

REGIONAL CONNECTORS STUDY

Public Engagement & Outreach Plan

Draft Plan updated February 2019

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Project Overview

The Hampton Roads Transportation Planning Organization (HRTPO) is embarking on the Hampton Roads Regional Connectors Study (RCS) to investigate transportation options that connect the Peninsula and the Southside while improving economic vitality, resiliency, accessibility, and quality of life in the region.

The purpose of the RCS is to evaluate the feasibility, permitability, and transportation benefits of the alternatives presented in the Hampton Roads Crossing Study (HRCS) Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) that were not included in the Preferred Alternative (PA) approved by the HRTPO, the Hampton Roads Transportation Accountability Commission (HRTAC), and the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB). The HRCS SEIS PA includes widening Interstate-64 (I-64) to a consistent six-lane facility between I-664 in Hampton and I-564 in Norfolk and adding a bridge-tunnel parallel to the existing Hampton Roads Bridge-Tunnel. These alternatives are shown in relation to the project study area in Figure 1.

The study team will evaluate HRCS SEIS alternatives including, but not limited to:

- VA 164
- I-564 Connector
- VA 164 Connector
- I-664 Connector
- I-664 (from I-64 in Hampton to US 460/58/13 in Chesapeake)

The HRTPO will consider including projects emerging from the study for inclusion in the HRTPO 2045 Long-Range Transportation Plan.

Initiated in June 2018, the RCS is a two-to-three-year study funded by the Hampton Road Transportation Accountability Commission (HRTAC) and administered by the HRTPO. The HRTPO hired a consultant, Michael Baker International, Inc., to conduct the study. The study will involve coordination with a Working Group, a Steering (Policy) Committee, and staff, who are undertaking the concurrent 2045 Long-Range Transportation Plan update effort to provide feedback and institutional perspective on the RCS study.

The Working Group is comprised of technical staff from local jurisdictions including the cities of Chesapeake, Hampton, Newport News, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Suffolk, and Virginia Beach and local and federal agency representatives including US Navy, US Coast Guard, Virginia Port Authority, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), and HRTAC. The Steering (Policy) Committee is made up of elected officials from the seven local jurisdictions and representatives from local and federal agencies.

The HRTPO is conducting the study in phases. In Phase 1, the study team will work with the HRTPO leadership, the Working Group, and Steering (Policy) Committee to validate the study focus, assess transportation priorities of the region, and identify additional alternatives to be evaluated in Phase 2. To achieve this the study team will:

- Conduct one-on-one stakeholder interviews with representatives from over 35 localities and business and agency leaders in the region;

- Conduct a regional (statistically valid) public opinion survey;
- Develop a study website;
- Assess existing traffic conditions;
- Evaluate future land use expectations to inform Scenario Planning and;
- Evaluate the regional travel demand model and suggest any modifications necessary to project future traffic for the Hampton Roads region.

Phase 2 of the study will include the validation of study goals and objectives, public participation, scenario planning, alternative development and analysis (including cost estimation and benefit-cost analyses), and development of prioritized recommendations to address regional connectivity and congestion relief.

The map displays the Hampton Roads region, including parts of Virginia and North Carolina. Key features include:

- Water Bodies:** York River, James River, Chesapeake Bay, and the Atlantic Ocean.
- Jurisdictions:** King William, King And Queen, Middlesex, Gloucester, Mathews, Northham, New Kent, Charles City, James City, Williamsburg, York, Newport News, Poquoson, Surry, Sussex, Isle Of Wight, Southampton, Franklin, Suffolk, Chesapeake, Virginia Beach, and North Carolina.
- Highways:** I-64, I-664, I-564, VA 164, VA 17, VA 10, VA 258, VA 480, VA 58, VA 13, VA 168, VA 264, and VA 60.
- Connectors:**
 - I-664 Connector:** Green line
 - VA 164 Connector:** Orange line
 - I-564 Connector:** Red line
- Map Features:**
 - VA Port Authority Terminals:** Blue triangle
 - Future Craney Island Terminal:** Blue triangle
 - Parks and Green Space:** Green area
 - DOD Land:** Tan area
 - HRTPO Jurisdictions:** Grey area
 - Non-HRTPO Jurisdictions:** Light grey area
- Scale:** 0 to 5 miles.
- North Arrow:** Indicated by an arrow pointing up.

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Project Timeline

As noted above, the study will be completed in two phases. The figure below presents the discrete tasks associated with each phase.

