



Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation



RELEASE: IMMEDIATE
Contact: Kelsey Webb
(804) 786-6793
kelsey.webb@drpt.virginia.gov

Public Hearings Scheduled
DC2RVA High Speed Rail Study Draft EIS Document Released for Public Comment

Richmond, Va., September 25, 2017 –Today, the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) and the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) announced public hearings for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that is now available for review and comment.

The Draft EIS provides an overview and comparison of the alternatives under consideration including recommendations for a preferred alternative in each corridor segment. The draft document is available online at http://www.dc2rvarail.com/draft and in paper copy at local libraries, planning district commissions, and the DRPT Richmond office.

Public Hearing Schedule

DRPT will host a combined open house and formal public hearing at each of the following locations. The public will have an opportunity to discuss the project with team members before providing comments for the official record either in writing or during the formal portion of the public hearing.

Table with 2 columns and 3 rows detailing public hearing locations and schedules. Locations include Richmond, Ashland, Alexandria, Fredericksburg, and Quantico, with specific dates, times for open houses and public hearings, and addresses.

**Opportunities to comment by November 7, 2017:**

- Complete the electronic form: [www.DC2RVArail.com/Contact-us/](http://www.DC2RVArail.com/Contact-us/)
- Provide verbal or written comments at the public hearing.
- Provide comments to the court reporter at the public hearing or leave comments on the toll-free project hotline: 888-832-0900 or TDD 711.
- Mail written comments to: Emily Stock, DRPT, 600 E. Main St, Suite 2102, Richmond, VA 23219.

**Special assistance accommodations**

Meeting locations are accessible to persons with disabilities. DRPT strives to provide reasonable accommodations and services for persons who require assistance to participate. For special assistance, call the Title VI Compliance Officer, 804-786-6794 or TDD 711 at least 72 hours prior to the meeting date.

**En Español?** Si necesita servicios de traducción para participar, por favor envíe un correo electrónico a: [español@DC2RVArail.com](mailto:español@DC2RVArail.com). También puede llamar a la línea directa del proyecto para dejar comentarios: 888-832-0900 or TDD 711.

For more information on the DC2RVA Tier II EIS project, visit <http://www.dc2rvarail.com/>.

**About the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation**

DRPT's mission is to improve the mobility of people and goods while expanding transportation choices in the Commonwealth through rail, public transportation, and commuter services. DRPT is committed to ensuring that no person is excluded from participation in or denied the benefits of its services on the basis of race, color, or national origin as protected by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. For additional information on DRPT's nondiscrimination policies and procedures or to file a complaint, please contact the Title VI Compliance Officer, Mike Mucha at (804) 786-6794, TDD 711, or 600 E. Main Street, Suite 2102, Richmond, VA 23219.

# Here's the worst traffic 'hot spot' in the U.S., according to a new study

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By **Katherine Shaver** September 27 at 8:01 AM

Congratulations, Washington-area drivers. You can now claim the worst traffic “hot spot” in the country — a stretch of Interstate 95 in Northern Virginia that averages a whopping 23 traffic jams a day, according to a new study released Wednesday.

Motorists heading south on I-95 between the Fairfax County Parkway and Exit 133 in Fredericksburg lose an average 33 minutes in backups that leave brake lights stretching an average 6.5 miles, according to the report by INRIX, a Kirkland, Wash.-based traffic data firm.

If congestion doesn't improve over the next decade, the researchers said, that stretch of I-95 will cost local motorists \$2.3 billion in wasted time, lost fuel and additional carbon emissions.

Nationwide, continued traffic congestion could cost drivers \$2.2 trillion over the next decade, the study found.

Bob Pishue, an INRIX senior economist, said researchers put a dollar figure on backups studied in more than 100,000 “hot spot” road segments in March and April to help public officials target improvements. Being able to prioritize transportation spending, he said, is particularly important since the Trump administration has proposed \$1 trillion in infrastructure investments.

Quantifying the costs of traffic congestion, Pishue said, will help government officials weigh the costs and benefits of improving roads or expanding transit in different areas.

Researchers didn't say how traffic should be alleviated.

“The investments should go into areas that would get the most bang for the buck,” Pishue said. “If those funds go to where drivers are feeling the most pain, it will go a long way in gaining public support” for additional infrastructure spending.

Overall, the Washington region ranked third in the United States, behind Los Angeles and New York City, for the 10-year costs of traffic congestion. Los Angeles motorists face a potential \$91 billion, while New York City drivers could lose \$64 billion to backups.

Atlanta came in fourth with \$29 billion in potential costs over the next decade, and Dallas came in fifth with \$28 billion.

INRIX, which collects data from sensors on vehicles and motorists' cellphones, usually ranks cities' traffic misery by focusing on motorists, such as how much time they spend in backups.

This time, Pishue said, researchers examined traffic in different road segments.

The Washington area had two other traffic "hot spots" among the 25 worst, the study found. Northbound I-95 from an area south of Fredericksburg to Exit 143 (Garrisonville Road), also in Northern Virginia, came in seventh with 936 traffic jams over the two-month study.

In Maryland, the eastern part of the Capital Beltway between Kenilworth Avenue (Route 201) and just east of the Woodrow Wilson Bridge in Prince George's County ranked ninth worst with nearly 700 backups.

John B. Townsend II, a spokesman for AAA Mid-Atlantic, said he wasn't surprised to hear I-95 in Northern Virginia had earned such a dubious distinction.

The highway's 29 miles of express toll lanes, which opened in 2014, have given motorists willing to pay a faster, more reliable option and freed up more space in the regular lanes, he said.

They've also caused more backups where the toll lanes end and vehicles have to merge into the regular travel lanes.

"In one way they're a godsend because they've lived up to their promise of creating faster commute times on I-95," Townsend said. "But we're seeing these slowdowns in the regular lanes. You just get these backups up and down the line . . . At the end of the day, you still save time."

Kelly Hannon, a spokeswoman for the Virginia Department of Transportation, said the state will spend \$800 million over the next five years to improve I-95 in the Fredericksburg area.

She said traffic is particularly congested there because local motorists who use I-95 as a Main Street for errands mix with regional commuters, tractor-trailers and long-distance travelers.

"Any incident can cause delays very quickly," Hannon said. "It's just a very fragile system whenever anything unexpected happens."

The state has started extending the express toll lanes two miles to the south and plans to build another 10 miles of them south to Route 17 (Exit 133), Hannon said.

It's also planning to build three new southbound lanes in the median to separate local and through traffic between Exit 133 and Exit 3 (Route 3).

Stewart Schwartz of the Coalition For Smarter Growth said adding more lanes will only attract more traffic. He said I-95's continued congestion, even in areas with express toll lanes, shows additional lanes only makes it easier for more people to drive.

He noted Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan (R) recently proposed adding express toll lanes on the Beltway, Interstate 270 and the Baltimore-Washington Parkway.

Northern Virginia's roads won't see relief, Schwartz said, until the region's growth plans insist on more affordable housing closer to jobs and transit options.

“Without that,” he said, “you're going to keep the pressure on that highway.”

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Katherine Shaver is a transportation and development reporter. She joined The Washington Post in 1997 and has covered crime, courts, education and local government but most prefers writing about how people get — or don't get — around the Washington region. [🐦 Follow @shaverk](#)

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