



Regional Update

February 2026

Collaboration in Action: HRPDC Achieves Model Level River Star Award

A Message from HRPDC Deputy Executive Director, Greg Grootendorst

At HRPDC, our work starts and ends with partnership. From water quality and resilience to housing affordability and other shared challenges, many of the issues facing Hampton Roads extend beyond any one jurisdiction. It is our mission to meet those shared challenges by bringing our local governments and communities together around common goals and turning ideas into meaningful action.



When Hampton Roads collaborates, we multiply impact. We create opportunities to share best practices, align and leverage funding, and pilot solutions that can be scaled across the region. We help translate complex regulations into practical strategies and connect education and outreach efforts so residents can play an active role in the solution.

Earning ***Model Level recognition from the Elizabeth River Project*** is an honor. It reflects not only the efforts highlighted in the video below, but also a broader regional commitment to environmental stewardship and to working together. Hampton Roads is surrounded by water, and together, we are ensuring it remains a defining strength for generations to come.

This recognition is a credit to our dedicated staff and the many partners who collaborate with us every day. Together, we're continuing to build a stronger, more resilient Hampton Roads.

Watch the recognition video below:



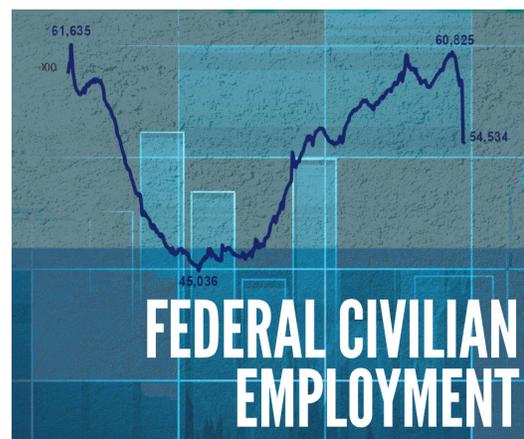
HAMPTON ROADS ECONOMIC MONTHLY **2026 Economic Outlook: Stability Amid Uncertainty**

While the national economy remained resilient in 2025, Hampton Roads felt the outsized impact of federal policy shifts.

The *Hampton Roads 2026 Economic Outlook*, prepared by Regional Economist Nikki Johnson, examines how federal workforce reductions, defense spending, port activity, tourism, and housing trends are shaping the region's trajectory. Key takeaways include:

- More than 6,000 federal civilian jobs were lost in 2025, contributing to a **total loss of nearly 12,000 civilian jobs regionally**
- The region's **unemployment rate rose to 4.1%** in late 2025, nearly a full percentage point higher than at the start of the year
- **Defense spending remains a stabilizing force**, supported by a \$900 billion federal defense budget and expanded investments in shipbuilding
- **Container volumes at the Port of Virginia and tourism activity softened** in 2025, reflecting broader trade and demand shifts

The 2026 forecast anticipates continued but modest growth, with defense providing



stability while federal workforce uncertainty and slower growth in other key sectors remain risks.

[Read the full 2026 Economic Outlook Report >](#)

State of Transportation: Key Trends in Hampton Roads

Rail and air passenger levels are at record highs. Freight volumes at the Port of Virginia continue to grow. And the number of bridges in poor condition across the region has been cut in half over the past decade.

HRTPO's *2025 State of Transportation in Hampton Roads Report* provides a comprehensive snapshot of the region's transportation system including highways, transit, rail, air travel, freight, safety, and commuting patterns. It also compares Hampton Roads to 40 similarly sized metropolitan areas nationwide.

Highlights from the report include:

- Regional roadway travel remains about **4% below pre-pandemic levels**.
- Only **34 bridges (2.7%)** are classified in poor condition — down from 68 in 2016.
- Air travel reached record levels in 2024, with **over 2.5 million passengers**.
- The Port handled nearly 27 million tons of cargo, **a 33% increase since 2015**.
- Amtrak ridership remains strong, **up 70% compared to 2022**.
- Public transit trips **increased 35% from 2023 to 2024**, totaling over 11 million trips.

[Learn more about the State of Transportation in Hampton Roads >](#)

Two Important Opportunities to Help Shape the Future of Hampton Roads:

Regional Congestion Survey

The HRTPO is seeking public input to identify and address congestion concerns. Commuters are invited to take the **Hampton Roads Congestion Survey** to identify areas of delay and share feedback using an interactive map to help planners better understand congestion patterns across the region.

In 2023, Hampton Roads travelers lost an average of 17 hours to congestion. Community



input will help inform future mobility strategies and investments.

[Share your commuting experience >](#)

Hampton Roads HORIZON Survey

HRPDC is seeking public input for **Hampton Roads Horizon, a long-range regional strategic plan** focused on improving quality of life and strengthening economic competitiveness.

The five-minute survey allows participants to allocate an imaginary \$1,000 across 19 regional strategies, helping identify the priorities that matter most. Participants will also be entered for a chance to win one of five \$100 gift cards.



