

Growing Equitably

Housing is top of mind for Norfolk residents. Rising housing costs felt across the income spectrum are compounded by climate risk, a shifting labor market, changing demographics, and broader economic uncertainty. These pressures are not unique to Norfolk, but their impacts are deeply local. As the city looks ahead, its path to equitable growth lies in leveraging the strength of its neighborhoods, the resilience of its people, and its position as a regional anchor for both industry and innovation.

Meeting this moment requires Norfolk to invest in growth that is inclusive, adaptive, and grounded in community. That means increasing housing production across income levels, preserving affordability in long-standing neighborhoods, and creating flexible housing options that reflect the needs of a diverse and often transient population. It also means supporting residents at every stage of life—military families building roots, new generations seeking opportunity, and long-time neighbors who deserve to remain and thrive.

To sustain this growth, Norfolk must strengthen its economic foundations, by cultivating emerging industries and

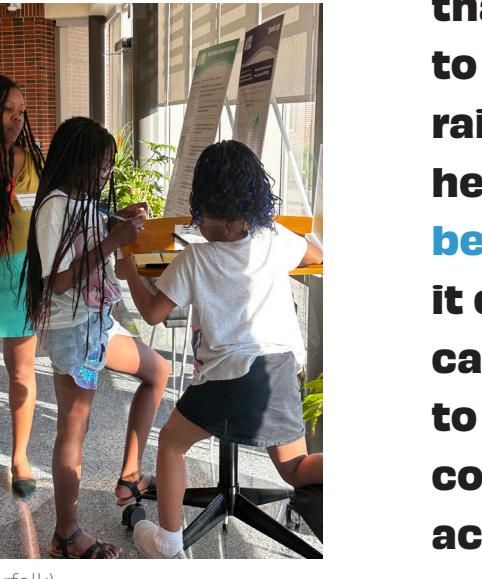
expanding its local business ecosystem. Strengthening education-to-employment pipelines, supporting entrepreneurs, and connecting residents to meaningful, good-paying jobs will be essential to ensuring prosperity is broadly shared.

Equitable growth is more than a policy goal—it is a lasting commitment to people and place. It requires sustained investment in neighborhoods, in grassroots leadership, and in the social infrastructure that empowers communities to lead their own transformation. With intentional action and community vision, Norfolk can grow in strength, connection and lasting opportunity for its residents.



The City's zoning, largely written in the 1950s to favor single-family housing, must move away from exclusionary practices. We need to allow multifamily housing wherever possible, as rising sea levels will leave less land to build on. The City will look very different 100 years from now, but we still have the opportunity to guide its growth in the right way—and the City must grow.

— Norfolk resident, Phase 1 Engagement



I would love to make sure there are things that would allow people to come and not only raise their families here, but for them to be able to thrive when it comes down to their career, it comes down to their social life, it comes down to different activities.

— Norfolk resident, Phase 1 Engagement

What We Heard:

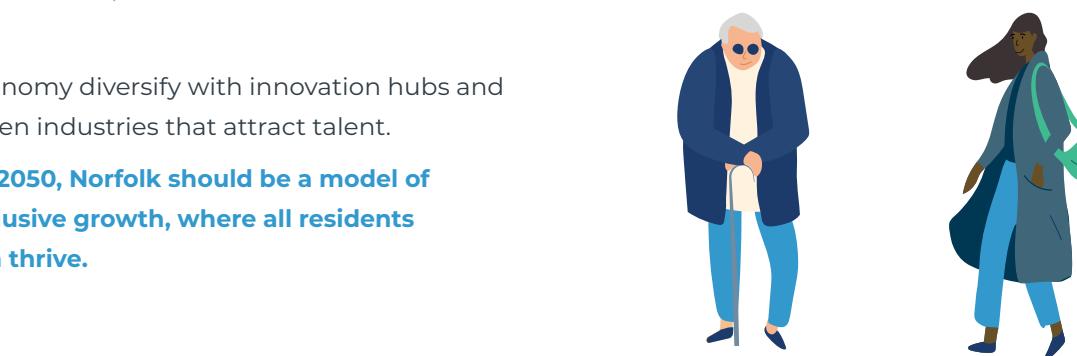
Norfolk residents envision a city where equity is embedded in housing and economic development.

By 2050, policies should ensure affordable units in new developments, housing assistance programs for low-income families, and preservation of historic homes. Norfolk's neighborhoods should include mixed-use developments that combine homes, shops, and green spaces, fostering vibrant, connected communities. Gentrification concerns should be addressed through measures that allow residents to age in place and retain their homes.

Economic development should emphasize supporting small businesses and creating workforce opportunities. Residents envision a city with streamlined processes for entrepreneurs, microgrants for startups, and a focus on workforce training starting in schools. Investments in underserved areas should balance resources across the city, ensuring all neighborhoods benefit from growth. Investments in underserved areas will balance resources and drive growth. Residents would like to see Norfolk's

By 2050, Norfolk will be well-connected, more equitable, affordable for all walks of life, and have a high quality of life.

— Norfolk resident, Phase 2 Engagement



economy diversify with innovation hubs and green industries that attract talent.

By 2050, Norfolk should be a model of inclusive growth, where all residents can thrive.



Goals:

GOAL 1:

Support a Housing Market that Meets the Needs of All Residents

GOAL 2:

Increase Housing Production and Adapt Housing Options for a Changing Population

GOAL 3:

Grow And Diversify Norfolk's Economy

GOAL 4:

Support Local Workforce Development and Build Strategic Pipelines

Big Ideas:

!**Deconcentrate poverty** and facilitate mobility to high opportunity neighborhoods.

!**Preserve and improve existing affordable housing.**

!**Create new affordable rental housing** and homeownership opportunities to address increasing affordability challenges faced by Norfolk's residents.

!**Establish a dedicated source to finance** affordable housing, preserve existing homes, support rental assistance, and invest in neighborhood improvements.

!**Implement affordable and long-term homeownership programs tailored for public service professionals** and vulnerable populations, including the unhoused, elderly, disabled and low-income households.

!**Forge partnerships with faith-based institutions and universities to enable enduring affordable housing through partnerships with community land trusts (CLTs),** especially in formerly redlined neighborhoods.

!**Support Community Development Corporations (CDCs) and Community Housing Development Organizations (CHDOs) to lead neighborhood revitalization efforts and build a community-led development ecosystem.**

!**Position Norfolk as a one-stop hub for defense and maritime industries** by attracting companies in related sectors such as shipbuilding, cybersecurity, and defense technology.

!**Promote clean, green redevelopment** and resilience investments on working waterfronts.

!**Work with educational institutions and vocational schools to provide job training, job access, and research programs** that meet the needs of qualifications to enter the workforce in growing industries within the city.

