ALAMEDA County Transportation Commission
1111 Broadway, Suite 800, Oakland, CA 94607 • 510.208.7400 • www.AlamedaCTC.org

Multi-Modal Committee Meeting Agenda
Monday, July 12, 2021 9:00 a.m.

Due to the statewide stay at home order and the Alameda County Shelter in Place Order, and pursuant to the Executive Order issued by Governor Gavin Newsom (Executive Order N-08-21), the Commission will not be convening at its Commission Room but will instead move to a remote meeting.

Members of the public wishing to submit a public comment may do so by emailing the Clerk of the Commission at vlee@alamedactc.org by 5:00 p.m. the day before the scheduled meeting. Submitted comments will be read aloud to the Commission and those listening telephonically or electronically; if the comments are more than three minutes in length the comments will be summarized. Members of the public may also make comments during the meeting by using Zoom's "Raise Hand" feature on their phone, tablet or other device during the relevant agenda item, and waiting to be recognized by the Chair. If calling into the meeting from a telephone, you can use "Star (*) 9" to raise/ lower your hand. Comments will generally be limited to three minutes in length, or as specified by the Chair.

Committee Chair:	Rebecca Kaplan, City of Oakland	Executive Director:	Tess Lengyel
Vice Chair:	Nate Miley, Alameda County, District 4	Staff Liaison:	Carolyn Clevenger
Members:	Karla Brown, Wilma Chan, Luis Freitas, Elsa Ortiz, Rebecca Saltzman	Clerk of the Commission:	Vanessa Lee
Ex-Officio:	Pauline Russo Cutter, John Bauters		

Location Information:

Virtual Meeting Information: https://zoom.us/j/93961524658?pwd=ZlVIeTdWZTZ1UkUwajNaK2VBOEFudz09
Webinar ID: 939 6152 4658
Password: 022938

For Public Access Dial-in Information: **(669) 900-6833**
Webinar ID: 939 6152 4658
Password: 022938

To request accommodation or assistance to participate in this meeting, please contact Vanessa Lee, the Clerk of the Commission, at least 48 hours prior to the meeting date at: vlee@alamedactc.org

1. Call to Order

2. Roll Call

		Page/Action	
3.	**Public Comment**		
4.	**Consent Calendar**		
4.1.	Approve April 12, 2021 MMC Meeting Minutes	1	A
4.2.	I-580 Express Lanes Operations Update	5	I
5.	**Regular Matters**		
5.1.	Bay Bridge Forward Update	25	I
6.	**Committee Member Reports**		
7.	**Staff Reports**		
8.	**Adjournment**		

Next Meeting: October 11, 2021

Notes:

- All items on the agenda are subject to action and/or change by the Commission.
- To comment on an item not on the agenda, submit an email to the clerk or use the Raise Hand feature or if you are calling by telephone press *9 prior to or during the Public Comment section of the agenda. Generally public comments will be limited to 3 minutes.
- Call 510.208.7450 (Voice) or 1.800.855.7100 (TTY) five days in advance to request a sign-language interpreter.
- If information is needed in another language, contact 510.208.7400.
- Call 510.208.7400 48 hours in advance to request accommodation or assistance at this meeting.
- Meeting agendas and staff reports are available on the website calendar.

1111 Broadway, Suite 800, Oakland, CA 94607 • 510.208.7400 • www.AlamedaCTC.org

Alameda CTC Schedule of Upcoming Meetings
September 2021

Commission and Committee Meetings

Time	Description	Date
9:00 a.m.	I-680 Sunol Smart Carpool Lane JPA (I-680 JPA)	September 13, 2021
9:30 a.m.	Finance and Administration Committee (FAC)	
10:00 a.m.	Programs and Projects Committee (PPC)	
11:30 a.m.	Planning, Policy and Legislation Committee (PPLC)	
2:00 p.m.	Alameda CTC Commission Meeting	September 23, 2021

Advisory Committee Meetings

1:30 p.m.	Alameda County Technical Advisory Committee (ACTAC)	September 9, 2021
9:30 a.m.	Paratransit Technical Advisory Committee (ParaTAC)	September 14, 2021

Due to the statewide stay at home order and the Alameda County Shelter in Place Order, and pursuant to the Executive Order issued by Governor Gavin Newsom (Executive Order N-29-20), the Commission will not be convening at its Commission Room but will instead move to a remote meeting.

Meeting materials, directions and parking information are all available on the Alameda CTC website. Meetings subject to change.

This page intentionally left blank

1. **Call to Order**

2. **Roll Call**
   A roll call was conducted. All members were present with the exception of Commissioner Miley.

   Commissioner Cox attended as an alternate for Commissioner Chan.

3. **Public Comment**
   There were no public comments.

4. **Consent Calendar**
   - **4.1. Approve January 11, 2021 MMC Meeting Minutes**
   - **4.2 I-580 Express Lanes Operations Update**

   Commissioner Ortiz moved to approve the consent calendar. Commissioner Saltzman seconded the motion. The motion passed with the following roll call votes:

Yes:	*Bauters, Brown, Cox, Cutter, Freitas, Kaplan, Ortiz, Saltzman*
No:	*None*
Abstain:	*None*
Absent:	*Miley*

5. **Regular Matters**
   - **5.1. Southern Alameda County Rail Study (SoCo Rail) Update**

   Tess Lengyel stated that this is an informational item. She noted that Alameda CTC wants to ensure that the Commission is kept abreast of the multitude of rail activities, including planning studies and project development in Alameda County. Ms. Lengyel noted that the presentation would be given by Carolyn Clevenger and Kara Vuicich from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC).

   Ms. Clevenger stated that in 2018, the state provided $5 million to MTC to explore a rail hub in southern Alameda County. The Southern Alameda County Rail Study is designed to define the East Bay Rail Hub identified in general terms in the 2018 State Rail Plan. The grant included funding for passenger rail planning and feasibility analysis, evaluation of station locations, and conceptual engineering and initial design focused on intermodal connectivity. The study also provided an opportunity to explore how rail connectivity could be improved via a new East Bay rail hub. Three primary rail services operate in Southern Alameda County – Altamont Corridor Express, Capitol Corridor (Amtrak), and BART. There are no direct connections between ACE and BART, whereas there are two connections between the Capitol Corridor service and BART at Richmond and Oakland Coliseum stations. Based on

market analysis and existing services, the study focused on the potential for connecting ACE to BART in Southern Alameda County. Potential locations for a connection evaluated included: at Shinn junction where BART and ACE tracks cross, Union City BART, Centerville, Ardenwood and a Newark junction.

Kara Vuicich provided an overview of the analysis that included the discussion of key objectives for the services that are traveling to, from, and through Southern Alameda County. Ms. Vuicich also covered opportunities to enhance service, reliability, and safety as well as sustainability and resiliency, particularly reducing vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gas emissions. Ms. Vuicich also discussed how a new East Bay hub serves the surrounding communities and helps shape future land use, development, and growth in those communities.

Commissioner Brown commented that Alameda CTC and other partners are investing in Valley Link, connecting San Joaquin County to the Tri-Valley and beyond. She noted that constraints to the rail network were mentioned, e.g., Alviso wetlands, and asked if those constraints will affect Valley Link. Ms. Lengyel stated that the constraints would not affect Valley Link.

Commissioner Saltzman asked if Valley Link considered how ridership might be impacted when ACE increases service and connects to BART. Ms. Clevenger stated that Valley Link and ACE are working closely to coordinate on the Valley Link project and are developing an Altamont Corridor vision plan looking at how their services complement each other. She noted that there are a number of potential rail improvements under development, and one of the next steps is to perform a more detailed modeling analysis with a more limited set of alternatives.

Commissioner Saltzman commented that as these projects move forward, it would be good to receive updates and think further about ACE's future as services increase. Ms. Lengyel stated that staff could have ACE come to a future MMC meeting to update the Commission on ACE's vision plan and how they are moving forward with implementation.

Commissioner Cutter stated that the Coast Subdivision versus the Niles Subdivision seems to be the big question for Central County cities and asked if there are any repercussions for this project. Ms. Lengyel stated that staff will discuss the project as part of the next agenda item.

Commissioner Cox stated that she supports more rail services and wanted to ensure that the difficult negotiations with Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) would not impede on the projects in the study.

Commissioner Kaplan stated that there is significant growth in freight rail and that there is a desire to move more freight by rail instead of by truck. She suggested that the project team look at where the need is to separate freight from passenger rail throughout the entire rail network. She also noted that Alameda County is experiencing a significant shift where higher-paid workers are traveling less, and lower-paid workers are traveling more with further distances. She questioned how the planning and projections accounted for this shift in demand, and she requested

the project team incorporate the information into the future analysis. Ms. Clevenger stated that the project team would capture trends in terms of future travel market analysis in the future phases of the work.

