



May 17, 2022

Chair Pamela Sebesky  
Transportation Planning Board  
777 North Capital Street  
Suite 300  
Washington, DC 20002

***RE: May 18, 2022 TPB Meeting, Agenda Item #8***

Dear Chair Sebesky and Members of the Transportation Planning Board,

The use of the term “Op Lanes Maryland” in the draft Constrained Long Range Transportation Plan (CLRP) is ambiguous and remains problematic since it denotes toll lane expansion along a more extended footprint than was voted on by the TPB in June or July 2021. Toll lanes have not been approved by the TPB for Maryland I-495 east of the I-270 spur, yet toll lanes on that stretch all the way to the Woodrow Wilson Bridge are part and parcel of Op Lanes Maryland. So, the use of the Op Lanes Maryland terminology in both the main body of the CLRP and in one of the appendices could be interpreted to mean that the entire footprint of Op Lanes Maryland has been approved by the TPB.

Despite the fact that ambiguous language remains in the draft CLRP, we appreciate that the TPB has now clarified that the draft CLRP does not include any money for construction or predevelopment of toll lanes on the Beltway east of I-270 and has promised to make appropriate corrections in the draft plan.

The TPB has received as of today at least 663 petitions requesting that the private toll lanes plan for Maryland be removed from the CLRP. This was not made clear in the powerpoint in the Agenda Item #8 document which combined the responses for and against the toll lanes.

Some of the text from the 663 messages follows:

“Please remove the entire I-495 and I-270 toll lanes project from the region’s long range plan, Visualize 2045.

The I-495 and I-270 toll lanes project would privatize our highway system, lock in decades of fossil fuel infrastructure, and make residents pay

outrageously high tolls (as much as \$50 each way). It would also hamper our region's efforts to reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled and meet critical climate targets.

After enduring years of construction, Marylanders and our neighbors would suffer the consequences of more sprawl, unhealthy air pollution, and greenhouse gas emissions. We'd see 1,200 trees cut down on our precious national parkland and more runoff pollution pouring into our local waterways and the Chesapeake Bay. Instead of reversing our highway system's racist legacy, the toll lanes plan would deepen racial and economic inequities.

Please do the right thing for Maryland's future and remove the entire I-495 and I-270 toll lanes project from the region's long range plan."

As is well known, the Maryland private toll lanes project does not enjoy regional consensus. This was emphasized last year by hundreds of comments as well as [letters](#) signed by 77 Maryland legislators and members of the Maryland U.S. Congressional delegation.

We would like to reiterate that *Visualize 2045* should identify not just an overall greenhouse gas reduction target for transportation but also identify specific numeric targets for electric vehicles and vehicle miles traveled.

We appreciate the leadership of TPB members who are making climate goals a priority, and we continue to encourage removing the Maryland toll lane project from the CLRP.

Sincerely,

Josh Tulkin, Director  
Sierra Club Maryland Chapter