



Eastern Shore of Virginia

2012
Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

CEDS

Table of Contents

1. Executive Summary	Page 2
2. Developing a Plan/Research Phase	Page 3
3. A-NPDC Economic Development Committee members	Page 4
4. Location Advantages	Page 5
5. Industry Clusters	Page 6
6. Partners & Resources	Page 7
7. Goals and Strategies	Page 10
8. Projects List	Page 13
9. Implementation Plan	Page 22
10. Public Meetings Comments	Page 27
11. Appendix A – Focus Group Questions	Page 37
12. Appendix B – Notes from Focus Group meetings	
a. Agriculture	Page 40
b. Aquaculture	Page 42
c. Government and Contractors	Page 44
d. Tourism/Hospitality/Retail	Page 48
e. Manufacturers	Page 49
f. Healthcare Providers	Page 51
g. Educators	Page 53
h. Service Providers	Page 55
i. Real Estate	Page 57
13. Appendix C – Eastern Shore Needs Assessment November 2011	Page 61

Executive Summary

This is the new 2012 Eastern Shore of Virginia Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) developed from focus groups conducted between March and May. More than 200 business leaders were invited to participate from nine industry sectors:

- Agriculture/Nursery Stock/Vegetable Growers/Wineries
- Aquaculture/Fisheries/Seafood Market
- Federal government organizations and their contractors
- Tourism/Hospitality/Retail
- Manufacturers
- Healthcare providers
- Educators
- Service providers
- Real Estate

Industry leaders shared their perceptions of our region's economic needs and made suggestions for improving our prospects. No independent research was conducted to verify if the perceptions of the industry leaders were accurate. The Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission's (A-NPDC) Economic Development Committee agreed that, if there is a perception, then there is a problem. What the actual problems are will be discovered during the course of the projects. The projects in this document were selected based on what the A-NPDC and its partners believed could be accomplished in 2013. New projects will be selected each year until 2017, when the new five-year CEDS will be developed.

Development of the CEDS is one of the A-NPDC's obligations to the US Economic Development Administration (EDA) for maintaining that federal agency's designation of the Eastern Shore of Virginia as an Economic Development District eligible for EDA funding. It is a public process that included a public open house on November 7, 2012 and review by the A-NPDC's Economic Development Committee, which was formed in late 2010 to comply with EDA membership regulations.

The CEDS is a roadmap for achieving economic development goals, and as such, should reflect the plans a region intends to implement in advancing its prosperity. Therefore, an implementation schedule has been included to track progress against goals. There are many more projects in the prioritized list than appear in the implementation schedule. The reason for this discrepancy is twofold; the list includes some projects as "placeholders" so that they are not overlooked in future, and the implementation schedule includes those projects and tasks that we believe can be accomplished in the next 12 months.

Questions or comments can be sent to the A-NPDC c/o Barbara Schwenk, P.O. Box 417, Accomac, VA 23301, phone 757-787-2936 x115 or email bschwenk@a-npdc.org.

Developing a Plan

The Research Phase

Between March and May 2012, nine focus group meetings were held with business and industry leaders. More than 200 invitations were sent, and the participants shared their views on the challenges they face and potential solutions to address them. The results of the focus group meetings are the basis of this new 2012 CEDS.

To understand some of the region's issues and for the purpose of strengthening local prevention coalitions, the Eastern Shore Community Services Board hired the Planning Council using a grant from the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Development Services. The resulting report, completed in November 2011, presents a comprehensive demographic overview of economic conditions in our region and included in its entirety as **Appendix C**.

In 2007, the Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission obtained planning funds from the US Economic Development Administration and Accomack and Northampton counties to conduct research for that year's CEDS document. The resulting report was "Community Economic Development for the Eastern Shore: Summit Report" (www.a-npdc.org/Summit_Report_2007.pdf). The Summit Report provided demographics, an inventory and analysis of assets based on people, places, and industries, as well as key findings and implications

Public Participation

Business leaders attended nine industry focus groups in the winter and spring of 2012. In addition, the draft CEDS was presented to the public for comments via the Internet, in the Clerk of the Court offices in each county, and in an open house held at the Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission on November 7, 2012 from 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Those comments were incorporated into the document where appropriate or listed separately where a clear fit for them could not be determined.

Alignment of CEDS with Commonwealth Goals and Objectives

During the 2011 General Assembly session, the Center for Innovative Technology (CIT) was directed to create a Commonwealth Research and Technology (R&T) Strategic Roadmap. The Roadmap identified eleven sectors for investment in the Commonwealth. Three of those sectors, Aerospace, Energy, and the Environment are reflected in the CEDS projects in the coming year. Those sectors are also represented throughout the CEDS as Issues/Challenges that will be addressed in future.

A-NPDC Economic Development Committee (51% private business)

Name	Affiliation	Interest
Peter J. Bale, Chairman	Eastern Shore Defense Alliance	Stakeholder
Pamela Barefoot, CEO	Blue Crab Bay Company	Business
Robert S. Bloxom, Sr.	Bloxom Auto Supply	Business
John Chandler, VP Finance	Bayshore Concrete Products Corp.	Business
Tommy Clark	Don's Seafood Restaurant and Tom's Cove Aquafarms	Business
Irene Davis, President	Chesapeake Outdoor Advertising, Inc.	Business
Kevin Dennis, Facilities Manager	Perdue Farms	Business
Ralph W. Dodd	Ralph Dodd & Associates	Business
Ava Gabrielle	New Road Community Development	Technical Advisor
Laura Belle Gordy, Supervisor	A-NPDC	Elected Official
Charles Kellam	A-NPDC	A-NPDC
Oral Lambert, CEO	Bay Creek Resort & Club	Business
John LeCato, Chairman	Accomack County Economic Development Authority	Stakeholder
Lynwood Lewis, Delegate	Virginia House of Delegates	Elected Official
Robert N. Marsh, Jr.	BB&T	Business
Andy Mason	Mason-Davis Co., Inc.	Business
Caroline Massey, Management Operations Director	NASA Wallops Flight Facility	Stakeholder
Jeff Middleton, Complex Manager	Tyson Foods, Inc.	Business
Steve Miner, County Administrator	County of Accomack	Technical Advisor
Ralph S. Northam, Senator	Virginia Senate	Elected Official
Katie Nunez, County Administrator	County of Northampton	Technical Advisor
Willie Randall, Supervisor	A-NPDC	Elected Official
Tom Rienarth	A-NPDC	A-NPDC
Charles Russell	WESR 103.3 FM	Business
John Tarr, Mayor	Town of Chincoteague	Elected Official
Linda Thomas-Glover, President	Eastern Shore Community College	Stakeholder
Genevieve Walker Switzer, President	T&W Block	Business

Location Advantages

The Eastern Shore of Virginia is adjacent to the Hampton Roads metro area across the Chesapeake Bay via the Chesapeake Bay Bridge and Tunnel. The region has remained rural with an economy dependent on farming and seafood and has become one of the few places on the East Coast that has preserved its pristine marine environment and shoreline eco-system.

The Eastern Shore's relative geographic separation and its pristine natural environment are a huge advantage for the tourism and eco-tourism industry. Nature and heritage tourism have expanded over the past ten years to include kayaking on both the bayside and seaside, bird-watching, sport fishing, increase in the number of charter boats, hunting, sailing, bicycling, festivals, and tall ship visits.

Although separated from "mainland" Virginia by the Chesapeake Bay, our region also has the advantage of being close to large economic regions. For instance, we are within only one hour driving time from Norfolk and Virginia Beach, three hours from Richmond, Annapolis, Baltimore, Washington DC and northern Virginia, and less than six hours from cities in the great northeast such as Philadelphia and New York. This was a distinct advantage in the past when our area was the breadbasket for those regions. All manner of seafood, game, and produce was shipped from here by the railroad. This location advantage endures and is still viable for farmers and seafood marketing. In addition, our proximity to high-population and service-rich areas provides many benefits to our citizens.

Our location is tremendously valuable to NASA and DOD contractors at Wallops Island and to our citizens for the jobs those agencies provide. Wallops Island will be resupplying the International Space Station because our global position enables the shortest trajectory to the ISS. Another unique advantage of our location is the high volume of through traffic on U.S. Route 13 from states such as Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Connecticut and Massachusetts. Many of these travelers are enroute to the Virginia and North Carolina beaches, with the highest number of travelers between June and August with slightly less traffic in May and October. These travelers spend money in our region on hotels, gas, restaurants and shops. Travelers as well as citizens support our region's many small businesses along the highway and in the small towns.

In the recent past, another major relationship was the growing number of people from outside the region purchasing vacation or retirement homes on the Eastern Shore of Virginia. This influx was thought to balance the impact of young people leaving the area and helped to support local retail and service businesses. Although the real estate market has slowed since 2007, our population is relatively stable, and our unemployment figures are lower than the state and national average.

Industry Clusters

Diversification of the Regional Economy

In past years, seven industry clusters were identified:

- Agriculture/food processing
- Aerospace
- Tourism
- Seafood/Aquaculture
- Education/Research
- Studio Businesses
- Retiree Services

Representative of these clusters are the employment figures by sector:

- Manufacturing 29%
- Wholesale Trade 2%
- Finance & Insurance 3%
- Administrative Support & Waste Management 3%
- Other Services 4%
- Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services 6%
- Construction 6%
- Forestry, Fishing, & Hunting (less than 1%)
- Accommodations & Food Services 11%
- Retail Trade 15%
- Health Care & Social Assistance 17%
- Other 5%

Partners & Resources for Economic Development

Many Hands Make Light Work

Regional Partners

The Eastern Shore of Virginia is blessed with several organizations working on the many aspects of economic development.

The **Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission**, also the Economic Development District designee, continues to coordinate and facilitate the CEDS process for the region, and focuses on regional planning, housing, and community development Issues/Challenges:/Challenges. Also, in 2009, the A-NPDC established a \$500,000 revolving loan fund for economic development purposes.

In 2010, the A-NPDC created an economic development committee that conforms to the new EDA regulations for a CEDS committee – 51% of the members are private business representatives at the highest organizational level (list on page 2). The Economic Development Committee met in January and June 2011 to conduct business and to develop this CEDS update. Sub-committees move projects forward throughout the year.

The **Chincoteague Chamber of Commerce** is an organization of businesses joined together to maximize its ability to attract and increase the numbers of visitors to Chincoteague Island. The ultimate goal of the organization is to communicate the message that Chincoteague, the “Beautiful Land Across the Water”, is the most desirable location to visit and/or vacation with family or friends.

The **Chincoteague Natural History Association** which has committed to raising the funds to restore the Assateague Island Lighthouse.

The **County of Accomack** is the leader in the Wallops Research Park project. It hired a project manager in 2007. A progress report is part of this document.

The **County of Northampton** completed its new Comprehensive Plan in 2009. It includes many of the recommendations that came out of the 2007 CEDS process. In addition, it focuses on its natural assets and the huge agriculture, seafood, and aquaculture sectors.

The **Eastern Shore Community College** provides workforce training and business development services in our region. Upon completion of its new facility in 2009, it expanded its curriculum in response to area business training needs.

The **Eastern Shore Defense Alliance** focuses on Issues/Challenges:/Challenges related to the federal BRAC closings and the needs of the Wallops Island Department of Defense and partner organizations and facilities relative to land-use policy and perceived threats due to encroachment.

The **Eastern Shore of Virginia Broadband Authority** was formed by the two counties in 2008 to build, expand, and maintain a high-speed fiber optic network for the entire region. Federal and state funds have been obtained for construction of the fiber-optic backbone which will connect NASA/Wallops in the north to the Tidewater region of Virginia, providing broadband redundancy for all federal agencies located in our region, and bringing affordable high-speed Internet access to our communities.

The **Eastern Shore of Virginia Chamber of Commerce** is a member-driven and –directed organization that represents the business, professional, agricultural, seafood, tourism, and community interests that advance economic and civic well-being through private-sector enterprise with a foundation built on providing value for its members' investment.

The **Eastern Shore of Virginia Tourism Commission** now receives regular funding from both counties, which has allowed it to hire additional staff. It has been busy with strategy development, tourism research, and branding of the Shore as a destination. By partnering with Northampton County and the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel District Commission, it established a visitor center in the expanded rest facility at the northern terminus of the bridge tunnel. It has also helped to organize artist's studio tours and has held high-visibility events to attract more visitors.

The **Northampton County Chamber of Commerce** promotes and develops the prosperity of the community as the primary advocate and resource for its businesses.

The **Small Business Development Center of Hampton Roads** has provided a part-time business analyst for the use of small businesses and entrepreneurs for many years. Assistance in developing business plans and financing packages has been especially important to start-up small businesses in our region.

The Virginia Commercial Space Flight Authority is a creation of the Commonwealth of Virginia, but its focus is on the **Mid-Atlantic Regional Spaceport** at Wallops Island (www.marsspaceport.com). The Spaceport has been and will be the scene of commercial rocket launches and will benefit the regional economy with spin-off manufacturing businesses.

Federal & State Resources

The **US Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration** has provided generous financial support to the creation of business parks, the commercial spaceport at Wallops Island, the Eastern Shore Community College Business Development and Workforce Center, and economic development planning in the region for many years.

US Department of Agriculture Rural Development is very active in providing funding for wastewater treatment, revolving loan funds and a variety of other economic development programs in the region.

The **US Department of Interior Fish and Wildlife Services** which is working closely with localities to develop the Northampton Bicycle Trail and is collaborating with the Chincoteague Natural History Association to restore the Assateague Island Lighthouse.

The **Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services** represents the concerns and interests of agriculture and works in cooperation with Virginia State University, Virginia Tech, and the Virginia Cooperative Extension Service on research, education, and marketing projects.

The **Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development** has provided business financing, downtown revitalization, and business park development assistance to our region.

The **Virginia Department of Transportation** has provided much-needed funding over many years through the Transportation Enhancement Program for myriad projects involving museums, downtown revitalization, and community trails.

The **Virginia Economic Development Partnership** serves those seeking a prime a business location and increased trade opportunities and fosters increased expansion of the Commonwealth's economy.

The **Virginia Employment Commission** supports our community in various ways, including tracking of availability of job opportunities to low- and middle-income residents to comply with Community Development Block Grant program goals, developing and updating economic and labor market data for Community Profiles, and conducting training with its partners.

The **Virginia Foundation for the Humanities** has provided grants and staff assistance for tourism-related projects on the Eastern Shore.

The **Virginia Marine Products Board** is the marketing arm of the seafood industry. In this capacity, the board conducts a comprehensive marketing program designed to upgrade and expand both domestic and foreign sales and markets to further the overall economic development of the industry.

The **Virginia Tourism Corporation** has provided tourism marketing grants and training workshop for business owners.

Goals

Landmarks on the Road to Prosperity

Taking information from previous plans, the 2007 ED Summit Report, the Economic Development Committee, and from nine focus group meetings held with our business and industry leaders between March and May of 2012, a new CEDS has been developed for 2012.

It became apparent that certain Issues/Challenges were surfacing over and over again. These common concerns became the basis for the strategic goals. The goals are fundamental to the plan, for while this report offers specific strategies for implementation, the list is not necessary exhaustive. Sound goals provide a strong framework for future expansion of strategies.

Economic Development Strategies

Strategic Goals:

- *Create a positive environment for the growth of our seven industry clusters by providing the necessary public infrastructure (business parks, utilities, incubators) and by enhancing capital availability (revolving loan funds).*
- *Offer opportunities for lifelong learning and skill development related to our seven industry clusters, serving potential employees and entrepreneurs.*
- *Develop a regional identity that celebrates our competitive advantages and connects the communities of our region.*
- *Attract or grow businesses that provide living-wage jobs without harming the environment.*
- *Recognize the importance of our historic towns and villages to the overall economic health of the region and develop strategies to stimulate their revitalization.*

PEOPLE:

“The region must actively plan for and pursue opportunities to fully leverage the region’s existing and potential sources of human capital.”

- Recognize school quality as a prerequisite for successful community economic development and make school quality a priority in any agenda.
- Consider models for marketing programs matching workers who’ve left the Eastern Shore with current and potential employers.
- *Provide opportunities for high school students to focus on in-demand technical skills.*
- *Look for innovative outlets to engage the energy of the Eastern Shore’s growing community of retirees.*

PLACES:

“The region should carefully study market opportunities and constraints facing ideas to develop the region’s natural assets.”

- Undertake careful analysis of markets and organizing strategies for entering new and exciting markets for agriculture and aquaculture.
- Explore and implement appropriate best practices in e-commerce and new “niche” tourism marketing strategies.

INFRASTRUCTURE:

“Recognize the quality of infrastructure as important to both community and business/industry and act on it.”

- Support community clean-up programs and other efforts to improve the quality of the physical environment, especially roadside litter.

- Carefully examine capital investments in infrastructure, such as water and sewer, and recreational facilities, with recognition of their significance for community economic development.
- Recognize addressing the problems of substandard housing will be beneficial for community economic development.
- Promote expansion of commercial-speed broadband infrastructure options.

BUSINESS & INDUSTRY:

“Carefully study the commitments required to realize the potential for research and development activity in the region.”

- Encourage state support for activity at Wallops Island, including the Mid-Atlantic Regional Spaceport (MARS).
- Pursue development strategies in aerospace/spaceflight and marine sciences, and conduct thorough research into the competitive picture in these areas.
- Recognize the distinction between the immediate economic impact of research and the long term commitment required to see the benefits of commercial development.

Projects List

1. BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, RETENTION, AND EXPANSION

A. Wallops Research Park

- i. In 2010, Accomack County resolved to fund infrastructure identified in the master plan: taxiway from the Wallops landing strip to the WRP, new road, water and wastewater, and broadband.

The Accomack County Board of Supervisors has committed to providing a match of up to \$4 million for infrastructure and deed restriction removal and authorized submission of a \$4 million Transportation Partnership Opportunity fund grant application for construction of a taxiway to connect the NASA runway with Wallops Research Park. The WRP is now poised to implement the detailed plans that were prepared for it by its partners.

- ii. A point of presence for the Eastern Shore Community College Workforce Development program in the park, as well as a continuing education module for graduate studies would be heavily used by WFF employees. Look for opportunities to build a large offering of graduate-level studies from diverse sources.
- iii. In early 2011, the Accomack County Board of Supervisors requested a report from the WRP Leadership Council (a service district authority under Virginia code) on the anchor tenant's prospects and a plan for moving forward with at least partial infrastructure improvements. The report recommended that development of the park proceed as originally planned. Federal loans and grants will be sought to build the necessary infrastructure.
- iv. Support NASA's efforts to provide an adequately-sized Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) airstrip on north Wallops Island that would be capable of supporting the testing and deployment of existing and future UAS and UAS-based scientific instruments at the Wallops Flight Facility.

B. Improve infrastructure

- i. Ports
 1. Deepen Cape Charles federal harbor and natural channel – Bayshore Concrete Products Corp., the Town of Cape Charles, and Northampton County funded an economic impact study that documented benefit of

millions of revenue dollars for our region and the state by deepening the federally-designated Cape Charles Harbor and natural channel from 14 to 40 feet.

ii. Energy

1. Continue to support the extension of a natural gas pipeline from Worcester County, Maryland to the Eastern Shore of Virginia.
2. Plan special training for residents for potential future jobs in the renewable energy field.

iii. Broadband – expand utilization of broadband infrastructure

1. Conduct a study of residential users to determine level of service desired, what service is currently available, and what price point residents are willing to meet to get the services they want. The survey would inform service providers of the available market. The survey could also be used to educate the public to the uses and benefits of true high-speed broadband.
2. Solicit proposals and partnership from private sector for additional services.

iv. Railroad - Upgrade railroad infrastructure

1. In the most recent Department of Rail and Public Transportation Virginia statewide draft six-year Rail Plan, there are \$1.1 million included for proposed physical improvements to the Eastern Shore rail system.
2. Find funding to conduct feasibility study of passenger/commuter service for the Shore.

v. Wastewater

1. Both counties are seeking funding to build wastewater collection and treatment systems for specific areas of need.
2. In 2011, the Town of Chincoteague completed preliminary engineering studies for a wastewater collection system that would support existing businesses and municipal facilities along its major corridor. Additionally, the town appointed a wastewater advisory committee that is studying

how 4-5 similar communities have successfully made the transition from septic systems to centralized wastewater systems. It will make recommendations to the town council in 2013 on how Chincoteague might proceed.

