

# *ENVISION HAMPTON ROADS*

RESEARCH REPORT TO THE

HAMPTON ROADS

PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION

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Results of a Series of Qualitative Listening Sessions  
And a Quantitative Survey among Hampton Roads Residents about  
the Region's Values And Aspirations

June 19, 2014

This research was conducted under HRPDC contract PLN-2014-01 with the Wason Center for Public Policy at Christopher Newport University. Bonney & Company of Virginia Beach contributed extensively to the completion of this research.

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## 1. Regional Visions and Regional Actions

The information in this report is groundbreaking for a number of reasons. For one, it recognizes that there are several steps in the development of a successful and effective regional plan that precede the traditional planning starting point, and that the first stage in this process is establishing the values and preferred future of the region. Or, in short, it acknowledges the merit of first asking, “What does the region want?”

Secondly, this process undertaken by the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission is groundbreaking because it acknowledges that the “public”—the general citizenry, as opposed to only established “leaders”—has a right to participate in the planning of its future and that the public will make good choices if presented with real options.

The results of this study provide actionable input to elected officials, planners and others involved in the regional planning process. The findings presented in this document provide input that can be used to create a vision for the region that is not only sound from a planning standpoint, but reflective of the desires of the region and, therefore, far more likely to be embraced by the full range of the region’s stakeholders, and successfully implemented.

### Guiding Values and Planning Priorities

With regard to the region’s values and more specific desired planning actions, this study finds that residents of Hampton Roads are optimistic about the future, and want a region that embraces the change that the future will inevitably bring. The majority believes the region will be better or about the same in ten years.

The public’s voice reflected in this study gives elected officials and regional planners clear guidance on how to move forward. Specifically, that they should take a strong leadership position when it comes to acting upon important issues before they become a problem, that they should act more regionally and less parochially, that they should be responsible stewards of the region’s natural environment, and that they should generally act to make the region better tomorrow than it is today.

Hampton Roads residents would like for the region to be more embracing of change in the future than they believe it is today. They want their leaders to act boldly to make Hampton Roads a better place, and to place a higher priority on the interests of the region as a whole, when appropriate, than on preserving the independence of localities.

Residents of the region used their participation in this study to share with elected officials and regional planners their highest regional planning action priorities: 1) work to solve the region's traffic congestion; 2) work to make the region's educational system the best it can be, 3) work to bring high quality jobs to the region, 4) work to make the region a stronger magnet for "brain gain" and stem the tide of "brain drain" and 5) take care of the region's natural environment.

Perhaps the most illuminating finding of this study is the consistency of priorities across the entire geography of the region. There are small differences of opinion here and there, but they are far more likely to be driven by ideological difference than by where people live. This is important because it was the goal of this study to identify basic values and priorities that are commonly held throughout the region, and therefore constitute sound planning elements, rather than focus on areas where there may be greater controversy. If anything, this survey begins to dispel the long-held notion among some that the residents of our many Hampton Roads communities are more defined by their differences than by the similarities in their values and desires.

In summary, this study provides clear guidance to elected officials and regional planners. It suggests that they will not only not be punished by citizens for collaborating more purposefully on issues of importance to the entire region, but that they will in fact be encouraged and more respected by citizens when they do so.

It is often said that Hampton Roads is a unique region. The results of this study tell us, however, that while there may be challenges imposed upon our region by complex intersections of land and water, by rivers and bays that divide us as much as they unite us, and by the imposition of competing independent municipalities, the residents of Hampton Roads would rather that its leaders find ways to turn the attributes that often threaten to weaken us instead into advantages and use them to propel the region boldly into the future.

Recommendations to the Planning District Commission

This study demonstrates that a regional vision and action on that regional vision is not only viable, but also wanted by citizens. Based on these findings, we recommend that the HRPDC continue with the planning process for which this study was the first step, including using the input from this study to develop a “preferred” regional vision, using that vision to develop implementation strategies and finally, develop plans for funding and completing the implementation of the vision.

Armed with the findings from this study, the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission is in a special position. Some of the guiding values and specific planning actions preferred by the citizens of the region fall within the purview of the Commission. Others do not, but still deserve attention. Accordingly, we recommend that HRPDC:

1. Become the clearinghouse for regional issues, using its resources and contacts to make sure that important issues that are not within the Commission’s purview receive adequate attention and are addressed by the organizations that are the most logical places for these issues to be addressed.
2. Take advantage of its position as the clearinghouse for regional issues to provide information and insight to its board members that enable them to be confident, forward-thinking leaders who can draw and demonstrate connections between the needs of the region, the wishes of their constituents and their actions.
3. Focus its resources on not only addressing its mandated state and federal requirements, but also identifying innovative ways to address the region’s opportunities and challenges as they apply to:
  - a. Creating a seamless and smoothly operating regional network of transportation resources.
  - b. Taking a leadership position in addressing large issues, such as sea level rise, that touch all of the communities of the region.
  - c. Supporting world-class public education resources for all learners.
  - d. Providing information that enables the region’s economy to grow and diversify.
  - e. Coordinating the development of circumstances that make the region a globally competitive magnet for innovators in commerce, science and technology, education and the arts.
  - f. Providing information and resources that enable the region’s elected leaders and managers to be more confident embracing new ways of looking at challenges and opportunities.

## 2. Study Background

The Hampton Roads Planning District Commission (HRPDC) is charged with developing a strategic plan for the region on a periodic basis. The HRPDC staff in consultation with elected officials, municipal managers and other government and institutional stakeholders has traditionally carried out this charge. In 2013, based on the emerging best practices of regions that have been successful in developing highly effective strategic plans, the decision was made to include residents and other stakeholders in the planning process. In doing so, HRPDC recognized that no regional vision would be successful without:

- Broad public support.
- Collaboration between nonprofits, government, citizens, institutions and other stakeholders.
- Preserving what the region considers special.
- Assessing the region's values and expectations.

This initiative has become known as *Envision Hampton Roads*. The first step in this process was an assessment of the values and aspirations of the region's citizens and other stakeholders.

Values are important because:

- They are stable and enduring, the undercurrent to everything else.
- Recognition of common values creates affinity and consensus among diverse groups.
- A sustainable region requires satisfying the values, hopes and dreams of present and future residents.

Following a series of "listening sessions" with citizens and groups throughout the region, a scientifically valid quantitative survey was conducted to test and verify the hypotheses developed based on the listening sessions and provide an accurate statistical "snapshot" of the region's values.

### 3. Purpose and Methodology

The purpose of this study was to identify guiding values, value aspirations and actions that Hampton Roads residents believe apply to the region and should be considered in HRPDC's regional planning process. A two-stage process was utilized:

1. A series of qualitative "listening sessions" to gather input about the region's values and aspirations from a variety of citizen and stakeholder perspectives. The results of these sessions informed the content of the quantitative survey that followed.
2. A region-wide scientific survey of adult residents to verify and quantify the values and aspirations identified in the listening sessions.

The results of this study provide interesting and actionable insight that can be used in the HRPDC's planning process. The results also represent respect for the insights, talents and resourcefulness that citizens and other stakeholders can bring to thought about the region's future. As such, this study represents not only valuable input to HRPDC's planning process, but also a bold step in the direction of transparency in public process.

More than four hundred and fifty individuals and representatives of municipalities, public agencies, educational institutions, private industry, nonprofits and other groups and organizations participated in *Envision Hampton Roads* listening sessions. All individuals and groups used a standardized worksheet developed for HRPDC by Southeastern Institute of Research and Bonney & Company. Organizations represented in this phase of the study included:

Aloha Circle - Children's Hospital of the King's Daughters  
City of Newport News Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee  
City of Newport News Planning Commission  
City of Norfolk  
Future of Hampton Roads  
Hampton Roads Center for Civic Engagement  
Hampton Roads Housing Consortium  
Hampton Roads Planning District Commission (2 public sessions)  
Hampton Roads Transportation Planning Organization  
James City County  
Joint Expeditionary Force Little Creek-Fort Story  
LEAD Hampton Roads Board of Directors  
LEAD Hampton Roads Class of 2013-2014  
Lynnhaven River Now  
Naval Station Portsmouth

National Station Oceana  
Naval Station Norfolk  
Naval Station Northwest Annex  
Naval Station Yorktown  
Regional Environmental Committee  
Senior Services of Southeastern Virginia  
Seventh Point, Inc. (Advertising & Public Relations)  
Surry County Planning Commission  
U.S. Coast Guard Portsmouth

Based on the results of the listening sessions, a survey questionnaire was developed by HRPDC and the Wason Center for Public Policy at Christopher Newport University. Beginning on April 4 and ending on April 17, a total of 1,216 interviews were conducted with adult Hampton Roads residents by the Wason Center for Public Policy Survey Research Lab. Qualified participants in this survey were adult residents of the following Hampton Roads cities and counties that make up the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission jurisdiction:

<u>Cities</u>	<u>Counties</u>
Chesapeake	Gloucester
Franklin	Isle of Wight
Hampton	James City
Newport News	Southampton
Norfolk	Surry
Poquoson,	York
Portsmouth	
Suffolk	
Virginia Beach	
Williamsburg	

A dual sample frame was utilized to include landline and cellular phone sampling, and all landline and cellular telephone numbers in the sample had an equal opportunity of being called. Post data collection iterative weighting on race, sex, age, and locality of residence was used to reflect the known demographics of the adult population of Hampton Roads. A total of 636 landline interviews and 580 cellular phone interviews (defined as those who were contacted on their cell phones and the interview was completed on their cell phones) were conducted. Potential respondents were contacted through random digit dialing (RDD), and interviews averaged 13 minutes. Up to five attempts were made on each randomly dialed number. This emphasis on callbacks improves the accuracy by including often hard-to-reach respondents.

The survey was conducted between April 4 and April 17, 2014. We are not aware of any circumstances in the region during this time we believe would have biased the outcome of the survey in any way.

