



**DATE:** August 24, 2017

**TO:** Transportation Authority of Marin Board of Commissioners

**FROM:** Dianne Steinhauser, Executive Director  
Dan Cherrier, Principal Project Delivery Manager

**SUBJECT:** Approve updated Resolution on HOV Hours of Operation, (Action), Agenda Item 10

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## **RECOMMENDATION**

Recommend confirmation of Resolution 2017-2, attached, unanimously approved by the TAM Board June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017, stating TAM's concerns and conditions regarding MTC's proposal to expand High Occupant Vehicle (HOV) hours of operation on Highway 101 in Marin. Authorize the updated resolution to be sent to the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC).

## **BACKGROUND**

High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Lanes began operation in Marin in 1976 with an occupancy requirement of three + people. In 1988 the occupancy requirement was reduced to two+ persons. The hours of operation in July 1998 were changed to 5 to 9 am and 3 to 7 pm Monday through Friday. After much community pressure, the Highway 101 HOV hours were returned to 6:30 to 8:30 am in the southbound direction and 4:30 to 7:00 in the northbound direction. Since that time, the existing gaps in the carpool lanes have been closed by constructing new HOV Lanes resulting in continuous HOV lanes through much of Marin.

The MTC Managed Lanes Implementation Plan (MLIP) was conducted in 2016 to identify projects that can be easily implemented to better manage the freeways in the region. The MLIP recommendations included potential locations for new HOV Lanes, HOV Lane conversion to Express Lanes, Express Buses, Park & Ride Lot Improvements, and extended or regionally consistent HOV hours.

As part of the MLIP recommendation for Marin, MTC originally proposed revised HOV hours of 6:30 to 10:00 am and 3:00 to 7:00 in the afternoon. These proposed changes would be implemented in two six-month pilot periods and then assessed for further consideration for continued operation. The first pilot would have changed the hours in the Southbound direction in summer 2017. The Northbound direction hours were proposed to be changed in early 2018.

Upon considering concerns raised by TAM in Marin, MTC has revised their proposal to increase the hours of operation by 30 minutes in the southbound direction. The resulting southbound HOV hours of operation would be 6:30 to 9:00, and would be implemented as a pilot for 3 months from October through December 2017. In a briefing sponsored by Senator McGuire in July, MTC and Caltrans presented additional information and announced the new proposal.

## **DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS**

A traffic study was completed in late June that showed delay in the general-purpose lanes, for travelers not able to utilize the HOC/ Carpool lane options. This study was shared with the project partners including TAM. The study results indicate results for both the original proposal of a 90-minute extension and the modified proposal of a 30-minute extension:

- For the 90-minute proposal, the increase was most pronounced during the time period of 9:30 to 10:00 when each user would experience a travel time delay increase from 2 minutes to 9.3 minutes.
- For the 30-minute proposal, the attached shows a 6-7-minute additional delay that would be experienced by all other travelers not able to utilize the carpool lane options.

An analysis was also completed and presented to the partners that shows the peak period extending beyond the current hours. It remains a concern that a longer period of congestion on Highway 101 would possibly result in additional accidents or incidents, an impact that should be carefully considered and ideally mitigated.

A final significant element to the revised proposal is the lack of clarity on what the benefit is that would offset the additional delay and increased accidents or incidents. There has not been clarity on how much bus service would be added; it has been reported that all Golden Gate buses utilizing the carpool lane are already full.

It is also not clear if the carpool lane being completely full for several segments of the corridor would result in more high occupancy vehicles wanting to - or being able to - use the lane. Concerns over violators in the carpool lanes are not addressed; in fact, requests for additional support for the California Highway Patrol to both enforce violators or address additional incidents have been rejected.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Based on the above analysis of the revised proposal for an HOV Lane Hours of Operation extension of 30 minutes, from the current 6:30 to 8:30 AM, to a new 6:30 to 9:00 AM on Southbound Highway 101, TAM staff recommend re-submittal of the original Resolution of concern and conditions, modestly updated, as attached.

