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 November 2026 TPB Meeting
**DATE:** November 18, 2026

---

The Transportation Planning Board accepts public comment on a rolling basis. Comments can be submitted via email (tpbcomment@mwcog.org), online (mwcog.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, October 20, and noon Tuesday, November 17 the TPB received one comment via voicemail, one comment via letter, and 115 comments submitted via email or forms. The following section provides a short summary of each comment and groups similar comments accordingly. Eleven people signed up to speak in person. There are 3 general public comments, and the rest are comments on the I-495 Southside Express Lanes (SEL) project. The comments regarding the SEL are divided up into those comments that came in via individual letter (1), voicemail (1), email (12), and email campaigns (3 campaigns, totaling 99). SEL public comments included opposition from 13 individuals and two email campaigns (77 comments) and support from 3 individuals and one email campaign (22 comments). Full comments for the letter, voicemail, and individual emails are attached to this memo. The email campaigns sent nearly identical emails. If you would like to see each individual comment, please reach out to TPB staff Laura Bachle (lbachle@mwcog.org) for those details.

### IN-PERSON PUBLIC COMMENT SPEAKERS

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

- Barbara Coufal, Citizens Against Beltway Expansion
- Austin Vitale, Northern Virginia Chamber of Commerce
- Janet Gallant, Citizens Against Beltway Expansion
- Nicholas Orrick
- Jason Stanford, NVTA
- Michael Sakata, Maryland Transportation Builders and Materials Association
- Chris Lawson, Maryland Transportation Builders and Materials Association
- Patricia Monroe
- Katrena Moody
- Rachel Youngblade, Northern Virginia Association of Realtors
- Bill Pugh, Coalition for Smarter Growth

**PUBLIC COMMENT - GENERAL**

**Arlene Montemarano, Comment via Email, November 6, 2026**
Ms. Montemarano writes that the direction of the country has changed. She states adding concrete to already heavily paved ground adds pollution while diminishing quiet green areas and our financial sovereignty.

**Chrissy Rockwell, Comment via Email, Oct. 29, and November 6, 2026**
Ms. Rockwell writes concerned about deer on I495 South near Carderock. She asks the TPB to request MDSHA to look into wildlife crossings. (NOTE: TPB staff have shared this information with MDSHA and have responded directly to Ms. Rockwell with additional information and contacts.)

**Will Weaver** writes in the General Comment Forms about posting route signage within Alexandria city limits. He states there are very few route signs in Alexandria or Arlington County. He states localities should make sure these routes are signed for navigational purposes, as the numbers are still relevant.

**PUBLIC COMMENT - SOUTHSIDE EXPRESS LANES**

**Opposition to SEL (13 individuals plus 2 email campaigns which included 77 comments).**

**Sylvia Griffin, Birchwood City + Clearview Community Association, Comment via letter, November 16, 2026**
Ms. Griffin writes on behalf of her community, which is situated at the Maryland terminus of the project. She states her community would get all of the negative consequences of the project without receiving its promised benefits. Her association opposes moving the project forward before questions are answered, including bottlenecks, cut-through traffic, disproportionate health burdens, and undermining future metrorail. She states that if the expansion is placed in Visualize 2050, Prince George's County will lose their leverage to demand meaningful changes. She asks the TPB to stand with frontline communities, reject VDOTs rushed timeline and require a transparent, comprehensive study before taking any action.

**Nanci Wilkinson, et. al. commented via General Comment Form Submission** on behalf of **The Climate Mobilization Montgomery County**, to ask the TPB not to vote on VDOT's southside expansion plan until after VDOT provides the missing information that local jurisdictions have been requesting for two years.

**Katrena Moody, Comments via Voice Mail November 16 and 17.**
Ms. Moody states that there are already express lanes utilized very frequently on Woodrow Wilson Bridge, so why should a toll be placed there to charge people? She says express lanes are ineffective, and putting a toll on them is price gouging. She says it is not needed and what is needed is Metrorail service to a central point.

**Delanta Harrison, Comment via Email, October 21, 2026**
Delanta Harrison writes on behalf of the Camp Springs Civic Association to register their opposition to the Southside Express Lanes project. They state the proposal raises critical concerns on a number of issues and asks regional leadership to insist VDOT deliver a comprehensive study of impacts and meaningful alternatives to the proposed project in a timely manner to allow for deliberation by the affected communities.

**Tony Hausner, Ph.D, Comment via Email, November 6, 2026**
Dr. Hausner writes in opposition to the Southside project expressing concerns for the increase in traffic and air pollution. He states a much better approach is to make use of transit, which has fewer negative impacts.

**Leslie Wharton, Comment via Email, November 7, 2026**
Ms. Wharton askes the TPB to delay any decisions on the Southside project until there is valid information on all the impacts. She states it's unacceptable that the TPB should vote on the project before elected officials and the public understand the impacts. Ms. Wharton calls attention to the RMI SHIFT calculator which she states estimates that the added lanes would result in between 1 and 3.4 million metric tons of carbon pollution through 2050, impacting communities already burdened by pollution.

**Eduardo Ramirez, Comment via Email, November 10, 2026**
Mr. Ramirez writes that he uses the Woodrow Wilson Bridge every day. He is concerned about the project because it will increase his commute time. He says it will hurt Marylander's pocketbooks with unfair toll fees.

