TASK 8 – EXPLORATORY EQUITY ACTIONS (EEA) MEMO

OVERVIEW

The Yolo 80 Managed Lanes Project ("the Project") is expected to reduce traffic congestion on I-80 within Yolo County by widening and tolling a portion of Interstate 80 through Yolo County. Minimizing transportation burdens for groups that may be disproportionately impacted is one of YoloTD's top priorities in the implementation of tolled facilities in the region. The thirteen Exploratory Equity Actions, or "EEAs," outlined in this memo are presented as opportunities to advance benefits and reduce burdens for the equity communities highlighted in the mapping analysis. EEAs represent options for continued evaluation and study and are not intended to be interpreted as recommendations. EEAs also provide the basis for potential local-regional coordination needs dependent on outcomes from regional toll equity studies to come.

Exploratory Equity Actions (EEAs)

1.1 Goals

The EEAs (also referred to as "actions" and "strategies") proposed below align with four principal equity goals:

- *Excess Toll Revenue Reinvestment*, which concerns the equitable redistribution of toll funds into programs and infrastructure that benefit communities in and near the toll corridor;
- *Equitable Enforcement*, which concerns the equitable application of tolling rules and regulations and ensuring that vulnerable and hard-to-reach populations have fewer barriers to understanding and meeting the requirements of the toll program;
- *Equitable Communications*, which concerns the development of opportunities for community involvement and ongoing education about the toll program's purpose, planning, operations, and benefits; and
- *Collaboration and Connectivity*, which concerns the establishment of community and agency partnerships that support equitable outreach and community-focused programmatic co-design.

Within these principal equity goal categories, each EEA comes with an explanation of the concept, its role in advancing equity, and key success factors.

1.2 Background

The EEAs are informed by literature on transportation equity programs, user and neighborhood mapping analyses, and stakeholder engagement with jurisdictional and agency partners as well as community-based organizations (CBOs). Furthermore, these EEAs should be considered against the potential impact of certain state measures and codes on eligible uses for excess toll revenue and the feasibility of different partnership and advisory options. While the actions can stand alone, many of them are designed to work best in collaboration with the others. The study encourages studying a suite of EEAs to optimize potential benefits.

Each action's general overview is paired with a discussion of its "equity value," or how it plays a role in advancing equitable outcomes, and its "success drivers," which are considerations to keep in mind for optimal implementation and results. Some actions share similar roles in advancing equity or have similar concerns for implementation; as a result, a few may share language in those sections.

This is especially the case with actions related to excess revenue reinvestment, due to state restrictions on how excess toll revenue can be utilized. Some of the proposed actions will include the following language, or similar: "CARTA (Capital Area Regional Toll Authority) will need to keep state and federal laws in mind as it develops an expenditure plan for excess toll revenue use." The state and federal laws referenced here include the following characteristics of 23 US Code – Section 129, which will be especially important when determining eligible uses of excess revenues:

- Requires that toll revenues first be used to fund (a) operations and maintenance (O&M), (b) rehabilitation and replacement (R&R), (c) debt service if applicable, (d) Reserves for (a), (b), (c) before excess revenues can be used; and,
- Identifies authorized uses of excess revenues to be any expenditure eligible under Title 23 (roadway projects, equity programs), which include capital expenditures under Title 49 (bus rolling stock, station improvements, complete streets etc.).
    - Note: this eligibility may not be extended to O&M for transit, nor state-required mitigation for impacts identified under California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Outcomes for actions with these legal considerations are largely dependent on how Title 23 and Title 49 eligibility are interpreted in tandem with California Streets and Highway Code section 149.7 at the regional level by the CARTA Board. As such, some elements of the above may evolve, i.e. eligibility for transit use.

Many actions encourage input from equity communities within Yolo County, and several consider possibilities for interagency partnership and coordination. Globally, the EEAs serve to highlight the importance of elevating underserved community voices, increasing access to project education, mitigating the disproportionate impact of toll violations on equity communities, and maximizing relationships between CARTA, its partners, and the most affected communities.

1.3 Regional Context

This Memo outlines potential objectives, strategies, and initiatives designed to enhance outcomes for equity communities in Yolo County only. While the Project must be considered in the context of larger regional development, CARTA is in the process of developing a regional toll equity plan, which will cover strategies for equity communities in nearby areas outside of Yolo County. The EEAs explored in this equity report are meant to prioritize the needs of Yolo County equity communities while remaining complementary to regional equity efforts.

Each action serves as a basis for discussion and further evaluation. The actions proposed may support the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) as it establishes a broader scope of regional equity framework priorities. Final decisions on actions, feasibility, costs, agency responsibilities, toll revenue, financial sustainability, or commitments will be made in later phases, and none are determined at this point.

STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

The EEAs proposed in this study were developed in collaboration between Yolo Transportation District (YoloTD), city jurisdictions, CBOs, local transportation providers, and state and regional agencies. Several EEAs include an expectation for continued collaboration between CARTA and its partners.

The Yolo 80 Managed Lanes Equity Study engaged two key groups to inform its findings:

Multisector Project Stakeholders and CBOs. The Multisector Project Stakeholders include various institutional governments and organizations at the city, county, regional, and state levels. CBOs include representatives of groups that deliver direct services to communities in Yolo County. Through this engagement process, both groups were informed about the results of the equity analysis and participated in discussions on equity issues related to the Yolo 80 Managed Lanes, helping to shape the EEAs.

Multisector Project Stakeholders

Stakeholder engagement for the Multisector Project Stakeholder group involved three working sessions: the Goals and Outcomes Workshop, Workshop #1, and Workshop #2. A total of 11 individuals participated, representing the following agencies and institutions: Sacramento Council of Governments (SACOG), Caltrans, City of Davis, City of Woodland, City of West Sacramento, and University of California at Davis (UC Davis).

