I-495 EXPRESS LANES
NORTHERN EXTENSION STUDY

Monday, May 20, 2019
Cooper Middle School
977 Balls Hill Road
McLean, Virginia 22101
6:30 p.m.
PRESENT

ABI LERNER, PE
Associate Manager of Special Project Development
Virginia Department of Transportation

KEN CONNORS
Project Manager
Virginia Department of Transportation

SUSAN SHAW, PE
Director of Megaprojects
Virginia Department of Transportation

AMANDA BAXTER
Kimley-Horn
MR. CONNORS: So, ways to submit your
questions and comments for tonight, of course you can
submit a comment in person tonight, we have a comment form
either by in person, you can mail it in or you can email
it to us or go through the website and submit it that way.

All comments need to be received by June 10th
to be included in the official summary that will summarize
tonight’s meeting and comments.

So, with that at this time, I think the moment
everyone’s been waiting for, I would like to introduce Ms.
Susan Shaw. Ms. Shaw is the VDOT Northern Virginia
Megaprojects Director and she is here, along with the rest
of the VDOT team, to answer any questions you may have.

So, I believe we are lining up here by the
microphone. (Indicating)

MS. SHAW: Yeah, and what you weren’t waiting
for is to hear me but to be able to ask your questions. I
did want to just lay some ground rules a little bit
tonight.

I just ask you to be cognizant of your
neighbors and friends that are here. This is an
opportunity for you to ask questions, it’s not really set up as a comment forum but more for you to ask questions. We’ve got a team of people up here that may come up and help answer some of those questions.

We don’t have a clock sitting here timing people, so we’re going to trust that you’ll keep your questions succinct and we’re also going to try to keep our answers fairly short just so that we can have time to do this.

And I think what we’ll plan to do is go until about 8:15 or so because I do want to have people have the opportunity to go back and talk to our team that are back at the boards.

Before we start I just wanted to mention a couple of other elected officials that are here. I know Supervisor Foust is here somewhere in the back, I see waving his hand. And we also have representatives for Senator Boysko that’s here. Do I see a hand up? That’s kind of hard to judge. And a representative for Delegate Murphy is also here.

So, thank you all for being there and with that we will start. And I am going to ask that you just keep to one question and then you can go to the back of
the line. As we have time, we’ll allow second questions.

MS. NAWAZ: Hi, my name is Kathleen Nawaz. I’ve lived in this neighborhood since 1989. And, you know, obviously as many of us here are, I’m very concerned about this project and my one question, since I’m limited to one and not allowed to make a comment, is to what extent will you take into account the questions, the comments and perhaps the dissatisfaction of people who live in this area in making the decision to go or no-go for this plan?

You know, you I’m sure recall a few months ago when there was the discussion and debate about potentially closing the Georgetown Pike access ramp onto 495 and through the public comment process the decision was reached to not go that route, and so my question for you is, does the same hold here?

It seems like this one is further along in terms of the planning and the design, the analysis. So to what extent do we actually have a say in the decisions?

MS. SHAW: So, first I would say very --

(Audience applause)

So two very different types of projects. One was really a transportation solution for a neighborhood
problem where there was a neighborhood cut-through traffic, this project is a regional transportation project. And so we will consider local input, we will consider comments and concerns from direct impact communities but we will also consider what the transportation improvements are for the region.

So that’s one of the things that was very different about the two approaches.

If we only ever allowed direct impact communities to decide whether we ever provided a regional transportation project I can tell you we would probably not provide any. So that’s just the reality of it.

Now, we are going to look at the traffic benefits. If they’re not there, you know, we don’t have a project. We need to meet our purpose and need. We need to look at what the project benefits are. Those three things, goals and objections that Abi talked about, we’re going to look at all of that data.

We’re also going to weigh the impacts to the natural and other environmental, you know, resources in the project area that are impacted by the project and we weigh all of that together to make a decision.

MS. NAWAZ: That is helpful to know. I would
also say that I’m really glad to know that you’re actually going to do the analysis because of course in transportation there have been many studies that look at you adding each mile of road, the percent increase in miles of road ends up increasing VMT, vehicle miles traveled, by the exact equivalent amount.

So, the fact that you’re going to do analysis I’m very supportive of and I appreciate your time. Thank you.

MS. GEORGELAS: Hi, Susan, thank you. I missed your memo about one question. I do have a comment and then I have my one question.

For far too long our community area has been experiencing many transportation decision surprises by officials in VDOT.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Ask your question.

MS. GEORGELAS: I’m sorry. I’m sorry, go ahead.

MS. SHAW: Thank you.

MS. MERLENE: Hi there. My name is Nicole Merlene. I’m a candidate for state senate in this district running against Barbara Favola, the current incumbent who has moved for legislation on this.
So, my question since we’re limited to one, it seems that one of your intentions has been to increase capacity and your projections look like it will be between 18 to 26 percent increase capacity and you don’t have assurances from Maryland for an expansion of their bridge and we don’t seem to be looking to expand GW, so, do you expect there to be a bottleneck right at that intersection?

(Audience applause)

MS. SHAW: So, we don’t have that traffic analysis just yet. We are audience to have that later in the study.

(General verbal comments from the audience)

But I would say I would expect there to be a bottleneck without increase capacity on the bridge.

(Yelling and audience applause)

Will there be, I think the question is will there be other improvements that we’ll see as part of this project if Virginia goes forward with their project in anticipation of Maryland if there’s a period of time where Maryland isn’t in but we are, is there a benefit and we will be looking at analyses for that as well.

MS. GEORGE LAS: Susan, I’m going to try one
more time, guys, and if this doesn’t work I’ll just ask my question.

For far too long our community area has been experiencing many transportation decision surprises by officials in VDOT without proper public process, public transparency and public input. A few are making major decisions for all of us. It is time, it is time for a serious review of some VDOT projects, an independent review of VDOT practices, management and decision making.

