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# Chapter 3

## Inventory and Existing Conditions: The Developed Environment



## Population

Accomack County has experienced an overall decline in population over the last fifty years. In 1930, Accomack County contained a population of 35,854 persons. In the following years of decline, the lowest population recorded for the county was 29,004 people in 1970. Between 1970 and 1980, Accomack County experienced its first substantial population increase since 1930. From 1970 to 1980, the recorded population for Accomack County increased by 2,264 persons. After 1980, the population stabilized and only increased by 435 persons between 1980 and 1990.

Historically, approximately 50% of the total population is located in the southern Pungoteague and Lee Districts. The Lee District has been the largest district, containing an average of 28.1% of the county’s total population since 1930. The island district has been the smallest district, containing an average of 10.7% of the county’s population since 1930.

The county’s magisterial district boundary lines were redrawn after the 1970 and 1980 census counts. The district boundary lines were redrawn in an attempt to balance voter populations according to U.S. Department of Justice guidelines. The redistricting created minor geographic shifts of district boundary lines, along with the shifting of Tangier Island from the Lee District to the Metompkin District in 1970 and to the Atlantic District in 1980.

The effect of redistricting on population projections is to reduce the value of historic data in calculating future district populations. The 1970 redistricting, which affected population counts in the 1980 census, had a minimal balancing effect. The 1980 redistricting has, however, balanced the population of the county districts. Each district now contains roughly 22% of the county’s total population with the exception of the Island District. In the future, redistricting should continue to maintain the desired voter balance.

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**Population by District, 1930 - 1990**

Source: U.S. Census Dept.

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<u>Year</u>	<u>Atlantic</u>	<u>Lee</u>	<u>Metompkin</u>	<u>Pungoteague</u>	<u>Island</u>
<b>1930</b>	7,476 (21%)	10,576 (29%)	6,394 (18%)	8,226 (23%)	3,182 ( 9%)
<b>1940</b>	6,632 (20%)	10,576 (29%)	5,835 (18%)	7,669 (23%)	3,349 (10%)
<b>1950</b>	7,695 (23%)	9,562 (28%)	5,592 (17%)	6,917 (20%)	4,066 (12%)
<b>1960</b>	6,095 (20%)	9,020 (30%)	5,796 (19%)	6,254 (20%)	3,470 (19%)
<b>1970</b>	6,464 (22%)	8,102 (29%)	5,796 (19%)	5,607 (19%)	3,258 (11%)
<b>1980</b>	6,261 (20%)	8,833 (29%)	6,449 (20%)	6,170 (20%)	3,555 (11%)
<b>1990</b>	7,214 (23%)	7,240 (23%)	6,917 (22%)	6,750 (22%)	3,582 (11%)

**Population Change Factors:** The trends in population change factors for Accomack County are: 1) in the 1950’s and 1960’s births exceeded deaths, but not enough to offset out-migration, which was the cause of population loss, 2) in the 1970’s and early 1980’s deaths outnumbered births, but enough in-migration occurred to result in population growth, and 3) in the late 1980’s and early 1990’s, deaths continued to outnumber births and in-migration slowed to lead to a more stable population.

**Age Distribution:** The trends in age distribution over the past four decades reflect three population trends. First, the “Baby Boom” of the 1950’s is apparent as 1990 populations in the age groups from 25 to 44 years of age were higher than the 1960, 1970 and 1980 populations. Second, the birth rate has slowed, as evidenced by the lower 1980 and 1990 population in the 0-9 age group. Third, there is evidence of Accomack County’s attraction as a retirement community in higher 1990 populations in the 65-85 age groups.

Age Group	1960		1970		1980		1990	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
0-4	3,095	10%	2,104	7%	2,046	7%	1,994	6%
5-9	2,998	9%	2,596	9%	2,124	7%	2,071	7%
10-14	2,757	9%	2,894	10%	2,490	8%	2,174	7%
15-19	2,185	7%	2,531	9%	2,661	9%	2,000	6%
20-24	1,421	5%	1,569	5%	2,292	7%	1,792	6%
25-29	1,561	5%	1,350	5%	2,185	7%	2,137	7%
30-34	1,787	6%	1,379	5%	1,889	6%	2,458	8%
35-44	3,810	12%	3,254	11%	3,156	10%	4,237	13%
45-54	3,717	12%	3,562	12%	3,458	11%	3,434	11%
55-64	3,249	11%	3,303	11%	3,757	12%	3,525	11%
65-74	2,653	9%	2,690	9%	3,100	10%	3,312	10%
75-84	1,168	4%	1,414	6%	1,602	5%	1,947	6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>30,635</b>		<b>29,004</b>		<b>31,268</b>		<b>31,703</b>	

**Age Distribution; Total population within each age group and percentage of total population**

Source: U.S. Census Dept.

**Race Distribution:** The distribution of Accomack County’s population by race has remained relatively constant between 1960 and 1990. The non-white population has declined by 4%, and the white population has increased by 4% over the last 30 years.

Year	1960	1970	1980	1990
<b>White</b>	18,779 (61%)	18,086 (62%)	19,753 (63%)	20,598 (65%)
<b>Non-White</b>	11,856 (39%)	10,918 (38%)	11,515 (37%)	11,105 (35%)

**Race Distribution of Population, 1960 - 1990**

Source: U.S. Census Dept.

**Population Estimates for 1990-1995:** The Weldon Cooper Center’s population estimates for 1990 to 1995 indicate that Accomack County’s growth rate over the last five years was 2.9%. The growth rate for the state as a whole over the five year period was 7%. Accomack County ranks 71st among Virginia cities and counties in percent change between 1990 and 1995.

Year	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
<b>Est. Pop.</b>	31,703	32,000	32,200	32,500	32,600	32,400	32,400

**Population Estimates for 1990-1995**

Source: Virginia State-Local Cooperative for Population Estimates

**Population Projections:** Population projections act as a tool to give elected officials, government administrators and planners a rough idea of how many people will need to be served in the future.

Linear Model: The linear model for population growth in Accomack County is a straight line projection based on the 1990 to 1995 population estimates by the Weldon Cooper Center. The results of this projection model are found below.

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**Linear Model Population Projections**

*Source: Weldon Cooper Center for Public Information*

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<b>Year</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2010</b>
<b>Pop. Proj.</b>	32,600	33,545	34,515	35,516

Virginia Department of Planning and Budget Estimate: The Virginia Department of Planning and Budget (VDPB) estimates are based on past population trends, Weldon Cooper Center information, migration, deaths, and births. The VDPB's population projections for Accomack County are as follows:

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**Department of Planning and Budget Population Projections**

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<b>Year</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2030</b>
<b>Pop. Proj.</b>	34,900	35,800	36,700

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**Virginia Employment Commission Population Projections**

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<b>Year</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2030</b>
<b>Pop. Proj</b>	33,600	34,600	35,600	36,600

## Land Use

Accomack County contains approximately 602 square miles of land and water reaching out to Tangier and Smith Islands to the west, to the Atlantic Ocean to the east, the Maryland state line to the north, and the Northampton County line to the south. The area directly affected by this plan is the upland area of the county and the tidal lands immediately adjacent to the upland. This area is approximately 476 square miles and can be subdivided into three basic geographic features; mainland, marsh and barrier islands.

