

I-495 NEXT SEPTEMBER 29, 2021 PROJECT INFORMATION MEETING SUMMARY OF QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

The following is a summary of the questions that were asked following the September 29th Public Information Meeting Presentation. This is not intended as a transcript, and includes adjustments to shorten or clarify answers. In cases where answers were not provided during the meeting, the answers are so noted. General comments are not summarized here.

Below are the full names, positions and agency for the staff members who provided responses during the meeting.

- **Susan Shaw**, Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) Northern Virginia (NOVA) Megaprojects Director
 - **Robert (Rob) Cary**, VDOT Chief Deputy Commissioner
 - **Abraham (Abi) Lerner**, VDOT NOVA Associate Manager Special Projects
 - **Jeffrey (Jeff) Folden**, Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT), I-495 & I-270 P3 Office Deputy Director
 - **Caryn Brookman**, MDOT I-495 & I-270 P3 Office Environmental Program Manager
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- Is there access to the plan and timeline of all the changes and phases for this project?
 - **Susan:** The slides that we shared tonight are posted on our website.
 - ALB reconstruction includes adding ramps connecting the hot lanes to the George Washington Memorial Parkway. It does not add any general-purpose (GP) lanes. Given that Beltway congestion is the issue, wouldn't adding GP lanes be a much better use of the limited space than the HOT lane ramps?
 - **Susan:** Express Lanes ramp connections were shown to be needed at the GW Memorial Parkway. Our focus is moving more people and so our focus has been making sure that the express lanes provide the connections that support maximum usage and will encourage car-pooling.
 - I would urge you to get the transit options in place before the HOT lanes are open to automobiles. That would help to get people to get used to the buses and hopefully they'll stay on transit and not even go back to using their automobiles.
 - **Susan:** We are working to get the transit options in place before the HOT lanes are completed.
 - Is there any thought to eventually adding metro along this route?
 - **Susan:** It currently is not in the Fairfax County comprehensive plan. The transit study was primarily focused on buses.
 - **Jeff:** Sure, there are no regional or local plans for rail in this corridor. Maryland is designing the bridge in a way that doesn't preclude development of a train system at a later date. It's just that at this point, and to avoid any

predetermination, we're not able to specifically say what type of rail may or may not be.

- **Susan:** Then as I understand it, it's not that you would have extra width on the American Legion Bridge, but you would design the substructure so that it could handle a heavier rail system in the future?
- **Jeff:** Yes.
- Will you be proactively emailing the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (e.g. a reminder/link to it)?
 - **Jeff:** If you're on our email list, MDOT will email a link on Friday, October 1. If you're not, I encourage you to sign up for email on our website at www.495-270-p3.com. You can sign up for our email alerts and you can also go to that website to view the supplemental DEIS on Friday.
- Sorry if I missed this, will the new HOT lane access reach Lewinsville and Snow Meadow Lane in the McLean VA area?
 - **Abi:** We do not anticipate impacts to the Lewinsville and Snow Meadow intersection. We will be incorporating some pedestrian improvements that are going to come close to the Lewinsville and Snow Meadow intersection, but we do not anticipate impact to that intersection.
- The shown slides do not have the information of any changes to Live Oak Drive in McLean - is there any slide for it?
 - **Susan:** We didn't have a specific slide for changes to Live Oak Drive since the limit of disturbance and the work on Live Oak Drive was consistent with what we showed in the public hearing documents.
- Who is the design build contractor and engineering firm? What is the anticipated date for starting the Right of Way Acquisition Project? What is the date for Right of Way plans submission for approval?
 - **Susan:** Right of way acquisition is expected to begin in early 2022. There's some pre-work that needs to be done ahead of that. We can also get information about who the appropriate contacts are related to the design-build work and who will be serving as the main contact.
- Should I be checking the website for that information?
 - **Susan:** Yes. I think that will be the easiest thing would be for us to summarize question and answers so that anyone can have access to the information.
- When will potential architectural designs for the new American Legion Bridge be released to the public for comment?
 - **Jeff:** The design of the bridge would be a function of final design after we get this section P3 grant approved, which is after fall 2022. The intention of the design of that bridge is that it be context sensitive and to blend in with the surrounding area and the national parks that are on three quadrants of the bridge.
- Georgetown Pike users will lose access to the HOT lanes and bear the brunt of construction delays. Please consider adding slip lanes to provide access to the HOT lanes

near their current location as these are used extensively for express lane access to Transurban's I-395/95 express lanes.

- **Susan:** The Georgetown Pike Bridge has been modified so that future Express Lanes access to and from the north is not precluded. This access wasn't specifically studied in our NEPA document, so there would need to be some follow on studies prior to implementation.
- Will there be any improvement in access for traffic going from Georgetown Pike to eastbound George Washington Memorial Parkway, which is currently mixed with traffic trying to merge onto 495 northbound with consequential delays.
 - **Susan:** As shown during our slide presentation, we made some improvements to that access in terms of merging onto the 495 northbound by extending the merge and improving the access.
 - **Abi:** Because we are providing additional capacity on the Beltway, through two new express lanes in each direction, then some of the traffic utilizing general purpose lanes will shift to the Express Lanes. So the combination of the additional improvements combined with the reduction in general purpose traffic, will improve the traffic operations for the merge from Georgetown Pike to 495.
- When will we get access to the locations of the new sound walls, the new bike/pedestrian trails and exactly what parts of Scott's Run will be affected or changed? Where will be able to access this information online?
 - **Susan:** The public hearing plans did show the work along Scott's Run where there are project impacts. The \$1.387 million that would be combined with Fairfax funding for stream restoration along Scott's Run, is not shown on our plans because it's a separate project that Fairfax County would implement. In terms of the sound walls and the bike trails, I believe all the bike trails were shown with the exception of these modifications shown during our presentation. This fall we will be working with the design builder to have them post updated plans on the project website as they're available.
- When will VDOT perform their Final Noise Study to help determine the new heights of the Noise Barriers?
 - **Susan:** The final noise study is anticipated to be done with the design build work and they are planning to do that work late this year. It does require some additional coordination with the Maryland team at the interface. The final noise study will be submitted to VDOT and to FHWA for their final approval.
- What will MDOT do when building the new American Legion Bridge? Will traffic be routed over to the other side of I-495 and back over otherwise known as a crossover or will MDOT have everyone use I-495 from I-95 in Virginia to I-95 in Maryland?
 - **Jeff:** Traffic will be maintained on the existing bridge, while the outsides of the new bridge are built. Once the bridges are built on the outside, the traffic will be shifted to the outside new bridges, allowing the existing bridge to be taken down

and rebuilt. We'll be maintaining traffic on the bridge throughout the duration of construction, especially during peak periods. There is no plan to have any crossovers or any re-routings as was done on the Woodrow Wilson Bridge.

