



# 2024 Regional Legislative Agenda





November 27, 2023

The Hampton Roads Planning District Commission (HRPDC) and the Hampton Roads Transportation Planning Organization (HRTPO) represent the 17 local governments and over 1.7 million residents of the Hampton Roads region. We have unanimously endorsed the following 2024 Regional Legislative Agenda for the Hampton Roads region and are pleased to present these priorities to our State and Federal partners for consideration.

The Hampton Roads region contains the second highest number of military personnel of any metropolitan region in the country, is home to the largest naval base in the world and contains numerous military and federal assets that are critical to our national security. We are also home to the Port of Virginia which is critical to the supply chain for the Commonwealth of Virginia and the eastern United States. Due to the strategic national, state and regional assets located in our region, the state and federal legislative items presented in this document are critically important to the Commonwealth of Virginia and our entire nation.

The 2024 Hampton Roads Regional Legislative Agenda is presented in two sections. The first is a listing of Regional Legislative Priority Items that the HRPDC and HRTPO will actively advocate to advance. The second section contains a listing of Regional Position Statements – these are items that we will monitor and support or oppose as appropriate.

As Chairs of the HRPDC and HRTPO, we are proud of the regional cooperation we have achieved in the Hampton Roads region and are pleased to present the following Regional Legislative Agenda for your consideration and action.

HRPDC Chair



Mayor Douglas G. Pons, Williamsburg

HRTPO Chair

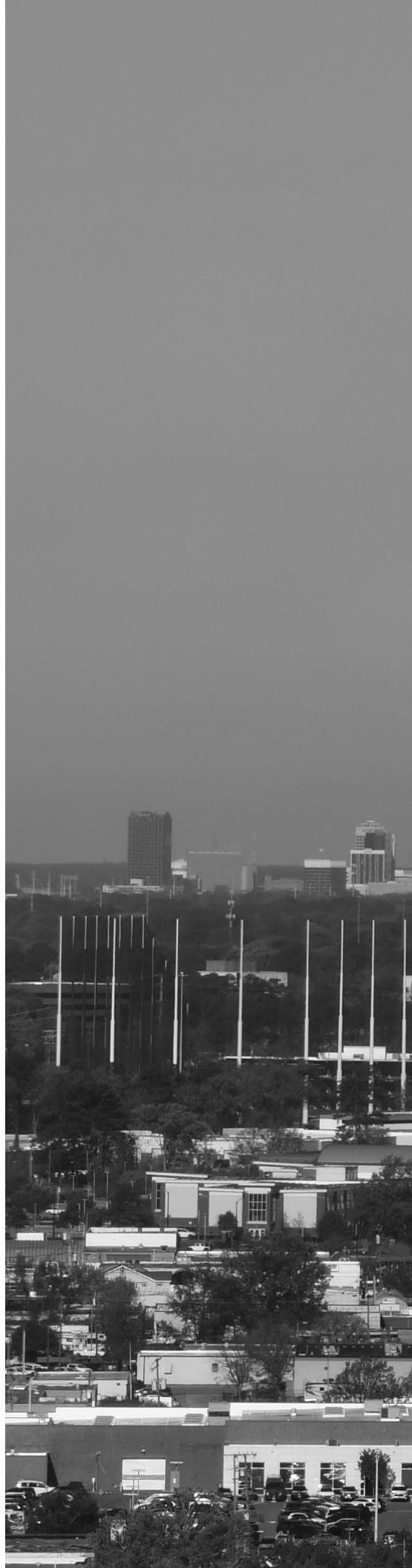


William M. McCarty, Isle of Wight County

Questions regarding the 2024 Hampton Roads Regional Legislative Agenda may be referred to  
Robert Crum  
Executive Director  
HRPDC/HRTPO

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# Regional Priorities

The following Regional Legislative Priorities were unanimously approved by the HRPDC and HRTPO. We will actively advocate to advance these items on behalf of the Hampton Roads Region.

