

CHAPTER 11: PRESERVING OUR HERITAGE



Norfolk has a long and rich history that is reflected in its architecture and cultural resources. This legacy creates a sense of place and contributes to the unique character of the City. Currently, Norfolk has four locally designated historic districts: East Freemason, Ghent, Hodges House, and West Freemason. There is one local overlay district, the Downtown Historic Overlay District (see Map H-1). There are also 14 National Register historic districts (see Map H-2). Table H-1 lists all of Norfolk’s historic districts. Table H-2 details Norfolk’s National Register Historic Districts, including the year each district was designated and the number of contributing structures in each.



TABLE H-1
HISTORIC DISTRICTS
 Source: City of Norfolk

Area	National Register Historic District	Local Historic District
Berkley North	✓	
Ballentine Place	✓	
Chesterfield Heights	✓	
Colonial Place	✓	
Downtown	✓	✓*
East Freemason	**	✓
Ghent	✓	✓
Hodges House		✓
Lafayette Residence Park	✓	
Norfolk Auto Row	✓	
North Ghent	✓	***
Park Place	✓	
Riverview	✓	
West Freemason	✓	✓
Williamston/Woodland	✓	
Winona	✓	

* - The Downtown Local Historic District is an overlay zoning district

** - The historic structures in the East Freemason Local Historic District are all individually listed on the National Register

