



NEWS

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NEW AUXILIARY LANES OPENING ON STATE ROUTE 78 IN NORTH COUNTY

The new eastbound auxiliary lanes on State Route 78 (SR 78) near the cities of San Marcos and Escondido will open to motorists starting Wednesday. This is the last project to be completed during a two-year highway improvement program for this area of North County and will ease traffic flow along one of the region's most congested stretches of freeway.

Located just west of the Interstate 15 (I-15)/SR 78 interchange, the new eastbound auxiliary lanes include an extra lane between Woodland Parkway and the Barham Drive on-ramp, and two additional lanes between the Barham Drive on-ramp and the Nordahl Road off-ramp. As part of this construction project, a portion of SR 78 over Mission Road was repaved and the Barham Drive on-ramp was replaced.

"Over the past two years, SANDAG and Caltrans, working in partnership with San Marcos and Escondido, have collectively invested more than \$40 million to improve traffic conditions on SR 78," SANDAG Chair and Santee Councilmember Jack Dale said. "We recognize that reducing traffic backup on this key east-west travel corridor is vital to the quality of life for residents living in North County."

Other recently completed SR 78 improvements in the area include the westbound auxiliary lanes and the replacement of the Nordahl Road Bridge. The City of San Marcos also reconfigured the intersection at Nordahl and Montiel roads.

"We're pleased that these new lanes are opening and look forward to the traffic relief they will provide," said San Marcos Mayor Jim Desmond. "I am proud that San Marcos took the lead by stepping forward to fund the design of this project in order to secure the state funding needed to make it happen. My sincere thanks to Caltrans and SANDAG for working collaboratively with San Marcos to complete the project in record time."

Together, the cities of San Marcos and Escondido, SANDAG, and Caltrans invested \$41.1 million near the I-15/SR 78 interchange to address severe traffic congestion and to prepare the SR 78 for future Express Lanes.

The SR 78 improvements are funded by a mix of local, state, and federal dollars. *TransNet*, the regional half-cent sales tax for transportation administered by SANDAG, provided \$15.5 million. Caltrans provided \$14.1 million through the State Highway Operation and Protection Program (SHOPP). The City of San Marcos contributed \$6.75 million, and the City of Escondido provided \$4.75 million.

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