



**DATE:** November 15, 2021

**TO:** Transportation Authority of Marin Citizens' Oversight Committee

**FROM:** Derek McGill, Director of Planning

**SUBJECT:** US 101 Part-Time Transit Lane Feasibility Study (Discussion), Agenda Item No. 5

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## **RECOMMENDATION**

Discussion item only.

## **BACKGROUND**

In June 2019, the TAM Board authorized the Executive Director to enter into agreements with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) to accept a \$308,000 planning grant to conduct the Marin County US 101 Part-Time Transit Lane Feasibility Study and provide a local match (in-kind staff time funded by city/county fee) in the amount of \$42,000. Part-Time Transit Lane, sometimes known as bus-on-shoulder, is a concept that has been successfully implemented in various parts of the US, as well as piloted in California. During peak hours, public transit buses are allowed to operate on the shoulder of the highways to bypass areas of traffic congestion. Due to the part time operation and use allowed specifically for transit vehicles, Caltrans refers to bus-on-shoulder operations as part-time transit lanes. This operational exception can significantly improve travel times for transit, improve transit reliability and make transit a more attractive travel option.

On April 23, 2020, the TAM Board approved a contract with Kimley-Horn to prepare the Marin County US 101 Part-Time Transit Lane Feasibility Study, in the amount not to exceed \$308,000. This study assesses the feasibility of this approach on US 101 in Northern Marin County. The study area limit is approximately between Mission Avenue in San Rafael and San Marin Avenue in Novato.

## **DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS**

The Marin County US 101 Part-Time Transit Lane Feasibility Study assesses the existing conditions in the corridor, and the development of a concept design and operational plan, as well as the capital costs and benefits associated with the concept. The Study also assesses how Part-Time Transit Lanes would interact and relate to other capital investments underway and planned for the corridor.

TAM staff presented the findings from the draft report at the July 2021 TAM Board meeting, where the Board provided input on the draft report and project concept. Staff then presented the project concept to the Marin Transit Board of Directors and the Transportation Committee of the Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transit District (GGBHTD) in August 2021. Members from all three boards asked clarifying questions on the project concept, with many supportive comments.

On October 28, 2021 the TAM board accepted the final feasibility study. A copy of the study is available at the following URL: <https://www.tam.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/7c-PTTL.pdf>

### **FISCAL IMPACTS**

No additional fiscal impact at this time. The development of the Marin County US 101 Part-Time Transit Lane Feasibility Study is funded with a Caltrans planning grant with committed local match that has already been approved by the TAM Board. Additional funding will need to be secured to support the continued development of this concept including environmental review and subsequent design and operational phases of any Part-Time Transit Lane implementation in the corridor.

### **NEXT STEPS**

Staff will seek competitive funding for project development and potential subsequent phases such as from upcoming Senate Bill (SB) 1 competitive grant cycles. Staff will also continue to monitor and advocate as appropriate for any legislation related to supporting part-time transit lanes in California.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment A – Staff Presentation

# US 101 PART-TIME TRANSIT LANE

Transportation Authority of Marin



# Presentation Outline

- » Overview of Part-Time Transit Lanes
- » US 101 Existing Conditions
- » US 101 Part-Time Transit Lane Concept
  - Physical Improvements
  - Cost
  - Related Regional Efforts
- » Next Steps
- » How to Get and Stay Involved





