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Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Transportation Committee, Tuesday, December 12, 2023

Date	Tuesday, December 12, 2023
Place	Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, Virginia
Length	1h 1m (video)

- Official meeting video (Fairfax County): https://video.fairfaxcounty.gov/player/clip/3145
- Official Board of Supervisors page (Fairfax County): https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/boardofsupervisors/

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Speech-to-text: whisper.cpp, model large-v3-turbo. Produced 2026-11-02. Each paragraph starts with its time [HH:MM:SS] in the meeting video.

[00:00:05] Okay, good afternoon, everybody. Call this meeting of the board's transportation committee to order. We really just have one item on today's agenda, but before we do that, we do have the minutes from the last meeting. Does anyone have any changes to those minutes?

[00:00:25] Anybody that was here? Yes, thank you very much, Supervisor Smith. All right, seeing none, then we do have a very comprehensive presentation today from VDOT.

[00:00:43] And before we go to there, I wanted to see Mr. Steverson, if you have any comments you'd like to make an introductory. Just real quick, and you're right, there's only one item a day. I'm hopefully going to try and get folks out of here early today. We'll see. But yes, the item is Northern Virginia Mega Projects, and we've got Michelle Shropshire and Charlie Warich here from VDOT.

[00:01:05] I believe Michelle is going to be doing the main part of the presentation. So with that, I will turn it over to Michelle. All right. Good afternoon, everyone. As mentioned, I'm Michelle Shropshire. I'm the Acting Mega Projects Director. As most of you know, Susan Shaw retired in October from VDOT.

[00:01:25] So I'm filling in from the Fredericksburg District. I have with me Charlie Warch, who is our Deputy Director, who has been with VDOT a very long time. So he's going to help me out when I need it

here today. We'll get started on our presentation to update you on what happened with the Megaprojects program in Northern Virginia.

[00:01:41] As you're aware, our Megaprojects program centers around the express lanes network in the Northern Virginia region. So just as a recap, we have 94 miles of express lanes in service in Northern Virginia, and we have three independent operators on those lanes. Three miles are presently under construction.

[00:01:59] We'll talk about these projects throughout the presentation. That's with the 495 Next Project and the Opitz Boulevard Project. And we have two studies that are presently underway, the 495 Southside Express Lanes and the 95 Bidirectional Study, which we'll cover later on in the slides.

[00:02:16] So since our program focuses on express or managed lanes, I thought it might be important to kick us off just highlighting why those managed lanes are so beneficial to the northern Virginia region. These lanes provide not just additional capacity and relief on some of our most congested interstates, but they also offer faster and more reliable trips.

[00:02:40] And these travel options are not just for those users that have one or two passengers in their cars who want to pay a toll, but they offer travel options for those people who wish to carpool and they promote carpooling. They also offer free trips for those wishing to travel on transit using buses who also use those lanes for free and can have faster and more reliable service routes along those lanes.

[00:03:08] Transit payments that come from those project agreements for all of these managed lanes have provided many multimodal and transit improvements over the years and will continue to do so throughout the life of those concession agreements. And they've also provided infrastructure improvements such as park and ride lots to support those multimodal options.

[00:03:28] As I move through the next part of the presentation, we'll talk about specifically some of the projects. First, we'll talk about 66 outside the Beltway. That project finished up last year and was open to traffic ahead of schedule. The three segments were opened in staggered opening.

[00:03:47] The grand opening was last November. The project includes 22.5 miles of new express lanes alongside the three general purpose lanes. The project also included park and ride lots, new park and ride spaces, and improvements at key interchanges.

[00:04:05] In addition to the lanes, 11 miles of new bike and pedestrian trails were also implemented with the project, which was a big win for the community. These were integrated along with local trail networks. These trail systems opened starting in May of this year, and the last segment opened in October.

[00:04:24] for the 66 outside the beltway project currently we are working on some of the final work elements and punch list items for the project and we are working on closing out the environmental permit some interesting facts just to share about the 66 outside the beltway project and how things are going out there these lanes are accommodating over 1 million trips every month in relation to transit and carpooling an average of 7 000 trips recorded just in may of 2023 of this year

[00:04:58] and $800 million will be paid out over the term of the concession for transit payments and this will be made in annualized payments and right now 23 Fairfax County school bus routes use these express lanes every day to transport students in a safe and reliable manner to school each day which is a big win for everyone. I'd like to transition now to talk about another project that's under construction right now

and this is the 495 Next project. This is adding 2.5 miles of express lanes from the Dulles Corridor interchange area to the George Washington Memorial Parkway.

[00:05:39] The project is a public-private partnership with Transurban as our concessionaire, and this concession runs through 2087. Other than the express lanes that are being added, some other improvements with the project include some interchange improvements, replacement of bridges, and some bike and pedestrian improvements.

