

San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission

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DRAFT MINUTES

TO: All Commissioners and Alternates

FROM: Lawrence J. Goldzband, Executive Director (415/352-3653;
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SUBJECT: Draft Minutes of January 16, 2025 Hybrid Commission Meeting

1. Call to Order. The hybrid meeting was called to order by Chair Wasserman at 1:08 p.m. The meeting was held with a principal physical location of 375 Beale Street, San Francisco, California, and online via Zoom and teleconference.

Chair Wasserman stated: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to our hybrid BCDC Commission meeting and workshop. My name is Zack Wasserman, and I am the Chair of BCDC. I want to thank Vice Chair Eisen for taking on my duties on December 19 while I was off enjoying myself in New Zealand. I also want to thank the Commissioners here at Metro Center for attending the meeting in person so that they can fully participate in today's important workshop, and to acknowledge those who are participating, virtually.

Chair Wasserman asked Ms. Peterson to proceed with Agenda Item 2, Roll Call.

2. Roll Call. Present were: Chair Wasserman, Vice Chair Eisen, Commissioners Addiego, Ahn (joined after Roll Call), Burt, Eklund, Gioia, Gunther, Lee (represented by Alternate Kishimoto), Moulton-Peters, Ramos, Ranchod (represented by Alternate Nelson), Randolph, Showalter, Tam (represented by Alternate Gilmore) and Zepeda. Assembly Representative Ting (represented by Alternate John-Baptiste) was also present.

Chair Wasserman announced that a quorum was present.

Not present were Commissioners: USACE (Beach), Department of Finance (Benson), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (Blake), Department of Natural Resources (Eckerle), Business, Transportation & Housing (El-Tawansy), Governor (Hasz), State Lands Commission (Lucchesi), Solano County (Mashburn), City and County of San Francisco (VACANT), San Mateo County (VACANT), Sonoma County (VACANT)

3. Public Comment Period. Chair Wasserman called for public comment on subjects that were not on the agenda.

Eva Chrysanthe commented: I have not been here in years, and it is very nice to address the BCDC on what appears to be an auspicious date, hopefully. We may be approaching a ceasefire agreement, and God willing, that would be really, really helpful.

The last time I came to talk to you Kate Sears was a member of BCDC and now we see different faces from Marin County. Marin County is the subject of my Substack investigative site. It is Marin County Confidential.substack.com where I do a lot of investigative reporting based on California public records requests, archived materials, interviews, et cetera.

One thing that I have been tracking very closely is the cease fire movement, both in Marin County and other parts of the Bay Area. And I would like to recognize that some of the elected officials in this room did sign an anti-cease fire petition that was distributed by the Jewish Community Relations Council, which is a de facto lobbying group for the Israeli government, unfortunately, and they have been brutal to protesters, activists and reporters in the Bay Area. But I would like to point out that there are other people in this room who are elected officials who were approached to sign the same document and did not, and so it is a mixed bag.

Hopefully we are going to see a cease fire, a real cease fire, a lasting one, because we can't afford to continue being part of a genocide, and the environmental damage alone should concern us. We have massive wildfires in Southern California. The carbon emissions just from the first two months of Israel's bombing were stratospheric, and now we find ourselves 15 months in on the eve of an uncertain cease fire.

There is a history of a peace movement here in the Bay Area and it is an honorable one and I beg you as elected officials and people who represent us to embrace that spirit.

It is terrifying to think that some of our elected officials, some of our own party members may be called to the Hague to testify. They may be charged with war crimes for what they have aided and abetted.

So, all I can say is we have an awesome responsibility as Americans and as Californians and as people in our own communities to speak for peace and to hope for a better world, one that is safer for everyone's children. Thank you for your time.

Chair Wasserman stated: That concludes our public comment period. We

will, of course, take public comment on items on the agenda as they come up.

Chair Wasserman continued to the Report of the Chair.

4. Report of the Chair. Chair Wasserman reported on the following:

A. Ex Parte Disclosures:

Chair Wasserman asked: Is there any Commissioner who has an ex parte report to make? Now is the time to do it.

Commissioner Gioia chimed in: We have made previous reports, so this is just a new one, right? Not to repeat an old one. But had discussions recently with some Bike East Bay representatives about the subject of our workshop today.

Chair Wasserman acknowledged: Thank you. Anyone else? All right.

That brings us to Item 4, my report.

B. New Commissioners: We are awaiting formal notification from the counties of Sonoma, San Mateo and San Francisco, among others, to inform us of their new Commissioners and Alternates. We will share that information with you as soon as we get it, and we look forward to welcoming new members to the Commission.

C. Richmond-San Rafael Bridge: I want to make some remarks about the workshop we are about to commence. I thank all the Commissioners who are here for their participation in this important workshop regarding the proposal to change the existing public access on the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge.

I do want to remind Commissioners and the public that there are no votes scheduled today. The purpose of the workshop is to hear from our staff, from subject matter experts and from various representatives about the proposal, to enable Commissioners to ask questions about the analyses that will be presented, and to enable the public to provide its comments as well. This will assist all who are participating and listening to better understand the proposal.

I also want to be very clear about one thing. Because the proposal is subject to a permit, which is a quasi-adjudicatory matter, Commissioners should not, indeed must not, opine on the suitability of the proposal during this workshop or until we have the full presentation on the permit at a subsequent public hearing.

The workshop is designed for all of us to listen, to ask questions most certainly, and to discuss various aspects of the proposal; but not to make up our minds about the proposal, describe how we feel about the proposal, or otherwise advocate for one solution or another.

These tables will work now that we have full people. Rebecca and I will join this table.

We will have, during the workshop, workbooks distributed to the Commissioners and to the public that will be used to compile views about the information we are going to be presented this afternoon. Members of the public, you have an alternative. You can form groups on your own to talk and work on a workbook, or if you wish you can observe. But we ask you not to participate so that the Commissioners can really participate at the table. But if you want to listen to the discussion at a table, you are welcome to do that, but not to make comments around the table. I will have more to say, and staff will certainly have more to say about the process as we move forward and will be a little repetitious.

D. Next Meeting: Our next meeting will occur in three weeks on February 6. At that meeting:

We expect we will hold a public hearing and possible vote on a permit application to create a new marina on Treasure Island; and,

We will hear about Governor Newsom's proposed budget and the discussions that legislative and External Affairs Director Rylan Gervase and Executive Director Larry Goldzband have had with various members of the State Legislature.

5. Report of the Executive Director. Executive Director Goldzband reported: I apologize for the delay.

I do not want to spend much time on the E.D. Report because we want to start the workshop as quickly as possible, but I will note that on today's date in 1412, 613 years ago, the Medici family was appointed as the official banker of the Papacy. If you have been to Florence, you are familiar with the amazing power of the family during some three or four centuries. But because I needed to get some cash yesterday, I was reminded that in Florence during the Medicis' reign of influence, most of the city's moneychangers sat on benches in the Ponte Vecchio as they handled their transactions. The word "bench" in Italian is "banca" and that is the basic etymology behind the word "bank" in English.

Two issues on Staffing and Budget.

First, I wanted to let the Commission know that Adrienne Klein, a 28-year veteran of BCDC, has retired. Adrienne was the lead for BCDC's enforcement actions after transferring to BCDC from the Coastal Commission many years ago. She knows our laws and policies backwards and forwards and provided our

new enforcement staff members with valuable context as they performed their duties. We will miss her gung-ho attitude, and we wish her the best in a long and happy retirement.

I will give you a formal update on BCDC's budget at our next meeting, which will occur after senior staff meets later this month to plan for the rest of the year given the position reductions and budget cuts that BCDC and other state agencies are beginning to work through. I do want to let you know, however, that the good news is that the Governor's proposed budget includes the seven positions BCDC requested to help implement SB 272 and our rising sea level adaptation work.

A couple of things on Policy.

I was very pleased yesterday to make just a couple of remarks as our first BCDC Shoreline Leadership Academy, which launched with 20 high school juniors and seniors in this room. We are co-leading this effort with the Port of San Francisco and using the Exploratorium both as a fiscal agent and as an active consultant. We will provide you with a recap of the Academy and its successes and challenges in a few months after its conclusion.

Also, you will remember that I told you that last month President Biden had signed the WRDA legislation that includes an authorization for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to conduct a study of measures to adapt to rising sea levels in the San Francisco Bay Area. Well, I was wrong, I jumped the gun. However, since then President Biden has signed the legislation. And our Bay Area congressional delegation is already hard at work to ensure that funds are appropriated for the authorized study. The Coastal Conservancy is taking the lead on this issue, which is totally appropriate, and we will be working with the Conservancy and briefing you on the issue as circumstances warrant.

Finally, following the strong storm that moved across Northern California on December 14, 2024, the city of Alameda experienced severe shoreline erosion in a number of locations at Crown Beach and other places. Chair Wasserman, while out of the country, approved an emergency permit so that the City and the East Bay Regional Park District could shore up the remaining beach buffer zone to protect critical assets.

In addition, the City's Bay Farm Island Dike also suffered major damage, which caused the Bay Trail south of the Harbor Bay Ferry Terminal also to suffer damage, which has caused emergency work. That is a horrible sentence, and I apologize. Our staff will work with the city of Alameda staff to ensure that the work not only comports with state law but is also part of a permitting

solution.

That completes my report, Chair Wasserman, for which I am sure you are very grateful, and I am happy to answer any questions.

(No questions were posed to the Executive Director.)

6. Consent Calendar

a) Approval of Minutes for December 19, 2024 Meeting

Chair Wasserman reviewed the items on the Consent Calendar and called for public comment.

(No members of the public addressed the Commission.)

Chair Wasserman asked for a motion and a second to adopt the Consent Calendar.

MOTION: Commissioner Eklund moved approval of the Consent Calendar, seconded by Commissioner Showalter.

VOTE: The motion carried with a vote of 15-0-0 with Commissioners Addiego, Burt, Eklund, Gilmore, Gioia, Gunther, Kishimoto, Moulton-Peters, Nelson, Ramos, Randolph, Showalter, Zepeda, Vice Chair Eisen and Chair Wasserman voting, "YES", no "NO" votes, and no "ABSTAIN" votes.

7. Consideration of Administrative Matters. Chair Wasserman asked if there were any questions for Regulatory Director Harriet Ross regarding the Administrative Listing.

(No members of the public addressed the Commission.)

(No questions were posed to Ms. Ross.)

8 Commissioner Workshop on Richmond-San Rafael Bridge.

Chair Wasserman stated: That brings us to the primary item of today, our workshop on the proposal to revise the current pilot project enabling pedestrian bicycle access on the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge.

We are holding this workshop because the Commission and the public have been exposed to a great deal of information on this issue, but not all of it has been crystal clear. I could say it more strongly, but I won't. I hope that our presenters and facilitators will enable our Commissioners to better understand the existing pilot program, the context in which it is being managed, to learn about the results of the program and the studies of the program, and to have their questions answered fully and succinctly. A difficult combination, but we have some good experts here.

I want again to remind the Commissioners, this workshop is to hear information, ask questions and not to opine, not to make up our minds. Doing

so, I think as you all understand, could well constitute a perception of bias prior to the time that BCDC actually holds the public hearing on the MTC/Caltrans proposal. So please keep your opinions to yourself but be active in asking questions. Let's dig into learning more about the proposal and what is going on. After the workshop we shall open the agenda item for public comment.

Go ahead, Commissioner Ramos.

Commissioner Ramos spoke: Thank you so much, Chair Wasserman. Given my current anticipated position coming in as an MTC Commissioner, I am going to sit this out until a thorough conflicts analysis is done by counsel of both ABAG/MTC and also BCDC. And if I need to rehabilitate myself on the workshop, I will certainly do so.

Chair Wasserman acknowledged: Thank you very much.

Any other comments or questions from Commissioners?

Now I will ask Harriet Ross to start the workshop.

Regulatory Director Ross addressed attendees: Good afternoon. Thank you, Chair Wasserman, happy to start things off.

If you recall, we had a briefing on the proposed modification to the public pathway on the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge last May. Caltrans and the Bay Area Toll Authority, also known as BATA, a subsidiary agency of MTC, are proposing to modify operations of the public pathway that is currently in place on the westbound upper deck of the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge.

We have been working with staff from these entities over the last several months to really understand the proposed modifications to the pathway and to complete their permit application.

We have also been reviewing an evaluation that was done on the pilot project to understand why the proposed modifications are necessary.

So, as we all know, given the great interest by the public and the many, many questions that the Commissioners had at our last meeting in May, we decided to have a Commissioner workshop today.

The purpose is really four components:

1. To share the information on the proposed pilot modifications.
2. Share the findings of the original pilot project from that PATH report.
3. Provide the Commissioners the opportunity to ask questions prior to a future hearing and vote.
4. And really to elicit guidance for a future staff recommendation.

For today, we are going to hear a presentation from Katharine Pan, BCDC's Shoreline Development Program Manager, and representatives from Caltrans, the University of California, and BATA on the existing pilot study and the proposed modifications.

After the presentation, as you all know, Commissioners will have time to ask questions. We have allotted about 45 minutes there. Staff believes the discussion can help our diverse group of Commissioners really better understand the different issues with this application.

And then staff will facilitate small group discussions for the Commissioners, with the Commissioners at the tables, and we will have workbooks for the public to fill out. And as Zack mentioned, the public that is here is welcome to form their own groups and small group discussions, or you are welcome to listen in.

Again, we will have time at the end of the facilitated discussions with the Commissioners, for public comment.

So again, just want to drive this home. We are not voting on this permit today. It is not a public hearing on the permit. We are simply here to listen, gather information and really have a have a discussion together. With that, I am going to go ahead and turn it over to Katharine.

Shoreline Development Program Manager Pan spoke: Good afternoon, Commissioners. I am Katharine Pan, the Shoreline Development Program Manager at BCDC, and I will be providing the background for today's topic, which is a material permit amendment request from Caltrans to BCDC Permit Number 1997.001, to modify a previously approved pilot project on the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge.

A Staff Report for this workshop was shared with you on January 13. I will be providing a summary of the Staff Report to provide regulatory context for our discussion.

I am joined by Muthanna Omran from Caltrans and Francois Dion from the University of Berkeley, California, PATH Program, who will provide more information about the pilot and its evaluation, as well as Lisa Klein from the Bay Area Toll Authority, or BATA, who will provide more information about the proposed modifications. And then after our presentation you will be free to ask us any questions you wish.

The Richmond-San Rafael Bridge is one of the seven major trans-Bay bridges in the Bay Area and one of the six state-owned toll bridges in the Commission's jurisdiction. It spans the Bay between Point Richmond in Contra

Costa County and San Quentin in Marin County and is a segment of Interstate 580. It opened in the 1950s, before the Commission came into existence. The Bridge itself is approximately four miles long and consists of a westbound upper deck and eastbound lower deck. It is owned and operated by Caltrans, with tolls managed by BATA, which is a subsidiary agency of MTC.

