

Value Pricing Education and Outreach Model

I-394 MnPASS Community Task Force

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After a decade of public discussion and political debate, the I-394 MnPASS Express Lane, Minnesota's first high-occupancy toll lane, opened in May 2005. The MnPASS project was designed to improve the efficiency of I-394 by increasing the person- and vehicle-carrying capabilities of existing high-occupancy vehicle lanes, maintaining free-flow speeds for transit and carpools, and using electronic toll collection (tags/transponders and readers) for dynamic pricing and electronic enforcement. While previous road pricing initiatives in Minnesota, as in other states, have provided opportunity for public feedback, the process tends to be confrontational and less than satisfying for all parties. Both citizens and politicians often believe comments and concerns are minimized and rarely taken seriously enough to alter project plans. The I-394 Express Lane Community Task Force, however, was formed to help citizens and stakeholders fully understand the project and its goals and to provide a more effective vehicle to give advice and guidance during the development of the project. Through this process, the task force members became an informed voice for the project and an essential part of an extensive education, outreach, and public involvement process that has been critical to the success of the I-394 MnPASS project. If proved successful in the long run, this task force model increases the likelihood that Minnesota citizens will support such projects in the future.

In May 2005, the Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT) opened the state's first high-occupancy toll (HOT) lanes facility, called the I-394 MnPASS Express Lane (Figure 1). Among a number of innovations on this facility was the method used to guide Mn/DOT and its partners through a challenging implementation process. The I-394 Express Lane Community Task Force was formed to help citizens and stakeholders fully understand the project and its goals. The mission of the task force was to provide advice and guidance to the commissioner of transportation during the development of the I-394 MnPASS project. Input from the task force was taken seriously and altered the project in several important ways:

1. Providing guidance to develop an appropriate pricing algorithm,
2. Establishing access and egress points to the HOT lanes,
3. Developing appropriate signing, and
4. Setting hours of operation.

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BACKGROUND

Minnesota has had a tumultuous history with other road pricing project proposals. Two previous attempts at introducing pricing as a financing and demand management tool were defeated by organized public opposition (1). Efforts to involve and inform decision makers and the public through effective education and outreach were determined imperative to the success of the I-394 MnPASS project.

When the Interstate 394 facility was originally opened in 1992, the high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes were designated for carpools with two or more passengers, buses, and motorcycles. Shortly after opening, however, congestion in the general purpose lanes plus a less-than-full HOV facility created a perception that the HOV lanes were underutilized.

This perception persisted and led to periodic requests that the HOV lanes be opened to solo drivers. This culminated with a request by the legislature that Mn/DOT conduct a study to evaluate the feasibility of this action. The study, which was completed in 2001, concluded that the I-394 HOV facility was underused but that opening it to general traffic would not be cost-effective and would result in a congested facility. The same study concluded that conversion to a HOT lane operation could be a more cost-effective alternative (2).

A Value Pricing Advisory Task Force of elected officials, business, transportation, and other community leaders laid the groundwork for the I-394 HOT lanes project by recommending that Minnesota pursue a pilot project in the corridor. Legislative action ultimately ensued in 2003 permitted the conversion of HOV facilities to HOT lanes. The governor and lieutenant governor (also the transportation commissioner) became immediate supporters of the concept, realizing the project's potential to help address multiple transportation problems.

Congestion pricing has long been advocated by economists as a more efficient way of allocating scarce road space among users. For many years the technology limited the ability to apply congestion pricing since tollbooths would defeat the purpose of the congestion charge by adding delay to the systems. The widespread use of electronic tolling technology, which is now rapidly replacing tollbooths, has made toll collection simpler and more efficient without slowing traffic.

In the 1990s the federal government encouraged states and regions to implement pilot projects to demonstrate how congestion pricing works. The Congestion Pricing Pilot Program authorized by the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) and its successor the Value Pricing Pilot Program authorized in the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) in 1998 and in Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) in 2005, have encouraged states and regions to develop and implement pricing projects.



FIGURE 1 I-394 MnPASS high-occupancy toll lane.

The program had a slow start in the 1990s due to political and institutional issues at the state and local levels. In 1994, a national Committee for Study on Urban Transportation Congestion Pricing summarized the problem as follows: “The reasons for rejection of congestion pricing in the past have not changed. Any shift from the current system of financing and using the transportation system toward more marketlike mechanisms can be expected to engender public and political resistance” (3).

