WHAT IS THE SOUTH ACCESS TO GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE – DOYLE DRIVE PROJECT?

Doyle Drive is the primary highway and transit linkage through San Francisco, between counties to the south (San Mateo and Santa Clara) and to the north (Marin and Sonoma). Nearly 120,000 vehicles use Doyle Drive every weekday. Weekend traffic volumes are comparable to the weekday volumes, confirming that it serves as both a primary commute and a recreational route.

Originally built in 1936, Doyle Drive is approaching the end of its useful life. It requires extensive seismic, structural, and traffic safety upgrades. Doyle Drive is currently ranked as the second worst bridge in the state, with a structural sufficiency rating of 2 out of 100. In the short-term, regular maintenance, seismic retrofit, and rehabilitation activities are keeping the structure serviceable. However, in the long-term, the replacement of the facility is needed to bring Doyle Drive up to current traffic and seismic safety standards. To address the degradation of the roadway, the San Francisco County Transportation Authority (the Authority), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) have prepared an Environmental Impact Statement/Report to evaluate design alternatives for replacing Doyle Drive. In September 2006, the Authority Board selected the Presidio Parkway as the Preferred Alternative to be identified within the Final EIS/R, which is scheduled for release in early 2008.

The proposed parkway alternative is estimated to cost approximately $1B. The parkway design emerged from a range of alternatives, including replacement of the existing facility with a conventional freeway. The cost of the conventional freeway alternative is only marginally lower.

PROJECT PURPOSE

To improve the seismic, structural and traffic safety of Doyle Drive within the setting and context of the Presidio of San Francisco and its purpose as a National Park.

HOW DO WE FUND THE PROJECT?

In preparation for the certification of the Final EIS/R, attention has turned toward funding the preferred alternative’s approximately one billion dollar price tag. The primary traditional funding source for state transportation projects are state gasoline and diesel fuel taxes, vehicle weight fees, and federal funding. To date, $560 million state and federal funds have been secured for the project. We expect an additional $65M - $80M in Federal earmarks. This leaves a gap of about $400M. Given the shortage of funds, the Authority undertook a toll feasibility study for Doyle Drive to explore how tolls would contribute to closing the Doyle Drive funding gap.
**WHAT ARE THE OPTIONS FOR COLLECTING TOLLS FOR DOYLE DRIVE?**

**GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE COLLECTION**
The Golden Gate Bridge (GGB) collection option would use the existing toll collection process. Southbound drivers would be charged a toll for Doyle Drive that would be automatically added to the existing GGB toll. The combined GGB and Doyle Drive tolls could be paid by cash at the toll plaza located on the south end of the GGB, or by paying the toll electronically with a FasTrak® toll tag. Alternatively, a separate electronic toll collection system could be developed near the existing toll plaza. This option would not benefit from the lower operating costs associated with using the existing facility discussed below.

**DOYLE DRIVE COLLECTION**
The Doyle Drive collection option would use 100% Electronic Toll Collection (ETC) technology to assess tolls to vehicles traveling on Doyle Drive. The tolls would be charged to drivers in each direction of travel, and could potentially be varied by time of day and direction of travel, according to a published schedule. Drivers would pay their toll either by using their FasTrak® toll tag or through a “pay-by-plate” scheme using license plate recognition.

**WHAT ARE THE GENERAL BENEFITS OF TOLLING?**
Introducing tolls on Doyle Drive would bring several real benefits to the region. First, the tolls would be used to secure bonds that would contribute a portion of the funding that is needed for the upgrade of the existing facility. Tolls are also an excellent tool to manage congestion. With electronic toll collection, tolls can be set at different rates during different times of the day and/or directions of travel, usually higher during peak periods and lower during the off-peak times. This variability in toll rates encourages some drivers to use the roadway during lower cost, off-peak times, which would reduce the amount of congestion on the roadway during the peak periods, in turn reducing travel times during those periods.

**HOW MUCH FUNDING CAN TOLLS PROVIDE?**
Depending on the toll structure and tolling methods, preliminary estimates show that toll revenue bonds could contribute from approximately $400 million to upwards of $1 billion in funding.

Excess revenue that tolls may generate after covering operations and maintenance costs plus debt service payments could be used to help pay for other area transportation needs. For example, if the Doyle Drive tolls generate more revenue than is needed to close the funding gap for the replacement project, funds could be freed up to enhance transit service in the region, or for other similar improvements.

**HOW ELECTRONIC TOLL COLLECTION WORKS**
Electronic toll collection along Doyle Drive would operate as follows. As a vehicle approaches a toll collection point, an overhead transponder reader would search for the presence of a FasTrak® toll tag. When the toll tag is detected (green), the user’s toll account would be charged for the current trip. If no toll tag is detected (red), the vehicle’s license plate would be scanned (yellow) and recorded for payment or billing as described on the following page.

**TOLLING AT THE GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE**
Since tolls are already collected at the GGB, there would be no additional capital costs associated with establishing a separate toll collection process, including expenses associated with new toll collection equipment. Although this limits flexibility to implement variable (time-of-day) pricing, operating costs are lower since tolls are already being collected from Bridge users. Avoiding these additional costs would mean that a lower toll would be required to help fund the project. This alternative would charge the 85% of Doyle Drive users that originate from Marin and points north during the peak period. It would not charge local San Francisco users who do not cross the bridge, who constitute 15% of trips using Doyle Drive in the peak period.

**TOLLING AT THE DOYLE DRIVE EXITS**
Tolling using 100% electronic methods allows for toll rates to be varied by time of day and by direction. Variable tolls provide an efficient tool for managing traffic flows by encouraging some drivers to avoid travel during the heaviest times and by rewarding them with a lower off-peak toll rate. Spreading traffic over more of the day lowers peak period congestion and reduces travel times. Collecting tolls southbound only at the GGB with a cash-payment option limits the opportunity for this type of variable tolling. Drivers would pay a flat toll for GGB use and a variable toll for Doyle Drive use.
WHAT IS A FasTrak® TOLL TAG?

A FasTrak® toll tag is a vehicle identification device that is affixed to the inside of your windshield. When your vehicle passes beneath the toll collection equipment, your toll tag is detected, indicating that you are using the toll facility. Your toll tag is linked to a prepaid toll payment account, which will be debited each time you use the tolled roadway. Whether tolls are collected at the Bridge or along Doyle Drive, the current Bay Area FasTrak® electronic toll collection system would be the preferred way to pay your toll.

HOW WILL I PAY MY TOLL ON DOYLE DRIVE IF I DON’T HAVE A FasTrak® TOLL TAG?

If tolls are collected at the Bridge, then you would pay cash at the toll plaza. Should tolls instead be collected electronically along Doyle Drive, vehicles without a toll tag could still use the facility. When the toll collection equipment fails to detect a toll tag, an image of the vehicle's license plate is recorded, allowing for secondary payment options. One method would be for drivers to register their vehicle’s license plate and provide a credit or debit card payment either in advance of using the roadway or within 24 hours. This payment could be made online, at a nearby payment kiosk, or by telephone. There would likely be a surcharge on the toll to cover the extra cost of collection by license plate and to encourage regular users to obtain a toll tag. A final option is to have the vehicle’s owner identified from the license plate and simply await a bill for the toll, plus an administrative fee, to be sent by mail.

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE DOYLE DRIVE PROJECT

For more information, visit the project web site: www.doyledrive.org

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