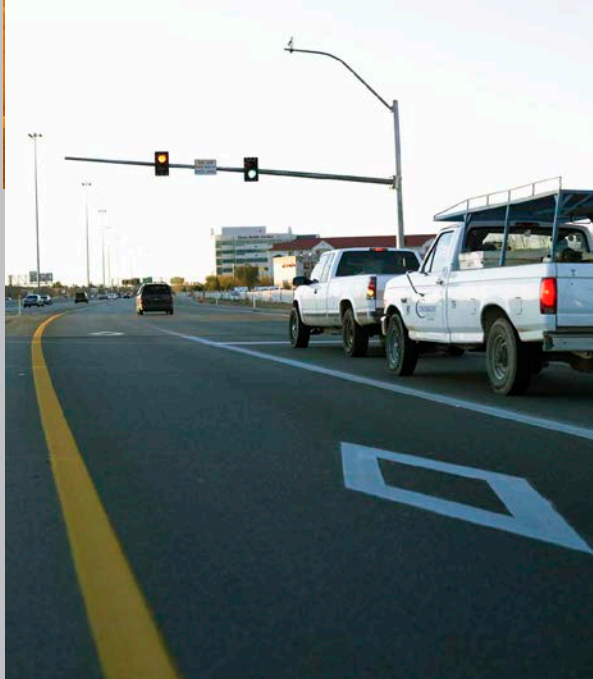



# *HOV/Managed Lanes and Ramp Metering Part 5: Public Outreach Primer*



Prepared for:



*Nevada Department of  
Transportation*

In cooperation with:  
*Regional Transportation Commission  
of Southern Nevada*

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A background image of a highway at dusk or dawn. Traffic lights are visible, with one showing a green light and another a red light. Several cars are on the road, including a dark sedan in the foreground with its brake lights on.

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# Introducing HOV / Managed Lanes in Nevada

## A Public Outreach Primer

### 1.0. THE CHALLENGE

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Introducing high occupancy vehicle (HOV) or managed lane facilities to the public begins long before ribbon-cutting takes place. At the earliest stages of deliberation, when HOV or managed lane facilities are being considered as part of the environmental document development process, the public is introduced to this concept and offered an understanding about its purpose, role and benefits when compared to other alternatives being considered. This early introduction helps to set the stage for future education and outreach actions, should the HOV / managed lane alternative be chosen as the preferred alternative. At the earliest stages of consideration, planners and engineers present an understanding of the HOV and managed lane concept when seeking public comment on necessary environmental documents.

The alternative assessment process is elemental to successful HOV/managed lane introduction because even **the best education and outreach actions cannot sell a poorly planned or executed project. If the HOV or managed lane project is not crafted and cannot deliver on the promise of travel time savings and trip reliability, education and promotion will not mask this reality.** The purpose of HOV/managed lane education and promotion is to 1) convince the marketplace to try the product (the HOV or managed lane) and, 2) assure nonusers that HOV / managed lanes are the most desirable use of money and land. Successful education and outreach will convince a customer to purchase the product for the first time, with “purchase” defined as traveling in a carpool, vanpool or aboard a bus in the HOV / managed lane. After that, it is up to the facility itself to deliver what was promised, a safe, reliable and swift trip. If a customer has a poor experience in the HOV/managed lane -- difficulty accessing or exiting the facility or not realizing travel time savings and trip reliability – that customer will perceive future promotional messages about the HOV/managed lane with suspicion and will be unlikely to repurchase the product (travel in the HOV/ managed lane) until changes in the facility are made and those changes are advertised.

Poor customer experiences in or perceptions about the HOV/managed lane can also lead to “negative testimonials” in which people talk about their unacceptable trip in the HOV/managed lane or perceptions about the facility to friends and coworkers. These testimonials can take on many forms; one-on-one conversations, letters to the editors, even web logs (blogs) can be powerful and ultimately destructive to poorly planned or executed HOV/managed lane projects.

**The education and outreach actions outlined in this report assume that the HOV/managed lane project being promoted will provide travel time savings and trip reliability in a safe manner.** If this cannot be assured, it is wise to make changes to the facility itself prior to broad-based promotion actions being undertaken.

