

According to the recently released “2007 Urban Mobility Report”, issued by the Texas Transportation Institute, congestion is not a singular problem. There are multiple problems, and therefore, several solutions. The report indicates that the “supply of solutions is not being implemented at a rate anywhere near the rate of travel demand growth.”

The Many Causes of Congestion

- Many people and lots of freight moving at the same time
- Too many people, too many trips, over too short a time period, on a system that is too small
- Unforeseen circumstances: weather, accidents, breakdowns, special events, poorly timed traffic signals
- Transportation capacity, built in earlier decades, is being “used up” today

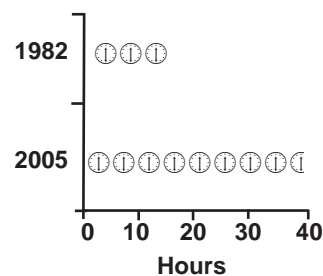


Congestions Solutions - A Mixed Bag

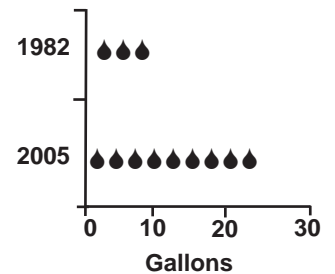
There is not a ‘single’ solution to the transportation problems that affect us today. A combination of efforts is required to reduce and relieve congestion. Be mindful that the solution “cocktail” may take years to complete and may be a combination of inexpensive and high cost options. And different areas, even within a region, may require different solutions, or combinations thereof.

- * *Get as much service as possible from what already exists:* time traffic signals for maximum efficiency; move stalled/crashed vehicles as quickly as possible; promote existing transit, car & van pool service.
- * *Add capacity in critical corridors:* for freight or people movement; add more buses, rail lines, streets, freeways; add tolling to existing lanes.
- * *Relieve chokepoints in road and transit systems:* retime traffic signals; add freeway lanes between entrance and exit ramps; rebuild freeway interchanges.
- * *Change usage patterns:* allow employees to choose flexible work hours, or to work from home; combine work trips with shopping, medical or other appointments.
- * *Diversify development patterns:* encourage transit-oriented-development; mix use in denser developments to encourage more pedestrian usage.
- * *Maintain realistic expectations:* understand that congestion cannot be completely eliminated; key activity centers may always experience some congestion.

Hours of Travel Delay per Peak-Period Traveler



Gallons of Fuel Wasted per Peak-Period Traveler



- Congestion is worse in all urban areas (large and small).
- The average peak-period traveler spends 38 hours, consumes 26 gallons of fuel and pays \$710, just to sit in traffic each year. (The value for 1982 was an inflation-adjusted \$260 per traveler.)
- Since major projects, programs and funding efforts take 10 to 15 years to develop, regions that today have 500,000 to 1 million people, will have the traffic problems that areas over 1 million people have now, if actions are not taken to change the trends.
- There is a cost to reducing congestion, but the benefits are enormous. Eliminating serious congestion returns \$8 for every \$1 spent. Benefits range from less travel time & less fuel consumed, to faster and more reliable delivery times, expanded service regions & market areas, increased safety and cleaner air.



What Would We Do Without Transit?

What would happen if there was no public transportation service in this country? Disregarding the 85 largest urban areas of the country, there are still 352 urban areas to consider. If public transportation service was discontinued and each person traveled in a private vehicle, the 352 smaller urban areas throughout the US would suffer an additional 31 million hours of delay, at a cost of over \$574 million.