Impact on Property Values and Property Tax Revenue

In June, a report from the Union of Concerned Scientists, titled “Underwater: Rising Seas, Chronic Floods, and the Implications for US Coastal Real Estate,” analyzed national property data for areas at risk of chronic inundation from high tides (defined as flooding on average 26 times a year or more), even in the absence of major storms, using the 3 sea level rise (SLR) scenarios developed by NOAA (a rise globally of 6.6, 4.0, or 1.6 feet, respectively, above 1992 levels by 2100). According to the report, “as many as 311,000 coastal homes in the lower 48 states with a collective market value of about $117.5 billion [are] at risk of chronic flooding within the next 30 years – the lifespan of a typical mortgage.”

The “high” SLR scenario, which the report notes is “an appropriately conservative projection to use when estimating risk to homes, which are often the owner’s single biggest asset.” Interactive maps and databases by state, community, and zip code are available on the website (www.ucsusa.org/underwater).

The report noted that “some of Virginia’s most exposed places are also home to large elderly communities or communities of color. In Accomack County, for example, more than one-in-four residents is elderly. Elderly and marginalized households typically have fewer resources available for coping with challenges like flooding.”

An analysis of data for Accomack and Northampton Counties (see table on p. 2) shows a significant number of properties at risk. Careful reading of the data shows some discrepancies (for example, the total number of homes and total population don’t always match when moving from one SLR scenario to another for the same time frame), but the trends are the critical message. Some highlights include:

• Under the high SLR scenario, almost 2,000 homes on the Shore will be at risk as early as 2030, increasing to almost 6,500 homes by 2100.
• By 2045, 17% of the property tax revenue for the two counties will be at risk under the high SLR scenario; even under the intermediate scenario, 11.3% will be at risk by 2060.
• In every scenario and time frame, the large majority of homes at risk are in Accomack County Election District 1 (Chincoteague; eg, 2,285 homes in 2045 under the high SLR scenario, which represents 69% of the total 3,293 homes at risk); the second-highest number is in Accomack District 6, which includes Accomac, Deep Creek, and Tangier Island (eg, 419 homes [13%] in 2045 under the high SLR scenario).

See Sea Level, cont’d on p. 2
Sea Level, cont’d from p. 1
Planning for the Future

While many organizations, including the Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission (A-NPDC) and others, have been developing resources and conducting studies on coastal resilience and adaptation for several years, many feel that the communities are not engaged in the process. To address this issue, the Resilience Adaptation Feasibility Tool (RAFT) was developed in partnership with the Institute for Environmental Negotiation at the University of Virginia, the Virginia Coastal Policy Center at William & Mary Law School, and Old Dominion University/Virginia Sea Grant Climate Adaptation and Resilience Program. A workshop was held on August 14 with community and staff members from Accomack and Northampton counties and the towns of Chincoteague, Onancock, Saxis, and Wachapreague, as well as representatives from local organizations and nonprofits, including CBES. An earlier workshop was held in Cape Charles; a future session is scheduled on Tangier Island.

The RAFT tool was developed “to assist localities in increasing their resilience”; the tool was used to develop a scorecard for each locality to assess strengths and weaknesses, with sections on policy, leadership, and collaboration; risk assessment and emergency management; infrastructure resilience; planning for resilience; and community engagement, health, and well-being. The focus of the workshop was to review the scorecard results, identify “low-hanging fruit” for improving resilience, and develop a list of Resilience Actions that can be started or implemented within the next year.

In outlining their plans, many of the communities focused on reaching out to local residents, to educate them on sea level rise and flooding, to find out what their concerns are, and to provide resources. Cape Charles has developed a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) sheet for residents and visitors on flooding, to get out to local residents, to educate them on sea level rise and flooding, to find out what their concerns are, and to provide resources. Cape Charles has developed a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) sheet for residents and visitors on flooding, to find out what their concerns are, and to provide resources. Cape Charles has developed a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) sheet for residents and visitors on flooding, to find out what their concerns are, and to provide resources. Cape Charles has developed a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) sheet for residents and visitors on flooding, to find out what their concerns are, and to provide resources.