C. Agriculture/Aquaculture

- i. Research model and data from Chesapeake Bay TMDL – methods of data collection and results are suspect.
 - a. Work with the Soil and Water Conservation District and the Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission to set up a successful and inclusive process for communication between the state, EPA, and the farming community.
- ii. Conduct a survey of farmers to establish return on investment by comparing input costs to price increases for crops.
- iii. Set a goal to have an Eastern Shore farmer appointed to the state's Best Management Practices Committee in order to have representation from two of the most agriculturally-important counties in Virginia.
- iv. Conduct a drainage study for Northampton County with focus on how to capture more stormwater for irrigation without harming the aquaculture industry which needs clean water flowing into creeks.
- v. Promote the value of agriculture and aquaculture by holding special events to highlight it – maybe one crop at a time; organize an ES regional fair; support farm businesses with marketing, signage, partnerships; explore ways to involve 4-H. Compile statistics and the value to our economy and share with elected officials and other citizens.
- vi. Expand school curriculums to include skills needed in farming the soil and the water such as fixing equipment and business management and finance, which are necessary to run a business today. Let young people know that there are jobs available if they are trained for them.
- vii. Protect water quality. Leverage our region's unique ability to control upland runoff into ANY water body. Almost no other community has this advantage. It means we can protect the seaside by enforcing vegetative buffers and enacting zoning to protect water quality.

- viii. The seaside barrier islands and the channels have moved drastically over the past 20 years. A bathymetric survey and accurate marking of the channels would be very beneficial to watermen, recreational boaters, and aqua-culturists alike.
- ix. Landowner view-share and conflicts over aquaculture activity – apprise Virginia Shellfish Growers Association of problems and ask that it address this issue.
- x. Continue to look for innovations in ag and ways to diversify crops/methods; i.e. more organic production, Kosher, Community Supported Ag (subscription farming), and value-added products on an industrial scale as well as small scale in order that crops can be processed locally .

D. Revolving Loan Fund

- i. The Accomack-Norhampton Planning District Commission manages a \$500,000 revolving loan fund for economic development purposes. Its most recent loan was \$300,000 to Bay Coast Railroad for repairs to the 25 railcar barge float that crosses the 26-mile wide Chesapeake Bay from Little Creek in Norfolk to Cape Charles. This loan was made to match a \$700,000 gift from the Commonwealth for the \$1 million repair bill. The repairs were made in 2010, and it was back in operation in November.
- ii. Create a venture capital fund for start-ups by entrepreneurs and/or technology transfer opportunities.

E. Federal Designations

- i. Look for a way to get federal thresholds changed to reinstate the HUBZone designation for our region.
- ii. Activate more of the Foreign Trade Zone areas, especially in the Wallops Research Park and for the Accomack Airport Industrial Park. Engage the Virginia Port Authority as a partner in getting this accomplished.

2. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

- A. Need for a full-time economic development organization with staff for the Eastern Shore.**
- B. Promote mentoring of school children and develop mechanisms that adults/parents can use to be more involved and supportive of the school systems.**

- C. **Create a central place to learn about all the educational opportunities on the Shore.**
- D. **Research the differences between our region's training and that of Worcester County, Maryland schools as well as Delaware Tech.**
- E. **Public transit could contribute more to the prosperity of the Eastern Shore if it synchronized its routes to workplace shifts. Now, STAR Transit does not run after 6 pm or on weekends. This makes it impossible for many people to use it to get to and from their workplace. Commuter rail on the Eastern Shore could also be a great boon for getting around without a personal vehicle. STAR Transit could provide transport from the railroad stations to major workplaces, shopping venues, and healthcare facilities.**
- F. **Look for applications for math skills to show students how they can use the math they learn in a practical way; i.e. titration or look for data that multiple groups collect and standardize it and put it on the Web as a teaching tool.**
- G. **Support for educational organizations:**
 - i. Lobby for increased Federal and State funding and for less unfunded mandates.
 - ii. Develop business partnerships with the school divisions to create co-op opportunities for students to expose them to various industries on the Shore. This will educate children about job opportunities and how to prepare for them.
 - iii. Support local education foundations.

3. TOURISM

- A. **Create new venues and become a destination:**
 - i. Develop an interpretive meteor center in Cape Charles.
 - ii. Expand the number of Historical Markers on the Eastern Shore and replace the broken ones; develop a list and map of all of them.
 - iii. Develop historic trails, such as the old Stagecoach Route, with people in period costume at the stops.
- B. **Improve Route 13 with landscaping and better signage.**
 - i. Plant locally-grown crops such as cotton and sunflowers in the median or alongside the highway. Would show pride in our area – especially now that mowing has been drastically reduced and the highway looks shaggy for much of the season. Look at North Carolina model which has been very successive.

- ii. Use branding to improve quality and quantity of signage to direct travelers to venues and into towns.

C. Chincoteague Island

- i. Support efforts by all partners to work with Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge (CNWR) to explore how best to advance the study, information exchange, and project resources for adaptive management practices that sustain the resiliency of this unique barrier island system including Assateague, Wallops, Assawoman, and Metompkin Islands in the face of dynamic coastal processes and climate change.
- ii. Prepare feasibility and funding program for expansion of the Chincoteague Museum
- iii. Continue efforts to extend and improve the bicycle trail connecting Accomack County and CNWR.
- iv. Revitalization of the downtown Main Street, including movie theatre and Landmark Plaza shopping center.
- v. Work with Accomack County and VDOT to secure funding for gateway enhancements to Maddox Boulevard recommended in the Walkable and Livable Communities technical report "Healthy People, Healthy Places – Community Well-Being on Virginia's Eastern Shore," August 2012.

D. Tourism Marketing/Projects

- i. Northampton County continues its intensive tourism marketing campaign for the lower Eastern Shore "Cross the Bay for a Day, Better Yet Decide to Stay." It is a targeted media outreach and awareness campaign focused on the Hampton Roads region, and more specifically on the Virginia Beach area and the military market to promote the region. The program is a partnership of two governmental agencies, the local chamber of commerce, one non-profit and three business entities as well as cooperation with the Eastern Shore of Virginia Tourism Commission.
- ii. Unify tourism-related businesses in both counties in cooperative marketing ventures to promote the Eastern Shore.

- iii. Get the roads cleaned up. Teach a “Beautification 101” class to kids in school and take them out to clean up the roads. They would teach their parents not to litter.
- iv. Work together to develop a major cultural center, water recreation centers and amenities such as fuel for boats already in the water.
- v. The Tall Ships Initiative needs more collaboration between all sectors.

4. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

A. Housing Development

- i. Several focus groups identified the need for affordable workforce housing (defined as no more than 30% of household income) for middle income workers such as teachers, first responders, and healthcare providers. Our area has many expensive vacation or second homes and many sub-standard units. Housing that is both decent and affordable is in short supply. The real estate focus group attributed the lack of this type of housing to restrictive zoning that doesn’t allow guest houses or multi-family units by right (in Northampton County).

B. Leadership Development Initiative

- i. Find a way to actively engage local leaders and businesses in regional economic development efforts.

C. Real Estate Industry

- i. Increase collaboration between local government and the real estate industry. Create strong strategic alliances between the two sectors:
 - 1. Create a webpage of available sites, state and other incentives (Enterprise Zone, Foreign Trade Zone, etc).
 - 2. Educate government leaders on the value of the real estate industry and how it advances economic development in our region:
 - a. Perhaps be involved in selecting new economic development director in Northampton County
 - b. Be involved in decision-making about disposal of deferred maintenance or abandoned buildings such as the Old Cape Charles High School.

- c. Show the public sector how the real estate industry collaterally benefits the area economically by marketing to industrialists and others that have the ability to bring jobs.
- d. Show how advertising dollars benefit all (not just the real estate industry)
- e. We need to address the lack of affordable workforce housing on the Eastern Shore. To begin to do that, we should allow guest houses and multi-family units in Northampton County.

D. Recreational Facilities

- i. Find funding to conduct a feasibility study for a Northampton County Aquatic Center

E. Healthcare

- i. Riverside Shore Memorial Hospital has been given the green light from the state to move from Nassawadox to Onancock. Northampton County Supervisors would like to see an urgent care facility left in Northampton County.
- ii. Within five years, healthcare providers need to reduce the cost of care by 30-40% in order to continue to serve the community. Healthcare providers strongly recommend organizing a meeting of all healthcare providers to identify issues and find solutions as a first step in helping them reduce costs. An example might be collaboration in purchasing supplies and services.
- iii. Teach children from grade school on that there are many needs in the healthcare industry that they could fill with proper training—nurses, pharmacists, therapists, etc. that will be needed here in future, and they are all family-wage jobs.
- iv. Prepare a message for our supervisors to influence them to think regionally, not by county. Leave politics out of the provision of healthcare.
- v. Healthcare providers could get involved in healthy lifestyles promotion for our region: farm to school program to have local foods in the schools and other institutions such as hospitals and nursing homes, the importance of diet and exercise to good health.
- vi. Market availability and promote underutilized services such as home health care, oral health, and preventative medicine.

- vii. Look into ways to address the shortage of housing for healthcare workers.
- viii. Use whatever influence is available to change the way federal programs determine an area's eligibility for federal grants and loans – most are now based on median household or per capita income. The poverty index would be a more accurate measure to use, especially in our region because of wealthy people moving here. Their incomes have made our median household incomes high without changing the level of poverty.

5. RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

- A. Explore synergies between R&D entities in the region such as the Marine Sciences Consortium, College of William and Mary Virginia Institute of Marine Sciences, University of Virginia Long-Term Ecological Research Project, Old Dominion University, NASA, Navy, NOAA, Coast Guard, and Department of Defense contractors.
- B. Conservation could be a growth industry because of the scientific research conducted here (see A above), training for marine research, and restocking the oceans with wild fish species (by aquaculture).

HEARD ACROSS SECTORS:

In each focus group, attendees expressed frustration at the lack of cooperation between elected officials in our two-county region.

The inability of Accomack and Northampton counties to work together on wastewater issues, economic development and healthcare facilities, and to compete rather than cooperate, is believed to be deleterious to our region's prosperity.

The belief is that we all benefit from improvements in our region, as everyone ventures beyond their "home" county for many reasons, and if one county gets a "good thing," it doesn't mean that the other one lost something.

Project/Task	Responsibility	Support	Timeline	Date Completed
1. BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, RETENTION, AND EXPANSION				
<p>A. Wallops Research Park Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Accomack County applies for \$4 million in state funding for the taxiway into the Wallops Research Park. ii. County completes additional steps to remove federal deed restriction on County land. iii. Secures additional \$4 million financing for infrastructure. iv. Develop a presence for Workforce Development/Continuing Education in the WRP based on the feasibility study already completed. 	<p>Accomack County</p> <p>Accomack County</p> <p>Accomack County</p> <p>Accomack County/ Educators</p>	<p>Timmons Group</p> <p>Timmons Group</p> <p>A-NPDC</p> <p>A-NPDC</p>	<p>January 2013</p> <p>January 2013</p> <p>March 2013</p> <p>Within 5 years</p>	
<p>B. Improve Infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Ports: Deepen Cape Charles Harbor and Natural Channel <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Request construction authorization and funding for construction through Congressional allocation. ii. Energy – Natural Gas Pipeline <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Facilitate extension of natural gas pipeline from Maryland to peaker plant in New Church first. 2. Extend pipeline further to major employers iii. Broadband <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct study of residential users to determine level of service desired and price point 	<p>Northampton County/Town of Cape Charles</p> <p>Accomack County</p> <p>Same as #1</p> <p>A-NPDC</p>	<p>A-NPDC</p> <p>A-NPDC</p> <p>Same as #1</p> <p>ES Broadband Authority</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Dependent upon pipeline developer</p> <p>March/April 2013</p>	

Project/Task	Responsibility	Support	Timeline	Date Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Advertise RFP for service providers to take advantage of incentives offered by ESVBA 	A-NPDC	Same	2012	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> iv. Railroad <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Begin making improvements over the next six years – includes cross ties, surfacing, lining, and ballasting the track. 2. Explore feasibility of passenger/commuter service for the Shore. 	<p>Bay Coast Railroad</p> <p>A-NPDC</p>	<p>A-NTDC</p> <p>Same</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>July/August 2013</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> v. Wastewater <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Seek funding to construct engineered systems in Cape Charles/Cheriton and Exmore/Nassawadox/Willis Wharf 2. Develop wastewater systems in Accomack County. 	<p>Northampton County</p> <p>Accomack County</p>	<p>A-NPDC</p> <p>A-NPDC</p>	<p>2013</p> <p>As directed</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> C. Support healthcare providers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Organize a conference of all Eastern Shore healthcare providers/caregivers and develop agenda/process that will facilitate 30- 40% reduction in service costs to all. (Reduction need stated by healthcare providers.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support next steps and ongoing efforts. 	A-NPDC	Healthcare/caregiver providers	March 2013	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> D. Agriculture/Aquaculture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Set up a successful and inclusive process for communication between the state, EPA, and the farming/aquaculture community ii. Seek a seat on the state’s Best Management Practices 	<p>A-NPDC</p> <p>FSA/S&W</p>	<p>Ext. Service Counties</p> <p>A-NPDC</p>		

Project/Task	Responsibility	Support	Timeline	Date Completed
<p>Committee.</p> <p>iii. Look for funds to conduct a study of stormwater collection and reuse for agricultural irrigation and industrial purposes.</p> <p>iv. Develop an Eastern Shore Food Policy Council to further the ability to leverage agriculture and aquaculture for economic development.</p>	<p>Conservation ESVA Groundwater Committee</p> <p>A-NPDC</p>	<p>A-NPDC</p> <p>VES Land Trust</p>	<p>October 2013</p>	
2. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT				
<p>A. Create a central place to learn about ALL the educational opportunities on the Eastern Shore</p> <p>B. Look for ways to expand transportation options for people without a personal vehicle to get to ESCC and/or their jobs.</p>	<p>Educators</p> <p>ESCC and employers</p>	<p>A-NPDC</p> <p>A-NPDC Transportation Committee</p>	<p>2013</p> <p>2013</p>	
3. TOURISM				
<p>A. Tourism Commission</p> <p>i. Support TC efforts to promote the region.</p> <p>ii. Communicate suggestions to unify tourism-related businesses in both counties in cooperative marketing ventures to promote the region.</p> <p>iii. Educate community on value of tourism to economic development by providing quantification of benefits.</p> <p>iv. Promote “Health People, Healthy Places” to Tourism Commission because of obvious benefits of implementing recommendations for tourists as well as citizens.</p>	<p>A-NPDC</p> <p>A-NPDC</p> <p>A-NPDC</p> <p>Eastern Shore Healthy Communities Coalition</p>	<p>Counties Tourism Commission</p> <p>Tourism Commission</p> <p>A-NPDC</p>		

Project/Task	Responsibility	Support	Timeline	Date Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> v. Support efforts of Fish & Wildlife Services, NASA, and the Town of Chincoteague to explore adaptive management practices that sustain the resiliency of Assateague, Wallops, Assawoman, and Metompkin Islands by providing assistance as requested. vi. Support development of agri- and eco-tourism through all venues. 	<p>Accomack County</p> <p>Tourism Commission VES Land Trust</p>	<p>A-NPDC</p> <p>A-NPDC</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	
<p>4. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT</p> <p>A. Housing Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Workforce housing for middle income earners is in short supply. Look at changing zoning to allow for guest houses, multi-family units, and other types of development for workforce housing. <p>B. Leadership Initiative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. ESCC is working with the Tayloe-Murphy Center at the University of Virginia to initiate a process that will create community leadership around innovative economic development projects and/or programs—such as starting an “Angel” investment group, competition to develop proposals for new businesses, or starting charter or magnet schools focused on local initiatives. ii. Prepare funding application to Virginia Department of Housing and Community under Building Collaborative Communities program to establish a single economic development entity for the region. 	<p>County Planning Commissions</p> <p>ESCC</p> <p>A-NPDC</p>	<p>A-NPDC</p> <p>A-NPDC</p> <p>Counties</p>	<p>September 2012</p>	<p>September 2012</p>

Project/Task	Responsibility	Support	Timeline	Date Completed
<p>C. Recreational Facilities</p> <p>i. Northampton County Aquatic Center – assist county to identify funding sources for feasibility study.</p> <p>D. Healthcare</p> <p>i. Organize a conference for ALL healthcare providers on the ES to identify issues and find solutions as a first step in helping them reduce costs by 30-40%, as is necessary in the next 3-4 years.</p> <p>ii. Teach children from grade-school on that there are good, family-wage jobs in healthcare if they prepare for them—nurses, pharmacists, therapists – healthcare workers visit schools to talk about needs and how to prepare for these jobs.</p> <p>iii. Promote use of underutilized services such as home health care, oral health, and preventative medicine.</p>	<p>Northampton County</p> <p>A-NPDC</p> <p>Healthcare providers</p> <p>Healthcare providers</p>	<p>A-NPDC</p> <p>Healthcare/caregiver providers Virginia Dept of Health, etc.</p> <p>Educators</p> <p>A-NPDC</p>	<p>March 2013</p>	
<p>5. RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT</p> <p>A. Interview stakeholders (UVA, Virginia Tech, Old Dominion University, Marine Science Consortium, William and Mary, etc) to identify potential synergies and ways to develop greater collaboration for R&D based on natural resources, farming, and aquaculture. Develop report on findings.</p>	<p>A-NPDC</p>	<p>Stakeholders</p>		

Prepared by:
 Barbara Schwenk (bschwenk@a-npdc.org)
 Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission

757-787-2936 x115

Comments from Public

A CEDS “Open House” was held at the Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission on Wednesday, November 7, 2012 from 9:00 a.m. to 7 p.m. to allow the public to review the CEDS document and comment on it.

The open house was advertised in the *Eastern Shore News*, the newspaper of record for our region, on Wednesday, October 27, and Saturday, October 31 2012. The document was also made available at the Clerk of the Court offices of both counties for public review and comment, and on the A-NPDC website at www.a-npdc.org. These locations were also printed in the advertisement. In addition, the open house was advertised on the local radio station on November 2, 5, and 6th.

Public comments were received in the form of emails and by citizens walking into the open house and commenting by putting sticky notes onto the large format copies of the Implementation Plan.

Email comments from the public are pasted in as they were received below (with names removed). Sticky note comments are noted on the Implementation Plan in yellow highlight.

Comment #1

Thank you and the rest of the Accomack-Northampton PDC for developing this 2012 draft and including proposals which would help restore clean water and improve quality of life on the Eastern Shore.

Upgrading septic systems, storm water control projects, and vegetated buffer zones are all wonderful steps in the right direction and can do a lot to help with water quality.

