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VIDEOAUDIO

Wide shot of congestion

Disgusted kid(s) in front of a school

Congested traffic from driver's perspective - Close ups of drivers in cars moving slowly

Traffic moving smoothly in a HOT lane

HOT lane footage - shot of dynamic signage

ANNCR:

Commuters want to get from home to work reliably, every day.

Kids are waiting after school; kids don't like waiting.

There's cross-town traffic to deal with. The HOV lanes are moving quickly. What if a car has one occupant? Should the driver risk a ticket? Or the wrath of the boss or kids?

In more and more locations across America, there's another option. It's called a HOT Lane. HOT stands for High Occupancy Toll. And it means that drivers that do not have enough passengers to meet the established vehicle occupancy requirement would have an option to use the HOV lane by paying a toll.

Carpools, vanpools, motorcycles and transit vehicles use the lane for free while other drivers pay a fee based on how busy the lanes are. This fee changes based on the amount of traffic congestion in the lane.

VIDEOAUDIO

Variable pricing is used to manage the lanes and maintain free flow conditions, even during rush hours.

What are the advantages of HOT Lanes?

They help to provide reliable travel times to users willing to pay a toll when they need to use the HOV Lanes.

The HOT Lanes concept is one of the proven congestion management tools to manage and optimize operational performance of HOV facilities.

ROBERT ARNOLD :

As we start to hit the edge of what we can do as far as adding new capacity because of right-of-way considerations and environmental considerations, we have to look at these pricing strategies such as HOT lane conversion as ways to use the existing capacity that we have in the most logical manner and cost-effective manner.

SAMUEL JOHNSON :

Our goal is to make sure that our transit customers and those folks who choose to car pool or van pool, that they receive the most benefit from the facility. So, when we look at the HOT lanes side of that, what we do is we use a dynamically-priced system that adjusts the pricing based on the level of traffic in the lanes to make sure that we don't have a lot of single occupants in the lanes and that the performance of

VIDEO

AUDIO

(approx. 1:13:13:21)
Background video: B-roll from San Diego I-15 HOT Lanes or stills

HOT Lanes b-roll

- Map w/ bullet points
- 4-Year Pilot project
 - Automated, variable tolling system
 - Good To Go! transponder required

the facility is maintained at a high level.

ANNCR:

Reliable travel times with fewer delays is exactly what daily commuters and impatient school kids expect. HOT Lanes deliver on this promise in many locations across the country.

SAMUEL JOHNSON :

At the onset, when the San Diego region first built the facility, the usage, even among HOV users, was very low. But, what we found as we started promoting FasTrak and we opened it as a HOT lanes facility, a lot of the initial customers realized the benefits of a single occupant and a light came on. They said, "You know what? This is a great facility and if I just get someone to ride with me, I can use it for free."

ANNCR:

For motorists and commuters in Seattle, Houston and San Diego, HOT Lanes are a reality. Let's take a look at each project and see how commuters and motorists are benefitting

ANNCR:

The SR-167 Project in Seattle is the first HOT Lane in the state of Washington and was opened as a pilot demonstration effort. Its goal is to create a successful HOT lane model that can be emulated elsewhere in the state. The project opened to the public in 2008. The Washington State DOT

VIDEOAUDIO

converted nine miles of HOV lanes to HOT lanes on SR 167 between Renton and Auburn.

CRAIG STONE :

The main purpose is getting the best utilization out of the lanes in the fact that we deal with the HOV problem from the standpoint of we have under-utilized HOV lanes and we have over-utilized HOV lanes. We have about 10 segments that are not meeting performance standards right now in the Central Puget Sound area. Going to three-plus from two-plus, I say, is like managing with a two-by-four from traffic operations. So, how can we use pricing, how can we use tolling, to get the best operations both out of under-utilized lanes but also being able to deal with that question of what do you do with an over-utilized lane?

ANNCR:

The I-10 widening project in Houston presented Texas Department of Transportation engineers with an opportunity to overhaul the existing corridor. What began as a single HOV lane operated only in the peak direction has been expanded to two full-time lanes in both directions.

