

# Special Report:

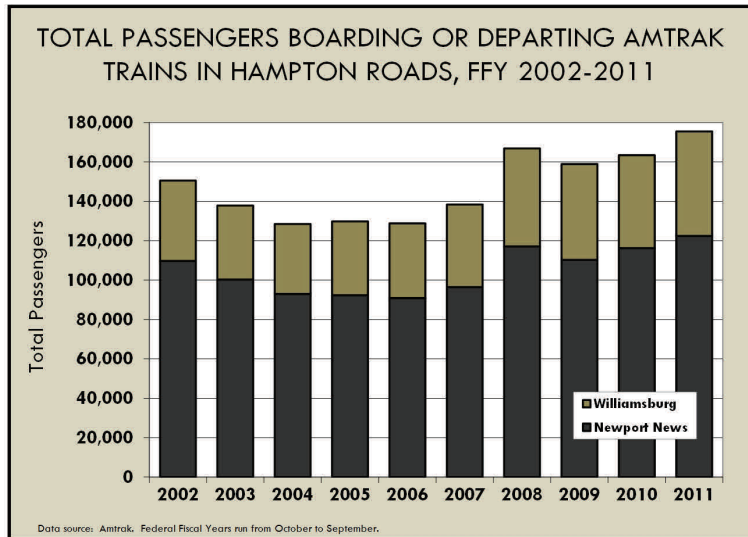
## All Aboard! Rail Travel in Hampton Roads

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Rail travel is becoming more prominent in Hampton Roads with the introduction of light rail service, upcoming Amtrak service to the Southside, and ongoing studies regarding improved passenger rail service both into and throughout the region.

One year ago, Hampton Roads Transit (HRT) began light rail service in the city of Norfolk. This light rail system, referred to as The Tide, serves a 7.4 mile corridor between the Medical Center Complex through Downtown Norfolk to Newtown Road at the Virginia Beach city line. Nearly 1.7 million passengers have used The Tide as of the end of July 2012. This averages to 4,818 daily passengers, or 5,228 passengers each weekday, much higher than the 2,900 passengers HRT estimated would use The Tide each weekday.



Intercity passenger rail service is provided to Hampton Roads by Amtrak at stations in Newport News and Williamsburg. There were a total of 175,500 passengers who boarded or departed Amtrak trains in Hampton Roads in 2011, with 122,400 passengers at the Newport News station and 53,100 passengers at the Williamsburg station. The number of Amtrak passengers boarding or departing trains in Hampton Roads increased 17% between 2002 and 2011, but has increased 36% since the lows seen in the middle of the 2000s. This number of passengers is likely to increase when direct Amtrak service to the Southside begins in December 2012. Construction is underway on the project, including improvements to the rail line and the construction of a platform at the future Norfolk Harbor Park station.

Many studies are underway looking at the potential to improve passenger rail travel into and throughout Hampton Roads. These studies include the feasibility of extending transit from the end of the Tide line into Virginia Beach and improving passenger rail service between Richmond and Hampton Roads as an extension of the Southeast High Speed Rail Corridor. In addition, the HRTPO Board has commissioned the *Hampton Roads Passenger Rail Preliminary Vision Plan*, *Hampton Roads Passenger Rail Plan Blueprint Study*, and the *Hampton Roads Passenger Rail Study - Data Collection*.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

Read the State of Transportation in Hampton Roads 2012 Report, please visit: [http://hrtpo.org/TPO\\_Reports.asp](http://hrtpo.org/TPO_Reports.asp)

