



City Planning Commission 2016 Report to City Council

Planning Commission

Earl Fraley, Jr., Chairman

Ramona Austin

Kevin Murphy

Matthew Hales

Dr. Dan Neumann, Vice Chairman

Nikita Houchins

Kathryn Shelton

Approved: February 23, 2017

Department of City Planning

Chairman's Message

February 23, 2017

To the Honorable Mayor and Council
City of Norfolk, Virginia

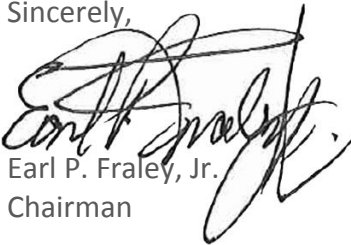
Ladies and Gentlemen:

On behalf of the City Planning Commission I am pleased to forward this summary report of activities for 2016. This was a year of unprecedented activity for the Commission, as we reviewed a record 212 planning and zoning applications, plus many of the 91 applications the Architectural Review Board (ARB) processed. We presided over the completion and adoption of three major planning documents and reviewed hundreds of pages of draft zoning ordinance text. We also received and discussed multiple topical presentations each month, covering a variety of topics, delivered by Planning Department staff and other invited guests.

One aspect of 2016 that we are most proud of is the fact that the Commission's attention wasn't focused on just a few neighborhoods or a few limited topics – we were a part of projects that will affect the entirety of Norfolk, from preserving the Ocean View dunes, to redeveloping Military Circle, our 2016 touched on everything. We are particularly pleased to be involved in two of the more cutting edge initiatives currently underway – the City's sea level rise/resiliency efforts and its neighborhood preservation/revitalization efforts. In the former case, we look forward to implementing *Vision 2100* and adopting the most resilient zoning ordinance in history in the coming year. In the latter case, we are excited to begin implementing the new infill development concepts being prepared for Huntersville; depending on the success there, these concepts can be considered for other similar neighborhoods across the City.

We anticipate that those efforts will be a major part of our 2017, but we know that there will be much more to do. We look forward to continuing our service and thank you for your support and confidence in us.

Sincerely,



Earl P. Fraley, Jr.
Chairman

CC: Douglas L. Smith, Interim City Manager
George M. Homewood, AICP CFM, Planning Director

Norfolk City Planning Commission

The Norfolk City Planning Commission is a seven-member body, appointed by the City Council, responsible for the review of land use and zoning matters for the City of Norfolk. The Commission makes recommendations on various matters to City Council, which is ultimately responsible for making a final decision. The City Planning Commission is also responsible for the development and implementation of the City's General Plan, *plaNorfolk2030*.

Planning Commission members in 2016 were: Earl Fraley, Jr., Chairman; Ramona Austin; Matthew Hales; Nikita Houchins; Andria McClellan; Kevin Murphy, Dr. Dan Neumann, Vice Chairman (August-December); Martin Thomas, Jr., Vice Chairman (January-August); and Kathryn Shelton. Ms. McClellan and Mr. Thomas left the Commission during the year, when each was elected to City Council. They were replaced by Mr. Murphy and Ms. Shelton. George Homewood, Planning Director, served as Executive Secretary.

The Planning Commission met on 24 separate occasions in 2016, convening the second and fourth Thursday of each month, excepting November and December, where only one meeting was held to accommodate the holidays. Two special meetings were also held in December, one to review in detail a portion of the draft zoning ordinance and another to conduct a special Planning Commission training, which included active participation by several members of City Council and which resulted in a new set of ethical principles for Commissioners. Staff also conducted a monthly field trip for Commissioners, providing an opportunity to visit each site on that month's agenda. The table below illustrates each member's attendance for the year.

	Meetings in Attendance	Meetings Absent
Earl Fraley, Jr., Chairman	24	0
Ramona Austin	21	3
Matthew Hales	22	2
Nikita Houchins	21	3
Andria McClellan*	12	0
Kevin Murphy**	6	0
Dr. Dan Neumann	21	3
Martin Thomas, Jr.*	15	0
Kathryn Shelton**	5	1

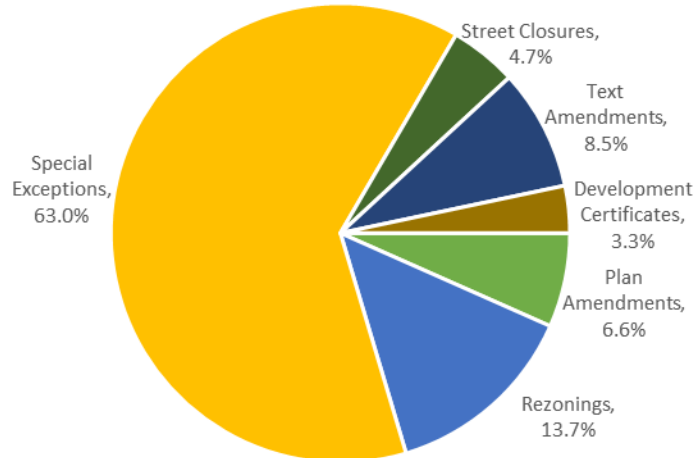
* Left the Commission during 2016. **Began service on the Commission during 2016.

In 2016, the Planning Commission processed 212 planning and zoning applications and 91 Architectural Review Board items. Additionally, the Commission considered presentations on many other topics throughout the year, including Norfolk-specific topics like the Sand Management Plan, light rail extension, and the Public Arts Commission; regional topics like Envision Hampton Roads, Connect Hampton Roads, and the Hampton Roads Crossing Study; and general planning topics like short-term rentals and changes in state and federal law.

Applications Reviewed in 2016 – Planning & Zoning

The 212 planning and zoning applications submitted to the Planning Commission in 2016 represent a substantial rise from the 158 applications reviewed in 2015. Special exception applications, about 63% of the total, were once again by far the most common type of application processed. The following table illustrates the disposition of all applications processed in 2016.