All results from this study are subject to possible sampling variances. The most important factor controlling tolerance is the size of the sample, or number of interviews on which the results are based, and as a rule the larger the sample the more stable and reliable the responses. Small differences between percentages are seldom significant. The margin of error for the full sample of 1,216 respondents is plus or minus 2.9 percentage points at the 95% level of confidence. This means that for any given topline percentage we can be 95% confident that the true population percentage is with plus or minus 2.9% of this result. The margin of error for portions of the full sample would be higher, and would depend upon the size of that portion of the sample. For instance, the sample includes 607 respondents who are male. Any topline analysis of only male respondents would carry a margin of error of plus or minus 4.0 percentage points at the 95% level of confidence.

## 4. Regional Planning: Guiding Values and Actions

The survey finds that the majority of the region’s residents would prefer that Hampton Roads be more open to change than they believe it is today. However, short of indications of greater proactivity from public officials and agencies—particularly greater cooperation and collaboration between the region’s localities—only a third of residents of the region believe unconditionally that the region will be in any better condition in ten years than it is today. The majority are divided in their expectation of whether the region’s population will stay the same or increase. However, the majority believe that the number of jobs in the region will grow.

In terms of values that they believe should guide any regional planning process, Hampton Roads residents show their greatest preference for:

- Addressing important issues before they become problems.
- Protecting and improving air and water quality.
- Cities and counties working together toward common goals.
- Making the region better than it is today.

By comparison, they felt that the region should *not* hold back progress to preserve the independence of our individual cities and counties or maintain a laidback lifestyle.

In terms of specific planning actions, study participants gave their highest support for:

- Commitment to the very best public education system.
- Bringing in more jobs.
- Creating opportunities for young people to stay and work here.
- Encouraging the use of recyclable materials to reduce the burden on landfills.

Conversely, they gave their lowest support to:

- Focusing more attention on urban development.
- Promoting a suburban lifestyle.
- Bringing more military to the area.
- Bringing professional sports to the area.

### 4.1. Discussion of the Findings

The survey results shown in Table 1 are among the most telling in the way Hampton Roads adults think of the region today and the way they would like the region to be in the future.

When asked about the region’s current predisposition to embrace change, fewer than half (45%) of respondents believe the region currently has a predisposition to either embrace or thrive on change. Roughly four-in-ten (39%) say the region is merely comfortable with change. One-in-six (15%) study participants believe the region is defined by a resistance to change.

But that the region may have a strong inclination to accept the status quo or resist change does not mean that the region is without ambitions. When asked what they would like the region to be more like in the future, two-thirds (67%) of respondents said they would like Hampton Roads to be a place that embraces and thrives on change.

Table 1.  
The Region’s Predisposition to Change  
And Change Aspiration

	<u>Now</u>	<u>Want to be more like</u>	<u>Percentage Point Change</u>
A place where nothing changes	15%	10%	- 5
A place comfortable with change	39	20	-19
A place that embraces change	32	43	+11
A place that thrives on change	13	24	+11
Don’t know/no answer	2	3	+ 1

Base: 1,216 = 100%

When asked to rank the importance of various guiding values or regional planning, the 1,216 Hampton Roads adults taking part in this study showed their greatest preference for the following:

- Addressing important issues before they become problems.
- Have cities and counties work together toward common goals.
- Protecting and improving air and water quality.
- Make the region better than it is today.

Least important were:

- Preserving the independence of our individual cities and counties.
- Maintaining a laidback lifestyle.

**Table 2.**  
**Guiding Values for Regional Planning**

	<u>Very Important</u>	<u>Somewhat Important</u>	<u>Not very Important</u>	<u>Not at all Important</u>
Addressing importance issues before they become problems.	85%	12%	1%	2%
Having cities and counties in the region work together toward common goals.	80	17	2	1
Protecting and improving air and water quality.	79	16	4	1
Making the region better than it is today.	77	21	2	-
Making our region affordable for people at all income levels.	73	21	4	2
Involving citizens more in public decision-making.	71	25	3	1
Being open to new ways of dealing with problems.	69	29	1	1
Preserving the independence of our individual cities and counties.	43	37	14	6
Maintaining a laid back lifestyle.	34	42	20	4

Base: 1,216 = 100%

Table 3, on the following page, shows that when asked to indicate their level of agreement with a variety of regional planning actions, study participants gave their highest agreement to:

- Commitment to the very best public education system.
- Bringing in more jobs.
- Creating opportunities for young people to stay and work.
- Encouraging the use of recyclable materials to reduce the burden on landfills.

Conversely, they gave the least agreement to:

- Focusing more attention on urban development.
- Promoting a suburban lifestyle.
- Bringing more military to the area.
- Bringing professional sports to the area.

[Continued on following page.]

Table 3.  
Preferred Regional Planning Actions

	<u>Agree Strongly</u>	<u>Agree Somewhat</u>	<u>Disagree Somewhat</u>	<u>Disagree Strongly</u>
Commitment to the very best public educational system.	89%	9%	2%	-
Bringing in more jobs.	85	13	2	-
Creating opportunities for young people to stay and work.	81	17	2	-
Encouraging the use of recyclable materials to reduce the burden on our landfills.	76	20	4	-
Promoting healthy living.	74	23	2	1%
Improving our water and sewer infrastructure.	69	28	2	1
Improving work force Training.	67	30	2	1
Developing a regional plan for addressing storm flooding and sea level rise.	65	26	6	3
Addressing issues that affect the whole region at a regional, rather than level.	59	36	3	2
Providing more public transportation options.	58	29	8	5
Diversifying our economy.	56	38	4	2
Making Hampton Roads More globally competitive.	53	35	8	4
Growing of the region's ports.	47	38	12	3
Growing out tourism business.	46	40	10	4
Building greater awareness of our region nationally and internationally.	44	41	11	4
Reducing the size and role of government.	41	35	16	8
Bringing professional sports to the region.	39	29	19	13
Focusing more attention on urban development.	32	45	15	8
Promoting a suburban lifestyle.	32	48	16	4
Bringing more military to the region.	32	35	22	11

Base: 1,216 = 100%

## 5. Sense of Place

A necessary step in the process of identifying and measuring guiding values and action priorities for regional planning was identifying and measuring how residents of Hampton Roads feel about their region and how much they identify with it, or not. The findings of this study address this information need and additionally remind those who have become so accustomed to some of our region’s defining characteristics—particularly our natural assets—that we fail to notice how much they contribute to what defines Hampton Roads and differentiates it from other regions.

The series of informal “listening sessions” that kicked off *Envision Hampton Roads* revealed that what Hampton Roads residents believe most defines and differentiates Hampton Roads from other regions is its variety of waters, its rich history, its diverse population and, above all, its significant military presence. Listening session participants also observed that Hampton Roads is a region where a casual coastal lifestyle masks a resistance to change and a predisposition among its local governments to go it alone when cooperation and collaboration could be more efficient and effective. Finally, some noted that while the region is rich in knowledge, talent and experience, it lacks the capacity to move bold ideas from concept to action.

The listening sessions reveal, however, that Hampton Roads is a region with ambition. The most frequently mentioned aspiration among the more than four hundred and fifty people who took part in the listening sessions is that they want Hampton Roads to be *better*, while protecting the attributes that make our region so pleasing today.

The quantitative survey of 1,216 adults throughout the region provided an interesting and statistically valid reflection of how Hampton Roads residents look upon themselves and the region.

- The overwhelming majority of respondents say they identify with “Hampton Roads” region. Fewer than one-in-ten disavow personal membership in the regional community.
- When asked where they tell people they are from when they are traveling away from the area, most—including those from the further reaches of the region—say they tell people they are from “Virginia Beach.”

- “Hampton Roads” is clearly the most used identifier among those who make reference to being from the region rather than a specific place within it.
- Almost all respondents—including those from Virginia Beach—were more likely to say they are from “Hampton Roads” than they were to mention the specific municipality where they live.
- Among those who made references to the region rather than to a specific municipality, mentions of “Hampton Roads” far outweighed other regional identifiers such as “Southeast Virginia,” “Virginia Beach/Norfolk” or “Norfolk/Virginia Beach.” (“Coastal Virginia” was mentioned by fewer than ½ of 1% of respondents.)

What residents of the region value most about the region are our natural assets: our beaches and waters and our comfortable climate. When asked where they would focus their attention if given the power to change anything in the region, survey respondents mentioned a variety of issues they would like to address, but focused their most attention on:

- Addressing traffic condition.
- Creating more jobs and a stronger economy.
- Reducing crime.

Given their feelings about issues such as these, study participants are interestingly divided in their expectations of the region’s future:

- Roughly as many believe the region’s future will be better as believe it will not change. (One-in-five believe the region will be worse in ten years than it is today.)
- They are similarly divided in their expectation of whether the region’s population will stay the same or increase. (Very few believe the population will decrease.)
- The overwhelming majority, however, believe there will be more jobs in the region in ten years. (We cannot diagnose the logic behind this expectation, but suspect it has more to do with hope than with any specific knowledge about the workforce or employment market.)

## 5.1. Discussion of the Findings: Qualitative “Listening Sessions”

The “listening sessions” that informed the design of the quantitative survey involved many different kinds of groups, included a wide array of perspectives and took place in a variety of locations throughout the region. Some were facilitated by members of the *Envision Hampton Roads* project team. Others were self-directed or facilitated by group members.

All of the sessions used a standardized list of questions. Some participants were initially inclined to answer the questions from the perspective of specific *issues*—e.g. traffic, sea level rise, etc.—before getting to the underlying *values* they believe define Hampton Roads and set it apart from other regions. Once focused, however, nearly all listening session participants found them engaged in what they felt was both an interesting, useful and important civic conversation.

