

## Traffic jam? Signs to advise alternate routes, estimated times

By Michael Turnbell  
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**W**hen a highway accident jams traffic, commuters get warnings posted on overhead signs — but no advice on what to do.

Soon, however, drivers in Broward County could get alerts by smartphone, computer and highway signs to specific alternate routes with estimated travel times, and even suggestions to take mass transit instead.

For example, a crash on Interstate 95 might prompt messages telling drivers to divert to Broward Boulevard and S.R. 7 and re-enter at I-595 -- with an estimated trip time. Or commuters could be urged to use a nearby park-and-ride for the express buses or Tri-Rail. And traffic signal timing could be adjusted along the route.

Many state and local agencies offer similar travel information now, but separately. This new effort, expected to take about two years to plan and four to five years from now to actually see in place depending on funding, would combine congestion and incident reports to give drivers a more complete picture of what's going on.

Officials say such a high-tech system is less costly than widening roads and takes advantage of tools already in place such as roadside cameras, speed sensors and traffic counters.

South Florida has the 11<sup>th</sup> worst congestion in the country, with commuters spending an average of 47 hours a year stuck in traffic, according to a Texas Transportation Institute study that analyzes traffic data every few years.

In the past few years, the commuter alert sign system has expanded to include major roads in the central part of the county, including Broward Boulevard, University Drive and Sunrise Boulevard. It's being expanded to roads in south Broward.

At the same time, other modes of transportation are expanding. In two years, All Aboard Florida will begin running passenger trains on the coastal tracks along U.S. 1 and Dixie Highway. Fort Lauderdale is planning a streetcar line that will circulate in the downtown area. And Tri-Rail is talking about running trains on the coastal tracks as well.

"There are lot of transit modes existing and some like the Wave streetcar that are up and coming. We want to make users aware of these before they get on the road or while in traffic so they can make better decisions," said Melissa Ackert, a Florida Department of Transportation engineer.

The Broward Metropolitan Planning Organization recently received a \$180,000 federal grant to develop a more high-tech system of alerts, with state providing \$20,000 matching funds. The MPO is providing \$30,000.

Dallas and San Diego were the first two metro areas to develop such a system. Riding on their success, the federal government awarded \$2.5 million in grants to 13 metro areas to develop programs. Broward is the only region in Florida to get funding.

If it works in Broward, it could be expanded to stretches of I-95 in Palm Beach and Miami-Dade counties.

"State-of-the-art technologies like these make the entire transportation network better, safer, and more reliable for commuters, businesses, and freight shippers," said U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx.

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### **The U.S. Department Transportation Announces \$2.6 Million in Grants to Expand Real-Time Travel Information in 13 Cities**

WASHINGTON - The U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) today announced \$2.571 million in grants to expand the use of real-time travel information in 13 highly congested urban areas across 10 states. Known as "Integrated Corridor Management," or ICM, the grants will help selected cities or regions combine numerous information technologies and real-time travel information from highway, rail, and transit operations.

"State-of-the-art technologies like these make the entire transportation network better, safer, and more reliable for commuters, businesses, and freight shippers," said U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx. "An efficient transportation system is at the heart of a healthy national economy."

Many state and local agencies across the country offer similar travel information, but separately. This new effort takes real-time information a step further by combining updated congestion and incident data from various state and local agencies.

"This takes real-time travel information to a new level," said Acting Federal Highway Administrator Gregory Nadeau. "Innovations like these are 21st-century tools for our 21st-century economy, and will make our nation's transportation system even more coordinated and effective."

Travelers can use real-time information to avoid congestion and find alternate routes or

the entire network, not just one route. Such tools can help engineers make better decisions about congestion management by recommending where traffic should flow and onto which systems commuters should be shifted based on up-to-the-second data.