Commissioner Bauters commented that last mile connectivity must be a core component of any future station.

Commissioner Kaplan stated that in Emeryville, there are great examples of bicycle projects that provide last-mile connectivity.

This item was for information only.

5.2. South Bay Connect Project Update

Tess Lengyel stated that this is an informational item and noted that this is an update on a presentation that the Commission has received before on the project. Ms. Lengyel said that the Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority (CCJPA) will present this item, and she introduced Shirly Qian and Rob Padgette of the CCJPA. Ms. Qian recapped the project description and stated that the South Bay Connect project is a proposed shift of existing service to move Capital Corridor service onto the shorter, more direct Coast Subdivision, and propose a new station at Ardenwood park-and-ride. For the station at Ardenwood, they are proposing a train platform, with connections to the transbay buses and shuttles that already serve the park and ride. Ms. Qian reviewed the project status and provided information on community outreach, the Draft EIR status, and the project schedule. She noted that the Draft EIR would not be published until the project team has received detailed feedback from UPRR.

Commissioner Cox asked if this change will affect freight traffic along existing corridors. Ms. Qian stated that UPRR told CCJPA verbally that they do not anticipate increased freight volumes due to this project, but that she cannot guarantee future freight activity.

Commissioner Cox asked if all freight is going to shift from the Coast subdivision to the Niles subdivision. Ms. Qian stated that there will be no change to the routing or levels of freight operations before and after the project.

Commissioner Cox commented that she wants to emphasize safety and noted that San Leandro has one of the highest levels of deaths by rail, especially high-speed Amtrak trains. Mr. Padgette stated that this project could be an opportunity to advance safety improvements and noted that the CCJPA Board and staff are extremely committed to safety.

Commissioner Cutter noted that a 13-minute time savings from Oakland to Newark is significant but questioned how much of that segment would be used by residents of Alameda County. She also expressed her concern about the frequency of freight trains going through the middle of the city, and noted that there are housing developments near the crossings. She stated that the project team must do outreach to ensure people know about the project. Ms. Qian noted that the project is trying to improve the rail system so that it is interconnected and can serve all users.

As such, the project team is considering layered rail service, to balance megaregional travel with that from local communities and will bring information back to the Committee at a future meeting.

Commissioner Bauters commented that many good points were made about safety. There are many conflicts with freight rail; however, he appreciates the desire to modernize and improve rail. He noted that he is supportive of improving rail travel times.

Commissioner Kaplan asked if mitigating noise and creating quiet zones are a part of this effort. Ms. Qian stated that the project team is analyzing potential noise and vibration impacts and mitigations as part of the environmental process.

This item was for information only.

6. Committee Member Reports

Commissioner Kaplan mentioned that the City of Oakland is supportive of grant funds from the state to fund hydrogen fuel cell trucks and stations and requested that Alameda CTC continue to work to fund the last remaining funding gap. She also noted that AC Transit is pursuing federal funds to support hydrogen fuel cell buses as well.

Commissioner Saltzman stated that BART's ridership is increasing again, and BART is committed to restoring 15-minutes service in September.

7. Staff Reports

There were no staff reports.

8. Adjournment/ Next Meeting

The next meeting is: July 12, 2021, at 9 a.m.

DATE:	July 6, 2021
TO:	Multi-Modal Committee
FROM:	Ashley Tam, Associate Transportation Engineer Liz Rutman, Director of Express Lanes Implementation and Operations
SUBJECT:	I-580 Express Lanes Operations Update

Recommendation

This item is to provide the Commission with an update on the operation of the I-580 Express Lanes for the third quarter of fiscal year 2020-2021. This item is for information only.

Summary

The purpose of this item is to provide the Commission with a Quarterly Operations Update of the existing I-580 Express Lanes for the third quarter of fiscal year 2020-2021 (January through March 2021). The express lanes continue to provide higher speeds and lower average lane densities than the general purpose lanes, as well as travel reliability along the corridor. See Attachment A for more detail.

Background

The Alameda CTC is the project sponsor of the I-580 Express Lanes, located in the Tri-Valley corridor through the cities of Dublin, Pleasanton, and Livermore, which opened to traffic in February 2016. The I-580 Express Lanes extend from Hacienda Drive to Greenville Road in the eastbound direction and from Greenville Road to the I-680 Interchange in the westbound direction. Motorists using the I-580 Express Lanes facility benefit from travel time savings and travel reliability as the express lanes optimize the corridor capacity by providing a choice to drivers. Single occupancy vehicles (SOVs) may choose to pay a toll and travel within the express lanes, while carpools, clean-air vehicles, motorcycles, and transit vehicles using a FasTrak® flex toll tag may enjoy the benefits of toll-free travel in the express lanes. Efforts are underway to modify the toll system to implement the 50% toll discount for Clean-Air Vehicles (CAV) in accordance with the new policy adopted in June 2020; implementation of the policy is expected in early 2022 with prior outreach to notify the public of the change.

An All Electronic Toll (AET) collection method has been employed to collect tolls. Toll rates are calculated based on real-time traffic conditions (speed and volume) in express and general purpose lanes, and can change as frequently as every three minutes. California Highway Patrol (CHP) officers provide enforcement services, and the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) provides roadway maintenance services through reimbursable service agreements.

Due to the COVID-19 public health crisis and state and regional Shelter-in-Place (SIP) orders, express lane use decreased significantly in spring 2020 and has slowly returned throughout 2020 and 2021. As of March 2021, express lane traffic volumes are rebounding, but still lower overall than traffic prior to the pandemic. The recovery is characterized by directional nuances; however, it is too early to assess potential long-term traffic impacts.

FY 2020-2021 Q3 Operations Update:

Performance of the I-580 Express Lane for the third quarter (Q3) of fiscal year 2020-2021 are highlighted below. Note that Q3 of FY19-20, which is referenced in year-over-year comparisons below, consists of data from January through March 19th 2020, as Express Lane operations were suspended on March 20th due to the COVID-19 pandemic. See Attachment A for more details.

- Motorists made over 1,606,000 express lane trips during operational hours in Q3.
    - Daily express lane trips averaged 25,500, an 18% decrease from the same quarter in the prior fiscal year.
    - Toll trips totaled 825,000, or 13,100 trips per day, which is 13% lower than the same quarter in the previous fiscal year.
    - Toll-free trips made up 49% of all trips, which is just shy of the 51% observed in the same quarter of the previous year.
- Generally, express lane users experienced better traffic conditions than the general purpose lanes, particularly during peak commute hours.
    - Westbound peak period (6 AM - 9 AM) express lane speeds averaged 72 miles per hour (mph) and users experienced average level of service (LOS) A throughout the corridor.
    - Eastbound peak period (3 PM - 6 PM) express lane speeds averaged 63 mph and users experienced averaged LOS C throughout the corridor.
- The average assessed toll for SOV motorists was $1.88 and $3.19 for westbound and eastbound, respectively.
- CHP performed 592 hours of enforcement services and made 561 enforcement contacts during Q3.

FY 2020-2021 Q3 COVID-19 Impacts:

After SIP orders were issued in March 2020, traffic volumes in the express lanes decreased by approximately 60 percent. In response to the decreased usage, toll rates were rolled back to January 2018 levels, with maximum tolls of $13 for westbound travel and $9.50 for eastbound travel, which are lower than the pre-COVID maximums of $14 and $13, respectively.

I-580 express lane usage in Q3 of fiscal year 2020-2021 has rebounded to reflect an overall decrease of 15% in average daily traffic volumes compared to Q3 of the previous fiscal year, but there are directional disparities. Westbound express lane traffic during the peak period was 27% lower than in Q3 of the previous FY, while eastbound express lane peak period traffic has returned to pre-COVID levels. Traffic speeds remain elevated above pre-COVID levels in both directions, which accounts for the relative improvement in eastbound traffic density from pre-COVID levels despite comparable volumes.

Staff increased the eastbound dynamic pricing cap back to the January 2019 maximum of $12 in February 2021 to manage rebounding express lane congestion, and expect to return to the January 2020 cap of $13 in September 2021 to ensure continued management of the eastbound express lanes. Staff continues to monitor traffic volumes and manage congestion in both directions.

Fiscal Impact: There is no fiscal impact. This is an information item only.

