South Bay Expressway – SR 125 Toll Road
Frequently Asked Questions
SBXthe125.com

What is South Bay Expressway?
South Bay Expressway is a 10-mile, four-lane, express toll road that offers a stress-free solution to gridlock on South County roads and highways. It extends from Otay Mesa Road/State Route 905 in Otay Mesa near the international border north through eastern Chula Vista to SR 54 in Spring Valley, providing drivers with convenient access to Downtown, Sorrento Valley, Santee, I-8, and I-15, as well as Otay Mesa and Mexico. Utilizing cutting-edge technologies – including FasTrak®, an electronic toll collection system that allows customers to bypass toll plazas at full highway speeds – the Expressway guarantees a fast, reliable, scenic commute, every time.

What is FasTrak?
FasTrak is an electronic toll collection system that requires a small electronic device called a transponder, to be placed on the inside of your vehicle’s windshield. The transponder works together with electronic readers installed along the South Bay Expressway. When a FasTrak customer is traveling in the FasTrak lanes, an overhead antenna reads the data stored in the transponder, and the toll is automatically deducted from the customer’s prepaid account. FasTrak is fully electronic – no tollbooths or gates – so there is no need to slow down at tollbooths. Just drive on through!

Can I use my FasTrak on other toll roads? How about the I-15 Express Lanes?
You can use FasTrak on any California toll road or bridge in California that displays the FasTrak symbol, including the I-15 Express Lanes and Orange County toll roads, such as the SR 73 and SR 91—even the Golden Gate Bridge.

Who is the owner and operator of the toll road on SR 125?
The San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) purchased the lease to operate the toll road in December 2011 for $341.5 million—roughly one-third of what a private consortium spent to build the toll road. SANDAG is a regional government agency that conducts – among many other initiatives – long-range transportation planning and implementation in San Diego County. SANDAG employees operate the facility.

How is SANDAG changing the toll structure?
Under a plan approved May 25, 2012, by the SANDAG Board of Directors, all tolls on the facility were reduced as of June 30, 2012. FasTrak tolls dropped by 25 percent to 40 percent, depending on the trip. The new tolls range from 50 cents to $2.75 for FasTrak users and from $2 to $3.50 for cash and credit card users.

What determined the amounts of the toll reductions?
The SANDAG business plan determined the toll reduction schedule. The plan balanced toll reductions against the revenue needed to pay for operations and maintenance, debt service, future improvements, and contingencies.

-over-
Will SANDAG reduce the FasTrak monthly minimum toll amount?
Yes, along with implementing the new toll structure on June 30, SANDAG reduced the monthly minimum toll amount for most SR 125 FasTrak customers from $7 to $4.50 ($3.50 per account plus $1 for each transponder), similar to I-15. For example, accounts with one transponder now have their minimum monthly toll set at $4.50; accounts with two transponders are set at $5.50; accounts with three are set at $6.50, etc.

Will SANDAG reduce the FasTrak account opening and replenishment amounts?
Yes. With the new toll structure implemented on June 30, SANDAG reduced the South Bay Expressway FasTrak account establishment and replenishment amounts for customers with more than one transponder per account. For those customers, instead of $40 per transponder replenishment amount, now it will be $20 per transponder. (Accounts with just one transponder will continue with the minimum replenishment amount of $40.) Existing customers with multiple transponders can call Customer Service to change to the new replenishment amount.

Is there a chance that SANDAG will completely eliminate the tolls on SR 125?
At this point, there are no plans to completely eliminate the tolls on SR 125 until the franchise agreement with the State of California runs out in 2042.

How does SANDAG expect to lower the tolls and still successfully operate the business?
SANDAG has different goals than the previous operators of the facility, which were private, for-profit entities. The primary goal of SANDAG, which is a government agency, is to improve mobility in the region. The agency will set toll rates low enough to achieve that goal, while still generating enough revenue for operations, maintenance, debt, and future improvements.

How will lowering tolls on SR 125 improve mobility in South County?
Reduced tolls are expected to attract more users to SR 125, relieving congestion on I-805 and surface streets around the toll road, as well as between SR 125 and I-805.

How were toll amounts determined?
Extensive traffic modeling was done to determine the toll structure, with the goal of lowering tolls as much as possible while still maintaining financial viability. The facility must generate enough revenue to pay for operations, maintenance, debt service, and future improvements.

Who maintains and polices the road?
Our priority is to provide a safe, well-maintained road. We contract with Caltrans to inspect the facility and the CHP to provide routine patrol services and incident management. SANDAG staff and qualified contractors perform daily maintenance.

Are bicycles allowed on South Bay Expressway?
Bicycles are allowed between Otay Mesa Road and Birch Road only. Cyclists are to remain within the white painted, striped lines while traveling and are never allowed on South Bay Expressway north of the Birch Road interchange.

Are trucks allowed to use the road?
Yes. South Bay Expressway provides a reliable, stress-free ride for cars and commercial vehicles, including trucks. The Expressway has been designed to accommodate trucks.

How can I find more information about SANDAG and the South Bay Expressway?
Visit the SANDAG Web site at sandag.org and the Expressway site at SBXthe125.com.