

Charlotte Region HOV/HOT/Managed Lanes Study Regional Managed Lanes Workshop

August 21, 2007 9:30am –2:00pm

Metrolina Regional Transportation Management Center
2327 Tipton Drive, Charlotte, NC

Workshop Summary

Welcome

- The workshop started at 9:30AM.
- Tim Gibbs (CDOT) welcomed everybody and asked attendees to introduce themselves.
- Jack Flaherty (NCDOT) described the purpose of the workshop.

Introduction to Managed Lanes

- Chuck Fuhs (PB) provided an overview of national experience in the areas of HOV, HOT and managed lanes. He concluded his presentation by emphasizing that managed lanes fit a unique role and are only part of a congestion management program that includes all other approaches to addressing travel demand. Bob Collier (NCBOT) asked about the inclusion of hybrid vehicles in managed lanes around the country. Heidi Stamm (HS Public Affairs) replied that she would address hybrids later in the workshop.
- Lynn Purnell (PB) described the HOV lane opened in 2004 along I-77 in Charlotte. He reviewed usage of the HOV lane after seven weeks and a year of operation. Mr. Collier asked if more recent counts of HOV usage had been performed. Mr. Purnell responded that new counts of HOV users and general-purpose traffic along I-77 are scheduled for this September. There also were questions from workshop participants about the current fine for HOV violations.
- Sashi Amatya (PB) reviewed the three feasibilities for managed lanes upon which the analysis will focus: technical, institutional and financial. Mr. Fuhs noted that managed lanes recommendations do not get implemented more often because of issues associated with institutional feasibility, rather than technical issues.
- Ms. Stamm and Mr. Fuhs facilitated a discussion among workshop attendees to identify issues which could affect implementation of managed lanes in the Charlotte region. **The issues cited by workshop participants (categorized as technical, institutional or financial) are attached.**

Technical Feasibility

- Mr. Fuhs presented technical guidelines and thresholds used around the country to identify roadways that may warrant managed lane treatments. He discussed typical screening criteria and reviewed in detail thresholds for HOV, HOT, Truck Toll and Express/Toll lanes. Mr. Fuhs continued by identifying screening criteria

for the Charlotte region managed lanes analysis, which is based on available output from the regional travel demand model.

- Ms. Stamm asked participants if they wanted to raise any additional technical issues after hearing Mr. Fuhs' presentation. She recorded several comments from workshop attendees, which have been included in the attached listing of key issues.

Institutional Feasibility

- Ms. Stamm reviewed the 4 P's of marketing and elements of success: product, placement, pricing and promotion. She followed with lessons learned around the country:
 - No negative impact to general purpose traffic
 - Facility must be perceived as effective
 - Facility must be perceived as customer friendly
 - Facility must be "honest and acceptable" to general public
- Mary Hopper (Hopper Communications) summarized key themes from the eight stakeholder interviews that she has completed so far. The stakeholders were selected to provide a broad cross-section of perspectives on traffic congestion and possible solutions. Interviewees include federal, state and local elected officials, major employers, environmental organizations, economic development groups, companies with significant truck operations, and law enforcement agencies. Ms. Hopper has four more interviews to conduct before preparing a synopsis of findings.

Financial Feasibility

- Andy Grzymiski (CDOT) discussed transportation funding for North Carolina, South Carolina and the City of Charlotte. He also reviewed transportation funding needs identified for the Charlotte region. Steve Dewitt (NC Turnpike Authority) suggested that presentations similar to Mr. Grzymiski's need to be made across the state.
- Mr. Amatya presented information from the seven facilities currently using pricing to manage travel demand in the United States. He reviewed financing used in project implementation, which motorists get to use the lane, and the type of pricing (flat-rate or variable priced).
- Workshop participants offered several more issues which were recorded by Ms. Stamm.

Wrap Up and Next Steps

- Mr. Gibbs noted that four jurisdictions still need to submit an executed multi-party agreement form to him.
- Mr. Gibbs commented that the next Regional Technical Team meeting is scheduled for September 25th. He added that Bob Cook (MUMPO) had begun posting study information on a webpage that is part of www.mumpo.org. The PowerPoint presentations shown at the workshop will be posted on the website.
- Mr. Flaherty closed the meeting by thanking everyone for their participation.

Issues Cited by Workshop Participants

Technical Issues To Consider

- Physical barriers to expansions
- Transit integration
- "Gang" operations to reduce costs
- Evaluate effectiveness of current I-77 HOV
- Shoulder conversion potential
- Reversible lane potential
- Low cost "fixes" for the interim
- Air quality evaluation component of recommendations
- System to system elements
- Safety as an element of evaluations
- How do new facilities impact the effectiveness of existing facilities
- Provide for truck traffic improvements
- Estimate utilization of facilities over time
- Maintain existing infrastructure

- Perceived underutilization of I-77 HOV facility
- Which type of transponder technology for HOT lanes

Institutional Issues To Consider

- Fractured regional planning and programming - necessity to look (and fund) regionally
- Contradictory goals
- Bi-State coordination challenges
- New legislation will be necessary
- Explore other funding mechanisms, including "privatization"
- Look beyond traditional DOT geographic boundaries/equity divisions
- Integration of Turnpike Authority
- Maintenance and operation commitment
- Facilities are compatible with land use goals
- Don't interfere with projects that have funding
- Preserving enforcement and emergency response
- Privacy
- Socio-Economic Equity (*Lexus Lane*)
- Recognize and evaluate constraints of privatization
- Design to available dollars rather than LOS C
- Many voices that need to be heard
- Competition on which area gets what improvements first

Marketing Issues To Consider

- Presenting new ideas to the region
- Champion development - Political, private and environmental
- Taking the message of "lack on funding" on the road
- Continually educate elected officials
- Construction inconvenience to all for a facility not open to all
- Define purpose of managed lane (move people/generate revenue/manage congestion)
- Dispel the myth that we can "build our way out of congestion"
- Craft mechanisms for consensus
- Increase current HOV
- Combat bias that HOV facilities should be fully used day-of-opening
- Buy-in by media and business
- Public perception that money is available and just needs to be reprioritized
- Deliver what you promise but don't oversell
- Show benefits of managed lanes on air quality