



**NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION**  

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**TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD**

**Item #1 - Public Comment on TPB Procedures and Activities  
From the April 15, 2015 Transportation Planning Board meeting.**

The attached written comments were received as part of the Public Comment on TPB Procedures and Activities. Members of the public presented these comments at the April 15, 2015 Transportation Planning Board meeting.

**Comments of Bryan Zelley**  
**Resident of Vienna, Virginia**  
**April 14, 2015**

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with the Board today. As residents along the I-66 corridor, we believe that regional issues need regional solutions. We also believe that necessary improvements to the corridor should provide true multimodal options that serve residents, commuters, and businesses.

The current Transform 66 plans do not reflect this perspective. Instead, the plans presented by the Commonwealth of Virginia will severely impact or destroy the communities in the corridor outside the Beltway. The supposed beneficiaries of the plan, car drivers, will be forced to endure the permanent loss of a free lane or pay a hefty toll twice a day with unlimited increases. Rather than provide a consistent approach to I-66, VDOT is choosing to transform the roadway outside the beltway in a plan remarkably more harmful than the right-of-way safeguards maintained inside the beltway.

With each new detail exposed about this transformation, we learn the project's true impacts, including significant land taking and homes lost. The displaced are your neighbors who live in transit-oriented housing, who chose not to have long automobile commutes, many choosing not to drive at all. If VDOT's current plan is implemented, these are the folks who will be forced to lose their homes, their modest open space, and their children's schools. Thousands more will face the permanent aftermath left behind.

For them, the project won't just bring increased noise, polluted storm water swamps, and the loss of beloved yards and school recess fields. The current plans mean the loss of pedestrian transit access, buffer zones of green space forever erased from the landscape, new walls constructed just feet from bedrooms, and the permanent blight of brightly lit "flyover" ramps towering over neighborhoods.

We are the residents who invested in our homes to avoid long car commutes. We are the folks who get up each day and take a train to our work, to our activities, and even to appear at today's meeting. But under VDOT's plans, the very residents who invested in transit oriented housing are the folks who will see their neighborhoods destroyed, their children displaced from their school, and their homes taken away, with many elderly and minority residents among those watching their homes demolished.

This car first approach will have a devastating effect on the people who did the very thing we were told by planners is good: live near our jobs and take public transportation. And for what purpose? To pave the way for more highway commutes, longer car trips, and even more sprawl into the diminishing open spaces of Northern Virginia. While wealthy commuters might be able to afford a pricey toll every morning and every evening, working class commuters will face the loss of a free peak hour lane forever.

We know that I-95 and I-495 are at a standstill at rush hour. The congestion has *increased* at the Express Lanes endpoints. This plan is for pavement now with promises of some buses later. Is this the best way forward for a region?

As the Board considers its *Constrained Long Range Plan* and *Transportation Improvement Program*, we urge a focus on moving people rather than cars. It is time for transit and rapid bus service in this corridor. Rather than paving over communities around Metro stations, a shift in focus to true multimodal options including smart transit is essential to transform 66 wisely.

**Comments of Marcia Hook  
Resident of Dunn Loring, Virginia  
April 14, 2015**

The Board is charged with taking a long-term, regional view of transportation planning in the D.C. region. With two Express Lanes projects operating in Virginia, we are now learning the long-term consequences of these arrangements. Indeed, the details of the private partnership agreements for these projects demonstrate why the Board should not approve VDOT's use of such an arrangement for I-66.

First, the I-495 Express Lanes contract has a term of 75 years. Now go back 75 years to 1940. Imagine what a deal signed by transportation planners then would look like today. Would that contract make sense today, 75 years later, without the benefit of understanding the nearly eight decades of change and technological innovations that were to come? Would you, as a transportation planning body, want to be constrained in planning for I-66 today by agreements made 75 years ago?

