

## 2020 Census Results are In: What's The Count?

The 2020 Census – a headcount of every person living in the United States as of April 1, 2020 – is one of the most important tools analysts, policymakers, businesses, non-profits and other decision makers have for understanding the nation's demographics, and determines how billions of dollars in public funds are allocated by state, local and federal lawmakers.

This process is undertaken every decade, but the 2020 Census has received an overwhelming amount of media interest this past year for a few different reasons. Due to the nature of how census data is collected, the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the ability for in-person follow-up interviews for households who do not respond to the survey. Due to these data collection difficulties and the associated uncertainties the pandemic created, the data was released much later than expected.

### What does the 2020 Census data tell us about Hampton Roads?

According to the 2020 Census, Hampton Roads' population increased by roughly 5% from 2010 to 2020. This is the lowest decadal growth rate since the population of Hampton Roads shrank by roughly 3% between 1920 to 1930, and is the fourth decade in a row that the population growth rate has declined. [Check out October's Map of the Month for a more detailed visual representation of the 2020 Census data in Hampton Roads.](#)

### Known issues to note:

- Upon further inspection of the data, there is a large decline from 2010 of over 9,000 Group Quarters residents in the census tract that houses Naval Station Norfolk. The City of Norfolk is inquiring with the Navy about the potential reasons this count could be so different, but some working theories are the way navy ships are being counted, or how active-duty military are being counted if they are deployed. We will know more once Norfolk's inquiry is investigated.
- As reported by UVA's Weldon Cooper Center, census race data for the City of Williamsburg, appear to be incorrect. The 2020 Census data shows that the share of Williamsburg residents who identified as Black nearly tripled to 39% between 2010 and 2020, the majority of which are in the census blocks containing William & Mary dorms, while the State Council of Higher Education shows no growth in the number of Black students living in dorms during the same period.
- In attempt to protect individual privacy of survey and census responders, the Census Bureau modernized privacy protection using a mathematical framework called *Differential Privacy*. Defined very simply, this process is designed to disguise personal information in published data by adding a little bit of "noise" to the data to blur the detail on individuals. Up close, the details may be fuzzy and difficult to piece together, but when pulled back, the details add together and make a sharper picture. According to the Weldon Cooper Center, it is possible that this adjustment in the data led to the apparent discrepancies in Williamsburg's race data.
- In addition to the decennial count, the Census Bureau provides one of the nation's most comprehensive sources of information about the U.S. population in the results of the American Community Survey (ACS) – completed annually. Amid the pandemic, the way data was collected had to be adapted to keep Census workers and residents safe, temporarily shutting down operations like mailing information to households encouraging them to respond, following up in person with nonresponding households, and collecting data from group quarters in person. Due to these impacts, the Census Bureau will instead be releasing 2020 ACS 1-year data as experimental estimates because they do not meet their Statistical Data Quality Standards designed to ensure the utility, objectivity and integrity of the statistical information.

In a year that was unlike any other in recent memory, the results of the 2020 Census will need to be treated with caution, and possibly moving forward, 2019 Census data may be used in certain analyses and 2020 1-year ACS data will be noted as experimental where appropriate.

