

Crews making progress on rapid transit project in South County



Crews construct the dedicated transit guideway in the median of East Palomar Street in Chula Vista. (Courtesy, San Diego Association of Governments)



By Allison Sampite-Montecalvo | February 22, 2017 10:45 a.m.

Significant progress has been made on construction of the South Bay rapid transit project, which, once complete, will provide people with a fast commuting option.

The 26-mile rapid bus route will run between the Otay Mesa port of entry and downtown San Diego through eastern Chula Vista.

The San Diego Association of Governments began construction on the \$128 million project last March.

About \$113 million will go toward construction costs, and \$15 million will be used to buy 16 new buses.

The new service will connect to employment and activity centers downtown and in South County.

It will be operated by the San Diego Metropolitan Transit System and is expected to begin in 2018.



A dozen rapid stations are planned along the 26-mile route, including five downtown and seven in eastern Chula Vista and Otay Mesa.

The stations will include modern shelters, level platforms for easier boarding and upgraded amenities such as real-time next vehicle arrival information, landscaping and improved paving.

All stations will be located in the public right-of-way designed for safe pedestrian access at intersections.

At the heart of the project is a dedicated bridge, a nearly six-mile-long, transit-only lane under construction in the median of East Palomar Street and along Eastlake Parkway.

The bridge will allow rapid transit vehicles to cross the state Route 125 toll road without stopping or slowing down.

Bridge construction is being done in phases to minimize effects to nearby residents, businesses and motorists.

In December, construction crews installed new utility lines and continued to pave transit lanes for the portion of the bridge between Heritage Road and Magdalena Avenue, along East Palomar Street.

Crews have also begun work between Magdalena Avenue and the toll road to prepare the area for bridge construction over the highway.

Last month, crews began prepping for construction of the bridge over state Route 125 between Olympic Parkway and Birch Road. And in the coming months, they are expected to build bridge foundations and temporary installation supports.

During this time, other temporary elements will be installed to reduce noise and dust for residents living near bridge construction.

Crews also will begin work on the Heritage transit station along East Palomar Street near the Heritage Recreation Center.

A bridge is currently being built between Magdalena Avenue and Town Center Drive, over state Route 125.

South Bay Rapid is funded through TransNet, a regional voter-approved half-cent sales tax to speed up the construction of high-priority transportation projects.