

# What is NFK2050?

## INTRODUCTION AND PLAN BACKGROUND

NFK2050 is the Comprehensive Plan for Norfolk, establishing a framework for the city's growth and evolution over the next 25 years. NFK2050 has a planning horizon that will stretch through the year 2050, but implementation efforts begin after the plan is adopted.



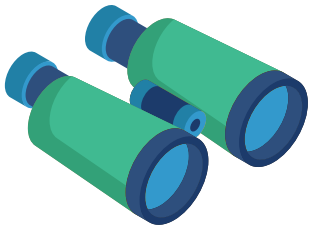
# What is NFK2050?

## What is a Comprehensive Plan?

A Comprehensive Plan is a long-range document that will guide the vision of what a city wants to become in the future.



Sometimes also referred to as a master plan or a general plan, comprehensive plans are foundational documents of planning, land use, zoning, and growth management in the United States, and enable local government officials and citizens to **anticipate changes occurring within the community.**



NFK2050 is both a **Vision**—a consolidated idea of where we need to go—and a **Policy** document, with specific land use-related actions to take in order to get there.

## Why NFK2050?

As the update to the City’s previous Comprehensive Plan ([plaNorfolk2030](#)), **NFK2050 is a broad effort to address a wide range of community issues and concerns**, and to understand the important relationships between each part of a community.

NFK2050 was developed over two years, beginning in Summer 2023 and adopted in 2025. As a long-range plan with a 25-year timeframe, the policies, vision, and land use guidance in this document will be official City policy through the year 2050.

While comprehensive plans are frequently amended to include new development and new policy ideas, the past decade of change in Norfolk has led to enough large-scale evolution in land use and zoning — notably, the city’s understanding of climate risks like sea level rise — to warrant an updated plan that builds on efforts like [Vision 2100](#).

## Why Plan Now?

**Norfolk is at an inflection point in its long and storied history.**

If the last quarter century was an indication of the rate of change, the next 25 years will be a dynamic time for Norfolk residents. We owe the next generation of citizens a consensus-informed plan to navigate the seas ahead.

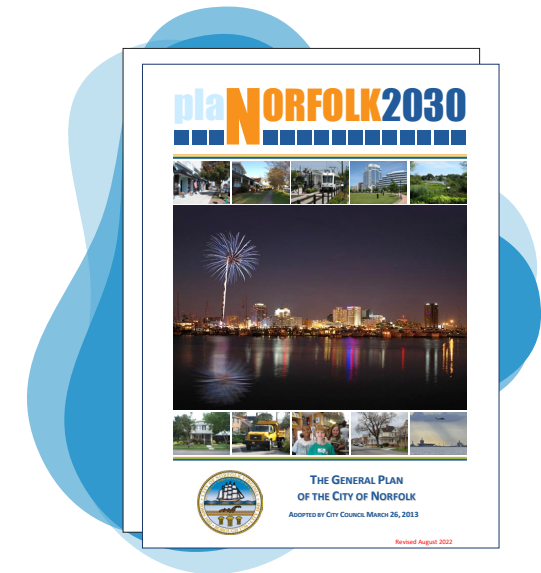
We have enough distance between us and the COVID-19 pandemic that we are beginning to understand its long-term effects on work, health, community and place. Housing costs are rising sharply nationwide, including in Hampton Roads. Our understanding of climate and environmental systems is more complex than ever, and our city has committed to addressing risk through top-down and bottom-up infrastructure.

**NFK2050 comes at a crucial time for setting the stage for Norfolk’s future.** As we assess our current conditions and project into the future, we must recognize the power that large-scale, comprehensive planning can truly have to help us set Norfolk on a course to a brighter future.



# Building on Past Planning

The work of NFK2050 did not start from scratch; many recent planning efforts guide the city’s current land use and development landscape. NFK2050 builds on all relevant recommendations.



## plaNorfolk2030 (2013)

Adopted in 2013, Norfolk’s most recent comprehensive plan, [plaNorfolk2030](#), includes recommendations and policies that the city’s diverse neighborhoods are still utilizing to chart their future courses.

- The Plan is organized into chapters, each addressing a specific topic area:
- The **Land Use Strategies** chapter lays out a holistic approach for how to think about future uses for Norfolk’s land, complementing the existing built and natural environment.
  - **“Creating and Maintaining Healthy and Vibrant Neighborhoods”** emphasizes the significant role that neighborhoods and their unique characteristics play in the lives of Norfolk residents.
  - **“Providing Transportation Options”** centers safe and efficient mobility and increased investment in transportation choices.
  - **“Enhancing Economic Vitality”** seeks investment opportunities for Norfolk to continue being a center for cultural, business, and educational resources of the region.
  - **“Promoting Environmental Sustainability”** leverages the environmental resources of the city to connect residents with nature while promoting resiliency strategies.

- **“Ensuring Housing Choices For All”** promotes high quality, affordable housing through existing and new incentives and code enforcement strategies, protection from flooding, and alignment with the needs of the community.
- **“Supporting Lifelong Learning”** seeks opportunities for all Norfolk residents to develop their skills and interests through diverse learning opportunities: school preparedness, workforce training, and partnerships to provide continuing education for all ages.
- **“Delivering Quality Community Services”** advocates for effective services to Norfolk residents. It focuses on ensuring that City services meet the needs of residents and businesses.
- **“Enjoying Daily Life”** outlines a vibrant city where opportunities for recreation and leisure are accessible to all Norfolk residents.
- **“Preserving Our Heritage”** embraces and protects all the cultural, historic, and architectural resources that Norfolk has and promotes new and existing historic landmarks and districts through different actions and policies.

- **“Fostering Responsible Regional Cooperation”** calls for a collective effort to seek improvements and solutions to regional issues.

Within the **691 actions** identified in [plaNorfolk2030](#) to set a path forward for Norfolk and its residents, **56.8% are ongoing, 20.2% are underway, and 9% are completed.** Of the 12 chapters that represent a specific topic, all of them have seen progress in the implementation of their actions, with most of them being “ongoing” or “underway.” Only 12.6% of all the actions in the Plan have not yet been started.

During NFK2050 Engagement events, residents frequently cited [plaNorfolk2030](#) as a reference point for understanding a comprehensive plan and how it might guide city and neighborhood-scale projects. To that end, **many ongoing plaNorfolk2030 actions are folded into NFK2050’s Future Land Use and Plan Goals, Actions, and Strategies**, ensuring that the effort to draft, adopt, and amend that document is a strong foundation for all the work to come.



**56%**

of [plaNorfolk2030](#) actions are categorized as ongoing efforts

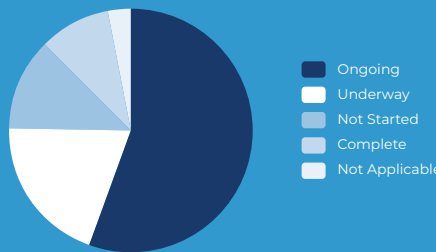


**20%**

of [plaNorfolk2030](#) actions are underway

## NEIGHBORHOODS

“Creating and Maintaining Healthy and Vibrant Neighborhoods” has 292 specific actions, of which **62% are ongoing or underway, and 34% are already completed.**



Of all 691 [plaNorfolk2030](#) actions, 76% are ongoing or underway and 9% have been fully completed.

Source: City of Norfolk



The following Plans and Policies, while not all adopted by City Council, provided background, context, and guidance for the development of NFK2050:

CITYWIDE PLANS AND POLICIES:

- **A Green Infrastructure Plan \***
- **City of Norfolk Bicycle and Pedestrian Strategic Plan \***
- Complete Streets Policy
- Electric Vehicle Charging Plan
- Floodplain Management Plan
- Multimodal Transportation Master Plan
- **Norfolk Comprehensive Housing Study and Strategic Plan \***
- Parks and Recreation Master Plan Assessment
- Sand Management Plan
- Stormwater Design and Construction Manual
- **Vision2100 \***

COMMUNITY PLANS:

- A Strategic Plan for Southside
- A Vision for the Next Decade: Downtown Norfolk 2030
- A Vision for Wards Corner: Urban Development Area Plan
- Broad Creek Refresh Plan: Building a Community of Choice
- Central Hampton Boulevard Area Plan
- City of Norfolk Midtown Plan

- Comprehensive Plan for the Military Highway Corridor
- Fairmount Park Neighborhood Revitalization Implementation Plan
- Greater Wards Corner Comprehensive Plan
- Military Circle/Military Highway Urban Development Area: A Vision for the Future

PATTERN BOOKS AND DESIGN GUIDELINES:

- A Pattern Book for Norfolk Neighborhoods
- Coastal Character District Pattern Book
- Commercial and Mixed-Use Pattern Book
- Design Principles for Multifamily Development
- Elevating Homes Pattern Book
- Local Historic District Guidelines
- Missing Middle Pattern Book
- Norfolk Outdoor Spaces Guidelines
- The Broad Creek Refresh: A Pattern Book

REGIONAL PLANS:

- Hampton Roads Hazard Mitigation Plan
- Hampton Roads 2045 Long-Range Transportation Plan
- Hampton Roads Joint Land Use Study
- Norfolk and Virginia Beach Joint Land Use Study

\* indicates a plan is profiled on this spread. All plans listed are hosted on the NFK2050 website.



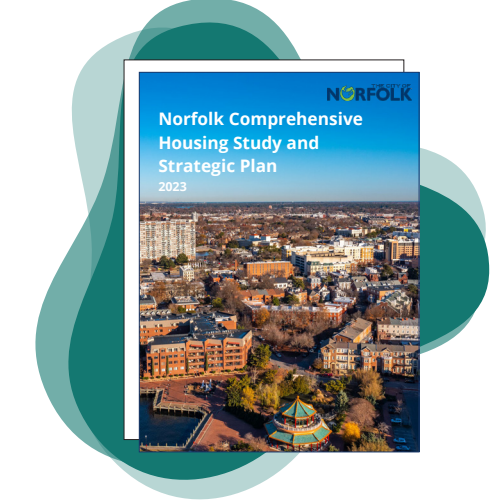
Vision 2100 (2016)

Vision 2100 is a long-term citywide vision developed by an interagency team including the Departments of City Planning, Communications and Marketing, and Neighborhood Services, along with the Office of Resilience and the City Manager’s Office. It is organized around four key themes: *Designing New Urban Centers, Enhancing Economic Engines, Adapting to Rising Waters, and Establishing Neighborhoods of the Future.*

The Plan’s primary objective is to develop Norfolk as a dynamic, water-based community protected from sea level rise and flooding. NFK2050’s Future Land Use Plan and many policy recommendations incorporate Vision 2100’s thinking as foundational.

Green Infrastructure Plan (2018)

The Green Infrastructure Plan focuses on re-greening the city landscape, improving stormwater treatment, restoring shoreline habitats, and fostering recreation. The Plan is structured around four major strategies that link to specific and implementable actions: Natural and Constructed Green Infrastructure, Open Space Access, Shoreline Protection and Restoration, and Water Accessibility. Many of the projects lined up through this planning process are underway or have been completed, making these recommendations a cornerstone of NFK2050’s environmental planning policies.



Norfolk Comprehensive Housing Study and Strategic Plan (2023)

Commissioned by the City’s Department of Housing and Community Development, the Housing Study was charged with identifying current market trends and housing needs in Norfolk. These findings included an analysis of Norfolk’s relatively stable population growth leading to a weaker housing market, and yet a wide diversity of housing stock across the city, especially compared to the rest of the region.

Many specific recommendations around how to grapple with housing challenges have been incorporated into NFK2050’s policy recommendations.

Building on Past Planning

Bicycle and Pedestrian Strategic Plan (2015)

This Plan, developed in 2015, recommends specific bicycle and pedestrian facilities on 12 key corridors, and provides a strong and detailed mobility foundation that NFK2050 can build on. Its recommendations include a granular level of detail developed for the 12 corridors as appropriate to its strategic function.

NFK2050’s Future Land Use and policy recommendations strongly incorporate the specific recommendations and connections that the Strategic Plan lays out in order to build a more multimodal and active city.





# Developing NFK2050

## Collaborators:

Many entities contributed to the development of the NFK2050 Comprehensive Plan. The plan’s organizational chart (opposite) illustrates the relationship, roles, and responsibilities of the parties who all contributed to the work.

### City Planning Commission:

Norfolk’s City Planning Commission (CPC) is a 7-member body appointed by City Council and responsible for the review of land use and zoning matters for the City of Norfolk.

The CPC served as the primary supervisors of the entire NFK2050 process. City staff and members of the Consultant team presented to the CPC regularly across the planning process, including 5 dedicated work sessions and additional monthly updates from City Planning staff. Commissioners also participated in Working Groups, chaired the Advisory Committee, and helped with outreach and feedback from many engagement events.

