

HAMPTON ROADS

Regional Legislative Agenda

2026



Hampton Roads Regional Legislative Agenda

The Hampton Roads Planning District Commission (HRPDC) and Hampton Roads Transportation Planning Organization (HRTPO) are pleased to present the following Regional Legislative Agenda for consideration by our State and Federal partners. The HRPDC and HRTPO collectively represent the 17 local governments in the Hampton Roads region and have unanimously endorsed these regional legislative requests to address important issues that will enhance the quality of life and economic opportunity for all residents in our Region.

The 2026 Hampton Roads Regional Legislative Agenda is presented in two sections. The first is a listing of Regional Legislative Priority items that the HRPDC and HRTPO will actively advocate to advance. The second section contains a listing of Regional Position Statements – these are items we will monitor and support or oppose as appropriate.

On behalf of our region, we want to thank our Hampton Roads Caucus members and Congressional delegation for their work on behalf of the Hampton Roads region. The HRPDC/HRTPO stand ready to offer our support for your efforts and look forward to collaborating with our state and federal partners as we work to strengthen and prepare our region for the future.

Questions regarding the 2026 Hampton Roads Regional Legislative Agenda may be referred to rcrum@hrpdcva.gov or 757-420-8300.



Robert Crum
Executive Director
HRPDC/HRTPO



The following regional legislative priorities were unanimously approved by the HRPDC and HRTPO. We will actively advocate to advance these items on behalf of the Hampton Roads region.

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RELIEF FROM TAX EXEMPTIONS

Request assistance from the Virginia General Assembly to provide relief to localities from existing state tax exemptions and other unfunded mandates

Existing state tax exemptions are having significant impacts on local government budgets.

One Hampton Roads locality reports losing as much as **\$50 million annually** to exemptions and unfunded mandates. These exemptions cause smaller localities to lack sufficient financial reserves to address unexpected budgetary pressures.

The impact of these state tax exemptions on local governments has reached a tipping point and must be addressed to ensure the fiscal sustainability of local governments.



TRANSPORTATION FUNDING

Create a Primary and Secondary Road Fund for the Hampton Roads region that provides funding to advance critical and unfunded transportation projects



The Hampton Roads Transportation Accountability Commission (HRTAC) has used the Hampton Roads Transportation Fund (HRTF) to finance and construct a generational package of transportation improvements in Hampton Roads. With the pending completion of nearly \$6 billion of regional transportation improvements on the region's interstate network, now is the time to advance improvements to our region's local primary and secondary roads.

The HRTPO has identified over \$3 billion in unfunded needs on our region's primary and secondary roads. These unfunded needs include a number of congested primary and secondary roads on both the Peninsula and Southside.

We ask that the General Assembly create a Primary and Secondary Road Fund to advance transportation projects that are necessary to support economic development, the Port of Virginia and military/federal facilities, and address resiliency/flooding, public safety, and other issues in Hampton Roads.

FUNDING FOR VIRGINIA'S PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSIONS

Restore state funding to Planning District Commissions to the levels provided over two decades ago



The HRPDC serves as the hub for regional cooperation in Hampton Roads and provides services and promotes collaboration that results in cost savings and a tremendous return on investment for the region and the Commonwealth of Virginia.

State funding for the Hampton Roads PDC has continuously decreased over the past two decades from just over \$366,000 in 2001 to \$190,943 in 2025.

When the Peninsula and Southside PDCs were merged, the HRPDC was reduced to one PDC funding share from the State.

We request that the General Assembly demonstrate support for regionalism in Virginia by restoring \$250,000 of funding to each PDC in Virginia.

FLOODING

Develop a state funding program to provide the non-federal match for federal grants to support large-scale flood relief projects

Localities cannot afford the non-federal local match to unlock federal funding for flood mitigation projects. For example, the Army Corps of Engineers Coastal Storm Risk Management program provides 65% federal funding with a 35% non-federal match.

In the case of Norfolk, a non-federal match of approximately \$900 million is needed to access the required federal funding. This challenge will also apply to several other local governments in our region.