Over 20 years ago, VDOT decided to add five lanes to our Beltway area without proper public process, notice or transparency. I had to stand in the dark alone in front of a VDOT bulldozer that was ripping out our dense area of trees between Live Oak Drive and 495 in front of Langley Club in order to get VDOT to agree to a public meeting about this project.

The five lanes were added, making our area the widest, most congested and polluted of the Beltway. Residents were promised that no more construction, new lanes would be added here, 495 expansion was to continue to Tysons, however it so unwisely morphed into HOT lanes.

A few years ago VDOT wanted to expand HOT lanes up to the American Bridge area. [sic] Citizens from...
McLean and Great Falls wisely and overwhelmingly fought against the illegal - the illogical I’m sorry - illogical proposal which would have caused more unwanted congestion and pollution.

Next came the shoulder lane. The shoulder lane extension surprise on 495 north before the American Legion Bridge and GW Parkway. Governor McDonnell quietly signed and funded the project just before leaving office. Residents knew nothing. No public notice, no promised notice, no meeting, no promised environmental testing.

MS. SHAW: Okay, April --

MS. GEORGELAS: I just want to --

MS. SHAW: I don’t want to cut you short but I want to respect the people that are here to ask questions.

We will take that comment, but can you go ahead and ask your question --

MS. GEORGELAS: This is -- okay, Susan --

MS. SHAW: -- and then if we have time, if we have time I would like to let you continue your comment, but let’s --

MS. GEORGELAS: Well, this is important because VDOT changed the name of that shoulder lane project from an increased capacity project to an
operational lane in order to avoid environmental testing.

Pre-construction traffic studies showed an increase in congestion, travel time and accidents. That’s what we’re living with now, guys. VDOT created this.

This study has been removed from the website. Surprise. VDOT ignored -- VDOT ignored the study, took $20 million of taxpayer money and built anyway. VDOT built a new lane and created a mega merge mess before the American Legion Bridge, added and created nasty neighborhood cut-through traffic.

The merge mess now affects seven lanes across the bridge, including the access ramp to 495 from 193, an illegal right shoulder lane. We are all now jammed with idling, polluting cars, forcing cars back up to the Balls Hill Road and 193 intersection.

Then this year a big surprise for taxpaying residents, Governor Northam signs a contract with Transurban. No public transparency or public input. VDOT now wants to build four new HOT lanes and solve and improve the traffic congestion mess that VDOT created.

VDOT apparently took 20 million of taxpayer money for a place-saving lane for the long wanted Transurban HOT lane project. Well, surprise again.
At the last ramp closure meeting, residents overwhelmingly, regardless of closure position, demanded officials to stop the shoulder HOT lane extension.

VDOT officials, your immediate plan must be to stop the shoulder lane, to ease the merge mess before the bridge and place a police car in the right illegal lane of jammed cars.

MS. SHAW: April, I am going to really just appeal to your good heart to stop and let -- I know you have important comments to make, but there’s a bunch of people in the line behind you and I really want to give them a chance to ask their questions.

MS. GEORGE: I want to also add, the other surprise was Bill 662 for this study. Here’s my question.

(General complaints from the audience)

MS. SHAW: Okay, thank you.

(Audience applause)

MS. GEORGE: And we’ve been asking for this study for several years and we haven’t gotten it, do HOT lanes reduce congestion on the Beltway and in neighborhood traffic? Where is our study?

MS. SHAW: So, yes, we believe that they do
and we will have traffic studies that look just at that, especially for this extension. You saw the blue lines of the surrounding roadway network that we’re going to be looking at.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: That’s not the question.

MS. SHAW: We have seen reduced congestion on 95 Express Lanes as well as the Beltway, both general purpose lanes have improved, as well we’re providing people with that option to car pool or use transit so that they can have a consistent and reliable trip.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: When you say, “We have seen from this,” are you talking about VDOT and Transurban as in the people who are like also building the lanes or are you talking about studies that have been done from unbiased outside sources?

(Audience applause)

MS. SHAW: So, it would be from VDOT, yes.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Yeah. Yeah.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: And who benefits from it?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: VDOT and Transurban.

MS. SHAW: Well, VDOT is here to help to try to move more people. That’s our goal.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Susan --
AUDIENCE MEMBER: And employ more people.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Yeah. The general lanes, Susan, will remain the same and the hot lanes don’t move people, they’re empty.

MS. SHAW: Okay. Thank you.

MS. WOMACK: Hi, my name is Carrie Womack and I have lived here for 19 years and when you mentioned earlier that the last meeting regarding all of this was last June, I’d like to know how many people were in attendance. We all signed in this evening but I can guarantee you there couldn’t have been a lot of people because nobody knew that this started a year ago in June.

So, how many people?

MS. SHAW: I think we do have those numbers. We have a meeting summary. And if it’s not on our website we’ll make sure that it gets there.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Seventy-six.

MS. WOMACK: Thank you.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I want to know why you’re doing a project with the assumption that Maryland is going to be doing it on the other side.

(Audience applause)

Why don’t we have their commitment to widen?
We’re letting Maryland people come over here, we’re widening it and they should have to have a commitment too. Why is Transurban not saying okay, we’re going to widen it over there as well?

MS. SHAW: Okay.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: We can’t base things on assumptions. And also, why is there no one up here explaining the maps and how much of the Greenway is going to be taken away, showing people?

People are visual. People need things explained. We don’t want to just hear somebody come up here and tell us all their facts, we want to see what is going to be taken exactly and how it’s going to be done and we deserve that and how it’s going to affect that neighborhood.

