TRB Webinar: COVID-19 Impacts on Managed Lanes

June 25, 2020
Questions and Answers

Please type your questions into your webinar control panel

We will read your questions out loud, and answer as many as time allows

#TRBwebinar
#COVID19
COVID-19 Response
Bay Area Express Lanes

Lisa Klein
Director, Field Operations and Asset Management
Metropolitan Transportation Commission

TRB Webinar
June 25, 2020
COVID-19 Shelter-in-Place
Regional Traffic Impacts

Traffic volumes decreased significantly:

- Bay Area Bridges: ↓44% to 61%
- I-80 (Alameda County): ↓40%
- US-101 (San Mateo County): ↓60+%  
- I-680 (Contra Costa County) Express Lanes Corridor: ↓60+%  

Traffic volumes reached their lowest point by late March / early April
About MTC’s I-680 Express Lanes in Contra Costa County

- 12-mile corridor between Walnut Creek and Dublin, CA
- Heavily congested in the northern half of the corridor
- 31,000 Average Daily Express Lane Trips (pre COVID-19)
Regional Express Lane Tolling Ceased March 20
Restarted June 1
Express Lane Tolling Decisions
Bay Area Express Lane Operators Acted Jointly

**Decision to Suspend Tolling**
- Significant reduction in corridor traffic
- Free-up CHP enforcement for more critical tasks
- Relieve workload on back-office contractor

**Decision to Resume Tolling**
- Steady increase in corridor traffic
- Easing of public health orders
- Other CA EL Operators continued tolling

Bay Area EXPRESS LANES
I-680 Traffic Trends During COVID-19

55% decline in traffic volumes in two-week period (3/10 – 3/24)

Steady rise in traffic volumes since 4/7. As of 6/18, corridor traffic volumes are down 22% compared to their pre COVID-19 levels.
### I-680 Traffic Since Restart of Tolling

**Peak Period (3:00 pm - 6:00 pm) Most Congested Tolling Zone**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Express Lane</th>
<th>General Purpose Lanes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>% Difference</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Toll</td>
<td>$8.00</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$1.00</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>-88%</strong></td>
<td><strong>N/A</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Average Speed</td>
<td>67 MPH</td>
<td>57 MPH</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>78 MPH</td>
<td>68 MPH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>+16%</strong></td>
<td><strong>+19%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Volume</td>
<td>1,029 VPH</td>
<td>1,458 VPH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>585 VPH</td>
<td>1,314 VPH</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>-43%</strong></td>
<td><strong>-10%</strong></td>
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</table>
Starting March 13th, EL Ops staff shifted to remote work to reduce risk of exposure to COVID-19 infection.

EL Ops staff continue operations remotely by connecting to the ELN via a secure Virtual Private Network (VPN).

Pre COVID-19, EL Ops staff accessed the ELN directly through a closed network portal from the ROC.
Regional FasTrak Operations Significantly Affected

Suspended cash collection on seven toll bridges

Sent ~1.4 M invoices in each of April and May

Suspended escalation for toll violations for all facilities
Call volumes declined by ~50% in the first weeks of shelter-in-place.
## Regional Customer Service Center COVID Impacts

### Operational Impacts
- Operations consistent with health ordinance for essential work
- Operational hours reduced; walk in center closed
- Sending toll notices with $0 penalty

### Staffing Impacts
- Initial absenteeism between 40%-60%
- Recruiting to replace agents
- Work from home
  - Non-phone personnel in April
  - Phone agents in progress
Planning for the Future (3 - 12 months)
Uneven Return of Traffic

March 17-20
(Start SIP)

April 7-10
(Lowest Vols)

May 26-29

Source: Caltrans PeMS

Change in Daily Traffic vs Feb
-50% 0%
More Unknowns than Knowns

Economic Recovery / Schools

Social/ Business Practices (telecommuting, use of transit & carpooling)

Traffic

2nd Wave?

Managed lanes / technology provide operational flexibility

- Proceed as planned for new express lanes, opening later this year
- Formalize all electronic tolling on region’s toll bridges
LA Metro Express Lanes

COVID-19 Response
LA Metro COVID-19 Response

• March 19 – County of Los Angeles issues Safer at Home order (Phase 2: May 8)
  • Metro & ExpressLanes staff implement Work from Home (WFH) policy
  • Headquarters (Gateway Building) remains open
  • ExpressLanes closes Torrance Service Center
  • 20 Customer Service Representatives issued “Thin Clients” to receive calls remotely
  • Consultants, BOS, & RTCS remain engaged and in the field or work remotely

• End of March/early April Metro initiates minimum pricing on all corridors

• June 9 Metro re-establishes dynamic pricing on all corridors
Traffic Volumes

COVID-19 Era ExpressLanes Transaction Counts
As Percent of Normal Levels

Transaction Counts

Percent of Normal Levels

Traffic and Revenue Volumes

COVID-19 Era ExpressLanes Transaction Counts and Toll Revenues
As Percent of Normal Levels

- Transaction Counts
- Raw Toll Revenue

Percent of Normal Levels

Dates: 3/16/2020 to 6/1/2020
Next Steps:

