



HAMPTON ROADS REVIEW

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE HAMPTON ROADS PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION • Winter '08

Smithfield
Little Theatre



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Authority Support**

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2007 GIS Conference Held in Virginia Beach

Over 400 attendees from around Virginia and the Mid-Atlantic traveled to Virginia Beach this year to attend the 18th Annual Virginia GIS Conference held on September 24-25, 2007, at the Virginia Beach Convention Center. The Virginia GIS Conference is sponsored annually by the Virginia Association of Planning District Commissions (VAPDC) and was hosted by the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission this year.

The presentation tracks offered represented a diverse cross section of GIS applications. Some of the tracks included Collaborative GIS, Transportation, Green Infrastructure, Enterprise GIS, Stormwater/Utilities, Emergency Management, and Water Resources.

Virginia Beach Mayor Meyera Oberndorf provided opening remarks and a welcome address to conference attendees on the first day. The featured speaker during Monday's lunch session was Dr. David Phillips from the Department of Urban & Environmental Planning at the University of Virginia. He spoke about how the Generation Y students are providing new perspectives on GIS. The featured speaker at Tuesday's lunch was Michelle Hamor from the Army Corps of Engineers, Norfolk District. She spoke about hurricane storm surge analysis and modeling.

There was also an exhibitor's hall open during the conference. There were 26 vendors who exhibited at the conference. Conference sponsors included the Virginia Geographic Information Network, JMT Engineering, Leica Geosystems, Woolpert, and WorldView Solutions.

The 2008 Virginia GIS Conference will be held in Roanoke, Virginia in the fall.



Explore Your Inner Chesapeake and Improve Water Quality!

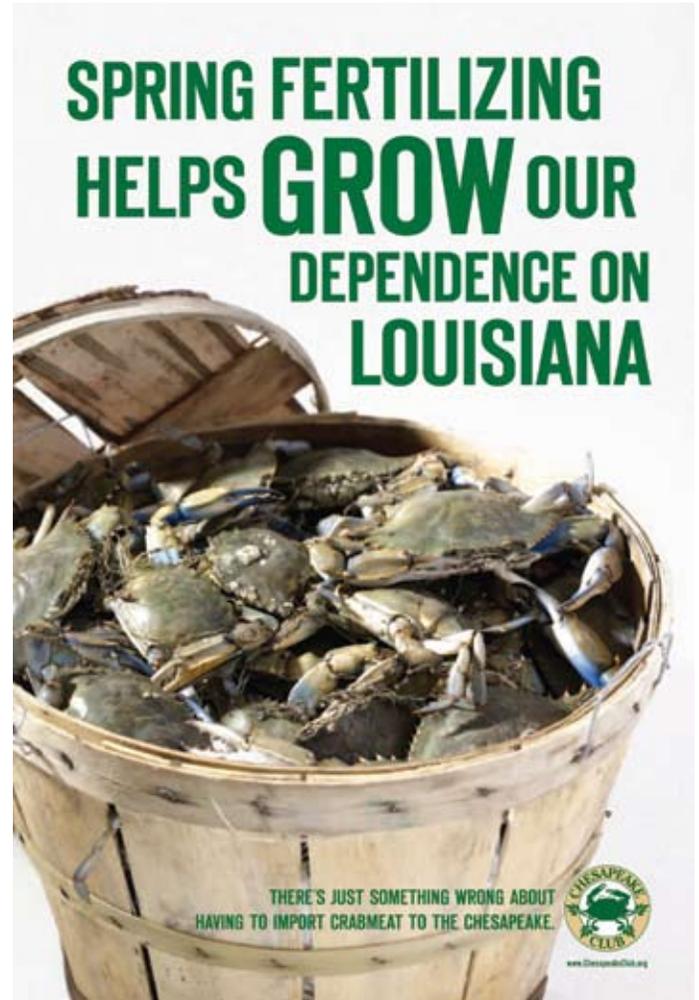
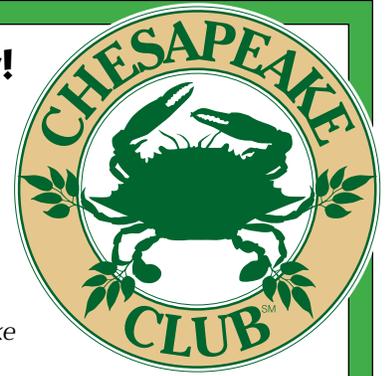
This spring will mark the second season of the Hampton Roads *Chesapeake Club* campaign. The campaign takes a two-pronged approach to educating residents and businesses about their impacts on water quality and what they can do to “Save the Crabs, Then Eat ‘Em.” Coasters and t-shirts with the eye-catching logo and slogan will be distributed to area restaurants, focusing on waterfront and seafood restaurants in particular. The business target will involve localities enlisting the support of professional lawn care services to provide an environmentally friendly standard of care, dubbed the *Chesapeake Club Standard*.

The *Chesapeake Club Standard* is a new branded lawn care regimen designed specifically for the Chesapeake Bay watershed and Hampton Roads. The *Chesapeake Club Standard* is based on lawn service criteria established jointly by a group of lawn care professionals and government environmental stewards.

Under the *Chesapeake Club Standard* lawn service option, lawn care professionals must:

- Keep fertilizer off any impervious surfaces. This may involve sweeping granules back into the grass from sidewalks, driveways and other areas after application;
- Leave behind *Chesapeake Club* lawn care materials provided by the Chesapeake Bay Program and explain to the homeowner that he/she should follow the provided lawn care guidelines if they perform any lawn care on their own;
- Visit the website twice a year – once before June 15 to sign up and once by November 15 to fill out a short online form estimating the area of lawn being serviced under the *Chesapeake Club* brand; and
- Meet ALL the nitrogen and phosphorus application criteria listed below. These criteria require the lawn service to:
 1. Limit the total amount of nitrogen applied during the year (based on the type of grass).
 2. Apply fertilizer only after a specified date in the spring (based on the location, and the type of grass).
 3. Apply fertilizer only before a specified date in the fall (based on the location, and the type of grass).
 4. Only apply phosphorus to new lawns, or as deemed necessary through soil testing.