## 2.0. THE PRIMARY PARTNERS

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### Nevada Department of Transportation

The Nevada Department of Transportation has lead responsibility for the planning, construction, operation and maintenance of the 5,400 miles of highway and nearly 1,000 bridges that make up the state highway system. NDOT is divided into three districts, with a district engineer and at least two assistant engineers in each. The districts are responsible for supervising all state transportation activities within their local areas. NDOT's headquarters building is located in Carson City, with the three main district offices located in Las Vegas (District One), Reno (District 2) and Elko (District 3).

A seven-member Board of Directors oversees the Nevada Department of Transportation. Directors include Nevada's Governor, Lt. Governor, Attorney General and State Controller. Three additional Directors, one representing each of the three NDOT districts (Las Vegas, Reno and Elko) comprises the remaining membership.

### MPO's and Transit Providers

Transit providers and Metropolitan Planning Agencies (MPO's) are partners with NDOT to help ensure successful HOV/managed lane facility planning and subsequent education and outreach actions. Because MPO's are the "local planning voice" with regard to HOV/managed lane vision, without their enthusiastic support, HOV/managed lanes have difficulty succeeding, as the additional programs which support HOV/managed lanes (park and ride lots, commute trip reduction programs) may not be prioritized. Additionally, because of the very nature of HOV and managed lane facilities in Nevada – to promote person movement – transit usage (and high patronage of the buses traveling on the HOV/managed lane) is elemental to facility success. It is impossible to over emphasize that transit is a key component to success, for without transit usage it is very difficult, if not impossible, to reach the desired HOV/managed lane person-movement thresholds.

In Northern Nevada, the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) of Washoe County serves the citizens of Reno and Sparks along with unincorporated areas of Washoe County and is responsible regional public transportation and the transportation network for Washoe County. The RTC of Washoe County was formed in July 1979 as a result of legislation approved by the Nevada Legislature, which consolidated the Regional Street and Highway Commission, the Regional Transit Commission and the Washoe County Area Transportation Study Policy Committee.

The RTC of Washoe County is supervised by an executive director and directed by a regional board comprised of five representatives appointed from three government jurisdictions – two from the Reno City Council, one from the Sparks City Council and two from the Washoe County Board of Commissioners.

In Southern Nevada, the Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada, or RTC, is the regional government agency that performs many transportation activities within the Southern Nevada community. The RTC was created in 1965 and in 1981; the agency was named the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Las Vegas Urban Area and charged with the responsibility to state and federal governments for maintaining a continuing, cooperative and

comprehensive transportation planning process. In 1983, state legislation enabled the agency to own and operate a public mass transit system, known today as Citizens Area Transit (CAT).

The Southern Nevada RTC is directed by an executive director and overseen by a Board of Commissioners. Board membership is set by State statute and consists of two members from the Board of Clark County Commissioners, two members from the city council of the largest incorporated city and one member from the city council of every other incorporated city in the county. Additionally, the Nevada Department of Transportation Director serves as an ex-officio member.

### **3.0. HOV/MANAGED LANE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH**

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**Goals • Strategies • Markets • Messages • Mechanisms • Outcomes**

#### **3.1. HOV/Managed Lane Education and Outreach Goals**

As HOV/managed lane facilities are being planned, partnering education and outreach goals need to be developed. The following goals will help the project team to focus efforts necessary to secure public understanding and support for high occupancy vehicle lanes or managed lane facilities.

- ▶ Create high visibility of HOV/managed lanes as a high-impact, incremental step for achieving the long-term vision for mobility in the region.
- ▶ Increase understanding of the vital importance HOV/managed lane/ managed lane projects have to positively impact economic vitality and environmental sustainability of the region.
- ▶ Maintain, strengthen and broaden jurisdictional, corporate and community partnerships through the introduction of HOV/managed lane options.
- ▶ Introduce the concept of HOV/managed lanes as an important strategy in making greatest and best use of transportation resources.
- ▶ Ensure mechanisms for the public to receive additional information and establish dialogue with project implementation team members.

