



Advancing Mobility Worldwide

## Daily News Briefs for April 27, 2015

April 27, 2015  
By Peter Shelly



- [I-95 Express Lanes Deliver Strong Q1 Results](#)
- [TxDOT Eyes Largest Ever Houston Improvement Project](#)
- [FL Lawmakers Eye MDX Leadership Changes](#)
- [A Look at Seattle I-405 Express Lanes](#)
- [A Deal to Fix I-66: Tolling & Transit Come Together](#)
- [FDOT: Still Time to Trade in Old SunPass](#)
- [NC Town Eyes I-77 HOT Lanes Money](#)
- [Caltrans had Early Warning of Bay Bridge Structure Issue](#)
- [FL Columnist Hammers "State Road Bosses" on SR 417 Proposal](#)
- [Yet Another Toll Booth Crash](#)
- [Locals Press for Hatem Bridge Toll & Toll Plaza Changes](#)
- [Fitch on OTA Bonds](#)
- [Fitch on Richmond Metropolitan Transportation Authority Bonds](#)



## I-95 Express Lanes Deliver Strong Q1 Results

[\*The Free Lance-Star\*](#) (Fredericksburg, VA) reports that, "The first quarter of the Interstate 95 express lanes was a profitable one for Transurban, as the toll road operator raked in \$9 million. According to Transurban's first-quarter statistics, an average of about 32,000 daily trips have been taken on the electronically tolled road since it opened in December. Those trips generated about \$134,000 in tolls each day."

## **TxDOT Eyes Largest Ever Houston Improvement Project**

[\*KPRC-TV News\*](#) (Houston) reports that, "TxDOT has revealed their plans to help relieve traffic on the North Freeway in what could be the largest freeway rebuilding project ever in Houston." The report adds that, "The project would add two managed lanes on both sides of Interstate 45 from the Beltway to the loop, and then from Interstate 610, to Interstate 10 the feeder lanes will be on the street level while the main lanes and managed lanes will be below street level." Go to the [North Houston Highway project site](#) for a schedule of public meetings and to download documents.

## **FL Lawmakers Eye MDX Leadership Changes**

[\*The Miami Herald\*](#) reports that the Florida legislature is considering a [bill](#) that would make the Miami-Dade mayor chairperson of the Miami-Dade Expressway Authority (MDX). "Legislation sponsored by Sen. Anitere Flores, a Republican and chair of the Miami-Dade delegation, would shuffle membership of the authority, which uses toll revenue for highway construction throughout Miami-Dade." The report adds that, "The effort is the latest twist in a legislative session that has local state lawmakers trying to change the make-up of county transportation boards."

[\*Miami Herald\*](#) editor Fabiola Santiago doesn't like the idea of handing Mayor Carlos Gimenez the chairmanship, arguing that, "Of all the things Gimenez has brought to county governance, transparency isn't one of them, vetting projects publicly isn't one of them, and listening to ordinary people before making high-impact decisions that affect them isn't one of them."

## **A Look at Seattle I-405 Express Lanes**

[\*KPLU-FM News\*](#) (Seattle) reports that, "Interstate 405's notoriously crawling traffic might accelerate if the state's [new system of express toll lanes](#) and increased carpool minimums works as expected. Drivers may have already noticed new flashing blue lights as they

travel along I-405 between downtown Bellevue and I-5 in Lynnwood."

## **A Deal to Fix I-66: Tolling & Transit Come Together**

*The Washington Post* reports that VDOT Secretary Aubrey Layne "believes that the broad framework of a deal has been struck: I-66 would be converted to a toll road inside the Capital Beltway, with carpoolers riding free. The tolls -- tens of millions worth -- would be channeled to just the types of Metro, bus, bike and pedestrian improvements that county officials have long argued are the best way to move growing numbers of people." Following analysis of the project's impact on I-66 congestion, "plans for expansion could then be considered, Layne said." Still, *The Post* finds that "make-or-break details, including the timing and precise triggers for when widening might proceed, are still a matter of deep dispute, and some areas that Layne and his team thought were settled aren't, according to interviews with local officials."

