

Active Prince William's Rebuttal to the Alleged Benefits of Building the Route 28 Bypass, As Asserted by the Northern Virginia Transportation Alliance

[The Northern Virginia Transportation Alliance has claimed the Route 28 Bypass/Godwin Drive Extended project, using Alignment 2B, has the following benefits:](#)

- **Improved rush hour travel times including a 50% reduction in morning delays**
- **Reduced traffic in historic downtown Manassas by 7,700 vehicles per day**
- **Increased capacity and travel options to meet 2040 travel demands**
- **Improved intersection operation with 67% fewer intersections operating over capacity**
- **Construction of a new bike/pedestrian path along Godwin Drive**
- **Smallest total community impact to homes and businesses**
- **Lowest cost to tax-payers – leveraging \$95 million in regional transportation funds**
- **Overwhelmingly supported by Prince William County voters as a part of the 2019 Mobility Bond**

Let's explore each claim.

- **Improved rush hour travel times including a 50% reduction in morning delays**

Building the proposed four-lane commuter road will simply move traffic faster for a short segment of the commute, while creating more intersections that will be "failing" because congestion will pile up there.

According to the Traffic Analysis Report, during the morning rush hour the intersections in downtown Manassas will see no improvement. They operate at Level of Service A now. With or without the proposed new road, they will operate at Level of Service (LOS) A in 2040.

Other intersections on the route between Route 28 south of Manassas and Centreville would become more congested if the proposed road was constructed:

2040 No Build:

14 out of 50 intersections (AM/PM) are LOS E/F (failing)

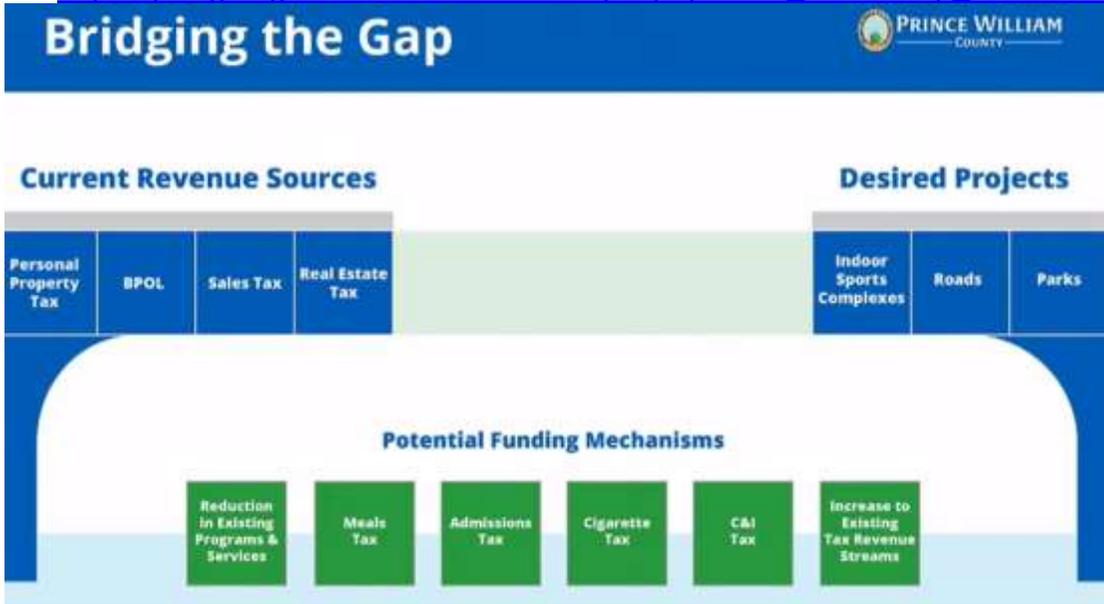
2040 Build 2B:

21 out of 50 intersections (AM/PM) are LOS E/F (failing)

Facilitating long-distance commuting by Single Occupancy Drivers outside of the county does not advance the Strategic Plan goals of creating local jobs, raising the commercial tax base inside the county to 35% (now 18%), or stimulating development of live-work-play communities inside the county.

Spending \$200 million for a paving project will limit the ability of the supervisors to fund other programs, including upgrading the schools, creating affordable housing, or advancing a green agenda.

