



Virginia Cooperative Extension

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Situation Analysis Report



Chesapeake

2018

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Introduction

On March 28, 2018, staff of the Chesapeake Extension Office of Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) met with the Extension Leadership Council (ELC) to discuss plans for conducting a Situation Analysis. The purpose of conducting the analysis was to identify priority issues in the city that Extension staff might be able to address through educational programs. Using data resources from the VCE Situation Analysis Resource website and the 2017 Statistical Profile-City of Chesapeake, a unit profile was developed. Key points from the unit profile were discussed. A list of Focus Groups and Key Informants were created for outreach interviews and one-on-one discussions. Work began on a community survey to solicit important issues or challenges VCE might be able to address. The survey was crafted as a Qualtrics survey and also printed copies delivered by mail or in person for persons without computer access.

Subsequent meetings with Chesapeake ELC were held June 27th and November 13th. Key findings from the Qualtrics survey were analyzed. Agents updated Community Perspectives on programs based on resident and program participant inputs. Finally, top priority issues for Chesapeake were identified. Final 2018 Situation Analysis was shared with ELC members.

Unit Profile

The City of Chesapeake was formed in 1963 through the consolidation of the City of South Norfolk and Norfolk County. Today it is comprised of 353 square miles and is located in the southeastern portion of the Commonwealth of Virginia in the Hampton Roads region. Chesapeake is bordered to the north by the Cities of Norfolk and Portsmouth, to the east by the City of Virginia Beach, to the south by Currituck and Camden Counties in North Carolina, and to the west by the City of Suffolk.

The merger between the City of South Norfolk and Norfolk County has resulted in a unique variety of landscapes within the City. Residents and businesses interested in locating in Chesapeake may choose between urban, suburban, and rural environments. The former City of South Norfolk has retained its urban character while the southernmost reaches of the City have remained rural. Between the two extremes lies a rapidly developing suburban region, offering a variety of amenities and housing options.

Chesapeake is centrally located in the South Hampton Roads area and is well linked to the rest of the region through an extensive transportation system. Several major interstate highways facilitate easy travel within the City and throughout the region. Chesapeake is also accessible by water through the Southern and Western Branches of the Elizabeth River and the Intercostal Waterway. Chesapeake also has two airfields and numerous railways to add to the versatility of the strategic transportation network.

Chesapeake has experienced considerable population and economic growth since its creation. The City had an estimated January 2018 population of 242,336 compared to the 1963

population of 78,153 when the city was first chartered by the General Assembly. Population growth from January 2017 to January 2018 was a 1.23% increase. The Virginia Employment Commission estimates that the City's population will increase another 19.1% by the year 2030 with a projected population of roughly 285,153. The University of Virginia's Weldon Cooper Center more conservatively estimates a 2030 population for the City of 277,475, a 15.9% increase.

According to USDA Census of Agriculture, the Chesapeake has lost over 6,000 acres of farmland (13%) in the past five years. Although farmland is being developed as commercial and residential properties, Chesapeake still has over 45,000 acres of active farmland. With less farmland, the market value of products sold has increased over \$5 Million to \$40,487,000. The soils in Chesapeake are some of the most productive in the state for growing crops. Farmers, greenhouses and nurseries are generating higher yields and remaining very competitive as an industry.

Population/Demographics

Households and Families:

According to the 2016 Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI) Community Analyst Profile, a typical Chesapeake resident is 37.8 years old and white (62.6%); African-American (29.4%); Asian (2.9%); Hispanic (4.4%). The likelihood of the resident being male (48.6%) or female (51.4%) is nearly equal. It takes this person an average of 24.7 minutes to drive to work. He or she has a per capita income of \$30,389 and a median household income of \$71,512. This resident is often married (55.1%) and is part of a family household (75.3%) with an average household size of 2.76 people and an average family household size of 3.19.

