

Report to Hampton Roads Transportation Planning Organization

Hampton Roads Residents' Perceptions of Regional Transportation

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Agenda

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

Recent Points of Reference

- 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

- 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

- 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

- 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

- 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

- 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

- 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

- 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?