

How Express Toll Lanes Benefit Commuters



Express toll lanes (ETLs) are optional freeway lanes that charge variable tolls to commuters who use them. The purpose of the tolls is to prevent the lanes from getting overcrowded. The price in the lanes changes to match the traffic demand. High-occupancy vehicles using the toll lanes generally pay lower rates or no toll at all. Buses and vanpools use the lanes at no charge.

1. Express Toll Lanes Reduce Congestion

- ❖ The variable toll adjusts based on traffic congestion.
- ❖ Most ETLs are managed to keep traffic flowing at 45 miles per hour or more during rush hours.
- ❖ Today, 60 ETL projects across the country are providing commuters with faster and more reliable alternative to congested highway lanes.

2. Express Toll Lanes Are Sustainable

- ❖ Variable tolling is able to offer drivers and transit vehicles a congestion-free travel option even when traffic volume in the general lanes increases.
- ❖ Since ETLs handle more vehicles per hour during peak periods than regular lanes do, regions with ETLs need to add fewer regular highway lanes.
- ❖ The same gas-powered vehicle going 45 miles per hour in a toll lane generates fewer greenhouse gas emissions than it does in stop-and-go traffic in general lanes.

3. Express Toll Lanes Are an Important Transit Solution

- ❖ Express buses using ETLs offer faster, more reliable service than buses in congested lanes.
- ❖ ETLs provide a semi-dedicated right-of-way that buses use free of charge.
- ❖ Transit agencies operate more buses that transport more passengers in corridors with express toll lanes than in corridors without ETLs.

4. Express Toll Lanes Are Optional

- ❖ No one is required to use an ETL.
- ❖ No one is required to pay a toll unless they choose to use the toll lane.
- ❖ Most commuters tend to use ETLs for time-sensitive trips, such as going to the airport or picking up a child from daycare before late fees begin.
- ❖ People choose ETLs when they believe the value of their time savings exceeds the toll.

Reason Transportation Policy Contacts

- Bob Poole, Director of Transportation Policy, bob.poole@reason.org
- Baruch Feigenbaum, Senior Managing Director of Transportation Policy, baruch.feigenbaum@reason.org

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