- Not all of us can read the engineering diagrams on VDOT's website. Please provide clear English descriptions of numbers of new flyovers and their dimensions, dimension of new bridges, new elevation of Live Oak.
 - **Susan:** We will take that under advisement and see what we can do to make it better.
- How many houses bordering the right of way in VA will be taken by eminent domain?
 - **Susan:** There are no houses being taken by eminent domain. There are partial property acquisitions that will be needed, but no total house takes that would require relocation.
- Having the Georgetown Pike Bridge "not preclude future access" does not provide access. Again, please consider use of slip lanes like those used on 395.
 - **Susan:** We can provide information on early screening that we did relative to slip lanes in this area.
 - **Abi:** We did some screening and we determined that because of the impacts to traffic operations, safety, right of way, and potential environmental impacts, we excluded that option from further assessment. We do have that document and we will be posting that document on our website **[NOTE: The document addressing slip ramps is included at the end of these meeting notes.]**
- In regard to your answer to access to GMP, that was only WESTBOUND access to 495. What about if you are going Eastbound on Georgetown Pike and taking a left onto the on ramp?
 - **Abi:** Since we are providing an improvement to the ramp, we are providing additional capacity to that ramp, even if you're turning left, the likelihood that you're going to be encountering a great deal of congestion, or the level of congestion that you see today on the ramp itself, is going to be reduced or minimized because we're providing more capacity on the ramp and we are providing more capacity on the Beltway.
- Will the northbound on-ramp from Georgetown Pike to I-495 be widened to allow more traffic volume to merge into 495? Previously proposed design will continue the bottleneck at that intersection.
 - **Abi:** The answer is yes. We are anticipating widening the on ramp to provide more capacity.
- When the final noise study is conducted, will the temporary reduction in COVID traffic be factored in? Also, time of day when the study is conducted? Based upon the last noise study, where can we go to view "current" proposed sound wall improvements?

- **Susan:** The noise study looks at the design year, which is 2045. Our traffic team looked at the COVID impacts and found that by the year 2045 there were no impacts due to COVID. They did not take that into account because it's more of a short term impact, we believe. In terms of some of these other details about the time of day this study is conducted, I will get back with our noise experts and be able to provide that answer. I believe it is based on the worst hour noise predicted based on the traffic modeling. The last thing that we had was our public hearing documents that showed the noise while locations based on the preliminary study. That is available. That is what's currently under consideration, but a final study will be getting underway with the design builder.

Additional information not discussed during the meeting is provided below.

The traffic developed for the 2045 design year did not assume that any COVID-effects on traffic would remain. The Preliminary Noise Analysis was performed for the loudest (“worst noise”) hour of the day in the 2045 design year for the project. Noise levels were predicted for the hour of the day when the vehicle volumes, operating speeds, and number of trucks (vehicles with three or more axles) combine to produce the loudest noise conditions. The Preliminary Noise Analysis found the 12:00-1:00 PM hour to be the loudest hour of the day, and this will be re-determined in the development of the Final Design Noise Analysis. The proposed sound barriers, as determined in the Preliminary Noise Analysis, can be viewed on the project website at http://495northernextension.org/about_the_study/project_review_and_approvals.asp. Note the Preliminary Noise Analysis was completed using conceptual engineering data, and a more detailed Final Design Noise Analysis will be completed during detailed design. As such, noise barriers that were found to be feasible and reasonable during the preliminary design phase may not be found to be feasible and/or not reasonable in the Final Design Noise Analysis. Conversely, noise barriers that were not considered feasible and reasonable during preliminary design may meet the established criteria during detailed design and be recommended for construction.

- Regarding the Georgetown Pike Interchange, the plan seems to eliminate access to 495N and the GW Pkwy from eastbound Georgetown Pike. This will force thousands of commuters to seek alternatives along 267, Old Dominion Drive, Balls Hill Road, etc. What do you plan to do to mitigate the impact of this additional traffic on these already over-crowded roadways?

- **Abi:** Our project is not eliminating access to Northbound 495 from eastbound Georgetown Pike.
- My property is within the Limits of Disturbance
 - **Susan:** For specific property impact questions, we will provide contact information for our VDOT right of way specialist.
- Can you explain how the EIS in MD found serious health concerns...but our air is different and VA EA found FONSI (really with only approximately 20% mitigation).

Additional information provided by the Maryland Team not discussed during the meeting is provided below.

The DEIS for the I-495 & I-270 Managed Lanes Study included an analysis of airborne pollutants known as criteria pollutants as well as Mobile Source Air Toxics for all Build Alternatives. The DEIS concluded that the Build Alternatives are not predicted to increase emissions burdens compared to the No Build in 2040, aside from a slight increase in GHG emissions, nor cause or contribute to a violation of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards. An updated air analysis is being performed on the Preferred Alternative, results of which will be available in the Final Environmental Impact Statement.

Additional information provided by the Virginia Team not discussed during the meeting is provided below.

VDOT prepared an Air Quality Study that found that the project would not cause or contribute to a violation of any air quality standard. The VDOT Air Quality Study can be viewed on the project website at:

http://495northernextension.org/about_the_study/project_review_and_approvals.asp . VDOT also reviewed the findings in the Maryland Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS) and found their findings to be comparable. The Maryland SDEIS can be viewed at <https://oplanesmd.com/sdeis/#SDEIS>.

- Also would request using the VDOT blast e-mail for any and all updates on the 495 NEXT website and what was asked just earlier please. Thanks in advance...
 - **Susan:** We will follow-up with an email to those on our contact list.
- Question for Sup Foust and Delegate Murphy; Specifically what steps have you taken to mitigate the negative effects of the paved trail to the west of the beltway on the residents of Timberly South. How much money has been allocated for a security fence

and the needed increase to the height of the sound walls on the west side of the beltway?