Second, the entire business plan of these express lanes promotes and depends on *low* occupant vehicle commuters. Specifically, under both the I-95 and I-495 contracts, VDOT must compensate TransUrban if the number of High Occupancy Vehicles exceeds a certain percentage. In other words, too many HOV cars or buses means taxpayers must actually pay TransUrban.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, both contracts include provisions that penalize Virginia for developing "competing" forms of transportation not already planned. For example, Section 12.05 of the I-95 Express Lanes contract requires VDOT to compensate TransUrban if VDOT: (1) adds additional lanes to I-95; (2) improves Route 1; or (3) improves the Occoquan Bridge. What will the non-compete clause for I-66 look like? Will it involve restrictions against a competing Metro, VRE, and other forms of public transportation not envisioned in current plans? Already, VDOT has admitted that one of the alternatives it is considering for the Transform 66 Project would not maintain sufficient space in the median to allow the Metro to extend beyond Vienna.

We believe that there is a better way forward. Any effort to Transform 66 should be based on multimodal solutions. Younger generations are seeking more transit-oriented housing in walkable communities. Bus Rapid Transit service can be implemented along the corridor, taking advantage of existing facilities and building others. VDOT could invest in improving pedestrian and bicycle access to underutilized rail transit stations. Instead of investing in multimodal solutions later, as currently proposed, the investment should be made now, before focusing on widening I-66. The time to change commuters' mindsets in favor of public transit is today.

Moreover, efforts to Transform 66 should be consistent inside and outside the beltway. VDOT has recently unveiled plans to toll I-66 inside the Beltway at peak hours, but has indicated that it will not widen I-66 inside the Beltway. If there is no serious plan to widen I-66 inside the beltway until *at least* the year 2040, why expand I-66 outside of the beltway? Such an approach is both illogical and contrary to the goal of regional planning.

We urge the Board to push Virginia to develop a revised plan that protects communities of transit-oriented housing from massive disruption and outright destruction before approving any I-66 project into the Constrained Long Range Plan and Transportation Improvement Program.

Thank you.

Comments of David Jonas Bardin to MWCOG  
TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD (TPB)  
15 April 2015

Chairman Mendelson and members of the TPB,

When you come to Item 12 of today's agenda, [1] you will find welcome attention being given to transportation strategies which can achieve *co-benefits* -- as we move toward meeting regional climate goals. These include strategies, akin to those that London, England, implements which are reported to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and congestion and accidents and local air pollution while raising revenues for transportation. (A proverbial win-win-win.) Revenue co-benefits are my issue today.

Some transportation strategies already identified by a COG Working Group offer revenue co-benefits -- revenues "that can be used for other transportation improvements" or to give incentives for shifts in transportation behaviors.

These strategies could be adopted by individual jurisdictions in our region. They include congestion pricing [T-18] and cordon pricing [T-19] (possibly with electronic tolling -- "EZ Pass") as well as parking impact fees [T-16] and carbon taxes [T-21].

It is important to have a regional basis for understanding revenue co-benefits and evaluating them.

Therefore, the Working Group and its consultant should examine various revenue-raising transportation strategies (either adopted or pending) of jurisdictions in our region so as to clarify whether revenues are (or will be) dedicated to transportation purposes -- and how.

Will revenues be used to encourage shifts to public transportation, regional or local (either of which might further advance regional goals)?

Will they help fund WMATA?

Co-benefit analysis by the COG Working Group could pave the way to regional understanding, jurisdictional decisions, and good outcomes.

COG's Working Group seeks public comment until April 22.

END NOTE

[1] "Briefing on the Activities of the Transportation Sector Group of the COG Multi-Sector Working Group to Examine Greenhouse Gas Reductions".

