



Larry Hogan  
Governor  
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Secretary

Office of the Secretary

July 7, 2021

The Honorable Charles Allen, Chairman  
Kanathur Srikanth, Deputy Executive Director, Metropolitan Planning  
National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board  
Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments  
777 North Capitol Street, N.E., Suite 300  
Washington DC 20002

Dear Chairman Allen and Deputy Director Srikanth:

I am writing to request that the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) revisit the vote taken at its June 16, 2021, meeting and propose that a new motion be added to the TPB's meeting agenda on July 21, 2021, to include Phase 1 of the Traffic Relief Plan I-495/270 High Occupancy Toll (HOT) Lanes project in the conformity analysis the TPB has begun.

There is a strong rationale for revoting on this issue as it was not properly presented and the removal of this project was rushed without a full understanding of the impacts, which has been attested to by multiple TPB voting members in recent communications. Those impacts include the new requirement for Visualize 2045 updates to be financially constrained, which means Maryland must reevaluate and reduce its local enhancement projects to pay for the system preservation work that private funding would have completed as part of this project.

Since it was first included in Visualize 2045, the initial scope of this project has been modified multiple times to address feedback we have received from agency partners, local leaders, and the public to focus on the American Legion Bridge and I-270 corridor. Other key enhancements to the project include free, reliable trips for transit buses and carpools with three or more people, an essential bicycle and pedestrian connection across the Potomac River to help address another Visualize 2045 aspirational goal, and a transit subsidy from the toll revenue to impacted jurisdictions. This modified project represents a good-faith compromise between all parties to address a long-identified need in our region.

The hasty actions of the TPB to remove Phase 1 of the Traffic Relief Plan I-495/270 HOT Lanes project eliminated the associated private sector capital; therefore, MDOT can no longer reasonably expect this private funding to be available to replace or maintain the American Legion Bridge or fund the related transportation projects. After this information in MDOT's June 21, 2021 letter to the TPB was made public to its members, we believe that the TPB should add the following motion to the July 21, 2021 agenda:

- Amend the proposed 2022 Update to Visualize 2045 and its Air Quality Conformity Analysis and scope of work to include Maryland's construction of the American Legion Bridge I-270 To I-70 Relief Plan – Phase 1 of the Traffic Relief Plan from the Virginia side of the American Legion Bridge to I-70.
- The project's immediate focus is on delivering Phase 1 South starting with the American Legion Bridge. Phase 1 South is I-495 from George Washington Parkway to I-270 and then I-270 from I-495 to I-370, with an anticipated completion by 2025.
- Phase 1 North (I-270 from I-370 to I-70) is a related part of the project that is in Pre-NEPA, with an anticipated completion by 2030.

This project addresses the need for new multi-modal travel options on the most congested and unreliable freeways in Maryland. Simply widening the bridge alone does not relieve congestion, does not provide reliable options for carpools and regional transit service, and does not provide a bicycle and pedestrian connection across the Potomac River. Without the totality of these multi-modal investments generated from leveraged private capital, the National Capital Region will continue to be one of most congested in the country which will severely limit its economic opportunity.

As alluded in our June 21, 2021 letter, MDOT is preparing an alternative motion for the TPB's consideration if the motion to add Phase 1 of the I-495/I-270 HOT Lanes project back into the Air Quality Conformity Analysis is unsuccessful. That motion will propose a list of reductions to MDOT project conformity inputs for air quality and costs for financial constraint. MDOT will submit a revised package of inputs and financial information that will be included in the mailout materials for the July 21, 2021 TPB meeting. The TPB will have to review and take action to approve a revised set of conformity inputs for the regional air quality conformity analysis in the 2022 plan update of Visualize 2045. **Based on an analysis since the June 16, 2021 TPB action, the list of projects under consideration for either downgrade to study or removal is attached.** Since the American Legion Bridge rehabilitation or replacement as well as the associated system preservation benefits are expected to be needed before 2035, these projects for consideration are all scheduled to be built by 2035 or earlier. While the total project cost estimate for the I-495/270 HOT Lanes is \$6 billion for Phase 1 South and North, the American Legion Bridge and system preservation cost is in the range of \$1.5 billion, which will equal the value of the projects being removed or downgraded. The final list will be forwarded to the TPB by July 13, 2021.

