

Toll Increase & High-Occupancy (HOV) Vehicle Changes for State-Owned Bridges

BATA Oversight Committee

December 11, 2024

6a-24-1421



Recap

April, July, and September 2024: Need for additional revenue to preserve BATA bridges, toll bridge usage, and responses to Commissioner feedback on considerations for a toll increase

October: Proposal for a toll increase and changes to HOV policies to this Committee and the Authority

November and December: Public comment process with numerous opportunities for public input

Today: Request for referral of BATA Resolution No. 184 Toll Schedule for the State-Owned Toll Bridges in the Bay Area to the Authority for approval of toll increase and HOV policy changes

Bay Area Toll Authority (BATA) Responsibility

- BATA is required under state law to fund projects to preserve and protect the bridges
- BATA's adopted Ten-Year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) is \$1.9B
- Preliminary Asset Management results show increased needs in both the CIP horizon and for ongoing preservation
- BATA is currently borrowing to fund bridge preservation

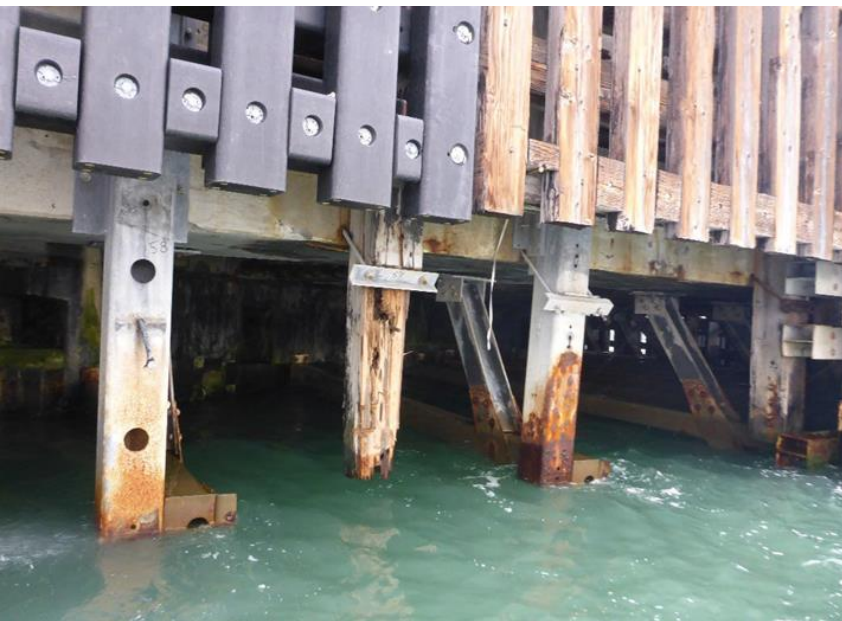


What are the existing bridge tolls used for?