I had a listing on Live Oak, at the very end, we couldn’t sell it because the Beltway was in their back yard. You couldn’t sit out there for five minutes, you couldn’t even hear yourself think. And we wrote letters to the county talking about the decibels, they were saying the decibels are fine the way they are. They’re absurd. The decibels were -- you couldn’t even hear yourself think.
(Audience applause)

MS. SHAW: So let me answer what I think what your questions were.

So, one is that both Virginia and Maryland have their projects in what we call the approved constrained long-range plan. And so from an environmental, regulatory standpoint we’re required, when we do our traffic study, to include their project because the region has voted to include their project.

Now, we will be doing a sensitivity analysis for the 2025 year, which is an interim year, that will look at our project in place and Maryland not in place. So, we do understand that people want to kind of understand what that looks like, but from a regulatory standpoint we’re following that regulation.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I still don’t understand why are you doing a project on this side if it’s just going to cause a bottleneck on that side?

The whole purpose of it is to get rid of the bottleneck and you’re just going to be causing one.

MS. SHAW: I mean the goal --

AUDIENCE MEMBER: So it’s illogical, it’s stupid.
(Audience applause)

MS. SHAW: So I will say we’re coordinating closely with --

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Hello, is anybody up there? VDOT? VDOT?

(Laughter)

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I mean, is anyone there or thinking?

MS. SHAW: So we do have, our partners from Maryland have a couple of boards at the back. We have been meeting with them monthly and on a routine basis.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Well, you need to get somebody with a brain in there. Thank you very much.

(Laughter)

MS. SHAW: All right.

MS. BUTLER: Hi. My name is Debra Butler and I am also a McLean citizen, and I’d like to talk to you about the environmental impact. Oops, excuse me, the environmental assessment.

I’d like to talk to you about bridges, cement, pollution, parks, national land, county land, Scott’s Run. If you go to the Fairfax County Scott’s Run Nature Preserve page it talks about 140-year old million
geological, rare birds, rare plants and by the way, okay, you’re only going to take a little small portion of that. Small. The noise, the environmental pollution spreads.

And I want to ask, why are we having an assessment and not a full impact study? I would also like to ask in relation to that, where is the Federal Highway, the National Parks on this position?

Barbara Favola, when she was then county supervisor of Arlington, successfully sued VDOT and the Federal Highway to stop this project until they got it right in Arlington with no impact to their citizens.

Mr. Foust, Supervisor Foust, I challenge you. Step up to the citizens who have elected you.

(Audience applause)

Barbara Favola, we need you again.

MS. SHAW: Let me ask Amanda --

MS. BUTLER: Kathleen Murphy is at a multimillion dollar mansion right now generating money for her campaign. Where are the people who are projecting our environment, our health?

Our children go to the NIH. You can see what being near a highway does to the impact on children’s brains. Who is protecting our citizens? Where’s the
Federal Highway? Where is NEPA? Where is the Parks?

MS. SHAW: Okay. I’m going to ask Amanda Baxter who’s leading our environmental assessment study to kind of talk about the difference between an EIS and an EA and FHWA’s role.

MS. BUTLER: And whom do you work for?

MS. BAXTER: Hi, my name is Amanda Baxter. I work for Kimley-Horn, we’re a consultant to VDOT and we are preparing the NEPA document.

MS. BUTLER: Ah, I’m sorry, I want the Federal Highway, I want the National Parks, I want the NEPA people who are going to work for us as citizens not for the construction people.

MS. BAXTER: So, we’re working for VDOT and we’re preparing the assessment, the NEPA assessment, for VDOT and for Federal Highway. So we are in communications and meetings and coordination with Federal Highway on this project.

Let me just describe, because you mentioned NEPA which is a really important process. It’s based on a federal action taking place in the project. It’s the National Environmental Policy Act. There are different levels of documentation that are done for NEPA.
This particular project, we’re doing an environmental assessment.

MS. BUTLER: Why?

MS. BAXTER: For this project?

MS. BUTLER: Yes.

MS. BAXTER: Because we have the ability to look at a no-build condition and a build condition and to test whether there’s a significant impact to the environment.

When you do an environmental impact statement, you have predetermined that there is a significant impact. When you do an environmental assessment, you’re assessing on whether or not there’s actually a significant impact or a no significant impact, and that’s what the analysis will determine and we’ll present to you in the fall.

MS. BUTLER: And taking away park land isn’t a significant impact?

MS. BAXTER: So, it is a conglomeration of the impacts as an entirety. So we will look along the corridor. This is a developed corridor.

And a couple of the things that you addressed are things that we’ll be addressing in our assessment and I’ll start, for one for example, for storm water
management. You address like pavement, runoff, Scott’s Run. That will be assessed in the manner of we would need to be treating the impervious pavement that we introduce to the project.

This actually is a corridor that does not have storm water management in effect and we’re introducing that as an added benefit to this corridor to provide that runoff and water quality that this corridor needs.

So when you look at Scott’s Run Nature Preserve, we have been in communications with Fairfax County Park Authority who manages that land. They are very encouraged by the fact that we’re introducing stormwater management to this project because Scott’s Run has such a high flow, because the water is not treated or stored properly and, you know, it really rips very quickly. There’s a high flow that goes through their park.

So we will take that all into assessment when we put in our project and that’s part of our assessment that we’ll present in our NEPA document.

MS. BUTLER: And are you independently -- are you independently emboldened to make this decision without input from our VDOT and Transurban team?
MS. BAXTER: Well, let me just back up really quickly of how we start the process.

MS. BUTLER: Yes.

MS. BAXTER: We do start the process using scoping letters that we send out to regulatory agencies, local officials, Fish and Wildlife Service for example.

We also take the project through what we call a partnering project with the regulators. We’ve just been through three of those meetings. That’s the Environmental Protection Agency, Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Virginia Department Environmental Quality. We’ve had four of those meeting presenting data and information as we’ve been out in the field collecting it.