Attachment:

A. I-580 Express Lane Operations Update (FY 2020-21 Q3)

This page intentionally left blank

ALAMEDA COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

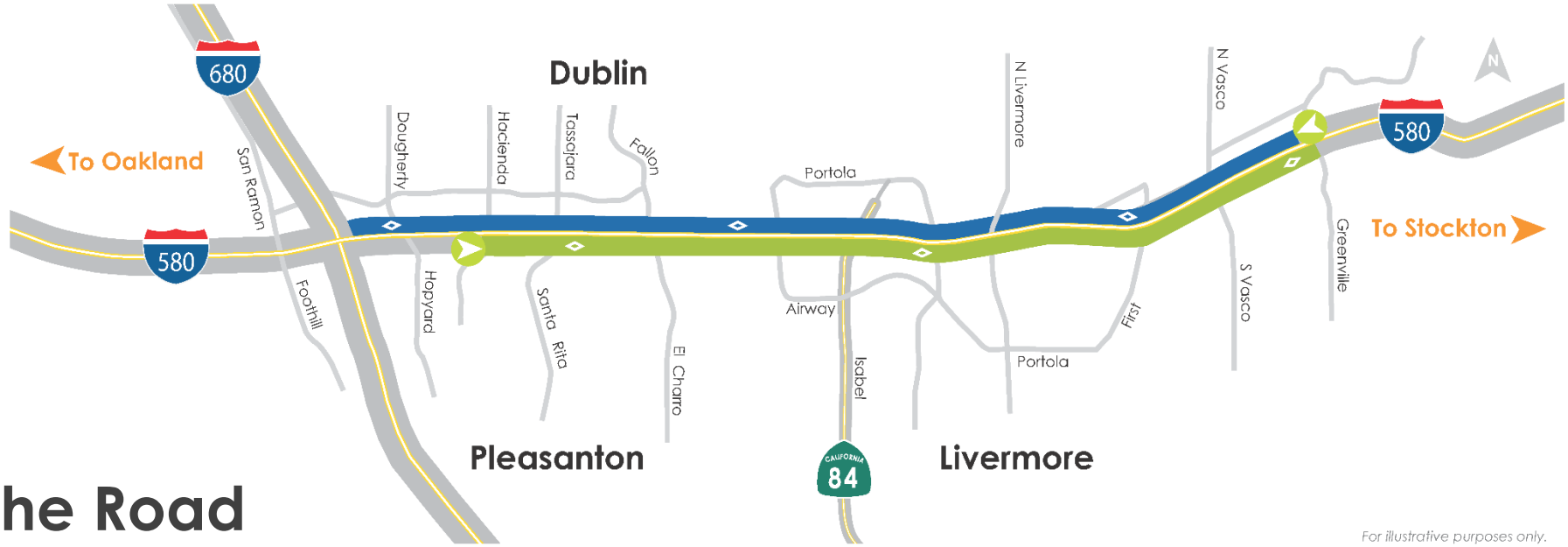
I-580 Express Lanes
Quarterly Operations Update

TOLL-PAYING VEHICLES

FasTrak

TRANSIT

I-580 Express Lane Overview



For illustrative purposes only.

Rules of the Road

- Hours are 5 AM – 8 PM, Monday through Friday
- FasTrak® is required for all users
- Carpools (2+), motorcycles, transit buses, and eligible Clean-Air Vehicles (CAV)* travel toll-free with FasTrak Flex set to HOV 2 or HOV3+

* Policy to charge single-occupant CAVs a 50% toll will be implemented in early 2022 with prior outreach to notify the public of the change.

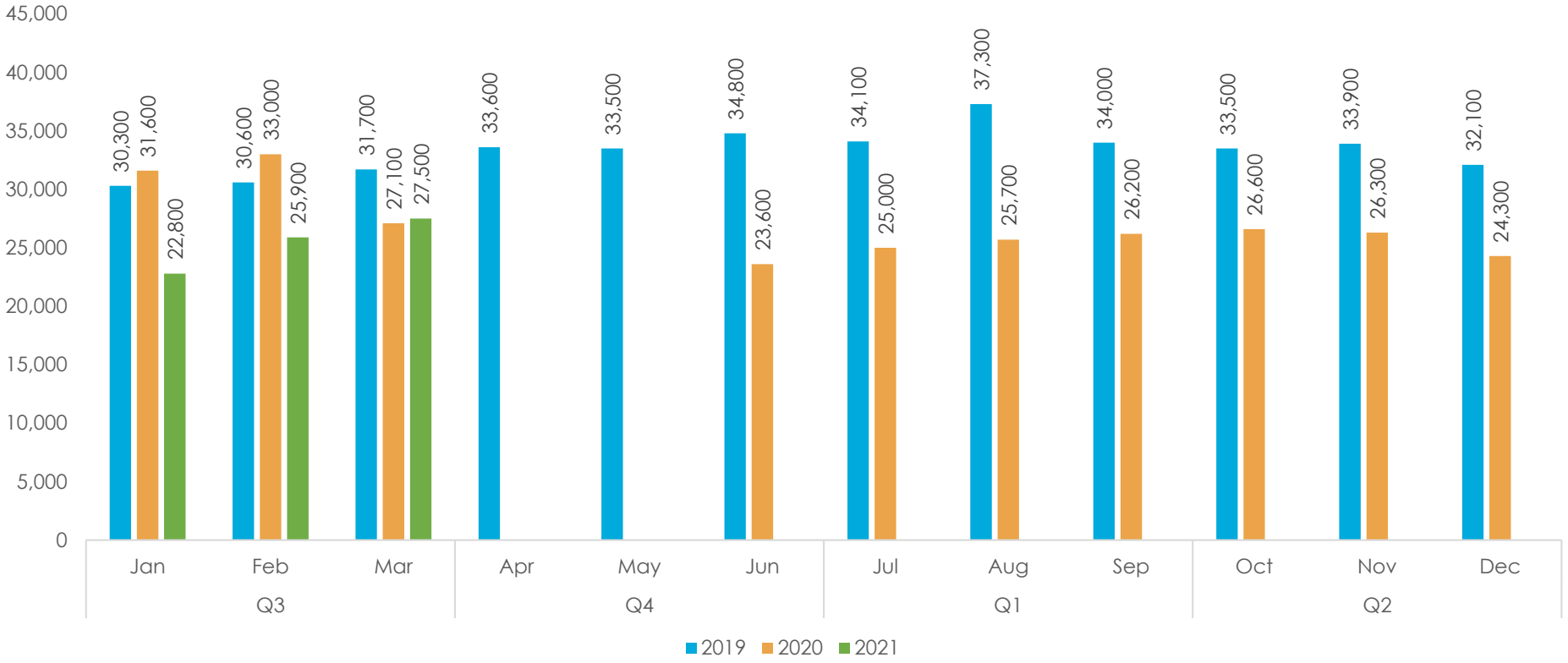
FY 20-21 Q3 Performance Highlights

- Motorists made over 1,606,000 express lane trips during operational hours in Q3. Daily express lane trips averaged 25,500, an 18% decrease from the same quarter in the prior fiscal year.*
  - Paid trips totaled 825,000, or 13,100 trips per day, which is a 13% decrease from the same quarter in the previous fiscal year.
  - Toll-free trips made up 49% of all trips, which is just shy of the 51% observed in the same quarter of the previous fiscal year.
- Generally, express lane users experienced better traffic conditions than the general purpose lanes, particularly during peak commute hours.
  - Westbound peak period (6 AM - 9 AM) express lane speeds averaged 72 miles per hour (mph) and users experienced average level of service (LOS) A throughout the corridor.
  - Eastbound peak period (3 PM - 6 PM) express lane speeds averaged 63 mph and users experienced average LOS C throughout the corridor.
- The average assessed toll for single occupancy vehicle (SOV) motorists was $1.88 and $3.19 for westbound and eastbound, respectively.
- CHP performed 592 hours of enforcement services and made 561 enforcement contacts during Q3.

**Q3 of FY19-20, which is referenced in year-over-year comparisons throughout this update, consists of data from January through March 19th 2020, as Express Lane operations were suspended on March 20th due to the COVID-19 pandemic.*

Average Daily Express Lane Trips

Through FY 2020-2021 Q3



Q3 of FY 2020-2021

1,606,000

Total Trips

Avg. Daily Trips compared to Q3 of FY 2019-20

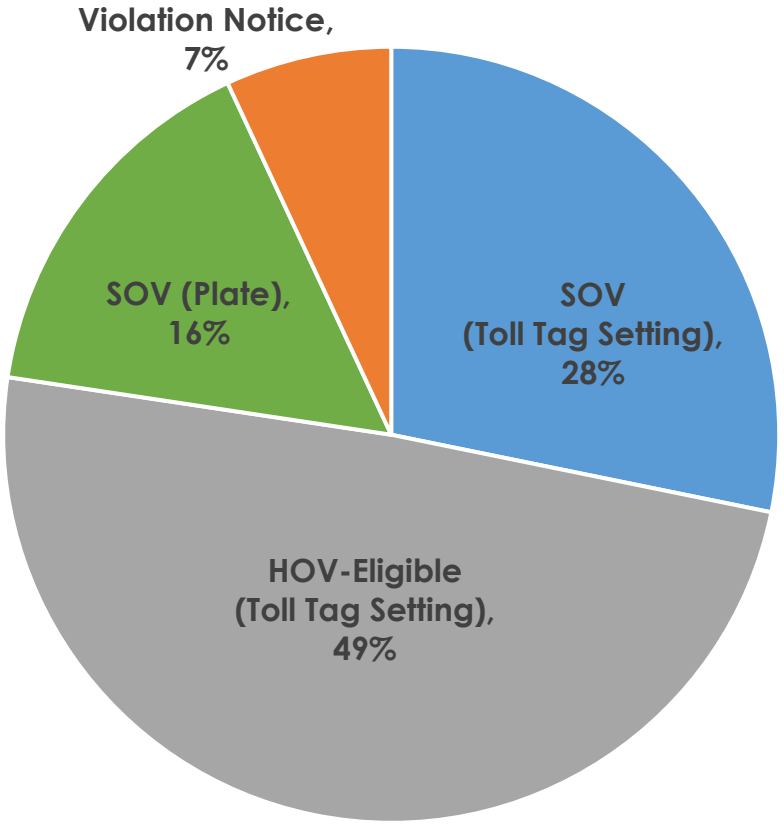
-18%

Note: Express Lane tolling operations were suspended between 3/20/20 and 6/1/2020 in response to the COVID-19 public health crisis.