### 3.2. HOV/Managed Lane Education and Outreach Strategies

Education and Outreach goals can be addressed by utilizing the following strategies:

- ▶ Support Project Committees
  - Example: Currently in the Las Vegas area, a variety of projects with HOV/managed lane components are in various stages of consideration, from planning all the way through to construction, with US 95 being the most immediate project soon to come online. HOV/managed lane education and outreach strategies need to be an element of each of these projects.
- ▶ Take advantage of the environmental documentation process to communicate directly with a variety of publics about how HOV/managed lane projects, fit in with the broader NDOT and RTC vision of mobility.
- ▶ Broaden the ally network by educating potential supporters and provide opportunities for them to actively participate as project messengers.
- ▶ Use proactive and creative media relations to promote key HOV/managed lane messages, particularly travel time savings and trip reliability messages.
- ▶ Use audience research to monitor public opinion, refine messaging, provide a platform to demonstrate continued strong support for improvements, and identify information needs for the implementation phase.

### 3.3. HOV/ Managed Lane Education and Outreach Target Markets

HOV/managed lane target markets – those groups that benefit from or are impacted by these lanes--need to understand HOV/managed lane treatments as integral to encouraging greatest and best use of transportation resources – include a broad cross-section of the region. Markets include not only corridor users, but also those in the position of setting and supporting transportation policies. By segmenting the messages sent to individual HOV/managed lane markets, education and promotion strategies can be developed which could turn those individual markets into users and/or supporters of the HOV/managed lane. HOV/managed lane target markets by segment include:

- ▶ Corridor Users
  - Daily Peak-Hour Trip Travelers (work, school)
  - Off-Peak Period Travelers
  - Freight and Good Transporters
  - Taxi Trips
- ▶ Employers
  - Adjacent to the Corridor
  - Local
- ▶ Community/Special Interest Groups
  - Adjacent Neighborhoods
  - Senior Citizen Groups
  - Environmental Groups
  - Business/Commerce Groups adjacent to the Corridor
  - General Business/Commerce Groups
  - Automobile Clubs
  - Tourism Interests
  - Event Planners
- ▶ Elected Officials
  - Cities
  - Counties
  - State
  - Federal
- ▶ Enforcement Officials and Judges
  - Local
  - State
- ▶ Media (as a community leader and opinion shaper)
  - Print
  - Broadcast



### 3.4. HOV/Managed Lane Market Messages, Communication Mechanisms and Desired Outcomes

Market messages are those benefits that the HOV/managed lane facility provides to the specific target market. In order to ensure successful positioning of the HOV/managed lane facility – with success defined as **understanding and embracing the purpose of HOV/managed lane treatments as part of transportation facilities mix** – the education and outreach actions must be designed and implemented to reach a broad cross section of travelers, residents and stakeholders. A variety of communication mechanisms are necessary to effectively and efficiently reach the target markets listed above. The following tables recommend HOV/managed lane benefit messages segmented by market and the communication mechanisms suited to those markets. Additionally, maintaining a clear vision of the outcome of a specific communication strategy helps to focus the key messages for those strategies.