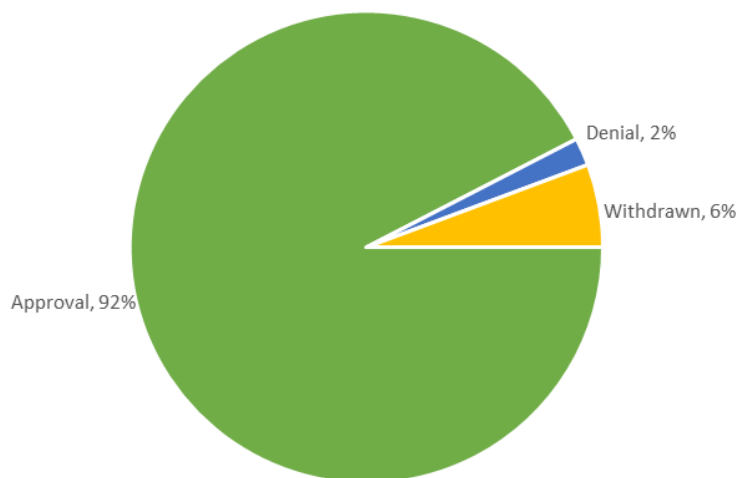
Types of Applications, 2016



	CPC Recommendation					
	Total	Percent	Approval	Denial	Withdrawn	% Approval
Plan Amendments	14	6.6%	13	0	1	92.9%
Rezoning	29	13.7%	27	0	2	93.1%
Special Exceptions	133	62.7%	125	3	5	94.0%
Street Closures	10	4.7%	9	0	1	90.0%
Text Amendments	18	8.5%	16	0	2	88.9%
Development Certificates*	8	3.8%	6	1	1	75.0%
Total	212	100.0%	196	4	12	92.5%

*Includes Downtown, Granby and PCO Development Certificates, and Institutional Development Plans

Recommended Actions, 2016

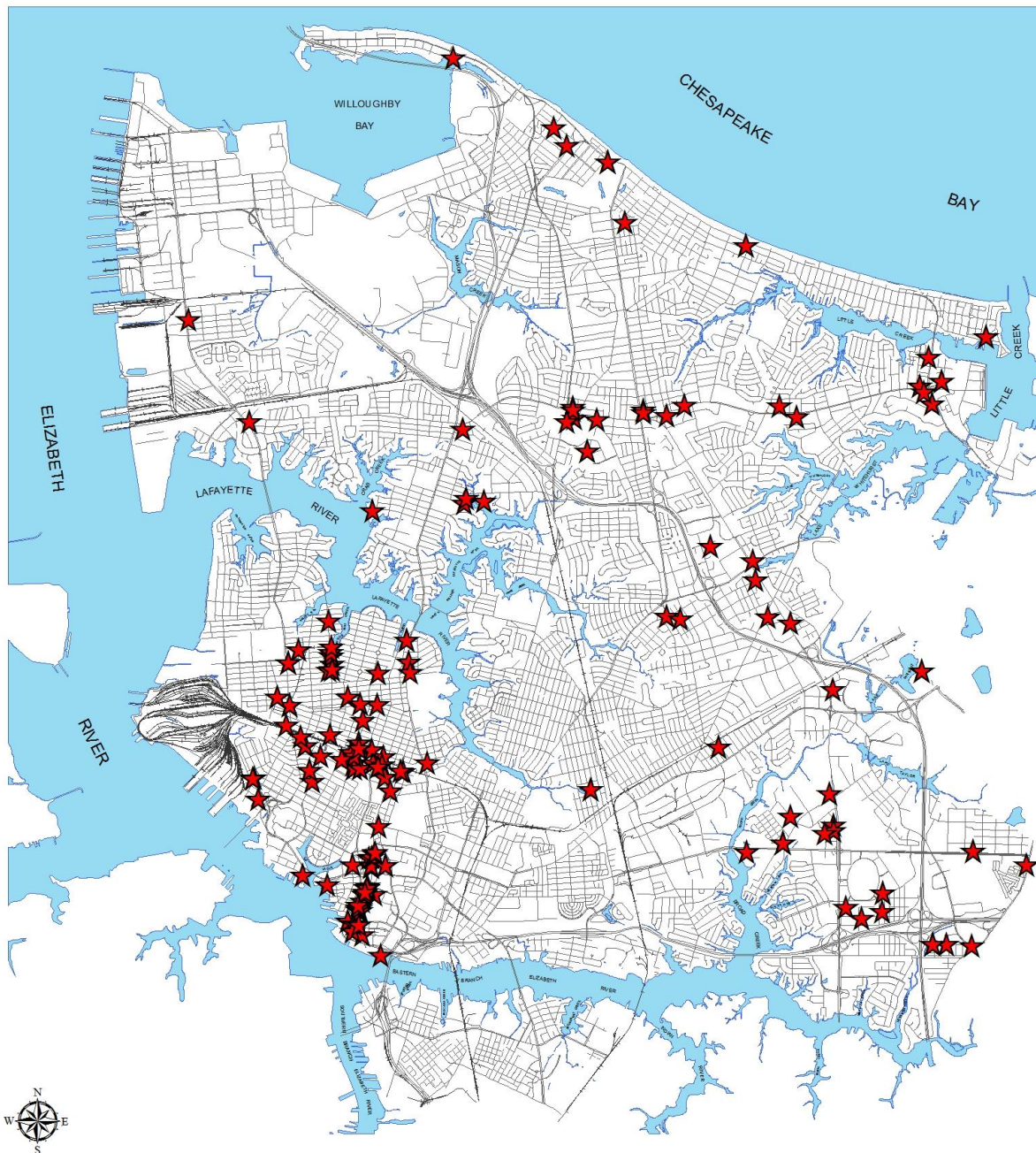


Planning Commission recommended approval on about 92% of the applications submitted in 2016, voting to recommend denial of four items. Twelve items were withdrawn before Commission could vote on them. The 92% approval rate marks a small increase from 2015's 88% and is generally in line with prior years. It also reflects staff's efforts to bring applications along to where they can be approved.

Applications Reviewed in 2016 – Planning & Zoning

The map below illustrates the geographic distribution of planning and zoning applications reviewed by the Planning Commission in 2016. Not reflected on this map are the 23 items that affected either the entire City or all or part of a neighborhood.

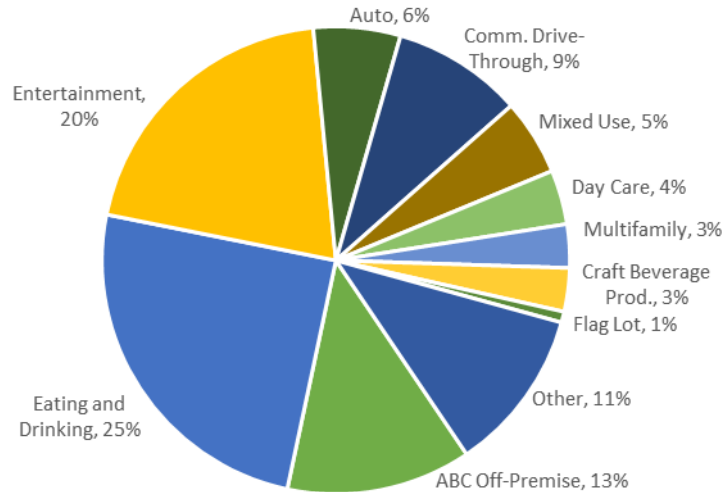
Planning and Zoning Applications, 2016



Applications Reviewed in 2016 – Special Exceptions

Special exceptions are the most common type of application considered by the Planning Commission, representing 63% of all agenda items in 2016. Almost two-thirds (61%) of those applications relate to the sale of alcoholic beverages, either for off-premise consumption, on-premise consumption, as part of an entertainment establishment, or for craft beverage production. That high percentage continues the recent trend. Three applications were recommended for denial, while five were withdrawn prior to Planning Commission review. In total, 94% of special exception applications received were recommended for approval.

