

A Vision For The Next Decade DOWNTOWN NORFOLK 2030

This plan update continues Norfolk's tradition of using physical planning as a primary tool for economic development. As in the previous five updates, *synergy* — using every project to create another — will continue to be the Downtown Plan's driving force. Public investment will be used strategically to catalyze private development to create vibrant urban spaces and resilient districts.

THE KEY DRIVERS FOR THE 2030 UPDATE

1 Coastal Resilience: In response to sea level rise, green infrastructure will provide water management and create beautiful urban spaces and amenities for Downtown and adjacent communities.

2 Slow Traffic to Improve Walkability: Improving facilities for walking, bicycling, and transit will put pedestrians first, improve safety, and create more travel options Downtown.

3 East-West Connections: Infrastructure improvements and new development will create pedestrian-friendly connections between the east and west sides of the Downtown area.

Interconnected framework of pedestrian-scale streets, urban rooms, and parks: The existing network should be extended to areas without pedestrian-friendly streets and enhanced with new trees and native landscape to create a more resilient environment. Additional open space amenities should be provided, especially for families and children, both in the public realm and as part of new development.

4 New Development: All new development should contribute to the character of urban spaces by providing active uses that animate the public realm. New development must focus on building diversity, equity and inclusion through mixed-income residential and by providing spaces for small businesses to grow and thrive. Public art should be encouraged to enhance and enrich resident's lives and bring people together.

Previous updates have focused on revitalizing the Downtown core by connecting it with the strengths in Freemason and the Waterfront. This update will rely on Downtown's success to reach across barriers and revitalize adjacent areas, including the communities east of St. Paul's Boulevard, the Harbor Park waterfront, the NEON District, and Fort Norfolk.



1980 Urban renewal had cleared large areas of blight. Some development in the core had been completed but was surrounded by empty land.



1990 Town Point Park and Waterside connected Downtown to the waterfront, but Granby Street remained nearly abandoned and surrounded by cleared land.



2000 New residential development connected the Freemason neighborhood to Granby Street. Tidewater Community College brought activity to Granby Street, and MacArthur Center reestablished Downtown as a retail destination.

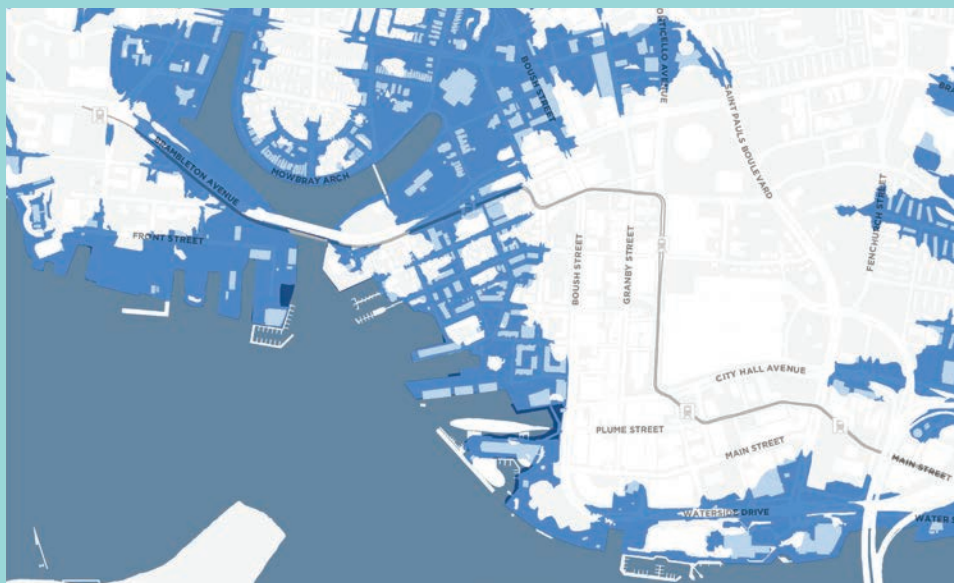


2010 Additional infill development along Boush Street, East Freemason Street and in the Downtown strengthened the east-west connections between the Downtown core and the Freemason neighborhood.