- The Goals and Outcomes Workshop (March 21, 2025) introduced stakeholders to equity considerations for the Yolo 80 Managed Lanes. Participants learned about peer agency equity frameworks, goals, and strategies and shared initial thoughts on potential project objectives, expected results, and challenges related to equity in tolling.
- Workgroup #1 (August 13, 2025) presented the concept and purpose of EEAs, allowing participants to discuss assumptions and issues for each topic identified during the Goals and Outcomes session.
- Workgroup #2 (November 6, 2025) built on prior discussions by helping attendees pinpoint major goal categories and delve into specific considerations and assumptions for each area. This session emphasized turning broad goals into concrete strategies, using a “Who, What, When, Where, Why, How” framework to further shape each strategic idea. The overall aim was to create actionable strategies.

Community-Based Organizations (CBOs)

CBO engagement occurred in the format of a survey or virtual interview. A total of five individuals participated, representing the following CBOs: Yolo County Children’s Alliance, Yolo County Housing, New Hope CDC, Rancho Yolo Community Association, Fourth & Hope, and Yolo County Library. Collectively these organizations serve low-income communities, youth and families, migrant farmworkers, seniors, veterans, former and currently homeless individuals, former foster youth, disabled communities, and individuals from a wide range of cultural, racial, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds.

- Interview with Yolo County Children’s Alliance (YCCA) (September 2, 2025): YCCA is the designated Child Abuse Prevention Council of Yolo County, and its mission is to ensure “everyone in Yolo County has access to the resources they need to build meaningful ties to their communities.” These communities include diverse families and youth across West Sacramento, Davis, and Woodland. The community experiences unreliable transit and financial strain making travel difficult. Many rely on bus passes for essential trips, and tolls would likely be a burden. However, clear rules, multilingual outreach, and financial support could help. Improving transit reliability is seen as the most urgent need and outreach was mentioned to be the most effective way to reach residents.

- Interview with Yolo County Housing Authority (YCH) / New Hope CDC (October 21, 2025): YCH and New Hope CDC are “dedicated to establishing and maintaining quality, affordable housing, and community development support” to the communities of Winters, Davis, Woodland, and West Sacramento. Most of the community are low-income households, migrant workers, seniors, and multilingual residents. With an average household income of around $29-32k, tolls or express lanes would likely be a financial strain and raise concerns on whether improvements will materialize. Key transportation equity priorities include affordability, reliable service, ADA- accessible infrastructure, and clear communication.

- Survey responses from Rancho Yolo Community Association, Fourth & Hope, and Yolo County Library (December 2025 – January 2026): Members of these communities commonly use the I-80 for education, work, recreation, and medical purposes. Driving a personal vehicle, biking, carpooling, and public transportation are the main modes of travel but there are mixed levels of access to the modes of transportation, with some respondents reporting adequate access and others unsure. Some respondents reported being unsure about carpooling for free access and are most concerned about the affordability and ease of entry and exit into express lanes. Some also expressed concern about the rules and laws around using express lanes. Themes associated with transportation equity include ensuring access for all, recognizing that toll costs can burden low-income travelers, and emphasizing affordability, ease of access, and support for seniors.

Reinvestment

1.1 Multimodal Investments: Prioritize multimodal upgrades that expand non-auto travel options

Overview

This action proposes that CARTA explore opportunities to invest excess toll revenue into transit frequency, stop improvements, and first/last-mile connections along the toll corridor. In the literature and in more recent work by the Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA) are examples of transportation equity projects that support broader mobility through partnerships with transit operators, local agencies, and discretionary grants. To explore what this could look like for Yolo County, CARTA should determine the extent of its opportunities to support initiatives that encourage and increase access to multimodal travel.

CARTA may find that it has clear pathways to support initiatives that increase the perception of safety at mobility hubs, aesthetic conditions for cyclists and pedestrians, and support for active transportation and paratransit programs. Strategies proposed here may also support elements of VMT Mitigation Plan, which highlights several opportunities for excess toll revenue support.

Equity Value

This action has the potential to broadly increase access to mobility for travelers in Yolo County regardless of transportation mode. Strategies developed with this action in mind could also complement the 2025 SACOG Blueprint policies around funding and improving transit in the region. California Streets and Highways Code section 149.7 dictates that any remaining revenue from tolling be used on the corridor where it was generated. This provides ample opportunity to focus reinvestments on benefits for corridor-adjacent equity communities.

There are many potential barriers to multi-modal adoption for Yolo County communities, including gaps in service, infrastructure, or knowledge of the opportunities available. Some reinvestment strategies that may be considered to address these barriers include:

- Subsidized mobility wallets and incentives for multimodal travel, especially for users living near transportation hubs, with access to carpool programs, or with low incomes.
- Multimodal facility improvements or upgrades in the corridor (e.g. pedestrian, cycling, and transit infrastructure like dedicated bus lanes).
- Bus rolling stock payments.
- Grant funding for equity programs that support and/or encourage multimodal travel, especially for communities with low incomes or communities that are historically hard-to-reach (e.g. users with limited English proficiency).

Prioritizing infrastructural improvements and mobility expansion can be especially beneficial for carpool-and-transit reliant communities where a higher percentage of users may have zero-car access and/or lower incomes. This sentiment was echoed in the feedback from Yolo County-based CBOs, who expressed that the communities they serve could benefit from having expanded and cheaper options for multimodal travel.

Success Drivers

CARTA will need to keep state and federal laws in mind as it develops an expenditure plan for excess toll revenue use. Outcomes for this action are largely dependent on how Title 23 and Title 49 eligibility are interpreted in tandem with California Streets and Highway Code section 149.7 at the regional level by the CARTA Board.