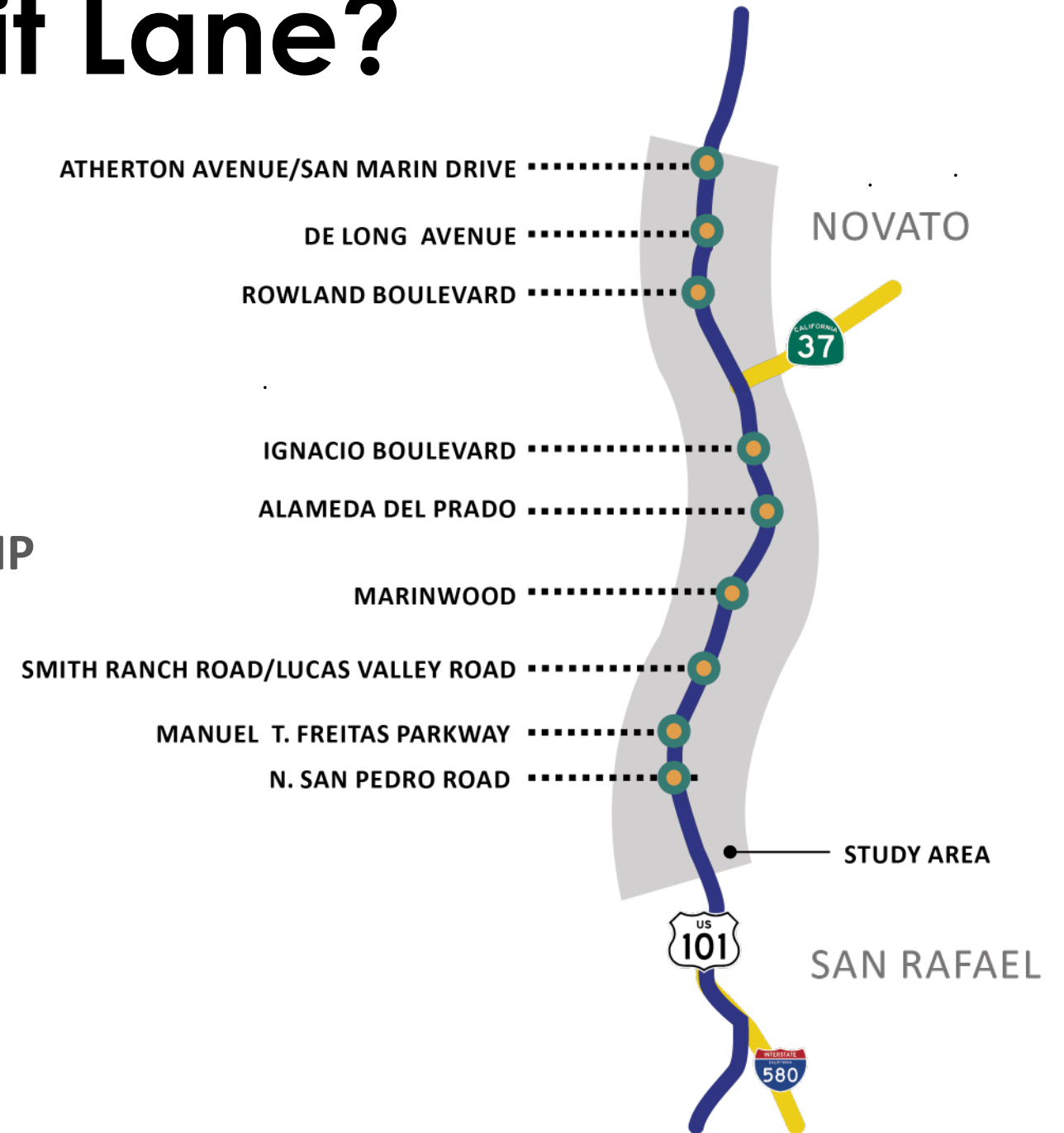
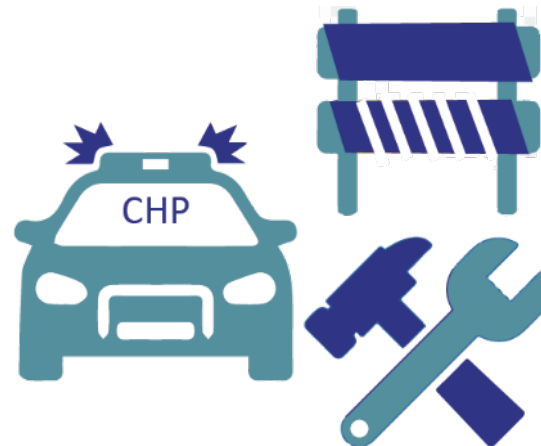
# What is a Part-Time Transit Lane?

- » Modified right-side freeway shoulder that allows buses to bypass traffic
- » Limited to peak congestion times

Maximum bus speed in part-time transit lane is 35 mph



Buses stay out of part-time transit lane if needed by CHP or construction vehicles



# Part-Time Transit Lane Benefits

- » Improves bus travel time and makes the bus a more reliable choice for commuters
- » Reduces congestion, emissions, and delay for everyone by encouraging bus use
- » Serves low-income communities in Marin County
- » Costs less than new highway capacity construction and takes less time to build



# PTTL Examples

- » Twin Cities, MN
- » Snohomish County (Everett), WA
- » Raleigh, NC



**Twin Cities**

Source: Metro Transit



## CALIFORNIA PROJECTS

# US 101 in Marin County

- » 350 bus trips each weekday, including 22 buses in the peak direction during the peak commute hour
- » Significant A.M. southbound traffic congestion delays between Novato and San Rafael, including within the HOV lane
- » Traffic is expected to worsen in coming years





