
Further Development and Inclusion of Potential I-24 Southeast Choice Lanes in TDOT's 3-Year Plan

Statutory Authority:

The Transportation Modernization Act of 2023 (Public Chapter 159) provided the Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) with the authority to establish user fee facilities (Choice Lanes) on new facilities opened on or after July 1, 2023, and on existing facilities where one or more new vehicle lanes are added to the facility on or after July 1, 2023.

By adding capacity to I-24 Southeast, a heavily traveled roadway, operations are expected to improve in this major growth area. Choice Lanes provide another option for motorists to bypass congestion, allowing motorists to maintain consistent travel times. The Choice Lanes would be new, optional lanes designed, built, financed, operated, and maintained by a private-sector partner, selected via a competitive procurement, through a Public-Private Partnership (P3).

Before the further development of a user fee facility project, and prior to such a project's inclusion in the transportation improvement plan (otherwise known as TDOT's 3-Year Plan), the Transportation Modernization Board must approve the project for further development. See Tennessee Code Annotated 54-3-102.

Background:

Following the passage of the Transportation Modernization Act (TMA), TDOT reviewed various corridor segments on several congested urban interstates to identify potential Choice Lane projects. These sections of interstate include I-24 (Davidson & Rutherford Counties), I-65 (Davidson & Williamson Counties), I-40/I-75 (Knox County), I-24 (Hamilton County), and I-240 (Shelby County). Each corridor was screened for the relative financial viability of adding choice lanes to each corridor. The screening included congestion data regarding the intensity (minimum speeds), duration (hours below 30 mph), and extent (contiguous miles below 30 mph) of congestion along the corridor. Additional considerations were given to projections of future growth along the corridors as well as initial market feedback.

As a result of these screening efforts, TDOT is recommending to the Transportation Modernization Board (Board) that I-24 between Nashville and Murfreesboro (I-24 Southeast) be the first corridor to be further developed and pursued with the private-sector via a competitive procurement for a Choice Lane solution.

Question Before the Board:

Shall TDOT be authorized to continue developing the I-24 Southeast Choice Lane project with the inclusion of the project for preliminary engineering in TDOT's 3-Year Plan?