



City Planning Commission 2017 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 22, 2018
Department of City Planning*

Chairman's Message

February 22, 2018

To the Honorable Mayor and Council
City of Norfolk, Virginia

Ladies and Gentlemen:

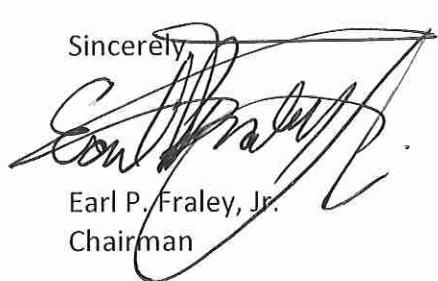
On behalf of the City Planning Commission I am pleased to forward this summary report of activities for 2017. This was a year that celebrated the completion of many significant projects that represent years of planning and effort, with the opening of the Hilton Norfolk Main Hotel, the Simon Premium Outlet Mall, and the reopening of the Waterside District. But even more significant for us was the completion of the city's new Zoning Ordinance, which is the most complete revision of guidelines for growth and development since 1992 and the most resilient zoning ordinance in history, and which represents years of hard work by the City Planning Commission and the City Planning staff.

During 2017 we also witnessed the continuation of a trend to convert historic offices and warehouses into new living spaces, which brings new street life to Main Street in Downtown and to parts of Park Place and Ghent. In the Military Highway area new office tenants moved into former retail space, beginning a revitalization of Military Circle.

Now that the zoning ordinance has been adopted, the hard work of implementing it will begin. Staff's work program for 2018 includes many items that will be necessary to fully take advantage of the new language and guidelines that have been developed, including the development of neighborhood resilience overlays and parking revisions. Looking forward the city is also embarking on a new General Plan update, as well as preparations for Census 2020 and a neighborhood plan for Wards Corner.

We are thankful for the opportunity to participate in the transitions that are taking place in Norfolk as we become a more resilient and inclusive community, and as we continue the hard work of providing guidance to our city leaders. 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, City Manager
George M. Homewood, FAICP 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 2017 were: Earl Fraley, Jr., Chairman; Ramona Austin; Matthew Hales; Nikita Houchins; Kevin Murphy, Dr. Dan Neumann, Vice Chairman; and Kathryn Shelton. George Homewood, Planning Director, served as Executive Secretary.

The Planning Commission met on 23 separate occasions in 2017, convening the second and fourth Thursday of each month, excepting November and December, where only one meeting was held to accommodate the holidays. A special meeting was held in October, to conduct a public hearing on the proposed Zoning Ordinance. 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.

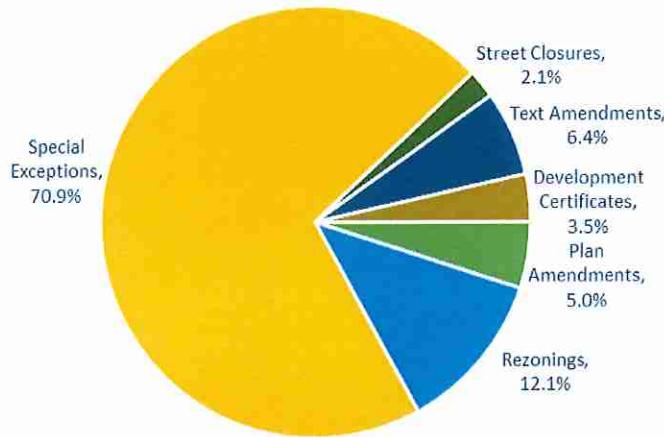
	Meetings in Attendance	Meetings Absent
Earl Fraley, Jr., Chairman	21	2
Ramona Austin	19	4
Matthew Hales	20	3
Nikita Houchins	21	2
Kevin Murphy	23	0
Dr. Dan Neumann, Vice Chairman	21	2
Kathryn Shelton	17	6

In 2017, the Planning Commission processed 141 planning and zoning applications and 64 Architectural Review Board items. Additionally, the Commission considered presentations on many other topics throughout the year, including Norfolk-specific topics like the Huntersville Design Guidelines, wayfinding signs, bike plan implementation, 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 2017 – Planning & Zoning

The 141 planning and zoning applications submitted to the Planning Commission in 2017 represent a substantial decline from the 212 applications reviewed in 2016. Special exception applications, about 71% 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 2017.

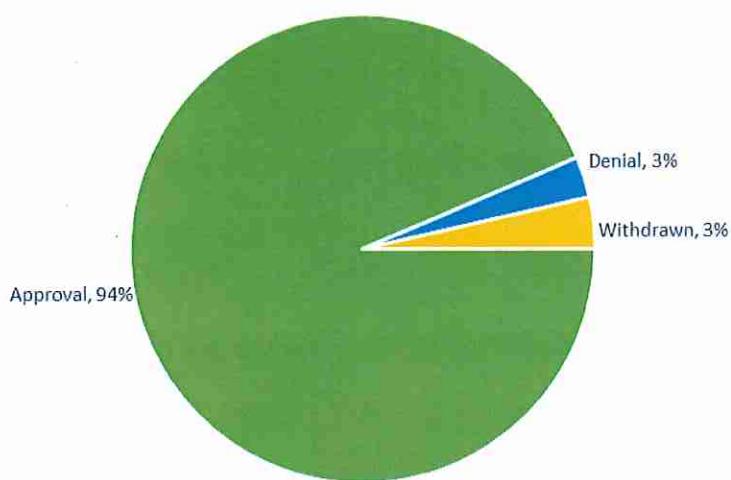
Types of Applications, 2017



	Total	Percent	CPC Recommendation			% Approval
			Approval	Denial	Withdrawn	
Plan Amendments	7	5.0%	6	1	0	85.7%
Rezonings	17	12.1%	13	2	2	76.5%
Special Exceptions	100	70.9%	97	1	2	97.0%
Street Closures	3	2.1%	3	0	0	100.0%
Text Amendments	9	6.4%	8	0	1	88.9%
Development Certificates*	5	3.5%	5	0	0	100.0%
Total	141	100.0%	132	4	5	93.6%

*Includes East Beach Harbor and PCO Development Certificates, and Institutional Development Plans

