



National Capital Region
Transportation Planning Board

MEMORANDUM

TO: Transportation Planning Board
FROM: Lyn Erickson, Plan Development and Coordination Program Director
SUBJECT: Public Comment for the October 2026 TPB Meeting
DATE: October 21, 2026

The Transportation Planning Board accepts public comment on a rolling basis. Comments can be submitted via email (tpbcomment@mwkog.org), online (mwkog.org/tpbcomment), mail, and phone. Comments are collected until noon on the day before the TPB meeting. These comments are compiled and shared with the board at the meeting the following day.

Between noon, Tuesday, September 15, and noon, Tuesday, October 20, the TPB received one comment via voicemail, four comments via letter, and 16 comments submitted via email. The comments are summarized below. All full comments are attached to this memo.

IN-PERSON PUBLIC COMMENT SPEAKERS

Four people signed up to speak during Item 1 Public Comment.

- Nick Orrick
- Janet Gallant, Co-Coordinator, Don't Widen270
- Lindsey Mendelsohn, Maryland Sierra Club
- Bill Pugh, Coalition for Smarter Growth

PUBLIC COMMENT-GENERAL

Chantel Wynn, Comment via Email- October 10, 2026

Ms. Wynn writes to urge Charles County, MDOT, VDOT, and the TPB to initiate feasibility of a new bridge in the Accokeek/Mason Neck/Bryans Road corridor. She writes a new crossing would reduce travel time and vehicle miles for residents and workers on both sides of the river, improve regional mobility and access, and provide an additional option for travel and emergency response.

PUBLIC COMMENT- SOUTHSIDE EXPRESS LANES

Paul Cruz, Comment via Voicemail- October 16, 2026

Mr. Cruz left a message commenting in opposition to the Southside Express Lanes project, especially without any kind of research into an alternative that does not include transit or any kind of rapid transit alternatives to just allowing express lanes or HOV.

Mark Scheuffler, Comment via Email and Letter- October 14, 2026

Mr. Scheuffler recommends that the project not be included in the Visualize 2050 Plan until it is linked to an initial light rail segment in the same corridor. He writes the TPB to consider a light rail option for the project, noting that the Southside Transit/TDM study evaluated only express bus,

commuter bus, and local bus as potential transit modes. He writes that an initial segment of light rail could be developed in concert and funded via concession, similar to the arrangement that funded the I-66 Outside the Beltway Expansion.

Lindsey Mendelson, Comment via Letter, October 20, 2026

Ms. Mendelson writes on behalf of the Maryland Sierra Club. They ask the TPB to delay the vote scheduled for November on including the Southside Express Lanes project in the air quality conformity analysis. They state VDOT should not advance any proposal that lacks key information on concerns that have been continually brought forward by TPB members. They urge VDOT to work collaboratively with Prince George's County and impacted communities to advance a range of transit and Transportation Demand Management alternatives in the conformity report.

Sharon Lawrence, Comment via Email and Letter, October 20, 2026

Ms. Lawrence writes on behalf of the Livingston Woods Homeowners Association. She urges the TPB to require a comprehensive traffic impact study before any vote; prioritize Metrorail expansion as a long-term solution; protect residents from increasing transportation costs; do not defer Metrorail commitments to an uncertain future; and respect public concerns and require meaningful accountability.

Staci Hartwell, Comment via Email and Letter, October 20, 2026

Ms. Hartwell writes on behalf of the South County Environmental Justice Coalition urging the TPB to delay any vote until comprehensive, publicly accessible studies evaluating the cumulative environmental impacts, traffic and safety consequences, projected development, climate emissions, and meaningful transit alternatives are completed.

Nanci Wilkinson, Comment via Email- October 15, 2026

Ms. Wilkinson writes that the Southside Express Lanes project has many of the same flaws as previously, including induced demand, and a lack of research into alternatives such mass transit. She questions whether this project is within the public interest when Suburban owns 50% of the roadway interstate travel ways and stands to gain profits via congestion. She urges VDOT to pursue strategies that address congestion in the long term.

Steve Hoffman, D.D.S., Comment via Email-October 16, 2026

Dr. Hoffman urges the TPB to delay any decisions on the Southside Express Lanes Project until after local officials and the public get answers to questions on traffic impacts, environmental damage, and alternative solutions.

Eric McKenzie, Comment via Email-October 16, 2026

Mr. McKenzie writes in opposition to the Southside Express Lanes Project, stating that the proposal would increase air, stormwater, noise and climate pollution. He states that most drivers would still be stuck in traffic as they are now, and questions why VDOT would have incentive to build Metrorail along the route in the future since the private partnership requires maximizing profit. He states that public transit is a more reliable long-term solution to congestion.

Kimberly Choi, Comment via Email- October 18, 2026

Ms. Choi is concerned that the new plan will end up cramping Metro expansion as the region becomes dependent on toll revenues and appeasing a private developer. Before the TPB makes a decision, she would like to see VDOT make room for Metro not just spatially, but realistically.

Barbara Coufal, Comment via Email- October 19, 2026

Ms. Coufal writes on behalf of Citizens Against Beltway Expansion stating VDOT is trying the rush the toll lanes forward. She urges the TPB to insist that VDOT provide a study of the impacts on local roads before voting to advance the project. Moreover, she states that while the new design may no longer be a physical impediment to Metrorail, there would still be a financial impediment.

David S. Kosterlitz, Comments via Email-October 18, 2026

Mr. Kosterlitz urges the TPB to delay decisions on the Southside Express Lanes project until after local officials and the public get answers to questions on traffic impacts, environmental damage, and alternative solutions that would benefit commuters and the environment. He states that toll lanes are inequitable due to tolls being sky high and that widening the beltway would not relieve congestion but would monetize it for the benefit of a for-profit corporation.

Terence Fitzgerald, MD, Comments via Email- October 19, 2026

Dr. Fitzgerald writes on behalf of the Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility to express concern over the project when there has still been no evaluation of traffic impacts on environmental damage and while alternative approaches to congestion have still not been fully considered. He states that public transit can move people and goods with less environmental and health impacts. He urges the TPB not to make any decision on the project until after local officials and the public get answers.

K J Doneby Smith, Comments via Email- October 19, 2026

Doneby Smith writes that there must be no consideration of the project until all the analyses and information is provided including the effects of bottlenecks on local roads, what is meant by “traffic mitigation” and how it works with community plans, and completion of alternative analyses on congestion.

Kristina Borrer, Comment via Email-October 19, 2026

Ms. Borrer writes that the project should not be voted on until VDOT provides a complete and accurate analysis of all projected community and environmental impacts.

Teresa Meeks, Comment via Email- October 20, 2026

Ms. Meeks asks the TPB to please study the environmental impact of the plan before implementing it. She urges the TPB invest in mass transit instead.

Joseph Baldi, Comment via Email- October 20, 2026

Mr. Baldi writes that he is a Maryland resident who uses the beltway frequently. He is very concerned about the plan and the potential negative impact on traffic. He asks the TPB to please hold the plans and complete a comprehensive cost-benefit analysis before final action.

Patricia Monroe, Comment via Email- October 20, 2026

Ms. Monroe writes on behalf of the South Lawn Citizens Association. She states that it is unfair for the project to be voted on without the requested studies and without notice to the community. Doing the traffic study after the fact is unacceptable. She states VDOT has never seriously studied any alternatives to highway widening. The stated study purpose has been to “extend the express lanes.” She raises the concern that VDOT would have an interest in blocking Metrorail to ensure their private partner is compensated. She urges the TPB to consider more affordable clean transportation choices.

Lee McNair, Comment via Email- October 20, 2026

Mr. McNair asks the TPB to ask themselves a series of questions in making their decision, including (but not limited to) whether the project is fiscally responsible, equitable, safe, and in line with publicly declared transportation priorities.

Marty Atias, Comment via Email- October 20, 2026

Marty Atias states there must be no vote on the project until VDOT provides a full and honest accounting of the impacts. He also states access for the wealthy is not in the public interest and the TPB and the public deserve adequate information to make a decision.

Emily Harris, Comment via Email- October 20, 2026

Ms. Harris urges the TPB not to vote on the project until VDOT provides an honest accounting of all the impacts. She states the public and elected officials deserve and should require adequate information.

Monique Taylor, Comments via Email-October 20, 2026

Ms. Taylor writes on behalf of the Camp Springs Civic Association to oppose the project stating that it raises serious questions about traffic, affordability, future transit, and environmental justice. She states residents deserve a full accounting before regional leaders approve it.

From: [Chantel Wynn](#)
To: [TPBcomment](#)
Subject: Request for Feasibility Study of a New Potomac River Crossing near Accokeek / Mason Neck
Date: Saturday, October 10, 2026 11:01:54 AM

Dear Officials,

I am a resident of Charles County, Maryland, in the Waldorf / Accokeek area. I regularly travel between southern Charles County and Fairfax County (including the Burke area).

