

## Transportation report rates Virginia poor in many areas



by: [Raven Payne](#)

Thursday, September 28, 2023

HAMPTON ROADS, Va. (WAVY) – A new report finds Virginia has “poor” transportation infrastructure in multiple areas.

The findings were released in a news conference Thursday morning.

The report, *“Keeping Virginia Mobile: Providing a Modern, Sustainable Transportation System in the Old Dominion State,”* was released by TRIP, a transportation non-profit in Washington DC.

The report first highlighted how Virginia transportation has improved thanks to past state and federal funding.

In 2020, Gov. Glenn Youngkin’s omnibus bill made many changes to transportation funding by establishing a new Virginia Passenger Rail

Authority, funding the improvements of Interstates 81 and 66, and more.

TRIP’s findings also mention the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, introduced in 2021, providing \$7.7 billion in state funds for highway and bridge investments in Virginia over five years.

However the report’s statistics call for much more improvement, citing a potential decline in federal state fuel tax revenue.

“The local and regional government, also working with the state government, needs to make sure that the improvements that the system needs are being planned and put in place,” said TRIP Director of Policy and Research Rocky Moretti, “and very critically that the funding will be there to get these projects done.”

Moretti highlighted what he said needed to be fixed, including bridges in Hampton Roads, with statistics showing 34 bridges in the area that are in poor condition, with another 730 in fair condition.

“As they age it becomes more costly to keep those bridges still operating,” Moretti said, “and it’s easy to get behind that curve and then you have a significant number of the region’s bridges reaching the point where they need reconstruction. “It has a huge impact obviously on the public to get places, but it impacts emergency response times. It starts to have a huge impact on the functioning of a region’s economy and also its safety programs.”

However, he explained that isn’t where Hampton Roads sees the most transportation trouble, with 28% of roads in the area being in poor condition.

That’s a higher percentage than Northern Virginia, Richmond and Roanoke.

“The Hampton Roads area, among urban areas in Virginia, had the highest sheer of pavement surfaces in poor, mediocre condition,” Moretti said. “And that just means roads are a little bit rougher when you’re driving on them but that also unfortunately impacts the life span of your vehicle.”

Keith Martin, Virginia Chamber vice president of public policy and government relations, said he didn’t know how much money it would take to improve the infrastructure problems.

“I think over the coming weeks and months, we’re probably going to take this report and actually look at the needs that have been identified,” Martin said, “and make a corollary look at Smart Scale and see where these projects line up moving forward.”

Traffic fatalities were also a big part of the report.

From 2018 to 2022, 4,479 people were killed in traffic crashes in the state.

That number increased significantly from 2019 to 2022.

However, that increase happened during the decrease of road traffic after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Rich Jacobs, public relations and outreach manager with Drive Smart Virginia, gave a possible answer as to why.

“For now, the driver is still one of the weakest links in our transportation system,” he said. “We need to prioritize safer people, safer roads, safer vehicles, safer speeds and improved post-crash care.”

Moretti said while he also isn’t sure about the cost of the suggested improvements, he believes the reconstruction of older bridges would cost the most.