

# Report to Hampton Roads Transportation Planning Organization

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## *Hampton Roads Residents' Perceptions of Regional Transportation*

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# Agenda

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- Today: What we've learned.
- Next month: Recommendations.

# Recent Points of Reference

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- HRP survey of 400 registered Hampton Roads voters (November 2001).
- HRPDC survey of 613 resident of Hampton Roads (May 2005).
- CNU-HRCCE survey of 500 registered Hampton Roads voters (April 2008).
- Six HRTPO (CNU) exploratory focus group interviews with Hampton Roads citizens (March 2010).

# Perceptions of Traffic

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- Few things unite Hampton Roads citizens as much as our shared dislike of the region's traffic congestion.
  - ✓ Almost 90% say traffic congestion is high or very high.
  - ✓ About 75% believe traffic has gotten worse over the last five years.
  - ✓ Almost 75% say traffic congestion negatively impacts their daily quality of life.
  - ✓ About 75% of residents consider traffic to be the region's #1 problem.

# The Paradox of Transportation

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- Not everyone experiences traffic congestion every day or in the same way.
  - ✓ TPO data suggest that only 15% of citizens are impacted by congestion on major regional arteries on a daily basis.
  - ✓ Many people experience congestion on local roads.
- Some people have purposely arranged their lives in order to mitigate or avoid congestion problems.
- Perceptions of the problem are created and reinforced by:
  - ✓ Personal experience
  - ✓ Hearsay
  - ✓ Constant media attention to traffic congestion and stoppage throughout the region
  - ✓ Major events (flooding of HRBT last summer).

# Current Citizen Frustrations

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- Few citizens think there is any reason to believe conditions will improve:
  - ✓ They believe poor maintenance and excessive demand on existing regional transportation infrastructure puts Hampton Roads at a competitive disadvantage.
  - ✓ They believe traffic congestion already stifles mobility and economic vitality within the region.
  - ✓ They expect traffic, sprawl and congestion will only get worse over time.
  - ✓ They find it inconceivable that the light rail starter line will not extend into Virginia Beach or out to ODU and NOB.

# The Roots of Citizen Frustration

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- They are unaware of any attempts to create a cohesive regional transportation vision.
- In the absence of evidence to the contrary, some conclude that elected leaders at the local and state level must not really care enough to want to do something about transportation.
- Many believe some of the region's municipalities are not predisposed to work together on transportation.
- Those who have lived elsewhere, especially military personnel, have seen other cities and regions throughout the world address and solve similarly complex transportation challenges and wonder why Hampton Roads can't.

# Perceived Solutions

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- Hampton Roads citizens believe the long-term solution lies in getting cars off the road.
- There must be a well-coordinated, *regional* light rail system supported by an extensive and regular network of buses, shuttles and other feeders and distributors.
- The region must bring current transportation assets up to current demand standards.
- Something must be done about congestion at the Hampton Roads Bridge-Tunnel.
- The region must promote telecommuting and other innovative indirect means of reducing traffic volume.



# The Only Question: How to Pay

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- Most people have no idea of the magnitude of the costs involved.
- First-impression revenue solutions (tolls, increased gasoline tax, etc.) barely put a dent in the total cost.
- First impression revenue solutions quickly devolve to increasingly incremental and impractical revenue ideas.
- There is inadequate trust in elected leaders and government to support even a modest state income tax increase dedicated to transportation.

# Restoring Citizen Trust

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- Localities must work together to create a solid and visionary transportation plan.
- It has to be clear that localities have worked on this together and that they all approve of the plan.
- The plan must be taken out to citizens to build consensus. The plan must include:
  - Cost estimates that are realistic and reliable.
  - A realistic and dependable timeline.
  - Noticeable interim improvements throughout the implementation of the plan.
  - Complete and ongoing managerial and financial transparency and accountability.

Questions?