Life in Hampton Roads Survey Press Release #6

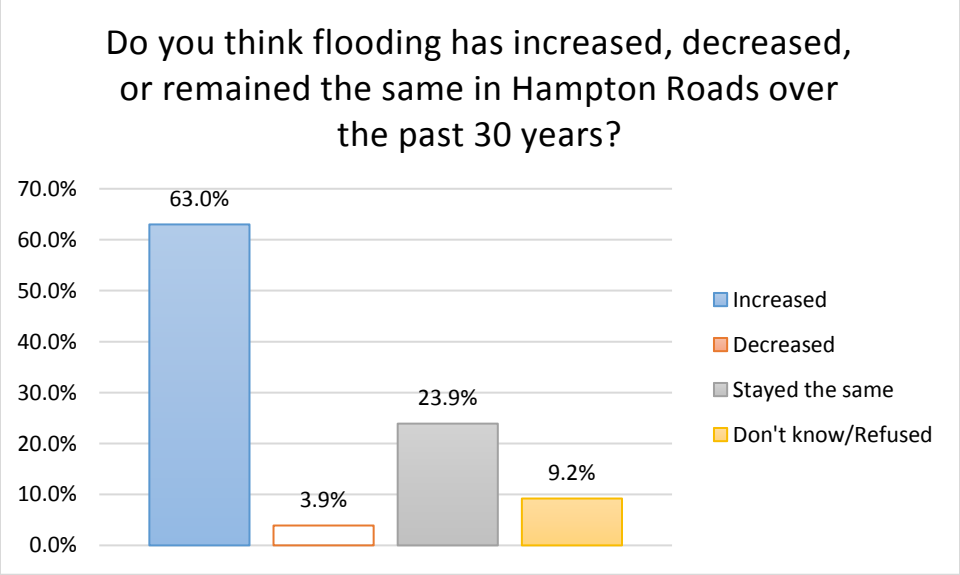
Sea Level Rise and Flooding

This report examines regional measures of environmental risk perceptions from the 2018 Life In Hampton Roads survey (LIHR 2018) conducted by the Old Dominion University Social Science Research Center. Data from prior years is also provided when available to show comparisons in responses over time. Responses were weighted by city population, race, age, gender, and phone usage (cell versus land-line) to be representative of the Hampton Roads region. For additional information on survey methodology, and analyses of other issues, please see the SSRC website at www.odu.edu/ssrc.

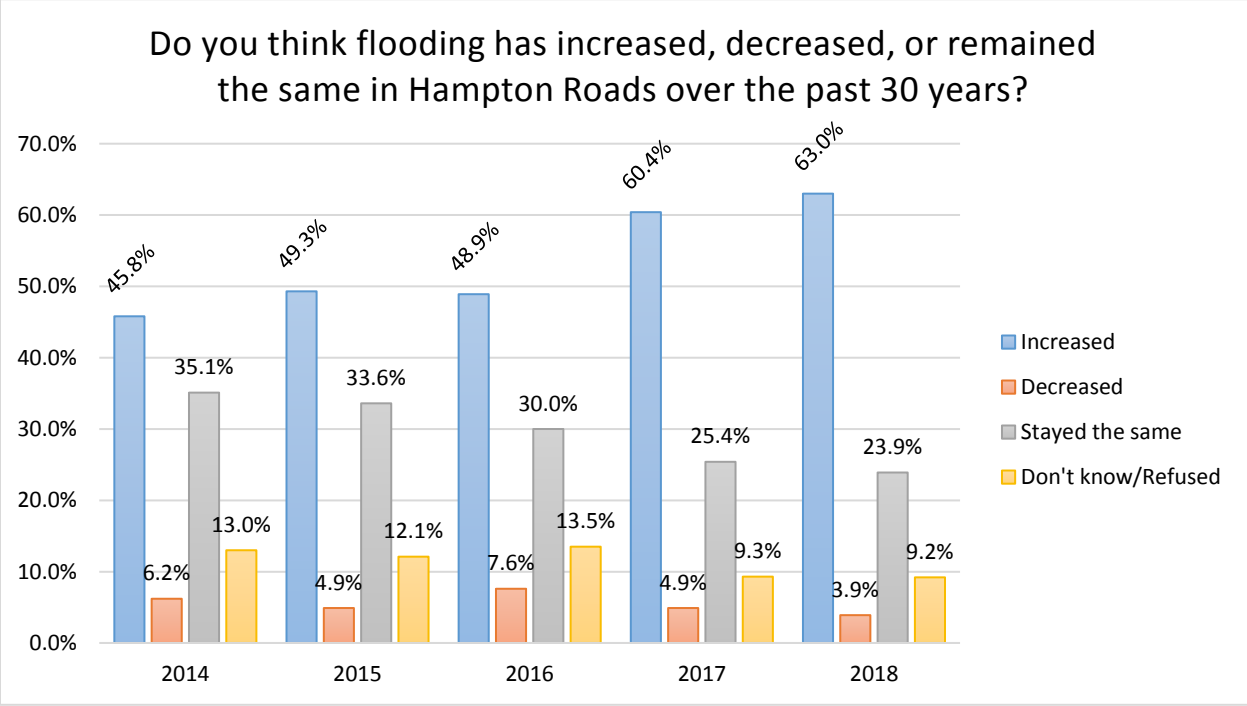
The 2018 Life in Hampton Roads survey included a series of questions to determine how people in Hampton Roads felt about sea level rise and flooding, which supports a research focus of the University in this area. The survey asked the respondents to give their opinion on a variety of questions ranging from sea level rise to prevalence of recurrent flooding and other flood related topics.

