



City Planning Commission

2018 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 28, 2019

Department of City Planning

Chairman's Message

February 28, 2019

To the Honorable Mayor and Council
City of Norfolk, Virginia

Ladies and Gentlemen:

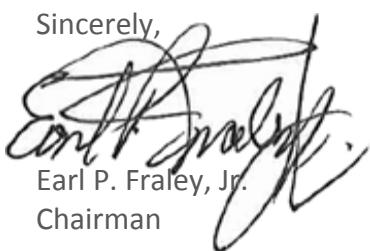
On behalf of the City Planning Commission I am pleased to forward this summary report of activities for 2018. This was a transitional year for the Commission, one that saw the adoption of Norfolk's first new zoning ordinance in a generation. As a group, we were proud to be involved in such a monumental project and we are excited to see its implementation continue.

2018 was also an active year in terms of workload. The Planning Commission reviewed 167 public hearing items and 34 (of 108 reviewed by ARB) design review items forwarded by the Architectural Review Board. It was a good year for Norfolk as a whole. Despite predictions to the contrary, the new zoning ordinance did not have a chilling effect on construction – residential building permits, including those for single-family homes – were in line with 2017.

But as proud as we are of our accomplishments in 2018, the Planning Commission is even more excited for what 2019 will bring. We look forward to working with City Council and staff to begin the physical transformation of the St. Paul's area. We look forward to completing our work on the Wards Corner Area Plan and the Commercial and Mixed-Use Pattern Book. And we look forward to kicking off a major rewrite of the comprehensive plan.

We remain thankful for the opportunity to serve this great city. It is an exciting time to be a part of the planning process in Norfolk. 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 2018 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.

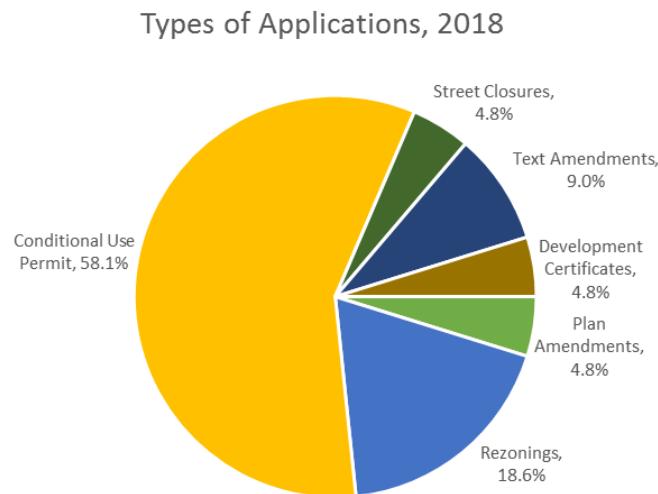
The Planning Commission met on 21 separate occasions in 2018, convening the second and fourth Thursday of each month, excepting November and December, where only one meeting was held to accommodate the holidays, and in September, when one meeting was canceled due to Hurricane Florence. Staff also conducted 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	19	2
Ramona Austin	15	6
Matthew Hales	14	7
Nikita Houchins	17	4
Kevin Murphy	21	0
Dr. Dan Neumann, Vice Chairman	19	2
Kathryn Shelton	16	5

In 2018, the Planning Commission processed 167 planning and zoning applications and 108 Architectural Review Board items. Additionally, the Commission considered presentations on many other topics throughout the year, including guidelines for window replacements in historic districts, the Commercial Pattern Book, the new Norfolk & Western historic overlay district, the Wards Corner area plan, proposed text amendments regarding form standards in the Traditional character district, implementation of the National Disaster Resilience Competition grant and the Harbor Park brownfields grant, the Naval Base light rail extension study, the Green Infrastructure Plan, short-term rental provisions, complete streets, bike and scooter share programs, the St. Paul's Area, Downtown outdoor dining design guidelines, Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel expansion, Census 2020, numerous presentations on the implementation of the new zoning ordinance, and the first five-year implementation review of *plaNorfolk2030*.

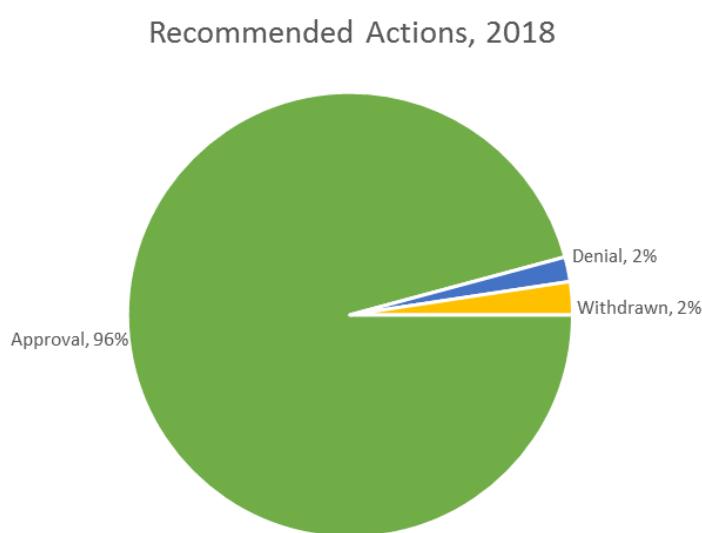
Applications Reviewed in 2018 – Planning & Zoning

The 167 planning and zoning applications submitted to the Planning Commission in 2017 represent a significant increase from the 141 applications reviewed in 2017. Special exception/conditional use permit applications, about 58% 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 2018.



