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MDTA BOARD APPROVES PUBLIC HEARING PLAN FOR I-95 ETL NORTHBOUND EXTENSION TOLL RATE RANGE SETTING

Public Comment & Hearings will Begin in First Quarter of 2023

BALTIMORE, MD (December 15, 2022) – The Maryland Transportation Authority (MDTA) Board today approved a plan to establish public hearings for the toll rate range setting process for the new I-95 Express Toll Lanes (ETL) Northbound Extension, a longtime priority project for Harford County. With the MDTA Board’s approval, a schedule for public hearings will be announced soon, with the hearings expected to begin in the first quarter of 2023.

The \$1.1 billion I-95 ETL Northbound Extension project began in 2019, following the success of the existing I-95 ETL. The existing ETL are more popular than originally forecasted. During 2022, the lanes have had 8.8 million annual users – or 3.9 million more users than the 4.9 million projected in 2013 prior to the opening. That’s an increase of 80% above the 2013 projection. Along with time savings for users of the I-95 ETL, users of the free, general-purpose lanes also have experienced improved travel times, with an average 12% reduction due to the reduced congestion. The greatest benefit for all drivers is a trip time they can rely upon.

The existing I-95 ETL provide eight miles – seven of them tolled – of generally, free-flowing traffic between I-895 and just north of MD 43 (White Marsh Boulevard) in Northeast Baltimore. Opening in 2014, the I-95 ETL brought much needed traffic relief to one of the most congested portions of I-95 in Baltimore, removing the highway segment from bottleneck lists. I-95 is the backbone of the East Coast transportation network and is essential to the movement of people and freight.

The I-95 ETL Northbound Extension is expected to open to traffic by the end of 2024 to MD 152, with the full extension to north of MD 24 expected to open to traffic by the end of 2027. The project will add 12 miles of additional express toll lanes to I-95 from the northern limit of the existing lanes at the MD 43 interchange in Baltimore County to MD 24 in Harford County.

The project includes construction to replace or reconstruct bridges and overpasses, provide multi-modal connections such as transit service to the new Park and Ride lots, reconfigure interchanges at MD 152 and MD 24, construct new noise walls, and various additional work. As part of the project, new ramps connecting I-695 (Baltimore Beltway) to the northbound ETL are expected to open by the end of 2027. The project also will address congestion on MD 24 northbound, resolving a request that’s been another key priority for Harford County for several years.

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To date, MDTA has completed 14 projects related to the I-95 ETL Northbound Extension, with four under construction and eight in the design phase. For more information, visit <https://mdta.maryland.gov/I95ETLNB/home.html>.

At today's meeting, MDTA staff requested and received approval to establish public hearings for the toll rate range setting process for the I-95 ETL Northbound Extension. The proposed toll rate ranges, pricing periods and additional tolling parameters in the current proposal match existing toll rate ranges, pricing periods and additional tolling parameters that are already set on the existing I-95 ETL. **The toll structure for the existing I-95 ETL, between I-895 and just north of MD 43, is not changing as part of this process.**

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