I-495 SOUTHSIDE EXPRESS LANES STUDY
Public Comment Response Summary

From Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
Transportation Planning Board Meeting on October 21, 2026
Date: November 16, 2026

The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG) Transportation Planning Board (TPB) met on October 21, 2026. During the meeting, Virginia Secretary of Transportation Nick Donohue provided an update on the Virginia Department of Transportation's (VDOT) I-495 Southside Express Lanes Study.

VDOT is responding to the 25 comments received by the TPB during the in-person meeting, as well as by voicemail, letter, and email. VDOT will continue to solicit feedback from elected officials, localities, key stakeholders, and the public, including at upcoming public information meetings.

Common themes that were expressed in the public comments and VDOT's responses are included below, followed by individual comments and responses.

1. Transportation Planning Board (TPB) Constrained Long-Range Plan Inclusion

- *Concern:* Questions about why the I-495 Southside Express Lanes proposed project must be added to the regional long-range plan at this stage and whether inclusion equals final approval.
- *VDOT Response:* Inclusion in the TPB's constrained long-range plan and air quality conformity analysis is a necessary regulatory step for any project to become eligible for federal approval and funding. This step allows VDOT to continue essential technical work, such as the Environmental Assessment (EA), in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and traffic operational and safety studies. Inclusion is one stage in a multi-step process. Stakeholders and the public will have opportunities to participate and provide feedback and comments on the traffic operations analysis, environmental document, design modifications and other aspects of the project as design progresses. Formal public hearings and federal approval decisions are expected to occur in 2027.

2. Evaluation of Alternatives and Rationale

- *Concern:* Requests to evaluate non-highway alternatives, such as standalone transit, and heavy rail.
- *VDOT Response:* Since 2022, VDOT has identified and evaluated 10 alternative concepts. These concepts included No-Build, Transportation System Management/Transportation

Demand Management (TSM/TDM), Part-Time Shoulder Use, Standalone Transit, Transit TSM/TDM, +One General Purpose Lane, +Two General Purpose Lanes, +One Express Lane, +Two Express Lanes, and +Two Reversible Express Lanes. Adding two managed express lanes in each direction was determined to best address the project's stated intent of addressing highway congestion, providing reliable travel, and having the ability to expand travel choice through integration of bus rapid transit and carpool incentives.

3. Induced Demand and Congestion Management

- *Concern:* Belief that adding lane capacity will simply induce new vehicle trips, causing highway congestion to return over time.
- *VDOT Response:* Generally, regular lanes in congested urban areas continue to fill up with vehicles, becoming congested and unreliable again, sometimes leading to induced demand. Managed express lanes avoid this by using dynamic pricing to control demand for the lanes and traffic volume in real time, preserving free-flowing speeds and travel reliability for transit, carpools, and drivers who choose to use the lanes by paying a toll.

4. Transit Commitments and Funding

- *Concern:* Demands for major investments in regional transit, and bus service support rather than building new lanes.
- *VDOT Response:* Express lanes expand and provide reliable transit options. Improved travel reliability provided by express lanes allows buses and carpools to bypass traffic delays toll-free, while helping to reduce the number of vehicles on the road and move more people. Virginia's proven practice of funding transit services through express lanes toll revenue opens the door to new carpool and transit opportunities that may not otherwise be possible.

  As part of the I-495 Southside Express Lanes proposed project, VDOT is committing a minimum of $15 million annually, based on foreseeable market conditions with targeted growth over time, from toll revenues to fund regional transit improvements in the I-495 southside corridor. VDOT's practice of funding transit services through express lanes toll revenue has proven successful by already contributing $330 million toward transit services and capital projects in Northern Virginia. Overall, VDOT will receive approximately $5 billion in transit funding across the life of existing project agreements and terms on Northern Virginia's 97-mile express lanes network.

  VDOT's toll revenues currently are distributed through two primary programs: the Commuter Choice Program and direct payments to transit operators. The Commuter Choice Program was established in 2016, as a partnership between the Commonwealth and the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission, allocating toll funds from the I-66 Inside the Beltway Express Lanes and the I-95/I-395 Express Lanes toward multimodal projects benefitting the corridors selected through a competitive process. Since 2016, this initiative has invested approximately $212M across 72 unique projects, supporting new and

expanded bus services ($140M), rail capital ($28.9M), bus capital ($23.9M), vanpooling and carpooling incentives ($8.8M), transit access improvements ($5.3M), park-and-ride facilities ($3.9M), and roadway operations ($1.5M).

In addition to Commuter Choice grants, private express lanes partners provide direct annual transit payments administered by the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation using revenues from the I-66 Outside the Beltway and I-495 Northern Extension corridors. Since 2021, $118 million in direct payments have funded new and expanded express bus routes operated by PRTC's OmniRide and Fairfax County's Fairfax Connector.

5. Preservation of Future Metrorail Expansion

- *Concern:* Concerns that building express lanes will block a future Metrorail or light rail extension across the Woodrow Wilson Bridge.
- *VDOT Response:* The revised project design specifically preserves the 18-foot inside shoulders across the Woodrow Wilson Bridge to accommodate future heavy or light rail. VDOT supports future rail service across the Woodrow Wilson Bridge and has committed to including legally binding contractual provisions in any public-private partnership (P3) project agreement to guarantee that the bridge space remains reserved for rail and will not preclude the advancement of a rail extension across the bridge.