### 3.4.1. Key Messages Conveying HOV/Managed Lane Benefits for Corridor Users

<i>Key Messages</i>	<i>Communication Mechanisms</i>	<i>Desired Outcome</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ HOV/managed lane facilities provide for current and future mobility</li> <li>❖ Immediate travel time savings for HOV/managed lane users</li> <li>❖ Predictable travel time for HOV/managed lane users</li> <li>❖ Less stress for HOV/managed lane users Incentive for commuters to make a carpool/ vanpool/transit choice</li> <li>❖ Address enforcement to ensure equity and fairness for users and non-users</li> <li>❖ Accurate and detailed information on what HOV/managed lane can (and cannot!) accomplish for the region</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Print and Broadcast News Media Relations</li> <li>❖ Project brochure distribution via requests and point-of-purchase displays</li> <li>❖ Signage with website for more info</li> <li>❖ Desk-top distribution of brochure at area worksites</li> <li>❖ Highlight website as mechanism to get info. about project specifics and HOV/managed lane in general. Link to website for ridesharing and transit info</li> <li>❖ Info distribution part of publicly sponsored transportation fairs</li> <li>❖ Information distribution at "gathering spots" -- malls, festivals, etc.</li> <li>❖ Newspaper advertisements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Aware that HOV/managed lane facilities are an important element in providing travelers transportation choices.</li> <li>❖ Positive anticipation of the HOV/managed lane opening.</li> <li>❖ Motivated to call for transit/ rideshare information</li> <li>❖ Understand that HOV/managed lane facilities are a prudent use of limited funds and scarce land</li> <li>❖ Familiar with HOV/managed lane operational rules and benefits</li> <li>❖ Aware that violators will be prosecuted to full extent of the law</li> </ul>

### 3.4.2. Key Messages Conveying HOV/Managed Lane Benefits for the Community

<i>Key Messages</i>	<i>Communication Mechanisms</i>	<i>Desired Outcome</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ HOV/managed lane facilities provide for current and future mobility</li> <li>❖ Incentive for commuters to make a carpool /vanpool /transit choice</li> <li>❖ More efficient utilization of transit</li> <li>❖ Predictable travel time for HOV/managed lane users</li> <li>❖ Immediate travel time savings for HOV/managed lane users</li> <li>❖ Less stress for HOV/managed lane users</li> <li>❖ Provide choices to commuters</li> <li>❖ Effective use of existing resources</li> <li>❖ Accurate and detailed information on what HOV/managed lane can (and cannot!) accomplish for the region</li> <li>❖ Improved access to/from community events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Print and Broadcast News Media Relations</li> <li>❖ Newspaper advertisements</li> <li>❖ Talk Radio interviews</li> <li>❖ Signage with website for info</li> <li>❖ Project brochure distribution via requests</li> <li>❖ Window/bulletin board posters</li> <li>❖ Information distribution at "gathering spots" -- malls, festivals, etc</li> <li>❖ Point-of-Purchase brochure distribution at public and retail sites</li> <li>❖ Highlight website as mechanism to get info about project specifics and HOV/managed lane in general</li> <li>❖ Public service announcements (radio)</li> <li>❖ Tabloid-style newsletter</li> <li>❖ HOV/managed lane opening ceremony</li> <li>❖ Advertising in event-sponsored advertisements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Understand that HOV/managed lane facilities are a prudent use of limited funds</li> <li>❖ Positive anticipation of HOV/managed lane opening</li> <li>❖ Familiar with HOV/managed lane operational rules and benefits</li> </ul>

### 3.4.3. Key Messages Conveying HOV/Managed Lane Benefits for Employers

<i>Key Messages</i>	<i>Communication Mechanisms</i>	<i>Desired Outcome</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Trip reliability for employees</li> <li>❖ Reduced employee parking space requirements</li> <li>❖ HOV/managed lane facilities provide for current and future mobility</li> <li>❖ RTC and NDOT are helping employers to plan by providing current and future employees with travel time savings and trip reliability</li> <li>❖ Accurate and detailed information on what HOV/managed lane can (and cannot!) accomplish for the region</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Direct Mail of brochure and targeted cover letter signed by ranking NDOT and RTC official; Request employer assistance in desktop distribution of brochure to employees</li> <li>❖ Courtesy copy of press packet with cover letter signed by NDOT and RTC official</li> <li>❖ Employee Transportation Coordinator Training</li> <li>❖ Worksite promotional activities and display</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Knowledge about the purpose of the HOV/managed lane</li> <li>❖ Positive anticipation of HOV/managed lane opening</li> <li>❖ Enthusiastic about the positive impacts HOV/managed lane facilities can have on reducing corporate parking costs</li> <li>❖ Improving reliability of employee arrival times</li> <li>❖ Gear-up for HOV/managed lane implementation through increased in-house rideshare promotions and work-site transportation events</li> <li>❖ Understand that HOV/managed lane facilities are a prudent use of limited funds</li> </ul>

