

# HOT LANE COMMUTER RESEARCH

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The purpose of this document is to share learnings gathered from several qualitative research groups conducted among carpool and single-driver commuters within targeted zipcode areas. The key reasons for the research were to better understand the perceptions and experiences these audiences have of HOT lanes in Georgia. The data will be used to shape on-going planning and communication strategies both in the short and long term.

**TRANSFORMATION  
WITH EXCELLENCE**

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## RESEARCH

### Background

Gov. Sonny Perdue and U.S. Transportation Secretary Mary Peters announced a \$110 million federal grant, to be matched with \$37 million from the state, for a two-year test of High Occupancy Toll (HOT) lanes aimed at relieving traffic congestion during peak commuting times.

The HOT lanes will run along the 85 Corridor from Doraville in DeKalb County to Old Peachtree Road in Gwinnett County.

HOT lanes allow carpooling drivers to enter for free while other vehicles pay a toll that varies according to the amount of traffic on the highway.

Buses, motorcycles, emergency vehicles and alternative-fuel vehicles also are exempt from the toll.

The first phase of the pilot project also will include funds for two new park-and-ride lots at Hamilton Mill and Cedars Road with 1,900 spaces.

Commuters using the lots will be able to take buses to Midtown and downtown Atlanta and to the Lindbergh MARTA station.

The project will take about two years to develop, with the HOT lanes expected to go into service by January 2011.

That portion of I-85 will become metro Atlanta's first toll road since tolls were imposed on Georgia 400.

Phase I will start immediately with environmental reviews, project design, and public outreach for the I-85 corridor between I-285 just south of Spaghetti Junction and Old Peachtree Road in Gwinnett County. The State will monitor the demonstration project for multiple success factors and report its performance through extensive outreach to the general public and lawmakers. The project development and delivery will take 2 years, with an expected operational opening date for the HOT lanes and supporting transit service by January 31, 2011.

#### What are HOT Lanes?

High Occupancy Toll (HOT) lanes in the Atlanta region will allow qualified carpools to ride in the High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes for free while other vehicles would enter for a fee. The fee changes based on the number of vehicles in the HOT lane in order to keep the lanes free-flowing. The changing fee (a.k.a. dynamic pricing) will keep the HOT lane traffic free-flowing to provide an option for more reliable travel times for commuters.

Transit, vanpools, and other eligible vehicles (i.e. carpoolers, motorcycles, alternative fuel vehicles and emergency vehicles) would also receive the benefits of reliable free-flow conditions but would not be required to pay a fee.

## Key Benefits

1. Provide commuters with a more reliable, free-flow commute option.
2. Multi-modal approach to reducing congestion that includes over \$147 million in transit and roadway investments in the I-85 corridor.
3. Vision for future regional system of HOT lanes in the Atlanta region.

## Objectives

The Partnership for Progress team is interested in understanding how commuters perceive the HOT concept and its combined services.

1. To understand what participants take away from the HOT concept.
2. To examine what customer expectations are of future service.
3. Identify distinctive positioning elements that provide a unique opportunity for communicating HOT branding and service benefits.

Feedback from participants will be used to better position HOT among target groups and aid in branding and marketing the product to commuters in Georgia.

## RESEARCH QUALIFIER

*It is important to recognize that this study was conducted in a qualitative format. As a result, the answers are not statistically reliable on any scale. This information should be used strictly for directional purposes and has been presented in the same manner. What is most important are the overall trends in respondent answer, not who said what, or how many people said what.*

## Methodology Part I

Six focus groups were conducted on November 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> 2008. Participation was totally voluntary. Carpoolers and Non-carpoolers participated separately in the focus group discussions after being screened. The groups were videotaped. What follows is an analysis of the key learnings from the groups (6).

The groups consisted of 8-9 participants and one facilitator for a 90-minute discussion and were conducted at a professional facility. Representatives of the Partnership for Progress team observed the groups from behind a one-way mirror and utilized audio and visual recording. Focus group participants were presented with several questions including what they like or do not like about HOT lanes and under which conditions they would be likely to use HOT lanes in their commute especially if HOV2 became HOV3.

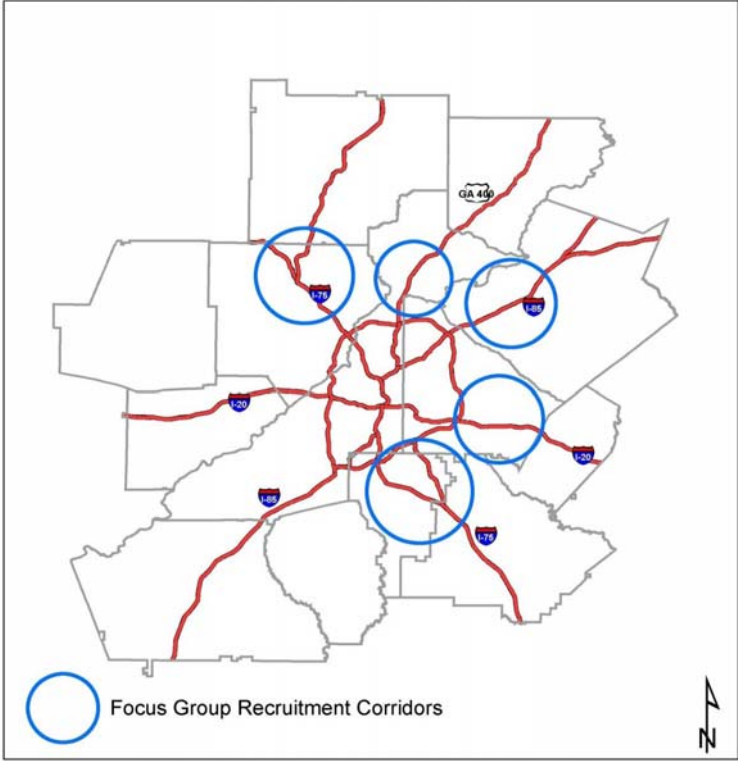
There was also a discussion on HOT branding and preferred communication vehicles.