Since there is a significant return on investment and cost savings for the Commonwealth if our communities can access federal funding, we request that the state develop a funding program to contribute to the required non-federal share.



Provide adequate funding through the Community Flood Preparedness Fund (CFPF) to meet the flood preparedness and resilience needs of the Commonwealth

The Hampton Roads region has successfully accessed CFPF funding to assist with the costs of completing vulnerability assessments and develop action-oriented approaches to bolster flood preparedness and increase resilience in our communities.

We request that the Commonwealth allocate a minimum of \$200 million per year to the CFPF to assist localities with their efforts to reduce the impacts of flooding.



TRAILS

Provide state funding to help support a regional biking and walking trail network in Hampton Roads

Our region has unanimously endorsed a regional trail network that, when completed, will provide over 250 miles of interconnected walking and biking trails, with portions of this system already developed.

We ask that the General Assembly contribute funding to our regional trail backbone system, which includes the following trail segments:

- **Dismal Swamp Trail**
- **Elizabeth River Trail**
- **South Hampton Roads Trail**
- **Trail757**
- **Virginia Beach Trail**

The average cost of trail construction is between \$2 million and \$6 million per mile, depending on whether the trail is in a rural, suburban, or urban environment.

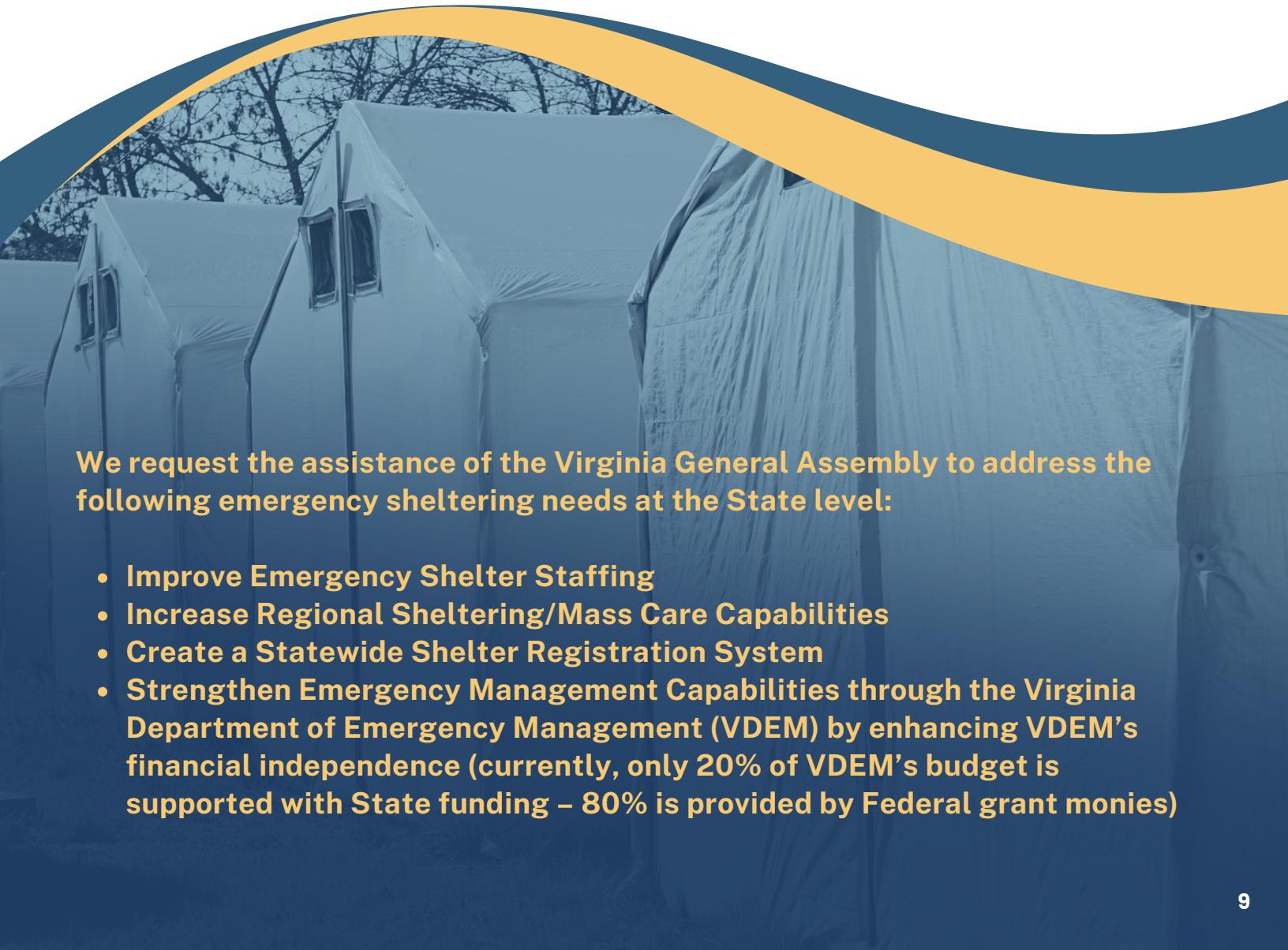
Bike/walk trails have proven to be economic drivers for metropolitan areas across the country. Trail networks provide environmentally sustainable transportation options for all residents, promote a healthy and active lifestyle, and attract residents and visitors to our region. Community surveys demonstrate broad support for walking and biking trails in Hampton Roads.

