

Corridor Newsletter: Spring 2013

The I-15 Continues to Spring Forward

By Gustavo Dallarda, Corridor Director

The I-15 Express Lanes, winner of seven statewide awards, opened last year under budget and nearly a year early. Since then, we began construction on the Mira Mesa Direct Access Ramp (DAR), the Miramar College Transit Station, and the new Sabre Springs/Peñasquitos Transit Station. We also completed many key projects, including the replacement of the Nordahl Road Bridge and upgrades to the Del Lago and Rancho Bernardo Transit Stations.



Everyone who has pulled together—Caltrans and SANDAG engineers, the contractors, and most importantly, the ever-patient public—deserves credit for the current and future advances along this important San Diego inland corridor.

We are continuing to visually improve the I-15 corridor with our landscaping projects. By using sustainable roadside elements, including drought tolerant trees, plants, and native grasses, we are enhancing and preserving the corridor's natural environment.

Rapid Transit, modeled after successful Bus Rapid Transit systems in other major U.S. cities, is set to launch in summer of 2014 and will be a key component of the Express Lanes. The future Rapid Transit service will help commuters get to regional destinations quickly and more efficiently.



May 2013—View of a recent landscaping project located along the I-15 on-ramp at Poway Road in Sabre Springs.

The recent improvements to the transit stations and the completion of the Mira Mesa DAR will help make the Rapid Transit system a premier travel option.

The I-15 Express Lanes corridor is a model for the nation when it comes to reducing commute times. We are proud to bring you an innovative and multi-modal system.

A New and Improved Nordahl Road Bridge

Caltrans—in collaboration with the San Diego Association of Governments, Escondido, and San Marcos—completed the replacement of the Nordahl Road Bridge. Located just west of the I-15/SR 78 interchange, it connects the cities of San Marcos and Escondido. The work is part of an ongoing effort to bring much-needed traffic relief to that key section of North County.

The project was finished in November, thereby avoiding any holiday season impacts to the surrounding businesses, which include big retailers such as Costco, Walmart, and Kohl's.

There was another big reason to deliver this project on time: The new Palomar Medical



November 2012—Ribbon cutting ceremony for the completion of the Nordahl Road Bridge.

Center in Escondido, with more than 2,000 employees, became fully operational in late 2012. Providing improved access for such an important facility was a major

priority. The new and improved Nordahl Road Bridge will allow for future widening and Express Lanes along SR 78.

Help is on the Way for Mira Mesa Commuters

Two simultaneous construction projects will greatly enhance travel choices and services in the Mira Mesa community and surrounding areas by providing convenient access to the I-15 Express Lanes, and the opportunity to use a new transit station.

Both a Direct Access Ramp (DAR) to the Express Lanes and the Miramar College Transit Station are under construction. The DAR, the fifth for the corridor, will connect Hillery Drive in Mira Mesa to the Express Lanes with one elevated ramp across southbound I-15 and four on- and off-ramps. That means local commuters

will no longer have to drive north or south to get on the Express Lanes.

The new transit station will feature 12 bus bays, traveler shelters, and signs noting next bus arrival times. The transit station will be located on the southeast corner of the Hillery Drive/Westview Parkway intersection on the edge of San Diego Miramar College. It will offer commuters the chance to use the current MTS Premium Express Bus and new Rapid Transit service. Both projects are expected to be completed in summer 2014 to coincide with the launch of the Rapid Transit service.



April 2013 - Crews constructing columns that will support the DAR over I-15 in Mira Mesa.

Q&A with Mark Bobotis, Senior Resident Engineer for the Mira Mesa DAR



Mark Bobotis,
Caltrans Senior Resident Engineer

How long have you been with Caltrans?

I've been with Caltrans for 27 years.

What are the major phases of work being done on the Mira Mesa DAR?

We are finished constructing retaining walls, a loading dock replacement for the Miramar College warehouse, earthwork

for the Miramar College Transit Station, roadwork, drainage, undergrounding of utilities, including the relocation of several sewer and water lines, one being a 60" diameter water pipeline. We are now building columns on the freeway median that will support the DAR structure.

What challenges do you expect to encounter as the project progresses?

The project is on a mix of state, city, and college property. The Transit Station will be operated by MTS, the utilities belong to the City of San Diego and SDG&E, and the DAR structure will belong to Caltrans. It takes coordination to have all the work fit together and meet a variety of schedules.

What type of equipment will the public be seeing in the area?

Our crews have been working with loaders, excavators, pavers, and welders for the utility, drainage, and roadwork.

For the structure work, crews will use cranes, drill rigs, falsework (temporary wood and steel structure), and a lot of concrete trucks.

What can the public look forward to when the Mira Mesa DAR and Miramar College Transit Station are complete?

The Mira Mesa area will have a DAR location to access the I-15 Express Lanes and a transit station that will feature Rapid Transit service. It will all blend into a diverse community which is comprised of residential, commercial, shopping, restaurants, theaters, and a college.

What motivates you and your team?

I have a great team and support on this project. The effort they put in creates its own motivation. It's an interesting project that puts a lot of big things in a very small area, a little like building a ship in a bottle on a big scale.



Who do I call if I'm stranded on the freeway?

Most of us have been there: You're on the freeway and your car blows a tire, runs out of gas, or breaks down. If you find yourself in this situation, the San Diego Freeway Service Patrol (FSP) can help. The FSP can be reached by calling 511 and saying, "Roadside Assistance," or by using the call boxes located on the freeway. This free service is provided by San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG), Caltrans, and the California Highway Patrol (CHP). Please log on to: sandag.org/fsp for more information regarding service areas and times of operation.

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