Agenda Item No. (8)

To: Finance-Auditing Committee/Committee of the Whole
Meeting of February 22, 2019

From: Jennifer Mennucci, Director of Budget and Electronic Revenue
Joseph M. Wire, Auditor-Controller
Denis J. Mulligan, General Manager

Subject: STATUS REPORT ON PUBLIC OUTREACH FOR TOLL INCREASE OPTIONS

Recommendation

This report is informational and intended to provide a status to the Finance-Auditing Committee regarding the public process to date relative to a proposed toll increase on the Golden Gate Bridge. It provides the most current update including comments received at the Open Houses that took place in late January through early February.

Please note that feedback from the public in this report is current as of February 11th which is after all Open Houses were conducted as well as the virtual open house. The official public comment period will close on the evening of Wednesday, February 27, 2019, at the conclusion of the Public Hearing; and all comments received will be summarized and presented to the Board at the March 21 and 22, 2019 Committee and Board of Director meetings.

Summary

The Finance-Auditing Committee took action during their meeting on December 20, 2018 to authorize staff to present for public review several toll options, with the understanding that any action to modify the existing toll structure will take place only after an extensive public outreach process takes place intended to fully inform the public of the Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District’s (District) range of services and the finances required to support future operational and capital programs.

The action also authorized staff to conduct informational open houses for the purpose of providing information, answering questions and receiving input from the public about the proposed toll increase options under consideration.

The Public Hearing regarding the proposed toll increase is scheduled for Wednesday, February 27, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. at the San Rafael City Council Chambers located at 1400 Fifth Avenue in San Rafael. The public comment period will conclude at the end of the Public Hearing at
approximately 8:00 p.m. Nevertheless, any comments after the close of the Public Hearing will still be reported; however, late arriving comments will be verbally presented at the March Committee and Board of Directors meetings.

The following section will provide a summary of the public involvement and public comments so far at the Open Houses.

**Summary of Public Involvement**

The goal is to seek comprehensive public involvement and perform extensive outreach to inform the public about the District’s range of services and the finances required to support future operational and capital programs, and to discuss the toll options under consideration, and to seek public input on these options.

Public outreach included:

- Announcement of February 27, 2019 Public Hearing was posted to District’s website on January 15, 2019.
- Public Meetings were held on Wednesday, January 30, 2019, from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at Whistlestop, San Rafael, CA; Tuesday, February 5, 2019, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., at Petaluma Arts Center, Petaluma, CA; and Thursday, February 7, 2019 from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., at Fort Mason Center, San Francisco, CA.
- A virtual open house was held on Saturday, February 9, 2019, at 11:00 a.m. as a Facebook Live event.
- Printed materials in English, Spanish, Chinese, and Vietnamese were made available at these meetings.
- Spanish language interpreters attended each open house.
- Legal notices were published in the *Marin Independent Journal, Press Democrat, Pacific Sun, San Francisco Chronicle*, and *San Francisco Examiner*.
- Print and website advertisements promoting the public meetings were published from January 15 through February 7, 2019 in the following publications: *San Francisco Examiner, San Francisco Chronicle, Marin Independent Journal, Santa Rosa Press Democrat, Petaluma Argus Courier, Pacific Sun, La Voz, and La Prensa*.
- A press release was posted to the District website on January 15, 2019.
- A formal public hearing notice and the associated staff report for a hearing on February 27, 2019 was posted on February 15, 2019 on the District’s website. A notice was also posted at San Rafael City Hall on February 15th and the public hearing will be held on February 27, 2019.
- Posters were placed on Golden Gate Buses and ferries, and in terminals beginning on January 22, 2019.
- Information was emailed to customer lists and community-based organizations on January 15 through February 7, 2019.
Summary of Public Meeting Involvement

The following is a summary of the involvement of the 3 in-person open houses and the Facebook Live event.

