



County of Fairfax, Virginia

To protect and enrich the quality of life for the people, neighborhoods and diverse communities of Fairfax County

April 13, 2009

Mr. Morteza Salehi
District Administrator
Virginia Department of Transportation
14685 Avion Parkway
Chantilly, VA 20151-1104

Subject: Comments on Design Plans for the I-95/395 High Occupancy Toll (HOT) Lanes Project (Mason, Lee, and Mount Vernon Districts)

Dear Mr. Salehi:

I am writing you at the request of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors to provide comments to you regarding the design plans for constructing the I-95/395 High Occupancy Toll Lanes. The Board reviewed this matter at their March 30, 2009 meeting and expressed concerns and provided comments regarding the project. For your information, I have listed staff recommendations as presented to the Board and the comments made at the March 30th board meeting.

Staff Recommendations:

- Coordinate plans to manage stormwater runoff, including sediment and erosion control, outfall treatments, and necessary easements, with the Fairfax County Department of Public Works and Environmental Services (for all locations) and the Fairfax County Park Authority Planning and Development Division (for park properties). The County wants to ensure in particular that areas of known existing stormwater management concern and stream degradation adjacent to the project are adequately addressed to provide stabilization during and at the completion of construction, so as not to exacerbate existing stream degradation. It is desirable that planned stormwater management facilities and areas identified on preliminary road plans be maximized and optimized where possible to help alleviate existing and future stormwater impacts due to the highway. The County requests the opportunity to provide input during the early stages of stormwater drainage designs to provide collaborative opportunities for implementation of identified watershed capital improvement projects. Also, the County would like the opportunity to review the portions of the construction plans dealing with stormwater and erosion and sedimentation control and will provide comments on these elements on a priority basis within the Virginia Department of Transportation's (VDOT's) established review timeframes.

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- In order to reduce the expected significant traffic impacts on neighboring communities and the secondary street system of various Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) installations being constructed along the I-95/I-395 corridor, direct access should be provided to and from the HOT lanes to/from the BRAC facilities where physically and operationally feasible. The cost of this direct access should be borne by the developers of the BRAC properties rather than at project cost.

NOTE: The Board asked that this comment be emphasized and highlighted-see additional Board comments below.

- The project team should provide the design exception documentation for the narrow shoulder widths along the corridor and identify specifically how they plan to address these constrained areas in terms of safety, both of transit and auto users.
- Slugging has been very successful in moving large numbers of people in the corridor. This project should ensure that this arrangement continues at its current levels.
- The project team must ensure that, at a minimum, the project meets the federal performance thresholds for High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes that are converted to HOT lanes. These lanes provide the fixed guideway miles that allow Northern Virginia transit systems to qualify for federal funding. Therefore, it is critical to the region that this level of service does not fall below the minimum standards. If the facility is not able to meet the standards to receive federal money, the project partners must replace the lost funding.
- Introduction of low occupancy vehicles on the HOV lanes compromises transit's efficiency. Provide some type of priority to transit at especially congested points along the facility, such as the access/egress points.
- In locations where feasible, construct new sound walls before existing sound walls are removed or, at a minimum, in those areas where pre-replacement is not feasible due to topographic changes, commit to replace the sound wall within a minimal time frame after removal so that residents are not left without sound protection for long periods of time.
- Further review should be given to the construction of sound walls adjacent to Laurel Crest, Gunston Corner, Laurel Hill Park, Edsall Gardens, Landmark Mews, Lincolnia Community Park, and Brighton Square to protect the public parks and the communities.
- Provide a suitable pedestrian bridge at Franconia-Springfield Parkway (F-S Parkway). The project should either provide a separate pedestrian bridge that is functional and has no conflict with the traffic or change the alignment of the pedestrian bridge to follow the alignment of the F-S Parkway and to have the bridge tie into the Metro/Parkway trail located east of I-95. In addition to tying into the trail, the bridge should also provide an at-grade tie-in at the location that is currently shown on the plans.
- Coordinate plans for the location of the 3,000 park-and-ride spaces throughout the corridor with Fairfax County Department of Transportation (FCDOT) Transit Services

- Division and Transportation Planning Division. As part of this commitment, construct at least 450 park-and-ride spaces in the Springfield/Lorton area to serve the HOT lanes.
- Coordinate with FCDOT Transit Services Division and VDOT's Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) study to determine the best provision of transit in the corridor.
 - Coordinate the design of the ramps and lanes with all the public and private transit providers in the corridor in order to ensure they can adequately and safely accommodate buses.
 - Coordinate with FCDOT Transit Services Division and other transit operators using the I-95/395 HOV lanes to address safety concerns raised by the limited number of refuge areas for disabled vehicles in the segment of the facility north of the Occoquan River.
 - The project should provide a detailed plan for the emergency pull-outs and how these pull-outs impact the flow of traffic.
 - Provide traffic mitigation during the construction phase and provide traffic management measures where neighborhoods are impacted by diverted traffic.
 - When traffic is displaced as a result of the construction, develop traffic mitigation plans in accordance with the guidelines for temporary traffic management during construction adopted by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors on September 22, 2008.
 - Identify truck haul routes to be used for construction activity and ensure that construction vehicles associated with the project do not use local streets.
 - Consider additional options for public transportation during construction.
 - In identifying construction staging areas, work closely with the affected communities.
 - Schedule regular briefings with the Board offices, County staff, community groups, and the general public on what to expect in the following months during the construction phase of the project.

