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Rick Jager November 14, 2022

Reinvesting over \$100 Million in the Corridors Where the Revenue was Generated

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) today joined Caltrans and other elected officials to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the popular Metro ExpressLanes along the I-110 and I-10 freeways, announcing that over the past decade, more than \$100 million has been reinvested in those freeway corridors. The funding is used for various multimodal transportation improvements to improve regional mobility.

After maintenance and operations costs, Metro ExpressLanes reinvests leftover toll revenue back into the corridors from which it was generated, augmenting transit services within the corridor. This also includes active transportation and roadway improvements that benefits the surrounding communities along the ExpressLanes corridors.

To date, Metro ExpressLanes have accommodated more than 340 million trips, issued more than 1.37 million transponders, opened over 887,980 accounts, and provided more than \$103.6 million in transit subsidies and net toll revenue grants along the corridor.

"This is a monumental day for Los Angeles County as we celebrate the success of Metro ExpressLanes," said Glendale City Council Member and Metro Board Chair Ara J. Najarian.

"They have provided more reliable commutes for hundreds of thousands of travelers on these congested freeways over the last decade."

Metro ExpressLanes debuted in November 2012 and have proven to be very popular with travelers who want to avoid traffic jams and more reliable commute times. ExpressLanes allow motorists meeting occupancy requirements who possess transponders to travel toll free. Solo drivers are also allowed the option to pay a toll to use the lane. The idea is to provide everyone with a faster, more reliable travel option on these heavily traveled corridors by letting just enough vehicles into the ExpressLanes to take full advantage of their capacity while still preserving free-flow uncongested lane conditions.

"A decade ago, we saw this as an opportunity to be on the leading edge of an innovative new project to improve commute times and air quality. Caltrans appreciates and supports Metro's Express Lanes as a mobility option for our region," said Caltrans District 7 Acting Director Gloria Roberts.

Metro ExpressLanes continue to receive high praise from users due to their convenience for motorists. Although they may not use them regularly, the one time they are late to work, an appointment or to pick up their children from daycare, ExpressLanes offer the necessary accessibility when motorists value reliability. Allowing motorists who do not have a transponder into the lanes has been an invaluable benefit for many motorists as well.

In 2019, the Metro Board initiated a Pay-As-You-Go model to enable drivers to use the ExpressLanes without a transponder or registered account. Drivers without an account or transponder are charged the toll and a \$4 processing fee per transaction/one-way trip with a notice sent to the registered owner of the vehicle.

Metro also implemented a Low-Income Assistance Plan as part of the program in 2012. This program allows qualifying L.A. County residents to receive a one-time \$25 credit when they set up their account. Proof of eligibility is required. The \$25 credit can be applied to either the transponder deposit or pre-paid toll deposit. Under this plan, the \$1 monthly account maintenance fee is also waived. To date, 23,884 low-income accounts have been opened.

Analysis has shown that the program is extremely effective in allowing low-income account users to access the lanes, providing them travel benefits and ability to utilize ExpressLanes just as much and in some cases more than standard users including both solo drivers and carpools.

"From the get-go, we wanted to create an equitable program that provided congestion relief for all and encouraged the use of public transit and carpools by rewarding account holders with toll credits that they could use when needed," said Metro CEO Stephanie Wiggins. "Equally important, we developed an ExpressLanes program that was not only sustainable financially, but also provided excess toll revenues to fund

transportation improvements along these freeway corridors. This program now serves as a model of success for us to pursue future ExpressLanes projects.”

Prior to freeway lane conversion in 2012, during the rush hour period from 2 p.m. to 8 p.m., carpool lanes were only averaging 42 mph. Upon conversion to the ExpressLanes, the speed increased to an average of 55 mph. In the last year along the I-110 ExpressLanes, speeds during the morning peak periods were even higher, averaging 61.6 mph.

The ExpressLanes network on I-110 and I-10 is just the start of bringing greater multimodal connectivity throughout the region. Currently, Metro’s I-105 ExpressLanes project from I-405 to I-605 is in design. There is also a project in environmental review to extend the I-10 ExpressLanes from I-605 to the San Bernardino County line near Montclair. Regionally, ExpressLanes on I-10 will eventually stretch to Redlands, essentially creating 64 miles of ExpressLanes between Los Angeles and San Bernardino counties. ExpressLanes are also being considered along the congested 405 freeway through the Sepulveda Pass.

From the start of the ExpressLanes program, transit riders have benefitted from the purchase of nearly 60 **clean fuel buses and the addition of over 100 vanpools to various routes along ExpressLanes corridors**. A first in the nation, the project also has linked transit usage with toll credits by offering transit riders a \$5 **toll credit for every 16 qualifying transit trips taken along the ExpressLanes**. **Transit rewards toll credits issued to date total \$253,370.**

The project also expanded and updated transit facilities, including a new state-of-the-art El Monte Station and it has funded improvements to the Harbor Gateway Transit Center in Gardena, Metro bus stations along the Harbor Freeway, widened the Adams Boulevard off ramp from the 110 Freeway by adding an additional turn lane and created a new pedestrian bridge along Adams Boulevard and downtown parking. Additionally, approximately \$15 million was provided for the construction of the new Patsaouras Plaza ExpressLanes bus stop at Union Station.

As an example, ExpressLanes has awarded 42 net toll revenue grants totaling \$47.6 million since 2014. The top five grants include:

City of Los Angeles (\$10.47 million) – ATSAC, Commuter Express Service, Active Streets Projects, Cesar Chavez Great Streets, My Figueroa Marketing Project, DASH Service Improvements, Downtown LA Mobility Center, Vision Zero Traffic Signal Improvements.

LACMTA (\$9.62 million) – Downtown Bikeshare, Dodger Express, Union Station Bike Hub, BRT Station Sound Enclosure, Willowbrook/Rosa Parks Station Improvements.

County of Los Angeles (\$8.33 million) – South Bay Performance Measurement Project, South Bay Congestion Relief Project, Vermont Green Line Intersection Improvement, Firestone Blue Line Station Intersection and Bikeway Improvements Project, Whittier Blvd Transit Priority Project, Eaton Wash Bike Path – Phase 1.

City of Carson (\$4.9 million) — Carson Rapid Bus Priority System, Dominguez Channel Bike & Pedestrian Path, Carson Rapid Bus Priority System, I-110 Freeway Arterial Improvements.

Torrance Transit (\$3.2 million) — Torrance Transit Expansion of Line #1 and Line #4 HOTLane Service, Torrance Transit Line #4 Express Buses and Relief Vehicles.

Metro will be rewarding its ExpressLanes loyal customers with toll credits to their accounts to celebrate the 10th anniversary during a planned 120-day celebration. Additionally, ExpressLanes customer “pop up” events will take place at several American Automobile Club (AAA) offices, where customers can sign up to win prizes to say thanks for using Metro ExpressLanes. These will take place monthly starting in November 2022 through February 2023. The Automobile Club, Metro’s ExpressLanes partner from the beginning, continues to offer its club members a discount on opening an ExpressLanes account, charging only \$32 instead of the normal \$40 fee.

For more information on Metro’s ExpressLanes visit: <https://www.metroexpresslanes.net/> (<https://www.metroexpresslanes.net/>)

About Metro

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) is building the most ambitious transportation infrastructure program in the United States and is working to greatly improve mobility through its Vision 2028 Plan (<https://www.metro.net/about/metro-vision-2028-plan/>). Metro is the lead transportation planning and funding agency for L.A. County and carries about 800,000 boardings daily on a fleet of 2,200 low-emission buses and six rail lines.

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