The Bridge was originally constructed with three travel lanes in both directions but was reconfigured in the '70s and '80s such that one lane in either direction was converted into an emergency shoulder. That remained its configuration until the pilot project began implementation in 2018.

The pilot was approved by the Commission in 2016 as a material amendment to BCDC Permit Number 1997.001. This permit was originally issued to Caltrans in 1997 for the seismic retrofitting of the Bridge. At the time of the original permit, there was no bicycle or pedestrian access on the Bridge, although it was already designated as a proposed Bay Trail segment by the Bay Trail Project.

When considering the project, the Commission heard from many community members advocating for bicycle and pedestrian connection across the Bridge, and the findings of the original permit stated that providing bicycle and pedestrian access was desirable and would maximize the public access benefits of the retrofit project.

However, the Commission also found that there was a need for further study as to whether this kind of access could be provided safely that could not be accommodated by the urgent timing of the project.

Therefore, the original permit did not include any special conditions to require bicycle and pedestrian access across the Bridge. Instead, the Commission decided to work with Caltrans to complete the necessary studies, and the permit findings document that Caltrans voluntarily committed to using its best efforts to study the feasibility of providing non-motorized public access on the Bridge and, if such access was found to be feasible, that it would ensure that it was provided.

Caltrans did complete a number of feasibility studies, but for years continued to be concerned that access was not feasible in terms of safety.

Then in 2016, Caltrans, in partnership with BATA, proposed the pilot to test the feasibility of a multi-use public access path on the upper deck and a part-time peak hour travel lane on the lower deck. Specifically on the lower deck, the pilot involved a part-time conversion of the lower deck shoulder into a third travel lane during the P.M. peak between 2:00 and 7:00 P.M. On the

upper deck, the shoulder was converted into a full-time two-way multi-use path with a movable barrier separating it from traffic and a safety railing on the side of the Bridge.

The pilot was intended to run for four years, and the permit required that Caltrans report on the results of the pilot, including an analysis of public usage and benefits, an assessment of any operational and safety issues, and the need for any future changes to the facilities, including removal or making them permanent.

The evaluation of the project takes the form of the After Study prepared by California PATH, a research center at the University of California, Berkeley.

Preliminary findings from this report were presented to the Commission at a briefing on May 2 last year. The PATH Study examined a number of indicators for traffic and safety impacts to evaluate whether any changes in operations could be attributed to the installation of the new public pathway. For the most part, the study found that changes observed in Bridge operations before and after the pilot were not statistically significant, meaning that they could not be directly attributed to the pilot.

However, there were some observed decreases in peak hourly flows and increases in incident rates on the upper deck during the weekday peak that Caltrans and BATA would like to study further, and you will hear more about this from the report authors in a moment.

On July 29, 2024, Caltrans submitted a material amendment request to modify the pilot project. The request includes a proposal to keep operating the part-time travel lane on the lower deck on a permanent basis, as well as a modified version of the pathway to allow Caltrans and BATA to further study the path's potential impacts on traffic flows and incidents. These modifications would include closing the pathway from Sunday night through Thursday afternoon, converting it back to emergency shoulder during that time. It would also include a bicycle shuttle that would operate between 6:00 A.M. and 7:00 P.M. on days that the path is closed.

Now, to provide additional detail on the pilot and proposed modifications, I will pass things over to Caltrans and BATA.

Ms. Klein spoke: Thank you, Katharine.

Chair Wasserman and Commissioners, I am Lisa Klein from the Bay Area Toll Authority. I am going to kick it off here today. And I really again want to thank you for taking time today to learn more about the pilot and the other efforts that are underway to improve access and mobility in this corridor. The

efforts are a partnership among Caltrans, the Bay Area Toll Authority, the transportation authorities in Contra Costa and Marin, and the local jurisdictions on both sides of the Bridge.

We are proud of the pilot, and we really appreciate the Commission's support to test some innovative uses of the freeway shoulder.

When we try something that is bold, we do hope for a win-win outcome. And that said, the Bridge is an older structure. It is a physically constrained structure. And we are asking it to serve a lot of transportation needs in this corridor, so there are bound to be trade-offs.

The Commission recognized this potential in the original permit by calling for the study of which Francois here is going to share the results on usage, safety and operational performance.

To me, it is certainly not surprising that we may want to make some adjustments and continue testing to learn more.

This slide shows the lineup for this segment of the presentation that Katharine introduced. I am going to now turn it over to my colleague Muthanna from Caltrans to get started with a review of the pilot. Thank you.

Mr. Omran presented the following: Thank you, Lisa. I am Muthanna Omran; I am a Caltrans Regional Project Manager. My office works on the toll bridges. I will provide a brief recap of the original pilot project.

As we just heard briefly from Katharine, in 2014 BATA took the responsibility for funding and implementing the pilot, undertaken in partnership with Caltrans, with the goal to address traffic congestion and provide bicycle and pedestrian access to and across the Bridge, consistent with the core strategies in Plan Bay Area 2050.

The four-year pilot was designed for two purposes: reduce congestion in the corridor and to improve bike and pedestrian access. This was achieved through a series of projects that test innovative uses. In 2019, on the upper deck we converted the emergency shoulder to a 10-foot-wide bike/ped path separated from the traffic lane by a movable barrier for protection. In 2018, on the lower deck, we converted the emergency shoulder to a part-time traffic lane to reduce congestion. Both parts were innovative uses.

The point of the pilot was experimentation to see what works and understand tradeoffs as we try to make this highly constrained Bridge more multimodal.

In addition to these four-year pilot features there were also permanent Trail connections that were constructed on the Bridge approaches at each end.

This slide shows the original pilot timeline in blue dashed lines, which shows the four-year pilot study period and the respective after-study reports, including BATA and Caltrans' review and the decision to move forward.

Currently in orange, Caltrans has submitted a BCDC permit amendment request in July of 2024, which has led to the BCDC workshop today and eventual BCDC hearing this year.

Caltrans contracted with UC Berkeley PATH to conduct the pilot study and prepare the two reports and deliverables that were shown in the previous slide. It was a data-driven evaluation addressing areas identified in the permit amendment, which is usage and benefits as well as safety and operational issues.

The final Phase 2 Report shaped the direction that BATA and Caltrans are pursuing with the amendment to the BCDC permit that authorized the original pilot. Now I will turn it over to Francois to discuss the key findings of the study. Thank you.

Dr. Dion spoke: Thank you, Muthanna. My name is Francois Dion, and I have been responsible since the beginning of the pilot of collecting and analyzing information about various aspects of the project. There's quite a lot of statistics to present so I have tried to summarize them to key numbers that hopefully should be easily digestible.

First of all, we are just going to acknowledge the key findings of the lower deck where the additional traffic lane during the peak hour has essentially eliminated the congestion that we used to observe in Marin County. This has translated into about a 17-minute travel time saving for people going across the Bridge.

We also found there was high compliance with the periods where the shoulder lane is open or closed. And based on various discussions and the statistics, there was no major impacts either on Bridge maintenance or incident response.

Now we are focusing on the upper deck. These slides essentially summarize how well the path has been used. And what we have found is actually two different periods, during weekdays and during weekends. During weekdays, we have observed between 35-80 entries per day per direction, that is on each side of the Bridge, on average. And during the weekend this goes up to 120-260 on average, with peaks in the summer that go well above 400.

There is obviously a seasonal pattern, given that it is cold and rainy in the winter, so we tend to observe about 25 to 40% less traffic during that

period, so July-August tends to be the busiest period.

In terms of pedestrian access the numbers are relatively small. We see about 6 to 20 entries per day per direction during the winter and just slightly more during the summer.

A more detailed look at the data indicates that individuals who are using the path tend to come from Richmond in the morning and tend to come back to Richmond in the early afternoon, and this pattern repeats whether we are looking at weekdays, weekends, whether we are looking at pedestrians or cyclists.

Through a survey that we conducted in the summer of 2021, 85% of the respondents indicated that they used the path for recreation or exercise, and that about 40% use it for commuting either to work or a non-work location.

The specific survey that I mentioned included about 1,400 respondents and we asked them in the survey to rate the safety of the path. Of the 1,400 cyclists respondents, the average rating was about an 8.27 out of 10, so a relatively high safety rating; and the pedestrians was a little bit lower at about a 7, but there were only about 61 respondents in that case.

The key stated concerns at the time were the narrow width of the path. Obviously, if you were crossing individuals going in the opposing directions then you might be worried about the space you have available. And there were also some concerns about cyclists having to pass pedestrians or anyone going slower than them.

There was also at the time a concern about the safety of the barrier, particularly the ability of the barrier to sustain a direct hit by vehicles.

Another comment that was made a number of times was a concern about being hit by debris that may be dragged on by a vehicle passing through, particularly trucks.

We tried to collect all the information we could, but unfortunately there is not a lot of information about incidents happening on the path itself, as the CHP typically does not collect that information. We also looked at the online reporting platforms like Street Story, but in that case, we could only find two records that date back from 2019 and nothing has been reported on the path since then.

Now I am going to shift to traffic, which is the other important issue. What I am trying to do here is simply compare current traffic with what we observed in 2019 before COVID. Obviously, everyone knows that COVID threw a wrench in the study. What we have observed right now is the traffic has

recovered in some part to what we were observing before COVID when the path was opening. During the morning peak we are about 92-99%, almost back. But during the rest of the day, traffic remains 10-25% below.

The same issue also happens during the weekend where traffic is 6-20% below. However, not included in that report was the last summer I think the Saturday traffic reached an all-time high.

Now, if we are looking at congestion, and this is usually a topic that is of high interest, this graph essentially represents the speed on the approach of the Bridge, the Bridge being at the top of each graph. The top graph represents the Tuesday to Thursdays, and the bottom graph is Saturday. And we are comparing each year, basically the data for mid-September to mid-November when traffic is usually the highest on the approach of the Bridge, from 2015 to 2024. As you can see, there has not been that much change into the extent of the queue aside from 2020 and 2021 because of the COVID issue.

The primary cause of the congestion leading to the Bridge is not the toll plaza itself, it is the fact that we go from three lines on the approach to two lines on the Bridge. However, the fact that we are expanding the numbers of lanes at the toll plaza and then shrinking them adds more friction and the pilot has also reduced the merging area. I think it used to be 850 feet, and it is now 325 feet, so that tends to slow traffic.

We did indicate that the impact on traffic is a reduced capacity to carry traffic on the Bridge. What we estimated is a 7% drop in capacity, which is highlighted on the graph here. If you are looking at the straight line before in the early days and after, you can clearly see that there is a drop. So, the drop is 7% during weekdays, 4% during weekends. For weekdays, this translates into about 250 fewer vehicles are able to enter the Bridge per hour and on Saturdays 125 less.

Why the different number between weekdays and Saturday? Simply, we have a different mix of travelers.

The change in capacity has essentially resulted in a longer queue on the approach, a little bit. Keep in mind the traffic is slightly lower before, so that is kind of the reason why the queue may not be that significantly longer. But if we estimate 250 less vehicles per hour over a two-hour period, that translates into about an extra two-thirds of a mile of a queue. The traffic in the queue typically moves 8, 9 miles per hour. This corresponds to an additional 5 minutes of travel.

And then this additional queue might also affect traffic that is entering

or exiting the freeway at an upstream interchange, Castro Street, Richmond Parkway.

The next couple of slides are simply going to be on safety and incidents. What I want to point out in these graphs before I dwell a little bit more into the data is the variability. Incidents are very variable, so I am compiling incident rate per quarter.

Here we have normalized that on per-million-miles traveled. So basically, we took the numbers of incidents, and we looked at how much miles have been driven. On the Bridge itself, a million miles corresponds to about 6-7 days worth of traffic.

As you can see, it is highly variable. We do think also that there is a significant lag in getting the data. There is a suspicion that the 2023 data might still be incomplete. If additional time is available, then we could strengthen the thing. But the key thing that was observed if we look at the entire day, we see a reduction in numbers of incidents, 13% and 19% reduction. So that translates to about one or two incidents per month.

But if we look at during the peak hour, the rate increased by about 18% or 33% if we are looking at the approach of the Bridge. This is 0.1 incident per month, or 0.4 per month. But I should point out, these are collisions, so that does not include any other incidents like vehicles being disabled or having a tire blown or running out of gas.

This is my last slide. Obviously, one of the concerns was how will the path affect response to incidents? This analysis was a little bit more challenging in the fact that there's very few incidents for which there's complete records in incidents response. We can see that if we are looking at all the incidents throughout the day, we were able to only collect about mid-50s incidents before and after, and on the Bridge itself it is less than 20.

What we can observe is, for the few points we have is there seems to be a greater scattering of response times after the path is open. That could be due to complications in getting to the incident, it could also be due to normal variations in the type of incidents that happen.

One thing we know for sure is the lack of a shoulder may, during periods of congestion, affect response. The question is, by how much. That is still difficult to quantify.

I think that is all I have in terms of statistics to present at this point.

Ms. Klein continued: Okay, I think we are back to me. Thank you, Francois.

As Francois explained at the beginning of his segment, the results for the lower deck, the part-time lane on the lower deck, were quite conclusive, and on that basis the agencies jointly decided last spring to pursue making that lower deck a permanent condition.

But in contrast, the results for the upper deck, the multi-use path, the results for that pilot were really not conclusive, and especially regarding incidents during the morning commute. And as a result, the agencies decided to pursue an extension of the upper deck pilot with some modifications to inform how we can really meet the varied access needs in the corridor.

The modifications illustrated here are intended to maintain access while we hone in on both the role of the shoulder and the barrier during incidents and on lane capacity.

The proposal is to have shared use by time. We would propose to restore the shoulder on the heavier commute days, that is Monday through Thursday morning when path usage has been much lower, and retain the pathway over the long weekend, Thursday afternoon through Sunday evening when there is a history of pretty robust path usage. We will provide a shuttle for bikes and pedestrians to maintain access when the path is not open.

This slide shows actually quite a bit more detail about the proposed shuttle service. But in short, the shuttle would run between the Tewksbury bus stop in Richmond and Vista Point in San Rafael. We would offer service every 15 to 20 minutes during the peak and about 20 to 25 minutes the rest of the day.

I do want to note the service would be a substantial improvement over the prior historic service in this corridor. For one thing, we would offer real-time tracking of the shuttle and estimated arrival time, so folks will know when the shuttle is coming, that would be accessible on an app.

With the pilot, as Muthanna mentioned, the agencies did make some substantial improvements in connecting pathways that connect trails and communities on both ends of this Bridge, and so there really is better access for bicyclists and pedestrians to those shuttle stops than there was in the past. I would mention that at least one of the two vehicles will be electric.

The proposed extension, as Katharine mentioned, is a 24-month period. That is 18 months to collect and analyze data and about 6 months for agency decisions, including any subsequent BCDC permit considerations. I think that timeline, that additional time is a lesson learned from the current pilot that these processes, the agency decisions and the permit application and

consideration do take some time.