The FHWA pilot programs helped in the initiation and evaluation of value pricing projects in southern California, Texas, Florida, and New York in the 1990s and demonstrated the technical feasibility, value, and public support for such projects (4, 5). Despite these initial successes and broad national interest in the potential for HOT lanes, states have been slow in implementing projects beyond these few pilots.

Public management studies have shown that neglecting or underestimating the information needs and concerns of stakeholders frequently leads to poor performance, outright failure, or even disaster (6). Nutt (7) analyzed 400 strategic decisions and found that half had failed in large part because decision makers failed to attend to interests and information held by key stakeholders. Wildavsky (8) argued that a key to effective policy change is “creating problems that could be solved,” linking technical rationality with political rationality “to mobilize support for substance.”

Since 1994 the University of Minnesota’s Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs has conducted research on congestion and value pricing and worked with Mn/DOT to educate stakeholders and the general public about the concept. In 1996 the Humphrey Institute, in its report *Buying Time*, recommended six key components for successful implementation of congestion pricing:

1. A leadership coalition representing key stakeholders,
2. Elected officials’ leadership and support,
3. Attention to equity impacts,
4. Citizen understanding and involvement,
5. A marketing and media strategy, and
6. A technology plan that addresses public concerns about cost, privacy, and reliability (9).

All six components were critical for Minnesota to get to the point at which a value pricing project could move forward in 2003.

Driving Forces

Mn/DOT has pursued value pricing in various forms for nearly a decade (10). Within the context of demographic and traffic forecasts for the coming decades, the department has recognized that not enough funding could be expected to expand the existing transportation system or to provide transit service at a level that would manage congestion at reasonable levels. Value pricing, however, has held promise of providing a demand management tool as well as a revenue stream to fund operations and perhaps make transit and other roadway improvements in the corridors in which funding is collected.

Road pricing in any form, however, has proved to be a highly contentious issue with the driving public. While new roads themselves, financed at least partly with tolls, have been controversial but achievable, almost no amount of economic rationale has been able to convince the public that conversion of existing general purpose lanes to toll lanes is equitable. Conversion of the non-barrier-separated diamond lanes on I-394—partially HOV and partially open to all users—is in a sense a partial lane takeaway.

The MnPASS project, authorized by the legislature, set the department toward development of a project with many nuances that required innovation in management and technology as well as in outreach and education. The importance of achieving “informed consent” was recognized early as key to the project’s success, and significant resources have been applied to this effort throughout the project development process.

Mn/DOT recognized that, given the complexity of the project, it was imperative to develop a meaningful education and outreach process to ensure successful implementation. At the request of Mn/DOT staff, the governor and lieutenant governor formed the I-394 Express Lane Community Task Force composed of legislators, community leaders, interest groups, and concerned citizens. At the same time, under a federal value pricing grant, Mn/DOT pursued a comprehensive education and outreach activity modeled after an earlier effort described in the next section.

An Early Value Pricing Advisory Task Force Model

An important precursor to the I-394 Express Lane Community Task Force was formed in 2001 after several unsuccessful attempts to introduce road pricing in Minnesota. In those earlier attempts to introduce the state to road pricing, the public overwhelmingly rejected the notion as demonstrated in a citizens’ jury process (11). The 30-member Value Pricing Advisory Task Force—composed of state legislators; mayors; city council and county board members; and business, environmental, and transportation association leaders—was assembled to explore appropriate and feasible value pricing options in Minnesota. Over time, polls conducted in conjunction with the task force showed a strong shift in public opinion. [One poll showed that 55% of the public in Minnesota preferred an option to pay a toll to bypass congestion and 52% favored a gas tax increase (12).] In concluding their work, after more than a year of study, the task force concluded that the state should proceed with a demonstration project (13).

Members of this task force decided to continue to champion the cause of value pricing and to communicate their reasons for supporting the concept. A project team led by the State and Local Policy Program of the University of Minnesota’s Humphrey Institute

of Public Affairs developed and carried out a research, education, and communications strategy for value pricing during 2002 and 2003 to help generate interest and support as the state explored various transportation funding and congestion mitigation options (14).

Broad political support for value pricing finally began to emerge in Minnesota after nearly a decade of effort. A number of significant social, economic, and political factors contributed to this changing climate including the following:

- Administration promise of no new taxes,
- State budget deficits exceeding \$4 billion,
- Growing population and congestion,
- Widespread agreement that transportation issues had to be addressed, and
- Growing understanding and awareness of the benefits of value pricing.