**3.4.4. Key Messages Conveying HOV/Managed Lane Benefits for Special Interest and Neighborhood Groups**

<i>Key Messages</i>	<i>Communication Mechanisms</i>	<i>Desired Outcome</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ NDOT and RTC adding strategies to encourage carpooling and transit as a travel mode</li> <li>❖ HOV/managed lane facilities provide for current and future mobility</li> <li>❖ Accurate and detailed information on what HOV/managed lane can (and cannot!) accomplish for the region</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Mail targeted cover letter signed by NDOT and MPO official to neighborhood group leadership; Ask leadership to help with brochure distribution through their newsletters, point-of-purchase display at customer/tenant gathering locations</li> <li>❖ Speaker’s bureau with tabloid-style newsletter</li> <li>❖ Courtesy copy of press packet with additional “newsletter-type” story appropriate for insertion into constituent-targeted newsletter</li> <li>❖ Direct mail to traffic court judges and meeting</li> <li>❖ Fact sheets/cards, briefings of transportation media specialists, editorial board briefings, corridor tours, media kits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Understand that HOV/managed lane facilities are a prudent use of limited funds</li> <li>❖ Positive anticipation of HOV/managed lane opening</li> <li>❖ Willing to assist distributing information about opening of HOV/managed lane</li> <li>❖ A fair treatment of HOV/managed lanes based on the facts and not on perceptions</li> <li>❖ Aware that violators will be prosecuted to full extent of the law</li> </ul>

3.4.5. Key Messages Conveying HOV/Managed Lane Benefits for Business and Commerce Groups

<i>Key Messages</i>	<i>Communication Mechanisms</i>	<i>Desired Outcome</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Trip reliability for people in vehicle carrying two or more people</li> <li>❖ Reduced destination parking space demand</li> <li>❖ HOV/managed lane facilities provide for current and future mobility</li> <li>❖ Accurate and detailed information on what HOV/managed lane can (and cannot!) accomplish for the region</li> <li>❖ Effective use of existing resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Join other major metropolitan areas in US that are implementing /expanding their HOV/managed lane systems</li> <li>❖ Mail targeted cover letter signed by NDOT and RTC official to business and commerce group leadership. Include copy of project brochure</li> <li>❖ Corridor Tour</li> <li>❖ Highlight website as mechanism to get info about project specifics and HOV/managed lane in general</li> <li>❖ Courtesy copy of press packet with additional "newsletter-type" story appropriate for insertion into constituent-targeted newsletter</li> <li>❖ HOV/managed lane info. In NDOT and MPO annual report</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Understand that HOV/managed lane facilities are a prudent use of limited funds</li> <li>❖ Positive anticipation of HOV/managed lane opening</li> <li>❖ Willing to distribute information about opening of HOV/managed lane</li> </ul>

# Ramp Metering Outreach

## 4.0. INTRA- AND INTER-AGENCY COORDINATION AND OUTREACH

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Intra- and inter-agency information and outreach serves as a means to obtain consensus on how ramp meters will operate and how they will fit into the overall transportation management program. The success of a ramp metering campaign often hinges on the ability to provide information to, and gain the support of individuals inside and outside the agency responsible for implementing ramp meters. The key is to break down barriers that exist within and between agencies and institutionalize working together as a way of doing business. Internally, the staff must coordinate with those responsible for performing day-to-day activities as well as upper management. Externally, staff must coordinate with the public, the media, local businesses, law enforcement, transit agencies, as well as local-elected officials. Input from and the support of these groups will ensure that ramp meters are adequately funded, designed according to local needs, operated efficiently, and perceived as positive investments throughout their respective life-cycles. Outreach activities associated with each of these groups are discussed in Sections 5.1 and 5.2 and presented in Table 5-1. Table 5-1 outlines specific coordination and outreach activities recommended from the early planning stages of ramp metering (3 to 5 years before ramp metering starts) through implementation and operation. The table shows activities for:

- ▶ Internal (NDOT)
- ▶ Public
- ▶ Other agencies
- ▶ Measurement and modeling

### 4.1. Intra-agency Coordination and Outreach – Internal Activities

Ramp meters should not be implemented until NDOT and its partner operating agencies (such as RTC) are ready to implement, operate and maintain them. Those responsible for ramp meter implementation should provide information to those who need it, when they need it. Staff should communicate the goals and objectives of ramp meters and the benefits these strategies will provide to personnel at all levels within the agency, beginning first with upper management, and later with department managers and operators. In doing so, employees will take on the role of ambassadors for ramp meters and can speak intelligently about them when called upon by outside parties. The specific coordination and outreach activities for each group are outlined in the following sections.

