



October 31, 2019

Ben Mannell
Project Manager
I-95 Corridor Improvement Plan
1401 E. Broad Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Dear Mr. Mannell –

On behalf of Virginians for High Speed Rail (VHSR) and the Virginia Transit Association (VTA) I would like to formally present our public comments for the I-95 Corridor Improvement Plan.

Over the last 63 years since the Eisenhower Interstate System was created, we have primarily put our transportation dollars into one basket by spending over 60 percent of our transportation funding on building and maintaining roads.

Since 1990, vehicle miles traveled per lane mile on Virginia's interstates has grown 58 percent, while new lane miles have barely grown 12 percent. To get back to 1990 levels of interstate traffic, the Commonwealth would need to build over 3,000 lane miles of interstates. At an average cost of \$44 million to construct a new lane mile (including your study's own estimate of what it would cost to add 104 lane miles along I-95) of interstate in Virginia; it is simply not feasible, nor responsible to the taxpayers of Virginia to try to pave our way out of traffic.

Even with the billions that we've spent adding lane, fixing interchanges, and improving the flow traffic --- 78 percent of respondents to your I-95 survey still said that the corridor was only sometimes reliable or even worse. Continuing down the path of trying to pave our way out of traffic is just simply not sustainable.

Going forward, we must now focus on expanding our multi-modal options including expanded intercity passenger rail, commuter rail, and transit.

We agree with the thousands of survey respondents – as well as the 1,100+ signatories to VHSR's I-95 petition – that believe that improved intercity rail, improved Metrorail, improved Virginia Railway Express (VRE), and improved commuter bus service are the best potential improvements for the corridor.

Annually, our Amtrak stations and the transit agencies along the I-95 corridor handle 119 million trips and take 1.2 billion passenger miles potentially off our roadway. While we understand that a good portion of these trips are most likely local trips; every person taking VRE or Metro to a daytime Nationals game or VCU student riding the Pulse from Willow Lawn to class is one more potential car removed from I-95.

Our transit and rail systems can do more!

As your study has noted, four new VRE trains and new bus service can move as many people as a new general purpose lane per hour. A new round-trip Amtrak Regional train between Richmond and Washington has the capacity to carry the equivalent of 7 lane miles of interstate traffic each year.

Moving forward, both VHSR and VTA support additional funding for our transit and rail network along the corridor to help accomplish what former Virginia Secretary of Transportation Aubrey Layne once said was the Commonwealth's goal which is to move more people, not more cars.

If I may be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Danny". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Danny Plaugher
Virginians for High Speed Rail
Virginia Transit Association