



# I-495 EXPRESS LANES NORTHERN EXTENSION (495 NEXT)

Virginia Department of Transportation

**COMMONWEALTH TRANSPORTATION BOARD BRIEFING**

April 20, 2021

Presenting: Rob Cary, Deputy Commissioner  
Susan Shaw, Megaprojects Director, Northern Virginia

# Presentation Topics

- Project Overview
- Environmental and Traffic Assessment Findings
- Public Outreach
- Concerns Addressed
- Transit Study
- Regional Coordination with Maryland
- Future Actions on HOV, Tolling, and P3 Procurement Process
- Schedule and Next Steps



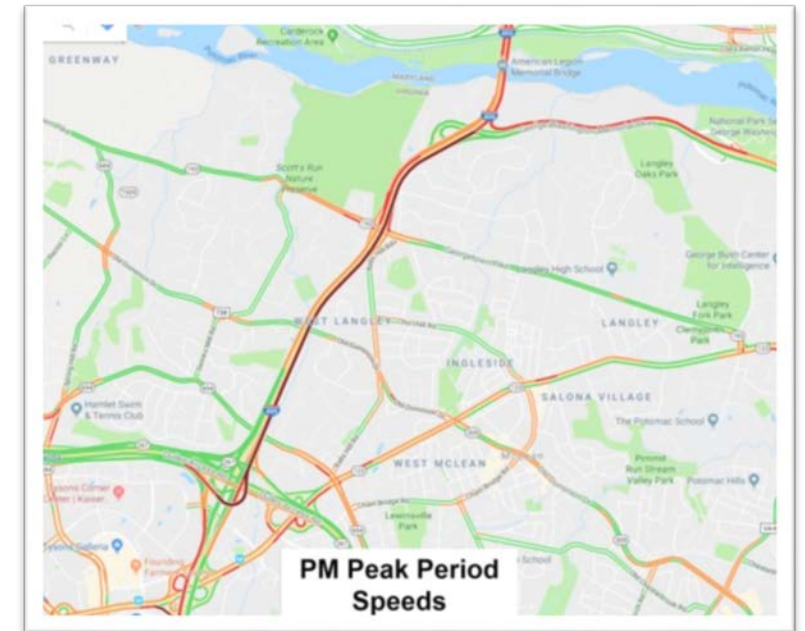
# Project Overview

## ■ Scope

- Extend the 495 Express Lanes by approximately three miles from the I-495 and Dulles Toll Road interchange to the George Washington Memorial Parkway in the vicinity of the American Legion Bridge
- Replace existing bridges
- Add bike and pedestrian trails
- Replace existing noise walls and construct new walls where needed
- Provide stormwater management facilities

## ■ Goals and Objectives

- Reduce congestion
- Provide additional travel choices
- Improve travel reliability
- Enhance safety



# Public Outreach

## Public Meetings and Public Hearings

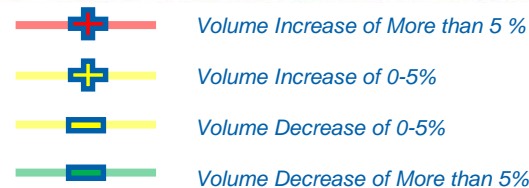
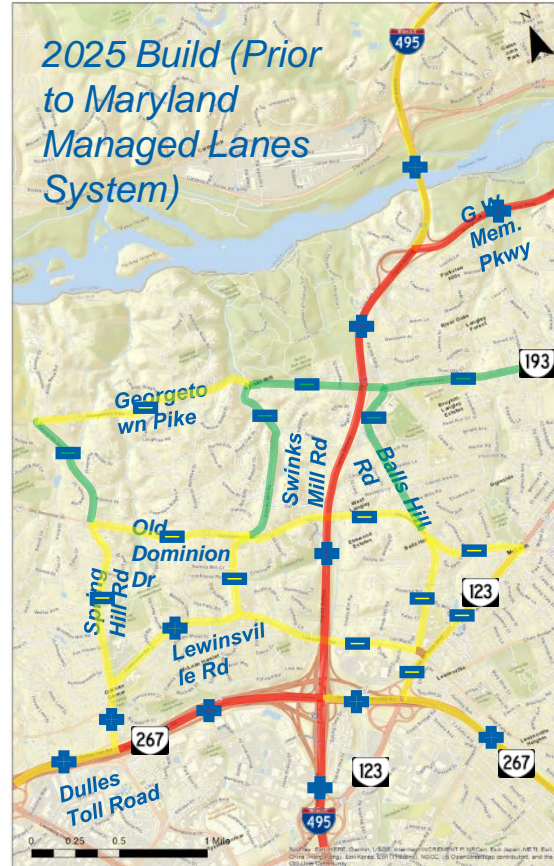
- Public Meeting # 1 (June 11, 2018)
- Public Meeting # 2 (May 20, 2019)
- Question and Answer Session #1 (September 28, 2020)
- Question and Answer Session #2 (September 30, 2020)
- Public Hearing # 1 Virtual (October 5, 2020)
- Public Hearing # 2 In-Person (October 8, 2020)
- Public Comment Period closed (December 4, 2020)
- Joint Public Meeting DRPT and VDOT– Transit Study, 495 NEXT (November 18, 2020)
- **Elected Officials (23 meetings)**
- **Stakeholders and Agencies (111 meetings)**
- **Property Owners One-on-One Meetings (22 meetings)**
- **Homeowners and Business Associations (22 meetings)**