**Phil Kanzlieter, Comment via Email, November 11, 2026**
Mr. Kanzleiter writes in opposition to the express lanes as a Virginia resident who travels these specific lanes daily. He states that the current approach to toll lanes has led to increased delays, proving that expanding this flawed system is not viable. He asks that the TPB and VDOT reconsider the scope to include the following: no decrease of existing capacity in general purpose lanes, and providing direct funding for metrorail.

**Janet Gingold, Comment via Email, November 12, 2026**
Ms. Gingold writes as a resident of Prince George's County concerned about the dangers of climate change. She urges the TPB to stand firm against VDOT's toll road expansion project. She states it will not provide a long-term solution to traffic congestion but rather will induce more greenhouse gas production and preclude the preferred alternative of metrorail expansion. She states that especially with the Sphere development with its large energy demand, more options are needed for transportation between Northern Virginia and Prince George's County.

**Kieran Grogan, Comment via Email, November 12, 2026**
M. Grogan writes as a concerned homeowner in Alexandria, VA. They state that they are a new homeowner expressing their strong opposition to the express lanes. They state that this proposal is personal, putting their investment at risk. They say they chose this area because of its character, community, accessibility and quality of life and that this project threatens those qualities. They say these decisions are being made without sufficient consideration for existing residents.

**Karina Bakhshi-Azar, Comment via Email, November 13, 2026**
Ms. Bakhshi- Azar writes in opposition to the toll lanes, stating we should be investing in more sustainable transportation options other than continuing to expand highways. She is concerned the project will make her recently purchased home and community a less desirable place to live.

**Nora Gutierrez, Comment via Email, November 17, 2026**
Ms. Gutierrez writes as a resident of Oxon Hill. She urges the TPB not to take any vote on the Southside project until members of the public get answers to questions. She states that the Southside project will negatively affect Metro's ability to expand service.

**Mark Scheufler, Comment via Email, November 17, 2026**
Mr. Scheufler urges the TPB to vote no on Resolution R5-2027 until there is more clarity on: a rail transit preferred alternative in the corridor beyond the Woodrow Wilson Bridge; the congestion impacts caused by removing the auxiliary lanes on the bridge used by traffic merging from Route 1 in Virginia and MD 210/I-295 in Maryland; performance of existing or previous circumferential I-495 bus transit services between Tysons, the Fairfax Connector, and Omniride. He adds the corridor needs more funding certainty regarding rail transit infrastructure, recommending a light rail or metrorail option.

**Coalition for Smarter Growth Email Campaign, from October 30, 2026 to November 17. 2026**
Fifty emails were received urging the TPB to delay a vote to start regional action on the Southside project, stating that it is premature for VDOT to ask the TPB to spend time on the Southside proposal with all the unresolved issues that will likely precipitate changes. They state VDOT needs to engage local communities first and provide the analyses repeatedly requested. They state VDOT revised the project because they were forced to do so after local officials postponed action on the original proposal and asked that the project be delayed again to further opportunities to provide more information on the impacts.

**Sierra Club Email Campaign, from November 9, 2026 to November 17, 2026**
Twenty-seven emails were received asking the TPB to please stop VDOT's plans, urging members not to advance the project into air quality conformity analysis. They state there is key information still missing for addressing a variety of issues, and there continues to be no viable alternative to congestion offered other than toll lanes. They call for a full and transparent analysis of traffic, safety, environmental and transit impacts before the project proceeds.

**In support of SEL (3 individuals plus 1 email campaign which included 22 comments).**

**Andrew Sutton, Comment via Email, November 10, 2026**
Mr. Sutton writes in support of the toll lanes, stating that it would greatly facilitate traffic for his family of five, who reside in Springfield and travel to Maryland frequently using the existing toll lanes, allowing them to bypass DC traffic.

**William Orlove, Comment via Email, November 11, 2026**
Mr. Orlove writes as someone who works in commercial real estate and lives in Montgomery County and has an office in Fairfax County. He states that both the Woodrow Wilson Bridge and the American Legion Bridge need expansion.

**Rachel Youngblade, Comment via General Comment Form Submission** writes on behalf of the **Northern Virginia Association of Realtors**, representing 13,000 real estate professionals across the region in support of Resolution R5-2027. She states the new proposal directly addresses the Board's previous concerns by preserving space for future metrorail, commits $15 million in funds annually to transit, and protects local communities by committing to evaluate and mitigate additional traffic on local roads. She adds a yes vote does not approve the project but allows the necessary air quality analysis to move forward.

**Support Resolution R5-2027, November 17, 2026**
Twenty-two emails were received in support of the TPB voting yes to advance the project to air quality conformity analysis and adding it to Visualize 2050. The emails state the new proposal preserves space for Metrorail, commits dedicated funding for transit with VDOT pledging a minimum transit payment of $15 million per year for the entire corridor, and protects local communities with Virginia pledging to evaluate and mitigate any added traffic on local roadways resulting from the project.