Special Exception Applications, 2016



Three applications were recommended for denial, while five were withdrawn prior to Planning Commission review. In total, 94% of special exception applications received were recommended for approval.

	Total	Percent	CPC Recommendation			% Approval
			Approval	Denial	Withdrawn	
ABC Off-Premise	17	12.8%	17	0	0	100.0%
On-Premise Alcohol	33	4.8%	32	0	1	97.3%
Entertainment	27	20.3%	24	1	2	88.9%
Auto Sales/Service/Rental	8	6.0%	8	0	0	100.0%
Commercial Drive-Through	12	9.0%	11	1	0	91.7%
Mixed Use	7	5.3%	7	0	0	100.0%
Day Care	5	3.8%	5	0	0	100.0%
Multifamily	4	3.0%	2	0	2	50.0%
Craft Beverage Production	4	3.0%	4	0	0	100.0%
Flag Lot	1	0.8%	0	1	0	0.0%
Other*	15	11.3%	15	0	0	100.0%
Total	133	100.0%	125	3	5	94.0%

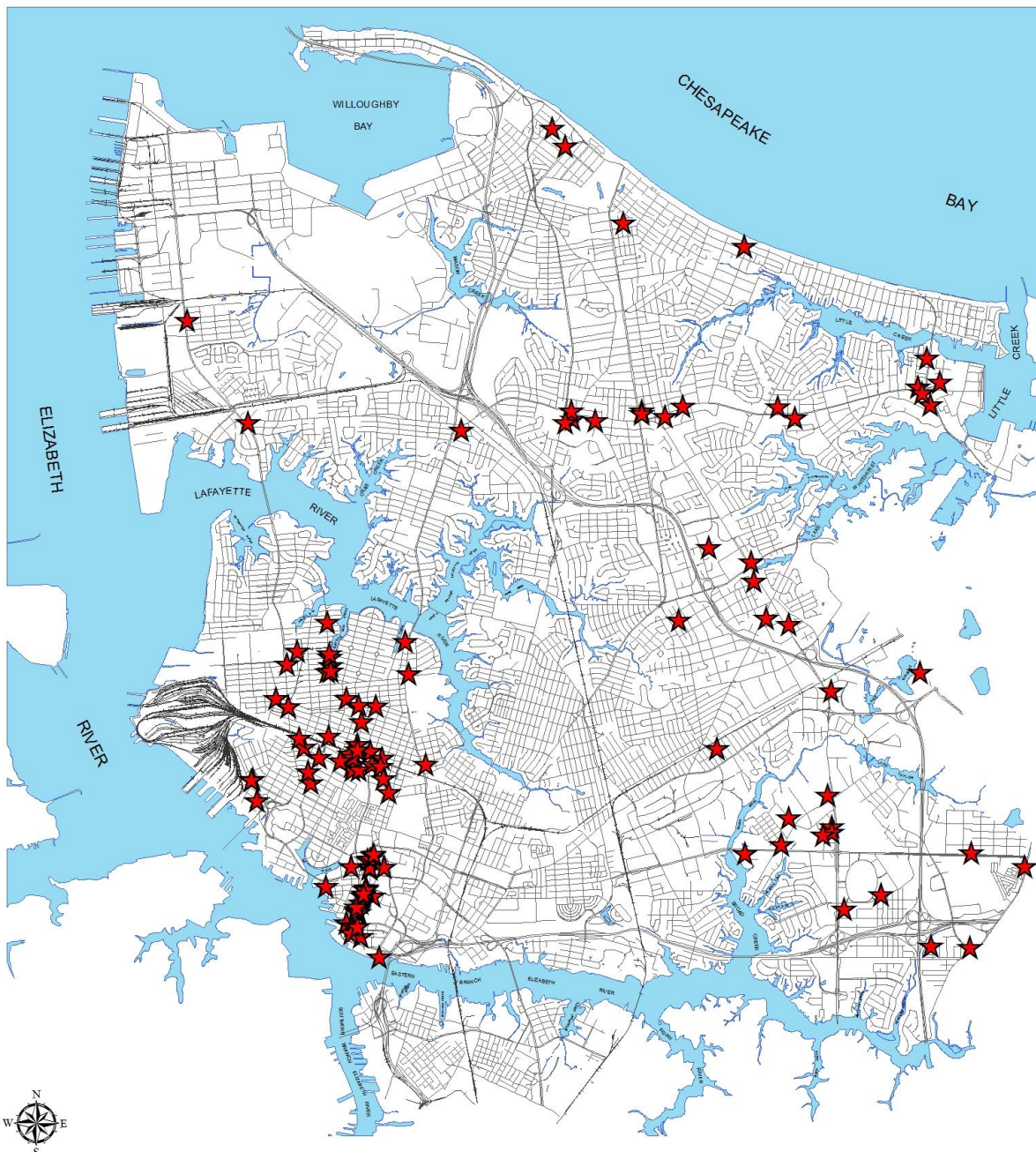
*Includes special exceptions for alternative signage, billboard, commercial recreation center, communication tower, consignment shop, payday loan establishment, religious institution, tattoo parlor, used merchandise, and resuming a nonconforming use.

Also of note, 10 of the 133 applications were for amendments to previously approved special exceptions. Nine of those ten related to the sale of alcoholic beverages, meaning 7.5% of all special exception applications and 11% of alcohol-related applications were for operations that had already been approved to sell alcohol.

Applications Reviewed in 2016 – Special Exceptions

The map below illustrates the geographic distribution of special exception applications reviewed by the Planning Commission in 2016.

Special Exception Applications, 2016



Applications Reviewed in 2016 – Council Disposition

The following table reflects Norfolk City Council's actions relative to the Planning Commission's recommendations, by application type. Of the 200 items acted upon by the Planning Commission in 2016, 98% were recommended for approval. Similarly, 98.5% of the 195 items thus far considered by City Council were approved, though the specific items approved and denied differed slightly from Planning Commission recommendations.

