



For Immediate Release

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**MDOT SHA, Federal Highway Administration to Hold
Virtual Public Hearing for I-495 & I-270 Managed Lanes Study's
Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement**

Virtual Public Hearing Sessions Are Part of 45-Day Public Comment Period

BALTIMORE, MD (October 29, 2021) – The Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration (MDOT SHA) and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) will receive public comments at two virtual public hearing sessions, 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. Monday, November 1, for the I-495 & I-270 Managed Lanes Study Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS).

The virtual public hearing sessions are part of a 45-day public comment period for the SDEIS that officially opened Friday, October 1, and continues through 11:59 p.m. Monday, November 15. In addition to the virtual public hearing sessions, the comment period includes opportunities for email, written and recorded comments.

Individuals are invited to provide verbal testimony via phone during the virtual public hearing sessions. Please register in advance to testify by phone by visiting OpLanesMD.com/SDEIS or by calling 833-858-5960. Members of the public will be allotted three minutes and elected officials will be allotted five minutes, per person, for verbal testimony. Responses to questions will not be given at the hearing. After the hearing, transcripts will be available at OpLanesMD.com/SDEIS at a later date.

In addition to providing live verbal testimony, stakeholders also may leave a voicemail message of their verbal testimony during the call-in hearing sessions by dialing 855-432-1483 and leaving a single voicemail message limited to three minutes. The public can listen to the live hearing sessions via telephone by dialing 855-432-1483 or watch the livestream at OpLanesMD.com/SDEIS.

Prior to calling in to a public hearing session, leaving a voicemail message or providing written comments, the public is encouraged to review the online presentation and copy of the SDEIS available at OpLanesMD.com/SDEIS. Hard copies of the SDEIS and electronic copies of the SDEIS technical reports also are available for review at multiple library locations in Montgomery and Prince George's counties, as well as one in Fairfax County, Va., and one in Washington, D.C. For a list of these locations, please visit OpLanesMD.com/SDEIS.

This SDEIS has been prepared to consider new information developed after the [DEIS](#) was published in



July 2020, and presents results relevant to Alternative 9 – Phase 1 South: American Legion Bridge I-270 to I-370, which was identified in May 2021 by FHWA and MDOT SHA as the Preferred Alternative for the Managed Lanes Study.

While the Managed Lanes Study considers ways to relieve congestion and improve trip reliability, mobility, and connectivity for all modes of travel in the National Capital Region – including transit – the Preferred Alternative focuses on replacing the 60-year-old American Legion Bridge and delivering two high occupancy toll (HOT) managed lanes in each direction within Phase 1 South: American Legion Bridge I-270 to I-370. The scope of the SDEIS builds upon the analysis and information that remains valid in the existing DEIS but is limited to providing new information about the Preferred Alternative.

On I-495, the Preferred Alternative consists of adding two new HOT managed lanes in each direction from the George Washington Memorial Parkway in Fairfax County, Va., to east of MD 187, Old Georgetown Road. On I-270, the Preferred Alternative consists of converting the one existing HOV lane in each direction to a HOT managed lane and adding one new HOT managed lane in each direction on I-270 from I-495 to north of I-370, and on the I-270 east and west spurs. Transit buses, motorcycles and HOV 3+ vehicles – those carrying three or more people – would be permitted to use the managed lanes toll free. There is no action, or no improvements, included at this time on I-495 east of the I-270 east spur.

The Preferred Alternative is designed to provide a new American Legion Bridge, address existing traffic and long-term traffic growth, enhance trip reliability, support regional transit improvements, foster new opportunities for transit and increased carpool/vanpool/ridesharing, and improve the movement of goods and services. In addition, the Preferred Alternative would provide pedestrian and bicycle improvements to enhance connectivity of area sidewalks and trails, including the addition of a shared use path on the new American Legion Bridge across the Potomac River.

The Managed Lanes Study complements Virginia’s I-495 NEXT project and the joint Maryland and Virginia I-495 American Legion Bridge Transit/Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Plan. The Managed Lanes Study further extends the network of travel options with HOT managed lanes by expanding upon the collective efforts to rebuild the American Legion Bridge. The potential construction of managed lanes in both states represents an opportunity to implement new bus transit service options that take advantage of this infrastructure and provide riders with reliable trip times for travel between the states.

MDOT SHA and FHWA continue to consider the nearly 3,000 comments received as part of the [DEIS](#) and public hearings held last fall. Responding to public input, the SDEIS reflects successful efforts by MDOT SHA to reduce community and environmental impacts, including complete avoidance of Morningstar Cemetery in the Cabin John area. On Plummers Island, a research site for the Washington Biologists Field Club, the team collaborated with regulatory agencies and interested stakeholders to



reduce the impact by 90% to 0.2 acre, consisting of one pier piling for the American Legion Bridge replacement.

In addition to the virtual public hearing sessions and call-in testimony through voicemail, written comments will be accepted for the official record through 11:59 p.m. November 15, 2021. Those interested may:

- submit an electronic comment form at OpLanesMD.com/SDEIS;
- email at oplanesMLS@mdot.maryland.gov;
- send a written letter about the SDEIS to:
Jeffrey T. Folden, P.E, DBIA
Director, I-495 & I-270 P3 Office
Maryland Department of Transportation
State Highway Administration
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All comments received will be given equal consideration. Following the 45-day public comment period, MDOT SHA and FHWA will consider comments received and will respond to substantive comments on both the SDEIS and DEIS in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS). Comments received or postmarked after the close of the comment period will be reviewed and considered to the extent practicable.

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