[00:06:00] If you have driven through the corridor recently, you'll notice a number of things that are under construction, and these include new bridges at Lav Oak Drive, Georgetown Pike, Old Dominion Drive, as well as a number of noise walls that are under construction. The outside lanes on the project are due to be completed late in 2024, early 2025, and we're expecting the new express lanes to be open to traffic in late 2025.

[00:06:28] The second project that we currently have under construction is the Opitz Boulevard ramp project. This will be constructing a south-facing ramp to the Opitz Boulevard bridge to the 95 express lanes.

[00:06:46] Construction began last fall and is expected to be complete late next year. Just last week, we opened up the new Dale Boulevard slip ramp that's from the southbound general purpose lanes into the express lanes. That was opened up in conjunction with the remaining flyovers on the Fredericksburg extension of the express lane.

[00:07:08] so that was last Thursday on that project. Next in the presentation we'll talk about some of the studies that we have ongoing. We have two. First I want to talk about today is the 95 express lanes bi-directional project. As everyone is familiar the 95 express lanes operate in a reversible fashion going in in the peak direction. The study that we're currently conducting would look at adding new capacity in the off-peak direction for approximately 11 miles, and that would begin

[00:07:45] near Opus Boulevard and carry all the way north to the Franconia-Springfield Parkway area. VDOT is collaborating with Transurban on this study, and VDOT is currently leading the environmental document efforts.

[00:08:04] 95 Corridor in Northern Virginia continues to experience rapid growth, as we all know, and this translates into some poor reliability often on the 95 corridor in the counter and in the counter peak directions and that you can see illustrated on the right side of the slide in our graphic and this is on weekdays and on the weekend especially in the area that we're conducting this study between Opitz Boulevard and the Franconia Springfield area. One of the most common complaints and if all of us have frequently driven that area is if you're traveling and you want to use the

[00:08:43] express lanes, they're probably going in the opposite direction of where you want them to go when you want to get to where you're going. So one of the benefits of this study would help to provide some relief for that complaint along this 11 mile segment. What we are proposing is demonstrated on the graphic at the bottom of this slide. And this was what we call our three by two bidirectional express lane concept. And what that means in the peak direction, we would propose

[00:09:16] three express lanes and in the off-peak direction we would propose two express lanes. So for example on a weekday morning you would have your general purpose lanes running how they normally run and then you would have three express lanes like on a Monday morning three express lanes would be

running northbound between Opitz and the Franconia Springfield area and at the same time you would have two southbound express lanes running at the same time.

[00:09:50] This concept would reduce overall congestion for all users on 95 as it would provide more lanes, and it would still have all the benefits that we talked about earlier in the presentation of these managed lanes. We have a draft schedule that we're working to for the bidirectional study right now.

[00:10:10] Some of the key milestones, just to point out, are the initiation of the NEPA document, which we, VDOT, are managing and kicked off last month. We are working toward and anticipating a decision on the NEPA document in summer of 2025.

[00:10:26] We'll be working toward a commercial close on the project in 2025 as well, late 2025. And we'll be working toward a financial close on the project in early 2026. Next project that we have under study right now is the 495 Southside Express Lane Study.

[00:10:52] This is an environmental study to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act. We have been working with a host of federal, state, regional, and local partners on this study, and they are listed on the slide in front of you.

[00:11:08] The specific study area includes 11 miles of the Capitol Beltway. It begins on the western end, just east of the Springfield Interchange, and heads all the way to Maryland 210 on the eastern end of the project.

[00:11:26] in Prince George's County, Maryland, and it covers the last segment of 495 where express lanes have not yet been implemented in Virginia. Our next slide is just a highlight of the study and what all the study includes and kind of in between where we are in the project.

[00:11:49] Currently, the project, I should say, started in 2022 with purpose and need development. We've been working through preliminary alternative concepts that were presented to the public and our last round of meetings held in September of this year. We currently are in the range of alternatives being narrowed down, so the star on the slide needs to kind of move to the right one peg.

[00:12:13] Working into next spring in 2024, we will be continuing to evaluate the narrowed down range of alternatives and do some detailed analysis of these. We will be presenting to the Commonwealth Transportation Board, and we will be having public meetings again, public hearings next year in 2024, and then late in the year we will be expecting a decision from the FHWA regarding the need for work. On this next slide,

[00:12:48] you will see a high-level summary of the public comments that were received from the meetings we held in September. We held four meetings, one virtual and three in-person public information meetings. The comments that we received were either through our question and answer sessions that were live and in person, or they were from the comment forms we received at the meetings or from our online surveys. Overall, during the comment period that was open from August 30th until October 10th, we received 330 comments, which is a fair amount of public input. So we

[00:13:28] are glad to receive that. Overall, the majority of respondents agreed that some sort of improvement is needed on this segment of 495. You can see on this slide 66% of those respondents said yes to some sort of improvement is warranted. This slide highlights the 10 different alternatives that were presented at those public meetings in September and gives a high-level response to

