



Northern Virginia Transportation Authority

The Authority for Transportation in Northern Virginia

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www.TheNoVaAuthority.org

June 20, 2013

The Honorable Sean T. Connaughton
Secretary of Transportation
Patrick Henry Building
1111 East Broad Street, Third Floor
Richmond, Virginia 23218

RE: Comments on I-66 Tier 1 EIS Recommendations for Tier 2

Dear Secretary Connaughton:

On behalf of the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA), I am transmitting the Authority's comments on a subsequent I-66 Tier 2 EIS as a follow-up to the Tier 1 EIS. As you are aware, I-66 is one of the major transportation corridors in Northern Virginia, carrying well over 100,000 vehicles per day. As such, the recommendations from these studies will have a significant impact on the daily lives of not only those who live and work along the corridor, but on the region as a whole.

The work done is critical in that mobility solutions in the I-66 corridor must be considered in order to achieve improvements that are sustainable as well as quantifiable. The Tier 1 EIS contains a substantial amount of information; yet, it also raises numerous questions, especially with regard to how some of the ratings in the results section were derived. Nevertheless, the Authority was in support of the concepts considered in Tier 1.

While the Authority understands that the CTB has taken action on the improvement concepts to be studied in Tier 2, there is grave concern regarding the lack of transit concepts moving forward for additional consideration. Although Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) is on the list of seven concepts being recommended for Tier 2, the absence of Metrorail extensions, VRE extensions and light rail transit is surprising given how they fared in Tier 1 and the presence of these projects in other regional studies in addition to local comprehensive plans. We are concerned by the exclusion of these transit options for additional study, as this could preclude development of these options in the future and is in conflict with existing and planned transit facilities for the I-66 Corridor.

The following point noted in the Authority's April, 8 2013 letter sent to the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) regarding the Tier 1 EIS, is still applicable:

One of the key findings of this study noted in Section 3.9 is that multimodal solutions are the most effective in addressing the transportation needs in the corridor. As such, the NVTA supports advancing the VRE and Metrorail Orange Line concepts to a Tier 2 level analysis. Further, while these extensions will provide a long term solution for the corridor, the results of the DEIS clearly support the need for a short term solution to provide relief to the current congestion. This solution should include features that provide reliable transit times, congestion relief, travel time savings, improved safety, efficient connection with the overall transit and highway network for improved regional mobility, expanded travel options, effective enforcement of HOV, affordability, and improved driver information.

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The Authority would urge you to reconsider the decision to only include BRT as the mode of transit for additional consideration. Additionally, the NVTa is concerned that input from participating agencies was very limited during the Tier 1 process. We strongly recommend that you fully engage stakeholders in the TIER 2 process as we are your partners and we want to work with you.

The Authority appreciates the work undertaken to date and the opportunity to comment. We look forward to working with you to advance the Tier 2 studies and to implement improvements as soon as possible in the corridor that will improve mobility and improve the daily lives of those who use the corridor. If you have any questions or would like to discuss any of the comments, please contact me at (703) 792-4620.

Sincerely,

Martin E. Nohe
Chairman

Cc: Members, Northern Virginia Transportation Authority
F. Gary Garczynski, Northern Virginia District Board Member, Commonwealth Transportation Board
Fran Fisher, At-Large Urban Board Member, Commonwealth Transportation Board