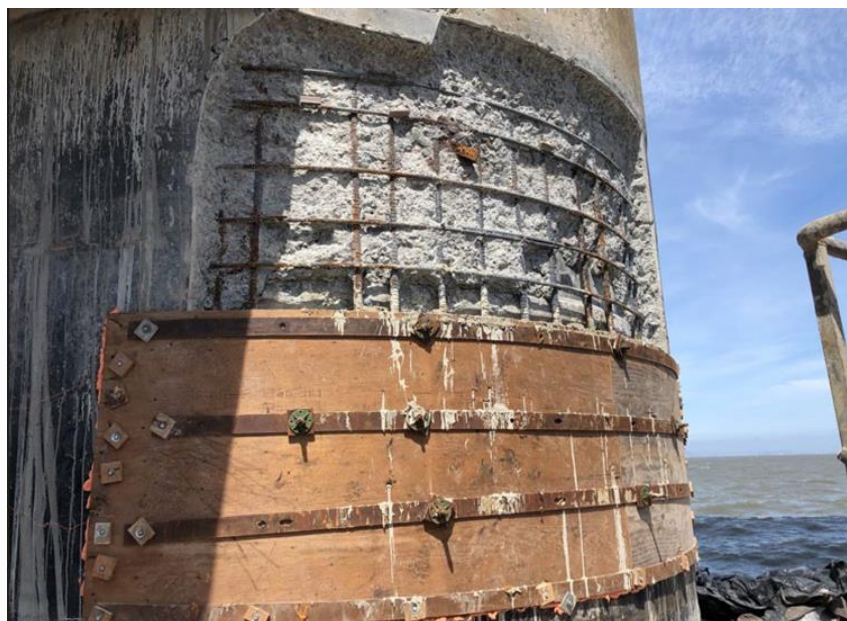


- The current bridge toll for passenger vehicles is \$7 and a higher amount (based on number of axles) for heavy duty vehicles (trucks, etc.)
- These funds are used for:
 - Bridge operations and maintenance
 - Bridge preservation
 - Bridge seismic retrofit (repaying bonds issued in the early 2000s)
 - Voter-approved regional measures 1, 2 and 3, which have funded many important highway and transit capital projects, plus transit operations for specific service (e.g. ferry and transbay bus) on an annual basis

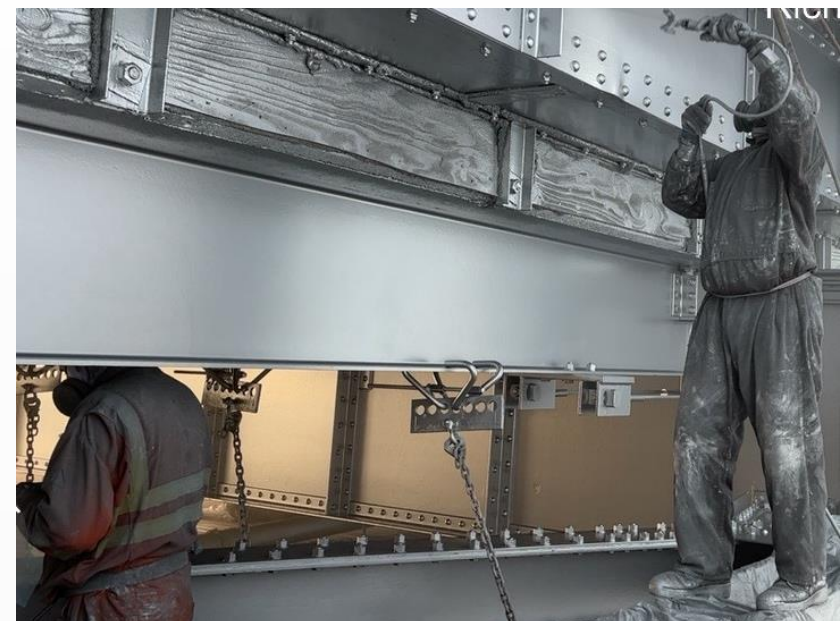
Bridge Preservation Projects to Address Critical Needs