[00:14:03] the screening criteria, which we'll go through in a minute as I move through some of the next slides, the screening criteria that was presented to the agencies and to the public for those meetings. The screening criteria was based on the purpose and need for the study, and that purpose and need was concurred with by all of the stakeholder agencies that we have been working with. Those alternatives that best meet the purpose and needs have been identified and narrowed down to our range of alternatives that we'll go through in just a minute. And I will mention that any of

[00:14:39] the build alternatives that we are carrying forward in our study do allow for and consider transit options. They include preservation of space for future transit, such as rail, and they do include bike and pedestrian accommodations. So in the next three slides, we're going to talk about our narrowed down range of alternatives for the study. The first you see on the screen is our no-build alternative. I would like to mention that extensive work was done on all of the alternatives

[00:15:13] that we presented and prepared for that round of meetings that we held in September. As I mentioned, we had screening criteria that was used that was consistent with the purpose and need for the project. That screening criteria that we used included system continuity, travel choice, congestion and travel reliability safety and consistency with regional plans all of the comments that were received from the public are generally in line with the findings of these

[00:15:48] alternative screenings and all of the build alternatives that will go through the next two that we're going to carry forward as i mentioned can include transit options in the near term and in the future, i.e. preservation for rail, and will include bike and pedestrian accommodations.

[00:16:12] The no-build alternative is carried forward by NEPA as a benchmark for comparison, and that's just the existing condition. The next alternative that will be carried forward for our study is the one express lane in each direction alternative. The graphics that are shown on the right-hand side of the slide are just representative typical sections at various spots along the corridor to show what this alternative may look like. And as you can see,

[00:16:50] the different screening criteria that was used to evaluate the alternative is listed on the slide as well. On the next slide, we have the two express lanes alternative. This will also be move forward in our range of alternatives and this is simply two express lanes in each direction again same criteria that was derived from the approved purpose and need key considerations to keep in mind for either the one or the two express lanes alternative is tsm or tdm improvements

[00:17:28] could be included with these near and long-term transit alternatives long-term preservation of rail is also feasible, and bike and pedestrian improvements can be included with these alternatives additionally. On the next slide, we give an illustration of how long-term preservation for future rail transit can be included with these options. The graphic represents this. On the top

[00:18:03] half of the graphic, we have the two express lanes in each direction option, and then on the bottom half of the graphic it depicts how this option could in the future be converted to include one express lane with that rail option and this is a representation of how that would look on the Woodrow Wilson Memorial Bridge. Our study team has been and continues to coordinate with WMATA.

[00:18:33] They are aware of the blue orange silver capacity and reliability study that's been going on and so any of our results of our study do not preclude any future rail improvements that would come out of that study that is ongoing. We will mention as part of our study we are not considering widening the

Woodrow Wilson Memorial Bridge and it is not feasible to relocate the barrier that separates the through and local lanes due to some limitations with the drawbridge span on that structure. In

[00:19:10] addition, our sister agency, the Department of Rail and Public Transportation, conducted a separate transit and transportation demand management study. This study was used to help inform the Express Lanes Southside study that we have ongoing. Their study was multifaceted in an inventoried existing rail, transit bus service, park and ride facilities, and TDM programs in the corridor area and then identified three key recommendations and these are listed on the

[00:19:47] slide in front of you and those include new or enhanced transit services that could improve or benefit from an expanded express lanes network new commuter assistance programs or newer technologies that could encourage the use of transit and these new technologies an example would be like a new app that you could use to find bus routes, parking space availability,

[00:20:17] or to find a bus or transit schedule. Additionally, as we've talked about throughout the presentation, any of the alternatives that we are moving forward with our narrowed downrange in the EA can include and will include bike and pedestrian accommodation. We are working with the stakeholders that have been part of our study to identify areas where there could be gaps in the existing network, that we can enhance these facilities, or where we could add some new facilities.

[00:20:55] The corridor is right-of-way constrained, so we want to make best use that we can of areas that might already have some existing bike or pedestrian facilities and where we can fill in the gaps or maybe make improvements, such as converting an existing sidewalk to a shared use path.

[00:21:16] Lastly, I'd like to share the schedule that we're working to for the 495 Southside Express Lane study. There are a couple of key dates on here, but some of the milestone highlights. We plan a briefing to the Commonwealth Transportation Board for early next year.

[00:21:33] We have some public hearings that we'll be planning for summer of 2024, where we will present our recommended preferred alternative. And then we are targeting a decision from the Federal Highway Administration regarding our NEPA work late next year and late 2024.

[00:21:55] And that will wrap up everything I had to present. So I'd be happy to take any questions that you may have. Thank you very much. Very complete. There is a lot going on. This is a very extensive set of projects and appreciate you being here and all the excellent information.

[00:22:16] I just have one question on the 495 Southside Express Lane study. And this is something that has come up. I believe we've heard from some of our constituents about this. And it was discussed, I can't remember, made an earlier committee meeting.

