



Regional Update

April 2026

### HAMPTON ROADS ECONOMIC MONTHLY **The Decline in Manufacturing Employment**

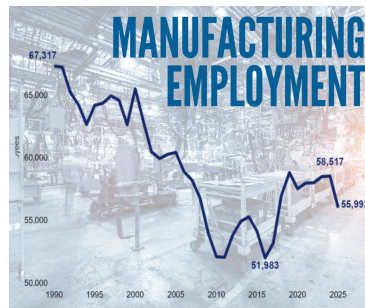
Manufacturing was one of the hardest-hit sectors in 2025, with job losses accelerating both nationally and in Hampton Roads. In the region, only federal civilian employment saw steeper declines.

Nationally, the industry saw the largest annual decline since the pandemic, continuing a long-term trend of workforce contraction driven by globalization, automation, and shifting economic conditions.

Closer to home, Hampton Roads saw manufacturing employment fall 4.3% in 2025, marking **the steepest decline since 2009**. Once a larger share of the regional economy, manufacturing now accounts for just **6.8% of regional employment**, down significantly from previous decades.

Much of the region's manufacturing base is tied to shipbuilding, which accounts for more than half of local manufacturing jobs and closely tracks federal defense spending. While that connection creates vulnerability during downturns, it also presents opportunity.

[\*Explore the Hampton Roads Economic Monthly to learn more about manufacturing trends and key economic indicators >\*](#)



### REGIONAL FREIGHT STUDY

## **Update Looks at Freight Movement in Hampton Roads**

From the goods on store shelves to the materials that support local industries, freight movement plays a critical role in Hampton Roads' economy. The [\*HRTPO 2025 Regional Freight Study\*](#) takes a comprehensive look at how goods move across the region and what it will take to keep that system efficient and competitive.

The study examines freight activity across highways, ports, rail, and air, with a focus on truck movement, which carries the majority of goods in and out of the region. It also highlights key trends, including continued growth at the Port of Virginia, regional freight patterns, and the challenges that impact movement, such as congestion, bottlenecks, and infrastructure constraints.



With more than 20,000 trucks traveling in and out of Hampton Roads each weekday, the study helps inform future transportation investments and policy decisions to support economic growth and mobility across the region.

[Learn more about the Hampton Roads Regional Freight Study>](#)



**At the Symposium:**

**ADA Title II Training**  
 \*2-hour ADA Title II Training sponsored by EasterSeals. Participants will receive a certificate of completion for successfully completing the course.

  
 Kristi McLaughlin  
 EasterSeals

**Updates from HRT**  
 Get updates from Hampton Roads Transit on the buses, fixed routes, and options for persons with disabilities.

**Regional Resources**  
 What other programs and resources are available for transportation needs for persons with disabilities? A roundtable discussion on options.

**ADA Transportation Symposium**



Join the Hampton Roads Disabilities Board on **Thursday, May 7th** for a morning dedicated to advancing accessible transit & independence across our region.

This high-impact event features a certified ADA Title II Training facilitated by **EasterSeals** followed by a dynamic panel of regional transportation leaders.

Connect with key stakeholders in government, housing, and advocacy as we bridge the gap in mobility options and enhance service delivery for persons with disabilities.

**May 7, 2026**  
**8:30 am - 12:30 pm**

**\$25.00**

**COST INCLUDES:**  
 Continental breakfast,  
 ADA course materials,  
 and certificate

 Scan for more information and to register

LOCATION:  
 HRPDC - THE REGIONAL BUILDING  
 723 Woodlake Dr., Chesapeake, VA 23320

SCAN THE QR CODE OR REGISTER HERE: <https://tinyurl.com/4cfr8tpz>

☎ 757.420.8300    ✉ [hrrdb@hrpdcva.gov](mailto:hrrdb@hrpdcva.gov)

## Shaping the Future of Hampton Roads

### PUBLIC INPUT OPPORTUNITY

## Hampton Roads HORIZON Public Survey *Extended through April 30*

HRPDC is seeking public input for **Hampton Roads Horizon**, a regional strategic plan focused on improving quality of life and strengthening economic competitiveness.

The five-minute survey allows participants to allocate an imaginary \$1,000 across 19 regional strategies. Results of the survey will help identify the strategies that matter most to Hampton Roads residents. Participants will also be entered for a chance to win one of five \$100 gift cards.