The RAFT team will be working with Implementation Teams for each community, to provide support and resources through 2019. More information is available on the website (http://ien.arch.virginia.edu/raft).

Eastern Shore Properties at Risk for Chronic Inundation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sea Level Rise Scenario*</th>
<th>Homes at Risk/Total Homes</th>
<th>Value at Risk/Total Value</th>
<th>Property Tax at Risk/Total Tax</th>
<th>Population at Risk/Total Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2030</td>
<td>1,914/20,157</td>
<td>$326,511,650/3,062,361,422</td>
<td>$1,657,210/17,215,817</td>
<td>1,961/40,016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2045</td>
<td>3,293/21,479</td>
<td>$579,916,350/3,175,278,822</td>
<td>$2,971,245/17,904,345</td>
<td>3,373/43,621</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2060</td>
<td>4,275/22,223</td>
<td>$774,338,500/3,272,184,705</td>
<td>$4,012,298/18,561,231</td>
<td>4,494/45,553</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2080</td>
<td>5,555/22,223</td>
<td>$1,019,923,776/3,272,184,705</td>
<td>$5,327,595/18,561,231</td>
<td>6,515/45,553</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2100</td>
<td>6,476/22,921</td>
<td>$1,213,451,690/3,371,505,947</td>
<td>$6,379,483/19,232,403</td>
<td>8,074/46,921</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2035</td>
<td>1,591/35,867</td>
<td>$266,011,850/2,953,758,292</td>
<td>$1,346,779/24,385,608</td>
<td>1,663/35,926</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2060</td>
<td>3,339/40,129</td>
<td>$586,562,150/3,175,519,692</td>
<td>$3,005,957/26,587,026</td>
<td>3,416/43,621</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2080</td>
<td>4,316/41,539</td>
<td>$780,714,535/3,272,425,575</td>
<td>$4,043,911/27,731,152</td>
<td>4,558/45,553</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2100</td>
<td>5,270/41,539</td>
<td>$967,695,033/3,272,425,575</td>
<td>$5,059,908/27,731,152</td>
<td>6,048/45,553</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2060</td>
<td>1,861/40,129</td>
<td>$304,993,950/3,175,519,692</td>
<td>$1,552,234/26,587,026</td>
<td>1,936/43,621</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2100</td>
<td>3,531/41,539</td>
<td>$611,089,350/3,272,425,575</td>
<td>$3,142,793/27,731,152</td>
<td>3,637/45,553</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The 3 sea level rise scenarios originally developed by NOAA for the 2014 National Climate Assessment.
Sea Level, cont’d from p. 2

The Code of Virginia (§15.2-2223.3) specifies that, beginning July 1, 2015, any localities in the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission (although not including A-NPDC) shall include “strategies to combat projected sea-level rise and recurrent flooding” into their Comprehensive Plans when updated. Although not specifically required, both Accomack and Northampton counties have begun to address this. Accomack County has added a detailed section to the current draft of the Comprehensive Plan, citing sea level rise of up to 2.5 feet by 2067, and identifying at-risk populations living within the floodplain; the next step is to “review the modeled data and identify the number of structures and properties affected,” with “action items [as] a likely outcome.” Northampton County’s current draft Plan includes a paragraph referring to “inundation due to sea level rise on a 50 to 100 year horizon.” Two goals identified are (1) ensuring that “public funds [a re not] utilized for infrastructure within areas projected to be inundated in the 100 year horizon,” and (2) developing “an integrated approach to shoreline protection ... throughout the County.”

Tangier Island in the Spotlight

Several news items recently have focused on Tangier Island as one of the first communities to be directly affected by sea level rise. On August 7, Tangier was the subject of an hour-long radio program on “The 1A,” on National Public Radio. The program included James “Ooker” Eskridge, Mayor of Tangier and a local waterman; Earl Swift, journalist and author of Chesapeake Requiem: A Year with the Watermen of Vanishing Tangier Island; Susan Conner, Chief of Planning and Policy, Norfolk Division, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; and Molly Mitchell, a marine scientist at VIMS Center for Coastal Resources Management.

