

**REPORT OF THE  
NORFOLK-VIRGINIA BEACH EXPRESSWAY STUDY  
COMMISSION  
TO  
THE GOVERNOR  
AND  
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF VIRGINIA**



**SENATE DOCUMENT NO. 33**

**COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA  
Richmond  
1980**

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## **Recommendations**

The Commission recommended to the General Assembly:

1. That Virginia Beach city-owned garbage disposal vehicles be allowed commuter rates;
2. That a report be made by the Department of Highways and Transportation to the Commission outlining its current efforts to have the Norfolk-Virginia Beach Expressway included in the Interstate System;
3. That a cut-off date should be adopted, at which time all improvements to the Expressway will come out of the State road fund and all toll revenue will be used to reduce the bond indebtedness;
4. That the Department of Highways and Transportation continue to maintain and improve the Expressway to the extent necessary and at the lowest possible cost;
5. That it is felt to be entirely appropriate for the developers of Lynnhaven Mall to share in the needed improvement at the Lynnhaven exit made necessary by present traffic conditions and the problems anticipated with the opening of such mall, since this mall is expected to generate an enormous amount of traffic;
6. That the commuter ticket procedure be reviewed annually to evaluate: (a) the efficiency of the program administration; (b) the ease of ticket purchase; (c) that distribution points keep current with population shifts; (d) that informational pamphlets are kept current and are made available to the public; and (e) that personnel management is obtaining maximum efficiency and courtesy;
7. That expressway personnel be required to wear name tags whenever on duty;
8. That the quality of the maintenance must be improved on the medians, approaches, and other visible areas of the expressway for the public good and the tourist orientation of this area;
9. That the speed limit on the Laskin Road exit be increased from the present 25 m.p.h.;
10. That the maintenance procedures on the automatic toll machines be improved; and
11. That banks who sell commuter tickets advertise such in a more visible manner.

## **Findings:**

1. Major improvements that have occurred since 1976 include the upgrading of the Independence Boulevard interchange to a full cloverleaf, the Rosemont Road interchange has been upgraded, and the Expressway has been widened to six lanes from Newtown Road eastward to the South Plaza Trail overpass. Additional toll booths have been added at the main toll plaza. Additional improvements are being planned and are included in Appendix I with the proposed implementation schedules and budgets.
2. A 15¢ passenger vehicle commuter rate was established effective July 1, 1978. Since commuter rates have become effective revenue and traffic are estimated to have risen approximately 10% per year. [See Appendix II.]
3. Further investigation has continued on the question of the inclusion of the Norfolk-Virginia Beach Expressway into the interstate System, and it has been pointed out that large federal complexes in this area contribute heavily to the traffic flow on this highway. Recently, mileage limitations set by the federal government for the interstate system have been expanded by some 500 additional miles. According to the Department of Highways and Transportation, they have again approached the FHWA to request the Interstate funding but were informed that no such funding is now or likely to become available in the foreseeable future. The Highway Commission is urged to renew its efforts in these regards.
4. The Highway Commission advises that, due to present traffic demands, the interchange at First

Colonial Road is felt to need only a "diamond plus loop in one quadrant" rather than a full cloverleaf interchange.

5. Beginning July 1, 1980 the cost of the police patrol by the Expressway will be paid out of the State Police Funds.
6. At the present time, the feasibility of a high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lane being instituted is felt to have merits, but traffic density still does not warrant such.
7. Some concern has been shown over the violation and loss rates at the automatic ramp machines. Figures from April through September of 1979 show an average revenue loss at \$19,770 per month. Arrests have been steadily increasing, and State Police have been requested to concentrate on this problem. It was pointed out that, while a \$200,000 per year loss in revenues due to this situation is substantial, the cost of "manning" the ramps, not including the cost of converting to manual equipment, is estimated at \$900,000 per year.
8. In reference to the continuing request that the investment of Expressway funds be maximized, the Office of the Attorney General researched the question. The Office of the Attorney General is requested to continue its research and overview of the Expressway funds investment to insure the maximum interest is earned. The trustees and fund's CPA have indicated their willingness to appear before the Commission.

