



MEMORANDUM

TO: Transportation Planning Board
FROM: Lyn Erickson, TPB Plan Development and Coordination Program Director
SUBJECT: Item 7 - Summary of Comments Received and Proposed Responses on Additional Project Submissions for Inclusion in the Out-of-Cycle Air Quality Conformity Analysis of the 2016 Amendment to the Financially Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan (CLRP) and FY 2017-2022 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
DATE: May 17, 2017

At the April 19, 2017 meeting, the Board was briefed on an additional project, the I-270 Innovative Congestion Management project, submitted by the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) to be included in the upcoming out-of-cycle Air Quality Conformity Analysis of the 2016 CLRP Amendment and the FY 2017-2022 TIP. The project submission was released for a 30-day public comment and interagency review period on April 13. This comment period closed on May 13.

Comments submitted have been posted on the TPB's website at www.mwcog.org/TPBcomment. This memorandum provides a summary of the comments and the proposed responses from TPB staff and MDOT. A compilation of all comments received is attached.

The TPB will be briefed on the comments received and responses provided. Following that briefing, the board will be asked to approve the additional project submission for inclusion in the out-of-cycle Air Quality Conformity Analysis of the 2016 CLRP Amendment and FY 2017-2022 TIP. This action will formally enable staff to initiate the analysis of this project. Upon completion of the analysis in September, another 30-day public comment period will be initiated. In October, the Board will be asked to approve the finding that the 2016 CLRP and FY 2017-2022 TIP conform with the requirements of the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990, and will be asked to approve the 2016 CLRP Amendment, which will include this project.

COMMENTS AND RESPONSES

Fourteen comments were received on MDOT's proposal to include the I-270 Innovative Congestion Management project in the air quality conformity analysis. One comment specifically supported the project. The remaining comments focused on various aspects of travel on I-270, and related suggestions. TPB staff have evaluated the comments to determine if they pertain to the TPB's plans, policies or processes. In this case, TPB staff have provided responses as indicated below. If the comment pertains to project or corridor-specific details that are not directly associated with the TPB's planning policies and process, then we have worked with MDOT to provide the best available information to assist the TPB in its deliberations.

1. **Comment:** Additional capacity is needed on I-270 north of Clarksburg to Frederick.

TPB Staff Response: The CLRP includes a project on the I-270/US 15 corridor (CLRP ID 1186) that considers additional highway and transit improvements from the Shady Grove Metro Station to north of Biggs Ford Road in Frederick.

2. **Comment:** The project/corridor would benefit from dedicated transit lanes. Investment in the corridor should be focused on public transportation.

TPB Staff Response: The CLRP includes the above-mentioned project (CLRP ID 1186) and the Corridor Cities Bus Rapid Transit project (CLRP ID 1649) which are both expected to expand transit options along I-270.

3. **Comment:** Congestion on the Capital Beltway needs to be addressed. Shoulder/breakdown lanes on the Beltway between the American Legion Bridge and I-270 should be converted to HOV.

TPB Staff Response: Improvements to this portion of I-495 are being considered by MDOT under the larger I-270/I-495 West Side Corridor Study (CLRP ID 3281) from which this project originated.

4. **Comment:** Toll or HOT lanes should be implemented on I-270 and/or I-495.

TPB Staff Response: HOV, HOT, or managed lane elements may be included in any of the CLRP projects referenced above on I-270 and I-495.

5. **Comment:** Congestion on I-270 could be reduced by operational reconfigurations and/or eliminating local lanes.

MDOT Response: Localized operational reconfigurations are being proposed as part of the contract.

6. **Comment:** An additional Potomac River crossing should be considered.

TPB Staff Response: There are no proposals to include additional Potomac River crossings at this time. The TPB's Long-Range Plan Task Force may address this issue in the coming months.