[00:22:35] The question is, if this goes forward in the future as some sort of a public-private partnership project, at that point, or I guess my question is, at what point would it be known whether or not the eventual implementation of rail across the bridge would be a compensation event or not so would that be something that's decided two years you know one year five years because those compensation events well those projects as we know you know go many decades into the future so when will we know if that would be considered a

[00:23:14] compensation event? Well, since the inclusion of rail or future transit has been such a key issue for the project, and we've had other projects like 66 outside the Beltway where that had been inclusive into

the comprehensive agreement for the project, that can be part of that deal, if you will. It can be written in so that those things are not compensation events. And there are parameters that are written around there, terms, obviously, that would trigger certain events. But that can

[00:23:53] be handled in those terms in the agreement. So it doesn't make it a compensation event. And so what's the timing on that agreement? I guess that's my question. For the project? For this project. The agreements, those are completed by commercial close.

[00:24:12] Right. So it would be after 2025 at the earliest, is that correct? Well, no, you would put a date into that document by which it's not a compensation event. So that would be a date in the future. So that would be determined.

[00:24:27] When would the agreement be put in place? That's my question. By 2025. So by 2025. So the window would be basically 2024 to 2025 is when those details would be? Ironed out, yes. Okay, great. That was what I was looking for.

[00:24:44] Okay, thank you very much. Mr. Chairman. Yeah, good question because that was going to be one of mine, and I don't know how you determine in the future what that date would be. I know these are long-range projects, but I think the most important thing on the south side lanes is to make it the least difficult possible to implement rail or to expand transit because having been around for when the Woodrow Wilson Bridge was built, there were a lot of concessions made to local governments and to the public about future provision of transit. So obviously we're not widening the Woodrow Wilson Bridge, but the good news is we don't have to to be able to accommodate transit. That was part of that vision.

[00:25:23] And so I just want to make sure that that's not lost here because I do think it's an important element of the project um on the mega projects i want to first i want to thank you for that one um we wrote a letter uh november 21st to the secretary about the project outlining you know the criticality of lining this up with other studies and things that are being done in the county but made the very clear point that we're happy this is being talked about and looked at because as you know this is the only segment of interstate left in fairfax county that has no transit benefit so from an equity standpoint i feel like a broken record but it was deliberately

[00:25:58] not included on 495 deliberately nothing was included east of 95 when the 495 express lanes were built and this will fix that problem so i think it's absolutely essential and same thing with the bi-directional lanes when that project was being contemplated at the time i was raising alarm bells about this will never work. And then when we did the analysis of 66, we looked at the metrics for 66 and put them next to the metrics of 95, and they were almost identical.

[00:26:32] Traffic volume, mixed directional going both ways, the same amount of mileage of both projects, and yet 66 we were able to not go by directional lanes, and I think a horrible mistake was made on 95 from the beginning, ignoring the fact that there's demand in both directions that now is fact, not a hypothesis.

[00:26:53] And so I think it's absolutely essential that that project be built. I guess the concern one would have is looking at the traffic flows and patterns, looking at the financial close documents of both of these two projects. One is a late 24 federal decision on the bidirectional and then a January 2026 financial close on the 95 south side.

[00:27:21] I just want us to be conscious that to the extent we can avoid them both being potentially under construction at the same time, we should be giving some thought to that now. I do know that on the bidirectional lanes, at least as it was presented to me, there would be very little impact.

[00:27:37] Most of the work would be able to be done in existing right-of-way. Maintenance of the existing express lanes would have to happen just because of the revenue implications of not doing that. And I just want to confirm in terms of construction, if we did the bidirectional 95 lanes, the goal of the project is to not disturb any of the existing traffic while that construction takes place because of the financial agreements that we have with the vendor.

[00:28:04] Is that fair? Is that a question? Yeah, that's a question. Not to disturb. The details on how the lanes would be constructed is still under development for bidirectional. I will mention one thing you mentioned, and I'll back up to my slide.

[00:28:23] So late 2024 for 495 Southside is when we expect to have the NEPA decision. That wouldn't be the start. That wouldn't be a financial close. So that would not align those, at present moment, that would not align those construction timetables. They're close, though.

[00:28:39] They can be relatively close, and the length of the construction is yet to be determined, which is one of the drivers of my question with the bi-directional lanes. I'm assuming that working with the vendor that runs the existing 95 express lanes that VDOT and or the vendor is not going to be in a position to disrupt the revenue model of the existing lanes.

[00:29:04] And so I just want to make sure when construction is done, if there is an impact to traffic, that that is not all on the back of the non-express users. And I don't know if that's been discussed yet, but I think that's a real issue that needs to be addressed. This is the first time we've gone into existing express lanes and retrofitted them.

[00:29:25] And the question has come up, whose traffic is going to be disrupted while that happens? Is it going to be the existing revenue-generating express lanes, or is it going to be the existing general travel lanes, and to what extent? And so I think that's a question that ultimately we're going to need an answer to.