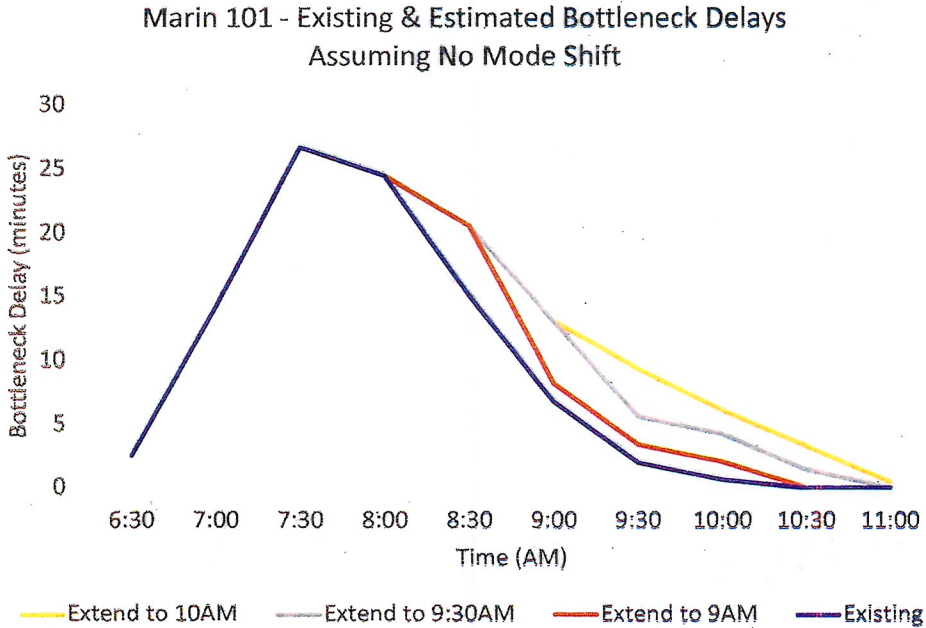
## **FISCAL CONSIDERATION**

None

## **ATTACHMENTS**

- 1) Traffic Study results regarding increased congestion
- 2) Draft TAM Resolution

# Additional 6-7 Minutes Delay in General Purpose Lanes If No Mode Shift (Worst Case), but Carpools and Buses Can Bypass Entire Bottleneck & Save Time



	Current Bottleneck Delay (Minutes)	Additional Delay Due to HOV Hours Extension (Minutes) Assuming No Mode Shift		
		Extend to 9AM	Extend to 9:30AM	Extend to 10AM
6:30 AM	3	-	-	-
7:00 AM	14	-	-	-
7:30 AM	27	-	-	-
8:00 AM	24	-	-	-
8:30 AM	15	6	6	6
9:00 AM	7	1	6	6
9:30 AM	2	1	4	7
10:00 AM	1	1	4	5
10:30 AM	0	0	1	3

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9AM Option Recommended

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9 AM Option Recommended

Existing HOV Hours  
HOV Hours Extension



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**TAM RESOLUTION NO. 2017-XX**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY OF MARIN (TAM) ON THE MTC PILOT PROPOSAL TO MODIFY THE HIGHWAY 101 HIGH OCCUPANCY VEHICLE (HOV) LANE HOURS OF OPERATION**

**WHEREAS,** On April 27, 2017 the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) made a presentation to the TAM Board to review and discuss a pilot proposal to modify the Highway 101 High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Lane Hours of operation; and

**WHEREAS,** the TAM Board sent a resolution urging further studies before action is taken on June 1, 2017, and

**WHEREAS,** The intended action by MTC is to modify the operating hours of the HOV lanes within Marin County on Highway 101 to allow transit trips to and from Sonoma County to operate more effectively and create a common standard around the Bay Area; and

**WHEREAS,** MTC has since reduced the hours of the pilot proposal; and

**WHEREAS,** MTC intends to implement the changes in hours as a three-month pilot in in the southbound direction, increasing hours to 6:30-9:00 AM, from the current 6:30-8:30 AM; and

**WHEREAS,** There are currently over 125,000 daily users on the section of Highway 101 in northern Marin, and 160,000 daily users in southern Marin and congestion is severe; and

