

Clarification in response to the Sierra Club Press release

The TPB staff has been made aware of a press release issued by Sierra Club about the status of the Maryland TRP/Op lanes project in the TPB's long-range transportation plan, Visualize 2045 (2022 update), a draft of which was released for public review and comments on April 1, 2022. This information is intended to correct the information contained in Sierra Club's release.

Summary of this clarification: The TPB's action from the summer of 2021 still stands and is reflected in the draft long-range transportation plan, Visualize 2045.

The Sierra Club communique notes, in part, that *"The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments' (COG's) new long-range transportation plan revives Governor Hogan's original proposal to build private toll lanes along the entirety of the Maryland Beltway, from the American Legion Bridge to the Woodrow Wilson Bridge. COG staff buried its approval of the multi-billion-dollar Beltway widening on page 95 of Appendix B of Visualize 2045's more than 1,000 pages of documentation. The inclusion of the widely rejected Beltway plan ignores the July 2021 decision of the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board not to include toll lanes on the majority of the Beltway."*

The TPB's Clarification and correction:

- The 2022 update to Visualize 2045, the region's long-range transportation plan, all associated documents, and the ongoing regional planning work activity are of the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) and not Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG). COG and the TPB are two independent regional entities. The TPB is housed at and staffed by COG. The TPB is the federally designated metropolitan planning organization tasked with the responsibility of developing the long-range transportation plan.
- The Sierra Club communique incorrectly states that the draft plan ignores the [July 2021 decision of the TPB](#). In July, the TPB [voted to include](#) three different segments of the proposed express/managed lanes project in Maryland: (1) managed lanes on I-495 from George Washington Memorial Parkway to the I-270 spur and on I-270 from the I-495 spur to I-370, referred to as the I-270 southern segment, to be constructed by 2025; (2) managed lanes on I-270 from I-370 to I-70, referred to as the I-270 northern segment, to be constructed by 2030 and (3) managed lanes on I-495 from the I-270 spur to the Woodrow Wilson Bridge, referred to as the eastern segment, to be **studied** but NOT to be constructed.

This is exactly what was done by the TPB and what is included in the Visualize 2045 (2022 Update) plan documents. Appendix C of the plan lists the projects that are included in Visualize 2045 (2022 Update) conformity analysis. On page 39-40 (page numbers as printed in on the page) is a listing of the managed lanes on I-495 (project ID 6432)– the southern segment that is to be constructed and the eastern segment that is to be studied only; and on pages 36 and 37 are listed the I-270 managed lanes both for the southern and northern segments. Only the segments identified for construction were included in the region's air quality conformity analysis. The segments that reference the study are listed for informational purposes. It is worth noting that the eastern segment of the I-495 managed lanes project was downgraded to a study by MDOT prior to the June and July 2021 TPB votes.

- The Sierra Club communique specifically notes page 95 of Appendix B asserting that the listing here indicated TPB's inclusion of segment that was not approved. The listings in Appendix B are a summary of the financial information for both the southern segment of the I-495 managed lanes (included for construction) as well as the eastern segment of the of the I-495 managed lanes included as a study only. The funding amount listed is for the planning, preliminary engineering, and design of the southern segment that has been approved for construction and funding for studying the eastern segment that has NOT been approved for construction. The TPB understands that the description for this listing does not make this clear. For the final documentation, the TPB will work with MDOT to clarify the description for this listing on page 95 of Appendix B of the plan.
- In conclusion: The TPB's action from the summer of 2021 still stands and is reflected in the draft long-range transportation plan, Visualize 2045.