Alexandria Transportation Commission
March 4, 2009

Agenda Item # 2

Issue: Consideration of Comments to the Virginia Department of Transportation on the I-95/395 HOV/Bus/HOT Lanes Project

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Issue: Consideration of a recommendation to City Council on comments to be made on behalf of the City of Alexandria regarding the Virginia Department of Transportation project to implement high-occupancy vehicle/toll (HOT)/bus lanes on I-95 and I-395.

Staff Recommendation: That the Transportation Commission recommend to City Council those comments on the I-95/395 HOV/Bus/HOT lanes Project that it feels are appropriate for submission to the Virginia Department of Transportation in the form of a resolution or letter to the Commonwealth Secretary of Transportation.

Background: In September 2003, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) received an unsolicited proposal submitted under the Commonwealth's Public-Private Transportation Act of 1995 (PPTA) to develop, design, finance and construct new high-occupancy toll (HOT) lanes on I-95. As required by the PPTA, competitive proposals were solicited for the development, financing, design, construction, operations and maintenance of the Interstate I-95/395 Bus Rapid Transit/HOT Lanes System. Following a review of the proposals received, the proposal submitted by Fluor-Transurban was selected and an Interim Agreement to Develop and/or Operate the I-95/395 HOT Lanes Project was entered into between VDOT and Fluor-Transurban, in October 2006.

HOT lanes are projects which allow high occupancy vehicles to travel for free while permitting single-occupancy vehicles (SOV) to pay a toll to travel on them. The inducement for paying this toll is that general purpose lanes are so congested that some people will pay to avoid this congestion. While toll lanes have been in existence for many years, HOT lanes have only come into vogue, with the advent of automated toll collecting devices such as the SMART TAGs. This permits toll collection, without slowing down vehicle flow. These tolls are dynamically set, allowing the HOT lanes authorities to raise the tolls to maintain free flow conditions.

Due to the high level of traffic congestion in Northern Virginia, HOT lanes are being promoted as a way to provide more capacity for highway users, at no or very low cost to taxpayers. An additional incentive for developing HOT lanes is the possibility of providing increased transit services in the affected corridor using a portion of the HOT lanes revenues collected by the private operators (concessionaires). One HOT lanes project is currently being constructed in Northern Virginia. This project will provide two

new HOT lanes in both directions on the Capital Beltway (I-495) between the Springfield Interchange and the Dulles Toll Road. The second project, currently in the development phase, affects Alexandria much more significantly than the first. This proposal calls for building HOT lanes from Eads Street/Pentagon in Arlington County to Massaponax in Spotslvania County. As currently proposed, this project will expand the existing HOV-3 lanes in the I-95/395 corridor from two to three lanes, extend the HOV/HOT lanes south to Massaponax in Spotsylvania County and provide $195 million in concessionaire payments to be used for transit improvements in the corridor.

Since the interim project agreement was signed in 2006, VDOT and Fluor-Transurban have moved forward with preliminary engineering, operations plans, and traffic and revenue studies. The northern section of this project, between Eads Street/Pentagon in Arlington County and Garrisonville Road (Route 610) in Stafford County, has been approved by Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) as a Categorical Exclusion (CE) under the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA). An Interchange Justification Report for the northern section of the project was filed in January 2009. These and other project documents are available at http://vamegaprojects.com/projectSummary03.html.

A key study which that was completed during project development was to determine what types of transit could be supported by concessions payments from the HOT lanes. Initially, Fluor-Transurban proposed a preliminary package of transit services to be subsidized by the HOT lanes in December 2006. This package was used as the initial input to the TIP/CLRP description, which was amended into the region's Constrained Long Range Plan in 2007. This initial package of transit improvements was subsequently found to be inadequate and in 2007, the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (VDRPT), working with the local affected jurisdictions, initiated a thorough, year long study to develop a new package of transit options for the corridor. The new transit plan that emerged from the VDRPT study benefits Alexandria in several ways, specifically providing:

1. Funding for reduced headways on WMATA Route 7B -
    - $3,266,637 for the operating costs for 20 years of this service enhancement. The project will cover all of the operating costs of this headway reduction after factoring in a 30% farebox recovery ratio.
    - $1,000,000 for the initial capital costs of bus equipment necessary to implement this enhancement and replacement costs based on a 12 year service life.
2. Funding for new, all-day service between Kingstowne and Shirlington/Pentagon, generally along Alexandria's proposed Van Dorn/Beauregard transit corridor.
    - Provides 20 minute peak and 30 minute off peak headways.
    - Pays $38,134,096 for the operating costs for 20 years of this service. The project will cover the operating costs of this new service after factoring a 30% farebox recovery ratio.

