

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

777 North Capitol Street, N.E., Suite 300, Washington, D.C. 20002-4290 (202) 962-3310 Fax: (202) 962-3202 TDD: (202) 962-3213

Item 8

M E M O R A N D U M

July 20, 2011

TO: Transportation Planning Board

FROM: Ronald F. Kirby
Director of Transportation Planning

SUBJECT: Review of Comments Received and Recommended Responses on the Approval of the Air Quality Conformity Analysis, an Amendment to the 2010 CLRP to Modify the I-95/395 HOV/HOT Lanes Project, Widen I-66 between US 29 and Route 15, and Add a Ramp from the HOV Lanes of I-395 to Seminary Road, and an Amendment to the FY 2011-2016 TIP to Include Funding for the I-66 Project

Background

At the June 15 meeting, the Board was briefed on the draft conformity analysis 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, widen I-66 to 8 lanes including HOV lanes between US 29 and Route 15, and add a reversible one-lane ramp from the HOV lanes of I-395 to and from Seminary Road. The draft conformity results and financial plan information for the projects were released for public comment and agency review on June 15 and the public comment period closed on July 15.

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 air quality conformity determination for the 2010 CLRP amendment, the amendment to the 2010 CLRP to include these projects, and the amendment to the FY 2011-2016 TIP to include FY 2011 funding for the I-66.

Comments and Responses

The comments received and recommended responses are summarized below:

The Proposed I-95 HOV/HOT Lane Project, I-66 Widening, and Seminary Road Ramp Project

Comments: 57 support the I-95 HOV/HOT Lanes project, I-66 widening, and Seminary Road Ramp project as amendments to the 2010 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:

- It is the responsibility of our government to provide for the transportation infrastructure not corporations, and if these lanes are expected to be of benefit then VDOT should undertake the project.
- The HOT Lanes work has been inordinately destructive to the quality of life all around the western side of the beltway. The decline in those property values will also cost Fairfax County dearly in taxes once homes begin to sell again. Nor do I believe that the HOT lanes will alleviate traffic woes significantly, they will merely allow a very small number of wealthy people to get to work more quickly while those who cannot afford to pay \$20 per mile for our commutes (that's most of us) will continue to stew in traffic.

Comment: One comment opposes the I-66 project:

- I live in Fairfax County and wish to register my opposition to plans to widen I-66 which only serves is to allow individuals working in, or close to, Washington to live further and further from the city. Growth in the Washington area is destroying the countryside that all of us enjoy, even if we can only visit it occasionally. By encouraging such growth we are destroying the very reasons that people move here in the first place and in the end no one wins (except real estate developers, and it is about time that elected officials heard the voice of someone besides these deep-pocketed contributors).

Response: The TPB has received and considered these comments from individuals and organizations and believes that on balance these projects are beneficial and should move forward.



July 15, 2011

The Honorable Muriel Bowser, Chairman
National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board
777 North Capital Street, N.E., Suite 300
Washington, D.C. 20002

Dear Chairman Bowser:

The Northern Virginia Transportation Alliance supports and urges the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) to amend the 2010 Constrained Long-Range Plan to include the revised I-95 HOT Lanes project, the widening of I-66 between Route 29 and US 15 and the I-395/Seminary Road reversible ramp.

Each of these projects represents an important multi-modal improvement to our region's transportation network. Each will improve not only mobility, but quality of life for tens of thousands of area residents.

Each also is a key element of a future regional bus rapid transit network.

The decision to truncate the proposed I-95/I-395 multi-modal HOT Lanes project is a major setback for regional mobility.

At a time when resources are scarce and BRAC relocations will make congestion in the region's most congested corridor even worse, the loss of an additional multi-modal lane and nearly \$200 million in private sector transit dollars is tragic.

The TPB's Air Quality Conformity analysis shows that termination of the HOT Lanes at I-495 creates exactly the I-395 conditions the original HOT Lanes proposal was intended to overcome, i.e. more single occupant vehicles, fewer public transit riders and more spill-over traffic in adjacent Arlington and Alexandria neighborhoods.

