

# LAND USE

## INTRODUCTION

The scope and purpose of a locality's comprehensive plan are set forth in Section 15.2-2223 of the Code of Virginia, which includes the following statement:

*"The comprehensive plan, with the accompanying maps, plats, charts, and descriptive matter, shall show the locality's long-range recommendations for the general development of the territory covered by the plan. It may include ... the designation of areas for various types of public and private development and use, such as different kinds of residential, including age-restricted, housing; business; industrial; agricultural; mineral resources; conservation; active and passive recreation; public service; flood plain and drainage; and other areas ..."*

In other words, the Plan must identify the preferred type of land use for all land in the County. The Land Use element is probably the section of the Comprehensive Plan with which citizens are most familiar. This element, often referred to as the County's Land Use Plan, describes the distribution of existing land uses and the potential for future development and identifies the policies that will guide the arrangement and intensity of future additions or changes to existing land use patterns. While residential densities and general use characteristics are described in the Land Use element, specific standards – permitted uses, minimum lot sizes, setback requirements, etc. – are set forth in the County Zoning Ordinance.

Roughly 40% of the land in York County is owned by the federal government. These federal landholdings include the various military installations, which total approximately 21,000 acres, and the 4,660-acre Colonial National Historical Park (including the Colonial Parkway). In addition, the Cities of Newport News and Williamsburg each own reservoirs and watershed property in the County encompassing a cumulative total of 7,760 acres. The combination of federal and watershed property accounts for more than 33,000 acres – about half of the County's total land area. While presenting a number of constraints for the County, these landholdings contribute positively to the County's quality of life and the perception of a rural atmosphere by ensuring that a relatively large amount of open space will be perpetuated.

## HISTORY OF YORK COUNTY LAND USE PLANS

Although York County's first Zoning Ordinance was adopted in 1957, the County did not have an adopted Land Use Plan until 1976. Land Use Plans had been developed in 1956, 1964, and 1967 but were never formally adopted, although they did serve as a basis for the development of land use controls. Under the land use designations set forth in the 1976 Plan, the County's population, at full build-out, was estimated to have the potential to grow to a total of 139,800 residents, assuming all available residential land were developed at its maximum allowable density. This so-called "maximum build-out" population was reduced slightly to 135,000 with the 1983 update of that Plan and was then reduced by 40.7% to 80,000 with the County's first true Comprehensive Plan, *Charting the Course to 2010*, which was adopted in 1991. The 1991 Plan established the 80,000-resident maximum build-out population as a specific policy goal, and residential designations and densities were adjusted as necessary to achieve that goal. These actions were taken in response to concerns about excessive growth and development and a realization that the ratio of residential to commercial and industrial development was not fiscally sustainable. The 80,000-person population target was carried forward into the 1999, 2005, and 2013 updates of the Comprehensive Plan.

The Board of Supervisors adopted a new Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map in 1995 that were intended to implement the policy recommendations of the 1991 Comprehensive Plan. In many cases the new zon-

ing densities were higher than those set forth for the corresponding land use designations in the Plan, resulting in an estimated maximum build-out population of 86,500. In 2002, the County conducted a build-out study that differed from previous studies in that it accounted for both the County’s steadily falling average household size and the vast land areas where environmental constraints limited the potential for development. According to that study, the maximum build-out population was roughly 86,000 but the realistic build-out population was estimated at 81,000. A similar analysis conducted for the 2013 Comprehensive Plan update determined that the maximum build-out population had risen to 89,000 while the realistic build-out population had climbed slightly to 82,000.

It should be recognized that it is not likely that the County will ever achieve build-out. The 1991 Comprehensive Plan includes this caveat: “The ‘Maximum Potential Population’ assumes that all ‘developable acreage’ is developed to the maximum density.” The Plan goes on to explain that this assumption represents a maximum growth scenario that is likely to be greater than the actual outcome because not all the acreage is, in fact, developable [because of infrastructure deficiencies or environmental constraints] and because achieving the maximum density has not been achievable historically.

## EXISTING LAND USE

The process of laying out a vision for the future begins with an analysis of existing conditions. The distribution of land uses throughout the County is shown on the 2023 Existing Land Use Map and is summarized in **Table 1**. The various categories of land use are described below.

### Military

With almost 21,000 acres, military landholdings account for almost a third of the County's gross land area, more than any other land use category. Included under this classification are AFETA Camp Peary (Armed Forces Experimental Training Activity), the U.S. Naval Weapons Station Yorktown and Cheatham Annex, the U.S. Coast Guard Training Center Yorktown and the adjacent Defense Fuel Supply Point Yorktown, and the Landings at Langley military housing complex. As previously noted, this vast amount of military property exerts a major influence on land use and development patterns as well as public infrastructure and services. Most notable is the fact that the Naval Weapons Station divides the County into its “upper” and “lower” portions.

### Conservation

Lands identified under the Conservation category include the Colonial National Historical Park, the various County parks, the City of Williamsburg's Waller Mill Park, watershed property owned by the City of Newport News or the City of Williamsburg to protect the Harwood's Mill, Lee Hall, and Waller Mill Reservoirs, and properties protected by conservation easements or acquired by land conservancies or trusts for the purpose of preventing development. Also included are the various designated common areas within residential subdivisions. The 17,430 acres of Conservation land represents over a quarter (26.7%) of the County's land area, second only to Military acreage.

<b>YORK COUNTY EXISTING LAND USE 2023</b>		
<b>Land Use Category</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Military	20,960	32.1%
Conservation	17,430	26.7%
Residential	13,190	20.3%
Single-Family Residential	12,430	19.1%
Multi-Family Residential	760	1.2%
Commercial	1,770	2.7%
Industrial	1,580	2.4%
General Industrial	1,060	1.6%
Limited Industrial	520	0.8%
Public/Semi-Public	1,770	2.7%
Agricultural	470	0.7%
Mixed Use	20	0.0%
Vacant	7,820	12.0%
Right-of-Way	220	0.3%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>65,230</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<i>Note: Acreage figures rounded to the nearest hundred and might not add because of rounding.</i>		

**Table 1**

## **Residential**

Residential development occupies about 13,200 acres. Although this figure may seem low for a suburban “bedroom community” of roughly 65,000 acres, it represents 57% of the County’s developed non-federal/non-watershed land area. The vast majority of the residentially developed land in the County (94%) is dedicated to single-family detached housing.

Low-density residential development is commonly found along the County’s extensive tidal shoreline (approximately 235 miles) and in other areas where environmentally sensitive features – such as wetlands, high water table, and steep slopes – or other constraints such as the lack of public utilities (either now or at the time they were developed) or poor road access limit the capacity of the land to support denser development. Medium- and high-density single-family detached housing is generally located in areas where public utilities and convenient access to major thoroughfares are available.

Multi-family residential development includes apartments, townhouses, duplexes, quadruplexes, and other multiplex units. The County’s fourteen mobile home parks are also included in this category. Not included is the 450-acre Landings at Langley military housing complex, which includes a mix of duplexes and single-family detached homes and ancillary support facilities and is included in the Military category. The 760 acres of multi-family residential development represents 1.2% of the County’s land area and 5.8% of the residentially developed land area.

## **Commercial**

Commercial uses occupy approximately 1,800 acres in the County. In the lower County, most of the commercial development is located along Route 17, which is the County’s main commercial corridor, and Victory Boulevard (Route 171) between Route 17 and the Newport News city line, which is centrally located to the entire Peninsula and easily accessible via I-64. In the upper County, the Lightfoot area – including the Route 199 corridor, East Rochambeau Drive, and Mooretown Road – has emerged as a major retail destination for the greater Williamsburg area. Likewise, the other end of Route 199 at its intersection with Interstate 64 is the site of the Water Country USA water park and the Marquis retail center. Proximity to two I-64 interchanges has facilitated large-scale commercial development at both ends of Route 199. Other commercial corridors in the upper County are Merrimac Trail, Mooretown Road, Bypass Road, and portions of Pocahontas Trail and Richmond Road, which have developed for the most part in strip retail fashion. Because of its location in the Williamsburg market area, the upper County is home to most of the County’s tourist-oriented development – including hotels, motels, timeshare resorts, and Water Country USA – although the Yorktown village also has a variety of businesses that cater largely to the tourist market.

There are also various neighborhood-oriented businesses that serve the day-to-day needs of nearby residents. These are generally termed convenience activities since their business depends largely on the convenience of the establishment to the shopper. In York County, neighborhood commercial activities are located in the centers of the older, established residential areas such as Lackey, Seaford, Dare, and Penniman Road. Also located in or near residential neighborhoods are various water-related activities that historically have held an important position in the County’s commercial base. Included in this category of commercial activities are the marinas as well as several boat-building operations and seafood businesses located in the Dare, Seaford, Dandy, and Waterview areas.

## **Industrial**

The approximately 1,600 acres devoted to industrial land development represent 2.4% of the County’s land area. Since the construction of the VEPCO (now Dominion Energy) Yorktown Power Station and the adjacent Amoco Oil Refinery (now occupied by Plains Marketing) between Goodwin Neck and Waterview Roads on the Goodwin Neck peninsula in the 1950s, this land assemblage, combined with the ad-

joining HRSD York River Treatment Plant on Back Creek Road, built in 1984, has served as the County's heavy industrial base for decades. The refinery property was acquired by Plains All American in 2011 and converted into a storage and distribution facility. The power plant is in the midst of a phased shutdown that started in 2019 with the decommissioning of two of the three generator units, with the third and final unit tentatively scheduled to be retired in 2023. Also included in the General Industrial category are the numerous automobile salvage yards at the southern end of the Route 17 corridor in Tabb. The categorization of these businesses as heavy industrial uses is based on their impacts on surrounding properties in terms of noise, dust, odor, and visual appearance.

Light or limited industrial activities are scattered throughout the County and are in many cases located in the midst of commercially oriented areas. These include the Bethel, Busch, Ewell, Greene, and Victory industrial parks, and the York River Commerce Center.

### **Public/Semi-Public**

Public uses in the County include County schools, fire stations, libraries, office buildings, and pump stations; other municipal facilities such as the Williamsburg water filtration plant on Waller Mill Road, the Harwoods Mill Water Treatment Plant on Route 17, and 440 acres occupied by runways and taxiways at Newport News-Williamsburg Airport; state-owned facilities such as the American Revolution Museum at Yorktown and the Jamestown-Yorktown Central Support Complex on Penniman Road; and non-military federal facilities such as the various National Park Service buildings in Yorktown and all U.S. post offices. The Semi-Public category of land uses includes places of worship and cemeteries; civic club meeting facilities; the Sentara Williamsburg Regional Medical Center on Mooretown Road; and, on Waller Mill Road, the Historic Triangle Community Services Center and the Heritage Humane Society animal shelter. Lands classified as public or semi-public are scattered all over the County and occupy a comparatively small proportion (2.7%) of the County's total land area.

### **Mixed Use**

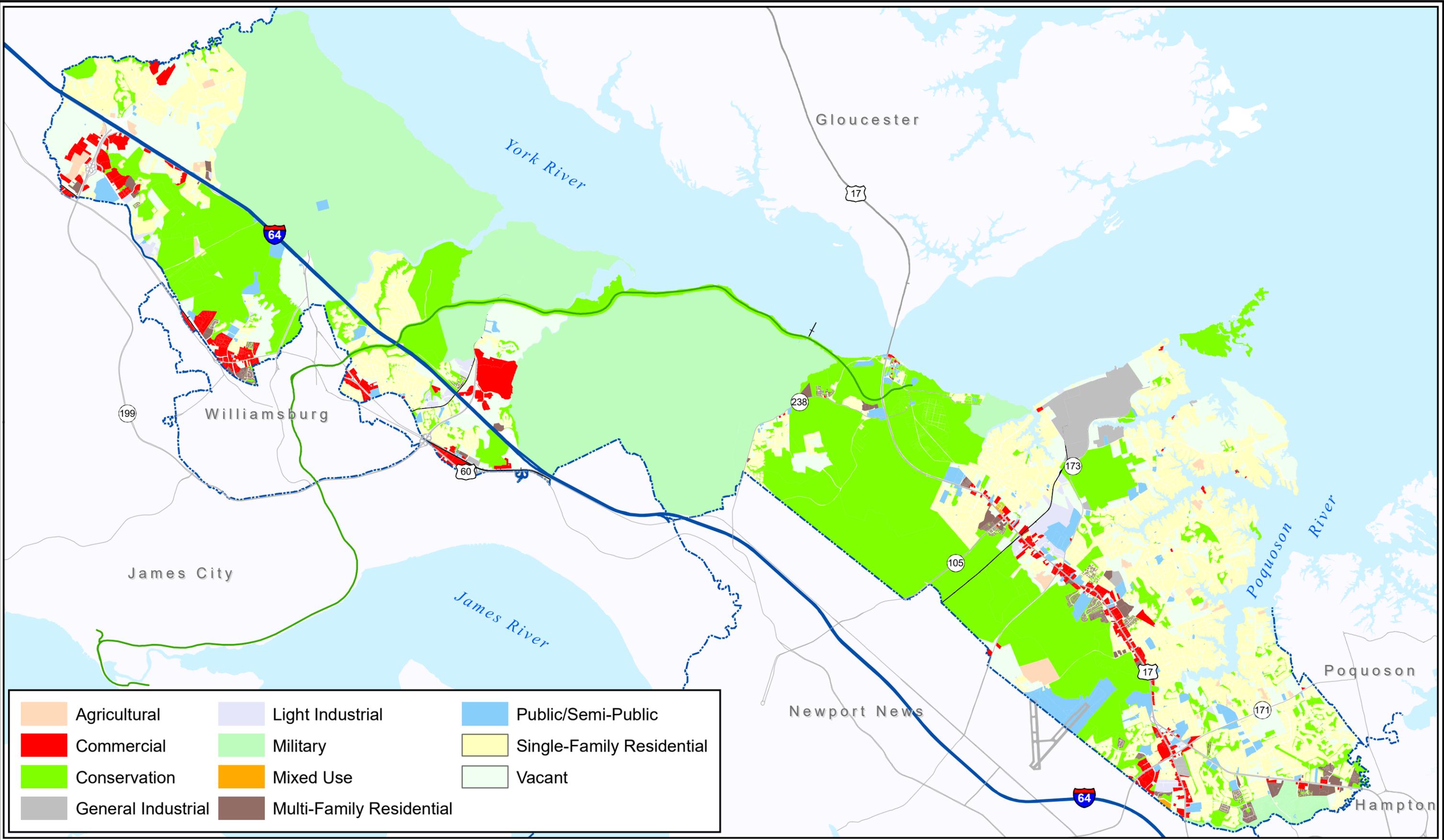
The four mixed-use developments that have been approved in the County – Nelson's Grant, Yorktown Crescent, Commonwealth Green, and Kelton Station – occupy a combined area of approximately 80 acres; however, much of this land is categorized as either Vacant, Multi-Family Residential, or Conservation (for common area). Twenty acres are categorized as Mixed Use.

### **Right-of-Way**

Approximately 220 acres of land are categorized as right-of-way. This includes private street rights-of-way (or in some cases, streets designed to be public that have not yet been accepted into the state secondary road system by VDOT) and rail corridors, whether owned by CSX or the Navy.

### **Agricultural**

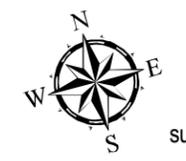
The Agricultural category includes commercially productive agricultural activities that are participating in the County's Land Use Program as well as other known agricultural uses. The Land Use Program, administered by the County's Real Estate Assessment Office, is intended to promote the preservation of land used for agricultural and horticultural purposes by basing the real estate assessment on use value rather than market value. Collectively, agricultural uses account for an estimated 470 acres or 0.7% of the County's land area. Agricultural uses are scattered around the County and are especially prominent in the Lightfoot and Skimino areas. While agriculture is an important part of the County's history and heritage, it does not play a major role in the economic base. (According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the County has four employment establishments in the Agricultural, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting sec-



	Agricultural		Light Industrial		Public/Semi-Public
	Commercial		Military		Single-Family Residential
	Conservation		Mixed Use		Vacant
	General Industrial		Multi-Family Residential		



2023 Existing Land Use  
 York County, Virginia  
 239



THIS IS NOT A LEGAL PLAT.  
 This map should be used for  
 information purposes. It is not  
 suitable for detailed site planning.



tor with a combined total of fourteen employees.)<sup>1</sup> Over the years, residential development has occurred adjacent or close to many of these long-standing agricultural activities and they have been able to co-exist without major problems or concerns.

### **Vacant**

Vacant privately owned land comprises about 7,820 acres, or 12.0% of the County's land area. More than 1,300 acres of this vacant land, though currently undeveloped, is slated for development that is either in the plan review and approval process or undergoing site work or construction that has not proceeded to the point where such properties can be considered “developed.” Large areas of contiguous vacant land are prominent in the upper County, especially in the Lightfoot area and the lands surrounding the Interstate 64 interchange at Camp Peary/Route 143. In the lower County, large areas of vacant land are limited largely to environmentally sensitive areas in the Seaford, Bay Tree Beach, York Point, and Tabb areas, most of which have limited development potential. Most of the large vacant sites in the lower County that can be developed are already slated for development. There are still significant opportunities, however, for additional infill development – i.e., development of small, scattered vacant sites that are surrounded or essentially surrounded by existing development – in both the lower County and the upper County.

## **LAND USE TRENDS**

Changes in land use since the adoption of the 2013 Comprehensive Plan are depicted graphically in **Figure 1**. One notable change is the sizable growth in the amount of conservation land, which increased by than 1,230 acres – more than any other category of land use. Most of this increase is attributable to the acquisition of several large properties by the American Battlefield Trust for preservation purposes, the recordation of conservation easements on property now or formerly owned by the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, and the acquisition of additional watershed property by Newport News Waterworks and the City of Williamsburg. In addition, common areas within residential subdivisions that have been developed since 2013 are responsible for some of this increase.

Among the remaining categories, single-family residential land use has experienced the greatest increase since 2013, growing by 680 acres. Multi-family residential followed with an increase of 110 acres. With regard to nonresidential land use categories, **Figure 1** indicates a 50-acre increase in the amount of commercial acreage and net declines in the Limited and General Industrial land use categories; however, those numbers are skewed by adjustments that have been made to account for properties that were incorrectly coded in the 2013 Comprehensive Plan. In actuality, industrial use has *increased* by roughly 60 acres, while the amount of commercially used land has increased by about 30 acres. Public and semi-public land use has increased by 40 acres. The amount of land dedicated to agricultural use has declined by an estimated 70 acres with the development of the Smith Farm Estates subdivision and the sale of several large parcels in the Lightfoot and Skimino areas that previously were used, in part, for agricultural activities.

As the amount of acreage in other categories has increased, the amount of vacant land has, of course, declined. The net difference between 2013 and 2022 is almost 2,000 acres. More than half of this land previously classified as “Vacant” actually remains vacant in terms of its use but is now classified as “Conservation” as a result of a change in ownership to a land conservancy, trust, or other similar entity whose intent is to preserve the land in perpetuity. In most cases, there is a conservation easement or deed restriction that prohibits or greatly limits construction.

---

<sup>1</sup> Employment data is for the first quarter of 2022.

