

US 36 Express Lanes Change from HOV 2+ to HOV 3+ on Jan. 1, 2017

As part of the US 36 Express Lanes project, the High Occupancy Vehicle lanes there will shift from HOV 2+ to HOV 3+ on Jan. 1, 2017 (HOV 3+ equals a driver and at least two passengers). This change is happening to all Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) HOV lanes across the state. In February 2013, the CDOT Transportation Commission passed a resolution, which was also approved by the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) in its Regional Transportation Plan, that all CDOT HOV Express Lanes would change from HOV 2+ to HOV 3+ on Jan. 1, 2017. CDOT has assembled the information below regarding this change:

Why Change to HOV 3+?

- This change is necessary for two main reasons – to help provide a desperately needed source of funding for the state’s transportation infrastructure and to ensure trip reliability – especially reliable mass transit - well into the future as the Denver Front Range population continues to grow.
- From July 2014 to July 2015, the Denver area’s population grew by more than double the national average, and by 2040, Colorado’s population is expected to increase 47 percent to be 7.8 million residents. Colorado cannot build its way out of congestion. Express Lanes help to meet the needs of a growing population with no funding for increased capacity. Colorado’s Express Lanes only achieve the goal of providing uncongested travel if most or all of the vehicles using them pay the market price. As the population continues to grow and funding continues to shrink, HOV 3+ helps guarantee uncongested travel in the Express Lanes.
- Moving to HOV 3+ means that more paying users who are benefitting from a free-flowing lane are also the ones helping to fund future improvements. At the same time, additional riders in a carpool and transit users are reducing vehicle emissions and congestion.
- The move to HOV 3+ also ensures congestion relief and trip reliability for transit, carpoolers and drivers who choose to pay a toll well into the future as the population continues to grow.
- Free general purpose lanes always exist alongside CDOT’s HOV Express Lanes. Express Lanes can deliver more consistent, faster speeds and reduced travel times for the entire corridor, including the general purpose lanes. Drivers always have the option to use those general purpose lanes for free, and drivers benefit from those lanes being less congested. For example, on both the US 36 Express Lanes and the I-70 Mountain Express Lane, the general purpose lanes and the Express Lanes all benefitted with faster speeds and shorter travel times:
 - o The I-70 Mountain Express Lane, which does not offer free HOV, helped travelers avoid congestion during several record-setting traffic counts on the Jan. 2, 2016 holiday weekend.

Also, over the 2016 MLK Holiday, travelers had reduced travel times from three to 17 minutes, or as much as 52 percent faster than in 2012.

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Visit CDOT's Express Lanes website at www.codot.gov/programs/expresslanes for the most recent updates. You may also sign up for email alerts. You can contact the ExpressToll Service Center at customerservice@expresstoll.com or 303-537-3470 at any time to discuss your account.