There is currently no direct bridge over the Potomac River in the stretch between the Woodrow Wilson Bridge and the Governor Harry W. Nice Memorial / Senator Thomas "Mac" Middleton Bridge. As a result, trips that should be shorter require a long detour via Indian Head Highway, Accokeek, Bryans Road, and Old Keene Mill Road. On a typical day this adds substantial time and distance (for example, a 38-mile / 55-minute trip that could be significantly shorter with a more direct crossing).

I am writing to request that Charles County, in coordination with the Maryland Department of Transportation, the Virginia Department of Transportation, and the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments Transportation Planning Board, initiate a formal feasibility study for a new highway bridge in the Accokeek / Mason Neck / Bryans Road corridor.

A new crossing would reduce travel time and vehicle miles for residents and workers on both sides of the river, improve regional mobility and access between southern Maryland and northern Virginia, and provide an additional option for everyday travel and emergency response.

Please let me know the appropriate process for formally submitting this request and whether any existing long-range plans already consider additional Potomac River crossings in this area. I am available to provide additional information or participate in any public process related to this.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
A Charles County Resident
Waldorf / Accokeek area, Maryland

From: [+1 240-237-0161](tel:+12402370161)
To: [TPBcomment](#)
Subject: Voice Mail (47 seconds)
Date: Friday, October 16, 2026 1:16:22 PM
Attachments: [audio.mp3](#)

Hi, this is Paul Cruz, phone number 240-237-0161. I was just hoping to comment in opposition to item one. especially with any kind, without any kind of research into an alternative that does not include transit or any kind of rapid transit alternatives to just allowing express lane or HOV. All right, thank you.

You received a voice mail from [+1 240-237-0161](tel:+12402370161).

Thank you for using Transcription! If you don't see a transcript above, it's because the audio quality was not clear enough to transcribe.

[Set Up Voice Mail](#)

From: [Mark Scheuffer](#)
To: [@wmata](#)
Cc: [local-transport@wmata.com](#); [transport@wmata.com](#); [planning@wmata.com](#); [concessions@wmata.com](#); [capital@wmata.com](#); [operations@wmata.com](#)
Subject: Endorse Woodrow Wilson Bridge Light Rail Study | I-495 Southside Express Lanes
Date: Wednesday, October 14, 2020 8:33:28 AM
Attachments: [I-495 Southside Express Lanes Project - 101326.pdf](#)

Transportation Planning Board

After monitoring the latest developments in the [I-495 Southside Express Lanes project](#) as it approaches another attempt at inclusion into Visualize 2050, please consider the [attached resolution](#) to endorse studying a [light rail](#) transit concept between Huntington Ave Metro Station in Alexandria and Oxon Hill Road via Woodrow Wilson Bridge and National Harbor.

Heavy rail transit via WMATA has long been envisioned for this corridor; however, it remains uncertain whether such a significant investment will ultimately materialize given the substantial costs and geometric constraints associated with accommodating trainsets of approximately 600 feet in length, while WMATA's near- and mid-term capital investments are currently focused on its rail modernization initiative.

Light rail, similar to the Purple Line, represents a more cost-effective high-capacity rail transit option that could enhance connectivity, support walkable and mixed-use development, and create new economic development opportunities along this corridor. This option was not previously evaluated as part of the I-495 Southside Transit/TDM Study.

The I-495 Southside Transit/TDM Study evaluated only express bus, commuter bus, and local bus as potential transit modes for this corridor, without evaluating rail transit alternatives. The constrained nature and [discontinuous](#) function of the corridor may limit the capacity, connectivity, and ridership potential of bus-only service compared with bus transit investments serving more radial travel patterns, while providing fewer opportunities to support walkable, mixed-use development and transit-oriented economic development.

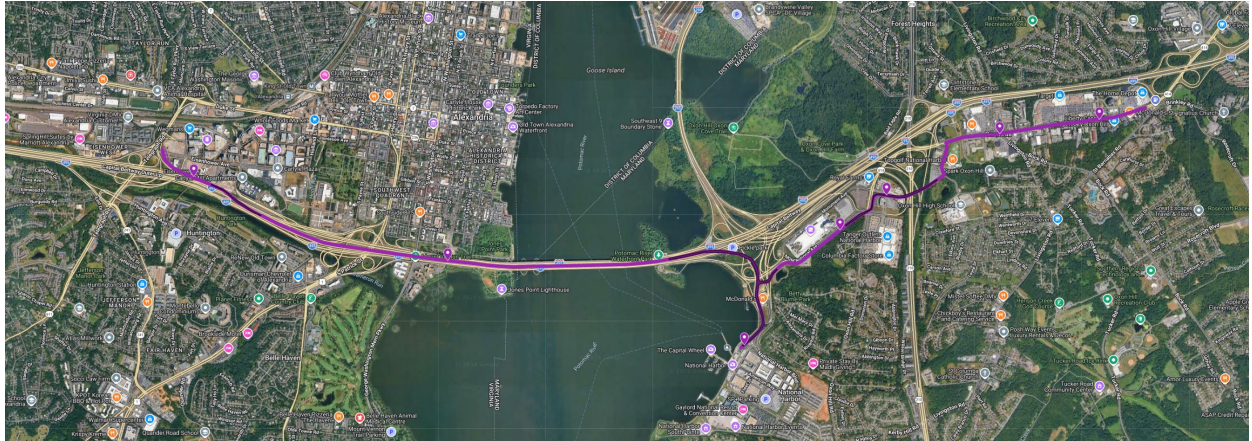
An initial segment of a light rail concept [could](#) be developed in concert and substantially be funded by the I-495 Southside Express Lanes project with an upfront concession fee and annual transit payments to cover operating costs and capital debt service.

As precedent, the I-46 Outside the Beltway Express Lanes concessionaire agreement provided an upfront \$500M concession fee to make multimodal transportation improvements that support travel in the corridor as well as \$20M+ annual transit payment that increases with inflation over time. WMATA Silver Line Phase 1 & 2 capital debt service is being substantially funded by Dulles Toll Road users and I-66 Inside the Beltway tolls are substantially funding the Long Bridge project.

In addition, service districts around light rail stations could be used to help fund the light rail operating cost and debt service.

My recommendation is that the I-495 Southside Express Lanes project should not be included in the MWCOG TPR Visualize 2050 unless it is linked to an initial light rail segment in the same corridor.

[Interactive Link](#)



My general light rail recommendation is for an initial 7 mile segment with stations at:

1. Eisenhower Ave Metro/Carlye (Multiple high-density developments in the pipeline)
2. GWPI/Jones Point Park (Access to Old Town Alexandria/Mt Vernon Trail)
3. National Harbor (Similar Station Concept to Hoboken Light Rail Station, allows for an exact location to be determined)
4. MGM/Sphere (Current/Future Major Destination)
5. Oxon Hill Park & Ride/Tanger Outlets
6. Oxon Hill Rd #1 (Opportunities to create walkable/transit/mixed use developments)
7. Oxon Hill Rd #2 (Opportunities to create walkable/transit/mixed use developments)

Initial Segment Light Rail Elements

- Eight (8) Train Sets
- Frequency: 7.5 minutes
- Length = 7 miles
- Dedicated ROW (90%)
- Technical specification: Purple Line
- Cost ~ \$1 Billion+
- Funding | Capital: \$500M Concession Fee from the I-495 Southside Express Lanes + \$500M Federal Infrastructure Bank Loan (To be paid back by a portion I-495 Southside Express Lanes Annual Transit Payment)
- Funding | Operating: \$25M/year | Portion of a I-495 Southside Express Lanes Annual Transit Payment, Service Districts around Light Rail Station (\$0.05/\$100)
- Additional Funding as needed: NVT, SmartScale, Federal, MTA, MDTA, etc
- Governance: WMATA Compact; Oversight: WMATA or MTA/CTB

Future extensions along/to Duke Street/Landmark/Alexandria Union Station to the west and WMATA Green Line Stations or Andrew AFB to the east could be advanced in the future.

The region has a lot of institutional knowledge of building light rail infrastructure [Purple Line] that will be drying up soon.

Thank you for taking the time to review this resolution and concept during this critical time for the VWB corridor.

