



January 20, 2022

VIA EMAIL

Don Saylor, Board Chair  
Yolo County Transportation District  
350 Industrial Way  
Woodland CA 95776

**CC:** Autumn Bernstein, Yolo County Transportation District Executive Director

**RE:** I-80 Corridor Improvements Project

Dear Mr. Saylor and YCTD Board of Directors:

We are writing to offer feedback on the Yolo 80 Corridor Improvements Project. The project proposes improvements along the I-80 corridor from Kidwell Road near the eastern Solano County border to West El Camino Avenue in Sacramento County. This project has the potential to provide transportation benefits to the region, but only if it is not developed as a “business as usual” freeway expansion project. It is well known that lane expansion projects do not reduce congestion in the long term, as they induce demand for driving and, over time, result in higher VMT than prior to lane expansion. This project will likely induce more than 150 million annual Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) per year, based on UC Davis’s Induced Travel Calculator<sup>1</sup>. Prioritizing public transit and active transportation elements within this project is critical to reduce its negative impacts on air quality, GHG, and congestion. As such, we offer the following considerations and recommendations.

**1. Recommendations on bicycle infrastructure:**

**We strongly recommend reconsidering the construction of a separated bicycle/pedestrian bridge as a replacement for the current bicycle/pedestrian path on the eastbound side of the Causeway.** With growing trends in electric bicycle usage, we

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://travelcalculator.ncst.ucdavis.edu/>

are seeing increased potential for commuters to travel from Sacramento to Davis, and even as far as the Bay Area, via the I-80 Corridor. Bike sharing systems in Sacramento have even been shown to [replace some car trips](#). The Yolo Causeway is the only feasible bicycle and pedestrian corridor connecting Davis and West Sacramento/Sacramento. For that reason, it is critically important to prioritize bicycle infrastructure as a part of this project. While we understand that this represents a significant cost, in our opinion this is a superior option to other bicycle/pedestrian infrastructure options and we urge Caltrans and YCTD to seek additional funding to incorporate it into the project.

**If constructing a separate bicycle bridge is deemed financially or environmentally infeasible, we urge you to consider additional alternatives to ensure that people can bicycle safely and comfortably along this corridor.** Per the comments previously submitted by Sacramento Area Bicycle Advocates (SABA) and Yolo Mobility, consider the following options for bicycle infrastructure:

- A separated cantilevered path attached to the side of the Causeway.
- A ground-level bicycle path through the Yolo Bypass. While located in a flood plain, a ground-level path may be less expensive than an elevated bridge and provide similar reliability to the American River Bike Trail in Sacramento which is also located inside levees. Various routes should be studied to identify the one with the least environmental impact.

In the case that any separate bicycle facility is deemed infeasible, at a minimum, steps must be taken to ensure that the usability of the current Class IV bicycle path along the westbound side of I-80 between West Capitol Ave and County Road 32A does not suffer as a result of constructing additional lanes. At present, the bicycle path is buffered by a concrete barrier and a chain link fence, then separated from the travel lanes by a shoulder of approximately 12 feet. The bicycle path itself is about 12 feet wide. Our concern is that adding travel lanes would move traffic even closer to the bike path, increasing the impact of wind, air quality, and kicked-up debris on people riding there. Under this scenario, we recommend considering what simple options exist that would improve the user experience for people biking, such as a plexiglass barrier or screen to provide moderate protection from gravel, exhaust, wind, and sound. The bicycle path should in no case be made narrower to accommodate more vehicle travel lanes. To be clear, we strongly recommend any of the previously mentioned options first, as a separate bicycle facility will be far more pleasant for cyclists and is more likely to be

used by commuters and people who like casual recreational riding in addition to long-distance cyclists.

We also want to raise another serious safety concern regarding the portion of the bike route that travels along County Road 32A. Along the stretch of Road 32A between the Chiles Road exit off I-80 and the Union Pacific rail crossing where Road 32A intersects with County Road 105 and a separated cycle path continues to Davis, people must ride on an extremely narrow bike path next to vehicles and trucks moving at highway speeds. Parts of Road 32A are slated to be converted into a bike path as part of the rail crossing relocation project currently under study. **We encourage including this project in the scope of the I-80 Corridor Improvements Project to expedite its completion by identifying the construction of a separated multi-use path from the Causeway as a safety and connectivity priority, and to attract needed additional funds.**

## 2. Recommendations on managed lanes:

**As the managed lane strategy is developed, we urge the YCTD Board to support a combination of transit-only lanes and express toll lanes and avoid completely the addition of new mixed flow or untolled carpool lanes.** We want to emphasize the importance of prioritizing transit in the implementation of managed lanes to realize the full positive impact this project can have on the region. **Our strong preference would be that the project did not add lanes at all, and instead converted general purpose lanes in the existing right of way to transit-only lanes.** Research has proven time and again that adding lanes may reduce congestion in the short term but in the long term induces demand and results in more congestion than at the start<sup>2</sup>. With the understanding that this may not be feasible, the next best option is transit-only lanes and express toll lanes. While untolled carpool lanes may work in the short term to reduce congestion, in the medium- and long-term they have the potential to cause substantial increases in VMT, greenhouse gas emissions, air pollution, and congestion, posing considerable equity impacts in the region. Toll revenue from express lanes should be primarily invested into ongoing active transportation and transit improvements for this project and along the I-80 corridor, including funding for improving transit efficiency. Toll lanes should be implemented with a strong equity strategy to ensure that low-income households are not disproportionately burdened by toll pricing and inflation. At a minimum, low-income

---

<sup>2</sup> <https://ncst.ucdavis.edu/research-product/increasing-highway-capacity-unlikely-relieve-traffic-congestion>

households should be provided with toll discounts. **We recommend working with local communities and community-based organizations in earnest as YCTD and Caltrans continue to develop the equity strategy for managed lanes to ensure that the impacts of road pricing are not felt disproportionately by vulnerable communities and that these communities see benefits from the reinvestment of toll revenue.**

In addition, per the comments previously provided by Yolo Mobility and SABA, Caltrans, YCTD, and other regional stakeholders should prioritize bus travel along the I-80 corridor by integrating fares and fare payment mechanisms for the different bus services that use the causeway and provide bus-only ramps at interchanges where trunk transit lines enter and exit I-80, connecting directly to managed lanes on the highway.

Sincerely,

Kiara Reed

Executive Director, Civic Thread

Nicolas Fauchier Magnan

President, Bike Davis Board of Directors