GOAL 1:**Support a Housing Market that Meets the Needs of All Residents**

Plan for partnerships, programs, and funding to support a housing market that sustainably and equitably meets the housing needs of all community members in Norfolk. Protect and maintain affordability in existing and new housing stock to reduce the financial burden on Norfolk's households and keep current and future residents rooted in their community.

A healthy housing market is made up of market, public, and nonprofit actors that work together to meet the needs of all households at all income levels. In addition to producing a wide range of new housing, Norfolk's existing housing needs equal attention to make sure residents can continue to live affordably and safely in their homes. Resources and programs can help bridge the affordability gap, mitigate evictions, adapt to rising waters, and otherwise meet existing

residents where they are, to make sure that all who call the city home can stay rooted in their own communities. Achieving this goal can be supported by the implementation of the *Norfolk Comprehensive Housing Study and Strategic Plan*.

The Norfolk Comprehensive Housing Study and Strategic Plan identified current market trends and housing needs in Norfolk, assessed existing capacity and proposed a series of goals to address those needs in a comprehensive way.



1. Deconcentrate poverty and facilitate mobility to areas of opportunity to help Norfolk households access quality housing in high opportunity neighborhoods across the region and promote economic opportunity for Norfolk's low-income residents.

- a.** Continue redevelopment of obsolete public housing (e.g., St. Paul's Transformation) and develop a coordinated, long-term strategy to address these communities.
- b.** Continue to identify necessary infrastructure for redevelopment of the St. Paul's area and determine funding needs.
- c.** Continue and expand the landlord incentive program to facilitate use of vouchers in areas of opportunity and emphasize and market a campaign to increase large household landlord participation in Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) programs.
- d.** Identify neighborhoods of opportunity throughout the region.

e. Create a user friendly, real time, searchable database of affordable housing options that includes other useful information, including proximity to transit, healthcare, grocery stores, and schools.

f. Create a housing resources guide that can be provided in libraries, recreation centers, places of worship, the Foodbank, and more.

g. Publicly praise or otherwise recognize financial institutions with a record of supporting fair housing initiatives.

h. Fund and charge experienced local organizations to provide fair housing education, testing, and investigation as well as periodic review and analysis of lending data.

i. Promote HUD Property Appraisal and Valuation Equity (PAVE) training to home appraisers in Hampton Roads.

j. Support tenants with vouchers to find homes in areas of opportunity and thrive once they move there by working with a strong nonprofit who can augment capacity and act as an intermediary between the voucher program and landlords.

k. Continue landlord outreach and engagement efforts, as well as housing counseling services through PeopleFirst and other non-profit partners.



2. Preserve existing affordable housing and strengthen neighborhoods to maintain and improve the existing housing stock, promote housing quality, and ensure long-term affordability for existing renters and homeowners while strengthening neighborhood housing markets.

a. Mitigate opportunities for for-profit LLCs to acquire multi-unit properties at the end of their affordability period (change loan documents).

b. Explore a Right of First Refusal policy.

c. Commission a preservation inventory to gather information about multifamily rental properties that can be used to identify and prevent the loss of properties at a risk of becoming blighted.

- d.** Partner with the non-profit and faith community to increase options for property rehab.
- e.** Continue targeted owner-occupied and rental repair programs (e.g., Renovate Norfolk and Strengthening Neighborhoods) and evaluate opportunities to enhance these programs, such as pursuing partnerships with non-profits.
- f.** Create a rehab program open to landlord or owner-occupied applicants that provides tax incentives and/or subsidies to upgrade homes in exchange for a covenant that guarantees affordability for a minimum of 5 years.
- g.** Revise CDBG and HOME funding to focus on strengthening neighborhoods and deconcentrating poverty.
- h.** Strengthen neighborhoods by giving existing housing programs a strategic geographic focus and introducing new programs to increase the impact.
- i.** Support efforts by the Department of Neighborhood Services to prevent evictions through the Eviction Prevention Center, providing financial assistance and other resources to eligible Norfolk renters who are facing evictions due to unforeseen hardships.



3. Create new affordable rental housing and homeownership opportunities to address increasing affordability challenges faced by Norfolk's residents.



Bruce's Park neighborhood (WRT)

- a.** Support mixed-income development in areas of opportunity through the implementation of the recommendations of the Mayor's Housing Commission.
- b.** Continue and enhance existing public land disposition processes, such as the disposition of vacant City-owned residential property (auction process).

