

Managed lanes: promoting some uses while funding infrastructure

→ INFLUENCING TIME AND PRICE TO CHANGE HABITS

Managed lanes resulted from the oil crises in the 1970s^{224,225}. To increase the occupancy rate of vehicles, bus lanes on key thoroughfares were opened to carpooling. This network of managed lanes has stood the test of time. The increase in federal funding for infrastructure projects aimed at reducing CO₂ emissions has led many US States to develop managed lane projects with a view to enhancing public transportation and carpooling. In the mid-1990s, this network of lanes reserved for buses and carpooling was rounded off with priority lanes, for drivers who placed great importance on saving time²²⁶, i.e. they would prefer to pay more to reduce their journey time and use the time saved for other activities. These new lanes guarantee optimal journey times by acting on congestion levels through dynamic infrastructure pricing²²⁷.

→ MAKING THE ROAD A VEHICLE FOR CHANGING BEHAVIOURS

The spatial, financial and environmental pressures cities face limit municipalities' ability to build new lanes in built-up areas or extend existing road networks. Future public transportation requirements can no longer be met by building new road or rail infrastructure.

Managed lanes meet three objectives: maintaining an optimal service level on the road in question or the motorway, achieved through a reduction in the volume of traffic by influencing the price or journey time, improving the commercial speed of public transportation lines and producing revenues to finance projects on the thoroughfare concerned. The benefit of managed lanes lies in their ability to promote certain uses, ultimately to make them the majority and strengthen the efficiency of the public transportation networks.

Furthermore, as the road network is already established across the territory, the cost of introducing a managed lane is lower than that of building a new infrastructure or dedicated routes (high-service buses, trams, underground trains, etc.).

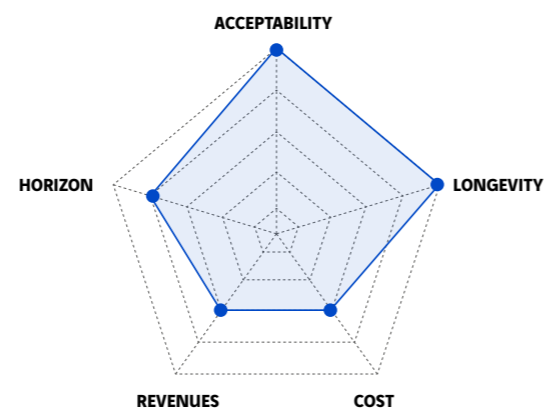
→ A NEW FINANCIAL RESOURCE TO IMPROVE A THOROUGHFARE WHILE PROMOTING "EXEMPLARY" TRANSPORTATION

The revenues from managed lanes depend greatly on the volumes of traffic and infrastructure operating costs, which themselves are dependent on the technology used and the length of the road. When operating costs are too high, as is the case for example on the I-95 in Miami (\$8.2 million for 2011 alone), the revenues of managed lanes are used to cover operating and infrastructure maintenance costs. Conversely, if a managed lane generates net revenues (after payment of operating costs), the scope for funding is greater. This resource can then be used in several ways: debt repayment, investment in improving the road network or funding new mobility services²²⁸. This is for example the case in California, in the County of Santa Clara, where, according to the California Streets and Highways Code, the revenues from managed lanes have the primary purpose of funding road maintenance and improvements. However, in the event of revenues exceeding infrastructure maintenance costs, the Code provides for the surplus to be used to finance transportation services on the roads on which they were generated²²⁹. The Santa Clara Valley Transport Authority has financed an express bus route and a regular bus service (Express bus 104 and bus 120)²³⁰.

Two pitfalls exist, however. Firstly, the ability to build a managed lane is subject to the presence of sufficient space, which is not always the case in areas that are already developed or are geographically restricted. Secondly, the issue of such a measure's social acceptability remains a challenge. The choice of promoting some uses over others may upset some people, particularly those working in professions in which competitiveness depends on traffic flows and the cost of using roads (taxis, ridehailing services, crafts industries, etc.).



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