

Land Use and Design

Goals

The City will:

- Foster the development of visually attractive and physically safe residential neighborhoods and business centers.
- Create visually attractive and distinctive gateways into the City on major roadways.
- Create a land use pattern consisting of residential neighborhoods and mixed-use centers of employment and retail uses, all linked together by a multi-modal transportation system, as well as places planned with a sufficient mass of commercial development to achieve economies of scale and a balanced range of centers of various sizes.
- Foster the revitalization, preservation and redevelopment of older neighborhoods and commercial corridors.
- Maintain areas with rural character, natural areas and open spaces to protect quality of life.
- Preserve key portions of the waterfront areas in a natural state while developing other portions for compatible recreational and commercial activities.
- Preserve and maintain the visual quality and ecological functions of the open space system centered on waterways and other important natural resources.



Land Use

Development of the 2026 Land Use Plan

As a part of the overall development of the 2026 Comprehensive Plan, the City of Chesapeake engaged in the development and evaluation of a series of alternative future development scenarios. These scenarios offered consideration for the geophysical characteristics of the City, projected population and employment growth, existing and historical development patterns, and the impact of existing and proposed infrastructure improvements. In order to provide a long term perspective on the impact of these scenarios, and to provide advanced planning for the development of the Master Transportation Plan, the scenarios were developed with a plan horizon of 2050. Three scenarios were developed: compact, dispersed, and nodal.

After careful review and consideration by the public, the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Team, Planning Commission, and City Council, a consensus was reached on a preferred 2050 scenario. The preferred 2050 scenario was a hybrid and contained elements of all three of the previous scenarios and provided the guide for the development of the 2026 Land Use Plan.

Goals (continued)

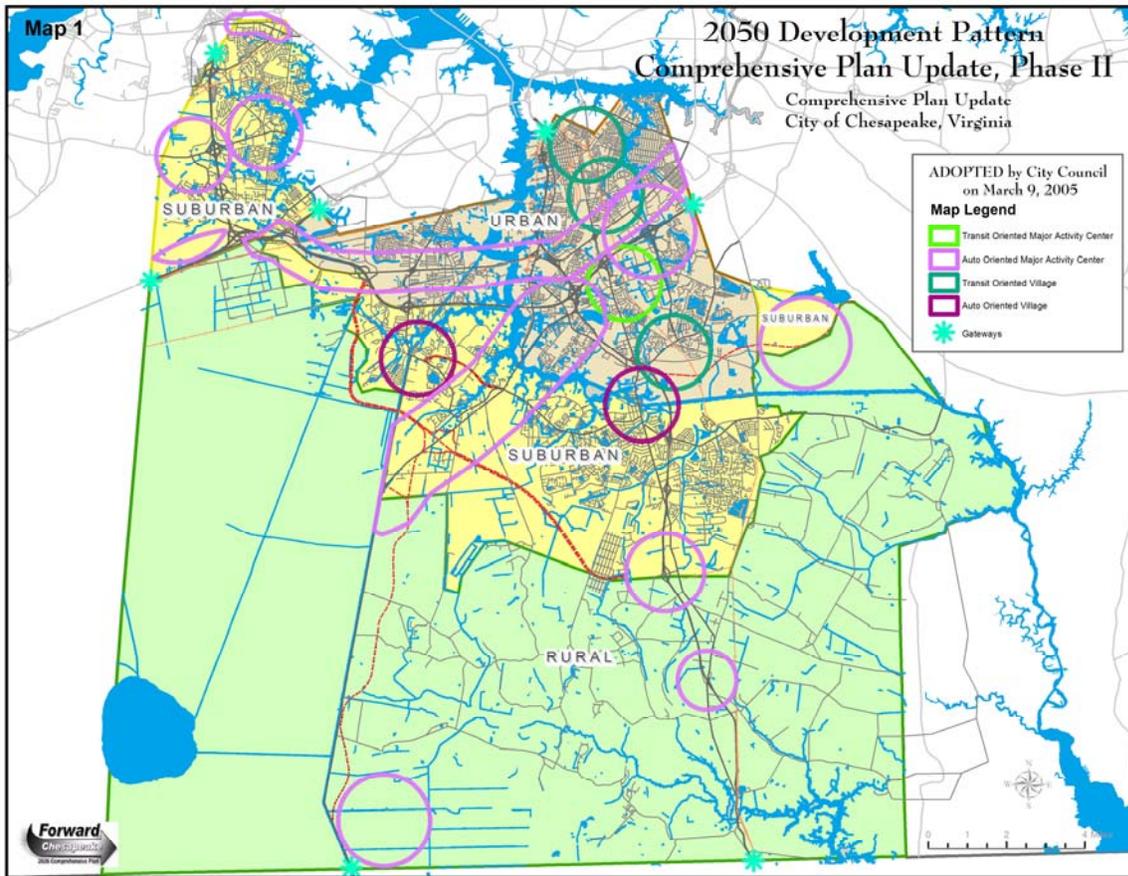
The City will:

- Achieve a pattern of land use and growth that is balanced between open space, housing, public facilities, industrial, agricultural and commercial uses.
- Ensure that all new development will be designed to have a minimum impact on natural areas.
- Integrate natural environmental areas and recreation areas into neighborhoods and mixed-use centers.
- Achieve a land use and development pattern that is economically stable and sustainable over the course of time.
- Coordinate development in the City with neighboring localities in the region through joint planning activities.

Generally speaking, the 2050 Development Pattern map has designated the northern portions of the City including Camelot, South Norfolk, Indian River, Rivercrest, and portions of Greenbrier as compact development. The compact development pattern includes opportunities for infill and redevelopment at increased densities that is compatible with existing development. Western Branch, portions of Deep Creek, portions of Greenbrier, and portions of Great Bridge have been designated as suburban development. The southernmost portions of the City have been designated for rural style development, with the exception of certain specially designated nodes.

The 2050 Development Pattern also includes a series of nodes which are designated as either Major Activity Centers, or Villages. Major Activity Centers are primarily employment-based centers and can be either automobile-oriented or mass transit-oriented. Villages are primarily residential-oriented and can also be either automobile or mass transit-oriented. Gateways have been designated to provide opportunities for land uses and design suitable to greet persons coming into the City. Please refer to Section 3B of this plan which has established "character districts" to define the specific design recommendations for these areas.

The 2050 Development Pattern map was used as guide to develop the 2026 Comprehensive Plan and 2026 Land Use Plan; however, it does not have the same force of effect as those policies contained in this plan for implementation at the 2026 planning horizon. The 2050 Development Pattern map provides insight into how decisions were made regarding the overall development pattern for the City and provides advanced guidance for transportation planning purposes. The Comprehensive Plan will be amended on a periodic basis to reflect changing conditions and circumstances and, therefore, no commitment to achievement of the 2050 development scenario is offered.



Issue One: Land Use Compatibility

As the City develops, the development pattern should be in accordance with the 2026 Land Use Plan. Land uses will generally transition from urban in the northernmost areas of the City to rural in the south. As development moves outward from existing urban and suburban development, it should proceed along planned corridors with adequate infrastructure for development. Urban and suburban densities should not be permitted without public sewer, and septic tanks should be discouraged except where they are essential for bona fide rural dwellings.

The Land Use component of the Comprehensive Plan shall create an orderly arrangement of appropriate land uses in a compatible relationship to one another, so as to establish desirable living, working and leisure environments.

Strategies:

- Each land use should be located only on an appropriate site in terms of size, access, environmental conditions, community facilities, and compatibility with its neighbors.
- Development patterns and trends should exhibit an orderly transition from urban uses in the northern part of the City to rural land uses in the southern part of the City along planned public sewer system and transportation corridors. Specific setback, landscaping and site arrangement requirements should be set out in the zoning and subdivision ordinances to ensure that there is an appropriate spatial

arrangement of buildings and uses, and sufficient buffering between different uses to enhance the compatibility of neighboring uses and improve the relationship between different uses in the community. The City's services and infrastructure should be sufficient to support a proposed development of land.