### **Background**

The 1976 Session of the General Assembly commissioned the present study by its passage of Senate Joint Resolution No. 58 (see Appendix III).

In its report to the 1977 Session of the General Assembly (1977 Senate Document No. 10), the Commission presented 18 findings, as follows with the response of the Highway and Transportation Commission at that time:

- (1) That, rather than extending the making of the following improvements to the Expressway through 1983, that they be completed immediately and before the end of 1977:
  - (a) Adding an additional lane to both the east and westbound sides of the Expressway from Plaza Trail west to the I-64 interchange.
  - (b) Adding an additional lane to both sides of the Central Toll Plaza.
  - (c) Finishing the ramp improvements and the other planned improvements at the Rosemont Road and Independence Boulevard interchanges.

These improvements are currently under construction and are scheduled for completion before the end of 1977.

- (2) That, thereafter, Norfolk-Virginia Beach Expressway toll revenue should be applied only to bond redemption, less essential costs, and, that the Expressway be made toll free by December 1983, or the earliest possible date before or thereafter, thereby eliminating the tolls more than 20 years ahead of the scheduled year of 2005.

The Commission continues to exert every possible effort to complete bond redemption at the earliest possible date that is consistent with the public good.

- (3) That the proposed improvements at the intersection of I-264 and I-64 and the Expressway east through Newtown Road be completed as soon as possible, with federal Interstate highway funds, or Federal Aid Urban System Funds and that the planning for and implementation of such improvements should proceed immediately and the Department of Highways and Transportation is hereby directed to proceed accordingly.

The Department has secured FHWA approval for Federal Interstate funding for the improvement of the I-264, I-64 and Expressway interchange east to Kempsville Road. The Department is in

the process of securing agreement with City officials of Norfolk and Virginia Beach and the FHWA for Urban Federal-Aid funding for the planned improvement between the end of the proposed Interstate project to the west abutment of Newtown Road. The allocation of approximately \$3,000,000 of Urban Federal-Aid Funds are contemplated for this project over the next several years.

We concur in the recommendation that the planning and implementation of the improvements should be expedited and that priorities for each phase of improvement should be established in cooperation with the local governing body.

- (4) That a 15¢ commuter rate be provided for use at the Central Toll Plaza, with books of tickets at a cost not to exceed \$7.50 for a book of fifty (50) tickets and \$3.75 for a book of twenty-five (25) tickets for use during a period of no less than six months from the date of issue. The book price should be kept low so as to be affordable by persons with lower incomes, as suggested by Delegate Bernard Barrow and others. These books of tickets should be available for purchase at all offices of the City Treasurer of Virginia Beach, at all banking locations of Virginia National Bank in Virginia Beach and Norfolk and at such other banks in the two cities as are willing to provide the service, at little or no cost, and by mail from an office of the Virginia Department of Highways and Transportation. As requested by Delegate George H. Heilig, this commuter rate should be made effective no later than February 1, 1977, to coincide with the reduction of the tolls on the Elizabeth River Tunnels.

The effect a 15¢ commuter rate may have on revenues cannot be determined with sufficient accuracy until additional data are obtained. Therefore, at this time no recommendation regarding change in toll rates is being made, pending receipt of detailed traffic data and analysis to be provided by the "Traffic Engineers".

- (5) That the Expressway, which was designed for inclusion in the Interstate Highway System, be so included at the earliest possible date, and that efforts to accomplish this goal should be diligently pursued by the State Department of Highways and Transportation until accomplished.

The Department submitted a request to FHWA on March 2, 1977 to have the Expressway added to the Interstate System. The Department should pursue this matter vigorously.

- (6) That preliminary planning proceed for a full interchange at First Colonial Road and for an eastbound off ramp and a westbound on ramp at Great Neck Road.

We concur and recommend the Department proceed with the planning and development of these projects so that they may be put under construction as soon as funds are available.

- (7) That vehicles bearing valid Virginia "Public Use" license plates be permitted to pass the Central Toll Plaza without charge, if legally possible.