In regards to the WRP, I have a few concerns. I lived right next to the area that will be developed and used to frequently walk my dog along the forest trail and run around with him in the baseball field. When the county decided to build the WRP, they stopped maintaining that land. Since grass and bushes are overgrown and the streetlight near there is out, it has become an area where cars park late at night for hidden rendezvous. I now feel unsafe walking past that area any time after dusk. The county should be maintaining this land until development begins ... as delays are not guaranteed to end any time soon and residents live there now. I am also concerned what the new buildings will do for the water quality in Watts Creek, which runs through those woods. Natural buffers of plants help to keep those waters clean, and construction that would tear down that old growth forest would likely damage that ecosystem

considerably.

For the Chesapeake Bay TMDL and Watershed Implementation Plan, I agree that communication among farmers, the state and the EPA is critical. I also support the suggestion that farmers work with Soil and Water CD to set up that "successful and inclusive process for communication." While not all voluntary BMPs were included in the model, that does not mean that the model is flawed ... merely that it is lacking data. This is why communication between the state, EPA and farmers is so important. If farmers already have these BMPs in place, they need to report what they are doing and be open to have someone come in and look!

The Chesapeake Bay TMDL Blueprint will help, not harm the Eastern Shore's economic activity (p 35). Estuary restoration is a huge commercial investment and creates jobs that stay local (see attached report). Money spent on habitat restoration stays in the local economy because it requires that local workforce.

The Blueprint will also help to protect the Eastern Shore by insuring that communities that live upstream - in MD and PA and all the way up to Cooperstown, NY - are held responsible for cleaning up their own pollution rather than passing it to the Bay and those communities that live downstream.

Comment #2

I wanted to send you a quick email summarizing some of the points that I (and the Land Trust) feel could be included or strengthened within the CEDS 2012. We'd like to see agri-tourism and eco-tourism included in the tourism section of the plan. Both forms of tourism could draw on the wealth of natural resources we have here on the Shore. As I mentioned, there was a Farm Tour Day this past Saturday. This could be a much bigger event with a much larger draw. We'd also like to see the workforce development section consider small-scale and alternative agriculture as potential training programs and future employment for young people (high school and community college). The average age of farmers is 57 in the U.S. Training young farmers and showing them that there is support for them here on the Shore, will continue to bolster our region's identity as an agricultural community. Additionally, as we talked about, we think the formation of a food policy council for the Shore would further our ability to leverage agriculture and aquaculture on the Shore for economic development.

Comment #3

In regard to the Agriculture/Aquaculture section:

I strongly support the points made in parts v., vii. and x, especially where they can support small local farmers and watermen supplying local markets. As has been shown in many studies,

money kept in the local economy in this way has a multiplier effect and spreads money and jobs throughout the community.

All local initiatives, including the formation of a cooperative for sustainable local food, should be endorsed and supported by both counties. Local seafood markets, with accurate labeling and dating of seafood, could keep our prized seafood here and would appeal to all who value healthy food, including tourists. Wachapreague and Chincoteague might be good locations.

Tourism section:

A. Another idea for tourist attraction: stargazing. More and more people are interested in finding places where the sky is dark enough for stargazing. The Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge still is such a location. They have done a great job by staying open all night for the Perseid Meteor showers in August. I don't think this has been promoted as a tourist attraction, however, but it could be. I believe there is potential here for much more to be done. Other places on the Shore still have relatively dark skies too: Kiptopeke State Park, the ES of VA National Wildlife Refuge, the Department of Fish and Game Natural Area Preserves, and the Nature Conservancy lands. I'm sure there are other locations as well that should be identified, kept dark, and advertised to tourists--with educational programs it could be an important draw.

B. I like all the suggestions, especially ii. regarding better signage and branding; branding should be specific regarding which foods being sold are truly local.

Regarding the Chesapeake Bay TMDL and Watershed Implementation Plan (the Clean Water Blueprint)-

It is good to see proposals for restoring clean water on the Projects List. I would like to see the following points added to insure that the Strategy's references to the Blueprint are accurate:

1. Make sure that the Blueprint is accurate "on the ground". To the extent the Model used for the Blueprint in 2010 does not include all voluntary BMPs on the Eastern Shore (p. 33), farmers can help the process by reporting their voluntary BMPs.
2. The Blueprint will help, not harm, Eastern Shore economic activity (p.35). The Chesapeake Bay is vital to the Eastern Shore economy. It's good for tourism, and supply's habitat for 75% of our nation's commercial fish catch and 80-90% of the recreational fish catch. It's restoration can create jobs; money spent on Bay restoration stays in the local economy.
3. The Blueprint will protect the Eastern Shore by helping to ensure that all communities- including those upstream, clean up their own pollution instead of passing it down to the Shore.

Comment #4

It's obvious that a lot of people have had a hand in the plan, as it has many different ideas, in fact it probably has too many ideas and not enough focus. To be an actionable plan, it really needs to get slimmed down and be prioritized. The ideas are so numerous that some actually conflict with each other. When prioritizing the actions, each proposal should be backed up / accompanied with a business case demonstrating its cost / payback.

Documenting the objectives of the plan up front should help set the criteria for prioritizing the ideas. You need to ask what is the objective of the plan: to provide a better work force for the

industry that is here, to provide more jobs for the people who live here, to provide better jobs, or create jobs to attract new people? Clearly stating the objective will help narrow down the ideas. For example, on page 39, the implementation plan calls for “NASA or other entities to provide a car for workers to use to get home if they carpool.” Proposals like this really don’t have an impact on the economy of the area, and are a distraction in terms of too many ideas. There are a number of similar proposals that should be eliminated to give more focus. It is also very important that if the county supervisors do not support the objectives, the plan will never get implemented. Any strategic plan that does not have buy-in to the objectives will never go forward. Getting buy-in to your objectives is probably the most difficult task you have to tackle.

One thing that came out in many different ways and places was the need for better education and skill sets for local people looking for jobs. It sounds like there are jobs, but not enough qualified people to fill them. Tackling this problem should probably be the number one priority. This is in large part due to the lack of school funding and the resultant quality of the local schools. This has a larger impact that was also hinted at in several places, one being page 37/38 that states it is difficult to recruit people to come to this area due to services, shopping, and *schools*. It further states that NASA people choose to live in Maryland because of better schools even though there are higher taxes. People are willing to pay more taxes for better schools, so maybe we should do a better job of funding our schools. If you can’t get good people to move here on account of the schools, businesses pick up on this and won’t come here either. Something needs to be done about the school system. People need to be convinced the higher school taxes have a payback.

Employment in this area has traditionally focused mostly on the agricultural / seafood industry. This has been positive in that we have a lot of open land, but these industries do not provide good paying jobs. In fact, few people other than migrants will take the jobs they offer. None of the proposals for these industries seemed to come up with ways to improve the jobs being offered in this industry, so their impact on jobs is somewhat marginal and probably not a priority. We can do all we want to develop farming, but if it is good jobs we want, this isn’t going to provide the answer.

To set priorities, business cases or cost benefit analyses need to be done. For example, on page 13, it talks about funding for a taxiway to be built at taxpayer expense to a hanger to be built by BaySys. If I recollect correctly, this project had a payback period of 21 years. This is a ludicrous undertaking if that is what the payback period is, and that has proven out by the fact the BaySys is now on the verge of bankruptcy. If this is the case, the proposal doesn’t have a valid business case the proposal should be dropped.

Another idea that was put forward is the development of the railroad. What is the payback to the taxpayers for spending money on this private business? It will never become a commuter line, our population is too small. What is the cost/benefit of this project, what is the reality of it ever coming to fruition? People want the independence that automotive transportation brings. Projects like this that are not supported by a business case should not be included.

The plan really needs to focus on our assets. The plan stated right up front that our location is a big advantage, supporting eco-tourism, but the analysis of the problems needs a little more insight. The plan calls for cleaning up the roads. While this is needed, there are other bigger problems... if we want to attract more people we need to make it easier to get here. The \$24 bridge toll is a big deterrent to get people from the Hampton Roads area or many other areas to come here. The bridge is a costly bottleneck. We need another set of tunnels to more safely accommodate more traffic and we need a more tourist friendly toll scheme. Traveling here is also restricted by Route 13, *the most dangerous road in Virginia*. It is hindered by numerous cross roads, many stop lights, and some well-known speed traps that are used to generate income from out of state drivers. If we are promoting tourism, we also need to think about ourselves, as we work to attract more tourist traffic. Route 13 is the only backbone route on the peninsula, when it is backed up, we all have a hard time. (Just speak to the people in Smyrna Delaware if you want to find out the problems the locals had on Route 13 until Route 1 was completed.) We need to look at a safer limited access highway to facilitate through traffic so locals can get around and tourists can get here conveniently. We need Route 1 extended as a limited access highway parallel to Route 13.

If we want eco-tourism, we need to look at our attractions. We have a lot of beautiful beaches but no public access to them. We have some beautiful wildlife preserves, but they are poorly advertised, have limited directional signage, and some have very limited parking. We need to expand kayak launching sites and boat launching sites. We need to expand marinas with both slips and moorings and provide better facilities for visiting boaters (pump out facilities, shower facilities, laundry facilities, etc.).

We need to give better information to attract people to watch NASA launches. We need to better advertise all our attractions.

And if we want more eco-tourism, we need to take more care of our assets. We need to support the efforts to reduce Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL) so we can have a healthier bay. The plan smears the TMDL as “a model that is flawed at best”. This is an emotional issue, where is the proof that it is flawed, the model is probably the best there is, but people have to do their homework to feed it better data. This is a popular sentiment made by the people who are contributing most to a pollution problem that they would just as soon ignore. The truth is that for more eco-tourism, we need a clean bay.

Along the same lines, we get a lot of tourism for fishing, but the fishing business – is hurting due to over fishing menhaden. If we want more fishing tourism, we need to be more environmentally friendly supporting menhaden restrictions and pushing for less pollution of the bay.

The plan has also ignored a big gorilla in the room, off shore drilling. While it’s not here yet, where do we stand with off shore drilling? If we are basing our plan on eco-tourism, we need to think about the risk of becoming another victim like the Gulf as a result of Deep Water Horizon oil blowout.

As you noted, the one big advantage we have is our unique location and our pristine environment. Our location is extremely fragile and if we want to preserve it, we need to take a proactive position on environmental concerns.

Comment #5

We need value added on an industrial scale so that our crops can be processed here locally.

We should add state and federal programs.

We need to add at the end of the sentence "volunteer practices".

Would like to add that we need to teach at the elementary school level where food comes from and the importance of agriculture. (Similar to Ag in the Classroom administered by VA Farm Bureau).

Add that we need to educate the public and our county leaders the value.

"Vegetative buffers need to be enforced". I feel these comments are more appropriate in the Ag section than in the aquaculture section.

Any agricultural BMP programs should be addressed in the Ag section.

Most importantly, I strongly disagree with the Chesapeake Bay Foundation email that is circulating about the TMDL model. They are aware that volunteer participation is not being accounted for in the model. Only acres that receive cost share, which is a very small percentage. I will use my farming acreage as an example on Friday if necessary.

Comment #6

First, regarding the statements in the farming section regarding EPA TMDL's: I am not surprised that our farming community discounts the studies and recommendations of the EPA regarding TMDL's, as that industry is a leading source of the pollution that is degrading the Chesapeake Bay. The science behind that program is not flawed and is widely recognized by experts and laymen alike as true studies evaluating the problems affecting the Bay. On the DelMarVA, nearly all of the soybeans, wheat and corn grown here are used as animal feed for the chicken industry, one of the worst industries polluting the Bay. Further, the use of fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides to support the growth of those crops is far more cumulative than what would be used on crops grown for direct human consumption. These chemicals end up in the Bay. For our plan to state that the TMDL program of the EPA is flawed and to discount the same is a blatant and outright claim that cannot be supported and only sustains the harmful industrial effects to our most precious resource, the Chesapeake Bay. I insist that the language be dropped or significantly altered in the plan to reflect support for the TMDL program of the

EPA.

Second, regarding the Tourism portion of the Plan, there is absolutely no mention of an effort to attract the Tall Ships industry to our shores. This year Northampton County and Cape Charles devoted \$60,000 of public funding, and the private sector contributed another \$15,000 towards our first concerted effort at attracting that industry. Around the world, communities that are able to accommodate tall ships have recognized the incredible economic gains realized in education, tourism and infrastructure that effort can bring. It is well demonstrated. In fact, Northampton continues to support this effort in this new year's budget. At least some mention of this focus should be mentioned in your plan.

Comment #7

The out-of-hand dismissal of the Chesapeake Bay TMDL model is premature. The ESVA development plan must articulate explicitly how the Chesapeake Bay TMDL is either: A) incomplete, or B) inaccurate. Before the ESVA development plan perpetuates the very error of which it is criticizing the Chesapeake Bay TMDL, it must identify specifically what numbers are incorrect **and** supply the correct numbers. To say data is incomplete is like saying corn isn't ripe yet -- we cannot ignore it nor can we dismiss it; we must nurture it as we would any growing movement. If the hardworking farmers of the Eastern Shore have not been given due credit, we should outdo one another in good. If we listen to them, they will listen to us; if we ignore them, they will ignore us. We do not have to swallow anything whole-cloth, but we should at least chew on it.

The Blueprint will help -- not harm -- the economy on the Shore. Estuary restoration can create 30 jobs for every million dollars invested; this is twice as many as gas and oil exploration and road development *combined*.

If the Eastern Shore has indeed remained below the N and K levels, include comprehensive voluntary BMP data in your development plan *alongside* the Chesapeake Bay TMDLs. If the voluntary BMP data is *not* included, then the assertion that local workers have in fact done their part is not represented enough. Show their hard work in detail! If the laborers on the Shore are indeed making sincere efforts to conserve resources on the peninsula -- and I know countless farmers who are -- then the inclusion of the voluntary BMPs *alongside* the Chesapeake Bay TMDLs will only increase the profile of these conscientious farmers.

We think that it is extremely important to improve communication between the State, the EPA, and farmers. We support the effort of farmers to work with the Soil and Water Conservation District to "set up a successful and inclusive process for communication between the state, EPA, and the farming community" (page 33).

The voluntary efforts of the farmers on the Eastern Shore were not given nearly enough credit. Expose the good work of these workers with cold, hard data! As it stands, the voluntary efforts of these farmers is not exposed any better in the ESVA development plan than they are in the Chesapeake Bay TMDLs.

Ignoring the TMDLs because the Eastern Shore wasn't included will appear petulant and will lead neither the EPA nor the Commonwealth to include local producers in further conversations. The decision to include the TMDLs in the ESVA development plan must be pragmatic, not dogmatic. Belittling the TMDLs will not bring honor to the voluntary BMPs of farmers on the Shore. Farmers can help complete the Bay TMDL by reporting their BMPs.

Please include the TMDLs *and* include complete data on voluntary BMPs.

Comment #8

1. Firstly, I applaud Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission for developing the draft 2012 Eastern Shore Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy and for including on the Projects List proposals which should help restore clean water and improve the quality of life on the Eastern Shore:
 - Upgrading septic systems to modern waste water treatment facilities for the Town of Chincoteague and other areas;
 - Agricultural storm water control projects for Northampton County;
 - Protecting water quality by enforcing vegetative buffers and enacting zoning that protects water quality
2. I appreciate Focus Group members' comments on the Chesapeake Bay TMDL and Watershed Implementation Plan (the Clean Water Blueprint) And
 - agree that better communication among farmers, the state and the EPA concerning the Blueprint is critical and strongly support the suggestion that farmers work with the Soil and Water Conservation District to "set up a successful and inclusive process for communication between the state, EPA and the farming community."
 - In connection with the Focus Group question on use of oysters to remove nitrogen, we note that the Blueprint mentions the possibility of using oysters to help reduce nutrient pollution pursuant to an approved state nutrient trading program.
3. To ensure that the Strategy's references to the Blueprint are accurate, the Strategy should also include the following points:
 - State and federal government representatives are working right now to ensure that the Blueprint is accurate "on the ground," and they have committed to making adjustments and corrections as necessary every two years. To the extent the Model used for the Blueprint in 2010 does not include all voluntary BMPs on the Eastern Shore, farmers can help the process by reporting their voluntary BMPs
 - The Blueprint will help, not harm Eastern Shore economic activity. The Chesapeake Bay is vital to the Eastern Shore and national economies. As described in the attached reports, estuaries like the Chesapeake Bay supply habitat for over 75% of our nation's

commercial fish catch and 80-90% of the recreational fish catch. Estuary restoration can create more than 30 jobs for each million dollars invested. That's twice as many jobs as the oil and gas exploration and road construction combined. And estuary restoration jobs are local – they requires on the ground machinery and local workforce. Money spent on habitat restoration stays in the local economy. Find out more from the attached reports.

- The Blueprint will protect the Eastern Shore by helping to ensure that all communities – including upstream and out-of-state localities like the Susquehanna Valley – clean up their own pollution and do not simply pass it on to the Bay and then to the Eastern Shore.

APPENDIX A
Focus Group Questions

Focus Groups – Spring 2012

Nine focus group meetings were held between March and May 2012. More than 200 business leaders were invited to participate in their specific industry group. Each group was asked the same questions. The nine groups were:

1. Agriculture/Nursery stock/Vegetable growers/Farmers markets
2. Aquaculture/Fisheries/Seafood Markets
3. Federal government entities and contractors
4. Hospitality/Tourism/Retail businesses
5. Manufacturers
6. Healthcare providers
7. Educators
8. Service providers of all kinds
9. Real estate – residential and commercial

Following are the Issues/Challenges:/Challenges and projects identified by each group.

Focus Group questions asked of each group:

1. How is your business or industry doing compared to four years ago (2007-2008)? (please score between 0 -10, with 0 being the worst and 10 being the best)
2. What challenges does your business/industry face in expanding its market?
 - a. Competition
 - b. Lack of capital
 - c. Labor issues (what are they?)
 - d. All of the above.
 - e. Other challenges – please list.
3. How are you addressing growth opportunities? Do they exist now?
4. What resources or tools would be helpful in expanding your business/industry? Circle all that apply.
 - a. Easier access to capital
 - b. A better workforce
 - c. Zoning changes
 - d. Cheaper access to high-speed broadband
 - e. Others?
5. What do you feel are the essential building blocks of a healthy economy? Which of these do we have, and which are missing?
6. What are the Eastern Shore’s economic strengths?
7. What are the Eastern Shore’s economic weaknesses? What remedies can you suggest to reduce/eliminate weaknesses?
8. What are the impediments to economic development on the Eastern Shore?
9. What are the Eastern Shore’s greatest economic development opportunities, or how could the Eastern Shore better use its assets to stimulate economic growth?
10. What collaborative initiatives can you imagine that would enhance economic gains in the county/region? Do you have examples of such?

Name _____

Contact info: _____

Would you like to receive the final document? _____

APPENDIX B
Notes from Focus Groups

Agriculture

Agriculture is a largest industry on the Eastern Shore of Virginia with a value \$243 million (2007 Census of Agriculture).

Accomack County has 93,764 acres in farms, with 76,576 acres of cropland that produced a market value of \$153,040,000 in agricultural products. It is the #1 producer of soybeans and corn, the #2 producer of wheat and vegetables, the #3 producer of aquaculture, and the #4 producer of poultry in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Accomack County ranks 3rd in the state for total value of agricultural products sold, but it ranks #2 if nursery crops are included.

Northampton County has 63,760 acres in farms with 58,230 acres of total cropland that produced a market value of \$90,969,000 in agricultural products. It is the #1 grower of snap beans, wheat, aquaculture, and vegetables, the #2 grower of soybeans (after Accomack County), and #7 in corn in the Commonwealth. Northampton County ranks 6th in the state for total value of agricultural products sold, but ranks #1 if nursery crops are included.