The four questions asked in all listening sessions were:

1. *What community values or characteristics do you think have historically best described our Hampton Roads region?*
2. *Which of these set Hampton Roads apart from other parts of the country?*
3. *What community values or characteristics would you like Hampton Roads to be more associated with in the future?*
4. *Of the values mentioned, which demonstrate, or could demonstrate “our best self” as a region?*









## **5.2. Discussion of Findings: Quantitative Survey**

The results that follow come from a quantitative survey that interviewed 1,200 Hampton Roads adults. The survey was designed to be a regional “statistical snapshot” of perceptions, preferences and opinions. As such, the results are presented as a single, Hampton Roads region. Analysis of the findings has been done to explore differences in perceptions based on common demographic characteristics. However, for the purpose of this report the results are not presented on a municipality-by-municipality basis, nor contrasting Peninsula with South Hampton Roads. The sample size does not support a deeper and confident level of analysis for each municipality. Also, since the purpose of the survey was to take a regional snapshot, presentation of the findings at a lower-than regional geographic level undermines the concept of a single regional perspective and encourages the examination of values that create differences over than values that unite and connect.

**5.2.1. How We View Hampton Roads**

There is perhaps no greater or more controversial question asked locally than “What do we call our region?” This survey does not add to the controversy by asking that question. Instead it provides more telling insight into how residents describe this region by asking them first where they tell people they are from when they are traveling throughout the United States.

What is perhaps most important to note in Table 4, below, is that when asked where they tell people they are from, as many Hampton Roads residents name a specific locality—usually the one in which they live—as use any kind of larger geographic identifier.

In terms of “regional” identification, just under one-in-five (17%) respondents said that if they were traveling outside of the region and were asked where they are from, they would say “Hampton Roads.” This is more than twice as many as mentioned “Tidewater” or the more recently proposed “Norfolk/Virginia Beach.” (There were no mentions of “Coastal Virginia.”)

Table 4.  
What Do You Call Where You’re From?

Virginia Beach area	20%
Hampton Roads	17
Virginia (unspecified)	14
Norfolk Area	6
Newport News	6
Tidewater	5
Williamsburg	5
Chesapeake	4
Southeast Virginia	4
Hampton Area	3
Suffolk	2
Portsmouth	2
Norfolk/Virginia Beach	1
East Coast	1
Other*	10
Base = 100%	1,216

\* Other includes responses mentioned by fewer than ½ of 1% of respondents.

When asked what one thing they value most about Hampton Roads, what is first noticeable about the responses to this question is how few responses receive anything approaching a meaningful number of mentions. Table 5 shows that the three characteristics of our region most valued by Hampton Roads residents are:

- Water and beaches
- Generally comfortable place
- Climate/environment/weather

These responses are not unexpected. However, no single answer was mentioned by more than 15% of respondents. Furthermore, beyond the top three items, the list of responses is short on specific attributes that set Hampton Roads from many other places, and almost none have anything to do with the characteristics of people living in the region.

Table 5.  
What Do You Value Most about Hampton Roads?

Water and beaches	15%
Generally comfortable place	15
Climate/environment/weather	13
People and diversity	7
Lots to do	7
Family	6
Community feel	5
Economy & jobs	5
Good location	3
Military	3
Family has roots here	3
Natural environment	2
Region's history	2
Schools and education	2
Affordable	1
Good for families	1
Other*	4
Nothing/no answer	6
Base = 100%	1,216

\* Other includes responses mentioned by fewer than ½ of 1% of respondents.

Asked which of a number of quality of life factors identified in the listening sessions they believe are most important, Table 6, below, shows that study participants attached their greatest importance to the value of being close to their families in a place that is perceived to be safe and free of crime.

Other quality of life factors they consider important include:

- Enjoying nature and the outdoors
- Good schools
- Access to good shopping and recreation
- Good weather

**Table 6.**  
**Most Important Quality of Life Factors**  
**In Hampton Roads**

	<u>First</u> <u>Mention</u>	<u>Net of 3</u> <u>Mentions*</u>
Being close to family	26%	47%
Safe community/low crime	25	41
Enjoying outdoors/nature	8	33
Good schools	7	28
Easy access to shopping and recreation	4	27
Good weather	7	22
Plenty of jobs	6	19
Friendly people	3	16
Respect for the diversity of our population	6	16
Less traffic congestion	4	15
Respect for history	2	10
Meeting the needs of an aging population	2	8
More privacy	1	7
Larger yards	1	6
Base = 100%	1,216	

\* Respondents could make up to three responses. Percentages total more than 100% due to multiple responses.

No matter what they call this region, the results of this survey make it clear that the majority of the region’s adults identify with the region. Table 7, below, shows that nearly four-in-ten (39%) Hampton Roads adults “identify strongly” with the Hampton Roads region. Roughly two-thirds (65%) identify with the region to some extent, and only a small percentage of respondents--8%, or fewer than one-in-ten—say they specifically do not identify with the region.

Table 7.  
Extent to Which the Region’s Residents Prefer to  
Identify with the “Hampton Roads Region,” or Not  
(Five-point scale)

1 – Do not identify with region	8%
2	6
3	21
4	26
5 – Identify strongly with region	39
Base = 100%	1,216

**5.2.2. Looking to the Future**

Slightly more than a third (38%) of Hampton Roads residents are confident enough to say that the region will be better ten years from now. They vastly outnumber the 21%, or one-fifth, of adults who believe the region will be in worse condition ten years from now. That almost all of the remainder—roughly four-in-ten (39%) of respondents—believe conditions will be unchanged in ten years indicates that net expectations of the region, while not overwhelmingly negative, are neither overwhelming positive.

Table 8.  
How Will Hampton Roads Be in Ten Years?

Better	38%
Worse	21
About the same	39
Don't know	2
Base = 100%	1,216

More specifically, just over four-in-ten (44%) Hampton Roads residents believe the population of the region will increase in the next ten years, compared to the one-in-ten (10%) who believe it will decrease. There is little disagreement, however, with respect to the employment outlook in the coming decade. Whether out of specific knowledge or merely wishful thinking, the overwhelming majority (83%) of Hampton Roads residents interviewed believe that the number of jobs in the region will increase over the next ten years. Only 4%--fewer than one-in-twenty—believe the number of jobs in the region will decrease.

Table 9.  
Expectations of Growth (Next Ten Years)

	<u>Population</u>	<u>Jobs</u>
Increase	44%	83%
Decrease	10	4
No change	44	11
Don't know	2	2
Base = 1,216	100%	100%

### **5.2.3. Making the Region Better**

When respondents were asked what one thing they would change about the Hampton Roads region if they could, the overwhelming majority of respondents said there was at least one thing they would like to change. The area of greatest focus was relieving traffic congestion. Just under a third (30%) of respondents said they would address the problem of traffic congestion if they had the power to make something happen.

The next most mentioned targets of attention were creating jobs and a stronger economy and reducing crime. However, none of these was mentioned by more than 15% of respondents. A number of other areas were mentioned, as well. But none was mentioned by more than 4% of respondents. Fewer than one-in-ten (7%) said there is nothing they would change about the region.

Table 10.  
The One Thing You Would Change  
(If You Could)

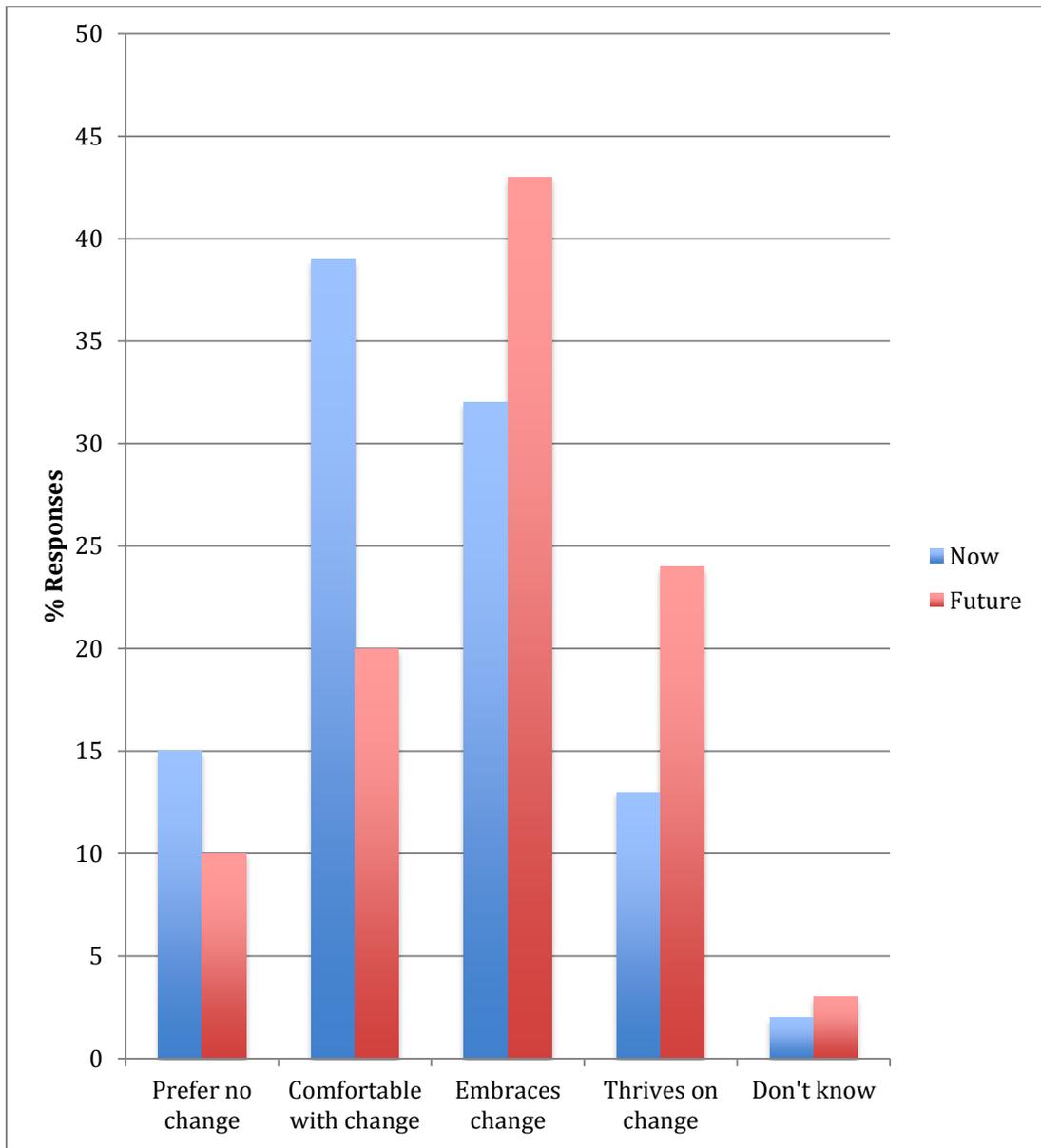
Less traffic congestion	30%
More jobs/stronger economy	15
Less crime	11
Better education	4
Less government	4
Stronger community	4
More public transportation	4
Better government	3
Less development	2
More culture, entertainment & shopping	2
More regionalism	2
More/better public service	2
Professional sports	2
More environmental consciousness	1
More affordable	1
Nothing	7
Other*	8
Base = 100%	1,216

