

**CHAPTER 14**  
**FREEWAY MERGE AND DIVERGE SEGMENTS**

**CONTENTS**

**1. INTRODUCTION ..... 14-1**

    Overview ..... 14-1

    Chapter Organization ..... 14-1

    Related HCM Content ..... 14-2

**2. CONCEPTS ..... 14-3**

    Overview and Ramp Components ..... 14-3

    Classification of Ramp Segments ..... 14-3

    Ramp and Ramp Junction Analysis Boundaries ..... 14-4

    Ramp–Freeway Junction Operational Conditions ..... 14-5

    Base Conditions ..... 14-5

    Capacity of Merge and Diverge Segments ..... 14-5

    LOS Criteria for Merge and Diverge Segments ..... 14-7

**3. CORE METHODOLOGY ..... 14-8**

    Scope of the Methodology ..... 14-8

    Required Data and Sources ..... 14-9

    Overview of the Methodology ..... 14-12

    Computational Steps ..... 14-15

    Aggregating Densities ..... 14-28

**4. EXTENSIONS TO THE METHODOLOGY ..... 14-30**

    Special Cases ..... 14-30

    Managed Lane Access Points ..... 14-35

    Effect of Ramp Control at Ramps ..... 14-36

**5. APPLICATIONS ..... 14-37**

    Example Problems ..... 14-37

    Related Content in the HCMAG ..... 14-37

    Example Results ..... 14-38

    Types of Analysis ..... 14-40

    Use of Alternative Tools ..... 14-43

**6. REFERENCES ..... 14-48**

**LIST OF EXHIBITS**

Exhibit 14-1 Ramp Influence Areas Illustrated ..... 14-4

Exhibit 14-2 Capacity Estimates at Merge Bottleneck Locations  
(veh/h/ln)..... 14-6

Exhibit 14-3 LOS Criteria for Freeway Merge and Diverge Segments ..... 14-7

Exhibit 14-4 Required Input Data, Potential Data Sources, and Default  
Values for Freeway Merge and Diverge Segment Analysis..... 14-10

Exhibit 14-5 Measuring the Length of Acceleration and Deceleration Lanes .. 14-12

Exhibit 14-6 Flowchart for Analysis of Ramp–Freeway Junctions ..... 14-13

Exhibit 14-7 Key Ramp Junction Variables ..... 14-14

Exhibit 14-8 Models for Predicting  $P_{FM}$  at On-Ramps or Merge Areas..... 14-17

Exhibit 14-9 Models for Predicting  $P_{FD}$  at Off-Ramps or Diverge Areas ..... 14-19

Exhibit 14-10 Capacity of Ramp–Freeway Junctions (pc/h) ..... 14-23

Exhibit 14-11 Capacity of High-Speed Ramp Junctions on Multilane  
Highways and C-D Roadways (pc/h)..... 14-23

Exhibit 14-12 Capacity of Ramp Roadways (pc/h) ..... 14-23

Exhibit 14-13 Estimating Speed at On-Ramp (Merge) Junctions ..... 14-26

Exhibit 14-14 Estimating Speed at Off-Ramp (Diverge) Junctions ..... 14-27

Exhibit 14-15 Estimating Average Speed of All Vehicles at Ramp–  
Freeway Junctions ..... 14-27

Exhibit 14-16 Typical Geometry of a Two-Lane Ramp–Freeway Junction ..... 14-30

Exhibit 14-17 Common Geometries for Two-Lane Off-Ramp–Freeway  
Junctions ..... 14-32

Exhibit 14-18 Adjustment Factors for Left-Hand Ramp–Freeway  
Junctions ..... 14-33

Exhibit 14-19 Expected Flow in Lane 5 of a 10-Lane Freeway  
Immediately Upstream of a Ramp–Freeway Junction..... 14-33

Exhibit 14-20 Major Merge Areas Illustrated..... 14-34

Exhibit 14-21 Major Diverge Areas Illustrated..... 14-35

Exhibit 14-22 Direct Ramp Access to Managed Lanes ..... 14-36

Exhibit 14-23 Illustrative Effect of Acceleration Lane Length on Merge  
Segment Speed ..... 14-38

Exhibit 14-24 Illustrative Effect of Traffic Demand Level on Merge  
Segment Speed ..... 14-39

Exhibit 14-25 Illustrative Effect of Deceleration Lane Length on Diverge  
Segment Speed ..... 14-39

Exhibit 14-26 Illustrative Effect of Traffic Demand Level on Diverge  
Segment Speed ..... 14-40

Exhibit 14-27 Limitations of the HCM Ramps and Ramp Junctions  
Procedure ..... 14-44