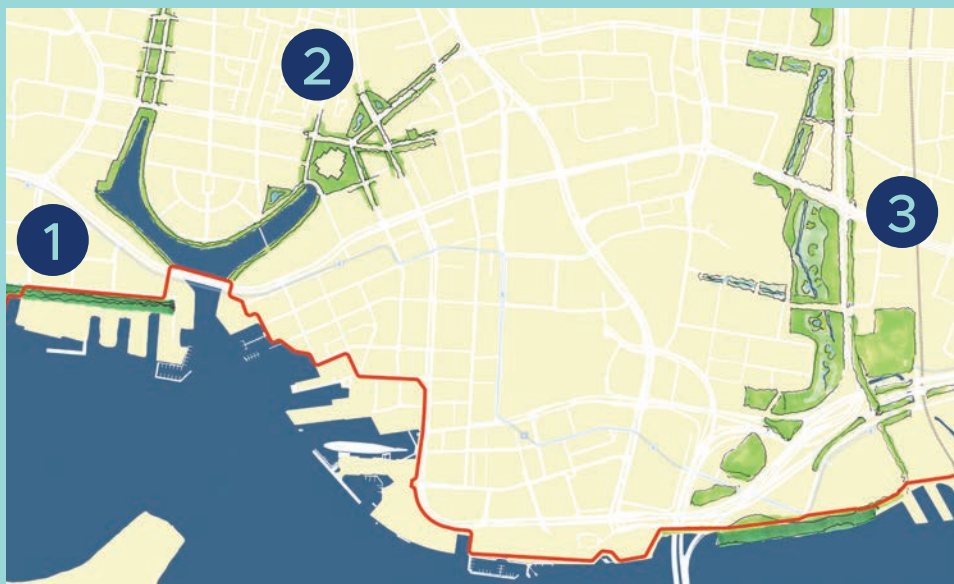


2020 The TIDE light rail system connected Downtown and the Sentara/EVMS/CHKD Medical Center. The Slover Library, Selden Market, and The Main Hotel and Conference Center, together with historic tax credit residential redevelopment strengthened Downtown as a dynamic urban

center. The Wells Fargo building and Monticello Station mixed-use development along Brambleton Avenue, and the formation and growth of the NEON District extended the active area of Downtown to the north.



TIDAL FLOODING: Affects residents and visitors during non-rain events (blue sky flooding) as well as during storms. Areas in the 100-year floodplain are shown in blue.



COASTAL PROTECTION: The red line represents the proposed location for flood protection structures as delineated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

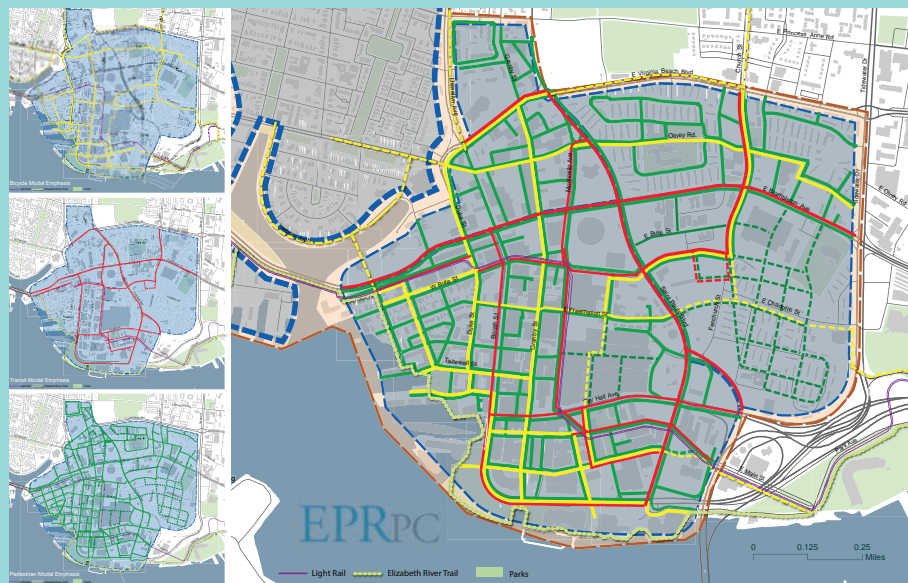
1 Coastal Resilience

Flooding will be mitigated with three interventions:

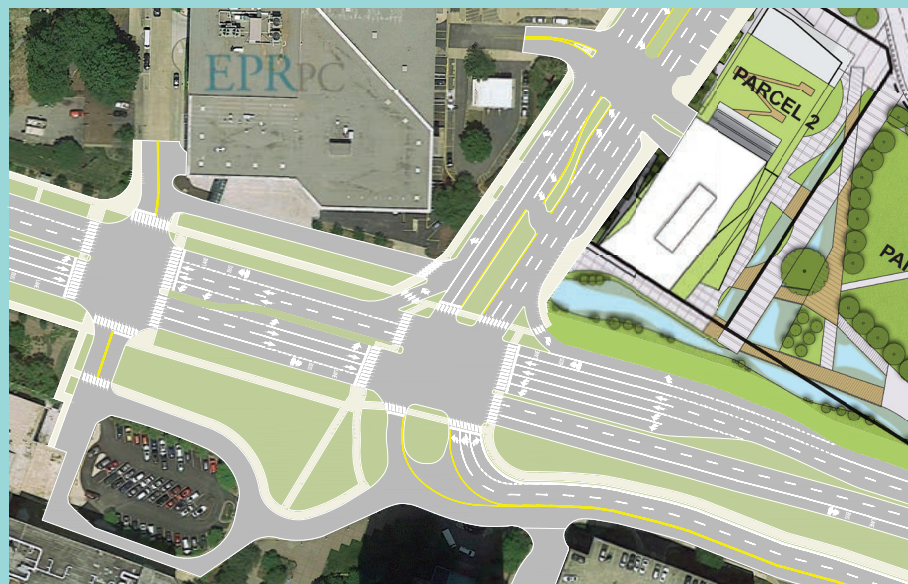
1 The Corps of Engineers is planning a flood wall along Front Street in Fort Norfolk, across the Brambleton Avenue Bridge, through West Freemason, past Nauticus, along the Downtown waterfront to Harbor Park.

2 Raised streets and resilient landscape in areas of low elevation, such as those around the Chrysler Museum of Art, Harrison Opera House and the NEON District will help alleviate the problems caused by flooding.

3 A major public open space along the alignment of Newtown Creek will help manage flooding for the new St. Paul's Area and Harbor Park. It will be critical for the City to control the outfall at the bottom of the Newton Creek watershed in order to both protect from incoming flood waters and allow the very large Newton Creek watershed to drain after rain or storm events.



MAP OF PEDESTRIAN, BICYCLE AND TRANSIT MODAL EMPHASIS



DEMONSTRATION PROJECT — WATERSIDE DRIVE: Improves facilities for walking, bicycling, and transit; emphasis should be placed on creating a gateway into Downtown.

2 Slow Traffic to Improve Walkability

Seamless networks for walking and bicycling throughout Downtown will create safe and comfortable streets. Transit facilities will connect Downtown's mix of destinations with surrounding neighborhoods. The Multimodal System Plan for Downtown is part of a larger citywide multimodal transportation master planning effort that will identify connected networks for all modes throughout the city.



FUTURE CONNECTIVITY DIAGRAM (2030): Shows good connections (green) on both the east and west sides of Downtown, and poor connections (red) where future attention should focus.

3 East-West Connections

Creating an interconnected network of pedestrian-friendly streets and open space is the most important step in creating a walkable city. This has been achieved in the western half of the Downtown and will be extended throughout the area. In combination with the Multimodal System Plan, the entire area will have pedestrian-friendly streets. It will require the addition of a significant number of trees to provide shade, lower temperatures in summer (heat island effect), clean the air, and lower carbon dioxide levels.



CURRENT (2020) INTERCONNECTED PEDESTRIAN NETWORK: Shows a clear distinction between the completed, landscaped streetscapes on the west vs. east side of Downtown.



FUTURE (2030) INTERCONNECTED PEDESTRIAN NETWORK: Connects the Downtown areas east and west and provides equitable, landscaped, pedestrian streets for all.



CHRYSLER MUSEUM AND OPERA HOUSE: Aerial view of the Chrysler Museum of Art's future expansion including a floodable resilience/sculpture park between the Chrysler Museum of Art, the Harrison Opera House, and adjacent residential development.

2030 The 2030 Update expands the area of the vision to include Fort Norfolk, the NEON District, the St. Paul's Area and the Harbor Park Waterfront with some key initiatives in the Downtown Core:

A FORT NORFOLK: The expansion of the Sentara/EVMS/CHKD Medical Center, the Harbor's Edge River Tower, and new waterfront residential developments are transforming Fort Norfolk into a high density "midtown" for the City with many economic development opportunities.

B NEON DISTRICT: The NEON District will be enhanced with creative streetscapes and new residential development. Resilient landscapes and street design will mitigate flooding and link the Chrysler Museum of Art and the Harrison Opera House to the heart of the NEON District.

C THE DOWNTOWN CORE: MacArthur Center will be opened up to create an extension of the interconnected network of pedestrian-friendly spaces. Modifications to the streets will increase walkability. The flood wall will be raised and extended along the waterfront.

D ST. PAUL'S AREA: The area will be transformed into a mixed-use, mixed-income community with an interconnected network of streets, a large-scale system of public open space, and connections to Downtown, the waterfront, and Norfolk State University.

E HARBOR PARK WATERFRONT: The Elizabeth River Trail will be enhanced to better connect Town Point Park along the waterfront to Harbor Park and Norfolk State University. It will be designed to protect the area from flooding and create major development sites.

DOWNTOWN NORFOLK

2030

INITIATIVES WITHIN THE FOUR FRAMEWORKS

DOWNTOWN CORE

Downtowns are never complete; they are always evolving as people, culture, and business models change. The Downtown core needs to be better connected — to the east to the St. Paul's Area and Harbor Park, to the south to the Waterfront, and to the north to the NEON District.

