

Managed Lanes Concept

A Fact Sheet Prepared by the Atlanta Regional Commission

June 2007

Managed lanes are a system tool that the Atlanta region uses to provide and maintain mobility and travel options for the citizens and travelers in the Atlanta region. Since the 1990s, managed lanes have been successfully implemented on the region's freeway network with the most recent addition on I-85 north in 2004. In this context, managed lanes refer to a system of lanes that use eligibility, access, pricing, or any combination of, to preserve mobility on the managed lanes. As of 2006, the baseline managed lane policy is to allow only carpools of at least 2 people, certain types of alternatively fueled vehicles, motorcycles, and transit to use the managed lanes. As such, the baseline policy managed lanes system operates primarily as a High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) system, using eligibility and access restrictions to preserve mobility.

Many areas in the U.S. have implemented managed lanes concepts that use pricing in addition to eligibility and access to manage congestion on a managed lane facility or system. Pricing refers to a toll policy that helps regulate user demand on a managed facility while guaranteeing a reliable and appropriate travel or trip time. Travel reliability cannot be guaranteed without the use of pricing when traditional HOV lanes begin to experience congestion. Along many corridors, this will be the situation in the Atlanta region by year 2030, the horizon year of this plan. If this were allowed to happen, many of the advantages of managed lanes in this region will disappear.

Pricing is a toll policy that links driving behavior to the economic value of making a trip. The concept is implemented by associating a realized price (a toll) with roadway usage. The price adjusts according to the level of congestion in the managed lanes. As congestion in the managed lanes increases, so does the price to access the managed lanes. The higher price discourages additional vehicles on adjacent non-priced lanes from entering, and thus enables acceptable speeds to be maintained on the

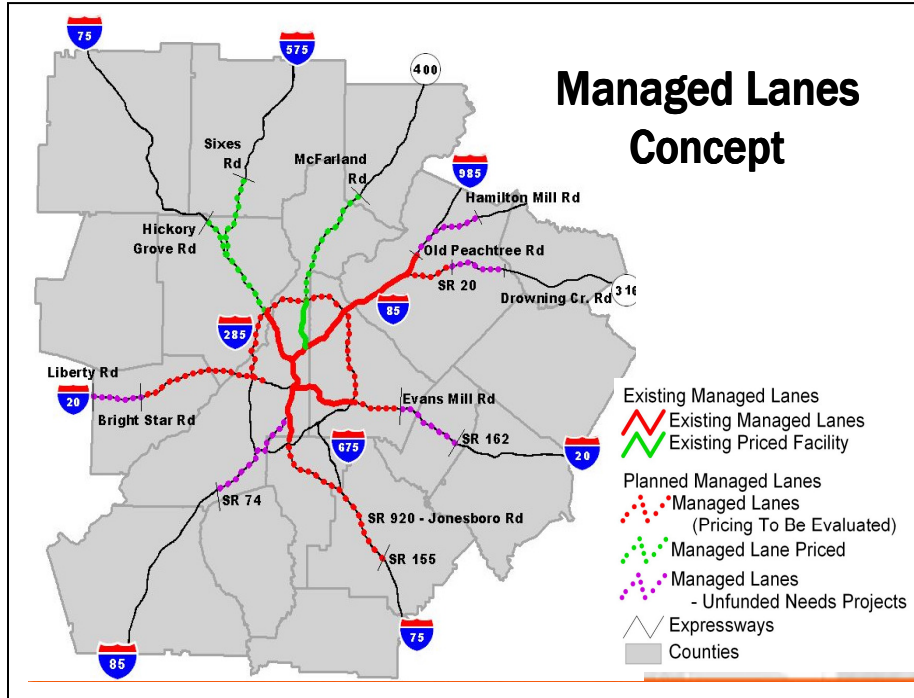


Source: Georgia Department of Transportation

managed lanes. When the managed lanes are underutilized, the price to access the managed lanes decreases until the excess capacity is no longer available. Once excess capacity has been sold, the price will again begin to increase so as to maintain travel time reliability and speeds. Crucial to this concept is the demand for use of the managed lanes system. Those travelers valuing the time savings more than the realized price choose to use the managed lanes. Managed lanes provide an option of a reliable and acceptable trip time when adjacent non-priced lanes cannot.

The most effective managed lanes improvements generally involve regional networks of managed lanes, with a system of supporting facilities and services, such as transit stations or, on a smaller scale, park and ride lots. In the Atlanta region, the baseline foundation for managed lanes relies on the HOV Strategic Implementation Plan developed by the Georgia Department of Transportation. The GDOT is currently in the process of updating the baseline concept to incorporate pricing. Once the baseline concept is formally updated, future long-range transportation plans will support the managed lane system just as previous plans support an extensive HOV expansion. The managed lanes concept simply adds pricing as a tool to guarantee travel speeds along corridors as needed.

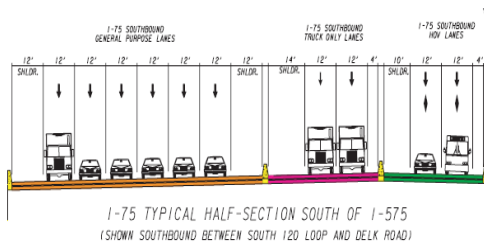
Current Planning Activities for Managed Lanes throughout the Region



Truck Only Lanes

Truck Only Lanes, a system of lanes limited to heavy duty trucks, is also being evaluated in the Atlanta region. This concept is being considered by the GDOT in conjunction with the planned managed lanes expansion on the interstate system. Atlanta is already a major freight hub with truck traffic anticipated to double over the next twenty years.

Proposed Example



Source: www.nwbtrt.com

Envision6 Managed Lanes Planning Team

In August of 2005, ARC formed and led a managed lanes planning team to discuss the shift in concept of the planned managed lanes expansion. The team set a goal of developing regional policy that incorporated the pricing

concept. Team members include representatives from the Georgia Department of Transportation, Georgia Regional Transportation Authority, Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority, and the State Road and Tollway Authority. Representatives from the U.S. Department of Transportation were also invited to attend. The resulting policy is broken into 5 key areas that the team felt needed to be addressed.

1. Efficiency
2. Revenue
3. Regional Goals
4. Transit
5. Accessibility

The final policy was adopted by the ARC Board in June 2007.

For more information

Rachel Cogburn, Managed Lanes Coordinator
404-463-3283
rcogburn@atlantaregional.com