



TA Board of Directors
Meeting of April 3, 2025

Correspondence as of March 7, 2025

Subject

1. Bay Area workers increasingly living farther from work
2. San Mateo County Transportion Authority (SMC TA) 2025
3. Public Comment - SamTrans service
4. Metrics matter: adding a lane to 101 north of 380 will increase trips, VMT, GHG, pollution and the deleterious effects

From: [Mike Swire](#)
To: [Board \(@smcta.com\)](#); [cacsecretary \[@smcta.com\]](#)
Subject: Bay Area workers increasingly living farther from work
Date: Tuesday, March 4, 2025 1:18:05 PM
Attachments: [image.png](#)
[image.png](#)
[Bay Area workers living farther from jobs.pdf](#)

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Dear SMCTA Board and CAC Members,

I thought that you might find [the following article](#) interesting. It presents data showing that in the past ten years or so an increasing number of Bay Area workers are moving farther from their jobs. The Bay Area has seen the highest increase in long commute workers among major US metro areas.

The article cites high housing costs and remote/tech work as potential causes. Another factor could be investments in road infrastructure that enables long distance commutes.

Mike Swire

S.F. saw the biggest change in workforce living 50+ miles from employer

Share of workforce living 50 or more miles from their employer in 2012 and 2022 and the percentage-point (pp.) change in those values

	City	2012	2022	▼ Change
1	San Francisco	14%	19%	+5.0 pp.
2	Austin	22%	27%	+4.7 pp.
3	San Diego	16%	20%	+4.2 pp.
4	Tampa	16%	19%	+3.2 pp.
5	Charlotte	17%	20%	+3.2 pp.
6	Dallas	13%	16%	+2.9 pp.
7	Miami	6%	9%	+2.9 pp.
8	Los Angeles	10%	13%	+2.7 pp.
9	Orlando	19%	21%	+2.4 pp.
10	Portland	7%	9%	+2.1 pp.

S.F. saw the biggest change in workforce living 10 or less miles from employer

Share of workforce living 10 or less miles from their employer in 2012 and 2022 and the percentage-point (pp.) change in those values

	City	2012	2022	▲ Change
1	San Francisco	53%	45%	-7.5 pp.
2	Austin	44%	37%	-7.1 pp.
3	Tampa	38%	34%	-4.6 pp.
4	Baltimore	58%	54%	-4.4 pp.
5	Orlando	41%	37%	-4.1 pp.
6	Riverside	39%	36%	-3.6 pp.
7	Boston	58%	54%	-3.6 pp.
8	Charlotte	39%	36%	-3.4 pp.
9	Dallas	32%	29%	-3.1 pp.
10	San Diego	45%	42%	-2.8 pp.

S.F.'s workforce keeps moving farther away from their jobs. Here's how far they live

By **Hanna Zakharenko** and **Roland Li** | Updated Jan. 31, 2025 9:05 a.m.

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San Francisco saw the nation's biggest jump in the percentage of the workers living 50 or more miles from their jobs from 2012 to 2022, compared with the top 25 cities with the largest workforces in the U.S. Experts said this was fueled by remote work and high housing costs.

By 2022, 18.7% of San Francisco's workforce lived 50 or more miles away from their jobs, up from 13.7% a decade earlier.

S.F. working population increasingly live in ZIP codes more than 50 miles away

Select a ZIP code below, use the search bar or toggle between layers to see more information

Change, 2012-22 **Total workers, 2022**

----- approx. 50-mile radius

Percent change in S.F. working population:



-100% 80% -60% -40% -20% 0 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

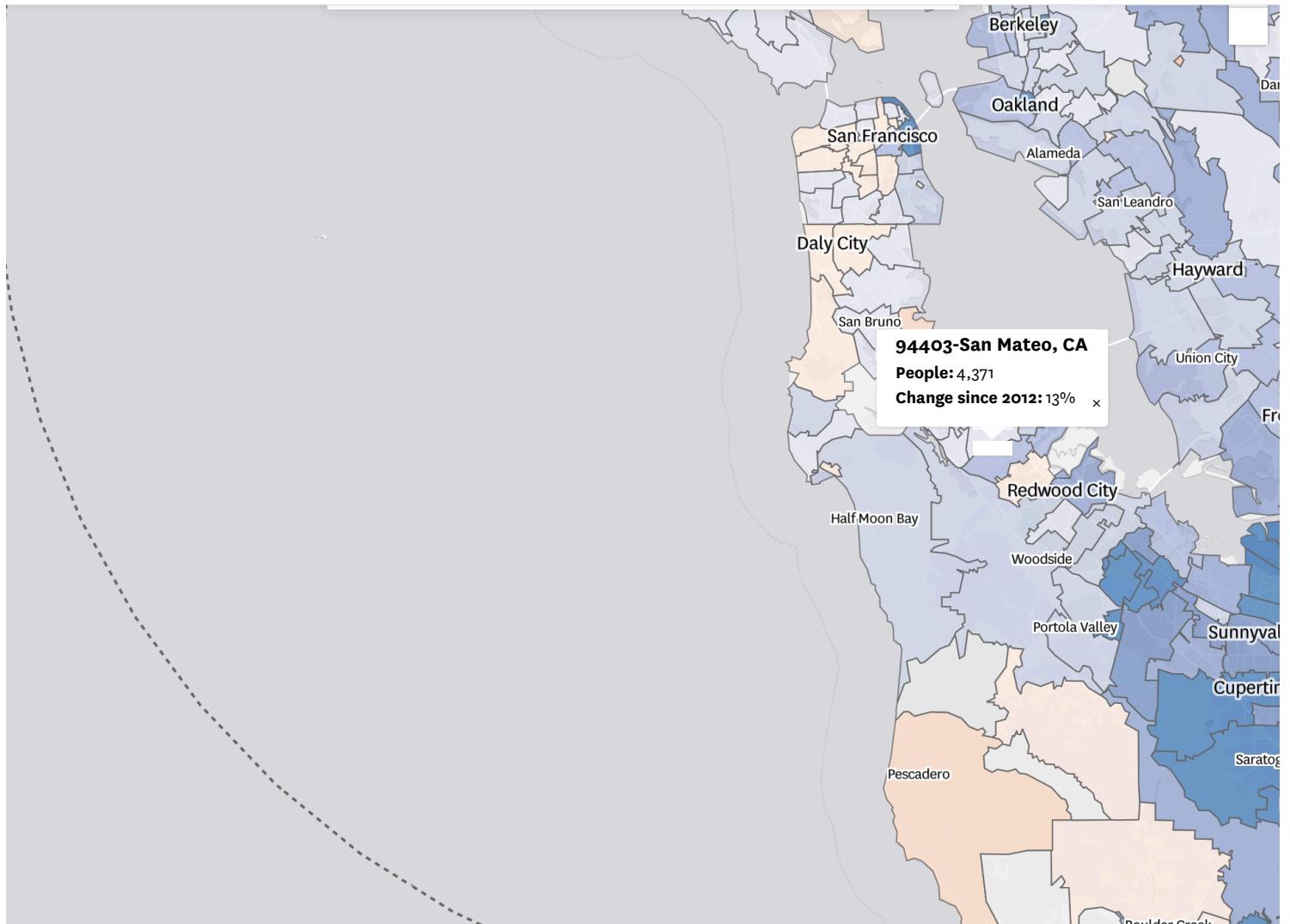
or

less

or

more





▼
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Dashed circle shows the 50-mile radius from the center of San Francisco. For the 'Change over time' map, data is displayed only for zip codes where there were at least 20 people in either 2012 or 2022. For the 'Number of people' map, data is shown only for zip codes with at least 10 people in 2022.

Map: Hanna Zakharenko, Janie Haseman • Source: [Census Bureau](#)

The dispersion of workers in the Bay Area and around the country is a challenge for CEOs and elected officials seeking to bring back workers to the office as much as five days a week. (As of 2022, 58% of San Francisco government

office say it's necessary to improve performance and help downtown comebacks, but workers have said they value flexibility and dodging torturous commutes.

"I think the main thing you're seeing is the continued outward spread of U.S. metro areas and labor markets," said Ted Egan, San Francisco's chief economist. He noted the 25 most populous U.S. metropolitan areas saw an average 2.7% increase in workers living 50 or more miles away from their jobs over the decade.

