

## CHAPTER 2: IDENTIFYING LAND USE STRATEGIES



Norfolk encompasses approximately 53 square miles of land and 13 square miles of water. Residential uses are predominant at 41.4%, followed by military uses (15.6%), open space and recreation uses (10.7%), and utility and transportation uses (8.1%). Table LU-1 illustrates the existing land use pattern, as of July 2009, for the vast majority of the 53 square miles of land. The remaining land that is not addressed in the table is primarily city-owned right-of-way.



**TABLE LU-1**  
**EXISTING LAND USE – CITYWIDE BY CATEGORY**

Source: 2009 City Assessor Download (not including water) – Refined to July 31, 2009

Category	Acres	% Total
Low Density Residential	9,171	32.8%
Medium Density Residential	1,067	3.8%
High Density Residential	1,336	4.8%
Commercial/Office	2,239	8.0%
Industrial	1,681	6.0%
Mixed Use	36	0.1%
Institutional	1,941	7.0%
Open Space/Recreation	2,986	10.7%
Utility/Transportation	2,259	8.1%
Military	4,367	15.6%
Vacant	863	3.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>27,946</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Norfolk is a mature, developed city. Of Norfolk’s nearly 28,000 acres of land, only 3.1% is vacant. Given that the amount of land is finite, new development in Norfolk is either the result of redevelopment or infill.

Residential development trends point to a resurgence of the housing market in Norfolk, specifically as it relates to multifamily housing. Table LU-2 illustrates that since 1992 almost 9,000 new housing units have been permitted in the City. Coupled with this new construction have been a significant number of demolitions, resulting in the net addition of 1,445 housing units since 1992. While the number of housing units demolished each year has generally remained stable during this period, there has been a marked increase in the number of new units built since 2001, moving the City from a net loss of housing units each year to a net gain.



**TABLE LU-2**  
**RESIDENTIAL BUILDING PERMITS ISSUED – 1992-2011**

Source: City of Norfolk Building Permit Data

Year	Total New	Demolished	Net New
1992	229	496	-267
1993	227	307	-80
1994	278	443	-165
1995	386	496	-110
1996	214	238	-24
1997	187	500	-313
1998	329	553	-224
1999	229	465	-236
2000	301	836	-535
2001	403	357	46
2002	662	303	359
2003	748	359	389
2004	770	1,006	-236
2005	1,273	241	1,032
2006	762	310	452
2007	350	360	-10
2008	1,046	135	911
2009	588	132	456
2010	305	113	192
2011	600	262	338
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,887</b>	<b>7,912</b>	<b>1,975</b>
<b>Average/Year</b>	<b>494</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>99</b>

The composition of the City’s residential market has also been changing as a result of recent development. Between 1992 and 2011, 42.1% of the building permits were for single-family detached units, far less than current composition of the housing stock (79.2% low density). This shift away from single-family detached housing illustrates Norfolk’s increasing market strength in the area of urban living, which is unique in the region and may represent a shift away from the suburbanization that the region has experienced over the past several decades.



Trends in the non-residential market are harder to identify from available building permit data, which indicate a steady rate of construction in terms of permits issued, but a significant amount of variability in terms of the value of construction. For example, non-residential building permits totaled approximately \$53 million in 1999 and jumped to \$138 million in 2000 due to an \$80 million expansion at Norfolk International Airport.



### KEY ISSUES

Based on existing conditions and trends, following are the key issues involving land use in Norfolk:

1. Complementing Norfolk's existing built and natural environment or facilitating land use change in specific areas.

### IMPORTANT LINKAGES

The goals, outcomes, and actions outlined in this chapter are linked to goals, outcomes, and actions found in the following chapters:

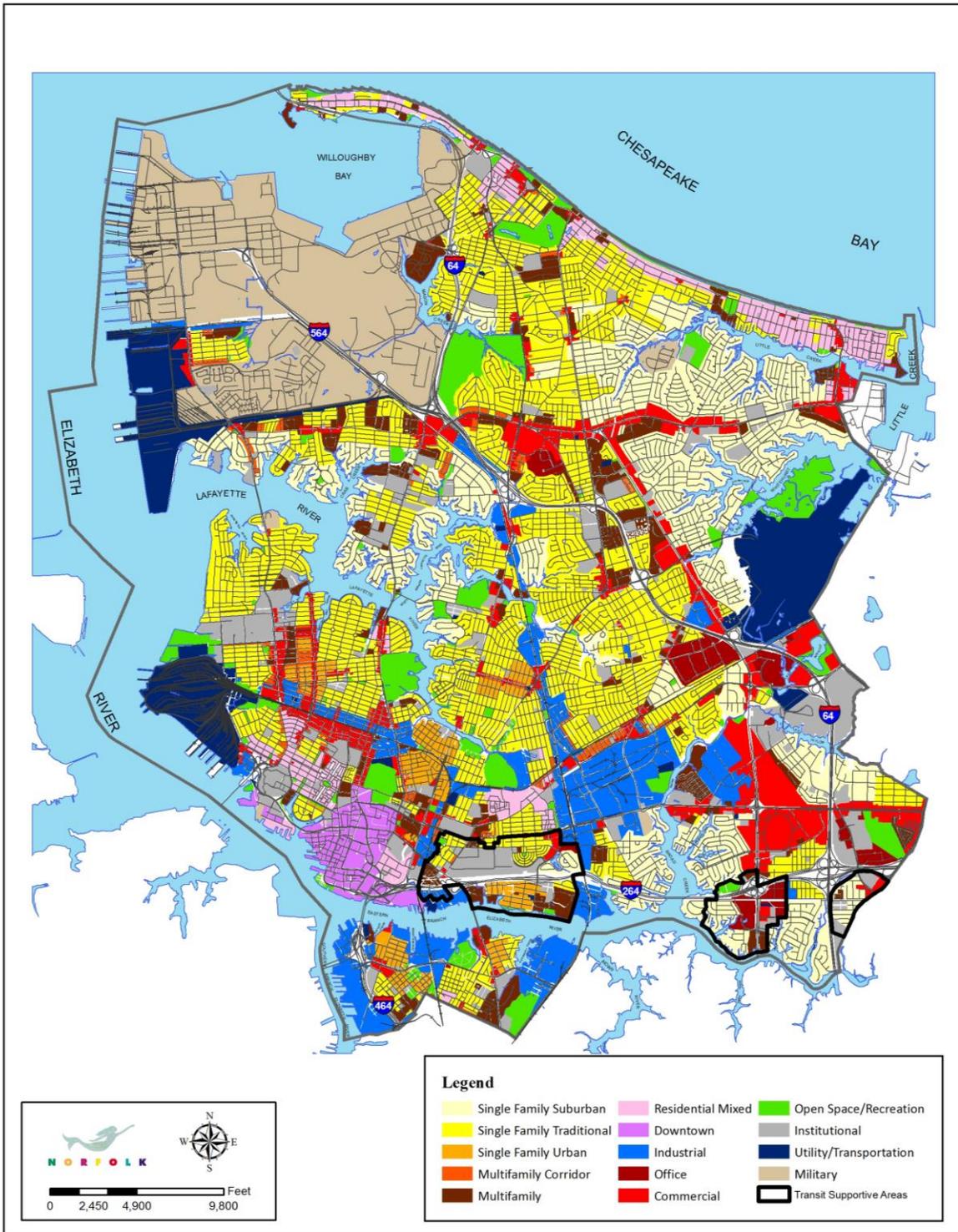
- Creating and Maintaining Healthy and Vibrant Neighborhoods
- Enhancing Economic Vitality
- Promoting Environmental Sustainability

**Land Use Goal 1. Ensure that the type and quality of land uses will complement or enhance the community's physical characteristics.**

**Outcome LU1.1. Future land use map and categories that respect neighborhood characteristics and meet the demand for each type of use.**

Action LU1.1.1. Use the Future Land Use Map, in conjunction with the text, to guide the location and character of development (see Map LU-1).