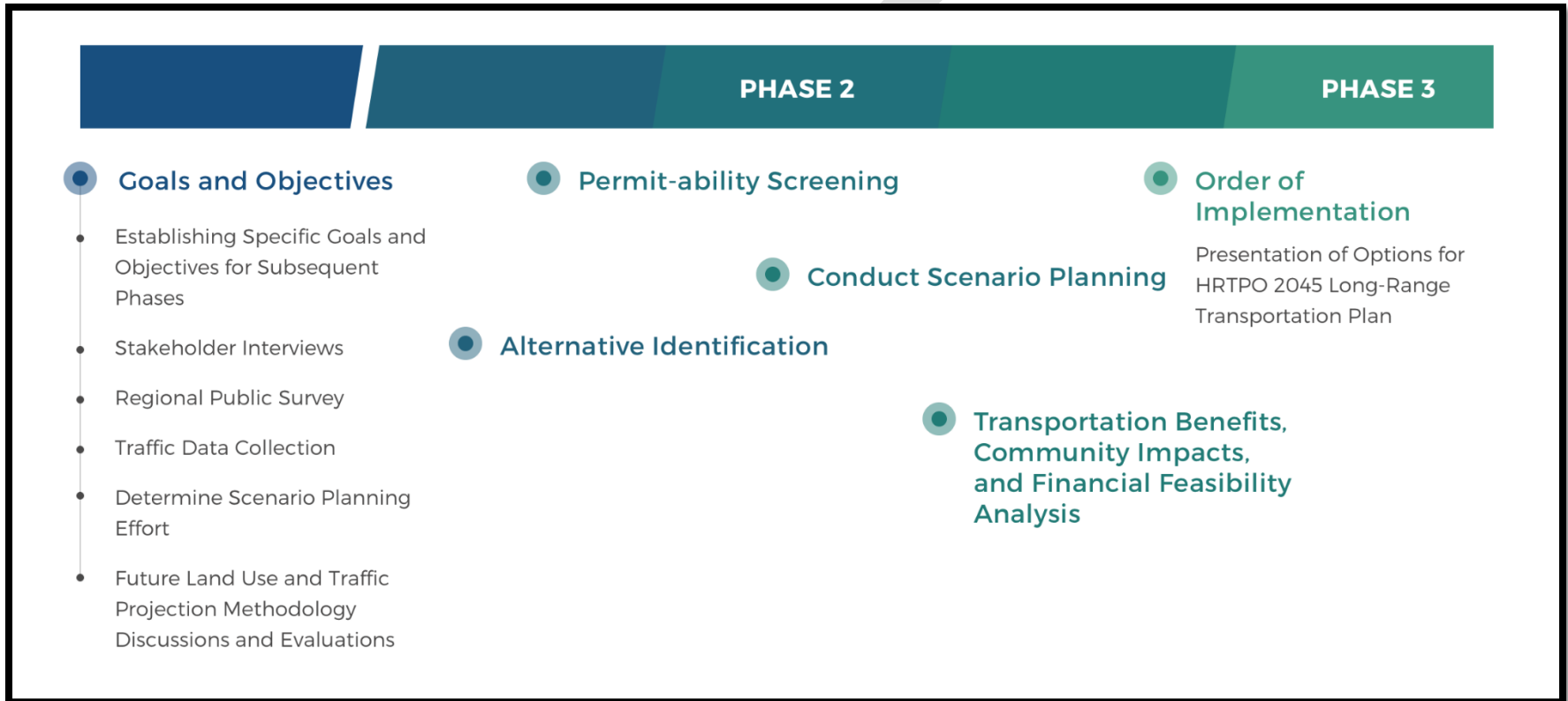


Figure 2. Hampton Roads Regional Connectors Study Project Timeline

Project Background

In the late 1990's VDOT, in cooperation with FHWA proposed constructing a new bridge-tunnel crossing in the Hampton Roads region to improve transportation connections between the Peninsula and the Southside. The original study included analysis of potential impacts of alignment alternatives on the human and built environment as required by the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA). The project's potential impacts and required permits associated with the crossing of a body of water led VDOT and FHWA to conclude the project needed EIS. The HRCS NEPA documentation process has had a long history. Table 1 provides an account of the most recent study milestones associated with the HRCS. Changes to alignment alternatives or the environmental setting require periodic updates to the NEPA document until FHWA issues a Record of Decision (ROD) or final approval.

National Environmental Policy Act Overview

The NEPA process began in 1999 when VDOT and FHWA developed the proposal to construct a highway across the James River and the Chesapeake Bay. The early environmental study was an EIS with a preferred alternative. FHWA issued a ROD in 2001. In 2003 VDOT completed a re-evaluation to bring the environmental documents up to date. At the completion of the re-evaluation process, funding was not available for VDOT to move forward with final design and construction. The table below presents the most recent NEPA developments.

Table 1. NEPA process and benchmarks

| Year | NEPA | What happened? |
|------|---|---|
| 2011 | Environmental Assessment (EA)/Re-evaluation | FHWA and VDOT issued an EA/Re-evaluation of the HRCS FEIS covering the segments of the preferred alternative including the I-664 Connector, the I-564 Connector, and the VA 164 Connector. The Re-evaluation did not advance due to lack of funding. |
| 2012 | Draft EIS (DEIS) | FHWA and VDOT published the Hampton Roads Bridge-Tunnel (HRBT) DEIS. The DEIS evaluated options to improve I-64 between Hampton and Norfolk. The DEIS found that the Retained Alternatives would result in a high number of impacts to historic and private properties. These impacts, along with lack of public and political support, led FHWA to rescind the Notice of Intent (NOI) for the project. |
| 2013 | SEIS | VDOT revised the 2011 EA but the FHWA did not make a final decision before VDOT began preparing an SEIS. VDOT prepared an SEIS to re-evaluate potential new environmental impacts since the initial 2001 FEIS. |
| 2015 | SEIS | (June) VDOT, in coordination with FHWA, began preparing an SEIS to the March 2001 HRCS FEIS. |
| 2015 | SEIS | (December) VDOT hosted community meetings to invite comments on the proposed SEIS alternatives. VDOT shared the study's purpose and need and outlined the proposed alternatives. |

On **October 20, 2016**, The HRTPO concurred with the selection of the VDOT approved HRCS Alternative A as the Preferred Alternative. HRTAC supported the HRTPO's selection of

Alternative A and Bowers Hill and allocated \$7 million for additional feasibility studies. VDOT chose Alternative A, after review of capital cost, capacity, and impact on the environment and the community. Alternative A begins at the I-64/I-664 interchange in Hampton and creates a consistent six-lane facility by widening I-64 to the I-564 interchange in Norfolk. VDOT will construct a parallel bridge-tunnel west of the existing I-64 HRBT.

In **December 2016**, the CTB approved Alternative A from the HRCS SEIS. VDOT continued to work with the HRTPO, HRTAC, the USACE, the US Navy, the Port of Virginia, and other stakeholders to advance separate studies to identify appropriate access options around Craney Island to include I-564 and I-664 Connectors, I-664/Monitor Merrimac Memorial Bridge Tunnel (MMMBT), VA 164, and VA 164 Connector.

In **September 2017**, VDOT hosted two public hearings to present the Draft SEIS to the public and invite public comment. A total of 250 people attended the two public hearings. To ensure robust opportunities for public comment, VDOT accepted comments through comment forms, emails, letters, and the court reporter. VDOT received 572 public comments. Comments identified the I-64/HRBT corridor and the I-564 Connector as the two highest priority sections. They further demonstrated I-64/HRBT corridor and the 164 Connector as the most impactful.

In **May 2017**, the HRTPO, VDOT, and HRTAC signed a Memorandum of Understanding to advance funding for the RCS Study.

FHWA issued a ROD for the HRCS in **June 2017**, identifying Alternative A as the Selected Action. Since June 2017, VDOT has refined Selected Action (Alternative A). VDOT identified High-Occupancy Toll (HOT) lanes as the preferred management option for the I-64 corridor and added an undeveloped area on Willoughby Spit to the project for a staging area. The Environmental Assessment Re-evaluation focused on the environmental impacts of those refinements.

In **June 2018**, VDOT hosted two public meetings to present findings of the Environmental Assessment Re-evaluation and gather community input on the proposed improvements in the re-evaluation.