Sea Level Rise, Flooding, and Flood Risks

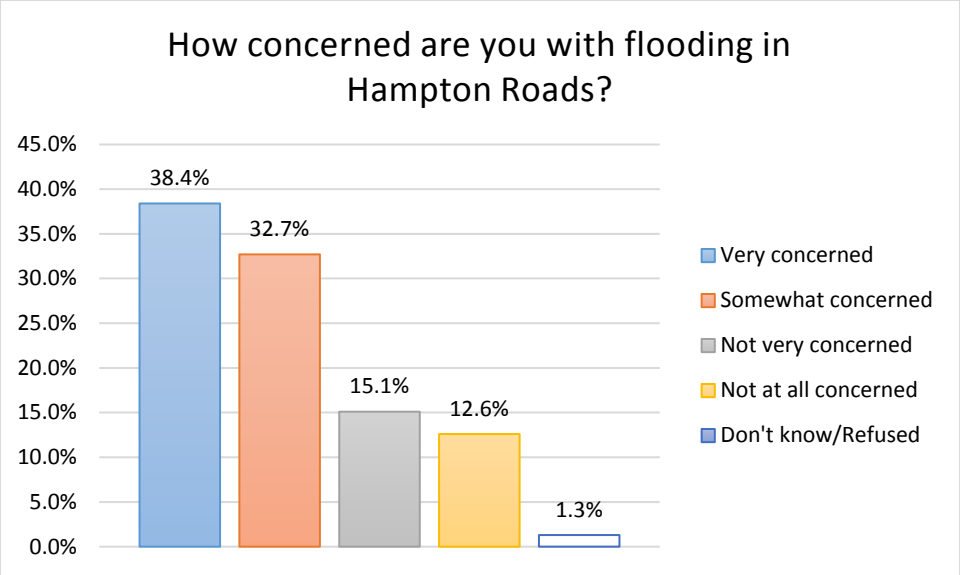
Respondents were asked whether they believe that flooding in Hampton Roads has increased, decreased, or stayed the same in the past 30 years. The majority of respondents (86.9%) stated that flooding has either increased (63.0%) or stayed the same (23.9%) in Hampton Roads over the past 30 years. Only 3.9 percent stated that flooding has decreased and 9.2 percent said that they did not know or refused to answer.



Responses to this question have remained relatively consistent with the previous four years; however, 2017 and 2018 saw an increase in respondents stating that flooding has increased. In 2017, 60.4 percent of respondents reported that they believe flooding had increased in Hampton Roads over the past 30 years, which was the highest percentage at that time. This year, 63.0 percent reported that they believe flooding had increased in Hampton Roads over the past 30 years. Similarly, only 3.9 percent of respondents reported that they believe flooding has decreased in Hampton Roads over the past 30 years, the lowest percentage reported in the last five years.

