

Doyle Drive Articles

MARIN INDEPENDENT JOURNAL – JANUARY 9, 2008

Huffman balks at double toll to rebuild Doyle Drive

By *Brad Breithaupt*

Marin Assemblyman Jared Huffman said Wednesday he won't support legislation that unfairly nails Marin motorists to help pay for reconstruction of Doyle Drive, the San Francisco approach to the Golden Gate Bridge. "Frankly, I have a lot of concerns that we're singled out. There's no way I want to see Marin commuters paying for a lot of that stuff," the San Rafael Democrat said of draft versions of the legislation that also includes money for other Bay Area transportation projects.

Reservations expressed by Huffman come as Marin officials are fuming that local commuters would be paying the proposed Doyle toll, which could add \$1 to \$2 to Marin commuters' trips into San Francisco. The proposed toll "is not equitable, and it's not right," said San Rafael Mayor Al Boro, who is vice president of the Golden Gate Bridge District board. Doyle Drive is a state highway, and the state Department of Transportation should pay for rebuilding it, he said Wednesday.

Marin Supervisor Steve Kinsey says he agrees with Boro. "We consider this as part of the state highway system and not part of the take-it-from-Marín system," Kinsey said. Recent estimates to rebuild the approach put the price tag above \$1 billion. It is still unclear where and how a toll would be collected.

A Doyle toll needs to be approved by state legislation. Nearly \$160 million in federal funds for rebuilding the approach and a host of other Bay Area transportation projects depend on the state approval of a Doyle toll before the end of March.

Those projects include \$12.8 million for parking improvements for Golden Gate ferries, but Boro even questions whether that cash is worth a new toll.

Rebuilding the busy Doyle approach so that it is seismically safe is an important safety project, but Marin commuters shouldn't be leaned on to pay more than their fair share of the cost, Huffman said. He said any legislation currently is "a work in progress," the topic of intense negotiations by Marin, San Francisco and Bay Area officials.

Boro has been worried that the legislation will be rushed through the state Legislature to meet the deadline. "We still haven't seen any draft legislation," Boro said.

Marin Supervisor Hal Brown isn't interested in waiting around for negotiations. He said Doyle Drive is part of state Highway 101, and the state should pay for making sure it's safe without raising tolls that might be charged at the Golden Gate Bridge.

At Tuesday's county supervisors' meeting, Brown said he's ready to ask the county board to take a stand against the proposed Doyle toll. Brown said the board needs to send a clear message that it is "adamantly opposed" to the proposed Doyle toll.

"At some point, we are going to have to discuss it," Brown said. "This is a state highway. Why should Marin be penalized - and only Marin and Sonoma? "That's outrageous, I think," he said.

Brown and other Marin representatives on the Golden Gate Bridge board will discuss the issue Friday morning. Kinsey, Boro and Supervisor Charles McGlashan have been involved in negotiations. Kinsey on Tuesday called the proposed Doyle toll plan "unfair, unbalanced, and it actually was inadequate to fully fund a very important safety project."

He said he and McGlashan delivered that message to San Francisco officials at a meeting in Napa hosted by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission last Thursday.

But talks are continuing, he stressed. "We are looking forward to seeing an improved approach to solving the problem in the weeks ahead," he said.

Last month, Marin officials were more conciliatory, hoping to bargain for a bigger share of the proposed toll revenue to help pay for local transit. Those efforts have gone nowhere.

State Sen. Carole Migden, Marin's other vote in the state Legislature, said she's waiting to see the plan hammered out in negotiations.

Any toll should be based on commute patterns, said Migden, whose political district also includes San Francisco, where she lives.

"I'm saying, we should look at the traffic patterns and what's fair," the Democrat said.

Huffman said he has stayed in close contact with Marin officials involved in the talks and is ready to step in when proposed legislation hits the agenda in Sacramento.

"I'll be bringing Marin's interests to the table," he said.

MEETING:

The Golden Gate Bridge District board is scheduled to discuss the proposed Doyle Drive toll at its meeting at 10 a.m. Friday in the district's Toll Plaza headquarters in San Francisco.

MARIN INDEPENDENT JOURNAL – DECEMBER 30, 2008

Excerpt From DICK SPOTSWOOD'S column:

ODDS & ENDS:

IT'S ALL VERY hush-hush, but San Francisco's plans to assess a \$2 toll on Doyle Drive motorists are moving forward. Since the viaduct is owned by Caltrans, state legislation is required. The authorization must clear Sacramento by March 31. Sen. Leland Lee, D-San Francisco, is considering introducing the bill. Yee represents Western San Francisco and San Mateo with few constituents impacted by a tax that will annually cost each daily North Bay auto commuter \$500. It's not surprising that none of the legislators who actually represent the area where Doyle Drive or the Golden Gate Bridge is located are willing to take the lead either for or against any Doyle Drive toll. That's called political self-preservation.

MARIN INDEPENDENT JOURNAL – DECEMBER 27, 2007

Thursday Readers' Forum

Staff Report

One man's Doyle Drive idea

Here we go again. San Francisco never misses a chance to find ways to put the burden for a project on Marin and Sonoma residents. Doyle Drive is indeed a headache and a solution to this road is needed.

But instead of bleeding Marin and Sonoma county drivers to finance this work, I suggest they erect toll booths on all roads leading into San Francisco from the south. Because a main reason for entering the city is to conduct business, which in turns pays for so many city functions, and because everyone coming from the east and north have been contributing for so many years, I think it is time for the Peninsula folks to start paying their share.

Chuck Galletta, Novato

MARIN INDEPENDENT JOURNAL – DECEMBER 23, 2007

Dick Spotswood: How local delegates are elected for conventions

Staff Report

ODDS & ENDS: San Francisco officials want the Golden Gate Bridge District to collect their proposed Doyle Drive auto toll for two reasons. First, letting the bridge district do their dirty work is cheaper than a separate electronic toll collection system. Second, if the toll is collected at the bridge's toll plaza, city residents traversing Doyle Drive will not pay any toll. Between 20 percent and 30 percent of Doyle Drive motorists use the trans-Presidio road to go from the Marina to the Richmond District. They know San Franciscans will revolt if they are subject to the toll.

For the toll to be implemented, state legislation must be passed by March 31. In the race for the Marin-Sonoma-San Francisco state Senate seat, two Democratic candidates, incumbent Sen. Carole Midgen, D-San Francisco, and Assemblymember Mark Leno, D-San Francisco, are key Sacramento players. Marinites need to ask them, along with Assemblymember Jared Huffman, D-San Rafael, to commit their best efforts to guarantee that no legislation is passed mandating collection of any Doyle Drive toll at the toll plaza without the expressed consent of the bridge district. Given the bridge board's opposition, that just might spike the whole harebrained scheme. The third Senate candidate, Joe Alioto Veronese of San Francisco, already has opposed the toll.