Over 38.6 million trips have been taken since the I-580 Express Lane opened in February 2016. There were a total of 1,606,000 trips during tolling hours in Q3 of FY 2020-2021. Express Lanes saw an average of 25,500 trips per day, which is approximately 18% fewer trips compared to Q3 of the prior FY.

Typical Express Lane Trip User Breakdown

FY 2020-2021 Q3

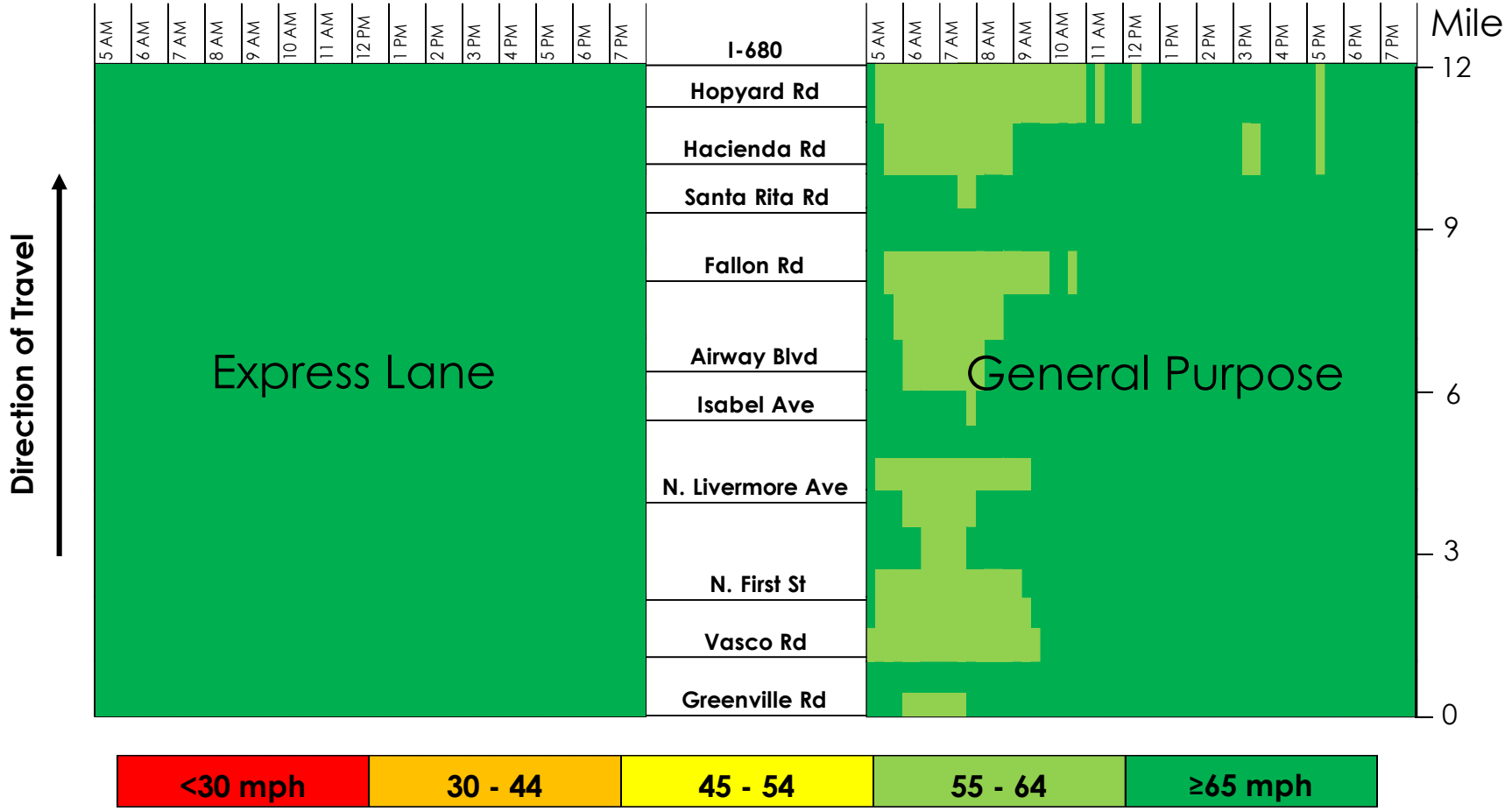


Toll-free trips made up 49% of all trips in Q3, a 2% reduction from Q3 of the previous fiscal year. It is not yet clear if the pandemic will have a lasting impact on carpooling in the region.

During Q3, 69% of all trips taken by users without a toll tag were assessed tolls via FasTrak account. All others were issued violation notices.

Westbound I-580 Corridor Speed Heat Maps

FY2020-2021 Q3

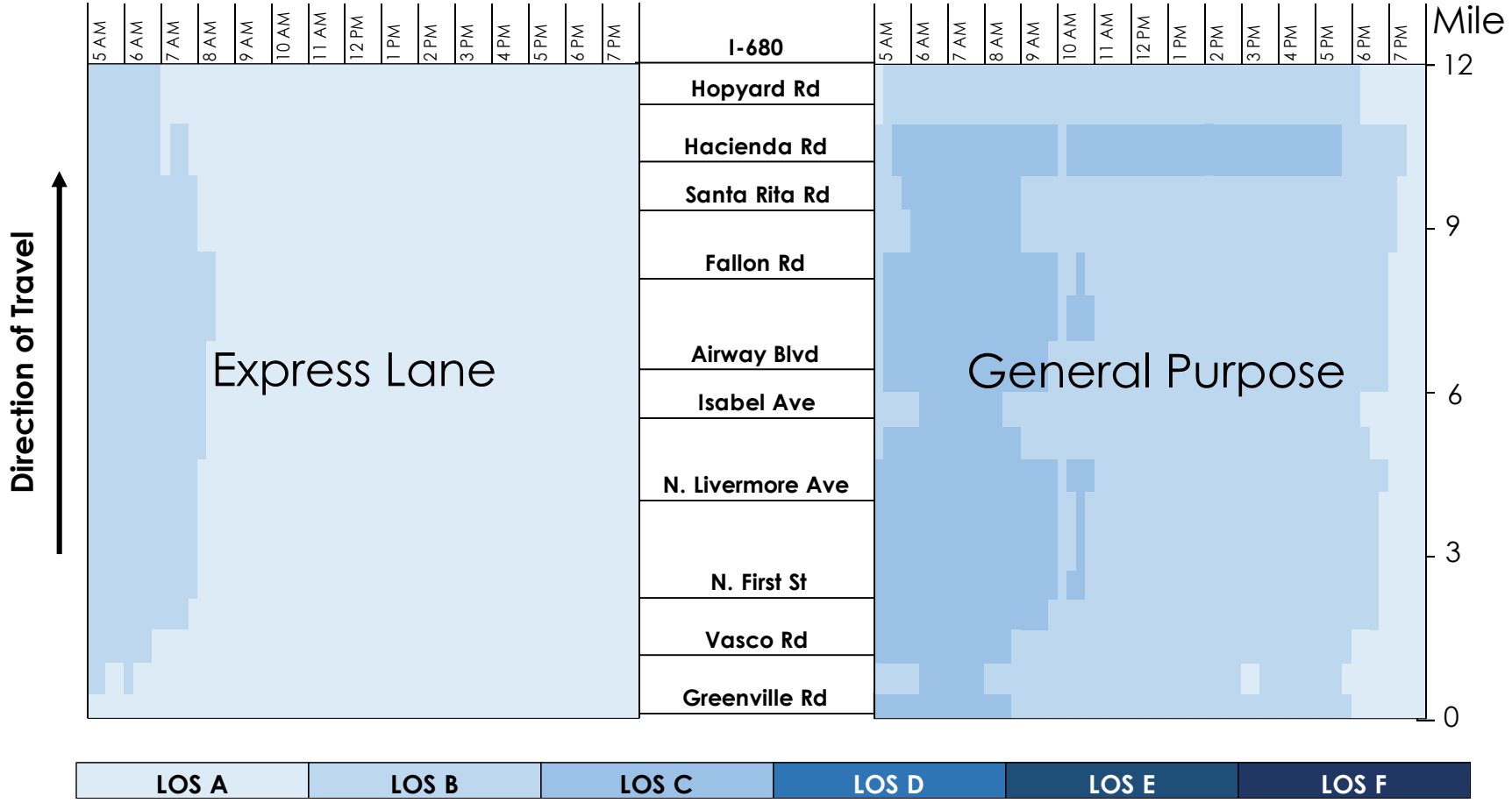


Express lanes average 5 – 9 mph faster than general purpose lanes depending on the time of day and location within the corridor.