[00:29:43] The last question I have has to deal with the 66 outside of the Beltway express lanes. After that open, we did get some early complaints about people who had three or more people in their car not being detected as such, and so they were being billed incorrectly, and all of a sudden, those complaints stopped coming into my office at least, and so I'm trying to figure out what happened at the beginning of that, what fix has been in place,

[00:30:16] And then what regular interface does VDOT have with the vendor in terms of sorting out billing challenges that users of the lanes are having? Well, I'll start with this answer. I might have to get Michelle Holland, our communications lead, to give me some support on that.

[00:30:36] But I do know that the concessionaire has been using some more robust with their video technology that verifies how many passengers are in a car. They use that, and then they have also physical checks on that when there are violations or notices of violation.

[00:31:02] and they have increased that back office, if you will, physical check with their supervisory staff. So that should be helping to limit some of those complaints.

[00:31:19] So there wasn't a technology issue here. It was more a verifying? It's the same technology, and I don't know, Michelle, if you want to add. That's correct. It wasn't a technology issue per se. it was more of needing that staffing the staffing resources in place to do that human verification I know when the lanes first opened and express mobility partners was ramping up they were also still ramping up their customer service and kind of that human verification back checking and I

[00:31:56] guess complaints from motorists were coming in and they weren't able to keep up with it so we do have regular coordination both from our tolling division as well as our outreach division with express mobility partners and corrective action was taken to where they did staff up and got the resources in place to keep up with that and it has improved quite a bit and I know from our end we have received a lot fewer complaints and we track it we have a matrix that tracks any complaints

[00:32:31] coming in to us at the 66 project, and we have a liaison here in our Northern Virginia district that works directly with their operational folks. So it is improving and getting better.

[00:32:47] It's certainly not perfect, but no technology is. But the system, it wasn't the system itself. It was just needing that additional verification. Okay. I think that's important to say because it started right when the lanes opened and it was intense for a while and it just stopped.

[00:33:07] So I knew something had happened. I mean, you know, frankly, it's a lot easier if it's a personnel issue as opposed to a technology issue. But I just would hope that we maintain that level of personnel to support this because these are, as you know, I mean, these are customers and they're paying a lot of money to use these lanes.

[00:33:25] And if they're not paying because they're doing the right thing by having three or more people, you can imagine the aggravation when they get a violation in the mail when they were playing by the rules set by the lanes. And so I just want to make sure we maintain and continue to have that level of customer support for people who have found themselves in this situation.

[00:33:44] And I know that, obviously, the switch is there for people, so you have to do that. These were people who, you know, for whatever reason, felt like they had the switch on, They had three or more people, and they were still getting billed. That's right. And customer service and making sure that people are being billed accurately or not billed accurately, that's a top priority to both VDOT and to the operator.

[00:34:10] Thank you. And it is getting better. Thank you. And maybe eventually there's an AI solution there. That'll be a different committee. Exactly. Thank you. Good questions, Mr. Chairman. Supervisor Stork and then Supervisor Gross. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[00:34:26] And I'm going to kind of go back to the future rail question because that's the one that's really most concerning to most members in the Mount Vernon district community. And the confidence level of whatever agreement as to whether or not that in fact will happen.

[00:34:48] for example alternative scenarios that maybe on an interim basis you use it for non-rail non-mass transit that that would somehow or other not in the end be implemented when the time came to implement it so if you had a date of 2040 that you could use that line up until 2040 then in 2040 it would be for rail then the the confidence of people in community is that that would in fact happen that there would be some sort of impact decision otherwise it would overturn whatever

[00:35:25] agreement there might be because what i heard you say to start with is that that rail is a commitment and i guess i you can first iterate reiterate that that is considered a inviolate commitment so that when rail is ready it will be that lane will be used for that uh then secondly is if there is some agreement that would have that lane be used in the interim, that you could define or ensure that that would in fact happen at some future date when that lane would be used for that, when it would be needed for mass transit.

[00:36:09] So, yes, and those comments, we've heard those throughout our public meetings. And again, to just say that I think the best way for that is to have something in the agreements, in those comprehensive agreements that make this non-compensation event, like we've had in some of the other projects, to preserve that.

[00:36:35] The 495 Southside study is looking at a potential solution for now. I know some of the other studies that are ongoing looking at future transit, rail transit studies are maybe a little bit farther behind and maybe take a little bit longer to implement, you know, a rail solution due to cost and funding.

[00:36:59] So we're trying to come up with some near and long-term solutions for the corridor. As we talk about, you know, managed lanes can provide, you know, travel choice and reliability, both for people in passenger cars, but also who are using transit now with reliability for those transit routes.

[00:37:25] So I think that the key here is just to make sure in these agreements that this is preserved in a way that is easy to implement in the future. So to the skeptics, what would you say? That we have it in some of our agreements now, and what's in those agreements is enforceable, right?

