

Dear Mr. Lerner,

The Tysons Partnership represents a diversified mix of stakeholders in Tysons, Virginia as an emerging urban destination, including employers, residents, workers, and visitors. As an employment center of over 100,000 people, Tysons is an economic powerhouse for Fairfax County and for the region. Consistent with that reality, we are also a regional locus for commuter and other vehicular traffic.

Like most of the Commonwealth, commuting patterns have been significantly disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent rise in telework. However, per VDOT's report in September to the Commonwealth Transportation Board, all of Virginia began to see a rebound in car commutes several months into the pandemic, and that trend continues. Though telework will surely play a role in all our futures, Tysons is designed to be a 24-7 live work play urban center, where people come and go regularly, not virtually. By 2050, Tysons is planned to have 100,000 residents and 200,000 employees. Those residents and employees, as well as tourists, shoppers, business travelers and others, will need flexible, reliable transportation options.

Although the urbanizing future of Tysons is anchored by its four Silver Line Metro stations, the Tysons Comprehensive Plan calls for a multitude of transportation options to benefit both Tysons and the regional economy. Tysons Partnership supports expansion of the transportation network and the increase in travel options that will result from a successful I-495 Express Lanes Northern Extension Project ("495 NEXT") on the Capital Beltway between Tysons and the George Washington Parkway.

These include:

- Express lanes that incentivize carpools, vanpools and bus ridership
- A three-mile shared use path connecting Tysons to local trails and providing more opportunities for pedestrian and cycling commutes into Tysons
- Groundwork for bus rapid transit connections between Virginia and Maryland.

The Partnership asks that VDOT enable realization of the full potential offered by the shared use path through good wayfinding and world class bike/ped infrastructure. We also encourage VDOT to dedicate 495 NEXT toll revenue to transit.

As detailed by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors in a December 1 letter addressed to Secretary Valentine, completion of the managed lanes on the Maryland side of the Beltway is critical to the Project's ultimate success. Coordinated execution of construction schedules between Virginia and Maryland authorities is therefore imperative. We share the specific concerns flagged by the Fairfax Board of Supervisors regarding the disruptions to neighborhoods and other harms potentially resulting from unresolved disconnects between approaches and timing pursued by Maryland and those of the Commonwealth. We urge VDOT to work with Fairfax County to resolve these concerns and to address issues such as storm water management, tree canopy and other environmental impacts of the 495 NEXT project. We applaud VDOT for all you are doing through this Project and in collaboration with FCDOT aimed at maximizing transit, walking and biking options.

**1** VDOT and Fairfax County continue to coordinate on development plans for a shared use path parallel to I-495 to serve active transportation modes. The signage plan for the 495 NEXT shared-use path would be coordinated with Fairfax County Department of Transportation (FCDOT) during the detailed design phase of the project.

**2** The proposed action would enhance transit on I-495 by providing additional capacity for transit vehicles with new managed lanes in each direction. The Express Lanes would directly encourage carpooling/vanpooling and transit service by providing reliable, faster, toll-free trips for HOV3+ vehicles and transit buses. With respect to subsidies for transit operations, in a November 30, 2020 letter, the Virginia Secretary of Transportation Virginia stated that Virginia is committed to providing dedicated, ongoing support for transit services along this corridor as part of the I-495 NEXT project, and committed to investing funding generated from toll revenues toward the benefit of the users of this corridor. This commitment creates the opportunity for future transit expansion along the corridor.

Under a separate but parallel study that is being coordinated with VDOT, the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) is conducting its I-495 American Legion Bridge Transit and TDM Study in coordination with the Maryland Department of Transportation's Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) to understand the potential for multimodal transportation options that would reduce congestion, improve trip reliability and regional connections, and enhance existing and planned multimodal mobility and connectivity on I-495 and the American Legion Bridge. The recommendations resulting from this study were aimed to work in concert with Virginia's proposed northern extension of the I-495 Express Lanes and Maryland's proposed managed lanes program for the American Legion Bridge, I-495, and I-270. More details on this study and recent updates may be found on the project website:

<http://drpt.virginia.gov/transit/major-initiatives/i-495american-legion-bridge-transit-and-tdm-study/>

**3** The project team has responded directly to the letter from the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors separately from this letter, elaborating on coordination and timing between the Virginia and Maryland projects as well as stated environmental impact concerns. VDOT has been meeting and collaborating with multiple neighborhoods and citizen associations regarding localized issues for the project and potential future construction phasing with Maryland's project. VDOT has coordinated with Fairfax County on strategies to address stormwater management, as well as tree canopy and environmental impacts associated with the 495 NEXT Project.

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Shared use path

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Transit

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Thank you for this opportunity to comment. We look forward to continuing our work with VDOT and with FCDOT aimed at continued economic growth and quality-of-life improvements through the creation and enhancement of effective transportation and mobility options.

Sincerely,  
Sol Glasner

cc: Fairfax County Board of Supervisors

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