



## TEMPORARY SHOULDER USE



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

### Description

Temporary shoulder use (also known as hard shoulder running and dynamic shoulder use) makes room for more traffic temporarily by allowing vehicles to drive on the shoulder at reduced speed limits. This strategy serves more vehicles and avoids congestion, either totally or partially, during peak periods.

An operator in the traffic management center makes the decision to begin temporary shoulder use on a stretch of roadway based on traffic conditions and according to operational policies. Two applications of temporary shoulder use include:

- **Shoulder use for all vehicles**—allows all vehicles on the roadway to use the shoulder when open. This can also be used in conjunction with a managed lane strategy.
- **Transit-only shoulder use** (also known as a bus bypass shoulder or bus on shoulder)—allows only transit vehicles to use the shoulder in specific conditions and driving regulations.

### Target Market

- Frequently congested freeways or roads.
- Freeways serving multiple bus routes that experience major travel time delays.

### How Will This Help?

- **Delays the start of congestion** by increasing volume and improving trip reliability.
- **Increases reliability of transit service** because buses can bypass congestion on primary routes.
- **Decreases crash rates** by temporarily increasing capacity volume and improving operating conditions.

### Implementation Issues

Public and political support varies widely by state, with opposition citing safety and operational concerns. When implementing temporary shoulder use, ample public outreach and educational efforts should be used to inform users of the benefits and proper use of the shoulder.

### COST



### TIME



### IMPACT



### WHO



STATE

### HURDLES



RIGHT-OF-WAY, PUBLIC SUPPORT, DESIGN, OPERATIONS

### SUCCESS STORIES

While successful in Europe for many years, temporary shoulder use in the United States has been limited and varies considerably.

**Minneapolis, Minnesota**  
IH 35W uses a **priced dynamic shoulder lane, which is free for transit and HOVs but operates as a toll for MnPASS users**. The city also operates exclusive bus-on-shoulder lanes on over 290 miles of freeway and major streets.

**Other successful operations in the U.S. are located in Seattle, Washington, D.C., Boston, and Honolulu.**



Additionally, issues related to design, ample right-of-way, operations, and pavement condition may delay or hinder this strategy.