**From:** Arlene Montemarano
**To:** TPBcomment
**Subject:** Item 1 Public Comment Opportunity
**Date:** Sunday, November 8, 2026 7:12:08 PM

---

**The direction of this country has radically changed from focusing on corporate profits to focusing on the real needs and wants of the public. We voted. We want that change.**

**Adding concrete to already heavily paved ground will add immense construction and ongoing pollution, while diminishing quiet green areas and our financial sovereignty for generations.**

**There is too much traffic, but there are much better alternatives to adding lanes, which we know will fill up quickly. They always do.**

**It's true that money talks.**

**But starting now, the public may well shout it down.**

**From:** Chrissy Rockwell
**To:** TPBcomment
**Subject:** Request to Construct Sound Barriers to Save Lives
**Date:** Thursday, October 29, 2026 7:48:26 PM

---

Dear Board Members,

Yesterday on the way to work, I saw two dead deer on I-495 South within a few meters of each other. They were about 100 meters before Exit 41 (Carderock).

This morning, I saw a third dead deer in the same area, close to the others.

Could you please request that the State Highway Administration construct sound barriers leading up to Exit 41 on 495? That will save the lives of drivers and wildlife alike. Luckily, it seems the deer were hit when there was not a lot of traffic, but if there were, the deer could have caused pile-ups and mass casualties.

Thank you for your attention to this serious matter.

Sincerely,

Chrissy Rockwell

---

Chrissy Rockwell
Maryland Resident
chrissy.rockwell1@gmail.com

I've reached out a few times to the City of Alexandria during the past few years about posting route signage within the city limits - other than Route 1 and a few scattered signs here and there for Routes 400 and 402, there are very few route signs in the city limits. The same goes for Arlington County even though primary routes there are maintained by VDOT. I feel like all primary state routes should be signed as such, and in Alexandria there are multiple intersections between primary routes (including Quaker Lane and Seminary Road, Routes 402 and 420) where no routes are signed at all. Alexandria seems uninterested in doing anything relating to state routes, not even replacing older signs that are obsolete (there are signs for I-95 that still exist in the city even though the route they're referring to has been I-395 for decades). I personally feel like localities should make sure these routes are signed for navigational purposes, as the numbers are still relevant.

**From:** Chrissy Rockwell
**To:** TPBcomment
**Subject:** Re: Request to Construct Sound Barriers to Save Lives
**Date:** Friday, November 6, 2026 8:19:48 AM

---

Dear Board Members,

I wanted to follow up regarding the email below about constructing sound barriers around I-495 to prevent deer from crossing the highway, causing car crashes.

In addition to sound barriers, it would be ideal if a wildlife crossing could be built in that area.

I wrote to the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) about the sound barriers and when they responded, they went over how important wildlife crossings are. The DNR Representative said that sound barriers prevent animals crossing but the animals then shift to other areas to cross the highways. Wildlife crossings would prevent that.

In addition to preventing fatalities, there was a study that wildlife crossings also prevent inbreeding which leads to animals being born with deformities. Below are a few links on that subject.

https://newsroom.ucla.edu/releases/florida-panther-conservation-success
https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/jan/23/how-wildlife-crossings-are-helping-reindeer-bears-and-even-crabs-aoe

Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter.

Best regards,

Chrissy

---
Chrissy Rockwell
Maryland Resident
chrissy.rockwell1@gmail.com

On Thu, 29 Oct 2026 at 19:48, Chrissy Rockwell <chrissy.rockwell1@gmail.com> wrote:

> Dear Board Members,
>
> Yesterday on the way to work, I saw two dead deer on I-495 South within a few meters of each other. They were about 100 meters before Exit 41 (Carderock).
>
> This morning, I saw a third dead deer in the same area, close to the others.
>
> Could you please request that the State Highway Administration construct sound barriers leading up to Exit 41 on 495? That will save the lives of drivers and wildlife alike. Luckily, it seems the deer were hit when there was not a lot of traffic, but if there were, the deer could have caused pile-ups and mass casualties.
>
> Thank you for your attention to this serious matter.

Sincerely,

Chrissy Rockwell

---
Chrissy Rockwell
Maryland Resident
chrissy.rockwell1@gmail.com

**From:** sylvia griffin
**To:** TPBcomment; Sharon Lawrence; Jacoline Key; Troy Barrington Lilly; Patricia Monroe
**Cc:** Wanda Gross; Elton Jones
**Subject:** Item 1 Public Comment Opportunity - Birchwood City
**Date:** Monday, November 16, 2026 4:36:37 PM
**Attachments:** Transportation Planning Board - Birchwood City.docx

---

Please see my attached document below on shared concerns regarding the Southside Project VOTE, Stop Highway Expansion.

*Sylvia Griffin, President*
Birchwood City-Clearview
Community Association
240-460-8743 (cell)
https://welcometobcca.org

---

Hello everyone,

Unfortunately, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) is moving forward with its request to hold a vote at the Transportation Planning Board meeting on Wednesday, November 18 on its updated Southside project proposal to widen the Beltway from Springfield, Virginia to Oxon Hill, Maryland.

**What can you do: Send a message to the Transportation Planning Board** to share your concerns about this proposal. Write a comment (more instructions here) and send it to the Transportation Planning Board at **TPBcomment@mwcog.org** with the subject line "Item 1 Public Comment Opportunity" or by calling and leaving a phone message at (202) 962-3315 by **Tuesday, November 17 at noon.** You can also sign up to speak. The staff at the planning board summarize the public comments at the beginning of their next meeting on November 18 at noon so it will be communicated to the planning board members (which includes MDOT, VDOT, County Council and state legislators across the region).

You can use this **template of key points** (and see more background info) prepared by some partners in the Maryland Advocates for Sustainable Transportation (MAST coalition). Please customize your message as much as possible so it can be recognized as a distinct comment.

