



Tolling in the Sacramento Region and the Yolo 80 Corridor Improvement Project

Information

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Attachments: Yes

Approved by: James Corless

Referring Committee: Transportation

1. Issue:

This item provides an overview of the process to form a regional tolling authority and the process to seek authority to toll for the Yolo 80 Managed Lanes Project

2. Recommendation:

None; this item is for information only. This item will also be presented to the Transportation Committee at their December 7, meeting.

3. Background/Analysis:

Tolled lanes, including express lanes and high-occupancy toll lanes, are identified as a critical strategy in the adopted Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (MTP/SCS) to improve traffic management, increase system reliability, expand modal choice, and increase person and freight throughput. The adopted MTP/SCS identified the following corridors in the region for tolled facilities: US 50, I-80, I-5, SR 51 (Capital City Freeway), SR 99, and SR 65. There are many tolled facilities currently in operation throughout California, primarily in the Bay Area and southern California. In the Bay Area, tolled facilities are operated or governed by more than seven different agencies within one region. In southern California, the approach tends to be more regional with fewer agencies. SACOG, Yolo TD, Caltrans, and other transportation stakeholders believe that a regional approach, rather than multiple organizations within the region, would be the best overall strategy for managing tolling facilities. This report builds on previous tolling presentations and discussions in the region including, the Megaregion Working Group workshop in April 2022, the SACOG Transportation Committee and Board workshop in March 2023, and the SACOG Strategic Planning Committee and Board information item in August 2023.

The California Transportation Commission (CTC) was delegated authority to approve tolled facilities on the state highway system through AB 194. The CTC requires each tolled facility, or project, seek approval prior to construction. Toll Facility Project Applications may be submitted by a Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA), a Joint Powers Authority with the consent of the RTPA, or Caltrans. Toll Facility Project Applications are lengthy, typically more than 60 pages, and must demonstrate the project meets the following minimum criteria:

- Improves highway performance through increased throughput or reduced delay
- Is in the constrained portion of the Regional Transportation Plan (or MTP/SCS)
- Evidence of cooperation between the RTPA and Caltrans

- Compliance with AB 194
- Project initiation document
- Funding plan

AB 194 allows the CTC to establish guidelines for tolling applications that include additional criteria beyond the minimum requirements, and therefore the CTC will consider additional factors in its evaluation including:

- Compliance with state law
- Compatibility with present and planned transportation systems
- Corridor performance improvement
- Technical feasibility
- Financial feasibility
- Support in existing regional plans and from community

The CTC's approval process also requires a public hearing on each Toll Facility Project Application prior to the CTC commission meeting when the approval is considered.

The Yolo 80 Managed Lanes Project is the first project in the region that will seek approval to toll from the CTC. The project has received \$86 million in federal INFRA funds, which requires the project to begin construction in September 2024, or risk forfeiture of the funds. To meet this deadline, the project must go out to bid in April 2024. The project's draft environmental document was released on November 13, 2023, and comments are due January 5, 2024; the Notice of Determination is anticipated to be filed in Spring 2024. Twelve alternatives are included in the draft environmental document, including multiple that would construct tolled lanes. The project extends along I-80 from the Yolo/Solano County line to West El Camino Avenue in Sacramento County and on US 50 from the I-80/US 50 Interchange to the US 50/I-5 interchange.

Other efforts in the region include I-5 Managed Lanes, as well as a more comprehensive managed lanes strategy through Caltrans' Managed Lanes System Plan (MLSP) that is currently underway.

4. Discussion/Analysis:

Yolo TD, SACOG, and Caltrans have been working together proactively with the CTC to understand the required steps necessary to maintain the critical federal INFRA funds awarded to the Yolo 80 Corridor Improvement Project. Per the CTC, its approval to develop and operate a toll facility must occur at the March 2024, CTC meeting, which requires a Toll Facility Project Application to be submitted in early February 2024. As the RTPA covering Yolo County, SACOG must either submit the application for the Yolo 80 Corridor Improvement Project on its own or consent to a joint powers authority submitting the application.

At its January 2024, meeting, the SACOG Board of Directors will consider two actions to implement the adopted 2020 MTP/SCS' pricing strategies: (1) the creation of a joint powers authority to develop, operate and manage tolling in the Sacramento region; and (2) the consent to submission of a Toll Facility Project Application to the CTC to advance the Yolo 80 Managed Lanes Project.

The joint powers authority would need to be established prior to submitting the application to receive the authority to toll from the CTC so that the joint powers authority board can approve the application prior to submittal. The Toll Facility Project Application requires extensive inter-agency coordination and staff work and could not be completed after the January Board of Directors Meeting in time to meet the CTC's February submittal deadline. Staff believes preparing a draft Toll Facility Project Application in advance of the January

meeting gives the Board of Directors the greatest flexibility in deciding how to move forward.

Through a contract with a consultant, Yolo TD has been conducting the necessary analyses and preparation of required documentation for the application, in consultation and coordination with SACOG and Caltrans staff. Additionally, the agencies have been working together, along with other partners in the region, to consider an acceptable governance structure for a regional tolling authority. The JPA, as drafted, would include SACOG, Yolo TD, and Caltrans as initial members; and the structure of the JPA would allow for other regional partners to be incorporated as future facilities begin operation. The draft JPA governance structure is included as an attachment and will also be presented for discussion to the Strategic Planning Committee at their December 11, 2023, meeting.

5. Fiscal Impact/Grant Information:

There is no fiscal impact. Consultant services required to prepare the draft Toll Facility Project Application will be paid by Yolo TD. Staff time and legal expenses for SACOG in its RTPA role required to prepare the draft regional tolling authority framework and draft Toll Facility Project Application are included in the adopted budget.