



City of Suffolk
City Profile and Statistical Digest
September 16, 2009



TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0	Overview and Purpose	1
2.0	Government and Taxation	1
2.1	GENERAL PROPERTY TAXES	1
2.1.2	Real Estate Tax	1
2.1.3	Personal Property Tax.....	2
2.2	PER CAPITA EXPENDITURES.....	2
2.3	FULL-TIME POSITIONS PER 1,000 CITIZENS	3
3.0	Demographics	4
3.1	POPULATION	4
3.2	RACE AND ETHNICITY	5
3.3	MEDIAN AGE	6
3.4	EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT	6
4.0	Local Economy	7
4.1	MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME.....	7
4.2	UNEMPLOYMENT RATE.....	8
4.3	EMPLOYMENT BASE.....	8
4.4	JOB CREATION AND CAPITAL INVESTMENT	9
4.5	DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY	10
4.6	REAL ESTATE.....	12
4.6.1	Foreclosures	13
4.6.2	Tax Exempt Properties and Tax Relief for the Elderly.....	14
4.7	RETAIL SALES.....	17
4.8	LODGING.....	18
5.0	Education	18
5.1	SCHOOL ENROLLMENT.....	18
5.2	PER PUPIL EXPENDITURES	19
5.3	HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATE	20
5.4	SCHOOL DROPOUT RATE	21
5.5	SCHOOL ACCREDITATION AND TEST SCORES.....	22
6.0	Health and Welfare	24
6.1	POVERTY RATE.....	24
6.2	FOOD STAMP RECIPIENTS	24
6.3	TEEN PREGNANCY	25
7.0	Crime	26
8.0	Summary	26

1.0 Overview and Purpose

The City Profile and Statistical Digest has been prepared by the Department of Budget and Strategic Planning to provide a snapshot of the City of Suffolk and how it compares with other localities in the region as well as state and national averages. Many demographic and socioeconomic indicators are evaluated in this report including general property taxes, per capita expenditures, and city government size; population characteristics; economic growth, employment, and development activity; real estate trends, educational achievement; health and welfare, and crime statistics. The statistical information that is presented paints an overall picture of the City's strengths and areas that need improvement. The findings of the report can be used to identify focus areas for the City's strategic planning efforts.

2.0 Government and Taxation

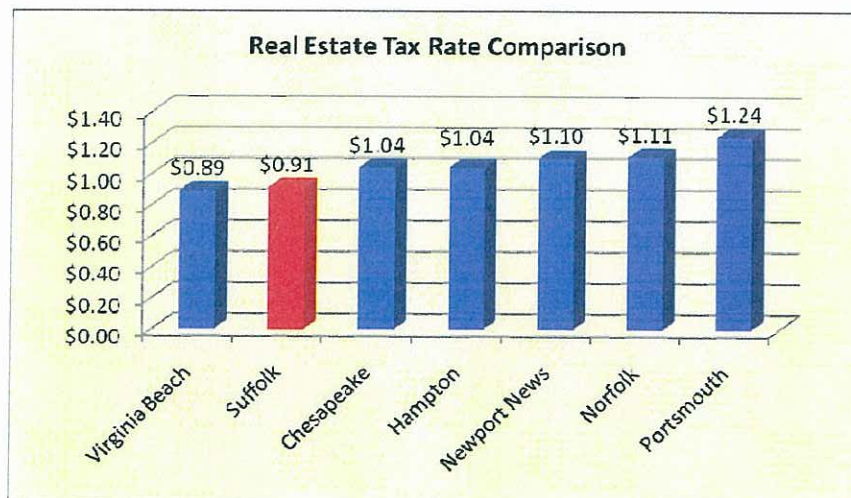
2.1 General Property Taxes

General property taxes, including taxes on real and personal property, represent the largest source of revenue for localities in the Commonwealth of Virginia. As a result, the City of Suffolk's ability to provide high quality services to its citizens is highly dependent on these revenue sources. In FY 2008, real estate and personal property taxes accounted for over 55% of the City's General Fund revenue.

The tax rates that are established on real estate and personal property by the local governing body, however, must be fair and equitable. Otherwise, citizens may be unwilling or even unable to pay taxes on their real estate and personal property. Additionally, the City's appeal to existing businesses and new business prospects may be jeopardized if the tax rates are set too high.