6. Local Road Operations and Traffic Spillover

- *Concern:* Concerns that highway interchanges and express lanes access points will divert traffic onto neighborhood streets and corridors like MD 210, Route 1, Telegraph Road, and South Van Dorn Street.
- *VDOT Response:* VDOT collected updated 2026 traffic data and is conducting a detailed operational and safety study adhering to Virginia and Maryland standards. Results will be shared for public input in spring/summer 2027 along with commitments to mitigate local road impacts shown to result from the project in coordination with local jurisdictions.

7. Environmental Assessment

- *Concern:* Questions regarding impacts on air quality, noise, streams, wetlands, wildlife, and neighborhood cohesion.
- *VDOT Response:* VDOT is conducting an Environmental Assessment (EA) under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in coordination with federal and state agencies. Where impacts are identified, the project team must consider applicable avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures. Draft findings of the EA will be presented at public hearings in 2027. The project must be included in the region's Constrained Long Range Plan and approve Air Quality Conformity Analysis in order to advance and conclude the NEPA process.

8. Equity and Tolling

- *Concern:* Concerns about toll costs burdening local residents and creating "Lexus lanes" for wealthy drivers.
- *VDOT Response:* All four existing general-purpose lanes in each direction on I-495 will be retained and remain free for travelers. Tolls apply only to non-HOV drivers who choose to use the express lanes. Commuters in carpools (HOV-3+), buses, vanpools, and motorcycles can travel in the express lanes toll free.

Public Comments Submitted from Sept. 15 - Oct. 21, 2026, for TPB Meeting and VDOT Responses

Comment	Response
10/16/2026 Paul Cruz -Voicemail 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.	Thank you for your comment. Since beginning the I-495 Southside Express Lanes Study in 2022, 10 alternative concepts were identified, and studied. These concepts included No-Build, Transportation System Management/Transportation Demand Management (TSM/TDM), Part-Time Shoulder Use, Standalone Transit, Transit TSM/TDM, +One General Purpose Lane, +Two General Purpose Lanes, +One Express Lane, +Two Express Lanes, and +Two Reversible Express Lanes. Additionally, the I-495 Southside Transit/TDM Study completed by Virginia's Department of Rail and Public Transportation (VDRPT) identified expanded bus service and TDM strategies as providing the most effective solutions for the I-495 southside corridor's transit needs. Express lanes support and provide transit options. Carpools (HOV-3+) and buses travel the express lanes for free and are able to bypass traffic delays and stay on schedule from the improved travel reliability provided by express lanes. This will directly benefit riders traveling on future express bus service between Oxon Hill, the Huntington Avenue Metro station, and Tysons. Without express lanes, buses and carpools would face daily gridlock, leading to ongoing delays.
10/14/2026 Mark Scheufler Email and Letter 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	Noted. Thank you for the detailed comment. A light rail option is not being considered at this time; however, the region can decide to study a heavy or light rail option as a separate initiative in coordination with the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), with support from Virginia and Maryland transit agencies, and local jurisdictions from throughout the region. VDOT supports a future rail option, which is why the current I-495 Southside Express Lanes concept preserves the 18-foot inside shoulders across the Woodrow Wilson Bridge to accommodate future rail, and does not preclude future light or heavy rail in this corridor.

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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 circumferential 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-66 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 TPB Visualize 2050 unless it is linked to an initial light rail segment in the same corridor. 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. GWP/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	

Comment	Response
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: NVTA, 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 WWB corridor. Thanks, Mark Scheufler NOVA Resident [Attachments in original email: image.png and "Recommended TPB Resolution – Woodrow Wilson Bridge Light Rail Transit Study – I-495 Southside Express Lanes Project" (draft resolution; see packet pp. 8–9). Resolution text not reproduced here.]	
10/20/2026 Lindsey Mendelson Maryland Sierra Club Letter	Throughout the past year, VDOT has worked closely with its Maryland partners including the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) and Prince George's County, as well as other localities and technical experts, to keep the I-495

Comment	Response
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	Southside Express Lanes Study moving forward and make changes to address public feedback and community needs. VDOT is hosting public meetings in late 2026/ early 2027, to share the latest project updates and hear the public's feedback. Ongoing public outreach and engagement will continue throughout the development of the proposed project. Additionally, VDOT is committed to completing its traffic operations and safety analysis using the latest traffic data and mitigating potential traffic impacts caused by the project on nearby local roads including MD 210, Route 1, Telegraph Road, and South Van Dorn Street. Inclusion of the proposed I-495 Southside Express Lanes project in the regional long-range plan allows VDOT to continue this important work, which is needed to shape the best possible project. Fixing traffic on I-495 takes more than one strategy, and the proposed project is an attainable solution to address the challenges and needs of the corridor in the near-term. This project will add much needed capacity to I-495 that is managed by dynamic pricing to combat traffic congestion and take pressure off local neighborhood streets. The express lanes will create and expand transit options, services and connections by offering free, dependable travel for buses, carpools, and vanpools – giving drivers a beneficial reason to leave their cars behind. The revised design concept for the I-495 Southside Express Lanes preserves space across the Woodrow Wilson Bridge and will not preclude future Metrorail expansion. Terms of any future project contract or concessionaire agreement with a private partner would include provisions that the untouched space on the bridge is intended for rail transit in the future. This type of contractual provision is included in other public-private partnership (P3) express lanes agreements that VDOT has in place such as the I-66 Outside the Beltway Express Lanes.