[00:37:46] I mean, Charlie has dealt with these agreements. Can you give any examples of where you've enforced that? So I could in turn say, well, this isn't the first time that this would be done. I don't know that we've had one that we've enforced yet. We had only one if on 395. Microphone, please.

[00:38:02] Yeah, we did have one on 395 where, you know, we added the lane between the Duke Street and Edsel Road. So we did enforce that one. There was one where we carved that one out in the original SCA that will not be a compensation event, and we did enforce that up there.

[00:38:20] Okay, that's helpful. The second part of this is one of the things that I've discussed with the community that I think should be a consideration, at least from my representation of them, would be a consideration is that the value of that lane would inure to the benefit of the communities around it, whether in intersection improvements that we can't currently get VDOT funding for because there's insufficient VDOT dollars for these kinds of improvements.

[00:38:54] I think of the HATS study, Huntington Area Transit Study, H-A-T-S. It's something that we know that needs to be done and would have a major impact on road access. Part of our challenge right now is the road itself backs up all of our local traffic lanes and we have huge impacts, particularly when the weather changes.

[00:39:14] Those are all serious and significant impacts, which would make it a little bit easier for people in the community to support if they saw dollars that would be able to address at least some of those impacts.

[00:39:27] And then the final piece of that related question is using dollars much like the Dulles Access Road corridor, the Greenway, if you will, how that was used to fund Metro, the Silver Line Metro, whether

or not there are similar parallels that could be used to do for the lanes that would be done at least on the Woodrills and Bridge or just the whole South Side Express lanes.

[00:39:54] So as far as arterial streets, the express lanes, if and when they're built or improvements to 495, inherently we see improvements to arterial street networks when that happens because then more people are moving more reliably along those mainline corridors and they're not looking for, especially during high congestion periods, they're not looking for those arterial streets to get around the congestion.

[00:40:30] That's not really what's causing, congestion is just getting on the bridge. It's not trying to get around it so much as it's just, it's stacked up because the bridge is stacked up. And I don't see a scenario where you're really going to change that because you're not changing the total number of lanes on the bridge, maybe by one.

[00:40:48] So my point is those are going to require VDOT investments in the intersections that are there that can help do that. And VDOT, frankly, has not been supportive of doing some of the things that I think would at least help that to some degree by putting bollards and other things that might be able to channel, better channel the traffic.

[00:41:08] So as far as the analysis, the detailed analysis that will be done as far as traffic, we'll look at adjacent getting on and off to the mainline facility.

[00:41:26] Now, it won't go very far off your arterial network, obviously, but it'll look at how the traffic is flowing, getting on and off the system that we're proposing. So we'll look at the levels of service and how traffic is impacted in the immediate vicinity and whether improvements are warranted to the immediate, you know, ramps, loops, how you're getting on and off the facility if those are warranted.

[00:41:52] And they would be funded by? If improvements are needed to the interchanges, then that would be largely funded, yes, with the project if that's what is required that comes out of the traffic analysis. Okay, and then the second part of the question?

[00:42:09] And the second part of the question, you were asking about transit-type payments that could be used for rail-type improvements. That would have to be something that would be worked out with the agreement. Right now, in most agreements, transit payments, I don't know that they have been used for rail, but they have been used for other types of transit improvements like bus, park and ride lots, other things.

[00:42:43] I'd urge you to take a look at that and be more flexible. And obviously, in my mind, come up with the tens, hundreds of millions of dollars that it would take to truly do those kinds of things because those are the true long-term solutions.

[00:43:00] And without that, I know it'll be difficult for me to get support of the community for what you're proposing and the other elected representatives that are part of the community. And you mentioned, and finally you mentioned, that you'd been talking with WMATA about their planning.

[00:43:19] Have you also engaged with them on engineering? So the pictures that are here, are they representative of what WMATA believes are the engineering requirements for using the bridge as well? Our team is engaging with WMATA on those same topics, on space requirements as well as their study.

[00:43:42] Thank you. All right, Supervisor Gross. Several items. On slide 23, again, going back to Woodrow Wilson Memorial Bridge and the future transit, I think it would be real helpful if you simply

removed the first word after the asterisk, should future transit be provided by others, just maybe future transit, this board fought hard to make sure that the bridge was wide enough to accommodate either rail or transit or both.

[00:44:18] So let's make sure that we don't lose sight of that. And I would hope, echoing the chairman's remarks, because I've heard it many times from Jeff, any future express lanes, current and future express lanes that are going to need to be bi-directional. They cannot be reversible lanes. It just doesn't work. And I remember, golly, when was Tom Farley, the engineer for here? It was a long time ago. It was in the late 90s, I guess. And we were looking at what was then called the mixing bowl. I'm not sure.