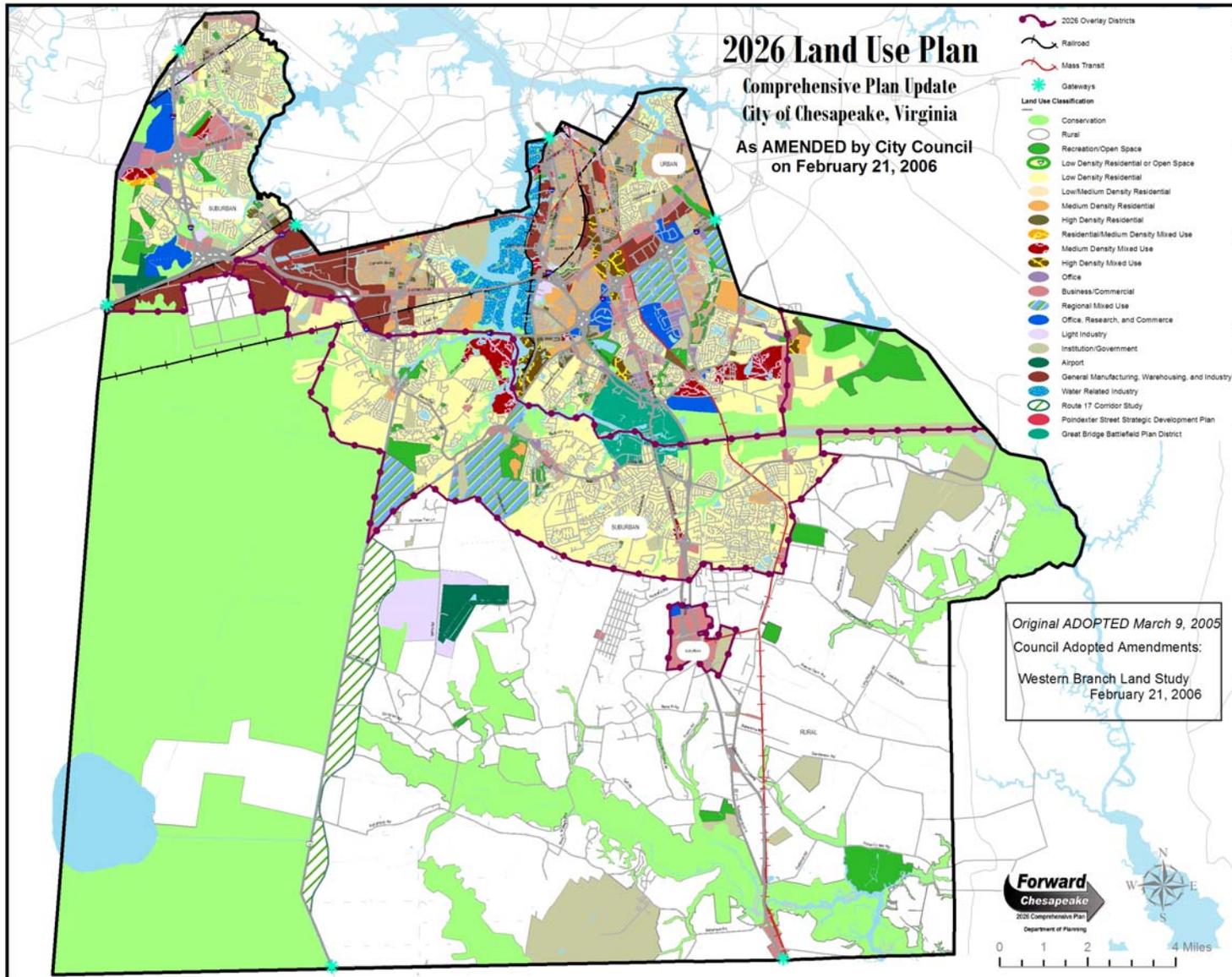
- The 2026 Land Use Plan shall provide a guide to the desired future land use pattern for the City. Land use frequently becomes a focal point for comprehensive plans and is frequently the issue with which most people identify.

It can become convenient to rely exclusively upon the Land Use Plan element of the Comprehensive Plan because of the ease of reading a map for a recommendation; however, the Land Use Plan should not be used without consulting the policies of the Comprehensive Plan for any mitigating conditions. The Land Use Plan should be considered a general guide for land use decisions. It is not a binding commitment on the part of the City to guarantee that changes of zoning classification will be granted or denied on the sole basis of the Land Use Plan.

The implementation of these general land uses strategies will require some actions in addition to the adoption of the 2026 Land Use Plan. It is recommended that the following steps be taken:

- The City's Zoning Ordinance should be reviewed for necessary amendments. For example, the provisions for Planned Unit Developments (PUD's) may require revision to reflect changes in the distribution of uses within mixed use designated areas. Also, correlating passages to the Overlay Districts should be synchronized.
- The City's Subdivision Ordinance should be reviewed for potential inconsistencies with the provisions of this Plan.
- All other City ordinances and policies should be reviewed for potential amendment to reflect the intentions and policies of this Plan. Such ordinances and policies should include but not be limited to the City's Landscape Ordinance, Sign Ordinance, and Public Facilities Manual.





Land Use Plan Designations

Land Use Plan Designation	Description
Conservation	Environmentally sensitive areas. These areas have been planned for conservation due to highly sensitive conditions. Areas delineated by identifying those areas that have at least 2 of the following criteria: -100 year flood plain (Source: FEMA Flood Plain Maps) -Highly erodible soils (Source: Chesapeake Soil Survey) -Designation as a wetland by the National Wetlands Inventory (Source: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service)
Recreation/Open Space	Active and passive recreational areas, parks, trails, recreation centers
Rural	Rural / agriculture based land use pattern. Permits farming and livestock operations, aquaculture, silviculture. Supporting commercial (i.e. businesses whose primary purpose is to provide support to the farming community such as feed and seed stores, farm machinery sales and repair)
Low Density Residential	Single family residential (<= 4 DU/AC)
Low / Medium Density Residential	Single family detached and attached (5-10 DU / AC) (CP-05-04)
Medium Density Residential	Single family detached and attached (5 - 16 DU/AC)
High Density Residential	Single family attached and multi-family residential (16-24 or 30 DU/AC)
Office	Professional offices, banks, senior assisted living facilities and group housing for the elderly
Business/ Commercial	General Commercial, Neighborhood Commercial, Retail
Medium Density Residential Mixed Use	Predominantly medium density residential with commercial (CP-05-04)
Medium Density Mixed Use	Predominately commercial with medium density residential.
High Density Mixed Use	Predominately commercial with higher density residential.
Regional Mixed Use	Regional context commercial activities including malls, power centers, office complexes, commerce centers, corporate headquarters, light industrial uses, and residential.
Office, Research, Commerce	Larger scale office, research and commerce uses, primarily located in parks.
Institution/ Government	Government, Hospitals, Military, and Institutional uses, could include housing for the elderly/ assisted living facilities
Light Industry	Light Industrial uses, warehousing
Airport	Airport and supporting functions
General Manufacturing Warehousing and Industry (GMWHI)	General Manufacturing / Warehousing / Industrial
Water Related Industry	Water related industrial uses such as ports, cargo terminals, and container storage yards
Poindexter Corridor Strategic Development Plan	Defer to Poindexter Corridor Strategic Development Plan
Great Bridge Battlefield District	Defer to Great Bridge Battlefield District

- **Overlay Districts**

As elements of the Land Use Plan are three distinct overlay districts: the Urban Overlay District, the Suburban Overlay District, and the Rural Overlay District. These districts correlate to those areas designated as compact, dispersed, and rural, respectively from the 2050 Development Scenario map. The purpose of the districts is to provide an orderly transition from the urban areas of the City to the suburban areas, to the rural areas and to allow for the grouping of land uses that are of compatible density and intensity.

- **Urban Overlay**

The purpose of the Urban Overlay District is to provide opportunities for infill development in areas of established infrastructure. It is advantageous to promote this type of development as it tends to reduce the propensity for inefficient, sprawling development patterns.

In order to promote infill development, it is recommended that opportunities for increased density be created in this overlay. The current zoning ordinance contains a maximum of 24 units to the acre for the R-MF2 zoning district. It is recommended through this plan that this maximum be increased to 30 units to the acre as an incentive to the redevelopment and revitalization of certain areas and as an incentive to increase housing affordability. Densities at the higher end of the range may be appropriate in designated village and major activity centers (see Design element of this Plan) in order to help solidify a sense of place. Special attention will be given to ensuring the compatibility of adjacent uses and for the provision of adequate buffering between uses in order to mitigate any potential negative impacts associated with increased densities.

It is anticipated that the transformation into an urban landscape will be gradual, over time and will not be fully realized within the 20 year window of this Plan. As the urban fabric of this overlay develops, special consideration will be given to enhancing pedestrian and mass transit opportunities as an increase in the urban development pattern should correlate with a decreased reliance on the personal automobile.

Development in this overlay should be consistent with the design guidelines of the Urban Character District (see the Design element of this Plan).

- **Suburban Overlay**

The purpose of the Suburban Overlay is to provide a transition area between the urban areas of the City and the outer lying rural area. This overlay provides some opportunity for diversity for persons not desiring either an urban or rural lifestyle.

Typical densities for Suburban Overlay zoning are 4 units to an acre for single family detached, 10 units per acre for single family attached, and 16 units per acre for multi-family. Densities less than or greater than these may be considered on an individual basis. Densities at the higher end of the range may be appropriate in designated village and major centers in order to help solidify a sense of place (see Design element of this Plan).

Development in this overlay should be consistent with the design guidelines of the Suburban Character District (see the Design element of this Plan).

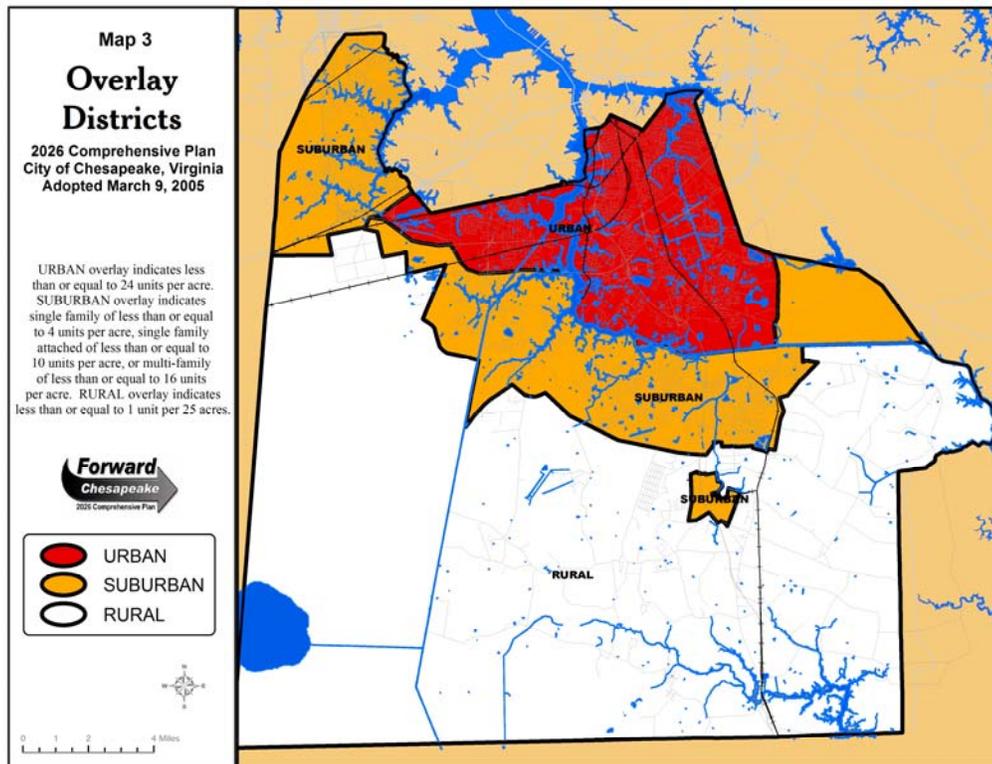
- o **Rural Overlay**

The purpose of the Rural Overlay District is to preserve and protect the rural character of the southern portion of the City. The current Zoning Ordinance provides for densities no greater than one unit per three acres. Development in this overlay should be consistent with the design guidelines of the Rural Character District (see the Design element of this Plan).