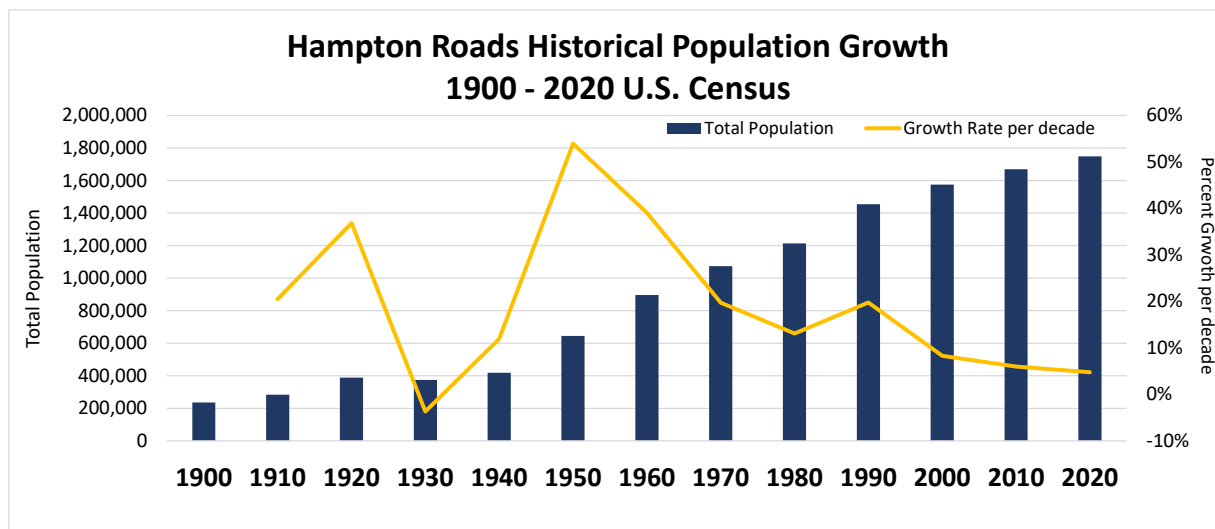
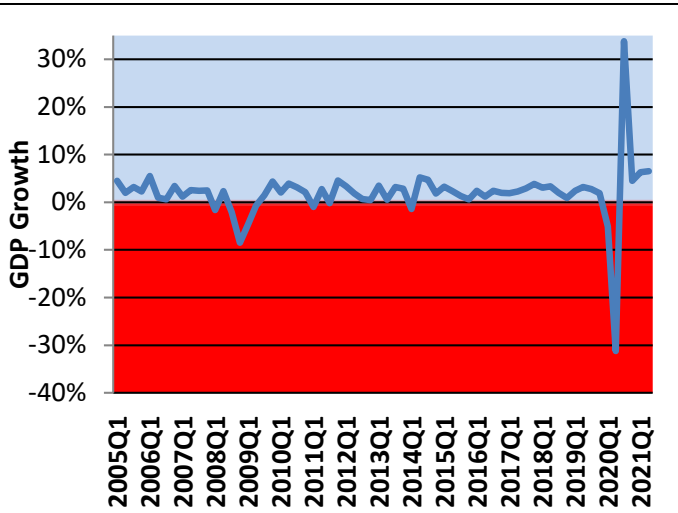


Figure 1: Historic population growth in Hampton Roads, 1900—2020, total population and growth rates. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, HRPDC

### GDP, Annualized Growth Rate

United States, 2005Q1 – 2021Q2 Quarterly

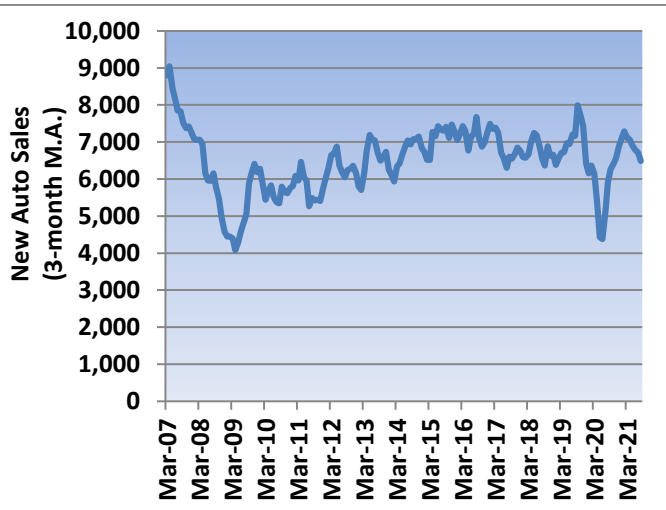


Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis, HRPDC

**GDP:** Gross Domestic Product combines consumption, investment, net exports, and government spending to determine the size and general health of the economy. Real GDP increased 6.5% in Q2 2021, reflecting the continued economic recovery from early 2020 losses as well as the ongoing impact of COVID-19. Once again, Q2 growth was largely driven by increases in PCE (2.7% increase in goods, over 5% increase in services), causing real GDP levels to finally surpass pre-pandemic levels of Q4 2019.