- Pays $5,000,000 in initial capital costs of bus equipment necessary to implement this new service and equipment replacement costs based on a 12 year service life.

3. Funding the capital and operating costs for new bus services between Prince William County and Old Town Alexandria.
4. Funding increased capacity on VRE trains serving patrons traveling to and from Alexandria.
5. Funding $10,000,000 for a proposed in-line transit station in Northern Virginia. As technical analyses may justify and the City may consent, Alexandria may be the site for this facility.

Questions that were not addressed by the VDRPT I95/I-395 TDM study was whether some type of bus rapid transit (BRT) in the HOT lanes corridor, as proposed by Fluor-Transurban, was feasible, and whether in-line stations, such as the one which might be located at Seminary Road are feasible and desirable. An additional study to address these questions was initiated in December 2008 and is scheduled provide recommendations on these matters in Spring 2009.

In January 2009, Design Public Hearing Plans for the northern section of the project were released for review and hearings were conducted on February 9, 10 and 11 in the Town of Dumfries, Springfield and the City of Alexandria, respectively. Considering comments received during these hearings, the final scope and cost of the project will be developed, commercial terms will be finalized with Fluor-Transurban, and the design-build phase will start with construction expected to begin near the end of this year or in early 2010. VDOT anticipates opening the northern portion of the project in late 2012 or early 2013.

Discussion: As part of the design public hearing process, the City can submit comments to VDOT on the overall I-95/396 HOV/Bus/HOT Lanes project and/or specific project elements. In considering these comments, the City may also elect to revisit its previous position on one specific project element, the addition of a south-facing connection to the HOV/Bus/HOT lanes at the Seminary Road interchange. The City is now on record as being opposed to any such connection.

City staff attended the design public hearings conducted in Springfield on February 10 and in Alexandria on February 11. VDOT reported these hearings were advertised in several area newspapers, on the web, through e-mail and by distribution of over 75,000 postcards to residents along the project corridor. The hearing format was the same at all three locations, a two-hour open house to provide project information and respond to questions about specific project features, followed by a hearing to receive comments on the project. The total attendance at the hearing in Alexandria was reported to have been 110 persons (open house and hearing). The reported attendance in Dumfries was 90 and 110 in Springfield.

At the hearing in Springfield, an estimated 70 to 80 persons were present at the public hearing portion of the program; however, only eleven persons, none residents of Alexandria, provided testimony at the hearing. Four persons expressed definite support for the project, two were definitely opposed to the project and the remaining expressed concerns about the project, but did not indicate an overall position concerning the project. Among speakers in favor of the project, the Northern Virginia Transportation Alliance, a business group generally in favor of any additional transportation capacity, two people representing chambers of commerce, and one private citizen spoke in favor of the project. The two persons opposing the project were either carpoolers or are sluggers who were concerned about the impact of the HOT lane proposal on carpool commuters. These persons indicated that the HOT lanes would simply deliver cars faster to the 14th Street Bridge and the District of Columbia, where they would still be confronted with congestion. They were also concerned that the HOT lanes would force people from carpools to single-occupancy vehicles. The final set of people raised concerns such as the need for more sound walls to protect neighborhoods from increased noise, and bicycle access across the expressway.

An estimated 70 persons attended the hearing portion of the program in Alexandria. Eighteen persons testified during the public hearing, 13 from Arlington County, four from Alexandria and one from Springfield. Overall, three persons (none Alexandria residents) clearly expressed opposition to the project, one (an Alexandria resident) clearly expressed support. The remainder raised concerns with the project without expressing overall support or opposition. Alexandria residents commented on the following issues:

1. The proposed new transit ramp at Seminary road and improvements to the mid-level interchange platform are critically important elements in light of the BRAC 133 site selection.
2. The proposed BRT service and in-line station at Seminary Road, now under operational study, is essential for this project to be successful.
3. Noise resulting from the increased volume of traffic is a concern along the east (south) side of the I-395 corridor.
4. The aesthetics of the proposed sound barriers is a concern. The earth berm approach used along the Winkler Center is preferable.
5. The proposed new ramp at Seminary Road should be opened to HOV traffic as well as transit.
6. The project design should accommodate direct access to and from the DoD site as is currently being studied.
7. The current HOV-3 lanes are working well. The addition of HOT lane vehicles may degrade current performance and discourage carpooling.
8. The HOT lane concept does not support the type transit oriented development that is being sought inside the Capital Beltway.
9. The design exceptions being requested for narrow lanes and substandard shoulders inside the beltway are a safety concern.