Chairman Allen and Deputy Director Srikanth  
Page Three

We appreciate your consideration of this request and look forward to your response. If you need further assistance, please contact Ms. Heather Murphy, MDOT Planning and Capital Programming Director, at 410-865-1275 or via email at [hmurphy@mdot.maryland.gov](mailto:hmurphy@mdot.maryland.gov). Ms. Murphy will be happy to assist you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "R. Earl Lewis, Jr.", is positioned above the typed name.

R. Earl Lewis, Jr.  
Deputy Secretary

cc: Ms. Heather Murphy, Director, Office of Planning and Capital Programming, MDOT

County	L RTP ID	TITLE	PROJECT DESCRIPTION/LIMITS	YEAR OF EXPENDITURE	TOTAL COST (in millions)
Frederick	CE3566	US 15/US 40 Corridor (Frederick City)	US 15/US 40 upgrades through the City of Frederick to include widening to three lanes in each direction from I-70 to MD 26	2030	\$191.0
Frederick	CE1210	MD 85 Corridor	Widen MD 85 to a 4 to 6 lane divided highway from south of English Muffin Way to south of Crestwood Boulevard/Shockley Drive.	2035	\$126.0
Frederick	CE2261	MD 180/Ballenger Creek Pike Corridor	Study to upgrade existing capacity and traffic operations along MD 180 and Ballenger Creek Pike (formerly MD 351) from Greenfield Drive to Corporate Drive, while supporting existing and planned development.	2035	\$136.0
Montgomery	CE2618	MD 97 Corridor	The MD 97 Montgomery Hills project will evaluate safety and accessibility issues on MD 97.	2030	\$39.0
Montgomery	CE1203	MD 117 Corridor	Upgrades from I-270 to West of Game Preserve Road.	2030	\$90.0
Montgomery	CE1206	MD 124 Corridor	Reconstruct MD 124 (Woodfield Road), from Mildcounty Highway to Warfield Road.	2035	\$162.0
Montgomery	CE1211	MD 97 at MD 28 Interchange	Construct interchange improvements along MD 97 at MD 28.	2035	\$161.0
Montgomery	CE1649	Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT)	This Bus Rapid Transit project will extend from the Shady Grove Metro station to the COMSAT facility (1.5 miles.) However, this CLRP project only includes Phase 1 of the project (9 miles) extending from Shady Grove to Metropolitan Grove.	2035	\$272.5
Prince George's	CE1479	I-95/I-495 at Greenbelt Metro Station Interchange	Construction of a full interchange along I-95/I-495 at the Greenbelt Metro station.	2030	\$134.0
Prince George's	CE2253	MD 197 Corridor	Reconstruct the roadway to upgrade and widen existing MD 197 to a multi-lane divided highway from Kenhill Drive to MD 450 Relocated.	2030	\$76.0
Prince George's	CE1207	MD 450 Corridor	Upgrade and widen existing MD 450 to a multi-lane divided highway from Stonybrook Drive to west of MD 3.	2030	\$44.0
Prince George's	CE1202	US 1 Corridor	Reconstruct US 1 from MD 193 to I-95/I-495.	2030	\$81.0
Prince George's	CE1196	MD 5 Corridor	Upgrade existing MD 5 to a multi-lane freeway from I-95/I-495 (Capital Beltway) to US 301.	2035	\$769.0
Prince George's	CE3425	US 50 Corridor	Study examining US 50 capacity and operational improvements between the Maryland/District of Columbia line and I-95/I-495.	2035	\$30.0
Prince George's	CE1619	US 301 Corridor (Bowie)	Upgrade and widen US 301 from north of Mount Oak Road to I-595 (US 50). Construct an interchange with a service road at MD 197.	2035	\$527.0

Note: There were no major projects in Charles County scheduled to be built before 2040, therefore none are listed here.