The Board had the following additional comments for consideration:

- Additional information is needed on transit and a report is due back to the Board at the upcoming Board Transportation Committee meeting on April 20. Transit improvements in the corridor should be coordinated with FCDOT Transit Services Division and VDOT's Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) study to ensure the best use of transit in the corridor.
- **The Board requested emphasizing the comment that the developer of Mark Center should bear the cost of constructing direct access from I-95/395 HOT lanes to/from the BRAC facilities. This access is critical to Mason District and to the County due to potential traffic impacts.**
- The narrow shoulder widths along the corridor should be reevaluated and the safety issues of these constrained areas are to be addressed for both transit and auto users.
- The Board emphasized the importance of further review of sound walls and expressed hope that lessons learned from the Beltway HOT Lanes project would benefit this project.

Mr. Morteza Salehi

Page 4 of 4

April 13, 2009

- It is important to integrate this project with the Beltway HOT Lanes project for a seamless system so that people can get from Woodbridge to Tysons and other destinations.

Attached for your information is a copy of the Board item that was presented on March 30, 2009.

I look forward to working with your Department to address these concerns. Please feel free to contact me or Seyed Nabavi at 703-877-5759 if additional information is needed.

Sincerely,



Katharine D. Ichter, P.E.

Director, Department of Transportation

Attachment

cc: Members, Board of Supervisors
Anthony H. Griffin, County Executive
Robert A. Stalzer, Deputy County Executive
Catherine Chianese, Assistant Fairfax County Executive
Ronaldo T. Nicholson, Regional Transportation Program Director, VDOT
Ellen Gallagher, Chief, Capital Projects and Operations Division, FCDOT
Karyn Moreland, Chief, Capital Projects Section, FCDOT
Tom Biesiadny, Chief Coordination and Funding Division, FCDOT
Randy White, Senior Transportation Planner, FCDOT
Seyed Nabavi, Senior Transportation Planner, FCDOT

**FAIRFAX COUNTY
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
MARCH 30, 2009**

**ADMINISTRATIVE
ITEMS
(continued)**

- 10 **Approved** Authorization for the Department of Community and Recreation Services to Apply for and Accept Grant Funding from the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, for the Gang Prevention Coordination Assistance Program

ACTION ITEMS

- 1 **Approved** Approval of a Memorandum of Understanding Between the Fairfax County Police Department and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Establishing the Child Exploitation and Human Trafficking Task Force
- 2 **Approved** Approval of Changes to the Fairfax County Guidelines Regarding Requests Made Pursuant to the Public-Private Education Facilities and Infrastructure Act of 2002
- 3 **Approved** Approval of a Parking Reduction for 6118 Arlington Boulevard in the Balleys Crossroads/Seven Corners Commercial Revitalization District (Mason District)
- 4 **Approved** Approval of Project Agreements for the Columbia Pike Streetcar Project (Mason District)
- 5 **Approved** Adoption of a Resolution Approving Issuance by the Industrial Development Authority of its Health Care Revenue Bonds
- 6 **Approved** Approval of Expenditure of Phase I Dulles Rail Transportation Improvement District Funds for the Dulles Rail Project
- 7 **Approved** Authorization to Issue a Solicitation for Financing of Equipment Under a Master Lease-Purchase Agreement
- 8 **Approved** Approval of Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts License Agreement (Dranesville District)
- 9 **Approved** Comments on Design Plans for the I-95/395 High Occupancy Toll Lanes Project (Mason, Lee, and Mount Vernon Districts)
- 10 **Approved** Approval of 2009 Zoning Ordinance Amendment Work Program

Board Agenda Item
March 30, 2009

ACTION – 9

Comments on Design Plans for the I-95/395 High Occupancy Toll Lanes Project (Mason, Lee, and Mount Vernon Districts)

ISSUE:

Board issuance of comments on the design plans for constructing High Occupancy Toll (HOT) Lanes on I-95/395.