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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	
10/20/2026 Sharon Lawrence	Thank you for your comment. Express lanes are managed lanes—not just toll lanes. They offer toll-free trips for buses, carpools, vanpools, and motorcycles,

Comment	Response
Livingston Woods Homeowners Association Email and Letter 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.	providing reliable travel times and supporting new bus service connecting Oxon Hill, Huntington, and Tysons. Traffic Relief: Severe peak-hour congestion on I-495 currently spills over onto local streets. VDOT and MDOT are conducting detailed traffic analysis to show how the proposed design improves traffic compared to current and no-build conditions. Community-Driven Updates: The current concept has been updated based on public feedback from last year. Future Metrorail: The project does not prevent future Metrorail expansion, keeping space preserved for rail on the Woodrow Wilson Bridge. MD 210 Improvements: MDOT is conducting a separate, independent study to improve MD 210 outside of the I-495 Southside project.

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• 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	

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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.	

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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	
10/20/2026 Staci Hartwell South County Environmental Justice Coalition Email and Letter 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	Thank you for your comment. Fixing traffic on I-495 takes more than one strategy—it also requires better transit and incentives for commuters to share rides. This project will add much needed capacity to I-495, helping clear up highway gridlock and take pressure off local neighborhood streets. By offering free, dependable travel for buses, carpools, and vanpools, the Express Lanes will make rapid bus service possible and give drivers a real reason to leave their cars behind. Severe peak-hour congestion on I-495 currently spills over onto local streets. VDOT is conducting a detailed traffic analysis and coordinating this effort with MDOT and localities. MDOT is conducting a separate, independent study to improve MD 210 outside of the I-495 Southside project. The current concept has been updated based on public feedback from last year. The project does not prevent future Metrorail expansion, keeping space preserved for rail on the Woodrow Wilson Bridge.

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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	

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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)	
10/15/2026 Nanci Wilkinson Email 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.	Express lanes support and provide transit options. Carpools (HOV-3+) and buses travel the express lanes for free and are able to bypass traffic delays and stay on schedule from the improved travel reliability provided by express lanes. This will directly benefit riders traveling on future express bus service between Oxon Hill, the Huntington Avenue Metro station, and Tysons. Without express lanes, buses and carpools would face daily gridlock, leading to ongoing delays. Fixing traffic on I-495 takes more than one strategy— in addition to capacity improvement it requires better transit and incentives for commuters to share rides. This project will add much needed capacity to I-495, helping clear up highway gridlock and take pressure off local neighborhood streets. The revised design concept for the I-495 Southside Express Lanes preserves space across the Woodrow Wilson Bridge and will not preclude future Metrorail expansion. Terms of any future

Comment	Response
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	project contract or concessionaire agreement with a private partner would include provisions that the untouched space on the bridge is intended for rail transit in the future. This type of contractual provision is included in other public-private partnership (P3) express lanes agreements that VDOT has in place such as the I-66 Outside the Beltway Express Lanes.
10/16/2026 Steve Hoffman, D.D.S. Email 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	Thank you for your comment. Support from the TPB to include the proposed project in the constrained long-range plan is required for any future project under consideration so that it is eligible to receive federal funding. This decision point is just one step in the overall process of planning, evaluating, and developing the project. There are several other approvals and decisions points that must occur, and there will be related opportunities for public engagement, including public hearings in 2027. Inclusion of the proposed project in the regional long-range plan allows VDOT to continue important work that is needed to provide the answers and data that is being requested by yourself and others within the community. This work includes completing the project's environmental study and traffic operations and safety analysis, which is needed to shape the best possible project for the corridor. There were 10 alternative concepts identified and studied as part of VDOT's Environmental Assessment, which began in 2022. VDOT's recommendation to add two express lanes in each

Comment	Response
	direction was determined to best meet the needs of the I-495 southside corridor, while incorporating elements of the standalone transit alternatives that were identified.
10/16/2026 Eric McKenzie Email 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)	Thank you for your comment. VDOT's I-495 Southside Express Lanes Study includes an Environmental Assessment that considers environmental, air and noise, community, and transportation impacts, associated with the proposed express lanes alternative, in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Findings of this environmental study will be presented at public hearings in 2027, with the opportunity for the public to provide formal comments and input, before federal approvals are sought. The proposed express lanes will help reduce congestion and improve travel reliability by adding needed capacity that is managed by dynamic pricing. Express lanes are toll-free for carpools (HOV-3+) and buses. The revised design concept for the I-495 Southside Express Lanes preserves space across the Woodrow Wilson Bridge and will not preclude future Metrorail expansion. Terms of any future project contract or concessionaire agreement with a private partner would include provisions that the untouched space on the bridge is intended for rail transit in the future. This type of contractual provision is included in other public-private partnership (P3) express lanes agreements that VDOT has in place such as the I-66 Outside the Beltway Express Lanes.
10/18/2026 Kimberly Choi Email 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.	We agree that adding more general-purpose lanes often fills up quickly with new car trips (induced demand), potentially leading back to the same congestion plus higher maintenance costs and greater environmental impact. Express lanes manage the volume of cars allowed in the lane at any given time. Buses, emergency vehicles, and carpools use express lanes for free, making transit faster and more attractive than driving alone.