According to a survey conducted by the Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission in 1989, land use in Accomack County is 5.8% residential, 0.2% commercial, 1% industrial (includes Wallops Flight Facility), 36.8% cropland, 42.5% woodland, 13.4% parks, conservation or vacant land, and 0.3% institutional. 1996 satellite land use imagery shows that less than 2% of the county is developed, 35% is crop and field, 39% is wooded, and 24% wetlands. The following is an analysis of recent change and trends.

**Cropland:** Agriculture is the dominant land use in Accomack County. According to the 1992 Census of Agriculture, there are 279 farms in Accomack County, covering 91,568 acres of land, 69,420 acres of which is harvested cropland. The average farm size is 328 acres. According to the 1992 Census of Agriculture, total cropland in Accomack County decreased by 1,711 acres between 1987 and 1992 (from 74,134 acres to 72,423 acres). The county currently has 82,851 acres of land in 22 Agricultural and Forestal Districts. These districts were created in recognition of their economic, ecological, and aesthetic value. Land within these districts are protected by Right to Farm legislation from local regulations that would interfere with farm operation.

**Poultry Operations:** Virginia ranks 9th in the country in broiler chicken production. A large percentage of those chickens are raised in Accomack County. There are a significant number of poultry operations in Accomack County and additional poultry houses are being built each year. Permits were issued for 67 poultry houses from 1992 through 1996. These growers supply the Tysons and Perdue poultry processing plants. Poultry houses are an intensive form of livestock production that involves certain land use considerations. Odors, noise, light, and hours of operation at poultry houses may conflict with surrounding uses.

**Forested Land:** According to the USDA-Forest Service, there are about 94,507 acres of forest in Accomack County (1991 survey data). The majority (48%) of the county's forest land consists of pines; there are 45,047 acres in pine, 24,617 in oak-pine, 16,134 in oak-hickory, and 8,719 in oak-gum. Most of the county's forest land is in private, non forest industry, ownership (83,359 acres). The forest industry owns 9,315 acres of forest land and 1,833 acres are publicly owned (1,412 federal, 185 state and 236 county). The

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### 1996 Landuse Cover

Low Intensity Dev.	1.27%
High Intensity Dev.	0.68%
Hay/pasture/grass	14.81%
Row Crops	0.98%
Probable Row Crops	16.24%
Conifer Forest	22.95%
Mixed Forest	7.39%
Deciduous Forest	6.96%
Woody Wetlands	1.51%
Emergent Wetlands	1.51%
Barren-Beach Areas	0.34%
Barren-Transitional	1.03%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

*Source: TVA, Landsat Imagery*

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### Construction Starts, 1990-1996

*Source: Accomack County  
Building Permits*

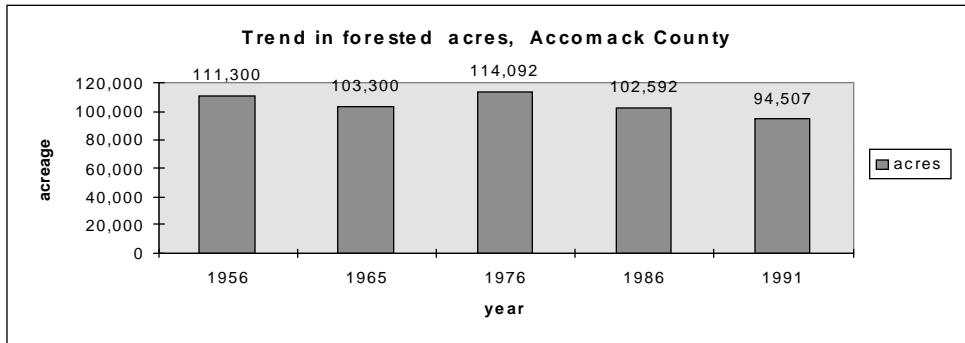
	Res.	Com.
<b>1990</b>	253	21
<b>1991</b>	265	6
<b>1992</b>	316	10
<b>1993</b>	275	15
<b>1994</b>	316	15
<b>1995</b>	335	10
<b>1996</b>	292	15
<b>Total</b>	2,052	92

*Res. = Number of permits issued for new frame construction or manufactured housing, Com.= Number of permits issued for new commercial structures.*

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Map J  
Zoning Distircts

majority (53,339 or 56%) of the county's timber is at sawtimber size, 23,065 is poletimber size (24%), and 18,103 acres are seedlings or saplings (19%).



**Residential:** From 1990 through 1996, 392 subdivision lots have been recorded and 2,052 new residential structures (conventional and modular) created. Housing starts represent about a 2% annual increase in housing units, a 10% increase since the 1990 census.

Year	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	Total
New subdivisions	1	2	4	5	0	6	4	18
Number of lots	30	30	126	59	0	81	32	326

**Subdivision of Land, 1990-1996**

Source: Accomack County subdivision approvals

**Commercial/Industrial:** Commercial construction activity has been fairly slow, with 77 new commercial, retail, or professional buildings constructed over the last six years. The most sizable commercial construction projects were a hatchery expansion at the Tysons poultry processing plant and three new starts in the industrial park.

The county has a 360 acre industrial park, located adjacent to the county's airport in Melfa. One hundred and twenty acres of the park are improved with streets, water and sewer. The industrial park currently houses the Eastern Shore Chamber of Commerce, a manufacturer of housing components, a manufacturer of aircraft components, and a manufacturer of computer components.

**Conservation:** A fairly large portion of Accomack County lies in conservation ownership. These lands are owned and managed by the National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, The Nature Conservancy, and The Chesapeake Bay Foundation.

The federal government owns 9,459 acres on Assateague Island, 550 acres on Chincoteague Island, 1,434 acres on Assawoman Island, 174 acres on Metompkin Island, 1,250 acres on Cedar Island, and 3,376 acres on Wallops Island (3,000 acres owned by NASA). The Commonwealth of Virginia owns

750 acres of Parkers Marsh, 5,574 acres of Saxis Marsh, and 19,491 acres of marshland on the seaside.

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**Accomack County Land  
in Conservation  
Ownership**  
Source: Accomack  
County Office of the Tax

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<u>Management</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Acreage</u>
USFWS .....	Assateague .....	7,465
USFWS .....	Chincoteague .....	550
USFWS .....	Wallops .....	1,284
USFWS .....	Assawoman Island .....	1,434
USFWS .....	Metompkin Island .....	174
USFWS .....	Cedar Island .....	1,250
VA DCR .....	Parker's Marsh .....	750
VA DGIF .....	Saxis Marsh .....	6,177
VA DCR .....	Seaside Marsh .....	19,491
TNC .....	Parramore & Revel Islands .....	7,692
CBF .....	Fox Island .....	500
CBF .....	South Point Marsh .....	437
Total .....		46,767

*USFWS=U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, VA DCR= Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, VA DGIF=Virginia Department of Game & Inland Fisheries, TNC=The Nature Conservancy, CBF=Chesapeake Bay Foundation.*

## Housing

**Existing Housing Stock:** According to the 1990 census, there are 15,840 housing units in Accomack County and 12,653 of those units are occupied. Of the existing housing stock, 18% were built between 1980 and 1990, 34% built between 1960 and 1979, 21% built between 1940 and 1959, and 26% built prior to 1940. Detached single unit homes are the predominate housing type (11,626). There are 3,208 mobile home or trailer units, comprising 25% of the existing housing stock. There are 611 multi-unit homes in Accomack County.

