

Expressway And Busway Extensions Would Bring 20,000 Jobs To Region, Study Says

By [Liz Reid](#) • Thursday, August 24, 2016



The proposed Mon-Fayette expressway extension would sit atop this hillside in Duquesne (left), cross above Route 837 and provide easy highway access to manufacturing companies and train depots along the Monongahela River (right).
Credit Liz Reid / 90.5 WESA

A national transportation research group has estimated that completion of the 14-mile stretch of the Mon-Fayette expressway and the extension of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Busway would create nearly 21,000 jobs in the Mon Valley region and beyond.

[The report, released Tuesday by the private non-profit organization TRIP](#), also found that 71 percent of surveyed Mon Valley firms said they would use the expressway. Twenty-five percent said they would hire additional employees if the highway was completed.

"This region has waited long enough for highway access essential for economic revitalization," said Joe Kirk, Executive Director of the Mon Valley Alliance and coordinator of the Mon-Fayette Expressway Completion Campaign.

Kirk made the comments at a press conference Tuesday, as cars whizzed past on nearby Route 837, over which the proposed expressway extension would cross. Down below, between the Great Allegheny Passage bicycle trail and the Monongahela River, thousands of steel pipe segments lay stacked in rows, presumably waiting to be transported to oil and gas drilling sites across the region. Proponents of the expressway extension said it would relieve truck congestion from city streets, reducing air pollution and shrinking travel times. The report

estimates the current half-hour trip from Duquesne to the Monroeville Convention Center would be reduced to 10 minutes.

TRIP's Director of Policy & Research Rocky Moretti said the most critical impact would be economic. He cited another [report released in 2012 by the Strategic Highway Research Program for the Transportation Research Board](#), which analyzed 100 similar projects nationwide and found that benefits include lower unemployment, higher land value and increased tax revenues.

"When you see transportation access improve in a region, what starts to happen is those areas become far more desirable for a variety of businesses including manufacturing, retail, any of those areas where mobility is absolutely vital," Moretti said.

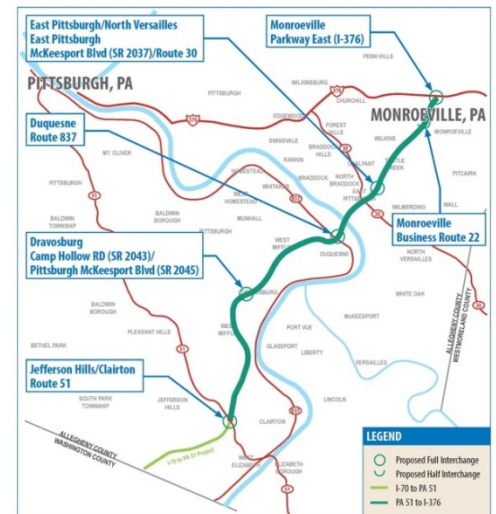
Local political leaders were also present, including Duquesne Mayor Phillip Krivacek and state Rep. Paul Costa (D-Allegheny), who both said the project would bring much-needed economic development to the Mon Valley.



The proposed Mon-Fayette expressway would pass above Route 837 in Duquesne.
Credit Liz Reid / 90.5 WESA

[Critics of the project](#) said scores of [Mon Valley residents would lose their homes](#) and increased development would only [exacerbate the region's traffic and air quality problems](#).

The \$1.7 billion expressway toll road would run from Route 51 in Jefferson Hills to the eastern end of the Interstate 376, and it is currently under review by the Federal Highway Administration. The proposed busway extension from Swissvale to East Pittsburgh to join the Mon-Fayette corridor is currently being studied by the Port Authority of Allegheny County.



The proposed extension would run from Jefferson Hills to Monroeville.
Credit Courtesy TRIP

The Washington, D.C. based TRIP is sponsored by insurance companies, equipment manufacturers and labor unions, among other groups.