



MEMORANDUM

TO: Transportation Planning Board
FROM: Lyn Erickson, TPB Plan Development and Coordination Program Director
SUBJECT: Summary of Comments Received and Proposed Responses on the 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: April 19, 2017

At the March 29, 2017 meeting the board was briefed on the projects submitted by the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) and the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) to be included in an out-of-cycle Air Quality Conformity Analysis of the 2016 CLRP Amendment and the FY 2017-2022 TIP. The project submissions were released for a 30-day public comment and interagency review period on March 9. This comment period closed on April 8.

Comments submitted by individuals, organizations and businesses have been posted on the TPB's website at www.mwcog.org/TPBcomment. This memorandum provides a summary of the comments received and responses provided by TPB staff in consultation with the implementing agencies. A compilation of the comments received is provided separately from this memorandum.

The TPB will be briefed on the comments received and responses provided. Following that briefing, the board will be asked to approve the project submissions 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 these projects. 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 these projects.

COMMENTS AND RESPONSES

Comments were received on the following projects and topics:

- A. I-66 Corridor Improvements Outside the Capital Beltway
- B. I-95 Express Lanes Access to Russell Road, Marine Base Quantico
- C. Governor Harry W. Nice Bridge Replacement, and Additional Potomac River Crossings
- D. Prioritization of Projects in the TIP

A. I-66 CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENTS OUTSIDE THE CAPITAL BELTWAY

More than 140 comments were received on VDOT's proposal to modify the Transform I-66 Outside the Beltway project to reflect changes to the preferred alternative which was included in the 2016 CLRP. Twelve comments were received in support of the project and 132 comments were received in opposition. The comments are summarized below with responses provided by VDOT, in the attached letter of April 18, 2017.

1. **Comment:** Concern regarding the elevated ramp over Gallows Road

Response: An elevated ramp is proposed over Gallows Road on the south side of I-66 to connect the eastbound I-66 regular lanes with the southbound I-495 regular lanes. This ramp avoids relocating the Dunn Loring Metro Station's Traction Power Sub-Station (TPSS), which would have been necessary in the original concept to make room for additional lanes for I-66 eastbound approaching the Beltway. Based on public input, the I-66 project team is working with WMATA to identify additional options in this area.

2. **Comment:** Concern regarding the impacts of two additional ramps at the I-495/I-66 interchange

Response: Two new ramps are proposed at the I-495 Interchange to connect the regular and express lanes. This concept would not significantly increase the height of the interchange.

3. **Comment:** Concerns regarding the impacts of new access points between the I-66 Express lanes and Nutley Street

Response: In addition to the Alternative Technical Concepts (ATCs) proposed during procurement, new express lanes access to and from the east is being considered at the Nutley Street interchange. The proposed access would not change the height of the interchange.

4. **Comment:** Concern about changes to the vertical and horizontal footprint of ramps

Response: The goal of the project is to move more people safely and efficiently, while limiting the footprint of the project. Every effort will be made to maintain the horizontal and vertical footprints that were presented previously to the public. However, as the project moves toward final design and more detailed information is available, there may be locations where this is not possible.

5. **Comment:** Concerns regarding the generation of visual, noise, air, and storm run-off pollution

Response: Additional environmental and traffic analyses will be completed for new and/or revised design concepts. A final noise study will be completed based upon final designs.

6. **Comment:** Concern regarding the taking of private residential property and impacts on Stenwood Elementary School

Response: As the project moves to final design and survey mapping is developed, additional details about property impacts will become available. Right-of-way impacts will be presented at the fall design public hearings. Every effort will be made to minimize right-of-way impacts. There are no new concepts under consideration that would increase right-of-way impacts to Stenwood Elementary School.

7. **Comment:** Concern regarding the impact of heavy trucks using the Express Lanes

Response: VDOT specified in its contract with Express Mobility Partners (EMP) that multi-axle vehicles will be permitted to use the express lanes, as this provision will help provide value to the overall project cost through increased revenues. Allowing trucks to use the center express lanes also provides other benefits: making travel easier in the regular lanes with fewer trucks, improving the movement of goods and services, supporting local businesses, and further removing trucks from adjacent communities.

