

# City Of Virginia Beach Dec 2025 Draft Comprehensive Plan 2040 Policy Review

KEY TAKEAWAYS

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## Executive Summary

The Draft Comprehensive Plan generally supports preserving the character of District 2 but there are possible **Red Flags** identified throughout the review document that highlight inconsistencies, vague language, or statements that leave the door open to further industrial and/or high-density housing development.

The Plan is quick to point out that it is “not a regulatory document, but instead sets direction for future policies, programs, and investments.”

District 2 character is affected by the “vision” described for:

- o Green Line Context Area - Princess Anne Commons and the Transition Area
- o Coastal Context Area – Sandbridge
- o Rural Context Area - Areas south of the Blue Line

## How to use this review document

This review document consists of excerpts from the Comprehensive Plan along with comments from the reviewers. It is intended to:

- o Point out key implications of text that pertains to District 2, either supportive or in conflict with preservation of the current District 2 character
- o Provide a quick reference, potential talking points, and key text for future Task Force developed communications

Because it does not contain all the Comprehensive Plan text you are urged to review the actual Comprehensive Plan in areas pertinent to your Task Force focus area.

We have used different highlighting methods to cue the reader in the following ways, illustrated in the “Example” below:

- o **Bolded text represents content that we feel most supports District 2 positions**
- o ***Italicized bold text represents content of concern to District 2 positions***
- o Underlined text provides good background material
- o **Red text are comments from the review team**

Major bullet points are copied directly from the Comprehensive Plan.

Page number and Figure references refer to the full Comprehensive Plan document, not this review document.

Bold Text= Most supports District 2 positions

### Example

1

Bold Italicized Text = Concerning statement

- o The Green Line continues to serve as a transition between urban development and the City’s more rural, low-density areas. **The Blue Line**, located south of the Green Line, **affirms the City’s intent to limit urban services and direct growth away from farmland, rural communities, and *environmentally sensitive areas*.**

Red Text =  
Reviewer  
comment



- **Affirms intent to limit services and growth below the Blue Line**
- **Red Flag - The statement DOES NOT attribute “environmentally sensitive areas” to the Transition Area, only to land below the Blue Line. See also reviewer comments regarding Figure 5-1 on page**

Underlined  
text = Good  
background  
statement



- o Virginia Beach has limited undeveloped land north of the Green Line and must be strategic about the businesses it attracts. **Agriculture in the southern half of the City remains a core part of the economy and will continue to be protected.**
  - **Red Flag - what about being strategic about businesses south of the Green Line?**
  - **May imply that agriculture is a core part of the economy in the Green Context Area, but text in other parts of the Comp Plan imply that it is only “core” below the Blue Line.**
- o This Plan’s Big Ideas are major investments and initiatives the City can make over the long term to support environmental and ***rural protection***, economic development, and quality neighborhoods
  - **Red Flag - “Rural” implies the Rural Context Area, not the Green Line Context Area**



# The Plan divides the city into four “Context Areas”

## Comprehensive Plan Framework (Page 32)

Context Areas capture the four major landscapes across Virginia Beach. The boundaries for the Context Areas are based on the Green Line, Blue Line, and the new Coastal Context Area Boundary—one of the Comprehensive Plan Update’s Big Ideas. Context Areas tell the story of these landscapes, including recognizing the environment, major destinations, and historic features, to direct and orchestrate goals and policies. The four established Context Areas are:

- o Inland Context Area: Located north of the Green Line, this area is mostly developed and densely populated, featuring numerous neighborhoods, shopping and employment centers, parks, Naval Air Station Oceana, and Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek–Fort Story. **The primary goals for the Inland Context Area are to accommodate the City’s anticipated growth through the redevelopment of major existing corridors and under-utilized shopping centers.**
- o Coastal Context Area: Located along the Chesapeake Bay and Atlantic Ocean, east of the Inland Context Area and defined by the Coastal Context Area Boundary, this area seeks to cultivate and protect a vibrant coastal landscape and experience.
- o Green Line Context Area: Located between the Green Line and Blue Line, this area serves as a density and intensity step-down between the developed lands north of the Green Line and the uses south of the Blue Line. **The Green Line Context Area seeks to maintain low-density neighborhoods and open space. Existing policies for Princess Anne Commons and the Transition Area will continue guiding development. Princess Anne Commons emphasizes education, recreation, and habitat preservation. The Interfacility Traffic Area (ITA) & Vicinity Master Plan provides a development program in the area based on aircraft noise contours and other features. This Context Area is also home to some medical and retail uses.**
- o Rural Context Area: **South of the Blue Line, this area will continue supporting rural and agricultural lands and serve essential conservation functions,** home to areas including Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge and False Cape State Park. **Agriculture plays a vital role in the City’s economy as the city’s third-largest industry, following tourism and defense, contributing significantly to local employment, sustainability, and the preservation of rural character.**

## The Plan further identifies several “Planning Areas” within the Context Areas (Page 34)

- o Planning Areas are specific parts of the city where development is guided by adopted plans or policies. The goals, objectives, and policies of each Planning Area plan will continue to guide development within the designated area.
  - **There are two Planning Areas in the Green Context Area identified as Princess Anne Commons and the Transition Area**
  - **There are no Planning Areas in the Rural Context Area**
- o Planning areas of note are:
  - Strategic Growth Areas (SGAs) are spaced along Virginia Beach Boulevard from the Norfolk city line to the Resort Area and adjacent to I-64 interchanges in the City. SGA plans illustrate the transformation of suburban shopping centers into compact, walkable places. Each SGA is designated as a Center Place Type in the Comprehensive Plan.
    - **There are no SGAs in the Green Line Context Area or the Rural Context Area**
  - Special Economic Growth Areas (SEGAs) are located around the Naval Air Station Oceana. SEGA policies from the 2016 Comprehensive Plan guide industrial and logistics development in those areas. Each SEGA is designated as an Industrial and Logistics Place Type, which is summarized in the next section.
    - **There are no SEGAs in the Green Line Context Area or the Rural Context Area**
  - Communities and neighborhoods, such as Seatack and Shore Drive, focus on neighborhood enhancements to land use, design, and overall aesthetics.

**This review provides specific detail on the Green Line, Rural and Coastal Context Areas and the Planning Areas starting on page 29 of this document**

## The Plan further identifies “Place Types” and “Corridor Types” (Pg 36)

- o Place Types convey the character, function, and development patterns for different settings within each Context Area.
- o Corridor Types provide guidance on the design and operations of unique roadways.
- o The Place Types include:
  - Centers and Multimodal Corridors
    - Centers – settings for compact, mixed-use, walkable, rollable, and transit-oriented development. Centers are located along Multimodal Corridors.
    - Multimodal Corridors – transportation routes that provide safe and convenient vehicle, transit, walking, and cycling access to and from Centers. Over time, existing roadways will transform into Multimodal Corridors.
    - **Princess Anne Rd is designated as a Regional Corridor (Pg 106)**
  - Neighborhoods
    - Type 1 Neighborhoods – mostly lower density areas where single family homes are the predominant use; civic uses like schools, religious institutions and parks may also be found in this Place Type.
    - Type 2 Neighborhoods – moderate to higher density settings with a range of housing options that span from single-family homes, townhomes, and apartments alongside neighborhood serving commercial and service uses.
    - **Transition Neighborhoods – lower-density areas designed to fit the unique context between the Blue and Green Lines.**
    - **Coastal Neighborhoods – moderate to higher-density areas with single-and multi-family homes suited to a coastal setting.**
    - **Sandbridge is a Coastal Neighborhood**

- Community Hubs – compact, walkable, centrally located places that provide convenient access for “neighborhood-oriented services, facilities, events, and potentially health care.
  
- Special Uses and Corridors
  - Institutional Districts – settings for schools, office parks, universities, hospitals, and similar multi-building institutions with specific and interconnected functions.
  
  - **The Inland Context Area Institutional Place Type shown in *Figure 3-3 (page 108)* encompass large-scale educational facilities, such as Tidewater Community College and health and civic functions, such as Sentara Virginia Beach General Hospital (Page 107). Note that the Plan also identifies the picture at Fig 3-3 as an example of a Business Place.**
  
  - Industrial and Logistics – settings that support specialized employment in production, distribution, manufacturing, and logistics sectors.
  
  - **Note that there are two small “Industrial and Logistics” Place Types in the Green Line Context Area (see map on page 37)**
  
- Business - non-Center locations for commercial, office, and hotel uses.
  
- Freight Corridors – transportation routes that provide safe and convenient freight and goods access to Industrial and Logistics districts.
  - **Later in the Plan you will see that “Industrial and Logistics Place Types” are attributed to the area around NAS Oceana and Burton Station (near the Airport), but there are two small Place Types in the ITA Planning Area.**
  
  - **Red Flag - There are no freight corridors in the Green Line Context Area, but there are two small Industrial and Logistics Place Types. Could Princess Anne Rd be redesignated as a freight corridor? (Pg 38 map)**
  
- Rural
  - Rural Villages – low-intensity collections of locally-oriented stores and services, along with some residences. These are oriented to the Rural Context Area to form a distinct place.
  
  - Rural Corridors – transportation routes that provide farm-to-market access and connections to Rural Villages and other destinations.