## **FDOT: Still Time to Trade in Old SunPass**

*WFLA-TV News* (Tampa) reports that, "Florida commuters who use the old SunPass transponders to go through the tolls still have time to exchange them for the new ones for free, Florida Department of Transportation reminded."

## **NC Town Eyes I-77 HOT Lanes Money**

*The Charlotte Observer* reports that, "Cornelius could get \$42.7 million in funding from the North Carolina Department of Transportation" -- a slice of toll revenue from the proposed I-77 HOT lanes -- "to fund multiple road improvement projects. But the one-time funding allotment depends on approval by a state transportation committee that meets this summer, and projects must begin construction within five years."

## **Caltrans Had Early Warning of Bay Bridge Structure Issue**

*The San Francisco Chronicle* reports that, "Caltrans knew the new Bay Bridge eastern span's supposedly watertight steel support structure leaked in the rain as early as 2012 -- more than a year before the bridge opened -- and warned that the water could cause corrosion, documents obtained by The Chronicle show."

## **FL Columnist Hammers "State Road Bosses" on SR 417**

## Proposal

[\*Orlando Sentinel\*](#) columnist Beth Kassab writes, "Now state road bosses have come up with a new way to torment drivers -- widen toll roads and charge even higher fares for the new lanes. The [Florida] Turnpike wants to do just that on the sections it controls of State Road 417 and the BeachLine Expressway. The plan for S.R. 417 makes so little sense it's as if some transportation bureaucrat announced, 'Spending \$88 million sounds like fun! Somebody come up with a project!'"

## Yet Another Toll Booth Crash

[\*NBC's New England Cable News\*](#) reports that, "A tractor trailer crashed into a toll booth on the Massachusetts Turnpike in Weston Friday night [April 24]." Fortunately, no injuries were reported.

## Locals Press for Hatem Bridge Toll & Toll Plaza Changes

[\*The Cecil Whig\*](#) (Elkton, MD) reports that local officials made their case for reducing [\*Hatem Bridge\*](#) tolls on multi-axle vehicles when they met with the Maryland Transportation Authority (MDTA) staff on April 23. They are also asking MDTA to relocate the bridge's toll facility to the Maryland-Delaware state line.

## Fitch Affirms OTA Bonds Rating

[\*Fitch Ratings\*](#) has "affirmed the Oklahoma Turnpike Authority's (OTA) 'AA-' rating on approximately \$986.2 million of outstanding second senior revenue bonds. The Rating Outlook is Stable. The rating reflects the turnpike system's demonstrated mature and stable traffic profile, particularly through the most recent economic downturn, while retaining significant rate-making flexibility."

## Fitch Rates Richmond Transportation Authority Bonds

[\*Fitch Ratings\*](#) has "affirmed the rating on the Richmond Metropolitan Transportation Authority's (the authority) approximately \$90.6 million in outstanding expressway toll revenue bonds, series 1998, 2002, and 2011-D. The Rating Outlook is Stable."

---

## Leave a comment:

Post Comment

ENGINEERED  
FOR ACCURACY.

perceptics™ HIGH PERFORMANCE IMAGING

### UPCOMING EVENTS

#### [InfraAmericas' US P3 Infrastructure Forum](#)

Tuesday, June 9

#### [2016 IBTTA Conferences Planning Meeting](#)

Friday, July 10

#### [IBTTA Summit on AET, Managed Lanes & Interoperability](#)

Sunday, July 12

[View all events](#)

**TOLLPLUS**   
Advanced Tolling Solutions...

### JOBS

[Director of Finance, Kansas Turnpike](#)

Posted: May 21

**Senior Programmer Analyst: Kansas  
Turnpike**

Posted: May 8

[View all jobs](#)

**RFPS**

**RFI: Tolling Solution System Integrators and  
Equipment Manufacturers**

Posted: June 1

**Automated Vehicle Occupancy Detection  
Solution**

Posted: May 20

[View all RFPS](#)