Attachment

Comments Received on the Project Submissions for Inclusion in the Off-Cycle Air Quality Conformity Analysis of the 2016 CLRP and the FY 2017-2022 TIP

I-270 Innovative Congestion Management Project

Submitted by: An Individual

Baker, S

Frederick, Maryland 21704

4/18/2017

Subject:

My family commutes from Urbana to Rockville & Arlington respectively. I believe the current proposal won't work. There are several new communities in Frederick County along the I270 and 15. This adds thousands of cars to the road every year. Frederick leadership is in denial about the impact these communities have on roads. No one can afford to live in Urbana, Lansdowne unless they are independently wealthy or work in DC, Rockville or northern Virginia. Very few jobs North of Frederick County pay a salary that allow persons to live in the new communities. I agree more lanes aren't always the solution but acknowledge its not possible to relieve traffic on 270 without adding a lane north of Clarksburg. I270 needs at least 3 lanes leading to Route 15 in Frederick. Another way to ease congestion on I270 would be enforce traffic laws which include slower traffic traveling to the right and perhaps using variable speed limits. Driver frustration leads to accidents and congestion.

Baker, Samantha

Frederick, Maryland 21704

4/18/2017

Subject: I270 traffic

I'm writing today to comment on the proposal to ease congestion on I270 in Maryland. I am not impressed by the proposal and don't think that the suggestions will ease congestion on this busy road. I do agree increasing the size of acceleration lanes may reduce accidents but the purpose of this project is to reduce congestion. I commute from Urbana to Rockville daily. My husband commutes to Arlington. I believe the current proposals won't work because there are several new communities being built in Frederick County along the I270 and 15 corridors. This adds thousands of cars to the road every year. Local leaders in Frederick are in denial about the impact these new communities have on the infrastructure. No one can afford to live in Urbana, Lansdowne or any of the newer communities being built unless they are independently wealthy or they work in DC, Rockville or northern Virginia. There are very few jobs in Frederick County (or Washington County) that pay a salary that

Bell, Ben

Frederick, Maryland 21704

4/18/2017

Subject: 270 Solutions

I read on WTOP the leading ideas for addressing the issue of congestion on 270. The primary issue is the congestion between Frederick and Clarksburg. This is the only stretch of 270 that is congested on the weekends (yes, it's bad on the weekends too). And it happens consistently. In the mornings, the southbound lanes are the first to become congested. In the afternoon the northbound lanes are first. The most significant traffic accidents occur in this stretch. The only solution is to add two additional lanes in each direction. There are very few "major" interstates in Maryland that only hanger two lanes. It's sad that no one wants to recognize this reality.

Blackman, Ric

Frederick, Maryland 21703

4/18/2017

Subject: 270 Congestion

#1 - a third travel MUST be extended all the way to Frederick. It doesn't take a high school education to look at daily congestion maps to see where the bottleneck is for the main through-way. #2 - HOT lanes is nothing more than a money grab on behalf of the state it will NOT resolve traffic woes. Extending on-ramps is a minor improvement as is the improvement of truck scales. Variable speeds?? Smooth my expectations?? Really? My expectation was for you to expand the lanes on 270 and you've failed for 20 years. You think the population north of Rockville is stagnant? USE COMMON SENSE. #3 - I think Hogan has done a good job thus far, but Berliner is right - the proposals are not well thought out and don't offer an metrics on improvement. That BS comment from Chasse has no place in improving the quality of life for Marylanders forced to travel I270.

Bloch, J

Potomac, Maryland 20854

4/20/2017

Subject: I-270 improvements

I don't think what was proposed will help decrease congestion. Extending the merge lanes will help a little with cars merging, but in the Montrose Road, Falls Road, Route 28 area so many cars are moving from lane to lane that I think this would be dangerous. I also don't like the camera controlled entry as I fear that the entry/exit ramps will back up and some of them are controlled by traffic lights on cross streets. I didn't like it on 66 in Virginia and in some areas I don't like to drive on I-495 in Virginia as well because during Rush Hour they take away the shoulder and it becomes a regular lane. So if you have an emergency, there is no where to go. Please don't turn Maryland into Virginia. Gov. Hogan needs to learn that Montgomery County is important and throwing together a quick cheap fix is not the right way to go. Go back to the drawing board and come back with better proposals.