CPC Recommendation						
	Total	Percent	Approval	Denial	Withdrawn	% Approval
Plan Amendments	8	4.8%	7	0	1	87.5%
Rezonings	31	18.6%	29	1	1	93.5%
Conditional Use Permits*	97	58.1%	94	2	1	96.9%
Street Closures	8	4.8%	8	0	0	100.0%
Text Amendments	15	9.0%	14	0	1	93.3%
Development Certificates	8	4.8%	8	0	0	100.0%
Total	167	100.0%	160	3	4	95.8%

*Known as Special Exceptions until March 1, 2018

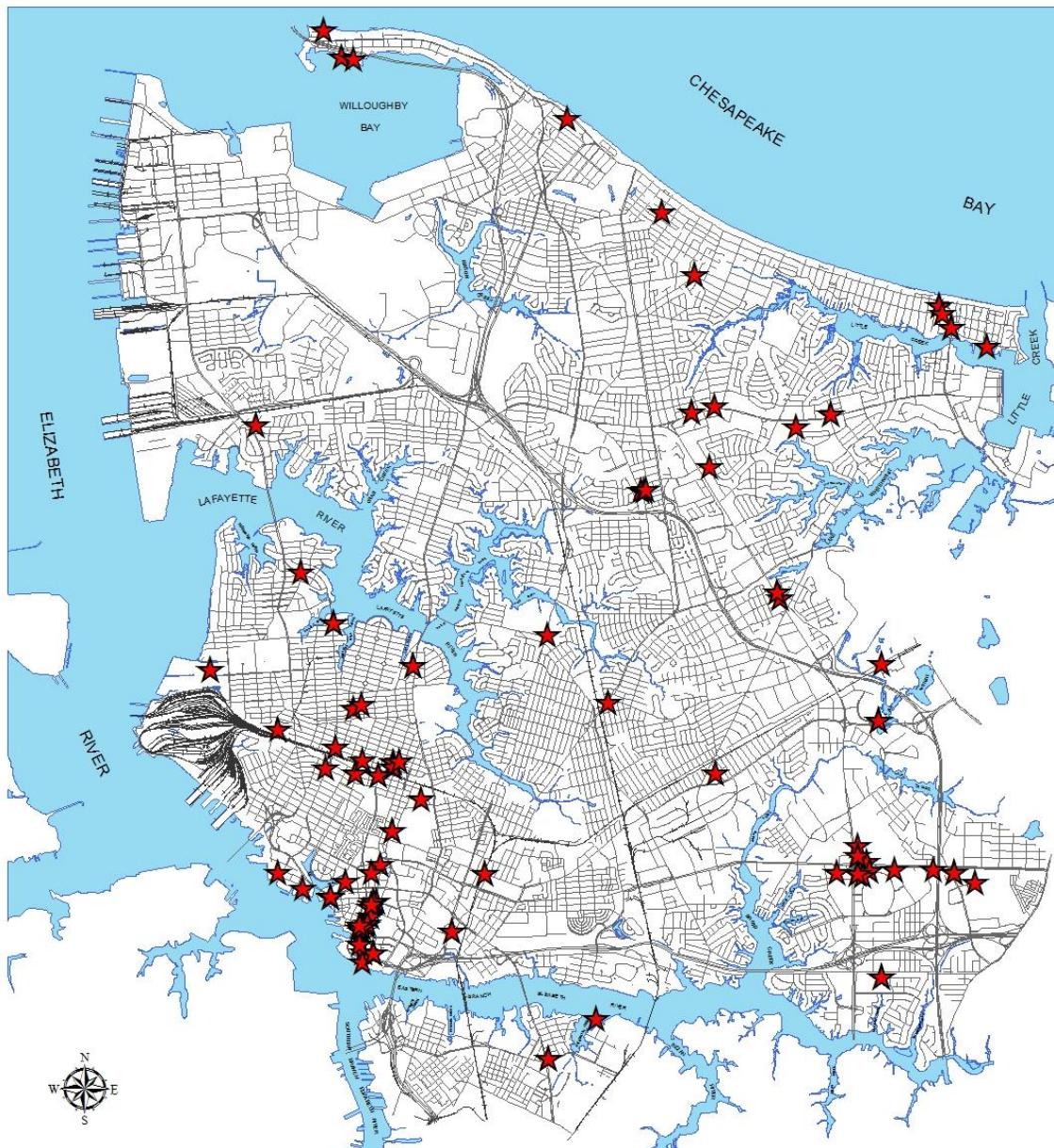


The Planning Commission recommended approval on 95.8% of the applications submitted in 2018, voting to recommend denial of three items. Four items were withdrawn before the Commission could vote on them. The high approval rating from both the City Planning Commission and the City Council is due in large part to the efforts of staff to advise and guide applicants through the pre-approval process.

Applications Reviewed in 2018 – Planning & Zoning

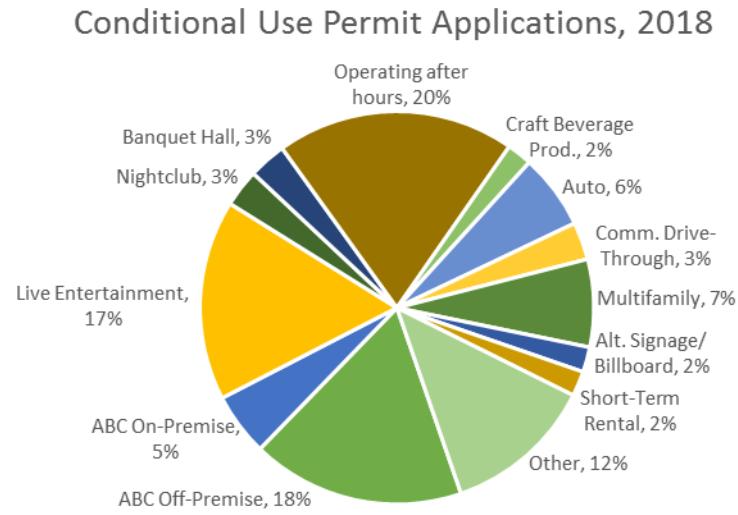
The map below illustrates the geographic distribution of planning and zoning applications reviewed by the Planning Commission in 2018. Not reflected on this map are the 16 items that affected either the entire City or all or part of a neighborhood.