## The Plan recognizes development pressure being put on the southern part of the city.

### From the Introduction (Page 9)

- o *Pressure to convert rural and agricultural areas:* The City's natural lands and agricultural areas south of the Green Line are vital ecological and economic assets. The City has a long-standing policy of preserving those farmlands and ecosystems. However, development pressures continue to threaten their long-term viability.
- o Constraints on continued outward growth: The City must grow "inward and upward, not outward," focusing anticipated growth and future development in the northern part of the City where public infrastructure already exists. Natural areas, water bodies, bordering jurisdictions, fiscal constraints, and the desire to protect rural areas south of the Green Line limit the ability to accommodate expected growth using suburban-style development patterns.
  - **A key statement that should be emphasized in all our communications with the city.**

## The Plan recognizes the impact of flooding across the region

- **We can point out that it is especially an issue below the Green Line. It also recognizes city efforts to address stormwater issues.**

### From Existing Context (Page 10)

- o Water is the City's biggest attraction and its biggest challenge. Low-lying areas are prone to flooding during storms when water cannot quickly drain into estuaries
- o The City is actively addressing both issues through its stormwater ordinance and Sea Level Wise planning. The Sea Level Wise Adaptation Strategy outlines ways to strengthen natural systems, build engineered defenses, and adapt based on detailed local sea level modeling. The Plan recognizes the importance of the Green and Blue lines and cites the "strong interest" of the public on enforcing the Green Line policies.

## From Development Context (Page 15)

- o In 1979, Virginia Beach established a growth boundary, today named the Green Line (Figure 1-3), to safeguard rural and agricultural lands and control local expenditures. The Green Line was adopted, but not formally named, in 1979 to distinguish zoning districts, with residential zones north and agricultural ones south. The 1985 Comprehensive Plan formally recognized the Green Line, and it has remained in the same location since its inception. **The City continues to recognize the role of the Green Line to limit development into the City's southern area and limit costs of expanding infrastructure and services.**
  - **This is a key statement to use in all Task Force communications**
  
- o In 2004, the City Council adopted a resolution that established the concept of the Blue Line as a boundary for potential extension of City water and sewer service. The Department of Public Utilities later developed a policy based on this resolution. **While the Green Line has historically served as the primary tool for managing growth in the Comprehensive Plan, this Update for the first time acknowledges the Blue Line as a complementary policy tool.** Together, these tools help define a clear transition between urbanized areas and the City's rural, agricultural, and natural areas.
  - **This is a key statement to use in all Task Force communications**
  
- o Conversations with the public during the update of the Comprehensive Plan indicated a strong interest in enforcing the Green Line policies to protect the rural areas in the southern part of the City. People also wanted continued growth, notably to diversify the City's economic base and cultural opportunities. There was consensus that the tension between the Green Line and growth is best addressed by continuing to focus on growing inward rather than outward, and through infill and redevelopment patterns.

The **GREEN LINE** begins at the Chesapeake–Virginia Beach border, tracing the Interfacility Traffic Area (ITA) boundary northward to Princess Anne Road. From there, it follows Princess Anne Road east to Sandbridge Road and then turns south, bypassing the Sandbridge Special Service District. **The Green Line restricts building intensity and density within the Southern Rivers Watershed, an area designated for agriculture and conservation, with notable flood risks.**

The **BLUE LINE** runs along North Landing Road to Indian River Road, then extends eastward to New Bridge Road, then proceeding north until it intersects with Sandbridge Road, then proceeding eastward tracing the eastern and southern boundaries of the Sandbridge Special Service District until such boundary reaches the Atlantic Ocean. **The Blue Line marks the outer limit for city sewer and water services.**

- o Because the area north of the Green Line is nearly built out, the City will increase its focus to growing inward rather than outward. Growth needs to be organized to advance the City’s sustainability and quality-of-life goals. The City created Strategic Growth Areas (SGAs) to absorb growth using higher density, mixed-use, walkable development patterns.
  - **There are no SGAs in the Green Line Context Area.**
- o The City is also seeking areas for other targeted industries, including logistics, ecotourism, advanced manufacturing, sporting events/ entertainment, and defense and technology sectors such as cybersecurity, medical technology, and data analytics. Designated planning areas around Naval Air Station Oceana, areas within the Burton Station SGA, and existing clusters at Princess Anne Commons and the Princess Anne Athletic Complex can also support these industries.
  - **This statement possibly opens the door for continued industrial development in the Green Line Context Area.**
  - **Which of the “targeted industries” are planned for Princess Anne Commons and the Princess Anne Athletic Complex?**

**imagineV** directs most growth through infill and redevelopment techniques. **Infill** involves adding new buildings to vacant or underutilized land within already developed areas. **Redevelopment** is replacing or upgrading older buildings or sites

- **Although the Plan directs “most” growth to be done in the area north of the green line it does not preclude development south of the Green Line.**

## The Plan recognizes the importance of the agreements with the Navy made during the 2018 BRAC negotiations

### From Military Partners and Planning (Pg 19)

- o **The City has made significant investments to meet the requirements of the Defense Base Closure and Realignment (BRAC) Commission to protect its citizens and keep NAS Oceana in Virginia Beach and will continue to do so.**
- o **The City adopted the Interfacility Traffic Area (ITA) & Vicinity Master Plan, as an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan in 2011. An updated version of that plan was adopted by the City Council in 2017. The update recognized a significant increase in land in the ITA purchased by the City as part of the program to support operations at NAS Oceana. The plan guides future land use and development in Virginia Beach within the high noise zone contours between NAS Oceana and NALF Fentress. (Pg 21)**

## The Plan emphasizes that public input supports maintaining the Green Line

### From Public Involvement (Pg 22)

- o Participants contributed input and ideas through group discussions with facilitators and participant-led report-outs. **Groups supported the initial themes and Big Ideas, most importantly maintaining the Green Line and further developing strategies for growing inward.**
  - **A separate spreadsheet with community comments from the November 2023 Big Ideas Workshops is available on the Task Force shared drive**

### From Goals, Objectives, and Big Ideas (Pg 23)

- o imagineVB's Overarching Goals originated from the initial focus group sessions and evolved over subsequent engagements. Plan goals include:
  - Economic sustainability and diversity.
  - Housing attainment and diversity.
  - **Environmental sustainability.**

- Rural and agricultural land protection south of the Green Line.
- Infill urban development and multimodal access north of the Green Line.
- **Community identity** and connections.
- Neighborhood well-being and safety.
  - **This is the first mention of a Goal to preserve land below the Green Line. Previous statements regarding preservation referred to the land below the Blue Line.**

Establish an environmental and open space framework: Create a citywide Environmental and Open Space Framework that improves flood and sea level rise resiliency, wildlife migration, ecological diversity, and public enjoyment of nature.

Create a linear park system: Establish a Linear Park System with non-motorized pathways for biking, rolling, and walking between new and existing open spaces, parks, and recreational areas.

- **A Linear Park System will significantly support sports tourism in the Green Context Area**
  - **An expanded sports tourism complex as proposed by the Parks and Rec would be a key element of this system**
- o **Continue the Green Line and Blue Line, and plan based on the unique contexts created by those lines:** Identify the City’s existing four unique landscapes into Context Areas to tailor planning efforts. **The Blue and Green Lines are foundational to the Context Areas. Tailor policies and initiatives to meet the needs of each Context Area.**
  - o **Designate centers and multimodal corridors north of the Green Line:** Redevelop strip commercial areas into higher-density, walkable urban centers and invest in walking, rolling, biking, and transit networks to provide travel options for residents and workers.
    - **Princess Anne Rd is designated as a “Regional Multimodal Corridor.” The Plan DOES NOT designate it as a “Freight Corridor,” like VB Blvd, Oceana Blvd, London Bridge Rd, Dam Neck Rd, and Interstate Highways.**

The Plan provides goals for economic sustainability and diversity but does not recognize agriculture in the Green Line Context Area (just in the Rural Context Area). (Pg 24)

## From Economic Sustainability and Diversity

### Goals

- o Attract quality employers and talent to the city in strategic market sectors defined by the Economic Development Strategic Plan.
- o Attract, retain, and grow military contractors and renewable energy businesses to support the Economic Goals of the City and region.
  - o **Are these targeted for the Green Line Context Area?**
- o *Continue to foster growth of tomorrow's workforce to retain and attract diverse talent.*
  - o **But don't try to provide ALL the housing in the Green Line Context Area.**
- o Support sustainable agricultural production, *especially south of the Blue Line.*
  - **What about agriculture in the Transition Area?**
- o Sustain and grow tourism within the Resort Area and across the city, guided by emerging opportunities.
  - **Sports Tourism and Eco-Tourism should be specifically called out as emerging opportunities in the Green Line Context Area.**
- o Attract year-round visitors that help sustain the City's economy and tax base.
  - **Through Sports Tourism and Eco Tourism in the ITA.**

### Objectives

- o Direct and encourage economic growth in Centers and SGAs.
  - **There are no SGAs in the Green Line or Rural Context Areas**
- o Continue to promote unique economic development opportunities in the Princess Anne Commons Planning Area.

