

# San Mateo 101 Express Lanes Equity Study

SMCEL-JPA Board Meeting

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# Agenda

1. Guiding Document
2. Literature Review
3. Public Engagement Strategy
4. 9/2 ESAC Meeting Feedback
5. Next Steps

# San Mateo 101 Express Lanes Equity Study Draft Guiding Document



# Desired Outcomes



Flexible and adaptive pilot program to changing needs and feedback



Encourage mode shift to high-occupancy modes



Strategies benefit historically underserved communities who live near or use the lanes



Supports the Express Lanes benefits and goals (mobility, travel time, and reliability)



Pilot program reflects input from historically underserved communities



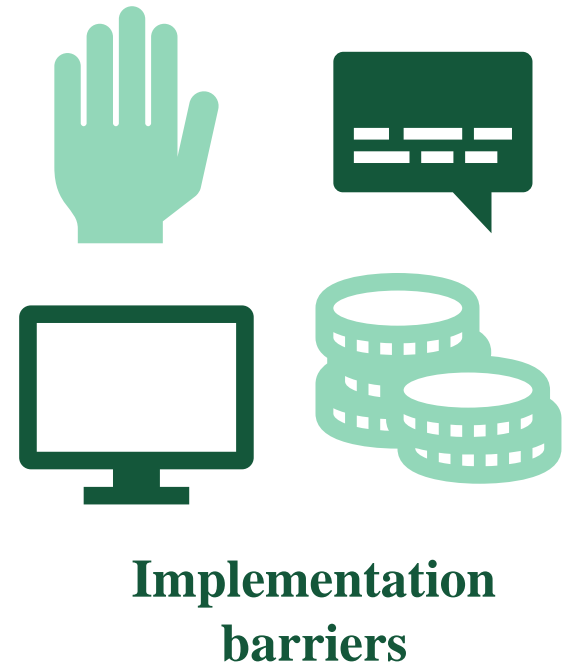
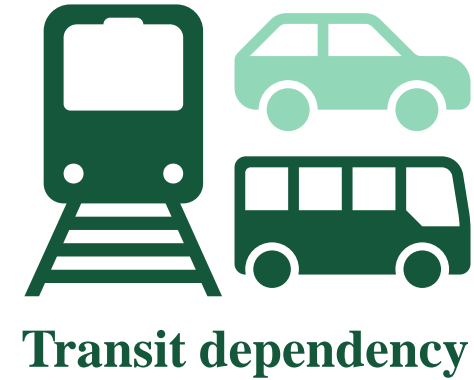
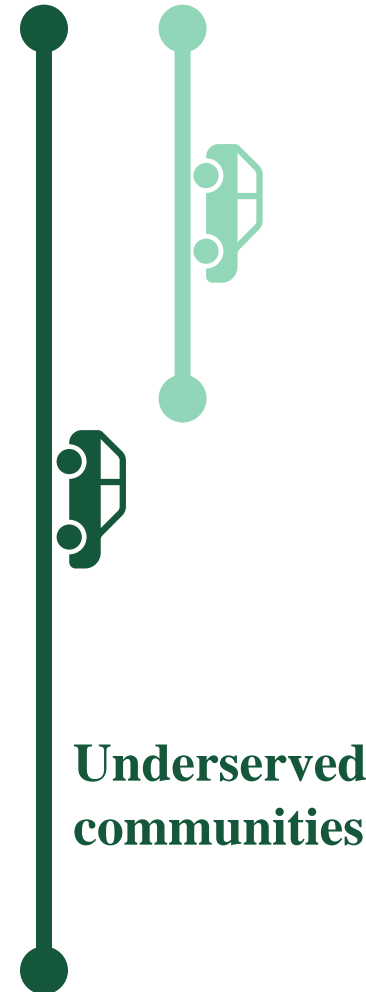
Improve active transportation network adjacent to the corridor