Comment	Response
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	Fixing traffic on I-495 takes more than one strategy— in addition to capacity improvement it requires better transit and incentives for commuters to share rides. This project will add much needed capacity to I-495, helping clear up highway gridlock and take pressure off local neighborhood streets. By offering free, dependable travel for buses, carpools, and vanpools, the Express Lanes will make rapid bus service possible and give drivers a real reason to leave their cars behind.
10/19/2026 Barbara Coufal Citizens Against Beltway Expansion (CABE) Email 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.	Thank you for your comment. VDOT supports a future rail option, which is why the current I-495 Southside Express Lanes concept preserves the 18-foot inside shoulders on the Woodrow Wilson Bridge. Fixing traffic on I-495 takes more than one strategy— in addition to capacity improvement it requires better transit and incentives for commuters to share rides. This project will add much needed capacity to I-495, helping clear up highway gridlock and take pressure off local neighborhood streets. Terms of any future project contract or concessionaire agreement with a private partner would include provisions that the untouched space on the bridge is intended for rail transit in the future. This type of contractual provision is included in other public-private partnership (P3) express lanes agreements that VDOT has in place such as the I-66 Outside the Beltway Express Lanes.

Comment	Response
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.	
10/18/2026 David S. Kosterlitz Email 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	Fixing traffic on I-495 takes more than one strategy— in addition to capacity improvement it requires better transit and incentives for commuters to share rides. This project will add much needed capacity to I-495, helping clear up highway gridlock and take pressure off local neighborhood streets. Terms of any future project contract or concessionaire agreement with a private partner would include provisions that the untouched space on the bridge is intended for rail transit in the future. This type of contractual provision is included in other public-private partnership (P3) express lanes agreements that VDOT has in place such as the I-66 Outside the Beltway Express Lanes.
10/19/2026 Terrence Fitzgerald, MD Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility	Thank you for your comment.

Comment	Response
Email 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	We agree that adding more regular lanes often gets congested quickly with new car trips (induced demand), potentially leading back to the same congestion plus higher maintenance costs. Express lanes manage the volume of cars allowed in the lane at any given time. Buses, emergency vehicles, and carpools use express lanes for free, making transit faster and more attractive than driving alone. Fixing traffic on I-495 takes more than one strategy— in addition to capacity improvement it requires better transit and incentives for commuters to share rides. This project will add much needed capacity to I-495, helping clear up highway gridlock and take pressure off local neighborhood streets. By offering free, dependable travel for buses, carpools, and vanpools, the Express Lanes will make rapid bus service possible and give drivers a real reason to leave their cars behind. VDOT collected traffic data in 2026 and is committed to completing its traffic operations and safety analysis using this latest traffic data. Severe peak-hour congestion occurs on I-495 and the traffic spills over onto local streets. VDOT is conducting detailed traffic analysis and coordinating these efforts with MDOT. The operations analysis results will be available for public input in spring/ summer of 2027. The project will mitigate any traffic impacts caused by the project. Support from the TPB to include the proposed project in the constrained long-range plan is required for any future project under consideration so that it is eligible to receive federal funding. This decision point is just one step in the overall process of planning, evaluating, and developing the project. There are several other approvals and decisions points that must occur, and there will be related opportunities for public engagement, including public hearings in 2027. Inclusion of the proposed project in the regional long-range plan allows VDOT to continue important work that is needed to provide the answers and data that is being requested by yourself

Comment	Response
	and others within the community. This work includes completing the project's environmental study and traffic operations and safety analysis, which is needed to shape the best possible project for the corridor.
10/19/2026 K J Doneby Smith Email 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	Thank you for your comment. VDOT collected the latest traffic data in 2026 and is committed to completing its traffic operations and safety analysis using this latest traffic data. Severe peak-hour congestion occurs on I-495 and the traffic spills over onto local streets. VDOT is conducting detailed traffic analysis and coordinating these efforts with MDOT. The operations analysis results will be available for public input in spring/ summer of 2027. The project will mitigate any traffic impacts caused by the project. Support from the TPB to include the proposed project in the constrained long-range plan is required for any future project under consideration so that it is eligible to receive federal funding. This decision point is just one step in the overall process of planning, evaluating, and developing the project. There are several other approvals and decisions points that must occur, and there will be related opportunities for public engagement, including public hearings in 2027. Inclusion of the proposed project in the regional long-range plan allows VDOT to continue important work that is needed to provide the answers and data that is being requested by yourself and others within the community. This work includes completing the project's environmental study and traffic operations and safety analysis, which is needed to shape the best possible project for the corridor.
10/19/2026 Kristina Borror Email	Thank you for your comment. Fixing traffic on I-495 takes more than one strategy— in addition to capacity improvement it requires better transit and incentives for commuters to share rides. This project will add much needed

