



# San Mateo US 101 Express Lanes Equity Study

June 2021



# Acknowledgements

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This study was commissioned and supported by the San Mateo County Express Lanes

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Additional information can be found on the SMCEL JPA website:  
[www.smcexpresslanes.org/studies-policies-2/equity-study](http://www.smcexpresslanes.org/studies-policies-2/equity-study)

# Executive Summary

# Executive Summary

## An Historic Opportunity

Like many urban freeways, the US 101 corridor has played a critical role in imposing and maintaining racial and socioeconomic segregation in San Mateo County. For most of the 20th Century, Black, Asian, and Latinx families were subject to redlining and discrimination in more desirable neighborhoods west of the highway and adjacent rail corridor. Diverse, blue-collar neighborhoods have taken root in communities including East Palo Alto, North Fair Oaks and the eastern portions of San Mateo, Redwood City and Burlingame, home to successive waves of low-income families drawn to the job opportunities located in nearby communities and employment centers. Now, these same communities are facing new challenges, from the high cost of housing to cut-through traffic, as well as the COVID-19 pandemic.

The San Mateo County Express Lanes Joint Powers Authority (SMCEL-JPA) has taken an important step toward addressing these historic inequities by approving a Pilot Equity Program that will invest toll revenue from the new San Mateo US 101 Express Lanes to fund transportation benefits that serve historically underserved communities.



Image Credit: Monica Almeida, The New York Times

This unprecedented program is the first of its kind in the Bay Area and will help to address transportation challenges that limit access to opportunities for low-income and underserved communities throughout the County. The Pilot Equity Program is rooted in an extensive community engagement process and partnerships with local community-based organizations (CBO) and social service providers. The SMCEL-JPA Board unanimously approved this Pilot Equity Program at their May 2021 board meeting.

## The Promise of Express Lanes

The San Mateo US 101 Express Lanes project will close a critical gap in the Bay Area's network of Express Lanes. With 1.6 million jobs and three million people, the US 101 corridor is the dominant north-south travel route on the Peninsula. Not surprisingly, before the COVID pandemic it was plagued by some of the worst traffic in the region, with average annual delay of 67 hours per-person.

This project will provide 22 miles of continuous Express Lanes from the Santa Clara County line to north of I-380. Separate projects to develop Express Lanes on other segments of US 101 are at various stages of development. Taken together, these create the potential for a dramatic increase in high-occupancy travel along the length of the Peninsula.

The new Express Lanes will provide significant mobility benefits, including<sup>1</sup>:

- Reducing travel time for Express Lanes users by as much as 79%
- Carrying up to 58% more carpool users and buses
- Increasing the number of people travelling on the corridor by up to 18%

While these potential benefits are significant, the question of who benefits also looms large.

**The Pilot Equity Program will help to ensure equitable access to the new Express Lanes as well as public transit services throughout San Mateo County and the region overall.**

# Vision Statement & Desired Outcomes

## Overview

The Pilot Equity Program is rooted in a Vision Statement and Desired Outcomes that were developed early in the process in consultation with community leaders, residents, and our Equity Study Advisory Committee (ESAC). The ESAC consisted of planning and public works staff from cities along the 101 corridor<sup>2</sup> as well as community organizations and other key stakeholders.

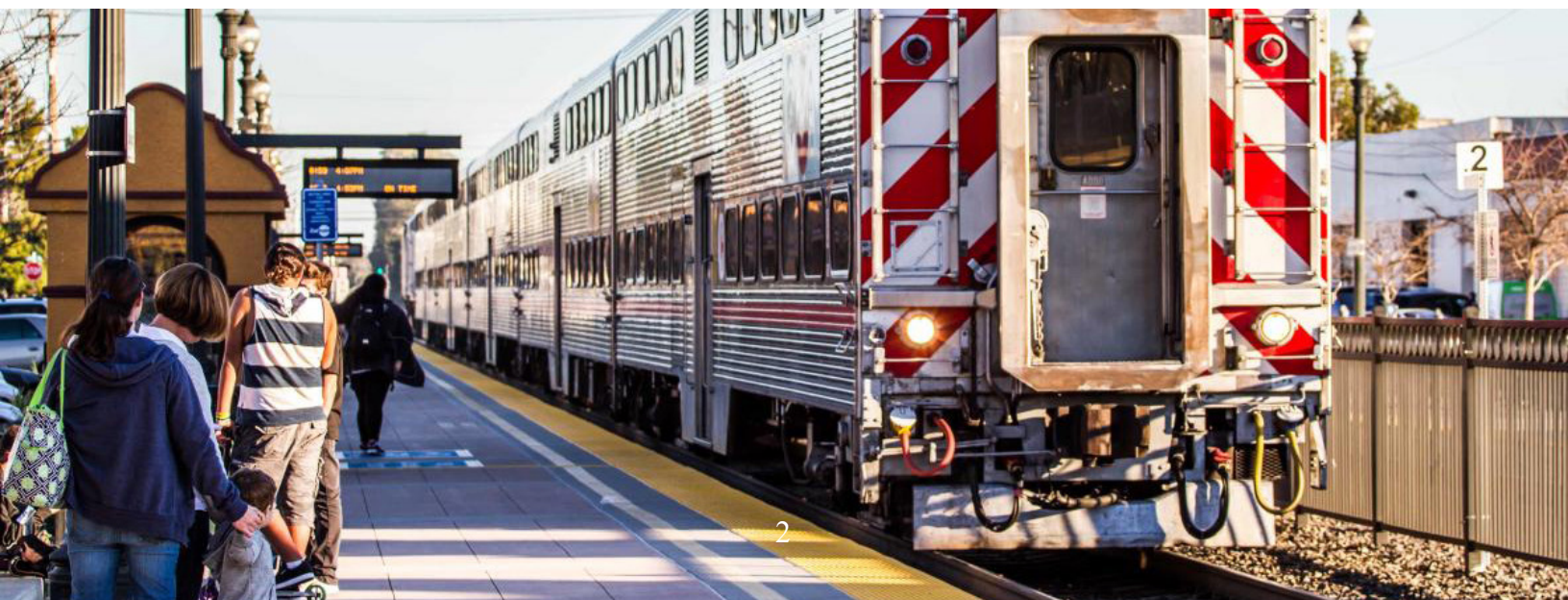
## Vision Statement

The Pilot Equity Program will be responsive to the transportation needs of historically underserved communities in San Mateo County and provide meaningful benefits to those communities. The Equity Study will prioritize program flexibility so that the Pilot Equity Program can be adaptive and evolve over time, in parallel with the phased implementation of the San Mateo 101 Express Lanes and in response to changing community needs.

## Desired outcomes

1. Develop an implementable Pilot Equity Program that is flexible and can adapt to changing needs and community feedback over time.
2. Identify equity strategies that are most beneficial to underserved communities who live near the lanes, as well as low-income travelers who are likely to utilize the Express Lanes.
3. Where possible, identify equity strategies that are replicable and could potentially be applied or expanded to other Express Lanes in the region.
4. Ensure communities who have had historically low involvement with planning decisions see their input broadly reflected in Equity Program design and implementation.
5. Encourage mode shift from single-occupancy vehicles to transit and other high-occupancy modes, especially within the Express Lanes.
6. Improve the safety and connectivity of the active transportation network in communities adjacent to the corridor.
7. Ensure the Pilot Equity Program supports the Express Lanes project benefits and goals, including improving mobility, travel time, and reliability.

Image Credit: San Mateo County Convention & Visitors Bureau



# Understanding Mobility Needs & Challenges

## Technical Analysis

Arup identified 15 target geographies within San Mateo County for the purpose of evaluating community and built environment characteristics. These geographies were identified based on 1) proximity to the US 101 corridor, and 2) criteria used by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) to define Communities of Concern<sup>3</sup>.

This analysis found that the target geographies are characterized by:

1. High levels of pedestrian and bike injuries/fatalities (see Figures 2 and 3)
2. Limited bike infrastructure
3. High transportation and housing costs
4. Limited access to high-quality transit (see Figure 4)
5. Limited tree cover, which makes it less pleasant to walk and bike

Arup analyzed Mobility Action Plan (MAP) survey data—which encompassed San Mateo, San Francisco, and Santa Clara Counties—to better understand the travel behaviors and needs of the targeted geographies. The data showed that targeted geographies are more likely to be weekly (as opposed to daily or infrequent) users of US 101 and that their primary mode of travel is to drive alone.

