

SPRING 2019

METRO EXPRESSLANES

FACT SHEET



Metro[®]

METRO EXPRESSLANES

What are ExpressLanes?

Background

The Metro ExpressLanes Program was initiated as a one-year demonstration to assess the use of congestion pricing to ease traffic on LA County freeways.

In collaboration with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Metro converted the existing high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes to dynamically-priced, high occupancy toll (HOT) lanes, also called ExpressLanes, on the I-110 and I-10 freeways which opened in 2012 and 2013, respectively.

How They Work

ExpressLanes operate on the principle of congestion pricing – when more vehicles are using the ExpressLanes, tolls increase to manage congestion in the lanes. As of May 2019, single occupant vehicles (SOVs) pay a toll of between \$0.10 and \$2.10 per mile to use the ExpressLanes, depending on the level of congestion. SOVs with a valid Clean Air Vehicle decal will receive a 15% toll discount. HOVs can continue to travel in the ExpressLanes toll free with a FasTrak® Flex transponder set to the proper setting, provided they meet the minimum occupancy threshold. To best manage lane congestion, the minimum occupancy threshold may vary from one freeway corridor to another and at different times of day. On the I-110, the minimum occupancy for toll free travel is two persons per vehicle.

With congestion pricing, ExpressLanes benefit both SOVs and HOVs. Because the toll rate is set to maintain minimum speeds of 45 miles per hour (mph) as often as possible, users receive the benefit of time savings and increased trip reliability. If speeds fall below 45 mph, the lanes revert to HOV lanes, with SOVs being precluded from entering the ExpressLanes within that segment. When this happens, HOVs can continue to use the lanes free of charge. Furthermore, because only SOVs pay tolls, ExpressLanes encourage people to carpool to save time and money, which eases congestion for everyone.

Why ExpressLanes

Angelenos spend the most time in traffic congestion compared to other US cities. Los Angeles freeways have consistently ranked among the worst in the nation for congestion, which has resulted in travel delay, productivity loss, wasted fuel and air pollution. By the year 2040, continued growth in population and vehicle miles traveled will make congestion even worse.

ExpressLanes offer SOVs the choice to pay for a faster, more reliable trip while continuing to allow free travel for HOVs. In addition, ExpressLanes help address the issue of HOV lane degradation. Currently, speeds on many HOV lanes in the county average less than 45 mph during peak periods and do not meet federal standards for HOV lane performance. One way to address degraded HOV performance is through conversion to ExpressLanes, which actively manages the number of vehicles using the lanes through pricing. As a result, the capacity and speeds of the lanes are optimized.

What Happens to the Revenues Collected from ExpressLanes?

State law requires toll revenues generated from the Metro ExpressLanes be reinvested in the corridor from which they were generated. Metro uses toll revenues first to pay for the cost of operating the ExpressLanes, including roadway and equipment maintenance, administration, toll collection, customer service, California Highway Patrol enforcement and Freeway Service Patrol tow trucks. In addition, transit subsidies of around \$7 million annually are granted to the Metro Silver Line, Foothill Transit, Gardena Transit and Torrance Transit for increased transit service operating on the I-10 and I-110 ExpressLanes. Metro assesses a \$1 monthly account maintenance fee to aid in cost recovery and manage operating expenses. It currently costs Metro \$3 to maintain each customer account.

Toll revenues are also invested in discount programs for Metro ExpressLanes customers. The Low-Income Assistance Plan provides subsidies for low income commuters. It offers eligible LA County residents a one-time \$25 toll credit and a waiver of the monthly account maintenance fee. Carpool Loyalty is a rewards program that automatically enters Metro ExpressLanes FasTrak® account holders into a monthly drawing for a chance to win toll credits when they use the ExpressLanes as a carpool. Every month, 20 carpools from each corridor win \$20 - \$30 in toll credits. The Transit Rewards Program allows transit riders to earn

toll credits on the Metro ExpressLanes corridors. Transit riders earn a \$5 toll credit by taking 16 one-way trips on select transit routes during peak hours along the I-10 El Monte Busway or I-110 Harbor Transitway. For more information regarding which transit routes qualify under the Transit Rewards Program, please visit metroexpresslanes.net.

