

Virginia faces \$74 billion backlog in needed highway transportation funds causing increased congestion, hampered economic development, reduced safety & deteriorating road and bridge conditions

TRIP releases new report on findings

At the current transportation funding level and with population and vehicle travel on the rise, Virginians can expect increased road congestion and deterioration, according to a new report released today by The Road Information Program, a national nonprofit transportation research group based in Washington, D.C. Also, the state's competitive advantage as a major transportation hub of the eastern United States may be threatened by increasing traffic congestion and the inability of the state to fund needed transportation infrastructure improvements.

Virginia is currently facing a \$74 billion backlog through 2025 in unfunded highway transportation improvements and a \$31 billion backlog in needed transit improvements, TRIP reports. By 2014, all state construction funds will be used solely for maintenance of the existing system, leaving other needed projects and improvements unfunded. Currently, the state Department of Transportation transfers about \$400 million per year from funds allocated to new construction to its maintenance program.

This comes when nearly 25 percent of the state's major roads and highways are rated in substandard condition, and an additional 16 percent are in mediocre condition, according to TRIP.

Additionally, more than one quarter of the state's bridges are rated structurally deficient or functionally obsolete, and approximately one-third of them are at least 50 years old. Specifically, 19 percent of bridges in Northern Virginia are in need of improvements; 27 percent in Richmond; 57 percent in Roanoke; and 41 percent in Hampton Roads. These bridges no longer meet modern design standards for safety features such as lane widths or alignment with connecting roads or are no longer adequate for the volume of traffic being carried, according to TRIP.

Also, with adequate funding, improved safety features on the state's roads and highways would likely result in decreased traffic fatalities. TRIP reports that nearly 4,700 people were killed on Virginia's roads in the past five years, and road design is an important factor in approximately one-third of these fatal and serious traffic accidents.

Lastly, highway improvements such as removing or shielding obstacles, adding or improving medians, adding rumble strips, wider lanes, wider and paved shoulders, upgrading roads from two lanes to four lanes and better road markings and traffic signals, where appropriate, can help reduce traffic fatalities and accidents while improving traffic flow to help relieve congestion, according to report.

To read the full report from TRIP, [click here](#).

To read the TRIP news release on the VBT Web site, [click here](#).

For more information about the transportation funding crisis or Virginians for Better Transportation, call 804-237-1399 or [click here](#) to visit the *It's Time* Web site.

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