SAN FRANCISCO'S Municipal Railway is testing a London/Hong Kong-style double deck 83-passenger bus. These high-capacity buses are efficient, great marketing tools and fun to ride. The Enviro 500, the test bus, is a North American adaptation of Hong Kong's standard double-decker. I checked with the manufacturer, Alexander Dennis, Ltd., of Glasgow, Scotland. Amazingly, it has a period in January and February when the bus is available. Golden Gate Transit should grab the opportunity and test the bus on its San Francisco-Marin commute runs.

Columnist Dick Spotswood of Mill Valley shares his views on local politics every Sunday in the IJ. His e-mail address is spotswood@comcast.net

MARIN INDEPENDENT JOURNAL – DECEMBER 23, 2007

Sunday Readers' Forum

Staff Report

Suicide barrier must be built

Thank you for the article about Coroner Ken Holmes and the issue of suicide on the Golden Gate Bridge (IJ, Dec. 17). Growing up in Marin, that issue has always been in the background of my awareness, beginning with the loss of a classmate's mother when I was in fifth grade. It became very real four years ago when the son of a friend jumped, and earlier this year when I was walking on the bridge with a group of children and someone jumped.

What I learned recently is that suicide is a permanent solution to a temporary problem - usually depression. When that problem is addressed, people can go on to have long and healthy lives.

The Golden Gate Bridge is a magnet for people in crisis. With 35 known deaths per year and countless others that are unconfirmed or prevented, this is a public health hazard that must be addressed. I can't imagine our county standing by and taking no action about any other location that provoked 100 suicide attempts per year.

There are many ways the bridge can be altered to prevent suicide that will not ruin its aesthetics. I encourage our community to take action before one more mother or father, son or daughter disappears from our lives in this traumatic way.

Leslie Miller, Kentfield

Median barrier needed first

Coroner Ken Holmes (IJ, Dec. 17) chides the Golden Gate Bridge District for planning to install the roadway median barrier before anti-suicide barriers.

The district is right to give priority to protecting those who use the bridge for its intended purpose. Moreover, the median barrier will result in more efficient use of the six lanes. At present, many drivers avoid the left lanes for fear of head-ons.

The demand for suicide barriers coupled with the looming expense of rebuilding Doyle Drive seems to require reopening of the discussion on revenue sources. The bridge district board was too quick to abandon the idea of corporate sponsorship in the face of opposition from those who regard the bridge as an "icon." The kinds of advertising proposed - signs on trash cans at the parking lots, etc. - would not mar anyone's view. Most of our other "icons" have lucrative contracts or are in national parks that charge admission.

However, any suggestion that the many who walk or bike on the bridge contribute to its upkeep, even by voluntary donations, is likewise shouted down.

It's time for all who use and/or love the bridge to think outside the (toll) box.

Alison Fuller, San Rafael

MARIN INDEPENDENT JOURNAL – DECEMBER 23, 2007

Dick Spotswood: How local delegates are elected for conventions

Staff Report

ODDS & ENDS: San Francisco officials want the Golden Gate Bridge District to collect their proposed Doyle Drive auto toll for two reasons. First, letting the bridge district do their dirty work is cheaper than a separate electronic toll collection system. Second, if the toll is collected at the bridge's toll plaza, city residents traversing Doyle Drive will not pay any toll. Between 20 percent and 30 percent of Doyle Drive motorists use the trans-Presidio road to go from the Marina to the Richmond District. They know San Franciscans will revolt if they are subject to the toll.

For the toll to be implemented, state legislation must be passed by March 31. In the race for the Marin-Sonoma-San Francisco state Senate seat, two Democratic candidates, incumbent Sen. Carole Midgen, D-San Francisco, and Assemblymember Mark Leno, D-San Francisco, are key Sacramento players. Marinites need to ask them, along with Assemblymember Jared Huffman, D-San Rafael, to commit their best efforts to guarantee that no legislation is passed mandating collection of any Doyle Drive toll at the toll plaza without the expressed consent of the bridge district. Given the bridge board's opposition, that just might spike the whole harebrained scheme. The third Senate candidate, Joe Alioto Veronese of San Francisco, already has opposed the toll.

SAN FRANCISCO'S Municipal Railway is testing a London/Hong Kong-style double deck 83-passenger bus. These high-capacity buses are efficient, great marketing tools and fun to ride. The Enviro 500, the test bus, is a North American adaptation of Hong Kong's standard double-decker. I checked with the manufacturer, Alexander Dennis, Ltd., of Glasgow, Scotland. Amazingly, it has a period in January and February when the bus is available. Golden Gate Transit should grab the opportunity and test the bus on its San Francisco-Marin commute runs.

Columnist Dick Spotswood of Mill Valley shares his views on local politics every Sunday in the IJ. His e-mail address is spotswood@comcast.net

PRESS DEMOCRAT - DECEMBER 18, 2007

Editorial

Toll shock

Bridge directors, SF need to rethink the \$8 crossing

Once upon a time -- 40 years ago -- motorists paid 25 cents to cross the Golden Gate Bridge, and the bridge district was still rolling in money.

Later, the large surplus, along with substantial investment from the federal government, would be applied to the purchase of bus and ferry systems. Bridge tolls were raised, too, and applied to the operating costs of the two transit operations.

The argument, then and now, was that people who drive their cars across the bridge benefit when car traffic is reduced.

Life has gotten more complicated for the bridge board. When the bus and ferry system were conceived, the federal government was eager to help. Now transit money from Washington is scarce.

Meanwhile, as Sonoma and Marin counties age, both bridge crossings and bus ridership are declining. Fewer people are commuting to jobs in San Francisco, which means revenues are falling, even as fixed costs go higher.

And the world-famous bridge, now 70 years old, needs more than a new coat of paint. A major retrofit project aims to make the bridge and its cables more resistant to the stresses of weather and earthquakes.

All of this background brings us to Staff Writer Paul Payne's report on Friday. The bridge board is making plans to increase bridge tolls from \$5 to \$6, while the San Francisco Transportation Authority measures an additional \$2 toll for a \$1 billion renovation of Doyle Drive, the southern approach to the bridge.

Get ready for this. Together, they are talking about charging you eight bucks to cross the Golden Gate Bridge.

We say: Time out.

Just because tolls can be raised doesn't mean they should be.

To begin with, a 60 percent increase all at once is simply too much. Any change should be incremental, limiting the burden on people who use the bridge.

These twin proposals also suffer from a kind of local government balkanization. What we have here are two government agencies asking folks to pay \$6, drive a few more yards down the same road and pay \$2 more.

There has to be a better way. Maybe if the bridge district, the city, the state and the federal government put their heads together, they can come up with a more coherent -- and less costly -- approach.