Bradford, Kevin

Washington, District of Columbia 20018

4/24/2017

Subject: 270 Disaster

Who's the fool that designed 270?

As a person who has been traveling 270 for 40 years, I'd like to know why someone actually got paid for the design. Let's look at some of the congestion problems;

N. bound.

1. People getting on at Montrose have to travel all the way to 28 to get into the main lanes. The local lanes are being populated by cars coming from Montrose, Main lanes before Falls rd. and Falls rd. The first area to exit local lanes is right before 28 where more cars are trying to exit main lanes while cars coming off Falls are trying to cross 2 lanes and exit onto Main Lanes. We have 4 lanes merging into 2 within a ¼ mile and cars in left lane are trying to move into right lanes and people in right lanes trying to get into left lanes. And the main lane exit to 28 is too close to 28, This entrance/exit should be exit only (to main lanes). Anyone wanting to go from main lanes to 28 should do so from Falls main line exit. Another main line entrance should be made after Wooten Parkway.

2. Shady Grove 270 and 370 area is nuts, you have basically 6 lanes merging into 2. Local lanes has 2 lanes that go into 1 (1 must exit at Shady Grove) 2 main lanes coming into local lanes, 2 Shady Grove entrances bringing in cars from both east and west and everyone moving left for exiting into main lane entrance and cars moving right for 370.

3. Another thing I don't understand is why do HOV lanes go all the way to Clarksburg going north but start at Shady grove going south? Who thought that up? Wouldn't the HOvers be travelling the same distance on 270 both north and south? So let's look at this another way, Montrose rd. 4 lane North and south, HOV both ways. Shady Grove rd. 4 lanes north and south, HOV both ways. 370 4 lanes north and south, HOV only north. Montgomery Village ave. 4 lanes north and south, HOV north only. Father Hurley 3 lanes north and south, HOV north only. Why are HOV cars getting on at Shady Grove to go south but continue all the way to Clarksburg going north? I've heard there's not enough lanes going south that's why they can't start at Clarksburg BUT there's the same amount of lanes on the North side.

I would really love to hear back from someone so I could show you how to REALLY fix the whole 270 debacle. Just don't have enough time thru email only.

Dye, Mike

Ga, Maryland 20878

4/18/2017

Subject: Bigger Issue than just I-270

Hello, I wanted to pass along a comment that the problem with the I-270 corridor is more than just I-270 itself. I drive to Northern Virginia every day for work, and I find that the biggest problem is on the Beltway itself. In the mornings, I-270 can be the bigger problem, but in the afternoons, it can sometimes take me as long as an hour to get from Virginia Route 7 to the I-270 entrance. What is happening to fix the beltway itself, and it's part in the congestion on I-270? The breakdown lanes on the beltway between the American Legion bridge and I-270 are huge. I would love to see a new HOV lane that is only open during rush hour opened in that breakdown lane, and I think that the congestion on the beltway would be greatly improved. Perhaps with cooperation of Virginia, we could have that breakdown lane open all the way from Route 7, across the bridge and into Maryland. It's the constant lane changing and jockeying for position that makes the traffic worse.

Epp Schmidt, Dietrich

Hyattsville, Maryland 20781

4/20/2017

Subject: Invest in Public Transportation

I have been a resident of Maryland, in the DC suburbs, for nearly my entire life. I have also, for periods of time, lived in Europe, where they have amazing public transportation options. Looking forward, public transportation is more fuel efficient, more time efficient, and thus a more sustainable option. Maryland should pioneer public transportation, providing alternative infrastructure wherever possible, to allow our citizenry to no longer be dependent on cars for

transportation. This is a viable option that is routinely available across Europe. Why is the US so far behind? This is a fundamental shift in world view, that the next generation has- we do not value personal transport in the way our parents do. Please plan for our future, and invest in public transportation. Spending this money on the roads will just be a waste, and it won't decrease congestion.