WATERSIDE DRIVE AND BOUSH STREET

Waterside Drive and Boush Street have a barrier effect on the Downtown as a result of a 1960s federal highway project. Decades of beautification projects have still not tamed this barrier. A new intersection at Commercial Place will slow traffic and make a new connection across Waterside Drive. Future initiatives will include a raised and extended flood wall along the waterfront, making it necessary to adapt access to the Waterside waterfront. Town Point Park will need to include more year-round, family-oriented amenities to serve the growing Downtown population and retain young families.

MacArthur Center

In 1999, the 11 million square-foot MacArthur Center reestablished Downtown as a regional retail destination and served as the catalyst for 20 years of development Downtown. In the course of the first two decades of the 21st century, retail changed so dramatically that MacArthur Center needs to be reconceived. Three options are being explored:

- 1 Open up the ends, light up the exterior and provide ground floor retail with offices above.
- 2 Leverage MacArthur Center's valuable assets: a 23-acre central site, 4,000 structured parking spaces, 400,000 square feet of anchor buildings, and a third anchor parcel ripe for redevelopment. "De-mall" the center to reopen Market Street as a landscaped, pedestrian-friendly promenade lined with mixed-use buildings, including residential uses. Line City Hall Avenue with micro retail, craft manufacturing and small services and businesses.
- 3 Demolish MacArthur Center and build a new urban district with a street pattern that re-opens Bank and Court Streets to connect Scope and Chrysler Hall with Main Street and the Waterfront.



The new urban address created by a reimagined MacArthur Center will link Granby Street and the TCC Campus to the revitalized St. Paul's Area and will provide a visual connection to St. Mary's Basilica. This dramatic vision for reestablishing east-west connections links business, education, neighborhoods, and opportunities for all. Development at the third anchor site should be a minimum of 12-stories, while redevelopment of the current mall along market street should be 5-7 stories, or a maximum of 85-foot tall.

HARBOR PARK WATERFRONT

The eastern improvements along the Elizabeth River Trail will include the "Berkley Bridge Underlook", new resilient parks along the shoreline, mixed-use development around Harbor Park, the realignment of Park Avenue, and the extension of City Hall Avenue and Tidewater Drive to Park Avenue.

ST. PAUL'S AREA

The areas east of the Downtown core have been isolated from Downtown, the waterfront, Norfolk State University, and the NEON District by high-speed roads and a street pattern designed to segregate the predominantly Black, low-income area. The City is making major investments to transform it into a mixed-income, mixed-use community with urban qualities similar to the Freemason neighborhood west of Downtown. The plan includes: traffic calming on major streets, a new interconnected network of pedestrian-scale streets, new housing for all incomes, and a beautiful public park that helps mitigate flooding.

NEON DISTRICT AND MUSEUM AREA

Major residential developments are underway in the NEON District (which includes the Auto Row Historic District) which will be supported by infrastructure improvements that include street lights, trees, resilient landscape, and creative uses of public art. The Chrysler Museum of Art's Master Plan includes resilient landscape and building additions with recommendations for raising streets and installing floodable landscape/sculpture parks between the Chrysler Museum of Art, the Harrison Opera House, and Virginia Beach Boulevard.

FORT NORFOLK

Three high rise buildings — the Harbor's Edge River Tower, EVMS' Waitzer Hall, and CHKD's mental health hospital — are establishing Fort Norfolk as an extension of Ghent and the Medical Complex. With a critical mass of redevelopment happening in this area, it is now time to explore options for turning underutilized properties into high-density, mixed-use development.



NEON DISTRICT: Twilight view looking west on Olney Road showing new streetscapes, residential buildings, and landscape features linking the Chrysler Museum of Art and the Harrison Opera House.



ST. PAUL'S AREA: View looking east along the new Freemason Street with mixed-use buildings and active ground floor uses.



ST. PAUL'S AREA: View of a typical residential street with resilient landscape and mix of townhouses and small apartment buildings.



ST. PAUL'S AREA: Aerial view over the resilience park looking west along an extended Freemason Street. This park provides amenities and educational opportunities for residents and is lined with houses and apartments.



ELIZABETH RIVER TRAIL: The Berkley Bridge Underlook will connect pedestrians and cyclists to the water.



FORT NORFOLK: Aerial view over Colley Avenue with the new Harbor's Edge River Tower on the left and EVMS' Waitzer Hall in the distance. Between the two are underutilized properties which could be transformed into new, high-density (5-7 story minimum), mixed-use development.



HARBOR PARK: View looking east with the Elizabeth River Trail's proposed "Berkley Bridge Underlook" in the foreground. A resilient waterfront park with high-rise, high-density development in a "green sponge" resilient setting stretches to the east toward the Harbor Park baseball stadium.