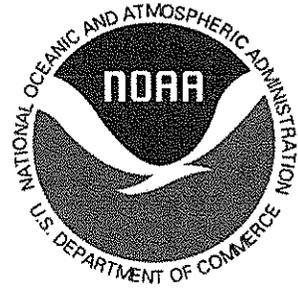


Virginia Coastal Zone
MANAGEMENT PROGRAM



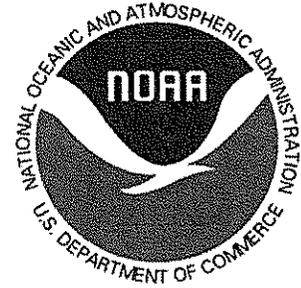
**2007 A-NPDC Seaside Special Area Management Plan: Community Viz
Training for Accomack and Northampton Staff and Public Forum on Growth
and Land Use Task 96.02**

Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission

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2007 A-NPDC Seaside Special Area Management Plan: Community Viz Training for Accomack and Northampton Staff and Public Forum on Growth and Land Use

Forum and Training Report

A-NPDC staff arranged and held the following forum and training activities for 2008:

The A-NPDC hosted a public forum highlighting planning tools that allowed the community to envision current and future growth and land use decisions. The A-NPDC also assisted the Counties with the costs to provide GIS and Community VIZ training to Accomack and Northampton County planning employees. The forum was held at the Eastern Shore of Virginia Community College in their large auditorium. Staffs from the counties as well as local institutions and citizens were present for the forum.

Chuck Donley, who completed the build out model for the two counties, presented information as well as P.G. Ross from the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS). P.G. Ross presented research information about the impacts of land use and development on the Eastern Shore of Virginia water quality and marine resources. He presented information from a CZM study that was soon to be completed on impervious surfaces related to shellfish closures. A similar study was completed in North Carolina and VIMS has taken the same approach for the study. Questions were asked about the presentation such as: Is there a specific area where run-off is occurring more frequently? Is it related to specific types of impervious surfaces, for example tomato plasticulture? Dr. Ross was careful not to blame particular local industries however there is a correlation between impervious surfaces and impacts to water quality and marine resources.

Chuck Donley, who completed the build out model for the two counties, presented information from the Community Viz program. Mr. Donley did a couple live build-outs with the Community Viz software that had positive feedback from the audience. One of the live build outs centered on the amount of load in a stream that will be produced if there were development in the close proximity of the stream. It found that there would be impacts to the stream but again Mr. Donley said the impacts will be minimal unless the site reaches total build-out which is what the model predicts. There was a tremendous amount of questions regarding future build-out and the rezoning of Northampton County. Mr. Donley insisted this is a build-out tool and many areas on the shore will never get totally built out.

Accomack and Northampton County staff received training for the Community Viz software. Rob Testerman, a Land Use Planner with Accomack County, received twenty-five hours of Community Viz training from Chuck Donley. Peter Stith, a Planner from Northampton County, received about twenty-five hours of Community Viz training with Chuck Donley through webex seminars; he also had about five hours of training with Mr. Donley while here for the DAWN forum.

The two counties have already found that is a very useful tool. The county of Northampton used the tool to assist in the decision making process for re-zoning the county. The county is still in the process of holding public hearings and collecting public input, but expects to adopt the new zoning ordinances within the year. Accomack County has recently completed an update of their Comprehensive Plan and used the Community Viz software to run some build-out models. Some of the build-out models have helped guide the county to possibly adopt new building regulations for the county. The County of Accomack evaluated the introduction of the Chesapeake Bay Act requirements for the seaside of the county. They used the Community Viz software to help guide the process. The County made the decision in February 2009 to extend the Bay Act to the Seaside.

There were a total of 29 individuals that attended the forum on June 11, 2008 at the Eastern Shore of Virginia Community College located in Melfa, Virginia.

Speakers for the Water Quality Workshop

Dave Wilson

Executive Director, Maryland Coastal Bays Program

Helped Raise \$80,000 in funding for DAWN from Sussex to Northampton Counties.

P.G. Ross

Eastern Shore native; grew up on Pungoteague Creek on the bayside of Accomack County

Undergraduate degree from VA Tech in Fisheries & Wildlife

Master's degree from Auburn University in Zoology & Wildlife

Senior Marine Scientist for the VA Institute of Marine Science at the Eastern Shore Laboratory in Wachapreague

Current research focusing on native oyster restoration & land use water quality relationships

Mr. Chuck Donley

Urban and Regional planner specializing in Community Viz Applications with 25 years of related experience

Planning magazine has published his writing relating to GIS and planning issues

He has guided the Community Viz build-out wizard from original design to actual use

And has worked with numerous planning and community departments across the country

Land Use and Water Quality Workshop June 11th at Eastern Shore Community College

The Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission (A-NPDC), will conduct a Land Use and Water Quality Workshop at 7:00 PM on Wednesday, June 11th in the Eastern Shore Community College Lecture Hall. The workshop will feature presentations by Paige G. Ross, Senior Marine Scientist at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) Eastern Shore Lab and Chuck Donley of Donley and Associates. Mr. Ross will discuss current VIMS research on the impact of land use and development on the Eastern Shore's water quality and marine resources. Mr. Donley will use CommunityViz, a land use modeling software, to present several hypothetical land development scenarios to illustrate the potential impacts of future development on water quality.