*** - Included in the Ghent Local Historic District

TABLE H-2
NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICTS

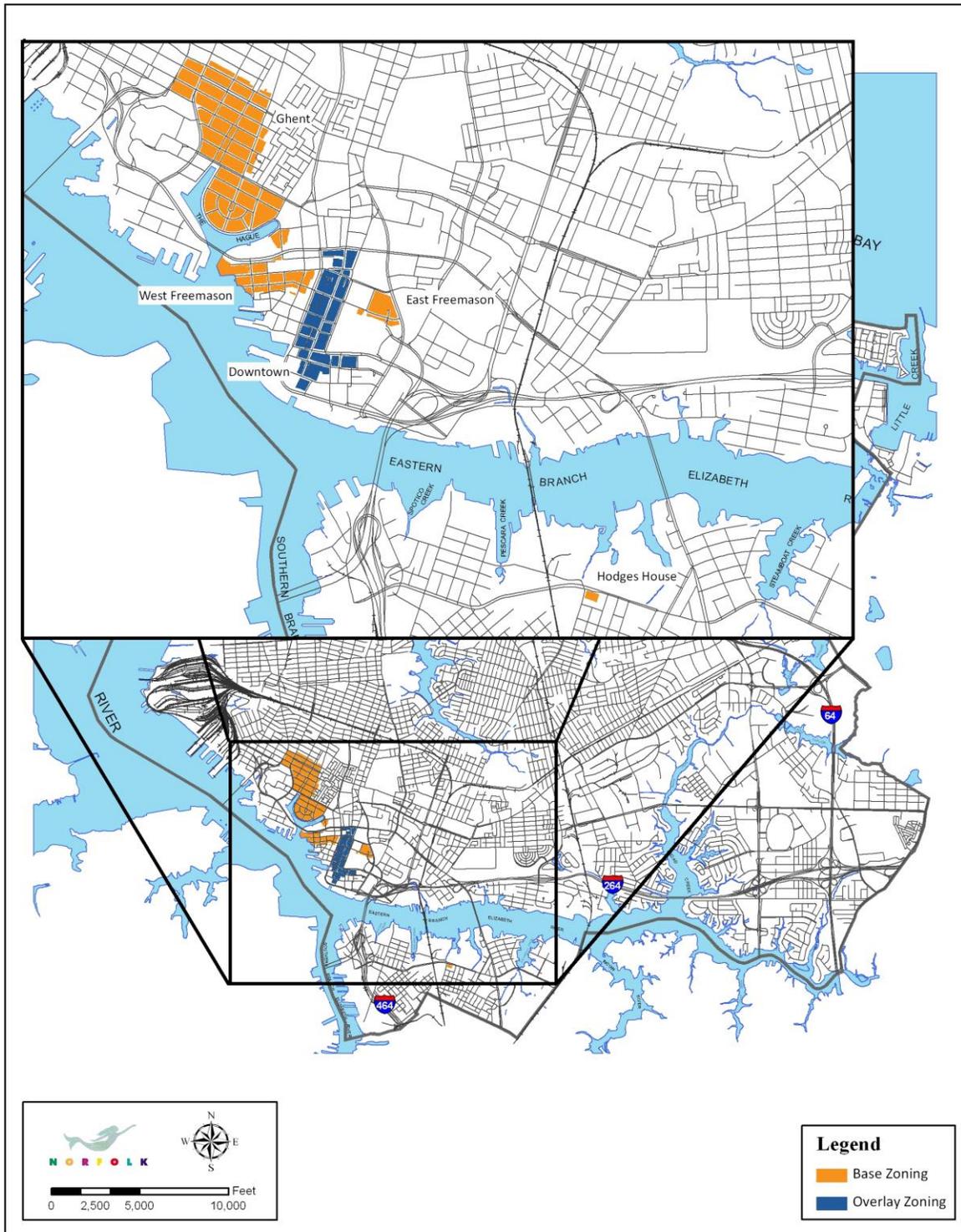
Source: City of Norfolk

Historic District	Year Designated	Contributing Structures*
Berkley North	2000	255
Ballentine Place	2003	862
Chesterfield Heights	2003	404
Colonial Place	2002	1,094
Downtown	1987 (2001)	n/a**
Ghent	1980	n/a**
Lafayette Residence Park	1998	284
Norfolk Auto Row	2014	52
North Ghent	1999	321
Park Place	2006	1,532
Riverview	1999	200
West Freemason	1972	n/a**
Williamston/Woodland	2014	38
Winona	2001	203

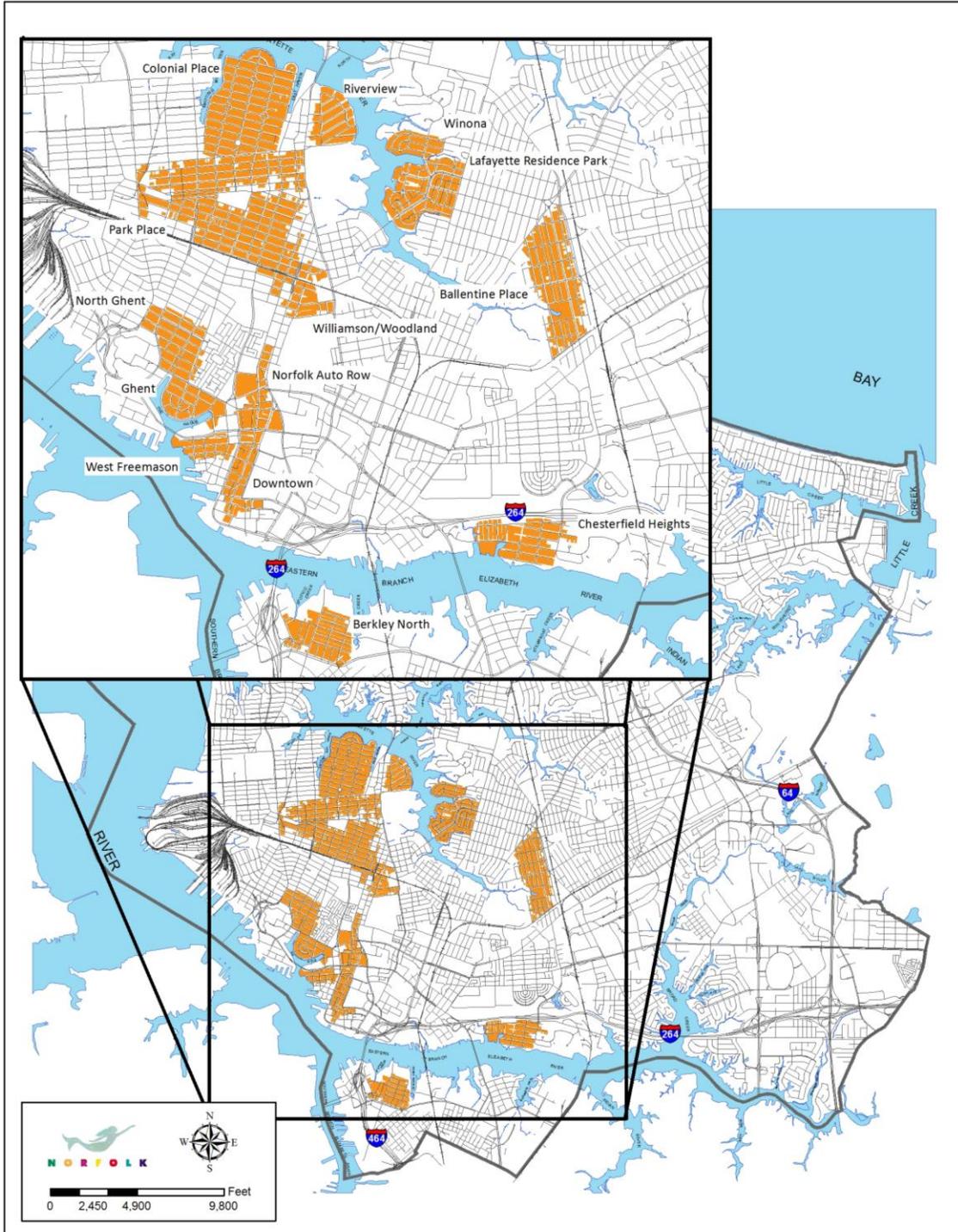
* - At the time of historic district nomination