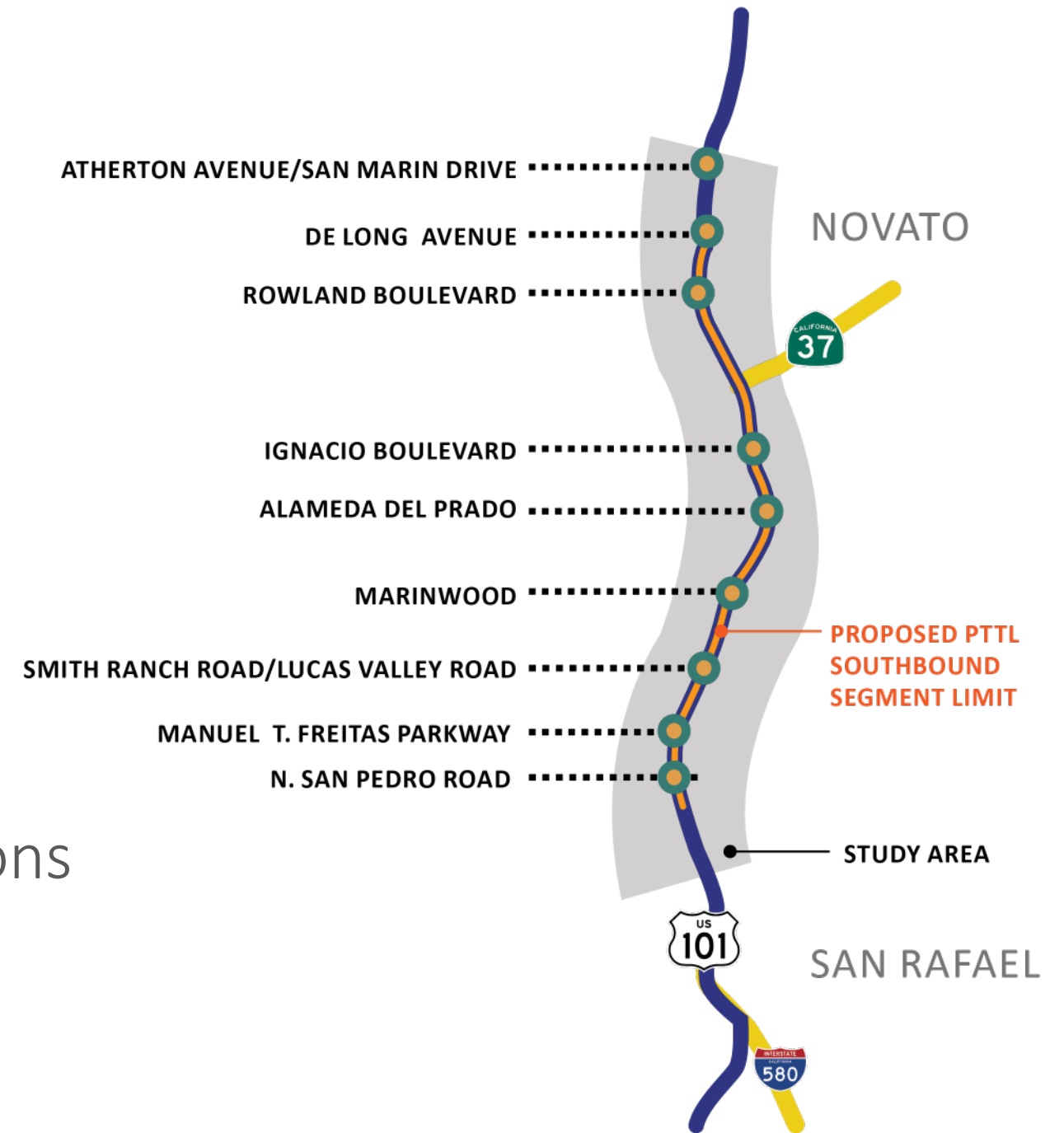
# Improvements Needed

- » Lane restriping and signage
- » Repaving
- » Storm drain upgrades
- » CHP monitoring areas



# How the Lane Will Affect Drivers

- » Minimal changes to the highway
- » No reduction in lanes or capacity
- » Emergency vehicles and stalled cars maintain priority for use of shoulder
- » Advances equitable transportation options in the US 101 corridor





# US 101 PTTL Costs and Savings

- » Estimated construction cost between \$6 and \$7 million
- » Strong candidate for a variety of state and federal funding sources
- » Faster transit travel times will result in reduced transit operating costs, which could be used to make transit more efficient or frequent



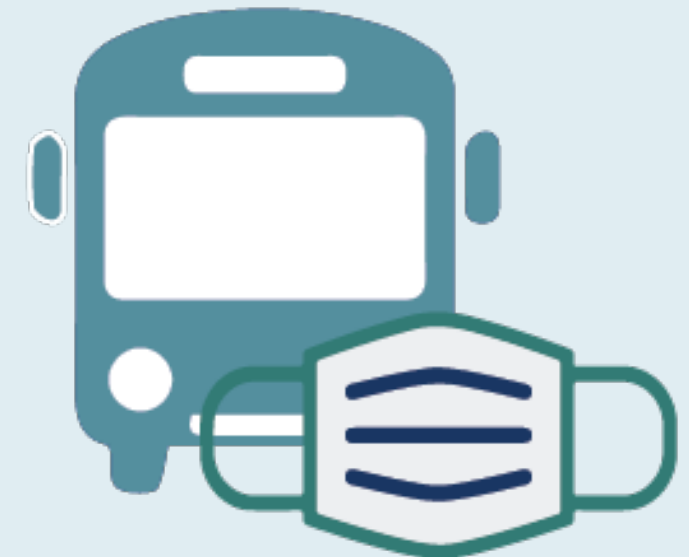
# TAM Regional Transportation Efforts

» Regional commitment to support transit recovery efforts



» Related projects to improve travel conditions:

- Marin-Sonoma Narrows Widening
- HOV Hours Adjustments
- US 101 Interchange Improvements
- SR-37 Climate Resiliency





# US 101 PTTL Next Steps

Secure Project Funding

Monitor State Legislation that would affect PTTL

Monitor performance of other PTTL in California

Initiate project design and environmental review once funding is secured



# US Part-Time Transit Lane

## Q&A

