RESILIENTSR37

State Route (SR) 37 Policy Committee
Meeting Minutes
9:30 a.m., Thursday, May 1, 2025

The Zoom video recording of this meeting can be viewed by clicking this link.

1. Call to Order/Introductions

Chair Eric Lucan called to order the State Route 37 Policy Committee at 9:40 a.m.; invited SMART General Manager Eddy Cumins to provide an agency update; and acknowledged outgoing NVTA Executive Director Kate Miller for her many years of dedicated service, offering well wishes for her retirement.

Policy Committee Members Present:

Eric Lucan, Chair	Supervisor, County of Marin
Pat Eklund	Councilmember, City of Novato
Rebecca Hermosillo, Vice-Chair	Supervisor, County of Sonoma
Mark Joseph	Councilmember, City of American Canyon
Amber Manfree	MTC Commissioner, Supervisor, County of Napa
Mitch Mashburn	MTC Commissioner, Supervisor, County of Solano
Stephanie Moulton-Peters	MTC Commissioner, Supervisor, County of Marin
Andrea Sorce	Mayor, City of Vallejo
David Rabbitt	Supervisor, County of Sonoma
John Vasquez	Supervisor, County of Solano
Pierre Washington	Mayor, City of American Canyon

Policy Committee Members Absent:

Victoria Fleming	MTC Commissioner, Councilmember, City of Santa Rosa

Executive Directors Present:

Andy Fremier, Metropolitan Transportation Commission
Anne Richman, Transportation Authority of Marin
Daryl Halls, Solano Transportation Authority
Dina El-Tawansy, Caltrans - District 4 Director
Eddy Cumins, Sonoma-Marin Area Rail Transit
James Cameron, Sonoma County Transportation Authority
Kate Miller, Napa Valley Transportation Authority

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2. Consent Calendar

2.1. Minutes of the March 6, 2025 State Route 37 Policy Committee Meeting

This item begins at 7:28 on the video recording.

With the correction to the spelling of Councilmember Eklund's first name on page 1, Councilmember Eklund moved for approval of the March 6, 2025 meeting minutes, Supervisor Rabbitt seconded.

The motion was approved unanimously.

3. Discussion/Information Items

3.1. Communications – Fairgrounds Drive Interchange

This item begins at 8:07 on the video recording.

Bart Ney, Caltrans, reported that the Fairgrounds Drive project in Vallejo is set to begin, with traffic advisories expected within 1–2 weeks. Caltrans is supporting outreach on the diverging diamond interchange; and nighttime closures for a separate project on SR 37 near Marin were also noted.

There was no public comment on this item, nor were there comments or questions from the committee.

3.2. Legislative Update

This item begins at 10:28 on the video recording.

Daryl Halls, STA, reported that Assembly Bill (AB) 697, the protected species legislation, had its committee hearing on Tuesday. Supervisors Moulton-Peters and Mashburn testified in support. The bill passed out of committee with 12 aye votes and one abstention and will proceed to the Assembly floor before moving to the Senate next month. Some questions were raised, including the need for improved communication with tribes, and language addressing this will be added.

There were no comments or questions from the committee.

Public Comment:

Kate Powers commented that the Marin Conservation League (MCL) opposes the legislation, joining several other organizations—including Climate Action California, the Planning and Conservation League, and Save the Bay—in expressing ongoing concerns about the interim project.

Chance Cutrano of the Resource Renewal Institute echoed MCL's opposition to the bill; expressed concern that the bill sets a negative statewide precedent; and welcomed further work on tribal engagement.

Jenny Calloway from Congressman Jared Huffman's office reiterated that the congressman opposes the legislation and wanted to ensure the committee was aware of his position.

Daryl Halls, STA, reported that in June, AB 697 will go to the appropriate Senate committee, where the next opportunity to testify will occur.

3.3. Quality of Life

This item begins at 14:53 on the video recording.

Jeanette Weisman, MTC, and Bart Ney, Caltrans, presented this item to the committee. The presentation may be viewed by clicking on this link.

In response to Councilmember Joseph, Kevin Chen, MTC, explained that there will be close collaboration with Caltrans and CHP to develop effective enforcement strategies, including exploration of camera technology to support those efforts.