Prince William County's Director of Finance advised the Board of County Supervisors in 2019 that funding for existing programs would have to be cut, or taxes raised, to fund the major road bonds –



- **Reduced traffic in historic downtown Manassas by 7,700 vehicles per day**

Manassas residents may get benefits, but they are freeloading. Prince William County residents, not Manassas residents, are paying the taxes required to sell \$200 million in road bonds. In addition, the benefits to downtown Manassas are overstated.

Today, the five intersections in downtown Manassas are at Level of Service (LOS) "A" in the morning rush hour. LOS A means "highest driver comfort; free flowing traffic, with volume-to-capacity ratio of less than 60%. The county Comprehensive Plan (RD Policy 1 at <https://pwcgov.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=e6a8f3ca604745c485790f0f677e46fa>) calls for existing and proposed roadway corridors and intersections to achieve a minimum level of service (LOS) of D. In 2040, those intersections will still be at LOS A in the morning even if the Route 28/Godwin Drive Extended project, is never built. At evening rush hour, there will be no change at two of the five intersections, while the other three are just slightly improved.

Table 3.3-1. Intersection Summary from CLV Analysis

Mainline	Intersection	Key Map # (Figure 3.3-2)	Existing				2040 No Build				2040 Build 2A				2040 Build 2B				2040 Build 4			
			AM		PM		AM		PM		AM		PM		AM		PM		AM		PM	
			LOS	CLV	LOS	CLV	LOS	CLV	LOS	CLV	LOS	CLV	LOS	CLV	LOS	CLV	LOS	CLV	LOS	CLV	LOS	CLV
Route 28	Route 28 and Godwin Drive	1	A	814	B	1002	A	958	C	1220	D	1375	F	1737	D	1448	F	1830	A	967	C	1223
	Route 28 (Center St) and Grant Avenue	2	A	767	A	837	A	933	B	1136	A	862	B	1007	A	861	B	1020	A	934	B	1133
	Route 28 (Church St) and Grant Avenue	3	A	580	A	833	A	841	C	1185	A	731	B	1043	A	727	B	1036	A	847	C	1180
	Route 28 (Center St) and Main Street	4	A	816	A	964	A	899	C	1211	A	807	B	1107	A	801	B	1090	A	873	C	1189
	Route 28 (Church St) and Main Street	5	A	459	A	558	A	548	A	891	A	543	A	743	A	525	A	733	A	640	A	877
	Route 28 and Sudley Road / Prescott Avenue	6	A	562	B	1008	A	996	D	1425	A	828	C	1248	A	824	C	1244	B	1033	E	1456
	Route 28 and Liberia Avenue	7	B	1048	C	1202	E	1490	F	1770	D	1400	E	1590	D	1365	E	1565	F	1820	F	1827
	Route 28 and Manassas Drive	8	A	872	C	1272	D	1421	F	1953	C	1220	F	1700	C	1180	F	1855	C	1208	F	1710
	Route 28 and Maplewood Drive	9	B	1104	D	1438	D	1343	F	2033	C	1362	F	1762	B	1138	F	1798	B	1307	F	1682
	Route 28 and Yorkshire Lane	10	D	1331	D	1433	E	1509	F	1894	C	1158	E	1535	B	1144	E	1515	C	1199	E	1558
	Route 28 and Orchard Bridge Drive	11	B	1132	C	1208	D	1370	F	1729	C	1207	E	1467	B	1081	D	1356	B	1078	D	1356
	Route 28 and Compton/Ordway Road	12	D	1384	E	1462	E	1530	F	1942	F	1889	F	2130	F	1911	F	2055	F	1707	F	1912
	Route 28 and Green Trails Boulevard / Old Mill Road	13	B	1146	D	1448	B	1048	C	1278	C	1367	D	1439	C	1236	F	1809	B	1066	C	1277
	Route 28 and New Braddock Road	14	D	1423	C	1294	F	1886	F	1884	F	2023	F	2039	F	2059	F	2073	E	1462	F	1749
	Route 28 and Machen Road	15	D	1423	B	1093	A	830	D	1404	A	857	E	1544	A	861	E	1580	A	845	D	1418
Godwin Dr	Godwin Drive and Wellington Road	16	A	634	A	757	B	1004	C	1207	D	1435	F	1887	E	1491	F	1752	B	1007	C	1209
	Godwin Drive and Sudley Road	17	A	507	B	1090	A	825	C	1225	D	1313	F	1696	D	1312	F	1693	A	825	C	1223
	Godwin Drive Extension and Liberia Avenue / Lomond Drive ¹	18	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	E	1523	F	1960	D	1348	F	1817	n/a	n/a
	Godwin Drive Extension and Old Centreville Road - S ¹	19	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	D	1437	F	1809	D	1350	F	1808	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Godwin Drive Extension-S and Old Centreville Road - N ¹	20	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	F	1888	F	2257	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Godwin Drive Extension-N and Route 28 ¹	21	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	D	1376	F	1832	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Godwin Drive Extension-S and Route 28 ¹	22	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	B	1025	F	2081	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Old Centreville Road	Old Centreville Road and Yorkshire Lane	23	A	794	C	1249	D	1331	F	1887	A	691	B	927	A	703	B	1036	B	1051	E	1520
Wellington Road	Wellington Road and Grant Avenue	24	A	544	C	1272	A	588	C	1234	A	646	C	1167	A	640	C	1152	A	687	C	1246
	Wellington Road and Fairview Avenue	25	A	450	A	717	A	801	A	842	A	562	A	793	A	554	A	787	A	624	A	886
	Wellington Road and Liberia Avenue and Prince William Parkway	26	B	1030	C	1261	F	1957	F	2275	F	1904	F	2228	F	1896	F	2219	F	1959	F	2286
Liberia Avenue	Liberia Avenue and Euclid Avenue	27	A	894	B	1134	B	1021	C	1226	B	1005	C	1205	A	998	C	1193	B	1056	C	1283
	Liberia Avenue and Signal Hill	28	A	870	C	1241	A	891	C	1195	A	887	C	1187	A	882	C	1181	A	902	C	1205
Mathis Avenue	Mathis Avenue and Liberia Avenue	29	A	724	B	1015	A	875	B	1046	A	714	A	880	A	709	A	874	A	916	B	1087
	Mathis Avenue and Manassas Drive	30	B	1102	A	789	A	806	A	788	A	802	A	771	A	808	A	774	A	779	A	773
Manassas Drive	Manassas Drive and Euclid Avenue	31	A	412	A	598	A	490	A	656	A	417	A	574	A	410	A	565	A	417	A	582