Language:

Of the people living in Chesapeake, 92.9% speak only English; 3.2% speak Spanish; 1.8% speak Asian and Island Pacific language.

Education:

Of people 25 years and older, 8.3% did not have a high school diploma. 26.1% had a high school degree or GED. 28.4% had an associate's or bachelor's degree. 11.9% had a graduate or professional degree.

Disability:

In Chesapeake, among people at least 65-years of age, 31.4% reported a disability. Under 65 years of age, 7.9% reported a disability.

Industries:

In 2011, for the employed population 16-years and older, occupations for civilian employment were: Management, business, science, and arts occupations 38.8%; Sales and office occupations 26.6%; Service occupations 14.9%; Production, transportation, and material

moving occupations 9.9%; Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations 9.8%.

Poverty:

Persons living below poverty level numbered 21,734 or 9.7%. Number of households with food stamps/SNAP 6,776 or 8.4%.

Housing Costs:

The median monthly housing cost for mortgaged owners is \$1,760; and renters \$1,144. 73% percent of homes are owner-occupied, while 27% of homes are renter-occupied. Of those owner-occupied homes, 61% have a mortgage while 12% are owned free and clear. Average home value is \$308,431.

Community and Resident Perspectives

Agriculture:

Chesapeake's history is that of an agricultural community that has undergone rapid development of other industries and residential development that goes with business development.

With approximately 45,118 acres in farmland, agriculture is the largest land use industry contributing over \$40.5 million in annual sales to the local economy. Nursery and greenhouse production contributes over half of these annual sales. Chesapeake ranks high in soybean, corn and wheat production in the state.

With farmland being in such close proximity to residential development, this presents great challenges and opportunities to all citizens. Some farmers have seized the opportunity to grow and market their produce to customers locally. Residents may take advantage of the chance to visit local farms and select fresh produce from pick your own operations or from roadside stands. Agri-tourism offers many farms another marketing tool for school groups and the general public. Extension has organized a City Farmers' Market which completed its 18th successful year in 2018.

Animal agriculture in Chesapeake has undergone change in the past two decades. What was once a major producer of swine in the state is now home to approximately 3,200 horses. Local horse ownership has prompted more Extension programming in areas of pasture management, equine health education, and emergency preparedness for horses. The rural areas of southern Chesapeake have attracted much development of boarding stables and equine residential developments. The City has future plans to develop equine riding trails and possibly an arena at one of its undeveloped parks.

Traditional row-crop farming remains the largest segment of farming in Chesapeake. Farmers responding to surveys identified the need for continued research and educational programs to maintain the viability of farming. The link between Extension and local government has been

cited as an asset to local farmers. The presence of Extension has also been of much benefit to city government as efforts to preserve agriculture has become an important factor in the city's Comprehensive Plan.

Horticulture:

The Greenhouse and Nursery industry continues to be recognized for its importance to the economic viability of the region ranking as the 5th highest economic crop in the State bringing in \$294 million annually. Nestled within the city, we have a collection of approximately 30-businesses ranging from small retail to large retail/wholesale operations provide a diverse selection of plants for the customer market whether it be local, statewide, or in some cases national.

Survey results, the Chesapeake Mayor's emphasis on Sustainable practices, and public questions throughout the year emphasize the importance of education in the areas of chemical use reduction to protect bees, soil erosion control, maintaining tree canopy coverage and making sure trees are properly treated for safety, beauty and air quality, and water stewardship/conservation(with an emphasis on wells). Since the last situational analysis, the importance of local food access and options for additional opportunities and methods to both produce (including niche crops) and supply food to food insecure areas in Chesapeake has grown significantly. Lastly, preserving/conserving biodiversity of especially native plants was also stressed in the survey stressing the need to provide food for the native fauna improving natural ecosystems.

