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INDEPENDENT REVIEW PANEL MEETING

PUBLIC COMMENTS

DOWNTOWN TUNNEL/MIDTOWN TUNNEL/
MARTIN LUTHER KING FREEWAY EXTENSION

APRIL 22, 2009

6:00 P.M. - 7:00 P.M.

NORFOLK CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS

810 UNION STREET, 11TH FLOOR

NORFOLK, VIRGINIA

REPORTING SERVICES PERFORMED BY: SHEILA L. LOWE

1 MR. DICKENS: Good evening, ladies and
2 gentlemen. I'd like to welcome each of you to the third of
3 five meetings to consider the conceptual proposal submitted
4 by the Elizabeth River Crossings, referred to as ERC, under
5 the Public-Private Transportation Act to finance, develop,
6 design, construct, operate and maintain the Downtown and
7 Midtown Tunnels and the Martin Luther King Extension
8 project.

9 I'd like to first introduce our panel,
10 if I may. We'll start with Mr. Alan Witt, who's a
11 Commonwealth Transportation Board member; Mr. Cord Sterling,
12 who couldn't be with us tonight; Ms. Regina Williams, city
13 manager for Norfolk; Michael Townes, CEO of Hampton Roads
14 Transit; Dwight Farmer, executive director of Hampton Roads
15 Planning District Commission; Ann Wright, a Portsmouth
16 attorney; Jeff Florin, deputy director of Virginia Port
17 Authority; Mal Kerley; chief engineer for VDOT; Rita Busher,
18 CFO at VDOT; Dennis Heuer, district administrator for the
19 Hampton Roads District; Mike Robinson from the Virginia
20 Modeling and Simulation Center, and Mr. Ken Chandler, who is
21 city manager of Portsmouth. And I thank each one of you for
22 your participation on this panel.

23 ERC or the Elizabeth River Crossings
24 presented its conceptual proposal before the IRP at our
25 first meeting at the Portsmouth Council Chamber in March of

1 2009. Yesterday in Portsmouth, VDOT presented its technical
2 findings of ERC's conceptual proposal followed by public
3 comment. Citizens here tonight are encouraged to register
4 out in the lobby, and if you haven't done so and would like
5 to speak, we would ask that you do that.

6 This is the second of two meetings
7 specifically set aside for the public to have an opportunity
8 to offer comment on this project. We have two stenographers
9 available for tonight's public comment. One is in this
10 room. The other is in the lobby. If you choose not to
11 speak publicly, you're certainly encouraged to deliver your
12 comments to the stenographer in the lobby.

13 I encourage you to visit VDOT's
14 information tables in the lobby throughout this evening and
15 would remind everyone desiring to address the Independent
16 Review Panel that you must register in the lobby. VDOT
17 project personnel will be available to discuss specific
18 information at each table. I would also remind those who
19 prefer not to speak publicly but would like your comments to
20 be documented for the record, the stenographer is in the
21 lobby and I think I've said that already.

22 The IRP will now hear public comment.
23 Each speaker will be called up to the podium in the order as
24 registered at the public comment sign-in sheet. So please
25 listen for your name and proceed to the podium as your name

1 is called, and I don't have the list yet. When you reach
2 the podium, please state your name and affiliation and speak
3 clearly. I would like to remind you-all, this is not a
4 question and answer session, so the IRP will not address
5 your comments or your questions.

6 Speakers will be strictly limited to
7 three minutes. A timekeeper will flash a yellow card when
8 one minute remains and will flash a red card when your time
9 has expired. When your time has expired, please move away
10 from the podium and return to your seat so the next speaker
11 can address the Independent Review Panel. As a reminder,
12 those who prefer to make a verbal comment, please -- prefer
13 not to make a verbal comment, please speak to the
14 stenographer in the lobby. And I still don't have the list,
15 please.

16 While we're getting there, if you parked
17 in the parking lot and would like to have your ticket
18 validated, you may do so at the sign-in table out in front
19 so there is no fee for parking.