MARIN INDEPENDENT JOURNAL - DECEMBER 16, 2007

DICK SPOTSWOOD'S COLUMN: DOYLE DRIVE TAX GRAB AIMED AT MARIN

THE BIGGEST tax grab in decades is aimed at Marin like a rocket and so far there has been nothing but a ho-hum from the public. I'm referring to San Francisco's harebrained scheme to place a toll on autos traversing Doyle Drive's southerly approach to the Golden Gate Bridge. Ostensibly, the toll is designed to pay part of the \$1 billion needed for Doyle Drive's long-overdue seismic upgrade.

State legislation is required because Doyle Drive is owned by Caltrans. The initial toll likely will be \$2. If a toll increase was proposed by the much-maligned Golden Gate Bridge District, an agency in which Marin at least has some representation, Marinites would be at the barricades. The instigator of the potential Doyle Drive toll is San Francisco's Board of Supervisors, an institution, to put it gently, that doesn't give a hoot about Marin residents.

Even San Francisco officials admit that the toll will pay the city's share of upgrade costs within six or seven years. After that, it will be a perpetual cash cow. San Francisco supervisors will continuously raise the toll once it's instituted. That's what a profligate public agency perennially short of cash inevitably will do. That's doubly true when the toll/tax is levied exclusively on perceived wealthy suburbanites who can't vote in the city.

A Doyle Drive toll is a commuter tax. Worse, it's a tax that will only be levied on North Bay motorists. No corresponding toll is planned to pay for the Bay Bridge's new approach in the city used by East Bay commuters. Nor would the toll be levied on those San Franciscans traveling on Doyle Drive from the Marina to the Richmond District.

San Rafael Mayor Al Boro, a bridge board member, is right when he calls the proposed Doyle Drive toll "half baked." Is Marin officially fighting the effort? No. The only concern from Dianne Steinhauser, executive director of the Transportation Authority of Marin, is that part of the potential Doyle Drive toll be designated for Marin's use. Savvy San Francisco officials will gladly carve off a small percentage of toll revenue for Marin and consider the payoff cheap.

Ironically, the sole institution throwing up a roadblock so far is the Golden Gate Bridge District. The bridge board is balking at San Francisco's request that the district does the dirty work of collecting the fee along with the current bridge toll. The only alternative is for the city to construct its own electronic toll collection system.

It could be that the bridge board is Marin's only ally, a bitter pill for those professional bridge district bashers. If there isn't a prompt outcry to leaders in Sacramento from North Bay commuters, an ever-increasing Doyle Drive toll is a fait accompli.

MARIN INDEPENDENT JOURNAL - DECEMBER 15, 2007

Questions over Doyle Drive toll hold up vote

By Mark Prado

The Golden Gate Bridge District Board of Directors again delayed taking a stand on whether to charge a toll to help finance reconstruction of Doyle Drive - a plan that could force Marin residents to pay twice to get into San Francisco.

The board had a resolution in front of it Friday stating it would not collect a toll for the San Francisco County Transportation Authority, which is seeking funds for the Doyle Drive work.

But San Francisco Transportation Authority and Metropolitan Transportation Commission representatives asked the board to delay its vote until Jan. 11, when the board next meets. "There are still a lot of questions that need to be answered," said Jake McGoldrick, bridge board member and chairman of the San Francisco Transportation Authority.

The board voted 10-6 to delay the vote, the second time this month it passed on taking action on the controversial topic. Ultimately it will be the state Legislature that decides if a toll can be charged, but the San Francisco Authority and MTC want the bridge district's support.

Some board members voiced concern that when the board meets in January, the new legislative session will be under way and the bridge district could suddenly find itself named as toll takers by the state.

"I don't want the state Legislature to pull a fast one and make us toll taker," said board member and Marin Supervisor Charles McGlashan. Maureen Middlebrook, a bridge board member from Sonoma County, agreed. "We need to be clear about our position before the legislation is created," she said.

But McGoldrick and an MTC representative assured the bridge board the plan would not move ahead without input from bridge officials.

The MTC controls much of the Bay Area transportation funding and the bridge district board had good reason to listen to its request to delay a vote. The MTC has given money to help the bridge district with the study of its suicide barrier and the agency could award it \$20 million to put a moveable median barrier on the span.

"This structure needs to be replaced," said Bill Dodd, MTC chairman, who referenced the collapse of a Minnesota roadway in August that killed seven people. "A new Doyle Drive is needed to create a safe route to the Golden Gate Bridge."

The "seismically challenged" 1.5-mile Doyle Drive was built in 1936 and is rated by the federal government as being in the second-worst condition level of all California bridges, scoring 2 out of 100. U.S. Transportation Secretary Mary Peters announced in August her department would help finance the Doyle Drive project as long as motorists who use the structure pay a toll during peak periods to discourage people from driving into busy downtown San Francisco.

The toll has been estimated at between \$1 and \$2, but with costs for the project climbing and possibly topping \$1 billion, it could go higher. Additionally, the bridge district may have to look at raising its cash toll to \$6 next year to cover a deficit. Traffic over the Golden Gate Bridge accounts for 6 percent of vehicles that come into downtown San Francisco and some board members believe the Highway 101 corridor is being unfairly targeted when other areas contribute more.

Other board members don't like the idea of the district being associated with the toll, saying it will make it hard for the district to raise its tolls. "We are going to get stuck with this whole thing in the public's mind," said Dietrich Stroeh, a board member from Marin.

MARIN INDEPENDENT JOURNAL – DECEMBER 15, 2007

Saturday Readers' Forum

Staff Report

TRANSPORTATION: Doyle Drive toll must be fought

Congratulations to the Golden Gate Bridge District board for standing up (so far) to a proposed toll collection for a rebuilt Doyle Drive. For 20 years or so, every proposal to rebuild Doyle Drive was met by loud noises from Marina residents who complained of increased traffic from any such rebuilding (I can hear it now: "Oh Mabel, they rebuilt Doyle Drive. Let's take a ride into the city.>").

As a result of San Francisco intransigence for many years, we Marin residents are now being asked to pay again for our one link to San Francisco. Let's put a stop to this now.

Mark Litwin, Larkspur

SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE - DECEMBER 15, 2007

Golden Gate Bridge directors postpone Doyle Drive toll resolution

Michael Cabanatuan, Chronicle Staff Writer

Golden Gate Bridge district directors, already unwilling to collect tolls on San Francisco's Doyle Drive, couldn't even agree Friday on whether they should support the proposed charge, intended to help pay for rebuilding the seismically fragile approach to the bridge. After a nearly two-hour discussion, the Board of Directors voted 10-6 to put off a decision on a resolution concerning the Doyle Drive toll until Jan. 11.

Postponing the decision would allow regional transportation officials to work with the bridge board and the San Francisco Transportation Authority to see if they can come to an agreement.