### New Car Sales, Seasonally Adjusted

Hampton Roads, Mar 2007 – Aug 2021, Monthly

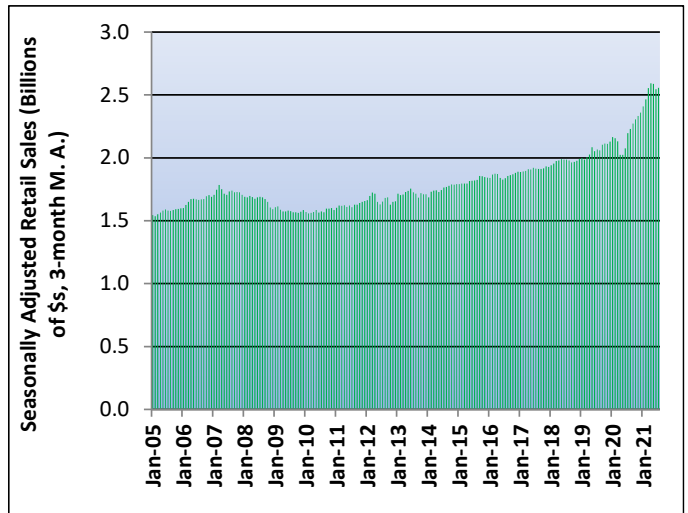


Source: Virginia Automobile Dealers Association, HRPDC

**New Car Sales:** Car sales, as a durable good, may be put off until an individual’s economic prospects improve; thus, the number of new car sales indicates the level of confidence that households in Hampton Roads have in their financial future. Car sales this August continued a downward trend compared to Winter highs, representing negative YoY growth—August 2021 showed a 2% decrease from August 2020, when spending was on the rise after the initial pandemic shock. For pre-pandemic comparison, August 2021 shows a 13% decrease from July 2019, the fourth month in a row for declines over 2019.

### Hampton Roads Retail Sales, Seasonally Adjusted

Hampton Roads, Jan 2005 – July 2021, Monthly

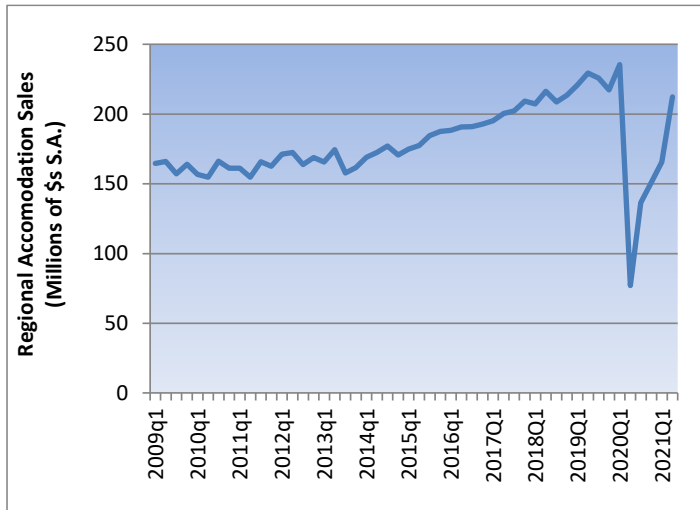


Source: Virginia Department of Taxation, HRPDC

**Retail Sales:** Retail sales in Hampton Roads, as measured by the 1% local option sales tax, serve as an indicator for consumption in the region. When seasonally adjusted and averaged over 3 months, June numbers continue the previous month’s signal that retail sales are continuing to cool down, with a slightly higher three-month moving average than the previous month, but below the recent high in April. Unadjusted, July 2021 posted a 17.6% increase from July 2020 (when the rise in retail sales was in full swing after the initial shock of the pandemic wore off), and a 28% increase from July 2019.

