

South Bay **Rapid**

Frequently Asked Questions - General

January 2019

What is the South Bay *Rapid* project?

The South Bay *Rapid* project is a \$139 million new transit service that will provide travelers with a frequent and reliable transportation choice. This rapid bus transit service will operate along a 26-mile route from the Otay Mesa Port of Entry to Downtown San Diego via eastern Chula Vista and Interstate 805 (I-805), improving travel times by using dedicated transit-only lanes, Traffic Signal Priority, and limited station stops. At the heart of the project is the dedicated transit guideway – a nearly six-mile-long transit-only lane being constructed in the median of East Palomar Street and along Eastlake Parkway in Chula Vista.

Why is this project needed and what are the benefits?

The population in South County is expected to increase substantially over the next 20 years, leading to added congestion. South Bay *Rapid* will address this growth and benefit the region in a number of ways. These benefits include:

- Minimizing traffic congestion along a major transportation corridor;
- Bringing an innovative mobility choice to areas in South County not currently served by mass transit;
- Connecting residents to employment, education, and activity centers across the county; and
- Supporting smart residential and commercial growth guidelines established by the local community.

When did construction begin and when will the improvements be completed?

Construction on the new *Rapid* project began in March 2016. South Bay *Rapid* began a limited service route in September 2018 between the East Palomar Station in Chula Vista and Downtown San Diego. South Bay *Rapid* service expanded in January 2019 to full service, operating along a 26-mile route between the Otay Mesa Transit Center and Downtown San Diego. South Bay *Rapid* is operated by the San Diego Metropolitan Transit System (MTS). Construction along a majority of the route will be completed in 2019.

What is the full service *Rapid* schedule?

Rapid 225 (South Bay *Rapid*) operates daily beginning as early as 4:30 a.m. until approximately 11 p.m., with service every 15-30 minutes between Otay Mesa Transit Center and Downtown San Diego. For more information, visit rapidmts.com.

What construction activities are currently underway?

The following construction activities are currently underway on South Bay *Rapid*:

- East Palomar Street (I-805 to Heritage Road, Chula Vista) — The I-805 to Heritage Road segment of the dedicated transit guideway is being constructed and is expected to be complete by mid 2019.

What areas will be served by South Bay *Rapid*?

The new *Rapid* transit service will connect to employment and activity centers in Downtown San Diego and South County, as well as the U.S.-Mexico border at Otay Mesa.

Where will the transit stations be located?

Twelve *Rapid* stations were constructed along the 26-mile route. Five stations in Downtown San Diego (completed), six stations in eastern Chula Vista (East Palomar Station, Heritage Station, Lomas Verdes Station, Santa Venetia Station, Otay Ranch Station, and Millenia Station), and one at the Otay Mesa Transit Center.

Is there a Park & Ride at the East Palomar Station? Which lot can be used for carpools?

There is a Park & Ride facility located at 400 East Palomar Street in Chula Vista, next to the East Palomar Station. The purpose of the Park & Ride is to provide travelers with access to the local bus and South Bay *Rapid* systems, and offer a convenient location from which carpools and vanpools can access the carpool lanes on I-805. The Park & Ride consists of two Park & Ride lots with a combined 348 available parking spaces. The upper lot is for carpoolers. The lower lot, closer to the freeway and transit station, is reserved for transit riders.

What type of vehicles will serve South Bay *Rapid* and what speed is permitted?

Rapid vehicles and stations are designed to provide a new level of service, enhanced comfort, and convenience. In fact, \$17 million of the overall project investment will go towards 17 new *Rapid* vehicles. These vehicles will be natural-gas powered and designed for a comfortable ride, with improved lighting and increased headroom. *Rapid* vehicles will adhere to posted speed signs of 35 MPH, and 25 MPH in designated school zones.

Once full service begins, what is expected ridership?

Initial South Bay *Rapid* ridership is expected to average 4,500 daily trips the first year, increasing to over 12,000 trips annually when the route is completed and as the region's population continues to increase.

What will the average travel time be between the U.S.-Mexico border and Downtown San Diego and other key destinations?

During peak commuting hours, the average travel time between the Otay Mesa Transit Center and San Diego City College will be approximately 50-75 minutes. For riders traveling from the Otay Ranch Station in Chula Vista to Downtown San Diego during peak commuting hours, travel times will be approximately 50-60 minutes. Traveling from the East Palomar Station at I-805 to Downtown San Diego will take approximately 25 minutes.

Were trees removed as part of the project?

Yes, however, trees and shrubbery that are removed during construction will be replaced with water-efficient trees and shrubbery, except at intersections, near utility boxes, and near local MTS bus route stops.

Was South Bay *Rapid* designed to be converted to light rail in the future?

South Bay *Rapid* was not designed to be converted to light rail or a trolley. This service is part of an integrated regional Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) that has been planned by the County of San Diego and the City of Chula Vista for the area since the 1990s, and is included as part of the Otay Ranch General Development Plan. Prior to the approval of the Otay Ranch General Development Plan, there were early plans to extend a light rail service into South County, but several factors went into the decision to develop the rapid bus network in its place. For example, the SR 125 bridges over Sweetwater River and Otay River were not designed to bear the load of a light rail system. The river valleys are environmentally sensitive and therefore it would be difficult to rebuild and reinforce the bridges.

How much will it cost to use the new *Rapid* service?

South Bay *Rapid* will cost \$2.50 for a one-way trip. Seniors, disabled persons, and those on Medicare will pay \$1.25 for a one-way trip. MTS also offers a 1-day pass for \$5 or \$72 for a monthly pass. A discounted monthly rate of \$18 is offered for seniors, the disabled, and those on Medicare. For more information, visit [SDMTS.com/fares-passes](https://www.sdmts.com/fares-passes).

How will the community be notified about construction?

Regular updates on construction hours, closures, and detours will be provided to the community through signage, notices, email bulletins, doorhangers, social media, updates from our agency and community partners, and postings on

[KeepSanDiegoMoving.com/SouthBayRapid](https://www.KeepSanDiegoMoving.com/SouthBayRapid). Sign up for construction updates at [KeepSanDiegoMoving.com/Contact](https://www.KeepSanDiegoMoving.com/Contact).

A construction hotline has also been established at **(888) 754-5062**. The City of Chula Vista will also share information on Nixle, an online platform that allows local agencies to share important community alerts. You can sign up at www.nixle.com.

Traducción al español disponible a solicitud.