### Working Groups:

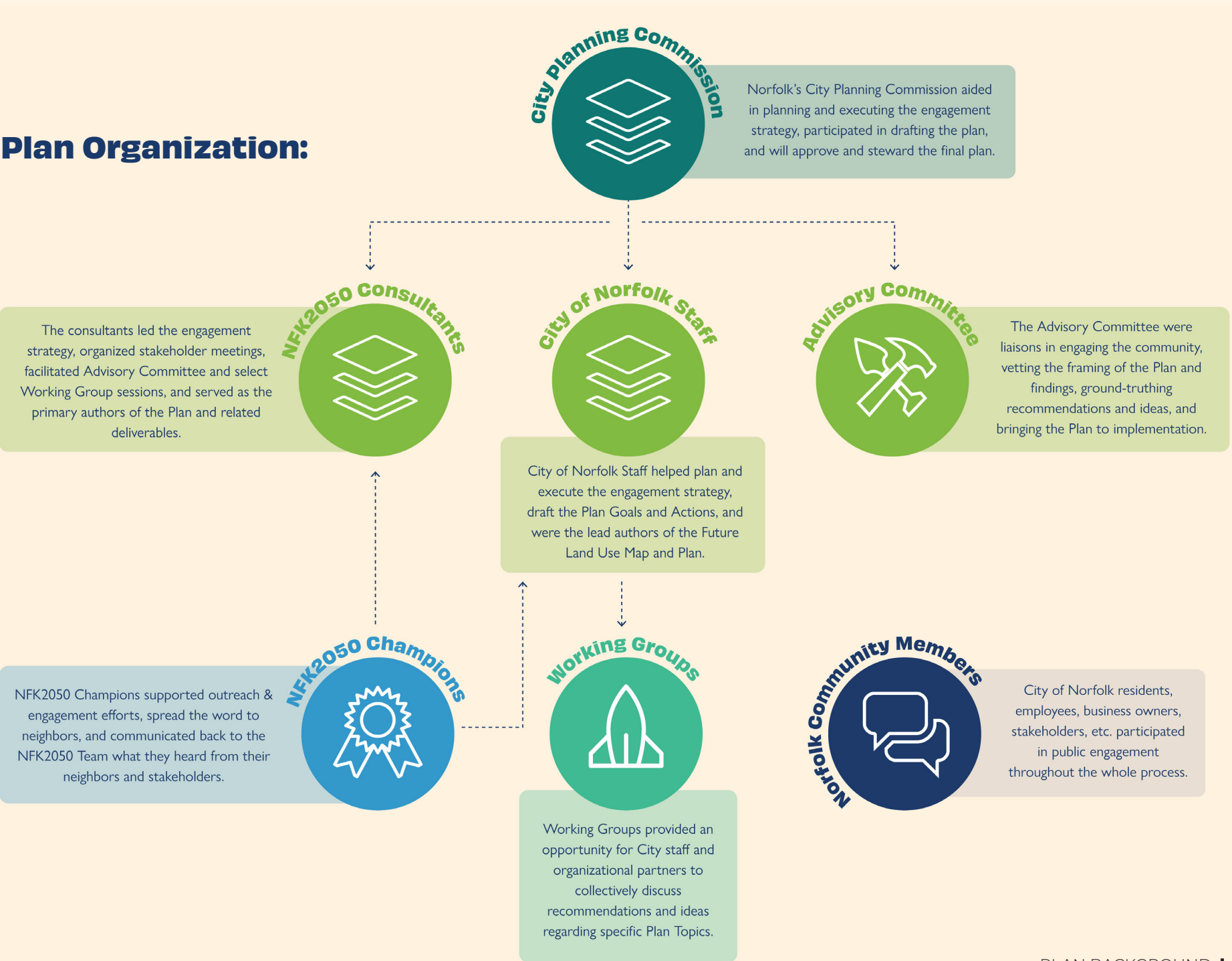
The core NFK2050 Planning Team cannot accomplish the vision of NFK2050 without strong collaborators within and outside of Norfolk City Hall. With this in mind, we invited partners from other City departments and partner agencies to hybrid work sessions hosted at City Hall to help the team vet, draft, and discuss implementation. The Working Groups met twice internally and once at a public Plan Workshop, and were first

organized by Plan Topic (ex. Mobility, Housing, etc.) and then later by the Plan Pillar format. These partner departments and agencies came to the table to help brainstorm and align their own organizational trajectory with emerging NFK2050 policy recommendations, and will be key leaders in bringing the final plan recommendations to action.

### Norfolk Community Members and Plan Champions:

As outlined further in Appendix I (Community Engagement), the efforts to engage a broad cross-section of the Norfolk community were varied and numerous. Our engagement approach combined in-person and digital tools, with dedicated Plan Champions helping to share the plan with their communities and relay feedback from their neighbors back to the planning team. In all cases, the final NFK2050 Plan Vision, Goals, and Actions are grounded in what we heard from the community.

## Plan Organization:





Advisory Committee

The NFK2050 Advisory Committee was appointed by the Norfolk City Council to advise and assist the City Planning Commission in its preparation of NFK2050.

The Advisory Committee is a broad representation of the Norfolk community, and Committee members serve as liaisons to their respective groups and organizations, act as a sounding board for residents, help encourage community participation in this planning process, and advocate for the Plan. The Committee assisted in developing the Plan and provided perspective on information

gathered as well as feedback on draft policies, goals, and strategies. Throughout the NFK2050 process, the Advisory Committee met in person four times—at key milestones when the planning team was best positioned to incorporate their guidance and input. The NFK2050 team is very grateful for the thoughtful input of so many invested partners and community leaders.



(City of Norfolk)

NFK2050 Advisory Committee Members:

KIM SUDDERTH, Chair

SCOTT BATEMAN, Vice-Chair

PHILLIP HAWKINS, City At Large Community Ambassador

SCOTT GUIRLINGER, Ward 1 Community Ambassador

BJORN KOXVOLD, Ward 2 Community Ambassador

JOYI WINSTON, Ward 3 Community Ambassador

VINCENT HODGES, Ward 4 Community Ambassador

KENNETH PAULSON, Ward 5 Community Ambassador

ENRIQUE FIGUEROA, SuperWard 6 Community Ambassador

MYA BASKERVILLE, SuperWard 7 Community Ambassador

RAY AMORUSO, Hampton Roads Transit Representative

GILBERT BLAND, Urban League of Hampton Roads Representative

JARED CHALK, Hampton Roads Alliance Representative

JENNIFER DAWN, Hampton Roads Realtors Association Representative

SUSAN GIROIS, Norfolk Department of Public Health Representative

KINDRA GREENE, Elizabeth River Trail Foundation Representative

LAURA HANSON, Tidewater Community College Representative

GERALD HUNTER, Norfolk State University Representative

STEVE JONES, Naval Station Norfolk, Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command (NAVFAC) Representative

MARCIA MOCK, Norfolk Federation of Civic Leagues Representative

LINDA PECK, Greater Norfolk Corporation Representative

JOSHUA PURNELL, N.A.A.C.P., Norfolk Branch Representative

DONNA PHANEUF, Norfolk Innovation Corridor Representative

CHAD REED, Old Dominion University Representative

LACY SHIREY, Elizabeth River Project Representative

MARY-CARSON STIFF, Wetlands Watch Representative

MICHELLE WASHINGTON, Hampton Roads Community Foundation Representative

DOREATHA WHITE, Norfolk Public Schools Representative

+ Representatives from City Departments: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; Economic Development; Emergency Management; Housing and Community Development; General Services; Neighborhood Services; Parks and Recreation; Public Works; Resilience; Transportation; Utilities





# Community Engagement

What we heard from the Norfolk community through the NFK2050 engagement process was far-ranging, optimistic, and visionary: a deep appreciation for Norfolk’s neighborhoods, empathy for our most vulnerable neighbors, a passion for our natural and urban environments, and a belief that Norfolk can truly become more connected and prosperous by 2050. This shared vision in turn laid the foundation for the rest of the NFK2050 Plan.

The NFK2050 team developed a wide range of tools to gather input from community stakeholders, residents, business owners, and other partners across the 24 months of the planning process.

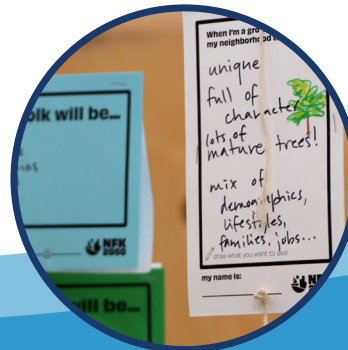
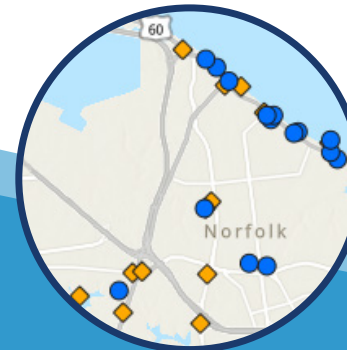
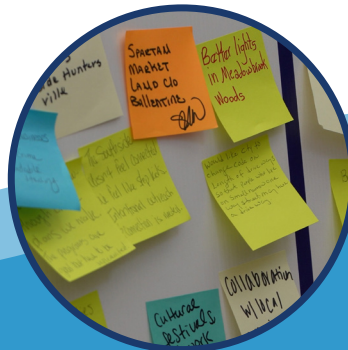
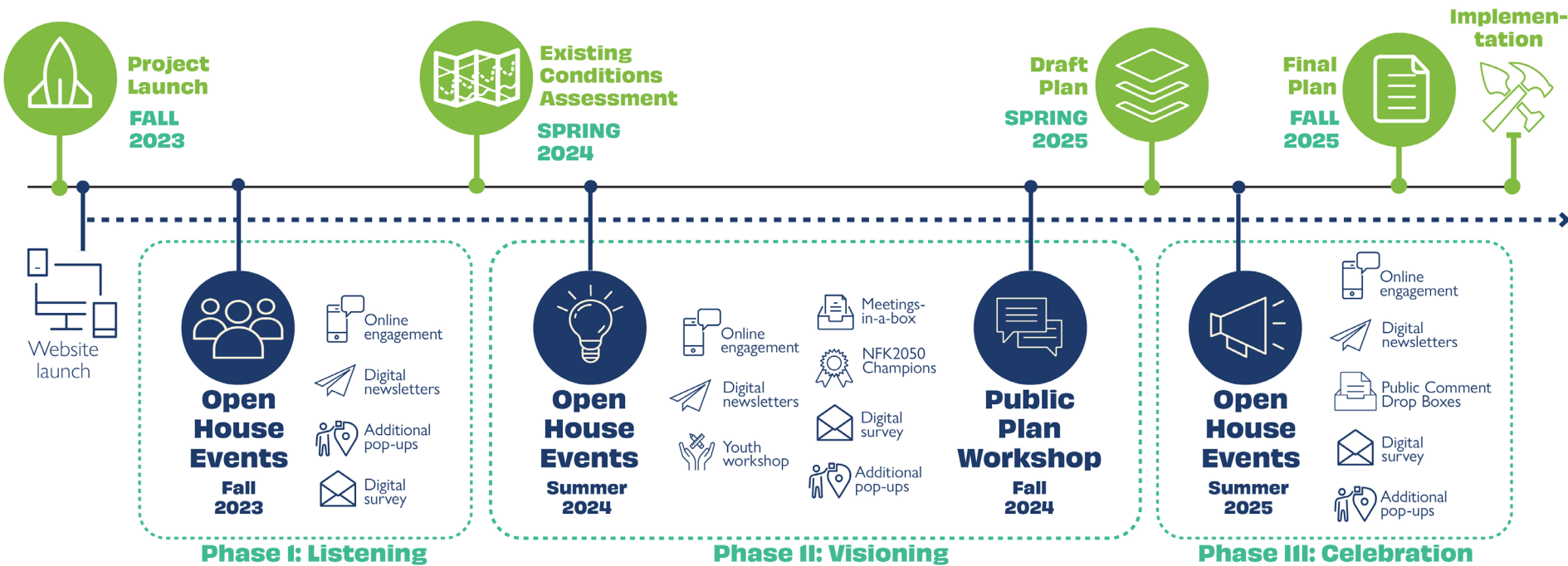
The team convened a standing Engagement Task Force comprised of city staff representing the departments of Communications and Marketing; Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; and Neighborhood Services, in addition to members of the consultant team, a representative from the City Planning Commission, and Planning staff. This Task Force guided the overall development and timeline for outreach and gathering feedback, helping to spread the word to their constituents and ensure the process was inclusive and far-reaching.

Every event, touchpoint, conversation, and comment was documented. Both Phase 1, **Listening**, and Phase 2, **Visioning**, were summarized in robust reports that are available on the NFK2050 Project Website. Phase 3, **Celebration**, commenced in Summer 2025, to gather feedback on the Draft Plan. The feedback from those events have been reflected in the priorities for Implementation.