Wednesday, January 30, 2019, from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at Whistlestop, San Rafael, CA
- 6 people attended

Tuesday, February 5, 2019, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., at Petaluma Arts Center, Petaluma, CA
- 1 person attended

Thursday, February 7, 2019 from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., at Fort Mason Center in San Francisco.
- 4 people attended

Saturday, February 9, 2019 started at 11:00 a.m., Facebook Live Event
- 469 views
- 3 comments as of February 11, 2019 at Noon

Summary of Public Comments

By the close of the last public open house and as of February 11, 2019 at 12 p.m., 42 comments were received by the District. This figure includes comments received via email, correspondence, and comment forms available at the public outreach sessions and online on the District’s website. New in the process was a virtual open house and any comment as part of the Facebook Live event is included.

- 5 commenting individuals indicated support of the proposal and 5 were not in opposition.
- 32 commenting individuals were not in favor of any toll increase
- 5 comments suggested that other options such as using public taxes or raising transit fares first should be considered.

Of the 42 comments there were 2 comments selecting one of the options.

Attachment A provides a summary of these comments, aggregated by main topic with a staff response below each comment. Attachment B are the public meeting materials which were displayed in poster board size and handouts during each open house.

The public comment period will remain open until 8:00pm Wednesday, February 27, 2019. After that a complete summary of the public comments will be supplied to the Finance-Auditing Committee and Board at the March meetings.

Background

The Finance-Auditing Committee has discussed and reviewed a variety of toll options in both their November 15th and December 20th meetings to give direction to staff and set forth the intention to engage the public extensively in the toll-setting process that could lead to a July 1, 2019, toll increase on the Golden Gate Bridge.
The proposed steps for increasing the toll rates are outlined chronologically as follows:

1. **At the November 15, 2018 meeting**, the Finance-Auditing Committee discussed possible criteria for future toll rates, types of toll rates, and proposed steps for public outreach to solicit input and guidance on possible toll rates. The Committee gave staff direction.

2. **At the December 20, 2018 meeting**, the Finance-Auditing Committee authorized staff to present for public review several toll options, with the understanding that any action to modify the existing toll structure would take place only after an extensive public outreach process designed to fully inform the public of the District’s range of services and the finances required to support those services, future operations and capital programs;

   - In early 2019, staff conducted informational open houses for the purpose of providing information, answering questions, and receiving input from the public about possible toll increase options. The public open houses were held Wednesday, January 30, 2019, from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at Whistlestop, San Rafael, CA; Tuesday, February 5, 2019, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., at Petaluma Arts Center, Petaluma, CA; and Thursday, February 7, 2019 from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., at Fort Mason Center, San Francisco, CA; and a virtual open house was held on Saturday, February 9, 2019, at 11:00 a.m. as a Facebook Live event.

3. Following the open houses, the Board will conduct a formal Public Hearing on Wednesday, February 27, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. to assess public input of options.

4. In March 2019, the Board will consider adoption of a five-year toll increase plan.

5. In July 2019, the first toll rate change could be implemented.

Bridge tolls supply the majority of the District’s revenue and, as envisioned by the District’s State Charter, that revenue is spent providing transportation services on the Golden Gate Bridge and the District’s Bus and Ferry services. Currently, about half of all toll revenue is utilized to operate transit services. In addition, the Bridge and Transit facilities require money for capital projects (maintenance, repair, and improvements).

Over the last four years, Golden Gate Bridge tolls have increased by twenty-five cents ($0.25) a year as part of a multi-year toll plan previously approved by the Board. The last such increase occurred earlier this year on July 1st. These toll increases are necessary to enable the District’s revenues to grow close to the rate of the District’s expenses. Over the past five years, since the last toll increase plan was implemented in April 2014, costs have risen for goods and services necessary to carry out the District’s mission to provide transportation services to its customers. The amount of money set aside each year from the operating budget for future capital projects (the “capital contribution”) has also increased. Over the past five years, the District’s average annual cost increase (operating costs plus capital contribution) was 4.1 percent.
## Proposed Five-Year Toll Rate Options

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<th>Option</th>
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<th>July 2020</th>
<th>July 2021</th>
<th>July 2022</th>
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<td>$ 7.50</td>
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Multi-Axle, Carpool and Persons with Disabilities Toll Rates

The carpool and persons with disabilities rate will increase by the same amount as the FasTrak toll rate. For example, the carpool toll is currently $5, so if the FasTrak toll is increased by $0.25, then the new carpool toll would be $5.25.

