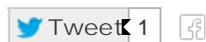




Advancing Mobility Worldwide

Daily News Briefs for March 31, 2015

March 31, 2015
By Peter Shelly



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Transportation Bill Would Clear Way for ETC, Variable

Tolling

[*The Detroit News*](#) reports that, "The U.S. Transportation Department['s] . . . \$478 billion proposal to fund surface transportation repairs over the next six years . . . would allow states to set variable tolls -- higher prices at rush hour -- to try to ease congestion, with the department's approval." The report adds that, "Last's year bill raised the idea of expanding toll roads -- and ending the current bar preventing tolling on currently free interstate highways. It would help phase out traditional toll collectors, requiring that after Oct. 1, 2016, 'new toll facilities on federal-aid highways use only non-cash electronic technology for toll collection.'"

[*The Bond Buyer*](#) (subscription required) reports that, "President Obama's revised six-year, \$487 billion transportation proposal, delivered to Congress on Monday, would allow states to levy variable tolls on existing roads to alleviate traffic congestion, in addition to removing the long-standing ban on tolling existing interstate highways."

New Chair for NY State Thruway Authority Confirmed

[*Syracuse.com*](#) reports that, "Onondaga County Executive Joanie Mahoney today became the first woman to chair the New York State Thruway Authority." The report cites a series of stiff challenges that the agency is confronting, from the Tappan Zee replacement project to tolls. Senator John DeFrancisco (R-Syracuse), before endorsing her nomination, warned, "You're going to have people on your back about tolls, no matter what you do."

IBTTA's Pat Jones: Let States Decide on Tolling Interstates

[*The Hill*](#) posts a column by IBTTA's Pat Jones who says, "We ask Congress to give states the flexibility to place tolls on Interstate highways for the purpose of reconstructing those highways. We are not talking about a mandate. We are simply talking about giving states the right to have an open and honest debate as to whether they want to use tolls to rebuild their Interstate highways."

IL Tollway Committee Calls for Indexing and Congestion Pricing

[*The Daily Herald*](#) (Arlington Heights, IL) reports that deep inside a [feasibility study](#)  on the proposed Route 53 extension project is this: "Indexing and congestion pricing of tolls

are strategies recommended for the proposed (Route 53 extension) as a pilot for eventual implementation along the entire tollway system." The newspaper adds, "The idea of indexing toll rates is among several game-changers recommended by finance committee members on an Illinois tollway Route 53 advisory group seeking to shrink a massive budget gap."

Will "tolls go up based on inflation?" The answer appears to be, well, maybe. The *Daily Herald's* Marni Pyke also wonders, "If calculating tolls based on the consumer price index works on the future Route 53 extension, could we see indexing carried over to existing toll roads?" Tollway Chairperson Paula Wolff responds, "I think we're always open to pilot projects. We're always interested in seeing how we can combine the needs of the tollway to maintain the system with the demand that the customers have. I'm happy to have a pilot always on things that make sense."

CTRMA Extends Public Comment Period on MoPac South

[KVUE-TV News](#) (Austin) reports that the Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority (CTRMA) "has extended the public outreach period" on the [MoPac South](#) project. [Click here](#)  for CTRMA's release on the decision to obtain more public feedback on the proposal to add managed lanes to the highway.

Audit: US 36 Delays Costly, but P3 Project Is Still a Good Value

[KUNC-FM News](#) (Northern Colorado community radio) reports that, "A state [audit](#)  of the U.S. 36 express lanes project has found that procurement delays cost the state of Colorado an additional \$5 million, but that overall "it provided the best value for taxpayers." The report adds that, "The audit report also targeted poor communication and a lack of transparency as additional issues."

[KDVR-TV News](#) (Denver) reports that, "It hasn't come without controversy, but the first phase of the U.S. 36 Express Lanes project will open as planned this summer."

Motorcyclists Argue I-405 Express Lanes Violate the Law

[KING5-TV News](#) (Seattle) reports that, "Federal law requires states to let motorcycles into HOV lanes for free. Safety concerns recognized by the Transportation Secretary are the only exceptions. Now, WSDOT plans to require bikers who want to avoid a toll to

purchase Good to Go! passes to use on the I-405 express lanes opening later this year. Bikers said the policy violates federal law."

NCDOT Advances Charlotte Toll Plan

[WSOC-TV News](#) (Charlotte) reports that, "The North Carolina Department of Transportation has a two-fold plan to avoid traffic congestion on Independence Boulevard, but part of the plan involves paying a toll." The station adds that NCDOT held a public meeting earlier this week "to explain the plan to build toll lanes on Highway 74 from I-277 to I-485 while also building connectors to back roads that run parallel to 74 to allow drivers to cut around traffic faster."

[WBTW News](#) Charlotte reports, "If you hate sitting in traffic on Independence Boulevard, the Department of Transportation (DOT) has an idea but you might not like all of it. Transportation officials are proposing express lanes for U.S. 74 between 277 in Uptown Charlotte and I-485."

MDX "Overhaul" Talk Continues

[The Miami Herald](#) reports that, "The Miami-Dade Expressway Authority's recent pledge not to hike tolls hasn't stopped state lawmakers from attempting to restructure the agency and impose tougher ethics regulations."

IL Tollway Fights Distracted Driving with Free Wi-Fi

[The Daily Herald](#) (Arlington Heights, IL) reports that, "For those who must call or text while on the road, the Illinois tollway is promoting stopping at oases with free Wi-Fi as part of National Distracted Driving Awareness Month in April."

Fitch Affirms 95 Express Lanes Rating

[Fitch Ratings](#) "has affirmed the 'BBB-' rating on the 95 Express Lanes LLC's (95 Express) approximately \$242 million senior private activity bonds (PABs), issued through the Virginia Small Business Financing Authority."

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