#### 4.1.1. Upper Management

Upper management must understand the reasons why ramp meters are being considered, and how they uphold the agency's overall goals and objectives. Similarly, it is important that upper management be kept abreast of ramp metering activities. Doing so will ensure that the ramp metering program will receive the support needed to ensure successful operations and that it will remain an integral aspect of regional transportation directives.

### **4.1.2. Managers and Operators**

Information and outreach should extend internally to department managers to verify that ramp meters fit into current operations and that they can be seamlessly integrated. Department managers may identify challenges before ramp meters are installed, which helps reduce unanticipated costs and delays. Reaching out and providing information to department managers and operators also helps to indirectly convey the benefits of ramp meters to those within and outside NDOT. Well informed managers and operators take on the role of ambassadors for ramp metering and can speak intelligently about aspects pertaining to their implementation when called upon by outside parties.

## **4.2. Inter-agency Information and Public Outreach**

The implementation and operation of ramp meters will also require that NDOT coordinate with and provide information to outside agencies and the public in general. Coordination with agencies is needed to establish region-wide policies that guide how ramp meters will be implemented and how associated issues are will be resolved. Several types of agencies with differing agendas will likely be involved with or affected by the operation of ramp meters. Therefore, NDOT may need to draft policies to ensure equity among agencies located across jurisdictional borders. Policies may also be needed to ensure equity among motorists, as it is possible that some may benefit more than others (see Section 4.3.2). In either case, coordination should continue beyond the planning stages and into the operations stages of ramp metering. Coordination and outreach activities for the different inter-agency groups and the public are discussed below.

### **4.2.1. The Public and Local Businesses**

Public information and outreach should be used to help familiarize and convey the benefits of ramp meters before they are implemented. At a minimum, NDOT should emphasize how ramp meters work, the reasons why they are being considered, the locations where they will be implemented and what impacts can be expected. By doing so, motorists' negative perceptions of ramp meters may be mitigated. For instance, motorists often fail to visualize the benefits of ramp meters and instead tend to focus on the few, but more noticeable impacts (i.e., diversions, wait times, etc) of these systems. Public information and outreach can be used to address public concerns, and promote benefits that the public would not recognize otherwise.

If public information and outreach is ignored, public or agency opposition to the implementation of ramp meters may pose a challenge that can significantly delay ramp meter implementation. In severe cases, public opposition may even force NDOT to cease implementation of proposed ramp meters, resulting in missed opportunities to further agency goals and objectives, wasted effort and the inefficient use of NDOT limited funds and resources. Due to severe impacts like these, NDOT staff should take all the steps necessary to inform the public, including local businesses, of the benefits of selected strategies and the reasons why they are being deployed. This includes soliciting support from other agencies as well as from individuals internally. Public information campaigns are also important from the aspect of obtaining public input. Public input is needed and valuable in evaluating and selecting locations for ramp meter deployment. Public input is also helpful in establishing program goals and objectives.

The size and scope of the public outreach effort should be commensurate with the size and scope of the ramp meter deployment. In other words, a large information and outreach campaign that



requires significant financial and staff resources would not be appropriate for the implementation of a single ramp meter or a group of a few ramp meters, but rather is more appropriate for a large scale deployment of many ramp meters along a corridor or several corridors.

In general, public notification should occur as far as 1 year in advance of when meters will be turned on, and is typically repeated several times before meters are turned on. This helps to smooth the implementation of ramp meters by reducing public dissatisfaction while at the same time achieving public acceptance and compliance.