For multi-axle vehicles (those with 3+ axles), the per-axle rate remain equal to the 2-axle rate for that payment type (FasTrak or Pay-By-Plate). For example, the current 3-axle FasTrak toll rate is $21 ($7 per axle x 3 axles), so if the 2-axle FasTrak toll is increased by $0.25 to $7.25, then the rate for each axle will increase by $.25 resulting in a new 3-axle toll rate of $21.75 ($7.25 per axle x 3 axles).

Fiscal Impact

This is a status report and there is no fiscal impact.

Attachment A: Public Comments as of February 11, 2019
Attachment B: Public Meeting Materials
ATTACHMENT A

Staff Responses to General Categories of Public Comment

Summary
As of 12:00 p.m. on Monday, February 11, 2019, there were 42 unique comments received by the Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District (District). Of these, 32 comments (76%) expressed opposition to the Golden Gate Bridge toll increase proposal options (“Proposal”), 5 comments (12%) expressed support for the Proposal, and 5 comments (12%) expressed the desire for an alternate revenue-generating proposal.

Comments on the Proposed Golden Gate Bridge Toll Increase

Comments Made in Opposition to the Proposal
The District received 32 comments in opposition to the Proposal. Of these, 20 comments were in opposition to the high cost of the proposed toll. 4 comments expressed dissatisfaction with toll revenue use for transit. 3 comments expressed frustration with the way District finances are handled in general. 1 comment was in opposition to the proposal but offered an alternate proposal. Two comments did not provide any elaboration.

Comments Made in Support of the Proposal
The District received 5 comments in support of the Proposal. 1 comment suggested congestion pricing with a higher FasTrak discount. 1 comment suggested Option 1. 1 comment suggested Option 1 or Option 2. 1 comment expressed support and suggest trimming back low productivity buses. 1 comment supported the notion that Golden Gate Bridge tolls should provide District revenue as opposed to property taxes.

Comments Made Proposal an Alternate Revenue Generation Idea
The District received 5 comments proposing an alternate revenue generation plan without being explicitly in support or in opposition to the Proposal. 2 comments suggested revenue generation through a variety of public taxes. 1 comment suggested raising Golden Gate Transit and Ferry fares. 1 comment suggested that older cars pay lower tolls and that the disabled rate should be lowered. 1 comment suggested privatizing transit.
GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE, HIGHWAY
AND TRANSPORTATION DISTRICT

WHO WE ARE
We are a public agency and special district established in 1928, serving over 50 million customers annually.

MISSION STATEMENT
Provide safe and reliable operation, maintenance, and enhancement of the Golden Gate Bridge and provide transportation services, as resources allow, for customers within the U.S. Highway 101 Golden Gate Corridor.

DISTRICT FINANCES

• The District projects that in order to continue current service levels, we will need to raise an additional $75 million over the next five years.

• The District implemented a 2014 Strategic Financial Plan to help balance the District’s finances. A 2019 toll increase is included as one of many initiatives in the plan.

• Successful cost-saving and revenue-generating initiatives in the plan include:
  - Modified health plan design and employee premium contribution
  - Charging for parking at Larkspur Ferry Terminal
  - Implementation of temporary license plate legislation Assembly Bill 516 (2015-16)

• The District has no taxing authority and has no dedicated tax revenue therefore, toll dollars are essential to fund District operations.
ADOPTED 2018/2019 OPERATING & CAPITAL BUDGET = $256.6 MILLION

REVENUE SOURCES:
(in millions)

TOTAL: $256.6

12% Government Grants $32
15% Bus & Ferry Transit Fares $37.4

59% Golden Gate Bridge Tolls $151.7

7% Reserves (funded by tolls from prior years) $17.1
4% Marin Local Service Contract $10.4
3% Concessions, Advertising, Leases $8.0

HOW REVENUES ARE SPENT:
(in millions)

TOTAL: $256.6

33% Golden Gate Bridge Operations $83.9

57% Bus and Ferry Operations $146.2

7% Golden Gate Bridge Capital Improvements $18.4
3% Bus and Ferry Capital Improvements $8.1
THE IMPORTANCE OF TRANSIT

BRIDGE TOLLS FUND HALF THE COST OF BUS AND FERRY SERVICES

BENEFITS OF GOLDEN GATE TRANSIT SERVICES INCLUDE:

• Provide an affordable, comfortable, stress-reducing alternative to driving between Marin/Sonoma counties and San Francisco.