** - Nomination forms did not include a list of contributing structures

MAP H-1. LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICTS



MAP H-2. NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICTS



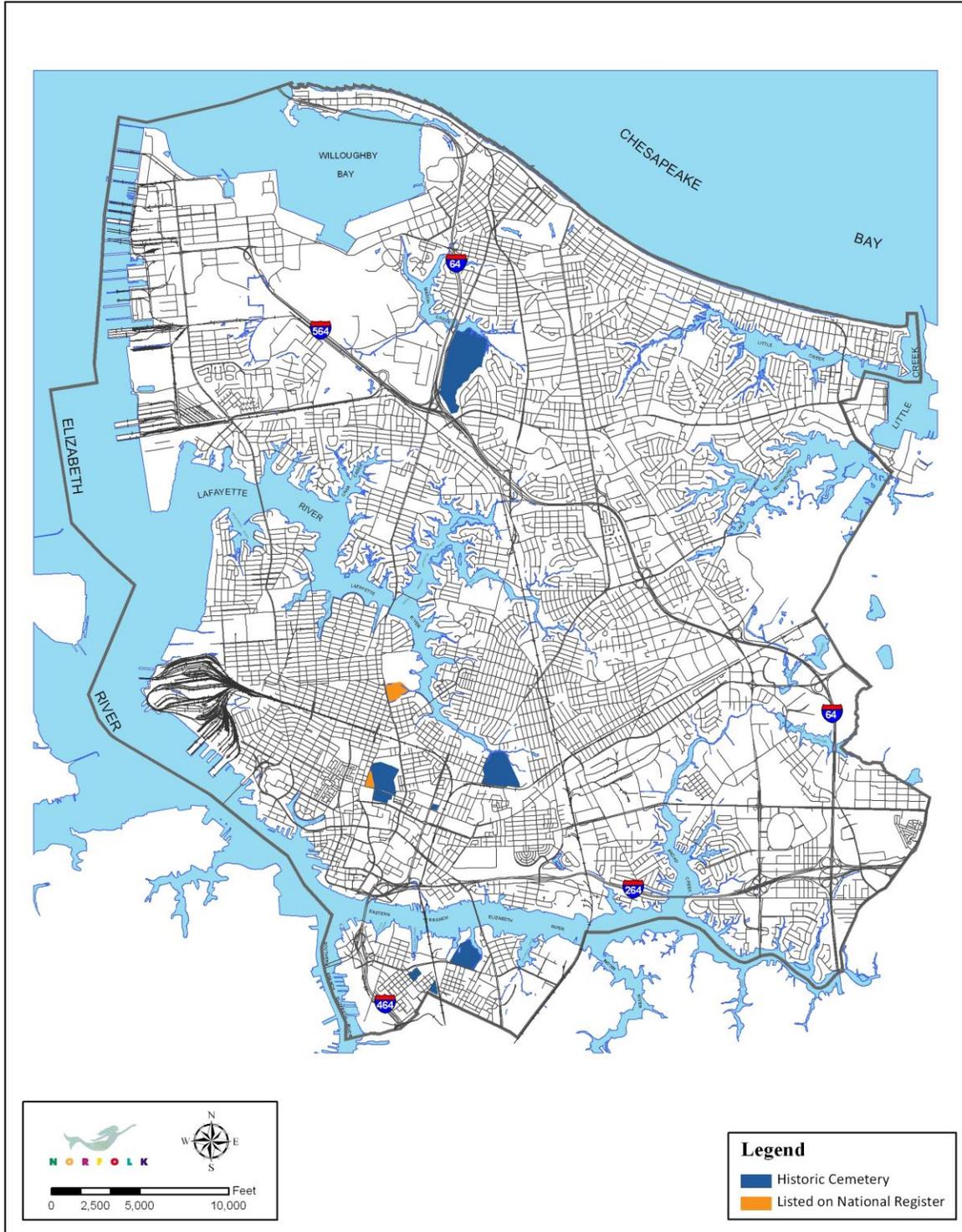
Though Norfolk boasts a fine collection of historic buildings and areas, much has been lost over the centuries due to war and natural causes, as well as the extensive urban renewal efforts that began shortly after World War II. During this time Norfolk received generous funding from the federal government and implemented sweeping redevelopment initiatives. This resulted in a loss of some of the City's material heritage. Despite these events and the lasting alteration they made to the built environment, many historic resources still remain in Norfolk. Many of these resources are near the central business district, though there are significant historic resources distributed throughout the City. Major arteries exiting Downtown, such as Monticello Avenue and Granby Street, are still lined with historic commercial and industrial buildings. North of the Ghent Historic District, there are more historic residential and commercial resources. Wartime housing and related buildings, such as Merrimac Park, are also significant, reflecting the important military influence in Norfolk. Norfolk is also home to several historic cemeteries (see Map H-3) and monuments that add to the City's historic character.