- **What “unique economic development opportunities” are we talking about? Sports Tourism? Eco Tourism?**
- Continue using policies and regulations that limit development in the Rural Context Area to support sustainable agricultural production.
  - **What about limiting development in the Transition Context Area?**
- Continue to support policies and regulations that preserve the Rural Context Area to maintain viable farming operations and safeguard long-term agricultural productivity, while exploring opportunities for ag-tech and sustainable farming innovations.
  - **This statement should also apply to the Green Line Context Area**
- Continue the Agricultural Reserve Program, and Open Space Acquisition Program.
- Apply Special Economic Growth Area (SEGA) Planning Area policies and design guidelines to support location opportunities for diverse, strategic, and emerging industries.
  - **There are no SEGAs in the Green Line Context Area**
- *Identify and promote areas for business growth that offer urban settings and regional multimodal access, supporting sectors such as light industrial, logistics, renewable energy, and industries with demonstrated momentum.*
  - **The Green Line Context Area is NOT an Urban setting.**
- Support unique and emerging economic opportunities in strategic market sectors, including innovation-driven enterprises, sports tourism, ecotourism, and other niche industries that contribute to a dynamic and resilient economy.
  - **“Innovation-driven” is a vague term open to interpretation.**
  - **What are the “strategic market sectors” and where are they targeted?**
  - **The Green Line Context Area is an ideal place for sports tourism and ecotourism.**

# The Plan leaves the door open for additional housing in the Green Line and Rural Context Areas

## From Housing Attainment and Diversity (Pg 25)

### Goals

- o *Provide a mix of housing types and attainable housing in differing settings across the City.*

### Objectives

- o Take advantage of Center redevelopment to increase housing diversity and attainability.
  - **We should support this Objective.**
- o *Find opportunities outside of Centers to increase housing diversity and attainability.*
  - **This statement leaves the door open for additional multi-family development in the district.**
- o Apply design guidelines to ensure the development of a variety of housing types affordable across all income levels in Centers and Community Hubs and along Multimodal Corridors.
  - **Should be limited to areas north of the Green Line along the Princess Anne Road corridor.**

## From Environmental Sustainability (Pg 25)

### Goals

- o Position the City of Virginia Beach as a model of environmental stewardship.
  - **Achieve this goal by not building large industrial buildings on poorly drained soils.**
- o Enhance healthy ecosystems in the City.
- o Improve water quality and **mitigate flood impacts.**
- o **Protect, enhance, and connect natural lands and open spaces.**
- o **Increase access to nature and expand eco-tourism.**

## Big Ideas

- o Establish an Environmental and Open Space Framework.
- o Create a Linear Park System.

## The Plan supports infill and redevelopment over outward growth

### From Infill Development, Redevelopment, and Multimodal Access (Pg 27)

#### Goals

- o Direct infill growth into Centers and Community Hubs and develop Centers and Hubs to make walking, biking, and transit viable and safe travel options.
  - We support this north of the Green Line.
  - Oppose the creation of a Center or HUB around the Haris Teeter Shopping Center on Nimmo.
- o Modify the designs and operations of designated Multimodal Corridors to make walking, biking, and transit viable and safe options within and between Centers and Hubs.
  - **Princess Anne Road is a Multimodal Corridor. The Inland Context Area includes two Regional Multimodal Corridors, Virginia Beach Boulevard / I-264 from the Norfolk City line to the Resort Area and Independence Boulevard / Princess Anne Road from Virginia Beach Boulevard to the Municipal Center**
- o Create safe and convenient walking and biking paths between neighborhoods and Community Hubs.

#### Objectives

- o Designate Multimodal Corridors and apply Multimodal Corridor design guidelines to promote safe and convenient walking, biking, rolling, and transit.
  - Since Princess Anne Road is designated as a Multimodal Corridor, it

**envisioning light rail or other multi-modal means of transportation all the way to the Municipal Center. What does this mean for development?**

- o **Prioritize transit service improvements that provide access to City job centers.**
  - **This would be good for Princess Anne RD but will make development at the south end more enticing.**

## The Plan supports Community Identity and Neighborhood Well-being and Safety (Pg 28)

### Goals

- o Recognize the unique histories and identities of communities in the City.
- o Promote and sustain community venues, events, and opportunities.

### Objectives

- o Work with residents to define community boundaries and their identities.
- o Develop community identity-based placemaking strategies, design guidelines, and cultural opportunities.
- o Recognize and protect historic sites within communities.

### Big Idea

- o Create unique community identities and connections.
  - **This should be the subject of a new Task Force committee . . . tell the unique story of District 2.**

## From Neighborhood Well-Being and Safety

### Goals

- o Protections from the scale and conflicting activity of adjacent non-residential developments.
  - **D2 needs to preserve and quote this statement.**
  - **Protection needs to be sought by adjoining Council Districts 5, 7 & 10.**

## Big Idea

- o Monitor and ensure neighborhood safety and well-being.

## Community Identity and Connections

- o Develop a Community and Connections program that focuses on:
  - Working with local residents to define community boundaries and the unique characteristics of each community.
  - Implementing brand designs (such as banners) in gateways to public spaces within communities.

## The Plan points out policies the city will focus on in the near term

- o Economic Development and Diversity
  - Industrial, logistics, and high-tech bio.
  - Technology and finance businesses.
  - **Agriculture.**
  - Defense and uncrewed systems.
- o **Identify key areas for redevelopment**, including needed infrastructure updates to attract vibrant mixed-use development.
- o **Identify and inventory suitable land for industrial, high-tech, and logistics industries, including available development and redevelopment parcels in Center and Special Use Place Types**, with a focus on unique, high-quality-of-life assets that support a diverse workforce base, including existing military personnel and young professionals.
- o Housing Attainment and Diversity
  - **Update the City's zoning code to allow for density bonuses and smaller lots in districts north of the Green Line.**
  - Explore land development opportunities for attainable housing, such as through partnerships with Virginia Beach Community Development Corporation, collaboration with religious entities on any excess land, and *use of publicly owned property as development incentives.*
  - **Red Flag – D2 contains a lot of City owned land!**

- o *Environmental sustainability*
  - Continue implementing programs that ensure water quality and flood protection, notably the Sea Level Wise initiative.
  - As described in Chapter 2, identify opportunities in City planning and design efforts and during private development reviews to protect and connect natural lands and open spaces.
- o Rural Land Protection South of the Green Line
  - Continue purchasing land and conservation easements south of the Green Line.
  - Continue the Agricultural Reserve Program, and Open Space Acquisition Program.
  - Continue the policy of not extending urban services south of the Blue Line.
  - Continue limiting development densities in the Green Line Context Area.
  - Prohibit density bonuses in the Green Line Context Area.
  - Infill and Multimodal Access North of the Green Line
  - Use Place Type design guidelines to update the zoning ordinance for properties north of the Green Line.
  - Within ten years, begin the Independence/ Princess Anne Road Corridor Study as described in Chapter 3.
- o Community Identity and Connections
  - Develop a Community and Connections program that focuses on:
    - Working with local residents to define community boundaries and the unique characteristics of each community.
    - Implementing brand designs (such as banners) in gateways to public spaces within communities.
- o Neighborhood Safety and Well-being
  - Develop a neighborhood monitoring system that continually tracks factors of interest to residents and stakeholders in local neighborhoods, such as sense of safety, traffic, sidewalk connectivity, or shade.

# The Plan addresses the variety of environments across the city

## From the Environment Introduction (Pg 41)

- o Fifty square miles of estuaries, creeks, and wetlands (about 15 percent of the total area). Lynnhaven River, Broad Bay, Linkhorn Bay are major waterbodies.
  - **No mention of Back Bay individually and its unique features such as wind driven tides**
- o Major State and Federal parks and wildlife areas, such including: First Landing State Park (2,900 acres), False Cape State Park (3,800 acres), and Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) (9,000 acres).
- o Approximately 26,700 acres of agriculturally designated lands, including 10,500 acres of farmland protected by the City through its Agricultural Reserve Program, discussed in Chapter 6.
  - **No specific mention of the unique soil types in the Green Line and Rural Context Areas**
- o The City has a longstanding commitment to planning for and safeguarding these resources. Continuing to protect them remains a top priority for the City, ensuring their value is maintained and enhanced for future generations.

## From the Environment Goals and Objectives

### Goals

- o Position the City of Virginia Beach as a model of environmental stewardship.
- o Enhance healthy ecosystems in the City.
- o Improve water quality and flood protection.
- o Protect, enhance, and connect natural lands and open spaces.
- o Increase access to nature.
- o Protect residents from natural hazards.
- o Encourage the efficient use of land.
- o Take a proactive stance in mitigating flooding and sea level rise issues.
  - **Most Environmental Goals support limited development in the Green Line**

## Context Area.

### Objectives

- o Expand the City's green infrastructure inventory.
- o Review practices that limit waste and pollution.
- o Maximize the social and environmental benefits of open space.
- o Encourage adaptive reuse redevelopment and green building techniques.
- o Develop a Linear Park System and continue to strategically acquire open space.
- o Expand public access to waterways.
- o Continue managing activities that significantly affect water quality and any regulatory floodplains.
- o Plan for increased sea level rise and model high-risk sea level rise and storm scenarios.
- o Implement the City's Sea Level Wise Program strategies.
- o Proactively collaborate with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and other federal, state, and local agencies on the ongoing Coastal Storm Risk Management Study and other resilience-planning initiatives in Virginia Beach.
- o Optimize the ecological value of protected lands and open space.
  - **These terms need to be explained or defined for people to understand.**
- o Enhance connectivity between protected lands.
  - **Most Environmental Objectives support limited development, passive recreation and ecotourism in the Green Line Context Area**

### From Sustainable Practices (Pg 44)

- o Green infrastructure leverages natural systems as infrastructure solutions in response to issues like extreme urban heat, flooding, and erosion.
- o The urban tree canopy is the area of the City covered by leaves, branches, and tree trunks when viewed from above. A connected, healthy canopy improves air quality, provides wildlife habitat, and reduces the heat island effect. The trees and plants that form the canopy also help sequester carbon

and mitigate stormwater runoff.