**Ownership:** In Accomack County, 74.8% of the housing units are owner occupied and 30.4% occupied by renters.

**Housing Costs:** The median value of owner-occupied housing in Accomack County increased significantly between 1980 and 1990. According to the U.S. Census Department, the median value in 1980 was \$26,700 and \$52,700 in 1990. This increase could be due to the number of new homes constructed in the 1980s. The median selected monthly ownership costs (mortgage payments, real estate taxes, hazard insurance, utilities and fuels) are \$552 a month for homeowners with a mortgage and \$183 a month for homeowners with no mortgage. The median rent for housing in Accomack County is \$335.

The Accomack-Northampton Housing and Redevelopment Corporation administers a rental assistance fund to help lower income people obtain adequate housing. This program is funded with federal and county funds. Under the rental assistance program, participants pay up to 30% of their income towards rent and the program pays the remainder, up to the fair market rental price. There are currently 133 families participating in the rental assistance program in Accomack County.

**Substandard Housing:** According to the 1990 Census, 7.5% of the county's housing units lack complete plumbing facilities, 4.9% lack complete kitchen facilities, and 6.9% have neither a septic system nor public sewer hook-ups. Although the Health Department will allow for replacement of existing privies, the county's building code will not allow new homes to be constructed without indoor plumbing. Over the last 30 years, both the number of vacant housing units and the number of occupied housing units have increased, suggesting that some of the county's older housing is being abandoned.

Through a combination of attrition and rehabilitation, substandard housing in Accomack County is diminishing. The Accomack-Northampton Housing and Redevelopment Corporation has rehabilitated over 100 units of substandard housing since 1990. The Accomack-Northampton Housing and Redevelopment Corporation, Accomack-Northampton Regional Housing Authority, Virginia Eastern Shore Economic Empowerment and Housing

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### **Housing Units Authorized by Permits**

*Source: Accomack County Building Permits*

<b>Year</b>	<b>Units</b>
1986 .....	280
1987 .....	263
1988 .....	334
1989 .....	489
1990 .....	253
1991 .....	265
1992 .....	316
1993 .....	275
1994 .....	316
1995 .....	335
1996 .....	292

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Corporation, Eastern Shore Area Agency on Aging, and Habitat for Humanity offer housing rehabilitation services. In 1994, the Accomack County Board of Supervisors identified the communities of Savagetown, Locust Mount, Metompinkin, and Graysville as priorities for housing rehabilitation assistance. At that time, the Board of Supervisors requested that the Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission and the Accomack-Northampton Housing and Redevelopment Corporation explore sources of Federal and State funding that could address the needs of these communities.

**Manufactured Housing:** The Virginia General Assembly passed legislation during their 1995 session which severely limits the county's control over manufactured housing. This legislation, effective as of July 1, 1995, allows any manufactured home which has a HUD approval sticker to be placed, by right, in an Agricultural zoning district. These homes may have been manufactured as early as 1976, when the HUD labeling program started. Prior to the effective date of this legislation, Accomack County allowed double-wide manufactured homes and single-wide manufactured homes with A-frame roofs, house type siding, and a masonry foundation, by right in both Agricultural and Residential zoning districts. Older manufactured homes required a special use permit from the Board of Zoning Appeals. This legislation has a particular impact on Accomack County due to the fact the 93% of the county is currently zoned as Agricultural.

## The Economy

**The Local Economy:** Accomack County’s economy is based primarily in manufacturing, services and public administration. The county’s major industries are two poultry processing plants operated by Perdue and Tyson Foods. These two plants combined account for approximately one quarter of the jobs in Accomack County. The NASA Wallops Flight Facility and related services also account for a large portion of the local economy. The Flight Facility and related contractors provide approximately 700 jobs.

<u>Industry</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Approx. Employment</u>
Perdue Farms, Inc. ....	Poultry Processing .....	1,900
Tyson Foods, Inc. ....	Poultry Processing .....	1,000
Byrd Foods, Inc. ....	Agriculture .....	400
NASA .....	Federal Agency .....	300
Eastern Shore Seafood Products .....	Seafood Processing .....	320
Computer Science Corporation .....	Engineering services .....	250
U.S. Navy .....	Federal .....	130

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**Major Industries in  
Accomack County**  
Source: E.S. of Virginia  
Economic Development  
Commission

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**Traditional Industries:** Agriculture and seafood production are the Eastern Shore’s traditional industries. The waters of the Atlantic Ocean and Chesapeake Bay support the local seafood industry and create a warming effect on the area’s climate, providing a long growing season for agriculture. As a result of these conditions, Accomack County produces 80% of Virginia’s vegetable crops. According to the 1992 Census of Agriculture, the market value of agricultural products sold in Accomack County was \$71,806,000. Total farm production expenses were \$56,811,000. The average net return per farm was \$50,292. The county’s proximity to major markets makes the area suitable for production of market crops and the state recently invested \$2.3 million in the construction of the Eastern Shore Farmers Market to promote the distribution of Eastern Shore produce.

**Forestry:** Accomack County’s forests are an important economic asset to both the owners of the forests and those that work in the wood products industry. Wood products that area produced by the county’s forests include saw logs, poles and pilings, and pulpwood. The fact that loblolly pine is the most preferred species for salt treated lumber makes it a resource of considerable economic importance. Secondary products that are produces as a result of the harvesting process include firewood, bark (for mulch), and sawdust. Virginia Department of Agriculture statistics indicate that timber is the second most valuable agricultural crop in Virginia, ahead of fields crops, vegetables, and tobacco, with only poultry and egg crops having a higher market value. Forest related employment in Accomack County consists of jobs in timber harvesting, sawmilling, trucking, firewood production, forest management and consulting, timber stand improvement, and reforestation.

Map K  
Census Tracts

The value of timber has increased steadily since the 1970's and timber demand is projected to increase into the 21st century. These trends should provide incentive for land owners to keep land in forests rather than converting it to a different land use. Economic benefits can be increased through better utilization of the forest resource at the time of harvest. Improved management techniques can shorten the amount of time of harvest. Improved management techniques can shorten the amount of time it takes to grow valuable sawtimber from 55-70 years to 35-45 years.

**Tourism:** The Eastern Shore Tourism Commission currently promotes the Shore as a tourist destination. At present, tourism in Accomack County is focused primarily on the county's natural assets, such as the beaches at Assateague. There has also been some recent activity in the eco-tourism industry. The Eastern Shore hosts an annual Birding Festival to promote nature tourism and regular bike tour weekends are being scheduled. Tourism is a vital part of the economy and is the area's largest growing industry.

**Taxes:** Accomack County's real property tax rate (1997) is \$0.62 per \$100 of value for real estate and \$3.22 per \$100 of value for personal property.

	<b>Real estate tax (per \$100 of value)</b>	<b>Personal property tax (per \$100 of value)</b>
Accomack County .....	\$0.62 .....	\$3.22 .....
Average for Va. Counties .....	\$0.69 .....	\$3.38 .....
Median for Va. Counties .....	\$0.66 .....	\$3.50 .....
Average for Va. Cities .....	\$1.04 .....	\$3.83 .....
Median for Va. Cities .....	\$1.11 .....	\$4.20 .....