However, some municipalities such as San Diego, Austin, Texas, and Tampa, Fla., had higher overall shares of dispersed workforces, with all three exceeding 20% of workers living 50 or more miles away.

"In San Francisco's case that's certainly due to work from home, in Austin probably also," Egan said. But he believes cities such as Charlotte, N.C., Tampa, Orlando and Dallas "are probably just showing the effects of new housing construction on the fringe."

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To get a better picture of what the workforce looks like, [the Census Bureau](#) regularly teams up with states to combine surveys on businesses, jobs and workers with existing census data, covering around 95% of U.S. employment.

with where they work, allowing us to explore how San Francisco's workforce has changed in the past 10 years.

S.F. saw the biggest change in workforce living 50+ miles from employer

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Page 1 of 3



Table shows top 25 cities by employment determined from [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#) data.

Table: Hanna Zakharenko / Hearst Newspapers DevHub · Source: [Census Bureau](#)

While the data doesn't show who is commuting and who is working from home, the San Francisco metro area sees a smaller number of daily miles traveled per capita than many other ranked cities, [according to](#) the Bureau of Transportation Statistics. [Office occupancy data](#) measured by security firm Kastle has also placed San Francisco at or near the bottom of the return to office trend for the past two years, compared with nine other major cities. Only about 45% of San Francisco workers are in the office compared with 2019 levels.

"The recent remote work dynamic has contributed to a dynamic we've had for some time in S.F.: the higher and higher housing costs in S.F. and inner Bay Area that have been driving workers further and further from S.F.," said

former head of California's Employment Development Department.

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San Francisco also saw the largest decrease in the percentage of the workforce living less than 10 miles away from their employer from 2012 to 2022. Part of that reflects the relative lack of housing downtown, where most offices are located.

miles from employer

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Page 1 of 3



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There were about 608,000 workers in San Francisco in 2012, and 748,000 in 2022, a growth of about 140,000 jobs over 10 years.

Over 1 in 4 workers in San Francisco was employed in the information industry or the professional, scientific and technical services industry in 2022. These industries include companies such as Google and OpenAI.

likely to live further from employer

Each circle is a city positioned by the share of workers in information and technical industries and percentage-point change in the share of workforce living 50+ miles from their employer

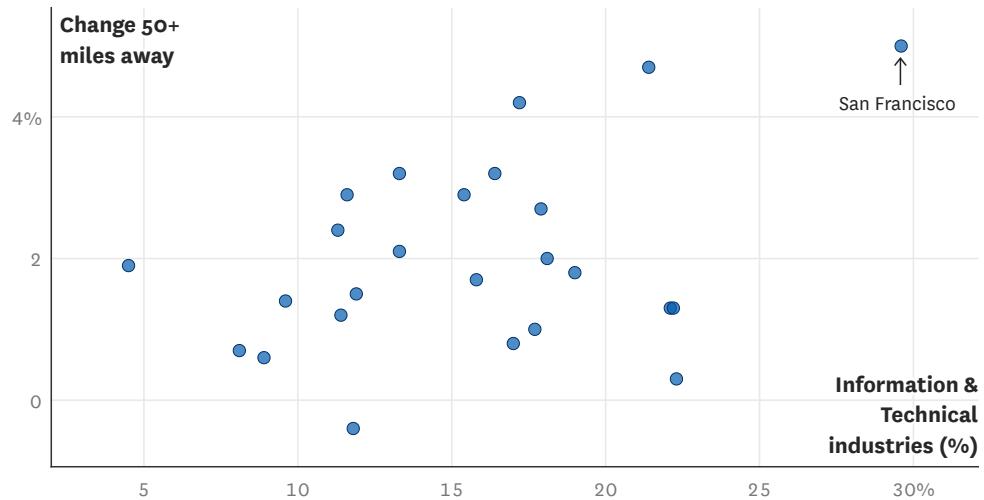
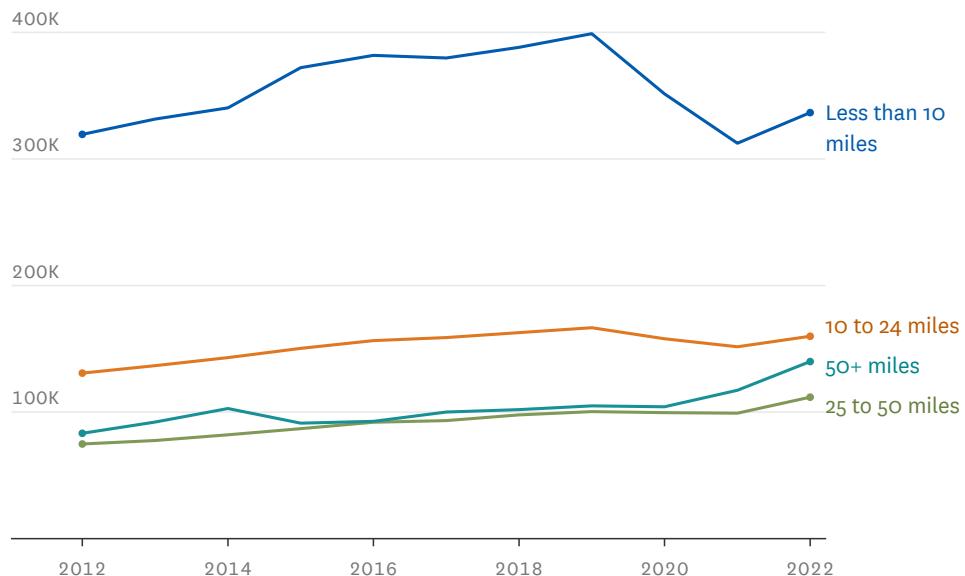