Swift pointed to some of the changes he has seen on the island in the last 20 years, including the loss of the southern end of the island, and added that “Ooker himself ... has shown me places ... offshore 100, 200 yards that had been high and dry in his boyhood.” He added, “Since 1850 Tangier’s lost two-thirds of its land mass ... What you’ve seen in the 20th century is that process is accelerated.” He noted that erosion “is not a separate issue from sea level rise – the two are interlinked. The higher the water climbs, ... the more erosive the power of the waves.”

Eskridge said, “our problem first and foremost is erosion. Sea level rise may be occurring, but it’s at a rate that I can’t detect.” Swift noted that some of the sea level rise may be apparent, but the islanders are “misidentifying it.... If you look at the interior waterways [of Uppards], ... Tom’s Gut in particular, it’s double in the last 50 years. That’s marsh that’s drowning.” Eskridge pointed out that “if sea level rise is occurring, if we can get protection from the wave action, we can actually build the island up. It was done back in the 1930s.” In response to a question about relocation, Eskridge stressed, “When we talk about saving Tangier, it’s not just about saving a piece of land, I’m talking about saving a people, a culture, a way of life.”

According to Mitchell, the rate of sea level rise in Virginia is about twice the global average, and evidence suggests that sea level rise is accelerating. For Tangier Island, with an elevation of 4 feet above sea level, the projection is just under 2 feet of sea level rise by 2050.

Swift pointed out that “we don’t have the time or the money or the technological means to save every community that ultimately will be threatened by sea level rise. We’ve got 88,000 miles of coastline.... And Tangier presents us with an inconvenient first choice.... We have a slow-motion natural disaster under way on the island, and we’ve got to decide what we’re going to do about it.”

RAFFLE to WIN

Between the Waters 2018
by popular Shore artist,
Bethany Simpson
CBES thanks LEMON TREE GALLERY, Cape Charles, for showcasing this striking Coastal Folk Art painting at their 301 Mason Avenue studio (757) 331-4327. Come savor Bethany’s works as well as those of other talented Shore artists and artisans, too!

Tickets cost $20 or 3 for $50, and are available at Lemon Tree or online at www.cbes.org. The drawing will take place on December 1, 2018.

All proceeds benefit CBES 26th Annual Between the Waters Bike Tour and its mission: Pedal to Protect Virginia’s Eastern Shore.
ShoreLine Page 4

More than 80 people filled the seats at the Northampton County Planning Commission’s Public Hearing on the county’s Draft of proposed changes to the current Comprehensive Plan – as a result of the Commission’s state-mandated 5-year review. With no introduction, no presentation of the changes, deletions, or additions to the current Plan, and no explanation of the process, the Hearing was opened for public comments.

Almost every speaker voiced dissatisfaction with both the process and the product. Comments ranged from proposed arbitrary density and use changes to Villages and Hamlets, to lack of sufficient resource protection for the growing aquaculture and tourism industries, to disregard for the aquifer recharge areas, to the absence of professional planning help to analyze data and draft the proposal, to the inclusion of Planned Unit Developments without performance standards, to failure to address the need for more affordable housing, and to the overall negative tone of the Draft and the lack of updated and accurate economic growth figures. Additional written comments received by the Planning Department voiced many of these same objections. The Commission’s procedure has been to read aloud only submitted comments with that specific request. All spoken and written comments now on the public record can be found here: www.boarddocs.com/va/northco/Board.nsf/Public#, then locate the Planning Commission (upper right in black ribbon), then Work Session Agenda for August 15.

Public Felt Excluded From the Process

The most frequent complaint, however, was the failure of the Planning Commission to include the public in the Comprehensive Review process. During the Hearing, the Commission Chair thanked the community for input and comments and read from a long list of “organizations and individuals” who had been involved in the review process at some point over the past 6 years.