## Methodology Part II

Participants were chosen because of where they lived and because of their familiarity and use of the 85 corridor. Key zip codes from which participants were recruited included:

### Recruitment Zip Codes/Target Zip Codes

30043	30518
30044	30071
30024	30319
30096	30340
30045	30084
30093	30542
30047	30345
30019	30329
30519	30092
30097	30341





## Focus Group Demographic Characteristics -Car pool & Non-Car pool

\*All respondents were between the ages of 25-54

(non car pool)	Male	Female
# of respondents	17	16
African American	1	2
Caucasian	16	13
Hispanic	0	1
Own a car	17	16
Self Driver	17	16
Toll Road Users	17	16
Toll Car Owners	0	2
Full Time	17	12
Part Time	0	4
\$30-\$35	0	1
\$35-\$49	2	1
\$50-\$74	3	4
\$74-\$99	6	5
\$100-\$149	2	3
\$150+	4	2
(car pool)	Male	Female
# of respondents	13	20
African American	0	6
Caucasian	13	14
Hispanic	0	0
Own a car	13	20
Carpool	7	17
Public		
Transportation	5	3
Toll Road Users	13	19
Toll Car Owners	1	2
Full Time	13	15
Part Time	0	5
\$30-\$35	0	1
\$35-\$49	1	0
\$50-\$74	5	12
\$74-\$99	4	4
\$100-\$149	1	2
\$150+	2	1

## **LIVING AREAS**

- Inside 285
- Dacula
- Norcross
- Austell
- Suwanee
- Norcross
- Lawrenceville
- Atlanta
- Tucker
- Duluth

## **JOBS**

- IT Consultant
- Optometric Technician
- Day Care Center Owner
- Director of IT
- Stock Broker
- Assistant
- Systems & Network Engineer
- Executive Assistant
- Finance Worker
- Shoe Store owner
- Administrator
- Large Equipment Manager
- Paralegal
- Computer Technician
- Musician

## **Average Daily mileage for commuters**

- 18 miles
- 5 miles
- 31 miles
- 22 miles
- 45 miles
- 15 miles
- 40 miles

## **Average daily time for commuters on 85 Corridor**

- 15 mins.
- 25 mins.
- 30 mins.
- 45 mins.
- 70 mins

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

By and large carpoolers and non-car poolers were quite intrigued by the HOT concept both in terms of its ability to reduce congestion and its objective to contribute to the environmental safety.

## **WHAT HOV LANE MEANS TO COMMUTERS.**

- The difference of about an hour going to work in the morning and more often than not coming home from work.
- Timing is everything.
- Having to have at least 2 and sometimes 3 people in the car
- Less time on the road. Time spent on the road leads to stress, fatigue and frustration.
- The HOV Lane does not eliminate the traffic but it lessens the time frame.
- Not having to strategically plan drive time
- Most believe HOV lane serves its purpose

## DESIRED COMMUTER EXPERIENCE EMOTIONALLY:

Commuter wish list from the HOT program experience:

### WANT TO FEEL:

1. That they can use the lanes with integrity and honesty and be treated the same via pricing and service
2. Like they are not victims but victors
3. That they can clearly expect performance delivery
4. That what is being offered by GDOT is of upmost quality and is not minimized because of defects or inexperience in execution
5. That their access to quality transportation options will add to their quality of life and integrate with broad social acceptance
6. That program communication will be complete and with courteous, common/familiar terms/language/action
7. That they can eagerly move beyond today and aspire for congestion relief with greater outcomes

## HOT LANE BENEFIT IS.....

- a way to get in the fast lane
- a lane that provides a commuter the luxury to get to work early to really enjoy that one cup of coffee
- a great concept for people who can't establish carpools
- timely
- a duplicate yet refined
- great if you are a carpooler
- optional
- flexible
- a method to encourage a better traffic flow
- the ability to pay for your virtual additional passenger
- a marketing tool which allows commuters the option to use the lane at an additional toll to move from one place to another
- a method that can be used to avoid traffic when not in a carpool
- for a minimal fee, valuable, time saving tool that can add to the safety of your daily commute

## HOT LANE BENEFIT IS.....(ALL GROUPS)

- is getting you where you need to be in a timely manner
- dynamic as long as it works the way that it should work
- easy
- convenient
- welcoming
- a great idea, but it would be wise to use other lanes
- is a lane where vehicles with 3 or more people can ride free, or one person can choose to pay to get in the lane and the charge depends on the degree of traffic.
- A great idea that should be formatted to our city's traffic and I don't see how that can be done with one lane
- HOT Lane is HOT!
- A positive method that will make your commute a great commute. It will put ease on travel and time. It will sell with commuters and more commuters would use it than people think.
- Is optional. You don't HAVE to get on it!
- a great way to commute and you can have peace of mind knowing you will be on time for dinner
- A great idea. It will relieve traffic on the freeway. It will shift traffic off congested lanes into fast flowing lanes
- a great move in the right direction and there is a great possibility that it may work but it may not be good enough for Atlanta traffic
- gives the driver a sense of control over traffic

## COMMUTERS WANT TO OBTAIN THEIR TRANSPONDERS...

1. at the tag office

It would be very convenient and easy to get them at the tag office when new auto tags are issued/registered

2. grocery store- Publix, Wal- Mart

If you are going to make it available for purchase in grocery stores then it needs to be in a large amount of grocery stores because it becomes inconvenient to drive far in order to receive a transponder

3. online

4. retail stores

5. car dealership

6. Automatically mail my transponder after registration either online or through the mail

## **COMMUTERS SAY THE BEST WAY TO ADVERTISE TO THEM**

- commercials
- radio- especially talk radio where they do a lot of traffic updates
- TV
- Billboards
- Screens on the highway because they are very easy to read and you can read them while in traffic
- Car Magazines based in Atlanta
- Newspaper
- Have a website

## **THEY DO NOT WANT TO BE CONTACTED VIA:**

- text
- call, telemarketers
- email- Do not spam me, and do not email me at all if I have not signed up for that feature
- It was made very clear that contacting me through a text message is NOT okay. If text messaging was optional however I would probably choose it
- Direct Mail



## **HOT COMMUNICATION LANGUAGE/TONE OF MEDIA VEHICLES**

**Words that had positive meaning with COMMUTERS in relationship to HOT:**

Committed, choice, options, movement, reliable, guaranteed, excellence, fulfill, diverse, value, time savings, relevant, accessible,

**Words that had little meaning and/or were less meaningful among COMMUTERS:**

5 minute savings, "green", exclusive, Lexus lane, alternative, peak,

## BRANDING

Commuters were asked to brand HOT with a name that is personal, meaningful, relevant, system expandable, and communicates the benefits of the program. The results were good with commuters giving a broad array of names. The most popular name of the day was PEACH PASS. Other ideas included:

### NOT EXHAUSTED LIST

- HOT Atlanta
- Fast Pass
- Free Ride
- One bill that's all
- HOT\_Lanta
- HOTLanta Pass
- HOT LaneTa
- GA Auto Pass
- "Pay and Move"
- ZIPit
- "HOT LANE keeps you moving through the ATL"
- "HOT Lane is swift"
- Atlantabahn
- Peach Pass
- Compass Lane
- Xpress Pass
- HotLanta Express
- Ga Go Pass
- Go Ga Pass
- Quik Transit
- Green Pass
- Corridor Cruise
- Traffic Buster
- Georgia Breeze
- Southern Breeze- a cool ride through Metro Atlanta
- Peach Pass- the sweet road to your destination
- Power Pass
- Speed Pass
- Auto Pass
- MoPass
- BUY Pass
- Peachy Pass
- HOT Pass
- Speed Pass Lane
- \$peed Pass
- Fast Pass
- Fire Pass
- HOTlanat Pas
- Go Gwinnett
- Corridor Cruise
- ZipPass
- Peach Pass
- HotLanta Express
- Express Pass
- HotLaneTa

- Atlanta Auto Bon
- Complete Pass

- Fast Lane Zip Card

**MORE NAMES FOR HOT LANES**

- Zroom
- Choice Lane
- Power Pass
- Fast Lane

- Diamond Lane
- HotLane
- Money Lane
- Option Lane

## **METHOD OF TECHNOLOGY**

Transponder- most people want to have a transponder. They do not like the idea of being followed by GPS or V Toll

## **PREFERED TYPE OF REPLENISHMENT**

1. Online Account
  2. Anonymous Account
- Most people wanted an account that allowed them to be in charge of how much goes on their account and in control of the timing of when the money in put on the transponder

## KEY COMMUTER QUESTIONS ABOUT HOT LANES:

- Will it negatively impact my commute or add time?
- How is it monitored?
- How is it enforced?
- How are the exits going to be accessed?
- What happens if there is an accident? Will I get a refund for having to get out of the lane?
- If there are more cars in the HOT, won't that make it slower?
- What are the dynamics of the lane?
- If I move in and out of the lane am I charged twice?
- Will my transponder ever expire?

A lot of people had questions about how the lane will be monitored and how the enforcement will work seeing that people already break the HOV rules.

- What is the money going to? I think that there should be a revenue generator- GA vs Gwinnett or Atlanta
- Is this concept going to be safe?
- Will this put an end to police pulling people over in the left lane?
- How high will the toll charge be allowed to go?
- How will they know how many people are in a vehicle?
- Will the buses still be allowed in the HOT lane because sometimes they slow the HOV lane down

## VALUE PROPOSITION

Most commuters we spoke to traveled from 20 minutes to 1+ hour on the corridor.

Commuters were asked what they would be willing to pay to save time on their 85 corridor commute time. They each placed a value on saving 10%, 15% and 30% of their time traveling the corridor.

In addition, when asked what they would pay to save 5 minutes off their commute, most commuters placed very little to no value on that time savings. The one sure thing we learned is that the longer the time spent on the corridor, the more commuters were willing to spend to cut the time down.

TIME SAVED	10%	15%	30%
PRICE (\$)	4.50	4.75	6.00
1			
2	.50	.75	1.00
3	1.75	2.25	3.50
4	2.00	3.00	5.00
5	.50	1.00	3.00
6	.25	.50	1.00
7	.25	.50	2.00
8	.50	1.25	2.00
9	5.00	8.00	11.00
10	.00	.00	1.50
11	.00	.30	1.00
12	.75	1.00	1.25
13	1.00	2.00	3.00
14	.35	.75	1.00
15	.25	.75	1.25
15	1.00	2.00	5.00
17	.50	2.00	7.00

## VERBATIMS: IN CONSUMER WORDS (ALL GROUPS)

- *“Hot sounds like a great idea. It would definitely help commuters save time on their commute. It would avoid a lot of congestion. It would be good when you have a lot of people in your car at one time. I like the idea that the price changes with flow of traffic. It is a neat concept. I will definitely use this concept.”*
- *“I love the idea. I heard about the one in California. I would use it all the time on my evening commute. It is not necessary for me to use it in the morning because of my early departure. My time with family is worth the money.”*
- *“As an occasional HOV user, I wonder how congested the HOT lane will be or commuters. I think it would be good for those in a rush to catch a plane during traffic hours to have the ability to use the lane if they don't mind paying. If it decreases traffic for the rest, it is a plus plus!”*
- *“I wouldn't want to pay for it if I already have to pay for the price of gas and the prices on other things.”*
- *“The key benefit is saving time to be with family.”*
- *“I think it is too short to be of any value. I would pay for it if it went further south into Atlanta. You can take back roads for that short of a trip.”*
- *“HOV is the difference of about an hour getting to work on some days and more often than not coming back home in the evening.”*
- *“My HOV commute is a planned carpool”*
- *HOV is a way for me to get to work and get going because I hate spending a lot of time on the road in traffic. When I do spend a lot of time on the road I am drained mentally for work and frustrated.”*
- *“Atlanta traffic is probably the best reason I have to move out of Atlanta but we live here so we deal with it.”*
- *I'd rather take side roads than sit in traffic because I am moving, As long as you are moving its okay. The movement is what matters.”*
- *The biggest factor is what the price is going to be.”*
- *“Being a store owner, there are days when I am driving alone and I have to open that store at 10:00am, and to avoid sitting in traffic I will pay \$10!”*
- *“As a carpooler, don't want this.”*
- *“You can find a person that you can commute with that kind of can adjust and will flex with you as far as your work schedule, but finding a third person is not always easy.”*
- *“HOV always seems to be faster. It is always moving and that is what is important, and I wouldn't mind paying a toll to continue moving.”*

- *“I think something that will attract a lot of people to use the HOT lane is the convenience, and just knowing that you do not have to be stuck in traffic.”*
- *“My main concern about carpooling is you lose your flexibility and the convenience to make those stops on the way to work or on the way home, and if I could get that convenience back and still be able to get home in a timely manner, then I would definitely take the HOT and pay the toll. You have to weigh your options and think about what is important to you.”*
- *“I am not at all concerned about*
- *“There are plenty of times during the day where traffic is really heavy in the other lanes and moving quickly in the HOV lane, and those are the times of day when this program will have benefits.”*
- *“I am not at all concerned about wealthy people being the only ones that use the HOT lane because if ten percent of the traffic has the money to go over here and get in the HOT lane, then that’s ten percent less traffic in the free lanes. So it does benefit every person on the freeway whether you are the wealthy person or not.”*
- *“I think that the focus was supposed to encourage more people to carpool so what is the incentive now?”*
- *What is going to happen to the concept for carpooling and how can we circumvent that for an HOT lane?”*
- *“If you do not have a transmitter at all, what is to keep you from going over there, and who is going to enforce it? What is going to keep someone from going over there?”*
- *“It’s a good idea, but I don’t think that the particular section is not in need of an HOT but going more south we need one and I can see it benefitting.”*
- *The concept is to keep people moving, and encourage carpooling.”*
- *“This is going to be one lane, and it’s going to be crazy.”*
- *“What will really drive this idea and make people want to spend their money is the marketing and people actually getting on it to see if there is a difference.”*
- *“Saving time is a function of the movement.”*
- *“It’s about the time because if I have more time, I will fill that time with things that I need or want to get done.”*
- *“No matter what’s happening in the other lanes, if the HOT lane is moving faster then I am going to take it.”*
- *“I have to keep moving.”*
- *“What is on my agenda, what do I need to do? These are the things that will motivate me to get on the HOT lane.”*