One aspect of land use that is not captured in these statistics is redevelopment and adaptive reuse of existing structures, which, as discussed in the Economic Development element, is playing an increasing role in the County’s efforts to attract and promote economic development. For example, the conversion of an old former auto repair garage on Second Street into a successful craft brewery represents a net gain in commercial activity, but since the property technically was not vacant (although the building was), this gain is not reflected in the land use data.

## York County Existing Land Use

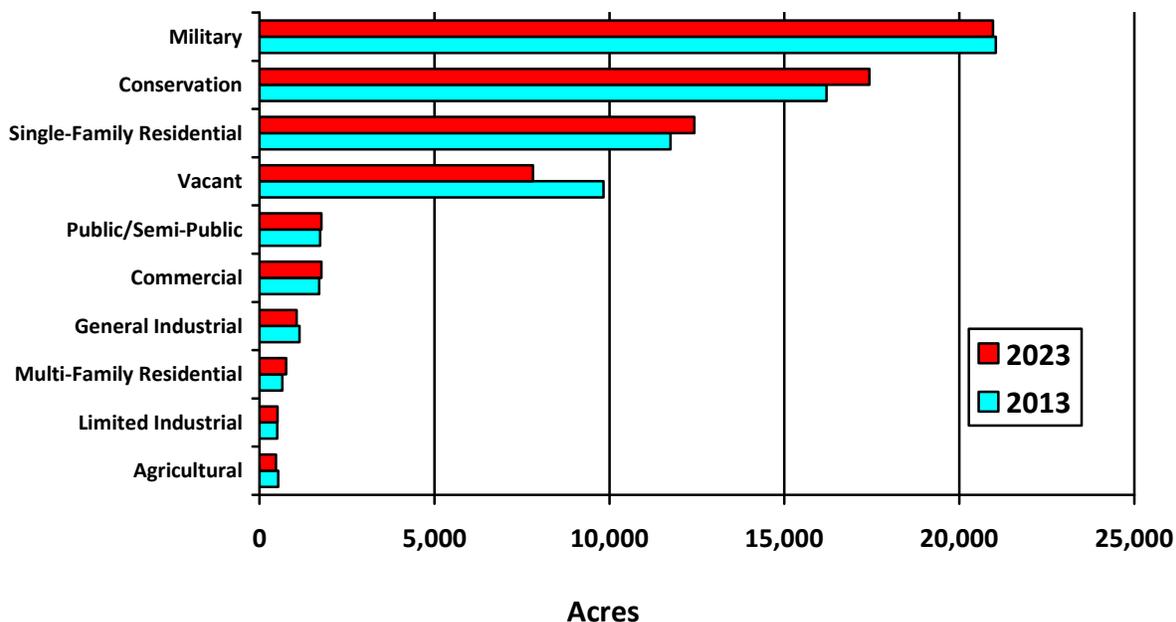


Figure 1

One aspect of land use that is not captured in these statistics is redevelopment and adaptive reuse of existing structures, which, as discussed in the Economic Development element, is playing an increasing role in the County’s efforts to attract and promote economic development. For example, the conversion of an old former auto repair garage on Second Street into a successful craft brewery represents a net gain in commercial activity, but since the property technically was not vacant (although the building was), this gain is not reflected in the land use data.

## COMMUNITY CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE

Traditionally the term *land use* has been fairly narrowly construed to encompass the basic type of activity that takes place on the land – i.e., residential, commercial, or industrial. Also appropriate, however, is a broader definition encompassing not just the type of use but how it will be designed and how it will look. Just as most County residents take pride in the character and appearance of their homes and properties, so too do they have a keen interest in the overall character and appearance of the county in which they live. Whether one’s interest is in preserving open space, seeing vacant commercial buildings occupied, having architecturally attractive commercial and residential buildings, living on tree-lined residential streets, or a host of other objectives, there is a strong desire to preserve and improve York County as a pleasant and attractive place to live, work, and play.

York County is blessed by its geography. With more than 200 miles of tidal shoreline and associated tidal areas and almost 50% of its total land area unavailable for private development, there are large areas of green space that are likely to remain that way for the foreseeable future. These “green” areas are supplemented by undeveloped privately owned lands with extensive tree cover and by developed properties where attention and effort have been given to protecting and enhancing the landscape. This vast amount of green/open space is one of the County’s principal character-defining features.

Although development has altered much of the County’s natural landscape, policies and regulations put in place over sixty years ago with the adoption of the County’s first Zoning Ordinance in 1957 and improved upon in subsequent amendments and rewrites have helped to minimize the character-altering impacts of that development. Now, as the County’s development continues into the next phase of its planning and zoning history, citizen input indicates a desire for the bar to at least be maintained and in some cases, perhaps, raised to higher levels to ensure that the inevitable growth and development that occurs has a positive *defining* effect on the character and appearance of the County.

### **Character-Defining Tools and Techniques**

Under the terms of the Code of Virginia, various tools and techniques are available to local governments seeking to protect and enhance the character and appearance of their jurisdiction. These measures can be coupled with non-regulatory and incentive-based policies and programs to address issues affecting appearance, either on a County-wide basis or in targeted areas. The following is a summary of some of the techniques in use in York County.

- **Landscaping**

In 1980 the Board of Supervisors adopted amendments to the Zoning Ordinance that established the first formal landscaping requirements for commercial and industrial development. These provisions required that a ten-foot (10’) wide landscaped open space area be provided around the perimeter of development sites. These requirements have been modified over the years, in terms of both width (at least a 20-foot wide strip is now required along road frontages while on some corridors a greater width Greenbelt buffer of 35 or 40 feet is required) and the number of landscape plantings, all with the objective of enhancing the appearance of developing areas.

In accordance with policy guidance provided by the 1991 Comprehensive Plan, the Board of Supervisors amended the Zoning Ordinance in 1995 to include requirements to protect and preserve existing trees and vegetation within a 35-foot wide *Greenbelt Buffer* along certain designated road corridors. These provisions recognized the reality that commercial site design and development often result in considerable disturbance within the front ten to twenty feet of a site, causing existing mature trees to be damaged or destroyed and thus significantly altering the views along that corridor. While some have argued that existing tall, spindly trees should be removed from a developing site and replaced with new landscaping, it is those same tall trees that create the pleasant vistas along many of the County’s road corridors and that can be supplemented (rather than replaced) with new landscaping to create an even more attractive highway corridor and visual horizon. With these benefits in mind, the Board of Supervisors amended the Greenbelt provisions to increase the width to 45 feet along certain corridors and to expand the provisions to additional residential and commercial corridors.

Recognizing the aesthetic benefits that landscaping can provide at the “gateways” to the County and on major transportation corridors, the County has undertaken several major landscaping projects with funding provided on a dollar-for-dollar match through the Virginia Department of Transportation Revenue Sharing Program. Extensive median and shoulder landscaping has been installed on segments of Route 17, Victory Boulevard, and Route 199 and on Mooretown Road and Merrimac Trail/Second Street. As a part of this effort, the County has also assumed responsibility for increased levels of maintenance (mowing/litter pick-up, etc.) along these and other roadways. The aesthetic benefits of this program

have been significant and, as VDOT's resources continue to decline, there may be additional corridors where such County-funded efforts will be needed in order to achieve the appearance standards that citizens desire. As the landscaping installed in these areas matures, it will continue to improve the appearance of the corridors.

- **Design Standards and Guidelines**

Also in 1995, and again in response to policy guidance provided in the 1991 Comprehensive Plan, the Board of Supervisors amended the Zoning Ordinance to establish the Tourist Corridor Management (TCM) overlay provisions. These provisions address architectural design and appearance with the objective of ensuring that new or redevelopment projects are compatible with their surroundings and present a positive image on the County's major tourist entry corridors. In 2005, the Board of Supervisors strengthened the architectural design standards in the TCM overlay district and also created a separate Route 17 Corridor overlay district applicable to Route 17 between Cook Road and the Newport News city line. The Route 17 overlay district provisions, which include many of the same architectural design standards of the TCM overlay, have had a positive influence on the appearance of the Route 17 corridor.

In 2004, after many years of study and deliberation, the Board of Supervisors established the Yorktown Historic District and the accompanying Yorktown Design Guidelines. These provisions, adopted pursuant to the authority provided in Section 15.2-2306 of the Code of Virginia, established a formal architectural design review process for the historic Yorktown village, the intent of which is to ensure that new construction and renovation work is designed in a manner that respects and complements the special character of Yorktown.

- **Underground Utilities**

Overhead utility lines add to the visual clutter, detract from the appearance of even the best looking and best maintained properties, and limit the type and size of the landscaping that can be planted along the road shoulder and the fronts of properties. In addition, the overhead lines are subject to damage from automobile accidents (poles hit and snapped) and during storms (from limbs or trees falling across the lines). For these reasons, underground utilities are required in York County in all new subdivisions and on-site in all new commercial and industrial developments. In addition, where new development activity necessitates relocation of roadside overhead lines, they must be placed underground in their new location. Areas where utilities have been placed underground (e.g., in front of Washington Square and Grafton Shopping Centers and along Victory Boulevard in the Kiln Creek area) are noticeably more attractive as a result. Unfortunately, the cost of putting existing lines underground is extremely high.

One of the most opportune times to consider undergrounding utilities is in conjunction with road improvement projects since VDOT policies allow certain "credits" for utility relocation work that is necessitated by a road project. As a result of these opportunities, the Board of Supervisors approved a major commitment of County funds to facilitate undergrounding of utilities along most of the length of the proposed Route 17 widening project between Wolf Trap Road and Route 134. Funds have been programmed in the Capital Improvements Program to continue this work as part of the widening of the next segment of Route 17 from Wolf Trap Road to Denbigh Boulevard/Goodwin Neck Road.

- **Telecommunications Towers**

Wireless telecommunications infrastructure has given rise to another set of utility-related aesthetic concerns with the proliferation of telecommunications towers. Consumer demand for cellular phones and other wireless telecommunication services has increased sharply in the past few decades, presenting local governments with the challenge of guiding the siting of the industry's antennas and support structures in their communities. At times it is difficult to find suitable locations that meet both the expectations of the wireless industry and the aesthetic goals of the community.

Support structures are typically needed for the placement of a wireless provider's antennas to deliver wireless communications. Antennas must be at specific heights (typically between 150' and 200') to adequately transmit and receive radio frequencies. Existing support structures – such as buildings, utility poles, pylons, church steeples, water towers, highway signs, lighting poles, and existing towers – can help accommodate the industry's antennas when they are located in or near a provider's service area. The industry often uses existing support structures when available but when they are not available, the communications provider must construct a support structure – usually a communications pole or tower – capable of supporting its antennas.

Although the federal Telecommunications Act of 1996 did not preempt local zoning authority, localities are somewhat constrained in their ability to deny requests for towers. Such decisions may be overturned by the Federal Communications Commission or federal courts if the intent or the effect of the decision is to discriminate between types of communications service providers, if the decision is not reached within a reasonable period of time, if the denial is unreasonable, or if the denial is based on public health concerns relating to radio frequency emissions. In addition, the Act places an obligation upon localities to assist the telecommunications providers in finding a facility somewhere within their coverage area.

Through its development ordinances and Special Use Permit conditions for towers, the County works to ensure that support structures are properly sited. Each potential tower site is different, but there are certain general policies that govern where such facilities are located. Towers should not be located in or near historic areas or along tourist corridors or greenbelt roads and ideally should be located in industrial and commercial areas rather than in residential neighborhoods. In accordance with the County's policy that it is preferable to have fewer towers, even if that means they have to be taller than they would otherwise be, wireless providers are required to share towers (i.e., co-locate) whenever possible and existing structures should be used when available. When no other feasible option exists, communication towers have been allowed in residential areas provided that all reasonable efforts are made to minimize visibility. It should also be noted that as condition of Special Use Permit approval for cell towers, the County requires that if space is available, the County shall have the right of first refusal for leasing space on the tower to place an antenna in support of operations consistent with the Department or Fire and Life Safety.

- **Blight Elimination**

York County has adopted the parts of the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code that address new construction but not the property maintenance code, which allows localities to formally cite property owners for violations such as broken windows, decaying wood and peeling paint. This code is routinely used in communities with older, run-down housing and commercial structures that are not being maintained. Adoption of this code would require additional staffing to enforce and would have to be applied on a County-wide basis rather than targeted to a specific area or corridor – both of which have been cited by the Board of Supervisors in previous discussions as reasons for not pursuing this type of program.

For various reasons, commercial and residential properties sometimes become vacant and are not maintained properly. These situations range from vacant lots that are not mowed frequently enough to commercial structures that become dilapidated and are prime graffiti targets. Code enforcement efforts sometimes work in these



cases but often are ineffective, particularly in the absence of a property maintenance ordinance. Even properly maintained abandoned properties can be a ‘blight’ on a neighborhood or corridor. For example, there are properties with old vacant buildings or properties where the building has been demolished while the concrete or asphalt parking lots and driveways remain. These properties are not attractive and, in many cases neither the buildings nor other improvements could be salvaged for use in a redevelopment scheme for the property. For aesthetic and marketing purposes, the best short-term solution for many would be to simply remove all of the old remnants and grass/landscape the site.

In 1997 the County was faced with a dilapidated gas station next to the Yorktown Library that was not being properly maintained by the out-of-town owner. The County convinced the owner to raze the structure but could not require that the grounds be cleaned and maintained to the same standard as the adjacent library property. In order to accomplish this, the County requested that the owner dedicate a landscaping and maintenance easement that allowed County staff to remove the debris on the property, plant shrubs and grass, and properly maintain the grounds. This same approach can be used to address problem properties where all other avenues have failed. The goal of such a program, which could be targeted to specific corridors or areas, would be to effect significant aesthetic improvements on the targeted property in order to stop its blighting influence and facilitate the property’s sale and renovation. Ideally, such results could be achieved through an easement arrangement, thus allowing the County to make the aesthetic improvements but with the property remaining in private ownership. However, in

certain other situations it may be necessary for the County to purchase the property outright in order to implement the desired aesthetic improvements and make the property (or properties) more marketable and better able to accommodate redevelopment, and with an ultimate objective of resale to the private sector. In recent years, this strategy has been successfully employed with the Beale’s East Brewpub now under construction on Route 17 north of its



intersection with Old York-Hampton Highway. It should be noted, however, that one drawback of this strategy is that the developer’s opportunity to obtain stormwater credits would be lost if the brownfield site has already been converted to a greenfield site.

As documented in the Economic Development and Housing elements of this Plan, the County offers a variety of property improvement grants and other programs that provide financial assistance to business owners and homeowners seeking to rehabilitate, renovate, or otherwise improve the appearance of their properties but lack the necessary capital. The Department of Economic and Tourism Development also offers a Commercial Demolition Program, which provides grants for the demolition of certain underused commercial properties in order to help prepare these properties for the redevelopment market.

## **PLANNING ISSUES FOR THE FUTURE**

Some residents use the term “rural” to describe York County’s character, and while there are areas of the County that have a rural feel, York County is probably best described as a suburban bedroom community. However one describes the overall character of the County, the citizen input collected in the preparation of this Plan indicates that in general, most County residents would like it to stay as it is. They like the fact that York County is less “built up” than other communities. They like the slower pace, the vegetation, the open space, and the less congested atmosphere. York County tends to attract more than

its share of families with children, not just because of the schools but also because it is a good environment for raising children.

The 1991 Comprehensive Plan cited the following characteristics as contributing to what the document described as “the perception of a ‘rural’ character in the County”:

- Retention of natural physical features,
- Retention of forest and woodland areas, both along roadways and within developed areas,
- Protection of existing agricultural areas,
- Protection or installation of landscaping and open space in all development, and
- Protection or enhancement of open space areas at strategic, highly visible locations throughout the County.

These features are still as desirable in 2022 as they were in 1991, and, thanks largely to the approach the County has taken in its development rules and regulations as described in the previous section, measures are in place to allow development to occur without losing these characteristics. In addition, there are several large land areas in the County – including watershed property, the National Park Service property, Camp Peary, and the Naval Weapons Station – that will not likely be opened for private development and that contribute to the rural feel by providing large amounts of contiguous vegetated open space. Although some of these areas are closed to the public, it is not necessary to physically enter them to appreciate these qualities. Their aesthetic appeal is evident as one drives along Airport Road through the Waller Mill watershed, or along Cook Road through the Colonial National Historic Park, or along I-64 adjacent to Camp Peary, or along Denbigh Boulevard through the Harwoods Mill watershed, and even along the northern portion of Route 17 through the National Park Service property.

Maintaining the County’s character in the face of continued development and striking a balance between the citizens’ desire for a high quality of life and the right of landowners to develop their property are the sorts of challenges that the County has faced and will continue to face in the years ahead. While some would like to stop growth altogether, that is not a realistic goal. With almost 8,000 acres of undeveloped land, it is inevitable that growth and development will continue for many years to come, and as the availability of vacant land shrinks, many County residents will find growth occurring “closer to home” on land that they assumed, or at least hoped, would never be developed.

Another challenge in regulating land use is the disparity that often exists between long-term goals and short- or medium-term market conditions. When there is a mismatch between the two, it often leads to pressure placed on the locality to change the zoning to allow something that it does not consider to be in the long-term best interest of its citizens. Market conditions fluctuate, and it is important to guard against the temptation to make development decisions, the impacts of which will be felt for years to come, solely on the basis of satisfying the demands of the current real estate market. In times of heavy residential demand and weak commercial demand, for example, excessive reliance on the market to dictate land use decisions can lead to an overall mix of homes and businesses that is fiscally unsustainable, with a rapidly growing population base demanding more public services and an economic base too small to generate the revenue to meet those demands without increasingly higher taxes.

“Rural” probably is not the best word to describe a county that, with more than 650 persons per square mile, is the sixth most densely populated county in Virginia, but many of the things people think of as rural – trees, open space, and relatively low housing densities – are still applicable to York County and, through appropriate development techniques, can be maintained without causing undue hardship on landowners. The overriding goals of this Land Use element are to provide for reasonable development opportunities in recognition of existing development and land use patterns and to provide for land uses that are compatible with that development and do not overburden public services and infrastructure. The fundamental tools for achieving these goals are the 2040 Land Use Map and the land use designations described below and in the Sub-Area Descriptions.

## LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

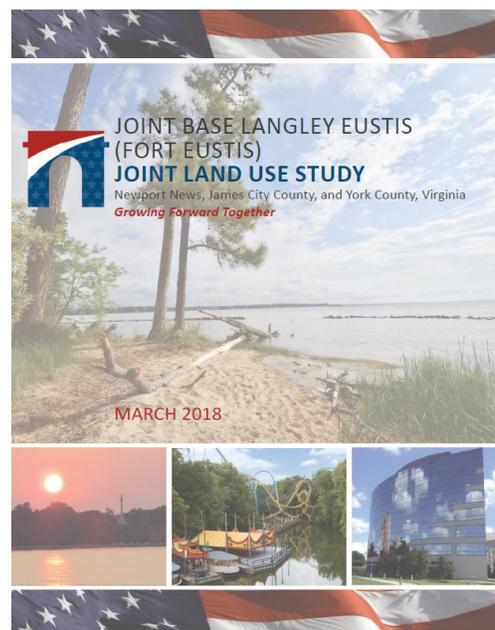
The following land use designations have been used in developing the 2040 Land Use Map. Although general in nature and not intended to precisely follow particular property lines, these designations will provide guidance for any changes to the more specific zoning regulations and zoning district locations and boundaries that implement the Comprehensive Plan. It must be recognized that development in accordance with these designations, as they apply to a specific area, may be appropriate only after certain improvements and infrastructure are completed. Since some of these improvements may require public investment, the appropriate timing for development will be closely related to capital improvements programming by the County and state and, in such cases, decisions to zone a property to facilitate the ultimate development objective should be delayed until the infrastructure is in place or at least programmed.

