



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Office of the Governor

Sean T. Connaughton
Secretary of Transportation

June 28, 2011

The Honorable Muriel Bowser
Chairman, National Capital Region
Transportation Planning Board
Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
777 North Capitol Street, N.E.; Suite 300
Washington, DC 20002-4201

Dear Chairman Bowser:

As a follow up to a request made by members of the Transportation Planning Board (TPB) on June 15, 2011, I am writing to reaffirm the Commonwealth's commitment to funding and delivering transit and transportation demand management (TDM) options along the Interstate 95 corridor. There are several efforts underway to identify, fund and deliver these critical improvements.

First, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) is advancing the I-95 HOT/HOV Lanes Project to provide infrastructure for a regional network of managed lanes that will link High Occupancy Vehicles (HOV) and transit services to key destinations in Virginia. While the original scope of the I-95 HOT/HOV Lanes Project has been substantively downsized, the project remains an important step forward in providing quality HOV and transit service in the corridor. It will address major bottlenecks in the current system, provide new access points, enhance incident response and improve enforcement.

Second, VDOT is advancing plans to construct a direct ramp from the existing HOV lanes on I-395 to Seminary Road, which will connect the growing Mark Center site to this expanded regional transit and HOV network. These improvements have been included in the Constrained Long Range Plan (CLRP) and an environmental study is underway.

Third, the Commonwealth is moving forward with efforts to expand park-and-ride capacity in the corridor. Full or partial funding for previously identified park-and-ride needs has been included in the FY2012-2017 Six-Year Improvement Program. These improvements include the Horner Road lot expansion, leasing of the parking spaces to replace the spaces lost at Potomac Mills Mall, Staffordboro Boulevard park-and-ride lot expansion and Gordon Road park-and-ride lot expansion.

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Finally, the Commonwealth has initiated a study to identify even further opportunities to expand transit and TDM in the corridor. Because the scaled-back project no longer includes a concession payment to fund transit beyond the core scope of the project, the previously developed transit and TDM plan is no longer part of the CLRP. Consequently, the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) is developing a new transit and TDM plan to maximize the capacity of the I-95 HOT/HOV Lanes and to respond to the demand for transportation options within the corridor. The I-95 Transit and TDM Plan will be largely limited to those jurisdictions within the I-95 HOT/HOV Lanes Project area, but will examine improvements such as bus bays at points north of the project's terminus to serve destinations including the Pentagon and the Mark Center.

DRPT has formed a steering committee of stakeholders in the project area to collaboratively advance the study. Recommendations from the study will be submitted to the steering committee and the public for comment this fall. Once recommendations have been established for transit and TDM improvements along the corridor, funding will need to be identified in order to advance the recommendations into the CLRP and toward implementation. This proactive approach will enable DRPT to identify improvements today so as funding becomes available those improvements can be quickly implemented with the full support of the region.

I thank the Board for its interest in providing transportation choices along the I-95 corridor, which is one of Virginia's busiest corridors and supports important economic activities across multiple jurisdictions. The Commonwealth recognizes that only a comprehensive and multimodal solution with the state, regional and local agencies working together will help address the mobility and accessibility needs and remains committed to advancing such a solution.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sean T. Connaughton". The signature is stylized with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Sean T. Connaughton