• Keep traffic moving by reducing commute traffic. From 5am-9am, 20% of all trips from Marin and Sonoma counties into San Francisco are on our buses and ferries. During the peak hour, the percentage is even higher.

• Take the equivalent of 1 and 1/2 lanes of traffic off the Golden Gate Bridge and Highway 101 in Marin and Sonoma counties during commute periods.

• Keep 13,000 cars a day off the streets of San Francisco.

• Reduces gas emissions and contributes to the overall quality of life in the community.

EXPANDING TRANSIT SERVICES TO MEET GROWING PUBLIC DEMAND REQUIRES ADDITIONAL TOLL REVENUE
WHY INCREASE TOLLS?

• Preserve infrastructure for the future
  - Maintain facilities and equipment that serve over 50 million customers annually.

• Maintain existing transit services
  - Golden Gate Transit and Golden Gate Ferry keep traffic moving by reducing commute traffic by about 20%. Tolls fund half of the cost to operate these systems.

• Finance our $232 million commitment to 16 important capital projects.

• Expand transit services
  - The State of California created the District as a public agency to provide services based on fees it collects. Expansion of transit services to meet increased demand can be funded with additional toll revenue.
  - Proposed toll increase options 3-5 raise additional funds to expand transit services such as increasing Larkspur ferry service which currently is experiencing overcrowding.
PROPOSED TOLL INCREASE OPTIONS

TOLL RATE OPTIONS THAT FUND EXISTING BRIDGE AND TRANSIT SERVICES

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<tr>
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TOLL RATE OPTIONS THAT RAISE ADDITIONAL FUNDING TO EXPAND TRANSIT SERVICES

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CARPOOL, PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES, AND MULTI-AXLE RATES

- The carpool and persons with disabilities rate will increase by the same amount as the FasTrak toll rate.
  - For example, if the carpool toll is $5 and the FasTrak toll is increased by $.25, the new carpool toll will be $5.25.

- For multi-axle vehicles (those with 3+ axles), the per-axle rate remain equal to the base 2-axle rate for that payment type (FasTrak or Pay-By-Plate).
  - For example, if the current 3-axle FasTrak toll rate is $21 and the 2-axle rate is increased by $.25, then the rate for each axle will increase by $.25 resulting in a new 3-axle toll rate of $21.75.
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS
(2019-2023)

INFRASTRUCTURE AND ASSET INVESTMENTS

For the Bridge, Bus and Ferry systems to continue serving the public well into the future, the District is investing in upgrades, renovations, and replacement of equipment, facilities and assets.

Below are some representative capital projects planned over the next five years. The total amount needed to deliver these projects is over $1 billion: $232 million in Bridge tolls and $847 million in grants. The District must pay at least 20% of the cost for these projects with toll revenues.

### Bridge Division

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<tr>
<th>Bridge Tolls</th>
<th>Total Project Cost</th>
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<td>(in millions)</td>
<td>(in millions)</td>
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<td>$117.0  Seismic Retrofit Phase IIIB Construction</td>
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<td>$ 51.0  Suicide Deterrent - Construction</td>
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<td>$ 7.3   Toll Plaza Gantry - Construction</td>
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<td>$ 15.0  Bridge Pavement Repair</td>
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<td><strong>$198.0 Bridge Division</strong></td>
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### Bus Division

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<td>(in millions)</td>
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<tr>
<td>$ 10.7  Replace 67 Transit Buses with Hybrids</td>
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<td>$  3.9  San Rafael Transit Center Relocation</td>
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### Ferry Division

