



U.S. Department of  
Transportation

# *Congestion Initiative*

*Louisiana Transportation  
Engineers Conference*

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US Department of Transportation



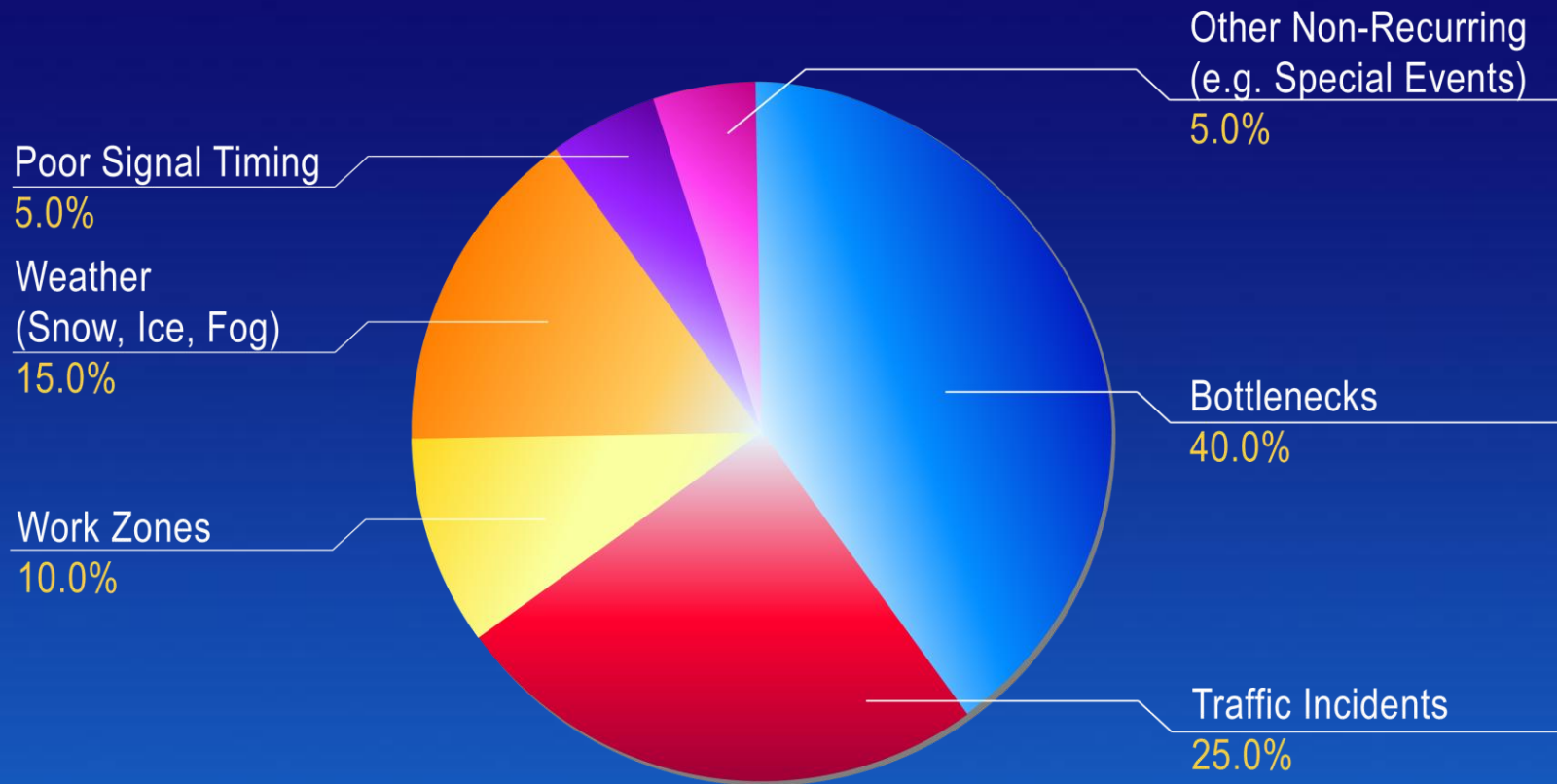
# Crisis of Congestion: A Tax on the Nation

- **Commuting costs:** Each motorist stuck in traffic wastes on average 47 hours and 30 gallons of fuel every year – at a cost of \$800 per person annually
- **Quality of life:** Reduced air quality, less time with family and friends.
- **Productivity:** Delays to trucks and unreliability of delivery times increase costs for businesses and reduce economic competitiveness.



Congestion on I-95 in Northern Virginia

# Sources of Highway Congestion



Source: "Traffic Congestion and Reliability," FHWA (September, 2005)

# Challenges in Reducing Highway Congestion

- The price of highway travel (gas taxes, registration fees, etc.) bears little or no relationship to the cost of congestion.
- Unlike other public utilities, the public expectation is that the “service” is free or does not change with changes in demand.
- The highway industry has a long tradition of infrastructure building and has only recently begun to embrace the importance of system management and operations.

# A Six-Point Plan

1. Relieve urban congestion.
2. Unleash private sector investment resources.
3. Promote operational and technological improvements.
4. Establish a “Corridors of the Future” competition.
5. Target major freight bottlenecks and expand freight policy outreach.
6. Accelerate major aviation capacity projects and provide a future funding framework.