[00:44:57] The mixing bowl has been in different places. But, you know, really, we need to make sure that we are accommodating as much future traffic as we can, even though I know a lot of people say you shouldn't do that. We will then not be in the kind of situation that Mr. Warwick mentioned, where we actually did expand another lane between Duke Street and Edsel Road. And now we have, It was really a novel approach, but it is the longest access ramp to 395, I think, that

[00:45:36] exists in the entire corridor. It works, but it did give us the extra space. But going back to the slide 12 on the express lanes bidirectional, on the little graphic here at the bottom where you proposed express lanes 3x2 bidirectional, I'm trying to figure out how that would work in actual driving because you've got down a movable barrier and i'm not sure i'm reading this correctly so you've got three lanes going in the main direction two lanes going

[00:46:12] in the other direction you've got a movable barrier are you suggesting that you would move all those barriers every time yes ma'am we do it when the holy cow when there's a machine that would move that barrier when the lanes reverse so like in in the in the morning when the lanes are going north as i described there would be three lanes express lanes going north and two running south and then when the lanes reverse you know late morning is their reversal schedule now there would be this machine that the barrier that movable barrier kind of runs through

[00:46:52] on a track and then it would point for the afternoon rush hour and a weekday it would then point the three express lanes in a southbound direction and two express lanes in a northbound and this is done in several locations around the united states charlie here went to a demonstration in in what boston in canada so he can talk about it a little bit then i was reading this right. I didn't think that would possibly be the approach that you would take. That seems like

[00:47:28] an awful lot of staffing, energy, time, and equipment. Okay, all right, then thank you. So we'll basically have two machines, okay, but it will be one only, and a patient will be one.

[00:47:46] One will be just as a backup in case, you know, machine breaks down, okay, and we will have two facilities okay where they will demand you know make sure those machines are maintained so nothing is broken you know while they're shifting and this would be miles long it's 11 miles so there's something just bizarre about that six to ten mile an hour when they shifted i just find that to be bizarre really so boston has it so they're using one system boston use lindsey's and there's another one they use in Canada. And actually, when I started with the VDOT a long time ago, on

[00:48:26] 66 and 91, we did use these machine and barrier like 32 years ago on 66. That was my first project, so I still remember it. It boggles my mind. It doesn't sound very efficient. It sounds like a lot of extra effort that I'm, I mean, definitely we need to have bi-directional lanes, but golly, I had not anticipated

that that kind of extra effort would be needed to separate the lanes. So I'd love us to see us do something that's a little more efficient, but maybe by the time this is done,

[00:49:06] there'll be different technology. Thank you. I have Supervisor Faust and then Supervisor Walkinshaw. Thank you. I'm going to start with the 495 Express Lanes project. What is the status of Maryland's progress with respect to the American Legion Bridge? Well, as probably most are aware, Maryland had several press releases out last week that they were regarding some of their budget cuts in their plan.

[00:49:45] We continue to coordinate with them regarding this, regarding their project on the American Legion Bridge and their press releases. They identified the American Legion Bridge as well several other key projects that would continue to move forward with project development so at a project level we're still coordinating with maryland right now but we we don't have any firm details on their project i mean i don't understand why because it's not just their

[00:50:18] project it's your project i mean you have ramps coming out of maryland into my community to serve traffic coming out of maryland to get on the gw parkway and to get on the toll lanes uh i mean you're building half a project without maryland as far as i'm concerned and you know to say you don't know what they're doing i don't believe that first of all i think somebody knows what's going on over there if they don't that's melt practice i mean it's ridiculous that we don't know and can't answer a simple question what's going to happen in maryland when everything you

[00:50:55] did up to now is based on the assumption that they're going to build widen the American Legion Bridge. Well, we're continuing to coordinate to see what their plan is since they announced, I guess, late in the summer that they were kind of changing up their design-build methodology, that they were pursuing their projects. So we're continuing to coordinate with them. And as we have more details we'll share those with you doesn't do me any good the the ramps that you're building

[00:51:29] for maryland are you going to continue to build those and they're literally the ramps to nowhere until maryland gets on board with this project we have our 495 next project that will will continue to move forward i've never seen anything like that 495 next project unbelievable do you have a plan for reforestation. You've totally denuded, I don't know how many acres around

[00:52:05] the American Legion Bridge and between the existing hotlands project and the American Legion Bridge. Is there a plan for reforestation? And can we get a copy of it if there is? Go ahead. As part of the 495 Next Project, there will be reforestation after construction.

[00:52:32] That is part of the agreement and the contract. They are still working on the design of that revegetation plan. I would expect that we will see a revegetation design in 2024.

[00:52:48] We would definitely want to be engaged with the community to share with them what the plan is. And we've tried to be very transparent with everyone, letting them know that the goal would be to do plantings and revegetation where space allows in using, you know, plants that make sense, that are lower maintenance and that are native.

[00:53:14] But we are committed to that. And once we get a plan from the contractor, we will be out again with the community. We're planning to have a meeting, public meeting in 2024, just to provide an overall update with the hopes of providing that information and engaging with the community.