So, we have been at this for a while and we are combining that. We’ll have a national resource technical report that will introduce all of these findings in and --

MS. BUTLER: Will that be to the public?

MS. BAXTER: It will be.

MS. BUTLER: Okay.

MS. BAXTER: So all the technical reports that you’ve described will be associated with -- the
environmental assessment piece in more of a summary, a
combination of all those technical reports into one report
that we would then present to the Federal Highway
Administration and they will have to make the decision.

We’re doing it, you know, as a representation
of VDOT’s process. For example, we’re using VDOT’s noise
policy to assess noise, air quality for example.

MS. BUTLER: VDOT’s policies.

MS. BAXTER: VDOT’s noise -- every state DOT
across the nation has their own noise policy. We are
following VDOT’s noise policy.

MS. BUTLER: Okay. They had said they were
following the Federal Highway, so we’ll get
(Unintelligible) Thank you very much.

MS. BAXTER: It is a trickle down. I mean, the FHWA has to adopt VDOT’s policy, so they still are
involved in that.

MS. BUTLER: Okay. Thank you very much.

MS. BAXTER: Sure.

MS. BUTLER: Hi. My name is Brenna Butler.
I’ve lived here for about 12 years now. I’m actually from
Brooklyn, New York and my family and I moved down here --
my family moved down here so that I would have a place to
ride a bike and walk a dog.

I live on Green Oak Drive and due to your proposed planning in the back, um I see that you guys are going to be taking land from our neighborhoods, our neighborhood specifically, and that um the highway as mentioned before would have a six-foot wide sidewalk, is that right?

MS. SHAW: It depends on where you are.

Basically along the Beltway it’s a ten-foot wide paved shared use path.

MS. BUTLER: So I’m just wondering who’s looking out for the future of the community? Like kids my age who -- I wanted to move back -- I love McLean, McLean quickly became my home and who is looking out for us?

Are my kids going to have to walk home from Cooper Middle School on a ten-foot wide sidewalk, high walk, sidewalk? (Laughter) I mean like are they going to have to like walk on the sidewalk next to the highway home from school?

And what’s happening to our parks and um like who’s going to protect the parks? A reason I fell in love with McLean is that there’s so much greenery and scenery and it’s beautiful here.
And like people that are from this community, if it becomes a highway pit stop are not going to want to come back and bring their children here.

And like if there is no more greenery and scenery, the population will go down and then the highways will no longer be needed and you’re going to have these wide highways and no one to drive on them.

(Laughter and applause)

MS. SHAW: Thank you. So, it is a balance. You know, providing pedestrian facilities, that takes green space, but then it’s kind of a green way to, you know, move through the region. So, it’s a balance and so we’re going to try to strike that balance.

We do have certain requirements around the park property. Any park property that we take from the preserve we have to actually buy replacement land that’s adjacent to the park that they can then use so they have no loss to the park.

And we’ll also be looking for ways to do revegetation, but I want to be honest, I mean, we are talking about adding lanes, it does mean there will be tree loss in the corridor.

MS. BUTLER: Yeah. I mean, it is -- I mean
you say there’s a balance but it doesn’t quite sound like a balance when environmental impact studies haven’t been done, environmental assessments haven’t been done, you haven’t gotten confident information from the other side, if they’re meeting us. It sounds like we’re going into a project that really has no plan.

And it really seems that a lot of these officials here aren’t looking out for the community and kids my age, they’re just looking out for their companies and this project quite frankly just goes like right into their pockets and it’s not fair to the community and it’s just not right.

(Audience applause)

MS. SHAW: Thank you.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: My name is Jose and I have one comment and one question. Many people ask this question, --

AUDIENCE MEMBER: We can’t hear you.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I am not a traffic expert but it doesn’t make sense that if Maryland is not going to expand the bridge you guys got to start going with your project. I mean, that’s the comment.

(Audience applause.)
The question is, I live in Largo, but I know many people from here live in Largo, they already have a lot of noise. So I was wondering, what is your measure for measuring noise because we already think we have a lot of noise and you have to expand the wall.

So I was wondering, how do you guys measure the noise?

MS. SHAW: So, we do have our noise experts back in the back, Jim, L.J. I see, yes. And so I’m going to ask you to speak with them. I can give you an overview.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Okay.

MS. SHAW: We do take noise measurements along the corridor to get an idea of what the existing traffic noise is and then we use our traffic models and we project traffic for the build year, which is 2045, and look at what the noise would be at the worst noisiest hour, which sometimes is not the peak hour because if traffic is at a dead stop it might not be making as much noise as if it’s traveling faster.

But, the people who can really answer that question -- but we do take into account terrain, we look at where the tires are hitting that pavement, where the
receptors are in terms of outdoor use is what we’re looking to protect.

So, Jim, I’m going to ask if you can get with gentleman maybe and go into more detail about the noise.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Okay.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Can you answer the question about why you’re doing these lanes and nothing on the bridge?

MS. SHAW: Oh, the other thing is that, you know, and I think this has been asked a couple of times, we haven’t finished our study. So we’re in the middle of a study and we wanted to let you see everything that we have. What we’ve got tonight is where we are in the study.

We don’t have all the answers, but one of the things that we are going to look at is that interim traffic year to see what it looks like in 2025 without Maryland and with our project. That will be one of the things that goes into this broad decision point about whether we move forward with our project without Maryland or not.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Thank you.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: You still haven’t answered
my question.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Yeah, you still haven’t answered the question.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Why are we doing this and expanding all these lanes and the bridge is not being rebuilt or widened? That’s the back up. That’s the jam up, is on the bridge.

MS. SHAW: Right. And we agree with that but we also believe --

(Audience applause)

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Maryland and Virginia have not been able to get together to agree to the funding for that bridge. So now you’re going to a private company, that a private company funds this expansion lanes and it’s going to be much worse. (Unintelligible)

MS. SHAW: Right. We believe that our traffic studies that we come back to you with in the fall will demonstrate that there’s a benefit to the project, but we don’t have those numbers today. It’s what we’ve -- we’ve looked at it, we’ve got our traffic people here tonight. They are also willing to talk with you back at the boards.