Issues/Challenges:

1. Cost of inputs
 - a. Nitrogen costs three times what it did just a year ago.
 - b. Potash has gone up 400% from \$150/ton to \$650/ton
 - c. Bean and corn seed have doubled in price in five years.
 - d. Soybean seed has doubled in last 10 years
 - e. Land rent has doubled as well.
 - f. Ammonium nitrate very expensive for our area because of lack of natural gas.
 - g. High cost of diesel fuel has cut into profits.
2. State and federal programs often have conflicting regulations – i.e. cost share program – some farmers won't participate because of not being able to put N onto the fields until after March 1 – too late by then. Most regulations seemed to be geared towards farming in western Virginia, not here. No one from the Eastern Shore sits on the State's Best Management Practices (BMP) Committee.
3. Water is a huge issue – we are not capturing the water needed for agriculture. Ponds don't refill quickly enough because they are on Bojac soil that drains quickly. Standing water is also an issue – the drains have not been maintained for years.
4. Chesapeake Bay TMDL – data is not accurate, or at best is incomplete. This issue shows that EPA and the State need to do a better job of communicating with farmers. We were never consulted

about how or what was sampled. There was no communication at all. It appears that no credit was given for volunteer practices.

5. Labor Issues/Challenges:/Challenges – the best workers are the ones we train ourselves. Also, the immigration mess is a huge issue. Undocumented workers should be provided a path to citizenship. Most US citizens don't want to work at low paying and very hard agricultural jobs anyway, so undocumented workers aren't taking jobs from them. Young people leave the area to find work, but there are ag jobs here. They just need to be trained to do them.

Projects/Opportunities:

1. Conduct a survey of farmers to establish return on investment. Compare input costs to price increases for crops.
2. Find out how we might get an Eastern Shore farmer onto the State's BMP Committee.
3. Conduct a drainage study for Northampton County with focus on how to capture more stormwater for irrigation without harming the aquaculture industry, which needs **clean** water to flow into the creeks.
4. Chesapeake Bay TMDL – model is flawed at best.
 - a. Challenge the process and methods of sampling.
 - b. Voluntary BMPs were not considered – the regulations were based on speculation. Farmers on the Eastern Shore have kept below thresholds for N and K for years, but this was not credited.
 - c. Work with the Soil and Water Conservation District and the Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission to set up successful and inclusive process for communication between the state, EPA, and the farming community.
5. Labor – train local young people to work in ag – expand school curriculums to include skills needed such as fixing equipment (mechanical skills), and business management and finance, which is essential to successful farming today. In addition, elementary school level classes should teach children where food comes from and how important agriculture is for a stable society.
6. Innovation – look for additional crops/methods to diversify the agricultural economy such as organic, Community Supported Ag (CSA), niche markets (Kosher), value-added products, etc.
7. Promote agriculture –
 - a. Educate public and county leaders to value
 - b. Conduct events to promote – maybe promote one crop at a time.
 - c. Organize an Eastern Shore Regional Fair.

- d. Explore how to involve 4-H more closely.
- e. Support farm businesses with marketing, signage, partnerships.

Aquaculture

Aquaculture of clams and oysters is a \$40+ million business on the Eastern Shore of Virginia. This includes raising and selling more than one **billion** clams per year.

Issues/Challenges:

1. Environmental
 - a. Chesapeake Bay TMDL viewed as flawed model and will negatively impact our industry.
 - b. Sheet flow off farm fields kills clams and oysters in the creeks – vegetative buffers need to be enforced. This comment could also apply to the agriculture section.
 - c. Wastewater contamination is a threat, especially on the bayside, and in the Exmore/Willis Wharf/Belle Haven area due to septic tank contamination. However, the two counties do not seem to have the ability to work together to solve wastewater Issues/Challenges:/Challenges at all, which may in future endanger this major seed growing area.
 - d. Some farmers plow right up the saltbush line or to the edges of ditches – heavy rains wash soil and chemicals into the water. This comment applies to the agriculture section as well.
 - e. Clam growing can't be expanded because the market is mature and planting capacity is already reached. There is no more acreage available at this time for clam production on the bayside, and there is a 90% mortality rate north of Nassawadox Creek. Submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV) has taken some areas out of production, and the Baylor Grounds (public shellfish harvesting areas) take more out of production. But oyster production has increased by 10 fold over the past four years which are more tolerant of differing salinity levels.
 - f. Sea level rise and climate change are already affecting the barrier islands and channels – they are moving rapidly. This will impact the industry by changing water depths and growing areas.
2. Zoning
 - a. Counties need to zone to support the industry. Agriculture is supported with zoning, but not aquaculture, which is really another form of agriculture according to tax laws.
3. Landowner view-share
 - a. Conflicts between landowners and watermen related to marking growing zones and tending cages.
4. Public education needed about how important the industry is to the economy of the Eastern Shore and how necessary it is to keep the water pristine for aquaculture.

Projects/Opportunities:

1. Chesapeake Bay TMDL
 - a. Research nitrogen loading – compare TMDL numbers to Best Management Practices records and also Department of Conservation and Recreation watershed management plans.
 - b. Find out if the N removed by oysters and clams was factored into the model. If it wasn't see if it can be considered now.
2. Look for a way to have a bathymetric survey done on the seaside and mark channels accurately.
3. Enforce vegetative buffer installation and maintenance. This can be addressed in agricultural BMP programs in the agriculture section.
4. Landowner View-Share – apprise Virginia Shellfish Growers Association of problems and ask that it address this issue.
5. Public Education/Promotion of the Industry – this industry is hard to see.
 - a. Advertise benefit of aquaculture to the local economy; i.e. a pallet of clams is \$4-5 thousand.
 - b. Explain need to protect water quality. Promote our region's unique ability to control upland runoff into **ANY** water body. Almost no other community has this advantage. It means we can protect the seaside by enforcing vegetative buffers and enacting zoning to protect water quality.
 - c. Research statistics for number of jobs and average incomes in the industry and value to counties in revenue.

Government and Contractors

NASA contractors were the only attendees at this focus group. Therefore, the Issues/Challenges:/Challenges expressed do not necessarily include those of the Department of Defense or NASA itself. The views of those agencies will be sought through interviews and added to this document as an addendum.

Issues/Challenges:

1. Funding reductions for facilities and infrastructure have resulted in delayed maintenance being seen on roads, buildings, sidewalks, etc. Runway maintenance would be an issue if BaySys was not paying rent to use it, which helps defray costs. But the Wallops Flight Facility (WFF) is getting more funding for the rocket programs.
2. Competition from other NASA facilities can be intense, as with the phase-out of the Shuttle program at Cape Canaveral and the loss of more than 8,000 jobs there. NASA may need to move some operations there as a result. There are many trained people available there.
3. NASA press releases don't always identify the location of a program, so WFF is not identified as the site of the work and progress.
4. The public and particularly the politicians need to know the value of NASA/WFF and other government agencies to the economy of the region. This is not publicized enough.
5. Growth opportunities. NASA's commercialization initiative is huge now:
 - a. Re-supply of the International Space Station
 - b. Minotaur rocket launches
 - c. Antares rockets
 - d. Sounding rockets
 - e. Not having the Wallops Research Park developed has resulted in some contractors setting up operations in Pocomoke, Princess Anne, and Salisbury.
6. Workforce:
 - a. Difficult to recruit people to come to this area, and often, if they do take a job, they don't stay long because their families don't like it – too rural for many people, not enough services or shopping.
 - b. Schools are viewed as inferior to Maryland schools so many people live in Maryland instead of Virginia, even though the taxes are higher.

- c. An intern program through the colleges does work, but not enough people qualify. Local people need to be trained better in drafting, calculus, and aircraft mechanics. Worcester County (MD) supplies people with the best training.
 - d. Another issue is that often we do find qualified people, but, if we have no current openings, they move on to other jobs, and we can't get them back later.
 - e. Many WFF employees have 40-45 mile commutes, and there is little to no carpooling probably because people need a car to drop small children off at daycare or leave immediately in the event that a child is sick in daycare.
7. Wireless service at the WFF base is abysmal. Verizon wireless signal doesn't penetrate the buildings on base, and high-speed service is also needed at people's homes as many work at home as well. There is also opportunity for other service providers, as high-speed fiber optic cable is there through Eastern Shore of Virginia Broadband Authority.
 8. Loss of HUBZone designation has hurt the region and ability of local contractors to get government contracts. If it hasn't been already, the Foreign Trade Zone designation should also be activated somewhere in the Wallops Research Park.
 9. Energy – natural gas would be more economical. Also, there are problems with electricity. Interad (in Accomack Airport Industrial Park) experiences outages of one leg of its three-phase system. They have generator, but it can't make up the difference. They need to shut down when this happens and start up again after power is restored. Power is unreliable on Assateague Island at the 60 foot radio frequency tower as well. (Note: According to ANEC, the problem at Assateague has been corrected since this focus group met).

Projects/Opportunities:

1. Education/Promotion – Publicize value of NASA WFF and other entities to the regional economy.
 - a. Look up study done by University of Maryland Salisbury.
 - b. Ask hoteliers what percentage of their business comes from NASA WFF
 - c. Look for ways that the Eastern Shore Defense Alliance could help with promotion
 - d. Need to develop our story to explain the uniqueness of the facility
 - e. Perhaps a centralized event planning entity could be identified to promote WFF and the Wallops Research Park.
2. Workforce

- a. Discuss need for better training with public school systems and Eastern Shore Community College. Research why Worcester County Maryland schools produce better candidates than Virginia schools do. What makes the difference?
 - b. Could NASA or other entities provide a car for workers to use to get home if they carpool? That way they could leave when necessary and still carpool.
 - c. A daycare center at the Wallops Research Park could resolve various Issues/Challenges:/Challenges with childcare for WFF employees and others in the area.
3. Wallops Research Park –opportunities slip by the longer Accomack County waits to build this out.
 - a. Accomack County should move aggressively to construct infrastructure and roads. Without WRP buildout, NASA may be forced to move work to Florida that could be done here.
 - b. A continuing education module for graduate studies would be heavily used by WFF employees. Look for opportunities to build a large offering of graduate level studies from diverse sources.
4. Broadband – needs further deployment especially for wireless service. Accomack County, the Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission, and the Eastern Shore of Virginia Broadband Authority should be actively marketing to service providers.
5. Federal incentive programs
 - a. HUBZone designation needs to be reinstated if at all possible.
 - b. Foreign Trade Zone status should be activated in Wallops Research Park if it hasn't been already.
6. Energy
 - a. Continue to support Chesapeake Utilities efforts to extend a natural gas pipeline into Accomack County.
 - b. Work with A&N Electric Cooperative to resolve any power problems.

Tourism/Hospitality/Retail

Only one person from the hospitality sector attended this focus group meeting. Additional research is underway to augment the list of Issues/Challenges:/Challenges and Projects/Opportunities to address them.

Issues/Challenges:

1. Route 13 carries thousands of automobiles, but most of it is through traffic that stays on the highway. The goal is to get people to drive into the towns not located on the highway and to explore our region. We need to do a better job of advertising what is available here. The new Visitor Center at the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel, staffed by enthusiastic volunteers, has made an impact already.
2. We lack tourism infrastructure, especially in lower Northampton County. We do have B&Bs in Cape Charles, but no other options for quality rooms or large numbers of lodgers. The Bay Creek development plans had originally included a conference center, but that has not yet come to fruition.
3. Labor Issues/Challenges:/Challenges – B&Bs and other businesses need quality handyman services. These are difficult to find in lower Northampton County.

Projects/Opportunities:

1. We need additional venues to get people off Route 13 and into our countryside by making our region a tourist destination:
 - a. Historic trails development – such as the old Stagecoach Route with period costumes.
 - b. An exhibit in Cape Charles about the meteor that hit the Bay. An interpretive center would draw people in.
 - c. The Historical Markers program could be expanded. It needs a “home” on the Shore – an agency to coordinate applications for new markers, maintain the old ones, and provide a list and map of all of them.
2. Capital – a venture capital fund for the Eastern Shore would be beneficial for entrepreneurs and for development of tourist infrastructure.
3. Route 13 signage and landscape improvements
 - a. Planting locally-grown crops such as cotton and sunflowers in the median or alongside the highway would show pride in our area – especially now that mowing has been drastically reduced, and the highway looks shaggy for much of the year. This has been done successfully in North Carolina.
 - b. Improve signage along Route 13 to direct travelers to venues and towns.

Manufacturers

Issues/Challenges:

1. Struggled over past couple of years as inputs have doubled in price, and markets are saturated. We are up millions of dollars in cost (chicken producer).
2. Too much protein on the market now – including beef, pork, all fresh meats.
3. Nexus taxation Issues/Challenges in states such as New Jersey, Michigan, and Washington.
4. Sluggish economy.
5. FDA label regulations that continually change.
6. Education, dollars, and access regarding social media marketing expertise and opportunities.
7. Growth opportunities
 - a. Value-added products that will increase margins with pre-seasoned products that are convenient for consumers to cook
 - b. Adding new products to kitchenware line
 - c. Looking for new opportunities through social media, blogging, etc.
8. Workforce
 - a. The newest graduates out of Eastern Shore of Virginia schools don't have adequate math skills or business and accounting training, but they are computer literate. Adequately skilled workers come from schools like Del Tech and Sussex Tech in Delaware.
 - b. Many Hispanic workers apply to us, but most are ineligible for hire because they can't supply documents.
 - c. We've actually had people come to interviews barefoot!
 - d. A large percentage of our employees are getting ready to retire, and we are concerned that we won't be able to replace them with adequately skilled younger people. We have a new HR recruiter working with the Eastern Shore Community College to perhaps put a training program in place that will include the skills we need for new hires.
 - e. Drugs are still a huge issue in our workforce. Years ago the problems were caused by marijuana, cocaine and alcohol. Now, prescription drugs such as Oxycontin (oxycodone) and Vicodin make workers fail drug tests. These are addictive drugs, but people tend to think that if a doctor prescribed the drug, it's OK to use it

indiscriminately. If they can't be gotten from a doctor, people are buying them off the street, and they can be very expensive. We've seen an upsurge in heroin use, as people are addicted to prescription drugs, can't afford them, and find that heroin is cheaper.

9. Public confidence in government is low – political polarization is hurting the Eastern Shore as well as the nation. Our politicians need to learn how to work together for the greater good.
10. Environmental
 - a. Environmental constraints are costly on the Eastern Shore. The sole source aquifer and the permeability of the soils create problems not encountered in other areas.
11. Tourism could be expanded, but:
 - a. Trashy roadsides and lack of concern about litter and rundown buildings along the highway hurt our image.
 - b. Tourism infrastructure and development of venues to showcase our unique assets are not being adequately pursued.
 - c. There is a lack of understanding about tourism's potential for economic development in our region.

Projects/Opportunities:

1. Education – we need better training programs to prepare people for the many jobs that are available.
2. Energy – the cost of energy goes up every year. We need to find a way to cut costs such as substituting natural gas for the fuels we now use.
3. Public transit could contribute to the prosperity of the Eastern Shore if it synchronized its routes to our shifts (chicken producer). Many people miss work because of unreliable vehicles, or they don't own a personal vehicle and must rely on others for transportation.
4. Tourism:
 - a. Unify tourism-related businesses in cooperative marketing ventures to promote the Eastern Shore.
 - b. Get the roads cleaned up. Teach a "Beautification 101" class to kids in school and take them out to clean up roads. Maybe they would then teach their parents not to litter.

Healthcare Providers

Issues/Challenges:

1. There have been dramatic changes in our industry in the past five years. We need to figure out how to reduce the cost of care by 30-40 percent within a timeframe of 3-4 years. To do this, we'll need to have in place seamless integration between all healthcare providers.
2. To maintain a functioning hospital, a minimum of 50,000 people must live in the area. We barely have that here, and the 2010 Census indicated that we actually lost population. However, we aren't sure that is accurate.
3. One patient/one record – problems with a single record involve maintenance, responsibility and medical/legal liability for accuracy and privacy. Getting reports between agencies and specialists is unreliable. In Virginia, the ownership of the record belongs with the healthcare provider. The “Connect Virginia” goal of one patient record is still in the future, but it could be a powerful tool for integrating healthcare between providers.
4. Workforce
 - i. Shortage of LPNs, RNs, pharmacists, and all therapists – physical, respiratory, rehab, and speech on the Eastern Shore.
 - ii. Need training programs accessible to people who live here.
 - iii. Recruiting is difficult because of housing shortages and the rural nature of our region (lack of services and shopping).
 - iv. Lack of jobs with health insurance. There are many uninsured people on the Shore. Eastern Shore Rural Health System has seen a 1,900 increase in uninsured patients in the ten-month period between June 1, 2011 and March 2012. This will create an internal problem for the agency, as they are already at 125% of grant funds.
 - v. The hospital experienced higher losses from people who have health insurance but have high deductibles that they can't now pay. This is not unique to the Eastern Shore, but the economics here have thinner margins.
 - vi. Schools are not producing adequately skilled young people, and they aren't teaching kids early enough to prepare for a career. There ARE jobs in our region, and kids should be taught to prepare for them.

Projects/Opportunities:

1. Plan a meeting of all healthcare providers – a symposium or forum where all providers' problems can be identified and solutions sought as a first step in reducing the cost of healthcare
2. Prepare a message for our supervisors to influence them to think regionally, not by county. Leave politics out of the provision of healthcare.
3. Market availability and promote underutilized services such as home health care, oral health, preventative medicine.
4. Address weight/exercise/nutrition issues by getting involved with the Eastern Shore Healthy Communities Coalition (Danny Vestal, YMCA, and Patti Kiger, Eastern Virginia Medical School).
5. Healthcare agencies could collaborate in purchasing supplies and services to reduce costs.
6. Use whatever influence is available to change the criteria for federal funding eligibility to the poverty index instead of median or personal income.
7. Facilitate a Farm to School program to get healthy, locally-grown food into our schools and out into the community.
8. Teach children from grade school on to prepare for a career. Healthcare professionals could visit schools to talk about this. Let school-age kids know that there are many needs in the healthcare industry that they could fill with proper training—nurses, pharmacists, therapists, etc. will be needed here in future, and they are all family-wage jobs.
9. Create a dialogue with those who develop housing to talk about the needs of healthcare providers in our region.

Educators

Issues/Challenges:

1. Unfunded Federal and State mandates coupled with decreases in funding from all quarters have reduced budgets substantially.
2. Field trips for Northampton County high school have been discontinued due to transportation issues and the time needed for SOL training and testing.
3. Higher education venues have had difficulty engaging local high school teachers.
4. Virginia Institute of Marine Science did not have its annual research trip to Wales as not enough students had the funds.
5. In an economic downturn, enrollment is usually up as people realize they need to get better educated to compete in the job market. Also, more people are taking advantage of the GI benefits.
6. Special programs have been dropped, and graduate programs have gotten more competitive, as there are more applicants.
7. Labor issues: Northampton County Public Schools (NCPS) has low pay for teachers coupled with years of no pay raises. Also lack support staff in revising curriculum.
8. NCPS is facing level-to-decreasing enrollments which will reduce its state funding further.
9. Physical plants need updating at Northampton High School and at Eastern Shore Community College. Both are now showing symptoms of deferred maintenance.
10. Funding is needed for Pre-K programs as well as technical and career programs so that the schools can offer two tracks at high school – career/technical and college-bound.
11. Lack of affordable housing (apartments, townhouses, condos, etc.) especially for entry level jobs. New teachers have the most difficulty in finding affordable housing.

