

The background of the page is a photograph of a building's exterior, showing a series of horizontal wooden slats or panels. A semi-transparent blue rectangular overlay covers the central portion of the image, serving as a background for the text.

City of Hampton

2025 General Assembly Legislative Agenda

Proposed November 13, 2024



Hampton City Council

Donnie R. Tuck, Mayor

Jimmy Gray, Vice Mayor

Chris Bowman

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City Manager – Mary B. Bunting

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2025 Legislative and Budget Requests

1. Increase Localities' Authority to Utilize Photo Enforcement Technology (Legislative)
2. Virginia Alcoholic Beverage Control Authority (ABC) Enforcement of Larcenies (Legislative)
3. Technical Code Amendment to Current Photo Enforcement Authority (Legislative)
4. Restore the Hampton Health District (Legislative)
5. Add Municipal Park Rangers, 911 Operators and Animal Control Officers to the List of Local Employees Who Receive Enhanced Hazardous Duty Retirement Benefits (Legislative and Budget)
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5. Public Safety
6. Economic Development
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Legislative Requests

Increase Localities' Authority to Utilize Photo Enforcement Technology (Legislative)

- **Request:** Amend the Code of Virginia to allow for the use of photo enforcement of stop sign infractions in high violation zones. The City of Hampton has experienced an increase in stop sign infractions due to distracted driving and speed across the City. There are numerous efforts underway to further deter this type of driving behavior. The request would give the City another mechanism to combat dangerous driving in city neighborhoods.

Alcoholic Beverage Control Authority (ABC) Enforcement of Larcenies (Legislative)

- **Request:** Grant authority to the Virginia Alcoholic Beverage Control Authority Bureau of Law Enforcement the ability to act as the primary law enforcement entity for reporting purposes. The proposal is to shift the responsibility for investigating property and fraud crimes at ABC stores from local law-enforcement to ABC agents. Liquor thefts fall squarely in the ABC Bureau of Law Enforcement's area of concern and their agents are well qualified to investigate these crimes and well situated to influence needed changes in their retail sector's protection of liquor inventory. This amendment would free up, otherwise depleted resources, to handle other law enforcement goals and priorities.

Technical Code Amendment to Current Photo Enforcement Authority (Legislative)

- **Request:** An amendment to the current photo enforcement authority specifically for stoplight and speed infractions to address an increase in business day review of violations. Currently for redlight violations, the City only has ten days to review but for speed violations in school zones the period is 30 days. This amendment would create parity and increase the redlight period also to 30 which would give the City additional staff time to review.

Restore the Hampton Health District (Legislative)

- **Request:** Grant authority to the City of Hampton to enter into a contract with the Virginia Department of Health for the local administration of local health services. Currently, the local department of health is operated as a joint venture between the state and local governments (Hampton, Newport News, James City, Williamsburg, York and Poquoson)

Add Municipal Park Rangers, 911 Operators and Animal Control Officers to the List of Local Employees Who Receive Enhanced Hazardous Duty Retirement Benefits (Legislative and Budget)

- **Request:** A code amendment ensuring that municipal park rangers, 911 operators and animal control officers, who act in a law-enforcement related capacity, are eligible to receive enhanced hazardous duty retirement benefits. The City of Hampton's Municipal Park Rangers complete the Hampton Police Academy, and also obtain annual training as required by DCJS of sworn police officers. By doing so they are considered Conservators of the Peace, can carry firearms, and can enforce the laws of the Commonwealth and the City of Hampton. Likewise 911 operators and animal control officers perform critical law enforcement related duties.

Support Funding Request for Fort Wool Restoration Efforts (Budget)

- **Request:** Support efforts seeking the repair/replacement of the Fort's boat dock and tower in the amount of \$1.5 million. Additionally, the City is eager to partner with the relevant state entities to capitalize on the preservation of Fort Wool.

Priority Positions

Resiliency and Environment

- Support the efforts of the Commonwealth of Virginia and Hampton Roads Planning District Commission to promote coastal resiliency and adaptation to climate change impacts.
- Continue to provide meaningful, ongoing grant funding to localities' and individuals' flood resilience and climate change adaptation efforts. Specifically, the City of Hampton respectfully asks the General Assembly to continue to provide dedicated funding for the Virginia Community Flood Preparedness Fund, Stormwater Local Assistance Fund, and Virginia Conservation Assistance Program.
- Request that the General Assembly help support continuity in state-level planning by continuing to advance the recommendations for state-level leadership identified in the Virginia Coastal Resilience Master Plan. Additionally, the City believes that it will be critical to provide state-level staff resources with the responsibility to provide this crucial coordination, including naming a Special Assistant to the Governor for Coastal Adaptation and Protection or similar dedicated, state-level position to be a critical point of contact and resource for localities like Hampton.
- Continue to support legislation to provide local governments with greater authority in the reforestation, preservation, and management of urban forests in recognition of their ability to capture and store carbon, reduce stormwater runoff, improve air quality, reduce energy use, and mitigate urban heat islands and their health effects. In addition, Hampton supports appropriating funds to the Department of Forestry's Urban Community Forestry Program to enable local governments to expand and better maintain urban tree canopy.
- Continue to fund efforts to restore and maintain historic African American cemeteries across in the City of Hampton. In 2017, the Commonwealth created a Historical African American Cemeteries and Graves Fund (the "Fund"), which is administered by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR). Hampton is home to several abandoned or neglected African American cemeteries and this Fund is instrumental in the preservation and maintenance of these historic cemeteries.