Thanks,
Mark Scheuffer
NOVA Resident

NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD
777 North Capitol Street, N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20002

RESOLUTION TO ENDORSE THE INITIATION OF A TRANSIT STUDY TO EVALUATE A
LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT SEGMENT CONNECTING THE EISENHOWER AVE METRORAIL
STATION TO OXON HILL ROAD VIA THE WOODROW WILSON BRIDGE AND NATIONAL
HARBOR, IN COORDINATION WITH THE I-95/I-495 SOUTHSIDE EXPRESS LANES
PROJECT, AND TO SUPPORT ITS FUTURE CONSIDERATION IN THE AIR QUALITY
CONFORMITY ANALYSIS FOR THE VISUALIZE 2050 NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION
TRANSPORTATION PLAN AND THE FY 2026–2029 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT
PROGRAM (TIP)

WHEREAS, the TPB recognizes the I-495 corridor across the Woodrow Wilson Bridge is of regional and of national importance and significance and would benefit from improvements to enhance mobility and accessibility along the corridor; and

WHEREAS, the TPB on October 15, 2025 via Resolution R2-2026 deferred including the I-495 SEL Project in the air quality conformity analysis for the proposed Visualize 2050 Plan and the FY 2026-2029 TIP and encouraged VDOT and MDOT to continue to explore project options and work with local jurisdictions towards securing a consensus on this important regional corridor, and

WHEREAS, the I-495 Southside Transit/TDM Study evaluated only express bus, commuter bus, and local bus as potential transit modes for this corridor, without evaluating rail transit alternatives; and whereas, the constrained nature and circumferential function of the corridor may limit the capacity, connectivity, and ridership potential of bus-only service compared with transit investments serving more radial travel patterns, while providing fewer opportunities to support walkable, mixed-use development and transit-oriented economic development; and

WHEREAS, a new high-capacity economic development entertainment venue (Sphere) has recently been proposed in the National Harbor/Oxon Hill area, creating the potential for increased travel demand and further strengthening the need to evaluate high-capacity transit options serving the corridor; and

WHEREAS, high-capacity rail transit can efficiently accommodate large volumes of passengers generated by major events, providing a reliable and scalable transportation option while reducing dependence on automobile travel and roadway capacity; and

WHEREAS, heavy rail transit via WMATA has long been envisioned for this corridor; however, it remains uncertain whether such a significant investment will ultimately materialize given the substantial costs and geometric constraints associated with accommodating trainsets of approximately 600 feet in length, while WMATA's near- and mid-term capital investments are currently focused on its rail modernization initiative; and

WHEREAS, light rail, similar to the Purple Line, represents a flexible and cost-effective high-capacity transit option that could enhance connectivity, support walkable and mixed-use development, and create new economic development opportunities along this corridor—an option that was not previously evaluated as part of the I-495 Southside Transit/TDM Study; and

WHEREAS, prior express-lane concessionaire agreements in the National Capital Region have generated substantial upfront concession payments for transportation improvements, as well as ongoing annual payments dedicated to transit investments, thus creating a potential funding and financing opportunity for the planning, development, and construction of an initial segment of a light rail project in this corridor; and

WHEREAS, with relatively few new rail transit projects identified in the Visualize 2050 plan, the region faces a potential loss of institutional knowledge and technical expertise in planning, designing, funding, and delivering rail transit projects, as experienced professionals from the Silver Line, Purple Line, and Transforming Rail in Virginia projects move on, potentially repeating the loss of institutional capacity that followed completion of the original WMATA system in 2001; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

The National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board:

1. Endorses the initiation of a transit study to evaluate a light rail segment between the Eisenhower Ave Metrorail Station and Oxon Hill Road via the Woodrow Wilson Bridge and National Harbor in coordination with the I-95/I-495 Southside Express Lanes project
2. Endorses the initiation of 30% preliminary design for a light rail transit segment between the Eisenhower Ave Metrorail Station and Oxon Hill Road via the Woodrow Wilson Bridge and National Harbor, including development of a preliminary cost estimate to inform potential funding through the I-95/I-495 Southside Express Lanes concessionaire agreement.
3. Endorses the evaluation of potential future light rail extensions westward to and along Duke Street and the Landmark area, and eastward to potential connections with WMATA Green Line segments and the Southern Maryland Rapid Transit project.

From: [Lindsey Mendelson Iankova](#)
To: [TPBcomment](#)
Cc: makbolo.sierraclub@gmail.com; [Josh Tulkin](#)
Subject: Item 1 Public Comment Opportunity: Maryland Sierra Club
Date: Tuesday, October 20, 2026 10:57:41 AM
Attachments: [TPB October 2026 Comments Maryland Sierra Club.pdf](#)

Dear Transportation Planning Board Representative,

Attached are written comments from Maryland Sierra Club related to Item 9 on the agenda for the October 21 Transportation Planning Board meeting.

I would also like to request the opportunity to offer verbal comments at the October 21 meeting.

Can you please confirm receipt of this message?

Much appreciated,

Lindsey Mendelson

--

photo



Lindsey Mendelson
pronouns: she/her/hers
Senior Transportation Campaign Representative
Maryland Sierra Club

PO Box 278
Riverdale, MD 20738

Direct Line: 240-706-7901 (mobile)
lindsey.mendelson@mdsierra.org

sierraclub.org/maryland/clean-transportation



SIERRA CLUB
MARYLAND CHAPTER

P.O. Box 278
Riverdale, MD 20738

October 20, 2026

Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
777 North Capitol Street NE, Suite 300
Washington, DC 20002

Re: Item 9 - I-495 Southside Express Lanes (SEL) - Updated Project Concepts and Commitments

Dear Transportation Planning Board Members,

We write to ask you to delay the planned vote scheduled for November 2026 on whether to include the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT)'s updated concept on the Southside Express Lanes project in the air quality conformity analysis. This updated proposal would add two express lanes in each direction over the Woodrow Wilson Bridge from Oxon Hill, Maryland to Springfield, Virginia, utilizing shoulder space for metrorail. VDOT should not advance any proposal that lacks key information related to concerns that have continually been brought forward by TPB members regarding the traffic bottleneck, local traffic impacts, tolls, and environmental damages. Instead, we urge VDOT to work collaboratively with Prince George's County and impacted communities along the corridor to advance a range of transit and Transportation Demand Management (TDM) alternatives in the air quality conformity report.

VDOT's updated proposal has not been informed by community input and continues to lack critical information that has been requested for years.

In October 2025, the TPB voted to exclude the Southside project from Visualize 2050 and the resolution indicated VDOT and MDOT should "explore project options and work with local jurisdictions towards securing a consensus on this important regional corridor." VDOT's updated proposal acknowledges the lack of "trust and communication between Virginia and Maryland" contributed to the proposal being removed. Yet, VDOT and MDOT **have offered no new public engagement and comment opportunities in Prince George's County** to gather input on options or collect feedback on this updated concept that VDOT is seeking a vote for at **TPB less than 30 days from now**. VDOT has indicated it would analyze the traffic impacts from the additional vehicle traffic from the Beltway on local roads and on the new bottleneck that would be created in Prince

George's County where the toll lanes end. But after more than two years of requests from local officials, VDOT has still not provided this analysis.

VDOT's concept would not result in meaningful transit improvements. It would still impede metrorail expansion. Virginia is proposing to commit \$15 million in annual transit payments as part of its proposal. This amount would not cover the cost of any significant transit improvements and is certainly nowhere near the cost of rail on the bridge. VDOT's presentation to the planning board also notes that "these funds cannot be redirected to pay for Metrorail as they only exist with the project." Additionally, even though VDOT has proposed it would reserve Metrorail by utilizing the shoulder space, the proposal would still create a financial burden to Metrorail expansion. This is because under a public-private partnership model, Metrorail would compete directly with the toll lanes for users, impacting the profit of the project concessionaire.

VDOT's updated concept fails to address environmental, safety, and traffic concerns.

The Maryland Department of Environment's [EnviroScreen tool](#) currently identifies the areas that would be impacted by the project (in Forest Heights and Oxon Hill) as being disproportionately burdened with high levels of particulate matter pollution, diesel pollution (soot pollution), a hazardous waste landfill, and many other pollution sources. VDOT's proposal for two new express lanes in each direction would result in additional vehicle traffic, adding further environmental and health burdens in surrounding communities.

Additionally, Prince George's County has the highest numbers of motor vehicle and pedestrian deaths in the state. Route 210 where the toll lanes would end, has been labeled as the "highway of death" due to traffic safety concerns. VDOT's updated proposal for two express lanes in each direction fails to address these safety concerns, especially given that adding additional lanes and traffic increases the risks of these conflicts.

VDOT should instead study alternatives that work for more residents and commuters.

VDOT should not advance the Beltway expansion project with express lanes. Instead, the focus should be to pursue strategies that will effectively address congestion over the long term, including shoulder and bus lanes combined with expanded carpool and transit incentives, transit-oriented development, future Metrorail expansion, and robust transportation demand management. VDOT has not seriously considered any alternatives to highway widening. The purpose of the study has been to "extend and

provide continuity of the express lanes system.” At a time where there is high inflation and costs to households, and high tariffs and fuel prices are increasing the cost of car ownership, it is important to give residents of the region access to more affordable clean transportation choices and invest in sustainable transit-oriented development.