What remained unspoken, however, is how, or if, those comments were used in the Draft and applied to the County’s planning. References appeared to include the input of a few carefully chosen “organizations and individuals” – almost all supporting the opinions and conclusions of the Draft writers. By far, the input mentioned most often throughout the Draft was a 6-year-old Report1 based on a phone survey conducted by an “issue management firm”2 – a firm with a website that advertises help for clients to “impact a legislative or regulatory issue (or) influence public opinion.” The survey was requested and paid for by the real estate industry. This material, mentioned by one of the speakers, appeared to be new information to many in the audience, especially to Shore newcomers.

What Happens Next?

The Virginia Code is very specific about the governing body’s process when working with the Comprehensive Plan and its amendments, including changes as a result of the mandatory 5-year review.

“After the public hearing, the [Planning] Commission may approve, amend and approve, or disapprove the plan. Upon approval, the commission shall by resolution recommend the plan, or part thereof, to the governing body [the Board of Supervisors] and a copy shall be certified to the governing body.” From that point on, the Board has 90 days to take action on the Draft.

The Board of Supervisors then posts the Draft to the county website, or clearly describes how the public may access the Draft being considered for adoption. After proper legal notice, the Board of Supervisors holds its own Public Hearing to accept public comment on the proposed Draft.

After consideration, the Board “shall approve and adopt, amend and adopt, or disapprove the plan.”

“If the governing body disapproves the plan, then it shall be returned to the local planning commission for its reconsideration, with a written statement of the reasons for its disapproval. The commission shall have 60 days in which to reconsider the plan and resubmit it, with any changes, to the governing body.”

The Planning Commission starts review of the Public Hearing comments at a specially called work session on August 29. The review documents will be on the Commission’s BoardDocs page, included in the work session Agenda. The Commission meets on the first Tuesday of the month at 7 PM in Eastville – meetings are open to the public.

1 http://www.co.northampton.va.us/departments/CPAC_Minutes/CPAC%20FINAL%20REPORT.pdf
2 http://www.amstrats.com/

Ed. Note: CBES will let readers know when the clock starts ticking – stay tuned.
Dangerous Intersection – Does VDOT Understand the Problem?

Heavy Highway Traffic + Unmonitored Median Crossover = Dangerous Intersection

By Mary Miller

There’s no question that the Food Lion entrance south of the traffic light at Rt. 13 and Stone Road is one dangerous traffic pattern. Take 4 lanes of fast moving traffic, an uncontrolled median crossing, and no flashing signal to warn of an impending red light, then add summer tourism through-traffic, plus several thousand local campers and other summer visitors, many stopping at the only grocery store within 10 miles – and what do you have? A hazardous, unsafe traffic situation that Northampton County would expect the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) to resolve as soon as possible.

VDOT’s Plan

But what do we get? A proposed $1.7 million-dollar VDOT project that addresses neither the speeding traffic nor the issue of cars crossing two or four lanes against highway traffic. And VDOT calls this its “Smart Scale”* program. VDOT’s proposed safety improvements include: widening and lengthening eight turn lanes, “tapering” roadway edges, and installing lighting and road signs along less than a half-mile of Route 13 near the shopping center.

Citizen comment at a July meeting included calls for lower speed limits and closing the median cross-over, or installing a traffic light at the commercial entrance. VDOT dismissed the new traffic light idea, stating that it would make the intersection more dangerous, even though a similar two-light system, on Rt. 13 to manage shopping center traffic in Exmore, appears to safely control traffic. And every time a median closing has been proposed anywhere in the Northampton County, there’s immediate pushback from someone – although none was voiced publicly at the VDOT meeting.

The Community’s Option

An alternative solution gaining citizen support is the re-emergence of an 8-year-old idea involving an approximately 1,000-ft. service road entrance into the Food Lion complex from Bayside Road/Business Rt. 13. Traffic that would go east at the Cape Charles light to access the new road, and the Route 13 median crossing would be closed.

Correction

The August issue of ShoreLine included an erroneous announcement regarding a Public Hearing on the Draft Northampton County Comprehensive Plan scheduled for August 14 during the Board of Supervisors regular meeting. We regret the error.