- **Industrial development in the Green Line Context Area will reduce tree canopy and increase impervious surfaces in an area already prone to flooding.**

## From Efficient Land Use Patterns and Buildings

- o The City of Virginia Beach is committed to the efficient use of land as part of its sustainability approach. Directing growth to create vibrant, more compact areas can:
  - **Ease pressures to convert farmland and open space to urban uses.**
  - **Make better use of existing public infrastructure and services** (roads, transit, schools, water, sewer, police, fire, and rescue), thereby **lowering long-term public expenditures.**
  - Reduce vehicle miles traveled by **placing essential services closer to where people live and work.**
  - The City intends to capitalize on the benefits of **compact development using higher-intensity, mixed-use Centers to accommodate its anticipated growth north of the Green Line**
    - **All statements support limited development in the Green Line Context Area**
- o Low Impact Development (LID) aims to minimize environmental impacts and manage resources sustainability in land development by **preserving natural systems, reducing impervious surfaces,** and using green infrastructure.

## From Mitigating Natural Hazards

- o **Virginia Beach is at a heightened risk for experiencing high temperatures. Urban areas with dense pavements, buildings, and heat-retaining surfaces can expose users to higher temperatures than areas with more open, natural areas.**

## From Limiting Pollution

- o Air pollution is the introduction of particulate matter, gases, odors, or other harmful materials into Earth's atmosphere. Air pollution is a significant risk factor for several health conditions, including respiratory infections, heart

disease, stroke, and lung cancer. Transportation and vehicle emissions are a primary contributor to Virginia Beach air pollution

- **Locating industrial business at the south end of the Princess Anne Corridor only serves to increase miles that trucks need to travel to get to Interstate Highways or rail.**
- o The Comprehensive Plan looks to reduce transportation-related air pollution by transitioning trips to less polluting sources and reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT).

## From Sustainability Practices- Policies

- o Encourage and incentivize adaptive reuse of suitable structures to limit waste and the need for all-new construction, as well as protect elements of historical value
- o Increase tree plantings and preservation of existing trees on all public properties.
- o For the City's trees, monitor and track tree planting and removal and ensure that net tree loss is replaced near the location of the loss.
- o Protect and help to enhance connected tree canopies.
- o Maintain the intermediate goal of 45 percent urban tree canopy (UTC) by 2045.
- o Mitigate urban heat island effects and enhance natural cooling.
- o Adhere to Air Installation Compatibility Use Zones (AICUZ) and other policy and programmatic recommendations cited in the Oceana Land Use Conformity Program and the 2005 Hampton Roads Joint Land Use Study.
- o Remain good partners with the Navy and ensure regulations relating to the AICUZ continue to provide the appropriate balance of development restrictions.

## From Water

- o Plan for increased sea level rise and model high-risk sea level rise and storm scenarios.
- o Optimize the ecological value of protected lands.
- o The proliferation of impervious surfaces also reduces groundwater recharge, which elevates these risks.

## The Plan acknowledges the unique characteristics of the Southern Rivers Watershed

### From The Southern Rivers Watershed (Pg 54)

- o **The Southern Rivers Watershed, sometimes called the Southern Watershed or the Albemarle-Pamlico Watershed, is the most extensive in the City, representing over 60 percent of the City's land area.** The Southern Rivers Watershed is foundational to the City's ecological balance and rural economies. This unique and sensitive watershed includes significant protected lands with noteworthy plant and animal diversity, as well as both tidal and non-tidal wetlands.
- o High groundwater elevations and hydric soils can increase runoff, limit the capacity of stormwater conveyance systems, and reduce the effectiveness of Best Management Practices.
- o The Southern Rivers Watershed Management Area guidelines create a 50-foot buffer as a key regulatory overlay that guides development.
  - The City strongly recommends that developers conduct drainage studies before a request to approve a discretionary development application involving land disturbance in the Southern Rivers Watershed.

## The Plan addresses the potential for increased cost due to sea level rise and stormwater flooding

### From Flooding

- o Virginia Beach is exposed to several sources of flooding, including high tide, **wind tide, storm surge, rainfall, and groundwater flooding.** These flood types are exacerbated by compounding factors due to changes in the natural and built environment. **According to the Sea Level Wise project, the City's annual average flood-related losses would increase almost three-fold to \$77 million without interventions.**

### From Sea level Rise

- o Sea level rise is expected to intensify flooding problems. Figure 2-4 shows the City's projected Mean Higher High-Water (MHHW) line under the 3-foot sea level rise scenario to 2075. **Increased MHHW levels will result in loss of land, saltwater intrusion, farmland loss, and loss of or challenges to existing**

**wetlands areas.** The map shows how the City’s low-lying lands are expected to be more frequently inundated by water and prone to storm flooding under the 100-year storm event flood depth (3’ SLR projection – 2075), as defined by the City’s Sea Level Wise Program.

## From Water Quality and Flood Protection Policies

- o **Establish protocols to conserve and protect groundwater on City properties**
  - **Carefully regulate development within and enhance the integrity of Virginia Beach’s floodplains.**
  - **Concentrate new development at higher elevations outside special flood hazard areas.**
  - **A detailed map of where the flood plains are in the Green Line Context Area would be helpful**
- o **Continue recommending that a professional engineer review all discretionary development applications in the Southern Rivers Watersheds, who will review disturbances and potential mitigations to the watershed and any upstream and downstream areas. Maintain the 50-foot buffer to protect the most sensitive part of the Southern Rivers Watershed ecosystem.**
  - Review and revise the zoning ordinance and connected regulations to protect the City against long-term threats from sea level rise and hazard flooding.
  - Inventory and incorporate sensitive and at-risk lands into the city’s zoning ordinance, planning, and engineering initiatives, reducing the intensity or density of uses in those places and providing any feasible defensive solutions.

## From Protected Lands, Open Space, and Access to Nature (Pg 63)

Those in District 2 are covered here:

- o Virginia Beach is home to abundant natural areas, open spaces, and recreational spaces. These encompass federal lands, such as the Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge, state lands, such as First Landing State Park and False Cape State Park, and local City parks, such as Marshview Park, Prosperity Park, and Mount Trashmore Park. **Conservation easements are used extensively in the southern part of the City to protect natural and agricultural land from development.** State and federal lands are generally established for conservation and are not artificially manipulated or disturbed from their natural condition.

- **The Plan should recognize those parts of the Green Line Context Area that are “natural areas.” Most of these are in the flood zones as stated.**
- According to the City’s Outdoors Plan (2016), 58 percent of Virginia Beach residents live within a ten-minute walk of a park, lower than the national median of 68 percent. **Expanding access to nature is a Goal of the plan update.**
- The City’s commitment to conservation also includes long-term planning efforts. For example, **the Natural Heritage Technical Report #94-12 provides a framework with key findings on areas of high biodiversity and ecological value in Virginia Beach.** This work continues to support grant applications and resource protection planning.
- **Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge (NWR)** was established in 1938 as a 4,590-acre refuge for migratory birds. In the 1980s, reacting to significant development activity, the US Fish and Wildlife Service purchased lands and doubled the size of Back Bay NWR, and today it represents nearly 9,250 acres. Habitats include beaches, dunes, woodlands, agricultural fields, and emergent freshwater marshes.
- **Princess Anne Wildlife Management Area**, covering about 1,500 acres, is a Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries waterfowl hunting area. Hunting opportunities are further enhanced by a long-standing cooperative agreement with the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation that provides limited access to False Cape State Park for visitors.
- **Beaches** - The City’s beaches are a vital part of the coastal ecosystem and are an immense attraction for residents and tourists. Many local beaches face erosion issues. The City’s Beach Management Plan (2002) balances beach access, recreational opportunities, erosion control, and infrastructure needs; the City has also undertaken additional re-nourishment efforts.
- Some residents expressed challenges accessing local beaches during the public engagement process for this Comprehensive Plan update. Balancing access, preservation, and protection remains key to maintaining Virginia Beach’s most iconic feature.
- **What does this mean for Sandbridge?**

## The Plan Envisions an Environmental and Open Space Framework

### From Environmental and Open Spaces (Pg 65)

- The Environmental and Open Space Framework Master Plan (EOSF) is envisioned as a long-term action plan the City can take to **synergize planning efforts and maximize investments in open space.** This is one Big Idea that