Recommended Actions, 2017

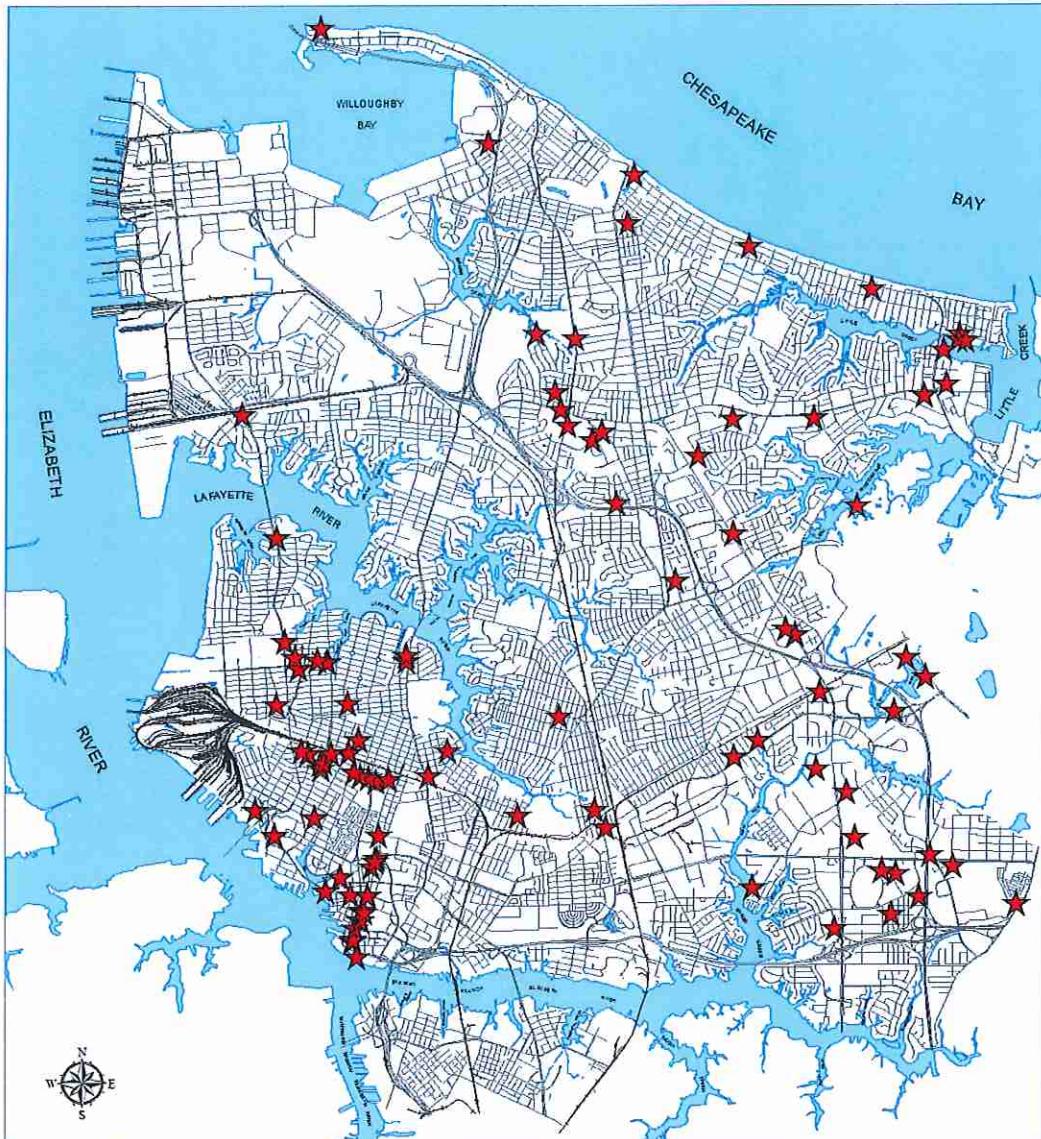


The Planning Commission recommended approval on 93.6% of the applications submitted in 2017, voting to recommend denial of four items. Five items were withdrawn before the Commission could vote on them. The high approval rating from both the City Planning Commission and the City Council is due in large part to the efforts of staff to advise and guide applicants through the pre-approval process.

Applications Reviewed in 2017 – Planning & Zoning

The map below illustrates the geographic distribution of planning and zoning applications reviewed by the Planning Commission in 2017. Not reflected on this map are the 15 items that affected either the entire City or all or part of a neighborhood.

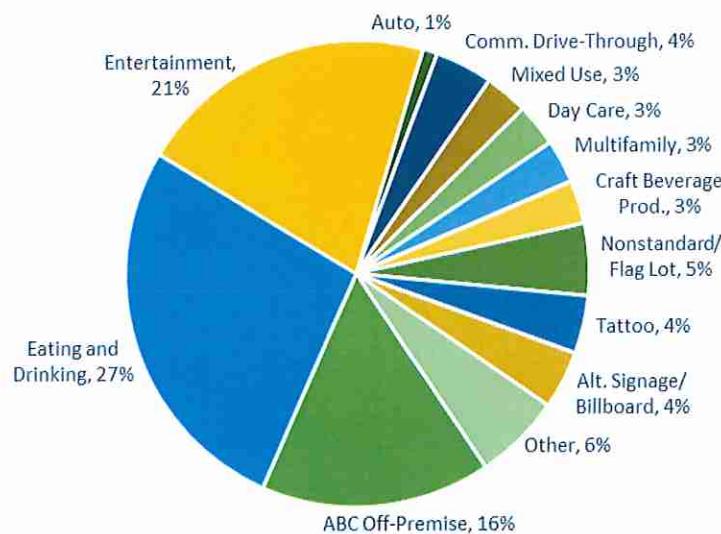
Planning and Zoning Applications, 2017



Applications Reviewed in 2017 – Special Exceptions

Special exceptions are the most common type of application considered by the Planning Commission, representing 71% of all agenda items in 2017. Continuing the recent trend, two-thirds (67%) 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. Planning Commission recommended denial of one application, while another two were withdrawn prior to their review. In total, 97% of special exception applications received were recommended for approval.

