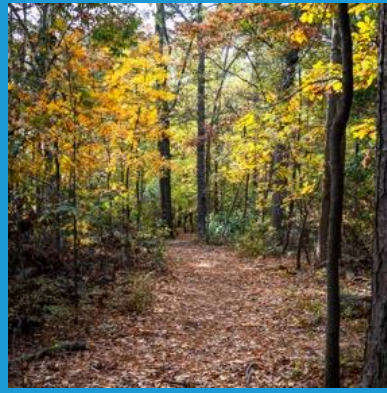




Virginia Beach's Open Space Strategies and Achieving Multiple Benefits

2026 Virginia Land Conservation & Greenways Conference

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Presentation Overview

1. Open Space Program History & Funding
2. Properties Acquired
3. Mission of the Committee
4. Candidate Site Selection Criteria
5. Needs Assessment
6. Evaluation for Multiple Benefits
7. Parks Serving Multiple Benefits

Open Space Program History

- Virginia Beach established the Open Space Program in 2001. The City Council took a big step forward by dedicating funding for both property acquisition and property development.
- The Open Space Program provides a solid foundation for our outdoor park system and has helped foster public/private partnerships, environmental stewardship, economic development, and healthy lifestyles throughout our community. Over one-third of Virginia Beach's park area was acquired between 2001 and 2015 at the expense of nearly \$50M.

Open Space Program Funding

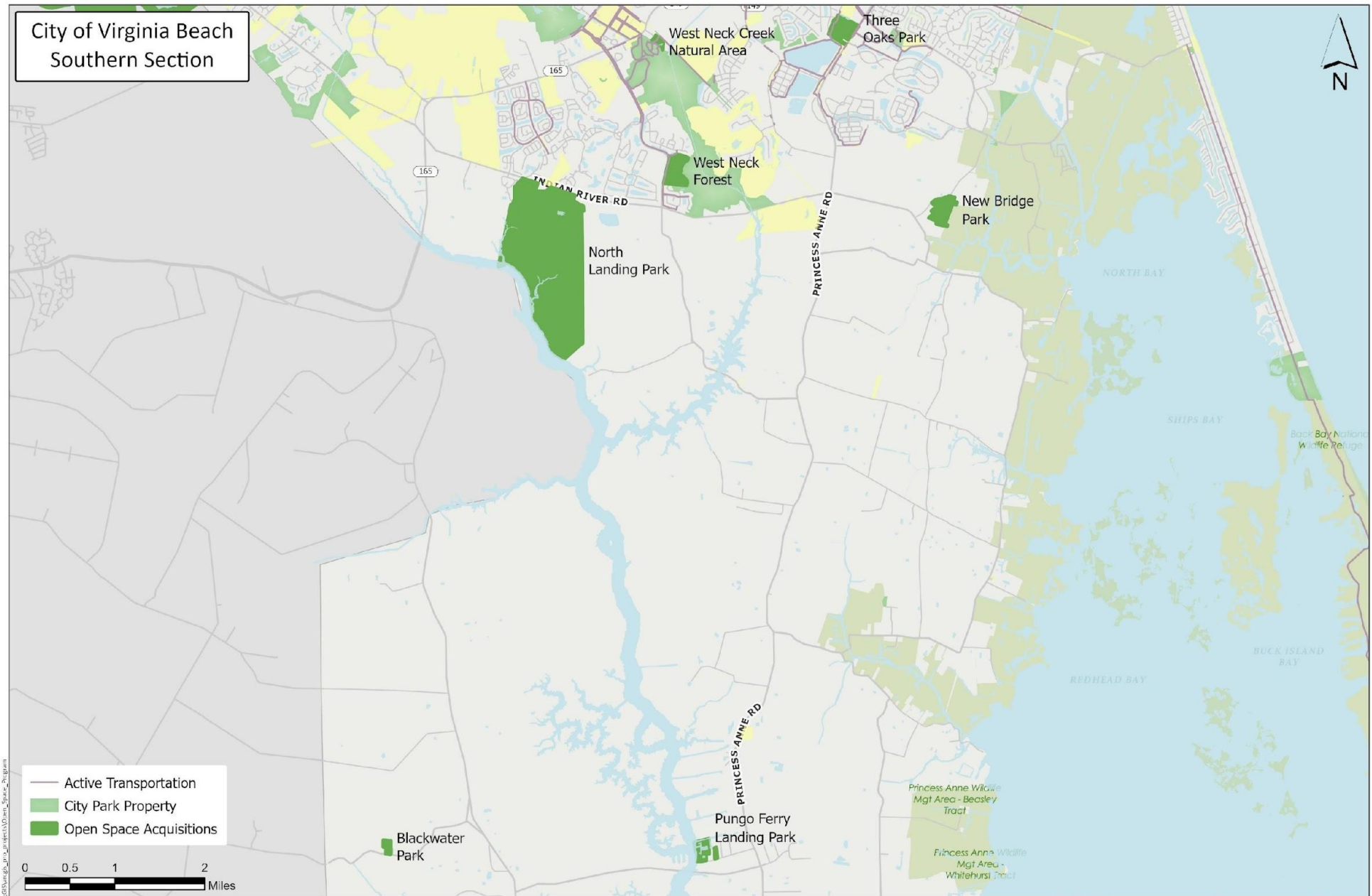
- Open Space Special Revenue Fund provides funding for:
 - Land preservation identified in the City's Outdoors Plan as candidates for future City recreational amenities
 - Debt service and operations
- The Plan calls for preservation of 5% of City's land area for parks, trails, or natural vistas.
- Prior to FY 2025-2026, fund revenue source was a 0.44% dedication of the restaurant meal tax
- In FY 2025-2026 this was reduced from to 0.17%
- With an available fund balance of \$19M, funds will only be transferred to an acquisition CIP on an as needed basis (no annual transfer to CIP)
- Essentially, this eliminates any appropriations to the Open Space Acquisition CIP Project for the next six years starting in FY 2025-2026.

