

The Future of Hampton Roads, Inc.

THE HAMPTON ROADS REGIONAL STRUCTURE PROJECT

PROCEEDINGS
Of Conferences on Regional Structure

27 July 2005 with the Project Steering Committee
14 January 2006 at Virginia Wesleyan College, Norfolk
21 January 2006 at Tidewater Community College, Virginia Beach
28 January 2006 at Thomas Nelson Community College, Hampton

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The Hampton Roads Regional Structure Project
An initiative of the Future of Hampton Roads, Inc.
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Participants

The following members of the Project Steering Committee, board members of Steering Committee organizations, and members of the general public participated in the conference discussion groups.

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James F. Babcock	Robert Glover	John D. Padgett
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Introduction

This record of discussions among some 140 citizens of Hampton Roads provides the basis for *Report No.2 – Transforming the Regional Structure*, issued in February 2006 by the Project Steering Committee. The Hampton Roads Planning District Commission, Virginia Wesleyan College, Tidewater Community College and Thomas Nelson Community College kindly contributed the use of their meeting halls and classrooms for the conferences. Funds for printing reports were generously furnished by BB&T, Bank of America, SunTrust, and Wachovia banks.

The remarks of the keynote speakers, all current or former mayors, sharply highlight the structural problem: They do not see themselves as particularly empowered to seek regional prosperity through combined action. They acknowledge the wasteful competition among the local governments, blaming it on the structure in which they find themselves. This is precisely the starting point for the Hampton Roads Regional Structure Project.

Consensus during the breakouts appears to have been achieved on the following ideas:

1. The metro region of Hampton Roads requires a *stronger central leadership entity* in order to compete more effectively in the global economy. *People want leaders to collaborate to get the region's act together.*
2. The necessary leadership entity should be *politically legitimate*, therefore it should be composed of the city mayors and county chairs and be chartered by the General Assembly as a Hampton Roads Metropolitan Council. *But the mayors and their council colleagues must become stand-up advocates for regional power sharing and seek the necessary authority.* The majority of the public will back common sense collaborative action.
3. The proposed Council must be *empowered to make decisions* on regional issues, and it must have a source of *sustained funding*. The Chair of the regional Council should be the *spokesperson for the region.*
4. *No mergers of present cities and counties* is desired. *No large regional bureaucracy* is needed to support the proposed Council as administrative support can be provided by the Planning District Commission.
5. The key function of the Council will be to generate momentum for implementing *a regional vision to increase the region's income*. Visionary leadership is needed. A body such as the Hampton Roads Partnership can organize the regional community to create the vision and legislative agenda, while implementation of strategies and programs should be delegated to the local governments and appropriate private bodies.
6. *Communications plans must be instituted* to create broader understanding among the public of regional issues and to involve citizens in setting goals for regional growth.
7. Given fiscal stress and taxpayer resistance, the local governments should create a *serious process for finding economies* by using modern technologies and management techniques to share overhead and service delivery structures in appropriate ways. A number of specific suggestions were offered.

THE PROCEEDINGS

Keynote Speeches

Keynote Remarks of Hon. E. Dana Dickens, President, Hampton Roads Partnership at the 14 January 2006 conference of the Regional Structure Project

I want to thank:

Jim Babcock, for his long lasting effort to promote regional cooperation ... like the Eveready bunny he keeps going and going and going.

Vince Thomas: Vince and I hit it off very first time we met. I was Mayor of Suffolk. He said we need to do something about this regional cooperation and I said "Yes sir, I couldn't agree more." Shocked him, I think, to hear a Mayor say that.

And to the folks of Future of Hampton Roads, thank you for all the hours you have put into this structure study. I am very impressed with the caliber of work and anxiously await the final product. You are an impressive group of folks and I encourage you to keep up the good work.

I feel like I am preaching to the choir here as you all are as passionate about this issue as I am. Many of you have been talking about regional cooperation much longer than I have ... but I have some great news for you! WE ARE NOT ALONE!!!! HRP has embarked on a "Listen and Learn Tour" and there are lots of citizens in Hampton Roads who think more regional cooperation is essential to our success. Let me tell you a little about that tour.

In the last several months, we have visited over 35 groups ranging from the Future of Hampton Roads Board, to Rotary and Kiwanis Clubs, to Leadership groups, Business groups, and the NAACP. We have been in front of almost 2,000 regular citizens all over Hampton Roads. And with very few exceptions, they say more regional cooperation is important.

And when asked why there is not more cooperation, they say local government officials don't want to give up power. Well Having been a local government official, I just know that is wrong!!!! I know I, and certainly every one I currently know, would gladly give up his seat in the name of regional cooperation ... right ... Just kidding.

I'm not sure giving up the power is the only issue but it certainly rang true with our Listen and Learn tour. Let me tell you something from a local government's official's point of view.

If I am elected to a seat on council by the folks in my community, my allegiance is to the people in that community. I am their advocate, their problem solver, and their protector. When I was elected Mayor, I was the chief cheerleader for the City. If you said something bad about my city, I was ready to ask you to step outside to settle it! Kinda like saying something bad about someone's mother ... it doesn't sit too well.

My job was to make my city the best it could be and to sing its praises from "one end of Hampton roads to the other". I was so bad that I often said "if you work hard, and if you are good, and say your prayers every night, you might get to live in Suffolk some day." You live and breath that so strongly you begin to believe that if another City gets something, then you lose. You know, if you win, I lose.

And the most crushing question of all ... they got something over there, why didn't we get it too? "You let them get something and we didn't get nothin' ... I will never vote for you again... or I'm going to run against you." That is a council member's worst nightmare ... worse than voting against your mother on a zoning issue.

Ladies and gentlemen, I'm over-dramatizing this a bit ... but just a little bit. Can you see how hard it is for local governments to cooperate when there is perception that someone wins and someone loses"?

Our challenge at the Hampton Roads Partnership is to figure out how to get around this "win/lose" mentality and develop a win/win attitude. Because you know what, it's all about being competitive ... being competitive in the global market place.

A participant in Franklin said our problem is "too many of us are still worried about who won the ball game in 1947!" And he is right. And while we are worried about an old ball game, Charlotte, The Research Triangle, Nashville, and others, are eating our lunch.

Did you know that the average per capita income in Hampton Roads was equal to or better than all our competitors in 1980 but had slipped almost a basis point per year for the next 15 years? In the mid 90's our per capita income was 85, 86, 87% of many of our competitor communities. THE COMPETITION WE HAVE IS NOT AMONG OURSELVES ... IT'S FROM OUTSIDE THE REGION.

You understand that, I understand it... Hampton Roads Citizens understand, and I believe local government officials understand that.

So how do we change the "you win, I lose" mentality to a win/win attitude?

The first place to look for the answer is in the structure of government. We now set city against city, our system fosters competition. It discourages us from pooling our resources, sharing our assets. It encourages short-sighted, self-serving politics.