Chart: Hanna Zakharenko / Hearst Newspapers DevHub · Source: [Census Bureau](#)

Cities with a higher percentage of the workforce in the tech sector also see a higher change in workforce living 50 or more miles away from 2012 to 2022. That coincides with the tech sector's embrace of remote and hybrid work, especially since the pandemic. In 2022, 41.4% of workers in the tech sector reported they were working remotely, according to the [American Community Survey](#).

There were two tech hubs that saw fewer workers living 50 or more miles away from the office during that time: New York and Seattle.

"I think the most likely explanation for this is more housing construction within those cities, combined with a lack of transportation infrastructure investment to support long-distance commutes," Egan said.

BETWEEN 2012-2022Chart: Hanna Zakharenko / Hearst Newspapers DevHub • Source: [Census Bureau](#)

When looking at the change in where people live over time who work in San Francisco, much of the city has seen a slight decrease in population, whereas many ZIP codes in the East Bay and South Bay saw increases, some more drastic than others.

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The 94568 ZIP code saw its population that works in San Francisco almost triple from 2012 to 2022. The ZIP code includes Dublin, one of the fastest-growing cities in California and about an hour's drive from San Francisco.

“These areas outside of (the) inner Bay Area offer the schools, open space and reduced congestion and crime that many individuals seek, especially those with young children,” Bernick said. “The suburbs/exurbs are making a comeback.”

the Sacramento area, where many Bay Area residents moved during the pandemic, according to postal data.

All those trends are obstacles for downtown San Francisco's comeback, including landlords seeking business and residential tenants, the vitality of transit agencies such as BART and Muni, and city officials looking to close a historic budget gap.

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Here's how work-from-home rates are changing in S.F.



S.F. is struggling to regain jobs lost in the pandemic. These industries are hurting the most

Credits

Reporting by Roland Li / San Francisco Chronicle. Data & graphics by Hanna Zakharenko / Hearst Newspapers DevHub. Editing by Danielle Rindler / Hearst Newspapers DevHub, Dan Kopf / San Francisco Chronicle and Robert Morast / San Francisco Chronicle. Design and development by Janie Haseman / Hearst Newspapers DevHub and Emma Stiefel / San Francisco Chronicle.

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From: [Public Comment](#)
To: [Board \(@smcta.com\)](#)
Subject: FW: San Mateo County Transportion Authority (SMC TA) 2025
Date: Wednesday, March 5, 2025 2:40:34 PM

From: Malcolm Robinson <calmotomal@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 5, 2025 2:35 PM
To: Public Comment <publiccomment@smcta.com>
Subject: San Mateo County Transportion Authority (SMC TA) 2025

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The SMC TA's job is to balance the needs and requirements of public v. personal transport in cars and buses and trains, while walking, and on bicycles and burgeoning micro mobility. The SMC TA needs to make our transport safer for everyone, and be smart with our tax dollars. This is no mean task.