Projects/Opportunities:

1. Need an economic development authority with fulltime paid staff to bring jobs to the Eastern Shore.
2. Promote mentoring of school children and figure out a way to get adults/parents more involved and supportive of the school systems.
3. Support full funding of the school divisions' budgets.
4. Lobby for increased Federal and State funding and less unfunded mandates.
5. Create a central place to learn about all the educational opportunities on the Shore – Brochure? Catalog? Could include giving opportunities as well. “How you can help” and volunteer opportunities.
6. Look for applications for math skills to show students how they can use the math they learn in a practical way; i.e. titration or look for data that multiple groups collect and standardize it and put in on the Web as a teaching tool.
7. Develop business partnerships with the school division to create co-op opportunities for students to expose them to various industries on the Shore. This will educate student in job opportunities on the Shore and lead them to gaining employment and stimulating the economy.
8. Support local education foundations, e.g. the Northampton County Education Foundation. These foundations offer support (financially and physically) to teachers through grants, students through scholarships, and the total community through day-long events that focus on health issues and healthy lifestyles.

Service Providers

Issues/Challenges:

1. There has been a downturn in business in the last two years.
2. Labor issues: not many motivated or qualified people for the IT industry on the Shore – i.e. Eastern Shore Community College had only 3 IT graduates out of 140 this year.
3. For Telecommunications companies such as broadband, right of way issues for towers, wire, road and railroad crossings are expensive and time-consuming to obtain. Also, permitting/regulations are a mess and are a definite barrier to growth at all levels.
4. Zoning for towers is difficult to work with in both counties. Rules are different between the counties as well. In Accomack County, if the tower is under 150 feet, it is easy to get a permit. In Northampton County, anything over 35 feet is a problem. How/why are these heights chosen? FAA rules cite 20 feet above surrounding obstructions.
5. There were complaints about Eastern Shore of Virginia Broadband Authority's pricing structure, which is perceived to compete with service providers by creating thin margins for them by lowering the IP price but not the transport price.
6. RFPs for service providers to compete for business have not been advertised – only trials have happened so far. Someone needs to take over this function to make it fair.
7. The two counties' inability to work together and to actually compete with one another is a lose/lose situation. It seems that if one county gets a good thing, the other one feels like it was robbed. Turf battles cost all of us – no matter what county you live in.
8. Town taxes can contribute to loss of business as well – i.e. Hinckley Yachts in Cape Charles – the double taxation there ultimately kept them in Oxford, Maryland.

Projects/Opportunities:

1. Conduct a residential survey for existing connections, speed, and pricing, and desired speed and acceptable pricing. This will help broadband service providers determine what level of debt they can handle for the level of service required.
2. Reduce or eliminate the Chesapeake Bay Bridge & Tunnel toll. Our location between Virginia Beach and points north might become more fully utilized with a lower or no toll.
3. Education/promotion of the uses and benefits of true high-speed broadband.

4. Try to get the two counties to see the benefits of REGIONAL economic development—that we all win when progress is made.
5. Research how each county chose heights for permitted telecommunications towers.

Real Estate

Issues/Challenges:

1. Our industry was worse in 2010 than it was in 2007/08. 2012 is picking up because things are so cheap – 30/40 cents on the dollar. Our industry has rolled back to the 1998 level volume. We expect the market to bottom out in 12-16 months, and no one knows what will happen after that.
2. Residential: Unless people have really good credit, they can't get loans. There are a lot of "traps" in applications and in credit scoring. Not sure if this is the reason that some brokers are seeing more cash sales, or if people are moving money out of other investments and putting it into real estate.
3. Commercial capital is difficult to obtain for start-ups. Banks want to see income before they will make a loan. We have many vacant properties, but operational vs. speculative is the problem. Buildings with income probably need to be on the highway, or at least need high volume traffic to survive.
4. Litter is a major inhibitor to economic growth. The back roads especially are a mess and make a bad impression on people looking for real estate. This is a socio-economic problem related to poverty and the fact that many people don't own homes or property. Also, the "convenience centers" are few and far between which makes it difficult for people without personal vehicles to get to them. They have odd hours and are often not open when people go to them, and they won't take anything except household waste. For instance, if a gang of volunteers cleans up litter on a section of road, you must take it to the landfill when it is open. It can't be deposited at a convenience center. There was less litter in Northampton County under the old green box system, probably because there were many more locations for them, and they were placed near communities.
5. Zoning: In Northampton County zoning is positive for residential growth, but economic development is difficult because of the way zoning and the Comprehensive Plan are written. We need more commercial development on Route 13, and equitable highway development needs to be established possibly through the use of special tax district overlays or some other mechanism. We need a balance between growth and safety on Route 13.
6. Tourism: We have a lack of tourist destinations with economic substance (other than Chincoteague), which includes major hotels with destination assets, significant (million \$ plus

level) facilities, water/recreation-oriented activity centers, more public access to beaches and waterways.

7. Impediments to economic development are perceived to be uninformed leadership, unrealistic political attitudes, overzealous conservation interests, poorly crafted zoning regulations, and elitist attitudes about commercial enterprises.

Projects/Opportunities:

1. Increase collaboration between local government and the real estate industry. Create strong strategic alliances between the two sectors:
 - a. Create webpage of available sites, state and other incentives (Enterprise Zone, Federal Trade Zone, etc.)
 - b. Educate government leaders on the value of the real estate industry and how it advances economic development in our region.
 - i. Perhaps be involved in selecting new economic development director in Northampton County.
 - ii. Be involved in decision-making for the Old Cape Charles High School – at least be consulted by the Town. An example of this type of collaboration is Waterside in Norfolk. The City invited real estate professionals to give them ideas on how to redevelop that area. It became a win/win for everyone involved.
 - iii. Show the public sector how the real estate industry collaterally benefits the area economically by marketing to industrialists and others that have the ability to bring jobs here.
 - iv. Show how advertising dollars benefit all (not just RE industry).
 - v. Job creation should be included in dialogue with the public sector. The RE industry is not only about residential, but we do need workforce housing – guest houses, multi-family, nice developments for middle class workers.
 - vi. Educate the public as to the value of the RE industry – Why are our ideas suspect? Just because we make a living from selling real estate, it doesn't mean that we are dishonest or that we don't have the community's best interest at heart. We live here, too!

2. Move the Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission to the county line and establish an industrial park that straddles the line somewhere near Exmore/Belle Haven. That way the counties would cooperate with each other on economic development!
3. Tourism:
 - a. We need to work together to develop a major cultural center, water recreation centers /amenities (it is even difficult to buy fuel for a boat in the water), and more regional efforts to recruit industry and share the wealth.
 - b. Tall Ships Initiative – need more collaboration between all the sectors.
4. Energy:
 - a. The Eastern Shore could be a green energy center. Fossil fuels will be taxed heavily in future and will get more expensive over time if world oil production continues to drop as it has over the past five years. Unfortunately though, the tax credits for alternative energy are sunseting and probably won't be reinstated. Also, Maryland has undercut Virginia's efforts by writing regulations that keep facilities in their state.
 - b. There is the possibility of servicing offshore wind farms from the Eastern Shore. Could provide good jobs with special training programs in place.
5. Conservation:
 - a. Conservation could also be a growth industry because of the scientific research conducted here (VIMS and LTER), training for marine research, and restocking the ocean with wild fish species (aquaculture).
6. Agriculture:
 - a. Opportunities for diversification of our agricultural base will need to be pursued, especially as inputs become more expensive due to increased prices for fossil fuels.
 - i. Increase organic production – farmers get better prices, but more labor intensive, provides more jobs.
 - ii. Expand Community Supported Agriculture (subscription farming) so that more food is grown locally and farmers make better profits.
 - iii. Develop value-added products from local crops.
7. Litter:

- a. Northampton County needs to look for ways to make the “Convenience Centers” more convenient perhaps by extending hours or by accepting litter that’s been picked up from the roads. Consider establishing additional centers for household trash that are closer to communities where there are residents without a personal vehicle.
- b. Educate families through “anti-litter” programs in the schools.

APPENDIX C
Eastern Shore Needs Assessment
November 2011

EASTERN SHORE OF VIRGINIA

11/9/2011

Community Needs Assessment



Eastern Shore of Virginia

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Acknowledgements

The Planning Council would like to express our gratitude to the individuals and organizations below for their time, effort and support for this project.

Accomack & Northampton Counties Departments of Social Services
Accomack & Northampton Counties Extension Services
Accomack & Northampton Counties Health Departments
Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission
Accomack & Northampton Counties Public Schools
Accomack-Northampton Regional Housing Authority
Accomack County Emergency Management
Chincoteague Community Center
Eastern Shore Area Agency on Aging
Eastern Shore Center for Independent Living
Eastern Shore of Virginia Chamber of Commerce
Eastern Shore Coalition against Domestic Violence
Eastern Shore Community College
Eastern Shore Community Services Board
Eastern Shore of Virginia Housing Alliance
Eastern Shore Literacy Council
Eastern Shore Post
Eastern Shore Rural Health
Foodbank on the Eastern Shore
Hospice of the Eastern Shore
Legal Aid Society of Eastern Virginia
Maranatha Baptist Church
Telamon Corporation
The Salvation Army of Accomack County
U.S. Social Security Administration
Virginia Department of Veterans Services
Virginia Employment Commission
WESR 101.3 FM Radio
George Ayers, Concerned Citizens of the Eastern Shore, Inc.
Sylvia Parks, Congressman Scott Rigell's Office

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	4
Town Hall meetings / Focus Groups.....	5
Employment / Job Training.....	6
Transportation.....	7
Housing.....	7
Healthcare.....	8
Education.....	8
Community Needs Survey.....	10
Summary of Demographic Data.....	10
Summary of Responses.....	13
Community Issues.....	15
Barriers to Medical Services.....	16
Veterans Services.....	21
Uses and Limitations of the Data.....	22
Attachment A – Town Hall meeting / Focus Group Responses.....	24
Attachment B – Community Needs Survey Responses.....	35

Introduction

The **Eastern Shore of Virginia**, geographically removed from the rest of Virginia, has had a unique history of settlement and development that can be attributed to agriculture, fishing, tourism and the Pennsylvania Railroad. Bounded by Maryland to the North, it is located at the southern tip of the Delmarva Peninsula. The Eastern Shore of Virginia stretches for 75 miles between the waters of the Chesapeake Bay on the west and the Atlantic Ocean on the east. It consists of two counties - Accomack and Northampton- and hosts a year-round population of 45, 553 people (73% of whom live in Accomack County).¹

The 23-mile long Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel spans the mouth of the Bay and connects the rural counties and towns of the Eastern Shore to the Hampton Roads metropolitan area and the rest of the state. Terrain is very flat throughout, and dominated by cotton, soybean, vegetable and truck farming, and large-scale chicken farms. At the northern end of the Atlantic side are the beach community of Chincoteague, famous for its wild ponies; and Wallops Flight Facility, a NASA space launch base. Tangier Island, off the western shore in Chesapeake Bay, is also a day tourist destination. Economic development focuses around agriculture and aquaculture, tourism, new and existing businesses, education, and water quality.² The Eastern Shore has become one of the few places on the East Coast that has preserved its pristine marine environment and shoreline eco-system. Residents struggle with balancing this way of life with the growing need to adapt, develop and remain economically relevant.

Project Purpose

In early 2011, the **Eastern Shore Community Services Board** was awarded grant funding from the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services for the purpose of strengthening local prevention coalitions. The study included implementing a comprehensive community needs assessment to include a survey and holding public, informative sessions throughout the Eastern Shore to gather statistical data regarding barriers for underserved populations and service providers. The culmination of the project was a Community Resource Fair where 275 residents were able to access services and information around health, employment, housing and other supportive services provided by twenty-two service provider agencies. This report summarizes the data collected from those who participated in the research activities. It is the intent that the report and its findings be made available to all agencies, local government and the general public in order to provide statistical data to guide policies and services as well as aid in the award of future funding opportunities.

The Planning Council was engaged as the evaluation agency to facilitate the town hall meetings and focus groups, and to design and implement the community needs survey to better understand the human services delivery system on the Eastern Shore. All elements of the study were developed in collaboration with the project's Planning Committee, which met at least monthly. The Planning Committee, made up of over twenty agencies, represents key service providers across the Eastern Shore that are experienced in receiving and implementing grant-funded projects. Most members also actively participate in the Eastern Shore Continuum of Care Coalition, which addresses housing and support services for the Eastern Shore's homeless and vulnerable populations.

¹ U.S. Census Bureau, population data, 2010. Website: www.census.gov

² Eastern Shore of Virginia Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, June 2011.

Town Hall meetings / Focus Groups

Four **Town Hall meetings** were held - two in Melfa, one in Exmore and one on the Island of Chincoteague - in order to gather public feedback from residents across the Eastern Shore. Invitations were extended while announcements were made by service provider agencies and through the media (“Talk of the Shore” radio show on 103.3 FM and in the Eastern Shore Post newspaper). Extra effort was made to invite educators, service providers and members of the faith-based community to the Town Hall meetings in order to hear from individuals who are both experienced and active in the issues being discussed. Meetings were held at:

- Eastern Shore Community College: Workforce Development Center – Accomack County (2)
- Chincoteague Community Center – Accomack County
- Maranatha Baptist Church – Northampton County

In addition, three **Focus Group sessions** were conducted. The first was conducted for members of the Planning Committee, which is made up of key service providers. The final focus groups were for participants at the Community Resource Fair. Approximately 115 individuals participated in the various meetings held from April through September 2011.

The key topics for both the Town Hall meetings and focus groups were decided by the members of the Planning Committee together with the evaluator. These five topics were selected as they were deemed to be the most critical barriers that Eastern Shore residents face. This was supported by statistical research.

- Housing
- Transportation
- Employment
- Healthcare
- Education

The experience of the service provider agencies that make up the project’s Planning Committee was that the quality of life for residents of the Eastern Shore is most directly related to these five issues. It was vital to the project’s success to identify the extent to which they exist for residents as well as brainstorm how to address each one. Therefore, the questions posed at the Town Hall meetings and Focus Group sessions asked participants about the **accessibility** and **affordability** of each, as well as for their ideas on how to improve them.

Results of Town Hall meetings and Focus Group sessions

Participants made the following comments and observations:

Adequate employment opportunities, affordable housing and transportation were felt to be insufficient by residents regardless of their socio-economic status. Education as the foundation necessary for residents to obtain employment and thus afford housing and transportation came up while discussing each topic. Healthcare, although increasingly expensive, was deemed overall accessible and affordable by most due to the network of rural health centers around the Eastern Shore. However, the quantity of physicians as well as specialty medical care services are lacking and force residents to travel outside of the Eastern Shore for care.

Employment / Job Training

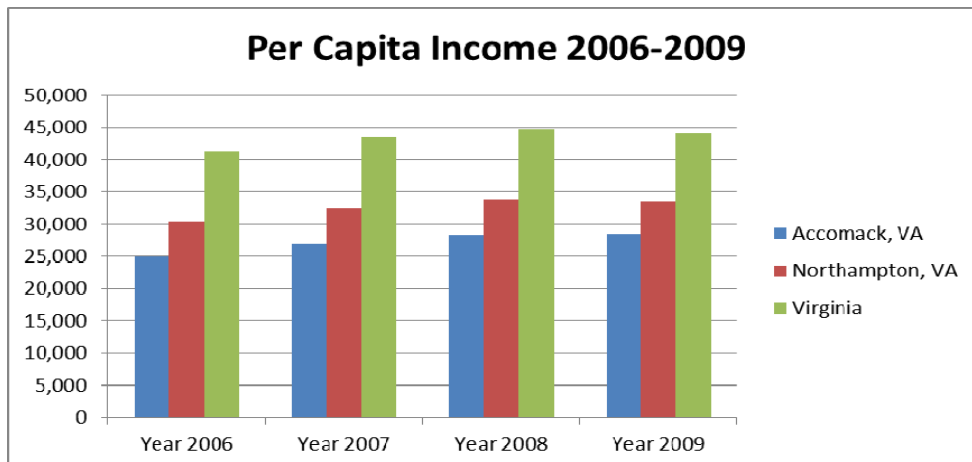
The increase in unemployed households coupled by the limited industries that offer jobs on the Eastern Shore was discussed at length. Many felt that the inadequate infrastructure (sewage, technology, etc.) and isolation of the Eastern Shore, particularly in Northampton County, drove away business development. Some felt the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel fees are held artificially high and the funds do not end up assisting the residents of the Shore.

Many commented that there was a vital disconnect between employment opportunities and education / job training available in both counties. While a job at NASA would pay a livable wage, it was unlikely a person would be hired if they only completed higher education at Eastern Shore Community College as the degrees offered there do not prepare people for the work at NASA. Some certification / technical programs that once were available on the Eastern Shore, such as auto mechanics, had closed down.

The service industry jobs available – at chicken farms, in tourism, farming or the fishing industry – do not pay enough to afford adequate housing, transportation and healthcare. Too few small businesses exist and the geographic distribution of the jobs available is a hardship for those without their own transportation. Seasonal employment surrounding tourism and agriculture was limited to only a few months each year and did not provide enough income to sustain a living wage.

Young adults tend to leave the Eastern Shore to find employment while more retirees remain. Many participants felt that it was vital to expand employment and business opportunities other than housing development that would provide permanent employment.

When asked about specific job training that was needed on the Eastern Shore in order for residents to find employment, participants responded that the low levels of education and literacy of many residents were a huge issue. Some job trainings named that would be useful on a regular basis were plumbing, electrical, auto mechanics and HVAC. Also discussed was that with advancements in technology, more computer-related training was needed – at both the high schools and community college. It was felt that technical colleges of different sorts would benefit the residents greatly. The limited vision of many to only work at the chicken farms and not strive for more was a concern for many participants.



Source: U.S. Department of Commerce – Bureau of Economic Analysis

Website: <http://www.bea.gov/regional/reis/drill.cfm>

Transportation

While most participants agreed that Star Transit public transit buses were affordable, the routes and hours were extremely limited and did not allow for most households to rely on them for travel between work and home. The buses stop running in the early evening and therefore many rely on family and friends to drive them to and from work. If this is not an option, other drivers (i.e. gypsy cabs) charge exorbitant rates since taxis are not available.

Vulnerable populations, such as the elderly and disabled, have even fewer transportation options. Very little transportation is offered to ensure they get to medical appointments although some providers within Hampton Roads cross the Bay Bridge to bring them to appointments located in Norfolk or Virginia Beach. Medicaid taxis also come across the Bay Bridge and often require up to two weeks' notice for the appointment.

Residents felt that city buses were needed between the larger towns, reaching a large portion of the population that live and work within town limits. This would especially assist younger and lower income households. For those that ride bikes, safety was noted since there are not official bike lanes and they ride along the busy roads with large trucks and speeding traffic. Lanes are not clearly delineated in many areas. The quality of the roads was noted to be good in most places of the Eastern Shore, on the highway as well as on country lanes.

Housing

Housing issues were discussed at length and it was noted that there was a visible, growing inventory of substandard housing along the Eastern Shore as many foreclosed homes were abandoned for long periods. The limited water and sewage systems affected the opportunities of many to build new homes while the cost of oil and other utilities was very high for many households.

While new housing developments have cropped up over the past two decades, these were not affordable for most residents and were mostly purchased as vacation or retiree homes for people from other regions or states. The building of new housing developments has also significantly increased the median price of homes, placing more of a barrier for long-time residents to afford one. There is a limited inventory of apartments in both counties as well as subsidized housing for low-income and disabled households.