¹ Intersection is part of Build Alternative 2A or 2B. Intersection numbers 18, 19, 22 are part of 2A while numbers 16, 19, 20, 21 are part of 2B.

- **Increased capacity and travel options to meet 2040 travel demands**

We need travel options to move people, not just cars for long-distance commuters.

The greatest need is to increase access to places within a few miles of where we live. More bicycle/pedestrian trails and upgraded bus service are a higher priority of county residents.

Commuters from Stafford, Culpeper, and Fauquier might appreciate the new commuter road, along with residents of Manassas - but the residents in Prince William would get more capacity and more options if the \$200 million was invested in improving local mobility.

This is also a high-risk, speculative project. The “benefits” associated with moving commuters to jobs outside the county will be affected by the shift to telecommuting after the COVID-19 pandemic. If built, the new road won’t be empty in 2040 – but the benefit/cost ratio of that road could be dramatically lower.

When the COVID-19 pandemic transformed how people went to work, Express Mobility Partners was locked into its \$2 billion bet to create toll lanes on I-66. There is no reason for Prince William County to make the same gamble now and build a new commuter road. It would be wiser to wait and see

how traffic patterns change, as work patterns change, before committing \$200 million in county bonds.

- **Improved intersection operation with 67% fewer intersections operating over capacity**

The Traffic Technical Report published in 2019 offers a very different conclusion:

2040 No Build **14 out of 50** intersections (AM/PM) are LOS E/F (bad)

2040 Build 2B **21 out of 50** intersections (AM/PM) are LOS E/F (bad)

Building a new road on Alignment 2B would result in more failing intersections with Level of Service ratings of E/F in 2040 than the No Action alternative.