The Highway Commission position is that this is in conflict with both the Trust Indenture and State Law.

- (8) That the Department of State Police shall patrol the Expressway as upon the Interstate Highways in the Commonwealth, without "special" or "extra" compensation from toll funds.
- (9) That the Department of Highways and Transportation continue to repair and maintain the Expressway without the use of toll funds, utilizing procedures and practices designed to minimize inconvenience to the users of the facility.

We agree that the Department should continue to pay, from regular highway funds, for the maintenance of the Expressway as it has in the past. The District Engineer has been directed to make every feasible effort to utilize procedures and practices in the maintenance of this facility to minimize inconvenience of the users.

- (10) That, whereas, the Expressway leads to the area receiving perhaps more tourists and guests to the Commonwealth than any other location in Virginia, and whereas, the people of Virginia Beach and Norfolk have a strong desire that our primary pathway to the sea be very attractively maintained; therefore, the grass and shrubbery on all the Expressway right of way,

including ramp and toll collection approaches, the sides of the inclines, beside the highway itself, and the median shall be kept trimmed and well maintained at all times; that litter shall be kept picked up; and that the ornamental horticulture and landscaping generally in medians and at the ramps shall be substantially improved.

We concur and recommend that the Department develop a comprehensive landscape plan for the entire facility with a standard of design comparable to that used for Interstate System urban roadways; and that the advice and assistance of citizen groups and the local government of Virginia Beach be sought for the development and implementation of such a plan. Additional attention should be given to the improvement and maintenance of the ramp areas.

- (11) That Virginia National Bank, as Trustee of the toll funds, is respectfully urged to maximize in every feasible way the revenue earned from the investment of toll funds, and that the Department of Highways and Transportation and the Office of the Attorney General shall provide full cooperation and a regular review to help assure that this is accomplished.
- (12) That the Department of Highways and Transportation should annually compute the amount of revenue received by it during the preceding year from the motor fuel tax as the result of vehicles using the toll road, subtracting from the said sum the amount spent on maintenance of the road during the said preceding year, and apply the balance to the redemption of the Expressway bonds, as requested by Delegate Owen B. Pickett.

The Department is urged to continue its efforts in this direction, with the assistance of the Division of Motor Vehicles.

- (13) That should a disaster threaten or strike the City of Virginia Beach, which, in the determination of the City of Virginia Beach Emergency Services Director or his designated alternate, in the interest of public safety requires mass evacuation utilizing the Norfolk-Virginia Beach Expressway, all westbound vehicles should be allowed to pass through the toll plaza free of charge for such period as the said Director shall determine to be necessary, not to exceed twenty-four (24) hours, if legally possible.

We agree that in the event of a public emergency, which would require a mass evacuation of the area, the Suffolk District Engineer should be authorized to permit toll-free passage over the facility.

- (14) That a minimum speed limit be established and posted and that signs be erected advising slower traffic to keep right.

The Department's traffic engineers have conducted a study of the traffic conditions and geometrics of the facility and it is the Department's position that erecting the requested signs would bring about no appreciable improvement to the traffic flow on the facility.

- (15) That all future contracts or construction on the Expressway or locations immediately affecting the flow of traffic thereon shall include a provision that all reasonable efforts shall be exercised so as not to perform work during peak traffic periods in the morning and evening that will impede the flow of traffic on the Expressway or the western approach thereto.

The Department's design engineers have been directed to give special attention to the sequence of construction and traffic control in the preparation of plans for all future construction on the Expressway.

- (16) That the users of the Expressway should be encouraged to utilize mass transit and car pooling; and to these ends, that a mass transit lane, westbound during the peak traffic in the morning and eastbound during the peak traffic in the evening, be established for the use of buses, cars, or trucks carrying more than three persons and other vehicles designated for the purpose of carrying multiple persons, at such time as same is found to be in the public interest.

We recommend that this alternative be fully considered in the development of plans for the further improvement of the facility.