The City has advanced efforts in rural preservation such as the creation of the Open Space and Agriculture Preservation Program (OSAP), which is a development rights purchase program, and the creation of a clustering ordinance that may be used to minimize development impacts on the rural landscape. Other conflicting regulations and policies, however, have resulted in a gradual erosion of the rural character of the area. For example, subdivision regulations encourage the “stripping” of rural roadways which not only destroys the rural landscape, but creates land use compatibility problems with the adjacent agricultural uses and promotes and inefficient consumption of land resources.

As a follow up to this Plan, a comprehensive strategy will be developed and implemented to synchronize the City’s rural preservation efforts. This strategy must address the coordination of the following ordinances, policies, and programs into a cohesive rural preservation strategy:

- Rural Design Guidelines
- Public Facilities Manual
- Open Space and Agriculture Preservation Program
- Subdivision Ordinance
- Zoning Ordinance
- Cluster Ordinance



Issue Two: Timing of the Land Use Plan

The 2026 Comprehensive Plan is a 20 year Plan for the City. A variety of factors will affect the timing of the implementation of the Land Use Plan element. Market conditions, demographic changes, technological changes, federal and state legislation, and City policies have an impact on the potential pace at which the Plan will develop.

The land uses depicted on the Land Use Plan should be considered a build out scenario for this planning window. It is not realistic, or expected, that the 2026 Plan will immediately be developed upon Plan adoption and it is presumed that the Plan will be amended over time and adjustments made as necessary to reflect changing circumstances and conditions. Timing strategies are contained in the Growth Management element of this Plan that are linked to public facility levels of service, infrastructure expansion and phasing, desired rates of growth, and funding availability. All of these considerations will be made prior to the approval of new development.

Land use decisions will not be made solely upon consistency with the Land Use Plan map but will also include consideration for timing and other policies of the Comprehensive Plan.

Strategies:

- The implementation of the Land Use Plan will be linked to, and integrated with, the growth management strategies, and other policies of the Comprehensive Plan.
- Desired land uses should be accommodated generally in accordance with anticipated market demands for each use; undesirable and incompatible land uses, or speculative development in excess of anticipated market demand should be discouraged. Even where market conditions may support the intensive location of certain similar uses which are economic competitors in a particular area, the saturation of an area with such uses may cause an overall deterioration in the quality of the environment, and in particular may have an adverse impact on the City's economic development goals. Such uses may also have cumulative negative impacts on the character of the commercial area and neighboring residential communities. As a result, the placement of certain commercial or industrial activities should not only be a factor of market conditions, but should also consider particular land use impacts on surrounding properties.

Issue Three: Plan Adaptability

The Comprehensive Plan should be considered to be a living document and not static. As circumstances change, the Plan should be reviewed for its continued relevance and applicability. Virginia State Code requires a minimal review of at least every 5 years, although reviews and amendments may occur on a more frequent basis if needed.

Chesapeake will monitor changes in circumstance that will result in the need for a review of the Comprehensive Plan and subsequent Plan amendments if necessary.

Strategies:

- Military installations such as Fentress Airfield and St. Juliens Creek Naval Facility occupy important land resources for the City. In the event these facilities were to be

closed and converted to public use, they would provide significant opportunities which would require special study.

Should changes in circumstances provide an opportunity to acquire the St. Juliens Naval Facility, a study has been prepared that provides guidance for potential uses for the facility. This study is included as Appendix L of this Plan.

- The comprehensive planning process has attempted to accommodate the probable timing of major infrastructure improvements; however, time schedules are often accelerated or decelerated depending upon funding availability and other factors. Significant changes in the anticipated timing for public infrastructure improvements and their impact on development patterns and timing may create a need for special study and subsequent Plan amendments.
- Intermediate reviews of the Comprehensive Plan will be conducted prior to the Virginia Code required 5 year review period.
- City Council may direct a plan review when it is believed that circumstances warrant such an action.

Issue Four: Planning for Special Areas

The City of Chesapeake is composed of a wide array of unique communities and landscapes. Chesapeake has in the past and will continue in the future to provide detailed area specific plans and policies. The Comprehensive Plan includes many smaller area plans and efforts which were intended to be adopted as components of the Plan. The following provides an overview of those special elements while the appropriate elements from these plans are contained in the appendices of this document. These plans should be considered components of the Comprehensive Plan and consulted for specific proposals in the affected areas.

Chesapeake will continue to provide for the special needs and considerations of unique areas and circumstances through the development of special area plans.

Strategies:

- **Western Branch Land Study Area**

The purpose of the Western Branch Land Study was to develop a land use, infrastructure, and economic development plan for the western portion of the Western Branch borough of the City. The area comprises an approximately 6.6 square mile area bounded to the north by Pughsville Road, to the east by Interstate 664, to the south by Military Highway and to the west by the City of Suffolk. The plan recommends a mixture of land uses capitalizing on their proximity to the interstate, existing neighborhoods, public services and commercial areas. The 2026 Land Use Plan incorporates a combination of Alternatives D and E. The summary of the Study is included as an Appendix to this document.

The Western Branch Land Study was completed in April 2001 prior the development of this Comprehensive Plan. As a result, the study team working on the Western Branch Land Study did not have the same land use pallet that is incorporated into this Plan. It has been suggested that the use of the mixed use designations would have possibly been considered for this area if the option had been made available.

For this reason, it is recommended that the Western Branch Land Study be reviewed for possible opportunities to incorporate mixed land use designations into the land use plan for that area.

- **Poindexter Corridor Strategic Development Plan**

The Poindexter Street Strategic Development Plan creates a new identity for South Norfolk and the Poindexter commercial corridor building on the historic character, strong neighborhood identity, underutilized waterfront, interstate access, and close proximity to other urban activity centers in surrounding localities. The study recommends site specific design criteria for the following areas:

- Waterfront (north of the Jordan Bridge)
- I-464 interchange (interchange between I-464 and Poindexter Street)
- Village center (Located at Poindexter, Liberty and 22nd Street)
- Poindexter Street corridor; and
- Liberty Street corridor.

The design standards cover critical community character-building details, such as building heights and setbacks, land use mixes, parking lots, parking garages, trails and sidewalks, focal points and viewsheds, among others.

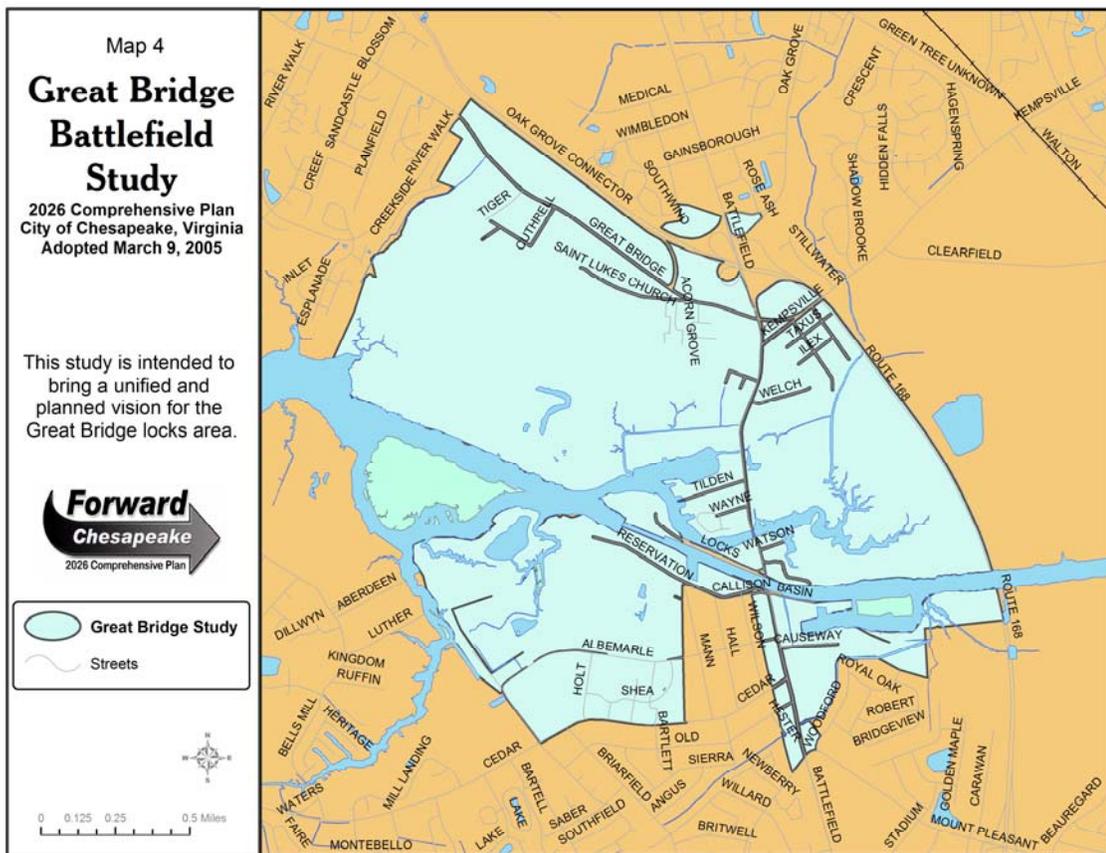
- The Poindexter Corridor Strategic Development Plan will be the guiding document for future public and private investment and projects in the area and has been included as an appendix to this Comprehensive Plan.

