



*Tier 2 Final Environmental Assessment
I-66 Interchange Justification Report*

Appendix A

Letters of Support

FINAL – AUGUST 2016



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October 20, 2015

The Honorable Aubrey L. Layne, Jr.
Secretary of Transportation
1111 E. Broad Street, Room 3054
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Reference: Recommended Design Concept (Preferred Alternative) for Transforming I-66 Outside the Beltway

Dear Secretary Layne:

On October 20, 2015, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors endorsed the Recommended Design Concept (Preferred Alternative) for Transforming I-66 Outside the Beltway as recommended and presented by VDOT to the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) on September 15, 2015, contingent upon VDOT's continued progress toward addressing the comments below regarding the Final Tier 2 Environmental Assessment of the Transforming I-66 Outside the Beltway project, the Preferred Alternative and the phasing of the Preferred Alternative.. As indicated in the Board's June 5, 2015, letter, I-66 is critically important to Fairfax County. The County continues to support the Commonwealth's efforts to address multimodal mobility in the I-66 Corridor and to move the most people as efficiently as possible.

Decisions made in this Corridor Improvement Project will have a significant impact on the daily lives of Fairfax County citizens and others who work and visit Fairfax County. They will also significantly affect the ability to implement future improvements in the I-66 corridor. Since the County transmitted comments to you in February and June, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) have been working collaboratively towards addressing our concerns. We sincerely appreciate the extensive public outreach that has been conducted. The Board also appreciates the additional design work that has minimized the project's footprint and reduced the number of potential residential relocations that were initially presented earlier this year.

Tier 2 Environmental Assessment of the Transforming I-66 Outside the Beltway Project

The County understands that the final environmental documents will not be completed until after the CTB decides on the Recommended Design Concept (Preferred Alternative) on October 27, 2015. The County expects that the final documents will include supporting information regarding:

- VDOT's multimodal recommendation, based upon increased person throughput and reduced congestion and cut-through traffic in the corridor
- Responses to the County and other comments submitted to VDOT that were considered in the formulation of the recommendation
- Strategy for completing the future phases of the recommended design concept

Recommended Design Concept (Preferred Alternative)

With the presentation of the Recommended Design Concept (Preferred Alternative) by VDOT to the CTB on September 15, 2015, the County renews the following additional comments covering our earlier February and June letters as well as additional issues regarding the project funding and phasing.

- Right-of-Way
The Board appreciates the additional considerations given to minimizing right-of-way impacts to our residences, schools, businesses, parks and natural resources. Some of these reductions are based upon new designs and applications of stormwater management regulations. The County continues to be interested in reducing the right-of-way impacts and encourages additional efforts to minimize residential relocations. The County also requests that possible right-of-way reductions be considered at all crossings, as is being done with the phased reconstruction for the Cedar Lane crossing, and that reasonable design waivers be considered. As the next project phase considers alternative designs, the County requests further efforts to reduce the footprints and right-of-way impacts. The Preferred Alternative should be considered the maximum footprint (both horizontally and vertically) going forward.
- Not to Preclude Extension of Rail Service
The Board has supported the use of Typical Section 2A between the interchanges for the Transform I-66 Outside the Beltway project. This concept would provide a wider median to accommodate an extension of Metrorail to three stations west of Vienna as planned on the County's Comprehensive Plan. The Recommended Design Concept (Preferred Alternative) allows for this wider median in Fairfax County. However, the Phase 1 project does not include the wider median in Centreville from west of Route 28, through the Route 29 interchange and to the planned future rail station location, a distance of approximately 5,000 feet.

The County understands that reconstructed interchanges will be designed and built to accommodate the future extension of Metrorail. However, in some cases, most notably at the Monument Drive and Stringfellow Road crossings, a significant up-front cost savings can be achieved by using the existing structures and their HOV ramp connections until such time as a Metrorail extension is implemented. Alternative concept designs have been developed for building the more expensive configurations which would accommodate an extension of Metrorail service as part of this project. The more extensive designs would relocate the ramps to the north, and in Monument Drive's concept, shift the crossing to the west. The Preferred Alternative at Monument Drive should be redesigned to eliminate the encroachment on the County's property where the Public Safety Building is currently under construction. The County requests that the additional right-of-way needed, if any, for these ramp relocations and bridge relocations be acquired as part of this project, so as to not preclude the future extension of Metrorail through these locations or make these ramp relocations cost prohibitive in the future.