## THE KEY COMMUNICATION CHALLENGE IS HOV2 to HOV3

There is a big issue among car poolers with HOT potentially becoming 3 person requirement and hence creates particular challenges to our communication effectiveness:

### Carpooler Commuters had this to say about HOV 3:

1. might make people crazy because it is hard to find 3 people
2. for me it would mean a hardship, I would just go back to driving separate cars because it would not matter
3. I can't just get with someone who works a 9 to 5 because my schedule is not fixed
4. Strips me from being a carpooler, it's hard enough to find one person
5. A lot of people do not want to give up riding alone so it would be hard to find more people to carpool
6. 2 people cars would automatically be eliminated

### AND ON THE OTHER HAND.....

1. my life wouldn't change because there is already 3 people in my car
2. It would clear the HOT lane out

### Non-Carpooler Commuters had this to say about HOV 3:

- messing with something that is already working
- 2 is too easy you are not accomplishing the goal
- The true carpoolers will benefit
- More likely you will have a lot more people in the lane paying
- More people will drive individually
- Carpooling was not invented for the HOV lane
- There will be a lot of people moaning about it
- Good for those who want to pay
- Need additional car pooling Incentives
- Need more than 2 HOT lanes for this concept to work. You are taking something away
- Good way to Go green
- Something has to be done because the traffic is getting worse

- People are doing their best already

## **CARPOOLERS INCLUDING TRANSIT**

Key insights about today's HOV lanes:

### **INEFFICIENCIES IN EXISTING HOV LANES**

The number one frustration is the inefficiencies experienced operationally, especially during rush hour. The lack of control of traffic patterns, "cheater" in the lane, violators of the white lines and accidents in the lane were cited as key reasons traffic is slowed down.

Although the carpoolers do not expect the HOV lanes to be perfect, they certainly believe that human error and enforcement can be improved to encourage operating efficiency.

Carpoolers feel like they are doing a lot and sacrificing a lot to be both environmentally supportive and time efficient. They are not looking for new requirements or restrictions that impact their use of HOV. These commuters are left feeling that the ownership and outcomes of "bad" traffic is caused not by them but single-drivers.

In short, carpoolers feel like they are contributing effectively to reduced traffic and DOT must begin to look at the result of disorganized systems as potential "first steps" to curtail congestion not changes in carpooler dynamics. Carpoolers welcome are looking for advocates/resources that support their willingness and interest in shared riding.

### **REMEDY**

One remedy that was recommended was controlling the time of day and number of HOV lanes in operation. Many believed the HOV lanes do not need to operate as HOV during non-peak times. In addition simply converting more lanes to HOV during peak times could help traffic flow and congestion. This will save time, resources and lead to better traffic pattern overall on the corridor.

Shoulders to receive accidents were another suggestion for HOV lanes in the system today. This would cut down on disrupting moving traffic.

## QUALITY OF TECHNOLOGY USE AND APPLICATION

Many carpoolers found an underutilized use of engineering/planning across the entire HOV system. Their primary concerns were the areas of enforcement, communication of “white lines” for getting on/off HOV, and general usage efficiency (time of day usage).

### REMEDY

- Mandatory registration of all HOV users (enforcement/tracking)
- Signage explaining “white lines”
- Better technology, patrolling of repeat offenders “cheating”

## ROAD FACILITIES IMPROVEMENT AND UPDATES

1. Most commuters simply want better roads. More HOV lanes and a feeling of safety and security while driving on GA roads.

### REMEDY

- Replace broken and unsafe equipment (pot holes, guard rails, abandoned cars)
- Increase quantity of choices for ridesharing benefits (taxes etc)
- Provide relevant options for transit that fit changing lifestyles and needs (more park and rides), resource sharing and ability to connect with other commuters

## TOP 10 COMMUNICATION RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Utilize TV, Radio, Direct Mail, Web and Educational Videos as the key communication tools
2. Be compelling, specific and concise in messaging especially to diverse populations and impacted target zip code areas
3. Start early and communicate often the process/benefits/impact of HOT on all commuters
4. Establish a meaningful pricing model (value proposition) based on “keep moving” vs time savings strategy
5. Begin a communication strategy that promotes ridesharing and then branch off into the into the introduction of HOT
6. Ease into HOV 3. Develop some meaningful incentives to offset the inconvenience of this new requirement
7. Establish a well communicated grace period to convert to HOV3.
8. Allow for multiple outlets for car registration means and methods
9. Brand the HOT lane system and transponder under the same name. Rename the Cruise Card
10. Recommendation for naming of HOT product: PEACH PASS

## REPORT ANALYSIS AND DETAIL AMONG CARPOOLERS



### CARPOOLER VOICE:

I am proud to be a carpooler. I am fortunate to have other carpoolers to share in the experience. We carpoolers have a lot in common with our biggest shared interests being that of wanting to save time and expenses.

I have few regrets when it comes to carpooling. Any of the pitfalls are far outweighed by the opportunity to share my commute with someone I enjoy talking to and I really do not mind any minor inconveniences.

I feel like I am really accomplishing something by carpooling. I am doing my part contributing toward a healthier environment and not to mention less wear and tear on my personal vehicles.

Spending time with my family is very important to me. When I carpool, it increases the likelihood that I will be where I want and need to be when I want and need to be there.

I do know it is not feasible for everyone to carpool but it works for me. Life is stressful enough without adding traffic congestions to it! By choosing to carpool, I really feel like I have made the right decision for me.