But there is a solution and I believe the work you are doing will produce that solution. You have done a great amount of work and the citizens of Hampton Roads appreciate it.

Another solution is to go to every man, woman and child in Hampton Roads and make the case: We are interdependent, we are more competitive and more successful if we are one region, one people, and together we have one future.

Hampton Roads Partnership is working on that one and we'll need your help.

**Keynote Remarks of Hon. Meyera E. Oberndorf, Mayor, City of Virginia Beach
at the 14 January 2006 conference of the Regional Structure Project**
(Owing to her illness, her remarks were delivered by Asst. City Manager Diane Roach)

Good morning and thank you for inviting me to be with you today. I want to start this discussion with a statement that is part of Virginia Beach's strategy document for achieving City Council's vision. It reads: "[Our] Regional Setting and Relationships require that in order for independence of individuals to occur, there needs to be increasing interdependence of the Hampton Roads cities." Yes, you heard

me right, *independence* of individuals through *interdependence* of cities. Simply put, it's looking out for the best interests of our individual citizens by working together as a team.

There is not a person living or working in Hampton Roads who can say that the discussion of regional cooperation has not had at least some impact on them. We are interdependent, no question about that. And cooperation among the municipalities is essential to our region's success as a whole. This is a timely and relevant topic, and I am pleased to be part of the discussion. All good leaders know it is important to step back and evaluate what is being done currently and how it might be done better.

We need to have an ongoing dialogue, and I'm grateful the Future of Hampton Roads has elected to bring together such a tremendous cross-section of leaders to engage in this conversation this morning, and at your other two conferences that are being held in other parts of the region.

When I think of the positive aspects—and importance of—regional cooperation, I often think of the Mayors and Chairs committee. We rotate the chairmanship of this group, as well as our meeting locations. We get together regularly for what I consider to be valuable discussion.

We all are extraordinarily busy handling the day-to-day work in our individual cities—and it should be noted in this discussion that as much as we value regionalism, we are currently, and I expect we shall remain, individual cities, towns and counties, but with regional perspectives and initiatives.

The first responsibility of elected officials and municipal staff members is to serve *their* citizens. That is reality, and this discussion won't change that. However, in serving our citizens, we must engage in regional dialogue because that is, without question, in the best interests of our citizens.

I have been a part of this dialogue for years and have heard countless positions on the topic. Let me succinctly state my viewpoint...

Regional *cooperation* is valuable and essential for all cities in Hampton Roads. This does not mean that we should merge, in fact, I believe exactly the opposite. I do not want to see us become another New York City with a central city and boroughs. What it does mean is that we need to communicate with one another and partner where it makes sense.

And where it makes most sense to me is in relation to issues that don't stop at borders—transportation, homelessness, emergency preparedness, job markets, labor pools, and the like.

But when it comes down to it, each municipality must bear the responsibility for their individual municipality. That's why we in the City of Virginia Beach are excited about having a region-wide effort to protect the vital defense industry in Hampton Roads.

The latest BRAC process was a sobering experience for everyone who depends on the military for economic vitality—which means everyone in Hampton Roads. The immediate threat is to Oceana, which is the largest employer in the City of Virginia Beach. We knew we were at risk. It's a testament to the leadership of the cities across the region that they, too, understood that a threat to Oceana is a threat to all.

That's why a regional lobbyist working to safeguard the future of all Hampton Roads military installations makes sense. Virginia Beach supports that effort 100%, but because the immediate threat lies within our borders, we also feel compelled to take additional action independently.

Let me use an analogy to explain it more clearly—as a human being, I want to work hard to keep our children safe and will do whatever I can to make sure there are programs for young people so they can grow and become productive, contributing members of society. At the same time, as a parent, it is my responsibility to take specific action to protect my own children, to make sure they wear their helmet when riding a bike, to review their homework and be involved in their school, to enroll them in Scouts or sports. I want that for everyone, but cannot control that, I can only support it. I can, however, control it for my own, and I am duty-bound to do so.

That doesn't mean that Virginia Beach is made of money. Sometimes it seems that there is a perception that because Virginia Beach is the largest city in the region and is among the most well-managed in the nation that we have endless financial resources. That simply is not the case—just ask the people whose programs were cut in this last budget process. We have to prioritize, and I daresay that's true region-wide as well. We know we cannot depend on the state and the federal government to shower us with grants and other funds. And we sometimes are let to creatively problem solve when we've allocated all the local funds we have or expect to have and then something happens on the state or federal level that impacts that funding. We saw this in glaring light when the car tax cut happened a few years ago and localities were left to shoulder their same burdens with significantly less income, or even during Hurricane Isabel, when a federal pronouncement led to 5,000 extra people showing up in our Human Services department to collect food stamps we didn't have.

My point in telling you that is to remind you that localities have to expect the unexpected.

We in Virginia Beach are willing to shoulder our responsibility, but cannot afford to be the only one doing so. Virginia Beach is part of the Hampton Roads Economic

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Development Alliance, and we've been a part of it since it was founded almost 10 years ago. And we pay more to it than any other city in the region. Although our return on investment does not necessarily justify our participation, we've done it anyway, because we've felt it was in the best interest of the region as a whole.

That's one of the things that I hope you will consider in your discussions today. The concept of regionalism is a good one. There can be great value in regional cooperation and partnerships. The flip side of value, however, is cost. That's a four-letter word most people don't like to discuss, but to be responsible stewards of taxpayer funds, we have to acknowledge that pink elephant in the room. We have to find a way that cost and value can be more closely aligned. Unfortunately, the argument that something is “the right thing to do” only works so long for the people footing the bill.

There are some tremendously successful and promising regionally minded groups and organizations at work in Hampton Roads today. The Chamber of Commerce is one that comes to mind. That consolidation of the five individual chambers did not come without a struggle, and each city still has

individual boards. I wonder if they tried to do it today, would that merger be successful? If not, why not? The Hampton Roads Planning District Commission is another regionally minded group that makes a lot of sense. These are some of the mechanisms of regional cooperation.

I understand you all have a copy of the Hampton Roads Regional Structure Project's report on how the region works. I have not read through that report, but I suspect it has many more examples than I can possibly give you in this short presentation.

I also know you have 35 community organizations that have been invited to participate in today's conference. That's a tremendous group of who I suspect will be forward thinkers eager to get to work on a complex, endlessly fascinating and often controversial topic. I look forward to learning what outcomes you discover today, and I thank you for inviting me to be part of it.

**Keynote Remarks of Hon. Joe Frank, Mayor, City of Newport News
At the 28 January 2006 conference of the Regional Structure Project**

Thank you for the kind introduction. It is certainly an honor and a pleasure to come before this conference regarding the Hampton Roads Structure Project.

I have been asked to speak about the subject of regionalism from my perspective as Mayor of the City of Newport news, and I hope you would agree, a long-term advocate of regional cooperation in the Hampton Roads area.

Where does regionalism stand in Hampton Roads in 2006?