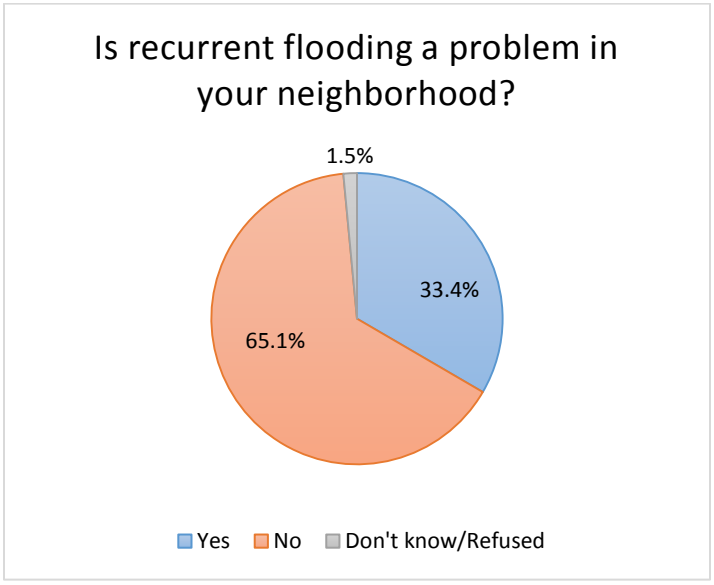


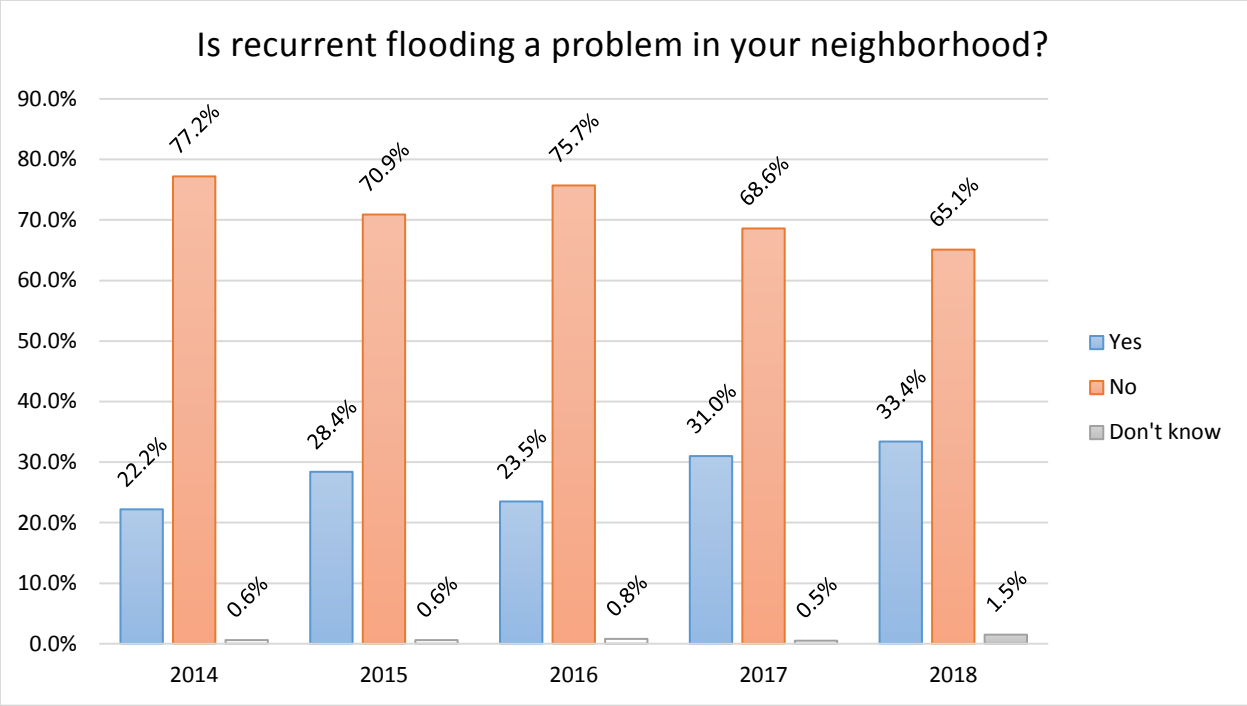
Over 70 percent (71.1%) of respondents indicated they were either very concerned (38.4%) or somewhat concerned (32.7%) with flooding in Hampton Roads. This is not surprising considering over 60 percent believe that flooding has increased in Hampton Roads in the past 30 years.



