

Contact: Donna Maurillo  
MTI Communications Director  
831-234-4009  
donna.maurillo (at) sjsu.edu

## **How Can Cities Design and Manage Shared-Use Bus Priority Lanes on Congested Urban Streets?**

*Free report from Mineta Transportation Institute benefits planners, policymakers.*

**San Jose, Calif., April 12, 2012** – The [Mineta Transportation Institute](http://transweb.sjsu.edu) (transweb.sjsu.edu) has published [\*Shared-Use Bus Priority Lanes on City Streets: Case Studies in Design and Management\*](#), a peer-reviewed research report. It examines bus lane design and operations in major congested urban centers where bus lanes are shared with non-bus vehicles. The study investigated seven cities that currently have networks of shared-use bus lanes: Los Angeles, London, New York, Paris, San Francisco, Seoul, and Sydney. The study found that key hallmarks of current bus lane planning are: (1) institutional reforms, (2) creative and carefully tailored physical designs, (3) strategies to balance competing uses, and (4) sustainable approaches to enforcement. Innovative practices in each of these areas that are discussed may be suitable models for other communities using shared-use bus lanes. Investigators were Asha Weinstein Agrawal, PhD, Todd Goldman, PhD, and Nancy Hannaford. The 218-page report is available for free PDF download from [transweb.sjsu.edu/project/2606.html](http://transweb.sjsu.edu/project/2606.html)

In recent years, US cities have created new Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) systems and pursued other strategies to make their bus services faster and more reliable. At the same time, a new emphasis on maximizing the productivity and livability of urban streets has led to new design and management practices to address the needs of their many users. As a result, cities are taking a new look at an old approach to improving bus service in urban centers – designating street space for priority use by buses.

“Bus lanes tend to be well suited for cities like the ones profiled in this report,” said Dr. Agrawal. “These cities have such high demand for bus transit and such dense and complex traffic operating conditions that it is impractical to physically segregate lanes solely for transit use. At their best, they reflect the ideal that a well-designed and well-managed street can help transit operate more efficiently while the street remains flexible enough to accommodate other users.”

Four key questions were addressed in the study:

1. How do the many public agencies within any city region that share authority over different aspects of the bus lanes coordinate their work in designing, operating, and enforcing the lanes?
2. What is the physical lane design?
3. What is the scope of priority use granted to buses? When is bus priority in effect, and what other users may share the lanes during these times?
4. How are the lanes enforced?

One universal finding was that there is no single “one size fits all” bus lane design or alignment suitable throughout any of these cities. Each has had to adapt its bus lane designs and regulations to meet local conditions, often on a block-by-block basis.

The complete 218-page report includes several tables and photographs that illustrate key issues and findings. It is available for free PDF download at [transweb.sjsu.edu/project/2606.html](http://transweb.sjsu.edu/project/2606.html)

### **ABOUT THE RESEARCH TEAM**

**Asha Weinstein Agrawal, PhD**, directs the MTI National Transportation Finance Center. She also is an associate professor and chair of the Department of Urban and Regional Planning at San José State University. Her research and teaching interests in transportation policy and planning include transportation finance, pedestrian planning, and urban street design. She also works in the area of planning and transportation history. She earned a BA from Harvard University in folklore and mythology, an MSc from the London School of Economics and Political Science in urban and regional planning, and a PhD from the University of California, Berkeley in city and regional planning. Access a complete listing of her publications at [www.sjsu.edu/faculty/weinstein.agrawal/](http://www.sjsu.edu/faculty/weinstein.agrawal/)

**Todd Goldman, PhD**, is manager, Regional Transportation Planning, at the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey. Previously, he was associate director for New Initiatives at the Region 2 University Transportation Research Center, based at the City College of New York. He holds a PhD from the University of California, Berkeley in city and regional planning.

**Nancy Hannaford** comes to urban and transportation planning research from a professional background spanning more than 20 years in computer engineering and operating system development. She divides her time between working as an editor and researcher for planning projects and privately consulting as a process efficiency expert in agribusiness. She earned a BA in computer science from the University of California, Berkeley.

#### **ABOUT THE MINETA TRANSPORTATION INSTITUTE**

The Mineta Transportation Institute (MTI) conducts research, education, and information and technology transfer, focusing on multimodal surface transportation policy and management issues, especially as they relate to transit. MTI was established by Congress in 1991 as part of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) and was reauthorized under TEA-21 and again under SAFETEA-LU. The Institute has been funded by Congress through the US Department of Transportation's (DOT) Research and Innovative Technology Administration, by the California Legislature through the Department of Transportation (Caltrans), and by other public and private grants and donations, including grants from the US Department of Homeland Security. DOT selected MTI as a National Center of Excellence following competitions in 2002 and 2006. The internationally respected members of the MTI Board of Trustees represent all major surface transportation modes. MTI's focus on policy and management resulted from the Board's assessment of the transportation industry's unmet needs. That led directly to choosing the San José State University College of Business as the Institute's home. Web site: [transweb.sjsu.edu](http://transweb.sjsu.edu), Twitter: @MinetaTrans, or Facebook: Mineta Transportation Institute.

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