



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA  
House of Delegates  
RICHMOND

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May 12, 2015

The Honorable Aubrey L. Layne, Jr.  
Secretary of Transportation  
1111 E. Broad Street, Room 3054  
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Reference: Comments on I-66 Outside the Beltway Corridor Improvement Project

Dear Secretary Layne:

Over the past few months, I have heard from dozens of constituents and met with several community associations regarding the proposed improvements to the I-66 corridor outside of the Capital Beltway. I also met with Renee Hamilton, Northern Virginia District Deputy Administrator on May 11<sup>th</sup> to review the most recent plans. While multi-modal improvements are critical to the Northern Virginia region, they must be sensitive to the livability and sustainability of the surrounding community. This includes both short-term and long-term impacts. Therefore, I am submitting the following comments regarding this project. I look forward to hearing from you and to further coordinating with VDOT staff as we address these issues.

Minimize Project Footprint

It is critical that this project minimize its footprint and reduce or eliminate the number of homes and the amount of public land that are currently proposed to be taken by eminent domain. I was pleased to be informed by Ms. Hamilton that the number of homes subject to taking has been reduced from approximately 35 to between 11 and 18 homes. However, additional measures should be taken to reduce this number even further. One solution is to engage the private sector early in the process in order to leverage innovative ideas or approaches that will achieve these goals. As I recall, when VDOT first proposed a design plan for adding capacity to the I-495 Capital Beltway, the design required taking 308 homes and the projected capital cost was estimated to be in excess of \$3 billion. By engaging in a public private partnership, a private sector development team designed and constructed the project at a fixed cost of \$1.4 billion while only taking eight homes. Likewise, innovative designs should be actively sought and considered for the I-66.

### Stormwater Management

While I support every opportunity to use the I-66 reconstruction to improve water quality and mitigate local flooding, this should be done in a manner that does not require additional right-of-way that will result in the loss of homes along the corridor. Complete reliance on above-ground stormwater ponds is an inefficient use of space. Quantity controls can and should be accomplished through underground detention that will not require surface space. Likewise quality controls can be implemented outside of the immediate corridor but within the same watershed to achieve equal benefits where the use of eminent domain will not be required. Prior to any taking, VDOT should strongly consider the use of off-site nutrient credits as allowed by the Virginia General Assembly in Code of Virginia §62.1-44.15:35.

### Sound Walls

Much of this corridor already suffers from considerable noise pollution as a result of traffic volume on I-66. This project is an opportunity to enhance the quality of life along the corridor by using more advanced sound wall technology. Equally important, sound walls should be replaced concurrent to removal of existing sound walls, or as soon as possible after removal, so that exposure of surrounding communities to noise pollution is minimized or eliminated.

### HOV-2 versus HOV-3

A core principal of this project is that any final design should not result in a reduction in the capacity of free lanes currently used by commuters during peak hours. This is particularly important with regard to HOT lanes since otherwise VDOT is allowing the conversion of lanes built with public dollars to be tolled. As such, any HOT lanes should continue the existing designation of HOV-2. The fact that the lanes will be separated from regular traffic will assist with enforcement problems that have plagued the existing HOV lanes.

I do understand that the region's Constrained Long Range Plan (CLRP) calls for the eventual conversion of I-66 from HOV-2 to HOV-3. While maintaining HOV-2 would be preferable, at a minimum, any conversion to HOV-3 as part of the I-66 corridor improvement project should not take place before the date identified in the CLRP.

### Preservation of Orange Line Extension

I was pleased to see that the preliminary plan maintains preservation of the right-of-way for future extension of the Orange Line. Extension of Metro to Centreville and eventually Gainesville is an essential component of long-term mobility within the corridor, particularly as the region does not have space to continue to expand the existing road infrastructure.

### Traffic Management on Local Roads

During the construction phase, this project will almost certainly force existing I-66 traffic on to parallel roads, including Route 29, Route 50, Little River Turnpike, and Braddock Road. In addition, the project

will likely result in neighborhood cut-through traffic as commuters seek alternative ways to reach their destinations. VDOT should actively assess and deploy strategies for managing increased traffic on these major arterials, such as improving light signalization. Similarly, VDOT should work with the City of Fairfax to implement these strategies, since the City controls light signalization within its boundaries. The City's Director of Transportation, Wendy Block Sanford, has committed to working with VDOT on this issue. VDOT should also work with Fairfax County and the City of Fairfax to identify neighborhoods that are at-risk for cut-through traffic and work with them to develop ways to measure impacts and implement contingency plans if cut-through traffic becomes an issue. VDOT engaged in this type of outreach in the Mantua community prior to construction of improvements to I-495 and developed a proactive plan with the neighborhood about what steps would be taken if traffic volume or speed reached certain levels. Such an approach should be replicated for this project.

#### Coordination with Localities

I have appreciated VDOT's coordination with Fairfax County and the City of Fairfax on this project. Continued close coordination with both localities is essential to the project's long-term success. Specifically, the City has noted that it will begin construction of the Northfax project in 2016, which will last approximately two years. This will overlap with the I-66 project, so coordination between the City and VDOT will be critical. Likewise, proposed access points to express lanes have the potential to significantly affect local traffic patterns. Decisions about where these access points will be located need to be well justified and coordinated with the affected localities.

I appreciate your consideration of these concerns, and again, look forward to working with you and members of your staff. I can be reached at (703) 310-6752 or [deldbulova@house.virginia.gov](mailto:deldbulova@house.virginia.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David L. Bulova". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

David L. Bulova  
Member, Virginia House of Delegates  
37<sup>th</sup> District

cc: Renée N. Hamilton, Deputy District Administrator, Northern Virginia District, VDOT