"We have an issue here where we need to be working together," said San Francisco Supervisor Jake McGoldrick, a bridge director and president of the Transportation Authority, the proponent of the Doyle Drive toll.

The Transportation Authority plans to charge a toll of between \$1 and \$2 - possibly rising during peak hours and falling as congestion declines - on Doyle Drive, the 1.5-mile San Francisco approach to the bridge.

Federal transportation officials have pledged to give \$158 million to the Bay Area - including \$140 million toward the \$800 million Doyle Drive replacement project - if the city implements the congestion-related tolls. But the Transportation Authority lacks the authority to charge the tolls, so the project requires state legislation.

While the bridge district has no official role in either the legislation or the toll, its opposition could make it difficult to get the legislation passed.

Bill Dodd, chairman of the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, suggested the postponement so his regional agency could review the proposed resolution for what he called "unintended consequences."

The proposed resolution staked out four positions in the event the San Francisco Transportation Authority or another agency decides to charge the toll. It called for:

- Tolls to be imposed on all Doyle Drive users, not just those crossing the Golden Gate Bridge.
- Tolls to be collected somewhere other than the bridge toll plaza.
- Giving the authority to collect tolls to an agency other than the bridge district.
- Using some of the Doyle Drive tolls to fund transit and other alternatives to driving.

The resolution before the board did not take any position on tolling, said bridge district General Manager Celia Kupersmith.

"It does not say we support tolling on Doyle Drive," she said.

But some directors said they thought the resolution implied support for the toll while others thought it didn't - and should. Several speakers, including a contingent from the San Francisco Planning and Urban Research Association, urged the board to approve the toll, while some speakers, who oppose the replacement structure altogether, called for it to be rejected.

After the meeting, Jose Luis Moscovich, executive director of the Transportation Authority, urged directors and the public to focus on the need to improve Doyle Drive, which has a Caltrans safety rating of 2 on a 100-point scale.

"This project needs a toll in order to complete the funding plan," he said. "We have a public safety imperative here. I'm not sure what kind of meeting we'd have here with the board the day after an earthquake destroyed Doyle Drive."

Online resources:

For information on the federal grant that includes the Doyle Drive toll requirement, go to:

links.sfgate.com/ZBFO

www.goldengate.org

www.sfcta.org

PRESS DEMOCRAT - DECEMBER 15, 2007

Toll is 'window dressing'

San Rafael mayor says plan to collect \$1 to \$2 from commuters to pay for Doyle Drive repairs is a ploy to get money from North Bay residents

By Paul Payne

Plans to hit commuters entering San Francisco with an extra toll to help pay for roadway improvements are just "window dressing" on a city scheme to reach deeper into the wallets of residents of Sonoma and Marin counties, a North Bay official said Friday.

San Rafael Mayor Al Boro said the \$1 to \$2 toll proposed by the San Francisco Transportation Authority would continue to raise money for the city long after the Doyle Drive corridor is replaced.

He urged colleagues on the Golden Gate Bridge district board of directors to ask for a more precise accounting of how the money would be spent and pass a resolution outlining some conditions for the project.

No resolution was passed after directors agreed to take more time listening to toll proposals.

At issue was the transportation authority's bid to impose a "congestion charge" that would make it eligible for a \$158 million federal grant to pay for part of the work.

"The \$158 million to me is window dressing to get the toll implanted," Boro said. "Twenty to 30 million (dollars) a year is going to go to the transportation authority, indefinitely. And we don't know what they're doing with it."

Boro's comments came as bridge directors took up the issue of the proposed toll, which would help pay the estimated \$1 billion to rebuild Doyle Drive.

Directors were considering a resolution to send to state lawmakers listing four main conditions. Among them were that all users of Doyle Drive be charged, not just those who travel south over the bridge.

Also, the bridge district said it would not collect the toll. And it asked that the money be used in part to fund alternative transportation like buses and ferries.

But disagreement among agencies over the bridge's position on collection and using the money for alternative transportation stalled the resolution.

A partner in the project, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, asked bridge directors to wait until their Jan. 11 meeting to consider the resolution again. "We want it efficiently collected and administrated," MTC spokesman Randy Rentschler said. "And we want to have conversations with the Golden Gate Bridge district about that."

On assurances from one director, San Francisco Supervisor Jake McGoldrick, that no legislation would be introduced before the board met, the board voted 10-6 in favor of waiting. All of the dissenting votes came from north of the bridge.

The transportation authority is expected to send legislation to Sacramento next month seeking toll-collection approval.

To be eligible for the \$158 million federal grant, it must have approval by March 31.

The remainder of the money needed to fix Doyle Drive will come from already secured state and local sources as well as money collected from the new toll.

Replacement of Doyle Drive is a longtime goal of San Francisco transportation officials, who fear the skyway through the historic Presidio could topple in a strong earthquake and is responsible for deadly traffic collisions.

Jim Chappel, president of the San Francisco Planning and Urban Research Association, told bridge directors Friday that driving the 70-year-old road south of the bridge toll plaza is a "white-knuckle, terrifying experience" that must be fixed.

"This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to rebuild the parkway," Chappel said.

Finding a way to pay for it has been a problem -- until recently. The federal government offered the grant if the city could set up a toll.

The toll would be in addition to the \$5 toll charged to cross southbound over the bridge. But just how the toll would be collected is in question.

Bridge officials don't want to include it in tolls commuters pay to cross the bridge because they will be considering their own increase to \$6 in January.

If it isn't paid at the existing toll booths, it could be collected electronically, said Jose Luis Moscovich, transportation authority executive director.

Moscovich said he hoped to get the toll in place by late next year or early 2009. The exact amount hasn't been set, but it would be no more than \$2, he said. Doyle Drive construction would run from 2009 to 2012, he said.

"What really makes it costly is the fact that you are building a road to carry 120,000 cars a day in the middle of a national park and a national cemetery where you can't touch any land," Moscovich said. "It's very difficult to do this."

SAN FRANCISCO EXAMINER – DECEMBER 12, 2007

Letter to the Editor

Doyle Drive toll proposal disagreeable

I do not own a car but if I did, and if I lived in Marin County, I would really dislike the \$5 toll on the Golden Gate Bridge. However, I would loathe to the umpteenth degree an additional toll on Doyle Drive ("Doyle plan may be stuck at gates," The Examiner, Dec. 10). Why should a secondary toll be placed on that stretch of roadway when motorists have no choice but to use it after crossing the already expensive Golden Gate Bridge? What do these idiots expect? Cars can't fly and avoid Doyle Drive. Who thought up this dumb idea anyway? Whoever it was should be fired immediately.