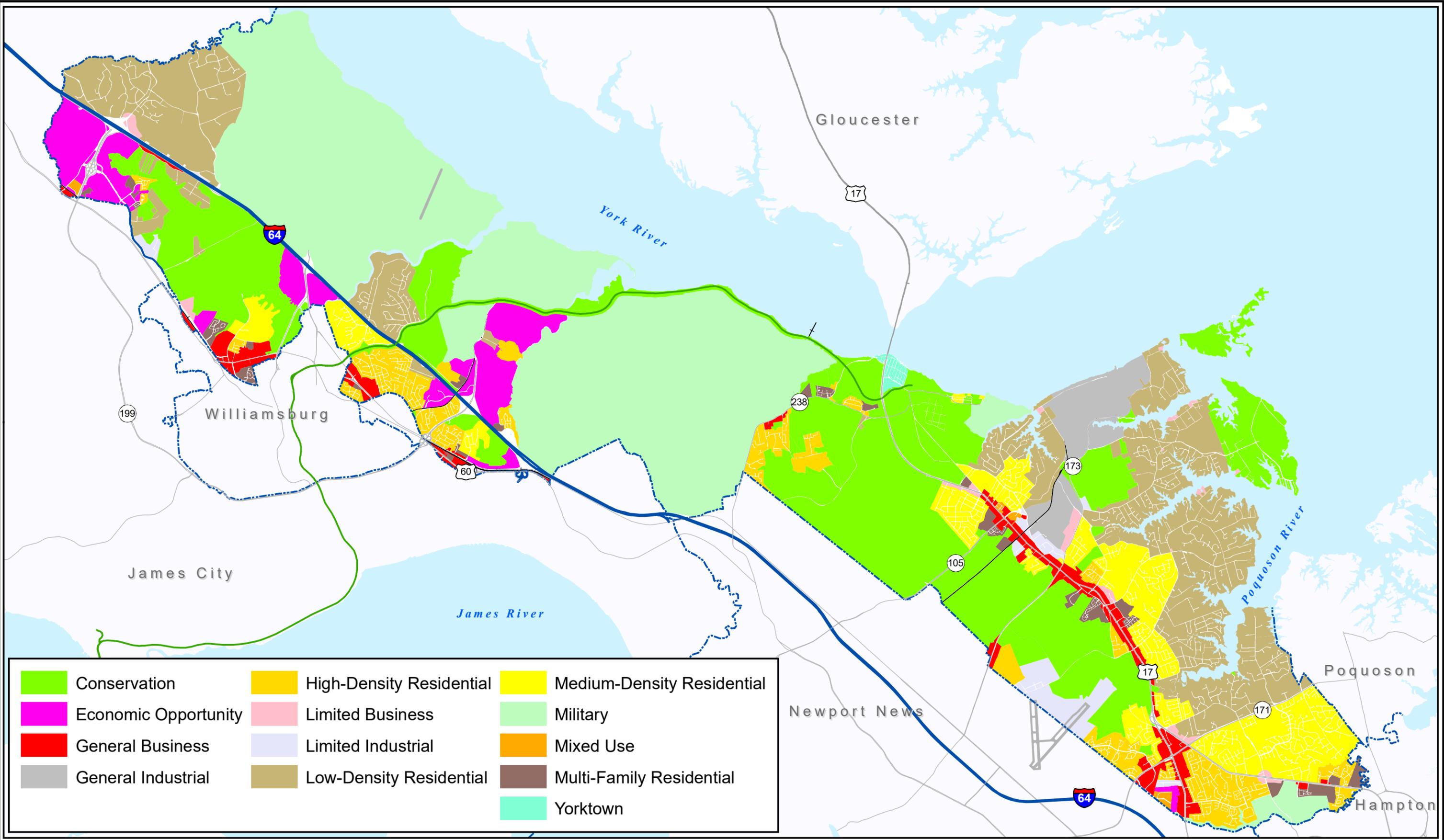
### Conservation

The Conservation designation is intended primarily to recognize the vast amounts of parkland, watershed property, and similar reserved areas and ensure their protection. For the most part, these areas are in a natural state and contribute positively to the perception of a rural atmosphere. The Conservation designation is intended as a policy statement to indicate the County's commitment to the proper management and protection of these areas as well as other environmentally sensitive areas. While many of these areas are controlled by the federal or state government and are not subject to local land use regulations, such areas should in most situations be placed in the least intensive zoning classification in order to ensure their proper management and protection. This will ensure that almost any development in these areas, unless it is of extremely low intensity, will be reviewed by the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors through the rezoning process. It should be noted, however, that some properties designated Conservation have been developed residentially, either pre-dating zoning altogether or having been platted in accordance with small-lot zoning classifications that are no longer in place. In such cases, the predominant lot size is considerably smaller than the "least intensive" zoning classification currently set forth in the Zoning Ordinance would allow. It would be appropriate to recognize and protect the character of such existing residentially developed areas, including but not limited to conventional and cluster residential subdivisions, through application of a residential zoning classification that may not be the least intensive but which better matches the existing lot sizes or, as an alternative or complementary measure, through the application of performance standards for non-residential uses designed to minimize adverse impacts on established residential areas.

### Military

This designation recognizes the vast amount of military property in the County even though such installations are not subject to local land use regulations. Several of these installations also have environmentally sensitive areas that would limit development opportunities if transferred to private ownership. Consequently, such areas should be placed in the least intensive zoning classification to emphasize the County's interest in ensuring their proper management and protection. The military plays a significant role in the local and regional economies, and it is important for the County to work in partnership with local military installations to ensure their continued viability by promoting land use compatibility between local bases and the areas that surround them. Accordingly, the County participated in the development of the *Hampton-Langley Joint Land Use*







*Study, or JLUS, and the Joint Base Langley Eustis (Ft. Eustis) JLUS. These two studies, completed in 2010 and 2018 respectively, were joint efforts involving the military installations, surrounding counties and cities, and various other stakeholders. The purpose of the JLUS process is both to prevent land uses that will interfere with the mission of such bases and to minimize the impact of military operations on lands surrounding military bases.*

### **Single-Family Residential**

The three single-family residential designations are intended to provide opportunities primarily for single-family detached dwellings. These designations are based on density – the number of dwelling units permitted per acre of land – and are intended to recognize and continue the existing range of single-family densities in the County. This plan defines allowable development density in terms of gross acreage; however, since undevelopable areas such as water bodies, wetlands, marshes, major power transmission rights-of-way, steep slopes, and other similar areas should be excluded from residential lots, the use of clustering is preferred to conventional subdivision. This technique preserves the environmental amenities that make York County special while maximizing open space retention, reducing impervious surface, and providing efficiency and cost savings in infrastructure construction.

- **LOW DENSITY:** This designation is intended to provide opportunities for single-family detached housing having a maximum density of **1.0 dwelling unit per acre**. The Low Density Residential designation has also traditionally encompassed areas where agricultural activities such as crop and livestock farming have existed; however, it will be important for the implementing zoning provisions, whether they are specific zoning district classifications or generally applicable standards including but not limited to minimum lot sizes, minimum setbacks, and minimum buffers, to recognize the distinction between acreage parcels where such uses can be supported and subdivision settings where they would be incompatible. Low-density development is appropriate in areas where physical or environmental constraints are prevalent and/or public services, facilities, and infrastructure are limited.
- **MEDIUM DENSITY:** This designation is intended to provide opportunities primarily for single-family detached housing having a maximum density of **1.75 dwelling units per acre**. Medium-density development typically generates moderate demands on public services and facilities and should be located in areas where such services will be adequate and environmental constraints will not present development problems.
- **HIGH DENSITY:** This designation is intended to provide opportunities for single-family detached housing having a maximum density of **3.0 dwelling units per acre**. It should be recognized, however, that in a number of areas, the density of existing residential development exceeds this maximum density. In many cases, these are older neighborhoods that were developed many years ago in accordance with previous land use plans and zoning regulations that allowed smaller lots and higher densities. In other cases, they are neighborhoods that were approved through the Planned Development process, which allows consideration of higher densities than are typically allowed, subject to approval by the Board of Supervisors. The high-density development envisioned by this designation can be expected to generate more intensive demands on public services and facilities and should be located with careful consideration given to the adequacy of public services, facilities, and infrastructure, particularly transportation facilities.

Although these designations are intended primarily for residential development, it should be recognized that residential and nonresidential development are not necessarily incompatible in every case. Some nonresidential uses can be appropriate in residential areas depending on the character and intensity of both the use and the surrounding residential neighborhood. In most cases, it is recommended that such uses be reviewed and approved by the Board of Supervisors on a case-by-case basis rather than allowed

as a matter of right. Such a review ensures that affected neighbors will have an opportunity to make their positions known to the decision-makers while allowing those decision-makers to take into account the unique circumstances and site characteristics associated with each development proposal. Similarly, accessory uses of single-family detached homes that are of a commercial or quasi-commercial nature – such as home-based businesses (home occupations) and short-term rental of rooms in a home – are not inherently incompatible with residential uses but should require a special level of scrutiny to ensure that such activities will not alter the residential character of the surrounding neighborhood or interfere with nearby residents’ quality of life. Likewise, proposals to rent out entire homes on a short-term basis, commonly referred to as “whole house” short-term rentals, should be subjected to a higher level of scrutiny to prevent the problems that can arise when there is no on-site monitoring of guests’ behavior.

With respect to the establishment of specific residential zoning classifications, it is intended that a range of residential density opportunities be made available. In this regard, the density guidelines established herein should be interpreted with a degree of flexibility when determining the range of lot sizes that are consistent with a particular density designation. Furthermore, the definition of permitted densities should not be construed to preclude consideration of higher density development proposals, including a variety of housing types (detached, attached, multi-family), through the Planned Development process, subject to public hearing requirements and review by the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors.

Flexibility is also appropriate with respect to the development of small vacant infill parcels that are essentially surrounded by development having a density in excess of that prescribed. Such infill development flexibility should be exercised only in situations where compatibility with surrounding development can be assured and when public facilities, services, and infrastructure are adequate. In no case should such an interpretation be made that would circumvent the overall Land Use goals and objectives or allow the extension of inconsistent development densities into essentially undeveloped areas.

### **Multi-Family Residential**

This designation is intended to recognize those areas of the County that are particularly suitable for residential development at a maximum density of **10.0 units per acre**. The high residential densities envisioned by this designation can be expected to generate intensive demands on public services and facilities and should be located accordingly. This designation is intended to provide opportunities for a variety of single-family attached and multi-family housing types such as apartments, townhouses, duplexes, quadruplexes, etc.

### **Limited Business**

The Limited Business designation is intended to provide opportunities for commercial activities of low to moderate intensity such as professional offices, research and development facilities, and relatively low-intensity commercial uses that are oriented primarily toward serving the needs of nearby residents. As the name suggests, the scope of permitted commercial activities should be limited so as to prevent significant traffic impacts on the immediate neighborhood and to promote compatibility with the surrounding area. Because of this limited scope, this designation is appropriate within, or in close proximity to, residential areas. The Limited Business designation is also intended to recognize and provide opportunities for various types of commercial activities requiring access to the water. These activities have historically been conducted in such areas as Waterview, Seaford, Dandy, and Dare, and because most were established years ago, they have been accepted as “fixtures” of the area as new residential development has occurred nearby. However, in some cases the surrounding residential development limits the ability of these existing waterfront commercial areas to accommodate new or expanded uses. Therefore, the County’s land use policies should not preclude opportunities, to be considered through a public hearing process, for the establishment of additional water-oriented

commercial or industrial development areas provided that roads and other infrastructure can support such activities and where they would be compatible with surrounding development.

### **General Business**

The General Business designation is intended to provide opportunities for a wide range of retail, office, service, and other commercial uses oriented primarily toward supplying goods or services for a community or regional market. The scope of commercial activities envisioned by this designation would include uses that need access to arterial highways. The high intensity activity levels envisioned by this designation dictate that it be located in recognition of the potential impacts on adjacent residential and commercial development and traffic and circulation patterns.

### **Mixed Use**

The Mixed Use land use designation has been applied to areas of the County where mixed-use development zoning has been approved by the Board of Supervisors. The mixed-use development concept is intended to create well-designed communities in which people can live, work, and play by providing opportunities for a mix of retail, office, and residential uses – and different types of residential uses – within a single, relatively compact development under a unified master plan. Proposed uses should have a high degree of physical and functional integration with one another, including extensive pedestrian and bicycle connectivity. To date there are four approved mixed-use developments in the County: Nelson’s Grant on Route 17, Yorktown Crescent on Ft. Eustis Boulevard (east of Route 17), Commonwealth Green on Commonwealth Drive, and Kelton Station on Lightfoot Road.

The 2005 and 2013 Comprehensive Plans applied a Mixed Use overlay designation to certain areas of the County that were identified as being potentially appropriate for a master-planned development approach that included some type of mixed-use development. All four of the County’s approved mixed-use developments are in areas that had this overlay designation, but to date, only one of them – Nelson’s Grant – has achieved the vision of a high-density walkable environment with businesses located within easy walking distance, while the other three have yet to include any commercial uses. Impediments to mixed-use development cited by the development community include the weak commercial real estate market, lenders’ reluctance to finance construction of residential buildings with ground-floor retail uses, County limits on residential density, and the impracticality of residential and commercial sequencing standards that require certain amounts of commercial construction to take place at various stages of the project.

The description of the Mixed Use overlay designation in the 2013 Comprehensive Plan included language stating that the identification of specific areas for mixed use should not be construed either to exclude other areas from consideration or as a guarantee that a proposed mixed-use development in one of those areas would necessarily be approved. That being the case, the designation is of limited value in terms of providing guidance for land use decisions, and it has therefore been removed from this Plan. Nevertheless, high-density walkable developments offering a mix of residential and compatible commercial uses in a single project can still be considered through the Planned Development rezoning process. Because of the uniqueness of such projects, it is critical that they be closely scrutinized by the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors, with the burden being on the developers to propose superior projects that are truly viable and meet the intent of the Comprehensive Plan goals and objectives for mixed-use development.

### **Economic Opportunity**

This designation, first established with the adoption of the 1991 Comprehensive Plan, is intended to guide a mix of office, light industrial, commercial, and tourist-related uses to areas of the County that

have or are planned to have the access and infrastructure necessary to support both capital- and labor-intensive uses that will have a positive fiscal impact on the County. The imposition of open space, landscaping, and buffering requirements that exceed the otherwise acceptable standards may be appropriate in order to foster a superior development character. The unique nature of the Economic Opportunity designation excludes uses that may conflict with or detract from the activities proposed.

### **Limited Industrial**

This designation is intended to provide opportunities for a variety of industrial activities of low to moderate intensity whose operations will have relatively low impacts in terms of smoke, noise, vibration, or similar factors. Desirable features of areas encompassed by this designation include transportation access (highway, rail, water, and air), available utilities, and favorable soil conditions.

### **General Industrial**

This designation is intended mainly to recognize the County's existing heavy industrial base, while providing opportunities for additional industrial activities whose operations and characteristics may necessarily involve significant levels of odor, noise, vibration, traffic and other conditions that may adversely impact surrounding land uses. As with the Limited Industrial designation, desirable features of areas encompassed by this designation include transportation access (highway, rail, water, and air), available utilities, and favorable soil conditions.

## **SUB-AREA DESCRIPTIONS**

The specific land use designations for each area of the County are discussed in detail in the following pages. In large part, the land use designations are intended to reflect existing development and encourage the continuation of existing development patterns into adjacent undeveloped areas. In some areas where the land use designations differ from existing uses, the designation has been selected with the intention of promoting redevelopment and/or a change in the area's character to ensure compatibility with the surrounding area and/or other land use objectives. It should be recognized that, as set forth in Section 15.2-2223 of the Code of Virginia, each locality's comprehensive plan "shall be general in nature, in that it shall designate the general or approximate location, character, and extent of each feature shown on the plan..." Consistent with that requirement, the land use designations shown on the 2040 Land Use Map should not be construed as parcel-specific. Rather, they are intended to reflect the general location of desired land use types, with the actual land use opportunities to be defined on a parcel-by-parcel basis through the Zoning Ordinance district classifications. In the event of a conflict between the map and the textual description contained herein, the text should be considered as taking precedence.

## **UPPER COUNTY OVERVIEW**

Upper York County has historically been defined as the area north and west of the southern boundary of the U.S. Naval Weapons Station Yorktown, much of which runs along Old Williamsburg Road. The area north and west of the Weapons Station is the Bruton Magisterial District and is often referred to as *the Bruton District* or simply *Bruton*.<sup>2</sup> With roughly 36,000 acres, the upper County represents approximately 55% of the County's total land area. About two-thirds of that acreage, however, is federal or watershed property that is not available for private development.

---

<sup>2</sup> Every county in Virginia, except Arlington, is subdivided into non-governing entities called *magisterial districts*. These districts are used in conducting elections or, as in York County, recording land ownership. The four magisterial districts in York County are Bethel, Bruton, Grafton, and Nelson.

The original 1976 Land Use Plan describes the upper County as two communities: the “urban fringe” to the east and north of the City of Williamsburg and the “rural upper Bruton area” north of Waller Mill Reservoir. This land use pattern was largely dictated by the availability of utilities and the road network that was in place at the time. Growth in the greater Williamsburg area followed the customary pattern that occurred all over the United States in the postwar era, with development, population, and jobs concentrated in a central city – Williamsburg – surrounded by less urbanized “inner ring” suburbs that are then surrounded by lower-density “outer ring” suburbs, with rural areas on the outskirts. This began to change in the 1990s as development spread with the completion of Route 199, effectively providing a bypass around the city with interstate interchanges at either end, the extension of utilities to the Lightfoot area, and the realignment of Mooretown Road. These infrastructure improvements opened up new development opportunities – both commercial and residential – in much of the upper Bruton area. Regardless, the overall density pattern described in the 1976 Plan, with generally higher residential densities in the areas around Williamsburg and lower densities north of the Waller Mill Reservoir, still exists.