Board Member Jay Fisette presented Arlington County's recently adopted resolution on the I-95/395 HOT Lanes project and NVTC Executive Director Rick Taube resubmitted NVTC's prior comments, noting noted that these had not yet been adequately responded to. Concerns of non-Alexandria residents, primarily residents of the Fairlington area, included: (1) extent and design of the sound barriers; (2) increased neighborhood traffic; (3) operation of the Shirlington rotary (interchange); (4) impact on area air quality; (5) lack of proffers of project revenues for neighborhood amenities; (6) effect of 24/7 operation of the HOT lanes on off-peak commuting; (7) construction sequence, staging and maintenance of traffic; (8) not including an extension of VRE service; and (9) potential impact on current slug commuters.

As part of the design public hearing process, several jurisdictions, regional agencies and at least one Alexandria civic group submitted written comments for the hearing record. Attached for information are comments submitted by: (1) Arlington County (Attachment 1); (2) the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA) (Attachment 2); (3) the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC) (Attachment 3); and (4) the Brookville-Seminary Valley Civic Association (Attachment 4).

Specific Issues for Consideration – Based on staff's understanding of the proposed project and issues raised by the community, the following are believed to be key issues that the City may desire to provide comments on.

Access at Seminary Road and Potential Cut Through Traffic - Among the more significant issues which have not been addressed in any detail by VDOT or Fluor-/Transurban is how additional access could be provided from the HOT lanes to Seminary Road and whether such access would beneficial to Alexandria. As noted previously, the City is currently on record as opposed to any such connection to the HOV/HOT lanes. The recent decision by the Department of Defense to construct the BRAC-133 facility housing 6,500 employees at the Mark Center reopens many considerations. One item, which is been funded by the Commonwealth is to determine if a direct access ramp from I-395 into the BRAC facility could relieve potential adverse neighborhood impacts. Since the model runs have been done only for a transit-only access, model runs should be constructed with private automobiles coming from both the HOT lanes and general purpose lanes of I-395. The issue of cut-through traffic from this access point through Alexandria should also be addressed.

Safety of Transit and Other Vehicles – The HOT lanes proposal calls for converting the existing two HOV lanes in the northern portion of the project into three HOT lanes with narrower shoulders. The HOT lanes proposal also calls for signage to be installed in many places along the HOT corridor to notify drivers of tolling prices and accidents. As manufactures continue to build wider and longer transit vehicles, there will be little margin of error for transit and other vehicles using the narrower lanes at a high rate of speed. Also, in the case of accidents or transit vehicle breakdowns, the narrower lanes and shoulders do not provide enough of a safety refuge for transit vehicles, transit

passengers (in case they need to de-board) and for other vehicles. The signage may also cause issues / distractions for transit and other vehicles as vehicles may merge / weave in and out of the general purpose lanes and into the HOT lanes and vice versa depending on the toll price.

Transit Service Degradation – Currently there are approximately sixty-eight (68) transit buses (DASH, WMATA, Fairfax County Connector, and PRTC) per hour using the existing HOV lanes in the morning and approximately seventy-eight (78) transit buses per hour using the existing HOV lanes in the evening. The narrowing conversion of the existing two HOV lanes into three HOT lanes and the addition of SOV and two person vehicles paying the HOT toll would decrease the speed in which transit vehicles could travel and deteriorate the transit service provided by all local and regional providers. Also, currently at the Pentagon and along other areas of I-395, SOV and two person vehicles wait, at times illegally on the shoulder, until 6:00 pm to use the HOV lanes without penalty. At times, these additional vehicles increase congestion on the HOV lanes and slow down the transit services provided on the HOV lanes. Also, if the average speed of transit vehicles is slowed with the HOT lanes, how will the operating cost to local and regional transit systems and each jurisdiction be applied?

In-Line Transit Station & Access – The revised VDRPT transit plan calls for an in-line transit station in Northern Virginia. Alexandria, more specifically Seminary Road, may be the site for this facility. Questions remain on the feasibility of this in-line station in regards to how the HOT lanes will accommodate this facility along with the additional ramp at Seminary; how pedestrians and transit vehicles will be able to access this facility; the capacity of this facility; transit transfer options at this facility; the safety of passengers waiting at this facility; and who may use the facility.

