

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

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Item 12

M E M O R A N D U M

March 16, 2011

TO: Transportation Planning Board

FROM: Ronald F. Kirby
Director of Transportation Planning

SUBJECT: Review of Comments Received and Recommended Responses on Project Submissions for the Air Quality Conformity Assessment for an Amendment to the 2010 CLRP to Remove the I-95/395 HOV/HOT Lanes Project and its Components in its Entirety, add a HOV/HOT Lanes Project on I-95 between I-495 and Garrisonville Road/Route 610 in Stafford County, Add a Reversible One-lane Ramp from the HOV Lanes of I-395 to and from Seminary Road, and Add the Extension of I-66 HOV and General Purpose Lanes from Route 29 to Route 15 in Prince William County

Background

At the February 16 meeting, notice was provided that VDOT had requested an amendment to the 2010 CLRP to remove the I-95/395 HOV/HOT lanes project and its components in its entirety, add a HOV/HOT lanes project on I-95 between I-495 and Garrisonville Road/Route 610 in Stafford County, and add a reversible one-lane ramp from the HOV lanes of I-395 to and from Seminary Road. On March 4, VDOT also requested that the widening of I-66 HOV and general purpose lanes between US 29 and Route 15 be included in this amendment to the 2010 CLRP. These amendments to the plan will require an air quality conformity assessment. Information on the project submissions for the 2011 CLRP and this amendment, and a draft air quality conformity analysis scope of work were released for a 30-day public comment period on February 10. The public comment period closed on March 12.

Public comments submitted by individuals, organizations, and businesses were posted as they were received on the TPB web site at

<http://www.mwcog.org/transportation/public/comments.asp>.

This memorandum provides recommended responses to comments received.

The Board will be briefed on the comments received and recommended responses, and asked to approve the project submissions for inclusion in the air quality conformity assessment for an amendment to the 2010 CLRP.

Comments and Responses

The comments received and recommended responses are summarized below:

A. The Proposed I-95 HOV/HOT Lane Project and Seminary Road Ramp Project in Virginia

1. **Comments:** 273 support the I-95 HOV/HOT Lanes project and Seminary Road Ramp project as amendments to the 2010 CLRP and 165 also support the inclusion of the projects in the 2011 CLRP because they will have a number of positive impacts including:
 - addressing significant congestion in the corridor by reducing travel time
 - offering drivers more choices and improved traffic flow by extending the HOV lanes to Stafford County and adding more capacity to the existing HOV lanes
 - by linking the I-95 HOV/HOT lanes to the I-495 HOT lanes, currently under construction, creating a network of HOV/HOT lanes to provide access for transit and carpoolers to more employment centers such as Tysons Corner
 - transit and carpoolers continuing to enjoy the HOV facility toll free with enhanced enforcement of violators and increased incident response to improve safety

Comments: Two comments oppose the I-95 HOV/HOT Lanes project: At a time when gasoline prices are increasing every single day, it makes no sense to invest our scarce transportation dollars in single occupancy vehicles. We call for a full Environmental Impact Statement to consider the full range of alternatives including both termini that have been proposed and independent HOV, Bus and VRE alternatives with links to better land use. We should not be making multi-billion dollar decisions or turn over public land to private companies for 75 years without a thorough understanding of the alternatives, costs/benefits and impacts.

Response: The TPB has received and considered these comments from individuals, the Greater Washington Board of Trade, multiple chambers of commerce, and private businesses and believes that on balance these projects are beneficial and should move forward.

B. The Proposed Extension of the I-66 HOV and General Purpose Lanes between US 29 in Gainesville and Rte. 15 in Prince William County

2. **Comment:** More focus should be put into improvements of the I-66 interchanges at Route 243/Nutley Rd, Route 28, and Route 29(Centreville) before adding more lanes to I-66 and fixing the route 15 interchange in Haymarket. We recommend that I-66 from Gainesville to Haymarket be limited to one new HOV lane instead of both an HOV and General Purpose lane, because the GP lane will undermine the HOV.

Response: This project continues the existing cross-section and removes a bottleneck on I-66 at Gainesville. I-66 is one of the most heavily traveled facilities in Northern Virginia and in the region as well. VDOT has implemented and continues to develop plans and projects for further improving mobility and reducing congestion along the facility. These include: plans to

build a new ramp from I-66 HOV lanes to the Vienna Metro station in the vicinity of the Rte. 243 interchange; adding capacity to Rte. 28 in the vicinity of I-66; an Active Traffic Management System to utilize available capacity more efficiently by addressing incidents quickly and effectively; and ongoing survey and conceptual studies for some improvements at the signalized intersection of Rte. 28 and EB I-66 entry ramp. Additionally VDOT is undertaking two studies of I-66 (one between the Beltway and US 15, the other between the Beltway and the Potomac River) to identify operational and transit improvements that can provide increased mobility and reduce congestion without adding lanes. Initial recommendations from these two studies are expected to be available by late 2012.