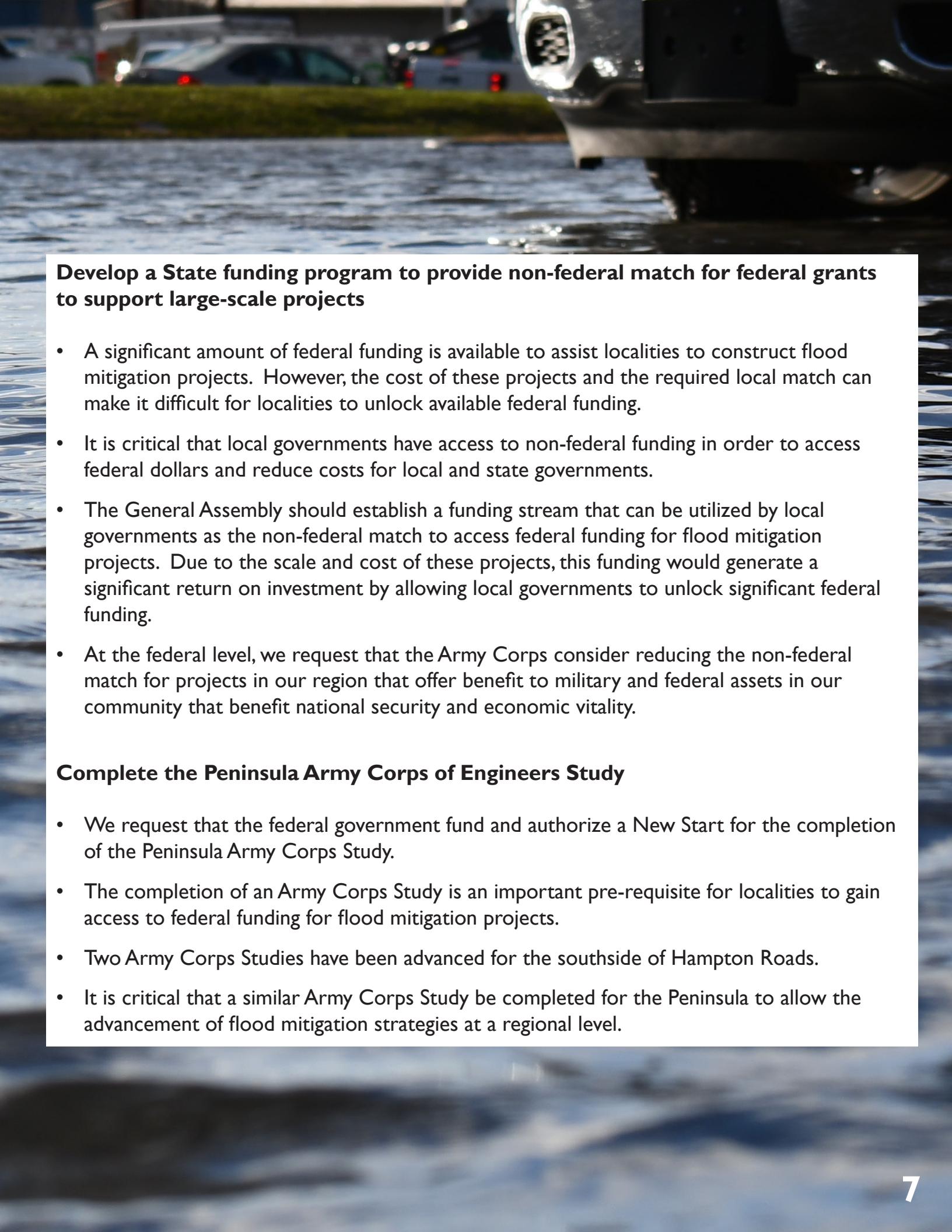
# RECURRENT flooding

**Create a Chief Flooding Officer position at the Commonwealth level with six staff members to support this office**

- There is a need for a position to coordinate and ensure alignment on flood mitigation efforts among State agencies, the federal government, local governments and key stakeholders.
- The Chief Flooding Officer position was recommended by the Virginia Resilience Coordination Working Group as a distinct non-cabinet position reporting directly to the Governor and supported by career staff.
- The Chief Flooding Officer should be supported by six staff members to ensure the effectiveness of this position and to coordinate flood mitigation efforts on a statewide basis.

**Provide a minimum of \$200 million/year through the Community Flood Preparedness Fund (CFPF)**

- The CFPF provides financial assistance to localities to reduce the impacts of flooding in the Commonwealth, with an emphasis on projects that align with local, state and federal floodplain standards, local resilience plans and the Virginia Coastal Resilience Plan.
- CFPF funds have been critical sources of revenue to support flood mitigation planning efforts and small-scale flood prevention projects in Hampton Roads and the entire Commonwealth.
- A minimum of \$200 million per year must be allocated to the CFPF to ensure the continued success of this grant program.



## **Develop a State funding program to provide non-federal match for federal grants to support large-scale projects**

- A significant amount of federal funding is available to assist localities to construct flood mitigation projects. However, the cost of these projects and the required local match can make it difficult for localities to unlock available federal funding.
- It is critical that local governments have access to non-federal funding in order to access federal dollars and reduce costs for local and state governments.
- The General Assembly should establish a funding stream that can be utilized by local governments as the non-federal match to access federal funding for flood mitigation projects. Due to the scale and cost of these projects, this funding would generate a significant return on investment by allowing local governments to unlock significant federal funding.
- At the federal level, we request that the Army Corps consider reducing the non-federal match for projects in our region that offer benefit to military and federal assets in our community that benefit national security and economic vitality.