Public Outreach Effort for the HRCS FEIS

Since the HRCS FEIS project began in 1991, VDOT has engaged the public at every milestone, with particular emphasis on minority and low-income populations. Outreach tactics included newsletters, public information meetings, a telephone hotline, and website.

The VDOT study team distributed four rounds of about 3,300 newsletters throughout Hampton Roads. To make sure these newsletters would reach minority and low-income groups, the study team distributed them to local community centers, churches, public libraries, social service centers, public housing centers, and senior centers.

The study team hosted three sets of public meetings: August 10 and 11, 1994, March 8 and 9, 1995, and September 20 and 21, 1995. They also hosted public hearings on May 21 and 22, 1996. VDOT advertised the meetings by placards placed on public buses, local newspaper advertisements, as well as issuing meeting notices to local television and radio stations. All meetings were held at locations accessible by public transit and to persons with disabilities.

Public Engagement and Outreach Plan Purpose

This Public Engagement and Outreach Plan (PEP) guides how the HRTPO staff and consultants (the RCS study team) will implement public engagement and outreach efforts throughout the study. The project team will coordinate closely to ensure that community outreach staff and consultants have relevant, timely, and accurate information to share with the public. This plan will support successful project delivery by providing a framework for outreach and communications tools, methods and engagement opportunities that support project objectives.

HRTPO values community engagement and is committed to participating in a two-way dialogue and collaboration with community members around project decisions. We want to help create an efficient, equitable Hampton Roads transportation system together.

HRTPO will convene support team meetings to coordinate with federal, state and local/other agencies as part of the collective work with the HRTPO Working Group and Steering (Policy) Committee.

This plan outlines the following community engagement goals and objectives for the project:

1. Promote an understanding of the purpose and need for the project and the process leading to practical solutions.
 - The public outreach process will adequately inform and engage all stakeholders, including people who are low-income, minority, and limited-English proficient (LEP).
 - Community outreach staff and consultants will coordinate closely with the engineering and environmental staff and consultants to ensure they are hearing, considering, and addressing input from the community in project planning, design, and environmental review.
 - All public materials and talking points will clearly communicate the purpose of and need for this project.
 - The study team will ensure that clear, honest, timely, and thorough information about the project and environmental review process is available to the public, stakeholders, and the media.
 - The public will receive updates on what the study team is hearing from them and how public input will be considered and addressed in the decision-making process.
 - The study team will ensure that all project documents are clearly written and easily understood by a non-technical audience. This includes translating the documents into languages spoken by a significant percentage of the project area, providing materials in large print, and other strategies designed to make sure materials are readable to all community members.
2. The public, the Working Group, the Steering (Policy) Committee, HRTPO, HRTAC, FHWA, and other stakeholders will be satisfied that the study and environmental processes are clear, accessible, fair, and meet the requirements of NEPA.

- Public outreach strategies and tactics will be convenient and accessible to a broad and diverse range of stakeholders and community members, including people who are low-income, minority, and LEP.
 - Public outreach strategies and tactics will involve new and existing stakeholders by providing a range of public input opportunities early and often.
 - The study team will publicize all public outreach activities through multiple and diverse communications vehicles.
 - All public materials and talking points will clearly explain the project process and when, where, and how stakeholders can provide their input.
3. The HRTPO will build informed consent for the project among community members and other stakeholders.
 - All stakeholders will have a clear understanding of the decision-making process as well as who the decision-makers are.
 - The study team will engage in transparent two-way communication to improve the project's development and recommendations.
 - The study team will research and respond to public inquiries, ideas, and concerns in a timely manner. This process will be consistent with the HRTPO's existing procedures to respond to public inquiries.
 - The study team will provide a process and the tools to allow stakeholders and the public to engage in meaningful ways, giving feedback and input on major decisions before they are finalized.
 4. The study team will plan for and manage risk to ensure smooth, cost-effective project delivery.
 - The study team will identify and acknowledge public participation risks early in the project and take a proactive approach to address, avoid, or mitigate those risks.
 - When there are conflicts between what the public or stakeholders want and technical or financial constraints, all project materials, and talking point will clearly communicate the criteria that the study team used to make recommendations to decision-makers.
 - The study team will document all contacts with the public, including follow-up activities and responses.

Regulatory Requirements for Public Involvement, Environmental Justice and Title VI

The HRTPO, as a sub-recipient of federal financial assistance, is required to comply with Title VI and subsequent nondiscrimination laws. The HRTPO makes every effort to ensure nondiscrimination in all its programs and activities, whether those programs and activities are federally funded or not. The HRTPO recognizes that not all communities and their members

have enjoyed the same level of access or representation in transportation and other decisions made by public agencies. As part of the HRTPO's public participation strategy, special steps and measures will take place to understand and consider the wants, needs, and aspirations of minority, low-income, and other underserved groups, which include LEP populations in the Hampton Roads region.

Environmental Justice (EJ)

The RCS team will document all outreach and engagement efforts as required by the NEPA, including the Environmental Justice (EJ) analysis and outreach effort outlined in Executive Order (EO) 12898 - *Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations*.

The United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) and the FHWA policies on environmental justice are included in:

- USDOT Order 5610.2(a), Final DOT Environmental Justice Order (May 2012)
- FHWA Order 6640.23A Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations (FHWA 2012)
- FHWA's Title VI program is outlined in 23 CFR 200.9

Executive Order 12898 does not define the terms "minority" or "low-income," but the terms have been defined in the USDOT and FHWA orders on environmental justice. The USDOT and FHWA orders provide the following definitions, which have been used in this analysis:

- **Minority Individual** - The US Census Bureau classifies a minority individual as belonging to one of the following groups: American Indian or Alaskan native, Asian American, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, Black (not of Hispanic Origin), and Hispanic or Latino.
- **Minority Populations** - Any readily identifiable groups of minority persons who live in geographic proximity, and if circumstances warrant, geographically dispersed/transient persons (such as migrant workers or Native Americans) who would be similarly affected by a proposed FHWA program, policy, or activity.
- **Low-Income Individual** - A person whose household income is at or below the US Department of Health and Human Services poverty guidelines.
- **Low-Income Population** - Any readily identifiable group of low-income persons who live in geographic proximity, and, if circumstances warrant, geographically dispersed/transient persons (such as migrant workers or Native Americans) who would be similarly affected, be a proposed USDOT program, policy, or activity.

