



DESTINATION 2025

Setting A Bold New Course

City of Portsmouth, Virginia
Comprehensive Plan
2005



DESTINATION 2025
Setting A Bold New Course

Approved
City Planning Commission
February 1, 2005

Adopted
City Council
April 26, 2005

Department of Planning

2005

A RESOLUTION ADOPTING A NEW COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR THE CITY OF PORTSMOUTH.

WHEREAS, Section 15.2-2223 of the Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, requires that each locality have a comprehensive plan to guide and accomplish the coordinated, adjusted and harmonious development of city land based on present and probable future needs and resources, so as best to promote the health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity and general welfare of the locality's citizens; and

WHEREAS, the City's Planning Commission, after a two-year process that included extensive citizen involvement, has developed and recommended for City Council's consideration and adoption the Destination 2025 Comprehensive Plan; and

WHEREAS, the City Council has made available to the public and has conducted public hearings on the recommended Plan; and

WHEREAS, the recommended Plan has been amended as a result of that additional citizen and city council input; and

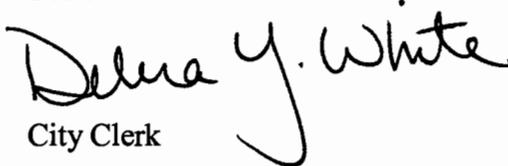
WHEREAS, the City Council finds that the amended Plan meets the requirements of the Code of Virginia and will serve as a valuable tool and guide for the future development of the City.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Portsmouth, Virginia that it hereby adopts the Destination 2025 Comprehensive Plan as recommended by the City's Planning Commission and as amended by the City Council.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Council extends its gratitude to the Planning Commission, the Citizens 2025 Committee that guided the Plan's development, and all other citizens and city staff involved in the Plan's creation for their extensive time and efforts contributed to the production of this significant and valuable document.

ADOPTED by the Council of the City of Portsmouth, Virginia at a meeting held on April 26, 2005.

Teste:


City Clerk



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Planning Commission

William Hargrove, III, Chairman
Paige D. Cherry, Vice-Chairman
Jennifer A. Smith, Secretary
Glen Francis
Carolyn Hersh
Simonee R. Thomas
Reginald J. Hayes

James B. Oliver, Jr., City Manager

Portsmouth City Council

Dr. James W. Holley III, Mayor
William E. Moody, Jr., Vice Mayor
Charles B. Whitehurst, Sr.
Marlene W. Randall
Stephen E. Heretick
Elizabeth M. Psimas
Ray A. Smith, Sr.

Citizens 2025 Comprehensive Plan Committee

John D. Wood, Chair	Albert F. Ferguson	Daniel L. Matthews, III
Pamela M. Smith-Rodden, Vice-Chair	Mary R. Hampton	William C. Neff
Jeff Barba	Allen R. Harris, Sr.	James A. Overton
Jon A. Berry	Geraldine Holmes	Joan M. Patterson
Aubrey C. Brock	Ida Kay Jordan	Christine D.N. Piersall
V. Pat Burns	Mary J. King	Cheryl P. Robinson
B. Ross Cherry	James W. Klender, Jr.	Sandra A. Shuler
Dan R. Evans	Bruce G. LaLonde	Orion W. Willis
	Jeanne M. Larcombe	

Department of Planning

Robert A. Baldwin, AICP, Director of Planning
Landon C. Wellford, AICP, Manager of Comprehensive Planning
Cliff S. Sayles, GIS Mapping

Consultants

Wallace Roberts & Todd, LLC
Hammer, Siler, George Associates
Kimley-Horn Associates

The City Planning Commission and Department of Planning acknowledge with gratitude the city departments and their staff who contributed to developing this plan. We also thank all the citizens of Portsmouth who were actively involved in sharing their views on the future.

Special thanks are owed to the members of the Citizens 2025 Committee.





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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A proud city with a rich heritage, Portsmouth in 2002 celebrated the 250th anniversary of its founding as a seaport in the historic Tidewater region of Virginia. While the City has experienced transition and change in recent decades, its citizens can take pride in their past, appreciate progress made in the present, and look forward to the future with a renewed sense of confidence and optimism. A product of extensive time and effort invested by Portsmouth citizens, community leaders, staff, and consultants, the **Destination 2025** Comprehensive Plan sets a clear direction for the City to follow as it charts a course to a positive future. The Plan articulates a **Vision** of the City in the year 2025 based on the expressed values and aspirations of Portsmouth's citizens. It provides the means to realize the Vision through clear and consistent **goals and policies** and through specific **action strategies** that the City will take over time to achieve the desired future.



Elizabeth River

The Comprehensive Plan was developed through a two-year planning process that included extensive citizen involvement. Plan development was guided by the Citizens 2025 Committee, which was comprised of 25 members selected through an open application process to represent all areas of Portsmouth. Public input was solicited through citizen surveys at the beginning of the process; interviews with stakeholders representing civic, neighborhood, and business interests; community meetings at key points in the process; and general correspondence. This input is reflected in the importance that the Plan places on improving the quality of the City's education system, consistently identified by Portsmouth residents and members of the Citizens 2025 Committee as the highest priority for the City's future.



Plan Organization

The Destination 2025 Comprehensive Plan is comprised of the following sections:

Chapter 1.0 (Introduction) describes the purpose of the Comprehensive Plan, provides an overview of the planning process, and identifies three primary themes that form the basic underpinnings of the Plan.

Chapter 2.0 (Vision Statement) establishes a positive Vision of Portsmouth's future based upon the direct input of citizens during the planning process. This Vision Statement establishes the mandate and direction (*"what we intend to be"*) for the policies and action strategies contained in the remainder of the Comprehensive Plan (*"what we must do to achieve the Vision"*).

Chapters 3.0 to 10.0 (Plan Elements) define goals, policies, and action strategies for the following subject areas:

- Education
- Land Use
- Economic Development
- Housing and Neighborhoods
- Community Facilities, Services, and Infrastructure
- Transportation
- Parks, Open Space, and Environment
- Community Appearance

Chapter 11.0 (FOCUS on Implementation) describes in detail how the City will implement the Comprehensive Plan.

Vision Statement

The Vision of Portsmouth in 2025 directly reflects the values, aspirations and priorities expressed by citizens during the planning process. In this Vision, Portsmouth is a **Community of Choice**



for the 21st century – a city that is renowned for its **learning environment** (outstanding public schools, educational institutions, and lifelong learning opportunities), **quality neighborhoods, healthy economy**, and for its unique character and **sense of place**. The City and its citizens will achieve this Vision of a city that people choose based on its outstanding quality of life by focusing their efforts in several key areas:

Fresnel Lens



- **Investing in People:** Building an outstanding education system; creating and expanding economic development opportunities; and promoting social diversity, equity, and inclusiveness.
- **Investing in Places:** Enhancing neighborhood quality, safety, and livability; enhancing civic infrastructure (community facilities, parks, roadway corridors, etc.); and setting new standards for the quality of private development.
- **Exercising Leadership:** Achieving fiscal strength and leading initiatives to address regional issues.

Plan Elements

The eight plan elements contain policies and action strategies which, implemented over time, will move Portsmouth toward the future desired by citizens as articulated in the Vision Statement. While presented in separate elements, these policies and action strategies are interrelated and are designed to work together to support realization of the Vision.

The goal of the **Education Element** is to transform what is generally acknowledged as a present weakness of Portsmouth into a future strength by establishing the City as a “Center for Knowledge.” Policies and action strategies address the Portsmouth City Public Schools, institutions of higher education, workforce development, connections between schools and neighborhoods, and the City’s cultural life (libraries, the arts, museums, etc.), all of which are seen as components of a quality, lifelong education system.

The **Land Use Element** addresses the pattern of and relationships between residential, commercial, industrial, public, and other uses in the City. It seeks to achieve several major objectives, including maintaining and strengthening viable land uses; targeting obsolescent uses for reinvestment or redevelopment; minimizing conflicts between incompatible uses; and “raising the bar” on the quality of new development. In addition, the land use policies promote mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly land use patterns (Activity Centers); identify the need to convert currently tax-exempt lands to productive (tax-paying) uses where feasible; and address the connections of land use to transportation and education, respectively.



Court Street
Baptist
Church/
Monument



The goal of the **Economic Development Element** is to establish a healthy, diversified economy with a strong tax base and employment opportunities for all Portsmouth residents. A major focus is on coordinating city programs and initiatives to promote economic vitality in a way that supports broader Comprehensive Plan goals and policies (education, land use, etc.). Two key action strategies are to:

- Ensure that every piece of available land is evaluated and targeted for its highest and best use for the City and its residents
- Establish clear criteria for decision-making on the specific economic development initiatives and programs to be pursued by the City

Inherent to both of these strategies is the idea that economic development should be measured not only by fiscal return, but also by factors related to quality of life for citizens. This reflects the premise that by enhancing quality of life, we improve our ability to attract new residents, employers, and investment. Conversely, we recognize that any influence that compromises our quality of life may also compromise our economy.

The Economic Development Element integrates policies from the City’s Economic Development Strategic Plan that address key economic activities (business development, market development, product development, and workforce development); key business sectors (retail, residential, and office/industrial); and key geographic areas of the City. It also addresses the need to market Portsmouth’s advantages to prospective visitors, residents, and businesses.

The **Housing and Neighborhoods Element** covers two related topics. The housing policies are designed to attract and serve a more diverse population with housing stock for middle and upper income residents; expand opportunities for affordable ownership housing; and provide for the housing needs of low-income residents and persons with special needs. The

City Hall/
Courthouse



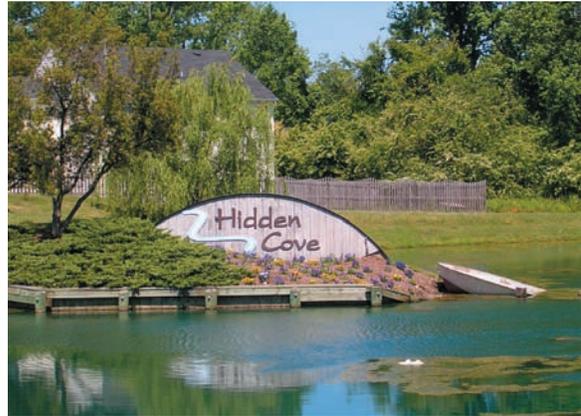
neighborhood policies are tailored towards three types of neighborhoods:

- **Stable neighborhoods** that should be maintained and strengthened
- **Transitional neighborhoods** that require more active intervention to reverse or prevent decline
- **Neighborhoods in need of redevelopment**, characterized by conditions of blight or obsolescence or abandonment

The **Community Facilities, Services, and Infrastructure Element** addresses public facilities and services (police, fire, libraries, human services, and municipal facilities) and infrastructure systems (water, sanitary sewer and stormwater drainage) provided by the City of Portsmouth. Policies and action strategies call for the allocation of limited fiscal resources based upon objective standards for each type of facility or service. This element also emphasizes the need to accelerate the replacement of aging infrastructure systems, target investments to support neighborhood revitalization and economic development activities, and carefully locate community facilities to support desired land use patterns.



The goal of the **Transportation Element** is a multi-modal transportation network consisting of roadways, rail, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities that support quality of life and economic vitality. Because Portsmouth is a largely developed city and funding for major highway improvements will be limited, the growing problem of congestion will be addressed by improving the operational efficiency of the existing road network through such means as signal timing, improved intersection configurations, and access management along highway corridors. Nevertheless, implementation of several regional roadway improvement projects – a second tube of the Midtown Tunnel, Third Crossing, and Martin Luther King Extension – will be critically important to maintaining mobility for the City’s residents as well as Portsmouth’s viability as an employment center. Another important issue is the need to minimize industrial truck and rail traffic on local streets and neighborhoods, particularly as major new waterfront facilities are developed, by coordinating with the Virginia Department of Transportation, Virginia Port Authority, and others. Other transportation policies address the development of more complete pedestrian and bicycle networks, enhanced transit service in partnership with Hampton Roads Transit (including the potential for a future light rail link to Norfolk), parking, the need to coordinate transportation and land use, and improved communication of transportation information.



The **Parks, Open Space, and Environment Element** addresses Portsmouth’s environment – water quality, air quality, and natural scenic resources – along with related topics of solid waste management and parks, recreation, and open space. It incorporates by reference the Environmental Component of the Comprehensive Plan, adopted by the City in 1996 in accordance with Virginia’s Chesapeake Bay Preservation Program. Establishing a quality parks, open space, and greenways system is a central recommendation, starting with development of a comprehensive parks and recreation plan that identifies strategies to meet citizens’ needs for parks and recreational facilities. Goals, objectives, and strategies from the Environmental Component related to water quality, air quality, solid waste, and the natural environment are integrated into the element, with several significant additions (e.g., a “Greening Portsmouth” initiative to plant trees and other vegetation throughout the City). In addition, a policy is included regarding the city’s ongoing efforts to enforce and improve its floodplain management program.





The **Community Appearance Element** focuses on the visual attractiveness of Portsmouth. Included are recommendations for citywide beautification that build on the current initiatives and activities of the City’s Neighborhood Quality Action Plan and the Clean Community Commission. Key action strategies include the “Greening Portsmouth” initiative and aggressive code enforcement targeted toward properties whose unkempt appearance degrades the quality of neighborhoods and commercial areas (identified as a priority by citizens). Another topic

OpSail at night



covered by the Community Appearance Element is the visual character of gateway corridors (e.g., exits from I-264) and major roadway corridors through Portsmouth, which play a major role in establishing “first impressions” of the City’s visual image and identity. A variety of strategies to improve the appearance of key entrances and corridors are identified, such as physical improvements (attractive signage, landscaping, etc.), removal of “visual clutter,” and measures to promote the redevelopment of obsolescent, unattractive land uses.

Implementation

Plans are turned into reality by concerted, consistent attention to implementation. The final chapter of the Destination 2025 Comprehensive Plan lays out in detail how the Plan is to be used to make ongoing progress toward achieving the Vision Statement. It contains:

- Principles for **Comprehensive Plan consistency**, requiring that the Plan be used as a guide and reference for zoning and development standards, re-zoning approvals, and other decision-making regarding future development
- A protocol for **adopting, amending, monitoring, and periodically updating** the Plan
- A framework for **Fulfilling Our Comprehensive Urban Strategy (FOCUS)** by targeting **FOCUS Areas** (specific corridors, neighborhoods, or other special areas within the City) in need of attention to achieve the goals, policies, and action strategies of the Comprehensive Plan
- Policies and action strategies to enhance and re-shape **Governance** of the City to support effective plan implementation
- An **Action Plan** as outlined in an Action Initiatives Table that identifies short-term, mid-term, and ongoing activities necessary to implement the Comprehensive Plan

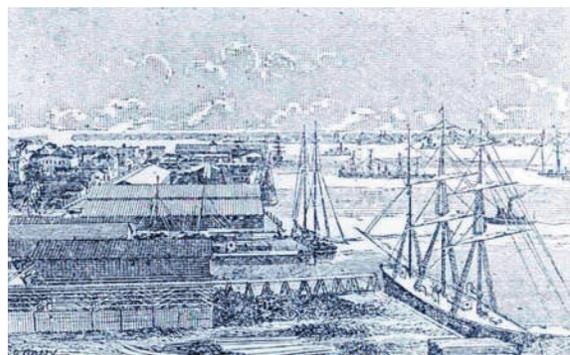
Given the breadth of the policies and action strategies contained in the plan elements and the extent of the FOCUS Areas, the need to target resources to achieve the best return on investment is a major theme of the Implementation Element. The element identifies criteria to be used to identify and prioritize FOCUS Areas for action by the City.



1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the Comprehensive Plan

Located in the center of the Hampton Roads region of Virginia (Map 1), Portsmouth is a historic waterfront city with a proud heritage. Portsmouth's last comprehensive plan was adopted in 1989. Since that time the City has experienced significant change. The City's population declined from 103,907 in 1990 to 100,565 in 2000, and key indicators such as the percentage of public schools accredited, per capita income, and median housing value rank below other Hampton Roads communities. As a mostly built out city with a large proportion of property owned by tax exempt entities such as the federal and state governments, Portsmouth has not shared in the growth experienced by neighboring communities with larger amounts of vacant land. Nevertheless, recent developments such as the Renaissance Hotel, NTELOS Pavilion, and Victory Crossing have generated momentum for positive change and bode well for Portsmouth's future.



Historic bird's-eye view of harbor looking north

Given the accelerating rate of transition and change in the City, Portsmouth has chosen to prepare a new comprehensive plan – Destination 2025 – at an important juncture in its history. The Code of Virginia requires each governing body to prepare and adopt a comprehensive plan for the physical development of the land under its jurisdiction and generally prescribes the contents of the plan. While Virginia Code provides the legal basis, the Comprehensive Plan can go well beyond the minimum requirements of state law to establish a clear, unified vision and direction for the City's future. To fully appreciate the significance of the Comprehensive Plan for Portsmouth and its citizens, it is useful to consider its four basic purposes:

1. The Comprehensive Plan is a reflection of citizens' values, aspirations, and shared vision.

Just as one would not begin a journey without first identifying a destination, the process of preparing the Comprehensive Plan began with citizens identifying in meetings and workshops the kind of place they would like Portsmouth to become. These citizen-expressed values and aspirations provide the basis for a shared vision of the City's future. Presented in Chapter 2.0, this **Vision Statement** defines citizens' expectations and directions for the future, frames the mandate for the Comprehensive Plan, and provides the benchmark to measure progress.



2. *The Comprehensive Plan is a guide for the management of change.*

If the vision for Portsmouth’s future is to be realized, the Comprehensive Plan must positively and deliberately influence growth and change. To do so, the Plan must be actively applied as a framework through which decisions are made, priorities established, and actions taken that advance the City toward the Vision. While Portsmouth’s government will take a leadership role in this effort, the Plan calls on citizens, civic organizations, institutions, and businesses to coordinate efforts with a shared sense of direction and a renewed spirit of partnership.

3. *The Comprehensive Plan is the foundation for policies, strategies, and actions.*

The goals, policies, and action strategies laid out in the plan elements (Chapters 3.0 to 10.0) are based upon a thorough evaluation of the present policies, initiatives, and regulations of the City and allied institutions. They address a variety of topics, ranging from education to land use to economic development to protection of sensitive environmental resources. While the goals, policies, and action strategies are presented in separate elements, many of them are closely related and they are designed to work together to achieve the future Portsmouth envisioned by citizens. Integration of the goals, policies, and action strategies into the day-to-day decision-making and long-range planning activities of city government will result in significant adjustments to present policies, regulations, and investment priorities.

4. *The Comprehensive Plan is Portsmouth’s “To Do” list.*

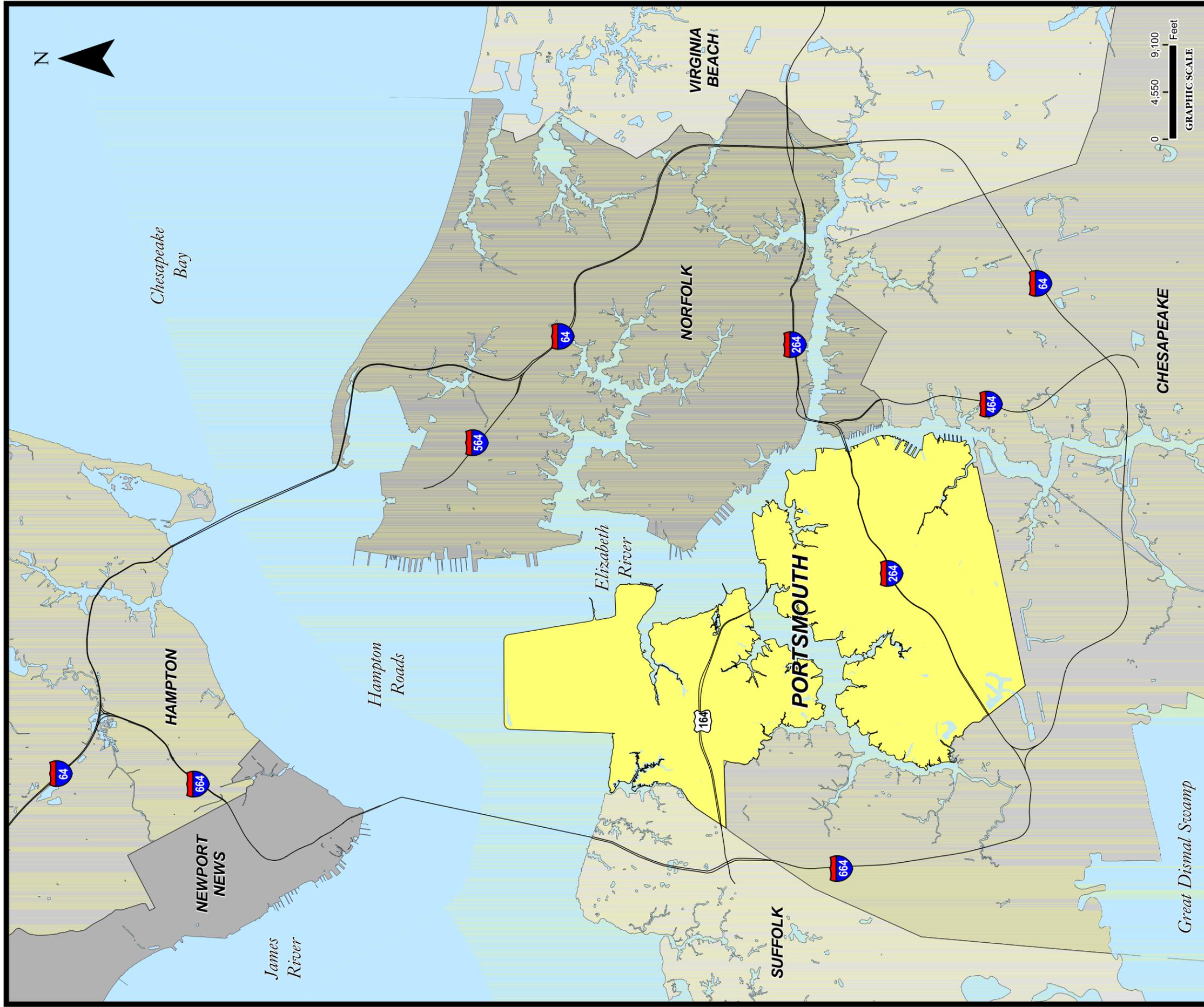
The Comprehensive Plan’s influence on Portsmouth’s future will be a product of the motivating power of its shared vision, and the effectiveness of actions taken to realize the Vision Statement. The Vision will not be achieved simply because citizens agree with the sentiments it expresses. Rather, it will be realized by steady progress in adhering to a well-defined “game plan” that sets priorities for effective short and long-term actions. Chapter 11.0 (FOCUS on Implementation) lays out a comprehensive program for action by the City as it seeks to transform the vision for the future of Portsmouth into reality.

1.2 Planning Process

Development of the Destination 2025 Comprehensive Plan began with two citizen surveys. The Wessex Group, a market research firm based in Williamsburg, conducted a random, statistically valid telephone survey of 400 Portsmouth citizens. Concurrent with the telephone survey, a written survey was distributed and received approximately 325 responses. The purpose of these surveys was to “set the stage” for the comprehensive planning process by gaining an initial



Citizens 2025 committee meeting



DESTINATION 2025
Setting A Bold New Course

MAP 1

LOCATION

PORTSMOUTH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



understanding of citizens' opinions and perceptions regarding 1) present quality of life in the City and 2) important issues for the future. Subsequent to the surveys, the Citizens 2025 Committee – 25 citizens selected through an open application process to represent all areas of Portsmouth – was formed to guide development of the Comprehensive Plan. This committee worked with city staff and a consultant team led by Wallace Roberts & Todd, LLC for over two years to develop the Vision, policies, and action strategies contained in the Plan.

The process of preparing the Comprehensive Plan consisted of three major phases:

1. Community Assessment
2. Policy Options
3. Plan Documentation

The purpose of the **Community Assessment** was to evaluate current conditions and trends in the City of Portsmouth, identify issues and values important to citizens, and develop a Vision Statement for Portsmouth's future (the year 2025) based upon citizen values. As part of this phase of work, interviews and small group exercises were conducted with stakeholders representing civic, neighborhood, and business interests. In the **Policy Options** phase, choices available to the City to address the issues identified by citizens in Phase One and to influence current conditions and trends in the direction of the Vision Statement were developed and evaluated. The end product of this phase was a set of preferred goals, policies, and action strategies. In the **Plan Documentation** phase, the preferred goals, policies, and action strategies were developed into this Comprehensive Plan document, consisting of topical elements (education, land use, transportation, etc.) and an implementation program.

Broad public input was solicited at key points in the planning process. In February 2003 a series of six community forums were held in different parts of Portsmouth prior to development of the Vision Statement. Citizen input at these forums was provided through small discussion groups with members of the Citizens 2025 Committee acting as facilitators. These groups were asked to consider present strengths and weaknesses of Portsmouth, as well as potential opportunities and threats in the future. The community forum results were tabulated and provided the “raw material” for development of the Vision Statement. A second round of public meetings was conducted in November 2004 to consider the preferred goals, policies, and action strategies prior to completion of the Comprehensive Plan document.



Community forum

1.3 Primary Themes

The Comprehensive Plan reinforces City Council’s three spheres of success – fiscal strength, economic development, and neighborhood quality – and the City’s ongoing initiatives in these areas. Looking toward the future, it lays out some significant new initiatives while identifying the need to **prioritize and focus** the City’s resources on strategic investments that **maximize return on investment**. Three primary themes provide the basic underpinnings of the Plan. These themes are:

- ***The most important step that the City can take to secure its future is to improve the quality of the public school system.*** Improving the public schools is essential to achieving Comprehensive Plan goals such as economic vitality and quality neighborhoods that retain long-time residents and attract new residents to Portsmouth. Education was consistently identified by Portsmouth residents and members of the Citizens 2025 Committee as the most important issue for the City’s future.
- ***Economic development projects and initiatives should be carefully targeted to ensure the highest and best use of the land and return on investment.*** Factors to be considered include not only the fiscal benefits, but also the broader effects of public and private sector projects on Portsmouth’s quality of life and community character, with the goal of “raising the bar” on development quality.
- ***Investment by the City in neighborhood revitalization should also be strategically targeted and staged over time.*** Major investments by the City to date have been concentrated in selected areas, such as the Downtown and Victory Crossing. The Comprehensive Plan identifies the need to extend these investments to “at-risk” neighborhoods and areas with obsolescent land uses. However, the extent of these areas and the total investment required necessitates that the City carefully “choose its targets” for intervention and investment based on a rational framework for prioritization.



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The above three themes are reflected throughout the Comprehensive Plan document, beginning with inclusion of Education (not normally addressed as a separate component by municipal comprehensive plans) as the first topical element and continuing through to the FOCUS on Implementation chapter.



2.0 VISION STATEMENT

2.1 Overview

This chapter presents the Vision Statement that was developed to define the kind of place citizens want Portsmouth to be 20 years in the future. It was drafted by the Citizens 2025 Steering Committee to reflect input received from Portsmouth citizens at the community forums conducted in February 2003.

In considering the Vision Statement, it is important to understand its perspective, context, and role in the Comprehensive Plan. Portsmouth's Vision Statement expresses citizens' aspirations for the future of our community as it will exist in the Year 2025. As such, it should be clearly distinguished from the topical elements (Chapters 3.0 to 10.0) and implementation program (Chapter 11.0) contained in subsequent parts of the Comprehensive Plan. The Vision Statement expresses our values and motivations – *“what we intend to be”* – while the strategies and actions laid out in the remainder of the Comprehensive Plan set out in detail *“what we must do to achieve the vision.”*



Community forum

2.2 Vision Statement

The Mission

Setting a **Bold New Course** for the future through enlightened leadership, the City of Portsmouth shall become a **Community of Choice**. We shall attract citizens and businesses seeking to locate in a city that prides itself for quality lifelong learning, safe and attractive neighborhoods, progressive economic development, and cultural diversity in an historic and waterfront environment.

Vision of the City of Portsmouth in 2025

In the Year 2025, the City of Portsmouth is a **Community of Choice**. Our prosperity is the result of deliberate action by city leaders with the foresight to set a **bold new course** for the future. The City is renowned for its:

- **Learning Environment:** Our outstanding public schools and educational institutions prepare our children to succeed in the 21st century and provide lifelong learning opportunities for all citizens.



- **Quality Neighborhoods:** Our safe, attractive, and livable neighborhoods offer a range of housing choices and convenient access to services such as shopping, parks, schools and medical facilities.
- **Healthy Economy:** Businesses are attracted to Portsmouth by the City's reputation for its livability, its welcoming environment, and by its educated workforce.
- **Sense of Place:** Our diverse community with its waterfront environment, rich history, thriving downtown, and cultural life define our unique character and desirable differences that draws people from throughout the region.



The City and its citizens shall achieve this Vision by focusing its efforts in several key areas:

Investing in People

- Portsmouth City Public Schools, city government, and Portsmouth citizens shall work together to build an outstanding **education system**.
- The City shall strategically target its resources to create and expand **economic development opportunities**. It shall partner with the private and public sectors, while creating an inviting environment for new businesses and entrepreneurs.
- The Portsmouth community shall make a fundamental commitment to promote and celebrate **diversity, equity, and inclusiveness** and to meet the basic needs of all citizens.

Investing in Places

- The City and its residents shall collaborate in a comprehensive action strategy to improve the **quality, safety, and livability of our neighborhoods**.
- The City shall commit to improving the quality of Portsmouth's **civic infrastructure**, including public facilities; parks and green spaces; attractive public places; gateway entrances to Portsmouth; and roadway corridors that support a regional, multi-modal transportation system.
- The City shall set new standards for the **quality of private development**.

Exercising Leadership

- The City shall achieve **fiscal strength** by increasing and diversifying its tax base and through prudent management of its resources.
- **As a proud partner at the center** of the Hampton Roads region, the City shall initiate work with neighboring communities to address regional issues.