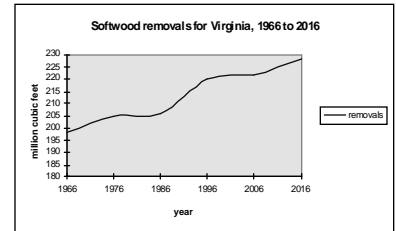
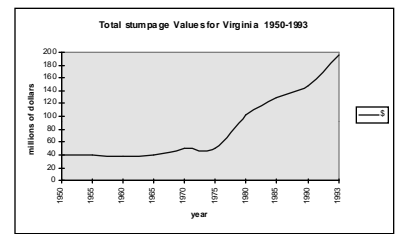
**Work Force:** According to 1990 census data, there are 14,936 individuals in Accomack County's work force. Of these, 8,008 are male and 6,928 female. One quarter of county residents have had some post-high school education. Sixty percent of county residents 18 years or older have a high school education or better. Twenty-five percent of those 18 years or older have had one or more years of post-high school education, 6% have a Bachelors degree from a four year college and 2% have graduate or professional degrees.

**Employment:** According to the 1990 census, 93% of the civilian work force in Accomack County is employed. The county's unemployment rate has ranged from 5.9% to 9.4% over the last ten years. This rate has been about two points higher than the state average.

Services and wholesale/retail trade are the largest employment sectors with each employing approximately one quarter of the working population. Table 24 breaks down employment by industry. Eighty-four percent of the county's employed residents work within Accomack County, 9% work outside of

### Forestry Values and Removal Rates

Source: Virginia Dept. of Agriculture



### Property Tax Rates, 1996

Source: 1996 Virginia Review of State and Local Government

### Unemployment Rates.

Source: E.S. of Virginia Economic Development Commission

	<b>Acc.</b>	<b>Va.</b>	<b>U.S.</b>
1985	7.8	5.6	7.2
1986	6.9	5.0	4.2
1987	6.1	4.2	6.2
1988	5.9	3.9	5.5
1989	6.3	3.9	5.3
1990	5.9	4.3	5.5
1991	7.4	5.8	6.7
1992	9.4	6.4	7.4
1993	8.2	5.0	6.8
1994	8.3	4.9	6.1
1995	7.8	4.5	5.6

Virginia and 7% find employment in Virginia, but outside of Accomack County.

**Employment by Industry,  
1995**  
Source: Virginia Employment  
Commission

<b>Industry</b>	<b>Establishments</b>	<b>Employed</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
Agriculture, forestry & fishing .....	46 .....	397 .....	3.7%
Construction .....	97 .....	564 .....	5.3%
Manufacturing .....	34 .....	3,626 .....	34.1%
Transportation & public utilities .....	42 .....	370 .....	3.5%
Wholesale trade .....	49 .....	299 .....	2.8%
Retail trade .....	224 .....	1,590 .....	15.0%
Finance, insurance & real estate .....	59 .....	344 .....	3.2%
Services .....	227 .....	3,013 .....	28.4%
Public administration .....	35 .....	415 .....	3.9%

**1989 Household Income.**  
Source: 1990 Census.

<b>Income</b>	<b>Housholds</b>
Less than \$5,000 .....	1,355
\$5,000 - \$9,999 .....	1,582
\$10,000 - \$12,499 .....	935
\$12,500 - \$14,499 .....	762
\$15,000 - \$17,499 .....	806
\$17,500 - \$19,999 .....	759
\$20,000 - \$22,499 .....	720
\$22,500 - \$24,999 .....	673
\$25,000 - \$27,499 .....	713
\$27,500 - \$29,999 .....	497
\$30,000 - \$32,499 .....	579
\$32,500 - \$34,999 .....	437
\$35,000 - \$37,499 .....	393
\$37,500 - \$39,999 .....	307
\$40,000 - \$42,499 .....	320
\$42,500 - \$44,999 .....	183
\$45,000 - \$47,499 .....	200
\$47,500 - \$49,999 .....	193
\$50,000 - \$54,999 .....	366
\$55,000 - \$59,999 .....	139
\$60,000 - \$74,999 .....	353
\$75,000 - \$99,999 .....	227
\$100,000 - \$124,999 .....	48
\$125,000 - \$149,999 .....	24
\$150,000 or more .....	75

**Income:** The median household income in 1989, as reported in the 1990 census, was \$20,431. Tables in this chapter show the distribution of household incomes in Accomack County.

**Economic Development:** Accomack County actively promotes business development through the recruitment of new industry, local business starts, and growth of existing business. Agencies involved in economic development for the county include the Eastern Shore Economic Development Commission, the Eastern Shore Chamber of Commerce, the Eastern Shore Tourism Commission, and the Virginia Eastern Shore Economic Empowerment and Housing Corporation. Economic development activities include development of the Virginia Spaceflight Center, Farmers Market and Airport Industrial Park, and the acquisition of Enterprise Community, Enterprise Zone, and Free Trade Zone designation for portions of the county.

**Enterprise Community/Enterprise Zone Designation:** In December of 1994, parts of Accomack and Northampton Counties were designation as a federal Enterprise Community and state Enterprise Zone. The Eastern Shore Enterprise Community is one of thirty rural Enterprise Communities nationwide. The Enterprise Community designation is the result of the federal government's Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities Initiative to direct federal resources towards impoverished rural areas. The Enterprise Community Program, administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, provides successful applicants with \$3 million and special consideration for a variety of competitive federal loan, grant, and technical assistance programs for a period of ten years. The original zone boundaries were expanded in 1996 to include all of Northampton County and census tracts 9907 and 9908 in Accomack County. The Accomack County tracts cover an area from Onley south. Map L shows the geographic extents of the designation.

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**Median Household Income  
by Type.**

Source: 1990 Census.

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<b>Income Type</b>	<b>Number of Households</b>	<b>Percent of Total</b>	<b>Median Household Income</b>
Wage and salary income .....	8,759 .....	45.7% .....	\$24,110
Nonfarm self-employed income ....	1,928 .....	10.1% .....	\$12,844
Farm self-employed income .....	278 .....	1.5% .....	\$10,360
Social Security income .....	4,720 .....	24.7% .....	\$6,587
Public assistance income .....	1,174 .....	6.1% .....	\$2,796
Retirement income .....	2,276 .....	11.9% .....	\$9,568

The Virginia Eastern Shore Economic Empowerment and Housing Corporation (VESEEHC) has been established to administer the Accomack-Northampton Enterprise Community program. VESEEHC directs use of the federal funds in accordance with the strategic plan submitted to the U.S. Department of Agriculture during the application process. The strategic plan addresses economic development, education, community development, infrastructure, public safety, human services, and environmental protection. The Enterprise Community operates under the following guiding principles:

- (1) The community will use the federal investment in combination with other local, state and private resources to renew and revitalize its once productive economy. This will be accomplished principally through development of programmatic and financial infrastructure to promote development of locally owned and operated business enterprises and by supporting existing industry.
- (2) Sustainable development strategies will provide leadership for concerted action to protect and capitalize on Northampton and Accomack’s world class natural, cultural, historic and human assets for the ongoing benefit of all citizens.
- (3) Strategies to promote sustainable community and economic development will involve concerted public and private actions to facilitate increased financial investment in the designated census tracts. Key to realization of this goal will be the creation of community business incubation services where new local entrepreneurs can obtain information and technical assistance, and where financial institutions can disseminate information concerning their programs and available resources.
- (4) Programs and initiatives will be developed that build the capacity of community residents to sustain physical, social and economic improvements once the designation period expires.
- (5) To provide all residents of both counties with the knowledge, opportunities and resources to access decent, safe and affordable housing regardless of class or income.
- (6) To create equal opportunity within economic, educational and social aspects of life and provide the target communities with the resources to take complete charge of their collective futures.