Best,

Lindsey

On Fri, Oct 16, 2026 at 12:38 PM Lindsey Mendelson Iankova <lindsey.mendelson@mdsierra.org> wrote:

> Hello everyone,
>
> The Virginia Department of Transportation has been planning to go back to the regional Transportation Planning Board (TPB) to once again advance its plans to widen the Beltway between Oxon Hill, Maryland and Springfield, Virginia with toll lanes. Last October we succeeded in ensuring this flawed project was not included in the TPB's long range plan, so the project could not advance. But now VDOT is seeking a **vote from the planning board this November to have an updated version of the project studied** as part of TPB's "air quality conformity analysis." After that VDOT is pushing for approval of the project in early 2027 for inclusion in the long range plan. But VDOT has not provided the public or elected officials with basic information on the project's impacts to communities or on other alternative solutions. **See more information on their proposal.**
>
> VDOT claims their revised proposal will physically allow for Metrorail to be built but this is extremely unlikely as Metro would compete with the toll lanes project for users and would not align with the traditional public-private partnership model that seeks to maximize as much profit for the highway developers as possible.
>
> **What can you do: Send a message to the Transportation Planning Board** asking them to 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. Write a comment (more instructions here) and send it to the Transportation Planning Board at **TPBcomment@mwcog.org** with the subject line "Item 1 Public Comment Opportunity" or by calling and leaving a phone message at (202) 962-3315 by **Tuesday, October 20th at noon.** You can also sign up to speak. The staff at the planning board summarize the public comments at the beginning of their next meeting on October 21 at noon so it will be communicated to the planning board members (which includes MDOT, VDOT, County Council and state legislators across the region).

Here is a **template of key points** prepared by some partners in the Maryland Advocates for Sustainable Transportation (MAST coalition) you can consider raising. Please customize your message as much as possible so it can be recognized as a distinct comment.

Thanks,

Lindsey
--

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

Hello everyone,

Unfortunately, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) is moving forward with its request to hold a vote at the Transportation Planning Board meeting on Wednesday, November 18 on its updated Southside project proposal to widen the Beltway from Springfield, Virginia to Oxon Hill, Maryland.

**BIRCHWOOD CITY-CLEARVIEW MANOR COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION (BCCA)**
**P.O. BOX 007**
**OXON HILL, MD 20745**
**https://welcometobcca.org**

**Subject:** Item 1 Public Comment Opportunity – Birchwood City-Clearview Manor Community Association

**Date:** November 16, 2026

**To:** National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB)
Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
777 North Capitol Street NE, Suite 300
Washington, DC 20002

**Re: Formal Opposition to Advancing the I-495 Southside Express Lanes Project Without Local Traffic and Environmental Impact Studies**

Dear Chair and Members of the Transportation Planning Board,

On behalf of the **Birchwood City-Clearview Manor Community Association** in Oxon Hill, Maryland representing 800 homes in my community we, urge the Transportation Planning Board to **delay any vote** on November 18 to advance VDOT's I-495 Southside Express Lanes proposal into the air quality conformity analysis for *Visualize 2050*.

Our community sits directly at the Maryland terminus of this proposed expansion. Because VDOT's toll lanes would end right at our doorstep in Oxon Hill, our neighborhood stands to absorb the worst consequences of this project without receiving its promised benefits. For over two years, local officials and Prince George's County residents have asked VDOT for basic data on how funneling additional vehicles across the Woodrow Wilson Bridge will impact Maryland highways and local neighborhood streets. VDOT has still failed to provide this analysis, yet it is pushing for a rushed approval vote in early 2027.

Specifically, our association opposes moving this project forward before our questions are answered due to three critical impacts on our community:

- **Severe Local Bottlenecks and Cut-Through Traffic:** Ending express lanes in Oxon Hill will create a massive merge bottleneck on I-495 in Prince George's County. When highway congestion backs up, drivers inevitably spill onto local arteries such as Oxon Hill Road, Livingston Road, and Route 210, threatening pedestrian safety and quality of life in Birchwood City and Clearview Manor.

- **Disproportionate Environmental and Health Burdens:** According to the Maryland Department of the Environment's *EnviroScreen* tool, Oxon Hill and neighboring Forest Heights are already overburdened by high levels of particulate matter, diesel exhaust, and noise pollution. Adding lanes that generate up to 3.4 million metric tons of additional carbon pollution—while offering vague, after-the-fact "mitigation" that often results in widening local roads—is unacceptable for our residents' health.

- **Undermining Future Metrorail to Prince George's County:** While VDOT claims its revised footprint leaves physical space for transit on the Woodrow Wilson Bridge, locking the corridor into a decades-long private toll contract creates a severe financial barrier to extending the Blue Line into Prince George's County. Furthermore, VDOT's proposed $15 million annual transit payment cannot be used for Metrorail and falls far short of our community's need for affordable, reliable transit alternatives.

Once the Southside expansion is placed into *Visualize 2050*, Prince George's County and local communities lose their leverage to demand meaningful changes or multimodal alternatives—such as dedicated bus lanes, expanded commuter transit, and future Metrorail.

We respectfully ask the Board to stand with frontline Maryland communities, reject VDOT's rushed timeline, and require a comprehensive, transparent study of local traffic impacts and transit alternatives **before** taking any action to advance this project.