Through these efforts, Portsmouth will become a city with a distinguished past, a vibrant present, and a promising future – **truly a Community of Choice for the 21st century**.



3.0 EDUCATION

3.1 Overview

Goal: A quality education system that establishes Portsmouth as a “Center for Knowledge,” including outstanding public schools that surpass national and state standards for achievement, libraries, educational and cultural institutions, and opportunities for lifelong learning.

Education refers to the spectrum of learning programs and facilities available to the residents of Portsmouth, ranging from preschool to the public school system to higher education institutions to workforce training and adult education. Educational facilities in Portsmouth are shown on Map 2. Not normally included in a comprehensive plan except in the context of physical land use and facility needs, education is emphasized in the Vision Statement and addressed as a discrete element in the Plan because of community consensus that it is the single most important issue for the City’s future. Currently, the quality of the City’s public school system as measured by performance on standardized tests is considered by many to be Portsmouth’s greatest weakness, one that erodes Portsmouth’s attractiveness as a place to live and its overall image in the region. This situation has serious implications for areas of concern such as housing (the present school system is a disincentive to families moving to the City) and economic development (an educated workforce is key to attracting business and increasing economic opportunity for residents).



An examination of the most recent accreditation ratings of Portsmouth City Schools reveals that progress is being made, although the schools still fall below statewide averages. Of the 23 Portsmouth schools listed in the VA Department of Education report for 2003/2004, 7 (30%)

¹ Definitions of the school accreditation ratings are as follows: A school is **fully accredited** if students achieve pass rates of 70% or above in all four content areas. A school is **provisionally accredited/meets state standards** if students achieve a pass rate of less than 70 percent in one or more subject areas but meet or exceed all of the following benchmarks: English – 66%, Mathematics – 65%, History/Social Science – 50%, Science (Elementary and Middle) – 66%, Science (High School) – 65%. A school is **provisionally accredited/needs improvement** if pass rates in one or more subject areas are below the benchmarks listed above unless the school is accredited with warning. A school is **accredited with warning** if pass rates are 20 or more points below the benchmarks listed above in one or more subject area.



were fully accredited, 1 (4%) was classified as provisionally accredited/meet state standards, 12 (52%) were classified as provisionally accredited/need improvement, and 3 (13%) were accredited with a warning.¹ This compares to percentages of 11%, 19%, 13%, and 22%, respectively in 2002/2003, when less than half as many schools (three) fell into the highest category (fully accredited) and twice as many (six) fell into the lowest category (accredited with a warning).

The policies and action strategies set forth in the Education Element are designed to achieve the benchmark established by the Vision Statement – a **learning environment** founded on outstanding public schools and educational institutions – by transforming what is now perceived as a weakness into one of Portsmouth’s strongest assets. They address not only the public schools, but also the other components of what can be an outstanding **lifelong learning system**, such as libraries and cultural institutions, workforce training, and institutions of higher education. Working with Tidewater Community College (TCC) to establish a new TCC campus in Portsmouth is one aspect of this strategy. A college placement curriculum for Portsmouth high school students could be provided at this campus. The strong local military presence offers another partnership opportunity to develop technology education and training programs that match the needs of today’s armed services. Maryview Medical Center – the largest private employer in the City – has an ongoing need for trained employees to fill jobs that pay well but do not necessarily require a four-year college degree. Strengthening the connections between these various entities and the public schools can improve the quality of education for Portsmouth school children, expand the job opportunities that are available to them when they graduate, and increase the number that go on to college and beyond.

City government provides partial funding for but has no direct control over the public school system, which is managed by the Portsmouth City School Board and administration. Policy #1 advocates a new era of cooperation and partnership between the City, School Board, and administration in building a first-rate school system. This partnership will require significant investment by the City to address needs such as retaining and attracting quality teachers. At the same time, the Plan calls for enhanced monitoring of progress (including use of quantitative measures of school performance), with the goal of maximizing return on the investment of limited resources. The following is proposed as an initial target/measure of success:

All Portsmouth schools shall be fully accredited within three years.

In addition to accreditation, student performance as measured by the Virginia Department of Education Standards of Learning (SOL) test scores can be used to track progress.

Improving the school system will require the commitment of the entire Portsmouth community, including parents and volunteers, to match the level of concern expressed by residents on this issue. Strong community and parental involvement, in turn, is tied to the health of the neighborhoods served by the schools. Policy #4 addresses the relationship between **quality public education** and **quality neighborhoods** and the importance of enhancing the role of schools as **community anchors**.



The school system has in place a Long Range Capital Improvement Program that specifies school construction, renovations, and closures to be undertaken over a 15-year period. Construction of new schools and closures of existing ones need to be coordinated with the Land Use Element and Future Land Use Map, so that land is available for future school siting needs and excess properties are re-used for productive purposes that complement adjacent neighborhoods. An example is the Hunt-Mapp Middle School, scheduled for closure in 2005. A master plan should be developed to determine the best use of this property, including consideration of developing a “Park and Arts” complex in conjunction with Willett Hall. Given the scarcity of vacant land in Portsmouth, demographic trends should be carefully tracked to ensure that properties are not prematurely disposed of which may be needed as schools in the future. Another issue is the operational inefficiencies associated with having school administrative functions split between two locations (Downtown and Midtown).



A final area of concern addressed by the Education Element is Portsmouth’s cultural life – libraries, museums and galleries, cultural and performing arts, and related attractions and destinations – which contribute to an overall environment of learning and enrichment for residents while drawing visitors to experience what the City has to offer. Policy #5 advocates strengthening, connecting, and promoting these various resources, including a heightened presence and visibility for local and regional cultural organizations. As an illustration of the interrelationships among plan elements, promoting Portsmouth’s cultural resources in the context of the City’s rich history can contribute to the local economy through heritage tourism (see Economic Development Policy #6).

3.2 Policies and Action Strategies

Policy #1: Portsmouth City Public Schools

Work in partnership with the City of Portsmouth public school system to improve the quality, performance, and reputation of city schools.

Action Strategies

- Implement strategies to attract and retain quality teachers, including competitive salaries, good working conditions, and incentive programs to entice them to live in Portsmouth
- Continue to fund the Portsmouth City Public Schools Long-Range Capital Improvement Program, based upon realistic projections of enrollment and school facility needs
- Ensure that public schools have adequate computer and other technology needed to prepare students for 21st century life
- Improve the appearance of public schools and grounds [*Policy Link: Community Appearance #1*]



- Work with charitable foundations (e.g., Beazley Foundation, Landmark Charitable Foundation, Portsmouth Schools Foundation) on strategies to transform Portsmouth City Public Schools into a model for improving the performance of urban school systems
- Work with the City of Portsmouth public school system to enhance monitoring and ensure the effectiveness of strategies to improve school performance, including establishment of quantitative targets to measure progress, deficiencies, and return on investment
- Explore the possibility of consolidating administrative functions of the public school system in one location

Policy #2: Higher Education

Build partnerships with institutions of higher education.

Action Strategies

- Establish a Portsmouth location for a new Tidewater Community College (TCC) campus
- Establish programmatic connections between institutions of higher education (e.g., TCC, Old Dominion University, Norfolk State University) and Portsmouth high schools
- Partner with higher educational institutions (e.g., TCC's Educational Foundation) to increase opportunities for Portsmouth residents to attend college through counseling and scholarship programs

Policy #3: Workforce Development

Implement programs and strategies to prepare children and adults for the 21st century workplace. *[Policy Link: Economic Development #2 & 5]*

Action Strategies

- Work with the City of Portsmouth public school system on strategies to equip students with the skills needed to succeed in the 21st century economy
- Establish partnerships with educational institutions, economic development agencies, and others to increase continuing education/workforce training opportunities available to Portsmouth residents (adult education programs, financial assistance, etc.)
- Establish workforce training/program connections with major employers and private businesses and ensure that these programs are included in the public schools

Policy #4: Neighborhoods

Build positive connections between schools and the neighborhoods that they serve.

[Policy Link: Land Use #4, Neighborhoods #4, Parks, Open Space, and Environment #1]

Action Strategies

- Implement the neighborhood improvement strategies of the Comprehensive Plan and the Neighborhood Quality Action Plan (NQAP)



- Establish partnerships between schools and the surrounding community, e.g.:
 - Community/parental involvement in school activities (volunteer programs, etc.)
 - Community use of school facilities (recreation facilities, meeting space, etc.) before and after school hours
 - Expansion of before/after school programs and partnerships with organizations such as Head Start and the Boys and Girls Club to provide youth activities needed to support working families
 - School involvement in neighborhood-based programs such as “Clean Community”
- Establish physical connections between schools and surrounding neighborhoods to enhance their roles as community activity centers [*Policy Link: Land Use #8*]
- Consider implications for neighborhoods of school closings, consolidations, and redistricting

Policy #5: Cultural Life

Promote Portsmouth’s libraries, cultural arts, museums and galleries, and performing arts as part of the City’s identity as a “Center of Knowledge.”

Action Strategies

- Maintain and improve the Portsmouth Public Library system as a pathway for ongoing education
- Strengthen, build connections among, and promote the City’s cultural destinations and attractions, including Willett Hall, the NTELOS Pavilion, Children’s Museum of Virginia, Courthouse Galleries, Naval Shipyard Museum, Lightship Museum, Virginia Sports Hall of Fame, etc.
- Strengthen cultural and performing arts programs in the public schools and their programmatic connections to Portsmouth’s cultural attractions and organizations
- Explore the feasibility of establishing a Portsmouth cultural center as a focus for community arts organizations and programs (e.g., in conjunction with the present Courthouse Galleries and/or a collaborative with the Tidewater Community College downtown art center)
- Explore the possibility of establishing a visitor center that would have the role of interpreting Portsmouth’s history and orienting visitors to the City’s attractions
- Commit sufficient resources to upgrading and changing museum exhibits to maintain visitor interest
- Recruit regional cultural organizations to schedule performances, conduct programs and activities, and locate their headquarters in Portsmouth
- Establish a link on the City’s web site with “one-stop shopping” for local and regional cultural organizations and events







4.0 LAND USE

4.1 Overview

Goal: A pattern of land uses that supports the City of Portsmouth's quality of life and economic vitality.

The smallest political jurisdiction in the Hampton Roads region at approximately 34 square miles, Portsmouth is an almost entirely developed city. Existing land uses range from a mix of uses in the Downtown to single-family neighborhoods, multi-family developments, commercial corridors, industrial areas, and governmental installations such as the Norfolk Naval Shipyard, Virginia Port Authority, and U.S. Naval Hospital (Map 3). Table 1 shows the percentage and acreage breakdown of existing land uses in the City as of 2004.



High Street in downtown

Table 1. Existing Land Use

Land Use	Acres	Percentage
Heavy Industrial	1,361	6.19
Light Industrial	667	3.04
Institutional/Public	1,166	5.31
Commercial	680	3.09
Mixed Use	111	0.05
Office	33	0.02
Federal Government	4,129	18.79
Multi-Family Residential	1,046	4.76
Single-Family Residential (High Density)	267	1.22
Single-Family Residential (Low/Medium Density)	6,044	27.51
Mixed Residential	443	2.02
Preservation/Open Space/Park	763	3.47
Transportation	3,601	16.39
Vacant	1,651	7.51
Uncategorized	12	0.01
Total	21,974	99.38¹

¹Does not add up to 100.00 because of rounding.



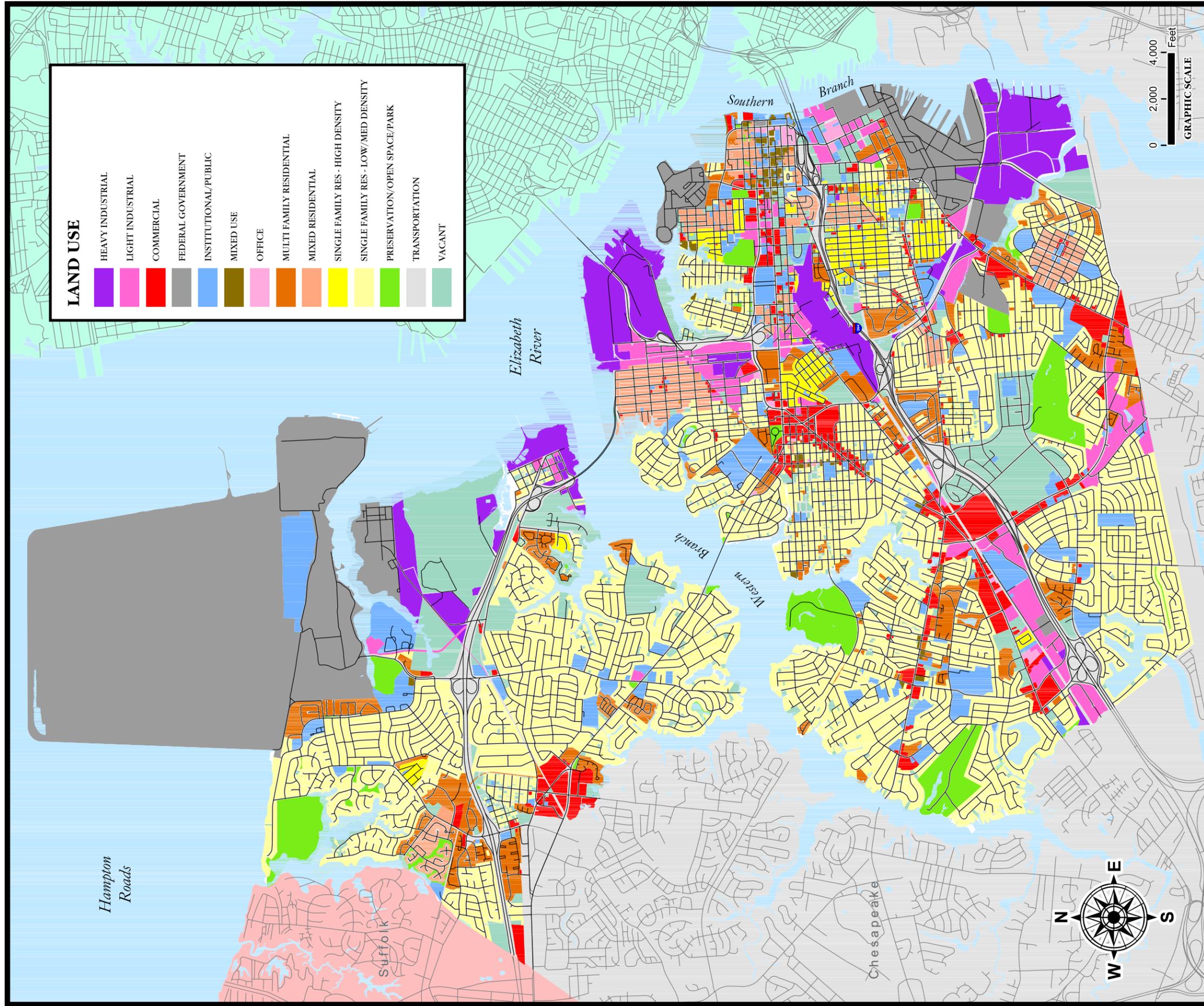
Key characteristics of Portsmouth's existing land use pattern include:

- Approximately one-third of Portsmouth's land area is classified as residential, the largest proportion of any land use category. Single-family neighborhoods are found throughout Churchland and other parts of the City.
- The Downtown supports Portsmouth's only significant concentration of mixed uses, including commercial, office, residential, and institutional uses.
- Heavy industry largely consists of maritime-related uses along the waterfront (including the Norfolk Naval Shipyard, shown as "Federal Government" on the Existing Land Use Map). Light industrial and commercial uses are concentrated along major roadway corridors.



Naval Medical Center

- A high proportion of land in Portsmouth is tax exempt. This includes land owned by the federal government (e.g., Norfolk Naval Shipyard, Naval Medical Center, U.S. Coast Guard Support Center) and land in other categories, such as Institutional/Public, Heavy Industrial, and Preservation/Open Space/Park.
- There is very little vacant land available for new development. Of the remaining land classified as vacant, approximately 37% is concentrated in three tracts committed for pending and future development:
 - The 180-acre former Fairwood Homes property, planned for redevelopment as a walkable, mixed-residential community
 - A 300-acre property on the Elizabeth River in Churchland, planned for a deepwater container terminal
 - The 135-acre Victory Crossing Business Park on Victory Boulevard, owned by the City's Industrial Development Authority
- Because of its age, fully developed character, and pattern of land use change, Portsmouth contains a significant amount of underutilized and obsolescent, previously developed properties that could be redeveloped for more productive uses. Upper High Street (between Effingham Street and I.C. Norcom High School) is a good example.

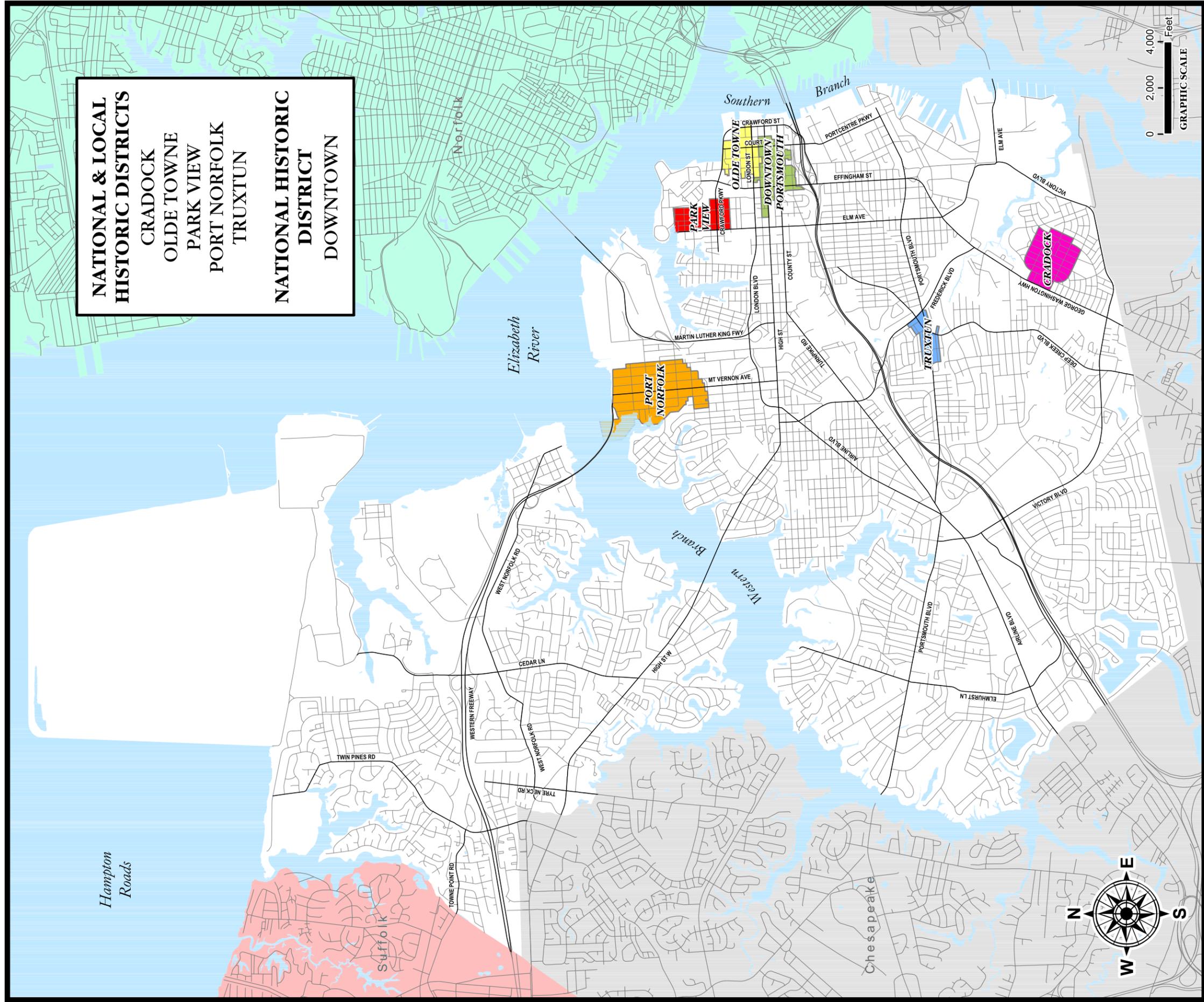


DESTINATION 2025
Setting A Bold New Course

MAP 3

EXISTING LAND USE

PORTSMOUTH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



HISTORIC DISTRICTS

PORTSMOUTH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

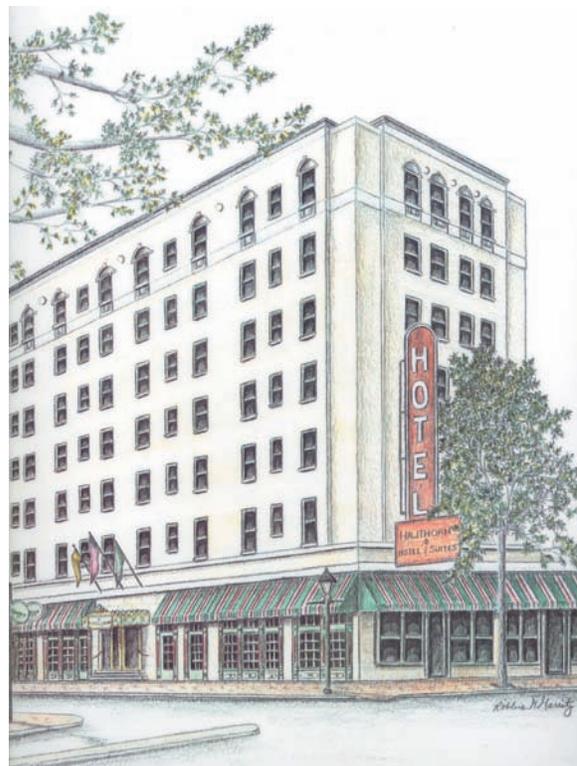


- In recognition of Portsmouth’s historic character, there are six historic districts listed on the National Register of Historic Places (Map 4). Five of these districts (Cradock, Truxtun, Olde Towne, Port Norfolk, and Park View) are also regulated as historic districts by two Commissions of Architectural Review (CAR1 and CAR2). A Downtown Historic District has been listed on the National Register and is within the area regulated as a downtown design district.


Historic Olde Towne

Key land use issues include:

- Portsmouth’s limited supply of vacant land, high proportion of tax exempt property, and barriers to expansion via annexation contribute to the need to achieve highest and best use of each parcel, both from a fiscal perspective and from the perspective of the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan.
- The same conditions also mean that any future growth in the City will largely be accomplished through infill and redevelopment rather than new development on vacant land. However, infill is made difficult by the configuration of existing development in the City and the City’s Zoning Ordinance (see below).
- It has been estimated that 37% of the residentially zoned lots in the City are nonconforming with respect to standards such as size and setbacks. In addition, the Zoning Ordinance lacks tools and standards that other cities use to manage and encourage good urban development in infill situations. For example, it has relatively few standards to address design issues such as landscaping, screening, lighting, signage, and compatibility with adjacent uses. The ordinance contains numerous residential, commercial, and employment zoning districts but no districts (with the exception of office-residential) that permit mixed uses outside of the downtown.


Hawthorn Hotel & Suites



- Because Portsmouth is an old city, there is considerable juxtaposition of incompatible uses, such as industrial and residential in areas such as Port Norfolk and West Norfolk. There are also spillover impacts such as truck traffic in residential neighborhoods. The ordinance lacked buffering standards for residential and commercial uses until recently.
- At approximately three and a half percent, the acreage of park/open space uses as a proportion of the total land area of the City is relatively low compared to 1) the norm for many other cities and 2) accepted national standards. (A typical standard for the amount of parkland is 10 acres/1,000 residents. Portsmouth has 7.6 acres of park and open space land based upon an estimated 2003 population of 99,617 residents.)
- The percentage of commercial land uses (approximately three percent) is also low compared to what is typical for other cities.
- There are differing perceptions regarding the relative benefits and costs of historic designation. On the one hand, such designation can contribute to neighborhood pride, make property owners eligible for tax incentives for eligible restoration projects, and support historic character, which is important to maintaining both quality of life for residents and Portsmouth's attractiveness as a place to visit. On the other hand, there is concern that the standards may impose an undue financial burden on homeowners in neighborhoods such as Cradock and Truxtun.

The land use policies and action strategies are designed to address the above issues. Because Portsmouth is predominantly developed, they do not propose to dramatically change the existing land use pattern. Instead, they are intended to achieve several major objectives:

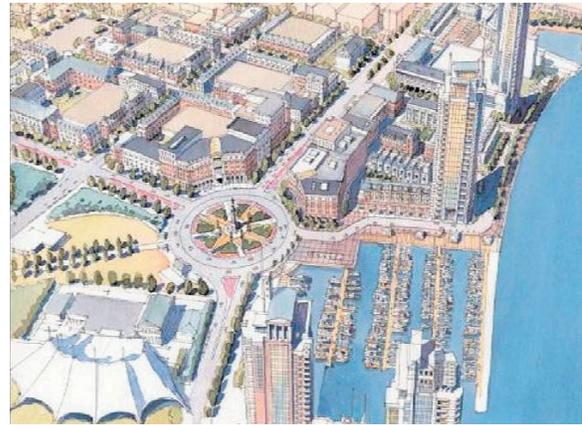
1. Maintain and strengthen viable land uses and land use patterns, such as stable neighborhoods and economically healthy activity centers.
2. Target land uses and areas that are no longer viable (i.e., exhibit obsolescence and disinvestment) for reinvestment and redevelopment to new uses that support the City's quality of life and economical vitality.
3. Minimize conflicts between incompatible land uses (e.g., impacts of industrial uses on residentially areas, a particularly important issue given the predominance of heavy industrial and port-related uses in the City).
4. "Raise the bar" of quality on new development.



Source: Urban Design Associates



The latter objective is particularly important to achieving the goal of Portsmouth as a “Community of Choice” set forth in the Vision Statement and to raise the City’s image in the region and beyond. The City has made a concerted effort to raise the bar on quality in development projects in which it has been directly involved, such as the Renaissance Hotel, NTELOS, and Westbury. The same standard of quality should be applied to private development in the City.


**Portsmouth
Future**

Source: Urban Design Associates

Because land use is fundamental to other topics addressed by the Comprehensive Plan, the policies and action strategies address its linkages to other plan elements, particularly transportation and education. As an overall organizing principle, Portsmouth’s future land use pattern is conceived of one of activity centers of different scales, surrounded by and providing services for the City’s residential neighborhoods. These centers range from the downtown – a major draw in the region – to smaller nodes that support commercial and other community-serving uses. The activity center concept is useful to focus and direct policies and action strategies for other plan elements, for example by integrating community facilities such as schools and recreation centers or providing nodes for transit service.

Key mechanisms to implement the policies and action strategies include 1) initiating a major revision to the Zoning Ordinance and development standards and 2) targeting public improvements and decisions on investment to support desired land use changes, such as redevelopment of obsolescent uses. Policy #6 supports the conversion of tax-exempt properties to productive (tax-paying uses) wherever possible, particularly those parcels acquired by the City through the redevelopment process. This policy may be more difficult to achieve with respect to properties owned by other governmental entities due to the extent of federal and other installations in the City and their importance to the economy. However, it does highlight a fundamental principle of the Land Use Element – to achieve the maximum productivity out of each and every parcel in Portsmouth, as measured both by quality of life for residents and revenue generated for the City.

The final section of the Land Use Element presents and describes a Generalized Future Land Use Map for Portsmouth. This map depicts the general distribution of land uses throughout the City to be achieved over the next 10 to 20 years in support of the Vision Statement. The Generalized Future Land Use Map should not be interpreted as a zoning map, nor is it appropriate for application at a parcel-by-parcel scale. Rather, it is meant to be used in conjunction with the policies and action strategies to guide decision-making on land use issues by the City. For example, proposed rezonings should be generally consistent with the Future Land Use Map unless it can be clearly demonstrated that the proposal will contribute to achieving the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan.



4.2 Policies and Action Strategies

Policy #1: Maintain Viable Land Uses

Maintain and strengthen viable land uses and land use patterns (e.g., stable neighborhoods, economically sound commercial and employment areas).

Action Strategies

- Prevent impacts/encroachments by incompatible land uses (e.g., industrial encroachments into healthy residential neighborhoods)
- Revise the Zoning Ordinance/enact standards for development that is compatible in character with the surrounding context and Portsmouth’s urban environment [*Policy Link: Community Appearance #1*]
- Apply neighborhood conservation strategies such as code enforcement and housing rehabilitation [*Policy Link: Neighborhoods #1*]
- Ensure proper transitions and buffering (e.g., park and open space areas) between different land uses (Policy #3)

Policy #2: Address Obsolescent Land Uses

Identify and reverse obsolescent (no longer viable) land uses and land use patterns.

[*Policy Link: Neighborhoods #3*]

Action Strategies

- Assemble and make land available for redevelopment for new uses
- Target capital investments by the City (e.g., infrastructure, streetscape improvements, etc.) to support private reinvestment and redevelopment
- Pursue regulatory and investment strategies that change the mix of uses over time in areas characterized by a high degree of obsolescence

Policy #3: Reduce Land Use Conflicts

Reduce conflicts between incompatible land uses.

Action Strategies

- Remove obsolescent land uses (Policy #2)
- Introduce transitional uses between lower intensity and higher intensity uses (e.g., multi-family between single-family and commercial, park/open space areas, etc.)
- Establish standards in the Zoning Ordinance to reduce the impacts of higher intensity on lower intensity uses (requirements for landscaping/buffering/screening, noise, odor, light, traffic, etc.)


Policy #4: Activity Centers

Promote mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly land use patterns, including Regional Activity Centers, Community Activity Centers, Neighborhood Activity Centers, and Walkable Neighborhoods.