OPEN SPACE SITE	DATE ACQUIRED	CURRENT NAME	SITE TYPE	ACRES	LAND COST
Little Neck Road	2000-Aug	Little Neck Rd Parcel	Open Space Preservation Area	7.20	\$2,200,000
Amhurst Area	2001-Feb	Amhurst Park	Open Space Preservation Area	3.00	\$159,000
Stumpy Lake Natural Area & Indian River Rd Parcels	2001-Jun	Stumpy Lake Natural Area & Stumpy Lake Golf Course	Natural Area / Golf Course	1,422.00	\$13,116,330
London Bridge Creek / Potters Road	2001-Dec	London Bridge Creek Park	Open Space Preservation Area	11.00	\$1,500,000
First Colonial Road / Mill Dam	2001-Jan	Mill Dam Park	Open Space Preservation Area	11.00	\$835,000
Lake Edward	2002-Jul	Lake Edward Park	Neighborhood Park	4.00	\$745,344
Norfolk Avenue	2002-Oct	Norfolk Ave Trail	Linear Park	1.20	\$238,788
Three Oaks Community Park (Future)	2003-Oct	Three Oaks Park	Community Park	36.80	\$1,260,000
Williams Farm	2004-Jan	Williams Farm Park & Williams Farm Community Recreation Center	Community Park / Recreation Center	57.60	\$5,000,000
Providence Park	2004-Feb	Providence Park	Community Park	18.00	\$3,650,000
Centerville Turnpike	2004-Oct	Centerville Tpk Parcel A	Open Space Preservation Area	6.70	\$850,000
Pleasure House Lake	2005-Apr	Chesapeake Beach Park	Neighborhood Park	4.60	\$1,682,000
Owl Creek Preservation Area	2006-Feb	Owl Creek Preservation Area	Open Space Preservation Area	38.60	\$1,406,000
New Bridge Road	2006-May	New Bridge Park	Open Space Preservation Area	45.80	\$1,925,070
Thalia Neighborhood Park	2006-Jul	Thalia Park	Neighborhood Park	3.00	\$985,000
Adam Thoroughgood House Expansion	2007-May	Adam Thoroughgood Property	Open Space Preservation Area	2.50	\$850,000
Lynnhaven Athletic Complex	2007-Aug	Lynnhaven Baseball Complex	Special Use Athletic Complex	15.60	\$0
Woods of Avalon Neighborhood Park	2008-Aug	Woods of Avalon Park	Neighborhood Park	13.20	\$600,000
Lake Lawson / Lake Smith Natural Area	2005-2008	Lake Lawson Lake Smith Natural Area	Natural Area	39.80	\$5,192,000
Lynnhaven House	2008-Oct	Lynnhaven House	Historic House (Not P&R)	4.90	\$535,000
Marshview Property	2010-May	Marshview Park	Metro Park	98.00	\$0
Rock Ministries Property	2011-Nov	North Landing Park	Open Space Preservation Area	792.00	\$750,000
Pleasure House Point	2012-Jul	Pleasure House Point Natural Area	Natural Area	107.80	\$4,012,775
Princess Anne Exec Park	2013-Aug	West Neck Creek Natural Area	Natural Area	5.00	\$6,000
Cavalier Hotel Open Space Easement	2013-Jul	Cavalier Open Space Easement	Easement	2.05	\$2,370,000
3380 Head River Road Property	2015-Apr	Blackwater Park	Neighborhood Park	0.85	\$190,000
Pungo Ferry Landing Park	2015-Nov	Pungo Ferry Landing Park	Special Use Water Access	22.4	\$2,600,000
Ferry Point Park	2017-Dec	Ferry Point Park	Special Use Water Access	9.12	\$73,457
Washington Square	2024-Jun	Washington Square Park	Neighborhood Park	7.45	\$1,500,000
Frank S. Fountain Property	2025-Mar	West Neck Forest	Open Space Preservation Area	40.89	\$0
Total				2,832	\$54,231,764

