



Florida Department of Transportation Research

Integrating Transit with Road Pricing Projects

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Florida's dramatic growth in residents and visitors in recent decades has placed a heavy demand on roadways. To accommodate this growth, expressways have been added and expanded, but for many heavily traveled highways, such as those in Jacksonville, Orlando, Tampa, and the Ft. Lauderdale-Miami corridor, adding lanes has become very expensive, especially in times of greater austerity; also, adding lanes does not always improve traffic flows or travel times.

A less expensive and more innovative solution to congestion problems is the managed lane, or express lane, usually a newly constructed or converted travel lane with access limited to specific vehicle classes, by a toll, or to a specific vehicle volume. Following the success of the managed lane project on I-95 in Miami-Dade, the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) determined that all new capacity on interstates will consider managed lanes. FDOT has designated managed lanes as a primary strategy for increasing capacity on many highways in Florida. The legislature has recently approved statutory changes that will facilitate these efforts.

In this project, University of South Florida researchers examined a wide range of policies applied to public transit access to managed lanes. They investigated the range of transit investments associated with managed lanes, both existing and planned. Their goal was to develop a decision framework for considering public transit during the planning for managed lane projects.

The researchers found that public transit enjoys significant benefits from managed lanes. By using limited access lanes, public transit can provide efficient mobility options for all travelers.

This results in better travel times, and better accessibility for all travelers; when transit ridership on the I-95 corridor before and after implementation of managed lanes was compared, a significant increase in ridership was found. Additionally, a significant number of new riders

used the new express bus system, thus influencing travelers to shift from auto to transit.



A bus uses the managed lane on I-95 in Miami, avoiding the congestion on this heavily traveled road.

The researchers studied FDOT's policy response to the I-95 project. New construction of express lanes, like those on I-595 in Fort Lauderdale, suggested that a regional policy for southeast Florida was needed to assure that continuing development would be in harmony with a multimodal strategy across the region's transportation network. Therefore, FDOT began developing a Regional Concept of Transportation

Operations (RCTO) to define responsibilities, operating parameters, and policies for regional implementation of express lanes.

The researchers combined what they learned about Florida's experience with a thorough review of public transit policies in place on managed lanes in San Diego, Seattle, and Atlanta. They formulated their findings and recommendations in three areas: design and planning issues; financial considerations; and policy considerations. The researchers concluded that planning for public transit on managed lanes should begin early in the planning process and be part of broad agreement about the objectives of specific projects and that using appropriate modeling and forecasting tools would put FDOT in the best position to estimate express bus project needs and evaluate transit investment decisions.