



May 1, 2024

Re: Richmond-San Rafael Bridge Public Pathway Pilot Project

Dear San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission Members:

We, the undersigned organizations, urge you to reject the Metropolitan Transportation Commission and Caltrans staff's BCDC permit amendment request to close the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge Trail all day every Monday through Thursday, for conversion to a car breakdown shoulder. Please join us in supporting permanent, 24/7 access for all between the East Bay and the North Bay by keeping this pathway open.

The opening of this multi-use trail in November 2019 was a joyous occasion, marking the culmination of decades of advocacy, and completing a critical 6-mile link in the Bay Trail between Contra Costa and Marin counties. Since then more than 377,000 biking, walking, and rolling trips have been made on the pathway for exercise, recreation, commuting, socializing, and more.

Report data on the four year pathway pilot project, shared by the Bay Area Toll Authority to the Contra Contra Transportation Authority at their December 2023 meeting, showed that as of Fall 2022 there was no increase in westbound car congestion compared to prior conditions in 2019. The report stated that the duration of the morning commute congestion was on average 30 minutes shorter in 2022 than 2019, with car traffic at 90% of pre-pandemic levels.

With regard to traffic safety the draft report showed that the number of crashes decreased slightly after the pathway was installed compared to before. Incident response times increased by 1.3 minutes on average, while the duration of incident impacts on bridge traffic went down by 2.5 minutes on average.

The draft report also showed that the pathway did not negatively affect air quality, which is primarily impacted by vehicle miles traveled, not by traffic congestion. Road dust, tire wear, and brake wear make up 83% of PM2.5 emissions from vehicles, compared to running exhaust which makes up 17%.

We recognize the hardships imposed on individuals from bridge congestion, many of whom are forced to drive great distances to access employment in the North Bay due to a lack of workforce housing options and robust public transit. Some mitigations to the congestion issues are already in the works at the main pinch-points including the toll plaza, the Richmond Parkway interchange, and the 580/101 interchange.

We also recognize hardships imposed on those who rely on public transit, but are currently only provided with a single bus line across the bridge with headways between buses of up to an hour, and no service after 10pm. And we recognize hardships on those who rely on bicycles, ebikes, and other devices who will have no crossing option at all if the pathway is closed.

Equitable and sustainable solutions to the bridge congestion issues involve addressing land use and housing affordability imbalances so as to not force people into arduously long commutes in the first place, and to significantly increase public transit service on the corridor to move more people without harmful increases in vehicle miles traveled. Closing the pathway for a breakdown shoulder as currently proposed, or for a third westbound car lane, will not contribute toward progress on these underlying causes.

Keeping the pathway open is in alignment with numerous adopted plans and policies on the regional and state level including the San Francisco Bay Trail Plan, the Plan Bay Area regional transportation plan and sustainable communities strategy, the Plan Bay Area 2050 transportation strategy, BCDC's Bay Plan Transportation Policy No. 4, the Caltrans Complete Streets Directors Policy DP-37, and Executive Order N-19-19 signed by Governor Newsom.

We appreciate and share BCDC's goals of increased equity, climate resilience, and access to the Bay shoreline, and we look forward to continuing to work together on real solutions to these issues.

Sincerely,

Robert Prinz
Advocacy Director
Bike East Bay

Najari Smith
Executive Director
Rich City Rides

Abigail Montejo
Friends of the Richmond Greenway (FORG)

Kendra Ramsey
Executive Director
California Bicycle Coalition

Ken McLeod
Policy Director
The League of American Bicyclists

Doria Robinson
Executive Director
Urban Tilth

Dani Lanis
Chair
Richmond BPAC

Eris Weaver
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Sonoma County Bicycle Coalition

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Interim Executive Director
San Francisco Bicycle Coalition

Coordinating Committee
El Cerrito / Richmond Annex Walk & Roll

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Head Coach & Team Director
Berkeley High Mountain Bike Team

Joe Grondahl
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Berkeley Bicycle Club