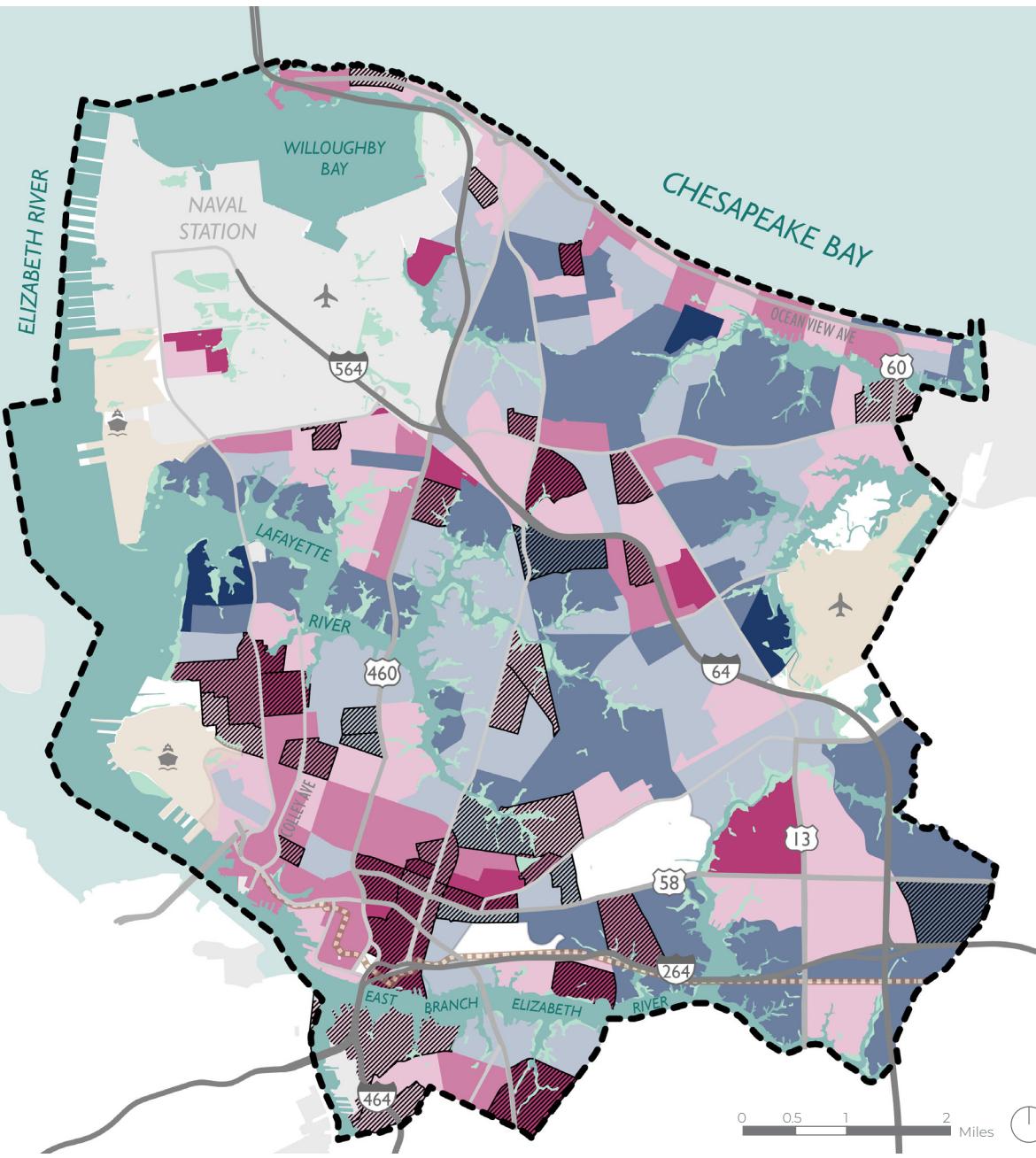


Figure 5: Occupied housing units: owners and renters

Source: City of Norfolk; US Census ACS 5-Year estimates, 2022; UD

- c. Work with NRHA to refine the Project Based Vouchers (PBV) award process to encourage projects that deconcentrate poverty.
- d. Create and implement a public education campaign on the benefits, best practices, and positive outcomes of affordable and mixed income housing.
- e. Modify performance-based grant regulations to allow affordable housing developments.
- f. Provide subsidies for the development of city-owned vacant residential property for multifamily development in neighborhoods of opportunity (Establish underwriting criteria and add capacity).
- g. Use HUD Entitlement funding to help local nonprofits providing tenant-based rental assistance (TBRA), financial and housing counseling, and homebuyer assistance.
- h. Increase awareness and utilization of NRHA's HomeNet Ownership Center, which provides credit counseling, down-payment and closing cost assistance and other tools to increase homeownership.
- i. Support the Rent Ready Norfolk program, which educates landlords, property

managers, and renters about their rights and responsibilities and informs and educates about the misconceptions of renters.

4. Build regional capacity and coordination around affordable housing and access to opportunity to ensure that the City and its partners are able to execute housing policies and programs with efficiency, scale, and significant impact.

- a. Collaborate with philanthropic, public and corporate entities to provide sustained funding for regional nonprofit capacity.
- b. Continue to work with regional partners to collectively address regional affordable housing needs.
- c. Support the development of a regional housing plan by the HRPDC, including implementation strategies, to ensure an adequate supply of quality and affordable housing.

d. Develop additional technical assistance to small developers about developing small properties and SWaM businesses for assistance with certifications.

e. Create informational open houses for contractors and builders, with support from partners like the Virginia Department of Housing & Community Development and Coastal Virginia Building Industry Association.

f. Leverage Norfolk's regional leadership to encourage regional partners to participate in attainable housing efforts, such as *Single Room Occupancies (SROs)*, *Permanent Supportive Housing*, and *Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) programs*, including building them in

their cities and accepting residents from all cities in the region.

Single Room Occupancies (SROs): is a residential property that includes multiple single room dwelling units. Each unit is for occupancy by a single eligible individual. The unit need not, but may, contain food preparation or sanitary facilities, or both.

Permanent Supportive Housing: is housing in which housing assistance (e.g., long-term leasing or rental assistance) and supportive services are provided to assist households with at least one member (adult or child) with a disability in achieving housing stability.

- g. *Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) Programs:* is a Housing First-informed intervention implemented by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Continuum of Care (CoC) program that rapidly connects individuals and families experiencing homelessness to permanent housing with short-term financial assistance and targeted support services. Its goal is to reduce the time spent homeless, prevent returns to homelessness, and promote long-term housing stability.



The Center, a 100-bed emergency shelter operated by Norfolk Community Services Board (City of Norfolk)

- h. Establish a dedicated source of local funding and financing to build capacity to meet housing needs, such as scaling local programs, gap financing, creating new affordable and attainable housing, supporting mixed-income developments, improving current housing stock, acquiring at-risk properties, and supporting rental assistance initiatives and neighborhood improvements.
- i. Establish eligible activities, focusing on assistance that covers gaps and also allows the City/partners to leverage significant state or federal funding.
- j. Encourage more lending institutions to include FHA loans and other affordable products in their portfolio and market more aggressively.
- k. Encourage lenders to reinvest in areas with majority-minority populations.

6. Forge partnerships with faith-based institutions, universities, and other community partners to foster an ecosystem that enables enduring affordable housing through partnerships with **community land trusts (CLTs), especially in formerly redlined neighborhoods.**

Community Land Trusts (CLTs): are non-profit, community-based organizations whose mission is to provide affordable housing in perpetuity by owning land and leasing it to those who live in houses built on that land.

BEST PRACTICES:
CHAMPLAIN HOUSING TRUST, BURLINGTON, VT

One of the largest CLTs in the country, Champlain Housing Trust has developed and preserved hundreds of affordable homes. By purchasing land and holding it in trust, they sell homes to low- and moderate-income families at affordable prices, ensuring long-term affordability even as property values

rise. Homeowners can build equity, but when they sell, the home must remain affordable to future buyers.

7. Incubate and support **Community Development Corporations (CDCs) and Community Housing Development Organizations (CHDOs) to lead neighborhood revitalization efforts and partner with local philanthropies to fund an emerging community-led ecosystem.**

Community Development Corporations (CDCs): are non-profit organizations that center neighborhood-based revitalization. CDC activities include developing affordable housing to attract homeowners back into their neighborhoods, initiating economic development, and developing social services.

BEST PRACTICES:

CLEVELAND COMMUNITY FOUNDATION, CLEVELAND, OH

The Cleveland Foundation (1914) is a community foundation providing targeted grantmaking and collaborative initiatives. It partners with local organizations, institutions, and CDCs to support programs like rental assistance and eviction prevention services, education and economic empowerment, and other impactful community-driven initiatives.

LOCAL SUCCESS:

ST. PAUL'S TRANSFORMATION PROJECT

The St. Paul's Area Transformation Project is a strategic partnership between the City of Norfolk and the Norfolk Redevelopment and Housing Authority, seeking to redevelop a flood-prone, public housing community adjacent to downtown Norfolk into a mixed-use, mixed-income, opportunity-filled Norfolk community of the future. Part of the project involves the People First team, which works with the City and the NRHA as well as

partnering organizations, developers, property managers, community members and other stakeholders to build comprehensive plans around neighborhood conditions and human-service needs.

