

# MD 24 Northbound Auxiliary Lane Through Singer Road February 4, 2021 Virtual Public Update Question Summary

## GENERAL PROGRAM

### 1. Why are you building ETL?

The proposed I-95 Northbound Extension will bring safety and congestion relief on Northbound I-95 between MD 43 to north of MD 24, in a manner similar to the successes experienced with the existing ETL segment.

Prior to the opening, a 2004 independent study by the American Highway Users Alliance, ranked this highway segment at 64 out of 233 of the worst bottleneck locations in the United States. This segment of highway also remained on the list of the top ten worst bottlenecks in Maryland until the I-95 ETL opened. The existing I-95 ETL, which opened in 2014, have significantly reduced peak period congestion on I-95 between the I-95/I-895 split and White Marsh completely removing this highway segment from the bottleneck lists.

The ETLs have also been profoundly popular during off-peak periods with more than double the usage of that anticipated before construction. Last year, there were days in which over 44,000 vehicles used the I-95 ETL.

Current congestion, safety, and reliability issues experienced on northbound I-95 today will similarly be corrected by the ETL northbound extension.

At this time, there is no funding allocated for southbound I-95.

### 2. Has the MDTA taken into consideration post-pandemic traffic changes and what they will mean to highways, toll collection, and related projects?

We understand how COVID-19 is impacting all Marylanders today – in how we work, in how we spend our free time, and in how we travel. While our number one priority continues to be the health and safety of Marylanders, we will continue with our efforts to ensure transportation improvements are being developed to meet our State's needs not only for today but for the next 20-plus years. The MDTA has updated traffic forecasts, considering post-pandemic conditions, and we do anticipate some sustained traffic volume reductions in the near-term traffic. However, these near-term declines are not anticipated to offset the long-term traffic growth anticipated out to the 2040 design year. Furthermore, we are observing traffic returning, where 83% of the pre-COVID-19 traffic returned to MDTA facilities during the month of January alone. The ETL program remains necessary to address today's safety and congestion issues, which will only be exacerbated with long-term traffic growth

### 3. If there is an accident in the general-purpose lane, will I be forced to use the I-95 ETL?

No, the current alternate/detour plan for incidents on I-95 directs motorists to use US 40 (Pulaski Highway) and/or US 1 (Bel Air Road). The I-95 ETL would be available as an option to the customer.

#### 4. **MDTA has been converting existing facilities to cashless tolling. Will the new ETL require an *E-ZPass*?**

The new I-95 ETL segment will utilize high speed all-electronic tolling, similar to the current ETL. Today, 97% of MDTA's customers currently use an *E-ZPass* in the I-95 ETL. This is your best option to save money. For anyone concerned about cost, *E-ZPass* is the lowest cost option to pay your tolls with no monthly fee, no transponder fee, and a 25% discount below the Cash rate. Users can get free *E-ZPass* transponders through the *E-ZPass* website.

Although *E-ZPass* is the most convenient, easiest, and lowest cost way to pay for your toll, you may also pay the toll after your trip using Video Tolling. Upon entering the I-95 ETL, a photo of your license plate will be taken, allowing the MDTA to identify the registered owner with the appropriate state's Motor Vehicle Administration. A bill will be sent to that address for the Video Toll transaction.

Rates for video tolling are higher than for *E-ZPass* users, so check the MDTA website for video toll rate information, or to sign-up with *E-ZPass* to begin saving money today.

In addition to the *E-ZPass* and Video Tolling options, MDTA will offer a new Pay by Plate option effective July 1, 2020 that will allow tolls to be billed to credit cards. *E-ZPass* remains your best option but Pay by Plate is still a better option than Video Tolling which benefits infrequent toll customers as well as those who do not want to maintain a prepaid *E-ZPass* balance.

#### 5. **When will the Southbound ETL be constructed?**

There is currently no funding for engineering or construction for the southbound ETL lanes.

### MD 24 NORTHBOUND AUXILIARY LANE THROUGH SINGER ROAD

#### 6. **What roadway improvements are proposed as part of this project?**

The project will involve adding a third lane on northbound MD 24 from north of the MD 24 / MD 924 interchange to ½ mile north of the Singer Road intersection. The roadway will be widened on the median side of the two-lane roadway in the northbound direction where necessary to accommodate this third lane. The northbound lanes will be resurfaced and restriped.