The COG Multi-Sector Working Group was convened by CEEPC, MWAQC, and TPB:  
Climate Energy and Environment Policy Committee (CEEPC) of COG Board of Directors  
Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee (MWAQC)  
Transportation Planning Board (TPB)

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## ELIMINATING GROSS PEAK CONGESTION ON FREEWAYS

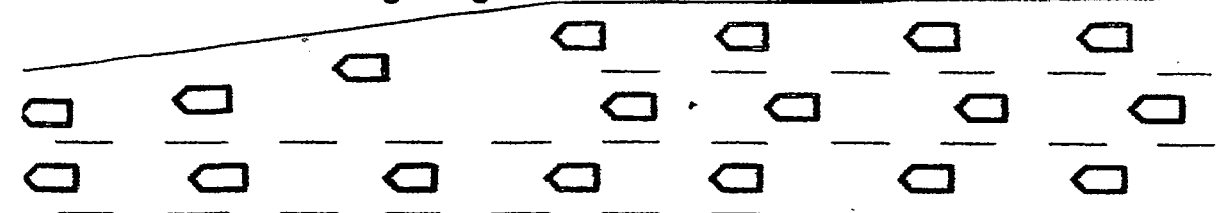
My name is Carroll George, 95 year old retired Mechanical Design Engineer with the Bell Telephone System after graduating from the Coast Guard Academy in 1944, and aboard ship at Battle of Okinawa, WWII, suggesting an engineering solution to peak congestion on freeways. To establish my engineering qualifications let me say the Bell Telephone System, my employer, manufacturing division, initiated the solid state electronics with the invention of the transistor, and designed and built the first in the industry continuous vacuum processing machine for making today's solid state circuits, replacing the very inefficient original Bell Jar units. Then I came along and built a far better one that required 1/8th the investment and 1/8th the labor cost of the first continuous vacuum machine, to process the same amount of solid state product, and my patent established the processing of today's portable electronics.

Having previously made suggestions of two different ways of eliminating gross congestion on freeways at peaks, neither of which were found acceptable because they involved change of long established right of way, I now suggest a way that does "not" change the right of way from the original design of the freeways, requiring only an additional safety control of a minimum follow distance for normal expressway speeds in the area of the merge, shown by chevron pavement markers, but specifying the follow distance between those pavement markers apply at all speeds clearly established by signage..

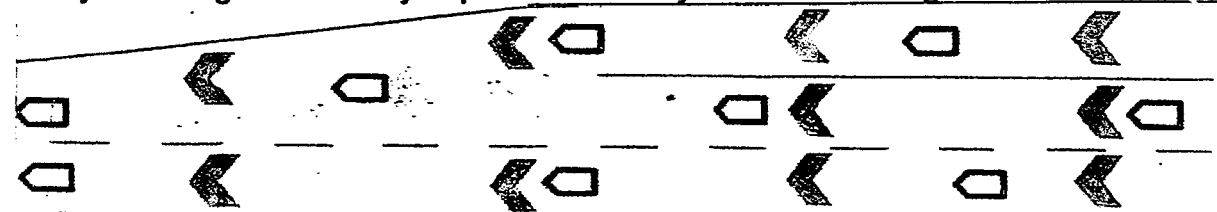
Given that any test requires that there be no congestion downstream of the test, I suggest all the outer entrance ramps of the Beltway be provided with the follow distance pavement markers, accomplished on one week end in the merge zone so there will be no congestion downstream of test area, and the difference in the traffic congestion in the opposite direction will be clearly demonstrated to the public with quick acceptance nationwide, no change in right of way, only a safety addition.

Given that there was no action taken on my previous suggestions, and given the normal vastly expensive expansive construction attempts to solve the problem have not solved the problem, perhaps a secret ballot of all the Board members would be more productive in getting action on this safety issue with such huge possible reward at so minisqual cost and to the great advantage of the entire nation with no direct change in the long established right of way at the merge, just eliminating that great stress and any motivation for uncooperative or aggressive driver behavior.

I will remain for the meeting being available for discussion of the matter...



Today: Entering traffic totally dependent on very frustrated through lane driver's action



Tomorrow: Freeways operating at freeway speeds at peaks free from the stopped cars in the acceleration lanes completely congesting all lanes down to the 15mph range.