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Project Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>$67.4 Ferry Division</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bridge Tolls</th>
<th>Total Project Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(in millions)</td>
<td>(in millions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$ 12.0  New Ferry Vessel</td>
<td>$  30.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$  0.6  M.S. Sonoma Refurbishment &amp; Repower</td>
<td>$  22.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$  11.5  Gangways &amp; Piers Sausalito Construction</td>
<td>$  2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$  2.8  Corte Madera Marsh Restoration Design</td>
<td>$  2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$  0.6  Renewable Diesel Pilot Program</td>
<td>$  0.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total** $232  **$1,078.9**
Seismic Retrofit Phase IIIB is the final phase of the Golden Gate Bridge Seismic Retrofit project and includes retrofitting the 6,451 foot long Suspension Bridge and two undercrossing structures at the Bridge Toll Plaza so they can withstand an earthquake of a Richter Scale 8.3 magnitude. The scope of Phase IIIB focuses on improvements that help make the bridge more resilient and flexible during a seismic event, including:

- Installation of seismic energy dissipation devices (EDD’s) that absorb the shock of seismic energy and prevent more brittle structures on the bridge from breaking
- Removal and replacement of the existing bracing system, which help to prevent the sides of the bridge from twisting; and
- Removal and replacement of the finger joints with seismic isolation joints that move in multiple directions and prevent the roadway from cracking due to seismic movements.

During prior phases of the Seismic Retrofit Project, the District retrofitted the North Approach Viaduct, North Anchorage Housing, Fort Point Arch, South Approach Viaduct and South Anchorage Housing.

Completion of Phase IIIB will ensure that the structural integrity of the Golden Gate Bridge is preserved after a major earthquake. The completed project is expected to:

- Prevent loss of lives
- Save billions of dollars in repair and replacement costs
- Prevent severe damage to the structure
- Prevent catastrophic impact on the economy of the region

**PROJECTED COST:**
Total project cost is $656 million: $539 million from grants and $117 million from Bridge tolls. (83% grants, 17% Bridge tolls)
GOLDEN GATE FERRY
CAPITAL PROJECT

FLEET EXPANSION - NEW FERRY VESSEL

The Golden Gate Ferry fleet carries about 2.5 million passenger trips annually between three Marin County terminals and the City of San Francisco. Growth in ferry ridership in recent years underscores the importance of a robust ferry service as a part of the region’s transportation network and economy. This significant ridership increases the urgency of expanding the District’s fleet to meet demand.

The project includes development of design, technical specifications, bid documents, construction, sea trials, and delivery of a new, 500-Passenger, High-Speed Ferry Vessel. The vessel will be similar to vessels in the current fleet but slightly larger to accommodate additional capacity needed to address demand.

The interior of the vessel will be equipped similar to the existing fleet. The vessel will have five hundred (500) interior seats.

PROJECTED COST:
Total project cost is $30 million: $18 million from grants and $12 million from Bridge tolls (60% grants, 40% Bridge tolls).
GOLDEN GATE TRANSIT
CAPITAL PROJECT

BUS FLEET REPLACEMENT

Buses need to be replaced periodically based on mileage and condition due to wear and tear. Many buses in our fleet will be eligible for replacement over the next five years.

• Sixty-Seven (67) diesel buses will be replaced with hybrid-electric buses.
• State-of-the-art, hybrid-electric buses are more fuel-efficient than diesel buses and help reduce air pollution in the Bay Area.
• New buses also offer features for increased passenger safety, improved accessibility for persons with disabilities, additional bike capacity and passenger comfort.

PROJECTED COST:
Total project cost is $67.6 million: $56.6 million from grants and $11 million from Bridge tolls (84% grants, 16% Bridge tolls).
NEXT STEPS

HOW TO SUBMIT COMMENTS:

• Fill out our comment form
• Go online and complete our electronic comment form
• Send email to tolls@goldengate.org
• Write to:
  Secretary of the District
  GGBHTD, PO Box 9000
  Presidio Station, San Francisco, CA 94129

• Attend the Public Hearing
  Wednesday, February 27, 2019 – 7:00 p.m.
  San Rafael City Council Chambers
  1400 Fifth Avenue, San Rafael, CA

Comments due by 8:00 p.m., February 27, 2019

Possible Board of Directors action on March 22, 2019
Possible Effective Date for Toll Increase – July 1, 2019