- **Great Bridge Battlefield Plan District**

The Great Bridge Corridor Study area generally surrounds the intersection of Battlefield Boulevard and the Intracoastal Waterway. More specifically, it is the area bounded to the north and east by the Oak Grove Connector, to the south by Cedar Road, and loosely to the west by Oscar Smith High School and the Bells Mill Park site. The goal of the study was to develop a land use plan to enhance the economic vitality of the area by creating a waterfront destination for tourists and residents alike by establishing development design standards to protect the aesthetic and visual character of the approaches by land and water to the Great Bridge Battlefield, the village of Great Bridge and its natural environment.

The 2026 Land Use Plan incorporates the study's recommendations by establishing land use designations consistent with a village designation for the study area. The village designation will promote pedestrian-oriented activity by encouraging human-scale buildings, mixed uses, as well as trails and sidewalks to connect visitors to the waterfront and surrounding neighborhoods and retail establishments.

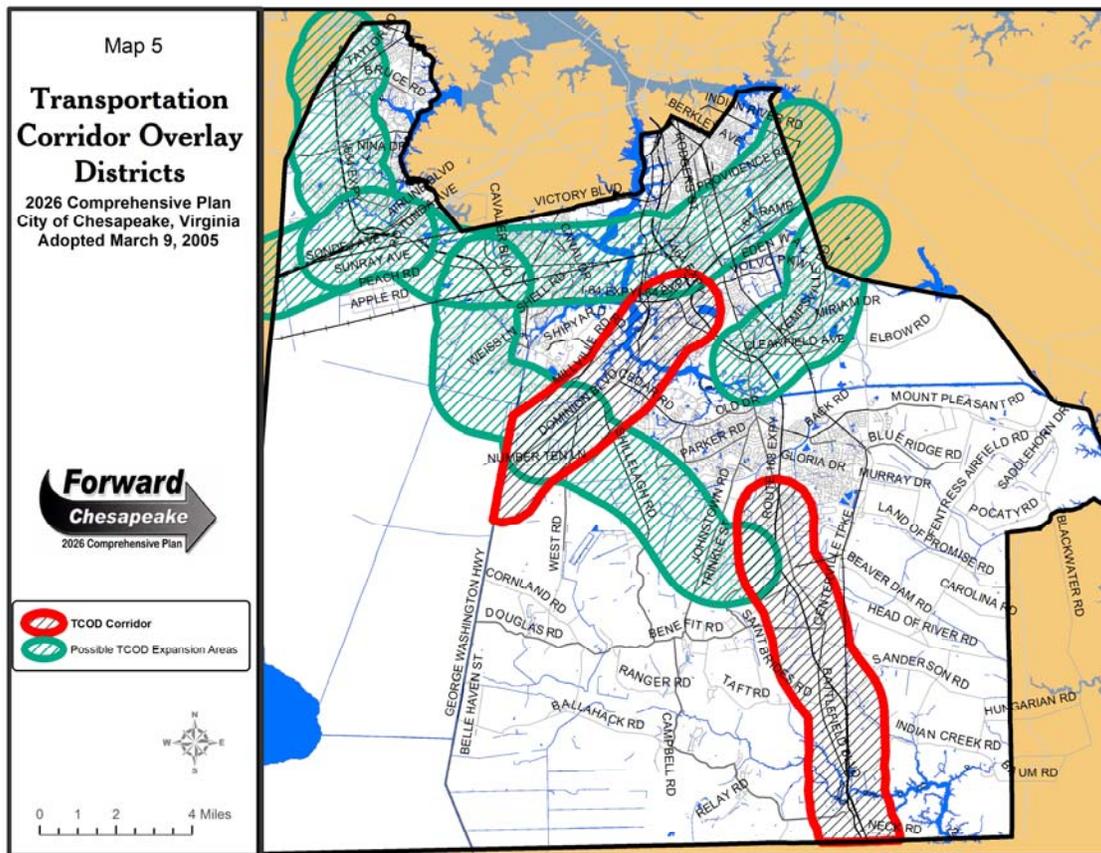
- The Appendix of this Plan includes initial guidance provided through the Great Bridge Battlefield Plan Study; however, the development of enhanced land use and design guidance for this area is underway. It is recommended that the follow on guidance be incorporated into this Plan upon its completion.



- **Transportation Corridor Overlay District (TCOD)**

The purpose of the Transportation Corridor Overlay District (TCOD) is to preserve future economic development opportunities for high quality, attractive development along key transportation corridors. To ensure the overlay fosters high quality development, TCOD consists of a series of guidelines designed to ensure that each rezoning and conditional use permit proposal is consistent with district policies.

The original TCOD Policy designated the Dominion Boulevard corridor and three interchanges of the Chesapeake Expressway as Target Areas for future economic development uses (subject to the provisions of the TCOD policy). The first Target Area in the Chesapeake Expressway corridor includes a buffer of a one-mile radius from the center of the Hillcrest Parkway interchange. The second target area includes a buffer of a ¾ mile radius from the center of the Indian Creek Road Interchange, and the third target area includes a buffer of ½ mile from a segment of the centerline of the new Route 168 alignment extending from the Northwest River south to the State line. As a result of the discussions and recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Team, last Target Area located at the Northwest River has been removed from the policy as a Target Area. This area, however, has been designated as a Gateway (see the Gateways subheading of this section).



The 2026 Land Use Plan has incorporated specific land use recommendations for the areas of the TCOD falling within Suburban and Urban Overlays of the Land Use Plan. The Indian Creek Target Area falls outside the 20-year window of this plan and as such it is premature to assign specific recommended uses for the entire target area. The Indian Creek Target Area is, however, still preserved for future economic development uses consistent with the TCOD Policy.

The TCOD Policy is set out in the Appendix of this document and is hereby incorporated into this Comprehensive Plan.

- The Transportation Corridor Overlay District Policy (TCOD) should be reviewed for possible expansion to the other roadways such as Military Highway, Kempsville Road, Pleasant Grove Parkway, Interstate 664 and Southeastern Parkway.
- The City Zoning Ordinance should be amended to provide clear linkages between it and the provisions of the Comprehensive Plan.
- **South Military Highway Corridor**
 The South Military Highway Corridor has long been an important roadway for the City. In the early 1940's, Military Highway was built as a defense highway to serve the Norfolk Naval and Little Creek Amphibious Bases. Its purpose was to bypass the congested traffic areas of Portsmouth and Norfolk, and to provide a high volume/high speed highway for transporting military supplies. Today, South Military

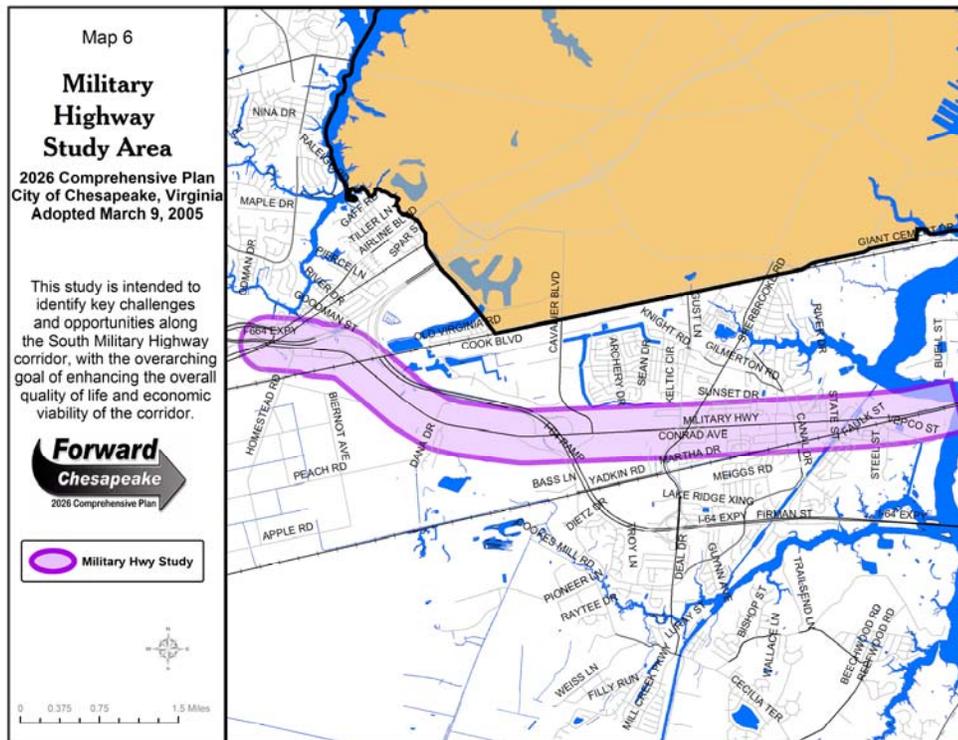
Highway continues to serve diverse land uses (type and density), as well as businesses and populations of widely different socioeconomic characteristics.

Because of its importance as a major arterial through Chesapeake, City Council established the South Military Highway Task Force in February 2003. The Task Force's goals were as follows: to undertake an in-depth study regarding the overall corridor in its present state, and make recommendations to City Council to improve, enhance, and sustain the viability of the area; to identify potential solutions to code enforcement issues and inappropriate land uses; to make suggestions for viable options that will help landowners and businesses to upgrade their facilities to meet current codes and ordinances; and to assist in the development of a long-range plan for reinvestment, both public and private, in the entire corridor.

Key recommendations from the Task Force included: providing more landscaping, screening and buffering between mixed land uses, especially between heavy industrial and residential uses; intensified policing of problem areas along the corridor; enhanced open space/recreational amenities; a unified set of architectural development guidelines for the entire corridor; a more focused, proactive inspections program; replacement of the Gilmerton Bridge; roadway and infrastructure improvements, including bicycle lanes; and various tax incentives and/or special district overlays to encourage revitalization and economic development. A follow-up master planning study for the corridor is underway.

