

1 

2 Councilmember David Grosso



Councilmember Brianne K. Nadeau

3 

4 Councilmember Elissa Silverman

5 

Councilmember Mary M. Cheh

6
7
8
9
10 A PROPOSED RESOLUTION

11
12 _____
13
14 IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
15
16 _____
17
18

19 To declare the sense of the Council opposing plans to widen I-495, I-270, and MD 295 in
20 Maryland.

21
22 RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this
23 resolution may be cited as the “Sense of the Council Opposing Maryland Highway Widening in
24 Favor of Alternatives Resolution of 2019”.

25 Sec. 2. The Council finds that:

26 (1) In September 2017, Maryland Governor Larry Hogan announced a proposed
27 widening of I-495, I-270, and the Baltimore-Washington Parkway (MD 295) as part of a “Traffic
28 Relief Plan.”

29 (2) This extensive highway widening plan was chosen over other solutions proposed by
30 Maryland DOT, including rail or dedicated bus infrastructure.

31 (3) Numerous studies and decades of real-world experience across the world have shown
32 that adding lanes to highways does little to reduce congestion. When roads are widened, more
33 drivers are encouraged to use them, and the end result is the same traffic problem as before. This
34 phenomenon of “induced demand” is thoroughly documented and commonly accepted among
35 transportation experts. Even Virginia’s efforts to add tolls to I-66 and I-495 while widening them
36 have had few impacts on overall congestion.

37 (4) Though divided into separate states and counties, transportation policy has region-
38 wide effects. The additional trips that are induced by widened highways in Maryland and
39 Virginia have direct and adverse consequences on District of Columbia residents and
40 infrastructure.

41 (5) Each additional vehicle entering the District imposes a high cost through additional
42 spending on highway infrastructure and public services. The District of Columbia is committing
43 considerable resources towards bringing its roads into a state of good repair, and the addition of
44 even more vehicle traffic from neighboring states and counties will require the District to spend
45 more of its budget on road maintenance, despite not having an active say in the source of new
46 traffic.

47 (6) The District of Columbia and Mayor Muriel Bowser have committed to a Vision Zero
48 policy to eliminate traffic fatalities on DC roads by 2024. One of the largest contributing factors
49 to safer streets is lower motor vehicle use. Continued expansion of road infrastructure will
50 adversely impact DC’s progress towards this Vision Zero goal and actively put District residents
51 at risk.

52 (7) The District of Columbia and the State of Maryland share a common goal of
53 drastically reducing greenhouse gas emissions in an attempt to combat global climate change.

54 Maryland has committed to a goal of reducing its carbon emissions by 25 percent by 2020.
55 Prince George’s County has set a goal to reduce greenhouse emissions by 80 percent by 2050.
56 Montgomery County has pledged to reduce 100 percent of greenhouse emissions by 2035. A
57 widening of highways in the State of Maryland and Montgomery and Prince George’s Counties
58 will make those ambitious and necessary climate goals more challenging.

59 (8) Many highly-trafficked commuter routes leading off of I-495 go through DC’s
60 minority and low-income communities that have consistently been the victims of environmental
61 injustice. An increase in commuter volumes through DC’s avenues will mean a continuation of
62 the epidemic of asthma and other health concerns that have stricken many of our most vulnerable
63 residents.

64 Sec. 3. It is the sense of the Council that Governor Larry Hogan and the State of
65 Maryland should reconsider its plans to widen roadways that feed into the District of Columbia
66 and should instead pursue transit alternatives that will advance DC and Maryland’s shared goals
67 of reducing traffic fatalities, greenhouse gas emissions, and vehicle congestion. The Mayor
68 should utilize her role in regional dialog between states to make clear the impact that Maryland’s
69 plan would have on the District of Columbia.

70 Sec. 4. The Council shall transmit a copy of this resolution, upon its adoption, to the
71 Mayor of the District of Columbia, the Governor of the State of Maryland, and the County
72 Executives of Montgomery and Prince George’s counties.

73 Sec. 5. This resolution shall take effect immediately upon the first date of publication in
74 the District of Columbia Register.