#### **4.2.2. Local and County Traffic Operations**

NDOT should coordinate with municipal and county traffic operations departments to ensure that ramp metering fits in well with existing or proposed arterial operations. During the planning and implementation phases, NDOT coordination with other traffic operations departments should focus on the selection, implementation and design of ramp meters. Memoranda of understanding may need to be drafted during the planning or implementation phases, to confirm agency commitments to ramp metering. If not, they should be considered early in the operational phase. It is important that agreements consider agency roles and responsibilities, including how traffic signals near metered ramps are operated. Memorandum of Understanding (MOU's) should also include provisions on data sharing, especially if control strategies like ramp metering will interconnect with the traffic signal system and other traffic management elements (e.g., closed circuit television) operated by either the NDOT or local agency.

#### **4.2.3. Enforcement**

Ramp metering will require active enforcement to ensure that motorists do not disregard meters and to maximize the potential benefits of these investments. NDOT should coordinate with local, county and state law enforcement agencies for two reasons. First, coordination between NDOT and law enforcement agencies is needed to inform these agencies of proposed ramp metering efforts so they can take steps to begin active enforcement. It is also important to provide law enforcement with information on why ramp meters are being implemented and why the help of law enforcement is needed. Second, NDOT coordination with enforcement agencies is needed to gain input and perspective from these agencies when deciding a best approach for enforcing ramp meter use. For instance, NDOT and law enforcement need to make decisions regarding, or come to an agreement on, the following issues:

- ▶ Extent to which compliance should be enforced,
- ▶ Times and conditions when ramp operations should and should not be enforced,
- ▶ Locations and where law enforcement can monitor and enforce operations and where additional monitoring locations need to be built,
- ▶ Staffing needs for enforcement activities, and
- ▶ Legal concerns

Coordination with these agencies is particularly important at ramp meter turn-on and the weeks that follow. High visibility of officers during this timeframe will help ensure compliance with the new traffic control devices and will help to reduce the number of crashes attributed to these systems and driver confusion. With this said, however, excessive enforcement may negatively affect driver behavior and may directly affect operations on the ramp as officers pull vehicles

over on the shoulder. City ordinances may need to be amended to ensure that ramp meter operations can be enforced and to dictate penalties for non-compliance. Last but not least, coordination between local and state enforcement agencies may expedite incident response and clearance.

#### **4.2.4. Transit**

Coordination between NDOT and local transit agencies may need to occur if the decision is made to implement transit-related incentives on the ramp. Such incentives may include those that give preferential treatment to transit vehicles, such as dedicated HOV or Transit-only lanes. These incentives may improve transit operations and encourage ridership. In order for these incentives to be effective NDOT and local transit agencies must coordinate to identify their impacts, discuss whether or not these impacts are acceptable, and develop an approach for their implementation. Transit agencies should be included in project discussions to resolve issues as they arise and to coordinate project activities with transit operations.

#### **4.2.5. Local Leaders**

Local leaders (e.g., elected and appointed officials) can be valuable advocates of, or powerful opponents to ramp metering. NDOT should determine whether local leaders are predisposed to either advocacy or opposition to ramp meters and develop an outreach program that targets both the advocates and the opponents.

It is important to reach out to advocates to mobilize their support for the efforts. It is equally important to reach out to opponents or potential opponents to understand their concerns. Some of these concerns may be ones that can be addressed through ramp meter implementation. Others may be the product of misconception or misunderstanding that can be lessened by providing accurate information that addresses those concerns.

It is also important to reach out to local leaders to confirm that they have no unresolved issues with the strategies. If no unresolved issues exist, then significant follow through with local leaders would not be necessary and resources could be expended on other aspects of the outreach efforts or other aspects of strategy implementation.

#### **4.2.6. Media**

The media can provide NDOT a means to gain positive support for ramp meters from motorists and local leaders. Electronic and print media can be used to express the benefits and reasons for ramp meters before and after they are deployed. Before ramp meter systems are implemented or expanded it is important that the local media be notified of program goals, objectives, and benefits well in advance of when meters are expected to be turned on.