The federal government provides no direct financial incentives for business in Enterprise Communities. However, when the county obtained Enterprise Community designation, the Commonwealth of Virginia also designated the area as a state Enterprise Zone. Enterprise Zone designation provides development and redevelopment incentives to encourage the private sector to invest in distressed areas. The following package of Enterprise Zone state tax incentives apply to development in the Enterprise Community/Enterprise Zone:

- (1) Ten-year general income tax credit against a business's state tax liability in an amount up to 80% in year one and 60% in years two through ten.
- (2) Real property improvement tax credit equal to an amount of up to 30% of qualified zone improvements with a maximum amount not to exceed \$125,000 within a five-year period. Rehabilitation projects must have a minimum investment of at least \$50,000 and an amount that equals the assessed value of the real property prior to the improvements being made, whichever is greater. New construction projects must have a minimum investment of at least \$250,000 in real property. The credit is refundable to the extent that if the business state tax liability is less than the credit allowed, the remaining balance would be refunded.
- (3) Investment tax credit against a business's state tax liability for businesses investing \$100 million and creating 200 jobs. The percentage amount is negotiable and could be worth up to 5% of the investment.
- (4) Job grants for jobs created by business start-ups and expansions by existing firms in amounts equal to \$1,000 per zone resident hired and \$500 for any other job per year. The maximum grant to any one firm per year is \$100,000 for a period of three consecutive years commencing with the first year. Businesses may qualify for additional job grant incentive periods provided there is additional job creation.



***The Accomack County Airport Industrial Park:*** The Accomack County Airport Industrial Park contains 360 acres of property strategically located adjacent to the county's airport, U.S. Route 13 and the Eastern Shore Community College. The park also lies within the boundaries of the Accomack-Northampton Enterprise Zone. The park has 120 acres of building sites which are served by water, sewer and paved roads. Airport improvements are currently underway which include a new terminal building, eighteen new hangars, a new apron, and new taxiway. The airport improvements connect the airport to the industrial park and farmers market. The airport currently handles approximately 10,000 take offs and landings a year.

Two new businesses located in the park within the last year. The industrial park now houses the Eastern Shore Chamber of Commerce, the Accomack County garage, Altair Inc. (a company that overhauls and repairs auxiliary power units for jet engines) Truss-Tech Inc. (a manufacturer of building components), and Interad Inc. (a manufacturer communications electronics components).

***NASA Wallops Flight Facility/Space Port:*** The Virginia Commercial Space Flight Authority has been established for the development of a Virginia Spaceflight Center at Wallops Island. A business plan for the Spaceflight Facility was presented to and approved by the Virginia Commercial Space Flight Authority in August of 1996. The plan states that a spaceport on the Eastern Shore of Virginia could launch five to seven commercial orbital satellites each year, with four launches needed to break even. Additional revenues could be generated from sub-orbital satellites launches. Six launches per year, with revenues of \$750,000 per launch, would net \$900,000 each year, allowing all the spaceport's initial debt to be paid in ten years with a 15% return for investors and a \$5 million profit.

Phase one of the plan, currently underway, includes an intensive marketing effort for investors and construction of a \$1.8 million "flat pad" launch pad. Phase two will begin when a \$6 million industry partnership has been established. Phase two will include the construction of a service tower at the flat pad and creation of a payload processing center.

## Transportation

**Route 13:** Route 13 plays multiple roles in Accomack County. It provides efficient transport for through travelers, provides local access to services, jobs and homes, and serves as the gateway through which travelers enter the county. Trucks make up about 15% of the traffic on Route 13. Approximately one-third to one-half of the annual Route 13 traffic is through traffic, as opposed to local traffic. This estimate is approximate since more detailed surveys are needed to precisely count the number of vehicles whose purpose is solely to travel from the Maryland state line to the Northampton County line. Through traffic can include commercial and industrial trucks, tourists and Northampton residents traveling to Maryland. For these drivers, the function of Route 13 is for rapid and safe transport through Accomack County.

**Capacity and Level of Service:** Highway capacity is defined as the maximum number of vehicles that can use a specific section of roadway during a specific period of time. Capacity is usually expressed in terms of vehicles per hour and is dependent on roadway conditions, traffic conditions and control conditions (i.e. the number of lights, signage, turn restrictions, etc.).

The quality of service provided by a highway is measured in terms of its level of service. Level of Service A represents free-flow. Vehicles can maneuver within the traffic stream and easily maintain the posted speed limit. Level of Service B is in the range of a stable flow. Drivers are somewhat restricted in maneuverability, but usually maintain the posted speed. Level of Service C is still in the zone of stable flow, but the maneuverability and speed are more restricted with higher traffic volumes. The drivers are more restricted in their freedom to select their speeds, to change lanes, or to pass. Level of Service D approaches unstable flow. Temporary restrictions to the traffic flow may cause substantial drops in the operating speed, the drivers have little freedom to maneuver to pass, and the comfort and convenience of the driver are lowered. Drivers usually tolerate this condition for short periods of time. Level of Service E represents the capacity of the facility. The traffic flow is unstable, there may be momentary stoppages in the traffic flow, and the vehicle operating speeds are very low. Level of Service F describes a forced flow condition usually with low operating speeds and traffic volumes that are below capacity. This is often described as stop-and-go conditions.

The Route 13 Corridor Study prepared by VDOT in 1989, analyzed the level of service for sections of Route 13. The analysis shows that the highway operates far below capacity. Traffic is consistently at level of service A during weekdays and stays within levels of stable flow through weekend traffic increases.

**The Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel:** The Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel serves to connect the Eastern Shore to the rest of Virginia and provides south-

Map L  
Transportation

bound passage for through traffic from the north. The Bridge Tunnel consists of two tunnels and a two lane span of bridge, crossing 17 miles of open water. Construction is now underway on a parallel bridge span. The second span will allow for each bridge to handle two lanes of one way traffic. This should improve safety on the bridge and lessen the likelihood of head-on collisions. Additional tunnels are not planned at this time. Traffic from the two bridges will merge into the existing two lane tunnels.

In a recent study conducted by Wilbur Smith Associates for the parallel crossing project, it was found that traffic flows to the bridge-tunnel vary dramatically according to the season. Traffic during the summer months of July and August can be 50% to 60% higher than the average monthly traffic and 20% to 40% lower during the winter months of December to March. Origin-destination studies conducted at the Bay Bridge-Tunnel found that 60% of all trips during the summer months were for recreational purposes. The most common points of origin or destination were Virginia Beach/Norfolk, Eastern North Carolina, New Jersey, New York, and the Eastern Shore. Over 2.7 million vehicles crossed the Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel in 1995 and the Wilbur Smith Associates study predicts an increase in traffic of 2.3% annually.

**Route 13 Capacity/Level of Service**

Source: 1989 VDOT Corridor Study

From	To	Weekday		Weekend	
		Exist. Traffic	Lev. of Service	Exist. Traffic	Lev. of Service
Maryland State Line	Route 175	1,980	B	2,470	C
Route 175	N. Bus. 13 at Accomac	1,730	A	2,150	B
N. Bus. 13 at Accomac	S. Bus. 13 at Accomac	1,240	A	1,930	B
S. Bus 13 at Accomac	Route 179	1,290	A	2,030	B
Route 179	Bus. 13 at Onley	1,440	A	2,200	B
Bus. 13 at Onley	Keller	1,400	A	2,220	B
Keller	N. Bus 13 at Exmore	1,350	A	1,800	B
N. Bus 13 at Exmore	Route 183	840	A	1,330	A
Route 183	S. Bus 13 at Exmore	820	A	1,050	A
S. Bus 13 at Exmore	N. Bus 13 at Eastville	620	A	1,220	A
N. Bus 13 at Eastville	Bus 13 at Cheriton	930	A	700	A
Bus 13 at Cheriton	Route 184	879	A	830	A
Route 184	Bay Bridge Tunnel	640	A	1070	A

**Through Traffic:** The goal of a road serving through traffic is to provide safe transport at the highest possible speed. Such roads are designed to be as straight as possible, have few traffic control devices, and have few access points to the roadway.