**San Francisco-Oakland Bay
Bridge fender repair**

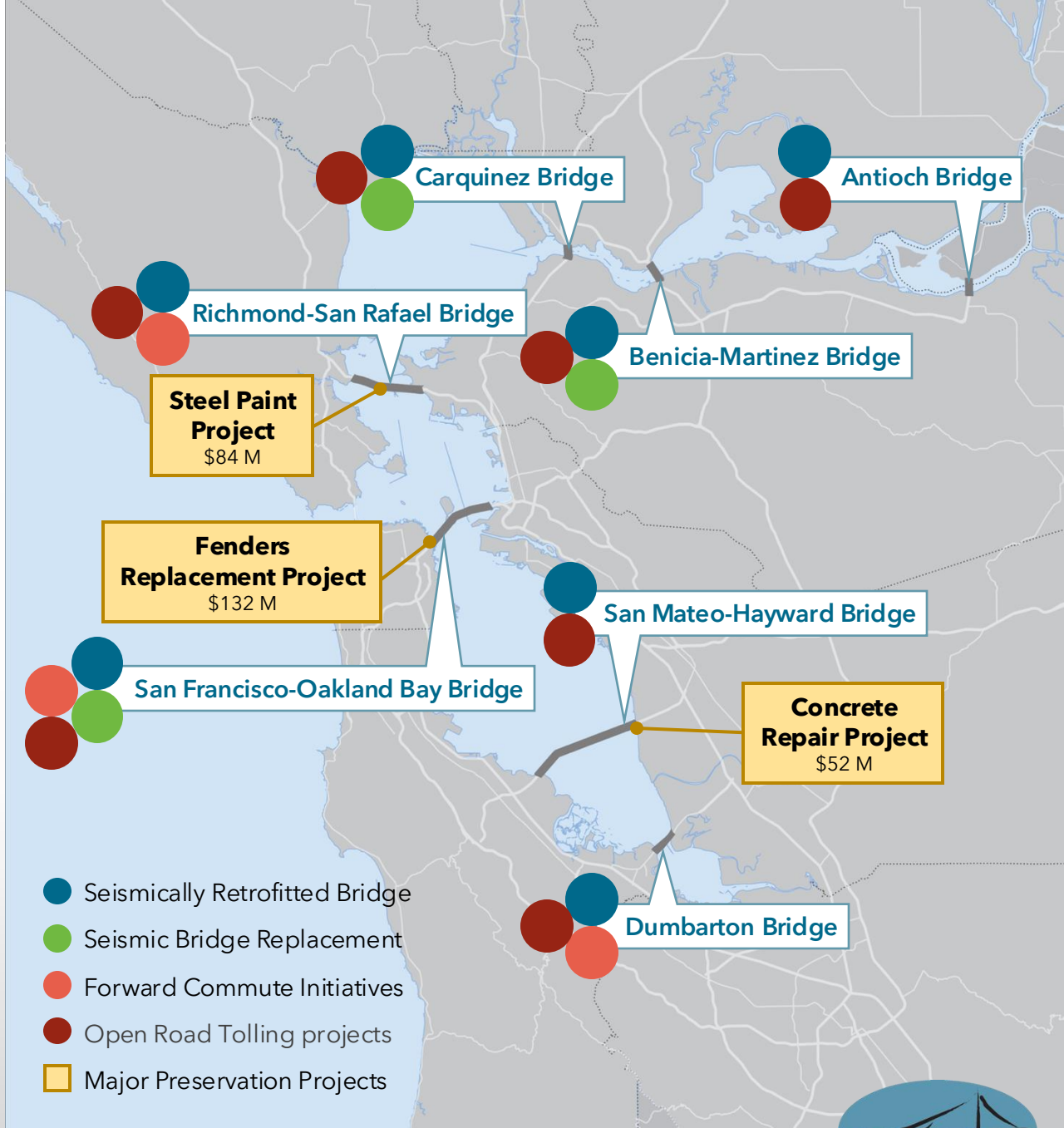


**San Mateo-Hayward Bridge
over water concrete repair**



**Richmond-San Rafael
paint**

BATA and Caltrans deliver bridge projects on multiple fronts



**Recommendation:
Toll increase for
operation and
preservation of
state-owned
bridges**



Toll Increase Recommendation

- **Five-year phased toll increases**
 - Two-axle vehicles: \$0.50 per year
 - Multi-axle vehicles: \$0.50 per axle per year
 - First increase effective January 1, 2026
 - Last increase effective January 1, 2030
- **Tiered pricing based on method of payment**
 - Additional toll when paying by license plate account: \$0.25
 - Additional toll when paying by invoice: \$1.00
 - Effective January 1, 2027

Recommended Toll Rates

	Jan 1, 2026	Jan 1, 2027	Jan 1, 2028	Jan 1, 2029	Jan 1, 2030
2-axle	\$8.50	\$9.00	\$9.50	\$10.00	\$10.50
3-axle	\$19.50	\$21.00	\$22.50	\$24.00	\$25.50
4-axle	\$25.00	\$27.00	\$29.00	\$31.00	\$33.00
5-axle	\$30.50	\$33.00	\$35.50	\$38.00	\$40.50
6-axle	\$36.00	\$39.00	\$42.00	\$45.00	\$48.00
7-axle or more	\$41.50	\$45.00	\$48.50	\$52.00	\$55.50

Starting January 1, 2027

- Tolls for payment by license plate account: +\$0.25
- Tolls for payment by invoice: +\$1.00

