

## John Kane Citizens 4 Traffic Relief

Proponents of HB 292 claim this bill is similar to legislation in place on the Eastern Shore. Unfortunately, that is not entirely accurate: The key difference is that the Eastern Shore law, passed in 1978, was approved to block a NEW *intrastate stand-alone* toll highway the State was proposing at the time to build.

Our concern is that the language in this bill is broad enough to effectively block the State and Federal Agencies who are charged with planning and maintaining Maryland's EXISTING *Interstate* Highway system.

Moreover, it is highly doubtful this kind of broad legislation limiting State and Federal authority would be upheld in court challenges given Commerce Clause and federal preemptions that have been in place for decades.

The sponsors of HB 292 have the same ultimate goal as legislators had last year when this bill was first proposed. They want to block the Transportation Relief Plan.

Citizens 4 Traffic Relief believes new managed toll lanes are part of an “*all the above*” solution that includes funding for projects such as the CCT and other BRT solutions.

In 2017 The *National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board* (TPB) at the *Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments* (COG) approved the region’s new long-range transportation plan called **Visualize 2045**. They recommended adding new managed lanes and express-bus service on those lanes as the most effective solution to our regions congestions challenges.

This plan is exactly what this bill would seek to effectively block, denying us the only realistic solution anyone has yet put forward to deal with the traffic nightmare we call the Beltway.

The National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) at the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) approved the region's new long-range transportation plan, Visualize 2045.

The plan consists of more than 600 highway and transit projects totaling \$291 billion that the region expects to fund through 2045. It includes the cost of new projects and operations and maintenance of the current system. The new major additions to the plan include:

In Maryland, managed toll lanes on I-495 and I-270 and widening of US 301, MD 201, and MD 97.

In Montgomery County, five additional segments to its Bus Rapid Transit network.

In Virginia, widening of US 15; and changing the completion date and the number of HOT lanes in each direction on the northern portion of I-495.

In the District of Columbia, six additional segments to its bicycle lane network.

For WMATA, improvements to add capacity to the Metrorail system, such as running 100 percent 8-car trains during peak periods.

During discussions before adopting the new plan, some local Maryland jurisdictions expressed concerns about the impact of the I-495 and I-270 managed toll lanes project on their communities. In response, the Maryland Department of Transportation provided a description of how they will address the concerns. The board also voted to approve the air quality conformity analysis, which found that the projects meet air quality standards and that future vehicle-related emissions remain below approved regional limits.

For the first time, the TPB's long-range plan also includes a set of aspirational initiatives that the board identified for their potential to address some of the region's biggest transportation challenges in the future. Transportation agencies in the region are urged to develop projects, programs, and policies to advance these initiatives. The seven initiatives are to:

- Bring jobs and housing closer together
- Expand bus rapid transit and transitways
- Move more people on Metrorail
- Increase telecommuting and other options for commuting
- Expand the express highway network
- Improve walk and bike access to transit
- Complete the National Capital Trail

*“Over the last four years, members of the TPB, transportation agencies, and COG have worked hard to put together Visualize 2045, a long-range plan that aims to provide affordable, sustainable, and multi-modal transportation options for the residents and businesses of this region,”* said TPB Chair Charles Allen. *“The plan goes above and beyond previous plans by also featuring unfunded initiatives that have the potential to significantly improve the region’s transportation system and that the region agrees are worth pursuing.”*

Many board members commended the extensive public outreach by staff about Visualize 2045 and the new features of the plan through surveys, forums, and community events across the region, which generated input from more than 6,000 people.