



Memorandum

TO: BUILDING BETTER
TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

FROM: James R. Helmer

SUBJECT: HIGH OCCUPANCY TOLL LANES **DATE:** 08-30-04

Approved

Date

RECOMMENDATION

Accept this report on the possibility of High Occupancy Toll (HOT) Lanes and the planned Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) study.

BACKGROUND

HOT (High Occupancy Toll) Lanes allow single-person vehicles to use carpool lanes for a fee. The newest technologies allow for the fees to be collected through the use of sensors similar to the FasTrak readers that are currently being used on Bay Area bridges. Subscribers to the HOT Lane program would pay a per-use fee and the appropriate amount would be deducted with each use of the HOT Lane. HOT lanes can be utilized by single occupancy vehicles on an as needed basis offering greater flexibility to commuters during peak travel periods. Traditional High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) commuters would continue to ride for free. The California Highway Patrol (CHP) would enforce HOT Lane use in the same way that current HOV Lane use is patrolled. Revenues generated by the HOT Lanes could be used to fund transportation system improvements, operations, and maintenance within the corridor.

The effort to investigate the feasibility of HOT Lanes in the region has been driven by the Legislature's recent passage of AB 2032 (Dutra), which provides the authority to establish demonstration projects for HOT Lane technology in the Bay Area. As a result, VTA's analysis will provide a timely evaluation of the potential for the development of HOT Lane corridors.

ANALYSIS

Several HOT Lane projects have been implemented or are under study statewide. VTA is beginning a feasibility study to assess the Santa Clara County highway system for potential locations for the possible operation of HOT Lanes in the County. The study is being conducted jointly with the Alameda County Congestion Management Agency (CMA), the Alameda County Transportation Improvement Authority and Caltrans. The goal will be to identify possible

demonstration projects for implementation of the HOT Lane technology. Routes reviewed in the study will include:

- Route 101
- Route 85
- I-680
- I-880

Completion of the initial assessment of local highway corridors will be completed by September 2004. VTA staff is developing a presentation to policymakers that will also address the potential equity implications of implementing HOT Lanes in the South Bay.

One of the HOT Lane segments under consideration, the I-680 “Smart Corridor”, would install HOT Lane technology on Southbound I-680 between Pleasanton and Milpitas through the Sunol Grade. Total cost of this segment would be \$5.6 million for capital investment, \$1.2 million for structures, \$1.1 for roadway, \$3.3 million for toll collection systems, and \$450,000 annually for operations. Revenue projections will be developed as part of the feasibility study.

VTA staff will provide a brief presentation to the BBT Committee that will review the details of the feasibility study and describe the next steps in the analysis. VTA staff will be available for questions at the BBT Committee meeting on September 13, 2004.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

VTA will undertake significant community involvement as part of the feasibility study effort. The study is expected to be completed within one year.

COORDINATION

This item has been coordinated with the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) and the Office of the City Attorney.

JAMES R. HELMER
Director of Transportation