Dan Leaverton & Alec Flett
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Angela Navarro
Board Vice President
San Francisco Randonneurs

Sean Brandt
President
Dolce Vita Cycling

Glenn Kirby
President
Fremont Freewheelers Bicycle Club

Carrie Harvilla
Deputy Director
Transform

Bryan Culbertson
Traffic Violence Rapid Response

Carter Lavin
Transbay Coalition

Taylor Peliska
Co-Founder & Head of Design
Movemint

Neil Flock
Bimotal Inc

Cyane Dandridge
Founder and Executive Director
SEI - Strategic Energy Innovations

Tim Oey
ZeroW.org

Nick Peterson
Founding Member
Albany Climate Action Coalition

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El Cerrito Trail Trekkers

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Eric Aaholm
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David Lewis
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YES Nature to Neighborhoods

Juliana Gonzalez
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The Watershed Project

Sarka Volejnikova
Parks for People Program Director
Trust for Public Land

Pam Stello
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Point Molate Alliance

Dan Cohen
President
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Save The Bay

Jon Spangler
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BART Bicycle Advisory Task Force

Zoe Siegel
Senior Director of Climate Resilience
Greenbelt Alliance

Nora Vargas-Dye
Collaborator
California Field School

Anna Thiel
Bad Business Model Bikes

From: [Anthony Campana](#)
To: [BCDC PublicComment](#); zwasserman@fennemorelaw.com; [Yoriko Kishimoto \(2\)](#); [Karl Hasz \(2\)](#); [Eckerle, Jenn@CNRA](#); [Shari Posner](#); [Pemberton, Sheri@SLC](mailto:Pemberton_Sheri@SLC); [Pan, Katharine@BCDC](mailto:Pan_Katharine@BCDC)
Cc: [Robert Prinz](#); info@marinbike.org
Subject: Public Comment: 5/2 BCDC Item 8 - Richmond San Rafael Bridge Public Pathway
Date: Thursday, May 2, 2024 5:30:05 PM

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Dear Commissioners,

I am among the 22 speakers who were not able to provide comment on Item 8 at today's meeting. Per Chair Wasserman's instructions I am submitting my comment via email; please confirm receipt.

I would like to speak to the Commission about my experience commuting from the East Bay to Sonoma County on transit. There is indeed a bus on the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge, Golden Gate Transit's Route 580, which connects El Cerrito del Norte BART to the San Rafael Transit Center and SMART station.

It might surprise you to know that getting to SMART would be much faster on the bridge pathway than it is on the bus. If I owned an e-bike and were willing to brave highway traffic on Sir Francis Drake Blvd, where long-promised bridge-approach bike improvements have stalled at the end of the offramp, I'd use the path to commute.

There are two major reasons taking the bus is slow:

1. The earliest westbound morning run of the 580 bus misses the first northbound SMART train, and after the bus reaches San Rafael there is a 28-minute wait until the next SMART.
2. This bus is scheduled to take 48 minutes to make it from BART to SMART, an average speed of just 16.4 miles per hour - dismal for a highway route.

Congestion from cars on the bridge surely impacts the speed of the bus. Caltrans and a few public commenters today spoke about how congestion also impacts emergency response and families trying to drive across the bridge. However, the pathway is not the cause of the congestion on the bridge.

The best data I can find online is that the Bay Bridge, with its ten lanes, carries 260,000 vehicles a day, while the Richmond Bridge with its five lanes carries just 70,000. If the data were available, I believe that comparing even just the westbound lanes and traffic would show that the Bay Bridge carries far more vehicles per lane each day.

What's different about the Bay Bridge? Traffic on the bridge is kept free-flowing with metering

lights at the toll plaza. Traffic engineers know that congested highways have lower throughput than free-flowing ones. If Caltrans applied this strategy from the Bay Bridge to the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge, traffic would flow optimally across the two-lane section out to Hwy 101, providing much-improved emergency access. Buses and high-occupancy vehicles would be provided priority lanes north of the toll plaza just as they are at the Bay Bridge. Commuters would be incentivized to take transit or the bus, and families taking their kids to school would have predictable trips free of congestion.