US-101 Travel Mode

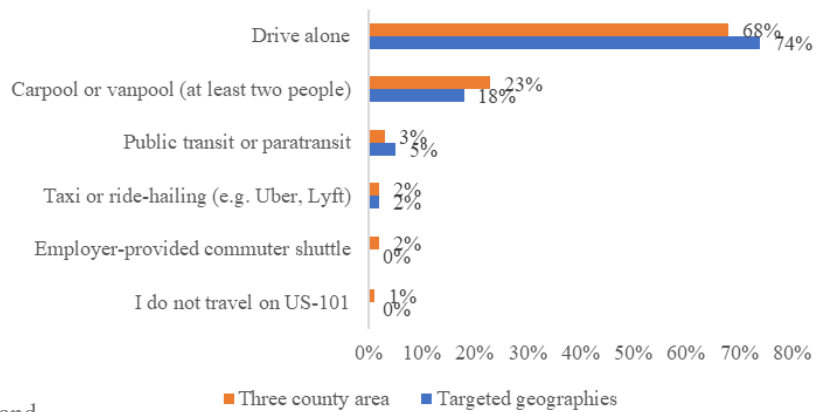
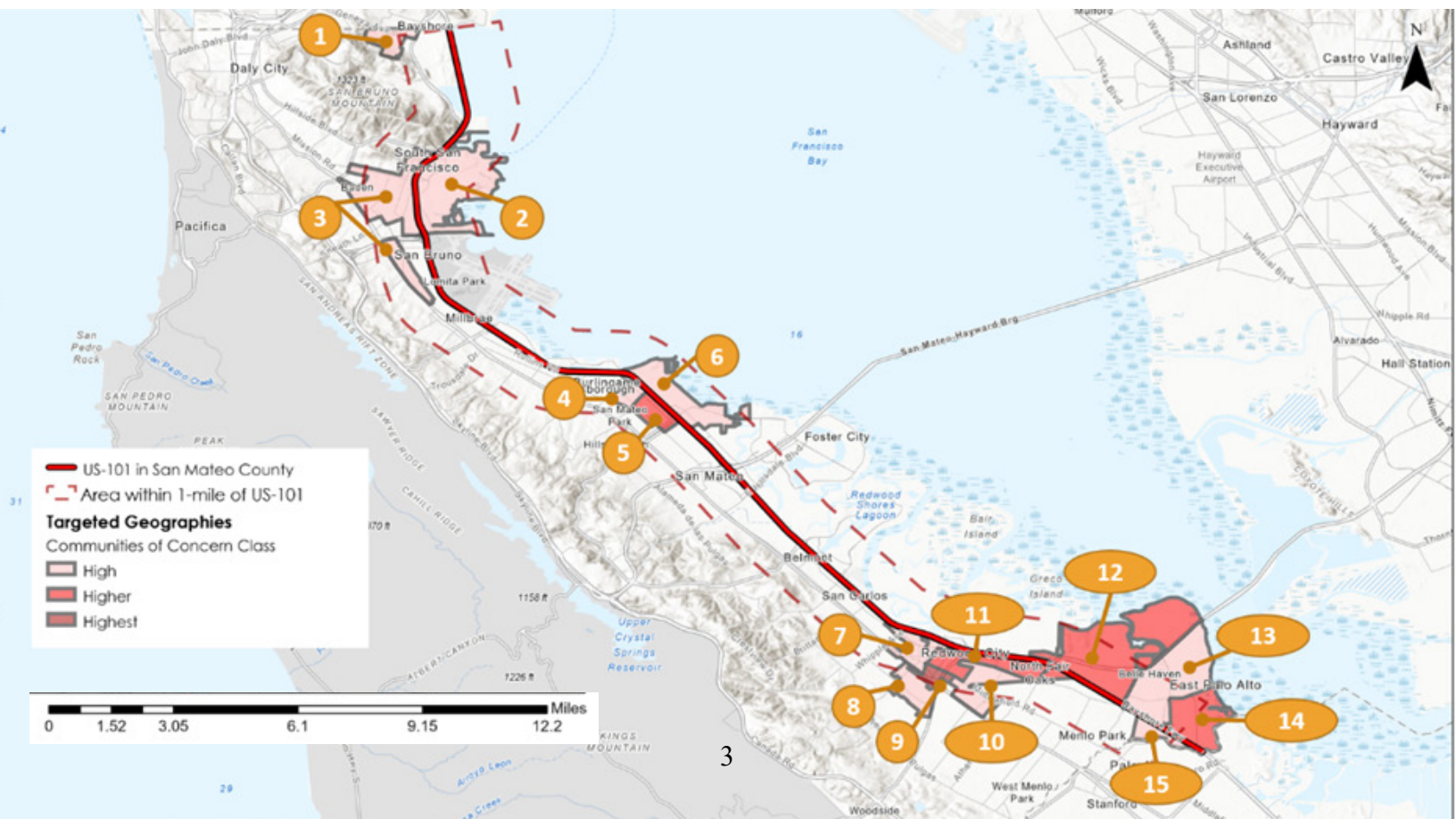


Figure 1: Target Geographies (image credit: Arup)  
15 target geographies were identified to analyze community and built environment characteristics.



## Phase I Community Engagement

The first round of community engagement included four streams of outreach:

1. Partnerships with CBOs in San Mateo County to receive feedback from their local constituent base, including a community survey with 847 responses
2. Interviews with local community leaders (7 interviews total)
3. Virtual public meeting
4. Equity Study Advisory Committee (ESAC) workshops (3 meetings total)

## Key Themes

### Limited travel options for low-income households:

Many people expressed that driving is their only viable transportation option. Some low- and moderate-income travelers have multiple jobs and daily commute patterns that are not amenable to carpooling, transit, or active transportation. Moreover, issues with frequency, coverage, and reliability prevent many residents from taking public transit. Residents of many communities also expressed that they lack safe bicycle and walking routes to and from their homes.

### Distribution of Express Lane costs and benefits:

There was a concern that the potential benefits (reduced congestion, improved travel speeds, increased reliability) would primarily serve more affluent households, while burdens (increased congestion on alternate routes, increased local pollution levels, increased travel costs) would disproportionately affect underserved communities who live near the freeway.

### Access to the new Express Lanes:

Residents expressed concerns about accessing the new Express Lanes due to barriers such as cost; difficulty obtaining a FasTrak transponder; difficulty making online payments; and language barriers.

### Strong desire for continued engagement and a voice in decision-making:

Many people expressed an interest in continued engagement in the Equity Study and the Express Lanes project. Recommendations included: communicating about the project via trusted messengers; ensuring unbanked people can access the program; and mitigating potential confusion about where and how these benefits can be used.

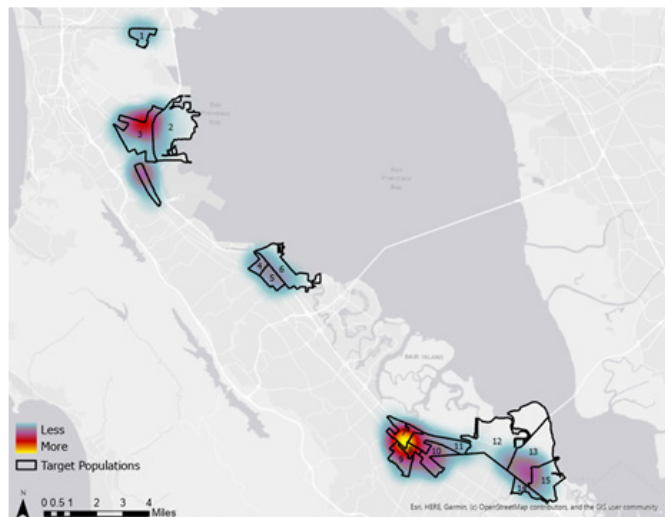


Figure 2: Pedestrian Injuries and Fatalities (image credit: Arup)

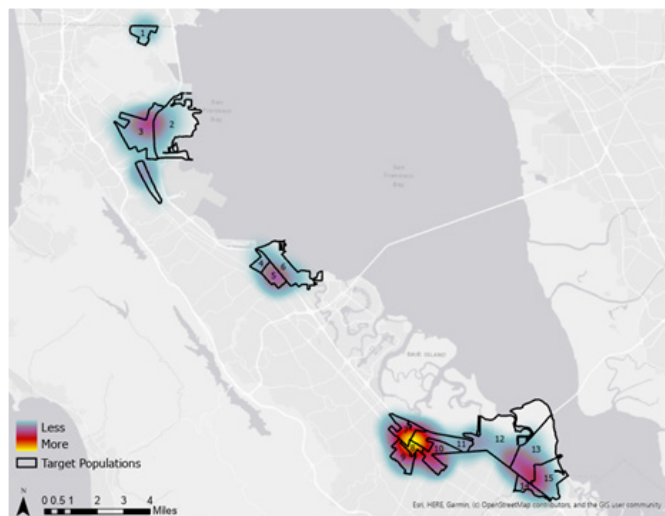


Figure 3: Bicycle Injuries and Fatalities (image credit: Arup)

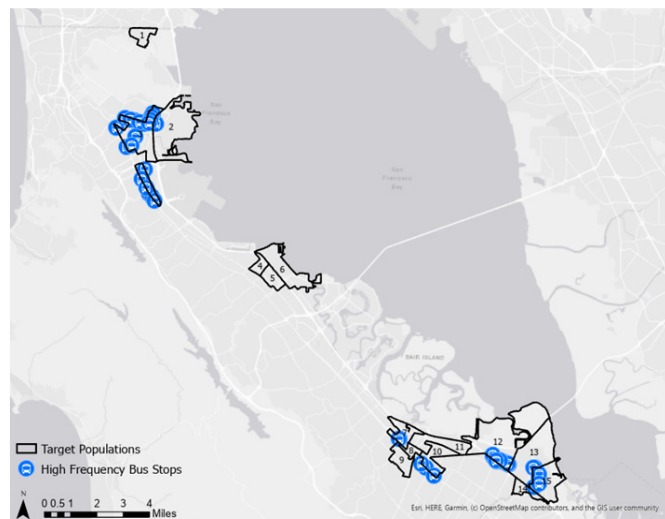


Figure 4: High-Frequency Bus Stops (image credit: Arup)



# Equity Program Alternatives

The project team developed four Equity Program Alternatives based on the community needs identified in Phase I. We then vetted these alternatives through a technical evaluation as well as a second phase of community engagement.

## Alternative 1 Pre-Loaded Toll Tags

Provide eligible recipients with a new FasTrak Flex toll tag that has been pre-loaded with \$50 cash value.

## Alternative 2 Cash on Clipper

Provide eligible recipients with \$50 cash value on a new or existing Clipper Card.

## Alternative 3 Place-Based Improvements

Construct pedestrian, bicycle, and transit safety improvements in historically disadvantaged neighborhoods throughout San Mateo County.

## Alternative 4 Carpool Rewards Program

Provide eligible recipients with up to \$50 cash value for making carpool trips.

## Technical Evaluation of the Alternatives

Arup developed an Equity Policy Evaluation Tool (EPET) to evaluate the performance of the four Equity Program Alternatives. The technical evaluation found that no single alternative clearly outperformed the others.

### Traffic Operations

None of the alternatives would have a meaningful impact on travel speeds. Alternative 1 (Pre-Loaded Toll Tags) and Alternative 4 (Carpool Rewards Program) could result in a slight decrease in speeds for the Express Lanes and a slight increase in travel speeds for general purpose lanes. However, these speed changes would be negligible from a traffic operations standpoint.