- Key Network Assumptions
As noted previously, there are a number of transportation network assumptions that are important to the conversion of a multimodal I-66 within the highway system serving the central part of Fairfax County. Some of these may be built at a later time period than the 'managed lanes' project on I-66; however, it is important to preserve the opportunity and not preclude the ability to build the following in the future. We are pleased that the Project Team has examined several options for the High

Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) connection between I-66 and the Fairfax County Parkway, in particular, and that future HOV connections are not being precluded. The County continues to encourage the

consideration of these future projects included on Fairfax County's Comprehensive Plan in the design process:

- HOV lanes and future transit along Route 28 north of I-66,
 - HOV lanes along the Fairfax County Parkway, and
 - Additional southbound lane along Beltway from Route 7 in Tysons to I-66.
- Enhanced Transit
A clear advantage of the managed lanes is that they support more reliable and more efficient bus service in the corridor, and, therefore, facilitate moving more people in fewer vehicles. As part of the I-66 Corridor Improvement Project, a preliminary proposed new transit service plan has been put forward to be funded as part of the project. It is recommended that existing transit operators in the corridor operate the enhanced transit service and that no new operator be created to provide the new transit services. Branding of corridor service could still be an option.
 - Bike/Pedestrian Facilities
Since transmitting our earlier comments in February, the I-66 Transportation Improvement Project Team has been working with the County regarding elements of Bike/Pedestrian Facilities:

- Crossings of I-66 –

We are pleased that VDOT is including bike and pedestrian facilities on the bridges it is rebuilding with this project. It is recommended that enhancements at the crossings be connected with the existing bike/pedestrian networks adjacent to the crossings and at the next intersection. The Board supports the designation of the proposed shared use path as shown through the Route 123 interchange in the north-south direction and as it connects with the I-66 Parallel Trail System.

- Parallel I-66 Regional Trail -

The Recommended Design Concept (Preferred Alternative) includes the major regional trail paralleling I-66 as indicated in the County's Comprehensive Plan. We are pleased that the regional trail shown immediately adjacent to I-66 is located predominantly between the sound wall and the I-66 roadway barrier. This element of the multimodal project will be a tremendous community amenity, serving both commuting and recreational bicyclists, as well as pedestrians. The Project Team has spent a significant amount of time on this issue; however, the identification and supporting documentation of a regional trail alongside of I-66 was very preliminary in the draft Tier 2 documents and additional detail has yet to be published for review. The County requests that this documentation be provided with sufficient time for review before the revised EA is finalized. The construction costs of the regional trail, including on-street and park sections (signage, striping, etc.) should also be included in the total Project costs.

- Traffic Impact Area Analyses

As part of the implementation of the Capital Beltway Express Lanes, a limited analysis of adjacent congested intersections was conducted. However, these efforts only minimally considered the nearby impacts of the new facilities on intersections adjacent to the Beltway and the related traffic congestion. It is recommended that prior to the implementation of a multimodal design along I-66, that cross-street traffic congestion resulting from this project (including during construction) be addressed within the nearby interconnecting roadway system within a quarter-mile of the I-66 corridor. It is the County's understanding that the analysis of nearby intersections will not be available for review before the CTB decides upon the Recommended Design Concept (Preferred Alternative). These analyses are important to the mitigation of traffic impacts associated with the project and as part of the TMP prior to the start of the project.

- Implementation Issues

County staff has been working with the VDOT Project Team in identifying elements of the TMP. These efforts are expected to continue to require substantial preparation and consideration for the implementation of the I-66 project. We urge continued communications to the County and community during project implementation and emphasize that these efforts continue and the following considerations be included:

- Ensuring that sound walls are provided in residential areas, on ramps elevated above sound walls adjoining residential neighborhoods and replaced rapidly after existing walls are removed,
- Minimizing park impacts,
- Developing an aggressive maintenance of traffic plan for roadway and existing Metrorail service,
- Minimizing night construction in areas adjacent to residential neighborhoods and using every effort to mitigate construction noise, including quieter equipment,
- Maintaining proper erosion, siltation and stormwater management equipment and facilities during construction,
- Developing an effective landscaping and tree replacement plan,
- Minimizing disruption during construction or after completion in places where new traffic will be added (for example, Virginia Center Boulevard in the Vienna Metro Station) and considering traffic calming devices as necessary,
- Providing homeowners with relocation within community and with comparable access to Metro, schools and jobs; owners of partial property takings should be notified as soon as possible,
- Coordinating with the County on safe transition between new bridges and existing roadways, including access to existing streets,
- Instituting regular, frequent communication with the community throughout the project,
- Maintaining safe access to Metro and pedestrian facilities during construction,
- Minimizing construction that impacts bus services especially at peak times, Maintaining safe pedestrian and vehicular access with particular attention around Metrorail stations and schools,
- Seeking joint use park-and-ride lots east of the Fair Oaks area,
- Implementing improvements at the I-66/Route 28 interchange as early in the project as possible, and
- Enhancing wayfinding signs to park-and-ride lots.