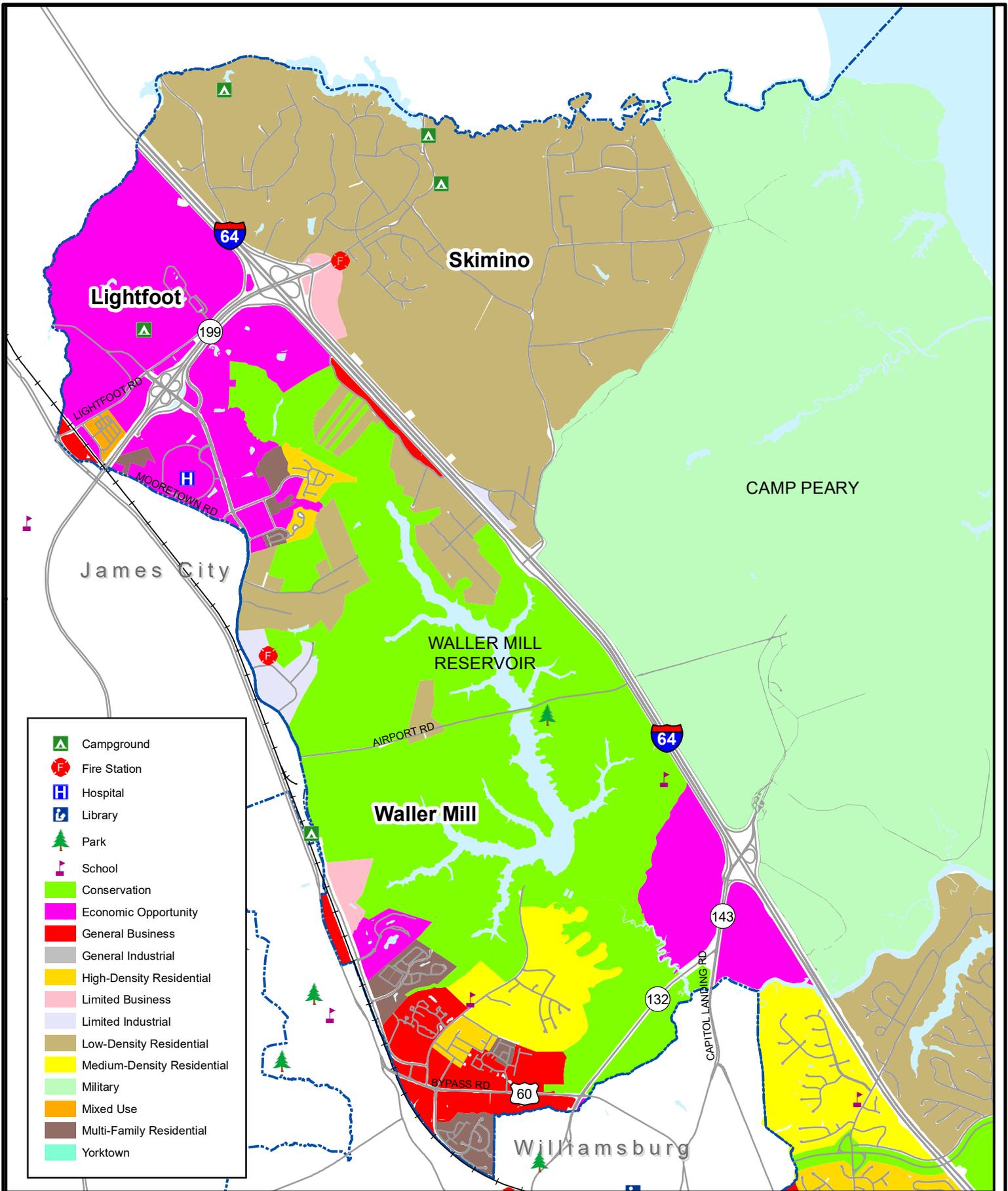
The 1976 Plan further states, “The upper County offers opportunities for commercial development based on demands influenced by the Williamsburg tourist population rather than the York County population.” While this is less true today than it was in 1976 as the tourist market has changed and the local population has grown, the fact remains that the vast majority of the County’s tourist-oriented development – hotels and motels, timeshare resorts, Water Country USA – is in the upper County. Community and regional shopping opportunities have increased greatly, particularly in the upper Route 199/Mooretown Road corridor (Walmart, Lowe’s, Home Depot, Victory Village shopping center).

### **Skimino**

The Skimino area east of I-64 is in the northernmost part of the County and is one of its most rural areas. Most of the residential lots are relatively large, thanks primarily to the absence of public water and sewer in much of this area, including Old Quaker Estates, Banbury Cross, Skimino Landing Estates, and Skimino Road. The average (mean) size of residential lots in this area is slightly over two acres, and 62% of them are larger than one acre. Of the parcels that are an acre or less, a large majority (77%) are in the Skimino Hills and Oaks at Fenton Mill subdivisions, which were developed with public utilities. Any development adjacent to existing housing should be compatible with neighboring properties in terms of housing type and density. Over 900 acres of land in the Skimino area is undeveloped, including a number of smaller infill parcels but some large acreage lots as well. About 40% of this acreage (roughly 376 acres) is being developed as a 292-lot subdivision of single-family detached homes called Fenton Mill (a gross density of 0.78 dwelling unit per acre), while an adjacent 28-acre parcel along Fenton Mill Road is planned for a large-lot residential subdivision of nine parcels.

Most of the Skimino area is designated Low Density Residential in recognition of its existing character as well as development constraints that preclude a more intensive designation. These include ravines, moderate to steep slopes, and main collector roads with insufficient width and in some cases hazardous geometrics. Fenton Mill, Barlow, and Newman Roads are among the roads identified in the Transportation element as being in need of wider shoulders or other improvements. Previous Comprehensive Plans have recommended that any development in the area between Barlow Road and Fenton Mill Road be required to incorporate a collector road linking these two roads, which would provide an alternate route for Skimino residents to Route 199 and I-64. While such a road would relieve pressure on Newman Road, which is narrow and has sight distance deficiencies, it probably is not environmentally feasible.

The presence of the I-64 Lightfoot interchange at the entrance to Skimino creates an opportunity for some type of commercial development in the area immediately surrounding the interchange. In fact, County Land Use plans dating back to 1976 have designated a commercial node in this location. While the area west of I-64 at this interchange has attracted significant large-scale economic development oriented toward a regional and tourist market (e.g., Great Wolf Lodge, Walmart, Lowe’s), any



0 5,716 11,432 17,148  
 256feet



commercial development on the east side should be of smaller scale and oriented toward a more local market in recognition of the capacity and safety limitations of Newman Road relative to Route 199 and the proximity of low-density single-family residential development. Accordingly, the general area on both sides of Newman Road east of Fenton Mill Road has been designated Limited Business. Development at this node should be limited to lower-intensity retail and office uses that are compatible with residential development (e.g., no 24-hour businesses) and are oriented primarily toward serving the needs of the local community.

Several long-existing light industrial and office uses are located at the eastern end of Fenton Mill Road are recognized with a Limited Industrial designation, but the expansion of these uses to adjacent properties would not be compatible with the residential character of the surrounding area and would not be practical because of the lack of public water and sewer.

### **Lightfoot**

Much of the Lightfoot area was identified in the 1991 Comprehensive Plan as an “Economic Development Priority Area,” and most of this area, which was largely undeveloped at the time, was given an Economic Opportunity designation in order to capitalize on several planned infrastructure improvements. These included the extension of Route 199 with a full interchange at I-64 and the realignment of Mooretown Road from its previous alignment (what is now Old Mooretown Road) to its current alignment with a full cloverleaf interchange at Route 199. In addition, the County invested in utility improvements to serve future economic development, and the western portion of East Rochambeau Drive was realigned and widened for the same purpose. As a result of these efforts, the Lightfoot area south of Route 199 has emerged as a major regional activity center with the construction of Lowe’s, Walmart, Great Wolf Lodge, and two automobile dealerships on East Rochambeau Drive and Home Depot, Sentara Williamsburg Regional Medical Center, the Victory Village Shopping Center, and the Michael Commons office park on Mooretown Road. With a few exceptions, the Economic Opportunity Designation remains in place for the properties along the Route 199 and Mooretown Road corridors in Lightfoot, including the area between Mooretown and Old Mooretown Road.

Existing homes along East Rochambeau Drive and Oaktree Road on relatively large lots of an acre or more are recognized with a Low Density Residential designation while the area between those two roads is designated General Business. This strip of land is a little over 5,000 feet long and only 300 feet wide at its widest point, and the predominant land use is commercial. The General Business designation recognizes this use and prevents the establishment of individual residential driveways on East Rochambeau Drive, which is not suitable for additional direct residential access. Commercial access, however, should not be permitted on Oaktree Road, which is a narrow residential street (approximately 16 feet wide) that would not be able to safely accommodate commercial traffic without widening or other improvements. Existing and planned apartment/townhouse developments on Old Mooretown Road (Grande Oak, a planned age-restricted apartment complex) and on Bulifants Boulevard (Arbordale) are recognized with Multi-Family Residential designations, while the single-family detached portion of Arbordale, with a gross density of 2.3 units per acre, is designated High Density Residential.

The area between Route 199 and Lightfoot Road, which is also designated Economic Opportunity, includes several small retail centers, an antique mall, a hotel, a gas station, a few single-family detached homes, and the 248-unit Kelton Station mixed-use development. Development on the north side of Lightfoot Road, meanwhile, remains relatively sparse, with mostly campgrounds and a timeshare resort. Most of this area is owned by two large landholders that own a combined total of roughly 570 acres, which creates the potential for some type of large-scale master-planned development. Areas fronting along Lightfoot Road and much of Rochambeau Drive are relatively flat, highly visible, and easily accessible from I-64 and Route 199 and thus are particularly well-suited for commercial or light industrial development. In the interior areas, there are several ravines, streams, and slopes that represent constraints to development.

As the largest contiguous assemblage of vacant land available for development in the County, the Lightfoot area north of Route 199 and west of I-64 would be a logical candidate for a special geographic area plan, described as follows in *The Citizen's Guide to Planning*: "Many local governments prepare plans to supplement the comprehensive plan and focus on particular geographic areas of the community. These typically apply to locations that have special needs or conditions requiring a more detailed analysis than the comprehensive plan can provide."<sup>3</sup> This area's potential as a site for very large-scale development warrants special attention to planning considerations to ensure both that future land uses will be compatible with the surrounding area and that the transportation network and other public infrastructure will be sufficient to accommodate them.

Future development in the Lightfoot area would be facilitated by the extension of Mooretown Road beyond its existing terminus at Lightfoot Road to the York County line and continuing into James City County. With participation from York County, James City County engaged a traffic consultant to conduct a regionally-funded *Mooretown Road Extension Corridor Study*, which was completed in February 2016. The study evaluated the traffic, economic, environmental, and social impacts of extending Mooretown Road to either Croaker Road or Rochambeau Drive in James City County. Three alternative alignments were evaluated, with a final route to be determined at such time as future development is proposed. As stated in the study, a primary purpose of the Mooretown Road extension would be to provide access to large developable parcels in both York and James City Counties. All three alignments were found to achieve that objective, to varying degrees, but they were also found to yield modest reductions in projected traffic delays on Lightfoot Road. Still, the chief benefits of the project are economic, and developer and/or property owner funding will be expected to pay for the project.

### **Waller Mill**

The City of Williamsburg owns and operates the 2,705-acre Waller Mill Park, which surrounds the 360-acre Waller Mill Reservoir. Extending from Oaktree Road south to Waller Mill Road and straddling both sides of Airport Road, the park offers fishing, boating, and various other recreational amenities to the general public for a fee. The park and surrounding properties owned by the City of Williamsburg are designated Conservation so as to protect the water quality of the reservoir and to recognize their value as a significant open space amenity. The City has identified some of its watershed property for possible development as very low-density housing for members of the City's workforce. A few privately owned parcels that are entirely surrounded by watershed property are also designated Conservation based on the expectation that these properties will ultimately be incorporated into the watershed. A small area along Airport Road is designated Low-Density Residential in recognition of the existing development, the absence of public utilities, and its proximity to the reservoir.

Apart from the Ewell and Henderson Industrial Parks located on Mooretown Road, which are designated Limited Industrial, most of the area surrounding Waller Mill Park north of Airport Road is designated Low Density Residential. Many of these properties are relatively large lots served by private wells and/or septic systems. The Low Density Residential designation is dictated by the existing development character, lack of public utilities, and proximity to the watershed.

South of Airport Road and beyond the watershed, most of the Mooretown Road corridor is designated for some type of commercial development. The Limited Business designation provides a transition between the watershed and more intensive commercial uses, including the Wyndham at Governor's Green timeshare resort (designated Economic Opportunity), The Reserve at Williamsburg housing community (designated Multi-Family Residential), and the Kingsgate Green shopping center and Pirate's Cove miniature golf course (designated General Business).

---

<sup>3</sup> Christopher J. Duerksen, C. Gregory Dale, and Donald L. Elliott. *The Citizen's Guide to Planning*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Chicago: American Planning Association, 2009) 27.

Most of the land in the Waller Mill sub-area, excluding the watershed, either is developed or has been approved for development. Two major exceptions are the two parcels located on either side of Capitol Landing Road (Route 143) at the approach to the I-64 Camp Peary interchange, which are owned by the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation (CWF). While the combined area of these parcels is about 340 acres, the developable area is greatly reduced by both the topography and 300'-wide "buffer zones" along East Rochambeau Drive, Capitol Landing Road, Route 132, and I-64. These scenic easements were established in 1975 when the federal government conveyed these properties to the CWF. The deed of conveyance prohibits any development, other than access points, within these buffer zones without the approval of the National Park Service, and it further states that the existing character of these scenic easements as "forest lands" must be retained. These large parcels have excellent interstate access and, with the scenic easements in place to preserve the natural vegetation and maintain the aesthetic appeal, offer an ideal location for some type of attractive large-scale office or corporate park development. A third nine-acre parcel at the intersection of Route 132 and Capitol Landing Road, which was also conveyed by the federal government, has a deed restriction requiring it "to remain in its present, wooded natural state free from development, in perpetuity" and therefore is designated Conservation.

The only other significant undeveloped acreage in the Waller Mill sub-area, which is located on the east side of Waller Mill Road, is an approximately 180-acre assemblage of land slated for development as a 326-lot subdivision of single-family detached homes that was first approved in 2007 and is now under development. The total area of this project, to be named Waller Mill Heights, is 306 acres, about 125 acres of which is protected from development by conservation easements conveyed to the Historic Virginia Land Conservancy. The portion proposed for development is designated Medium Density Residential and the remainder, together with additional conservation easements that have been recorded by the owner, CWF, on both sides of Route 132 and a portion of Bypass Road, is designated Conservation. CWF also owns 43 undeveloped acres on both sides of Bypass Road west of its intersection with Route 132 that are designated General Business, as is the rest of Bypass Road, which is a major gateway into the historic Williamsburg area and carries large amounts of tourist traffic. Much of the County's tourist-oriented development – including hotels, timeshares, and restaurants – is along the Bypass Road corridor. Because of these corridors' proximity to the historic area, any new development along Capitol Landing Road, Route 132, or Bypass Road should be held to special design standards – especially with regard to such features as signage, landscaping and tree preservation, and building colors – to protect the area's visual appeal.

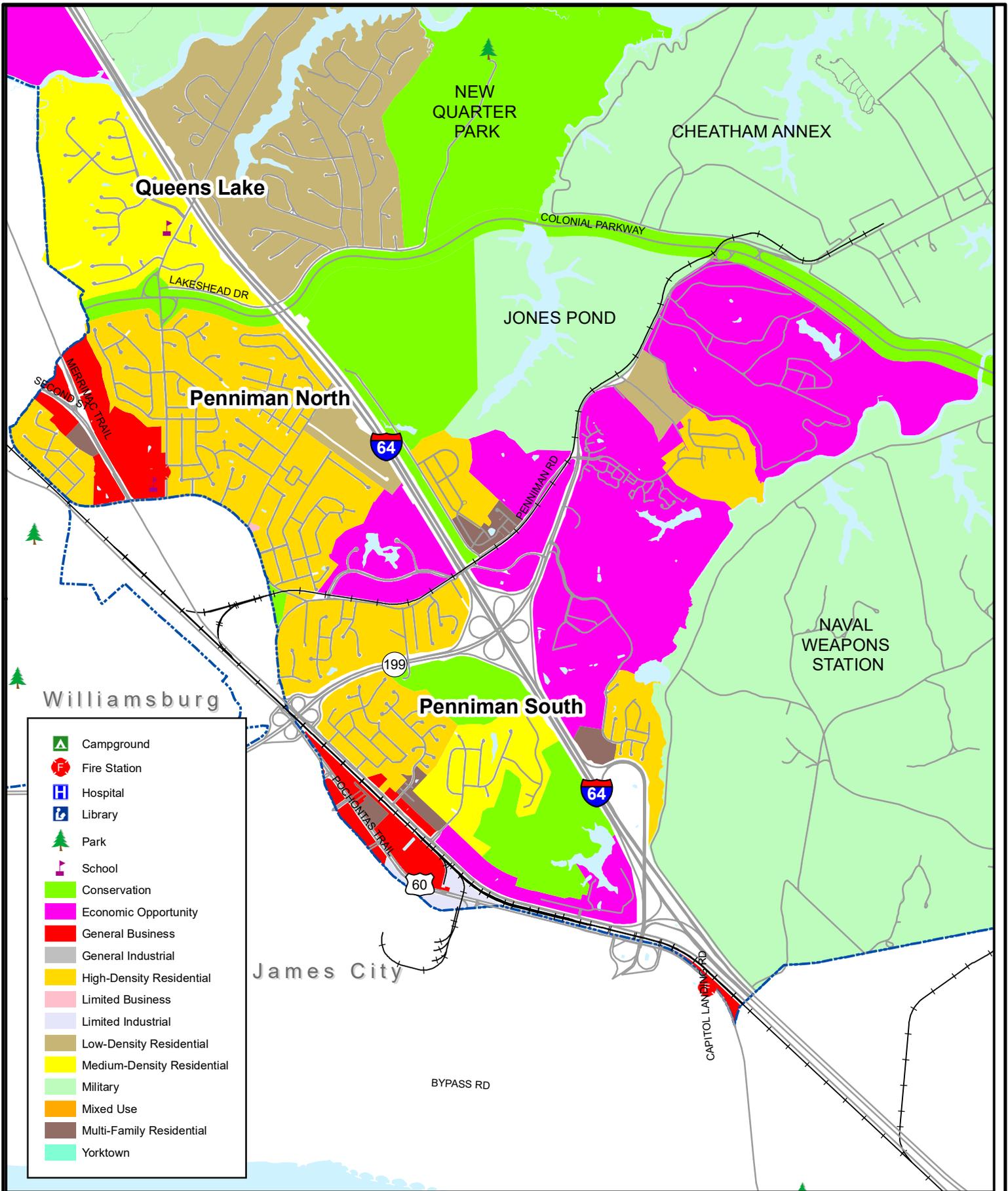
Beyond the General Business frontage along Bypass Road and along Waller Mill Road is a neighborhood of roughly 75 single-family detached homes, most of them built in the 1950s and '60s, which has about 2.5 dwelling units per acre and is designated High Density Residential. Multi-Family Residential designations are intended to recognize the Williamsburg Commons condominiums and duplexes on the south side of Bypass Road along Commons Way, and the Burgesses Quarters townhouse development on the north side of Bypass Road.

### **Richmond Road**

Richmond Road runs through Williamsburg, York, and James City and is one of the Historic Triangle's principal tourist and commercial corridors. Two relatively short segments of Richmond Road run through York County and are designated General Business in recognition the existing character of this retail corridor.