- o emerged as part of the visioning for this update.
- o The Environmental and Open Space Framework will be designed to accomplish three goals:
  - o Enhance large, open land areas and environmentally sensitive spaces to address **flood control** and sea level rise.
  - o Establish wildlife corridors to connect fragmented habitats, support ecological health, and promote biodiversity.
  - o Where appropriate, identify corridors supporting the Linear Park System to amenitize these features and support access to nature.
  - o **Establish environmentally protective boundaries for development, with particular focus on the Green Line Context Area.**
- **Yes**

## From Linear Park System (Pg 66)

- o The **Linear Park System (LPS)** is an aspirational system of trails connecting the city. It is one of the Big Ideas from public focus groups and workshops.
- o The Linear Park System concept relies on primary spines that extend across the City. The LPS Spines are critical pieces for connecting the future trail network. LPS spines include:
  - The Virginia Beach Trail, following the former Norfolk-Southern ROW, parallel to Virginia Beach Boulevard.
  - **The Southeastern Trail, following the Southeastern Parkway and Greenbelt alignment.**
  - **We should take advantage of the fact that this trail intersects with the Green Line Context Area.**
  - The Coastal Trail, following the Shore Drive and Atlantic Avenue corridors.
  - **The West Neck Creek Trail, following along waterways extending from the Lynnhaven River to the North Landing River.**

## From Protected and Connected Open Spaces Objectives and Policies (Pg 67)

### Objectives

- o Continue to strategically protect and connect open spaces that:
  - Optimize the ecological value of protected lands and open space.
  - Enhance connectivity between protected lands.
  - Increase public access to natural lands and waterways.
- o **Continue to implement the Outdoors Plan and the Active Transportation Plan.**

### Policies

- o **Prepare the Environmental and Open Space Framework Master Plan to:**
  - **Comprehensively study solutions that address citywide stormwater, sea level rise, wildlife, and open space needs.**

- Identify strategically important lands to protect through purchase, easements, and/or regulations.
- Use the City's Open Space Program to acquire at-risk or strategically located lands vulnerable to sea level rise in the floodplain and to preserve or create open space.
- o **Strive for access to high-quality outdoor spaces using the Linear Park System initiative to coordinate improvements.**
  - Develop the Linear Park System by identifying open space opportunities from the Environmental and Open Space Framework Plan, bike and walking connections in the Active Transportation Plan, and **parks and recreational needs in the Outdoors Plan.**
  - Acquire high-quality park space within a ten-minute walk for residents north of the Blue Line.
  - Prioritize equity when implementing access strategies for parks, beaches, and waterway investments (such as docks, kayaks, and boat launches).
- o **Protect and preserve the City's parks and recreational areas.**
  - Monitor the condition, physical accessibility, and appeal of parks and recreational areas.
  - Implement and update the City's Outdoors Plan.
  - **Ensure the Sportsplex is properly funded and maintained.**
- o **Maintain and provide access to beaches.**
- o **Maintain the integrity of Virginia Beach's beaches and dune areas.**
  - Actively provide re-nourishment to areas where erosion is persistent and invest in erosion control projects as appropriate.
  - Follow the recommendations as stated in the Beach Management Plan.
- Pursue private ownership dedication of right-of-way easements to resolve questions surrounding public access.
- **Explore strategies that make accessing local beaches easier for residents, particularly those outside the Coastal Context Area.**
  - **What does this mean for Sandbridge?**
  - **Accelerate Nimmo Parkway Phase 7B?**
- Use the framework and direction established in the Natural Heritage

Technical Report #94-12 to guide conservation, stewardship, and planning for ecologically significant areas.

## From Linear Park Systems Spines

### Southeastern Trail (Pg 70)

- o The Southeastern Trail is planned along the former Southeastern Parkway and Greenbelt alignment. It will extend from the Chesapeake–Virginia Beach line to an area east of Naval Air Station Oceana. The original Parkway was intended to serve as a high-speed roadway connecting Chesapeake and areas to the west with the Resort Area. The City has since limited potential construction to a segment between Indian River Road and Holland Road.
- o The City owns portions of the right-of-way and has identified potential uses, including multiuse trails and utilities. While the full roadway may not be built, the Active Transportation Plan includes the Southeastern Trail along this alignment.
- o The trail would follow the full length of the original route, connecting the Princess Anne Commons Planning Area to the Virginia Beach Trail near the I-264 and Birdneck Road interchange. This link would create a continuous 10-mile corridor between the Resort Area and the sports and entertainment venues in Princess Anne Commons, accessible by walking, running, biking, or rolling.
  - **Great supporting statement for sports tourism in Princess Anne Commons.**
- o The right-of-way should include landscaped stormwater retention features. Parks should be located near road crossings to support access and provide places to rest. The Southeastern Trail can move forward independently of any future roadway development

### West Neck Creek Trail (Pg 71)

- o The West Neck Creek Trail would extend from the Lynnhaven River to the North Landing River along the West Neck Creek. It would cross both the Virginia Beach Trail and the Southeastern Trail. The trail would follow a series of waterways and canals identified in the Sea Level Wise Adaption Strategy. **Given anticipated flooding and sea level rise effects (see Figure 2-4 and 2-5), the West Neck Creek Trail can**

complement the City's response in West Neck floodplain. The trail could be built along at-risk lands, and portions could be integrated into the West Neck Creek flood defense system.

## From Linear Park System Policies

- o Evaluate rights of way available in the Southeastern Parkway and Trail alignment to determine how the Southeastern Trail and other uses can be collocated and how additional rights of way are needed.

## The Plan Provides a Comprehensive Vision for the Green Line Context Area (Pg 126)

- o The Green Line Context Area will continue to **buffer urban and suburban land north of the Green Line and rural land south of the Blue Line**. Enhancements and connections among open spaces and environmental lands will create a connected open space system. Low-density neighborhoods will be a place for refuge, connected to **neighborhood-oriented businesses and civic uses with walking and biking trails**.
  - **This statement should be used to promote the Princess Anne Commons and Transition Planning Areas**
- o The Princess Anne Commons Planning Area in the western portion of the Green Line Context Area will continue to be a *place for low-impact and low-intensity businesses and activities that help diversify the City's economy and culture*.
  - **"Does low-impact and low-intensity" equal "light industrial"??**
- o The Transition Area will continue to support low-density residential and residential-serving uses while prioritizing the preservation of open space.
  - **"Residential serving" does NOT equate to "light industrial."**

## From Green Line Context Area Introduction (Pg 127)

- o **The Green Line Context Area covers around 11,300 acres**. Nearly a third of the area (3,400 acres) is either vacant or agricultural. Almost another third is low-density residential neighborhoods.
- o There are small pockets of commercial and higher intensity residential development.

- o The Green Line Context Area includes two Planning Areas, the Transition Area in the eastern half and the Princess Anne Commons Area in the western half. It also includes two City Centers, including the Municipal Center and the Health Education Center located along Princess Anne Road. This area is also home to the Transition Neighborhood Place Type.
  - **Figure 5-1 indicates that 9% of the Green Line Context Area is “Environmentally Sensitive Areas and Parks” yet the Forward to the Plan (Pg 7) only attributes sensitive area to land south of the Blue Line...**

From page 7 - “The Green Line continues to serve as a transition between urban development and the City’s more rural, low-density areas. **The Blue Line**, located south of the Green Line, **affirms the City’s intent to limit urban services and direct growth away from farmland, rural communities, and *environmentally sensitive areas.***”

- **Figure 5-1 describes 31% of the Green Context Area as “Vacant.” What does that mean? Is it currently in agriculture? Is it buildable?**

## From Green Line Context Area Goals and Objectives (Pg 129)

### Citywide Goals

- o Economic sustainability and diversity.
- o Housing attainment and diversity.
- o Environmental sustainability.
- o **Rural and agricultural land protection south of the Green Line.**
  - **The first real supporting mention of agriculture in the Green Line Context Area.**
  - **Infill urban development and multimodal access north of the Green Line.**
  - **Community identity** and connections.
  - Neighborhood well-being and safety.

## Green Line Area Goals (Pg 130)

### Economic sustainability and diversity

- o Retain and create jobs to foster economic growth and vitality in the Princess

Anne Commons Planning Area through **light industrial, technology-based uses, and unique venues and activities such as sports tourism, esports, ecotourism, and educational opportunities** that attract year-round visitors and sustain the city's economy and tax base.

- **Red Flag - This statement opens the door for “light Industrial” development in the Princess Anne Planning Area.**
- **Also, the following statement is on page 126 “The Transition Area will continue to support low-density residential and residential-serving uses while prioritizing the preservation of open space.**
- o **Nurture and expand existing businesses to facilitate economic growth.**
  - o **Which existing businesses are they talking about? A more focused statement would be beneficial. See economic sustainability and diversity below. (Pg 129)**

### **Housing attainment and diversity**

- o Ensure the quality of existing and new housing.
- o Take advantage of Center redevelopment to increase housing diversity and attainability.
  - **There are two City Centers in the Green Line Context Area...the Municipal Center and the Health Education Center. On page 17 the Plan defines infill as “adding new buildings to vacant or underutilized land within already developed areas and redevelopment as “replacing or upgrading older buildings or sites to meet today’s needs” so, wouldn’t that be infill in our two Centers? It seems like it should, but infill above the green Line is mentioned throughout. Confusing.**
- o Find opportunities outside of Centers to increase housing diversity and attainability.
  - **Red Flag – if the idea is to focus housing in Centers, then why promote finding housing areas outside of centers?**

### **Environmental sustainability**

- o Improve water quality and mitigate flood impacts.
- o Protect, enhance, and connect natural lands and open spaces.
- o Increase access to nature.