\* Other includes responses mentioned by fewer than ½ of 1% of respondents.

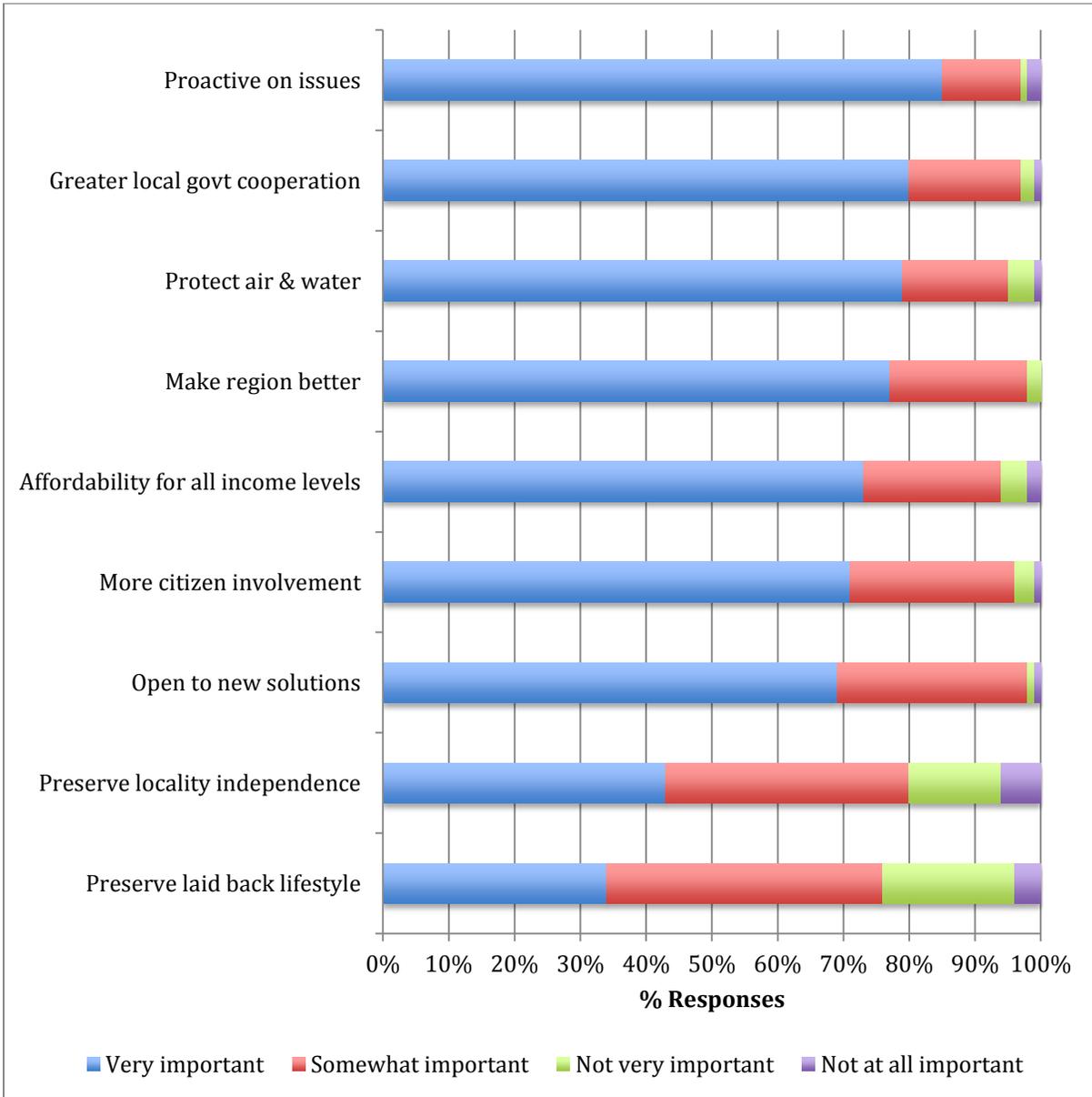




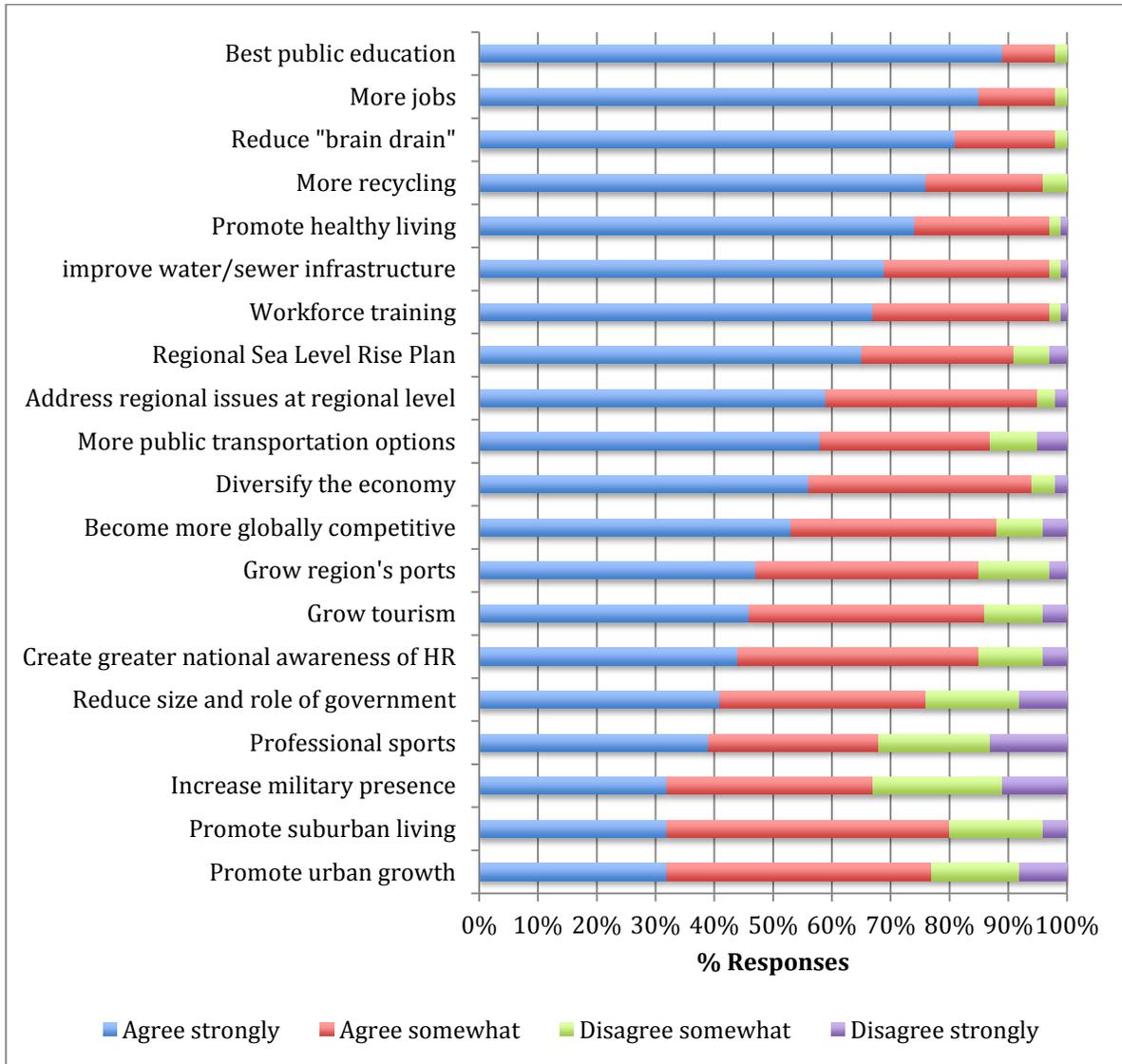
**Chart 1.**  
**Hampton Roads' Attitude Regarding Change:**  
**Current Perceptions and Preferences for the Future**