Sincerely,

Lindsey Mendelson
Senior Transportation Campaign Representative
Sierra Club Maryland Chapter

Makayla Bowen-Longingo
Transportation Chair
Sierra Club, Prince George’s County Group

Josh Tulkin
Chapter Director
Sierra Club Maryland Chapter

From: [Sharon Lawrence](#)
To: [TPBcomment](#)
Subject: Item 1 Public Comment Opportunity
Date: Tuesday, October 20, 2026 11:05:19 AM
Attachments: [Southside Toll Lanes Opposition Ltr.docx](#)

To: Transportation Planning Board (TPB)

Subject: **Formal Opposition to the Southside Project and Request to Delay Any Further Decisions Pending Comprehensive Traffic, Environmental, and Transit Studies**

Dear Members of the Transportation Planning Board:

I am writing to formally express my continued opposition to the Southside Project proposal to construct toll lanes extending across the Woodrow Wilson Bridge from Virginia into Maryland. I am requesting that the Transportation Planning Board delay any further decisions or votes on this project until a comprehensive assessment of its potential impacts, viable alternatives, and environmental consequences has been completed and made available to the public and our elected officials.

The proposed project raises serious concerns for residents of southern Oxon Hill, Fort Washington, and Forest Heights, Maryland. From our perspective, the toll lanes offer no demonstrated benefit to our communities while potentially worsening the traffic congestion and safety challenges we already experience on local roads, particularly along Maryland Route 210, also known as Indian Head Highway. This roadway has long been a source of serious public safety concerns, and we cannot support a plan that advances without a clear understanding of how it could further affect traffic conditions in our area.

1. Require a Comprehensive Traffic Impact Study Before Any Vote

Before this project advances, I am requesting a full and detailed traffic impact study that evaluates the anticipated effects on local roads, highways, and surrounding communities on both sides of the Woodrow Wilson Bridge, including the Maryland portion of Interstate 495 and the Route 210 corridor.

To date, I am unaware of a publicly available analysis that adequately addresses these concerns. It is unacceptable for a decision of this magnitude to proceed before residents and elected officials have a clear understanding of the potential consequences.

The study should address, at a minimum:

- The projected impact of toll lanes on traffic congestion and traffic patterns throughout southern Prince George's County.
- Potential increases in traffic on Indian Head Highway, Interstate 495, and connecting local roads.
- Roadway safety concerns and the potential effects on emergency response times.
- Environmental impacts on nearby residential communities.
- Reasonable alternatives, including expanded public transportation options.
- The costs, feasibility, and long-term consequences of each alternative.

These studies must be completed and presented to the public well in advance of any TPB vote or decision. Relying on after-the-fact mitigation is neither an acceptable nor a reasonable substitute for identifying and addressing foreseeable problems before construction begins.

2. Prioritize Metro Rail Expansion as a Long-Term Transportation Solution

We believe that expanding Metro rail service across the Woodrow Wilson Bridge deserves serious

consideration as a viable alternative to prioritizing toll lanes. Improved rail access would support the continued growth of southern Prince George's County, improve regional connectivity, and provide residents and visitors with another transportation option for accessing National Harbor and the surrounding entertainment and commercial developments.

As these destinations continue to grow, additional travel demand must be anticipated. Adding more roadway capacity alone does not adequately address the need for affordable, efficient, and sustainable transportation alternatives.

Consider the difference in passenger capacity: approximately sixteen vehicles carrying seven passengers each would be needed to transport 112 people. By comparison, a Metro rail car can accommodate approximately 110 to 175 passengers, depending on its design and configuration, with some newer designs offering even greater capacity.

The broader point is clear: public transportation must be part of the region's long-term transportation planning strategy.

We urge the TPB to evaluate the feasibility, cost, timeline, and regional benefits of rail expansion before committing to infrastructure that could complicate or increase the cost of future transit development.

3. Protect Residents from Increasing Transportation Costs

At a time when inflation and household expenses continue to place financial pressure on many families, transportation planning must recognize the importance of affordability and accessibility.

Many residents depend on reliable transportation to reach employment, education, healthcare, and essential services. We must provide more affordable, cleaner transportation choices and invest in transit-oriented development that supports communities rather than increasing their dependence on costly vehicle travel.

We therefore question why toll lanes should be advanced without a demonstrated benefit to the residents who will experience their local traffic impacts. Any decision must account for the financial burden on households, the availability of practical alternatives, and the long-term transportation needs of Maryland communities.

4. Do Not Defer Metro Rail Commitments to an Uncertain Future

We are concerned about the repackaged or revised proposal that would defer Metro rail expansion to a later phase. Residents have little assurance that a future rail commitment would ultimately be fulfilled once toll lanes are constructed.

Furthermore, building toll-lane infrastructure first could create financial, engineering, or planning obstacles to future rail expansion. These potential conflicts must be examined and publicly addressed before the region commits to a course of action.

Our communities should not be asked to accept an immediate roadway project based on the possibility of a future transit investment that may never materialize. If rail expansion is a meaningful regional objective, it must be incorporated into present planning and supported by a clear, credible implementation strategy.

5. Respect Public Concerns and Require Meaningful Accountability

Our communities opposed this project two years ago, and our concerns remain unresolved. We continue to question whether the proposal adequately addresses the transportation needs, environmental interests, and quality of life of residents in southern Prince George's County.

We are not asking the TPB to disregard regional transportation needs. We are asking that those needs be evaluated comprehensively and that decisions affecting our communities be made transparently, with credible evidence and meaningful public participation.

Accordingly, I respectfully request that the Transportation Planning Board:

- a) Delay any further vote, approval, or decision advancing the Southside Project until the requested studies and assessments are completed.
- b) Make the traffic impact analysis, environmental assessments, and alternative transportation studies available to the public.
- c) Provide opportunities for residents and local elected officials to review the findings and receive substantive answers to their questions.
- d) Fully evaluate Metro rail expansion across the Woodrow Wilson Bridge and other viable transit alternatives before making a final decision.
- e) Explain how the project would affect Maryland communities, particularly southern Oxon Hill, Fort Washington, and Forest Heights, and identify how any projected adverse impacts would be prevented rather than addressed after the fact.

We remain opposed to advancing the Southside Project and any approval of plans without satisfactory answers to these concerns. No further decision should be made until the public and our elected officials have been given the information necessary to understand the project's full implications and evaluate reasonable alternatives.

The future of transportation in southern Prince George's County must reflect the needs of the people who live, work, and travel here. Our communities deserve thoughtful planning, responsible investment, environmental consideration, and transportation options that serve both present and future generations.

Thank you for your attention to these concerns. I look forward to a response addressing the issues outlined in this letter and to a transparent process that gives our communities a meaningful voice before any further action is taken.

Respectfully,
Sharon B. Lawrence
President, LWHOA Board of Directors
(301) 518-1115

From: [SRH Consulting](#)
To: [TPBcomment](#)
Cc: [Selena McKissick](#); nicole.williams@house.maryland.gov; ron.watson@senate.maryland.gov; PGSenateDelegation@mga.maryland.gov; [William Pines \(SHA\)](#); [Delegate Kris Valderrama](#); [Woods, Jamila](#) [Delegate](#); [Senator C. Anthony Muse](#); [Senator Nick Charles](#); AtLargeMemberBlegay@co.pg.md.us; AtLargeMemberIvey@co.pg.md.us; [CM Thomas E Dernoga](#); CouncilDistrict2@co.pg.md.us; [Eric Olson](#); [Council District 4](#); [CM Jolene Ivey](#); [Council District 6](#); [Krystal Oriadha](#); [Edward Burroughs, III](#); [CM Sydney J. Harrison](#); [Clerk of the Council](#)
Subject: Item 1 Public Comment Opportunity"
Date: Tuesday, October 20, 2026 12:02:44 PM
Attachments: [SCEJC TPB Letter in Opposition to VDOT Toll Proposal.pdf](#)

Dear Chair and Members of the Transportation Planning Board,

On behalf of the South County Environmental Justice Coalition (SCEJC), I strongly oppose VDOT's proposed I-495 Southside Express Lanes expansion across the Woodrow Wilson Bridge. This project is environmentally irresponsible, economically inequitable, and fundamentally shortsighted.

Southern Prince George's County has endured disproportionate environmental burdens for decades. Maryland's EnviroScreen identifies Oxon Hill and Forest Heights as communities overburdened by particulate matter, diesel emissions, hazardous waste, and cumulative pollution.[1] Highway expansion would exacerbate these conditions while generating an estimated 1 million to 3.4 million additional metric tons of carbon emissions through 2050.[2]

Our highways are already overwhelmed. More or slower traffic entering Maryland could worsen congestion on I-495, Route 210, and surrounding arteries. Route 210, notoriously known as the "Highway of Death," has a troubling history of fatal crashes.[3] Increasing traffic without addressing existing safety deficiencies is unconscionable. Why should Maryland residents bear the environmental, public health, and safety consequences of Virginia's toll-revenue ambitions?

