

# **495 SOUTHSIDE EXPRESS LANES STUDY**

Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Transportation Committee

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# Northern Virginia Regional Express Lanes Network



- **94-Mile Network of Connected Express Lanes**
  - I-95, I-395 (reversible lanes)
  - I-495 (2 lanes each direction)
  - I-66 Outside the Beltway (2 lanes each direction)
  - I-66 Inside the Beltway (2 lanes, weekdays peak travel time, peak commute direction)
- **3 Miles Under Construction**
  - I-495 Northern Extension (2 lanes each direction opening late 2025)
  - I-95 Express Lanes/Opitz Boulevard Ramp (opening late 2024)
- **Under Study**
  - I-495 Southside Express Lanes

# Why Express Lanes?

- **Additional capacity and congestion relief**
- **New faster and more reliable travel options**
- **Dynamic system with variable tolls to manage demand and keep lanes free flowing for all express lanes users**
- **Moves more people, not just vehicles**



## Express Lanes Drivers

Vehicles with fewer than 3 people can choose to use the express lanes by paying a toll, receiving a faster and more reliable trip.



## HOV-3+ and Motorcycles Travel Toll Free

Carpools with 3 or more occupants, and motorcycles, can travel the express lanes for free anytime.



## Buses Travel Toll Free

Faster and more reliable travel creates new opportunities and benefits for buses (which travel for free) on express lanes.



## Funding Support for Enhanced Transit in Corridors

Transit payments in project agreements allow toll revenues to fund transit and multimodal improvements.



## Transit & Multimodal Elements Included in Project Scope

Transit and multimodal features such as new commuter parking lots, shared-use paths and bus service can be incorporated into project scopes.

# Study Overview

- Environmental study to potentially extend the express lanes system on 11 miles of the southern section of I-495 (Capital Beltway)
- Ongoing coordination with federal, state, regional, and local agencies in Virginia and Maryland





# Study Area

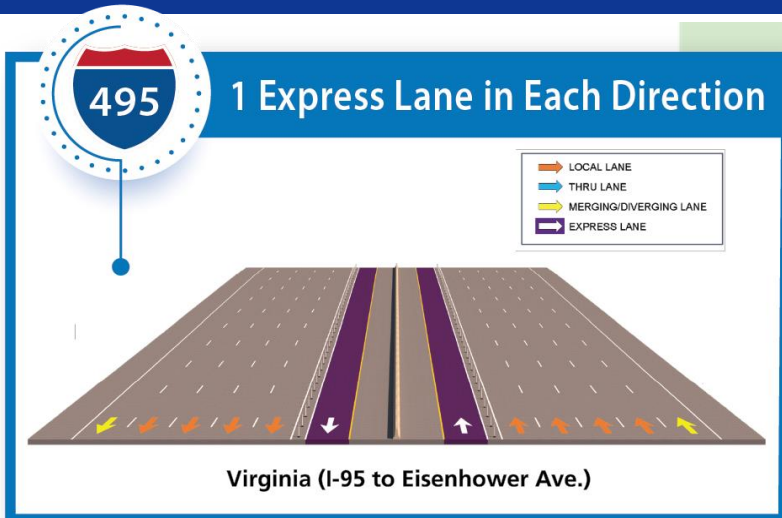
- Last section of I-495 in Virginia where express lanes have not been implemented
- From the Springfield Interchange (I-95/I-395/I-495) in Fairfax County, VA, across the Woodrow Wilson Memorial Bridge, to the MD 210 interchange in Prince George's County, MD



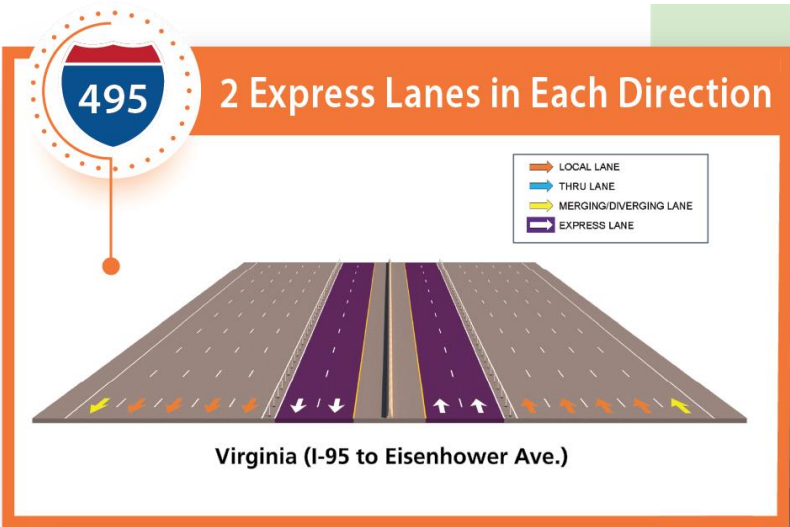
# Study Alternatives

Alternative	Description
No-Build	Existing conditions; required by NEPA
1 Express Lane	Add one buffer-separated express lane in each direction on I-495
2 Express Lanes	Add two buffer-separated express lanes in each direction on I-495

