

Public Participation / Process

Need more community rap sessions.

Need more forums for regional conversations and regional planning.

Have more community meetings to inform and discuss issues.

More diverse opportunities to engage in open, level atmosphere of sharing (knowledge and questions) between public officials and public.

Informal "town halls" at hours mutually available to all – also available online.

Have public decision making in each community for representation.

In a mass society, effective public-government communication must be a formalized process specifically organized by major institutions (public, private or non-profit)

Respectful exchanges of information and viewpoints in a meaningful way before a decision needs to be made.

Greater representation from different segments – seniors, youth, physically-challenged etc. Target groups by attending meetings.

Feedback on public input e.g. what was done with comments/input from citizens.

Making available information relevant to citizens (not those relevant to governments) i.e. accessibility of information.

Public meetings held at more convenient times and venues.

There needs to be two-way communication.

A regular forum where all views are welcome and where citizens can express their views.

Neighborhood meetings for discussion of mutual concerns.

More informal discussions by neighborhood/city/region. Town hall meetings are too formal and make dialogue threatening and intimidating.

For more citizens to take advantage of opportunities that are made available to them – attend scheduled meetings.

Better meetings. Include childcare and improved meeting notices.

More citizen-led and organized forums (like this one) to capture collective insights of citizens.

Neighborhood, local and regional town hall meetings to solicit citizen input – the use of the automated tally devices is good.

Invite randomly selected specific people to attend citizen mid-size community meetings focused on identified community needs. Provide for two-way communications with learning and teaching from citizen and government. Allow these selected citizens to spread the word

Multi-level civic organizations from civic leader in government to civic league president (community leader) For example: City to CCO to Civic Leagues

Civic Education

Teach leadership and empowerment skills – widely.

There needs to be appropriate and numerous opportunities in various forms to receive citizen input and on the same level education so that the input is informed and productive.

Civic education in schools.

Educate them in each community.

Required reading for all involved in any regionalism attempt: "The Metrocrats: Regionalism and Non Law Governance are Destroying the US" by Jo Hindman (deceased)

Teach civic engagement in middle and high school focusing on communication - talking and listening – "A Required Course"

"Civic" colleges – behind the scenes look at how government works. Speakers, workshops, discussions.

Citizens have to be educated in the ways that are most effective for their group and education level.

Use universities as an asset for collection and analysis.

Technology

Technology solution – Some level of moderated discussion forums and social media (Web) to both receive information but also provide voice of citizens re surveys, etc. . Not the only channel of communication, but one readily available one.

Use of Internet sites which are more user friendly and geared toward citizens not bureaucrats.

A way to get and exchange information in a timely and convenient way. Accessible anytime and allows multiple ways to become involved.

Data availability.

Develop a neutral source of reliable data.

Use Internet and local access cable to inform, blog, survey on important issues.

Moderated message board for exchange of opinion and questions.

Using technology (email, Facebook) to increase engagement with citizens.

Annual or semi-annual publication of opportunities and contact points. Also for initiatives and ideas. Utilization of advising remarks, avoid editorial agendas.

Use more technology to gather input from citizens and to distribute information on different levels – from neighborhoods to the region.

Please note, the public is inundated with info from all sources. The Internet – Bring intel on important issues.

Online news, forums

Being more open to accessing technological advances, Web/TV etc.

Use more modern technology – Facebook, twitter, Internet conversations and Web page access. Enhance feedback opportunities from public from all of the above. Using all of above, collate surveys and make available.

Use multiple ways of input – video, ballots.

More document on the Internet.

I am very satisfied with the information and communication received from my county (James City) government. I do not receive much from the greater Hampton Roads region. It might be quite good – I just don't know. A Web site for the region with links to each government agency and/or aid organizations might be helpful.

A Website with frequent public broadcasts (radio, billboards, TV, etc.) to advertise checking in. A call-in number for people without Internet.

Communication must be open with full disclosure of government decisions, with valued input from citizens being used in the decision process. Value all inputs and ideas. Include all data in decisions.

Use the Internet to throw out questions, get short answers, get long answers, etc.

Information should be put on the Internet, be available at public libraries and public leaders and employees should answer questions!

Greater use of technology to gain/ascertain majority views.

Some mechanism to effectively provide public information on alternatives for decision.

Information on issues should be more readily available for all citizens – via – Internet, mews and an easy method for people to respond and be tabulated. Do not have to feel out of the loop if not readily involved.

Email updates.

Information and communications needs to be: Frequent, Reliable, Consistent source, Truthful, Opportunity for feedback/response, Accurate records of information – transmission/receipt

All public bodies should televise, Webcast, podcast and transcribe their proceedings and deposit/post those records on publicly accessible Web sites and public libraries.

Organized town hall meetings to create more opportunities for input to be passed.

Segregate mundane information from milestone or decision-related information in government news dissemination.

No propaganda. No “managed” information.

Ensure the purity of data – don't accept any number thrown on the table – check it out.

Increase trust and information flow.

Transparency/Good Practices

Government closer to the people through town hall meetings and local election reform, etc.

Leaders should follow up with more info and the process should be less technical and presented by a group's peers.

Contextualization – Citizens, all civic leaders must realize they speak from their own context – (race, income, gender, time in region) and recognize that is not the only context. So we have to “put our cards on the table” and recognize we form our opinions and biases on our context.

Everyone is on an equal playing field and has the same voice, same “weight” to their voice.

One central place where you can voice your opinion and see that it is being collected and responded to.