Comment	Response
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 though 2050); therefore, the public deserves and elected officials should require adequate information. Kristina Borror	capacity to I-495, helping clear up highway gridlock and take pressure off local neighborhood streets. By offering free, dependable travel for buses, carpools, and vanpools, the Express Lanes will make rapid bus service possible and give drivers a real reason to leave their cars behind. VDOT collected the latest traffic data in 2026 and is committed to completing its traffic operations and safety analysis using this latest traffic data. Severe peak-hour congestion occurs on I-495 and the traffic spills over onto local streets. VDOT is conducting detailed traffic analysis and coordinating these efforts with MDOT. The operations analysis results will be available for public input in spring/ summer of 2027. The project will mitigate any traffic impacts caused by the project. Support from the TPB to include the proposed project in the constrained long-range plan is required for any future project under consideration so that it is eligible to receive federal funding. This decision point is just one step in the overall process of planning, evaluating, and developing the project. There are several other approvals and decisions points that must occur, and there will be related opportunities for public engagement, including public hearings in 2027. Inclusion of the proposed project in the regional long-range plan allows VDOT to continue important work that is needed to provide the answers and data that is being requested by yourself and others within the community. This work includes completing the project's environmental study and traffic operations and safety analysis, which is needed to shape the best possible project for the corridor.
10/20/2026 Teresa Meeks Email	Thank you for your comment. VDOT is currently conducting an environmental study and one of the key aspects of the study is to avoid and minimize impacts to environmental resources. This study is being coordinated with the federal and state agencies.

Comment	Response
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	Fixing traffic on I-495 takes more than one strategy— in addition to capacity improvement it requires better transit and incentives for commuters to share rides. This project will add much needed capacity to I-495, helping clear up highway gridlock and take pressure off local neighborhood streets. By offering free, dependable travel for buses, carpools, and vanpools, the Express Lanes will make rapid bus service possible and give drivers a real reason to leave their cars behind.
10/20/2026 Joseph Baldi Email 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	Thank you for your comment. VDOT is conducting extensive studies to determine the financial feasibility of the project. VDOT collected the latest traffic data in 2026 and is committed to completing its traffic operations and safety analysis using this latest traffic data. Severe peak-hour congestion occurs on I-495 and the traffic spills over onto local streets. VDOT is conducting detailed traffic analysis and coordinating these efforts with MDOT. The operations analysis results will be available for public input in spring/ summer of 2027. The project will mitigate any traffic impacts caused by the project.
10/20/2026 Patricia Monroe South Lawn Citizens Association Email 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	Thank you for your comment. Fixing traffic on I-495 takes more than one strategy— in addition to capacity improvement it requires better transit and incentives for commuters to share rides. This project will add much needed capacity to I-495, helping clear up highway gridlock and take pressure off local neighborhood streets. By offering free, dependable travel for buses, carpools, and vanpools, the Express Lanes will make rapid bus service possible and give drivers a real reason to leave their cars behind. VDOT collected the latest traffic data in 2026 and is committed to completing its traffic operations and safety analysis using this latest traffic data. Severe peak-hour congestion occurs on I-495 and the traffic spills over onto local streets. VDOT is conducting detailed traffic analysis and coordinating these efforts with MDOT. The operations analysis results will be available for public

Comment	Response
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" yo the toll lanes. Yet they are pushing for an approval if 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 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. VDOTs mitigation plan will not work! I believe if this project is approved mass transit will never come to the south side of the County. VDOTs plan will only add more vehicles on the road, which equates to more income from tolls. intollseventing “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 when 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	input in spring/ summer of 2027. The project will mitigate any traffic impacts caused by the project. Support from the TPB to include the proposed project in the constrained long-range plan is required for any future project under consideration so that it is eligible to receive federal funding. This decision point is just one step in the overall process of planning, evaluating, and developing the project. There are several other approvals and decisions points that must occur, and there will be related opportunities for public engagement, including public hearings in 2027. Inclusion of the proposed project in the regional long-range plan allows VDOT to continue important work that is needed to provide the answers and data that is being requested by yourself and others within the community. This work includes completing the project’s environmental study and traffic operations and safety analysis, which is needed to shape the best possible project for the corridor.
10/20/2026 Lee McNair Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Environmental Justice Ministry	Thank you for the comment.

Public Comments Submitted from Sept. 15 - Oct. 21, 2026, for TPB Meeting and VDOT Responses

