

Attachment F

Key Issue/Policy: Regional Express Lanes Network

Issues Area: The Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for Plan Bay Area included three versions of the Regional Express Lanes Network (see attached map).

1. **Regional Express Lanes Network:** The Draft Plan includes a Regional Express Lane Network of approximately 350 miles that aims to close gaps within the existing high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lane system on I-80, I-880, I-580 and I-680 to increase travel time savings and reliability for carpools and buses in those corridors. The Express Lanes Network converts existing carpool lanes to express lanes and uses the revenue generated to finance completion of the carpool/express lane system.
2. **Reduced Scope Express Lanes Network:** A Reduced Scope Express Lanes Network, as evaluated in Alternative 3 of the DEIR, includes HOV lane conversions and HOV lane gap closures in the inner Bay Area for a total of approximately 300 miles. This alternative removes the proposed expansion express lanes on I-580 and I-80 at the outer edges of the Bay Area (shown in red on the attached map).
3. **Committed Express Lanes Only:** Alternative 5 of the DEIR includes only Committed Express Lanes. This alternative removes express lanes on I-80, I-880 and portions of I-680 and I-580. It includes only the existing express lane on I-680 and express lanes on I-580 east of Livermore for a total of approximately 40 miles.

We received a significant number of comments requesting changes to the Regional Express Lanes Network, as defined in the draft Plan. The requests include:

- Limit Express Lanes Network to only include segments that are conversions of existing HOV lanes.
- Include expansion express lanes (those segments where no HOV lane currently exists) only if they are conversions of a general purpose lane to an Express Lane.
- Modify the network approach to allow toll revenue to fund expanded transit operations and other non-single occupant transportation choices in each corridor concurrent with the opening of each new express lane.
- Ensure low income families receive an equitable share of the benefits of express lanes.

Key Considerations: Closing the gaps in the HOV network is a critical aspect of the express lanes strategy because of the benefit provided to carpools and express bus services in the affected corridors. While state and federal laws do not currently allow conversion of an existing general purpose lane to an express lane, there is no prohibition on studying this approach. Plan Bay Area already reflects a significant regional commitment to funding transit operations and maintenance as well as expansion. In addition, as described in Attachment E, staff is recommending additional revenue for transit investments.

Data from other regions, including Minneapolis, San Diego, Orange County and Seattle, indicates that low-income travelers use express lanes and value having the choice to use them.

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This finding is reinforced by initial outreach to low-income travelers in the Bay Area.¹ Implementation of the Regional Express Lanes Network will include project-level environmental clearance that will comply with all applicable requirements for environmental justice analysis. In addition, focused outreach will be conducted with low income communities as part of the Express Lanes network roll out.

Recommendation:

1. Continue to include the full Regional Express Lanes Network in the Final Plan
2. MTC/BAIFA should study the potential benefits and impacts of converting general purpose lanes to Express Lanes in order to inform implementation of the express lanes network and future long-range plans.

¹ Staff presentation to the MTC Policy Advisory Council, March 13, 2013.
http://apps.mtc.ca.gov/meeting_packet_documents/agenda_2008/5_Express_Lanes.pdf