## WHAT DOES HOV MEAN TO YOU?

- QUICKER THAN OTHER LANES
- THE SOONER THE BETTER
- FASTER
- NOT SITTING IN STOP N GO TRAFFIC
- NOT ALWAYS FASTER, DEPENDS ON THE HOURS
- THERE ARE TWO FACES TO THE HOT LANES
- CONVENIENT, KNOWING THAT YOU ARE NOT GOING TO BE STUCK IN TRAFFIC
- SAVING MONEY ON GAS
- FRIEND HOPS IN THE CAR WITH YOU?
- ANYONE THAT YOU ARE WILLING TO RIDE WITH

## ADVANTAGES OF CARPOOLING

- SAVING TIME
- GET OUT OF WORK ON TIME
- CONVENIENCE- FIND PLENTY OF PEOPLE WHO WANT TO CARPOOL
- BEING ABLE TO GET WHERE I NEED TO GO IN A TIMELY MANNER
- SAVES TIME
- SAVES GAS
- PLAN ACCORDINGLY
- MAKES THE RIDE MORE ENJOYABLE
- NOT STOPPING AND SPENDING MONEY

## DISADVANTAGES ABOUT CARPOOLING

- NOT BEING ABLE TO BE FLEXIBLE WITH YOUR OWN TIME
- NOT BEING ABLE TO STOP FOR PERSONAL BUSINESS
- SOMETIMES YOU JUST LIKE TO BE ALONE
- NOT BEING ABLE TO SMOKE IN THE CAR
- HAVING KIDS, IF SOMETHING HAPPENS YOU CAN'T GET THERE ALL THE TIME
- EMERGENCIES
- GIVING UP EXTRA TIME
- HAVING TO MAKE STOPS

## ONE BIG EMOTION ASSOCIATED WITH HOT LANE

- ADVANTAGEOUS
- QUICKER
- HAPPY
- ADVANTAGEOUS
- QUICKER
- BETTER THAN SITTING IN  
REGULAR TRAFFIC
- APPRECIATIVE
- RELIEF



## WHAT QUESTIONS/OBSERVATIONS DO YOU HAVE ABOUT HOT LANES?

1. HOT MIGHT SLOW THE LANE DOWN BECAUSE MORE PEOPLE WOULD BE USING IT. EVERYONE WILL BE IN THE LANE. SINGLE DRIVERS AND CARPOOLERS WILL BE IN THE LANE BECAUSE NOW THEY ARE PAYING TO BE IN THE LANE
2. WHAT IS THE AVERAGE PRICE GOING TO BE?
3. THE 1-85 CORRIDOR IS ALWAYS PACKED, IT DOESN'T MATTER WHAT TIME OF THE DAY YOU DRIVE, THERE IS NEVER A NON TRAFFIC HOUR IN ATLANTA
4. GREAT CONCEPT FOR PEOPLE WHO CAN'T ESTABLISH CARPOOL. IT IS A GREAT ECONOMIC RESOURCE EVEN IF I HAVE TO PAY A LITTLE BIT MORE
5. WHAT IF THERE IS AN ACCIDENT IN A HOT LANE?
6. DIRECT THE REVENUE FROM THE LANES BACK TO THE PEOPLE WHO USE THE LANE
7. HOW DOES THE CHEATING GET ENFORCED?
8. I DON'T SEE IT WORKING WITHOUT TWO LANES BECAUSE THE TRAFFIC IS SO BACKED UP
9. I DON'T THINK YOU CAN SAFELY PULL PEOPLE OVER IN THE LANES
10. IF THERE IS AN ACCIDENT AND YOU HAVE ALREADY PAID THE MONEY TO RIDE THE HOT DO YOU GET A REFUND?
11. HOW WILL THEY KNOW THAT I AM A CARPOOLER
12. HOW MUCH WILL IT COST IF I AM A CARPOOLER
13. WILL I QUALIFY AS A CARPOOLER
14. I AM HOPING THAT 2 PEOPLE WILL QUALIFY AS A CARPOOLER
15. WHY CARPOOL IF YOU CAN USE THAT LANE ANYWAYS
16. TO ME IT DOESN'T ENCOURAGE CARPOOLING

## KEY THOUGHTS ABOUT HOT LANES CONTINUED

17. WHAT IS THE MONEY FOR?
18. NO DIFFERENT, STILL GOING TO BE CONGESTED BECAUSE THE HOV LANE NOW IS BACKED NOW AND ALL 5 LANES ID GOING TO BE FULL
19. IF THERE IS AN OPTION TO PAY \$.25 THEN I WOULD GO TO THE HOT LANE
20. THERE WOULD BE MORE SINGLE RIDERS THAN JUST CARPOOLERS
21. YOU HAVE PEOPLE NOW WHO SNEAK IN THE LANE WHO ARE NOT IN CARPOOLING
22. I DO NOT THINK THAT THE HOV LANE WOULD HELP, BECAUSE IT IS JUST AS CONGESTED AS THE OTHER LANES
23. IT'S THE SAME THING NOW THEY ARE JUST CHARGING FOR IT
24. WILL VARY BASED ON TRAFFIC AT THE TIME
25. IF YOU HAVE A LOT OF TRAFFIC HOT ASSUMES IT IS STILL FLOWING VERY WELL THEN
26. WHERE IS THE MONEY GOING? THAT WOULD BE A REASON AS TO WHY THEY ARE CHARGING
27. HOW IS IT POLICED?
28. WHERE ARE THE ENTRY POINTS GOING TO BE?
29. WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE TOLL GOES UP AND YOU ARE ALREADY IN THE LANE?

## WHAT IS THE HOT CONCEPT TO YOU?

HOT IS.....

- A LANE THAT PROVIDES A LUXURY TO EASE THROUGH TRAFFIC
- IS A WAY TO GO IF YOU PAY THE TOLL
- ONE TOLL THAT'S ALL
- ABILITY FOR YOU TO PAY FOR YOUR VIRTUAL PASSENGERS
- A TOOL THAT IS AN OPTION THAT CAN BE USED TO MOVE FROM POINT TO POINT
- ADJUSTABLE RATE STRUCTURE
- VALUABLE TIME SAVING TOOL WHICH CAN ALSO ADD TO THE SAFETY OF YOUR DAILY COMMUTE

## THOUGHT ABOUT CAR REGISTRATION IN ORDER TO USE HOT LANE

1. THE STATE OF GEORGIA SHOULD AUTOMATICALLY REGISTER EVERY CAR THAT GETS A TAG
2. WHAT HAPPENS TO PEOPLE WHO COME IN FROM OUT OF TOWN?
3. NO ISSUES WITH HAVING TO REGISTER VEHICLES
4. WHAT IF THE DRIVER IS FROM OUT OF TOWN?
5. THERE ARE 3 PEOPLE IN MY CAR, DO I STILL HAVE TO REGISTER?
6. HOW WILL THEY KNOW THERE ARE THREE PEOPLE IN THE CAR?
7. IF I HAVE TO I WILL, BUT IT IS NOT SOMETHING THAT I WANT TO DO

## REPORT ANALYSIS AND DETAIL AMONG NON-CARPOOLERS



### SINGLE-DRIVER VOICE:

I am always in a hurry. Nothing gets me more frustrated when driving than traffic that is not moving. I mostly blame others for it...slow buses, unassisted accidents, slow drivers.

