

NEWS RELEASE

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District: District 7, Los Angeles and Ventura Counties
Contact: Jeanne Bonfilio
Phone: (213) 897-3630

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CARPOOL LANES OPENING ON SAN BERNARDINO FREEWAY (I-10) TODAY; WILL PROVIDE MORE GRIDLOCK RELIEF

El Monte -- The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) announces that three new miles of High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV), or carpool lanes, in each direction of the eastbound and westbound I-10 from Baldwin Avenue to the San Gabriel River Freeway (605) will open by noon today, in time for evening commuters. This addition brings to a total of 455 miles of carpool lanes in Los Angeles County.

This segment of carpool lanes will require three or more persons per vehicle Monday through Friday from 5 a.m. to 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. -- with two or more persons required at all other times. The connecting segment of carpool lanes, from Alameda St. to Baldwin Avenue, is currently used by approximately 24,000 vehicles a day in both directions.

"HOV lanes help to achieve connectivity -- and everyone benefits," said Douglas R. Failing, Caltrans District 7 Director over Los Angeles and Ventura counties. "These carpool lanes help to relieve congestion and increase mobility in Los Angeles County."

These HOV lanes are part of building a regional HOV lane system for California's commuters -- providing freeway-to-freeway connections for a seamless transportation system. HOV lanes move almost twice as many people as regular traffic lanes during peak hours. They decrease commute times for drivers; increase carpool, vanpool and bus usage; reduce traffic congestion; improve air quality by decreasing vehicle emissions; and enhance safety. On average, an HOV lane carries 1,300 vehicles (or 3,200 people) per "peak" hour.

Los Angeles leads the state in the miles of carpool lanes, with approximately 40% of the state's total carpool lane miles. People can spend less time stuck in traffic and more time with their families and in recreational activities, which improves the quality of life for everyone in the State.

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“The opening of this stretch of HOV lanes that extend the El Monte Busway to the 605 Freeway is a major milestone in the completion of a continuous car pool lane along the San Bernardino Freeway,” said MTA Board Chairman Frank Roberts. “Metro was happy to contribute funding towards the completion of this vital project and encourages people to share a ride and use these newly completed car pool lanes to get where they need to go.”

The Los Angeles County HOV system is used by over 300,000 vehicles and almost 700,000 people each day. By reducing mainline freeway congestion, HOV lanes facilitate the movement of goods and people from and through the Los Angeles Metropolitan area.

"In the San Fernando Valley, motorists are saving an average of 18 minutes on the San Diego Freeway (I-405), because of a new carpool lane from 101/405 Interchange to Waterford Street and various other improvements to the 101/405 Interchange," added Failing.

The cost of the project is \$55.2 million – and includes a \$4.8-million soundwall.

HOV lanes have operated in Los Angeles County since 1973. The first was the El Monte Busway on Interstate 10 -- and carried buses only. This HOV lane is now also open to vanpools and other carpool vehicles.

There are additional projects in the planning stages that will close the HOV gap on I-10 from West Covina to the I-10/57/210 Interchange. In the future, motorists will be able to drive from Downtown Los Angeles to the I-15 freeway in San Bernardino in the carpool lane.

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