

Virginia Working Waterfront Master Plan

HAMPTON ROADS PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION

FEBRUARY 16, 2017

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Working Waterfronts in Virginia

Working waterfronts are an important part of Virginia's economy

- Commercial fishing
- Ship and boat building, maintenance and repair operations
- Marine research
- Export and import
- Recreational boating and support services
- Marine services and transportation
- Military operations

179 working waterfront businesses identified in 12 Hampton Roads localities

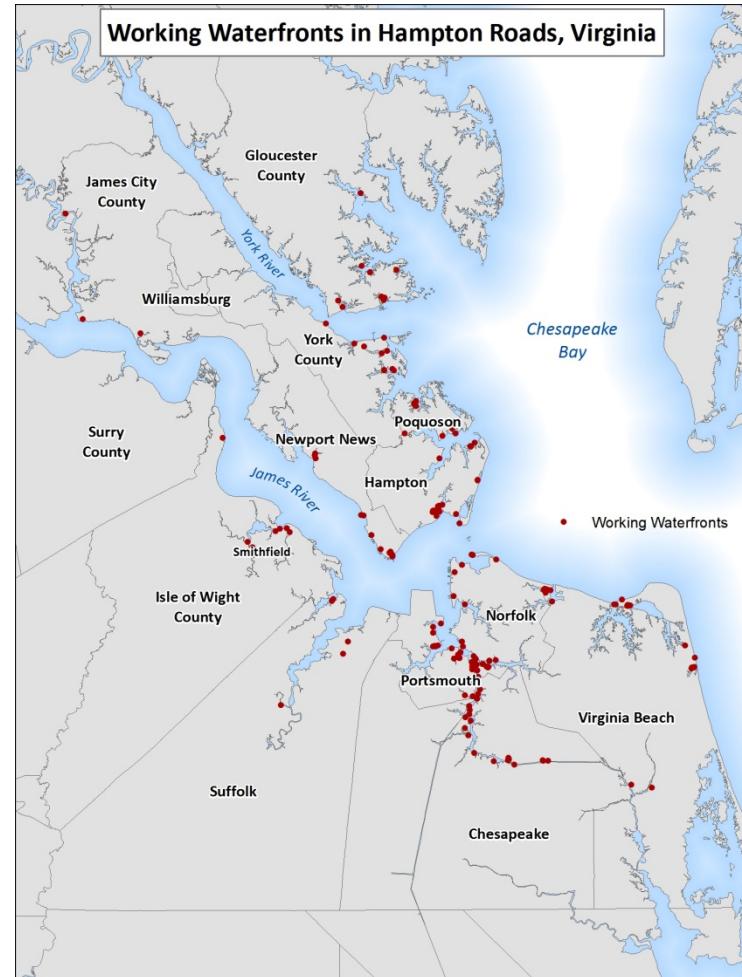




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Working Waterfronts in Virginia

Virginia's working waterfronts face a number of threats and challenges to their continued viability

- Poor water quality and habitat loss
- Sea level rise and recurrent flooding
- Shoaling of navigable channels
- Land and water use conflicts
- Global shipping practices
- Federal budget policies

Image courtesy of MPDDC



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Working Waterfronts – Success Leads to Conflict

“Feud over oyster farm turns into hot-button issue” – Virginian-Pilot, January 28, 2011

“Virginia oyster industry fights off aquaculture bills” – Daily Press, April 4, 2011

“York attorney warns against over-reaching agriculture, aquaculture restrictions” – Daily Press, August 5, 2014

“York court hears another oyster lawsuit” – Daily Press, March 12, 2015

“On the Lynnhaven River, oyster population sees a comeback – and a conflict” – Virginian-Pilot, December 12, 2015

“The oyster cage debate: Is there enough Lynnhaven River for everyone?” – Virginian-Pilot, June 1, 2016

“Virginia regulators leave Lynnhaven oyster rules unchanged; lawmakers invited to weigh in” – Virginian-Pilot, September 27, 2016

Image courtesy of MPDDC

Why a Virginia Master Plan?

Working waterfronts are important to the Commonwealth's economy

Role of state or federal governments

Growing awareness of issues and success of working waterfront industries

A Coastal Zone-wide approach provides funding to address a common need



Source: Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program



Planning for Working Waterfronts

Overall goal: develop a coastal zone-wide Working Waterfronts Plan that will guide communities in protecting, restoring and enhancing their water-dependent commercial and recreational activities.

