

# I-15 Express Lanes Fact Sheet

## I-15 Express Lanes:

The I-15 Express Lanes are an innovative “expressway within a freeway” that by 2012 will stretch 20 miles from SR 163 to SR 78 and will revolutionize the way our local highway system is utilized and operated. The Express Lanes are the first adaptable, high-tech transportation facility configured to meet the diverse needs of commuters and commerce throughout the San Diego region.

## Developed by:

San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) and California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)

## Background:

**1988:** The Express Lanes opened originally as an 8-mile, reversible high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) expressway.

**1998:** The High Occupancy Toll (HOT) element of the lanes was added.

**2009:** A new 8-mile section of sophisticated Express Lanes was completed that includes four lanes situated in the middle of I-15.

## Features:

The new 8-mile section extension offers drivers who choose to use the Express Lanes:

- Multiple access points and direct access ramps for greater accessibility to the lanes
- Three transit centers open at Sabre Springs Parkway/Peñasquitos, Rancho Bernardo Road and Del Lago Boulevard (North County Fair). There will be a total of five stations when the facility is completed.
- Access for transit riders and carpoolers to Park and Ride lots conveniently located next to the transit centers which are served by five MTS Commuter Express bus routes (810, 820, 850, 860 and 880)
- Four new Express Lanes – two southbound and two northbound
- 24/7 operation

## Who Can Use the Lanes:

- Carpools, vanpools, motorcycles, transit, and approved clean air vehicles can use the lanes free of charge.
- Solo drivers with a FasTrak® prepaid toll account

## Forward-Thinking Features:

- The Express Lanes project not only goes beyond the HOV lanes concept, it is in a league of its own. Referred to by engineers as “managed lanes,” the I-15 Express Lanes were designed to provide a platform for new technology, including future traffic management technology and new communication technology being installed in vehicles that allows vehicles to communicate with roadside systems.
- The Express Lanes feature a sophisticated congestion pricing system that varies tolls for solo commuters based on distance traveled and the amount of congestion in the Express Lanes. FasTrak customers accessing the Express Lanes pay a toll based on the distance they travel in the lanes and a rate per mile for their entry location. Every few minutes, the system recalculates the per-mile toll rate based on the level of traffic in the I-15 corridor, ensuring traffic flows freely in the Express Lanes.
- The Express Lanes include a moveable barrier that allows for expansion or contraction of northbound and southbound lanes, thus providing maximum flexibility to meet both the region’s current needs and to accommodate future growth.



**Project Completion  
Timeline:**

**Opening 2011:**

- 4 miles extending north from Centre City Parkway to SR 78.

**Opening 2012:**

- The original, 8-mile section of Express Lanes will reopen with two additional lanes, more access points and modern traffic management technology.
- Bus Rapid Transit will launch with new buses and high-speed transit connections along the I-15 corridor to downtown San Diego.

**Other I-15 Enhancements:**

The I-15 corridor has undergone a spectacular transformation during the last six years. The expansion and enhancements include:

- Auxiliary lanes and general purpose lanes on I-15 from Miramar to Escondido
- New bridges at SR 56/Ted Williams Parkway, Rancho Bernardo Road, Lake Hodges, Pomerado Road, and Carmel Mountain Road
- Widening of Camino del Norte, Rancho Bernardo Road, and the Peñasquitos Creek bridges

**Express Lanes Funding:**

- In part by *TransNet*, the local half-cent sales tax for transportation
- \$350 million from the Corridor Mobility Improvement Account (funded by Proposition 1B)
- \$50 million in State Transportation Improvement Program funds from the California Transportation Commission
- \$280 million in federal funding

**Project Cost:**

The cost at completion is expected to be \$1.3 billion.

**About SANDAG:**

The San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) is the San Diego region's primary public planning, transportation, and research agency providing the public forum for regional policy decisions about growth, transportation planning and construction, environmental management, housing, open space, energy, public safety and national topics. SANDAG is governed by a board of directors composed of mayors, council members and supervisors from each of the region's 18 cities and the county government.

**About Caltrans District II:**

District II oversees approximately 1,000 miles of freeway and highway, both urban and rural. The district also is involved with local agencies to develop a diverse multimodal transportation system including light rail, transit, commuter rail and high-occupancy vehicle programs and facilities. The district staff includes some 1,400 employees in a variety of functions.