It is perplexing that Caltrans says they want to add an HOV/bus lane to this bridge once environmental study can be completed. Caltrans has opposed the creation of an HOV or bus lane on the Bay Bridge, arguing that bypass lanes on the approaches to the toll plaza and metering lights are sufficient to provide priority. The same should be done at the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge, queueing single-occupant cars at the toll plaza where there is space available to wait for a free-flowing slot, instead of in two or three lanes of congestion along the bridge itself.

Finding that public access to the bridge is infeasible should be a high bar - the pathway already exists today. Before agreeing to alter this permit, please require that Caltrans and BATA:

1. Report additional data from the pilot, including congestion on highways and roads on the approaches to the bridge, and congestion and incidents charted over time rather than merely "before" and "after." Minor collisions went down once the pathway opened, and have slowly increased only after that.
2. Compare and coordinate the proposed change with state and regional land use and transportation plans and priorities.
3. Forecast changes to Vehicle Miles Traveled and emissions, including long-term induced demand, and congestion impacts on the lower eastbound deck once it no longer benefits from being wider than the westbound deck.
4. Explain why converting the pathway to a shoulder will provide data of any value, when a) this was the previous configuration of the bridge, b) this is not Caltrans's near-term vision, which is a bridge with an additional HOV lane, and c) the proposed study period is before completion of the RSR Forward project, which Caltrans believes will be a significant change to traffic.
5. Study westbound metering at the toll plaza, to keep traffic on the bridge free-flowing and provide priority to the bus and HOVs.
6. Study funding Golden Gate Transit to increase the capacity of the bridge by increasing Route 580 bus service from hourly to every ten minutes (matching BART), and by increasing its span of service.
7. Implement programs to incentivize carpooling and to move commutes out of the peak-of-the-peak, including variable tolls, bypass lanes on the toll plaza approach, and facilitated "casual carpool."
8. Fully develop the current hand-waved plans for alternative access for those walking and

rolling, and model usage to demonstrate that they will not fail as historical examples have.

9. Commit to including continuous bike and pedestrian access in its longer-term HOV project, such as by using the moveable barriers to maintain a pathway in the off-peak direction (lower deck in the morning; upper deck in the afternoon). Capital requirements for this should be less than even was needed to begin this pilot in 2019, and it is therefore clearly feasible.
10. Provide an expected timeline for eventual replacement of the bridge, which could incorporate the shoulder/HOV lane Caltrans desires as well as a pathway and SMART extension to Richmond BART.

The change that Caltrans and BATA anticipate proposing would be a major step backward for the Bay Area that would help neither drivers nor transit riders. If this permit change is brought before you, please defer it until the RSR Forward project is complete and the alternatives discussed above are properly assessed.

Thank you,

Anthony Campana
Berkeley resident

From: [Blurton, Dominic](#)
To: [BCDC PublicComment](#)
Subject: Zoom Meeting 5/2 re public comments on RSR bridge (I did not get to comment but you said you would read submitted comments)
Date: Thursday, May 2, 2024 7:07:08 PM

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I enjoyed the meeting today re plans for the RSR bridge but didn't get to comment given the overwhelming turnout that seemed majority pro- keeping the bridge unchanged and remaining open to non cars users.

Most of the cyclists commenting seemed to be coming into Marin from the east bay.

I live in Mill valley and come from Marin to east bay for work. (Stanford Pediatric Cardiology outreach in Emeryville) I also commute Marin to SF regularly for work across the GGB.

2 years ago I moved to this cyclists paradise you have helped create in the Bay Area from the cyclists nightmare that is Southern California. I feel very safe commuting here given the excellent infrastructure.

Please do not fall into the same trap that my old home of Southern California has by believing that an extra lane will actually help reduce traffic. Do you know parts of the 10 freeway in LA have 22 lanes still there's gridlock!