Action Strategies

- Intensify and diversify land uses in Regional Activity Centers, including the Downtown, Midtown, and Victory Crossing.
 - Pursue regulatory and investment strategies that promote a healthy mix of uses (e.g., retail, residential, office, and public facilities)
 - Promote redevelopment of underutilized properties to higher intensity uses
- Promote development of Community Activity Centers with complementary mixed uses (e.g., neighborhood-oriented retail, higher density residential, parks, schools, and other community facilities)
- Encourage Neighborhood Centers and Walkable Neighborhoods with development patterns that replicate the scale and character of Portsmouth’s traditional neighborhoods (compact development, interconnected streets, sidewalks, etc.)

Policy #5: Development Quality

“Raise the bar” on private and public sector development.

[Policy Link: Community Appearance #1 & 2]

Action Strategies

- Adopt standards in the Zoning Ordinance that set minimum levels for the design quality of new development (e.g., landscaping, relationship to the street, pedestrian environment, meaningful park/open space setbacks, etc.)
- Provide incentives for developments that exceed the minimum requirements for design quality
- Set a standard of quality in the design of public buildings, facilities, streetscapes, roadway corridors, and infrastructure

Policy #6: Tax Exempt Land

Seek opportunities to convert tax exempt lands to productive uses that strengthen the City’s tax base.

Action Strategies

- Work with Portsmouth Redevelopment and Housing Authority (PRHA) to return properties acquired through the redevelopment process to private ownership/development
- Monitor possibilities for converting state or federal lands to tax-generating private development



Policy #7: Land Use/Transportation Connection

Connect the land use pattern to a supportive, multi-modal transportation system.

[Policy Link: Transportation #7]

Action Strategies

- Ensure that major traffic generating uses such as industrial and employment areas have direct access to the regional transportation network (highways, arterial roadways, transit) and do not result in significant traffic impacts on local neighborhoods
- Establish compact, mixed-use development patterns that create a walkable environment and reduce the need to use the automobile (Policy #4)
- Provide convenient, multi-modal access (including sidewalks, trails, bike lanes, etc.) from residential areas to Community Activity Centers (Policy #4)

Policy #8: Land Use/Education Connection

Incorporate public schools and other educational facilities into the land use pattern as centers of community activity and learning. [Policy Link: Education #4]

Action Strategies

- Seek opportunities to integrate schools into mixed-use activity centers (Policy #4)
- Establish physical connections between schools and surrounding land uses to enhance their roles as centers of community activity
- Ensure that land is available to accommodate projected school siting needs
- Identify new productive uses for obsolete school properties
- Work to establish a new Portsmouth location for a new Tidewater Community College campus

Policy #9: Development Regulations and Processes

Facilitate appropriate development and redevelopment through “user-friendly” development regulations and processes.

Action Strategies

- Enact provisions and standards in the Zoning Ordinance that make it easier to develop in Portsmouth’s urban environment
- Develop streamlined review and approval procedures for development projects that are consistent with the land use policy directions
- Review the historic district regulations and standards for opportunities to facilitate reinvestment in properties within the districts while maintaining overall historic integrity



4.3 Future Land Use

The Generalized Future Land Use Map (Map 5) identifies the general pattern of future land use in Portsmouth for application of the policies and action strategies contained in the Land Use and other Comprehensive Plan elements. It recognizes the City's existing development pattern as the basis for future uses while indicating areas in which the existing pattern should be modified over time to achieve the policies and action strategies. In particular, the map emphasizes **Mixed Uses** and **Activity Centers** as important components of Portsmouth's future land use pattern.

Land Use Categories

The major categories of land use shown on the Generalized Future Land Use Map are Employment, Residential, Mixed Use, and Community/Institutional. While federal government properties are not subject to local jurisdiction, they have been designated as discrete land uses to indicate their roles in Portsmouth's overall land use pattern. These designations are consistent with the current or projected use of these properties by the federal government.

The following text describes the different types of land use shown on the Map for each of the four major categories.

Employment Uses

Heavy Industrial: Heavy Industrial uses include manufacturing, ship repair, and other port-related activities associated with Portsmouth's working waterfront along the Elizabeth River. This designation applies to existing privately owned industrial properties, governmental facilities (the Norfolk Naval Shipyard and Virginia Port Authority Terminal), and two vacant waterfront sites (the former Cox property in Churchland, currently planned for a deepwater container terminal, and the eastern shore of Craney Island, projected for future port facilities).

Heavy Industrial uses such as container storage yards are discouraged away from the working waterfront, both to prevent adverse impacts on surrounding land uses and to promote more productive use of the land. An existing industrial area in the vicinity of I-264 and Frederick Boulevard, including the City Public Works Compound (Operations Center) is recommended for conversion to Mixed Employment uses.





Policy issues associated with Heavy Industrial uses include:

- Provide proper buffering from and minimize impacts on residential and other less intensive land uses (Land Use Policy #3)
- Provide proper access for vehicular traffic to the regional road network (Land Use Policy #7)
- Minimize visual impacts on major roadway corridors (Community Appearance Policy #2)

Light Industrial: The Light Industrial category includes light manufacturing and assembly, warehousing and distribution, and similar uses. Many of the existing Light Industrial uses in the City are located in areas designated as Mixed Use Corridors on the Generalized Future Land Use Map, including Airline Boulevard and Victory Boulevard south of I-264. In addition, there is a significant concentration of Light Industrial uses in the Port Norfolk area, where efforts are needed to reduce conflicts with residential uses. The policy issues identified above for Heavy Industrial uses also apply to Light Industrial uses. In addition, the evolving nature of the 21st century economy and the extent to which Light Industrial uses are integrated into Portsmouth's overall land use pattern suggest that flexibility should be provided to accommodate different uses that meet specified performance standards (e.g., appearance, impacts on adjacent uses).



Mixed Employment: The Mixed Employment category applies to areas of Portsmouth with existing or future office and related uses that are planned as a unified development. These include the existing PortCentre Commerce Park and Victory Crossing Business Park, which is planned for Class A office buildings with 40 acres reserved for a Portsmouth campus of Tidewater Community College (shown as Public/Institutional on the Generalized Future Land Use Map). In addition, the area in the vicinity of I-264 and Frederick Boulevard, which contains a former rail yard and other industrial uses, is recommended for future redevelopment as a Mixed Employment business park.

Land Use Policies #3 and #7 identified above for Heavy Industrial uses also apply to the Mixed Employment category. Mixed Employment parks should be planned to incorporate consistent standards of development quality, thus addressing Community Appearance Policy #2. In addition, ensuring the continued availability of sites for quality employment uses is important to Economic Development Policy #3, which addresses office and industrial uses as one of Portsmouth's three key business sectors.

Commercial: This designation applies to areas within the City to remain in predominantly commercial uses, such as the Midtown commercial core and the Victory Crossing, Churchland, and Williams Court Shopping Centers. Strategies for these areas should seek to 1) strengthen retail uses and associated sales and tax revenue (Economic Development Policy #3) and 2) introduce complementary mixed uses (e.g., public facilities, high-density residential) that can reinforce the retail base and enhance their roles as activity centers (Land Use Policy #4).



Residential Uses

Single-Family Residential (Low/Medium Density): This residential use category applies to single-family neighborhoods with lots that are approximately 7,500 square feet or greater in size. Areas designated as Low and Medium Density Single-Family Residential are mostly



stable neighborhoods located in Churchland and the western part of the City, whose existing character should be maintained and strengthened in accordance with Land Use Policy #1 and Neighborhoods Policy #1. A few are designated as transitional neighborhoods for which more active intervention is called for to promote reinvestment and revitalization (Neighborhoods Policy #2).

Single-Family Residential (High Density): High Density Single-Family Residential areas are developed with lots generally less than 7,500 square feet in size. Similar policies apply to these areas as apply to Low and Medium Density Single-Family Residential areas, except that High Density areas have a higher proportion of neighborhoods designated as transitional. In addition, their more compact development pattern makes them potential models for “Walkable Neighborhoods” in Portsmouth in accordance with Land Use Policy #4.

Multi-Family Residential: This category largely applies to existing multi-family uses (apartments and condominiums) in Portsmouth. Efforts should be made to maintain and improve the quality of existing multi-family developments in accordance with the policies of the Housing Element. Future multi-family developments should be planned to provide a greater range of housing choices for Portsmouth residents, including units attractive to middle and higher income residents (Housing Policy #1). They should be located so as not to intrude on established single-family neighborhoods, (e.g., as part of Mixed Use Centers or Corridors, or in selected waterfront locations where their value will be enhanced by views and access to the water).

Mixed Residential: The Mixed Residential category applies to residential areas developed as unified developments with a mix of housing types (e.g., single-family residences with a range of lot sizes, townhouses, and apartments). The Westbury neighborhood on the former Ida Barbour public housing site is a good example. Non-residential components (e.g., community facilities, neighborhood-oriented retail and services) can be included in the mix of uses. Policy issues associated with Mixed Residential uses include:

- Design as Walkable Neighborhoods (Land Use Policy #4) with compact development patterns, interconnected streets and sidewalks, and integrated parks and open space
- Provide transitions between different housing types, densities, and non-residential uses. For example, single-family homes could transition to townhouses and apartments, with the latter integrated into a mixed-use center with commercial and other community uses that is accessible by foot from the entire neighborhood while fronting on a larger thoroughfare.



Mixed Use

By definition, mixed use refers to several types of activity, each of which could function independently but that would benefit from proximity to each other. An unfortunate legacy of zoning practice in this country in the post-World War II era has been to promote the separation of land uses into discrete and uniform residential, commercial, and industrial categories. The initial intent, to protect public health and welfare by removing noxious influences from residential areas, was valid. However, the result has been to segregate uses (particularly in suburban areas) to such an extent as to create a total reliance on automobile travel for activities that were formerly located within walking distance in older, more mixed-use urban settings. As an historic city, Portsmouth retains mixed-use characteristics in certain areas, such as the Downtown. (The impacts of industrial uses on adjacent residential areas in other parts of the City are a less positive manifestation of mixed use.)

The Generalized Future Land Use Map indicates areas of the City where mixes of complementary uses are to be encouraged or maintained. A number of these areas are **Activity Centers** that are shown as “overlays” on top of the underlying land use categories (see text below). Mixed land use categories shown on the Map include the **Downtown** and **Mixed Use Corridors**.

Downtown Mixed Use: Downtown Portsmouth supports the greatest concentration of mixed uses in the City. In accordance with Land Use Policy #4, the Downtown’s role as a center of activity for Portsmouth and the region should be strengthened through a more intensive mix of retail/restaurant/entertainment, residential, office, and public uses and destinations. Strategies that should be pursued to achieve this overall objective include, among others:



NTELOS Pavilion

- Promote redevelopment and reuse of underutilized properties
- Maximize the use and value of the downtown waterfront
- Develop and market “niche” attractions and destinations, such as the NTELOS Pavilion, Renaissance Hotel and Conference Center, and Children’s Museum of Virginia (Economic Development Policy #6)
- Develop a comprehensive parking strategy to accommodate the intensification of uses in the Downtown (Transportation Policy #6)
- Ensure that more intense uses do not adversely impact established residential neighborhoods (Land Use Policy #1)

A detailed Downtown Master Plan is needed to more specifically define the strategies that the City will pursue to promote enhancement of the Downtown as a regional activity center.



Mixed Use Corridor: This designation applies to major roadway corridors in Portsmouth that support a mixed pattern of non-residential (commercial and light industrial) and residential land uses. These uses have typically evolved over time in isolation on the individual parcels that front the roadway, resulting in a disconnected linear pattern of development. Mixed Use Corridors fall into two categories: Stable and Revitalization. Portsmouth Boulevard from Airline Boulevard to Mayflower Road is classified as Stable because it supports a mostly viable mix of non-residential and residential uses. Revitalization Corridors designated on the Generalized Future Land Use Map include Airline Boulevard, High Street between Effingham Street and Airline Boulevard, Victory Boulevard south of Greenwood Drive/George Washington Highway south of Frederick Boulevard, and Turnpike Road. These corridors are characterized by the presence of underutilized properties, obsolete uses, land use conflicts, or other conditions that make them candidates for coordinated revitalization actions.

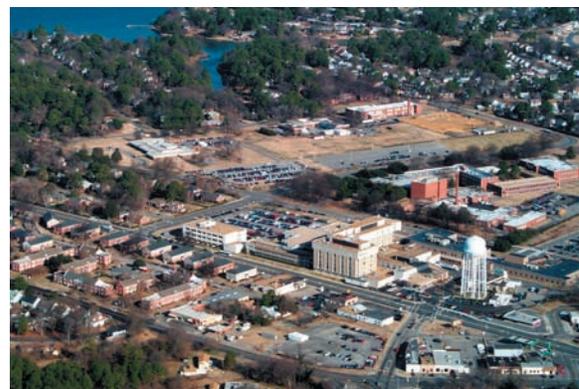
Strategies for Mixed Use Corridors should:

- Encourage a more coherent, connected land use pattern, including compatible transitions to adjacent residential areas (Land Use Policies #1 and #3)
- Promote private investment and replacement of obsolete with more viable land uses in Revitalization Corridors (Land Use Policy #2). More detailed planning should be undertaken for these corridors to determine the appropriate mix of uses and the specific regulatory and investment strategies to be undertaken by the City to support corridor improvement. If these strategies are successful, Revitalization Corridors will evolve into Stable Corridors over time.

Community/Institutional Uses

Institutional/Public: This designation applies to private institutional uses (e.g., churches, the Maryview Medical Center) and city, state, and federal governmental facilities that function as institutional activity centers (e.g., public schools and libraries, the Naval Medical Center, the future Portsmouth campus of Tidewater Community College). Policy issues associated with Institutional/Public uses include:

- Enhance the roles of Institutional/Public Uses in establishing Portsmouth as a “Center of Knowledge” through improved programs and connections (Education Policies #1-5)
- Enhance the roles of Institutional/Public Uses in reinforcing the vitality of Activity Centers, e.g. Midtown (Maryview Medical Center) and Victory Crossing (future TCC campus) (Land Use Policy #4)
- Enhance the roles of uses such as schools and libraries in strengthening surrounding neighborhoods by functioning as centers of community activity (Neighborhoods Policy #4)



Maryview
Medical Center



- Ensure that city facilities do not occupy land that is better used for high-value private development (Community Facilities, Services, and Infrastructure Policy #2). For example, the City Public Works Compound (Operations Center) near the I-264/Frederick Boulevard interchange should be considered for relocation to an appropriate site to make the property available for a more productive use, possibly in conjunction with the development of the Mixed Employment business park proposed in this vicinity.

Parks/Open Space/Conservation: The Parks/Open Space/Conservation category applies to existing parks and open space areas (e.g., City Park, Bide-A-Wee Golf Course, Hoffer Creek Wildlife Reserve, cemeteries) and two areas designated as future open space: a greenway corridor along Paradise Creek and the western portion of Craney Island. It is expected that additional park and open space opportunities will be identified in the City’s Parks and Recreation Plan (Parks, Open Space, and Environment Policy #1). This plan should establish numeric standards for the provision of active and passive parkland open to the public. Pending completion of the plan, the target should be to provide a minimum of 10 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents.

Activity Centers

Activity Centers are concentrations of higher intensity uses that function as destinations for the surrounding area. Activity Centers are shown as overlays on the Generalized Future Land Use Map, generally in areas of mixed or other relatively intensive land uses. Land Use Policy #4 addresses Activity Centers as essential components of Portsmouth’s future land use pattern. Three types of Activity Centers are designated on the Generalized Future Land Use Map based upon size of the center and the area served: Regional, Community, and Neighborhood.

Regional Activity Centers: These are the largest scale centers, representing present or future concentrations of intense uses (commercial, employment, entertainment, recreation, etc.) that serve residents both of Portsmouth and the larger region. These include the Downtown (discussed above under Mixed Use), Midtown, Victory Crossing, and a center of regional recreational activity in Churchland.

The **Midtown** area of Portsmouth historically supported a mix of commercial and office uses. The Activity Center designation supports revitalization of Midtown through redevelopment of underutilized and substandard properties for predominantly commercial but also office, residential, and mixed-use development. This designation is reinforced by present and future destinations in the surrounding area, which include:



Concept plan for Midtown

Source: Wallace Roberts & Todd, LLC

- Maryview Medical Center
- The proposed “Park and Arts” Center at the Hunt-Mapp Middle School property
- The proposed Mixed Employment business park in the vicinity of I-264 and Frederick Boulevard, including future redevelopment of the City Public Works Compound (Operations Center)



Redevelopment of Howard Homes and Jeffry Wilson Homes will also support establishment of Midtown as a Regional Activity Center.

Located along Victory Boulevard next to the I-264 interchange, **Victory Crossing** is developing into a Regional Activity Center that draws residents from all of Portsmouth and beyond. Major present/future destinations include the Victory Crossing Shopping Center and Victory Crossing Business Park, which will include a Portsmouth campus of Tidewater Community College. Redevelopment of the former Fairwood Homes property as a Mixed Residential community with a retail component will reinforce this designation.

The **Churchland** Regional Activity Center consists of a concentration of schools, some higher intensity private land uses, and recreational facilities that are used by residents of Portsmouth, Chesapeake, and Suffolk.

Community Activity Centers: Community Activity Centers serve residents drawn from relatively large areas within the City of Portsmouth. Two Community Activity Centers – Churchland and Williams Court – are shown on the Generalized Future Land Use Map. Both are commercial centers that are in need of revitalization to strengthen their roles as focuses of activity for the surrounding community.

Neighborhood Activity Centers: Neighborhood Activity Centers are smaller scale centers containing concentrations of retail, service, and/or community uses that cater to a surrounding neighborhood. Three such centers are shown on the Generalized Future Land Use Map: the Broad Street/Detroit Street area in Port Norfolk, Afton Square in Cradock, and the Greenwood Drive/Cavalier Boulevard area in the Cavalier Manor neighborhood. The Broad Street/Detroit street area supports a stable mix of shops, restaurants, and services, as well as a nearby recreation center. Afton Square contains the basic elements of a neighborhood center (library, post office, commercial uses fronting on a community green). However, the commercial uses are marginal and the area should be addressed as part of a revitalization strategy for the Cradock neighborhood. The Cavalier Manor Neighborhood Activity Center is formed by the Cavalier Manor Recreation Area and adjacent commercial and multi-family uses. Additional opportunities to establish Neighborhood Activity Centers focused on community facilities and/or commercial uses should be pursued as part of a neighborhood revitalization strategy (Neighborhoods Policy #4).



Afton Square
proposal

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5.0 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

5.1 Overview

Goal: A healthy, diversified economy with a strong tax base and employment opportunities for all Portsmouth residents.

Economic vitality is viewed as the underpinning of the Comprehensive Plan – the fundamental driving force that will assure the future success of the City of Portsmouth. As such, this concept transcends the traditional focus of economic development activities on attracting businesses and creating jobs. Instead, it embodies a synergistic approach in which the energies of city government and the private sector – and the policies and action strategies of all the Comprehensive Plan elements – are directed towards strengthening Portsmouth’s economy in a manner that increases opportunity and improves the quality of life for all citizens.

Portsmouth’s economic fortunes are tied both to the Hampton Roads economy as a whole and to the City’s unique attributes and position within the region. The region as a whole and Portsmouth in particular are heavily dependent on the presence of the military, with 35% of jobs in the City tied to the Defense Industry. Due to military downsizing as a result of the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process initiated by Congress, federal civilian and military employment in the Hampton Roads region declined substantially between 1990 and 2000 (Table 2). Regional employment sectors that experienced significant increases between 1990 and 2000 included Services; Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate (FIRE); and State and Local Government.



North Pier

U.S. Fifth
District
Coast Guard
Headquarters



Mirroring the region as a whole, Portsmouth has experienced losses in military and federal civilian employment. Nevertheless, the Norfolk Naval Shipyard remains Portsmouth’s largest employer with approximately 7,000 employees. Other major federal employers include the Naval Medical Center (U.S. Naval Hospital) with approximately 4,000 employees and the U.S. Fifth District Coast Guard Headquarters with approximately 1,900 employees.



The 1990s also witnessed a decline in retail employment and sales due to the decline of shopping centers such as Tower Mall and Midcity and the emergence of retail areas in adjacent communities.¹ However, this trend has begun to turn around with the opening of the Victory Crossing shopping center. Employment growth areas include business, legal, and social services, as well as state and local government.

Table 2. Regional Employment Trends (1990-2000)¹

Employment Category	1990	2000	% Change
Increases			
Services	200,780	271,065	+35.0
FIRE ²	50,104	63,264	+26.3
State/Local Government	80,391	99,926	+24.3
TCU ³	31,860	38,034	+19.4
Construction	48,671	57,278	+17.7
Retail Trade	137,767	159,937	+16.1
Wholesale Trade	28,278	30,399	+7.5
Decreases			
Manufacturing	74,428	71,219	-4.3
Farm Employment	2,454	2,116	-13.8
Federal Government:			
• Military	142,650	111,261	-22.0
• Civilian	59,668	46,780	-21.6

¹ Numbers are for the Hampton Roads Planning District as compiled by the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission. The Hampton Roads Planning District includes 16 jurisdictions: the Cities of Chesapeake, Franklin, Hampton, Newport News, Norfolk, Poquoson, Portsmouth, Suffolk, Virginia Beach, and Williamsburg; and the Counties of Gloucester, Isle of Wight, James City, Southampton, Surry, and York.

² FIRE = Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate

³ TCU = Transportation, Communications, and Utilities

Statistical information available from the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission indicates that Portsmouth citizens benefit less from the regional economy than neighboring communities. The per capita income of the City's residents in 2001 was \$22,173 compared to \$27,970 for the average of five South Hampton Roads communities (Table 3). In March 2003, Portsmouth's unemployment rate was 5.6% compared to 4.2% for the same five communities as a whole (Table 4). Portsmouth had the lowest per capita income and second highest unemployment rate of the five communities.

¹ Retail sales in Portsmouth declined from a peak of \$491.0 million in 1987 to \$393.0 million in 1995. From 1995 to 2001 retail sales fluctuated between a high of \$413.2 million (1999) and a low of \$392.6 million (2001). Between 2001 and 2002 (the latest year for which figures are available), retail sales increased by 4.2% to \$408.9 million.


Table 3. Per Capita Income, South Hampton Roads Communities

Community	2001 Per Capita Income (\$)
Chesapeake	27,807
Norfolk	23,271
Portsmouth	22,173
Suffolk	27,302
Virginia Beach	32,076
South Hampton Roads	27,970

Source: Hampton Roads Planning District Commission

Table 4. Unemployment Rates, South Hampton Roads Communities

Community	March 2003 Unemployment (%)
Chesapeake	3.3
Norfolk	6.2
Portsmouth	5.6
Suffolk	4.1
Virginia Beach	3.5
South Hampton Roads	4.2

Source: Hampton Roads Planning District Commission

Portsmouth has definite strengths to build on as it seeks to improve its economy and the economic well-being of its citizens. These strengths include, among others, its waterfront and port access, historic character, strategic location at the center of the Hampton Roads region, and the City's aggressive approach to promoting economic development, which has created momentum for continued success. Key economic development issues include:

- Compared to growing neighbors such as Chesapeake and Suffolk, Portsmouth has limited vacant land available for economic development uses. This situation highlights the need to identify appropriate infill and redevelopment opportunities and achieve the highest and best use of each property if new business activities and uses are to be accommodated. There is also a need to carefully consider the impacts of economic development activities on neighborhoods and quality of life.



Renaissance
Hotel



- The decline in federal civilian and military employment suggests the importance of diversifying Portsmouth's employment base to ensure a healthy future economy.
- Improving the quality of education available to Portsmouth citizens is essential to retaining and attracting businesses and residents and to nurturing a skilled workforce, all of which are vital elements of a sustainable economy.

Economic development has been established as a priority by City Council. In recent years Portsmouth has experienced a number of economic development successes as a result of aggressive implementation of planning initiatives such as Vision 2005 and the Economic Development Department's Strategic Plan, which in turn has enhanced the City's image as a positive place for business growth and investment. Examples of these successes include the Renaissance Portsmouth Hotel and Waterfront Conference Center, the NTELOS Pavilion at Harbor Center, and the Victory Crossing shopping center. Currently pending projects include, among others, Victory Crossing Business Park, redevelopment of the former Fairwood Homes property as a mixed residential community, and development of a privately owned deepwater container terminal on the former Cox property in Churchland.

The policies and action strategies presented below are designed to build on the current momentum for success through a comprehensive approach to strengthening the vitality of Portsmouth's economy and increasing the economic opportunities available to Portsmouth's citizens. They establish a coordinated framework for city departments and programs to promote economic development in the context of the overall goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan. They also provide a framework for implementation of the Economic Development Department's Strategic Plan, which is a separate document and is incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan by reference.



Policy #1 establishes the overall context for the City's economic development programs and initiatives. The action strategies included for this policy identify three fundamental principles that should guide all economic development activities. First, the scarcity of available land in Portsmouth places a premium on evaluating each and every parcel and project to ensure the highest and best use for the City and its residents. Second, the evaluation of specific economic development initiatives and projects should be based on clear criteria that take into account not only economic costs and benefits (e.g., public investment versus tax revenues generated) but also broader considerations of quality of life and community character. The third principle ties the first two principles to the goals and policies of the other Comprehensive Plan elements.



Policies #2-4 follow the organizational structure of the Economic Development Strategic Plan, which focuses on key economic development activities (Policy #2), key business sectors (Policy #3), and key geographic areas within the City (Policy #4). In the context of its role as a guide for the activities of the Economic Development Department, the Strategic Plan takes a broad view of economic development (e.g., by addressing the importance of improving Portsmouth's housing stock to the City's economy). The action strategies identified for these policies incorporate some additional recommendations that relate to key Comprehensive Plan concepts and will involve entities other than the Economic Development Department to implement (e.g., workforce training/program connections between major employers and the public schools).

Policy #5 builds on Policy #1 by explicitly addressing the linkages between economic development policies and programs and the policies of other elements of the Comprehensive Plan. For example, the City's economic development initiatives must be coordinated with infrastructure planning and programming to ensure that adequate roads, utilities, and other needed facilities are in place to support planned developments and projects.

Policy #6 addresses the continuing need to market Portsmouth to prospective visitors, residents, and businesses. It is based upon the City's present marketing plan, with the added recommendation that marketing efforts address Portsmouth's present and future assets as defined in the Comprehensive Plan Vision Statement. For example, the improved education system brought about by implementation of the policies and action strategies of the Education Element could conceivably in the future be marketed as a Portsmouth "success story."



Sports Hall of
Fame

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Policy #6 also identifies the need for measures of success to monitor not only the City's marketing program, but also progress in achieving the overall economic development goal and policies. The following are proposed as indicators to measure the success of the City's economic development policies and programs:

- Growth in the assessed valuation of the City's tax base
- Growth in retail sales within the City
- Increase in outside visitation to/visitor spending in Portsmouth
- Increase in the average per capita income of Portsmouth residents in relation to the per capita income of residents of South Hampton Roads as a whole (Chesapeake, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Suffolk, and Virginia Beach)
- Reduction in Portsmouth's unemployment rate in relation to the unemployment rate for South Hampton Roads as a whole



5.2 Policies and Action Strategies

Policy #1: Economic Vitality

Coordinate all city programs and initiatives to promote economic vitality in a manner supportive of the broader goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan.

Action Strategies

- Ensure that every piece of available land is evaluated and targeted for its highest and best use for the City and its residents
 - Inventory current assets
 - Identify gaps and unique opportunities
 - Based on these analyses, ascertain the highest and best use for available land parcels
 - Identify and proactively recruit individual businesses and uses that meet the standard of highest and best use
- Establish clear criteria for decision-making on specific economic development initiatives and programs to be pursued by the City, e.g.:
 - Cost/benefits in terms of public investment required vs. tax revenues generated
 - Job opportunities created for Portsmouth residents
 - Quality of life benefits (e.g., provision of quality local shopping opportunities) vs. detriments (e.g., adverse neighborhood impacts such as increased truck traffic)
 - Impacts on public facilities, services, and infrastructure
 - Development quality in terms of visual character, compatibility with adjacent land uses, etc.
- Align city economic development initiatives and programs, including the Department of Economic Development Strategic Plan, with Comprehensive Plan goals and policies (Policy #5)

Policy #2: Key Activities

Promote economic growth in Portsmouth by focusing on four key activities: Business Development, Market Development, Product Development, and Workforce Development.

Action Strategies

- ***Business Development:*** Implement strategies and programs to nurture business growth and investment, including retention and expansion of existing businesses; attraction of new businesses; and support of startup and emerging businesses:
 - Undertake outreach efforts to existing businesses to determine what may be needed to ensure that they remain and grow in Portsmouth
 - Identify and market Portsmouth's comparative and competitive advantages, targeted towards the types of businesses that may be attracted to locate in the City (Policy #6)
 - Facilitate business startup and development through actions such as maintaining an inventory of available properties in conjunction with local realtors; establishing small business incubators; and zoning and regulatory provisions that make it easier to start a business



- Form public/private partnerships and provide incentives (e.g., use of the HUB Zone, Empowerment Zone, and Foreign Trade Zone designations) to start or expand businesses in Portsmouth or to attract businesses from outside the City
- Aggressively partner with the Commonwealth of Virginia to attract innovative/state-of-the-art businesses, taking advantage of the Commonwealth’s economic incentive program
- **Market Development:** Implement strategies and programs to retain existing and attract new residents and visitors who will enhance the economy and enlarge the market area in which they can receive products and services:
 - Improve the quality of Portsmouth schools as a priority strategy to retain and attract residents
 - Implement Neighborhood and Housing policies to build quality neighborhoods in Portsmouth that are attractive to existing and new residents. Support and encourage revitalization policies or rehabilitation efforts that turn at risk neighborhoods into positive investment opportunities for stable families and individuals while respecting the personal property rights of current residents
 - Continue to develop regionally unique “portals of entry” that attract visitors to Portsmouth (e.g., Renaissance Hotel, NTELOS Pavilion)
 - As one “portal of entry,” develop a regionally unique recreational/athletic/event venue(s) (e.g., multi-field soccer complex, extreme sports center, enclosed ice rink/indoor soccer facility), thus attracting participants, visitors, and associated spending on hotels, goods, and services in the City
 - Continue and expand the City’s marketing program (Policy #6)
- **Product Development:** Invest in physical improvements that make the City more attractive to businesses and residents, including:
 - Development-ready sites and buildings
 - Infrastructure systems (water, sewer, electricity, telecommunications, streetscapes, etc.)
 - Urban design improvements (streetscapes, gateway enhancements, etc.)
- **Workforce Development:** Implement strategies and programs to build the skills of the local workforce:
 - Work with the City of Portsmouth public school system on strategies to equip students with the skills needed to succeed in the 21st century economy
 - Establish partnerships with educational institutions, economic development agencies, and others to increase continuing education/workforce training opportunities available to Portsmouth residents (adult education programs, financial assistance, etc.)
 - Establish workforce training/program connections with major employers. Partner with the school system to have these programs included in the curriculum (e.g., technical/career programs to provide graduates with industry certification, career fairs, etc.)