I understand your concern and what you’re saying and I think, you know, if our traffic studies show
there is absolutely no benefit we won’t move forward. We won’t. But we believe that there will be.

(Audience applause)

(Audience member asking question from the back, unintelligible - not using a microphone)

MR. DANE: Hi. My name is John Dane. I’ve lived in the area for over 30 years, also originally from Brooklyn.

(Audience applause)

Sixth Street as a matter of fact.

(Laughter)

My question is this, the map you had with the study overview has all the blue lines of kind of the study area, they go along the Beltway from the Toll Road up to the bridge, but then they also extend way down along the Toll Road to Spring Hill and down the other way to Dolly Madison and south on the Beltway all the way to 123, and my question is why? What’s going on there?

MS. SHAW: So, we look at how the project impacts traffic in and around the Beltway, not just at the Beltway. We’re not necessarily proposing any improvements there, but we understand it’s a regional network and we want to see how what we do on one area might impact flow.
and traffic on another.

MR. DANE: You said not necessarily, is it possible that we’ll see additional construction on those areas in the blue dots?

MS. SHAW: It’s possible. That’s one of the things that we work with FHWA on when we look at what the results are with the build versus the no-build. We’ll look at those areas to see if there’s any kind of hot spots that we need to address as well as what we’re proposing on the Beltway.

MR. DANE: When would that be folded into the study if you did that?

MS. SHAW: That would be over the summer as traffic results become available to us.

MR. DANE: Okay. Thank you.

MS. SHAW: So we also work closely with Fairfax County Department of Transportation. So they also are kind of looking out for the County’s interest and work with them. I know they’ve got a couple of representatives here tonight, Martha Coello and Eugene Yuqing are at the back there, and Chris representing our Trails Community.

So, they’re also here kind of observing and trying to get a feel for any comments or questions that
people have.

   MS. HUGH: Hi, my name is Betty Hugh [ph] and I think you may have partially answered my question in this process, but the question is, when can you provide the 2025 sensitivity analysis that shows the impacts if the Maryland project does not go forward, because it would be probably of great interest to the community not to have to wait for an analysis to be provided until the fall of this year for the report when you provide the draft environmental assessment?

   MS. SHAW: I mean, it’s currently scheduled for the fall. We’ll get back with our team to see if we can move that up at all. I do understand the sensitivity of it, but there’s a lot of work that’s got to go between now and then. So, the fall is when it’s currently planned.

   AUDIENCE MEMBER: Thank you. I’m (inaudible). I’ve also lived in this area for 35 years. My question is about the selection of Transurban for the building of the project. It looks like there’s been an agreement that’s been signed with them.

   And my question really is what other options has the State, has VDOT considered for funding and
financing that project? How was the selection of
Transurban taken place and under what terms and
conditions?

What is the (Unintelligible) rate at the time
of (Unintelligible) of Transurban from this project? Has
that analysis been done and how does that compare to other
alternative sources of funding, like raising taxes or
issuing specific bonds on this area?

And to what extent are the economic benefits
that Transurban will receive will the offset by some
payment to the State for acquiring and using public land
for tracking purposes?

And finally, what are the terms of the
agreement with Transurban, for how many years does it run
and what happens afterwards?

(Audience applause)

MS. SHAW: I’m not sure how many questions
that was but it was definitely more than one. But let me
just say the agreement that is with Transurban has
(Unintelligible) end date which is 2087, and that is from
the original deal that was signed. So this would get
rolled up into that, it would not extend that date any.

This is a developmental framework agreement,
it is not subject to public disclosure. That is because if we abort, say partly through with Transurban, which VDOT always has that option, if they don’t meet our -- if we can’t successfully negotiate what the terms and conditions might be for the binding proposal or if they are unable to submit a binding proposal, we could have options to go out and procure it in a different manner, and they may compete on that. So there is this protection of their competition stance as we move forward.

But VDOT does have the ability to not accept the binding proposal. So, we’ve set the terms and conditions. We work on that. We’re kind of working on that process now, the framework just kind of sets the broad guidance about how we’re going to move forward with developing a binding proposal.

So we’re not -- it’s not a done deal. It’s a partly done deal, and it kind of represents the fact that there’s a lot of efficiencies in having the current operator just extend their existing system without adding all that new infrastructure. They already have an operations center where they monitor traffic. They’ve already got tolling people in place doing all the necessary things. They’ve got maintenance people out
there maintaining the Express Lanes.

So, there is quite a bit of efficiencies in terms of them providing the extension and it is allowed in the confidence of agreement that we’ve already signed.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Unintelligible - not using microphone)

MS. SHAW: Yeah, so we have a robust analysis that we’ll be doing where we compare it to a publically financed process as well. We did something similar on 66 outside the Beltway where we compared with some other options. But I think, you know, the stipulation is that there be no public, or no Commonwealth contribution for the project.

Our rough estimate at this point in terms of what we’re talking about in an initial phase, and this does not including the American Legion Bridge or anything else, it’s just looking at adding the lanes as we are showing them and the connections at the interchange, is somewhere around the $500 million range is what we believe the cost of the project is.

If you looked at Smart Scale and what the region got this year for Smart Scale, I’m looking to anybody over there, but it was not 500 million. The
region did not get 500 million statewide, it’s much less than that. So it’s a pretty heavy lift to completely publically finance and pay for a project of this size.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Unintelligible - not using microphone)

MS. SHAW: So, yes, there is a lot of that. A lot of that is proprietary.