Sincerely,

*Sylvia Griffin*

Sylvia Griffin, President
Birchwood City-Clearview Manor Community Association
Oxon Hill, MD 20745
Email: sygriffin@gmail.com/Phone: 240-460-8743

**From:** Karina Bakhshi-Azar
**To:** TPBcomment; 495southsideexpresslanes@vdot.virginia.gov
**Cc:** ali.nomani@vdot.virginia.gov
**Subject:** Item 1 Public Comment Opportunity
**Date:** Friday, November 13, 2026 2:03:39 PM

---

Dear Members of the Transportation Planning Board,

I am writing to voice my strong opposition to the proposed expansion of the Capital Beltway from Springfield, Virginia, to Oxon Hill, Maryland.

While I recognize that traffic congestion is an issue throughout Northern Virginia and the greater Washington, DC region, I strongly believe that widening the Beltway is the wrong approach. We should be investing in smarter, more sustainable transportation solutions rather than continuing to expand highways at the expense of the communities surrounding them.

As a young homeowner in Old Town Alexandria, this proposal hits particularly close to home. My husband and I purchased our first home here on Jefferson Street because we love this community and see it as the place where we want to build our future. Buying a home is one of the biggest financial commitments a young family can make, and we made that investment with the expectation that the character, accessibility, and quality of life that make this area special would be protected.

I am deeply concerned that this project could compromise those very things. Increased traffic, prolonged construction, noise, air pollution, and environmental disruption could make surrounding communities less desirable places to live. These impacts also raise legitimate concerns about the long-term value of residential properties. Homeowners should not have to worry that a major infrastructure decision, made without adequate consideration for the people who live here, could negatively affect their largest financial investment.

Beyond the impact on individual homeowners, I believe this proposal reflects a short-term approach to a much larger regional transportation problem. Specifically:

**Environmental consequences:** More highway infrastructure means greater potential for vehicle emissions, noise pollution, and disruption to surrounding natural spaces.

**Community impact:** Existing residents should not be expected to absorb years of construction disruption and the lasting consequences of a larger highway.

**Long-term traffic concerns:** Expanding road capacity does not necessarily eliminate congestion. It can encourage additional driving and ultimately recreate the same traffic problems.

**Better alternatives:** Our region should prioritize reliable public transportation, improved transit connections, and investments that reduce our dependence on personal vehicles.

I urge the Transportation Planning Board to seriously reconsider this proposal and explore alternatives that address regional transportation needs without compromising the communities that make Northern Virginia such a desirable place to live.

People choose to live in Alexandria and invest in this region because of its neighborhoods, history, accessibility, and quality of life. Those qualities should be protected, not put at risk by a project that may offer only temporary relief while creating lasting consequences for residents.

Please consider the voices of the homeowners, families, and communities who will be directly affected. I strongly encourage the Board to vote against advancing this proposal in its current form.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Karina Azar

**From:** Janet Gingold
**To:** TPBcomment
**Subject:** Item 1 Public Comment Opportunity
**Date:** Thursday, November 12, 2026 11:43:57 AM

---

To: MWCOG Transportation Planning Board
Re: Oppose VDOT's Southside Toll Road Expansion

As a resident of Prince George's County who is concerned about addressing the real and present danger of climate change by reducing our regional greenhouse gas emissions, I urge the MWCOG Transportation Planning Board to stand firm against the Virginia Department of Transportation's Southside Toll Road Expansion project. This project is ill advised because it will not provide a long-term solution to traffic congestion; rather, it will induce more cars to take to the road. More lanes means more cars and trucks burning more fossil fuels. Even more important, this project will preclude the preferred alternative solution — extending Metro rail service across the Woodrow Wilson Bridge. Especially with Sphere glowing on the horizon with its large-load energy demand, we need more options for lower-emission transportation between Prince George's County and northern Virginia. Clearly, allowing those who can afford high tolls to travel faster exacerbates regional inequities.

Please oppose VDOT's proposed expansion of the I-495 toll lanes across the Woodrow Wilson Bridge into Oxon Hill. Instead support plans for extending electric Metro rail across the bridge so that we can see people moving back and forth across the Potomac without the greenhouse gas burden caused by so many internal combustion engines lined up bumper-to-bumper to ferry their occupants to destinations across the river.

Thanks in advance for looking out for the long-term best interests of the people of Prince George's County as you plan transportation projects for the Metropolitan Washington area.

Sincerely,
Janet Gingold
13107 Whiteholm Drive
UPPER MARLBORO, MD 20774
301-814-1223
jgingold3@gmail.com

| | |
|---|---|
| **From:** | Delanta Harrison |
| **To:** | TPBcomment |
| **Cc:** | Angel Rush; Monique Taylor; Marlyn Goins-Mccants; Krystal Isaac; Arlene Wilson; wayne Wright; D Randolph; Delanta Harrison; Shelia Miller; Ann Taylor; John E. Bailey IV |
| **Subject:** | Oppose the proposed I-495 Southside Express Lanes |
| **Date:** | Wednesday, October 21, 2026 3:28:40 PM |

---

**Dear Members of the Transportation Planning Board,**

The Camp Springs Civic Association (CSCA), representing concerned citizens in southern Prince George's County, Maryland, strongly opposes the proposed I-495 Southside Express Lanes expansion put forward by the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT). This proposal raises critical concerns regarding traffic congestion, financial affordability, future transit viability, and environmental justice. Regional leaders must demand a full accounting of these consequences before granting any project approvals.