- (17) That a reversible lane system be used during morning and evening peak traffic periods to add an additional lane for use by westbound traffic in the morning and by eastbound traffic in the evening, as soon as the system is feasible and determined to be reasonably safe in the public interest, as suggested by the Chief Transportation Planner of the Southeastern Virginia Planning District Commission.

We recommend that this alternative be fully considered in the development of plans for the further improvement of the facility.

- (18) That an annual report be prepared each year by the Department of Highways and Transportation until both the following shall have occurred, to-wit: (i) the Expressway is made toll free, and (ii) the Expressway has been included in the Interstate System, such report to include:

- (a) An itemized list by category of the income and expenses of the facility for the preceding calendar or fiscal year.
- (b) A listing of the investment revenue from the facility and the income derived therefrom.
- (c) The principal amount of the bonds retired during the period.
- (d) The principal amount of the bonds still to be retired.
- (e) Activities and the results thereof directed toward the inclusion of the Expressway in the Interstate System.

This report shall be mailed each year to the City Managers of Virginia Beach and Norfolk, the members of the City Councils of Virginia Beach and Norfolk, and to the persons presently constituting the Norfolk-Virginia Beach Expressway Study Commission.

The Department's Fiscal Manager has been directed to routinely furnish the reports as requested for items (a) through (d). Information regarding the inclusion of the facility in the Interstate System should be reported to those listed as developments occur.

Continuation of the Commission was provided for with the passage of Senate Joint Resolution No. 109 by the 1977 Session of the General Assembly (see Appendix IV).

Respectfully submitted,

Glenn B. McClanan (Chairman)  
Joseph T. Fitzpatrick (Vice-Chairman)  
Peter K. Babalas  
A. Joseph Canada, Jr.  
William T. Parker  
Robert E. Washington

## Appendix I

### Norfolk-Virginia Beach Toll Road

Material to be covered:

Proposed improvements

Implementation schedule

Estimated costs including P.E., R/W and Constr.

#### I. Proposed Improvements

- (a) Route 64/264 to Witch Duck Road
- (b) Witch Duck to Lynnhaven - 8 lanes
- (c) Improvements to Lynnhaven Interchange
- (d) New ramps at Great Neck Road
- (e) New interchange at First Colonial Road
- (f) Six laning from Lynnhaven to end of Toll Road