**Local Traffic:** The goals of a road serving local traffic is to provide safe access at lower speeds to stores, services, employment, and homes. These arterial roads tend to have numerous curb cuts, median crossovers, and traffic control devices.

**Strip Development:** Commercial land uses tend to prefer slower traffic so that the driver has sufficient time to observe signs and storefronts. At the same time, business feasibility studies tend to encourage locations on high volume roadways. The historic result has often been strip development, where traffic congestion is generated by slow-moving traffic, making numerous turns on and off the roadway. Congested areas can lead to the construction of bypasses around the congestion. These bypasses, if improperly managed, can become the site of new congested strip development.

**Gateway:** Route 13 serves as a gateway to Accomack County. Most travelers entering the county arrive via Route 13. The highway should present a positive image of the community. This can be accomplished by maintaining the transportation efficiency of the road while also maintaining an attractive road corridor. The appearance of the corridor could be protected through landscaping requirements and sign regulations.

**Secondary Road Network:** Accomack County does not maintain any of the road system. All public roads are maintained by the state as part of the secondary highway system. This practice is common in rural areas of the state. Subdivision developers who create public roads are required to build them to state standards for acceptance into the highway system. The Department of Transportation is responsible for maintenance of the roads once they are accepted into the system. Generally, a subdivision road that has been built to state standards will be accepted into the highway system once three homes have been built on the road.

The issues of subdivision roads and private versus public road requirements have received considerable attention over the last ten years. The issue involves a conflict between the developer's goal to make a profit while selling subdivision lots at a marketable price and the government's goal to provide a safe, efficient road network. Prior to November 20, 1996, Accomack County's subdivision ordinance required that all roads in subdivisions be built to VDOT standards. The problem arose from the fact that divisions of land into less than five lots, or into any number of lots over three acres each, were exempted from the definition of a subdivision. The definition also did not include the resubdivision of land, so situations arose where a developer would divide a piece of land into several three acre parcels and then resubdivide each of these parcels into three one acre parcels, creating a large subdivision of one acre lots and circumventing the requirements for state roads.

On November 20, 1996, Accomack County's Subdivision Ordinance was revised to define a subdivision as any division of land into three or more parts. The ordinance further defines a large lot subdivision as one in which each of the lots is three or more acres in size. Private roads are allowed in large lot subdivisions, but a statement must be recorded on the subdivision

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#### VDOT

The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) is responsible for building, maintaining and operating the state's roads, bridges and tunnels and, through the Commonwealth Transportation Board, it also provides funding for airports, sea ports, rail, and public transportation. In Accomack County, VDOT is responsible for all public roads.

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plat stating that the roads are not built to state standards and will not be maintained by the state or the county.

**Public Transportation:** The Accomack-Northampton Transportation District Commission is currently operating a pilot bus system called STAR Transit. This system started with two buses on two north-south routes stretching from Cape Charles to Chincoteague and has added a third bus and route in Northampton County. The pilot system is funded through a grant for one year. Long-term federal funding for the bus system is being sought. This funding would require match funding from Eastern Shore localities. The system has operated beyond the expectations of its director during the first year. The most heavily traveled zone is between Cape Charles and the Onley area.

**Rail:** The Eastern Shore Railroad has more than 90 miles of track that covers the length of Accomack and Northampton Counties. The line is connected to Maryland Rail to the north and the Norfolk-Southern line to the south. The southern connection is made by use of a barge which carries rail cars from the port of Cape Charles to the port of Hampton Roads. The Port of Hampton Roads is served by 70 steamship lines linking it with 100 foreign countries through 260 overseas ports.

**Air Service:** The Accomack County Airport is located adjacent to the Accomack County Industrial Park near the town of Melfa. The airport was originally constructed as a U.S. government facility during World War II. The airport has a 7,000 foot concrete runway capable of accommodating modern jets.

Commercial air service is provided 60 miles to the south through the Norfolk International Airport and 60 miles to the north through the Salisbury Airport. The Norfolk airport offers service from a full line of air carriers, includes air freight facilities, and has a customs office for foreign imports. The Salisbury airport is a regional facility which offers daily flights to major cities.

## Waste Disposal

**Solid Waste Collection System:** Accomack County collects trash through a greenbox system in which citizens deliver trash to greenbox sites for collection by the county. The county currently maintains 32 of these sites. Greenboxes are enclosed roll off containers with a 40 cubic yard capacity. The containers are serviced by county owned and operated vehicles. Items too large for direct placement in the greenbox containers must be delivered to one of the county landfills. In addition to the county's green box collection system, a private contractor provides solid waste pick-up service for a fee.

**Landfills:** Accomack County currently operates two landfills under permits from the Virginia Department of Solid Waste Management.

**Southern Landfill:** The southern landfill was purchased in 1973. The landfill is located at Bobtown on Route 620 between Route 178 and Route 609. The landfill is 113 acres in area, of which approximately 86 acres have been used. This landfill was constructed without a liner prior to adoption of the Department of Solid Waste Management's regulations on landfills. This facility, however, has been grandfathered and although the landfill cell cannot be expanded, the existing cell is expected to last another 20 years.

**Northern Landfill:** The northern landfill was purchased in 1984 and permitted for operation by the Virginia Department of Waste Management in 1985. The landfill is designed as three adjacent, yet independent, fill areas. The landfill is located on Route 694, approximately 1 mile north of Temperanceville. The site is approximately 150 acres in area, of which one cell currently occupies approximately 10 acres of space. The northern landfill is lined and has a system in place to protect against groundwater contamination. A stormwater management system handles rainwater and a leachate system collects liquid originating in the waste and stores it in 10,000 gallon tanks. When the tanks are full, they are brought to the Onancock wastewater treatment plant for disposal. The landfill has fourteen groundwater monitoring wells installed that are monitored quarterly. There have been no signs of significant contamination in these samples.

When the facility was permitted in 1985, it was estimated that it would receive 22 tons of waste a day and the projected life expectancy of the first cell was between 20 and 30 years. However, the landfill is handling waste at about twice that amount and when the southern landfill reaches capacity and closes, the northern landfill will receive all of the county's waste. There has been concern that the cell would fill in half the time projected. However, the use of the new bailing facility, as described below, is expected to double the capacity of the landfill, returning the life expectancy of each cell to approximately 20 years.

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### Adopt-A-Highway

VDOT administers the Adopt-A-Highway program. Volunteers agree to pick up litter on state maintained highways four times a year for two years. VDOT provides trash bags, vests, safety information and a highway sign with volunteer's name on it. Virginia's program is the second largest in the country, with 50,000 participants. VDOT sponsors two annual state-wide clean-ups, the Spring Clean-Up on the third Saturday of each April and the Great State Trash-Off on the third Saturday of October.