# 1 Express Lane Scenario



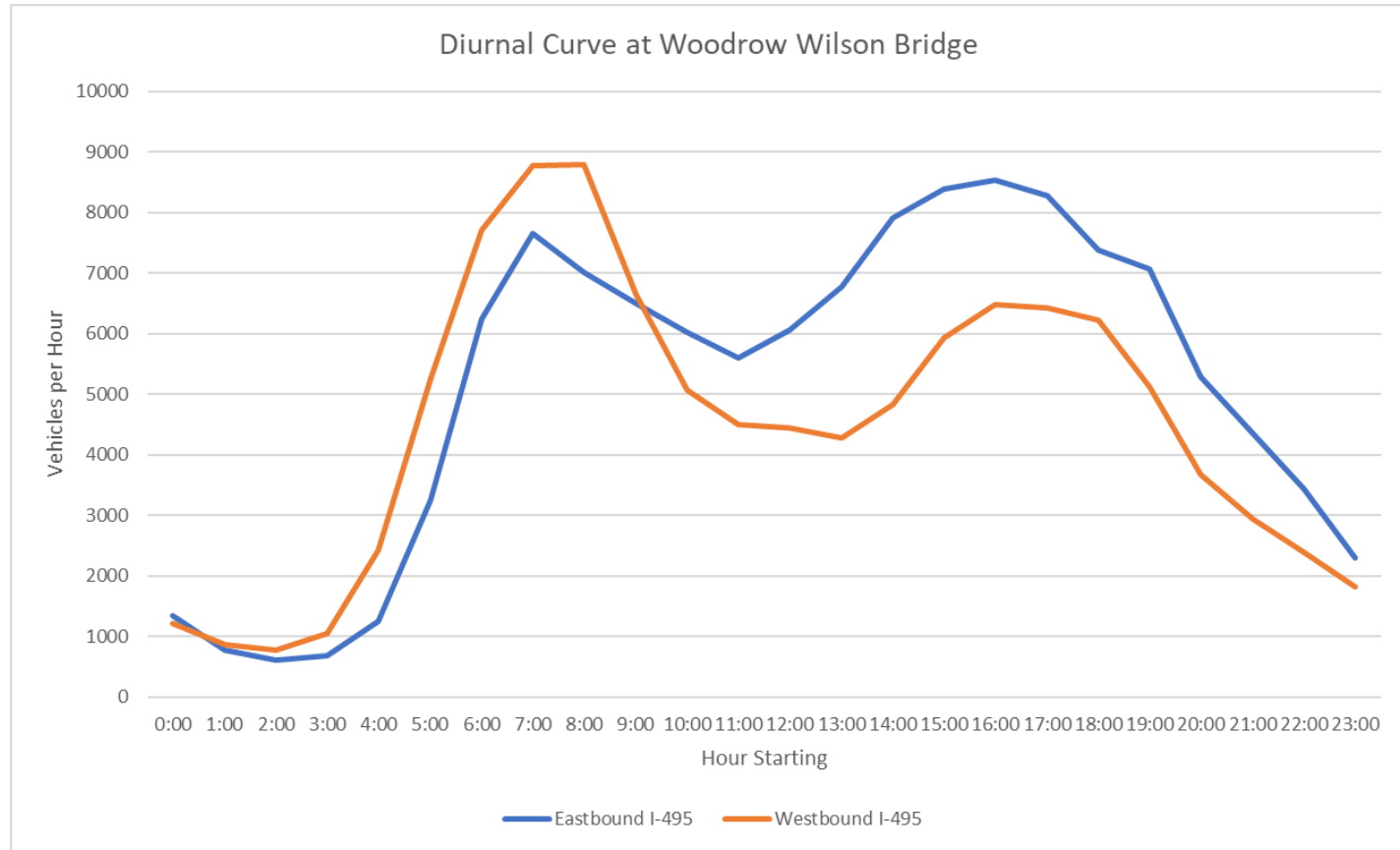
# 2 Express Lanes Scenario





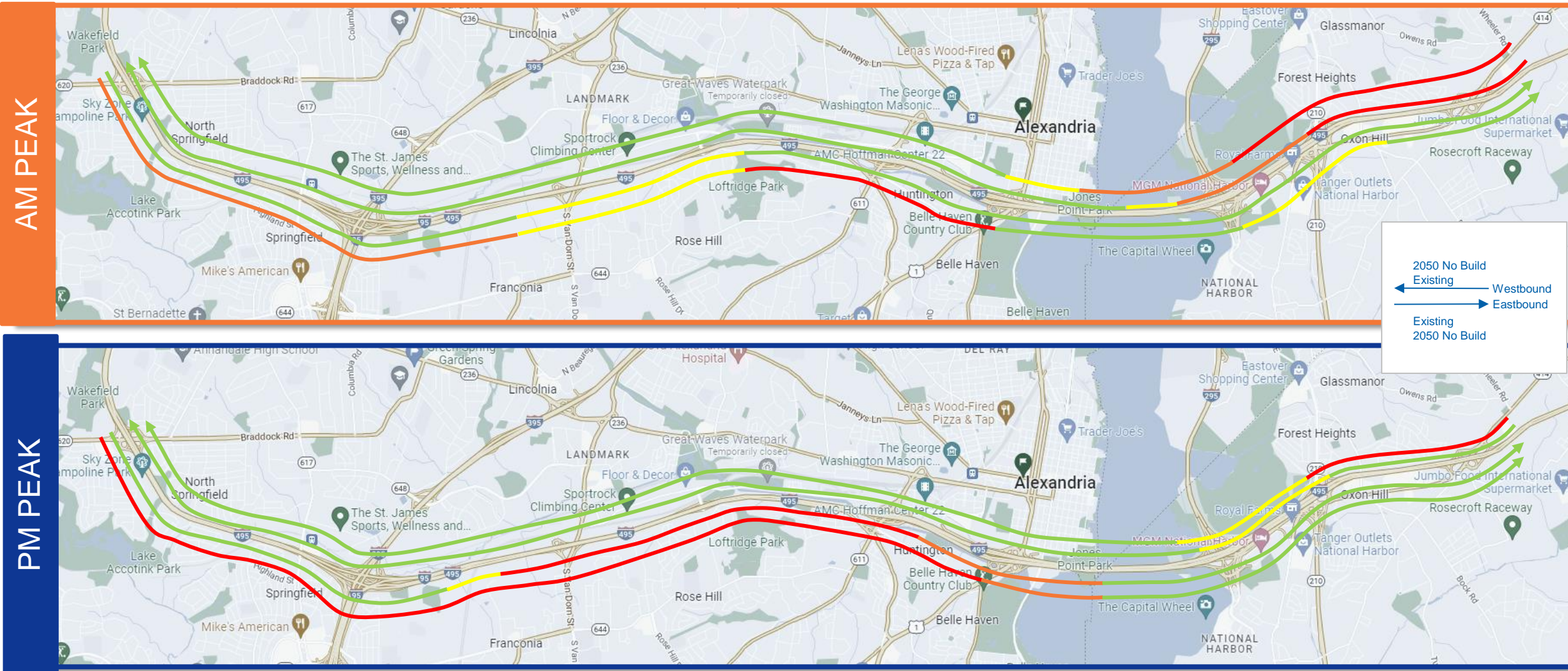
# Existing Conditions and Traffic Patterns

- Morning Peak Direction: Westbound
- Afternoon Peak Direction: Eastbound
- Off-Peak Eastbound has a noticeable morning peak
- The bridge does not experience the same “reverse commute” patterns seen on I-66 or I-95 where traffic is bound to/from the District of Columbia in the morning/afternoon



Curves represent an average Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday from 2022

# Existing and Future Traffic Conditions



# Existing and Future Traffic Conditions

## Comparing Travel Time Benefits

*Morning Peak Hours					*Afternoon Peak Hours				
Travel Time (in minutes)	2023 Existing	2050 No-Build	2050 2ELs	2050 1EL	Travel Time (in minutes)	2023 Existing	2050 No- Build	2050 2ELs	2050 1EL
Westbound Local	31	47	32	32	Westbound Local	17	18	21	21
Eastbound Local	17	22	17	18	Eastbound Local	31	152	49	52
Westbound Thru	27	34	27	30	Westbound Thru	18	19	19	19
Eastbound Thru	17	21	17	17	Eastbound Thru	24	126	25	28
Westbound ELs	-	-	24	27	Westbound ELs	-	-	20	20
Eastbound ELs	-	-	16	17	Eastbound ELs	-	-	17	21