The RCS team will use the strategies developed under Executive Order 12898 and the USDOT and FHWA policies on EJ to identify minority and low-income populations and proactively provide these communities meaningful opportunities for public participation in project development and decision-making.

This EJ approach establishes the framework to identify outreach efforts for engagement low-income and minority populations who may be affected by the project. The following are key strategic objectives for the EJ outreach:

- Identify and actively engage advocacy groups and elected officials representing environmental justice populations throughout the project area. Provide structured and unstructured opportunities for these groups and officials to provide input.
- Provide clear, concise, and accurate information, in appropriate languages, regarding the project and development.
- Identify and address any potential environmental impacts disproportionately borne by low-income and minority residents and communities throughout the project area.
- Develop and implement multiple avenues of communication methods for stakeholders to receive project information and submit questions and comments (meetings, group presentations, community centers, and the project webpage).
- Facilitate constructive dialogue between key stakeholders and the study team. Communicate back to EJ communities and representatives how feedback has been reflected in the process.
- Effectively communicate the vision, purpose, and benefits of the project.
- Accurately document and respond to all public input received and meet all NEPA requirements.

Title VI

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, requires no person in the US shall, on the ground of race, color, national origin, or LEP, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination, as well as disparate impact discrimination.

Should the study team learn that they will be presenting a topic in a geographic location with a known concentration of LEP persons, the team under HRTPO staff direction, will make a concerted effort to have meeting notices, fliers, advertisements, or agendas printed in the alternative languages. The study team will coordinate with local community groups to have someone available who can help interpret information at the meeting as applicable. When running a public meeting notice in a geographic location that could be of potential importance to LEP persons or if the team is hosting a meeting or a workshop, the team will, to the extent possible, provide contact information for an RCS team member for general inquiries and insert the following clause --“An interpreter will be available” -- in the predominant language.

The study team will include this statement when running public meeting notices:

The HRTPO will strive to provide reasonable accommodations and services for persons who require special assistance to participate in this public involvement opportunity. Contact Ms. Kendall Miller, Public Involvement and Title VI Administrator, at (757) 420-8300 for more information. Para información en español, llame al (757) 366-4375.

Coordination with local community groups is a key outreach component as the RCS team identifies and seeks to engage the LEP population in the RCS effort. The RCS team has identified Spanish and Tagalog for LEP outreach efforts.

Community Profile

Transportation corridors have the potential to impact communities and community cohesion in many ways. Construction and expansion of existing transportation corridors can disrupt community cohesion by changing how neighborhoods connect within the community. Analysis of community cohesion includes these elements: ethnicity, design features, and aesthetics in the community's layout, and accessibility to neighborhoods, community facilities, goods, and services.

The study area corridors are considered major transportation facilities connecting communities in the Hampton Roads region to the rest of Virginia. The Hampton Roads Harbor divides the region into two sections:

1. the "Southside", which includes Chesapeake, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Suffolk, Virginia Beach, Franklin, Southampton County, and Isle of Wight County; and
2. the "Peninsula", including, Newport News, Hampton, Poquoson, and Williamsburg, as well as James City and York counties.

There are several diverse communities that form the study area. An overview of the setting of each of those communities follows.

Chesapeake is in a historically rural and agricultural area that experienced a large population boom at the turn of the century. It continues to be one of the fastest growing cities in the Hampton Roads region.

The 2018 population of 242,336 residents was 210% greater than the 1963 population of 78,153. It is estimated by the Virginia Employment Commission that the City's population will increase another 17.7% by 2030 with a projected population of 285,153¹.

Of the total population, 62% are White, 30% Black or African American, 4% Asian, and the remaining 4% are American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, or Other Pacific Islander².

Hampton is located at the southern tip of the Peninsula and is divided into several planning districts, within which smaller communities and neighborhoods are located. Three large districts (Coliseum Central, Downtown, and Phoebus) and several smaller neighborhoods fall within the limits of the I-64 and I-664 Study Area Corridors.

Forty-nine percent of Hampton's total population of 137,000 is Black or African American. Forty-two percent are White. The median age in Hampton is 35 years old³.

¹ [2018 Statistical Profile - City of Chesapeake Planning Department](#)

² [US Census 2017 Data - City of Chesapeake](#)

³ [Brookings analysis of 2015 5-year ACS data](#)

Hampton is the home of Hampton University, a historically black college (HCBU). US News and World Reports ranked Hampton University number three compared to all HCBUs in the nation. Cities with HCBUs have higher median incomes for black households than other cities.

The Hampton neighborhood of Phoebus, a historically black neighborhood, is a National Historic District. The population density in Phoebus is 17% higher than Hampton. Their median age is five percent lower than the Hampton median. Only 30.70 percent of the population is White, while 62.72% is Black or African American.

Like Hampton, **Newport News** is located at the tip of the Peninsula and is divided into different planning districts. Newport News is largely urban and industrial, except for portions of the Southeast Community, which is largely residential.

With a population of 179,000, Newport News is the fifth largest city in Virginia. The median age is 33 years old. Forty-nine percent of the population is White; forty-one percent are Black⁴.

Norfolk is characterized by its many distinct communities and neighborhoods. There are more than 125 active neighborhood civic leagues. It has a strong military presence and is home to the world's largest naval base, Naval Station Norfolk (NAVSTA Norfolk).

Norfolk State University, an HBCU with almost 5,000 undergraduates enrolled, is in the City of Norfolk.

Over 44 percent of Norfolk's over 245,000 residents are White, 43% are Black or African American, and three percent are Asian. The largest age group, 30 percent of the population, is 25 to 44. Nearly a quarter of the population is under 18, while 10.9% are 65 or older⁵. In 2016, the City of Norfolk reported a 22% poverty rate for individuals in their city⁶.

Portsmouth is an older, largely built-out city with established neighborhoods and mature housing stock. Of the total population of 95,535 residents, 40% are White, 55% are Black or African American, and the remaining 5% are American Indian, Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian, and other Pacific Islander. The dominant age group of persons 18yrs and younger is 24% of the total population, followed by persons 65 years and older at 14.6% and persons 5 and under at 7.5%⁷. The poverty rate in Portsmouth is 18.2%⁸.

Suffolk, historically a rural and agricultural city, has experienced rapid suburban growth over the past fifty years with a growing population, great accessibility, and suburban sprawl. Suffolk is still a predominantly rural area with two major centers of development: the historic downtown core located in central Suffolk and the more recently developed northern core. Suffolk has a lower poverty rate, 11.5%, than some other cities in the project area⁹.