- o Protect residents from natural hazards.
- o Encourage efficient land use and green buildings and infrastructure.
- o Protect existing properties from sea level rise, flooding, and erosion.
- o Enhance the ecological resilience of natural areas.

### **Community identity and connections (Pg 129)**

- o Identify and enhance the unique identities of Green Line communities.
- o Provide easy walking and bike access to Community Hubs.
  - From page 103... NOTE - Community Hubs are compact, walkable locations for community activities, such as schools, places of worship, health care services, parks, farmers markets, etc. Community Hubs are centrally located in defined communities with safe and convenient multimodal access to adjacent neighborhoods. The Historic Kempsville Master Plan Planning Area functions similarly to what is envisioned for Community Hubs. Chapter 7 includes Community Hub Place Types policy and design guidelines. Locations for Community Hubs will be identified once communities are defined, as described in the next section. Local community members will initiate Community Hub plans.

### **Neighborhood well-being and safety**

### **Green Line Area Objectives (Pg 130)**

### **Economic sustainability and diversity**

- o Continue to update and follow the Interfacility Traffic Area and Vicinity Master Plan to guide the development of unique sports and cultural venues, agriculture, innovative technology businesses, and other emerging business opportunities that align with nearby health services, municipal, educational, and retail uses in the Princess Anne Commons Planning Area.
  - **No “Light Industrial” is included in this definition.**

### **Housing attainment and diversity**

- o Implement recommendations adopted by City Council from the 2024 Virginia Beach Housing Study.
- o Use Transition Neighborhood Place Type guidelines to increase the diversity of housing types and the number of affordable homes.
- o Update zoning regulations to simplify the review of attainable housing development in Green Line neighborhoods.

- **Red Flag - Updated zoning may bring multi-family housing to single family neighborhoods. See Abigail Spanberger's proposed legislation.**
- o Identify locations and strategies for accommodating future senior housing demand.

## **Environmental sustainability**

- o Continually monitor flooding and water quality and update Sea Level Wise strategies and other flood protection and water quality strategies as needed.
- o Continue implementing Sea Level Wise recommendations and other stormwater management efforts to mitigate flooding.
- o Continue programs that protect natural lands and develop the **Environmental and Open Space Framework Plan** to identify how to leverage initiatives such as flood protection land purchases to connect protected lands.
- o Apply the Transition Neighborhood design guidelines that create connected open spaces within new neighborhoods. (Pg 130)
- o **Find opportunities to develop the Linear Park System.**
- o Continue programs that protect water quality in local water bodies.
- o **Continue to use the Green Sea Blueway and Greenway Management Plan for grant applications and to support the Outdoors Plan.**
- o **Continue to implement the Outdoors Plan, the Active Transportation Plan, and acquire more open space via the Open Space Acquisition Program.**

## **Community identity and connections (Pg 131)**

- o Continually monitor flooding and water quality and update Sea Level Wise strategies and other flood protection and water quality strategies as needed.
- o Continue implementing Sea Level Wise recommendations and other stormwater management efforts to mitigate flooding.
- o Continue programs that protect natural lands and develop the Environmental and Open Space Framework Plan to identify how to leverage initiatives such as flood protection land purchases to connect protected lands.
- o Apply the Transition Neighborhood design guidelines that create connected open spaces within new neighborhoods.
  - **Red Flag – Are new neighborhoods acceptable in the Transition Area?**
- o **Find opportunities to develop the Linear Park System.**
- o Continue programs that protect water quality in local water bodies.

- o Continue to use the Green Sea Blueway and Greenway Management Plan for grant applications and to support the Outdoors Plan.
- o **Continue to implement the Outdoors Plan, the Active Transportation Plan, and acquire more open space via the Open Space Acquisition Program.**

### **Neighborhood well-being and safety**

- o Continually monitor housing conditions and well-being in neighborhoods and make improvements as needed.
- o **Buffer existing neighborhoods adjacent to Centers.**

## **From Green Line Area Planning Areas (Pg 132)**

### **Transition Area**

- o **The Transition Area covers the eastern portion of the Context area and is primarily composed of low-density Transition Neighborhoods that focus on maintaining open space.** The Nimmo Church is an important historic resource in the Transition Area. The character and pattern of development has been orchestrated by the Transition Area Design Guidelines, adopted in 2015, which provides for environmental protection, historical character, and a more rural pattern of development. The Transition Area Design Guidelines also includes maps indicating areas where new local trails are appropriate (refer to Transition Area Design Guidelines - Appendix A). **The boundaries of the Transition Area remain the same, and are not changing as part of the update to the Comprehensive Plan.**

### **Transition Planning Area Policies**

- o Continue to follow the goals, objectives and design guidelines in the Transition Area Design Guidelines augmented with the Transition Neighborhood design guidelines during development reviews and rezonings.
  - **The Plan provides “guidelines” not “Policies.”**
  - **Pages 171 through 180 provide Type 1 and Type 2 neighborhood design guidelines, but there are no design guidelines provided for Transition Neighborhoods.**
  - **Appendix A of the Plan details the relationships between Place Type districts and existing zoning districts.**
- o Do not allow densities bonuses.
- o Using Center Place Type design guidelines, ensure buffers between designated

## Centers and Transition Neighborhoods.

- In the Green Context Area there are two “Center Place Types, the Municipal Center and the Health Education Center. Transition Neighborhoods are defined as lower-density areas designed to fit the unique context between the Blue and Green Lines. No specific Transition Neighborhood is provided as an example.
  - Page 173 states - Transition Neighborhoods provide natural, quiet, and safe settings for single-family homes between the Green and Blue Lines at lower densities than Type 1 or Type 2 Neighborhoods.
  - How do you achieve a meaningful buffer between the Municipal Center and any future nearby neighborhood?
- o Through neighborhood development reviews and land acquisitions, find opportunities to create a connected open space network.
  - o Develop the trails included in the Transition Area Design Guidelines and new trails that could be developed on new connected open spaces to create the Linear Park System trails within the Green Line Context Area.
  - o Use the Environmental Open Space Framework Plan, once developed, to identify opportunities and strategies for creating open space connections and strategies for protecting those connections, including land purchases and proffers, and easements.
  - o Where feasible, encourage the protection or conservation of privately owned quasi-public spaces and open spaces.

## Princess Anne Commons (Pg 133)

- o The Princess Anne Commons Planning Area in the western portion of the Context Area includes a mix of unique non-residential uses and activities of City-wide importance, including Innovation Park, Tidewater Community College, Veterans United Home Loans Amphitheater, Sentara Princess Anne Hospital, and the Virginia Beach Sportsplex. Development in Princess Anne Commons has been guided by the Interfacility Traffic Area and Vicinity Master Plan.
- o The ITA Plan, shown in Figure 5-4 and whose boundaries are shown in more detail in Figure 5-5, is the main guiding document for the Princess Anne Commons Planning Area. The plan establishes land use policy that supports military operations by ensuring compatibility with frequent jet overflights between NAS Oceana and NALF Fentress. Via the ITA Acquisition Program, the City has purchased roughly 60 percent of land in the ITA as of 2017.

## o Princess Anne Commons Planning Area Policies

- Continue to follow the design concepts and principles of the ITA and Vicinity Master Plan as updated by City Council.
- Continue to follow the Innovation Park Design Guidelines.
- Do not allow densities bonuses.
- Continue pursuing the target industries identified in the ITA and Vicinity Master Plan, focused on the designated Initiative Areas like Innovation Park, Sportsplex, and Municipal Center, while allowing flexibility for evolving economic activities.
  - **What are the “targeted” industries?**
- Pursue the ITA and Vicinity Master Plan goal to increase resilience to sea level rise and flooding by meeting stormwater regulations, utilizing innovative solutions, and improving public infrastructure.
- Incorporate the recommendations for the Southeastern Parkway and Trail, including developing the Southeastern Trail within the right of way, into the ITA and Vicinity Master Plan. Update the plan’s trail system accordingly and integrate the final design into the Linear Park System.

## From Green Line Area Place Types (Pg 135)

*Figure 5-2* illustrates the organization of Place Types in the Green Line Context Area. The Area includes:

- o Portions of two City Center Place Types along Princess Anne Road, the Municipal Center and the Sentara Princess Anne Hospital.
- o Special Use Place Type as defined by the Interfacility Traffic Area and Vicinity Master Plan within the Princess Anne Commons Planning Area, and **(incomplete sentence in the Plan)**.
- o Transition Neighborhood Place Types.

Details regarding the objectives and design guidelines for Place Types are provided in Chapter 7 (Pg 147).

## Green Line Area Centers (Pg 135)

- o The Green Line Context Area includes two mixed-use, walkable, employment-oriented, City Centers along Princess Anne Road – the Municipal Center and the Health Educational Center. Both Centers straddle the Green Line,

with portions located in the Inland Context Area and in the Green Line Context Area.