### MAP LU-1. FUTURE LAND USE MAP

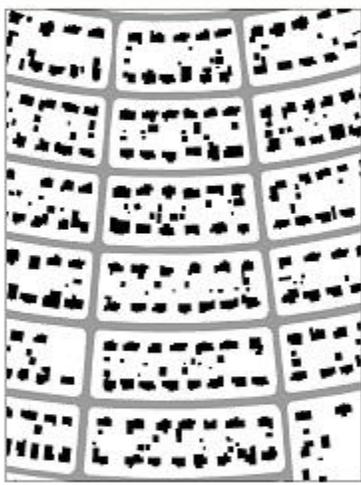


Action LU1.1.2. Implement residential land use categories that reflect existing successful neighborhood patterns with regard to lot width, structure type, setback, and vehicular use areas. The residential land use classifications are:

Land Use Classification	Description
Single Family Suburban	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Single family detached development characterized by houses set back further from the street, front-loaded driveways and garages, and a curvilinear street pattern with the general absence of on-street parking, curbs, and sidewalks.</li> <li>○ Lot widths of 70 feet or more and larger lot sizes (lots that are approximately 7,500 square feet or more).</li> </ul>
Single Family Traditional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Single family detached development characterized by houses set back a moderate distance from the street, driveways leading to rear garages, and streets typically in a grid pattern with sidewalks and on-street parking.</li> <li>○ Lot widths ranging from approximately 50 to 70 feet and lots ranging from approximately 4,000 to 7,500 square feet.</li> </ul>
Single Family Urban	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Older, predominantly single family detached development characterized by older homes, with minimal setbacks from the street, few driveways and garages, and streets typically in a grid pattern with sidewalks and on-street parking.</li> <li>○ Lot widths of less than 50 feet and lots smaller than 5,000 square feet.</li> </ul>



### Single Family Suburban



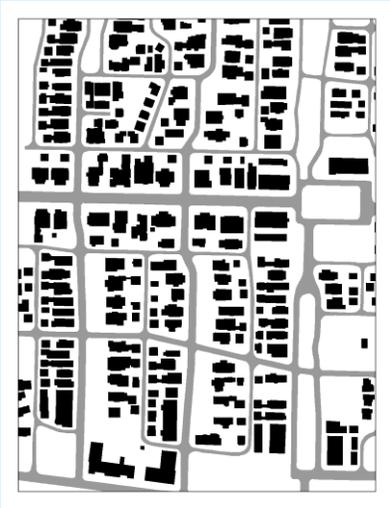
### Single Family Traditional



### Single Family Urban



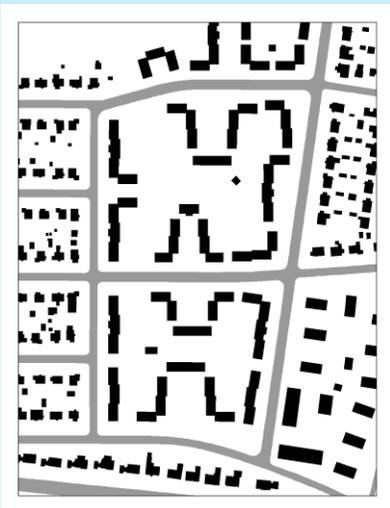
Land Use Classification	Description
Residential Mixed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Residential areas with a greater variety of housing types than generally found in other residential land use categories.</li> <li>○ Typically developed as walkable neighborhoods with interconnected streets and sidewalks and buildings that are similar in scale, no matter what the use.</li> </ul>
Multifamily Corridor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Typically duplexes, townhomes, and smaller apartment and condominium structures that are no more than one story taller than surrounding uses, or a maximum of four stories tall, with minimal setbacks from the street, and limited parking located to the rear or side.</li> <li>○ Often located at the edges of single family neighborhoods that can provide a variety of housing options and potentially serve as a buffer to more intense uses.</li> </ul>
Multifamily	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Typically townhome, apartment, or condominium complexes with designated parking areas and common open space, and with vehicular entrances and exits.</li> <li>○ Developed as stand-alone communities that can provide a variety of housing options, and located in close proximity to employment centers, transit options, or other lifestyle and site amenities.</li> </ul>