I do not car pool because I lose my independence. I really do not have time to fit in coordinating someone else's schedule with mine. I cannot see that ever working for me.

I respect carpoolers. I think they deserve the perks they receive from making the sacrifice of ridesharing.

I admit, I would love to ride in the HOV lane. I often feel a tad bit jealous when I see others in HOV whizzing by me especially during peak times. Still I consider it a gift when I happen to have two or more people in my car and can use the HOV lane.

Until there is another solution, I will move on with the hope that tomorrow's traffic will be better than today's. I have so many things I must get done. Life is pulling at me...I just want to feel like I am always moving even if I never fully catch up.

## WHAT DOES THE HOV LANE MEAN TO YOU?

- CONVENIENT
- SPEED
- IRRELEVANT
- EMPTY
- QUICK
- TEMPTING
- EITHER YOU CAN'T USE IT BECAUSE YOU ARE NOT CARPOOLING OR INCONVENIENT BECAUSE THEY PUSH ALL OF THE ACCIDENTS INTO THE HOV LANE
- I LEAVE EARLY SO I AM MOVING JUST AS FAST AS THOSE WHO ARE IN THE HOV LANE
- I TRY TO MINIMIZE MY TIME BY ROUTING PROPERLY
- IF YOU WANT TO HOV EFFECT YOU HAVE TO LEAVE EARLY
- IN THE LAST 3MONTHS EVERYONE HAS BEEN IN THE HOV LANE
- NEVER BEEN IN THE HOV LANE ALONE
- EVERYONE PREFERS TO DRIVE ALONE BECAUSE OF THE HASSLE OF TRYING TO FIND ANOTHER PERSON TO RIDE WITH THEM
- WHAT DOES THE HOV LANE MEAN TO YOU?
- CHEATERS
- SLOW PEOPLE
- SLOW
- FAST
- DIAMOND
- TEMPTING
- UNDER USED
- NO TRAFFIC
- WAIST OF TIME
- USELESS
- DANGEROUS

## WHY DON'T YOU CARPOOL?

NOTE: NO ONE WE SPOKE TO SAID THEY ARE LIKELY TO EVER BE A CARPOOLER.

- WE COULD BUT BECAUSE OF THE TIME THAT EVERYONE HAS TO BE AT HIS OR HER JOBS IT MAKES IT DIFFICULT, BUT IF WE ALL CAME IN AT THE SAME TIME I WOULD CARPOOL.
- I AM IN SALES AND THERE IS NO WAY IT WOULD WORK. MY BIGGEST DRAWBACK TO CARPOOLING IS THE TIME BECAUSE TIME IS SO VALUABLE. IT IS AN INFRINGE UPON MY LIFE
- I HAVE A FLEXIBLE JOB AND I COME AND GO AS I PLEASE. I DO NOT WANT TO HAVE TO HANG AROUND AND WAIT FOR SOMEONE TO GET OFF WORK.
- NOT PRACTICAL FOR ME BECAUSE OF MY SCHEDULE
- EMERGENCIES, I LIKE BEING ABLE TO GET IN AND GO. I FIGURE OUT A WAY AROUND THE TRAFFIC
- WHY DON'T YOU CARPOOL?
- NOT POSSIBLE
- I CAN'T PUT LADDERS ON OTHER PEOPLE'S CARS.
- COMPLICATED
- I WOULD HAVE TO DRIVE 8 OR 9 MILES TO PICK SOMEONE UP JUST TO DRIVE 5 MILES TO WORK
- I WOULD GIVE UP MY FLEXIBILITY.
- I DON'T KNOW WHETHER I AM GOING TO HAVE AN 8 HOUR DAY OR A 10 HOUR DAY
- VERY DIFFICULT TO FIND PEOPLE THAT LIVE NEAR ME

## ONE BIG EMOTION ASSOCIATED WITH HOT LANE

- GIVES BACK FREE TIME
- EFFICIENT
- GUARANTEED
- TIME SAVER
- GETS YOU WHERE YOU ARE GOING
- ENAB LES TIME WITH FAMILY

## HOT LANE QUESTIONS/OBSERVATIONS

1. UNIQUE CONCEPT
2. VERY INTERESTED
3. USE IT IN A RUSH, IF I HAVE MEETINGS
4. I WOULD HAVE QUESTIONS
5. HASSLES, OVERCHARGES?
6. POLICE HARASSMENT?
7. I WOULD WAKE UP LATER TO START COMMUTE
8. I SEE THE ROADS CLEARING UP AFTER HOT
9. I THINK OF TIMES I USED TO COACH LITTLE LEAGUES AND I WISH I HAD THIS LANE BECAUSE IT WOULD REDUCE STRESS
10. WHAT IF EVERYBODY THINKS THAT WAY? THERE IS ALREADY CONGESTION IN THE HOV LANE.
11. I COULD JUSTIFY MY EXPENSES TO MY JOB BY NEEDING TO GET IN THE HOT LANE
12. SOME PEOPLE ARE REALLY CHEAP AND THEY WON'T PAY
13. A LOT OF PEOPLE ARE GOING TO JAM IT UP. IT IS NO THE SOLUTION FOR A LOT OF PEOPLE
14. DEPENDS ON IF EVERYBODY DOES IT
15. LOVE THE IDEA
16. I WILL CHANGE MY WHOLE HOURS JUST TO USE THIS LANE
17. NEED TO HAVE AN HOV AND HOT TO USE IT AS AN OPTION
18. THE TRUE CARPOOLERS WILL BENEFIT
19. MORE LIKELY YOU WILL HAVE A LOT MORE PEOPLE IN THE LANE PAYING
20. MORE PEOPLE WILL DRIVE INDIVIDUALLY
21. CARPOOLING WAS NOT INVENTED FOR THE HOV LANE
22. THERE WILL BE A LOT OF PEOPLE MOANING ABOUT IT
23. GOOD FOR THOSE WHO WANT TO PAY
24. WHAT ARE THE INCENTIVES?