There are several other residential communities that contain historic resources, some of which may be eligible for National Register designation or placement in a local historic district. The 1992 *General Plan* identified several neighborhoods as potential locations for either National Register or local historic districts. Several neighborhoods have since been listed. The remaining neighborhoods identified are: North Ghent, West Ghent, Colonial Place, Riverview, and Lafayette/Winona. In 2009, the Historic and Architectural Preservation Committee updated this list, adding several neighborhoods that were not previously identified. These are: Algonquin Park, Ballentine Place, Berkley North, Campostella, Chesterfield Heights, Haynes Tract, Lamberts Point, Larchmont, Oakdale Farms, and Park Place.



MAP H-3. HISTORIC CEMETERIES



Together, Norfolk's historic resources provide not only an interesting environment for residents and visitors to Norfolk, but demonstrate a visual passage of time and serve as reminders of our shared heritage.



KEY ISSUES

Based on the existing conditions and trends, the following are the key issues involving preservation of Norfolk's heritage and culture:

1. Improving resident and visitor awareness of Norfolk's heritage through a variety of mediums.
2. Increasing the number of historic resources that enjoy local zoning protection and improving awareness of the benefits that those designated areas enjoy.
3. Ensuring compatible development that preserves the character of Norfolk's historic neighborhoods, respecting the size, massing, and lot placement of adjacent properties.
4. Streamlining review processes for applicants seeking to do work in local historic districts to enhance customer service and make local historic district designation more appealing to neighborhoods considering designation.

IMPORTANT LINKAGES

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

- Identifying Land Use Strategies
- Creating and Maintaining Healthy and Vibrant Neighborhoods
- Ensuring Housing Choices for All
- Delivering Quality Community Services
- Enjoying Daily Life

Heritage Goal 1. Foster a greater awareness of Norfolk’s heritage for residents and visitors.

Outcome H1.1. Increased information available to the public about Norfolk’s historic resources.

Metrics:

- *Number of communication methods utilized.*

Action H1.1.1. Utilize a variety of communications methods, ranging from printed materials, online information, and municipal television channels, to workshops and lectures, to raise awareness of Norfolk’s historic resources and inform property owners and design professionals about the need to maintain historic properties and opportunities to revitalize historic properties.

Comments: Increasing awareness of Norfolk’s historic resources and of available incentives, such as historic rehabilitation tax credits and tax abatement, could encourage property owners to rehabilitate historic structures.



Action H1.1.2. Provide information, including maps of routes between sites for walking, bicycling, or driving tours, highlighting Norfolk’s history and architecture, as defined by the Cannonball Trail, in a variety of forms such as brochures, websites, and mobile applications.

Action H1.1.3. Provide programs related to historic preservation, continuing to use those provided by the Norfolk Public Library and encouraging other City departments to develop programs celebrating Norfolk’s history.

Action H1.1.4. Continue to work with the Norfolk Society for Cemetery Conservation to increase awareness of the historic and cultural value of those resources.

Outcome H1.2. Improved identification of historic landmarks and districts.

Metrics:

- *Percent of known historic resources designated with a City-provided marker.*

Action H1.2.1. Develop a process for expanding Cannonball Trail markers.

Comments: The Cannonball Trail was created to focus on historic sites and buildings in downtown, and has been expanded to include more sites around the City of Norfolk.

Action H1.2.2. Identify new sites for Cannonball Trail markers.



Action H1.2.3. Develop a local plaque program to recognize contributing structures in historic districts or sites that have local landmark designation.

Action H1.2.4. Identify historic district boundaries through vintage or special street signs in historic districts.

Heritage Goal 2. Protect Norfolk’s historic resources.

Outcome H2.1. New and infill development that respects surrounding historic properties and reflects the established architectural pattern.

Metrics:

- *Percent of developable vacant lots in local and National historic districts subsequently developed with appropriate buildings.*

Action H2.1.1. Develop local historic district design guidelines utilizing professional standards, such as the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation, as the basis.

Action H2.1.2. Evaluate existing local historic district guidelines to determine the need for updates at least every ten years.

Action H2.1.3. Encourage the use of design guidelines and pattern books in National Register districts and other historic areas for new infill construction.



Outcome H2.2. An increased number of historic resources, including structures, neighborhoods, and cultural resources, that are protected.

Metrics:

- *Percent of the City’s identified historic buildings and neighborhoods with some level of protection.*

Action H2.2.1. Develop an up-to-date inventory of historic resources readily available on the City’s website.

Action H2.2.2. Update the inventory of historic resources at least every ten years, evaluating the historic significance of all buildings that are more than 40 years old.

Comments: As buildings and sites become 50 years old, they become potentially eligible for historic designation, necessitating regular surveys to ensure that potentially eligible resources are evaluated. Because it is not feasible to prepare a survey more often than every decade, evaluating all buildings more than 40 years old ensures that all potentially eligible resources have been evaluated.

Action H2.2.3. Identify funding sources for updates to the inventory of historic resources.

Comments: There are two sources of funding for such an update: the City budget and grant money through the Certified Local Government (CLG) program, a program administered through the Virginia Department of Historic Resources.

Action H2.2.4. Revise the Zoning Ordinance to provide for designation of local landmarks, including cultural resources.

Comments: There are single buildings, monuments, gardens, and cemeteries of particular significance in the City, which are not necessarily located within a larger historic district. Local landmark designation would create a method for those buildings to be recognized and offered local protection.

Action H2.2.5. Work with neighborhoods to gain support for new locally-designated historic districts and landmarks.

Action H2.2.6. Communicate regularly with property owners in neighborhoods that are designated local historic districts regarding the regulations and policies in those districts.

Action H2.2.7. Discourage the performance of work in a local historic district without a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) through the implementation of programs such as a system of fees or fines for not obtaining a COA.

Action H2.2.8. Utilize historic district design guidelines to promote the appropriate maintenance and rehabilitation of existing structures in historic districts.



Action H2.2.9. Amend the Zoning Ordinance to permit the reuse of nonconforming historic structures.

Comments: Currently, many nonconforming structures exist in historic areas where the Zoning Ordinance does not allow for their continued use. Providing avenues for their continued use, if an applicant obtains a COA, could potentially save many historic buildings from demolition

Action H2.2.10. Promote reuse of historic structures through City marketing efforts about programs such as tax abatement.

Action H2.2.11. Pursue the statutory authority to prevent demolition by neglect in historic areas through heightened code enforcement.

Action H2.2.12. Preserve, protect, and promote Norfolk’s historic municipal cemeteries through active conservation, education, and advocacy.

Heritage Goal 3. Improve and streamline the Certificate of Appropriateness process.

Outcome H3.1. Expedited review of projects going through the Certificate of Appropriateness process.

Metrics:

- *Percent change in the average amount of time a project takes to go through the COA process.*

Action H3.1.1. Eliminate the duplicative process of review by two bodies, the Design Review Committee and the Planning Commission, in order to get a project approved.

Comments: Requiring applicants for a COA to have their application reviewed by multiple bodies adds time to the review process and introduces the potential for conflicting recommendations.