- **Delegate Murphy:** What we understand is there's been a redesign at this time and we're going to study that and see how we can help.
- **Senator Favola:** I will just say that we have been working with Eric and other leaders from the Timberly South and I know that VDOT and some of the Timberly South residents have been talking about the design for the path and how to design it in a way that provides enough privacy for the homes, so that it's very safe and secured. We're working on, I think Delegate Murphy mentioned, we are working on a sound wall that would be uniformly effective and look good throughout the extent of the areas that need the sound wall.
- **Susan:** I will note that in some of the Timberly South area, the existing sound wall, based on our preliminary study was shown to not need to be increased in height and we are currently not planning to do that; but we will look at it again with our final noise study. I would concur that we've been in those meetings together with the elected officials as well as Timberly South residents and we are working with the project team to see how we can provide the requested mitigation of introducing this trail in what is now a utility easement, but that backs up to the homeowners association property. So we do understand the concern there and we are working to incorporate something that will be acceptable to the community.
- **Senator Favola:** We're also going to try to at least make the sound wall look attractive, I believe. Is that true Susan?
- **Susan:** For the new sound walls, I think for the Timberly South area, there's the ability to do some landscaping. We are working to coordinate a meeting with Dominion Virginia Power to see what types of plantings are acceptable and to also talk about the privacy fence and where that can go. It is an easement area, but yes we're working through the options.
- Will VDOT, Superintendent Foust, Senator Favola, and Delegate Murphy walk the Live Oak with the homeowners to see the damage that will have? We are prepared to meet next week or next. There are 63 citizens that would like your explanation. We urge you to work with us to minimize, and mitigate, the damage.
 - **Senator Favola:** I said I would be willing to. Kathleen, would you be willing to meet with the Live Oak residents?
 - **Delegate Murphy:** Yes, of course.
 - **Senator Favola:** Okay, we will just have to get that arranged. You can contact our offices. I'm at district31@senate.virginia.gov.
 - **Delegate Murphy:** I'm at district 34

- **Senator Favola:** Jane Edmonson, Supervisor Foust’s chief of staff was on this call, but I don’t know if she’s here right now.
 - **Supervisor Foust:** I’m here and I’m always ready and willing to meet in person.
- My property is within the limits of disturbance. I am being contacted by a legal firm in Norfolk. Do I need them?
 - **Susan:** I am not qualified to give you legal advice myself so I think that's something that you'll need to research and determine for yourself. I can have our right of way expert at VDOT contact you and make sure you understand our process. Then you can make that determination.
 - **Rob:** I want to assure everyone that if we need to acquire any property whatsoever, that we strictly follow the Uniform Relocation Act, which is federal law. It's one of the highest duties that we have at the Department of Transportation. When we acquire people’s property, we will do our very best to make sure that you're completely informed about the process. You will be provided with our appraisals as a basis of the offer, but if you choose to do your own, you can do that. If you choose to bring in your own legal counsel that is perfectly fine and within your right to do so, but I did want to clearly state that VDOT is simply interested in acquiring the property at fair market value and wants to treat every property owner in the way that we would want to be treated if we were acquiring our property.
- Will Fisher Island be disturbed?
 - **Caryn:** I can answer it. I believe this is related to Plummers Island, not Fisher Island. Plummers Island is a part of the C&O Canal National Historical Park and I can answer that. Since we identified the preferred alternative earlier this year, we have worked extensively with the National Park Service and also with our engineering team to look at options for construction and design approaches to try to minimize the limits of disturbance. We haven't been able to completely avoid impacts to Plummers Island, but we have significantly reduced the impact. So in the DEIS, the build alternatives had approximately 2 acres of impact to the island. Under the preferred alternative, we now have approximately 2/10 of an acre of impact. This is required for construction of the bridge substructure and construction related activity. We will continue to look at a minimum further minimization and avoidance if possible, but we have been able to significantly reduce impacts to the island.
- Why is HOT lane access not part of plans at Georgetown Pike? You stated it could be added, but it's not now? Why wouldn't it be part of the initial design?
 - **Susan:** This project is being done as a concessionaire enhancement and so largely the access to and from express lanes was something that was considered

by Transurban, our operator. It is something that they could add, but it's something that they didn't elect to do with the initial design.

- Maryland seemed to negotiate a very good deal with hundreds of millions of concessions. Will Virginia receive such concessions that will allow for reforestation and beautification?
 - **Susan:** Within the design build contract and the work that's happening in the corridor, there is a requirement to identify areas that can be revegetated. The Virginia project, in terms of the additional revenue, is somewhat limited. It is an extension and is more of an incremental change to a system that's already up and running. We feel that we've gotten a very good deal, especially with the transit support over the life of the term of the contract, so that was really important to our Secretary of Transportation.
 - **Rob:** It's a very expensive 2 1/2 to three mile long project. We have negotiated diligently with the concessionaire. We've certainly, on some of our other projects like 66 as an example, where we're doing more extensive work, gotten hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars for that concessionaire of the ability to build the project. They build it all at their expense, so we have a very strong track record of getting good concessions or payments out of the contractors in this case. Obviously we're doing the transit, which is going to be really transformative in this corridor once you have express lanes that function for rapid transit use, which does not exist today. If you look at our experience across the entire express lanes network, the types of concessions that we have been able to get out of those and some of the things that we've been able to do and continue to be able to do are frankly something that many states across the country come and ask us "how did we do that" because it's gone so well. I think in this particular case, because of the limited nature of what's being done here, the opportunities to do as much of that given the high expense of the project were somewhat more limited, but we still did get some pretty strong concessions out of it.
- Will a pedestrian trail across the Woodrow Wilson Bridge be built? The graphics say "possible trail."
 - **Jeff:** Both Maryland and Virginia are committed to building a trail across the American Legion Bridge and connecting trails in Maryland and Virginia. I believe you are referring to is the possible location, because we are showing it on the east side but we are open to hearing different perspectives and opinions such as on the west side of the bridge, or hung on the bridge or something of that nature.

- Is VDOT adding any new short-term noise monitoring sites or long-term noise monitoring sites to their final noise study? If so, where will the new noise monitoring sites be? Also, will the public be able to look at the TMN model?
 - **Susan:** Since this is a detailed technical question, we will get back with our noise experts to provide a response.

Additional information not discussed during the meeting is provided below.