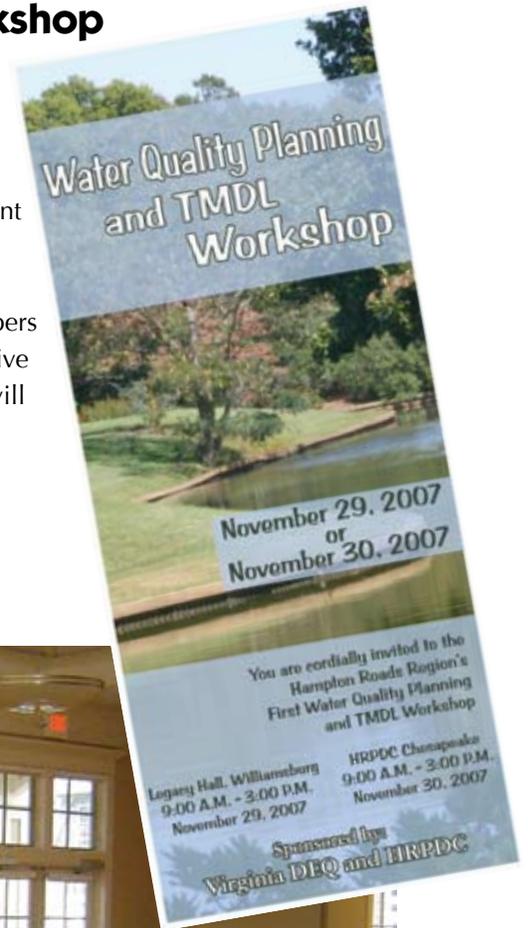
This campaign is made possible by the Chesapeake Bay Program, the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, NOAA, Hampton Roads localities and the HRPDC. Regional *Chesapeake Club* efforts will be coordinated with the localities via the regional stormwater education subcommittee, HR STORM. New local partners this year will include the Virginia Turfgrass Council, Lynnhaven NOW and various offices of Virginia Cooperative Extension. For information about Chesapeake Club, visit www.chesapeakeclub.org or contact Julia Hillegass or Holly Miller of the HRPDC staff.



Physical Planning

Regional Water Quality Planning and TMDL Workshop

The Hampton Roads Planning District Commission and the Department of Environmental Quality – Tidewater Regional Office co-sponsored two Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Workshops on November 29 and 30. Workshops were held at Legacy Hall in Williamsburg and the HRPDC in Chesapeake. The purpose of the workshops was to educate locality staff on the TMDL development and implementation processes and how upcoming TMDL studies may impact local programs. Approximately 90 people attended the two workshops. All localities were represented by staff from at least one department. Council members from Suffolk and Poquoson were also in attendance. Participants provided positive feedback from the workshops. Additional workshops planned for Spring 2008 will focus on educating the public and increasing public involvement in TMDL and Implementation Plan development.



Regional Collaboration Key to Consistent Compliance on SSOs

As part of regional coordination of the state Special Order By Consent to address Sanitary Sewer Overflows (SSOs) in the region, the HRPDC in partnership with Hampton Roads Sanitation District (HRSD), hosted a series of training workshops to assist local governments in maintaining compliance with the Order. Over 70 local government Public Works, Utilities and Engineering staff members attended the regional training to help affected localities better understand the requirements and protocol of the Consent Order. Brown and Caldwell, consultant to HRSD that is also a party to the regional Order, conducted the trainings.

The sessions provided technical guidance on near term deliverables, as well as an overview of expected milestones, methodology and documentation. Participants learned valuable procedural and legal requirements of the Order and contributed to important discussions regarding alternatives and options available.

Smithfield Adopts Stormwater Management Program

In December, the Smithfield Town Council adopted a Stormwater Management Program for the town of Smithfield. The program, which was developed by the HRPDC and is based on the six minimum control measures of the Phase II stormwater regulations, addresses some of the common pollutants found in stormwater. The comprehensive program includes pollution reduction activities and best management practices that can be performed by citizens, businesses, construction site operators and the local municipal system operators. The program also includes town participation in a regional public education effort (HR STORM) that involves targeted pollution reduction strategies and campaigns. By addressing stormwater pollutants and limiting the sources of such pollutants through the implementation of a stormwater management program, the town of Smithfield hopes to improve the water quality of its creeks and streams and protect the natural beauty and defining characteristics of the town's landscape.

In addition to the stormwater management program components, the adopted program also includes a review of applicable stormwater regulations, a comparison of town policies to state regulations, and proposed recommendations on how town policies and ordinances can be adjusted to enhance regulatory compliance.



Stormwater Management Progress...

Phase I Permit Update

Through the HRPDC Regional Stormwater Management Committee, the Phase I localities of Chesapeake, Hampton, Newport News, Norfolk, Portsmouth and Virginia Beach have been working with the state Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) to develop draft Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Permits for the next permitting cycle. These permits will require the establishment or enhancement of significant programmatic initiatives, increased tracking and reporting, increased staffing to carry out those responsibilities and increased financial commitment on the part of the localities. The Phase I localities have worked closely with DCR staff to refine the draft permits to ensure that they meet the regulatory requirements while including permit conditions that are achievable within the constraints of government resources and that protect and improve water quality conditions.

On November 15, the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board approved the submission of the six draft stormwater permits to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region III and the public for review and comment. If the comment process and finalization procedures go smoothly, the permits may be issued as soon as July 1, 2008.

Phase II Localities Submit Permit Reapplications

Every five years the six Phase II communities within Hampton Roads, which include the cities of Poquoson, Suffolk and Williamsburg and the counties of Isle of

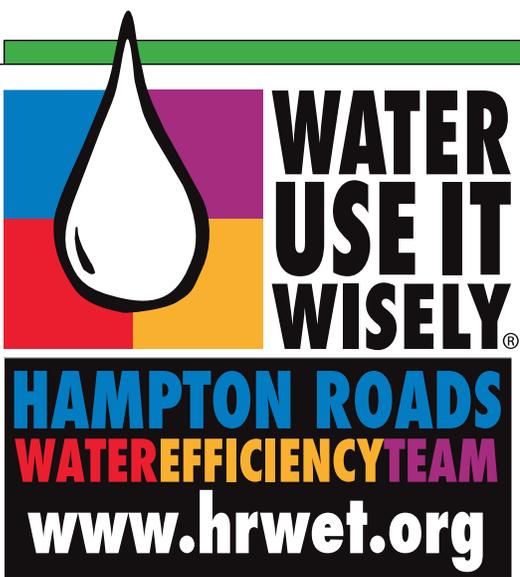
Wight, James City and York, are required to renew their stormwater Phase II permits. HRPDC staff has spent the past several months working with the six communities to develop consistent permit reapplications that meet state requirements and effectively address stormwater pollution. The finalized permit reapplications were submitted to the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) in early December. The six Phase II communities will spend the next five years of their new permit cycle implementing the measurable goals and stormwater management program components identified in their permit reapplications.