# Traffic Benefits

## Move More People

- **2045:** Moves 7,600 more people per hour in both directions combined
- **2025 with Maryland Managed Lanes System:** Moves 5,400 more people per hour in both directions combined
- **2025 Prior to Maryland Managed Lanes System:** Moves 2,500 more people per hour in both directions combined

## Reduces Cut-Through Traffic on Local Roads



## Improves Travel Reliability

### 2025 Prior to Maryland Project

- A 5 to 24 minute decrease in travel time on the northbound I-495 express lanes
- A 4 to 6 minute increase in travel time on the northbound general purpose lanes

### 2025 With Maryland Project

- A 4 to 5 minute decrease in travel time on the northbound I-495 express lanes
- A 3 to 4 minute decrease in travel time on the northbound I-495 general purpose lanes

# Environmental Assessment Findings

Environmental Resource	Resource Summary
Property Impacts	89 properties with potential impacts No relocations
Community Facilities	5 community facilities: Partial property acquisition 9 existing trail/bicycle facilities: Temporary impacts 4 proposed trail/bicycle facilities by others: Temporary impacts
Environmental Justice (Minority/Low-income)	No disproportionately high and adverse effects
Historic Properties	Anticipated “No Adverse Effect” determination from the Virginia State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO)
Section 4(f) Protected Properties	Anticipated <i>de minimis</i> impact finding for Scott’s Run Nature Preserve and the George Washington Memorial Parkway
Section 6(f) Protected Properties	Anticipated impacts to Scott’s Run Nature Preserve
Noise – Based on Preliminary Noise Study	9 existing barriers physically affected will be replaced 3 of the 9 existing barriers would be lengthened 1 new barrier determined to be feasible and reasonable

# Environmental Assessment Findings

Environmental Resource	Resource Summary
Air Quality	No adverse impacts to air quality; no violation of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards
Wetlands and Streams	Streams: Approximately 13,000 linear feet located within the LOD (Anticipated 3,000 linear feet of impact) Wetlands: 20 acres within the LOD (Anticipated 4.5 acres of impact)
Floodplains	Approximately 60 acres of floodplains are within LOD No increase in flood levels or probability of flooding expected
Wooded Areas	Approximately 118 acres within the LOD
Wildlife and Habitat	Approximately 234 acres within the LOD (Anticipated 66 acres of impact) No new habitat fragmentation or elimination of existing wildlife passages is anticipated
Threatened and Endangered Species	Tree clearing could impact potential suitable habitat for three bat species Streams and floodplains that contain potential habitat for wood turtles would be impacted

*These impacts are based on the proposed Limits of Disturbance (LOD). During final design, efforts will be made to reduce the project footprint and minimize impacts.*