Kim, Michael

Rockville, Maryland 20850

4/18/2017

Subject: MD's lack of progress on addressing roads

We NEED more lanes and roads, plain and simple. Look what VA has done with 495 and their HOV/toll lanes; we need to expand our portion of 495 and 270 to support more cars; its plain and simple. MD's approach of reducing the # of cars and increasing shared transportation options is not working. The state is years behind the curve; if we don't attempt to catch up now, we'll be left behind. We need the following: 1 - HOT/toll lanes for 495 2 - HOT/toll lanes for 270 3 - modification of ICC tolls to support ride sharing(HOV3+) 4 - approval to build additional crossing/bridge over the Potomac river

Padilla, Manuel

Frederick, Maryland 21701

4/24/2017

Subject: Fix the 270

I want to use public transportation to Rockville, from Frederick, but your plan only targets "cars" and more "cars". It lacks of a plan to stimulate more mass transportation. Driving my car is less expensive than using the MTA Commuter Bus. If at least the Commuter Bus were faster, but it uses the same lanes as the rest of cars. It's not attractive to use it. Build a dedicated lane for mass transportation, and problem solved. I read your plan, and it really does not shows interest for the fast economic development that is happenings in Frederick. Looks like you do not care about the county. We need a real plan, not vague, and irresponsible decisions that do not stimulate the potential of the zone.

Smith, Kelsey

Rockville, Maryland 20850

4/18/2017

Subject: I-270 Dos and Don'ts

As a life time Montgomery County resident and vehicle owner who commutes daily, I ask only that you do not add toll lanes to 270. These class-tiered transportation methods do not relieve traffic, they only allow those who can pay to get home quicker. Additionally, studies show that adding lanes to major roads doesn't reduce congestion, it only encouraged more people to drive and move into the area. It's a temporary fix. So I am in favor of the plan to manage on-ramps and have better, digital signage. But a better, long term fix would be to develop public transit lanes, make the bus system amazing and easy. Anything to encourage people to ditch their cars. If you add capacity, people will always fill it. But if you give us the best transit in the world, we will use it and reduce damage on the roads, the environment, and our free time. Thank you.

Van Tol, Eric

Gaithersburg, Maryland 20878

4/18/2017

Subject: I270 Traffic Relief

As a daily driver on I270, I must say that one way to relieve some of the congestion and make I270 *safer* is to eliminate the local lanes. Their design makes literally no sense. Take the entrance ramps from I370 heading southbound. Cars will attempt to cross two full lanes of traffic immediately upon getting into the I270 local lane, while cars in the local lane are trying to exit onto the Shady Grove exit. It causes too much braking, backups, and near accidents when cars going 50MPH or more are all trying to cross each other's lanes at the same time. This causes backups for miles - all it takes is one person hitting their brakes to cause a chain reaction. The same thing happens northbound at the Shady Grove entrance ramps. Cars attempt to cross the lanes to get to the express lanes while at the same time, cars exiting are trying to get to the I370 exit. It's a mess. Local lanes are stupid and pointless. It won't solve the problems, but it will help.

Wessel, Barret

Hyattsville, Maryland 20783

4/18/2017

Subject: MARC better investment than I-270

Having read the CLRP amendment for this \$105 million expansion of I-270, I have to say it looks like a misguided waste of money that moves Maryland in the wrong direction. These funds would be far better spent upgrading MARC Brunswick Line service along virtually the same corridor, through to Point of Rocks, as outlined in the plan submitted by the Action Committee for Transit. I am one of many Marylanders who not only depend on public transportation, we prefer it. Younger generations are increasingly choosing public transportation options where they are available because they are safer, more sustainable, more affordable, and the riding time can be used productively. People do not look fondly on

the prospect of spending hundreds or thousands of hours a year dealing with traffic, and the I-270 proposal hasn't shown that it will cut this time. The state needs to continue to invest in an efficient and interconnected public transportation network, and it should use these funds to do so.

Young, Karen

Frederick, Maryland

4/18/2017

Subject: I-270 Innovative Congestion Management Project

This project is imperative to the economic prosperity of our region! It is currently one of the most congested roads in the country. In order to support regional economic strength and open Frederick and Montgomery markets to expansion, this project **MUST** be expedited!
