



What is a managed lane?

A managed lane is a lane that is reserved for a special purpose. A managed lane is restricted to qualifying users, so it is not available to all the motorists on the freeway. The regular freeway lanes that currently exist in Central Arkansas are all “general-purpose” lanes.

Managed lanes can sometimes be referred to as “diamond lanes”, “carpool lanes”, “high occupancy vehicle (HOV) or high occupancy toll (HOT) lanes”.

There are reasons to restrict a lane to qualifying users. One common restriction is to set the lane aside for use by high-occupancy vehicles, such as carpools and transit vehicles. This is a strategy to move more persons more quickly, which leverages the lane to provide a time savings reward to people who find ways to reduce the total number of vehicles on the freeway. Another strategy that is becoming more common is to restrict the lane use to toll payers. Requiring a toll provides a more reliable travel time in return for a payment from the motorist.

Technologies such as dynamic message boards can be used to have toll rates vary by time of day (or by traffic congestion) in order to make sure that the managed lane is always performing to some minimum standard, even if the other lanes become congested. Other motorists on the freeway benefit by having the toll payers in their own lane, reducing traffic volumes in the remaining lanes.

I-66 in Virginia.

Source: VDOT.



In Central Arkansas, another reason to consider managed lanes is because regional transportation policy limits freeways to six lanes.

It is becoming increasingly common for major urban centers to allow both high occupancy vehicles and toll payers to share a restricted lane. These lanes are then “HOV/T lanes,” which is typically shortened to “HOT lanes.”

There are many examples of successful implementation of managed lanes from around the U.S.A. The I-30 corridor is considered as a potential candidate for managed lanes as a transportation strategy.