20 Thank you, sir. Okay. At this time,
21 I'd like to invite Mayor Fraim to the podium. Mayor Fraim,
22 welcome.

23 MAYOR FRAIM: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
24 For the record, my name is Paul Fraim. I'm mayor of the
25 City of Norfolk, and on behalf of the Norfolk City Council,

1 I would like to welcome you to city hall for tonight's
2 discussion, which is certainly an important one.

3 The Midtown Tunnel is the most heavily
4 congested two-lane roadway in the Commonwealth of Virginia
5 carrying approximately 44,000 vehicles a day. The Midtown
6 Tunnel interchange in Norfolk connects with Hampton
7 Boulevard to the north. It is one of the most important
8 travel corridors in the entire Hampton Roads region
9 providing access to the Norfolk Naval Base, Old Dominion
10 University, NIT, and EVMS medical campus among others.

11 Despite its significant importance,
12 Hampton Boulevard traffic backs up, and delays in both
13 Norfolk and Portsmouth are a daily occurrence. Backups
14 routinely build for miles creating daily delays lasting for
15 hours at a time. These backups at the Midtown Tunnel and
16 Hampton Boulevard routinely spill over and impact the
17 circulation of Norfolk's downtown traffic, especially at
18 peak times and all through the neighborhoods of the west
19 side of Norfolk.

20 What makes matters worse is that the
21 Downtown Tunnel is also the most heavily travelled river
22 crossing in Hampton Roads. Its daily volume now routinely
23 exceeds that of the Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel even during
24 peak summer tourist months. We often have approximately
25 100,000 vehicles a day travelling between Norfolk and

1 Portsmouth through the Downtown Tunnel.

2 The daily congestion on Hampton
3 Boulevard, Brambleton Boulevard -- Brambleton Avenue,
4 Tidewater Drive, I-264 and I-64 is largely attributable to
5 the limited capacity of the Midtown Tunnel. No other
6 community in Virginia, including those in Northern Virginia,
7 would be asked to accept what Norfolk and Portsmouth
8 citizens routinely experience. The daily congestion is more
9 than just a nuisance or inconvenience causing the average
10 citizen a couple of extra minutes. The limited capacity of
11 the Midtown Tunnel is putting a stranglehold on businesses
12 we need to support. It is unnecessarily impacting the
13 quality of life our citizens deserve, and the traffic
14 congestion problems at the Midtown Tunnel are only going to
15 get worse, not to mention compounding our inability to
16 evacuate the area in the event of a natural disaster or any
17 sort of disaster.

18 If we do nothing, the Midtown Tunnel
19 will become the clogged artery of our regional highway
20 traffic circulation system, and it will affect the entire
21 region. The forecasted traffic congestion patterns tell us
22 that the Midtown Tunnel expansion is not an option or even a
23 luxury anymore. It is vital.

24 In September 2008, Elizabeth River
25 Crossings submitted a solicited proposal under the Virginia

1 Public-Private Transportation Act to privately construct a
2 second Midtown Tunnel and to extend the refurbished
3 federally required safety improvements to the Martin Luther
4 King Freeway. We are confident that the ERC team has the
5 background, the technical expertise, experience, and
6 financial capacity to complete the project; however, the
7 City of Norfolk is resolute in our objections to the notion
8 that the project be solely financed by tolls estimated to be
9 in the two to three dollar range. Any tolls considered must
10 be reasonable -- I say that again, must be reasonable -- and
11 affordable, and every effort must be pursued to achieve that
12 goal.

13 Now, a few additional thoughts about how
14 to achieve what would be a reasonable toll. First, VDOT
15 required that the current PPTA proposal include
16 refurbishments of the Downtown Tunnel and the existing
17 Midtown tube, and also, the assumption of daily operations
18 and maintenance responsibilities for both tunnels. As a
19 general principle, the willingness of the region to accept
20 tolls to advance a needed project should not create a cost
21 savings to VDOT. The citizens of Norfolk, citizens of
22 Portsmouth, the citizens who use the Midtown Tunnel are
23 certainly willing to pay a toll to construct the tunnel. We
24 already pay taxes to operate and maintain the roadways here.
25 We ought not to be billed twice.

