

**Hampton Roads Transportation Authority  
Public Outreach Committee  
Report and Recommendations  
October 17, 2007**

**Background**

The Hampton Roads Transportation Authority held its organizational meeting on August 10, 2007. At this meeting the HRTA created a Public Outreach Committee that was charged with developing a plan to be recommended to the Authority for receiving comment from and communicating information to the public about the work of the HRTA. Art Collins convened a staff work group of Public Information Officers from Hampton Roads localities on September 6, 2007, at the Norfolk City facility at Wards Corner for the purpose of drafting recommendations for the Public Outreach Committee to consider. The staff work group was chaired by Chuck Applebach (Virginia Beach) and included R.C. Bob Batcher Jr. (Norfolk), Elizabeth Gunnufsen (Chesapeake), Betsy McBride (Virginia Beach), Jody Puckett (James City County), Ruth Ritchie (James City County) and Joe Turner (HRPDC). Other local government POI's were invited but were unable to attend. As a result of this meeting a document was prepared for discussion by the Public Outreach Committee that made recommendations on the following:

1. When and where should the HRTA hold its meetings? How should the authority plan the public comment portion of its meetings?
2. How should the authority manage the taping and re-broadcasting (including e-streaming) of its meetings and public comment sessions? Can the region's municipal cable operations be involved in this, or should it be handled through other means?
3. If one is needed, what is the best way for the HRTA to plan and implement a public information program on its goals, projects, funding mechanisms/alternatives, and the like?
4. What would constitute a meaningful public input/involvement program?

**Public Outreach Committee Recommendations**

The Public Outreach Committee met on September 12, 2007 at 9 am at Sandy Bottom Nature Park in Hampton. All members of the committee were present as well as the chair of the HRTA Legislative Committee, Art Collins, Chuck Applebach, other HRPDC staff members, members of the public, and the press. The Committee opened invited public comment but received none.

The Committee reviewed the recommendations of the Staff Work Group and agreed upon the following recommendations for the HRTA to consider:

1. HRTA meetings should follow the HRPDC/MPO meetings on the third

- Wednesday of the month as necessary.
2. HRTA meetings should rotate meeting locations on a 2:1 basis – Southside to Peninsula – at fixed locations (suggested locations –The Regional Building and Thomas Nelson Community College).
  3. HRTA meetings should have a public comment period for agenda items prior to the start of the agenda discussions. HRTA meetings should also have a general comment period prior to adjournment. In both periods, individual public comments should be limited to three (3) minutes and speakers will be asked to sign-up prior to each meeting.
  4. HRTA meetings should, at the minimum, be recorded for re-broadcast on the internet and local governments’ cable access channels.
  5. The HRTA should draft a “living” Frequently Asked Questions list to address public interest in the HRTA’s work and operations. An initial draft of questions has been developed and a draft copy is attached.
  6. Finally, the HRTA should consider development of an RFP for professional services for public outreach initiatives at the appropriate time.

It should be noted that included in the Staff Work Group’s recommendations was the recommendation that a second RFP be developed to secure a private firm to plan and implement a continuing public involvement program. The Public Outreach Committee does not recommend that at this time. In addition, the Committee agreed to work on a Public Outreach Committee mission and goals statement for the HRTA to consider. That work is incomplete at this time.

### **Recommendation**

The Public Outreach Committee recommends that the HRTA approve the six recommendations listed in this document.

Respectfully,

Jeanne Zeidler,	Chair, Public Outreach Committee
	City of Williamsburg
Ross Kearney	City of Hampton
Linda Johnson	City of Suffolk