### Estimated Hotel Revenue, Seasonally Adjusted

Hampton Roads, 2009Q1 – 2021Q2, Quarterly

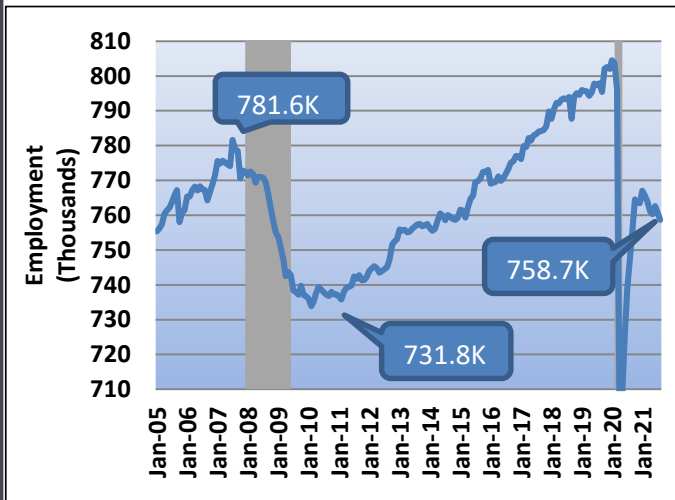


Source: Virginia Department of Taxation, HRPDC

**Estimated Hotel Revenue:** Hotel sales indicate the performance of the region’s tourism sector. When seasonally adjusted, Q2 2021 hotel revenue once again saw improvement from the historic lows realized in Q2 2020 due to pandemic-related closures. With one full year of data available, the recovery led to a 175% increase in year-over-year revenue from Q2 2020 to 2021. As of Q2 2021, hotel revenues in the region are roughly 10% below pre-pandemic levels.

### Civilian Employment, Seasonally Adjusted

Hampton Roads, Jan 2005 – Aug 2021, Monthly

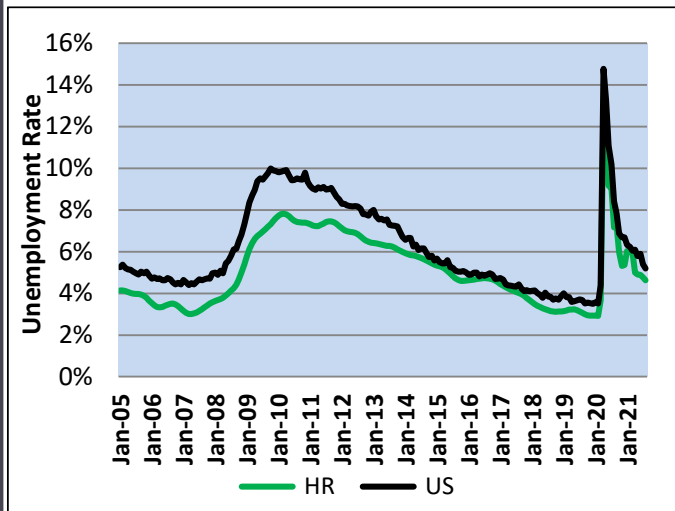


Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, HRPDC

**Employment:** Non-agricultural civilian employment figures are considered the best estimate of labor market activity by the National Bureau of Economic Research. According to data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Hampton Roads employment (seasonally adjusted) decreased by 0.26% from July to August 2021. Unadjusted employment levels decreased once again from the previous month after its largest increase in a year in June, likely due to the adjustments in leisure and hospitality jobs supporting the summer tourism industry. Total payroll employment remains 5.7% below pre-COVID highs.

### Unemployment Rate, Seasonally Adjusted

U.S. & Hampton Roads, Jan 2005 – Aug 2021, Monthly

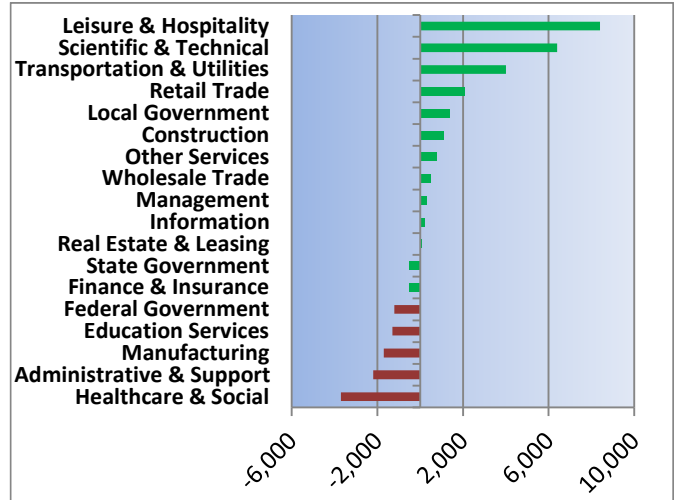


Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, HRPDC

**Unemployment Rate:** The unemployment rate is the percentage of the population actively seeking work but unable to obtain a position. Hampton Roads' unemployment rate decreased again to 4.62% in August 2021, reflected by a slight decrease in the labor force, increase in employment, and a decrease in the number of unemployed persons. The unemployment rate in Hampton Roads continues to sit below the US rate, roughly 0.57% lower.