## **Complete the Peninsula Army Corps of Engineers Study**

- We request that the federal government fund and authorize a New Start for the completion of the Peninsula Army Corps Study.
- The completion of an Army Corps Study is an important pre-requisite for localities to gain access to federal funding for flood mitigation projects.
- Two Army Corps Studies have been advanced for the southside of Hampton Roads.
- It is critical that a similar Army Corps Study be completed for the Peninsula to allow the advancement of flood mitigation strategies at a regional level.

# JEFFERSON lab

Continue to support efforts to advance the Department of Energy's High Performance Data Facility (HPDF) at Jefferson Lab

- The recent announcement that the HPDF will be located at Jefferson Lab has the potential to spur significant job creation in our region.
- We offer unanimous regional support for State and Federal efforts that support and advance this project at Jefferson Lab.



# OFFSHORE wind

**Support legislative efforts to make Hampton Roads  
a hub for the emerging Offshore Wind Industry**

- Over the past year, significant economic activity has occurred around the offshore wind industry in Hampton Roads.
- The region's geographic location in the Mid-Atlantic Region, our harbor with no vertical obstructions, and a specialized workforce all position the 757 to be the hub to support wind turbines planned for construction along the east coast.
- We request the support of our state and federal partners to capitalize on this significant job creation opportunity.



# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## site readiness



**Continue State financial assistance to support funding programs and policies that assist local governments with preparing shovel-ready economic development sites**

- Appropriately located, shovel ready economic development sites are key to our goals to grow the Hampton Roads regional economy.
- We request that the Commonwealth continue to invest in preparing shovel ready economic development sites to allow our region to take advantage of job creation opportunities.

## STATE FUNDING

### for planning district commissions

**Restore state funding to Planning District Commissions to the levels provided over two decades ago**

- The 21 PDCs in Virginia were formed by the General Assembly to foster intergovernmental cooperation by bringing together local elected and appointed officials to discuss common needs and determine solutions to regional issues.
- Unfortunately, State funding for PDCs has decreased dramatically over the past two decades. The HRPDC receives \$165,000 per year of state funding, which is over \$200,000 less than it received in 1998.
- PDCs provide state and local governments significant cost savings through regional cooperation and efficiencies, and are called on to deliver state programs on a regular basis.
- We request that the General Assembly begin to restore State funding to the level of 20 years ago by increasing state base funding by \$150,000 per PDC.

# ELIZABETH RIVER CROSSING

## toll agreement

**Continue efforts to mitigate the impact of the Downtown and Midtown Tunnel tolls on our region's residents and businesses**

- The expansion of the toll relief program in October of 2023 was another positive step for our region. We commend the Virginia Department of Transportation, Elizabeth River Crossings OpCo LLC and the HRTPO Elizabeth River Crossings Task Force for this accomplishment.
- We encourage continued collaboration to explore all options to further reduce toll rates for our residents and businesses.

**STAY IN LANE**

A photograph of a black SUV driving away from the camera through a tunnel. The tunnel has a curved concrete ceiling and walls. A black rectangular sign with the white text "STAY IN LANE" is mounted on the ceiling. The tunnel is illuminated by numerous small, glowing lights on the ceiling and walls. The road is dark and appears to be a two-lane highway.

# PASSENGER rail

**Advance projects that provide faster and more reliable passenger rail service between Hampton Roads, Richmond and the Northeast Corridor**

- We offer support for projects that will reduce passenger rail travel time from the Norfolk and Newport News stations to the Richmond/I-95 corridor and Washington, DC.
- With the addition of passenger rail trains to both Norfolk and Newport News, now is the time to reduce travel time to make passenger rail a competitive/attractive mode of travel.
- The completion of passenger rail improvements between Hampton Roads and Richmond is a standing priority of the RVA757 Connects Megaregion
- We request that the Hampton Roads to Richmond corridor be examined to identify projects that can decrease passenger rail travel time in this corridor.



# TRANSIT funding

**Provide adequate funding for Hampton Roads Transit, Williamsburg Area Transit Authority and Suffolk Transit**

- We request that the General Assembly preserve and provide adequate funding to support our region's three public transit systems.