8. **Comment:** Concern regarding the public involvement process and information sharing

Response: Public involvement has been a cornerstone of the Transform I-66 Outside the Beltway project and will continue to play a central role until the project is completed. As part of the process to select a private-sector partner for the project, new design concepts, including express lane access options, were proposed. The proposed design changes were necessarily kept confidential during the procurement process to protect each team's competitive advantage. In the time since the contract was signed in December 2016, VDOT and I-66 EMP (the team selected for the project) have been working to consider additional alternative technical concepts where there is a clear benefit. Public information meetings are scheduled on June 12, 14 and 15, and will be followed by design public hearings in the fall. In addition, VDOT and EMP are reaching out to homeowners associations and community groups to provide in-person updates on the design process and to answer questions.

B. I-95 EXPRESS LANES ACCESS TO RUSSELL ROAD, MARINE BASE QUANTICO

Thirteen comments were received in support of this project. VDOT provided the following response in the attached letter of April 18.

1. **Comment:** The larger I-95 Express Lanes project should include a four-lane extension from Quantico to Route 17.

Response: VDOT is analyzing options to provide access to and from the existing reversible I-95 Express Lanes at or in the vicinity of Russell Road as part of the proposed 10-mile extension of the I-95 Express Lanes to Fredericksburg, Virginia. We anticipate releasing a draft Environmental Assessment, supported by several technical studies including Traffic Analysis, to support the need of this new access point in late summer/early fall 2017.

C. GOVERNOR HARRY W. NICE BRIDGE REPLACEMENT, AND ADDITIONAL POTOMAC RIVER CROSSINGS

Twelve comments were received in support of the bridge replacement project. Fourteen comments were received proposing a northern Potomac River crossing.

1. **Comment:** The CLRP should include a northern Potomac River crossing.

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.

D. PRIORITIZATION OF PROJECTS IN THE TIP

One comment was received regarding the need for prioritization of projects in the TIP.

1. **Comment:** The TPB should take a more active role in rating and/or prioritizing projects in the TIP.

Response: The development of the FY 2019-2024 TIP will be guided by the Performance Based Planning and Programming regulations laid out by federal transportation legislation. TPB staff and the implementing agencies which program funding in the TIP will be providing data that links funding in the TIP to specific performance measures. This data and analysis will provide the TPB with a greater role in the TIP process.



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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Fairfax, VA 22030

CHARLES A. KILPATRICK, P.E.
COMMISSIONER

April 18, 2017

The Honorable Bridget Newton, Chair
National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board
Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
777 North Capitol Street, N.E., Suite 300
Washington, DC 20002-4201

RE: Recommended Responses to Public Comments on Projects Proposed for Inclusion in the Air Quality Conformity Analysis for the Out-of-Cycle Air Quality Conformity Analysis for the 2016 CLRP

Dear Ms. Newton:

Thank you for the opportunity to address public comments regarding two VDOT projects: I-66 Outside the Beltway and I-95 Express Lanes Southern Extension (Marine Base Quantico Access at Russell Road). The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) is requesting that these projects be included in Out-of-Cycle Air Quality Conformity Analysis for the Amendment of the 2016 Constrained Long Range Plan (CLRP).

We understand that the proposed CLRP and Air Quality Conformity Amendments will be brought back to the Transportation Planning Board for action on October 18, 2017, following another 30 day public comment period.

The Transform I-66 Outside the Beltway project was approved by the TPB for inclusion in the CLRP on October 21, 2015, and later amended to reflect the Preferred Alternative and approved by the TPB in November 2016. The approved project consists of two express lanes alongside three regular lanes with space in the median for future transit, park and ride lots, and a corridor-wide trail. For this Out-of-Cycle Amendment, VDOT has submitted two access option scenarios for Transform I-66 Outside the Beltway for evaluation in the Air Quality Conformity Analysis. Both scenarios retain the approved major project elements.

As part of the process to select a private-sector partner for the project, new design concepts, including express lane access options, were proposed. The proposed design changes were necessarily kept confidential during the procurement process to protect each team's competitive advantage. In the time since the contract was signed in December 2016, VDOT and I-66 Express Mobility Partners (EMP, the team selected for the project) have been working to consider additional alternative technical concepts where there is a clear benefit.

Public information meetings are scheduled on June 12, 14 and 15, and will be followed by design public hearings in the fall. In addition, VDOT and EMP are reaching out to homeowners associations and

The Honorable Bridget Newton, Chair
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community groups to provide in-person updates on the design process and to answer questions. More information on the project and opportunities for public input can be found at www.Transform66.org.