Each city has a comprehensive overarching plan guiding community development and some cities have some neighborhood-specific plans.

⁴ [Work Population Review - Newport News, VA Population 2019](#)

⁵ [US Census Data 2017 - City of Norfolk](#)

⁶ [Norfolk.gov](#)

⁷ [US Census Data 2017 - City of Portsmouth](#)

⁸ [Portsmouth, VA Data](#)

⁹ [Suffolk, VA Data](#)

The population in **Hampton Roads** is racially and economically diverse. Data from 2010 decennial census and a three-year 2009-2011 American Community Survey were used to estimate the population for Hampton Roads to be 1,632,100. Growth has slowed down considerably since the expansion of the Navy fleet during the Reagan era.

Of the Hampton Roads population, 11 percent of the population was over 65, 33.1 percent were identified as a minority, 11.8 percent were low-income in poverty, and 10 percent of households were without a vehicle. For the region minorities represented approximately one-third of the total population, with Hampton, Newport News, Norfolk, and Portsmouth having the highest percentages of minorities. The regional percentage of people who are low-income was 12 percent. Norfolk, Portsmouth, and Suffolk had the highest percentages.

The Hampton Roads region's economy is highly dependent on the military. Other economic activity important to the region includes industry related to the port, shipbuilding and ship repair, and tourism.

Public Outreach Activities and Key Milestones

The study team will plan and implement a variety of public outreach activities in the study area to keep the public informed during all major project phases. During outreach activities and events, project staff will share information and materials to a wide variety of community members. This will also provide community members the opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback. Outreach activities may include neighborhood briefings, business outreach, summer fairs and festivals, and other potential tabling events in the community.

With the understanding that large-scale regional planning projects have the potential to create disproportionately high and adverse impacts on marginalized and historically underserved populations, including people of color, people of the senior community (65+), college students, people with disabilities, people who are low-income, and LEP populations, the study team recommends tools and tactics to reach all affected communities.

Throughout the course of the project, the team will use different mechanisms based on the audience to consult and collaborate with stakeholders and the public to solicit feedback and input.

- *Key stakeholder briefings* The study team will provide project updates and gather feedback from key stakeholders ahead of project decision milestones.
- *Project materials* The study team will prepare project materials such as presentations, email messages, fact sheets, and informational brochures to support a consistent look, feel, and messaging about the project. The study team will make sure all project materials are 508 compliant and that translated materials are available where needed/requested in Spanish and Tagalog.
- *Web page* The study team will develop a webpage featuring the latest project information, contacts, and upcoming community outreach activities. The webpage will feature a comment form or email link to encourage public comment at key project milestones. The study team will make sure the web page is 508 compliant.

- *News media outreach* The study team may provide information on the project to media outlets. For example, the study team will evaluate the use of ethnic media outlets such as Tidewater Hispanic News and mainstream media outlets including the Virginian-Pilot and the Daily Press.
- *Social media* The study team will develop a social media strategy to share project updates and engage community members. Social media posts may include project updates to increase awareness and understanding, promote upcoming project milestones, and solicit feedback about the project. The social media strategy will determine if the study team should use existing VDOT accounts or launch project social media accounts on Facebook and/or Twitter.
- *Public meetings and community events* The study team will inform and engage residents through community meetings and briefings, transit outreach, and other activities. The study team will share the project purpose and need, timeline information, environmental findings, and gather feedback through public meetings and pop-up events.
- *Agency and interest group briefings* The study team will be available to present updated information about the project at scheduled meetings of various decision-making groups and interest-based organizations such as major employers in the project area, businesses, community groups, transportation interest groups, planning organizations, historically underserved populations, etc.
- *EJ and Title VI outreach* The study team will engage with and provide numerous opportunities to solicit input and feedback from Environmental Justice (low-income and minority) and Title VI populations, including people who are LEP. Efforts will include outreach to community leaders and representatives of social service providers and special needs transportation agencies. Grassroots outreach efforts will encourage broader public participation by these traditionally underserved populations such as meeting in a smaller group, reaching out to faith-based organizations, talking with existing transit users, conducting outreach to school-aged people, and attending community events.
- *Information stations* The study team will develop information station kits to place at local public spaces, including libraries and community centers, to inform community members about the project. The kits will include project materials such as fact sheets, newsletters and project contact information for any questions or feedback.
- *Mailing list and comment management system* The study team will use a comment management system to track agency and public comments throughout the duration of the project and the responses. The system will consist of an excel database that will house comments, commenters, a summary of each comment, any action taken from received comment(s), and a tracking code by comment type of category.

The following table describes potential risks to successful project delivery and proposed mitigation tactics.

| Public Outreach Risks and Mitigation | |
|---|---|
| Risk | Proposed mitigation |
| Stakeholders and other community members may feel frustrated that the project is not advancing as quickly as they would like. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Communicate the project goal and initiatives in tandem with the Long-Range Transportation Plan for the region. ▪ Highlight how people can stay involved throughout the distinct phases of the project. ▪ Communicate all phases of project delivery and describe the work happening at each phase. |
| Community members may not understand how this project differs from others within the area or region. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Offer various forms of communication and different tactics to explain the project. ▪ Clearly describe the project in all communication. ▪ Ensure project team members are versed in other area projects and can refer members of the public to the right resources. |
| Stakeholders and other community members may have suggestions or ideas that should be considered with this study that was not covered in the HRCS SEIS. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Clearly describe the project purpose and need to the public. ▪ Provide information about where non-project related comments should be directed. ▪ Communicate that the study team is committed to listening to community members' concerns and views about what they would like to see addressed in this study. ▪ Communicate the many ways to provide input with community members. ▪ Provide information about how to make an official comment. ▪ Provide contact information for individuals who will ensure all input is incorporated. |
| After years of project delay, stakeholders and other community members may doubt HRTPO's ability to deliver the project on time. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Communicate the project goal and initiatives in tandem with the Long-Range Transportation Plan for the region. ▪ Explain why the project was previously delayed and share the plan to complete the project. |

The following messaging platform aims to produce consistency of information regarding the project throughout Phase II. The messaging should be used as a primary resource for any communication about the project from interested parties.