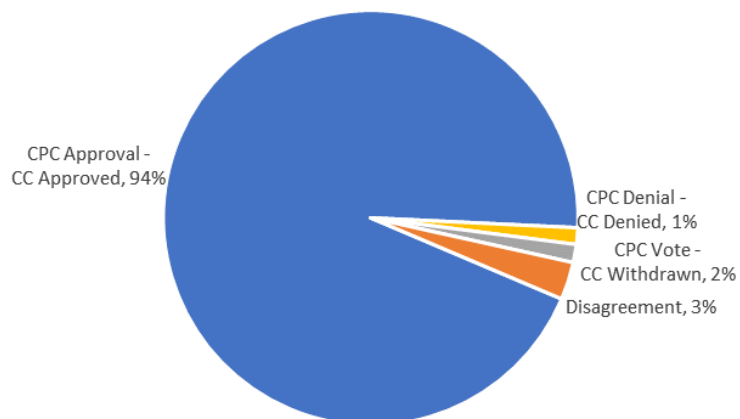
	CPC Recommendation			City Council Resolution				Pending*
	Approval	Denial	% App.	Approved	Denied	Withdrawn	% App.	
Plan Amendments	13	0	100.0%	12	0	0	100.0%	1
Rezoning	27	0	100.0%	25	1	0	96.2%	1
Special Exceptions	125	3	97.7%	124	1	0	99.2%	3
Street Closures	9	0	100.0%	9	0	0	100.0%	0
Text Amendments	16	0	100.0%	16	0	0	100.0%	0
Dev. Certificates	6	1	85.7%	6	0	1	85.7%	0
Total	196	4	98.0%	192	2	1	98.5%	5

* As of January 24, 2017.

In 2016, Planning Commission and City Council differed on four items. Two of these, a rezoning and an entertainment special exception, both pertaining to a single property, were recommended for approval by Planning Commission but ultimately denied by City Council. Two other items were recommended for denial by Planning Commission but approved by City Council – a special exception for entertainment and another for a commercial drive-through.

City Council generally agrees with the recommendations of the Planning Commission. Since 2012, City Council has agreed with Planning Commission's recommendation – for either approval or denial – about 94% of the time. An additional 2% of items were withdrawn prior to a vote from City Council. This means that the two bodies have disagreed only on about 3% – 25 of 856 – of items, several of which were modified by the applicant following the Planning Commission's vote.

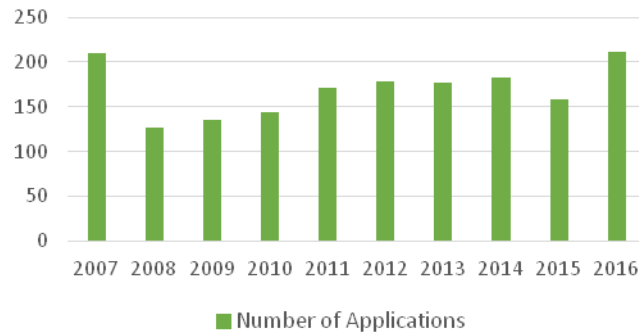
Planning Commission and City Council Actions, 2012-2016



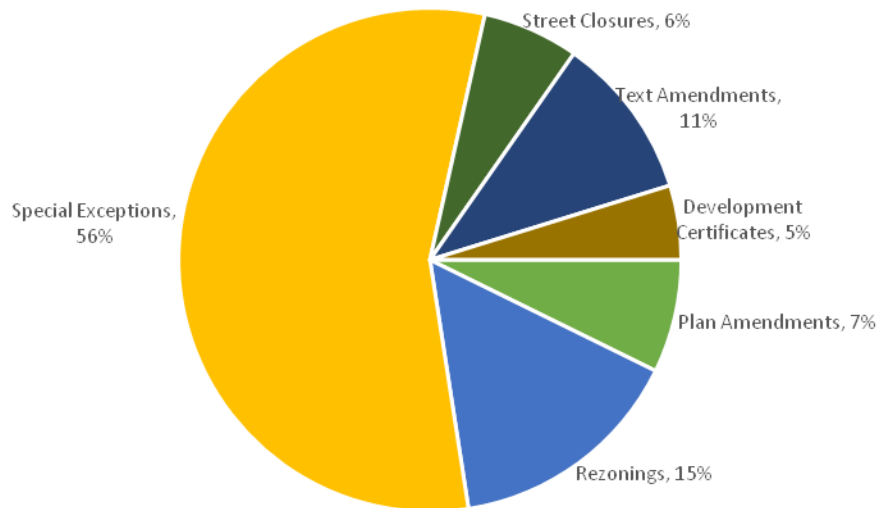
Applications Reviewed – 2007-2016

The number of applications to the Planning Commission increased significantly in 2016, rising from 158 in 2015 to 212 in 2016, an increase of 54 items and the highest total on record. Nearly all of the increase is the result of a 48% rise in the number of special exception applications, accounting for 43 of the 53 additional items. A total of 1,694 applications have been submitted to the Planning Commission since 2007, an average of 169 per year.

Applications Received, 2007-2016

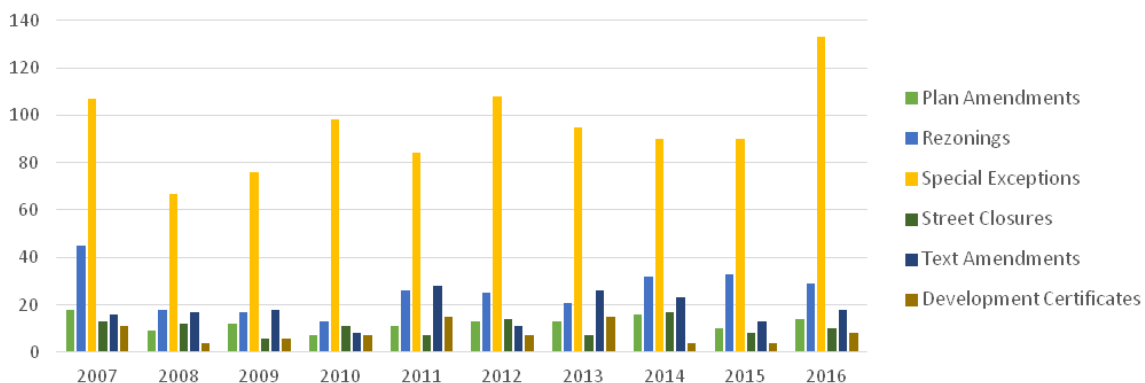


Types of Applications, 2007-2016



The special exception has been the most common application type, consistently making up at least half of all applications each year. All other types of applications vary from year-to-year, with only rezonings showing a clear trend, with obvious peaks before the recession and after the recovery.