The Design-Builder will be responsible for preparing the Final Design Noise Analysis (FDNA). At this time, it is not known whether any new short-term or long-term monitoring sites will be needed. Once the FDNA gets underway, the Design-Builder will be required to prepare a noise monitoring plan for VDOT review and approval. The public can view FHWA's Traffic Noise Model (TNM) at the following location:

[https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/noise/traffic_noise_model/tnm_v25/.](https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/noise/traffic_noise_model/tnm_v25/)

- How are you managing the additional rain runoff due to the additional impervious surfaces?
 - **Susan:** We do have a stormwater management plan. I know Abi went over some of the additional commitments that Virginia has made as part of our 495 NEXT project. This corridor does not currently have stormwater management facilities on the Beltway. Generally speaking in this area when the Beltway was built there weren't requirements to provide stormwater management. Our studies show that when we're done, the run off actually will be reduced from what it is today and so we believe this is an improvement especially with the additional work that we've committed to.
 - **Jeff:** We have to meet similar requirements from the Maryland Department of Environment, so we've got to address the quantity and quality of stormwater runoff. Similar to Virginia, stormwater solutions don't exist today because the Beltway was built back in the 60s and 70s when it wasn't required. We'll be upgrading and modernizing the stormwater to today's standards.
- Will Supervisor Foust, Senator Favola, and Delegate Murphy walk Live Oak with the homeowners to see the damage that that we will have? We are prepared to meet next week. There are 63 citizens that would like your explanation we urge you to work with us to minimize and mitigate the damage.
 - **Susan:** VDOT certainly would also be glad to attend with the elected officials when you have that meeting, and I think you know we will be glad to invite Maryland, too, since some of their work is adjacent to the Live Oak community, as well, if they're interested to come.

- **Senator Favola:** I really think it would be helpful Susan to have VDOT there, and Maryland Department of Transportation is welcome as well. It would be great if we could all meet together.
- **Delegate Murphy:** Barbara and I have walked Live Oak before, several times.
- Will existing lanes remain open while new lanes are being built?
 - **Susan:** We have requirements for peak periods so the existing lanes have to remain open. We will need to have lane closures overnight and in off peak periods as there's just no way to get the project constructed without doing those types of lane closures, but we will be working with the contractor to minimize disruption. Whenever construction is ongoing it does reduce the capacity just by the fact that there's work going on and it makes it more challenging for drivers, but we will do our best to keep traffic moving. We also will have a traffic management plan where we will be working with our team to try to reduce single occupant travel in the corridor, to promote bus use, to get those bus services started early, and anything we can do to reduce travel in the corridor. This is a challenging corridor. If you're going across the American Legion Bridge it's because you have to and there's just not a lot of good options, but we will do our best to minimize impact to traffic during construction.
- How will traffic issues be addressed during construction on Balls Hill and Georgetown Pike at I-495 North?
 - **Susan:** We know this is a challenging area with some typical vehicular traffic that use local streets to avoid congestion on the Beltway. We do have a traffic management plan to try to look if there are impacts on the surrounding road network to explore if there are options to improve the situation.

Phone Callers:

- **Caller 1:** Asked questions regarding the use of slip lanes, adding more general purpose lanes, and the need for Express Lanes connections at the George Washington Memorial Parkway.

After the meeting, VDOT provided the responses to the questions asked by the resident during the Public Information Meeting and in a separate email. These questions and responses are noted below.

- Why **at-grade slip lanes** shouldn't be used at **HOT-lane entrances**, (as on I-395)
- **At-grade entrances** require vehicles in the general purpose lanes to maneuver from the right side to the left side to access the slip lanes. This causes major

weaving issues immediately downstream of interchange on-ramps for vehicles trying to access the Express Lanes – causing congestion hot spots and safety issues.

Why VDOT isn't considering **retaining the HOT-lane entrance** at or near its current location to enable access from Georgetown Pike AND GW Parkway

- This location is too close to the off-ramps to Dulles Toll Road to allow a future slip ramp. It works OK today because there is only an upstream entrance in advance of the exits, but once the Express Lanes are in place, a slip ramp entrance, followed by off-ramps just downstream, will create a weaving issue and potential congestion hot-spot.
- This location is adjacent to Timberly Park, as well as wetlands immediately west of the Beltway – further widening to accommodate a slip ramp will negatively impact both

Why VDOT has not **shared the analysis of options** performed at the concept stage.

- VDOT uses a tiered screening process that applies more detailed analysis to the more detailed design-level concepts. For the preliminary conceptual stage, VDOT uses high-level screening criteria to “weed out” alternatives that would have impacts to parks, environmentally sensitive areas, private property acquisition, or safety and operations.

Using an at-grade slip lane near the current HOT-lane entrance would eliminate the need for elaborate flyover interchanges or elevated ramps allowing GW Parkway and Georgetown Pike drivers to access the HOT lanes.

- Access at GW Parkway is already being provided within that interchange. For reasons above, a slip ramp near the HOT-lane entrance would not be feasible or environmentally permissible due to the impacts that would be created with the widening that would be required.

It notes that "VDOT and Transurban have been removing these types of ramps where possible along the I-95 Express Lanes corridor due to safety and operational issues..."

But this claim is only half true: most of the **HOT lane entrances from local lanes are slip lanes**. We've all seen the at-grade "EZ-Pass EXPRESS ENTRANCES" I-395.

So, clearly, **the argument against using slip lanes for NEXT's HOT lane entrances doesn't hold water**.

- There is one remaining left-side ramp for the I-395 Express Lanes between the Springfield Interchange and the Pentagon, which is in the SB direction. This ramp was constructed long ago as part of the original I-95 HOV system, as were other left-side ramps along the original I-95 HOV Lanes. They have been shown to be problematic when located near interchange on-ramps, which causes weaving problems and creates a safety

hazard. In some locations, they have been replaced, such as near Fairfax County Parkway and south of Route 234.

- VDOT had to reconfigure the southern terminus of the I-95 Express Lanes in Garrisonville a few years ago due to problems with the left-side slip ramps that were initially constructed.
- If you drive between Prince William County and Fredericksburg on I-95, you will notice numerous locations where new flyovers are being constructed, not slip ramps, to make sure that entrances are not causing weaving and safety issues. When completed, the number of flyover entrance ramps will be notably more than the number of previously constructed left-side HOV slip ramps from years ago.

The White Paper is provided at the end of these meeting notes

- **Rob:** I did want to jump in and just say one thing relative to the general purpose lanes. Our experience on the I-95 corridor, we carry twice as many people in the Express Lanes than we do in the general purpose lanes so I think it is important to recognize the value of the Express Lanes in moving more people, not more vehicles...more people.
- **Caller 2** If we are going to predicate this whole thing on transit on vans where are the park and rides? Where are people going to park their car to get into these vans? Are your traffic studies accurate? Are your noise studies accurate? Or the sensors in Loudon County. Is the air accurate? Did you put the sensors out there elsewhere?
 - **Susan:** This was a study that was done to our Federal Highway standards reviewed by Federal Highway as well as reviewed by our own team. It was accomplished by VDOT, using consultant services that we hired. The studies go through a number of reviews prior to review and approval. So, we do believe our studies are accurate and that they meet the required standards. Regarding your question about park and ride lots, we will review the travel patterns we anticipate in the corridor and how carpooling can be enhanced, and whether additional facilities might be needed.

