



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

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

Charles A. Kilpatrick, P.E.
Commissioner

October 26, 2016

The Honorable Charles W. Carrico
Senate of Virginia
P.O. Box 1100
Galax, Virginia 24333

The Honorable Ronald A. Villanueva
Virginia House of Delegates
P.O. Box 61005
Virginia Beach, Virginia 23466

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 23 U.S.C. 166, 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.

The Honorable Stephen D. Newman
The Honorable Thomas D. Rust
October 26, 2016
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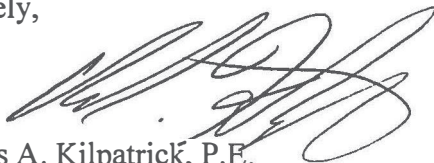
The average peak hour traffic volumes on the eastbound lane in the morning HOV restricted period, during which speed degradation conditions exist, are as follows. Near the western terminus of the HOV lane at MP 52.3 the average peak hour traffic volume is 970 vehicles per hour. Near the Capital Beltway at MP 59.8, the average peak hour traffic volume is 970 vehicles per hour.

On the westbound lane in the afternoon HOV restricted period, speed degradation conditions also exist. Near the western terminus of the HOV lane at MP 53.2 the average peak hour traffic volume is 960 vehicles per hour. Near the Capital Beltway at MP 59.9, the average peak hour traffic volume is 1105 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 licenses plates issued prior to 2011 (see Chapter 390 of the 2010 Acts of Assembly). The plan measures include continued operation and evaluation of the recently implemented Active Traffic Management along I-66 (opened September 2015), as well as increasing the occupancy requirements from 2 to 3 passengers along the I-66 Corridor, which has been the adopted policy of the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board since 2010 and was recently approved by the Commonwealth Transportation Board to be implemented at certain key dates specified by the Board, 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). These latter measures will be implemented as part of Transform66: Inside the Beltway and Outside the Beltway projects and improvements that are the subject of active or recently completed procurements.

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