



## **Additional Eastbound Lane Coming to I-66 Inside the Beltway**

By David Dickson

[Transform 66](#) is a major project to improve the movement of people through the I-66 Corridor inside the Beltway. The project was finalized after years of planning, and more recently months of negotiations among local governments and VDOT.

The project would convert the roadway from HOV 2 to a tolled HOV3/HOT lanes facility during peak rush hour. Revenues from tolls would be used to help fund other multimodal improvements in the corridor including additional transit, park-and-ride lots for carpooling, Metrorail enhancements, and bicycle and pedestrian options. The project also considered potential widening of the roadway from the Dulles Access Road to the Ballston exit in Arlington if the tolling, conversion to HOV 3 and other multimodal improvements proved ineffective in relieving congestion. Toll revenues would have been diverted from multimodal improvements to pay for the widening.

The Mount Vernon Group has long opposed widening I-66 because of its potential negative impacts on air and water quality, two important regional bike paths, and adjacent neighborhoods. Unfortunately a bipartisan and pro-road group of state legislators from outside the Beltway tried to scuttle the multimodal aspects of the Transform 66 project in favor of immediate widening of the roadway.

The likely success of this damaging effort in the General Assembly led Governor Terry McAuliffe to [negotiate a compromise](#) that preserves the tolling and multimodal components of the project, while enabling the construction of the additional lane to proceed. For reaction to this compromise deal from the Sierra Club, the Coalition for Smarter Growth and other groups, please see the [February 2016 press release](#).

The one positive aspect of the compromise deal is that the estimated \$140 million price tag of the additional lane will now be funded by federal and state funds, leaving more of the toll revenues to be used for the other multimodal improvements. VDOT is beginning an Environmental Assessment of the widening project, which our Group will be following closely.

At the same time, the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission, which is charged with dispersing toll revenues to the multimodal components of the project, is beginning the selection process, with a public hearing to be held in May.

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