We must also consider the region's future, particularly the proposed 6,000-seat Sphere entertainment venue at National Harbor.[4] Combined with existing MGM casino, convention, tourism, and residential traffic, this development could introduce substantial additional vehicle demand at the convergence of I-495, I-295, and Route 210. Without comprehensive regional planning, we risk creating a transportation crisis we made ourselves. Piecemeal highway expansions cannot substitute for a coordinated, multimodal transportation strategy that anticipates decades of growth.

Environmental justice is transportation justice. Toll lanes privilege motorists who can afford premium access while leaving others in congestion. Meanwhile, regional METRO investments reveal a glaring geographic disparity.

To "the North," 21 METRO stations extend beyond the Capital Beltway, compared with just one in Prince George's County's regional comparison, Downtown Largo.[5] Billions have gone into rail development, including the Purple Line, while southern Prince George's County still waits for meaningful cross-Potomac rail connectivity.[6] This disparity perpetuates unequal access to employment, education, healthcare, economic opportunity.

The most just, reasonable, and forward-looking compromise is extending METRO across the Woodrow Wilson Bridge. Rail connectivity would reduce automobile dependency, alleviate congestion, lower emissions, support National Harbor's economic development, and connect workers, residents, and visitors across jurisdictions.

Although VDOT's revised proposal preserves physical space for future rail, VDOT must demonstrate that toll-lane financing and concession agreements will not impose financial penalties, contractual restrictions, or other barriers to future METRO expansion.[7] Physical accommodation without enforceable protections is insufficient.

We urge the TPB to delay any vote until comprehensive, publicly accessible studies evaluate cumulative environmental impacts, traffic and safety consequences, projected development, climate emissions, and meaningful transit alternatives.

We need a transportation vision measured in generations, not toll revenues. Maryland and Virginia must collaborate on a long-term solution that accommodates economic growth without sacrificing environmental health, affordability, or community safety.

The Woodrow Wilson Bridge should connect communities to opportunity and shared economic prosperity, not condemn them to more congestion, pollution, preventable deaths, and the lasting economic consequences of diminished productivity, increased transportation costs, and lost opportunities for equitable growth.

Footnotes

[1] Maryland Department of the Environment, [MDEnviroScreen Environmental Justice Screening Tool](#).

[2] RMI, [SHIFT Calculator](#). Project-specific estimate provided in the Southside Express Lanes advocacy background; the underlying calculation should accompany the submission.

[3] Prince George's County Council, [Testimony Supporting HB 349 \(2025\)](#), documenting Route 210 safety concerns and fatalities.

[4] Prince George's County Government, [Sphere National Harbor](#), describing the proposed 6,000-seat venue.

[5] WMATA, [Official Metrorail System Map](#). SCEJC's finalized inventory identifies 21 stations beyond the Capital Beltway in Montgomery County and Northern Virginia, compared with one in Prince George's County. This inventory excludes borderline stations located directly on I-495.

[6] Maryland Department of Transportation, [Purple Line Project](#).

[7]VDOT, [I-495 Southside Express Lanes Study](#); [FFXnow, September 24, 2026](#). Contractual protections for future Metrorail expansion remain to be demonstrated.

Respectfully submitted,

Staci Hartwell, Strategic Advisor
South County Environmental Justice Coalition ([SCEJC](#))
617 257 8893 (text preferred)



From: [Sharon Lawrence](#)
To: [TPBcomment](#)
Subject: Item 1 Public Comment Opportunity
Date: Tuesday, October 20, 2026 11:05:19 AM
Attachments: [Southside Toll Lanes Opposition Ltr.docx](#)

To: Transportation Planning Board (TPB)

Subject: **Formal Opposition to the Southside Project and Request to Delay Any Further Decisions Pending Comprehensive Traffic, Environmental, and Transit Studies**

Dear Members of the Transportation Planning Board:

I am writing to formally express my continued opposition to the Southside Project proposal to construct toll lanes extending across the Woodrow Wilson Bridge from Virginia into Maryland. I am requesting that the Transportation Planning Board delay any further decisions or votes on this project until a comprehensive assessment of its potential impacts, viable alternatives, and environmental consequences has been completed and made available to the public and our elected officials.

The proposed project raises serious concerns for residents of southern Oxon Hill, Fort Washington, and Forest Heights, Maryland. From our perspective, the toll lanes offer no demonstrated benefit to our communities while potentially worsening the traffic congestion and safety challenges we already experience on local roads, particularly along Maryland Route 210, also known as Indian Head Highway. This roadway has long been a source of serious public safety concerns, and we cannot support a plan that advances without a clear understanding of how it could further affect traffic conditions in our area.

1. Require a Comprehensive Traffic Impact Study Before Any Vote

Before this project advances, I am requesting a full and detailed traffic impact study that evaluates the anticipated effects on local roads, highways, and surrounding communities on both sides of the Woodrow Wilson Bridge, including the Maryland portion of Interstate 495 and the Route 210 corridor.

To date, I am unaware of a publicly available analysis that adequately addresses these concerns. It is unacceptable for a decision of this magnitude to proceed before residents and elected officials have a clear understanding of the potential consequences.

The study should address, at a minimum:

- The projected impact of toll lanes on traffic congestion and traffic patterns throughout southern Prince George's County.
- Potential increases in traffic on Indian Head Highway, Interstate 495, and connecting local roads.
- Roadway safety concerns and the potential effects on emergency response times.
- Environmental impacts on nearby residential communities.
- Reasonable alternatives, including expanded public transportation options.
- The costs, feasibility, and long-term consequences of each alternative.

These studies must be completed and presented to the public well in advance of any TPB vote or decision. Relying on after-the-fact mitigation is neither an acceptable nor a reasonable substitute for identifying and addressing foreseeable problems before construction begins.

2. Prioritize Metro Rail Expansion as a Long-Term Transportation Solution

We believe that expanding Metro rail service across the Woodrow Wilson Bridge deserves serious

consideration as a viable alternative to prioritizing toll lanes. Improved rail access would support the continued growth of southern Prince George's County, improve regional connectivity, and provide residents and visitors with another transportation option for accessing National Harbor and the surrounding entertainment and commercial developments.

As these destinations continue to grow, additional travel demand must be anticipated. Adding more roadway capacity alone does not adequately address the need for affordable, efficient, and sustainable transportation alternatives.

Consider the difference in passenger capacity: approximately sixteen vehicles carrying seven passengers each would be needed to transport 112 people. By comparison, a Metro rail car can accommodate approximately 110 to 175 passengers, depending on its design and configuration, with some newer designs offering even greater capacity.

The broader point is clear: public transportation must be part of the region's long-term transportation planning strategy.

We urge the TPB to evaluate the feasibility, cost, timeline, and regional benefits of rail expansion before committing to infrastructure that could complicate or increase the cost of future transit development.

3. Protect Residents from Increasing Transportation Costs

At a time when inflation and household expenses continue to place financial pressure on many families, transportation planning must recognize the importance of affordability and accessibility.

Many residents depend on reliable transportation to reach employment, education, healthcare, and essential services. We must provide more affordable, cleaner transportation choices and invest in transit-oriented development that supports communities rather than increasing their dependence on costly vehicle travel.

We therefore question why toll lanes should be advanced without a demonstrated benefit to the residents who will experience their local traffic impacts. Any decision must account for the financial burden on households, the availability of practical alternatives, and the long-term transportation needs of Maryland communities.

4. Do Not Defer Metro Rail Commitments to an Uncertain Future

We are concerned about the repackaged or revised proposal that would defer Metro rail expansion to a later phase. Residents have little assurance that a future rail commitment would ultimately be fulfilled once toll lanes are constructed.

Furthermore, building toll-lane infrastructure first could create financial, engineering, or planning obstacles to future rail expansion. These potential conflicts must be examined and publicly addressed before the region commits to a course of action.

Our communities should not be asked to accept an immediate roadway project based on the possibility of a future transit investment that may never materialize. If rail expansion is a meaningful regional objective, it must be incorporated into present planning and supported by a clear, credible implementation strategy.

5. Respect Public Concerns and Require Meaningful Accountability

Our communities opposed this project two years ago, and our concerns remain unresolved. We continue to question whether the proposal adequately addresses the transportation needs, environmental interests, and quality of life of residents in southern Prince George's County.

We are not asking the TPB to disregard regional transportation needs. We are asking that those needs be evaluated comprehensively and that decisions affecting our communities be made transparently, with credible evidence and meaningful public participation.

Accordingly, I respectfully request that the Transportation Planning Board:

- a) Delay any further vote, approval, or decision advancing the Southside Project until the requested studies and assessments are completed.
- b) Make the traffic impact analysis, environmental assessments, and alternative transportation studies available to the public.
- c) Provide opportunities for residents and local elected officials to review the findings and receive substantive answers to their questions.
- d) Fully evaluate Metro rail expansion across the Woodrow Wilson Bridge and other viable transit alternatives before making a final decision.
- e) Explain how the project would affect Maryland communities, particularly southern Oxon Hill, Fort Washington, and Forest Heights, and identify how any projected adverse impacts would be prevented rather than addressed after the fact.

