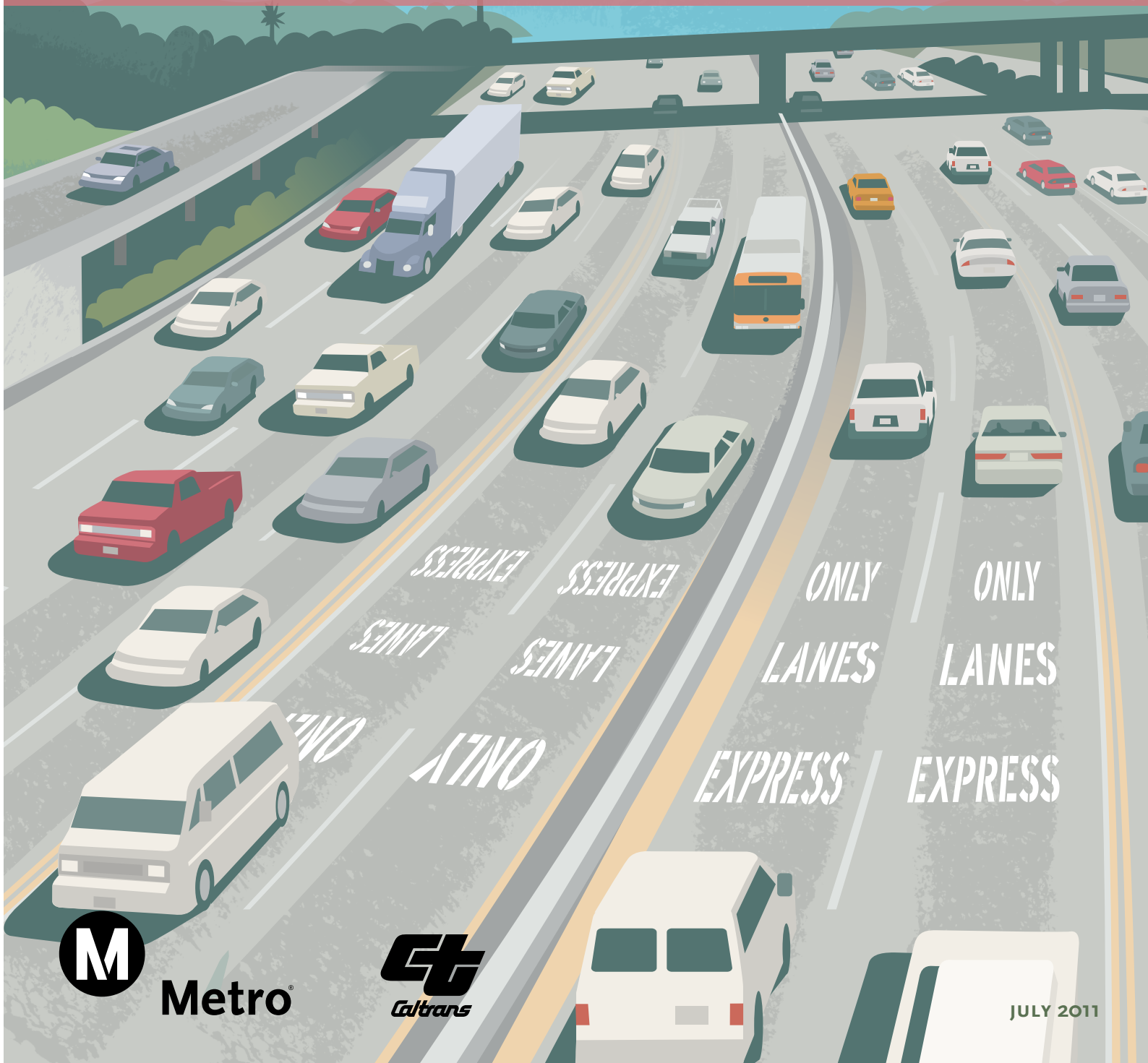


# Metro ExpressLanes

## Frequently Asked Questions



**Metro**



# METRO EXPRESSLANES FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## 1. What is the Metro ExpressLanes Demonstration Program?

Metro ExpressLanes is a one-year demonstration/pilot program during which existing carpool lanes (HOV) on the I-10 El Monte Busway (between Alameda St and I-605 – approximately 14 miles) and I-110 Harbor Transitway (between Adams Bl and Artesia Transit Center – approximately 11 miles) will be converted to High-Occupancy Toll (HOT) lanes. Buses, motorcycles, vanpools and carpools that currently use HOV lanes will not be charged a toll. General purpose lanes will continue to remain toll-free.