*Environmental Documentation for Route 28 Corridor
Traffic Technical Report*

Table 3.3-2. Summary of Intersection Performance - Level of Service

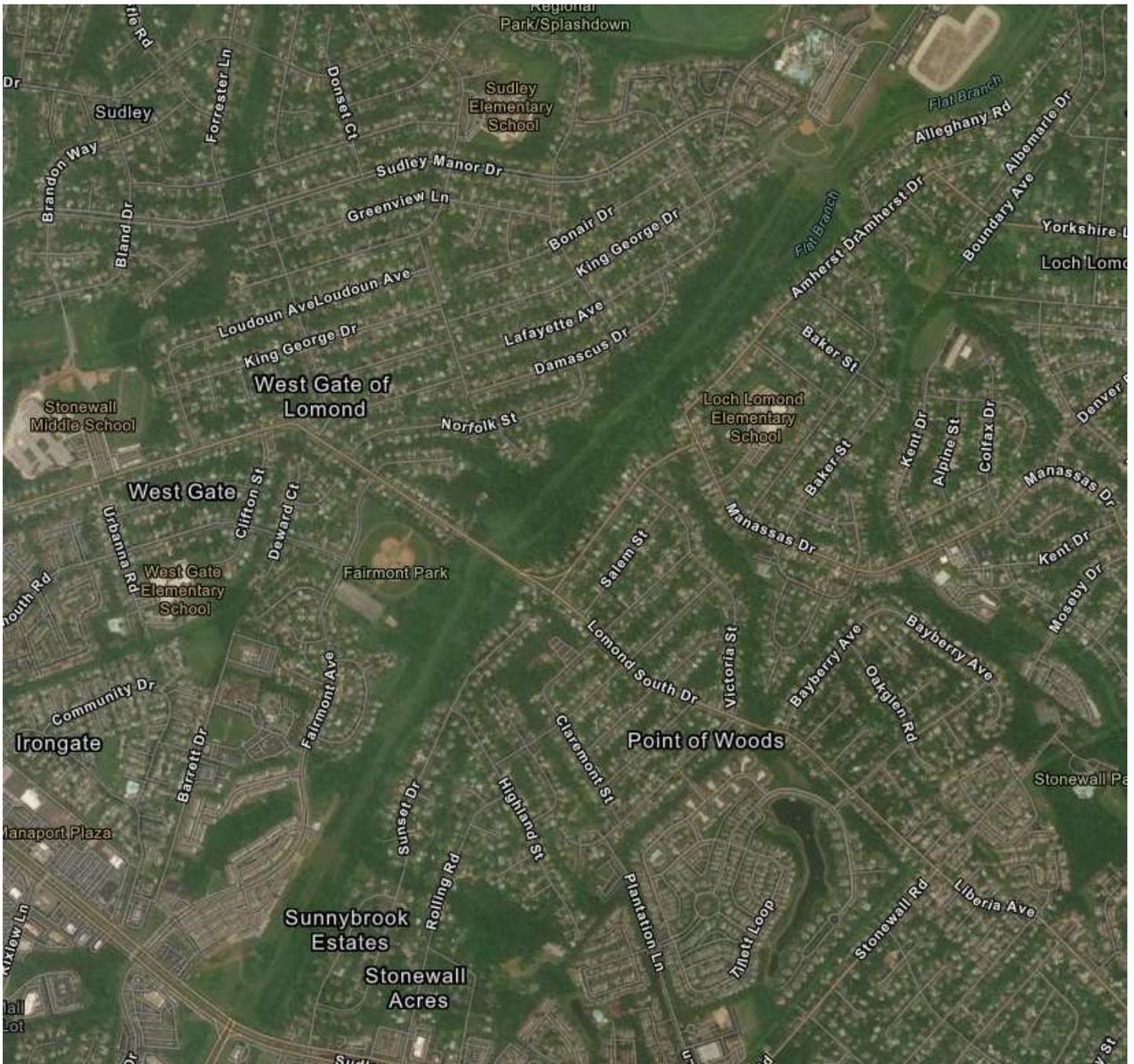
Intersection Location	Existing						2040 No Build						2040 Build 2A						2040 Build 2B						2040 Build 4								
	AM			PM			AM			PM			AM			PM			AM			PM			AM			PM					
	A/B	C/D	E/F	A/B	C/D	E/F	A/B	C/D	E/F	A/B	C/D	E/F	A/B	C/D	E/F	A/B	C/D	E/F	A/B	C/D	E/F	A/B	C/D	E/F	A/B	C/D	E/F	A/B	C/D	E/F			
Along Route 28	11	4	0	7	7	1	8	3	4	2	6	7	6	7	2	4	2	9	9	4	2	4	2	9	10	2	3	2	6	7			
Along Godwin Drive	2	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	1	3	1	0	0	0	5	0	4	2	0	0	6	2	0	0	0	2	0
Along Old Centreville Road	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1			
Along Mathis Avenue	2	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0
Along Liberia Avenue	2	0	0	1	1	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
Along Wellington Road	3	0	0	1	2	0	2	0	1	1	1	1	2	0	1	1	1	1	2	0	1	1	1	1	2	0	1	1	1	1			
Total	21	4	0	13	11	1	16	4	5	5	11	9	14	10	4	8	5	15	16	8	5	8	5	16	19	2	4	5	11	9			