We really want to dig into the impacts on Bridge operations and safety, the ones that were not so conclusive during the original pilot. We will look at incident rates, response times, traffic impacts during the morning commute as well as Bridge throughput. We are equally eager to understand path and shuttle usage and the equity considerations, both in terms of usage and impacts. And finally, it will give us a chance to better understand how the deck responds if we are moving that concrete barrier more frequently.

The bottom line is we need to continue to be creative in this corridor to serve community needs on both sides of the bridge.

The proposal maintains access on the Bay Trail segment as a typical path when it is most used and provides access by shuttle during other times.

It provides an opportunity to better understand the role of the emergency shoulder, especially during commute. Because, after all, the predictability of travel is really most important when you are trying to get to work on time.

It gives an opportunity to pursue other work in parallel, that is including additional work on the structural strengthening of the Bridge if the barrier is to stay in place long-term, and also complementary projects that really work in tandem with an extended pilot and with a permanent access solution.

I will talk a little bit more about those complementary projects before I wrap up this segment.

The modified pilot as described really is to better understand how the Bridge functions during incidents on the Bridge itself. And we have a suite of projects that we call Richmond-San Rafael Forward that are really designed to address the routine congestion on the approach to the Bridge. These are fully funded projects. They will alleviate, though honestly not eliminate, the congestion in Richmond. They are going to streamline travel through the toll plaza, and really importantly I think, provide priority to carpools and busses with the intent of reducing driving in the corridor.

The first up is open road tolling and HOV lane extension opening in spring 2026. I will show a diagram of that on the next slide. It is going to reduce the weaving at the toll point and extend the HOV lane through Richmond. A couple of other projects include transit priority on Cutting Boulevard so the busses can get to the Bridge a little faster, and improvements to the Richmond Parkway Interchange to help with local congestion.

This shows a bird's eye view of the changes coming in 2026 with open

road tolling. The top shows the existing toll plaza, which was of course built to collect tolls by cash. Today, three lanes on Interstate 580, they kind of fan out to a total right now of five lanes which are open today, passing through that toll plaza. One of those is a relatively short HOV lane, which is shown in orange. Then those five lanes merge back to two on the Bridge. I will say the couple of gray lines, if you can see them that well, are currently closed because there was a truck crash a few years ago and following that Caltrans and BATA simply closed those lanes.

With the Richmond-San Rafael Forward Project shown on the bottom you can see there will be a much longer HOV lane, again shown in orange. And then a total of three lanes through that tolling point, which results in much less merging as they enter the Bridge. I will say that we expect this project to save travelers about 12 minutes for busses and carpools and about 5 minutes for other traffic.

In addition, BATA and Caltrans have begun looking at continuing that HOV lane as a third travel lane on the Bridge, and that would be by using the shoulder space.

We are analyzing traffic and safety, whether it would increase vehicle miles traveled, and any improvements that might be needed at the touchdown in Marin County where, again, there are two lanes on the interstate, and also some exit ramps that have to be handled.

So, by April, BATA and Caltrans should understand the operations and costs and be able to consider whether to start environmental review of this kind of a project.

This slide shows how these complementary efforts are proceeding, really in parallel. The top three rows show the pilot and the proposed extension to understand incidents on the Bridge. Subject to BCDC's permit review, modifications would start this summer. Data collection analysis through 2026, with an actionable decision in early 2027.

The Forward projects are shown on the bottom and that, again, is really designed to address congestion on the approach.

And then should BATA and Caltrans decide to pursue a third HOV lane on the Bridge, that environmental review could get started in parallel, which then be followed by design and construction, but would realistically take a few years to complete.

I want to say unequivocally that the proposal to modify the pilot is not a turn away from a deep commitment by BATA and Caltrans to active

transportation and specifically to the Bay Trail. In conjunction with the pilot, we improved 2.5 miles of connecting paths that link trails and communities in Richmond and San Rafael. Those connections, which I believe Katharine mentioned, are outside of BCDC's jurisdiction and they are not part of the original permit, but they are permanent paths open 24/7 that provide local as well as corridor access. This slide shows a closeup of the new connecting path in red that was constructed in Richmond.

The next slide shows a closeup of the new connecting path constructed in San Rafael.

With that work done is very good and I want to say also that we fully recognize there is still a good deal of work to do on the paths. BATA and Caltrans, we are equipped to help, and we are positioned to help with that. The Bay Trail Team has identified opportunity projects that would further serve the communities on both ends of the Bridge, both counties. These are priority projects, Bay Trail gap and connecting paths, with strong equity and accessibility benefits. They are not inexpensive. It is about, the ones identified here are, about \$60 million total. Gaps are often not inexpensive because they are the hardest segments to build, as you well know.

MTC does have some funds to offer technical assistance with design and development, help cities develop these projects so they can really compete for regional and state and federal funds to close these gaps.

The last slide I have got here is a summary, a wrap up. In summary, the pilot was an effort to really see how we can meet a range of needs in a constrained space. It reduced congestion on the lower deck and it provided new access on the Bridge and the connecting paths on both ends.

As a pilot, because the approach that we were trying was untested, and again as I said in the beginning, it does not surprise me that some of the findings are inconclusive. They raise questions about the role of the shoulder, in particular during morning congestion. I do believe and we do believe these are questions worth exploring further with the modifications so we can really better understand how to use the limited deck width, potentially sharing space over time. We really want to take the opportunity to learn more while we are continuing to make mobility and access improvements in the corridor. Thank you.

Ms. Pan continued: Great. Thank you, Lisa.

So now to put the proposal into the context of BCDC's laws and policies.

The McAteer-Petris Act includes a finding and declaration that states that

“existing public access to the shoreline and waters of the San Francisco Bay is inadequate and that maximum feasible public access, consistent with a proposed project, should be provided.”

The McAteer-Petris Act does not further define the term maximum feasible, but the Bay Plan describes conditions in which public access should be provided and how it should be planned and designed.

Public Access Policies 1 and 2 are in the same vein as the McAteer-Petris Act, essentially stating that projects should provide public access to the maximum extent feasible, except where it would be clearly inconsistent with the project because of public safety considerations or significant use conflicts.

Public Access Policies 5 and 8 provide direction for how public access should be signed. For example, it should be inclusive, welcoming to all, built to encourage diverse Bay-related activities and movement to and along the shoreline, and provide barrier free access, and should be designed through meaningful community engagement.

Policy 12 adds that the Commission should cooperate with other agencies to link the entire system of shoreline parks, regional trail systems, such as the San Francisco Bay Trail, and existing public access areas to the extent feasible without additional Bay filling.

The Bay Plan also includes a section of Transportation Policies recognizing that there has historically been considerable pressure to place fill in the Bay for new bridge and roadway projects. This section includes findings that the primary reliance on single occupant vehicles for transportation in the Bay Area results in further pressures to use the Bay as a route for future roadways and bridges and that pressure to fill the Bay can be reduced by providing safe and convenient public pathways for non-motorized forms of travel.

The policies require the Commission to encourage the development of alternative modes of transportation and to include pedestrian and bicycle paths in the transportation projects on bridges over the Bay.

In reviewing the amendment request, staff has identified some considerations where we would like additional Commission guidance, and this is to help staff tailor the special conditions and findings to reflect the Commission’s priorities and informational needs on this issue. We will delve into these further in our discussion groups after the question-and-answer session, but I will summarize them now so you can keep them in mind.

First, staff’s interpretation of the Bay Plan’s policies is that non-

motorized public access is a highly desirable use along the Bridge corridor and that it should be developed and maintained if it can feasibly be provided. The pathway as it currently exists is a key linkage between trail systems on north and east sides of the Bay, while utilizing existing infrastructure to minimize the need for new Bay fill. When the Commission ultimately acts on the amendment request, the Commissioners will need to determine what maximum feasible public access should be provided as part of the request.

In its current state, the 24-hour daily availability of the path encourages diverse activities and movement to the Bay and along the shoreline and is barrier-free. The proposed pilot modifications would reduce the availability of the pathway for a two-year period.

Thus, the Commission will need to consider whether the pilot has already demonstrated that the pathway is the maximum feasible public access on the Bridge or if further study is warranted. If further study is warranted, Commissioners should consider whether the proposed reduction of the path's availability is required to acquire the necessary information, and how the information would help the Commission make a determination on maximum feasible public access at the conclusion of the study.

Discussion between the Commission and Caltrans of whether a public pathway on the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge is feasible dates back to at least the original issuance of this permit in 1997. At the time, Caltrans agreed to study whether public access could be provided on the Bridge, and if so, to implement such access. However, that initial study and additional subsequent studies are all held to be inconclusive up to the point the pilot was proposed in 2016.

Amendment Number 4 authorized the pilot, but it did not establish any guidance for the Commission or the Applicant to use to determine feasibility at the end of the pilot evaluation, meaning that there are no criteria that have previously been contemplated by the Commission to guide its decision-making following the conclusion of the pilot.

Staff requests that Commissioners consider what feasibility means in the particular context of providing maximum feasible public access on the Bridge, keeping in mind relevant Bay Plan policies. And in considering the amendment request, the amount, nature and quality of public access may be balanced with other considerations such as public safety or significant use conflicts.

However, it is important to note that the evaluations prepared by Caltrans to assess the pilot consists of observational or statistical data only and

is not accompanied by any thresholds or metrics for determining whether any identified or potential impacts are significant enough from a policy standpoint for the Commission to find that maximum feasible public access in this setting is anything less than the full-time access currently available.

The staff believes that, where possible, it is important for the Commission to have thresholds and metrics for determining the significance of data presented. For any aspect of Bridge operations that the Commission considers essential to the discussion of public access feasibility, there should be criteria for determining whether an impact would be significant enough to warrant a different view of what maximum feasible public access would be.

Thus, staff requests that the Commissioners consider at what point would an impact from providing public access on the Bridge affect feasibility, and how can that be expressed as criteria for evaluating data? Is there any additional information that is needed to define such criteria?

All right. Thank you for your attention during this presentation. All the presenters are now available to answer any questions from the Commission. We are also joined by Ashley Tomerlin, our Senior Bay Development Design Analyst at BCDC, as well as Ingrid Supit and James Go who are members of the BATA Project Team, as well as Aung Maung, the Transportation Safety Division Chief of Caltrans District 4.

Commissioner Gioia was recognized: Thanks for the presentations. I am thinking about how we really consider maximum feasible public access. And I want to relate this to a question that was asked by a couple of the Commissioners, your answer, and some comments and a question I have.

One of the questions before that was asked by Commissioners and dealt with the with the landside connections. I think it was Kishimoto and Nelson asked about whether the low usage by bike riders is related to failure to complete some of the landslide connections. And your response was, well, we have completed these landslide connections to the Bridge.

So that is just half the story because, really, connections are broader than that. People cannot get to the Bridge and use those connections if other connections are not fixed. You identified about \$30 million--I do not know if it is all the needed connections--but you identified about \$30 million on one side and \$28 million on the other.

I am just most familiar with the Contra Costa side, where a major bike route is the Richmond Greenway, which goes through central Richmond and there's clearly major, very significant gaps, both observing it, hearing from

bikers and riding it myself. The 23rd Street Overpass is unsafe, so really it is a barrier, and then the connection from the west end of the Greenway to the Bridge. And of course there are similar issues, I am less familiar with the needed connections on the Marin side.

So, it seems to me when we think about maximum feasible public access, we should be considering all of those connections. So, would Caltrans be willing to consider as part of any permit application, commitment to funding those \$30 million on either side on those other connections? Not just the connections you made to the Bridge, but these other \$60 million in connections on either side in Marin and Contra Costa that actually then help get people to the Bridge and other locations.

It seems to me if we are talking about equity, which you claim to want to address, and we talk about really creating maximum feasible public access, the improvement of those connections has to occur just as importantly as the connections to the Bridge. Would Caltrans consider including that commitment in any kind of permit application?

Ms. Klein replied: I can answer on behalf of BATA and maybe folks can chime in on behalf of Caltrans. But I would say, the total we identified was \$60 million between the two sides, which is a pretty significant amount of money. I cannot commit my board to funding that kind of commitment. I can say for certain that we are in a position to help, to help local jurisdictions complete successful applications for a variety of sources.

Frankly, funding 60 million is likely to require a combination of sources, federal, state, regional, potentially BATA could be one of those. But it is unlikely that that can be readily funded just in one chunk by one source.

Commissioner Gioia continued: So again my comment, again, we are in comments and questions, is maybe asking MTC and Caltrans together, BATA, to all go back and explore that issue. Because again, I think when you say, well, we have completed connections, those connections really do not make the Bridge fully accessible on either side for folks in Marin or Contra Costa unless these other connections are also done.

Frankly, I agree that it is a lot of money. It is not a lot of money by MTC standards, let me just say, I think, given the funding you have. It is really about a will and a commitment to close those gaps.

Ms. Klein added: I will say one thing. I do believe there actually is some funding in Regional Measure 3 that is immediately available.

Commissioner Gioia interjected: But I think what we are asking is, is

there a package you could come back with as part of any amended permit application that says, here is the array of funding that we are working on committing to close those gaps.

Ms. Klein responded: It is something we can look into. Again, I cannot commit my board to that.

Commissioner Gioia continued: I am just relating it to how we think about maximum feasible public access. To me it is a balancing factor as we think about that.

And my last, second question just to understand, to have you summarize. Because I appreciate it is very complicated, and you have done the best to try to summarize. There was some question about the incident response. Can you summarize that again. The issue that it was unclear whether incidents can be responded to quicker or cleared with a breakdown lane. Can you go into greater detail about that whole issue?

Dr. Dion responded: Yes, I certainly can. The main issue with the incident response is a lack of information. Whenever an incident happens there is information that is being recorded about the incidents. But the way that the information is recorded, for instance, on the CHP log, they will indicate whenever they dispatch a vehicle, but we do not know from where the vehicle is being dispatched. We do not know often, I would say 98% of the case, there is no indication when the vehicle arrived at the scene or there is just a mention. You may have a record, and it will say, oh, there's three vehicles been dispatched at three different times. There is only one mention that a vehicle arrived without mentioning any.

The same thing happens with the tow truck logs. We know when they were dispatched. They are better in that case, because in a number of cases they will indicate when they arrived. And then that way then we might see, okay, so that is the amount of time that they responded. But we often do not know where they started because there is a roving patrol that happens on the Bridge and some of these calls may have happened just while they were on the patrol and at some point. So that is the main issue with getting information.

We do know that on the Bridge if there is a major incident they will often access it counterflow. That happened before the path was done, it still happens.

One, the issue that was mentioned is because there is a path, and they cannot use the shoulder to get to an incident. If they are stuck in traffic, then they will be stuck in traffic. That is where in some cases they may just close the

Bridge and come counterflow. But we would need a little bit more information, a little bit more detailed information to be able to assess what are the constraints?