4-H Youth Development:

Chesapeake 4-H is able to offer a variety of positive opportunities to the youth of Chesapeake. The Chesapeake 4-H program strives to provide many hands on 4-H learning opportunities for youth to "learn by doing" and also strives to continue to "Make the Best Better" within the community. The 4-H program assists youth, and those adults working with them in acquiring the knowledge, life skills, and attitudes that will enable them to become self-directing, contributing, and productive members of society.

4-H Livestock education has had a long history with the City. The local community has supported 4-H tremendously by providing encouragement and financial support for this 4-H youth development program. Youth involved in the Chesapeake animal science program raise sheep, goats, cattle, hogs, poultry and horses. 4-Hers show and represent Chesapeake not only on a local level, but at the state and regional level too. Participation in the 4-H animal science programs train youth in raising the animals, while developing social skills and other skills necessary in life, to become self-directing, contributing, and productive members of society.

Through learning more about the needs of the communities that we serve the 4-H office is offering programs in all areas of the City. The 4-H program has started to offer a wider range of programs that include, STEM, gardening, nutrition, Character counts and leadership programs for the youth. The 4-H program partners with City departments, Boys and Girls

Clubs, Parks and Recreation, libraries and other organizations to offer these programs and those in the future.

Family & Consumer Sciences: Health, Wellness & Nutrition Education:

Virginians spend about \$4 billion annually in health care cost associated with chronic diseases related inadequate food intake, unhealthy food choices, lack of physical activities, and inadequate nutrition education. According to the 2007 City of Chesapeake Health District's report, cardiovascular disease (CVD), hypertension, diabetes, stroke, obesity, cancer and chronic lower respiratory disease are the leading health risk factors affecting Chesapeake citizens.

The 2003 National Survey of Children's Health statistics indicates 24% of children in Virginia are overweight and 15% are at risk of being overweight. Indicators also show two in three adults Virginians (or 66%) overweight. Obesity and overweight frequently lead to chronic diseases, especially diabetes, cardiovascular disease and some cancers that equate to almost 35% of the in-hospital stays in the city. The Department of Human Service reports 10.6% of children; 8 % of seniors and 24% of females heading households in Chesapeake are living in poverty this year.

These figures have increased the past five years. The largest increase (8%) was female head of households. As a result of this economic definition, Virginia has seen an increase in the number of individuals affected by food insecurity and hunger. In 2000, 336,080 Virginians received food stamps each month. In 2005, food stamp usage increased to 45.3% (488,481). In Virginia, and in the City of Chesapeake, 54 % of individuals who qualify for food stamps utilize them, in contrast to the National rate of 60% use rate of those eligible. Many who do not utilize these services manage to get by with the support of family, friends, the faith based community or the local food pantry. Of the 39,654 children enrolled in Chesapeake public schools, 25.33 % (10,046) of the children are eligible for the free or reduced lunch program. Of the 48 schools in the City of Chesapeake, 15 schools rate more than 50% above the poverty level.

Extension has been involved in programs and statewide initiatives to promote nutrition, food security, food safety and physical activity in adults and children. Virginia Cooperative Extension became involved in the CHAMPION (Commonwealth's Healthy Approach and Mobilization Plan for Inactivity Obesity and Nutrition) program in 2003. The Chesapeake Extension Office has been involved in delivery of nutrition education programs for low-income individuals, families and children such as: Women, Infants, and Children (WIC); Healthy Weights for Healthy Kids; Eating Better and Moving More; Canning Classes; Reality Store; Housekeeping.

Priority Issues

(Issues not listed in any order of priority)

Issue 1: Agricultural Sustainability/Preservation:

Survey results reveal Agricultural Sustainability/Preservation is ranked very high. This notion is reinforced by local government initiatives to preserve agriculture as an industry in Chesapeake's future. The city adapted an Open Space Agricultural Preservation (OSAP) program in 2003 for purchase of development rights on farmland. Currently, 204 acres have been permanently preserved for agriculture.