Although the media can aid in acquiring public support, the media can also be obstructive if not handled properly. If the benefits of ramp meters are oversold and unrealistic, credibility of the implementing agency can be questioned.

### **4.3. Outreach Tools and Techniques**

Several tools and techniques are available to use to disseminate information to the public, outside agencies and/or individuals within an agency. The selection of techniques and tools will depend on the intent of the public information campaign or audience targeted.

- ▶ Brochures/Flyers/Newsletters – Brochures, flyers and/or newsletters may be used to describe ramp management strategies and activities. Brochures, flyers and/or newsletters can be mailed to local residents and business owners located near affected ramps or distributed manually in locations near ramps or left for people to take at nearby businesses, public facilities or open house meetings. Mailing lists should be updated to include additional individuals that come forward to provide feedback to keep them abreast of project activities, timelines and future meetings. Typically information contained within the brochure, flyers, or newsletter may pertain to:
  - Description of ramp metering.
  - Expected date and/or time of day metering will be in effect.
  - Expected benefits and cost effectiveness.
  - Reasons why metering is being considered.
  - Public information and outreach activities and details.
  - Locations where metering is slated to be implemented.
  - Contacts or websites where additional information can be obtained or public comments can be collected.
- ▶ Websites – The public can be referred to websites specifically set up to provide information on projects where ramp metering will be implemented. RTC and NDOT both had ramp metering information on their websites before the US 95 ramp meters were turned on.
- ▶ Open House Meetings – Meetings may be held prior to or after major milestones to gather input from and/or disseminate information to the public. Open house meetings are often used to inform the public and local businesses of project progress, and to provide a platform for residents, business owners, and motorists to voice their concerns to project staff.
- ▶ Inter-agency meetings - Meetings in the form of workshops or round table discussions may be held with local agencies to gather and solicit information regarding the implementation of ramp metering. Workshops also give agencies the opportunity to coordinate operations and activities and express needs related to these activities. Supplementary meetings may be needed to address lingering issues and to assign priorities.
- ▶ Media releases and advertising – Newspapers and other print media can be used to advertise the location, times and intent of public information meetings. NDOT representatives may release written statements or hold press conferences to release information to the media and to answer questions. In some cases it may be beneficial to prepare short video or graphic presentations that strengthen understanding of ramp management strategies. Copies of the presentations can be issued to media agencies as requested, the level of effort and time needed to disseminate information and meet with each media outlet. It may also be appropriate to purchase media advertising to publicize ramp metering or the dates and locations of ramp meter initiation.

- ▶ Signs – A public notice sign may be posted at or near ramps to advise motorists of impending improvements that will be made. If available, the public notice sign should display a phone number that motorists can call to get more information on the impending activity or to provide feedback.

Table 5-1: Sample Ramp Metering Coordination and Outreach Schedule

	Internal Activities	Public Activities	Partner Agency Activities	Measure/Modeling
1-3 Years Before Metering (Today)	FDOT Policy Maker Briefings	Public Attitude Survey	Deliver Initial Project Plans	Develop Measures of Effectiveness
	Educate Staff	Develop Public Involvement Plan		
	Concept of Operations Plan and Design	Conduct Open House Meeting		Pre-Deployment Traffic and Crash Baseline
	Develop Public Improvement Plan			
	Incorporate Public Input to Design			
6-12 Months Before Metering	Policy Maker Briefings	Conduct Public Meetings	Disseminate Letters to Affected Agencies	Model
		Disseminate Project Information to Media	Operational Agreements	
2-6 Months Before Metering	Train Operators		Conduct Additional Presentations	
	Policy Maker Briefings			
1 Month Before Metering		Install Traffic Signs Near Affected Areas	Media Campaign	
<b>Begin Ramp Metering</b>				
2 Weeks After Metering	Policy Maker Briefings	Distribute Information to Public and Media		Fine Tune Metering Equipment
2-6 Months After Metering		Public Attitude Surveys		Conduct First Evaluation
6-12 Months After Metering				Conduct Second Evaluation

Note: Some cells are left intentionally blank.

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