	Housing Stock	Median Value	Substandard
Accomack County	75% = detached, single units	\$52,700	7.5%
	25% = mobile homes, trailer units		
Northampton County	78% = detached, single units	\$57,700	25%
	14% = mobile homes	(\$77,500 – new)	
	8% = other		

Source: Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission: Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel Toll Impact Study, 2001

Participants repeatedly stated that there were very few playgrounds, fields and community centers for entertaining children and hosting youth activities.

Healthcare

Overall, participants at the various Town Hall meetings and focus groups felt that their primary health care needs were met adequately through either their private practitioners or at the rural health centers. (Both counties were deemed both a Health Professional Shortage Area and Medical Underserved Area for primary care, mental health and dental health and are therefore eligible for federally qualified community health centers.)³ Several touted the quality of care offered at the health centers. Some felt the wait for appointments was not reasonable and participants in Chincoteague, in particular, related their preference to travel to Maryland for medical care where more private practitioners were available. Some residents also noted their preference to receive medical care at Hampton Roads' facilities.

There was considerable concern about the lack of emergency services and urgent care along the Eastern Shore and about the impending move of the Shore Memorial Hospital of its inpatient care out of Northampton County and into some, the distance between providers presented extremely difficult barriers. Others felt the takeover of the hospital by Riverside Health Systems would attract more providers, particularly for specialty care services.

According to the American Community Survey data from 2008-2009, the uninsured rate for the non-elderly population of the Eastern Shore was 16.1%.

concern about the lack of emergency services and urgent care along the Eastern Shore and about the Shore Memorial Hospital of its Northampton County and into some, the distance between providers presented extremely difficult barriers. the hospital by Riverside Health providers, particularly for specialty care

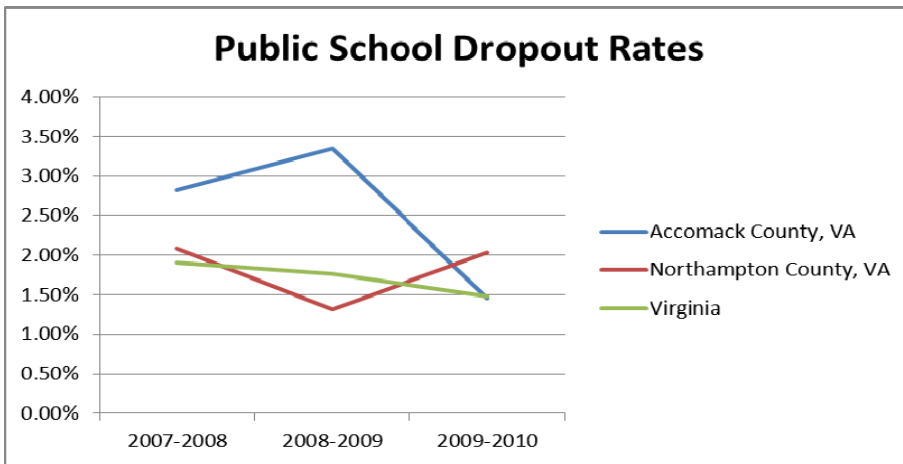
Various specialty care services is in demand and not available on the Eastern Shore. Many residents go without care simply because they cannot afford those services and their employers do not provide health insurance coverage for them. It was noted that physicians often come to the Eastern Shore on Health Corps programs only to leave once their debt is fulfilled. This creates a problem for continuity of care and building trusting relationships with health professionals.

Education

While the residents of Chincoteague Island were very positive about the quality of the public education available to them, other areas expressed concern about limited resources and how it was affecting the education of their children. Funding for school programs and transportation was insufficient and most after-school and summer programs were cut. Some children riding school buses were forced to travel as much as two hours in each direction. In addition, teacher's salaries were among the lowest in the state and, like physicians, many tend to leave for higher paying jobs elsewhere after a short period.

It was noted that parental involvement was missing for many schools and without it the responsibility of children's education lay solely on the school system, which is ill-equipped to handle it. Tutoring programs are available through some service provider agencies and churches but much more is needed. Hispanic student enrollment has nearly doubled since the 2004-05 school year in both school divisions, requiring additional services to ensure those children are learning and parents receiving important communications.

³ Health Resources Services Administration, website: <http://hpsafind.hrsa.gov/> and <http://muafind.hrsa.gov/index.aspx>



Source: Virginia Department of Education, website:

http://www.doe.virginia.gov/statistics_reports/graduation_completion/dropout_statistics/index.shtml

Besides the Eastern Shore Community College, institutions of higher education do not exist on the Eastern Shore and residents must leave to receive a Bachelor’s degree. Old Dominion University has begun web-based instruction at the college and there is hope this will expand. Previous online instruction programs that were offered to high school students have disappeared and residents were frustrated about this.

Participants who attended the Community College were complimentary of the quality of education offered there. It was noted that the nursing program at the Community College was an asset and very well attended. Because of the growing need for healthcare, participants recommended expanding the medical certification and degree programs at the college.

For detailed responses from the Town Hall meetings and Focus Group sessions, see **Attachment A**.

Community Needs Survey

The community needs survey was developed and distributed to gather information from the residents around the Eastern Shore about which issues in their surrounding area were of concern, what barriers they experienced when seeking medical care, if they were able to secure employment, health benefits and housing, and overall how they felt about the quality of life on the Eastern Shore. Demographic questions were included in order to understand who was responding to the survey and to filter responses by county or by other specific population features. While the survey results are neither statistically significant nor representative of the entire population of the Eastern Shore, they provide a snapshot of opinions and experiences of everyday individuals from all sectors of the community and gather their perspective on health and quality of life issues.

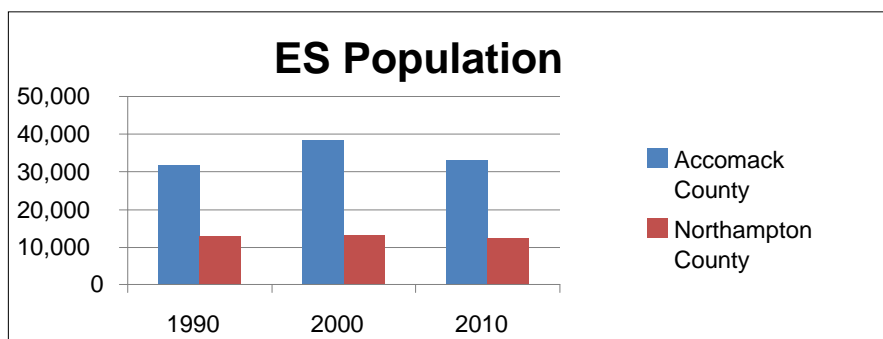
There were a total of 701 (697 completed) responses to the Community Survey, which totals 1.5% of the population. The surveys were available to the general public to complete in electronic form and in hard copy. The website was announced publicly through email blasts to service providers, weekly on the “Talk of the Shore” 103.3 FM radio show, and at Town Hall meetings. Paper copies (including large print) were strategically placed around the Eastern Shore in order to be completed by a large cross-section of residents. They were made available from June through September 2011 at various county departments, the Community College, the five Rural Health Centers locations, U.S. Social Security Administration and at the offices of several other service providers. Additionally, those who attended the Town Hall meetings and the Community Resource Fair completed them. Some service providers took the opportunity to elicit participation from clients during group gatherings. Each Planning Committee member was also asked to complete one.

Summary of Demographic Data

Below is a comparison of those who completed the survey with official data from the 2010 Census. Note that total responses to each question vary as some questions were skipped. Seven (1%) surveys were completed by persons who stated that they did not reside on the Eastern Shore.

County	Responses		Population	
Accomack	485	70%	33,164	73%
Northampton	198	29%	12,389	27%
Total	690		45,553	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, website: <http://factfinder2.census.gov>



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, website: <http://factfinder2.census.gov>

54% of those surveyed stated that they lived within town limits while the remaining lived in more rural settings. Towns listed included: Melfa, Accomac, Onley, Parksley, Cheriton, Exmore, Onancock, Temperanceville, Birdsnest, Quinby, Belle Haven, Cape Charles, Nassawadox, Painter, Withans, Wachapreague, and others.

Gender	Responses		2010 Census	
Male	144	21%	22,083	48%
Female	553	79%	23,470	52%
Total	697	100%	45,553	100%

Age Group	Responses		2010 Census	
Under 18	6	1%	9,361	21%
18 – 24	102	15%	3,389	8%
25 – 34	136	19%	4,747	10%
35 – 44	106	15%	4,958	11%
45 – 54	139	20%	6,983	15%
55 – 64	138	20%	6,998	15%
65 or over	70	10%	9,117	20%
Total	697	100%	45,553	100%

According to the Census data above, half of the Eastern Shore's population is persons aged 45 and older. 50% of those that responded to the survey were also of that age group.

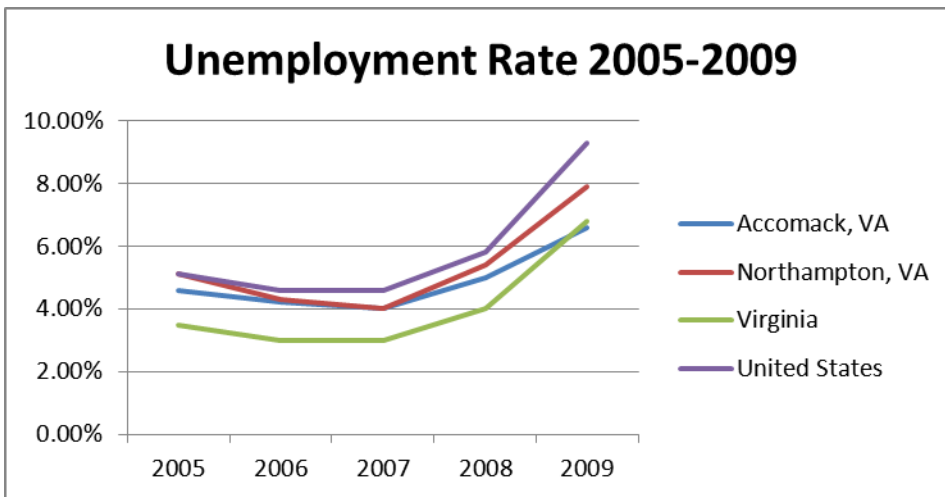
Race / Ethnicity	Responses		2010 Census	
White / Caucasian	264	37.9%	28,830	63%
African American / Black	388	55.7%	13,831	30%
Asian / Pacific Islander	2	0.3%	319	0.7%
Native American	5	0.7%	162	0.4%
Multiracial	13	1.9%	0	N/A*
Other	15	2.1%	1,695	N/A*
Hispanic / Latino	10	1.4%	3,596	N/A*
Total	697	100%	N/A*	N/A*

Note: ethnicity crosses several races.

Of the 697 responses, 52% responded that they were employed while 48% were not. It is important to note that some of those listed as unemployed were retired or not working by choice. The August 2011 employment statistics from the Bureau of Labor Statistics demonstrate the following for the Eastern Shore:

County	Civilian Labor Force	Employed	Unemployment	
Accomack	21,542	20,061	1,481	6.9%
Northampton	6,964	6,416	548	7.9%
Total	28,506	26,477		

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, website: <http://www.bls.gov/lau/laucntycur14.txt>

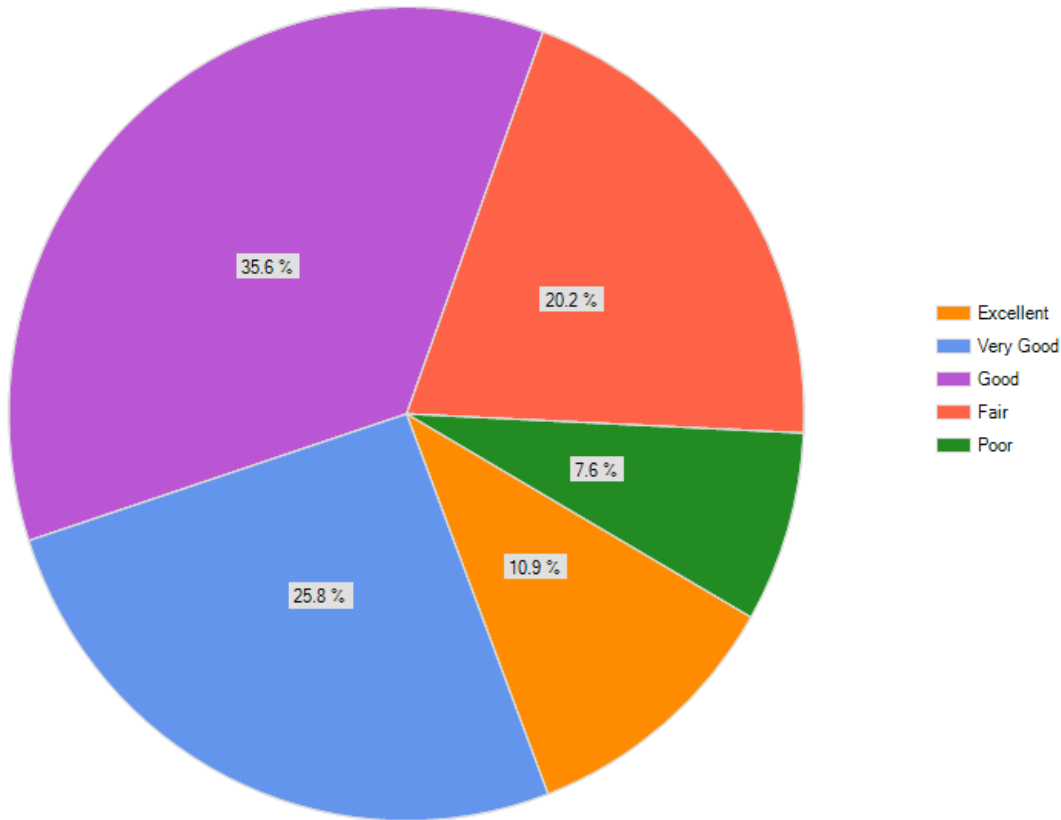


Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics
 Website: http://bi.cao.virginia.gov/VEC_EIS/rdPage.aspx

Summary of Responses

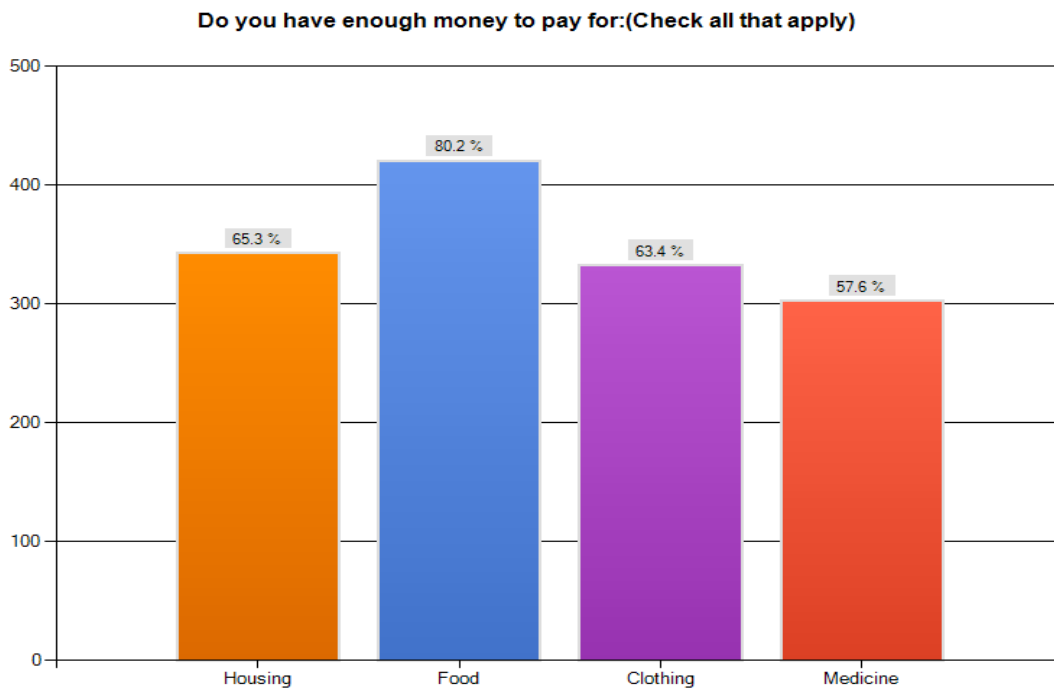
Those surveyed first answered questions about how they rated life on the Eastern Shore. While 35% responded rated life as 'Good', 26% rated it as 'Very Good' and even 11% rated it 'Excellent'.

What kind of place is Accomack County / Northampton County to live?

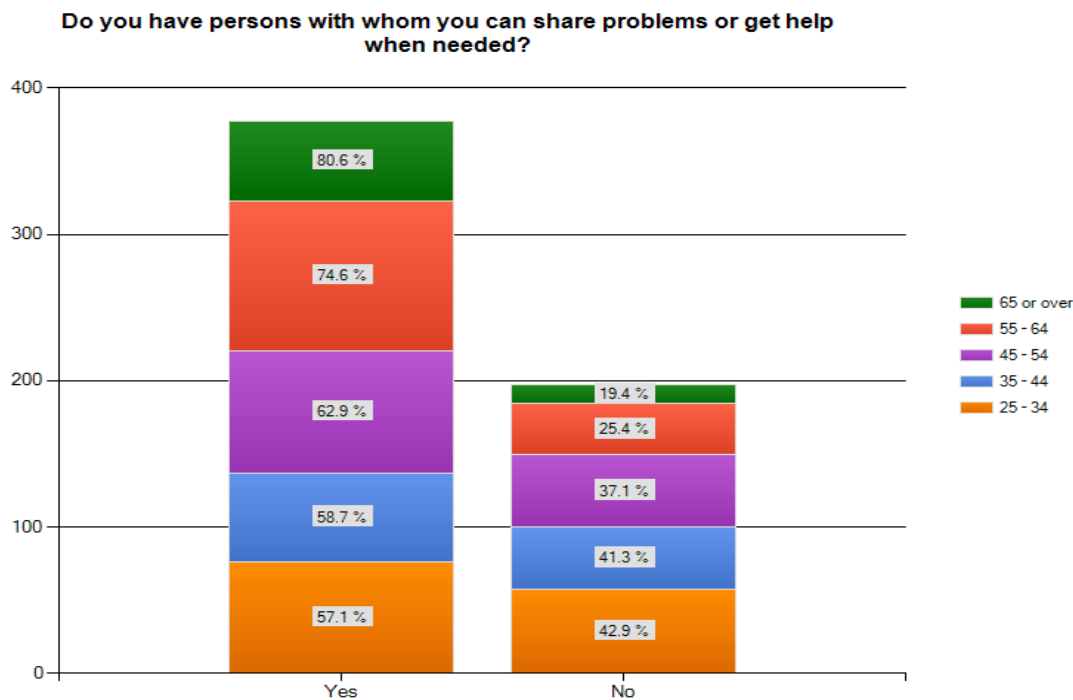


When asked how they felt about the Eastern Shore as a place to raise children, an overwhelming majority (71%) rated it 'Good' to 'Excellent'. As a place to grow old, again the majority (75%) rated it between 'Good' and 'Excellent'. For each of the three questions discussed above, just over 7% rated the Eastern Shore as 'Poor', with the remaining (18-21%) selecting 'Fair', respectively.