Some changes to the Phase II stormwater management program may be necessary in the near future once the new Phase II stormwater regulations are finalized. These regulations include additional monitoring, tracking and reporting requirements as well as additional program components and requirements where impaired waters are present. The Phase II communities within Hampton Roads have been monitoring and participating in the Phase II regulatory process since February 2007. Local and HRPDC staff participated on the DCR technical advisory committee, which was established to aid DCR in revising the Phase II regulation. The Phase II localities also collaborated on developing a set of regional comments about their concerns and the benefits of the newly developed Phase II regulations.



Beginning Phase III of the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act

The HRPDC is currently participating in the process to develop procedures for the implementation of Phase III of the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act regulations. Two representatives from the region were selected to be members of the Local Government Advisory Committee (LGAC) formed by DCR's Division of Chesapeake Bay Local Assistance (DCBLA) to assist in the development of these procedures. The Phase III process will require a review of all local codes to identify areas where those codes conflict with Bay Act requirements related to the protection of water quality. Over the course of the next several months, the checklists developed by DCBLA to help guide this review will be tested in several localities to ensure that they will work as anticipated. If this process is successful, the new procedures are expected to be adopted by the Chesapeake Bay Local Assistance Board in March 2008.



Call for Water Conservation

Several months of below-average rainfall in the Hampton Roads region have prompted the region's local governments to request that residents and businesses voluntarily restrict their use of water. While some recent rains have helped improve the drought situation in the region, conserving water is prudent until local reservoir levels return to normal.

Some quick ways to save water include the following:

- Check toilets and faucets for leaks, and repair.
- Take shorter showers! A shower uses 5-10 gallons of water a minute. Try turning the water off when shampooing or soaping up.
- Water your lawn only when it needs it.
- Add organic materials, like compost, to planted beds to improve water and air holding capacities.
- Run only full loads in the washing machine and the dishwasher.
- Use a broom instead of a hose to clean driveways and sidewalks.

Additional water conservation tips and information about doing a home water audit can be found at the HR WET (Hampton Roads Water Efficiency Team) website at <http://www.hrwet.org>.



Debris Management Contracts Out for Bid

The 2008 regional debris reduction, removal and disposal contracts were one of the topics of discussion during the Annual Debris Management Stakeholders meeting, held in the Regional Board Room on October 29, 2007. This year marks the last year the original contracts will be in effect. They were developed and put in place in 2002 by the Regional Debris Management Planning Taskforce. The Taskforce developed a planning model to spur localities to further develop their own debris management plans and a regional debris planning model and communications tool to help increase coordination and communication with all those involved, including public & private stakeholders, in recovering from a debris-producing event. Recovery efforts following Hurricane Isabel provided the first opportunity to use the contracts.

The Southeastern Public Service Authority (SPSA) and the Virginia Peninsulas Public Service Authority (VPPSA) sent out the 2008 Request For Proposals with the contracts attached at the end of November. The bid review and selection committee will review and rank the proposals in February. SPSA and VPPSA will negotiate pricing with the selected vendors and have the contracts ready and distributed by the time the current contracts expire on May 31, 2008.

The new contracts will have five optional renewal years and include the opportunity to revise and update pricing each year as needed. HRPDC will continue to facilitate contract revisions and editing support as well as facilitate any After Action Reports. SPSA and VPPSA retain contract authority. Having these pre-event contracts in place helped Hampton Roads recover after Hurricane Isabel and better prepares the region for the next one.

Regional Emergency Management Coordination Plan (REMCP)

The purpose of the REMCP is to provide guidance for HRPDC member jurisdictions, state and federal agencies, private sector, volunteer organizations, primary and secondary schools, and universities to collaborate in planning, communication, information sharing, and coordination activities before and after a regional incident or regional emergency. The REMCP will be presented to the Hampton Roads Chief Administrative Officers for approval in January. The committee is currently working on a communications annex to the plan and making the plan compliant with the national framework, published by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Currently, the following areas are being addressed under the communication annex: introduction, background of communications, policies related to communications in the region, different situations that will be addressed by the annex, concept of coordination, and types of regional communications equipment.



Medical Special Needs

The Medical Special Needs (MSN) subcommittee is in the process of filling a Regional Special Needs Emergency Management Planner position and a Regional WebEOC Project Coordinator position. Both positions are a result of the FY07 Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI) grant. The Hampton Roads Chief Administrative Officers allocated approximately 2.6 million dollars for the MSN project. In addition, the Hampton Roads Metropolitan Medical Response System (HRMMRS) has allocated approximately \$185,000 to enhance the project's outcomes related to purchasing WebEOC equipment for the localities and approximately \$5,000 for support in the development of a database to help the emergency managers regionally address the MSN population. The committee is working on finalizing a contract with ESI for a regional WebEOC system. Finally, the committee is working on long-term goals and potential projects for medical special needs.



Healthcare Organizations Emergency Preparedness Seminars

The Healthcare Organizations Emergency Preparedness Seminars (HOEPS) seminars will be held on April 28 and 29 this year and are focused on nursing homes, assisted living facilities, home healthcare facilities, dialysis centers, and group homes. Due to the success of the seminars, the committee has decided to expand the seminars to include mental health facilities this year. The HOEPS committee has been meeting to determine a theme, location, conference materials, and length of the conference for 2008. The committee has decided on a Southside venue for this year's seminars. The exact location will be announced in early 2008. In addition, committee members have been working on revamping the format of the seminars to make them more interactive with the participants. The healthcare organizations' mapping project, which consists of mapping every nursing home, assisted living facility, mental health facility, home healthcare agency, community service board, and mortuary in the region, will be released to jurisdictions in early winter. Funding for the seminars is provided by the HRPDC, HRMMRS, and the Peninsulas Emergency Medical Service Council (PEMS).

Utility Directors Committee Pursuing UASI Project

Last year marked the first time Hampton Roads was eligible for the Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) funds. The Region successfully pursued funding for several projects involving emergency responders, communications and medical special needs. This year the HRPDC Utility Directors Committee is developing a proposal to improve the region's preparedness against a terrorist attack on the utility infrastructure.

The Committee has decided to pursue a project for assessing the regional response to a major disruption of the water supply. The UASI project would identify the existing communication tools, support agreements and capabilities that help water providers aid each other during emergencies. The project would provide recommendations describing communications protocols, support agreements, procedures, or contracts that would improve the region's ability to deliver water to various portions of the region if they were impacted by a terrorist attack or natural disaster. The grant project would also include the development and execution of an exercise to test and evaluate the regional response to a major water supply disruption.

