

Downtown Tunnel Ceiling Panel Removal Project I-264 Westbound Tube

Project Information

VDOT conducted an engineering analysis and evaluation on ceiling panels in the Downtown Tunnel westbound tube. The initial evaluation included 74 ceiling panels and their associated assemblies. The evaluation concluded that the panels showed significant deterioration. It was recommended that ceiling panels and hanger systems are removed with current available funding and that the installation of replacement ceiling panels occur at a later date.

Ceiling panel removal costs will be funded through the general budget for VDOT Eastern Region Operations. Funding for the ceiling panel replacement is being evaluated and has not yet been identified. A replacement design for the ceiling panel system is necessary to determine a cost estimate for replacement.

The westbound Downtown Tunnel was opened to traffic in 1952 and connects Portsmouth to Norfolk, Virginia. The tunnel is located along I-264 and crosses under the Elizabeth River. The westbound is the oldest of the two tubes.

Inside the tunnel, three rows of suspended panels create a ceiling above the roadway. Bolts are used to suspend the concrete panels, each weighing approximately 750 pounds.

The removal of the ceiling panels in the westbound tube of

the Downtown Tunnel will require the complete closure of the tunnel. Six possible tactics were identified to mitigate traffic impacts while the removal work is being performed. City officials, the TPO and VDOT worked together to identify the mitigation plan with the least negative impact to the traveling public. It was decided that the Downtown Tunnel will be closed westbound for six consecutive weekends beginning in mid-February.

I-264 Westbound Downtown Tunnel Closure Dates

Each closure will begin on Friday at 7 p.m. and end on Monday at 5 a.m.

February 18 through February 21

February 25 through February 28

March 4 through March 7

March 11 through March 14

March 18 through March 21

March 25 through March 28

Contacts

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