

January 14, 2008



Mr. Bill Dodd, Chair
Metropolitan Transportation Commission
101 Eighth Street
Oakland, CA 94607-4700

Dear Mr. Dodd:

I am writing to follow up on the discussion that transpired during the meeting of the Board of Directors of the Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District (District) on January 11, 2008. Please know that, in response to your January 9, 2008, letter request on behalf of the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), the Board of Directors voted to continue the discussion surrounding adoption of a policy position regarding tolling to fund the reconstruction of Doyle Drive and the Federal Urban Partnership Agreement (UPA) to the call of the President.

During the meeting, we learned from Andy Fremier of MTC staff that MTC will be participating in meetings in Washington DC this week and plans to seek an extension of the current March 31 deadline contained in the UPA requiring that legal authority be in place by that date to implement congestion pricing. The Board was also advised that additional efforts will be pursued at both the federal and state levels to obtain supplemental funding commitments for the reconstruction of Doyle Drive.

Although no formal policy vote was taken by the District Board, based upon comments during the meeting last Friday by District Board members, it appears to me that there is unanimous support for the reconstruction of Doyle Drive. As has been the case since the beginning of our discussions, the division within the District Board centers over the principle of whether toll financing is appropriate or not for the reconstruction of this State of California-owned facility. The notion of collaborative advocacy for more funding from the State and/or federal governments also appears to me to be a notion endorsed by all members of the Board. Accordingly, this is to advise of our intention to work with you and your colleagues at MTC, and with other UPA partners, in an effort to find a solution that will best ensure regional consensus and harmony.

As I have reflected on the subject further, it appears to me that there are two fundamental issues before us. One relates to the fast approaching March 31st deadline to evidence the existence of legal authority to implement congestion pricing in order to preserve the \$158.7 million in UPA funds. The other relates to the significant funding gap that exists for the Doyle Drive reconstruction project. Thus far, these two topics have been joined in the discussions. It may be helpful to decouple them.

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Specifically, recognizing the importance of salvaging the UPA funds for the benefit of the entire Bay Area region, it may be useful to focus on the specific terms of the UPA grant that bear on congestion pricing. The grant agreement identifies a project as variable pricing "of either Doyle Drive or the Golden Gate Bridge." In this context, it may be valuable to consider that although our attorney has advised that the District does not possess legal authority to implement a congestion pricing program on Doyle Drive, he has advised that the District does possess legal authority to implement a congestion pricing program applicable to users of the Golden Gate Bridge. In fact, that authority has been exercised over a period of many years through the implementation of a program that permits carpools to travel across the Bridge free of charge during commute hours. This is a form of congestion pricing aimed at discouraging the use of single occupant vehicles during peak periods. The reality that a congestion management program has been operative for several years at the Golden Gate Bridge appears to be in keeping with the broad purposes of the UPA grant.

I offer this suggestion to you and your colleagues to consider as a means of preserving the \$158 million for the region and obviating the need to seek new legislation on an emergency basis by March 31st. If the DOT can be satisfied that authority exists at the current time to meet the congestion pricing principle underlying the UPA grant, that should enable all of the agencies interested in the Doyle Drive reconstruction project to devote the requisite time and energy necessary to pursue every conceivable means to find additional funds to fully finance that project. The District stands ready to work with you in pursuit of the additional federal, state and/or regional funding that may be obtained pursuant to a regional advocacy approach.

I look forward to hearing from you with respect to the suggestions I am offering.

Sincerely,



John J. Moylan
President, Board of Directors

JJM/dh

c: Gavin Newsom, Mayor of San Francisco
Tom Ammiano, MTC Commissioner
Jake McGoldrick, Chair, SFCTA
Board of Directors