Comment	Response
Email Re: Our request that the TPB delay any vote on the Southside project until futher 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 it's 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 harm 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	Cost Structure for Residents: The four existing general-purpose lanes in each direction will remain free and open to all drivers. Tolls apply only to drivers who choose to use the express lanes. Free Access: Buses, carpools with three or more occupants (HOV3+), and motorcycles can use the express lanes free of charge. Beneficiaries: The project is intended to benefit transit users (faster bus travel times and schedule reliability), carpoolers, drivers willing to pay a dynamic toll for reliable travel speeds, and non-toll drivers who may experience reduced congestion in the general-purpose lanes. Potential Harms & Mitigation: Potential property and resource impacts are currently evaluated in the Environmental Assessment (EA), with VDOT aiming to minimize property acquisition during detailed design. Traffic impacts on surrounding local streets (such as South Van Dorn Street, Telegraph Road, Route 1, and MD 210) and noise impacts are being evaluated to develop practical mitigation measures. Resource Evaluation: The review evaluates impacts on air quality, water resources, noise, parks, streams, wetlands, and historic/cultural resources, requiring avoidance, minimization, or mitigation where impacts occur Bicycle & Pedestrian Facilities: The project design includes new or improved bicycle and pedestrian connections between neighboring communities
10/20/2026 Marty Atias Email 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.	Thank you for your comment. Fixing traffic on I-495 takes more than one strategy— in addition to capacity improvement it requires better transit and incentives for commuters to share rides. This project will add much needed capacity to I-495, helping clear up highway gridlock and take pressure off local neighborhood streets. By offering free, dependable travel for buses, carpools, and vanpools, the Express Lanes will make rapid bus service possible and give drivers a real reason to leave their cars behind.

Comment	Response
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 though 2050), the public deserves and elected officials should require adequate information. -- Marty Atias ATS Communications Silver Spring, MD	VDOT collected the latest traffic data in 2026 and is committed to completing its traffic operations and safety analysis using this latest traffic data. Severe peak-hour congestion occurs on I-495 and the traffic spills over onto local streets. VDOT is conducting a detailed traffic analysis and coordinating these efforts with MDOT. The operations analysis results will be available for public input in spring/ summer of 2027. The project will mitigate any traffic impacts caused by the project. Support from the TPB to include the proposed project in the constrained long-range plan is required for any future project under consideration so that it is eligible to receive federal funding. This decision point is just one step in the overall process of planning, evaluating, and developing the project. There are several other approvals and decisions points that must occur, and there will be related opportunities for public engagement, including public hearings in 2027. Inclusion of the proposed project in the regional long-range plan allows VDOT to continue important work that is needed to provide the answers and data that is being requested by yourself and others within the community. This work includes completing the project's environmental study and traffic operations
10/20/2026 Emily Harris Email 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 comment. Fixing traffic on I-495 takes more than one strategy— in addition to capacity improvement it requires better transit and incentives for commuters to share rides. This project will add much needed capacity to I-495, helping clear up highway gridlock and take pressure off local neighborhood streets. By offering free, dependable travel for buses, carpools, and vanpools, the Express Lanes will make rapid bus service possible and give drivers a real reason to leave their cars behind. VDOT collected the latest traffic data in 2026 and is committed to completing its traffic operations and safety analysis using this latest traffic data. Severe peak-hour congestion occurs on I-495

Comment	Response
Thank you for your consideration, Emily Harris 600 Hermleigh Road Silver Spring, MD 20902 Pronouns: she/her/hers	and the traffic spills over onto local streets. VDOT is conducting detailed traffic analysis and coordinating these efforts with MDOT. The operations analysis results will be available for public input in spring/ summer of 2027. The project will mitigate any traffic impacts caused by the project. Support from the TPB to include the proposed project in the constrained long-range plan is required for any future project under consideration so that it is eligible to receive federal funding. This decision point is just one step in the overall process of planning, evaluating, and developing the project. There are several other approvals and decisions points that must occur, and there will be related opportunities for public engagement, including public hearings in 2027. Inclusion of the proposed project in the regional long-range plan allows VDOT to continue important work that is needed to provide the answers and data that is being requested by yourself and others within the community. This work includes completing the project's environmental study and traffic operations
10/20/2026 Monique Taylor Camp Springs Civic Association Email 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.	Thank you for your comment. Fixing traffic on I-495 takes more than one strategy— in addition to capacity improvement it requires better transit and incentives for commuters to share rides. This project will add much needed capacity to I-495, helping clear up highway gridlock and take pressure off local neighborhood streets. By offering free, dependable travel for buses, carpools, and vanpools, the Express Lanes will make rapid bus service possible and give drivers a real reason to leave their cars behind. VDOT collected the latest traffic data in 2026 and is committed to completing its traffic operations and safety analysis using this latest traffic data. Severe peak-hour congestion occurs on I-495 and the traffic spills over onto local streets. VDOT is conducting detailed traffic analysis and coordinating these efforts with MDOT. The operations analysis results will be available for public

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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.	input in spring/ summer of 2027. The project will mitigate any traffic impacts caused by the project. Support from the TPB to include the proposed project in the constrained long-range plan is required for any future project under consideration so that it is eligible to receive federal funding. This decision point is just one step in the overall process of planning, evaluating, and developing the project. There are several other approvals and decisions points that must occur, and there will be related opportunities for public engagement, including public hearings in 2027. Inclusion of the proposed project in the regional long-range plan allows VDOT to continue important work that is needed to provide the answers and data that is being requested by yourself and others within the community. This work includes completing the project's environmental study and traffic operations. Cost Structure for Residents: The four existing general-purpose lanes in each direction will remain free and open to all drivers. Tolls apply only to drivers who choose to use the express lanes. Free Access: Buses, carpools with three or more occupants (HOV3+), and motorcycles can use the express lanes free of charge. Beneficiaries: The project is intended to benefit transit users (faster bus travel times and schedule reliability), carpoolers, drivers willing to pay a dynamic toll for reliable travel speeds, and non-toll drivers who may experience reduced congestion in the general-purpose lanes. Potential Harms & Mitigation: Potential property and resource impacts are currently evaluated in the Environmental Assessment (EA), with VDOT aiming to minimize property acquisition during detailed design. Traffic impacts on surrounding local streets (such as South Van Dorn Street, Telegraph Road, Route 1, and MD 210) and noise impacts are being evaluated to develop practical mitigation measures. Resource Evaluation: The review evaluates impacts on air quality, water resources, noise, parks, streams, wetlands, and