As you heard during the very thoughtful comments "induced demand" will lead to the same traffic within months after opening the 3rd lane even to HOVs . This phenomenon has been proven around the world not just in car-centric Los Angeles. I understand that when you think about it a 33% increase in number of car lanes sounds like it will lessen traffic but the unfortunate truth is that it won't! Please Don't ignore history or history will repeat itself.

As you also heard in comments e-bikes are a game changer! they allow average non Lycra wearing cyclists to become avid commuters. They flatten hills but yet do give the user a workout. You choose your level of workout based on your mood/ energy by changing the assist level. They cost a small fraction of a car although I admit they are still expensive. I purchased my current e-bike two years ago as soon as I moved here and so far on Golden Gate Bridge tolls alone I have saved 2k! Thus making my initial investment in an expensive e-bike far less. As you are seeing with electric cars e-bike costs will also fall making it a practical option for many current car only owners in the near future.

E-bikes are the future of single occupancy sustainable transport for the common man. They will in the next few years become a common site on the RSR.

As a pediatric cardiologist who previously worked in southern California and has now worked in SF, Marin and Sonoma counties, in my experience there is remarkably far less childhood obesity, hypertension and hypercholesterolemia in the children of northern versus Southern California.

The abundance of children here using bicycles whether for commuting to school or just social time with friends I see as a major factor in Northern Californias favorable health status when it comes to obesity induced diseases. You do not want to change this positive factor. Multiple studies show parents who ride bikes will have children who ride bikes, so please don't discourage parents from commuting and being a role model to their children. Their Childrens future health may depend on it.

Additional points re mentioned factors during comments-

1: any bike shuttle you offer will not allow the average user to lift their 55lb e-bike easily on to a bus rack. E-bikes on a shuttle will not work.

2: the infrastructure on both sides of the bridge is adequate.

Richmond and on all the way to the bay bridge and in Marin to the larkspur Smart train, ferry or on to the existing bike path system taking you north to Novato or south into San Francisco are excellent! There is nothing left to do to

improve them. All it takes is a look at google earth/
Maps and a motivated cyclist who is sick of driving his car to work to safely navigate pre and post bridge routes.

Thanks for reading.

Dominic Blurton MD
Stanford Pediatric Cardiology

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From: [Marcus Daniels](#)
To: [BCDC PublicComment](#)
Subject: May 2nd, 2024 BCDC meeting public comment
Date: Thursday, May 2, 2024 4:08:55 PM

Hello,

I'd like to suggest that Caltrans reconsider how they recover from accidents and breakdowns.

I ride on the bridge frequently and am familiar with the layout. There are several relevant features:

1. Caltrans has a station on the east side, with a fence that opens into the lane. Through this area emergency vehicles and tow trucks could enter.
2. Caltrans now has very large tow trucks that patrol the bridges. However, there are smaller trucks that could drive in the bike lane. There's also the possibility of tow trucks with high decks that would be above the barrier.
3. The barrier is made up of modules connected by pins. With some tooling, Caltrans could open the barrier to extract cars. This would be better than a breakdown lane because the emergency vehicles would never be impeded by traffic.

Starting from the premise the main issue are congestion events rather than transit times, I suggest Caltrans take seriously these features and design a protocol to quickly enter the bike lane, drive to the accident, open the barrier and remove the obstacle. This might involve hydraulic jacks to pop the pins out and dragging or lifting away several of the barriers.

Another approach would be to use the "zipper truck" that can quickly move the entire barrier so that rescue vehicles may enter in a newly created lane behind it. A small truck could first sweep the lane of cyclists.

Regards,

Marcus Daniels
El Cerrito

From: [mary ann furda](mailto:maryannfurda@gmail.com)
To: [BCDC PublicComment](#)
Subject: Meeting date 5/02/24: item #8, Richmond Bridge pathway pilot project
Date: Thursday, May 2, 2024 4:24:22 PM

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Thank you in advance for reading this public comment. And thank you for a most informative meeting this afternoon. Although disappointed that I was unable to make comment after over 3 hours of listening, I will retain a hope that this letter will be received, read by the Commission, and taken into consideration in planning next steps. Because of the existence of this active transportation lane, I was able to take a job in Sausalito, and purchased an ebike to enable me to do this commute from Berkeley. Without this lane, I will lose the job.