#### II. Implementation Schedule and Estimated Costs

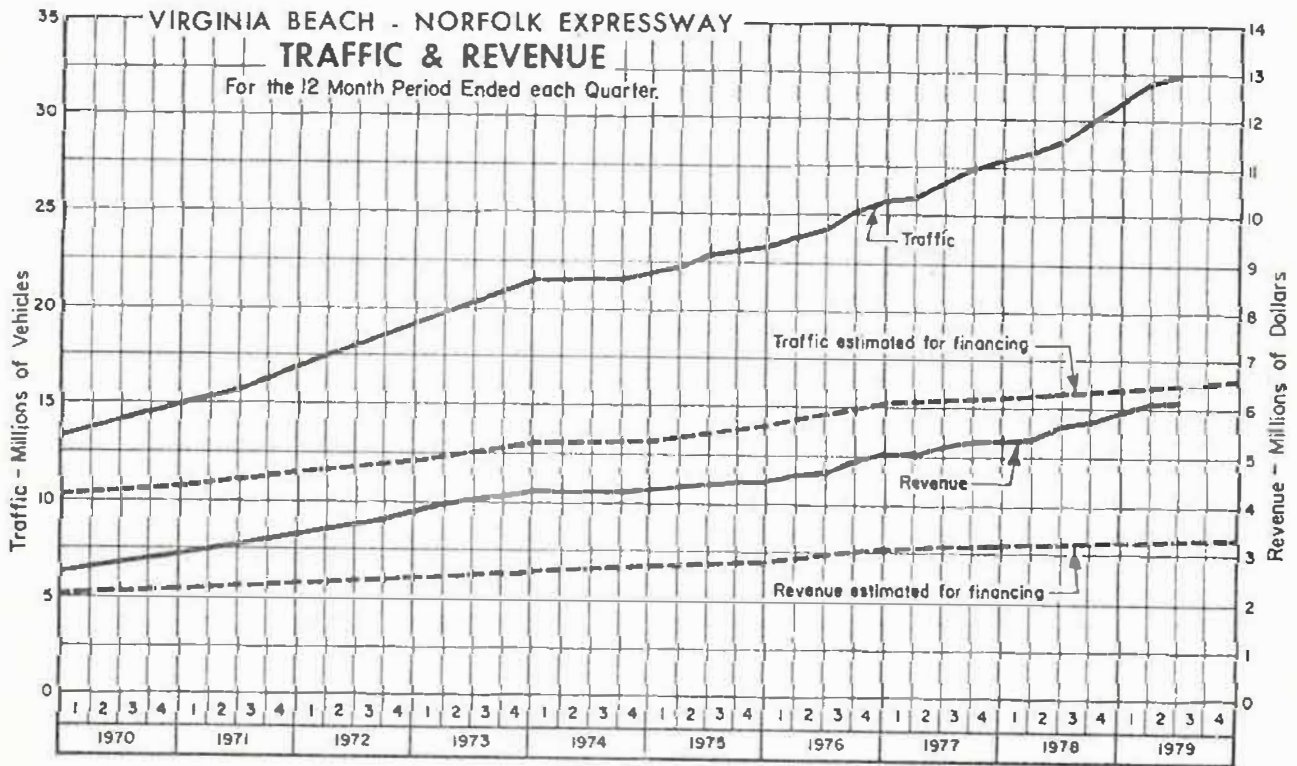
- (a) Early widening of bridges in median for additional six lanes from Plaza Trail East. Also bridge work at Newton Road - 2nd Qtr. 1980 Est. = \$ 5.6 Mil.
  - (b) Roadway widening six months later than foregoing bridge widening - 4th Qtr. 1980 \$ 5.9 Mil.
  - (c) Roadwork at Newton Road - 1st Qtr. 1981 = \$ 4.2 Mil.
  - (d) Lynnhaven Interchange - 4th Qtr. 1981 = \$ 7.0 Mil.
  - (e) First Colonial and Great Neck Interchanges - 1st Qtr. 1982 = \$11.2 Mil.
  - (f) Eight lanes - Witch Duck to Lynnhaven - 1st Qtr. 1982 = \$ 2.7 Mil.
- Total \$36.6 Mil.

Laskin Road Landscaping - Nov. '79



## Appendix II

Traffic and revenue growth accelerated in 1978, increasing by 11.2% and 9.3%, respectively. The lower growth rate for revenues reflects both the higher rate of increases for ramp traffic and the commuter rate in effect at the barrier toll plaza since July 1, 1978. This growth continued for the first four months of 1979 with traffic increasing 12.2% and revenue increasing 9.8% through April. Then, however, the growth slowed as the cost of gasoline rose and gasoline shortages were experienced. The June increase in traffic was only 1.6%, and revenues declined by .8%, the first monthly revenue decline since 1974. Both traffic and revenue declined in July, by 2.0% and 0.6%, but small increases were being experienced in August. Nevertheless, for the first seven months of 1979, traffic and revenues were 7.1% and 4.8%, respectively, higher than in 1978. In June 1979, barrier toll plaza traffic averaged over 62,000 vehicles per day and exceeded 74,000 on one day. Average daily traffic through all toll plazas was approximately 98,000 in June 1979. The complete record of growth of Expressway traffic and revenues is presented in the chart below:



**HOWARD NEEDLES TAMMEN & BERGENDOFF**  
CONSULTING ENGINEERS

### Appendix III

#### SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 58

Creating a Commission to Study the Norfolk-Virginia Beach Expressway.