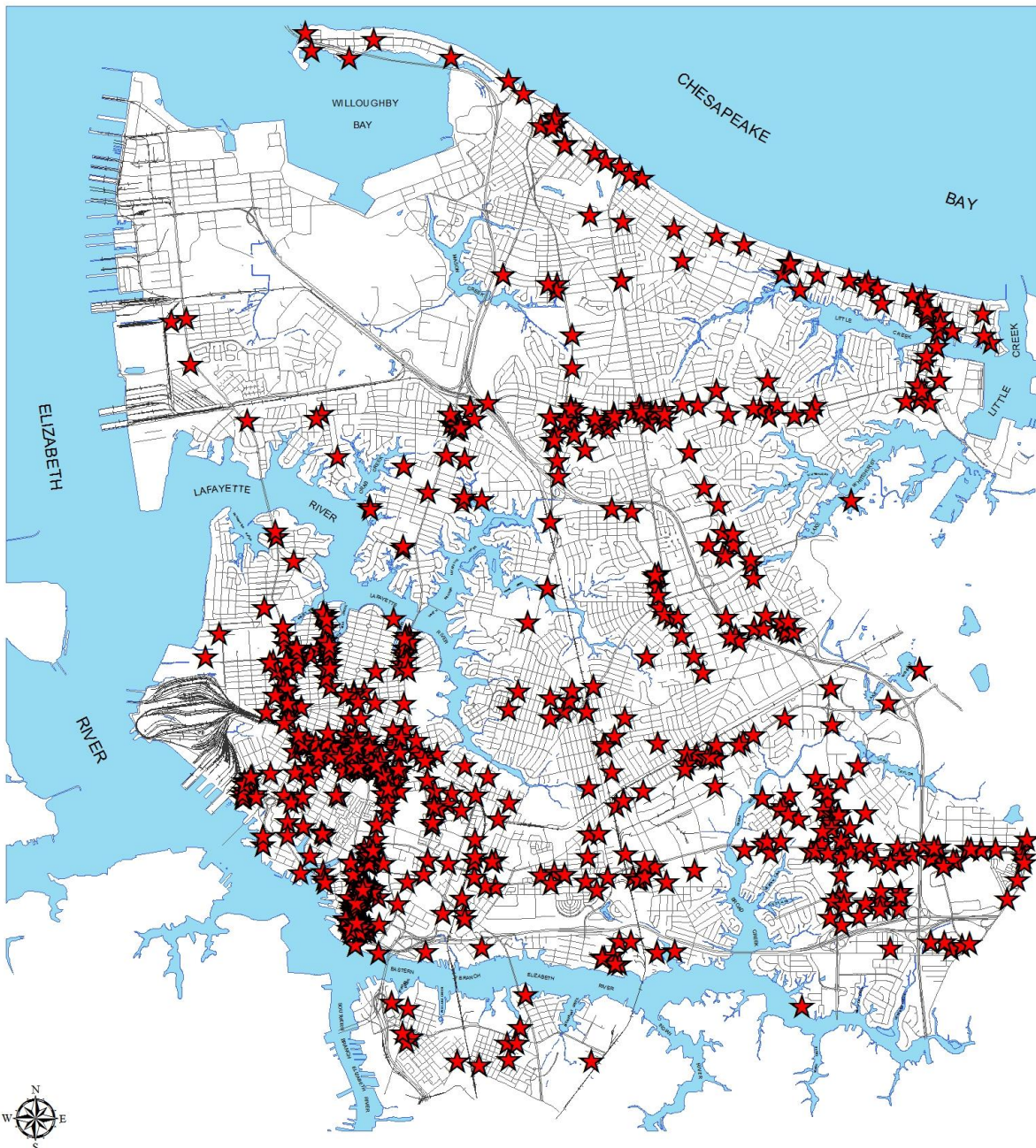
Planning Commission Activity, 2007-2016



Applications Reviewed – 2007-2016

The map below illustrates the geographic distribution of applications reviewed by the Planning Commission between 2007 and 2016.

Planning and Zoning Applications, 2007-2016

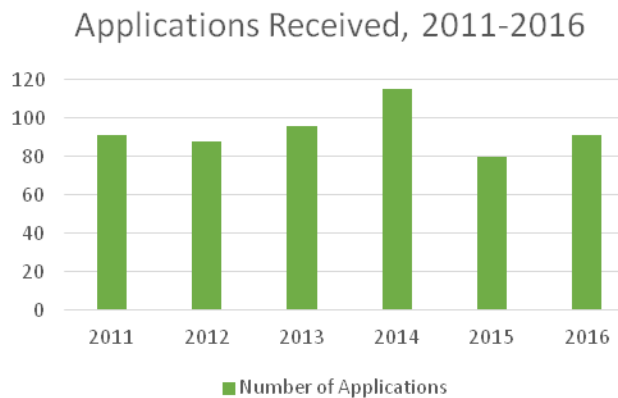


Architectural Review Board Items – 2016

Architectural Review Board items are different from other items reviewed by the Planning Commission, in that the Planning Commission only reviews selected ARB items. ARB has the final say on all Certificates of Appropriateness, meaning the Commission only saw 38 of 91 items reviewed by ARB in 2016. That represents a slight increase from 2015, when 80 items were reviewed by ARB. About 87% of the items reviewed in 2016 received approval, a nearly identical percentage to 2015.

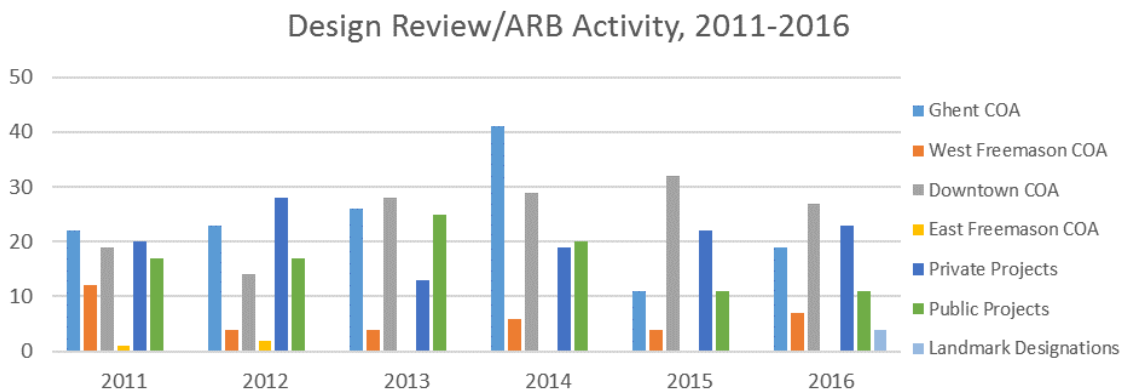
	Total	Percent	Approved	Denied	Withdrawn	% Approved
Ghent COA*	19	16.5%	16	2	1	84.2%
W. Freemason COA*	7	6.1%	7	0	0	100.0%
Downtown COA*	27	23.5%	25	0	2	92.6%
Private Projects	23	20.0%	20	1	2	87.0%
Public Projects	11	9.6%	11	0	0	100.0%
Landmark Designations	4	3.5%	4	0	0	100.0%
Total	91	100.0%	79	3	5	86.8%