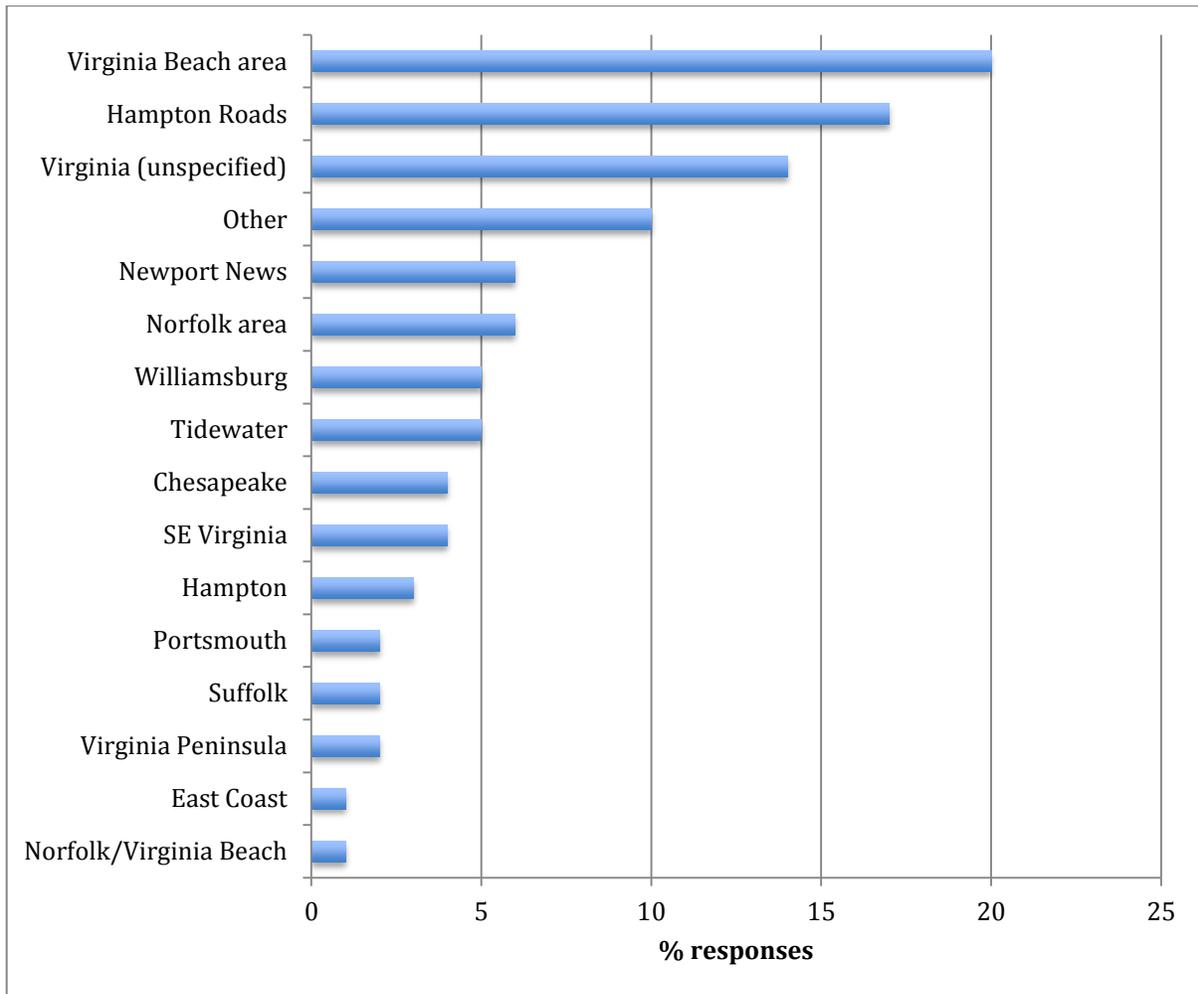
**Chart 2.**  
**Guiding Values for Regional Planning**



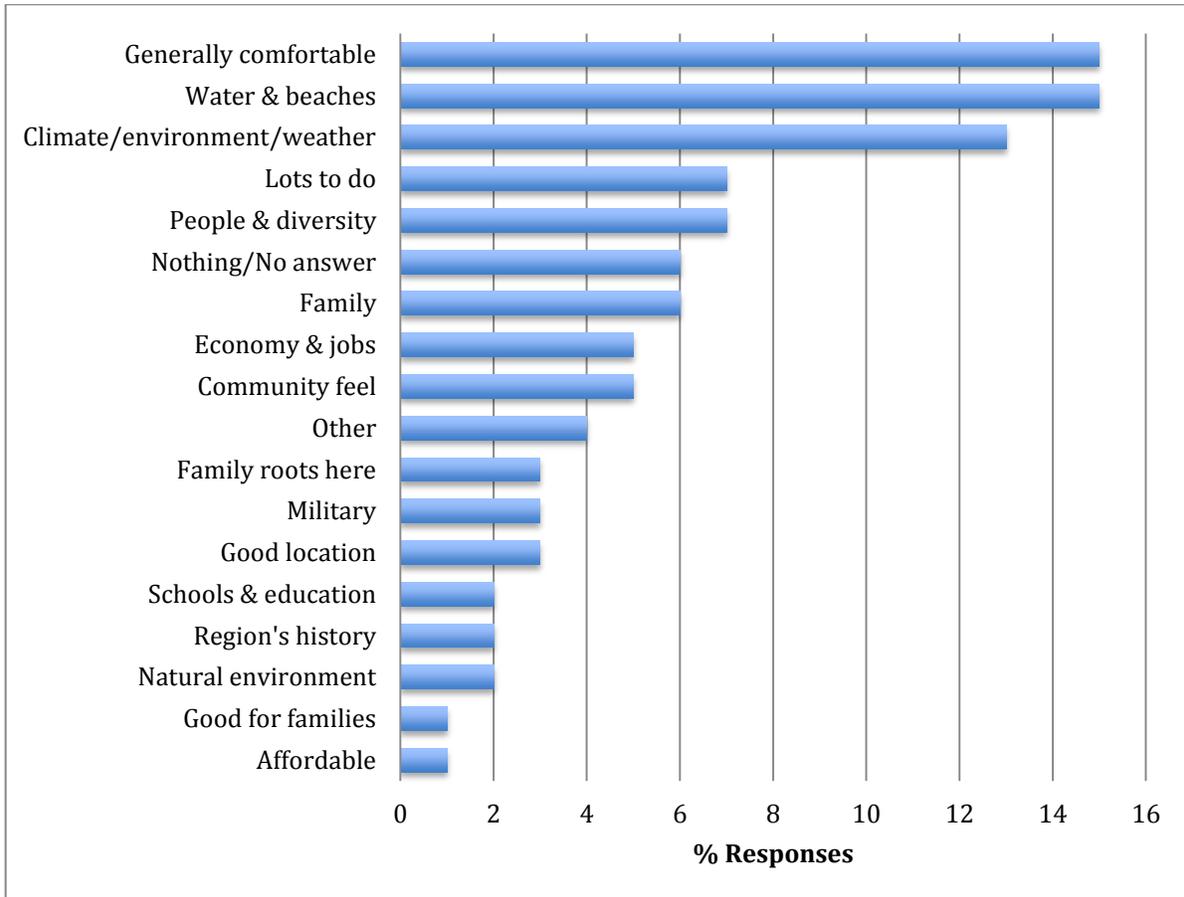
**Chart 3.**  
**Preferred Regional Planning Actions**



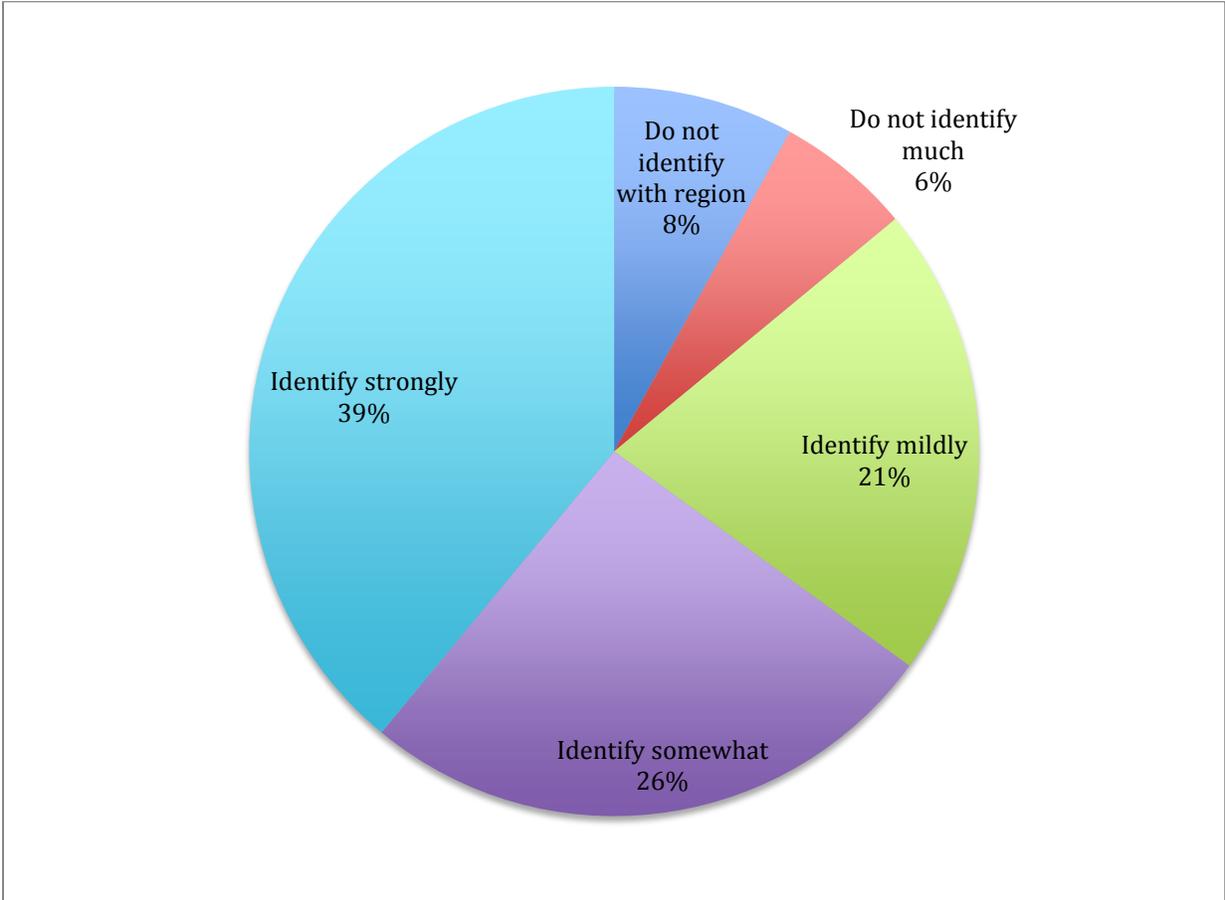
**Chart 4.**  
**Where Do You Say You Are From?**