2.1.2 Real Estate Tax

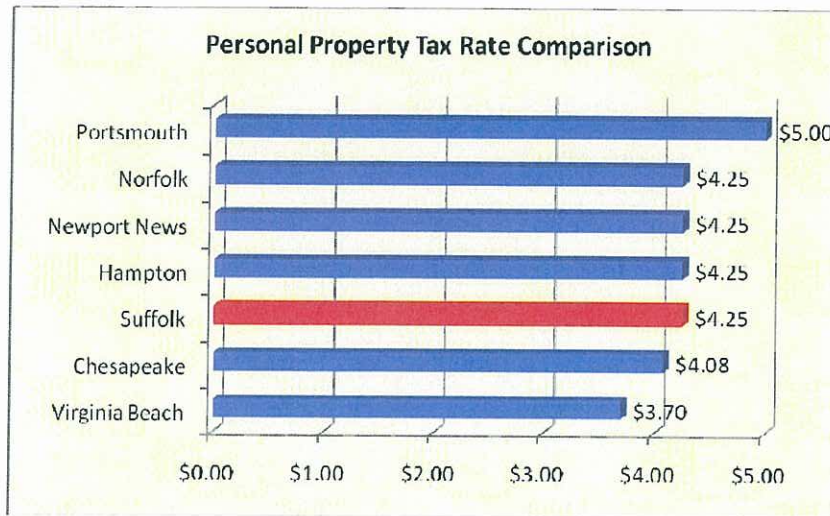
The real estate tax is the largest source of revenue generated by the City of Suffolk. Audited financial statements for FY 2008 show that the real estate tax accounted for \$78.3 million or 46% of General Fund revenue. With a general real estate tax rate of \$0.91 per \$100 of assessed value, Suffolk has second lowest real estate tax rate among the seven major cities in the Hampton Roads region. Only the City of Virginia Beach boasts a lower real estate tax rate at \$0.89 per \$100 of assessed value.



Source: Department of Budget and Strategic Planning, City of Suffolk

2.1.3 Personal Property Tax

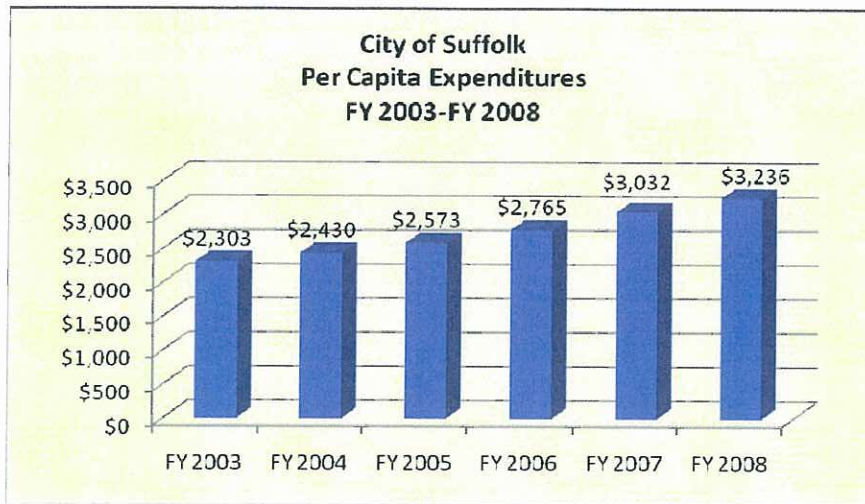
The personal property tax includes levies on airplanes, boats, cars, trucks, trailers, mobile homes, recreational vehicles and machinery and tools. In FY 2008, the personal property tax accounted for \$15.3 million or 9% of General Fund revenue. Revenue that is generated on tangible personal property including cars, trucks, and trailers is a major source of personal property tax revenue. The tax rate on tangible personal property in the City of Suffolk is \$4.25 per \$100 of assessed value. In comparison to other localities in the region, the City's tangible personal property tax rate is squarely in the middle between the City of Virginia Beach (\$3.70) and the City of Portsmouth (\$5.00) which have the lowest and highest rates in the region.



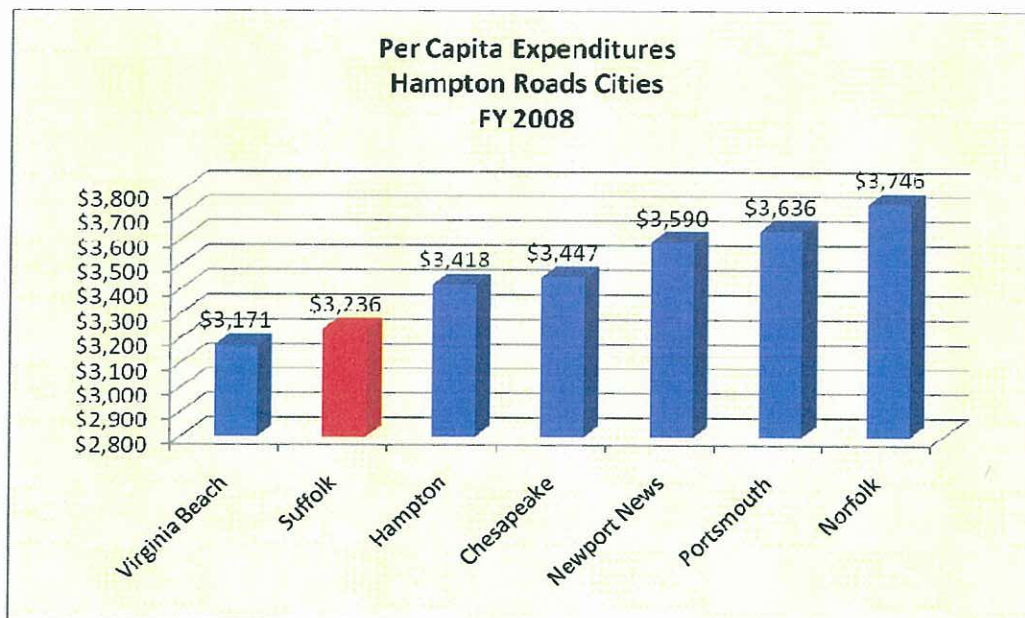
Source: Department of Budget and Strategic Planning, City of Suffolk