* Certificate of Appropriateness



With the exception of a one-time spike in 2014, the number of applications to the ARB has generally held consistent between 80 and 100 per year. The spike in 2014 and subsequent return to “normal” in 2015 was likely the result of the shift in 2014 from the old Design Review Committee to today’s ARB and the rules changes that corresponded with

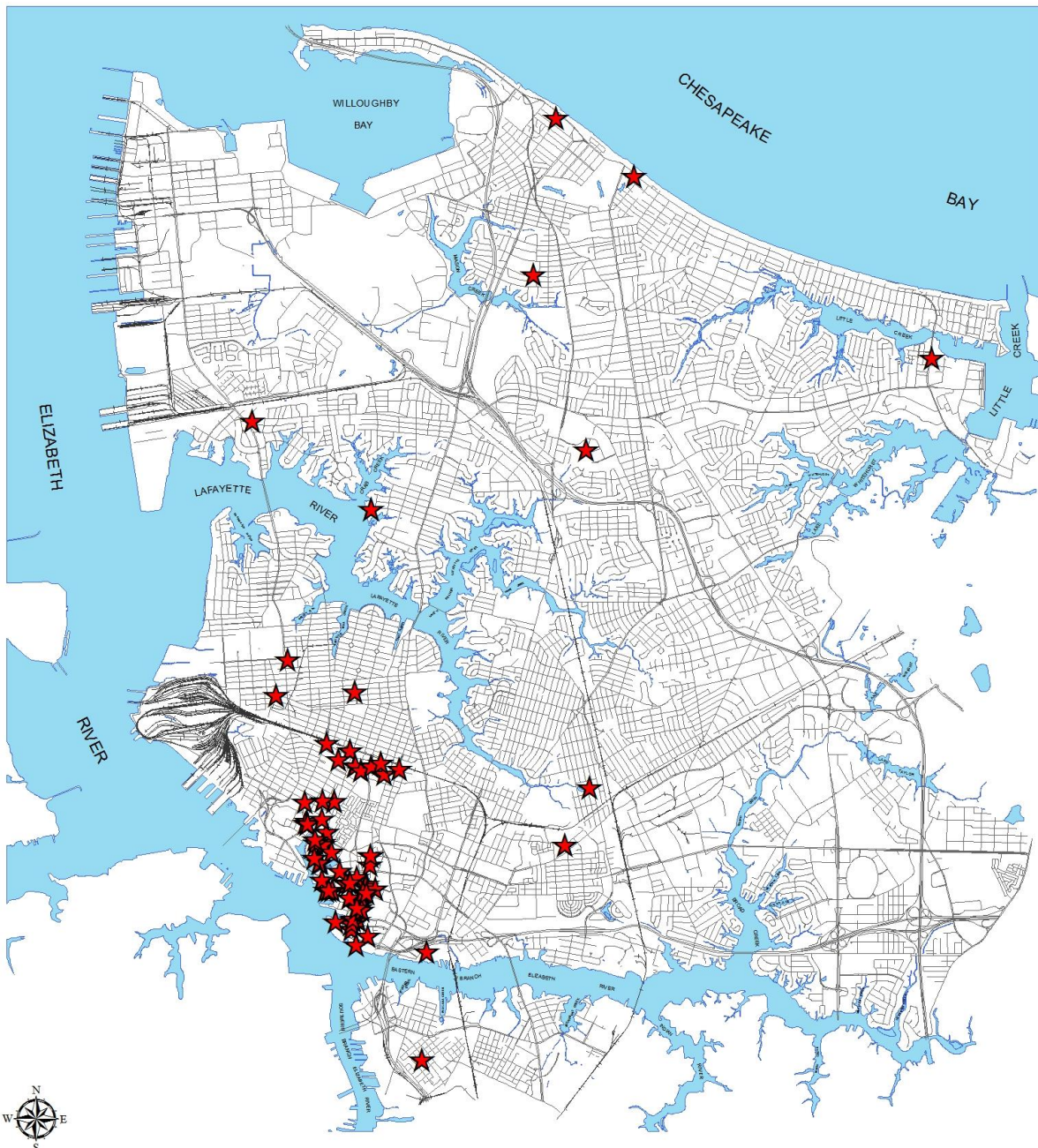
that shift. The shift resulted in a one-time rise in Ghent COA requests, possibly due to the uncertainty of moving to an ARB system, while some rules changes have reduced the number of projects that need to be reviewed by the ARB and have added reviews for applications to Norfolk Historic Landmark status.



Architectural Review Board Items – 2016

The map below illustrates the geographic distribution of the Architectural Review Board applications reviewed in 2016.

Architectural Review Board Applications, 2016



Construction Status – 2016 Items

Once an applicant receives final City Council approval for their rezoning or special exception application, they may begin the development review process. For those that do not require any sort of physical improvements, the acquisition of a business license or zoning certificate may be all that is required. For those that will require construction of either a new or modified building or of site improvements, additional steps are required before construction can begin.

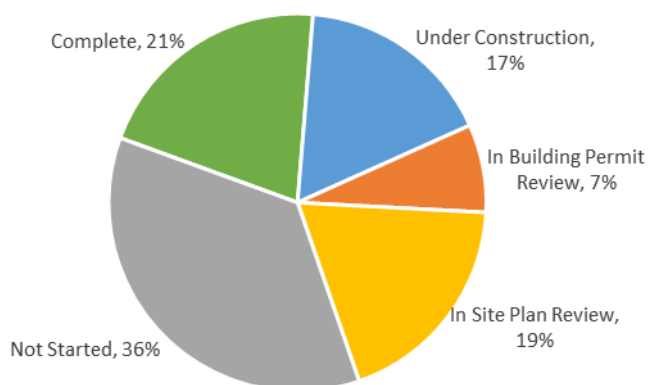
In most cases, the next step is site plan review. The site plan review process is an administrative review that ensures compliance with all City, State, and Federal development codes. Common issues reviewed include stormwater management, landscaping, access management, right-of-way improvements, and emergency accessibility. Depending on the complexity of the proposal, the review can take two to four months to complete. Once a final site plan is reviewed, building permits can be acquired and construction can begin.