# Key Themes From Public Comments

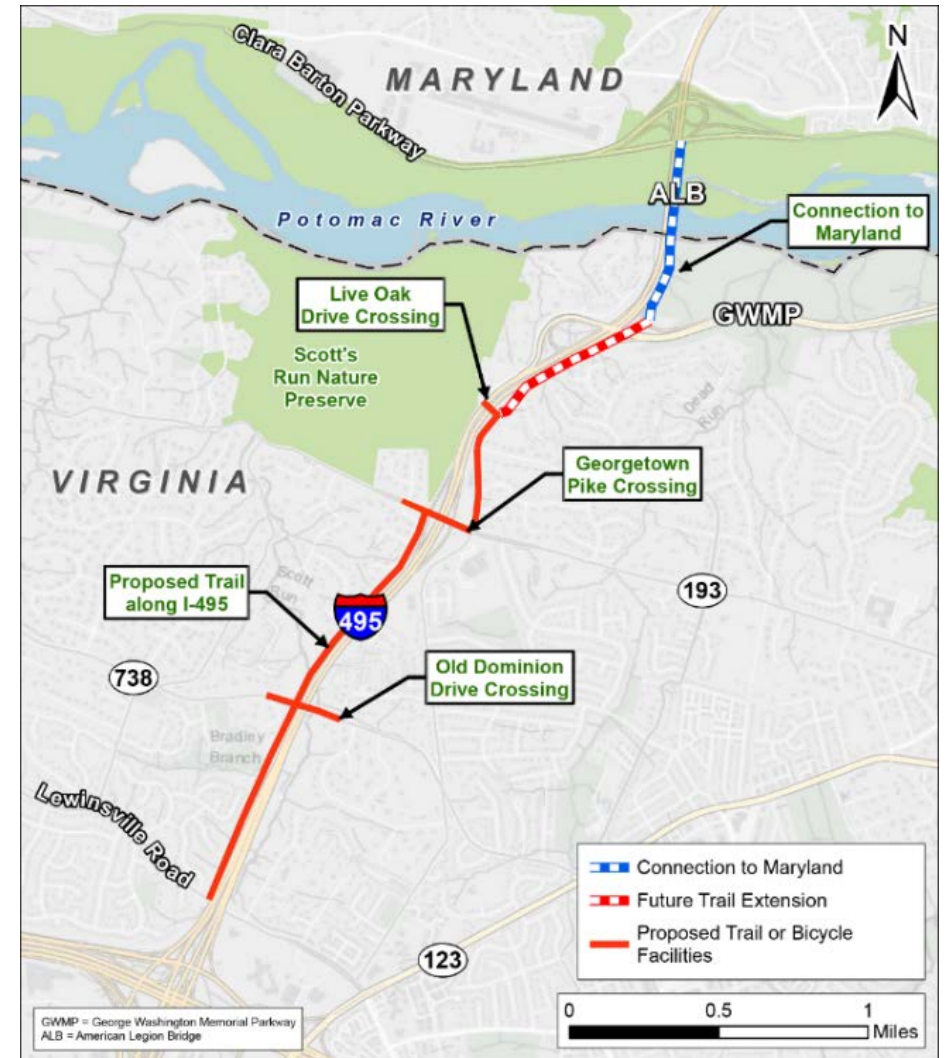
## 700+ comments and letters received during official comment period

- 495 NEXT needs to be coordinated with Maryland Managed Lanes Project and the project should not be built until Maryland upgrades the American Legion Bridge
- Why was EA done instead of EIS? Why was only one build alternative studied?
- Questions about traffic impact/benefits prior to Maryland's upgrades to American Legion Bridge
- The project should be delayed until long-term traffic impact of COVID-19 is known
- Questions about Transurban involvement in 495 NEXT
- Provide transit funding commitment on I-495



# Key Themes From Public Comments (cont.)

- Support for shared-use path, located on non-highway side of the noise wall
- Concerns about elevated ramps and phasing at Dulles Toll Road, George Washington Memorial Parkway interchanges
- Noise mitigation, new noise walls will be needed
- Concerns about stormwater and wetland impacts, including Scotts Run
- Concerns about tree clearing and replacement
- Concerns about construction-related noise, traffic, and access to residences
- Concerns about local intersection operations near I-495



# Concerns Addressed

- Outfall enhancements added to the project
- Funding commitment to partner on future stream restoration (\$1.38 M)
- Reduced project footprint to minimize tree loss (35 acres in Phase 1); committed to tree survey
- Provided renderings for elevated ramps as requested by communities
- Providing new and/or extended sound walls where needed
- Dedicated Transit Improvement Fund: \$5.2M for transit vehicles, and \$2.2M per year for transit operations
- Enhancements to the bike/ped accommodations at southern terminus of proposed shared-use path at Lewinsville Road