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**Landfill Useage in Tons  
Annually.**  
Source: Accomack County  
Dept. of Public Works

	<u>1990</u>	<u>1991</u>	<u>1992</u>	<u>1993</u>	<u>1994</u>	<u>1995</u>
<b>Northern</b> ....	21,292 ..	18,622 ...	18,226 .	17,380 .	16,124 ..	16,161
<b>Southern</b> ....	18,683 ..	15,817 ...	14,711 .	17,940 .	18,489 ..	17,006
<b>Total</b> .....	39,975 ..	34,439 ...	32,937 .	35,320 .	34,613 ..	33,167

**Landfill Useage in Tons per  
Day**  
Source: Accomack County  
Dept. of Public Works

	<u>1990</u>	<u>1991</u>	<u>1992</u>	<u>1993</u>	<u>1994</u>	<u>1995</u>
<b>Northern</b> .....	58 .....	51 .....	50 .....	47 .....	44 .....	44
<b>Southern</b> .....	51 .....	43 .....	40 .....	49 .....	51 .....	47
<b>Total</b> .....	109 .....	94 .....	90 .....	96 .....	95 .....	91

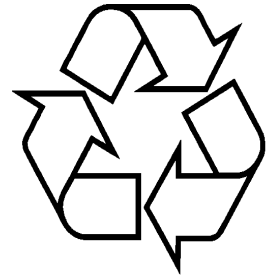
**Landfill Improvements:** Accomack County has recently made some significant improvements to the county’s landfills. Improvements include the addition of baling facilities at both landfills and the construction of an additional cell at the northern landfill. The baling facilities allow trash to be compressed into compact bales prior to placement in the landfill. Following compaction, the bales are stacked in the landfill and promptly covered with soil. This system creates a neater, safer landfill by eliminating exposed, blowing trash, and discouraging sea gull foraging. The system also makes more efficient use of landfill space through compaction and stacking of bales. The baling system is expected to extend the useful life of the landfill. The southern landfill is expected to continue operation for another 20 years. The northern landfill should remain useful for at least 60 years.

**Waste Stream:** The tables above show the amount of trash collected at the county landfills. These figures are derived from monthly reports of waste accepted at the landfill facilities. All of this waste is not necessarily placed in the landfill. Tires, scrap metal, brush and construction materials brought separately to the landfill are recycled.

According to an analysis made by the Accomack County Public Works Department in 1994, commercial accounts collected and transported by Shore Disposal, account for 34.1% of waste deposited at the county’s landfill. Waste collected by the county from the green box sites accounts for 24.4% of waste in the landfill, 17.2% is delivered from Shore Disposal’s non-commercial customer accounts, 12% comes from town trash collection, 9.3% is brought directly to the dump by citizens, and 3% comes from the litter control board, school board and other no charge customers.

**Recycling Centers:** The county currently maintains 24 glass recycling drop-off containers and three full service centers that provide containers for glass, plastic and newspaper. The full service centers are located near population centers, in the towns of Parksley, Onancock and Chincoteague.

**Virginia Solid Waste Management Plan Requirements:** Section 10.1-1411 of the Code of Virginia mandates the development and implementation of local solid waste management plans. The Department of Solid Waste Management as adopted regulations governing the requirements for local solid waste management plans. The following excerpts are from the regulations for solid waste management plan development.



### Section 3.1 Schedule for Plan Development

Every city, county and town in the Commonwealth shall develop a solid waste management plan or amend an existing solid waste management plan and submit them for approval in accordance with these regulations.

Existing plans may be amended by addendum of items such as consideration of the waste management hierarchy, the recycling program implementation activities and other requirements of these regulations that are not a part of the existing plan. A local jurisdiction participating in an authorized regional solid waste management plan is not required to develop a separate plan.

- A. A complete solid waste management plan in compliance with these regulations shall be provided to the Department of Waste Management no later than July 1, 1991.
- B. The Department of Waste Management shall approve or disapprove each plan submitted in accordance with Section 3.1.A no later than July 1, 1992. If the Department of waste Management disapproves the plan, it shall cite the reasons for the disapproval and state what is required for approval.
- C. Each submitter whose solid waste management plan is disapproved under Section 3.1B shall submit a corrected solid waste management plan to the Department of Waste Management no later than 90 days following notification of disapproval.
- D. Plan approved without alteration shall become effective upon notification. If the Department of Waste Management cannot approve the corrected solid waste management plan because it finds the plans not to be in accordance with these regulations, it will issue a notice of disapproval to the submitter and shall cite the reason for the disapproval and state what is required for approval. The Department will give priority consideration for review of corrected plans where the local or regional body has a pending permit application for a solid waste management facility.
- E. On July 1, 1997 and each succeeding five year period thereafter, each city, county, town or region shall submit a report to the Director updating the plan.

## Section 3.2 Mandatory Plan Objectives

- A. The solid waste management plan shall include:
1. An integrated waste management strategy;
  2. Objectives for solid waste management within the jurisdiction;
  3. Definition of incremental stage of progress toward the objectives and schedule for their accomplishment;
  4. Description of the funding and resources necessary, including consideration of fees dedicated to future facility development; and
  5. Strategy for the provision of necessary funds and resources.
  6. Strategy for public education and information on recycling.
  7. Consideration of public private sector partnerships and private sector participation in execution of the plan. Existing private sector recycling operations should be incorporated in the plan and the expansion of such operations should be encouraged.
- B. The plan shall describe how each of the following minimum goals were or shall be achieved:
1. By December 31, 1991, a recycling rate of ten percent of the total of household wastes and principal recyclable materials that are wastes from non-household sources generated annually in each city, county, town or region.
  2. By December 31, 1993, a recycling rate of fifteen percent of the total of household wastes and principal recyclable materials that are wastes from non-household sources generated annually in each city, county, town , or region.
  3. By December 31, 1995, a recycling rate of twenty-five percent of the total of household wastes and principal recyclable materials that are wastes from non-household sources generated annually in each city, county, town, or region.

According to a report filed by Accomack County in September of 1996, the county met these mandates by recycling 404 tons of aluminum, 1,686 tons of auto bodies, 975 tons of non-ferrous metals, 47 tons of newspaper, 1,488 tons of corrugated cardboard, 62 tons of office paper, 8 tons of plastic, 39 tons of glass, 245 tons of brush, and 300 gallons of motor oil.

**Septage Lagoons:** In Accomack County, septic system pump-out effluent is disposed of in lagoons. There are three septage lagoons on the Eastern Shore and they are all located in Accomack County. Bundick Well & Pump operates two lagoons that are located near the villages of Atlantic and Mappsburg. Boggs Water & Sewage operates one lagoon near the town of Wachapreague. These facilities consist of unlined, dirt bermed, anaerobic lagoons which receive sewage sludge collected from septic tanks and deliv-

ered to the lagoons by pump trucks. The berms around the lagoons vary from 4 to 6 feet in height and are currently operating with 2 to 4 feet of freeboard. These lagoons are the only septage disposal facilities available on Virginia's Eastern Shore.

These lagoons were originally permitted by the State Bureau of Wastewater Engineering and the Division of Water Programs. The Virginia Department of Health assumed responsibility for regulation of the facilities in 1988. Prior to transfer of regulatory authority to the Health Department, the Bureau of Wastewater Engineering and the Division of Water Programs developed provisions under which the facilities would be allowed to continue operation. The Bundick and Boggs facilities are regulated by the Health Department in accordance with those provisions. Conditions for continued operation include quarterly reporting of the date and volume of septage dumped, hauler's name and monthly water levels in the lagoon and yearly water samples from two wells to test groundwater quality. Groundwater quality tests are to include fecal coliform, chloride, nitrate, ammonia nitrogen, total dissolved solids, and pH. If any water sample test results indicate a violation of water quality standards, as established by the State Water Control Board, a consent order must be implemented to establish a schedule for correction and compliance, and provision of a liner for the lagoon.