*http://www.vasmartscale.org/
Keeping Track

Glass Recycling on the Way Out

Accomack County announced recently that they will no longer be accepting glass for recycling. According to Stewart Hall, Deputy Administrator of Public Works and Facilities, due to changes in the recycling market and new tariffs, TFC Recycling had initiated a processing fee of $90 per ton, which would exceed the tipping fee of $75 a ton the county receives at the landfill. By eliminating glass – the heaviest material – they were able to lower the fee to $70 a ton. The county is currently exploring other recycling companies that may be able to take our glass recyclables. Northampton County is still accepting glass for recycling, although they may follow Accomack’s lead, since both counties use the same recycling company.

Accomack County Supervisors Vote to Consider New Options for Funding Tourism

Although tourism promotion for Accomack was not on the Board’s August 15 meeting agenda, a Supervisor was allowed to bring up the subject.* The discussion centered around the value of the poultry industry vs. that of tourism, then moved on to the idea of separating from the bi-county Tourism Commission, “teaming up” with the Chamber of Commerce, and considering how to promote tourism in Chincoteague. The Chairman then moved to direct Staff to explore options for the best way to promote tourism in Accomack without continuing its membership in the Tourism Commission. There was no dissent to the motion.

The discussion appeared to be an intentional insertion into the meeting by the Chair with support from one other Supervisor. A spur-of-the-moment decision to consider withdrawing the County from its tourism marketing Commission, when the bi-county region has consistently led the state in tourism growth – dollars spent, revenues collected, employment increases – might be regarded as a random, capricious action by a Board with serious fiduciary responsibilities to taxpayers. Perhaps further deliberation and discussion will lead to more thoughtful action.

*Online audio can be found at https://accomackcountyva.swagit.com/play/08152018-1613

Refrigerator Pickles

If you can find those little pickling cucumbers, they’re perfect here. But for this fast, easy summer condiment, those long thin English/Persian cucumbers work just fine. Double or triple the recipe for a weekend party, or to pass around jars to friends. This recipe makes about a pint. The hardest part here is the 10 minutes or so it takes to slice the vegetables REALLY thin – take that time and you’ll end up with great crispy, tangy pickles.

- 1 English cucumber, or 6 to 8 small pickling cucumbers
- ½ sweet onion, like Vidalia
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 1 garlic clove, whole but slightly crushed
- ginger to taste – grated fresh, powdered, or a few drops of ginger oil
- red pepper flakes to taste
- ½ cup rice vinegar
- ¾ cup sugar

Heat vinegar and sugar until simmering and sugar is dissolved. Cool to room temperature. Add garlic and spices to taste. Thinly slice cucumber and onion, toss with salt, and drain in colander for 1 hour. Fill clean jar with sliced vegetables and cover with vinegar mix. Refrigerate for 24 hours. That’s it – you’re done.

Reprinted with permission from The Kitchen Hive (http://www.talkrealnow.com/category/revolution-cookbook/).
Watch House Follow-Up

The Northampton County Board of Supervisors proposed a change to the county Zoning Ordinance to permit "watch houses," up to 500 sq. ft., to be used as short-term/vacation rentals, and to be located within the Resource Protection Area (RPA) under certain conditions.

A letter from the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) informed the Board that this use would not be consistent with state regulations. Any non-water-dependent use, like a short-term rental described as a "watch house," would not be permitted in the RPA. A special exemption would be needed, and an appeal to the Board of Zoning Appeals pleading a hardship or unreasonable restriction on the use of property would be required.

The Planning Commission recommended denial of the Board’s proposal; they will submit alternative language for consideration. The Board accepted the recommendation.

Shore Natives

A reminder from the Plant ES Natives campaign – fall is the best time to plant native trees and shrubs! Do you have a copy of the guide, Native Plants of Accomack and Northampton? Free copies of this informative, full-color publication are still available! The guide can also be viewed and downloaded online (https://www.plantvirginianatives.org/native-plants-for-virginias-eastern-shore/). The Plant ES Natives campaign steering team recently met to begin planning events and activities for a relaunch event in spring 2019. More details to come.