[Learn more & share your vision for Hampton Roads >](#)



## Celebrating Autism Acceptance Month

This April, the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission and the Hampton Roads Disabilities Board (HRDB) are proud to recognize and celebrate the incredible neurodiverse community in our region. Acceptance is about more than just awareness—it's about action and inclusion.

To honor this month, the HRDB is hosting an impactful **Lunch & Learn** session designed to transform perspectives and drive professional excellence. Join us virtually as we learn together to build a more accessible and inclusive Hampton Roads for everyone!

[Get more information and register for the virtual event >](#)

**April is Autism Acceptance Month**

**HRDB: LUNCH & LEARN SERIES**  
**29 APRIL**  
**12 NOON - 1 PM**

In honor of Autism Acceptance Month, HRDB invites you to a packed one-hour virtual Lunch & Learn on April 29. Join Dr. John Harrington (CHKD/ODU) and Tyler Williamson (Families of Autism Coming Together - FACT) to explore ASD diagnosis, prevalence, and behavior strategies. We will also cover navigating school systems, community programs for families, and the political pressures affecting our roles. Join us for this free event to secure the practical resources and insights necessary for a more inclusive Hampton Roads.

**DR. JOHN HARRINGTON**  
Pediatrician & Professor  
CHKD/ Old Dominion University

**TYLER WILLIAMSON**  
Executive Director  
FACT

**REGISTER**  
Scan the QR Code or register here: <https://hrdb.org/autism>

**\*\*\*\*\*VIRTUAL EVENT\*\*\*\*\***

**WHO SHOULD ATTEND?**

- CASE MANAGERS/SOCIAL WORKERS/COUNSELORS
- PROVIDERS
- ADVOCATES
- FAITH BASED ORGANIZATIONS
- ANYONE PASSIONATE ABOUT OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL

## PUBLIC INPUT OPPORTUNITY Construction Ahead!

*Draft FY 2027-2030 Transportation Improvement Program Available for Public Comment*

Transportation improvements are happening across Hampton Roads every day, and planning for what comes next is well underway.



As the region's Metropolitan Planning Organization, the HRTPO develops and maintains the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The TIP is a federally required, financially constrained plan that identifies all of the transportation infrastructure projects to be built or initiated within the next four years.

Community input plays an important role in shaping the program and ensuring it reflects regional priorities. The **Draft Hampton Roads FY 2027-2030 TIP** is now available for public review and comment through May 5, 2026.

We encourage you to review the document and share your feedback on the proposed projects and/or the document itself. Comments may be submitted to Kathlene Grauberger at [kgrauberger@hrtpo.org](mailto:kgrauberger@hrtpo.org) or by mail to **723 Woodlake Dr., Chesapeake, VA 23320**. For more information, please visit [HRTPO TIP website](#).

[Explore the Draft FY 2027-2030 TIP and learn more >](#)

## ON THE MAP

### Connecting Regions Across Virginia

HRPDC staff recently joined partners from across the Commonwealth at the Environment Virginia Symposium, bringing together leaders focused on environmental challenges and

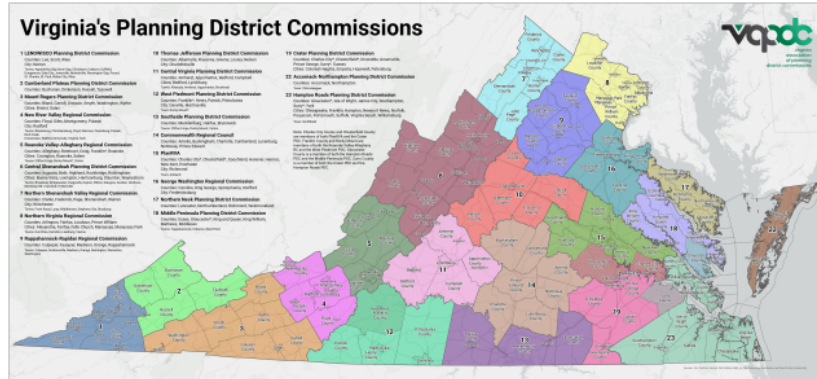
solutions statewide.

Working alongside seven other Planning District and Regional Commissions, HRPDC helped coordinate a collaborative booth highlighting environmental programs and partnerships across Virginia. At the center of the display was a custom map of VAPDC regions, where attendees added stickers to show where they were from, creating a colorful, interactive snapshot of statewide collaboration.



