



FACT SHEET

AB 744 (Torrico) – Authorize a Bay Area Express Lane Network to Deliver Congestion Relief and Public Transit Funding with No New Taxes

Status:

- Assembly Appropriations Committee Hearing: August 17th
- Assembly Transportation Committee: 12-1
- Assembly Appropriations Committee: 13-4
- Assembly Floor: 58-18
- Senate Transportation and Housing Committee: 6-1

Problem

Bay Area highway congestion is among the worst in the nation; regional travel is slow and unreliable. The carpool lane system, which has been under construction for over 30 years, is fragmented by gaps that can't be closed for many decades due to lack of funds. These gaps significantly reduce the travel time savings available to carpoolers and bus riders using the lanes.

Solution

AB 744 authorizes the Bay Area Toll Authority (BATA) — MTC's affiliate agency that currently administers toll revenue from the region's seven toll bridges — to develop, operate and maintain a seamless, regionally managed Express Lane Network in the Bay Area.

Currently, the Bay Area is authorized to develop and implement only a handful of express lane projects in Alameda and Santa Clara counties. The first such projects, on Interstates 580 and 680, are now under construction.

Key features of the Express Lane Network proposed in the region's long-range transportation plan include:

- Conversion of 500 miles of existing or fully funded HOV lanes to express lanes.
- Construction of 300 miles of new express lanes (180 miles of gap-closure; 120 miles of outward expansion).
- Qualifying carpools and buses use network free of charge; non-carpools pay toll (collected electronically).
- Maintains free-flowing traffic for carpools, buses and toll payers by adjusting tolls as congestion rises and falls.

- Toll revenue pays for construction, operation, maintenance and enforcement, with remaining net revenue available for additional transportation improvements, including public transit, in network corridors.

Result

- Completes funding and construction of 800-mile network of congestion-free lanes for carpools, buses and toll-payers decades earlier than possible with existing funds.
- Provides a reliable, congestion-free transportation option.
- Improves time-savings for carpoolers and bus riders by closing gaps in carpool network.
- Boosts worker productivity by \$100 billion by reducing wasteful freeway delay.
- Reduces greenhouse gas emissions by 7 percent, resulting in a savings of 10 million metric tons through 2050 (vs. traditional HOV lane approach).
- Yields an estimated \$6 billion in net revenues that can be used for public transit and other corridor improvements.

AB 744 (Torrico) Supporters

- Alameda County Congestion Management Agency
- American Automobile Association (AAA), Northern California, Nevada & Utah
- Bay Area Council
- California Transit Association
- California Transportation Commission
- Contra Costa Council
- Contra Costa Transportation Authority
- San Francisco Chamber of Commerce
- Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority
- Silicon Valley Leadership Group
- Solano Transportation Authority

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How much will it cost to drive in an express lane?

To keep express lane traffic flowing freely, toll rates will adjust every few minutes to balance supply and demand. But the rate you pay won't change once you've entered the express lane. Toll rates will be low during the off-peak and higher during the commute hours. Nationwide, toll roads charge between 30 cents and 95 cents per mile.

Aren't these just "Lexus lanes" for the very rich?