Special Exception Applications, 2017



	CPC Recommendation					
	Total	Percent	Approval	Denial	Withdrawn	% Approval
ABC Off-Premise	16	16.0%	16	0	0	100.0%
On-Premise Alcohol	27	27.0%	27	0	0	100.0%
Entertainment	21	21.0%	20	1	0	95.2%
Auto Sales/Service/Rental	1	1.0%	1	0	0	100.0%
Commercial Drive-Through	4	4.0%	4	0	0	100.0%
Mixed Use	3	3.0%	3	0	0	100.0%
Day Care	3	3.0%	3	0	0	100.0%
Multifamily	3	3.0%	3	0	0	100.0%
Craft Beverage Production	3	3.0%	2	0	1	66.7%
Nonstandard/Flag Lot	5	5.0%	5	0	0	100.0%
Tattoo	4	4.0%	4	0	0	100.0%
Alt. Signage/Billboard	4	4.0%	3	0	1	75.0%
Other*	6	6.0%	6	0	0	100.0%
Total	100	100.0%	97	1	2	97.0%

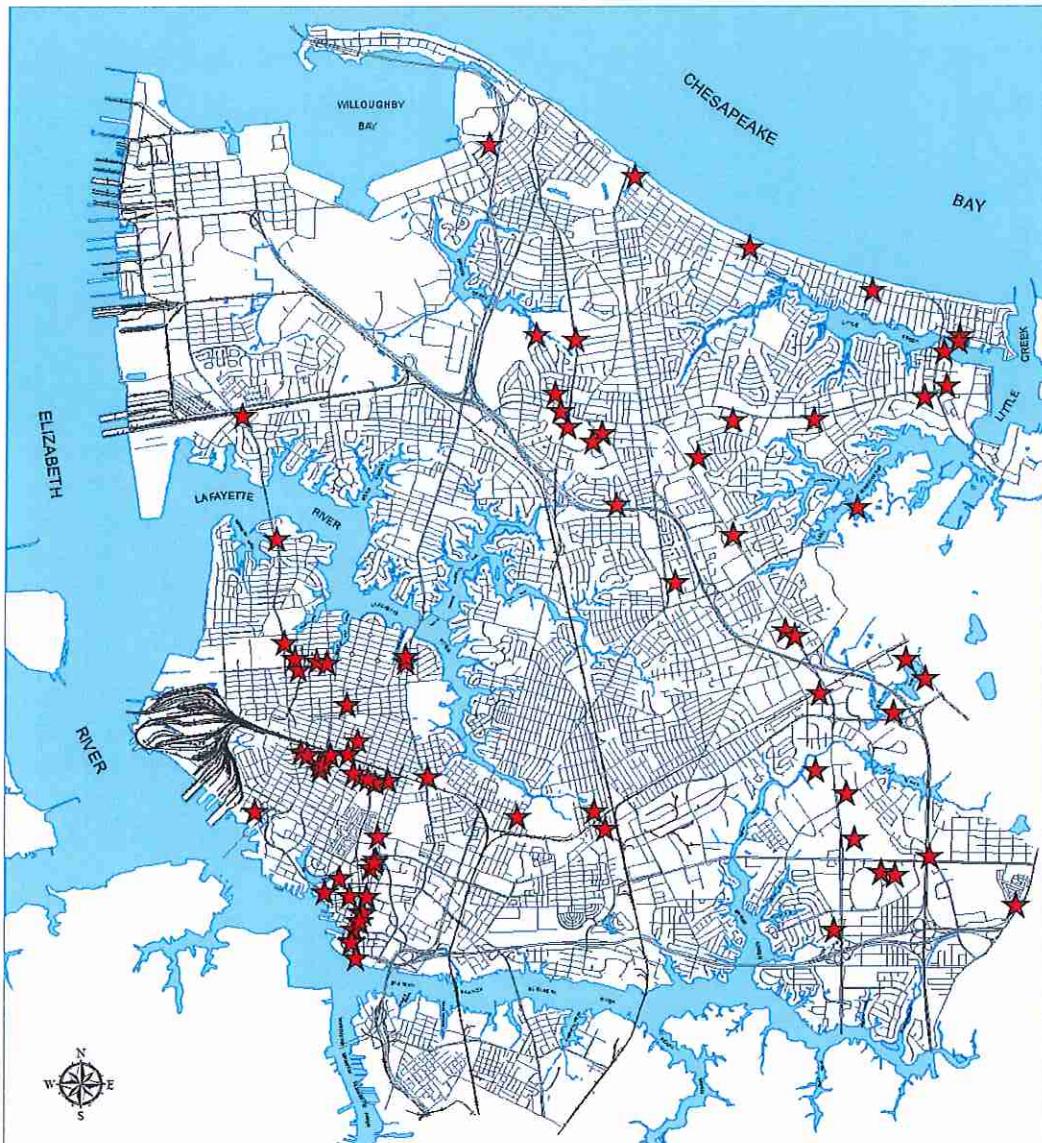
*Includes special exceptions for after hours membership organization, communication tower, religious institution, used merchandise, and a change from one nonconforming use to another.

Also of note, 14 applications were for amendments or additions to previously approved special exceptions. Twelve of those related to the sale of alcoholic beverages, meaning 14% of all special exception applications and 18% of alcohol-related applications were for operations that had received a prior approval for the same type of operation.

Applications Reviewed in 2017 – Special Exceptions

The map below illustrates the geographic distribution of special exception applications reviewed by the Planning Commission in 2017.

Special Exception Applications, 2017



Applications Reviewed in 2017 – Council Disposition

The following table reflects Norfolk City Council's actions relative to the Planning Commission's recommendations, by application type. Of the 136 items acted upon by the Planning Commission in 2017, 97.1% were recommended for approval. Similarly, 97.0% of the 132 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				
	Approval	Denial	% App.	Approved	Denied	Withdrawn	% App.	Pending*
Plan Amendments	6	1	83.3%	6	0	0	100.0%	1
Rezonings	13	2	84.6%	13	1	0	92.8%	1
Special Exceptions	97	1	99.0%	95	1	2	96.9%	0
Street Closures	3	0	100.0%	3	0	0	100.0%	0
Text Amendments	8	0	100.0%	7	0	0	100.0%	1
Dev. Certificates	5	0	100.0%	4**	0	0	100.0%	0
Total	132	4	97.0%	128	2	2	97.0%	3

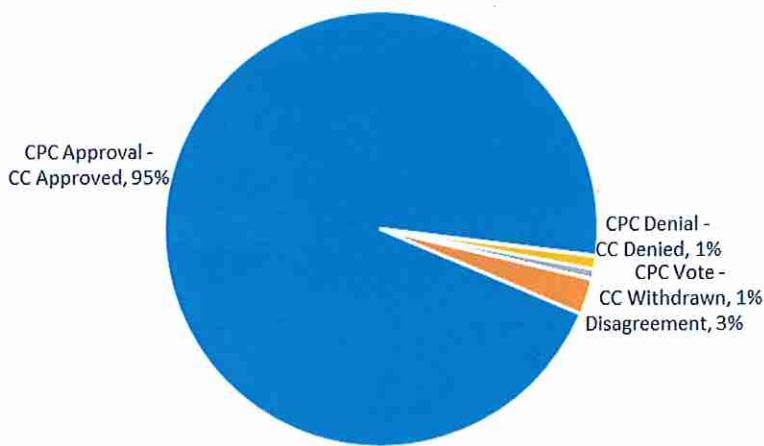
* As of January 24, 2018.