### Travel Costs

Alternatives 1 (Pre-Loaded Toll Tags) and 4 (Carpool Rewards Program) could result in a 2% decrease in average household travel costs for auto drivers. Alternative 2 (Cash on Clipper) could result in a 3% decrease in average household travel costs for transit riders. Alternative 3 would not have any household cost impacts.

### Place-Based Impacts

Alternative 3 (Place-Based Improvements) could have a positive impact on place-based metrics including first-last mile access, pedestrian and bicycle safety, availability of bicycle infrastructure, and urban heat island (missing tree canopy). The other alternatives would not have an impact, positive or negative, on any of these place-based metrics.

## Phase II Community Engagement

The second round of community engagement included four streams of outreach:

1. Community meeting ‘roadshow’ (17 meetings total)
2. Interviews with low-income individuals and representatives from local social service providers and CBOs (10 interviews total)
3. Multilingual virtual public meeting
4. Equity Study Advisory Committee (ESAC) workshop

Participants in ‘roadshow’ meetings expressed the most support for Alternatives 1 and 2 (or hybrid of Alternatives 1 and 2). Participants raised the value of providing access to the Express Lanes versus supporting public transit, which would encourage mode-shift and benefit people who don’t have access to a vehicle.

Interview participants expressed the most support for Alternatives 1 and 3. Many felt that it was important to provide access to the new Express Lanes. The vast majority of interview participants highlighted the need for safety improvements, especially at bus stops, though they also acknowledged that other funding sources exist for these improvements.

Successful program implementation is dependent upon a multilingual, culturally-sensitive education on a) how to use the Express Lanes and b) how to access the Pilot Equity Program.

There is a desire for additional funding to provide more substantial benefits. Many participants said \$50 is too low to be a meaningful benefit.

# Pilot Equity Program Recommendation

## Overview

The Pilot Equity Program responds to the community needs and challenges that were identified over the course of this study. We recognize that disadvantaged residents in San Mateo County have a variety of transportation needs: some households rely solely on public transit, while others require a vehicle to juggle complex commute schedules. Many households share a single vehicle, and kids and seniors disproportionately rely on public transit and walking or biking to get to get around. In developing the Equity Program, we aimed to provide benefits that would meet the breadth of these needs, while still ensuring that the individual program benefits are deep enough to make a substantial difference in expanding people's transportation options.

In May 2021, the SMCEL-JPA adopted a resolution to develop an implementation plan based on the Pilot Equity Program.



Image Credit: San Mateo Daily Journal

## The Pilot Equity Program recommendation consists of four parts:

### 1. Pre-loaded toll tags

Provide eligible recipients with a new FasTrak Flex toll tag that has been pre-loaded with \$50 cash value. This would be a one-time benefit for eligible households/vehicle owners. The recipient could re-load the toll tag with cash once the initial \$50 has been spent down, or use the toll tag to carpool in the Express Lanes for free (vehicles must have three or more people to carpool for free in the Express Lanes).

### 2. Cash on Clipper

Provide eligible recipients with \$50 cash value on a new or existing Clipper Card. This would be an annual benefit for eligible individuals with no limit to the number of people who could apply per-household. The recipient could re-load their Clipper Card with cash once the initial \$50 has been spent down.

### 3. Enroll qualified individuals in Clipper START and FasTrak START

Provide eligible recipients with \$50 cash value on a new or existing Clipper Card. This would be an annual benefit for eligible individuals with no limit to the number of people who could apply per-household. The recipient could re-load their Clipper Card with cash once the initial \$50 has been spent down.

### 4. Provide capacity to local organizations to educate and enroll participants

Barriers such as a lack of internet access and limited English proficiency could limit the reach and impact of the Pilot Equity Program. Local service providers and CBOs are already deeply embedded in the community and can help ensure that the Pilot Equity Program reaches those who need it most. Resources should be made available to partner with social services providers and CBOs for continued outreach, education, and enrollment.



## Funding

The SMCEL-JPA has committed to providing a minimum of \$1 million in the first year of the program and \$600,000 annually thereafter. This commitment is a floor, not a ceiling: available funding may increase over time as demand for the Express Lanes grows and other financial commitments, such as paying off the construction loan, have been met. We recommend that any additional funding should go toward increasing the annual Cash on Clipper benefit.



## Eligibility and Number of People Served

The Pilot Equity Program should use the same eligibility requirements as MTC's means-based discount programs – ClipperSTART and FasTrak START. Eligibility for ClipperSTART is currently based on 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), or about \$53,000 annual income for a family of four (based on the 2021 FPL). For the toll tag benefit, additional coordination with MTC will be needed to determine eligibility verification requirements related to vehicle ownership and registration as the FasTrak START program continues to be developed. Based on the per-benefit cost of \$50-\$70 and the current funding commitment of \$600,000 per year, the Pilot Equity Program could provide approximately 8,500 to 12,000 benefits annually. This does not necessarily equate to number of people served, as some people may claim both the toll tag and Cash on Clipper benefits.



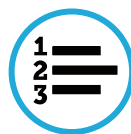
## Additional Recommendations

### Strategic Investment Plan

The SMCEL-JPA should develop a Strategic Investment Plan to identify and prioritize mobility investments for vulnerable communities beyond what can be currently funded through the Pilot Equity Program.

### Equity Program Advisory Committee

The SMCEL-JPA should establish an Equity Program Advisory Committee to provide guidance and feedback on program implementation and evaluation.



## Next Steps

The project team will develop an implementation plan in Summer 2021, with the goal of providing initial benefits when the first portion of the Express Lanes project opens in Winter 2021.

### Endnotes

1. Source: October 2018 Final Environmental Impact Report and Environmental Assessment (Final EIR/EA).
2. Most cities along the corridor were represented on the ESAC. Some cities and public agencies were invited but did not participate.
3. MTC's Communities of Concern dataset is based on the following: Income level (up to 200% of the Federal Poverty Level); non-white population; limited English proficiency; single female-headed households; no- or low-vehicle ownership; transit-dependency; older adults; youth; people with disabilities and paratransit users.

# Pilot Equity Program Recommendation

# Memorandum

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To	Matt Click and Lacy Vong San Mateo County Express Lanes Joint Powers Authority	Date April 21, 2021
Copies	Sean Charpentier, C/CAG Jessica Epstein, SMCTA	Reference number
From	Autumn Bernstein, Sophia Forde and Dahlia Chazan, Arup	File reference
Subject	San Mateo 101 Express Lanes Equity Study: Recommended Equity Program	

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## 1 Introduction

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This memorandum summarizes the Recommended Equity Program that was developed through the San Mateo US 101 Express Lanes Equity Study project. The Recommended Equity Program was developed through an iterative process that included community outreach, technical program evaluation, and consultation with project stakeholders.

## 2 Equity Study Purpose, Vision and Objectives

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### Overview

The purpose of the Equity Study is to develop a Pilot Equity Program to benefit historically underserved communities who either use – or live near – the US 101 freeway. The Pilot Equity Program will be funded with toll revenue from the new US 101 Express Lanes. The Equity Study is split into two phases, as described below.

### Phase One (May 2020-December 2020)

Phase One focused on understanding travel needs and existing conditions for underserved communities who live near – or use – US 101, including in-depth technical analysis to evaluate key demographic and travel demand data for the target population. This technical work was supplemented by a robust public engagement effort that included Community-based Organization (CBO)-led outreach; one-one-one interviews with stakeholders and community leaders; and regular convenings of an Equity Study Advisory Committee (ESAC). The project team also conducted a literature review to identify best practices related to congestion pricing and equity. This work was summarized in the Phase I Baseline Conditions and Needs Assessment Report.

# Memorandum

## Phase Two (January-May 2021)

The project team used the findings from Phase I to develop four Equity Program Alternatives. The four alternatives were vetted through a second round of community engagement as well as a quantitative and qualitative analysis of each alternative's performance against a variety of metrics. The project team used the results of the community engagement process and technical evaluation to develop a Recommended Equity Program. The results of this evaluation process and the Recommended Equity Program are summarized in this memorandum.

## Project Vision and Desired Outcomes

The following vision statement and desired outcomes were developed at the beginning of Phase 1 with input from the advisory committee, community leaders and the Joint Powers Authority (JPA) Board; they have served as guideposts throughout the project, including in the development and selection of alternatives.

### Vision

Our vision for this work is to develop a Pilot Equity Program that will be responsive to the transportation needs of historically underserved communities in San Mateo County and that will provide meaningful benefits to those communities. The Equity Study will prioritize program flexibility to enable the Pilot Equity Program to adapt and evolve over time, in parallel with phased implementation of the San Mateo 101 Express Lanes and in response to changing community needs. The Pilot Equity Program will also strive to integrate seamlessly into a regional equity strategy across the Bay Area's express lanes network.

### Desired Outcomes

The desired outcomes of the Equity Study are as follows:

- Develop an implementable Pilot Equity Program that is flexible and can adapt to changing needs and community feedback over time.
- Identify equity strategies that are most beneficial to underserved communities who live near the lanes, as well as low-income travelers who are likely to utilize the Express Lanes.
- Where possible, identify equity strategies that are replicable and could potentially be applied or expanded to other express lanes in the region.
- Ensure communities who have had historically low involvement with planning decisions see their input broadly reflected in Equity Program design and implementation.
- Encourage mode shift from single-occupancy vehicles to transit and other high-occupancy modes, especially within the Express Lanes.
- Improve the safety and connectivity of the active transportation network in communities adjacent to the corridor.

# Memorandum

- Ensure the Pilot Equity Program supports the Express Lanes project benefits and goals, including improving mobility, travel time, and reliability.

## Equity Program Funding

The Pilot Equity Program will be funded with revenue from the new US 101 Express Lanes. The JPA has committed to providing a minimum of \$1 million in the first year and \$600,000 annually thereafter. This commitment is a floor, not a ceiling: available funding may increase over time as demand for the lanes grows and other financial commitments, such as paying off the construction loan, have been met.