Planning and Zoning Applications, 2018



Conditional Use Permits Reviewed in 2018

Conditional use permits (called special exceptions until March 1, 2018) are the most common type of application considered by the Planning Commission, representing 58% of all agenda items in 2018. In a shift from prior years only 46% of those applications relate to the sale of alcoholic beverages compared to about 65% in recent years – likely due to the easing of rules regarding alcohol sales in the new Zoning Ordinance. In total, 97% of special exception applications received were recommended for approval, a typical figure.



	Total	Percent	CPC Recommendation			% Approval
			Approval	Denial	Withdrawn	
ABC Off-Premise	17	17.5%	17	0	0	100.0%
ABC On-Premise	5	5.2%	5	0	0	100.0%
Live Entertainment	16	16.5%	15	0	1	93.8%
Nightclub	3	3.1%	2	1	0	66.7%
Banquet Hall	3	3.1%	3	0	0	100.0%
Operating After Hours	19	19.6%	19	0	0	100.0%
Craft Beverage Prod.	2	2.1%	2	0	0	100.0%
Auto Sales/Service/Rental	6	6.2%	6	0	0	100.0%
Comm. Drive-Through	3	3.1%	3	0	0	100.0%
Multifamily	7	7.2%	7	0	0	100.0%
Alt. Signage/Billboard	2	2.1%	1	1	0	50.0%
Short-Term Rental	2	2.1%	2	0	0	100.0%
Other*	12	12.4%	12	0	0	100.0%
Total	97	100.0%	94	2	1	96.9%

*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, the new Ordinance created several new permit types to allow for greater scrutiny of select applications. 19 businesses (almost all restaurants) requested a conditional use permit for operating after normal hours. Three requests for banquet halls and three for nightclubs (both newly separated from the “entertainment” category) were also submitted. Another 7 requests were for multifamily developments of over 24 units (a new rule that generally replaces many of the prior planned development requests). Commission approved all but one of these 32 requests.

Applications Reviewed in 2018 – Council Disposition

The following table reflects Norfolk City Council's actions relative to the Planning Commission's recommendations, by application type. Of the 163 items acted upon by the Planning Commission in 2018, 98.1% were recommended for approval. Similarly, 98.7% of the 158 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	7	0	100.0%	6	0	0	100.0%	1
Rezonings	29	1	96.6%	29	0	0	100.0%	1
Cond. Use Permits	94	2	97.9%	93	1	1	97.8%	1
Street Closures	8	0	100.0%	8	0	0	100.0%	0
Text Amendments	14	0	100.0%	14	0	0	100.0%	0
Dev. Certificates	8	0	100.0%	6**	0	0	100.0%	0
Total	160	3	98.1%	156	1	1	98.7%	3

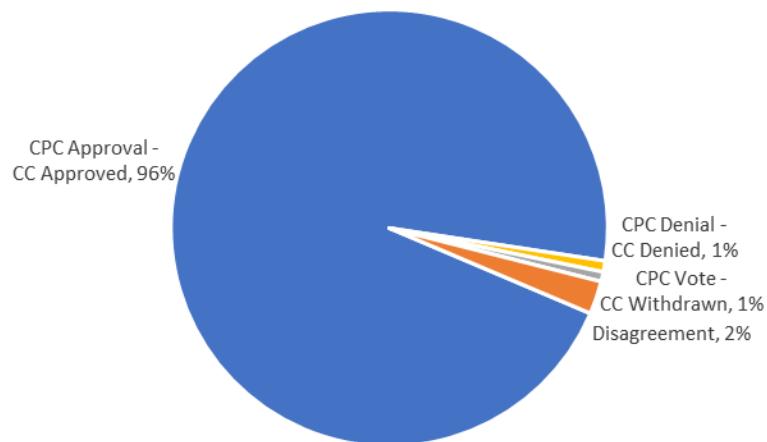
* As of February 27, 2019.

** Two approved development certificates did not request waivers from the standards of the district, meaning they only required Planning Commission approval.

In 2018, Planning Commission and City Council differed on two items. Both items – a rezoning for a church parking lot in Larchmont and a conditional use permit for a digital billboard on E. Virginia Beach Boulevard – were recommended for denial by Planning Commission but ultimately approved by City Council. Another conditional use permit request was recommended by Planning Commission but withdrawn prior to Council – because it was rendered unnecessary by the adoption of the new Zoning Ordinance.

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% – 24 of 940 – of items.

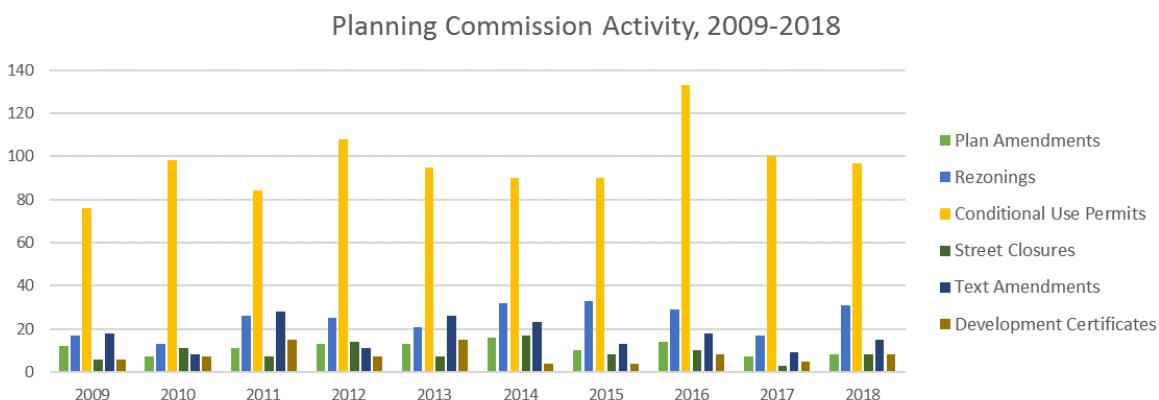
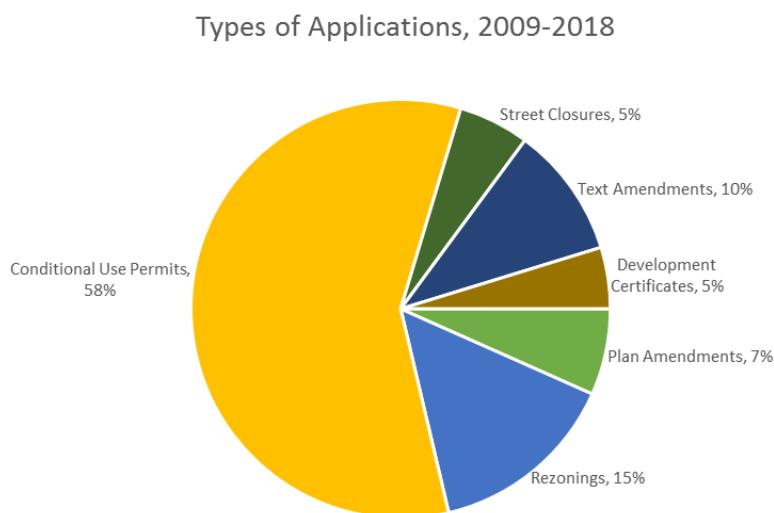
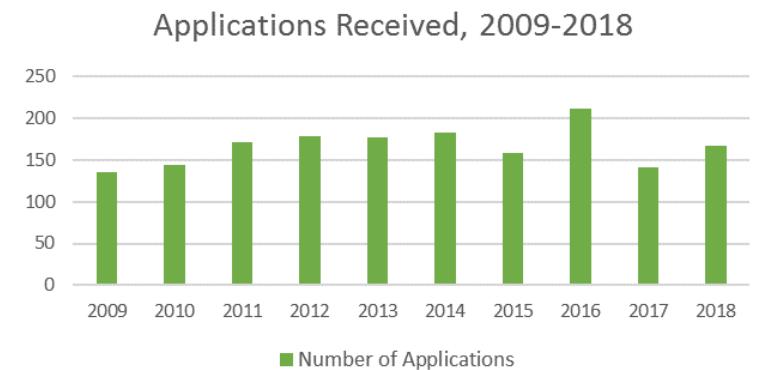
Planning Commission and City Council Actions, 2013-2018



Applications Reviewed – 2009-2018

The number of applications to the Planning Commission recovered in 2018 from the large decline of 2017. Applications rose from 141 in 2017 to 167 in 2018, right on the 10-year average of 166.5 per year. The bulk of the increase from 2017 was a near doubling of the number of rezoning requests processed. For the ten-year period, a total of 1,665 applications were submitted to the Commission.

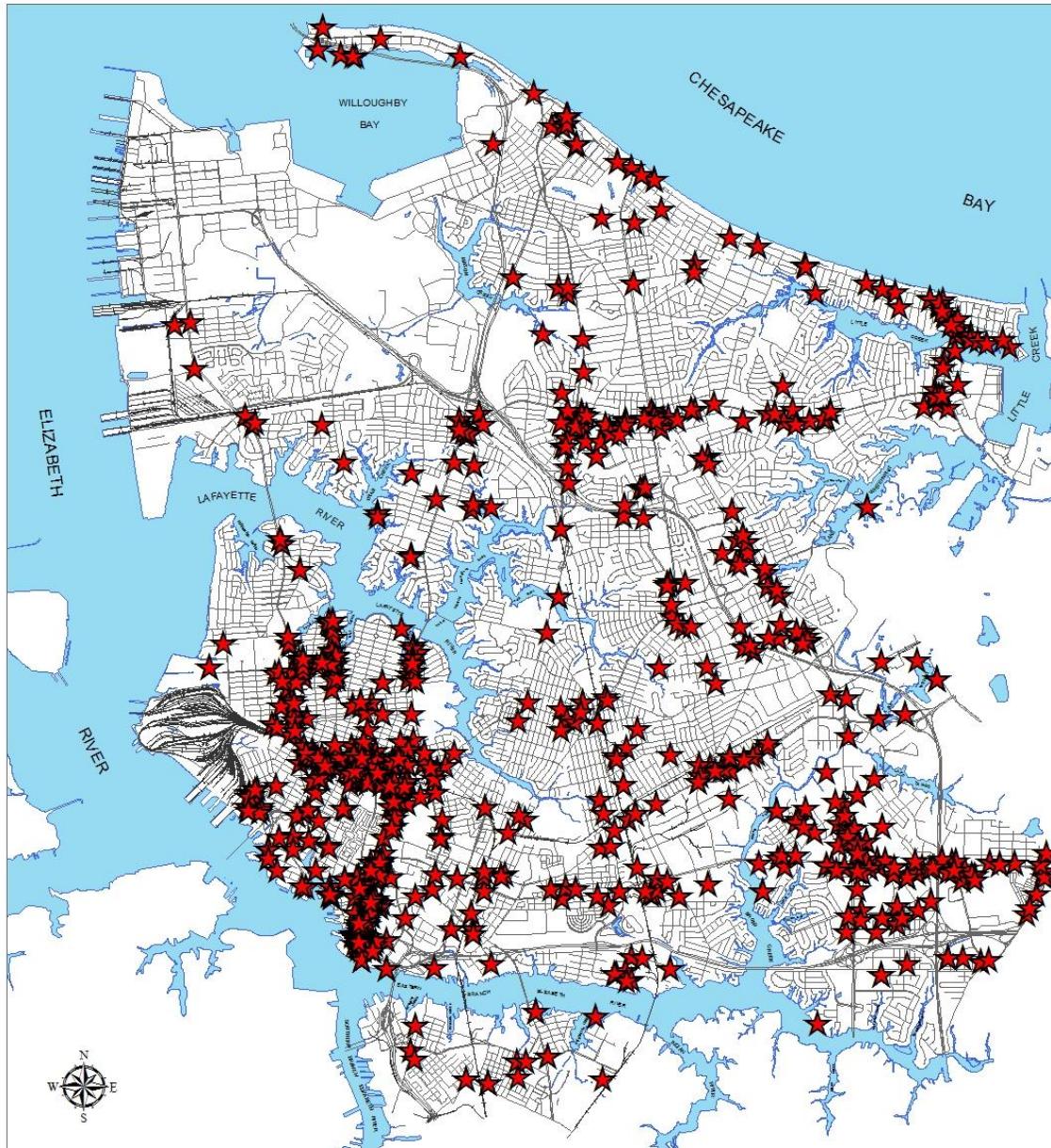
The conditional use permit (formerly known as the special exception) has remained the most common application type for the entire 10-year period, consistently making up at least half of all applications each year. All other types of applications vary greatly from year-to-year. Despite some year-over-year indications, there appear to be few obvious trends in the data beyond a general leveling off since the last recession.



Applications Reviewed – 2009-2018

The map below illustrates the geographic distribution of applications reviewed by the Planning Commission between 2009 and 2018.

Planning and Zoning Applications, 2009 - 2018



Architectural Review Board Items – 2018

The Architectural Review Board reviewed 108 items in 2018. ARB items are different from other items reviewed by the Planning Commission, in that the Planning Commission only reviews selected items. ARB has the final say on all Certificates of Appropriateness, meaning the Commission only saw 34 of those. About 96% of the items reviewed in 2018 received approval, with four items being withdrawn prior to being heard by the ARB.

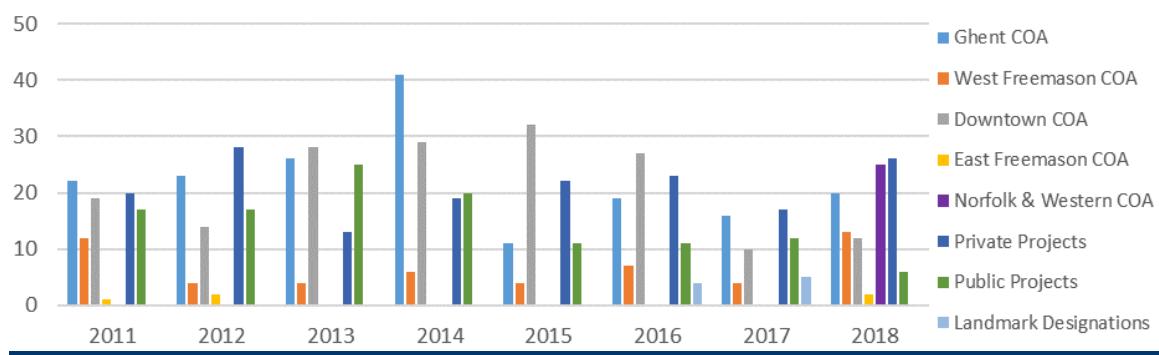
	Total	Percent	Approved	Denied	Withdrawn	% Approved
Ghent COA*	20	18.5%	18	0	2	90.0%
W. Freemason COA*	13	12.0%	13	0	0	100.0%
Downtown COA*	12	11.1%	12	0	0	100.0%
E. Freemason COA*	2	1.9%	2	0	0	100.0%
Norfolk & Western COA*	25	23.1%	25	0	0	100.0%
Private Projects	26	24.1%	24	0	2	92.3%
Public Projects	6	5.6%	6	0	0	100.0%
Landmark Designations	4	3.7%	4	0	0	100.0%
Total	108	100.0%	104	0	4	96.3%

* Certificate of Appropriateness



Averaging just under 92 items per year since 2011, the 108 items reviewed in 2018 makes it one of the busiest years on record, recovering significantly from 2017's low number. The bulk of that increase, however, was due to a new review type, the Norfolk & Western COA, which only became available in March when the local historic district was created. Nearly every other application type was at or near record lows for the period.

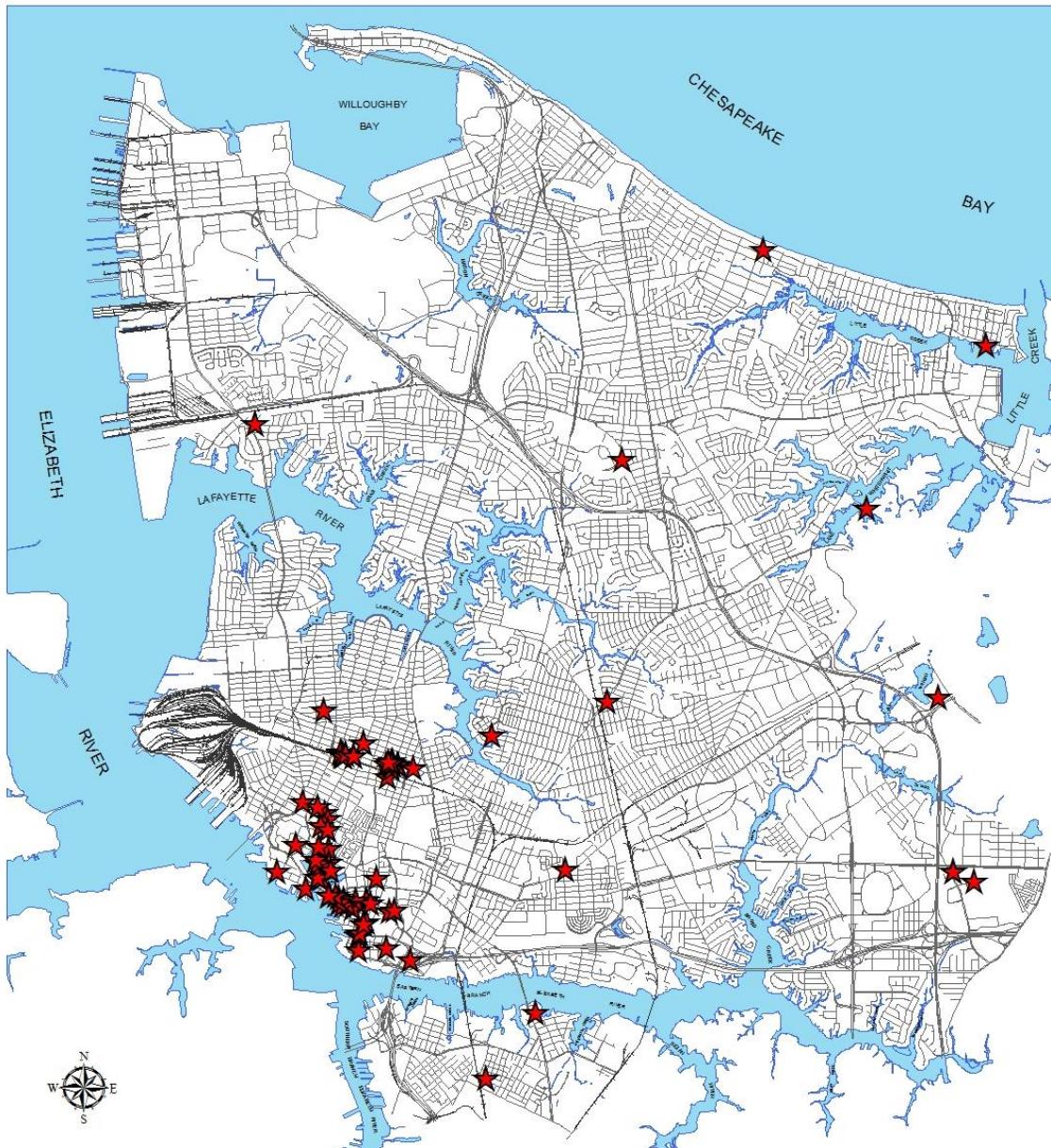
Design Review/ARB Activity, 2011-2018



Architectural Review Board Items – 2018

The map below illustrates the geographic distribution of the Architectural Review Board applications reviewed in 2018.

Architectural Review Board Applications, 2018

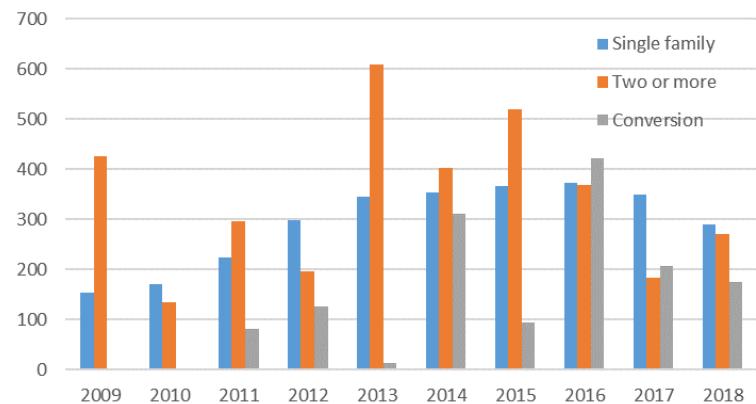


Building Permits Issued – 2018

The net total of new housing units permitted increased slightly in 2018 to 526, a slight increase over 2017. 735 new units were permitted while 209 units were demolished – both figures within percentage points of 2017.

Residential permits issued in 2018 included 290 single-family homes (39%), 271 units in multifamily developments (37%), and 174 units in conversion projects (24%).

New Housing Units by Type, 2009-2018



The numbers above include several major residential projects that received building permits in 2018. These included the following projects:

First Permits Issued	Project	Location
January	Boys and Girls Club apartment conversion – 40 units	2607 Colonial Avenue
July	Old Dominion Peanut apartment conversion – 84 units plus commercial space	200-block W. 24 th and 25 th Streets
September	New mixed-use building – 5 units plus commercial space	4013 Colley Avenue
November	Villa Marina Apartments – 105 units	8150 Shore Drive
November	Pinewell Station Apartments – 145 units	719 E. Ocean View Ave
November	Apartment conversion – 16 units	639 W. 24 th Street
November	Apartment conversion – 27 units	619 W. 24 th Street

Just over 800 non-residential building permits were also issued in 2018, including several major projects, including:

First Permits Issued	Project	Location
March	Sentara Cancer Center	6229 E. Virginia Beach Boulevard
April	Tidewater Drive Storage Center phase 2	6555 Tidewater Drive
April	Sentara Norfolk General renovations	600 Gresham Drive
May	Glass Light Hotel renovation	201 Granby Street
June	EVMS Administration Building	315 Colley Avenue
September	Norfolk International Airport renovations	2200 Norview Avenue

Projects Completed – 2018

2018 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 2018.



Projects Completed – 2018

Included on these pages are several new developments in Downtown Norfolk, including the Barry Art Museum at Old Dominion University, the SkyWheel at Waterside Live, townhouses in Ocean View, Five-Eleven York in Freemason, the Broad Creek Library, Museum Apartments in the Arts District, Starbuck's on Colonial Avenue, International Student House near ODU, the Roebuck apartment conversion in Fort Norfolk, Royal Farms on E. Virginia Beach Boulevard, and First Colony Flats on 22nd Street.



Plans and Other Projects

As has been the case for several years now, the Planning Commission's worksession agendas – where they advise on and consider major projects like new plans and ordinance changes – were as busy as ever in 2018. Leading the charge were discussions centered on the implementation of the new zoning ordinance, which was adopted by City Council on January 23rd and went live on March 1st. Several additional projects, though, required serious Planning Commission attention. These included continued work on the Wards Corner Area Plan, new regulations for short-term rentals, and the first five-year implementation review of *plaNorfolk2030*.

The Wards Corner Area Plan kicked off in November 2017 with a \$120,000 grant from the Commonwealth's Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment and a goal of incorporating traditional neighborhood design into a re-imagined community with walkable, bikeable, green streets with a mix of housing options, uses, and incomes. Two public meetings were conducted in 2018 – one in February to review development concepts and one in September to review the final vision plan. Final drafting of the plan is underway, and it is expected to be ready for adoption in early 2019.



In September, Planning Commission considered a major zoning text revision to more broadly permit short-term rental units (both homestays and vacation rentals, depending on location) in the City. Such units had previously only been permitted through the Conditional Use Permit process in very limited locations. The amendments expanded the range of properties where the units might be permitted and outlined a compliance and enforcement program to ensure that they operate appropriately. A registry program will be established in 2019 to allow for streamlined approval – without Conditional Use Permit – where applicants can meet the basic standards, relying on the more thorough review only for more challenging sites and operations.

The first five-year review of *plaNorfolk2030* took place in the spring, evaluating the entire plan to determine the need for major revisions. Staff reviewed with Commission select existing conditions data, new state mandates, and new City initiatives, recommending a major update to focus on mobility, inclusive economic development, and healthy communities. The formal update process is anticipated to kick off in early 2019.

Impact of the New Zoning Ordinance

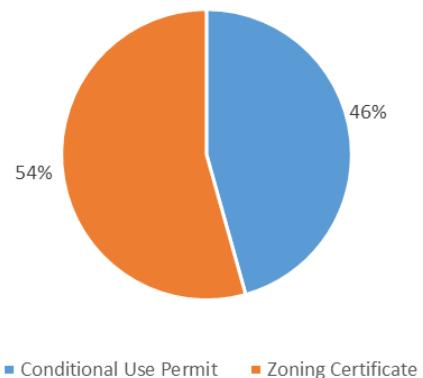
Norfolk adopted a new zoning ordinance on January 23, 2018 and it went live on March 1, 2018. This was the first completely new ordinance in a generation, the last being adopted in 1992. As such, staff and the community at-large expected to see some changes, while understanding that successful implementation would also mean that other things would remain the same.

One of the most prominent goals for the new ordinance was to streamline approval processes. A great example of this is the new policy permitting restaurants to serve alcohol without City Council approval, provided they limit their hours and entertainment options. This should result in a reduced number of restaurants going through the conditional use permit process. To date, that has been the case, as 25 of the 49 restaurant applicants (49%) in 2018 required just a zoning certificate rather than a conditional use permit. Prior to the new ordinance, all 49 applicants would have required a conditional use permit.

Another prominent goal for the new ordinance was to increase the resiliency of new development in the city, both in terms of flood resilience and in ensuring that new development conforms with the surrounding development. This goal will necessarily increase the cost of constructing homes in Norfolk. However, the expectation was that such cost increases would make the structures more resilient, reducing long-term costs.

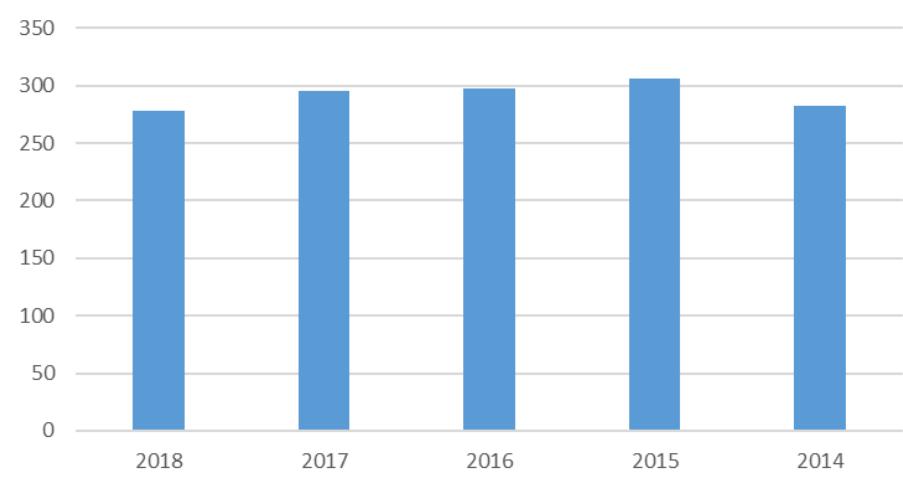
As such, the number of homes permitted in Norfolk should remain relatively constant. That appears to have been the case, as the 276 single family (detached) homes permitted in 2018 compares favorably to the 296 permitted in 2017 and to those permitted in prior years.

Restaurants with ABC Approval - 2018



■ Conditional Use Permit ■ Zoning Certificate

Single Family Dwellings Permitted - 2014-2018



Review of 2018 Work Program

The 2017 Annual Report was the fourth to include a work program for the upcoming year, 2018 in this case. The 2018 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, most of the projects listed for 2018 have either been completed or are underway and on track for completion.