In response to Councilmember Eklund, Mr. Chen explained that as part of the 2023 environmental review, detailed travel demand modeling showed that tolling, HOV lanes, and new transit service would reduce solo driving by encouraging carpooling and transit use, ultimately lowering vehicle miles traveled (VMT). Ms. Weisman explained that MTC views the work on State Route 37 as creating a new, more extensive bridge connection, driven by the need for ecological connectivity; and while lane

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management differs from traditional bridges, MTC is developing a hybrid approach that blends bridge and express lane strategies to suit this unique corridor. Mr. Chen added that this effort began about a decade ago when United Bridge Partners proposed privatizing the road and tolling the full facility; and that from the start, tolling has been seen as a necessary tool—not only to generate the revenue needed for current and future improvements, but also to help manage traffic congestion, encourage mode shift, and reduce VMT. Ms. Weisman explained that the Planning and Environmental Linkages study took a corridor-wide approach, building on earlier sea level rise documents and plans; and that the work is continuously updated based on the latest projections and recommendations from the Ocean Protection Council. Councilmember Eklund requested copies of the studies and documents referenced in staff's response(s).

Supervisor Mashburn expressed support for the public outreach video and commented on the importance of providing information on how to obtain and use the required transponder to avoid confusion and potential violation fees, as well as clearly explain how the new transit options will connect people to their destinations so they understand both the benefits and the logistics.

Mayor Sorce expressed support for the Vallejo-specific data, given concerns about tolling and limited routes out of the city; and commented on the importance of involving the Solano Transportation Authority Equity Committee early in the process to address challenges like transit limitations for workers with irregular hours and issues around transponder access and fees. Mayor Sorce also commented on the importance of addressing the bottleneck at the Mare Island Interchange alongside the SR 37 corridor project to prevent future congestion as development continues; and that regional collaboration will be key to securing funding.

Vice Chair Hermosillo emphasized the need to ensure language access by translating the video into the predominant languages spoken across the counties.

In response to Supervisor Rabbitt, Ms. Weisman explained that MTC is actively working with CHP to ensure that there is space and presence for enforcement and exploring technology systems to better detect and manage violations; and that over the next three years, the focus will be developing a toll program and refining a lane management approach to support these efforts. Mr. Chen explained that some double white striping will be included near the toll entry and exit points to help with lane discipline, however its use will be limited to minimize the need for extra widening of the roadway. Mr. Chen also explained that financial projections include conservative assumptions about potential violations, based on trends from regional bridges and express lanes, and while cautious, the outlook also anticipates improvement over time as enforcement and industry practices evolve. Supervisor Rabbitt commented on the importance of clearly communicating to the public the benefits of the project and how the system works as a whole.

In response to Supervisor Rabbitt's inquiry regarding origin-destination data, Ms. Weisman explained that STA is leading the origin and demand analysis to help design a transit system that meets actual travel patterns, building on NVTA's previous work, with a goal of shaping a vision for microtransit to meet initial demand, alongside transportation demand management efforts to raise awareness before, during, and after rollout.

Supervisor Moulton-Peters commented on the importance of building upon successful demand management strategies like Marin's long-running vanpools and effective HOV lane practices used across the Bay Area; and highlighted the need for stronger east-west transit connections.

In response to Shane Trimmer from Congressman Jared Huffman's office, Ms. Weisman explained that the most recent project cost estimate was

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updated in 2024. Ms. Weisman also explained that there is currently no cost estimate for fill removal, as it won't occur until the long-term project in this section is completed and operational—likely a decade or more away; and that although analysis will come later, there is already coordination with regulatory and resource agencies to explore efficient, thoughtful approaches, including potential reuse of existing improvements and minimizing impacts on nearby restored lands like those managed by CDFW.

Following up on Supervisor Moulton-Peters' comment, Daryl Halls commented that TDM is a key starting point; and that STA is coordinating with the county on a mobility hub at the fairgrounds, tied to the transit-integrated project at this location.

Supervisor Rabbitt inquired about a hybrid HOV/express lane that allows single-occupant commercial vehicles to use the lane for a fee as a potential approach to address congestion.