Operation of the Shirlington Rotary (Interchange) – Proposed changes to the Shirlington (Quaker Lane) interchange include the addition of a new south-facing entry point to the HOV/HOT lanes, five new traffic signals, one at each of the interchange entry points, and additional lane capacity on both the rotary and interchange approaches. Staff in both Alexandria and Arlington are concerned that this interchange cannot be operated satisfactorily and may lead to unacceptable traffic backups on the surface approach roadways. Future meetings are scheduled to review this matter in greater detail; however, jurisdictional staff remain unconvinced at this time that the proposed configuration can operate satisfactorily.

BRAC 133 Security & Wait Areas – Increased security resulting in an elevated Office of Home Land Security threat level may cause a queuing and back ups in the proposed HOT lanes, which will have an effect on transit service, tolling, and congestion in these lanes.

Snow / Ice Removal – Who will be responsible for removing the snow / ice and ensuring transit vehicles are able to travel on the proposed HOT lanes?

Coordination – Who will coordinate with transit providers if there is an accident and / or emergency on the HOT lanes?

Attachments:
Attachment 1 – Arlington County Resolution, January 27, 2009
Attachment 2 - Northern Virginia Transportation Authority, December 11, 2008
Attachment 3 - Northern Virginia Transportation Commission, December 5, 2008
Attachment 4 – Brookville-Seminary Valley Civic Association, February 20, 2009

Staff: Rich Baier, Dept. of Transportation and Environmental Services
Tom Culpepper, Dept. of Transportation and Environmental Services
Jim Maslanka, Office of Transit Services and Programs

ATTACHMENT 1

RESOLUTION ON THE VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION'S (VDOT'S) I-95/395 HIGH OCCUPANCY TOLL (HOT) LANES PROJECT

ADOPTED BY THE ARLINGTON COUNTY BOARD – JANUARY 27, 2009

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) is currently in contract negotiations with a private firm, Fluor/Transurban, for a project to convert the two existing High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV-3) lanes on I-95/I-395 between Dumfries and Arlington into a three lane High Occupancy Toll (HOT) lanes facility; and

WHEREAS, according to the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC), during the morning peak period, the two HOV lanes on I-95/395 outside the Beltway carry about 25 percent more people than the four conventional lanes; inside the Beltway the HOV lanes carry 50 percent more than the conventional lanes in the three hour am peak period; and

WHEREAS, Arlington County is committed to preserving and improving the person throughput in this corridor; and

WHEREAS, Arlington County has articulated a list of questions and issues about this project's impacts on transit, safety, the environment, and local multimodal streets, most recently in a letter dated December 23, 2008 to the Virginia Secretary of Transportation (attached); and

WHEREAS, additional concerns have arisen regarding fundamental inadequacies with the modeling that was used by VDOT to support the environmental documentation including:

1. A modeling area at each interchange that is inadequate to evaluate the project's impact to local streets, according to the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA's) own guidelines;

2. A failure of the project team to include the extensive public transit routes in the specific interchange models for Shirlington Circle and Eads St;

3. The omission of pedestrian data at any intersections having crosswalks in those same interchange models;

4. The exclusion of a model of existing conditions, which is standard practice for most environmental analysis; and

WHEREAS, the concerns articulated by the County indicate that the model used by the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) in its environmental analysis does not satisfy condition five of the Categorical Exclusion (CE) for the I-95/395 HOT Lanes project (attached) which states that, "the consultant must demonstrate that the proposed project represented by the re-striping and shoulder reconstruction did not point the proverbial loaded gun at the roadway network at either termini forcing additional improvements to be made at either termini;" and

WHEREAS, Arlington County believes that the CE documentation did not receive adequate environmental review and that this project as it is designed today will have an adverse impact on the citizens of Arlington County and the Northern Virginia region; and

WHEREAS, despite these outstanding concerns and the apparent failure to identify and address significant environmental impacts of the project, FHWA has concluded that VDOT and its private partners have satisfied the conditions laid out on August 31, 2006 for a CE; and

WHEREAS, in the federally-required Interchange Justification Report (IJR) for the I-95/395 HOT lanes, VDOT states that the project does meet the specified justification criteria, "The proposal considers and is consistent with local and regional land use and transportation plans." However, the HOT Lanes project does not meet this criterion for Arlington County, and in fact:

1. The current designs for the interchanges at Eads St. and Shirlington Circle are at odds with the stated goals of the adopted Master Transportation Plan, specifically General Policy B which states that the County will, "support the design and operation of complete streets… to enable safe access by all user groups including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit vehicles and users, and motorists of all ages and abilities, allowing these users to access a full range of daily activities."
2. The overall project does not comply with Streets Policy 13 which states that the County will, "Ensure that High Occupancy Toll (HOT) lane implementation does not negatively affect the efficiency of existing transit and carpooling."