Largely as a result of the emergence of political champions from the Value Pricing Advisory Task Force, bipartisan support and leadership resulted in 2003 legislation supporting conversion of HOV lanes into express lanes, allowing solo drivers to access the lanes for a fee. A newly elected governor and lieutenant governor endorsed moving forward with the conversion of HOV lanes to HOT lanes. Nearly all associated with the project agreed that the HOV lanes on I-394 from Minneapolis through the western suburbs would provide the best early test of the HOT lane concept (Figure 2).

Traditional public involvement models, which may include open houses and formal hearings, fall short of providing meaningful

public deliberations and decision making. These approaches allow for little interaction between stakeholders and transportation agencies, leave citizens feeling that their questions and concerns are not being addressed, and give the transportation agency too little opportunity to respond and integrate public input into the solution. More important, it is difficult to establish a level of trust and ownership with public sessions that allow little opportunity for involvement in key decisions.

The process Mn/DOT has pursued requires sharing control of project details and decisions, making more effective use of community input during project design and implementation, and developing an atmosphere of trust while reducing confrontation.

High-Occupancy Toll Lane Legislative Action

Although there were divergent points of view among legislators and other political leaders, there was general consensus on at least three fundamental points:

- Something needed to be done with the underused HOV lanes;
- Opening the HOV lanes to general purpose traffic was not a desirable or feasible option; and
- Current and anticipated transportation funding was inadequate to expand capacity through construction alternatives in the I-394 corridor.

As a result of continuing discussion, and at least partially as the result of Value Pricing Advisory Task Force findings, the 2003



FIGURE 2 I-394 MnPASS corridor.

Minnesota Legislature enacted High Occupancy Toll Lane Legislation (160.93, Sec. 7) authorizing the commissioner of transportation to implement user fees on high-occupancy vehicle lanes in Minnesota (15). Highlights of the legislation are as follows:

- The goal of the legislation is to improve the operating efficiency in trunk highway corridors and provide more options to travelers.
- Fees can be collected electronically or by other methods that may vary in amount by time of day, and may vary with congestion.
- Fees collected will be used to repay the trunk highway fund or other fund sources for cost of equipment and modification in the corridor and to pay for the costs of implementing and administering the fee collection system.
- Excess revenues shall be spent as follows: one-half for capital improvements in the corridor and one-half transferred to the Metropolitan Council for expansion and improvement of bus transit services in the corridor in which the funds are collected.
- Violators are guilty of a petty misdemeanor.

MnPASS Project Objectives

Five project objectives were defined with the legislative authority given to Mn/DOT to implement the I-394 MnPASS project:

1. Improve the efficiency of I-394 by increasing the person- and vehicle-carrying capabilities of HOV lanes;
2. Maintain free-flow speeds for transit and carpools;
3. Use excess revenue, if available, to make transit and highway improvements in the I-394 corridor;
4. Use electronic toll collection—tags/transponders and readers—no toll booths; and
5. Use new intelligent transportation system technologies such as dynamic pricing and in-vehicle electronic enforcement.

Mn/DOT and the I-394 Community Task Force recognized that, in a number of aspects, MnPASS is a first-of-its-kind application in the United States. As such, it is important to monitor and evaluate its operation carefully, and be prepared to make adjustments and improvements periodically to ensure that the project objectives are achieved.

I-394 EXPRESS LANE COMMUNITY TASK FORCE

Establishment of the Task Force

With the authority to proceed on HOV-to-HOT conversions, it was clear that a new creative and responsive public involvement process was imperative to the project's success or otherwise risk facing imposing obstacles similar to those that previous pricing projects had faced. Despite what appeared to be a sea change in public opinion, due to a changing political and economic climate, as well as growing congestion, public acceptance of the project was not ensured. The question of equity remained large and was sure to remain prominent because I-394 would be the only toll facility in the state and therefore would require careful consideration.

In response to this recognition, the I-394 Express Lane Community Task Force was established. The task force was a 22-person group of leaders and citizens appointed by the lieutenant governor,

by the House and Senate leadership of the state legislature, and by the communities themselves. The governor appointed the chair of the task force.