Chair Lucan commented on the importance of early communication and gathering of feedback with regard to the proposed HOV lane hours; as well as advancing environmental work quickly on both ends of the Mare Island interchange in order to address the impact to congestion. Chair Lucan also expressed support for exploring a new HOV lane decal program for users in other industry sectors once the EV decal program ends this fall.

Public Comment:

Solano County Supervisor Monica Brown commented on the importance of toll discounts for tradespeople, expressed concern regarding 24/7 HOV lanes, and offered to share project updates via her newsletter. Supervisor Brown also called for a website showing how toll funds are spent, stressed the need for practical commute alternatives like SMART connections, and cautioned against presenting bike path improvements as compensation.

Sonoma County Transportation & Land-Use Coalition advocate Steve Birdlebough expressed concern that an HOV lane in the western section toward Highway 101 is being overlooked and urged Caltrans to reconsider extending the HOV lane all the way to U.S. 101.

Kate Powers commented on the importance of clear communication on how interim improvements tie into the ultimate project, noting that key intersections like 121/37 and Mare Island could reduce congestion now; questioned the stability of the $228 million in funding; and stressed the need for long-term planning to address the impacts of sea level rise.

Chance Cutrano appreciated the discussion on the proposed 24-hour HOV lane and emphasized the need for clear public communication. Mr. Cutrano expressed concern about technology and enforcement around tolling and inquired whether the 24-hour HOV requirement is a legal mandate or a policy decision made by MTC, Caltrans, or project leadership.

Mr. Chen and Ms. Weisman explained that for this project, the proposed 24/7 HOV lane is tied to the tolling component, and that the California Transportation Commission approved the proposed hours to support effective toll operations.

In response to Councilmember Eklund, Caltrans District 4 Director Dina El-Tawansy explained that part of the reason for the 24/7 HOV lane is to help reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT), and that reevaluating the 24/7 setup would likely trigger additional traffic studies and possibly new mitigation measures.

Supervisor Mashburn commented that to reduce VMT, 24/7 tolling must be matched with transit options for off-peak hours—like early vanpools or transit service for shift workers.

Councilmember Joseph commented that if a main goal is reducing congestion, then 24/7 HOV and tolling might undercut that by removing incentives to shift travel times; and that while VMT and GHG reductions are key state goals, their

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long-term relevance may diminish as we transition from fossil fuels.

3.4. Public Access

This item begins at 1:24:11 on the video recording.

Skylar Nguyen, Caltrans, presented to the committee on the Proposed Public Access Improvements. The presentation can be viewed by clicking on this link.

In response to Councilmember Joseph, Mayor Sorce explained that the City of Vallejo recently celebrated the completion of a major Vine Trail gap segment connecting Vallejo to American Canyon and ultimately linking the ferry terminal to Calistoga; and Ms. Nguyen noted that coordination with MTC staff is ongoing, including updates on community outreach efforts to identify public access opportunities; and that next steps include bringing the project to BCDC as part of the permitting process for feedback and further action.

Supervisor Mashburn expressed support for the project and commented on the importance of budgeting funds for ongoing maintenance.

Public Comment:

Kate Powers expressed support for the project and inquired if it would connect to the ultimate project. Ms. Weisman noted that the environmental analysis and preliminary engineering for the long-term section are just beginning, and that further considerations, including maintenance and design elements, can be addressed during that phase.

3.5. Long-term Flood Reduction Project (US 101 – Atherton Ave)

This item begins at 1:37:39 on the video recording.

Javier Mendivil, Caltrans, presented to the committee on the US 101 – Atherton Avenue long-term flood reduction project. The presentation can be viewed by clicking on this link.

There was no public comment on this item, nor were there comments or questions from the committee.

4. Public Comment for Items not on the Agenda

None received.

5. Future Meeting Schedule

5.1. July 10, 2025 – Napa County
5.2. September 4, 2025 – Solano County
5.3. November 6, 2025 – Napa County

6. Future Topics

6.1. Innovative Financing and Project Delivery
6.2. Outreach and Engagement
6.3. Novato Creek Baylands Strategy
6.4. FHWA Toll Program

Included for the committee's interest.

7. Adjournment

The committee adjourned at 11:23 a.m.

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