Strategies are replicable and could be expanded regionally

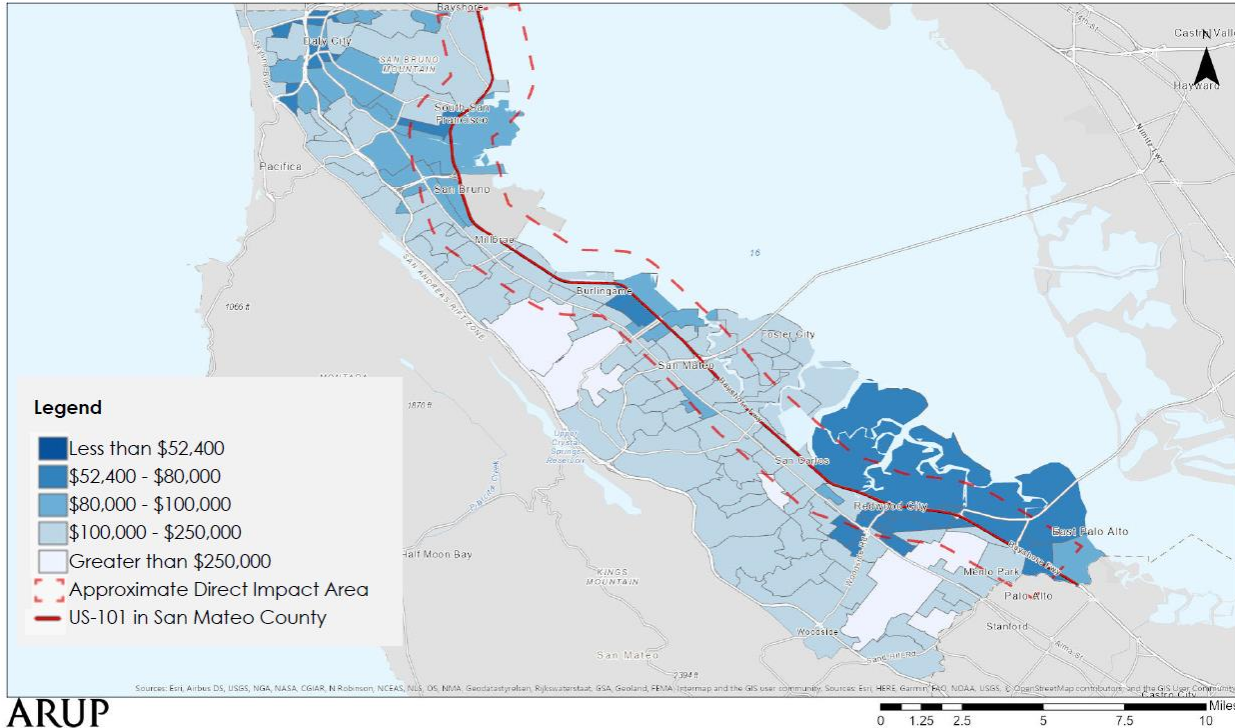
# Challenges

- Express lanes may widen inequities
- Underserved communities have greater need but fewer means
- Non-drivers will benefit only if transit uses the lanes
- Barriers to program implementation
  - *Limited English proficiency*
  - *Digital divide*
  - *Unbanked households*
  - *Eligibility requirements*