Commissioner Gioia added: I did forget to ask, why is it that you have the shuttle ending at 7:00 given that during the summer when it gets dark later there is use after 7:00 especially?

Ms. Klein answered: I will respond to that one. Yes, that is a question that has come up before. While we did not formally change it in the application, we would be certainly willing to look at running the shuttle to later in the summer, that is not a problem. I think we previously talked about 8:00 but it could be later than that.

Commissioner Gioia continued: And how will you get back to us on that first issue I raised in terms of the funding?

Ms. Klein sought clarification: The funding?

Commissioner Gioia replied: The funding, the issue - because I think that relates to maximum feasible public access is how those connectors are closed. Because I do not think it is sufficient to say, well, we closed connections close to the Bridge when you have other major routes that are connectors that need to be closed.

Ms. Klein agreed: Right. I think we will go back and consider it, and we would certainly have a response to that before the Commission were to take up the permit as an action item.

Commissioner Ecklund commented: My name is Pat Ecklund and I serve on the Novato City Council and have been living in the Bay Area all my life so I am very familiar with the Bridge. In fact, the Bridge was constructed the year my mom was born, and my mom is doing great, the Bridge isn't. Anyway.

First of all, I wanted to thank everyone for their presentations, great information. Wanted to thank BCDC for including a copy of the slides in our packet. Is it possible for Caltrans to also give us a copy because there was a lot of statistics. Right, it will be posted, great, but it would have been helpful, just a comment from the peanut gallery out here, for you to have provided copies for us so we could have taken notes, rather than trying to write down what was on the slide and trying to remember questions. In fact, I will probably be having more questions after I look at the slides because I am not an expert in memorizing the slides while developing my questions.

First of all, what is the Bridge lifespan? There is a reason why I am asking this question.

Mr. Omran replied: I will attempt to talk about it. Currently to answer part of that very loaded question, we have a joint effort with BATA. Caltrans has joined efforts with BATA to write an asset management plan. In that study or in that plan is a prediction of how much we can maintain the Bridge and make it feasible for operations. Now, statistically speaking, bridges like this will go way beyond the 100 years in-service life. And you know exactly when it was built, you can do that projection. It is very likely in the 125, but that is statistics, not bridge-specific.

What we are studying is bridge-specific. What we learn from life cycle cost analysis specific for the Bridge, that maintaining the Bridge is much more, a lot more cost-effective than replacing it. We are trying to reach the details of how and what we can maintain to prolong the life of this bridge. But 125 is a good guess.

Commissioner Eklund asked: 125 years?

Mr. Omran replied: Do not quote me on it. We are working on it. We are working on defining that yes.

Commissioner Eklund continued: Granted. And my comment stands as I mentioned earlier, my mom is doing a lot better than the Bridge.

The other question I had was, you said that the 2023 data is incomplete at this point. Can folks help me to understand when that 2023 data would be more complete than what you have got now?

Dr. Dion fielded this question: Yes. I say it could be incomplete because it takes about, at the time we were doing the study there was about a year and a half delay for the incident data to come into what we call the TASAS record, which is the official record. We completed the work on the report last summer, and so then, obviously, we had some 2023 data, but we probably did up until the end. But with the caveat that some incident might still be missing. So obviously, it has now been almost nine more months and if there is an extension then we just simply go back and ask for all the data that would be missing, so we would get the remainder of 2023 plus 2024 and then ideally 2025 as well.

Commissioner Eklund acknowledged: Thank you. You mentioned incidents of bicycle breakdowns or whatever. But do we have any incidents for pedestrians?

Dr. Dion answered: Not that I have seen.

Commissioner Eklund continued: And have we counted the number of pedestrians that have crossed that Bridge, and that data is available as well?

Dr. Dion answered: Yes. That is the information that I provided where we had about, off the top of my head 6 to 20 on weekdays, 6 to 30 during summer weekends. I think sometimes it goes up to about 50. That is from each side.

Commissioner Eklund noted: And that is assuming that the pedestrian goes the entire Bridge?

Dr. Dion replied: No, we do not know if they do fully cross the Bridge. Based on the survey, off my head, we were estimating that maybe about 80% of the cyclists will cross the Bridge. The pedestrians, it is very likely that they do not fully cross. They may go up to the midpoint and then they come back, unless they have a way to come back. It is a long walk.

Commissioner Eklund acknowledged: I know, 9.1 miles. That is a pretty long bridge. The other question I had is that you said that you only studied collisions. You made that comment.

Dr. Dion responded: Yes. Any incident that is reported by the CHP. There are fender benders or sites where we know one vehicle changed lanes hitting objects. So, anything that they respond. We have from the tow truck, I do have some information about the vehicle running out of gas or that they are helping with tires. But then again, it is not exactly otherwise the same information. We do know when they are happening. It is a little bit of a challenge to try to match the two records because they are not kept in the same format. And some of the CHP incidents show up in the tow truck data, a lot of the tow truck data do not show up in the CHP incident.

Commissioner Eklund noted: So, we really do not know how many people run out of gas or get a flat tire?

Dr. Dion stated: We do have an idea for those that were reported that were assisted by the Caltrans tow truck.

Commissioner Eklund continued: Okay. I have some other questions, but I would pass the microphone on so that other people can ask some questions; but I would like to continue at some point.

Chair Wasserman acknowledged: Thank you.

Commissioner Randolph spoke: Thanks very much for the presentation. Thinking about the question of equity and access for people who may not have the realistic option of biking and may need to access the Bridge by car for work, so let's say they need to commute on the Bridge. You said that there had been in the eastbound direction by opening up the third lane a 17-minute travel time saving, basically eliminating the congestion issue. Is there any reason to think that if the upper deck were opened up in a similar way you

would not have a comparable result?

Dr. Dion replied: Yes, I can offer some insight. It is a little bit more challenging on the upper deck. When they opened up the shoulder lane on the lower deck there was a little bit of work that was done in Richmond to provide a third traffic line. The issue is that if we have three lanes on the Bridge there's only two lanes on the freeway in Marin County, so that creates the issue that the freeway would need to be enlarged. And I think that was mentioned that some interchanges may need to be upgraded.

But there is also the issue that currently about 40% of the peak hour traffic. Sir Francis Drake onto it is a two-lane road with traffic signals, so very limited capacity. And we do see on numbers of days when there is some incident on Sir Francis Drake around Larkspur that the incidents there can back up and actually create congestion on the Bridge. So not all congestion over there will be solvable by a third lane. They will still have the issue of providing enough capacity in Marin County.

Commissioner Randolph continued: A second different follow-up question, technically, because I do not really understand these things, is, would it be or could it be compatible to have an HOV lane that also serves as sort of an emergency vehicle support lane? Let's say you have that third lane on the upper bridge. Could it function as an HOV lane but also be used in a way that a shoulder would be used for emergency vehicle access?

Mr. Maung responded: Aung Maung with Caltrans District 4. Yes, that configuration and configuration setting can be used. However, the point Francois made about actually realizing the actual throughput or time saving for the HOV will be constrained by the two lanes at the end of the bridge.

Mr. Omran added: Let me continue that. The study that we embarked on, and it is supposed to be finished sometime in the spring of this year, it studies exactly that. One of the alternatives talks about what you describe. We are anxious to see it. The consultant is doing wonderful work so far.

Commissioner Showalter chimed in: Yes, thank you for the presentation. I was interested that all of the statistics that you have shown us are actual collected data, right? I was wondering if any modeling was done to figure out or to help figure out what made what change. Did you model the situation at all?

Dr. Dion replied: No. As you indicated, all the statistics that we presented are actual observation. So, we did not do specific modeling. However, it is discussed. If we do an extension, then we may do some modeling

to analyze some of the incidents a little bit more in detail.

Commissioner Showalter stated: I am a water engineer.

Dr. Dion acknowledged: Right.

Commissioner Showalter continued: We do a great deal of modeling. Normally, when you encounter something that says it is not statistically relevant, that triggers modeling, so I was surprised that that was not triggered by this. Is this something that you are expecting to do, or do you think it would be valuable? It is not my field. Would it be valuable in this case?

Dr. Dion stated: It is a good question. By the way, I would point out that I am a modeler by trade, so I do a lot of traffic modeling, it is usually what I normally do. When we started, we thought that there would be enough data that we could actually just by looking at the statistics be able to quantify, for instance, what is the typical incident. But as I pointed out, the data is difficult to even pinpoint how long does an incident last, because this information is not being recorded at all. We just know there is an incident that happened this time, and that is about it.

I had some discussions with Muthanna there that, yes, maybe given more time that we may actually do some modeling, for instance, to see what an incident at a given time, does it last 10 minutes or 20 minutes during peak hour, then what might be the impact on traffic. That can be calculated just by doing very, very simple modeling.

Commissioner Moulton-Peters commented: Thank you. Thanks to everyone for the presentation. I am going to continue this very line of thinking because this is what I was interested in. A couple of us, Commissioner Gioia and I, asked about this. We understand that you have looked at response to incidents, but what I am interested in, and I think you have just alluded to, is the impacts to traffic delays that are behind the accident and are impacted by the cascading effect of the incident. It sounds like there is more to study on that to understand the delays and the impacts; is that correct?

Dr. Dion replied: Yes, there is some information from the data source that we use, INRIX, and particularly they are tracking vehicles and travel time. One of the statistics that they now offer is that we can compare data to see what is the variability of travel time. And by looking at variability, okay, it tells us, okay, is the time you are taking to cross the Bridge now, is it more variable during a specific hour than it is before.

The challenge is always to associate that with a specific incident. Is it because of incident or is it because of other things. As I did mention, is it

because of Sir Francis Drake backing up? A lot of incidents that we observe they do not happen on the Bridge, they happen around the toll plaza. Is this valid for the analysis? It does affect your travel time to the Bridge. But they are not on the Bridge, but they are on the approach. They are related but maybe not as much as when they happen right on the Bridge itself.

The other challenge in modeling is that most of the incident records do not specify exactly where on the Bridge the incident happened. So, if we want to model an incident that happens at the beginning of the Bridge versus at the end of the Bridge depending on how they are doing the response, that makes a big difference. And then usually it is the CHP Marin that responds to almost all the incidents on the Bridge.

Mr. Omran added: Thank you, Francois. I would like to continue. That lack of information we are trying to address by this extension. By instructing first our tow truck drivers to have to log down that specific information. What time did you get the call? Where were you? How long it took you to reach the incident? And where on the Bridge is the incident? So, we are modifying the information that the tow truck driver logs. Those are the incidents log. We cannot control what the CHP reports, but we are reaching out to see how far we can get with them to improve the data that we are using for this purpose.

Commissioner Moulton-Peters stated: I think it is important we hear from the constituents that the unpredictability and the variability in their commute times is really a friction point. And so is it also fair in my last question to say that we need to obtain this information, and will it be possible to make any kind of observation about whether the breakdown lane itself, the presence of a breakdown lane or the lack thereof, contributes to incident response as well as delay times for everyone. Or let me make that a suggestion.

Mr. Omran replied: Yes, that is one of the goals of what we are extending the pilot for, to study those details. Something worth discussing here is we are trying to manage the unpredictability of having enough data, enough incidents to draw that picture from. And for that, we are proposing to use simulated incidents and to track if it is Lane 1 or is it Lane 2, which part of the Bridge. We have not designed those incidents yet, but we are working on it, and those will be valuable sources of data for everything that we need to know.

I would like to go back to the modeling, though. We do have a model for the corridor. And to tweak the model for a specific incident, is what we are trying to do. So, there is, there is an established model.

Commissioner Nelson was recognized: Thank you so much. There was a

lot of information in those presentations and it is hard to pack all of that data in your head. So, some of my questions you may have addressed during the presentation but let me run through them. One of the things I am wrestling with is how to sort through interesting questions from the really important questions that will really inform the Commission's decision. Let me just run through a couple of things and feel free to disagree with any of those if you do.

First is, as a lifelong East Bay resident I have seen the backup on the on the east side of the Bridge and how frequently, not always, but how frequently that backup is longer than the backup on the other end. It is clear that open tolling is going to have real impact on that. You said there was going to be a 12-minute reduction. That is a big reduction in the backup of that side of the Bridge. And so, a really interesting question, the future of the bike lane is separate from the future of open tolling.

Similarly, clearly the merge down to two lanes has an impact on the backup, but that merge is going to happen on one side of the Bridge or the other recognizing that Sir Francis Drake complicates that a little bit. So, an interesting question. But it seems to me that some of the key questions are, how many incidents happen on the Bridge during rush hour?

An incident at midnight is not going to be affected by the fact that it is two lanes, not three. So how many of those incidents are during rush hour? What is the delay because of those incidents? And it sounds as though that data either is not collected or that is data you do not currently have on how long the delays are for those incidents that are during rush hour when the bike lane could be having an effect.

And where is important. If the incident is at the toll plaza, if we were to eliminate the bike lane tomorrow, there is no effect on that, the backup from that. So, teasing that data apart would be really helpful. With that in mind, so as I said, feel free to comment on any of that. Those are all statements, but feel free to comment on that.

I do have one question. That is, given those places where some additional analysis, additional data might be helpful, why the proposal to so significantly change the pilot project. We are still trying to figure out how well this pilot project is really working and what the impacts of changing would be. And I have a couple of additional comments, more for staff.

Dr. Dion commented: Yes, you are asking so how many incidents happen? It varies. Essentially, if I am just looking at the peak hour between 6:00 and 9:00 A.M. on the approach and the Bridge, it is total between 1 and 7 per

month. That includes the approach and the Bridge. Yes, there's not that many incidents that happen on the Bridge itself. The incidents we are really talking about, collisions, things that are reported by the CHP. Obviously, there's fair numbers of disabled vehicles and other things. They do not get reported.

It is sometimes possible to know that an incident, particularly when we know when one happened and then when we look at the traffic data and say oh, we can compare that day to another day. In those cases, we might be able to say, that incident likely extended the commute by that. In order to paint a clear picture, we just need to get more incidents. The more incidents we have then we know what is the variability or what typically happens. I am not sure if I missed something.

Ms. Klein chimed in: If I may add, I think you asked, why change now? I think it is a really good question. Quite honestly, I think a question in our minds is, will it be different if there is a shoulder?

There is I think an expectation perhaps by some that it will be quite different. It has been a long time since there was an emergency shoulder on that Bridge. I think it is easy to look back perhaps with rose-colored glasses at what things were like before. We may find when we restore the shoulder that it does not make a substantial difference and that I think would be valuable information. So, that is one reason we would like to go ahead with this change.

Commissioner Nelson addressed BCDC staff: Thank you. A couple of just comments for staff as we are working our way through these issues. First, one of the people who testified at one of our earlier hearings talked about e-bike uptake. I have certainly seen an explosion in e-bikes, and I think that is going to likely have an impact, especially on how many commuters are going to be using that bike lane across the Bridge. So again, something for staff to look at down the road is e-bike uptake and how that might affect the existing pilot in the future.