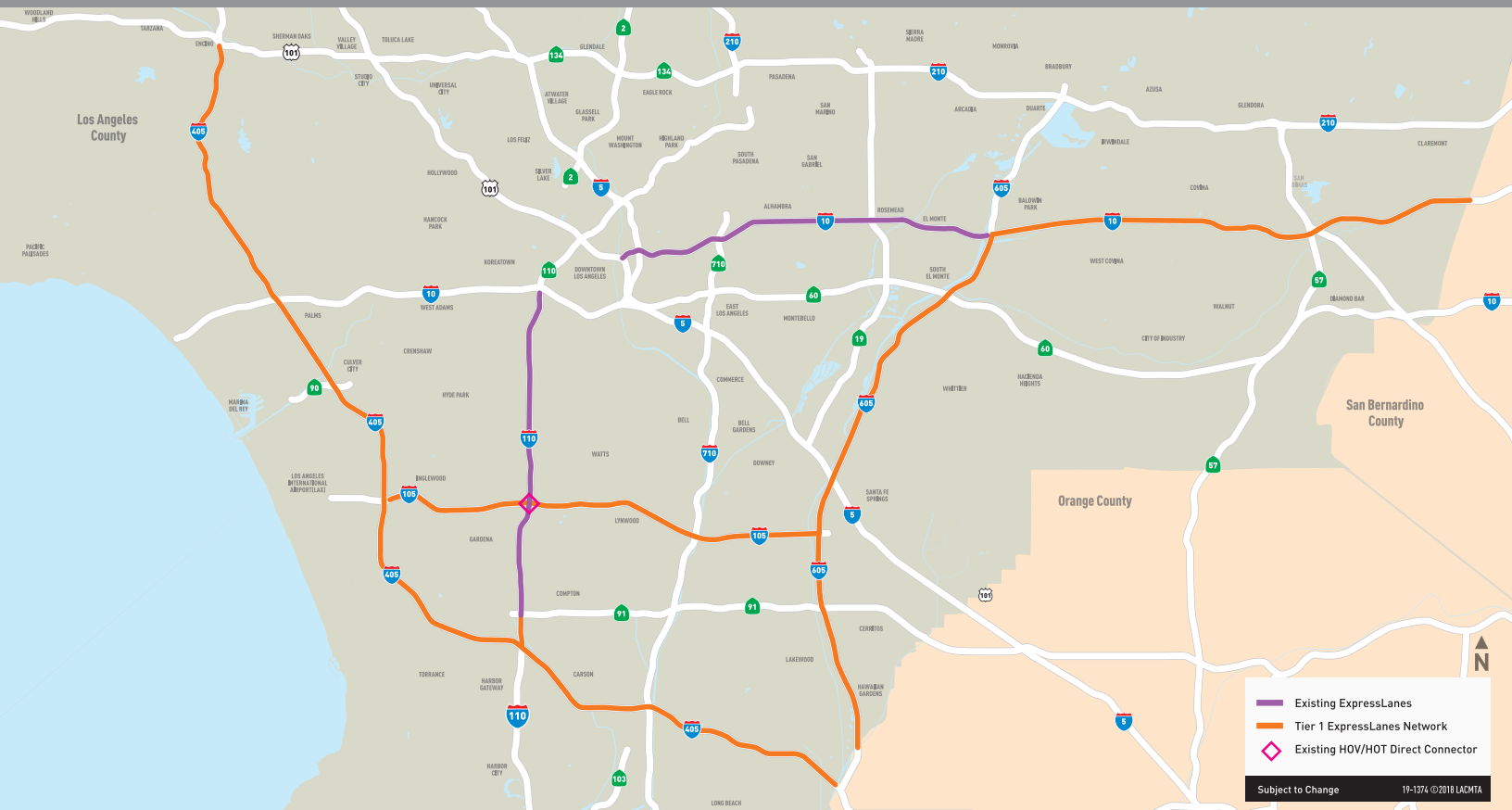
After all of these expenses are paid, remaining net toll revenues generated from the corridor would be available for jurisdictions within a three-mile radius with funding through the competitive Net Toll Revenue Reinvestment Grant Program. This program's primary objective is to increase mobility and person throughput through the implementation of transit, transportation demand and systems management, active transportation and roadway improvement projects.

To date, two rounds of Net Toll Revenue Reinvestment grants have been awarded. In 2014 and 2016, Metro granted \$20.7 million and \$27.9 million, respectively, to projects and programs that provide mobility benefits to the I-10 and I-110 corridors.

For more information on the Net Toll Revenue Reinvestment Grant Program, please visit metro.net/expresslanes and click on the "Net Toll Revenue Maps and Project Lists" drop-down menu.



Map of Current and Proposed Tier 1 ExpressLanes



Future Plans for the ExpressLanes Network

Building on the success of the I-10 and I-110 ExpressLanes, the Metro Board directed staff in November 2014 to prepare a Countywide ExpressLanes Strategic Plan that would identify and recommend potential corridors that could benefit from ExpressLanes conversion.

The Strategic Plan identified three tiers of projects comprising a 310-mile ExpressLanes network. Tier 1 projects are near-term, expected to be constructed in the next five to 10 years. Tier 2 projects are mid-term, slated for construction within the next 15 years. Tier 3 projects are longer-term projects that would be constructed within the next 25 years. The corridors highlighted above on the I-10, I-105, I-405 and I-605 are Tier 1 projects. The Strategic Plan can be found at metro.net/expresslanes. Currently, available funding is not sufficient to construct and maintain all projects listed in Metro's Countywide ExpressLanes Strategic Plan. Metro will seek all opportunities to secure funding through traditional and innovative sources.

With the proposed ExpressLanes projects in LA County, Metro, along with other country transportation commissions in Southern California, is on its way to developing a regional, interconnected ExpressLanes network that would extend across Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside and San Bernardino counties.

The Difference Between HOV Lanes and ExpressLanes

The difference between HOV lanes and ExpressLanes is that SOVs can pay a toll to drive in the ExpressLanes and eligible HOVs with a FasTrak® Flex transponder can use the ExpressLanes toll free. HOV lanes do not charge tolls, but restrict usage only to eligible HOVs, clean air vehicles and buses.

Current ExpressLanes business rules require that all vehicles using the ExpressLanes have a FasTrak® transponder mounted on the vehicle's front windshield. Metro is also considering the pilot implementation of a license plate-based "pay as you use" system in the future. This system would bill the vehicle's registered owner the toll for their ExpressLanes use, plus an additional administrative fee. Under this arrangement, transponders would not be required; however, a vehicle billed under the "pay as you use" system would be ineligible for any toll exemptions or discounts.

	HOV Lanes	ExpressLanes
Requires a FasTrak® Transponder		✓
SOVs allowed		✓
Qualifying clean air SOVs allowed	✓	✓*
Buses and motorcycles allowed	✓	✓
Generated revenue is reinvested		✓
Actively managed to reduce congestion		✓
Offers discount and incentive programs		✓

*Clean air SOVs pay tolls and receive a 15% discount

METRO EXPRESSLANES

Contact Us



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