# HOUSING for all

**Support policy decisions that assist in providing housing opportunities for all residents**

- The Hampton Roads region is experiencing significant cost escalation in our regional housing market.
- Combined with a shortage of available housing stock, this trend is causing significant challenges for potential homebuyers and renters to locate adequate housing across all portions of the housing spectrum.
- The HRPDC has taken unanimous action supporting the completion of our region's first housing assessment to identify housing gaps and needs and determine strategies to address our housing challenges.
- We request state financial support to assist our region in completing this critical regional housing assessment.
- We also request that the General Assembly support policy decisions that provide housing opportunities for all residents and increase the supply of available housing stock.



# TRAIL funding

## Provide State and Federal Funding to extend the Virginia Capital Trail through the Hampton Roads region

- The 52-mile Virginia Capital Trail extends from downtown Richmond to James City County just adjacent to Williamsburg.
- The Hampton Roads region has unanimously endorsed a proposal to extend this trail to Fort Monroe on the Peninsula, and also proceed over the Jamestown Ferry to the Oceanfront on the Southside.
- This trail has the potential to connect significant residential, employment, tourism and recreation areas, support underserved communities and create substantial economic impact.
- RVA757 Connects Megaregion supports this trail extension as an important strategic priority for connecting the Hampton Roads and Richmond regions.
- Dedicated biking and walking trails not only provide an alternative to the automobile for commuters, but also serve as a quality of life amenity that can attract workforce and investment to a community.
- There are several exciting trail projects in Virginia including the BoAT/Capital Trail Extension, Fall Line Trail, Eastern Shore Trail and the Shenandoah Trail. We request that the BoAT/Capital Trail Extension on both the Peninsula and Southside be considered as one of the “Big 4” trail opportunities for Virginia when State funding is considered, with an eventual goal of using the BoAT to connect the Virginia Capital Trail to the Eastern Shore Trail.

# Regional Position Statements

While the HRPDC/HRTPO will not lead on these items, we will monitor these topics during the General Assembly session and support and oppose proposed legislation as appropriate.



# POSITION statements

The HRPDC/HRTPO requests the assistance of our State and Federal Partners on the following position statements:

- **Provide adequate funding for transportation network maintenance and repair.** Costs for transportation system maintenance continue to rise with inflation. The Commonwealth should consider increased assistance to address these maintenance needs.
- **Consider the formation of a Primary and Secondary Roads Fund.** The regional sales and use tax that has been used by the Hampton Roads Transportation Accountability Commission (HRTAC) to build a generational package of transportation improvements in Hampton Roads currently stands at 7/10 of a penny. These monies have been used to address congestion relief along the region's interstate highway network, but needs exist on our region's primary and secondary roads. An increase in the regional sales and use tax to a full cent would provide the region capacity to address primary and secondary road construction needs.
- **Reject Unfunded Mandates.** We ask that the General Assembly oppose and reject legislation and budget amendments that would impose new unfunded mandates and fiscal responsibilities on local governments.
- **Federal/State Support for Regional Broadband Networks.** The Hampton Roads region is building a fiber network that will connect to the subsea cables that have come ashore in Virginia Beach and will spread this ultrafast fiber service throughout the 757 region. We support funding programs and policies that advance regional efforts to develop interconnected and modern fiber networks.
- **Consider amendments to the Virginia Barrier Crime Statute to allow more individuals with applicable life experiences to serve as credible messengers and youth mentors.** Many times, individuals who have paid their debt to society have the opportunity to be trusted advisors who can help guide and assist our youth. The current Statute does not allow our communities to leverage these credible mentorship opportunities.

# POSITION statements

- **Protect local land use authority.**

We ask that the General Assembly oppose and reject any provisions that would dilute local land use authority.

- **Support efforts that improve the delivery of a quality juvenile detention system.**

Localities across the region are coordinating an effort to provide a regional solution to the limited bed space to accommodate juvenile's placed in detention. The current funding limitation on the construction of juvenile detention facilities by the Commonwealth is an additional deterrent to efforts by localities to ensure that juveniles can remain within the region while detained. Currently juveniles from Hampton Roads are placed as far away as Northern Virginia which separates them from their local support networks and places an undue burden on the localities transporting them across the State.

- **Support actions that increase access to affordable and quality childcare.**

The rising cost of quality childcare is having significant impacts on our region's families.

These concerns are shared by military leadership who have identified affordable childcare as a critical priority.

- **Continue to support efforts that promote public safety in our communities, including but not limited to the following:**

- Address the Mental Health System
- Witness Protection Program Funding
- Support for 599 Police Department Funding
- Coordinated Case Management Systems
- Temporary Detention Order (TDO) Assistance
- Conflict Resolution/Mediation Skills in K-12 Public School Curriculums
- Enable Assistance from Retired Public Safety Professionals
- Address Commonwealth Attorney Staffing Challenges



