

**Charlotte Region *Fast Lanes* Study
Regional Technical Team
Meeting #4**

June 26, 2008 9:30 – 11:00AM

**Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center
600 East Fourth Street, Charlotte, NC**

Meeting Summary

Welcome and Introductions

The meeting started at 9:30AM.

Jack Flaherty (NCDOT) welcomed meeting attendees by pointing out growing Federal interest in congestion pricing. He asked meeting attendees to introduce themselves.

Review of Study Progress

Study Coordination and Outreach

Tim Gibbs (CDOT) distributed a list of presentations made on the *Fast Lanes* study since the project's inception. Sixteen presentations have been made since the second *Fast Lanes* workshop held on February 12.

Tim asked meeting attendees to let him know of other groups that would benefit from a study briefing.

Managed Lanes Design Concepts

Chuck Fuhs (PB) reviewed preliminary design concepts for adding managed lanes to I-85, NC-16, I-77 North, I-485 and US-74. Several Regional Technical Team (RTT) members asked if the I-85 frontage roads provide an opportunity to expand the interstate to allow more space to implement managed lanes. In response to a question from Norm Steinman (CDOT), Chuck noted that an 11-ft *Fast Lane* could not be used by large trucks. Dan Mikkelson (City of Salisbury) asked how bicycle and pedestrians would be accommodated along NC-16 following managed lanes implementation. He requested that bicycle/pedestrian mobility be considered as managed lanes are analyzed for NC-16. During the discussion of US-74 managed lanes concepts, David McDonald (CATS) noted that NCDOT rejected the suggestion of sheet flow drainage for US-74 which would have provided future flexibility in the lane and barrier configuration. David added that the US-74 barrier walls would likely have slots to facilitate drainage of the proposed transitway. Center columns are planned for overpasses (not shown in the cross-sections between interchanges). The design speed for the US-74 BRT/HOV facility is 50 miles per hour.

In response to RTT suggestions, PB will develop preliminary *Fast Lanes* design concepts for three I-77 South locations: 1) Center City Charlotte to I-485, 2) I-485 to South Carolina state line, and 3) York County, South Carolina. PB also will revise the PowerPoint slides to reflect RTT member suggestions offered during the meeting.

Lynn Purnell (PB) commented that CDOT and PB had presented the preliminary *Fast Lanes* cross-sections to FHWA and NCDOT staffs on May 29 in Raleigh. One of the purposes of the presentation was to obtain FHWA and NCDOT input on the design exceptions (reduced lane widths and narrower shoulders) to implement managed lanes on I-85. A response from these organizations on the proposed design exceptions is expected in early July.

Discussion of Policy Objectives Which Influence HOT Lane Revenues

Chuck reviewed with meeting attendees revenue forecasting assumptions for high occupancy toll (HOT) and express toll lane (ETL) operational scenarios. Clarification of these scenarios is required prior to ECONorthwest's application of the toll optimization model, RapidTOM ©. He explained the reasons underlying PB's recommendations on forecasting assumptions. RTT members did not object to any of the recommended assumptions.

Status Report on New HOT Lane Projects in Seattle and Miami

Chuck briefed meeting attendees on the most recent HOT lanes projects in the country.

HOT lane operations on SR-167 in Seattle began on May 3, 2008. This conversion of a 9-mile HOV facility is based on electronic toll collection with a variable toll rate between \$0.50 and \$9.00 per trip. Approximately 300 HOVs were using the SR-167 HOV lanes during the peak hour providing lane capacity for sale to single-occupant vehicles. HOVs (2+) and motorcyclists use the managed lanes for free. A major issue since HOT lane start-up has been HOVs crossing the double lines which prohibit lane access to designated ingress/egress areas. No pylons are used to separate the HOT lane from other lanes.

"95 Express" is a pilot project being implemented by Florida DOT to provide HOT lanes along I-95 between I-395 in Miami-Dade County and I-595 in Broward County (Fort Lauderdale). The first eight-mile section will open later this summer. The project involves converting a single HOV lane into two HOT lanes by reducing lane and shoulder widths. Carpools that are allowed free use will need to be registered in advance.

Fast Lanes Video Update

Tim Gibbs showed meeting attendees the video on *Fast Lanes* produced by the City of Charlotte's Corporate Communications department. Jennifer Harris of the North Carolina Turnpike Authority praised the quality of the production. Other RTT members liked the video as well. Tim asked meeting attendees to provide him feedback later if they had any ideas for improvements.

Updated Study Schedule

Lynn reviewed projected completion dates for the remaining tasks in Phase 2.

Three more RTT meetings have been tentatively scheduled for:

- 1) August at the completion of Task 2.3, Mobility Improvements;
- 2) October at the completion of Tasks 2.4, Cost Estimates, and 2.5, Revenue Forecasts; and
- 3) December at the completion of Tasks 2.6, Corridor and Network Analysis, and 2.7, Findings and Recommendations.

Other Items of Discussion

Norm reviewed the work of the Task Force of 21, a Charlotte Chamber-led group studying roadway needs and financing options for Mecklenburg County. The task force's work is scheduled for completion in November 2008 so recommendations can be considered by the North Carolina General Assembly in the 2009 legislative session.