Metro ExpressLanes are scheduled to open in 2012. This demonstration program is intended to ease congestion by better managing the flow of traffic through the implementation of pricing to improve all of the travel choices in the corridors. Under current conditions, there is capacity in the carpool lanes at certain times of the day to permit single occupant vehicles to use these lanes for a toll. By incorporating this “congestion pricing” strategy, it is hoped that more people will be encouraged to use transit, join a vanpool or carpool, and that solo drivers will be encouraged to travel at off-peak hours.

## 2. How will Metro ExpressLanes operate on the I-110 Harbor Transitway?

All vehicles that choose to enter the Metro ExpressLanes will need to be equipped with a transponder. Vehicles with two or more occupants per vehicle will be able to continue using the Metro ExpressLanes toll-free. Single occupant vehicles will now have the option to use Metro ExpressLanes but will be charged a toll.

## 3. How will Metro ExpressLanes operate on the I-10 El Monte Busway?

All vehicles will need a FasTrak® transponder to enter the Metro ExpressLanes. Vehicles with three or more occupants will be able to use Metro ExpressLanes toll-free at all hours. Vehicles with two occupants will pay a toll during peak hours (5am–9am; 4pm – 7pm), but will have toll-free use during off-peak hours. Single occupant vehicles will now have the option to use Metro ExpressLanes but will be charged a toll.

## 4. How much will it cost to use Metro ExpressLanes?

The minimum toll per mile will be \$0.25 and the maximum toll per mile will be \$1.40. Tolls will be adjusted according to traffic conditions to maintain a free-flowing level of traffic on the Metro ExpressLanes. The toll will vary depending on the level of congestion in the Metro ExpressLanes – the higher the demand, the higher the toll to discourage too many people from using the lane and to keep traffic moving at least 45 mph; if speeds fall below 45 mph for more than 10 minutes, the tolling system will be shut down to single drivers until the travel speeds climb back above 45 mph. The average toll during the peak period for the I-10 Metro ExpressLanes is anticipated to be \$6 (average trip is 9 miles); the average toll during the peak period for the I-110 Metro ExpressLanes is anticipated to be \$4 (average trip is 5 miles).

## 5. How will the tolls be collected—will there be toll booths on the freeway?

There will be no toll booths. All tolls will be collected electronically. All vehicles will need a FasTrak® transponder to access the Metro ExpressLanes. A FasTrak® transponder is a small radio-frequency device about the size of a credit card that adheres to the inside of a vehicle’s windshield near the rearview mirror and can be read by a sensor mounted over the roadway. As the vehicle enters the Metro ExpressLanes, an antenna will read the transponder and any toll will be automatically charged to the vehicle owner’s account. FasTrak® transponders will be portable and can be moved from one vehicle to another.

## 6. How will the system distinguish between carpools and solo drivers in charging tolls?

Metro ExpressLanes users will have a “self-declaration” FasTrak® transponder that can account for the different minimum occupancy requirements on the I-10 and I-110. With a “self-declaration” FasTrak® transponder, users will be able to self-declare the number of passengers in their vehicle. That way, even users who only carpool occasionally can indicate occupancy using a manual switch/button on the FasTrak® transponder. The “self-declaration” FasTrak® transponder will help enforce occupancy requirements aided by dedicated CHP officers who will provide visual verification.

## 7. How can I enroll for a pre-paid Metro ExpressLanes FasTrak® transponder account and how much will the transponder cost?

Customers will be able to establish their pre-paid Metro ExpressLanes FasTrak® transponder accounts in person, by mail or online using a credit/debitcard or cash/check.

### CREDIT/DEBIT CARD

It will cost a total of \$40 to open a pre-paid account with a credit/debit card. The \$25 transponder deposit will be waived. When the account is closed, a \$25 fee will be charged if the transponder is not returned in good working condition.

For a qualifying low-income commuter, it will cost a total of \$15 to open a pre-paid account with a credit/debit card. The \$25 transponder deposit will be waived. Metro will provide a \$25 toll credit resulting in an opening pre-paid toll balance of \$40.

