Virginia's portion of the National Highway System (NHS) consists of approximately 3,430 miles of highway important to the nation's economy, defense and mobility. The NHS is divided into 5 subsystems defined by the purpose and type of highway:

- Eisenhower Interstate
- Strategic Highway Network (SHOWNET)
- Major Strategic Highway Network Connectors
- Intermodal Connectors
- Other Principal Arterial

Eisenhower Interstate:
The Eisenhower Interstate System, which retains its separate identity within the NHS.

Strategic Highway Network (SHOWNET):
The network of highways which are important to the United States' strategic defense policy and which provide access to military installations, seaport, and other intermodal transportation facilities.

Major Strategic Highway Network Connectors:
The highways which provide access between major military installations and highways that are part of the Strategic Highway Network.

Intermodal Connectors:
The highways which provide access between major intermodal facilities and the other four subsystems making up the National Highway System.