

Corridor Newsletter: Summer 2012

Progress...mid-year update

By **Gustavo Dallarda, Corridor Director**

After watching this summer's Olympics, we can't help but say that we continue to go for the gold to make the I-15 Express Lanes a model of convenient transportation choices.

Our efforts so far – most notably the completion of the Express Lanes – have helped speed commutes and earned multiple construction awards. Recently, this project was awarded "Project of the Year" by the California Transportation Foundation (CTF) at the 23rd Annual Excellence in Transportation Awards.

More people are also taking advantage of the Express Lanes thanks to a recent successful FasTrak® promotion. FasTrak allows solo drivers to use the 20 miles of Express Lanes for a fee. The lanes are also open to carpools, vanpools, public transit, motorcyclists, and permitted clean air vehicles for free.

This summer, many key complementary projects went into construction, these include improving the Del Lago and Rancho Bernardo Transit Stations, and building the Mira Mesa Direct Access Ramp and the Miramar College Transit Station. (See story below for more details.)

The transit stations are being upgraded to handle the increase in use once the Bus Rapid Transit System (BRT) becomes operational in 2014. This high frequency bus system will be operated by Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) on the Express Lanes.

Other ongoing construction projects along the I-15 include improvements to the I-15/SR 78 interchange and the replacement of the Nordahl Road bridge. Improvements to the Sabre Springs/Peñasquitos Transit Station will also begin this winter.

We are working hard to create a one-of-a-kind transportation corridor. As always, we thank you for your patience as we continue this work. It is truly a team effort.



May 2012 - Caltrans Corridor Director Gustavo Dallarda, SANDAG Executive Director Gary Gallegos, & Flatiron District Manager Jeff Turner at CTF's 23rd Annual Excellence in Transportation Awards.

New and Improved Transit Stations Coming

More shelters. More signs. More bus bays. Better amenities. That is the goal. Beginning this summer, a brand new transit station is under construction and others are being improved to capitalize on the I-15 Express Lanes system.

In July, construction began on the new Miramar College Transit Station and the Mira Mesa Direct Access Ramp (DAR) on Hillery Drive, which will connect the community of Mira Mesa to the Express Lanes by way of the DAR. Both projects will be completed in 2014.

Additionally, work is currently underway at the Del Lago and Rancho Bernardo Transit Stations to create more bus staging areas and shelters for travelers.



Simulation of the Miramar College Transit Station in Mira Mesa.

Construction began in early August and will continue for approximately six months. Temporary parking lots are

available for the duration of construction at both stations. For construction progress, visit: KeepSanDiegoMoving.com.

The End is in Sight



August 2012 - Senior Resident Engineer Faridun Javed overseeing the demolition of the Nordahl Road bridge's west side.

You've heard the saying: There's a light at the end of the tunnel. Well, there's also a light at the end of the bridge – the Nordahl Road bridge. The ambitious project is over halfway complete and it will be finished in the fall.

To call it a challenging job would be an understatement. The bridge is heavily traveled by both cars and pedestrians. Serving as a link between Escondido and San Marcos, it is a vital piece of transportation infrastructure in North County. But it needed an upgrade to improve traffic flow and prepare for future improvements on SR 78.

The new bridge will be a lane wider

than the current one, helping drivers make turns from the bridge on to the SR 78 on-ramps.

The improved westbound and eastbound off-ramps to Nordahl Road are also open, including one additional turning lane to prevent vehicle congestion. New bridge supports are being sited to accommodate the future widening of SR 78 and carpool lanes.

While there have been temporary closures, the bridge has remained open to traffic for much of the construction. The patience from the community and surrounding businesses has been much appreciated. We are almost there.

Q&A with Francisco Gutierrez: Construction Traffic Manager for SR 78 at the Nordahl Bridge

What is your role on the project?

My title is Construction Traffic Manager. I coordinate with the contractor to facilitate closure and detour requests. I coordinate this information with the cities of Escondido and San Marcos, Caltrans and emergency services.

How long have you been with Caltrans?

I have been with Caltrans for 23 years. Before becoming the Construction Traffic Manager for this project, I worked in design and traffic operations, and I conducted construction inspections.

How are traffic closures determined?

There are guidelines in the project contract that the contractor is required to follow. The contractor submits their requested closures to Caltrans each week. The closures are linked to and prioritized by the contractor's current activities.

What methods do you use to inform the public of upcoming closures?

I send a daily e-mail with the planned closures and detours to various parties. I also coordinate this information internally with the deputy director, all resident engineers, and our public information officers. Closure and detour information is also posted on the project's website, www.KeepSanDiegoMoving.com, and on Caltrans' website, www.dot.ca.gov.

What benefits can the public look forward to with the improvements on SR 78?

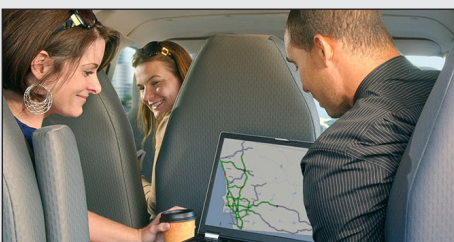
Less congestion for the travelling public, allowing quicker travel to the area. Widening portions of the I-15/SR 78 interchange and the replacement of the Nordahl Road bridge will provide a better link between San Marcos and Escondido.

What do you consider your greatest professional achievement to date?

Being a part of the I-15 improvement team from the start, and now, years later, seeing the end result. These improvements really are helping to relieve congestion and improve the flow of traffic for everyone.



Francisco Gutierrez, Caltrans Construction Traffic Manager



How do I get a vanpool started at work?

You or your employer can lease a van through the SANDAG iCommute program with a contracted vendor and receive up to \$400 per month off the cost. Last year, vanpool participants saved almost \$1,000 each in the cost of vehicle ownership and operation, in addition to saving money on gas. To view a list of currently available vanpool seats or get information about starting a new vanpool, visit www.icommutesd.com/vanpool.aspx or e-mail us at vanpool@sandag.org.



For more information, log on to:

KeepSanDiegoMoving.com

For questions, call: Caltrans Public Affairs: (858) 668-3368



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