### CASH/CHECK

It will cost a total of \$75 to open a pre-paid account with cash/check (\$50 for the pre-paid toll deposit and \$25 for the transponder deposit). When the account is closed, the \$25 transponder deposit will be refunded to the customer if the transponder is returned in good working condition.

For a qualifying low-income commuter, it will cost a total of \$50 to open a pre-paid account with cash/check. Metro will provide a \$25 credit that can be applied to the customer’s transponder deposit or pre-paid toll deposit.

Any remaining toll balances will be refunded to customers when their accounts are closed in good standing.

## 8. If people get Metro ExpressLanes FasTrak® transponders and don't use them, will they be charged?

Yes. There is a fee of \$3 per month per Metro ExpressLanes account. The monthly account maintenance fee of \$3 is waived for commuters who use the Metro ExpressLanes at least four times (one-way trips) per month, whether they are in a carpool, vanpool or toll-paying single occupant vehicle. It is also waived for qualifying low-income commuters.

## 9. Can I use the transponder I currently have?

Yes. If you already own a FasTrak® transponder, you will not be required to get a Metro ExpressLanes transponder when traveling alone. State law requires that FasTrak® transponders be capable of being used on the Metro ExpressLanes.

## 10. Will all vehicles that use Metro ExpressLanes be required to have FasTrak® transponders?

Yes. This means that solo drivers, motorcycles, vanpools and carpools must be equipped with a FasTrak® transponder, which provides for easier identification of violators by CHP officers who will provide visual verification.

## 11. Will my privacy be protected?

Yes. State law requires that Metro protect the privacy and confidential information of all Metro ExpressLanes customers.

## 12. Will there be CHP officers to monitor the lanes?

Yes. There will be dedicated enforcement officers for the Metro ExpressLanes who will provide visual verification of occupancy requirements with the aid of the "self-declaration" FasTrak® transponder.

## 13. Where will the entrance/exits to the Metro ExpressLanes be located?

The Metro ExpressLanes' entrances/exits will remain the same as the current carpool lane entrances/exits.

## 14. We all paid for the HOV lanes with our gas taxes, and now you want us to pay again for the right to use them? Shouldn't freeways remain free?

These are optional tolls, and the choice is yours. While it's true that the converted HOV lanes would become toll lanes, you only pay if you choose to use them—and in most cases, they will continue to be free for many commuters. Either way, all general purpose lanes will remain free.

What's different under the Metro ExpressLanes program is that commuters will have more options. For example, whereas HOV lanes are currently restricted to cars with two or more passengers, Metro ExpressLanes will be open to solo drivers willing to pay a fee. And those drivers who choose to use the Metro ExpressLanes provide a benefit to drivers who do not choose to pay a toll by creating more capacity in the other lanes. As tolling pilot projects in other cities have shown, this extra capacity produces speedier trips for non-toll paying drivers as well.

## 15. Are low-income drivers priced out of certain lanes?

No. The toll policy includes a Toll Credit Program for low-income commuters. Residents of Los Angeles County with an annual household income (family of 3) at or below \$35,000 will qualify for a \$25 credit when they set up their account. This credit can then be applied to either the transponder deposit or pre-paid toll deposit. The monthly \$3 account maintenance fee will also be waived.

In addition, carpools, vanpools, transit and motorcycles will not be charged a toll, the Metro ExpressLanes project will provide increased transit service and net toll revenues will be reinvested in transit and carpool lane improvements.

## 16. Will alternative fuel/hybrid vehicles with stickers qualify to ride in the Metro ExpressLanes free of charge?

No. Driving alone in an alternative fuel/hybrid vehicle helps reduce pollution, but it does not reduce congestion. Alternative fuel/hybrid vehicles will be treated like all other vehicles.

## 17. What is Metro doing to improve transit options along the I-10 and I-110 corridors?

Before adding Metro ExpressLanes to the corridors, Metro and its transit partners will purchase 59 new buses to improve Silver Line and feeder service on the I-110 Harbor Transitway and I-10 El Monte Busway. In addition, Metro is embarking on several major transit station expansion and improvement projects along both corridors, including the expansion of El Monte Station and Pomona Metrolink Station, construction of a Patsaouras Plaza/Union Station Connection, improvement of Artesia Transit Center, and improvement of I-110 Harbor Transitway Park/Ride Lots and transit stations.



## Contact Us

Please use the following contact tools to access more project information, ask a question or provide comments:

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