VDOT and EMP are committed to presenting and getting public input on these design concepts, and sharing environmental and traffic analyses before design plans are finalized.

Attached are responses to issues raised in the public comments. Thank you again for your consideration as we work to deliver important multimodal improvements along the I-66 and I-95 corridors.

Sincerely,



Helen L. Cuervo, P.E.
Northern Virginia District Engineer
Virginia Department of Transportation

cc:

Rene'e Hamilton, VDOT, Northern Virginia
Susan Shaw, P.E., VDOT, Northern Virginia
Amanda Baxter, P.E., VDOT, Northern Virginia
Maria Sinner, P.E., VDOT, Northern Virginia
Norman Whitaker, AICP, VDOT, Northern Virginia

Attachment

**VDOT Responses to Public Comments on the Proposed Off-Cycle Amendments
to the 2016 CLRP Air Quality Conformity Analysis
4.18.2017**

Transform I-66 Outside the Beltway Project

1. **Elevated ramp over Gallows Road** – An elevated ramp is proposed over Gallows Road on the south side of I-66 to connect the eastbound I-66 regular lanes with the southbound I-495 regular lanes. This ramp avoids relocating the Dunn Loring Metro Station’s Traction Power Sub-Station (TPSS), which would have been necessary in the original concept to make room for additional lanes for I-66 eastbound approaching the Beltway. Based on public input, the I-66 project team is working with WMATA to identify additional options in this area.
2. **Adding ramps to the I-495 Interchange** – Two new ramps are proposed at the I-495 Interchange to connect the regular and express lanes. This concept would not significantly increase the height of the interchange.
3. **Express lane access at Nutley Street Interchange** – In addition to the Alternative Technical Concepts (ATCs) proposed during procurement, new express lanes access to and from the east is being considered at the Nutley Street interchange. The proposed access would not change the height of the interchange.
4. **Vertical and horizontal footprint of ramps** – The goal of the project is to move more people safely and efficiently, while limiting the footprint of the project. Every effort will be made to maintain the horizontal and vertical footprints that were presented previously to the public. However, as the project moves toward final design and more detailed information is available, there may be locations where this is not possible.
5. **Air, noise, visual and storm-run-off pollution** – Additional environmental and traffic analyses will be completed for new and/or revised design concepts. A final noise study will be completed based upon final design.
6. **Residential and elementary school right-of-way taking** – As the project moves to final design and survey mapping is developed, additional details about property impacts will become available. Right-of-way impacts will be presented at the fall design public hearings. Every effort will be made to minimize right-of-way impacts. There are no new concepts under consideration that would increase right-of-way impacts to Stenwood Elementary School.
7. **Allowing heavy trucks to use the express lanes** – VDOT specified in its contract with EMP that multi-axle vehicles will be permitted to use the express lanes, as this provision will help provide value to the overall project cost through increased revenues. Allowing trucks to use the center express lanes also provides other benefits: making travel easier in the regular lanes with fewer trucks, improving the movement of goods and services, supporting local businesses and further removing trucks from adjacent communities.
8. **Public Involvement Process and Information Sharing.** Public involvement has been a cornerstone of the Transform I-66 Outside the Beltway project and will continue to play a central role until the project is completed. As part of the process to select a private-sector partner for the project, new design concepts, including express lane access options, were proposed. The proposed design changes were necessarily kept confidential during the procurement process to protect each team’s competitive advantage. In the time since the

contract was signed in December 2016, VDOT and I-66 Express Mobility Partners (EMP, the team selected for the project) have been working to consider additional alternative technical concepts where there is a clear benefit. Public information meetings are scheduled on June 12, 14 and 15, and will be followed by design public hearings in the fall. In addition, VDOT and EMP are reaching out to homeowners associations and community groups to provide in-person updates on the design process and to answer questions.

I-95 Express Lanes Southern Extension Project (Marine Base Quantico Access at Russell Road)

1. **Russell Road Access for I-95 Express Lanes.** VDOT is analyzing options to provide access to and from the existing reversible I-95 Express Lanes at or in the vicinity of Russell Road as part of the proposed 10-mile extension of the I-95 Express Lanes to Fredericksburg, VA. We anticipate releasing a DRAFT Environmental Assessment, supported by several technical studies including Traffic Analysis, to support the need of this new access point in Late Summer/Early Fall 2017.