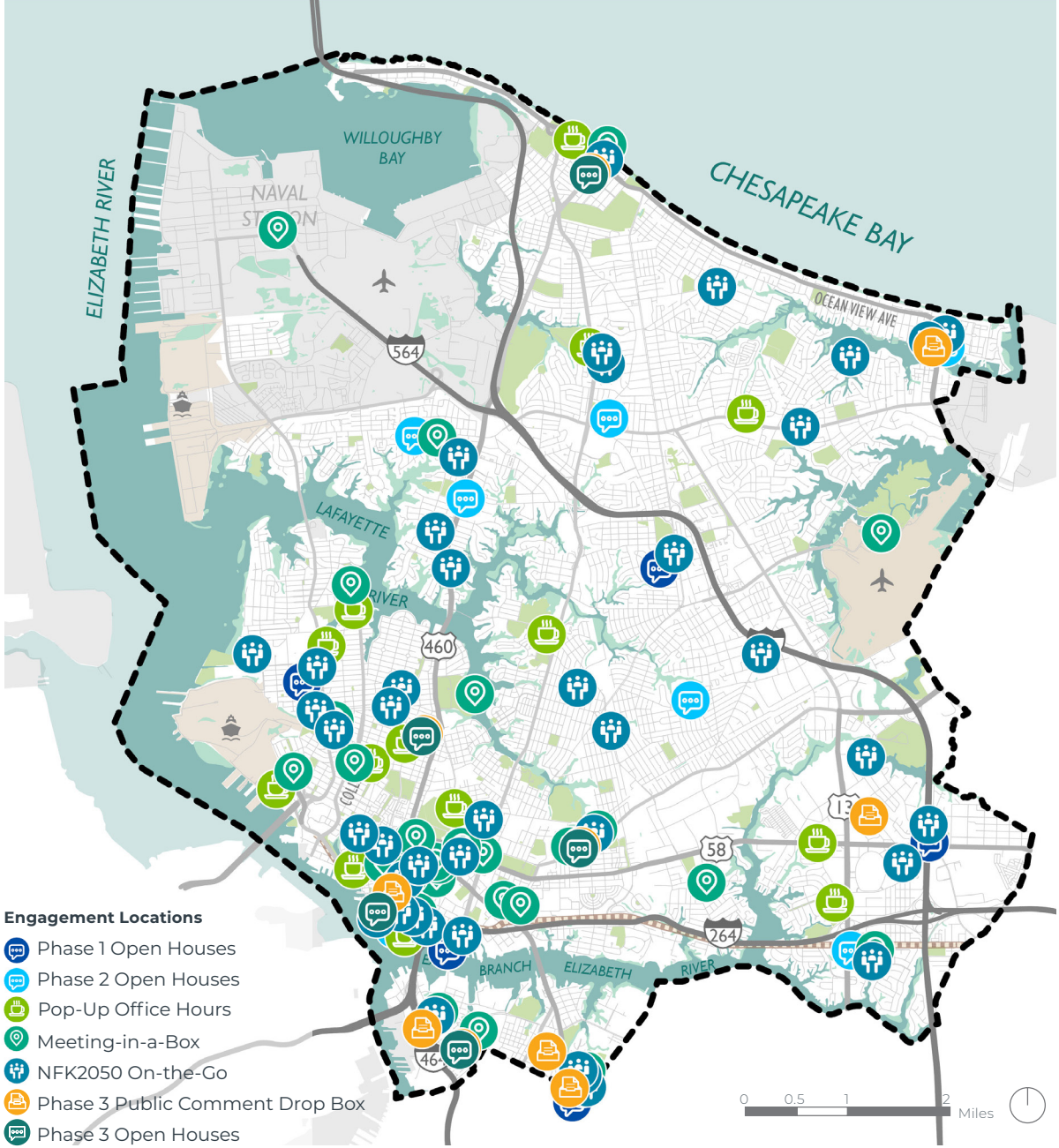
**Appendix I - Engagement** describes each of these primary tools and their development and deployment in more detail.

★ For a full summary of the NFK2050 Community Engagement, include tools, champions, and what we’ve heard, please see Appendix I.

## ENGAGEMENT TIMELINE







# 150+ In-Person Engagements

NFK2050 employed a wide range of tools to gather input from community stakeholders, residents, business owners, and other partners across the 24 months of the planning process, including open houses in every Ward; pop-up office hours; meetings with civic leagues and other community organizations; a flexible “meeting-in-a-box” tool that individuals and groups could use to host their own conversations; an interactive website with engagement tools; public comment drop box locations with printed copies of the Draft Plan document; and a group of volunteer Plan Champions who helped to spread the word about NFK2050. Read more about the engagement toolkit in Appendix I.



(WRT)

**Figure I:** Engagement Locations by type

Source: City of Norfolk

# NFK2050 In-Person Engagement Locations

- Afterglow Brewing
- Aldersgate United Methodist Church
- Always Latte Cafe/La'Vie Cafe
- American Legion Tidewater Post 327
- Assembly Norfolk
- Aviation Institute of Maintenance
- Azalea Inn & Time Out Sports Bar
- Berkley Community Center
- Berkley Supermarket
- Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church
- Blocker Norfolk Family YMCA
- Borjo Coffeehouse
- Cafe Stella Roasters
- Calvert Square Family Investment Center
- Christ United Methodist Church
- Chrysler Museum of Art
- City Hall
- Coalescence Coffee Company
- Coaster Coffee
- COVA Brewing Co
- Crossroads Community Center
- Cure Coffeehouse
- Department of Neighborhood Services
- Dominion Enterprises
- Downtown Norfolk Transit Center
- East Ocean View Community Center
- Eleanor's Norfolk
- Fairlawn Community Center
- First Baptist Church
- Franklin Arms Midrise Senior Residence
- Gather Norfolk

- Gethsemane Community Fellowship
- Granby High School
- Granby Norfolk Family YMCA
- GROW
- Hampton Roads Workforce Council
- Harbor Park
- Howard Hanna Downtown Norfolk
- Huntersville Community Center
- Ingleside Baptist Church
- Janaf Library
- Jeff Robertson Park
- Jordan-Newby Library at Broad Creek
- Just Pic'd Juices
- Lafayette Park
- Lake Taylor Transitional Care Hospital
- Lamberts Point Community Center
- Made in Norfolk
- Mary D Pretlow Library
- Mudita Cafe
- Naas Bakery
- Naval Exchange
- Neptune's Fury Cafe and Roastery
- New Hope Christian Community Center
- Next Step to Success
- Norfolk Apostolic Church
- Norfolk Fitness & Wellness Center
- Norfolk International Airport
- Norfolk Main Navy Exchange (NEX)
- Norfolk Public Health Department
- Norfolk State University Student Center
- Norfolk World Trade Center
- North Shore Road Playground
- Northside Park
- Norview Community Center

- Ocean View Beach Park
- Otter's Berth - Elizabeth River Trail
- Park Place Multi-Use Center
- Poplar Hall Park
- Purpose Park
- Push Comedy Theater
- Ready Academy
- Richard A Tucker Memorial Library
- Riverside Baptist Church
- Roosevelt Gardens Civic League Building
- Rose Marie Arrington Community Center
- Saint Patrick's Catholic School
- Selden Market
- Sewells Point Golf Course
- Sherwood Forest Community Center
- Slover Library
- Smartmouth Brewing Co
- Southside Aquatic Center
- Southside Boys & Girls Club
- St Timothy Lutheran Church
- Sweet Jam Café
- The Plot
- The Scope Arena
- The Williams School
- Three Ships Coffee Roasters
- Town Point Park
- Trinity Lutheran Church School
- Trinity-Word of Faith Baptist Church
- Vessel Craft Coffee
- Virginia Career Works
- Virginia Club
- Voyager Coffee







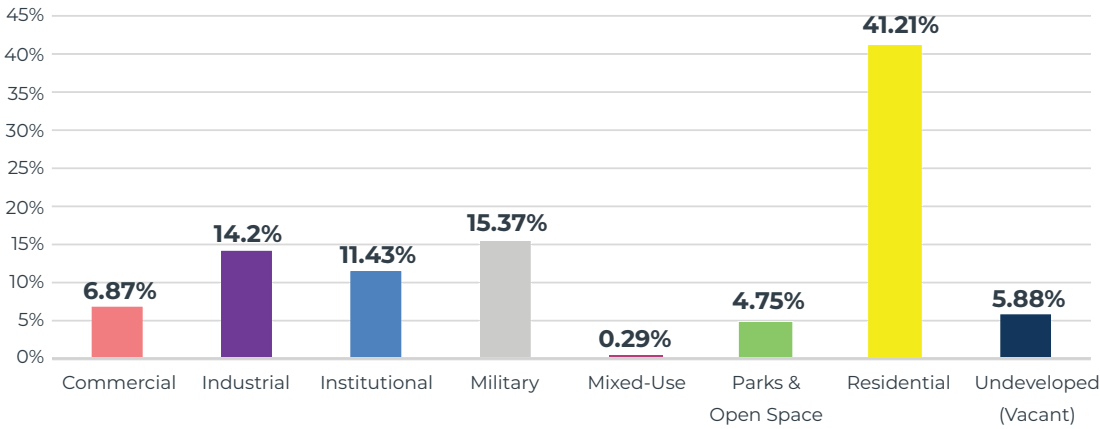
# Existing Conditions

## Current Land Use

Norfolk, like all cities, accommodates a variety of uses on its land. Studying the differing ways that Norfolk residents, businesses, industry, and public institutions use the physical space of the city can give an understanding of our collective values and future opportunities.



(WRT)



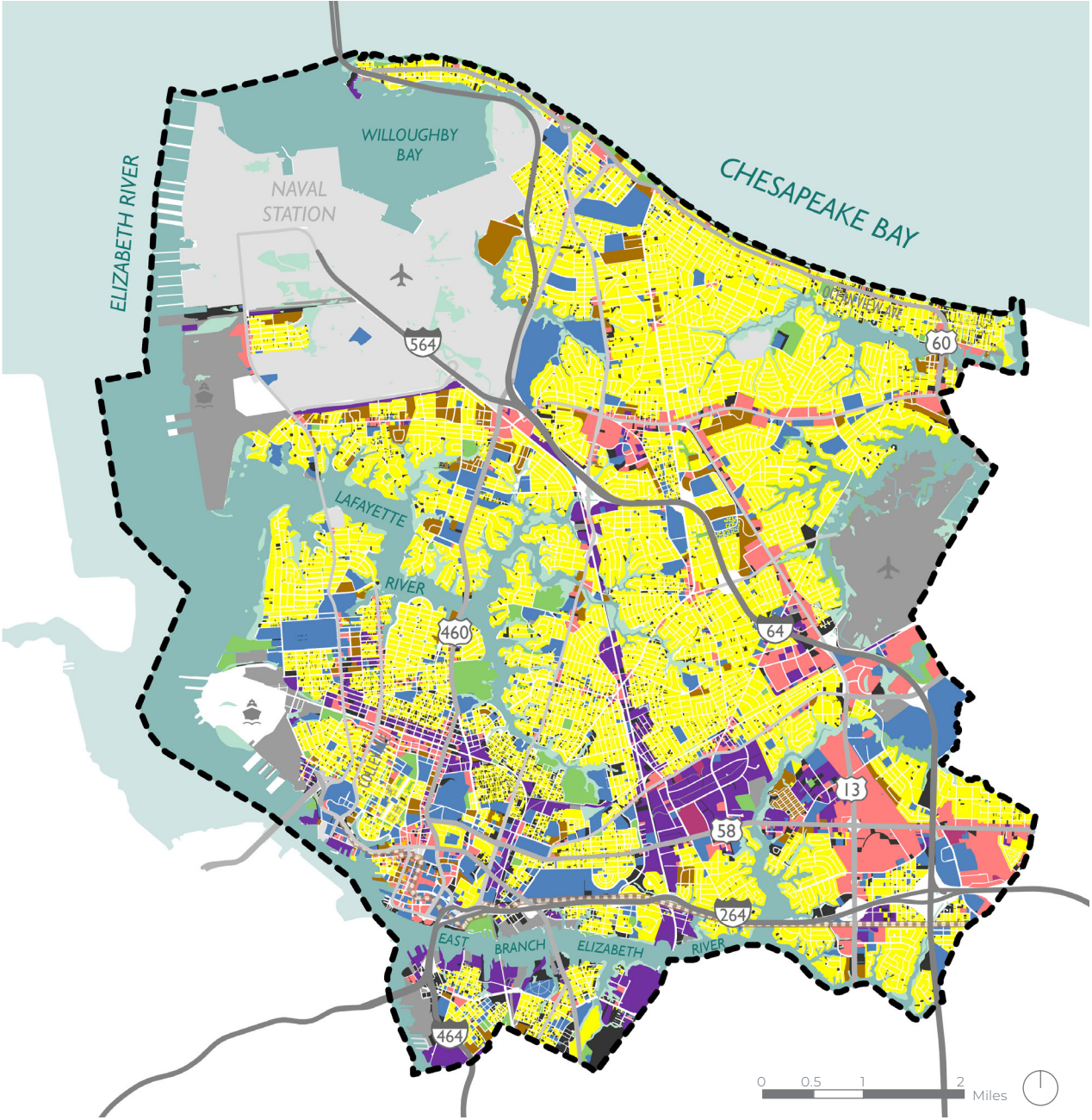
**Figure 2:** Existing Land Use by Percentage of Overall City Area

Source: City of Norfolk

**As of 2022, Norfolk encompasses approximately 66 square miles of land. Of that, residential uses occupy 41% of the city's landmass, followed by 15% for military uses and 14% for industry.** Residential districts in Norfolk are primarily comprised of single-family detached housing that is consistent with low to medium density development.

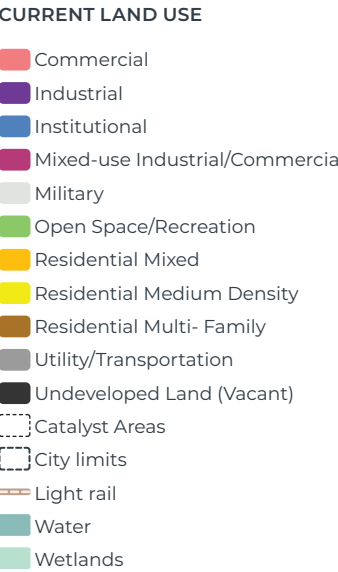
Much of the city's industrial and commercial uses occupy large swaths of land in neighborhoods such as Industrial Park and Military Circle, as well as along major thoroughfares such as Military Highway,

East Little Creek Road, and West 23rd Street, outlining the edges of residential neighborhoods. The city's industrial land also encompasses the Port of Virginia in the west that shelters the world's largest shipbuilding and repair base, a thriving coal and bulk trade, and the sixth-largest containerized operation in the United States.



**Figure 3:** Existing land use, 2022

Source: City of Norfolk





## BUILDING ON PAST SUCCESS:

### Zoning Code Update (2018)

The 2018 Zoning Ordinance Update was an ambitious and important implementation vehicle for [plaNorfolk2030](#), including new zoning standards that implemented policies and recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan. New requirements included the following examples:

- Enhanced landscaping, buffering, and screening standards;
- Requirements for open space;
- Development standards focused on form;
- Resilience-based requirements for new development.

Source: City of Norfolk

## Current Zoning

Norfolk's Zoning Ordinance is a tool for shaping future development, strengthening the City's commitments to vibrant neighborhoods, economic diversity, and coastal resilience.