Supervisor Gioia and the presenters both talked about connections off of the Bridge that will certainly have an impact on usage. Again, an issue for staff to think about. Are we going to see a higher usage once the connections to the Bridge are improved?

And then there was a graphic in one of the staff documents here that I just did not see discussed in your presentation and I just wanted to flag that. I was disappointed to see that there was not more use of the Bridge. There are some peak times when the usage is reasonably high, but disappointed that it is not higher. I would like to see all of that public access used.

But I also thought it was important that, I think, I do not have that graphic in front of me right now, that there are about six connections, both bridges and other Bay Trail segments, that have less average use. And as we think about whether we are going to sacrifice a really important connection for part of the time it is important to put that use in context. If this were anomalously low, then that is one issue. But if there are a lot of other Bay Trail segments and bridges that have less use than the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge does, that is just important context for the Commission to consider as it is considering these decisions. And that is what I have got.

Dr. Dion chimed in: I will just make a quick comment about the use of the path on the Bridge. Obviously, this is kind of a new entity. The only thing we have been able to do is to compare how well the path is used compared to the other bridge, and currently it is the heaviest use.

Commissioner Nelson noted: Other than the Golden Gate.

Dr. Dion agreed: Other than the Golden Gate. We do not count the Golden Gate because it is all touristy, so yes. It has moved over the last two years as being a little bit more traffic than on the Bay Bridge, but that is the only metrics of reference. Yes, we were asked, what do you define as an acceptable use? But we did not know. Nothing existed before.

Vice Chair Eisen commented: Thank you. There have been a lot of questions about incidents and the data poverty that we have regarding incidents. It sounds like you are hoping in this extended period to get better data, but that is not a certainty at all that the data will be better. But I am wondering about the eastbound pilot, because in that case, if I am understanding correctly, there was a shoulder, and we eliminated or opened that shoulder to traffic during the commute times. So, the notion that breakdowns, et cetera, were slowing the commute, we do have some information with respect to the eastbound lanes, right? That eliminating that breakdown lane did not increase the commute. In fact, we dropped the commute 17 minutes, as somebody pointed out. So, do we have some information about what incidents occurred on the eastbound side and whether they did or did not slow the commute?

Dr. Dion stated: We have the same information on the lower deck as on the upper deck.

Vice Chair Eisen continued: It is not enough.

Dr. Dion answered: Yes, it is the same type of information. But what happened on the eastbound direction is that the numbers of incidents dropped

mainly because the congestion dropped. Incidents that happen on the Bridge on the approach, they are typically rear-end or sideswipe when people change lanes. So, less congestion, you tend to have less rear-ends. We added the shoulder lane, there may be a little bit more sideswipes because people change lanes.

But we do know that on the lower deck, not all lanes are utilized equally. The shoulder lane when it is open carries, I would say, only two-thirds of the traffic that the other lanes do. For some reason I guess people do not tend to use it as much. So, we do know that if there is an incident that happens there maybe there is a little bit less impact. And because there is no congestion there is already no backup. An incident happens so a small backup may build and then it may disappear. But the impact may not be as much that if you have only two lanes and an incident happens, then you are suddenly restricted to one lane. A parallel can try to be traced, but we also have to recognize the different environment a little bit.

Ms. Klein added: Yes, if I could just amplify one point, right. I think the fundamental difference is on the lower deck if there is an incident and it blocks one lane there are still two lanes for the traffic to get through. And that was true when it was a shoulder, and that is still true today when it is a part-time use lane.

On the upper deck today, if there is an incident and one lane is blocked, there is just one lane for the traffic to get through because there is a concrete barrier that makes it so that shoulder cannot be used for emergency access and it also cannot be used for cars to get around the incident.

So, I think that the conditions really are not parallel, right. It is a really good question. I think it is a really good question. And it has caused us, the question has been asked, and it has caused us to think about it too and that was an important conclusion for us.

Vice Chair Eisen continued: And one other quick question on the seasonality and the synchronicity of cars versus bikes. It sounds to me like what we know is that cars are using the Bridge at different times and in different seasons than the bikes are using it. And I do not know if we have tracked that, the lack of synchronicity and seasonality between cars and bikes, because it seems to me that they are using it at different times than each other.

Dr. Dion responded: Yes, I have not explicitly looked at that, but we do have the data. Because all data that I have collected are compiled on a month-

by-month basis. In terms of traffic, yes, during weekdays the fall is usually the heaviest traffic and it tends to come down during spring and then during summer. But on the weekend it tends to follow. On Saturday the summer is the heaviest, usually.

Vice Chair Eisen stated: For bikes.

Dr. Dion clarified: No, for traffic. For bikes what it is, simply because now you are not in a sheltered environment. If you are in your car, it is raining, it does not affect you as much as if you are on your bike. Yes, obviously we do have a seasonality in bike usage where it is lowest December, January. However, in years where we had nice January weather, for instance, demand was higher.

Vice Chair Eisen continued: And one last question about moving the concrete barriers. How hard is that to do? I have seen the commute going in and out of Boston and they change those concrete barriers twice a day, whole miles of them, they change. But is that a problem in terms of how quickly or easily or problematic changing the concrete barriers is?

Ms. Klein fielded this question: Yes, that is a good question, too. I feel like I should be able to speak to the Boston one because I was there for a while but I cannot speak to that example as much.

But because of the length of the Bridge and the amount of barrier, it is roughly five miles of barrier, and the process of moving it is pretty slow. And plus, before you open, you change the use of that lane, someone has got to sweep that lane and make sure there is no debris in it, right? So that complete process of changing it, I think we are saying it was like a three-hour process to change it.

We did contemplate whether you could actually flip back and forth middle of the day every day. The fact of the matter is you would spend so much time moving that barrier that it would not be available for cyclists, pedestrians, emergency use, it is not available for any purpose during those hours and so we feel that that is probably not an optimal solution.

Vice Chair Eisen acknowledged: I see. Thank you. Thank you.

Commissioner Gunther commented: Thank you all for taking the time to do this. It is a little bit of a drink out of a fire hydrant, but I really appreciate your efforts to summarize it. I have just a couple of questions.

First of all, I was under the impression that it is not feasible to have three lanes of traffic on the upper deck of the Richmond Bridge. Is that correct?

Ms. Klein explained: A couple of years ago the Transportation Authority of Marin looked at running a third lane of general traffic across the Bridge and found that to make it work would require a really sizable investment on the Marin side at the touchdown because there are two lanes there and because there are offramps to Sir Francis Drake and other off ramps. And I would not say it is not feasible; I would say that it was very expensive to do it.

It also really, quite frankly, runs in conflict with our regional goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and single occupancy driving. And as a result, what BATA and Caltrans have elected to do is to study a third lane that is a carpool and bus lane, a priority lane essentially for high occupancy vehicles. And that is what we are presently looking at. That lane is going to carry a different kind of traffic and a different amount of traffic, and so the question at hand is, do you need the same kinds of improvements on the Marin side or maybe you do not need it. Maybe it is actually more feasible from a cost standpoint.

Commissioner Gunther continued: I need to think about feasibility as not just the five miles of the Bridge and the space there. But it is conceivable if the proper changes were made on the Marin side, you could have three lanes of traffic moving in a westbound direction.

Ms. Klein answered: You could. We believe you could. Our analysis is not done. We believe it is physically feasible, it is a question of cost, I guess.

Commissioner Gunther stated: One of the things that I would like us to ponder is that we, however we go here, that we are all using the same conceptual model about what is possible and what the causal relationships are that we understand between one factor and another.

I have received enormous amounts of email on this topic and there is clearly a broad range of opinions from people about what causes what and so we need to understand that; and then we need to be able to clarify what we can measure and what it means.

If I remember what you said correctly about the pilot project, the goal was to measure public usage and public benefits, but I did not hear anybody tell me how you measure public benefit. I heard a lot of public usage. And this is not a criticism. It is trying to point out that it is a somewhat subjective assessment.

Katharine, you asked us to identify criteria benchmarks. But before we can do that you have to tell us what you can measure and what you think it means, and we can then decide what is too much or not enough. And I would

encourage us if we are going to have a successful second pilot, it is because at the beginning of the process as many stakeholders as possible will agree about what we can measure and what it means. And we can argue about what is too much or not enough, and that judgment ultimately resides with us and other permitting agencies.

But I think we have so many different measurements here and I am not clear what of these quantifiable endpoints are really the thing I should be focusing.

For example, we seem to have a little breadth around what qualifies as an incident. If I understand things correctly, if I get a flat and I whip out my jack and I change my tire in 10 minutes and I am off and I have 500,000 angry people behind me, but that was not an incident because the tow truck was never called. I would imagine that is a very small fraction of the events that occur on the Bridge. But having these things thought through and discussed ahead of time is going to be really vital.

And I will use the analogy that I am very familiar with of deciding the health of San Francisco Bay. Now the Clean Water Act goals are that we protect the biological, physical and chemical integrity of the waters of the Bay, but there is no integrio-meter that I can dip into the Bay and measure that. It is a construct; I create it by deciding what I can measure and what it means.

And I think we would be really well suited going forward to understand these and make some decisions ahead of time about how we normalize our things. And there is a lot of different ways to do it and there is not necessarily a right way, but we are very not well served if we try to do it several different ways and just put that in Table 1 and Table 2 and Table 3. So that would be my thoughts for the staff going forward.

Commissioner Gilmore commented: Thank you very much. Like somebody said, this is like drinking out of the business end of a fire hose in terms of the information that we are getting, and I really thank all of you for coming and presenting today.

I think Barry asked this question, but I did not understand the answer so I am going to ask it again. So, if I understand this correctly, this pilot program was designed to test certain theories, possible conclusions and whatnot. And we got to the end of the pilot program, and you have stated here today that you are lacking in information in certain areas, and so then you want an extension to the pilot program. But rather than carrying on with the pilot program as originally designed, you want to change a number of variables in

the pilot program.

So, my question to you is, number one, why? And secondly, if you do that, what does that do to the data that you have already collected and the data that you might collect in the future and how do you square those two or several data points against each other as this pertains to the bike lane because that is what we are actually talking about here. So that is question one or possibly two.

And then the other question, which we may not have an answer to, is this pilot started right in the middle of COVID. I do not know if, how, when, that affects your data collection. But I will tell you that the landlords in San Francisco are having a really hard time filling up their office space because they cannot get their people to come in and work. People do not want to come in and work. And I am sure that affects traffic patterns. So, I do not know how all of that factors into what you guys are looking at. Because I guess the thing is, I do not think we want to design pathways to and from the Bridge for a scenario that does not exist, will not exist, or might exist. Thank you.

Dr. Dion chimed in: I can offer some answers. Yes, I think that what is being asked will change the configuration of the Bridge. But right now, the data we collected stopped, essentially the traffic data stopped in May 2024; and then the incident data I think stops in December 2023. Now, the path is still there. If the extension is granted it will take, what, another several months before the thing on the Bridge is changed. So, we are going to collect at least, there will be at least a year or year and a half of extra data to actually evaluate the current situation. Because the data is still being collected. They are just being stored. We just have not got it and have not looked at it.

The same thing with the incident data. We would get at least a year, a year and a half of extra data to look at the curve before things are changed because of the months that have already passed. And then then we would have another year, year and a half, 18 months, to look at alternate configurations.

And again, the big questions with the alternate configuration I would say, I think I am correct. The primary question right now is traffic congestion. But we also wants to know on safety, does it improve things? We might be able to see that in the few data that may come up for sure, we do not want things to get worse. So that was the first thing and I think I forgot what the other thing was.

Ms. Klein stated: COVID.

Dr. Dion acknowledged: COVID, yes. The path opened in November 2019

and then COVID hit like, several months later. And that is why I am always looking at data, what I presented in the presentation, that was an update based on from the report, because I did present the Fall 2024 data, and I just keep track. So that is what we know in terms of traffic that we are back, almost back during peak hour and what it was.

You do mention some points which are very interesting. Return to Office mandate. How is this going to affect? When I interviewed a lot of businesses in Marin they were saying, okay, there were people who were working in retail, manufacturing, so they are probably people who had to go to work.

But as parts of the extension, I think there is a plan to do an equity analysis into really figuring out who is using the Bridge, both in terms of motorists, cyclists and pedestrians, and really quantify, okay, whatever is on the Bridge benefits whom exactly.

Commissioner Zepeda commented: Commissioner Zepeda, also a City Council Member the City of Richmond. The Bridge is in my district, so I hear from constituents about this all the time, and not just from the whole Bay Area, the hundreds of emails we have all received from everyone, everywhere, but especially those that live right at the Bridge and there. So, a couple of questions. I have a lot of them.

Is there a way to collect the data faster and being able to process it? Because we are about, if I am hearing correctly, about a year to year and a half to be able to determine what the data is. So, we are in 2025 now, Happy New Year, but we are still collecting 2023 and then we are about to make a decision that is going to affect the future but we still do not have enough yet. And the data that we have is as people are coming back from COVID, right. Still soft to getting back to work. And I agree, many people do not want to come back into the office, so we have that. But if we collect data from 2024 where I believe more people are coming back in, it is going to paint a little bit different picture than what we have. So, is there a way to get that faster?

Dr. Dion stated: The data that is delayed about a year, a year and a half, is the CHP incident data. We do not have any control over that, it is just the amount of time it took the CHP. I was told that part of that long delay was due to COVID in part, they were backlogged, and I think they were working on improving. The last I checked I got data that was nine months old, but that is only for the incident data. For the traffic data the data is literally collected real-time. I go on the website; I can collect the data, the counts from the past hour would already be available.

Commissioner Zepeda continued: So thank you for that. Is that data then in the report, in the slides? And if we can look at slides 23 and 17 I had a question. I took pictures of them as they were going and I zoomed in, but I did not catch 17. So, I had two questions on them.

Dr. Dion replied: The question is to which, they may have different numbers.

Ms. Klein asked: Are they data slides?

Dr. Dion acknowledged: Yes.

Ms. Klein stated: They are yours.

Dr. Dion agreed: They are my data slides, yes.

Commissioner Zepeda stated: I thought it was all one contiguous deck.

Dr. Dion asked for clarification: Yes. If you are just telling me which data it is referring to.

Commissioner Zepeda clarified: One of them, slide 23 in the screenshot that I took, is trying to collect incidents per miles, million miles.

Dr. Dion acknowledged: Okay, I know which one you are talking about, okay.

Commissioner Zepeda asked: So just wondering. On the right hand side you have the Approach, Bridge and Downstream, and I do not see any data for Downstream. Is there no data?

Dr. Dion explained: It is just because the CHP did not provide me with that data. There has been a change in data accessibility since I started the project in the later years now. The individuals who handle the incident data put more restrictions into getting that information. So, we went into some hoops into getting the information, and what they provided me was the Approach and the Bridge, but not Downstream.

Commissioner Zepeda acknowledged: Thank you. And the Downstream I am assuming here is at the end of the Bridge?

