



Toll Lanes Would Cause Great Harm But They Wouldn't Work

In June 2022, The Maryland Dept. of Transportation issued its [Final Environmental Impact Statement](#) (FEIS) on the plan to add toll lanes to I-495 and I-270 in Montgomery County. The FEIS showed that the plan would not ease congestion but would cause substantial harm to our communities and our environment.

Toll Lanes Would Not Improve Daily Commutes: In fact, according to the FEIS, it would take 8 minutes and 54 seconds longer to travel during evening rush hour from the American Legion Bridge and up I-270 to Gaithersburg. Only those who would pay to use the toll lanes would experience a quicker commute, and the tolls could be as high as \$50 for the 12-mile stretch of toll lanes.

Toll Lanes Would Worsen Air Pollution and Global Warming: According to the [Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission](#), the toll lanes would increase congestion on I-270 and on the Inner Loop on the top side of the Beltway and in Prince George's County. This increased congestion would cause an increase in air pollution in communities near these bottlenecks. The increase in vehicle emissions would also worsen the climate crisis.

Toll Lanes Would Pollute our Waterways: MDOT plans to treat less than half of the stormwater runoff. This would increase the amount of pollution flowing into local streams, creeks, the Potomac River and ultimately the Chesapeake Bay.

Toll Lanes Could Disturb Resting Places of Formerly Enslaved People and their Descendants: MDOT failed to fully study the impact of widening the Beltway on the historic Morningstar Cemetery in Cabin John. An initial survey revealed evidence of up to 34 burials adjacent to the Beltway right-of-way that could be disturbed if construction commences. But MDOT refused to complete the survey work ahead of construction.

MDOT Failed to Investigate Alternatives: MDOT did not study whether transit, telework or a collection of other options would effectively address congestion. For example, both the [Maryland Transportation Institute](#) and the regional [Transportation Planning Board](#) have determined that telework would effectively reduce traffic congestion, but MDOT refused to study policies to encourage telework.

For more about the FEIS, read comment letters submitted by [CABE](#) and by the [MD Sierra Club](#).