This regional network will brand Hampton Roads as the epicenter for walking and biking opportunities in the Mid-Atlantic region.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND SHELTERING

Provide State assistance to address regional emergency sheltering/mass care needs

The Hampton Roads region and the entire Coastal Region of Virginia have the potential to be significantly impacted by storm and tidal events that may create a need for emergency response and sheltering. It is clear that planning and responding to these emergency events requires coordination at a scale larger than any one PDC region. Depending on the scale or location of a storm event, sheltering or other responses will need to be coordinated throughout Virginia and neighboring states.



We request the assistance of the Virginia General Assembly to address the following emergency sheltering needs at the State level:

- Improve Emergency Shelter Staffing
- Increase Regional Sheltering/Mass Care Capabilities
- Create a Statewide Shelter Registration System
- Strengthen Emergency Management Capabilities through the Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) by enhancing VDEM's financial independence (currently, only 20% of VDEM's budget is supported with State funding – 80% is provided by Federal grant monies)

ENERGY

Support State policies and programs that provide for an “All of the Above” approach to energy development

Access to reliable, affordable, and increasingly clean energy is critical to the economic growth of Hampton Roads and the entire Commonwealth of Virginia. Energy demand within Dominion Energy’s service territory, which includes eastern Virginia, including Hampton Roads, is forecast to increase by more than 5 percent annually over the next decade and double by 2040. Meeting this demand will require an “all of the above” approach that includes significant investments in new generation sources, an expanded and improved transmission and distribution grid, and continued focus on energy efficiency programs.

To unlock economic development opportunities for the Hampton Roads economy, we must explore advancements in all available generation sources, including offshore wind, solar, advanced nuclear, natural gas, and energy storage.

We support State policies and programs that encourage a diversified energy portfolio.





WATER QUALITY

Provide funding through the Water Quality Improvement Fund (WQIF) to support Chesapeake Bay cleanup efforts in Hampton Roads

The Hampton Roads Sanitation District (HRSD) is currently carrying the largest share of Virginia's Chesapeake Bay cleanup under the state-mandated 2021 Enhanced Nutrient Removal Certainty Program (ENRC). In the last twenty years, the Commonwealth has invested hundreds of millions from the WQIF in northern Virginia upgrades — now Hampton Roads is where the burden falls.

Without sufficient appropriations in the State Budget, the shortfall will fall upon Hampton Roads ratepayers.

HRSD's SWIFT program is under active construction to comply with the upcoming regulatory deadlines.

We request funding support through the Water Quality Improvement Fund to support the Hampton Roads Sanitation District in its efforts to meet nutrient reduction goals.