Appendix D: Mapping



This map illustrates the central section of Virginia Beach, highlighting parks, trails, and open space acquisitions. The map includes a legend in the bottom left corner with three categories: Active Transportation (represented by a grey line), City Park Property (represented by a light green fill), and Open Space Acquisitions (represented by a dark green fill). A scale bar at the bottom left indicates distances from 0 to 2 miles. A north arrow is located in the top left corner. The map shows various parks and trails, including Woods of Avalon Park, Ferry Point Park, Providence Park, Centerville Turnpike, Stumpy Lake Golf Course, Stumpy Lake Natural Area, London Bridge Creek Park, Marshview Park, Owl Creek Preservation Area, Naval Air Station Oceana, Three Oaks Park, West Neck Creek Natural Area, North Landing Park, and West Neck Forest. Major roads such as I-64, I-264, I-165, I-190, I-100, I-350, I-149, and various local roads like Indian River Rd, Princess Anne Rd, Lynnhaven Pkwy, Holland Rd, Dam Neck Rd, and London Bridge Rd are also shown. The map uses a color-coded system to distinguish between different types of land use and transportation infrastructure.



Mission of the Committee

The mission of Virginia Beach's Open Space Advisory Committee is to research and evaluate undeveloped properties throughout the city for possible acquisition to preserve as open space.

Specifically, in furtherance of said purpose, it shall be the responsibility of the Committee:

- To provide recommendations regarding properties for acquisition, with such recommendations including priorities, schedule, and sequence
- To continue to include citizen involvement in all phases (acquisition and development) of the open space program
- To assist in the monitoring of funding sources, including Capital Funds, as well as grants
- To assist in the recommendation of joint partnerships, joint development, and joint management options
- To monitor and recommend revision, as needed, of the Virginia Beach Outdoors Plan
- To assist in the monitoring, overseeing, and guidance of the acquisition process, including the exercise of due diligence, analysis, and development alternatives
- To assist in the monitoring and review of the development process and schedule for improvements to sites
- To assist in the development and monitoring of the overall process for evaluation and recommendation of sites for acquisition.

Candidate Site Selection Criteria

- I. Park System Planning
 - Support adopted plans, satisfy multiple City goals, high needs area, expand open space and recreation network, i.e. active transportation, greenways, blueways
- II. Access
 - Accessible to housing, by pedestrians, bicyclists, multiple modes of transportation; visually accessible
- III. Recreation
 - Accommodate high need amenities, active and passive recreational development
- IV. Natural Resources & Ecosystem Services
 - Support urban tree canopy, wildlife habitat, ecosystem services; Protect riparian zones and wetlands
- V. Development Considerations
 - Appropriate for open space, private development or redevelopment
- VI. Risks, Liabilities, Protections
 - Maintenance considerations, potential risks or liabilities

Candidate Site Selection Criteria (Extended)

I. Park System Planning

1. Would open space in this location support the Comprehensive Plan, Outdoors Plan, or other adopted plan? Is the site specifically mentioned in an existing plan?
2. Could the site satisfy multiple City goals? (i.e. historic preservation, stormwater designed as an amenity)
3. Could the site be used for an innovative project?
4. Could the site provide high priority items in adopted City plans? (i.e. tree canopy preservation from the Urban Forest Management Plan?)
5. Regarding equity, is the site located in an area with high social vulnerability or socioeconomic/population risk factors? (Needs Assessment study will provide info on underserved districts based on analysis)
6. Could the site expand on existing facilities or networks? (parks, recreation, active transportation, ecological networks, active transportation (greenways, blueways))

Candidate Site Selection Criteria (Extended)

II. Access

Is the site:

1. In a location that will serve residents that aren't within a 10- Minute Walk Time of an existing park?
2. Easily accessible by pedestrians & bicyclists?
3. Close to multiple modes of transportation?
4. Easily accessible by vehicle?
5. Visually accessible?

Candidate Site Selection Criteria (Extended)

III. Recreation

1. Can the site accommodate park development that meets design criteria for good public space? (accessibility (discussed under Access), specificity, authenticity, adaptability, functionality)
2. Does the site have appropriate Parks & Recreation development potential (active recreation)? Is there ample acreage unencumbered by wetlands, floodplain, restrictions, etc.?
3. Could the site provide a connection with active transportation that expands the local and regional trail system, increases a park service area, or enhanced accessibility for residents and destinations?
4. Could the site be developed with amenities found to be a high need based on the community surveys and the Needs Assessment study?
5. Are there opportunities for passive recreation or ecotourism?
6. Does the site have water adjacency / access?

Candidate Site Selection Criteria (Extended)

IV. Natural Resources & Ecosystem Services

1. Does or could the site support the City's urban canopy? (are there existing trees or canopy noteworthy of preserving, is the site identified as having high rates of evapotranspiration, does the site provide opportunities to plant trees or reforest?)
2. Could the site provide valuable ecosystem services? ((Urban ES; Rural/Natural Area ES), preserve natural habitat, support biodiversity, water purification, water regulation & flood mitigation, carbon sequestration, pollination)
3. Would the site preserve environmentally sensitive areas/areas that support ecosystem functionality, such as riparian zones, wetlands, and flood hazard areas?

Candidate Site Selection Criteria (Extended)

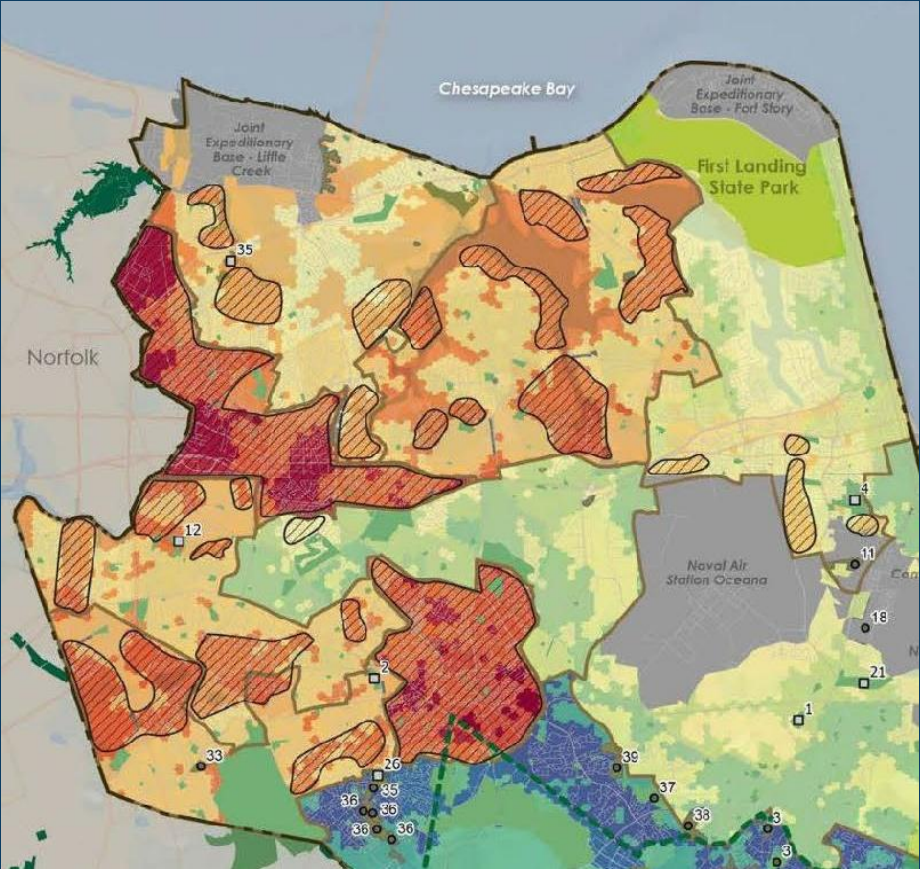
V. Development Considerations

1. Is the site more appropriate for private development or redevelopment?
2. Is the foreseeable public value of the site worth acquiring to preserve it from private development?
3. If not developable per regulations/restrictions, does it have public value to support the acquisition?

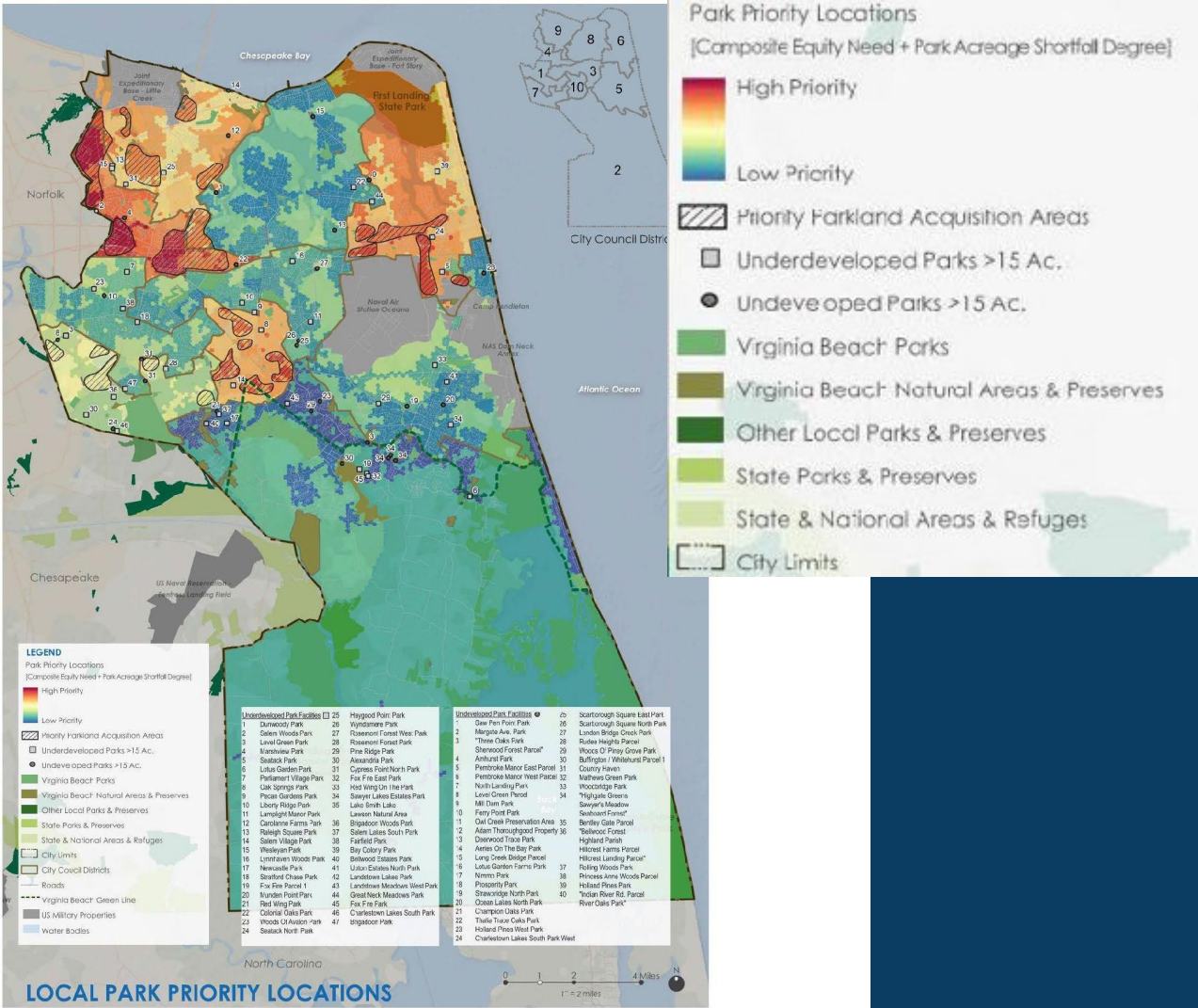
VI. Risks. Liabilities. Protections

1. Is the site encumbered by site structures, easements, or other regulatory components that present a challenge to the use under consideration?
2. Would the site increase risks or liabilities for the City?
3. What maintenance would the City be responsible for?
4. Would the site reduce future risks for the City and/or residents in the face of sea-level rise?
5. What was the previous use of the site? (i.e. is there a contamination liability?)

Needs Assessment



Map 5.3 // Priority Areas for Local Park Land Acquisition



Evaluation for Multiple Benefits

Conservation

Scenic Buffers

Urban Forest
Protection &
Restoration

Water Access

Trail Access &
Connectivity

Active &
Passive
Recreation

Stormwater
Management

FEMA
Discounted
Policy Rates

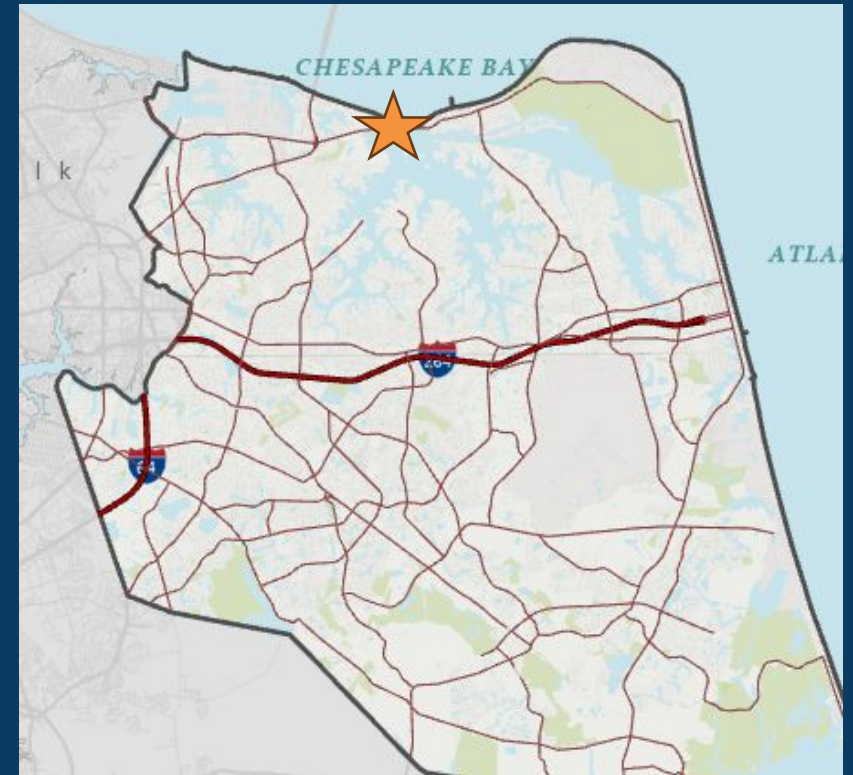
Economic
Development
Incentive

Historic
Preservation

Other
Ecosystem
Services

Wetland &
Floodplain
Mitigation

Pleasure House Point Natural Area

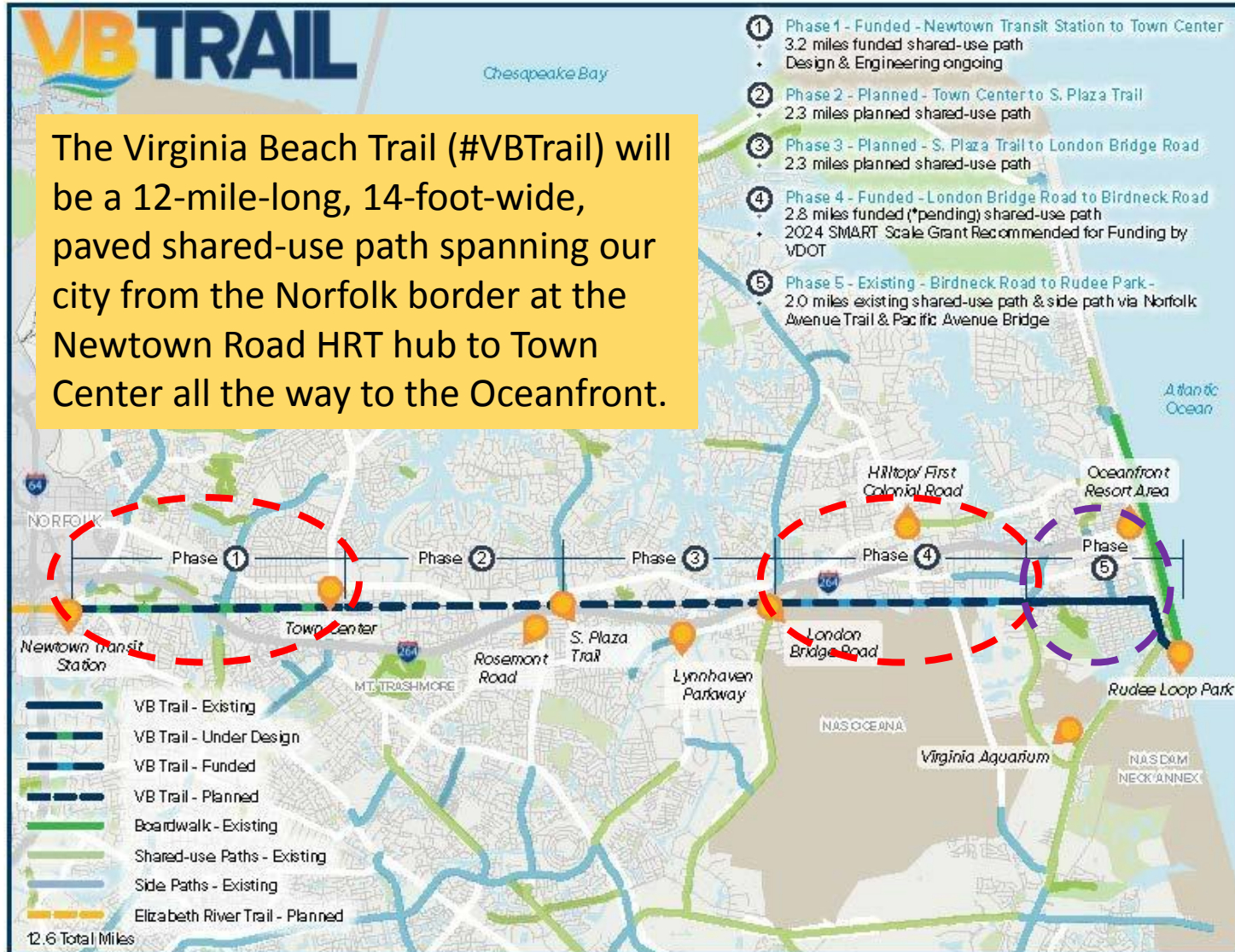


Pleasure House Point Natural Area

- City acquired over 100 acres in 2012
- Partners include Trust for Public Land, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, Department of Conservation and Recreation, Dominion Energy
 - 85 acres in conservation easement
 - 10 acres acquired by Chesapeake Bay Foundation for Brock Environmental Center
 - 13 acres reserved for wetland mitigation bank
 - Wetland mitigation bank finished construction a couple months ago yielding 8 acres of wetlands
 - Credits are worth over \$1M per acre, will be used for public City projects



VBTrail



The Virginia Beach Trail (#VBTrail) will be a 12-mile-long, 14-foot-wide, paved shared-use path spanning our city from the Norfolk border at the Newtown Road HRT hub to Town Center all the way to the Oceanfront.

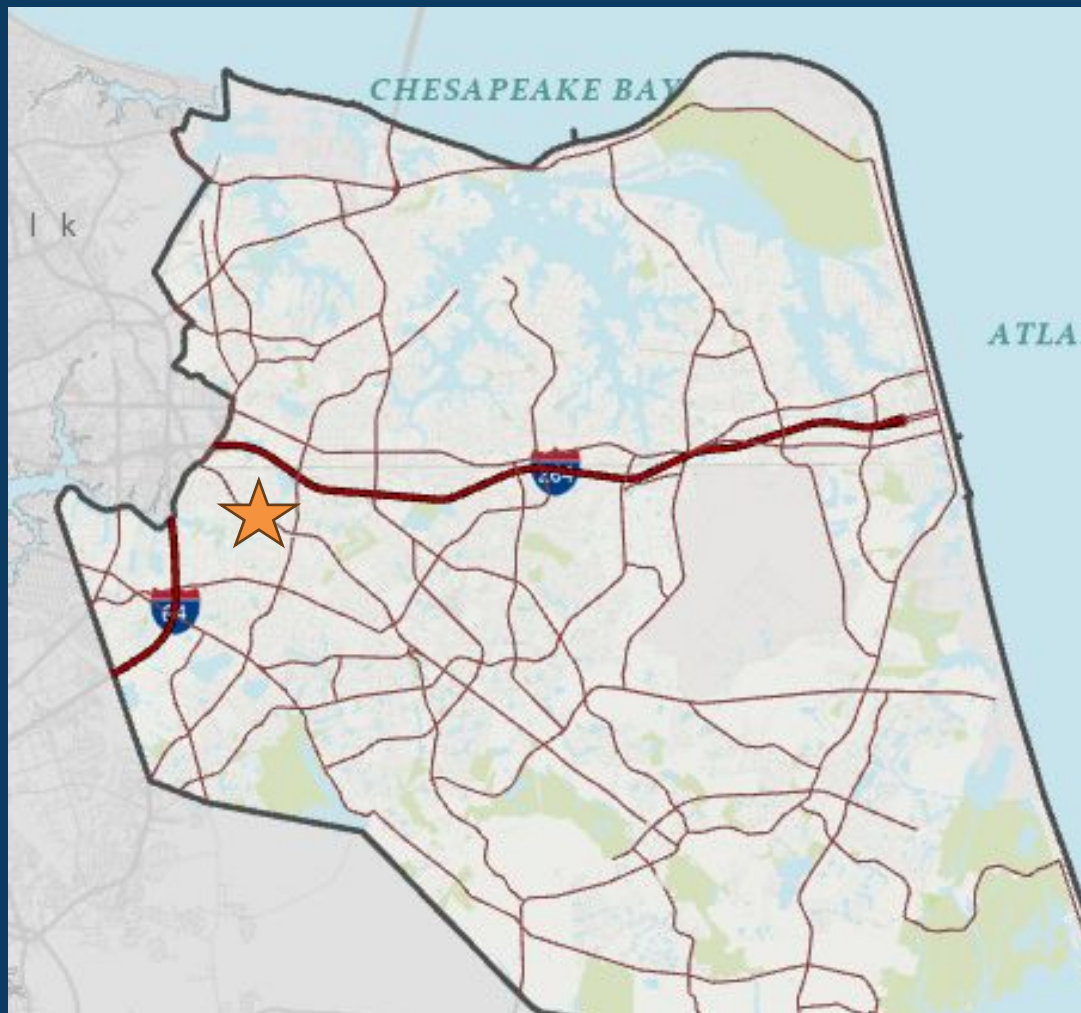


Will Link Together

- Neighborhoods
- Schools & libraries
- Workplaces
- Transit stops
- Dining & shopping
- Parks & other trails
- Historic/cultural sites
- Entertainment destinations