Irving Q. Waldorf, The City

MARIN INDEPENDENT JOURNAL - DECEMBER 15, 2007

Doyle Drive toll must be fought

Congratulations to the Golden Gate Bridge District board for standing up (so far) to a proposed toll collection for a rebuilt Doyle Drive. For 20 years or so, every proposal to rebuild Doyle Drive was met by loud noises from Marina residents who complained of increased traffic from any such rebuilding (I can hear it now: "Oh Mabel, they rebuilt Doyle Drive. Let's take a ride into the city."). As a result of San Francisco intransigence for many years, we Marin residents are now being asked to pay again for our one link to San Francisco. Let's put a stop to this now.

Mark Litwin, Larkspur

NBC11.COM – DECEMBER 15, 2007

SF Considers Toll For Doyle Drive Near GG Bridge

Toll Would Pay For Seismic Upgrade

The city of San Francisco is considering creating a new toll that would be applied to drivers who use Doyle Drive, the San Francisco approach to the Golden Gate Bridge. The San Francisco County Transportation Authority wants to implement the toll in order to pay for roadway repairs and possibly a redesign of the aging, seismically unsafe, elevated roadway.

Golden Gate Bridge District Board members are not entirely supportive of the plan, NBC11's Lisa Bernard reported Friday. The board held a politically charged meeting Friday.

Board members are unsure whether to lend their support to the transportation authority, which must go to the state legislature to get a toll approved on Doyle Drive, Bernard reported.

Golden Gate Bridge directors want to make sure everyone who uses Doyle Drive pays for the new roadway, not just those who travel to and from Marin County.

The toll could be \$1 or \$2 but the exact amount has not been decided yet, Bernard reported. The district does not want the toll to be collected at the bridge toll plaza, Bernard said.

The Metropolitan Transportation Commission said cameras could photograph license plates or a FasTrak-type gadget could be used for toll collection.

The head of the MTC wants to reach a compromise with the Bridge District, to make sure the federal funds come through, Bernard reported.

Most people she spoke to said they supported the toll idea.

"This is over \$150 million of federal transportation dollars that are going to come into the Bay Area and it's important we don't miss the opportunity," said Bill Dodd of the Metropolitan Transportation Commission.

"Unfortunately it seems to be the only way to raise funds for Doyle Drive," said San Francisco resident Redmond Kernan. "Therefore I am reluctantly in favor of it."

Some Golden Gate Bridge District members have distanced themselves from the Doyle Drive toll idea because they have been pushing a hike in the actual Bridge toll next year.

KPIX TV 5 - DECEMBER 15, 2007

Golden Gate Bridge Commute Toll May Soon Reach \$8

With a \$1 Golden Gate Bridge toll increase and a new charge on the Doyle Drive extension both under consideration, commuters could soon see the cost of commuting across the Golden Gate Bridge to San Francisco jump to \$8 per-trip. On Friday, administrators postponed a vote on the possibility of a toll on Doyle Drive, the aging roadway that leads from the Golden Gate Bridge to the city's Marina District. The federal government is requiring that the toll be imposed before \$158 million in funding is delivered to help repair the 1.4 mile-long Doyle Drive. That planning for that toll must be approved both locally, and by State Legislature prior to a March 31st. federal deadline.

The Golden Gate Bridge District postponed a vote on a new Doyle Drive to give administrators time to answer questions such as where the toll would be collected. San Francisco County Transportation Authority would manage the Doyle Drive toll, but approval from the Golden Gate Bridge district must be obtained before a new toll can be imposed. The Golden Gate Bridge District has been trying to distance itself from the Doyle Drive toll issues because it has been considering a \$1 increase to the current bridge toll to help covering a widening budget gap. The district will again take up the issue on their next meeting on Jan 11th.

KTVU REPORT ON DOYLE DRIVE - DECEMBER 14, 2007

Are Marin Commuters Facing \$8 Toll Into San Francisco?

SAN FRANCISCO -- The Golden Gate Bridge Board of Directors Friday considered a toll increase of \$1 for 2008 and also a proposal by the San Francisco Transportation Authority to tack on another dollar or two as a fee to use Doyle Drive.

Currently, commuters pay a \$5 toll to cross the Golden Gate Bridge, but Maureen Middlebrook, Santa Rosa's representative on the board, told the Santa Rosa Press Democrat increases were likely on the way.

"Everything is costing more these days," Middlebrook said. "It's very difficult to say, but yes, this will cost more, too." The MTA is asking for approval of a Doyle Drive toll to pay part of a projected \$1 billion earthquake renovation project to upgrade the 1.4-mile stretch that runs from the bridge to the Marina District and Lombard Blvd.

The construction project currently is scheduled to begin in 2012.

Part of that proposal also is asking the 20-member board to support of MTA in its bid to become a toll-collecting agency, a decision that will require further state legislative action.

Jose Luis Moscovich, the transportation authority executive director, said the toll would also remove some of the financial burden on San Francisco.

"The majority of people using the facility are from Marin and Sonoma counties," Moscovich told the Press Democrat. "This is not just a San Francisco road."

To beat a March 31 deadline for the federal money, the transportation authority will send toll legislation to state lawmakers next month, Moscovich said.

The 2008 \$1 toll increase, meanwhile, was being considered to help the bridge district offset a \$90 million operating deficit.

PRESS DEMOCRAT - DECEMBER 14, 2007

Tolls to drive into SF may hit \$8

North Bay commuters could face \$1 bridge hike, \$2 road repair fee

By PAUL PAYNE

Sonoma and Marin county commuters could be paying up to \$8 to drive into San Francisco under separate toll proposals being reviewed by transportation officials.

Golden Gate Bridge directors are thinking of raising the current \$5 charge by \$1 early next year in an effort to close a gaping budget deficit.

And as motorists drive off the bridge onto Doyle Drive, they could be hit with a new \$1 to \$2 toll from the San Francisco Transportation Authority to pay part of a \$1 billion renovation of the precarious stretch over the Presidio.

"Everything is costing more these days," said Maureen Middlebrook, Santa Rosa's representative on the Golden Gate Bridge district board of directors. "It's very difficult to say, but yes, this will cost more, too."

Middlebrook and the rest of the 19-member board are scheduled to vote today on a resolution in support of the transportation authority in its bid to become a toll-collecting agency, a decision requiring state legislative action.

The resolution has conditions. It says the bridge district will not collect the toll for the transportation authority -- in part because it's planning its own increase -- and asks that any toll be paid by all users of Doyle Drive, not just those crossing the bridge.

Jose Luis Moscovich, the transportation authority executive director, said he's considering several methods of collection including the use of high-tech cameras that would record license plates and send the information to an electronic billing system.

The cameras could be adjusted to catch north- or southbound traffic, and could be placed anywhere on Doyle Drive, but they would likely focus on rush-hour commuters entering the city, Moscovich said.

"It's a congestion charge," he said.