While the Commonwealth of Virginia has expressed its commitment to work with localities to improve public transit in the corridor, it also has acknowledged it lacks funding to support such service expansion.

Another byproduct is that core jurisdictions will be less accessible to more and more people, especially workers. Employers are more likely to move outward and closer to their worker and customer base. Good news for outer jurisdictions, but not for the region's core.

All of this is most unfortunate. However, on July 20th the TPB has the ability to advance important I-95/I395 and I-66 corridor improvements and the Alliance encourages it to do so.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bob Chase".

Robert O. Chase
President

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International Union of Operating Engineers

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July 13, 2011

The Honorable Muriel Bowser, Chair
National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board
777 North Capitol Street NE, Suite 300
Washington, DC 20002-4239

**Re: Support for amendment to 2010 CLRP and inclusion in 2011 CLRP
of the I-95 HOV/HOT Lanes Project**

Dear Chairwoman Bowser and TPB Board Members:

On behalf of the International Union of Operating Engineers Local 77, I am writing to urge the Transportation Planning Board to approve the amendments to the 2010 Constrained Long Range Plan (CLRP) for the I-395/I-95 HOV/HOT Lanes Project.

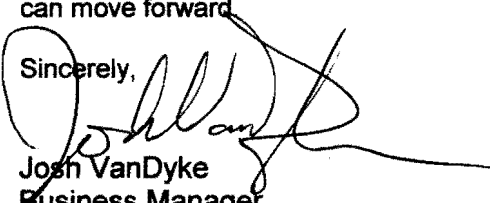
The Capital Beltway HOT Lanes Project has generated good work for many of our members over the last several years. If approved, the I-395/I-95 HOT Lanes Project could start as early as next year and would provide our members with another good union job to work on for the next 2 – 3 years. With the economy still struggling, this is critically important to our membership!

In addition, the project will provide a significant improvement to the transportation network in our area – which was recently noted as having the worst traffic in the nation. The I-95 HOT Lanes Project combined with the one on the Capital Beltway will provide a seamless network that allows HOV/Bus/carpoolers continuous designated access all the way to Tysons Corner.

It will extend the HOV network 9 miles further south on I-95, and upgrade and add an additional lane on the existing HOV lanes to just beyond Edsall Road inside the Beltway. With increasing traffic pressure to come with BRAC, these road improvements are desperately needed.

The IUOE Local 77 urges the TPB to approve the amendments to the 2010 CLRP so this critical project can move forward.

Sincerely,


Josh VanDyke
Business Manager
IUOE Local 77

Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

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Submitted By: An Organization
Name: Mahlon "Lon" Anderson
Agency / Organization: AAA Mid-Atlantic
Location: Washington, DC
Subject: urging approval of CLRP amendments

Position: Comment in support of the proposed amendments to the 2010 CLRP.

Comments:

To the Members of the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board: When study after study has shown that the Washington metro area has either the very worst or near worst congestion in the U.S., doing projects that will attack that congestion should be a top regional priority. Congestion is a thief that robs us all of time and saps valuable economic resources, thus eroding our quality of life in the Washington metro region, and adds a very real tax to every person and business here. At AAA, we believe that addressing projects that will add capacity and otherwise improve mobility on some of our most congested arteries makes only common sense and should be done. Yet smart growth advocates will tell you otherwise, and propose so-called solutions and fixes that will not address the problem. If they have their way, there would be little or limited highway construction. The following projects in the 2010 fiscally Constrained Long-Range Plan (CLRP): the I-95 HOV/HOT Lanes (I-495 to Garrisonville Road/Route 610 Stafford County), widening of I-66 (between US 29/Gainesville and Route 15/Haymarket) and the one-lane reversible ramp from I-395 HOV Lanes to and from Seminary Road will improve mobility in their locales. Further, each of these projects has been tested and deemed to be in conformance to air quality standards. Therefore, AAA Mid-Atlantic urges members of the TPB to adopt Resolution R1-2012, therein approving the air quality conformity determination for the 2010 CLRP amendment, the amendment to the 2010 CLRP to include these projects, and the amendment to the FY 2011-2016 TIP to include FY 2011 funding for the I-66 project. Thank you. Mahlon G. "Lon" Anderson, Managing Director, AAA Mid-Atlantic

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Submitted By: An Organization

Name: John Townsend

**Agency /
Organization:** AAA Mid-Atlantic

Location: Washington, DC

Subject: proposed amendments to the 2010 CLRP

Position: Comment in support of the proposed amendments to the 2010 CLRP.

