



# County of Fairfax, Virginia

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## **Board of Supervisors Transportation Committee**

July 17, 2018

Government Center, Conference Room 11

### **Board of Supervisors Members Present:**

Sharon Bulova, Chairman  
Penelope Gross, Mason District (Vice Chairman)  
John Foust, Dranesville District (Committee Chair)  
John Cook, Braddock District  
Pat Herrity, Springfield District  
Catherine Hudgins, Hunter Mill District  
Kathy Smith, Sully District  
Linda Smyth, Providence District  
Dan Storck, Mount Vernon District

### **Board of Supervisors Members Absent:**

Jeff McKay, Lee District

### **County Leadership:**

Bryan Hill, County Executive  
Robert A. Stalzer, Deputy County Executive  
Beth Teare, County Attorney

### **Transportation Advisory Commission (TAC):**

Jeff Parnes (Sully District), Chairman

Link to agenda and presentation materials:

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/transportation/btc>

Supervisor Foust called the meeting to order at 9:40 a.m.

### **1. Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of the May 8, 2018, meeting were accepted with no changes.



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## **2. I-66 Inside the Beltway**

Nick Donohue, Deputy Secretary of Transportation, briefed the Board on the six-month performance review of the Transform66 Inside the Beltway Project. [The presentation is available online.](#)

Mr. Donohue discussed the results of the six-month performance review regarding morning and evening peak travel speeds, toll rates and usage, morning shoulder period analysis and incidents. He stated that the Commonwealth will continue to monitor the situations and will proactively look for opportunities to make improvements to the project. The Commonwealth was pleased with the general performance in the six-month period, and will post a monthly report on [www.66expresslanes.org](http://www.66expresslanes.org).

Regarding the toll rates, Commissioner Parnes asked for the highest toll rate of the last segment of the project (from North Glebe Road to the District of Columbia), and whether the toll cost is proportional to the distance. Mr. Donohue replied that he did not have all of the information available, but the toll cost was not proportional to the distance. He explained that the algorithm was based on demand, travel speed and other factors. One unique factor is that at the end of the I-66 segment in the District of Columbia, there is a stop light at Constitution Avenue at 23<sup>rd</sup> Street NW. The project measured traffic data from Glebe Road to the exit at Route 110. The travel speeds for that area of the roadway included a segment that currently is not subject to the toll.

Supervisor Herrity asked for clarification on the comparison of the I-66 eastbound travel speeds before the tolling and after the tolling, and the comparison of old High-Occupancy-Vehicle (HOV) to the new High Occupancy Toll (HOT) hours and speeds. Mr. Donohue explained that the hours of the new HOT restriction are from 5:30 am to 9:30 am, Monday to Friday (eastbound), and 3:00 pm to 7:00 pm, Monday to Friday (westbound). The overall improvement to speed in the corridor was about 20 percent higher. Regarding the question about other metrics like vehicle throughput, Mr. Donohue replied that from January to June 2018, the number of people registering as car poolers increased by 2,500 vehicles. On the parallel roads, Mr. Donohue stated that travel speeds did not change much after the implementation of tolling. He discussed a problem of not having a dedicated lane at the George Washington Parkway off-ramp merging to the Theodore Roosevelt Bridge. VDOT is exploring options to improve that connection.

Supervisor Gross asked if the traffic on Route 7 and Route 50 increased as a result of the I-66 tolling. Mr. Biesiadny replied that FCDOT did measure the traffic before and will need to measure traffic after the tolling implementation. He stated that he will provide the data to the Board at a later time.

Chairman Bulova stated that the results were a surprise that speeds have increased on I-66 and showed little impact to parallel roads. Before tolling, there were many concerns about traffic bailing off I-66 and spilling onto alternative roads. Mr. Donohue explained that there were several reasons for it. Mr. Donohue said that traffic is spread out over the rush hours, expanded



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HOV hours, and people are making decisions based on the choices that they see on I-66 as to whether to travel at a different time. There are more carpoolers to use the HOV lane, and single-occupancy vehicle operators have the legal option to use the road. The arterial roads have the ability to handle some increase traffic volumes.

Mr. Donohue explained that, on the average, the toll that people paid for going in both directions in the morning and evening is \$13.09. April and May are the heaviest travel months, which increased the average toll rate a bit higher. Toll rates are higher in the morning and lower in the afternoon, due to less roadway capacity. Average daily vehicle trips are 30,184, and 43 percent of the trips are HOV. Approximately 0.28 percent of all toll payers paid more than \$40 during the first six months.

Supervisor Cook stated that at the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC) meeting in January 2018, NVTC members asked if the project would consider adjusting the algorithm to lower the speed threshold from 55 miles per hour to 45 miles per hour (mph) as a way to bring some of the tolls down. Mr. Donohue replied that VDOT is testing modifications to the tolling system regarding the issue raised by the NVTC members. He noted that the travel speed is well below 55 mph.

Supervisor Foust asked staff to provide information on the impact on Route 123, Old Dominion Drive and Great Falls Street.

The Commonwealth will continue to monitor performance of the Express Lanes and parallel routes. Construction on a new eastbound lane is underway and will be completed in 2020. VDOT is testing modifications to tolling systems to evaluate opportunities to move more people and will continue to partner with NVTC to reinvest toll revenues in the corridor.

The presentation on the Fairfax Connector Route 699 was postponed to the next meeting to reserve time for the WMATA presentation.