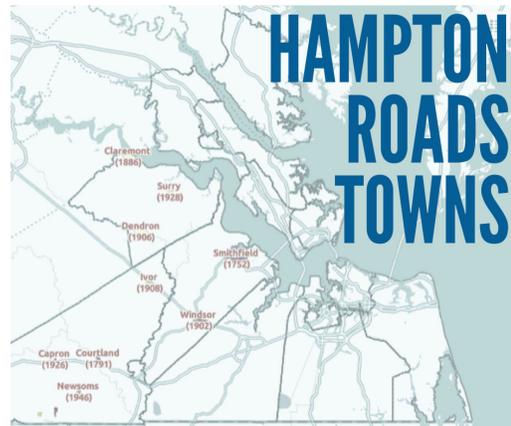
[Learn more & share your vision for Hampton Roads >](#)

MAP OF THE MONTH

Towns in Hampton Roads

Beyond the region's cities and counties, **Hampton Roads is also home to 11 incorporated towns**. These are communities with deep roots and distinct identities.

Some began as colonial river ports along the James. Others grew around agriculture, courthouse crossroads, or 19th-century rail lines. Today, these towns remain an important part of the region's fabric, operating within their parent counties and contributing to the shared history and character of Hampton Roads.



This month's interactive map highlights where each town is located and how their populations are distributed across the region.

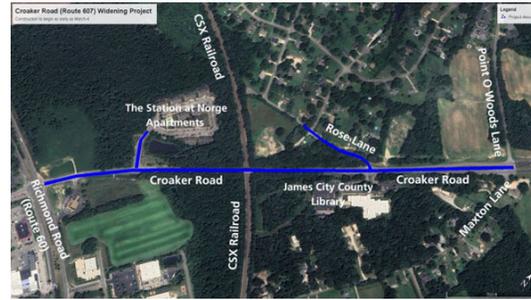
[Explore the Interactive Map >](#)

PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

Croaker Road Widening Project

James City County is advancing the **Croaker Road Widening Project**, designed to accommodate future growth, improve capacity, and enhance connectivity in the Norge area.

The project will widen Croaker Road from two lanes to four between Richmond Road and Point O Woods Road/Maxton Lane, with a raised median and intersection improvements. A new southbound bridge over the CSX Railroad will accommodate additional lanes and a shared-use path.



The project also includes a new shared-use path and a pedestrian-activated HAWK signal to improve access to the James City County Library.

The \$19.2 million project is currently under construction and is expected to be completed in Fall 2027.

[***Learn more about this and other transportation projects in the region >***](#)

Public Input Opportunities

Draft Fiscally Constrained Project List for the 2050 Long-Range Transportation Plan (Comments due by March 11, 2026)

Promoting Planned Road & Path Projects via the Development Review Process: DRAFT Report (Comments due February 20, 2026)

Hampton Roads Congestion Public Survey (Survey open through March 15, 2026)

Hampton Roads HORIZON Public Survey (Survey open through March 31, 2026)

HRPDC/HRTPO In the News

A new sensor network system will help track real-time data for flood-prone areas (WVEC, February 10, 2026)

Sensors targeting flood-prone roads coming to Suffolk (Suffolk News-Herald, February 10, 2026)

WRECK WATCH explores the five worst intersections for crashes in Hampton Roads (WAVY, February 9, 2026)

Which roads flood in Hampton Roads? A new sensor network will help track. (WHRO, January 27, 2026)

Hampton Roads officials seek public input as traffic congestion continues to rise (WTKR, January 26, 2026)

Hampton Roads bridges show improvement, air travel surges in 2026 transportation report (WTKR, January 26, 2026)

Hampton Roads 2026 Economic Outlook reflects on impact federal job cuts have had on the region (WAVY, January 21, 2026)

Sick of Hampton Roads traffic? HRTPO wants your feedback on congested roads (WTKR, January 21, 2026)

Report: Hampton Roads lost about 6,300 federal civilian jobs in 2025 (Virginia Business, January 21, 2026)

Report sheds light on rising toll rates, revenue (WVEC, January 19, 2026)

Hampton Roads seeing record travel on rails, roads and runways transit report finds (WAVY, January 16, 2026)

Need Help?



NEED HELP?

- ○ ○ Access to Services
- ○ ○ ADA Accommodations
- ○ ○ Language Assistance

LET US KNOW!

The HRPDC & HRTPO are committed to making regional planning accessible. If you need assistance with additional accommodations please let a staff member know or contact titlevi@hrpdcva.gov



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Upcoming Meetings

PDC



TPO



Katie Cullipher
Director of Communications

Matt Klepeisz
Communications Administrator

Joe Turner
Communications and Web Manager

Robert Cofield
Graphic and Web Designer

Quan McLaurin
DEI & Title VI/Civil Rights Liaison

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[HRPDC Website](#)

[HRTPO Website](#)

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The Hampton Roads Planning District Commission (HRPDC) and Hampton Roads Transportation Planning Organization (HRTPO) fully comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987, Executive Order 12898 on Environmental Justice, and related nondiscrimination statutes and regulations in all programs and activities. HRPDC's website, www.hrpdcva.gov, and HRTPO's website, www.hrtpo.org, may be translated into multiple languages. Publications and other public documents can be made available in alternative languages and formats, if requested. HRPDC public meetings are always held in ADA-accessible facilities and in transit-accessible locations when possible. Auxiliary services can be provided to individuals who submit a request at least seven days prior to a meeting. Requests made within seven days will be accommodated to the greatest extent possible. Any person who believes they have been aggrieved by an unlawful discriminatory practice by HRPDC under Title VI has

a right to file a formal complaint. Any such complaint may be in writing and filed with the HRPDC and/or the appropriate state or federal agency within 180 days of the alleged discriminatory occurrence. For more information on HRPDC's Title VI program, or to obtain a Title VI Complaint Form, please call (757) 420-8300 or email: qmclaurin@hrpdcva.gov

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