A mayor or city council member and a citizen member from each of the cities in the corridor—Minneapolis, Golden Valley, Minnetonka, St. Louis Park, Plymouth, and Wayzata—were represented. In addition, state legislators, private-sector organizations (American Automobile Association, Minnesota Trucking Association), public organizations (Downtown Minneapolis Transportation Management Organization and Transit for Livable Communities), public agencies (Metropolitan Council, Metro Transit, Hennepin County, Mn/DOT), and private citizens were represented. The task force met monthly from September 2003 through October 2004 (16).

Mission Statement

The I-394 Express Lane Community Task Force mission was articulated as follows:

Conversion of high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes to express lanes was authorized by the 2003 Minnesota Legislature. Express lanes permit single occupant drivers to pay tolls for the privilege of using HOV lanes. The I-394 Express Lane project is Minnesota's first facility based value pricing demonstration and is a new and significant change in highway facility management. The Minnesota Department of Transportation recognizes that community involvement and acceptance are imperative to the successful application of this concept. The I-394 Express Lane Community Task Force has been established to assist the Commissioner of Transportation in delivering a project that reflects the needs and values of the corridor and broader community to create a forum for public discourse.

The I-394 Express Lane Community Task Force will provide the Commissioner of Transportation with advice and guidance on public involvement, communications, community outreach and education. Other policy issues that the Task Force might address include operations, pricing, access, and violations and enforcement.

Decision-Making Process

A former state senator who was appointed by the governor chaired the task force. Although an agenda was developed in advance of each meeting as a means to guide technical presentations and discussions, the chair painstakingly ensured that all concerns were adequately aired by the task force members as well as citizens attending the meetings. The process focused on consent building as well as open discussion.

Early in the deliberations, the task force members were provided information on the rationale behind HOT lanes and were briefed on projects in other parts of the country. The task force chair and five other members of the task force visited the I-15 HOT lane project in San Diego, California, and the SR-91 express lane project in Orange County, California. This visit provided task force members a much better understanding of how these projects work as well as the differences between the two projects.

As the project was being designed, the task force members were briefed by members of the project team and given the opportunity to raise issues that needed to be addressed or studied further. While it was clear that Mn/DOT would make the final decisions about the project, the department leaders made it clear that they wanted to incorporate the recommendations of the community task force into the plans for the project and, in fact, did so.

Public–Private Partnership

With public and political patience running thin concerning the HOV lane performance on I-394, Mn/DOT used a streamlined procurement process similar to design–build as a means to deliver MnPASS at least a year earlier than under traditional project delivery. As such, a request for proposals for partners was issued in July 2003, and Mn/DOT entered into a contract with the team of Wilbur Smith, SRF Consulting Group, Raytheon, and Cofiroute to implement the MnPass project on I-394 in December 2003.

The public–private partnership between Mn/DOT and the Wilbur Smith team is referred to as the MnPASS Partnership Team. This group became integral to the process and acted as expert consultants to the I-394 Express Lane Community Task Force.

Task Force Market Research

The Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota and Mn/DOT engaged in a study to learn of the public's perception and attitudes associated with implementing HOV buy-in capabilities on I-394. Market research among citizens who live in the western metropolitan area of the Twin Cities (Minneapolis and St. Paul) was commissioned with the following objectives in mind:

- To identify the awareness and acceptance levels of an HOV buy-in option,
- To identify the perceived benefits and concerns associated with this new program,
- To help in the design of launch-related issues (best way to purchase transponders, how to best communicate with customers, etc.),
- To understand the perceived value of the purchased trip, and
- To capture changes in attitudes relating to an HOV buy-in compared with what had been learned earlier.

Focus group discussions were selected as the means to accomplish these objectives. Focus groups are an exploratory research technique designed to elicit insights, attitudes, and issues through moderated group discussions. While the results are not statistically projectable to the population as a whole, they can provide revealing feedback and directional data on complex topics and newly proposed ideas.

Five focus groups were conducted. Three focus groups were held with single-occupancy vehicle drivers (solo drivers, SOVs) who travel I-394 (or an adjacent highway) into or beyond downtown Minneapolis during peak commuting hours to and from work. One focus group was held with carpoolers (HOVs) who travel the same route as above to and from work, and a fifth focus group was held with people who ride the bus to and from work, traveling I-394 into or beyond downtown Minneapolis. The focus groups were held in February and March 2004.