A fair and balanced answer to that question requires historical perspective. Compared to some urban areas like Portland, Oregon or Oklahoma City, one could argue that

regionalism in Hampton Roads remains quite limited. On the other hand, if you look at where Hampton Roads is today in comparison to the regional cooperation of 40 years ago, one must conclude that good progress has been made.

During that 40 years, in the context of broad progress, specific achievements and notable setbacks have occurred. The overall suburbanization of Hampton Roads and the vastly improved transportation connections between Southside and the Peninsula are the forces which have led to the changing regional dynamic.

Some of the most noteworthy achievements during the last generation have included the consolidation of the Virginia ports, the establishment of the Hampton Roads Planning District, and more recently, the creation of the Hampton Roads Transit Authority and the Hampton Roads Partnership. Just last year our economic development marketing activities were merged in the Hampton Roads Economic Development Alliance.

I would have to say that our inability to totally come together on mutual transportation issues represents one of my biggest disappointments and in my view the region's largest failure (i.e., light rail and the third crossing transit plan). Another area where our efforts have not been successful despite serious efforts, has been in the recruitment of major league sports and franchises and related infrastructure issues. And, finally, we should not dismiss the problem of regional identity. While we have all officially come together and agreed that we are Hampton Roads, the fact is very few people in the country and around the world know where Hampton Roads is. Clearly, our regional marketing and civic pride suffer from this lack of name recognition.

Another perspective on regional cooperation that I want to share with you is how this issue is generally viewed from the Peninsula. It is a fact that many of us see the Peninsula as a separate and distinct place from Southside Hampton Roads. This is true partly because of geography, partly because of living and working patterns, and is certainly reinforced by our separate institutions. The Peninsula has its own newspaper, it has its own Chamber of Commerce, its own business roundtable, and a distinctly identifiable economy.

Because of this separate identity that has been the experience of most Peninsula citizens, there remains a certain feeling of independence or separation from Southside Hampton Roads even though our common interests are recognized. Among the business community and individuals in leadership around the Peninsula, there is a perspective that could be described something like this: "Whenever a Peninsula and Southside institution merge, the good stuff ends up on the Southside." For example, when the ports merged almost all of the port-related employment gravitated to Norfolk. When the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission was consolidated the main office went to Chesapeake. When the Hampton Roads Partnership was created the office went to Norfolk. And, yes, the same thing happened with the consolidated [Economic Development] Alliance.

While such developments are understandable given the weight of the population on the Southside, it is certainly not inaccurate for Peninsula leaders to have a certain amount of trepidation that consolidation equals loss. [It also affects the] willingness of people to travel and engage in meetings.

If institutions that remain separate were to consolidate in the future the same expectation would exist. If Hampton Roads had one newspaper where would its main office be? If Hampton Roads had one Chamber of Commerce where would its main office be?

Implied in my comments is perhaps a lesson for the future. To the extent that additional consolidation is desirable, Southside leaders may want to consciously take into account this historical experience of the Virginia Peninsula and find ways to compensate.

Despite my comments about how the Peninsula feels about being "swallowed" by Southside, there is broad support for continuing the movement toward constructive regional cooperation. The Peninsula and Newport news have supported the Hampton Roads Transit consolidation and efforts to fund the third crossing, as well as the [Economic Development] Alliance merger. We provided our fair share of support to newly created regional institutions both in terms of leadership and financial resources.

On a personal level, I and others in positions of leadership on the Virginia Peninsula have carried our weight when it comes to regional cooperation. I believe many of you are aware of my long-standing involvement in the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission and the Metropolitan Planning Organization. With the support of my City Council, I have worked for Hampton Roads' interests with state government and sought alliances between Hampton Roads communities and other urban areas in the Commonwealth.

I think it is fair to say that the Peninsula has broadly contributed its time and talents to Hampton Roads regional efforts.

Let me now shift and talk about regional issues from the standpoint of how an individual locality is compelled to behave and compete with its regional neighbors.

How are localities approaching planning and development in a state system which forces localities within a single region to compete and sometimes pursue "beggar thy neighbor" policies or at least uncoordinated growth and development policies?

Let's think about growth from a regional perspective.

What's good? Greater wealth, upward mobility, choice in where to live, work, shop, all of the quality-of-life things a wealthier and larger community offers: concerts, sushi, pro sports, nice parks, good air service, good hospitals, etc.

What's not so good? Traffic, sprawl, loss of green space and agricultural land, imbalances between newer wealthier suburbs and older more urban areas, redundant facilities (convention centers) and excessive infrastructure (new schools in outlying areas).

How do we reconcile these pros and cons? Regional planning in theory. Hardly at all in practice.

In the real world, how do individual localities respond to the imperatives and risks of growth, playing the hand they are dealt?

Is competition among Hampton Roads localities for quality growth positive, negative, rational? For the most part, we are competing for the good stuff and hoping our neighbors get stuck with the less desirable aspects of growth.

Is this competition among localities a positive or negative dynamic? This is a debatable question. On the plus side, one can argue that competition within the region creates choice for residents and incentives for localities to improve themselves or establish special niches much like a private, free market. For example, a locality may specialize in quality public schools, single-family subdivisions, upscale shopping, the arts and culture and so forth. Desirable communities are rewarded by people can afford to make a choice by moving to, or using the services of such "successful" places.

The counter argument is that such competition within the region creates irrational investments and public policy that promotes some sections of the region at the expense of others and the overall health of the regional economy. Should every city in Hampton Roads be subsidizing the creation of

convention or hotel conference centers? Instead of five 8,000 to 10,000 seat basketball arenas, should we have figured out a way to build one within the region big enough for an NBA team? In the competition to make your locality more desirable than your immediate neighbor, what happens to the need for balanced growth? (The region needs affordable housing, not just McMansions. Should we all be pursuing upscale retail and office uses? Even though a light rail connection between Norfolk and Virginia Beach would be great for regional transportation, it was opposed for fear of endangering the “desirability” of Virginia Beach. Affordable housing in close proximity to new retail and service businesses is rarely allowed, for example, in Williamsburg, Virginia Beach, and elsewhere.)

For better or worse, Virginia localities often pursue a beggar thy neighbor policy because it is the rational response to the tax structure and planning laws that exist in Virginia.

How are our localities competing for quality development amongst each other and against other regions?

There has been a major change in economic development philosophy in my city and many others. Emphasis formerly was on “smokestack chasing”—bringing in export sector [companies]. The idea was that service and retail sectors more or less took care of themselves. Now there is a much more holistic attitude about the nature of work, creating a “place” that is stimulating, fun, and attractive in which to live, work, and play. You no longer recruit employers by suggesting “you can pay everybody less than where you are now.”

This is a major change in planning philosophy. We all used to have a Los Angeles style “separation of use” automobile-oriented zoning. Today, mixed-use pedestrian-friendly is increasingly encouraged. This fits in with the new economic development philosophy and also reflects our changing demographics and economy—more households without children, older folks desiring to be near health care, fewer polluting-type heavy industries.