CBES Membership 2018

Name ________________________________
Address ______________________________
City __________________ ST ______ Zip ______
Email _________________________________

New _______ Renewal _______ ShoreLine by US mail ______

______ 1 yr. Regular Membership (includes ShoreLine) $25
______ Life Membership (includes ShoreLine) $500
______ Optional add’l tax-deductible contribution of $ ______
______ Gift subscription to ShoreLine for a friend: $25

Please provide recipient’s name, address, and email: ____________________________

Volunteer for our community-building opportunities:

Bike Tour _______ Community Unity Day _______
Oyster Roast _______ Clean the Bay Day _______
ShoreLine reporter _______ Hospitality _______
Fundraising _______ Candidate Forums _______
Administrative _______ Where needed _______

Send to CBES, PO Box 882, Eastville, VA 23347
Join online at www.cbes.org

Celebrating 30 Years of ShoreLine
1998-2002

As one century ended and a new one began, ShoreLine assessed the impacts of changes in policies – local, State, and Federal – and explored challenges ahead.

Northampton County first considered the concept of including "open space easements" protection in subdivisions. Differing points of view were invited in discussions of the new "performance-based" accreditation process for public schools; and the effects of electric power deregulations on rural areas, as well as explanations of the new plasticulture agricultural technique – especially for tomatoes – all received ShoreLine’s attention.

Northampton County’s biggest tourist attraction, Kiptopeke State Park, received funding for a fishing pier and a new boat ramp. Long-term ecological research on the Shore attracted increasing national and international attention. And although Accomack County Supervisors had been warned about the dangers of development on Cedar Island, 4 houses were lost and 4 more were left in the water after a major storm event.

ShoreLine became available by e-mail and online, and a change in IRS designation ensured that its emphasis would officially be on “collecting and disseminating reliable information and analysis on the environment, economy, social fabric, and local governments” of the Shore.

The Eastern Shore Railroad manager pled guilty to embezzlement, its president was fired, the management company terminated, and a local auditing firm quit in the middle of examining railroad and Accomack-Northampton Transportation District Commission financial records.

The Nature Conservancy received an Environmental Justice grant from EPA for the redevelopment of the Bayview community after the state of its substandard housing came to light during the state prison controversy.

Pollution clean-up at Wallops included a well water remediation operation that would run 24/7 for 9 years on an 11-acre tank farm. An old petroleum fire training area was identified for future clean-up but “was not believed to pose an environmental threat.”

And the threat of residential “sprawl” was brought to the fore when Accomack County residents raised an outcry over a lack of resource protection in the county’s Zoning Ordinance. A large subdivision on Upshur’s Neck threatened to degrade land and water resources, and the county had no tools or performance standards to protect itself.

The new century was off to an interesting start.
### CBES and Other Activities

**Sept 5**  
VIMS Public Seminar  
7:30 PM, Wachapreague

**Sept 18**  
ES Ground Water Committee  
10 AM, Accomac

**Sept 18**  
CBES Board Meeting  
7:00 PM, Eastville

### Accomack County

**Sept 5**  
Board of Zoning Appeals  
10 AM, Sup. Chambers

**Sept 12**  
Planning Commission (PC)  
7 PM, Sup. Chambers

**Sept 18**  
School Board  
6:30 PM, Sup. Chambers

**Sept 19**  
Board of Supervisors  
5 PM, Sup. Chambers

**Sept 25**  
PC Work Session  
7 PM, Sup. Chambers

**Sept 27**  
Wetlands Board  
10 AM, Sup. Chambers

### Northampton County

**Sept 4**  
Board of Zoning Appeals  
1 PM, Conference Room

**Sept 4**  
Planning Commission (PC)  
7 PM, Machipongo

**Sept 11**  
Board of Supervisors (BOS)  
7 PM, Sup. Chambers

**Sept 19**  
Wetlands Board  
TBA, Conference Room

**Sept 19**  
PC Work Session  
7 PM, Sup. Chambers

**Sept 24**  
BOS Work Session/  
Adjourned Meeting  
7 PM, Conference Room

**Sept 25**  
School Board  
6:00 PM, Machipongo

---

**Note:** Please verify times and places prior to attending meetings.

---

**ShoreLine**

Community Calendar - September 2018

For Memberships & Information: www.cbes.org