

## **CRITERIA FOR HOT LANE SELECTION**

### **(1) How did you choose the 210, 10 and the 110 to implement HOT lanes?**

The primary criteria for selecting conversion of high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes to high occupancy toll (HOT) lanes along the I-10, I-110, and I-210 corridors include evidence of the following:

- High travel demand and traffic congestion levels
- Reduced travel time benefits due to lower travel speeds
- Availability of alternative travel modes, such as bus and rail service, along the HOV corridors and/or on the arterials and streets located in their vicinity.
- Existing HOV lanes (with sufficient length) that could provide significant travel time benefits

### **(2) Why is the I-405 not on the list of projects?**

First, because there are gaps in the HOV lanes along the I-405 corridor, with one significant segment missing where construction is to start soon. Second, this highway was not selected because of the lack of adequate parallel and reliable transit alternatives along the corridor.

## **FUNDING**

### **(3) When will USDOT have a response to Metro's application for transportation funds?**

USDOT has formally notified Metro and Caltrans of its decision to select the Los Angeles region as the recipient of a federal grant of \$213.6 million. On April 25, 2008, the Metro Board authorized the CEO to enter into negotiations with USDOT. The disbursement of funds is contingent upon securing necessary legal authority from the State (see question #5 below for more details).

### **(4) What is the estimated total cost to implement the HOT lane system on the I-10 and I-210?**

The estimated cost to implement the HOT lanes along the I-10 (from Interstate 605 to Alameda St. in downtown Los Angeles) and the I-210 (from Interstate 605 to State Route 134 near Pasadena) is approximately \$100 million.

### **(5) What is the sequence in accessing the \$213.6 million in federal monies for transit enhancements?**

The sequence for accessing federal monies is as follows:

- A. Projects must be included in the Los Angeles Transportation Improvement Program and Long Range Transportation Plan and SCAG's Regional Transportation Plan.
- B. Availability of funds to implement the HOT lanes must be certified by September 30, 2008.
- C. State legislative authority to implement and operate the HOT lanes must be obtained by October 15, 2008.

**(6) Will the State (Caltrans) pay for any portion of the project?**

Caltrans has committed \$800,000 for developing the operating plan and will prepare the environmental documentation that is needed.

**USE OF TOLL PROCEEDS**

**(7) What is the structure controlling expenditure of the proceeds of the tolls, to the extent they exceed operating costs?**

The State law authorizing the project would specify the eligible use of the net revenues. State legislation for similar projects in California requires that net revenues be used for transit projects and other related improvements in/along the HOT lanes. Federal legislation allows for the use of net revenues for any project that improves the success of the operations of the HOT lanes. Our application to the USDOT stated that we would use toll revenues after expenses for improvements along the HOT lane corridor including for example additional transit facilities and service, subsidies for vanpools and funding for advanced traffic signal timing and arterial capacity improvements.

**(8) Can price adjustments be made after the policy has been approved, or are the fees going to be fixed?**

Fees will be adjusted according to the level of travel demand to guarantee reliable travel speeds of at least 45-50 mph and to avoid congestion. This is to be done electronically and without the need for the vehicles to stop to make payments, similar to the process in San Diego's I-15. Fees will be set higher during peak-periods of travel.

**PLAN ELEMENTS**

**(9) Did Metro consider a plan that included robust parking reforms in the greater downtown Los Angeles area – similar to Chicago's congestion reduction plan?**

Yes, the proposal that was submitted to the USDOT included an Intelligent Parking Management Program comprised of significant parking reforms that included variable pricing.

**(10) Does the agreement with the DOT stipulate the duration of the HOT lanes demonstration program?**

The MOU with USDOT does not stipulate the duration of the HOT lanes demonstration program. However, the application submitted to the USDOT indicated that the duration of the HOT lanes demonstration will be one year.

**(11) What is the length of the project?**

The length of the I-10 HOT lane is 14 miles (28 lane miles).  
The length of the I-210 HOT lane is 12 miles (24 lane miles).

**(12) Is there going to be an environmental study done on the project? Will there be mitigation?**

Yes, Caltrans will conduct an environmental study and impacts will be mitigated.

## **EQUITY**

**(13) Will there be discounts afforded to the elderly, poor, and students in order to minimize potential impacts?**

The potential impact of tolling on low income commuters is one of the biggest issues of concern raised to date by numerous elected officials and community activists. Metro is sensitive to this concern, and we recognize the extent to which HOT lanes may be perceived as being out of reach for those with limited financial means.