1 This action would shift a significant
2 amount of state transportation funds away if this action
3 occurs. It would shift a significant amount of state
4 transportation funds away from the region and away from the
5 Hampton Roads citizens that pay taxes to the Commonwealth to
6 build and maintain road infrastructure across the state. A
7 commitment from the state to contribute annually towards the
8 project in amounts at least equivalent to the present and
9 ongoing responsibilities at the tunnels for maintenance,
10 operations and upgrades should be provided, including that
11 for the fourth tube.

12 Second, the VDOT solicitation envisioned
13 a traditional toll project for which revenues collected
14 through tolls would be sufficient to repay the project debt.
15 This approach was built upon the 2005 regional toll study
16 that supported a self-sustaining project with tolls at
17 approximately 65 cents. The current proposal, based upon
18 more detailed information and a revised design greatly
19 increased costs, raising the question whether the project is
20 viable without any public contribution. The issue of state
21 participation in the funding of the Midtown Tunnel
22 Improvement Program should be on the table, given the
23 statewide significance of the Midtown Tunnel facility.

24 And third, under the current PPTA
25 proposal, tolls would begin to be collected upon completion

1 of the Midtown and MLK projects. The ability to begin to
2 collect revenue on existing facilities at the start of
3 design work as proposed in the previous regional toll study
4 could aid project development and financing and thereby help
5 to lower overall tax levels. Revising the state's decision
6 on when tolling can be initiated may be appropriate.

7 The citizens and businesses of Norfolk
8 and Portsmouth stand ready to do their part, but please do
9 not ask them to do more than what is fair or reasonable.
10 Thank you for your -- thank you for considering what has
11 been said here today, and I look forward to working with you
12 on this most important issue. Thank you. Thank you,
13 Mr. Chairman, I appreciate it.

14 MR. DICKENS: Thank you, Mayor Fraim,
15 and thank you for the use of your facility.

16 Next speaker is Russell Manning.
17 Russell Manning will be followed by Mickey Bisese.

18 MR. MANNING: Good evening. My name is
19 Russell Manning. I've lived here in Norfolk my entire life.
20 I'm here today to strongly suggest that any addition to the
21 Midtown Tunnel be constructed to accommodate a future light
22 rail line. On a board posted where we came in out front,
23 Elizabeth River Crossings stated that this project would
24 fulfill their vision of, quote, an effective linked
25 transportation system for Hampton Roads, bringing reduced

1 congestion and increased mobility for all users.

2 Light rail is in Hampton Roads' future
3 as you can see if you look out this window. It stops
4 practically at the entrance to the Midtown Tunnel. There is
5 no reason why we should have it that close and not take into
6 consideration where it's going to go in the future. By
7 failing to include plans for light rail, this plan would
8 drive a wedge through this linked transportation system.
9 Light rail will be part of the future transportation system.
10 We need to keep this in consideration. Thank you.

11 MR. DICKENS: Thank you, Mr. Manning.

12 Mr. Bisese followed by Henry Shriver.

13 MR. BISESE: Thank you, Mr. Dickens.

14 Gentlemen, many of you-all have heard my speech before. I
15 apologize to you-all. Think of it as a toll, it just never
16 stops. I am fighting tolls, and that's the sole purpose of
17 my being here tonight. I'm not fighting the project. I'm
18 fighting the tolls.

19 The tolls of \$2.50, as you well know as
20 I've shown many of you before, comes to \$1,200 a year.
21 That's \$1,200 a year. When the gasoline tax was increased
22 where gasoline went from \$2 to \$4 in this country, what
23 happened? The economy went on its duff. It came to about
24 \$900. It's 480 gallons an average person uses. It's about
25 \$960, somewhere in that range. Here's \$1,200. What's that

1 going to do to our economy?

2 Mayor Fraim, if you recall back when the
3 toll was removed from the Portsmouth to Norfolk tunnel at 25
4 cents, what, about 15 years ago, what was the headline in
5 the paper? That's right. Commerce increased on both sides
6 of the river. My, my, my.

7 We're being held hostage by the Senate
8 of Virginia for the 24 cents that goes out of every one of
9 our tax dollars for rural Virginia. If we have to turn
10 around and tax our citizens again via a toll, a user fee, I
11 suggest we start looking at getting our 44 cents back. If
12 we're going to be held hostage and damage our economy that
13 feeds this entire state with our transportation system, call
14 it river, Elizabeth River, which brings the ships in daily,
15 goods that go to the transport station, it's going to have
16 an impact. It's going to have a huge impact to some people,
17 and it trickles down, of course, to the economy of
18 businesses and its restaurants and everything else. If you
19 take 1,000, \$1,200 out of people who make \$35,000 a year,
20 they're hurt. They are hurt by this.

