USDOT Congestion Initiative Update: The Federal Government Takes Up the Congestion Challenge

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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.
Crisis of Congestion
Wasted Hours Across America

- Congestion has increased dramatically over the past 20 years in the 85 largest U.S. cities. During this time the number of hours lost each year by an average driver to congestion increased from 17 to almost 50.*

- In the 13 largest cities, drivers now spend the equivalent of almost 8 work days each year stuck in traffic.*

* Texas Transportation Institute, 2005 Urban Mobility Report
USDOT’s Congestion Initiative: A Six-Point Plan

- Relieve Urban Congestion.
- Unleash private sector investment resources.
- *Promote operational and technological improvements.*
- Establish a “Corridors of the Future” competition.
- Target major freight bottlenecks and expand freight policy outreach.
- Accelerate major aviation capacity projects and provide a future funding framework.
Operational and Technological Improvements

Strategy to Reduce Congestion

- Traffic Signal Timing
- Incident Management
- Traveler Information
- Bottleneck Reduction
- Work Zone Management
Congestion experienced by highway travelers is caused by many different factors. 

- **Bottlenecks**: 40% 
- **Traffic Incidents**: 25% 
- **Work Zones**: 10% 
- **Bad Weather**: 15% 
- **Poor Signal Timing**: 5% 
- **Special Events**: 5%

*Strategy to Reduce Congestion*
Enhanced Incident Management

- Advance move-it laws.
- Establish quick clearance policy agreements.
- Promote full function service patrols.
- Data integration.
- Performance measures.
Enhanced Work Zone Mobility

- Support implementation of the key concepts of the Work Zone Safety and Mobility Final Rule:
  - Better understand, anticipate and plan for the impacts.
  - Do so early in the program delivery process.
  - Consider solutions that go beyond the immediate location of the work zone.
  - Integrate this thinking in the agency/DOT culture.
Enhanced Traveler Information

- Implement 511
- Implement travel times on DMS.
- Establish Real-time Traveler Information Program (SAFTEA-LU, section 1201).
511 Deployment Status
as of October 1, 2007

Accessible by 46% of Population

- Green: 511 Operational (“Live”)
- Blue: Expected “Live” in 2008

D.C.

Accessible by 65% of Population in 2008

Strategy to Reduce Congestion
Strategy to Reduce Congestion

Travel Times on DMS Status

Total combined, as of July 12, 2007

- Orange = Provide Travel Times (35)
- Yellow = Plans to Provide Travel Times (16)
- Red Star = “Top 40” Metro Area (26 / 40)
Improved Traffic Signal Timing

- National Report Card
  - Traffic Signal Audit Guide implemented
  - Release of report card (Oct 9\textsuperscript{th})
- ACS-Lite available
  - Lessons learned from test sites.
  - Technical assistance, training, outreach.
  - First “real” deployment – 11/07 Tyler, Tx
- Traffic Signal Timing Manual – 01/08
Operational Improvements to Alleviate Bottleneck Congestion

- Establish and learn from lead States
- Released primer (July 2007); update electronic version with good ideas.
- Initiate dialogue with states to pursue innovative, low-cost solutions (July 2007).
Summary

Many opportunities to reduce congestion, and the USDOT is working to help State and local agencies take advantage of these opportunities.

FHWA’s “Operational & Technological Improvements” website
http://www.oti.dot.gov/