The Zoning Ordinance promotes development that enhances Norfolk's resilience—both physical and economic. It acknowledges the city's four established Character Districts and supports more efficient, streamlined development processes. The ordinance takes a proactive and innovative approach to address flooding and positions the Mermaid City as the most resilient coastal community of the 21st Century.

## RESILIENCE

The ordinance pioneers a number of approaches in response to the long-term challenges posed by sea level rise, one of which requires development within the city to meet a resilience quotient. The requirement is measured on a point-based system covering three separate resilience elements: risk reduction, stormwater management,

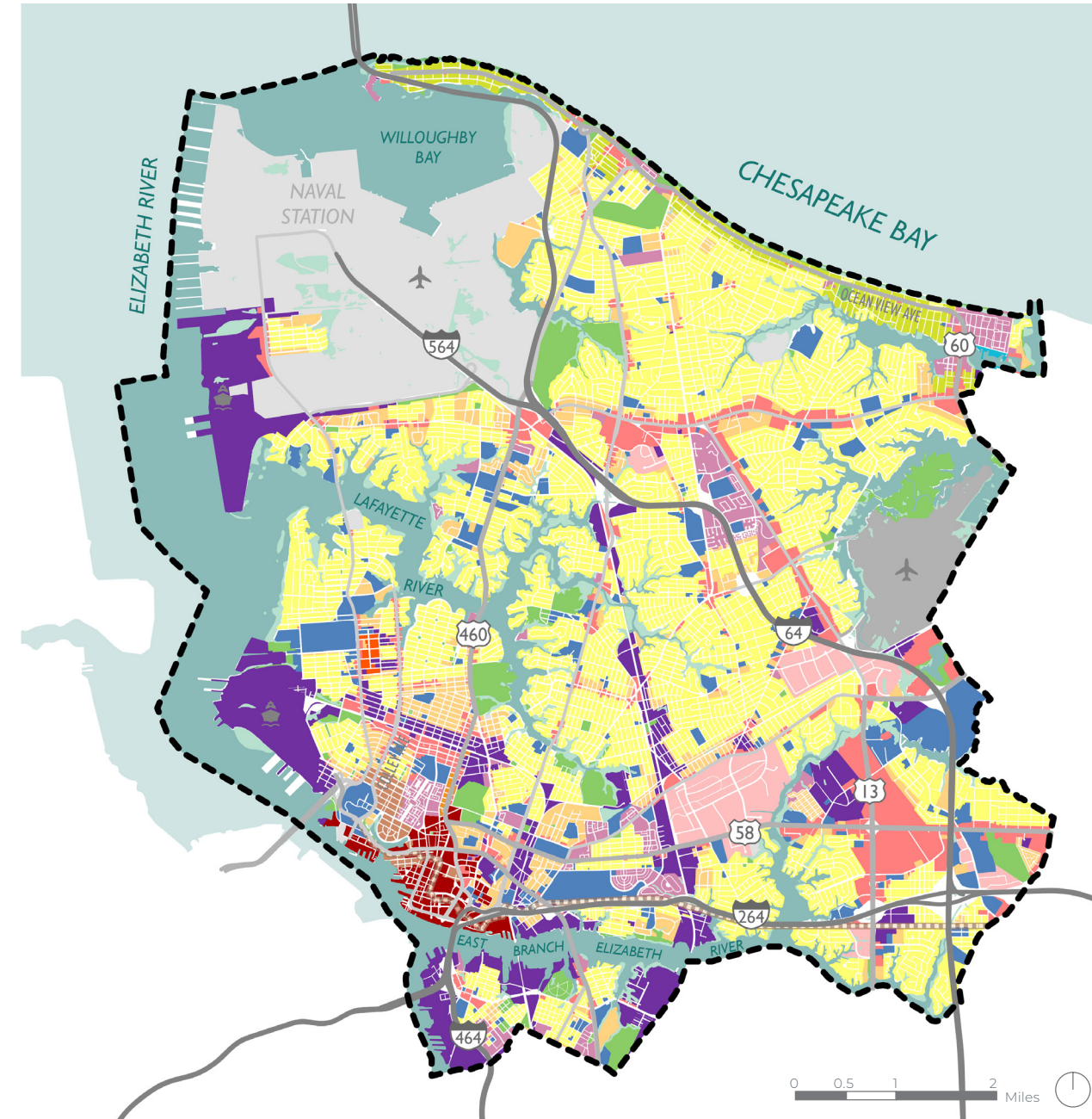
and energy resilience. Additionally, new or expanding development must meet minimum first floor elevations above flood level.

## DIVERSITY

Current zoning allows for easier mixing of uses in commercial corridors to encourage more vibrant and pedestrian-friendly communities. Housing uses include provisions for more live-work units, allowing for a broader range of home occupations. The construction of accessory dwelling units in certain zoning districts also helps to increase the city's housing supply.

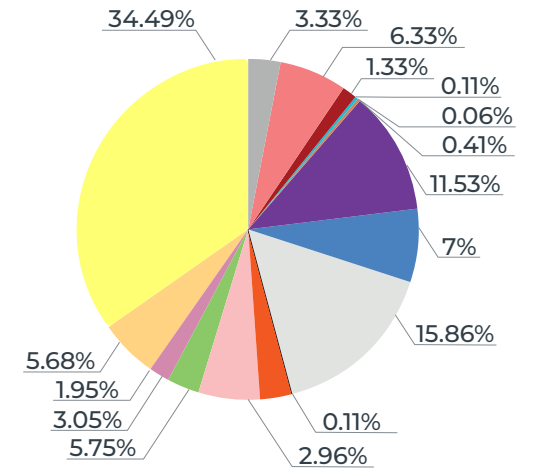
## NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER

Recognizing that Norfolk is a city that's been growing and evolving over centuries, the City uses a zoning overlay called **Character Districts** to guide developers and property owners towards the most appropriate development patterns in their unique geography, encouraging alignment with existing local character. These four Districts—Downtown, Traditional, Suburban, and Coastal—provide guidance on form, setbacks, building massing, and site configuration to help new projects better fit within the neighborhood fabric in the area.



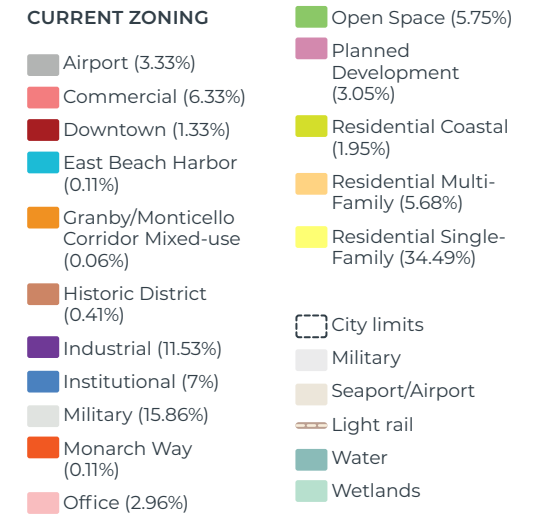
**Figure 4:** Current zoning (percentages)

Source: City of Norfolk



**Figure 5:** Current zoning

Source: City of Norfolk





Demographic Snapshot

GROWTH

Norfolk’s population, stable for decades, has seen a slight decline since 2010. The city observed a 2.4% decrease from 2010 to 2022, while the population of Virginia and the Greater Hampton Roads region grew by 7.79% and 4.8% (respectively) in the same period. It should be noted that the regular deployments of large numbers of Norfolk’s military population can make truly accurate population counts difficult.

Statewide, the past year marked the slowest growth rate for Virginia. While this can be partially attributed to a declining birth rate (13,000 more births than deaths in 2022 as compared to 27,000 in 2019), since the COVID-19 pandemic, more people are leaving larger metro areas in favor of smaller southern states. This national trend of migration out from cities into suburbs and outlying regions, for example, helped boost the number of residents in Suffolk past 100,000 in 2023 (Weldon Cooper Center, University of Virginia).

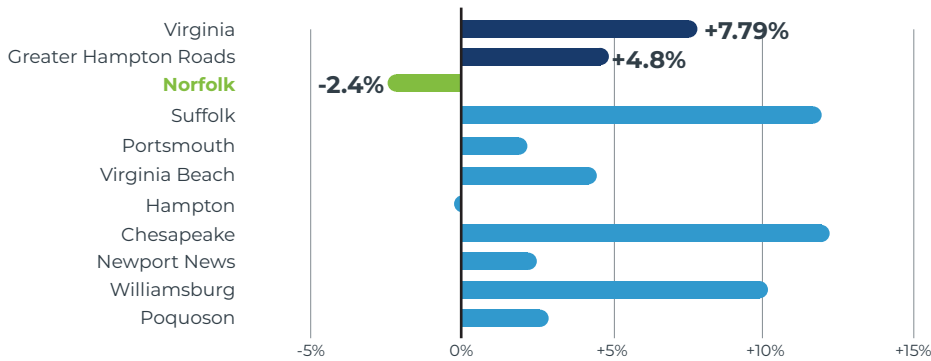


Figure 6: Regional growth rate, 2010-2022  
Source: US Census Bureau, ACS 5-year Estimates, 2010-2022

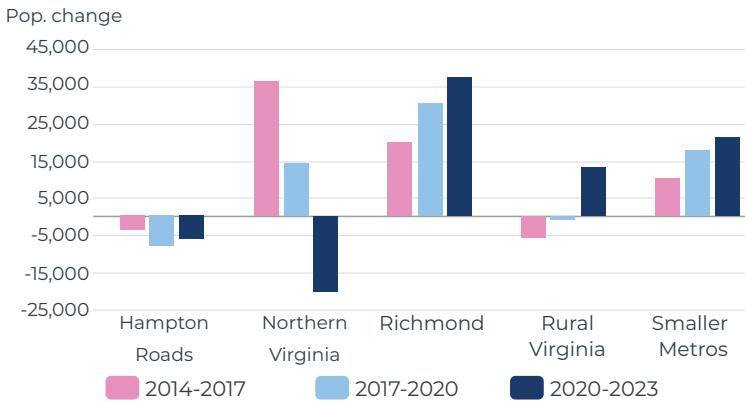


Figure 7: Net Migration by Region in Virginia  
Source: Weldon Cooper Center Population Estimates

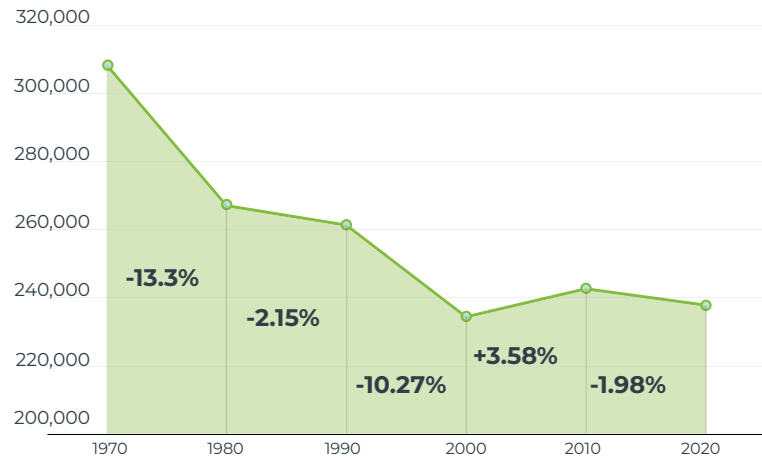


Figure 8: Population change in Norfolk, 1970-2020  
Source: CivicLab, City of Norfolk

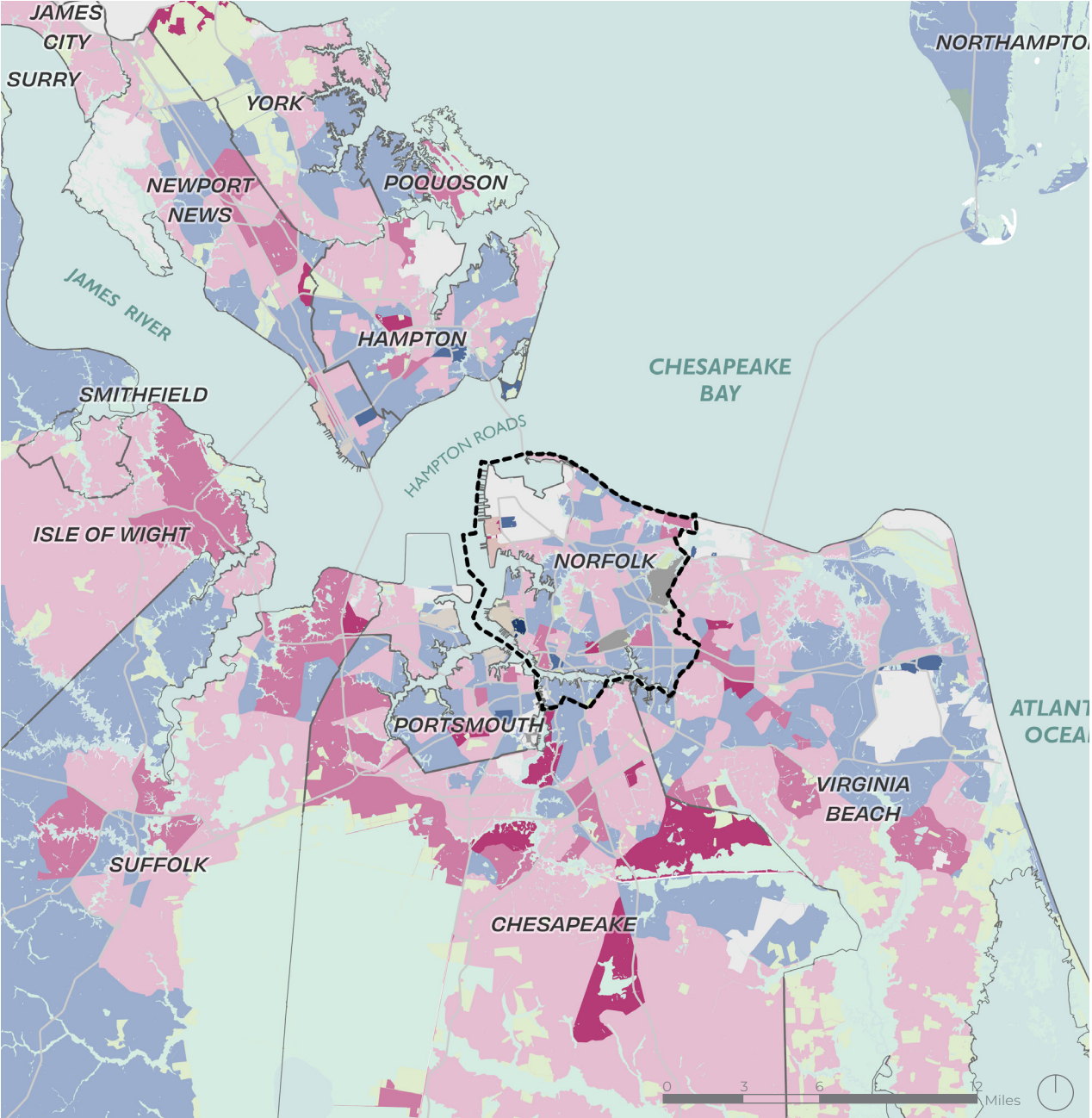


Figure 9: Population Change 2010-2022  
Source: US Census Bureau, ACS 5-year Estimates, 2010-2022