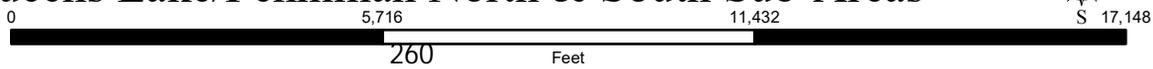
### **Queens Lake**

The Queens Lake sub-area encompasses the Queens Lake, Royal Grant, Creekside Landing, and Parkway Estates (National Drive) subdivisions as well as New Quarter Park. This area is almost entirely developed, and the land use designations basically mirror existing development. North of the Colonial Parkway and



# 2040 Land Use

## Queens Lake/Penniman North & South Sub-Areas



east of Interstate 64, the Queens Lake subdivision, which has an average density of 0.9 unit per acre, has been recognized with a Low Density Residential designation. Almost all of the lots in Queens Lake are developed and further expansion is precluded by surrounding Queen Creek, I-64, the Colonial Parkway, and the County's New Quarter Park, which is designated Conservation.

The area on the west side of I-64 is designated Medium Density Residential because of existing development – Parkway Estates (1.8 units per acre), Royal Grant (1.9 units per acre), and Creekside Landing (1.48 units per acre), and a small section of Queens Lake. A 13-acre parcel between I-64 and Parkway Estates is also designated Medium Density Residential, although the development potential of this property is limited by topography. This property has about a quarter-mile of frontage along Lakeshead Drive; however, the number of residential driveways on this relatively narrow, curvy road, which functions as a minor collector with a speed limit of 45 MPH, should be minimized. Three landlocked parcels with a combined area of approximately 25 acres along the Williamsburg city line have significant environmental constraints, including a perennial stream, ravines, and steep slopes. Access is also a problem; however, there is a platted road right-of-way parcel extending to Merrimac Trail in the City of Williamsburg. These parcels are designated Medium Density Residential to ensure that any development that does occur will be compatible with the adjacent subdivisions in York County.

### **Penniman North**

The Penniman North sub-area includes all of the property bounded by the Colonial Parkway, Penniman Road, and the Williamsburg city line. Penniman Road extends a distance of approximately 4.5 miles from the Colonial Parkway Cheatham Annex exit to York Street in the City of Williamsburg. It runs through all three localities of the Historical Triangle and serves as the boundary between York County and James City County and Williamsburg for a distance of about 1.5 miles. It is a higher order street classified by VDOT as a minor arterial between the Parkway and Route 199 and a major collector between Route 199 and York Street.

Older single-family detached houses on relatively small lots make up the predominant development pattern in this area. Much of the housing in this area – including Middletowne Farms, York Terrace, and many smaller subdivisions on the east side of Hubbard Lane – was built in the 1950s and '60s when the minimum allowable lot sizes were smaller than they are today. In all, the average lot size for single-family detached homes in a Penniman North area is a third of an acre, and the average year of construction is 1981. Forty-three percent of the homes are at least fifty years old, and 32.5% are at least 60 years old. This development pattern is recognized with a High Density Residential designation that covers most of the land in the Penniman North Area west of I-64. The Housing element of this Plan identifies this general area as one that would benefit from public investment in the form of infrastructure grants and/or housing rehabilitation/renovation projects as part of an overall housing affordability and neighborhood revitalization strategy.

There is almost no undeveloped land in this sub-area designated for residential development other than a few small infill lots and an approximately 50-acre area off Queens Creek Road that abuts I-64 and is designated Low Density Residential. The only means of access to this land is Queens Creek Road, which is only 20 feet wide and not wide enough to safely accommodate the additional traffic volumes that would be associated with higher density development. Higher residential densities should only be considered in this area if a secondary means of access is provided. In addition, the Bryan Manor Plantation historic site, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, further warrants a Low Density Residential designation. In that same general area, at the intersection of Penniman Road and Queens Creek Road, a small neighborhood business is recognized with a Limited Business designation.

Most of the Merrimac Trail/Second Street retail corridor is designated General Business. Though the corridor is almost fully developed, there have been several successful redevelopment and adaptive reuse projects, including the Virginia Beer Company (a former auto repair garage), Casa Pearl restaurant (a

former gas station), Parkway Printshop (a former furniture store), and The James on Merrimac apartments (a former hotel, which is now designated Multi-Family Residential). Additional opportunities for redevelopment exist along this corridor and should be encouraged as the “Edge District” continues to evolve as a regional dining and entertainment destination for the Historic Triangle. The County should assist this transition by encouraging uses that are consistent with this vision and investing in pedestrian and bicycle improvements to fill gaps in the transportation network.

Light industrial, office, and warehouse uses in this sub-area are on the north side of Penniman Road, including the 104-acre Busch Industrial Park on the west side of I-64 and several smaller industrial parks near the intersection of Penniman Road and Route 199. These are recognized with an Economic Opportunity designation.

Most of the undeveloped acreage in Penniman North sub-area consists of three parcels with a combined area of 310 acres including a 245-acre parcel (the former James Custis Farm, also known as the Egger tract) on the south side of the Colonial Parkway east of I-64 and two adjacent parcels. In recent years, these three parcels, which played a key role in the Battle of Williamsburg during the Civil War, were acquired by the American Battlefield Trust for preservation purposes and therefore are designated Conservation. This designation should not be interpreted to preclude the possibility of opening up this historic site to the general public, should the Trust wish to do so, with walking trails, interpretive signage, and similar improvements that are consistent with the Trust’s stated goal of preserving the property for future generations.

The only residential development on the east side of I-64 in this sub-area is the 230-unit Whittaker’s Mill Planned Development, which has a mix of single-family detached homes and townhouses, at a density of 3.5 units per acre. The townhouse portion of the development is designated Multi-Family Residential while the single-family detached portion is designated High Density Residential.

The largest parcel in the Penniman North sub-area is the 426-acre Jones Pond property located on the west side of Penniman Road adjacent to the Colonial Parkway. This property is part of the Naval Weapons Station’s Cheatham Annex – for which Jones Pond formerly served as the drinking water reservoir – and is designated Military.

### **Penniman South**

The Penniman South sub-area is bounded by Penniman Road to the north, the Colonial Parkway to the east, the Naval Weapons Station to the south, and York County’s border with James City County and the City of Williamsburg to the west. Similar to Penniman North, this sub-area is divided by I-64, with mostly residential development to the west and commercial uses to the east. Existing single-family detached housing between Penniman Road and Route 199 is recognized with a High Density Residential designation, as are the Carver Gardens (3.6 units per acre), Washington Ridge (4.1 units per acre), and Williamsburg Bluffs (3.0 units per acre) neighborhoods on the other side of Route 199. Adjacent to these neighborhoods is the Country Club Acres subdivision, which has a development density of 2.0 units per acre and is designated Medium Density Residential, as is an adjacent 43-acre parcel that has been approved for a 66-lot expansion of this subdivision. Several other vacant parcels abutting this neighborhood are also designated Medium Density Residential to ensure compatibility with existing development. A Multi-Family Residential designation recognizes the existing 100-unit Country Club Apartments and the adjacent 28-unit Callahan Village duplexes. The 150-unit Arbors at Williamsburg senior apartment complex located on Pocahontas Trail is also designated Multi-Family Residential.

Development along Merrimac Trail and Pocahontas Trail consists mostly of retail, office, light industrial, and tourist commercial uses, including the 147,000-square foot Marina Electrical Equipment manufacturing facility and Parkside timeshare resort on Merrimac Trail and, on Pocahontas Trail, two shopping centers (which are partly in James City County) and several fast-food restaurants. These uses are desig-

nated either General Business or Economic Opportunity. CSX railroad tracks run between these two commercial corridors, with spurs off the main line serving the Busch Gardens property on Pocahontas Trail and the Anheuser-Busch brewery located in James City County. Those properties and the brewery entrance on Pocahontas Trail are designated Limited Industrial. Further to the south along Pocahontas Trail is a very small, narrow sliver of land in the Grove community situated between the road and the railroad tracks. This 4.8-acre area has no established development character and, given the property's size and configuration, a realistic development scenario would be limited to a few small businesses or single-family detached homes. Since residential driveways would not be appropriate on a minor arterial road that carries 10,000 vehicles per day, this area is designated General Business.

One of the largest pieces of vacant land in the Penniman South sub-area is the 58-acre parcel in the southwest quadrant of the I-64/Route 199 interchange, which was redesignated from High Density Residential to Conservation in 2005. The only access to this property, much of which was formerly used as a VDOT borrow site, is via Lodge Road, which is very narrow and not suitable for heavy traffic volumes. If this publicly owned property were ever transferred to private ownership, it would be a likely candidate for conditional rezoning to address access and other issues. This property is also constrained by ravines, topography, and Chesapeake Bay RPA buffers. Also designated Conservation, because of its open space/recreation use, is the 152-acre Williamsburg Golf Club (formerly Williamsburg Country Club), which is a golf course that includes additional amenities.

Almost all of the land on the east side of I-64 in the Penniman South sub-area is designated Economic Opportunity. This includes the 220-acre Water Country USA theme park and neighboring developments to the north and south: the Kings Creek timeshare resort and the Marquis shopping center. Originally approved in 2005, the Marquis center has struggled for a variety of reasons, despite its excellent access adjacent to a full I-64 interchange. Three of the five big box stores that once occupied the center are still in operation, and Sam's Club canceled plans to build a 135,000-square foot store and gas station on a 13.5-acre site in the center that remains undeveloped.

One major factor that has hindered efforts to attract retail tenants to the Marquis center is the lack of residential customers in the surrounding area. In an attempt to help address that situation, a rezoning was approved in 2013 to allow the Marquis South Pod – the 113-acre tract located to the south of the commercial North Pod – to be developed for residential rather than commercial use as was originally planned. Accordingly, the 182-lot Marquis Hills subdivision that has since been developed at a density of 2.6 dwelling units per acre is designated High Density Residential while the adjacent 13.5-acre parcel, which is approved for a 265-unit apartment complex, is designated Multi-Family Residential.

While the additional 447 housing units will certainly bring more business to the stores at The Marquis, they are probably not enough to reverse the shopping center's downward spiral. The weak demand for commercial space and the low density of population around the center suggest that it is time for a new vision for The Marquis North Pod – a vision not of a suburban big-box shopping center but rather of a mixed-use village combining apartments and/or other types of high-density housing with convenient shopping and dining opportunities in a compact, walkable environment. The former Sam's Club site, together with roughly six adjacent acres of raw land, could be a potential site for a high-density residential anchor that would provide a built-in customer base for the existing stores as well as spur new development on the three other vacant parcels, which range in size from 1.4 to 2.4 acres. Given their size and location, these parcels could accommodate smaller businesses that offer goods and services that are not available in the surrounding area. Specifically, the absence of restaurants and a gas station/convenience store is often cited as a major drawback of the center. In this case, the Economic Opportunity designation, which provides only for commercial uses, should not be viewed as inconsistent with this vision, since the ultimate goal would be to enhance the economic viability of The Marquis.

While the immediate focus of such a mixed-use strategy for The Marquis must be on the North Pod, it could ultimately be extended to the 33-acre triangular area on the opposite side of Route 199 between

Penniman Road and Water Country Parkway, which is designated Economic Opportunity and includes an undeveloped 32-acre parcel along with several small, narrow parcels. Most of Route 199 is a Limited Access facility, which means that driveways or entrances are not permitted. However, in 2019 the Board of Supervisors endorsed a request from the owner of the 32-acre parcel for a break in the limited access to allow two entrances on Route 199 to serve future commercial development. This endorsement was based on the fact that the requested limited access break, which was subsequently approved by the Commonwealth Transportation Board, would greatly enhance this property's economic development potential and the fact that Route 199 is much better able than Penniman Road to handle commercial traffic. Residential development should be considered on this property only in the context of an overall mixed-use strategy for the North Pod.

The largest undeveloped property in the Penniman South sub-area is the 432-acre former Commonwealth of Virginia Emergency Fuel Farm parcel that fronts on both Penniman Road and the Colonial Parkway in the vicinity of the Parkway's Cheatham Annex exit. This parcel was acquired in December 2021 by the Eastern Virginia Regional Industrial Facility Authority (EVRIFA), which was formed for the purpose of providing a regional authority mechanism to enhance the economic base of the member localities, which, in addition to York County, include the cities of Chesapeake, Franklin, Hampton, Newport News, Poquoson, and Williamsburg and the counties of Gloucester, Isle of Wight, and James City. The EVRIFA plans to lease approximately 250 acres of this property to a solar development company for a solar energy generation facility, while the remaining 82 acres – to be named the Kings Creek Commerce Center – will be marketed for light industrial development, which might include a testing site for unmanned aerial craft (i.e., a "drone park"). Access to the property will be off of Penniman Road. In accordance with the planned use of this property, it is designated Economic Opportunity.

Other than the Marquis South Pod, the only existing residential development on the east side of I-64 in the Penniman South sub-area consists is the Springfield Road/Jones Drive area, which is an established neighborhood of single-family detached homes – most of them built more than fifty years ago – on large lots (1.3 acres, on average). The absence of public sewer and the narrow width of Springfield Road dictate a continuation of the existing low-density pattern, and this area is therefore designated Low Density Residential. The age of this neighborhood and infrastructure deficiencies make it a strong candidate for a Community Development Block Grant, housing rehabilitation/renovation programs, or other grant opportunities administered by the County's Housing and Neighborhood Revitalization.

To the east of the Springfield Road area is an 83-acre parcel designated High Density Residential that has been approved for a 213-unit senior housing development called Tranquility that will include a mix of age-restricted single-family detached homes and duplexes. The approved density of this project is 2.6 dwelling units per acre. Although this development abuts Springfield Road, this road will only be used temporarily for construction vehicle access. Springfield Road is a narrow substandard road that is not appropriate to handle the volume of traffic that will be generated by the Tranquility development, which would have an adverse impact on the surrounding neighborhood. For these reasons, the Tranquility development will be accessed via Tranquility Drive, which is a private road off of Penniman Road that serves the Kings Creek timeshare resort, and Springfield Road will be used only as a gated emergency vehicle access.

### **Federal Installations**

Federally-owned land runs from the northern tip of the upper County to its southern boundary. Camp Peary (Armed Forces Experimental Training Activity), Cheatham Annex, and the U.S. Naval Weapons Station Yorktown are federal installations and therefore are not subject to local zoning and land use regulation. Accordingly, the entire area encompassing these three facilities is designated Military. The County has no jurisdiction over this land, but it does have jurisdiction over adjacent properties. It should work to ensure that proper zoning and land use controls are in place so that future development is compatible and does not interfere with the mission or viability of these federal installations.

## **LOWER COUNTY OVERVIEW**

The lower County is similar to the upper County in that much of the land is either federal or watershed property and therefore not available for private development. In the case of the lower County, most of the federal landholdings are not military installations but rather the Yorktown Battlefield portion of the Colonial National Historical Park, owned and operated by the National Park Service (NPS), while the watershed property is owned not by the City of Williamsburg but by the City of Newport News. Also like the upper County, the lower County is divided almost in half by a major highway – Route 17. Unlike the upper County, most of the waterfront property is privately owned and under the County’s jurisdiction.

In reference to the lower County, the original 1976 Land Use Plan states the following:

*“The Plan structures residential density according to proximity to public services and transportation routes. Consequently, the southern portion of the Route 17 and Route 134 corridor is designated for higher density residential development. Residential intensity decreases to lower density development along the coastal lands where access roads and utilities will be limited, and where environmental considerations will hamper high intensity development.”*

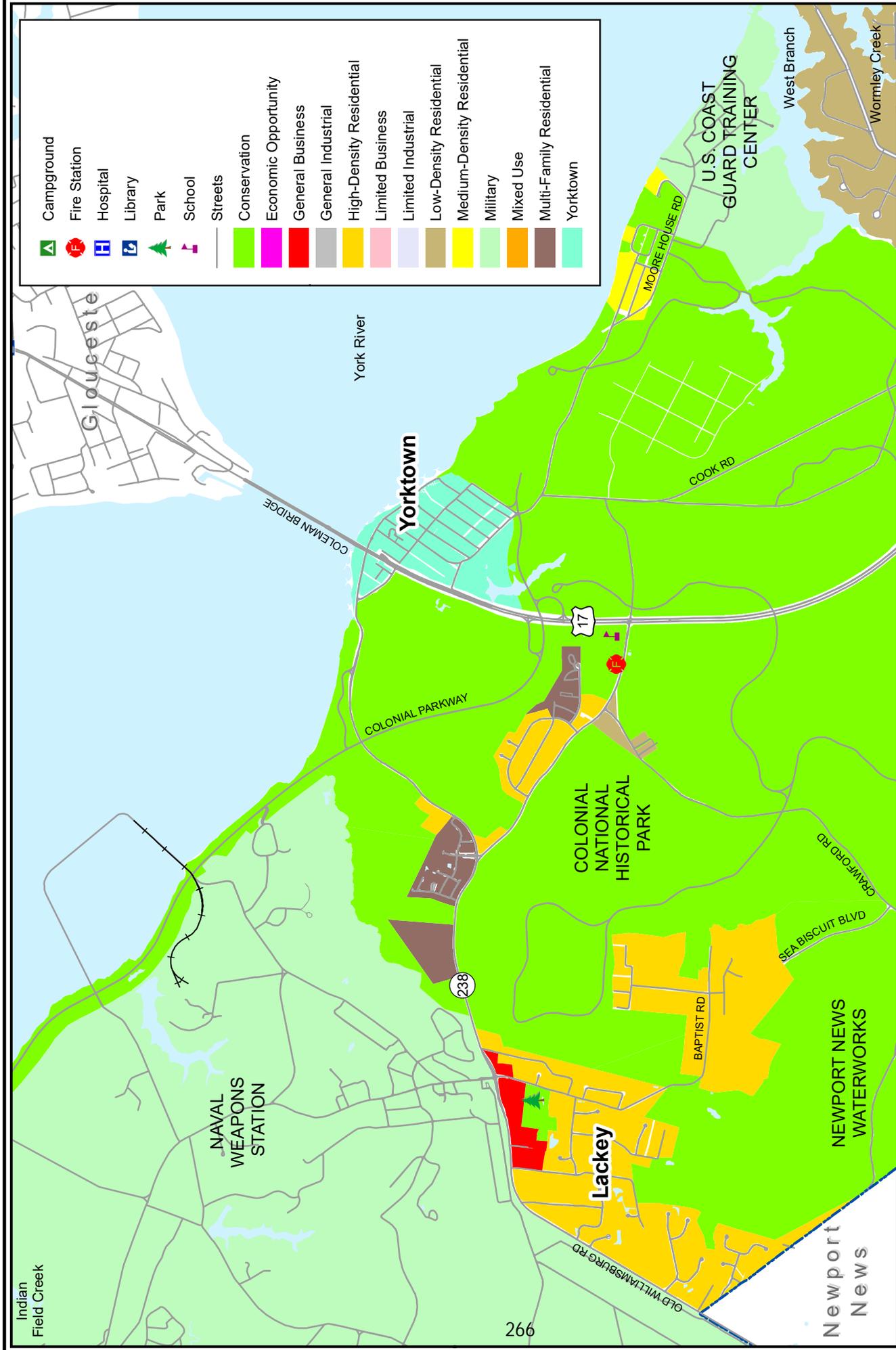
To a great extent, the lower County has developed as set forth in that Plan, with lower densities in areas along or near the waterfront and higher-intensity residential and commercial development in the interior. For the most part, subsequent land use plans have continued to follow the basic guidance laid out in the 1976 Plan; in fact, the emphasis on low-density development in waterfront areas has actually been strengthened in response to the passage of the Chesapeake Bay Act in 1990 and growing concerns about the County’s resiliency to recurrent flooding and sea level rise. The 2005 Comprehensive Plan went further and redesignated the York Point/Bay Tree Beach area from Low Density Residential to Conservation based on environmental factors and access limitations.