Metro intends to develop a program specifically designed to assist low income commuters. One idea would be to provide HOT lane credits for regular transit users which would enable them to redeem credits for free access to HOT lanes on those occasions when driving a car is necessary. There are other promising and creative options currently being explored. Metro is committed to developing a system of comprehensive mobility improvements that works for individuals of all income levels.

**(14) Would carpoolers and solo drivers of hybrid vehicles have to pay a toll to use the HOT lanes?**

Vehicles meeting higher passenger occupancy requirements will be charged a discounted fee and may not need to pay at all if traveling in vanpools or the larger carpools. As for hybrids, the federal law that allows hybrids to access the high occupancy vehicle lanes without the need to meet the minimum passenger occupancy requirements expires on September 30, 2009. It could expire earlier if a state Department of Transportation, such as Caltrans, determines that such exemption is resulting in the degradation of the performance of the facility (speeds

lower than 45 mph). Under California law, this exemption expires on January 1, 2011. However, it could end earlier if recommended by Caltrans.

**(15) Chicago is the other city to receive a congestion reduction grant from USDOT. However, Chicago has merely proposed a variable parking program, whereas the scope of Metro's project is far more extensive. Why can't Metro simply offer a parking program as a condition of receiving federal funds? Chicago's proposal is simple and noncontroversial, yet they qualified for a grant. Metro should have done the same.**

Like Metro, the City of Chicago has also been selected by USDOT for a pilot program under the Congestion Reduction Demonstration Program. However, Chicago's overall program is vastly different, and one cannot compare Chicago's efforts with that of Los Angeles County. It is not a valid comparison.

Mayor Daley, who has been a strong proponent of innovative approaches to congestion management and private investment in transportation infrastructure, has employed several approaches, this pilot being the latest. The Chicago pilot, a variable parking plan proposal in downtown Chicago, is just one of several projects undertaken by the city over the past roughly two years aimed at both private equity investment in transportation infrastructure and congestion management. The first, a controversial 99-year lease concession agreement whereby the city transferred effective ownership and operation of the Chicago Skyway toll road to a consortium of Australian investment banks in return for \$1.8 billion in upfront cash, has resulted in immediate increases in tolls, with further increases planned over the next several years. Other projects have included the sale/lease of the Grant Park parking garages and plans to complete a concession-lease agreement for Midway Airport, similar to the Skyway transaction. The Chicago pilot proposed under DOT's program is but one element in an overall plan that continues to be developed by city officials. Other proposals are likely to follow in the near term. Chicago does not have HOV lanes per se, but they are exploring variable pricing on existing reversible "Express Lanes".

## **PROGRAM EVALUATION**

**(16) What factors will be used to evaluate the success and failure of the program?**

The program will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- Minimum travel speeds of at least 45 mph along the HOT lanes.
- Increase in transit ridership along the corridor where the program is instituted
- Increase in vehicle and passenger throughput
- Travel speed reliability

**(17) What happens after one year of the program's implementation?**

The program will be re-evaluated according to the performance criteria identified in response to question #15.

**(18) Will Metro reserve the right to re-implement the HOV lanes if the policy fails to increase mobility and decrease congestion?**

Performance of the program will be monitored and adjustments made accordingly. Similar to other HOT lane demonstration projects that have been approved (many of them already implemented) in California, it is expected that such a monitoring program will be required, consistent with state law. HOT lanes could return to HOV status if the program is deemed unsuccessful.

**COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION**

**(19) What is your community outreach plan? What community outreach has been done already?**

The Metro Board has awarded a 12-month consultant contract for developing a congestion pricing operating plan that includes a community outreach program in which the baseline message to all community groups is that this travel demand strategy must work and provide benefits for everyone. Extensive outreach will include survey work, educational campaigns, presentations and explaining the program to a wide variety of constituents. Metro will form advisory groups to engage representatives of local cities, local governments, private and public agencies, as well as the community.

Initially, surveys will be conducted and the data analyzed to assess the public perception on key issues related to congestion-reduction, including pricing. These surveys will provide further guidance for conducting public outreach in Los Angeles County via community meetings, focus groups, workshops, and media. Outreach efforts will be tailored to educate stakeholders about potential impacts, proposed mitigations, and the range of viable travel choices available in the region. Included in the outreach plan is a diversified media program, rich in graphics, with the opportunity for broad distribution through DVDs, electronic media and through multi-ethnic media venues.

The consultant team is expected to begin outreach efforts later this month. In advance of the consultant's efforts, Metro has conducted several briefings with Councils of Governments, local and regional transportation agencies, and federal, state and local elected officials.