State requirements notwithstanding, multimodal investments should be informed by and complementary to existing plans and priorities, like those established in CARTA's toll policy, the SACOG Blueprint adopted in 2025, and in the VMT Mitigation Plan adopted in 2024. It is important to minimize redundancies that could lead to extraneous use of resources and reduce the quality of attention given to developing holistic plans and strategies for multimodal adoption.

Several agencies have studied and piloted programs for excess toll revenue reinvestment in service of increased multimodal access. LA Metro's Mobility Wallet Program subsidizes multimodal transportation options for residents with low incomes, providing travel flexibility while also encouraging VMT-reducing behaviors. The program has had a favorable response and is expanding, though unforeseen challenges have included operational practices like debit card distribution and activation. Any reinvestment program will need to be evaluated not only for its potential for beneficial outcomes, but for its procedural feasibility and cost as well. CARTA may seek synergies between this action and mitigation measures in the Yolo 80 Managed Lanes VMT Mitigation Plan that propose expanded transit service and subsidies for transit passes.

Timeline: Upon development of the Excess Toll Revenue Expenditure Plan

1.2 Neighborhood and Safety Investments: Conduct a traffic study to determine reinvestment opportunities in corridor-adjacent communities

Overview
This action proposes that CARTA conduct a traffic study to explore ways that excess toll revenue can support efforts to reduce the impacts of diversion and cut-through traffic. Examples of measures commonly taken to reduce these impacts include (but are not limited to) "slow streets" infrastructure, road maintenance, and noise mitigation. A traffic analysis of the project area can help to determine if the equity communities identified in the Mapping Analysis are experiencing disproportionate impacts to health, safety, and quality of life because of diversion from drivers evading the corridor. Should there be a determined need, CARTA should take care to clearly identify when and where excess toll revenue could be used to support this goal, while prioritizing opportunities to support this goal through existing funds and partnerships.

Equity Value
A clear understanding of traffic conditions in the corridor can maximize CARTA's options for using remaining funds or partnerships to contribute to equitable outcomes in Yolo County. California Streets and Highways Code section 149.7 dictates that any remaining revenue from tolling be used on the corridor where it was generated. This action has the potential to maintain or improve safety and quality-of-life conditions for neighborhoods along the corridor as well as for users traveling near the Causeway at peak hours. These strategies could also complement the 2025 SACOG Blueprint policies adopted around cost-effective safety investments in high-crash areas and infrastructural improvements that provide safer travel pathways for cyclists and pedestrians.

Examples of reinvestment strategies that may be identified via such a study to address safety and quality-of-life conditions for corridor-adjacent communities include:

- Traffic-calming facility upgrades and improvements in the corridor, especially for residential areas demonstrating significant impacts from diversion or high-speed travel.

- Enhanced facilities for pedestrians and active transportation users, especially in communities demonstrating significant impacts from crashes.
- Grant support for equity programs and projects that encourage safer travel through the corridor (e.g. “Complete Streets,” and “Slow Streets” initiatives

A traffic analysis study can include opportunities for community and stakeholder input on existing conditions and traffic-related health and safety concerns. This action supports the development of the project’s excess toll revenue Expenditure Plan while creating avenues for increased collaboration and transparency between CARTA, its partners, and the communities it serves. Through the study’s findings, CARTA can further develop its equity goals based on daily traveler needs and experiences.

Success Drivers
CARTA will need to keep state and federal statutes in mind as it develops an expenditure plan for excess toll revenue. Some elements of this action may be covered under standard toll revenue requirements for operations, maintenance, and road rehabilitation. CARTA should take care to delineate what opportunities for neighborhood diversion mitigation and safety will need to be considered in the development of an excess toll revenue Expenditure Plan and what opportunities can be supported prior to the collection and distribution of excess revenue.

Some examples of neighborhood reinvestment can be seen through LA Metro, which dedicates some net toll revenue toward active transportation and system connectivity projects, and the Contra Costa Transportation Authority’s I-680 Express Lanes, which has a number of infrastructural uses for excess toll revenue.

Jurisdictional and community buy-in will be important to the success of this action. Any traffic analysis will benefit from direct input from institutional stakeholders and community members about their lived experiences. By finding opportunities to bring equity communities into the information-gathering process, CARTA may happen upon new or revitalized pathways to relationship-building with CBOs, stakeholders, and the public. See 3.3 (“Invite and Incorporate Community Input”) and 4.3 (“CBO Involvement”) for strategies that overlap with this success driver.

Timeline: Upon development of the Excess Toll Revenue Expenditure Plan

1.3 <u>Community Involvement: Establish a community-informed shortlist of equity priorities for excess toll revenue reinvestment</u>

Overview
This action proposes developing a matrix of priorities for excess toll revenue reinvestment in preparation for the project’s Expenditure Plan, within any bounds established by Actions 1.1 (“Prioritize Multimodal Upgrades”) and 1.2 (“Prioritize Corridor Reinvestments”). This matrix of projects, programs, and partnerships for reinvestment would focus on opportunities that exist within a determined radius of the project corridor. Evaluation criteria for scoring the equity priorities may include (in no specific order nor exclusively):

- Geography/proximity to corridor-adjacent communities
- Ability to support VMT mitigation goals
- Ability to support multimodal access
- Ability to support neighborhood health and safety
- Benefits to established equity communities

- Feasibility for excess toll revenue distribution
- Opportunities for ongoing user education and engagement

The shortlist of priorities would form the basis for the Expenditure Plan required prior to any distribution of excess revenues.