Setting up a new toll was a requirement to receive about \$160 million in federal transportation money aimed at reducing peak traffic congestion. The money would be added to a commitment of \$405 million from the state and about \$100 million from a special San Francisco tax.

The difference -- about \$400 million -- would be generated by the new toll over 30 years, Moscovich said.

Altogether, the funds would pay for total renovation of the 1.4 mile stretch of Doyle Drive, which is considered an earthquake and traffic safety risk.

Construction could start sometime next year and be finished in 2012, he said.

"The majority of people using the facility are from Marin and Sonoma counties," Moscovich said. "This is not just a San Francisco road."

To beat a March 31 deadline for the federal money, the transportation authority will send toll legislation to state lawmakers next month, Moscovich said.

He said a resolution of support from Golden Gate Bridge officials was welcome but "not indispensable."

"It's an advisory piece," he said. "It would be nice to have the bridge on record supporting our effort."

North Bay bridge directors said they opposed collecting the toll for the transportation authority because it would complicate their own proposed toll increase to help cover a \$90 million operating deficit.

Also, they were adamant the toll be exacted from all users of Doyle Drive, not just commuters.

Joanne Sanders, the mayor of Sonoma and one of three directors representing Sonoma County, said Thursday she was undecided on whether to support the resolution.

She said the \$160 million would include about \$12 million to build a new parking structure at the Larkspur ferry terminal, something that would benefit commuters.

Middlebrook and Sonoma County Supervisor Mike Kerns said giving the transportation authority toll collection ability was a good thing. Middlebrook said Doyle Drive poses a danger to North Bay commuters and must be fixed.

"You have to bite that bullet at some time, as painful as it is," Middlebrook said.

ABC 7-KGO TV - DECEMBER 13, 2007

New plans for fixing Doyle Drive

By Heather Ishimaru

SAN FRANCISCO -- This summer, San Francisco won a federal grant designed to reduce traffic congestion. A key part of the deal involves putting a toll on Doyle Drive, the 1.3-mile approach to the Golden Gate Bridge. That money would then be used to help build a new Doyle Drive. But at this point, no one has the authority to collect that toll.

Seventy-year old Doyle Drive is a virtual death trap. It has no shoulders, nothing to prevent a head-on collision and the right size earthquake would level it.

"It has a structural sufficiency rating of two out of 100. Its the worst bridge in California and one of the three worst in the nation, it would make Minneapolis look like a picnic, you know," said Jose Luis Moscovich from San Francisco County Transportation.

Public officials are not mincing their words these days.

"The hard part is above all getting the public to understand that Doyle Drive is the most dangerous road in the state of California," said supervisor Jake McGoldrick.

The hard sell comes as San Francisco prepares to ask the legislature to help make Doyle Drive a rush-hour toll road.

Last summer San Francisco won a \$158 million dollar federal grant to be used for projects that will reduce traffic congestion.

But to get the money, the city must put a toll on Doyle Drive. The idea is that the rush-hour toll would do two things, reduce traffic and provide a way to raise the final \$300 million dollars to fund the \$900 million dollar Doyle drive replacement project. this county transportation authority animation shows what the new road would look like.

Only problem is, right now there is no agency with the authority to collect that toll.

The Golden Gate Bridge District says it wouldn't want the job anyway, because it already expects to get enough grief from drivers when it raises the toll on the bridge to close its own budget deficit.

"There were suppositions that we would do certain things and I think that a lot of this discussion should have happened beforehand," said Al Boro from the Golden Gate Bridge District.

But transportation officials say that would have been putting the cart before the horse, and they're confident the legislature will come through before the March deadline to have a tolling authority in place.

"I'm confident that we will be in Sacramento with a real piece of legislation when the session opens," said Moscovich.

"Either we'll have the Transportation Authority collect it or we'll create "Agency X." We do that all the time, create an agency with the authority to collect it," said McGoldrick.

The Doyle toll could be in the one to \$2 dollar range during peak times. The Golden Gate Bridge district has talked about the possibility of an \$8 dollar toll someday. If that happens, using the bridge and Doyle together could be a \$10 dollar trip during peak times.

SAN FRANCISCO SENTINEL - DECEMBER 13, 2007

ALIOTO VERONESE CHIDES MIGDEN AND LENO for backing Golden Gate Bridge toll increase

San Francisco Police Commissioner Joe Alioto Veronese today called on State Senator Carole Migden and Assemblyman Mark Leno to withdraw their support for a plan to charge Marin and Sonoma commuters double tolls to cross the Golden Gate Bridge and Doyle Drive.

He asked both to join, on record, in his vocal efforts to denounce and defeat the plan for higher tolls.

Both Senator Migden and Assemblyman Leno have endorsed a plan to charge double tolls in order to finance rebuilding the Doyle Drive approach to the Golden Gate Bridge.

Alioto Veronese also released a letter to U.S. Secretary of Transportation Mary Peters calling on the U.S. Transportation Department to drop the federal requirement that federal funding be contingent on the second toll being imposed.

“This is a disastrous plan and fundamentally unfair to Marin and Sonoma commuters,” said Alioto Veronese.

“We need to rebuild Doyle Drive to make it seismically safe, but we should do it smarter. We should tear up this plan and go back to the drawing board. Our leaders should be standing up for the people they represent, not scheming with politicians behind closed doors and against the pocket book interests of struggling commuters.”

The State Legislature has until March to sign off on the double toll plan.

Alioto Veronese is calling on Migden or Leno to sponsor legislation rejecting the double toll plan. Alioto Veronese is further calling on Migden or Leno to find alternative sources of funding instead of revenue from a second toll.

In February, the California Transportation Commission met and voted to approve the Doyle Drive reconstruction project, part of the \$19.9 billion Proposition 1B State Transportation Infrastructure bond measure approved by voters in November 2006.

As a part of that project, nearly \$159 million in federal funding for Doyle Drive and other Bay Area projects is contingent on a second toll that would be charged of commuters driving down Doyle Drive into San Francisco.

Alioto Veronese is calling for a guaranteed return on investment for Marin and Sonoma counties if the plan does go through. Alioto Veronese believes that any plan to raise tolls must include projects the benefit Marin and Sonoma counties, such as additional bus or ferry routes, more bike or multi-use trails, investments in rail, relief from traffic congestion at the Larkspur ferry terminal, or other long-term public transit improvements in the North Bay.

“No representative in the Legislature should choose between one half of their district and the other half, but that’s what has happened here,” said Alioto Veronese.

“I’m disappointed that when Carole Migden and Mark Leno were given a choice whether to stand with Marin and Sonoma, they chose to turn their backs.”

Joe Alioto Veronese currently serves as San Francisco Police Commissioner, Civil Rights Attorney in the Law Office of Mayor Joseph Alioto and Angela Alioto, and small business owner in the wine industry in Sonoma County. He is a Democratic candidate for California State Senate District 3, including San Francisco, Marin and Sonoma Counties.