The MD 24 Auxiliary Lane Project is an interim improvement as it relates to MDTA's I-95 ETL Program. The MD 24 Corridor and the MD 24/MD 924 intersection are owned and operated by the MDOT State Highway Administration (MDOT SHA). Future improvements on MD 24 and MD 924 will be completed by MDOT SHA.

#### 7. **Will this project add toll lanes on MD 24?**

No. Toll lanes are not being proposed on MD 24.

**8. Will the entire grass median on MD 24 be eliminated?**

Proposed roadway widening on MD 24 will be constructed into the median, but a portion of the grass median will remain.

**9. Will this project change the intersection and traffic signal at Singer Road?**

This project includes modifications to the Singer Road intersection and existing traffic signal to accommodate the third northbound through-lane. No turning movements will be added or removed from the intersection. All proposed improvements are being coordinated with MDOT SHA.

**10. Does this project propose changes to the MD 24 / MD 924 interchange?**

This project does not propose any changes to the MD 24 / MD 924 interchange. The proposed auxiliary lane begins just north of MD 924.

**11. Will a Dynamic Message Sign (DMS) be installed as part of this project? What information will be shown on it?**

A DMS is proposed on southbound MD 24 north of MD 924. This will be installed as part of the I-95 / MD 24 Interchange Improvements project. It will show information related to traffic and travel times on I-95.

**12. Were potential impacts to environmental and natural resources evaluated, including pollution or cultural resources?**

As a part of the project development, an environmental assessment was performed following the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) which is required by federal and state laws. The NEPA study evaluates natural resources, air quality, noise, cultural and historic resources.

**13. Were potential impacts to adjacent property values evaluated as part of this project?**

Studies and design for this project and project components was completed in accordance with federal and state guidelines and requirements. A study of property values is not a standard component of the federal and state transportation projects.

**14. Is this project coordinating with MDOT SHA and Harford County?**

Yes, all projects associated with the I-95 ETL Northbound Extension Program are coordinated with local agencies.

**15. How will this project be funded?**

This project will be funded by MDTA through toll revenue collected from MDTA toll facilities. MD 24 will not be tolled.

**16. When will final design for this project be complete?**

The plans are anticipated to be completed in Fall 2021.

**17. When will construction start? How long will it last?**

Construction is anticipated to be in Winter 2022/23. The duration will be approximately 18 months, and is expected to be complete in Summer 2024.

**18. Will construction be completed during overnight hours?**

There may be some during nighttime hours, but the contractor must follow all local noise ordinances.

**MD 24 NOISE WALLS**

**19. How did you determine the location and size of proposed noise walls? Is the design likely to change in the future?**

Noise wall evaluation and design are being completed in accordance with federal and state standards. MDOT Noise Policy outlines a multi-step process for noise analysis, design, and evaluation to establish noise walls that are feasible and reasonable. The noise walls that have been designed have been sized according to these guidelines and are not likely to change significantly in the future.

**20. I live on Airdrie Avenue. Why aren't I getting a noise wall?**

A noise analysis was completed for the study area. Noise levels can vary throughout the neighborhood based on the distance from the noise source, terrain, elevation differences, etc. For this community, there are a lot of earth berms and varying terrain in the study area which affects how the noise travels. As a result of the varying terrain, some areas were determined to be impacted whereas others were not.

**21. When were existing noise monitoring measurements taken?**

Noise monitoring was completed in February and March 2020, prior to the stay-at-home orders related to COVID-19. The monitoring was done during free flow conditions, which creates a higher noise level than stop and go traffic.

**22. If noise level measurements are taken at ground level, do they account for residences in multi-story buildings?**

Noise measurements are taken outside at ground level in accordance with Noise Analysis Policies published by MDOT. After these measurements are gathered, a comprehensive noise model is developed for the entire corridor to reflect existing noise levels and to predict future noise levels. Traffic noise impacts are determined for each residence, including individual residences in multi-story buildings.