RECOMMENDATION:

The County Executive recommends that the Board offer conditional concurrence with the design plans for constructing HOT Lanes on I-95/395, generally as presented at the February 9, 10, and 11, 2009, public hearings, subject to the following modifications, comments, and requests for additional coordination to ensure that the project remains fully in conformance with the Board's Environmental Agenda and the Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan:

- Coordinate plans to manage stormwater runoff, including sediment and erosion control, outfall treatments, and necessary easements, with the Fairfax County Department of Public Works and Environmental Services (for all locations) and the Fairfax County Park Authority Planning and Development Division (for park properties). The County wants to ensure in particular that areas of known existing stormwater management concern and stream degradation adjacent to the project are adequately addressed to provide stabilization during and at the completion of construction, so as not to exacerbate existing stream degradation. It is desirable that planned stormwater management facilities and areas identified on preliminary road plans be maximized and optimized where possible to help alleviate existing and future stormwater impacts due to the highway. The County requests the opportunity to provide input during the early stages of stormwater drainage designs to provide collaborative opportunities for implementation of identified watershed capital improvement projects. Also, the County would like the opportunity to review the portions of the construction plans dealing with stormwater and erosion and sedimentation control and will provide comments on these elements on a priority basis within the Virginia Department of Transportation's (VDOT's) established review timeframes.
- In order to reduce the expected significant traffic impacts on neighboring communities and the secondary street system of various Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) installations being constructed along the I-95/I-395 corridor, direct access should be provided to and from the HOT lanes to/from the BRAC facilities where physically and operationally feasible. The cost of this direct access should be borne by the developers of the BRAC properties rather than at project cost.

Board Agenda Item
March 30, 2009

- The project team should provide the design exception documentation for the narrow shoulder widths along the corridor and identify specifically how they plan to address these constrained areas in terms of safety, both of transit and auto users.
- Slugging has been very successful in moving large numbers of people in the corridor. This project should ensure that this arrangement continues at its current levels.
- The project team must ensure that, at a minimum, the project meets the federal performance thresholds for High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes that are converted to HOT lanes. These lanes provide the fixed guideway miles that allow Northern Virginia transit systems to qualify for federal funding. Therefore, it is critical to the region that this level of service does not fall below the minimum standards. If the facility is not able to meet the standards to receive federal money, the project partners must replace the lost funding.
- Introduction of low occupancy vehicles on the HOV lanes compromises transit's efficiency. Provide some type of priority to transit at especially congested points along the facility, such as the access/egress points.
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- Further review should be given to the construction of sound walls adjacent to Laurel Crest, Gunston Corner, Laurel Hill Park, Edsall Gardens, Landmark Mews, Lincolnia Community Park, and Brighton Square to protect the public parks and the communities.
- Provide a suitable pedestrian bridge at Franconia-Springfield Parkway (F-S Parkway). The project should either provide a separate pedestrian bridge that is functional and has no conflict with the traffic or change the alignment of the pedestrian bridge to follow the alignment of the F-S Parkway and to have the bridge tie into the Metro/Parkway trail located east of I-95. In addition to tying into the trail, the bridge should also provide an at-grade tie-in at the location that is currently shown on the plans.
- Coordinate plans for the location of the 3,000 park-and-ride spaces throughout the corridor with Fairfax County Department of Transportation (FCDOT) Transit Services Division and Transportation Planning Division. As part of this commitment, construct at least 450 park-and-ride spaces in the Springfield/Lorton area to serve the HOT lanes.
- Coordinate with FCDOT Transit Services Division and VDOT's Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) study to determine the best provision of transit in the corridor.
- Coordinate the design of the ramps and lanes with all the public and private transit providers in the corridor in order to ensure they can adequately and safely accommodate buses.
- Coordinate with FCDOT Transit Services Division and other transit operators using the I-95/395 HOV lanes to address safety concerns raised by the limited number of

Board Agenda Item
March 30, 2009

refuge areas for disabled vehicles in the segment of the facility north of the Occoquan River.

- The project should provide a detailed plan for the emergency pull-outs and how these pull-outs impact the flow of traffic.
- Provide traffic mitigation during the construction phase and provide traffic management measures where neighborhoods are impacted by diverted traffic.
- When traffic is displaced as a result of the construction, develop traffic mitigation plans in accordance with the guidelines for temporary traffic management during construction adopted by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors on September 22, 2008.
- Identify truck haul routes to be used for construction activity and ensure that construction vehicles associated with the project do not use local streets.
- Consider additional options for public transportation during construction.
- In identifying construction staging areas, work closely with the affected communities.
- Schedule regular briefings with the Board offices, County staff, community groups, and the general public on what to expect in the following months during the construction phase of the project.

TIMING:

The Board should take action on this matter as soon as possible to allow VDOT to proceed with the negotiations of a comprehensive agreement with their private partners, Fluor and Transurban. Final design and construction operations will follow once the agreement has been satisfactorily completed.