Additional information not discussed during the meeting is provided below.

As part of the Transportation Management Plan, VDOT will be providing additional incentives to new carpoolers and Vanpoolers traveling in the I-495 Corridor. These incentives will be over and above what is currently being offered in the region through Commuter Connections and Vanpool Alliance services. To encourage formation of non-Single Occupant Vehicles (SOV) commuting along the corridor to reduce congestion during construction, VDOT will be working

with both entities and Fairfax County to promote and implement these strategies.

VDOT and DRPT have initiated discussions and will continue to coordinate with Fairfax County, Montgomery County and Maryland agencies for a possible early start of a pilot bus service between Maryland and Virginia. As part of this effort, collectively, the team will be working on identifying potential locations and opportunities for commuters to park to use ridesharing options and transit services.

It is important to note that in the development of the new transit services between Tysons (which is being transformed into an urban center) and Maryland locations, the study team will focus on identifying locations for the bus stops near major activity centers (residential and commercial) to help reduce the dependency on the usage of automobiles to complete the trips. By placing the bus stops near major activity centers, transit users can walk to the bus instead of having to drive to a park-and-ride lot.

- **Caller 3:** Was the Commonwealth Transportation Board action to designate the lanes as High occupancy toll lanes (with 3 or more people using the lanes for free) legal? Is only one public information meeting on May 20th 2019 appropriate? There needs to be an independent review of Transurban and their financial situation as well as the overall 495 process.
- **Caller 3:** The McLean Traffic Advisory Group, formed by Favola, Supervisor Foust, and Delegate Murphy- was never briefed.
 - **Susan:**
The PowerPoint Slide used at the November 10, 2020 meeting with the Transportation Committee of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors is shown below.

Public Outreach

Public Meetings and Public Hearings

- Public Meeting # 1 (June 11, 2018)
- Public Meeting # 2 (May 20, 2019)
- Question & Answer Session #1 (September 28, 2020)
- Question & Answer Session #2 (September 30, 2020)
- Public Hearing # 1 (October 5, 2020)
- Public Hearing # 2 (October 8, 2020) – **Comment period closes on 12/4/2020**
- **Joint Public Meeting DRPT and VDOT– Transit Study, 495 NEXT: November 18**
- **Elected Officials (16 meetings in 2020)**
- **Stakeholders and Agencies (29 meetings in 2020)**
- **Property Owners One-on-One Meetings (21 meetings in 2020)**
- **Homeowner’s Associations (5 meetings in 2020)**

Additional Information Not Discussed During the Meeting

VDOT has held four public meetings, two question and answer sessions for the general public, two public hearings, 25 meetings with elected officials, 165 meetings with stakeholders and agencies, 13 meetings with homeowners associations, and 24 one-on-one meetings with property owners. The Public Hearings held on October 5 and 8, 2020, provided both in-person, as well as virtual opportunities for the public to engage in the process. Prior to and after the Public Hearings, VDOT held three Public Information Meetings / Question-&-Answer Sessions virtually with the public. In addition, the materials have been available online and in hard copy in several locations since February 2020, and the project team has been available for questions and comments via phone throughout the planning and design process. VDOT has been proactive in its engagement with the public through meetings, as described above, with numerous local citizen groups and residential organizations. VDOT is continuing to meet with HOAs on a regular basis to provide updates and provide opportunities for additional input and dialogue. Additionally, VDOT is committed to continuing to engage with the community through the final design and construction phases. These public involvement opportunities exceed both FHWA and VDOT policy for this type of NEPA study.

VDOT representatives met with the McLean Citizens Association (MCA) on May 14, 2019; February 11, 2020; October 13, 2020; and April 13, 2021. VDOT 495 NEXT Project representatives have not met with the McLean Traffic Advisory Group, but are available to brief this group.

Regarding review of financial and other project records, approvals at the federal level, other state agencies, and key stakeholders have been ongoing and will continue throughout the project, as appropriate. All actions to date are consistent with Virginia Code and federal laws.

- **Rob:** We've had extensive public outreach through meetings with neighborhood groups. We've met in person on site with individuals, with neighborhoods. We have followed every requirement and pretty significantly exceeded those and ensured that we had good public outreach.
- There is currently an ineffective portion of the sound wall in that vicinity of Blaise Trail on the outer loop, about 1/4 mile from Georgetown Pike. Will this project replace that section with the same sound wall material and height that are used everywhere else?
 - **Susan:** I'm going to ask and I'll get back to you on that. If it is being replaced with new walls certainly it would be using current standards for materials, which are sound absorbed on the side with the materials that we use. In terms of the height, we would look at our final noise study with the additional traffic that would then determine what that height should be. To be sure that I'm talking about it in the same spot, I will make sure that we get that answer to you.

Additional Information Not Discussed During the Meeting

Based on the preliminary noise analysis, a new wall is proposed to be constructed in this section of the corridor. The final determination for height and location will be made when the study team conducts the final noise analysis.

- Please provide information on steps VDOT and its contractors will take to minimize construction impacts to residents. Safety, security, privacy, dust, are a mess, especially once noise walls come down and trees or vegetation are removed.
 - **Susan:** The design-builder will be looking to make sure that the work they do minimizes impacts in this surrounding area. They are responsible to purchase any construction easements they might need and, just in terms of that in itself, is incentive to minimize their impact. Transurban will be working with the contractor as well to make sure that they're following all of our policies and procedures around safety, privacy, and making sure that they are taking into account the surrounding neighborhoods.
- Will VDOT be committing to using native plants only for any additional landscaping or beautification? Also, what commitments to treating invasive plants will VDOT be giving to these new areas of impacts?