RAQUELLE LEWIS :

Specifically, for the I-10 project, it was important to look at how we could move forward and deal with adding capacity and optimizing that capacity. So,

Map w/ bullet points

- 12 miles of roadway
- Uses dynamic tolling
- An all-electronic tollway for all vehicles
- Separated from the main lanes by flexible barriers

(3:09:27:01)

Background video: B-roll from I-10 HOT Lanes

VIDEOAUDIO

Map w/ bullet points

- Fares range from 50 cents to \$8
- Automated system named FasTrak
- Average I-15 traffic volume from 170,000 to as many as 295,000 vehicles a day

(1:08:23:10)

Background video: B-roll from San Diego I-15 HOT Lanes or stills

HOT Lane footage b-roll

one of the things we looked at in the early planning stages was how to implement a managed lane program that would afford us that. So, in going over the options, HOT lanes was one of the options that proved to be a very manageable way for us to add capacity, manage the added capacity that was being put on the system, and allow us some congestion management well into the future.

ANNCR:

San Diego's first implementation of HOT Lane technology is an eight-mile stretch of I-15. Once a FasTrak transponder is placed on the windshield of a car or truck, use of the lanes is controlled by a dynamic fee structure.

SAMUEL JOHNSON :

The public sentiment about HOT lanes in San Diego County has changed quite a bit. Initially, there was some concern. Would it be effective? Would it work? Was it a program that was considered elitist? We've put those concerns to rest. Now, the population of San Diego overwhelmingly supports HOT lanes.

ANNCR:

HOT Lanes are a reality. As with most new technologies, there are always surprises; issues you never expected crop-up. What have these pioneers learned about tolling and marketing challenges that come with HOT Lanes implementation?

VIDEO

(6:01:36:22)
Background video: HOT Lane
footage b-roll

(approx 2:06:02:23)
Background video: B-roll from SR-
167 HOT Lanes or stills

AUDIOROBERT ARNOLD :

When agencies implement pricing, they should be looking for strong goals and objectives that are easily discussed and presented to the public. On that point, there should also be a strong public outreach program, not only through implementation and development, but also a post-implementation during the operation of the facility itself.

Also, looking at interoperability of toll collection technologies, electronic toll collection technologies, is a way to reduce the administrative and overhead costs of the pricing program. So, they should be looking at what others are doing in the region and providing the interoperability of the toll collection.

CRAIG STONE :

After we opened, the biggest issue we have is striping. The lanes in Washington state, we have access continuous in-and-out of our HOV lanes. We've gone to a place, we have two-foot buffers with access zones. It's been the striping that the drivers have had the biggest challenge with. It hasn't been the technology. It hasn't been the toll price. It hasn't been the signing. It hasn't been the enforcement. It's being able to say, "I used to be able to get in and out of this HOV lane anywhere I wanted to. Now you're telling me I can only get in and out at different locations." It's interesting, because if you go to Southern California, that's the predominance of their operating system down there. So, it's new to Washington state and it's new to our drivers.

VIDEOAUDIO

Background video: HOT Lane b-roll
footage

CG: Proper signage
Clear lane markings
Public awareness campaign

(approx 3:28:55:21)
Background video: Houston HOT
Lane b-roll

ROBERT ARNOLD:

What has happened is, as the infrastructure has evolved, as the technology has evolved, we are actually at a nexus where we can begin to do these sorts of congestion pricing strategies in an effective and efficient manner.

ANNCR:

Proper signage and lane markings are critical. Plus a public awareness campaign to make sure motorists understand HOT Lanes and how they work.

RAQUELLE LEWIS :

If there was anything that I would, in the context of HOT lanes change in retrospect would be early identification of what we're going to refer to the lanes as and defining that nomenclature up-front so the people had an expectation and understanding of what was forthcoming. Even today, we struggle with, as I mentioned, whether we call it a managed lane, a tollway, a HOT lane. Are all those things the same? You have the nuances of them being any different from one another. That's confusing to the general public. We, as transportation professionals and practitioners, kind of get married to our nomenclature, which oftentimes confuses the general public. So, if there was anything that I could do in hindsight, it would be get all of that clear up-front so that once you start rolling it out, you have

VIDEO

(6:03:35:23)
Background video: HOT Lane
footage b-roll

CG: A single clear, concise message
on HOT Lanes

(2:17:06:10)
Background video: B-roll from SR-
167 HOT Lanes or stills

AUDIO

one consistent message from beginning to end that doesn't change as the tides change.