BACKGROUND:

Interstate I-95 from the Prince William County Line to the Springfield Interchange is on the County's Transportation Plan as a future 11-lane facility with HOV lanes. Interstate I-395 from the Springfield Interchange to the City of Alexandria line is on the County's Transportation Plan as a future 9-lane facility with HOV lanes. There are currently 10 lanes on I-95 and 8 lanes on I-395 plus auxiliary lanes at interchanges.

The I-95/I-395 HOT Lanes project will add capacity by expanding the existing HOV system from two to three lanes between Eads Street in Arlington to Dumfries, and will construct two new lanes south to Spotsylvania. The project is divided into the Northern and Southern sections. VDOT currently plans to design/build the Northern Section, which begins near the Pentagon in Arlington and ends near the Garrisonville Road (Route 610) area. The remaining stretch is the Southern Section which is to be constructed at a later date. HOV-3, motorcycles, buses, and emergency vehicles will use the HOV/Bus/HOT lanes free of charge. Non-HOV motorists will be able to access the HOV/Bus/HOT lanes by paying a toll. Tolls will be based on demand, also called congestion pricing. Tolls will change

Board Agenda Item
March 30, 2009

throughout the day according to real-time traffic conditions to manage the number of cars in the HOV/Bus/HOT lanes and keep lanes free of congestion:

The project will improve transit services and provide an in-line BRT station near the Lorton Virginia Railway Express (VRE) station. The project will also add 3,000 park-and-ride spaces throughout the corridor. The project is designed to provide congestion relief to all drivers, keep traffic moving on I-95/395 and provide a 70-mile facility for buses, carpoolers, sluggers, and vanpoolers to the Pentagon, Tysons Corner, and the Dulles area when combined with the I-495 Capital Beltway HOT Lanes.

The Virginia HOV/Bus/HOT lanes project is being developed as a public-private partnership between VDOT and Fluor-Transurban. VDOT will continue to own the I-95/395 roadway and Fluor-Transurban will construct, operate, and maintain the HOT lanes.

The Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DPRT) is also playing an active role in the project as the project will provide opportunities for expanded public transportation in the I-95/I-395 corridor.

Public Hearing Comments:

Three public hearings were held on February 9, 10, and 11, 2009. Approximately 300 people attended the three hearings. There were 186 total commenters. Of the 54 oral and 132 written comments received, approximately 28 indicated support of the project as proposed and 38 indicated opposition to the project. The remainder of the comments raised specific issues and concerns about the project.

Major concerns/comments received are summarized as follows:

- Concerns have been raised that the private sector will own HOV lanes that were built with public funding and that the project will create inequality.
- There are concerns that the HOT lanes will run 24 hours a day / 7 days a week and people will have to pay tolls to utilize the facility during non-peak hours, whereas now they can use the HOV facility during non-peak hours and weekends for free.
- Sluggers are concerned that the number of carpoolers might decrease and return to single occupancy vehicles, which would result in deterioration of a successful HOV system.
- There are concerns that with the introduction of more access and egress points throughout the corridor, more traffic congestion will be added in neighborhoods along the corridor.
- The project should reevaluate the need for sound walls in the corridor, considering the needs of the communities along the corridor.
- The new pedestrian bridge located south of the F-S Parkway will be much more dangerous for all users. The replacement bridge should provide equivalent access as the original bridge, which provides grade-separated crossing of I-95 and does not have at-grade crossings of multiple exit/entrance lanes on a high-speed facility.

Board Agenda Item
March 30, 2009

- There is a concern that the HOV speeds will deteriorate and Fluor-Transurban will not be able to maintain existing speeds.
- The project needs to inform the communities of the toll rates and the technology that will be used for accessing the HOT lanes facility.
- The project needs to mitigate the bottleneck at the 14th Street Bridge entering Washington, D.C. since the added volume will create longer queues at the bridge.

Project Cost and Schedule:

This project is a Public-Private Transportation Act (PPTA) project. VDOT is in the process of negotiations on a comprehensive agreement with their private partners, Fluor and Transurban.

The anticipated project schedule is as follows:

Commercial Close: Fall of 2009

Right-of-Way Acquisition: Starts after commercial close

Design/Construction: End of 2009 or early 2010

Completion/Opening of HOT Lanes: 3 - 4 years after start of construction

The cost of the project is not finalized and VDOT is in the process of finalizing the comprehensive agreement with Fluor-Transurban. The entire construction cost is to be funded by the private sector.

Right-of-Way Impacts:

The proposed project is anticipated to be located entirely within the existing right-of-way and therefore no permanent right-of-way taking will be required.

FISCAL IMPACT:

No Fairfax County funds are required for this project.

ENCLOSED DOCUMENTS:

Attachment 1: Design Public Hearing Brochure

STAFF:

Robert A. Stalzer, Deputy County Executive

Katharine D. Ichter, Director, Fairfax County Department of Transportation (FCDOT)

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