- **Susan:** Wherever we are disturbing earth and removing existing vegetation there is a requirement to use native plants and not to use any invasive species. It's not part of the project to remove existing invasive plants in areas that are not disturbed by the project.
- Why is Virginia putting in infrastructure to support people commuting from Maryland to DC through Virginia? Shouldn't Maryland first take steps to enhance the Clara Barton Parkway and Canal Rd before building hot lane bridges from Maryland to the GW Parkway?
 - **Susan:** We have worked together with Maryland to identify a regional solution and I think from our viewpoint, if you're a Virginia resident, you're driving to Maryland, and we want you to have a good travel experience. If you're a Maryland resident and you're driving to work in Virginia, that's important to Virginia too, that you have a good driving experience. I think Maryland would say the same thing. We see it as a regional system and we're working together with our partners in Maryland to make sure that's the case.
- **Caller:** It seems like Maryland is putting in more and more NIMBY rules, for example, River Road on the other side of the Potomac River, they reduced their speed limits from like 45 to 25, making it so that really the only way to get from Rockville, Frederick, to downtown DC, is through Virginia via GW Parkway and through the I66 hot lanes, not through Wisconsin Ave, not through Connecticut Ave, not through River Road, or through anywhere else in Maryland. It seems like the route from Frederick to Rockville to DC that's most optimal is via Virginia, and at the same time Maryland's doing the NIMBY responses where if you lived in Fairfax County and worked at say, Fort Meade, you're just crazy to have a commute like that. Maryland's not reciprocating, I don't agree with that.
 - **Jeff:** I would state that I agree with what you said Susan, we're looking at transportation as moving people in the region, irrespective of where you live. We want to make sure people have the ability to get from one side to the other. Every project is different, and referring to River Road, I don't know all of the specifics, but we are still looking at arterials very closely to ensure we're accommodating context sensitive solutions for the people who are traveling there, the cyclists, pedestrians, and trying to get the road context sensitive for safety and ensuring we're providing for all users of the roadway. So it's not just about cars, it's about bikes and pedestrians and everyone.
- Will large trucks be able to use the I-495 Next portion of the project?
 - **Susan:** Consistent with the existing 495 express lanes, permitted vehicles do not include large trucks.

- On September 15th, the Commonwealth Transportation Board allocated \$57.6M to the I-495 Next project. I thought this was going to be a private funded project that constructs the new lanes and provides a small yearly transit payment.
 - **Susan:** It is privately funded. It is a project that is provided through financing. There is some public support through a loan through the US Department of Transportation that's anticipated with the project. The \$57.6 million at the Commonwealth Transportation Board allocated is to partially cover VDOT costs for our oversight and implementation during the project. Transurban is also providing funds for this purpose. This is very consistent with how we delivered all of our P3 projects in Virginia.
 - **Rob:** The fact that while there will be money through tolls, it's a very expensive project to build and striking a balance that actually created a fundable project that we will be able to close on and move forward, and for the first time in decades, provide relief in one of the greatest chokepoints, not only in the Washington region, but arguably across the nation, serving not just local traffic, but regional and more extensive traffic beyond. I've never heard anybody say the American Legion Bridge is great. It's an issue, everybody knows it's an issue, and this project is going to move forward and fix that.
- It would be nice if you could use trees or vegetated sound walls if possible
 - **Susan:** Generally, for a stand of trees to actually provide a noise mitigation they have to be quite thick, several hundred feet to be able to actually reduce noise levels. We just don't have that kind of space. In terms of vegetated sound walls, currently there's not a standard that we have available to us within Virginia. We are using our standard concrete walls or lightweight panel walls as the options that we are looking at in this corridor.
- Timberly South does appreciate the efforts of our elected officials and VDOT to address key safety concerns regarding the multi-use path, including the crossing of Lewinsville Road and the consequences of a de facto terminus of the path at Lewinsville and Timberly. A significant concern remains, VA's policy allowing electric-powered vehicles, like ebikes, on this type of pathway. The difference in speeds among pedestrians, those walking dogs, those pushing strollers, and powered vehicles is significant -- Class 3 bikes as sold can travel nearly 30 mph and can readily be modified to actually travel faster than that with minor electrical modifications. This difference in travel speeds creates real risks, especially when administration of the path is left with the state.
 - **Susan:** I know we've met with the Timberly South community, particularly around the trail in that area, and we are working with the design build team to see how we can meander that trail to encourage reasonable speeds for any bikers in that area. There are a number of vertical curves in that area just

because of the natural terrain, but we're continuing to work on that and to try to address some of these concerns.

- I don't see that any hard dates have been provided by MD for their improvements to the Legion Bridge and the widening of I-495/I-270 corridor? The bridge alone is a massive engineering project, which will take years. There are no plans to widen the Beltway from the north 270 split off of 495. The entire north side of the Beltway is a parking lot with no mitigation in sight. What is the need to increase the top of the funnel at the Dulles Access Road leading to the Legion Bridge at this time? Did the Environmental Assessment take the associated air pollution with sharply increased idling traffic?
 - **Jeff:** In our schedule for Maryland, the American Legion Bridge, is to be starting construction, the financial close, by the end of 2022. Having construction lasts about five years, so that is our schedule. We obviously do have some additional approvals, or need to get there, we have the completion of the environmental process and approval of the final Section 3 agreement. We expect it will take five years to build the bridge, but we're expecting to meet these schedules. As far as widening the Beltway north of 270 or the split, this project goes up to I-370. As far as the Beltway, there's no current planned improvements to the Beltway from 270 going east. As part of this project we will be transitioning back down to existing conditions between the 270 spurs, somewhere in the vicinity west of Maryland 187, which is Old Georgetown Road. We do recognize that we need improvements to the entire system and if this Preferred Alternative Phase 1 South is selected to move forward, we would be looking at additional improvements to the system through additional environmental studies.
 - **Abi:** Dulles Toll Road, Route 267, is a major regional facility. It ties to 495 and providing direct access from this major regional facility to the Express Lanes is going to help traffic operations in the region. We anticipate that with the construction of our Express Lanes, in conjunction with the additional improvements Maryland is putting in with the new managed lanes on the bridge, as well as extending the managed lanes north of the Beltway and 270, there will be the ability to move more people and allow them to make more reliable trips. Those additional users will be a combination of transit, carpool, and single occupant vehicles that are paying for the use of the Express Lanes. With this additional capacity, you will see a reduction in travel times and better operations on the Beltway from the Dulles Toll Road all the way up to Maryland.
- Will you provide traffic studies that prove Express Lanes access ramps to the George Washington Memorial Parkway provide traffic relief?
 - **Susan:** For the Virginia study, we believe our traffic studies did show the need for connections with the express lanes to and from the South. That's what is

being built with the 495 NEXT project. I know Maryland did similar studies to and from the north.