The workshop is being held in cooperation with the Delmarva Atlantic Watershed Network (DAWN), the Virginia Coastal program, and Accomack and Northampton counties. DAWN has provided Accomack and Northampton counties with copies of the CommunityViz software to use in conjunction with their geographic information systems (GIS). The Virginia Coastal Program has provided funding Mr. Donley to train county staff to use the software to model the impacts of development and plan better for the future.

For further information on the workshop, contact the Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission at 787-2936.

ShoreLine Editorial

The numbers are in for Northampton – Accomack take heed – the Piper *will* be paid.

Using new planning software available through Community Viz – an advanced, accessible software that is designed to help people visualize, analyze and communicate about important land use decisions – the Northampton County planning staff has been able to present approximate new build out numbers for residential dwelling units (i.e., how many units can be built in certain situations) as well as new population projections. The new numbers were discussed at a recent meeting of the regional Delmarva Area Watershed Network (DAWN) for planners and interested citizens from both counties. The meeting took place last month at the Community College.

In Northampton County, currently there are 7,022 dwelling units in the county with a population of 12,991. Under current zoning, the number of dwelling units at build out could climb to 25,316 with a projected population of 64,809 – and this would be through existing, by-right zoning with no additional public hearings or new re-zonings – and it would take place with no contributions from developers toward the services or infrastructure that the new projects would require.

Under the proposed Northampton zoning ordinance amendments, that by-right build out would decrease only about 12% to 22,125 dwelling units with a projected population at 56,640. These figures include thousands of legally recorded lots which would require no additional public hearings or rezonings – and again with services and infrastructure paid for by county taxpayers and no contributions from developers. The proposed new zoning will, however, require some rezonings to increased densities around population centers. Using the generous U.S. Census Bureau growth rate of 0.04% rate for the county, there appear to be enough available building lots to fill the need for 300 to 350 years. State projections, however, continue to predict a negative growth rate for the county.

How did a small rural county like Northampton get divided up into so many building lots? Why didn't the county consider how future residents would pay for all this development? The responsibility rests with previous Boards of Supervisors which generously allowed the recording of thousands of building lots. Most of the required zoning and subdividing took place during the 1980s and 90s – even though there was no existing documentation to support a need for 300 years worth of building lots. No records are available to indicate that plans were being made to ensure that the resources would be available to supply services and infrastructure to this nearly 400% increase in dwelling units. In doing so, prior county governments have made implied contracts with owners of all these lots that somehow the money would appear to fund the services and infrastructure that will be required to serve what the zoning ordinance allowed.

While we often focus on maintaining an adequate supply of clean drinking water (and rightly so), even if our sole-source aquifer could support regional density at the levels zoned for now, how would that water be allocated? All of it for residential use? How much for commercial uses? How much for each county? Do we just keep on zoning at increased densities until the proverbial well runs

dry? Even if the tap keeps running, who will figure out how to provide and pay for all the other services demanded by residential development? What happens now with large swaths of these recorded, buildable lots in existing subdivisions and no mechanism to allow the county to rethink the situation and consider whether or not it can fulfill its part of the bargain?

Now, in spite of the county's lack of resources to either fund or supply adequate levels of service, especially to those areas distant from population centers, many of these long-recorded lots have increased in supposed value and, therefore, have increased the county's "wealth." That increase has led to a decrease in state funding for infrastructure, especially to education and transportation – an unintended consequence of that old attitude of "zone it and they will come."

At this point, it appears that when development occurs on these vacant, recorded lots, county taxpayers will be required to fund the services which must be provided by local government – public health and safety, solid waste disposal, administration, etc. – in addition to making up the difference in reduced state funding for education. All because old rezonings enabled and encouraged land speculation but made no provision for developers to help pay for the services their projects require.

Accomack County, which is beginning the process to revise its zoning ordinance, is in much the same situation and would do well to pay attention to the results of Northampton's past zoning decisions. Accomack County could use Community Viz software to present its current build out and make sure its citizens understand the consequences of today's decisions on zoning.

Asked a professional planner attending the recent DAWN meeting: "Why are we zoning for a density we know we can't support?"

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