

From: [Jon Welte](#)
To: [MTC-ABAG Info](#)
Subject: Freeway Congestion Pricing
Date: Tuesday, August 18, 2020 4:28:14 PM

External Email

To Whom It May Concern,

I saw the story in SFGATE regarding MTA's proposal to convert freeways into tollways. I strongly oppose this.

I appreciate the role that public transit plays in our regional transportation system, but the reality is that it is not a reasonable option for many workers – including many workers of modest means. Transit is too slow and trip opportunities too infrequent.

I used to live in San Jose about a block from a VTA light rail station only two stops away from San Jose Diridon. I tried taking VTA/Caltrain to work in San Carlos daily for five months before I gave up in disgust. My commute on transit was 1.25-1.5 hours each way including the walking to/from the stations and the waiting for trains (especially when transferring trains at Diridon). Driving the same route took 30 minutes in the morning and 60 minutes (due to increased traffic) in the evening. I switched back to driving to save 60-90 minutes per day roundtrip.

I know this isn't part of your proposal, but for sake of giving you some ground truth here is my current situation. I live in Belmont and still work in San Carlos, 4 miles away. There is actually a SamTrans bus line that runs from about a block away from my home to about two blocks away from work. I've lived in Belmont for seven years now and I still have never taken this bus to work. Why? Even though I do not have to make any transfers, it's a 40-minute scenic ride through Redwood Shores before the bus completes the trip. Plus 5-10 minutes of walking to bus stops, plus getting to the bus stop 5 minutes early since there is only 1 bus every 30 minutes and I wouldn't want to miss it. All told it would take almost an hour for me to ride one bus from home to work. Driving the four-mile trip takes eleven minutes in the morning (light traffic), and twenty minutes in the evening with awful traffic. Taking the bus would be a tremendous waste of time.

If you want to encourage folks to take transit, make it faster and more convenient so that it competes favorably with driving through traffic. If people really wanted to take it, they would pay more to do so. Your proposal would attempt to make up for the fact that public transit in our area stinks by forcing folks to pay more to drive so that driving stinks even more. California is supposed to be a shining star of progress in the world, I am sure that we can do better than that.

Jon Welte

VP Education and Public Programs

Hiller Aviation Museum

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