Start local (neighborhoods) and look at ways to engage neighbors that depart from the traditions “civic organization” model. For example, make it project-oriented, like build a community garden or start a neighborhood business where the “neighbors” are also the owners. Form a small group, build on enlarging the circle where the ultimate purpose is engaging conversation on mutual areas of concern.

Provide space for individuals to express ideas and give them a notion that their opinions will be respected.

All voices need to be reached out to and given the opportunity to be heard from. If there is not a response then civic leaders have done their part. As long as they reached out to the places people can be found.

Early citizen involvement when the debate on a public issue is starting – before the vested interests have come up with the “school solution” that government then tries to sell to the community under the guise of public outreach, public hearings.

Convey the message that leaders are listening rather than talking at citizens. Involve elected leadership in forums such as this one.

Utilize charette process more often. More “public information” meetings. Start with context for decision making, use break out session for where we are as region, then focus on where we want to be.

Better availability of decision-making meetings.

Eliminate “closed” City Council meetings except in the case of sensitive employment issues.

Reduce the use of “Executive sessions” for local and state government deliberations.

More diversity in forums for public input.

On major issues – have public comment meetings and then provide responses to topics of concern.

Two or three minutes at a public hearing or council meeting and no chance to directly question our political leaders and get answers has put our government out of balance.

Openly share information – good and bad – and enlist citizens in overcoming those challenges. Too often, “communications” is perceived as spin.

Bring the public in earlier in the process.

More less formal official meetings developed in a format that entice citizen participation.

More small group dialogue.

Neighborhood-level “issue” study circles or dialogues/forums.

Involve citizens in strategic planning for their area.

Forums held with time of the day the majority of citizens can be available or have multiple opportunities at different times and days.

Regional Visioning

Vision process in region – all citizens are brought together (in person, online, via phone) to decide what are our regional priorities and to establish work groups around priorities including established organizations on potential need for new non profits.

Creation of a large civic engagement effort including over 10,000 people using differing formats, online, phone, in-person. The results would be identification of the 100 most important HR issues and a report to the community would be updated on each goal monthly.

Prove regionalism reduces cost, size and scope of government – SPSA – dismal failure of a regional entity.

Build trust between parties.

Values in society discussion.

Create outreach strategies that respond socio-culturally, socio-economically aimed at reaching diverse audiences through inclusion.

Increase involvement in HRCCE or equal.

Decide who/what organization is the regional voice – who will speak for HR? -HRP, HRPDC, Mayors & Chairs, MPO, etc.

Create one regional system to facilitate consensus toward decision making across the region.

Media

Restructure media outlets – newspaper-like but more like public dialogue, with opinion-oriented sections, content-based, feature-like-this outlet can be used to generate discussion, dispense in-depth info on complex issues, make citizens feel informed, engaged, participatory.

Citizens need knowledge/understanding of process and how to communicate.

More community newsletters.

Local media should focus less on presenting facts and more on using facts, figures and info to get the community into the discussion so we can come up with the best answer to these issues.

Greater outreach into various communities, organizations, constituencies and populations by means of separate and understood and accepted forms of media and communication.

Use media to help educate us – radio, local TV and newspaper to follow more closely local (from civic leagues to city government) issues as they are discussed in these forums.

The news media needs to be regulated so not to distort information.

Modernize service request portals and information availability.

One newspaper!

To enhance regionalism, we need better information via regional media.

Use media – radio, local TV and newspaper to have clear forum (venue) for announcements of public meetings.

Use a unified radio channel and TV station as one teaching tool in all public (private, parochial?) schools.

Local television news change their focus away from crime and weather to what is happening with government and our community.

Use WHRO (both 89.5 and Channel 15) as the central information collection and distribution with regular scheduled programs to provide information to everyone. Internet site will also catch other people.

Newspaper column written by official and citizen on an issue coming up for a public hearing – also column could be put on web site.

The need to make the playing field level – have to do away with the digital division.

All forms of communication mediums to be accessible to the public – blogs (Internet) public access (equal time for dissenting opinion) TV and radio and newspaper

City level government officials should have a consistent means to communicate/interact with their constituency. Personal interaction is the best means of communication. The Internet, email, and telephone, TV all complimentary means.

Neighborhood Building/Community Involvement

Record all committee meetings and government discussions and post them on the Internet using streaming video that can be selected by agenda item. Include all regional organizations that accept any tax funding.

Use civic clubs, but not exclusively, to access citizens.

Leverage WHRO, libraries, use of Web and civic leagues.

Forming structures at neighborhood level for communication.

Improve meetings by: Move the meetings away from city hall and hold them in the neighborhoods. Provide child care area at meetings.

Hand out fliers at frequently visited places i.e. WalMart. Vary times.

Somebody needs to go where people are to get their input – not expect them to go to meetings at awkward times, with no public transit available. For example: to neighborhood organizations, fairs, PRAs, churches and synagogues.

Make all information/data used by local and regional decision makers available to anyone interested with non-biased analysis available by a non biased source, i.e. business school.

Better and credible mechanism for public input on selecting driving alternatives.

FOIA modified to make records of closed meetings accessible to the public after a decision has been made.

Monthly mailing/emailing to citizens about meeting on decisions.

More individualized announcements of public event, email, etc.

Survey citizens regularly after making good faith efforts to inform them.

More collaboration between community groups for transparency sake and options for blogging to generate discussions.

Greater notice of public meetings.

Discussion forums.