Policy #3: Key Business Sectors

Focus on enhancing the vitality of three key business sectors: Retail, Residential, and Office & Industrial.

Action Strategies

- ***Retail:*** Implement strategies to maintain and expand retail sales/tax revenue in Portsmouth and provide quality shopping opportunities for Portsmouth residents:
 - Using existing retailers as the foundation, identify the components of a more diverse and complete retail mix and target the missing retailers
 - In conjunction with retail brokers, identify and package the retail space that is available to the market, targeting specific retailers that offer the highest and best use of the land and meet market needs
 - Promote development of new retail space to attract the right balance of national brand names and local retailers
 - Provide and manage infrastructure (roads, downtown parking areas, etc.) needed to support retail development

- ***Residential:*** Implement strategies to improve the quality of and diversity of Portsmouth’s housing stock:
 - Promote rehabilitation of existing housing stock
 - Remove and redevelop blighted and economically obsolete housing
 - Redevelop available property in the downtown for “in-town” housing and mixed-use development
 - Attract higher income residents and expand the tax base by supporting development of new upscale residential housing options and communities
 - Promote existing and be prepared to capitalize on potential new historic districts as an economic development opportunity

- ***Office & Industrial:*** Implement strategies to retain and attract quality office and industrial development:
 - Identify and target market sectors that are good candidates for Portsmouth’s economy (e.g., government contractors, information technology, transportation and maritime-related services)
 - Build capacity by coordinating the development of business parks (PortCentre Commerce Park, Victory Crossing Business Park, other future opportunities)
 - Work with the Portsmouth Economic Development Authority to provide assistance and incentives for businesses to locate in the City


Policy #4: Key Geographic Areas

Focus economic development activities in key geographic areas, including the Downtown Waterfront, Downtown Portsmouth, Midtown Portsmouth, Central Portsmouth, George Washington Corridor, Western Portsmouth, and the Working Waterfront.

Action Strategies

- ***Downtown Waterfront:*** Utilize this asset to the maximum economic and aesthetic benefit to the City by developing a mix of residential, retail, and water-related commercial uses that provide for public access
- ***Downtown Portsmouth:*** Position the Downtown’s authentic urban setting as an ideal location for business investment, quality housing, specialty shopping, and family entertainment
- ***Midtown Portsmouth:*** Implement initiatives to restore the economic vitality of the Midtown business district, foster growth and prosperity of the nearby neighborhoods, and create opportunities for new retail, office/industrial, residential, and mixed-use development
- ***Central Portsmouth (Victory Boulevard/I-264 Corridor (Victory Crossing) and Airline Boulevard Corridor):***
 - Redevelop and redefine Victory Crossing as a regional center for retail and employment activity that serves as a catalyst for redevelopment of the surrounding area
 - Improve the vitality of the Airline Boulevard Corridor while ensuring that future development is compatible with existing viable land uses
- ***George Washington Corridor:*** Implement initiatives to enhance the appearance of the City’s southern “gateway” by revitalizing the commercial strip and contributing to the overall quality of the surrounding neighborhoods, e.g.:
 - Develop codes to improve the character of the corridor (e.g., addressing the display and sale of used vehicles, prohibiting the overnight parking of tractor-trailer vehicles) and work with appropriate agencies to ensure enforcement
 - Develop a strategy to attract quality retail vendors to existing vacant commercial spaces
- ***Western Portsmouth (Western Freeway Corridor and Churchland):***
 - Monitor the economic health of commercial, retail, and residential tracts in the western part of the City
 - Encourage quality retail development on remaining vacant tracts
 - Encourage redevelopment of underutilized tracts



- **Waterfront:** Capitalize on Portsmouth’s waterfront as a major economic development asset:
 - Maintain an active “working waterfront” by encouraging the development of vacant tracts and redevelopment of underutilized properties along the Elizabeth River
 - Increase public access to the water for residents and visitors
 - Pursue opportunities for higher end residential development on the waterfront

Policy #5: Linkage to Other City Policies

Balance objectives such as creating jobs and increasing the tax base with consideration of the broader impacts of economic development projects, programs, and policies on Portsmouth’s quality of life and community character.

Action Strategies

- Ensure that economic development policies and programs are coordinated with city policies and programs that address other topical areas of the Comprehensive Plan and are compatible in terms of their effects on these areas, e.g.:
 - **Education:**
 - Implement action strategies to establish Portsmouth as a “Community of Learning” as a key to attracting businesses and residents and to developing the workforce
 - Work with the City of Portsmouth public school system to encourage major employers and businesses to participate in technical and career education curricula that better prepare students to enter the workforce
 - **Land Use:** Coordinate economic development strategies with land use strategies designed to support economic vitality and quality of life
 - **Housing and Neighborhoods:** Coordinate economic development strategies with strategies designed to maintain and improve the quality of Portsmouth’s housing and neighborhoods
 - **Community Facilities, Services, and Infrastructure:** Provide quality community facilities, services, and infrastructure to support the City’s business development, market development, and product development activities
 - **Transportation:** Ensure that major traffic-generating industrial and employment uses are provided with adequate access to the regional transportation system so as not to result in significant traffic impacts on local neighborhoods
 - **Parks, Open Space, and Environment:**
 - Provide quality parks, recreational facilities, and greenways that can be used in helping to market Portsmouth to current and prospective residents
 - Ensure that economic development activities do not degrade the quality of environmental resources such as air and water
 - **Community Appearance:** Improve Portsmouth’s appeal to prospective businesses, residents, and visitors by implementing action strategies to make it an attractive, clean community



- **Governance:**
 - Ensure that public investments to promote economic development are appropriately balanced with private sector investment and are justified by the increased tax revenues generated
 - Evaluate current organizational functions and relationships related to economic development for opportunities to better direct, coordinate, and support policies and activities (e.g., roles of city departments in supporting economic development; establishment of a new downtown development entity as recommended by the Urban Land Institute Advisory Services Panel Report for Downtown Portsmouth)

Policy #6: Marketing

Continue and expand the City's program to market Portsmouth to prospective visitors, residents, and businesses.

Action Strategies

- Continue to develop and implement public relations and media campaigns focused on marketing and advertising Portsmouth's "Big Rocks":
 - Children's Museum of Virginia (targeting individuals and groups)
 - Victory Crossing Development (targeting site selection consultants, local brokers, and Hampton Roads residents overall)
 - Tourism (targeting hotel and conference visitors from the Mid-Atlantic and Northeast Regions, individuals visiting the Hampton Roads/Williamsburg area, and Hampton Roads residents)
 - Incentives (targeting economic development niche markets – defense contractors, maritime industry, finance, insurance, and real estate – and the Hampton Roads public overall)
 - Affordable historic housing
 - Plentiful waterfront (83 miles of shoreline)
 - The "New Portsmouth": (marketing residential, commercial, and retail developments; raising of the City's "quality bar"; regional attractions, etc. at the local, regional, and national levels)
- Market the City's existing and emerging assets as defined in the Comprehensive Plan Vision Statement
- Use a "brand" positioning statement and consistent graphic standards in all marketing and advertising materials
- Monitor the effectiveness of the City's marketing and advertising program by defining desired outcomes and criteria for measuring success





6.0 HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS

6.1 Overview

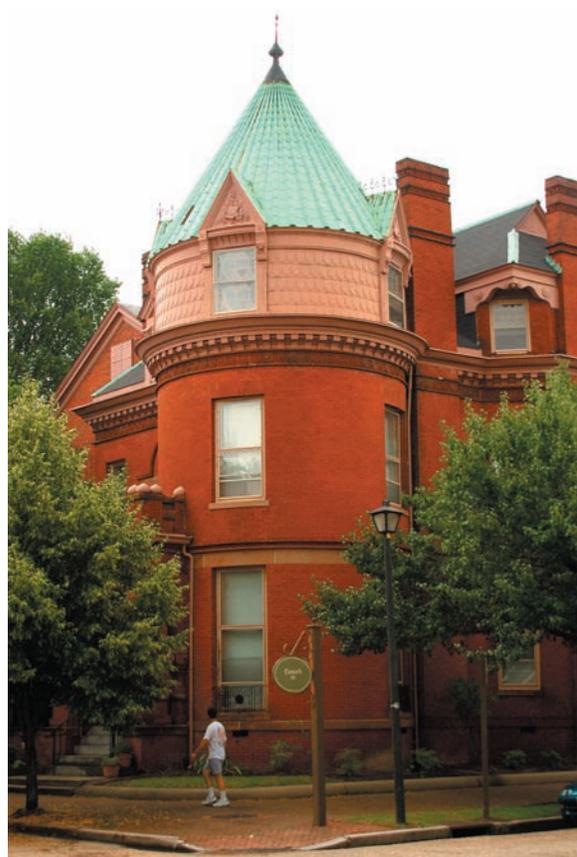
Goals:

Housing: *An inventory of quality housing that meets the needs of all income groups and people with special needs.*

Neighborhoods: *Quality, livable neighborhoods that retain long-time residents and attract new residents to the City of Portsmouth.*

Housing and neighborhoods are related topics that are critical to the quality of life of Portsmouth residents. All citizens have a need for decent housing that is affordable for their income level. This housing, in turn, needs to be located in a livable, safe neighborhood that provides a sense of belonging to a larger community. Portsmouth is an older, largely built out city with established neighborhoods – several of which are designated as historic – and a mature housing stock. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 65.9% of all units were constructed prior to 1970. Most (62.7%) were single-family detached homes; 8.4% were single-family attached, 28.4% multi-family, and 0.5% other types of units. The median value and rate of homeownership of the City’s housing stock is relatively low compared to other Hampton Roads communities (Tables 5 and 6).

The total number of housing units in Portsmouth declined slightly between 1990 and 2000 (by 678 units or 1.6%). Building permits for new residential construction totaled 234 in 2001, 152 in 2002, and 155 in 2003.



Historic housing stock



Table 5. Median Housing Value, South Hampton Roads Communities

Community	# of Housing Units	Median Value
Chesapeake	75,196	\$122,300
Norfolk	95,094	\$88,400
Portsmouth	41,860	\$81,300
Suffolk	26,826	\$107,300
Virginia Beach	165,710	\$123,200
South Hampton Roads	404,686	\$109,500

Source: 2000 U.S. Census

Table 6. Homeownership Rates, South Hampton Roads Communities

Community	# of Housing Units	Homeownership Rate
Chesapeake	75,196	74.9%
Norfolk	95,094	45.5%
Portsmouth	41,860	58.6%
Suffolk	26,826	72.2%
Virginia Beach	165,710	65.6%
South Hampton Roads	404,686	62.3%

Source: 2000 U.S. Census

The City has a range of active programs in place to promote conservation and rehabilitation of Portsmouth’s housing stock and to provide for the housing needs of low income and special needs populations. These programs are documented in the City’s Consolidated Plan, which is incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan by reference. (The Consolidated Plan is currently being updated by the City.) Approximately six percent of the housing units in Portsmouth are either located in public housing developments (1,142) or are subsidized through the Section 8 Certificate and Voucher Program (1,360).

Port Norfolk neighborhood



Most neighborhoods in Portsmouth are stable and in generally good condition. Some neighborhoods, particularly in the southern part of the City and in isolated parts of Churchland, demonstrate evidence of decline or potential for decline in the form

of housing disinvestment, vacancies, and/or substandard conditions. A few residential areas, such as the former Fairwood Homes property, are in need of redevelopment to new uses. This assessment of the condition of Portsmouth’s neighborhoods is reflected in Map 6, which divides the entire City (residential and non-residential areas) into three categories:



- **Stable:** Good quality; little change occurring or predicted
- **Transitional:** Evidence of decline or potential for decline; reinvestment needed
- **Redevelopment:** Removal of former uses and conversion to new uses needed

Neighborhood quality is a priority established by Portsmouth City Council. To address this priority, the City has developed a Neighborhood Quality Action Plan (NQAP) to improve the physical and human infrastructure of Portsmouth's neighborhoods. The NQAP defines guiding principles to nurture and sustain Neighborhood Quality; identifies desired outcomes in the areas of Neighborhood Appearance and Services, Health and Well Being, Public Safety, and Leisure and Culture; and outlines how these outcomes are to be achieved through an Operational Action Plan and a Human Services Action Plan. Like the Consolidated Plan, the NQAP is incorporated by reference into the Comprehensive Plan, and many of the policies and action strategies of this and other Plan elements (e.g., Community Appearance) are designed to support its implementation.

Key issues related to Portsmouth's housing and neighborhoods include:

- Portsmouth supports a higher concentration of affordable housing than other communities in the region. While there is a continuing need to provide housing that is affordable to persons with low incomes and special requirements, there is also a need for diversification of the City's housing stock to serve persons of all socio-economic groups.
- As noted for the Land Use and Economic Development Elements, the scarcity of available land places a premium on identifying redevelopment and infill opportunities to accommodate new housing. Two examples of the opportunities that exist in Portsmouth are the transformation of the former Ida Barbour public housing into the Westbury neighborhood and the planned redevelopment of the former Fairwood Homes complex. The latter property will be redeveloped under the City's Traditional Neighborhood Overlay District ordinance as a walkable, mixed residential community with pockets of common green space.
- There is a close relationship between the quality of the Portsmouth public schools and the quality of the neighborhoods they serve, as well as to the City's ability to retain and attract a socio-economically diverse population.
- A number of factors in addition to public schools contribute to neighborhood quality. Examples of these factors include a sense of safety and security, access to quality community facilities and services



Design for new
public school

Source: Tymoff + Moss Architects



(schools, park and recreation facilities, police, etc.), economic opportunities for residents, and lack of destabilizing influences such as intrusive land uses and traffic. Citizens also identify visual quality as an important issue, including vigorous code enforcement to ensure that neighborhood stability is not threatened by substandard or unkempt properties.

- Given the constraints of available resources, the extent of Transitional and Redevelopment Neighborhoods shown on Map 6 (Community Conditions) suggests the need for a focused neighborhood improvement strategy that defines clear priorities to be phased over time. The City has begun this process by implementing a coordinated revitalization strategy for the Parkview neighborhood.

Two separate sets of policies and action strategies are presented below for Housing and Neighborhoods. The Housing policies are designed to achieve the goal of developing an inventory of quality housing that meets the needs of all income groups and people with special needs. Housing Policy #1 focuses on attracting (and retaining) middle and higher income residents as part of an overall strategy of socio-economic diversification. A key to this policy is to ensure that housing products attractive to these income groups are available in the market. Equally important is to improve Portsmouth's competitiveness in the regional market by addressing factors that contribute to the decisions of homebuyers, such as public school quality; access to quality community facilities, services, and amenities; and the image of the City in the region.

Policies #2, #3, and #4 address housing for persons with low or moderate incomes or other



special needs. The action strategies identified for these three policies are designed to support implementation of the City's Consolidated Plan. Policy #2 identifies ways to increase homeownership opportunities for low and moderate income families and households, a major priority of the Consolidated Plan. By becoming buyers instead of renters, residents can improve their economic status and also become more invested in the community. Policy #3 addresses the provision of decent rental and subsidized housing for low-income households. An important issue is

the need for proper maintenance of privately-owned subsidized rental housing developments to prevent them from becoming destabilizing influences on adjacent areas. Policy #4 addresses housing for special needs populations, such as the elderly, disabled, homeless, and persons with AIDS.

Neighborhood Policies #1, #2, and #3 address the three neighborhood types identified on the Community Conditions map. Policy #1 identifies action strategies to maintain and strengthen Stable Neighborhoods. These are considered "base" strategies that should be



used to support the quality of all the City's neighborhoods. Policy #2 identifies additional strategies for Transitional Neighborhoods, which require more active intervention to reverse or prevent decline. Policy #3 deals with neighborhoods characterized by conditions of blight and obsolescence that necessitate redevelopment to new uses.

Neighborhood Policy #4 addresses the range of facilities and services that are important to supporting the quality and livability of neighborhoods. These include public infrastructure (utilities and transportation), community facilities (schools, libraries, parks, etc.), and retail and service opportunities provided by the private sector that are important to neighborhood quality of life. This policy recognizes the important link between improving the quality of Portsmouth's schools and neighborhood revitalization.



Source: Tymoff + Moss Architects

The following are proposed as indicators to measure the success of the City's housing and neighborhood policies and programs:

- Increase in the median value of housing in Portsmouth in relation to the median value of housing in South Hampton Roads as a whole (Chesapeake, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Suffolk, and Virginia Beach)
- Increase in the homeownership rate in Portsmouth in relation to the homeownership rate in South Hampton Roads as a whole
- Increase in the number of neighborhoods classified as Stable rather than Transitional or Redevelopment



6.2 Housing Policies and Action Strategies

Policy #1: Attract Middle and Higher Income Residents

Utilize the full resources of the City to increase the number of middle and higher income residents in order to improve the City's tax base, increase expenditure potential to attract higher quality retail stores, and expand the civic leadership base. [Policy Link: Economic Development #2]

Action Strategies

- Promote historic district designation of areas with housing stock that can be upgraded and which might prove attractive to middle and upper income households
- Identify locations for middle and upper income housing where values such as river views can be captured
- Promote renovation of existing commercial or industrial buildings in the downtown or historic areas that might be appealing to young professionals
- Promote the development of mixed-use, higher density projects in high amenity locations (e.g., “in-town” housing in the Effingham Street area per the ULI panel recommendation)
- Assure good quality public infrastructure and public services, including public schools and libraries as a priority
- Promote the renovation of existing private housing stock into attractive market rate structures
- Utilize creative financing techniques to support programs for first-time homebuyers
- Provide incentives to support new middle and upper income housing development

Policy #2: Affordable Ownership Housing

Utilize all available sources of financing to provide an inventory of affordable ownership housing for families and households.

Action Strategies

- Develop public sector, bank and realtor partnerships to support first-time home buyer programs, including:
 - Employer assisted housing programs and plans
 - Low down payment and soft second mortgage programs
 - Down payment assistance programs
 - Home purchase counseling or buyers club programs
- Provide affordable housing types as part of mixed-use developments (e.g., by allowing housing above retail space)
- Evaluate zoning and development regulations and processes for opportunities to facilitate the production of new affordable ownership housing units (e.g., incentives, expedited permitting), consistent with maintaining neighborhood character
- Undertake initiatives (incentives, etc.) to support the creation of affordable ownership housing in market rate developments



- If feasible, develop an urban homesteading program as a way to promote affordable homeownership and return property to the tax rolls
- Provide incentives for teachers, police officers and other city employees (e.g., use of the HUD “Officer and Teacher Next Door” programs)
- Continue and expand education programs for homeowners

Policy #3: Housing for Low-Income Households

Provide a good quality of housing stock for low-income households.

Action Strategies

- Renovate and redevelop existing public housing as needed, building on the Westbury model
- Target aggressive code enforcement towards substandard, non-compliant properties, holding the violator responsible be it the property owner or tenant
- Use public acquisition/land assembly, redevelopment, and land banking (if necessary) to remove and replace blighted housing
- Develop financial incentives in support of owners of low-income rental properties, tied to standards for maintenance and livability of the units
- Create landlord-tenant councils
- Support activities of non-profit housing developers to improve the housing inventory for low income households

Policy #4: Housing for Persons with Special Needs

Provide an inventory of quality housing for individuals or households with special needs such as the elderly, the disabled, the homeless, or persons with AIDS.

Action Strategies

- Continue to implement housing assistance to persons with special needs in accordance with the City of Portsmouth Consolidated Plan
- When warranted, increase the supply of elderly housing with good access to shopping and health care facilities
- Establish a Committee made up of representatives from the elderly and the development community to review retirement and assisted living needs
- Provide financial assistance to elderly homeowners who need to renovate or retrofit their homes for safety
- Encourage the conversion of low traffic hotels or other commercial buildings into single room occupancy (SRO) buildings
- Identify surplus federal property that could be utilized as housing for the homeless
- Support the work of non-profit groups seeking to develop assisted living facilities for victims of AIDS



6.3 Neighborhood Policies and Action Strategies

Policy #1: Stable Neighborhoods

Maintain and strengthen, to the maximum extent possible, neighborhoods in the City that are presently stable. [*Policy Link: Land Use #1, Economic Development #2*]

Action Strategies

- Maintain and, where possible, enhance existing infrastructure (roads, utilities, sidewalks, etc.)
- Apply neighborhood conservation strategies, e.g.:
 - code/law enforcement [*Policy Link: Community Appearance #1*]
 - renovation or rehabilitation of existing single-family units as a priority over demolition and construction of new units
 - zoning and development standards to ensure compatibility of infill/new construction with the neighborhood context
 - protection from incompatible land uses
- Evaluate and strengthen the City’s current rental licensing and inspection program
- Maximize potential market opportunities for the introduction of new quality housing
- Initiate education and outreach programs for property owners, including written and online information on:
 - zoning and any variations (variances, nonconforming conditions, etc.) that relate to their properties
 - home maintenance and improvements
- Target public resources for neighborhood capacity building (Civic Associations, Community Development Corporations, Merchants Associations, Business Improvements Districts, etc.)
- Support efforts of organizations such as civic and business associations to maintain and improve neighborhood quality (e.g., clean-up and beautification activities)

Policy #2: Transitional Neighborhoods

Identify and reverse, to the maximum possible, negative trends affecting transitional neighborhoods and capitalize on possible new development opportunities. [*Policy Link: Economic Development #2*]

Action Strategies

All of the action strategies listed above for Stable Neighborhoods plus the following additional strategies:

- Target capital investments by the City (e.g., infrastructure, streetscape improvements, etc.) to support private reinvestment in transitional neighborhoods
- Utilize and strongly enforce building/property codes, holding the violator responsible be it the property owner or tenant [*Policy Link: Community Appearance #1*]
- Develop procedures to ensure the maintenance and upkeep of vacant properties



- Encourage new housing suitable to a mix of income groups that is developed consistent with design standards reflecting the neighborhood context
- Encourage new business development opportunities through the provision of incentives and technical assistance
- Target creative financing programs for home ownership and business development, including incentives for public employees (teachers, police, etc.) to purchase homes in neighborhoods
- Evaluate policies and development standards associated with historic districts to:
 - minimize regulatory impediments to compatible renovation and reinvestment
 - promote use of tax credits and other incentives for reinvestment

Policy #3: Neighborhoods Requiring Redevelopment

Reduce blight and obsolescence and capture new growth opportunities while preserving and building on historical neighborhood assets. [*Policy Link: Land Use #1, Economic Development #2*]

Action Strategies

All of the action strategies listed above for Transitional Neighborhoods (with the exception of historic districts) plus the following additional strategies:

- Use public acquisition/land assembly, redevelopment, and land banking (if necessary) to remove obsolescent land uses and/or conditions of blight
- Seek to regain, to the extent possible, a sense of historic identity and sense of place in revitalization/redevelopment activities for redevelopment neighborhoods
- Provide improved traffic flow, accessibility, parking, and lighting as part of redevelopment planning
- Encourage new housing suitable to a mix of income groups that is developed consistent with design standards reflecting the historic context and sense of place

Policy #4: Supporting Facilities and Services

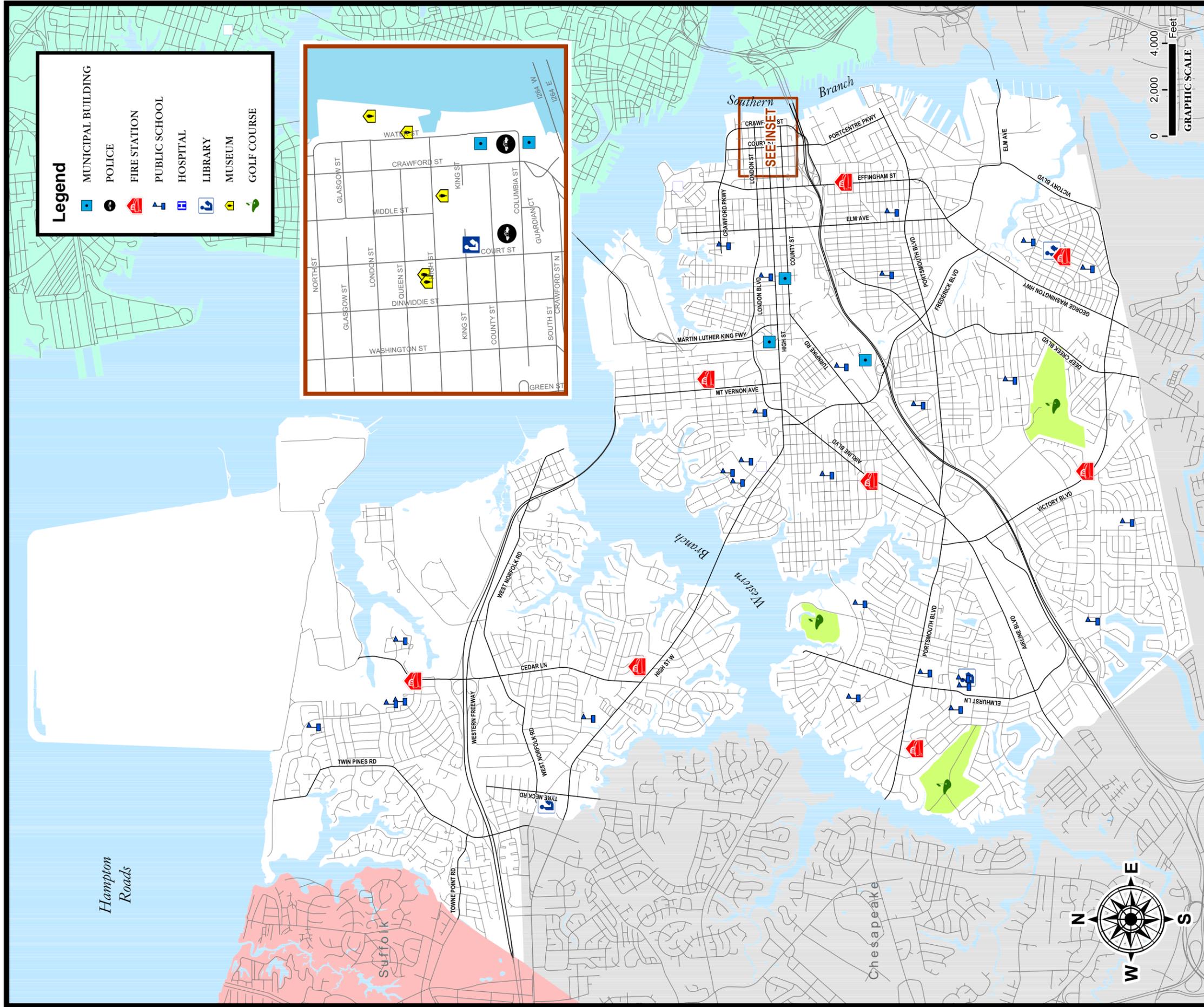
Provide public and private facilities, services, and infrastructure to support neighborhood quality and livability.

Action Strategies

- Link programming of public infrastructure improvements to an overall plan and priorities for neighborhood improvement
- Provide quality of life amenities and facilities in Activity Centers that are accessible to the City's neighborhoods, e.g.:
 - community facilities (schools, park and recreation facilities, sidewalk/trail connections, etc.)
 - retail and service opportunities
 - eating, drinking, and entertainment facilities



- Support the creation of public green spaces and landscaped areas to provide recreational opportunities and to enhance the perceived quality of adjacent neighborhoods (e.g., stormwater management facilities developed as “water gardens,” marginally developable or undersized property used to create passive-use public space)
- Provide municipal facilities and services on a regional basis so as to combine accessibility to neighborhoods with cost effectiveness [*Policy Link: Community Facilities, Services, and Infrastructure #1*]
- Link neighborhood revitalization to a strategy for improving the quality of Portsmouth’s schools, including examination of the implications for neighborhoods of school closings, consolidations, and redistricting [*Policy Link: Education #4*]
- Provide the City’s neighborhoods with convenient access to a multi-modal transportation system while preventing significant impacts from major traffic-generating uses
- Improve the visual appearance and reduce visual clutter (excess signage, overhead utilities, substandard structures, etc.) of primary and secondary roadway corridors serving neighborhoods



COMMUNITY FACILITIES

PORTSMOUTH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

**Community Facilities,
Services, and
Infrastructure**



7.0 COMMUNITY FACILITIES, SERVICES, AND INFRASTRUCTURE

7.1 Overview

Goal: Community facilities, services, and infrastructure that meet citizens' needs and contribute to quality of life in a cost-effective manner.

This element addresses several types of public facilities and services (police, fire, libraries, human services, municipal facilities – see Map 7) and infrastructure systems (water, sanitary sewer, stormwater drainage) provided by the City of Portsmouth. Several other types of

Social
Services
building



public facilities and infrastructure, including public schools, parks and recreation, and transportation, are addressed in other Comprehensive Plan chapters (3.0 Education, 8.0 Transportation, and 9.0 Parks, Open Space, and Environment). However, it should be noted that Policies #1 and 2 in Section 7.2 below apply to all community facilities and services, including schools, parks, and recreational facilities.

Police

Police protection for the citizens of Portsmouth is provided by the Portsmouth City Police Department. There is approximately one police officer for every 400 citizens, which is the national average. The Portsmouth City Police coordinate with the Virginia State Police (located in the Greenbrier section of Chesapeake) for bomb squad and interstate highway enforcement issues.