** One approved development certificate was an East Beach Harbor Compliance Certificate, which does not require City Council review.

In 2017, Planning Commission and City Council differed on three items. Two of these, a rezoning and a plan amendment, both pertaining to a single property, were recommended for denial by Planning Commission but ultimately approved by City Council. Another item – a special exception for tattoo parlor – was recommended for approval by Planning Commission but denied by City Council.

City Council generally agrees with the recommendations of the Planning Commission. Since 2013, City Council has agreed with Planning Commission's recommendation – for either approval or denial – about 96% of the time. An additional 1% of items were withdrawn prior to a vote from City Council. This means that the two bodies have disagreed only on about 3% – 22 of 786 – of items.

Planning Commission and City Council Actions, 2013-2017

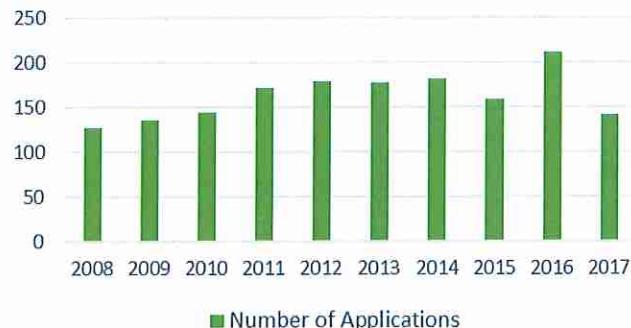


Applications Reviewed – 2008-2017

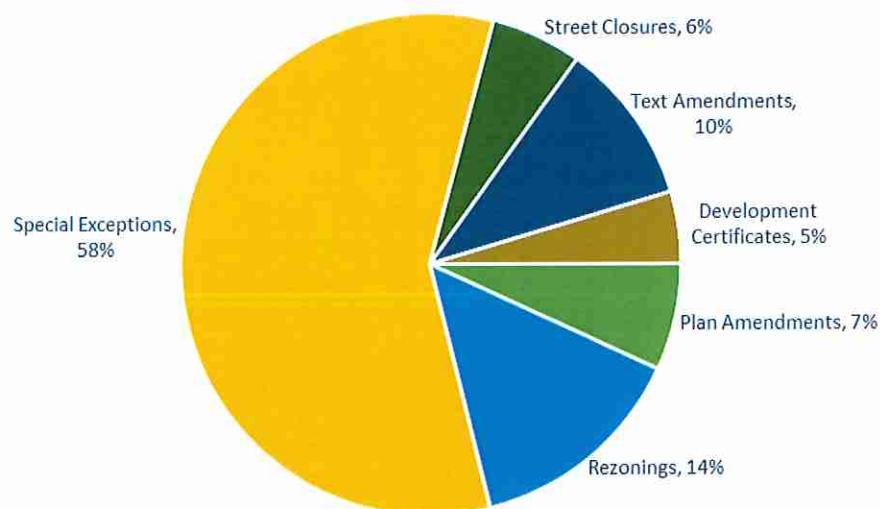
The number of applications to the Planning Commission declined significantly in 2017, falling from 212 in 2016 to 141 in 2017, a decrease of 71 items and the largest decrease on record a year after the largest increase. Every item type declined from 2016 to 2017, making clear that 2016 was an anomaly rather than a new normal. A total of 1,625 applications have been submitted to the Planning Commission since 2008, an average of 162.5 per year.

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 greatly from year-to-year. Despite some year-over-year indications, there appear to be few obvious trends in the data beyond a general rise following the last recession.

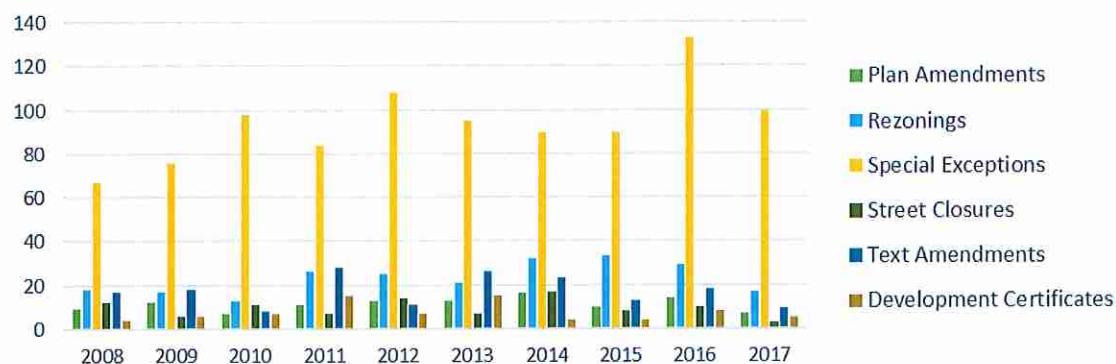
Applications Received, 2008-2017



Types of Applications, 2008-2017



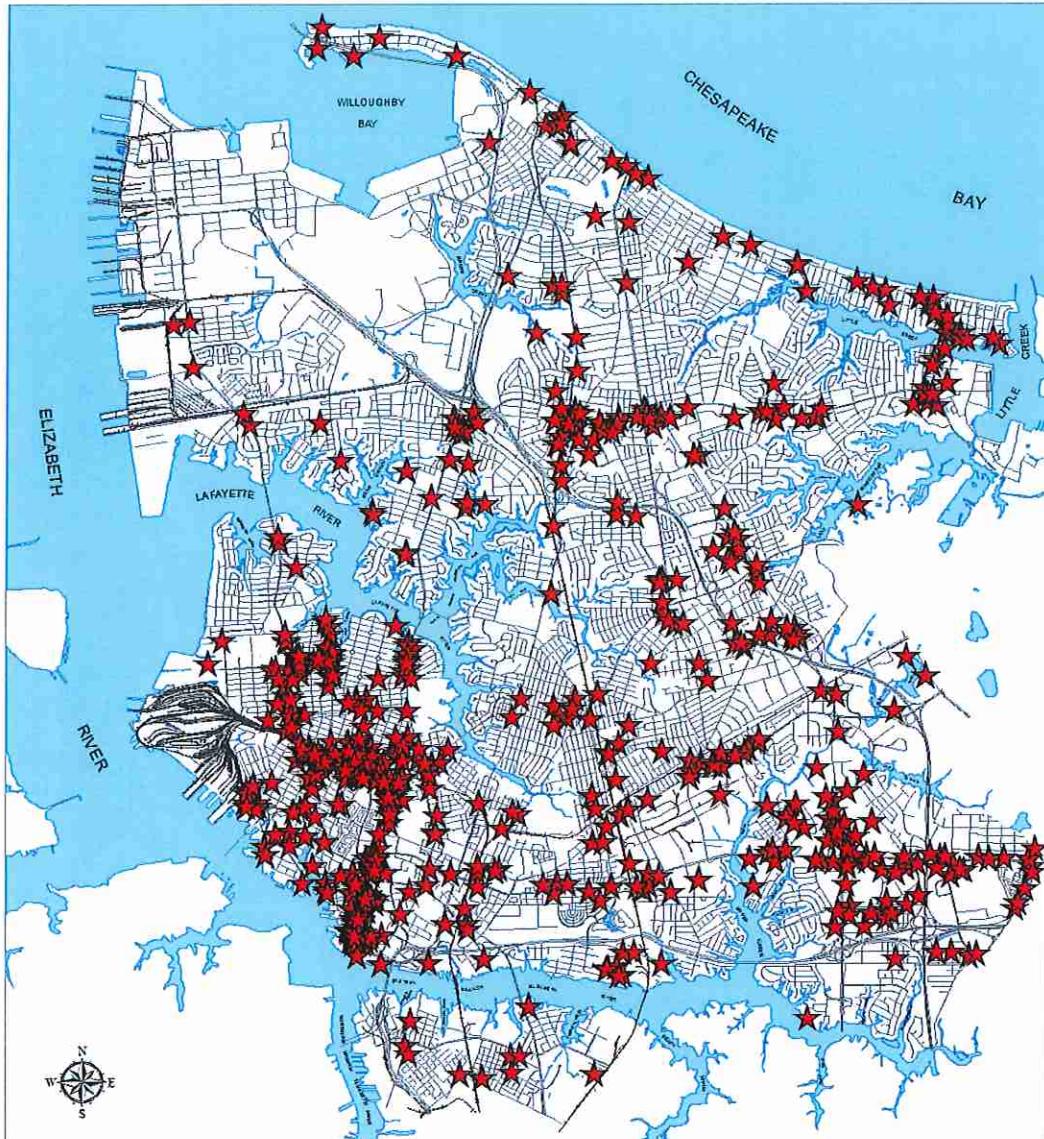
Planning Commission Activity, 2008-2017



Applications Reviewed – 2008-2017

The map below illustrates the geographic distribution of applications reviewed by the Planning Commission between 2008 and 2017.

Planning and Zoning Applications, 2008 - 2017



Architectural Review Board Items – 2017

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 34 of 64 items reviewed by ARB in 2017. That represents a decline from 2016, when 91 items were reviewed. About 97% of the items reviewed in 2017 received approval. The two items that were denied by ARB were appealed to the City Council.

	Total	Percent	Approved	Denied	Withdrawn	% Approved
Ghent COA*	16	25.0%	14	2	0	87.5%
W. Freemason COA*	4	6.3%	4	0	0	100.0%
Downtown COA*	10	15.6%	10	0	0	100.0%
Private Projects	19	29.7%	17	0	0	100.0%
Public Projects	12	18.8%	12	0	0	100.0%
Landmark Designations	3	4.7%	5	0	0	100.0%
Total	64	100.0%	62	2	0	96.9%

* Certificate of Appropriateness

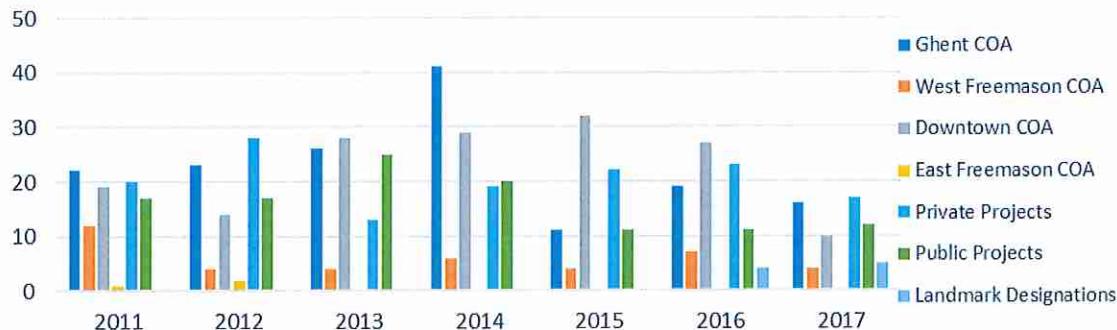
Applications Received, 2011-2017



With the exception of a one-time spike in 2014 and 2017's decline, 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 cause of 2017's decline is less clear, though it was largely the result of a substantial decline in Downtown COA activity, likely due somewhat to a return-to-normal after record application types in that area between 2013 and 2016.