We remain opposed to advancing the Southside Project and any approval of plans without satisfactory answers to these concerns. No further decision should be made until the public and our elected officials have been given the information necessary to understand the project's full implications and evaluate reasonable alternatives.

The future of transportation in southern Prince George's County must reflect the needs of the people who live, work, and travel here. Our communities deserve thoughtful planning, responsible investment, environmental consideration, and transportation options that serve both present and future generations.

Thank you for your attention to these concerns. I look forward to a response addressing the issues outlined in this letter and to a transparent process that gives our communities a meaningful voice before any further action is taken.

Respectfully,
Sharon B. Lawrence
President, LWHOA Board of Directors
(301) 518-1115



CHARTER MEMBERS

Patricia Monroe, SCEJC Chair and
President, South Lawn Citizens Association

Staci Hartwell
NAACP Environmental and Climate Justice
Chair (Emerita) and Advisor to the NAACP
MD State Conference Quad Leadership

Herbert Jones
Strategic Advisor, Tantallon North Area Civic
Association

Sharon Lawrence
Board Secretary, Livingston Woods
Homeowners Association

Dee Smith
Strategic Advisor

Click here to [become an affiliate member!](#)

*SCEJC membership comprises
elected and appointed leaders of
Homeowners Associations and Civic
Associations representing more than
16,000 households across Maryland.*



Click or scan the QR
code to watch our video!

SOUTH COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE COALITION

6316 Oxon Hill Road, Eleven
Oxon Hill, MD 20750-0011
SCEJCMD@gmail.com
301 485 6099

Dear Chair and Members of the Transportation Planning Board

October 20, 2026

On behalf of the South County Environmental Justice Coalition (SCEJC), I strongly oppose VDOT's proposed I-495 Southside Express Lanes expansion across the Woodrow Wilson Bridge. This project is environmentally irresponsible, economically inequitable, and fundamentally shortsighted.

Southern Prince George's County has endured disproportionate environmental burdens for decades. Maryland's EnviroScreen identifies Oxon Hill and Forest Heights as communities overburdened by particulate matter, diesel emissions, hazardous waste, and cumulative pollution.[1] Highway expansion would exacerbate these conditions while generating an estimated 1 million to 3.4 million additional metric tons of carbon emissions through 2050. [2]

Our highways are already overwhelmed. More or slower traffic entering Maryland could worsen congestion on I-495, Route 210, and surrounding arteries. Route 210, notoriously known as the "Highway of Death," has a troubling history of fatal crashes.[3] Increasing traffic without addressing existing safety deficiencies is unconscionable. Why should Maryland residents bear the environmental, public health, and safety consequences of Virginia's toll-revenue ambitions?

We must also consider the region's future, particularly the proposed 6,000-seat Sphere entertainment venue at National Harbor.[4] Combined with existing MGM casino, convention, tourism, and residential traffic, this development could introduce substantial additional vehicle demand at the convergence of I-495, I-295, and Route 210. Without comprehensive regional planning, we risk creating a transportation crisis we made ourselves. Piecemeal highway expansions cannot substitute for a coordinated, multimodal transportation strategy that anticipates decades of growth.

Environmental justice is transportation justice. Toll lanes privilege motorists who can afford premium access while leaving others in congestion. Meanwhile, regional METRO investments reveal a glaring geographic disparity.

To "the North," 21 METRO stations extend beyond the Capital Beltway, compared with just one in Prince George's County's regional comparison, Downtown Largo.[5] Billions have gone into rail development, including the Purple Line, while southern Prince George's County still waits for meaningful cross-Potomac rail connectivity.[6] This disparity perpetuates unequal access to employment, education, healthcare, economic opportunity.

Footnotes

[1] Maryland Department of the Environment, [MDEnviroScreen Environmental Justice Screening Tool](#).

[2] RMI, [SHIFT Calculator](#). Project-specific estimate provided in the Southside Express Lanes advocacy background; the underlying calculation should accompany the submission.

[3] Prince George's County Council, [Testimony Supporting HB 349 \(2025\)](#), documenting Route 210 safety concerns and fatalities.

[4] Prince George's County Government, [Sphere National Harbor](#), describing the proposed 6,000-seat venue.

[5] WMATA, [Official Metrorail System Map](#). SCEJC's finalized inventory identifies 21 stations beyond the Capital Beltway in Montgomery County and Northern Virginia, compared with one in Prince George's County. This inventory excludes borderline stations located directly on I-495.

[6] Maryland Department of Transportation, [Purple Line Project](#).

The most just, reasonable, and forward-looking compromise is extending METRO across the Woodrow Wilson Bridge. Rail connectivity would reduce automobile dependency, alleviate congestion, lower emissions, support National Harbor's economic development, and connect workers, residents, and visitors across jurisdictions.

Although VDOT's revised proposal preserves physical space for future rail, VDOT must demonstrate that toll-lane financing and concession agreements will not impose financial penalties, contractual restrictions, or other barriers to future METRO expansion.[7] Physical accommodation without enforceable protections is insufficient.

We urge the TPB to delay any vote until comprehensive, publicly accessible studies evaluate cumulative environmental impacts, traffic and safety consequences, projected development, climate emissions, and meaningful transit alternatives.

We need a transportation vision measured in generations, not toll revenues. Maryland and Virginia must collaborate on a long-term solution that accommodates economic growth without sacrificing environmental health, affordability, or community safety.

The Woodrow Wilson Bridge should connect communities to opportunity and shared economic prosperity, not condemn them to more congestion, pollution, preventable deaths, and the lasting economic consequences of diminished productivity, increased transportation costs, and lost opportunities for equitable growth.

Respectfully,



Staci Hartwell

Strategic and Legislative Affairs
South County Environmental Justice Coalition

From: nanci wilkinson nanciwilkinson@gmail.com
Subject: Southside VDOT Widening Beltway Plan
Date: October 15, 2026 at 7:33 AM
To: Dr Anna pain Irwin nanciwilkinson@gmail.com

DI

The new VDOT Southside Beltway Widening Plan has many of the same flaws that have been previously presented including the “induced demand” aspect-the more lanes, the more traffic. The plan, once again, is based on the VDOT’s initial flawed plan that totally rejects any research for better transportation alternatives such as increased mass transit, rapid rail and rapid bus lanes. If enacted, its long term planning might lead to ultimate catastrophe.

The VDOT plan includes an 18 foot right of way for future Metro service lane expansion and 4 new non toll lanes and 2 new Express Lanes. Non usable shoulder lanes will house safety trucks and equipment. Will this plan will benefit the majority of public users? Suburban owns 50 percent of the roadway for both I95 and the 495 affected travel ways and is eager to improve its profit unrelated to the public interest. Suburban's profit in the fiscal year ending June 3, 2026 was 264 million dollHow are these profits made? They are made by the Express Lanes during dynamic pricing when congestion occurs - the opposite of VDOT's goal to reduce congestion.

VDOT should not advance the Beltway expansion with Express Lanes but instead should pursue strategies that will effectively address congestion over the long term including shoulder and bus lanes combined with expanded carpool and transit-oriented development, future Metrorail expansion of the Blue Line, and robust transportation demand management. It is important to give residents of the DMV access to more affordable clean transportation choices and invest in sustainable development.

Thank you for this opportunity to present my views.

**Nanci Wilkinson
5502 Glenwood Rd
Bethesda MD 20817**

From: [Eric McKenzie](#)
To: [TPBcomment](#)
Subject: Item 1 Public Comment Opportunity
Date: Friday, October 16, 2026 4:49:33 PM

Dear Transportation Planning Board,

I am writing with a comment on VDOT's proposal for the 495 Southside highway expansion to extend the express lanes, which I oppose.

This proposal would increase air, stormwater, noise, and climate pollution, and most drivers would still be stuck in traffic as they are now. VDOT has suggested that Metrorail could be built along the route in the future, but why would Virginia allow that if their private partnership requires them to maximize profit for the highway developer?

Our region needs to focus on public transit, which is a more reliable, long-term solution to congestion.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best wishes,

Eric McKenzie (Greenbelt, MD)

From: [Steven Hoffman](#)
To: [TPBcomment](#)
Subject: Item 1 public comment opportunity
Date: Friday, October 16, 2026 1:48:53 PM

Please delay any decisions on the project until after local officials and the public get answers to questions on traffic impacts, environmental damage, and other alternative solutions that would benefit more commuters and the environment. This process is being forced ahead without taking the care it deserves.

--

Steve Hoffman, D.D.S., L.M.T.
410-963-1934
orcadog85@gmail.com

From: kimberly-y-choi@tutamail.com
To: [TPBcomment](#)
Subject: Item 1 Public Comment Opportunity
Date: Sunday, October 18, 2026 4:03:17 PM

I appreciate the new I-495 plan includes space for Metrorail, but I'm concerned it'll end up cramping Metro expansion as the region becomes dependent on toll revenues and appeasing a private developer.