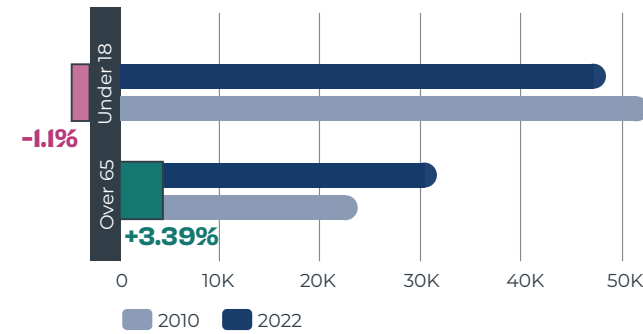


**We have a pretty diverse neighborhood. There are kids who are white, Hispanic, and then some of Asian origins. I feel like we have stumbled upon a magical little community. It's not perfect, but it is great!**

— Norfolk resident, Workshop #1, October 2023

## Age

**Norfolk's population is aging.** Between 2010 and 2022, the population above 65 years of age increased by 3.4% while those under 18 decreased by 1%. The median age has grown from 29.7 to 32.2 as of 2022. The city also saw a decline in public school enrollment rate by 18.6% as compared to the 7.5% decline in the Hampton Roads region (Virginia Department of Education, Fall Membership 2010-2011 & 2021-2022).

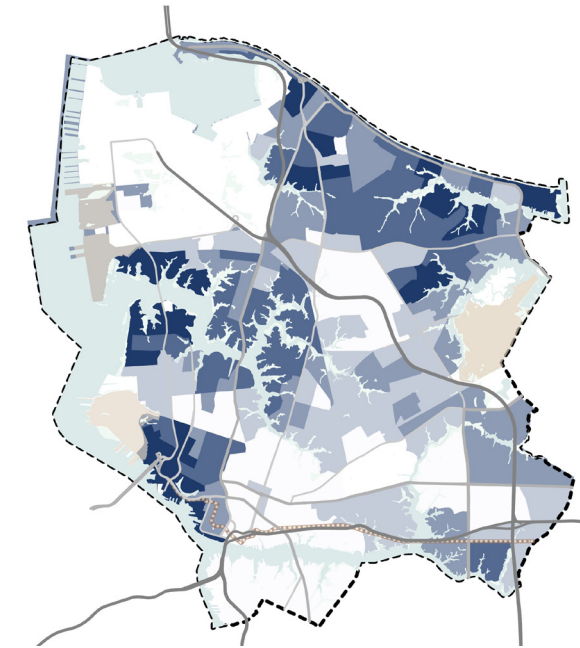


## Diversity

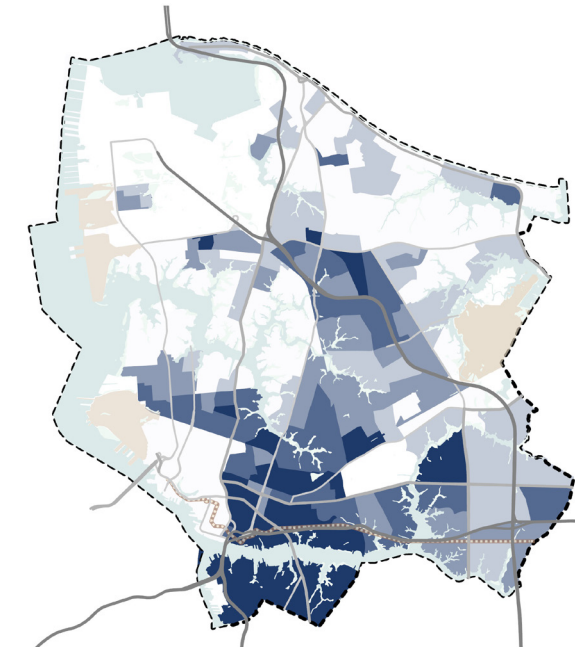
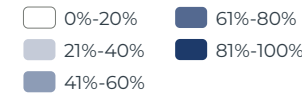
**Norfolk is becoming more Hispanic and more multi-racial.** While 42% of Norfolkiens are white, the city observed an increase in Asian, Hispanic, and multi-racial populations in the last decade. Neighborhoods like Chesapeake Gardens and Glenwood Park are home to the largest concentrations of Hispanic and Asian communities in Norfolk.

**Figure 10:** Change in youth and senior population between 2010 and 2022

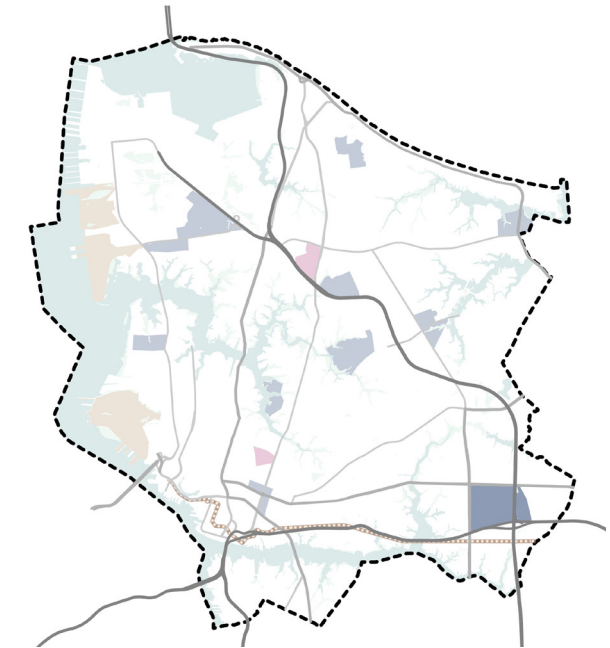
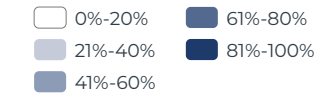
Source: US Census Bureau, ACS 5-year Estimates, 2010 and 2022



WHITE POPULATION



BLACK POPULATION

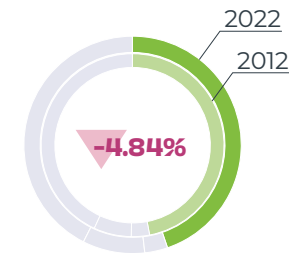


HISPANIC POPULATION

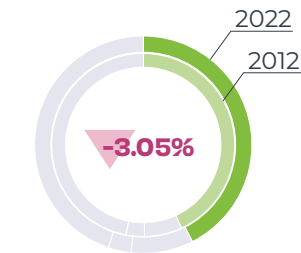
MULTI-RACE POPULATION



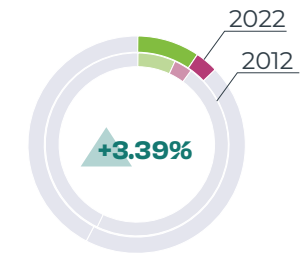
WHITE POPULATION CHANGE 2012-2022



BLACK POPULATION CHANGE 2012-2022



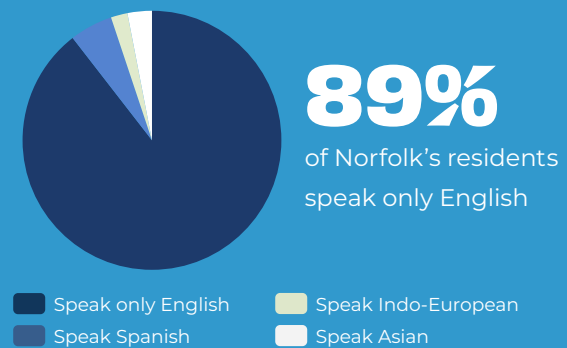
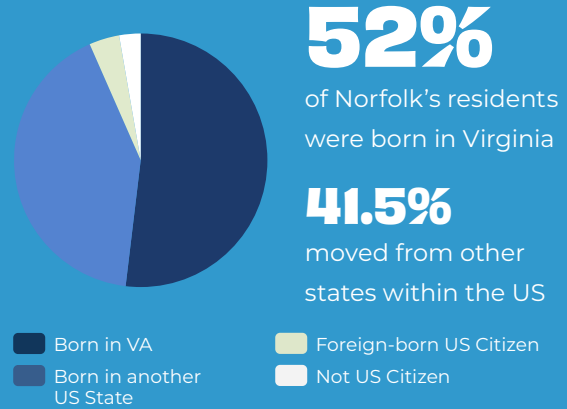
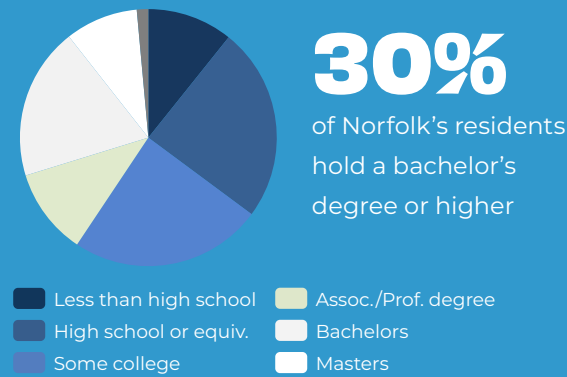
HISPANIC AND MULTI-RACE POPULATION CHANGE 2012-2022



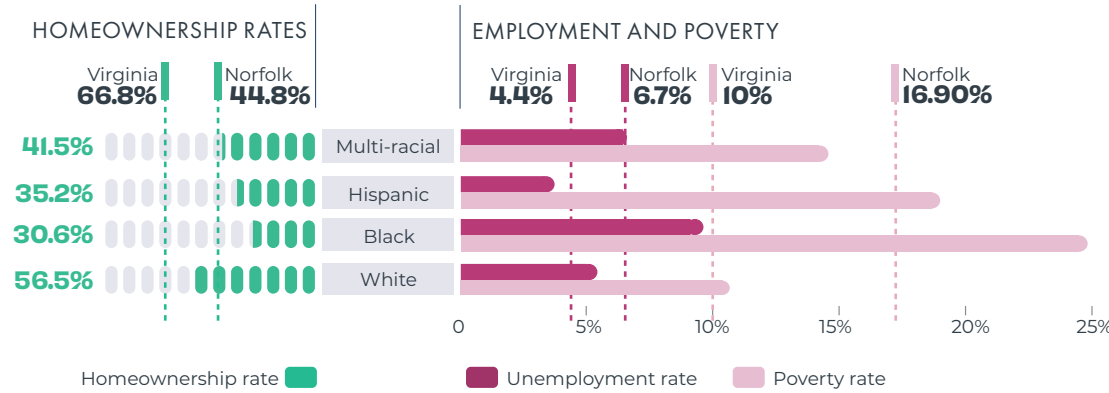
**Figure 11:** Racial/ethnic make-up of Norfolk, 2022

Source: US Census Bureau, ACS 5-year Estimates, 2010 and 2022





Source: US Census Bureau, ACS 5-year Estimates, 2022



**Figure 12:** Social inequities in poverty, unemployment, and homeownership rates by race/ethnicity

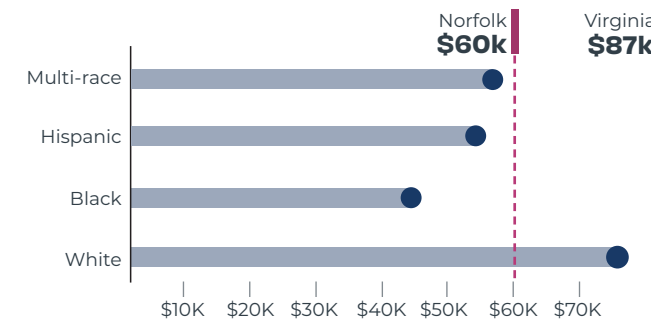
Source: US Census Bureau, ACS 5-Yr Estimates 2022

## EQUITY

**Norfolk has a higher rate of poverty and unemployment than Virginia on average.**

With a 16.9% poverty rate, Norfolk has a significantly larger population living below poverty level compared to the 10% state average.