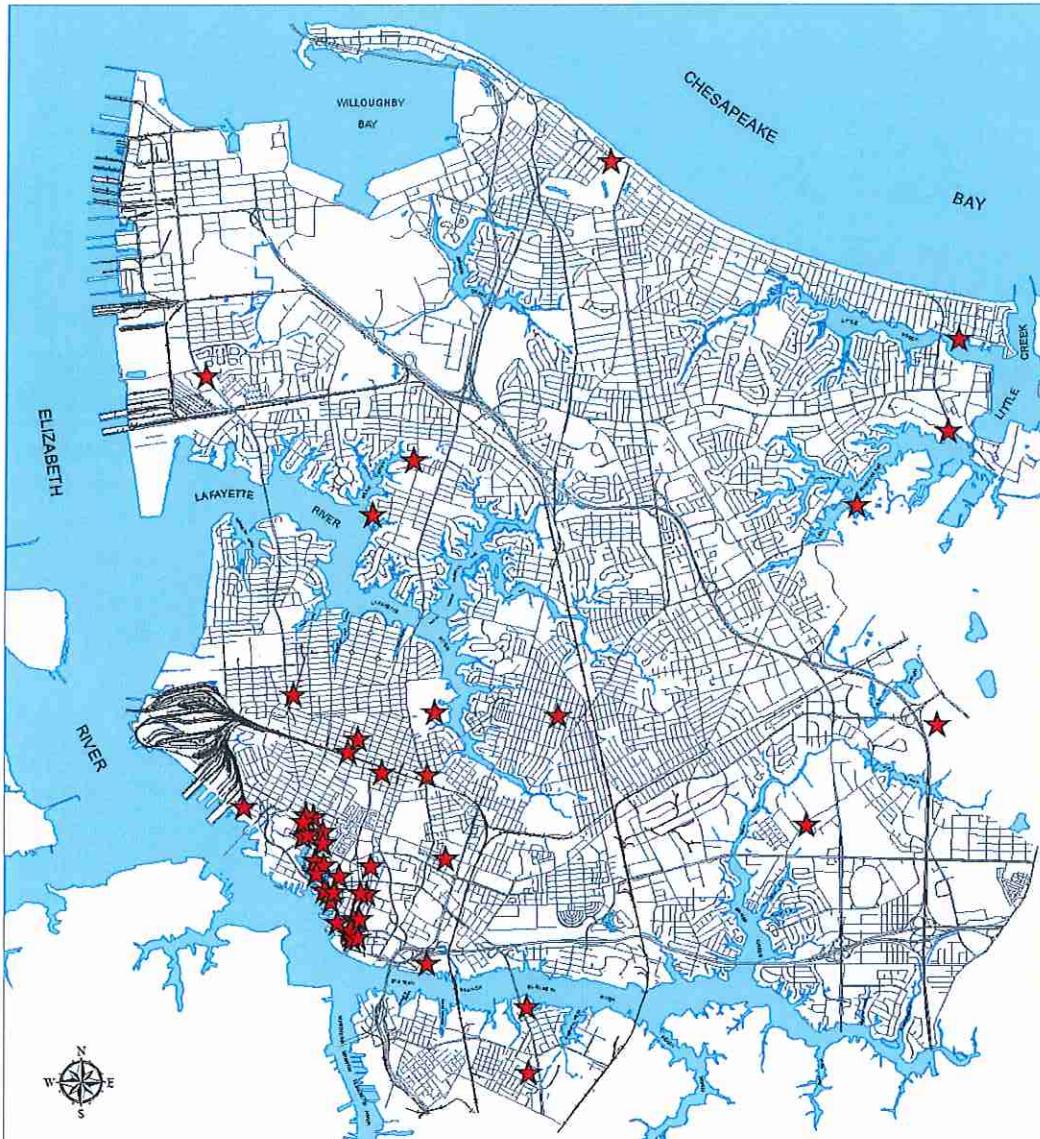
Design Review/ARB Activity, 2011-2017



Architectural Review Board Items – 2017

The map below illustrates the geographic distribution of the Architectural Review Board applications reviewed in 2017.

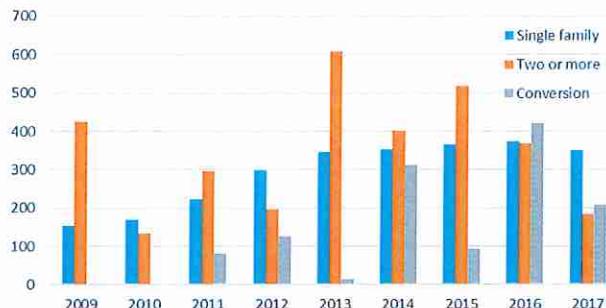
Architectural Review Board Applications, 2017



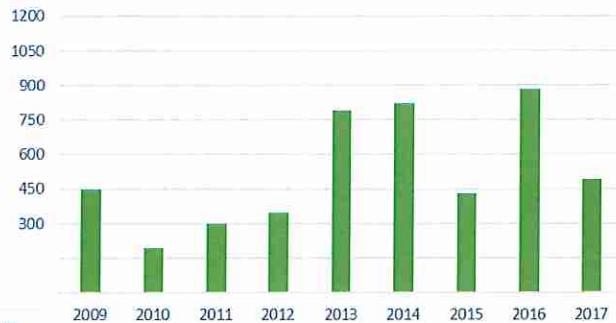
Building Permits Issued – 2017

The number of new housing units permitted in 2017 dropped to the lowest level since 2012, with 742 new units. 249 housing units were demolished, for a net increase of 493 new dwelling units.

New Housing Units by Type, 2009-2017



Net New Residential Units, 2009-2017



Residential permits included 350 single-family homes, ten duplex units, two new multifamily developments with 174 units, and seven conversion projects with 208 units.

The numbers above include several major residential projects that received building permits in 2017. These included the following projects:

First Permits Issued	Project	Location
February	161 Granby apartment conversion – 36 units	161 Granby Street
February	151 Granby apartment conversion – 8 units	151 Granby Street
March	Linde Lofts apartments conversion – 15 units	2219 Colonial Avenue
April	First Colony apartment conversion – 51 units	204 W. 22 nd Street
May	Ghent Arts apartments – 48 units	117 W. Virginia Beach
August	Saint Pauls Apartments – 126 units	500-581 Posey Lane
August	Ghent Self Storage apartment conversion – 65 units	529 W. 24 th Street
December	Ballentine School apartment conversion – 23 units	2415 Ballentine Blvd

