



Will Virginia Build Private Toll Lanes in Prince George's County?

Under Gov. Hogan, the Maryland Dept. of Transportation (MDOT) has worked on two projects to add private toll lanes to the Beltway, one in Prince George's County and one in Montgomery County. While there is substantial opposition to these projects, MDOT has not announced plans to cancel either one. Below is an update on the Prince George's County project.

I-495 Southside Express Lanes in Prince George's County

Under an agreement between MDOT and the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), Virginia is leading an effort to allow Transurban to build private toll lanes from Springfield, VA, over the Woodrow Wilson Bridge, up to Oxon Hill, MD. According to VDOT's schedule, a public hearing will be held about the project sometime this summer. VDOT expects the Federal Highway Administration to decide whether to allow the project to proceed during the summer of 2024.

- **VDOT is Not Conducting a Comprehensive Environmental Review:** Unlike the Montgomery County toll lanes proposal, there will not be a full environmental impact statement conducted for the Southside Express Lanes. Instead, VDOT is conducting a much less comprehensive environmental assessment. As a result, the public will not know the full environmental damage that this project would cause.
- **Toll Lanes Would Crowd Out Metro's Blue Line Extension over Woodrow Wilson Bridge:** When it was rebuilt, policymakers ensured that there would be space to build rail transit over the Woodrow Wilson Bridge and Metro has a plan to extend the Blue Line over the bridge. Toll lanes would take up the space planned for rail, eliminating the opportunity to extend the Blue Line which would provide a more effective, sustainable and equitable transportation option for the residents of Prince George's County.
- **The Toll Lanes Won't Stop at Oxon Hill:** The environmental impact statement for the Montgomery County toll lanes shows that they would not reduce congestion, only move the bottlenecks. In Virginia, the bottlenecks have been used to justify further extensions of the toll lanes. The same will happen in Maryland if toll lanes get a foot hold in the County.

Sign up for email updates at <https://www.cabe495.com>