8. Implement affordable and **long-term homeownership programs tailored for public service professionals such as firefighters, teachers, police officers, nurses, military service members, and city workers, as well as more vulnerable populations (e.g., unhoused, elderly, disabled, income limited, etc.).**

BEST PRACTICES:

TEACHER'S VILLAGE, NEWARK, NJ

A mixed-use development providing 205 residential units specifically for teachers, educators and school staff. Beyond housing, it fosters a strong sense of community through



Rendering of Teachers' Village, Newark, NJ (RBH Group / Richard Meier & Partners)

commercial spaces for local businesses; three charter schools that allow teachers to live and work in the area, and a early childhood learning center to offer support to teachers with younger children.

GOAL 2:**Increase Housing Production and Adapt Housing Options for a Changing Population**

Expand the development of new housing units across all income bands to meet growing demand and ensure accessibility to Norfolk residents. Develop flexible and adaptable housing solutions that meet the needs of a transient population, cater to Norfolk's seasonal economy, and prepare for future demographic shifts.

Housing is top of mind for Norfolk residents of all backgrounds. While building new affordable housing is paramount, housing developers and partners should construct a wide range of housing types for households across the full range of incomes, lifestyles, and

family needs, building up a diverse supply to meet growing demand. To meet the needs of the present and future, we must embrace thoughtful infill, higher-density transit-oriented development, expanded affordable housing, and innovative partnerships.

1. Increase housing production for residents across all income levels using a combination of regulatory and non-regulatory efforts.

a. Continue to implement innovative zoning strategies to encourage and incentivize more flexible housing types, such as those incorporated into the Huntersville Neighborhood Resilience Overlay, the Broad Creek Refresh Overlay and the Norfolk and Western Historic Overlay.

b. Consider reducing or eliminating minimum lot sizes.

c. Amend the Zoning Ordinance to permit manufactured housing in more zoning districts, recognizing it as a source of affordable housing, and encourage new manufactured home communities in resilient, amenity-rich, and walkable neighborhoods.

d. Identify underutilized and vacant parcels that can be transformed into mixed use and mixed income neighborhoods with a range of amenities, diverse housing options, and areas easily accessible by the city's robust transit network, focusing on areas within the Community Mixed-Use, Corridor Mixed-Use, and Regional Activity Center Place Types.

 **BEST PRACTICES:**

INFRASTRUCTURE UPDATES IN TRANSIT-ORIENTED COMMUNITIES, CO

Colorado's HB24-1313 enhances transit-oriented communities (TOCs) by implementing zoning reforms for high-density, mixed-use developments, improving public transportation facilities, and ensuring affordable housing is included in new projects. If communities are approved as a TOC that meets housing opportunity goals, they are eligible for an infrastructure fund.

2. Explore options for gentle density where appropriate via **accessory dwelling units (ADUs)** and Missing Middle Housing.

 **Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU):** is a smaller, independent residential dwelling unit with kitchen, sleeping and bathroom facilities, that is added to, created within or detached from a primary one-unit single-family dwelling.

a. Modify the Zoning Ordinance to provide more by-right options for ADUs, especially in residential districts where they are only allowed by CUP, and open development and performance standards.

b. Using the guidance from the Future Land Use Plan and Place Types, explore zoning changes to accommodate more Missing Middle Housing (e.g. allow by-right or by CUP in more zoning districts, create a new definition to distinguish from higher density multi-family uses, etc.).

**LOCAL SUCCESS:****ARLINGTON DENSITY POLICIES,
ARLINGTON, VA**

In March 2023, Arlington, Virginia passed a significant zoning reform allowing up to six units (duplexes, townhouses, or multiplexes) to be built on lots previously limited to single-family homes. This policy, part of the “Missing Middle” Housing initiative, aims to increase housing density and affordability by permitting these multi-unit structures in designated neighborhoods.



ADU by Backyard Homes in North Arlington
(Jay Westcott)

- c. Implement flexible zoning standards, such as reduced parking requirements, increased size allowances, height restrictions and owner-occupancy requirements, for ADUs and Missing Middle Housing.

3. Explore reducing or eliminating **minimum off-street parking requirements to devote more development space to housing, promote housing attainability, reduce impervious cover for better stormwater infiltration, and help reduce greenhouse gas emissions.**

4. Pursue missing middle housing demonstration projects to test the concepts in the Missing Middle Pattern Book, and prioritize when pursuing grant opportunities.

5. Pursue educational efforts, such as an online and printed housing guide, to explain what can already be done in the city (e.g., zoning allowances and housing programs) to support affordable and attainable housing development.

6. Review the viability of inclusionary housing policies in the City of Norfolk.



Paseo Verde Transit-Oriented Development, Philadelphia, PA (WRT)

7. Encourage and incentivize new housing, including low-income **affordable housing, to be located near public transit to promote accessibility and to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions.**

8. Utilize zoning and the Future Land Use Plan to support additional housing opportunities

10. Continue to support the efforts of the Norfolk Community Services Board to **provide services to unhoused populations, including food, clinical and case management, and shelter resources (e.g., The Center).**

11. Consider policies to enhance services to the unhoused through additional assisted housing units or programs.

12. Consider zoning amendments that would support and **accommodate more flexible forms of housing, such as coliving, cohousing, and homesharing arrangements, to support multigenerational housing needs and opportunities.**

GOAL 3:**Grow And Diversify Norfolk's Economy**

Support existing industries, while innovating and attracting emerging sectors, markets, and audiences, to build diversity and resilience into Norfolk's economy. Create and foster an equitable economic development environment, support Norfolk's emerging entrepreneurs, and grow a community of small and medium-sized businesses.

Norfolk is already a leader in many industries, yet there is always room to grow. Our strong foundations in defense, maritime, health, manufacturing, and other key sectors lay the groundwork to grow and diversify, meeting emerging regional, state, and national opportunities. The City should also make sure to promote our creative, innovative, and highly connected community and our high quality of life when attracting new industries and businesses.

Entrepreneurs and small businesses are the backbone of Norfolk's communities, providing opportunity for newcomers and diverse stakeholders to create a brighter future for themselves and their families. Targeted programs, resources, and outreach can help ensure that small businesses are supported in every neighborhood in the city, are inclusive of residents of all ages and backgrounds, and are truly equitable and accessible for all.