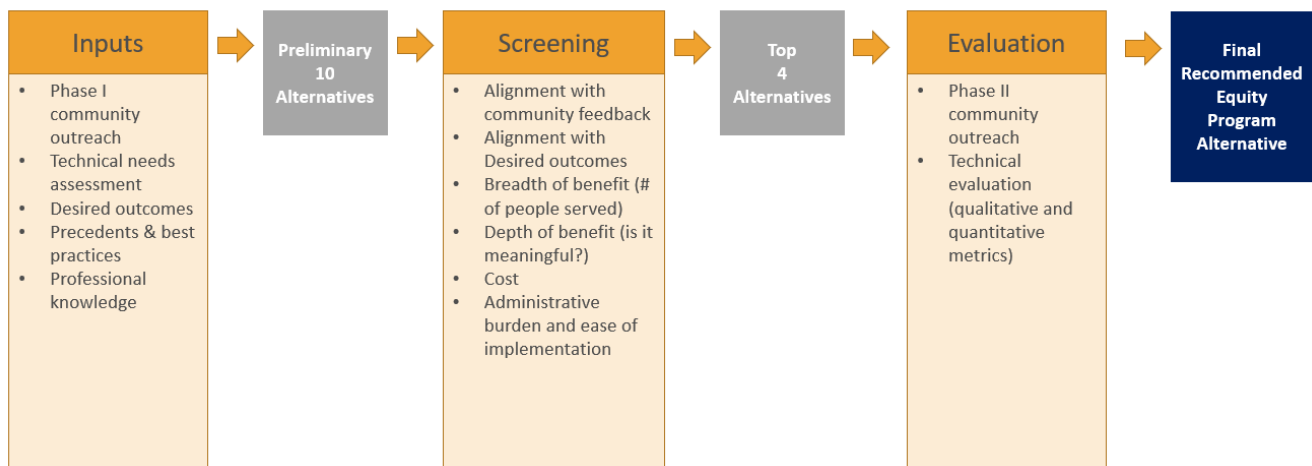
## 3 Alternatives Development Process

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The alternatives development process focused on four Equity Program Alternatives that were designed to respond to the community needs and mobility challenges identified through Phase I of this project (see Figure 1). In developing the four Equity Program Alternatives, the project team first developed a “long list” of ten preliminary alternatives that captured the range of potential ideas and strategies that were identified in Phase I. The list of ten preliminary alternatives was then screened based on a variety of factors, including: cost, depth of benefit, administrative burden, alignment with desired outcomes, and alignment with community feedback from the Phase I outreach.

As a result of this preliminary screening process, four alternatives were advanced: 1) Pre-Loaded Toll Tags, 2) Cash on Clipper, 3) Place-Based Improvements, and 4) Carpool Rewards Program. These four concepts represented the best performing options from the list of 10 preliminary alternatives and met the project team’s desire to advance a range of distinct options for technical screening and community feedback.

Figure 1: Alternatives Development Process



# Memorandum

## Summary of the Four Equity Program Alternatives

### **Alternative 1: Pre-Loaded Toll Tags**

*Provide eligible recipients<sup>1</sup> with a new FasTrak Flex toll tag that has been pre-loaded with \$50 cash value.*

This would be a one-time benefit for eligible households or vehicle owners. The recipient could re-load their toll tag with cash once the initial \$50 has been spent down. A key benefit of this alternative is that users who receive the toll tag would be able to take advantage of the express lane carpool benefit: vehicles with 3 or more occupants will be able to use the lanes for free, and vehicles with 2 occupants will be charged a discounted toll. Approximate benefit is up to \$70 per participating household per year (\$20 deposit plus \$50 cash value), not including free or discounted carpool trips that recipients may choose to take.<sup>2</sup>

### **Alternative 2: Cash on Clipper**

*Provide eligible recipients with \$50 cash value on a new or existing Clipper Card.*

This would be an annual benefit for eligible participants, and there would be no limit to the number of people who could apply per household. The recipient could re-load the Clipper card with cash once the initial \$50 has been spent. A key benefit of this alternative is incorporating vulnerable populations into the Clipper system, thus avoiding cash surcharges and enabling qualified users to take advantage of MTC's Clipper START means-based fare reduction program. Approximate benefit is \$50 per recipient per year.

### **Alternative 3: Pedestrian, Bicycle and Transit Improvements (Place-Based Improvements)**

*Construct pedestrian, bicycle and transit safety improvements in historically disadvantaged neighborhoods throughout San Mateo County.*

Whereas the other three alternatives provide a direct cash benefit to recipients, this alternative would construct physical, place-based capital improvements in disadvantaged communities throughout the county. Example improvements include new bike lanes, ADA ramps, bus shelters, new/modified traffic signals, and intersection safety improvements. The per-unit cost varies widely depending on the type of improvement, from approximately \$20,000 for bus stop improvements to \$1.3 million for major intersection and signal upgrades. This program could be implemented via an annual call for projects, allowing local jurisdictions to apply for funds, or by compiling a list of priority projects to be implemented over a multi-year timeframe.

### **Alternative 4: Carpool Rewards Program**

*Provide eligible recipients with up to \$50 cash value for making carpool trips.*

Users would be able to claim a cash incentive for making carpool trips, up to \$50 per year. Both drivers and passengers would be eligible. This would be an annual benefit for eligible participants (users could

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<sup>1</sup> See Section 6: Recommended Equity Program for recommended eligibility requirements.

<sup>2</sup> Currently a \$20 security deposit is required for each new toll tag on an account not linked to a credit card or bank account.



# Memorandum

re-apply each year), and there would be no limit to the number of people who could apply per household. Potential models include Commute.org's carpool rewards program, where users can log trips via a smartphone app (though additional options would need to be provided for users without access to a smartphone). Approximate benefit is \$50 per user per year.

## 4 Technical Evaluation

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### Equity Policy Evaluation Tool

Arup developed an Equity Policy Evaluation Tool (EPET) to evaluate the performance of the four equity alternatives against a variety of qualitative and quantitative metrics, including operational impacts to the toll lanes. Using the EPET, Arup evaluated each of the four equity alternatives against a baseline condition that assumed full build-out of the express lanes project with no equity program. Once this baseline was established, it was possible to evaluate the relative impact that each of the four alternatives had on traffic operations and traveler costs, as well as qualitative community/built environment characteristics. Appendix A provides more details on the development of the tool.

### Findings

Key technical findings are described below and are summarized in Table 1.

#### Traffic Operations

Alternative 1 would result in a 2-4 mph decrease to travel speeds for the Express Lanes, and a 2 mph increase to travel speeds for general purpose lanes (note that general purpose lane speeds increase as a result of travelers being incentivized to use the Express Lanes, which pulls cars away from general purpose lanes and into the express lanes; due to the limited speed changes it is assumed that overall traffic volumes remain constant without any induced traffic).

Alternative 4 would result in a 2 mph increase to general purpose lane travel speeds and a 1-2 mph decrease to travel speeds for the Express Lanes. Because carpooling consolidates travelers into fewer vehicles, the negative impact to Express Lane speeds is lower for Alternative 4 than for Alternative 1. Alternative 4 has the added benefit of incentivizing carpool trips over single occupancy vehicle (SOV trips); it thus has the same positive speed benefit for general purpose lane travel speed as Alternative 1.

For both Alternatives 1 and 4, the speed impacts (both positive and negative) to the express lanes and the general purpose lanes are small enough as to be considered negligible from a traffic operations standpoint.

#### Travel Costs

Alternatives 1 and 4 would both result in a 2% decrease for average auto travel costs. Alternative 2 would result in a 3% decrease for average transit travel costs. Alternative 3 would not have an impact on travel costs.

# Memorandum

## Qualitative Metrics

Alternative 3 would positively impact many of the qualitative evaluation criteria used in this analysis. Constructing new pedestrian, bicycle, and transit safety improvements in disadvantaged communities would result in meaningful impacts to many of the qualitative metrics that were identified in Phase I of this study, including: first-last mile access; pedestrian and bicycle safety (i.e. prevalence of crashes, injuries and fatalities); availability of bicycle infrastructure; impact to local traffic volumes; and urban heat island (i.e. missing tree canopy). It should be noted, however, that these benefits would only be realized in the specific locations as relevant improvements are rolled out over time.

Alternative 4 positively impacts local traffic volumes and total housing + transportation (H+T) costs and has no impact on the other qualitative metrics.

Alternatives 1 and 2 positively impact total housing + transportation (H+T) costs and has no impact on the other qualitative metrics.

In summary, the technical analysis finds that no single alternative clearly outperforms the others. All four alternatives would have a small, positive impact on several key metrics. These positive impacts are as varied as the alternatives themselves. None of the alternatives would negatively impact surrounding communities, and the predicted speed changes on the US 101 are essentially negligible.

# Memorandum

Table 1: Technical Evaluation Key Findings

Metrics	Alternative 1: Pre-Loaded Toll Tags	Alternative 2: Cash on Clipper	Alternative 3: Place Based Improvements	Alternative 4: Carpool Rewards Program
<b>Quantitative Metrics</b>				
Average impact to General Purpose Lanes Speed	2mph	NA	NA	2mph
Average impact to Express Lanes Speed	-2 to -4 mph	NA	NA	-1 to -2 mph
Change to average Travel Cost (Auto)	-2%	NA	NA	-2%
Change to average Travel Cost (Transit)	NA	-3%	NA	NA
<b>Qualitative Metrics</b>				
Impact on Total H+T Costs	+	+	NA	+
Impact on First/Last Mile Access	NA	NA	+	NA
Impact on Pedestrian Safety	NA	NA	+	NA
Impact on Bike Safety	NA	NA	+	NA
Impact on Bike Infrastructure	NA	NA	+	NA
Impact on Local Traffic Volumes	NA	NA	+	+
Impact on Urban Heat Island	NA	NA	+	NA

Legend	
	Not Applicable
	Strong negative impact
	Moderate negative impact
	Minor negative impact
	Minor positive impact
	Moderate positive impact
	Strong positive impact

# Memorandum

## 5 Community Feedback: Phase II Outreach

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### Summary

The Phase II community engagement process focuses on soliciting feedback on the four equity program alternatives under evaluation. This outreach built upon the Phase I engagement, and some groups were contacted during both phases of the outreach process.