Key Messages

Elevator Speech:

The purpose of the Hampton Roads Regional Connectors Study (RCS) is to establish a long-term vision that includes transportation options that connect the Peninsula and the Southside while improving economic vitality, resiliency, accessibility, and quality of life in the region. Initiated in June 2018, the study is being funded by the HRTAC and administered by the HRTPO. HRTPO's consultant, Michael Baker International, Inc., is conducting the study in coordination with a Working Group, Steering (Policy) Committee, and HRTPO staff.

Projects emerging from the study will be considered for potential inclusion in the HRTPO 2045 Long-Range Transportation Plan. The study is being conducted in Phases. Phase 1 is focused on establishing goals and objectives for the subsequent study phases and includes extensive one-on-one stakeholder interviews; a regional public survey; existing conditions analysis; scenario planning, and travel demand model evaluation. Phase 1 will help align the scope of the balance of the study with the expectations/priorities of the region.

* Messages to be developed further with HRTPO in Phase 2 once the study goals and objectives have been determined.

Primary Messages

| | Key Messages | Supporting Info |
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| What (purpose of the study/project) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The RCS will evaluate the feasibility, permitability, and transportation benefits of the alternatives presented in the Hampton Roads Crossing Study (HRCS) Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) that were not included in the Preferred Alternative (PA) approved by the HRTPO, the Hampton Roads Transportation Accountability Commission (HRTAC), and the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB). - The HRCS SEIS PA includes widening Interstate-64 (I-64) to a consistent six-lane facility between I-664 in Hampton and I-564 in Norfolk and adding a bridge-tunnel parallel to the existing Hampton Roads Bridge-Tunnel. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This RCS aims to improve the economic vitality, resiliency, accessibility, and quality of life in the region. - The HRTPO 2045 Long-Range Transportation Plan (an overall transportation plan for the Hampton Roads region) will consider including the RCS. - The RCS is looking at crossings and supporting roadways to support future regional growth and avoid further congestion at existing chokepoints. |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The widening of I-64 provides necessary congestion relief to a part of the region, but does not support the long-term growth projections of the area; further crossing options are needed. | |
| Why (need for the study/project) | <p>HRTPO The Hampton Roads Transportation Planning Organization (HRTPO) is embarking on the Hampton Roads Regional Connectors Study (RCS) to investigate additional transportation options that connect the Peninsula and the Southside and alleviate some of the existing and projected future chokepoints.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Since all of the alternatives from the HRCS SEIS were included in the preferred alternative, HRTPO will consider including the alternatives in the HRTPO 2045 Long-Range Transportation Plan. - HRTPO is developing the study to improve connectivity across the region and alleviate traffic during peak travel times. - Drivers are looking to increase local roads to avoid this congested corridor. The RCS is analyzing how best to address these areas and decrease the impact on local roads. - HRTPO's Long-Range Transportation Plan projects the regional population to grow by more than 300,000 people by 2045. The western and northwestern areas of Hampton Roads are likely to develop greatly over the next few decades, providing additional connections to the Southside is necessary to sustain economic development. |
| How (agencies leading/funding the effort) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The RCS is a two-to-three-year study funded by the Hampton Roads Transportation Accountability Commission (HRTAC) and administered by the HRTPO - HRTPO and the project study team have developed a thorough project plan, including the first phase of heavy stakeholder assessment, integrated modeling concepts for future growth and | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Phase 1: the study team worked with the HRTPO leadership, the Working Group, and Steering (Policy) Committee to validate the study focus, assess transportation priorities of the region, and identify additional alternatives to consider in Phase 2. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o 57 stakeholders participated in the interviews held by the study team to gather information about their interests, concerns, organizational focus, and regional perception of transportation. |

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| | traffic projections and testing of alternative combinations. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ HRTPO conducted a survey by mail with a response rate of 9%. The survey gathered information from Hampton Roads residents to discover that when looking at the Hampton Roads region overall, respondents were more concerned about congestion and reported areas of improvement, but were not highly critical of the overall roadways in that region. The key source of frustration amount respondents was traveling between the Peninsula and the Southside. - Phase 2: the team will validate the study goals and objectives, engage the public, conduct scenario planning, develop and analyze alternatives (including cost estimation and benefit-cost analyses), and develop prioritized recommendations to improve regional connectivity and provide congestion relief. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The study team will evaluate options to improve regional mobility based on traffic modeling, technical feasibility, environmental analyses, and community feedback. |
| When (project/schedule timeline) | Phase 1: Goals and Objectives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establishing specific goals and objectives for each phase - Stakeholder Interviews, Regional Public Survey, Traffic Data Collection, Future Land Use Discussions |
| | Phase 2: Screening and Planning of Alternatives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Permit-ability Screening - Conduct Scenario Planning - Alternative Identification - Transportation Benefits, Community Impacts and Financial Feasibility Analysis |

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| | Phase 3: Implementation | - Presentation of options for HRTPO Long-Range Transportation Plan |
| Supporting Messages/Proofs | | |
| How can I get involved? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The study team will engage the public at major milestones; seeking input on the study and providing timely updates on progress. - Visit the project website: https://www.connectorstudy.org/ to stay informed and learn more about upcoming events and activities. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advertisement of the meeting(s) and event(s) such as dates, times and location will be provided with advance notice. - The website will provide links to obtain information on the study, how to get involved, resources and how to contact someone in regards to the project. - As documents are produced for outreach efforts they will also be made available on the website as well. |

RCS identified the following stakeholders to interview to better understand the audiences they represent, including their priorities, transportation challenges, and preferred methods to engage. The table will be completed once the stakeholder interviews are complete as part of Phase II of the project.