ROBERT ARNOLD :

We'd like to emphasize the importance of a public outreach program that not only engages the citizens and users of the facility in what the expectations and outcomes of the scheme would be, but also provide them information on the performance post-implementation and what they're actually getting for the price that they're paying.

ANNCR:

A clear, single message is vital. Make sure that everyone on the team calls the lanes by the same name. Make sure the public knows what a HOT Lane is.

CRAIG STONE :

One of the areas that we probably could have changed and looked at has been our marketing and our branding. We've talked a lot about express toll lanes. There's been talk about the HOT Lanes. Different terms have been used. Managed lanes has been used. We couldn't come to a place of marketing and branding that everyone inside the department and everybody inside the region could agree to. So what happened, we opened up the 167 HOT Lanes just because that was the definition, the discussion, all the conversations were an HOV Lane

VIDEOAUDIO

HOT Lane footage b-roll

(2:16:08:11)

Background video: B-roll from SR-167 HOT Lanes or stills

to a HOT Lane. So now, in Washington state, we have HOT Lanes. As we look to the future, we're exploring the idea of having two express toll lanes. Well, are they the same as the HOT Lane or are they different? We'd like to market them as express toll lanes. The public gets the idea that this is an express trip. It's being tolled. I am paying something for this express trip.

ANNCR:

Everyone agrees that a consistent message is vital for public understanding and acceptance. In most every location, once a monetary value was associated with a trip in the HOT Lane, there was an increased expectation that violators would not be tolerated. Did this change the way HOT Lanes were enforced in Seattle?

CRAIG STONE :

Our HOV enforcement actually did not change dramatically with the HOT lanes being put in place. We have three tickets that a state patrol officer can issue. One is just for HOV violation. One would be for violating any traffic control signs and the striping; those double stripes that we put down which was new to Washington state, as well as toll evasion. It's all enforced by an officer on the side of the road with a confirmation light that comes from the transponder readers. We found, also, that the state patrol officers issue mainly HOV violations. That way, it's more

VIDEOAUDIO

HOT Lane b-roll

(1:14:45:29)

Background video: B-roll from San Diego I-15 HOT Lanes or stills

CG: Be consistent
Understandable signage
Clear lane markings
Proper enforcement

secure, it's easier to identify that you were driving without someone else in your vehicle. And, if you didn't have a transponder, it was easy to then issue that ticket.

ANNCR:

Enforcement has not been a big issue in California, either.

SAMUEL JOHNSON :

For San Diego, there's not a difference in enforcement in operating it as an HOV facility versus an HOT facility. This is because we don't have a dedicated lane for HOT users to use to identify that they're paying a toll. So, our operating policy is, if you're a single occupant driver, we expect you to put your transponder in your window so the system can recognize you. Our enforcement strategy still relies heavily on our partnership with the California Highway Patrol and they do a simple visual inspection. If they see someone driving as a solo occupant and they don't have a transponder, they are cited as an HOV violator.

ANNCR:

HOT Lanes are viable, if the public knows what is expected of them. Be consistent in describing the lanes to the public. Make your signage messages clear. Make sure lane markings are understandable. Enforce proper HOT Lane use. Experience so far

VIDEOAUDIO

TRANSITION

Shot of HOT Lane in operation
 Shot of kids being picked-up after school

(6:02:54:14)

Background video: HOT Lane footage b-roll

CG: FHWA Office of Operations
http://www.ops.fhwa.dot.gov/freeway_mgmt/index.htm
 FHWA Tolling and Pricing Program
http://www.ops.fhwa.dot.gov/tolling_pricing/index.htm

indicates that the public likes HOT Lanes, if they know what the benefits are.

ANNCR :

There IS a way for employees to reliably get to and from work. Kids can be picked-up on time, even with crosstown traffic . HOT Lanes are a proven time-saver.

ROBERT ARNOLD :

The Federal Highway Administration has many program opportunities and program guidance on their website or through contact with the agency itself. Also, we can direct you towards agencies in states that currently have pricing programs and be able to partner with them to develop and put together a pricing scheme that works best for them.

ANNCR :

HOT Lanes may be a tool to help address traffic congestion issues in your area. For more information about implementing HOT Lanes, visit either of the following websites: The Federal Highway Administration Office of Operations (PAUSE) or the Federal Highway Administration Tolling and Pricing Program.