The participants in the focus groups represented a general cross section of the population from the Twin Cities (mix of age, income, employment, and gender) who commute from the western metropolitan area into or beyond downtown Minneapolis during peak commuting hours and travel I-394 or an adjacent highway, such as Highway 55 or Highway 7. The participants were recruited randomly by telephone from the local areas, answered an advertisement that appeared in the *Star Tribune* or a local newspaper, or responded to a flyer that was distributed at downtown parking garages that offer

discounted parking to carpoolers. Qualified individuals were invited to come to a central location to discuss this topic.

Focus Group Observations

The following were typical reactions by focus group members about the I-394 corridor:

- “Something needs to be done with the HOV lanes on I-394.”
- HOV lanes are vastly underused, and far too little is done to promote transit usage or to encourage carpooling.
- Many SOV drivers were angry about the “empty lane” and would prefer to open HOV lanes to all drivers all the time.

When the MnPASS project was explained to focus group members, the following were typical reactions:

- “It’s about time” something is done with I-394 HOV lanes; it may free up general purpose lanes somewhat.
- The ability to pay and drive express lane could mean the difference between being late for work or a meeting, or picking up a child from day care on time.
 - It could reduce “stress” by offering option to sitting in congestion.
 - There were questions about how revenue would be used; transit dollars should be used to provide more frequent buses throughout the day.
 - A few dollars a day would be an acceptable expenditure to travel in a faster lane with less-stressful driving conditions.
 - Carpoolers and bus riders might use pay express lane occasionally if they had to but generally would not change behavior.
 - Several participants understood how “dynamic pricing” works to keep traffic flowing in express lanes, but others were unsure it would work.

The focus group participants raised the following concerns about the I-394 MnPASS project:

- Concerns from carpoolers and bus riders about “clogging up sane lane” and slowing their commute; may be disincentive to carpoolers and bus riders.
- Problems of “bottlenecks” at Lowry Hill Tunnel.
- Unfairness to low-income drivers—serves “privileged” few who drive SUVs from far western suburbs.
- Safety concerns with “swerving” onto and off of express lanes west of Highway 100.
- Concerns about enforcement, interruption of traffic flow, cost of enforcement.
 - Why have a toll during times when there is little traffic?
 - Heavy eastbound traffic in the afternoon—could one of the lanes between Highway 100 and downtown be opened to eastbound traffic?
 - Confusion about two tolls west and east of Highway 100.
 - “Band-Aid” approach—lanes will be filled by those from other routes and population growth in western suburbs.

The focus groups occurred during the same period as the task force meetings, and a few of the task force members observed one or more of the focus groups. The results of the focus groups were presented to the full task force and used as additional input in their deliberations.

Public Outreach and Education

The task force encouraged and participated in public outreach and education activities during the course of the project. These activities included an open house for all citizens in the corridor; briefings and discussions at city council and county board meetings within the corridor; and presentations and discussions with community, business, and civic organizations.

The Humphrey Institute also conducted public roundtables on topics related to value pricing and HOT lanes, which the task force members were encouraged to attend. One of these roundtables brought in the researchers who had done the evaluations of the SR-91, I-15, and Katy Freeway projects to learn more about how they had conducted evaluations of similar HOT lane or express lane projects, and how this might apply to the I-394 MnPASS project evaluation.

A website was established for the project, www.mnpass.org. It included information on the MnPASS project and the task force, minutes of task force meetings, PowerPoint presentations, and related reports. The website was also linked to the Humphrey Institute's website, www.valuepricing.org, which includes more extensive information on projects in other states.

TASK FORCE DISCUSSIONS

The task force deliberated on a variety of I-394 Express Lane issues that were either determined by the project management team to be of significance or determined by the task force itself to be important to consider. The areas of discussion included

- Access points and traffic operations,
- Hours of operation,
- Enforcement,
- Dynamic message signs,
- Toll rates,
- Type of vehicles allowed,
- Transponders,
- Expected revenues,
- Public outreach, and
- Project evaluation.

Because the I-394 MnPASS project was breaking new ground in the area of HOT lane pricing, it was imperative to evaluate these topics thoroughly and consider realistic solutions. Meeting agendas were planned carefully to provide ample opportunity for task force members to hear technical and policy presentations on these topics and to provide ample time to discuss topics in sufficient detail. A hallmark of the process was the receptive and respectful manner in which the chair facilitated discussion and encouraged participation.