I will say in all of these deals there are stipulations where if they exceed certain levels then there is a revenue sharing that goes back to the public.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Can you state (Unintelligible - not using microphone)

MS. SHAW: I don’t have the numbers with me so --

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Unintelligible - not using microphone)

MS. SHAW: -- so I --

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Unintelligible - not using microphone)

MS. O’TOOLE: My name is Bridget O’Toole and I’ve lived in McLean for 15 years, and my question is around the HOV lane.

So, I understand why the toll lanes need to be
separated because you need to charge a toll, but if there’s no charge for the HOV lane, why are they being separated?

The HOT lanes are not used partially because they’re expensive, but partially because they are difficult to get on and off of. They’re not at the normal interchanges. And so every other highway just has an HOV lane that you can get on and off of whenever you want, why do these have to be separated if they’re not getting charged for?

(Audience applause)

MS. SHAW: So, they are shared, I will say with the toll paying people, and if you drive 66 today and you see what an HOV lane looks like that anybody can get in and out of, it doesn’t work very well.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Well, you got --

MS. SHAW: I’m just telling you.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: You’ve got 495 and no one’s in the HOT lane, so I don’t understand how it’s going to ease congestion.

MS. SHAW: Yeah.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I mean, you guys, you guys did a model before you built the HOT lanes that exist
today, does the traffic not match your model?

(Audience laughter and applause)

MS. SHAW: So, I’ll take that question back and I know we --

(Audience laughter and applause)

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Of course it doesn’t match the model, come on.

MS. SHAW: I would say for 495, in the opening year the traffic did not match up with the projections, but since that time they’ve kind of reset and I believe they are not exceeding those projections. But I will need to go back to get the actual numbers. We’ll take that question back.

MR. PAN: Good evening, my name is Gary Pan. I have lived in Great Falls for 20 years, right off of Georgetown Pike, actually also running for state delegate for Great Falls, McLean and other areas. I’m here tonight and that’s--

(Audience applause)

More importantly, we have a lot of traffic construction going on. Route 7 widening is happening as well.

You know, after we had the tolls go in, we had
a dramatic increase to the traffic on Georgetown Pike. Huge, in both ways, all day long, right. Now we have Route 7 come on board and it’s going to have a huge impact on this area.

So I asked VDOT at a recent presentation over at Forestville Elementary School about the analysis that you guys have done. And I asked them, have you done a holistic, you know, review of this and they said, “Yes, we did a long time ago when we did the scope of work for the project and it hasn’t been updated.”

So my question is, how can, you know, can we expect it to be done a little bit more timely and periodic review of the traffic impact because all these projects change all the time, we understand that, but we as citizens need to be aware of what’s coming down the pipe because it’s just congestion all day long?

(Audience applause)

MS. SHAW: Okay. So I think your question is how we manage traffic during construction given that there’s so much going on in the region and we do have a regional management traffic plan, so that’s one of the things that we will work on with our partners and I think it’s a fair point that maybe we need to expand that to
some of the multiple project corridors that we have under construction. So, thank you.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I’m sorry, you spoke a lot about if we’re going to do the construction and Maryland’s not ready what’s going to happen and you’re looking at that alternative and that possibility.

Have you taken the other side, I did not hear that at all, that we don’t do anything and Maryland does their lanes and we see what the improvement will be?

(Audience applause)

MS. SHAW: So, Maryland will be doing that in their environmental study.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I’m sure that they will, but --

MS. SHAW: Yeah, because

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Unintelligible)

MS. SHAW: Right, because they’ll assume that we’re in and they’re not in, right? Yeah.

(Questions/comments called out from the Audience, no one using microphone)

You want them in and we’re not in, we will do that study. Yeah, we’ll do that study. That’s our no-build. That’s our no-build, yeah.
AUDIENCE MEMBER: And when do we get to see the results of that?

MS. SHAW: Well, we have some of it tonight, the 2045, the preliminary study.

(Questions/comments called out from the Audience, no one using microphone)

MS. SHAW: Yeah, because that was with Maryland assumed to be in in the year 2045 and the no-build was us not in but them in. So, I don’t think we have 2025 yet for that. We’ll have that in the fall.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: So where do you see that?

MS. SHAW: Rob, you want to -- Rob Prunty is our traffic guy. There’s the two big screens back there, they can scroll through whatever displays you want to look at.

Yes?

MR. BARRENS: My name is Bill Barrens. [sic] I’ve lived in McLean for 48 years. A critical time period for this discussion is after we build in Virginia and before Maryland builds and I have the impression that’s being sort of shovled under the rug. The traffic analysis should specifically address the period before completion of the Maryland construction.
It’s a nearly $10 million project, it’s highly suspect politically. There are many people in Maryland that think they ought to spend the money to support the Baltimore area not Montgomery County.

The question then also was, if there is substantial period and it’s going to be deadly in it’s effect on traffic on the Beltway, if the project is to go on and proceed at all, can it successfully be constrained by progress of the Maryland bill so that we stop if Maryland’s not in any position to be close to providing the bridge upon completion of the Virginia work? That could be a period of many years, and during those many years you’ll do a lot of damage to McLean and won’t achieve anything but to screw traffic.

(Audience applause)

MS. SHAW: Thank you. I’m going to just kind of if it’s a routine question I’m not going to really answer again, but then I think that one you’ve talked about quite a bit and I understand the concern.

We are at 8:27. We are supposed to be out of here at 8:30, but, you know, we can try to keep going with questions. I’m looking to my public affairs people. Okay, we’re going to check.
MR. WHITFIELD: I’m Rob Whitfield with the Fairfax County Taxpayers Alliance and I’ve lived in Fairfax County for over 40 years, 10 years in McLean. So (Unintelligible) highway network (Unintelligible) North Carolina to New York state.

This question is about the truck management and the idea on I-66 they introduced several years ago some kind of speed monitoring system starting, let’s say out near Centreville, and the idea is that if there’s an incident ahead, let’s say at 123, they have variable speed signs that lower the speed.