21 And it comes complete with congestion
22 pricing. I love that one. Congestion pricing, when we all
23 go to work, 6:30 in morning to 10:00, and then again it
24 repeats when we all return from work. That's not -- it's
25 not a user fee. It's not congestion pricing. By any other

1 deal, it would be called gouging. When gas prices went up
2 and gas became scarce, when the gas pumps raised their
3 prices, the federal government went after them for gouging
4 on their prices. This becomes the same thing. When people
5 are using the roads to reach in their pocket deeper because
6 of congestion pricing, it's a facade. It's a profit base
7 you can run.

8 Now, if we need the tolls to fund the
9 project, I have no problem or we should have no problem some
10 setting the toll once the project is paid for. But the way
11 this thing is being orchestrated, the private companies that
12 are building the roads will -- each one of us in this room,
13 every one of us in this room will be dead in 50 years.
14 We'll be in a box. It's your children that are coming
15 behind you, and they'll think that's the normal operation
16 way to fund tolls -- to fund highways to operate the tolls.
17 And their children, of course, the private companies, their
18 kids will be enjoying life in Tahiti. Our kids will be
19 scrapping for a slice of bread. That's no kidding. Look
20 what happened at the Dulles Greenway. They took the toll
21 from \$1 to \$2 to \$3 and now they want 7.

22 Thank you, gentlemen. I appreciate your
23 time.

24 MR. DICKENS: Thank you, Mr. Bisese, and
25 if you want to leave your props up there --

1 MR. BISESE: Well, that would be a
2 bribe. I'm sorry, I can't do that.

3 MR. DICKENS: Just kidding. Just
4 kidding.

5 Mr. Shriver followed by Susan Horton.

6 MR. SHRIVER: My name is Henry Shriver,
7 and I'm speaking on behalf as a citizen of Norfolk and on --
8 as chairman of the Transportation Committee of the Greater
9 Norfolk Corporation, which is comprised of business, civic,
10 and public interests in this city. My thoughts are this,
11 and I think it's the thoughts of many of the businesses in
12 these interests that I noted above. Number one, we want it
13 to happen. It needs to happen.

14 Number two, we think it's part of a
15 state highway system, a state roadway system that the state
16 has been unable to fund, and we are, I think, very open to
17 participating, as a community, in a partnership relationship
18 to make this happen, but it's been referenced before, this
19 tunnel is not serving just Hampton Roads. It's not serving
20 just the users of it. It serves the entire state in
21 supporting commerce throughout the state of Virginia, and
22 I'd like for us not to continue to think of it as a South
23 Hampton Roads or a Hampton Roads project. It is a state
24 network problem, and we see this needs to be addressed and
25 we're prepared to cooperate in that.

1 We recognize the cost. The construction
2 cost is somewhat controllable, but we're concerned, many of
3 us are concerned about the maintenance and operation, and
4 especially, the deferred maintenance operation. These are
5 picking up tabs that should have been paid some time ago,
6 and certainly, if you were closing on a new project, you
7 would attribute past costs to the past and adjust the value
8 accordingly. We would like to be supporting a value-based
9 project and not engaging in some of the State of Virginia's
10 responsibilities.

11 The end is near. I've checked the
12 podium. Nothing was left. I understand the imperative of
13 finance. I guess I would sum it up to say this: We
14 recognize that no tunnel is going to be a great loss to this
15 community and to the State of Virginia, and we also
16 recognize that a high toll -- and that can be discussed what
17 a high toll is -- is a disservice to this community and to
18 the State of Virginia, and I hope that -- I believe that
19 needs to be taken into account, and hope that that will be.

