CHAPTER 8: SUPPORTING LIFELONG LEARNING

A vibrant city provides its residents, from birth through retirement and beyond, with opportunities to continue to develop their skills and interests. Lifelong learning opportunities are offered by Norfolk's schools, both public and private, community colleges, universities and trade schools, workforce and vocational training centers, libraries, recreation centers, and other providers.

NORFOLK PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Norfolk Public Schools (NPS) is overseen by the Norfolk School Board, an independent board funded by the City but ultimately responsible for its own budget. NPS operates more than 50 facilities (see Map LL-1), with almost 5.2 million square feet of educational space.

More than 34,000 students are enrolled in grades pre-kindergarten through 12 at NPS facilities, with additional students enrolled in private schools. Public school enrollment has been declining since 1998 and it is projected to continue to decline, though that decline is not anticipated to impact all grade levels equally. According to a 2007 facilities study, utilization of NPS facilities – calculated by comparing actual and projected enrollments to functional building capacity – is expected to rise over the next decade at elementary schools while declining at the middle and high school level. Table LL-1 illustrates the current and projected utilization rates for each category of public school as well as the total utilization rate for NPS. It also lists the utilization rate of the school with the lowest and highest rates in each category.

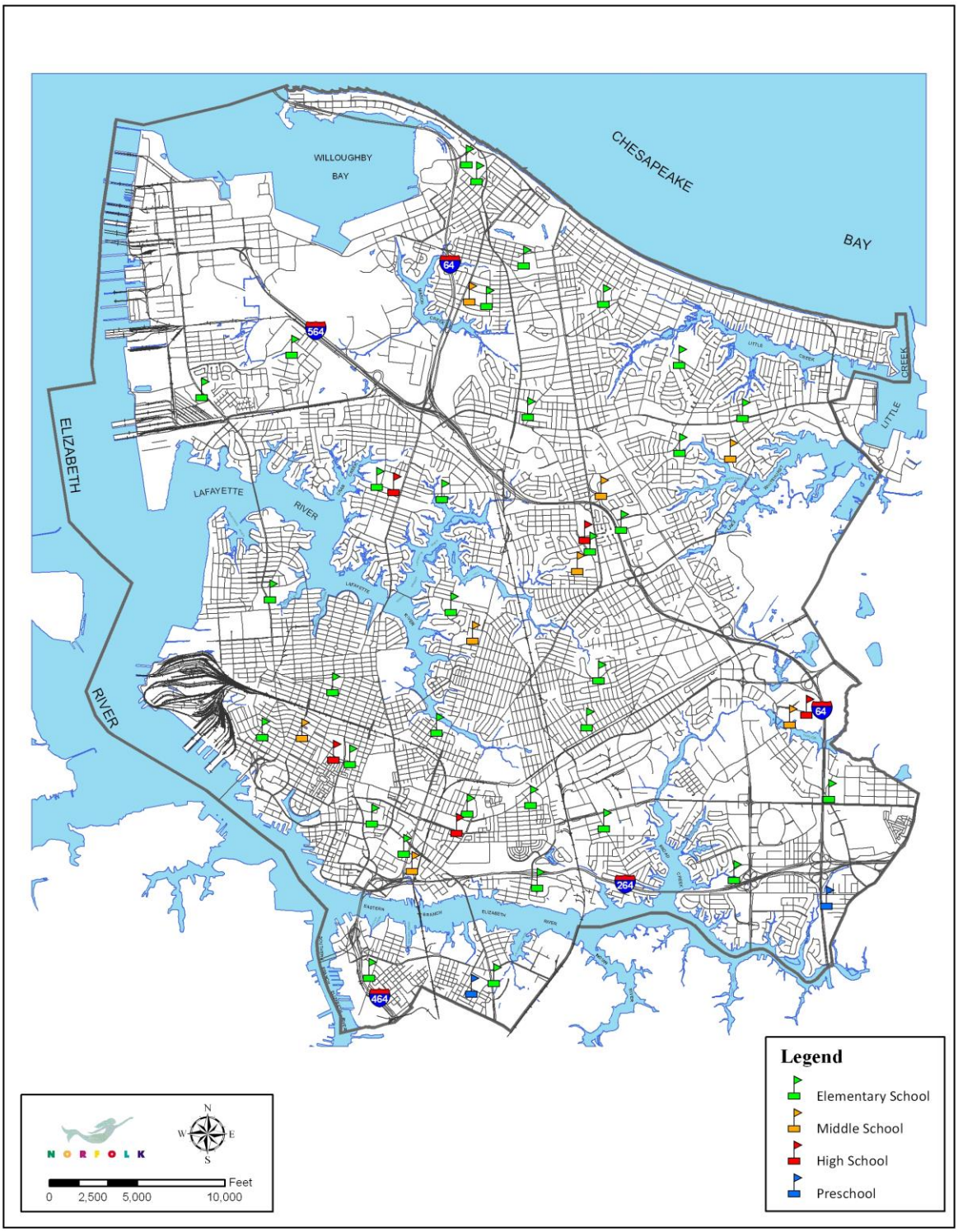
TABLE LL-1
NORFOLK PUBLIC SCHOOLS – CURRENT AND PROJECTED UTILIZATION
Source: Virginia Department of Education, Norfolk Public Schools