Consequently, we urge the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT), Prince George's County, Fairfax County, and the City of Alexandria to insist that VDOT deliver a comprehensive study of traffic impacts and meaningful alternatives well in advance of any Transportation Planning Board (TPB) vote.

Unresolved Traffic Impacts and Local Disruption

While VDOT has committed to examining local road congestion and the new bottleneck that will be created where the toll lanes terminate in Prince George's County, this analysis remains outstanding—despite more than two years of inquiries from local officials. With VDOT seeking approval in early 2027, the public and elected officials urgently need adequate time to review these findings, question underlying assumptions, and assess alternatives.

Furthermore, VDOT's mitigation commitments lack necessary specifics. Widening roads and intersections directly threatens adopted municipal plans for walkable, mixed-use communities around Huntington, Van Dorn Street, Alexandria's Route 1 corridor, and National Harbor in Oxon Hill. Residents have a right to know exactly which roads will change, how their neighborhoods will be impacted, and whether these measures will ultimately induce more driving. Affected communities must not be left to absorb these consequences after the fact.

Equity and Economic Burden

Virginia's existing toll lanes have demonstrated that variable pricing does not eliminate persistent congestion. Instead, it creates a two-tiered system where faster commutes are reserved for those who can afford them, while working families are left trapped in congested general-purpose lanes. For regular commuters, these recurring charges place an unsustainable financial burden on household budgets. Regional leaders should instead prioritize transportation investments that provide affordable, reliable travel options for everyone.

Failure to Prioritize Clean, Multimodal Alternatives

Defining this project entirely around "Express Lanes" narrows the scope before sustainable alternatives receive fair consideration. Before advancing highway expansion, VDOT must evaluate:

- **Transit Enhancements:** Shoulder-running capabilities, dedicated bus lanes, expanded transit services, and robust carpool incentives.
- **Infrastructure & Planning:** Transit-oriented development and strong transportation demand management programs.
- **Future Rail Integration:** Protecting the alignment for a future Metrorail Blue Line extension.

While moving the toll lanes away from space reserved for rail resolves a physical conflict, financial barriers persist. Private toll-road agreements often include non-compete or compensation provisions that penalize the public if future Metrorail service reduces toll revenue. VDOT must disclose whether such provisions are being contemplated. Any final agreement must legally protect the region’s ability to extend Metrorail from Virginia into Prince George’s County without prohibitive financial penalties or contractual restrictions.

Environmental Justice for Frontline Communities

Expanding highway capacity inevitably increases air and noise pollution, contaminated stormwater runoff, and greenhouse gas emissions. Communities like Forest Heights and Oxon Hill already shoulder a disproportionate share of regional environmental burdens. This project's review must explicitly address how localized traffic increases will affect these neighborhoods and detail the enforceable protections that will be put in place.

Conclusion

MDOT and local leaders must demand complete data, transparent public reviews, and firm environmental and contractual protections before casting a vote at the TPB. Our collective transportation decisions should improve regional mobility while safeguarding public health, affordability, and future mass transit opportunities.

Thank you for your time, leadership, and attention to these critical concerns.

Sincerely,

Delanta Harrison Sr. President
Camp Springs Civic Association (CSCA)

**From:** Leslie Wharton
**To:** TPBcomment
**Subject:** Item 1 -- Public Comment Opportunity
**Date:** Saturday, November 7, 2026 10:31:58 AM

---

Dear Planning Board members:

Please delay any decision on the project until you have valid information on traffic impacts, environmental impacts, and the potential benefits of alternative solutions. Right now the promised analysis of the impacts of more cars accessing the expanded I-495 has not been taken. This information is critical for any decision about going forward. It is simply unacceptable for the Southside project to be voted upon before elected officials and the public understand any negative impacts it will have on local roads and on I-495 in Maryland.

You should be looking at alternatives that meet the needs of more residents and commuters. The Express Lanes model has not worked well, and most commuters spend long times bogged down in traffic on the general purpose lanes. We need to address congestion over the long term and study the potential benefits of shoulder and bus lanes and future Metrorail expansion. With high inflation and increasing costs of car ownership, we need to give residents access to more affordable clean transportation choices and invest in sustainable transit-oriented development.

Also, the current proposal would increase air, stormwater, noise and climate pollution. None of these impacts have been studied and no reports provided to our elected officials and the public. Just one piece of data: The RMI SHIFT calculator estimates the added lanes would result in between 1 and 3.4 million metric tons of carbon pollution through 2050 (the equivalent of 28,000 passenger car annual emissions. And communities near the Beltway would suffer increased air, stormwater and noise pollution). Just look at the Maryland Department of Environment's EnviroScreen tool which shows areas like Forest Heights and Oxon Hill as being impacted with high levels of pollution including soot and diesel. And the proposed expansion would very likely cause extreme bottlenecks in Prince George's County where the toll lanes end.

Thank you for considering my comments

Leslie Wharton

4978 Sentinel Drive #501

Bethesda, Maryland 208216

**From:** kieran grogan
**To:** TPBcomment
**Subject:** Item 1 Public Comment Opportunity
**Date:** Thursday, November 12, 2026 11:08:27 PM

---

Dear Transportation Planning Board Members,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed plan to widen the Capital Beltway from Springfield, Virginia, to Oxon Hill, Maryland.