Police operations are based in the headquarters located in Downtown Portsmouth at 711 Crawford Street, as well as a variety of city-owned and leased facilities dispersed throughout Portsmouth. The City's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) calls for construction of a new facility to address the operational issues associated with dispersed facilities and to improve communications, business processes, and customer service. A site on Effingham Street next to Fire Station 1 has been identified as a potential location for this facility.

Crime (both real and perceived) has been identified as a major factor affecting citizens' quality of life. Community policing is a major Police Department initiative, including Neighborhood Enforcement Action Teams (NEAT) that work in neighborhoods throughout Portsmouth. The department is integrating community policing throughout its operations by developing Police Service Areas. Sworn personnel from throughout the department will be assigned to



specific geographical areas to enhance problem-solving teams along with the NEAT officers. Additionally, the department is undertaking a complete organizational assessment as it moves to obtain first-time accreditation from the Virginia Law Enforcement Professional Standards Commission.

The number of arrests per capita is higher in Portsmouth than in other South Hampton Roads communities (Table 7). However, crime in Portsmouth has decreased in most categories of offense over the last 10 years and the following categories experienced significant decreases from 1998 to 2003: larceny (10.0% decrease), aggravated assault (13.1%), robbery (22.3%), burglary (35.5%), and auto theft (38.2%). The Police Department has set the following measures of success to be achieved by 2008:

- Public perception for feelings of safety will surpass comparable cities nationwide.
- Serious crime in Portsmouth will be lower than comparable cities nationwide.
- The Police Department will be fully staffed, with a waiting list of qualified recruits.

In addition to the Police Department, the Sheriff’s Office of the City of Portsmouth operates the City Jail, provides court security, serves warrants, and offers a variety of community programs. Located in Downtown Portsmouth on Crawford Street, the City Jail had an average of 484 inmates in 2004, which is 68 percent over its capacity of 288. The jail is connected to the Portsmouth District Court building, which is also owned by the City.

A second correctional institution – the Hampton Roads Regional Jail, located off of Airline Boulevard – serves the Cities of Hampton, Newport News, Norfolk, and Portsmouth. A maximum-security facility constructed in 1998, the Regional Jail has a capacity of 1,200 prisoners. Currently it has 1,050 inmates, including 200 contracted for by the City of Portsmouth to alleviate overcrowding at the City Jail.

Table 7. Crime Statistics, South Hampton Roads Communities

Community	Group A Arrests ¹ (2003)	Population ² (2002 Estimate)	Residents per each Group A Arrest
Chesapeake	3,378	205,100	61
Norfolk	4,056	234,100	58
Portsmouth	3,084	98,400	32
Suffolk	1,323	69,200	52
Virginia Beach	8,369	428,400	51
South Hampton Roads	20,210	1,035,200	51

¹Source: Virginia Uniform Crime Reporting Program. Group A arrests include a variety of types of crime.

²Source: Hampton Roads Planning District Commission



Fire and Emergency Services

The City of Portsmouth Department of Fire, Rescue, and Emergency Services provides a variety of services, including fire suppression, pre-hospital emergency medical services (ALS transport), hazardous materials emergency response and mitigation, technical rescue, marine incident response, public fire and EMS education, emergency disaster management, fire prevention, and arson investigation. Total Fire Department personnel numbered 240 in 2003. The Fire Department operates eight stations in the City of Portsmouth. A ninth station was closed and combined with another station in 2001. The City's CIP includes construction of a new station in Truxtun in the Portsmouth Boulevard/Deep Creek Boulevard area. In addition, the Fire Department has identified the potential need for a new station in West Norfolk.



Firehouse

Average response time to emergency calls averaged slightly over five minutes in 2002, which is at or below the response time of fire departments in other Hampton Roads communities but does not meet the National Fire Protection Association's (NFPA) Standard 1710, adopted in 2001.¹

Libraries

The City of Portsmouth operates a library system consisting of a main library in the Downtown on Court Street and branch libraries in Churchland, Cradock, and Hodges Manor (the Manor Branch). Used by residents of Suffolk and Chesapeake as well as Portsmouth, the Churchland library has been identified as inadequate for present demands. Construction of a new library to replace the existing one is included in the City's CIP and land has been acquired by the City in Churchland to accommodate this facility. The possibility of regional participation in this project should be explored.



Portsmouth Public Library

The traditional role of libraries in community life is changing due to societal and technological trends such as widespread use of the Internet. These trends need to be taken into account in planning for future library facilities and services (e.g., by providing expanded hours and computer access to accommodate the varied lifestyles of users). A long-range plan is needed to evaluate usage at existing libraries and to explore the possibility of developing a new, state-of-the-art facility, for example at the new campus of Tidewater Community College (see discussion below).

¹ NFPA Standard 1710 calls for a time of four minutes or less for the arrival of a unit with first responder or higher level capability at an emergency medical incident. This objective should occur 90% of the time.



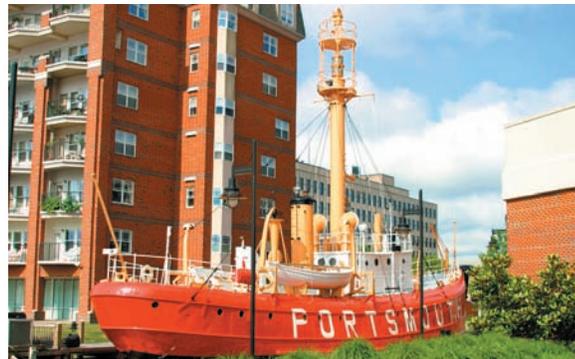
Human Services

A variety of services for individuals and families in Portsmouth are provided by the City's Department of Social Services (DSS) and Department of Behavioral Healthcare (DBH). Examples include foster care, adult and child protective services, job assistance, and medical aid provided by DSS and mental health, mental retardation, and substance abuse services provided by DBH. Together, DSS and DBH provide an important safety net for Portsmouth's poor and disadvantaged population, as well as programs that help citizens lead productive, self-sufficient lives.

DSS is based in the Portsmouth Human Resources Building across High Street from I.C. Norcom High School while DBH operates out of two downtown buildings. The City's CIP calls for relocation of DBH to a new building to be constructed on a site near the Social Services Building, thus consolidating these related functions in one area. With the Norcom High School located across High Street, this area offers the future opportunity to locate additional community-serving facilities in a civic complex.

Municipal Facilities

Maintained by the City of Portsmouth Department of General Services, municipal facilities include many properties owned outright by the City, as well as some properties that are leased. A number of the municipal facilities are discussed above under the various categories of community services provided by the City of Portsmouth. Examples of other municipal facilities include City Hall, city-operated museums (Children's Museum of Virginia, Courthouse Galleries, Lightship Museum, and Portsmouth Naval Shipyard Museum), and maintenance facilities such as the Public Works Compound (Operations Center).



Lightship
Museum

Several interrelated issues pertain to the location and operation of municipal facilities. First is the importance of efficient service to citizens in the form of facilities that are readily accessible and cost-effective in their operations. From this perspective shared or joint-use facilities can offer benefits to citizens while providing opportunities for sharing of resources and costs. Second, municipal facilities with significant numbers of employees and/or visitors can enhance economic and community activity in the surrounding area. An example is the contribution to the economic vitality of the Downtown made by City Hall, the museums, and other city facilities. A third important issue is the need to maximize return on scarce land resources in a predominantly built-out city. From this perspective City Hall, City Jail/ Portsmouth District Court, and the Public Works Compound (Operations Center) are located on land that would ideally be better used for private development due to a waterfront location or interstate access.



Water/Sanitary Sewer

The Portsmouth Department of Public Utilities/Works operates the city-owned water system, which serves approximately 140,000 persons in Portsmouth and parts of Chesapeake and Suffolk. The water supply is drawn from four lakes and five deep wells located on 3,300 acres in the City of Suffolk. A filtration plant, the Lake Kilby Treatment Plant, is also located in Suffolk. The system's total safe yield of 25.8 million gallons per day (mgd) is well in excess of the average daily demand of 17.36 mgd and the peak daily demand of 20.12 mgd in 2003. The system also includes storage facilities, pump stations, and a 543-mile long distribution and transmission system.

The Department of Public Utilities/Works also maintains the sanitary sewer collection network, which includes approximately 435 miles of gravity sewers and force mains, 26 collection wells, and 61 pumping stations. This network conveys the City's sewage to two sewage treatment plants operated by the Hampton Roads Sanitation District: the Nansemond Plant in Suffolk (which serves Churchland) and the Virginia Initiative Plant in Norfolk (which serves the remainder of Portsmouth).

Portsmouth's water supply/treatment and sanitary sewer treatment facilities appear to have sufficient capacity to meet present and future needs. The Department has undertaken a Water System Firm Yield Study and Master Plan Update to assess the impacts of future water demands and regulatory changes on the City's water system. However, various components of the water distribution and sewage collection networks are in need of rehabilitation due to the age of the infrastructure (many lines are more than 100 years old and a full 63% of these systems are in operation beyond their useful lives). According to a December 2001 study by the Department of Public Utilities/Works, Portsmouth's overall utility system (both water and sanitary sewer) has a replacement value of about \$550 million. Based on industry standards, the City should be spending about \$9 million per year to replace aging portions of this system, including \$6 million per year to replace water and sewer lines in neighborhoods. Planning efforts should recognize that required funding needs to keep up with inflation as costs increase over time. The City has initiated a Neighborhood Water and Sewer Replacement Program to address the problem of deferred maintenance of these aging utility systems. A key issue for this program is the need to coordinate programmed utility replacements with other city activities designed to promote neighborhood revitalization and economic development. Assessment of the condition of the supporting water and sewer infrastructure should be a key component of any redevelopment strategy.



Stormwater Drainage

The City of Portsmouth's stormwater drainage system is operated by the Stormwater Management Division of the Department of Public Utilities/Works. The system is comprised of 250 miles of drainage pipe, 42 miles of ditches, 9,000 drains and catch basins, and 488 outfalls that drain into area waterways and ultimately into the Chesapeake Bay. Like the City's water and sewer systems, the stormwater drainage system is very old and in need of rehabilitation. The stormwater management system has an estimated replacement value of approximately \$155 million. Based on industry standards, the City should be spending nearly \$6.6 million annually to manage the system, or about \$4 million more than the current level of investment. The need to address federal and state requirements regarding the water quality impacts of the stormwater system is a related issue.



Paradise Creek

The City has developed a Stormwater Management Plan for adoption and implementation. This plan incrementally raises the Stormwater Management Fee to provide necessary funding for the maintenance of existing stormwater facilities, compliance with current regulations, and for additional public education on stormwater issues. The pace and amount of the incremental fee increases should be reviewed periodically to ensure adequacy, especially in light of the implementation of new regulations and inflationary increases in maintenance costs. The Stormwater Management Plan does not address the construction of new stormwater facilities (curb, gutter, and drainage) in areas lacking them nor does it address stormwater facility "betterment" in areas that have some stormwater facilities, but in which the facilities may be inadequate in size, consist of open ditches, or have no curb or gutters. This indicates the need for a comprehensive city-wide inventory and plan to integrate the already defined maintenance needs with new construction, "betterment," and anticipated regulatory requirements.

Policies and action strategies for the above community facilities, service, and infrastructure systems are articulated in Section 7.2. Policy #1 advocates establishment and use by the City of a rational methodology in planning for the provision of community facilities and services. This methodology, called the Community Facility Planning System, should begin with the identification of objective levels of service or performance standards for each type of community facility or service. (As an example, the number of officers per resident population and emergency vehicle response time are standards commonly used for police and fire service, respectively.) The levels of service/performance standards can then be used to plan for and program improvements to existing facilities and services or development of new ones to meet identified deficiencies.

Several other issues related to the provision of community facilities and services by the City are covered by Policy #1, including recommendations to optimize their geographic distribution, provide joint use facilities where possible (including facilities shared with other jurisdictions),



and to develop adequate long-range management and maintenance programs for all city facilities as part of an overall Community Facilities Master Plan. The City's existing cemeteries (as well as the possibility of the City assuming control over currently private cemeteries) should be addressed in the Master Plan.

The planned development of a new campus of Tidewater Community College in Portsmouth provides an exciting example of the joint use opportunities that exist. As noted in Chapter 3.0 (Education), this campus could incorporate facilities and programs that provide college level courses for Portsmouth high school students. It could also incorporate a central public library facility with features such as state-of-the-art technology and computer access around the clock to meet the contemporary needs of the community.

Policy #2 deals with the relationship of community facilities to other land uses. For example, facilities such as libraries, community centers, and schools can complement and reinforce the mix of uses in Activity Centers (see the description of Activity Centers in Section 4.2, Future Land Use). This policy also calls for locating or relocating community facilities so as not to occupy land that has higher value for private development. It should be noted that decisions regarding the relocation of existing facilities will need to be based upon feasibility studies and comparisons of the costs involved in relocation to the ultimate benefits provided to the City. Nevertheless, the City should pursue the long-term goal of relocating the City Jail/Portsmouth District Court and the Public Works Compound, in particular, to alternative locations. With respect to the jail and court complex, this will require evaluation of logistical issues related to operating the facilities together or in separate locations.

Policy #3 addresses the human service programs that serve Portsmouth residents. It recommends that programs be targeted and coordinated to provide disadvantaged citizens with the support and training needed to succeed, accompanied by systematic monitoring to determine if the programs are effective in meeting this mission.

Policy #3 also addresses prevention as a key to reducing crime in Portsmouth. Effective crime prevention is related to many different factors, such as economic opportunity; stable, healthy neighborhoods; quality public schools; and active, involved residents and parents. One emerging approach is Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED), which is based on the premise that design of the physical environment can positively



influence human behavior to create a climate of safety and reduce crime. From this perspective community beautification and roadway corridor improvement programs (see Chapter 10.0, Community Appearance) can create a positive image that deters crime and inspires residents to maintain interest in keeping their area safe and clean.² As another example, Policy #3 recommends development of a citywide lighting strategy to help deter crime.

² National Crime Prevention Council website



The City's water, sanitary sewer, and stormwater drainage systems are covered by Policy #4. This policy reinforces the need for replacement of aging infrastructure and also notes that infrastructure investments should be targeted and coordinated to support the City's neighborhood revitalization and economic development activities. This includes ensuring that adequate water, sewer, and other infrastructure systems are available to serve economic development projects planned for specific sites.

The following are proposed as indicators to measure the success of the City's policies and programs for community facilities, services, and infrastructure:

- **Police:** Crime as tracked by the Virginia Uniform Crime Reporting Program – year-to-year trend, comparison to other Hampton Roads communities, comparison to comparable cities nationwide; public perception of safety as measured by citizen surveys, comparison to comparable cities nationwide; emergency response times, comparison to comparable cities nationwide
- **Fire and Emergency Services:** Emergency response time (NFPA Standard 1710 or comparable standard)
- **Libraries:** To be determined; staffing per 1,000 persons served, expenditures on materials per capita, circulation per capita, square footage of space per capita, and utilization rates are examples of standards from other communities
- **Human Services:** Number of persons who are able to leave assistance programs to lead self-sufficient lives
- **Municipal Facilities:** A long-range plan is needed to optimize the future distribution of city facilities based upon objective criteria and standards, as well as cost-benefit analysis. As an example, this plan could call for the relocation of the City Jail to the vicinity of the Hampton Roads Regional Jail as funding becomes available, freeing up a downtown waterfront development site.
- **Public Infrastructure Systems (Water, Sanitary Sewer, and Stormwater Drainage):** funds expended to replace aging infrastructure in comparison to industry standards, level of coordination of infrastructure investments with neighborhood revitalization and economic development priorities

7.2 Policies and Action Strategies

Policy #1: Community Facility Planning System

Establish an ongoing system to 1) identify needs/optimal locations and 2) set priorities for improvements to existing and development of new community facilities and services.

Action Strategies

- Establish objective level of service or performance standards (e.g., fire/emergency vehicular response time) to determine needs for each type of community facility/service
- Based upon the level of service/performance standards, develop an overall Master Plan to meet identified needs through the orderly future expansion of existing or development of new facilities. Initiate projects only if they are in accordance with the approved Master Plan



- Organize development of community facilities and services based upon geographic subareas within the City, balancing the cost-effectiveness of regional service provision with accessibility to local neighborhoods [*Policy Link: Neighborhoods #4*]
- Wherever feasible, provide shared rather than single-use facilities to promote cost efficiencies and more comprehensive services for citizens
- Ensure that sufficient resources are allocated in operating and capital budgets to meet citizens' needs for community facilities and services
- Institute and fund a comprehensive Facilities Management Program providing for adequate maintenance of all city and school facilities
- Investigate opportunities for shared facilities with other jurisdictions

Policy #2: Relationship to Other Land Uses

Integrate community facilities into the City's pattern of land uses.

Action Strategies

- Where possible, include community facilities such as schools and libraries in major (regional) and community mixed-use activity centers [*Policy Link: Land Use #4*]
- Provide safe and convenient vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle connections between community facilities and the neighborhoods they serve
- In view of the City's scarce land resources, (re)locate community facilities so as not to occupy land that is better used to support high-value private development (e.g., downtown waterfront, I-264 interchanges)
- Take advantage of opportunities to develop open spaces adjacent to community facilities as public amenities (e.g., well-designed plazas, public gathering places)
- Seek appropriate opportunities to locate regional non-taxable facilities/services to areas immediately adjacent to, but outside of city limits. [*Policy Link: Land Use #6*] In identifying such opportunities, balance the tax revenues lost against the benefits derived from having the facility within the City

Policy #3: Human Services

Continue/strengthen existing programs and provide new ones that provide advancement opportunities and a safety net for Portsmouth's poor and disadvantaged population.

Action Strategies

- Place priority on improving Portsmouth public schools and libraries as a key to preparing children to succeed as adults [*Policy Link: Education #1*]
- Ensure that public and private sector programs and services offered by the City of Portsmouth Department of Social Services, Department of Behavioral Healthcare Services, and others are available, accessible, and responsive in a coordinated manner to persons in need. These services include, but are not limited to:
 - Family support, including prenatal education and parenting programs
 - Child care, early childhood development, and programs to prepare pre-school age children for school



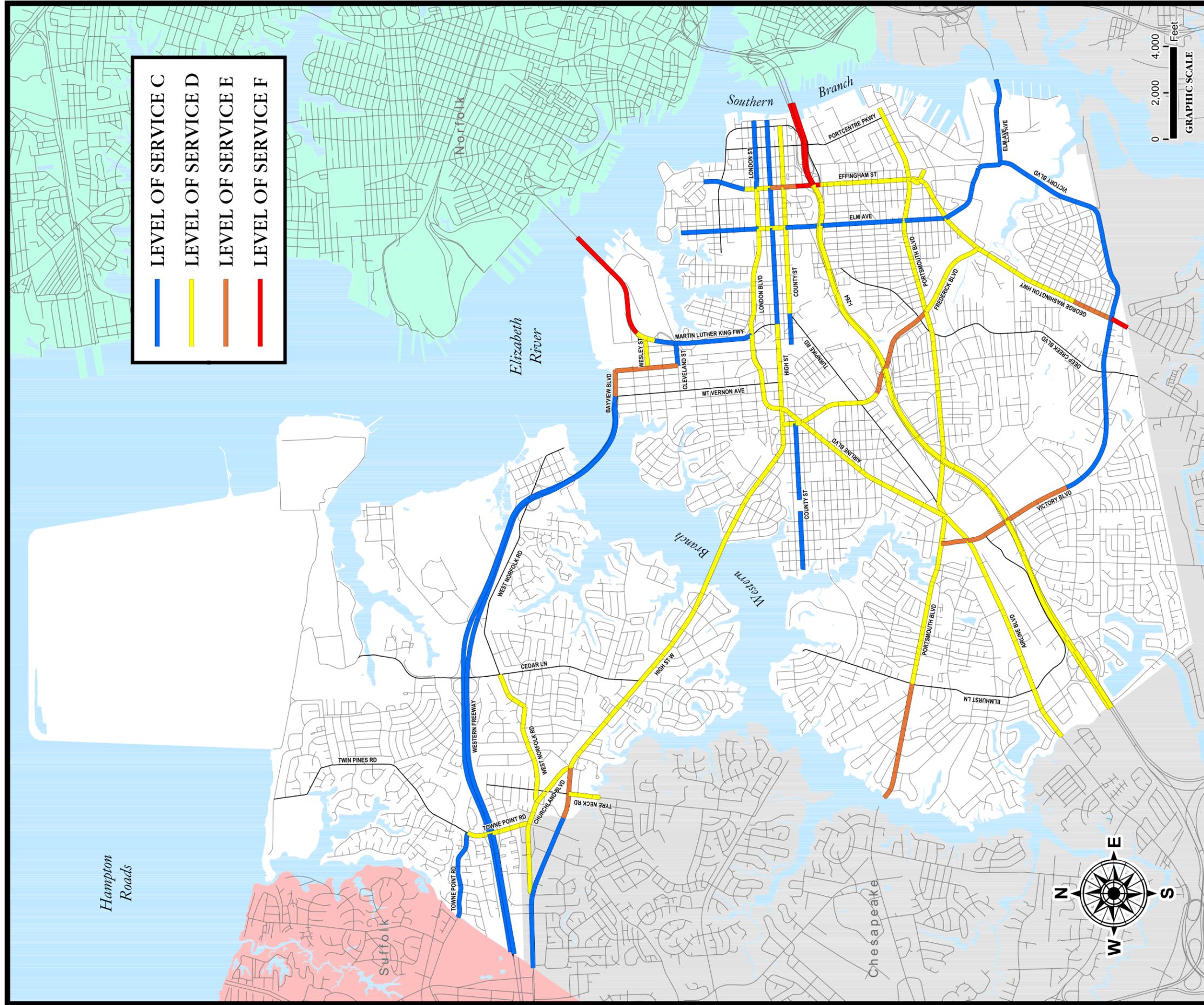
- Recreation, culture, and activities for youths
- Self improvement
- Support for seniors
- etc.
- Enhance workforce training and employment opportunities for low-income residents, e.g.:
 - Job improvement and career development programs for unemployed, underemployed, and low-wage employees
 - Support of small-business startups and development, including appropriate home-based businesses and microenterprise programs
- Pursue a comprehensive approach to public safety that combines:
 - Law enforcement
 - Crime prevention, including application of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) techniques (e.g., development of a citywide lighting strategy to deter crime)
 - Programs to address the causes of crime (e.g., education/job training)
- Develop and implement measures to monitor the effectiveness of human service programs and modify or eliminate under-performing programs

Policy #4: Public Infrastructure Systems

Develop and fund a program to replace Portsmouth’s aging water, sanitary sewer, and stormwater drainage systems.

Action Strategies

- Continue the City’s current programs to prioritize and replace deteriorating sections of the water and sanitary sewer systems
- Implement the Stormwater Management Plan to replace deteriorating sections of the stormwater drainage system
- Coordinate public infrastructure investments with the City’s neighborhood revitalization and economic development activities:
 - Replace aging public infrastructure as part of a broader public/private investment strategy to promote revitalization of “transitional” neighborhoods, based upon priorities set by the City
 - Ensure that adequate infrastructure is in place to support key economic development sites and projects
- Continue public education and outreach programs to Portsmouth citizens on the importance of properly maintaining the City’s infrastructure systems
- Identify funding sources and commit funding at the levels necessary to bridge the gap between current levels of spending and the spending necessary to bring infrastructure systems to acceptable condition

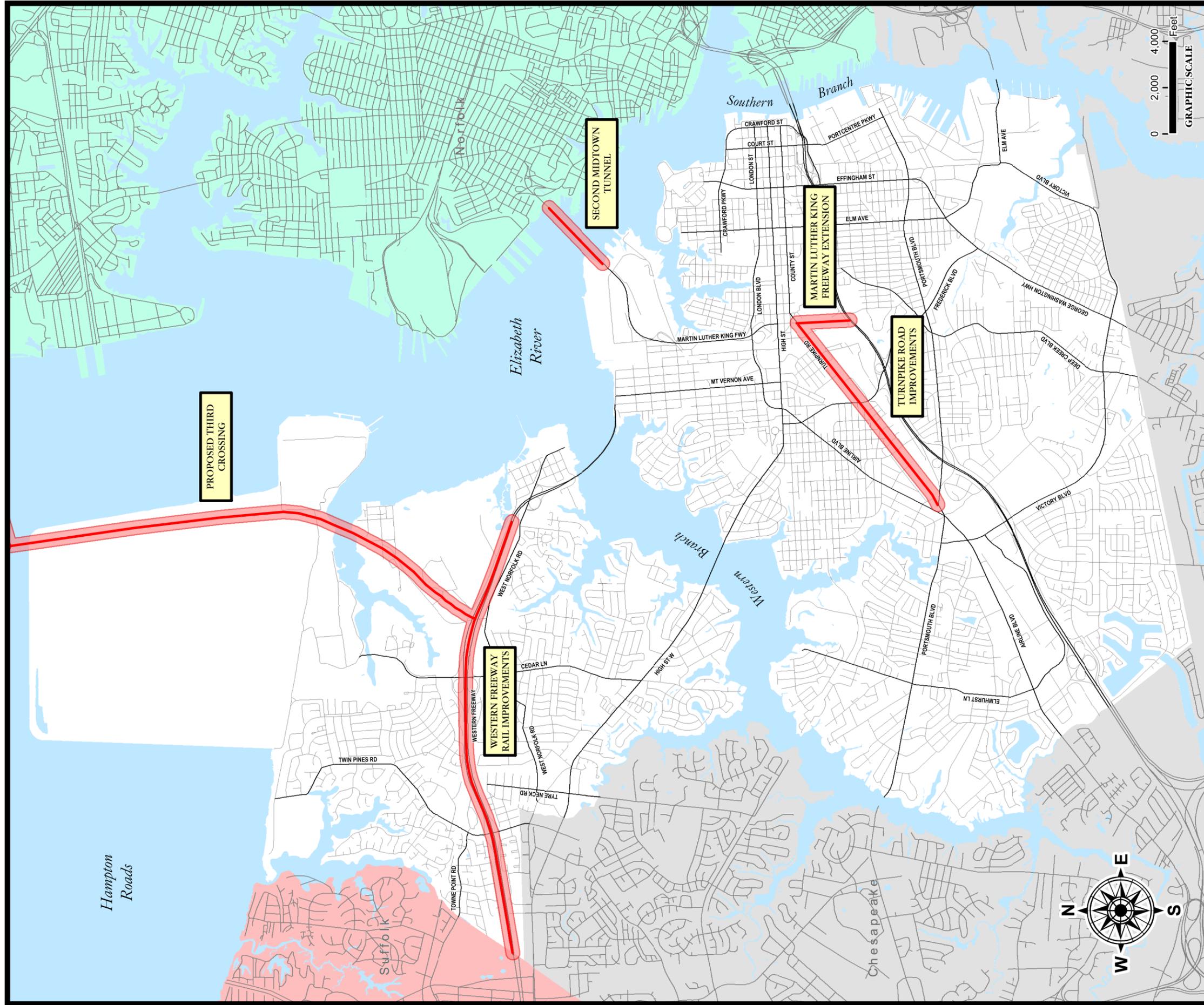


DESTINATION 2025
Setting A Bold New Course

MAP 8

**EXISTING ROADWAY
LEVELS OF SERVICE (2004)**

PORTSMOUTH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



DESTINATION 2025
Setting A Bold New Course

MAP 10

PLANNED TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS

PORTSMOUTH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



8.0 TRANSPORTATION

8.1 Overview

Goal: A multi-modal transportation network with enhanced features that support the City of Portsmouth's quality of life and economic vitality.



This element addresses the components of an integrated transportation system for Portsmouth, including the City's road network, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, transit service, parking, and the relationship between transportation and land use. As indicated by the high percentage of workers who drive to work (Table 8), the predominant means of transportation in Portsmouth is the automobile. While only about four percent of Portsmouth workers bike or walk to their

jobs, the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation's 2002 *Virginia Outdoors Plan* notes that alternative means of transportation are important to people who recreate (67% of whom walk as a leisure activity, 40% bike, 22% jog, and 11% skate).

Table 8. Means of Transportation to Work, 2000

Means	Portsmouth	Virginia	United States
Drove Alone	72.8%	77.1%	75.7%
Carpooled	15.6%	12.7%	12.2%
Public Transportation	3.0%	3.6%	4.7%
Bicycled or Walked	3.9%	2.5%	3.3%
Worked at Home	2.7%	3.2%	3.3%
Motorcycle or Other Means	1.9%	0.9%	0.8%

Source: Hampton Roads Planning District Commission (HRPDC), based on U.S. Census

Road Network

As a fully developed city, Portsmouth has a relatively complete road network consisting of freeways, arterial and collector streets, and local roads serving residential neighborhoods. Congestion occurs along major routes during peak commuting hours. Segments of Portsmouth's regional road network (freeways and arterials) with current (2004) levels of service C and



below during the PM peak hour are shown on Map 8 (source: HRPDC).¹ As can be seen, the worst congestion (levels of service E and F) is experienced by road segments that connect Portsmouth to the regional road system, in particular the Downtown and Midtown Tunnels. Aside from the more heavily traveled corridors, the majority of Portsmouth's internal road network functions reasonably well and does not need major capacity improvements (e.g., widening of roads to add lanes) in order to alleviate congestion. Congestion is projected to significantly worsen in the future if improvements are not made to the regional transportation system. Map 9 shows regional roadway segments projected by HRPDC to have level of service C or below in 2026 (the timeframe of the long-range regional transportation plan) assuming no such improvements are made.²

Portsmouth has several employment centers that are major generators of traffic, such as the Downtown, Norfolk Naval Shipyard, and the Naval Medical Center. According to the 2000 Census, there are 43,922 workers in the City, of which 19,875 work in Portsmouth and 24,047 commute elsewhere to work. The number of persons who commute to Portsmouth to work (29,994) exceeds out-commuters by approximately 25%. In 2000 the percentage of vehicles passing through Portsmouth (as opposed to beginning and/or ending their trip in the City) was 47% on I-264 between Deep Creek Boulevard and Frederick Boulevard, 58% at the Downtown Tunnel, and 58% on Western Freeway between Cedar Lane and Town Point Road.