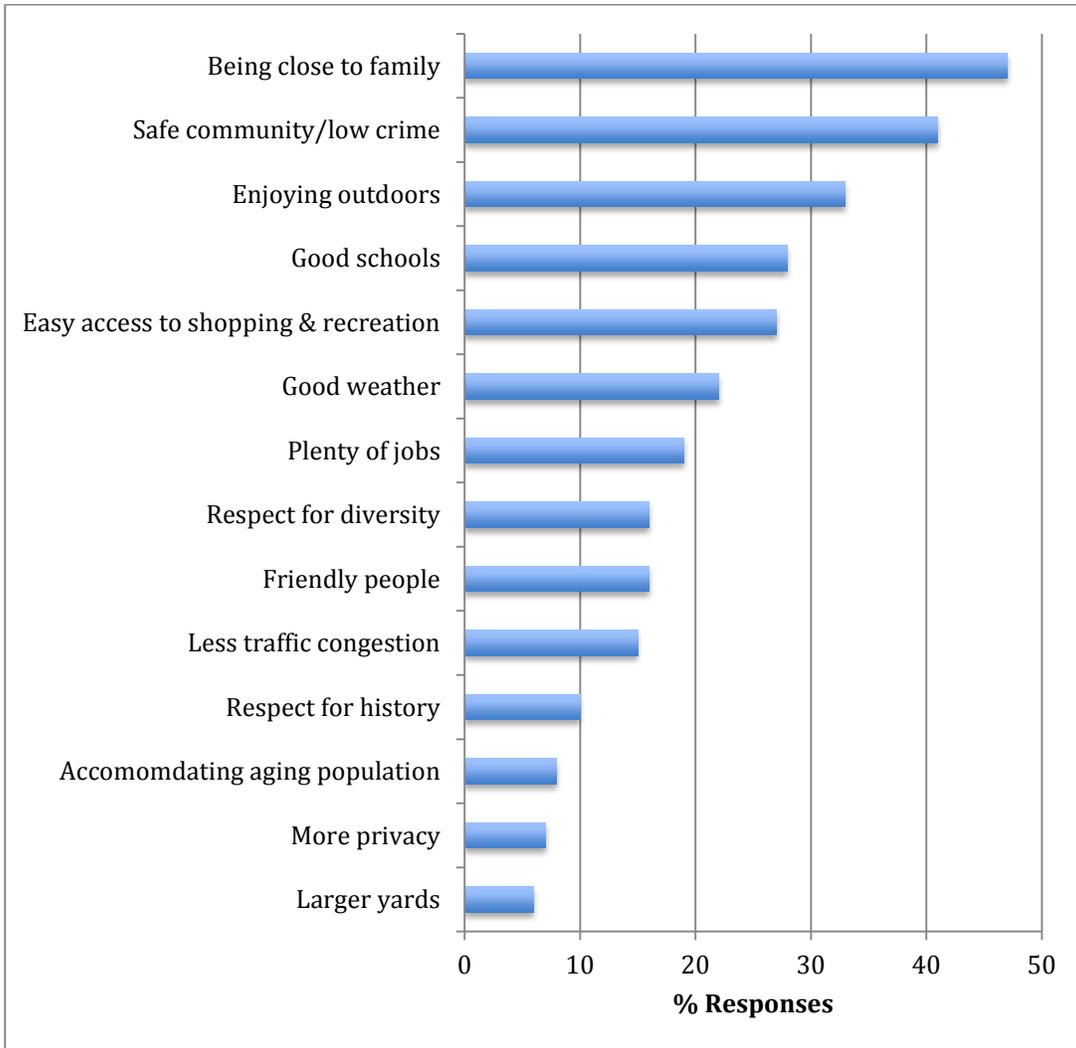
**Chart 5.**  
**What Residents Value Most About Hampton Roads**



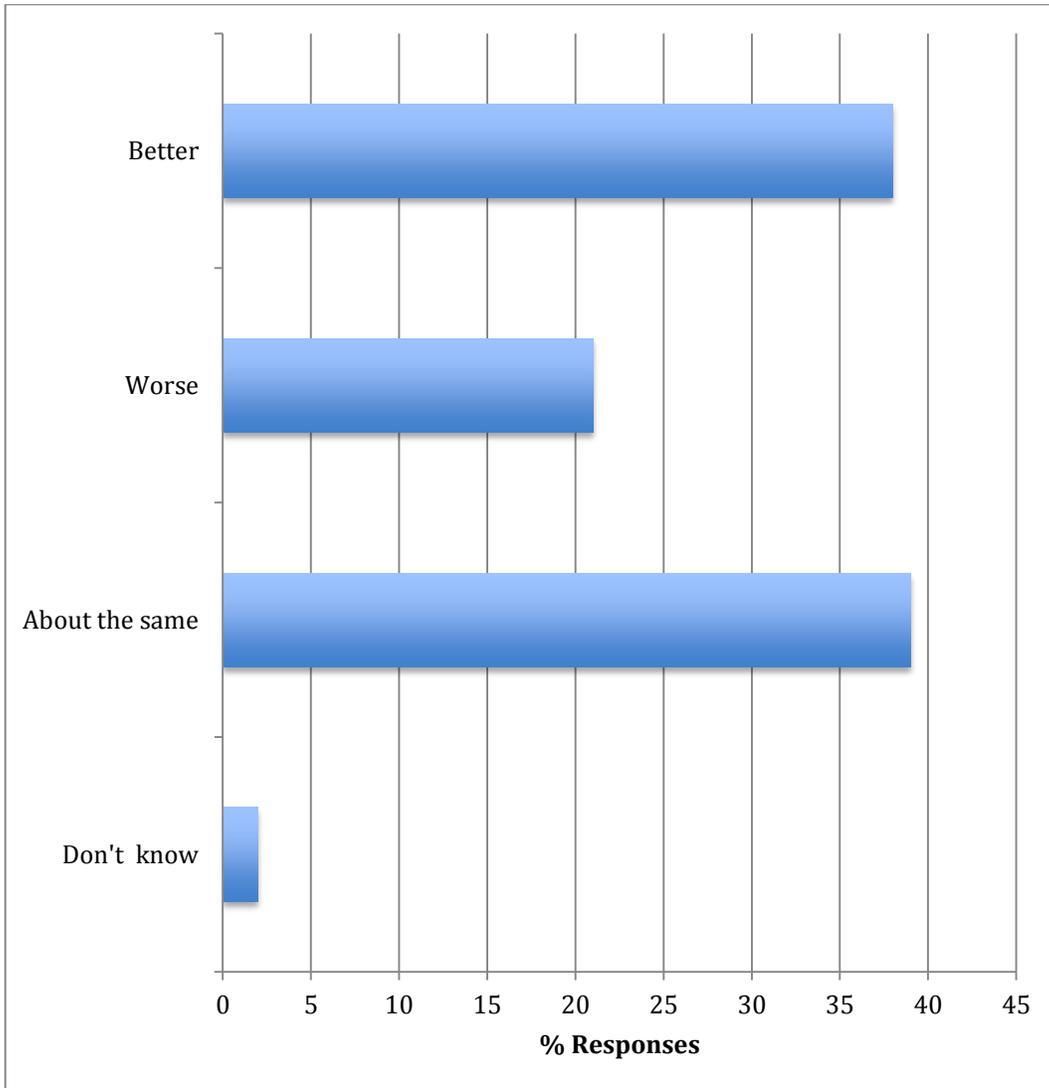
**Chart 6.**  
**Extent to Which Respondents Prefer to Identify with**  
**“Hampton Roads Region”**



