

# I-85 EXPRESS LANES: MARKET RESEARCH

## Focus Groups

In late 2008 and early 2009, two rounds of focus groups were conducted that totaled more than 75 participants. They revealed what I-85 commuters knew, liked, or disliked about the High Occupancy Toll (HOT) lanes concept, its perceived benefits and concerns, and key messages that resonated with focus group participants. Participants were recruited using a random sampling of I-85 commuters that were stratified by single drivers and carpoolers. Each 90-minute discussion consisted of eight or nine participants and one facilitator.

## Perceived Benefits

During the focus group sessions, several benefit themes regarding HOT lanes emerged, including that they:

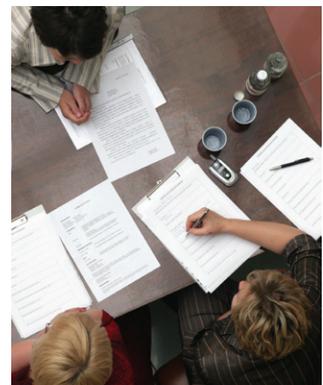
- provide drivers with a sense of control over traffic
- are easy and convenient to use
- get you where you need to be in a timely manner
- make for a more enjoyable commute by reducing travel times
- provide a choice and are optional - "You do NOT have to use it"

## Perceived Issues and Concerns

Participants provided feedback on issues and concerns, including:

- How is the HOT lane monitored and enforced for drivers who break the rules?
- Will I get a refund for having to get out of the lane if there is an accident?
- If I move in and out of the lane am I charged twice?
- How is the money from my toll going to be used?
- What is the maximum toll that will be charged?
- How do you enter/exit the HOT lanes?

The issues and concerns brought up during the focus group sessions are being discussed by the project partners. These questions will be addressed through the normal project planning processes.



Source: U. S. Department of  
Transportation

For more information, please visit:  
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## Surveys

In the Spring of 2009, an extensive quantitative survey of transit riders, carpoolers, and single drivers was conducted. The quantitative study was an email survey conducted in partnership with the Clean Air Campaign, a non-profit agency and project partner that promotes commute alternatives throughout the state of Georgia. By targeting commuters, particularly carpoolers and transit users through the Clean Air Campaign's database, a 30 percent response rate was achieved. This data provided profound insights into the attitudes and behaviors of these potentially impacted groups.

## Key Carpooler Findings

- Carpoolers have adopted ridesharing as an integral part of their routine
- Carpooling is a practical, economic decision
- Demonstrating value of High Occupancy Toll (HOT) lanes is critical
- Position HOT lanes as an innovative solution addressing congestion before it becomes intolerable
- Carpoolers are a key audience for outreach and promotion – need to set up a program just for them
- Unique opportunity for promotion of transit

## Profile of the I-85 Carpooler

- Member of a 2 or 3 person carpool
- Carpool at least 3 times per week, for the last 6 months or more
- Employed as a professional or administrative support
- Cite cost savings as primary motivation
- Rarely stop for a personal errand
- Commute at regional peak periods
- Reside in Gwinnett County or surrounding areas

## Use of the HOV lane by I-85 carpoolers

- 63% are in 2-person carpools
- 45% use the High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lane 3 or more times per week
- 40% never or only occasionally use the HOV lane
- 64% would continue to carpool if HOV lane did not exist