WHEREAS, Interstate Highway 64, as proposed, extends primarily without tolls from St. Louis, Missouri to the boundary line of the city of Virginia Beach, Virginia, only 12.1 miles from the Atlantic Ocean; and

WHEREAS, the Norfolk-Virginia Beach Expressway connects Interstate 64 with the Atlantic Ocean and is unfortunately a toll road; and

WHEREAS, the said Toll Road Authority receives more than \$4.5 million per year in revenue, but after eight years of operation, has reduced the initial bonded indebtedness of \$34 million by only \$3,385,000, with the bonds presently scheduled to not be retired until the year 2005; and

WHEREAS, it is highly desirable that a way be found whereby the financial obligations of the Norfolk-Virginia Beach Toll Road Authority be retired as quickly as possible so that this road may become toll free and may be incorporated into the Interstate Highway System; and

WHEREAS, the existence of the Norfolk-Virginia Beach Expressway as a toll facility works a special financial hardship upon persons who use that highway in commuting daily to and from their places of work, and other frequent users of the toll road, because the Norfolk-Virginia Beach Expressway does not make available any form of reduced-rate commuter privileges for those making regular and extensive use of the highway; and

WHEREAS, the Richmond-Petersburg Turnpike and other toll facilities in Virginia offer books of commuter tickets at a lesser cost than individual fares; and

WHEREAS, it is desirable that some means be found whereby the existing burden upon users of the Expressway may be reduced or eliminated; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That there is hereby created the Norfolk-Virginia Beach Expressway Commission. The Commission shall study all aspects of the Norfolk-Virginia Beach Expressway which studies shall include, but not be confined to, the investigation of (i) the Authority's current debt service plan, its management and investment of its funds, and how the financial obligations of the Expressway may be most expeditiously retired, (ii) the planned improvement program of the Authority and how the Expressway may be improved without lengthening the period during which tolls will need to be imposed on users of the Expressway, (iii) the current operations and the operating expenses of the Toll Road Authority, and (iv) means by which special commuter tickets can be provided without jeopardizing the Expressway's revenues.

The Commission shall have the right to call public hearings and shall have the right to prepare for consideration such legislation as it may deem appropriate, on the basis of its study. The Commission shall also have the right to make such other recommendation as it may deem appropriate.

The Commission shall consist of seven members, four to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates from the membership therein, three to be appointed by the Committee on Privileges and Elections of the Senate from the membership of the Senate. If a vacancy occurs for any reason, the appropriate above named person or persons shall appoint a successor. The Division of Legislative Services shall serve as staff to the Commission.

The members of the Commission shall receive such compensation as authorized by law for members of the General Assembly and be reimbursed for their expenses incurred during the conduct of the study.

The Commission may call upon the Norfolk-Virginia Beach Toll Road Authority, the State

Department of Highways and Transportation and other State departments and agencies, and all governing bodies and agencies of all political subdivisions of the State, for such technical assistance and information as may be needed by the Commission, all of whom shall assist the Commission upon request in the performance of its duties.

The Commission may also obtain the services of private persons or any organizations having knowledge, expertise and interest in the matters to be considered by the Commission.

The Commission shall complete its study and report to the Governor and the General Assembly not later than December one, nineteen hundred seventy-six.

**Appendix IV**

**SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 109**

Continuing the Norfolk-Virginia Beach Expressway Commission.

WHEREAS, in nineteen hundred seventy-six, the General Assembly, by passage of Senate Joint Resolution No. 58, created a Commission to study the Norfolk-Virginia Beach Expressway; and

WHEREAS, certain aspects of such Commission's work have yet to be completed; and

WHEREAS, it is necessary that the existence of such Commission be continued so that it may receive and, as it deems appropriate, act upon reports recommended in its Report to the Governor and General Assembly; and

WHEREAS, termination of the Commission's existence at the present time would jeopardize work already done by the Commission; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate of Virginia, the House of Delegates concurring, That the Commission to study the Norfolk-Virginia Beach Expressway, as created and constituted by the General Assembly in nineteen hundred seventy-six, is hereby continued in existence for the purpose of receiving and, as it deems necessary, acting upon reports recommended in the Commission's latest Report to the Governor and General Assembly.

## **Appendix V**

### **Members of the Committee**

Glenn B. McClanan, Chairman

Joseph T. Fitzpatrick, Vice-Chairman

Peter K. Babalas

A. Joe Canada, Jr.

William T. Parker

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