Utilization Percentage Per Facility*	Preschool Utilization		Elementary School Utilization**		Middle School Utilization		High School Utilization		Total Utilization	
	2008 -2009	2016 -2017	2008 -2009	2016 -2017	2008 -2009	2016 -2017	2008 -2009	2016 -2017	2008 -2009	2016 -2017
Lowest Utilization	27%	71%	67%	79%	50%	51%	107%	81%	27%	51%
Highest Utilization	42%	80%	131%	145%	107%	108%	126%	99%	131%	145%
Average Utilization	35%	76%	94%	105%	89%	85%	117%	93%	96%	97%

* - Assumes a 90% utilization factor at the elementary school level and a 75% utilization factor at the middle school and high school level, calculated by multiplying building code capacity by the appropriate utilization factor to arrive at a more realistic functional capacity

** - Includes pre-kindergarten students at all facilities and grade 6-8 students at Ghent School

MAP LL-1. PUBLIC SCHOOLS



Many NPS facilities are in need of renovation or replacement as a result of their age, as well as evolving educational models; the oldest school in the system dates to 1910. Flexibility and energy efficiency have become key considerations for new and updated facilities. To address these issues, NPS has examined the expansion of models such as the K-8 school model, where students from kindergarten through 8th grade are taught in the same facility, a model currently applied at Ghent School.

In addition to the public education system, Norfolk residents also have access to many private K-12 schools located within the City. There are also several public and private institutions of higher learning located within the City, including Old Dominion University, Norfolk State University, the Norfolk Campus of Tidewater Community College, and Eastern Virginia Medical School. The private Virginia Wesleyan College is partially located in Norfolk. Several other institutions of higher learning are also located in the City.

PRIVATE SCHOOLS AND HOME-SCHOOLING

Norfolk is served by numerous private schools enrolling students of all ages. Many of these schools are operated by faith-based organizations, while others are secular in nature. Additional private schools, located in surrounding cities, also educate children living in Norfolk. Norfolk is also home to many children who are home schooled. Consistent with national trends, the number of home schooled students residing in Norfolk has increased over the last decade, with approximately 500 Norfolk home schooled students.

HIGHER EDUCATION

Norfolk is home to two state universities, Old Dominion University and Norfolk State University, the Eastern Virginia Medical School, the private Virginia Wesleyan College, and the Norfolk Campus of Tidewater Community College (see Map LL-2). Situated on a 185-acre main campus located on the City's west end, Old Dominion has grown to become the largest University in the region, with an enrollment of 24,446. Norfolk

State, founded as the Norfolk unit of Virginia Union University in 1935, has grown to be one of the largest predominantly black institutions in the nation. Located on a 134-acre campus located just east of Downtown Norfolk, NSU has a fall 2012 enrollment of 7,100. Eastern Virginia Medical School, a part of the larger Eastern Virginia Medical Center complex, is one of four medical schools in Virginia. The product of a grassroots effort to create a medical school in Hampton Roads, EVMS was established in 1973 and has a current enrollment of approximately 900 students. Tidewater Community College, the largest provider of higher education in Hampton Roads, has four campuses in the region, including one located in Downtown Norfolk. The Norfolk Campus, opened in 1997, enrolls a significant portion of TCC's 46,000 students.

Private colleges in the City include Virginia Wesleyan College, located on the border between Norfolk and Virginia Beach, as well as several other smaller institutions. Chartered in 1961 with support of the United Methodist Church, Virginia Wesleyan enrolls 1,287 students. Other private colleges include campuses of Centura College, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, Fortis College, ITT Technical Institute, Saint Leo University, and Troy University.