### Employment Growth by Industry

Hampton Roads, Aug-20 to Aug-21, Year-over-Year

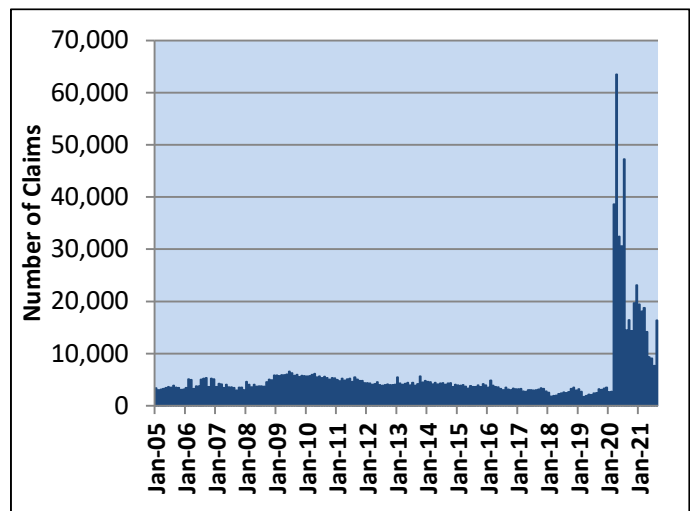


Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, HRPDC

**Employment Growth by Industry:** As the job market grows or declines, there will be some industries whose experience does not resemble the regional trend. In August, almost every Hampton Roads industry experienced an increase in year-over-year employment when compared to August 2020—when the economy was beginning to rebound. Most significant was Leisure & Hospitality, which added over 8,000 jobs compared to August 2020, followed by Scientific & Technical, Transportation, and Retail, other heavily impacted industries. The Healthcare industry realized the highest losses when compared to 2020.

### Initial Unemployment Claims, Seasonally Adjusted

Hampton Roads, Jan 2005 – Aug 2021, Monthly

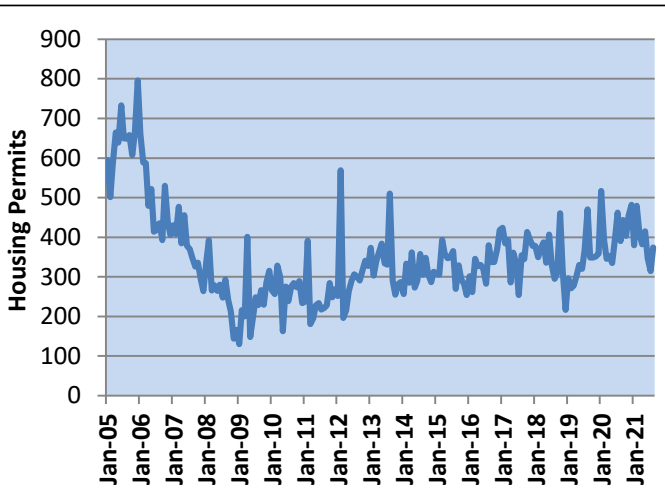


Source: Virginia Department of Labor, HRPDC

**Initial Unemployment Claims:** The number of initial unemployment claims is a leading economic indicator reflecting those who are forced to leave work unexpectedly, thus revealing the strength of the job market with little lag time. In August 2021, initial unemployment claims increased significantly from the previous months, the highest in four months and comparable to levels seen last summer. Seasonally adjusted unemployment claims in August were over 16,000, a 113% increase from the previous month, potentially showing the grip the Delta variant currently has on the job market.