The following principles were used to facilitate the most meaningful input process possible:

- Developing as complete an understanding of the issues as possible;
- Presenting technical and policy analysis;
- Opening topics for thorough discussion;
- Respecting all opinions, including those of citizenry;
- Considering concept changes or modified solutions based on technical or policy analysis;
- Responding to all media inquiries;

- Delivering project updates to local units of government;
- Recognizing that the project may require technical and operational changes as experience is gained; and
- Leaving no question unanswered.

This last point, leaving no question unanswered, became a matter of pride for the project team. During the project, a Humphrey Institute research assistant diligently recorded all questions that were raised by the task force or in other public forums and briefings. If questions could not be answered immediately, the project team would do additional research to find the answer and report back at the next meeting of the task force. The assistant compiled answers to frequently asked questions into FAQs that were handed out at briefings and were available on the project website.

LESSONS LEARNED

Minnesota's experience with the I-394 Express Lanes Community Task Force offers a number of lessons for states or regions implementing HOT lane or value pricing projects.

- The makeup of an advisory task force is important when trying to achieve informed consent on complex and controversial projects. Legislators working alongside community representatives, citizens, interest groups, and technical experts can provide a productive and meaningful deliberative opportunity.

- An advisory task force can be a highly effective way of getting key players as well as interested citizens at the table during the design and implementation of a project. While support may exist for moving forward, "the devil is in the details," and a task force of a corridor's key stakeholders can help the project team in sifting through those details that are most important to the public and addressing them before they generate political opponents.

- It is significant that no organized opposition emerged during the design and implementation phase of the project. While there were critics who spoke out about the project in city council meetings and other forums, the task force became an important vehicle for ensuring that public concerns were addressed and helped in assuring elected officials that their interests were represented in the design of the project.

- Transportation agencies must address problems quickly when they occur. There were significant points of controversy during the project, in particular the operation 24 h a day, 7 days a week (24/7), of the diamond lanes west of Highway 100. While most of the members agreed to go along with the project team's recommendation to charge tolls at all times rather than only during the peak periods, there was a clear understanding that Mn/DOT would observe how the 24/7 operation worked and make changes if necessary. One legislative member of the task force chose to submit a minority report on this issue. When the project opened in May 2005, there was an unexpected increase in congestion in the morning in the westbound, reverse-peak direction. After a few weeks of negative public reaction, a Minnesota Senate action to reverse the 24/7 decision, and exploration of various alternatives, Mn/DOT decided to reverse the 24/7 tolls and apply them in the peak direction only during peak periods and to open an auxiliary lane using existing shoulders.

- The selection of the right chair and task force members is important. Skillful and respectful leadership increases the confidence and trust of committee members in the process and that their concerns will be heard and addressed.



FIGURE 3 I-394 MnPASS lane entering downtown Minneapolis and I-94.

- Site visits to other HOT lane and express lane projects played a critical role in increasing the task force understanding of how value pricing works. Early in the task force deliberations, six of the members visited the SR-91 and I-15 projects in California. The six came back with an increased understanding of how these projects work as well as the differences in the two projects. They reported what they learned to the other members of the task force and frequently referenced these projects during the course of the task force deliberations.

- The project team brought all details to the task force and took every problem raised by a task force member seriously, making special efforts to provide good analysis and answers to every question. For example, in response to concerns about additional bottlenecks at the Lowry Hill Tunnel with more traffic in the HOV lane after it was converted to a HOT lane, the project team produced a computer simulation of how merging would occur with increased traffic in the HOT lane and why it would not lead to increased congestion in the general purpose lanes (Figure 3).

CONCLUSIONS

After many years of discussion and deliberation, a number of factors converged to result in political, institutional, and public support for a HOT lane project in Minnesota. The collaboration between Mn/DOT and the Humphrey Institute on research, outreach, and education, through a grant from FHWA's Value Pricing Pilot Program, was critical in building the political and institutional support for an initial project in Minnesota.

Once the legislature, the governor, and Mn/DOT decided to move forward on the I-394 MnPASS project, however, an extensive public involvement process was needed within the corridor to ensure public and political support. The I-394 Express Lane Community Task Force was created as the centerpiece of this public involvement strategy and was given full access to all details of the project in the design and preimplementation phase. The task force served as an

important element in ensuring that all aspects of potential concern were addressed by Mn/DOT while implementing its first HOT lane project and in increasing the likelihood of success.

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