



# REVERSIBLE TRAFFIC LANES



**WHO**



CITY/STATE

**HURDLES**



PUBLIC AWARENESS/  
OPERATION

**More Information:** [tti.tamu.edu/policy/how-to-fix-congestion](http://tti.tamu.edu/policy/how-to-fix-congestion)

## Description

Reversible traffic lanes change direction based on peak congestion times. Reversing lanes reduces congestion:

- During morning and evening commutes.
- When there is an incident blocking a lane of traffic.
- Before and after a special event.
- When construction or maintenance is being done on the road.

Reversible traffic lanes add capacity to a road by borrowing from the other (off-peak) direction.

Roads can be adjusted to become a one-way street or have one middle lane operate in the peak direction. Changeable message signs and/or arrows show these adjustments at specified times of the day or when volume exceeds certain limits.

## Target Market

- Roads with congested work zone areas or incidents.
- Roads with highly directional congestion.

- Bridges, tunnels, and toll booth areas difficult to widen.
- Roads surrounding or leading to/from special event centers.
- Roads during emergency use (hurricane evacuation).

Reversible lanes work well in corridors where traffic flow is heavily imbalanced for a short period of time, and there are few other solution options.

## How Will This Help?

- **Reduces congestion** by borrowing capacity from the other direction.
- **Increases safety** in work zones.
- **Postpones the need to add capacity** through conventional lane additions.
- **Accelerates evacuation** during weather events or other natural disasters.

## Implementation Issues

Proper communication and public participation are crucial to reversible lane success. Local agencies should identify

## SUCCESS STORIES



### Arlington, Texas

The city installed reversible lanes to ease congestion

around two professional sports stadiums:

- FM 157/Collins Street.
- SH 180/Division Street.
- Road to Six Flags Street.

the best locations for implementation and ensure the public understands the concept and operation.

The endpoint treatment requires particular care and attention; common treatments extend across an intersection, requiring complex signals and inefficient timing strategies. If poorly executed, these intersections may become expensive and confusing. Locating a safe mid-block left turn across the favored travel direction can also be difficult. Impacted businesses may complain of denial to traffic. Also, there is more potential for crashes depending on left-turn demand, mid-block geometric conditions, and large groupings of vehicles in the favored traffic direction.