Emergency Management

Hampton Roads Transportation Authority Update

The Hampton Roads Transportation Authority (HRTA) continues to establish itself in preparation to collect the first funds in April 2008. At its August 2007 meeting, the HRTA created the Public Outreach and Legislative subcommittees to address issues that were brought to light during the August public hearings.

The Public Outreach subcommittee met in September to establish a foundation for public involvement in HRTA meetings. At the October HRTA meeting, the Public Outreach subcommittee brought forward six recommendations regarding public involvement. The HRTA approved the following as a basis for its public outreach program:

1. As needed, the Authority should hold its meetings on the third Wednesday of each month following the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission/Metropolitan Planning Organization meeting to take advantage of another already scheduled regional meeting.
2. The Authority meetings should rotate locations on a two-to-one basis, Southside to Peninsula, and be scheduled at fixed locations.
3. Public comments should be heard before agenda discussion and again just before adjournment. In order to speak, individuals must sign in for the record and be limited to three minutes each.
4. At a minimum, the Authority meetings should be recorded for rebroadcast on the internet and local government cable access channels. Live broadcasts or live webcasts of meetings are currently cost prohibitive, however the Authority may look at that option in the future as funds become available.
5. It is recommended that a list of frequently asked questions be developed and maintained to address questions expressed by the public about the Authority's work. (*The list is currently available on the HRTA's website, www.hrta-va.org.*)
6. The HRTA should consider the development of a Request for Proposals for professional services for public outreach initiatives.

The Legislative subcommittee was tasked with developing a legislative program for the Authority. The subcommittee decided to focus on developing a legislative initiative for the 2008 General Assembly that addressed the numerous concerns and recommendations relating to the revenue streams for HRTA as outlined in HB 3202. The committee felt important principles were suggested in the August public comment sessions and in the actions of the various localities. More pointedly, any proposed change in the legislation ought to be simple and targeted, that the sources of revenue for the HRTA should be tied to its purpose, i.e. transportation, and that the taxes and fees should be equitable and fair. The subcommittee understood that any changes it recommended needed to be revenue neutral, producing roughly the same amount of money as the original legislation provided by the seven taxes and fees that were allowed by HB 3202. The subcommittee concluded that the rates of three of the authorized taxes could be adjusted upward to generate sufficient revenue to eliminate reliance on four other taxes or fees in the HB 3202 revenue stream package.

These three taxes would generate approximately \$166 million in the first full year of collection, about \$4 million above the amount generated by the original package. This would leave HRTA with a transportation based revenue stream that would be much more palatable to the citizens who indicated they favored an effort to address transportation issues through transportation based streams of revenue.

The HRTA voted to move forward with this strategy for 2008 General Assembly Session with the realization that the General Assembly does not have to act on any such request. Without any General Assembly action, collection of revenue from the taxes and fees prescribed in HB 3202, and approved by the HRTA in August, will begin April 1, 2008.



Other HRTA news...

In October, the HRTA released an RFP for an updated Traffic and Revenue Study. The study will provide the HRTA with how much revenue can be expected to be collected for the construction on the projects. The results of the study will not be available until July of 2008.

During its November meeting, the HRTA approved the hiring of Kaufman and Canoles as the Authority's Attorney of record. The HRTA also approved the hiring of the executive search firm of Korn/Ferry International to conduct the national search for an Executive Director for the HRTA. Korn/Ferry was also selected to perform a similar search for a new Executive Director for the HRPDC.



HB3202 Taxes and Fees (Approved by HRTA, August 2007)

Legislated Revenue Source	HB3202 Estimate FY09
\$10 Automobile Inspection Fee	\$12,300,000
5% Tax on Automobile Repairs	\$18,900,000
Grantor's Tax of 40¢ per \$100 of Assessed Value*	\$42,800,000
Motor Vehicle Rental Tax of 2%	\$3,500,000
One-Time Vehicle Registration Fee of 1%	\$41,200,000
Annual Vehicle Registration Fee of \$10	\$13,300,000
2% Retail Tax on Motor Fuel Sales	\$30,200,000
Total Revenue	\$162,200,000

**Grantors Tax revised by Department of Taxation August 2007*

HRTA Proposed Revision to Approved Taxes and Fees Package

Revenue Scenario	HRPDC Revenue Estimate
\$10 Automobile Inspection Fee	-
5% Tax on Automobile Repairs	-
Grantor's Tax of 40¢ per \$100 of Assessed Value	-
Motor Vehicle Rental Tax of 5%	\$8,800,000
One-Time Vehicle Registration Fee of 2%	\$82,400,000
Annual Vehicle Registration Fee of \$10	-
5% Retail Tax on Motor Fuel Sales	\$75,600,000
Total Revenue	\$166,800,000

The State of Transportation in Hampton Roads



UPDATE

MPO Approves 2030 Long Range Plan

In October, the Hampton Roads Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) approved the 2030 Long-Range Plan (LRP). The Plan is the culmination of a four-year process and serves as a blueprint for the future of transportation in Hampton Roads.

As the federally-designated regional transportation-planning organization, the MPO is required to periodically develop LRPs in order for the region to continue receiving federal transportation funding. These plans are prepared every three to four years and represent a 20-plus year outline of the future of the region's transportation system. The planning team led by the MPO includes the MPO staff (transportation planners and engineers who work for the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission (HRPDC)), local governments, Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (VDRPT), Williamsburg Area Transport (WAT), Hampton Roads Transit (HRT), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

The four-year 2030 LRP planning process followed a sequence of steps, with later steps building on the products of earlier steps:

- Developing vision and goals
- Forecasting 2030 socio-economic data
- Calculating locations of expected congestion
- Formulating candidate 2030 Plan projects
- Estimating the cost of the candidate projects
- Calculating the expected effectiveness of each candidate project
- Calculating the expected amount of funding from existing sources
- Selecting projects for draft Plan from list of candidates
- Soliciting public input concerning the draft 2030 projects
- Calculating expected air-quality impacts of plan projects.

Preparation of the 2030 LRP began in 2004, following federal approval of the 2026 Plan. The MPO staff analyzed traffic counts from the region's roadways to determine areas of existing congestion. Then, with the help of the local governments and VDOT, HRPDC staff forecasted area population and employment, entered those forecasts into

a computer model of the region's transportation system, and used the model to determine where Hampton Roads highways will be deficient in the future. The staff then tested the effectiveness of various transportation projects proposed for construction.