So, back a couple of months ago there was a tanker crash near the bridge. So I suggested to, I guess it was Nick Donohue or the Transportation Secretary, the need -- we need to do certain things now rather than waiting five years for some new project.

So, speed control signs, let’s say north of Tyson’s Corner, is something that can be done this year. Yes, it has to (Unintelligible) the budget to be approved. Right now 87 percent of our money from Northern Virginia is being shoveled to Arlington and Alexandria for transit projects.

Of course there was no similar help from
Arlington and Alexandria to build the Silver Line for $6 billion, three billion of which comes from tolls from people.

MS. SHAW: Excuse me, do you have a question?

MR. WHITFIELD: So my question for you is, while it’s just not truck safety, it’s overall safety, has any specific proposal been made to improve safety on this section of highway?

Furthermore, the area south of Tyson’s Corner, north of 66, is increasingly congested, so we need to look in terms of an overall plan, not just for this one segment here, but let’s say north of 66 over the next 30, 40 years.

One of the problems we have is with this private sector, if you go and look at the financial plan for I-66, 90 percent of it is from investors, and this is totally unacceptable because nobody has any sense of what the rate of return being gained by the investors. It’s certainly far more than the cost of bonds that VDOT sells at about four percent. So the equity is probably somewhere between 13 and 16 percent, and the end product we pay for --

MS. SHAW: Okay. I’m going to ask you to
please ask a question (Unintelligible)

MR. WHITFIELD: Okay. What are you going to
do to improve the public disclosure of vital financial
information and cost of collection and then I would ask
that you create a venue, either in McLean or Tyson’s,
where people can go and look at the actual data that you
have today so it’s not this kind of loopy-goosy forum.

MS. SHAW: I’ll take that to a colleague, but
I will just say the Office of the Attorney General
approves what can and can not be released. So we follow
the Code. It’s not really necessarily a VDOT issue, but
we do get review and determination from their office.

MR. WHITFIELD: So please provide - I was here
at the meeting a year ago - please provide a venue where
the public can read what has been asked and what your
answers are.

MS. SHAW: Okay. Thank you.

Yes?

MS. PONA: Hi, I’m Natalia Pona. [ph] You’re
painfully aware that you have a fairly sophisticated
audience and my comments generally follow the line of
trust but verify.

So my request is that the environmental study,
if you can please provide the raw data, not relative data but the actual raw data, ideally simultaneous if not before the next meeting, that would be fabulous.

(Increase volume in background talking)

And then also if you can provide the modeling that’s used and the assumptions that go into your models so that there is (Unintelligible) this work and replicate your models.

MS. SHAW: Thank you.

MS. PONA: Thank you.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: My name is Anastasia Carbusos [ph] and I’m actually running for school board of Fairfax County here in Dranesville and one of the main concerns is actually safety. And tonight (Unintelligible) look at the maps you provided in the 2025 and 2045 projections and the most critical, we’re here right now at Cooper, and there’s no plans to actually help the congestion right in front of the school.

So right now, in order to, you know, make the left from Balls Hill to Georgetown Pike takes forever. If you want to go to make a right, you know, there’s no light, there’s no right lane to go. It’s a very simple solution.
I was talking to your staff and they said oh, it’s such an easy thing to do. So, I’m asking if you can really look into that because being able to come in and out of Cooper, the safety of our children is imperative.

It’s great to talk about the larger scheme of things, but something that should be addressed today at a minimal cost should really be addressed by VDOT and I urge you to really look into that, to how it would be for cars to be able to come into Cooper and also for the traffic, you need to make a right lane -- I live right off Georgetown Pike, I pick up my child and I have to wait in line for everybody going left.

So it’s an easy solution and I urge you to look into this. Thank you.

(Audience applause)

MS. HALL: Hi, my name is Mary Hall and I live on Green Oak. I just moved there. I’m very concerned about the flyover plan, but it’s caused me, because I’m sort of new to this community, to consider why we’re having this here.

If you look at all of the bridges that get us over to Maryland or Washington DC, they are very heavy on this side of Fairfax County. You have the Key Bridge, you
have the Chain Bridge and then you have this American Legion Bridge.

My question, and I understand that Maryland is not onboard for any of this, but my question is, have you considered having another point of entry further west in Fairfax County.

The Dranesville District, the Leesburg Pike, I know they’ve widened it. Wouldn’t it be tactical to have some sort of bridge from say Seneca Road to Maryland and then use that Carderock infrastructure that is not getting used on a regular basis?

Those roads are empty. Whether it’s morning, noon or night, those roads are empty. So I don’t understand if there is a federal parks issue over there or if it’s Maryland is just not coming to the table so we haven’t considered that.

My question is, have you considered almost any other idea than this?

MS. SHAW: So, there have been a number of discrepancies - (audience applause) - (Unintelligible) not at the American Legion Bridge and I would just say that, you know, anything that we’re doing with this project doesn’t preclude that from happening, so that could still
happen.

I know today Loudoun County is actually doing a study of additional crossings themselves for Loudoun County. So, I mean, it’s been studied through the years but this project is focused on capacity in the 495 corridor.

MR. O’TOOLE: Hi, my name is Brian O’Toole. I live in McLean. I have just a simple question.

Would VDOT consider this project if Transurban wasn’t paying for it?

(Audience applause)

MS. SHAW: So, you know, we actually started the project before Transurban was involved. So when we started in the Spring, that was just -- we were just doing an environmental study and actually some of the information that’s being gathered today is probably more than what we would have done just because they are now doing that effort.