On the first slide of all SMC TA decks is a bicyclist, and yet county wide bicycle planning and priority is nonexistent. SMC TA needs a countywide vision and Advocate for walking and biking infrastructure. SMC TA's piecemeal approach is misguided by half. That is why I ask the SMC TA to take a fresh look at planned freeway expansions, and please consider all methods of transport in your work.

For example, it took at least 40 years to get a train, the most efficient people transport yet devised, to SF International Airport and 30 years to connect BART and CalTrain. Chicago made grade separation a requirement in 1909, and SMC TA is still struggling with the effort. Burlingame fought and hindered their grade separation effort until the cost ballooned from about \$14 million to \$600 million, while creating the most unsafe rail crossing in California.

I have been watching the SMC TA and CAC on Zoom for the last 18 months. It is with chagrin that I watch **trillions** of scarce dollars spent on freeways that constitute a "no person's land" dividing towns in our county, while leaving the clean up funding to the cities. Why is it impossible for the SMC TA to widen a freeway and also make it safe to ride .8 mile

from the In-N-Out on Industrial to the San Carlos Airport? Or ride 1 mile from San Bruno Ave. at El Camino Real to the airport to go to work? Can only wealthy towns make walking and biking across US-101 safe in SMC?

US-101 north of SSF settles down and does not need widening, yet the SMC TA wants to spend another \$half trillion to add one lane. Does US-101 also need to be raised along the Bay due to climate change? The pedestrian crossing over US-101 in SSF at 610 Dubuque was removed and not replaced by the last widening project north of I-380. Why can't freeway widening ALSO make it safe to walk and bike in SMC? How can we help the SMC TA make it safe to walk and bike in our County? Please advise.

Thanks in advance for your assistance.

Rgds,

Malcolm Robinson
SMC Resident Since 1970

From: [Public Comment](#)
To: [Board \(@smcta.com\)](#)
Subject: FW: Public Comment - SamTrans service
Date: Thursday, March 6, 2025 12:15:54 PM

From: Allamere Allamere <allamere62@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 6, 2025 11:58 AM
To: Public Comment <publiccomment@smcta.com>
Subject: Public Comment - SamTrans service

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Dear SMCTA leadership,

I have been a dedicated Caltrain rider since I first moved to the Bay Area in 1996. I have seen the train service improve, with new cars and more frequent service. But I have been so pleased to watch the electrification of the tracks and the new train sets. What an improvement, I can feel closer to being in Europe! My partner and I now regularly take the train up to the city or down to San Jose for the museums, restaurants, etc., something we would not have done in the past because of the slower and less reliable service. I have returned to taking the SamTrans bus from Redwood Shores to the San Carlos or Belmont train stations because of the increased service and slightly later hours.

Having just been so pleasantly surprised by the improved service and investment in public transit on the Peninsula, I was shocked to learn that there are plans to decrease the local Caltrain service from two trains an hour to once, on both Saturday and Sunday, and to decrease service during the week. In addition, I have learned that SMCTA is considering decreasing it's service concomitantly. This is a travesty! For those of us that want improved transit so that we don't have to live in our cars to do anything on the Peninsula, this is extremely disappointing. I consistently vote for bond measures that would help fund public transit. I regularly use the train, and I am now using Samtrans to get to the Caltrain stations because of the improved connection times and later service. If this were to go away, I would be back to doing less or using my car.

What was the point of the electrification investment if not to improve service? What was the point of improved Samtrans service and train connection times if not to encourage more people to take public transpiration? Especially since ridership is noticeably up, both during the week and weekend? I see young people using the bus specifically to get to the train because they do not drive.

I wholeheartedly support efforts to keep the train and bus schedules as they stand, and to continue investing in public transit. I would urge Caltrain to work with SamTrans and other Peninsula public transit to improve the system, rather than let it stagnate. I continue to urge colleagues and friends to utilize public transit, but getting new people who are hesitant to use the system requires a system they can actually use!

