METRO EXPRESSLANES

Item # -

March 14, 2018 Ad Hoc Congestion, Highway & Roads Committee

Metro ExpressLanes Dynamic Message Signs

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Metro ExpressLanes Dynamic Message Signs

At the October 2017 Ad Hoc Congestion, Highway and Roads Committee, Director Janice Hahn expressed concern that some of the terminology used on the ExpressLanes' Dynamic Message Signs (DMS) was confusing and did not clearly communicate its intent to system users. Specifically, among the areas of concern raised were the meaning of the word "Flex" and the usage of the acronym "HOV".

Focus Groups

Five focus groups were held on November 15th & 16th.

- The focus groups were comprised of both frequent and in-frequent users of the 10 and 110 ExpressLanes and concentrated on the issue of signage and messaging.

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Key Findings

Key Findings from the Focus Group Interviews:

- Use of the word 'HOV'
    - Participants experienced great difficulty in comprehending signs that included the word 'HOV'.

- Unfamiliarity with the Flex transponder
    - One of the least understood elements of the digital signs was the use of the word 'FLEX'.

- Importance of simplified language
    - For each sign discussed, participants quickly gathered their understanding of the message and sought to paraphrase it for simplicity.

Overarching Issues

Overarching issues govern the selection of terminology for highway DMSs:

- Per federal regulations, all signage used on highways across the US must conform to the standards presented in the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD).

- Message options for ExpressLanes' DMSs are constrained by the size of the sign themselves, character sizes, and the number of characters that can fit on a given sign.

- For consistency of user experience across California, precise definitions and usage are established for the FasTrak brand by the California Toll Operators Committee (CTOC).

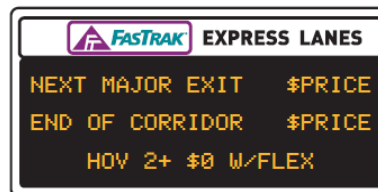# Existing & Recommended Signs

EXISTING	RECOMMENDED

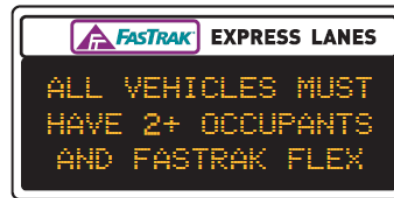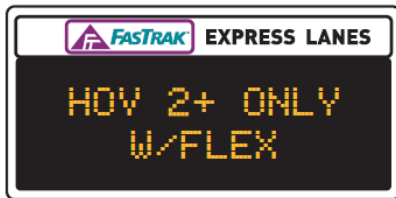| FasTrak EXPRESS LANES	FasTrak EXPRESS LANES	
OPEN TO ALL TRAFFIC	OPEN TO ALL – FASTRAK NOT REQUIRED	The ExpressLanes are open to any driver, even if the driver does not have a transponder. Violations will not be processed and tolls will not be charged. Drivers may not cross the solid double white lines unless directed to do so by the CHP.
FasTrak EXPRESS LANES	FasTrak EXPRESS LANES	
CLOSED TO ALL TRAFFIC	CLOSED TO ALL	No one may enter or use the lane. Any driver who enters the lanes after the lanes are closed will be charged the maximum toll for the full corridor even if the driver did not travel the full length of the corridor.
FasTrak EXPRESS LANES	FasTrak EXPRESS LANES	
MINIMUM TOLL RATE IN EFFECT	NEXT MAJOR EXIT $PRICE / END OF CORRIDOR $PRICE / HOV 2+ $0 W/FLEX	The minimum non-peak or peak toll rate per mile will be charged. Non-peak hour rate is $0.10 per mile. Peak hour rate is $0.35 per mile. Flex – Switchable FasTrak transponder that has a switch that can be moved to indicate the number of occupants in the vehicle.

Existing & Recommended Signs

EXISTING	RECOMMENDED

FASTRAK EXPRESS LANES
HOV 2+ ONLY
W/FLEX
→
FASTRAK EXPRESS LANES
ALL VEHICLES MUST
HAVE 2+ OCCUPANTS
AND FASTRAK FLEX

Any driver entering the lanes must have two or more occupants in the vehicle, and must also have a FasTrak Flex transponder set to the proper occupancy setting. Any driver entering the lanes without meeting these requirements will be subject to the maximum toll rate for the corridor, regardless of actual length traveled in the ExpressLanes. Drivers that were already in the ExpressLanes before encountering this sign may stay in the lane.

FASTRAK EXPRESS LANES
HOV 3+ ONLY
W/FLEX
→
FASTRAK EXPRESS LANES
ALL VEHICLES MUST
HAVE 3+ OCCUPANTS
AND FASTRAK FLEX
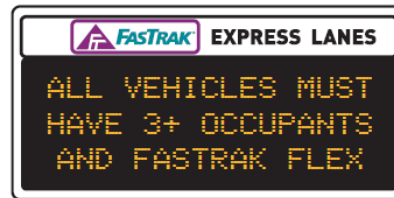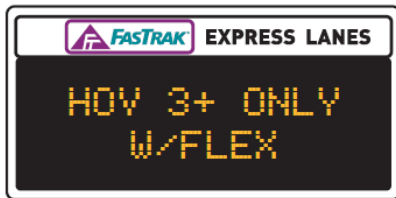
Any driver entering the lanes must have three or more occupants in the vehicle, and must also have a FasTrak Flex transponder set to the proper occupancy setting. Any driver entering the lanes without meeting these requirements will be subject to the maximum toll rate for the corridor, regardless of actual length traveled in the ExpressLanes. Drivers that were already in the ExpressLanes before encountering this sign may stay in the lane.

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Targeted Education & Outreach Schedule

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•	Press release	March 2018
•	Pocket Guide with promotional items	April/May 2018
•	Educational video	April/May 2018
•	Social media marketing	April/May 2018
•	Focus groups to determine the effectiveness of the new messages & education/marketing campaign	Early 2019

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