Of the 212 items recommended for approval by the Planning Commission in 2016, 53 (25%) will require either construction or some other form of site improvements. 35 of those will require a site plan due to the level of land disturbance that will be required for their construction. The other 18 require only a

The Site Plan Review Process



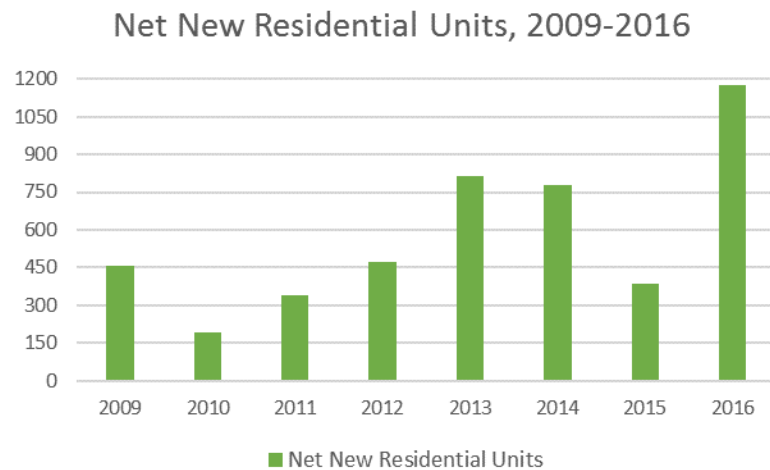
Construction Status of 2016 Items



zoning certificate review to assure the site complies with the requirements of the approval. Of those 53 items, 11 (20.8%) had completed construction by the end of 2016 while another 9 (17.0%) were under construction. Four (7.5%) items have completed site plan review while ten others (18.9%) were working their way through the process. 19 of the items, 35.8%, have yet to submit any plans to the City for approval.

Building Permits Issued – 2016

The number of net new residential dwelling units jumped dramatically in 2016, the 1,175 units more than tripling the 385 permitted in 2015. A large portion of the increase, however, is due to demolition permits returning to their historic average, dropping from 550 in 2015 to 260 in 2016. 1,435 new



residential permits were issued on the year, still a significant jump from previous totals. Since 2009, an annual average of 824 new units have been permitted and 248 have been demolished, leading to an average of 490 net new dwelling units per year.

The numbers above include several major residential projects that received building permits in 2016. These included the following projects:

First Permits Issued	Project	Location
August	81-unit apartment building	2016 Church Street
August	50-unit apartment building (Banks at Berkley)	708 South Main Street
August-September	52-unit apartment conversion	200-210 E. 22 nd Street
September	300-unit apartment conversion (Icon at CityWalk)	1 Commercial Place
October	58-unit apartment conversion	519 Front Street

Several major non-residential projects were also permitted in 2016, including:

First Permits Issued	Project	Location
April	332,000 square foot, 90 store outlet mall (Norfolk Premium Outlets)	1600 Premium Outlets Boulevard
May	New Camp Allen Elementary School	501 C Street
May-August	Major hospital renovation (Sentara Norfolk General Hospital)	600 Gresham Drive
July	Renovation of retail/entertainment center (Waterside)	333 Waterside Drive
October	Renovation of 285,000 square foot office building	2 Commercial Place
December	New 28,000 square foot Broad Creek Library	1425 Norchester Avenue

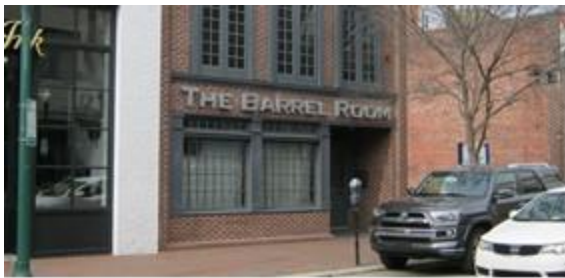
Projects Completed – 2016

2016 once again saw the completion of multiple major projects and the opening of many new or relocated businesses. Most of these projects received some form of Planning Commission approval over the past few years and, as major construction projects often take some time to finish, finally opened during the past year. Below are several projects that were completed in 2016.



Projects Completed – 2016

Included on these pages are the new Richard Bowling Elementary School; new multifamily residential buildings in Ghent, East Beach, and on Newport Avenue in Talbot Park; a mixed-use building on Church Street in Huntersville; a multi-unit retail building on Shore Drive; a new “coastal” 7-11 on Ocean View Avenue; and new restaurants on Granby Street Downtown and on Little Creek Road.



Plans and Other Projects

2016 was another busy year for the Planning Commission and the Planning Department. The year saw the adoption of two major new visions and additions to *plaNorfolk2030* – *Vision 2100* and the *Military Circle/Military Highway Urban Development Area Vision for the Future*. Much progress was also made on the drafting of the City’s new Zoning Ordinance.

Vision 2100 was adopted in November following a year-long planning effort. The result was a very-long-term resilience-focused vision for the City, with the central goal of ensuring Norfolk’s place as the coastal community of the future. The innovative planning process began with a series of asset mapping exercises to identify the people, places, things, and events that make Norfolk great. That positive focus carried forward into a series of visioning meetings and ultimately into the vision document itself, which identifies strategies for improving neighborhoods and addressing climate change in all areas of Norfolk – not just those that are or are not at risk.



The *Military Circle/Military Highway Urban Development Area Vision for the Future* presents another forward-looking vision. A grant-funded project with the stated goal of re-imagining the Military Circle/JANAF area as an “urban development area”, the plan envisions a complete redevelopment of the underperforming retail centers. It suggests



Military Circle / Military Highway Urban Development Area A Vision for the Future

extending light rail north from the current alignment and using new stations as centerpieces for new higher-density, mixed-use, transit-oriented communities. It further

provides detailed steps and a phased implementation approach to achieving these goals. The plan was completed in December and was ready for adoption in early 2017.

Work on the drafting of a new Zoning Ordinance continued into its third year in 2016. This process will result in Norfolk’s first completely new Zoning Ordinance since 1992. The project kicked off in late 2014 with a thorough analysis of the existing ordinance. Drafting of the new ordinance began in earnest in 2015 and continued throughout 2016, reaching a milestone late in the year with the drafting of the third and final “module” of text. Planning Commission and an advisory committee of interested citizens, as well as the general public at certain stages, have been involved throughout. Their input will be key in 2017 as the project races to an anticipated fall conclusion.