The Phase II community engagement process consisted of four streams of outreach:

1. Community meeting ‘roadshow’ of presentations to local boards and commissions
2. Interviews with a) low-income individuals and b) representatives of service providers and community-based organizations
3. Virtual (Zoom) public meeting
4. Equity Study Advisory Committee (ESAC) workshop

Key themes are summarized below:

- During the community meeting roadshow, Alternatives 1 and 2 received the most support. There was discussion on the value of providing access to the Express Lanes versus supporting public transit, encouraging mode-shift, and benefiting people who don’t have access to a vehicle. Many participants also expressed support for a hybrid of Alternatives 1 and 2.
- Alternatives 1 and 3 received the most support from interview participants. Many felt that it was important to provide access to the new Express Lanes. All interview participants expressed the strong need for safety improvements and, in particular, improvements to bus stops. However, many expressed that other funding sources should be used for capital improvements.
- Multilingual, culturally sensitive education on a) how to use the Express Lanes and b) how to access the Pilot Equity Program will be key to successful program implementation.
- There is a desire for additional funding to provide more substantial benefits.
- For cash benefits (Alternatives 1, 2 and 4), some people expressed that \$50 is too low to be a meaningful benefit.

Table 2 illustrates key evaluation criteria from the Phase II community engagement process mapped against the four equity program alternatives.

# Memorandum

Table 2: Key Criteria from Phase II Community Engagement

Criteria	Alternative 1: Toll Benefit	Alternative 2: Transit Benefit	Alternative 3: Place Based Improvements	Alternative 4: Carpool Benefit
Improves access to the Express Lanes	X			
Benefits residents who don't have access to a vehicle		X	X	
Improves mobility for youth/seniors		X	X	
Overlaps with benefits provided by other programs/funding sources		X	X	X
Provides a direct cash benefit to individuals/households	X	X		X
Provides a long-term, targeted investment in disadvantaged communities			X	

## Community Meeting Roadshow

The project team presented to 17 local boards, commissions, and community groups in San Mateo County to solicit their feedback on the proposed equity program alternatives. A list of these meetings is provided in Appendix B.

Alternative 1 (pre-loaded toll tags) and Alternative 2 (cash on Clipper) received the most support during the roadshow portion of the Phase II outreach. Some participants felt that supporting access to the new express lanes via Alternative 1 should be the key focus for the Pilot Equity Program. Others felt that funds should be directed towards supporting access to public transit, both to support mode-shift goals and to benefit disadvantaged residents who do not have a car or are not able to drive (e.g. youth and seniors). This trade-off between supporting access to the express lanes versus supporting transit ridership was a key theme throughout the Phase II community feedback. Many participants also expressed support for a hybrid of Alternatives 1 and 2.

Alternative 3 received strong support from a smaller sub-set of meeting participants. Some felt that Alternative 3 would provide a more meaningful long-term benefit for vulnerable communities by constructing permanent infrastructure investments, especially in light of the relatively small cash value proposed for Alternatives 1, 2 and 4. Others articulated that cash benefits can be rolled out quickly and can be targeted at vulnerable populations countywide, as opposed to capital improvements located in specific neighborhoods that will take years to construct and carry a high administrative burden. Several people also articulated that there are other funding sources available for capital improvements.

The need for sustained, culturally sensitive and multi-lingual outreach and engagement was a common theme expressed by many participants. This includes educating the community on how to use the new express lanes and how to participate in the Pilot Equity Program.

# Memorandum

## Interviews

In addition to the roadshow, the project team interviewed 10 individual community members and service providers / CBO staff to gain more nuanced, in-depth feedback on the proposed equity program alternatives and on community mobility needs more generally.

After hearing about the four equity program alternatives, interviewees were asked to state which alternative best met their needs or the needs of the communities they serve. A summary of responses is shown in Table 3. Alternative 1 (pre-loaded toll tags), Alternative 3 (place-based improvements), or a combination of Alternatives 1 and 3 received the strongest support from interview participants. Many participants articulated that it’s difficult for people to get access to a FasTrak toll tag if they don’t live close to a cash sale location, and/or if they have limited access to the internet and/or online banking. Providing a toll tag would lower the barrier to entry for people who otherwise may not try out the new express lanes.

**Table 3: Top Ranking Equity Program Alternatives - Interviews**

<b><i>Which equity program alternative best meets your needs or the needs of the communities you serve?</i></b>	
<b>Alternative</b>	<b># of Responses</b>
Combo of Alternatives 1 and 3	3
Alternative 1	3
Alternative 3	3
Alternative 2	1
Alternative 4	0
Total	10

While all participants expressed that there is a strong need for safety improvements on local streets, many also stated that this should be the responsibility of local jurisdictions, and/or that other sources of funding are available for these improvements. For the most part, those who expressed interest in a combination of Alternatives 1 and 3 stated that funds for Alternative 3 should be focused on small-scale, targeted interventions such as crosswalks and shelters/lighting at bus stops. The very poor condition of bus stops was a prominent theme across a many of the interviews.

In contrast to the roadshow feedback, interviewees expressed relatively little support for Alternative 2 (cash on Clipper). Many stated that the cash value was simply too low for Alternative 2 to be a meaningful benefit, even for those who are very low income and/or do not

have other viable travel options.

Interviewees stressed the need for ongoing, multi-lingual, and culturally sensitive community engagement. Specific recommendations include: leveraging existing service provider and CBO relationships; being sensitive to the needs of undocumented residents; inclusion of youth and seniors; and “meeting people where they are” by hosting pop-ups at community destinations such as high schools and local grocery stores.

# Memorandum

## Zoom Public Meeting

A general public meeting was held on March 18, 2021 to present the four equity program alternatives and receive input from participants. The meeting was held in four languages—English, Spanish, Mandarin and Cantonese—and advertised in multiple languages through a variety of outlets, including social media, CBOs, and through the networks of the JPA Board, ESAC members, and the local boards and commissions that received our “roadshow” presentation.

Forty-two people participated in the meeting. The majority of participants asked questions about the Express Lanes or the Equity Program. Among those who offered feedback on the four alternatives, we noted the following themes:

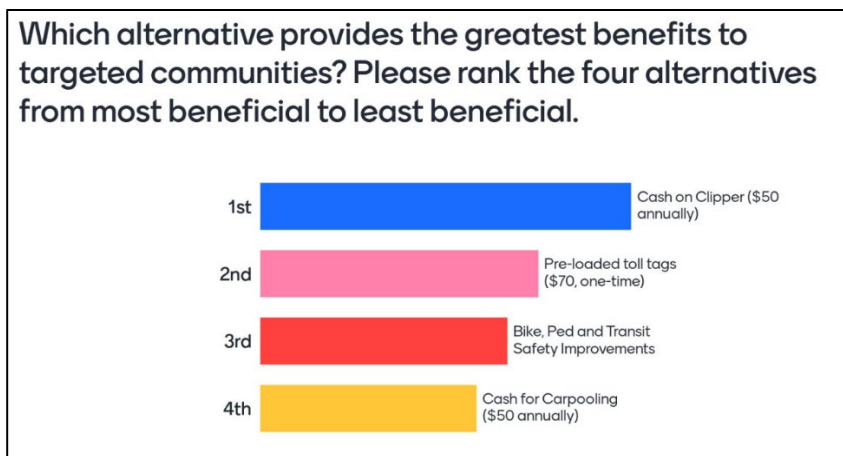
- Concern that communities would have difficulty accessing benefits in Alternative 3 (place-based improvements) if those funds are allocated via a competitive application process;
- Support for improvements that facilitate transit use (such as free transit) rather than driving;
- Transportation programs that serve older adults should be considered;
- Broader community benefits/needs should be considered, such as programs to reduce childhood asthma.

## ESAC

The Equity Study Advisory Committee (ESAC) comprises advocates and local practitioners representing jurisdictions across San Mateo County along with adjacent county transportation authorities and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC). The project team presented to the ESAC to gain their input on the proposed alternatives on February 25, 2021. The ESAC was able to provide direct feedback on the alternatives through real-time polling. Figure 2 shows their ranking of the four alternatives. Alternatives 2 (cash on Clipper) came in first followed by Alternative 1 (pre-loaded toll tags), Alternative 3 (place-based improvements) and lastly Alternative 4 (carpool rewards program).

# Memorandum

Figure 2 ESAC Polling Results: Ranking of the Equity Program Alternatives



Additional ESAC feedback:

- Ensure a low barrier to entry for accessing the benefit
- Other funding sources already exist for Alternative 3
- Prefer direct benefits, such as cash on clipper or pre-loaded toll tags
- Think broadly about mobility in the US 101 corridor and provision of transit along the corridor

## 6 Recommended Equity Program

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### Overview

The project team has developed a Recommended Equity Program that combines elements of Alternative 1 (pre-loaded toll tags) and Alternative 2 (cash on Clipper), along with a focus on enrolling qualifying individuals in existing and anticipated benefit programs.

This hybrid approach recognizes that disadvantaged residents in San Mateo County have a variety of mobility needs and challenges. By providing both a toll tag benefit and a transit benefit, the Recommended Equity Program serves residents who rely on public transit as well as those who need to drive. Many families rely on a combination of driving and public transit for different family members – e.g., high-school aged children might take the bus to get to school, while parents carpool to take younger children to school and drive to work or other destinations. Providing people with a new toll tag also helps encourage carpooling by enabling free use of the Express Lanes with a 3+ carpool, or discounted toll for a 2-person carpool.

The Recommended Equity Program also includes a commitment to enroll qualifying individuals in MTC’s regional low-income discount programs – Clipper START (currently active) and FasTrak START (under development) – which can significantly reduce transportation costs.



