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Miramar College Transit Station, I-15 access ramp to open

By **JAMES PALEN**
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The Miramar College Transit Station and a direct-access ramp in Mira Mesa will open along the Interstate 15 corridor in the next two weeks, expanding the Metropolitan Transit System's Rapid bus service.

Construction began on the projects, administered by Caltrans and the San Diego Association of Governments, in the summer of 2012 and complete a \$60 million push for more transportation choices in the area.

The direct-access ramp has an elevated ramp from Hillery Drive in Mira Mesa across southbound I-15, and four on- and off-ramps connecting to I-15 express lanes.

The ramp will be free for car pools, van pools, buses, motorcycles and permitted clear-air vehicles, and will be available to solo drivers with a FasTrak prepaid account for a fee, Caltrans said. It will also serve as the access ramp for the MTS Rapid bus services.

The Rapid 235 route, which began service in June between Escondido and downtown San Diego, will start serving the Miramar College Transit Station on Oct. 12; the Rapid 237 route will operate during weekday rush hours between Rancho Bernardo and UC San Diego starting Oct. 13.

Officials from Caltrans, SANDAG, MTS and the San Diego Community College District celebrated the upcoming openings Tuesday at the new transit center, 9311 Hillery Drive in Mira Mesa.

Rob Schupp, a representative of MTS, said the Miramar College area has



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Photo courtesy of Metropolitan Transit System

been serving as a hub for transit riders, especially for those using bus Route 20 up the I-15 corridor, but until now, the buses have stopped at Miramar College along side streets.

"It hasn't been contained in a nice transit center like this is going to be," Schupp said. "People would get off at Miramar College and then go east along Mira Mesa Boulevard."

The addition of the transit center is expected to boost ridership on the Rapid 235 route, which MTS said already averages 3,700 riders per weekday since it opened.

"There is a big south-to-north connection there, so now with the 235 stopping at Miramar College, we think there's going to be a lot more riders on the 235," Schupp said.