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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	historic/cultural resources, requiring avoidance, minimization, or mitigation where impacts occur Bicycle & Pedestrian Facilities: The project design includes new or improved bicycle and pedestrian connections between neighboring communities. VDOT supports a future rail option, which is why the current I-495 Southside Express Lanes concept preserves the 18-foot inside shoulders across the Woodrow Wilson Bridge to accommodate future rail, and does not preclude future light or heavy rail in this corridor. Additionally, the I-495 Southside Transit/TDM Study completed by Virginia's Department of Rail and Public Transportation (VDRPT) identified expanded bus service and TDM strategies as providing the most effective solutions for the I-495 southside corridor's transit needs. Express lanes support and provide transit options. Carpools (HOV-3+) and buses travel the express lanes for free and are able to bypass traffic delays and stay on schedule from the improved travel reliability provided by express lanes. This will directly benefit riders traveling on future express bus service between Oxon Hill, the Huntington Avenue Metro station, and Tysons. Without express lanes, buses and carpools would face daily gridlock, leading to ongoing delays.
10/21/2026 Nick Orrick Riverdale, MD In-Person Testimony Uh, good afternoon. My name is Nick Orrick. I'm from Riverdale, Maryland, which is in Prince George's County. There is a climate crisis going on. We're right in the midst of it. And yet, you wouldn't really know it based on the commitment to implementing solutions. As everybody here probably knows, the principal source of greenhouse gas emissions is transportation. And yet, Virginia is supporting spending billions of dollars to make it easier for people to emit ever more greenhouse gases. Transurban knows very well that toll lanes will not solve the congestion problem. Otherwise, they would not build toll lanes for uh and not have people pay	Thank you for your comment. Fixing traffic on I-495 takes more than one strategy— in addition to capacity improvement it requires better transit and incentives for commuters to share rides. This project will add much needed capacity to I-495, helping clear up highway gridlock and take pressure off local neighborhood streets. By offering free, dependable travel for buses, carpools, and vanpools, the Express Lanes will make rapid bus service possible and give drivers a real reason to leave their cars behind.

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the tolls because the non-toll lanes are not congested. The only viable way to reduce congestion is reducing vehicle miles traveled. Thank you.	
10/21/2026 Janet Gallant Co-Coordinator, DontWiden270.org In-Person Testimony I'm with DontWiden270.org. VDOT's revised Southside plan should not be added to Visualize 2050. At the recent MDOT road show in Prince George's County, Assistant MDOT Secretary Joe McAndrew said of the Southside project, quote, "We won't go ahead and give in if it doesn't work for the state and the county." End quote. That's a responsible approach, and the Southside revisions VDOT presents this afternoon offer no evidence that the plan will work for Maryland. First, the long-requested analyses of Southside's impact on Prince George's roads and communities have not been done. The effects of new bottlenecks decreased safety, and environmental impacts have not been studied, and VDOT has failed to seriously consider alternatives. VDOT has also said critical decisions on toll setting and revenue sharing will be made during VDOT's negotiations with their concessionaire after the project is approved. Maryland is not invited to that table. VDOT's major change to the Southside plan reserving room on the Wilson Bridge for Metro in no way guarantees that Metro will ever cross that bridge. The cost to taxpayers of compensating the toll lane concessionaire for loss revenue would be astronomical. VDOT's proposal to build and operate unaffordable private toll lanes in another state is without precedent in the US. Based on the evidence VDOT presents, the project will harm, not benefit Maryland. Thank you.	Thank you for your comment. The revised design concept for the I-495 Southside Express Lanes preserves space across the Woodrow Wilson Bridge and will not preclude future Metrorail expansion. Terms of any future project contract or concessionaire agreement with a private partner would include provisions that the untouched space on the bridge is intended for rail transit in the future. This type of contractual provision is included in other public-private partnership (P3) express lanes agreements that VDOT has in place such as the I-66 Outside the Beltway Express Lanes.
10/21/2026 Lindsey Mendelsohn Maryland Sierra Club In-Person Testimony Thank you, Lindsey Mendelson with the Maryland Sierra Club. We urge TPB to not schedule any vote to advance a Southside project for inclusion in the air quality conformity report until VDOT answers key questions and gets input from impacted residents. We have asked VDOT for 2 years to study the local traffic impacts and the bottleneck on the Beltway. Yet VDOT is moving	Thank you for your comment. Inclusion of the proposed I-495 Southside Express Lanes project in the TPB's air quality conformity analysis and constrained long-range plan is a requirement that exists for any future project to be eligible for federal approval and federal funding, and to ensure it is included in the region's air quality conformity analysis. This decision point is just one step in the overall process of planning, evaluating, developing and potentially constructing a project. There are several other approvals and decisions points on the I-495 Southside Express Lanes proposed project that must occur, and related opportunities for public engagement including public hearings in 2027.

