



Hampton Roads Transportation Report Card

Putting Our Cities To The Test

Year 2005

Report Card

Hampton Roads
Transportation

Subject	Grade
Roads	D-
Bridges	C+
GPA	D

Prepared by the Norfolk Branch of the

ASCE

American Society of Civil Engineers



Our Transportation System Must Make the Grade

In addition to increasing the potential for accidents, being stuck in traffic means wasted fuel and less time home with our families. Congestion affects our ability to attract businesses and visitors as well as to deal with natural and man-made disasters.

This report provides a “big picture” of our transportation situation by amassing documented information about problems, needs and funding for roads and bridges into an overall assessment.

The cumulative grade of D is a wake-up call that we need to act now.

Time Is Running Short

Time is working against us in correcting the situation. Major transportation projects are long term (typically 10-20 years from conception through construction). Yet, no investment has been identified within the next 20 years for over 3/4 of our congested roadways. Hampton Roads will face gridlock conditions well before then.

Who Is the ASCE and Why Did We Produce This Report Card?

We are the Norfolk Branch of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE). Civil engineers are stewards of our infrastructure and ethically bound to uphold the safety and welfare of the public. As professionals, we understand what it requires to plan and meet future transportation needs. We are also your neighbors who drive the same roads you do. A growing population with increasing demands on an already deteriorating transportation system, together with no plans for significant funding, align for a perfect storm.

Hopefully, after studying the transportation and funding problems set out in this report card, you will agree that we all have work to do.

Let's begin by informing elected officials that the situation is unacceptable and that we need transportation funding now.

Roads

Motorists Pay Dearly for Poor Roads in Lost Time and Money



Inadequate roads cost Hampton Roads drivers \$1,290 annually in lost time, wasted fuel, safety hazards and vehicle operating costs according to TRIP, a national transportation research group. Deteriorating road conditions and congestion combined with a growing population have created serious problems:

- Norfolk tunnels are severely congested choke points. The Downtown Tunnel experiences congestion of 4+ hours each workday. By 2015, traffic in the Hampton Road Bridge-Tunnel is expected to hit delays of 15 minutes or more up to 21 times per day. Incidents and accidents at the tunnels cause back-ups averaging 3-8 miles.
- Virginia Beach motorists averaged equivalent to 3 workdays of delay in 2003 because of rush-hour congestion according to a Texas Transportation Institute study which ranked Virginia Beach 31st among U.S. cities in terms of traffic delays.
- A 2005 national travel survey co-sponsored by AAA rated Hampton Roads as the nation's 2nd worst tourist destination for summer traffic delays.

“Rush hour” here is now frequently 3 hours, but without additional investment, the situation will worsen. Within 10 years peak-period traffic in most major bridge tunnels is projected to move below 10 mph—and many city thoroughfares at under 25 mph. By 2026, about 40% of miles traveled in evening rush traffic will be mired in severely congested conditions.

No Funding Is Planned for 78% of Severely Congested Roads

No funding exists for 147 projects totaling \$26 billion that the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission (HRPDC) has identified to relieve our congestion. The following map relays the pain ahead because over 3/4 of our **existing** severely congested roadways have no new investment planned through 2026.

Visit www.ascenorfolk.org/reportcard for detailed roads and bridges grade assessments

Bridges



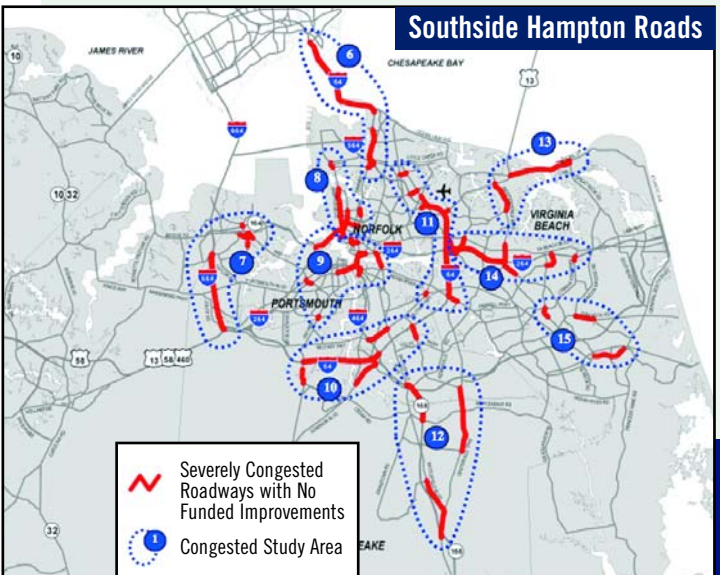
Hampton Roads' aging bridges were built for lighter vehicles and less traffic, but many of these crossings are now handling larger trucks and record traffic volumes. The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) reports that 73 bridges in Hampton Roads are load posted, meaning that less than the normal loads are allowed to cross.