I live in Maryland but visit Metro-connected parts of Virginia. Because I travel by Metro, I make these trips safely and without contributing to congestion.

But I'm not just asking for more Metro stations; the much more pressing worry is our day-to-day local safety. I live by a highway and a major street. If the trend in our region is to increase traffic on highways, the effect is likely going to be more congested and widened streets surrounding them. I already try to limit crossing major streets in suburban Maryland after dark as it is, with lots of drivers impatient to turn right on red, and I'm young and able to walk quickly. If we consider more people moved by cars to be a good thing, we're setting up for a more dangerous future with driving and walking being precarious even in our local communities.

Before the Board makes a decision, I would like to see VDOT make room for the Metro not just spatially, but realistically.

~Kimberly Choi

From: bcoufal10@aol.com
To: [TPBcomment](#)
Subject: Item 1 Public Comment Opportunity
Date: Monday, October 19, 2026 10:01:14 AM

Below are comments from Citizens Against Beltway Expansion (CABE) to the Transportation Planning Board about the Virginia Dept. of Transportation's Southside Toll Lanes.

Best,
Barbara Coufal, Chair
CABE

Comment Summary: VDOT is trying to rush the Southside toll lanes forward. The TPB must insist that VDOT provide its long-promised study of the impacts on local roads before voting to advance the project. Moreover, while the new design may no longer create a physical impediment to Metrorail, toll lanes would still be a financial impediment to future Metrorail.

We urge the TPB to insist on the study of impacts on local roads prior to any vote. For two years, the Virginia Dept. of Transportation has promised to study how the toll lanes would impact traffic conditions on local roads in Maryland and Virginia. VDOT still has not conducted this study, but is asking the Transportation Planning Board to move the project forward anyway. The TPB should insist on this study before considering a vote on revising the air quality conformity analysis.

The Southside toll lanes would still be an impediment to Metrorail. VDOT states that it's new design for the Southside project would address the concern that the toll lanes would block a future extension of Metrorail over the Woodrow Wilson Bridge. While the new design may no longer be a physical obstruction to Metrorail, the Southsides project would still block Metrorail. As noted on slide 7 of VDOT's presentation, it anticipates that toll revenue will fully fund the Southside lanes. However, Metrorail would reduce toll revenue by drawing vehicles off the Beltway. This loss of toll revenue would undermine financing for the project and be a strong disincentive for Virginia to agree to a future extension of Metrorail.

From: [David Kosterlitz](#)
To: [TPBcomment](#)
Subject: Please delay any decisions on VDOT's proposed Southside Project
Date: Sunday, October 18, 2026 12:52:14 AM

Hi TPB folks,

Please delay any decisions on VDOT's proposed Southside Project until after local officials and the public get answers to questions on traffic impacts, environmental damage, and other alternative solutions that would benefit more commuters and the environment. VDOT intends to go to the TPB to once again advance its plans to widen the Beltway between Oxon Hill, Maryland and Springfield, Virginia with toll lanes.

VDOT claims that their proposal would allow for Metrorail in the median going over the bridge. But not likely to happen because it would divert traffic from I-495 thus reducing toll revenue for the developer (likely Transurban). The proposed express (toll) lanes are inequitable due to tolls being sky high so that the average person cannot afford them.

Widening the beltway would not relieve congestion, but would simply monetize it for the benefit of a private for-profit corporation. Adding lanes would create induced demand and more traffic would fill them soon. The proposed project would create carcinogenic cement dust in the area. It would harm the environment and increase pollution from more fossil fuel car exhaust.

VDOT has not provided the public or elected officials with basic information on the project's impacts to communities or on other alternative solutions. Until local officials and the public get answers to questions on traffic impacts, environmental damage, and other alternative solutions that would benefit more commuters and the environment, the TPB should delay any decisions on the proposed Southside project.

Thank you for your attention to this issue.

--

David S. Kosterlitz
6209 Hollins Dr
Bethesda, MD 20817

(301) 928-1818

From: [Terrence Fitzgerald](#)
To: [TPBcomment](#)
Subject: Item 1 Public Comment Opportunity
Date: Monday, October 19, 2026 4:10:18 PM

Good afternoon.

I write on behalf of Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility (CPSR) to express concern that VDOT is going to attempt to revive the plan to add toll lanes to the south side of I-495 when we still have not seen evaluations of the traffic impacts and environmental damage of such a project and while alternative approaches to congestion have not been fully considered.

We need a comprehensive approach to the need to move people and goods around the Washington area. Lively public transit can do this with far less impact on the air, water, and health of the residents. More lanes will mean more traffic. "Induced Demand" is a real thing.

Please do not make any decisions on this project until after local officials and the public get answers to the above.

Terrence Fitzgerald, MD
Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility

From: [Doneby Smith](#)
To: [TPBcomment](#)
Subject: Item 1 Public Comment Opportunity
Date: Monday, October 19, 2026 2:13:55 PM

There must be NO VOTE on VDOT Southside Expansion Plan until after the VDOT provides critical Information (which local jurisdictions have been requesting for more than 2 years):

- Effect of creating bottlenecks on local roads and I-495 in Maryland
- What is meant by “traffic mitigation” and how it will work with local community plans
- Analysis of impact on congestion in the including comparison with alternatives such as shoulder and bus lanes combined with expanded carpool, transit incentives and transit-oriented development.

Given that VDOT’s new proposal would increase air pollution, stormwater run-off, noise, and carbon pollution (about 1 to 3.4 million metric tons cumulatively though 2050), the public deserves and elected officials should require a full and honest accounting of all projected community and environmental impacts.

There should be no consideration of the VDOT’s Southside Expansion Plan until all the stated analyses and information are provided.

K J Doneby Smith, PA-C
4113 Tulare Dr.
Silver Spring, MD 20906

From: [Kristina Borrer](#)
To: [TPBcomment](#)
Subject: Item 1 Public Comment Opportunity
Date: Monday, October 19, 2026 4:42:01 PM

The VDOT Southside Expansion Plan should not be voted on until VDOT provides a complete and accurate analysis of all projected community and environmental impacts. This should include comparing with alternatives such as shoulder and bus lanes combined with expanded carpool, transit incentives and transit-oriented development.

VDOT's new proposal would increase air pollution, stormwater run-off, noise, and carbon pollution (about 1 to 3.4 million metric tons cumulatively through 2050); therefore, the public deserves and elected officials should require adequate information.

Kristina Borrer

From: [Teresa Meeks](#)
To: [TPBcomment](#)
Subject: Invest in Mass Transit Instead of the VDOT Southside Expansion Plan
Date: Tuesday, October 20, 2026 7:35:42 AM

Please study the environmental impact of the VDOT Southside Expansion Plan before implementing it. It will increase air pollution and traffic congestion. Invest the money in mass transit instead, for a more environmentally sensitive solution.

Thank you,

Teresa Meeks

From: joebaldi@verizon.net
To: [TPBcomment](#)
Subject: Proposed Widening of Beltway
Date: Tuesday, October 20, 2026 8:43:09 AM

I am a Maryland resident who uses the Beltway frequently and am very concerned about plans to widen it between Oxen Hill and Springfield and the potential negative impact on our traffic and commute. Please hold plans and complete an honest comprehensive cost-benefit analysis before final action is taken.

Respectfully,
Joseph M. Baldi
U.S. Public Health Service, Retired

From: [P.Monroe](#)
To: [TPBcomment](#)
Cc: [Edward Burroughs](#); [Krystal Oriadha](#); [Krystal Oriadha](#); [Ross, Preston J.](#); [Monroe, Y Pleshette](#)
Subject: Item 1 Public Comment Opportunity
Date: Tuesday, October 20, 2026 10:27:46 AM

Good morning,

My name is Patricia Monroe, Chair South Lawn Citizens Association and President of South Lawn Citizens Association, which is directly located off 210 Indian Head Highway and 495. In previous hearings, I spoke about VDOT not being transparent about their plans to put "Hot Lanes" on the Woodrow Wilson Bridge. It was also requested that residents in the area be notified about any plans, needless to say, the residents in the area have not been notified about the proposed plan being presented to the Transportation Board. It was requested that VDOT provide a traffic impact study before returning to the the TPB for a vote on this project. This project will have a MAJOR impact on Maryland residents. This project will cause a MAJOR bottleneck at the 295/495 portion of the bridge. This does not include the impact on 210 which is already overburdened with rush hour traffic in the morning and afternoon. To my knowledge VDOT has not provided the necessary studies but are coming before you with an "alternative" to the toll lanes. Yet they are pushing for an approval of this project in early 2027. It is unfair for a project to be voted on without the requested studies and analysis of traffic impacts and alternatives well in advance of a TPB vote on the project. VDOT has said it will analyze the impacts of more cars accessing the expanded I-495 on local roads and on the new bottleneck that will be created. It is ludicrous for the Southside project to be voted on before the public and elected officials understand the negative impacts it will have on local roads and I-495.

