

**Written Comments on the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority's
Draft TransAction Update, September 18, 2022
By Allen Muchnick, Active Prince William Board Member**

These comments expand upon the oral statement I delivered at NVTAs September 8, 2022 public hearing. I live in the City of Manassas, and I serve on the board of [Active Prince William](#), an active mobility advocacy group.

The Northern Virginia Transportation Authority's transportation planning and programming processes are fundamentally flawed, starting with its statutory mandate to focus on traffic congestion, while ignoring the critical roles of land use and induced demand as well as the environmental, equity, and traffic-safety problems caused by our region's overdependence on auto travel.

The draft TransAction project list--a discombobulated and non-prioritized hodgepodge of transportation projects submitted by various local agencies--is not an effective tool to implement the TransAction vision of developing "a safe, equitable, sustainable, and integrated multimodal transportation system that enhances quality of life, strengthens the economy, and builds resilience."

Northern Virginia's roadways have been expanded for the past seventy years, yet we still face perpetual traffic congestion, and most NoVA residents will continue to lack viable alternatives to driving alone for most local trips. Repeating the same activity over and over and expecting a different result is the definition of insanity.

Developing an independent Northern Virginia transportation plan that does not reinforce and advance the goals, objectives, and strategies of Visualize 2045--the federally mandated long-range transportation plan for the entire Washington region--is counterproductive and foolish. An unconstrained and un-prioritized transportation project wish list, whose price tag far exceeds the funding that is expected to become available before 2045, is largely a wasteful exercise.

In June 2022, the TPB committed to a strategy of completing all planned segments of its National Capital Trail Network (NCTN) by 2030. Yet, no such planned trail segments are identified in the TransAction project list, and it's likely that many are not even included.

In the TransAction project list, many of the road-widening and interchange proposals do not mention the inclusion of associated pedestrian and bicycling elements, which might be new, upgrades, exact replacements, or preserved pre-existing facilities. For over 18 years, VDOT has operated under a Complete Streets Policy adopted by the Commonwealth Transportation Board. The NVTa also needs to adopt a Complete Streets policy that requires all NVTa-funded projects to incorporate all related pedestrian and bicycling accommodations as safe, direct, and efficient facilities, unless one or more specified exemptions exist.

Another much-needed, yet simple, NVTA reform would require advertised public hearings before the relevant governing body endorses any project for NVTA-related funding.

My review of the TransAction project list will begin with the projects added for this update.

Project #353, a roundabout at Rtes 28 and 234 Business in the City of Manassas, does not describe any pedestrian or bicycling improvements, which this urban project clearly needs.

Project #354, the Route 28 STARS improvements in Yorkshire, mentions the possible addition of a sidewalk but fails to mention much-needed bicycling access via a shared-use path and/or bike lanes.

Project #355, a short extension of Mathis Avenue in Manassas Park, does not mention any pedestrian or bicycling components, although those are clearly needed and expected. Moreover, Project #432 describes essentially the same project.

Project #376, a widening of Route 28 through Yorkshire, is related to Project #354, except it would add two travel lanes. The description of this project omits much-needed pedestrian-bicycle and bus transit improvements.

Projects 377, 379, 380, and 381, all in Prince William County, do not mention any pedestrian or bicycling improvements, although these should be vital components of each project.

Project #382, a bus hub on Mosby St in Manassas, does not mention pedestrian or bicycling access, bicycle parking, or shared micromobility accommodations.

Project #383, an interchange at Route 123 and Old Bridge Road, does not mention much-needed pedestrian and bicycling accommodations.

Project #385, the Horner Road Park and Ride lot, does not mention pedestrian or bicycle access or bicycle parking.

Projects 387-398, all in Fairfax County and most involving the Fairfax County Parkway, all fail to describe critically needed pedestrian and bicycling components.

Project 411, double tracking the Norfolk Southern Railroad west of Nokesville, should include a rail-with-trail component.

Project 412 is a rail-with-trail along the VRE Manassas Line between Alexandria and the City of Manassas.

Project 422, an extension of Conner Drive in Manassas Park, does not mention vital pedestrian and bicycling components. In addition, the scope of this project should be expanded to the northwest to include a grade-separated pedestrian and bicycle crossing of Route 28.

Projects 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 431, and 432, all in the City of Manassas Park, all fail to describe much-needed pedestrian and bicycling accommodations.

Project 432, which duplicates #355, an extension of Mathis Avenue, does not mention much-needed pedestrian and bicycling accommodations.

Project 441, which overlaps with Project 412, fails to extend the VRE Trail to downtown Manassas.

Project 443, a long-missing shared-use path along Rte 234 north of Rte 294, fails to mention the need to complete the I-66 Trail in Prince William County and to connect it to Bull Run Drive in Fairfax County.

Project 444, a shared-use path along Route 28, erroneously cites Route 29, not Route 28, in the project description.

Project 464, an interchange at the Prince William Pkwy at Hastings Drive, omits critically needed improvements to the Prince William Pkwy Trail at that location.

Project 465, an access road to the Hazy Center, omits needed pedestrian and bicycle components.

The project list omits critically needed pedestrian and bicycle access at the following locations:

- Across Bull Run at I-66, Old Centreville Road, Rte 28/Centreville Rd, and Yates Ford Road
- Across I-66 at or near Sudley Road/Route 234 Business
- Across I-95 at or near Route 123 or Occoquan Road, Prince William Pkwy, Opitz Blvd, Dale Blvd, Cardinal Drive, Dumfries Road, Batestown Rd, and Joplin Rd

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