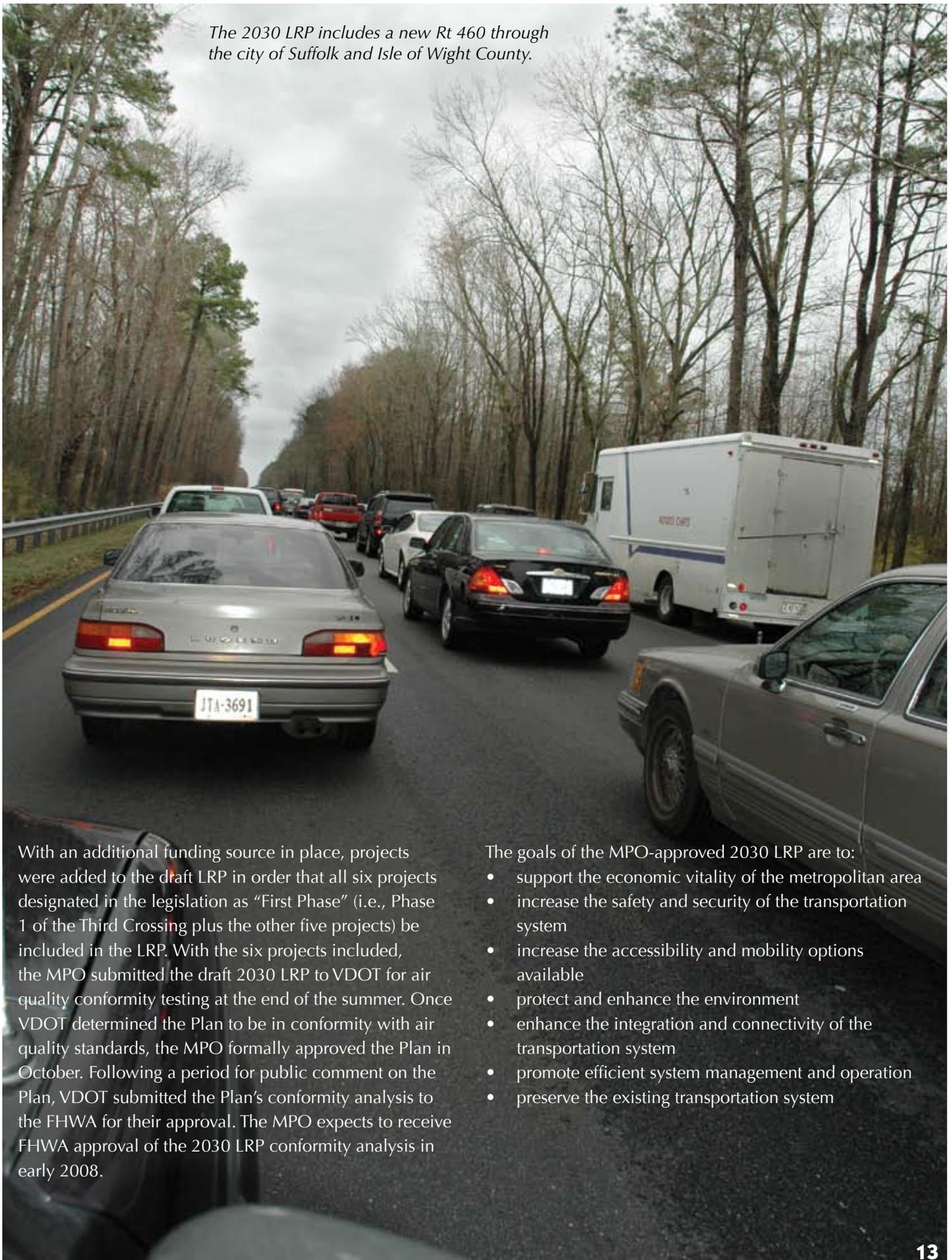
Following an examination of available funding for all 2030 LRP projects, it was determined that there was a severe lack of funding for six major regional projects that had been planned for years. The HRPDC and VDOT commissioned a study to determine if tolls would be a viable solution for funding these projects. The study determined that, even with tolls, the region lacked the funds to complete the projects. Consequently, the MPO appealed to the region's General Assembly members to find additional funds for the six projects. Because Federal guidelines prohibit projects from being included in the LRP without designated funding sources, the projects had to be removed until the General Assembly was able to act upon the request.

In April of 2007, the General Assembly passed—and Governor Kaine signed into law—H.B. 3202, which created the Hampton Roads Transportation Authority (HRTA). Per the legislation, resolutions passed by the governing bodies of a majority of the affected jurisdictions, and the vote of the Authority, the HRTA will collect region-specific taxes and fees that will provide funding for the six regional projects.

The projects outlined in HB 3202, in no particular order, are as follows:

- The Third Crossing—
 - Phase 1 - widening I-664 from Bowers Hill to Hampton
 - Phase 2 - a bridge-tunnel running between the Monitor-Merrimac Memorial Bridge Tunnel and I-564 in Norfolk; a connector traversing Craney Island, running between the above bridge-tunnel and the Western Freeway
- The Southeastern Parkway/Dominion Boulevard
- Midtown Tunnel/Martin Luther King Freeway Extension
- U.S. Route 460
- Widening I-64 (Peninsula) to Route 199
- Widening I-64 (Southside, including the High-Rise Bridge) from Battlefield Boulevard to Bowers Hill

The 2030 LRP includes a new Rt 460 through the city of Suffolk and Isle of Wight County.



With an additional funding source in place, projects were added to the draft LRP in order that all six projects designated in the legislation as “First Phase” (i.e., Phase 1 of the Third Crossing plus the other five projects) be included in the LRP. With the six projects included, the MPO submitted the draft 2030 LRP to VDOT for air quality conformity testing at the end of the summer. Once VDOT determined the Plan to be in conformity with air quality standards, the MPO formally approved the Plan in October. Following a period for public comment on the Plan, VDOT submitted the Plan’s conformity analysis to the FHWA for their approval. The MPO expects to receive FHWA approval of the 2030 LRP conformity analysis in early 2008.

The goals of the MPO-approved 2030 LRP are to:

- support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area
- increase the safety and security of the transportation system
- increase the accessibility and mobility options available
- protect and enhance the environment
- enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system
- promote efficient system management and operation
- preserve the existing transportation system

Safety Study Prompts Closer Examination of Seatbelt, Cell Phone Use

The HRPDC updated its Hampton Roads Regional Safety Study: General Crash Data and Trends report in October 2007. The study was first performed in 2001 and is updated on an annual basis. The report provides a comprehensive analysis of highway safety throughout the region. The General Crash Data and Trends report is one portion of a larger study that also highlights dangerous intersections and road segments and offers mitigation suggestions. The October report uses 2006 crash and accident data to analyze trends in crashes, injuries and fatalities at the regional and jurisdictional levels, and includes a comparison with state and national figures.