- o **Centers are oriented around potential transit stops, with higher intensity development in the Core Zone transitioning to lower intensity development in the Edge Zone.** Buffers along the Edge Zone transition Center development to match the scale and type of development adjacent to the Center. Center boundaries extending a half mile from their focal point are adjusted inward by either agricultural or Transition Neighborhood zoning district boundaries *Figure 5-2*. Details of Center design guidelines are provided in Chapter 7.
  - **An important statement for the housing and development committee, especially as it applies to the area adjacent to the Municipal Center.**

## Green Line Area Centers (pg135)

### Locations

- o Designated City Center locations and boundaries are shown in *Figure 5-2. (Pg 128)*

### Development review

- o Proposed development within each designated Center has the following options:
  - Where applicable, develop according to the existing zoning requirements for the property (by-right development) and as informed by the ITA and Vicinity Master Plan.
  - Develop according to City Center Place Type design guidelines appropriate for the property's location within the Center (Core versus Edge Zone guidelines) and informed by the ITA and Vicinity Master Plan, where applicable, and Transition Area Design Guidelines.
    - **The Task Force needs to articulate which option we support.**
- o Limit building heights to four stories in the Municipal Center and six stories in the area's northwestern Center.
- o The City should update and enhance the Interfacility Traffic Area and Vicinity Master Plan to align with Center design guidelines. Updates could include:
  - A form-based code that adds design requirements for proposed development.
  - Center infrastructure, including:
    - Internal street network alignments and designated street types.
    - improvements and parks.
    - Shared parking locations and types (structured versus surface parking).
    - An infrastructure financing plan.

## Green Line Area Neighborhoods

- o Most of the development in the Transition Area of the Green Line Context Area is low-density residential neighborhoods. Development of those neighborhoods has been regulated by the zoning ordinance and the Transition Area Design Guidelines, which states:

*“...encourage innovation and creativity in the appropriate design of buildings and sites so that all development and redevelopment in this unique area of the City will be respectful of its natural heritage and historical legacy and sensitive to its environmental value.”*

Neighborhoods currently zoned for single family homes are designated as Transition Neighborhood. The objectives and design guidelines for the Transition Neighborhood Place Type, detailed in Chapter 7, will work in combination with policies in the Transition Area Design Guidelines and zoning regulations to guide residential development in the Green Line Context Area. The few neighborhoods in the Area currently zoned for multifamily and single homes are designated as Type 2 Neighborhoods (Figure 5-2).

- **Watch for new legislation from Richmond that could change zoning to allow multi-family housing in single family zones.**
- **Note that two neighborhood types exist in the Green Line Context area, Type 2 and Transition.**

## Green Line Area Neighborhood Policies (Pg 136)

### Locations

- o While technically within the Inland Context Area, the Courthouse Corner and South Holland neighborhoods are primarily associated with the Municipal Center.
  - Designated Transition Neighborhoods include zoning districts shown in *Appendix A* and are shown in *Figure 5-2*. (Pg 128)

### Development review

- o Review proposed development within designated Transition neighborhoods using zoning regulations augmented by Transition Area Design Guidelines and Transition Neighborhood Place Type design guidelines detailed in Chapter 7.
- o Review neighborhood development rezoning requests using the Transition Area Design Guidelines and the Transition Neighborhood Place Type design

guidelines in Chapter 7.

- o Use Place Type design guidelines in Chapter 7 to ensure proper buffering between neighborhoods and Centers.
- o Density bonuses are not allowed in the Green Line Context Area.
- o Review and update zoning regulations in Transition Neighborhoods to identify opportunities for increasing attainable housing and to streamline the review and approval of attainable housing projects.
  - **Red Flag - Watch for new legislation from Richmond that could change zoning to allow multi-family housing in single family zones.**

### **Courthouse Corner and South Holland**

- o Encourage parcel consolidation.
- o Land Use:
  - For the Courthouse Corner neighborhood: low-intensity office, mixed-use residential, and neighborhood-oriented service uses.
  - For the South Holland neighborhood: single-family residential development with an overall maximum density consistent with the AICUZ Overlay Ordinance, but not to exceed four units per acre. Encourage residentially compatible neighborhood retail and service uses (such as day care centers, medical offices, and pharmacies).
- o Access:
  - New access should be provided with a new connecting facility located to the rear (“reverse frontage access”). This reverse frontage facility should provide a single road from Nimmo Parkway that serves both the Courthouse Corner and South Holland neighborhoods.
  - The reverse frontage facility should not connect to the existing adjacent residential area.
  - When completed, all direct access to Princess Anne Road from inside Courthouse Corner should be closed.
- o Incorporate the design concepts and policies for these neighborhoods into any future Center-based plan for the Municipal Center.

### **Neighborhood safety and well being**

- o Develop health, safety, and well-being measures as part of the neighborhood monitoring system and regularly review neighborhood conditions. Work with

neighborhoods to make needed improvements. The measures could include:

- Health
  - Walking access to schools and parks
  - Tree canopy shading
- Safety
  - Safe streets
  - Sidewalks and bike paths
  - Traffic volumes
  - Crosswalks and crossing signals
  - Traffic speeds
  - Cut-through traffic
  - Crime rates
  - Emergency service response times
- Well-being
  - Quality of housing
  - Age of housing (for potential historical designation)

## Green Line Area Communities

### Enriching Community Identity

- o **Identify and reinforce the recognition of Green Line communities and design and deploy branding techniques in gateways and other prominent community locations.**
- o **Inventory community facilities and programs and identify potential improvements, such as the need for more community civic land, community parks, and recreational centers.**
- o **Work with neighborhoods to identify, pursue formal designation of, and maintain historical resources, including districts, structures, and sites.**
- o **Use all available resources to preserve designated historic resources, including those provided by the City's Historical Review Board and Historic Preservation Commission, the Princess Anne County/Virginia Beach Historical Society, and the Interfacility Traffic Area and Transition Area Citizens Advisory Committee.**
- o **Efforts to retain historic resources should be accomplished responsibly and innovatively. This should include providing land use planning guidance and tax credit assistance to owners of historic properties to help protect and preserve the City's limited number of valuable historic resources and surrounding open space**

**areas.**

### **Community Hubs and Connections**

- o **Local community members will initiate Community Hub plans, using Community Hub design guidelines listed in Chapter 7. Planned Community Hubs will then be designated as part of the Comprehensive Plan.**
- o Plan for and build walking and biking connections between neighborhoods, Community Hubs, and other destinations in the community.

## The Plan Provides a Comprehensive Vision for the Coastal Context Area (Pg 113)

- o The Coastal Context Area stretches along the Chesapeake Bay and Atlantic Ocean. Its beaches and dunes, long part of the natural ecology, face growing risks from sea level rise, erosion, and more frequent severe weather. These beaches draw both tourists and residents. Businesses in the Resort Area and along parts of Shore Drive bring outside income that supports the City's economy and tax base. Neighborhoods feature a mix of housing, from single-family homes to **multi-story apartments and condominiums**, many designed to complement the coastal setting.
- o The area's defining characteristics will be preserved and refined. Beaches and dunes will be strengthened to reduce flooding.
- o The Resort Area will remain a major tourist draw while becoming a more vibrant and accessible destination for residents. Neighborhoods will keep their diverse housing and distinct character while offering options for all income levels. Walking, rolling, and biking trails will link neighborhoods and Community Hubs.
  - **No mention of Sandbridge (population growth is to be AT the two town centers – Town Center and the Oceanfront). This could become an issue if Sandbridge is included in the future.**

### From Introduction

- o The Coastal Context Area stretches along the Chesapeake Bay and Atlantic Ocean coastline from the Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek-Fort Story to Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge. It lies north and east of the Green Line. There are three unique areas in the Coastal Context Area: Bayfront, Resort Area, **and Sandbridge**. Each has a distinct set of landscape, planning, and design recommendations.
- o Like the Inland Context Area to the west, this area can absorb anticipated population and job growth. However, with less than 1,000 acres of vacant land (Figure 4-1), growth will be inward and upward in the designated Centers, most notably the Resort Area.

### From Coastal Goals

#### **Economic sustainability and diversity**

- o Attract year-round visitors that help sustain the City's economy and tax base.
- o Create jobs to foster economic growth and vitality.

#### **Housing attainment and diversity**

- o Take advantage of Center redevelopment to increase housing diversity and

attainability.

- o Find opportunities outside of Centers to increase housing diversity and attainability.
- o Identify locations and strategies for accommodating future senior housing demand.

### **Environmental sustainability**

- o Protect existing properties from sea level rise, flooding, and erosion.
- o **Optimize, protect, preserve, and enhance the ecological resilience of beaches, parks, trails, launches, and recreational amenities.**

### **Infill urban development and multimodal access north of the Green Line**

- o Absorb a portion of the City's anticipated growth in Centers.
- o Apply Place Type design guidelines to create land development patterns and multimodal networks that promote safe and convenient walking, biking, rolling, and transit.
- o Designate Multimodal Corridors and apply Multimodal Corridor design guidelines to promote safe and convenient walking, biking, rolling, and transit.

### **Community identity and connections**

- o Enhance the unique coastal identities of Coastal Context Area communities.
- o Provide easy walking and bike access to Community Hubs.