## KEY THOUGHTS ABOUT HOT LANES CONTINUED

25. WHAT WILL THE MONEY GO TO?
26. HOW ARE YOU GOING TO GET CHARGED?
27. HOW WILL YOU DISTINGUISH BETWEEN HOV AND SINGLE DRIVERS
28. ONE LANE WILL NOT SOLVE THE PROBLEM
29. SPEED WON'T INCREASE
30. GENERATING MORE MONEY FOR THE CITY
31. IF THERE IS AN ACCIDENT IN THE LANE, ARE YOU GRIDLOCKED? DO I GET A REFUND? WHAT HAPPENS?
32. HOW DO YOU KEEP TRACK OF YOUR ACCOUNT?
33. IF I GET OUT AND GO BACK IN, IS THERE A ONE - TIME CHARGE?
34. SAFETY?
35. ENFORCEMENT?
36. ENTRY POINTS?
37. TOTALLY AGAINST IT?
38. HOW HIGH WILL IT GO?
39. WHY DOES THE TOLL GO UP AS TRAFFIC INCREASES?
40. WHO IS MANAGING THE MONEY?
41. I LIKE IT
42. I THINK THAT SOME OF THE CONCERNS ARE LEGIT BUT I THINK THAT ANSWERS CAN BE MADE
43. THERE ARE TIMES OF DAY WHEN THE HOV WORKS SO I HAVE CONFIDENCE THAT IT WILL WORK
44. IF 10% HAS THE MONEY TO GO PAY TO RIDE IN THE LANE THEN THAT IS 10% LESS TRAFFIC WE HAVE
45. INTERESTING
46. COULD BE A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION
47. SHIFTING MORE TRAFFIC TO THE OTHER LANE
48. DEFEATS THE PURPOSE OF TRYING TO GET MORE PEOPLE TO CARPOOL
49. HOW WOULD THEY ENFORCE IT?
50. NEEDS TO BE FARTHER SOUTH
51. ONCE PEOPLE FIGURE THE TRAFFIC PATTERN WE ARE GOING TO
52. WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU NEED TO GET ON 285? IT IS DANGEROUS

## WHAT IS THE HOT CONCEPT TO YOU?

HOT IS....

- IN A HURRY YOU HAVE AN OPTION
- QUICK
- MOVES AT A FAST SPEED
- SAVING TIME SO YOU CAN DO MORE THINGS THAN JUST SIT IN TRAFFIC
- GIVES DRIVERS A SENSE OF CONTROL OVER TRAFFIC
- BENEFITS TRAFFIC FLOW WHEN ITS WORKING
- GET THERE FIRST WITHLESS STRESS
- SAVE TIME GET HOME SOONER
- MOBILITY OVER VOLUME FOR EVERYBODY

## WHAT WILL MOST INFLUENCE YOUR DECISION TO USE HOT LANE?

- WHAT IS THE CHARGE?
- WHAT ELSE DO I NEED TO BE DOING OTHER THAN SITTING IN TRAFFIC?
- DESTINATION
- CIRCUMSTANCE, DO I NEED TO BE ANYWHERE?
- MY TO DO LIST
- HOW IMPORTANT IS IT THAT I SAVE TIME?
- EFFICIENCY

## THOUGHT ABOUT CAR REGISTRATION IN ORDER TO USE HOT LANE

- CAN THEY TRACK YOUR SPEED BECAUSE YOU REGISTERED?
- NOT A PROBLEM WITH REGISTERING VEHICLE FOR HOT ACCESS
- WILL HELP WITH ENFORCEMENT
- DOES IT COST? IF NO THEN NO PROBLEM WITH REGISTRATION

## COMMUNICATION RECOMMENDATIONS

### EMOTIONAL COSTS OF HOT COMMUNICATION NOT CONNECTING WITH COMMUTERS?

FRUSTRATION, CONFUSION, DISAPPOINTMENT, FEELING OF EXCLUSION, LACK OF CONFIDENCE IN GOVERNEMENT, FEAR, GUESSWORK, EXPLOITED

### DESIRED COMMUTER EXPERIENCE EMOTIONALLY:

Commuter wish list from the HOT program experience:

#### WANT TO FEEL:

1. That they can use the lanes with integrity and honesty and be treated the same via pricing and service
2. Like they are not victims but victors
3. That they can clearly expect performance delivery
4. That what is being offered by GDOT is of upmost quality and is not minimized because of defects or inexperience in execution
5. That their access to quality transportation options will add to their quality of life and integrate with broad social acceptance
6. That program communication will be complete and with courteous, common/familiar terms/language/action
7. That they can eagerly move beyond today and aspire for congestion relief with greater outcomes

### COMMUTERS DO NOT WANT TO FEEL:

1. Uncared for/needs ignored
2. Like they are not moving forward
3. Over used - Used up by the government or government bureaucracy

### LIST OF NON-NEGOTIABLES

1. Disrespectable treatment (no rapport with advertiser)
2. Being taken advantage of
3. Consistent reprimand or overly enforced
4. Lack of access to key information or human contact
5. Lack of trust
6. Being given bad advice and information
7. Feeling not empowered or without control of own information/accounts

## EMOTIONAL TRUTHS ABOUT COMMUTER HABITS AND PRACTICES

1. Seek things that have feelings of familiarity or culturally relevant
2. Will seek out a variety of information sources but without going through a lot of useless and extra effort
3. Want straight forward and honest treatment approach from customer service
4. Want meaning / expectations behind processes.
5. Expect consistent communication performance from GDOT
6. Want Instant Impact from their efforts
7. Seek trusting relationships with others
8. Will not walk in blind faith of what government tells them
9. Wants the truths about HOT expectations... “Just me tells what is”
10. Seek least amount of disruption in their already demanding life-style - sense of normalcy
11. Like products that focus on their individual needs

## HOT COMMUNICATION STRATEGY EXECUTION

### COMMUTER WANTS

1. Relevant information about HOT experience
2. Visualization of product benefits
3. Simpler presentation with education/information skew
4. Current best practices information-showing uniqueness of HOT
5. Information on how HOT is cutting-edge, and technologically relevant
6. Presentation that looks alive vs static
7. Ads show mature populations featuring life-balance images
8. Ads show culturally relevant balance of diversity represented.

### WATCHOUTS

1. Over-speak in copy points
2. Non-credible language, visuals, “me-too” information vs GA specific
3. Language that set unrealistic expectations
4. Presentation that does not position GA HOT as ahead vs behind
5. Story lines that do not apply to commuter life
6. Commuter does not learn enough (lack information, learning, application)  
Presentation is too cheesy (too simple, not passionate)
7. Articulation that fails to express commuter emotional needs about commuting
8. The cultural relevance of the commuter’s condition has not been acknowledged
9. Commuter does not feel understood

## HOT COMMUNICATION RECOMMENDED MASS MEDIA VEHICLES

### Cable Television

- **Plus:** This media is highly visual and can be targeted within designated zip code areas. On top of that, people watch a lot of television. The right ad, then, will attract the attention of viewers and create a buzz.
- **Minus:** Television is a very expensive media to advertise in and viewers will generally only watch an interesting ad once- and an uninteresting one even less!
- **How to use successfully:** You'll need an ample budget and ads that are somehow surprising, funny, or have stopping power.