| Key Stakeholders | | |
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| Stakeholder Type | Group/Organization | Issues & Concerns |
| Local Governments (cities) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ City of Chesapeake ▪ City of Franklin ▪ City of Hampton ▪ City of Newport News ▪ City of Norfolk ▪ City of Poquoson ▪ City of Portsmouth ▪ City of Suffolk ▪ City of Virginia Beach ▪ City of Williamsburg | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Impacts on their cities such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Congestion impedes the flow of commerce in the community ▪ Lack of multimodal planning and complete street options ▪ Primary ways in and out from the peninsula for most traffic creates limited options ▪ Lack of connections between where people where they live and the growing job network ▪ Tide Light Rail not expanding into Virginia Beach limits transit options ▪ Sea level rise ▪ Lack of regional transit coordination between municipalities |

| Key Stakeholders | | |
|---------------------------------|---|---|
| Stakeholder Type | Group/Organization | Issues & Concerns |
| Local Governments (counties) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Isle of Wight County ▪ James City County ▪ Gloucester County ▪ Southampton County ▪ York County | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Impacts to their cities such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Congestion that impedes the flow of commerce in the community ▪ Lack of multimodal planning and complete street options ▪ Primary ways in and out from the peninsula for most traffic creates limited options ▪ Lack of connections between where people where they live and the growing job network ▪ Sea level rise ▪ Lack of regional transit coordination between municipalities |
| Local Agencies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Coastal Virginia Tourism Alliance ▪ Elizabeth River Crossings ▪ Hampton Roads Chamber ▪ Hampton Roads Economic Development Alliance ▪ Hampton Roads Transit ▪ Suffolk Transit ▪ Williamsburg Area Transit Authority | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Impacts on behalf of their constituents/customers/members: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Infrequent transit service and interest in expanding service ▪ More difficult to attract customers to use public transit if there's no public transit through certain areas ▪ Having more advance signage to alleviate congestion ▪ Improve the connection for rail, freight, port and other transit to improve economic vitality ▪ Revisiting the stigma of using public transit ▪ Public transit had not been reliable to users, making it difficult when time is a factor ▪ Consider making more ferry service connections available |
| Military | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hampton Roads Military and Federal Facilities Alliance ▪ US Air Force - Langley/Fort Eutis ▪ US Coast Guard ▪ US Army Corps of Engineers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Impacts for military, contractors, and civilians: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reoccurring flooding (sea-level rise) makes access to facilities difficult ▪ Tolls impacting lower ranked military ▪ Limited access to hospitals due to tolls and traffic ▪ The military cannot always leave at a specific time (making public transit use a challenge) ▪ Tunnel used to transport certain DoD items is prohibited; limits options ▪ More transit options to DC and the Pentagon |

| Key Stakeholders | | |
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| Stakeholder Type | Group/Organization | Issues & Concerns |
| US Navy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ NAS Oceana/Dam Neck Annex ▪ Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek-Fort Story ▪ Naval Station Norfolk ▪ Naval Weapons Station Yorktown | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Impacts for military, contractors, and civilians: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reoccurring flooding (sea-level rise) makes access at facilities difficult ▪ Tolls impacting lower ranked military ▪ Limited access to hospitals due to tolls and traffic ▪ The military cannot always leave at a specific time (making public transit use a challenge) ▪ Tunnel use to transport certain DoD items is prohibited; limits options ▪ More transit options to DC and the Pentagon |
| State Agencies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation ▪ Virginia Department of Transportation ▪ Virginia Peninsula Chamber of Commerce ▪ Virginia Port Authority | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Impacts for their constituents/customers/members: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Not having options for cross corridor connectivity ▪ Coordination and engagement with localities in their planning efforts ▪ Carriers cannot use HOT lanes/toll lanes ▪ Need to identify rail system investments that will provide an opportunity to shift cargoes from the roadways to the rail system |

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| Public/Interest Groups | <p>Also included in the public:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>EJ/Title VI populations</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hampton Roads Hispanic Chamber of Commerce (757.348.9969) - Philippine Cultural Center of Virginia (757.490.7600) - Urban League of Hampton Roads, Inc. POC Stephen Williams (swilliams@ulhr.org) ▪ <u>People with disabilities</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Arc of Greater Williamsburg - POC Pam McGregor (pam.mcgregor@thearcgw.org) - Chesapeake Bay Chapter of National Federation of the Blind - POC Theresa Willis (Theresa_willis@hotmail.com) - Endependence Center, Inc. - POC Cheryl Ward (cward@endependence.org) ▪ <u>People who receive social services</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Peninsula Council for Workforce Development - Hampton, VA (757.826.3327) - Catholic Charities of Eastern Virginia (757.456.2366) - Office of Human Affairs - Newport News, VA (757.247.0379) - City of Hampton Social Services (757.727.1955) - Hampton Roads Family Services (757.580.5678) ▪ <u>People who are 65 and older</u> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Access to services and businesses ○ Access to community amenities ○ Access for people with special needs ○ Tolling costs ○ Impacts on EJ/Title VI populations ○ Environmental, social, economic and development changes |
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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Versability Resources - Hampton, VA (757.896.6461) - Peninsula Agency on Aging - Newport News, VA (757.873.0541) - Virginia Department of Social Services Richmond, VA (800.832.3858) - Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services - Richmond, VA (804.786.3921) - Hampton Senior Center (757.727.1601) - Little England Cultural Center - Hampton, VA (757.727.0821) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Commuters (car, transit, bike, walking)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I-Ride Transit (757.222.4513 and 757.516.8556) - Peninsula Agency on Aging - Newport News, VA (757.837.0514) - Hampton Roads Transit Bus Service - (757.222.6100) - Paratransit Bus Service - 757.222.6087 - Peninsula Commuter Service (Major Employers) www.gohrt.com/services/peninsula-commuter-service/ - Williamsburg Area Transit Authority (757.220.5493) - Virginia Regional Transit/Suffolk Transit (757.214.6442) - Bay Transit (804.250.2011) ▪ <u>College students and youth</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Old Dominion University: (John Broderick president@odu.edu 757.683.3159) | |
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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hampton University: Dr. William Harvey presidentsoffice@hamptonu.edu (757.727.5231) - Bryant and Stratton College: Francis Felser - Norfolk State University: Dr. Melvin Stith president@nsu.edu (757.823.8670) - Virginia Wesleyan College: Scott Miller sdmiller@vwu.edu (757.455.3215) - Bethel College: president@bcva.edu - Tidewater Community College: Dr. Gregory DeCinque (757.822.1050) - Thomas Nelson Community College: John Denver deverj@tncc.edu (757.825.2711) - William and Mary: Katherine Rowe president@wm.edu (757.221.7892) - Christopher Newport University: Paul Tribble (757.594.7000) - Virginia State University: Makola Abdullah President@vsu.edu (804.524.5070) - ECPI: Mark Dreyfus mdreyfus@ecpi.edu - Strayer: Brian Jones - South University: Dr. Ameanthea Blanco-Knezovich (804.225.2600) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Veterans</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Office of Human Affairs - Newport News, VA (757.247.0379) - US Department of Veteran Affairs - Hampton, VA (757.722.9961 ext. 1209) | |
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| Key Stakeholders | | |
|------------------|---|-------------------|
| Stakeholder Type | Group/Organization | Issues & Concerns |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - American Red Cross - Hampton, VA (757.838.7320) - Thomas Nelson Community College in Partnership with Peninsula Counsel for Workforce Development (757.825.2938) - LINK of Hampton Roads (757.595.1953) | |