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT, the Arlington County Board concludes that the CE was improperly approved because it fails to address significant environmental impacts of the project. Accordingly, Arlington County respectfully requests that the environmental documentation for the I-95/395 HOT lanes project submitted on December 18, 2008 by VDOT be re-examined by FHWA, including a more careful look at the modeling used to support the environmental conclusions and that a determination consistent with federal environmental requirements be made; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, the County Board requests that as part of this review, FHWA and VDOT work with the local jurisdictions to ensure that the impacts to localities created by this project are adequately captured and addressed in the environmental documentation and in any subsequent project agreements, including an agreement between Arlington County and the Commonwealth covering financial and operational arrangements to mitigate those impacts; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, the County Board requests that VDOT acknowledge in its request for approval of the IJR for the I-95/395 HOT Lanes project that the project proposal is not consistent with the comprehensive plan of Arlington County. If VDOT does submit the IJR to FHWA with this inaccuracy, the County Board requests that the IJR be disapproved; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, the County Board requests that the design exceptions currently under review for this project also receive the same level of scrutiny typical of a project of this magnitude, including close coordination with the local jurisdictions that will be impacted; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, the County Board continues to withhold its support for the I-95/395 HOT lanes proposal until the questions and concerns expressed by the County are adequately addressed.

Barbara Favola

Barbara A. Favola, Chairman

ATTACHMENT 2

The Northern Virginia Transportation Authority

The Authority
for Transportation in Northern Virginia

December 11, 2008

The Honorable Pierce Homer
Secretary of Transportation
1111 East Broad Street, Third Floor
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Dear Secretary Homer:

VDOT staff and members of the Fluor/Transurban team have provided individual briefings to the elected officials of each jurisdiction on the status of the HOT Lanes project. Many issues were raised during these briefings; I am writing to formalize these questions and to ask that all the requested information be provided to the NVTA before final National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documentation is submitted to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

We appreciate the additional information that the project team briefings have provided, much of it in response to previous requests for information. However, the added detail has raised questions in addition to those that have been articulated by the NVTA in the past. As you can see from the attached list, the questions and concerns range from transit/HOV issues to enforcement and local street impacts, to safety and public outreach concerns. Some of these issues, like narrow shoulder widths and commuter parking, have been raised many times before. Others, like questions about the impacts to local streets and public outreach are a result of the new detail that was provided by the project team.

We hope you will take adequately address these points before you move forward with submitting the NEPA documentation for the project. NVTA believes that in order for the I-95/395 HOT Lanes project to be adequate, it cannot degrade safety, transit and HOV level of service, or the operations of the adjacent local streets. In order for the project to be successful in providing an added benefit to the region, the project team must work with the local governments to build on the multi-modal success that exists today. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you wish to discuss this further.

Sincerely,

Christopher Zimmerman
Chairman

Cc: Members, Northern Virginia Transportation Authority

NVTA 1-95/395 HOT Lanes Issues
12/11/08

Transit/HOV

1. In Northern Virginia, the informal carpooling arrangement, "slugging," has been very successful in moving large numbers of people in the corridor. This project must ensure that this arrangement continues at its current levels. NVTA would like to see the specific model results for the HOV share of trips on the HOT lanes, and in particular slugs.

2. The project partners must provide transit priority at choke points, such as the ramps. The existing HOV lanes serve transit well; however with the introduction of low occupancy vehicles on the lanes, transit's efficiency could be compromised. We understand that the state is reconsidering a more robust BRT system in this corridor, which the NVTA fully supports. However, we believe that in order to ensure the success of the state's BRT concept and make this a truly multi-modal corridor, there must be some type of priority given to transit at especially congested points along the facility, such as the access/egress points. The Eads Street ramp in particular must provide priority to transit vehicles.

3. The project team must ensure that at a minimum, it meets the federal performance thresholds for HOV lanes that are converted to HOT lanes. These lanes provide the fixed guideway miles that allow Northern Virginia transit systems to qualify for federal funding. Therefore, it is critical to the region that this level of service does not fall below the minimum standards. If the facility is not able to meet the standards to receive federal money, the project partners must replace the lost funding.