Some quick facts from the update:

- There were 32,019 traffic crashes reported in Hampton Roads in 2006. That is an average of 88 crashes throughout the region every day of the year, or one crash every 16 minutes.
- In 2006, a traffic crash injury occurred every 33 minutes in Hampton Roads. There were 16,026 injuries resulting from traffic crashes on the region's roads in 2006.
- A fatality resulting from a traffic crash occurs in Hampton Roads every 2.6 days.
- There were 39 fatalities attributed to alcohol-related traffic crashes in Hampton Roads in 2006.
- Most prevalent actions leading to traffic crashes in Hampton Roads:
 1. Following too closely
 2. Driver distracted/failed to maintain control
 3. Failure to yield the right-of-way

Following the report presentation, members of the MPO requested additional information regarding seat belt usage, primary enforcement seat belt laws and cell phone usage. There was some discussion as to whether primary seat belt laws and/or restricting drivers' cell phone usage would help to reduce the number of crashes. In November, the HRPDC presented its report on the topic.

The additional report noted that wearing a seat belt can reduce the risk of dying in a crash by 45% in a car and 60% in a truck or sport utility vehicle. Data analysis found that 26 states and the District of Columbia have enacted primary enforcement seat belt laws that allow police to stop drivers solely for not wearing a seat belt. Virginia is not one of those states. In the states with such laws, seat belt usage is reported to be at 87% as opposed to 73% in those states without a primary enforcement law. Virginia seat belt use rate is 79.9%.

The update to Hampton Roads Regional Safety Study: General Crash Data and Trends indicated Driver distracted/failed to maintain control as the cause for 16.3% of all crashes in Hampton Roads. The follow-up study found that less than 1% of all crashes listed cell phones as the cause of the distraction. Whether an omission in accident reports or actual figure, the follow-up study found that the less than 1% was fairly consistent with national figures.

For the complete Hampton Roads Regional Safety Study Update, visit the HRPDC website: http://www.hrpdcva.gov/transport/reports/Gen_Crash_Data_Trends_07_Final.pdf.



Images courtesy of NHTSA



Hampton Roads Housing Consortium First Annual Members' Awards Ceremony

The First Annual Hampton Roads Housing Consortium (HRHC) Members' Award Ceremony was held on October 10, 2007, in the Regional Boardroom. The ceremony was designed to honor the achievements of people committed to affordable housing initiatives in Hampton Roads. The following awards were presented by HRHC Chairman, Wendy A. Hunter:

1. HRHC Lifetime Achievement Award

Glenn R. Goetsch (posthumously)
Janaka Casper accepting
Former VP of Homeownership,
Community Housing Partners

2. HRHC Housing Warrior-Excellence Award

Christy Westlund
LINK of Hampton Roads, Inc.

3. HRHC Housing Partner-Special Project Award

Andrew Friedman & Sharon Prescott
City of Virginia Beach-Housing and Neighborhood
Preservation Department Workforce Housing Initiative

4. HRHC Silver Service Award

Arthurine Peacock
Chesapeake Redevelopment and Housing Authority

The HRHC is a voluntary association of governmental, private and non-profit organizations committed to improving housing opportunities for low and moderate-income households in Hampton Roads. Participants include city and county governments, Redevelopment and Housing Authorities, non-profit housing and emergency shelter providers, mortgage lenders, realtor and builders associations and a variety of other groups interested in affordable housing issues. Member groups represent most of the sixteen communities within the Hampton Roads region. The HRHC is a federal 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. The Hampton Roads Housing Consortium believes that households of all income levels deserve a fair opportunity to buy or rent housing that is safe, affordable and suitable for their needs. The HRHC also supports adequate housing for persons with special needs including the disabled and elderly. Many HRHC members are directly involved with housing development, housing program management or affordable mortgage financing. The HRHC gives these organizations and other interested groups a regional framework for information exchange, training activities and cooperative action.

The HPPDC provides ongoing support and resources for the HRHC. Shernita L. Bethea, Housing and Human Services Planner for the HRPDC, was also recognized at the ceremony for her dedication and support of the HRHC's mission.



ECONOMICS

Hampton Roads Housing Market: An Update

After three years of double-digit price inflation, the housing boom in Hampton Roads has come to a close. Housing prices across the nation had been steadily increasing since the late '90s. Mortgage rates then hit an historic low in 2003, sparking a nation-wide housing boom. The boom was spurred on as investors moved from the stock market to the housing market and sub-prime lenders began making credit widely available.

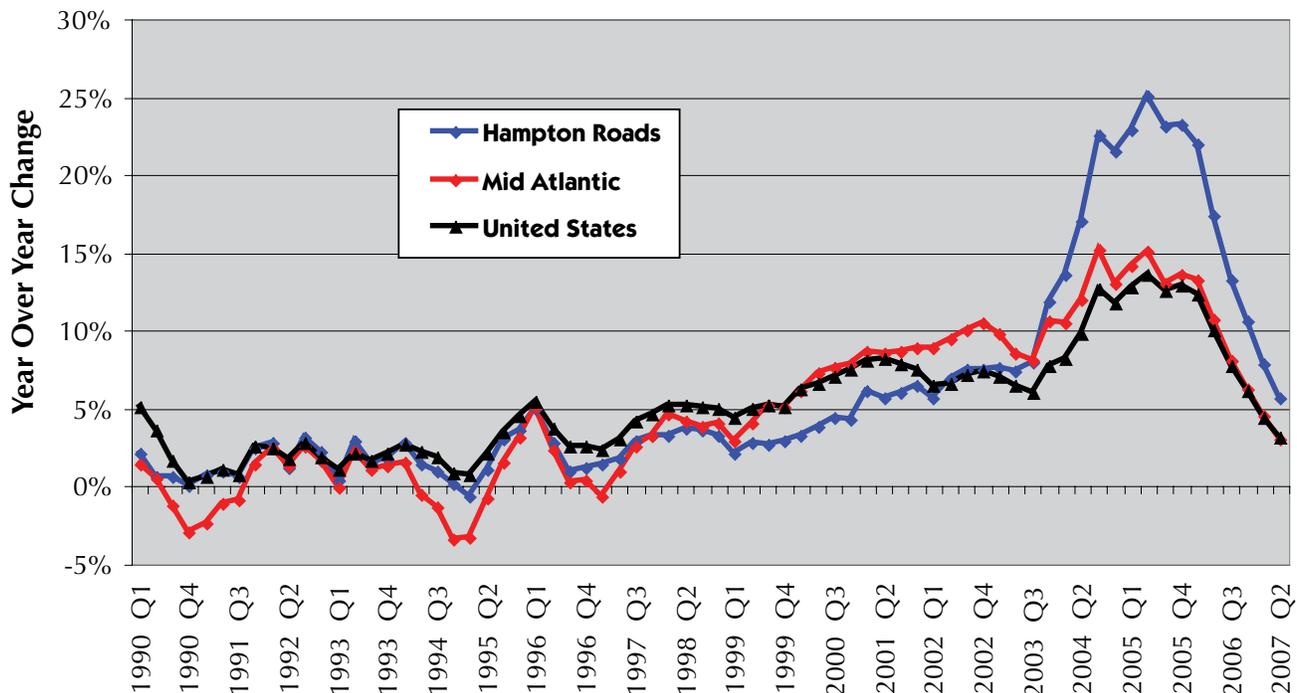
The rise in housing prices in Hampton Roads far surpassed the national average due, in-part, to increases in military pay, changes in defense housing policy, limited available housing stock, and undervalued housing prices. As housing prices continued to rise, residents began to get priced out of the market and homeowner housing became over-valued. With a saturated housing market, the number of days it took to sell a house began to creep up and the industry began to cool.

