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Future HOT Lanes Operations Center to Use Groundbreaking Technology to Provide Faster, More Predictable Trip on the Capital Beltway

First Look at the Operations
That will Transform Travel for Carpoolers, Transit Riders and Drivers

Alexandria, Va. – Today, Capital Beltway (I-495) HOT Lanes Project partners broke ground on the HOT Operations Center. The facility will be the nerve center behind Virginia's Capital Beltway HOT Lanes – one of the most technologically advanced roadways in the country. The groundbreaking event provided a first look at the operations behind Virginia's first fully-electronic and open road tolling facility.

"Virginia is leading the way in using innovative solutions to address traffic congestion," said Sean T. Connaughton, Virginia Secretary of Transportation. "The Capital Beltway HOT Lanes bring a number of firsts to the region, including the nation's first public-private HOT Lanes initiative, as well as the first-ever HOV and transit options on the Beltway."

The Capital Beltway HOT Lanes will provide new travel choices for a faster and more predictable trip for regional travelers including drivers, carpoolers, transit riders and businesses. The HOT Operations Center will serve as the central command center for the expanded and improved Beltway travel options, coordinating the technology, infrastructure and personnel necessary to operate the HOT Lanes 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The HOT Operations Center will interface directly with VDOT's robust traffic management network to ensure smooth traffic operations, sharing of information and incident management on the Capital Beltway. The new 30,000-square-foot building will feature a traffic control room with a dedicated video wall to display live feeds from traffic cameras, and a data center and traffic control room that will constantly interface with on-road technology managing traffic and tolling operations. More than 45 miles of cable and wireless communications will be built into the Beltway to connect these technologies.

How It Will Work

The Capital Beltway HOT Lanes will use world-class expertise and the latest technology to monitor and manage the number and timing of vehicles entering the lanes, and the variable tolls that will change with traffic conditions to manage traffic flow. More than 80 traffic sensors along the roadway will continuously monitor traffic levels. Toll prices will be dynamic, adjusted continuously based on real-time traffic volumes, to keep the lanes free-flowing, even during peak travel times. A network of 76 information signs will inform drivers of real-time toll rates so they can make informed decisions on whether to enter the lanes.

The HOT Lanes will feature electronic gantries at nine points along the lanes, detecting a vehicle's entry and exit points, and total trip distance, via radio frequency identification technology. Fully electronic tolling will enable drivers to pay tolls at highway speeds, allowing for more than four times the number of vehicles per hour to utilize the HOT Lanes system.

To ensure the speed and accuracy of the electronic tolling and traffic management system, all vehicles traveling on the HOT Lanes are required to have an E-ZPass or compatible transponder. For carpools, toll gantries will have the ability to distinguish between high occupancy vehicles (HOVs) and toll-paying customers. Plans are under way to provide a new switchable transponder to offer travelers a convenient way to switch between HOV and toll-paying modes. Drivers who plan to primarily travel the lanes as toll-paying customers may use a traditional E-ZPass.

Safety is a top priority for the Capital Beltway HOT Lanes Project partners. Law enforcement officers will be present throughout the HOT Lanes corridor to enforce motorist safety and support incident response. Up to 84 closed-circuit and automatic incident-detection cameras on the roadway will quickly detect incidents and alert the HOT Operations Center operators to notify dedicated incident-response crews assigned to the HOT Lanes. The automatic incident-detection cameras can alert the operators at the HOT Operations Center within 30 seconds of an incident. These safety measures and close coordination with local emergency responders will ensure driver safety at all times.

"As the long-term operator of the Capital Beltway HOT Lanes, Transurban and Fluor, along with our partners, are focused on building a safe and sustainable road that solves some exceptionally complex transportation issues," said Tim Steinhilber, Transurban-Fluor's General Manager for the Capital Beltway HOT Lanes Project. "The operations technology behind the HOT Lanes will lead to a new driver experience and deliver relief to one of the most congested roadways in the nation. VDOT and Transurban-Fluor will frequently look at the latest technologies throughout

our partnership so that we can continually improve drivers' safety, information and overall experience on the HOT Lanes."

A public-private partnership between Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) and Transurban-Fluor, along with the Federal Highway Administration, the $2 billion Capital Beltway HOT Lanes Project is nearly two years into construction. The project includes four new Beltway lanes along a 14-mile stretch of the Beltway in Virginia from the Springfield Interchange to just north of the Dulles Toll Road and the replacement of more than $260 million dollars of aging infrastructure including 58 bridges and overpasses. Every Beltway interchange bridge and overpass is being demolished and rebuilt to accommodate the wider Beltway. Pedestrian and bike paths are being added to every new bridge crossing over the Beltway. In addition, the project includes the construction of dedicated HOT Lanes ramps to provide convenient access to major employment and retail destinations. HOT Lanes construction is expected to be completed in late 2012.

For more information on the Capital Beltway HOT Lanes Project and how the new HOT Lanes will benefit you and your community, visit www.virginiahotlanes.com or www.vamegaprojects.com.

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