Next, those surveyed were asked if they had enough money to pay for everyday expenses, like:



To understand the level of isolation felt by the residents of the Eastern Shore, the survey asked if residents felt they had someone with whom to share problems or to get help. Of the 685 that answered only 2/3 responded 'Yes', leaving 34% feeling they had no one to turn to. Of those who responded positively, they listed their family, friends, church, God and service providers such as the Community Services Board or Department of Social Services as people and places they turn to for help.



Community Issues

Those surveyed were asked to rate the importance of 32 different issues in their community, selecting 'Very Important', 'Somewhat Important' or 'Not Important'. The five **most important** issues named by both counties were:

1. Unemployment / Underemployment (91.9%)
2. Lack of affordable housing (84.6%)
3. Ability to read and write (84.4%)
4. Lack of job training programs (83.8%)
5. Poor quality of public education (K-12) (82.2%)

These ratings underline the same concerns shared by service providers and participants at Town Hall meetings and focus groups.

Other issues rated by at least 75% of those surveyed as '**Very Important**' include:

Child abuse	Mental illness or emotional problems
Lack of services for children with special needs	Crime
Lack of public transportation	Lack of services for the mentally ill
Lack of services for the elderly	Teen pregnancy
Lack of services for adults with special needs	

The five issues named as **least important** to those surveyed within their communities were:

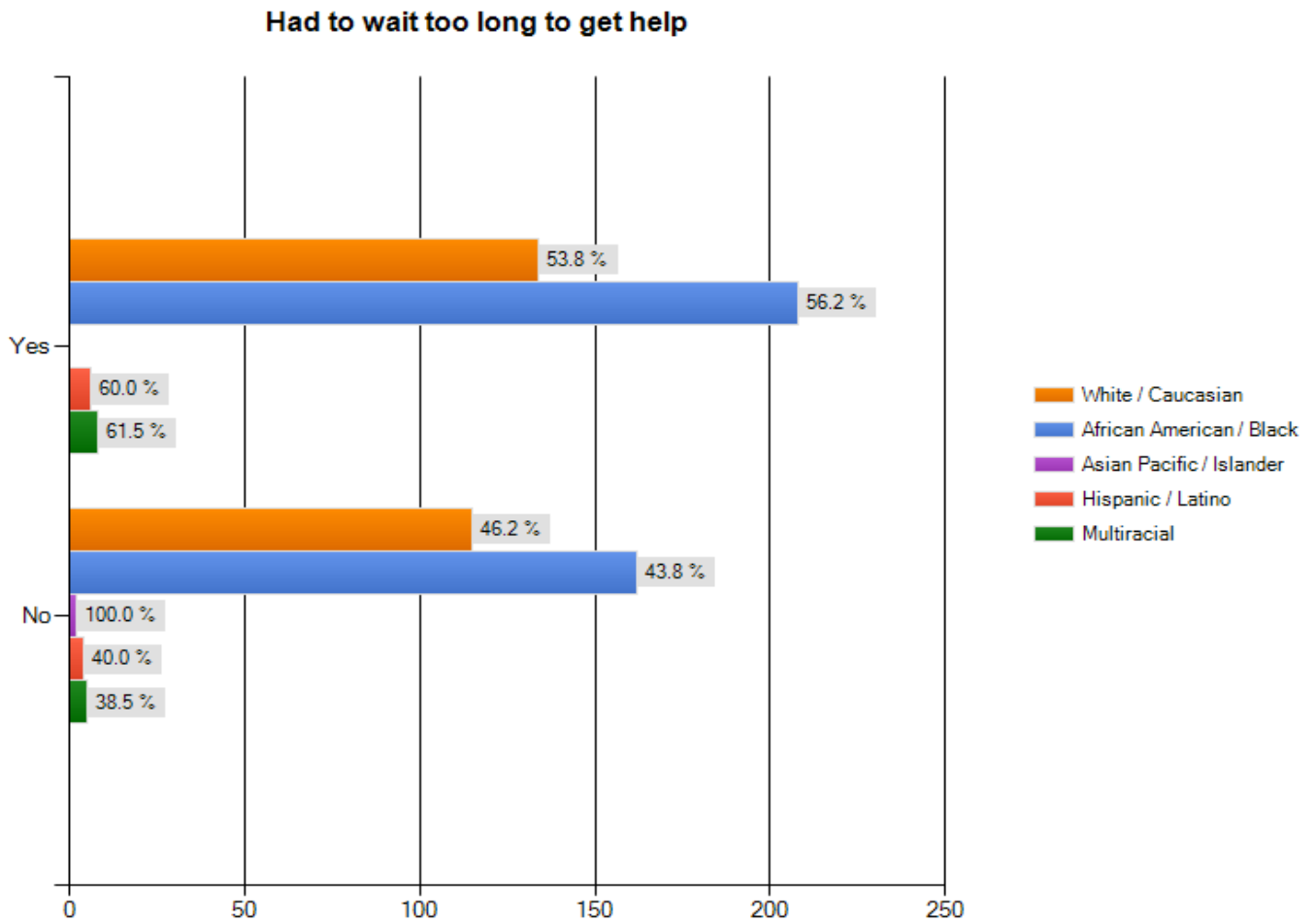
1. Noise pollution (25.1%)
2. Exposure to wildlife / wild animals (18.5%)
3. Tobacco use (17.3%)
4. Air pollution (15.8%)
5. Gangs (10.5%)

Several issues that followed close behind and were also rated '**Not Important**' by many of those surveyed include:

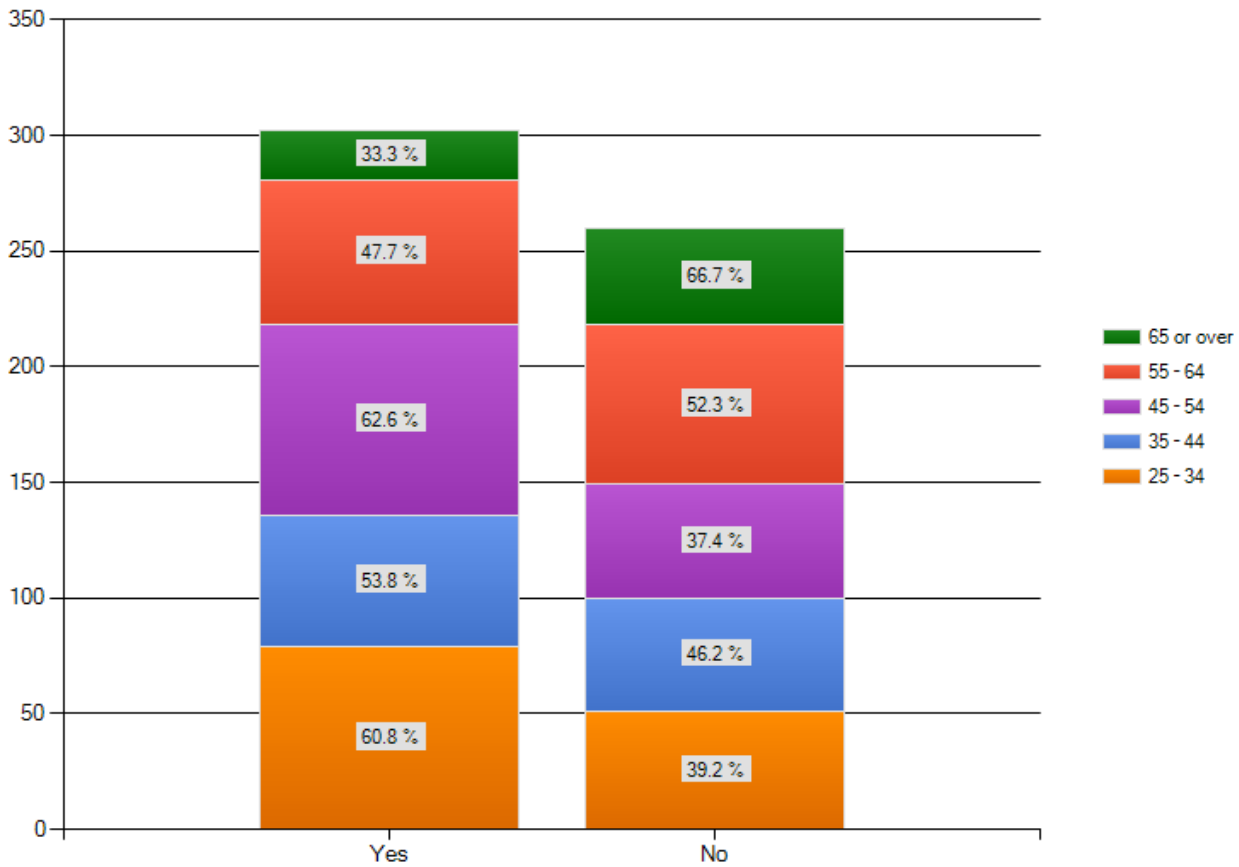
- Vehicle injuries
- Lack of access to computer / Internet
- Alcoholism / other drug abuse
- Street / Neighborhood litter

Barriers to Medical Services

Six questions were posed about people's experiences when accessing medical services to understand what type, if any, barriers they encountered. 55% named affordability and the amount of time required to get an appointment as the most significant barriers. These were followed by lacking information about services available and eligibility requirements. Only a bit more than 1/3 felt that locations, days and hours of the medical services were inconvenient.



Could not afford



Those surveyed were then asked to list medical services that were not available to them.

- Dental Care (65%)
- Primary Care (53%)
- Specialty Care (47%)

When asked to name the types of specialty care services missing from, or lacking on, the Eastern Shore, those surveyed listed:

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------|
| Optometrist | Neurologist |
| Cardiac | Mental health |
| Pain management | Home health care |
| Plastic surgeon | Transportation |
| Children's orthopedist | Allergist |

Employment data among those who completed the survey revealed the following information:

	Number	Percent
Employed	362	52%
Unemployed	335	48%
<i>Of those employed:</i>		
Part-time	102	29%
Full-time	245	71%
Has health benefits	221	32%
Has dental benefits	194	28%

Residents were asked to describe their **household**, including status and size. Results revealed that:

	Number	Percent
Rent	308	44%
Own	256	37%
Other:	133	19%
Living with someone	66	50%
Homeless	9	6%
Other situation*	58	44%
Member is a Veteran	110	17%
Member has a Disability	243	37%

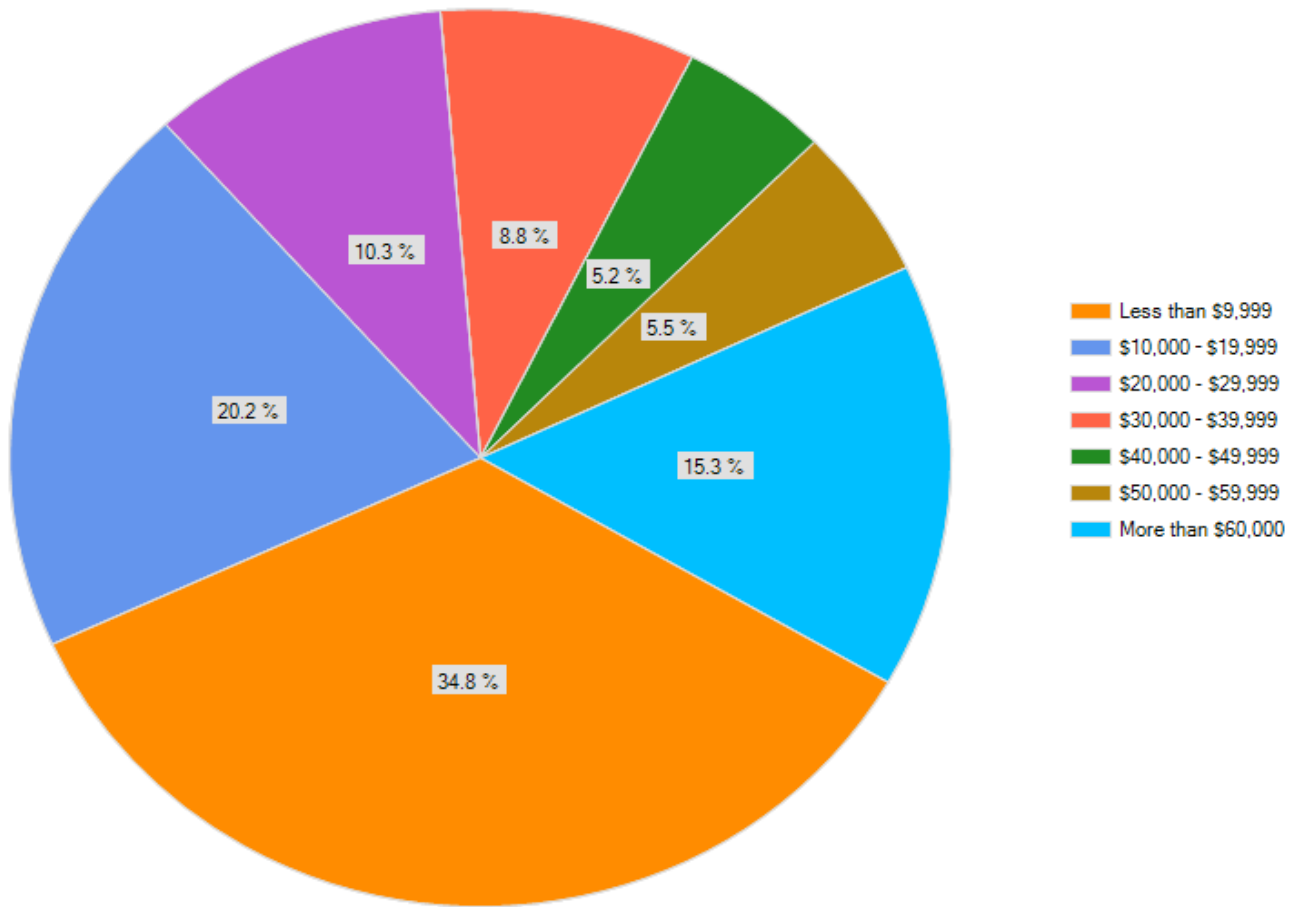
**Responses under “Other situation” include: buying a home, renting a shed, lifetime property rights or otherwise not specified.*

The average household size is 3.17:

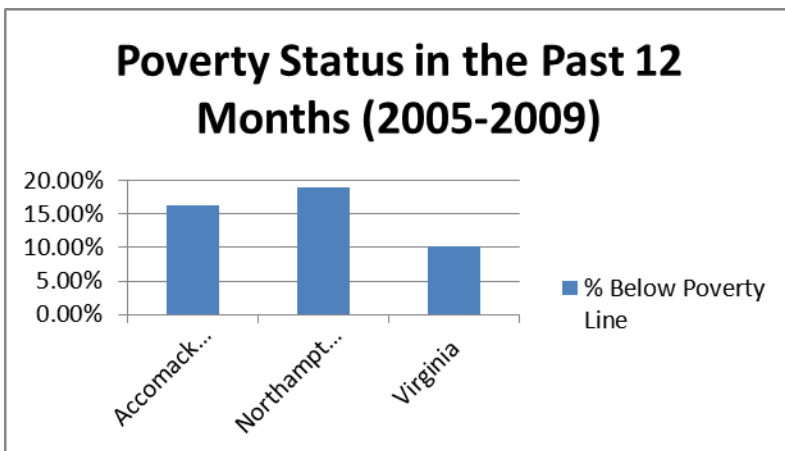
2.05 – Adults

1.53 - Children under 18 years of age

Total household income:

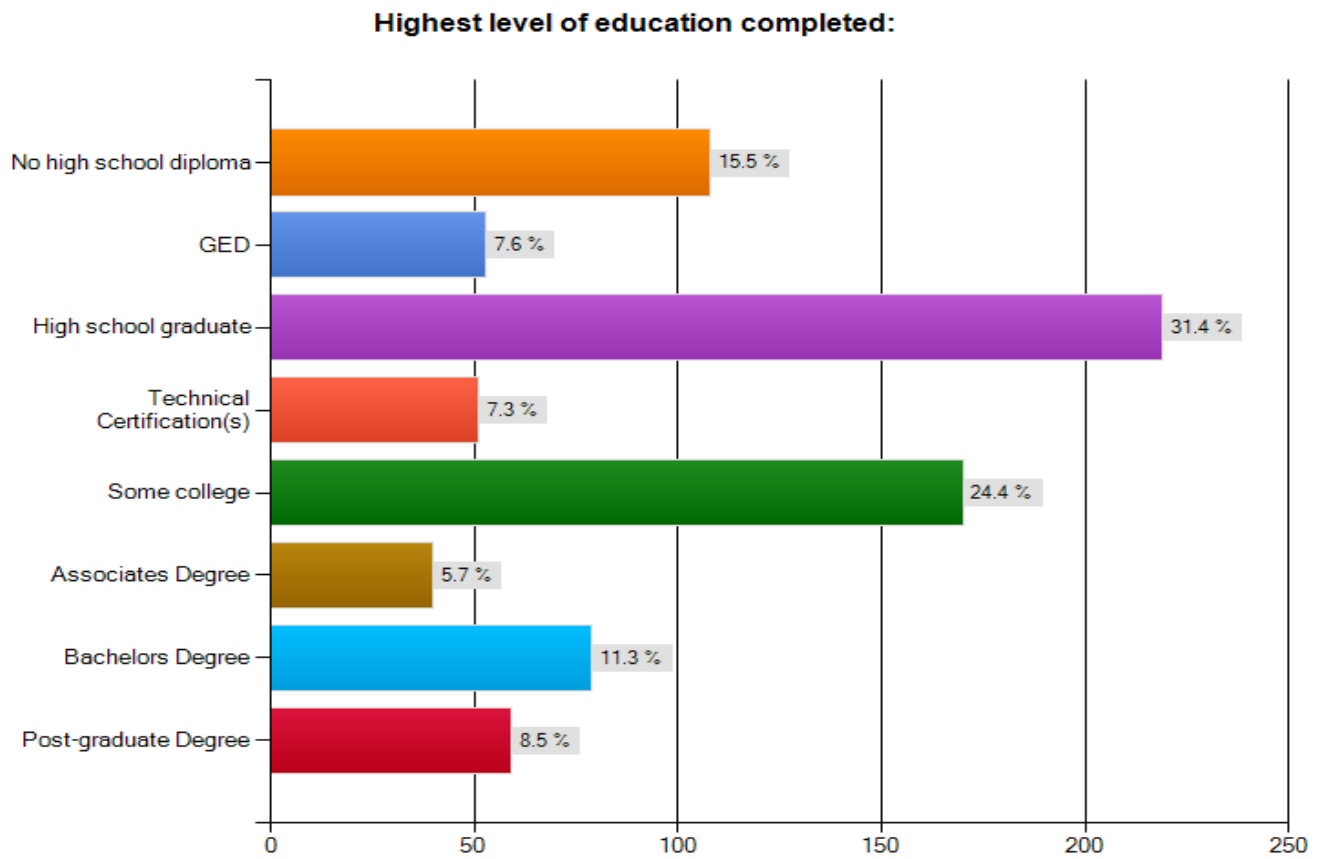


More than 1/3 of those surveyed claimed their household income was less than \$10,000 while over half claim it's less than \$20,000 annually.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, website: <http://www.factfinder.census.gov>

The **education level** among those surveyed revealed that only ¼ obtained degrees in higher education.



To view a complete Summary of Responses, see **Attachment B**.

Veterans Services

In an effort to identify Veteran's needs on the Eastern Shore, those surveyed who identified themselves as Veterans were asked specific questions. While 110 of those surveyed stated that a member of their household is a Veteran, only as many as 79 responded to the specific questions below:

Please tell us when you served:

	Number	Percent
WWII	4	5%
Korea	8	10%
Vietnam	35	46%
Gulf War/Iraq/Afghanistan	12	16%
Peacetime	23	30%
Total	76	N/A *

* Note: some selected more than one option

Do you receive medical care at:

	Number	Percent
Hampton VAMC	13	30%
Pocomoke, Maryland	7	16%
Other VAMC	5	11%
Non-VAMC	19	43%
Total	44	100%

If a Vietnam Veteran, have you registered to receive an Agent Orange exam at a VAMC?