PASSENGER RAIL

Continue to support efforts that will produce faster and more reliable passenger rail service between Hampton Roads, Richmond, and the Northeast Corridor

Passenger rail ridership continues to grow within Hampton Roads, with over 950,000 riders using either the Norfolk or Newport News trains in the last year.

With modern passenger rail stations in both Newport News and Norfolk, and significant increases in passenger rail ridership in Hampton Roads, now is the time to expand our current service and continue efforts to reduce travel time.

We support projects that will reduce passenger rail travel time from the Norfolk and Newport News stations to the Richmond/I-95 corridor and Washington, DC.

We also request that our region's current and planned passenger rail trains be maintained during the construction of the Long Bridge project in Northern Virginia.

TRANSIT FUNDING

Provide adequate funding support for Hampton Roads' three transit systems

Public transportation options contribute to the quality of life for Hampton Roads residents and are a key component of our region's goals for a multi-modal transportation system.

We request that the General Assembly preserve and consider increased funding to support Hampton Roads Transit, Williamsburg Area Transit Authority, and Suffolk Transit.

ELIZABETH RIVER CROSSINGS TOLL RELIEF

Support continued efforts to mitigate the impact of tolls at the Downtown and Midtown Tunnels

We applaud the work of the Virginia General Assembly to continue to expand toll relief efforts at the Downtown and Midtown Tunnels.

We support and encourage continued collaboration to explore all options to further reduce toll rates for our residents and businesses.

REGIONAL POSITION STATEMENTS

The HRPDC/HRTPO will monitor the following Regional Position Statements during the General Assembly session and support and oppose proposed legislation as appropriate.



Reject Unfunded Mandates

We ask that the General Assembly oppose any proposals that would impose new unfunded mandates and fiscal responsibilities on local governments, including tax exemptions that will have unintended consequences on local operating budgets.



Protect Local Land Use Authority

We support maintaining and expanding local authority to plan and regulate land use and oppose any legislation that weakens these key local responsibilities.



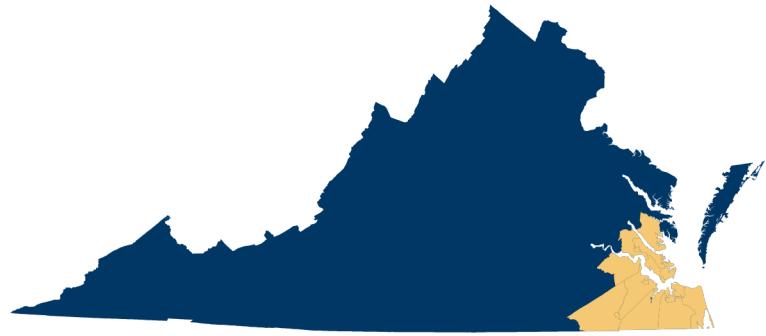
Flood Sensors

We encourage the State to continue to gather data on roadway flooding occurrences, including making investments in flood sensor networks to assist in predicting roadway flooding events.



Jefferson Lab

We offer unanimous regional support for efforts to advance the Department of Energy's High Performance Data Facility at Jefferson Lab.



Housing

We support State policy decisions that assist in providing housing opportunities and inventory for all Hampton Roads residents. We also support the continuation of funding for the Housing Trust Fund and extension, expansion, and improvement of the Housing Opportunity Tax Credit. The HRPDC is leading the preparation of our region's first housing assessment to identify housing gaps and needs and determine strategies to address our housing challenges. We request support for this regional housing assessment and the recommendations and strategies that will be produced by this effort.



Economic Development Site Readiness

We continue to support state funding programs and policies that assist local governments with preparing shovel-ready economic development sites.



Transportation Maintenance and Repair

Costs for transportation system maintenance continue to rise with inflation. The Commonwealth should consider increased assistance to address these maintenance needs.



HAMPTON ROADS

Population of 1.8 Million

2,950 Square Miles

17 Local Governments

18 Defense Installations

World's Largest Naval Base

East Coast's Deepest, Widest Port

3,900 Miles of Shoreline

Top 25 Tourism Market