Community Development

- Support maintaining and expanding local authority over land use/zoning issues and decisions. These issues are best made by those locally impacted. The City of Hampton further requests the continued ability to regulate short-term rentals and accessory dwelling units locally in line with local zoning standards and ordinances.
- Support increased state funding for the Hampton Roads Planning District

Commission (HRPDC)

- Request the General Assembly adopt legislation that would allow for the creation of local ordinances to eliminate or deter the continuation of nuisance and safety related offenses and violations.

Education

- Continue to support pay equity for teachers and support staff. The City of Hampton also supports continued state funding for At-Risk Add On, Transformational High Schools, and the Virginia Preschool Initiative. In order to continue the positive forward momentum in our public schools, the state must be a reliable funding partner in accordance with the Virginia Constitution and state statutes.
- Oppose any changes in methodology or changes in the division of financial responsibility that would result in a shift of funding responsibility from the state to localities. Further, the City opposes policies that lower state contributions but do nothing to address the cost of meeting the requirements of the Standards of Accreditation, Standards of Quality, and Standards of Learning. Any approach to improving low-performing schools must include adequate state financial support.
- Support the General Assembly maintaining funding of the Virginia Air and Space Science Center's STEM 360 program as appropriated in the current budget. The City of Hampton recognizes the importance of increasing student achievement in STEM education. The Virginia Air & Space Science Center's education programs and experiences have been proven to increase student engagement, interest, and knowledge of STEM, particularly among underserved children. Located in a city-provided 100,000 square foot building in downtown Hampton, the Center has gained national and international recognition for being a leader in STEM education programs and research. While the Virginia Air & Space Science Center already receives support from the region's corporations, foundations, private donors and the City of Hampton, continued dedicated state funding is needed to expand the reach of its programs.
- Support regional efforts to further expand the inclusion of conflict resolution in Virginia's educational curriculum standards.

Fiscal Responsibility

- Request that the Governor and the General Assembly refrain from using local governments as a fiscal balance wheel in order to overcome revenue challenges.
- Recommend that state constitutional amendments with local government fiscal impacts require the cost burden to be allocated among all citizens of the Commonwealth so that the citizens of one or only a few localities are not unduly and inequitably burdened.
- Support efforts to request that the Commonwealth offset local real estate and

personal property tax revenue losses due to the tax exemptions for disabled veterans program.

- Support amending the Communications Sales and Use Tax (“CSUT”) to modernize that tax base to capture new technology that is being used to deliver traditional services subject to the tax.
- Oppose any attempt to mandate exemptions to the local option sales tax unless the General Assembly and/or Governor can establish a viable revenue-replacement for localities like Hampton.
- Support efforts to establish a registry of short-term rental properties and require accommodation providers and intermediaries to register with the Department of Taxation.

Public Safety

- Request that the Code of Virginia be amended to require that jail per diem rates for all offenders held in a local or regional jail be regularly adjusted to reflect changes in cost.
- Honor commitments to local governments specific to the local aid to police departments or “599” program. The Code of Virginia provides for financial assistance to localities with police departments through the “599” program. This legislation was enacted by the General Assembly when it imposed an annexation moratorium on cities more than 30 years ago. Currently, almost 70% of Virginians live in communities that have police departments. The General Assembly has increasingly de-emphasized this funding obligation as a priority.
- Support continued efforts to regulate illicit liquid nicotine, cannabis, cannabis-derivatives, synthetic THC, and similar products being sold at local retail stores which put the health and safety of its residents, including juveniles, at risk.
- Support ongoing work to review Virginia’s barrier crimes laws and the impacts of the ability of local governments to engage credible messengers or violence interrupters. Virginia’s barrier crime laws prevent local governments or nonprofits working with local governments from using credible messenger programs to effectively combat youth violence.
- Support efforts at the state level to provide local relief to the temporary detention order (TDO) and emergency custody order (ECO) processes including providing additional resources to alternative transport services

Economic Development

- Support the Hampton Roads Talent Retention and Attraction Initiative to overcome misperceptions about the region and reverse the current trend of talent outmigration.
- Support legislation that would provide additional financing and bonding

authority/ opportunity for the maintenance and construction of entertainment related venues and public facilities.

FOIA

- Support transparent government operations but oppose any legislation that proposes to increase the financial or administrative burden on localities when responding to records requests.

Transportation and Transit

- Request that the General Assembly appropriate additional funds toward sunken boat removals. The issue of abandoned, sunken, and/or derelict boats is a growing problem in Virginia waterways.
- Support policies to create predictable, adequate, and equitable funding across varying transit modes and regions throughout the Commonwealth. Sustainable funding is critical for reliable transit services that reduce customer exposure to service cuts and fare increases.
- Support expanded legalization of speed cameras if the area in which they are placed has been documented as an area of concern through speed studies, crash data, or engineering studies.

Coalition and Community Partners' Legislative Programs

The City of Hampton has a long-standing commitment to support and encourage our partnerships with local commissions, boards, organizations, coalitions and institutes of higher learning. As such, unless specifically stated, we generally support the legislative agendas of the following:

- Hampton-Newport News Community Services Board
- Hampton Roads Planning District Commission
- Hampton Roads Transportation Planning Organization
- Transportation District of Hampton Roads (Hampton Roads Transit)
- Fort Monroe Authority
- Hampton Roads Transportation Accountability Commission
- Hampton Roads Military and Federal Facilities Alliance
- Virginia Municipal League
- Virginia First Cities
- Chesapeake Bay Foundation
- Hampton University
- Virginia Tech Seafood Agriculture Research and Extension Center