# Equity Study Target Populations

## Census Tracts | Median Household Income, 2018

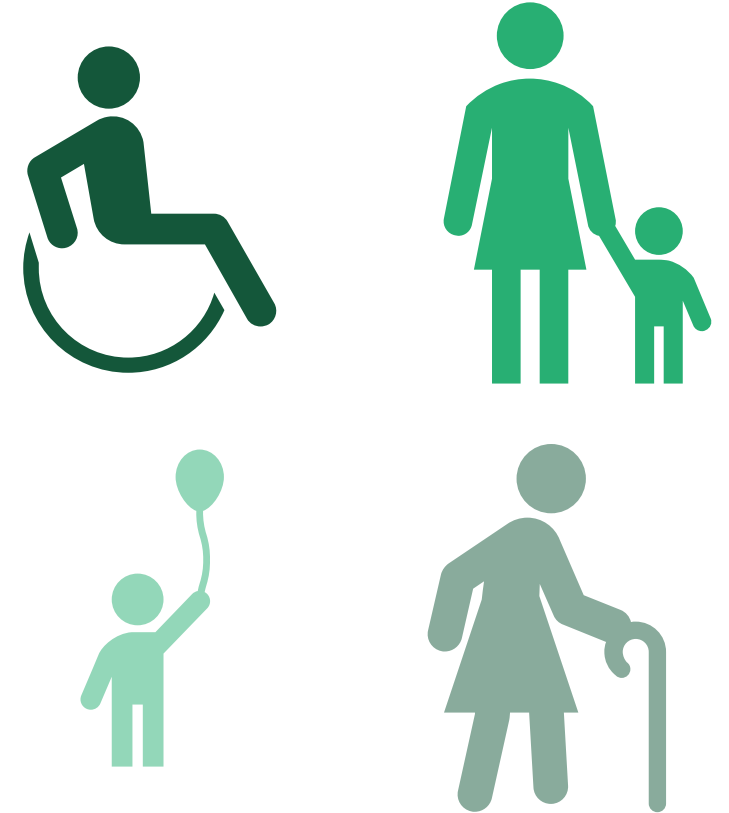


- Low-income freeway users from across San Mateo County
- Residents of historically underserved communities near the freeway

# Equity Study Target Populations

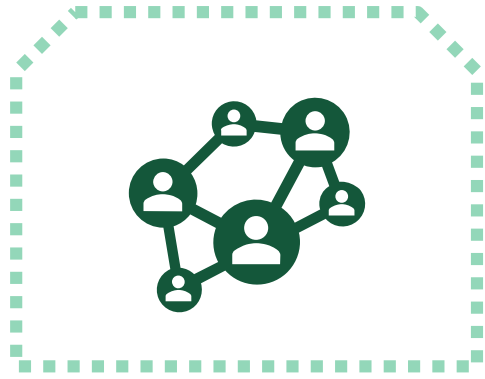
Low income households that also have one or more of the following characteristics:

- Latinx
- Black
- Southeast Asian or Pacific Islander
- Indigenous/Native American
- Limited English proficiency
- Single female-headed
- No- or low-vehicle ownership (defined as 1 car per 3 or more working adults)
- Transit-dependent
- Older adults
- Youth (17 and under)
- Disabled/Paratransit users





# Directing Benefits to Target Populations



Place-Based Investments →  
Census tracts with highest concentration of target populations

*Examples:*

- *Capital improvements (bike lanes, bus shelters etc.)*
- *Fixed-route transit service improvements*



Direct Payments or Incentives →  
All County residents/households who meet eligibility criteria

*Examples:*

- *Discounted tolls*
- *Free or reduced transit passes*



# San Mateo 101 Express Lanes Equity Study Literature Review



# Summary of Key Findings



Congestion pricing can reduce congestion, reduce air pollution, and improve mobility and access for everyone



Congestion pricing schemes are considered more equitable than sales taxes



Express lanes generally create fewer equity concerns than other congestion pricing schemes, eg cordon pricing



Express lanes are slightly less regressive than other forms of transportation finance



Revenue redistribution is key to equitable outcomes



It is difficult for express lanes to generate enough net revenue to fully fund projects that benefit underserved communities



Congestion pricing can have negative environmental justice impacts if a highway is expanded for a new lane



The evidence does not support claims that traffic will be diverted through nearby communities



The direct benefits of express lanes accrue to higher income groups more than others



Acceptability after implementation is widespread and all groups make some use of the guaranteed reliable travel times



Low-income drivers are a small share of peak-period traffic, and therefore less likely to pay the highest tolls

# Case Study | LA Metro ExpressLanes Low-Income Assistance Program

- Requires that participants be residents of Los Angeles County and also meet the income threshold requirements by household size. The income threshold is twice the federal poverty rate in 2015 numbers. Eligibility can be proven several ways, including MediCal or LAUSC participation.
- Offers eligible Los Angeles county residents a one-time \$25 toll credit and an automatic waiver of the monthly account maintenance fee of \$1.
- 461,121 transponders were issued, 7,991 participated in LIAP

## Performance Measures

Number of low-income commuters [including percentage of Transit Access Program (TAP) users] who sign up for a transponder.