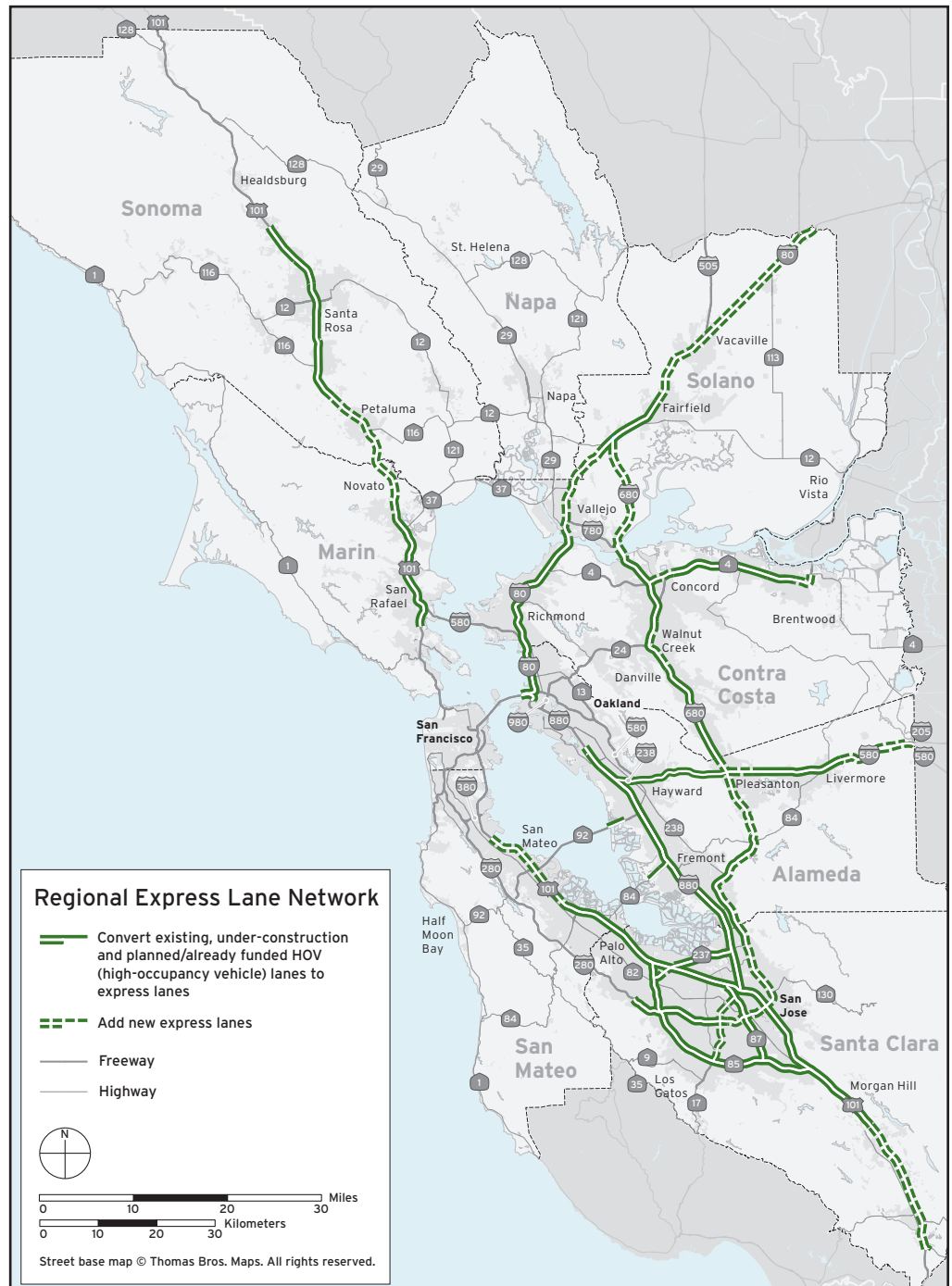
No. Around the country, high-income people account for just 25 percent of express lane customers. Most are lower- and middle-income drivers. A Cal Poly San Luis Obispo study of the State Route 91 express lanes in Orange County found usage to be more closely tied to current travel conditions and trip needs than to income.

How much will the network cost?

BATA estimates a \$7.6 billion cost to build, finance, operate and maintain the Bay Area's Express Lane Network over the next 25 years. This is based on a rapid delivery design that relies upon existing right of way to reduce costs and environmental impact.

How much money is generated?

Toll revenues are expected to total \$13.7 billion over 25 years. After construction, operation and maintenance costs, the remaining \$6.1 billion in net revenue would be available to finance additional improvements in the express lane corridors. The bill requires that at least 95 percent of net revenue be reinvested in the corridor from which it was generated and prioritizes these funds for cost-effective public transit improvements.



A collaborative approach

AB 744 creates a framework for collaboration and partnership in development of the network. It establishes BATA as the lead agency to plan, finance, and manage the network, but provides that phasing plans, system design and operational policies will be developed through an interagency oversight committee consisting of Caltrans, CHP, county-based congestion management agencies and BATA staff. Expenditure plans for use of net revenue will be developed through a bottom-up process in each individual travel corridor, led by county congestion management agencies.