



November 22, 2002

Nov 22 - HOV Policy

Metropolitan
Transportation
Authority

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TO: BOARD OF DIRECTORS

THROUGH: ROGER SNOBLE
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

FROM: JAMES L. DE LA LOZA
EXECUTIVE OFFICER
COUNTYWIDE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

SUBJECT: CONVERSION OF HOV GUIDING PRINCIPLES TO HOV
POLICIES – HOV PERFORMANCE PROGRAM
EVALUATION REPORT

ISSUE

The MTA Board approved a set of HOV Guiding Principles as part of the HOV Performance Program Evaluation Report on September 26, 2002. To conform with the format for MTA program policies, MTA staff has reformatted the "HOV Guiding Principles" to "HOV Policies". Attachment A is the reformatted HOV Policies in the standard MTA format for such document.

DISCUSSION

MTA promotes using HOV lanes as a viable transportation choice that is safe, environmentally supportive and encourages ridesharing in an effort to improve mobility throughout the Los Angeles County. The HOV Policies implement MTA's commitment to promote ridesharing through the use of carpools, vanpools and transit. The MTA's 2002 HOV Performance Program Evaluation Report verifies that HOV lanes shorten overall travel times and move more people faster than mixed flow lanes. The HOV Policies provide direction for more efficient HOV lane operation and cost effective completion of the countywide HOV system. These HOV Policies are hence designed to provide a more convenient choice for improving mobility.

NEXT STEPS

MTA staff will utilize these policies and share with other interested organizations as appropriate in the development of MTA's HOV Program.

ATTACHMENT

Attachment A – HOV Policies

ATTACHMENT A

HOV Policies

Purpose

MTA promotes the use of HOV lanes as a viable transportation choice that is safe, environmentally supportive and encourages ridesharing in an effort to improve mobility throughout the Los Angeles County Transportation System. The HOV Policies implement MTA's commitment to promote the use of carpools, vanpools and transit. The MTA's 2002 HOV Performance Program Evaluation Report verifies that HOV lanes shorten overall travel times and move more people faster than mixed flow lanes. The HOV Policies provide direction for more efficient HOV lane operation and cost effective completion of the countywide HOV system.

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for ensuring that the HOV Policies are converted to an action plan, budgeted and appropriately implemented.

Policy 1.0 -- Capital Investments

Based on results from the performance program, three areas were identified where future capital investments in the HOV system plan are needed:

1.1 HOV Gap Closures. The MTA will pursue completion of gaps in the currently defined countywide HOV system plan and its connections with adjacent counties. The MTA will generally utilize the methodology that was developed and tested on select freeway-to-freeway connectors as part of the performance program. This methodology utilized future traffic volume and travel time forecasts generated using the MTA Travel Simulation Model, existing average vehicle occupancy rates and accident locations derived from performance program data, and conceptual design impacts and cost estimates specifically developed for each location to score and rank the potential facilities. For the purpose of future gap closure evaluation, this methodology will be further enhanced by incorporating a benefit-cost element that will follow the modified California Benefit Cost (Cal BC) Model that was applied as part of the performance program evaluation of existing HOV facilities. The MTA will work with Caltrans to perform these evaluations and to secure and program funding for needed gap closures. The MTA will discuss parameters and needed modification to this methodology with Caltrans such as life-cycle periods, transit service, etc. This approach will ensure a planning process that advances the most logical evolution of a more continuous system of HOV lanes, promotes increased transit and ridesharing, and optimizes operational efficiency where lane discontinuities currently constrain freeway and HOV operations.

1.2 Freeway-to-Freeway HOV Connectors. The MTA will pursue freeway-to-freeway HOV connectors at strategic locations between intersecting HOV freeway corridors. The MTA will generally utilize the methodology that was developed and tested on select freeway-to-

freeway connectors as part of the performance program. This methodology utilized future traffic volume and travel time forecasts generated using the MTA Travel Simulation Model, existing average vehicle occupancy rates and accident locations derived from performance program data, and conceptual design impacts and cost estimates specifically developed for each location to score and rank the potential facilities. For the purpose of future potential HOV Direct Connectors evaluation, this methodology will be further enhanced by incorporating a benefit-cost element that will follow the modified California Benefit Cost (Cal BC) Model that was applied as part of the performance program evaluation of existing HOV facilities. The MTA will work with Caltrans to perform evaluations to prioritize candidate locations and to secure and program the funding needed for these capital investments. Implementing HOV connectors will provide even greater travel time saving and trip reliability to bus riders and carpoolers, and will enhance both HOV and freeway operations by minimizing HOV weaving and merging at freeway interchange locations.

1.3 Transit Facilities. The MTA will actively plan and implement transit services, transit stations, park-and-ride lots, and direct access ramp connections with existing HOV lanes to gain greater efficiency and use of the current HOV lane investment. Transit facility investments are particularly critical on routes where HOV lane operational capacity has been reached and increasing occupancy requirements to three or more persons per vehicle are required. In order to achieve the same success as evidenced on the El Monte Busway, the MTA will work with Caltrans and affected transit service providers and jurisdictions to develop an evaluation methodology to identify transit markets that could be better served using HOV facilities, and to define, evaluate and rank specific transit investments that will be needed.