Doyle Drive plan may hit brakes

A \$158 million federal grant for fighting Bay Area gridlock could be lost if the state Legislature does not meet a spring deadline to give a city agency the authority to impose a toll on the heavily trafficked and aging Doyle Drive.

The Bay Area received the funds through the federal Urban Partnership Program. Grantees were required to include some form of congestion pricing — which penalizes drivers for using key thoroughfares during peak driving hours — in order to qualify for the funds.

Of the \$158 million awarded to the Bay Area, \$35 million is to help defray the \$810 million cost to seismically upgrade Doyle Drive, the southern approach to the Golden Gate Bridge. Another \$12 million is for electronic tolling equipment for Doyle Drive — the congestion-pricing component of the Bay Area grant proposal.

The grant carries with it a number of conditions, including that the legal authority to collect tolls on Doyle Drive must be in place by March 31, and tolls must be collected starting no later than Sept. 30, 2009.

For The City to charge a toll on Doyle Drive, it would need approval from the state Legislature, and city officials have expressed concern that this would not happen in time to meet the federal government's deadline.

Supervisor Jake McGoldrick, who chairs the San Francisco County Transportation Authority, the agency taking the lead on the Doyle Drive toll project, wrote a letter to the Golden Gate Bridge Highway and Transportation District this month asking the agency to consider acting as the toll authority. "Our main goal in respect to this alternative is to demonstrate compliance — in order to avoid the loss of \$158 million to the Bay Area," McGoldrick wrote.

On Friday, however, the attorney for the Bridge District ruled that the agency did not have the authority to impose a toll on all users of Doyle Drive without state approval.

José Luis Moscovich, the San Francisco County Transportation Authority's executive director, said he was not "terribly concerned" that the grant money would be lost.

"I think we're well on our way [toward] getting this done," he said. "We're focused on the positives of getting this done."

Moscovich said that if they run out of time, the Transportation Authority would ask the Bridge District to "reconsider" acting as the tolling authority, adding that the initial legal opinion is not necessarily the "last word" on the matter.

The toll for use of Doyle Drive would be about \$1 to \$2 and would be collected electronically, with no toll booth, Moscovich said. The new toll, which would help fund the Doyle Drive improvements, would be in addition to the existing toll to cross Golden Gate Bridge, for those drivers coming into San Francisco.

SAN FRANCISCO EXAMINER - DECEMBER 10, 2007**Doyle Drive plan may hit brakes**

A \$158 million federal grant for fighting Bay Area gridlock could be lost if the state Legislature does not meet a spring deadline to give a city agency the authority to impose a toll on the heavily trafficked and aging Doyle Drive.

The Bay Area received the funds through the federal Urban Partnership Program. Grantees were required to include some form of congestion pricing — which penalizes drivers for using key thoroughfares during peak driving hours — in order to qualify for the funds.

Of the \$158 million awarded to the Bay Area, \$35 million is to help defray the \$810 million cost to seismically upgrade Doyle Drive, the southern approach to the Golden Gate Bridge. Another \$12 million is for electronic tolling equipment for Doyle Drive — the congestion-pricing component of the Bay Area grant proposal.

The grant carries with it a number of conditions, including that the legal authority to collect tolls on Doyle Drive must be in place by March 31, and tolls must be collected starting no later than Sept. 30, 2009.

For The City to charge a toll on Doyle Drive, it would need approval from the state Legislature, and city officials have expressed concern that this would not happen in time to meet the federal government's deadline.

Supervisor Jake McGoldrick, who chairs the San Francisco County Transportation Authority, the agency taking the lead on the Doyle Drive toll project, wrote a letter to the Golden Gate Bridge Highway and Transportation District this month asking the agency to consider acting as the toll authority. "Our main goal in respect to this alternative is to demonstrate compliance — in order to avoid the loss of \$158 million to the Bay Area," McGoldrick wrote.

On Friday, however, the attorney for the Bridge District ruled that the agency did not have the authority to impose a toll on all users of Doyle Drive without state approval.

José Luis Moscovich, the San Francisco County Transportation Authority's executive director, said he was not "terribly concerned" that the grant money would be lost.

"I think we're well on our way [toward] getting this done," he said. "We're focused on the positives of getting this done."

Moscovich said that if they run out of time, the Transportation Authority would ask the Bridge District to "reconsider" acting as the tolling authority, adding that the initial legal opinion is not necessarily the "last word" on the matter.

The toll for use of Doyle Drive would be about \$1 to \$2 and would be collected electronically, with no toll booth, Moscovich said. The new toll, which would help fund the Doyle Drive improvements, would be in addition to the existing toll to cross Golden Gate Bridge, for those drivers coming into San Francisco.

MARIN INDEPENDENT JOURNAL - DECEMBER 8, 2007

Golden Gate Bridge officials balk at taking toll to S.F.

By Mark Prado

Golden Gate Bridge officials say they want no part of collecting a second toll that would be slapped on Marin drivers to help finance reconstruction of Doyle Drive.

Marin residents could find themselves paying close to \$10 during peak commute hours to drive into San Francisco if a controversial plan to help fund the work gets state approval.

The bridge district's board held a special meeting Friday to decide whether to support state legislation that would allow the San Francisco County Transportation Authority to collect the toll.

The consensus: The bridge district board is undecided on whether to support the plan, but it doesn't want to collect the toll.

"We don't want to be the toll takers," said Marin Supervisor Charles McGlashan, a bridge board member.

And legally, the bridge doesn't have the authority to collect tolls for the Doyle Drive project because it does not own the structure - the state does. Doyle Drive is the elevated structure that carries traffic immediately south of the bridge.

The San Francisco County Transportation Authority said it can take tolls by reading license plates and would not need the bridge toll booths, but it wants support from the bridge district in its efforts.

The board delayed taking a position on the political hot potato until next Friday, saying it wanted to see specific wording of a letter of support before approving it.

U.S. Transportation Secretary Mary Peters announced in August her department would help fund the Doyle Drive project as long as motorists who use the structure pay a toll during peak periods to discourage people from driving into busy downtown San Francisco.

The toll has been estimated at between \$1 and \$2, but with costs for the project climbing and possibly topping \$1 billion, it could go higher. Additionally, the bridge district may have to look at raising its cash toll to \$6 next year to cover a deficit.

"We represent people across the bridge (in Marin) and they face double taxation," said Al Boro, bridge board member and San Rafael's mayor, adding that the plan appears "half-baked."

Board member Dick Grosboll of San Francisco said it is a "disingenuous proposal" that penalizes one corridor when motorists from other regions contribute to downtown gridlock. Board member Gerardo Sandoval, also of San Francisco, called the toll a "regressive" tax.

