



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

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

Charles A. Kilpatrick, P.E.
Commissioner

November 10, 2015

The Honorable Stephen D. Newman
Senate of Virginia
Post Office Box 480
Forest, Virginia 24551

The Honorable Thomas Davis Rust
Virginia House of Delegates
730 Elden Street
Herndon, Virginia 20170

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 defined by MAP-21 (Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century), which is the successor to SAFETEA-LU, an 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 a 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 a 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 (I-66) 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. For this report, the volumes are provided for both the eastern and western portions of the I-66 HOV lanes between the Capital Beltway and Route 234.

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The average peak hour traffic volumes on the eastbound lane in the morning HOV restricted period, during which speed degradation conditions exist, are as follows. Near the western terminus of the HOV lane near Route 234, the average peak hour traffic volume is 638 vehicles per hour. Near the Capital Beltway by Cedar Road, the average peak hour traffic volume is 1079 vehicle per hour.

On the westbound lane in the afternoon HOV restricted period, speed degradation conditions also exist. Near the western terminus of HOV lane near Route 234, the average peak hour traffic volume is 501 vehicles per hour. Near the Capital Beltway by Cedar Road, the average peak hour traffic volume is 1,410 vehicles per hour.

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 has developed a plan that presents a phased approach to mitigate degradation in the I-66 Corridor which 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). Future steps will include implementation and operation of Active Traffic Management along I-66 (opened September 2015), increasing the occupancy requirements from 2 to 3 passengers along the I-66 Corridor, which has been the adopted policy of the National Capitol Region Transportation Planning Board since 2010, discontinuing use of the HOV lanes by non-HOV clean fuel vehicles throughout the I-66 Corridor, and reduction of merging activity and creation of managed lanes (HOT Lanes).

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

Sincerely,



Charles A. Kilpatrick, P.E.
Commissioner of Highways

Cc: The Honorable Aubrey L. Layne
Mr. Garrett Moore
Ms. Helen Cuervo
Mr. Dean Gustafson
Mr. Paul Szatkowski