Over the course of a year and a half, the number of days a house sat on the market almost tripled, nervous investors began leaving the market, and residents began opting for cost-friendly rental units. The construction industry responded to the cooler market and the number of building permits for single-family houses has rapidly decreased.

The outlook for the future is somewhat varied. Since the housing market is a neighborhood market, as opposed to a regional or national market, the market experience can vary from neighborhood to neighborhood. In general, it is expected that housing across the region will experience a degree of stagnation, ranging from slight price declines to limited price increases. Housing prices tend to be very "downward sticky" as owners & investors refuse to sell property at a loss, quite often opting for large concessions in terms of housing allowances and closing costs.

There are several potential threats to the region's housing markets, with foreclosure being perhaps the most foreboding. Extensive defaulting on sub-prime loans or adjustable rate mortgages poses serious risk to both the economy and the housing market. In addition, changes in the local, regional, national, or international economy pose significant risk to local markets. Looking ahead, HRPDC staff expect that the region's unique industry-mix and stable economy will limit local foreclosures and continue to grow our employment and population base, slowly moving the housing market back toward equilibrium.

Housing Price Indices

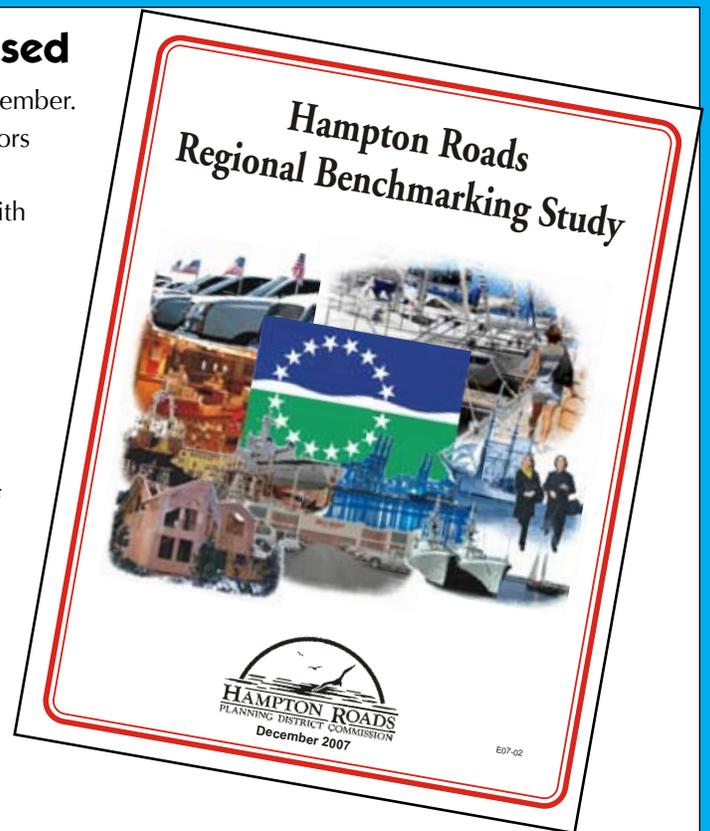


Third Annual Benchmarking Study Released

The HRPDC released the third annual Benchmarking Study in December. The Benchmarking study is a collection of socio-economic indicators that highlight trends and conditions in the region's economy. This resource is designed for use as a comprehensive evaluation tool with which to track various quality of life indicators in Hampton Roads.

Data used throughout the report have been screened for accuracy, with data sources limited to reliable organizations that provide information on a continuous basis.

The 2007 Benchmarking Study is comprised of five general categories: The Economy, Regional Demographics, Housing, Transportation, and Quality of Life. The report also includes a brief data snapshot for each of the sixteen jurisdictions.



HRPDC Assists Affordable Housing Opportunity for Military Families

Through funding made possible by Freddie Mac Corporation, Navy Federal Credit Union (NFCU) launched an initiative to increase affordable housing opportunities to military families in the Hampton Roads Area. Freddie Mac requested the HRPDC serve as lead agency of this initiative. NFCU has over 3 million members and operates 115 banking offices and 19 lending centers throughout the United States, including United States military facilities worldwide. The majority of their originations are concentrated in areas surrounding Navy, Marine, and Army bases where there is a need for affordable housing for first-time and underserved members.

This initiative represents a formal collaboration between NFCU, Freddie Mac, HRPDC and other local community-based organizations to bring creative, affordable mortgage products, access to down payment/closing cost assistance, and customized financial literacy and homeownership programs for Active Duty Military personnel and their families. Through the initiative, Freddie Mac and NFCU will collaborate with HRPDC and other local housing agencies to

link the services currently being offered in the community to NFCU's current array of home buying tools and services. This initiative will service seven cities that include Chesapeake, Hampton, Newport News, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Suffolk, and Virginia Beach providing solutions that speak directly to the needs of those men and women who serve our country while strengthening linkages between existing community resources and the housing support system in Hampton Roads.