20 I thank you very much for the
21 opportunity to present these thoughts.

22 MR. DICKENS: Thank you, Mr. Shriver.

23 Susan Horton followed by Stephanie
24 Pazur.

25 MS. HORTON: Thank you. My name is

1 Susan Horton. I'm a resident of West Ghent. I live in the
2 1032 block of Raleigh Avenue. I'm here, actually, just to
3 express my concern and of my neighbors of our block on
4 Raleigh. We live in an historic area. It's the last
5 remaining row houses from the original Atlantic City, and we
6 are actually wrapped by two lanes of traffic. We have, to
7 the right of my home is the entrance to the Midtown Tunnel
8 on one side, and to the left, it comes in from Hampton
9 Boulevard, and we have concerns on how the new construction
10 is going to be done. Is it going to impact our houses? Are
11 they going to be taken by eminent domain? If so -- well,
12 we're hoping that's not going to happen, but we would like
13 to know what is going to happen to our row.

14 If the construction is going to go
15 forward and they're not going to take our houses, we would
16 like to know, is there going to be some sort of maybe wall
17 put up to kind of block the noise? We're assuming there
18 might be more traffic. We're not really sure, since we
19 haven't seen the plans, exactly how that's going to look.
20 But most of us have spent a lot of money in recent years
21 updating our homes and we'd love to keep them and stay
22 there. We love that part of Norfolk and we love these
23 houses.

24 So I'm here just in that capacity to
25 express that concern. I think we thought this meeting

1 tonight was going to give us a presentation on the actual
2 tunnel itself, what the traffic plans were going to be, and
3 that's what we were hoping to find out tonight. Thank you.

4 MR. DICKENS: Thank you, Ms. Horton.

5 Next speaker is Stephanie Pazur followed
6 by Chris Swanson. Did I say that correctly?

7 MS. PAZUR: No. It's okay. My name's
8 Stephanie Pazur, and I, too, am a resident of dubbed Raleigh
9 Row, 1028 Raleigh Avenue, a lovely West Ghent neighborhood,
10 and our homes border the Midtown Tunnel fence. Our concern
11 is, like Susan expressed, just supporting what she said, a
12 barrier, a wall, a jersey wall, a sound bearing wall to
13 protect the neighborhood, our children, you know, because
14 there is a play park also, and, you know, to keep our
15 neighborhood safe. Again, I hope that you will consider us
16 and the historic Raleigh Row houses, which we all dearly
17 love and hope to stay there.

18 MR. DICKENS: Thank you, Ms. Pazur.

19 Chris Swanson followed by Louis Guy.
20 Chris Swanson is not here. Mr. Guy.

21 MR. GUY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My
22 name is Louis Guy, and I'm a resident of Norfolk and a
23 Norfolk native. I want to support going ahead with this
24 project. I think it is needed and the community needs it.
25 The region needs it. I specifically want to support the

1 comments by Mayor Fraim and Mr. Shriver. I think the price
2 is -- the tolls are something that we've lived with in the
3 past, and if they are fair and reasonable, we can live with
4 them again. I personally remember the tolled facility of
5 the tunnel from Norfolk to Portsmouth in the '50s and the
6 period of improvement for the region and for our
7 connections, all weather connections, within the region in
8 the period of the '50s, and the tolls were a nuisance, but
9 we were able to live with them. And even though the state
10 turned its back on us then and didn't provide the money, we
11 used bonds to pay for the improvements that the region and
12 its leaders felt were necessary then. The state, it seems
13 to me, has done a poor job of addressing our regional
14 transportation needs in the past several years, but the
15 region needs to come to the gate and do what is necessary.

16 I also want to add to the comments of
17 one of the speakers about light rail. Light rail is a
18 significant benefit that the region is just starting with.
19 When we do the Midtown project, it is a golden opportunity
20 for us to use light rail to connect Portsmouth and Norfolk
21 and build the regional network of that transportation
22 alternative. It would be, I think, a real mistake for the
23 region to go forward with the Midtown Tunnel and not to
24 include light rail because it will benefit us as we move
25 forward.