Equity Value

This action ensures that plans for excess revenue use are aligned with the equity priorities ultimately agreed upon by CARTA, its partners, and Yolo County communities. The shortlist provides the basis for the Expenditure Plan required prior to any distribution of excess toll revenues and will act as a guiding document for CARTA as it pursues partnerships, grants, and community feedback. This action creates avenues for discussion between CARTA, its partners, and its communities about how to most comprehensively and economically address the equity needs of Yolo County communities.

Success Drivers

YoloTD priorities for CARTA to consider in the development of the shortlist include partner and community input. Some CBOs, including those interviewed for this study like New Hope CDC, could support the success of this action by distributing informational material and encouraging community participation. A toll equity program designed to address disproportionate impacts of highway expansion on the Globeville and Elyria Swansea neighborhoods of Denver, Colorado shortlisted equity programs and practices using direct input from residents of the area. Another agency example is the Contra Costa Transportation Authority's I-680 Project, which has several innovative uses for excess toll revenue beyond those identified in this study's literature review. Actions 1.4 ("Community Reinvestment Working Group") and 3.3 ("Invite and Incorporate Community Input") propose options for deepening community involvement in the development, implementation, and evaluation of equity actions for the project.

CARTA may also consider internal communications strategies for developing, documenting, and evaluating its list of equity priorities as it continues to study options prior to implementation. Should direct community input prove to be difficult to achieve while developing the Expenditure plan, CARTA may still be able to leverage agency relationships, local and regional data sources, and publicly available CBO resources to support its planning and decision-making. A well-maintained database of these contacts and resources would support shortlist development and could potentially support future relationship-building efforts.

CARTA will need to keep state and federal laws in mind as it develops an expenditure plan for excess toll revenue use. Outcomes for this action are largely dependent on how Title 23 and Title 49 eligibility are interpreted in tandem with California Streets and Highway Code section 149.7 at the regional level by the CARTA Board. Due to these requirements, it should be noted that selection and implementation of any projects on this list would likely occur several years after the list's development. CARTA may seek synergies between this action and Voluntary Trip Reduction Program expansion as it is described in the Yolo 80 Managed Lanes VMT Mitigation Plan, to include ridesharing, transit pass subsidies, and community-based travel planning.

Timeline: Upon development of the Excess Toll Revenue Expenditure Plan

1.4 Community Involvement: Establish a Community Reinvestment Working Group (CRWG) to recommend and score equity programs and projects

Overview
This action proposes establishing a temporary working group dedicated to the process of shortlisting reinvestment projects and evaluating the success of each project's planning and implementation. The working group would be charged with reviewing CARTA's toll policy alongside its agreed-upon equity goals to develop evaluation criteria for reinvestment projects. The working group would be stood up for the time needed to develop scoring criteria, review projects, and make recommendations to share with the CARTA board.

Members of equity communities, including those where zero-car households, linguistic isolation, or low incomes are common, should be strongly encouraged to participate, and incentivized where able. To increase the pool of potential participants in the working group, CARTA may consider working closely with CBOs and institutional stakeholders with strong ties to equity communities in Yolo County.

Equity Value
The CRWG would bring much-needed community perspectives to the decision-making process by informing equity priorities ahead of CARTA's development of an expenditure plan for excess revenues. This working group may extend CARTA's ability to reach equity communities by providing trusted community members with the tools and information needed to keep their neighborhoods informed and to solicit additional feedback when needed. When compared to other standing community engagement methods like advisory committees, working groups have more potential for flexibility. Meeting times can be less frequent, with participants having the option to provide input and develop project recommendations using a variety of tools and timing options.

While the Yolo 80 Managed Lanes equity study uses census records, mapping data, and other qualitative input to guide its proposed actions and where to direct them, we recognize the importance of lived experiences to illustrate the practical implications of any equity measure. The CRWG would be expected to review findings from the Equity Study's mapping analysis and any future traffic studies *and* encouraged to supplement those findings with their own experiences as residents and travelers in Yolo County.

While this action is primarily focused on supporting the development of the Expenditure Plan, CARTA may consider standing up the CRWG at different times in the project's lifecycle (e.g. a certain number of years after the expenditure plan's adoption, five years into project implementation, etc.). The CRWG can facilitate real-time feedback on a pilot project's success, allowing for earlier opportunities to solve problems, pivot, or increase investment as needed. This action and others within this report recommend that avenues for community input continue to be prioritized through the planning, implementation, and evaluation of Yolo 80 Managed Lanes. Doing so increases the project's chances of success while fortifying relationships between CARTA, its partners, and local communities.

Success Drivers
Working groups need clear calls-to-action, defined responsibilities, and genuine agency buy-in to perform efficiently and produce actionable recommendations. Support for the CRWG could include dedicated staff or consultant hours for committee guidance, coordination, and agenda-setting. Using community members who are already demonstrating commitment to advising

local transportation projects reduces the level of resources needed for recruitment. Furthermore, having the CRWG operate on a temporary, “as-needed” basis enables more flexibility and efficiency for CARTA staff time and budget.

Consideration should be given to recruiting and engaging with community members with relevant lived experience in Yolo County, i.e. residents that live, work, and travel in the project corridor; users of transit that frequent stops along the corridor; shift workers with less options for transit and carpooling; active transportation users in the area; and car owners within a certain distance of the project area who may be interested in shifting to other modes. Priority should be given to community members who are already engaged in existing committees or working groups tied to CARTA or any of its partner agencies, including (but not limited to) YoloTD Citizens Advisory Committee.

Compensation for working group members may be considered; incentives and compensation are commonly considered a best practice for creating environments that foster participation from communities with diverse backgrounds and lived experiences.

