

Alexandria Transportation Commission
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April 21, 2025

Nick Nies, AICP
VDOT 495 Southside Express Lanes Study Project Manager
9030 Stony Point Parkway, Suite 220
Richmond, VA 23235

Dear Mr. Nies:

At its April 16 meeting, the Alexandria Transportation Commission received an update from City staff and City Councilmembers on the status of the I-495 Southside Express Lane extension study. While the Commission appreciates the opportunity VDOT has given to the City of Alexandria community to learn more about the proposal and provide feedback, including at the public meetings in the City earlier this month, there remain concerns that the project is moving forward prematurely, without the examination of additional data or the full exploration of all available alternatives.

The Commission would like to communicate the following concerns for your review and consideration:

- The Commission urges VDOT to wait for a preferred alternative until after the results of the traffic impacts to local streets have been analyzed and considered. We are concerned about the project advancing without having reviewed all comprehensive traffic study data, including local traffic impact studies depicting the impact of adding new Express Lanes in the surrounding communities.
- Right-of-way impacts of any related on/off ramps will undoubtedly adversely affect existing traffic patterns on local streets. These impacts should be communicated more clearly and explicitly.
- The Commission is disappointed that options for transit, beyond simply that buses can use the express lanes or that there will be a reservation for Metrorail sometime in the future, are not more fully developed. Because of the density and urban form of this area, transit is critical to reduce congestion and provide mobility, and should be given the appropriate amount of attention.
- Should the implementation of new tolls be adopted and instituted, the Commission believes that local governments and communities which will be most adversely affected by the expanded lanes and will shore the financial burden of traffic mitigation efforts, should benefit the most from toll revenue. As such, the Commission advocates for a robust mitigation program, with major capital and operating improvements requested by the jurisdictions, be funded with toll revenue. These funds should include the flexibility to be used for operating costs, not just capital costs.
- Direct funding of transportation investments to local jurisdictions with toll revenue should be streamlined. The current system of Commuter Choice funding program, while beneficial, still requires jurisdictions to apply and work through bureaucratic red tape.
- The Commission remains skeptical that there will be any long term congestion mitigation from this project in general, and is strongly concerned about impacts to the local transportation network.

The Transportation Commission strongly encourages VDOT to continue to work with City staff on this study to address the concerns as outlined above, and to develop concrete mitigation strategies which minimize adverse impacts of the plan's eventual adoption, outline potential agreements and collaborate on project development, implementation and adverse impact mitigation effort. The Commission believes that VDOT's continued

collaboration with the City of Alexandria, and Fairfax and Prince George's Counties in developing mitigation plans is critical, and working together to develop potential mitigation measures to combat the negative impacts of each individual alternative in advance will serve as an essential tool in navigating to a final decision.

Thank you very much for your consideration of this matter; if you have any questions or wish to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Matthew McManus
Matthew McManus (Apr 21, 2025 10:15 EDT)

Matthew McManus
Chair, Alexandria Transportation Commission

cc: Jim Parajon, City Manager
Emily Baker, Deputy City Manager
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TC Letter 495 - Final

Final Audit Report

2025-04-21

Created:	2025-04-21
By:	E Jacobs (erica.jacobs@alexandriava.gov)
Status:	Signed
Transaction ID:	CBJCHBCAABAA6DzQIfKZ5_5_0HgJ-tboeeAFGiW9MHx_

"TC Letter 495 - Final" History

-  Document created by E Jacobs (erica.jacobs@alexandriava.gov)
2025-04-21 - 2:01:59 PM GMT
-  Document emailed to Matthew McManus (matthewtmcmamus@gmail.com) for signature
2025-04-21 - 2:02:03 PM GMT
-  Email viewed by Matthew McManus (matthewtmcmamus@gmail.com)
2025-04-21 - 2:14:13 PM GMT
-  Document e-signed by Matthew McManus (matthewtmcmamus@gmail.com)
Signature Date: 2025-04-21 - 2:15:11 PM GMT - Time Source: server
-  Agreement completed.
2025-04-21 - 2:15:11 PM GMT