1 Thank you for the opportunity to speak
2 and I look forward to moving ahead.

3 MR. DICKENS: Thank you, Mr. Guy.

4 Next speaker is Brad Face followed by
5 Joseph George.

6 MR. FACE: Thank you. My name is Brad
7 Face with the Face Companies here in Norfolk. I preceded
8 Henry as chairman of the Transportation Committee with
9 Greater Norfolk Corporation. I'm co-chair of the Virginia
10 High-Speed Rail Development Committee, and Virginian's for
11 High-Speed Rail and various and sundry other civic projects,
12 but I'm here today because I travel through the Midtown
13 Tunnel about 500 times a year. So I echo that we should
14 structure the funding for this so that the tolls are not an
15 impediment to commerce as the current congestion is.
16 Exchanging one problem for another is not the answer.

17 It's too bad that we're here discussing
18 this. Mayor Fraim and many others in this room tried to get
19 the Midtown Tunnel fixed before, but we haven't done the
20 best job in the Commonwealth of addressing our
21 transportation issues. This is not a mistake we can afford
22 at this time. This is not optional as the mayor said. So
23 the reasonableness of the toll is critical.

24 I can tell you, because I'm my bosses
25 best friend at my company, I get to set my own hours, and I

1 simply don't come through the tunnel at rush hour because
2 it's not tenable. So I come in after ten and go home after
3 seven, and there's not very many people that can arrange
4 their business activities to work like that. So I know, as
5 a fact from personal experience for many years, that this is
6 hurting our economy and hurting the access from Portsmouth
7 into Norfolk and back and forth.

8 And as someone who's worked on light
9 rail going back into the late '80s, I would like to throw in
10 while we might not be able to proceed with light rail in the
11 first realization of this project, I think it would be a
12 mistake not to have the design accommodate the possibility
13 of light rail using this facility in the future. Thank you
14 very much.

15 MR. DICKENS: Thank you, Mr. Face.

16 Mr. Joseph George followed by Mr. Edward
17 Ellis.

18 MR. GEORGE: My name is Joe George. I
19 live in the West Ghent section of Norfolk, about five blocks
20 from the entrance to the Midtown Tunnel. My good mayor
21 really expressed all of my sentiments, covered them, except
22 one little facet that called to me is the container traffic
23 going to and from the tunnel. The picture you're looking at
24 is a container truck that got jammed in the Norfolk side of
25 the entrance to the Midtown Tunnel and backed up traffic --

1 well, it stopped traffic for about five hours. You may keep
2 those, sir.

3 Nevertheless, I would like for you to
4 look into the feasibility of charging an extra rate for
5 container trucks as a means to encourage them to get on
6 Taussig Boulevard and then thus onto the interstate to go
7 around to swap containers from Portsmouth ship facilities to
8 NIT. And it's a shame in this day and age with all the
9 computerization that we have that containers destined for a
10 place that's more accessible to the Norfolk piers should
11 wind up at the Portsmouth piers. It looks like the
12 merchandise going to K-Marts and Wal-Marts from China could
13 be designated way beforehand as to what port they would wind
14 up in. Nevertheless, this is not something that's in your
15 ballpark, but I do wish you would look into the feasibility
16 of making an extra surcharge to container trucks. Thank
17 you.

18 MR. DICKENS: Thank you, sir.

19 Mr. Edward Ellis followed by Frank
20 Auerbach.

21 MR. ELLIS: My name is Edward Ellis. I
22 live in the City of Portsmouth. Actually, I just have a
23 question, and I know you can't answer this question, but I'd
24 like to see if something couldn't be published to the effect
25 of it, and my question is, what is the estimated profit that

1 ERC expects to make from this project over the estimated
2 costs of 1.1 to 1.4 billion construction costs? And the
3 reason of this I ask, this would help show why
4 public/state/federal funding are more desirable than a
5 private company which must make a profit -- which must make
6 a profit, I'm sorry, and that's my question. Thank you.

7 MR. DICKENS: All right. Thank you,
8 Mr. Ellis.

9 Mr. Auerbach.

10 MR. AUERBACH: Hi. My name is Frank
11 Auerbach, and I'm a resident of Norfolk and a business owner
12 in Portsmouth and I grew up in Portsmouth as well. The
13 tunnel has been needed as long as I can remember, but a two
14 to three dollar toll, they might as well not put it in. It
15 will just serve to separate the cities. We have workers who
16 would not be able to afford to go through it. It amounts to
17 a seven-and-a-half percent tax on an employee making \$10 an
18 hour who has to go through the tunnel each day.