Trends in trip distance and trip time by low-income commuters compared with non-low-income.

Number of peak-period low-income users of HOT lanes (and percentage of overall HOT lane users).

Share of time savings by low-income Express Lanes drivers compared with the share of tolls and transponder costs they pay

Usage of HOT lane credits for low-income drivers (credit redemptions).

Account balance problems of low-income commuters compared with non-low income.

Mode choice of low-income drivers (carpool versus single-occupant vehicle), compared with mode choice before the project is implemented.

Performance of transit service (average speed, trip time, time savings, and trip reliability) in the Express Lanes corridors during the demonstration period.

# Case Study | Treasure Island Transportation Affordability Program *(proposed)*

- Using toll revenue, provides new residents of Below-Market Rate (BMR) units on TI a discount on a variety of modes, including transit and car-sharing
- Program is expected to benefit many more residents than a toll credit
- Longtime households and existing BMR residents would also receive one non-tolled daily round-trip.



# San Mateo 101 Express Lanes Equity Study Public Engagement Plan



# Achieve more impactful outcomes for public engagement through partnership with community organizations

1

Reach **groups that are disproportionately burdened** by existing transportation policies and land use patterns

2

Gain more **nuanced feedback** through **outreach activities and project messaging** that are relevant to target communities



# Outcomes of a community partner program

1. **Recognize expertise** of community groups
2. **Establish trust** with community groups
3. **Provide adequate compensation** to add value for community organizations
4. **Build capacity** of community groups to increase long-term engagement with public agencies
5. **Implement emerging best practices** being used in the field of equitable public engagement



# Launching a community partner program



# Finding community partners

**Set selection criteria and release notice for community partners**

## Potential criteria...

1. Target populations served
2. Organizational capacity
3. Organization's area of work
4. Geography
5. Nonprofit status or fiscal sponsor

**Evaluate applicants and select groups to work with**

## Potential partners...

1. Engage up to five (5) non-profit organizations that are known and trusted within target communities

# Virtual engagement strategies for pandemic

Livestream discussions with local stakeholders (e.g., CBO staff, community members, agency staff, elected officials, etc.)

Create short videos and/or social media content to distribute to their networks

Produce real-time interactive polling to survey sentiments, educate users, and raise awareness about key concepts

Develop website content focused on equity considerations, frequently asked questions, and/or project updates

Use fliers/mailers to disseminate information and text surveys to gather feedback

# Equity Study Advisory Committee 9/2 Meeting Feedback



# Feedback

Level of Agreement		Verbalized as...	Do you agree with the vision and approach outlined in this Guiding Document?	Do you agree with our approach to public engagement?
<b>1</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	I am very pleased and fully support this decision	<b>50%</b>	<b>50%</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Agree with Reservations</b>	I am mostly satisfied and can support this decision	<b>50%</b>	<b>33%</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Neutral or Abstain</b>	I will go along with the rest of the group	0%	<b>17%</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Disagree but Will Go Along</b>	I have serious reservations but will not stand in the way of this decision	0%	0%
<b>5</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	I object to this decision	0%	0%

# Equity Study schedule

We are here

Description	Summer 2020	Fall 2020	Winter 2020/2021	Spring 2021	Summer 2021
<b>Baseline Conditions and Needs Assessment</b>					
Advisory Committee meetings	★	★	★ ★	★ ★	
Literature review					
Define vision, goals and target populations					
Demographic and travel analysis					
Public engagement (phase I)					
Publish final needs assessment					
<b>Equity Program Recommendation</b>					
Draft & analyze 2-3 equity program alternatives					
Public engagement (phase II)					
Recommend preferred alternative					
Board review and approval					

