

VI. Conclusion

There are four key points that must be recognized with respect to mobility issues faced by Texans and our potential to address those issues:

First, traffic congestion has a significant detrimental effect on economic growth – not just locally, but over entire economy and for all Texans.

Second, during the past 10 years, among those who drive, traffic congestion has cost Texans 2.6 billion hours of delay, 4.5 billion gallons of wasted fuel, and \$45.6 billion in increased travel time and fuel.

Third, traffic congestion is getting worse. The number of people, vehicles, and miles traveled has increased significantly faster than the increase in lane-miles of roadway. There is absolutely no reason to believe that, given the present course, the situation will improve.

Fourth, the cost to significantly reduce traffic congestion in Texas' four largest metropolitan areas is less than the cost of doing nothing.

Fifth, the principal strategies for reducing congestion must respond to increased demand by improving the flow of personal and commercial traffic on roadways.

If these four points are accepted as a point of departure, the issue then dissolves into six separate questions:

- *What level of mobility do we wish to achieve?* This report has recommended establishing a goal of a Travel Time Index of 1.15 across all modes.
- *How are we going to achieve it?* There are a number of different strategies that can be employed including demand management, improved operations, toll facilities, and public transportation, but building additional lane-miles of roadway will, by far, provide the largest portion of the solution.
- *What does it cost?* This report provides estimated costs to achieve and maintain four different mobility scenarios.
- *What are the returns?* This report provides estimated returns, both in reduced fuel and delay times, as well as general returns to the economy. In the aggregate, the returns are greater than the costs.
- *How do we finance it?* This report started from the premise of solving the problem rather than doing as much as can be done with the funds that are available. As a result, it does not address revenue issues in detail. It is recommended that a comprehensive solution set, designed to meet the funding requirement of the mobility goal, be adopted within one year.

- *How will we know if we're doing the right thing?* This report proposes a series of monitoring, reporting and management steps that should be adopted to insure the mobility goals are met.

The challenge before the State is to achieve and then maintain a satisfactory level of mobility for its citizens and their shared future. The cost of meeting that challenge is significant – but the cost of failure is greater.