



# Flex Lane Frequently Asked Questions

## 1. What are Flex Lanes?

- Flex Lanes are a method to allow UDOT to vary the number of eastbound or westbound lanes during peak travel times.
- Flex Lanes will provide four eastbound lanes, a left turn lane and two westbound lanes during the morning rush hour. During the evening hour, four westbound lanes are provided. During the rest of the day, the current configuration of three lanes in each direction with a center turn lane will be in effect.

## 2. Why use Flex Lanes on 5400 South?

5400 South is one of the most congested west-east roads during the morning and evening commutes – but traffic flows smoothly the rest of the day. Flex Lanes allow an additional lane in each direction to be added when it's needed -- without an expensive (and unnecessary) widening of the roadway.

## 3. How do motorists use them?

During the morning rush hour, one additional lane will be available headed east, for a total of four through lanes. During the evening commute, the additional lane will be available for west bound traffic. Permanent electronic signage, called lane indicators, will be installed approximately every 500 feet which can be seen every 10 to 15 seconds. This is designed to ensure that motorists will always have lane indicators in view. Green arrows mean the lane is open for use; red 'X's indicate that the lane is not open (being used by opposing traffic). A white double-arrow symbol indicates the two way left-turn lane. Rather than the familiar single white lane markings, distinctive yellow double lane stripes will indicate which lanes are Flex Lanes.

## 4. How will I know when the lane's direction changes?

The overhead lane indicators will change to yellow 'X's providing motorists time to change lanes before the Flex Lane switches direction. The shift in lane configurations will be infrequent and during periods of relatively low volumes.

## 5. What about left turns?

- When the Flex Lanes are in operation, left turns will still be allowed from the center lane to access businesses and residences.
- Left turns will be allowed at all signalized intersections at all times.
- At non-signalized intersections left turns are allowed if vehicles will cross only two lanes of traffic. This means motorists on the north side of 5400 South can make a left turn and enter the eastbound Flex Lanes during the morning rush hour. Likewise, motorists on the south side of 5400 South will be able to cross 5400 South to enter the westbound Flex Lanes during the evening rush hour. Red beacon lights at non-signalized intersections will indicate when left turns are prohibited.
- Left turns are allowed out of Harvey Heights Road and Jordan Canal Road at all times due to their limited access.

**6. Will motorists be confused by these lanes?**

The 5400 South Flex Lanes will be straight forward and easy to understand by motorists of all ages and experience. The lanes will be clearly marked. UDOT plans to educate the public about how to use them. This will include publicizing the project through the news media, and providing information to local officials, businesses and residents (including Taylorsville High School and Senior Center) throughout the Taylorsville area.

- Continuous Flow Intersections (CFI) and Single Point Urban Interchanges (SPUI) are a good example of how the public successfully adapts to innovative new transportation solutions.

**7. What happens if the power goes out?**

Backup batteries will support the lane indicators for up to four hours. If more time is needed, and it happens to be during a peak commute time, the lights will change back to off peak travel lanes and 5400 South will operate in its traditional configuration.

**8. Why is UDOT installing a reversible lane type system when some cities have removed them?**

There are many examples of reversible lanes in successful operation around the country and indeed the world. New reversible lanes continue to be implemented, but in some cases, reversible lanes have been removed for reasons highly specific to the situation such as a change in land use. UDOT believes that 5400 South is a roadway where reversible lanes can be used successfully, efficiently and safely.

**9. When did UDOT decide to begin implementing reversible lanes?**

The 5400 South Flex Lanes are part of the West-East Go! coordinated strategies of innovative solutions UDOT is using to improve west east traffic flow in and around the Taylorsville area. UDOT began studying the concept in 2005.

**10. What was the public process for this?**

UDOT began the public involvement process in June with a public open house and has continued with a strong public involvement strategy by launching a project Web site, presenting to the city council, holding information booths at public locations, conducting a second open house in October, meeting with specific stakeholder groups and local officials along with conducting public opinion research.

**11. Was public input used during Flex Lanes design phase?**

Yes. Due to public input UDOT has made major changes to the design of Flex Lanes. The following are changes due to public comment.

- Left turns will be allowed onto 5400 South at all hours from Harvey Heights Road and Jordan Canal Road. The initial plan was to restrict left turns during rush hours.
- Left turns will be allowed at all non-signalized intersections if vehicles will cross only two lanes of traffic. The initial plan called for restricting all left turns from intersections without traffic signals.
- The outside (or curb) lanes on 5400 South will be approximately 13 feet wide, instead of the originally planned 11 feet, to allow more room for buses and right turns on the road.

**12. Will there be more Flex Lanes in the future?**

There are other corridors on which there is a highly directional rush-hour traffic flow that may benefit from a Flex Lanes approach. UDOT will evaluate the 5400 South Flex Lanes and work with local and State officials to decide if and where more Flex Lanes make sense.