19 If they're going to go ahead on a
20 private partnership, it needs to be done at the lowest cost
21 possible, which would be eliminating the Martin Luther King
22 Extension, which would serve no purpose other than to
23 congest traffic on the city streets around the Midtown
24 Tunnel.

25 There's no alternative to going through

1 the tunnels. Going around 64 is already backed up, and the
2 distance is just too much, so people who go back and forth
3 in the cities have to go through the tunnels. It would be
4 better to leave it as it is with no toll then to put a two
5 to three dollar toll on cars or a six to nine dollar toll on
6 trucks. It would eliminate our supplies wanting to come
7 from Norfolk to Portsmouth. It would add tremendous costs
8 to our trucks that go back and forth, and the Martin Luther
9 King Extension specifically would cause big disruptions in
10 Portsmouth as far as local truck traffic trying to get onto
11 the interstate and off of the city streets with the closing
12 of the South Street ramp and Des Moines Avenue ramp, and
13 that's all I have to say. Thank you.

14 MR. DICKENS: Thank you, Mr. Auerbach.

15 That is our last registered speaker. Is
16 there anyone in the audience that would like to address the
17 Independent Review Panel before we close the public hearing?
18 Yes, sir, please come forward. If you would give us your
19 name and address, please, sir.

20 MR. BOLLING: Thank you. Greetings
21 Mr. Chairman and to the party assembled. I'm a resident of
22 Portsmouth. I was at your meeting last evening, and I'm
23 sure that you said the extension is apropos for our day, but
24 we are, as Dr. Martin Luther King said, I have a dream.
25 I've been to the top of the mountain. I'm 76 years old and

1 I've seen the fabrication of Mr. VDOT. They killed the
2 ferry. The businesses in Portsmouth on High Street
3 collapsed. They also converted the tunnel and that took
4 away revenue and people would use the Jordan Bridge and
5 ferry as long as the ferry operated.

6 Where we are now, if you're in the 21st
7 century, roadways are out like the Appian Way was out,
8 what's happened to Rome. We're not a visionary people. Our
9 minds are stagnated by the dollar sign, and it says that we
10 are taxing the poor, the rich are getting richer, and the
11 poor are getting poorer in this nation, and it wasn't
12 designed for that purpose.

13 I'm saying that it's not feasible for an
14 extension of Mr. King's name being attached to a roadway
15 when he had a vision. We have done away with the rail line.
16 We have done away with the boat line, and in Portsmouth,
17 VDOT converted two streets there, County and I believe it
18 was Queen, and they had to come back and gave someone
19 \$10,000 who went to Florida and basked in the sun. They
20 sold a tugboat for a ferry and the tugboat belonged to the
21 railroad company who had stock pilings on Crawford Street,
22 and these stock piling ferries were converted into what we
23 call a Louisiana ferry to Norfolk and Portsmouth.

24 I have used the Midtown Tunnel. I've
25 used the Downtown Tunnel, and I still see, as the gentlemen

1 presented, we're not prepared for any kind of occasion,
2 whether it's God's natural evils or whether it's inflicted
3 by man. What we need is people who have a vision, and I
4 think setting up committees, paying out the pocket
5 grapevines is a vast waste, and we are in a great
6 depression. I thank you.

7 MR. DICKENS: Excuse me, sir. Can you
8 give me your name and address for the record, please?

9 MR. BOLLING: I will give it outside,
10 sir. Will that be all right with you, Mr. Chairman?

11 MR. DICKENS: That will be fine, yes.

12 MR. BOLLING: Thank you.

13 MR. DICKENS: Yes, sir. Thank you very
14 much.

15 Anybody else who would like to address
16 the Independent Review Panel? All right. I'll close the
17 public hearing and thank you-all for being here. Your
18 comments were very thoughtful, and as they were last night,
19 very civil, and we certainly appreciate that. All of the
20 comments received tonight will be considered and actually
21 posted on the VDOT website prior to our fourth IRP meeting.

22 That meeting will be May 13th, 6:00 in
23 the Norfolk Council Chambers where we are tonight. At that
24 meeting, VDOT's Chief Financial Officer will present the
25 agency's financial perspective and evaluation of the results

1 of the conceptual proposal. That will be Ms. Busher.

