

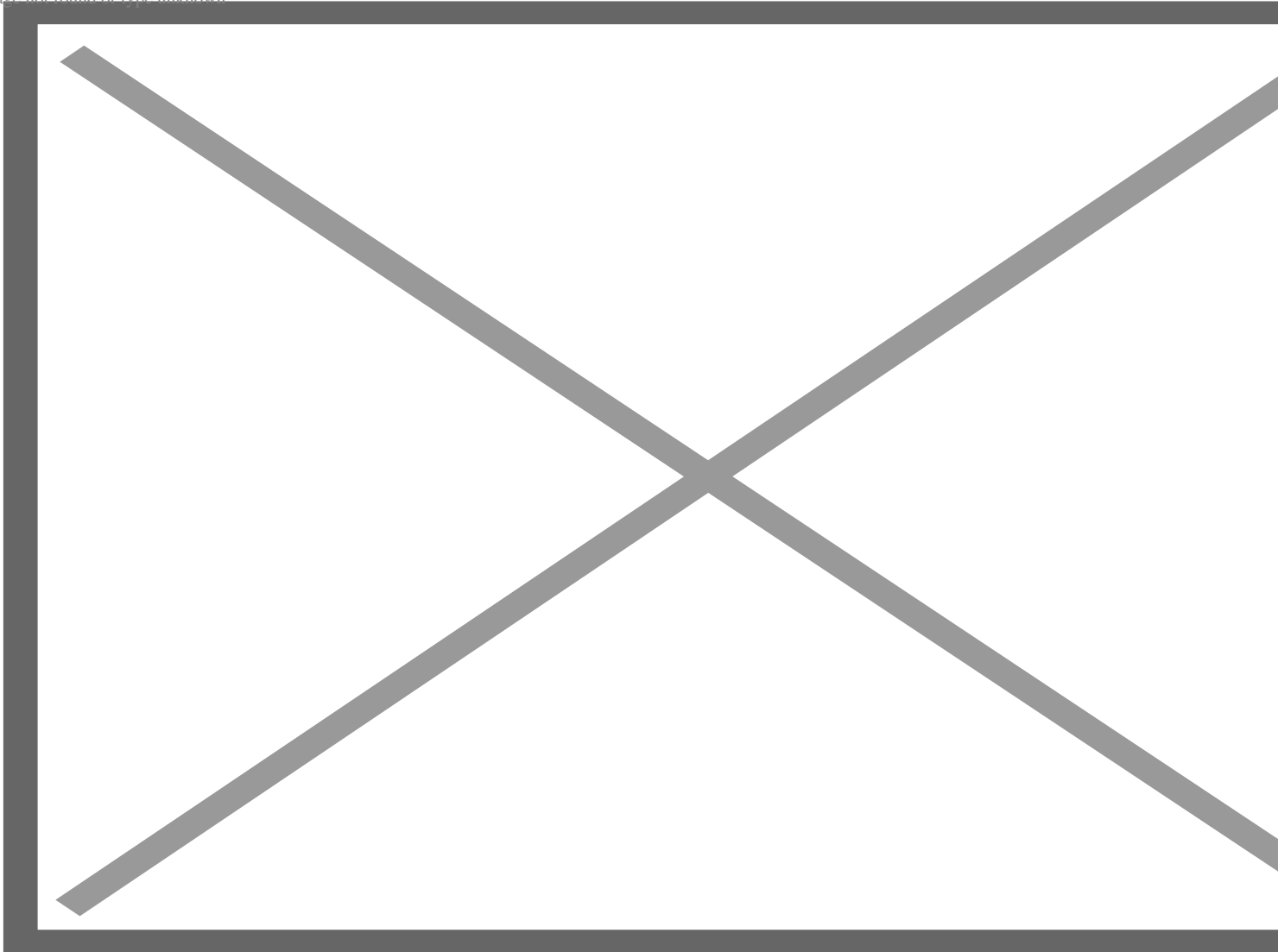


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The Boulevard Bus Way. Introducing The Boulevard Bus Way!

A new way of driving buses along El Cajon Boulevard.

Bus operators working Routes 1, 6 and Rapid 215 along El Cajon Boulevard get to experience a better and safer form of transit. MTS buses just began using The Boulevard Bus Way, a three-mile dedicated bus lane going both directions on El Cajon Boulevard, between Fairmount Ave. and Park Blvd. The Boulevard is one of San Diego's most vibrant corridors and has many

appeals, such as shopping, nightlife, restaurants, and much more. However, as our operators know, this inevitably creates traffic, especially at peak hours of the day.

“One of the best ways to keep buses moving is to keep other traffic from stopping us,” said Peter Casellini, Associate Transportation Planner for MTS. He has been working on the implementation of this new bus only lane and explains why it is highly needed along corridors like this one.

“Removing conflicts with cars waiting to turn at busier intersections, as well as having no conflicts with cars for local buses waiting to reenter the flow of traffic from curbside stops, should help to create a smoother and quicker travel experience for everybody.”

“I think that it will be much easier for everyone. It’s going to be safe for us and the operators who are driving in the regular cars,” said Lizette Camacho Bus Operator, who works Rapid 215 regularly.

Also, behind the wheel of one of our Rapid 215 buses is James Robinson. He has been enjoying driving this route for five years and believes this dedicated bus lane is a game changer. “I’m going to love it actually; afternoon traffic between 3 and 6 o’clock is very hectic. A lot of people going from home to school, going shopping, or doctor visits,” said James, who in addition to seeing this route become more convenient, is looking forward to having “his people” [riders] benefit from the bus lane.

“I call them ‘my people’ because I see the same people every day on my bus, I see students, elderly people, moms and babies... everybody rides that route. It’s going to make the route more efficient, because we will hit the time points more efficiently, so I know people look forward to that, they know they can get on the bus and get where they need to go on time.”

This highly traveled corridor situated in the heart of San Diego is important for commuters because MTS services offer a one-seat ride from places like San Diego State University to top locations along the boulevard and beyond, such as the San Diego Zoo, Balboa Park, and Downtown.

Lizette Camacho, another bus operator says this lane will be important for everyone. “I think that it will be much easier for everyone. It’s going to be safe for us and the drivers who are driving in the regular lanes,” said Lizette. Safety is key factor, and has been on the top of the list during the planning process of this forward-thinking project. Vehicles’ access on the lane is now limited and only bikes get to share the lane with the buses, thus giving cyclists a safer and with wider space to ride.

Looking into the future

“We’re hoping this is just the beginning,” said Casellini. “The MTS Planning Department already has a pretty extensive wish list for other areas where we could use dedicated space for buses, and we’re hoping to take the lessons we learn along this corridor elsewhere to help reduce the impacts of traffic for our buses throughout San Diego and beyond.”

The Boulevard Bus Way is an 18-month pilot, and its success will be measured by metrics such

as time savings, ridership increases and customer satisfaction. Bus operator input will be collected as well.

Although The Boulevard Bus Way is only a three-mile dedicated bus lane on one street, its success could pave the way for many more miles of dedicated lanes around our service territory that would make it safer and more efficient bus service.

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