Other high ranking survey results related to this priority include direct marketing of farm products as well as agri-tainment opportunities for local customers. Local, state, and federal programs that benefit agriculture. Most noted are local ordinances that are friendly to rural and urban agriculture production. In recent years, local ordinances have been passed that include friendly language for urban beekeeping, chicken egg production, small scale farm production on single-family residential home lots, farm stands and more farmer's markets.

Traditional agriculture responses reveal interest in Extension education programs that keep farms profitable. People have indicated they want to see local food systems which are environmentally safe. Highly noted responses are people want to see more public awareness of agriculture and its importance as part of Chesapeake's future.

VCE's role in addressing this issue: VCE has and continues to support many of these local agriculture related initiatives with City government. VCE agents continue to be involved with the OSAP program. Local ordinances involve Extension participation in an advisory capacity. Extension initiated a Chesapeake Farmer's Market in 2000 which continues today. Extension has also been instrumental in helping private farmer's markets develop. VCE Agents continue to hold educational meetings, field days, on-farm-research, newsletters, and one-on-one consultations with farmers.

Issue 2: Urban and Suburban Water Quality Issues:

The importance of education regarding the proper planting and maintenance, pesticide use, plant selection and practices to improve water quality in our wells, streams, lakes, BMPs and groundwater has been identified through surveys and multiple client discussions as a top priority. Training and recruiting for the Master Gardener program and emphasis on these issues in our recertification and certification trainings for Pesticide licenses will continue to help accomplish this goal. Other programs identified to help with improving Water Quality include: Tidal Wetland presentations, Retention pond maintenance analysis and new signage program, awareness of pollinators and beneficial insects, plantings of trees, buffers and pollinator gardens, encouraging native plant planting, and reduction of mowing, pesticides and fertilizers without soil testing, BMP site visits and management plans, organic and home/local grown produce practices (Farmers' Market, Plant a Row for the Hungry) and availability, as well as information on how to attract and preserve wildlife habitat and plant diversity in our community.

By providing a multifaceted approach to this concern we can reach a diverse audience and enhance water quality in Chesapeake in a positive way.

Issue 3: Healthy Lifestyles with Youth:

Healthy Eating, nutrition education and the importance of exercise are the top issues youth are facing to have a healthier lifestyle. Extension continues to address this issue with nutrition education programs in the school and afterschool settings. Youth garden programs are being offered to the youth to learn about growing fresh fruits and vegetables. Extension continues to reach out to the community and community partners to offer programs.

Issue 4: Life Skill Development in Youth:

Decision making, teen leadership, community involvement were a few of the life skills identified as the greatest issue facing youth in Chesapeake. Extension continues to address this issue with hands on learning through year-round 4-H clubs, educational workshops, afterschool programs, camps and school enrichment programs. Established partnerships with public and private schools, youth organizations, and city youth agencies to help address this issue. Additional adult volunteers are needed for training, program outreach and delivery in order to serve a larger audience more frequently.

Issue 5: Diet, Health, and Nutrition across the Lifespan:

Safe, affordable, and adequate food choices are vital to the health and well-being of citizens of Chesapeake. Improving health through making better food choices; accessibility to affordable foods; and encouraging physical activities are seen as key elements that can contribute to a healthy community.

Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) staff and volunteers have taken a pro-active approach to addressing diet, health and nutrition by providing research based educational programs for individuals from infancy to senior populations. An Expanded Food Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) assistant, funded through the federally supported Food Stamp Education program conducts educational programs for low income adults and youth. Extension programs are targeted to address the basic needs of food budgeting; food preparation; food safety; menu planning; food security; food preservation; obesity prevention and physical activity. Pregnant mothers, infants, pre-school and school aged children, seniors and individuals concerned about health conditions related to nutrition participate in a variety of programs offered by Cooperative Extension. VCE has partnered with various community groups; city government; schools; area businesses and the faith-based community to offer educational opportunities for English speaking as well as non-English speaking audiences.