Doing the traffic study after the fact is unacceptable. VDOT's mitigation plan will not work! I believe if this project is approved mass transit will never come to the south side of the County. VDOT's plan will only add more vehicles on the road, which equates to more income from tolls. Implementing "traffic mitigation" for more cars is not a solution. Residents need more information from VDOT on the types of traffic mitigation it's considering for communities.

VDOT should not advance the Beltway expansion with express lanes and instead should pursue strategies that will effectively address congestion over the long term, including shoulder and bus lanes combined with expanded carpool and transit incentives, transit-oriented development, future Metrorail expansion of the Yellow or Blue Line. VDOT has never seriously studied any alternatives to highway widening – its stated study purpose has been to "extend the Express Lanes". At a time where there is high inflation and costs to households, and high tariffs are increasing the cost of car ownership, it is important to give residents of the region access to more affordable clean transportation choices and invest in sustainable transit-oriented development.

With Metrorail on the Woodrow Wilson Bridge, Virginia would be required to compensate its private partner (likely Transurban) for the loss of decades of toll revenue. Virginia will try to use their power to block an extension of Metrorail.

What happens to the air quality of residents in the area? This project is environmentally unhealthy.

Has anyone considered how the hot lanes would affect those who cannot afford to pay the toll?

I am once again asking the TPB to not approve VDOT moving forward with this project.

Thank you,
Patricia Monroe

From: [lee mcnair](#)
To: [TPBcomment](#)
Subject: Item 1 Public Comment Opportunity
Date: Tuesday, October 20, 2026 10:49:13 AM

To: Members of the Transportation and Planning Board

Re: Our request that the TPB delay any vote on the Southside project until further information is available on its impact as well as on the investigation of possible alternatives.

Please ask yourselves these vital questions in your decision making process:

- Is this a fiscally responsible project?
- Is it a wise use of our limited resources?
- Will it be cost effective for the largest number of our residents or will it serve only a few?
- Can we afford both the immediate costs of this project and its future maintenance?
- Are we fixated on moving cars when we should be moving people outside of a car?
- Are we spending far too much of our resources on highways and far too little on rail, BRT, bike/ped options?
- Are we prioritizing safety first in our decision making?
- Are we next prioritizing equity?
- Are we being innovative and creative in our project planning or simply continuing the same old way of moving our problems around while never solving them?
- What are our publically declared transportation priorities?
- Does this project advance or oppose those stated priorities?
- Who exactly benefits from this project and who exactly is harmed by this project?
- Will the benefits outweigh the harms over the next 5 to 25 years?
- Will this project promote or harm our state climate goals?
- Will this project harm our watershed, our streamwater, our wildlife and other natural resources?
- Will it serve the finances of people already overwhelmed with the costs of housing, food, energy or add more burdens to their extremely limited resources?
- Finally, will those responsible for making these project decisions hold themselves publically accountable both now and in the future for the results created by their decisions on this project?

Thank you for providing this opportunity for our comments.

Lee McNair

Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Environmental Justice Ministry

"Ring the bells that still can ring, Forget your perfect offering

There is a crack, a crack in everything, That's how the light gets in."
-Leonard Cohen

From: [Marty](#)
To: [TPBcomment](#)
Subject: Item 1 Public Comment Opportunity
Date: Tuesday, October 20, 2026 11:20:41 AM

To the Transportation Planning Board

There must be no vote on VDOT Southside Expansion Plan until VDOT provides a full and honest accounting of all projected community and environmental impacts including a comparison with alternatives such as shoulder and bus lanes combined with expanded carpool, transit incentives and transit-oriented development.

Exclusive access for the wealthy is not in the public interest.

I routinely observe Virginia's Rt 66 toll lanes with near-zero traffic. Traversing the highway's toll road can cost nearly \$100.00 at peak times. While traffic congestion is unaffected on the main road, the wealthy few benefit.

At what cost to the general public?

Given that VDOT's new proposal would increase air pollution, stormwater run-off, noise, and carbon pollution (about 1 to 3.4 million metric tons cumulatively through 2050), the public deserves and elected officials should require adequate information.

--

Marty Atias

ATS Communications
Silver Spring, MD

From: [Emily Harris](#)
To: [TPBcomment](#)
Subject: Item 1 Public Comment Opportunity
Date: Tuesday, October 20, 2026 11:45:25 AM

Dear Transportation Planning Board members,

Please DO NOT vote on VDOT's Southside Expansion Plan until VDOT provides a full and honest accounting of all projected community and environmental impacts. This should include comparing options such as shoulder and bus lanes combined with expanded carpool, transit incentives, and transit-oriented development.

VDOT's new proposal would increase air pollution, stormwater run-off, noise, and carbon pollution. The public deserves and elected officials should require adequate information.

Thank you for your consideration,

Emily Harris

600 Hermleigh Road

Silver Spring, MD 20902

Pronouns: she/her/hers

From: [Monique Taylor](#)
To: [TPBcomment](#)
Cc: [Marlyn Goins-Mccants](#); [Carolyn Fleming](#); [Krystal Isaac](#); [Monique Taylor](#); [Arlene Wilson](#); [Wayne Wright](#); [Delanta Harrison](#); [John E. Bailey IV](#); [Ann Taylor](#); [D Randolph](#); [Sheila Miller](#); [John Bailey](#)
Subject: Item 1 Public Comment Opportunity
Date: Tuesday, October 20, 2026 11:49:51 AM

Dear Transportation Planning Board,

The Camp Springs Civic Association (CSCA) are concerned citizens in Maryland, particularly in the southern part of Prince George's County oppose the proposed **I-495 Southside Express Lanes** expansion proposed by the Virginian Department of Transportation (VDOT). Their proposal raises serious questions about traffic, affordability, future transit, and environmental justice. Residents deserve a full accounting of those consequences before regional leaders approve the project.

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT), Prince George's County, Fairfax County, and Alexandria must insist that the VDOT provide a comprehensive study of traffic impacts and meaningful alternatives well before any Transportation Planning Board (TPB) vote.

VDOT has said it will examine additional traffic on local roads and the new bottleneck where the proposed toll lanes would end in Prince George's County. Yet, after more than two years of questions from local officials, the requested analysis remains outstanding while VDOT seeks approval in early 2027. The public and elected officials need adequate time to review the findings, question assumptions, and assess alternatives.

VDOT's commitment to mitigate traffic impacts must come with specifics. Widening roads and intersections could undermine adopted plans for walkable, mixed-use communities around Huntington, Van Dorn Street, Alexandria's Route 1 corridor, and National Harbor in Oxon Hill.

Residents need to know which roads could change, how neighborhoods would be affected, and whether proposed measures would encourage still more driving. Communities should not be left to absorb the consequences after approval.

Virginia's existing toll lanes have not eliminated persistent congestion and commuting challenges. Drivers who can afford the tolls gain access to an additional travel option, while those who cannot remain in congested general-purpose lanes. This creates an unequal system in which access to a faster commute depends on the ability to pay.

For commuters who use the toll lanes regularly, recurring charges add to already strained household transportation budgets. Expanding this model risks placing further financial burdens on working families without adequately addressing congestion for everyone. Regional leaders should prioritize transportation investments that provide affordable, reliable travel options for all commuters.

Furthermore, before advancing this expansion, VDOT should seriously evaluate:

- Shoulder-running and dedicated bus lanes.
- Expanded transit service and carpool incentives.

- Transit-oriented development.
- A future Metrorail Blue Line extension.
- Strong transportation demand management programs that reduce the need to drive alone.

Defining the project's purpose around extending Express Lanes narrows the discussion before alternatives receive fair consideration. With household transportation costs putting pressure on residents, the region needs affordable, clean, reliable choices.

Moving the proposed toll lanes away from space reserved for rail addresses a physical conflict, but potential financial barriers remain. A private toll-road agreement could include compensation provisions if future Metrorail service reduces toll revenue.

Before approval, VDOT must disclose whether such provisions are contemplated and explain their implications. Any agreement must protect the region's ability to extend Metrorail from Virginia into Prince George's County without prohibitive compensation demands or contractual restrictions.

More highway capacity and vehicle travel could increase air pollution, polluted stormwater runoff, noise, and greenhouse gas emissions.

Forest Heights and Oxon Hill already face substantial environmental burdens. The project's review must address how additional traffic would affect these communities and what enforceable protections would be provided.

MDOT and local leaders must demand complete analysis, meaningful alternatives, public review, and firm protections before a TPB approval vote. Our transportation decisions should improve mobility while protecting community health, affordability, and future transit opportunities.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Monique C. Taylor

Camp Springs Civic Association