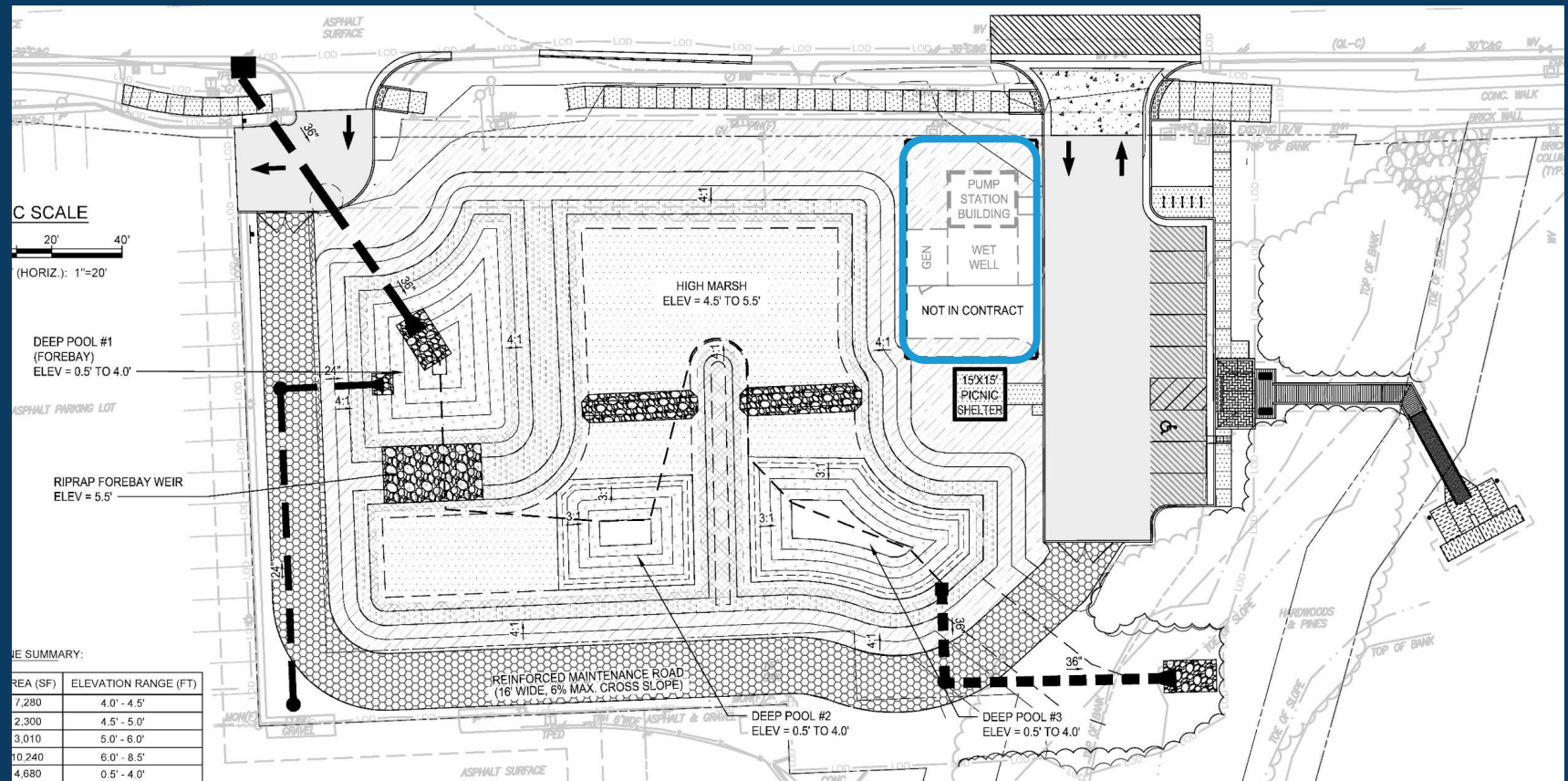
The trail has been a part of the City Council-adopted Virginia Beach Active Transportation Plan since 1981.

Historic Kempsville Kayak Launch



Historic Kempsville Kayak Launch

- Stormwater: Constructed Wetland
- Utilities: Future Pump Station
- Recreation: Kayak Launch & Amenities
- Also supports the implementation of Historic Kempsville Master Plan



Historic Kempsville Kayak Launch



- Kayak launch in this vicinity has been discussed since prior to the Historic Kempsville Area Master Plan, adopted in 2006
- Launch is officially opening May 1st!

Bow Creek Stormwater Park

- Bow Creek Golf Course surrounded by low-lying communities that flooded during 2016 Hurricane Matthew
- Conversion of golf course to a 100-acre stormwater park, mitigating future flooding, restoring natural systems, and providing recreational opportunities



Bow Creek Stormwater Park

- Shared Use Paths & Nature Trails
- Mountain Bike Trails
- Kayak Launch
- Pickleball, Volleyball, Stormwater Playground
- Overlooks
- Event Spaces
- Extensive native plantings



Thank you!

Questions?



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