1. Conduct a **buildable lands analysis to determine Norfolk's physical capacity to meet current and projected future economic needs.**

2. Develop a **list of land ready to be developed and appropriate options for development or redevelopment that are suitable for new industrial and manufacturing sectors, as well as access, trends, etc. needed for them to be successful.**

3. Evaluate how existing **economic development tools (e.g., Opportunity Zones, Enterprise Zones, Tourism Zones, Technology Zones, etc.) align with the Future Land Use Plan and adjust those tools and/or create new ones to drive economic development.**

4. Continue efforts to **analyze Norfolk's existing economy; its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats; and how the city can capitalize on its assets to proactively create a more diverse, resilient economy, to better withstand and adapt to future shocks.**


BEST PRACTICES:
ECONOMIC RESILIENCY PLAN, MADELIA, MN

Madelia's Economic Resiliency Plan was developed with the primary goal of diversifying the economy beyond its current reliance on manufacturing, health care, and retail. It includes a focus on economic disturbances that result from natural or human-caused disasters, spurred by a fire that impacted nearly 20% of the city's service sector jobs.

5. Develop and maintain **robust relationships with companies in the City's current targeted business sectors, as well as new sectors identified by the Department of Economic Development.**

a. Evaluate offering new tax incentives or property tax deductions or exemptions for businesses that choose to invest in Norfolk (e.g., businesses that partner with defense institutions via a local defense production zone).

6. Facilitate the **attraction and growth of new target industries, as identified by the Department of Economic Development, and aligned with regional and state economic development targets, particularly those that provide living, or family-supported wages and on-the-job training.**

a. Pursue land use regulations that support businesses/industry expansion or relocation, especially within the Norfolk Innovation Corridor and Downtown Norfolk, as well as areas within the Innovation and Production, Regional Activity Center, and Corridor Mixed-Use Place Types, in tandem with the provisions and targets of existing location-based incentive programs (e.g., Technology Zones, Opportunity Zones, Enterprise Zones, Historically Underutilized Business [HUB] Zones, and Tourism Zones).

b. Dedicate resources to guide and provide support to new industries on relocation application processes, available development areas that are suitable for the intended use and creating synergies with already existing industry leaders.

7. Empower and grow capacity and resources of the Economic Development Department to lead special projects that will impact the economic vitality of the city.

8. Participate in and support efforts by regional entities, such as the Hampton Roads Alliance, to share information, challenges, and opportunities, and create regional strategies for the creation and retention of jobs and businesses.

9. Position Norfolk as a one-stop hub for defense and maritime industries by building a business ecosystem that attracts companies in related sectors such as shipbuilding, cybersecurity, and defense technology.

a. Engage defense and associated industry clusters to understand future projections and develop sub-sectors or emerging business types that could be compatible with Norfolk's economic landscape.

b. Seek opportunities to concentrate or co-locate innovation and defense-focused businesses, attracting companies seeking proximity to defense assets for collaboration on technology and defense projects.

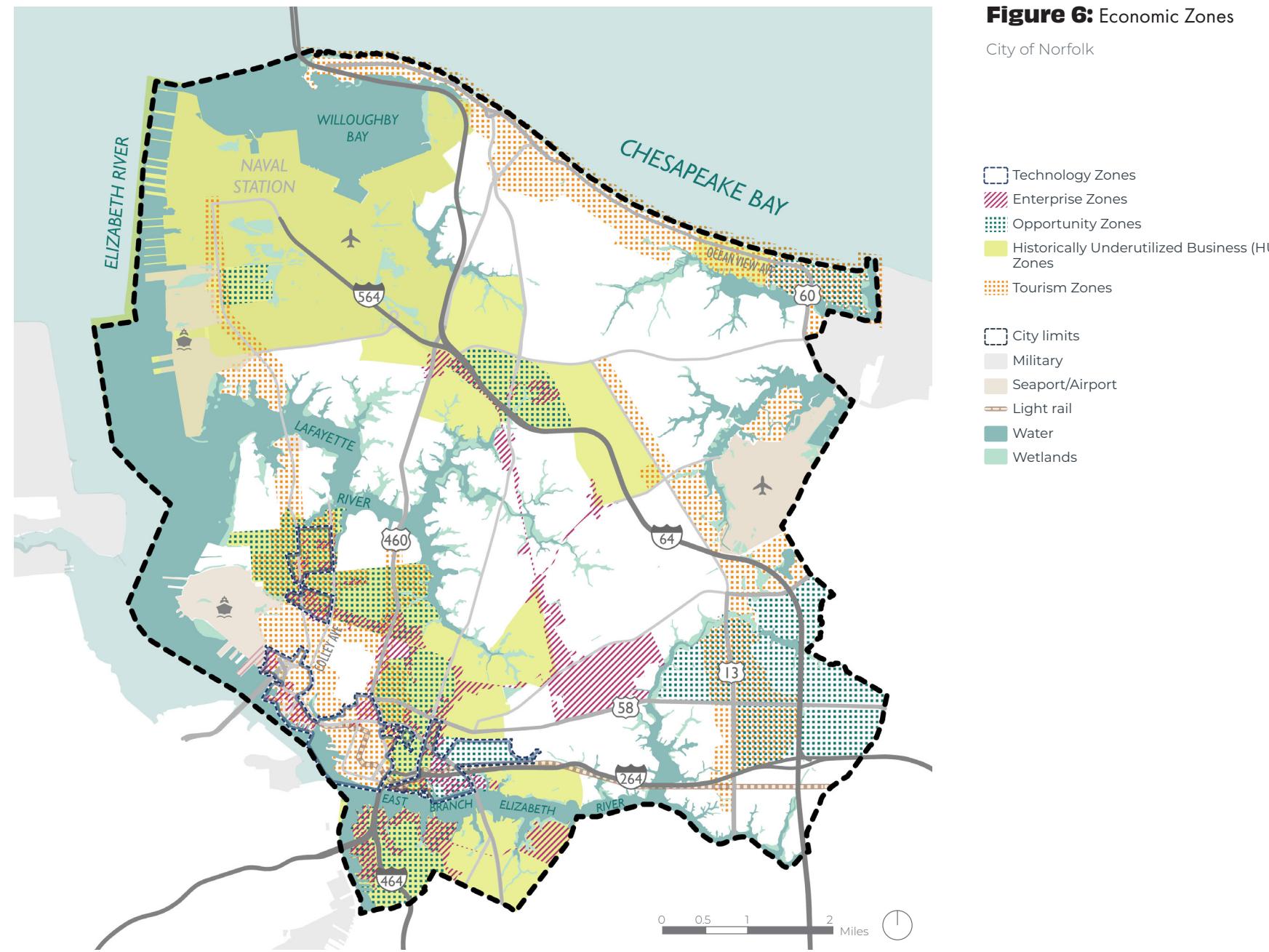
BEST PRACTICES:

CUMMINGS RESEARCH PARK, HUNTSVILLE, AL

Huntsville capitalized on the presence of Redstone Arsenal—a U.S. Army post, home to several military organizations, including the Army Materiel Command and NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center—to develop the Cummings Research Park, now a thriving hub for defense and aerospace contractors, that has led to a significant expansion in the city's high-tech sector.



Cummings Research Park, Huntsville AL



10. Align City of Norfolk infrastructure investments with Port Authority and other stakeholder plans to promote **clean and green redevelopment and resilience investments** on working waterfronts.

11. Create an inventory of **“opportunity sites” that includes vacant, underutilized, and environmentally sensitive properties** (e.g., **brownfields**) and support the redevelopment of these sites to enhance the quality-of-life of the surrounding community, with an emphasis on areas that have experienced historical redlining.

A brownfield is a property in which the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of may be complicated by the presence, or potential presence, of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant. Common examples of brownfields include former gas stations, auto repair shops, dry cleaners, industrial facilities, warehouses, vacant lots.

 **LOCAL SUCCESS:**

NORFOLK THRIVE EPA BROWNFIELDS AREA-WIDE PLAN

The City of Norfolk was awarded a Brownfields Area-Wide Planning Grant through the US Environmental Protection Agency to advance initiatives that integrate resilience, transportation, and economic development elements to create a comprehensive urban redevelopment strategy for the Harbor Park area.

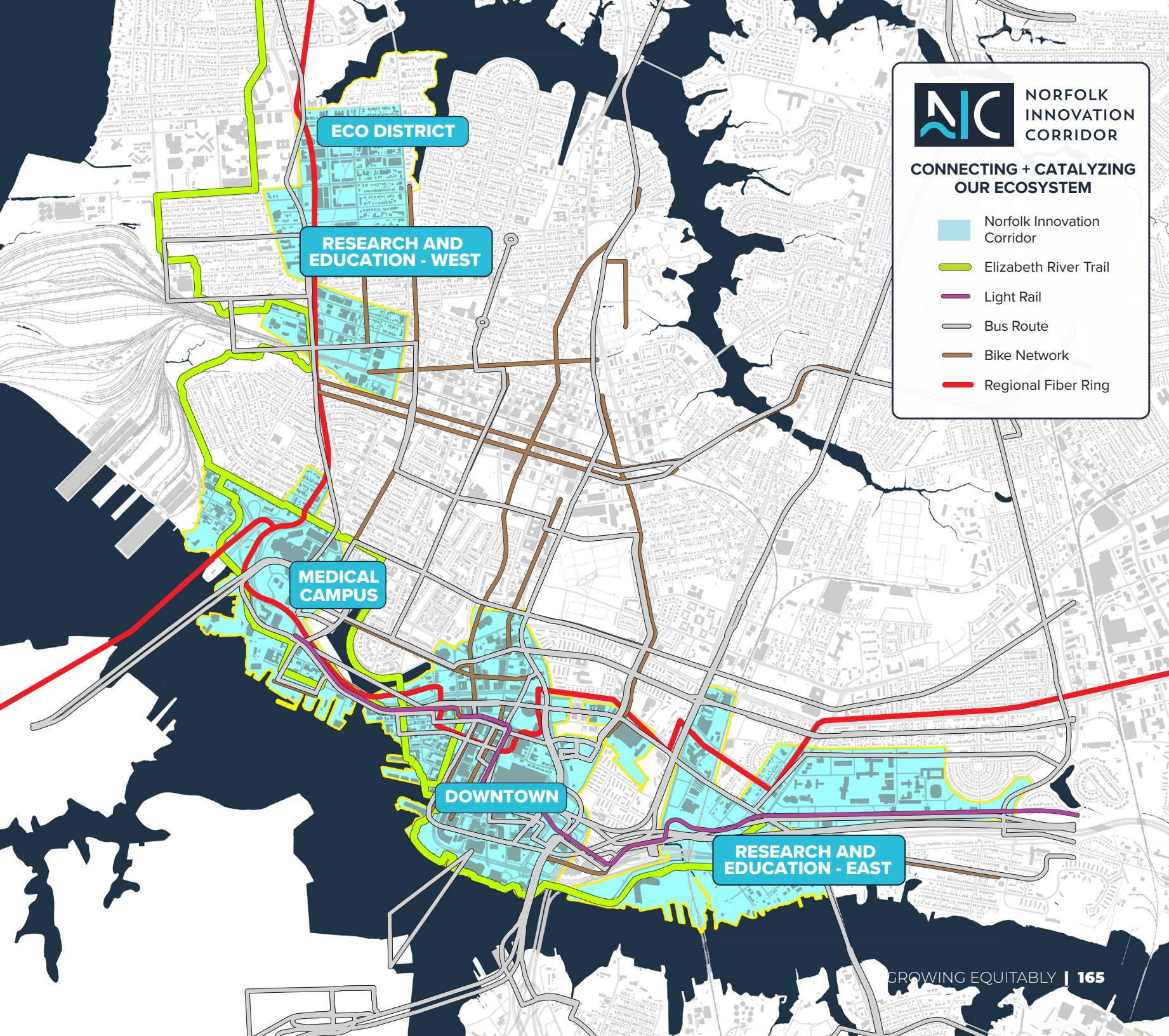
12. Support grassroots and external efforts to build **district identities** around local industries and explore financial incentives to attract, retain, and expand these industries.

 **LOCAL SUCCESS:**

NORFOLK INNOVATION CORRIDOR (NIC)

The Norfolk Innovation Corridor (NIC) is an area of Norfolk designated as a “technology zone”, enabling qualifying startup firms and firm expansions to receive certain tax incentives.

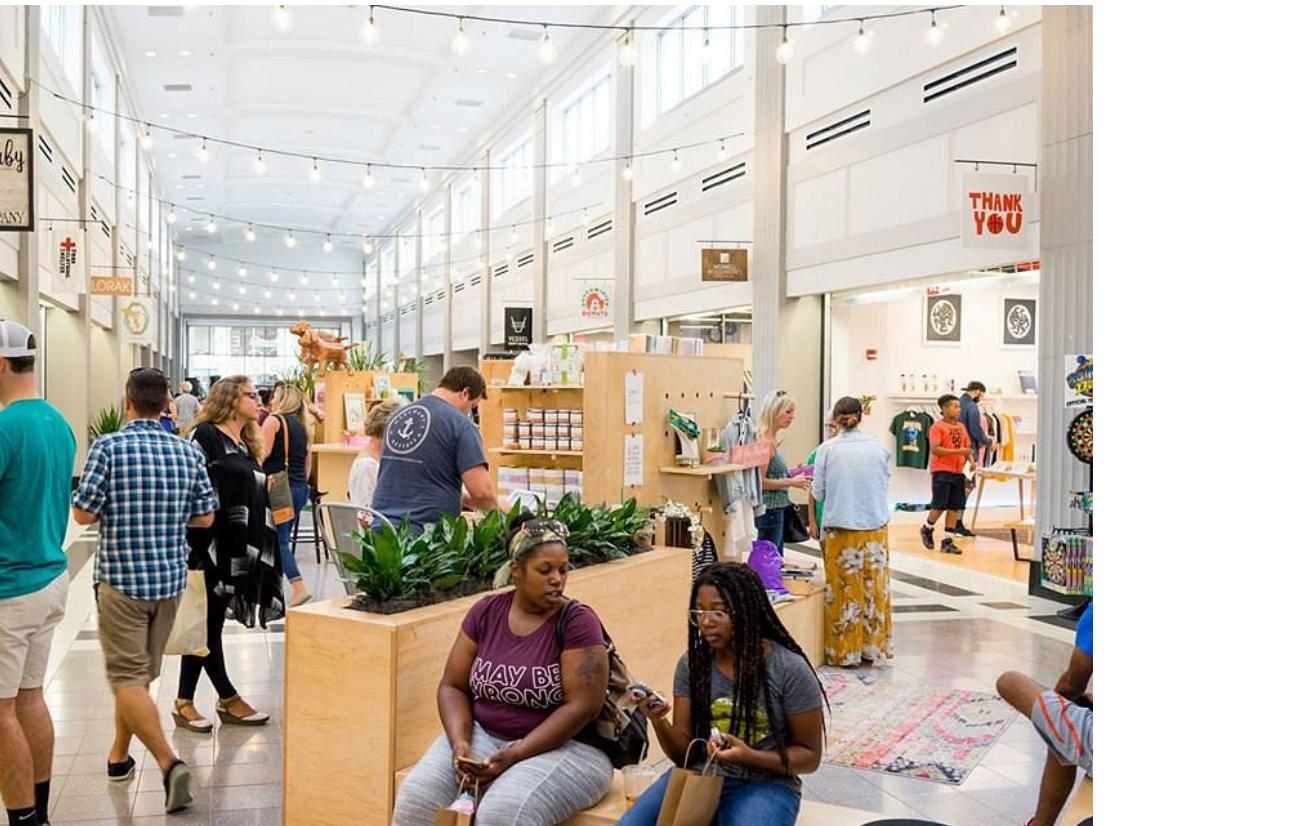
Most importantly, the businesses in this zone benefit from densely clustered physical, networking, and economic assets and has strong marketing identity that has been outreach to the public, establishing their own identity they are known for.



13. Find ways to identify, promote, and support spaces for **incubator opportunities, start-ups, and non-brick and mortar food and commerce industries** conducive for small businesses to start and grow.

 **LOCAL SUCCESS:**
SELDEN MARKET

Selden Market is a collaborative space designed to foster new street-level business ideas in Downtown Norfolk. The market provides a low-risk environment with short-term leases, a supportive development program, and a community atmosphere that fosters learning and growth.



Selden Market, Norfolk, VA (City of Norfolk)

14. Evaluate regulatory and use barriers for **home-based businesses** and consider changes to allow for more flexibility and allowances, especially for creative production or artisanal production.

15. Actively engage and support businesses, especially small, women-owned, and minority businesses and through allowances, especially for creative production or artisanal production. **technical assistance** and informing them of **resources available** from the City and other partners for starting, marketing, and growing businesses, using innovative advertisement and outreach. Support and maintain existing programs and staffing resources (e.g., Business Navigator/concierge program and Biz Café and seminar programs).

16. Support **Business Retention and Expansion (BRE)** programs that assist existing, growing companies (especially those in traded sectors) to drive new capital investment into Norfolk.

 **BEST PRACTICES:**
PITTSBURGH EMPLOYMENT, ADVANCEMENT AND RETENTION NETWORK (EARN), PITTSBURGH, PA

Pittsburgh runs several retention programs such as Employment, Advancement and Retention Network (EARN) that are aimed at supporting the development of new businesses in the Downtown, providing employment and training services to low-moderate income workers, retail and office retention, and recruitment efforts.

Growing Equitably / Goal 3

17. Focus existing workforce development resources on **underserved and high-unemployment communities**, using the **Norfolk Works** program as a model.

• **Norfolk Works:** is the workforce development arm of the Norfolk Department of Economic Development, focused on connecting residents to in-demand jobs and supporting business attraction, retention, and growth. It offers resources and training for job seekers, while providing recruitment and hiring assistance to local businesses through partnerships.

18. Develop a suite of services to **support and upscale “disruptor” business models** as a means of expanding opportunities for entrepreneurs and business owners, in partnership with outside agencies such as the NSU Innovation Center, ODU, and 757 Collab.

19. Explore the creation of a **Legacy Business Register**, which would honor local businesses that have been operating in Norfolk for 50 years or more and explore local mechanisms or programs for financial and/or infrastructure assistance for businesses on the register.

20. Continue to implement equitable economic development strategies to **expand inclusivity and opportunity** throughout the City's procurement and contract processes.

21. Support efforts to provide **affordable childcare** in the city, to help foster diverse and equitable participation in the local economy.



GOAL 4:

Support Local Workforce Development and Build Strategic Pipelines

Partner with Norfolk's anchor institutions to build local employment pipelines, connecting current and prospective Norfolk residents with well-paying jobs within the city.

Norfolk's workforce is shaped by the talent, resilience, and diversity of its residents. Norfolk is fortunate to have key educational and business anchors that can collaboratively create a more seamless pipeline, from school to training to emerging innovative sectors. Sustainable partnerships, incentives for hiring

locally, and resources for traditional and non-traditional career paths should all be supported. Those partners may in turn need adjustments in infrastructure or land uses to accommodate their own growth trajectories, helping to create a prosperous future for all.

1. Develop a **"cradle-to-career" model** for Norfolk to support the development of lifelong learning and continued educational opportunities leading to in-demand careers.

2. Work with Norfolk State University, Old Dominion University, and Tidewater Community College, vocational schools, and similar educational institutions to provide **job training, job access, and research programs** that meet the qualifications to enter the workforce in growing industries within the city.

a. Invest in expanding and establishing new retraining programs that focus on workforce development for the high-paying industries and fastest growing sectors within the city, in collaboration with educational, vocational, and industry partners.



Norfolk State University (WRT)



CASE STUDY:

"SECTOR-SPECIFIC" RE-TRAINING INVESTMENT, SEATTLE, WA

Seattle Colleges work closely with industries to develop and maintain programs to prepare graduates for the job market. Many of these professional/technical programs qualify for worker retraining to provide opportunities for laid off, unemployed, and dislocated workers, with a focus on rapid re-employment.

b. Support and promote efforts by non-profits, NGOs, and other agencies to develop and implement workforce development programs for special needs populations and partner with these organizations to review the City's hiring policies related to these populations.

