

BART Bicycle Advisory Task Force

March 18, 2025

TO: Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC)
Metro Center
375 Beale Street, Board Room
San Francisco, CA 94105

FROM: BART Bicycle Advisory Task Force

RE: Oppose Proposed Closure of Richmond-San Rafael Bridge Bicycle Path
(BCDC Meeting, April 3 - Item 8 - RSR Bridge Path Permits)

The BART Bicycle Advisory Task Force (BBATF) ~~unanimously and strongly opposes~~ the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) proposal to prematurely end the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge (RSR Bridge) Pilot Project and replace the dedicated multi-use path with a westbound breakdown/shoulder lane.

Instead, we urge the BCDC to:

- 1) **Withhold any permits that restrict or end bicycle, wheelchair, and pedestrian access** to the existing path;
- 2) **Keep the RSR Bridge multi-use path open all day, every day (24/7/365)** to walkers, bicyclists, wheelchair users, and others;
- 3) **Extend the RSR Bridge Multi-use Path Pilot Project through 2027** — at least until more reliable data can be gathered — ~~after~~ westbound traffic flow enhancements are installed near the toll plaza in 2026;
- 4) **Support more sustainable congestion management solutions instead:** improve transit across the bridges, add workforce housing near jobs in Marin County, etc.

Closing the RSR Bridge multi-use path Monday through Thursday would eliminate a safe, direct route for non-motorized commuters and recreational travelers between the East Bay and Marin County for four out of five workdays each week. Replacing the RSR Bridge multi-use path with a westbound breakdown lane/shoulder lane ~~will not end~~ westbound traffic congestion — but it ~~does~~ leave commuters who walk or ride bicycles without a safe and direct path between the East Bay and Marin County for 80% of their work week.

The MTC-CalTrans proposal is not supported by the Pilot Project data and it ignores pending 2026 toll plaza area improvements that will speed up westbound traffic. It limits sustainable Bay Trail access and transportation options by ~~removing~~ 5.5 miles of existing Bay Trail.

Closing or restricting the path violates MTC's and BCDC's goals and policies to foster clean, green, and equitable transportation, particularly:

- BCDC Transportation Policies 1 and 4
- BCDC Public Access Policies 2, 5, and 8

The MTC-CalTrans proposal is auto-centric, inappropriate, and not supported by the data gathered during the 2019-2024 Pilot Project. These are key reasons to reject the proposal:

- 1) **Traffic and safety data from the Pilot do not justify path closure.** The 2019-2024 Pilot study showed no significant impact on traffic congestion, collision rates, or incident-related delays due to the bike-pedestrian path. [After Study for the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge, Phase I, Section 10.5 (2022), Appendix B];
- 2) **The multi-use path is widely used.** Since opening in 2019, thousands of bicyclists and pedestrians have crossed the bridge for commuting and recreation—far surpassing usage of the wholly inadequate bike shuttle that operated before the pilot project;
- 3) **Closing the path directly increases pollution.** Restricting biking and walking reduces car-free commute options, generating more air, water, and bay pollution as well as greenhouse gas emissions;
- 4) **Traffic congestion will persist.** Without significant improvements to Marin County's RSR Bridge access roadways, westbound traffic delays will continue — whether two or three lanes are available. Westbound RSR Bridge congestion is overwhelmingly caused by choke points at the toll plaza and in Marin County at the Sir Francis Drake Blvd, US 101, and I-580 merge points.

Despite an absence of supporting evidence, the push to restrict the multi-use path is driven by motorists and business groups. MTC's proposal also undervalues pending (2026) toll plaza improvements. Furthermore, sustainable long-term solutions are available, such as building more affordable workforce housing close to jobs in Marin County and adding transit service.

We urge the BCDC to reject issuing any permits that would end or limit full-time access to the RSR Bridge Multi-Use Path. The RSR Bridge path is a critical link for bicyclists, pedestrians, and users of e-bikes, scooters, wheelchairs, and mobility devices. It provides sustainable, equitable transportation access 24/7/365 between Marin County, the East Bay, and BART for everyone.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeremiah Maller, Chair
BART Bicycle Advisory Task Force
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