Note: Intersection of Manassas Drive and Mathis Road has been excluded from this table. It does not fall along one of the main routes focused on in the report and it performs at LOS A in all scenarios.

- **Construction of a new bike/pedestrian path along Godwin Drive**

The stream valley of Flat Branch is perfectly situated for a linear park, not just a shared use path next to vehicle exhaust tailpipes. The bike/pedestrian trail should include a bridge over Bull Run, connecting to the Occoquan-Bull Run trail in Fairfax County.

A quick look at an aerial photo reveals how many residents would prefer a linear park, compared to a noisy commuter highway.



- **Smallest total community impact to homes and businesses**

That is an absurd claim. Alignment 2B will require tearing down over 50 houses, destroy six acres of wetlands, and disrupt the Flat Branch and Bull Run stream channels.

There are two alternatives which would have a lower impact on the community.

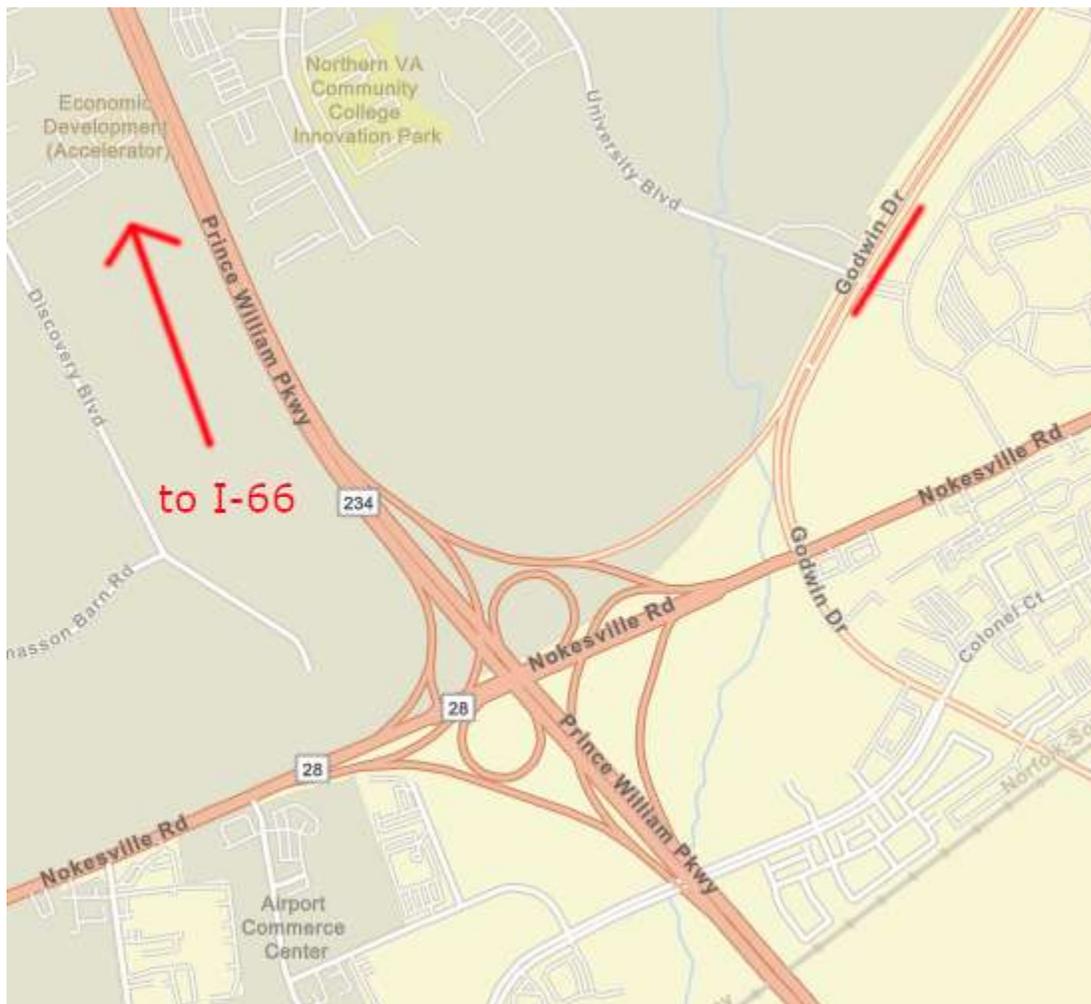
Alternative 4-Modified (described in detail at <https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/viewer?mid=1W5RScu2HJEIyy7ypLqFI4INQhiw&ll=38.7894159493738%2C-77.45043765000001&z=14>) would build new lanes parallel to Route 28. It would require tearing down fewer houses. It would also create the opportunity to integrate the Yorkshire Small Area Plan with transportation planning. The proposed Alignment 2B would create zero opportunity for economic development in Prince William, while Alternative 4-Modified could help revitalize Yorkshire.

