



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **VDOT TO LAUNCH STUDY TO EXTEND I-495 EXPRESS LANES TOWARD AMERICAN LEGION BRIDGE AND MARYLAND LINE**

*Funding approved to conduct environmental analysis of project  
to relieve major traffic choke-point*

RICHMOND, Va. -- Virginia's Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) approved funding in the amount of \$6 million Wednesday for the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) to conduct an environmental study of a plan to extend the I-495 Express Lanes by approximately three miles from the I-495 and Dulles Toll Road interchange to the vicinity of the American Legion Bridge and Maryland line. This northern extension to the 495 Express Lanes would help relieve a traffic-choked section of I-495 by providing more capacity, new travel choices and benefits for carpoolers.

According to Virginia Transportation Secretary Shannon Valentine, "This is a regional problem that requires a regional solution. We are pleased to begin our efforts to formally study bringing transportation improvements to this area, and look forward to working in partnership with Maryland, as they too work to find the best solutions for this challenging traffic area."

Virginia's I-495 Northern Express Lanes Extension study, also referred to as 495 NEXT, will be developed as an independent, stand-alone project that will be closely coordinated and compatible with plans for the I-495 Capital Beltway in Maryland. The full scope of improvements will be refined over the coming months.

The environmental study, which will be completed according to the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), will evaluate site-specific conditions and potential effects the proposed improvements may have on air quality, noise, neighborhoods, parks, recreation areas, historic properties, wetlands and streams, and other resources. The study will begin this month and is expected to be completed in 2019.

The public will have their first opportunity to learn more about the proposed project and upcoming study at a public information meeting scheduled for Monday, June 11, 2018 at Cooper Middle School in McLean.

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