Recruitment for volunteer groups can be difficult. CARTA should expect to lean on partnerships with local jurisdictions and CBOs to recruit working group members. (See 4.3, “CBO Partnerships.”)

Timeline: Ongoing/As-needed

Equitable Enforcement

2.1 Increased Access: Explore lenience and support strategies for first-time offenses by drivers with low incomes (A step above minimum requirements/standard policies)

Overview
This action proposes that CARTA study opportunities to expand lenience and support strategies within existing statewide requirements for toll enforcement. AB 2594 already requires capped initial and subsequent penalties, automatic first-time violator relief, a grace period for payment, low-income payment plans, car rental disclosures, and opportunities for appeals and waivers.

According to the toll policy adopted by the CARTA board, the Yolo 80 managed lanes will be operated using FasTrak®, a transponder-based, automated tolling system that deducts tolls from user accounts and issues violations when accounts have insufficient funds, transponders are missing, or other errors occur. In December 2025, CARTA adopted its Toll Policy Resolution, which included the following policies related to toll penalties:

- CARTA will make all reasonable attempts to encourage payment of tolls to promote equitable cost-sharing among all express lane users
- CARTA will make a concerted effort to convert violators who will use CARTA's express lanes again into FasTrak® customers
- The toll evasion penalty for a user's first toll violation will be the cost of the toll + $25. The second toll violation penalty will be the cost of the toll + $50.

This action explores how CARTA could implement these statutory provisions within FasTrak® operations and consider additional lenience strategies for low-income drivers beyond the minimum requirements. The goal is to identify strategies that are feasible, equitable, and compatible with automated tolling, while reducing the disproportionate financial burden on vulnerable users. Strategies with the most potential within these guidelines may include flexible payment plans with minimal administrative barriers, a one-time amnesty program for accumulated penalties, and/or engaging communications materials that encourage FasTrak® sign-up and clearly identify support options for repayment.

Equity Value
First-time violations and penalty escalation can disproportionately affect low-income drivers, who often face greater financial barriers to maintaining good standing in toll systems. AB 2594 provides a baseline through penalty caps, first-time violator relief, grace periods, and low-income payment plans, but equity opportunities remain. Exploring additional lenience strategies within FasTrak® operations, such as expanded payment flexibility or temporary amnesty programs, can help prevent minor errors from escalating into long-term financial penalties, ensuring more equitable access to express lanes for all users. This exploration may also help ensure that enforcement practices do not reinforce existing inequities or disproportionately burden certain equity communities.

Success Drivers
CARTA needs to understand how its toll policies and equity priorities intersect with:

- The way FasTrak® generates violations;
- How AB 2594 key provisions are integrated into operations; and
- Where additional flexibility can be applied.

This will help identify where payment plans with lower administrative or qualification barriers could realistically fit into existing operations. Any income-based criteria would need to be simple and easy to use, without requiring extensive paperwork or credit checks. Clear communication in violation notices will also be key so that users know what steps they can take before penalties increase. Tracking how many people use these options, how quickly issues get resolved, and if outcomes are different for users with low-income will help evaluate whether these strategies support more equitable enforcement.

Timeline: Available by day one of implementation

2.2 Increased Access: Establish accessible dispute and resolution channels in multiple languages and formats (online, phone, in-person)

Overview

This exploratory action focuses on improving how users can contest or resolve toll violations by expanding the availability and accessibility of customer service channels. AB 2594 requires California tolling agencies to provide appeals and waivers for violations, including first-time offenses, establishing a baseline. Currently, resolving a violation often requires navigating online portals, mailed notices, or phone systems that may not meet the needs of all users, especially those with limited English proficiency, limited digital access, or inconsistent internet connectivity.

Potential approaches to explore include multilingual customer support, simplified online dispute forms, extended customer service hours, and in-person assistance at trusted community settings. The goal of this exploration is to understand whether expanding support channels can improve resolution rates and reduce unnecessary penalty escalation.

Equity Value

Even with statutory protections like AB 2594, violation disputes can be difficult to navigate for users who face language barriers, low digital literacy, limited internet access, or users not familiar with express lanes. Violations can escalate into significant penalties when dispute channels are not easily accessible, and this can disproportionately impact households with low-incomes and communities with limited-English-proficient residents.

Stakeholder and CBO discussions highlighted several communities throughout Yolo County, including West Sacramento and Davis, with high concentrations of linguistically-isolated households and workforces. By exploring multilingual and multi-format resolution alternatives, like options delivered through trusted community partners, this action aims to reduce those barriers, support equitable access to the dispute process, and ensure all users have a fair opportunity to resolve issues before penalties grow. Through this action, CARTA can also explore ways to increase its visibility at community centers and events to meet equity populations where they are.

Success Drivers

To make the dispute process more accessible, CARTA can offer support in the languages most spoken in the area and make sure that online, phone, and in-person options are straightforward and easy to use. Clear explanations in violation notices and on customer service materials can help users understand their options and avoid unnecessary penalty escalation. Providing in-person help through trusted community centers or CBOs can also make the process more approachable for people who have limited English proficiency or limited internet access. It is also key to examine opportunities for streamlining forms and minimizing documentation requirements to reduce administrative burden. Monitoring aspects of the user experience like wait times, dispute outcomes, and the kinds of assistance requested can help determine the success of these expanded channels at improving access and reducing barriers.

Timeline: Available by day one of implementation

2.3 Increased Access: Explore transponder distribution and maintenance strategies outside of minimum requirements.

Overview

This exploration looks at ways to expand transponder distribution beyond standard channels to better reach communities along the corridor who may face financial, language, or access barriers. While most users obtain transponders online or through designated retail partners, these pathways may not fully serve households with limited internet access, limited English proficiency, or lower comfort navigating formal customer-service systems.