Programmed roadway improvement projects include (see Map 10):

- Turnpike Road improvements from County Road to Alexander's Corner (first phase to Frederick Boulevard scheduled to be completed in 2006-2007)
- Pinner's Point connector from Western Freeway to Martin Luther King Freeway and the Midtown Tunnel
- Victory Boulevard improvements between I-264 and Greenwood Drive



Pinner's Point connector

At the regional level, the *Hampton Roads 2026 Regional Transportation Plan* completed by the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission (HRPDC) projects increasing vehicle miles traveled and associated congestion over the next 20 years, particularly if key roadway projects are not constructed due to lack of funding. The following regionally significant projects that are critical to alleviating traffic congestion associated with commuter and truck traffic in Portsmouth are currently unfunded:

¹ Used as an indicator of the operation of a roadway and measured on a scale of A to F, level of service (LOS) is a qualitative measure of a driver's comfort and safety perception as related to speed, travel time and delay, traffic interruptions, freedom to maneuver, driver frustration, comfort, convenience, and safety. LOS "A" represents free flow, where drivers are unaffected by others in the traffic stream. LOS "B" represents stable flow; however, the presence of others in the traffic stream is noticeable. LOS



- Extension of Martin Luther King Freeway south to I-264
- A second tube at the Midtown Tunnel
- A third crossing of the James River north from Western Freeway

Other major issues include:

- ***The need to adequately maintain the City's aging roadway infrastructure.*** Current state and city funding for repaving and reconstruction of deteriorated streets is not sufficient to keep up with the need, resulting in increased deferred maintenance. A related issue is the need to coordinate street reconstruction with upgrades to other infrastructure systems (water, sewer, and stormwater).
- ***The need to improve the visual appearance of roadway corridors and gateway entrances throughout Portsmouth.*** This issue is addressed in Chapter 10.0 (Community Appearance).

Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

Portions of Portsmouth, such as the Downtown, are well served by sidewalks. However, gaps in the sidewalk network occur in many parts of the City. A survey of sidewalks in the Port Norfolk neighborhood found that these gaps ranged from one to four blocks in length. In addition, many existing sidewalks are in poor condition or have physical obstructions to use by pedestrians. The City does not have a sidewalk plan or a dedicated funding source for the reconstruction of existing sidewalks or the construction of new ones.

There are currently no designated bicycle routes or facilities in Portsmouth or an overall city plan for providing such facilities. However, the Multi-City Bicycle Trail Project is planned to develop a 29-mile bikeway connecting the Cities of Suffolk, Chesapeake, Portsmouth, and Norfolk. In addition, accommodations for bicycles are beginning to be programmed into roadway improvement projects (e.g., the Clifford Street bridge replacement).



Bike lane concept

Source: Hampton University Department of Architecture: Envisioning Portsmouth

“C” is within the limit of stable flow, where maneuvering within the traffic flow requires significant vigilance. LOS “D” represents high density but stable flow, where freedom and speed to maneuver are highly restricted. LOS “E” represents operating levels at or near capacity. Comfort and convenience levels are very low, driver frustration is high, and very long delays ensue. LOS “F” is used to define a breakdown of flow. The amount of traffic arriving at a point exceeds the amount departing and queues begin to form. Extreme delays are encountered.

Current City of Portsmouth policy is to maintain level of service C during the peak hour. However, many other urban communities use level of service D as the minimum acceptable standard.

² The HRPDC study does not address minor arterial and collector streets that are not part of the regional road network but may also be subject to congestion.



Transit Service

Transit service in Portsmouth is provided by Hampton Roads Transit (HRT). Five bus routes link major destinations within the City, including one route that connects to the Sentara Norfolk General Hospital in Norfolk and Chesapeake Square Mall in Chesapeake, a second that connects to Downtown Norfolk, and a third that connects from Churchland to Tidewater Community College (TCC) in Suffolk. The Downtown Norfolk route runs

seven days a week with reduced service on Sunday. Three of the routes provide service from Monday through Saturday, while the TCC route runs on weekdays only.

The bus system serving Portsmouth includes two transfer stations, one on County Street in the Downtown and the other on McLean Street next to the Victory Crossing Shopping Center. The proper location, design, and appearance of these transfer stations in the context of development or redevelopment in the surrounding areas is an issue, as is the capacity of roadways connecting to the stations to support bus traffic.

In addition to bus service, HRT provides ferry service between the High Street Landing and North Landing in Portsmouth and Waterside in Downtown Norfolk. HRT also maintains two park-and-ride lots in Portsmouth and offers paratransit service to people with disabilities.

HRT is in the planning stages of a light rail project to extend 7.4 miles from the Eastern Virginia Medical Center through downtown Norfolk to Newtown Road. However, HRT has no current plans to provide light rail service to Portsmouth.

Parking

Public parking in Portsmouth is concentrated in the Downtown. Downtown parking facilities, including parking garages, surface lots, parking meters, and parking districts, are administered by the City of Portsmouth Parking Authority. While the overall supply of parking appears to be adequate for present needs, the location of facilities in relation to key destinations is an issue that will grow in importance as visitation increases. The visual appearance of both public and private parking facilities is another issue of concern. Enhanced design standards for parking lots should be enacted in the Zoning Ordinance and opportunities sought to improve the functionality and appearance of parking lots serving older commercial uses as they are redeveloped. Another issue is the need to ensure that the design of parking garages and other parking facilities accommodates access by handicapped vehicles.

Transportation/Land Use Connection

Because Portsmouth is an older developed city with disparate uses often located in close proximity to one another, a key land use/transportation issue is the need to minimize the transportation impacts of more intensive on less intensive uses. In general, transportation facilities and services should support desired land use patterns and meet objectives such as providing citizens with alternatives to automobile usage (walking, bicycling, transit).



A key issue related to the transportation/land use connection is the need to minimize the impacts of truck and rail traffic generated by waterfront industrial uses on Portsmouth's local streets and neighborhoods. An immediate priority is the provision of adequate access to and from the regional road network for the deepwater container terminal planned on the Elizabeth River in Churchland. Access improvements required to serve this development include new road connections, improvements to existing roads, and designation of truck routes that exclude truck traffic from surrounding neighborhoods. Another important priority is the need for a rail corridor within the median of the Western Freeway to move freight rail traffic generated by waterfront industrial uses away from Portsmouth's street network. It is critically important that this rail corridor be in place to serve the future Craney Island Terminal planned by the Virginia Port Authority.


Container shipping

In general, the effects of industrial rail lines and truck traffic on land use and quality of life in Portsmouth is an issue that will need to be closely monitored and addressed as portions of the City are redeveloped and as new facilities such as the deepwater container terminal are opened. Rail lines impact the City's roadway network at at-grade crossings, create physical constraints and opportunities for development, and pose safety, environmental, and aesthetic issues. Container truck traffic is integral to the types of waterfront industrial uses that Portsmouth supports and will continue to grow along with associated impacts on the local and regional road networks in the future. This trend underscores the need for regional projects such as the Martin Luther King Freeway extension to direct truck traffic away from Portsmouth's local streets. In addition, the City should work with major generators of truck traffic such as the Port Authority on management measures to minimize impacts on land uses in Portsmouth.

The policies and action strategies laid out in Section 8.2 address each of the above aspects of Portsmouth's transportation system. Policies #1 to 3 deal with the City's road network. Given that the City is largely built out and the constrained funding available for major transportation improvements, Policy #1 identifies measures to improve the operational efficiency of existing roads as a priority over major new construction projects to address congestion. However, several major roadway improvement projects that are currently unfunded are vitally important to sustaining Portsmouth as an employment center and to maintaining access for the City's residents to the surrounding region. The need to vigorously support these projects – extension of Martin Luther King Freeway south to I-264, the second tube of the Midtown Tunnel, and the third crossing of the James River north from Western Freeway – is addressed in Policy #2. Policy #3 addresses traffic calming as a potential way to reduce traffic impacts in appropriate locations, such as neighborhoods experiencing “cut-through” traffic or streets adjacent to schools. Traffic calming involves changes in street alignment, installation of barriers, and other physical measures to reduce traffic speeds, and/or cut-through volumes, in the interest of street safety, livability, and other public purposes.³

³ Definition from Institute of Transportation Engineers.



Policy #4 advocates development of more complete pedestrian and bicycle networks as part of a multi-modal transportation system. This effort should begin with planning to identify key corridors within which to provide enhanced bicycle and pedestrian facilities, as well as critical gaps in the sidewalk network that should be filled. One approach that has been used in other communities that could be considered for adaptation to Portsmouth is the use of performance measures to measure pedestrian and bicycle levels of service. As an ongoing policy, roadway improvement projects should incorporate accommodations for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Policy #5 recommends a partnership with HRT to explore opportunities for enhanced transit service in the City. This should include exploring the possibility of incorporating light rail capability into capacity improvements to the Midtown Tunnel to enable a future link to Portsmouth from the light rail system planned by HRT for Norfolk.

Middle Street parking garage



Policy #6 supports a proactive approach to planning for Portsmouth's parking supply to accommodate needs in the Downtown and other key areas. It also recommends review and updating of the parking standards contained in the Zoning Ordinance to fit present conditions in Portsmouth and the types of development desired.

Policy #7 addresses the connection between transportation and land use, including mitigating the impacts of major traffic generating uses and creating bicycle and pedestrian friendly environments for land uses. It is intended to complement Land Use Policy #7, which addresses the same topic. Finally, Transportation Policy #8 recommends enhanced communication of information on Portsmouth's transportation system to the public (e.g., improved, attractive signage).

The following are proposed as indicators to be tracked to measure the success of the City's transportation policies and programs:

- Percentage of total trips to work made in single-occupancy vehicles
- Average travel time for selected trips/congestion delay at key locations in road network
- Levels of service on key roadway segments (measured by HRPDC)
- Length of sidewalks built or reconstructed, total and system gaps filled in
- Miles of bicycle lanes and other facilities developed
- Transit boardings per capita



8.2 Policies and Action Strategies

Policy #1: Roadway Network

Enhance the existing roadway network to optimize operational efficiency.

Action Strategies

- Increase the efficiency of existing roadways through measures such as up-to-date signalization and timing, improved access management (i.e., managing the locations of curb cuts/driveways of adjacent land uses), and geometric improvements
- Carry out capacity improvements within the constraints created by Portsmouth's existing street network, including the historic grid pattern. Seek to reduce the overall amount of impervious surface in the City, adding pavement to increase capacity only as a last resort
- Develop a Long-Range Transportation/Master Street Plan to identify and program needed improvements
- Continue to upgrade and expand the existing Traffic Operations Center
- Coordinate with the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) to provide a communications link to the regional Smart Traffic Center, thus allowing for the sharing of information with VDOT and surrounding cities
- Continue to pursue alternative funding sources to install variable message signs (VMS), video detection, and observation cameras for incident management or emergency evacuation
- Develop and fund a maintenance program to strategically improve substandard infrastructure (roadways, water and sewer lines contained within road rights-of-way) and to maintain areas in acceptable conditions (minor pavement overlay, new signing, and refurbished pavement markings)
- Implement strategies to improve the visual appearance of gateway entrances and roadway corridors throughout Portsmouth [*Policy Link: Community Appearance #2*]

Policy #2: Regional Roadway Improvement Projects

Continue to support additional regional facilities (e.g., second tube of Midtown Tunnel, Third Crossing, Martin Luther King Extension, Downtown Tunnel). [*Policy Link: Economic Development #5*]

Action Strategies

- Consider alternate funding possibilities/options as evaluated by the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission (HRPDC)
- Continue lobbying VDOT, State, and federal representatives for the prioritization of critical regional transportation projects and the allocation of transportation funds
- Explore interim strategies, such as ferry service to accommodate truck/container traffic, to relieve congestion on existing roads during the time it takes to secure funding, design, and construct regional facilities



Policy #3: Traffic Calming

Develop traffic calming standards and procedures appropriate to certain locations within Portsmouth.

Action Strategies

- Define measurement procedures such as traffic counts, speed studies, and criteria for application of traffic calming measures. Use this data to validate the need for and level of implementation of traffic calming in specific locations.
- Develop and implement a public education process regarding traffic calming measures
- Adopt or implement traffic calming measure thresholds for undesirable cut-through traffic in residential neighborhoods
- Evaluate the need for additional traffic calming efforts in and around neighborhood schools to enhance student and traffic safety

Policy #4: Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

Promote pedestrian and bicycle facilities and usage throughout the City.

[Policy Link: Parks, Open Space, and Environment #2]

Action Strategies

- Identify key corridors to enhance and improve pedestrian and bicycle facilities as part of the regional network and the HRPDC Regional Plan
- Undertake a citywide sidewalk inventory and implementation plan. Emphasize segments that provide greater connectivity, especially around schools, neighborhoods, and recreational areas
- Promote placement of related land uses adjacent to one another to encourage walking and bicycle activity
- Define pedestrian paths and bikeways with landscaping, lighting, and adequate signage
- Implement pedestrian safety measures (e.g., clearly demarcated crosswalks, countdown signals) where appropriate, such as around schools and in the downtown
- Coordinate the design and construction of roadway improvement projects to include bicycle and pedestrian facilities, adequate lighting, and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant features
- Develop bikeways that connect neighborhoods and neighboring communities to recreation facilities and/or large employment centers such as the Norfolk Naval Shipyard, starting with a demonstration project(s)


Policy #5: Transit Service

Enhance transit service (bus, ferry, and potential future light rail service) and usage throughout the City by increasing ridership opportunities to activity centers and special event attractions.

Action Strategies

- Work with Hampton Roads Transit (HRT) to identify:
 - areas and routes with the highest ridership and potential for enhanced service (e.g., to serve activity/employment centers)
 - ways to make transit service more comfortable and attractive for users
- Coordinate with HRT to promote and advertise the coverage and attractiveness of the transit system
- Work with HRT and Traffix to promote public transportation incentives and the use of alternative commuting modes (park-and-ride, ride sharing, bus rapid transit (BRT), express routes, etc.) to both employers and employees
- Evaluate the potential for a downtown shuttle if opportunities arise related to special events or the type, size, and location of future redevelopment
- Explore the need for and feasibility of an additional landing to expand ferry service
- Evaluate the potential of park-and-ride lots for shipyard and downtown Portsmouth employees
- Coordinate with HRT to ensure adequate accessibility of the transit system to seniors, persons with disabilities, etc.
- Encourage the use of environmentally friendly (e.g., electric or natural gas powered) transit vehicles throughout the City

Policy #6: Parking

Provide for parking adequate to meet needs within the context of Portsmouth's roadway network and urban/historic character.

Action Strategies

- Undertake a parking study in the downtown and in other key areas as needed to address various users (commercial, business, residential) and to adequately relate the type of demand (convenience, cost, availability, time limits, etc.) with supply
- Review and update the parking standards in the Zoning Ordinance, including:
 - Evaluate the appropriateness of standards for specific uses
 - Improve design standards for parking facilities
 - Explore opportunities such as shared and off-site parking
- Investigate the strategic use of structured parking to maximize the economic potential of undersized and underutilized properties
- Ensure accessibility of parking facilities for handicapped vehicles



Policy #7: Transportation/Land Use Connection

Coordinate land use strategies with the existing and future multi-modal transportation system. [Policy Link: Land Use #7]

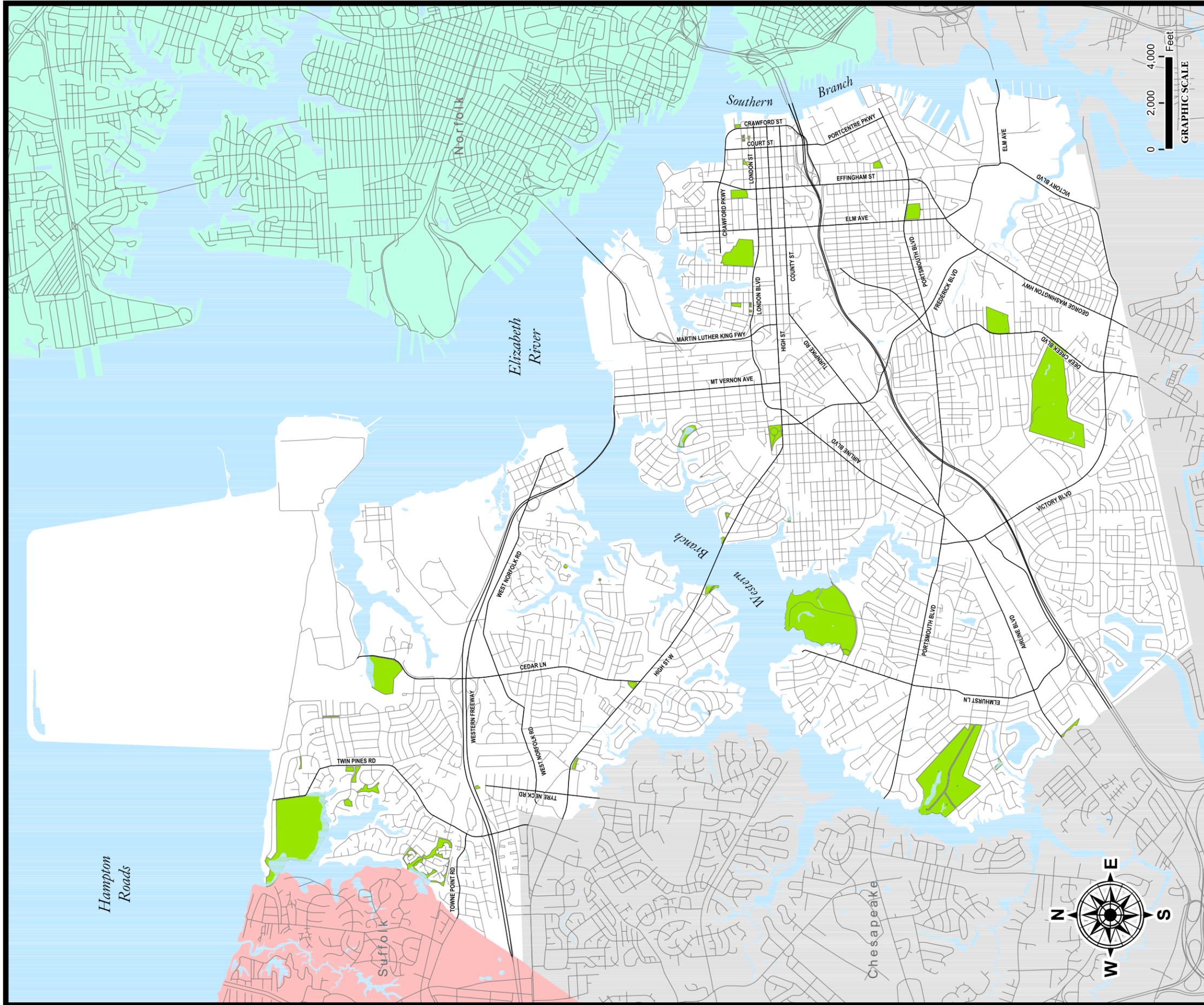
Action Strategies

- Review proposed developments from a transportation perspective to ensure that major traffic generating uses such as industrial and employment areas have the necessary quantity and type of access (signalized intersections, interstate access, and parking facilities) to minimize impacts to the existing roadway network [Policy Link: Economic Development #4]
- Monitor the effects of industrial rail and truck traffic on the City's land uses and work with other entities (e.g., the Virginia Port Authority and Department of Transportation) to implement measures to minimize adverse impacts
- Create a pedestrian and bicycle friendly environment with sidewalk, trail, and bike lane connections to complement proposed land uses and minimize the need for vehicles, particularly in locations such as schools, recreation areas, and the downtown
- Provide convenient, multi-modal access (i.e., that accommodates transit, pedestrians, and bicycles in addition to vehicles) to and from high traffic generating uses and attractions

Policy #8: Communicating Transportation Information

Enhance communication with the public regarding the transportation system.

- Develop coordinated, attractive signage standardized by type of trip (roadway directional signage; employment, commercial, recreational destinations; etc.) [Policy Link: Community Appearance #2]
- Provide adequate signage for pedestrian and bicycle facilities (Policy #4)
- Seek opportunities to provide transportation information (e.g., transit routes/schedules, directions to key destinations) in convenient public places (e.g., web access, malls, transit stops, parking garages, City Hall, community centers, public attractions such as the nTelos Pavilion). Partner with agencies such as HRT in these efforts.



DESTINATION 2025
Setting A Bold New Course

MAP 11

**EXISTING PARKS AND
OPEN SPACE LAND**

PORTSMOUTH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



9.0 PARKS, OPEN SPACE, AND ENVIRONMENT

9.1 Overview

Goal: A quality system of parks, open space, greenways, and protected natural resources.

Portsmouth’s natural environment is defined by its location on the Elizabeth River, James River, and Chesapeake Bay, one of the world’s great estuarine ecosystems. Portsmouth’s approximately 83 miles of shoreline support port facilities and other water-dependent industries, a mainstay of the local economy, as well as waterfront residential properties that are among the City’s most desirable homes. Places where the public has access to the water, such as City Park and High Street Landing, function as community gathering and activity centers. In general, waterfront resources are central to the City’s history, character, identity, and quality of life.



This element of the Comprehensive Plan deals with Portsmouth’s environment – water quality, air quality, and natural resources – and the related topics of solid waste management and parks, recreation, and open space. It incorporates by reference the Environmental Component of the Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 1996 as a separate document by City Council in accordance with Virginia’s Chesapeake Bay Preservation Program. The following overview text first addresses parks,

open space, and greenways, followed by a discussion of policies and strategies related to the major topics covered by the Environmental Component: water, air, solid waste, and the natural environment.

Parks, Open Space, and Greenways

Shown on Map 11, Portsmouth’s existing public parks and open spaces include two larger community parks and a number of smaller neighborhood and “mini” parks (typically 5-10 acres and 1-2 acres in size, respectively). The two larger parks are City Park (68 acres located



on the south shore of the Western Branch of the Elizabeth River) and Churchland Park (37 acres located on River Shore Road in Churchland). Recreational facilities in City Park include playgrounds, picnic areas, tennis courts, a multi-purpose community building, amphitheater, boat ramp, a garden, a 9-hole golf course, and the “Pokey Smokey” train. Churchland Park supports several recreation fields, tennis courts, and trails. In addition, the park is adjacent to two schools with

outdoor recreation facilities. The approximately 30 neighborhood and mini parks are scattered throughout the City south of the Elizabeth River Western Branch, with only one located north of the river in Churchland.

Other city recreation and open space properties include the Hoffer Creek Wildlife Preserve in Churchland, the Bide-A-Wee golf course near Victory Crossing, and eight recreation centers. Bide-A-Wee is an 18-hole course that underwent extensive renovation in 1999, including a new clubhouse and pavilion, and is recognized as an outstanding municipal golf facility. The Hoffer Creek Wildlife Preserve is a 142-acre sanctuary with a variety of habitats located at the mouth of the James River and Chesapeake Bay. The City’s Capital Improvement Program (CIP) includes construction of a nature center to house nature programs and activities at this preserve. All eight recreation centers are located south of the Elizabeth River Western Branch and are concentrated in the western part of the City. One of the centers is a Senior Center that offers programs and events for older adults. The Downtown and Churchland are not served by public recreation centers, although private YMCA facilities are located in both areas.

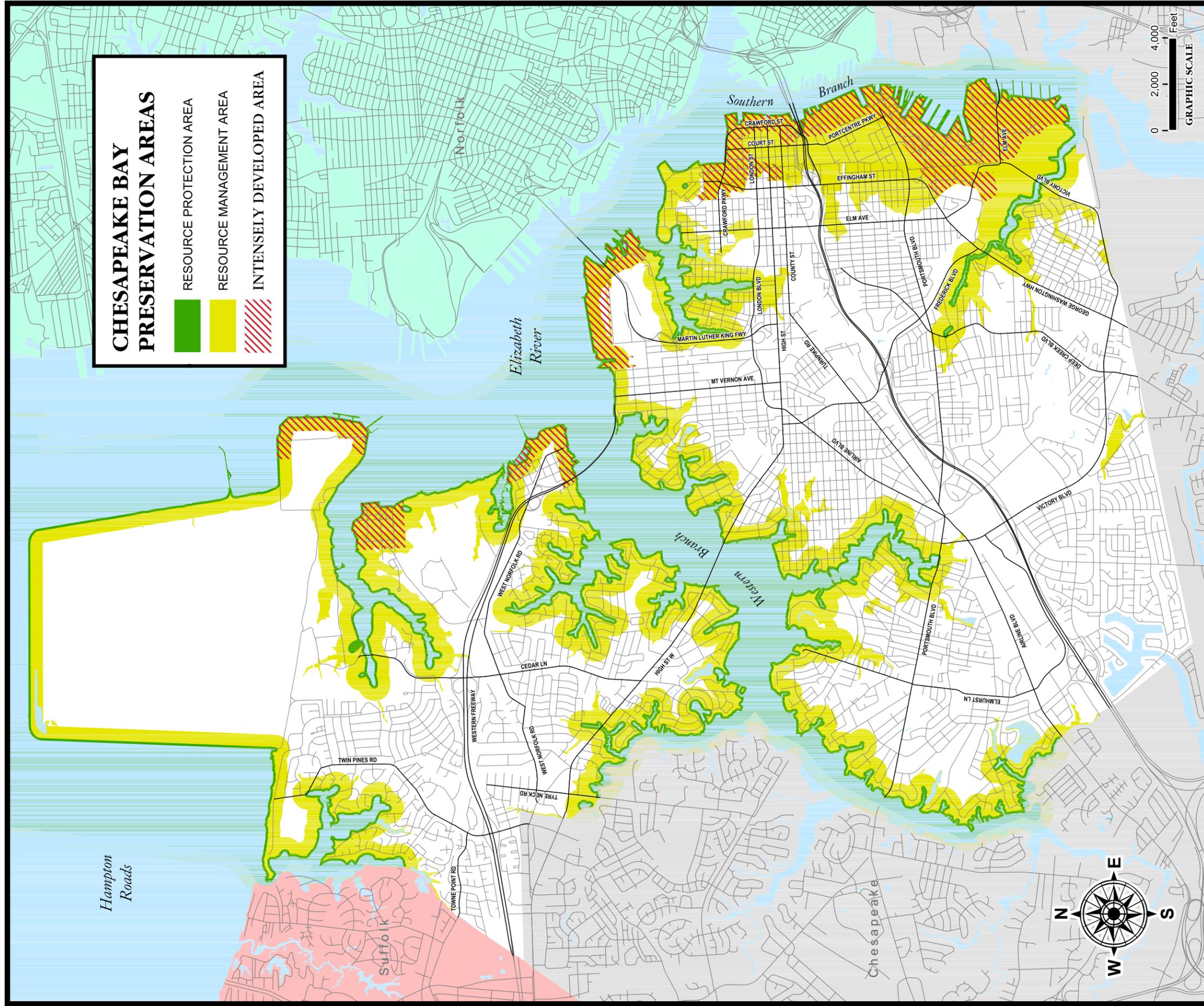


Bide-A-Wee
golf course

The CIP includes various projects to upgrade existing recreational facilities throughout the City, as well as a project to develop a new athletic complex in the Cradock area.

In addition to city parks and recreation facilities, recreational opportunities in Portsmouth are provided through the school system, private organizations, commercial facilities, and private facilities within residential developments. Of particular importance are schools with indoor and outdoor recreation areas and open space that function as neighborhood parks/activity centers for the surrounding residential community. A number of athletic fields maintained by the City are located on City of Portsmouth Public School properties.

Past analyses of city parks and recreation facilities have revealed deficiencies in the following areas:



DESTINATION 2025
Setting A Bold New Course

MAP 12

CHESAPEAKE BAY PRESERVATION AREAS

PORTSMOUTH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



1. The total amount of city-owned parkland (approximately 350 acres) is below the standard of 10 acres per 1,000 residents that is widely used as a target for municipal parks and recreation systems.
2. Significant portions of the City are underserved by neighborhood and community parks using standard service area radii of one-half mile and two miles, respectively, for these facilities. (Churchland is particularly underserved by neighborhood parks and the Downtown and southern portion of the City fall outside of the service radius for City Park.)

In addition, there is a continuing need to accommodate new demands for recreational facilities and programs that emerge over time (e.g., the current popularity of youth soccer). Another important issue is the need to replace athletic fields on U.S. Navy property at St. Julian's Creek that are currently used by the City. The new athletic complex at Cradock will provide replacement facilities; another possibility is to develop fields next to Paradise Creek as part of a new community park (see below).

Because the largely developed nature of the City makes it difficult to acquire additional lands for park and open space purposes, creative approaches will be necessary to meet identified deficiencies. Examples of the possibilities that exist include:

- ***Redevelopment of the former Hunt-Mapp Middle School property as a “Park and Arts” complex:*** This complex would build on the Willett Hall Performing Arts Center and the outdoor areas associated with the school to bring together cultural and recreational facilities and programs in a center of community activity. A master plan for re-use of the Hunt-Mapp Middle School property to accommodate this concept should be developed, including the relationship of the “Park and Arts” complex to the surrounding area.
- ***Acquisition and development of a community park along Paradise Creek as part of implementation of the Paradise Creek Restoration Plan, an Elizabeth River Project initiative:*** The City has initiated a joint park planning initiative in the Paradise Creek area with the Elizabeth River Project and the Navy's Watchable Wildlife Program. This initiative will combine environmental restoration with recreational opportunities for citizens.