The logo consists of a blue square containing the text "Building a Better Norfolk" in white, bold, sans-serif font. "Building" is on the first line, "a Better" on the second, and "Norfolk" on the third.

**Building
a Better
Norfolk**

**a zoning ordinance
for the 21st century**

Review of 2016 Work Program

The 2015 Annual Report was the second to include a work program for the upcoming year, 2016 in this case. The 2016 work program is included below, along with an indication of each project's status. Those shaded green are considered complete. Those shaded yellow are not complete but are underway and are on track for completion. Work has not begun on those shaded red. As the table indicates, the majority of the projects listed for 2016 have either been completed or are underway and on track for completion.

Project	Status
Zoning Ordinance Update – comprehensive re-write of the Zoning Ordinance	Completion by late-2017
Vision 2100 – planning process to create a very-long term vision related to sustainable and resilient development patterns	Complete
Military Highway UDA Study – state funded consultant analysis to develop a transit oriented vision for the Military Circle area	Complete
Sand Management Plan – sand management processes to be incorporated into the City's beach management plans	Complete
Denby Park Plan Amendments – <i>plaNorfolk2030</i> amendments to clarify land use policies for the Denby Park neighborhood	Complete
Healthy Communities Strategy – <i>plaNorfolk2030</i> amendments to incorporate healthy living strategies into City's long-term plans	Completion by late-2017
Community Rating System strategy – strategy for improving Norfolk's CRS rating	Under review by FEMA
Complete Streets Policies – development of a process, policy, and guidelines for implementing complete streets citywide	Complete
Strategy for Neighborhoods in Transition – review of zoning approach to neighborhoods experiencing economic change	Completion by mid-2017
Emergency/Re-Build Ordinance – Ordinance or Code language regulating how properties may be re-built in a more resilient manner	Not Started
Development Guide – document for developers on requirements and steps through city approval processes	Not Started
New Permit Management Tracking System – implementation of departmental work tracking system	Completion by late-2017
TIDE Extension Draft Environmental Impact Statement – formal study of locally-preferred alternative(s)	Not Started
Area Planning Process – analysis of Norfolk's neighborhoods to develop priority list for potential area plans	Not Started
Renewable energy strategy – analysis of best practices and development of expanded policies for <i>plaNorfolk2030</i> (potential intern project)	Not Started
Public Art – discussion of Public Arts Commission processes and upcoming projects	Complete
Public access to shoreline – analysis of best practices and development of expanded policies for <i>plaNorfolk2030</i> (potential intern project)	Not Started

Project	Status
Coordination efforts with Colleges/Universities – discussion of how staff coordinates planning efforts with representatives of local colleges and universities	Not Started
Administrative approval for some Certificates of Appropriateness	Needs further discussion
Architectural Review Board application guidelines – establishment of guidelines for window replacement and demolition	Completion by mid-2017
Historic preservation recognition awards	Completion by early-2017
Coordination efforts with Military – discussion of how staff coordinates planning efforts with representatives of local military facilities	Underway
Joint Planning Commission/Economic Development Authority meeting(s)	Not Started
Joint Planning Commission/City Council meeting(s)	Joint Training in Dec. 2016

2017 Planning Commission Work Program

As the Planning Commission transitions into another year, there are many projects currently underway or planned for initiation in 2017. Below is a list of projects Planning Department staff and the Planning Commission should be working on over the coming year. While this may not represent all projects and tasks the Commission works on in 2017, it is intended to be a snapshot at the beginning of the year of what activities are anticipated.

Project	Projected Project Timeframe
Zoning Ordinance Update – comprehensive re-write of the Zoning Ordinance	Completion by late-2017
Vision 2100 Implementation – full incorporation of <i>Vision 2100</i> into <i>plaNorfolk2030</i> and related ordinance revisions	Completion by late-2017
Healthy Communities Strategy – <i>plaNorfolk2030</i> amendments to incorporate healthy living strategies into City's long-term plans	Completion by late-2017
Community Rating System strategy – submittal of paperwork necessary to obtain improved flood insurance rates for Norfolk residents	Completion by early-2017
Complete Streets Policies – development of a process and guidelines for implementing complete streets citywide	Completion by late-2017
Strategy for Neighborhoods in Transition – review of zoning approach to neighborhoods experiencing economic change	Completion by mid-2017
<i>plaNorfolk2030</i> Bi-annual Review – second two-year review of plan metrics and implementation status	Completion by early-2017
Emergency/Re-Build Ordinance – ordinance or code language regulating how properties may be re-built in a more resilient manner	Completion by late-2017
Development Guide – document for developers on requirements and steps through city approval processes	Completion by mid-2017
Permit Management Tracking System, Phase 2 – implementation of land management module	Completion by late-2017
TIDE Light Rail Extension Studies – Westside Alternatives Analysis	Completion by late-2018
Administrative approval for some Certificates of Appropriateness	Completion by mid-2017
Architectural Review Board application guidelines – establishment of guidelines for window replacement and demolition	Completion by mid-2017
Historic preservation recognition awards	Completion by early-2017
Coordination efforts with Military – discussion of how staff coordinates planning efforts with representatives of local military facilities	Completion by mid-2017
Joint Land Use Study – regional (local government, NGO, and U.S. Military) study of the impacts of sea level rise on area military facilities	Completion by mid-2018
Analysis of Resiliency Practices – analysis of best practices and development of expanded policies for <i>plaNorfolk2030</i>	Completion by late-2017

Project	Projected Project Timeframe
Public access to shoreline – analysis of best practices and development of expanded policies for <i>plaNorfolk2030</i>	Completion by 2018
HUD Natural Disaster Resilience Competition Grant – staff support for the planning and implementation of resilience improvements	Completion by 2019
EPA Brownfields Grant – staff support for a market and redevelopment feasibility study of the Harbor Park and Fort Norfolk areas	Completion by 2019
Green Infrastructure Plan – staff support for grant funded study of improved green infrastructure elements	Completion by late-2017
St. Paul's Interagency Revitalization Planning Group – staff support of interagency group working to re-imagine public housing in St. Paul's area	Completion by late-2017
Bike plan Implementation – staff support for early implementation stages of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Strategic Plan	Completion by 2018
Joint Planning Commission/Economic Development Authority meeting(s)	Periodic briefing(s)
Joint Planning Commission/City Council meeting(s)	Periodic briefing(s)