"New technology has great potential to improve riders' experience with transit," said Acting Federal Transit Administrator Therese McMillan. "By expanding the use of real-time information in cities across the U.S. – from Portland, Oregon, to Ft. Lauderdale, Florida – we can make it easier for people to make informed choices about the best ways to get around, whether it's by bus, train, bike, or other ways of travel."

The ICM technologies rely on many data sources simultaneously, such as live camera feeds, hundreds of traffic speed and volume detectors, pavement sensors and even weather monitors to gather, transmit and analyze information.

"I am very proud of our successful pilots in San Diego and Dallas," said Greg Winfree, Assistant Secretary for Research and Technology. "Integrated corridors provide real benefits for travelers, and we would like to see those benefits spread throughout the U.S."

Two ICM systems are currently operational in the U.S.—on U.S. 75 in Dallas, Texas, and on I-15 in San Diego, Calif., and the lessons learned there are helping to improve other deployments. San Diego's I-15 traveler information app is tied into ICM response plans and provides real-time updated information about traffic incidents and alternative routes to local drivers.

The 13 projects selected to receive the grants seek to implement similar systems and will use the funding towards further development are listed below:

**Integrated Corridor Management Grants**

<b>State</b>	<b>Lead Agency or City</b>	<b>Corridor Description</b>	<b>Grant Funding</b>	<b>Total Project Cost</b>
Arizona	Maricopa County	I-10 through the Phoenix metro area and multiple east-west parallel routes.	\$200,000	\$258,800
California	Caltrans	I-210 on a 22-mile section from the 134/210 interchange near downtown Pasadena to the Foothill Boulevard Interchange in La Verne.	\$200,000	\$250,000
California	Contra Costa County	SR-4 in the city of Hercules from I-80 to I-680.	\$200,000	\$400,000
Florida	Broward County	I-95 on a 25-mile section in Broward County. Commuter rail, transit bus service, inter-city rail (including Amtrak) park & ride lots and bike trails.	\$180,000	\$230,000
Maryland	Maryland State Highway Administration	Three corridors connecting WDC and Baltimore: I-95, MD 295 (the Baltimore-Washington Parkway), and US 1 between MD 32 and I-695.	\$200,000	\$250,000
New Jersey	New Jersey DOT	New Jersey Turnpike (I-95), Garden Parkway and US 1 and US 9 from Woodbridge (south) to the Holland	\$200,000	\$296,800

New York	City of New York	In the New York/New Jersey metro area, the corridor includes sections of Route 495 (the Long Island/Queens-Midtown Expressway) and crosses midtown Manhattan, the Lincoln Tunnel and the Queens-Midtown Tunnel.	\$200,000	\$450,000
New York	Niagara International Transportation Technology Coalition (NITTEC)	I-90 within the Buffalo-Niagara region, including the Peace Bridge and the I-190/I-90 interchange to the south and the I-190/I-290 interchange to the north.	\$200,000	\$284,800
Oregon	City of Portland	I-84 from downtown Portland encompassing over 45 square miles. Light rail and streetcar routes. Local streets. Bus and bike routes.	\$191,680	\$239,600
Texas	City of El Paso	IH-10 from US-54 to Loop 375, US-54/IH-110 from IH-1 to Loop 375. This project is 16 miles combined. Bus routes.	\$200,000	\$250,000
Texas	City of Austin	IH-35 between US 183 and SH 71	\$200,000	\$300,000
Utah	Utah Transit Authority and the Utah DOT UTA and UDOT	Major north-south roadways, representing approximately 25 miles, from downtown Salt Lake City to Lehi City, including I-15, State Street and Redwood Road. Commuter rail services.	\$200,000	\$250,000
Virginia	Virginia DOT	Northern Virginia east-west corridors including I-66, SR 7, US 29, US 50 and SR 267. The Virginia Railway Express Manassas line, Metro Silver and Orange lines, commuter bus routes, and commuter parking lots.	\$200,000	\$315,000
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>\$2,571,680</b>	

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