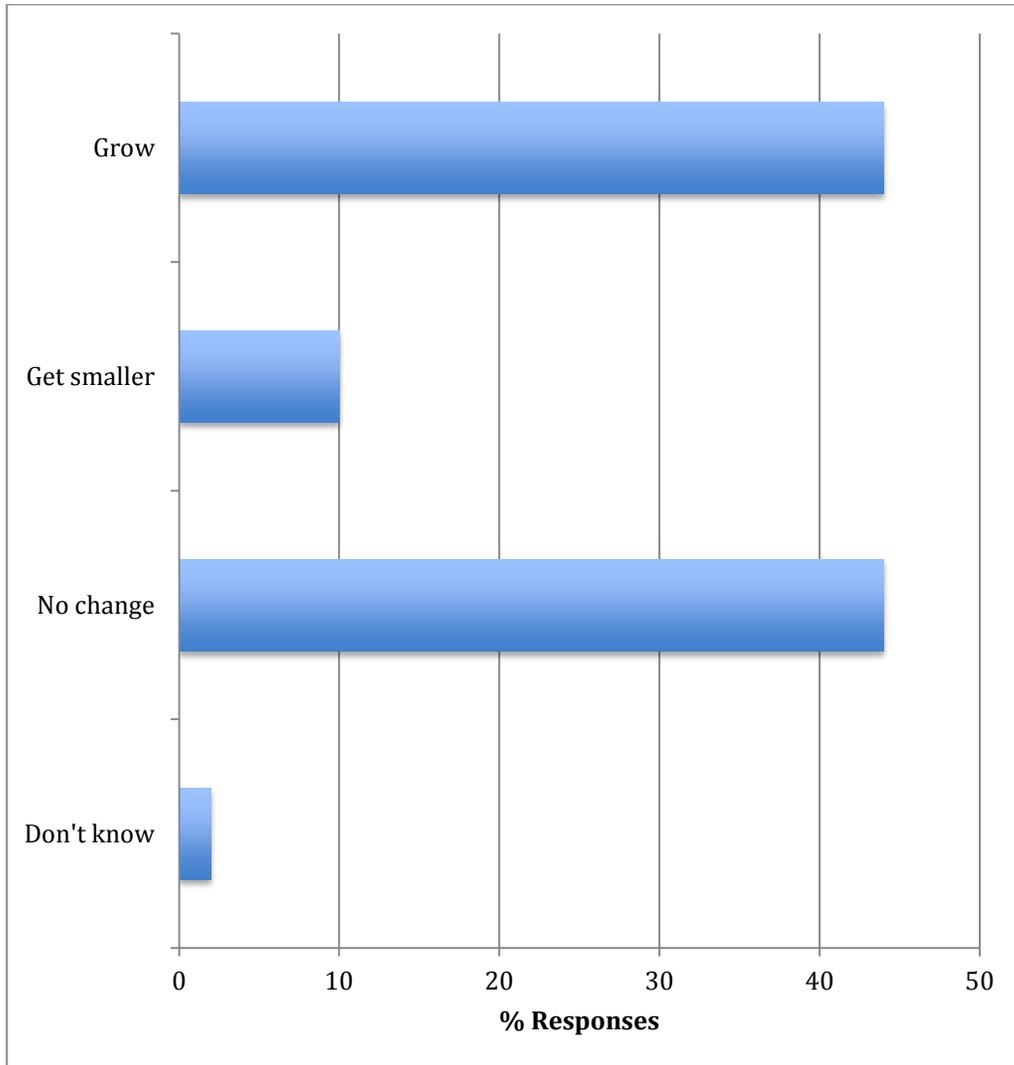
**Chart 7.**  
**Most Valued Quality of Life factors in Hampton Roads**



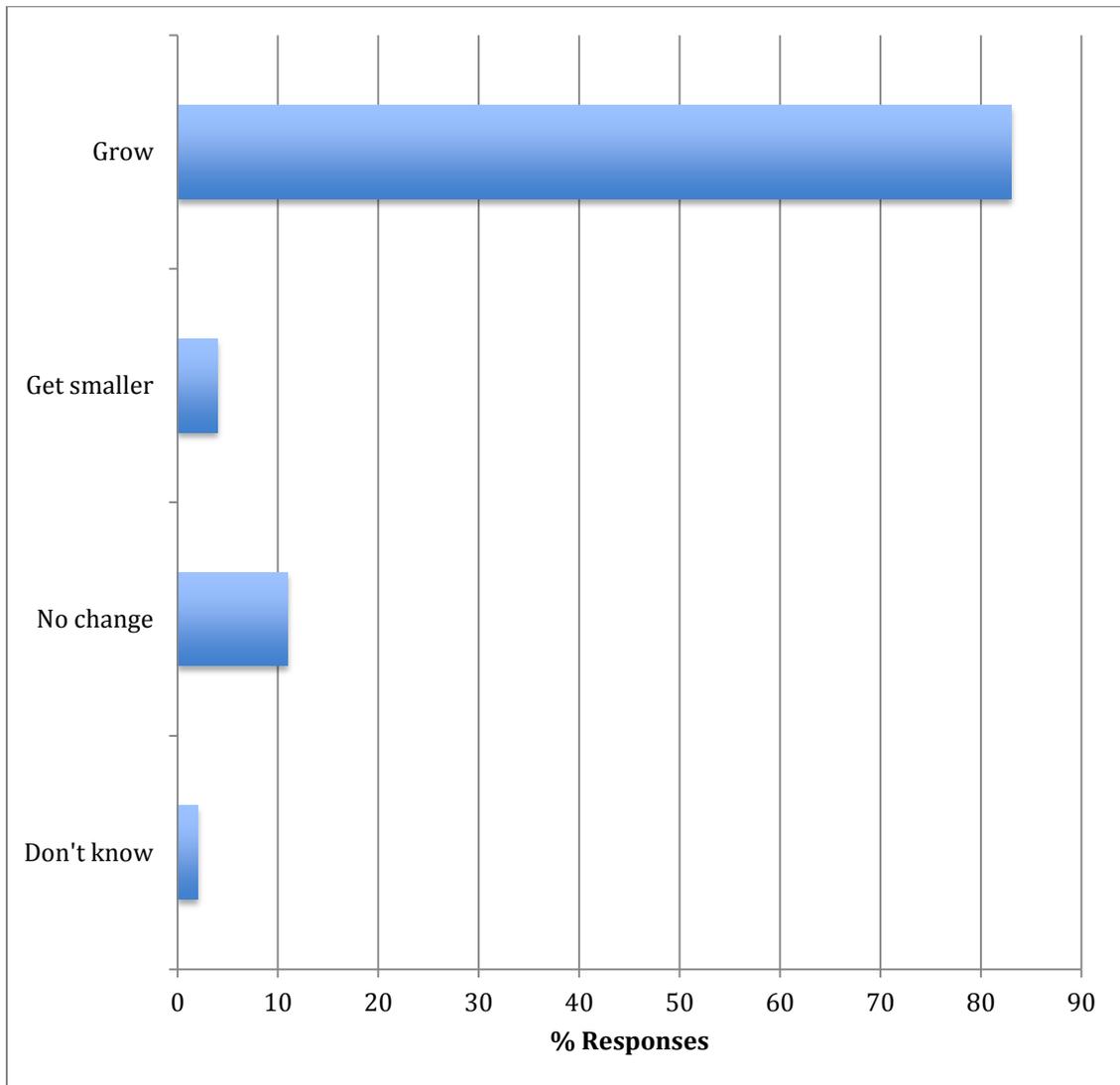
**Chart 8.**  
**Will Hampton Roads Be a Better or Worse**  
**Place to Live Ten Years from Now?**



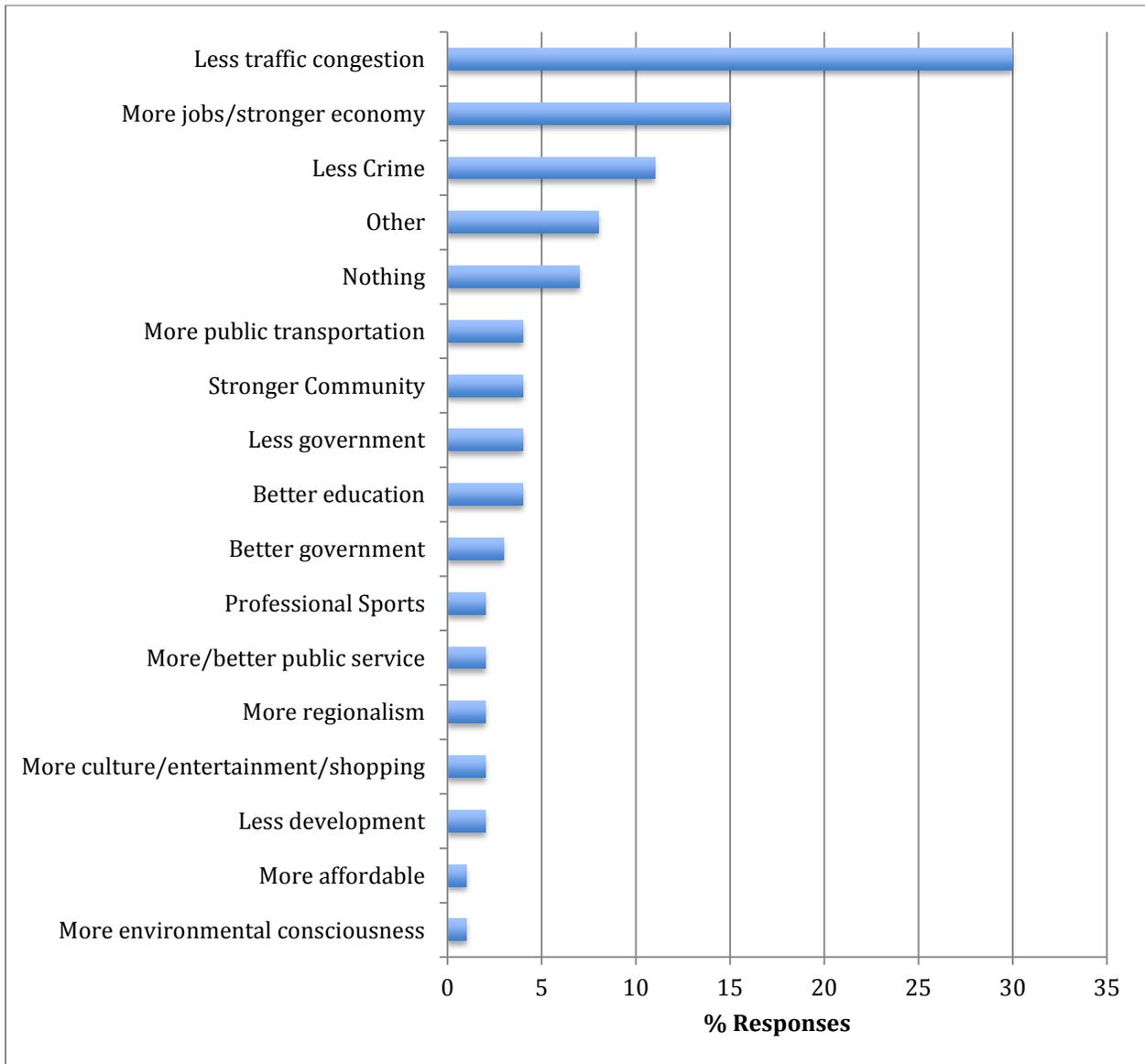
**Chart 9.**  
**Expectations of Population Growth in Hampton Roads**  
**(Next Ten Years)**