Dr. Dion continued: Yes, I was looking up to the 101. If there is an extension I will certainly try to get the Downstream data. We can go back and say we want data from 2022, 2023. It is all sitting in a database.

Commissioner Zepeda opined: Thank you. I think it is an important piece of data. Because as we are trying to have the conversation about where the traffic might need to stop or how do we merge, someone else mentioned about having a third lane be designated for EVs.

Dr. Dion clarified: HOVs.

Commissioner Zepeda acknowledged: Or HOV. A comment was made

about at the end there is only two lanes. Can we have the third lane merge back into the second lane before the Bridge ends? For my constituency, I am trying to get the traffic away from residential.

So, when you are beginning we are talking about equity. When you are beginning the entrance to the Bridge, those are all residential. And those are all, on one side of the area is a lot of black and brown people. At the end of the Bridge, you have lots of greenery, nobody lives there for miles. So, I do not want traffic anywhere in the best-case scenario. But right now, we are at the worst-case scenario where we are stopping it in the most affected community in the Bay Area, right next to Chevron. So, if I can push some of that somewhere else away from the humans that are living there. They do not know who is going to the other side. They do not know who is going to Napa to have a drink. They are at their home trying to enjoy a day and now this is happening. So, if there is any way to move traffic away.

Moving the deadline to opening up the lanes, the configuration from these five lanes to two, if we can move that to this year. And wishful thinking here, right? But I am going to throw it out there. Because we know that that is issue number one.

Before we talk about bike lanes or no bike lanes on the Bridge, we know that one of these is going to be a much bigger, faster solution for this issue. People do not know how to merge, so going from three to five to two is the biggest issue. I travel this Bridge all the time.

So that I think is the first solution as part of the conversation about the bridges or about the bike lanes, because this is about that access. So, moving cars out of the way first, the bike lanes could continue being in there. The question that I am getting to, how wide must the lanes be? Because right now we have access for three. Can they be skinnier and fit more?

Mr. Omran stated: The Caltrans standards for the freeway lanes are 12 feet.

Commissioner Zepeda asked: Twelve feet?

Mr. Omran answered: Yes.

Commissioner Zepeda asked: What is the length of the Bridge? How many lanes do we have and how wide are they? Can we fit anything else? Can we put a skinny bike lane?

Dr. Dion replied: Not with three lanes.

Ms. Klein agreed: Yes, there is not room. The bike lane needs to be protected, right. That is why we have that big concrete barrier for the safety of

the cyclists and the pedestrians, principally. There really is not enough room for a bike lane and three lanes of traffic at the same time. But in terms of the overall width and for a third lane of traffic and could it be part-time for carpools and part-time for bikes? All of that is being looked at in this study that is ongoing now.

Commissioner Zepeda acknowledged: Okay, thank you, thank you for that.

Dr. Dion added: I will just throw an additional wrench to consider in your first comments, which I can see the point into trying to move more traffic across the Bridge. But what is happening in the Marin side is about 40% of the peak hour traffic goes on to Sir Francis Drake, and that is going to be a limiting thing. So, if we move more traffic to the Bridge, most likely Sir Francis Drake might back up, we already see that. If it backs up, it tends to back up across the Bridge. It is a two-lane road in some sections, there are some traffic signals, so there is a very limited capacity, even if we move the traffic. Because what is missing on the Marin side is a direct 580 to 101 South connector.

Commissioner Zepeda continued his inquiry: Thank you. And going back to data collection. Can we gather more data to help shape the conversation, if at all possible, and what other data points?

And one of them that I am looking for is bike and pedestrian incident report, because things might be happening like we saw in there. The response time. And then the impact to the communities of interest. What is happening? Because we are just talking about traffic. But the air pollution, the PM, everything else that is happening there. What is happening to the communities? Because we have to be able to move and make decisions on what is happening overall to the communities. So would love to have some of those data points.

Mr. Omran chimed in: If I may I will try to answer. Each concept has the metrics. For the greenhouse gases the metrics that we have is the VMT, Vehicle Miles Traveled. That reflects. So, if one alternative has higher VMT than the other, then the other is the good one.

As far as data, incident data, like I mentioned before, we are modifying who and what data to collect in terms of incident data. We are informing the people that write the incident report. Generally, those are the tow truck drivers. We are asking them to collect more data to bridge the gap. And if we felt we do not have enough incidents to make a determination statistically, we are going to have simulated incidents, controlled, designed, and we are going

to collect that data because it reflects the performance of the system. That is how we think we are managing that ambiguity that we witnessed in the first part of the pilot.

Ms. Klein chimed in: I would add to that too that I think we are also interested in more data and the questions you raise about who is being impacted by additional delay. Better understanding who is using the Bridge driving and who is using the path, both of those things. And that is data we have proposed to include as part of this extension and modifications, precisely for the kinds of reasons that you mention.

Commissioner Zepeda continued: Thank you. And then going a little bit on funding and what Gioia mentioned for the connector gaps and then just more funding. Can we have some money? I will ask MTC for funding on the streets, the connector gaps. RM3, great job all of us who passed it, but it did put a lot more money on the other side of the Bridge versus less money on the Richmond side. Not just because I live there, but I believe we have a much greater need of funding than on the other side. Again, it is our community that is more impacted. So, any money that you have, I will take it. Can we work together to find some?

Ms. Klein replied: I am just laughing because, of course, Executive Director Goldzband opened the meeting today talking about going to the bank, so I think it is really a good question that is being asked here.

Commissioner Zepeda continued: I think figuring out, because this is another trial potentially, what is the long-term plan for the Bay Trail on the Bridge? I think that is the question, and how is this going to be? Because right now we are taking it. You might not have the answer now, but it is something we have to take into consideration. Because right now this was a pilot for a couple years, potentially there is another pilot for a couple years, we are going to be back again. What is happening to the Bay Trail?

Ms. Klein replied: Those of us sitting up here and in the room, I think we are all interested in some kind of permanent solution. We do not want to be doing serial pilots for decades, that is absolutely not the position we want to be in. I think what we really are trying to figure out is how can we provide this Trail connection and what does it look like given the real estate we have, which is this Bridge.

I think in an ideal world we would have 24/7 access on this Bridge. And we really need to better understand how that works in light of all the other mobility and access goals that we have for the corridor. One possibility that

this pilot contemplates is sharing that access over time. That may be a good solution. It is not an ideal solution, I am sure of that. But it may be a good solution, or it may not. But I think that is that is fundamentally the question we are all trying to answer, so appreciate it.

Commissioner Zepeda offered a recommendation: And then lastly, if we can just for the shuttle have it be electric. I think the last thing we need is to put more gas out there. That is it for now, thank you.

Commissioner Kishimoto was recognized: Thank you for doing this study session, it is much appreciated.

Obviously, there is a lot of data. I am just thinking of going back to the lens of BCDC. Our staff has pounded into us the important things are, Bay fill and maximum feasible public access. So, I guess on the on the Bay fill side, and this goes along with the Bay Plan 2050 goals of reduction of SOVs and just anything that expands lanes, allows car-oriented development to happen, to me does not seem to fit that Bay fill criteria.

And then staff was asking about the feasibility of maximum feasible public access. I really appreciate the analysis about the Bay Plan and how they align with them or do not align with them, so I thought that was very good data.

I do not know to what extent we would be looking at overall Bay Plan 2050, because to me my questions there would be, what is going to be happening in terms of development in Marin and Contra Costa. Where are these people going and what are the cumulative impacts of the decision that we are being asked to make?

And then I would also look at the standards of biking. Not just availability but biking safety. It was mentioned, I saw in the comments that when they are biking the headlights are in their eyes because the barriers are not high enough and then we talked about the lack of networks on both sides. To me it seems like the timing for the initial pilot, we have not had enough time to allow a full network of bikes to happen. We have not looked at the full comfort and safety of a feasible and safe bike biking experience. So, I would add in the criteria about the biking comfort and safety. And that was a good point about the e-bikes coming on as well.

And then just to bring us back to the timing and sequence. There was a lot of questions about the San Rafael Forward pilot projects that are coming on. Those seem so promising. Why would we not wait for the impacts of that before we make any changes? I guess that would be one question or comment.

Ms. Klein answered: I can respond to the last the last question about why not wait for the Richmond-San Rafael Forward projects. I think there are a couple of important points about that. One is that, again, the Richmond-San Rafael Forward Project is really going to address routine congestion on the approach. It is really about the day-to-day traffic that comes on the approach and streamlining that through the toll plaza. It does not really address what happens if there is an incident on the Bridge and a lane is blocked. So that is one point. Certainly, there is a relationship there, but they but they are not coterminous, right.

The second point that I just want to make is that Richmond-San Rafael Forward Project, we would also love it to open faster. We are going as fast as we can. It is currently scheduled to open in the spring of next year. It may well take a year or so before we really understand, before our traffic patterns change and settle out. So, it is going to be probably quite a while before we understand how that is really functioning.

In the meantime, we do feel there is really value in further experimenting, gathering more data, and really understanding, is the lack of the shoulder making a difference? Again, we may find it does not, but at this point we cannot say that.

Commissioner Kishimoto continued: But it would also seem that we do not have the data. We do not know the implications of the biking network being improved. We have not had a full year of data from that. I would hope that we could take more time on that. Thank you.

Commissioner Eklund commented: I just have one question and that is, on the Highway 37 we are dealing with the issue of an equity issue in terms of those individuals that need their trucks in order to be able to do their business. Does Caltrans also track on the San Rafael-Richmond Bridge how many trucks are used for business and is that information available for me to be able to get a hold of? Because to me that is an important component of changes on the Bridge because of that equity issue, making sure that people can do their job, just like we are trying to deal with on Highway 37.

Mr. Omran replied: We do not have that data as accurate as you want it. But from a statistical point of view, we have something like the percent of truck travel out of the counts, traffic counts, that is what we have.

Ms. Klein chimed in: But Muthanna, correct me if I am wrong, those trucks are heavy trucks, not, for example, landscaper or construction, construction crews.

Mr. Omran agreed: That is correct.

Ms. Klein continued: Yes. So, I think that, again, that is something that is not readily accessible, would require some additional work, and is the kind of thing that we are proposing to look at through the extension.

Chair Wasserman continued: All right. Now we are going to move to our table conversations. Again, the public can either form your groups. You will receive workbooks from staff. Or if you wish you can observe the conversations, but that is observing, not participating.

(The Commissioners participated in table conversations from 3:36 P.M. to 4:18 p.m.)

Chair Wasserman reconvened the meeting: I am about to start the next part of this workshop. We are going to start with Jessica.

Planning Director Fain addressed attendees: I represented the table over here with Commissioner Eklund, Commissioners Gioia, Eisen and Wasserman. We had a great conversation such that we really only got to activity number one but a really great discussion around all the great benefits that the Bridge, the bike lane provides increasing public access, health to the community, alternative modes, recreational opportunity, vistas, completion of the Bay Trail; and really distinguishing that from the issue of commute times, which really is not an issue for our Commission as a primary issue.

On the second part of that activity when we were thinking about maximum feasible public access and what feasibility means, Commissioners talked about the importance of impacts to Bay natural resources, including thinking about emissions as part of that. Safety and the different types of safety, safety of the trail, safety to drivers, and then the hierarchy of safety. Equity as an important consideration, quality of life, and then cost and economic impacts.

We had a good conversation about what it means to be accessible to whom. Who are the users of this bike trail, who do they represent, and what does it mean for the trail to really be an amenity for all and what that means? And additional information that could help distinguish those public benefits, not just in terms of number of bikers using the trail but really understanding the range of public benefits.

And then lastly, we had a great conversation about if public access and this trail is the status quo this starts to get into the conversation of, if we reduce that public access, what are those mitigations or changes that would come about? We talked about the shuttle, of course, as an example of that, but

maybe we need to think a little bit more broadly about what those mitigations should be. Thinking about broader impacts into the community and access to the trail.

Legislative and External Affairs Director Gervase spoke: Thank you, Mister Chair. My table, Table 1, consisting of Commissioners Zepeda, Ahn and Nelson. We had a robust discussion on equity. There are a lot of key factors that were identified as being critical to that question, namely, air pollution, particularly for the residents living near the Bridge. The location of where traffic backs up also significantly contributing to that question.

We also talked about e-bikes, access to them. On versus offsite access to the bike trail. We also talked a lot about data collection, trying to identify who exactly and from what communities are using the bike and pedestrian multi-use path, as well as the folks who are driving over the Bridge.

Our discussion also talked about locals in the area, whether the access issues to the Bridge currently are impeding them from using it versus visitors coming from out of the area.

Finally, we also talked about collecting after-the-Bridge data, so basically traffic data from the Marin side.

We also talked about the data questions relevant to equity. As I mentioned, air quality, location of traffic, how much the multi-use path, in fact, actually increases or decreases commute times, whether the multi-use path has any effect on traffic merging, as well as really trying to identify what the effect of the toll plaza removal project would be on the pilot project.

And then finally, incident reports for bikes and pedestrians as well as automobiles. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Regulatory Director Ross was recognized: Mine is going to be a little bit shorter because my notetaker took really great notes, but she is I am not sure where. The bottom line is for number one we talked a lot about the advantages of the continuation of the Bay Trail. Obviously, the bike/ped operation of the pathway is better for the environment, it allows an option for commuters via bike and walking rather than a car.

The top six things we talked about most, we talked about a lot of things. But the metrics or those thresholds or those factors that the group would consider in terms of perhaps reducing the existing public access and operation of that pathway is related to safety, and that is safety to the bicyclist as well as to the drivers.

Incidents, the number of incidents that happen and the time delay that

that causes and how that affects the quality of life, and also as it impacts roadway congestion as well.

Equity was a big thing we talked about, was a big issue, and that is definitely a consideration. Who are we impacting? How are we impacting different communities?

And then obviously also in addition, environmental impacts of the traffic queuing and related to the delays.

Some of the additional topics or data that the group really wanted are really to understand what the impacts are with the continuation of the operation of the facility itself, but with the changes to the toll plaza and the approach. Really separating the projects to understand the true contribution of those impacts, independent of the operation of the pathway as well as the economic impact in terms of time that additional drivers may have to undergo if there are delays in the traffic.

Also, our group talked about wanting an equity study to be done.

And I am sorry, I was facilitating this table here with Commissioners Addiego, Gilmore and Gunther.

General Counsel Scharff spoke: At my table I had Commissioners Showalter, Kishimoto, Randolph and Moulton-Peters.

We talked a little bit about how does this affect the reduction of GHGs, and it would be interesting to report how that affects it, what that looks like with the queuing, all of that.

The other idea, they wanted to discuss a little bit on modeling and how relying just on data collection may not be the most appropriate thing, and that we should model this besides data collection, and that could be really helpful.

We talked also about equity from an equity standpoint. That biking is not an option for everyone and that needs to be looked at.

