

John D Lynch, Regional Transportation Director for Virginia Mega Projects
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5 minutes:

Thank you for inviting me here tonight to discuss transportation and transit in the West End of the City of Alexandria. As the Regional Transportation Director for the Virginia Mega Projects, I oversee the development and construction of 5 specific projects that make up the Mega Projects for Northern Virginia (NOVA). These include the 495 HOT Lanes, VDOT oversight of the Dulles Rail Project, the I-95 4th Lane widening in Fairfax County, The Fairfax County Parkway through the Army Proving Ground and support for other BRAC projects (HOV to Seminary ramp, Mark Center, DAR Ramps, Rte 1 Widening, etc.) and the 95 HOT Lanes project. So you can understand that my view for the West End of Alexandria comes from a big picture standpoint and how we deal with the ongoing congestion in our entire region. With the projects currently under construction in the region such as the 495 HOT lanes, Rail to Dulles and the other BRAC related projects both in and around not only the Mark Center, but also Fort Belvoir, Quantico and the Army Proving Ground, we will see some dynamic changes in both the transportation system and the travel patterns of the area. With the 495 HOT Lanes and the Rail to Dulles, a combined construction cost of approximately \$4 billion, significant infrastructure is being built. In addition to that, transit options for those traveling to Tyson's Corner will be significantly improved. The HOT lanes are providing two brand new connections to the Tyson's Area that are free to HOV and transit as well as connections from Rte 7. This means HOV and bus service to the Tyson's area can now connect directly from the I95 HOV lanes without entering into the congestion of the general purpose lanes. We hope our efforts during construction will help stimulate some of these transit and TDM strategies which include enhanced bus service, car and vanpools

and other shuttle services that are getting SOV vehicles off the road and out of our construction zones.

- What are the transportation and transit challenges facing the West End?

The same challenges that we see in most areas of Northern Virginia are prevalent in the West End. Dealing with the current congestion, long term congestion issues and how we deal with the changing travel patterns are critical. How we deal with that depends on the area you live, work, etc, but I see it as a multi-pronged approach. Most of the traffic you see in this area (inside the Beltway) typically is coming from outside the immediate area. Locally, the construction of the 395 HOT lanes along with the other projects including the 395 Seminary HOV Ramp and the short and mid-term improvements along Seminary and Beauregard as well as complimentary transit enhancements are trying to address some of the immediate challenges in the West End. During construction of these projects, we will be implementing strategies that will help reduce cars through construction zones, that we hope can carry forward post construction.

For the construction phases of these projects, we will address and respond to both Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and VDOT requirements that the project ensure public safety, provide a high level of mobility, and offer reliable information to allow travelers to better plan their trips throughout the construction period. This Transportation Management Plan (TMP) will incorporate:

- Project specific Maintenance of Traffic (MOT) and Public Information (PI) plans.
- Transportation management strategies, ranging from incident management within the construction area to broader strategies intended to reduce transportation demand and provide alternative travel modes during construction; and
- Communication strategies, focused on providing timely information to the public regarding construction activities and detours.

In terms of broader strategies to mitigate construction-related congestion, the TMP focuses efforts in four key areas:

- **Traffic Operations & MOT:** the TMP provides several strategies for reducing incident response time and clearance during construction, which include additional safety service patrols, new technology to speed incident clearance, and more patrols by both the Virginia State Police and local police. Related to these efforts freeway monitoring equipment will allow VDOT real-time information regarding traffic conditions and to use ITS to keep the motoring public informed. Lane closure requests will be coordinated through the Megaprojects to ensure effective maintenance of traffic along the I-95/395 corridor.
- **Transit and Transportation Demand Management:** To augment local transit and shuttle programs initiated by Alexandria (DASH) and DOD/WMATA the TMP will expand transit options in the I-95 corridor providing additional transit service to the metropolitan region's primary employment centers. Additionally, the TMP will provide funds for the development and administration of vanpools and ride sharing programs, providing travel alternatives to single-occupant vehicles, and reducing demand during peak hours.
- **Local Network Operational Enhancements:** recognizing that certain intersections or road segments will be particularly impacted during construction, the TMP provides funds to make limited, but

critical improvements. Examples include enhancing efficiency by changing signal timing and traffic management through the use of speed humps and speed signs. An important element of maintaining service on local roadways, the TMP also sets aside funds for traffic enforcement to better ensure that drivers do not cut through neighborhoods to avoid construction, and instead utilize corridors suited for high volume traffic.

- Comprehensive communications and outreach: The communications strategies will be targeted to the entire range of I-95/395 users as well as key stakeholders and the local community. This includes both daily commuters and through traffic that travel through the impacted area. The goal of the communications program will be to provide timely information to empower commuters, travelers and neighbors to avoid delay when possible, and at a minimum to be kept aware of travel delays.
- What are the choices/decisions that Alexandrian citizens need to make about transportation and transit expenditures for the next 20 years?

Providing options for the traveling public to reduce congestion with a multi-pronged approach with the goal of increasing transit use and by making smart choices to increase the roadway capacity that will help reduce congestion for all travelers. In summary, all strategies need to be considered, not one is the silver bullet.

These are questions that need to be vetted out with all stakeholders in the area and region. VDOT is well aware and respectful of the position of the City of Alexandria with regard to HOT lanes on I-395. The City is also aware that it is VDOT's position that we must address the increasing congestion on I-95/395 due to the continued growth of employment and residents in Northern Virginia and in the I-95/395 corridor. The Base Realignment and Closure Act

(BRAC) activities that have brought approximately 20,000 new jobs to the corridor have also contributed to this growth. The Commonwealth has proposed the HOT Lanes from Garrisonville Road in Stafford County to the vicinity of Edsall Road in Fairfax County to add capacity and allow more choices for commuters with minimal environmental damage to the corridor. The Transit and TDM Plan of the Department of Rail and Public Transportation further encourages more carpools, vanpools, slugging and transit use, along with the HOV Ramp to Seminary from I-395. Thus, the Secretary is proposing a balanced approach to easing the congestion in this corridor.

- Lightening round (Yes or No) on plans: Took questions from the audience rather than the prepared questions from the moderator. These are prepared remarks for the advance moderator questions.
1. HOT Lanes in Arlington and Alexandria; VDOT has recognized the need to address continuing congestion & mobility challenges on I 395 and is prepared to work with jurisdictions to explore all potential solution including HOT lanes.
 2. widening of I-395 between the Seminary Road and Duke Street interchanges; ongoing operational analysis indicates significant benefits to I 395 GP lanes and as such VDOT is prepared to make this a priority project with support from the stakeholders; there is precedence to such targeted improvements at interchanges providing significant improvement to mainline traffic such as when VDOT added a second lane to the ramp from Outer loop of I 495 to DTR; TPB's aerial surveys documented significant reduction in backups on the Outer loop backups in the PM peak period.
 3. an HOV ramp from I-395 to Seminary Road; ongoing EA work related travel demand forecasts indicates significant usage of this proposed facility by HOV and transit users destined not just to Mark Center but to other parts in the City and County; ability of

GP lanes to absorb the Mark Center and other developments backfilling the BRAC related move in the vicinity is significantly deficient.

4. the widening of Beauregard and Van Dorn for bus-rapid-transit; has to be considered in the larger context of a overall network of BRT or other such express bus service network.
5. the addition of a bus-rapid-transit lane on Duke Street; has to be considered in the larger context of a overall network of BRT or other such express bus service network.
6. an ellipse—traffic circle—at Beauregard and Seminary Road; traffic circles and roundabout can be effective when designed and located at appropriate locations; traffic volumes and direction of movements are important and this will have to be examined thoroughly.