- Development of a strategy to coordinate implementation of improvements Inside and Outside the Beltway

The County is participating in both the I-66 Inside the Beltway and I-66 Outside the Beltway projects. The projects are following different schedules, but have very important continuity and connectivity issues. There are major efforts underway for each project, and they both come under the heading of 'Transform66'. However, an overall strategic plan for blending the implementation of elements from each has not been developed. The County requests that a Transform66 Strategic Plan be developed to assist with issues such as managed lane and tolling coordination, multimodal applications and directional signage for the larger Corridor providing implementation continuity between both project segments.

- Heights of Elevated Ramps

Some flyover and interchange ramps in the Recommended Design Concept (Preferred Alternative) along the project have been designed with high elevations to allow for adequate clearances and connections between travel lanes. While an effort has been made to reduce the heights of the elevated ramps, the project team should encourage reconsiderations of design or ATCs (Alternative Technical Concepts) that would reduce the heights even further. Alternative concepts to the high elevation ramps should be evaluated and considered for minimizing noise, visual and right-of-way impacts upon nearby residential communities.

- Flexibility in Final Design

The Board recognizes that the Recommended Design Concept (Preferred Alternative) represent preliminary designs and that design public hearings will be held in the future. Regardless of whether the selected procurement process is a public-private partnership or a design-build process, the need exists to allow creativity in the final design to reduce costs, simplify maneuverability between systems, and further reduce impacts on the community.

- Environmental Issues

There are a number of outstanding environmental issues that were reviewed in the Draft Tier 2 EA, but limited information and changes to the Recommended Design Concept necessitates continuing coordination on these issues leading up to the Design Public Hearings. The Project Team has initiated contact with the County's Department of Public Works & Environmental Services (DPWES) regarding stormwater management in the corridor. However, a number of items as highlighted in the June 5, 2015, letter have not been addressed as related to Environmental Quality Corridors (EQCs) and Resource Protection Areas (RPAs). This continues to be a significant concern to the County. As the Project Team proceeds to the design phase of the project, the County considers that the stormwater management and the following items still need to be addressed:

- stormwater management strategies,
- heights of noise barriers,
- tree cover and tree replacement,
- impacts to:

- Resource Protection Areas,
 - Environmental Quality Corridors,
 - Watershed Management Plans,
- impacts to Parks, and
- impacts to Historic Properties and wildlife habitat.

Comments from the Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA) and the Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ) containing more detailed comments regarding some of these issues were included, as Attachments to the June 5, 2015 letter.

- Project Funding Considerations

The County understands that the Virginia Office of Public-Private Partnerships has initiated a procurement process regarding the consideration of three delivery approaches to provide for Phase 1 of the Recommended Design Concept (Preferred Alternative). The County recommends that the Commonwealth's decision consider the balancing of public sector funding, risk, flexibility to allow the future extension of Metrorail and the ability to fund future phases of the Preferred Alternative. The County also requests that the funding provide continuing support for transit services within the Preferred Alternative and that the distribution of revenue from the express lanes under each delivery method be considered to support transit service. If a private partner agreement is developed, the County requests that flexibility be provided in the agreement to allow the extension of Metrorail before the concession term expires, and to draft any "non-compete" language in the agreement carefully.

- Phasing of Project

On September 15, 2015, VDOT presented a Recommended Design Concept (Preferred Alternative) for I-66 Outside the Beltway to the CTB that is represented as a multimodal project providing increased person throughput while reducing hours of congestion and impacts on local adjacent roads in the corridor. VDOT also recommended the project be implemented in phases in recognition of the cost and complexity of the proposed improvements. They submitted a Phase 1 portion of the Recommended Design Concept (Preferred Alternative) that is implementable by 2021. Portions of the new construction do not accommodate future Metrorail extensions, however. VDOT suggested that future phases to complete the Preferred Alternative could be implemented as funding becomes available. The County has a number of concerns regarding the elements described within Phase 1 as recommended by VDOT and the ability to complete the project in future phases that are undefined, unscheduled or have no expressed support for completion. The Board is particularly concerned about the section of I-66 between Route 28 to past Route 29.

