



Cecilia Lunaparra
Councilmember, District 7

CONSENT CALENDAR
December 3, 2024

To: Honorable Members of the City Council

From: Councilmember Lunaparra (Author), Councilmember Humbert (Co-Sponsor), Councilmember Kesarwani (Co-Sponsor)

Subject: Bicycle and Pedestrian Access on the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Resolution affirming the City of Berkeley's support for permanent 24/7 protected bicycle and pedestrian access to the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge Trail.

BACKGROUND

Following decades of advocacy, in 2019, the protected bicycle and pedestrian trail opened on the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge, completing a 6-mile link in the Bay Trail and connecting Contra Costa and Marin counties.

Since the opening of the barrier-separated shared bike and pedestrian path, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission's (MTC) Phase II After Study for the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge found that both weekday and weekend vehicle flows have dropped, and weekday emissions have decreased. In the summer of 2021, the path received an 8.19 out of 10 safety rating by users. The report also states that "there is no statistical evidence that the bridge modifications are producing longer crash-related incidents or changing the location where crashes tend to occur on the bridge," or that the modifications are increasing the time needed to clear crashes.¹

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

The Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) is proposing a weekday (Monday through Thursday) closure of Richmond-San Rafael pathway designated for pedestrians and people on bicycles. Under this proposal, the closed pathway would become a non-

¹ After Study for the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge (Phase II), California PATH, UC Berkeley, https://mtc.ca.gov/sites/default/files/meetings/attachments/6005/4a_ATTACHMENT_B_Phase_II_Pilot_Study_Final_Report.pdf

drivable breakdown lane on weekdays. Unfortunately, doing so would eliminate critical access for people who do not drive and rely on the Bridge as the primary connection between the East & North Bay. Although MTC's movable barrier proposal would allow bikes and pedestrians to safely cross the Bridge on weekends, many are concerned about "equitable access needed for those who must cross during the week." ²

MTC's proposal requires approval from the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) at an upcoming meeting. The Cities of Richmond and Albany have recently passed similar resolutions in support of a permanent protected Richmond-San Rafael Bay Trail with unanimous support.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

None.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Maintaining permanent 24/7 access to the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge Trail would continue to encourage safe and equitable access to transbay multimodal transportation.

CONTACT PERSON

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Attachments:

1: Resolution

² Bike East Bay, <https://bikeeastbay.org/rsr2024-2/>

RESOLUTION NO. ##,###-N.S.

AFFIRMING BERKELEY'S SUPPORT FOR THE RICHMOND-SAN RAFAEL
BRIDGE TRAIL

WHEREAS, the City of Berkeley is proud to promote connections between communities via the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge; and

WHEREAS, the Berkeley City Council recognizes that the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge Trail is a keystone section of the 500-mile regional San Francisco Bay Trail linking the East Bay and North Bay; and

WHEREAS, Berkeley City Council by unanimous vote adopted Resolution No. 68,486 - N.S., declaring a climate emergency and calling for urgent action to restore a safe climate; and

WHEREAS, the Council recognizes that an increase in the number of vehicle miles driven to and on the bridge increases pollution affecting vulnerable communities; and

WHEREAS, the Council recognizes that active transportation allows people to be physically active in everyday life by enabling them to walk, bike, or roll to their destinations; and

WHEREAS, bicyclists and pedestrians have enjoyed over 400,000 trips on the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge Trail since it opened in November 2019; and

WHEREAS, the Bay Area Toll Authority Report data showed no increase in westbound car congestion, a decrease in the number of motorist crashes, and no negative impact on the Air Quality Index (AQI); AQI is primarily impacted by vehicle miles traveled, road dust, tire wear, and brake wear, not by traffic congestion; and

WHEREAS, the Council recognizes that a closure of the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge Trail would cause individuals who currently rely on this trail to drive for more trips, and if they don't have access to a car they could be left with no other options; and

WHEREAS, the Council recognizes that access to transportation is a human right and reliable mobility options for those unable to afford or drive a car should be available.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Berkeley does hereby support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week access to the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge Trail for pedestrians and bicyclists.

BE IT FURTHER AND FINALLY RESOLVED, that upon passage, a copy of this Resolution be sent to the members of the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission and the members of the Metropolitan Transportation Commission.