Neighborhood Flooding and Flood Insurance

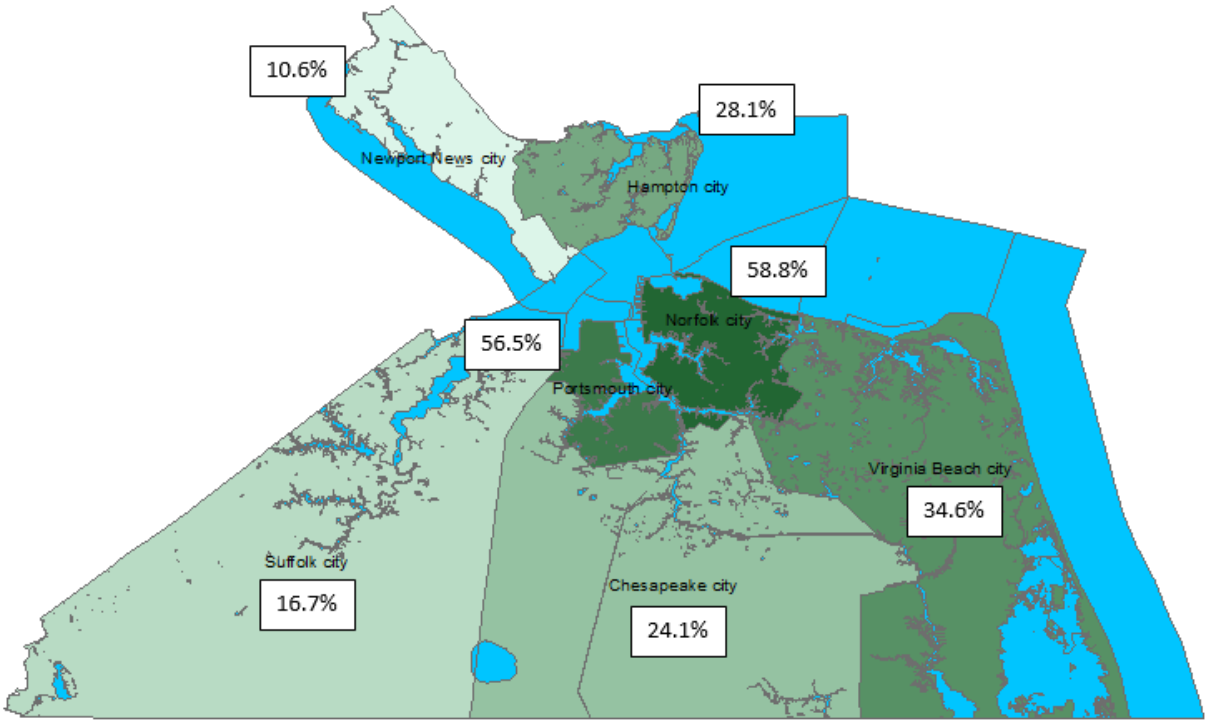
Respondents were also asked whether or not recurrent flooding is a problem in their neighborhood. While 63.0 percent of respondents indicated that they think flooding has increased over the past 30 years, 65.1 percent reported that recurrent flooding ***is not*** a problem in their neighborhood. The percentage of Hampton Roads respondents reporting that recurrent flooding is a problem in their neighborhood increased 2.4 percent (33.4%) from 2017 (31.0%).





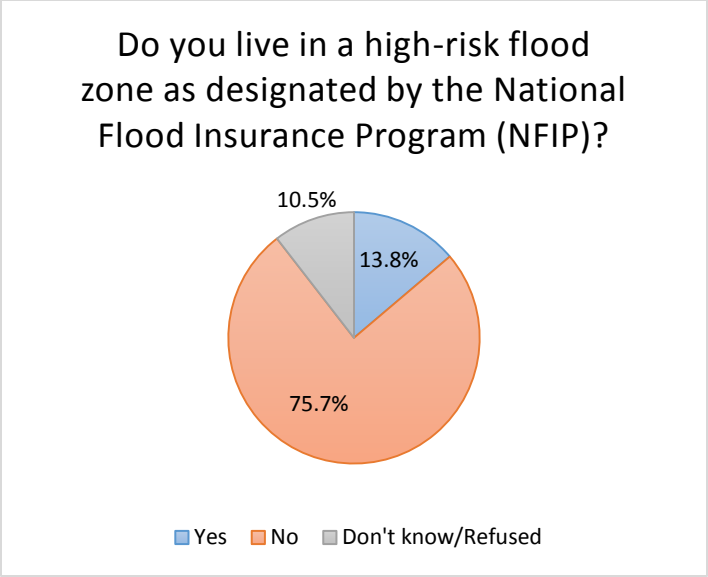
There were significant differences between the cities in regards to the prevalence of recurrent flooding in neighborhoods. At the highest end, 58.8 percent of Norfolk residents and 56.5 percent of Portsmouth residents said that recurrent flooding is a problem in their neighborhood. At the other end of the spectrum, only 16.7 percent of Suffolk residents and 10.6 percent of Newport News residents said that recurrent flooding is a problem in their neighborhood.