A second alternative is to remove the last stoplights on Prince William Parkway/234 Bypass, between Route 28 and I-66.

The Traffic Technical Report (http://route28study.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/190522_Route28_TrafficTechnicalReport.pdf, pp.23-24) shows that building Alignment 2B will create 27,479 more trips/day at the Godwin Drive/Sudley Road (Business 234) intersection each day, on average.

60% of those trips will start at the Godwin Drive/Route 28 intersection. Drivers will pass through the Route 28/Prince William Parkway interchange just north of the airport and turn left onto Godwin Drive.

At the Route 28/Prince William Parkway interchange, drivers have another option. They could use the Prince William Parkway/234 Bypass and go 5 miles to I-66 on a 4-lane divided highway with controlled access.

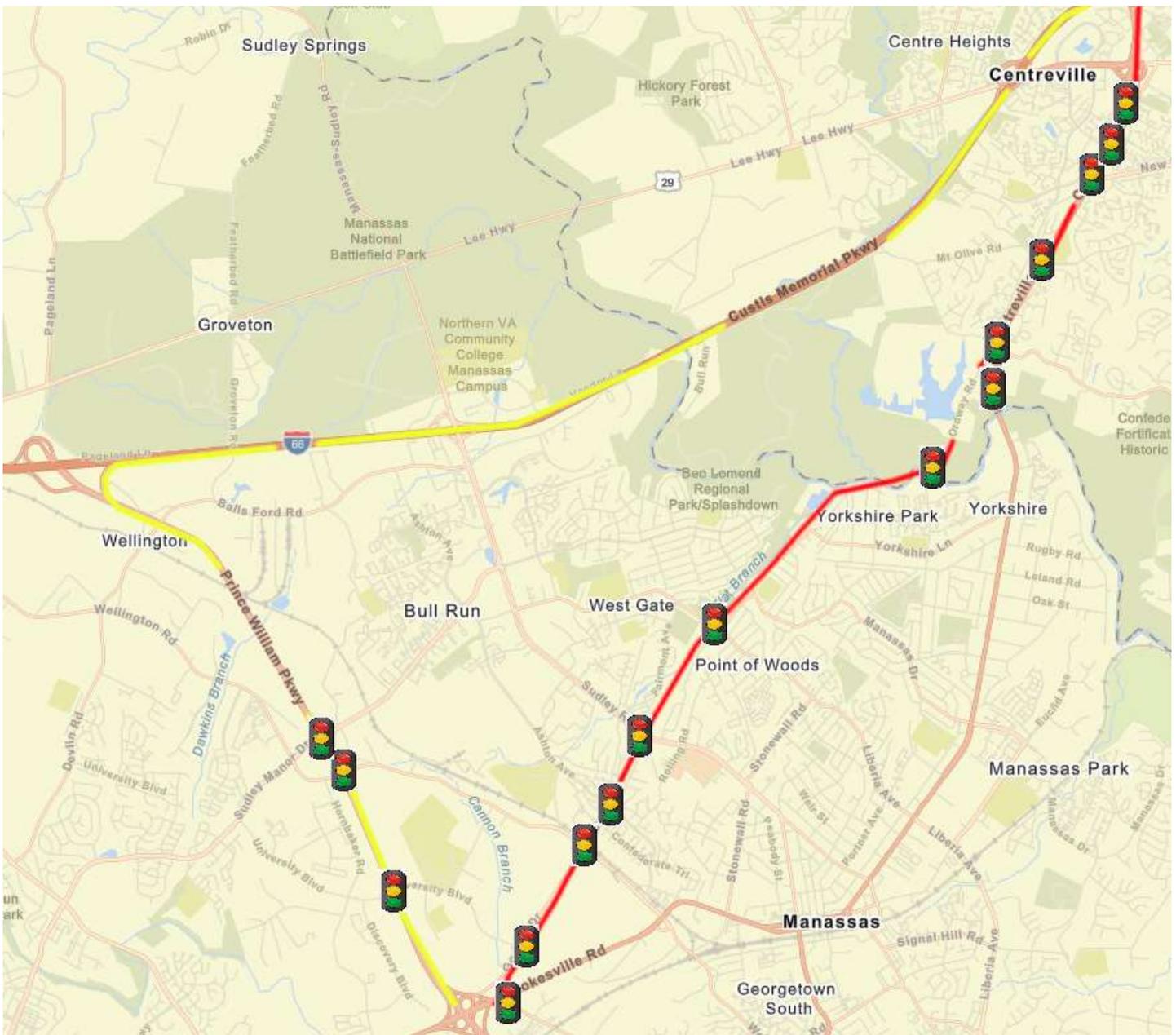


Drivers taking the Route 28/Prince William Parkway will pass through just three intersections with stoplights.

In contrast, drivers who choose to go north from the interchange, turn left on Godwin Drive, and use Alternative 2B will have to travel 9 miles to get to I-66. That will require passing through 13 traffic signals and crossing a railroad track at grade.

A rational driver would choose to take the faster route to Centreville via Prince William Parkway/234 Bypass. The idea that 17,348 drivers would prefer a longer route with more stoplights might make sense to the computer model, but common sense suggests the traffic analysis and benefits claimed for Alignment 2B are questionable.

Elimination of those remaining stoplights on Prince William Parkway/234 Bypass create a greater return on investment, and speed the trip for 17,348 drivers, compared to a \$300 million road creating a 13-stoplight route.