I understand the region's transportation challenges and the frustration that comes with traffic congestion. However, I do not believe expanding highway capacity is a sustainable or effective long-term solution. Widening the Beltway risks creating more traffic over time by encouraging additional driving, while failing to address the underlying transportation issues facing our region.

**As a young homeowner in Old Town, Alexandria, this proposal is personal to my family.** My wife and I purchased our first home here with the intention of putting down roots, investing in our community, and building our future in Northern Virginia. Like many young homeowners, purchasing our first home represented a significant financial and personal commitment.

We chose this area because of its character, sense of community, accessibility, and quality of life. A major highway expansion threatens the very qualities that make this area such a desirable place to live. Increased traffic, construction disruption, noise pollution, and environmental impacts could diminish the appeal of surrounding neighborhoods and potentially negatively affect residential property values.

We have worked hard to make this investment in our future, and it is concerning to think that decisions made without sufficient consideration for existing residents could undermine the value of our homes and the quality of life we worked so hard to achieve. Homeownership should provide families with an opportunity to build stability and equity, not leave them worrying about the consequences of large-scale infrastructure decisions made without adequate community input.

Beyond the personal impact, I have several broader concerns:

- **Environmental impact:** Expanding an already heavily traveled

highway will contribute to additional vehicle emissions, noise pollution, and environmental disruption.
- **Impacts on local communities:** Nearby neighborhoods will bear the consequences of increased construction, noise, pollution, and potentially more congestion on surrounding roads.
- **Questionable long-term effectiveness:** Adding highway lanes is not a reliable long-term solution to congestion. Additional capacity can encourage more driving, ultimately bringing congestion back.
- **Misplaced transportation priorities:** Significant public resources should be directed toward improving public transportation, expanding reliable transit options, and making existing infrastructure more efficient rather than continually expanding highways.

I urge the Transportation Planning Board to reconsider this proposal and prioritize transportation solutions that are sustainable, fiscally responsible, and beneficial to the entire region.

Residents who have invested in this community deserve to have their voices heard. We should not sacrifice neighborhood character, environmental quality, and the long-term value of our homes for a highway expansion that may not even solve the congestion it is intended to address.

Please vote against advancing this proposal in its current form and require a more comprehensive evaluation of alternatives that prioritize existing residents, our environment, and the long-term transportation needs of the region.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A Concerned Old Town Alexandria Homeowner

**From:** Nora Gutierrez
**To:** TPBcomment
**Subject:** Item 1 Public Comment Opportunity
**Date:** Tuesday, November 17, 2026 7:26:06 AM

---

Hello--

Nora Soto Gutierrez here.

I am a resident of Oxon Hill, Maryland, and at 7:25 AM on Tuesday, November 17th, 2026, I am writing and emailing my opposition to the Virginia Department of Transportation's Planning Board taking any vote on the Southside Project, until members of the public, such as myself, get answers to questions that I have with respect to future adverse effects that said Southside Project will have on my transportation needs.

I am opposed to anything that adversely affects Metro and MetroRail--and it is clear that the Southside Project will be adversely affecting and altogether negating and eliminating Metro's ability to expand service between the state of Virginia and Prince George's County, Maryland-my place of residence.

At the same time, it also looks like the Southside Project will be not be providing Metro with the necessary annual funds that it lawfully deserves, to expand the impeccable service that residents like me have depended on and enjoyed for years; and still have the right to continue to depend on and enjoy for years to come.

So hold on and delay that vote!

Thank you.
Nora Soto Gutierrez
1313 Crisfield Dr, Oxon Hill, MD 20745
(202)834-3654

| | |
|---|---|
| **From:** | Phil Kanzleiter |
| **To:** | TPBcomment |
| **Subject:** | Strong Opposition to HOT Lanes Expansion on the Southern Segment of the I-495 Beltway |
| **Date:** | Wednesday, November 11, 2026 8:24:51 AM |

---

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed expansion of High-Occupancy Toll (HOT) lanes on the southern portion of the Capital Beltway (I-495).

As a Virginia resident who travels these specific lanes daily to Maryland for work, I experience the intense gridlock on this corridor firsthand. Our roads are already heavily overloaded, and the current approach to toll lane management has only increased delays at the American Legion Bridge. In fact, traffic has become so severe that even the existing HOT lanes frequently back up, particularly where the lanes bottleneck and merge back down to 4 lanes heading into Maryland, at the American Legion Bridge. Proving that expanding this flawed system is not a viable solution for regular commuters, moving forward with a plan that prioritizes drivers who are willing and able to pay high tolls, while actively removing or compromising existing capacity for regular commuters, is the wrong approach for our region's workforce.

I urge VDOT and the Transportation Planning Board to reconsider the scope of this project based on the following critical concerns:

- **Preservation of Existing General Purpose Capacity:** Any future construction must not take away existing capacity from non-toll general purpose lanes. If private concessionaires or the state wish to build toll lanes, they must find or acquire additional space to construct entirely new lanes rather than repurposing or squeezing current infrastructure. Everyday commuters should not be penalized to create premium lanes.
- **Prioritize Funding for Public Transit:** Instead of spending massive resources on planning and facilitating toll lane expansions, the Board should prioritize direct funding for the physical expansion of the Metro system. We need actionable funding for mass transit infrastructure now, not more prolonged studies or highway projects that incentivize single-occupancy toll driving.

