

June 11, 2008



**PUBLIC HEARING TO RECEIVE PUBLIC COMMENT ON A PROPOSAL  
TO INCREASE TOLLS ON THE GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE,  
INCLUDING CONSIDERATION OF VARIABLE TOLLS**

**Golden Gate Bridge Toll Increase**

The District has proposed an increase in the toll on the Golden Gate Bridge to close a projected \$91 million budget shortfall over the next five years. A toll increase on the Golden Gate Bridge will allow continued funding of Bridge, bus, and ferry systems. The current proposal is a \$1 increase to the existing Golden Gate Bridge toll, which would result in a \$5 FasTrak<sup>®</sup> toll and a \$6 cash toll for a two-axle vehicle and \$2.50 FasTrak/\$3.00 cash toll for each additional axle. This proposed toll increase is estimated to raise \$18.1 million annually. Also being proposed is a change in policy for the toll program for qualified persons with disabilities to a 50% discount off the cash toll per axle, which is consistent with the amount of discount provided for persons with disabilities using Golden Gate Transit or Golden Gate Ferry services. Today's rate of \$1.50 per vehicle for persons with disabilities has not changed since 1991. No other toll bridge in the Bay Area has any form of discounted toll rate for persons with disabilities. (Attachment A shows toll increase details.)

The District has previously held public meetings in San Francisco, Marin and Sonoma counties to gather input on this possible toll increase. Today's June 11, 2008, public hearing provides an opportunity for further public input. Staff will present a summary of comments received and a staff recommendation to the Finance-Auditing Committee on July 10<sup>th</sup>. The District's Board of Directors is scheduled to take action on the proposed toll increase on July 11, 2008, with possible implementation as early as September 1, 2008. Two staff reports documenting the analyses that went into the toll proposals under consideration, which were presented to the Finance-Auditing Committee meetings of January 25 and May 8, 2008 ("Approve Actions Relative to a Proposed Toll Increase" and "Approve Proposed Variable Toll Rates for Inclusion in Public Hearing", respectively), are available at this hearing or on-line at [goldengate.org](http://goldengate.org) for reference.

**Variable Toll**

Variable tolling consists of higher tolls during heavily congested travel periods to encourage people to drive at other times or to take transit. District staff has developed a variable toll component in connection with the Golden Gate Bridge toll increase proposal mentioned in the previous section. Specifically, staff is recommending two variable toll options that consist of:

- Option A:** An additional \$1 cash and 50-cent FasTrak toll increment
- Option B:** An additional \$1 cash and \$1 FasTrak toll increment

This variable toll increment is to be charged during the peak traffic hours of 7 a.m. to 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. on weekdays, and 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. on weekends and holidays. Depending on the option, the estimated annual revenue from this variable toll is \$3.8 to \$5.2 million, with the net proceeds funding District-provided transit services.

This variable toll is in addition to the proposed \$1 cash and FasTrak general toll increase. This would result in a \$7 cash toll and a \$5.50 FasTrak toll from Option A, or a \$7 cash toll and a \$6 FasTrak toll from Option B, during the peak periods. At today's public hearing, we will be receiving comments on the proposal to increase the base tolls on the Golden Gate Bridge, as well as on the two proposed variable toll options.

### **Background Information on Why a Variable Toll is Under Consideration**

In August 2007, the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) awarded \$158.7 million in discretionary funds for the San Francisco Bay Area pursuant to the Urban Partnership Program grant (UPP) to fund congestion relief projects, including at least \$36 million for Doyle Drive reconstruction as well as \$12.8 million for Larkspur Ferry Terminal parking improvements. A portion of that money is designated for use in addressing the funding gap for Doyle Drive reconstruction. Other portions of that grant are designated for regional transit improvement projects and other congestion relief measures, including a little more than \$12 million that would come to the Bridge District to fund parking improvements at the Larkspur Ferry Terminal.

The UPP grant has a significant deadline that must be met before any funds could be expended: The legal authority to implement congestion pricing through variable tolls at either Doyle Drive or the Golden Gate Bridge had to be in place by March 31, 2008. The actual collection of the congestion toll must begin no later than September 30, 2009. Originally, it was contemplated that the San Francisco County Transportation Authority (SFCTA) would get legislative authority by March 31, 2008, and would be the agency implementing congestion pricing on Doyle Drive. As the grant deadline drew nearer, it became apparent that SFCTA would not be able to get the necessary authority in time to save the \$158.7 million. Because the grant allows the variable toll to be implemented on either Doyle Drive or the Golden Gate Bridge, and because the District already has the necessary authority to implement tolls on the Golden Gate Bridge, on March 14, 2008, the Board of Directors voted to commit to implementing variable tolling on the Golden Gate Bridge by September 30, 2009. By taking this action, the District effectively saved the \$158.7 million grant for the benefit of the entire region.

All revenue generated by any variable toll implemented on the Golden Gate Bridge will be used by the District to fund additional transit services that provide an alternative means of travel between the North Bay and San Francisco. If a variable toll is approved for implementation, the District will then develop a plan for how to use the additional net revenue. The plan will identify specific transit services that would be added to the current bus or ferry system. The plan will be prepared by staff for consideration by the Board of Directors in public session.

Attachment

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	CURRENT TOLL & PROPOSED INCREASE			VARIABLE TOLL <i>OPTION A</i> Effective Periods Weekdays: 7-9 a.m. & 4-6 p.m. Weekends/Holidays: 3-7 p.m.		VARIABLE TOLL <i>OPTION B</i> Effective Periods Weekdays: 7-9 a.m. & 4-6 p.m. Weekends/Holidays: 3-7 p.m.	
	Current Toll	Proposed Incremental Increase	Proposed Toll Effective 24 hrs/day	Proposed Additional Incremental Increase	Proposed Effective Variable Toll	Proposed Additional Incremental Increase	Proposed Effective Variable Toll
<b>Cash Toll (2-axle)</b>	\$5	\$1	\$6	\$1	\$7	\$1	\$7
<b>FasTrak Toll</b>	\$4	\$1	\$5	\$0.50	\$5.50	\$1	\$6
<b>Per Additional Axle Toll (Cash)</b>	\$2.50 per additional axle	\$0.50	\$3 per additional axle	\$.50 per additional axle	\$3.50 per additional axle	\$.50 per additional axle	\$3.50 per additional axle
<b>Per Additional Axle Toll (FasTrak)</b>	\$2 per additional axle	\$0.50	\$2.50 per additional axle	\$.25 per additional axle	\$2.75 per additional axle	\$.50 per additional axle	\$3.00 per additional axle
<b>Disabled Toll Rate</b>	\$1.50	50% of Cash Toll	\$3	\$0.50	\$3.50	\$0.50	\$3.50
<b>PROPOSED EFFECTIVE DATE:</b>	No earlier than September 2008 and possibly as late as January 2009			As early as September 2008 but not later than September 30, 2009			