In terms of regional structures and planning, however, it’s a fact that most of the effort to reshape the region is occurring through initiatives sponsored by individual localities. The Newport News example includes investments in arts and culture, such as the Virginia Living Museum, the Mariners, and Christopher Newport University, and developments like Port Warwick, Asheton, and City Center at Oyster Point.

At this time in the region’s history, most major land-use decisions and public-private partnerships occur at the level of the individual locality. These are the decisions that are reshaping Hampton Roads.

Regional cooperation is more tangible with regard to the growth of regional institutions, including the ports, Hampton Roads Transit, the Alliance, and the Partnership. I see further regional cooperation and consolidation of institutions as a good but not inevitable process.

A failure to solve our transportation problems will shut down momentum to further integrate the governing structures of Hampton Roads.

Much progress has been made, and I, along with much of the Peninsula’s leadership, have generally been supportive of these efforts.

There is a Peninsula perspective and there are legitimate concerns that sometimes cause us to be cautious. Leaders on Southside Hampton Roads, by being especially sensitive to these legitimate concerns, can go far to reinforce the good progress we are making.

For the foreseeable future, local governments within Hampton Roads will continue to dominate the public policy decision-making that changes the face of the region, even as the regional structures and mechanisms grow in importance.

Conference Procedure

Remarks of James Babcock, Planning Committee, Regional Structure Project at each of the three conferences on January 14, 21, and 28

Today you are going to undertake a challenging task. You are going to divide up into several discussion groups and go out to classrooms to talk about a couple of big questions dealing with regional governance. At the end of the morning your discussion facilitators will give us brief summaries of your ideas. Afterwards, we will prepare a report and share it with you.

However, while the work you do today is an important step in the process, it is not likely that the proposals you come up with today will be in finished form. So we will invite you to continue to work with us in study groups that will refine the principal recommendations that surface from these public conferences. If you find that this work is important, you will want to stay involved. In order to sign up for further involvement, please be sure to fill out the questionnaire form we will hand out.

Now before we break up to go to the classrooms, let me remind you briefly what the Hampton Roads Regional Structure Project is all about. Most of you will have received—and have read, I hope, *Report No. 1*—our Steering Committee’s descriptive report on how the region is organized at present to deal with various issues and opportunities that make up the regional agenda. Out of this initial work by our participating organizations, several propositions emerge that provide the basis for your work today:

First, we recognize that metropolitan regions such as Hampton Roads are the basic units of competition in the national and international economy, and therefore regionalism is about improving the economic competitiveness of the region. All of us have a personal stake in the performance of our interdependent regional economy and quality of life. We are all citizens of Hampton Roads. And although our region has much to brag about, when we look at our economic indicators, such as per capita income and the growth rate of our economy, we see plenty of room for improvement.

Second, regionalism offers the possibility of improvement by bringing leaders and citizens together to envision and work on a shared agenda of issues and opportunities. Regionalism is not about diminishing the role of our individual local governments but about joining together to make decisions and implement programs where a combined effort can avoid wasteful duplication or produce a better result than any one municipality can achieve on its own. Our elected leaders recognize this, at least up to a point— but some of us believe we need to coordinate our efforts even better.

Third, as indicated in *Report No. 1*, although the shared agenda of regional issues is far from covering all functions of government, it is still quite substantial, and this justifies a significant effort to create effective mechanisms of regional cooperation. This is serious business, and it affects all of us.

Fourth, also as described in the booklet, a diverse collection of both public and private entities contribute to regional decision-making in Hampton Roads. And while some sectors are well-organized regionally, we must acknowledge that some are not.

Fifth, a full-blown regional government would be one solution. By government we mean an entity with political legitimacy, decision-making by majority vote, the power to tax, and the power to enforce its decisions. But a complete regional government structure would require either an expensive bureaucracy in addition to our present local governments or the merger of all the local governments. And most of us agree that neither of these alternatives is desirable in Hampton Roads, at least at this time.

Therefore, sixth, if we acknowledge that improved regional performance does require improvement in our structure of regional governance, we are left to consider several important questions, and two of the most important questions are the ones posed for discussion today:

For your first breakout discussion, we ask you to consider: What are the characteristics of an ideal regional organization that can provide what we have called “the stronger voice” for Hampton Roads? How is it chartered? Who makes up its governing body? And how are members of the governing body chosen? What are its powers? Its functions?—what does it *do*? How is it funded?—by contributions or taxes? What features would give it public legitimacy? Finally, can any of our *present* organizations be modified to meet these requirements? In simple English, when we say “somebody ought to do something (about some regional issue),” what should that *somebody* look like? That’s your first task—to brainstorm something short of a full-blown regional government but something more effective than what we now have.

For the second hour: Given that we do not want to merge our cities and counties, and given that they already have found scores of ways to work together—and also given that all of them suffer from fiscal stress while taxpayers don’t want to pay more taxes—what additional steps can our local governments take to achieve economies by sharing or consolidating functions? With modern automation, telecommunications and highways, don’t we have more bureaucracy for some functions than we really need? We would like to know whether you agree that service consolidation is possible and necessary—and what functions might be considered for this purpose.

July 27 Steering Committee**Group 1**

Facilitator-Recorder: Ed Brickell

Priorities:

1. Create a regional water authority. Note: Virginia has a new regulation that requires localities to have a five-day water backup plan. New River Valley will probably implement by creating a regional water authority. This might prove a model for Hampton Roads.
2. Create a regional political action committee (PAC).
3. Create a regional industrial authority.
4. Combine the two workforce development programs.
5. Create a regional tourism marketing authority.
6. Develop a regional land use strategy.
7. Create a Hampton Roads Citizen Advisory Committee for Regional Advancement.
8. Create a regional distribution center for the public schools.
9. Develop a plan for providing for the homeless.
10. Initiate systematic examination of services that could be combined.
11. Develop guidelines for merit-based pay for K-12 teachers.
12. Modify/relax the Dillon Rule.
13. Create a regional legislative roundtable.
14. Create a regional environmental initiative
15. Institute a regional approach to major capital projects
16. Create a center for citizen participation.
17. Build a Hampton Roads raceway.

July 27 Steering Committee**Group 2**

Facilitator-Recorder: Bob Sharak

1. Common regional identity and shared regional vision is required before region can accomplish shared planning and goals
2. Mechanism for convening
 - a. City council members
 - b. School Boards
 - c. Etc.
3. The region needs a more effective legislative coalition
 - a. Formalized structure for existing HR caucus
 - i. Provide for meetings outside the General Assembly session
 - ii. Provide mechanism for relationship building (reduce partisanship)
 - iii. Maybe start with a single, defining (hopefully unifying) issue
 - b. Regional Legislative agenda (possibly through Hampton Roads Partnership)
 - c. Need organizing force (an entity/structure to help make the push)
4. The region needs a better “megaphone” for identifying and highlighting successes.

