VISUALIZE 2050
National Capital Region Transportation Plan

Frequently Asked Questions: Proposed I-495 Southside Express Lanes Project Amendment to Visualize 2050

This FAQ includes questions/answers received during the TPB's process to consider amending Visualize 2050 to include the I-495 Southside Express Lanes (SEL) project. As needed during the amendment process, additional questions and answers will be added to this FAQ.

TPB staff received the following questions as of November 17, 2026.

1. **What is the approximate cost in TPB staff hours and budget of conducting the special off-cycle air quality conformity analysis of the I-495 Southside Express Lanes?**

Conducting regional air quality conformity analysis for the TPB's Metropolitan Transportation Plan, Visualize 2050, and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is part of the core function of the TPB staff. As such, there are no discrete budget allocations for this task.

2. **Are there further conformity model changes or updates that might be needed in 2027 due to federal requirements or anticipated TPB modeling and forecasting updates?**

At this time, staff is not aware of any other changes to the regional air quality conformity analysis inputs that would merit an immediate revision to the analysis in 2027.

3. **What types of potential refinements to the project design, operating assumptions, or transit service assumptions, would require another special off-cycle air quality conformity analysis of the I-495 SEL project?**

Substantive changes to the scope of the project that would result in a regionally significant change to the roadway and transit system capacity OR operations would merit re-examining the approved air quality conformity analysis. The nature and magnitude of change in the capacity or operations are relative to the fidelity of the travel demand and air quality models used in the analysis. For example, extending an acceleration or deceleration lane on a stretch of a limited access facility OR adding a turn lane at an intersection OR updating the schedule of services for a few bus routes are not considered regionally significant for air quality purposes and as such do not merit an off-cycle revision to the approved analysis.

4. **What transit improvements are assumed in the new conformity modeling and current project planning by VDOT, MDOT and WMATA? For example, why is TPB proposing to model a Branch Ave-Tysons new bus service when the Virginia Secretary of Transportation's recent presentations have an Oxon Hill-Huntington service?**

The documentation submitted by VDOT for the revised I-495 SEL project describes a new bus service that appears to have been discussed and agreed to, and this is new bus service between Branch

Ave. and Tysons Corner. The Virgina Secretary of Transportation noted, during his briefing of the TPB at its October 21, 2026 meeting, that the VDOT project team is engaged on discussions examining other bus services specifically one between Oxon Hill-Huntington. It appears that discussions on this have not been finalized and thus this service has not been officially proposed to be included in the analysis. It must be noted that the air quality analysis is conducted at a regional scale and as such not all changes to bus transit service are deemed regionally significant for air quality purposes.