COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Office of the Governor

Aubrey L. Layne, Jr.
Secretary of Transportation

November 20, 2015

The Honorable Sharon Bulova
12000 Government Center Pkwy., Suite 530
Fairfax, VA 22035

The Honorable William Euille
301 King St., Room 2300
Alexandria, VA 22314

The Honorable Mary Hynes
2100 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 300
Arlington, VA 22201

Dear Chairman Bulova, Mayor Euille, and Chairman Hynes:

As you know the Interstate 95/395 Corridor is critical to economic competitiveness and development in Northern Virginia. This Corridor serves as the major north-south travel route connecting people to jobs and other opportunities from Fredericksburg to the District and points in-between.

The Commonwealth has taken significant steps to improve portions of this corridor. In 2014 the 95 Express Lanes opened extending the highly successful HOV lanes 9 miles south and providing new travel options for drivers. There have been several enhancements to Virginia Railway Express service, including the first expansion of the system with the recently opened station in Spotsylvania, addition of a new round trip train, construction of a new station at Potomac Shores, and the extension of platforms along the entire Fredericksburg corridor. In addition, over the last three years the Commonwealth has invested $26 million in new bus service and park-n-ride lots to help move more people along the corridor, and a $50 million loan from the Virginia Transportation Infrastructure Bank to support construction of a new Metrorail station at Potomac Yards.

Despite these actions, more needs to be done. The McAuliffe Administration believes that this corridor needs new and expanded transportation options both for drivers, sluggers and transit users.

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As such I am writing you to let you know that the Commonwealth plans to take two actions to improve travel along this Corridor: (i) initiate an environmental assessment to study the conversion and expansion of the existing HOV lanes on I-395 to dynamically priced Express Lanes, and (ii) initiate a transportation demand management study to identify transit, carpool, vanpool and other demand management strategies that can improve travel along the Corridor. Both of these will be done in coordination with the affected jurisdictions, the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission and the Potomac-Rappahannock Transportation Commission.

We have initiated discussions with Transurban to extend the 95 Express lanes north to the District of Columbia. As planned this proposal will include:

- Conversion of the existing HOV lanes from Turkeycock Lane north to the Eads Street Interchange to dynamically tolled Express Lanes;
- Expansion of these lanes to provide three through lanes along this portion of the Corridor without compromising bus performance;
- Improvements to transit service along the corridor identified in cooperation with the region.

This proposal is not the same as proposals in the past. The revised proposal:

- Will include guaranteed funding for new and enhanced transit service and carpooling incentives;
- Will not include the construction of a new ramp at the Shirlington Interchange;
- Will maintain HOV-only access for the new Seminary Road ramp currently under construction; and,
- Will be studied and refined through an environmental assessment.

The Commonwealth and its private partners are committed to a robust public engagement effort. As the project is further developed there will be public meetings in all affected jurisdictions, individual meetings with local homeowner associations and businesses, and ongoing updates and opportunities to provide input.

In addition, the Commonwealth and its private partners are committed to take steps to minimize the impacts of construction to the surrounding communities and the traveling public. The project will not require the taking of any residential properties or significant rights-of-way. Aside from the construction of new soundwalls, it is anticipated that the construction will be within the existing footprint of the I-395 HOV lanes.

This proposal in conjunction with the Transform66 projects will provide a network of Express Lanes in Northern Virginia. Connecting Fredericksburg with the District, Manassas and points through the region, this network will be a 'game-changer' for the region by providing a high-speed reliable trip for transit users, carpoolers and drivers alike now and well into the future.

We look forward to working with your jurisdictions and the appropriate regional transit planning organizations to improve travel along the I-395 Corridor.

Sincerely,

Aubrey L. Layne Jr.

Copy:
Members of the Alexandria City Council
Members of the Arlington County Board
Members of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors
Members of the Commonwealth Transportation Board
Members of the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission
Members of the Potomac Rappahannock Transportation Commission