2 Again, this has been stated a critical
3 project for the region and for the entire Commonwealth. I
4 think everybody at the podium and this room recognizes it is
5 a project that has to happen and it has to happen with a
6 toll that is a reasonable number, and this panel is
7 dedicated to work in that direction. Thank you-all for
8 coming. I hope we'll see you at our May 13th meeting.
9 Meeting adjourned.

10

11 (Whereupon, the meeting concluded at
12 6:40 p.m.)

13

14 (Whereupon, the following comments were
15 given orally to Glynis Locks, stenographer, outside the
16 presence of the Independent Review Panel.)

17

18 1) Janice Jackson.
19 6423 Coxley Lane
20 Suffolk, VA 23435

21

22 My name is Janice Jackson. My address
23 is 6423 Coxley Lane, Suffolk, Virginia 23435. And my
24 comment at this time is I'm using the tunnel at least twice
25 per day and sometimes more. And if the toll would be \$3 one
way, that's \$6 per day, and I work in Norfolk and so I would

1 use this tunnel at least five days per week going to work,
2 and that's \$30 per week and I would also use it on Saturdays
3 and Sundays as well. And to pay \$30 per week to travel from
4 Suffolk to Norfolk at this time is not feasible for myself
5 nor my husband.

6 So I sure would like for the committee
7 to reconsider such a high toll and I know we have to pay
8 something, at least a dollar, no more than a dollar and 50
9 cents instead of \$3. Thank you.

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C E R T I F I C A T E

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
CITY OF NORFOLK, to wit:

I, Sheila L. Lowe, do hereby certify
that the foregoing pages are a true and correct transcript
of my Stenotype notes of the public hearing held at the time
and place in the caption mentioned.

This 4th day of May, 2009.

Sheila L. Lowe
Notary Public

My term in office expires January 31, 2010.



**DOWNTOWN TUNNEL/
MIDTOWN TUNNEL/
MLK EXTENSION PROJECT**

**INDEPENDENT REVIEW PANEL MEETINGS
Public Comment Sheet**

**Meeting 2
April 21, 2009
5 - 9 p.m.**

City of Portsmouth Council Chambers

**Meeting 3
April 22, 2009
6 - 9 p.m.**

City of Norfolk Council Chambers

Name: Henry Pyto

Address: 409 Jagger Court
Virginia Beach, VA 23462-1929 Zip code: _____

1. I would like to provide the Independent Review Panel with the following comments regarding this project:

Having a three lane tunnel is a must, two lanes for vehicular traffic, one for light rail tracks. I'd support a higher toll to get three lanes.

Having a three lane tunnel is a must; two (2) lanes for vehicular traffic, one (1) for light rail tracks. I'd support a higher toll to get three (3) lanes.

2. What effect would this project have on your daily travel?

As a transit user, I'd take light rail to Portsmouth if it went through the new tubes.

As a transit user, I'd take light rail to Portsmouth if it went through the new tubes

3. Has this meeting helped you to better understand the project? Yes No

If you checked "No", please comment:

The technical information did little to help the public.

The technical information did little to help the public.



**DOWNTOWN TUNNEL/
MIDTOWN TUNNEL/
MLK EXTENSION PROJECT**

**INDEPENDENT REVIEW PANEL MEETINGS
Public Comment Sheet**

**Meeting 2
April 21, 2009**

5 - 9 p.m.

City of Portsmouth Council Chambers

**Meeting 3
April 22, 2009**

6 - 9 p.m.

City of Norfolk Council Chambers

Name: Richard C. BROWN

Address: 431 New Hampshire Ave
Norfolk, VA Zip code: 23508

1. I would like to provide the Independent Review Panel with the following comments regarding this project:
If the tunnel does not provide greater facility
for rapid transit, express bus and light rail,
then it will only lead to greater auto congestion
for Norfolk, Portsmouth and other cities. The
tunnel must, must accommodate rapid public transit

2. What effect would this project have on your daily travel?
Not daily, but occasional travel
to south of James River area

3. Has this meeting helped you to better understand the project? Yes No

If you checked "No", please comment:

