

Testimony at July 12, 2021 Maryland Transit Authority Hearing
By Sally Stolz, Co-Coordinator DontWiden270.org
Rockville, Maryland

I oppose the rates proposed for the managed lanes study because they are way too high.

As others have explained, to actually commute from Rockville to Tysons corner in rush-hour if these lanes are built, would cost over \$20,000 a year if done each work day.

Who can afford \$20,000 a year for tolls?

And that doesn't include the additional tolls that people who live north of Rockville would have to pay.

MDOT says that we will have a choice. We won't HAVE to take the toll lanes.

They say we'll still be better off in the general lanes than we re now. That is false.

This plan removes the 2 inside lanes, which are general lanes for all but 15 hours a week.

They **ARE free lanes** 91% of the time.

But they won't be free at all if this toll road is built.

They will be tolled
or HOV-3
24 hours a day, every day of the year.

And from Wootton Parkway south to the split, there are currently SEVEN lanes on each side, plus the merge lanes.

The new plan has only five free lanes.
That is a reduction of two free lanes on each side.

Two lanes on each side.....Gone!

So when Governor Hogan says all free lanes will remain free, that's NOT true! All free lanes will NOT remain free.

I say this to highlight that the plan for the toll road is to CREATE CONGESTION in the free lanes to force desperate people onto the toll lanes.

Transurban, the Australian company MDOT selected for this project, needs congestion to make money.

For about ten years they prevented the Virginia Department of Transportation from building an additional southbound lane on I-95 at the Occoquan River crossing because it would relieve congestion.

Yes, that is right. They blocked it **because it would relieve congestion.**

Imbedded in the fine print of their contracts are “non-compete clauses” that block efforts to relieve congestion.

Anything the local government wants to do to relieve congestion either incurs a huge payment to Transurban Or is completely blocked.

For Transurban, congestion brings profit.

Another example is the recent revelation that if a rail line is built over the American Legion Bridge, and continuing in Virginia, Transurban would block it or demand payment.

The rail would reduce congestion and therefore reduce profit.

WHO would design a supposed “traffic relief” plan that incentivizes the operator to maintain and INCREASE congestion?

Not just in the general lanes, but also in the toll lanes.

The more congested THEY are,
the higher the toll rate
and the higher the profit.

This P3 is a soul-crushing plan.
It is soul-crushing to think anyone would want to unleash it on us.
It is NOT “traffic relief” and NOT FREE!
It’s an unconscionable regressive tax.
A wolf in sheep’s clothing.
We absolutely must not let Marylanders fall victim to it.

Montgomery County leaders have a MUCH more effective solution,
and they have had it for years.
Two Reversible Lanes on I-270
Widen the American Legion Bridge
with federal infrastructure debt

Thank you!