

Crossing in its listing of projects from the 2034 Long-Range Transportation Plan for Hampton Roads that benefit the military (see page 52 of the study).

Add to this naval reality the recent recommendation of Admiral Harvey, Commander of U.S. Fleet Forces Command, headquartered in Norfolk, to the Navy's CNO that a study be made of the feasibility of relocating the Military Sealift Command headquarters now located at the Navy Yard in Washington, D.C. to Hampton Roads. While the feasibility and scope of that relocation remain to be developed, the fact that the study has been recommended shows that the Navy has a serious interest in consolidating activities in the face of current budget constraints. This interest constitutes a strategic opportunity for the addition of a significant number of high paying jobs to Hampton Roads. Of course, in the midst of this opportunity, the relocation of one or more carrier groups from Hampton Roads remains a threat.

If started now, the construction of the Patriots Crossing project would demonstrate unmistakably to the Navy that Hampton Roads is serious about addressing its transportation challenges. That step would assist in persuading the Navy that Hampton Roads has the capacity to accommodate the relocation of the Military Sealift Command headquarters from the Washington Navy Yard to Hampton Roads and could certainly influence the carrier relocation debate.

Third, the Patriots Crossing is a portion of the larger Third Crossing project. The NEPA process for the Third Crossing has already been completed and a Record of Decision (ROD) has already been rendered. That ROD covers the entirety of the Patriots Crossing. One portion of the Patriots Crossing, the Craney Island Connector, is already partially funded and right of way acquisition and utilities coordination have already commenced. Additionally, a related project, the I-564 Intermodal Connector, is fully funded and scheduled to commence construction in the near future. In effect, the Patriots Crossing project is more than shovel ready—i.e., preparations to build it have already commenced.

Finally, although the Route 460 Corridor Improvements project has been identified for inclusion in the Governor's Transportation Funding Plan, there are important considerations regarding the viability of this project and the impact it will have on easing traffic congestion and stimulating job growth in Hampton Roads if it is pursued independently from and prior to related transportation projects in Hampton Roads. First, if the Route 460 Corridor is completed before projects to relieve congestion on I-664 and I-64 in Southside Hampton Roads, it will not be able to achieve its goals in easing traffic congestion and stimulating job growth. In fact, the Patriots Crossing will make a significant contribution to the success of the Route 460 Corridor by relieving congestion on other corridors across the Elizabeth River. Second, if the Route 460 Corridor is completed as a toll road before the project to widen I-64 on the Peninsula, which also is likely to be a PPTA partly financed by tolls, passenger vehicles and trucks will have little incentive to use Route 460 and it will not help relieve congestion on I-64. For both of these reasons, we believe that the Route 460 Corridor is best pursued at a point in the future when completion of related projects will ensure the success of the Route 460 Corridor.

To be clear, the Hampton Roads Partnership is not opposed to funding the Route 460 Corridor Improvements project at an appropriate time in the future. The Route 460 Corridor is a good project; however, its contribution to Hampton Roads will be felt over the long term, in

conjunction with the other priority projects in the 2034 Long-Range Transportation Plan, not as a near term, stand alone project. Again, the Patriots Crossing will have much greater near-term impact on easing traffic congestion and stimulating job growth in Hampton Roads.

For all these reasons, the Hampton Roads Partnership strongly recommends (1) that the Patriots Crossing project be added to the Governor's Transportation Funding Plan with construction starting at the earliest possible date, (2) that the Route 460 Corridor Improvements project be deferred for future construction at a time when related projects in Hampton Roads will guarantee its success, and (3) that public funds, including Virginia Port Authority funds, for the Route 460 Corridor Improvements project be reallocated to the Patriots Crossing project.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss our recommendations with you and, of course, thank you for all that you do for the Commonwealth and her people.

Sincerely,



Deborah M. DiCroce
Chair, Board of Directors

DMD/
c: The Honorable Robert F. McDonnell
Governor of Virginia