

May 4, 2021

### Testimony re Virginia 6-Year Plan 2022 - 2027

For this evening I will focus on the big picture. We will submit more detailed comments by the deadline.

First, thank you for your leadership in supporting transit in Virginia including funding reduced fare and free fare initiatives for bus service. Transit is now receiving more funding than it has in the past, however we believe it should receive far more – as much as 50% of future state transportation funding in order to support economic opportunity and equity, more efficient land use and state competitiveness, and fight climate change.

Second, that you for your great leadership on Virginia intercity rail. Your analysis showed that adding another lane the length of I-95 would be both costly and a failure due to induced demand. Since our Reconnecting Virginia project in 2005, we've shown that intercity rail, transit, and transit-oriented development in the state's urban crescent should be a top priority. Third, thank you for adoption and implementation of SmartScale which in general is resulting in more effective projects and spending.

However, we urge you to do more, in light of the existential threat of climate change. Virginia will be heavily impacted by sea level rise and we must limit that rise if we are going to save our coastal communities including Hampton Roads and the Naval facilities. In addition, we will be faced with more flooding events, washed out roads and transit facilities, as well as longer droughts and significant heat events.

This means you must scale back the extensive road expansion in state plans. New and wider roads in metro areas fill up in as few as five years and they fuel more auto-dependent development, more vehicle miles traveled, and more greenhouse gas emissions. "Congestion relief" is not possible. The science shows electrical vehicles will not be enough. We need to reduce VMT by at least 20% statewide, and because rural residents have fewer options and must drive more miles, our metro areas need to reduce VMT even more. We know how to do this – by focusing development in our cities and towns, and creating transit-oriented communities (TOCs) in our suburbs. This must be combined with focusing our transportation \$ on transit, on local street networks for TOCs and on bike/walk investments. It also means pricing solutions like parking pricing, and employer transit benefits, and zero transit fares.

As usual, we strongly disagree with the Northern VA Transportation Alliance whose focus on the failed metric congestion reduction has done great damage to planning in NOVA.

Our suburban elected officials must recognize that the auto-dependent land use approvals that they are granting and the efforts to widen so many roads (even if they have bike/ped paths) creates more traffic and less than ideal experiences for pedestrians and cyclists.

For today, I will just mention two items of concern:

495Next – we and our partners urge you to delay action because VA and Md have not studied a TOC/transit/demand management alternative. The P3 process continues to override fair and objective alternatives analysis. As it is, the proposal to date has far too little funding for transit, and extends the provision limiting transit and HOV to 24% of HOT traffic after which the taxpayers must pay fees to Transurban.

State of good repair – We appreciate the increased attention to maintenance. But it appears that you are including capacity expansion, at least for bridges, in your state of good repair program. If that means additional vehicle lanes, we ask that the relevant portion of the cost due to capacity expansion not be charged in the SGR category but to the capital funding spent on road expansion.

Route 1: We are concerned that the widening of most of Route 1 will create a barrier and make the road far more dangerous for pedestrians, cyclists, and transit riders. So could the proposed 123 and Route 1 interchange.

Thank you,

Stewart Schwartz  
Executive Director