	Number	Percent
Yes	3	6%
No	48	94%
Total	51	100%

Would you utilize a Community-based Outpatient Clinic located on the Eastern Shore?

	Number	Percent
Yes	55	70%
No	24	30%
Total	79	100%

Uses and Limitations of the Data

The data provided in this report were collected through a model utilizing community-wide participation that involved citizen input from various geographic areas and backgrounds across the Virginia Eastern Shore. For any community plan to be realistically implemented, it must be developed through broad participation by persons who share the commitment and have a role in the community's health and well being. Uses of this data can benefit the human service delivery system as a whole as well as the individual organizations, depending on the opportunities taken with the resources available to incorporate the results into practice or policy. Publicizing the report through media channels, at least in summary, is important to recognize the initiative taken by the service providers to identify the bigger community needs so as to develop and implement improvements wherever possible.

There are many ways citizens can participate in local decision making (e.g. voting, campaigning, joining a neighborhood or interest group). Citizen surveys are fundamentally different, measuring general public opinion and attitudes and offering public officials potentially useful policy input information. Contrary to the expectations of those who believe citizens dislike and distrust government, citizens give their local government generally high marks for service delivery.⁴ Policy makers tend to agree that citizen participation is key to developing acceptable, sustainable policy decisions. Such participation traditionally suffers, however, from claims that citizens who participate do not represent the views of the community. Another commonly heard criticism is that citizens participating do not understand enough about the issues to evaluate the policy choices or the consequences of their decisions. One option is to turn to public opinion surveys as a means of determining the opinions of a wider, statistically representative sample of the population, yet the problem of an uninformed or uninterested sample of respondents persists. This is particularly important when surveys are used as one form of citizen input into policy decisions.

While surveys may not be the most widely recognized channel for communicating information to the public, there is value to public participation in ongoing policy-making and community development. Surveys are one method to gather information from citizens who are affected but otherwise unable to participate in these processes. By identifying the opinions of people in the community, surveys offer information on the varying status of agreement and disagreement and the various perceptions, accurate or mistaken.

Weaknesses of surveys must also be noted, such as cost and the skills required to interpret data, as well as social influences on certain groups of respondents or language barriers. Another drawback is that respondents may not have experience with or know enough about the topics to provide quality responses to the questions. However implemented, the surveys represent the perception of the individual responding to the questions and offering feedback and should be viewed as such. Rather than being the only form of contact, surveys work best when they complement other forms of citizen participation.

To this end, the Eastern Shore Community Needs Survey was not only widely distributed across geographic areas but also collected household-level information that allowed for personal perspectives regarding the most significant gaps and barriers in the existing human services delivery system, including schools, medical care and more. It was also used in tandem with face-to-face town hall meetings and focus group sessions that asked broader questions around the issues and which were widely announced to gather participants from all factions of the community.

⁴ *Linking Citizen Satisfaction Data to Performance Measures: A Preliminary Evaluation*. Public Performance & Management Review, Vol. 24 No. 1. September 2000 30-52

Interpreting the results and implementing change become the biggest challenge to end users of the data. Service evaluation is critical to monitor challenges and for focusing efforts and resources where failures are identified. However, national best practices demonstrate that the nurturing and development of strong community consensus regarding the needs of the service delivery system can be a springboard for future collective action.

It is recommended to use the data contained in this report to:

- Evaluate and implement service improvements;
- Raise awareness of community issues;
- Educate the general public and local government of challenges such as existing resources, barriers and gaps in services, changes in perception, and successes;
- Identify trends that will affect how services are delivered, where, to whom and the quantity;
- Target and seek additional funding to expand, enhance or adjust the service delivery system.

The existing Continuum of Care coalition, made up of key service providers (governmental and non-governmental) should take the following steps in order to make the best use of the data:

1. **Review and analyze the summary of responses** contained in this report along with other social indicators that demonstrate community-wide issues.
2. **Identify trends, gaps, barriers and successes** within the bigger issues discussed in this report.
3. **Develop a realistic action plan** that includes
 - a. a goal
 - b. at least one objective
 - c. very specific activities around each issue
 - d. person or organization responsible for each activity
 - e. timeline

The action plan should be developed over a succession of meetings within a limited time period, such as six months, while the motivation around implementing change is elevated. The action plan should be used as a guiding document over the next 3-5 years and reviewed and updated annually. The action plan, along with a summary of the key results from this report, should be incorporated into the annual or strategic plan of every agency within the human service delivery system to ensure consistency of efforts.

Those within the Continuum of Care that have the expertise and incentive to seek additional funding and resources should make appointments with local governmental leadership as well as private funding organizations to announce the action plan undertaken by the service providers. Through these personal exchanges and supporting documentation, priorities can be identified for allocating resources where additional assistance is needed to affect change. Some examples of this are:

- expansion of the transportation system for those most medically vulnerable
- development of affordable housing options near bus routes and schools
- creation of new services (counseling, training, in-home case management, etc.) that do not exist
- enhancement of basic services such as food, clothing and school supplies, emergency financial assistance and job training

Determining strengths and weaknesses within the current system while matching needs with assets is the cornerstone of any successful strategy for community-wide improvement.

ATTACHMENT A

Town Hall meetings / Focus Group Responses

1. How long have you lived on the Eastern Shore?

Not a resident	15 years	45 years (3)
3 months	16 years (3)	46 years
6 months	18 years	47 years (2)
9 months (2)	19.5 years	48 years (2)
Less than 1 year	20 years	49 years (2)
1 year (3)	21 years (3)	50 years (3)
2 years (5)	24 years	51 years (2)
3 years	26 years (3)	52 years
4 years (3)	28 years (2)	53 years (2)
5 years (4)	29 years	54 years
6 years	32 years	55 years
7 years (2)	33 years	59 years
8 years (4)	34 years	64 years
10 years (2)	35 years	73 years
11 years	38 years	80 years
13 years (3)	42 years	All my life (3)
14 years (2)	43 years	

2. Tell us what you like best about living on the Eastern Shore.

Slow pace (1)

Peace and quiet

Nature, wildlife

The people of the Eastern Shore

No traffic

Small-town community

Beach, boating

Tons of churches

Beauty of the area

People

Next to the water

Quiet (3)

Freedom to travel

Safe place to raise children

Retirement

Cost of living

Schools

So green

Public transportation

Closeness of the community

People are kind and diverse welcoming to strangers

Slower pace (2)

Open, friendly

People are more willing to help out

Less traffic

Wide, open spaces

Resources of Chesapeake Bay and ocean, outdoor life

Less stressful

Friendly people (2)

Relationships

Laid back

Good family environment

Islands

3. Is housing accessible? Is it affordable?

Not very accessible; long waiting list for Habitat for Humanity

Lack of housing stems from lack of employment opportunities*

Varies by community

Planning District Commission holds training sessions for people experiencing homelessness; how is this information accessed?

Number of vouchers not sufficient, not offered often enough

One year-round faith-based shelter

Substandard housing; structure, insulation, lack of foundations

Not enough affordable housing developments

Trailer parks becoming too expensive

Need to expand water and sewer systems

Limited access to power

Internet connection very slow, affects businesses

Most people coming to AICC for assistance need help with electric bill

Oil heating is outrageous, especially a problem for the elderly

Lack of low-income housing

Lack of affordable rental housing in safe locations

20% of the property on the Shore has been abandoned; homes are dilapidated and unsafe

Question of legal ownership of abandoned property

Health hazards related to occupation of abandoned housing

Many people are moving out of the ES

Growing Hispanic population

Need more jobs in order to make housing affordable

More people purchasing second homes or retirement homes on the ES – increasing surrounding real estate assessments in the area

Gentrification

Affordable for people coming from North, not from other areas

Not much affordable housing in Chincoteague

Vice mayor – tourist area, valuable land makes affordable housing less attractive for contractors. Housing is affordable but not in relation to income opportunity

Some affordable housing has age restrictions

Shifting to seasonal rentals, part-time residents

Housing and land should be more affordable for young people

Sewage is a problem

Property value has increased exponentially compared to wages

Assessment values of property unrealistically high – taxes increasing every year

Not affordable or accessible – disabled low-income housing have to get on a waiting list for financial assistance – slow process

No emergency financial assistance for housing

Can't afford housing on social security checks

Some of the housing (trailers, concrete houses) need to be condemned

Not accessible or affordable in relation to income, job market, credit challenges

Young families can't find places to rent on their budget – nothing less than \$700 or \$800

Rent at trailer parks is about \$500 (not affordable) and some people would like for them to go away

Where to look for affordable housing? The newspaper (dead-end) or word-of-mouth (most effective)
Landlords don't like to negotiate
Getting women out of domestic violence shelter and into permanent housing is very difficult
Affordable rent for the shore is \$200-\$300 per month
Northampton families in poverty have so many interwoven issues – every aspect of life is a struggle (housing, transportation, education, etc.)
Utility bills too high for people to use heat in the winter and air in the summer
Not enough housing for disabled persons, with kids play areas and with community centers
Not affordable: poor quality housing vs. rent prices
Utilities should be included in rent
Need more apartment complexes
The area is not safe
Property values are bad
More poor than good quality
More housing is needed
Change old schools into housing
Price vs. wages a problem
Need standards for landowners (rentals), for all housing, not just Section 8
Need playgrounds, play areas for kids
Need several recreation and community centers
Need Boys and Girls Clubs
Need community involvement

4. Is *transportation* accessible? Is it affordable?

Transport only runs for Cape Charles to Parksley; only 7 runs during the day

Difficult to access areas that aren't off the main artery of Eastern Shore

Students of the community college wait around for the bus

Reliable and on time

Hours are limited, need longer route time

Often have to rely on family or friends for transportation; get charged exorbitant fees

Vans for senior centers, MR, MH – people sometimes wait a long time for rides

Medicaid cabs come from across the bay

Public transport is very affordable

Public transportation not close enough to affordable housing communities

Younger families 18-25 lacking transportation

No public transportation after 6pm

Limited transportation available for elderly population

No Star transit above Accomack area

Friends charging for rides

Car insurance less expensive than other areas

More people riding bicycles on the highway – insufficient safety measures in place (lights, bike lanes, etc.)

Need more education around safe bike riding (“Bike Rodeo” this weekend)

18-wheelers driving too fast, causing accidents

Used to have county bus service discontinued from coming to Chincoteague last fall

No cab services

Some people charge to give rides

Roads to the south get narrow and you can't see the paint on the road

Back roads are in great condition – you can get everywhere on them

Public transportation is getting better – more stops and willing to stop at your house if you call ahead

Star transit refuses to go beyond certain geographic limits

Limited hours, frequent delays make travel time unpredictable

No service at night

Some folks are in connection with the cancer center or other services to get them to the grocery store, etc. – there are some underused services out there (American Cancer Society Road to Recovery)

Eastern Shore Area on Aging has 2 vans – used to pick up persons with disabilities to take to medical appointments (free, no requirement to qualify)

Medicaid cabs need two weeks' notice to transport to doctor's appointment

Star Transit's cost is good but the times and area covered are limited

Need city buses

Need medical transport services for people without Medicaid

Need more buses for handicapped persons

5. Are there **employment opportunities available?**

Very limited***

Large employers are Bay Shore, Tyson, Purdue, fast food, seasonal tourist industry, NASA, schools, hospital

Some are laying off employees

Offering less overtime, cutting back hours

When the chicken plants cut back, the community could suffer

Migrant workers August-Oct/Nov

Business running into community barriers (chicken plants looking to expand chicken houses into Northampton County)

NASA seeking expansion (does not align with ES labor pool, skill sets)

Need a youth center – education, resources, and engagement

Sewage and infrastructure problems are a barrier to new businesses coming to ES

Need fabrication industries

Not enough job training to draw big companies to the area

Need more chicken houses so the two chicken plants can expand to capacity, increase employment opportunities

Geographic limitations of the area - need more, smaller businesses

Bridge-Tunnel tolls held artificially high – barrier to employment commutes

Biggest industry is tourism in Chincoteague– make all of your \$ in the summer

Affordable parking is key to keeping tourists coming

People who work at NASA place their kids in Maryland schools

Service jobs don't earn enough

Lack of high-speed Internet access for the entire shore – will have access within the next year

Lack of employment on the shore, especially in Northampton – no new jobs coming to Northampton – need more diversity in employment opportunities

Younger people are leaving Northampton, leaving an aging population

Biggest employers are in healthcare and education. Farming to a much lesser extent.

Cape Charles gets some tourism, but those jobs are seasonal for low pay

Some people say that construction is improving, but that may be because a lot of places went out of business in the recession so there's less competition for new businesses

A lot of retired people on the shore

Government restrictions on fishing and crabbing make it difficult to make a living

Some aquaculture

Folks need to consider how are we going to maintain the eastern shore culture but generate new opportunities for growth and employment to get people excited about staying here on the shore rather than moving away – policy makers need to be convinced

One job may not be enough to make ends meet

There are no jobs, you; have to really look

Networking is a must

No jobs unless you go to work for the chicken farm companies

Employee requirements are not reasonable

Need more employers

Better paying jobs

6. Are there any specific *job trainings* needed?

Literacy level is low among many adults**

Insufficient incentive to further education without job opportunities

Establishing education as a value in the home*

About 1/3 of adults 25+ do not have HS diploma/GED

Job Corp and YMCA provide youth education – teen pregnancy rate declining

High HS dropout rate

Need consumer math skills

Fabrications computers telecommunications

Technical colleges or schools would provide incentive for big companies – readily available workforce

Reading and writing, basic math skills

Heating and A/C training

Untapped grant opportunities

This community is good adapting to the job opportunities by training students for what's available

Vocational trainings – plumbing, electrical, auto mechanics, HVAC

Need a big-ticket degree to work at NASA

County is not friendly to big business – lot of bureaucratic barriers - not so much in Chincoteague but the rest of the county

Great welding program but no jobs for that on the shore

Industrial arts programs have been abandoned

No unions on the shore to provide on-the-job training

Not enough liberal arts programs

Shore should invest in technical training – college should have training and certification for auto mechanics

Kids who don't like school really seem to enjoy the vocational programs

GED isn't easy to pass – barrier to getting into vocational programs

A lot of vocational programs offered in Accomack are not offered in Northampton

Eastern Shore Community College has classes at convenient times

Training is needed for jobs like Cashier, Quick Books, Secretary, and Computer Programmer

The cost of higher education and training is a barrier

Trainings needed for offices, pharmacy tech, nursing, computers, and green energy

Need on-the-job training programs

Need to volunteer

Employers are not working with people with criminal histories

7. Is *healthcare* accessible? Is it affordable?

Rural Health Centers and Health Dept. offer income-based fees (sliding scale)

Lack of providers

Lack of transportation to Rural Health

No urgent care centers

Hospital move will affect many people

Access to dental care for Medicaid participants

Schools and Head Start have dental clinics

Senior services offer transportation, home weatherization

Gap in services for those who earn too much to qualify for Rural Health but too little to afford healthcare

Continuity of services is a problem

Information about services not adequately communicated to lower-income families

Have to go elsewhere for specialty care

Primary care is plentiful

Common to cross into Salisbury for healthcare

Rural health system ranked in top 3 in the country (includes dental, ob-gyn care)

Mental health services are lacking

Smaller population means greater difficulty subsidizing specialized care

Cost of medications is a problem

When the hospital moves to Accomack, it will be able to attract more specialists to the area – specialists will then attract sub-specialists

CHCs open half-day Saturday, no Sunday

Tourists put strain on ambulances

Health facilities are too far apart

The Shore lost a lot of physicians due to contractual obligations through the Health Corps as they only have 3-4 years of obligation

Get used to certain doctors then they leave

Affordable dental care – bring back dental fairs!

Dentists not available 5 days a week

Dialysis – have to go to Nassawadox

Primary care hours are limited

Have to travel far to get specialty care

Have to travel too far to find primary care providers; access is limited

Specialty care is nonexistent

The hospital is getting a bad reputation

The hospital doesn't accept all forms of health insurance

Not many pediatricians

Need more inpatient/residential resources for substance abuse

Great senior center on shore but some single elderly don't have transit to the center (churches, senior center offer some transportation)

People misuse the emergency room because 1) you can't be refused care for lack of insurance 2) lack of after-hours care

Emergency services get called for simple problems

Hospital moving soon out of Northampton – it's a long time coming but I think other urgent care centers will come to the southern end of the shore

Get a doctor that you like then they leave, especially pediatricians

If a new hospital comes, then we may get more specialists
The Eastern Shore hospital not as well equipped for emergency care as other hospitals on the other side of the bay
Doctor's offices have long waits for appointments – several weeks or months
Doctor's offices seem to give preferential treatment related to which school district you're in
I love my doctor at Cape Charles Medical Center
Franktown is pretty good with scheduling appointments within reasonable time frames
Positive - Pediatricians at rural health see patients at the hospital
Positive – the hospice is wonderful – the staff is accessible and easy to work with – go above and beyond
No insurance means no specialist
Need affordable health or dental plans
Go to Maryland for primary care because they have appointments available
No emergency care or hospital service
No after hour care
Quality of care is low for uninsured

8. Is education accessible? Is it affordable?

Parent involvement is almost nonexistent

Teacher wages are too low

No accountability for school tardiness

School bus transportation is reliable but often slow due to geography

Community college accessible and affordable

YMCA offers free tutoring

Language barriers for migrant workers

Turkish and Haitian populations are increasing

Weekend education less accessible

Dual enrollment offered at all high schools – now for fee

e-learn for GED online learning

Many residents have difficulty with Internet connection

Increased classroom size

Decreased school budgets

Lack of school supplies

Parent involvement in student achievement

College enrollment increasing

College graduates leave the area to seek higher-paying jobs, more professional job opportunities

Difficult to stay in education programs when facing housing and financial crises

Elementary education needs greater focus on basic practical math skills

SOL testing gets in the way of practical education

Teachers burdened with more administrative responsibilities

Parents, churches, and communities need to reinforce learning for children

Public schools offer programs for people to come into the school and volunteer

Need more parenting classes for families on the shore

Would like to have a satellite location for community college

Better quality education

Kids are more focused

Parents and teachers are involved

High schools need to offer more vocational programs again

The community college is fantastic – very accessible and help with financial aid – there's something for everyone at the community college

Public schools are in really bad shape (quality of classroom instruction) across the board, and families can't afford alternatives

Reading level of high school graduates is insufficient

Focus on stupid things like uniforms; seem to be less concerned about reading level

Kids aren't being well prepared for the workplace or higher education

Too many kids in one school, classes being combined (Northampton)

Northampton not able to tend to problems surrounding kids in poverty – housing issues, etc. (school social work)

Teachers don't have the money to purchase resources that they need to teach – kids have to switch off reading the required books or teachers have to buy their own materials

Parents unable to help kids with homework because of their own lack of education

High teen pregnancy, but it seems to be declining due to outreach

Need more higher education

Need affordable pre-school
Good class size overall
No resources for special needs children
The location of schools (i.e. Chincoteague and ESCC)
Schools are good
Need more art programs in a community center

for more information contact

Elaine K. N. Meil, Executive Director
Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission
PO Box 417, Accomac, VA 23301
757-787-2936
Fax 757-787-4221
e-mail emeil@a-npdc.org