Economic opportunities vary significantly across racial lines. In Norfolk, where the population is 42% white and 40% Black, a disproportionate number of residents living below the poverty level are Black — 21,544 Black residents are living below poverty level, the highest in the city and over twice the number of white residents in similar circumstances. This inequality extends to housing security, with white residents having a median household income of \$76,706



**Figure 13:** Median household income by race/ethnicity

Source: US Census Bureau, ACS 5-Yr Estimates 2022

compared to \$44,814 for Black residents, which is significantly below the city average of \$60,998. Such disparities severely affect the ability of Black residents to accumulate wealth, evidenced by a homeownership rate of just 30.6% among Black Norfolk residents.



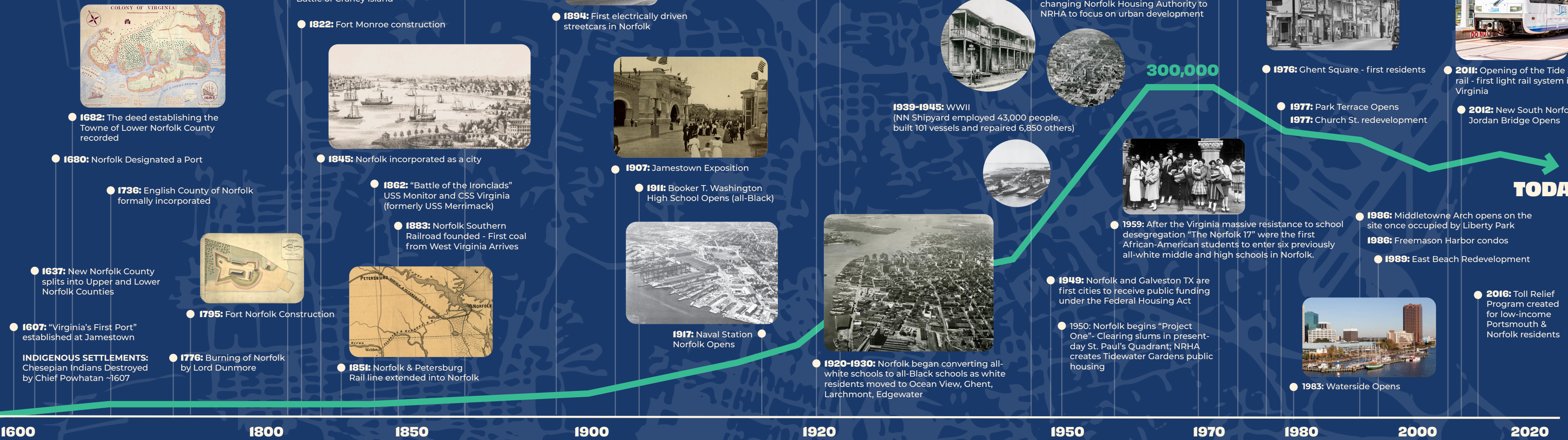
✱ For a full summary of the NFK2050 Existing Conditions, please see Appendix II.

National Night Out 2023 (City of Norfolk)



A BRIEF HISTORY OF NORFOLK

As one of the first areas of settlement for European colonists in the US, the Hampton Roads region has a long, deep, and rich history. Looking back at four centuries of urban development and the diversity of people who have called Norfolk home helps us to understand who we are today: with that shared past we can then look forward to a bright future.





# THE LAST 25 YEARS IN NORFOLK

**NFK2050** will be official policy for the City of Norfolk for the next 25 years. Long-range and comprehensive planning can feel abstract, so it can be helpful to look back to see just how much can change in a city across a similar timespan. Norfolk has had a significant amount of development, infrastructure, and environmental changes since 1999, some of which are highlighted here for illustration:





# Projections to 2050

## Why Look Forward?

Data can tell us not only where we are currently, but can help us make informed and plausible assumptions about where Norfolk might be by 2050—just 25 years from now.



When we conduct future projection analyses, we see a city that is stable, but not growing. Norfolk continues to offer a diverse mix of jobs and housing, though perhaps not at the scale needed to achieve broad-based prosperity. Meanwhile, rising sea levels and persistent flooding create challenges for residents across all income levels. In broad terms, Norfolk is doing well, yet concerns remain.



Our community envisions a thriving city, one that strives for greater opportunity, resilience, and growth, and we can take action to adjust our course accordingly. At its core, comprehensive planning is about coordinating efforts citywide with a broad coalition of partners to pull in the same direction and **make change happen in a targeted and concerted way.** The future envisioned by NFK2050 and its community is bright, and the choices we make around land use, development, and the economy will be key to realizing it.





# Population Projections

According to the University of Virginia's Weldon Cooper Center, by 2050 the city is estimated to have approximately 237,000 residents, a significant drop from current estimates (245,406). Compared to the state of Virginia as a whole (17% projected growth), and neighboring cities of Chesapeake (23% projected growth) and Virginia Beach (7% projected growth), Norfolk is projected to lag behind its neighbors in growth.

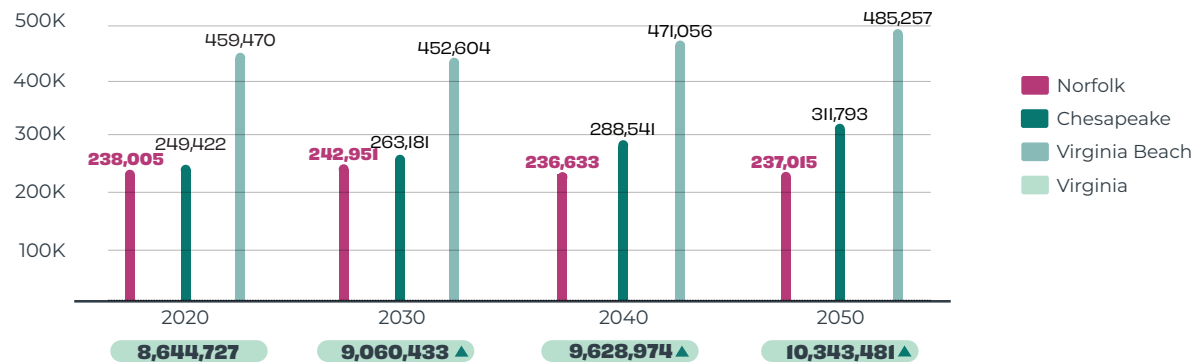
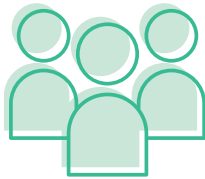


Figure 14: Population change: 2020-2050 (projected)

Source: Weldon Cooper Center Population Estimates

The Hampton Roads Transportation Planning Organization (HRTPO) similarly has projected a static population or slight decline in the majority of the city by the year 2045, as part of their long-range transportation planning (Fig.15, opposite). This data shows the probability that **the “exurbs” (developing areas far from the urban core) in the south sides of Norfolk’s neighboring cities will likely see the sharpest growth, as residents presumably relocate to newly developing areas.**



**Norfolk’s population is projected to remain stable but not increase between now and 2050.**



(City of Norfolk)

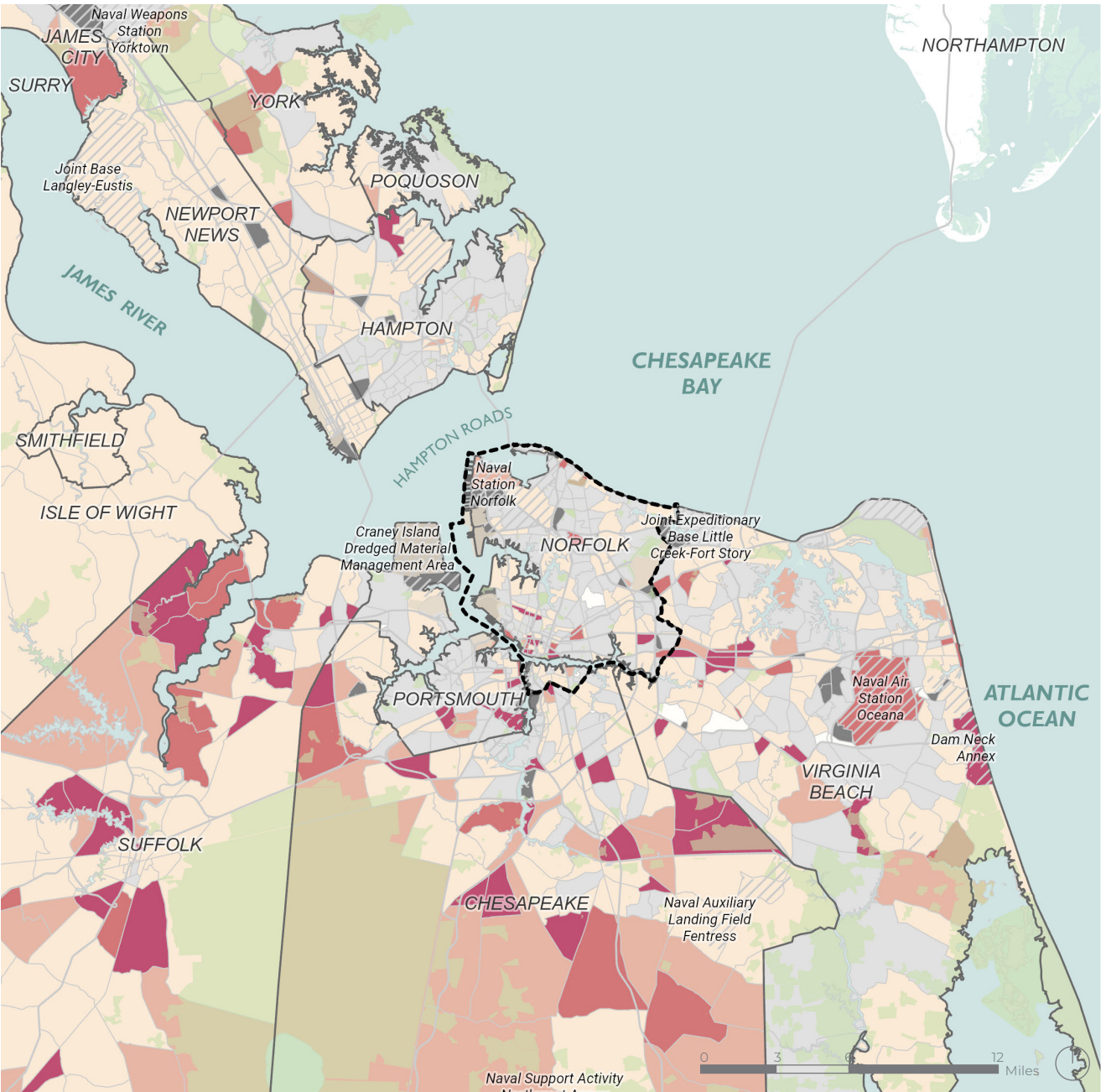


Figure 15: Regional population: projected change from 2015-2045

Source: HRTPO, 2019





Norfolk is the home of several large regional job anchors including the Port of Virginia (City of Norfolk)

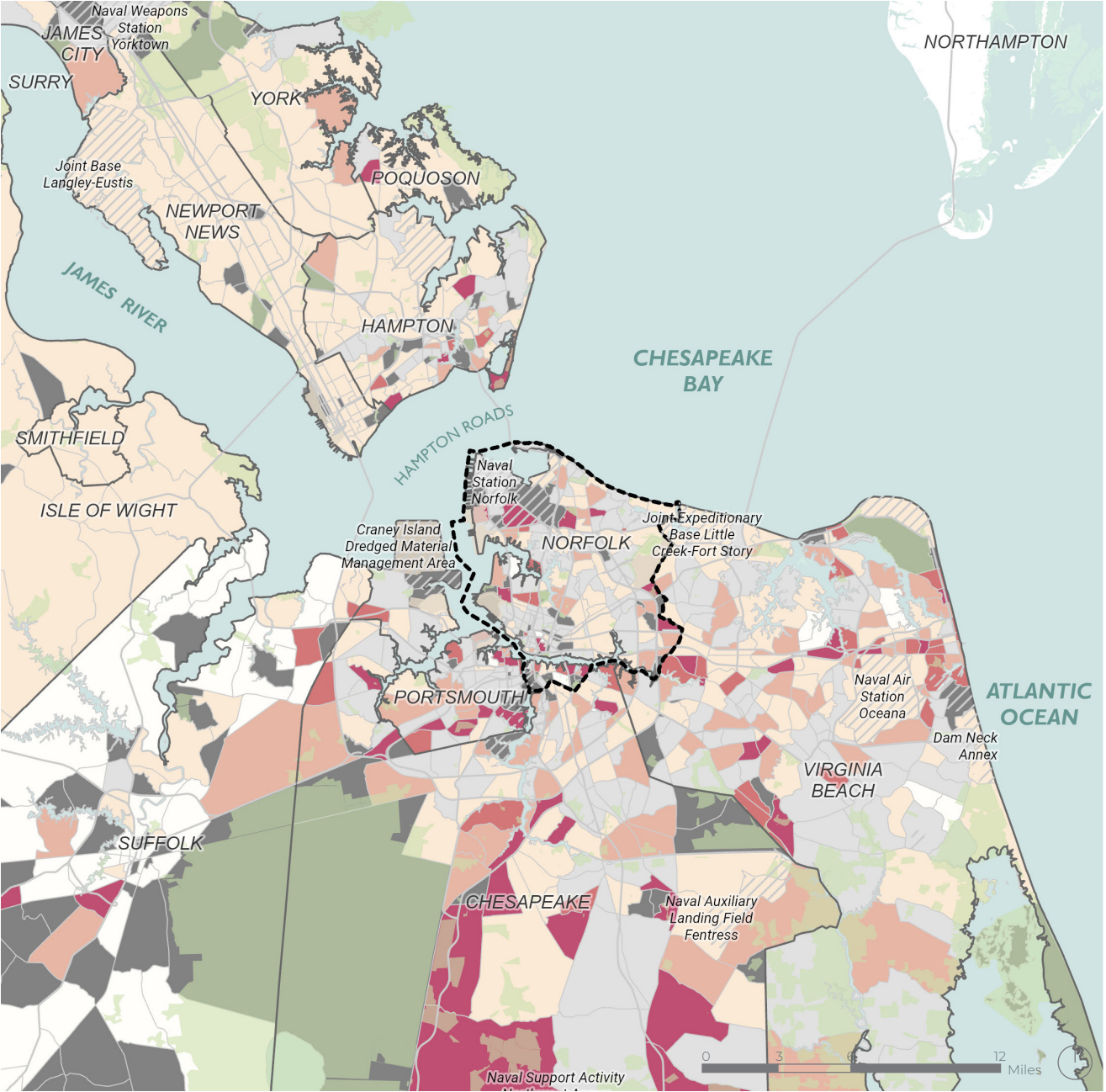
# Employment Projections

While there is evidence of job growth in neighboring counties that may pose a competitive threat to Norfolk’s industry sectors, Norfolk is showing signs of job growth in certain key areas. **The city’s economic development efforts should focus on strengthening and diversifying its key industries, improving job retention, and enhancing its competitive advantages** to mitigate concerns about industry migration.