4. In addition, HOV and transit users today are experiencing a higher average speed than the federally mandated 45 mph threshold, and therefore mere adherence to the threshold is a degradation. NVTA maintains that the average speeds experienced today on the HOV lanes should continue when these lanes are converted to HOT lanes and this threshold should be formalized in the final agreement.

5. Coordinate the design of the ramps and lanes with all the public and private transit providers in the corridor in order to ensure they can adequately and safely accommodate buses. There are concerns about the lanes not being wide enough to accommodate buses and about the discontinuous / substandard width shoulders. In addition, some of the ramp geometry, particularly at Eads, has come into question in terms of the turning radii and grade changes accommodating buses.

6. Commuter parking should be placed where it is most needed, rather than where it is most convenient for the project team. Part of the original commitment from the project team was to construct an initial 3,000 park and ride spaces. The project team must work with staff to build those spaces where they would be most effective.

7. Fluor is proceeding with the design for the Lorton in-line station without any associated parking. The existing VRE parking lot is sized to accommodate current and future VRE demand only. If the in-line station is accessed via the VRE Lorton Station, parking to meet the anticipated demand generated by the in-line station should be identified independent of the VRE station parking. The project partners should provide NVTA with an estimate of

parking demand generated by the in-line station, along with a proposal to accommodate this demand.

Enforcement

8. Originally the project proposed using new technology to ensure that there were no toll evaders. We understand that technology is not yet available, and that instead pull-out areas will be provided for police to enforce proper toll paying. Today the state estimates that there is a 20% violation rate on the existing lanes. Because the Fluor/Transurban proposal for enforcement in the near future is the same as exists today, how do the project partners propose to eliminate violators?

9. The right-of-way inside the beltway is very constrained and it will be difficult to provide pull-out areas for enforcement. It is our understanding that the planned pull-outs inside the beltway are tightly clustered (as the geometry allows), and thus the distance from one pull-out to the next is as far as three miles. Moreover, the pull-outs are not consistently on one side of the travel lanes, so there will be weaving as vehicles try to make their way to one of the pull-outs (or are forced to one of the pull-outs). The planned placement and configuration of these pull-outs makes for a potentially hazardous set of conditions. The project team must provide a detailed plan for how these pull-outs will work, and what the impacts will be on the flow of traffic based on these locations.

Impacts to Local Streets

10. The addition of low-occupancy vehicles will likely cause impacts to the region's local streets, in particular those surrounding the access/egress points along the corridor. As the project moves forward, the team should be providing adequate documentation to local staff in order to determine what these impacts are projected to be. This includes coordinating the modeling assumptions with local jurisdictions, and modeling an adequate impact area at each access/egress point. Based on experience with recent regional projects, each local jurisdiction should have an MOU with the project team outlining how the project's adverse impacts to local traffic movement will be mitigated before the state and Fluor/Transurban enter financial close.

11. Both the operations of the signals and the surrounding local streets of each access/egress point should be revisited annually by both the project team and the local jurisdictions. This review should include an examination of volumes and how they compare to the model projections. If the impacts are determined to be worse than projected, the project team must work with local jurisdictions to mitigate the additional impacts. This review should be part of the MOU referenced in the above bullet.

12. The project team should also have a separate MOU with the local jurisdictions regarding the maintenance of traffic plan during construction. The plan should outline various strategies to manage overflow traffic on the local street network and be consistent with local jurisdictions' traffic management plans and policies.

Safety

13. We are particularly concerned about narrow shoulder widths along the length of the corridor. The project partners should provide NVTA the design exception documentation, and identify specifically how they plan to address these constrained areas in terms of safety, both of transit and auto users.

14. The NVTA was very disappointed with the Safety Study. The Safety Study did not specifically address the I-95/395 HOT Lanes facility and potential safety issues, but rather provided a review of existing literature. Moreover, none of the other HOT lanes experiences cited in the Safety Study featured the combined complexities of the subject project, including: narrow lane widths; discontinuous / substandard shoulders; a high incidence of buses / HOV-3+ users; and frequent on and off ramps that will become even more frequent if the project is implemented as proposed. When these observations were made at the meeting where the Safety Study results were discussed, VDOT staff indicated that the lessons learned would be applied to the I-95/395 HOT Lanes facility during the course of design. To that end, NVTA is expecting to see the project team address specific areas along the corridor where these concerns are present, developing a detailed plan for remediation. We must also see the incident management plan that includes transit and auto scenarios.