### **3. WMATA Plans of Reconstruction and Extended Shutdowns during Summer of 2019**

John Thomas, Regina Sullivan and Gregg Potts, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), briefed the Board on the WMATA's plans to demolish and rebuild platforms, and shutdown of rail services at stations in Fairfax County. There are 20 stations that have platforms requiring immediate attention. Where needed, temporary measures have been installed to stabilize and ensure safety until reconstruction occurs. The concrete repair is a necessary safety project. Mr. Thomas discussed the challenges of recent platform rebuilding while stations were open. He said that the decision to shut down stations to perform the needed work was based on safety, costs, and time while minimizing commuter impacts. [The presentation is available online.](#)

Supervisor Herrity commented on the difficult decisions that WMATA and General Manager Wiedefeld have made were tough, but necessary decisions that should have been done many years ago. He thanked WMATA for working with Fairfax County to return the system to where



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it needs to be. Supervisor Cook stated that he was glad to see the repair plans coming, and that WMATA is making a tough, but appropriate, choice to have the system repaired quickly and efficiently. WMATA will save a considerable amount of money and minimize the impact during the three-month shutdowns instead of three years. Chairman Bulova agreed with both Supervisors' comments. She noted the negative impacts to riders, and stated that WMATA needs to work closely with jurisdictions to minimize the impacts to riders and continue to communicate with the public. She stated that GM Wiedefeld is doing an outstanding job. Supervisor Gross asked WMATA for information to share with constituents via the newsletters and other ways. Supervisor Hudgins stated that it is very important to bring the system back to the state-of-good-repair, and that the riders will recognize the results. WMATA needs to be able to deliver the message with confidence that work will be done on time, and the plans to mitigate the impacts for the riders will work. Supervisor Storck stated that he hoped that there is a better way to make the improvements, so WMATA does not have to experience this repair every 30 years. He asked if WMATA has had a discussion with the City of Alexandria regarding their plans during the shutdowns. Mr. Thomas replied that WMATA has been working with Alexandria staff to develop specific plans to address the mitigation plans. Supervisor Storck asked for the plans regarding the development at the Huntington Garage. WMATA staff responded stating that they are developing a plan to reconfigure the area and build a garage to the same capacity, and reserve part of the station area for future development.

#### **4. VDOT Proposal to Address McLean Cut Through Traffic Problems**

Mr. Biesiadny briefed the Board on a VDOT proposal to address cut-through traffic problems in the McLean area. [The presentation is available online.](#) The existing conditions at the Georgetown Pike interchange at I-495 show heavy evening peak hour volumes using the Route 193 on-ramps to northbound I-495, and heavy intersection volume along Route 193 including cut-through traffic. There are issues with safety and access in neighborhoods and schools.

Mr. Biesiadny discussed the proposal from VDOT to address the cut-through traffic problems experienced in the Great Falls area during the weekday's evening rush hours with about 1,700 vehicles trying to travel back to Maryland and across the American Legion Bridge by using the ramp from Route 193. Mr. Biesiadny described the pros and cons of the two options that VDOT developed to close this ramp from 2 pm to 7 pm. He stated that there will be a community meeting scheduled for August 2, 2018, at the McLean High School. The public comments and the feedback from the Board will be used to develop additional analysis. The second public meeting will be scheduled in the fall, and a staff recommendation will be prepared afterward. He said the Board would be asked to endorse a pilot program to be implemented for a period of four months.

Supervisor Smyth stated that VDOT needs to figure out where the potential traffic impacts are going to be and find solutions to fix bottlenecks created as a result. She cautioned that VDOT cannot fix one problem and create another one someplace else. If the experiment fails, then VDOT and the County need to acknowledge it. Supervisor Foust stated that the missing piece



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of the puzzle is where the traffic would go. Commissioner Parnes raised concerns about a plan that does not allow traffic from one part of the County going through another part of the County, and the benefits. He stated that the solution and impacts of the solution need to be looked at the County level, not as individual areas. Supervisor Foust stated that Mr. Garrett Moore, VDOT Chief Engineer, has been observing the perspectives and impacts to the residents around the County and the Commonwealth. Chairman Bulova stated that the situation is not just cut-through traffic, but the area is bogged down with severe traffic problems. Residents cannot travel to and from their homes. She emphasized that the status quo is not an option, and some of the options are not feasible. Supervisor Herrity noted other safety issues in many places and hoped that there is a better solution for the problems in McLean. Supervisor Storck also expressed his support for solving the traffic problems and other options that can be applied in other areas. Supervisor Herrity stated that the solutions need to be focused on projects that decrease traffic congestion on the main roads.

## **5. Transportation Project Priorities (TPP)**

Mr. Biesiadny briefed the Board on the status of the Transportation Project Priorities effort. [The presentation is available online.](#) He said that based on the current level of funding available, no new projects can be accommodated through FY 2025. Staff will return to a future meeting with some revisions of the schedules for the current projects. After the 2019 General Assembly session, the County can re-engage in discussion about revenues for TPP projects, if the funding situation changes. Supervisor Herrity asked for clarifications on the increase of project costs regarding planning costs, raw construction costs, land acquisition, or just the number of projects. Mr. Biesiadny replied that steel has gone up 14 percent since January 2018, and asphalt went up 25 percent last year. These are two examples of the reasons for higher project costs.

## **6. Silver Line Phase 2 Implementation**

Due to the timing issue, this presentation was postponed to the next meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 11:20 a.m. The next BTC meeting is scheduled for October 2, at 3:00 p.m.