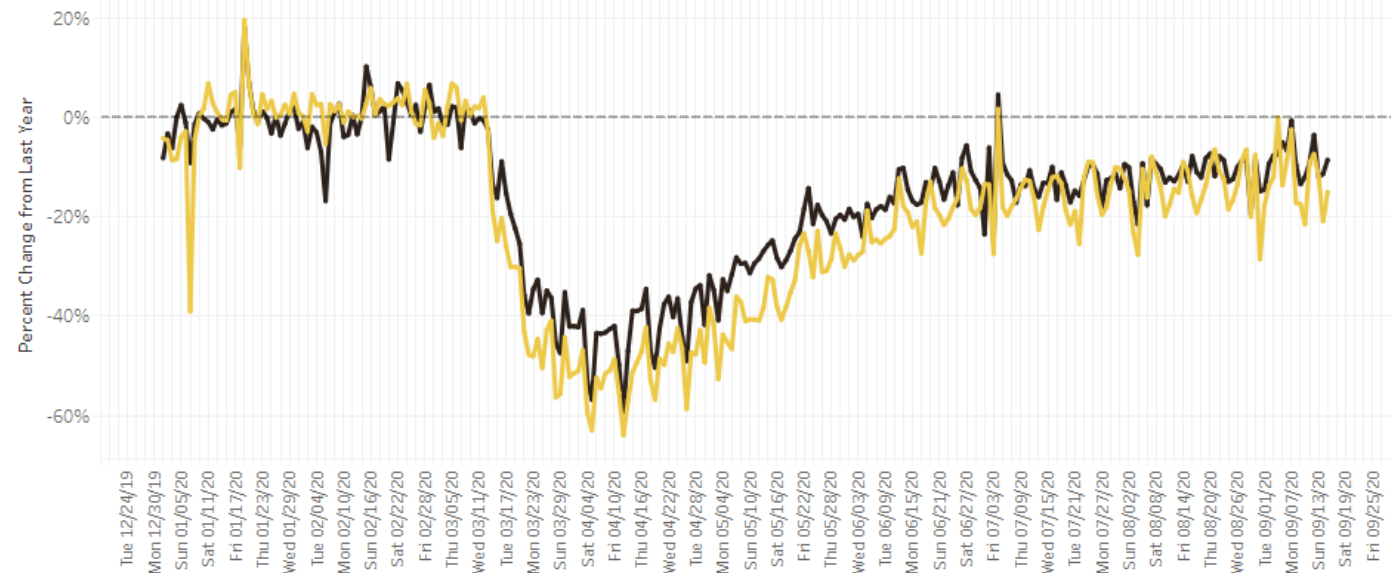
# Concerns Addressed: Impacts of COVID-19

- Current traffic at 80% to 90% of pre-COVID-19 levels
- VDOT conducting sensitivity analyses to assess the impacts of COVID-19 on future traffic in the corridor – Completion in April 2021

## VDOT Permanent Count Station Data – January – September 2020 – Northern Virginia & Statewide Urban Interstate Traffic – All Vehicles in PM Peak



