

Report: 4 of top 10 Va. road projects are in Hampton Roads

THE PROJECTS

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THE TOP 10

TRIP's top 10 projects for Virginia's economic growth:

1. Widen I-95 between Richmond and Washington, D.C.
2. Expand the Hampton Roads Bridge-Tunnel
3. Widen I-64 between Hampton and New Kent County
4. Construct High Occupancy Toll lanes on I-95 and I-395
5. Construct Hampton Roads Third Crossing/Patriots Crossing
6. Widen I-64 in Chesapeake and replace High-Rise Bridge
7. Widen I-66 in Northern Virginia
8. Widen portions of I-81
9. Extend Metrorail to Dulles airport and Ashburn
10. Widen portions of U.S. 29

By [Debbie Messina](#)

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Four of the top 10 transportation improvements that would do the most to support economic growth in the state are in Hampton Roads, according to a report released today by a national nonprofit transportation group.

TRIP ranked expanding the Hampton Roads Bridge-Tunnel second, widening Interstate 64 on the Peninsula third, building a new Third Crossing/Patriots Crossing fifth, and widening I-64 and the High-Rise Bridge in Chesapeake sixth.

Among the 36 road projects identified in the report, 15 are in Hampton Roads.

"That obviously speaks to how important your region is to the state's economy and to the significant traffic congestion in your area," said Frank Moretti, director of policy and research for TRIP, based in Washington, D.C. "When areas lose accessibility, they become less attractive to businesses because the cost of moving people and goods in and out and around the area becomes more expensive."

Moretti said the ports, the military and tourism drive the Hampton Roads economy and are each dependent on ease of travel.

Other projects that made the list include rebuilding U.S. 460 as a limited-access highway, expanding the Midtown Tunnel, building the Southeastern Parkway and Greenbelt, constructing a grade-separated rail crossing at Hampton and Terminal boulevards, improving the I-64/I-264 interchange, building the I-564 Intermodal Connector, and widening Dominion Boulevard.

Of the six public transit projects ranked, two are in Hampton Roads - light rail to Virginia Beach and high-speed rail from Norfolk to Richmond, Washington and beyond.

TRIP ranked transportation projects on a rating system that considered improving mobility as well as the physical condition and safety of the roadway. Short-term economic benefits including job creation and long-term benefits including economic performance also were evaluated.

The TRIP report said roads, rail and public transit are the backbone of the state's economy.

"But Virginia's surface transportation system has significant deficiencies that could prevent the state from reaching its full economic potential," the report said.

Improving transportation can "insure that the state's economy recovers from its recent downturn and returns to significant sustained growth," it reads.

Moretti acknowledged that funding the improvements is a challenge: "Obviously these large projects are costly but also provide significant benefits."

He said a goal of the report is to highlight how critical the projects are to the economic health of Virginia.

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