**Chart 10.**  
**Expectation of Change in Number of Jobs in Hampton Roads**  
**(Next Ten Years)**



**Chart 11.**  
**One Thing Respondents Would Change in Hampton Roads**



**Appendix B: Demographic Characteristics of the Sample (weighted)**

Place of residence	26%	Virginia Beach
	14	Norfolk
	13	Chesapeake
	11	Newport News
	8	Hampton
	6	Portsmouth
	5	Suffolk
	4	James City
	4	York
	2	Gloucester
	2	Isle of Wight
	1	Surry
	1	Poquoson
1	Williamsburg	
1	Franklin	
1	Southampton	
Education	18%	High school or less
	28	Some college
	4	Vocational/technical
	33	College graduate
	16	Graduate study or more
Race	60%	Caucasian
	30	African American
	10	Other
Ideology	7%	Strong liberal
	12	Liberal
	20	Moderate, leaning liberal
	18	Moderate, leaning conservative
	11	Conservative
	11	Strong conservative
Relationship	58%	Married
	5	Partnered, but not married
	6	Widowed
	8	Divorced
	2	Separated
	19	Never married

Active Duty Military	15%	Yes
Or Spouse	84	No
Age	16%	18 - 29
	16	30 - 39
	19	40 - 49
	20	50 - 59
	14	60 - 69
	16	70 and older
Household Income	12%	Under \$25,000
	11	\$25,000 - \$39,999
	9	\$40,000 - \$49,999
	18	\$50,000 - \$74,999
	15	\$75,000 - \$99,999
	10	\$100,000 - \$124,999
	5	\$125,000 - \$149,999
	7	\$150,000 or more
Gender	49%	Male
	51	Female

## Appendix C: Survey Questionnaire

Field Dates: April 4-16

1,216 Residents of sixteen cities and counties in the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission

INTRO: Hello! My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I'm a student calling from Christopher Newport University. This is not a sales call but a poll about regional civic values. This number was selected at random, and your answers are completely confidential. I am only interested in your opinions.

SCREEN: Just to make sure we are interviewing qualified people, could you confirm that you are 18 years or older?

Yes

No/Dk/Ref – Go to END

1. And so that we can be sure we're including people from throughout the region, what is the name of the city or county where you live? (*DO NOT READ LIST*)

Gloucester County  
Hampton  
Isle of Wight County  
James City County  
Surry County  
Newport News

Norfolk  
Poquoson  
Portsmouth  
Suffolk  
Virginia Beach  
Williamsburg

York County  
Franklin  
Southampton County  
Chesapeake  
Other – *thank and terminate*

2. If you were traveling in some other part of the United States and someone asked you where you're from, what would you say? Where would you say you're from?

---

3. What do you value most about living in this area?

---

4. You hear people talk about "the Hampton Roads region." Using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means you don't prefer to identify with the "Hampton Roads region" at all and 5 means you identify strongly with the region. Where on that scale are you?

Enter number (and decimal, if mentioned). \_\_\_\_\_

5. When you think about the quality of life in the Hampton Roads region, which THREE of the following are most important to you personally?

Safe community/low crime  
Being close to family  
Enjoying outdoors/nature  
Plenty of jobs  
Meeting the needs of an aging population  
More privacy  
Less traffic congestion  
Good schools

*Easy access to shopping and recreation*  
*Respect for history*  
*Friendly people*  
*Larger yards*  
*More privacy*  
*Good weather*  
*Respect the diversity of our population*

6. When you think about Hampton Roads ten years from now, do you think it will be a better place to live, a worse place to live, or about the same as it is now?

- Better
- Worse
- About the same
- Don't know

7. This next question has to do with growth, by which I mean growth in population and growth in the number of jobs. For each of these factors, please tell me whether you think the region should try to grow, get smaller or not change at all.

	<u>Grow</u>	<u>Get smaller</u>	<u>No change</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
Population	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jobs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

8. If there were one thing you could change to make Hampton Roads a better place to live, what would that one thing be?

---

9. Now I'm going to read several descriptions and ask you which ONE you think best describes Hampton Roads *now*:

- A place where people would like to keep things the way they are now, or used to be.
- A place where people are comfortable with changes after they've been proven effective somewhere else first.
- A place where people are open to change and believe it's a good idea to consider new ideas and ways of doing things.
- A place where people want to try out, and even be a little experimental with new ways of doing things.

10. I'm going to read through that list again, and this time, tell me which of these you'd like Hampton Roads to be more like *in the future*:

- A place where people would like to keep things the way they are now, or used to be.
- A place where people are comfortable with changes after they've been proven effective somewhere else first.
- A place where people are open to change and believe it's a good idea to consider new ideas and ways of doing things.
- A place where people want to try out, and even be a little experimental with new ways of doing things.

11. I'm going to read a list of different things, and for each one please tell me how important you think it is as a guiding value for planning the future of our region.

	<u>Very Important</u>	<u>Somewhat Important</u>	<u>Not very Important</u>	<u>Not at all Important</u>
Making the region better than it is today.	( )	( )	( )	( )
Protecting and improving air and water quality.	( )	( )	( )	( )
Addressing importance issues before they become problems.	( )	( )	( )	( )
Maintaining a laid back lifestyle.	( )	( )	( )	( )
Having cities and counties in the region work together toward common goals.	( )	( )	( )	( )
Making our region affordable for people at all income levels.	( )	( )	( )	( )
Preserving the independence of our individual cities and counties.	( )	( )	( )	( )
Involving citizens more in public decision-making.	( )	( )	( )	( )
Being open to new ways of dealing with problems.	( )	( )	( )	( )

12. Now I'm going to read a list of things that some people believe will make the region better in the future. For each one, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree that this action is important to the future of our region:

	<u>Agree Strongly</u>	<u>Agree Somewhat</u>	<u>Disagree Somewhat</u>	<u>Disagree Strongly</u>
Diversifying our economy.	( )	( )	( )	( )
Improving our water and sewer infrastructure.	( )	( )	( )	( )
Providing more public transportation options.	( )	( )	( )	( )
Promoting healthy living.	( )	( )	( )	( )

Growing of the region’s ports.	( )	( )	( )	( )
Focusing more attention on urban development.	( )	( )	( )	( )
Addressing issues that affect the whole region at a regional, rather than level.	( )	( )	( )	( )
Building greater awareness of our region nationally and internationally.	( )	( )	( )	( )
Bringing in more jobs.	( )	( )	( )	( )
Growing out tourism business.	( )	( )	( )	( )
Improving work force Training.	( )	( )	( )	( )
Commitment to the very best public educational system.	( )	( )	( )	( )
Developing a regional plan for addressing storm flooding and sea level rise.	( )	( )	( )	( )
Promoting a suburban lifestyle.	( )	( )	( )	( )
Making Hampton Roads More globally competitive.	( )	( )	( )	( )
Reducing the size and role of government.	( )	( )	( )	( )
Creating opportunities for young people to stay and work.	( )	( )	( )	( )
Bringing more military to the region.	( )	( )	( )	( )
Bringing professional sports to the region.	( )	( )	( )	( )
Encouraging the use of recyclable materials to reduce the burden on our landfills.	( )	( )	( )	( )

**Demographics**

Ok, thank you, we're *just about* done. I have just a few questions about you to make sure we are *including* a wide range of people.

13. Could you tell me the highest level of school or college you had the opportunity to complete?

- |                                  |                        |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|
| High school or less              | College graduate       |
| Some college                     | Graduate study or more |
| Vocational or technical training | Dk/ref (vol.)          |

14. Do you consider yourself to be:

- |                           |               |
|---------------------------|---------------|
| White                     | Other (vol.)  |
| Black or African American | Dk/ref (vol.) |
| Asian                     |               |

15. In terms of your general outlook, do you consider yourself to be:

- |                           |                                |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Strong liberal            | Moderate, leaning conservative |
| Liberal                   | Conservative                   |
| Moderate, leaning liberal | Strong Conservative            |

16. Is your current status...

- |  |               |
|--|---------------|
| Married                                | Divorced      |
| Living with a partner, but not married | Separated     |
| Widowed                                | Never married |

17. Are you or your spouse currently in the uniformed military service or a civilian employee at a local military instillation?

- |     |               |
|-----|---------------|
| Yes | Dk/ref (vol.) |
| No  |               |

18. Could you tell me the year in which you were born?

Record exact year

19. And, just for statistical purposes, in which of the following categories does your family income fall?

- |                |                    |
|----------------|--------------------|
| Under \$25,000 | \$75-\$100,000     |
| \$25-\$35,000  | Over \$100,000     |
| \$35-\$50,000  | Don't know/refused |
| \$50-\$75,000  |                    |

Thank you very much for your help with this survey!

20. Sex [INTERVIEWER CODE]

1. Male
2. Female

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## **Appendix D: Note on Cross Tabulations**

As noted earlier, all survey findings are subject to possible statistical sampling variances. The most important factor controlling tolerance is the size of the sample, or number of interviews on which the results are based. As a rule, the larger the sample size the more stable and reliable the responses. Small differences between percentages are seldom significant.

The margin of error for the full sample of 1,216 respondents is plus or minus 2.9 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. The margin of error for smaller segments of the sample—e.g. just residents of a single municipality—would be higher, with the exact variance depending on the size of that subsegment.

The tables that follow show breakdowns of findings according to a variety of demographic and geographic subsegments that are, because of the smaller number of interviews in any given subsegment, subject to greater statistical variance.