Transportation policy in Northern Virginia should serve the entire community equitably by building robust transit alternatives and protecting existing public roads, rather than favoring those who can afford to pay out-of-pocket for their commute.

A copy of this note was also sent to the Fairfax board of supervisors.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and dedication to the residents of Fairfax County. I look forward to your response and to seeing a shift toward sustainable public transit funding.

Sincerely,

Philip Kanzleiter
Springfield, VA

**From:** Mark Scheufler
**To:** TPBcomment
**Subject:** Oppose Resolution R5-2027 [I-495 Southside Express Lanes (SEL)]
**Date:** Tuesday, November 17, 2026 10:34:40 AM

---

Dear Chair and Members of the Transportation Planning Board:

I am writing to urge you to vote no on Resolution R5-2027 until:

1. More clarity on a rail transit preferred alternative/space required in the corridor beyond the Woodrow Wilson Bridge.
2. More clarity on the congestion impacts caused by removing the auxiliary lanes on the WWB used by traffic merging on from Route 1 in VA and MD210/I-295 in MD.
3. Clear understanding of projected toll rates for crossing the WWB during peak period/peak direction for SOV/HOV2+ users. ($20+?)
4. More clarity on performance of existing/previous circumferential I-495 bus transit services to/from Tysons (Destination with abundant/free parking available) | Fairfax Connector 494 Burke-Tysons, Fairfax Connector Springfield-Tysons, Fairfax Connector 798 Bethesda-Tysons, Omniride Woodbridge-Tysons (Route Cancelled) | All examples previously provided were for radial routes along I-95/I-395 and I-66 to DC.

This corridor needs more funding certainty for rail transit ***infrastructure*** in this constrained corridor. A rail transit preferred alternative project should be completed concurrently with and substantially funded by the I-495 SEL project. Recommend a light rail or Metro Rail option that creates transit oriented development opportunities.

Rail Transit Recommendations (Light Rail or Metrorail):
https://www.google.com/maps/d/edit?mid=100fVGMBAEHnZxEBtCMM_leBYLyaLH_xD&usp=sharing

Thanks,
Mark Scheufler
NOVA Resident

| | |
|---|---|
| **From:** | Eduardo Ramirez |
| **To:** | TPBcomment |
| **Subject:** | Item 1 Public Comment Opportunity |
| **Date:** | Tuesday, November 10, 2026 10:31:38 PM |

---

Hello,
I am a resident of Maryland and travel through the Wildrow Wilson Bridge everyday. I am very concerned about the VDOT 495s expansion project. It will increase my commute dramatically during rush hour. Traffic is already bad enough to place tolls lanes and it will hurt all Maryland resident pockets with unfair tolls fees. Please so not allow VDOT to come hurt Maryland residents

**From:** Tony Hausner
**To:** TPBcomment
**Cc:** Lindsey Mendelson
**Subject:** Southside Project
**Date:** Friday, November 6, 2026 2:53:09 PM

---

I strongly oppose the proposed Southside project which will add more cars to the highway system. Adding more cars will result in significant additional air pollution. A much better approach to traffic issues is to make use of transit approaches, such as expanding Metro, adding light rail and Bus Rapid Transit solutions. These approaches have far less negative impact on our environment. I have been involved in advocating such solutions for many years in Maryland and the Metro area.

Tony Hausner

--
Tony Hausner, Ph.D.
Independent Health Policy Consultant
Former Senior Analyst, US CMS
http://tinyurl.com/thcmtyprofaccompl
Cell: 301-641-0497

Rachel Youngblade, NoVA Association of Realtors

On behalf of the Northern Virginia Association of REALTORS®, representing 13,000 real estate professionals across the region, we strongly support Resolution R5-2027.

Virginia's new Southside Express Lanes proposal directly addresses the Board's previous concerns.

First, it preserves space for future Metrorail on the Woodrow Wilson Bridge without reducing existing general-purpose lanes.

Second, it commits at least $15 million annually for transit, with funding increasing 3% each year.

Third, it protects local communities by committing to evaluate and mitigate additional traffic on local roads.

This proposal also reflects the regional collaboration the Board requested, bringing Maryland into the process and prioritizing the movement of more people through one of our region's most congested corridors.

A vote today does not approve the project. It simply allows the necessary air quality analysis to move forward.

We respectfully ask you to vote YES on R5-2027.

## Comments to Transportation Planning Board to Oppose Rushed Southside Project Vote and to Support Alternatives

The Climate Mobilization of Montgomery County asks there be no vote on VDOT's Southside Expansion Plan until after the VDOT provides the missing information that local jurisdictions have been requesting for more than 2 years. In early 2027 VDOT will push for approval of the project in the long range TPB plan prior to providing public or elected officials with basic information on the project's impacts on communities or offering alternative solutions.

In order for the TPB to make an informed decision, the VDOT must first provide analyses of local traffic impacts and alternatives to reduce congestion for the long term, including shoulder and bus lanes combined with expanded carpool and transit incentives and transit-oriented development. VDOT's latest proposal would increase air, stormwater, noise impacts and contribute an additional 1.0 to 3.4 Million Metric Tons of carbon pollution cumulatively though 2050.

Please delay any consideration of the VDOT's Southside Expansion Plan until all the stated analyses and information are provided.

Thank you for this opportunity to present the views of The Climate Mobilization, Montgomery County.

Nanci Wilkinson, Karl Held, and Kevin Walton

TCM Steering Committee members