5. Combine the two Workforce Investment Boards.
6. Better cooperation with technical and career education
 - a. There's an Opportunity, Inc effort to develop shared technical and career education curriculum – need to expand effort.
 - b. Closer connection between industry needs and counseling required.
7. Coordinate workforce efforts of the three Community Colleges.
8. Greater use of joint purchasing among municipalities. (Will possibly need a formal structure to do so rather than current, ad hoc arrangements.)
9. Formal mechanism for consolidating service delivery (service district; multipurpose authority?).
10. Mechanism for sharing revenues and costs across municipal boundaries.
11. Mechanism for joint facilities (infrastructure) planning (for example, convention centers).
12. Mechanism for joint tourism marketing
13. Mechanism for joint land use planning AND management
 - a. Need more than planning or else individual planning commissions will gut plan by variance
 - b. Inclusionary zoning?
 - c. Focus on transportation issues and affordable housing
14. Relaxation of Dillon Rule
15. Need a Major League sports team: The “region’s’ team
 - a. Jointly landed
 - b. Jointly funded facility
16. Mechanism for entrepreneurial support.
17. One stop shop for economic development
 - a. More than current marketing effort
 - b. Zoning, permitting, etc (easy and across municipal boundaries)
 - c. Must make it easy to relocate to and expand in Hampton Roads

July 27 Steering Committee

Group 3

Facilitator-Recorder: Chip Slaven

1. Proposals that will create a stronger political voice:
 - Have political districts redrawn along economic lines by nonpartisan judges or commissions.
 - Reconstitute/empower local state political caucus.
 - Establish a regional economic development authority with a commensurate local government revenue sharing matrix.
 - Create a PAC/voting bloc of local organizations to identify/prioritize issues.
2. Proposals that involve consolidation of government entities or services:
 - Combine local public health/ public assistance programs/organizations.
 - Tourism departments/commissions.
 - Eliminate:
 - City Commissioners of Revenue.
 - Sheriff Departments where city police exist.
3. Proposals that will accelerate economic growth:
 - Funding/grants for higher education Research & Development.
 - Hire/fund appropriate lobbyists.

- Hire/fund grant writers.
- Coordinated regional transportation plan.
- Coordinated regional land use plan.
- Coordinated regional tourism marketing.
- Combined workforce development organization/plan for SHR & Peninsula.

January 14 Conference

Group 4

Facilitator: Joe Bouchard

Recorder: Chip Slaven

1. Establish a Regional Council of Governance (COG)...or.....Council of Kahunas!
 - mayors and chairs
 - coordinate issues with the regional caucus
 - funded commensurate to population of cities/counties
 - oversees 2 subordinate regional organizations:
 - Org A consists of a planning/coordinating board that works with various functional departments still resident in the cities and counties
 - Org B has direct line management responsibilities of all aspects of its subordinate functional departments
2. Org A: Regional Planning & Coordination Board
 - deals with non-regionalized functions (those difficult, emotional issue functions not yet ready or desirable for regionalization)
 - primary duties are planning, coordinating, best practices, standardizing, etc. by various subordinate committees
 - affected functional departments still funded by parent city/county
 - board chairman selected by COG
 - chair and staff funded by cities & counties
 - possibly Planning District Commission
3. Org B: Regional Public Services Agency
 - as many “regionalized” functions as possible (begin with low hanging fruit)
 - total regional authority and responsibility for policy and operational execution of designated functional area
 - run by a regional “city manager” selected by & reporting directly to the COG
 - funded by participating cities/counties and state
 - possibly establish joint advisory groups to provide guidance, direction and local input into some of these functional departments.
4. Strategy: Transition functions from Org A to Org B as time, funding and participating consent allow.

January 14 Conference

Group 5

Sandra Bryant, Facilitator

Mary White, Recorder

1. Question 1: What are the Characteristics of a regional organization that would act as a “stronger voice” of Hampton Roads?

- A. It should be democratic ... open
 -Public participation
 -Within view of public scrutiny
 -Decisions made rapidly and available to public
 -Organization should be accepted by the people
- B. Cultivate improved communications between cities
- C. Begin with a common issue that impact all of the municipalities like homeland security
 -Currently only Norfolk and Virginia Beach
 -Federal government does not see Hampton Roads – only the individual cities
 -Our individual cities cannot attract attention like Atlanta
 -We have a block of military and security entities that should be represented as a whole of 1.5 million not populations of 100,000 – 200,000
 -We need to be a team (together everyone achieves more)
- D. Who is Hampton Roads
 -Tidewater was 7 cities, we are not 17
 -Is that the public perception?
 -Must “put a face” on the region similar to “The Research Triangle” (takes time)
 -We were Tidewater until someone realized that the name didn’t appropriately describe who we are
 -Citizens up north refer to home as northern Virginia not Arlington
- E. Proposed organization should be forward thinking, not historical
- F. Organization should be a subject expert
 -San Diego effort failed due to a lack of buy in
 -Fire departments have succeeded by created mutual aid agreements. (each consolidates resources in time of crisis)

2. How would membership be defined?¹

- A. Equal representation
- B. Number of committee representatives members based on population

3. What about funding?

- * A. Competitive issues could arise concerning funding.
 -Take heed from the founding of the republic. Fairness is better than equality.
 -Is it fair to expect municipalities with lower per capita incomes to share equal burden?
 -Move from majority rule to consensus does not require a referendum.
 -Spending that is decided by consensus
- B. Ideas must be sold to the committee. The one proposing has the burden to persuade.
 -There could be conflict surrounding rural versus metropolitan issues
 -Example – Fairfax County pays much to improve the roads in areas that consistently voted against funding road improvement.
- C. If one equal vote per committee member, the affluent could be outvoted.

¹ Bolded black text indicates questions from the facilitator.

- D. City representatives may have a tough job explaining to people why they may have to pay in \$1.00 and receive on 60¢ benefit. We must teach the people that $1 + 1 = 3$. (similar to Dana’s point that the rising water lifts all boats)

4. Should there be one overarching organization or several smaller defined by specific interest groups that collaborate in time of need?

- A. The current scope of FHR is larger than economics
 -Already addressing issues related to education
 -Current purpose is fostering regional competitiveness
- B. Current regional entities may not have public support
 -Example – regional transportation initiative by the Yes organization. Killed by the “Axe the Tax” slogan. The public has an easier time latching on the slogan than reading the 20 page report produced by Yes.
 -Public does not like to be left out of important initiatives
 -Any organization affecting policy and dollars must be democratic at the grass roots level
 -Lack of consideration or communication could create unusual alliances against a proposed regional initiative.
- C. Town Hall meetings are good for educating the public. But they don’t make decisions
 -Decision by public vote?
 -Decision by local officials?
 -Public does not often invest time needed to be properly informed
 -The need for distributing information could compete with the need to “get it done”
- D. The proposed organization will not be able to solve all of the problems. Will need to work through other organizations at times
- E. Something is needed to brainstorm ideas and promote synergy
- F. The proposed organization needs a tight mission statement that the people can embrace and understand
- G. Dade County Florida consolidated school system
 -Reduced competition for teachers.
 -Eliminated incongruence in education programming
 -Some prospering components initially resisted because they felt their hard earned SOL averages would decline. That did happen initially, but over time SOL averages for entire region improved.