Express Lane speeds average 72 mph during the morning commute period, and remain above 70 mph at all times throughout the corridor.

Westbound I-580 Corridor LOS Heat Maps

FY2020-2021 Q3

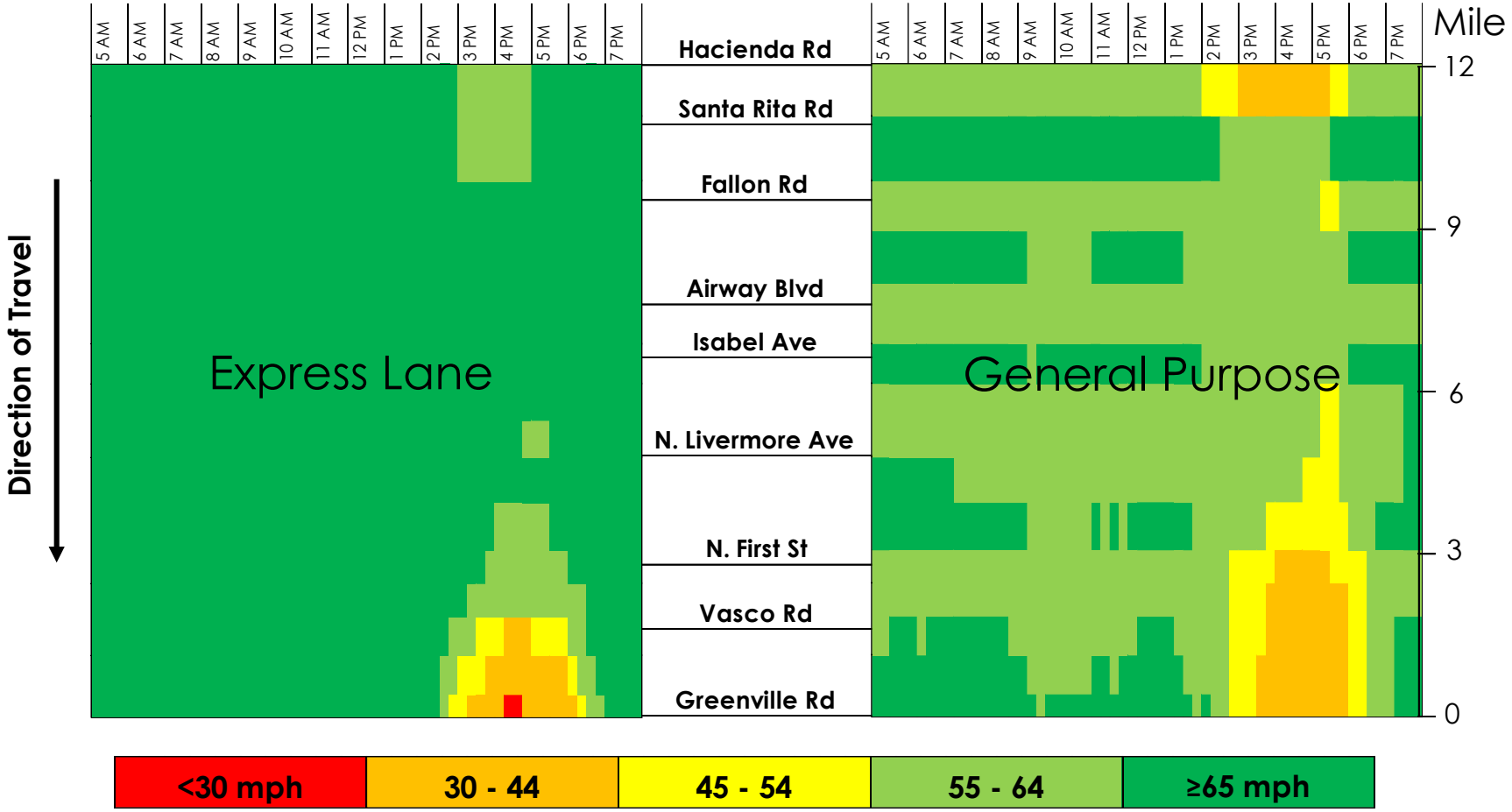


The westbound express lane generally performed at LOS A, except for the early morning hours when the lanes performed at LOS B. Comparatively, the general purpose lanes performed at LOS C during the morning peak.

Increased speeds and lower express lane traffic volume during the pandemic contributed to low levels of congestion.

Eastbound I-580 Corridor Speed Heat Maps

FY2020-2021 Q3

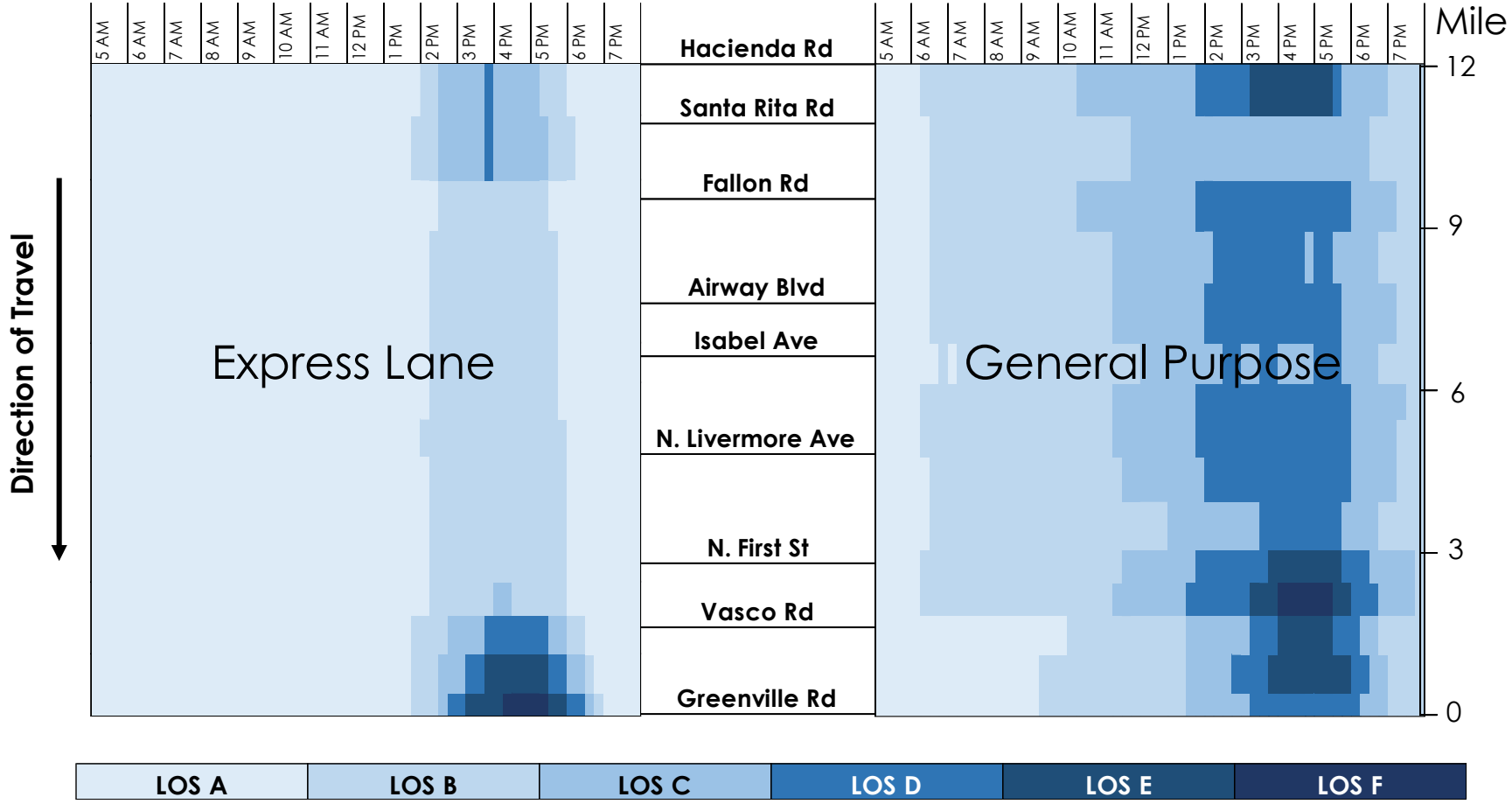


Express lanes average 6 – 11 mph faster than general purpose lanes depending on the time of day and location within the corridor.

