

I-15 Express Lanes Open in San Diego

Movable Barriers and Tolls Respond to Traffic Flow

California transportation officials say the public reaction has been positive to the opening of the I-15 Express Lanes (HOT lanes) in San Diego. The I-15 Express Lanes Project, which opened last month, runs 20 miles from State Route 163 (SR-163) in San Diego to State Route 78 (SR-78) in Escondido.

The \$1 billion project has been described as a “freeway within a freeway” and features four express lanes which can be reconfigured to accommodate peak period traffic demand with the use of movable barriers. Construction on the express lanes began in November 2003 and was conducted in three phases.

I-15 Corridor Director Gustavo Dallarda says using the movable barrier system minimized the number of new lanes needed for the project and allows the express lane system to respond to changing traffic conditions. With the movable barrier, up to three express lanes can be opened to travelers in the peak direction and can also be used to keep traffic moving during incidents and special events. A Barrier Transfer Machine uses an electronic guidance system cut into the pavement for accurate and automatic placement of the barrier.

The express lanes are free for cars with two or more occupants, vanpools, motorcycles and permitted clean air vehicles. Single-occupant vehicles (SOVs) can travel in the lanes using the FasTrak® electronic tolling system. Tolls for SOVs are dynamic. The minimum toll is 50 cents and the maximum is \$8.

To help the flow of traffic, the express lanes include intermediate access points (IAPs) to allow vehicles to move between

the express lanes and the main lanes at two- to three-mile intervals. Dallarda says the express lanes also include four direct access ramps (DARs) that connect the express lanes directly with transit centers

and local communities. He does not anticipate any extra congestion at access routes to interchanges along I-15 due to additional vehicles accommodated on I-15.

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Boulder Passes Ordinance to Limit Bicyclists to 8 Miles per Hour at Crosswalks

Also Requires Pedestrians and Bicyclists to Activate Flashing Lights

Boulder’s City Council recently passed two unique ordinances concerning bike speeds and pedestrian-activated flashing signals in crosswalks. They are amendments to the Boulder Revised Code (BRC), passed originally in 1981, which regulates vehicles and traffic/parking infractions. The two revisions were formally approved in January and will go into effect February 16, 2012.

A July 2010 study conducted by City of

Boulder staff presented accident data which show cyclists experience a collision rate with cars that is four times higher than the equivalent rate for pedestrians. This was alarming considering roughly equal numbers of bikes and pedestrians (9.9 percent and 8.3 percent, respectively) make up the mode share on Boulder streets. Additionally, of the collisions that occurred at flashing crosswalks, 70

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A pedestrian crosswalk at 11th Street in Boulder, CO, where cyclists' speeds will be limited to 8 m.p.h. and where pedestrians are required to activate flashing lights.

(Photo: Courtesy of the City of Boulder)

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After 40 Years, San Francisco's BART Looks to Reinvest and Reinvent

Planning for Future Growth in Bay Area

San Francisco's Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) system is looking to the future and studying how it should change and grow in coming years. Planning Department Manager Val Menotti says there are two major reasons for this planning effort, known as the metro concept.

First, BART celebrates a significant birthday this year as the system turns 40 years old. After four decades, reinvestment and upgrades are vital. The system has identified needs such as replacing and adding rail cars, modernizing stations, improving tracks and communication systems and enhancing capacity.

Secondly, BART is responding to the state's focus on reducing greenhouse gas emissions. A California law (SB 375) sets targets for reductions in greenhouse gas in the coming years. The 2008 legislation sets a goal of cutting emissions from driving in the Bay Area by 7 percent by 2020 and 15 percent by 2035, and the state's 18 Metropolitan Planning Organizations are working to create Sustainable Community Strategies through integrated land use and

transportation planning. Menotti says that as the Bay Area starts to look at land use and transportation investments, BART is evaluating what it can do since transportation is a "very significant" source of greenhouse gas emissions.

While much of this planning vision is expected to be completed by the fall, Menotti says it could extend to a year or 18 months. BART will work with groups such as the Metropolitan Transportation Commission and Caltrain, as well as gather input from the public. Menotti notes, "We'll use multiple channels to communicate."

Plans call for the use of focus groups and expert panels. A series of up to nine town hall meetings are in the works. BART is also looking at the use of social media tools and Webinars to gather input. A key to the planning effort will be new land use projections that will soon be available to provide insight into where and how the Bay Area is expected to grow.

Menotti says there are three key concepts in the planning vision: capacity, service, and coverage. BART will look at the

need to expand line-haul and station capacity to accommodate growth. In the service area, planners will consider the need for more "show up and go" service so riders don't have to worry about checking schedules. BART will also look into ways to speed commute times and what trackway modifications may be needed for flexibility and recovery. Coverage considerations will include infill stations, "inward" expansion to regional destinations, "outward" expansion of BART-technology limited to connecting regional/high speed rail nodes and multi-modal service in key corridors.

The metro concept puts its emphasis on inward changes, such as adding a station along an existing line, more than expansion of the system. Transit oriented development being done on a regional scale will be a consideration in future plans.

For more information, visit: <http://bart.gov/index.aspx> or contact Jim Allison at (510) 464-7110 or jallis1@BART.gov.



*BART trains at Castro Valley in the San Francisco metropolitan area.
(Photo: Courtesy of BART)*

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