Policy 2.0 -- HOV Operations

2.1 The MTA supports the operation of HOV facilities on a 24-hours/7 days a week basis. Only when the measured HOV lane volumes are less than federal and state standards (e.g., 800 vehicles per hour) and other remedial actions have not been successful in increasing use of the facility, part time HOV operation would be considered. Part time HOV operations should not be considered during the first 3 years of operation to allow adequate time for ridesharing and transit use to develop. Any part time HOV operations must be coordinated with and approved by appropriate state and federal agencies, and may require repayment of any federal funds used for HOV capital investments.

2.2 The MTA will work with Caltrans and other agencies to examine HOV facilities currently reaching capacity at the 2+ vehicle-occupancy level for possible operating alternatives to sustain travel time savings and trip time reliability. These alternatives may include restriping or otherwise modifying lane design to address isolated capacity conditions, raising the vehicle-occupancy requirement to 3+ during congested periods, and adding or increasing transit services as a means of regulating demand. Evaluations will be needed to address the best combination of strategies which will preserve current benefits and generate the potential to serve additional person movement.

2.3 The MTA supports a 2+ vehicle-occupancy requirement. When maximum design limits for HOV traffic volumes (1,600 vehicles per hour) are being approached, 3+ vehicle-occupancy level would be considered during peak commute hours. Before the 3+ vehicle-occupancy restriction is put in effect, a comprehensive analysis based on the Caltrans methodology for evaluating the benefit-cost of capacity enhancing projects will be conducted to assess the best combination of strategies to transition a project from 2+ to 3+. After the 3+ vehicle-occupancy restriction is in effect, the effectiveness of the restriction would be assessed.

2.4 The MTA will periodically assess the need for new bus services and expanding existing services on HOV lanes. The assessments will evaluate existing routes, common origin/destination pairs in unserved travel markets, and major employment locations. The assessment will be undertaken in coordination with Caltrans and transit operators.

2.5 The MTA endorses the California Highway Patrol (CHP) role in providing ongoing enforcement of the HOV lanes, and will work with CHP and Caltrans to pursue innovative strategies and facility modifications to improve enforcement and to reduce the costs associated with enforcement.

Policy 3.0 -- Public Education and Awareness

3.1 MTA shall prepare and annually update/revise an HOV Education and Promotion Plan. Elements of the HOV Education and Promotion Plan shall include:

3.1.1 Assessment of existing HOV market conditions (actual usage, users and non/user attitude and opinion data, etc.) as needed;

3.1.2 Goals and objectives of the HOV Education and Promotion activities and determination of target markets for the calendar year;

3.1.3 Descriptions of specific activities to be undertaken;

3.1.4 Schedule of implementation, desired measurable outcomes and required budget; and

3.1.5 The annual budget for HOV Education and Promotion activities which might vary based on the introduction of new HOV facilities, market research efforts, and ongoing education needs.

3.2 Information outlining HOV goals, objectives and performance and future visions will be included as part of the annual program for elected officials (cities, County, State officials representing LA County) and key County stakeholder outreach undertaken by MTA. It is desirable that the HOV education outreach be implemented within 3 months of election of a newly elected official and within 4 months of a re-elected official and a minimum of annually with key County stakeholders.

3.3 The MTA will target specific HOV corridors, implement a more focused HOV corridor promotion program and periodically assess the common origin/destination pairs in underutilized HOV corridors. The assessment will be undertaken in coordination with Caltrans.

3.4 MTA shall ensure that an education and promotion specialist is an active member of the HOV Planning and Design Team(s). The role of this specialist will be to identify and coordinate opportunities for education and promotion at the earliest stages of HOV project development.

3.5 HOV education and promotion elements shall be incorporated into the outreach activities of rideshare organizations receiving funding from MTA (including the MTA managed programs that benefit rideshare) and other incentive programs, as well as transportation management and transit operator associations and/or organizations.

3.6 Funding for project specific HOV education and promotion shall come from HOV project funds. Agencies applying for HOV project funding will include an estimate for HOV education and promotion in the overall project cost estimate, after a thorough research of available promotional materials that currently exist at the MTA.

Policy 4.0 -- HOV Performance Monitoring

The MTA will coordinate with Caltrans, CHP, and other agencies in conducting periodical assessment of the performance of the Los Angeles County HOV lanes. The performance assessment will focus on "key" measures of effectiveness (MOEs) outlined in Section 4 contained in the HOV Performance Program Evaluation Report. Some of these MOEs include vehicle volumes, persons per lane per hour, travel time savings, improvements in speed, vehicle occupancy levels, violation rates, and others. Caltrans will provide data support (i.e., tach runs and vehicle-occupancy counts) by implementing a computerized freeway monitoring program and by incorporating the HOV data collected in this performance improvement program; transit operators will provide ridership counts and operating cost data; and CHP will provide violation data. The MTA will assist and coordinate with Caltrans in summarizing data and publishing status report.