\*Braddock Road in Virginia to MD 414 in Maryland



# New Transit and Multimodal Options

- **New bus service** from Central-West **Prince George's County to Tysons** as part of 495 Southside Express Lanes, included in region's air quality conformity analysis underway by Transportation Planning Board (TPB)
- New bus service is dependent on project being procured as a public-private partnership
- Recommended by 2023 Transit and Transportation Demand Management Study completed by DRPT
- Virginia committed to continuing practice of incorporating transit elements and payments in future express lanes

## Examples of Virginia delivering transit and multimodal options through express lanes



Monument Drive Parking Garage and Transit Center opened in June 2024, providing express lanes access to buses and carpools. Funded by concession fee payment from I-66 Express Mobility Partners.



More than 4,000 new park and ride spaces delivered through construction of 2 new commuter lots with direct access to 66 Express Lanes, as part of Transform 66.



New Fairfax Connector Express bus service launched in Sept. 2024, providing new regional connectivity between Tysons and Bethesda. Funded by Commonwealth, and through annual transit payments from Transurban.



# New Bike-Pedestrian Facilities and Access

- Bicycle and pedestrian facilities are being considered with the Build Alternatives as part of the 495 Southside Express Lanes Study
- Based on input from Fairfax County, City of Alexandria, Prince George's County and Maryland State Highway Administration

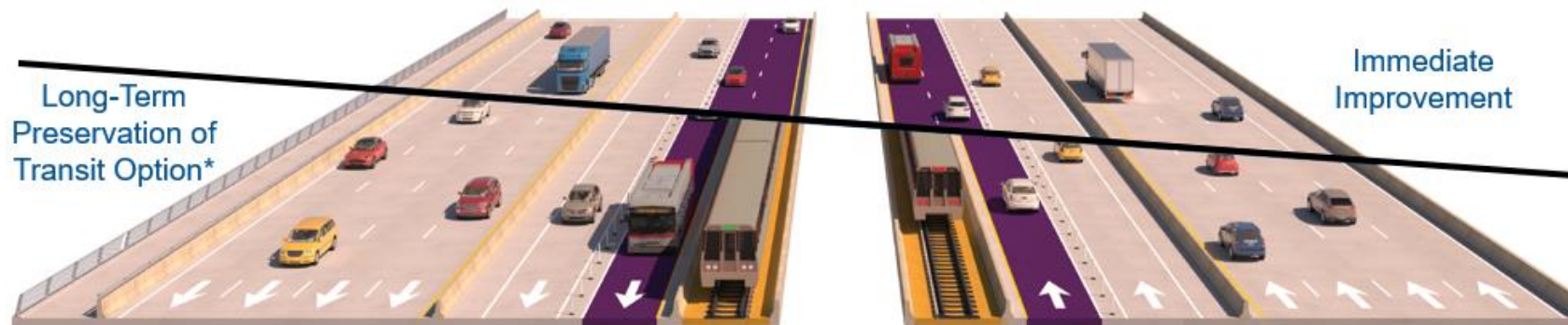
## Examples of Virginia delivering bicycle and pedestrian facilities and access through express lanes



18 miles of new trail built as part of Transform 66 project including 11 miles of shared-use path along I-66, and sidewalks on new and existing bridges over I-66

# Preserving Space For Future Metrorail

- Alternatives under consideration incorporate rail preservation across the Woodrow Wilson Memorial Bridge through:
  - Retaining existing, unoccupied space, or
  - Incorporating a commitment to convert necessary space to rail transit in the future
- Rail preservation commitment would be incorporated as part of environmental (NEPA) process, which must receive federal approval.
- Terms within any potential contract or concessionaire agreement would incorporate a requirement for conversion to rail transit in the future.



# Recent Activities

## Ongoing Agency Coordination

- September 11: VDOT's Merged Process Agency meeting
- September 18: MDOT's Interagency Review Meeting
- Weekly Coordination Meeting with Maryland (MDOT/SHA)

## Public/Stakeholder Outreach and Engagement

- Email updates to stakeholder list
- Meeting with community groups as requested
- October 7: Mount Vernon Council of Citizens' Associations, Transp. Committee
- Coordination/briefings to elected officials and partner agencies

# Study Schedule