### Single Family Housing Permits, Seasonally Adjusted

Hampton Roads, Jan 2005 – Aug 2021, Monthly

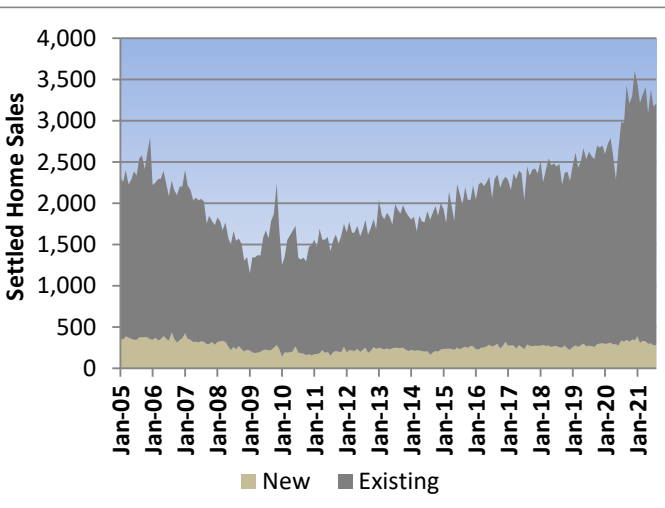


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, HRPDC

**Single Family Housing Permits:** Permit data signals the level of construction employment and confidence regarding the future trajectory of the local economy. There were 371 new construction permits issued for single family homes in August 2021. When seasonally adjusted, the data shows small variances month to month over the past year, but as the market continues to respond to labor and materials shortages, the trend is likely to stay constant until the industry can increase capacity in response to increased demand. August numbers do show declines compared to both 2020 and 2019.

### Number of Homes Sold, Seasonally Adjusted

Hampton Roads, Jan 2005 – Aug 2021, Monthly

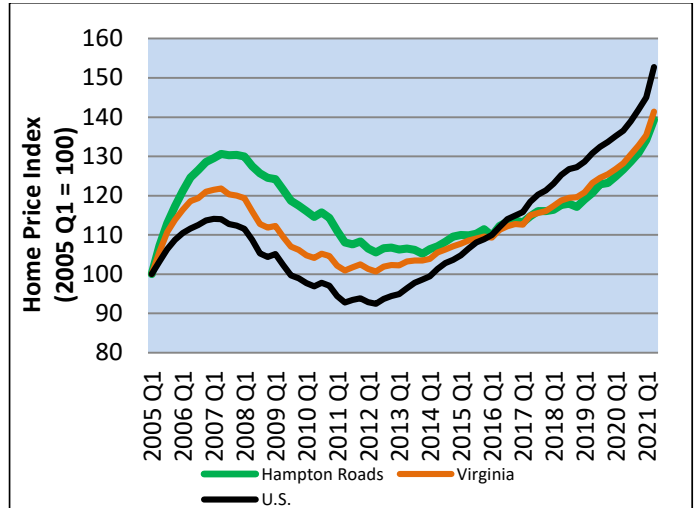


Source: REIN, HRPDC

**Home Sales:** Settled home sales measure the level of transactions on the real estate market over time, and a healthy real estate market should have a consistent level of activity. Seasonally adjusted, existing home and total settled sales in August increased slightly, remaining elevated with just over 3,200 homes sold in July. Unadjusted, total home sales in August were the third highest on record (behind only June and July 2021). Pandemic impacts were first felt in Spring 2020, so while August posted 8% YoY increase, August sales realized a 25% increase from 2019 to 2021.

### Home Price Index, All Transactions

Hampton Roads, 2005Q1 – 2021Q2 Quarterly



Source: Federal Housing Finance Agency, HRPDC

**Home Price Index:** The home price index measures the value of homes by evaluating changing price levels through repeated sales of properties. The index provides the highest quality data available on the trends in the real estate market. Hampton Roads' home prices increased, yet again, by 10% over the previous year in Q2 2021, slightly lower rates than both the state and the nation, but still a record high. Regional housing values are now 6.8% higher than the peak of the housing boom—four points higher than the previous quarter when the gap closed for the first time as home prices have been rapidly increasing.

**Note:** The format of this monthly economic report will be getting an update in the coming months. We welcome any input about what you find useful in this report. Please email Katherine Rainone at [krainone@hrpdca.gov](mailto:krainone@hrpdca.gov) with any suggested changes or improvements for future economic monthly updates.