- **Jeff:** I agree, we've done our studies with the ramps to and from the north and there are significant traffic volumes that use those ramps. Without those direct connections, all that traffic would be remaining in the general purpose lanes, therefore you would not be improving the general purpose lanes.

TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM

I-495 Express Lanes Northern Extension (NEXT) Project

Left-side Express Lanes Entry/Exit Slip Ramps

The purpose of this memorandum is to address the consideration of left-side express lanes entry / exit “slip” ramps (left-side slip ramps) as a means of providing access between the I-495 General Purpose (GP) lanes and the proposed I-495 Express Lanes (ELs), and to provide a recommendation on their use as components of the 495 Northern Extension (NEXT) Project. Left-side slip ramps can be used to provide direct access between two parallel high-speed facilities. In the case of this project, the issue has been raised regarding whether they could be used to provide connections from the I-495 GP lanes (left-most lane) to the I-495 ELs (right-most lane) in the northbound direction, and from the I-495 ELs (right-most lane) to the I-495 GP lanes (left-most lane) in the southbound direction, within the interstate segment between Georgetown Pike interchange and the Dulles Toll Road interchange. The purpose of providing south-facing left-side slip ramps between the GP lanes and ELs would be to provide access for drivers who wish to use the existing Capital Beltway Express facility coming from or heading to Georgetown Pike. Because the existing ELs terminate north of the Dulles Toll Road Interchange, near the Old Dominion Drive overpass, motorists can currently travel between the ELs and Georgetown Pike. The concern from some members of the public who live along Georgetown Pike has been that once the proposed 495 NEXT Project is completed, there will no longer be an entrance or exit to the facility that would accommodate these existing ELs users in the McLean-Langley area. The request for consideration of left-side entry/exit slip ramps is aimed at maintaining access to and from the existing ELs facility without constructing ramps and structures at the Georgetown Pike interchange to and from the south.

Left-side entry/exit slip ramps have a number of constraints and challenges which make their use challenging and typically undesirable. VDOT and Transurban have been removing these types of ramps where possible along the I-95 Express Lanes corridor due to safety and operational issues observed in the field and confirmed with analysis data. Left-side ramps would be difficult to implement as part of the 495 NEXT Project for the following reasons:

- The segment between Georgetown Pike and Dulles Toll Road interchanges is constrained by two overpasses and a stream crossing that would limit the width available to accommodate the ramps on I-495. The Lewinsville Bridge was lengthened as part of the previous Beltway HOT Lanes project and

there is not enough space to accommodate new left-side slip ramps in addition to the ramps for the Dulles Interchange. The Old Dominion Drive Bridge spans over Scotts Run immediately adjacent to the stream crossing at I-495, where there is a bend in the stream, a flood plain, and a conservation easement that limits widening beyond the proposed design footprint.

- The maximum distance between the ramp gore points at Georgetown Pike interchange and the most feasible location for where left-side ramps could be located – north of the Scotts Run bridge – would not allow enough longitudinal distance to accommodate safe and efficient movements between the ELs and Georgetown Pike ramps (see **Figure 1** and **Figure 2**). The likely distance that would be available would be limited to approximately 2,400 feet.