4. Explore opportunities to incentivize **local hiring for small- and medium-sized businesses, with special focus on residents living in underrepresented areas of the city.**

5. Promote and support NRHA's **youth and business enterprise programs to advance economic development for low-income communities.**

6. Work with Norfolk Public Schools to build **awareness and interest for youth in growing and targeted industries in Norfolk. Use this partnership to train and provide fundamental skills and training efforts in the classroom (e.g., City staff seminars, discussions, or presentations to students).**

7. Support the **development and expansion of anchor institutions in the city, balancing growth with land availability and conservation, and work collaboratively with these institutions to ensure that their master plans are presented to the Planning Commission for review and information.**

8. Explore "satellite" locations for anchor educational partners co-located for **workforce training opportunities, in partnership with existing City programs such as Norfolk Works.**

9. Seek to identify service members who are separating from the defense industry and who may be candidates for employment with local businesses; encourage them, their spouses and dependents to **remain in Norfolk after their service commitment terminates.**

10. Build relationships with **employers, identify real-time and projected workforce needs, and connect businesses with Norfolk's education and training partners.**



Assembly Workspace campus Downtown Norfolk (Assembly)



Growing Equitably: Putting Actions in Place

Norfolk's high-ground neighborhoods, least prone to flooding and climate risks, offer a critical opportunity to grow in ways that are both climate-smart and equity-driven. These areas can anchor new housing, vibrant commercial corridors, and resilient infrastructure that supports both people and place. To realize this potential, Norfolk must double down on transit-oriented and mixed-use development, promote missing middle housing, support entrepreneurs and small businesses, and invest in historically underserved neighborhoods. Projects like St. Paul's Transformation show what's possible when our city invests boldly and equitably in our future.

Now is the time to build on that momentum. Norfolk can position its high ground as an engine for inclusive growth, where homes are attainable, businesses can thrive, and every resident has a stake in the city's future.

St. Paul's Transformation Project

Where in the city could
these ideas go? 

Identify and support spaces for
incubators, start-ups, and **non-brick and
mortar food and commerce industries**

3.13

Facilitate **attraction and growth of new
target industries**, particularly those
that provide living, or family supported
wages and on-the-job training

3.6

Support **redevelopment of
“opportunity sites”** such as vacant,
underutilized or brownfields.

3.11

Create **new affordable homeownership
and rental** opportunities for low income
residents.

1.3

Promote **clean and green
redevelopment and resilience
investments** on working waterfronts

3.10

Enable enduring affordable housing
through **Community Land Trusts** in
formerly redlined neighborhoods

1.6

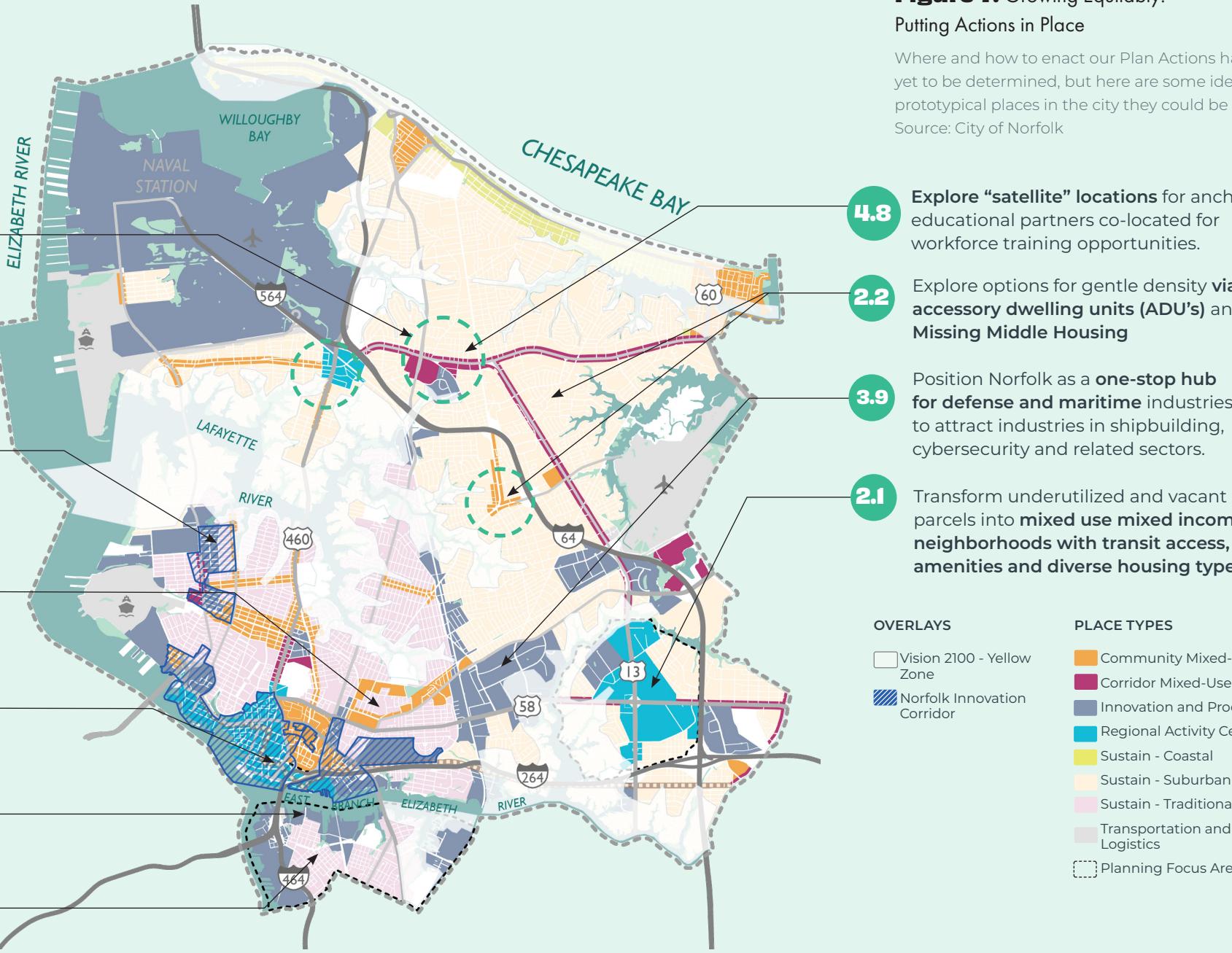


Figure 7: Growing Equitably:
Putting Actions in Place

Where and how to enact our Plan Actions has yet to be determined, but here are some ideas of prototypical places in the city they could be in. Source: City of Norfolk