Carpools will continue to receive discount of 50% of 2-axle FasTrak rate

Recommendation: Carpool (HOV) Policy Changes



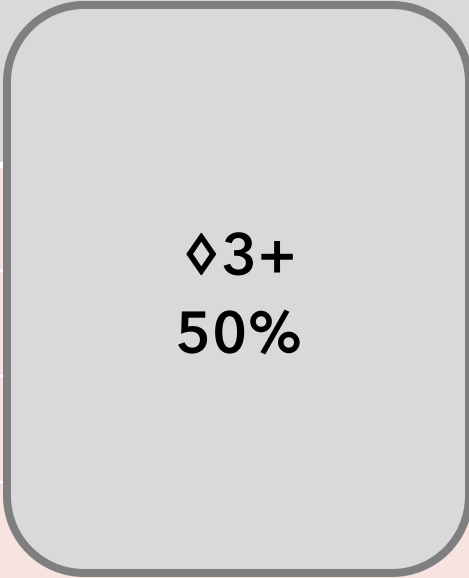
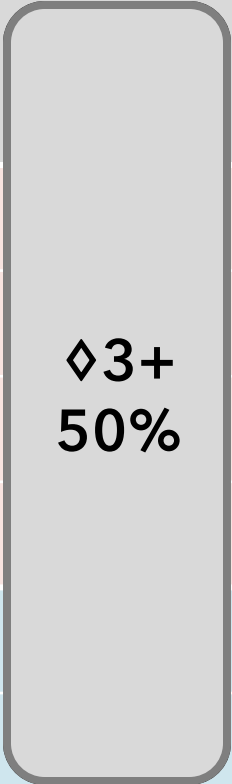
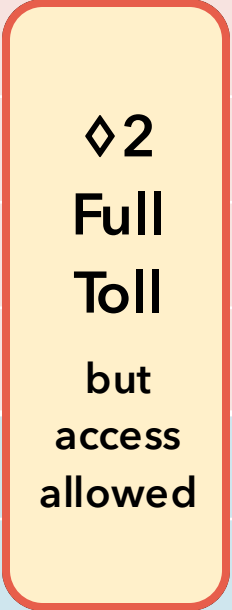
Proposed BATA toll bridge HOV policy

Current:

- Reduced toll and restricted access to HOV 3+ on five bridges.
- Reduced toll and restricted access to HOV 2+ on Dumbarton and San Mateo-Hayward bridges

Proposed:

- HOV3+ required for reduced toll on all bridges
- HOV2s can use lane for time savings but pay full toll except at Bay Bridge

Bridge	In Designated HOV Lane HOV Discount	
	Current HOV Policy	Proposed HOV Policy
San Francisco-Oakland Bay		
Antioch		
Carquinez		
Benicia-Martinez		
Richmond-San Rafael		
Dumbarton		
San Mateo-Hayward		

Need for Proposed HOV Policy

Dedicated HOV lanes approaching the toll bridges provide time savings and priority for buses and carpools and will be retained with Open Road Tolling (ORT), but some HOV lanes are underutilized.



The updated policy will:

1. Improve safety by minimizing traffic weaving and optimizing the lane configuration for future ORT
2. Increase person throughput by improving transit prioritization and maintaining or increasing HOV demand
3. Enhance regional consistency by offering a toll discount only to HOV3+ on all state-owned bridges

Public Outreach



Public Outreach: Policy Changes

Public outreach on proposed toll increase and HOV policy changes included:

- Multiple announcements and news items posted on MTC website
- Press releases in October & November
- Multiple emails to MTC/BATA distribution lists
- Social media postings
- Public legal notices posted in newspapers in multiple languages
- November 13 public webinar for overview and questions & answers
- November 20 public hearing

Public Comments

- A total of 172 comments from the public were provided through December 3, 2024.
- Comments opposing the toll increase: 152
- Comments in support of toll increase: 9
- Comments undecided about the toll increase: 11
- Many comments included multiple themes.