The result? A powerful visual reminder that while each region is unique, we are all connected in advancing environmental resilience across Virginia.

[Explore the map of Virginia's 21 Planning District Commissions and see how regions are connected >](#)

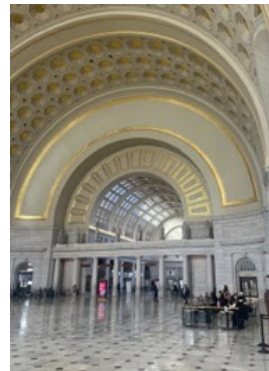


## TEMPORARY CHANGES IN RAIL SERVICE

### All Aboard the New Bus Service from Hampton Roads to D.C.

If you've recently traveled between Hampton Roads and Washington, D.C., you may have noticed a change: some trips are currently being served by bus instead of train.

This temporary adjustment is part of the Long Bridge Rail Project, a major effort to expand rail capacity across the Potomac River and improve reliability by separating passenger and freight service. To allow for daytime construction, train operations into and out of D.C. are paused during midday hours on weekdays.



During this time, select Amtrak routes are being supplemented with motorcoach service, with train schedules adjusted to run outside the construction window.

[Learn more about this change in rail service in Hampton Roads >](#)

## Public Input Opportunities

[DRAFT Hampton Roads FY 2027-2030 Transportation Improvement Program \(TIP\)](#)

(Comments collected through May 5, 2026)

[Hampton Roads HORIZON Public Survey](#) (Survey extended through April 30, 2026)

## HRPDC/HRTPO In the News

[Studies find widening roads often doesn't ease traffic. VDOT says the HRBT expansion is different.](#) (WHRO, April 11, 2026)

**Chesapeake Mayor Touts City's 'Small Town Feel' and Regionalism** (National Today, April 9, 2026)

**How Much Is Nature Worth? ODU Researcher Has the Answer** (Old Dominion University, April 6, 2026)

**Column: Community survey invites residents to shape the region's future** (Daily Press, April 4, 2026)


**Editorial: Long-term transportation plan aims to improve connectivity, mobility** (Virginian-Pilot, March 26, 2026)

**Hampton Roads now has the deepest port on the East Coast** (Virginian-Pilot, March 26, 2026)

## Procurement Opportunities

**Regional Construction Standards** (All proposal submissions are due by April 23, 2026, 2:00 PM EDT.)

## Need Help?





**NEED HELP?**

- ○ ○ Access to Services
- ○ ○ ADA Accommodations
- ○ ○ Language Assistance

**LET US KNOW!**

The HRPDC & HRTPO are committed to making regional planning accessible. If you need assistance with additional accommodations please let a staff member know or contact [title@hrpdcva.gov](mailto:title@hrpdcva.gov)



## Follow Us on Facebook



**Reminder: The HRPDC and HRTPO will not meet this month.**

## Upcoming Meetings



The Hampton Roads Planning District Commission (HRPDC) and Hampton Roads Transportation Planning Organization (HRTPO) fully comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987, Executive Order 12898 on Environmental Justice, and related nondiscrimination statutes and regulations in all programs and activities. HRPDC's website, [www.hrpdcva.gov](http://www.hrpdcva.gov), and HRTPO's website, [www.hrtpo.org](http://www.hrtpo.org), may be translated into multiple languages. Publications and other public documents can be made available in alternative languages and formats, if requested. HRPDC public meetings are always held in ADA-accessible facilities and in transit-accessible locations when possible. Auxiliary services can be provided to individuals who submit a request at least seven days prior to a meeting. Requests made within seven days will be accommodated to the greatest extent possible. Any person who believes they have been aggrieved by an unlawful discriminatory practice by HRPDC under Title VI has a right to file a formal complaint. Any such complaint may be in writing and filed with the HRPDC and/or the appropriate state or federal agency within 180 days of the alleged discriminatory occurrence. For more information on HRPDC's Title VI program, or to obtain a Title VI Complaint Form, please call (757) 420-8300 or email: [qmclaurin@hrpdcva.gov](mailto:qmclaurin@hrpdcva.gov)

Phone: 757.420.8300  
Fax: 757.523.4881  
TTY: 757.390.2578

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