



Exploring I-75's Median Special Use (Managed) Lanes

Fall 2009

What are Special Use/Managed lanes?

Special Use lanes can be either reversible lanes or dual express lanes. A **Reversible Lane** is a lane in which traffic may travel in either direction depending on traffic conditions and time of day. Typically, they are meant to improve traffic flow in the peak direction of traffic during both the morning and afternoon rush hours. This is accomplished by daily phasing in of traffic to the reversible lane using overhead message boards, special signing, traffic control safety devices (signal lights, gates, vehicle restraint systems, etc.) on a regularly scheduled daily time interval. **Express Lanes** are special use lanes primarily reserved for High Occupancy Vehicles (HOV), Bus Rapid Transit/Express Buses, or longer-distance trips, and normally operate in both directions, providing additional capacity in both directions continuously. **Managed Lanes** are special use lanes (either Reversible or Express) that are tolled using a variable rate throughout the day. The variable toll increases or decreases throughout the day to maintain a minimum operating level of service and speed, dependant on volume of traffic. I-95 in Miami-Dade County is being converted to a partial managed lane highway.

Why are they effective?

The reversible or express lanes would significantly improve the capacity and operations of the I-75 corridor by providing two additional travel lanes in the median of the corridor. If reversible lanes were chosen, they would be designed to reverse direction to handle peak travel times (for example, southbound in the a.m./northbound in the p.m.). Peak hours are normally considered 7 a.m. to 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. Reversible lanes are normally operated for extended durations, for example, 5 a.m. to 11 a.m. for the morning peak direction, and 2 p.m. to 8 p.m. for the afternoon peak direction. The lanes could be opened to either direction during off-peak times or not open at all, depending on travel demand needs for the adjacent general purpose lanes.

Will the reversible or express lanes be tolled?

A determination whether or not the reversible/express lanes will be tolled has not yet been made. In any Florida Department of Transportation Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study, all options and alternatives must be identified, analyzed, and put through an evaluation screening process. Factors that will work into this part of the study include total anticipated

traffic volumes, peak hour traffic level of service, existing general purpose lane traffic projections, and capacity. In either case, the existing travel lanes would not be tolled.

How will vehicles access the reversible or express lanes?

The reversible/express lanes would be accessed from either the existing I-75 (general purpose) lanes from a new ramp connecting the existing lanes to the median reversible/express lanes, or from dedicated ramps from overpasses or interchange locations to the median reversible/express lanes. The exact number of access points and the limits (beginning and ending locations) of the reversible/express lanes have not yet been determined.

What are the immediate benefits?

By offering additional travel choices for each trip, the median special use lanes would provide the means to relieve congestion on the I-75 mainline while providing a free-flow alternative that will reduce delays and lower total driving hours for longer distance trips. The reversible or express lanes would primarily serve longer distance trips, thereby improving flow on the existing general purpose lanes by removing the longer distance trips from the traffic stream. In addition to individual commuters, this type of congestion management provides a valuable time saving benefit to essential services such as emergency vehicles, van pools, and express buses. See the **Exploring I-75's Transit Needs** insert for more information on potential transit improvements included in this PD&E Study.

Why would we want toll lanes?

Under any option being considered, only the new lanes in the middle of the freeway could be tolled. The existing lanes would remain free. The advantage tolling offers is twofold: 1) the tolls can help manage the volume of traffic on the Special Use lanes to provide an alternative travel mode on an as-needed basis; and 2) tolling provides an additional funding source for construction, operations and maintenance, allowing the overall project improvements to be built sooner than would be possible without the toll revenue.

Community Outreach

To learn more about our study, and how you can participate in the public involvement process, please visit our website at www.I-75Vision.com.