Conditions

- A total of 432 bridges in VDOT's Hampton Roads District have a major component with a condition rating of 5 or lower, on a scale of 0 to 9, indicating that some level of rehabilitation is needed to bring them up to "fair" or better condition.
- Of the nearly 1,500 bridges in Hampton Roads, approximately 27% are classified as either structurally deficient or functionally obsolete.
- Chesapeake's 22nd Street and Jordan bridges are rated lowest in sufficiency, with respective grades of 2 and 4 on a scale of 100. Together, the bridges carry about 15,000 vehicles daily. No funding has been designated to replace these bridges.

Funding Versus Need

A one-time funding infusion by the 2005 General Assembly will increase maintenance by 10% for bridges, and Hampton Roads should receive some of that benefit. However, it would cost nearly \$500 million to repair or replace the bridges throughout Hampton Roads considered to be structurally deficient or functionally obsolete by today's standards.





Transportation Packs an Economic Wallop

Healthy commerce depends on a strong transportation system: Our port has a huge stake in moving goods in and out by truck as well as rail. Transportation figures heavily into business decisions about where to locate and expand. Transportation also strongly impacts tourism, a leading industry here.

Traffic Threatens Our Tourism Industry

- A 2005 national travel survey rated Hampton Roads as the nation's 2nd worst tourist destination for summer traffic delays. **MSNBC news reports advised vacationers to reconsider travel to areas cited by the report.**
- Traffic is a top complaint among Virginia Beach visitors.
- In 2000, 25% of Virginia Beach visitors also visited Williamsburg sometime during their beach vacation. By 2004, only 17% made the trip.



Every year, in addition to supporting over 10,000 jobs in Virginia Beach, 2.9 million visitors account for \$1.6 billion in total revenues and 15,500 jobs

in Hampton Roads. Moreover, 96% of visitors arrive by car. A slight decline in visitations translates to an annual dollar-loss of millions.

Road Investments Could Net Over \$12 Billion in Gains

Forecasts show that spending for road improvements can generate strong economic returns. For instance, the cumulative **25-year benefit from 4 major road improvement projects* is projected at \$9.5 to \$12.9 billion** in gross regional product. That after-costs figure represents the growth in wages, business revenue and other financial benefits that Hampton Roads stands to gain.

Transportation is an investment in our future.

Despite the need, the General



Assembly has provided no significant new funding for construction.

* Projects studied are the Southeastern Parkway & Greenbelt, the Third Crossing, and improvements to the Midtown Tunnel & MLK Freeway and U.S. 460.

How Do We Solve Our Transportation Crisis?

Investment is critical in solving our transportation crisis, but only part of a resourceful, complete strategy that incorporates demand management, new technologies, responsible community growth and real commitment from policy leaders and the public.

The answers are out there, but not acted upon. Your transportation professionals have identified solutions, including a long-term, comprehensive plan. Here are immediate measures needed and how you can get things moving:

- **Support funding for the HRPDC transportation plan.** The Hampton Roads Planning District Commission has developed a complete regional transportation plan.
- **Adjust our travel habits.** We all can make a huge difference by adjusting our travel patterns — consolidating trips, car pooling and using transit.
- **Be open and support innovative solutions.** Solutions such as Intelligent Transportation Systems and mass transit are key components of an adequate transportation system.

Above All, Demand Funding Now

- **Demand adequate transportation funding.** Elected officials react to overwhelming public sentiment, but appeals from Hampton Roads have been too fragmented to yield results. Consequently, on state and regional levels there is no significant new funding for local transportation improvements. The 2004 Virginia General Assembly passed a \$1.4 billion tax package, completely overlooking additional transportation expenditures. This is unacceptable and you should object.

How to Contact Your Elected Officials

We've made it easy to speak out:

- Visit www.ascenorfolk.org/reportcard to locate your representatives and contact information
- Fill out and send one of the supplied letter forms
- Make your voice be heard by faxing and calling
- Spread the word to family, friends and co-workers

To Learn More

Detailed findings from Hampton Roads' Transportation Report Card —

www.ascenorfolk.org/reportcard

HRPDC's comprehensive transportation plan — www.hrpdc.org

ASCE 2005 Report Card for America's Infrastructure — www.asce.org/reportcard

Virginia's transportation funding problems — www.itstimevirginia.org

Transportation congestion research findings — www.tripnet.org/state.htm