It was a bit frustrating to hear folks describe how they needed to leave hours before they report to work in their morning commute to the North Bay to be sure they could get to work on time in the crowded auto lanes. For Heaven sake, an ebike would get them where they need to go expeditiously and more healthfully!

I appreciated many of the comments of speakers who were able to be there in person, especially Tom Lent and those like him, who spoke of preparing for a future with less air pollution and greater health and better access to the Bay for all through greater use of the active transit lane, especially with the economical use of electric bikes and scooters.

It was two years ago now that I was involved with planning bicycle routes throughout the Bay Area, fundraising for and environmental advocacy group 350 Bay Area. One of our routes was a circumnavigation of the Bay, which began in Richmond; the first bridge crossing was the Richmond San Raphael Bridge, through Marin and then crossing over the Golden Gate and through San Francisco. The final Bay crossing was by ferry from SF to Oakland. Please, let us work together to support and INCREASE active transportation, to increase equity and health and access to the Bay in our expanding population, and prepare for a future of more active use of all the bridges which ring our precious Bay Area!

Thank you,
MaryAnn Furda

From: [Rachel Ng](#)
To: [BCDC PublicComment](#)
Cc: [John Gioia](#); [Federal D. Glover](#)
Subject: Public Comment - Item 8 RSR Bridge - 5/2/24 BCDC Meeting
Date: Thursday, May 2, 2024 4:50:04 PM

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Hello BCDC members,

I am emailing my public comment as the virtual commenting period on Item 8 was cut short this afternoon.

My name is Rachel Ng, and I have been a Richmond resident since 2018. I actually have only used the bike path twice; I basically only drive across the bridge. I support keeping the bike path open 24/7 and oppose reverting it to an emergency shoulder.

I must highlight the public commenter earlier today who drily commented, "I look out my car window all the time on the bridge and see nobody in the bike lane. I think there are more people advocating for the bike lane in this meeting than actually using it." (Paraphrasing him, of course.)

What he said isn't wrong. It might even be objectively true. But despite being a driving user of the bridge like that guy, I can fathom how keeping the bike lane open 24/7 positively impacts me, him, and all drivers. It's really not that difficult to understand how something that benefits others can benefit me as well. (Although all the cyclists' reasons are sensible, fantastic, important, and ones that I support too.)

Reverting the lane will not decrease congestion. Further, I think opening a shoulder makes it even more dangerous to drive across the bridge.

First, the shoulder lane will not decrease congestion. It's a moot point as the toll plaza approach is 7 lanes being squeezed into 2 lanes. The shoulder lane doesn't change the fact that there's still only 2 lanes across the bridge. The option of opening a 3rd traffic lane is not on the table, as some pro-shoulder lane commenters seemed to misunderstand today.

So, secondly, that leaves the other hot topic that causes congestion: breakdowns or accidents that shut down lanes. Breakdowns are unavoidable. Accidents though?

Well, road design affects how safely people drive. With the bike lane barriers up, the perceived narrower lanes encourage safer and slower driver behavior. The Caltrans interim report supports this; "severe injury collisions are down significantly on the upper deck...while they increased on the three-lane lower deck." I've been nearly sideswiped 3 times on the bridge. If having a bike lane open means people are less likely to pull crazy stunts like cutting me off at 45 mph while traffic is going 20 mph with less than 1 foot of clearance, then by all means keep the bike lane open! I'd rather that than getting crushed by a reckless driver.

Third, an increase in road safety across the bridge would decrease the need to even dispatch emergency vehicles and close down lanes in the first place. We can't control flat tires or drivers running out of gas, but we certainly can influence driver behavior in a proven and

effective manner.