2.2 Per Capita Expenditures

While maintaining a competitive tax structure is extremely important, an evaluation of local government expenditures also provides compelling statistics from which to compare the City of Suffolk with other localities in the region. Although expenditures vary by locality based upon specific community characteristics and needs, all localities spend money across multiple disciplines to deliver services to their citizens. Expenditures for general government operation and maintenance including general government administration, judicial administration, public safety, public works, health and welfare, education, parks and recreation, and community development are compiled annually by the Auditor of Public Accounts for the Commonwealth of Virginia. As shown in the graph on page 3, the City's per capita expenditures have increased from \$2,303 in FY 2003 to \$3,236 in FY 2008. This equates to an annualized growth in per capita expenditures of 6.8% per year. In comparison to other localities in the region, Suffolk has the second lowest per capita expenditures.



Source: Department of Budget and Strategic Planning, City of Suffolk
Auditor of Public Accounts, Commonwealth of Virginia



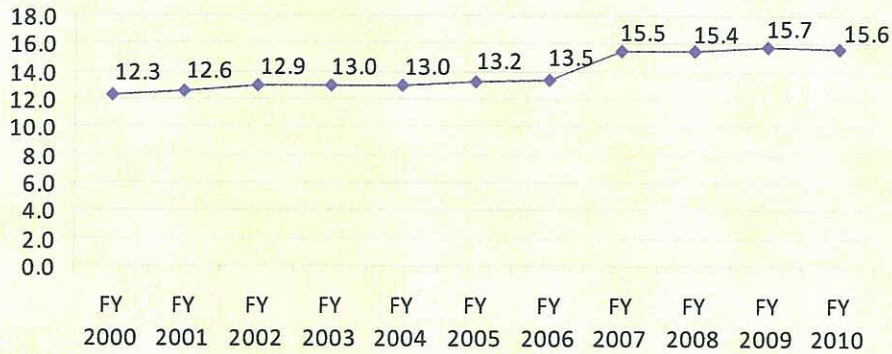
Source: Department of Budget and Strategic Planning, City of Suffolk
Auditor of Public Accounts, Commonwealth of Virginia

2.3 Full-Time Positions Per 1,000 Citizens

Each year the City Council adopts an operating budget to provide the funds required to carry out and implement city services. Included in the operating budget is the total number of full-time positions approved to fulfill the operational needs of all city agencies and departments. While all of these positions do not remain filled throughout the year, the number of approved positions can be used to assess the size of city government and determine if the City is in line with other localities in the region who deliver similar services to their citizens. The ratio of the number of full-time city positions per 1,000 citizens is commonly used to evaluate the size of cities and counties.

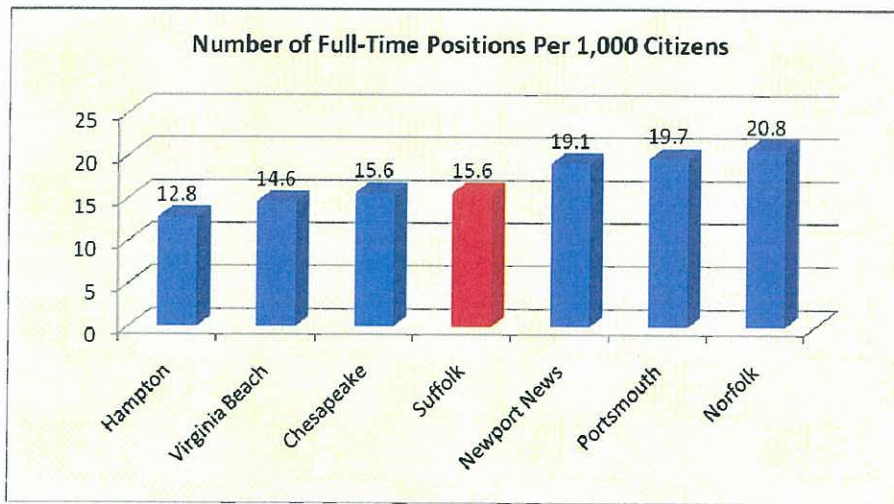
The FY 2009-2010 operating budget provides for 1,282 approved full-time city positions. This represents a net increase of four positions over FY 2008-2009. As illustrated in the graph below, the size of Suffolk's city government has remained relatively steady over the last 10 years with the exception of FY 2007 when the City assumed roadway maintenance responsibilities from the Virginia Department of Transportation.