Continuing Education

In addition to the opportunities presented by the full range of educational institutions, lifelong learning opportunities are available throughout the community. Enrichment, education and jobs skills programs and classes are provided at libraries and recreation centers, the workforce development center, and by numerous community partners. In addition, programming aimed at increasing self-sufficiency is provided by the Department of Human Services and NRHA, as well as other community partners.

Key Issues

Based upon existing conditions and trends, the following are the key issues for Norfolk related to lifelong learning:

1. Maintaining safe and effective school facilities.
2. Investing in lifelong learning to promote economic vitality.
3. Improving economic competitiveness through the enhancement of regional cooperation, especially related to education and transportation.

Important Linkages

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

- Enhancing Economic Vitality
- Delivering Quality Community Services
- Enjoying Daily Life
- Fostering Responsible Regional Cooperation

MAP LL-2. COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Lifelong Learning Goal 1. Provide learning opportunities that are responsive to the changing needs of Norfolk's population.

Outcome LL1.1. Efficient public schools, appropriately sized to meet the needs of the school-aged population.

Metrics:

- *Change in the percent of public schools with a utilization rate between 80% and 120%.*

Action LL1.1.1. Continue to regularly evaluate the utilization of existing public school facilities to determine the need for adjustments to attendance zones or for the construction, renovation, or closure of facilities.

Action LL1.1.2. Locate new school facilities on sites that are accessible to the population being served and on sites that can increase efficiency by accommodating multiple public uses, while also serving as community and neighborhood focal points (see Delivering Quality Community Services chapter).

Action LL1.1.3. Respond to socioeconomic needs and shifts in public school enrollment through innovative techniques, such as the use of the K-8 school model.

Action LL1.1.4. Ensure that outdoor recreational facilities that share sites with public schools are open and accessible to residents outside school hours (see Enjoying Daily Life chapter).

Outcome LL1.2. Children who are prepared for success in school.

Metrics:

- *Change in reading level of third grade students.*
- *Percent of children ready for kindergarten.*

Action LL1.2.1. Identify and monitor programs to improve the quality of learning within daycare centers.

Action LL1.2.2. Continue to implement programs designed to improve readiness for school such as Implement programs designed to improve readiness for school such as Norfolk Ready By 5 and After the Bell.

Action LL1.2.3. Increase access to libraries, recreation centers, and other community facilities to better utilize programs such as early childhood literacy and after school care (see Enjoying Daily Life chapter).

Action LL1.2.4. Increase the number and accessibility of high quality child care homes and centers by removing regulatory barriers.

Action LL1.2.5. Connect families with early intervention and support services by implementing a universal newborn screening and referral system.

Action LL1.2.6. Develop a focused outreach effort in the community and education settings to increase awareness of the importance of early childhood development.

Outcome LL1.3. A well-trained, qualified workforce.

Metrics:

- *Reduction in the number of people who live in poverty.*
- *Change in high school graduation rate.*

Action LL1.3.1. Work with educational partners, both within and outside of Norfolk, including universities, colleges, and trade schools, to tailor their educational programs to the changing opportunities presented by Norfolk's economy (see Enhancing Economic Vitality and Fostering Responsible Regional Cooperation chapters).

Action LL1.3.2. Support Norfolk Public Schools in efforts to provide both college-track and trade education that is responsive to economic opportunities (see Enhancing Economic Vitality chapter).

Action LL1.3.3. Identify and provide opportunities for career training and development of Norfolk residents that can lead to jobs in Norfolk industries (see Enhancing Economic Vitality chapter).

Action LL1.3.4. Support the availability of adult basic education and GED programs.

Action LL1.3.5. Increase access to libraries, recreation centers, and other community facilities to better utilize programs aimed at increasing literacy and job readiness, and assisting with job searches (see Enjoying Daily Life chapter).

Action LL1.3.6. Identify and address the most significant barriers to employment for the underemployed, unemployed and those living in poverty.

Outcome LL1.4. Partnerships and community resources that provide opportunities for training and continuing education.

Metrics:

- *Percent change in participations in lifelong learning opportunities.*

Action LL1.4.1. Partner with the universities, colleges, medical institutions, businesses, corporate entities, and the military to provide opportunities for training and continuing education (see Enhancing Economic Vitality chapter).

Action LL1.4.2. Develop and implement a pilot program using schools as neighborhood centers to offer lifelong learning opportunities.

Action LL1.4.3. Develop a database of lifelong learning resources, building on any existing databases, to better connect residents with available opportunities.

Action LL1.4.4. Continue to work with the military, colleges and universities to develop skills and enhance job opportunities for veterans.