5. Is there a current organization that could be modified?

- A. Several organizations in existence
 -Arts
 -Chamber (Southside only)
 -VA Marine Science (state)
 -Hampton Roads Partnership (HRP)
 -No competition between HRP and Future of Hampton Roads (FHR)
 - Work together closely
 - FHR completely volunteer and can not include elected officials
 -Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) similar to Hampton Roads Planning District Commission (HRPDC) (exact same people)
 - MPO = federal
 - HRPC = General Assembly

-Chesapeake Alliance, Portsmouth Partnership and Suffolk Tomorrow meet regularly through governed separately
-All existing organizations are collaborative to ensure there is little or no duplication of effort
 - Economic Development Alliance (EDA) uses HRPDC for research & analysis as well as HRP which has funding.
 - All bring their individual strengths to bear

- B. H.R. Partnership is a good candidate for modification
- We need to be careful what we create because we will have to live with it.

6. HRPDC is a great group. It is private, while funded by the state. What would be needed to modify it or some other organization?

- A. MPO federally legislated and often used
- B. HRPDC (state) plans sometimes given to MPO for federal funding
- C. These organizations too often leave out the public
- D. None of the existing organizations have a “quality of life” sub group
- E. HRPDC has no public relations support

7. Question 2: What are the various ways in which our local government might consolidate services or provide additional services to achieve economy? (What services? In what form? By what Process?)

- A. HRPartnership.org has a list of several on their website

8. Existing efforts

- A. Fire departments
- B. Purchasing consortium
- C. Rural governments contract with farms to use farm equipment for grass, snow removal, ditch digging, etc.

9. Other opportunities

- A. Combine school and city operating expenses such as cars and fuel
- B. Most municipalities have services that are fairly common and provide opportunities to great savings if combined.
 -Fire fighting
 -Policing
 -Recreation
- C. Schools (this would be very hard to implement in the current climate)
 -Schools could share facilities and programming with recreational departments
 -Anything proposed for the schools must be consensual or a referendum will be needed.
 -A Community college offered classes for adults/parents
 - Increased adult presence during the day reduced behavior problems
 - Increased literacy of parents positively impacted SOL scores for area
 -Partnerships between schools and boys and girls clubs reduce programming cost and increase SOL scores
- D. starting with the low hanging fruit allows us to create a model that would educate and ease attempts in with more difficult

10. What about consolidation of public city services?

- A. trash collection

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-provided through SE public service authority
-standardization could constrain rising fees

- control cost
- encourage recycling
- control dump sites
- don't step on private industry toes
- Confront request from other states to use Virginia to dump. We take care of our trash; they can take care of theirs – responsibility.
- B. Computer services
- C. Public Transportation
 -HRT is under the regional transportation authority
 - What about influencing service levels
 - Currently handled by city representatives
 -Bad signing of evacuation routes
- D. Regional marketing
- E. Common communication systems that take advantage of federal / state
- F. Consolidation of city health care plans
- G. Regional water initiative
 -Existing state law for transfer of water between cities in an emergency
 -HRSD was originally established for water (SIPSA)
 -South Norfolk gave free access to pipes for years but savings were not reciprocated
 -30 million gallon excess in but still running pipes 76 miles.
- H. What will happen to existing regional organizations when the proposed one is created?

January 14 Conference

Group 6

Facilitator: Cathy Lewis

Recorder: Kelly Jackson

1. Overview

A. Hampton Roads should work toward regional governance slowly, beginning with the easier issues, and adding others to gradually evolve into a network of regional cooperation. Governments may or may not ever merge, but could cooperate across boundaries on many things. Taking one issue at a time, the group thought, we may one day wake up and have a form of regional government which would have grown up over time based on a foundation of successes.

B. There may be regional organizations that could be enhanced to serve as the structure for considering regional issues, but this is by no means clear. To begin the process, existing regional groups could convene to “plan to plan” for more regional cooperation. These groups would include at least: Hampton Roads Partnership; Hampton Roads Planning District Commission; The Future of Hampton Roads. The plan could include state support for a study on regional governance. Public perception should be a key issue in how the regional structure is formed.

C. The regional planning organization must be well defined, have authority and funding ability, and require accountability.

D. To be effective, a structure for regional planning requires political legitimacy, strong leadership with a cooperative disposition, and the support of state legislators, including and perhaps most importantly, the Hampton Roads delegation.

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2. Potential Areas for Consideration

A. Some of the areas a regional planning organization could consider include:

- Transportation
- Land Use
- Homeland Security
- Water
- Tourism Research
- Workforce
- Chambers (Southside and Peninsula)
- Libraries
- Schools/Purchasing
- Arts/Leisure
- Revenue Sharing
- Public Safety
- Funding for the region (state and federal)
- Trash
- Community Colleges
- Emergency Evacuation
- Mass Transit
- Recycling

January 14 Conference

Group 7

Facilitator: Joanna McAnulty

Recorder: Dan Cawley

1. In our initial introductions of the group it was discovered that many of us came from outside Virginia. One individual commented that he was originally confused by the government structure upon arriving and when he applied for a driver's license, the form asked for his county and he didn't know how to answer.
 2. This began a discussion of that structure and the image of a county that contains within it several distinct and independent municipalities framed our discussion for the next two hours.
 3. With that in mind, we first decided to list some of the obstacles to current municipalities cooperating:
 - Political subdivisions
 - Government structures
 - Harbor / water / "north shore vs south shore"
 - City manager structures
 - Politics in general
 4. Next we found obstacles that could be turned to opportunities:
 - Civic pride / regional pride that already exists
 - Many citizens already live regionally in spite of government structure
 5. Quote brought to the table: "If you can't be a formal region then you've got to act like one."
 6. Initial feeling on creating a form of county style entity:
 - Need to approach solution like a business with the health and well being of businesses in mind
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- Needs to be an elected structure
 - Ultimately the authority should come from the people, probably in the form of a referendum
7. Next we discussed examples of regional entities that are working:

- HRSD
- SPSA
- Planning District Commission
- Economic Development (HREDA)

8. Our group thought these kinds of organizations could be the starting point for the responsibilities of a new umbrella entity, the structure should work like a mini general assembly, a regional board or county. The localities would then succeed certain targeted functions to this entity.

9. What would it look like? The discussion went back and forth from an appointed group made up of current elected officials or a group of individuals appointed by elected officials or groups...Or, some felt it needed to be directly elected in order to have authority. It could be 1 vote 1 community of some formula to preserve fair representation.

