

South Bay Cities Council of Governments

September 23, 2021

To: SBCCOG Board of Directors

From: Jacki Bacharach, SBCCOG Executive Director
Steve Lantz, SBCCOG Transportation Director

Subject: I-405 ExpressLane Transit Elements

Adherence to Strategic Plan:

Goal A: Environment, Transportation, and Economic Development. Facilitate, implement, and/or educate members and others about environmental, transportation, and economic development programs that benefit the South Bay. Strategy 5 – Actively pursue opportunities for infrastructure funding for member agencies.

BACKGROUND

L. A. Metro and Caltrans are initiating two simultaneous studies related to converting the bi-directional High Occupancy Lanes to ExpressLanes to enable key segments of an I-405 ExpressLane to be in service before the 2028 Olympics. The first study is an environmental impact report for the segment of the I-405 between SR-101 freeway in the San Fernando Valley and the I-10 freeway in West Los Angeles. The second study, the [I-405 Comprehensive Multimodal Corridor Plan \(CMCP\)](#), has an objective “to create a holistic, innovative planning vision for the I-405 corridor communities” between Saugus and the South Bay.

SBCCOG has provided comments to Metro and Caltrans previously in connection with the design and use of ExpressLane net revenues on the I-110 and I-105 ExpressLanes. In both corridors, the SBCCOG has expressed a concern that transit capital and operating funding and parallel street improvements must be included in the ExpressLane project scope of work. Staff has drafted a letter to Caltrans and Metro to place on the record our similar concern with the I-405 project scopes (see Exhibit 1).

RECOMMENDATION

That the Board approve the letter as drafted below.

Attachment

September 24, 2021

Stephanie Wiggins
Chief Executive Officer
Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority
One Gateway Plaza
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Tony Tavares
District 7 Director
California Department of Transportation
100 S. Spring St.
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Ms. Wiggins and Mr. Tavares:

The South Bay Cities Council of Governments has for several years provided input on the scope and design of ExpressLane projects relevant to the South Bay. We understand that L. A. Metro and Caltrans are initiating two simultaneous studies related to converting the I-405 High Occupancy Vehicle lanes to ExpressLanes to be in service before the 2028 Olympics. The first study is an environmental impact report for the segment of the I-405 between SR-101 freeway in the San Fernando Valley and the I-10 freeway in West Los Angeles. The second study, the [I-405 Comprehensive Multimodal Corridor Plan \(CMCP\)](#), has an objective “to create a holistic, innovative planning vision for the I-405 corridor communities.”

The SBCCOG wants to ensure that both studies adequately provide for a robust level of transit service in their design and funding plans. The current ExpressLanes were marketed to the public as providing transit alternatives and the I-405 should not be an exception.

Additionally, while we understand there are design constraints, particularly through the Sepulveda Pass, we strongly believe based on current usage and congestion, that a successful I-405 ExpressLane corridor from Saugus through the South Bay will need two dedicated standard lanes in each direction to safely accommodate the buses, vans, and commercial trucks that will choose to use the toll facility to serve LAX, Olympic venues and other major activity nodes within the corridor for decades to come. We believe that the alternatives being considered in the Sepulveda Pass EIR must consider the aggregate corridor-long travel demand that we expect will be documented in the CMCP study.

And finally, when developing guidelines for the South Bay Measure R Highway Program, Metro included Pacific Coast Highway as a freeway reliever in our area. With that in mind, we also support inclusion of the area between the I-405 and Pacific Coast Highway through the South Bay in the CMCP as we are very concerned with the need to mitigate potential spill-over traffic effects of dedicating two ExpressLane toll lanes within the existing freeway right of way.

In summary, we strongly urge Metro and Caltrans to design the facility including parallel street improvements while providing for adequate alternate transit service for the anticipated growth in demand as the ExpressLanes are expanded throughout the L. A. County network.

Sincerely,

Drew Boyles, SBCCOG Chair
Mayor, City of El Segundo

c.c.: Alice Tolar, LA Metro Project Manager
Los Angeles Metro
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Los Angeles, CA 90012