

SANDAG Acquisition of Lease to Operate SR 125 Toll Road Frequently Asked Questions

Updated: May 25, 2012

Q: What immediate changes in the operations can users expect?

A: Users should see no difference in the operation of the SR 125 toll road. There will be no immediate changes to the personnel or the equipment. Toll reductions were approved by the SANDAG Board in May, 2012 and will take effect at the end of June or early July.

Q: Will FasTrak users need to take any action to continue using the facility?

A: No. All operations will remain the same. FasTrak users can continue using the facility as usual. (In addition, they can use the FasTrak lanes on Interstate 15, which are also operated by SANDAG.)

Q: How is SANDAG changing the toll structure?

A: Under a plan approved May 25, 2012 by the SANDAG Board, all tolls on the facility will be reduced, with FasTrak tolls dropping 25% to 40% depending on the trip. The new tolls, which are expected to be implemented at the end of June or in early July 2012, will range from 50 cents to \$2.75 for FasTrak users and from \$2 to \$3.50 for cash and credit card users.

Q: What will determine the amount of the toll reduction?

A: The SANDAG business plan has determined the toll reduction schedule. The plan balances toll reduction against generating enough revenue to pay for operations and maintenance, debt service, future improvements, and contingencies.

Q: Will SANDAG reduce the FasTrak monthly minimum toll amount?

A: Yes, at the time the new toll structure is implemented (expected in late June or early July), SANDAG will reduce the monthly minimum toll amount for SR 125 FasTrak customers from \$7 to \$3.50 per account plus \$1 for each transponder, similar to I-15.

Q: Will SANDAG reduce the FasTrak account replenishment amount?

A: Yes, at the time the new toll structure is implemented (expected in late June or early July), SANDAG will reduce the FasTrak account replenishment amount for customers with more than one transponder per account. For those customers with more than one transponder, instead of \$40 per transponder replenishment amount, it will be \$20 per transponder. (Accounts with just one transponder will continue with the minimum replenishment amount of \$40.) Existing customers with multiple transponders will be able to contact customer service to change their replenishment level to the new structure when the new tolls are implemented.

Q: Is there a chance that SANDAG will completely eliminate the tolls on SR 125?

A: At this point, there are no plans to completely eliminate the tolls on SR 125 until the franchise agreement with the State of California runs out in 2042.

Q: How does SANDAG expect to lower the tolls on the road and still successfully operate the business?

A: SANDAG has different goals than the previous operators of the facility, which were private, for-profit entities. SANDAG's goal is to improve mobility in the region and will set toll rates to cover the cost of operating and maintaining the road along with paying off the remaining debt.

Q: How will lowering tolls on SR 125 improve mobility in South County?

A: Reduced tolls are expected to attract more users to SR 125, relieving congestion on Interstate 805 and nearby streets and making expensive future improvements unnecessary.

Q: How much did SANDAG pay for the toll facility?

A: SANDAG purchased the asset for \$341.5 million – roughly one-third of what a private consortium spent to build the toll road.

Q: Who is the new owner of the lease to operate the toll road on SR 125?

A: The San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) has purchased the lease to operate the toll road. SANDAG is a regional government agency that conducts – among many other initiatives – long range transportation planning and implementation in San Diego County. The acquisition transaction closed on December 21, 2011.

Q: Who now operates the toll road on SR 125?

A: SANDAG is directly managing operation of the facility and using staff contracted from the former operator.

Q: Will other SANDAG transportation projects in the region have to be given up or delayed to finance the purchase?

A: As part of the plan of finance for the purchase, the SANDAG Board has swapped one project out of its overall program and applied the funding against the SR 125 toll road purchase, making it possible for SANDAG to reduce tolls on SBX. This project would have built four carpool lanes on I-805 in Chula Vista. SANDAG scaled back plans to only two lanes because the lower tolls on the SR 125 are expected to draw traffic away from I-805 and make some of those improvements unnecessary. No other projects will be impacted or delayed by the transaction.

Q: How can I find out more information about SANDAG?

A: Visit the SANDAG Web site at www.sandag.org.

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