10. Side note: One goal of the organization should be to make local business processes consistent across the region to improve the efficiencies in the interaction of business and government.

11. The list of regional opportunities to be included among the responsibilities of the entity could include (in no particular order):

- Trash
- Water
- Jails, Group Home System (correctional)
- Economic Development
- Planning
- Some Shared school resources
- Fire
- Police
- Transportation
- Regional Legislative Agenda for Region

12. The legislative agenda and the need for a more regional vision was deemed an important priority.

13. The notion of revenue sharing and its part to play in this process was also deemed important. It was commented that the Dillon Rule need not be an obstacle and the General Assembly has already given permission for localities to share revenue.

14. Funding and Taxing Authority: The notion that if the .01 tax increase had been adopted there would have been hundreds of millions of dollars raised by now (exact number given in discussion lost...sorry).

15. The funding formula for the organization envisioned would be:

- Fee for services (as currently utilized by existing regional organizations)
- Funding formulas (as currently utilized by existing regional organizations)
- New .01 "regional consumption fee" (sales tax)
- Revenue sharing formulas

16. There needs to be more discussion about what would be done with the .01 raised but priority #1 was thought to be transportation.

17. It was also felt that a big job to do before the level of government comes into existence would have to be selling the benefits to citizens and especially to currently elected government leaders.

- Better Services
- Constituents want it

"It's not going to happen without their support."

Recorder: Dan Cawley

1. While our group this morning was small, it was interesting that we were exactly divided between retired military and active duty non-profits.
2. We began our discussion with the notion of the “ideal regional organization” with the notion that it should first and foremost educate the public about the value of regional cooperation and/or government. That in doing so it would make it a priority to get the question of regionalism on the public agenda and work to prevent inertia.
3. The biggest challenge to this is that there is no “crisis” motivating the public to action, although economic factions (namely lagging wages) and BRAC are issues that could be considered so.
4. The starting point, our group decided, could be “what nobody minds losing”, and functions or responsibilities that localities have already shown a willingness to collaborate on. Possible functions could also be “what we do worst”. Another important function would be working with the General Assembly on a regional agenda and improving local/state relationships.
5. The first job of the ideal regional organization should be to act as a “spokesperson”. Additional functions (in no particular order):
 - Jail
 - Transit
 - Water
 - Sewage
 - Trash
 - Targeted Procurement (schools do this a little now)
 - Public Safety (select functions)
 - Transportation (select functions)
 - Government IT / Communications
 - Human Services
 - Health Services
 - Social Services
 - Emergency Preparedness
 - Libraries (select functions)
6. The feeling of the group was that the source of authority for the group would be the state and the jurisdictions cooperating.
7. The idea is to start with an existing administrative group, specifically the Hampton Roads Partnership, with the role of “spokesperson” coming first and later evolving into a more “formal” entity with authority to coordinate the functions outlined above.
8. The current challenge is that regional cooperative initiatives are structured so that veto power on action generally lies in the hands of any single locality. Ultimately a directly elected body or individual would be a possibility in order to create a regional constituency and to act as a check and balance to localized agenda in favor of a regional vision when necessary.
9. In the meantime, our group struggled with the notion of such a political body vs a public private body, saying that in the evolution of any “ideal regional organization” this will be the fork in the road that will need to be discussed, debated and a path selected before the ideal is achieved, whatever that may look like.

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**January 21 Conference
Group 9**

Facilitator: Joanna McAnulty
Recorder: Kelly Jackson

1. Overview

A. While there are numerous regional organizations focused on the long-term well-being of Hampton Roads, none has the authority to make regional decisions. A bottom-up, rather than a top-down, process is probably preferable but will take a long time. The region needs to find common ground on some issues and begin to develop a regional agenda. The process will create and build capacity.

B. A regional structure should focus on cost efficiency and effectiveness of services, implementation of regional plans, the ability to build capacity through collaboration, and minimization of partisan politics.

C. Ultimately, a structure with authority must exist to implement regional decision making. The region needs to speak with one voice to have political legitimacy with the state and federal governments.

2. Potential Regional Structures with Authority

- A. A formal structural relationship between the Authorities and the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission
- B. Mayors and Chairs task individual departments to create efficiencies and improve effectiveness through regional consolidations of services and functions.
- C. Regional legislative package developed by Mayors and Chairs
- D. Regional mayor to articulate regional agenda (elected or appointed on a rotating basis)

January 21 Conference

Group 10

Facilitator: Chip Slaven
Recorder: Ed Brickell

1. Characteristics of ideal regional organization:

- A. Seek official federal designation of the area to be certain it is eligible for all federal grant programs.
- B. Strong, unified political voice (power).

2. Governance:

- A. Empower Mayors & Chairs organization to “standardize” government functions for efficiency, effectiveness, and possible economy of scale.
- B. Authority derived from common consent of all political subdivisions in H.Rds.
- C. Membership: Elected representatives (mayors and chairs).
- D. Publicly funded.
- E. Codified responsibilities.

January 21 Conference

Group 11

Facilitator: Rich Werber

Recorder: Matt Breitenberg

1. Question 1: What are the Characteristics of the ideal regional organization?

A. What key governance functions would it perform?

- provide regional vision/strategy
- able to lobby state for regional funding
- provide accountability
- need openness/transparency
- focused on a few high-impact opportunities
- need big educational effort to communicate benefits – simple, catchy

B. From what source would it derive its authority?

- need referendum – get legitimacy from citizens

C. Who would serve on its governing board?

- strong leadership with focus on region, not their municipality
- not led by a mayor (divided loyalty), but led by an elected person (no benevolent dictator), legitimacy
- consolidate/coordinate existing regional organizations
- least possible change in new structure to improve likelihood of success
- greater citizen involvement/representation (not just business/government)
- strong, committed leaders need to build consensus; strong vision, strong communicators
- diversity

D. How would they be selected?

- slot leadership positions for citizens (how to avoid gadflies?)
- slot a number of seats for each constituency

E. How would they reach decisions?

- data gathering/analysis
- build consensus (better than a vote)
- one person, one vote if voting necessary

F. How would the organization be funded?

- revenue neutral – use funding from existing organizations that would be folded into this (e.g., HRPDC and HRP)

G. How can processes of regional decision-making be improved?

- most effective legislative caucus
 - obstacle: accountability is to district, not region
 - regional entity would develop regional legislative agenda and issue report card

H. Can any present regional organization be altered to serve these purposes?

- HRPDC – expanded role to “operations” – services
- HRP has vision component
- Combining these two could be a quick win

I. Lower priority

- education (K-12), emotional issue
- property assessment
- redevelopment

2. Question 2: Can local governments share or consolidate more functions to achieve savings or better service?

A. Possible consolidation candidates

- social services
- library

- trash/landfills
- fire/public safety/emergency response/police
- water/wastewater
- public transportation – mass transit

B. Make case – cost savings, service/quality improvement

January 28 Conference

Group 12

Facilitator: Joe Bouchard

Recorder: Ray Taylor

1. Opening discussions:

- People like the idea of a region, and they act as, a region, but our local governments do not do the same.
- The idea of regionalism needs to be marketed, possibly put on to a ballot.
- Perhaps regionalism could start with small steps; merge more functions, or even merge a few communities, and then move on later from there.
- Homeland security could be a new driver for regionalism.
- We should consider constructing an Area Council while retaining the cities and counties.
- How do we deal with the issue of consensus versus empowerment?
- Determine if we could merge some two or more of the existing regional authorities.