### Residential Mixed



### Multifamily Corridor



### Multifamily



Action LU1.1.3. Implement non-residential land use categories to meet market demand while recognizing the importance of accessibility, infrastructure capacity, and the relationship in scale and use to the neighborhood. The non-residential land use classifications are:

Land Use Classification	Description
Commercial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Broad range of retail sales and services, as well as hotels and offices, typically located along arterial roadways, near transit hubs, or in neighborhood-serving nodes.</li> <li>○ May include residential uses, typically located above the ground floor in a mixed use development.</li> </ul>
Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A variety of office-type uses, such as realtors and attorneys, often developed as complexes along arterial roadways or near transit hubs, with internal street networks and amenities, or as a buffer between lower intensity residential uses and more intense uses.</li> <li>○ This category may also include accessory services such as retail sales and services and daycare facilities.</li> </ul>
Downtown	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ High-intensity blend of residential, retail sales and services, hotel, office, institutional, and civic uses supporting a pedestrian-oriented environment.</li> </ul>
Industrial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Wide variety of manufacturing, warehousing, distribution, and office-warehouse uses, including flex space. Typically these are more intense land uses and require a buffer when located adjacent to a less intense use.</li> <li>○ Accessory services such as office or retail sales and services may be appropriate in this category.</li> </ul>
Utility/ Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Utility providers, such as water, sewer, and electric, or providers linked to the transportation of goods. The ports, airport, and water distribution facilities are examples of land uses found in this category. Typically these are more intense land uses and require a buffer when located adjacent to a less intense use.</li> </ul>
Institutional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Public and private schools and their surrounding recreation fields, universities and colleges,</li> </ul>

Land Use Classification	Description
	<p>medical centers, public facilities, and religious institutions located on sites of at least one acre.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Accessory services, such as office, housing, and retail sales and services, related to the function of the institutional use may be appropriate in this category.</li> </ul>
Military	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Defense related uses on property owned by the U.S. Government or the Commonwealth of Virginia. Uses are varied, potentially including all other land use categories.</li> </ul>
Open Space/ Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Passive and active parks, playing fields, recreation centers, environmentally sensitive land, and cemeteries that are at least one acre in size. Playing fields and recreation centers associated with education facilities are classified as “Institutional.”</li> </ul>

Action LU1.1.4. Support mixed use development in appropriate locations in Residential Mixed, Multifamily Corridor, Multifamily, Commercial, and Office designated areas provided that it includes a combination of two or more land uses, at least one of which is residential and the other is non-residential, it includes the use depicted on the Future Land Use Map as part of the mixed use development, and it includes complementary uses.

*Comments: Mixed use development provides a variety of benefits including the creation of a vibrant sense of place and community, with areas that are active throughout the day. Mixed use development can provide housing options for a diversity of household types, often including higher density housing, such as apartments and townhouses. Mixed use developments provide a variety of services and activities within a walkable distance of housing, allowing residents to conduct more of their daily activities without depending on automobiles, and in many instances can provide increased travel options.*



Action LU1.1.5. Support the development of uses in Transit Supportive Areas (areas surrounding selected rail stations) that create opportunities for a mix of employment and residential activity that promotes transit, bicycle, and pedestrian activity, while discouraging low intensity auto-oriented uses (see Map LU-1).

Action LU1.1.6. Utilize a series of Character Districts (see Map LU-2) to establish differing development standards based on the existing predominant development character in an area. The Character Districts are as follows:

<p><b>Downtown</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Downtown areas developed first with a broad range of higher-intensity uses, limited on-site parking, common open and green space, and widespread pedestrian and transit accessibility.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Traditional</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Areas primarily developed in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, with a grid pattern of streets, smaller lots, and a variety of uses located in proximity to one another.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Suburban</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Suburban areas developed after WWII with more curvilinear streets, larger blocks and lot sizes, and a greater separation of uses.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Coastal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Areas along the Chesapeake Bay developed in a linear fashion centered on Ocean View Avenue, broken up by a repeating pattern of north-south streets leading to beach accesses, and developed with an eclectic mix of housing types interspersed with neighborhood-scale commercial uses.</li> </ul>