MR. O’TOOLE: It just seems that if you added two general purpose lanes in each direction you would increase capacity by 50 percent without all of this infrastructure, flyovers or HOT lanes and make it available to everybody not just --
(Audience applause)

MS. SHAW: And I think (Unintelligible) want to say that we focused on our Express Lanes project, it’s moving more people. That HOV three component and having buses and transit vehicles being able to move at a guaranteed free flow is really important to us.

If you look at, you know, adding more general purpose lanes it still would not get us out of congestion. So really what we’re doing is trying to provide those two lanes in each direction that could move at a guaranteed speed.

(Audience member: (Unintelligible - not using microphone)

MS. SHAW: Yes.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Unintelligible - not using microphone)

THE COURT REPORTER: Susan, they have to quiet down in the back, I can’t hear.

MS. SHAW: Okay. Can I ask the people in the back to kind of keep it down just a little bit and the people at the mic to try to speak up or make sure you’re hitting the mic. We are trying to record the conversation
here so that we can have a record. Thank you.

MR. HALL: My name is Scott Hall. I’m running for grandparent but my children are not cooperating.

(Laughter)

When the Silver Line was announced, our Supervisor John Foust did everything he could to get consideration to have the subway put underground. And despite his efforts it became fairly apparent that it was a done deal. It was said that (Unintelligible) didn’t want to pay a French firm to tunnel under.

It seems to us, to many of us I believe, that this is a done deal, and I’ll tell you why.

(Audience applause)

You’ve been asked a number of times about, you know, this study or that study and you keep say we’re going to get it done.

So my question to you is, once you get them done, what period of time will there be between your getting them done and your signing a final contract and how much public hearings will be held?

(Audience applause)

MS. SHAW: So right now we anticipate having one public hearing in the fall and then as we said
contract would be, the earliest with Transurban would be sometime in 2020.

MR. HALL: That wasn’t my question.

What my question was, is once you get the studies done, what period of time will elapse between the studies being done and published and a final signing and during that period, assuming there is any period between there, how many public hearings will you have?

In other words, if you don’t get the studies done I think you need to put off signing the contract until you get the studies done and let the community take a look at them.

MS. SHAW: Right, and that is required. I mean, we have to get the environmental decision completed before we would enter into a contract.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Unintelligible - not using microphone)

MS. SHAW: The environmental studies, yes.

Yes.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Unintelligible - not using microphone)

MS. SHAW: Prior to the public hearing. The minimal requirement is 30 days prior to the public hearing
and then there’s a 30-day comment period.

MS. GARDNER: Hi, I’m Samantha Gardner. I live right against the wall on Auburn Lane and there is a line of disturbance cutting off about three-quarters of my property.

So my question was, if in the worst case scenario this goes through and our property needs to be taken, how do you handle relocating homeowners?

For example, do you pay enough that allows them to buy a house in the same neighborhood? And similarly (Unintelligible) we have neighbors who now have a (Unintelligible) or some other big construction right next door, how do you handle compensating that and what’s the process?

MS. SHAW: So, we do not anticipate any residential relocations on this project. I’m not sure if you’re looking at the limits of disturbance or what’s shown on what we anticipate being the design plans.

You know, we keep pulling those in, but we do follow the Uniform Relocation and Assistance Act as well as our own policies. We have very prescribed processes for how we appraise property, how we assess damages and all of those types of things.
So I can talk with you and get in more specific detail about your situation if you’d like.

MS. GARDNER: Thank you.

MS. CRYSTAL: Hi, my name is Susan Crystal. I live in (Unintelligible) and my property backs up to the GW Parkway and no one has talked about the interface between this project on the Beltway and how it will affect the GW Parkway this evening.

I’m sure you’ve talked about it, but I wondered if you could talk a little bit about that given that I read the GW Parkway needs to be completely reconstructed, it’s had two large sink holes that shutoff traffic flow recently in the last two months.

So, could you talk about that, please?

MS. SHAW: So, most of the work that we would be looking at is very close to the Beltway in terms of direct impact and how we might tie in.

As we’ve mentioned tonight, the Park Service has asked us to also look at an option without any new Express Lanes connections to the GW Parkway.

The Parkway themselves published an environmental assessment last summer for the pavement reconstruction, major repair work. They are working to
try to get a grant through their own processes because
they’re responsible right now for the maintenance of that
facility.

You know, whether there would be any
discussions if we added traffic connections there, there
may be some further discussions with the Park about how to
mitigate any type of impact and, you know, deal with --

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Unintelligible - not using
microphone)

MS. SHAW: We don’t have those studies yet.
That’s something certainly the Park is very interested in
and we are as well.

MS. BUTLER: Hi, I’m sorry, I’m back. I’ll
keep it really brief I promise. I know everybody’s been
bombarded all night by constant comments.

(Increase volume of background noise)

But my question is, have you guys taken into
account that this project will be completed in 2045 when
technological advances are probably so vast by that time,
cars will be driving themselves, and no one knows what
traffic patterns are going to be like with that type of
car.

(Audience applause)
MS. SHAW: So, you know, we try to look into the future based on this regional land use and traffic model to at least predict, you know, what the traffic will be.

But I hear you, you know, nobody knows. I mean, we are saying that the project would be potentially completed by 2023. And so that’s the year that we’re looking at in terms of over the year.

What happens by 2045, you know, is anybody’s guess. We do try to do that projection.

MS. BUTLER: Thank you.

MS. SHAW: All right. I’m going to stop us now and we will meet with you back at the boards.

* * * * *

(Whereupon, at approximately 8:45 o’clock, p.m., the proceedings were concluded.)
CERTIFICATE OF NOTARY PUBLIC

I, JUDY F. HENDERSON, the Verbatim Reporter before whom the foregoing comments were made, do hereby certify that the comments were taken by me stenographically and thereafter reduced to typewriting; and that I have no interest in said proceedings, financial or otherwise, nor through relationship with any of the parties in interest or their counsel.

______________________________
JUDY F. HENDERSON
Verbatim Reporter