Comments:

To the members of the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board: Congestion has eroded the quality of life in the Washington metro region, a fact of life in the region that no one doubts and a reality that no one denies. It affects every aspect of our daily lives. This is seen in the amount of time we spend in our daily commutes. It robs us of valuable time that we could spend with our families. It causes us to lose leisure time and worship time. Study after study have shown the extent of the congestion in the Washington metro area. Most recently, it has been measured by the Texas Transportation Institute's (TTI) Annual Urban Mobility Report by INRIX's Traffic Scorecard, and by the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) aerial traffic congestion survey. The findings are undisputed: the region continues to suffer from some of the worst congestion in the entire nation. Almost undisputed is the fact that the region's congestion is the impairment to our quality of life and an impediment to our regional economy. Yet smart growth advocates will tell you otherwise, and propose so-called solutions and fixes that will not address the problem. If they have their way, there would be little or limited highway construction. This is untenable and unrealistic. Their world-view and reasoning are flawed, and their analysis is inaccurate. As transportation planners in the region continue to develop congestion improvement strategies and solutions, members of the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board are slated to vote on the inclusion of the following projects in the 2010 fiscally Constrained Long-Range Plan (CLRP): the I-95 HOV/HOT Lanes (I-495 to Garrisonville Road/Route 610 Stafford County), widening of I-66 (between US 29/Gainesville and Route 15/Haymarket) and the one-lane reversible ramp from I-395 HOV Lanes to and from Seminary Road. Each of these projects has been tested and deemed to be in conformance to air quality standards. AAA Mid-Atlantic urges members of the TPB to adopt Resolution R1-2012, therein approving the air quality conformity determination for the 2010 CLRP amendment, the amendment to the 2010 CLRP to include these projects, and the amendment to the FY 2011-2016 TIP to include FY 2011 funding for the I-66 project. Thank you.

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From: Jean Graham
Sent: Friday, July 15, 2011 10:30 AM
To: TPBPublicComment
Subject: Oppose I-95 HOT Lanes, I-66

I live in Fairfax county and wish to register my opposition to plans to widen I-66 west of Gainesville. The only purpose that this serves is to allow individuals working in, or close to, Washington to live further and further from the city. Growth in the Washington area is destroying the countryside that all of us enjoy, even if we can only visit it occasionally. By encouraging such growth we are destroying the very reasons that people move here in the first place and in the end no one wins (except real estate developers, and it is about time that elected officials heard the voice of someone besides these deep-pocketed contributors).

I have no comment on the Seminary Road project but the HOT Lanes work has been inordinately destructive to the quality of life all around the western side of the beltway. The road has been completely stripped of its wooded buffer zones, creating a hideous eyesore for both the drivers and the many thousands of residents living nearby. The decline in those property values will also cost Fairfax County dearly in taxes once homes begin to sell again. Nor do I believe that the HOT lanes will alleviate traffic woes significantly, they will merely allow a very small number of wealthy people to get to work more quickly while those who cannot afford to pay \$20 per mile for our commutes (that's most of us) will continue to stew in traffic. With their own traffic problem solved, the wealthy will have little reason to agree to the taxes needed to improve overall traffic problems in the area. Eventually, the middle class will be pushed into a transportation ghetto despite the fact that 98% of the transportation infrastructure has been paid for with their taxes.

Name: Sandra Graham
Address: Alexandria, VA 22310

From: Dennis Bilowus AEC Software
Sent: Thursday, July 14, 2011 4:01 PM
To: TPBPublicComment
Subject: Object to I-95 Hot lanes

It is the properly the responsibility of our government to provide for the transportation infrastructure **not corporations**. If these lanes are expected to be of benefit then VDOT should undertake the project. Roads are part of why we pay taxes.

Dennis Bilowus
Alexandria, VA 22306