- Assess the long-term costs associated with the loss of working waterfronts
- Identify and develop policy tools that can be used to manage growth pressures on working waterfronts
- Build capacity to develop working waterfronts as a thriving component of local economic development

5-year effort

- Years 1 and 2: PDC working waterfronts inventories for 4 Coastal PDCs (Accomack-Northampton, Hampton Roads, Middle Peninsula, and Northern Neck)
- Years 3 and 4: Planning and Policy Development in rural PDCs
- Year 5: Completion of final Working Waterfronts Plan



Virginia Working Waterfront Master Plan

The plan includes:

- How working waterfronts are doing statewide
- Regional assessments
 - History
 - Current status
 - Past and ongoing efforts to support working waterfronts
 - Future of working waterfronts
- Working waterfront resiliency
- Recommendations for actions at multiple levels

Recommendations - Federal

Congress should adopt a national **Working Waterfront Preservation Act**.

Congress should **reinstate funding for the shallow channel-dredging program of the Army Corps of Engineers**.

The US Maritime Administration should **designate additional America's Marine Highway Program corridors** in Virginia.

The National Park Service should more actively **promote the Captain John Smith Chesapeake Bay Historic Trail**.

Recommendations – General Assembly

Enact a **Working Waterfront Preservation Act**

Establish a legislative study commission with members representing a broad cross-section of stakeholder groups to **review the long-term viability of Virginia's working waterfronts** (SJ 281 - stricken)

Establish a shallow channel dredging matching grant program

Dedicate the marine motor fuel tax and other marine related taxes/fees to working waterfront improvements

Enable localities to **establish Working Waterfront Development Areas** (SB 1203 – passed Senate 1/30/17 and House 2/14/17)

Enable localities to **classify commercial fishing vessels and related equipment as a separate class of personal property**

Expand the Port of Virginia Economic and Infrastructure Development Fund to **include private investment at smaller commercial harbors**

Recommendations - Governor

The Governor should:

- Issue an Executive Order **establishing priority for working waterfront improvements in numerous State administered grant programs** – Community Development Block Grant, Transportation Alternatives Program, Clean Water, etc.
- Establish an advisory group to **evaluate the relaxation of State storm water and Chesapeake Bay Act regulations** related to development at working waterfront locations, and
- Charge the Commonwealth Center for Recurrent Flooding Resiliency with the **long-term planning for the resiliency of select working waterfronts of regional importance**.

Recommendations - State

The VA Port Authority should **expand funding for small port and harbor improvement** throughout Tidewater Virginia.

The Commonwealth should **continue active fishery resource management and Chesapeake Bay cleanup programs**.

VMRC should assess the effectiveness of its water conflict mediation process for conflicts on or over tidal waters and consider updating the process accordingly.

The Commonwealth should **establish adequate workforce development programs and facilities** for the changing marine related industries.

Recommendations - Regional

Continue research and planning for the preservation and redevelopment of working waterfronts

Increase technical assistance to local governments towards the preservation and redevelopment of working waterfronts

Serve as the test demonstration organization/site for working waterfront preservation methods

Create revolving loan funds for commercial waterfront development and equipment financing

Use the Public Access Authorities for future acquisition and development of select working waterfront sites

Recommendations - Local

Adopt a **working waterfront policy** as a part of the comprehensive plan or as an independent policy

Establish permissive, by right, zoning policies for working waterfronts

Establish local taxation policies that stimulate water dependent business development (personal property, real estate, BPOL, and machinery and tools taxes)

Review their zoning provisions that regulate shoreline uses and uses connected to the shoreline by a wharf, pier, dock, or similar structure to help resolve potential use conflicts and to ensure the viability of commercial water-dependent activity

Recommendations - Local

Establish a set of **development incentives** to encourage the appropriate use of working waterfronts

Invest in the development of select working waterfronts

Use the appropriate **development districts (EZ, Technology Zone, CDA, TIF, etc.) to achieve the desired development** objectives along the working waterfront

Plan for adaptation and resiliency of public facilities along the waterfront

Recommendations – Private Sector

Education of the public, community leaders and decision makers on the importance of our working waterfronts to our economy and our culture.

Conduct sufficient **succession planning** to ensure continuation of marine businesses.

Plan for the resiliency of private waterfront businesses at our working waterfronts.



Ongoing Issues to Address

Urban working waterfront issues

- Redevelopment of waterfront property
- Land and water use conflicts
- Water quality and other environmental impacts
- Flood mitigation and sea level rise adaptation

Fiscal impacts of nontaxable, non-locally controlled working waterfronts on local governments



Image courtesy of MPDDC

Recommended Action

The HRPDC Regional Environmental Committee voted on December 1, 2016 to recommend that the Commission adopt a resolution of support for the Virginia Working Waterfront Master Plan (included in agenda packet).

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission accepts the Virginia Working Waterfront Master Plan as a policy document to help preserve or encourage the redevelopment of working waterfronts throughout coastal Virginia.