The cost of construction has been used as a discriminator for reducing the design of the Monument Drive flyover for the express lanes, the Stringfellow Drive flyover for the express lanes, the continuation of the wider median to the west of Route 28. It is recommended that a refinement of these limitations in the design elements be conducted to include the completion of the critical flyover and the widened extension of the project west of Route 28 so that the future extension of Metrorail and connections to the three planned rail stations in the County are not precluded or are prohibitively infeasible from a design or funding perspective in the future.

It is unclear as to when and how the remainder of the Recommended Design Concept (Preferred Alternative) will be completed. The cost for completion of the Preferred Alternative in present dollars

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October 20, 2015

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and the financing of the remainder should be developed for consideration in defining Phase 1 and subsequent phases.

Fairfax County appreciates the work that has been undertaken on this project to date and the opportunity to provide comments. We also look forward to working closely with the Commonwealth to develop a mutually beneficial project to County residents and the region.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Bob Kuhns of the Department of Transportation at Robert.Kuhns@fairfaxcounty.gov or 703-877-5600.

Sincerely,



Sharon Bulova
Chairman

cc: Members, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors

Edward L. Long Jr., County Executive

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DEPARTMENT OF
TRANSPORTATION

Ricardo Canizales
Director

August 8, 2016

Ms. Susan Shaw, P.E.
Regional Transportation Program Director
Virginia Department of Transportation
Northern Virginia District Office
4975 Alliance Drive
Fairfax, Virginia 22030

RE: Tier 2 Environmental Assessment – Interchange Justification Report
Prince William County Concurrence Letter

Dear Ms. Shaw:

Prince William County concurs with the new access point modifications as proposed in the Interchange Justification Report. VDOT and Prince William County Department of Transportation have worked in coordination to identify the proposed new access points. The County concurs that the Draft Interchange Justification Report (November 23, 2015 and revised April 2016 to accommodate County staff comments) appropriately documents and demonstrates the operational effectiveness of the proposed new and modified access points.

The proposed improvements and limited access changes in Prince William County in Phase 1 include the following:

- Access to and from the east via the Express Lanes beginning in Gainesville near US 29.
- New park-and-ride lot in Gainesville along University Boulevard, with access to and from the east via the Express Lanes at a new interchange at University Boulevard.
- New park-and-ride lot in Manassas near Balls Ford Road, with access to and from the east via the Express Lanes at a new interchange between Route 234 Bypass and Route 234 Business.
- Expanded commuter bus service and enhanced I-66 bus service, including new bus routes from project park-and-ride facilities delivering one-seat rides along strategic routes to enhance connectivity to major destinations in Washington, DC, Arlington, Tysons, and other points east of Prince William County.

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August 8, 2016
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- In addition, VDOT and DRPT will collaborate with Prince William County and other stakeholders to identify a suitable location for a park-and-ride facility in the Haymarket area in a separate, but coordinated, effort.

The additional proposed improvements and limited access changes in Prince William County in the Preferred Alternative include the following:

- Extension of Express Lanes to west of US 15 in Haymarket, with a direct Express Lanes connection in all directions provided via a new crossing of I-66 west of US 15. This new crossing will provide access to the new park-and-ride lot in Haymarket.
- New access to Route 234 Bypass via the Express Lanes; this access will provide directional ramps from I-66 Express eastbound to Route 234 Bypass southbound and from Route 234 Bypass northbound to I-66 Express westbound.
- Expanded park-and-ride lot in Gainesville at Route 234 Bypass/Cushing Road, with new direct access to and from the east via the Express Lanes.
- Continued expansion and enhancement of bus service between locations in Prince William County and major activity centers east of the County via the Express Lanes.

Prince William County concurs with the limited access changes proposed for both Phase 1 and the Preferred Alternative and the need to provide additional access in the future to accommodate the County's needs.

If you have questions or need additional information, please feel free to call me at (703) 792-5985.

Sincerely,

Ricardo Canizales

Ricardo Canizales
Director of Transportation