### Radio

- **Plus:** This media can really pull in people's imaginations, which is a great way to get people to intellectually interact with your product, increasing the likelihood that you'll be top-of-mind when they want to buy it.
- **Minus:** Unlike television, which people give their full attention to as a form of entertainment, radio is often background noise heard while people are driving or at work. Unless your ad is really good and very memorable, you'll have a hard time getting noticed.
- **How to use successfully:** Make sure your jingle and phone number are very memorable because people will likely not be able to reach for a pen and paper while they're driving.

## HOT COMMUNICATION RECOMMENDED TARGETED MEDIA VEHICLES

**Why include direct-mail postcards in your marketing plan? Impact, versatility, affordability, results ...Here are ten good reasons...**

### Immediate Impact

Arguably the greatest benefit direct-mail postcards have over letters—there’s no envelope to open. Envelopes create a barrier between the marketer and the prospect. And in marketing, one barrier is too many.

### Long Lasting

Postcards begin speaking your message as soon as they’re pulled from the mailbox. But they don’t stop there. Creative postcards wind up on bulletin boards and refrigerator doors, giving them more visibility and “shelf life” than regular direct-mail. And with the affordability of full-color printing and graphic design these days, you can create a pinup-worthy masterpiece for little more than the price of a stamp.

### Short and Sweet

If it’s easy to read, it will be read—a copywriting proverb that applies doubly to direct mail. Postcards are quick and to the point. This makes them more inviting to a potential reader and gives your message more punch.

### Quickness

Order today, delivered tomorrow. Choose the right direct-mail provider and that’s the speed of service you’ll enjoy. This makes postcards ideal for time-sensitive marketing, such as upcoming events, limited-time offers, and market changes (e.g. real estate agents marketing around changing interest rates).

### Campaign Capable

Direct-mail postcards are campaign-friendly. You can carry out a sustained, periodic marketing plan easier and more affordably than with any other medium. A good direct-mail provider will even have automated features built into their system, enabling you to set up your mailings in advance.



### Easily Measured

Postcards allow you to test your offer, message, and design ... *before* launching a more costly, full-scale campaign. For example, send 500 cards out and get 10 phone calls in return, and you've just measured a 2% response-rate. You can then modify your approach until you're happy with the return.

### Works with the Web

Direct-mail postcards and the Internet make a perfect marketing match. The postcard tells your prospects about your website and makes an offer to get them there (like free information). Once at your site, they can learn more about what you're offering. This also pre-qualifies your prospects, because only those truly interested in your product or service will visit your site.

### Cost Effective

Even small businesses can afford to advertise with postcards. The creative and printing costs are much less than for a full-blown direct-mail package, again because there are no envelopes, letters, brochures, or other inserts to produce.

### Versatility

Postcards have as many marketing uses as the marketer has imagination. They can be used as coupons, new product announcements, event reminders, thank-you cards, buyer follow-ups, special offers, quick-reference guides, and a host of other applications.

### Proven to Work

If done properly, direct-mail marketing works. Want proof? According to the U.S. Postal Service, Americans spend over \$250 billion each year in response to direct mail. And the numbers are rising. Direct mail also averages \$10 in sales for every dollar spent—twice the return of a TV ad.

## RECOMMENDED CONCEPT EVALUATION APPROACH TO COPY DEVELOPMENT

	Radio	Web	Video	Direct Mail	Cable TV
Message components/criteria:					
HOT communicates feeling of .....	a	b	c	d	e
Fits my overall needs	x	x	x	x	x
Culturally relevant	x			x	x
Fills my need gaps	x	x	x	x	x
Emotionally relevant	x		x	x	x
Addresses my fears/anxieties	x	x	x		x
Provides choices	x	x	x	x	x
Provides options	x	x	x	x	x
Compassion and inclusive	x	x	x	x	x
I fit versus I am a welcome visitor	x	x	x	x	x
Time and Value proposition	x	x	x	x	x
Accessible (groups/website)		x			
Inclusive	x	x			x
Personal		x		x	
Unique	x	x		x	
Innovative	x	x	x	x	x
Relevant		x		x	

## HOT COMMUNICATION LANGUAGE/TONE OF MEDIA VEHICLES

### Words that had positive meaning with COMMUTERS in relationship to HOT:

Committed, choice, options, movement, reliable, guaranteed, excellence, fulfill, diverse, value, time savings, relevant, accessible,

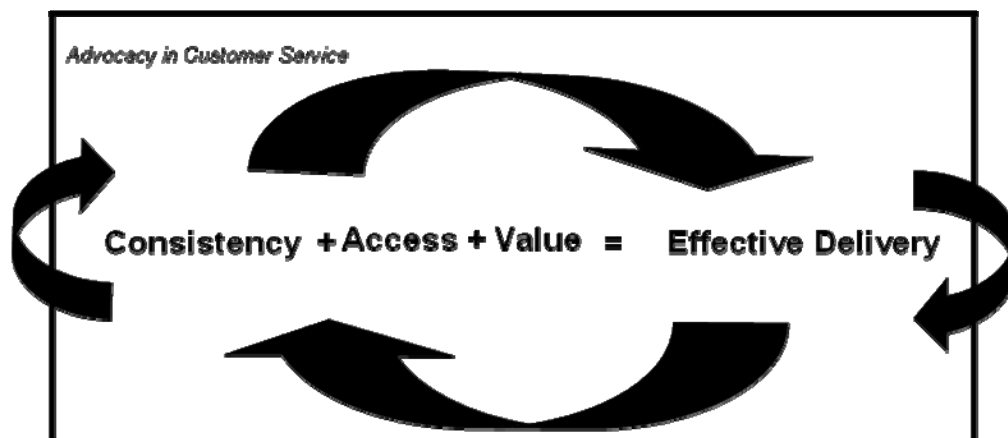
### Words that had little meaning and/or were less meaningful among COMMUTERS:

5 minute savings, "green", exclusive, Lexus lane, alternative, peak,

## PRESUMPTIVE COMMUNICATIONS BUSINESS MODEL

**f(x)**

The commuter's desire in every engagement with HOT is a consistent level of service and product delivery that meets their expectations. The more consistent the service, the greater the opportunity for developing an advocacy relationship where the student feels understood and valued in a unique way and with a higher standard for service from a team of experienced staff who truly appreciate them and want to provide the best transportation solutions.



## APPENDIX

Participant grids

Discussion Guide

Survey

Screener

Data Map

Data Input