Finally, there is no guarantee that people will respect the shoulder as it should be used. In fact, it's almost a given that they WON'T treat it as an open, emergency-only lane. Caltrans cites that CHP officers repeatedly see vehicles on the lower deck blatantly misusing the 3rd lane, whether maliciously or not. This is a real problem for tow trucks or first responders that are using or stopped in the shoulder.

Putting dangerous driving behavior and a free-for-all attitude some have towards an open shoulder together, I can't help but imagine the likelihood of a crash between a tow truck and a reckless driver in the shoulder. Oh, wouldn't that be a terrible situation for the thousands of commuting drivers to sit through? It effectively renders the shoulder useless and brings us back to where we started - a third, unusable lane. I'd much rather see peds/riders be able to use it, whether it's 1 person or 10,000 people. That's because the presence of the lane makes driving a safer, more efficient experience.

The findings from the Caltrans interim report draws a clear and obvious cycle. Thinking of eliminating the bike path? Get ready to re-enable dangerous driving behavior because the road design physically encourages it. People driving dangerously and crazily again? Get ready for (completely avoidable) crashes that cause lane closures. Uptick in crashes or wrecks that close down lanes? Get ready for congestion that has drivers waking up hours earlier to avoid gnarly commute traffic jams. Wouldn't it be absurd to continue inducing and allowing the hell-like levels of traffic that car commuters at today's meeting complained about?

I think you must address root causes of congestion and dangerous driving behavior and leave the bike lane alone. It's not harming drivers or commute time. In fact, the lane could possibly be making it better for all users of the bridge, whether they're drivers or walkers or rollers.

Thank you for the work that you do and considering this issue with detail, care, and nuance.

Rachel Ng

From: [Kyle Pennell](#)
To: [BCDC PublicComment](#)
Subject: Bridge public comment
Date: Thursday, May 2, 2024 5:51:32 PM

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Shutting down the Richmond Bridge bike lane during weekdays just doesn't make sense. Traffic data shows drive times haven't really gotten worse since the bike path opened. But closing it Monday-Thursday would screw over bike commuters who rely on that affordable transportation option to get to work or run errands since they can't afford driving.

Restricting bike access four days a week based on some driver frustrations doesn't seem fair, especially when it likely won't improve traffic flow that much. The bike lane provides an important non-motorized travel option that should stay open, while still allowing vehicles at current levels. It's a more balanced approach than severely limiting cycling.

From: [heppyket](#)
To: [BCDC PublicComment](#)
Subject: I oppose the proposed RSR bridge path closure, and support keeping it open for biking and walking 24/7
Date: Thursday, May 2, 2024 1:35:25 PM

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My name is Myra Chachkin. I oppose the proposed bridge path closure, and support keeping it open for biking and walking 24/7.

I've used my bike for both transportation and recreation for more than 30 years. I own a car, and I use it when necessary, but I often travel by bicycle. I've ridden across the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge many times since the beginning of the 4-year pilot. I've ridden on the weekends for fun, but I've also biked across the bridge on weekdays to attend meetings.

It's very important, not just for me personally but for the Bay Area overall, to provide access to this route for people using all forms of transportation. It's better for the environment, and it's better for traffic. It's good public policy.

I honestly don't understand how it can even be a question whether pedestrian and bike access should be provided on this essential public road, which is one of only a few Bay crossings. We all support the roads with our tax dollars, and it should be open to all, at all times.

The pilot has shown no adverse effects from the path, and claims otherwise are ignoring research-supported facts. I understand and share the concerns about congestion and pollution. But the path is not increasing congestion or pollution, and removing it would only make those problems worse.

Please acknowledge the successful pilot and support permanent access now and for future generations. Thank you!

From: [Brett Morrison](#)
To: [BCDC PublicComment](#)
Subject: Pls keep the RSR bridge path open to cyclists 24/7
Date: Friday, May 3, 2024 7:33:38 AM

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Hello,

I use the cycling path 2-3 times a week to ride from home in Oakland to work on downtown SF. I love the freedom of being able to make that commute without depending on a car! And I love that the path doesn't actually take away a lane for cars. It's win-win!

PLEASE keep the cycling and pedestrian path open so theat the bridge can work for everyone!