According to 2000 census data from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, more than 30,000 Marin residents commute to work in San Francisco, while just 6,450 San Francisco residents work in

Marin. Another 8,000 commute from Sonoma County to the city, placing the toll burden squarely on North Bay commuters.

But Jose Luis Moscovich, executive director of the San Francisco County Transportation Authority, said it is important that the project move forward for safety and seismic reasons.

The "seismically challenged" 1.5-mile Doyle Drive was built in 1936 and is rated by the federal government as being in second-worst condition level of all California-owned bridges, scoring 2 out of 100.

If the toll plan does move forward, the Transportation Authority of Marin wants some dollars to flow back to Marin for its transportation projects. "If Marin is going to pay for this, it seems like we should benefit in some way," said Diane Steinhauser, executive director of the Transportation Authority of Marin.

KCBS RADIO – DECEMBER 7, 2007

GG Bridge Officials Consider Doyle Drive Toll

SAN FRANCISCO (KCBS) - The Golden Gate Bridge District Board of Directors has asked its staff to craft a resolution, stating its position on a toll on Doyle Drive. Officials are expected to vote on that resolution next week.

The Bay Area receives millions of dollars in federal grant monies to address clogged roadways, with a portion of those dollars earmarked for fixing Doyle Drive.

However, a toll would also be required to pay to actual complete the necessary repairs. San Rafael Mayor Al Boro, first vice president of the Golden Gate Bridge District, believes there is consensus on the board that a toll collection on Doyle Drive is a good, if not necessary, thing. "They would support the city of San Francisco seeking that authority as long as the toll applies to all users of Doyle Drive and as long as the Legislature understands that the Golden Gate Bridge District does not want to be the tolling authority," he explained. "We look for the city of San Francisco to be the tolling authority."

There is technology available to collect Doyle Drive toll electronically. The idea is expected to be presented to state lawmakers in January 2008.

MARIN INDEPENDENT JOURNAL – DECEMBER 4, 2007

Marin needs to play key Doyle Drive role

Staff Report

MARIN transportation officials would love to see San Francisco's dangerous Doyle Drive rebuilt.

They also are wise to pursue a strategy to make sure that Marin and its motorists - who could pay the biggest share of a proposed Doyle Drive toll - are treated fairly.

The cost of a new Doyle Drive approach to the Golden Gate Bridge is expected to be more than \$800 million. The state is willing to pay about half. San Francisco has come up with \$100 million and after other funding is added up, the project is about \$170 million short. Nearly \$159 million in federal cash - for Doyle Drive and other Bay Area projects - is contingent on a toll that would be imposed during peak traffic periods on the road.

In other words, when most of the Marin motorists are pouring across the Golden Gate Bridge and down Doyle Drive to get to work or an appointment.

Marin officials figure it's only fair that the county should see more of that federal money if county drivers are going to be shouldering most of the new toll. More commuter buses and money for the Muir Woods shuttle, which needs new funding sources, are two projects that have been mentioned.

The reality is that Marin needs to be a squeaky wheel while it still has leverage. Toll details have yet to be finalized, but there is a March deadline for the state Legislature to sign off on the toll. That is why the Transportation Authority of Marin board last week voted 10-1 to push for Marin to get additional funding if a Doyle Drive toll is approved.

A new toll could generate \$30 million a year, which would make up much of the Doyle Drive shortfall.

Big transportation projects often involve intense political maneuvering over funding. This one is no exception. Marin's support for a new Doyle Drive toll would help San Francisco keep the toll on the fast track in Sacramento.

Marin deserves to be treated fairly and to have a seat at the table when it comes to making the important decisions about a Doyle Drive toll and how the federal money is divvied up.

Marin motorists also should not simply be viewed as a cash cow that can be milked at will to help pay for this project. After all, those same drivers already are paying the highest toll in the Bay Area to cross the Golden Gate Bridge - and the day will come when the bridge district needs to increase tolls again.

The bottom line is that Doyle Drive is a seismic time bomb and the antiquated, elevated stretch of road needs to be torn down and rebuilt. It should have been done many years ago. Once it happens, and it looks like there is a real chance this time, thousands of local drivers will be able to breath easier each day as they enter and leave San Francisco.

We urge our officials, whether they be in Marin, San Francisco, Sacramento or Washington, D.C., to keep the inevitable political gamemanship to a minimum and focus on coming up with a fair plan for Doyle Drive - and those who actually use it.

To learn more:

Go to www.doyledrive.com

MARIN INDEPENDENT JOURNAL – NOVEMBER 30, 2007

Marin looks for benefits from rebuilding of Doyle Drive

By Brad Breithaupt

Local political leaders figure that if their constituents are going to have to pay the lion's share of a new toll to rebuild San Francisco's Doyle Drive, Marin should get a bigger piece of the action. Plans for a toll - \$1 to \$2 - are moving ahead toward a March deadline for the state Legislature's approval.

Nearly \$159 million in federal funds is promised for rebuilding the approach to the Golden Gate Bridge, but that cash is contingent on imposition of a local toll. The federal plan also includes a range of other projects and Marin officials have a few ideas of their own - such as money to subsidize the Muir Woods shuttle or for more commuter buses.

"There is no doubt we would benefit from the reconstruction of Doyle Drive," Dianne Steinhauser, executive director of the Transportation Authority of Marin, said of the long-studied plan to make the approach more earthquake-safe.

The federal plan does include \$12.8 million that could be used for relieving the daily parking jam at the Larkspur ferry terminal. But TAM president Steve Kinsey said if there is money for other San Francisco and Easy Bay traffic projects and Marin motorists would be the predominant toll payers, Marin must "get in there and elbow for some funding."

San Francisco could use Marin's support to win quick approval of new tolls in the state Legislature. "It's imperative that we have a voice in the discussion," Kinsey said.

He reasoned that improving transbay bus service would benefit those people who cannot afford to pay the higher toll.

The TAM board voted 10-1 Thursday night to pursue a share. "What this basically does for Marin folks is it raises the toll again," said TAM board member and Novato Councilwoman Carole Dillon-Knutson. "We should be getting something back," she said.

The lone dissenting vote came from Fairfax Councilwoman Mary Anne Maggiore, who said the politics were too "hectic" for the TAM board to take a stand at this time.

Speaking of paying more to get around, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission just completed a Bay Area poll and 69 percent of those questioned said they would be willing to consider paying 25 cents more per gallon for gas if the tax is used to combat global warming. Sixty-six percent of Marin residents questioned said global warming is extremely important.

"I think you are going to see that the community wants to see action and they are willing to reach in their pockets on some level," Kinsey said at TAM's meeting.

The same MTC poll indicates 77 percent of Marin respondents list improving rail as a higher priority than widening freeways to fix the Bay Area's transportation mess.

That's 20 percent better than the 57 percent SMART got from Marin voters in 2006.