



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
1401 EAST BROAD STREET
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA 23219-2000

Stephen C. Brich, P.E.
COMMISSIONER

October 10, 2019

The Honorable Charles W. Carrico, Sr.
Senate of Virginia
Post Office Box 396
Richmond VA 23218

The Honorable David Yancey
Virginia House of Delegates
Post Office Box 1163
Newport News VA 23601

Dear Gentlemen:

I am pleased to submit this report in accordance with §46.2-749.3 (A.3) of the Code of Virginia. Section 46.2-749.3 (A.3) directs the Commissioner of Highways to annually report the “traffic volumes on the HOV facilities that result in a degraded condition as identified in SAFETEA-LU or other applicable federal law and reported to the Federal Highway Administration.”

As set forth in 23 U.S.C. 166, a High Occupancy Vehicle or “HOV” facility is considered to be degraded if vehicles operating on the facility are failing to maintain a minimum average operating speed 90 percent of the time over a consecutive 180-day period during morning or evening weekday peak hour periods (or both). The minimum operating speed means (a) 45 miles per hour, in the case of an HOV facility with a speed limit of 50 miles per hour or greater; and (b) not more than 10 miles per hour below the speed limit, in the case of an HOV facility with a speed limit of less than 50 miles per hour (United States Code, Title 23, Section 166).

At this time, the only facility that meets the operating speed degraded condition continues to be Interstate 66 West outside of the Capital Beltway. A recent analysis revealed that varying levels of degradation exist along this corridor between the Capital Beltway and Route 234.

The traffic volumes of this HOV facility that are associated with a degraded condition vary by location. Due to the ongoing construction of the I-66 HOT lane facility, there has been very limited data collection along this corridor as devices have been removed or disabled. Data was obtained from a detector at MM 50.5 during May 2019.

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Near the western terminus of the HOV lane at MP 50.5, the traffic volume during HOV hours is 1,272 vehicles per hour in the eastbound direction. For the westbound direction at the same location, the traffic volume is 1,247 vehicles per hour during HOV hours.

Federal law and regulations require that the state take steps to bring a degraded facility into compliance including, "limiting or discontinuing the use of the facility by the [clean special fuel] vehicles whenever the operation of the facility is degraded." The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) has developed a plan that presents a phased approach to mitigate degradation in the I-66 Corridor that began with the General Assembly's limitation on use of I-66 HOV lanes by clean special fuel vehicles to those vehicles with clean special fuel license plates issued prior to 2011 (see Chapter 390 of the 2010 Acts of Assembly). The plan measures include expanding the number of dedicated HOV lanes and converting those lanes to High Occupancy Toll (HOT) lanes, which incorporates a managed lanes concept of operation and will require vehicles using the lanes, including clean special fuel vehicles, to either satisfy an HOV requirement of three occupants or pay a toll.¹

In December 2017, VDOT commenced operation of the HOT lanes on Inside I-66 from I-495 to U.S. Route 29 in Rosslyn. The Public-Private Partnership project for development and operation of the HOT Lanes on I-66 outside the Capital Beltway has been awarded, and the project is expected to become operational in 2022.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or Bart Thrasher, Chief Engineer, at 804-786-4798.

Sincerely,



Stephen C. Brich, P.E.
Commissioner of Highways

cc: The Honorable Shannon Valentine
Mr. Bart Thrasher
Ms. Helen Cuervo
Mr. Kevin Gregg
Mr. Alireza Farhangi
Mr. Paul Szatkowski

¹ It is noted that, pursuant to 23 USC 166, as of September 30, 2019, hybrid vehicles are no longer authorized to utilize HOV lanes without the requisite number of occupants. However, the expiration of the hybrid HOV exemption had not yet taken effect at the time data was collected for purposes of this report.