2. Desired characteristics for a regional entity:

- Enduring – it must be durable and not have built-in vulnerabilities.
- It must be empowered by the state.
- It needs to be chartered to be responsible for a selected (limited) number of government functions and to have a selected (limited) number of regulatory authorities.
- It needs to have sufficient funding and fiscal controls.
- It needs to be incentivized – the Baliles point (a strongly expressed point).
- It needs to be the regional spokesman – the one voice that is needed.
- It must have the authority to act with regard to its assigned (few) functions.

3. Candidate topics for regionalism:

- Transportation and transit
- [We did not finish discussions on this topic]

4. How do we get there?

- Educate and energize the business community
- Get the business community allied with the general public
- Get press coverage
- Use the Internet

January 28 Conference

Group 13

Facilitator: Mac McGinty

Recorder: Carmen Burrows

A. Characteristics of Ideal Regional Organization

1. Inclusive for jurisdictions and residents
2. Builds on successful models
3. Has buy-in/commitment from all jurisdictions
4. Is empowered to act for region w/one vote per jurisdiction (or optional voting scheme)
5. Is sustainable long-term – noted that change takes time
6. Is empowered by General Assembly (to mitigate challenges of the Dillon Rule)
7. Has effective/variable funding (per resident, per program)
8. Has an identified regional spokesperson (rotate among jurisdictions)
9. Rotates meeting locations among jurisdictions
10. Could build on current mayors-chairs structures, especially the current 16-member organization
11. Measures regional progress & effectiveness
12. Works to consolidate regional functions for greater efficiency

B. Functions: Ideal organization has multiple functions that:

1. Address broad regional issues
2. Provide new services with new funding
3. Create economics of scale
4. Address issues that cross boundaries
5. Can be supported across the region
6. Consolidate localities' rules & regulations to simplify for economic development
7. Create one strategic plan for regional development
8. Provide guidance to Hampton Roads Legislative Caucus (e.g., legislative voting report card)

C. Decision-Making: Ways to improve regional decision-making:

- Reduce intra-regional rivalry
- Promote regional benefits
- Expand vision of localities' interests
- Emphasize regional decision-making authority
- * Emphasize regional strategic plan
- Collect & use good regional data – consider data from each locality in compiling regional data
- Recognize inequalities among localities & potential adverse effects
- Balance needs of “haves” & “have nots”
- Consolidate lobbying into regional focus – create a regional lobbying organization

D. Planning & Visioning

Coordinate current efforts into one regional strategic plan

Examples of current groups include:

- Planning District Commission
- Hampton Roads Partnership
- Metropolitan Planning Organization
- Planning Council (South Side)
- Specific functions (e.g., HRSD)

January 28 Conference
Group 14

Facilitator: Rich Werber
Recorders: Bob Trahan

A. First breakout session: Characteristics of ideal regional organization

1. Varies with agenda
2. If money comes from people then must have elected officials
3. Mechanism for communication “everybody” – any direction = no direction
4. Don’t think we need to reinvent the wheel
5. Must have objectives – govern? Everything?
6. Two house local government “commission” “council” smaller rep
7. Mayor → Commission → Council, authority = elected
8. Sensitivity to local issues
9. Regional “government” or Regional “organization”
10. When you split out shared services, you must also split out tax dollars (with taxing authority)
11. WHRO “model” for cooperative work in communications
12. Revenue sharing
13. Go to state ... “You need to “incentivize” us
... 599 bill
... our reps do not have the moxie to carry out
14. Must produce tangibles ... not just plans
15. Metrics
16. Hampton Roads Partnership ?
17. Accountability – scrutiny
18. Need transparency – Hampton Roads Transportation
19. \$ - meetings – access
20. Civic league involvement ... How do we “hear” other voices?
21. Different groups – different perspectives
22. How to tap into this? Business, faith, et al.
23. Making the dialogue open – available
24. Mass media – televised meeting so popular people are showing up to reach larger audience
25. Consequences of doing nothing
26. Trust – cooperation
27. “One voice” economic development – branding
28. Legislative liaison
29. Military relationships – defense
30. Requirements of economic prosperity changing rapidly
Education
Tech based industries
31. Regional Vision
32. Decision
Decide Gather input Consensus Delegate
Announce Decide Majority Vote w/ constraints

B. Second Break out session: Consolidation of regional services

1. IS there an organization today?

Yes No Maybe

None that meet all criteria

2. HRPDC could be there (If it met regularly and had an agenda)

Needs transparency

No taxation

No charter that empowers

No accountability

3. Other possibilities

H. R. Partnership

Economic Development Council

Chambers of Commerce

4. Feds require some organizations

5. We could build on current groups and add more

6. Using the HR Partnership as a model

Limited citizenship involvement

(Needs transparency)

Lacks regional charter

Low faith in ongoing viability

Need method of communicating its work and successes

7. Organizations currently engaging in regional efforts:

Universities

Military

Hospitals

7. Vision needs better definition

8. Needs a consistent revenue stream

9. Need elected (could be appointed) body/representation

10. Don't forget the agrarian interests

11. What would be the scope of the organization?

12. How would you finance?

Tax

Revenue sharing

State incentives

13. Legislative Caucus

Need better communication and cooperation

Cities and counties have individual interests and hire their own lobbyists (**change may start here**)

The squeaky wheel gets the grease (honor those constituents who speak out)

There is a political desire to stay in office

Need qualified people to want to run

Need accountability to citizens (able to balance local pressure with regional needs)

The current legislators are probably not the ones to make this happen (may have to "grow" new ones)

14. What are some current organizations that would benefit?

15. Manpower development

16. Public schools – parental involvement may keep this under local control – could still recognize economy of scale with “back room” services such as procurement, buses, printing, etc.
17. Services still need manpower, equipment so there is no real savings
18. Libraries – sharing books, technology
19. Local specific regulatory ordinances
20. Research
21. Standardization (RFP, bids) (State regulations make this difficult)
22. Insurances
23. Public safety, fire, rescue (driven by response time)
24. Emergency preparedness
25. Sharing → collaborating → merging
(A degree of the above, not just “either – or”)
26. Standardize routines
27. Regional Agenda (with metric)
28. Generate a citizen report card
29. Need citizen buy in, input, education/awareness
30. Need local government buy in, input, education/awareness
31. Caution: Organizations can’t be elitist.