[00:53:32] Yeah, I say with the hopes is not, in my opinion, it's not good enough. I mean, if you drive down the Beltway today and see what you've done to those communities and those neighborhoods in terms of denuding the forest that used to protect them and for not to be able to come forward to demonstrate at this time to relieve concerns.

[00:53:56] They're working on it. They're working on the design of where the plantings would go. And who's working on it? The contractor. It's Transurban, our private partner, and Lane Construction, the design-build contractor. and that those plantings will happen once construction is complete you shouldn't have to wait till construction is complete for the entire project you should be able to start i mean you've made such a matter anyway i think you owe it to the community don't say that we hope to bring plans into 2024 i think you owe it to the community to bring plans in 2024 yeah i mean i

[00:54:35] worked on the hotlands project in 2011 and it was awesome vdot was awesome uh transurban was awesome it's like a different world today working with the the uh the 495 extension project and it's not fair to the community i mean what the damage has been done is phenomenal and there it's almost unbelievable um no i mean that's all i have for right now but uh you know you guys owe it to that community to deliver very attractive reforestation plant and you owe it to us all to tell us what

[00:55:14] you're going to do with those ramps that you're building to go to Maryland that aren't going to have anything to connect to. I mean it's hard to even envision what it's going to look like and I have to try to envision it because nobody will show us exactly what it's going to look like without the Maryland piece which isn't going to happen at least for many many years. Anyway you You got your work cut out for you over there.

[00:55:43] You're new, I know, and we appreciate your focus on it. I was told by your predecessor that there were two things that VDOT cared about on this project. One was cost and the other was schedule. And that's not you're missing the community part.

[00:55:59] You've got to include that. All right. And I would just point out that's probably Supervisor Faust's last set of questions at a transportation committee meeting. So, John, thank you. Was there a question in there?

[00:56:15] You represent your community very well, John. Thank you. Supervisor Walkinshaw. Thank you. Just a quick question, maybe, related to both the Southside study and the bidirectional study.

[00:56:33] Can you talk through how those studies, I assume they will, you know, predict or project the use of the new hot lanes, the proposed new hot lanes, how will they capture those users who come from transit?

[00:56:53] In other words, somebody's using transit today, metro, VRE, bus, and because of the bidirectional lanes, they say, hey, this is a good new option and I'm going to stop using transit and I'm going to pay $20 or $30 and use the bidirectional lane.

[00:57:12] Will your studies capture that? We will do a detailed traffic analysis for bidirectional. I'm not sure if it'll get to that granular level to see if the users are from transit or in, you know, vehicles.

[00:57:39] But we will have appropriate traffic analysis and safety analysis for the project that has existing traffic and then forecasted traffic. Okay, so it sounds like the answer is no.

[00:57:58] You'll calculate how many users will use the new facilities, but you won't analyze what are they using now, where are they coming from? We will have data that gives us the classes of vehicles that use the facility now.

[00:58:14] Whether it's general purpose lane will be categorized by classes of vehicles. In the express lanes, obviously, not all classes of vehicles are allowed to use those lanes, but that's on the general purpose lanes, the data that's collected to feed those traffic analyses will be broken down by class of vehicle, if that makes sense.

[00:58:39] Yeah. I mean, it seems to me from a big picture level, that's a shortcoming. I mean, as the Commonwealth and local governments in the region is investing a lot of money in transit in both of these corridors, at a minimum, it seems to me, we would want to understand, Are we siphoning off transit riders when we give them this other option?

[00:59:02] Maybe we still decide to do it, but shouldn't we at least know where the new users of these facilities are coming from and who they are? There is origin-destination data that is used in the traffic analysis. But not mode? Not mode, no.

[00:59:22] I mean, there's origin-destination data that's used. The travel demand models are used in building the traffic analysis that we use for these large studies. Okay.

[00:59:39] All right. I'm surprised to hear that, that that's not part of it, but okay. Okay. Any other questions? All right. We did end early, so thank you again for both of you to be here. Mr. Steverson, do you have a final comment or question?

[00:59:57] Well, my final comment was a little bit more towards Faust and Supervisor Gross. I know this is their last BTC meeting, and so I'd like to thank them both for not only their service on BTC, but their service on the board. I've only been here seven years, but in the seven years, I've really appreciated y'all's insight and your willingness to fight for your communities, as we've seen here today, obviously.

[01:00:22] And I know that I've enjoyed the time here with you all. And while I don't know exactly necessarily what your next steps and where you all might end up, I know that I will see at least one of you probably, if not both of you, at some transportation-related something at some point.

[01:00:41] So I won't say goodbye. I'll just say I'll see you later at some other event. So thank you very much, and I really appreciate it. Yes, but, Greg, at that point they may be limited to three minutes. Yes. All right.

[01:00:57] If there's nothing else, we are adjourned.