Low speeds at Greenville Road result from congestion over the Altamont Pass that extends back along I-580 into the express lane corridor.

Eastbound I-580 Corridor LOS Heat Maps

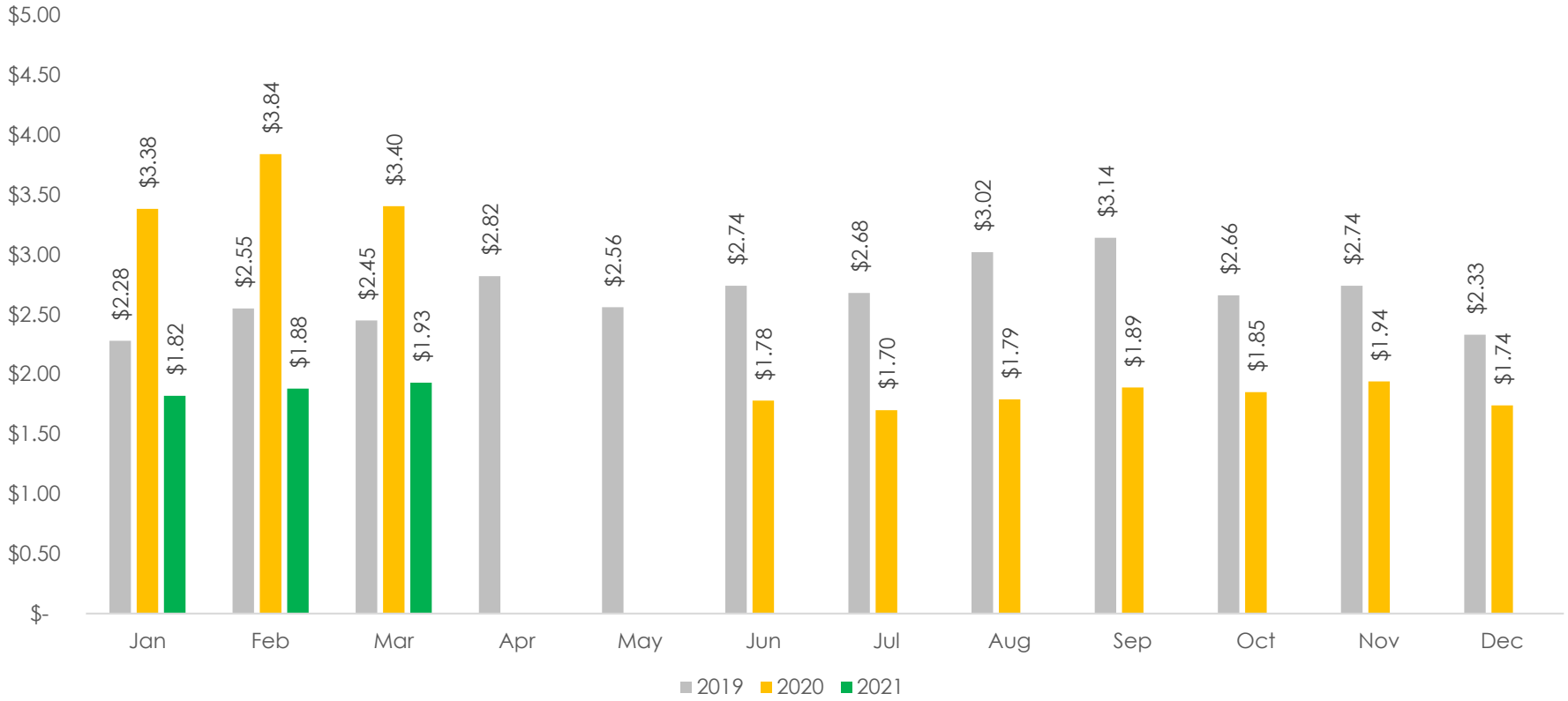
FY2020-2021 Q3



Express lanes performed at LOS C on average during the peak commute period.

Eastbound traffic volumes, which have returned to pre-COVID levels, and heightened speeds contributed to lower levels of traffic congestion during the pandemic.

I-580 Westbound Assessed Toll



Average tolls paid increased slowly but remained lower than previous years, with an average assessed toll of $1.88 in Q3 of FY20-21. Although the pricing cap westbound tolls is $13, the dynamic pricing algorithm did not reach this cap in Q3.

FY 20-21 Q3:

Toll Cap:

$13.00

Maximum Posted Toll Rate:

$12.25

(1 of 63 days)

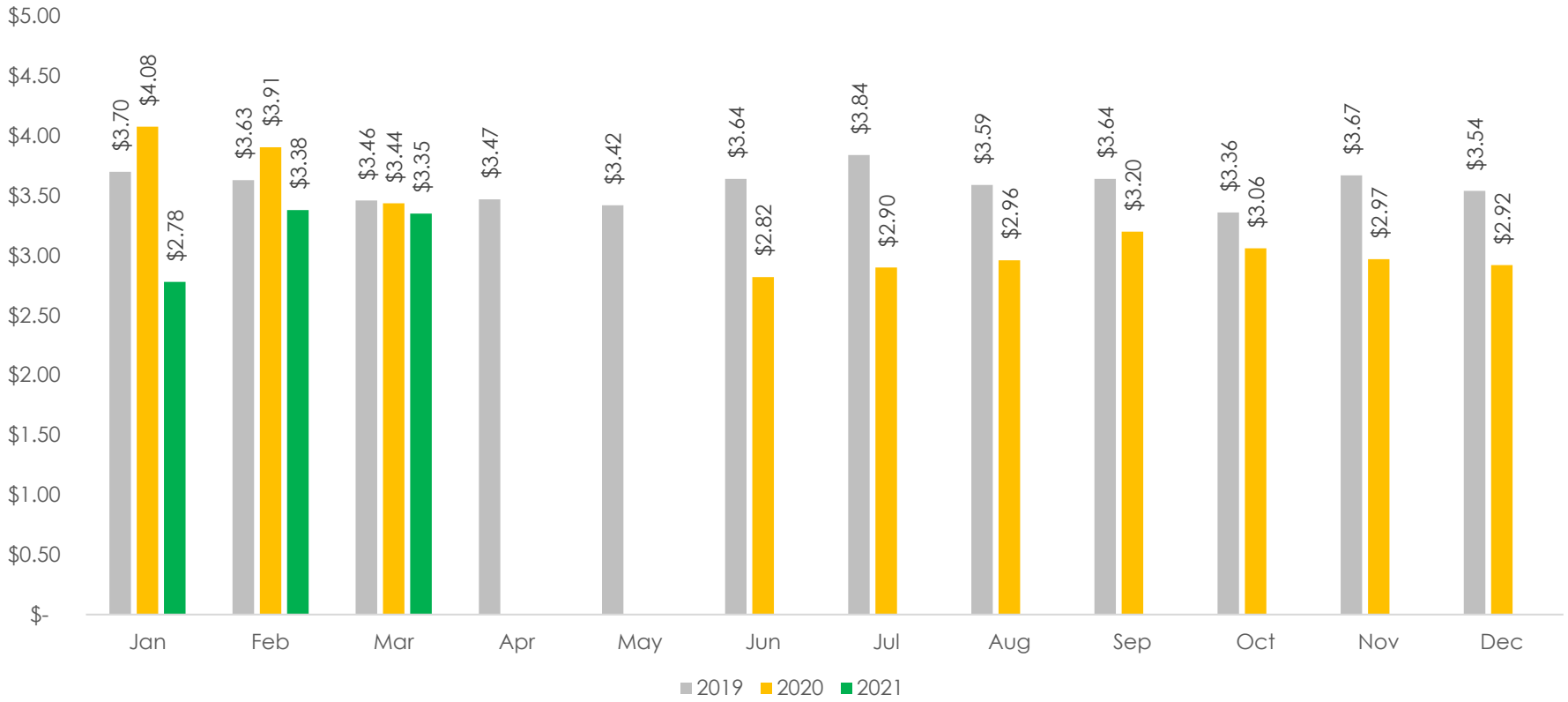
Percent paying $12.25 (Maximum Toll):

0.01%

Average Assessed Toll:

$1.88

I-580 Eastbound Assessed Toll



Average tolls paid increased back to pre-pandemic levels over the course of Q3, averaging $3.19 for the quarter. The pricing cap on eastbound tolls was raised to $12 in February 2021; just 0.7% of toll-paying users paid this rate in Q3.

