

AGENDA NOTE – HRPDC QUATERLY COMMISSION MEETING

ITEM #11-C: DISSOLUTION OF ELIZABETH RIVER STEERING COMMITTEE AND CREATION OF REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL TECHNICAL WORKGROUP

SUBJECT:

At its June 5, 2014 meeting, the Regional Environmental Committee (REC) voted to recommend the HRPDC dissolve the existing Elizabeth River Steering Committee and create an Environmental Technical Working Group that would report to the REC. The proposed Working Group will focus on technical issues related to water quality and habitat restoration projects and programs throughout the Region. Proposed membership is local government environmental staff, DEQ, VDH, VMRC, NOAA, ODU, VIMS, COE, HRSD, CBF, and ERP. The meetings will be open to the public. The Working Group will not vote, but may request the HRPDC staff make a recommendation to the REC to vote on a policy action. The Working Group will meet quarterly and provide regular updates to the REC.

BACKGROUND:

In 1998, the Corps of Engineers entered into a cost-sharing agreement with DEQ and the cities of Chesapeake, Norfolk, Portsmouth and Virginia Beach to develop and implement a restoration plan for the Elizabeth River. The final Elizabeth River Restoration Feasibility Study was published in 2001 and identified seven wetland restoration sites and one sediment cleanup site.

The Elizabeth River Steering Committee was established to provide local and state guidance to the Elizabeth River Restoration Study conducted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE). The Committee was later expanded to function as the stakeholder and Technical Advisory Committee for Total Maximum Daily Load water quality studies for the River. Steering Committee membership included locality representatives from planning, public works, public utilities, economic development, and parks and recreation, and representatives from COE, The Elizabeth River Project, academia, HRSD, HRPDC and several state and federal agencies. The Steering Committee met the first Friday of every month to discuss ongoing restoration projects and other water quality projects or issues within the Elizabeth River Watershed. Since the development of the Chesapeake Bay TMDL and the completion of several projects within the Elizabeth River watershed, the content of the meetings has evolved to include issues relevant to all the localities within Hampton Roads.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Vote to dissolve the Elizabeth River Steering Committee and create an environmental technical working group that reports to the REC.