Public Outreach Milestones, Activities and Tactics

This table provides an overview of the recommended tools and tactics for the project, purpose, frequency, and stakeholder audience type.

| Tools | Description/Purpose | Frequency/Timing | Audience/Attendees | Tactics |
|---|---|--|---|---|
| Study mailing list/ comment database | To use for the duration of the study to track parties interested in staying informed and updated on the project | Throughout the duration of the project. Mailings at key project milestones and ahead of outreach activities. | Elected officials; transportation, environmental, civic and business organizations; city, state, regional and federal agencies; residents and property owners; transportation providers; the media; and other interested groups and individuals | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The consultant team will utilize MailChimp • Communications to database list will include meeting announcements, electronic newsletters, and other pertinent information |

| Tools | Description/Purpose | Frequency/Timing | Audience/Attendees | Tactics |
|---------------|--|--|----------------------------|---|
| Study Website | Develop content to update the project website to keep public informed | Schedule to be confirmed; initial recommendation for monthly or bi-monthly updates Quarterly refresh of project website photo carousel and spotlight feature. | Public | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spotlight on Scenario Planning Activities • Spotlight on outreach activities, including any online surveys • Spotlight announcing and summarizing two public meeting series |
| Social Media | Inform and educate users about events and activities through Twitter and Facebook posts, including links to surveys | As needed throughout the project; schedule to be confirmed and tied to benchmarks and opportunities for input | Public | Consultant team to prepare content and posting schedule each month |
| Study Video | <p>Provide interesting visual to educate the public about the project</p> <p>For use on the project webpage, at pop-up events, and public meetings</p> <p><i>HRTPO staff to evaluate possible inclusion in the scope</i></p> | One-time production; expected launch in April 2019 | Public Key stakeholders | The video will be featured at public meetings, pop up events, and on the project website as appropriate |

| Tools | Description/Purpose | Frequency/Timing | Audience/Attendees | Tactics |
|----------------------------|---|--|---|---|
| Brochures/Postcards | <p>Brochure on topics to be agreed to by HRTPO team to disseminate project information.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential distribution methods: online and mailed copy to stakeholders Stakeholders, distributing newsletters through their networks | <p><u>Two Brochures</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One before each public meeting series <p><u>One Postcard</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Announcing the study and the first public meeting series Spring/Summer 2019 | Elected officials; transportation, environmental, civic and business organizations; city, state, regional and federal agencies; residents and property owners; transportation providers; the media; and other interested groups and individuals | Initial postcard distribution to target areas as determined by HRPTO to announce the first meeting and to encourage registration for the project mailing list |
| Factsheets/Flyers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One fact sheet will provide a project overview to provide context and educate the public Factsheets will focus on specific issues of concern to individual groups or localities or provide brief status reports on the overall project Flyers will focus on announcing opportunities for engagement | Throughout the duration of the project | Elected officials; transportation, environmental, civic and business organizations; city, state, regional and federal agencies; residents and property owners; transportation providers; the media; and other interested groups and individuals | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Factsheet for pop-up events Regional Library Bookmarks Rack cards for kiosks Public Meeting announcement flyers <p>Location-specific:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> City Halls Public Meetings, Stakeholder Meetings and Pop Up Events Major Business Placement Local Libraries and Schools -please stay away from schools. |

| Tools | Description/Purpose | Frequency/Timing | Audience/Attendees | Tactics |
|--|---|--|--|--|
| Public & Stakeholder Meetings | <u>Public Meetings</u> Will provide structured opportunities for informal interaction between the public and the project team at key points in project development | <u>Fourteen meetings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Key project milestones (to be updated one schedule is finalized?) | Public | Two sets of seven on-site meetings (fourteen total) Postcards as required <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Newspaper ads as required• Poll Everywhere Technology for scenario rankings• Table for LRTP team |
| | <u>Stakeholder briefings</u> Will provide structured opportunities for informal interaction between key stakeholders and the project team at key points in project development | <u>110 briefings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Before each public meeting series to 35 stakeholders• Various briefings as requested to 20 community, business and interested parties | Residents, the business community (shipyard), and transit advocates | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• small group meetings with neighborhoods and churches, businesses• 70 briefings to stakeholder list identified in Phase 1 |
| Outreach Activities | Engage community members in ways that meet them where they are, outside of traditional open house style meetings | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Spring/Summer/Fall | Residents, Commuters, Public Engage EJ, Title VI population through hands-on engagement where people live, work, and play | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• pop-up events; potential locations include:• Movie nights, sporting events, fairs and festivals• Purchase swag to distribute at tabling events• HBCU Symposium• Ziosks Marketing Survey/Announcement |
| Final Report | Provides information on all outreach efforts completed for the project | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• One report at end of Phase 2 | HRTPO | |

References

[Brookings analysis of 2015 5-year ACS data](#)

[Executive Order \(EO\) 12898 - Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations](#)

[EA Re-Evaluation of Hampton Roads Crossing Study \(HRCS\) FEIS: Candidate Build Alternative CBA 9 - Segments 1 & 3](#)

[FHWA Order 6640.23A Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations \(FHWA 2012\)](#)

[FHWA's Title VI program is outlined in 23 CFR 200.9](#)

[Hampton Roads Crossing Study \(HRCS\) Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement \(SEIS\)](#)

[Hampton Roads Transportation Planning Organization Public Participation Plan](#)

[Hampton Roads Transportation Planning Organization Title VI Plan/LEP Plan](#)

[HRTPO Historical Analysis of Census Transportation Data 2013](#)

[Norfolk.gov](#)

[Portsmouth, VA Data](#)

[Suffolk, VA Data](#)

[Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964](#)

[US Census 2017 Data - City of Chesapeake](#)

[US Census Data 2017 - City of Norfolk](#)

[US Census Data 2017 - City of Portsmouth](#)

[USDOT Environmental Justice Order 5610.2\(a\)](#)

[Work Population Review - Newport News, VA Population 2019](#)

[2018 Statistical Profile - City of Chesapeake Planning Department](#)