

ADDING NEW LANES OR ROADS

Description

Widening a freeway or street has been a traditional strategy for mitigating congestion along a corridor. Many people assume this is the natural course of action when traffic snarls a particular route. Though this technique is not a panacea for congestion, it may be an appropriate course of action when the existing road cannot handle the amount of traffic any longer.

Under certain circumstances, it may not be possible or desirable to widen a freeway or street. A second option would then be to add a new road or freeway on another corridor to alleviate the congestion. This could be as simple as completing a connection between two roads that can divert traffic off of a heavily traveled route or as complex as building an entirely new freeway to serve as a relief route or economic catalyst in the region. In either case, widening or adding a freeway or street is a major project that requires careful planning, comprehensive public engagement, and ample financial support.



LBJ Infrastructure Group

Cost:	●●●●●
Time:	Moderate/Long
Impact:	Corridor
Who:	City/State
Hurdles:	Funding

Target Market

Additional lanes on current corridors are best suited for roads that have exhausted most other lower cost or more rapid implementation time options for increasing and maximizing capacity. New freeways or streets should be placed in areas where existing corridors cannot be easily expanded in the existing alignment. They can be used to provide a relief route around highly congested areas or complement existing travel patterns by improving network connectivity. New corridors may also be used in growing or undeveloped areas to prepare for planned growth or to spur economic development.

Projects to add lanes and new roads should look to incorporate other congestion-mitigation strategies into the design and operation, including those strategies that manage traffic and provide travel options.

How Will This Help?

- Provides significant direct congestion relief, increasing or creating new person-moving capacity.
- New roads alleviate other nearby congested corridors by attracting drivers off those roads onto the new facility and improving access to surrounding areas.
- Encourages new or redevelopment of surrounding land uses, stimulating economic growth.

Implementation Issues

Though adding new lanes or roadways is common, funding and environmental limitations have made this method much more difficult to use. Obtaining the right-of-way to add lanes to an existing roadway, especially within urban corridors, can be difficult and expensive. Adding an entirely new roadway can be even more difficult. In addition to obtaining right-of-way, planners must find a suitable corridor that garners public and environmental approval. A poorly placed corridor or expansion could be detrimental to the local economy and neighborhoods.

For more information, please refer to: <http://mobility.tamu.edu/mip/strategies.php>.