Public Comments Summary (1 of 3)

Themes	Responses
Economic Burden (107 comments) Concern with financial strain on working class families and questioning need of toll increases.	While BATA is sensitive to these financial strains, BATA is required to keep the bridges in a state of good repair, and tolls are the only reliable funding source available to BATA. BATA has designed the toll increase at \$0.50 increments each year to minimize the annual burden to toll payers.
Government Accountability (34 comments) Need for transparency and call for clear and detailed financial documentation to help justify increases.	MTC's Annual Comprehensive Financial Report, BATA's Capital Improvement Plan, Toll Bridge Program Report, BATA's Operating and Capital Budgets and Asset Management Policy are posted on MTC's website.
Economic Impact on Lower-Income Communities (28 comments) Toll increases disproportionately impact lower-income communities, particularly those who rely on bridges for daily commute.	While a toll increase has a greater burden on a low-income household than an affluent household, BATA is required to keep the bridges in a state of good repair, and tolls are the only available, reliable funding source. MTC has a goal to lower transportation costs. Recent surveys show low-income households that use toll bridges are twice as likely as other households to also take transit and thus may benefit from Clipper START, which provides a 50% discount on transit fares to qualifying low-income residents.

Public Comments Summary (2 of 3)

Themes	Responses
Call for Alternative Solutions (24 comments) Explore alternative solutions to toll increases, such as identifying other revenue sources or better managing existing funds.	State law requires that BATA fund toll bridge in a state of good repair. BATA has applied for federal grants, but a one-time grant would not replace the need to raise bridge tolls due to the scale and ongoing nature of the need. BATA requires an ongoing, reliable revenue stream for bridge preservation projects and cannot depend on one-time grants or other funding sources outside its control.
Geographic Disparity (13 comments) Toll increase disproportionately impacts residents of the East Bay and Solano County who often choose to live there due to more affordable housing.	As provided in state law, BATA provides a discount on the RM 3 portion of the bridge toll for drivers crossing multiple bridges to lessen the impact for users that cross more than one bridge during commute times on the same day. The discount is provided on the second bridge crossing. This \$1 discount will increase to \$1.50 on January 1, 2025 as part of the final RM 3 toll increase. A maximum of one morning discount and one afternoon discount can be applied to the same vehicle for the day. MTC is also working with ABAG to increase affordable housing and create more housing close to jobs, as called for in Plan Bay Area 2050.

Public Comments Summary (3 of 3)

Themes	Responses
Support for toll increase (9 comments) General support to raise revenues for bridge improvements and public transit. Belief that higher tolls will help reduce car usage and encourage transit use.	Revenue from the toll increase is intended to fund the operations, maintenance and rehabilitation of the seven state-owned bridges and keep them in a state of good repair.
Need for Enhanced Public Transportation Options (8 comments) Hope that higher tolls would encourage more transit use and increased investment in public transportation options.	Revenue from the toll increase is intended to fund the operations, maintenance and rehabilitation of the seven state-owned bridges. BATA can raise bridge tolls for other purposes only with legislative authorization as was the case with Regional Measure 2 and 3, which include substantial funding for transit.
HOV Policy (3 comments) Two-person carpools should receive the toll discount	This policy is designed to encourage maximum person throughput by rewarding two-occupant vehicles with the travel time savings available in the carpool lanes, and provide the highest reward, via a discounted toll, to carpools with three or more occupants.

Timeline

Tasks	2024				2025												'26
	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J
BATA review of proposed toll rate and HOV policy changes for public comment		●															
Public comment period (Nov. 4 - December 18 (BATA meeting))			■	■													
Webinar with Q&A (November 13)			●														
Public hearing (November 20)			●														
BATA Oversight referral of toll rate and HOV policy changes to BATA (December 11)				●													
BATA approval of toll rate and HOV policy changes (December 18)				●													
Implementation: RCSC, toll system, signage					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Customer education											■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Policies effective Jan 1, 2026																	◆

← We are here!

Additional ways to comment



In person:

- Bay Area Toll Authority Oversight Committee meeting on December 11
- Bay Area Toll Authority meeting on December 18
- Visit MTC's Meetings & Events page for more information:
mtc.ca.gov/meetings-events



By mail to:

- MTC/BATA Public Information Office
375 Beale Street, Suite 800
San Francisco, CA 94105



By email to:

- info@bayareametro.gov
- Please include "Toll Increase & HOV Policy" in the subject line

Comments will be accepted until and through public comment on the toll increase and HOV policy agenda item at BATA's December 18, 2024 meeting.

Thank you!

Submit additional
written comments to
info@bayareametro.gov

PHOTO: JOEY KOTFICA