% Responding that Recurrent Flooding is a Problem in Your Neighborhood

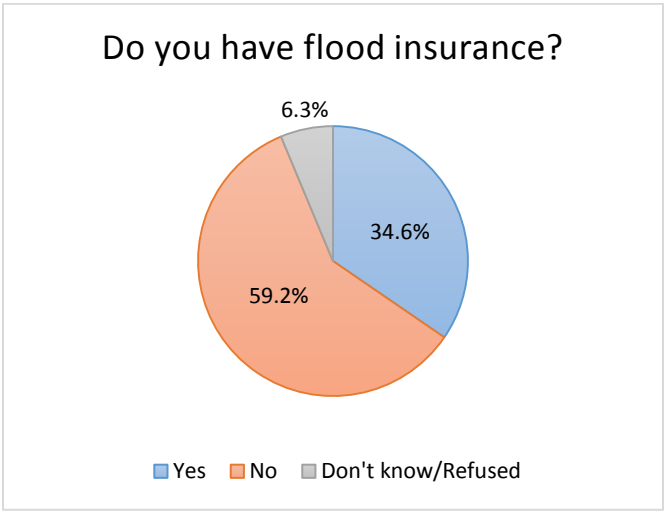


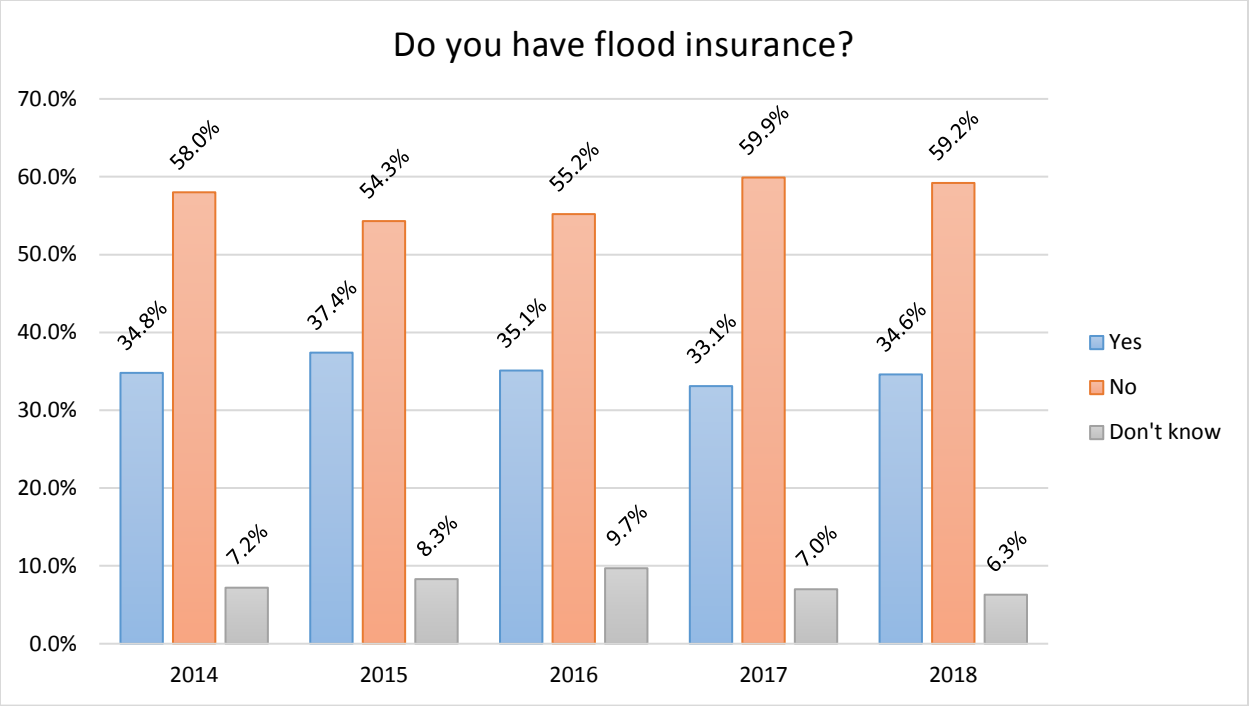
**p<.000 statistically significant, 2-tailed test

