



Legislation Text

File #: 18-116, **Version:** 1

Consider adoption of a resolution calling for a special election to be conducted in Solano County on whether the voters shall approve Regional Measure 3, the Bay Area Traffic Relief Plan, and calling for the election to be consolidated with the statewide primary election on June 5, 2018

Published Notice Required? Yes ☐ No ☒
Public Hearing Required? Yes ☐ No ☒

DEPARTMENTAL RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt the resolution calling for a special election to be conducted in Solano County on whether the voters shall approve Regional Measure 3, the Bay Area Traffic Relief Plan, and calling for the election to be consolidated with the statewide primary election on June 5, 2018.

SUMMARY:

Regional Measure 3 (RM 3), authorized by SB 595 (Beall, 2017), is the third regional toll increase measure to be considered by San Francisco Bay Area voters. Pursuant to California Streets and Highways Code section 30923, the Bay Area Toll Authority (BATA) selected June 5, 2018 as the date to place RM 3 on the ballot, and the board of supervisors in each county must consider calling a special election to do so. The deadline for action by the Board of Supervisors is March 9, 88 days prior to the election. If approved by a majority of voters in the counties of Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Solano and Sonoma as well as the City and County of San Francisco, RM3 would raise tolls on the Antioch, Benicia-Martinez, Carquinez, Dumbarton, Richmond-San Rafael, San Francisco-Oakland Bay and San Mateo-Hayward bridges by \$1 on January 1, 2019, by an additional \$1 on January 1, 2022 and by an additional \$1 on January 1, 2025, to finance the transportation expenditure plan detailed in Senate Bill 595.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

RM3 revenues will provide a substantial benefit to Solano County and will not impose any direct costs to county staff or services. Senate Bill 595 requires the BATA to use toll revenues to reimburse the counties and the City and County of San Francisco for the cost of submitting RM3 to the voters via a special election.

DISCUSSION:

Bridge Toll History

RM 1, approved by voters in 1988, established a uniform \$1 base toll on each of the region's seven state-owned toll bridges, with the proceeds used to fund a series of highway improvements in the bridge corridors. These included the northbound Benicia-Martinez Bridge, the westbound Carquinez Bridge, widening of the San Mateo-Hayward Bridge and the Bayfront Expressway at the west end of the Dumbarton Bridge, reconfiguration of the I-880/State Route 92 interchange in Hayward and construction of the Richmond Parkway connecting I-80 with the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge. These RM 1 projects are completed.

RM 2, approved by voters in 2004, raised tolls by \$1 on the region's seven state-owned toll bridges, with the

proceeds used to fund the Regional Traffic Relief Plan to finance highway, transit, bicycle and pedestrian projects in the bridge corridors and their approaches, and to provide operating funds for key transit services. Major investments include the Caldecott Tunnel Fourth Bore, I-80/I-680 interchange upgrades in Solano County, State Route 4 widening and a BART extension in eastern Contra Costa County, BART extensions to Warm Springs/South Fremont and Oakland Airport, seismic retrofit of BART's Transbay Tube, and the Muni Central Subway and Transbay Transit Center projects in San Francisco, as well as operating support for Muni's T-Third light-rail line, AC Transit enhanced bus service, All-Nighter bus service along BART corridors, San Francisco Bay Ferry, Golden Gate Transit service over the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge, Napa VINE service to the Vallejo intermodal terminal and the Clipper® transit-fare payment card.

RM 3 Expenditure Plan Focused on Traffic Relief and Public Transit Improvements

The proposed \$4.45 billion RM 3 Expenditure Plan included in SB 595, which is summarized in the table set forth below, aims to reduce traffic congestion and to improve transportation options throughout the San Francisco Bay Area. These investments include both highway and transit capital improvements as well as improved regional connectivity at the soon-to-open Transbay Transit Center in San Francisco and operating support for enhanced bus and ferry services in congested bridge corridors.

Major projects in the RM 3 expenditure plan include expansion of BART's railcar fleet to accommodate record ridership and the system's pending extension to Milpitas and East San Jose; further extension of BART's Silicon Valley service to downtown San Jose and Santa Clara; extending Caltrain to downtown San Francisco; expanding transbay bus services and AC Transit's bus rapid transit lines; constructing a direct freeway connector from northbound U.S. 101 to eastbound Interstate 580 in Marin County, and improving the westbound approach to the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge and the I-580/ Richmond Parkway interchange in Contra Costa County; constructing a direct connector between Interstates 680 and 880 in Fremont; upgrading the I-680/State Route 4 interchange in Contra Costa County, the I-680/State Route 84 interchange in Alameda County and the U.S. 101/State Route 92 interchange in San Mateo; various upgrades to relieve congestion in the Dumbarton Bridge corridor and improve State Route 37 in Marin, Sonoma, Napa and Solano counties; completing the widening of U.S. 101 to three lanes in each direction through the Marin-Sonoma Narrows; extending the new SMART rail system to Windsor and Healdsburg; expanding San Francisco's fleet of Muni Metro rail cars; and adding more vessels to the San Francisco Bay Ferry fleet. (See Attachment A - RM3 Expenditure Plan.)

RM 3 also would provide \$50 million for planning and preliminary engineering of a second rail tube connecting the East Bay and San Francisco; and fund a \$150 million grant program to improve bicycle and pedestrian access to regional transit hubs and to close gaps in the San Francisco Bay Trail. In addition, the measure includes a provision to establish an Inspector General position to oversee BART's capital investments.

The proposed final RM3 expenditure plan is attached under Attachment A.

Toll Discounts

Voter approval of RM 3 would allow the BATA to retain the current toll discount for high-occupancy vehicles, and to introduce new discounts for:

- Vehicles that cross two or more toll bridges during commute hours, including carpoolers. Such vehicles would receive a 50 percent discount on the RM 3 increment of the second toll. For example, after tolls are raised by \$1 in 2019, a commuter would pay 50 cents on the second trip rather than \$1 for the RM 3 portion of the toll. To be eligible for this discount, tollpayers must use FasTrak® to pay their tolls.

Oversight

RM 3 includes a number of oversight provisions:

- 1) **A Citizen Oversight Committee**
Modeled on the approach taken in local counties' dedicated transportation sales tax measures RM 3 requires establishment of an independent oversight committee to ensure that all spending is consistent with the Expenditure Plan. County supervisors in each of the nine Bay Area counties would appoint two representatives to this committee.
- 2) **Performance Measures**
Prior to allocating funds to bus or ferry services, MTC would develop ridership targets or other performance measures to help ensure tolls are used cost-effectively and to highlight the need for service adjustments if operating performance falls short of these guidelines. A similar requirement existed for RM 2 and led to changes in service and the elimination of certain routes that did not attract sufficient riders to be cost-effective.
- 3) **Office of BART Inspector General**
Approval of RM 3 would establish an independent Office of the BART Inspector General to ensure BART uses bridge toll funds and other revenues efficiently and effectively.

ALTERNATIVES:

Pursuant to SB 595 (specifically, Streets and Highways Code section 30923(c)(1)), the Board of Supervisors must consider calling the special election on RM3.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

This has been a multi-jurisdictional effort, including the counties of Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Mateo, Santa Clara, and Sonoma as well as the City and County of San Francisco; the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC); and the Bay Area Toll Authority (BATA).

CAO RECOMMENDATION:

APPROVE DEPARTMENTAL RECOMMENDATION