The Task Force's recommendations are included in the Appendix of this document.

- o Using the recommendations of the South Military Highway Task Force as a guide, a strategic plan of implementation should be developed.



- **Route 17 Trail / Dismal Swamp Corridor Study**

U.S. Route 17 is a two-lane highway leading from the urbanized sections of Chesapeake through the rural southern section of the City and into North Carolina. Much of the existing road runs along the Dismal Swamp Canal, which is a part of the Intracoastal Waterway System. To expand capacity and improve safety, the Virginia Department of Transportation is constructing a new four-lane facility east of the current Route 17 alignment.

Plans are in development to convert the existing road into a multi-use trail in order to expand recreational opportunities while protecting open space and managing access. This area is viewed as a vital conservation corridor for the City, due to its rich history and unique natural amenities. As such, the City has arranged for the development of a master plan for the Route 17/Dismal Swamp Corridor to plan for land uses between the old and new roadway, to develop the old roadway as a multi-use recreational facility, and to establish design guidelines for the new route.

Potential recommendations for the corridor include: possible locations for wetland creation and habitat restoration; potential sustainable land uses to support eco-tourism (e.g. Bed and breakfasts, bicycle/canoe rentals, etc.); potential location for a Great Dismal Swamp Visitor Center; capital improvement needs to enhance recreational, historic, and environmental opportunities in the corridor; a conceptual trail design; access management; and master plan implementation techniques (such as land acquisition).

- The City should continue to work to develop the master plan for this corridor and implement any necessary amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and 2026 Land Use Plan.

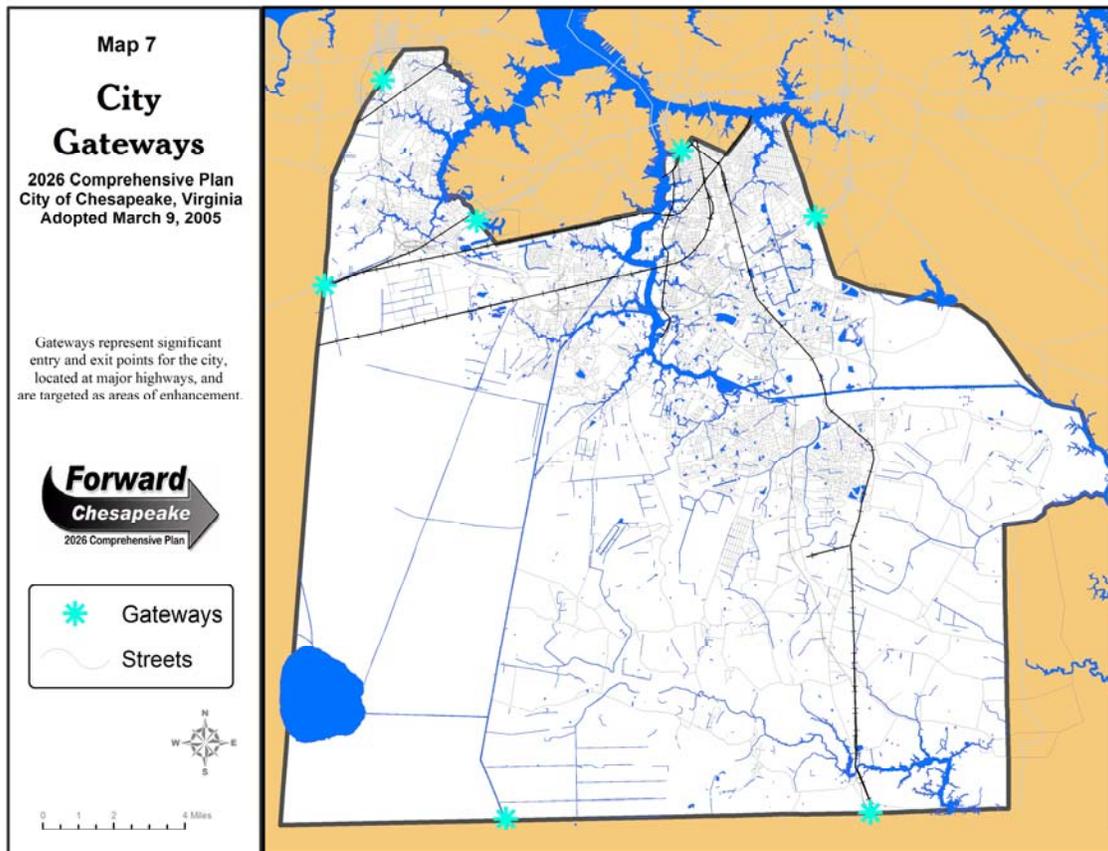
- **Greenbrier Major Activity Center**

A key land use planning tool for the 2026 Comprehensive Plan is the major activity center concept. A major activity center is a form of land use characterized by regional scale retail, commercial, and industrial development that is oriented toward a major transportation corridor or area. Major activity centers can be automobile-oriented or transit-oriented. Greenbrier is one of the largest and most recognizable of the City's major activity centers. Because of its physical location near Interstate 64 and Military Highway and status as a planned unit development (PUD) since the early 1970's, Greenbrier has taken on the unofficial role of Chesapeake's "downtown," or center of commercial activity, anchored by Greenbrier Mall.



- Effective January 2005, portions of the Greenbrier area will be designated as a Tax Increment Financing District (TIF). Designation as a TIF will provide funding opportunities for continual investment in the area to ensure the infrastructure and improvements keep pace with the demands of a significant regional activity center.

- The Land Use Plan will continue to promote regional mixed uses, including retail, commercial, light industrial, office space, and a variety of residential settings, particularly higher density dwellings.
- While Greenbrier is recognized as a strongly automobile-oriented major activity center in the present, it is also located along a planned mass transit corridor. As such the City should plan for facilities and services that promote both a more pedestrian-friendly and transit-oriented environment.
- **Dominion Boulevard Major Activity Center**
 The Dominion Boulevard/Route 17 Corridor is a significant transportation corridor due to its relationship as a primary north / south link between Raleigh, North Carolina, and Norfolk. Route 17 and Interstates 464 and 64 are significant regional transportation corridors and provide regional access to the area. The proposed Pleasant Grove Parkway also runs through the corridor and provides additional accessibility for the future. Recognizing the strategic nature of this corridor, it was designated as a TCOB Target Area in 2001. The road is currently a two-lane, undivided highway with a draw span at the Southern Branch of the Elizabeth River, improvements are planned.
 - As a part of the 2026 Land Use Plan, the Dominion Boulevard Corridor has been designated for regional mixed uses. It is the intent of this Plan to create an alternative regional employment center, south of the Albemarle and Chesapeake Canal. Corporate offices and research and development uses, including amenities such as integrated opens spaces or golf courses, and institutional uses, should be promoted for this area. Some strategically placed residential may be included in the area; however, the focus of the corridor should be on economic development.
 - The guidelines for the Transportation Corridor Overlay District should continue to provide guidance in land use decisions in this corridor.
- **Gateways**
 The purpose of Gateways is to take advantage of the special opportunities associated with being an entryway into the City.
 - As an entryway, special consideration must be given to the overall appearance and impression created for the City as well as taking advantage of the potential for economically beneficial uses that may be appropriate at these locations. Uses which may be appropriate in these locations include welcome centers, hospitality centers, and well-designed convenience and lodging uses.
 - Design recommendations for Gateways may be found in the Design element of this Plan and should be used to provide guidance in the appropriate appearance of development within Gateways.
 - As a follow up to the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan, a study should be undertaken to develop more detailed guidelines for development within gateways.



- **Areas for Future Study**

There are some areas of the City which are still in need of study for specific recommendations. These areas include the following:

- Indian River Planning Area / Military Highway Corridor
- The Southeastern Parkway Corridor
- The Pleasant Grove Parkway Corridor
- Community Revitalization Study
- Kempsville Road Corridor
- The Northwest River
- The North Landing River

Design

The Design of Chesapeake

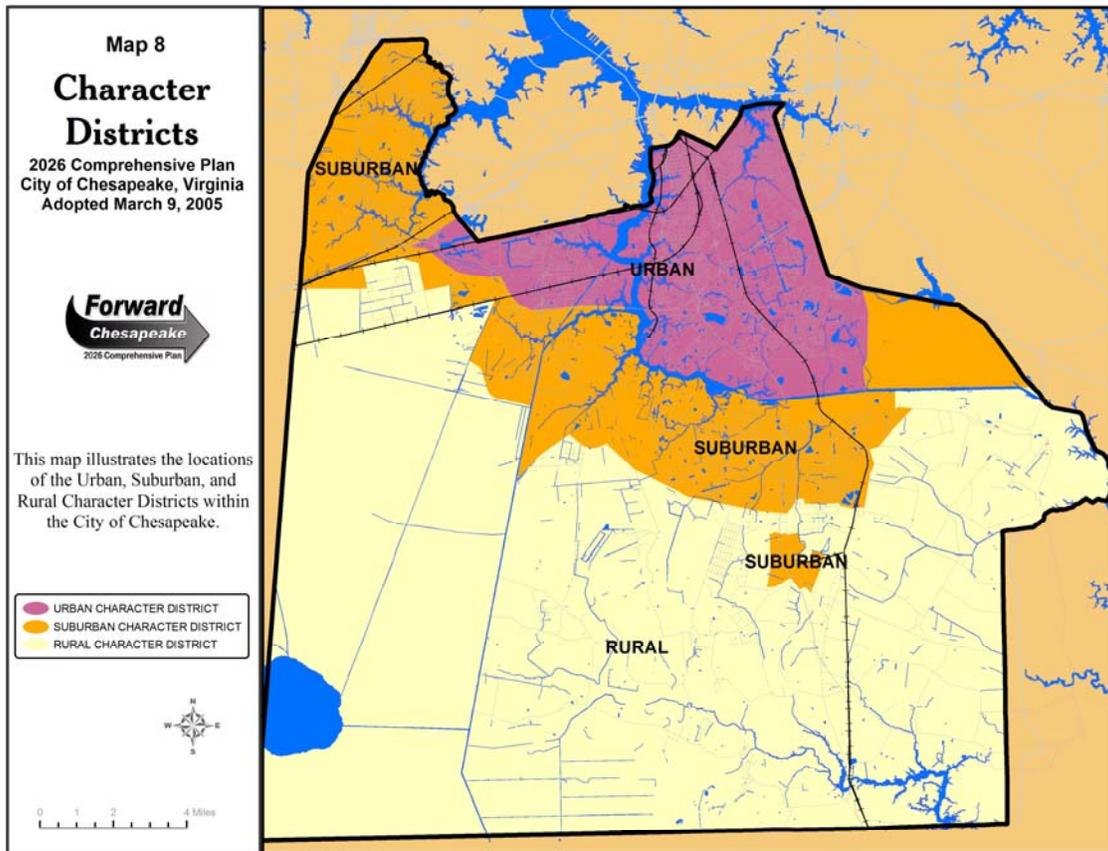
The overall vision for Forward Chesapeake describes a city that is a desirable place for residents, businesses and visitors alike, with a high quality of life and an attractive and harmonious built and natural setting. This vision of Chesapeake's future calls for a city that works well, supports its citizens, and is a beautiful place to live and work. Implementing this vision will call for a renewed commitment to the importance of community design and appearance in the City.



Good design is more than just an option to consider for Chesapeake. The quality of a city's streets, buildings and parks has a direct impact on the city's economy, its quality of life and its long-term sustainability as a desirable place. Distinctive and high quality city design can help Chesapeake solidify its "brand identity" within the larger Hampton Roads region. It can be an effective marketing tool for the City, providing good models for future developers and investors. The excellent design quality that Chesapeake's citizens have demanded in their Vision can also be used to strengthen the City's economic base and long-term marketability in the region.

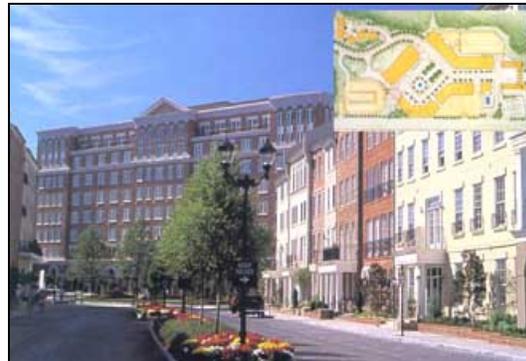
City-Wide Character Districts

Chesapeake is not uniform – it is a city composed of villages, neighborhoods and districts that often have distinct settings and separate design characters. By emphasizing quality in the design of the built environment, these disparate places can be enhanced and harmonized with the look of the city as a whole, while maintaining their individual character. It is important to recognize the different development patterns that make up Chesapeake as a whole. These patterns of growth and development have been determined by history, by governmental policy and by market forces. As Chesapeake flourishes over the next decades, the following broad "Character Districts" and associated design principles will help ensure a harmonious pattern of land use and design and give landowners and developers guidance regarding site development issues. The information provided in this element of the Plan is provided as guidance and it is understood that some flexibility may be expected in accordance with good design practices.



Urban Character District – Design Principles

- The Urban Character District should continue as a mixture of stable older neighborhoods and districts that are enhanced over time with new landscaping, façade improvements, a revitalized streetscape and better multi-modal transportation and access.
- Infill development should be encouraged in this area, with new development enhancing the visual character of neighborhoods and allowing for a greater range of densities and mixtures of uses over time.
- A diversity of housing types and densities should be promoted, with a range of density types from urban high density to suburban density housing prototypes.
- Consideration should always be given the mitigation of any undesired impacts between adjacent uses; good design practices should be used to ensure land use compatibility.



- Residential neighborhoods should be designed for enhanced pedestrian access, street trees and landscaping and pedestrian-scaled front yards and house facades.
- Historic buildings should be preserved and their design used to inspire “place-making” and new development in the area.
- New housing should respect traditional patterns of development in the area. Houses with front porches, consistent setbacks that are close to the sidewalk and on-street or rear-access parking should be encouraged.
- Neighborhood-based schools, civic services and commercial centers should be preserved where they exist, and encouraged when new development proposals are being considered.



Suburban Character District – Design Principles

- The Suburban Character District should be an area that maintains a basic suburban character, but enhances the livability and design quality of existing neighborhoods and new developments over time.
- Consideration should always be given the mitigation of any undesired impacts between adjacent uses; good design practices should be used to ensure land use compatibility.
- Street improvements in new suburban development should show improved vehicular connections between neighborhoods, increased pedestrian amenity and minimal pavement widths needed to meet functional and safety requirements. Street design should encourage slow vehicle speeds without reducing the connectivity of the overall network.
- Retail and service uses should be well connected to adjacent areas and neighborhoods. Neighborhood-based retail and service centers should, where possible, be within walking or biking distance of residential and employment areas.
- Where possible, encourage clustering residential and commercial development to preserve open space and reduce public expenditure for public services.
- Design roadways and buildings to preserve natural landforms and minimize impact on environmentally sensitive areas through:
 - Aligning roads to pass around, rather than through, sensitive areas.
 - Designing grade separation where applicable
 - Permitting flexibility in roadway width and geometry, to better preserve sensitive areas.



- Encourage the extensive and creative use of landscaping to create attractive streetscapes through:
 - Expanding and maintaining street tree programs in all public rights of way.
 - Developing special concentrations of landscaping in medians, at intersections and prominent focal points and gateway locations.
 - Creating attractive views of landscaped yards and street edges, rather than privacy fences and blank screen walls from major roadways.

Rural Character District – Design Principles

- The Rural Character District should be an area of preserved farmland, natural areas and small-scale rural communities and compatible employment uses. It is designed to support the goals of protecting working farmland and providing an open, rural landscape as a relief to the built up and developed areas of the City.



- Farmland preservation, environmental protection and the maintenance of an open, rural landscape and community structure should be the priorities for this district.
- Consideration should always be given the mitigation of any undesired impacts between adjacent uses; good design practices should be used to ensure land use compatibility.
- New residential development should only be permitted if it is very low density, compatible with the rural design character and is clustered in such a way as to preserve meaningful areas of viable farmland or connected natural habitats.
- Public and institutional uses should be designed to blend harmoniously with the rural landscape and to support the traditional design character of the area.
- Existing rural settlements should be preserved and only small-scale, compatible new infill development should be permitted within them that doesn't change the traditional visual character of the community or surroundings.
- Farming, forestry and compatible rural economic development should be encouraged as a way to make the district economically self-sufficient and part of a "working rural landscape."
- Important natural features such as waterways and wooded corridors should be identified and preserved whenever possible and these areas should be a priority for future public and private land protection efforts. Priority should also be given to the areas and corridors identified in the region's Southern Watershed Area Management Plan (SWAMP).



Additional City-Wide Design Elements

Gateways and Edges

Visual impressions of Chesapeake are usually formed as one enters the City and experiences a series of “views from the road.” The quality of Chesapeake’s gateways, edges and main transportation corridors leaves an important impression on visitors and residents alike. The current sameness and lack of visual distinctiveness to much of the City’s gateways and corridors presents a key opportunity to strengthen Chesapeake’s image and identity. A positive visual image for these key design elements will contribute much to the overall positive impression Chesapeake can make as a city and an attractive place to live and work.



- Gateways should be established at key entry points into the City. Gateways should incorporate a combination of the following design elements:
 - Identity and welcome signage to reinforce Chesapeake’s brand identity and promote its unique qualities
 - Unified graphic and architectural treatment of logos, color and construction materials
 - Distinctive landscaping treatments to reinforce the image of a superior design quality at each gateway
 - Gateway points need not be at the actual City boundaries – they should be sited for the best visual and design impact.
- A separate but harmoniously designed system of “community gateways” should be incorporated at key neighborhood or community locations to reinforce Chesapeake’s multi-focal urban form and the distinctiveness of its individual communities.
- Major transportation routes should be attractively landscaped and should have appropriate unified signage to direct visitors and promote the city’s attractions.
- Identifiable City edges should be reinforced to create a distinctive design character for Chesapeake. New development around City edges should incorporate extensive natural protection, high quality building design and attractive landscape treatments.

Open Space System

Providing a high quality of life for the residents and employees of Chesapeake will rely on creating an integrated and accessible system of outdoor amenities, including active recreation areas, passive natural areas and sufficient “green relief” for the developed portions of the City. Chesapeake is fortunate to have within its boundaries extensive and environmentally significant natural resources such as the Great Dismal Swamp and the Northwest River. It also has a network of many smaller waterways and natural corridors that interlace the developed



areas and provide an unprecedented opportunity to create an open space network within the City. Open space and access to it are key indicators of community quality of life and Chesapeake should place a high priority on creating and maintaining this open space framework as an amenity to all residents and visitors in the City.

- Open space design and maintenance should be an integral part of community design in Chesapeake. Residents should have convenient access to parks, public gathering and recreation spaces and natural areas at home and at work.
- An integrated open space framework should be developed throughout the City and open spaces and preserved natural areas should be used as connective elements to join different development areas in the City.
- Preserved open spaces should relate as much as possible to identified natural resources. They should meet the diverse needs for groundwater protection, flood control, human needs and habitat protection.
- A hierarchy of open space areas should be designed, from high-use urban parks and plazas to passive-use natural areas. Good access to all types of open space should be provided for all residents.
- Encourage walking and biking access to open space from all developed areas through the design of:
 - Small “pocket parks” in residential neighborhoods
 - Plazas and courtyards in core areas and denser urbanized districts
 - Landscaped gathering places along key pedestrian “main streets” in individual communities
 - Sensitively designed trails through connected open space systems such as stream valleys and greenways
- The rural landscape surrounding designated development areas should be preserved as a city-wide resource and key element in the overall design character of Chesapeake.