A comprehensive parks and recreation plan is needed to fully inventory existing recreational facilities and programs available to city residents, define current and projected needs based upon the inventory and a demographic analysis of Portsmouth's population, and develop strategies and actions to meet those needs. In addition to defining needs and strategies, the plan should explore the following ideas that emerged during the planning process for the Destination 2025 Comprehensive Plan:



City Park

- Develop a central recreational complex to serve residents from the entire City and beyond



- Develop a network of multi-use trails throughout Portsmouth (the City currently has very few trail facilities)
- Increase the amount of public access to the water (the 1995 City of Portsmouth Waterfront Access Study identified existing and potential water access points and can be used as a starting point to develop a strategy for increased public access)

Policies #1 and #2 below are designed to bring about a quality parks, open space, and greenways system for the City of Portsmouth. Policy #1 addresses the need for a comprehensive parks and recreation plan and identifies strategies to meet the needs of Portsmouth residents. Policy #2 proposes a city-wide network of greenways structured around parks, other protected open space lands, and linear corridors (waterways, including “blueways” with public access for landside (walking) and waterside (canoeing, kayaking, etc.) recreation; utility rights-of-way; and landscaped roadways). Paradise Creek, for which a model restoration plan has been developed as part of the Elizabeth River Project, provides a prime opportunity for development of a greenway as a component of this network.

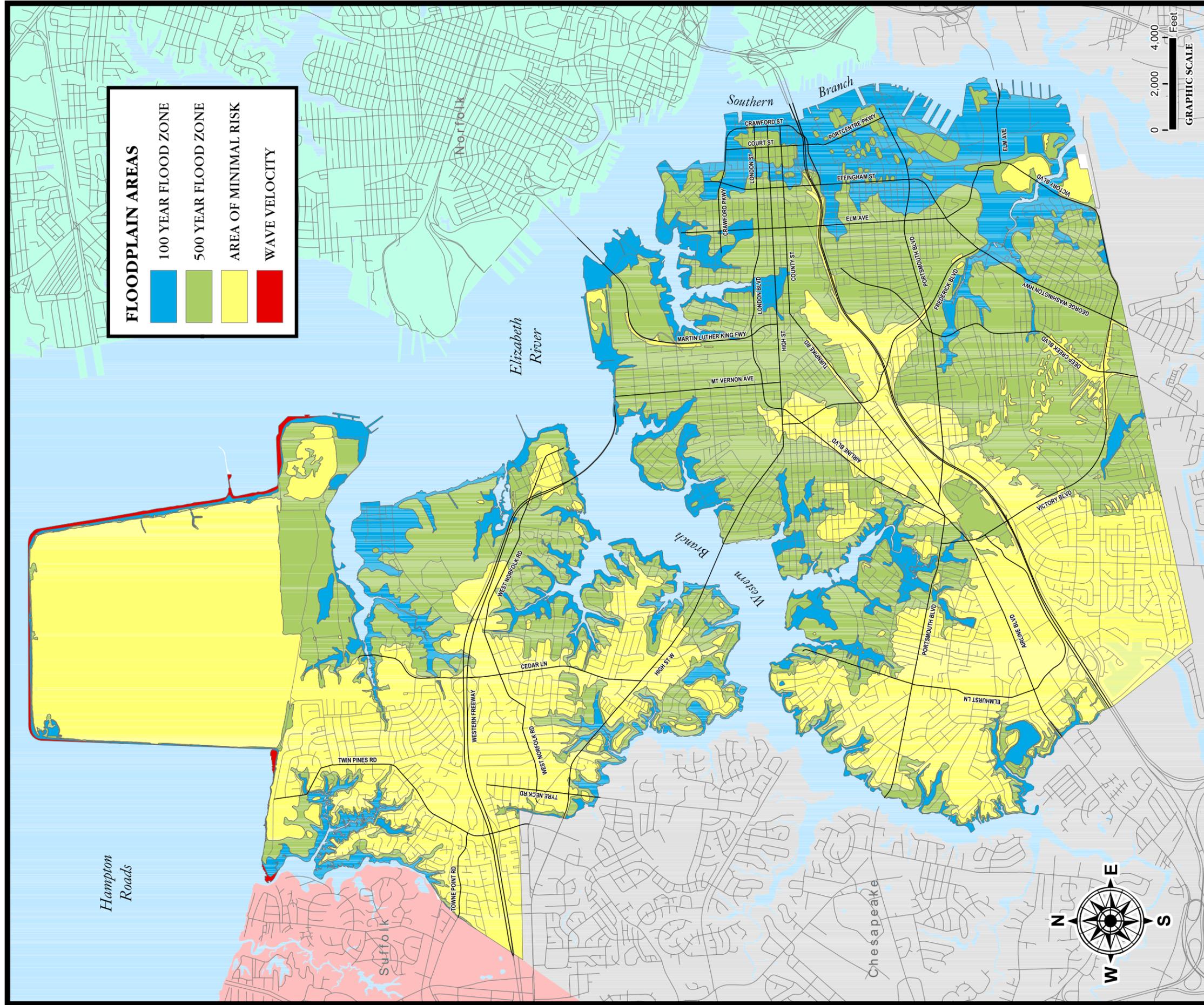
Natural Environment

Portsmouth’s environmental resources are documented separately in the Environmental Component of the Comprehensive Plan. Resources addressed by the Environmental Component include topography, climate, water resources, environmental conditions related to land use (soils, stormwater runoff, etc.), air quality, and natural resources such as wetlands, wildlife, and critical species habitat. In accordance with Virginia’s Chesapeake Bay Preservation Program, the City has in place a Chesapeake Bay Preservation Area Overlay Ordinance designed to minimize non-point source pollution from stormwater runoff, erosion and sedimentation, and nutrients and toxicants. The ordinance establishes the following jurisdictional areas (Map 12):



Hoffler Creek Preserve

- **Resource Protection Area (RPA):** Lands at or near a shoreline that have an intrinsic water quality value due to the ecological and biological processes they perform. RPAs include tidal wetlands, tidal shores, nontidal wetlands, and a 100’ buffer area adjacent to and landward of these resources and all tributary streams.
- **Resource Management Area (RMA):** All lands within 530 feet of the landward boundary of the RPA, the limits of the 100-year floodplain, and certain other wetlands not included in the RPA. Newly developed areas cannot exceed the non-point source pollutant load for the watershed in which they are located while redevelopment sites must achieve at least a 10% reduction in the existing or predevelopment pollutant load for the specific use.
- **Intensely Developed Area (IDA):** Areas in which little or none of the natural environment remains. These areas are usually densely populated and have a very high degree of impervious surface area. Since non-point source pollution is directly proportional to the amount of impervious surface, efforts should be made to reduce impervious surface areas



DESTINATION 2025
Setting A Bold New Course

MAP 13

FLOODPLAIN AREAS

PORTSMOUTH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



when an IDA is redeveloped. Approximately 9% of Portsmouth is designated as IDA, located along the eastern shoreline in industrial areas and densely developed residential areas in the older part of the City. Within IDAs, infill development and redevelopment must meet a 10% pollution reduction.

The Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act Program is a state-mandated program through which the City will continue to participate in state and national efforts to clean up the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. The City should make a commitment to regional leadership in these efforts through ongoing initiatives such as restoration of Paradise Creek and new ones such as “Greening Portsmouth” (see Community Appearance Policy #1).

The Environmental Component identifies goals, objectives, and strategies for four topics related to Portsmouth’s environment: water, air, solid waste, and natural resources. Policies #3 to 6 below address each of these topics. Significant additions to the strategies contained in the Environmental Component include:

- Support of the Elizabeth River Project, a nonprofit organization dedicated to cleaning up the severely polluted Elizabeth River watershed. Public education and outreach, one of the eight “highest priority actions” of the Elizabeth River Watershed Action Plan, is identified as an important action strategy. Another highest priority action contained in the Watershed Action Plan that is relevant to Portsmouth is to “ensure that a proposed expansion of Craney Island, and other proposed port expansions, are both ecologically and economically responsible.”
- Linkage of strategies for the minimization and recycling of solid waste to Portsmouth’s Clean Community program
- Development of a plan for the disposition of the City’s landfill on Craney Island, required under state legislation to close by 2018. This plan should address working with the Southeastern Public Service Authority (responsible for regional solid waste disposal) to identify a suitable replacement for the landfill, the long-term use of the landfill site, and associated funding needs.
- Linkage of air quality improvement to other Comprehensive Plan strategies, including:
 - Encouraging compact/mixed-use land use patterns to encourage pedestrian activity and reduce automobile usage
 - Encouraging the planting of trees and other vegetation throughout the City through a “Greening Portsmouth” initiative



Oyster seeding in the Elizabeth River



Another key action strategy under Policy #6 addresses the City’s continuing efforts to enforce and improve its floodplain management program in accordance with the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s (FEMA) National Flood Insurance Program. This includes updating the City’s Floodplain Management Plan in accordance with FEMA’s Community Rating System. Floodplain areas in the City are shown on Map 13.



9.2 Policies and Action Strategies

Policy #1: Parks and Recreation

Develop a comprehensive parks and recreation plan that defines the needs of Portsmouth's citizens for parks and recreational facilities and identifies strategies to meet these needs.

Action Strategies

- Define needs for different types parks and recreational facilities geographically distributed throughout the City based upon objective measures such as level of service standards
- Develop a major recreational complex that serves Portsmouth residents while attracting participants from inside and outside of the Hampton Roads region. Potential components of this complex include multiple soccer fields, an “extreme” sports center (skate park, bike ramps, rock wall, soap box derby track, etc.), and an enclosed indoor sports facility. [*Policy Link: Economic Development #2*]
- Pursue joint use of recreational facilities owned by Portsmouth Public Schools and other recreational providers [*Policy Link: Education #4*]
- Establish standards for the dedication of parkland (or cash-in-lieu payments) in development/redevelopment projects
- Identify opportunities to establish neighborhood parks accessible to local residents throughout the City
- Increase the number of public access points to the water for recreational activities (walking, boating, etc.)
- Develop an implementation and funding plan to address deficiencies in parks and recreational facilities defined by the needs analysis. Address both capital and operating/maintenance costs in the funding plan

Policy #2: Open Space and Greenways

Develop a citywide open space and greenway network comprised of parks, environmental corridors (waterways, wetlands, etc.), utility right-of-ways, and landscaped roadways.

Action Strategies

- Establish greenway corridors along waterways such as Paradise Creek and Scotts Creek, with vegetated buffers, public access, and trails where feasible
- Identify and pursue opportunities to permanently preserve key natural resource areas as part of the open space and greenway network (e.g., as dedicated open space in new developments)
- Develop a city-wide system of walking/biking trails, utilizing greenway corridors, available right-of-ways, and sidewalks/bike lanes within roadway corridors [*Policy Link: Transportation #4*]
- Incorporate waterfront lands, public access to the water, and blueways into the open space and greenway system. Retain city ownership of waterfront access points (e.g., street ends) to ensure public access



- Develop incentive programs (e.g., conservation easements, purchase of development rights, density bonuses) to encourage preservation of valuable open space, such as view corridors to waterways, marshes, and other scenic amenities

Policy #3: Water Quality

Improve the quality of the Portsmouth's water resources, including the Elizabeth River, its tributary streams, and ultimately the Chesapeake Bay.

Action Strategies

- Continue to enforce the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act and tidal and non-tidal wetlands regulatory programs
- Implement and maintain Best Management Practices (BMP) in public and private development projects to minimize water quality impacts
- Maintain buffers of natural vegetation along waterways and wetland areas. Limit shoreline alterations to water dependent uses with proven economic justification and minimal adverse impacts on the environment
- Continue to improve the City's aging stormwater drainage system, including measures to improve the quality of stormwater discharge
- Continue to work with the City of Suffolk to preserve the quality of the City's drinking water supply
- Continue to work with the Elizabeth River Project to improve the water quality of the River
 - Implement the Paradise Creek Restoration Plan
 - Reduce toxic discharges to the Elizabeth River and its tributaries
 - Support education and outreach efforts to increase awareness and partnerships with private businesses and the public

Policy #4: Air Quality

Protect and improve air quality in the City of Portsmouth.

Action Strategies

- Continue to participate in the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission's (HRPDC) air quality monitoring program
- Pursue strategies to reduce vehicular use and associated emissions (e.g., car/van pools, park-and-ride, increased use of public transit, electric or natural gas-powered transit vehicles, bicycle network, compact/mixed-use development patterns that create a walkable environment, etc.)
- Ameliorate air quality by maintaining and increasing trees and other natural vegetation throughout the City (Policy #6)



Policy #5: Solid Waste

Minimize the amount of solid waste produced in the City of Portsmouth, encourage the recycling of renewable resources, and dispose of the waste generated in an environmentally sound manner.

Action Strategies

- Promote waste minimization and recycling programs for industrial, commercial, and residential uses, including public education and consideration of incentives for recycling/disincentives for generation of larger quantities of waste. Link to Portsmouth’s “Clean Community” program [*Policy Link: Community Appearance #1*]
- Plan for the future disposition and replacement of the City’s landfill on Craney Island, required by state legislation to close by 2018
- Continue to provide opportunities for the proper disposal or recycling of hazardous household materials
- Work with federal, state, and regional partners to develop a strategy for the safe and proper disposal of dredge materials from the Elizabeth River
- Coordinate with the Hampton Roads Sanitation District for the continued safe and proper treatment of wastewater and biosolids

Policy Direction #6: Natural Environment

Implement strategies to preserve, enhance, and restore the natural features and environment of Portsmouth.

Action Strategies

- Preserve key natural resource areas as part of the open space and greenway network (Policy #2)
- Improve the quality of Portsmouth’s water resources (Policy #3)
- Maintain and increase trees and other natural vegetation in Portsmouth, through activities such as:
 - Strengthening regulations to protect trees and other natural resources
 - Participating in the Tree City USA program
 - Encouraging the planting of new vegetation throughout the City (a “Greening Portsmouth,” initiative, including the possibility of a “forested greenbelt” at the I-264 downtown exit as recommended by the Urban Land Institute Advisory Services Panel Report for Downtown Portsmouth)
- Continue to participate in the National Flood Insurance program, enforce the Floodplain Ordinance, and pursue policies to minimize the risks of flood damage
- Establish standards and policies to address the physical limitations of natural resources (wetlands, floodplain areas, etc.) in land development projects
- Work with the Elizabeth River Project on a public education and outreach program regarding the benefits of wetlands and other natural resources and the role private citizens can play in conservation



10.0 COMMUNITY APPEARANCE

10.1 Overview

Goal: An attractive, clean community that instills pride in residents, contributes to the appeal of the City of Portsmouth for visitors, and earns the reputation of being the cleanest municipality in the Hampton Roads region.

The visual appearance of roadway corridors, neighborhoods, commercial areas, and other parts of the City has been identified by citizens as an important factor in Portsmouth's quality of life. In recognition of the linkage between community appearance and neighborhood health as measured by resident satisfaction and stable or growing property values, six of ten Strategic Directions identified by the operational component of the City's Neighborhood Quality Action Plan (NQAP) relate directly to this topic:



Westbury
neighborhood

- Improve the City's corridors/entranceways (#1)
- Forge partnerships with businesses to improve the perception and attractiveness of business locations emphasizing cleanliness and aesthetics (#3)
- Forge a partnership with the Downtown Business District in order to enhance the perception and attractiveness of the district and associated/adjacent residential neighborhoods (#4)
- Create guidelines to encourage and promote neighborhood clean-ups (#6)
- Create a Citywide Beautification Program (#7)
- Develop a program to eliminate visual clutter on the city streets (#9)

In addition to the NQAP, which is being implemented by action teams formed from city departments, Portsmouth has in place an active Clean Community Commission. The Clean Community Commission sponsors a variety of community volunteer activities ranging from "Adopt-A-Spot" projects to neighborhood cleanups to "Clean the Bay Day," an annual event to clean trash and debris from the City's waterways.

A variety of approaches can be used to address Community Appearance issues. At the most basic level there is a need for on-going maintenance, code enforcement, cleanup, and similar activities to maintain or restore neighborhoods, commercial areas, and roadway corridors to acceptable visual condition. A second approach involves physical improvements (e.g., landscaping, attractive signage, street furnishings, removal of visually objectionable elements) to improve visual character in selected locations. The City is pursuing both of these types of community appearance initiatives. The activities of the Clean Community Commission are an



example of the first approach; streetscape improvements made to the High Street corridor are an example of the second. A third approach is to modify development regulations in high visibility locations (e.g., gateways and roadway corridors) to promote aesthetic improvements as properties are modified or redeveloped over time.

The Community Appearance policies and action strategies build on and integrate the City's current efforts. Policy #1 addresses citywide beautification, beginning with the community appearance initiatives and activities of the NQAP and Clean Community Commission. Key action strategies include initiation of a citywide tree planting program (Greening Portsmouth) and aggressive code enforcement focused on private properties whose visual appearance degrades the quality of neighborhoods and commercial areas (identified as a priority by City Council). Policy #1 also addresses the link between community appearance and solid waste recycling and other programs that can reduce the amount of trash generated in the City.

Policy #2 focuses on improving the visual character of gateway entrances (e.g., I-264 exits) and major roadway corridors through the City, which play a key role in defining Portsmouth's image and identity both for residents and visitors (Map 14). With a few exceptions these important community resources have an uneven visual character with unattractive uses in prominent locations (e.g., the City's Public Works Compound (Operations Center) at the I-264/Frederick Boulevard interchange). The City has begun to address this issue by allocating funds in its Capital Improvement Program (\$200,000 annually between Fiscal Years 2004-05 and 2008-09) for a "City Gateway project to improve the City's entrances and public green spaces."



Proposed
Midtown
Gateway at
Frederick
Boulevard

Source: Wallace Roberts & Todd, LLC

A variety of action strategies are identified to improve the appearance of key entrances and corridors, ranging from physical improvements of the kind envisioned by the City Gateway project (landscaping, signage, etc.) to removal of "visual clutter" to land use strategies to promote the redevelopment of obsolescent, unattractive uses. Given limited city resources and the extent of gateways and corridors in need of visual enhancement, priorities will need to be set and improvements phased over time. This effort should begin with a citywide visual assessment, following which a strategic action plan should be developed to address detrimental elements identified by the assessment. Related planning initiatives undertaken by the City (e.g., plans for Revitalization Corridors such as Airline Boulevard) will provide additional opportunities to identify specific actions to be taken in areas of concern. Land use strategies should include exploration of regulatory changes such as design standards and overlay districts to promote a higher quality visual environment as properties are redeveloped over time.



10.2 Policies and Action Strategies

Policy #1: Beautification

Continue and expand current efforts to beautify Portsmouth.

Action Strategies

- Implement the community appearance recommendations of the Neighborhood Quality Action Plan (NQAP), i.e.:
 - Corridor/entranceway improvements (Policy #2)
 - Downtown/business cleanliness and aesthetics
 - Neighborhood clean-ups (“Clean Community”)
 - Citywide Beautification program
 - Elimination of visual clutter on city streets
- Continue and expand the community clean-up activities of the Portsmouth Clean Community Commission
- Building on the NQAP, implement a citywide Greening Portsmouth initiative involving planting of trees and other vegetation, in cooperation with community, civic, and business groups
- Maintain designation as a Tree City USA by the National Arbor Day Foundation on an annual basis
- Explore regulatory approaches (e.g., design standards for nonconforming lots) to encourage development that is compatible with the visual character of existing neighborhoods [*Policy Link: Land Use #1*]
- Strengthen and enforce codes pertaining to the unkempt appearance of private property (building deterioration, trash accumulation, abandoned vehicles, vacant lots, etc.) [*Policy Link: Neighborhoods #1 & 2*]
- Promote solid waste minimization and recycling programs [*Policy Link: Parks, Open Space, and Environment #5*]
- Aggressively maintain the appearance of open green spaces

Policy #2: Gateways and Corridors

Improve the appearance of gateway entrances to and roadway corridors through Portsmouth.

Action Strategies

- Invest in visual improvements (e.g., clean up/replacement of land uses that convey a negative image; landscaping, directional and identity signage [*Policy Link: Transportation #8*], public art, etc.) at interchange entrances and along major roadway corridors:
 - Undertake citywide visual assessment
 - Develop and implement a strategic action plan to address detrimental elements identified through the assessment
- Improve the visual appearance of and reduce visual clutter (excess signage, substandard structures, selective removal of overhead utilities, etc.) along Portsmouth’s roadway corridors



- Coordinate visual improvements with land use strategies to promote redevelopment of obsolescent land uses along roadway corridors
- Explore regulatory approaches (design standards, overlay districts, etc.) to promote visual improvements to major gateways and corridors over time as properties are redeveloped
[Policy Link: Land Use #5]
- Develop and implement a coordinated program for the installation of attractive directional/informational signage throughout Portsmouth, graphically consistent with the City's marketing program
- Install period lighting and signage in historical neighborhoods consistent with era
- Maintain and enhance existing and create new view corridors from public ways to scenic resources (e.g., waterfront and wetland areas)
- Improve city maintenance of right-of-way landscape and streetscape conditions



11.0 FOCUS ON IMPLEMENTATION

11.1 Overview

The policies and action strategies identified in the plan elements (Chapters 3.0 to 10.0) will only be turned into reality by concerted, consistent, and highly focused attention to implementation. Effective implementation will require that the City Administration, present and future City Councils, and other governmental entities such as the School Board, Portsmouth Redevelopment and Housing Authority, etc. actively and continuously use the Comprehensive Plan as a key reference for all decisions and actions. For the first time in its history, Portsmouth has, through this Destination 2025 Comprehensive Plan, a framework to integrate and coordinate all aspects of governance so as to achieve a vision for the future derived from citizen values and aspirations. The Plan's value will only be realized to the extent that it is followed and implemented through actions such as regulatory changes (e.g., revising the Zoning Ordinance) and capital improvements (e.g., repairing and upgrading aging infrastructure systems).



In recent years, Vision 2005 and other initiatives have resulted in a number of “success stories” for the City, focused on several well-planned and well-executed redevelopment projects. This Comprehensive Plan moves planning in the City to the next level by objectively balancing needs and opportunities citywide, and by taking the long view of how to guide the momentum of change to move Portsmouth forward into a new era of optimism, achievement, and excellence. The Destination 2025 Comprehensive Plan provides both the framework and the motivation to exert the necessary leadership in addressing problems and seizing opportunities. It creates the mandate to mobilize governance structures, secure the necessary resources, and commit to “staying the course” in realizing the Vision.

The individual elements of the Comprehensive Plan call for specific action strategies to bring about the positive change reflected in the Comprehensive Plan Vision Statement. These strategies include bold initiatives to “raise the bar” of expectations in all aspects of quality of life: from excellence in public education to accelerating economic prosperity to setting higher standards for the character of neighborhoods, commercial centers, and roadway corridors. While the Plan calls upon the City to increase its tax base and revenues, as well as to pay



increased attention to the fiscal implications of redevelopment decisions, in light of limited fiscal resources it is only prudent to establish a highly focused and realistic implementation program to be staged over time. Hence, a major theme of the implementation element is **FOCUS: Fulfilling Our Comprehensive Urban Strategy**, which targets specific areas of the City in need of intervention to promote positive change. This element describes an implementation program for the Destination 2025 Comprehensive Plan comprised of the following components:



Sunrise across Paradise Creek

- **Principles for Comprehensive Plan consistency**, including compliance with the Plan with regard to zoning and development standards, re-zoning approvals, and other decision-making
- A protocol for **adopting, amending, monitoring, and periodically updating** the Plan
- A framework for **Fulfilling Our Comprehensive Urban Strategy (FOCUS)** by targeting specific areas of the City in need of attention to achieve the goals, policies, and action strategies of the Comprehensive Plan
- Policies and action strategies to enhance and re-shape **Governance** of the City to support effective plan implementation
- An **Action Plan** as outlined in an Action Initiatives Table that identifies short-term, mid-term, and ongoing activities necessary to implement the Comprehensive Plan

11.2 Principles for Comprehensive Plan Consistency

In the Commonwealth of Virginia, comprehensive planning is mandated and guided under the Code of Virginia. Statute 15.2-2223 requires that local governments have a comprehensive plan and that it be “*general in nature*” and “*be made with the purpose of guiding and accomplishing a coordinated, adjusted and harmonious development of the territory which will, in accordance with present and probable future needs and resources, best promote the health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity and general welfare of the inhabitants.*” Plan contents called for include elements related to transportation; to designations of land uses, facilities, and proposed public improvements; and to the provision of affordable housing.

The legal mandate for actions of local government to follow a comprehensive plan is derived from Statute 15.2-2232, Legal Status of Plan, which states:

“Whenever a local planning commission recommends a comprehensive plan or part thereof for the locality and such plan has been approved and adopted by the governing body, it shall control the general or approximate location, character and extent of each feature shown on the plan. Thereafter, unless a feature is already shown on the adopted master plan or part thereof or is deemed so under subsection D, no street or connection to an



existing street, park or other public area, public building or public structure, public utility facility or public service corporation facility other than railroad facility, whether publicly or privately owned, shall be constructed, established or authorized, unless and until the general or approximate location, character and extent thereof has been submitted to and approved by the commission as being substantially in accord with the adopted comprehensive plan or part thereof.”

If the Destination 2025 Comprehensive Plan is to effectively guide change in Portsmouth over time, a framework must be established to provide reasonable assurance that the Plan will be followed, consistent with this statutory provision. Therefore, three basic principles for consistency with the Comprehensive Plan are set out below.

Principle: Zoning and related development standards and ordinances shall be revised to maintain consistency with the Comprehensive Plan.

The Land Use Element and other elements of the Comprehensive Plan identify the need for revisions to zoning district designations and development regulations to raise standards of quality, increase flexibility, and adjust land use mixes and intensities. The above principle addresses this need. It DOES NOT suggest that, upon plan adoption, the zoning map and

its various zoning districts must undergo a wholesale revision. Rather, following plan adoption the City should conduct an analysis of its development regulations, including the zoning map, to determine the specific changes that are needed to carry out the goals, policies, and action strategies of the Comprehensive Plan. It should also be noted that the Future Land Use Map presented in Chapter 4.0 is not intended to become or replace present zoning district designations



on the zoning map. Rather, the Future Land Use Map conceptually depicts relatively broad categories of land use, and will serve as a guide for considering future re-zonings (see second principle below). Because the Future Land Use Map depicts development patterns as they should be in the future, the land use designations shown may differ from existing patterns of uses and intensities, as well as from existing zoning designations, in anticipation of changes in use and intensity as revitalization and redevelopment take place over the next 20 years.

Principle: Requested re-zonings shall be reviewed for consistency with the Comprehensive Plan and shall not be approved if found contrary to the Comprehensive Plan.

Because the Future Land Use Map and its associated policies are considerably broader than present zoning and development regulations, many development proposals that are consistent with present zoning will also be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. In fact, the Plan will add considerable **flexibility** in the re-zoning/development review process, particularly in areas designated for mixed use, where the underlying zoning is more rigid or limited than provided



for by the Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map. However, in cases where a proposed development or use larger than a specified magnitude is in clear conflict with the Comprehensive Plan, re-zoning approvals should not be granted until and unless the Comprehensive Plan is amended. The City Council shall make such amendments upon findings of fact based on designated criteria and upon the recommendation of the Planning Commission, as outlined in Section 11.3 below.

Principle: City Council shall consider consistency with the Comprehensive Plan as a factor in making decisions on proposed projects, programs, and initiatives.

In addition to re-zonings, City Council makes decisions on many programs and projects that relate to the goals, policies, and action strategies contained in the Comprehensive Plan. Effective implementation of the Plan will thus depend upon the extent to which City Council takes into account consistency with the Comprehensive Plan in making decisions that affect Portsmouth's future. To help ensure that this factor is considered by City Council, a procedure for reporting by city staff to City Council on the consistency of relevant projects, programs, and initiatives with the Comprehensive Plan shall be established.



The following is a recommended checklist for the development of a more specific protocol for compliance with the Comprehensive Plan, to be established within one year of plan adoption:

- Identify specific task schedules, resources, and responsibilities to enact revisions to the Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Regulations, and associated development standards to be in conformance with the Comprehensive Plan, consistent with the priorities and timeframes in the Action Plan set forth in Section 11.6
- Establish provisions for the review of all development applications, re-zonings, and plats to be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan
- Establish a protocol for reporting to City Council by staff regarding the consistency of relevant projects, programs, and initiatives with the Comprehensive Plan
- Establish provisions to expand and modify the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) to reflect policies, strategies, and priorities established in the Comprehensive Plan



11.3 Plan Adoption, Amendments, Monitoring, and Updating

This section describes procedures to be followed by the City in adopting the Comprehensive Plan, making periodic amendments to the Plan during the years following its adoption, monitoring progress made in implementing the Plan, and updating the entire Plan on a regular basis. These procedures meet or exceed the minimum requirements set by the Code of Virginia requirements for local government comprehensive plans.

Plan Adoption

The following plan adoption procedures are in accordance with Code of Virginia requirements:

- 1. Recommendation by Planning Commission to City Council:** Following public notice requirements as per Statute 15.2-2204, Code of Virginia, the Planning Commission shall hold a public hearing on the Plan. Following this hearing the Planning Commission may approve, amend and approve, or disapprove the plan. Upon approval, the Commission shall by resolution recommend the plan, or part thereof, to City Council. (15.2-2225)
- 2. Transmittal:** A copy of the Plan shall be certified by the Planning Commission and transmitted to City Council. (15.2-2225)
- 3. City Council Adoption:** Following public notice requirements as per Statute 15.2-2204, Code of Virginia, City Council shall hold a public hearing on the plan, after which City Council may approve and adopt, amend and approve, or disapprove the plan. (15.2-2226)

Plan Amendments

While the Comprehensive Plan provides for considerable flexibility in interpretation, if it is to have relevance over time the City should not allow it to be ignored, nor should it be subject to continuous or arbitrary revisions. Therefore, amendments to the Plan shall not be made more than twice per calendar year. Plan amendments shall be recommended by the Planning Commission and adopted by City Council in the same manner as for plan adoption, as specified in Statute 15.2-2229, Code of Virginia. However, the following deviations shall NOT be considered to require plan amendments:

- Emergency situations requiring immediate actions, as defined by the City Manager
- Re-zonings or development approvals necessary to protect public health, safety or welfare
- Small scale developments involving minor deviations, interpretations, or adjustments to the Future Land Use Map
- Corrections of errors, clarifications of intent, or updating of data, any of which do not substantially alter plan policies or actions

City Council is responsible for determinations regarding plan deviations which may be approved based on the above criteria.