### Downtown Character District



### Traditional Character District



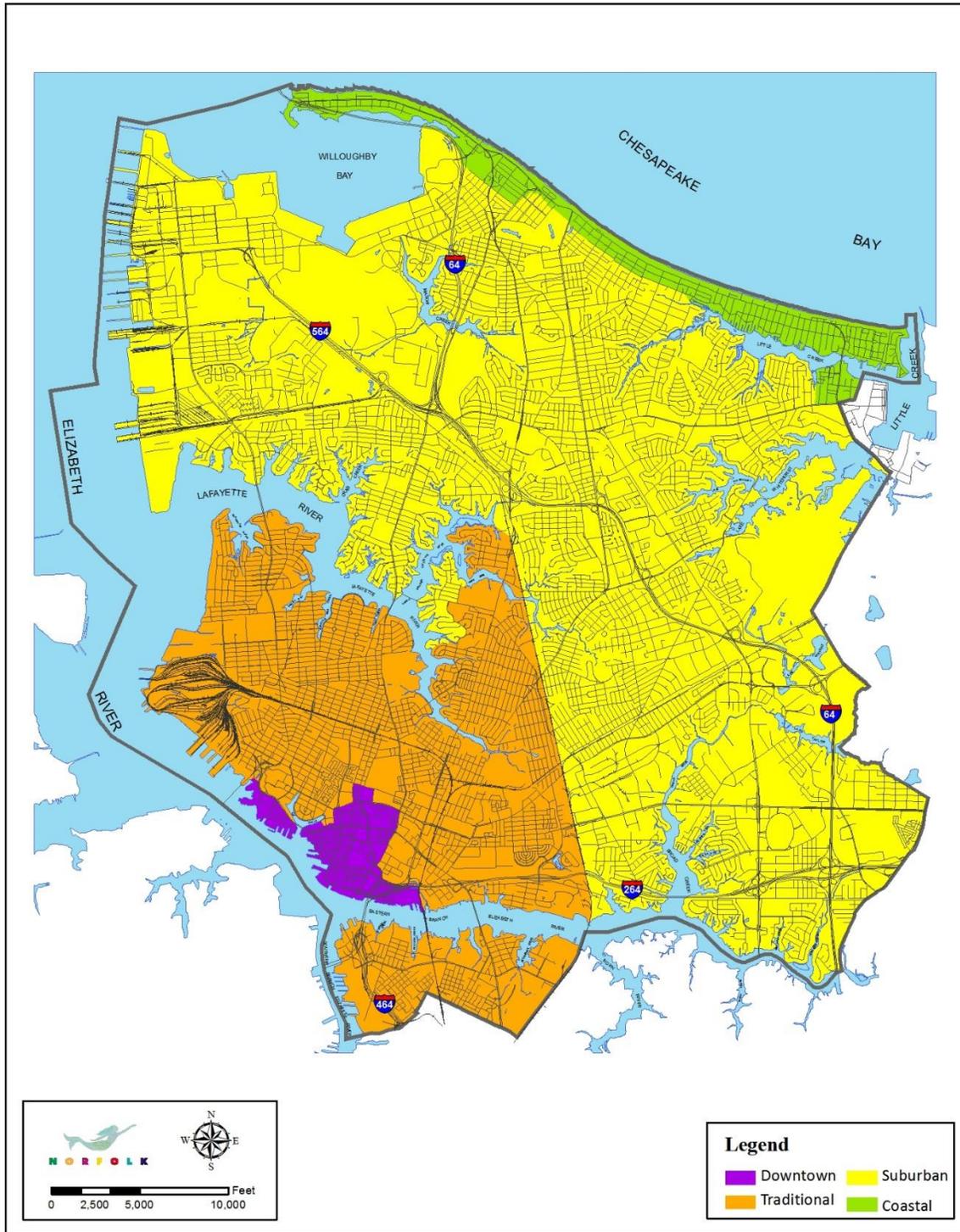
### Suburban Character District



### Coastal Character District



MAP LU-2. CHARACTER DISTRICTS



Action LU1.1.7. Evaluate any potential changes in land use classification to Multifamily or Multifamily Corridor residential using the following criteria:

**Multifamily**

- Sites to be identified as Multifamily must meet the following requirements:
  - The site is either within ¼ mile of an arterial road, is within ¼ mile of an existing bus route, or is within a Transit Supportive Area (see Map LU-1).
  - The site is currently developed with multifamily housing or is adjacent to a Multifamily, Multifamily Corridor, Mixed Residential, Downtown, Industrial, Office, or Commercial designation on the Future Land Use Map (see Map LU-1).
  - The site can accommodate the open space, parking, buffering, and stormwater facilities as required by the Zoning Ordinance.

**Multifamily Corridor**

- Sites to be identified as Multifamily Corridor must meet the following requirements:
  - The site is either located on an arterial or collector road or is within a Transit Supportive Area (see Map LU-1).
  - The site is currently developed with multifamily housing, or can serve as a buffer between less intense single family neighborhoods and other more intense uses including multifamily, industrial, office, and commercial (see Map LU-1).
  - The site can accommodate the open space, parking, buffering, and stormwater facilities as required by the Zoning Ordinance.

Action LU1.1.8. Ensure that new multifamily housing is designed to meet the following criteria:

- Building height, placement, and massing that is consistent with surrounding development.
- Appropriately sized and sited open space.
- Appropriately sized, sited, and located parking.
- Landscaping.
- Buffers.
- Access points and sidewalks.

Action LU1.1.9. Encourage the creation of new exclusively-commercial locations in nodes at the intersections of roads rather than at isolated mid-block locations.

Action LU1.1.10. Identify potential areas for transition or intensification of land use (see Enhancing Economic Vitality chapter).

Action LU1.1.11. Evaluate reuse options for city-owned facilities that are planned for closure.

Action LU1.1.12. Apply the standards of an Urban Development Area (UDA), as defined by the Code of Virginia § 15.2-2223.1, to development, including infrastructure, in the Downtown character district and in Transit Supportive Areas.

*Comments: The Commonwealth of Virginia defines UDAs as areas that are appropriate for higher density development due to proximity to transportation facilities or other infrastructure and suitable for redevelopment or infill development. UDAs are to be developed in accordance with the principles of traditional neighborhood design.*

Action LU1.1.13. Ensure that new development in the Traditional and Coastal Character Districts fits with the predominant development character in those areas by incorporating more strict form standards into the Zoning Ordinance.

Action LU1.1.14. Develop pattern books to clearly establish the appropriate development form and style for all new development in the Traditional and Coastal Character Districts, and for new commercial and multifamily development in the Suburban Character District.

**Outcome LU1.2. Development regulations and practices that support a quality built and natural environment.**

Metrics:

- *Change in linear feet of unbuffered lower intensity residential land and more intense land uses.*
- *Percent of development within areas with design guideline mandates that comply with design regulations.*
- *Percent of land area within noise contours and Accident Potential Zones (APZs) that complies with Land Use Compatibility as defined in the 2005 Hampton Roads Joint Land Use Study.*
- *Percent of properties in flood zones that do not receive a variance to waive requirements related to flood protection.*



Action LU1.2.1. Develop new zoning tools reflecting best practices to address lot width, building placement, building form, landscaping, stormwater, and vehicular uses areas (driveways, parking lots, and garages) to ensure that development is compatible with surrounding land uses.

Action LU1.2.2. Develop appropriate land use transitions between lower-intensity residential areas and other more intense land uses by amending the zoning ordinance to provide appropriate vegetated buffers to ensure meaningful separation of uses or by applying slightly more intense uses adjacent to lower-intensity uses, with the transition occurring at the rear property lines.

Action LU1.2.3. Establish parking standards within the Character Districts (see Map LU-2) based on the most current research on parking by the Institute of Traffic Engineers, and other professionally-recognized organizations.

Action LU1.2.4. Update zoning regulations to ensure the adequate provision of open space in multifamily residential and planned development districts.

Action LU1.2.5. Revise zoning regulations, developing new commercial categories and appropriate regulations that better reflect the current function of commercial areas as neighborhood-serving, community-serving, or region-serving.



