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GOV. MCDONNELL ANNOUNCES COMMONWEALTH SEEKS PRIVATE SECTOR INNOVATIONS TO EASE CONGESTION ON I-66 IN NORTHERN VIRGINIA

From the office of Gov. Bob McDonnell

RICHMOND—Gov. Bob McDonnell announced today that the commonwealth is looking for the best and brightest ideas, suggestions and recommendations from the private sector to transform Interstate 66 from a highly congested corridor to a multi-modal transportation facility that moves traffic and people more efficiently.

The Office of Transportation Public Private Partnerships, in coordination with the Virginia Department of Transportation and the Department of Rail and Public Transportation, issued a Request for Information (RFI) to seek private sector input on a range of best practices and innovative approaches to developing and financing transportation improvements on a 25-mile section of I-66 from U.S. Route 15 in Prince William County to I-495 in Fairfax County. Improvements under consideration would add additional capacity to the road, provide multi-modal options and possibly finance the project through tolled express lanes, similar to the I-495 Express Lanes.

“I-66 improvements begin with opening the gates to private sector ideas on how the Commonwealth can ease congestion on this vital transportation link in one of the most heavily traveled areas of the state and country,” said Governor McDonnell. “The goal is to make I-66 an efficient and dynamic transportation facility so that motorists and commuters save time and money, while cutting down on the stress and cost of waiting in traffic.”

Information from the RFI responses will help the Commonwealth to further develop the project, which may result in a formal procurement of a contract, possibly through the Public Private Transportation Act.

Currently, I-66 corridor improvements are in the environmental review process. Following public hearings last spring, the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) advanced the following concepts from the Tier 1 Draft Environmental Impact Statement for further consideration:

- Widen I-66 by building additional general purpose lanes that would not be tolled
- Convert the existing high occupancy vehicle lane into either a one or two lane (in each direction) facility that would be free to carpoolers, buses and emergency vehicles. The HOV lanes would operate similar to the I-495 Express Lanes, which were completed late 2012 or the I-95 Express Lanes, which are under construction.
- Locate Bus Rapid Transit in the median of I-66 extending west from Vienna to Haymarket

The CTB also advanced improving certain interchanges and choke points, increasing connections between travel modes, enhancing traveler information and traffic operations technology and making location-specific safety improvements for further consideration.

The Commonwealth also welcomes additional improvement concepts for other transportation alternatives, such as Metrorail extension and light rail transit.

RFI responses are due by Nov. 25, 2013. Information collected from the RFI process will help the commonwealth to make the best decision on how to advance the project.

The I-66 RFI and other project details are posted on www.i66ppta.org.