



Florida Department of Transportation Research

Investigation of the Feasibility of Toll and Transit Agency Equity Sharing

BDK85 977-09

When addressing increasing traffic volumes on highways, an alternative to adding lanes and supporting infrastructure is managing traffic demand by incentivizing travelers to carpool or use mass transit. High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes are a common site in larger urban areas, and dedicated bus lanes are becoming more common. Less well known are High Occupancy Toll (HOT) lanes. HOT lanes are free to certain classes of vehicles, such as buses, carpools, and motorcycles, which reduce facility demand and pollution, but vehicles with less than a certain number of occupants must pay a toll to use the lane. The toll is paid electronically and often adjusted depending on traffic conditions.

The concept of HOT lanes has been combined with Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), dedicated bus lanes, into the idea of Bus Toll Lanes (BTL). Effectively, these are BRT lanes which are accessible to other vehicles for a toll. Creation and operation of these lanes requires the cooperation of transit authorities, whose expertise includes scheduling and maintenance for bus systems, and toll highway authorities, whose expertise include planning, construction, maintenance, and fiscal control of toll highways. BTLs offer the possibility of a revenue stream that can offset construction costs or operating expenses of cooperating agencies.

In this report, researchers from the University of South Florida examine the issues surrounding creation of BTLs. Development of the BTL concept requires consideration of several policy, programmatic and regulatory questions, especially how two types of agencies that do not normally overlap can plan and work together.

The researchers begin the report by providing some background on the issue and discussing various models of toll and transit agency partnerships. To fully explore the issues, the researchers designed a scenario to construct a two-lane BTL facility mostly in the median of an



Existing HOT lanes on I-95 in Miami are similar to the concept of the Bus Toll Lanes explored in this report.

existing interstate highway with a connection to an existing express tolled facility. This hypothetical BTL would connect suburban areas north of town to a downtown core with access to the facility at major east-west highway connections. Expenses and revenues of the project are estimated, and options for management are presented.

In the next phase of the project, the researchers reviewed federal and Florida statutes and regulations to identify relevant issues. Interviews were conducted with experts from various transportation sectors at various government levels. Issues explored included the availability of funding under existing legislation and transportation programs. Whether BTLs qualify for New Starts funding remains a question, but federal tolling provisions appear to permit implementation of a Bus Toll Lane project, even on interstate highways.

A number of steps would be needed at the state level to address public acceptance of the BTL concept and to modify statutes of expressway authorities to allow them to construct, operate and maintain public transportation facilities.