## Recreation

**Parks:** Accomack County currently has limited public park facilities. Many of these facilities are operated through cooperative agreements. The Department of Parks and Recreation owns and maintains the tennis courts at Nandua High School, the ball fields and park at Arcadia High School, and a driving range at South Accomac Elementary School. The county has a lease agreement with the Town of Wachapreague in which they share maintenance of the town park in exchange for use of the ball fields, playgrounds, and picnic areas. The Navy has assisted with the construction of a playground at county owned Wallops Park and there are currently plans for the Navy to assist with improvements to the nature trail at that park. The county recently acquired the Wayside Park, located on U.S. Route 13 outside of Parksley, from the Department of Transportation. Wayside Park has been turned over to the Department of Parks and Recreation and is open for daytime use.

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### The Eastern Shore YMCA



There has been a good deal of discussion over the last several years about establishing a YMCA on the Shore. Significant progress was made towards that goal in 1996. An organizing committee raised \$15,000 from citizens, organizations, and business to conduct a feasibility study. The study will be conducted in 1997 and if the findings are good, Virginia's Eastern Shore may have a YMCA in the near future.

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**Beach Access:** The only truly public beach area accessible by automobile in Accomack County is Assateague National Seashore. There are several sandy beaches along the Chesapeake Bay that have been traditionally used by the public but are privately owned. The barrier islands are also available for day use, but must be accessed by boat.

**Public Wildlife Areas:** There are a number of publicly owned natural areas and wildlife management areas in Accomack County. Depending on which agency manages the property, these are available for wildlife observation, hiking, canoeing, fishing, and hunting. Public areas include the Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge, 750 acres at Parkers Marsh Natural Area and the 6,177 acre Saxis Wildlife Management Area.

**Boat Ramps:** The county currently maintains 34 boat ramps. These ramps vary in condition from unusable to brand new, several of the ramps are for car top boats only. In some cases, the county only owns the property that the ramp is located on and no surrounding parking area.

**Sports Facilities:** The two high schools have tennis courts that are available after hours for public use. The Town of Chinoteague also maintains public tennis courts. Ball fields at the schools are also used for soccer, football and baseball. The Little League maintains baseball fields just outside of Parksley. Ball fields are also available at the parks in Wallops, Wachapreague, and Melfa. There is a public golf course at the Captain's Cove development, near Greenbackville. The private Eastern Shore Yacht and Country Club has a golf course, swimming pool and tennis courts. There is also a private pool in the Town of Onley.

**Recreation Centers:** Accomack County has no indoor recreation facilities except those in the public schools, and those are not open for regular public use. Funds are currently being collected for feasibility study for an Eastern Shore YMCA. The Department of Parks and Recreation has created a Capital Improvement Fund for the future creation of a county recreational facility.

Map M  
Waterfront Access

## Cultural Resources



**Cultural Resources:** Established in the 1600's, the Eastern Shore has a rich history and many surviving cultural treasures. Towns, homes, farms, churches, roads, waterways, and people are woven into the county's cultural fabric. This is evident to any visitor who happens down one of the county's back roads, winding around productive farm fields and forests of pines, through small villages with maybe a store, a church and several large old homes, past an open field with an oyster shell drive leading to a traditional Eastern Shore long house set back from the main road, and ending at a spot where the pavement meets the water's edge and deadrises float at a dock piled high with crab pots. Accomack County is fortunate to have a cultural history which is still very much alive in its traditional industries, churches, homes, and families.

**History Overview:** Archaeological digs have found evidence of humans on the Shore as early as 8,000 to 10,000 B.C.. Prior to European settlement, the Shore was populated by a number of Indian tribes. It was these natives of the area the named the land, "Accawmacke," meaning, "land beyond the waters." Local Indian tribes included a group of families (the Accohanocks, Curratocks, Nasswattocks, Magothas, Mattawames) who called themselves, "Ginga skins" and were ruled by a tribal leader who held court at Great Nasswattock (now Nassawadox). Other tribes included the Assateagues, Chicoteagues, Kickotanks, and Matchipungoes. These tribes all belonged to the Powhatan nation, but due to geographical isolation, had little communication with the Powhatans on the mainland. Algonquin speaking Indians settled near the Maryland border and were more closely related than the Nanticokes to the North than the Powhatans of the lower shore.

The first recorded European to visit the Eastern Shore was Giovanni de Verrazano, who arrived in 1524. Captain Bartholmew Gilbert of England visited the area in 1603 and Captain John Smith explored the Eastern Shore in 1608. The first permanent English settlement on the Shore was settled in 1620 by Thomas Savage along what is now known as Cherrystone Creek in Northampton County.

Accomack County was founded in 1663. The county courthouse was originally located in Onancock and moved to a site midway between the Atlantic Ocean and Chesapeake Bay in 1786. That site is now the town of Accomac. The Shore was originally all one county. In 1673, the border was settled to divide the area into two separate counties. The southern county was named "Northampton," after the birth place of Colonel Obedience Robins, who came to the Shore from a shire northwest of London and was a friend of King Debedeavon. The northern county retained the name, "Accomack," as given by its native people.

Map O  
Historic Landmarks

European settlers began to settle on the Shore in large numbers in the 1630s and timberland was cleared for the planting of crops. Food for sustenance and tobacco were the primary crops until the steamboat era began in the early 1840s. Use of the steamboat allowed local farmers to expand from staple crops to commercial vegetable production. Sweet potatoes, beans, peas, cotton, flax, fire wood, tobacco, and oysters were shipped up and down the coast. The introduction of rail service in 1884 allowed for further expansion of the produce market and for the export of perishable items such as strawberries and seafood.

***Architecture:*** The Eastern Shore has a unique style of architecture exemplified by the long house, or “big house, little house, colonnade, kitchen.” This style developed from the local practice of starting out with a small, modest house and detached kitchen, and as a family became more prosperous, building a larger house next to the first and connecting the two with a colonnade. There are many fine examples of this style still standing and in use in Accomack County. The county also has many old farm houses, stately town residences, waterfront estates, churches, government buildings, stores, and schools.

***State and National Designated Landmarks:*** There are a number of sites in Accomack County that are on Virginia’s register of historic landmarks and the National Register of Historic Places. Properties included on these registers are historically, architecturally or culturally significant. Accomack County sites include Saint James Episcopal Church, Bowman’s Folly, Hopkins and Brother Store, Kerr Place, Wessels Root Cellar, Saint George’s Episcopal Church, Wharton Place, Corbin Hall, Assateague Lighthouse, the Mercantile Building, the Mason House, Pitts Neck Farm, the Debtor’s Prison, the Scarborough House Archaeological Site, the Edmond Bayly House, Shepherd’s Plain, Arbuckle Place, and the Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station. Also, the towns of Accomack and Onancock have state designated historic districts.

***Museums:*** Accomack County has several museums dedicated to the area’s history and natural resources. Most of these museums are located in the Chincoteague area, including the Assateague National Seashore Visitors Center, Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge Visitors Center, the Oyster Museum, and the NASA Wallops Island Visitor Center. The Town of Parkley has the Eastern Shore Railway Museum and an antique car museum, and the Town of Onancock is home to the Kerr Place Historic House and Museum.