In at least one respect, however, development in the lower County has not followed the 1976 Land Use Plan, which limited commercial development along Route 17 to certain major intersections, with residential development located between those commercial nodes. In the 1983 Land Use Plan and all subsequent plans, Route 17 has been designated as an almost entirely commercial strip.

The other manner in which lower County land use has not followed the 1976 Plan is along the boundary with Newport News from “the Route 171 extension” (Victory Boulevard) almost to Ft. Eustis Boulevard, where the original Plan envisioned significant industrial development in the areas both north and south of what was then Patrick Henry (now Newport News-Williamsburg) International Airport. Although much of that land has continued to be designated for industrial development in subsequent plans, the desired industrial uses never materialized. Some of this land has been developed for residential or commercial use, and some has been acquired by the City of Newport News and added to the Harwoods Mill Reservoir watershed. Also, a 397-acre portion has been shifted into the City of Newport News as a result of a boundary line adjustment between the County and the City that took effect in 2007 and also included the transfer of an 87-acre tract of land located on the Naval Weapons Station property from Newport News into the County, resulting in a net decrease in the County’s land area of 320 acres.

### **Yorktown**

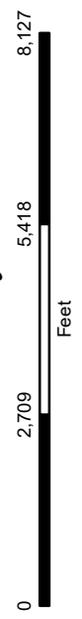
Ever since the County’s first adopted Land Use Plan in 1976, the Yorktown village has been designated as a historic area without reference to specific land uses. The intent of this designation is to recognize the unique history of the town and to encourage development that is consistent with the mix of historic, residential, commercial, and civic land uses already present. The historic buildings of Yorktown are contained in *The Virginia Landmarks Register*, and some are listed on the *National Register of Historic Landmarks*. Special regulations that recognize the architecture and historic heritage are in place to



	Campground
	Fire Station
	Hospital
	Library
	Park
	School
	Streets
	Conservation
	Economic Opportunity
	General Business
	General Industrial
	High-Density Residential
	Limited Business
	Limited Industrial
	Low-Density Residential
	Medium-Density Residential
	Military
	Mixed Use
	Multi-Family Residential
	Yorktown



**2040 Land Use**  
**Yorktown/Lackey Sub-Areas**



Indian Field Creek

NAVAL WEAPONS STATION

Yorktown

COLONIAL NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

Lackey

Newport News Waterworks

U.S. COAST GUARD TRAINING CENTER

West Branch

Wormley Creek

Gloucester

York River

COLEMAN BRIDGE

COLONIAL PARKWAY

COOK RD

MOORE HOUSE RD

238

OLD WILLIAMSBURG RD

BAPTIST RD

SEA BISCUIT BLVD

GRAFFORD RD

266

provide opportunities for a variety of land uses that will complement the unique character of the village. More specific recommendations for land uses and improvements in Yorktown are contained in the *Yorktown Master Plan*, which is a separate document incorporated into this Comprehensive Plan by reference.

The Colonial National Historical Park surrounds the village and is designated Conservation, as are the various National Park Service parcels scattered around the village and in the Moore House Road area, where privately owned homes are recognized with a Medium Density Residential designation. The 153-acre U. S. Coast Guard Training Center Yorktown, located on the York River at the end of Moore House Road, and the adjacent 139-acre Defense Fuel Supply Point Yorktown have a Military designation.

### **Lackey**

The Lackey sub-area includes the Lackey community, located on the south side of Old Williamsburg Road, and nearby property to the east including Goosley Road, Crawford Road, and the north side of Old Williamsburg Road. Land Use designations in this area have changed very little since the first Zoning Map, which zoned the entire area R-1/Residential with a strip of B-1/Business along Old Williamsburg Road (which was also called Lee Hall Road) across from the Naval Weapons Station's Lackey gate. As stated in the 1983 Land Use Plan, the commercial designation was intended to recognize the historical development of various neighborhood-oriented businesses and provide opportunities for further commercial development of that nature. In 2002, the Board of Supervisors amended the Comprehensive Plan by expanding the range of allowable commercial uses and enlarging the commercial designation to cover more land. The purpose of this change was to take advantage of this area's designation as a federal HUBZone, which provided a unique opportunity for certain types of commercial and service enterprises competing for federal procurement contracts. This strategy enjoyed only modest, temporary success, and although the HUBzone designation no longer exists, the General Business designation remains.

There are a number of larger parcels in Lackey, many of them undeveloped, that can potentially be subdivided under the High Density Residential designation. Most of the vacant land in Lackey, however, is in a relatively isolated area at the end of Baptist Road, where plans have been approved for a 242-lot subdivision (Rose Hill) on 118 acres of undeveloped land. Because of the width deficiencies of Baptist Road and the fact that it was the only means of access to this area, the 2005 Comprehensive Plan designated this area for Medium Density Residential development, stating that higher density development should be entertained only in the event of developer-funded improvements to provide a second means of access. To address this concern, the original developer of Rose Hill proffered to build a new road between the property and Crawford Road to provide the desired second means of access and avoid having the property rezoned to a lower density. That road, Sea Biscuit Boulevard, is now in place.

A Low Density Residential designation has been applied to a small area along Crawford Road near its intersection with Goosley Road in recognition of existing development.

Significant acreage in and around the Lackey sub-area is owned by either the National Park Service or the City of Newport News. These properties and the County's Charles Brown Park are designated Conservation. Also designated Conservation is an approximately 46-acre assemblage of land on the south side of Crawford Road. This property, which had been slated for a residential subdivision and was previously designated Low Density Residential, was associated with the 1781 Siege of Yorktown and was acquired by the American Battlefield Trust in 2019 for preservation purposes.

## **Route 17 Corridor**

As the lower County's primary commercial and transportation corridor, Route 17 (George Washington Memorial Highway) has long been recognized as an area worthy of special consideration. Extensive information and planning recommendations for this corridor are included in the 1996 *Route 17 Corridor Master Plan*. Among other things, that plan recommended the investment of public funds to implement landscaping enhancements along Route 17. This recommendation served as the catalyst for the installation of median and shoulder landscaping improvements that have had an extremely positive visual impact. In 2003, the Board of Supervisors initiated an effort to revitalize the Route 17 corridor, which led to the formation of an ad hoc Route 17 Revitalization Committee that conducted an exhaustive study of the corridor and developed a series of recommended action items that included property improvement grants and other business incentives as well as Zoning Ordinance amendments, landscaping and streetscape improvements, undergrounding of utilities, and additional County-funded maintenance.

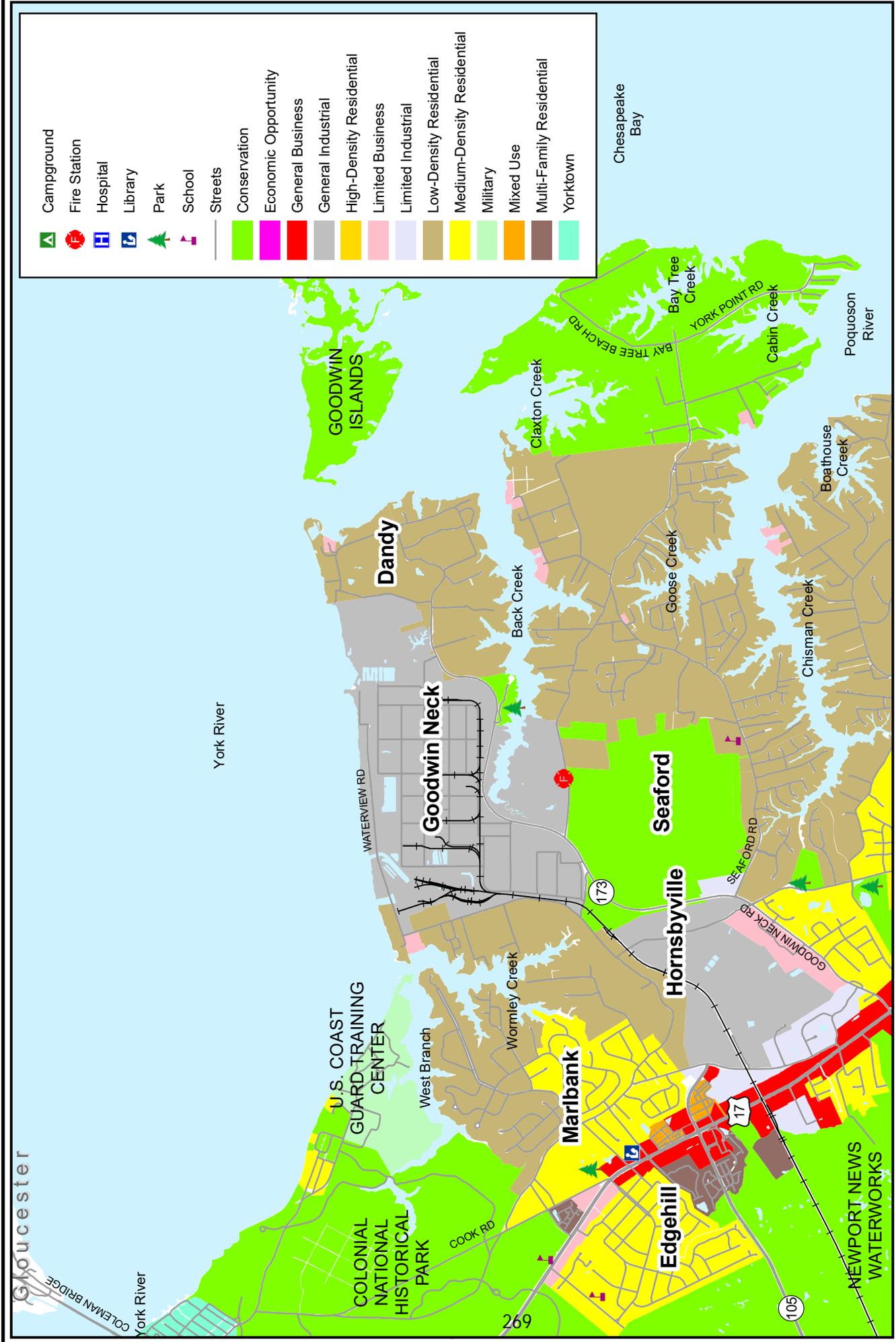
With regard to land use, General Business is the predominant designation of property along the Route 17 corridor. However, there are some exceptions:

- The Yorktown designation has been applied to the segment that runs through historic Yorktown village, while the segment that runs through the Colonial National Historical Park is designated Conservation, as is all the National Park Service property.
- Between York High School and Cook Road, the Route 17 corridor is designated Limited Business in order to protect this major gateway into the historic area by encouraging low-impact commercial and office uses and provide a smooth and visually attractive transition from the more intensive retail and service-oriented uses along the southerly portions of Route 17. The Limited Business designation is also intended to protect the adjacent residential areas from the adverse effects of more intensive commercial development.
- Additional residential development along this commercial corridor is generally discouraged. A Multi-Family Residential designation recognizes the age-restricted Villas at Yorktown quadruplex development at the intersection of Route 17 and Falcon Road, while the Nelson's Grant mixed-use development, which includes commercial uses along Route 17 with residential condominiums and townhouses behind, is designated Mixed Use. Two mobile home parks along Route 17 are designated General Business to provide opportunities for eventual redevelopment in a manner that is more compatible with surrounding development.
- Newport News Waterworks property abutting Route 17 in the Harwoods Mill Reservoir area is designated Conservation.
- Bethel Industrial Park, located along Production Drive off of Route 17, is recognized with a Limited Industrial designation.

There are several nonconforming auto salvage businesses along Route 17 in the Tabb area that detract from the corridor's overall appearance. Aesthetic improvement or redevelopment of these nonconforming uses has been and should continue to be a major objective of the County.

## **Edgehill**

The Edgehill sub-area is located north of the CSX rail spur and west of Route 17 and Cook Road. Most of this area is designated Medium Density Residential, consistent with the 1.8 unit-per-acre density of the 523-lot Edgehill subdivision. The adjacent Clairmont Apartments and Burnt Bridge Run condominium

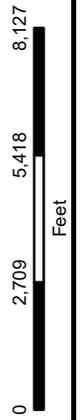


- Campground
- Fire Station
- Hospital
- Library
- Park
- School
- Streets
- Conservation
- Economic Opportunity
- General Business
- General Industrial
- High-Density Residential
- Limited Business
- Limited Industrial
- Low-Density Residential
- Medium-Density Residential
- Military
- Mixed Use
- Multi-Family Residential
- Yorktown



## 2040 Land Use

### Edgehill/Marlbank/Hornsbyville/Goodwin Neck/Seaford/Dandy Sub-Areas



Gloucester  
COLEMAN BRIDGE  
York River

York River

U.S. COAST  
GUARD TRAINING  
CENTER

GOODWIN  
ISLANDS

COLONIAL  
NATIONAL  
HISTORICAL  
PARK

Dandy

COOK RD

Goodwin Neck

Marlbank

Claxton Creek

269

Edgehill

Hornsbyville

Seaford

Back Creek

Chesapeake Bay

NEWPORT NEWS  
WATERWORKS

Hornsbyville

Seaford

Goose Creek

Claxton Creek

Bay Tree Creek

105

17

173

SEAFORD RD

GOODWIN NECK RD

Chisman Creek

YORK POINT RD

BAY TREE BEACH RD

WATERVIEW RD

SEAFORD RD

Goose Creek

Boathouse Creek

Cabin Creek

YORK POINT RD

WATERVIEW RD

SEAFORD RD

Chisman Creek

Boathouse Creek

Cabin Creek

YORK POINT RD

NEWPORT NEWS  
WATERWORKS

105

17

SEAFORD RD

GOODWIN NECK RD

Chisman Creek

YORK POINT RD

BAY TREE BEACH RD

WATERVIEW RD

SEAFORD RD

Chisman Creek

Boathouse Creek

Cabin Creek

YORK POINT RD

NEWPORT NEWS  
WATERWORKS

105

17

SEAFORD RD

GOODWIN NECK RD

Chisman Creek

YORK POINT RD

BAY TREE BEACH RD

NEWPORT NEWS  
WATERWORKS

105

17

SEAFORD RD

GOODWIN NECK RD

Chisman Creek

YORK POINT RD

BAY TREE BEACH RD

Feet

development are recognized with a Multi-Family Residential designation, as are the Wood Towne Quarters townhouses and the Quarters of York County quadruplexes on the opposite side of Ft. Eustis Boulevard. The undeveloped property to the west of Edgehill and extending all the way to the Newport News boundary includes a portion of the Lee Hall Reservoir and surrounding watershed property and is designated Conservation.

The triangular area between Route 17 and Cook Road includes York High School, which, like all County schools, is designated Conservation, and the Villas at Yorktown age-restricted quadruplex development, which is designated Multi-Family Residential. The remaining land is designated Limited Business to recognize existing office development, protect adjacent residential development from the potentially adverse impacts of more intensive commercial development, and protect the quality of development of these major gateways – Route 17 and Cook Road – into historic Yorktown.

Much of the developable vacant land in the Edgehill sub-area consists of commercially designated property along Route 17 and Ft. Eustis Boulevard, as described above in the Route 17 Corridor sub-area description. In addition, approximately 25 acres on the north side of the railroad tracks, which has been approved for a 300-unit age-restricted senior housing development, is designated Multi-Family Residential.

### **Marlbank/Hornsbyville**

Most of the land north of the CSX rail spur extending to the east from Route 17 and Cook Road to Wormley Creek, consisting largely of the Marlbank Farm and Marlbank Cove residential subdivisions, is designated for residential use. With housing densities of 1.0 and 1.4 dwelling units per acre, these two subdivisions are designated Low Density and Medium Density Residential respectively. The Marlbank and Hornsbyville sub-areas contain mostly older, established residential neighborhoods of single-family detached homes, and the land use designations are intended mainly to recognize existing development in this area, most of which is designated Low Density Residential to ensure the protection of the Wormley Creek basin from the potentially adverse impacts of increased stormwater runoff and siltation associated with higher density development. Also contributing to the low-density development patterns are the capacity limitations of Old Wormley Creek Road and Hornsbyville Road, both of which are identified in the Transportation element as roads in need of improvement. Medium-density single-family detached housing in areas adjoining Old York-Hampton Highway and Hornsbyville Road is designated as such.

A connecting road between Hornsbyville Road and the intersection of Fort Eustis Boulevard and Old York-Hampton Highway would enable residents of Hornsbyville Road and the Waterview area to easily and directly access Fort Eustis Boulevard and Interstate 64 and prevent them from “cutting through” residential areas on subdivision streets – specifically Copeland and Harris Lanes – that are not designed or intended for such traffic. Such a road connection should be incorporated into any future development plans for this area.

The area generally bounded by Wolf Trap Road, Goodwin Neck Road, and Hornsbyville Road is occupied by various industrial uses, including the 74-acre Dominion Energy fly ash disposal site, the 22-acre VPPSA (Virginia Peninsulas Public Service Authority) Compost Facility, the former York County landfill, a portion of the County’s Waste Management Center, York Industrial Park on Wolf Trap Road, and the 102-acre York River Commerce Park at the intersection of Old York-Hampton Highway and Newsome Drive. This business/industrial park is a joint venture between



Dominion Energy and the York County Economic Development Authority and includes Travaini Pumps, Ryson International, AVID LLC, and Marine Sonic Technology. This area, which is traversed by a CSX rail spur, has been designated for industrial development since the 1976 Land Use Plan and continues to be designated General Industrial in recognition of existing development and to provide opportunities for additional industrial and warehousing users. However, because of extensive residential development along Hornsbyville Road, the rail line itself is the most logical dividing line between residential and industrial designations along most of the rail corridor. Allowing homes to encroach on these future industrial sites would sow the seeds of future citizen discontent with their industrial neighbors. Similarly, industrial development should not be allowed to encroach on residential development along Hornsbyville Road; in the area just east of Old York-Hampton Highway, a Low Density Residential designation has been applied along Hornsbyville Road to recognize and prevent industrial access to this residential road.

Light industrial development along Old York-Hampton Highway, including Victory Industrial Park, is recognized with a Limited Industrial designation, while the York County Operations Center on Goodwin Neck Road is designated Limited Business. The Operations Center houses numerous County offices as well as the Waste Management Center and the building and vehicle maintenance facilities. While these are government rather than commercial uses, they have land use impacts consistent with the Limited Business designation. This designation also provides a buffer between the heavy industrial area to the north and the residential areas on the south side of Goodwin Neck Road.