Figure 1. Weaving Distance Between Georgetown Pike and Scotts Run Bridge

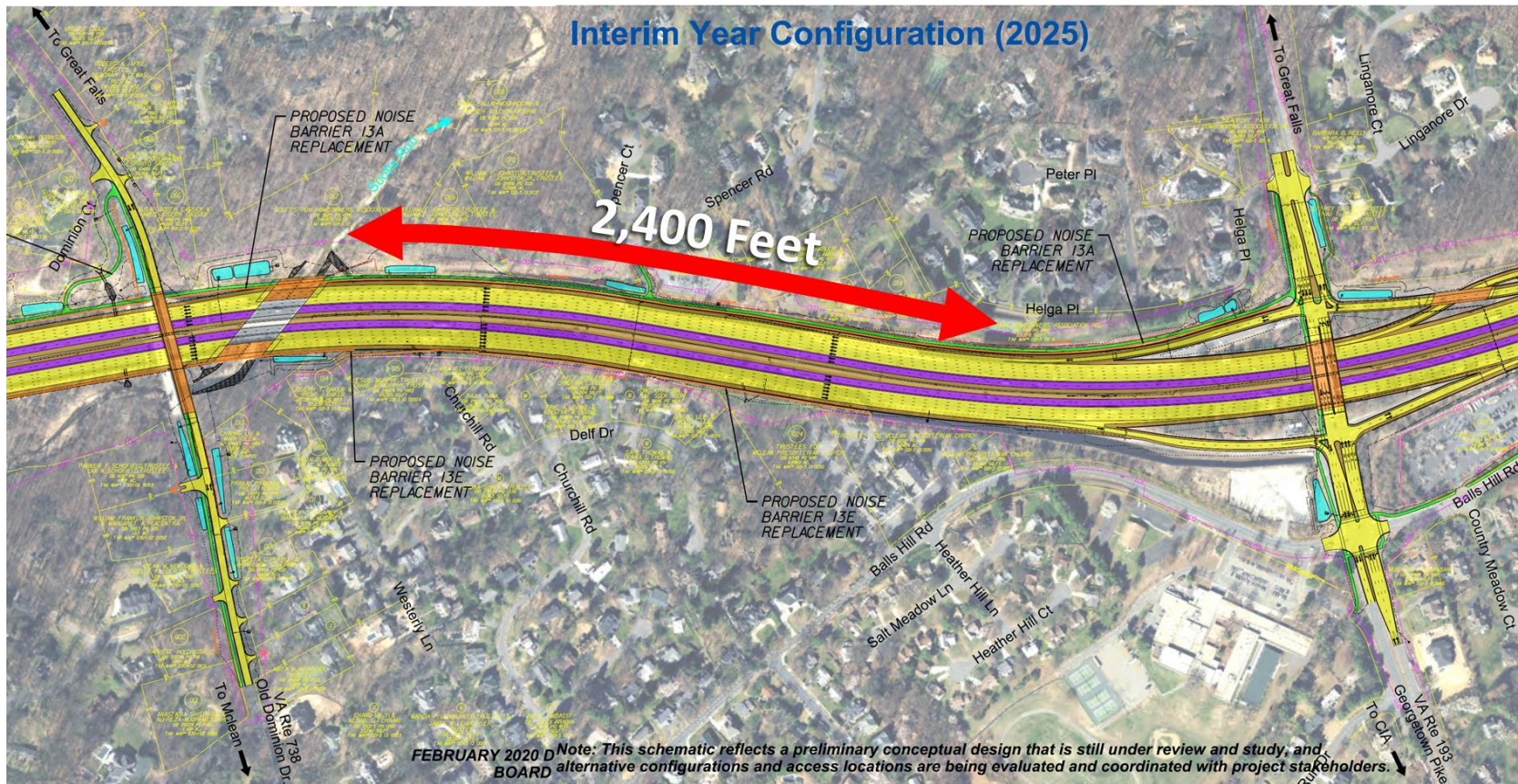
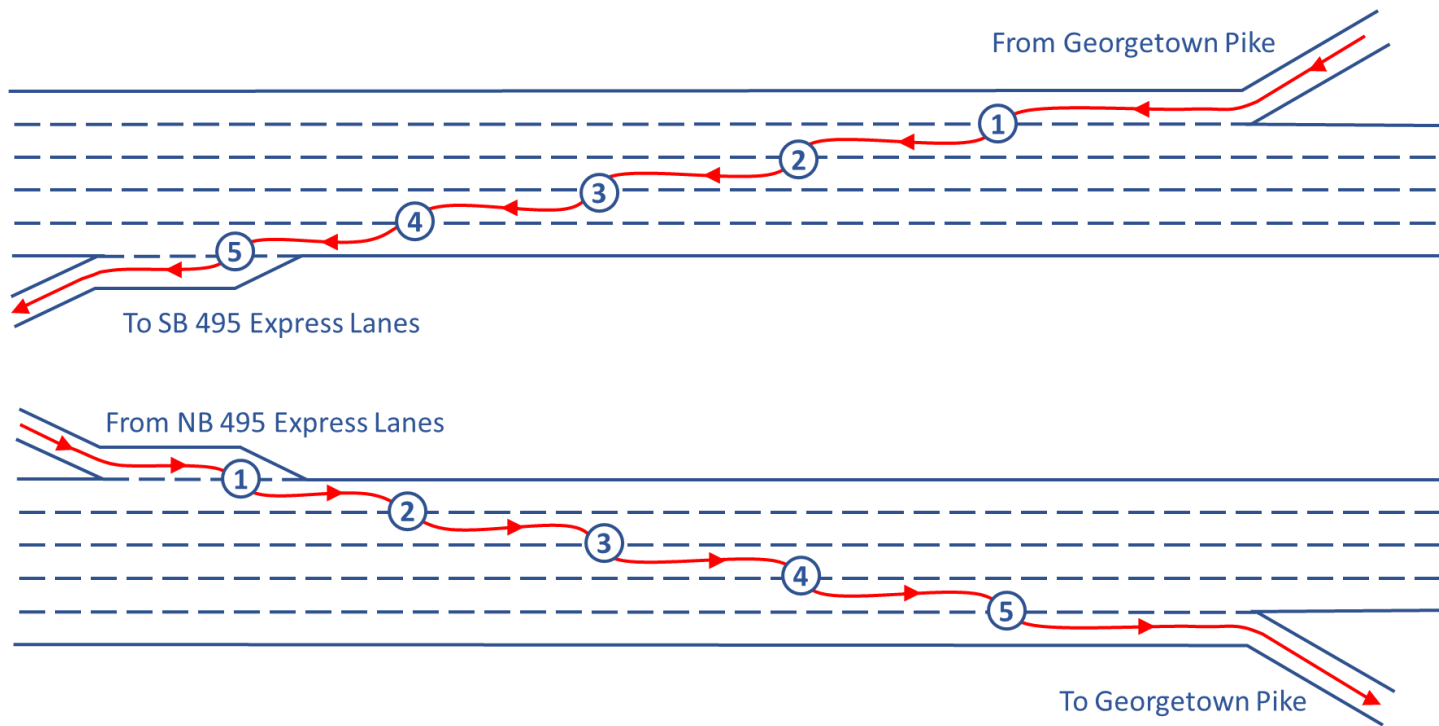


Figure 2. Weaving Movements Required for Left-side Express Lanes Entry/Exit Slip Ramps



- As shown in **Figure 2**, a total of five lane changes in the 495 GP lanes and at least one lane change in the ELs would be required for vehicles traveling between the Georgetown Pike interchange ramps and the existing Beltway ELs to the south. Assuming 2,400 feet of longitudinal distance to change lanes six times, the average distance allotted per lane would be 400 feet. At average free flow speeds of 60 miles per hour, drivers would be required to find an acceptable gap in the adjacent lane and execute a lane change every 4.5 seconds. Under slower speeds, drivers would have more time to change lanes, but would be much less likely to find enough acceptable gaps to change lanes due heavier congestion and more closely spaced vehicles.
- In order to accommodate left-side slip ramps to and from the GP lanes, widening would be required for the transition area to develop the exit/entry lane and the acceleration / transition area. As a result, additional ROW impacts would be required on both directions of I-495; on the east side of the northbound direction, additional residential takes would occur, while on the west side of the southbound direction, the Dominion Power substation would be impacted, as well as the proposed stormwater management ponds within the Scott's Run Homeowners Association lands.
- As demonstrated by the previously mentioned issues identified along the I-95 corridor, notable safety and operational issues are associated with a configuration where faster flowing traffic from the ELs must merge suddenly with congested and slower-moving traffic in the GP lanes in a short distance, with little or no storage area. This configuration increases the potential for, and frequency / severity of, the following problems:
 - Sideswipe and rear-end crashes due to speed differentials between ELs traffic attempting to merge and congested GP lanes traffic;
 - Queuing on the proposed transition ramp area that spills back from the GP lanes due to merging traffic, and that potentially causes dangerous back-ups onto the through lanes of the mainline ELs;
 - "Hot-spot" speed reductions on both the ELs or the GP lanes that occur suddenly and are driver expectancy issue.

Summary and Recommendation

The provision of left-side entry/exit ramps would be problematic and challenging due a number of factors: inadequate longitudinal distance to accommodate the appropriate distance for multiple lane changes; constrained areas on either side of I-495 that limit widening needed to enable provision of the ramps, including Scotts Run stream and surrounding flood plain, a conservation easement, and an electrical power substation; the increase in frequency and severity of crashes and operational issues as a result of speed differentials and six-lane weaving maneuvers required. Based on the factors presented in this memorandum, left-side slip ramps are not recommended as a part of the 495 NEXT project, especially between Georgetown Pike and the Dulles Toll Road interchanges.