Specific Provisions

The following is a recommended checklist for the development of a more specific protocol for plan amendments, to be established within one year of Comprehensive Plan adoption:

- Planning staff will package proposed plan amendments semi-annually for review and recommendation by the Planning Commission, who will forward their recommendations to City Council for consideration following a public hearing.
- Plan amendments may include modifications to goals, strategies and actions, and/or modifications to the Future Land Use Map to accommodate re-zonings that are contrary to the adopted Comprehensive Plan.
- Amendments shall be accompanied by an analysis of the need and public purpose served by the amendment and a review of the effects on other elements of the Comprehensive Plan.
- Before amendments are considered for adoption, citizens shall be provided with effective ways for participating in the decision-making process, in addition to the required public hearing.

Plan Monitoring and Updating

If the Destination 2025 Comprehensive Plan is to have value and remain useful through its planning horizon, it is important to develop ways of monitoring progress in achieving the many initiatives it calls for, measuring its success in effectuating positive change, and keeping it current as new information becomes available and circumstances change. For this reason, the Comprehensive Plan should be thought of as an on-going process and the foundation that will guide on-going, more detailed planning rather than as a one-time event or a static document.



Virginia law (15.2-2230, Code of Virginia) recognizes this need to keep the Comprehensive Plan current and relevant, generally mandating that it be reviewed by the Planning Commission at least once every five years “*to determine whether it is advisable to amend the plan.*”

Due the complexity of the many initiatives called for in the Destination 2025 Comprehensive Plan, as well as the accelerating rate of change in the City and region, provisions for plan monitoring and updating should exceed the following minimum requirements:

- The City of Portsmouth shall monitor and report upon plan implementation progress **annually**.
- The City of Portsmouth shall update the Comprehensive Plan **every five (5) years**.



Specific Provisions

The following is a checklist for the development of a more specific protocol for Comprehensive Plan monitoring and updating, to be established within one year of plan adoption.

Annual Monitoring

- The Planning Commission shall submit to the City Council an **annual report** indicating actions taken and progress made toward plan implementation, along with recommendations for plan amendments and adjustments to the Action Plan due to altered circumstances or in response to citizen requests, proposed re-zonings, etc.
- Annual review of the Comprehensive Plan shall be coordinated with the capital improvement programming process to ensure that the City's CIP reflects priorities for major public investments set by the Action Plan.
- **Measures of success** shall be developed for each element of the Comprehensive Plan as part of an overall plan-monitoring program, to evaluate the effectiveness of implementation efforts and adherence to the Plan. Measures of success include 1) numeric targets that indicate progress in achieving the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan and 2) timeframes for the completion of specific actions. Chapters 3.0 to 10.0 provide an initial identification of numeric indicators that can be used to measure progress in achieving the goals and action strategies of each element. The Action Plan contained in Section 11.6 establishes a framework of short, mid, and long-term timeframes within which individual actions are to be completed. The specific targets and timeframes to be used in the monitoring program should be finalized within one year of plan adoption, and may be adjusted as implementation moves forward.
- **Dialogue** shall be maintained with local citizens, municipalities, school districts, development interests, and other stakeholders and affected parties on a periodic, ongoing basis to monitor the effectiveness of the plan.

Updating

No less than every five years, Portsmouth shall initiate a process to revise and adopt an updated Comprehensive Plan with an extended time horizon. The revision process will include the following:

- Creation of a Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee
- Updating of the Comprehensive Plan Data Book to document growth trends and other factors experienced since the adoption of the current plan
- Preparation of an Evaluation and Appraisal Report, documenting Comprehensive Plan effectiveness and implementation efforts, identifying constraints upon implementation, and summarizing trends and challenges that have emerged or changed in the period since plan adoption
- Revision of goals, strategies, and actions to reflect changing circumstances, emerging needs and opportunities, and expressed citizen priorities



11.4 FOCUS: Fulfilling Our Comprehensive Urban Strategy

Sections 11.2 and 11.3 above describe procedures to be used by the City of Portsmouth to implement the Destination 2025 Comprehensive Plan. In moving forward with implementation, it is vitally important that the resources of the City and its public and private sector partners be targeted and leveraged to have maximum effect in achieving the Vision, goals, policies, and action strategies of the Comprehensive Plan. As part of this effort the City's actions will need to be targeted toward specific geographic areas in need of intervention to promote plan objectives such as neighborhood revitalization. These **FOCUS Areas** fall into two broad categories: **Revitalization FOCUS Areas** and **Special FOCUS Areas**. Revitalization FOCUS Areas include Corridors, Centers, and Neighborhoods. Special FOCUS Areas include a variety of geographically based initiatives that have been identified as components of the Comprehensive Plan implementation program. These initiatives range from site-specific projects such as development of the Hunt-Mapp Middle School property as a "Park and Arts" Center, to larger areas that present special opportunities or needs (e.g., Downtown Portsmouth). An initial list of Special FOCUS Areas has been identified for the purposes of the Comprehensive Plan and is provided below. It is expected that the City will identify additional Special FOCUS Areas during plan implementation.



Given the extent of the FOCUS Areas and the limited resources at its disposal, the City will need to set priorities among different FOCUS Areas (including the sequence in which it addresses specific Revitalization Corridors, Centers, and Neighborhoods) as it moves forward with implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. Objective criteria should be used by the City to identify and prioritize FOCUS Areas. These criteria shall include, but may not be limited to, the following:

1. **Need:** Degree of distress or need for revitalization as evidenced by indicators such as building or property vacancy, abandonment, deterioration, and obsolescence of land uses.
2. **Market/Economic Opportunity:** Demonstrated market potential, opportunity for private investment, and other indicators that a return on public investment will be achieved.
3. **Ratio of Public Cost to Private Investment:** Amount of private investment or increased tax base relative to the required amount of public investment.
4. **Intangible/Quality of Life Factors:** Opportunities to protect or enhance unique features (historic resources, scenic areas, waterfront access, etc.) that may be compromised without intervention by the City.
5. **Community Consensus:** Degree of public support for identified interventions.



Revitalization FOCUS Areas

Revitalization Corridors: Revitalization Corridors include major roadway corridors within Portsmouth that are characterized by the presence of underutilized properties, obsolete uses, land use conflicts, and/or other conditions that make them candidates for coordinated revitalization actions. These corridors include Airline Boulevard, High Street (between Effingham Street and Airline Boulevard), Victory Boulevard (south of Greenwood Drive)/George Washington Highway (south of Frederick Boulevard), and Turnpike Road (see Section 4.2 of the Land Use Element).

Revitalization Centers: Revitalization Centers include designated Activity Centers (see Section 4.2 of the Draft Land Use Element) that, similar to Revitalization Corridors, are characterized by conditions that make them candidates for targeted revitalization. Both Revitalization Corridors and Revitalization Centers support commercial and other activity-generating uses; the major difference is that the former are linear in nature while the latter are concentrated in more localized areas. Revitalization Centers include Midtown, Williams Court (as a focus of the larger Victory Boulevard/George Washington Revitalization Area), Churchland (in the vicinity of Churchland Boulevard/West Norfolk Road), and Afton Square.



Midtown
revitalization
concept

Source: Wallace Roberts & Todd, LLC

Revitalization Neighborhoods: Revitalization Neighborhoods show evidence of decline or the potential for decline (increased vacancies, substandard or abandoned properties, etc.) that may warrant coordinated public actions to promote private reinvestment. Revitalization neighborhoods include residential areas identified as Transitional on the Community Conditions map (see Chapter 6.0), such as Brighton/Prentis Park/Prentis Place and Victory Park/Lincoln Gardens.

Special FOCUS Areas

Downtown: Continuing to build the vitality and attractiveness of the Downtown as a regional center of activity is a key to Portsmouth's future. The immediate first step is to develop a Downtown Master Plan that builds on the recommendations of the ULI panel.

Historic Districts: Neighborhoods regulated as historic districts under the City's Zoning Ordinance – Cradock, Old Towne, Parkview, Port Norfolk, and Truxtun – have special issues and needs. These range from conflicts between industrial and residential uses in Port Norfolk to land use “edge” conditions in Old Towne to broader revitalization needs in Park View, Cradock, and Truxtun.

Howard Homes/Jeffrey Wilson Homes Redevelopment: Redevelopment of these properties is a key to successful revitalization of the Midtown area.



I-264/Frederick Boulevard Commerce Park: Located in a prominent location adjacent to an interstate interchange, this industrial property provides an opportunity for future redevelopment to more compatible employment-related uses consistent with the diversified economy envisioned by the Comprehensive Plan. As part of this initiative, relocation of the present City Public Works Compound (Operations Center) to an appropriate site would free up a prime property next to the interchange.

New Port: Redevelopment of the former Fairwood Homes property provides an opportunity to establish a model for the type of compact, walkable, mixed residential development envisioned by the Land Use Element. It will also increase the range of housing choices available in Portsmouth consistent with the Housing and Neighborhoods Element.

Portsmouth “Park and Arts”: The planned closure of the Hunt-Mapp Middle School provides an opportunity to develop the property (which includes Willett Hall and outdoor fields associated with the school) as a center for performing arts combined with recreation. Such development would support Education Policy #5.

Sugar Hill: Located on Scotts Creek, Sugar Hill is identified as a redevelopment area on the Community Conditions map. Redevelopment for a combination of compact (high-rise) residential and park/open space land with boat access to the creek would take advantage of the area’s waterfront location.

Victory Crossing Business Park: The planned development of this property to include a Portsmouth campus of Tidewater Community College in addition to private businesses is important to successful implementation of the Education and Economic elements of the Comprehensive Plan.

Priorities must be set among these various FOCUS Areas in implementing the Comprehensive Plan, as the City does not have the resources to pursue all simultaneously. The Action Plan in Section 11.6 provides a framework for setting these priorities.

11.5 Governance Policies and Action Strategies

Goal: A city government that is fiscally responsible, responsive to citizens, and effective in implementing the Comprehensive Plan.

As expressed in the Vision Statement, enlightened leadership by city officials will be central to effective implementation of the Destination 2025 Comprehensive Plan. The following policies and action strategies are intended to provide guidance for leaders in ongoing management activities and short and long-term decision-making related to governance of the City of Portsmouth. Policy #1 identifies approaches that the City can use to enhance its fiscal strength in order to build the capacity needed to implement Comprehensive Plan initiatives. Building on the extensive involvement of Portsmouth residents in developing the Destination



2025 Comprehensive Plan, Policy #2 addresses the ongoing need for 1) effective communication to citizens on civic matters and 2) citizen involvement in developing city programs and initiatives. Policy #3 deals with changes to decision-making processes of the City that are needed to support effective implementation of the Comprehensive Plan; these changes are addressed in more detail in Sections 11.2 and 11.3 above. Finally, Policy #4 identifies several structural changes to the



City Hall

City's governmental organization that should be considered to facilitate implementation of Comprehensive Plan initiatives related to redevelopment, neighborhoods, and housing.

Policy #1: Fiscal Strength

Enhance the City's fiscal strength and ability to implement Comprehensive Plan initiatives.

Action Strategies

- Set fiscal strength objectives for expenditures/revenues, debt management, property assessment tied to fair market value, and fund balance
- Set clear priorities for city spending on initiatives and projects, based upon objective criteria tied to the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan
- Use the Capital Improvements Program and community facility planning system to phase spending on capital projects and initiatives over time, within the limits set by the City's fiscal strength objectives
- Emphasize non-city financing of private development projects. Provide targeted public investment (e.g., infrastructure improvements) as necessary to make priority economic development projects happen and where it makes sense from a cost-benefit standpoint
- Vigorously pursue alternative revenue sources to fund priority initiatives and projects
- Monitor expenditures on capital initiatives to determine return on investment in the form of increased city revenues and economic activity (employment, retail sales, etc.)

[Policy Link: Economic Development #1 & 5]

Policy #2: Citizen Participation and Communication

Communicate to and involve citizens in city governmental affairs, programs, and initiatives.

Action Strategies

- Utilize a variety of mechanisms and media to 1) disseminate information about and 2) solicit citizen participation and input regarding city initiatives and decision-making processes
- Make citizens aware of the reasons for, costs, and benefits of city programs and initiatives



- Undertake efforts to increase awareness of and participation in civic decision-making by groups often underrepresented in city government
- Develop programs in Portsmouth City Public Schools to educate students about civic affairs and to solicit their ideas regarding city programs and initiatives that will affect their future
- Building on existing programs such as the Portsmouth Neighborhood Academy, expand public outreach efforts to educate citizens about the City, recruit volunteers to boards and commissions, and reach a new generation of leaders
- Institute a mechanism to solicit citizen input regarding ways to improve the efficiency of city government

Policy #3: Comprehensive Plan Implementation

Ensure that city decision-making processes support implementation of the Comprehensive Plan.

Action Strategies

- Integrate Comprehensive Plan policies and strategies into the planning and decision-making activities of city departments and boards, including Portsmouth City Public Schools
- Revise the City’s Zoning Ordinance and Development Standards to be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan
- Review development applications for consistency with the Comprehensive Plan. Do not approve them if found to be contrary to the Comprehensive Plan, unless the Plan is amended
- Develop a process for monitoring progress in implementing the Comprehensive Plan, including annual reviews coordinated with the capital improvement programming process and a Comprehensive Plan update no longer than every five years
- Establish quantitative measures of success (indicators of progress made in implementing the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan) as part of the monitoring process

Policy #4: Governmental Organization

Restructure governmental organizational functions related to redevelopment, neighborhoods, and housing in order to better direct and coordinate policies and activities. [Policy Link: Economic Development #5]

Action Strategies

- Work with PRHA to establish criteria for programming of redevelopment activities to be consistent with Comprehensive Plan policies and related policy directions set by the City
- Explore establishment of a dedicated Community Development function in city government to lead and coordinate activities related to neighborhoods and housing
- Establish a new entity (private nonprofit) to promote redevelopment in downtown Portsmouth as recommended by the Urban Land Institute study
- Establish a Downtown Development Council Committee supported by a Technical Review Team as a comprehensive review process to evaluate significant downtown development/redevelopment activity



11.6 Action Plan

Table 9 lays out an **Action Plan** for implementing Destination 2025 Comprehensive Plan initiatives according to timeframe and relative priority. The table synthesizes the policies and action strategies contained in the plan elements in the form of a series of **action initiatives**. Three types of action initiatives are included, defined as follows:

- **Program:** entails detailed, issue-focused planning or additional studies necessary to implement concepts and strategies contained in the Comprehensive Plan. Examples include more detailed planning for Revitalization FOCUS Areas.
- **Regulations and Standards:** involves revising zoning districts, development standards, and protocols for development review, approvals and appeals. Individual recommendations for zoning ordinance changes are presented in the Land Use Element and other plan elements.
- **Capital Investments:** require significant financial commitments to new and on-going initiatives such as parks, greenways, beautification, and replacement of aging infrastructure.

All action initiatives are assigned to one or more of three timeframes, as follows:

Short-Term (within 0-2 years from plan adoption)

Actions designated to be initiated within the first two years following plan adoption are generally those which are high priorities, as well as those for which limited additional study or preparation is needed, and which can be accomplished largely with existing staff and available financial resources.

Mid-Term (within 2-5 years from plan adoption)

Actions designated to be initiated between two and five years of plan adoption generally fall into two categories. The first category includes high priority items that will require significant additional study or more detailed planning. In some cases these actions will be the outgrowth of initiatives begun in the short term. The second category includes action initiatives for which sufficient resources may not be immediately available.

Ongoing

This category includes initiatives and policies that will be ongoing during the life of the Comprehensive Plan, subject to adjustment as a result of the plan monitoring and updating procedures identified in Section 11.3 above. Some of these initiatives are continuations of current city programs (e.g., the Neighborhood Quality Action Plan and Consolidated Housing Plan). Others are relatively new policies that should be integrated into city programs and decision-making processes (e.g., education strategies to build partnerships among educational institutions and between schools and neighborhoods). Still others will require a longer or indeterminate timeframe for implementation in order to define needs and opportunities,



create programs and partnerships, and establish funding resources (e.g., initiatives to develop regional transportation facilities and light rail service to Portsmouth). In some cases ongoing initiatives may carry out short or mid-term actions or be pursued as opportunities or resources arise.

The Action Plan is not intended to be a definitive prescription or a rigid formula, nor does it preclude certain actions from being implemented earlier or later than indicated, subject to the availability of resources. Rather, it is suggested as a framework to guide decision-making and allocation of resources – a “to-do list” to ensure steady progress in carrying out the strategies and actions of the Destination 2025 Comprehensive Plan. It should be reviewed and adjusted on annual basis as part of the plan monitoring process (see Section 11.3 above).



Action Initiatives Table

Table 11-1. Comprehensive Plan Action Initiatives

3.0 EDUCATION			
Ongoing Initiatives	Short-Term Initiatives (0-2 years)	Mid-Term Initiatives (2-5 years)	Long-Term Initiatives (5+ years)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure funding and enact organizational changes sufficient to demonstrate progress in improving city schools (Policy #1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Competitive salaries to attract quality teachers - Funding for Long-Range CIP - Computers / technology - Improved appearance of buildings / grounds • Build partnerships with institutions of higher education (Policy #2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish Portsmouth location for a TCC campus with joint academic programs for Portsmouth high school students - Partner with the region's institutions of higher education to increase opportunities for residents to attend college • Implement programs and partnerships with local employers and institutions to expand workforce training opportunities in Portsmouth public schools (Policy #3) • Strengthen relations between schools and neighborhoods (Policy #4) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Neighborhood Quality Action Plan - Community use of schools - Before / after school programs - Neighborhood-sensitive criteria for school closings / school site re-use • Strengthen / build connections among the City's cultural / arts programs and destinations (Policy #5) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish partnerships / forums for dialogue with the Portsmouth City Public Schools and area institutions to establish a shared agenda to improve the quality, performance, and reputation of the City's schools (Policy #1) • Investigate, plan, and begin implementing actions to improve efficiency / lower operational costs of Portsmouth City Public Schools (Policy #1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Selective school closings / consolidation - Plan for consolidation of public school administrative functions • Identify and plan school closings as opportunities to expand Portsmouth's cultural life and strengthen neighborhood quality of life (3.4, 3.5) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Plan for redevelopment of Hunt-Mapp Middle School as "Park and Arts" center or other suitable use - Other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue implementing plans to improve efficiency / lower operational costs of Portsmouth City Public Schools (Policy #1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Selective school closings / consolidation - Implement consolidation of administrative functions • Seek funding and redevelop former school sites as opportunities to expand Portsmouth's cultural life and strengthen neighborhood quality of life (Policies #4 & 5) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implement redevelopment of Hunt-Mapp Middle School property as "Park and Arts" center or other suitable use - Other 	

4.0 LAND USE

Ongoing Initiatives

- **Maintain the stability of viable land use patterns (Policy #1, Neighborhood Policy #1)**
 - Prevent encroachments by incompatible uses
 - Infill development standards in Zoning Ordinance / Development Regulations
 - Neighborhood conservation (code enforcement, housing rehabilitation, etc.)
- **Pursue revitalization / redevelopment initiatives to:**
 - Reverse obsolescence (Policy #2)
 - Reduce land use conflicts (Policy #3)
- **Continue planning for ongoing Special FOCUS area initiatives**
 - Howard Homes / Jeffrey Wilson Homes Redevelopment
 - New Port
 - Victory Crossing Business Park
- **Promote mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly land use patterns (activity centers and walkable neighborhoods) (Policy #4)**
- **“Raise the bar” on development quality (Policy #5)**
 - Design standards for private development in Zoning Ordinance / Development Regulations
 - Design of public buildings and civic spaces
- **Seek opportunities to convert tax exempt lands to productive uses that strengthen the City’s tax base (Policy #6)**

Short-Term Initiatives (0-2 years)

- **Revise the Zoning Ordinance / Development Regulations**
 - Standards for compatibility with character / urban context (Policy #1)
 - Standards to reduce impacts of high intensity uses (Policy #3)
 - Guidelines to promote mixed-use patterns in activity center and walkable neighborhoods (Policy #4)
 - Standards / incentives for higher quality design (Policy #5)
 - Remove impediments / improve flexibility, user friendliness (Policy #9)
 - Parking standards (Transportation Policy #6)
 - Traffic impact assessment procedures to ensure that proposed uses that will generate large amounts of traffic have sufficient access / capacity to limit impacts and maintain acceptable levels of service (Transportation Policy #7)
 - Gateway / corridor design standards (Community Appearance Policy #2)
- **Initiate planning for the revitalization of First Phase Centers, Corridors, and Special FOCUS Areas (Policies #2 & 4; Economic Development Policy #4)**
 - Airline Boulevard
 - Cradock / Afton Square
 - Downtown
 - Hunt-Mapp Middle School / Portsmouth “Park and Arts”
 - Midtown
 - Victory Boulevard
- **Seek opportunities to convert tax exempt lands to productive use (Policy #6)**
 - Conduct inventory of PRHA and other public land holdings and plan for disposition of excess property

Mid-Term Initiatives (2-5 years)

- **Reevaluate historic district regulations (boundaries, standards, procedures, potential additional designations) (Policy #9)**
- **Implement plans for First Phase Centers, Corridors, and Special FOCUS Areas (Policies #2 & 4; Economic Development Policy #4)**
 - Airline Boulevard
 - Cradock / Afton Square
 - Downtown
 - Hunt-Mapp Middle School / Portsmouth “Park and Arts”
 - Midtown
 - Victory Boulevard
- **Initiate plans for Second Phase Centers, Corridors, and Special FOCUS Areas (Policies #2 & 4; Economic Development Policy #4)**
 - George Washington Highway
 - I-264/Frederick Boulevard Commerce Park / Public Works Compound (City Operations) site
 - Sugar Hill
 - Turnpike Road
 - Other

Long-Term Initiatives (5+ years)

5.0 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Ongoing Initiatives

- **Continue to implement and update the City's Economic Development Strategic Plan as it applies to the following:**
 - Key Economic Development Activities: Business Development, Market Development, Product Development, and Workforce Development (Policy #2)
 - Key Business Sectors: Retail, Residential, and Office & Industrial (Policy #3)
 - Key Geographic Areas: Downtown Waterfront, Downtown Portsmouth, Midtown Portsmouth, Central Portsmouth (Victory Blvd / Airline Blvd), George Washington Corridor, Western Portsmouth (Western Freeway Corridor & Churchland), Waterfront (Policy #4)
 - I-264 / Frederick Boulevard Commerce Park
- **Implement Downtown Development Council Committee (DDCC) Process (Governance Policy #4)**

Short-Term Initiatives (0-2 years)

- **Establish framework for decision-making on city programs and activities to promote economic vitality (Policies #1 & 5)**
 - Establish highest and best uses for available land parcels
 - Establish criteria for economic development decision-making / priorities, taking into consideration the broader goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan

Mid-Term Initiatives (2-5 years)

- **Expand the City's marketing program (Policy #6)**

Long-Term Initiatives (5+ years)

6.0 HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS

Ongoing Initiatives

- **Identify opportunities to develop additional middle upper and middle income housing through planning and economic development activities (Housing Policy #1, Economic Development Policy #3), e.g.:**
 - Downtown
 - Waterfront
 - Historic Districts
 - "In-Town" Mixed Use Centers
 - New Port
- **Utilize the full resources of the City to increase the diversity of the City's housing stock**
 - Middle and upper income residents (Housing Policy #1)
 - Affordable ownership housing (Housing Policy #2)
 - Low-income households (Housing Policy #3)
 - Persons with special needs (Housing Policy #4)
- **Continue to implement ongoing city housing and neighborhood initiatives**
 - Consolidated Plan (Housing Policies #2-4)
 - Neighborhood Quality Action Plan (Neighborhood Policies #1-4)
 - Howard Homes / Jeffrey Wilson Homes redevelopment
- **Strengthen Stable Neighborhoods (Neighborhoods Policy #1), e.g.:**
 - Code enforcement / neighborhood conservation
 - Infrastructure investments
 - Neighborhood capacity building
- **Provide public and private facilities and services to support neighborhood quality and livability (Neighborhoods Policy #4)**

Short-Term Initiatives (0-2 years)

- **Complete Plans for the revitalization of First Phase Neighborhoods (Neighborhoods Policy #2)**
 - Park View
 - Cradock
 - Truxtun

Mid-Term Initiatives (2-5 years)

- **Implement Plans for First Phase Neighborhoods (Neighborhoods Policy #2)**
- **Initiate planning for Second Phase Neighborhoods (Land Use Policies #2 & 3)**
 - Set priorities for staged development of plans for Transitional and Redevelopment Neighborhoods (Figure 6-1)

Long-Term Initiatives (5+ years)

7.0 COMMUNITY FACILITIES, SERVICES, AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Ongoing Initiatives	Short-Term Initiatives (0-2 years)	Mid-Term Initiatives (2-5 years)	Long-Term Initiatives (5+ years)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better integrate community facilities into the City's land use pattern (mixed-use centers, linkages, civic space amenities) (Policy #2) • Investigate opportunities to relocate community facilities to less valuable location to support high value private development (e.g., City Public Works Compound at I-264 interchange) (Policy #2) • Continue / strengthen programs to promote advancement of the City's poor and disadvantaged (Policy #3) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Public schools - Social services - Workforce training - Public safety - Monitor program effectiveness • Replace aging / deteriorated infrastructure systems (Policy #4) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Target infrastructure investments where needed to support economic development priorities and support revitalization initiatives - Continue / accelerate programs to replace prioritized sections of water, sanitary sewer, and stormwater systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a Community Facilities Planning System to prioritize needs and set priorities (Policy #1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish level of service / performance standards for each type of community facility / service - Prepare Community Facilities Master Plan - Develop a Comprehensive Facilities Management / Maintenance Program in conjunction with Master Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement Community Facilities Planning System / Maintenance Program by linking it to city capital and operating budgeting processes (Policy #1) 	

8.0 TRANSPORTATION

Ongoing Initiatives	Short-Term Initiatives (0-2 years)	Mid-Term Initiatives (2-5 years)	Long-Term Initiatives (5+ years)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement roadway network improvements to expand capacity and improve system efficiency (Policy #1) • Work with Hampton Roads Transit to enhance transit service and usage in Portsmouth, including exploring the possibility of a future light rail linkage to the City (Policy #5) • Coordinate transportation and land use strategies (Policy #7) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Traffic impact assessment procedures - Minimize impacts of industrial truck / rail traffic on neighborhoods and other land uses - Pedestrian & bike-friendly land use environments / multi-modal access • Enhance communication with the public regarding the transportation system (signage, transportation information in convenient places) (Policy #8) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify / prioritize roadway network improvements to expand capacity, improve system efficiency, and accelerate maintenance of substandard infrastructure (Policy #1) • Initiate development of a sidewalk and bicycle facilities plan (Policy #4) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prepare city-wide inventory - Prioritize corridors and segments for implementation • Undertake downtown parking and traffic circulation study as part of Downtown Plan (Policy #6) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure funding sources for needed transportation system improvements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Roadway network improvements (Policy #1) - Sidewalk / Bicycle Facilities (Policy #4) • Initiate a traffic calming program (Policy #3) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Define measurement procedures, thresholds for needs and applications - Establish priorities (neighborhoods near schools, cut-through traffic hot spots) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support additional regional transportation facilities needed to alleviate present and future congestion in Portsmouth (second tube of Midtown Tunnel, Third Crossing, MLK Extension) (Policy #2) • Work to ensure that a rail corridor is in place within the median of the Western Freeway by 2017 to serve the future Craney Island Port terminal (Policy #7)

9.0 PARKS, OPEN SPACE, AND ENVIRONMENT

Ongoing Initiatives

- **Continue to work with the Elizabeth River Project and U.S. Navy on the Paradise Creek Initiative**
 - Recreational opportunities (Policies #1 & 2)
 - Environmental restoration (Policies #3 & 6)
- **Continue to participate in the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act Program and other state and federal initiatives to improve environmental quality, including:**
 - Water quality (Policy #3)
 - Air quality (Policy #4)
 - Natural resources (Policy #6)
- **Promote programs to reduce the solid waste stream, expand recycling, and improve safe treatment of hazardous materials (Policy #5)**
- **Plan for the future disposition and replacement of the City's landfill on Craney Island, required by state legislation to close by 2018 (Policy #5)**
- **Continue to enforce and improve the City's floodplain management program in accordance with the Federal Emergency Management Agency's National Flood Insurance Program (Policy #6)**

Short-Term Initiatives (0-2 years)

- **Develop a comprehensive parks and recreation plan (Policies #1 & 2)**
 - Establish level of service standards / define needs
 - Investigate feasibility and prepare plan for a regional multi-use recreation complex
 - Include strategies to develop a citywide open space and greenway / walking & biking trail network
- **Update the City's Floodplain Management Plan per FEMA's Community Rating System (Policy #6)**

Mid-Term Initiatives (2-5 years)

- **Secure funding sources and initiate a phased program to implement the comprehensive parks and recreation plan (Policies #1 & 2)**

Long-Term Initiatives (5+ years)

10.0 COMMUNITY APPEARANCE

Ongoing Initiatives

- **Continue and expand citywide beautification efforts**
 - Neighborhood Quality Action Plan
 - "Clean Community" clean-ups
 - Code enforcement
 - Maintenance of civic open spaces
 - Citywide community appearance action plan

Short-Term Initiatives (0-2 years)

- **Initiate a "Greening Portsmouth" city-wide tree-planting / beautification effort (Policy #1)**
- **Develop a phased program of visual improvements to gateway entrances and roadway corridors (Policy #2)**
 - Citywide visual assessment
 - Action plan to address detrimental elements

Mid-Term Initiatives (2-5 years)

- **Implement "Greening Portsmouth" city-wide tree-planting / beautification effort (Policy #1)**
- **Implement visual improvements to gateway entrances and roadway corridors (Policy #2)**

Long-Term Initiatives (5+ years)