Best,
Brett

From: [Jackson Lester](#)
To: [BCDC PublicComment](#)
Subject: Public Comment - Item 8 RSR Bridge - 5/2/24 BCDC Meeting
Date: Thursday, May 2, 2024 3:56:30 PM

Hi All,

Thank you for your time in today's meeting discussing the bike/ped path on the Richmond / San Rafael Bridge! I wanted to provide some comments based on the discussion I heard. I think both of these items could be helpful in directing Caltrans' future proposals.

- The Caltrans representative mentioned that we don't have data about the impact of travel time around incidents from before the shoulder was turned into a multi-use path. If Caltrans didn't keep time series speed data from the past from sensors on the bridge needed for this kind of study, I'm sure Inrix would be happy to sell it to them without having to close the bike/pedestrian path to figure it out.
- A commenter mentioned that there is no reason the number of lanes wouldn't be symmetrical on each side of the bridge - but that doesn't take into account downstream bottlenecks from the bridge. As I understand it, the West side of the bridge leads the vast majority of vehicles to the 580/101 junction that will become more of a substantial bottleneck for Westbound travel if capacity on the bridge is expanded.

Thanks!
Jackson

Jackson Lester
jacksonlester@gmail.com
541-777-0668

From: [Zach Lipton](#)
To: Reception@BCDC
Subject: Public comment re Richmond-San Rafael Bridge Bay Trail
Date: Thursday, May 2, 2024 3:58:37 PM

I was not able to give a public comment at today's Commission meeting. Please add my comments to the record.

Good afternoon commissioners, Zach Lipton. I bike on the bridge, and I'm asking you to keep the Bay Trail on the Richmond-San Rafael bridge open every single day

What we're talking about here is removing four miles of the Bay Trail and converting it to a breakdown lane for tow trucks. That's more trail than we've built in the past 6 years combined, and in a place where there's no alternative bike or pedestrian crossing for 20 miles in either direction.

I've had the great chance over the course of the pandemic to spend more time getting out and exploring the Bay Area, and a big part of that has been biking on every part of the Bay Trail. And through that, I've gotten to see firsthand just how hard the Commission has worked to ensure the whole Bay Area has access to the really extraordinary resource that is the Bay Trail. So it's really discouraging to see this push to remove such an important part of the Bay Trail, especially as e-bikes have become wildly popular and make the path accessible to more users.

If people are really crashing their cars together so often on the bridge that this is such a frequent problem, I wonder what work is being done to address traffic safety here so that these crashes, these "incidents" as you keep calling them, aren't happening so routinely. If there are really so many incidents that you need an entire lane just to address them, something really no other bridge has, that seems like something is really dangerous and should be addressed in the name of public safety instead of removing the path.

I believe what I heard your experts say earlier is that tire dust is the biggest source of pollution in the Bay, and that is caused by Vehicle Miles Traveled. It's vital for the Bay and our climate goals that reduce VMT. Removing the trail to widen the highway, whether for a breakdown lane or an HOV lane, would lead to increased VMT, worsen pollution in the Bay, and be a huge step backward for the Bay Trail and for our region's transportation system.

I urge you to listen to the people who use and rely on this path and keep the Bay Trail on the bridge.

Thank you.

From: [Latham, Owen](#)
To: [BCDC PublicComment](#)
Subject: Public comment to Richmond Bridge lane closure
Date: Thursday, May 2, 2024 8:26:13 PM

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Hello there,

I sent this letter to Ms. Moulten Peters but she never responded. I also attempted to make a public comment in today's meeting but the public comment session was closed early.

My name is Owen and I am a daily bicycle commuter on the Richmond bridge. I live in El Sobrante and commute to Larkspur, where I work as a special education high school teacher.

As a lifelong bicycle commuter, I believe cycling and public transit use is the most effective way to reduce my carbon footprint. I accepted my job in Marin on the understanding the bike lane would be a fixture of my day-to-day, as I've done with all other occupations I've had in the Bay since I was a teen.