- I-105 Environmental & Design (Ongoing)
- Dynamic Pricing (June 9)
- Open Service Center (July 6)
- Occupancy Detection System (August 1)
- Metro HQ (Gateway) Reopens (August – TBD)
- Normal Operations (October – December 2020)
- TIFIA LOI for 105 (2021, planned)
Mark Linsenmayer
LA Metro
Deputy Executive Officer
Congestion Reduction

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linsenmayerm@metro.net
The Effects of COVID-19 on MnPASS Express Lanes

Kiet Ly, PE
MnPASS Operations Engineer
June 25, 2020
MnPASS Corridors Overview
MnPASS Express Lanes

• MnPASS = MN’s system of priced managed lanes (or High Occupancy Toll Lanes)

• MnPASS lanes currently in operation:
  • I-394 since 2005
  • I-35W since 2009
  • I-35E since 2015

• MnPASS is a key strategy for improving the efficiency of the region’s highway and transit systems by providing a reliable, less congested option during peak travel times.
Travel decreased steadily in the days following the first COVID-19 case in Minnesota.

Traffic Travel Demand

- Mar 13: Peaceful emergency declared
- Mar 18: Public schools closed; in-person dining suspended
- Mar 28: "Stay-at-home" order takes effect
- Apr 12: Easter Sunday
- Apr 17: Some workplaces reopen
- May 18: "Stay-at-home" order expires; "Stay-safe" order takes effect

Traffic Sensor Group
- MnDOT Metro Freeways (1000+ Stations)
- MnDOT Statewide (105 Stations)

MnPASS.org
March 4th @ 8AM – before COVID-19 emergency

March 25th @ 8AM – after COVID-19 emergency


- MnPASS operations background
  - Customer Service Center at Golden Valley office
  - Approximately 50,000 accounts and over 67,000 transponders/tags
  - 3 CSRs; 1 CSR supervisor; 1 CSC manager and 1 project manager

- When Peace Time Emergency declared, our contract consultant established a new protocol to provide our services remotely
  - Discontinued walk-in service due to reduction of walk-in customers (a couple a day)
  - Set up CSRs to be able to access the back-office system remotely
  - Two staff report twice a week to handle mail and phone messages
## COVID-19 Effects on MnPASS Operations

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Before COVID-19</th>
<th>After COVID-19</th>
<th>% Change</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inbound Calls</td>
<td>787</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>-84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outbound Calls</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>-11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emails</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>546</td>
<td>105%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chats</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walk-ins</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounts Opened</td>
<td>486</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>-91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounts Closed</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>-7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tags Requested</td>
<td>781</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>-84%</td>
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## COVID-19 Effects on MnPASS Operations

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<th>Before COVID-19</th>
<th>After COVID-19</th>
<th>% Change</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average Monthly Toll Transactions (Trips)</td>
<td>258,103</td>
<td>36,169</td>
<td>-86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Monthly Toll Revenue</td>
<td>$431,180.44</td>
<td>$14,788.75</td>
<td>-97%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average Toll</td>
<td>$1.67</td>
<td>$0.41</td>
<td>-76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Daily Toll Transactions (Trips)</td>
<td>12,340</td>
<td>1,722</td>
<td>-86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Daily Toll Revenue</td>
<td>$20,614.20</td>
<td>$704.23</td>
<td>-97%</td>
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COVID-19 Effects on MnPASS Operations

Weekly Trips

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>65,000</td>
<td>55,000</td>
<td>45,000</td>
<td>35,000</td>
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<td>15,000</td>
<td>5,000</td>
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COVID-19 Effects on MnPASS Operations

Weekly Toll Revenue

24-Feb 2-May 8-May 22-May 29-May 5-Jun 12-Jun 19-Jun

MnPASS.org
COVID-19 Effects on MnPASS Operations

The chart shows the number of customer accounts from May 2019 to May 2020. The accounts are categorized as either opened or closed. The data indicates a decrease in customer accounts from May 2019 to May 2020, with the largest decrease occurring in March 2020.
COVID-19 Effects on MnPASS Operations

Requested Tags

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>676</td>
<td>784</td>
<td>830</td>
<td>818</td>
<td>708</td>
<td>956</td>
<td>1,065</td>
<td>1,093</td>
<td>683</td>
<td>615</td>
<td>626</td>
<td>520</td>
<td>333</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>122</td>
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Conclusion

• Significant impacts on our operations.

• Continue to operate with our current protocol.

• We will operate normal when the economy and travel demands are recovered.
Thank you!

Kiet Ly, P.E.
MnPASS Operations Engineer
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TRB Resources

• Consensus Study Report: *Renewing the National Commitment to the Interstate Highway System: A Foundation for the Future*
• *NCHRP Research Report 835: Guidelines for Implementing Managed Lanes*
• *NCHRP Research Report 860: Assessing the Environmental Justice Effects of Toll Implementation or Rate Changes: Guidebook and Toolbox*
• *NCHRP Synthesis Report 540: Leveraging Private Capital for Infrastructure Renewal*
• *NCFRP Research Report 39: Freight Transportation Resilience in Response to Supply Chain Disruptions*
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