



For Immediate Release

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**FIRST VIRTUAL PUBLIC HEARING ON I-495 & I-270
MANAGED LANES STUDY DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT
STATEMENT SET FOR AUGUST 18**

Registration open to submit live testimony; Event is first in series of virtual and in-person hearings hosted by MDOT SHA, Federal Highway Administration

BALTIMORE, MD (August 17, 2020) – The Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration (MDOT SHA) and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) remind the public that the first in a series of virtual and in-person joint public hearings for the I-495 & I-270 Managed Lanes Study Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation will be held Tuesday, August 18. This will be a virtual hearing to provide opportunity for public comment while maintaining safety during Maryland’s COVID-19 emergency.

“We continue to take every precaution to ensure the public has ample opportunity to safely review and comment on the DEIS and Section 4(f) documents,” said Transportation Secretary Greg Slater. “The health and safety of the public and our team remains our number one priority, and we hope the public will take full advantage of these hearings to learn and share their input with us.”

The Managed Lanes Study considers ways to relieve congestion and improve trip reliability, mobility and connectivity for modes of travel, including transit, in the National Capital Region. MDOT SHA and its partners announced the virtual and in-person public hearings on July 10 with the release of the DEIS.

The public is encouraged to testify at the August 18 virtual hearing, which will be held 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. and streamed live at 495-270-p3.com/virtual-hearing.

To testify, please register in advance by visiting 495-270-p3.com/DEIS.

The public may call 1-855-432-1483 anytime during the hearings to listen to the public testimony or leave testimony by voicemail. Additional virtual hearings will be held 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. August 20, August 25 and September 3.

In-person hearings are scheduled from noon to 9 p.m. September 1 at Homewood Suites by Hilton, 9103 Basil Court, Largo, in Prince George's County; and noon to 9 p.m. September 10 at Hilton Executive Meeting Center, 1750 Rockville Pike, Rockville, in Montgomery County. To promote social distancing, testimony at these hearings will be by APPOINTMENT ONLY. Participants will be placed into time slots, and also may listen to other testimony and speak to the limited staff who will be on-site to answer questions. To register, call 1-833-858-5960.

At the in-person hearings, social distancing protocols will be strictly enforced, including a requirement for face coverings. Hand sanitizing stations will be in place and there will be limited capacity in the hearing rooms. The public also may call 1-855-432-1483 on in-person hearing dates to listen live and/or leave testimony by voicemail from noon to 9 p.m. Press * to hear options.

Those testifying either virtually or in person will be given three minutes. Maryland Relay Service can assist teletype users at 7-1-1. Individuals requiring assistance, such as an interpreter for hearing/speech difficulties or assistance with the English language, can call the program's toll-free number, 1-833-858-5960. MDOT SHA and FHWA will continue to monitor the ongoing impacts of COVID-19 and follow the guidance of public health officials to determine any changes to the planned hearings as conditions evolve.

The DEIS includes traffic, environmental, engineering and financial analyses of a No Build Alternative and six Build Alternatives involving high-occupancy toll (HOT) lanes or express toll lanes (ETL), sometimes in combination with existing high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes on I-270. As part of the review, MDOT SHA, FHWA and the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) are conducting the four virtual and two in-person joint public hearings to provide opportunities for public comment.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) will participate in the August 25 hearing, as comments also will be accepted on the Joint Federal/State Application (JPA) for Alteration of Any Floodplain, Waterway, Tidal or Nontidal Wetland in Maryland. The USACE is responsible for reviewing the JPA per the Clean Water Act (Section 404(b)(1)) and MDE is responsible for reviewing the application per Environment Article §5-503 and §5-906, Annotated Code of Maryland.

The DEIS, supporting technical reports and JPA are available online at 495-270-p3.com/DEIS. Hard copies of the DEIS and electronic copies of technical reports and the JPA also are available for review at multiple locations in Montgomery and Prince George's counties, as well as one in Fairfax, Va. and one in Washington, D.C. For a list of these locations, go to the website above.

In addition to oral testimony during the virtual and in-person public hearings, the public may provide comments through an online comment form at 495-270-p3.com/DEIS. Written comments also may be emailed to MLS-NEPA-P3@mdot.maryland.gov or mailed to:

Lisa B. Choplin, DBIA

Director, I-495 & I-270 P3 Office

Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration
707 North Calvert Street, Mail Stop P-601 Baltimore, MD 21202

Similarly, while oral testimony and written comments on the JPA may be given at the public hearings, comments also may be emailed or mailed to the addresses below and must reference application NAB- 2018-02152 and the MDE Tracking Numbers 20-NT-0114 / 202060649:

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Baltimore District

Attention: Mr. Jack Dinne

2 Hopkins Plaza

Baltimore, MD 21201 john.j.dinne@usace.army.mil

Maryland Department of the Environment Wetlands and Waterways Program

Attention: Mr. Steve Hurt

1800 Washington Blvd. Suite 4300

Baltimore, MD 21230 MDE.SHAprojects@maryland.gov

The 90-day public and agency comment period for the DEIS and JPA is underway and currently runs through 11:59 p.m. October 8, 2020. MDOT SHA has requested an additional 30-day extension. Please visit the program website, 495-270-P3.com/DEIS, for updates. All comments received, regardless of method of submission, will be given equal consideration. All substantive comments received or postmarked by the end of the comment period will be responded to in preparation of the Final EIS. Comments received or postmarked after the close of the comment period will be reviewed and considered to the extent practicable.

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