If the bike lane is closed, I will no longer have the means to make it to work. The Golden Gate bus service is infrequent and unreliable, and I am not in a position to afford commuting all the way to Marin in a car on a daily basis, nor would I given the detrimental environmental impact it would have.

If the bike lane is closed, I will be seeking employment in a school district that allows me to bike commute to my campus.

Please keep this important transit option open to cyclists like myself. I enjoy working with Marin families, and I would hate to discontinue my work because there's no way to make it out to the place of my employment.

Thank you for your time.

- Owen

From: [William Cline](#)
To: [BCDC PublicComment](#)
Subject: Public Comment - Item 8 RSR Bridge - 5/2/24 BCDC Meeting
Date: Thursday, May 2, 2024 2:42:00 PM

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Dear Bay Conservation and Development Commission:

I am writing to express support for keeping the bicycle path on the Richmond-San Rafael bridge 7 days a week. Maintaining and improving non-automotive travel is important to meeting our region's transportation, livability, and climate needs.

There was a brief exchange during the live meeting today about running a "bike shuttle" as an alternative for bicycle travel. I echo the staffer's comment that traveler satisfaction with that option is low. From my own experience trying to use the Bay Bridge bike shuttle [1] (back when BART still prohibited bicycles during peak hours), the traveler experience with these is very poor. Travel time is unreliable, capacity is low, and the shuttle burdens travelers with having to find and figure out how it works instead of simply using bridge infrastructure.

Respectfully yours,
William Cline
San Francisco
wwcline@icloud.com

[1] <https://dot.ca.gov/caltrans-near-me/district-4/d4-popular-links/crossing-thebay-by-bike>

From: [Amy Wagner](#)
To: [BCDC PublicComment](#)
Subject: Public Comment - Item 8 RSR Bridge - 5/2/24 BCDC Meeting
Date: Thursday, May 2, 2024 11:11:15 AM

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I waited my entire career to ride my bike over the Richmond San Rafael Bridge to work in Richmond. The week that the path opened, I began commuting from Marin to the East Bay - no matter how cold, it was an exhilarating way to get to and from my job and squeeze in fitness.

I urge the Commission not to close this path any time of the day - our transportation system's mandate is not just to serve the car-driving public. Closing the path will not increase access for bikers and walkers since there are no other bike/pedestrian crossings of the Bay for 20 miles in either direction, and it also removes several miles of the Bay Trail. Adding more car capacity to the Bridge will not decrease congestion - I have commuted by car over the RSR bridge for 25 years, and I have rarely had to deal with traffic on the bridge. An occasional breakdown is part of all Bay Area bridges, and CalTrans has always been very responsive at clearing accidents and breakdowns.

Thank you for your consideration to keep the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge path open all days and hours of the week.

Amy Wagner

From: [Morris Fuller](#)
To: [BCDC PublicComment](#)
Subject: Richmond San Rafael bridge bike/ped path
Date: Thursday, May 2, 2024 3:59:43 PM

Hello,

I was unable to speak at the meeting today, but I urge you to keep the RSR bridge bike ped path open everyday. It is vital that there is a means to access Marin by bike and foot and turning the path into a breakdown lane as proposed would do nothing to improve congestion.

Thank you,
Morris Fuller
Berkeley, CA

From: [Andre Carothers](#)
To: [BCDC PublicComment](#)
Subject: The Richmond bridge
Date: Thursday, May 2, 2024 11:09:33 PM

I'm a big supporter of keeping the Richmond bridge bicycle Lane open all the time. We are committed, as a community, to reducing reliance on automobiles, and closing this Lane for any reason is a step backwards.

It will be used more and more, as access and ease of use becomes clearer and clearer to a new generation of bicyclers and people who eschew automobiles.

Availability like this induces demand, and we wish for more and more demand to reduce the Bay area's reliance on automobiles. Don't let this step backward delay the inevitable.

Thanks For listening, Andre Carothers.

Andre Carothers
<https://www.linkedin.com/in/andrecaothers/>