

Regional Connectors Study Open Houses: Summer 2023

July – August 2023

IN-PERSON OPEN HOUSES

Outreach activities

- Members from the study team and HRTPO coordinated and attended pop-up tabling events in Hampton Roads during which information was shared about the Regional Connectors Study (RCS) and upcoming open houses. The team visited the following locations:
 - July 18 - West Hampton Community Center, Hampton
 - July 19 - Farmer's Market at City Park, Chesapeake
 - July 20 - Mount Trashmore Park, Virginia Beach
- The study team emailed the open house flyer to the following contacts for distribution:
 - Area Libraries (Chesapeake, Portsmouth, Newport News, Hampton, Virginia Beach, Suffolk, Norfolk, York County, Smithfield)
 - City communications departments (Norfolk, Portsmouth, Newport News, Suffolk)
 - HRTPO Community Advisory Committee
 - Regional Connectors Study Working Group and Steering (Policy) Committee
- The study team emailed an invitation to attend the in-person open houses:
 - Using Mailchimp, an initial invitation and two reminders were sent to a list of 498 civic league and homeowner association contacts with an open rate of 35.5% (invitation), 32.6% (reminder 1), and 31.7% (reminder 2).
 - Additional emails were sent from the connectorstudy@prrbiz.com email to 110 community organizations, associations, and faith-based organizations.
 - Emails were sent from the connectorstudy@prrbiz.com email to previous attendees of the January 2023 open houses and the regional symposium.
- HRTPO posted the Open Houses on their website calendar.
- Open House announcements posted on the RCS website.
 - 1.9K unique users viewed the RCS website from July 1 – August 4, 2023
- A media advisory was distributed to local media outlets and picked up by the following:

Date	Headline	Outlet
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24-July-23	Open house set on final planning for regional connectors	Suffolk News-Herald
28-Jul-2023	Editorial – Speak up on new route to Peninsula	Suffolk News-Herald
29-Jul-2023	News Briefs for July 29	Williamsburg Yorktown Daily
03-Aug-2023	Public input needed to alleviate traffic from the Peninsula to Norfolk	WTKR Channel 3

- PRR placed print ads promoting the open houses in The Virginian-Pilot, The Daily Press, and the New Journal and Guide. Ads ran from July 20 to August 3.
- Digital display ads and Facebook ads were geotargeted to the project area/open house meeting locations (Portsmouth, Newport News, Norfolk, and Suffolk), directing click throughs to the connectorstudy.org website. Ads ran from July 20 to August 3.
- HRTPO posted information about pop-ups and open houses on the HRTPO and RCS Facebook pages.

Open house participation

Four in-person open houses were held between July 31 – August 3, 2023. See [Appendix A](#) for the discussion and comments summary.

Date	Location	City	Participants
July 31	Pearl Bailey Library	Newport News	8 attendees signed in, including 2 youth. Several other youth spoke with staff but did not sign in
August 1	First Baptist Church Lambert's Point	Norfolk	3
August 2	Portsmouth Public Library	Portsmouth	3
August 3	VDOT Hampton Roads District Office	Suffolk	6

ONLINE OPEN HOUSE (OOH): AUGUST 16 – AUGUST 31

Outreach activities

- OOH information was posted on the RCS website.
- The study team emailed the open house flyer to the following contacts for distribution:

- Area Libraries (Chesapeake, Portsmouth, Newport News, Hampton, Virginia Beach, Suffolk, Norfolk, York County, Smithfield)
- City communications departments (Norfolk, Portsmouth, Newport News, Suffolk)
- Regional Connectors Study Working Group and Steering (Policy) Committee
- The study team emailed an initial invitation and reminder email to participate in the OOH:
 - Emails were sent from the connectorstudy@prrbiz.com email to:
 - 495 civic league and homeowner association contacts
 - Previous meeting attendees
 - Regional symposium attendees
 - 110 community organizations, associations, and faith-based organizations.
- PRR mailed 16,645 postcards to single-family homes near the project areas located in Norfolk, Newport News, Portsmouth, and Suffolk.
- HRTPO shared information on the HRTPO and RCS Facebook pages.
- The Hampton Roads Messenger ran an [article](#) about the OOH on August 25.

OOH Participation

- The OOH was viewed 821 times.
- Average engagement time with the site was 1 minute and 33 seconds.
- 45 responses to OOH questions were received.
- See [Appendix B](#) for the comment summary.

APPENDIX A: IN-PERSON OPEN HOUSE COMMENTS SUMMARY

General themes from in-person OH comment cards, post-it notes, and discussion:

Presentation discussion:

Topics of discussion during presentations included:

- Growth percentages and the alignment of traffic expectations, including work from home scenarios
- Concerns about increased congestion as related to growth scenarios
- Questions about high occupancy vehicle (HOV) and express lane capacity and toll pricing
- Coordination with the Department of Defense
- Discussion on flooding and sea level rise
- Considerations for rail options

Comment card input:

What Regional Connectors Study (RCS) corridor segments would be of greatest convenience for your travels?

- 1a and 2
- Segments that help congestion west of I-664

Do you have any concerns or suggestions about the RCS segments that future studies should address?

Concerns:

- Air quality and noise, specifically in downtown Newport News
- Concerns that adding highways will induce a greater demand and result in increased congestion
- Construction and long-term impact on wildlife and marine life
- Pedestrian and cyclist ability to cross the harbor
- Funding

Suggestions:

- Conduct a thorough social impact study
- Consider rail, public transit, and non-automobile solutions for reducing congestion, especially between the peninsula and the south side
- Include improving existing roads

APPENDIX B: ONLINE OPEN HOUSE COMMENTS SUMMARY

General themes from OH comments from 43 responses

What Regional Connector Study (RCS) corridor segments would be of greatest convenience for your travels?

- 1a – 12 responses
- 2 – 8 responses
- 3 – 8 responses
- 4 – 10 responses
- 5 – 7 responses
- None** - 7 responses

What is your biggest concern for the future of travel in the region?

- 1) Congestion
 - a. Reduced traffic
 - b. Removing truck traffic from Hampton Blvd
 - c. Coordinating construction with other projects to minimize detour conflicts and overall back ups
- 2) Tolls / Cost
 - a. Cost of the project
 - b. Increased tolls
- 3) Alternatives to personal vehicles
 - a. More investment in non-personal-vehicle travel, especially light rail and buses/public transportation
 - b. Shared lanes for bicyclists
 - c. Incentives for car shares/ carpools
 - d. Use technology to manage travel needs
- 4) Environment
 - a. How new infrastructure will affect surrounding communities, especially Black communities
 - b. Flooding and sea rise impact on travel and the surrounding communities in the project corridors
 - c. Impact on conservation areas, water quality, marine life, and bird life especially on Craney Island
 - d. Safety of the port from a national security perspective
 - e. Impact on waterway traffic during construction
 - f. Impact on smaller roads surrounding the project, especially during construction

Would additional bridge tunnels be helpful to your travel? *Only one response answered this question the rest were concerns and included above.*

Bridge yes, tunnel no

What major harbor crossing highways do you travel most frequently, what is your overall experience? *All responses were concerns and included above.*