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ahead again without answering these questions. We have asked repeatedly for VDOT to hold public engagement sessions to explore a range of project options. This vote would be scheduled less than 30 days away, but there have been zero public input sessions in Prince George's County. This proposal is not giving Prince George's meaningful transit improvements. VDOT slideshow acknowledges the money from their proposal couldn't be used to pay for Metrorail expansion. 15 million is simply not offering significant transit improvements. We know that even if the shoulder allows Metrorail physically, there will be a big financial obstacle to Metro expansion from the competition it would would create with a P3 toll lane for users. MDE's EJ Tool currently indicates the areas in Forest Heights in Oxon Hill as being disproportionately burdened with very high levels of pollution. Route 210, where the toll lanes would end, has been labeled the highway of death due to traffic and pedestrian safety concerns, but VDOT has not shared how this new concept would address these concerns. The planning board must look at a range of transit and transportation demand manage management options in the air quality conformity report. Otherwise, we are simply not advancing this conversation to explore options. Thank you.	Inclusion of the proposed I-495 Southside Express Lanes project in the regional long-range plan allows VDOT to continue important work that is needed to provide the answers and data that is being requested by yourself and others within the community. This work includes completing the project's environmental study and traffic operations and safety analysis. VDOT is committed to completing its traffic operations and safety analysis using the latest traffic data and mitigating potential traffic impacts caused by the project on nearby local roads including MD 210, Route 1, Telegraph Road, and South Van Dorn Street, in coordination with local jurisdictions. VDOT will host five public meetings in late 2026 or early 2027, including two meetings in Prince George's County, to share the latest project updates and hear the public's feedback. Ongoing public outreach and engagement will continue throughout the development of the proposed project. VDOT's recommendation to add two express lanes in each direction was determined, out of 10 alternatives, to best meet the needs of the I-495 southside corridor. The express lanes will create and expand transit options, services and connections by offering free, dependable travel for buses, carpools, and vanpools - giving drivers a beneficial reason to leave their cars behind. VDOT is committing to a minimum of $15 million a year for transit in the I-495 southside corridor, with the goal of increasing this amount through a competitive procurement process. VDOT's practice of funding transit services through express lanes toll revenue has proven successful by already contributing $330 million toward transit services and capital projects in Northern Virginia that otherwise probably would not have been funded. Furthermore, VDOT will receive an astounding $5 billion in transit funding across the life of existing project agreements and terms on Northern Virginia's 97-mile express lanes network.

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10/21/2026 Bill Pugh *Coalition for Smarter Growth* In-Person Testimony Good afternoon. The Coalition for Smarter Growth appreciates the involvement of Virginia Secretary Donohue and his offices engagement with local jurisdictions. We also applaud the effort to actually look at whether the proposal would complicate future Metrorail and avoid bad impacts. Uh, VDOT had not done that a year ago despite all the promises of not precluding rail. So, it is important for this board to remember that over two years ago, you passed a resolution stating that you were giving VDOT time to analyze the new bottleneck in Maryland, impact of traffic on local roads, and look at other alternatives like demand management. VDOT working with its partner MDOT has still not done that. Therefore, TPB members today need to ask key questions and get answers to them before there's a vote on more regional modeling rather than doing this um directly local with jurisdictions. When will VDOT complete and share the traffic analysis with local stakeholders? Fairfax, Prince George's, and Alexandria all asked for that information a year ago and and previously. And what kind of traffic mitigation is VDOT promising? Is this imply wider roads, bigger intersections? That approach conflicts with state small area plan visions in for walkable mixed-use areas at National Harbor, Oxon Hill, Huntington, South Old Town, and Eisenhower West. Um, as an Alexandria resident, you know, I take our vision seriously. So, I ask for you to get answers to these questions and not put the cart before the horse. Thank you.	VDOT is conducting a traffic analysis of the I-495 southside corridor as part of its Environmental Assessment and is conducting a local road operational and safety study, as well. This detailed traffic operations and safety analysis is underway, using the latest traffic data, to evaluate potential impacts caused by the project on nearby local roads including MD 210, Route 1, Telegraph Road, and South Van Dorn Street. VDOT is adhering to both Virginia and Maryland standards for this evaluation. Any impacts caused by the project on nearby local roads will be mitigated through the project to the maximum extent practicable, in coordination with local jurisdictions to ensure consistency with long-range plans. There were 10 alternative concepts identified and studied as part of VDOT's Environmental Assessment, which began in 2022. VDOT's recommendation to add two express lanes in each direction was determined to best meet the needs of the I-495 southside corridor, while incorporating elements of the standalone transit alternatives that were identified. Fixing traffic on I-495 takes more than one strategy, and VDOT believes the proposed I-495 Southside Express Lanes project is an attainable solution to address the challenges and needs of the corridor in the near-term. The travel reliability and transit funding source provided by express lanes will create and expand transit options and help transform the southern section of the Beltway into a robust transit corridor.