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Clipper START is one of the most substantial mobility benefits available to San Mateo County residents, and the proposed FasTrak START program will provide additional benefits once implemented. The Recommended Equity Program is designed to complement and leverage these regional benefits by providing people with a new FasTrak toll tag and/or Clipper card as well as initial funds to immediately access these benefits.

This approach also fosters regional interoperability and could be easily replicated by other express lane operators across the Bay Area. This was a key desired outcome for the project, because many San Mateo County workers and residents regularly travel across county lines.

The Recommended Equity Program also includes a provision to fund local organizations and service providers to educate and enroll qualifying individuals in these programs. This provision is key to ensuring the benefits of the Equity Program reach those who need them most.

## Alternatives Not Advanced

While Alternatives 1 and 2 received substantial community support, many people also expressed interest in Alternative 3 – Place Based Improvements. The project team ultimately determined not to include place-based improvements as part of the Recommended Equity Program for a variety of factors, including:

- Relatively high administrative cost to develop and implement a project evaluation and selection process.
- Challenges related to geographic equity, as the budget and timeline for implementing capital projects means that many disadvantaged residents/neighborhoods would not see any benefits for years to come.
- Difficult to implement as a pilot
- Other funding sources currently exist for capital projects.

The need for bike, pedestrian, and transit safety improvements was nonetheless clearly articulated by community members. We therefore recommend that the JPA and partner agencies prioritize funding for these needed improvements through a Strategic Investment Plan (see the Additional Recommendations section below for further details).

Alternative 4 (Carpool Rewards Program) performed well in the technical evaluation but received very little support through the public engagement process. Additionally, the project team notes that Alternative 1 (Pre-Loaded Toll Tags) provides a substantial incentive for carpooling. Alternative 4 was therefore not included as part of the Recommended Equity Program.

## Recommended Equity Program

The recommended equity program consists of four parts:

1. Pre-Loaded Toll Tags
2. Cash on Clipper

# Memorandum

3. Enroll qualified individuals in Clipper START and FasTrak START
4. Provide capacity to local organizations to conduct education and enrollment

## **1. Pre-Loaded Toll Tags**

Provide eligible recipients with a new FasTrak Flex toll tag that has been pre-loaded with \$50 cash value. This should be a one-time benefit for eligible households or vehicle owners (exact eligibility to be determined). The recipient could re-load the toll tag with cash once the initial \$50 has been spent or use the FasTrak toll tag to carpool in the Express Lanes for free with 3+ people.

## **2. Cash on Clipper**

Provide eligible recipients with \$50 cash value on a new or existing Clipper Card. This would be an annual benefit for eligible individuals, and there should be no limit to the number of people who could apply per household. The recipient could re-load the Clipper card with cash once the initial \$50 has been spent. The dollar amount of this benefit and/or the frequency with which it is provided should be increased as available funding allows (i.e. provide more than \$50 and/or make available more than once per year).

## **3. Enroll qualified individuals in Clipper START and FasTrak START**

A portion of program resources should be devoted to enrolling qualifying individuals in two regional programs that provide significant benefits to low-income travelers:

- Clipper START, the Bay Area's regional transit fare discount program that provides low-income individuals with up to a 50% discount when they use SamTrans, Caltrain, BART or other participating transit services. Clipper START is administered by MTC.
- FasTrak START, a program currently under development by MTC that proposes to provide discounted tolls on Express Lanes to qualifying low-income individuals. Details on the size of discounts and eligibility requirements are still being developed. Representatives of the SMCEL-JPA sit on an advisory committee that is providing input to the development of FasTrak START.

## **4. Provide capacity to local organizations to educate and enroll participants.**

Barriers such as a lack of internet access and limited English proficiency could limit the reach and impact of the Pilot Equity Program. Local service providers and community-based organizations are uniquely positioned to reach targeted populations to ensure they receive these benefits. These organizations currently provide food, clothing, housing assistance, employment support and other supportive services to the populations in San Mateo County this program is intended to serve. Resources should be made available to these organizations to conduct Equity Program outreach, education and enrollment.

# Memorandum

## Implementation Considerations

### Eligibility

For adults between the ages of 19-64, we recommend that the Pilot Equity Program adopt the same eligibility requirements as MTC's Clipper START program, which provides benefits for people making 200% of the Federal Poverty Level or less. It is anticipated that FasTrak START will align its eligibility requirements with Clipper START, allowing people who have enrolled in one program to easily be enrolled in the other.

Clipper START is currently limited to adults between the ages of 19-64. However, SamTrans and Caltrain both provide discounted fares for youth (18 and under) and seniors (65 and older). These are not means-based discounts, meaning that they are available for everyone in these age categories regardless of income or other factors. Providing transportation benefits to youth and seniors was a key recommendation from the community engagement process. However, it is beyond the scope of this study to recommend whether youth and seniors who are not disadvantaged should be eligible for the Pilot Equity Program. Additional work is needed to determine whether and how to provide benefits to low-income seniors and youth who are not eligible for ClipperStart but who otherwise would be eligible for the Pilot Equity Program.

For the toll tag benefit, additional work and coordination with MTC will be needed to determine eligibility verification requirements related to vehicle ownership and registration.

### Program Costs and Number of People Served

To estimate the number of people who could be served by the Pilot Equity Program, we assume a per benefit cost of \$50-\$70 for the pre-loaded toll tags and Cash on Clipper. The lower end of this estimate (\$50 per benefit) assumes that all administrative costs are covered by other funding sources, so that 100% of the \$600,000 annual budget flows directly to benefits for qualified recipients. The higher estimate (\$70 per benefit) is a more conservative assessment, as it assumes some administrative costs will come out of the \$600,000 annual budget for the Pilot Equity Program. See below for a high-level overview of anticipated administrative costs.

Based on the per-benefit cost of \$50-\$70 and the current funding commitment of \$600,000 per year, the Pilot Equity Program could provide approximately 8,500 to 12,000 benefits annually. Note that this does not necessarily equate to number of people served, as some people may claim both the toll tag and Cash on Clipper benefits.

By comparison, the estimated number of individuals in San Mateo County who qualify for Clipper START is 80,000. These are individuals between the ages of 18-64 whose income is less than 200% of the federal poverty level.

### Timing and Resource Constraints

The current budget does not provide sufficient resources to provide both the pre-paid toll tags and Cash on Clipper to all eligible individuals and households in San Mateo County. However, it is unrealistic to

# Memorandum

assume full participation for a variety of reasons. Many individuals will not hear about the program, despite best efforts to reach as many as possible. Some who hear about the program may not choose to participate because they don't perceive the benefit as being worth the effort to enroll.

The JPA should establish a policy for managing over-subscription in case demand exceeds available resources. Is the program first-come first-serve on an annual basis? Is there a use-it or lose-it policy for the annual Clipper benefit? Conversely, the JPA should also develop a policy to determine how surplus revenues should be used if the program is under-subscribed. This policy could be developed as part of the strategic investment plan described below.

Because the toll tag is a one-time cost for drivers, we anticipate that demand for this benefit will decrease over time as the percentage of eligible households who have a toll tag increases and reaches saturation point. As the demand for new toll tags decreases, surplus resources could be directed to the Cash on Clipper benefit. As mentioned above, funding for the equity program may increase over time. We recommend that the dollar amount and/or frequency of the transit benefit be increased above \$50 per person per year as resources allow (i.e. provide more than \$50 and/or make available more than once per year).

## Administrative Costs and Staffing

We provide a high-level summary of likely administrative costs and staffing needs below. Developing a more detailed operating budget will be a critical next step as part of the Implementation Plan.

Categories of likely administrative costs:

- Funding for service providers/CBOs to provide community outreach, education and enrollment
- Toll tag purchases and deposits
- Payments to MTC for administrative costs related to eligibility verification and program implementation
- Internal administrative services, such as finance, payments and auditing.
- Ongoing policy/programmatic work and evaluation
  - Overall program management
  - Oversee development and implementation of the Strategic Investment Plan
  - Coordinate with MTC on FasTrak START design, integration, eligibility verification and other issues
  - Recruit, staff and provide stipends to Equity Program Advisory Committee

## Strategic Investment Plan

The JPA should develop a Strategic Investment Plan to identify and prioritize mobility investments for vulnerable communities beyond what can be currently funded through the Pilot Equity Program. The Strategic Investment Plan should serve as blueprint for leveraging additional funding sources, including state and federal grants, local dollars, and private/philanthropic giving, as well as future increases in toll revenues.

# Memorandum

## **Equity Program Advisory Committee**

The JPA should establish an Equity Program Advisory Committee comprised primarily of low-income individuals who are residents of targeted communities, as well as representatives of community-based organizations and service providers that work with these populations. The committee should meet periodically on an ongoing basis to provide guidance and oversight on program implementation and evaluation, and to oversee development and implementation of the Strategic Investment Plan. Committee members should receive compensation for their service.

## **Evaluation of the Pilot Program**

The JPA should initiate an evaluation of the Pilot Equity Program one year after the opening of the second segment. This evaluation should gather qualitative and quantitative data on the successes and challenges of the Equity Program and make recommendations for how to improve the program going forward. The evaluation should include robust engagement of low-income individuals and the organizations that work directly with them. This time period will allow for sufficient data collection to inform a meaningful evaluation effort and will also provide a buffer period as transportation patterns shift in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **Continue to Prioritize Partnerships and Share Lessons Learned**

The JPA should continue to prioritize regional interoperability through partnerships with MTC, the Bay Area Infrastructure Financing Authority (BAIFA), and the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA).

Additionally, the JPA should capture lessons learned through this innovative project and make findings available to interested agencies and community organizations in the Bay Area and beyond. Partnerships with academic institutions and researchers could assist with data collection and analysis and allow for further dissemination of findings.