The intersection of Route 17 and Route 105 represents a major transportation node and was identified as a potential “village center” in the 1996 *Route 17 Corridor Plan* because of its central location at the intersection of two major arterial highways and the proximity of commercial frontage to high-density housing areas, all of which creates the potential for a pedestrian-oriented mix of uses anchored by commercial development at each of the four quadrants comprising the intersection. Consistent with this vision, two mixed-use developments have subsequently been approved in this area and are designated Mixed Use. These developments – Nelson’s Grant on Route 17 and Yorktown Crescent on the Ft. Eustis Boulevard extension – account for most of the recent development in this sub-area. Nelson’s Grant, approved in 2010, is almost fully developed and includes a mix of townhouses, condominiums, restaurants, retail and service uses, while Yorktown Crescent, approved in 2011 is still in the early stages of development (35 townhouses) but is planned to include a mix of townhouses, condos and/or apartments, and commercial uses in future phases. With more than one thousand high-density housing units either built or planned within a 2,000-foot radius of this intersection, combined with County sidewalk projects either planned or under construction that will greatly improve pedestrian accessibility in this area, the remaining vacant land at this node (approximately 15 acres) should be targeted for commercial uses that are consistent with the walkable “village center” concept.

### **Goodwin Neck/Dandy**

The Goodwin Neck peninsula has been home to the County’s heavy industrial base dating back to the 1950s and the establishment of the VEPCO (now Dominion Energy) Yorktown Power Station and the Amoco oil refinery. While the oil refinery property is now occupied by the Plains Marketing crude oil terminal, the power plant is still in place but is in the midst of a phased shutdown; two of the plant’s three coal-fired generators were decommissioned in March 2019 while the third is expected to be retired in 2023. The area encompassing these two facilities and their respective landholdings, including numerous small waterfront parcels on the north side of Waterview Road, is designated General Industrial based on its established character, deep-water docking facilities, rail access, and utilities, all of which create an opportunity for additional heavy industrial users that would benefit the County’s economic base. The Wormley Creek Marina on the west side of Waterview Road is recognized with a Limited Business designation, while neighboring homes are designated Low Density Residential.

The Dandy community is located at the eastern end of the Goodwin Neck peninsula. Surrounded by water on three sides (the York River, the Thorofare, and Back Creek), Dandy is almost entirely within both

the 100-year flood plain and the storm surge area for a Category 1 storm. While there are several relatively large vacant parcels both inside and outside of Dandy Loop Road, the capability of the land to support additional development is limited by the likely presence of non-tidal wetlands. Lastly, there is only one road – Goodwin Neck Road – into and out of this area of more than 200 homes and about 650 residents. In recognition of these constraints, the area’s vulnerability to future sea level rise, and the need to protect adjacent wetlands and waterways from the increased stormwater runoff, siltation, and nonpoint source pollution associated with higher density development, the Dandy area is designated Low Density Residential. The only exception is the Limited Business designation that applies to the long-standing water-oriented commercial property on Belvin Lane.

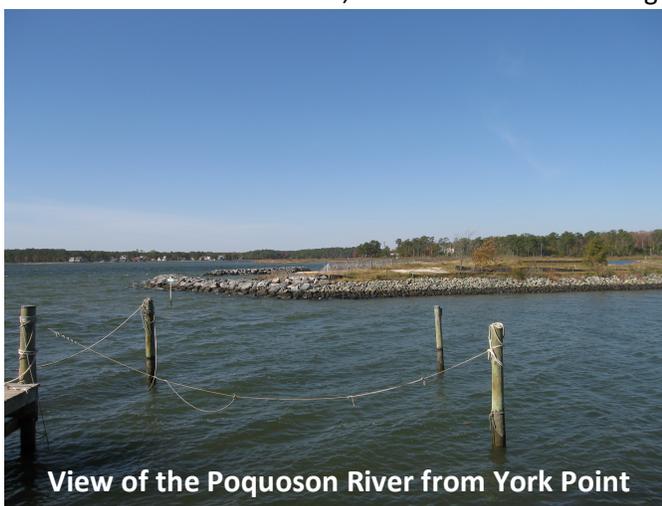
The Goodwin Islands were originally zoned for industrial development and have been the subject of various development proposals over the years. However, the islands were designated Conservation in the original 1976 Land Use Plan and have been so designated ever since. The



Conservation designation recognizes the presence of salt marsh and wetlands, the lack of access and utilities, and the severe flooding potential and extreme wetness. In 1991 the Goodwin Islands became a part of the Chesapeake Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve System (CBNERR-VA) for the Commonwealth of Virginia. The CBNERR-VA is one of thirty protected areas that make up the National Estuarine Research Reserve System, which was established to promote informed management of the nation's estuaries and coastal habitats. The Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) serves as the on-site manager of the islands, which are owned by the College of William & Mary and used by VIMS for coastal research and education.

## **Seaford**

The Seaford peninsula is bounded by Back Creek, Chisman Creek, and the Chesapeake Bay. Much of this area is designated Low Density Residential, based largely on the need to protect the adjacent water bodies from siltation and water quality degradation. Although there are several older medium-density developments in the area and public water and sewer are available, the need to encourage environmental protection is an overriding issue that dictates a Low Density Residential designation. This is especially true of the eastern portion of Seaford (i.e., east of the intersection of Seaford Road and Back Creek Road) – particularly the low-lying Bay Tree Beach/York Point area – which includes salt marshes, wetlands, and Chesapeake Bay RPA buffers. The area, which is located in the 100-year flood plain (the area susceptible to the 1% annual flood) and the storm surge area for a Category 1 storm, is more vulnerable to potential future sea level rise than any other area of the County. Furthermore, there is only one means of ingress and egress (Seaford Road), which hinders residents’ ability to



evacuate in the event of a major storm or access needed goods and services in the aftermath. In recognition of these constraints, this area is designated Conservation.

More than 600 acres of undeveloped land in the area between Seaford Road and Back Creek Road was donated to The Nature Conservancy by BP Amoco in 2006 for conservation purposes. Accordingly, this land is designated Conservation.

The 141-acre HRSD wastewater treatment plant on Back Creek Road and the Seaford Fire Station that it surrounds are designated General Industrial. The Limited Industrial area at the intersection of Goodwin Neck and Seaford Roads is largely developed with the Coca-Cola distribution center and there is only limited opportunity to expand. The presence of tidal and perhaps non-tidal wetlands could be an obstacle to future development in this area.

A small neighborhood commercial area near the intersection of Seaford and Back Creek Roads serves the area and has been recognized with a Limited Business designation. Large-scale commercial development would not be appropriate in this area. Also designated for Limited Business are several water-dependent uses located on Shirley Road. These businesses provide docking facilities, support services for seafood landing and processing, boat fueling and re-supply, and boat repair operations that generate considerable commercial traffic on fairly narrow roads. Expansion of commercial development in this area is not recommended and should not be considered in the absence of road improvements.

There are almost 1,200 acres of vacant land in the Seaford sub-area, including several large parcels over 50 acres in size. As previously noted, however, much of it has limited development potential because of environmental constraints and access limitations. This includes a large undeveloped area between Claxton Creek Road and Seaford Road, which is designated Low Density Residential but appears to have extensive non-tidal wetlands.

### **Grafton East/Dare**

The Grafton East sub-area encompasses the land bounded by Goodwin Neck Road to the north, Chisman Creek and the Chesapeake Bay to the east, the Poquoson River to the south, and Route 17 to the west. Land use designations east of the Route 17 General Business corridor follow a general pattern of decreasing intensity of use from west to east in recognition of the existing development character. A dividing line between Medium and Low Density Residential designations is formed by Wolf Trap Road, Allens Mill Road, Dare Road, Lakeside Drive, and Showalter Road. Property on the east side of this line is designated Low Density Residential because of the presence of wetlands, proximity to waterways and vulnerability to flooding and future sea level rise. Land on the west side of this line, most of which is designated Medium Density Residential, is relatively free of environmental constraints other than some perennial streams where Chesapeake Bay RPA buffers limit development.

There are a few pockets of higher density housing in this sub-area, including the 248-unit Willow Lakes residential development on Wolf Trap Road, which contains a mix of duplexes and single-family detached homes at a gross density of 5.6 units per acre and is designated High Density Residential. In addition, a Multi-Family Residential designation in the area bounded by Route 17, Dare Road, and Lakeside Drive recognizes the existing Grafton Station Apartments and York Crossing townhouses, both of which have densities slightly below ten units per acre. This Multi-Family Residential designation also provides a transition between the intensive commercial character of Route 17 to the west (Washington Square shopping center) and Medium Density Residential development to the east.

A Limited Business designation extending from Wolf Trap Road to Dare Road, encompassing the Dare Professional Park area and surrounding areas, signifies the need for a well-designed transition between more intensive commercial development along Route 17 to the west (Grafton Shopping Center) and residential development to the east.



Wolf Trap and Chisman Creek Parks (both of which are former Superfund sites) and the former County landfill are designated Conservation in recognition of their current and previous use.

The Low Density Residential designation for the Dare peninsula is based on its existing development character and environmental conditions. This density level also recognizes the potential impact that more intensive development could have on adjacent Chisman Creek, Patrick's Creek, the Poquoson River, and the Chesapeake Bay because of increased runoff and non-point source pollutant loadings. Consequently, any development that occurs must be accomplished in an environmentally sensitive manner utilizing public utilities or large lots that can accommodate individual systems. A small neighborhood commercial area at the intersection of Dare Road, Lakeside Drive, and Railway Road that serves local residents is recognized with a Limited Business designation. Water-oriented commercial activities are also an integral part of this community and include boat storage, maintenance, and repair facilities. These also have been recognized with a Limited Business designation.

The amount of developable vacant land in the Grafton East and Dare sub-areas is somewhat limited by the presence of non-tidal wetlands, especially in Dare. The largest piece of undeveloped land – a 125-acre parcel on Yorkville Road south of Charles Road – has significant non-tidal wetlands that greatly reduce its development potential. It is designated Low Density Residential, as is all the surrounding land. The undeveloped rear portion of the Peninsula Hardwood Mulch site on Lakeside Drive has potential for development and is designated Medium Density Residential. Medium-density single-family detached housing would be compatible with adjacent neighborhoods to the east and prevent the expansion of existing commercial and multi-family development to the south and west in a manner that would encroach on these neighborhoods.

### **Grafton West**

The Grafton West sub-area is bounded by the CSX rail spur, Route 17, Oriana Road, and the Newport News city line. Most of this land is owned by the City of Newport News and is designated Conservation to protect the watershed. These vast landholdings extend almost the entire length of the lower County, stretching from the National Park Service property in Lackey to the Kiln Creek residential area in Tabb. Also designated Conservation is a 200-acre parcel owned by the Peninsula Airport Commission (PAC) that is almost completely surrounded by watershed property and was acquired from the City of Newport News in 2000 for wetlands mitigation purposes.

The PAC also owns roughly 170 acres on the north side of Oriana Road located in the flight path of one of the Newport News-Williamsburg Airport's two runways. This land assemblage includes the 140-acre Kentucky Farms horse farm and 47 roughly half-acre lots that were platted in 1953 as part of a 73-lot residential subdivision known as Kentucky Heights and were later acquired by the PAC to prevent construction in the path of a planned runway extension. Of the remaining 26 lots in Kentucky Heights that are privately owned, twenty are occupied by single-family detached homes and the rest are vacant. Historically, this area has been designated Limited Industrial based on the PAC's runway expansion plans, which would have required the PAC to acquire all of these lots. Since then, the airport's plans have been scaled back to the point where most or all of these parcels are likely to remain in private ownership. It should be noted that all but one of these homes are outside the approach zone for the airport runway; however, they are all within the 65-decibel noise zone in which residential uses are considered by the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to be incompatible with airport use. Industrial uses, in contrast, are considered to be compatible with airport operations because they are less affected by noise than any other land use and, in fact, are often noisy themselves. The Limited Industrial designation remains in place based on the recognition that the long-term highest and best use of this land is industrial, whether that means airport expansion or private development that would benefit from proximity to the airport. Regardless, this is a viable residential neighborhood, and industrial zoning should not be considered without a significant change in circumstances at the airport.

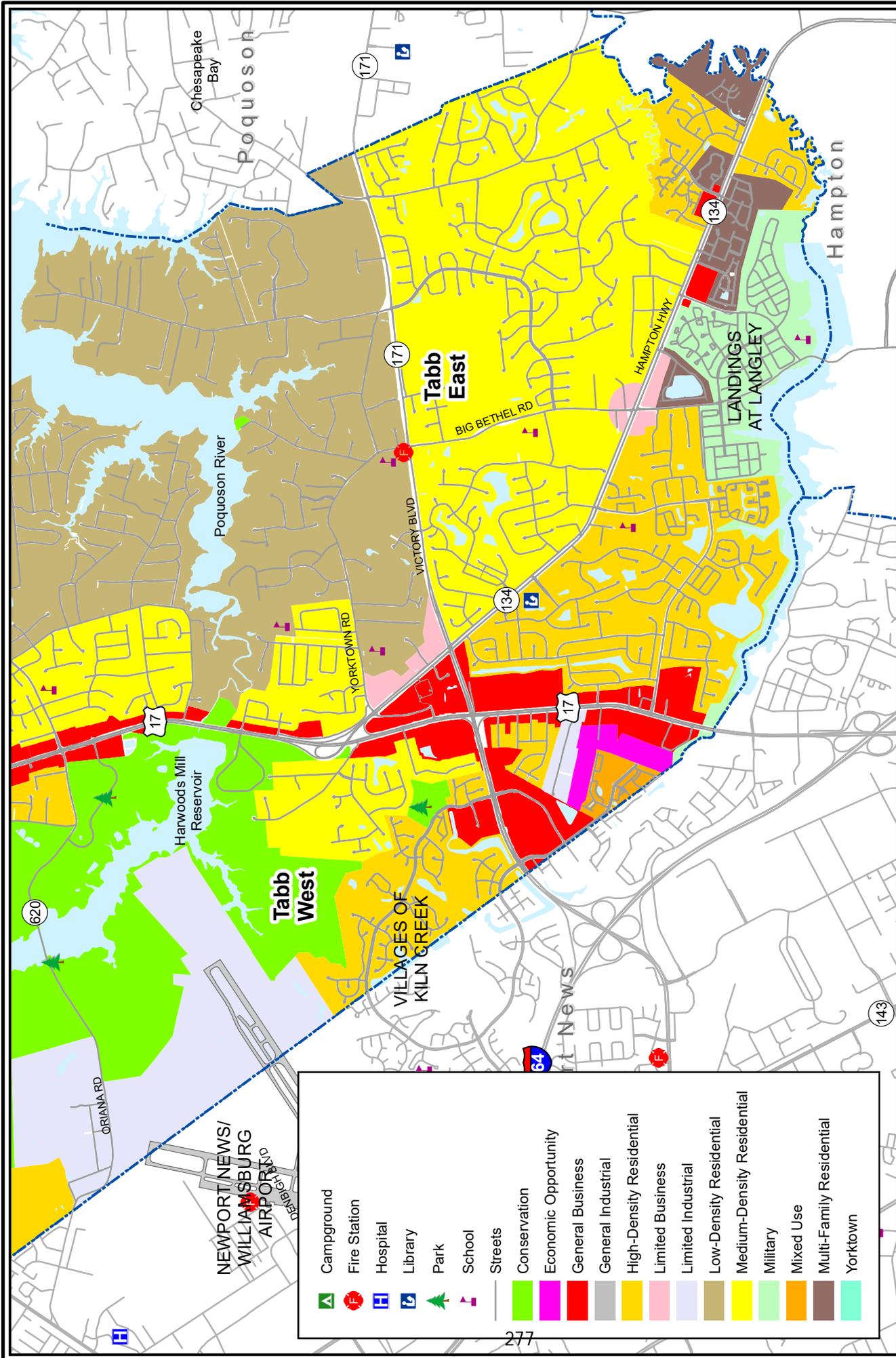
The Grafton Drive area, including both sides of Grafton Drive between its two intersections with Route 17, contains a variety of land uses, including four single-family attached housing developments (which are designated Multi-Family Residential), the Grafton High/Middle School campus, and assorted retail and office development. The existing mix of commercial and high-density residential uses in close proximity to one another in a relatively compact area, combined with a planned sidewalk on the west side of Grafton Drive to be installed by the County, creates the potential for some type of pedestrian-oriented mixed-use “village activity center,” consistent with the recommendations of the *Route 17 Corridor Study*. With the right mix of walkable commercial uses, this area – similarly to the Route 17/Route 105 intersection discussed above – could potentially be developed with the semblance of a “main street” on Grafton Drive, in contrast to the more auto-oriented character of development along much of Route 17. This area is designated General Business.

To the south of the Grafton Drive corridor, a triangular area of high-density housing, including three mobile home parks along Oriana Road, is recognized with a High Density Residential designation. Although this area is mostly developed, there are some vacant infill parcels that have the potential to be subdivided and developed.

The only significant vacant acreage available for development in the Grafton West sub-area consists of almost 170 acres on the south side of Denbigh Boulevard adjacent to the Newport News city line, roughly fifty acres of which has been approved for an age-restricted senior housing development of 151 single-family detached homes and is designated High Density Residential, as is the undeveloped property to the east. The commercial frontage along Denbigh Boulevard is designated General Business. On the north side of Denbigh Boulevard, to the north of the commercial frontage, are roughly ten acres of undeveloped land owned by the developer of Huntington Pointe, a high-density mixed-use development now under construction in Newport News, just west of the County line. Since this property is to be developed as part of the recreational trail system for Huntington Pointe, it is designated Conservation. Also of significance is the fact that the development will eventually be served by a new road – Independence Boulevard – that is planned to extend from Denbigh Boulevard to Richneck Road and Fort Eustis Boulevard, thus providing an important road connection linking Denbigh and Fort Eustis Boulevards and taking pressure off of Jefferson Avenue in the City of Newport News and Route 17 in York County.

### **Tabb East**

The Tabb area is located in the southernmost part of the County and is generally bounded by the Cities of Newport News, Hampton, and Poquoson and by the Poquoson River and Oriana Road. In the area to the east of Route 17 – the Tabb East sub-area – development is primarily residential, with Victory Boulevard serving as the general dividing line between low-density development to the north and medium-density development to the south. Except in a few cases, land use designations in this sub-area mirror this general development pattern, as they have since the original 1976 Land Use Plan. An exception is an area on the north side of Yorktown Road that is designated Medium Density Residential in recognition of the Mill Farm, Kings Villa, and Plantation Acres subdivisions, which have a combined total of 316 homes – almost all of which are at least forty years old – with an average lot size of about 0.5 acre and an overall density of 2.2 units per acre. For most of the area north of Victory Boulevard, however, the proximity of the Poquoson River and Lamb’s Creek and the potential adverse water quality impacts of higher density development warrant a Low Density Residential designation. This is also true in Calthrop Neck, much of which lies within the 100-year floodplain, providing further impetus for maintaining low-density development, even with the availability of public sewer and water. To the south of Victory Boulevard, proximity to waterways is not much of a concern except in some areas along Brick Kiln Creek where Chesapeake Bay RPA buffers limit the possibilities for development. While there are some large non-tidal wetland areas, environmental constraints are relatively few. Almost the entire area between Victory Boulevard and Hampton Highway is designated Medium Density Residential; however, High Density and Multi-Family Residential designations have been applied on the north side of Route 134 in recogni-



## 2040 Land Use Tabb Sub-Area



- |  |                            |
|--|----------------------------|
|  | Campground                 |
|  | Fire Station               |
|  | Hospital                   |
|  | Library                    |
|  | Park                       |
|  | School                     |
|  | Streets                    |
|  | Conservation               |
|  | Economic Opportunity       |
|  | General Business           |
|  | General Industrial         |
|  | High-Density Residential   |
|  | Limited Business           |
|  | Limited Industrial         |
|  | Low-Density Residential    |
|  | Medium-Density Residential |
|  | Military                   |
|  | Mixed Use                  |
|  | Multi-Family Residential   |
|  | Yorktown                   |

tion of the existing Yorkshire Downs planned development, The Courts at Yorkshire Downs apartment complex, and the Villas on Shady Banks quadruplexes.

