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Metro Reaches Milestone of Issuing 20,000 FasTrak® Transponders before the Nov. 10 ExpressLanes Opening on the 110 Harbor Freeway

Tuesday October 30, 2012

Reaching another significant milestone in its Congestion Reduction Demonstration Initiative, Metro announced today that it has issued more than 20,000 FasTrak® transponders in advance of the Nov. 10 debut of the Metro ExpressLanes on the 110 Harbor Freeway.

Beginning tomorrow (Oct. 31), Metro will start counting down the days to the opening of the Express Lanes in Los Angeles County with messages on digital messages signs (DMS) over the 110 Harbor Freeway Metro ExpressLanes.

"The public's support for this project has been impressive as we issue more than 20,000 FasTrak transponders before the start of operations," said Metro CEO Art Leahy. "Commuters have just a few more weeks to get the FasTrak transponders they will need to travel on the ExpressLanes."

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when they open on the 110 Freeway. Opening your account now will ensure you're ready to enjoy the advantages of the 110 Metro ExpressLanes on the very first day."

Metro ExpressLanes is a one-year demonstration project to expand the capacity along 11 miles of the 110 Harbor Freeway (between Adams Boulevard and the 91 freeway) and 14 miles of the 10 San Bernardino Freeway (between Alameda Street and the 605) by turning the HOV (High Occupancy Vehicle) lanes into HOT (High Occupancy Toll) lanes that allow solo drivers to use the carpool lanes by paying a toll. The 10 San Bernardino Freeway Metro ExpressLanes are scheduled to open early next year.

"We expect it will take drivers some time to learn all the advantages of the ExpressLanes, so we ask the traveling public to be patient with us as we embark on this exciting new endeavor," said Leahy. "Opening a FasTrak account now and taking the time to understand the Metro ExpressLanes will help this project succeed in reducing congestion and in making commutes faster for everyone traveling on the 110 and 10 freeways in the ExpressLanes corridors."

When tolling begins on the ExpressLanes, all vehicles will need a FasTrak transponder to travel in the lanes. Solo drivers can use their existing FasTrak transponders from other toll operations. But carpools, vanpools and motorcycles will need a switchable Metro FasTrak transponder to travel for free in the lanes.

With the switchable transponder, drivers can indicate the number of occupants in the vehicle (1, 2, or 3+) so that eligible carpools and vanpools can travel for free in the lanes. Motorcycle riders should use the 3+ setting to travel for free in all Metro ExpressLanes.

The Metro FasTrak switchable transponders can be used on all toll roads in the state.

There are several options for opening a Metro ExpressLanes FasTrak account and obtaining a transponder, including:

- Visiting www.metroexpresslanes.net
(<https://web.archive.org/web/20200803101539/http://www.metroexpresslanes.net/>)
- Calling 511 and saying "ExpressLanes"
- Visiting walk-in centers at 500 W. 190th Street in Gardena or at the El Monte Station, 3501 Santa Anita Avenue, El Monte
- Mailing in an application, which is available online, to Metro ExpressLanes, PO Box 387, Gardena, CA 90247

The costs vary depending on payment methods, but drivers who open their account with a credit or debit card will pay \$40, and the transponder deposit will be waived. The fee will be applied to any tolls incurred while driving solo on the Metro ExpressLanes. There is a minimum balance threshold of \$10.

Discounts are available. Members of the Automobile Club of Southern California (AAA) can open a Metro ExpressLanes FasTrak account at a discounted price of \$32 by visiting www.AAA.com (<https://web.archive.org/web/20200803101539/http://www.aaa.com/>), or visiting a participating branch.

A \$3 monthly maintenance account fee will be charged. It can be waived by taking four one-way trips in the corridor in a month. These can be trips in the ExpressLanes or on eligible transit. The maintenance fee will begin when the 10 San Bernardino Freeway ExpressLanes open early next year.

In a first for an ExpressLanes project, low-income commuters can receive a \$25 toll credit when setting up an account and the transponder deposit will be waived. They must reside in Los Angeles County and have an annual income below \$37,061 for a family of three. There is a limit of one per household. The monthly fee is waived.

When tolling begins on the Metro ExpressLanes, the tolls will vary depending on traffic. To avoid traffic back-ups, sensors will be used to measure congestion in the Metro ExpressLanes and will increase the toll from 25 cents a mile to a maximum of \$1.40 a mile as more vehicles enter the Metro ExpressLanes. Net toll revenues will be reinvested in transit and carpool lane improvements in the corridor where generated.

For now, there is no toll. The carpool lanes are still operating until the conversion to Metro ExpressLanes. Solo drivers cannot legally travel in the 110 ExpressLanes before they open Nov.10 or in the 10 ExpressLanes before they open next year.

In preparation for the opening of the 110 ExpressLanes, equipment is being tested, so carpoolers with a FasTrak transponder may hear a beep when traveling in the HOV lane. This means the equipment has detected the transponder but no tolls are being assessed and no information is being transmitted.

The Metro ExpressLanes program is a \$290 million project, primarily funded by a \$210 million congestion reduction demonstration grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation.

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