# Memorandum

## Appendix A – Technical Analysis Methodology

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The Equity Program Evaluation Tool (EPET) represents a simple database of data inputs, assumptions and policy definitions in a spreadsheet format. A front-end user interface provides the functionality to select pre-defined policy options (i.e. the four equity alternatives) and evaluate them based on their impact to the fifteen target geographies that were identified in Phase I of this study.<sup>3</sup> The impacts of this analysis can then be visualized through the tool using data tables and graphs. By providing the option to select different equity alternatives for different target geographies, multiple combinations of interventions can be tested.

### Traffic Operations Analysis

A transportation operations analysis was performed to a) establish a baseline, and b) evaluate the impact of the four equity program alternatives on traffic operations for the Express Lanes. The project leveraged data inputs and operational metrics from previous modelling work conducted by AECOM and Kittelson in the Transportation Operations Analysis Report (TOAR) for the US 101 Managed Lanes Project. Arup's analysis used the Preferred Build Alternative from the Final EIR/EA (i.e. the HOV 3+ add lane scenario) for the baseline condition. The project team summarized metrics by simplified US 101 segments to better relate to the fifteen target geographies and to assign volumes to US 101 from the target geographies.

### Qualitative Analysis

Arup identified a set of qualitative community and built environment characteristics to a) inform the baseline condition (no equity program), and b) provide a basis for scoring the four equity program alternatives.

The purpose of the qualitative evaluation was to inform an analysis of current infrastructure or service deficiencies that impact travel behavior or mode choice in the fifteen target geographies. The qualitative metrics were compiled from multiple open source data sources and were analyzed in a geographic information system (GIS) to provide a baseline for each metric. The GIS data was then aggregated and summarized for all 15 target geographies and indexed relative to each targeted geography. A countywide comparison was also analyzed to understand how the targeted geographies performed for all qualitative metrics relative to a San Mateo countywide average.

With the available data and tools, it is not possible to quantify the impact an equity program could have on the qualitative metrics. However, by defining a clear numeric baseline for the qualitative metrics, it was possible to define the range of potential impact – such as a minor or a major positive impact – for each of the proposed equity alternatives.

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<sup>3</sup> See the Baseline Conditions and Needs Assessment Report for a detailed explanation of how the fifteen target geographies were identified.

# Memorandum

## Appendix B: List of Community ‘Roadshow’ Meetings

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<b>Board, Commission or Organization</b>	<b>Date of Presentation</b>
Commuter.org Board of Directors	February 18, 2021
San Mateo Commission on Disabilities Accessible Transportation Committee	February 22, 2021
TEAMC	February 23, 2021
SamTrans Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC)	February 24, 2021
North Fair Oaks Community Council	February 25, 2021
San Mateo County Transportation Authority Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC)	March 2, 2021
San Mateo County Transportation Authority (TA) BOD	March 4, 2021
Central Labor Council	March 8, 2021
SAMCEDA	March 9, 2021
SMC Paratransit Coordinating Council	March 9, 2021
SSF Traffic Safety Commission	March 9, 2021
Redwood City Transportation Committee	March 9, 2021
San Mateo Sustainability & Infrastructure Commission	March 10, 2021
City/County Association of Governments of San Mateo County BOD	March 11, 2021
East Palo Alto Transportation Committee	March 17, 2021
Redwood City Veterans Senior Center	March 24, 2021
Safe Routes to Schools	March 24, 2021

# **May 2021 SMCEL JPA Board Presentation**



## **May 2021 SMCEL JPA Board Presentation: Pilot Equity Program Recommendation**

The following presentation was given to the SMCEL JPA Board by equity program staff on May 14, 2021. This presentation summarizes the Pilot Equity Program Recommendation.

The project team presented to the SMCEL JPA at key milestones throughout this project. Additional presentations can be found on the SMCEL JPA website: [www.smcexpresslanes.org/studies-policies-2/equity-study](http://www.smcexpresslanes.org/studies-policies-2/equity-study)

**SAN MATEO 101**

**EXPRESS LANES PROJECT**



**SMC Express Lanes JPA**

# **JPA Board Meeting**

**San Mateo 101 Express Lanes Equity Study**

**May 14, 2021**

# Agenda

1. Project Timeline
2. Recap Equity Program Alternatives
3. Stakeholder and Community Feedback
4. Recommended Equity Program
5. Next Steps

# Project Timeline

We are here

Description	Summer 2020	Fall 2020	Winter 2020/2021	Spring 2021	Summer 2021
<b>Baseline Conditions and Needs Assessment</b>					
ESAC facilitation	★	★ ★	★ ★	★	
Literature review					
Define equity metrics					
Demographic and travel analysis					
Public engagement (phase I)					
Publish final needs assessment					
<b>Equity Program Recommendation</b>					
Draft & analyze 3-4 equity program alternatives					
Public engagement (phase II)					
Recommend preferred alternative					
Board review and approval					
Develop implementation plan					

# Recap: Equity Program Alternatives

Development & Technical Evaluation

# Desired Outcomes



Flexible and adaptive to changing needs and feedback.



Encourage mode shift to high-occupancy modes.



Strategies benefit underserved communities who live near or use the lanes.



Supports the Express Lanes benefits and goals (mobility, travel time, and reliability).



Program reflects input from historically marginalized communities.

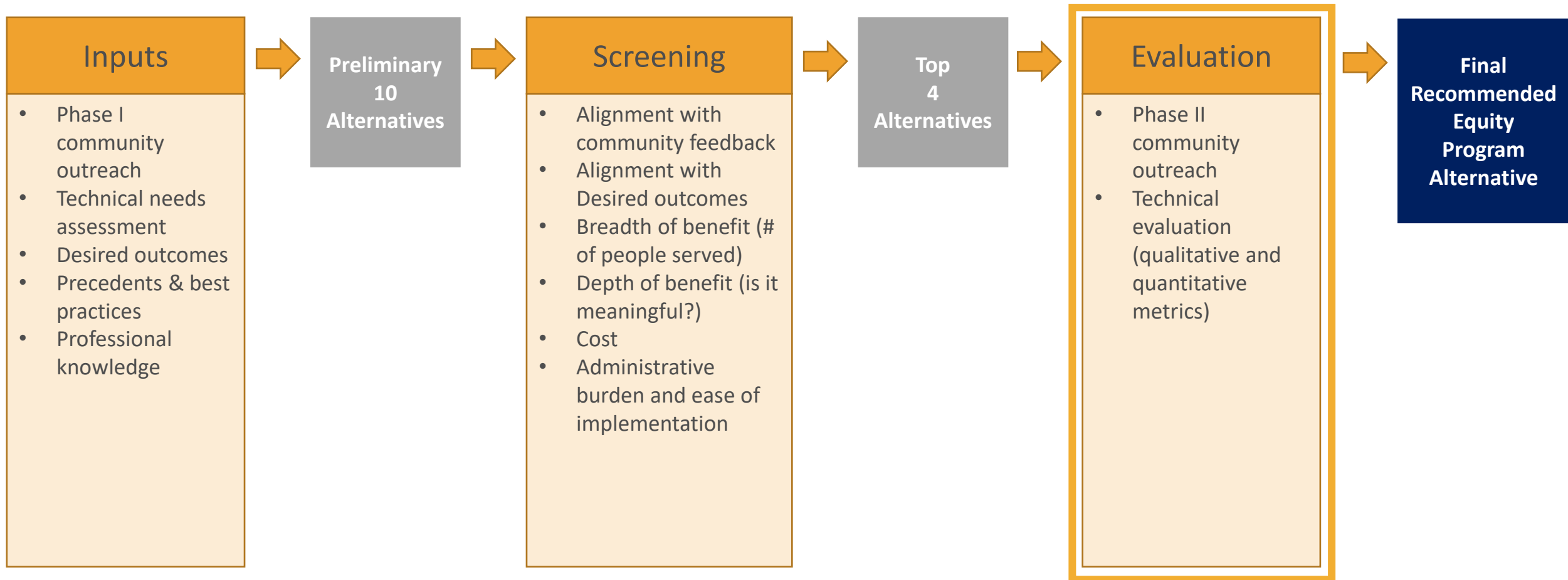


Improve active transportation network adjacent to the corridor.



Strategies are replicable and could be expanded regionally.

# Alternatives Development Process



We are here

# Four Equity Program Alternatives

## Alternative 1: Toll Benefit

### Pre-loaded \$50 Toll Tags

- Provide one-time benefit of pre-loaded toll tags to eligible households
- \$50 cash benefit plus security deposit
- Toll tags can be reloaded online (with a credit or debit card), by mail, or at cash payment locations

## Alternative 2: Transit Benefit

### \$50 Cash-On-Clipper Benefit

- Provide \$50 per year to eligible individuals as cash value on a Clipper Card for use on any regional transit service that accepts payment via Clipper

## Alternative 3: Place Based Improvements

### Biking, Walking, & Transit Safety Improvements

- Build safety improvements in historically disadvantaged communities in San Mateo County on the 101 Corridor
- Example projects: Bike lanes, ADA ramps, new/modified traffic signals, bus shelters, intersection improvements
- Communities could apply for the funding

## Alternative 4: Carpool Rewards Program

### \$50 Cash Benefit for Carpool Trips

- Provide carpool cash benefit up to \$50 per year for eligible individuals
- Both drivers and passengers eligible



# Technical Evaluation Results

## **Alternative 1 (Toll Benefit)**

- Small reduction in household transportation costs for automobile drivers.
- Very minor impact to traffic operations.

## **Alternative 2 (Cash on Clipper)**

- Small reduction in household transportation costs for transit users.
- No impact to traffic operations.

## **Alternative 3 (Place Based Improvements)**

- Provides greater multi modal benefits in some of the 15 Targeted Geographies.
- Level of impact depends on existing conditions in each area and type of investment.
- No impact to traffic operations or household transportation costs.

## **Alternative 4 (Carpool Rewards Program)**

- Small reduction in household transportation costs for carpoolers.
- Helps reduce local traffic volumes by incentivizing shared trips.
- Very minor impact to traffic operations.