We also talked about the feasibility of using more spaces around the toll plaza for public access. Could some of that area be turned into birdwatching areas or other public areas? And there was some discussion about that not sure how much the bikers will be affected overall since the bikers are a low number.

There was some discussion about it is not a bike lane only but maybe a bus lane, get high density public access. There was some discussion about why MTC has not brought to us as part of the pilot the notion that you would do an HOV lane for part of that with busses and that kind of stuff. And using that as with the shoulder as well to see what effect that has. There was concern that there will be serial pilots that MTC will come back to us and then ask for that.

There was also a long discussion about how much modeling might help in doing this. And so maybe that could be addressed, if you are not going to model it get us back to why you are not going to model and why that would be infeasible, as opposed to just data collection.

I think there was some discussion about, can you bring us more options? Why is the pilot so limited?

There was concern about the CHP data that you are not going to get anything really different because it is the CHP so are there other sources of data? Maybe bike groups, maybe other people. We really did not have answers to it, we just wanted to know if there were other sources of data.

I think people were pleased that you were going to create incidents of your own, like when you do a flood model, create the likely storm and then the worst scenario.

There were questions about timing and sequence. Why don't we wait until we do other improvements, either the Forward San Rafael Project, the Toll Lane Project. And then see if that changes the outcomes and then do the pilot after that.

There was a discussion if we do not have all the data, what do you know when you do not know it. And there was a big discussion about how the 12 minutes for the other project will be huge.

And then there is also a problem of variability of waiting for the shuttle. And if you are going to have a shuttle, we wanted to make sure that that really worked well in terms of the timing for people to actually be able to use it in a comfortable way so that people can get across, because no one is going to want to wait 20 minutes for a shuttle when you are biking.

The other segments of the Bay Trail were really worth further study and would like to understand how we get those completed. I think that was primarily what we discussed.

Acting Chair Eisen: Thank you. Chair Wasserman had to step out for a while so I am going to take it from here until he gets back.

Thank you for those four summaries. I have to say that the summary from our table was a lot more coherent than the conversation at our table so I really appreciate the summaries. With respect to birdwatching, I just want to point out that the osprey nest, which is right off the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge, is on the south side, and you cannot see it from the bike trail I am sorry to say.

All right, we are going to now turn to public comment. We have a great number of speakers, both here and by Zoom, so we are going to ask that the

speakers keep their comments today to two and a half minutes, which is a compromise between the two minutes that we sometimes go to and the three minutes we sometimes use. I am going to start with the folks in the room.

The first speaker card I have is from Bruce Beyaert.

Bruce Beyaert spoke: Madam Chair, Members of the Commission, my name is Bruce Beyaert. I am the Chair of TRAC, the Trails for Richmond Action Committee and a member of the San Francisco Bay Trail Project Board of Directors.

I guess the first point I would like to make is the UC Berkeley PATH Study concluded that converting the shoulder into the San Francisco Bay Trail had no significant effect on the number of crashes or the time required to clear them. So, how would converting the Trail back to a shoulder reduce the number of collisions or time to clear them when the converse is not true? Especially considering that the new shoulder would be 18 inches narrower than the previous one because the removable barriers say it is only 10 feet wide. So, to me it does not really compute that based on the data so far that putting a narrow shoulder back in to replace the previous one would improve traffic flow.

In terms of traffic flow, it useful to look at it in two issues here. One is sporadic problems on the Bridge and the ongoing, everyday grinding problems on the approaches to the Bridge. On the Bridge itself, the UC Berkeley PATH Study shows that there are only 40 incidents per year, 40 per year. That is one incident every week and a third. So, the proposal here was to shut down the Trail four days a week because every one-and-one-third week there would be one incident on the Bridge.

The real problem, the ongoing everyday grind, is on the approaches where Caltrans and MTC's RSR Forward Program is addressing that problem by eliminating open road tolling and extend the HOV lane. So, you no longer have this crazy situation of going from two or three, out to five or seven, and back to two. That is going to make a huge difference, as was mentioned earlier today, as well as the HOV lane extension and the improvements to the interchange at Richmond Parkway and Castro make a big difference too.

So, with that in mind I ask the Commission to take a serious look at the recommendation of the West Contra Costa Transportation Commission representing all four cities of Western Contra Costa. And that is to keep the Trail open 24/7 until the open road tolling/HOV extension lane has been completed and its effects evaluated. Otherwise, you are changing too much,

too many things at one time and hard to sort out what makes a difference.

Warren Wells commented: Hi, Vice Chair Eisen, Members of the Commission. My name is Warren Wells. I am the Policy and Planning Director for the Marin County Bicycle Coalition.

We urge this Commission to uphold its mandates to provide maximum feasible public access to the Baylands and maintain the multi-use pathway on the RSR Bridge pathway and its current 24/7 operation, at least as long as the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge Forward Project can go through.

We believe that the current configuration represents the maximum feasible public access, and any curtailment would represent a significant diminution of that access.

The four miles of the Bridge represent a greater distance of the San Francisco Bay Trail that have been completed in the last six years combined and represents one of the longest, uninterrupted segments of that Trail.

As a Commission's packet mentions, despite the Bridges long length and the fact that MTC did only complete all their planned connecting trails to the Bridge in the fall of last year, a year after the end of the pilot project, the Bridge sees more bicycle users than any other MTC-managed toll bridge.

The applicant states that the period of Friday through Sunday is when the majority of users cross it. That is true. But Monday through Thursday account for 40% of the ridership. While we appreciate the proposed shuttle, it is slated to cease operation at 7:00 P.M. as mentioned earlier, forcing potential users to rely on Golden Gate Transit Route 580, an hourly bus that itself ceases service at 10:00 P.M.

We have concerns about the ability of the proposed shuttle, or any shuttle, frankly, to transport the wide variety of wheeled vehicles used on the Bridge, including heavier e-bikes, tricycles and other adaptive cycles. We believe this runs counter to BCDC's commitment to providing barrier-free access for people with disabilities and people of all income levels.

You know, we will hear from Marin-based employers who cannot hire East Bay residents due to the traffic, and we understand the challenges faced by car commuters pulling over the Bridge. But I do urge you to ask yourselves, if traffic gets better and those employers hire another 1,000 East Bay commuters, what is going to happen to the traffic?

Ultimately, we worry that this effort represents the gradual pulling off of the Band-Aid when curtailment by that bike access is represented as another compromise. As suggested in I.C.1 of the Commissioners packet, even a part-

time multi-use path is not consistent with three lanes of westbound car travel, which we know MTC and Caltrans are seeking to bring about.

With all the dark news on climate that each of us read every day, it is my sincere hope that leaders of our progressive vanguard here in the Bay Area do not choose to abandon four miles of Bay Trail chasing the ever-receding mirage of lasting congestion relief, which research clearly demonstrates cannot be done with additional automobile capacity alone. Thank you very much.

Acting Chair Eisen continued: Mr. Arce followed by Tom Lent.

Lauren Goode announced: Hi. I was given permission to pass out a public comment by Mr. Arce on behalf of Mrs. Spears.

Acting Chair Eisen acknowledged: Thank you very much.

Tom Lent was called to speak: Hello. I am Tom Lent, E-bike Project Coordinator for Walk Bike Berkeley. I am also personally a user of the Bridge to attend business meetings in both Marin and San Francisco, and for recreational access to Marin.

First of all, I can personally swear that e-bikes are practical and time competitive for the morning commute, even against a stiff wind. I have tested it. I can provide data if people like data.

It is a serious mistake, speaking of data, to make a decision based on ridership counts from the first four years of this pilot. The path was opened, and the survey was undertaken before there were many e-bikes, before that was an option, when very few people were commuting, and equally importantly, before there were any significant safe routes to the Bridge.

And that is really important. Judging the usage of the path on the basis of this data is kind of like judging an expressway before the entrance and exit ramps have been built.

You know, the path has not had a fair chance. It is kind of like we are saying, well, nobody used that thing because they were lousy participants, so now we are going to build those ramps. There is some great work that has been done in the last couple of years, and more planned, so we are building the exit ramps and we are going to take away the expressway.

With the fires still raging in L.A., this is a heck of a time to go backwards on active transportation to reducing our dependence on fossil fuel-based transportation. So, I beg you, please do not allow the MTC to remove the majority of the public access time to the Bridge. It is clear this shutdown would violate McAteer-Petris and lock us into more vehicle exhaust and tire particulate raining down on Richmond with no gains in congestion and more

climate emissions for us all. Remember, induced demand.

So I urge you to scrutinize carefully and challenge the relevance of the usage data that is being used to justify this change, and I strongly urge you to delay until the RSR Forward gives us a chance to see what is really going on, where the delays are actually happening that are generating those thousands of emails that you are all getting, and to see what really happens, and reject this proposed access restriction for now. Thank you very much.

Lauren Goode commented: Hello. My name is Lauren Goode and I am a Policy Associate for Transportation and Homelessness at the Bay Area Council, as well as a lifelong Richmond resident.

This consistent delay in a vote for this matter is inexcusable. During this year-long delay my community and neighboring cities have been subject to increased vehicle accidents, which have contributed to stop-and-go traffic and extremely variable commute times. The Commission claims to take into account equity concerns for all projects. This is a clear issue of equity.

It is an equity issue when minority communities, most of whom make less than the Bay Area median income, concerns in trying to get to work are put on the back burner in favor of the recreational habits of a small group of those earning twice the Bay Area median income.

It is an equity issue when Marin's traffic problems with the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge were resolved while Richmond was stuck with a bike lane.

It is an equity issue when we raise concerns about the bike lane's disruption to our daily lives and they go unheard and progress is stalled.

Balancing the interests of those who utilize the Bridge via car and bicycle are attainable. I urge you to support the permit amendment proposal to truly allow an opportunity for such compromise. Thank you.

Joanne Webster spoke: Good afternoon, Commissioners. Thank you so much for the opportunity for public comment and for engaging in the workshops or at least listening. I am Joanne Webster, President and CEO of the North Bay Leadership Council. We represent leading employers in Marin, Sonoma and Napa. I am here to support, to express our support for the modified pilot.

As you continue to explore this item, I want to emphasize the critical importance of addressing it as a matter of equity and quality of life for the tens of thousands of commuters crossing the Bridge every day that do not have transit options. The lived experience of these workers is absolutely real. For these Bay Area residents, the issue is not just inconvenience, it is a significant

burden on their lives.

I would also like to offer you this perspective that the modified pilot program is not a zero-sum solution. This initiative does not prioritize one user over another but represents a balanced approach to this crucial resource. It provides compassionate relief during the weekdays for those hardworking families who do not have the option to bike to work, while also ensuring that cyclists and pedestrians have access during the weekends when usage is highest.

Additionally, the pilot creates an opportunity for you to study the potential future enhancements including HOV and bus lanes to further benefit all users of the Bridge.

North Bay Leadership Council supports efforts for increased investments in public transportation that serve this corridor and reduce reliance on personal vehicles. The usage from the current pilot data is not compelling, and it did not support any kind of mode shift away from personal vehicles.

So, I ask you to try something different. Something that this new pilot can do, and you can study how to make a mode shift happen. By approving the permit at your hearing for the modified pilot you have the opportunity to promote greater equity, enhance economic mobility, and improve the quality of life for thousands of residents who rely on this crucial infrastructure to get to work and to school every day. Thank you so much.

Eva Chrysanthe was recognized: I speak to you as someone who has never driven a car and uses this Bridge much more than Mr. Warren Wells who just spoke on behalf of the Marin Bike Coalition. Usually when I am using this Bridge, I am the only woman cyclist on the Bridge. And I think we need to ask ourselves why that is. And it is not because I am some kind of badass cyclist. I am 56 and a lot of times I am really just peddling very tiredly.

But I can tell you that there are a number of factors that have reduced the number of women using that Bridge. You could increase the number of minorities using that Bridge if there were better outreach from the bike coalitions. Some of this has to do with the racial composition of the bike coalitions. I have long stated that if you hired, if Marin Bike Coalition had ever hired policy experts from Richmond, you know, we would have this settled. We would have good outreach. But instead, this has been a majority white institution and it is very frustrating talking to them. They do not answer the phone. They do not answer email. They have got a head who gets \$150,000 a year and she can barely pedal her bike. It is very frustrating.

There are a lot of things that need to be fixed for cyclists to make this work. In the meantime, if you are going to restrict this, if you are going to do this pilot, ending a shuttle at 7:00 o'clock, no, it does not work. A lot of times I do not finish reporting a town hall or a city council meeting until 1:30 A.M. You are going to strand me in Marin County. I am using this because I am working class on a very, very tight budget. So, you are restricting the very people who need this the most.

And I will tell you something, in some ways this was backward. If you had built the shuttle first, the bike shuttle first, you would have built the ridership for this and then you could have done it this way. It sounds counterintuitive. I know it sounds crazy. But if you are going to restrict this that shuttle access needs to be 24/7. I know that is a sucky idea to you, but it has to be. You cannot strand workers.

A lot of restaurant workers, a lot of workers in Marin, especially people who work for rich people, they do not get out of there until 1:30 A.M., I am not the only person. You know, when I am coming back over the Bridge at 3:00 A.M. I am not the only person on that Bridge.

Thank you so much. And I would be happy to advise on any survey. I will provide my contact information to you personally. Thank you.

John Grubb spoke: Thank you, Chairwoman and Commissioners. My name is John Grubb, I am the Chief Operating Officer at the Bay Area Council.

The way we see this is that the most ethical choice is the greatest good for the greatest number of people. And what we are talking about here according to the survey results that you reviewed today, is 35 to 80 bicyclists a day compared to 40,000 car and pickup truck drivers. We have bought the StreetLight data, which is on the demographics of who the morning commuters are; 63% of them are people of color, 69% of them do not have a college degree, and 60% make less than the Bay Area median income. This ultimate project here, if we can get to it, would save them 17 minutes a day, or 74 hours a year, which is very significant for those folks.

In the meantime, if we are able to improve what happens when there is an incident, what we hear from these people who are largely working in Marin is that they have to plan for the incident. Because if you are a teacher or a nurse, you cannot be late for your shift over and over again, and so they end up having to plan to be an hour early, because that is how bad the backup is when there actually is an incident. And so, this is a chance to improve, even by approving this pilot, to improve their lives for that.

In terms of safety. Looking at the PATH Study, you can look at it. It is not a perfect analogy, but you can look at the improvements that happened on the lower deck, because 19 hours a day that third lane is just a pullover lane. And so rear-end collisions have decreased, according to the report, 50%, sideswipes have decreased 57%, and overall rate of incidents decreased by 69%.

And so, we would urge you to support this amendment and ultimately to support a carpool and transit lane on that Bridge. Thank you.

Dani Lanis commented: I am Dani Lanis. I am a Richmond resident and I am the Advocacy Manager at Bike East Bay.

Closure of the Bridge Trail would cause individuals who currently rely on the Trail to drive for more trips. And if they do not have access to a car, they would be left with no other options besides a shuttle that is not appetizing. This is a matter of justice that disproportionately impacts low-income communities.

