



## Agenda Item 2

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COMMISSION

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### *Memorandum*

TO: MTC Planning Committee

DATE: September 8, 2011

FR: MTC Policy Advisory Council

W.I. 1114

RE: Express Lane Network Authority

In order to give input on the Express Lane Network item scheduled to go before the Planning Committee on Friday, September 9, the Policy Advisory Council moved its normally scheduled meeting up by a week and met this past Tuesday, September 6. The Council was concerned enough about this issue to meet eight days ahead of time with only three working days' advance notice in order to submit comments on this agenda item to the Planning Committee.

After hearing the staff presentation, the Council rejected a motion to support the recommendation to submit an application to the CTC. After that vote, the Council discussed the item further, with members expressing a number of concerns, including serious questions about the revenue potential from the system. Further, the Council expressed concern about being asked to approve the idea of additional express lanes as a project before adopting any kind of policies associated with the use of potential revenues. The Council did not feel the presentation included adequate justification of the need for additional express lanes, and when asked for a policy justification, staff noted that express lanes help solve future crowding in HOV lanes. That argument did not seem logical, since express lanes actually increase the potential number of cars using HOV lanes. Given the high cost of implementing the system, lack of funds for transit, and lack of a clear policy justification for expanding the express lane network, the Council moved forward with an alternate motion, as follows.

The Policy Advisory Council does not support MTC going forward with the application at this time for the following reasons:

- Previous discussions between former advisors and MTC staff focused on raising transit revenues through the Express Lane Network as a means of mitigating the inequity; now staff is saying the expectation of excess revenue from express lanes is not likely, and if there is excess revenue then use of those funds is negotiable and will be determined in the future.
- Since the only low-income means of accessing the lanes would be through carpools, there needs to be assurance that future HOV requirements are not increased so high so that the only way to use the lane is to pay for it.
- Commuters of lesser means will be priced out of using the very lanes they paid taxes to build; this is not equitable.

- There appears to be an inability to include express lanes throughout the Peninsula and San Mateo County, even though there appears to be a need. The inclusion of an express lane network in less affluent counties but not in higher income areas appears inequitable.
- There are no Project Performance Assessment results for an Express Lane Network yet. Given that the Council has spent many months discussing Plan Bay Area, it seems prudent to determine what the impact of additional express lanes would be on vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gases associated with driving, as well as other targets.
- The network could induce a greater demand for overall driving and the use of roads, particularly in light of the statement that one of the goals of the express lane network is to create more capacity in non-priced lanes.

The above concerns were put forth as a motion, which was passed 13 to 2. A quorum of the Council was present at the meeting, and these comments represent a majority of the concerns of the Council.