Potential strategies to evaluate include in-person distribution at community events, pop-up enrollment sites, partnerships with CBOs and local businesses, or offering low-/no-cost transponders for income-eligible households. CARTA may also consider purchasing and maintaining transponder accounts for low-income households by covering monthly administration fees. LA Metro's Express Lanes Low-Income Assistance Plan provides one-time transponder credits and waivers for the monthly $1 service fee to maintain user accounts for eligible users. The exploration would consider what mix of outreach methods, locations, and materials can make it easier for Yolo County residents, especially those most impacted by enforcement or financial constraints, to access a transponder and avoid unnecessary violations.

Equity Value

Yolo County residents with low incomes or living in linguistically diverse communities may not have equal access to the standard distribution channels and may be more vulnerable to accumulating penalties if they cannot easily obtain, activate, or maintain a device. By exploring more proactive and community-centered distribution and maintenance strategies, this action aims to reduce these disparities and ensure that corridor-adjacent communities have a fair opportunity to use the lanes without facing enforcement consequences.

Success Drivers

To successfully explore this action, CARTA will need to consider how new distribution approaches can integrate with existing FasTrak® account setup requirements and customer service channels. Partnerships with CBOs, local businesses, libraries, and community centers may be important for reaching residents who face language, cultural, or technology barriers. In the LA Metro example above, 7-Eleven stores provide account-loading services.

Distribution efforts should include multilingual materials and staff who can help users understand account setup, balance management, and how transponders work. It will also be important to evaluate cost and administrative feasibility, including how to confirm eligibility for low- or no-cost devices, if that option is explored.

Timeline: Ongoing/As-needed

2.4 Increased Access: Explore the effects of varying discount and exemption strategies on VMT mitigation, revenue generation, and multimodal access

Overview

This action suggests a financial analysis of income-focused or subsidized strategies like discounts or credits, ensuring they are evaluated for their short and long-term feasibility alongside adjacent strategies and plans. At its most involved, this action may benefit from scenario development and modeling to demonstrate likely changes in travel patterns and revenue generation when discounts or toll credits are offered to those with low incomes or within a specific geographic location. Surveys of potential users, especially those with low incomes and in corridor-adjacent communities, may also be conducted to determine community need.

This action item supports some of the items above; for example, multimodal access strategies subsidized by excess revenue (1.1, “Prioritize Multimodal Access”) or toll enforcement lenience strategies (2.1, “Explore Lenience and Support Strategies”) will need to provide the most benefit to equity communities without impacting VMT reduction or congestion management goals. CARTA may also consider studying discounts that reduce the cost differential of travel between corridor-adjacent communities using the Causeway for essential trips and users who may be traveling through the area infrequently and for non-essential purposes.

Equity Value

Along with income-based lenience programs, discount programs can help address the disproportionate burden of transportation budgets on households with low incomes, especially in areas without many options for multimodal travel. These programs can result in reduced revenue and need to be evaluated alongside other options for increasing mobility and mitigating burden for equity communities.

Conversely, some of these programs see low enrollment numbers with eligible users choosing to use the free lanes instead, which can lead agencies to expand eligibility criteria to attract more potential users. This may reveal a need for greater engagement with potential users of such a program to determine the actual level of desire for access to the express lanes and the level of benefit that access can provide when compared to or paired with other strategies.

While many discount programs are tied to income thresholds, that may not be the only eligibility criteria CARTA chooses to study. Some agencies, like the Treasure Island Mobility Management Agency (TIMMA) and the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), have subsidies for existing businesses and their employees or discounts for low-income residents of specific municipalities. Stakeholder discussions highlighted the importance of addressing the needs of corridor-adjacent communities, many of which consist of low-income households and other equity determinants like linguistic isolation or demographic factors like age and race.

Success Drivers

Discount and subsidy programs work best when supported by a robust suite of equity strategies like regular and inclusive communication, equitable violation policies, and reinvestment into infrastructure and programs that can also increase access to reliable and safe transportation options. The Metropolitan Transportation Commission’s (MTC) Express Lanes START pilot saw lower enrollment numbers than expected and found that gaps in education about FasTrak® and the express lanes still posed potential problems for the equity communities they were trying to reach. Still, the program had a favorable response from those who did participate, and MTC’s recommendation moving forward includes regional education and encouragement around FasTrak®.

CARTA will need to keep state and federal laws in mind as it develops an expenditure plan for excess toll revenue use, which could include discounts or subsidies that reduce the expected amount of revenue over time. The private-public partnership operating VDOT's Toll Relief Program agreed to increase its funding from $500,000 to $3.2 million annually through 2037, with the expectation that enrollment will increase significantly with expansions in program eligibility. Understanding how eligibility thresholds, program education, and geographic distribution impact program costs and effectiveness will be important for developing strategies that support regional goals, generate funds for multimodal infrastructure, and address the immediate challenges that equity communities may experience along the corridor.

Timeline: Available by day one of implementation

Equitable Communications

3.1 Community Support and Education: Establish multilingual education campaigns for corridor-adjacent communities

Overview

This action proposes prioritizing equity communities along the corridor for multilingual, multi-channel educational outreach about the project. CARTA may launch a “Tolling 101” education campaign prior to the implementation of the project in partnership with CBOs. Through mapping analysis and stakeholder outreach, we’ve learned that there are linguistically isolated communities that may require specialized outreach throughout Yolo County, especially in the City of Davis and West Sacramento. Outreach should keep in mind needs for neighborhoods with limited digital access or limited English proficiency. Outreach should focus on closing knowledge gaps around pricing, accounts, enforcement, and project benefits. CARTA would use census data and community input to assess the communication needs for equity communities along the corridor.