It is also crucial to consider broader regional economic dynamics, as collaborative efforts across the region may bolster resilience against the potential migration of industries.

Current demographics in Norfolk show higher percentages of workers with high school diplomas and associate degrees, rather than those with bachelor’s degrees. **Future employment strategies should target sectors offering well-paying jobs without requiring a bachelor’s degree.** Industries like offshore wind are comprised mostly of these types of jobs not requiring a bachelor’s degree. These

industries provide ample manufacturing jobs and, importantly, they leverage existing assets in Norfolk: these jobs can be accommodated by existing shipyards, which support secondary steel components; they support local human capital and talent being created at Norfolk-based and regional community colleges, trade schools, and universities; and they build off of historic and existing maritime and defense industries.



**Figure 16:** Regional employment: Projected change from 2015-2045

Source: HRTPO, 2019

## PROJECTED EMPLOYMENT CHANGE 2015-2045 BY TAZ

- Decline
- 0% change
- 1%-50% increase
- 51%-100% increase
- 101%-200% increase
- >200% increase
- No data
- City limits
- Military
- Seaport/Airport
- Light rail
- Water
- Wetlands



## Flooding Risk and Planning Horizons

**Flood risk is the most prominent climate risk in Norfolk, and is expected to intensify as sea levels rise.** Higher sea levels will lead to more frequent tidal flood events, eventually causing daily or permanent flooding in certain areas and exacerbating flood impacts from coastal storms.

The speed and magnitude of Sea Level Rise (SLR) are uncertain. NFK2050's planning approach must consider different climate models, time horizons, and probabilities.

To navigate this variable within the planning process, the NFK2050 team has established a framework for selecting appropriate models, defining probability ranges, and determining time horizons—while also addressing the inherent uncertainties of both climate projections and future adaptation efforts.

- **Models and probability ranges:** For Norfolk and the Hampton Roads area as a whole, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) 2017 model has been used in the most recent planning efforts (the Virginia Coastal Resilience Master Plan, 2021). As the latest available scientific data, a 2022 update is proposed for this planning effort, with the “Intermediate” scenario as the basis. In addition, the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) projects SLR in Coastal

Virginia up to the year 2050. For the purposes of this plan, the VIMS projection is used for 2050, and NOAA's 2022 Intermediate projection is used beyond that date.

- **Year to plan for:** The time horizon of this Plan is 2050, but the actual lifespan of a home is more than 50 years. The time horizon for sea level rise must be at least 50 years, plus the planning span, resulting in the year **2100**.

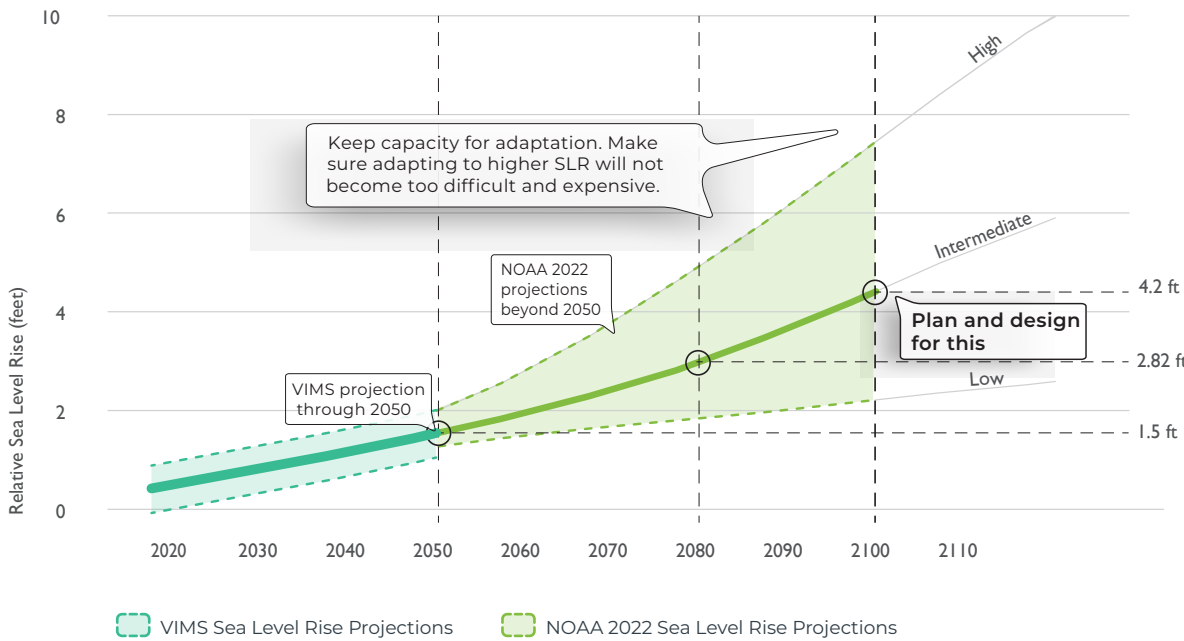


Flooded street in Norfolk (WRT)

- **Managing Sea Level Rise uncertainty:** The proposed SLR model and time horizon comes with a caveat: SLR will continue after 2100, although we cannot know to what extent and with what speed. The 50-year time horizon allows for ample time to adapt to new circumstances at a later stage; however, for investments with a longer lifespan, a longer time horizon should be taken into account. There is also a chance that actual SLR and flood risk are overestimated or underestimated. Future modeling can make estimates with more precision. It is essential to acknowledge this chance now and, in the future, reassess the level of uncertainty as new models become available (see Fig.17 to the right for a summary).
- **Resilience:** While it is expected that measures to protect against or adapt to SLR, storm surge, and urban flooding will be implemented, the specific strategies and their timelines have yet to be finalized. Presenting only inundation and flood risk maps—without referencing anticipated protective measures—could

create the false impression that Norfolk is destined to be flooded. This may erode public confidence in the city's long-term viability. To counter this, flood maps should incorporate the best available estimates of planned or proposed adaptation and mitigation measures.

**In response to projected rising sea levels through 2100, NFK2050 will proactively plan, design, and adapt.**



**Figure 17:** Sea Level Rise Scenarios for Sewells Point, Norfolk

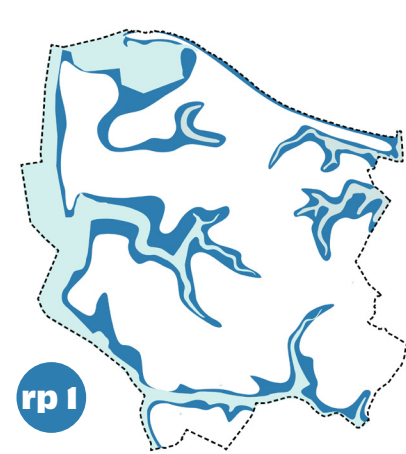
Source: Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS); NOAA 2022; ONE Architecture



Risk Profile Overlays

NFK2050 recognizes the uncertainty of flood scenarios and the need to plan for an unknown future.

Flood risk varies across the city. To complement the strong work already incorporated in Vision 2100's assessment of risk (Figure 18), the NFK2050 team also developed four "risk profile" analyses. These profiles are based on susceptibility to flood risks (considering both tidal and storm surge flooding), and the probable implementation of future flood protection projects, helping us understand what land use decisions and adaptation measures work best where in the city.



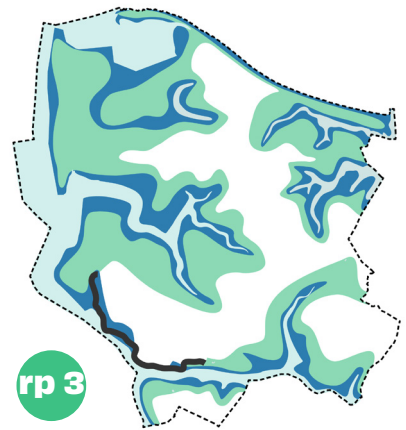
Risk Profile 1: Tidal Flooding

This risk profile identifies areas vulnerable to chronic inundation from sea level rise (SLR) during high tides, particularly neighborhoods along the Lafayette River and low-lying coastal zones. Recurrent tidal flooding could submerge these areas daily under intermediate SLR scenarios. The extent of this overlay builds on, and refines, Vision 2100's yellow zone – Adapting to Rising Waters. Actions here focus on protecting most vulnerable populations and avoiding recurring damages, while allowing for the restoration of shoreline ecologies.



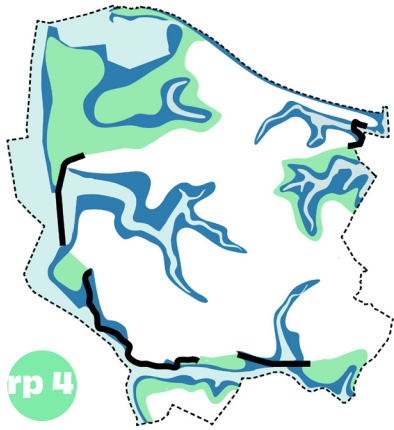
Risk Profile 2: Storm Surge

Risk Profile 2 focuses on areas exposed to potentially devastating storm surges, such as Downtown's Elizabeth River waterfront and Ocean View. Though low in probability at the current estimations, without intervention, the levels of flood in these areas can raise up to 10 ft during a significant storm, necessitating investments in the resilience of physical assets and local communities.



Risk Profile 3: Downtown Protection

While much of Norfolk falls under Risk Profile 2, this can change in the future if coastal protection is constructed. The US Army Corps of Engineers and the City of Norfolk are developing plans to protect the Downtown areas, extending and upgrading the existing Downtown Floodwall to protect a larger area from coastal storms. After the completion of such a project, Risk Profile 3 shows that for a large part of Downtown, flood risk is greatly reduced.



Risk Profile 4: CSRM Implementation

If all currently-projected Coastal Storm Risk Management (CSRM) components — including 8 miles of floodwalls, 11 tide gates, and pump stations — were to be implemented, storm surge flood risk would be greatly reduced in an even larger area (e.g., The Hague, East Ocean View). Residual flooding may still occur during tidal events.

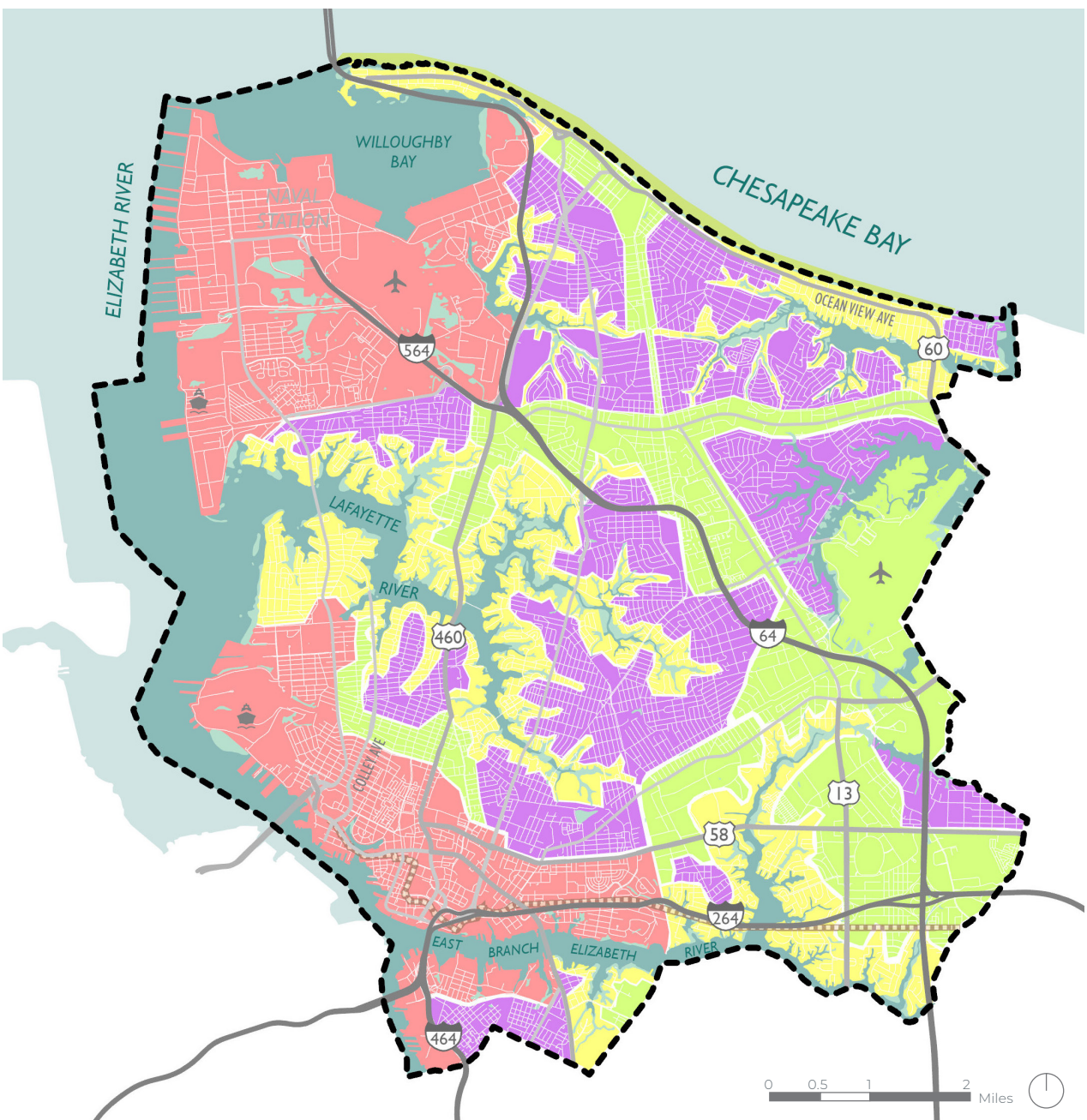


Figure 18: Vision 2100 areas, underpinning much of NFK2050's land use and policy recommendations.