Public Outreach

15. A public meeting should be held in every jurisdiction along the corridor. The northern segment of this project covers 56 miles. In order to adequately provide out-reach in this large of an area, there must be a public hearing in every impacted jurisdiction, much like the first round of Public Information meetings.

16. There must be ongoing coordination with the local jurisdictions and agencies, especially with respect to the design exception requests. As these have impacts on the operations of transit service and streets within local control, a satisfactory resolution of these issues must involve all stakeholders so that these operations can continue in a safe and efficient manner.

ATTACHMENT 3

Northern Virginia Transportation Commission

December 5, 2008

The Honorable Pierce R. Homer
Secretary of Transportation
Patrick Henry Building, 3rd Floor
1111 East Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Secretary Homer:

At its December 4, 2008 meeting, the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission received a presentation from several representatives of the I-95/395 HOT Lanes project team on the current status of this major undertaking. The commission then determined that there remain several outstanding issues that have not been addressed to our satisfaction. The commission voted unanimously to bring these to your attention and to ask that you respond as soon as possible and certainly before final NEPA documentation is submitted to the Federal Highway Administration.

At the heart of our ongoing uneasiness with this project is the essential fact that much of the project involves taking a facility that was built originally primarily for transit and converting it to another use. A recent study for NVTC showed that this facility now carries twice as many persons per lane per hour (3,106) as the parallel general purpose lanes (1,566) at a screenline just outside the Beltway during the morning peak period. To be successful, the HOT lanes project must meet or exceed this level of performance.

At this point the risks of deteriorating performance on the existing tax-payer funded facility and on adjacent local streets as a result of this conversion appear substantial. A successful project would be in our region's best interests, especially given the lack of state transportation funding, but we have yet to be convinced that the risks are worth taking; accordingly we are requesting the information described below.

NVTC's Concerns and Requests

4350 N. Fairfax Drive • Suite 720 • Arlington, Virginia 22203
Tel (703) 524-3322 • Fax (703) 524-1756 • TDD (800) 828-1120 • VA Relay Service
E-mail nvtdc.org • Website www.thinkoutsidethecar.org

1. Please provide specific modeling results from traffic and revenue forecasting. This information should include shares of HOV trips on the HOT lanes, including informal carpooling (slugs). We are aware that many current "sluggers" are very concerned about the future.

2. What are projected traffic hot spots, particularly at points of access and egress, that may affect the reliability of transit service? What are the plans to mitigate congestion at each of these locations?

3. What provisions are in place to ensure that local governments and transit systems do not incur additional expense to resolve congestion that may spill over to local streets? Modeling of these impacts should be coordinated with local governments. Based on recent experience on similar projects memoranda are needed between each local government and the project team to provide compensation for financial impacts on local governments. Further, for each year in the future results should be evaluated and if impacts are worse than projected, the project team should commit in those MOU's to mitigate the impacts.

4. Will the project team be required to maintain current performance after conversion to HOT lanes? Federal performance standards for HOV lanes converted to HOT lanes would allow lower average speeds (i.e. 45 m.p.h.) than those currently experienced (i.e. 55 m.p.h. inside and 65 m.p.h. outside the Beltway). In the event average performance drops below the federal minimum of 45 m.p.h., what provisions are in place to reimburse the region for the millions of dollars of FTA formula funds that would be lost each year? Average speeds may hide unacceptable periods of delay, so please report on anticipated variability within that average. We know from experience that transit customers will not tolerate periodic extensive delays even if average speeds meet the minimum standard.

5. Transit systems have warned about serious safety concerns from 11-ft lanes, discontinuous shoulders as narrow as 2-ft. and ramp geometry with limited turning radii and grade changes. Also, pull-out areas are inconsistently placed as far as three miles apart on opposite sides which could lead to weaving and other hazards. A safety study by Halcrow Associates did not examine the specific combination of factors present in this project. While VDOT is reported to be examining mitigation measures for design exceptions to be requested of FHWA, no information has been shared about exactly why it is believed that such a combination of risk factors can be deemed to be safe. Transit systems wish to be protected against claims arising from these design exceptions, since, for example, operating 11-ft buses with additional side mirrors in 11-ft lanes is obviously a serious concern.

Also the project team has stated that an incident response plan will serve to reduce the risk of disabled buses on the facility. More details should be shared about such a plan.

6. Enforcement is a concern that affects transit performance and safety. Without an effective enforcement process, transit levels of service may bog down due to congestion and officers on the HOT lane rights-of-way may pose safety risks. When will specific enforcement plans be available for review? Please share the specific technologies that will be used to identify and enforce free HOV users.