Action LU1.2.6. Encourage the use of design guidelines wherever possible to ensure compatible development.

*Comments: Design guidelines are legally required in locally designated historic districts, Pedestrian Commercial Overlay districts, and City and Norfolk and Redevelopment Authority (NRHA) owned property, including encroachments.*

Action LU1.2.7. Ensure that all new development in designated flood-prone areas complies with the city's flood protection regulations (see the Promoting Environmental Sustainability chapter).

Action LU1.2.8. Evaluate the impact of potential sea level rise when reviewing development proposals and future changes to development regulations (see the Promoting Environmental Sustainability and Fostering Responsible Regional Cooperation chapters).

*Comments: Several research and technical assistance resources related to sea level rise are available, including those provided by Old Dominion University and the Virginia Institute of Marine Science.*

Action LU1.2.9. Continue enforcement of the Airport Safety Zone Overlay District, restricting heights in designated areas.

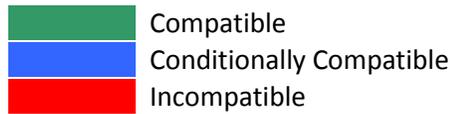
Action LU1.2.10. Ensure that zoning regulations reflect noise zones and accident potential zones (APZs) so that residents are aware of the impact of airport regulations on land use (see Map LU-3).

*Comments: Land uses around airports (Norfolk International Airport and Chambers Field) are potentially impacted by noise and APZs. The City is continuing to work with the Navy on issues relating to the natural and built environment around Naval Air Station Norfolk. Table LU-3 shows the Navy's recommendations for land use in noise zones and APZs.*