Project	Status
Neighborhood Resilience Overlays – development of a process for completing individual neighborhood resilience overlays	Complete
Short-Term Rental Ordinance Revisions – consideration of revisions to address short-term rentals in the Zoning Ordinance	Complete
Zoning Ordinance Maintenance – consideration of necessary revisions to Zoning Ordinance	Three “cleanups” completed
Census 2020 LUCA – project to ensure accuracy of addresses within Norfolk in preparation for Census 2020	Complete
Commercial Pattern Book – preparation of pattern book to guide development patterns in commercial zoning districts	Completion by mid-2019
Joint Land Use Study – regional (local government, NGO, and U.S. Military) study of the impacts of sea level rise on area military facilities	In process
Permit Management Tracking System – implementation of land management module	Completion by late-2019
Green Infrastructure Plan – staff support for grant funded study of improved green infrastructure elements	Complete
Floodplain Management Ordinance Revisions – consideration of revisions to the Zoning Ordinance to address new floodplain management policies	Waiting for FEMA final regulations
Neighborhood Resilience Overlays – test process in Lamberts Point and Colonial Place/Riverview neighborhoods	In process in Col. Place/Riverview
New General Plan – preparation of public outreach strategy for new comprehensive plan	Process being developed
Reservoir Protection Overlay – consideration of an overlay district to address development within drinking water reservoir watersheds	Completion by late-2019
Community Rating System strategy – submittal of paperwork necessary to obtain improved flood insurance rates for Norfolk residents	Completion by late-2019
Emergency/Re-Build Ordinance – ordinance or code language regulating how properties may be re-built in a more resilient manner	Coordinating with Emer. Mgt.
Development Guide – document for developers on requirements and steps through city approval processes	Complete
TIDE Light Rail Extension Studies – Westside Alternatives Analysis	Complete
Administrative approval for some Certificates of Appropriateness	In process
Wards Corner Area Plan – preparation of a state-funded Urban Development Area plan for Wards Corner	Completion by early-2019

City Planning Commission 2018 Report to City Council

Project	Status
Parking Ordinance Revision – consideration of revisions to the parking provisions of the Zoning Ordinance	Not started
Neighborhoods Pattern Book – update of the Pattern Book for Norfolk Neighborhoods to reflect new Zoning Ordinance	Not started
Inclusionary Housing Policy – preparation of a policy to encourage the development of inclusionary housing in new development	Completion by mid-2020
Park Place Comprehensive Rezoning Project – consideration of revised zoning districts for portions of the Park Place neighborhood	Not started
HUD Natural Disaster Resilience Competition Grant – staff support for the planning and implementation of resilience improvements	Staff support as needed
EPA Brownfields Grant – staff support for a market and redevelopment feasibility study of the Harbor Park and Fort Norfolk areas	Staff support as needed
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)

2019 Planning Commission Work Program

As the Planning Commission transitions into another year, there are many projects currently underway or planned for initiation in 2019. 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, it is intended to be a snapshot at the beginning of the year of what activities are anticipated.

Project	Projected Project Timeframe
Wards Corner Area Plan – preparation of a state-funded Urban Development Area plan for Wards Corner	Completion by early-2019
Preparation of construction detail sheets to streamline narrow lot development process	Completion by early-2019
Neighborhood Resilience Overlays – complete Colonial Place-Riverview project	Completion by mid-2019
Commercial Pattern Book – preparation of pattern book to guide development patterns in commercial zoning districts	Completion by mid-2019
Permit Management Tracking System – implementation of online portal for permit requests and payments	Completion by mid-2019
Emergency/Re-Build Ordinance – ordinance or code language regulating how properties may be re-built in a more resilient manner	Completion by mid-2019
Enhanced Community Outreach on Flooding – PPI (program for public information) and STiR (start-up in residence) projects	Completion by mid-2019
Parking Ordinance Revision – consideration of revisions to the parking provisions of the Zoning Ordinance	Completion by mid-2019
Downtown Norfolk Outdoor Dining Design Guidelines – preparation of design guidelines and a streamlined approval process	Completion by mid-2019
Neighborhood Resilience Overlays – kickoff new project (location to be determined)	Completion by late-2019
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 late-2019
Short-Term Rental Program – implement registration, tracking, and enforcement system	Completion by late-2019
Community Rating System – floodplain management code revisions to improve CRS score	Completion by late-2019
Parking Regulations – consideration of revisions to parking regulations in the traditional character district	Completion by late-2019
Citywide Historic Survey – project kickoff	Completion by late-2019
plaNorfolk2050 – completion of existing conditions report, work plan, and outreach strategy	Completion by late-2019
Insurance Services Office (ISO) Review – 4-year review of Norfolk's building code implementation	Completion by late-2019

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Project	Projected Project Timeframe
Reservoir Protection Overlay – consideration of an overlay district to address development within drinking water reservoir watersheds	Completion by late-2019
Implementing administrative approval for some Certificates of Appropriateness	Completion by late-2019
Preparation of Norfolk & Western Historic District guidelines	Completion by late-2019
TIDE Light Rail Extension Studies – Eastside Environmental Impact Study kickoff	Completion by late-2019
Multifamily Design Principles – Preparation of a policy document to guide development of new multifamily housing throughout the City	Completion by late-2019
Planning Commission Training	Completion by early-2020
Permit Management Tracking System – implementation of land use management module	Completion by early-2020
Census 2020 – creation and support of complete count committee	Completion by mid-2020
Inclusionary Housing Policy – preparation of a policy to encourage the development of inclusionary housing in new development	Completion by mid-2020
Zoning Ordinance Maintenance – consideration of necessary revisions to Zoning Ordinance	Ongoing
Neighborhood Planning Processes – staff support for various efforts	Ongoing
Major development Projects – staff support for various projects	Ongoing
Support for Economic Development in implementing inclusionary/diverse economic development strategy	Ongoing
HUD Natural Disaster Resilience Competition Grant – staff support for the planning and implementation of resilience improvements	Ongoing
EPA Brownfields Grant – staff support for a market and redevelopment feasibility study of the Harbor Park area	Ongoing
Joint Planning Commission/City Council meeting(s)	As needed
Joint Planning Commission/School Board meeting(s)	As needed
Joint Planning Commission/Economic Development Authority meeting(s)	As needed
Joint Planning Commission/Architectural Review Board meeting(s)	As needed

Note: The work program above only reflects items that may involve City Planning Commission in some fashion. The Norfolk Department of City Planning is responsible for additional projects and processes, including site plan review, CBPA and E&S law oversight, building permit issuance and inspections, the Development Services Center, and boards and commissions including the Board of Zoning Appeals, the Board of Building Code Appeals, and the Wetlands Board.