7. For the I-95/395 HOT lanes project, the project team should ensure that the public is fully informed by sharing specific plans in sufficient time to allow public comments to be considered and incorporated. This request pertains not only to environmental factors but also to all of the plans (design, traffic, revenue, enforcement, etc.). In planning to provide parking and access and egress facilities, the project team should learn from public reactions on the Beltway HOT lanes project. The media have reported recently that many persons have stated that they were not aware of the intention to cut large swaths of trees along the Beltway and they are also concerned about storm water management.

8. What is the additional capacity to be accomplished for person-through put in peak and non-peak periods?

Thank you for the opportunity to share these requests with you and the project team. Most of these requests are long-standing and we do wish to ensure that they are heard and considered.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

William Euille
Chairman

cc: NVTA Chairman Chris Zimmerman
NVTC's Local Governments
Tim Young
Young Ho Chang

ATTACHMENT 4

BROOKVILLE-SEMINARY VALLEY CIVIC ASSOCIATION, INC.
P.O. Box 23348
Alexandria, VA 22304

February 20, 2009

Mr. Ronaldo T. Nicholson, P.E.
Regional Transportation Program Director
Virginia Department of Transportation
6363 Walker Lane, Suite 500
Alexandria, VA 22310

Re: I-95/395 HOV/Bus/HOT Lanes

Dear Mr. Nicholson:

The Board of Directors of Brookville-Seminary Valley Civic Association, Inc. ("BSVCA") respectfully submits these comments relating to the I-95/395 HOV/Bus/HOT Lanes project (the "Project"). As discussed below, we request that the Virginia Department of Transportation ("VDOT") respond to crucial questions and conduct necessary additional studies requested by various entities, including Arlington County, the City of Alexandria, the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission ("NVTC"), and the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority ("NVTA"), before proceeding with the Project.

The BSVCA, which is comprised of individuals from several hundred households in the Brookville-Seminary Valley area of the City of Alexandria, is a non-profit organization that seeks to promote the best interests of Alexandrians. Given the close proximity of the Brookville-Seminary Valley area to I-395, the Project is of great interest to the BSVCA.

We are aware that Arlington County has articulated a list of questions and issues about the Project, including fundamental inadequacies with the modeling that was used to support the environmental documentation, and that it believes that the Categorical Exclusion ("CE") documentation did not receive adequate review by VDOT and the Federal Highway Administration ("FHWA"). We further understand that numerous multi-jurisdictional organizations, including the NVTC and the NVTA, have also expressed concern about the Project and its impacts on transit and mobility in the region. We also are cognizant of the fact that the City of Alexandria has requested that VDOT and Fluor/Transurban conduct a study to evaluate the potential impact of creating HOT access at the Seminary Road interchange connection on adjacent residential neighborhoods. In addition, we recognize that several municipalities, including Arlington County, have expressed the view that the Project, as it is designed today, will likely have an adverse impact on citizens across the Northern Virginia region.

For the reasons discussed above, we make the following requests. To begin with, we urge that the CE documentation be re-examined by the FHWA, including a more careful look at the modeling used to support the environmental conclusions, and that the FHWA and VDOT work with local jurisdictions to ensure that the impacts to localities created by this project are adequately captured and addressed in the environmental documentation and any subsequent Project agreements, consistent with the conditions of the CE. We also ask that the design exceptions currently under review receive the same level of scrutiny typical of a project of this magnitude, and that there be close coordination with the local jurisdictions that will be impacted. In addition, we request that VDOT and Fluor/Transurban conduct a study to evaluate the potential impact of creating HOT access at the Seminary Road interchange connection on adjacent residential neighborhoods, as has previously been requested by the City of Alexandria. Finally, we urge VDOT to keep

in mind that the efficient movement of transit and HOV should continue to be the primary purpose of these lanes, and that the design of the Project should reflect this priority.

Your consideration of our comments is greatly appreciated. If you have any questions regarding our comments, please do not hesitate to contact me at geoff.goodale@bsvca.net or (703) 618-6640.

Respectfully submitted,

Geoffrey M. Goodale

Geoffrey M. Goodale
President, Brookville-Seminary Valley Civic Association, Inc.

cc: Mayor William D. Euille and Members of City Council
Mr. James Hartmann, City Manager of the City of Alexandria
The Honorable Patricia S. Ticer
The Honorable Charniele Herring