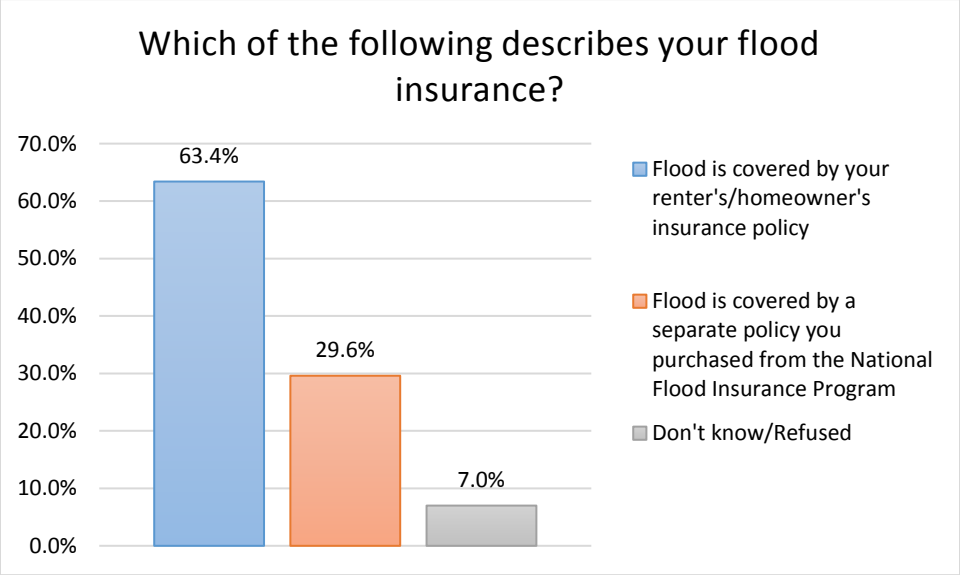
Only 13.8 percent of respondents said they live in a high-risk flood zone as designated by the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). Another 10.5 percent did not know if they are in a high-risk flood zone.



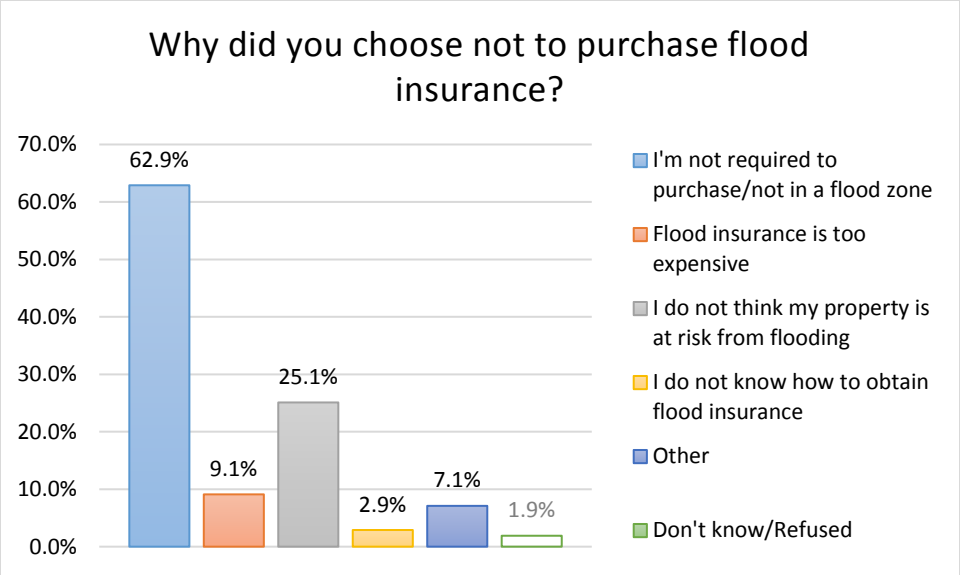
Consistent with the past five years, 34.6 percent of respondents said that they do have flood insurance. Since 2014, this percentage has stayed between 33.1 percent (2017) and 37.4 percent (2015). Of those who do have flood insurance, the majority (63.4%) said their flood insurance is covered by a renter's or homeowner's policy. Another 29.6 percent said their flood insurance is covered by a separate policy they purchased from the National Flood Insurance Program.



