



MIAMI-DADE COUNTY

## Dolphin Expressway wants to open shoulder to carpoolers using Uber and Lyft

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Forget Lexus Lanes. Miami-Dade's busiest toll road wants to create Lyft Lanes.

A plan by the Miami-Dade Expressway Authority would convert the left-hand shoulders on the Dolphin Expressway into express lanes reserved for shuttle buses as well as private cars selling carpooling services through the Uber and Lyft apps. The arrangement would let Uber, Lyft and other ride-hailing companies avoid regular traffic on the clogged toll road in an effort encourage people to change habits and leave their personal cars at home.

"It's about providing options," said Tere Garcia, a spokeswoman for the independent toll authority. "It would offer an alternative to traveling in your car. It's geared to reduce some of the congestion on the roads in peak hours."

Details haven't been worked out, but the pilot program could launch within the next 12 months.

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## Miami-Dade Mayor Carlos Gimenez discusses transportation plan

Miami-Dade Mayor Carlos Gimenez and Budget Director Jennifer Moon discuss the county's transit future with the Miami Herald Editorial Board on July 19, 2017.



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The toll authority, best known as the MDX, would limit the shoulders to ride-hailing vehicles ferrying multiple passengers through each company's carpooling option: Uber Pool and Lyft Line. Those services employ the personal vehicles that make up the regular Uber and Lyft fleets, but offer cheaper prices in exchange for multiple stops to pick up and drop off other passengers.

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**THE RIDE-HAILING CARS AND MDX SHUTTLES WOULD RUN ON THE EXTRA-WIDE SHOULDER, WHICH WAS DESIGNED TO ACCOMMODATE BUSES. THE TOLL AGENCY PLANS TO EVENTUALLY RESERVE THE LANES FOR AUTONOMOUS VEHICLES ONCE THE ROBOTIC CARS ARE PUT INTO WIDE USE. MDX ALSO PLANS TO PAINT THE SHOULDER LANES GREEN TO DESIGNATE THEIR SPECIAL STATUS.**

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The ride-hailing cars and MDX shuttles would run on the extra-wide shoulder, which was designed to accommodate buses. The toll agency plans to eventually reserve the lanes for autonomous vehicles once the robotic cars are put into wide use. MDX also plans to paint the shoulder lanes green to designate their special status.

Regular vehicles would still be able to use the shoulder for breakdown emergencies, forcing the buses and ride-hailing cars to detour. County buses already use the shoulder on MDX's Don Shula Expressway, and the 836 program would expand the strategy to MDX-chartered shuttles and the new crop of cellphone-powered services for carpooling.



After expanding tolls to all of 836 in 2014, MDX has faced intense pressure from Miami-Dade politicians to divert some of its revenue into the county's beleaguered transit system. While some county leaders want MDX to fund a rail line running parallel to the Dolphin, MDX's board only agreed to provide the express bus service operating on the shoulder.

MDX plans to hire a private company to run its buses, which would run express routes along the east-west expressway designed to let commuters avoid traffic that can slow cars to a crawl during rush hours. The toll agency said it's targeting motorists who would otherwise be adding their vehicles to the mess, rather than regular transit users who take the regular county buses that already go back and forth on the 836.

"What we want to do is attract the 'choice rider,'" Javier Rodriguez, the toll authority's executive director, told a county planning board Thursday, using the term for a transit rider who has a car but chooses to take public transportation.

Both Lyft and Uber have been in discussions with MDX administrators about the program, Rodriguez said. A Lyft representative was not immediately available for comment. An Uber spokesman in Miami said the company expects the MDX to issue a request for proposals where ride-hailing companies could apply to participate in the service.

"We haven't had any conversations with MDX on specific details around these proposals," Uber spokesman Javier Correoso said.