# 1. Relieve Urban Congestion



- Create urban partnerships to pursue congestion pricing.
- Promote HOV to HOT conversion.
- Implement meaningful congestion management process.
- Reduce impacts of bottlenecks.

# Congestion Pricing: Cordon Pricing



Signs for cordon pricing in London

## Stockholm

- Downtown cordon pricing has reduced traffic in the downtown area by 25%, increased transit ridership by 5%, and reduced vehicle emissions by 14%. Fees vary by time of day.

## London

- Downtown cordon pricing has increased vehicle speed by 37%, reduced delays by 30%, and decreased taxi travel costs by as much as 40%. Fees are currently uniform, but will soon move to a variable structure.

## Singapore

- Fully automated electronic fee collection system (the first of its kind in the world) has reduced traffic by 13% and increased vehicle speed 22%. Fees are variable.

# Congestion Pricing: HOT Lanes



Express Lanes on California SR-91 charge all users of the 10-mile stretch between Anaheim and Riverside, with discounted rates for cars with 3+ occupants.



Single occupancy cars pay to use an 8-mile (FasTrak) stretch of I-15 outside of San Diego. Some of the proceeds are used to fund transit projects and operations. Fees vary based on entry points and real-time traffic levels.



I-394 MnPass Express Lanes allow single occupancy cars to use 11 miles of carpool (HOV) lanes between downtown Minneapolis and the western suburbs. Fees vary every 6 min. based on real-time traffic levels.

# Relieve Urban Congestion

## Create Urban Partnerships

Create urban congestion partnerships with urban areas willing to **implement broad congestion pricing**, plus

- New or expanded bus rapid transit.
- Expanded telecommuting/flexible work schedules.
- Technology/operations strategies.

Federal Register notice issued: December 2006

Two-Phase Process:

March, 2007 – “Application” from States, counties, cities, MPO’s, etc.

May, 2007 – USDOT designates preliminary urban partners.

July, 2007 – USDOT selects urban partners.

## 2. Unleash Private Sector Investment Resources

### Public Private Partnerships (PPP)

#### Opportunity:

- Emergence of PPP's as mechanism to support needed transportation investments.
- 21 States currently have enabling PPP legislation.

#### Actions:

- Engage with partners on potential role of PPP's within State.
- Provide technical support to assist partners in entering successful PPP's

### 3. Promote Operational and Technological Improvements



- Improve traveler information.
- Reduce incident delay.
- Reduce work zone delay.
- Improve traffic signal timing.

# Technology and Operations

## Improve Traveler Information

### Challenges:

- 511 accessible to 35% of American public.
- 20 of 40 largest metro areas post travel time on DMS.

### Actions:

- Nationwide 511 Deployment.
- Travel time on all urban DMS signs.
- SAFETEA-LU Section 1201 – Implementation (NPRM).

# Traveler Information

Example: **COLOGNE, GERMANY**

Drivers are provided travel times (real time) comparisons to city center via car or via adjacent park-and-ride option with info on next train



# Technology and Operations

## Reduce Incident Delay

### Challenges:

- 25% of all congestion.
- 1-minute closure = 4-minute delay.

### Actions:

- “Move it” laws.
- Quick clearance policies.
- Full function service patrols.
- Integrated transportation/law enforcement technology.

# Integrated Transportation and Law Enforcement Technology



Strategy for Reducing Congestion



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# Technology and Operations

## Reduce Work Zone Delay

### Challenge/Opportunity:

- 10% of all congestion.
- 20% of NHS under construction in peak season.
- Highways for Life (HfL) program authorized at \$20 million/year.
- HfL projects eligible for 100% Federal share.

### Actions:

- Implement work zone safety and mobility final rule.
- Identify opportunities to leverage HfL program in support of Congestion Initiative.

# Technology and Operations

## Improve Traffic Signal Timing

### Challenge:

- Nationally operating at D-level.

### Actions:

- Increase awareness/funding (Signal Report Card).
- Champion regular signal retiming programs.
- Implement ACS lite.

## 4. Corridors of the Future

**Identify up to five major growth corridors in need of long-term investment.**

Federal Register notice issued: September 5, 2006.  
(Volume 71, Number 171)

Two-Phase Process:

October 23, 2006 – "Expression of Interest" from State, multiple States, private sector entity (40 received).

April 2, 2007 – Detailed applications submitted

# 4. Corridors of the Future

## Objectives

- 1) Promote innovative national and regional approaches to congestion mitigation.
- 2) Address major transportation investment needs.
- 3) Illustrate the benefits of alternative financial models that involve private sector capital.

# 4. Corridors of the Future

## Objectives

- 4) Promote a more efficient environmental review and project development process.
- 5) Develop corridors that will increase freight system reliability and enhance the quality of life for U.S. citizens.
- 6) Demonstrate the viability of a transportation investment model based on sound economics and market principles.

*“Congestion is not a fact of life. We need a new approach, and we need it now.”*

Former Secretary Norman Y. Mineta, May 2006

*“Mobility is one of our country’s greatest freedoms, but congestion...limits predictable and reliable movement of people and goods and poses a serious threat to continued economic growth.”*

Secretary Mary Peters, October 2006

# *For More Information*

## **FHWA Focus On Congestion Relief**

<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/congestion/index.htm>

## **Freight Analysis**

[http://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/freight/freight\\_analysis/index.htm](http://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/freight/freight_analysis/index.htm)

## **USDOT Fight Gridlock Website**

<http://www.fightgridlocknow.gov/>

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