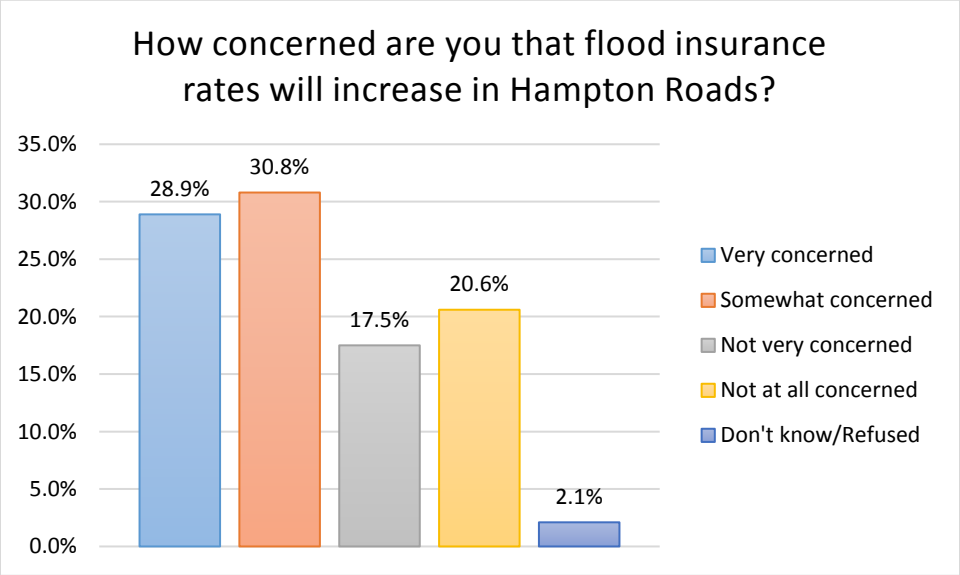




Those who said they did not have flood insurance were asked why they chose not to purchase flood insurance. The most common response (62.9%) was that they were not required to purchase flood insurance or are not in a flood zone. Another 25.1 percent reported they do not think their property is at risk from flooding. Less than 10 percent (9.1%) said flood insurance is too expensive.



Respondents were asked to identify how concerned they are that flood insurance rates will increase in Hampton Roads. The majority of respondents (59.7%) said they were either somewhat concerned (30.8%) or very concerned (28.9%) that flood insurance rates will increase in Hampton Roads. Conversely, 20.6 percent are not at all concerned and 17.5 percent are not very concerned that flood insurance rates will increase in Hampton Roads.



Respondents were also asked to identify the percent chance (between 0 and 100) that the Hampton Roads region would be struck by a catastrophic hurricane within the next ten years. The average percentage

given across all respondents was a 57.8 percent chance of a catastrophic hurricane striking the Hampton Roads region within the next ten years. A follow up question was then asked; "if such an event did occur, what is the percent chance that your home would flood?" The average response was a 39.1 percent chance that they would experience flooding within their home if a catastrophic hurricane impacted the region. Finally, respondents were asked to identify the percent chance that their home would receive damage due to wind. The average response given to this question was a 56.6 percent chance that their home would receive damage due to wind.

% Likelihood between 0 and 100	Average %
If such an event did occur, % chance that my home would flood.	39.1%
If such an event did occur, my home would receive damage due to wind.	56.6%

There was an increase in the percent of respondents reporting flooding has increased this year, yet just over one-third have flood insurance. Hampton Roads residents think on average that there is a greater than 50 percent chance of the region being struck by a catastrophic hurricane in the next ten years and that their home would experience wind damage.

All Life in Hampton Roads Data Analyses will be placed on the Social Science Research Center website as they are released (http://www.odu.edu/al/centers/ssrc). Follow-up questions about the 2018 Life in Hampton Roads survey should be addressed to:

Randy Gainey, PhD
Faculty Director
The Social Science Research Center
Professor of Sociology and Criminal Justice
Old Dominion University
757-683-4794 (office)
rgainey@odu.edu

Or

Tancy Vandecar-Burdin, PhD
Associate Director
The Social Science Research Center
Old Dominion University
757-683-3802 (office)
tvandeca@odu.edu