### **Neighborhood well-being and safety**

- o Promote the integrity, sense of well-being, and safety of neighborhoods. (Big Idea)

## From Coastal Objectives

### **Economic sustainability and diversity**

- o Continue to support and implement the objectives, policies, and recommendations in the RASAP.
- o Continue to monitor the tourism market and develop strategies to increase tourism in non-summer months.
- o Plan for and invest in public amenities and facilities that will attract tourists and residents to the Resort Area.
- o Continue to work with state and federal partners to monitor and maintain

adequate sand replenishment.

## **Housing attainment and diversity**

- o Implement recommendations adopted by City Council from the 2024 Virginia Beach Housing Study.
- o Use Place Type guidelines to increase the diversity of housing and the number of affordable homes in Resort Area Centers.
- o Update zoning regulations to simplify the review of attainable housing development in Coastal communities.
  - **Red Flag – There is no affordable housing in Sandbridge and the only way to provide any would be through multi-story apartments which the infrastructure cannot support.**

## **Environmental sustainability**

- o Continually monitor flooding and water quality and update Sea Level Wise strategies and other flood protection and water quality strategies as needed.
- o Implement Sea Level Wise recommendations and other stormwater management efforts to mitigate flooding.
- o Continue programs that protect natural lands and develop the Environmental and Open Space Framework Plan to identify how to leverage initiatives such as flood protection land purchases to connect protected lands.
- o Find opportunities to develop the Linear Park System.
- o Continue programs that protect water quality in Coastal estuaries and tributaries.
- o Continue programs that protect the resiliency, ecological value, and attractiveness of Atlantic Ocean and Chesapeake Bay beaches, and provide easy walk and bike access to those beaches.

## **Infill urban development and multimodal access north of the Green Line**

- o **Continue to promote mixed-use redevelopment in Resort Area Centers.**
- o Design and implement transportation improvements along Multimodal Corridors, prioritizing transit ridership, walking, and biking.
- o Provide multimodal access for residents and tourists to beaches.
- o Continue implementing the Active Transportation Plan.

## **Community identity and connections**

- o Uplift coastal and bayfront community aesthetics by highlighting the nautical and

culture, history, and identity of neighborhoods and public spaces through place making techniques.

- o **Integrate Community Hub plans developed by local community members.**
- o **Develop walking and biking connections between neighborhoods and Community Hubs.**
- o Use the Oceanfront Resort District Connector Park Design Guidelines (2017) to enhance pedestrian links and upgrade the linear parks connecting Atlantic Avenue to the Boardwalk.
- o Leverage opportunities from Cultural Affairs to realize local art and place making investments.

### **Neighborhood well-being and safety.**

- o **Develop a neighborhood monitoring system that continually tracks factors of interest to residents and stakeholders in local neighborhoods, such as sense of safety, housing conditions, traffic, sidewalk connectivity, or shade.**
- o Use the monitoring system to regularly report on neighborhood well-being and recommend needed improvements.
- o Buffer existing neighborhoods adjacent to Centers.

### **From Coastal Communities (Pg 123)**

- o The Coastal Context Area includes several communities, including several neighborhoods and all having a mix of housing types, a limited amount of small-scale commercial and civic uses, and a seaside-coastal design and character.

### **Sandbridge**

- o The Sandbridge Community extends from the Dam Neck Naval Station to the Back Bay Wildlife Refuge. It is a thin strip of beaches and dunes between the Atlantic Ocean and Back Bay. Its single-family homes are raised above major storm flooding levels. Condominiums on the north and south end of the community have ground floor parking with units located above. Small-scale retail at the north and south ends could become Community Hubs.
  - **The character of Sandbridge has changed dramatically over the years. What was once a community of single-family vacation homes has become a community with the majority (70+%) of houses being used as Short Term Rentals, with many containing 10 or more bedrooms. These are no longer family homes being rented, but small hotels. The Task Force should:**

- Encourage the building of “family” homes.
- Encourage limited parking on residential lots to minimize existing stormwater street flooding.

## Coastal Community Hubs

- o As detailed in Chapter 7, Community Hubs are compact, walkable gathering places for community activities, such as schools, places of worship, health care services, parks, or farmers markets. They are located near the midpoint of defined communities and have safe and convenient multimodal access to neighborhoods. Local community members will initiate Community Hub plans.

## Coastal Community Policies

### Locations

- o Designated Coastal communities include:
  - Shore Drive
  - North End
  - Old Beach
  - South End / Shadowlawn
  - Sandbridge

### Community Hubs and Connections

- o Reference the ViBe District Connectivity Plan for recommended strategies, corridor priorities, and typical street sections concepts to ensure alignment with the community’s connectivity vision in the ViBe District.
- o Local community members will initiate Community Hub plans, using Community Hub design guidelines listed in Chapter 7. Planned Community Hubs will then be designated as part of the Comprehensive Plan.
- o Plan for and build walking and biking connections between neighborhoods, Community Hubs, and other destinations in the community.

### Enriching Community Identity (Pg 124)

- o Deploy branding techniques in gateways and other prominent community locations.
- o Inventory community facilities and programs and identify potential improvements,

**such as the need for more community civic land, community parks, and recreational centers.**

- o Work with neighborhoods to identify, pursue formal designation of, and maintain historical resources, districts, structures, and sites.
- o Use all available resources to preserve designated historic resources, including those provided by the City's Historical Review Board, Historic Preservation Commission, and the Princess Anne County/Virginia Beach Historical Society. Efforts to retain historic resources should be accomplished responsibly and innovatively. This should include providing land use planning guidance and tax credit assistance to owners of historic properties to help protect and preserve the City's limited number of valuable historic resources and surrounding open space areas.

## The Plan Provides a Comprehensive Vision for the Rural Context Area (Pg 139)

- o The City will enhance and connect rural and natural lands continue to support viable agriculture south of the Blue Line. **It will strive to create an open space system that safeguards the rural landscape and agriculture, supports eco-tourism opportunities, mitigates flooding, promotes wildlife migration, and provides public access to nature and recreation.**

- **Note - No mention of "industrial development."**

### From Introduction

The Rural Context Area is the southernmost area of the City of Virginia Beach. It is bounded on the north by the Blue Line and the Green Line, which follows Indian River Road, Newbridge Road, and Sandbridge Road; on the west by the City of Chesapeake; on the east by the Atlantic Ocean; and on the south by the City limits and the state line.

- o Most of the Rural Context Area is comprised of **soils not suitable for major residential development**. Rural residential development is limited to areas capable of handling septic systems and in places where it would complement, rather than conflict, with the landscape.
  - **This statement should also acknowledge unsuitable soils for "industrial" development . . . soils not suitable for major residential or industrial development**

- **A similar statement should be added to the Green Line Context Area... soils not suitable for major residential or industrial development.**

o The Rural Context Area covers 142 square miles, around 46 percent of the City's total area.

### From Goals and Objectives (Pg 143)

- o The goals for the Rural Context Area are:
  - Protect and sustain natural lands, open spaces, and environmental systems.
  - Support sustainable agricultural production.
  - Provide opportunities to access nature.
- o Supporting objective include:
  - Implement Sea Level Wise strategies for flood control.
  - **Continue the Agricultural Reserve Program and Open Space Acquisition Program.**
  - **Limit non-agricultural land uses outside designated Rural Villages.**
  - **Support access to expansive nature, eco-tourism, and agri-tourism operations through the Linear Park System.**
- **Rural Village and Rural Corridor are the only Place Types in the Rural Context Area. (Pg 143)**

### From Policies

#### Natural Land and Open Space Protection

- o **Enhance and connect natural systems and open spaces** as recommended by the Environmental and Open Space Framework Plan, once adopted, and the Natural Heritage Technical Report.
- o **Support public access to protected natural and open spaces along with state and federal partners, maintain the accessibility and quality of recreational areas.**
- o **Develop the Linear Park System as outlined in Chapter 3.**

#### Area-Wide Development

- o **Preserve historical properties by:**
  - Using available resources, including those provided by the City's Historical Review Board and Historic Preservation Commission, to preserve designated historic resources.
  - Providing land use planning guidance and tax credit assistance to owners

of historic properties to help protect and preserve historic resources and surrounding open space areas.

- Encouraging owners of qualified properties to participate in the Virginia Beach Historical Register program.

o **Limit development outside Rural Villages by:**

- Following existing agricultural zoning requirements that limit development intensities and uses.
- Reviewing and updating the zoning ordinance as needed to ensure compatibility with the goals and objectives of the Rural Context Area. At a minimum, the update should:
  - Limit significant development activity outside Rural Villages, especially non-agricultural development.
  - Ensure existing agricultural zoning districts function as intended and do not inhibit desirable primary or secondary agricultural activities.
- Prohibiting new residential development in the regulatory floodplain.
- Not allowing the extension of water, sewer and utilities, and limiting all other infrastructure investments apart from those directly supporting roadway safety, stormwater management, and flood mitigation.
- **Limiting farmland conversion pressure by not allowing utility-scale solar installations in the Rural Context Area.** These uses should be allowed only as small-scale or accessory uses that generate solar power exclusively for on-property use, where small scale means energy generated only for use by the property. **Reconcile these changes in the update to the City's zoning ordinance.**
- **The Task Force needs to be aware the plan states limiting the conversion of farmland to utility-grade solar.**
  - Emphasizing the importance of a physically accessible, walkable, and rollable footprint Rural Villages.
  - Ensure proper environmental stewardship in areas with significant excavation, such as borrow pits.

o