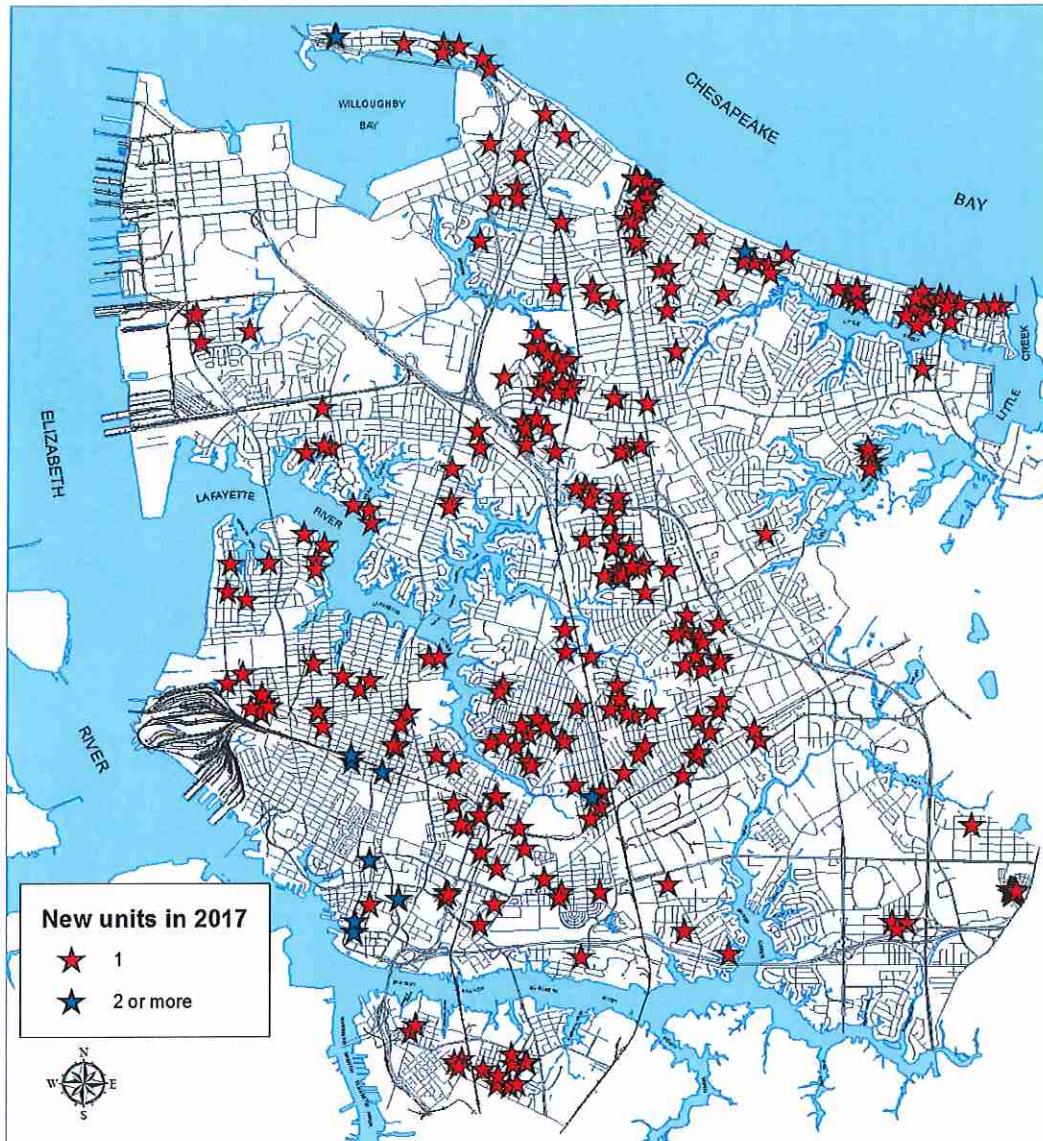
Over 1,000 non-residential building permits were also permitted in CY 2017, including several major non-residential projects, including:

First Permits Issued	Project	Location
March	Marriott Autograph Collection	201 Granby Street
April	Fire Station #12	1655 W. Little Creek Rd
April	CIRS building at Central Business Park	900 Asbury Avenue
May	Barry Art Museum	1075 43 rd Street
September	VIA design architects building conversion	319 E. Plume Street
November	New Ikea store	1500 Ikea Way

New Residential Building Permits – 2017

The map below illustrates the geographic distribution of the residential building permits issued in 2017.

New Residential Building Permits, 2017



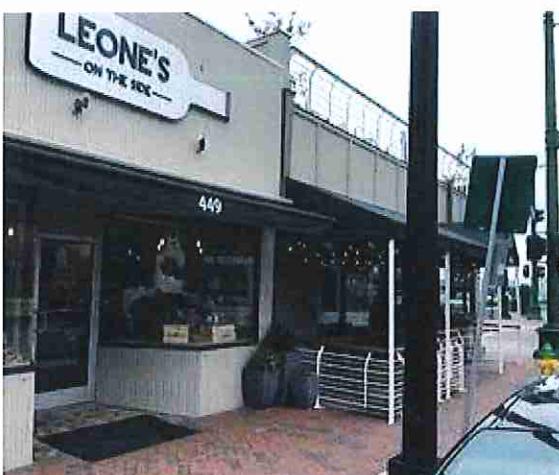
Projects Completed – 2017

2017 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 2017.



Projects Completed – 2017

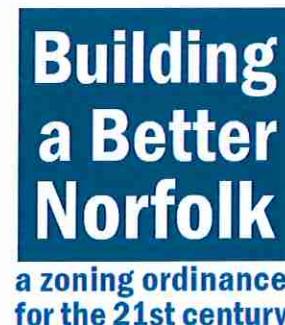
Included on these pages are several new developments in Downtown Norfolk, including the new Main hotel and conference center, the re-opened Waterside Live, and examples of the new multifamily residential retail development underway in that area; new multifamily residential developments in Berkley and Campostella, as well as a historic rehabilitation in Ghent; new retail and restaurant developments throughout the City; and the new Norfolk Premium Outlets off Northampton Boulevard.



Plans and Other Projects

While the Planning Commission's public hearing agendas were somewhat shorter in 2017, their worksession agendas – where they advise on and consider major projects like new plans and ordinance changes – were as full as ever. In fact, 2017 saw an event that hadn't been seen in Norfolk in a generation, the completion of a new Zoning Ordinance. While the Zoning Ordinance was the primary focus of the Commission in 2017, they advised on several other projects, including a new pattern book for the Coastal Character District, an area plan for Wards Corner, and the second bi-annual review and update of *plaNorfolk2030*.

2017 was the fourth and final year of work on the City's new Zoning Ordinance. Throughout the year, Planning Commission reviewed hundreds of pages of draft text, considering hundreds of revisions along the way. A public review draft was completed in the Spring, followed by a set of community input sessions, which resulted in many additional revisions. Drafting concluded in early-September with the completion of a public hearing draft. Another community outreach and input process took place at that time, culminating in a public hearing in October. Planning Commission considered over 150 separate amendments based on public hearing input, ultimately voting to recommend adoption of the new Ordinance in November. City Council then voted to officially adopt the Ordinance in January 2018, with an effective date of March 1, 2018.