Traffic Volume Change by District

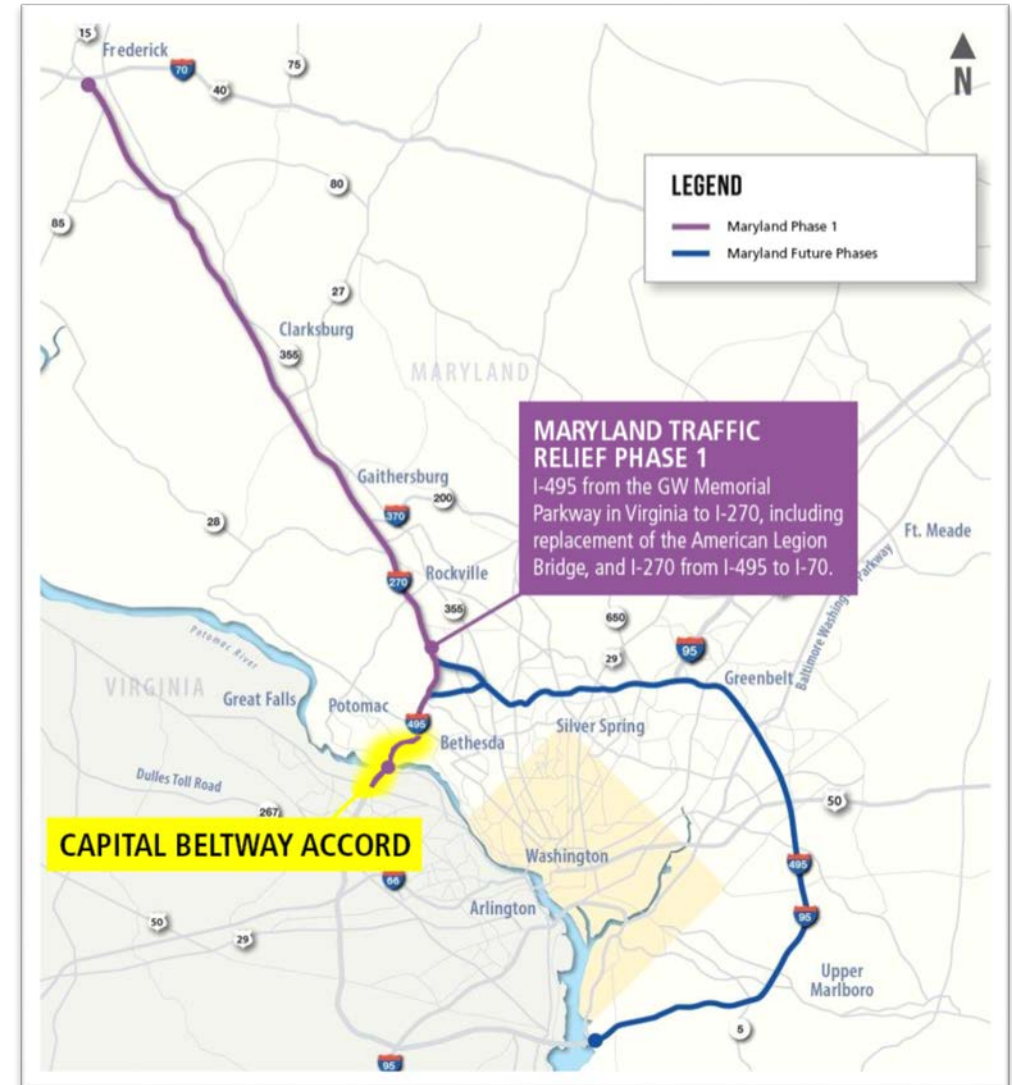


# I-495 Regional Transit Study

- High-level transit needs study
- Joint study between Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation and Maryland Transit Administration
- Study Purpose: identify potential current and future multimodal solutions to reduce congestion, improve trip reliability and regional connections
- Study includes assessing the overall demand for transit and developing recommendations
- Rail along this corridor is not included in the regional long range plan or local comprehensive plans
- The study is independent of ongoing environmental studies in both states
- Presented at CTB Workshops on December 9<sup>th</sup>, and January 19<sup>th</sup>
- Anticipate final report in Spring 2021

# Regional Coordination with Maryland

- 495 NEXT is an independent, stand-alone project
- 495 NEXT is being coordinated with Maryland to:
  - Ensure that both projects are compatible
  - Support the delivery of Maryland's project
- Capital Beltway Accord
  - Agreement between Virginia and Maryland to fund a new American Legion Bridge and infrastructure for connections between George Washington Memorial Parkway and River Road



# Designation as HOT Lanes

- Section 33.2-502 of the *Code of Virginia* requires the CTB to designate HOT lanes and to specify the high-occupancy requirement for use of the HOT lanes as HOV lanes by certain users
- The draft resolution (May 2021) will:
  - Designate the I-495 Northern Extension as HOT lanes
  - Establish the high occupancy requirement as HOV-3 matching the existing I-495 Express Lanes facility
  - Authorize the Commissioner of Highways to establish the conditions for use of the I-495 Northern Extension and to negotiate with Capital Beltway Express LLC to finalize amendments for the I-495 HOT Lanes agreement

# Tolling Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

- In December 2007, VDOT entered into a Tolling Agreement with FHWA for the I-495 Express Lanes in accordance with federal requirements
- With the addition of the I-495 Northern Extension HOT Lanes, FHWA and VDOT plan to enter into a tolling MOU for the congestion pricing strategy that replaces the 2007 agreement
- The draft resolution (May 2021) will:
  - Confirm that the HOT Lanes will meet the federal toll eligibility requirements
  - Commit that VDOT will assure compliance with federal requirements
  - Replace the existing Tolling Agreement with updated MOU
  - Authorize the Commissioner of Highways to execute the updated MOU between the Department and FHWA

# Key Project Development / P3 Milestones and Next Steps

Key Milestones	Begin Dates
Final Transit/TDM Study	Spring 2021
Final NEPA Decision	May 2021
CTB Actions to Designate HOT Lanes, HOV Requirement and Authorize Tolling MOU	May 2021
Commercial Close / Contract Amendment	August 2021
Financial Close	December 2021
Service Commencement	Mid-to-late 2025