FY 20-21 Q3:

Toll Cap:

$12

Maximum Posted Toll Rate:

$12

(19 of 63 days)

Percent paying $12.00 (Maximum Toll):

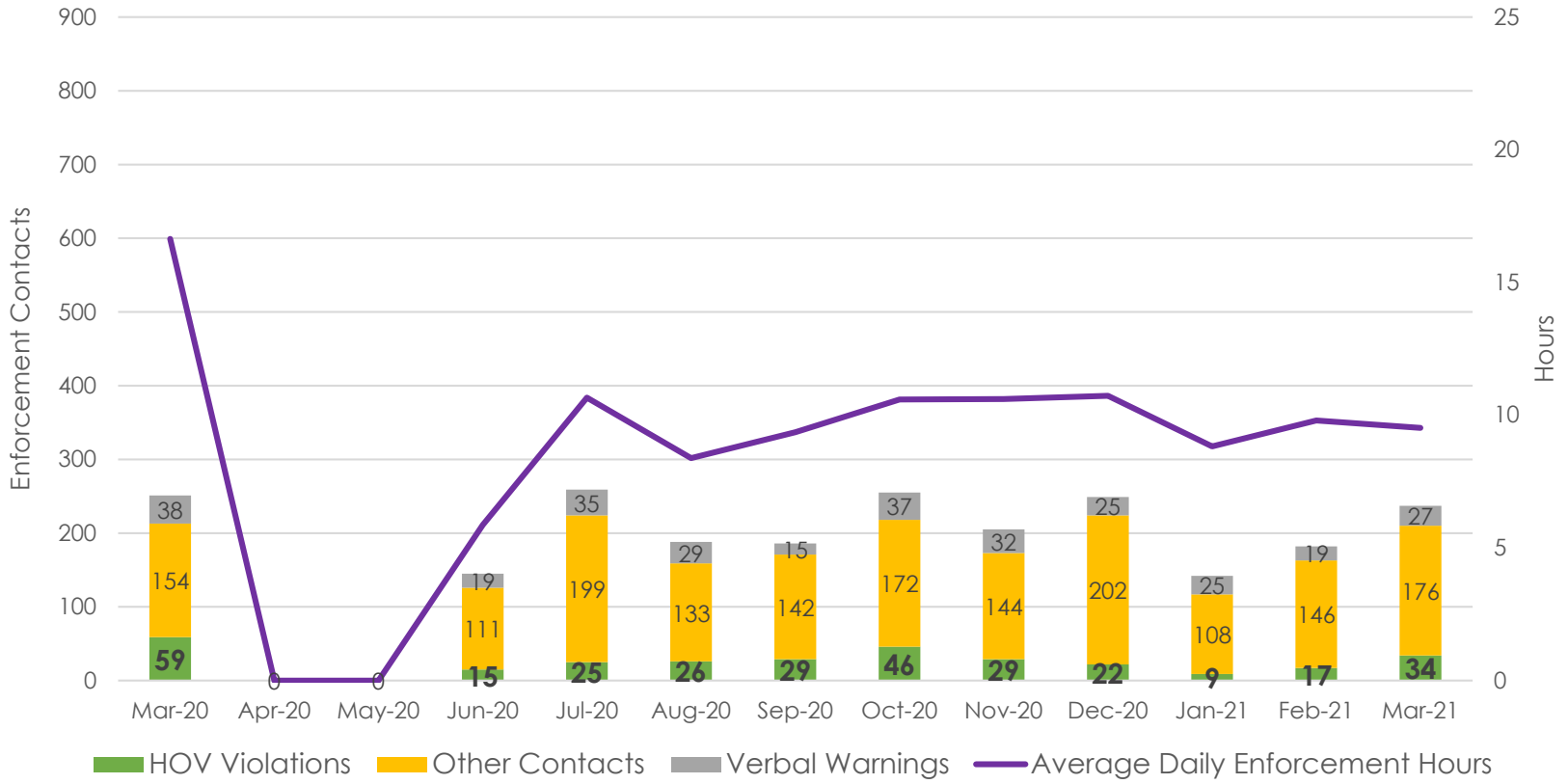
0.7%

Average Assessed Toll:

$3.19

I-580 CHP Enforcement

March 2020 – March 2021



Note: Enforcement activities were put on hold when tolling operations were suspended due to the COVID-19 public health crisis, and resumed with the resumption of tolling in June 2020.

Average cost per CHP contact in Q3:

$125

The California Highway Patrol provides enforcement of the I-580 Sunol Express Lanes. CHP recorded 561 enforcement contacts in FY 20-21 Q3, 11% of which resulted in toll evasion violations.

COVID-19 Impacts: Daily Trips & Tolls

Averages	Jan – Mar 2020 (Q3 FY19-20)*	Jan – Mar 2021 (Q3 FY20-21)	% Change
Avg. Daily EL Traffic Volume	294,700	249,300	**-15%**
Avg. Daily EL Trips	31,000	25,500	**-18%**
Share of Toll-Free Trips	51%	49%	**-2%**
Average Assessed Toll	$3.57 WB $3.87 EB	$1.88 WB $3.19 EB	**-47%** **-17%**
Maximum Posted Toll	$13.00 WB $12.00 EB	$12.25 WB $12.00 EB	**-6%** **0%**

*Excludes data from 3/21/20 – 3/31/20, when tolling operations were suspended due to the COVID-19 public health crisis.

The I-580 Express Lanes average daily traffic continues to rebound from Q2 – when traffic was 17% lower year-over-year – to a deficit of 15% over Q3 of FY 19-20.

Toll-free trips continue to make up roughly half of all trips during the pandemic, which combined with reduced traffic and lower fares has resulted in a significant decrease in average assessed tolls for both directions.

COVID-19 Impacts: Peak Period Traffic

Averages	Westbound Peak Period (6-9 AM)			Eastbound Peak Period (3-6 PM)		
	Jan – Mar 2020 (Q3 FY19-20)*	Jan – Mar 2021 (Q3 FY20-21)	% Change	Jan – Mar 2020 (Q3 FY19-20)*	Jan – Mar 2021 (Q3 FY20-21)	% Change
EL Speed *(mph)*	65	72	**+11%**	59	63	**+6%**
EL Volumes *(veh/hr)*	1,100	800	**-27%**	1,600	1,600	**0%**
GP Speed *(mph)*	58	64	**+10%**	51	53	**+3%**
GP Volume *(veh/hr)*	5,600	5,500	**-2%**	5,200	5,300	**+2%**

*Excludes data from 3/21/20 – 3/31/20, when tolling operations were suspended due to the COVID-19 public health crisis.

Peak westbound EL traffic continued a slow rebound during Q3 of FY20-21 to levels 27% lower than Q3 of the previous fiscal year. Peak eastbound EL traffic has returned to pre-COVID-19 levels, as have GP volumes in both directions.

Speeds remain elevated in both directions, which accounts for the relative improvement in eastbound traffic density from pre-COVID levels, despite comparable volumes.

For more information, visit
www.AlamedaCTC.org/expresslanes

This page intentionally left blank

DATE:	July 6, 2021
TO:	Multi-Modal Committee
FROM:	Cathleen Sullivan, Director of Planning
SUBJECT:	Bay Bridge Forward Update

Recommendation

This item is to provide the Commission with an update on Bay Bridge Forward, an effort led by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission/Bay Area Toll Authority (MTC/BATA) in partnership with Alameda CTC and other agencies to implement a suite of near-term improvements to move more people in fewer vehicles across the Bay Bridge, the most-traveled bridge in the Bay Area. This item is for information only.

Summary

The San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge (Bay Bridge) corridor has consistently ranked as one of the most congested corridors in the region. The congestion on the East Bay side approaching the bridge is significant, and worse than congestion on the bridge itself, with buses and carpools/vanpools often stuck in traffic trying to access the HOV by-pass lanes near the toll plaza. Bay Bridge Forward[1] consists of a suite of improvements to improve overall corridor efficiency, reduce delays for buses, and move more people in fewer vehicles across the Bay Bridge. It includes improvements that benefit transit and carpool operations, including bus and HOV priority improvements to bridge approaches, demand management strategies, and increases in Transbay bus service, among others. This memo provides an overview of the projects included in Bay Bridge Forward, including more detailed information on the I-80 Design Alternatives Assessment (DAA). The I-80 DAA is an assessment, currently underway, of near- and mid-term concepts to address congestion on the I-80 corridor in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties between the Carquinez Bridge and the Bay Bridge, with a focus on improving reliability and travel time for higher occupancy modes of travel, such as express buses and carpools. Staff from MTC/BATA presented on the Bay Bridge Forward program to the Commission in February 2020; this month they will join us for an update on program implementation.