Source: City of Norfolk

VISION 2100 AREAS:

Enhancing Economic Engines

These areas have key economic assets essential to the city's future. Major land use policy and infrastructure investments to protect these areas should encourage additional dense mixed-use development in these areas.

Adapting to Rising Waters

Established neighborhoods that experience more frequent flooding. The city should explore new and innovative technologies to help reduce flood risk and focus on investments aimed at extending the resilience of key infrastructure.

Designing New Urban Centers

Areas at low risk of coastal flooding and that have great potential for high density, mixed-use and mixed income development. These areas are prime opportunities for creating walkable, bikeable, transit-rich communities. The City should encourage transformational development in these areas.

Establishing Neighborhoods of the Future

Established neighborhoods at less risk of coastal flooding. The City should make investments that improve connections between these areas and key economic assets to ensure these neighborhoods can continue to thrive.

- City limits
- Military
- Seaport/Airport
- Light rail
- Water
- Wetlands



Sea Level Rise & Fiscal Impacts

Water is deeply embedded in the life and culture of Norfolk. Adapting to it—and fostering a positive relationship with it—will be critical to the city’s future success.

Norfolk has one of the fastest rates of sea level rise on the East Coast, driven largely by the combined impacts of a changing climate and land subsidence. Sea level rise poses significant threats to Norfolk’s property tax base through both permanent flooding by tidal inundation and precipitation-induced flooding as a result of storm surge. Acting now to address sea level rise will ensure a more resilient future for Norfolk.

Figures 19, 20, and 21 outline the potential impacts of sea level rise on properties. By 2050, oceans are anticipated to rise by at least 1.5 ft. Without additional adaptation measures, tidal inundation is projected to permanently flood approximately 1.8 square miles, and reduce Norfolk’s property tax base by \$615 million. In addition, storm surge flooding expands to an additional 4.5 square miles of taxable city land, and threatens the property values of approximately \$5.1 billion in appraised value.

If sea level rise continues to accelerate, it has the potential to impact over half of the city area and its property tax base. These projections illustrate the urgent need for cultivating more efficient and productive land uses.

As we look forward to Norfolk’s future, incorporating development decisions that promote building more in less space will be imperative for building the city’s resilience to climate change and other challenges.

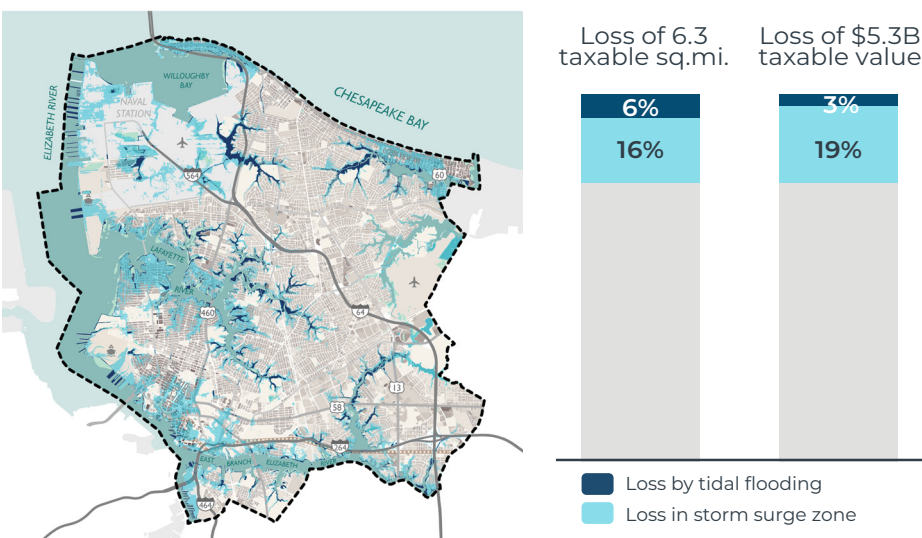


Figure 19: Sea level rise and storm surge risk, 2050 projections (without protective infrastructure in place)

Source: VIMS; City of Norfolk Assessor, 2023; ONE Architecture

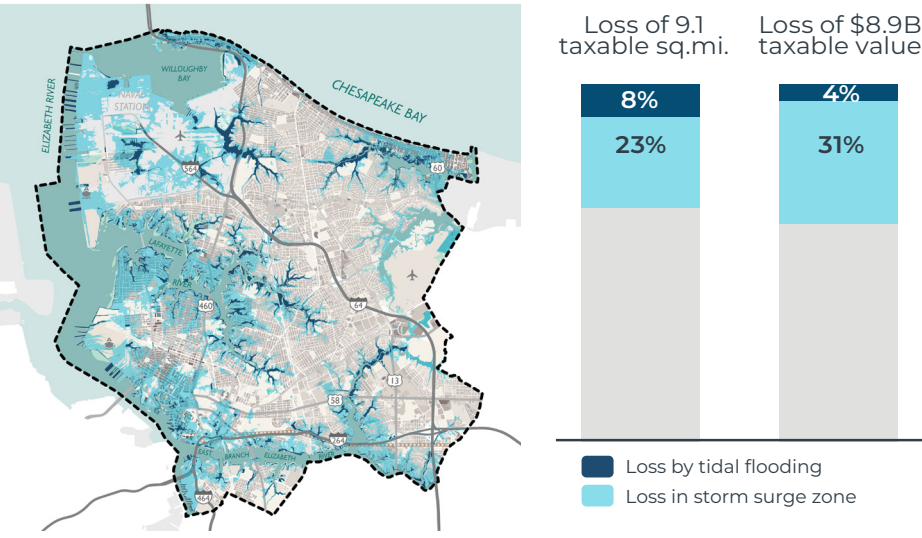


Figure 20: Sea level rise and storm surge risk, 2080 projections (without protective infrastructure in place)

Source: NOAA, 2022; City of Norfolk Assessor, 2023; ONE Architecture

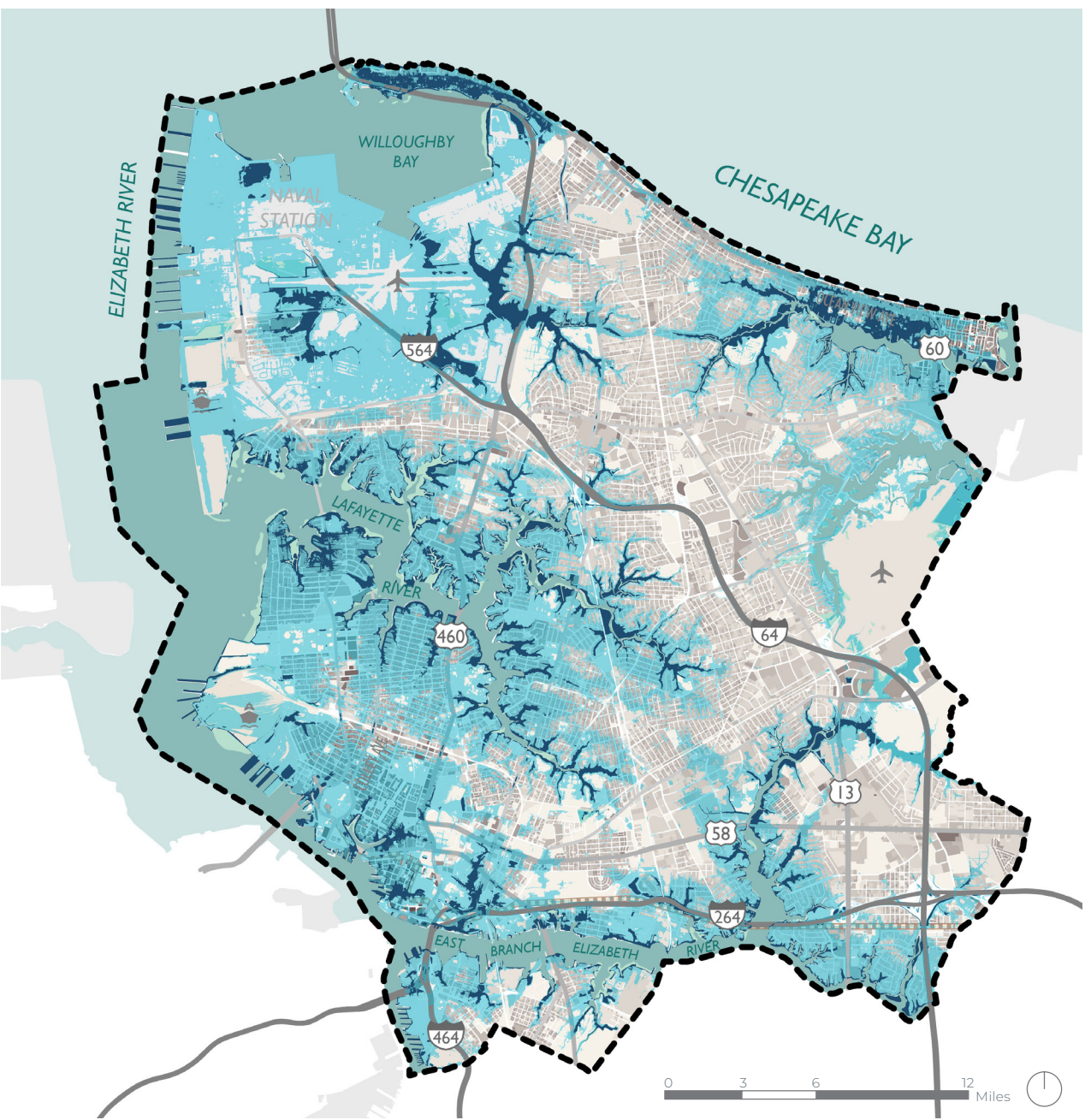
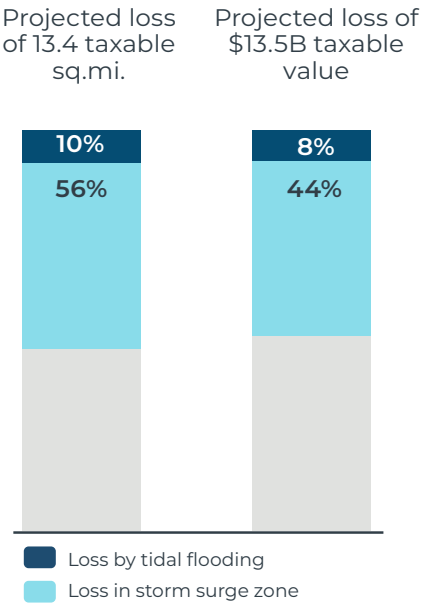


Figure 21: Sea level rise and storm surge risk, 2100 projections (without protective infrastructure in place)

Source: NOAA, 2022; City of Norfolk Assessor, 2023; ONE Architecture



FLOODING RISK

- Tidal inundation
- Storm surge
- City limits
- Military
- Seaport/Airport
- Light rail
- Water
- Wetlands



# Adjusting Course

## The Time to Plan is Now

Norfolk has a range of plausible paths forward based on our current trajectory, but we get to write our future together. We can seize this opportunity to shape our city as a united community, and to build a Norfolk that meets the needs of all our residents, for today and tomorrow.

**We know our city is special.** We have diverse neighbors, strong cultural assets, a singular sense of identity, a deep and rich history, and a meaningful connection to water all around us. We have world-class economic anchors, parks and tree canopies across the city, a diversity of housing, a strong urban downtown, the popular Elizabeth River Trail, and the only light rail transit system in the Commonwealth.

Norfolk is doing well, but there are always opportunities for improvement to make a more equitable and resilient city for all our neighbors. Housing is becoming less affordable nationwide, and Norfolk is no exception. Our roadways and bike lanes don't always connect seamlessly, and rising waters

with increased flood events further divide our close-knit neighborhoods from each other. Economically, the jobs available in the city do not always align with the skills and training of our own residents, making it harder to earn a living wage and raise a family.

In 2025, Norfolk is at an inflection point, and the NFK2050 planning process offers an opportunity to realign land use, development, and economic policies to ensure the city is moving in the right direction.

Grounded in a thorough assessment of current conditions and a data-driven understanding of where our trajectory may be pointing, **it's now time to find out where we want to go from here.** To do this, we consulted our diverse community voices to understand what their future city looks and feels like—and how we might make it happen together.

