



Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Associations, P.O. Box 3913, Merrifield, VA 22116-3913

**Approved by the Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Associations
Executive Committee at its 30 June 2015 meeting:**

Input on the I-66 Multimodal Improvements Inside the Beltway

The Virginia Department of Transportation is proposing to convert an existing section of the Interstate Highway System, whose use is currently limited to High Occupancy Vehicles containing two or more persons (HOV-2) inbound in the morning, and outbound in the evening, to HOV-3 and tolled (HOT) use during both the morning and evening commute in both directions. It is expected that many drivers who currently commute in what is considered the reverse direction and are not presently paying tolls, will choose to use the streets of Arlington instead of paying the varying-rate toll, joining the current non-HOV commuters who travel inbound in the morning and outbound in the evening on the same streets.

The Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Association offers the following recommendations for consideration by the Commonwealth Transportation Board prior to making a formal decision on this proposal:

A. Collection and Use of Funds: As the Federation stated in its testimony on the I-66 Outside the Beltway Improvements¹ “if tolling is implemented, funds collected should be used to reduce congestion along the corridor, including mass transit, and not be used for improvements indiscriminately throughout Northern Virginia”.

Changes in the corridor that need to be considered as part of the I-66 conversion include:

- 1. I-66 Widening:** The short-term six-laning of both directions of I-66 inside the Beltway: the projected period of 2025-2040 is too late to address even the traffic safety and operational problems that are already being observed on a regular basis along this portion of the I-66 travel corridor. Any determination as to that need should be made much sooner within a maximum of five years rather than a decade out.

¹ <http://www.fairfaxfederation.org/testimony/TestimonyI66MultiModalStudyTier120150603Ver1.pdf>

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2. Parallel Roads: Improvements to all of the major parallel roads that will be burdened by increased use by non-HOT commuters. These other facilities include, but are not limited to:

- Arlington Blvd (US Rt. 50)—We would suggest that this route be widened to a basic 6-lane, suburban arterial type cross-section from the Capital Beltway interchange to the Washington Blvd (VA Rt. 27) interchange at Fort Myer. We would also recommend a major reconstruction and improvement to the existing Seven Corners interchange complex, which is a continuing traffic bottleneck
- Lee Highway (US Rt. 29)
- Old Dominion Dr. (VA Rt. 309)
- Washington Blvd (VA Rt. 237)
- Wilson Avenue

B. Metrorail: Metrorail service in the in the Vienna/Reston/Rosslyn corridor is limited by the capacity of the existing Rosslyn Potomac River tunnel. Virginia cannot wait until Metro's Momentum 2040 plan for additional river crossings. In addition, consideration needs to be given to the construction of a wye-junction that will allow for a direct Metrorail service option between Dulles International and Reagan National airports, as well as allowing Fairfax, Loudoun, and Prince William county commuters to travel from the north and west to the employment centers of Alexandria, Crystal City and the Pentagon without transferring at the capacity-constrained Rosslyn station.

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C. Dulles International Airport Access Road Connector: Although the project website indicates that “the project area includes I-66 Inside the Beltway, from I-495 / Capital Beltway to U.S. Route 29 in Rosslyn, as well as the Dulles Toll Road,” the full Dulles International Airport Access Road connector from I-66 to the Beltway is not in the green-highlighted section as shown in the below image taken from the website².



Commuters on VA Rt. 267, the Dulles International Airport Toll Road, now pay a toll to travel to the Beltway but are not allowed to travel on the extension from I-66 to the Beltway during the HOV-restricted times. It would seem logical that these commuters, used to paying a toll, would be prime candidates to continue on a tolled route, but there doesn't seem to be plans for them to do so as part of this project. We recommend that the Dulles International Airport Access Road connector be included in the plans for HOT use, as well as plans put in place so that current traffic to and from Dulles International Airport can continue to use I-66 during HOT-restricted times, and not be forced to pay a toll to use the road.

² <http://inside.transform66.org/>

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D. Bus Rapid Transit: In our I-66 outside the Beltway testimony, referenced above, the Federation advocated the use of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) west of the Vienna Station in the interim period before the Orange line is extended to the Centreville area, as has been included in the Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan for well in excess of 20 years. Until the Rosslyn Potomac River tunnel bottleneck is resolved, BRT should be planned to continue to employment centers in Ballston, Crystal City, Pentagon and the District of Columbia. The critical considerations are the junction between the BRT and Metro, and a methodology for the BRT passengers to continue to their destinations identified above without having the passengers wait for long periods of time.

D. Uniform Hours of Operation: Currently the HOV hours for I-66 sections inside and outside the Beltway have different start and end times. In addition, in past years, HOV restrictions were also non-uniform. If HOT lanes are implemented for both I-66 sections, the HOT requirements and the hours of operation should be coordinated so both sections are uniform, rather than having non-uniform HOT requirements and start and end times for each section.