# Stakeholder and Community Feedback on Alternatives

Phase II Community Engagement  
March 2021

# Community Feedback Outreach Events

- **Community roadshow**
  - 17 presentations to local boards and commissions
- **Interviews**
  - 10 interviews with a) community members and b) representatives from service providers and community-based organizations
- **Virtual (Zoom) public meeting**
- **Equity Study Advisory Committee (ESAC) workshop**

<b>Community Roadshow Presentations</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Commute.org Board of Directors</b>	February 18, 2021
<b>San Mateo Commission on Disabilities Accessible Transportation Committee</b>	February 22, 2021
<b>TEAMC</b>	February 23, 2021
<b>SamTrans Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC)</b>	February 24, 2021
<b>North Fair Oaks Community Council</b>	February 25, 2021
<b>San Mateo County Transportation Authority Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC)</b>	March 2, 2021
<b>San Mateo County Transportation Authority (TA) BOD</b>	March 4, 2021
<b>Central Labor Council</b>	March 8, 2021
<b>SAMCEDA</b>	March 9, 2021
<b>SMC Paratransit Coordinating Council</b>	March 9, 2021
<b>SSF Traffic Safety Commission</b>	March 9, 2021
<b>Redwood City Transportation Committee</b>	March 9, 2021
<b>San Mateo Sustainability &amp; Infrastructure Commission</b>	March 10, 2021
<b>City/County Association of Governments of San Mateo County BOD</b>	March 11, 2021
<b>East Palo Alto Transportation Committee</b>	March 17, 2021
<b>Redwood City Veterans Senior Center</b>	March 24, 2021
<b>Safe Routes to Schools</b>	March 24, 2021

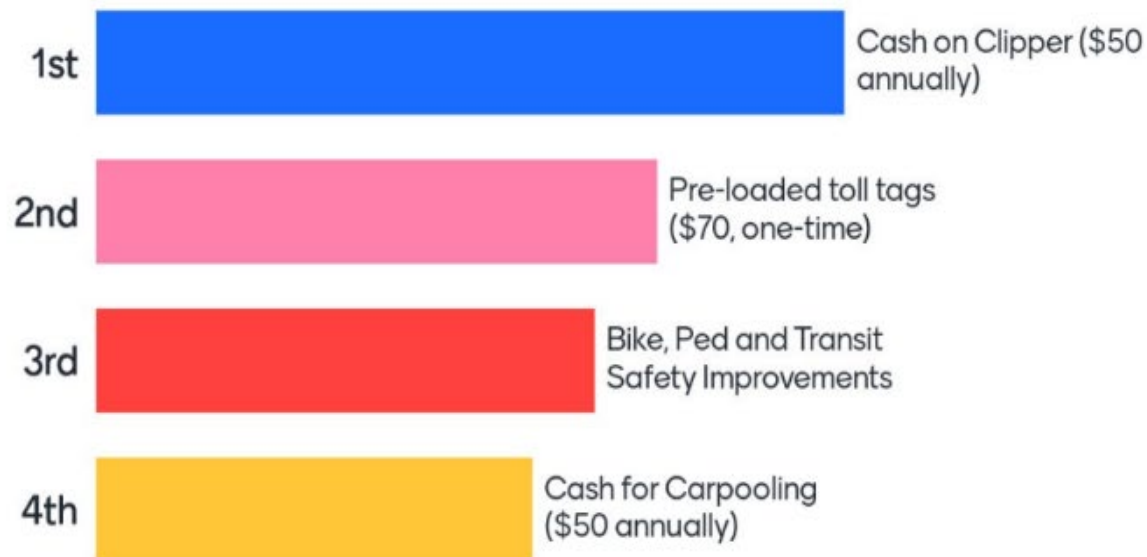
# Community Feedback

## Key Themes

- Alternatives #1 and #2 received broadest support
  - Mixed feedback on the value of promoting access to the express lanes vs. supporting transit ridership.
  - Some support for a hybrid option between Alternatives #1 and #2
- Strong support for Alternative #3 from some groups/individuals
  - Mixed feedback on the value of direct cash benefits vs. capital improvements
  - Some feel Alternative #3 provides a more meaningful long-term benefit
- Desire for additional funding to provide more substantial benefits
  - Concern that \$50 per benefit is very small
- Multilingual, culturally-sensitive education on the Express Lanes and Pilot Equity Program will be key to successful program implementation

# Community Feedback ESAC Workshop Results

Which alternative provides the greatest benefits to targeted communities? Please rank the four alternatives from most beneficial to least beneficial.



Additional ESAC feedback:

- Ensure a low barrier to entry for accessing the benefit
- Other funding sources already exist for Alternative 3
- Prefer direct benefits, such as cash on clipper or pre-loaded toll tags
- Think broadly about mobility in the US 101 corridor and provision of transit along the corridor

# Recommended Equity Program

# Recommended Equity Program

## Four components:

1. Pre-Loaded Toll Tags
2. Cash on Clipper
3. Enroll eligible individuals in Clipper START and FasTrak START
4. Fund local organizations to do education and enrollment

# Recommended Equity Program

## Eligibility

- We recommend adopting the same eligibility requirements as MTC's Clipper START program
  - Households whose income is less than 200% of the Federal Poverty Level
  - Approximately \$55,000 for a family of four
- Eligibility should be limited to San Mateo County residents.
- Eligible participants receive any combination of Equity Program benefits that meets their needs (eg toll tag + Cash on Clipper + Clipper START enrollment)



# Recommended Equity Program

## 1. Pre-Loaded Toll Tags

- Provide eligible recipients with a new FasTrak Flex toll tag that has been pre-loaded with \$50 cash value.
- One-time benefit for eligible households or vehicle owners (exact eligibility to be determined).
- Recipient could re-load the toll tag with cash once the initial \$50 has been spent or use the FasTrak toll tag to carpool in the Express Lanes for free with 3+ people.



FasTrak CAV Toll Tag



# Recommended Equity Program

## 2. Cash on Clipper

- Provide eligible recipients with \$50 cash value annually on a new or existing Clipper Card.
- Annual benefit for eligible individuals (no limit to # of people per household).
- Recipient receives all the benefits of being in the Clipper system
- In future, the dollar amount and/or frequency should be increased as funding allows.



# Recommended Equity Program

## 3. Enroll eligible individuals in MTC's regional means-based discount programs

### Clipper START

- Regional transit fare discount program
- 50% discount for SamTrans and Caltrain
- 20% discount for BART
- + discounts on other Bay Area transit services

### FasTrak START

- Currently under development
- Regional toll discount program
- Initial pilot in East Bay
- Details on the size of discounts and eligibility requirements are still being developed



# Recommended Equity Program

## 4. Fund local organizations to do education and enrollment

- Barriers could limit reach and impact of the Pilot Equity Program:
  - Lack of awareness of Pilot Equity Program
  - Limited internet access
  - Limited English proficiency
  - Complicated enrollment process
- Local service providers and community-based organizations are uniquely positioned to reach targeted populations.
- Resources should be made available to conduct Equity Program outreach, education and enrollment.



# Alignment with Desired Outcomes

## Desired Outcomes:



Flexible and adaptive to changing needs and feedback.



Strategies benefit underserved communities who live near or use the lanes.



Program reflects input from historically marginalized communities.



Strategies are replicable and could be expanded regionally.

## Included in Recommended Equity Program?

**Yes** – Program can be scaled based on user uptake, changing conditions, and community feedback.

**Yes** – The combined transit and toll lane benefit will provide maximum flexibility for users and is aligned with the mobility needs identified through the Phase I outreach process.

**Yes** – Program alternatives were designed to respond to Phase I outreach, vetted through Phase II outreach and revised for the final recommended program.

**Yes** – Leveraging regional programs (Clipper START and FasTrak START) will provide maximum interoperability.

# Alignment with Desired Outcomes

## Desired Outcomes:



Encourage mode shift to high-occupancy modes.



Supports the Express Lanes benefits and goals (mobility, travel time, and reliability).



Improve active transportation network adjacent to the corridor.

## Included in Recommended Equity Program?

**Yes** – Supports transit and carpool trips. Toll tag is a one-time benefit while transit benefits are ongoing.

**Yes** – Provides access to the US 101 express lanes and has a negligible impact on travel time and reliability for express lane users.

**No** – Does not directly improve the quality of the active transportation network adjacent to the corridor.

# Implementation Considerations

## **Anticipated Administrative costs**

- Funding for organizations to do to education and enrollment
- Toll tag purchases and deposits
- Program enrollment
- Marketing and education
- Administrative services
- Ongoing policy work and program management

## **Program Evaluation**

- To begin one year after the opening of the second segment

# Implementation Considerations

## **Eligibility and Enrollment Mechanism**

- We recommend that the Pilot Equity Program utilize MTC's Clipper START to verify eligibility and enroll participants
- Leveraging this existing regional program will reduce administrative costs and minimize barriers to entry.
- Further coordination is needed with MTC to develop an enrollment plan that also captures vehicle info (for toll tag and FasTrak START benefits). Toll tag benefit will not be available until this enrollment system is operational.

## **Number of people served**

- Based on available funding of \$600,000 per year, the Pilot Equity Program could provide approximately 8,500 to 12,000 benefits annually.
- Some people may receive both Cash on Clipper and Toll Tag benefits, so total individuals served may be lower than total benefits provided.



# Implementation Considerations

## **Strategic Investment Plan**

- Identity and prioritize mobility investments for vulnerable communities beyond what can be currently funded through the Pilot Equity Program.

## **Equity Program Advisory Committee**

- Comprised of low-income community members and other key stakeholders
- Provide guidance on program implementation/evaluation and creation of Strategic Investment Plan.

## **Partnerships and Lessons Learned**

- Ongoing partnerships with local and regional agencies
- Capture lessons learned to support implementation of peer programs.

# Next Steps

- Develop Equity Program Implementation Plan: *Summer – Fall 2021*
- Phased rollout of Equity Program: Exact timing TBD

Thank you!