**TABLE LU-3**  
**LAND USE COMPATIBILITY WITHIN NOISE AND ACCIDENT POTENTIAL ZONES**

Source: Hampton Roads Joint Land Use Study 2005

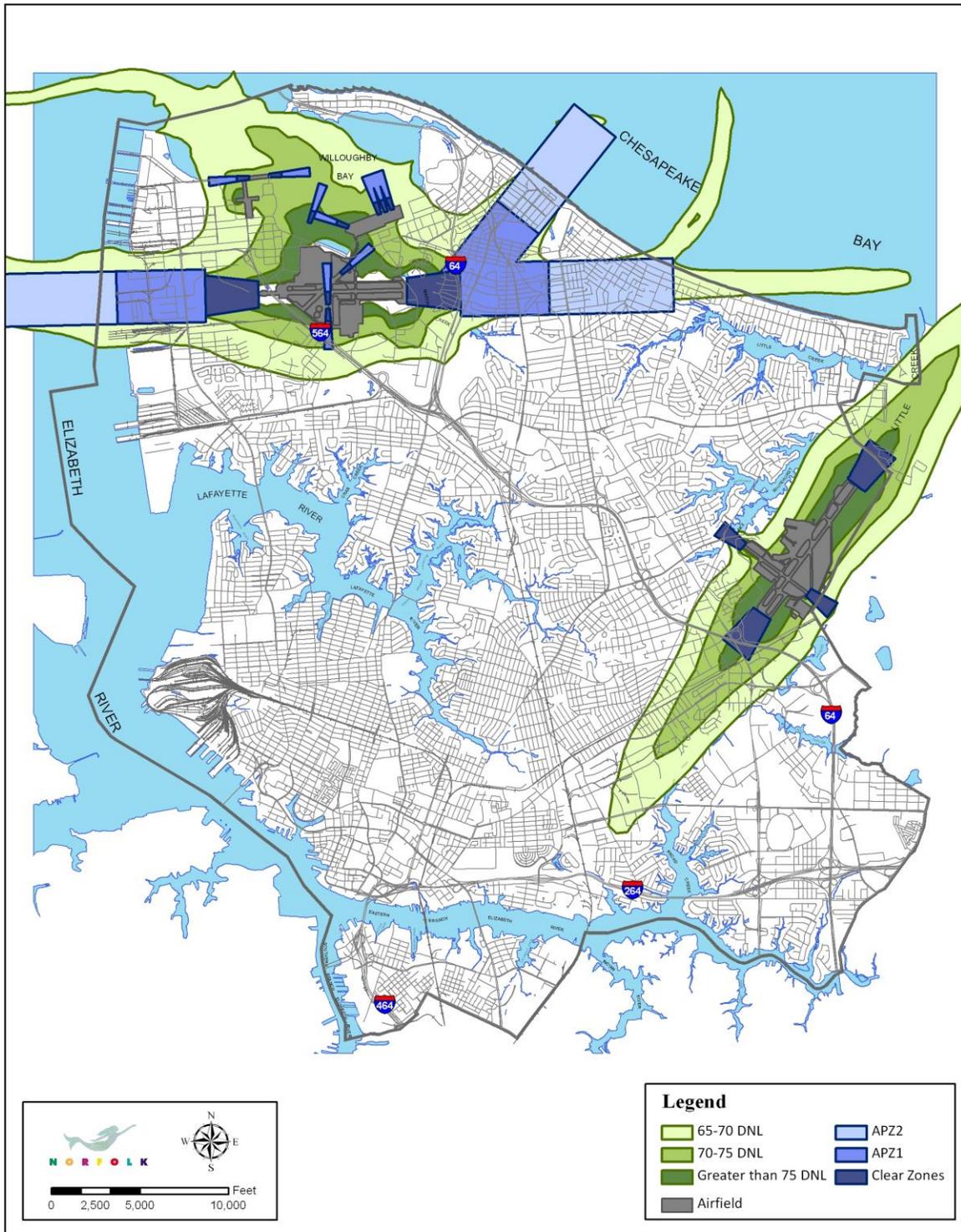
Land Use	Noise Zones				Accident Potential Zones		
	Less than 65 DNL	65-70 DNL	70-75 DNL	Greater than 75 DNL	Clear Zone	APZ 1	APZ 2
Outdoor Amphitheaters	Incompatible	Incompatible	Incompatible	Incompatible	Incompatible	Incompatible	Incompatible
Residential	Compatible	Incompatible	Incompatible	Incompatible	Incompatible	Incompatible	Conditionally Compatible
Transient Lodging	Compatible	Incompatible	Incompatible	Incompatible	Incompatible	Incompatible	Incompatible
Churches, Schools	Compatible	Conditionally Compatible	Conditionally Compatible	Incompatible	Incompatible	Incompatible	Incompatible
Commercial, Retail, Services	Compatible	Compatible	Conditionally Compatible	Conditionally Compatible	Incompatible	Incompatible	Conditionally Compatible
Wholesale, Manufacturing	Compatible	Compatible	Conditionally Compatible	Conditionally Compatible	Incompatible	Conditionally Compatible	Conditionally Compatible
Public Rights-of-way	Compatible	Compatible	Compatible	Compatible	Compatible	Compatible	Compatible



Action LU1.2.11. Do not support any proposed increase in intensity of uses located in incompatible noise and accident potential zones (see Map LU-3) and seek opportunities to reduce the intensity of those incompatible uses.

Action LU1.2.12. Coordinate land use planning with institutions, including the military, colleges and universities, and medical institutions, to ensure compatibility with surrounding neighborhoods.

MAP LU-3. NOISE AND ACCIDENT POTENTIAL ZONES



Action LU1.2.13. Enhance buffering, landscaping, and parking standards for newly established automobile sales and repair establishments.

Action LU1.2.14. Work to bring existing automobile sales or repair establishments into compliance with applicable codes, with an emphasis on buffering, landscaping, and parking.

*Comments: Norfolk has a significant number of “grandfathered” automobile sales or repair establishments. When these establishments want to expand or otherwise change their operations, they must obtain a special exception.*

Action LU1.2.15. Ensure that the design and scale of public utility structures are in keeping with the surrounding uses and that the placement minimizes physical or visual obstructions and avoids environmentally sensitive areas.

Action LU1.2.16. Develop design guidelines for public utility structures.

Action LU1.2.17. Work to ensure that building codes continue to provide adequate protection from potential hazards.