Revitalization and Community Preservation

The long-term sustainability of Chesapeake depends not just on new development in “Greenfield” areas, but also in an ongoing process of revitalizing and redeveloping existing older areas within the City. Chesapeake has a number of small historic communities that form the nucleus of its recently expanded community growth centers. These older centers need to be preserved as an important link to the past and source of community identity. In addition, there are a number of commercial corridors that have aged significantly and represent a “disamenity” to new economic development and marketing efforts. The infrastructure investments in these older commercial strips and heavy industry corridors represent an underutilized resource and a prime economic opportunity for future reinvestment.

The future economic success of Chesapeake depends partly on successfully revitalizing its older neighborhoods and employment areas to effectively meet the needs of current and future populations.

- Recognized historic areas should be preserved and used as a guide for new development in and around them.
- Zoning in older commercial and industrial areas should be progressively restructured to allow mixed use development for greater market flexibility.
- Redevelopment / revitalization efforts should be coordinated with the Chesapeake Redevelopment and Housing Authority.
- Incentives such as more flexible density, subdivision & parking requirements should be incorporated to encourage development in priority infill/redevelopment sites.



- The use of community development corporations should be explored as a tool in redevelopment / revitalization efforts.
- Redevelopment and infill should generally follow compact development patterns and traditional urban forms rather than land-intensive suburban patterns.
- Design guideline for infill development should be developed.
- Primary redevelopment and revitalization areas should emphasize quality of life and pedestrian activity through:
 - Expanded transit access and multi-modal transportation flexibility to reduce automobile dependency
 - A mixture of residential retail and service uses for round-the-clock street life and activity
 - Buildings set close to street and wide sidewalks with pedestrian amenities
 - Ground floor facades & uses that emphasize pedestrian activity
 - On-street parking for shopping areas and a minimum of surface parking lots fronting on main streets

Streetscapes and Circulation

The most important publicly-controlled design elements in the City are its public streetscapes. The visual character of city streets is often more important than the appearance of buildings and facades in forming a visual impression of a neighborhood. Chesapeake has several excellent examples of landscaped and attractive streetscapes such as those in commercial areas like Greenbrier and residential communities like Riverwalk.



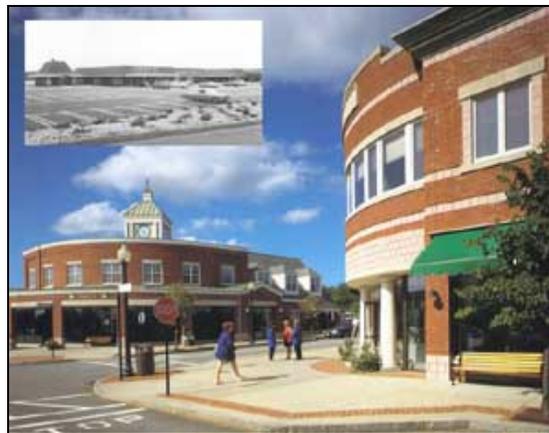
Many older street corridors, however, such as Military Highway and Battlefield Boulevard, need significant design enhancements to improve their appearance and encourage commercial reinvestment and redevelopment.

Chesapeake should expect excellence in streetscape and street design to improve both the look and the function of the City – its streets should consistently be made both safer and more attractive in the future.

- Chesapeake should maintain an aesthetically pleasing street environment while meeting the needs of multiple transportation modes.
- Expressways should be designed to carefully channel traffic while minimizing impacts on adjacent neighborhoods.
- Landscaped urban boulevards should link neighborhoods with activity centers and be bordered by trails or sidewalks that connect to the overall open space trail system.
- Local transit should be expanded with the goal of connecting higher-density activity and employment centers along major routes supported by a demand-driven system of buses and shuttles serving areas of greatest access need.
- Traffic circulation needs should be balanced with the goal of creating neighborhoods that are designed with an orientation to pedestrian and bicycle needs.
- New development should be encouraged to create linkages to existing neighborhoods toward a flexible circulation network with multiple alternative routes.
- New neighborhoods should be developed with an integrated system of trails and pedestrian ways that link schools, shopping centers and other public facilities with residences. Bike paths are highly recommended to be included.
- Utilities should be located underground as matter of routine.

Village Design

Most of the development in the area that would become Chesapeake traditionally grew up as a series of small village settlements. These villages were of two distinct types, the urban village, such as South Norfolk, was a separate urban community, part of a larger urban area but standing separately as a distinct cluster of neighborhoods. The rural village, such as Deep Creek or Sunray or Great Bridge, on the other hand, was typically a self-sustaining market center that served surrounding farmland. Both types of villages were characterized by local churches, schools and small commercial centers. They allowed residents to live, work and shop within convenient distances. Most of these small village settlements have experienced enormous growth and are losing their identity as distinct communities within the fabric of the City.



Consistent with Chesapeake's vision as a City of individual communities, it is important to establish design principles that will help reinforce the village structure and emphasize each village's distinct character within the City as a whole.

- Historic village cores and buildings should be preserved and used as a guide for new development.
- As they grow, villages should retain separate identities and distinctive design characteristics.
- Streets should be tree-lined with sidewalks – gaps in walks and trees should be filled in. Houses should have consistent setbacks & front porches where possible.
- Village centers should be developed as mixed use centers, denser than the surrounding area and should primarily serve local populations.
- Pedestrian access routes should be established to link community facilities with neighborhoods, transit routes, and with neighborhoods.
- Village Centers should be designed to encourage pedestrian activity with pedestrian-scaled streetscapes and strong pedestrian connections to surrounding neighborhoods.

Transit Oriented Village Design

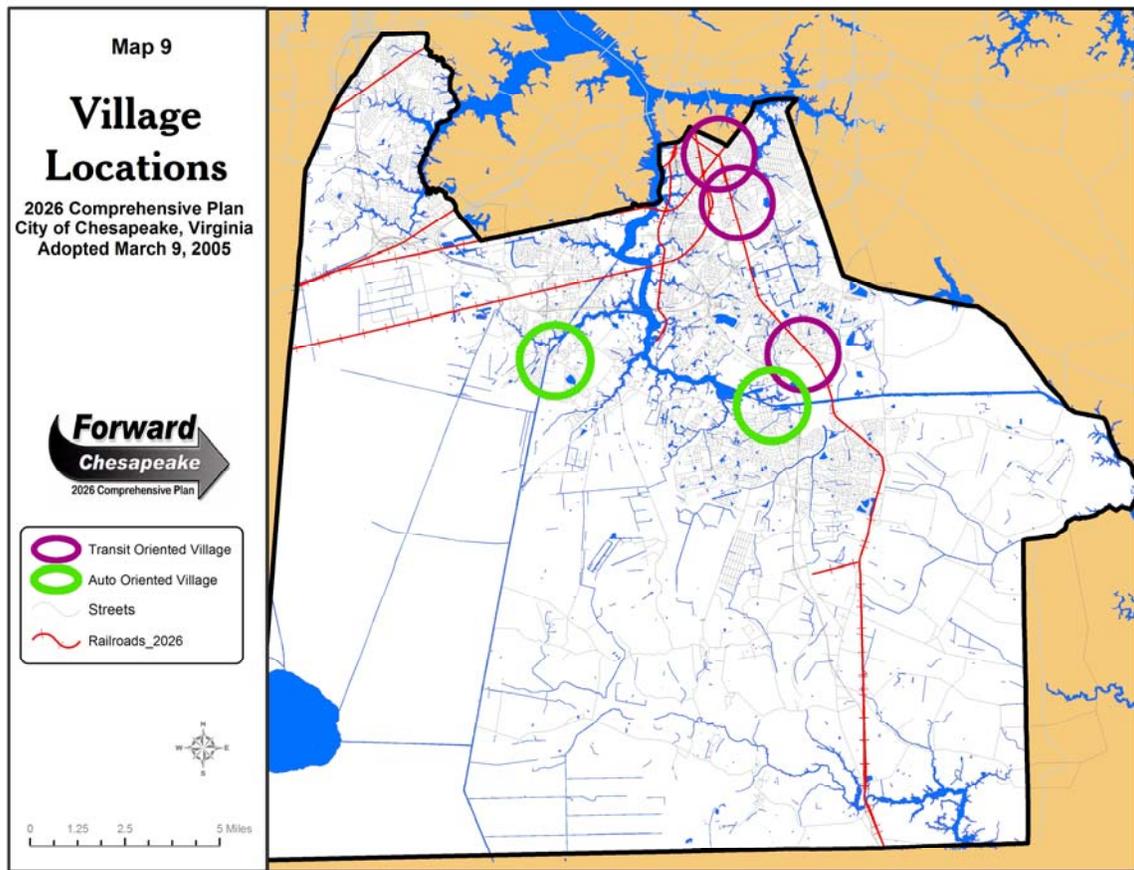
Three locations should be planned for transit-oriented village redevelopment in the very long-term:

- South Norfolk
- Edmonds Corner
- Clearfield Triangle

As these areas infill and redevelop, options should be preserved for reorienting them toward transit-friendly design. Investments in transit are long-term and may take decades to be realized. However, planning for transit and transit-oriented design should be instituted in the short term, so that future village centers will have the development concentrations and land use patterns that can adequately support transit usage.



- Village centers along potential transit lines should be developed with consideration for transit-oriented design.
- Increased density and a mixture of residential and commercial uses should be designed within walking distance of potential transit stations.
- Land uses and streetscape design should emphasize a pedestrian orientation with strong pedestrian linkages to potential transit station locations.
- Consideration should be given to bus and shuttle transit, in addition to rail transit, with bus shelters, benches and special pull out areas for buses incorporated into the streetscape design.



Major Activity Center Design

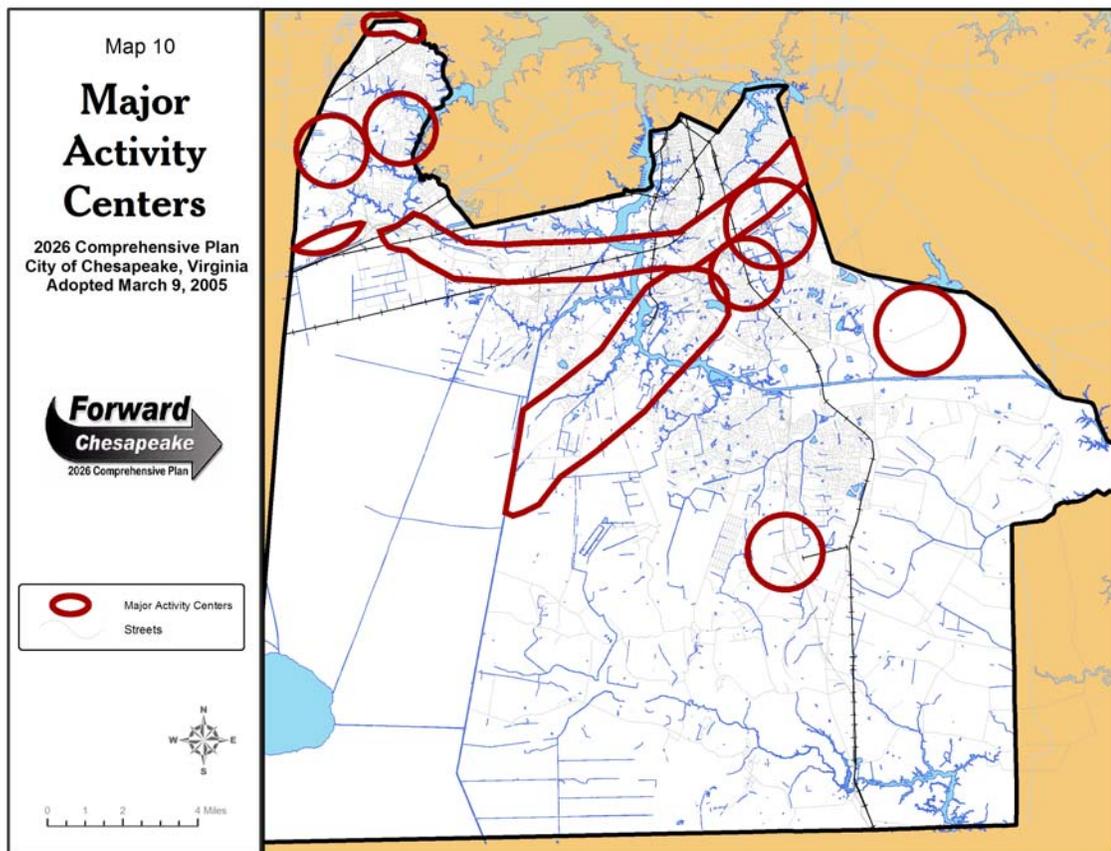
Major Activity Centers are regional retail or employment nodes that are intended to draw customers and employees from the region. These centers are typically located in the Nodal Character Districts and are served by high speed transit or interstate highways and arterial roads. Current examples include Western Branch and Greenbrier. Future centers will be developed around new transportation hubs such as in Hickory. They are important to the continued economic vitality of Chesapeake and their design is a key component of the City's overall visual character.

Major Activity Centers by necessity require large areas of parking and are frequently characterized by large building volumes and simple massing. Land uses often include regional shopping malls, big box retail stores, entertainment centers, office, light industrial parks, and residential.

- Major Activity Centers should be located where they are adequately served by major transportation routes and, where possible, by future transit lines.
- Major Activity Centers should have maximum connection with collector and arterial streets. Traffic improvements should minimize disruptions to existing neighborhoods.



- Land area for parking should be minimized through shared parking, structured parking and on-street parking, where appropriate. Parking lots should be enhanced with extensive perimeter and external landscaping and clearly marked multiple vehicular access ways.
- Bicycle lanes, pedestrian ways and crosswalks should be encouraged to enhance safety and expand access opportunities within the Center.
- Architectural treatment of buildings should be architecturally compatible in terms of materials, massing and roof forms. Loading and service areas should be screened from view and visual clutter on site areas should be reduced.
- Signage should be clustered and attractively designed with unified stylistic elements. Lighting should be harmoniously designed with brightness levels that do not exceed functional needs while minimizing impacts on adjacent properties.



Industrial Corridors and Centers

Industrial Centers and Corridors in Chesapeake are special-use districts that are intended to serve as employment hubs for the City and the region. Existing examples include Cardinal Industrial Park, portions of Military Highway and the waterfront of the Southern Branch of the Elizabeth River. They range from light industrial parks with small lots and minimal outdoor storage and equipment, to large heavy industry sites with significant impact on adjacent land uses. Some of these areas have very good redevelopment potential and can be upgraded to improve their visual appearance and reduce their impacts on surrounding areas.



- Industrial Centers and Corridors should be served by major rail, river or vehicular corridors. Multiple connections to Arterial and Collector roads and to local vehicular ways within industrial centers should be encouraged.
- Site development should include good design practices in order to insure compatibility of land uses.
- Land area for parking should be minimized through shared parking, structured parking and on-street parking, where appropriate. Large parking lots should be enhanced with landscaping and clearly marked multiple vehicular access ways.
- Street frontages should be attractively designed with appropriate façade treatments and landscaping to fit in with surrounding areas.
- Outdoor storage should be shielded from public view. Fences and screens should be attractively designed and fit with the building architecture.
- Special consideration should be given to character of industrial areas in terms of determining the appropriate degree of design requirements.



Area-Specific Design Principles

While the above design principles incorporate recommendations for the City as a whole, additional design principles may be needed for individual areas within the City that have unique development issues and challenges.

Following are design recommendations that should be considered for specific planning areas within Chesapeake. Over the years, the City has developed detailed area plans for areas such as South Norfolk, Western Branch and, recently Poindexter Street and the Great Bridge Battlefield area. The purpose of area-specific design principles listed below is not to supplant, but to supplement and support the policies of the existing City area plans relative to design issues. In addition, for geographic areas of the City that have no detailed plans, the following design principles can be used for general design guidance until more specific area plan design policies are developed.

Western Branch

(See also the Western Branch Land Study, 1995 located in Appendix J)

- Encourage the development of a distinctive development character for the relatively self-contained planning area of Western Branch. The design character of development in Western Branch should reflect the unique qualities of the surrounding area, in particular the open space, woods and water and marsh systems.
- Encourage the development of special “gateway” design features along existing and future entrances into the City, such as I-664 and Military Highway / Route 58. Gateway features could include both City and area-specific identity signage, landscaped entry features and architectural and landscape design guidelines for areas with visual prominence from the main roadway corridors in the area.
- Consider zoning and other incentives for the development of self-sufficient mixed-use communities that provide localized housing, shopping and employment opportunities in Western Branch, in order to reduce vehicular traffic to other areas in the City for basic needs.
- Encourage new residential communities to provide internal functional open spaces and gathering areas that are centrally located within the community such as “pocket parks” and small neighborhood parks (cf. Western Branch Area Plan, 1995, p.36)



Great Bridge

(See also the Great Bridge Battlefield Master Plan, 2004 located in Appendix H)

- Encourage the development of a comprehensive and unified design character for the entire Great Bridge area, building upon the design recommendations in the Great Bridge Battlefield Master Plan, incorporating primary design themes for a historic and waterfront-oriented development character.
- Ensure that future commercial development on heavily traveled portions of Battlefield Boulevard incorporate traffic access management considerations, such as shared vehicular entrances, turn lanes and minimal curb cuts on Battlefield Boulevard.
- Incorporate pedestrian-friendly streetscape design features for all new commercial developments in the area, including extra width sidewalks, street trees, pedestrian plazas and crosswalks and decorative street furniture.



- For the City Hall complex, consider developing additional civic and pedestrian amenities and a more unified design theme as it grows over time. Envision the future of the City Hall complex as a pedestrian-oriented precinct with unified building designs set in a landscaped campus that is a showcase of civic architecture and a symbolic focal point for the whole City.
- Encourage both vehicular and pedestrian inter-parcel access and the linking of new and existing residential communities into a Great Bridge-wide trail and walkway system to foster a stronger sense of community for the area.
- Consider additional design guidelines and standards for site planning, signage and landscaping for the Battlefield Boulevard frontage to bring greater visual cohesiveness to the streetscape over time.

South Norfolk

(See also the Poindexter Corridor Strategic Development Plan 2004 located in Appendix G)

- Ensure that new infill development and redevelopment in South Norfolk is compatible with the traditional architectural styles and urban fabric of the area, including the incorporation of a connective street grid system, pedestrian-oriented streetscapes, traditional neighborhood “shop front” commercial styles and compact single-family development where possible.
- Ensure that new residential development and redevelopment in South Norfolk preserves traditional and historic design features, such as fencing, front porches, sidewalks and street trees and garages set back from the main front of the house or served by alleys at the rear of lots where possible.
- Encourage the redevelopment of the Jordan Bridge / Elizabeth River area as a waterfront mixed use focal point for the City, with residential waterfront multi-family residential lofts, ground floor retail and compatible commercial and employment uses where possible (see Poindexter Street Strategic Development Plan).
- Reinforce the redevelopment of a South Norfolk “downtown” of urban-scale mixed uses, in conformance with the Poindexter Street Strategic Development Plan design plans, at the key Poindexter Road, Bainbridge Boulevard and Campostella Road intersection where possible.

