

Years of Advocacy Pay Off: HOT Lanes Embraced ... Finally

Step into the “way-back machine” for a moment to revisit the year 2001. Peter Magowan, Managing General Partner of the San Francisco Giants, and Alex Mehran, President and CEO of Sunset Development Company, presented to the Bay Area Council Executive Committee an ambitious [new vision for the region’s transportation system](#). A key facet of the vision was a system of “HOT lanes.” Responding to the inevitable “What?! lanes?” question from other members, they explained that the Bay Area could institute a series of High-Occupancy Toll Lanes, in which single drivers could pay a toll to hop into carpool lanes to speed their commute. The toll would vary: the more traffic – and hence benefit of being in the carpool lane – the higher the toll. But the real genius of the HOT Lane idea was that the region could bond against the expected revenue, generating enough funds to build new freeway lanes (which would be carpool lanes) at the region’s most notorious bottlenecks. Indeed, the Bay Area would get \$3.5 billion to eliminate the bottlenecks, AND have \$6 billion left over for other projects. In a region continually starved for transportation cash, despite having the second worst traffic in the country, HOT Lanes seemed a no-brainer. Alas, it was not. The Bay Area Council spent seven years lobbying, advocating, cajoling and begging for the HOT Lane system. We have done polls, studies, press releases, opinion editorials, events and lunches all driven to getting the HOT Lane system. This Wednesday, [victory was finally ours](#), as the Metropolitan Transportation Committee voted to create and build [the HOT Lane system](#)! With the new HOT Lane system, the [Water Emergency Transportation System](#), the infrastructure bonds [we help negotiate and pass](#), the [extra billion for freeways](#) we wrung out of the California Transportation Commission, the [“disproportionate” amount of funding](#) we got for goods movement by uniting all of Northern California around one plan, and [other ongoing efforts](#), the Bay Area Council feels pretty good about efforts on behalf of members to help alleviate the region’s traffic problems. There is more work to be done.



BAC Foundation Gets \$125,000 Grant for Preschool Project

This week the [David and Lucile Packard Foundation](#) awarded the Bay Area Council Foundation a \$125,000 grant for our [Bay Area Employer Engagement Initiative for Early Childhood Education](#). The Council aims to rally strong business support for early childhood education programs and will advocate for statewide preschool for all four-year-olds. Research shows that quality preschool programs provide a good return on investment - children who participate are less likely to drop out of school and less likely to repeat a grade or to need special education. Once they enter the workforce, they earn more, pay more taxes, and are less likely to engage in criminal activity. For more information on our efforts, contact [Linda Galliher](#).

Quote of the Week

“Your carbon emissions will soon be good in Quebec.” The Sacramento Bee [on the developing carbon market](#).

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