- **Lowest cost to tax-payers – leveraging \$95 million in regional transportation funds**

County taxpayers will still have to pay \$200 million, compared to the no-build alternative.

Yes, the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA) has committed to fund 1/3 of the costs to increase capacity in the Route 28 corridor. Alternative 4-Modified would qualify for that \$89 million in NVTA funding. Implementing the recommendations in the Route 28 STARS Study (http://www.virginiadot.org/projects/northernvirginia/centreville_rd_study.asp) may also qualify.

And the worst case scenario is also acceptable – the county could reapply to NVTA, with a better proposal to increase capacity and travel options, and request the money be directed to that new approach. Maybe some of the \$89 million will be reallocated by NVTA to other jurisdictions, but at the same time the county's \$200 million burden may also be reduced.

- ***Overwhelmingly supported by Prince William County voters as a part of the 2019 Mobility Bond***

The voters overwhelmingly endorsed improving transportation within the county, but the previous Board of County Supervisors chose the projects.

The new Board has the opportunity to invest more wisely, to implement the priorities in its updated Strategic Plan and 2040 Comprehensive Plan.

Alignment 2B will do nothing to create live-work-play communities. It is a traditional build-our-way-out-of-congestion solution that simply encourages more sprawl.

Alignment 2B will not address inequities in housing. Project planners never considered transit on the route, and it does not improve access to affordable transportation.

The new supervisors have the opportunity now to identify better transportation projects, consistent with their priorities. They can propose a new bond issue to fund better projects, while cancelling the Alignment 2B proposal.