



U. S. Department
of Transportation

Virginia Division
(804) 775-3320

400 N. 8th Street, Rm. 750
P. O. Box 10249
Richmond, VA 23219

**Federal Highway
Administration**

October 9, 2012

I-395 HOV Ramp Project
Project # IM/NH 395-4(178)
Interchange Modification Report

Mr. Malcolm T. Kerley, P.E.
Chief Engineer
Virginia Department of Transportation
Richmond, Virginia

Dear Mr. Kerley:

Thank you for your October 1, 2012, letter requesting FHWA approval of the Interchange Modification Report (IMR) to provide an access point to/from the Interstate 395 reversible high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes to Seminary Road. FHWA fully supports enhancing the HOV system and constructing an additional HOV reversible ramp at this interchange; however, we do not support VDOT's recommendation to prohibit the morning right-turn movement from the northbound HOV ramp to eastbound Seminary Road and the afternoon left-turn movement from westbound Seminary Road to the southbound HOV ramp.

We approve the IMR and the additional ramp, but all turn movements at Seminary Road must be provided when the ramp is opened to traffic. We do not agree with prohibiting the two turning movements and conducting at least six months of additional operational study, observation and analysis before considering allowing the movements. We recognize the main impetus behind this new ramp is to provide additional access to the Mark Center; however, precluding the two movements will have additional impacts on the Interstate system and does not fully support HOV users. We have reviewed the operational analysis in the IMR, and note the two movements basically had no negative traffic impact plus the intersections east of the interchange all operated at very good levels of service. During the last three months, we have had numerous conference calls and meetings with VDOT and the City of Alexandria representatives, in addition to several field visits to better understand the issues involved. All in all, we wanted to ensure we understood VDOT's and the City's concerns, including safety and cut-through traffic, before making the decision to require all movements be provided upon opening.

Safety has been a concern expressed, and we encourage VDOT and the City to continue working together to consider potential improvements either for this project or for future projects to improve the overall traffic operations along Seminary Road. In particular, conflicts were observed during a field review at the intersection of Kenmore Avenue and Seminary Road. We

recommend that VDOT and the City consider closing Kenmore Avenue at Seminary Road or extending the existing median between the I-395 ramp and Seminary Road to the east as part of the project.

As noted earlier, FHWA approves this IMR with all movements provided at Seminary Road. Once opened to traffic, we recommend VDOT and the City continue to monitor the traffic situation on Seminary Road and bring any significant safety problems to our attention. Please contact Tarsem Lal at (804) 775-3345 for any questions or comments.

Sincerely,

Irene Rico
Division Administrator

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Thomas A. Jennings". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial 'T'.

By: Thomas Jennings
Director of Project Delivery