**23. What will the noise walls look like? Will they be mounted in the ground or on retaining walls?**

There will be aesthetic finishes applied to the noise walls, however the final finish has not been selected. The noise walls will be ground mounted.

**24. Will additional trees be planted along MD 24 in areas where noise walls are not proposed?**

Final design plans for the project will include landscape plans in keeping with the existing roadway character, however no additional trees are currently being proposed for screening purposes.

## RELATED PROJECTS

**25. Does the Woodsdale noise wall allow clearance for a pedestrian crossing over I-95?**

A pedestrian connection over I-95 is not included in the program plans at this time.

In the future, a pedestrian connection could be provided by removing one noise panel and modifying the two adjacent noise panels to ensure that adequate noise abatement is still being provided while allowing the pedestrian connection to extend and cross I-95.

**26. Is there still a Park and Ride at the MD 152 Interchange?**

Yes, the existing Park and Ride at the MD 152 Interchange will remain in place until construction activities begin for the MD 152 Interchange Improvements project. The interchange project is scheduled to begin construction in fall 2021.

**27. Will the Park and Ride on the Edgewood side of MD 24 be closed?**

No, the existing Park and Ride on MD 24 south of I-95 will remain.

**28. Will the Park and Rides have Electric Vehicle (EV) charging stations?**

The Park and Rides will have the compatibility for EV chargers to be added in the future.

**29. What impacts will construction of the MD 24 / MD 924 Park and Ride have on MD 924 and Woodsdale Road?**

The MD 24 / MD 924 Park and Ride includes a right-in/right-out access point with turn lanes on MD 24. Full access for the Park and Ride is being provided at Woodsdale Road. A traffic study was conducted for the Park and Ride project, which illustrated that additional traffic associated with the improvements did not exceed the capacity of the existing road system.

**30. Will additional lanes or turn movements be included on MD 24 between I-95 and MD 924?**

A future project within the I-95 ETL program will reconfigure the I-95/MD 24 interchange. This project will remove the traffic signal for vehicles exiting I-95 NB to MD 24 from the general purpose lanes. A traffic signal will be added for vehicles exiting the I-95 ETL northbound lanes.

**31. What additional transit services are being proposed with the I-95 ETL Northbound Extension Program?**

The Park and Ride at MD 24 / MD 924 provides for transit compatibility. MDOT MTA and Harford County transit will determine if any changes to the existing routes are necessary.

**32. When will other projects associated with the I-95 ETL Northbound Extension program, including additional noise walls, begin construction?**

To safely and efficiently construct the I-95 ETL NB Extension, the large Program has been separated into over 30 individual construction projects. Several projects have been completed to date, and five projects are scheduled to begin construction this spring. There are a total of eight noise walls within the Program. Two have been completed and two more are scheduled to begin construction this spring. A project timeline can be found on the project website at <https://mdta.maryland.gov/I95ETLNB/Timeline.html>

**33. How can I get more detailed information about the MD 24 Interchange Improvements project?**

Preliminary designs for the MD 24 Interchange Improvements project are included in materials from Public Meetings held in August 2019. This information is available on the project website.

[https://mdta.maryland.gov/I95ETLNB/Past\\_Meetings.html](https://mdta.maryland.gov/I95ETLNB/Past_Meetings.html)

Additional public meetings specific to this project will be held prior to construction, approximately two years from now.

**34. Where can I find more detailed information about other projects in the program?**

Preliminary designs for the projects included in the I-95 ETL Northbound Extension Program are included in materials from Public Meetings held in August 2019. This information is available on the project website. [https://mdta.maryland.gov/I95ETLNB/Past\\_Meetings.html](https://mdta.maryland.gov/I95ETLNB/Past_Meetings.html)

**35. Are there plans to replace the I-95 / MD 136 overpass?**

Proposed improvements associated with the I-95 ETL Northbound Extension program will tie back into existing conditions south of the MD 136 overpass. Reconstruction of this overpass is not included as part of this program.

**36. Will GIS data be updated to reflect changes associated with the I-95 ETL Northbound Extension?**

Yes, GIS data is updated regularly by the state and by counties.