Rachael Patchett Retires

Rachael Patchett, Reprographics Supervisor, retired in December after 26 years as the heart of the HRPDC Graphics Department. Rachael began her service at the HRPDC's predecessor organization, the Southeastern Virginia Planning District Commission (SVPDC), in August of 1981. Her leveled-headed attention to details and willingness to accomplish any task at hand was the foundation of the HRPDC's busy Graphics Department. In addition to supervising the production of numerous HRPDC reports and publications, Rachael's duties also included the coordination and execution of countless meetings at the HRPDC offices and in the Regional Board Room.

In her retirement, Rachael plans to go "RV-ing" around the United States with her husband, David. In addition to seeing the countryside, she and David plan to perform volunteer work within the community they are visiting.

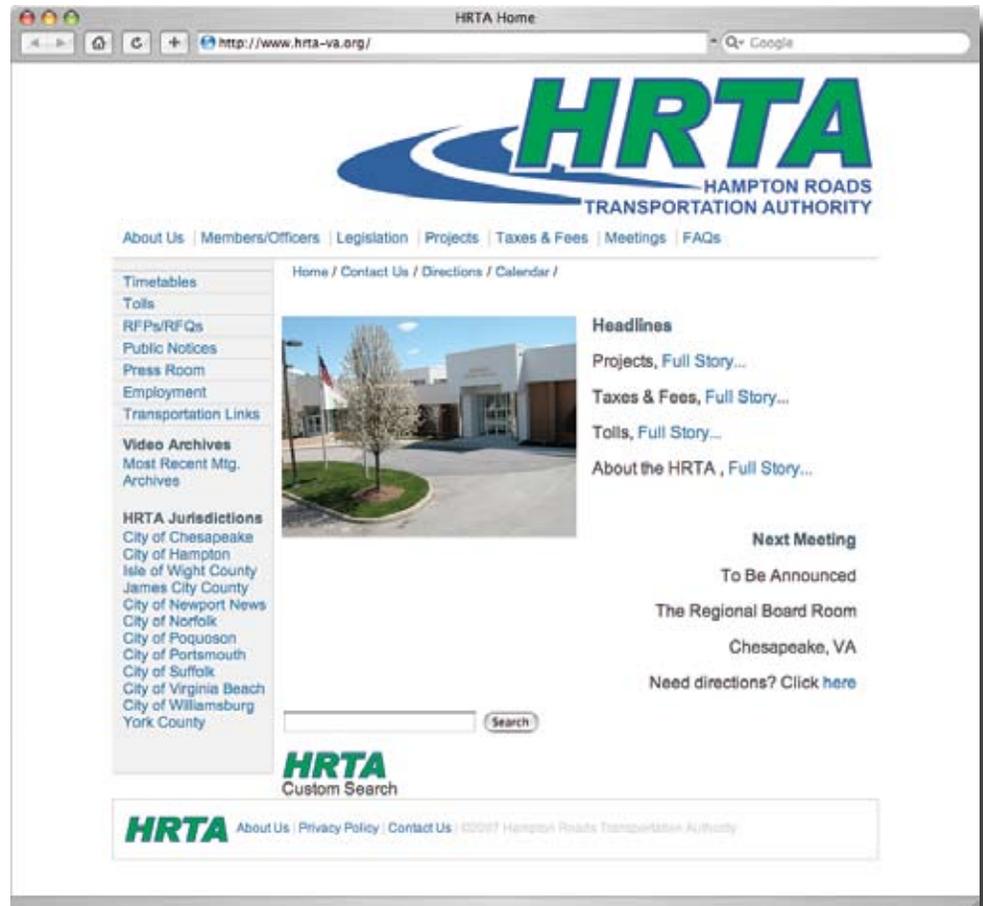
Congratulations Rachael on 26 years of service to the HRPDC and the citizens of Hampton Roads. Enjoy your well-earned retirement.



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HRPDC Welcomes New Employees

James Clary, Economist - Mr. Clary joined the HRPDC's Economics staff November 1, 2007. He is a graduate of Tulane University with a degree in Economics and also has degrees in Mathematics and History from Loyola University (New Orleans). He is graduating from Old Dominion University with a Masters in Economics in May. Mr. Clary joins us from Chartway FCU, where we worked with the Strategy Department.

As the Economist, James will help update the regional benchmarking study and data book, as well as prepare a variety of analytic reports for the director. He will also assist the Deputy Executive Director, Economics in preparing short and long-range forecasts of the region's economy as well as forecasts into major industries.

Welcome aboard James!

John Sadler, Assistant Regional UASI Planner – Mr. Sadler joined HRPDC's Transportation & Emergency Management staff December 3, 2007. He is a graduate of the College of William and Mary with degrees in Government and Psychology.

As the Assistant Regional UASI Planner, John will assist the Regional Emergency Management Planner and the Deputy Executive Director, Transportation and Emergency Management in all aspects of the UASI Federal Grant. This includes providing regionally oriented planning and advocacy of homeland security UASI issues as well as coordinating and facilitating working relationships between multiple agencies, jurisdictions, and disciplines on grant related programs.

Welcome to the team John!

Holly Miller, Environmental Educator – Ms. Miller became a member of the HRPDC's Physical and Environmental Planning staff December 3, 2007. She holds two master's degrees from Regent University; one in Journalism and one in Human Services Counseling. Holly recently worked as the Media and Communications Coordinator for the City of Virginia Beach Department of Public Utilities.

Holly will coordinate the regional environmental education committees, which promote the messages of water conservation, storm water pollution prevention, proper grease disposal, litter prevention and recycling. She will also assist Senior Environmental Planner, Julia Hillegass with regional initiatives such as training, environmental compliance and reporting.

Thanks for joining us, Holly!





The Hampton Roads Review is published quarterly and is available at no cost. The HRPDC is a voluntary association of sixteen local governments. The purpose of the HRPDC is to provide a forum for local governments to address issues of regional importance and to encourage regional cooperation and coordination. For more information contact the HRPDC at 757.420.8300 or visit our website at www.hrpdcva.gov.

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Deputy Executive Director Economics

Hearing Impaired may contact the HRPDC through the Virginia Relay Center: 800.828.1120

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Jan 16	held at:	<p>HRPDC Quarterly Commission/ Metropolitan Planning Organization Hampton Roads Convention Center, Hampton VA</p>
Feb 20		<p>HRPDC Retreat</p>
Mar 19	held at:	<p>HRPDC Executive Committee/ Metropolitan Planning Organization The Regional Board Room</p>

MEETING CALENDAR

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