Best regards,
Kate Kuhns
Redwood City

From: [Giuliano](#)
To: [Board \(@smcta.com\)](#)
Subject: Metrics matter: adding a lane to 101 north of 380 will increase trips, VMT, GHG, pollution and the deleterious effects.
Date: Thursday, March 6, 2025 1:42:05 PM

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NOTE: Per new Rules of Procedure, my intent is to forward this to a few reporters, as I think that several items enclosed are new and of general interest to the public. I have no emails for any reporters yet, and so I'm trying to find some. Once I find/identify a few I'll let y'all know who I've forwarded this to.

First many thanks to staff for posting 101 Managed Lanes metrics to the website ([quarterly](#) and [weekly](#)). Currently only averages and graphs, but staff assures me that was only because those were easy to bring up quickly, but that they will be bringing up charts and distributions and other data I asked for later. I've been asking for this for most of my tenure on the CAC. Many thanks to staff for doing this, and to Chair Romero for facilitating this.

The availability of metrics and other data matters. Some of us on the CAC have often discussed that without metrics, we have no idea whether projects are successful in meeting their goals. We asked this primarily because knowing which approaches work and which fail is vitally important in choosing which projects the TA funds in the future. The TA should fund projects that use successful approaches and reject those using failing approaches. In particular, we have been interested in whether the 101 Managed Lanes south of 380 project has seen the congestion relief and the increase in HOV usage it so prominently promised on its website, reports, and marketing materials.

The TA needs to insist that for all project goals, that the project MUST include metrics and processes to measure those metrics, both before and after project implementation. How can we know if the project was successful without this? Without a means to measure a stated goal, the TA can not use that goal in deciding whether to fund a project. In addition, given the many harms created by additional motor vehicle trips, all projects must include processes to measure trips, VMT, and mode shift to mass and active transport. Any project that does not include these processes must be rejected or have the unmeasured goals ignored in evaluating them.

For example, one of the primary goals of the 101 Managed Lanes **south** of 380 project was to increase car pooling. At last night's meeting Mike asked about how we measure this. We don't. See the [video](#) at 2:35:43. Thus, we can't use desired shift of trips to HOV as a reason to fund 101 Managed Lanes project **north** of 380. Further, even though the 101 Managed Lanes project **north** of 380 has recently dropped congestion relief from its stated goals, it still must be evaluated on whether it will affect congestion, trips, VMT, and mode shift.

Now that we have the data, we know that adding a lane to 101 south of 380 failed to decrease congestion, and in fact increased congestion, motor vehicle trips, and by inference VMT, GHG, pollution, and other deleterious impacts. During last night's CAC meeting (see [video](#)) Needha, Mike, and I all asked about trips and congestion. The responses were phrased slightly differently, but all were basically that trips/volume/congestion have gone up. In particular, the response to my question at 2:43:37, "... have trips and congestion in general purpose lanes gone up ...?" was the direct, unequivocal response, "yes, and you can even see it in the heat

maps too"

We have spent \$7 million on the 101 north of 380 project exploring whether to do nothing, convert a lane to a toll lane, or add a toll lane. We plan to spend far more on the next phase, before even bringing this project to the public for its feedback. I implore you, remove the "add a lane" option as soon as you can, before further funds are squandered on it. We have the data. We know it is bad. We can't measure whether it will increase HOV use. We know absolutely that the similar 101 managed lanes project south of 380 increased trips, VMT, and GHG. Please direct staff to add a discussion of removal of this option to your next board meeting agenda. Before we squander another \$300M+ on this boondoggle of an alternative.

If the TA desires more than one tolling option for this project, I suggest that you replace the "add a lane" alternative with one to "toll all lanes", with the metric driving pricing being throughput/trips/volume. Price should rise until the volume across all lanes drops below our 2030 targets for VMT reduction. All measures show that we are far, far, far behind our goals in meeting 2030 VMT reduction targets. Here's a concrete way to reduce VMT. Use the funds to subsidize mass transit operational expenses. Imagine how many more folks would take bus and Caltrain if they were free/cheap during peak demand periods. Use the proceeds to provide real ebike and bike purchase incentives. We subsidize electric cars \$7500+ for each purchase. Why not \$2000 per "road/transit" class 1 ebikes (not eMTB or non utilitarian ebikes). Or since regular road/transit bikes are at least as beneficial as ebikes, subsidize their purchase also.

Thank you, see y'all tomorrow,

giuliano

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Drive a bike a bit more often and cars a bit less. You'll be healthier and happier, and so will our world.

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