Equity Value

Proactive outreach and education can reduce the likelihood of equity communities experiencing disproportionate barriers to transportation access and benefits. Understanding the project, its purpose, and its rules can reduce the likelihood that a user will misuse the lanes and end up on the receiving end of a toll violation. Furthermore, these efforts can guide interested users to adopting behaviors that enhance their own experience while contributing to the functionality of the managed lanes (i.e. carpooling at peak hours). Several users, like seasonal migrant workers who often drive at off-peak hours, may still benefit from understanding that their travel likely wouldn’t be impacted by the changes being made to the Causeway. Considering the needs of equity communities—like those with multilingual needs, disabilities, or technology gaps that can impact their access to information—in the development of these campaigns would likely benefit the comprehension and engagement of all corridor-adjacent communities.

Success Drivers

CARTA will need to determine the breadth of the outreach effort, balancing effectiveness with budget constraints and potential gaps in connection with hard-to-reach communities. Opportunities for creativity, both in messaging content and its distribution, should be encouraged; “out-of-the-box” thinking can revive stale information channels or create new ones. This would involve the development of a marketing plan with value propositioning, branding concepts, an estimated timeline, and a campaign-specific budget. Compensated partnerships with CBOs can support on-the-ground efforts while strengthening relationships between the project and local stakeholders.

Timeline: Ongoing/As-needed

3.2 Community Support and Education: Provide live customer support in key community languages

Overview

This action proposes establishing multilingual pathways for customers to receive live support and information about the project. One common way to do this is to establish separate telephone extensions dedicated to specific community languages or needs. Languages should be informed by community input and are likely to include, among others, Spanish, Mandarin, Vietnamese, Russian, and Ukrainian. Virtual live support, where customers can connect to their desktops or via apps on their mobile phones, is another option.

Equity Value
This action ensures that regardless of one's preferred language of communication, options are available to receive the information they need to learn about the project, understand how to navigate the project in ways that benefit them most, and avoid toll violations and penalties. Moreover, providing the option to receive support through phone reduces barriers for those with limited access to or comfort with digital technologies. For those who are comfortable with using virtual support options, a mobile-optimized webpage may be favorable over a downloaded mobile application, which may deter users with limited data space, privacy concerns, or minimal patience for the application download and set-up process. Providing a variety of low-barrier-to-entry options not only increases trust between CARTA and Yolo County's most vulnerable communities, it increases the likelihood that they will access and utilize important project information.

Success Drivers
While language can be one barrier to access, a customer's ability to navigate certain technologies can be another. This action should keep in mind the intersection of potential barriers that linguistically isolated customers may face. Including more traditional methods of communication (i.e. a telephone extension) alongside virtual methods can create more avenues for community feedback as the population and its needs evolve.

Timeline: Available by day one of implementation

3.3 <u>Community Involvement: Explore opportunities to invite and incorporate community input</u>

Overview
This action proposes creating avenues for ongoing community input during the planning, implementation, and evaluation processes surrounding the Project. Doing so would involve the development of a long-range Community Involvement Plan. This action is particularly concerned with community input on what equity strategies have the most potential to benefit corridor-adjacent communities within Yolo County, including those with low incomes or multilingual needs. CARTA would develop a community engagement plan that establishes the type and purpose of communications, what communities to prioritize for specialized outreach, and an estimated timeline for when these touchpoints would occur.

This action is meant to promote deep community involvement in the success of the Yolo 80 Managed Lanes and to empower communities by creating opportunities for their voices to be heard at all phases of the project's planning and implementation. The community can be provided with information about, and invited to provide thoughts on, the following:

- Which EEAs to study and develop further
- A shortlist of ideas for excess toll revenue reinvestment, prior to finalizing the expenditure plan
- CBOs to partner with for distributing information and reaching equity communities
- Methods of communication and/or transponder distribution that best suit their needs

Equity Value
It is an equity best practice is to give communities the opportunity to be seen and heard regarding transportation projects that affect them. Doing so contributes to a general sense of transparency and understanding, can improve relationships between agencies and the public, and helps to ensure that decisions are made with the communities most impacted in mind. There are many ways to solicit and engage with community feedback, and with varying levels of cost and effort. Some options include:

- In-person tabling activities at community events
- Community workshops
- Interactive online mapping and write-in activities
- Social media campaigns
- Interviews
- Workgroups and committees

It should be acknowledged that any level of intentional engagement is more beneficial than no engagement at all. The literature on tolling equity programs shows that programs can be shaped with as little as a couple of community workshops or as much as a multi-year steering committee or CBO-partnership. Several examples of how community involvement can look are found in programs led by TIMMA for its Toll Program, the Colorado Department of Transportation for its Central 70 GES Toll Equity Program, and Caltrans for its I-5 Managed Lanes Study.

Success Drivers
CARTA will need to clearly define how and when community input will be used. The team will also need to be realistic and transparent about the hierarchy of community feedback in decision-making. The early development of a communication plan with well-established boundaries is important to consistent, actionable community input over the lifecycle of the project. Establishing this plan early allows for actions within it to be well-integrated with other initiatives being undertaken by CARTA, increasing the likelihood that outreach can be done efficiently while maximizing outcomes. This action encourages CARTA to make this plan as simple as is necessary for it to be sustainable and feasible with the resources available.

Timeline: Ongoing

Collaboration and Connectivity

4.1Transit Partnerships: Coordinate with local transit agencies to share multimodal travel information

Overview
This action explores coordination between the Yolo 80 project team and other local transit agencies to ensure that multimodal travel information and transit service details are clear, accessible, and consistent before and during express lane operations. As managed lanes are introduced, Causeway users may reassess their travel choices, so it is important that transit service information, reliability and connections are easy to understand.