[1] Bay Bridge Forward webpage: https://mtc.ca.gov/our-work/operate-coordinate/traveler-services/forward-commute-initiatives/bay-bridge-forward

Background

The Bay Bridge corridor has consistently ranked as one of the most congested corridors in the region. In particular, during the morning commute hours, severe traffic congestion exists at each of the major approaches from I-80, I-580, I-880, and West Grand Avenue, which, in turn, causes delays to buses and carpool vehicles accessing the high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) by-pass lanes at the toll plaza. This was true before the pandemic, and since then, there has been a significant drop in transit ridership and the use of carpooling on this corridor. As the state's reopening continues, vehicular traffic demand is anticipated to continue to increase on this heavily travelled corridor.

Traffic analyses have found that there is more congestion during the AM peak at the westbound approaches to the Bay Bridge, compared to the bridge itself. Similarly, in the PM peak, there is more congestion in the East Bay corridors than on the bridge itself. Bay Bridge Forward is the regional response to address bus and HOV travel time and reliability issues caused by this congestion in the near-term.

Bay Bridge Forward[2] consists of a suite of improvements to improve efficiency, reduce delays for buses, and move more people in fewer vehicles across the Bay Bridge. It includes improvements that benefit transit and carpool operations, including bus and HOV priority improvements to bridge approaches, demand management strategies, and increases in Transbay bus service, among others. Several previous planning efforts fed into this effort, including the Core Capacity Transit Study and the I-580 Design Alternative Assessment. Near-term recommendations from these and other studies have been packaged together under this program for implementation; together they have a high potential to improve efficiency and spur mode shift.

Bay Bridge Forward Projects

The MTC Bay Bridge Forward roadmap to prioritize Transbay buses and shared rides calls for a $65 million investment to make progress towards a mode shift goal of 20%. It also sets the stage for potential implementation of additional transit supportive strategies within the next 5+ years, such as a dedicated bus lane, higher vehicle occupancy requirements greater than 3 persons per vehicle, and managed lanes. Alameda CTC is a funding partner and working closely with MTC and other agency partners to deliver the program. Below is a summary of the improvements included in Bay Bridge Forward.

I-80 Improvements

- **I-80 Westbound Bus/HOV Lane Extension:** The right shoulder will be converted to a bus/HOV lane from the I-80 Powell Street diagonal on-ramp to connect with the existing bus/HOV lane at the toll plaza approach (the HOV fly-over direct connector), a distance of approximately 1,800 feet. This project is anticipated to be delivered by 2023.
- **I-80/Powell Street Interchange Transit Access Improvements:** Operational deficiencies at the Powell Street interchange have been identified as a source of increased travel

[2] Bay Bridge Forward webpage: https://mtc.ca.gov/our-work/operate-coordinate/traveler-services/forward-commute-initiatives/bay-bridge-forward

time and decreased reliability for transit vehicles that enter I-80 westbound and exit I-80 eastbound via Powell Street. Proposed transit access improvements to this interchange include providing bus queue jump lanes, exclusive bus-only turn lanes, transit signal priority, and new and/or improved bus stops at the interchange vicinity. This project is anticipated to be delivered by 2023.

- **I-80 Design Alternative Assessment (DAA):** A design alternative assessment is being conducted to address congestion for the I-80 corridor in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties between the Carquinez Bridge and the Bay Bridge. The assessment will produce concepts to improve higher occupancy modes of travel, such as express buses and carpools. More detail on this effort is provided later in this memo.
- **HOV Lane Improvements:** Along the I-80 corridor in Alameda and Contra counties, additional signage and striping will be added at strategic locations to improve HOV lane operations and reduce HOV lane violations.

I-580 and West Grand Improvements

- **I-580 Westbound HOV Lane Extension:** A general purpose lane on I-580 will be converted to an HOV lane from the I-980/SR 24 interchange to connect with the existing HOV lane at the toll plaza approach (just west of the MacArthur maze), a distance of approximately 1.5 miles. This project is anticipated to be delivered by 2023.
- **West Grand Ave Bus/HOV Lane Extension:** The shoulder along the Bay Bridge on-ramp in Oakland was converted to a Bus/HOV lane (completed in 2019). Further improvements will be made when the existing westbound right shoulder on West Grand Ave between the I-580 eastbound on-ramp and the intersection of West Grand Ave with Frontage Road is converted to a Bus/HOV lane. Additionally, a multi-use path for bicyclists and pedestrians will be constructed on eastbound West Grand Ave between Maritime Street and Mandela Parkway. This project is anticipated to be delivered by 2022.

Operational Improvements

- **Toll Plaza HOV Lane Hours of Operation:** An evaluation will be conducted to determine if toll plaza hours should be changed (for example, to all-day operations or to cover the typical duration of congestion). The HOV lane hours of operations at the toll plaza and from the various bridge approaches will be established in a coordinated fashion.
- **Dynamic Bridge Operations:** This includes improvements such as dynamic transit routing and advanced traveler's information to better communicate with travelers to encourage a shift to transit and vehicles with higher occupancy.

Demand Management and Shared Mobility Strategies

- **New Express Bus Service:** AC Transit, and/or Western Contra Costa Transit Authority will pilot new transbay routes between the East Bay and San Francisco. This element has been delayed due to the ongoing operational challenges for transbay services due to COVID-19.

- **Bike Shuttle Program:** The existing Bay Bridge Bike Shuttle program will be expanded, potentially increasing service frequency, and providing additional pick up and drop off locations.
- **Commuter Parking on I-580 and I-80:** Additional commuter parking lots will be added along the I-580 and I-80 corridors in the East Bay. Potential sites have been previously identified as part of the I-580 Design Alternative Assessment and the West Contra Costa County Express Bus Implementation plan, and will be further evaluated for implementation.
- **MTC SHIFT Program:** Working with employers, the MTC SHIFT Program will be expanded to reduce drive-alone rates.

Fixing congested hotspots most affecting bus movement at the West Grand Ave, I-580 and I-80 approaches to the Bay Bridge first is the highest priority, and will have the most immediate impact for riders. However, additional planning and policy efforts are also underway to tackle other congestion hot spots. Unlike the projects listed above that are under development, the I-80 DAA is still in the planning phase – more information on this current effort to address congestion along the entire I-80 in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties is provided below.

I-80 Design Alternatives Assessment (DAA)

I-80 in Alameda and Contra Counties is consistently among the top congested corridors in the Bay Area. It serves as a key transbay/Bay Bridge commute corridor and accommodates a diversity of travel patterns, connecting housing in the East Bay and as far as Napa, Solano and Sacramento, to jobs in San Francisco, Alameda County, and Silicon Valley. This corridor is heavily used by carpools and express buses during commute hours; based on 2019 data, as much as 34 Transbay buses per hour were observed.

The I-80 DAA is a project to evaluate a range of improvements to address congestion in the I-80 corridor, with a focus on improving higher occupancy modes of travel, such as express buses and carpools. The corridor limits are between the Carquinez Bridge in Crockett and the Bay Bridge. The I-80 DAA is managed by MTC, in partnership with Alameda CTC and Contra Costa Transportation Authority.

The assessment will identify and evaluate a range of near-term and mid-term operational improvements and demand management strategies, with a focus on improving higher occupancy modes of travel, such as express buses and carpools. Improvements considered will include, but are not limited to:

- HOV lane conversion to express lane, or dual managed lanes (HOV/express lanes) in each direction (which may require conversion of an existing general-purpose lane);
- HOV and managed lanes policies, such as hours and days of operations, and vehicle occupancy (including an alternative to increase minimum occupancy vehicle requirements, such as an HOV5+ managed lane);
- Shoulder conversion to part-time bus/transit lanes; and

- Express bus and transportation demand management strategies, including new and improved express bus services, first and last mile strategies, new/enhanced park and ride lots and/or shared mobility hubs, opportunities for commuter parking and other improvements for ridesharing/vanpooling.

The outcome of the DAA will be a set of near- and mid-term project concepts that could advance into project development and project delivery and would be competitive for funding opportunities. The DAA began in early 2021 and will conclude with recommendations by mid-2022. Alameda CTC will bring this item to the Commission again in late 2021 or early 2022 to present the study evaluation outcomes and get input from the Commission on potential recommendations.

Fiscal Impact: There is no fiscal impact. This is an information item only.

This page intentionally left blank