Timed for adoption in early 2018 alongside the Zoning Ordinance – which it serves as an integral part – the Coastal Character District Pattern Book was also completed in 2017. The Planning Commission again advised on this project, which provides detailed guidance for any development project proposed in the Ocean View area of the City.

The Wards Corner Area Plan – the second state-funded “urban development areas” planning project in Norfolk in as many years – kicked off in November. This process will escalate substantially in early-2018, using an advisory committee and a series of community meetings to develop a new vision for the commercial core of Wards Corner.

The second bi-annual review of *plaNorfolk2030* took place in the spring, updating the Commission on the status of each of the plan's 608 actions and 103 metrics. This review is intended – according to the requirements of the plan itself – to lead into the first “five-year review” of the plan in 2018. That review is intended to evaluate the entire plan to determine the need for major revisions. In that vein, discussions have already begun to prepare for the preparation of a new – or heavily revised – plan in 2018.

Review of 2017 Work Program

The 2016 Annual Report was the third to include a work program for the upcoming year, 2017 in this case. The 2017 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 overwhelming majority of the projects listed for 2017 have either been completed or are underway and on track for completion.

Project	Status
Zoning Ordinance Update – comprehensive re-write of the Zoning Ordinance	Complete
Vision 2100 Implementation – full incorporation of <i>Vision 2100</i> into <i>plaNorfolk2030</i> and related ordinance revisions	Complete
Healthy Communities Strategy – <i>plaNorfolk2030</i> amendments to incorporate healthy living strategies into City's long-term plans	To be part of new general plan
Community Rating System strategy – submittal of paperwork necessary to obtain improved flood insurance rates for Norfolk residents	Complete
Complete Streets Policies – development of a process and guidelines for implementing complete streets citywide	Transferred to Public Works
Strategy for Neighborhoods in Transition – review of zoning approach to neighborhoods experiencing economic change	Complete
<i>plaNorfolk2030</i> Bi-annual Review – second two-year review of plan metrics and implementation status	Complete
Emergency/Re-Build Ordinance – ordinance or code language regulating how properties may be re-built in a more resilient manner	Completion by late-2018
Development Guide – document for developers on requirements and steps through city approval processes	Completion by late-2018
Permit Management Tracking System, Phase 2 – implementation of land management module	Completion by mid-2018
TIDE Light Rail Extension Studies – Westside Alternatives Analysis	Completion by late-2018
Administrative approval for some Certificates of Appropriateness	Not Started
Architectural Review Board application guidelines – establishment of guidelines for window replacement and demolition	Complete
Historic preservation recognition awards	Complete
Coordination efforts with Military – discussion of how staff coordinates planning efforts with representatives of local military facilities	Complete
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>	Complete
Public access to shoreline – analysis of best practices and development of expanded policies for <i>plaNorfolk2030</i>	To be part of new general plan

Project	Status
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 mid-2018
St. Paul's Interagency Revitalization Planning Group – staff support of interagency group working to re-imagine public housing in St. Paul's area	Transferred to City Manager
Bike plan Implementation – staff support for early implementation stages of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Strategic Plan	Complete
Joint Planning Commission/Economic Development Authority meeting(s)	Periodic briefing(s)
Joint Planning Commission/City Council meeting(s)	Periodic briefing(s)

2018 Planning Commission Work Program

As the Planning Commission transitions into another year, there are many projects currently underway or planned for initiation in 2018. 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 2018, it is intended to be a snapshot at the beginning of the year of what activities are anticipated. It is also understood that implementation of the new zoning ordinance may supplant or delay some of the projects.

Project	Projected Project Timeframe
Neighborhood Resilience Overlays – development of a process for completing individual neighborhood resilience overlays	Completion by early-2018
Short-Term Rental Ordinance Revisions – consideration of revisions to address short-term rentals in the Zoning Ordinance	Completion by mid-2018
Zoning Ordinance Maintenance – consideration of necessary revisions to Zoning Ordinance	Completion by mid-2018
Census 2020 LUCA – project to ensure accuracy of addresses within Norfolk in preparation for Census 2020	Completion by mid-2018
Commercial Pattern Book – preparation of pattern book to guide development patterns in commercial zoning districts	Completion by mid-2018
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
Permit Management Tracking System, Phase 2 – implementation of land management module	Completion by mid-2018
Green Infrastructure Plan – staff support for grant funded study of improved green infrastructure elements	Completion by mid-2018
Floodplain Management Ordinance Revisions – consideration of revisions to the Zoning Ordinance to address new floodplain management policies	Completion by late-2018
Neighborhood Resilience Overlays – test process in Lamberts Point and Colonial Place/Riverview neighborhoods	Completion by late-2018
New General Plan – preparation of public outreach strategy for new comprehensive plan	Completion by late-2018
Reservoir Protection Overlay – consideration of an overlay district to address development within drinking water reservoir watersheds	Completion by late-2018
Community Rating System strategy – submittal of paperwork necessary to obtain improved flood insurance rates for Norfolk residents	Completion by late-2018
Emergency/Re-Build Ordinance – ordinance or code language regulating how properties may be re-built in a more resilient manner	Completion by late-2018
Development Guide – document for developers on requirements and steps through city approval processes	Completion by late-2018
TIDE Light Rail Extension Studies – Westside Alternatives Analysis	Completion by late-2018
Administrative approval for some Certificates of Appropriateness	Completion by

Project	Projected Project Timeframe
	late-2018
Wards Corner Area Plan – preparation of a state-funded Urban Development Area plan for Wards Corner	Completion by early-2019
Parking Ordinance Revision – consideration of revisions to the parking provisions of the Zoning Ordinance	Completion by mid-2019
Neighborhoods Pattern Book – update of the Pattern Book for Norfolk Neighborhoods to reflect new Zoning Ordinance	Completion by mid-2019
Inclusionary Housing Policy – preparation of a policy to encourage the development of inclusionary housing in new development	Completion by mid-2019
Park Place Comprehensive Rezoning Project – consideration of revised zoning districts for portions of the Park Place neighborhood	Completion by mid-2019
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
Joint Planning Commission/City Council meeting(s)	Periodic briefing(s)
Joint Planning Commission/School Board meeting(s)	Periodic briefing(s)
Joint Planning Commission/Economic Development Authority meeting(s)	Periodic briefing(s)