Coordination efforts could include sharing real-time or scheduled transit information, first/last-mile options through digital platforms or physical locations. The Contra Costa County

Transportation Authority's (CCTA) Innovate 680 program, which includes Shared Mobility hubs with live information across transit modes, is one example of how agencies can partner to present multimodal options in a user-friendly format. This action would explore whether similar coordination approaches could support travel readiness in Yolo County.

Equity Value
Reliable multimodal information is important to all users, in particular users with low incomes, due to transit reliance, off-peak travel patterns and limited schedule flexibility. Users without reliable travel information may face greater difficulty adjusting to express lanes use or identifying an alternative travel mode. Live or scheduled multimodal information can be shared in an online dashboard that can be accessed via a mobile-optimized webpage or via mobile app.

In the interest of reaching people where they are, CARTA may consider partnering with YoloTD and local agencies to have digital dashboards at mobile hubs or transit stops. By improving access to transit information, before and after toll activation, this action helps ensure that identified equity priority communities are not disproportionately affected by pricing changes and can access affordable and reliable travel options.

Success Drivers
For this action, CARTA will require early and continued collaboration with transit agencies serving travel in Yolo County and through the Causeway to identify what information can be shared and how it will be shared over time. Travel information should be accessible through digital tools and physical locations. To evaluate equity outcomes, CARTA may monitor transit user awareness and gather community feedback, including input facilitated by CBOs, to determine whether coordinated information initiatives are effectively promoting equitable access to multimodal transportation options.

Timeline: Available by day one of implementation

4.2 CBO Partnerships: Seek and maintain opportunities for CBOs to support ongoing outreach, education, and co-design of improvements

Overview
Partnering with CBOs can help CARTA stay connected with corridor communities. CBOs can offer a range of perspectives on major communications materials and strategies, advise on culturally relevant messaging, and deliver outreach through trusted messengers who already have strong relationships with Yolo County residents. Their role can include explaining how FasTrak® works, how express lanes operate, and what drivers need to know to avoid confusion or unexpected costs.

CBOs can also gather community feedback, support education efforts, and help co-design improvements that address real-world barriers. For example, San Mateo County Transportation Authority (SMCTA) partnered with the San Mateo County Core Service Agencies Network to support in-person enrollment and distribution of mobility debit cards through trusted community organizations, direct outreach and assistance for San Mateo residents with low incomes. CBOs may also support this action by recruiting potential volunteers or "ambassadors" from their communities who may be interested in being trained and deployed for transportation outreach. Two of the CBOs engaged for this study, Yolo County Children's Alliance and Yolo County Housing Authority, expressed their interest in continuing to be engaged around this project.

Equity Value
Working directly with CBOs ensures that information about tolling and express lane operations is accessible and understandable. This approach supports potential express lane users who may have limited English proficiency, lower incomes, or less familiarity with electronic tolling systems. Partnering with CBOs helps ensure that education and outreach are delivered in ways that reflect how people learn and make decisions. By relying on trusted messengers who can explain systems in plain language and appropriate cultural contexts, this approach reduces information barriers, supports informed travel choices, and helps prevent inequitable enforcement outcomes driven by lack of understanding rather than noncompliance.

Success Drivers
We acknowledge that it can take years of dedication to develop deep, active, and reciprocal relationships with CBOs. Many CBOs are operating with limited resources and capacity for any extra work. While an ideal manifestation of this action would include multi-year contracts between CARTA and interested CBOs, this action is more concerned with the several years of intentional relationship-building needed before making that the expectation.

CARTA may consider developing and providing simple educational materials that can be easily shared with CBOs to explain FasTrak® and express lane basics. Closer to implementation, CARTA may consider actively seeking opportunities to involve CBOs early in the development of key communications. Clear expectations, consistent communication, and visible use of community feedback are key strategies. Outreach should be delivered through trusted messengers and adapted to cultural and linguistic needs, ensuring that CBO insights directly influence engagement strategies and project improvements.

In the years after implementation, CARTA may consider providing CBOs the materials, information, and tools needed for ongoing training of outreach teams. Should a greater level of investment be desired, CARTA may consider directly training any on-the-ground ambassadors on a semi-regular schedule for a pre-determined duration of time. The amount of time, effort, and resources needed for on-the-ground outreach may be reduced as the project ages and becomes more established among Yolo County’s communities. Strong relationships with CBOs can help CARTA determine what cadence of outreach, education, and co-design is needed in later years.

Timeline: Ongoing

NEXT STEPS

Upon further study, the actions listed above may inform the continued planning and implementation of the Yolo 80 Managed Lanes Project. CARTA may consider referring to and adopting these actions as a framework for:

- Developing the Project’s Excess Toll Revenue Expenditure Plan
- Operational planning for customer service and enforcement
- Continued community engagement and outreach
- Coordination among and between CARTA members, transit agencies, and regional partners

Prioritization

The timeline included with each action provides a loose idea of how these steps can be prioritized. Items that are dependent on the Excess Toll Revenue Expenditure Plan should be considered high priority if it is determined that they are feasible, since these have some of the highest potential for providing material equity benefits or, if mishandled, can severely undermine opportunities to do so.

Beyond that, actions that are meant to be “available upon day one of implementation,” are important to prioritize and commit to well before the toll system activates. These strategies may reduce the confusion and stress users could encounter with the new system and could mitigate the amount of toll violations and customer service bottlenecks in the early days of implementation.

Actions designated as ongoing or as-needed are lower priority due to less urgency; however, having any of these strategies in place or well-planned prior to implementation would reinforce the commitment to equitable practices and programs for affected communities.