**WHEREAS,** The area served by Highway 101 uniquely lacks a strong local road network, as such, Highway 101 serves as Main Street, often with intra-county trips that stay on the highway for just one or two interchanges before exiting. These short trips preclude the use of the HOV lanes by many of our residents. Longer HOV hours would reduce the capacity of the highway for residents by 25% during those longer hours; and

**WHEREAS,** A recent study shows a substantial increase in delay between 8:30 and 9:00 for the majority of users on Highway 101. The same study shows effects from the change will still be present until 10:30; and

**WHEREAS,** When Caltrans changed the hours of operation in July of 1998, there was significant public concern eventually leading to a return of the current hours a few months later. The underlining concerns of Marin residents have not changed during the intervening years. A reduction of 25% of the available capacity, could be detrimental to our businesses who rely on workers traveling into Marin every day, as well as our residents using Highway 101 as an urban arterial; and

**WHEREAS,** Requests for the change in hours have been received from Golden Gate Transit and Marin Transit. Each feel that the extended hours can allow their transit system to operate more efficiently and effectively attract additional transit users. TAM actively supports the use of transit, vanpools, and carpools on Marin's busiest highway. TAM recognizes the importance of providing alternatives to driving alone; and

**WHEREAS,** The California Highway Patrol has raised concerns regarding increased incidents from the added congestion that will occur due to compressing the users into fewer general purpose travel lanes. Increased congestion and incidents related to that congestion are unacceptable, and be it

**RESOLVED,** While the TAM Board supports HOV Lane hours that support transit, it will be in the best interest of Marin commuters not to suddenly introduce these changes as a stand-alone effort. TAM believes a more comprehensive approach to managing highway traffic is warranted and should be implemented in a coordinated effort that includes: the implementation of ramp metering; a commitment of funds supporting additional HOV Lane enforcement of violators; and support for a Bus-on-Shoulder lane. TAM believes these complementary elements would result in more effective operational improvements, and be it further

**RESOLVED,** that the TAM Board wishes to supplement the June 1,2017 Resolution with this revised Resolution, and be it further

**RESOLVED,** Prior to initiating the pilot project, it is imperative that there is a clear agreement regarding what constitutes success – and what constitutes unacceptable impacts, specifically regarding additional congestion in the mixed-flow lanes and local roads, with delays affecting our residents and businesses;

Prior to implementing the pilot project, MTC and Caltrans should study the effect of the changed HOV Lane hours. Predicting potential impacts and mitigations must precede the decision to implement the pilot. Both before and after evaluations clearly establishing the metrics of pilot success should be done including but not limited to:

- Total number of people moving through the Highway 101 Corridor,
- Total length of congestion in the Mixed Flow and HOV Lanes,
- Change in travel time for Mixed Flow and for HOV Lane users,
- Advantage to transit and resultant growth in transit ridership, and increases in carpools, vanpools, and low/zero emission vehicles.
- Potential impacts to local roads

TAM requests a robust public information campaign prior to the change in HOV hours, along with an assessment of carpool and transit options and incentives be conducted in advance of the pilot. Our residents, employers, employees, and recreational visitors should all be afforded an opportunity to plan their trips knowing these restrictions on Highway 101 are going to occur; and be it further

**RESOLVED,** TAM requests MTC and Caltrans implement the change in HOV hours of operation after the aforementioned studies have been completed, reviewed, and agreed upon by all parties and that the potential impacts are acceptable. All parties shall revisit the proposed change in the HOV Lane hours of operation during the pilot to assess successful performance or should the pilot experience intolerable negative impacts consider appropriate steps to terminate the pilot program.

**PASSED AND ADOPTED** at a regular meeting of the Transportation Authority of Marin held on the 24<sup>th</sup> day of August 2017, by the following vote:

AYES:           Commissioners:  
NOES:           Commissioners:  
ABSENT:        Commissioners:

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Stephanie Moulton-Peters, Chair  
Transportation Authority of Marin

ATTEST:

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Dianne Steinhauser  
Executive Director

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