**City of Suffolk
Number of Full-Time Positions per 1,000 Citizens
FY 2000-FY 2010**



Source: Department of Budget and Strategic Planning, City of Suffolk

The City of Suffolk compares favorably to the other major cities in the Hampton Roads region in terms of city government size. While Suffolk has a greater number of employees per 1,000 citizens than the City of Hampton (12.8) and the City of Virginia Beach (14.6), it is equal in size to the City of Chesapeake (15.6), and well below the cities of Newport News (19.1), Portsmouth (19.7) and Norfolk (20.8).



Source: Department of Budget and Strategic Planning, City of Suffolk

3.0 Demographics

3.1 Population

The City of Suffolk continues to lead the Hampton Roads region in population growth and remains one of the fastest growing communities in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Since 2000, the City's population has increased 28.6% to 81,907 residents. Suffolk is also the largest city in Hampton Roads and the state in terms of land mass with 400 square miles of land. The availability of land and close proximity to regional transportation routes and employment centers will likely fuel growth for years to come in Suffolk. According to estimates provided by the Hampton Roads Planning District

Commission, the City's population is projected to double in size by the year 2034 to 180,600 residents.

	2000	2008	Percent Change
Suffolk	63,677	81,907	28.6%
Chesapeake	199,184	216,622	8.8%
Virginia Beach	425,257	431,451	1.5%
Norfolk	234,403	235,092	0.3%
Newport News	180,697	180,978	0.2%
Hampton	146,437	144,204	-1.5%
Portsmouth	100,565	97,599	-2.9%

Source: Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service

	Land Mass	Population Density
Suffolk	400	205
Chesapeake	340	637
Virginia Beach	248	1,740
Newport News	70	2,585
Norfolk	54	4,354
Hampton	52	2,773
Portsmouth	33	2,958

Source: Hampton Roads Planning District Commission

3.2 Race and Ethnicity

Demographic estimates compiled by the U.S. Census Bureau show that Suffolk's population is 55.30% white, 41.65% black, 1.38% of two or more races, 1.36% Asian, 0.28% American Indian and Alaska Native, and 0.03% Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander. Suffolk residents of Hispanic or Latino descent comprise 2.65% of the City's population.

	Estimate	Percentage
White	45,511	55.30%
Black	34,282	41.65%
American Indian and Alaska Native	231	0.28%
Asian	1,123	1.36%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	23	0.03%
Two or more races	1,132	1.38%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	2,185	2.65%

Source: Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service
U.S. Census Bureau

3.3 Median Age

The median age in the City of Suffolk is 34.9 compared to the state average of 36.8. Since 2000, the median age in Suffolk has decreased from 36.0 in 2000 to 34.9 in 2007. In comparison, the state average increased from 35.7 in 2000 to 36.8 in 2007. This data suggests that as Suffolk grows, it is attracting younger residents.

	Suffolk	Virginia
Under 5 years old	7.3%	6.5%
18 years and over	72.2%	75.4%
65 years and over	11.4%	11.2%
Median Age	36.0	35.7

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

2007 Median Age Statistics

	Suffolk	Virginia
Under 5 years old	7.7%	6.7%
18 years and over	73.0%	76.1%
65 years and over	10.7%	11.6%
Median Age	34.9	36.8

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

3.4 Educational Attainment

Educational attainment data compiled by the U.S. Census Bureau indicates that Suffolk's population is becoming better educated. In 2000, 76.8% of Suffolk residents were high school graduates or higher and 17.3% college graduates or higher. In 2007, the percentage of Suffolk residents categorized as high graduate or higher increased to 84.7% and bachelor's degree or higher to 23.4%. While educational attainment levels in Suffolk are still below the state average, Suffolk is closing the gap. In 2000, Suffolk was 4.7% below the state average for high school graduates or higher and 12.2% below the state average for bachelor's degree or higher. However, 2007 estimates show the City is less than 1% and 10% respectively below the state average for high school graduate or higher and bachelor's degree or higher.

Educational Attainment (Population 25 years and over)		
2000	Suffolk	Virginia
High School Graduate or Higher	76.8%	81.5
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	17.3%	29.5

Educational Attainment (Population 25 years and over)		
2007	Suffolk	Virginia
High School Graduate or Higher	84.7%	85.3%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	23.4%	32.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau