

Hampton Roads Dutch Dialogues Background Information



Kingdom of the Netherlands



Waggoner & Ball Architects

The Dutch Dialogues are the latest component of the long history and friendship between the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the United States. These workshops combine Dutch approaches to integrated water management – acquired over centuries of living with water – with American expertise to address water problems in U.S. cities such as flooding, poor water quality, sea level rise, and subsidence. The initial Dutch Dialogues were held in New Orleans, and similar workshops have been held in New York, Bridgeport, St. Louis, Tampa Bay, and Los Angeles. The Dutch approach to living with water strives to integrate flood risk mitigation, engineering, spatial planning, urban design, environmental restoration, community amenities, and economic development. While such integration is challenging, it provides an incredible opportunity for innovative approaches to improve the quality of life and economies of waterfront communities.

What is a Dutch Dialogue?

Dutch Dialogues (www.dutchdialogues.com) were conceived by David Waggoner, Principle of Waggoner and Ball Architects, and the Netherlands Embassy in Washington, DC, to bring together Dutch urban designers, engineers, landscape architects, planners, academics, and government officials to engage with American counterparts to explore creative solutions and holistic concepts for flood risk reduction, (green and gray) infrastructure with multiple benefits, resiliency, and smart redevelopment. In New Orleans, the Dutch Dialogues eventually led to the development of the award-winning Greater New Orleans Urban Water Plan (www.livingwithwater.com), and, in New York, this approach was used to inform the Rebuild by Design Competition (www.rebuildbydesign.org).

The Dutch Dialogues evaluate district-, neighborhood- and block-scale challenges within the context of the regional landscape and morphology. Participants explore how to:

- Reduce the impacts of both catastrophic and recurrent flooding due to significant precipitation, lunar tides and wind- and/or wave- driven tidal surge.
- Re-envision and take advantage of riverfronts, shorelines and stream alignments using storm water retention, groundwater, and water management measures to improve water quality, reduce flooding and improve ecosystems.
- Naturalize engineered storm water conveyance systems.
- Revitalize and redevelop urban waterfronts and nearby communities.
- Reestablish links between natural systems and neighborhoods via parks and other amenities.
- Stimulate redevelopment, tax base, and economic opportunities.
- Replace, where possible, hardscape with permeable surfaces for water storage.

- Develop practices to secure multiple benefits such as flood protection, economic development, and beautification via current and future infrastructure programs.
- Mitigate impacts of future sea level rise and increased storm surge.
- Explore how existing sand nourishment, dune protection, and shoreline morphology improvements can contribute to beachfront communities.

A Dutch Dialogue for Hampton Roads

The possibility of hosting a Dutch Dialogue in Hampton Roads was first brought up in a conversation between the City of Norfolk and the Royal Netherlands Embassy in 2012. In 2014, the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission was brought into the conversation with a proposal to expand the geographic scope of the Dialogue to the region. Localities were invited to submit proposals for Dialogue study sites. Two sites, the Tidewater District of Norfolk and the Newmarket Creek watershed in Hampton and Newport News, were selected from the list of proposals.

About the Sites

The **Tidewater District** of Norfolk encompasses the area extending inland from the Elizabeth River's Eastern Branch from Harbor Park to Chesterfield Heights. The area includes the St. Paul's Quadrant and other areas between Brambleton Avenue and the river. The district includes a mix of uses, including housing, industrial waterfronts, and the baseball stadium. The primary water management issue facing the district is tidal flooding. Additional issues include poor drainage, environmental degradation, public housing, and water access.

The **Newmarket Creek** watershed runs from the Back River in Hampton across the Peninsula through Newport News to the James River. The watershed contains a wide variety of land uses and types of development, including residential neighborhoods, shopping centers, and major roadways. The watershed faces flooding challenges from tides, storm surge, and precipitation.

The End Goal

At the workshop's conclusion, the teams will have identified a number of strategies that promote integrated water management and resiliency and are applicable for communities across Hampton Roads.

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