The controversy around the pathway is a red herring, distracting from needed attention on Marin County workforce housing production and increased public transit. The failure to build local affordable housing in Marin and infrequent public transit options are the reason we are where we are today, and that is where investment and attention should be focused on.

This is not a conversation about added traffic or the ratio of car to bike usage. The issue really is about equity and access. Over 1.4 million residents live between Marin and Contra Costa counties and the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge Trail serves as one of the only connection points between them.

We cannot continue to exclusively center cars when deciding massive public policies. Decisionmakers must consider sustainability, access and mobility justice. More car lanes does not equate to less traffic, but more bike and pedestrian options always means there are more choices for residents.

Bike East Bay is asking for BCDC to reject the proposal when the time comes. The city of Richmond, city of Albany, city of Berkeley, San Francisco Bay Trail Board of Directors and West Contra Costa Transportation Commission all signed resolutions supporting access to the Richmond San-Rafael Bridge Trail with unanimous votes. Every single vote was in support.

People who walk or bike for transportation should be able to. According to the McAteer-Petris Act, BCDC can deny a permit if the proposed project fails to provide the maximum feasible public access to the Bay and its shoreline. Eliminating this trail Monday through Thursday goes against BCDC's goals of providing maximum public access. Simple.

MTC proposes to study response times and its effects on traffic when using the breakdown lane for emergency vehicles to get to the incident. This is something they already have decades of data on. The multi-modal path was a breakdown lane for decades. In theory, this is supposed to ease traffic congestion, but any benefit, if any, would be temporary, resulting in more delays due to induced demand. Just across the Bay, the Bay Bridge has three times more lanes than the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge Trail, and there is consistent congestion.

Acting Chair Eisen continued: Thank you, Mr. Lanis, appreciate it.

Can we now turn, Sierra, to the folks that are online and give them a chance for public comment.

Michael Ungerer commented: Michael Ungerer from Emeryville. To be clear, there has been no R-squared confidence interval or statistically significant data that was presented on the incident report or the other data presented. To those that are not as data savvy this means that the data presented should be treated as anecdotal until those numbers are provided.

Moving the barrier twice a week increases the cost of the infrastructure. A shuttle is a barrier to free access. Are these appropriate and optimal use of our taxpayer funds? We need to know the cost of this. The study will also cost taxpayers more money in other ways as well.

As we saw in this meeting, any time that there was a discussion of increased bike infrastructure the cost was well scrutinized. Yet we see no concern for car infrastructure cost increases. Adding one more lane, or, in this case an emergency shoulder, is not a meaningful solution to congestion. There's been literally thousands of case studies on this. We do not need to add to that list.

We all know that car-centric infrastructure in its current state is inherently financially unsustainable. As a society do we want to induce demand of more cars or do we want to create a more healthy, sustainable society for all of us to enjoy? Thank you.

Robert Prinz was recognized: Hello. My name is Robert Prinz and I work as the Advocacy Director at Mike East Bay. I really appreciate MTC for providing this study session and thanks so much to all the Commissioners for their very good questions. This includes the questions in the agenda packet that were submitted in writing, which I hope all Commissioners will read.

Some of the staff responses did not get to the heart of those written questions. I encourage Commissioners to continue pushing to make sure you

get specific responses that adequately address your inquiries.

With regard to the question of maximum feasible public access, which this body is supposed to prioritize, please note that the current proposal over two years amounts to around 9,200 or so hours of Trail closure. But the currently proposed shuttle service would only run for about 4,900 hours, only about half of the total Trail closure hours. The proposed shuttle hours also overlap with the existing 580 bus service across the Bridge, but do not provide service when the bus also provides no service overnight. What that means is that after 10 P.M. it will basically be impossible for people to cross the Bridge without a car. The shuttle as proposed also does not provide access for nonstandard bike frames and adaptive cycles. So, for many people with disabilities, access to the Bridge will be reduced even more significantly.

I do appreciate Richmond Commissioner Zepeda's questions expressing concerns about pollution hot spots in Richmond. On that, please note that most car-related pollution comes from brake and tire particulates, not from tailpipe emissions. This is a function of vehicle miles traveled and not of congestion. A breakdown shoulder could actually increase vehicle miles traveled, and a third lane definitely would.

So, from an environmental perspective and a Bay protection perspective, I hope all Commissioners will keep this in mind. Since this particulate pollution is happening on a Bridge, the majority of it ends up in the Bay.

The only sustainable path forward for the Bridge is to prioritize strategies that reduce car trips. It might sound counterintuitive, but attempts to reduce congestion might actually work against this goal. Thanks so much for considering my comments.

Roger Marquis commented: Many of us are disappointed that removal of Bridge access is being discussed. But we are also disappointed that the streets on either side of the Bridge remain far less safe than the parallel motoring roadways. This bias has improved over the last decade, but bicyclists still lack reasonable safety accommodations such as sufficient shoulders or bike lanes, particularly on Sir Francis Drake and East Francisco in Marin. And I do not mean sidewalk access, which is inherently unsafe.

Other than the awful Richmond Parkway, bicycle access to and from the east is safer, but still suffers from major gaps and badly maintained bicycle lanes with difficult intersections and train crossings. I should not even have to mention AC Transit, with one bus an hour carrying at most three bicycles, uncoordinated with the Smart Train.

As bicyclists, we are used to the deck being stacked against us. This proposed action is just more of the same, but with an exponentially larger impact. My hope is that Caltrans' DD-64 will be taken seriously. It was intended to correct 70-plus years of motorist-oriented development, with the past 10 years of multimodal improvements still leaving us with a 60-year deficit. Bottom line, there are many, many bicyclists still waiting for a safe route, not by bus, shuttle or even ferry, just a bicycle route to and across the Bay.

In closing I would like to thank the BCDC for this well informed discussion, especially emphasizing the toll plaza continues to be a major source of delays. Westbound traffic still funneled down to two lanes in Marin, and it would require a major, multi-year, multi-million-dollar project to address that. And especially for not repeating the disinformation we have all seen in the heavily paid for social media advertising. Thank you.

Bryan Culbertson spoke: Hi, Commissioners. My name is Bryan Culbertson. I work on art installations in Richmond. One of them is installed in Point San Pablo Harbor just off the Bay Trail near the Richmond Bridge.

Let's be clear about the results of the study that we all just saw. Congestion and travel time was the same before and after the pathway was installed. The study you saw is clear, removing the pathway will not help with congestion or travel times. Two, the number of collisions on the Bridge decreased after the pathway was installed. The study you just saw was clear, removing the pathway would increase the number of collisions on the Bridge.

Go back and look at the data. If you look at it, there is not a tradeoff here. The pathway is an improvement for everyone by increasing access between North Bay and East Bay, and according to the study, the pathway did not negatively impact drivers. I repeat from the study you just saw, the pathway did not negatively impact drivers.

While removing the pathway is not estimated to affect travel times, the RSR Forward improvement to the toll plaza was estimated to improve travel times by up to 12 minutes. That is the thing you should be focusing on. You want to improve things for drivers, focus on the RSR Forward Project, which has a 12-minute improvement.

I urge you to keep the pathway open 24/7 and continue collecting data to see the effect of the improvement to the toll plaza. Making changes now would conflate those things and so we would not know what was due to the toll plaza improvements and what was due to a temporary shoulder.

As to the air quality issues, we know what the top air quality problem in

Richmond is, it is Chevron. They are the number one culprit causing air quality issues in Richmond. And if you look at the air quality study, the top recommendation for improving air quality in Richmond is to electrify the industrial truck fleet that Chevron uses. If you want to improve air quality for Richmond residents, it is that that you should focus on, electrify Chevron's industrial truck fleet.

So please keep the pathway open and continue collecting data as we make the RSR Forward changes. Thank you.

Randahl commented: Hello. I love bike trails, and I log hundreds of miles on them. The Richmond Bridge is not the place. Nearly everyone is baffled at the existence of this barrier except diehard bike lobbyists and Bay Trail enthusiasts. In an effort to figure out who holds the fate of tens of thousands of toll payers in their hands, I found my way to this meeting after a long treasure hunt of emails and web searches. How many others started this journey and gave up? They are largely unrepresented in these discussions.

I invite everyone to take a trip on a weekday morning to see the situation on the ground, observe the makeup of vehicles on the road and the demographic makeup of the drivers using the Bridge. I do not know how anyone can see this traffic situation as a secondary issue to increasing bike trail amenities. Many of the questions posed by the quote missing data about the barrier's impact are glaringly answered by direct observation. Then look at the makeup and number of bike lane users. To quote the MTC Active Transportation Origin Destination Study, those users are predominantly white, older males who use the lane for recreation.

BCDC should reject this modification proposal and curtail the pilot program. We have the answer staring us in the face, which is to replicate what was done eastbound. Open the third lane to full-time traffic. The modification proposal is a half measure where all interests will lose.

The pushed over barrier does not leave sufficient space for a usable lane, and it removes the use of the lane for cyclists. MTC and BCDC can make the lives of tens of thousands better in the near future by opening this lane and fast tracking the toll plaza modifications. This is an easy win and a low-hanging fruit if this body can set aside the influence of the small but vocal bike lobby and the Holy Grail of Bay Trail Everywhere at all costs. The bike demand can be safely and quickly carried over the Bridge using the shuttle and bus system.

Our climate change issues are not going to be solved by 100 bicycles a day replacing cars, and the need for heavy freight capacity on this Bridge is not

going away. References to induced demand are misplaced and irrelevant to this lane. The findings of the studies and data are blind or ignorant to so many actual causes and effects. Whether intentional or not, they seem to go out of their way to favor the barrier. Thank you.

Bruce Doogie spoke: Hello, Bruce Doogie here. I am a user of the, a bicycle user of the Bridge, and I think the Bridge, the bicycle lane should be kept open. I do not know how we are ever, ever expecting to reduce greenhouse gasses when we just keep on with this whole induced demand thing.

I also, I am really confounded why Caltrans would want to confound their data collection with the toll, the open tolling thing, with the RSR Forward stuff. So why would they do that? I mean, it does not make sense. The big change is in the toll plaza. That is the 12 minutes everybody keeps talking about. So, it seems to me like we should first take a look at that, that is going to be the big enchilada, and then move from there.

You know, your Commission, what you are supposed to be doing is keeping the Bay accessible and closing the Trail does not do that. So, please maintain the bike trail. I guess that is it, thanks.

Uchenna Okoye commented: Good afternoon. East Bay resident, long-time user of the Bridge since it has been opened as a cyclist. I am not going to tell anybody what to do or what not to do or make any recommendations, I will just state a few facts.

One, it is really difficult to hear the gaslighting of black and brown people on the Richmond side of the Bridge talking about the amount of car traffic without talking about Chevron, right. Chevron produces far more pollution that affects far more people and far more of the Bay Area than any amount of traffic that that Bridge can actually carry. So please do not use that as a red herring to open up more lanes one way or another.

Two, induced demand is a real thing and induced demand works in all directions. So, if you create better bike infrastructure you will get more bike users who will then use the Bridge more. They have more access and be able to use that more. Induced demand also means that if you create more vehicle lanes you get more people driving. It is pretty simple, it works in all directions, so that is just one thing about that.

I also want to be careful of the smoke screen, a bit, from the folks on the Marin side saying that they need to protect all these workers who are coming in from the East Bay. If Marin had more affordable housing there would not be

as many people needing to traverse the Bridge in the first place. And in addition to that, Marin can drive finding more opportunities to help more people from an equity perspective by providing more transit and transportation to and from the Bridge for people who are cycling, for people who do not, who do not have the means to drive. You do not need to open a new travel lane, which Marin does not have to pay for. They do not pay for that, right. MTC pays for that, the toll people pay for that. They can just tell you, we need it, it will make everything better for them. Having the folks in Marin actually build out affordable housing and actually come to the table with something in terms of public transportation forces those communities to pay for it, which they do not want to do. So that is just straightforward. It is a little bit of a smoke screen on that.

And also, just do not overly science this, right? You all know, you have seen what has happened. Folks who are driving are typically upset with traffic. It is always true. From LA to New York to everywhere, right. There is never going to be enough traffic reduction unless there is nobody on the streets and we are kind of like Detroit. So be careful of trying to fix congestion at all means over the health and safety of all others. Thank you very much.

Geoffrey Smith addressed attendees: My name is Geoffrey Smith, I am from Santa Rosa, California. I want to thank everyone involved in this process for being here today and working on this effort. I speak in support of keeping the pathway open 7/24.

I am a scientist; I have degree in biology. I have seen plenty of charts and graphs and listened to a lot of PhDs talk about their research. But sometimes we just need to step back and look at what the bike path represents. To those people who are driving across the Bridge, maybe taking a bus or needing some way to get from one end to the other, the message that that bike lane sends to people, which is, oh, I could be doing that instead of sitting in this car. Or I could be getting an electric, pedal-assist bicycle for my ride from Richmond to Marin. I do not have to, you know, buy a car. It is the best advertising you could ever hope for, for something like that, which represents intermodal transportation and an alternative to the car. And as I mentioned, electric pedal-assist bicycles are making such a commute, a four or five-mile ride across the Bay in the wind and so forth, much more realistic for those of us who are not in great shape and maybe wearing work clothes.

So, I encourage the Commissioners and the staff to think about really not what the status quo is now but what we want it to be. What is our vision for

the future. Think about growing bicycle ridership and getting people out of their cars. And those are my two cents. Thank you.

Jesse Voreberg spoke: Good evening, Commissioners. My name is Jesse Voreberg. I am an Oakland resident who loves using the Richmond San-Rafael Bridge path. I frequently visit family in Marin on weekdays and always use that opportunity for a ride up the Bay and over the Bridge. I have been using my e-bike to do this lately after sustaining a leg injury, making the Bridge crossing a breeze. I would hate to lose this option and have to be another person in a car contributing to traffic.

Professionally, I am the Trail Development Manager for the Western Region for Rails to Trails Conservancy, which is the nation's largest trail advocacy organization.

I have really appreciated the discussion earlier in the meeting around the local bicycle connections to the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge path. The path is also very regionally important. Not only is it a part of the 500-mile Bay Trail, but it is a key piece of the 2,600 mile, nine-county Bay Area Trail network. That network which has been adopted into MTC's Active Transportation Plan, is a spine for cyclists. All Bridge crossings in that network are really critical segments.

Restricting this Bridge connection to three days per week in favor of more vehicle travel has no recent national parallel and I do not think the Bay Area should set that example. Thank you for your time tonight and this afternoon for the thoughtful discussion.

Chair Wasserman announced: With that, that concludes our workshop. I thank all of the Commissioners for participating, for the public for their input, and our panel of experts helping to increase clarity on the issues, if not deliver total clarity.

9. Adjournment. There being no further business, the Commission meeting was adjourned at 5:11 P.M.