Just as Victory Boulevard serves as a dividing line between different intensities of land use, Hampton Highway serves as the general dividing line between medium- and high-density residential development in this sub-area, with most of the area south and west of Hampton Highway designated High Density Residential. In fact, the area between Route 17 and Hampton Highway is the most densely populated area of the County, largely because it includes the Landings at Langley military housing complex, which has approximately 3.9 units per acre and an average of 3.8 persons per household. Although the character of development is a mix of high-density single-family detached homes and duplexes, the Landings at Langley is designated Military since the land is owned by the Department of Defense. Other large high-density residential developments in this area include Coventry (4.4 units per acre), Tabb Lakes (3.4 units per acre), and The Greenlands (2.4 units per acre). East of Big Bethel Road, Multi-Family Residential designations have been applied to recognize three existing apartment complexes (the Belmont Apartments, the Pines of York, and Four Seasons) and The Gables of York quadruplexes.

Commercial land use designations in the Tabb East area are limited to the Route 17 and Hampton Highway corridors and the segment of Victory Boulevard that runs between the two. All of the land along Route 17 within this sub-area is designated General Business, as is the triangular area bounded by these three arterial highways. Along Hampton Highway, a Limited Business node has been designated at the Big Bethel Road intersection. Concentrated nodal commercial development has the advantages of limiting the number of curb cuts and encouraging an economically efficient concentration of uses on commercial sites. The presence of multiple commercial entrances would deteriorate the capacity of this arterial highway; for this same reason, individual residential driveways along Hampton Highway should be discouraged. Because of the proximity of residential development, the preferred development within this node would consist of offices and other businesses of lesser intensity that would not adversely affect residential neighborhoods or generate significant traffic during peak periods. Consequently, this node is designated Limited Business. Less intensive commercial uses are also envisioned along Hampton Highway between Victory Boulevard and Yorktown Road; these areas are designated Limited Business based primarily on their proximity to residential development and Tabb Middle School. In addition, two smaller General Business nodes have been designated along Route 134 at the York Downs Drive and First Avenue intersections in recognition of existing commercial activities.

There is a roughly 100-acre assemblage of land on the south side of Victory Boulevard that is undeveloped and designated Medium Density Residential, but it appears to have extremely limited potential for development because of non-tidal wetlands. Other vacant properties are also designated Medium or Low Density Residential, and in several cases – Smith Farm Estates on Yorktown Road, Victory at Tabb on Hampton Highway, and Celestial Way on Big Bethel Road – have already been approved for development. A 26-acre dual-frontage lot extending from Yorktown Road to Victory Boulevard, which is designated Medium Density Residential, was purchased in 2020 by the Hampton Roads Sanitation District (HRSD) for the purpose of constructing the Tabb Pressure Reducing Pump Station and Offline Storage Facility, which is intended to relieve pressures to the sewer system during wet weather events and provide flow balancing for HRSD’s James River and York River Treatment Plants.

### **Tabb West**

The Tabb West sub-area is bounded by Oriana Road, Route 17, and the Newport News city line. Newport News-Williamsburg Airport, which is located mostly in the City of Newport News but has runways and taxiways that traverse the York County-Newport News border, occupies more than 400 acres on the south side of Oriana Road. This acreage, owned by the Peninsula Airport Commission, is designated Limited Industrial in recognition of its current use as an airport and to provide opportunities for future runway expansion. The airport property is surrounded by more than 900 acres of watershed property owned by the City of Newport News – including the leased site occupied by the County’s McReynolds

Athletic Complex (MAC) – and is designated Conservation. The area between the watershed property and Victory Boulevard, which includes the Villages of Kiln Creek, Foxwood, the Darby-Firby residential community, and Rich Acres and is almost entirely developed, is designated High and Medium Density Residential based on the density of existing residential development. Most of the Victory Boulevard corridor, however, is designated General Business on both sides. With the development of the Kiln Creek commercial area in the 1990s, Victory Boulevard has emerged as a major commercial node that includes a wide variety of restaurants, hotels, retail stores, and office space in addition to the 232,000-square foot Village Square at Kiln Creek shopping center.

Land use designations in the area to the south of the Kiln Creek commercial area, bounded by Route 17 and the Newport News city line, mostly reflect existing development. The York Manor residential subdivision and the adjacent housing areas, with a combined total of roughly 100 single-family detached homes at a density of 3.3 units per acre, are designated High Density Residential, while the adjacent commercial development to the east, along Route 17, is designated General Business. In order to protect this somewhat older neighborhood of moderately-priced homes, most of them built in the 1950s and '60s, commercial zoning should be limited to the Route 17 frontage. This neighborhood also abuts Bethel Industrial Park along Production Drive to the south, which is designated Limited Industrial.

Bordering the Newport News city line further to the south is the Commonwealth Green mixed-use development approved by the Board of Supervisors in 2012. This development includes the 324-unit Commonwealth at York apartments (with an additional 60 units in Newport News), the 94-unit Mainstay condominiums, the first of three planned three-unit “live-work” residential buildings with ground-floor commercial use, and a 1.8-acre parcel designated for commercial development. This 46-acre development is designated Mixed Use. The abutting property to the north and east is designated Economic Opportunity, with the Route 17 General Business frontage beyond. The Economic Opportunity designation recognizes the area’s proximity to the airport and I-64 on one end and to Route 17 on the other. The roughly forty acres of contiguous undeveloped land at the end of Commonwealth Drive has so far failed to realize its development potential because of its limited accessibility, visibility, and, in some areas, the absence of public sewer. An extension of Commonwealth Drive to Route 17 at its signalized intersection with Coventry Boulevard would greatly improve access to this area and enhance its viability for commercial and office uses. A future road corridor should be reserved through this area, and any development therein should be required to have its internal street system designed accordingly and to construct appropriate segments of the connector. Such a road extension would also take pressure off of the congested Victory Boulevard intersections with Route 17 and Hampton Highway while incorporating traffic-calming features, such as roundabouts or traffic circles, so as to prevent Coventry Boulevard from becoming an inviting route for cut-through traffic.

**SUMMARY**

Acreage figures for each of the 2040 land use designations are provided in **Table 2**, while **Figure 2** compares existing and future acreage for the major categories of land use. Roughly half the undeveloped land in the County is designated for single-family detached residential development, while about 30% is designated for commercial use (mostly in the Economic Opportunity designation, which included light industrial), and one percent for industrial use.

<b>2040 Land Use Summary</b>		
<b>Land Use Designation</b>	<b>Gross Acreage</b>	<b>Undeveloped Acreage</b>
Low Density Residential	10,960	2,760
Medium Density Residential	4,930	900
High Density Residential	3,070	500
Multi-Family Residential	770	80
Mixed Use	90	20

2040 Land Use Summary		
Land Use Designation	Gross Acreage	Undeveloped Acreage
General Business	1,480	350
Limited Business	330	100
Economic Opportunity	2,840	1,760
Limited Industrial	930	80
General Industrial	1,550	320
Conservation	16,990	950
Yorktown	120	0
Military	20,980	0
Right-of-Way	210	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>65,250</b>	<b>7,820</b>

Note: Figures are rounded to the nearest ten acres. The amount of undeveloped land encompassed by the Yorktown designation is 4.5 acres.

Table 2

### York County Existing and Future Land Use

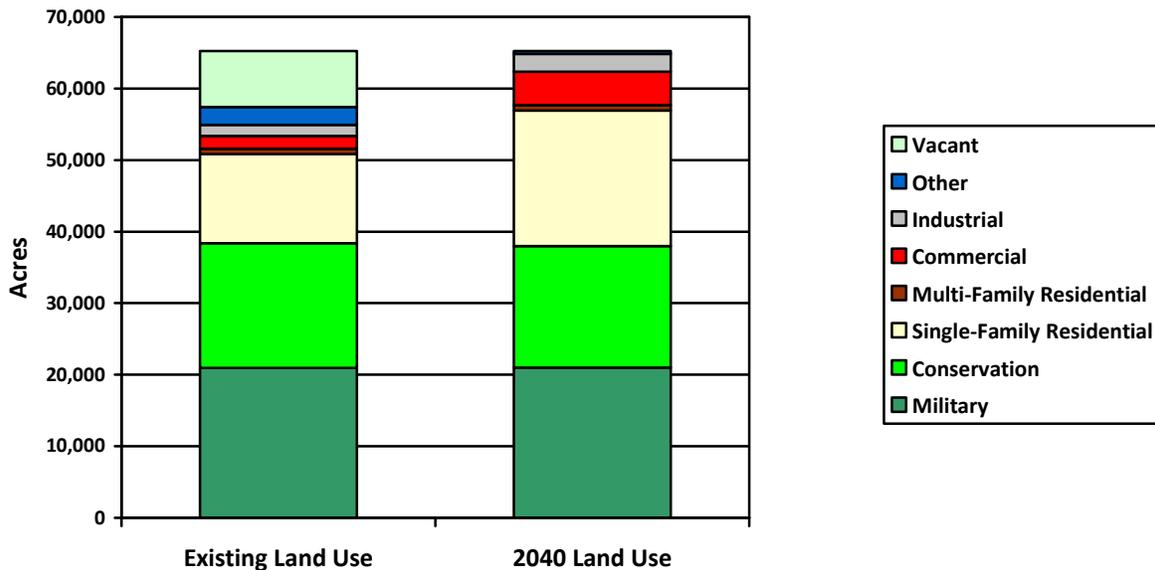


Figure 2

If the County were to develop in accordance with the land use designations set forth in this Plan, single-family residential development would, at build-out, increase from 19.1% to 29.1% of the County's total land area, and commercial uses would more than double their proportion from 2.7% to 7.1%. Industrial uses would increase from 2.4% to 3.8% of the total. The ratio of residential to non-residential land use under such a growth scenario, however unrealistic, would certainly be advantageous for the County's fiscal health but would be very challenging to achieve in the face of land use trends documented elsewhere in this plan: a weak commercial real estate market; the growing popularity of e-commerce; a shift in consumer preferences away from low-density housing, particularly among the younger age groups; and a growing need for more affordable housing opportunities. While a higher ratio of residential to commercial and industrial development is a good goal to strive for, the County cannot ignore the realities of the real estate market. The Comprehensive Plan is a general guide – not a blueprint – and decision-makers and citizens need to recognize that flexibility in response to changing circumstances is sometimes called for when evaluating specific land use and development proposals.

## GOAL, OBJECTIVES, AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

---

**Goal:** Provide for orderly and efficient land use patterns that protect, preserve, and enhance the natural and physical attributes of the County that define and contribute positively to its appearance and character.

---

**Objective 1:** Establish and maintain a balanced diversity of land uses, with minimal conflicts among different uses, in recognition of the physical characteristics of the County and the capacity of the land and public services and infrastructure to accommodate different types of uses.

1. Use the 2040 Land Use Map as a guide for amending the Zoning Map to implement the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan.

The Zoning Map is probably the most fundamental tool for implementing the Comprehensive Plan. Typically when the Board of Supervisors adopts an updated Comprehensive Plan, that action is followed by a comprehensive review of the County's Zoning Map to identify possible changes that might be needed. It is recommended that this same process take place following the adoption of this Plan.

2. Provide for residential growth that would allow the County population to reach a level of approximately 80,000 residents at full build-out.

When the 1991 Comprehensive Plan was developed, there was a general consensus among both the citizens and the elected and appointed policymakers that in order to preserve the character of the County and not allow it to become too congested, the residential acreage and density allowances should be established in a manner that would allow the population to grow to no more than approximately 80,000 residents at full residential build-out – that is, when there is no more vacant residential land left to be developed. Zoning changes were subsequently made with this objective in mind, and Comprehensive Plan updates adopted in 1999, 2005, and 2013 have carried this guidance forward. This should not be interpreted to mean that at such time as the County's population reaches 80,000, further residential development should be prohibited. The 80,000 "maximum build-out population" should be taken not as a literal target but as a general goal intended to avoid uncontrolled population growth.

3. Prepare a detailed area plan to provide guidance for future land use, development, and infrastructure enhancements in Lightfoot.

With nearly 600 contiguous acres of almost entirely undeveloped land, most of it controlled by two property owners, the Lightfoot area in the northwest quadrant of the I-64 Route 199/Newman Road interchange represents the largest assemblage of vacant, developable land in the County. Given its size and location, development of this land will likely have a major impact not just on York County but on the entire Historic Triangle. To ensure that the impact is positive, it is important to have detailed guidance that addresses land use compatibility, the transportation network, public facilities and services, and fiscal impacts. An area plan building on the work that was done for the *Mooretown Road Extension Corridor Study*, prepared with involvement from the local community and other stakeholders, would provide that guidance.

4. Consider development patterns and plans established in neighboring jurisdictions when making local land use and zoning decisions.

The impacts of land use and development do not end at the jurisdictional boundary. This is particularly true in York County since it is the only Peninsula locality that shares a common border with

each of the other five cities and counties on the Peninsula. While it is imperative that each locality retain control over local land use decisions, it is important for the localities to work together to achieve land use compatibility across jurisdictional boundaries to the greatest extent possible.

**Objective 2: Preserve and enhance the visual attractiveness of York County.**

1. Review the Zoning Ordinance to identify opportunities to improve the aesthetic appeal of new development and redevelopment through regulatory controls and incentives.

One of the most common concerns expressed by County citizens about new development has to do with the loss of trees. The landscaping provisions of the Zoning Ordinance are intended, in part, to address such concerns, but they have not been comprehensively reviewed since the adoption of a series of amendments in 2003. As the supply of developable land shrinks, so does the opportunity to ensure that development contributes positively to visual appeal of the County's built environment. A thorough reexamination of the landscaping provisions to ensure that they are sufficient to achieve the County's expectations regarding development aesthetics would help to accomplish this. Other Zoning Ordinance provisions intended to address the aesthetics of development – such as the Tourist Corridor Management and Route 17 Corridor overlay district provisions – should be included in any such review.

2. Minimize the visual obtrusiveness of utility infrastructure.

The Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance require underground utilities in conjunction with new development. For existing overhead utilities, the County should pursue opportunities for placing them underground, either in conjunction with road projects – such as the widening of Route 17 – or as separate projects funded by grant/matching funds and/or County funds along other high-visibility “gateway” corridors such as Bypass Road. Similarly, telecommunications towers should be permitted in proximity to residential areas only when no other practical option exists and when after careful evaluation and consideration of their visibility from residential properties.

3. Where appropriate, assist in preserving conservation areas and making them accessible to York County residents.

Preserving open space ensures that the scenic natural beauty that makes the County special will be available for present and future generations of residents and visitors to enjoy. Conservation lands occupy more than a quarter of the County's total land area, second only to military property, much of which is also dedicated to open space. Within residential subdivisions that were developed utilizing the *open space* or *cluster* provisions of the Zoning Ordinance, common open space constitutes a minimum of 40% of the gross land area and is accessible to all who reside there. The County should also seek opportunities to make open space accessible to the general public through the development of greenways, trails, and similar facilities. One such opportunity, depicted on the Greenways Map in the Public Facilities element of this Plan, involves the 200-foot wide power line easement that runs diagonally through the Tabb area east of Route 17 where the developer of Smith Farms Estates proffered to construct an eight-foot (8') multi-use trail extending from Yorktown Road to the Mt. Vernon Elementary School property for a distance of a little more than one-third of a mile. This project, together with the various pedestrian improvements that are planned along Yorktown Road and Victory Boulevard, creates the potential for a trail system that could serve as a significant recreational amenity for local residents.

**Objective 3: Promote the redevelopment and/or adaptive reuse of vacant commercial and industrial sites.**

1. Provide assistance and incentives to encourage prospective businesses to occupy existing structures.

The Department of Economic and Tourism Development offers assistance to prospective businesses seeking to locate in the County. Encouraging those businesses to move into existing vacant buildings, aided, when necessary, by property improvement grants, puts these properties to productive economic use, prevents them from deteriorating and becoming eyesores through lack of use and maintenance, and helps to preserve undeveloped land. (This Implementation Strategy is discussed in greater detail in the Economic Development element of this Plan.)

2. Facilitate the rehabilitation of abandoned and blighted properties in areas targeted for enhancement and prepare them to accommodate redevelopment proposals through negotiation of landscape/maintenance easements or fee simple purchase.

Bringing obsolete, nonconforming commercial buildings and sites up to code – or demolishing them altogether – can be a costly endeavor. Public investment in the rehabilitation of these properties and the removal of blight yields not only aesthetic benefits but economic benefits as highly visible vacant buildings are removed from the tax rolls and replaced by economically viable uses or, at a minimum, a “clean” site that is ready for development. (This Implementation Strategy is discussed in greater detail in the Economic Development element of this Plan.)

**Objective 4: Promote land use compatibility between local military installations and the areas that surround them.**

1. Use the *Hampton-Langley Joint Land Use Study (JLUS)* and the *Joint Base Langley Eustis (Ft. Eustis) JLUS* as planning tools to help guide land use and development policies that will protect the mission of Joint Base Langley Eustis and promote compatible land use around the bases while minimizing the impact of military operations on existing developed areas.

Both JLUS documents include an implementation plan to ensure that the cooperation among military installations, surrounding localities, and other stakeholders that the JLUS process fosters doesn’t end with the completion of the study. As stated in the JBLE JLUS, “if the recommendations [of the JLUS] remain as words in a report, the intent of the study is not accomplished. Through actual implementation, the community and the military are able to fulfill the goal of the JLUS and work together to create a thriving community while maintaining support for the mission of the Installation.” It is important that York County actively participate in the implementation of JLUS recommendations that are applicable to the area within its jurisdiction.

2. Participate with local military bases in collaborative land use planning efforts.

Private development located around military installations is affected by and can have an effect on military operations. On a micro, project-based level, this is achieved through consultation between the County and the installation about specific development proposals within the influence area of a military base, in accordance with Section 15.2-2204.D of the Code of Virginia. On a macro level, it can be achieved through the development of comprehensive, coordinated planning studies. Examples include the previously mentioned Joint Land Use Studies and the Langley Air Installation Compatible Use Zone (AICUZ) Study. In recent years, the possibility of administering a JLUS for the Naval Weapons Station-Cheatham Annex Military Influence Area has been discussed.

