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**New decision-support tool designed for long-term mobility**

AUSTIN (Spl) – The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) today released a decision-support framework designed to help operators of toll roads and managed lanes meet the specific performance goals established for their facilities.

Dubbed the “Traffic Thermostat™,” the online decision-support system allows traffic managers to plan and ultimately modify operational aspects of a managed lanes and toll roads much in the way a household thermostat regulates a home’s air conditioning system to maintain an established temperature.

“The system begins with approved performance measures,” explained XXXX XXXXX, a senior transportation XXXX for TxDOT. “The idea is that by beginning with the goals established for a facility by its board with input from the community, operators can adjust operations as needed to maintain a high level of performance. The tool helps project planners and policy boards set up an automatic adjustment plan so that changes can be made easily by the operators when conditions change.”

Goals for High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes, High Occupancy/Toll (HOT) lanes, express toll lanes and traditional toll roads typically focus on ensuring consistent travel times by controlling congestion. Methods for reducing congestion on managed lanes include varying the cost to use the roadway, limiting the types of vehicles allowed or restricting the number of passengers per vehicle using the facility.

Defining the factors to measure a roadway’s performance and specifying what parameters trigger operational changes help policy-makers while guiding operators to effectively implement day-to-day changes needed for the facility to meet its goals, XXXXX noted. This tool will help operators analyze the impact of making specific operational changes when the performance of a facility drops below predetermined thresholds.

Faced with declining revenue and an increased focus on customer satisfaction, departments of transportation around the country are looking for new, smarter ways to manage existing roadways. The Traffic Thermostat™ uses actual values — average speed, travel time, current toll charges and vehicle restrictions, among others — to calculate the changes needed to meet established performance measures.

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