



YOUR Northampton County 2040

Creating a resilient and vibrant community. Together.

Northampton County, Virginia Comprehensive Plan

Joint Public Hearing Draft

May 4, 2021

Acknowledgments

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The citizens, businesses, and organizations of Northampton County and surrounding region.

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Table of Contents



| | |
|---|------------|
| 1 About the Plan..... | 1 |
| What is Your Northampton County 2040?..... | 2 |
| Creating Your Northampton County 2040..... | 5 |
| 2 This is Your Northampton County..... | 8 |
| This is Your Northampton County..... | 9 |
| Your Northampton County Today..... | 10 |
| Your Northampton County 2040..... | 13 |
| PlanVision..... | 13 |
| Achieving the Vision (Plan Goals) | 14 |
| 3 Cultural Heritage..... | 16 |
| 4 Land Use & Community Character..... | 19 |
| Future Planning Framework..... | 24 |
| 5 Resilient Environment..... | 47 |
| 6 Sustainable Economy..... | 58 |
| 7 Housing..... | 67 |
| 8 Mobility..... | 72 |
| Priority Transportation Projects..... | 80 |
| 9 Community Facilities & Services..... | 84 |
| 10 Implementation..... | 90 |
| Implementation Matrix..... | 94 |
| Performance Indicators..... | 109 |
| Appendices..... | 111 |
| Appendix A Community Overview..... | 112 |
| Appendix B Glossary..... | 179 |
| Appendix C Willis Wharf and Oyster Visions | 184 |

Maps and Figures

Maps

| | |
|--|----|
| 3.1 Designated Historic Sites & Districts..... | 17 |
| 4.1 Future Land Use Map..... | 25 |
| 5.1 Conservation Lands..... | 49 |
| 5.2 Tree Canopy & Wetlands..... | 51 |
| 5.3 Groundwater Resources..... | 52 |
| 5.4 Flood Zones..... | 53 |
| 5.5 Sea Level Rise..... | 56 |
| 6.1 Major Economic Drivers..... | 60 |
| 6.2 Working Waterfronts..... | 64 |
| 8.1 Road Network Classifications..... | 74 |
| 8.2 2019 Crash Clusters..... | 75 |
| 8.3 Rails to Trails Projects..... | 78 |
| 8.4 Priority Transportation Projects..... | 83 |
| 9.1 Community Facilities..... | 89 |

Tables

| | |
|--|-----|
| 4.1 Planning Objectives..... | 26 |
| 7.1 Potential Programs & Funding Sources | 71 |
| 8.1 Northampton County Six-Year Improvement Program Projects..... | 80 |
| 8.2.1 Priority Transportation Projects - Short Term..... | 81 |
| 8.2.2 Priority Transportation Projects - Long Term..... | 82 |
| Implementation Matrix..... | 94 |
| Performance Indicators..... | 109 |

The Plan at a Glance

Your Northampton County 2040

Creating a resilient and vibrant community. Together.

Northampton County is your community and this is your plan. This Comprehensive Plan is a statement of shared community values and a framework to advance those values. It articulates Northampton County's vision for the future and identifies specific steps to realize our vision. The Comprehensive Plan is not regulation. It is an adopted policy guide for County officials and a resource for community members. It is our guide to creating a more resilient and vibrant community - together.

Chapter 1

About the Plan

Establishes the legal context for the Comprehensive Plan, describes the Plan's functional relationship to other planning efforts, and summarizes the community input process - a key component of drafting the content of this plan.

Chapter 2

This is Your Northampton County

Introduces key issues and opportunities facing Northampton and an overarching Vision Statement for the future of the community. The Vision sets the stage for the goals, objectives, and strategies contained within each Planning Element.

Chapters 3-9

Planning Elements

This section contains the policies and strategies to achieve the community's vision. The section is organized into seven Planning Element chapters:

- Cultural Heritage*
- Land Use & Community Character*
- Resilient Environment*
- Sustainable Economy*
- Housing*
- Mobility*
- Community Facilities & Services*

Each Element includes an overarching goal, supporting objectives, and specific strategies.

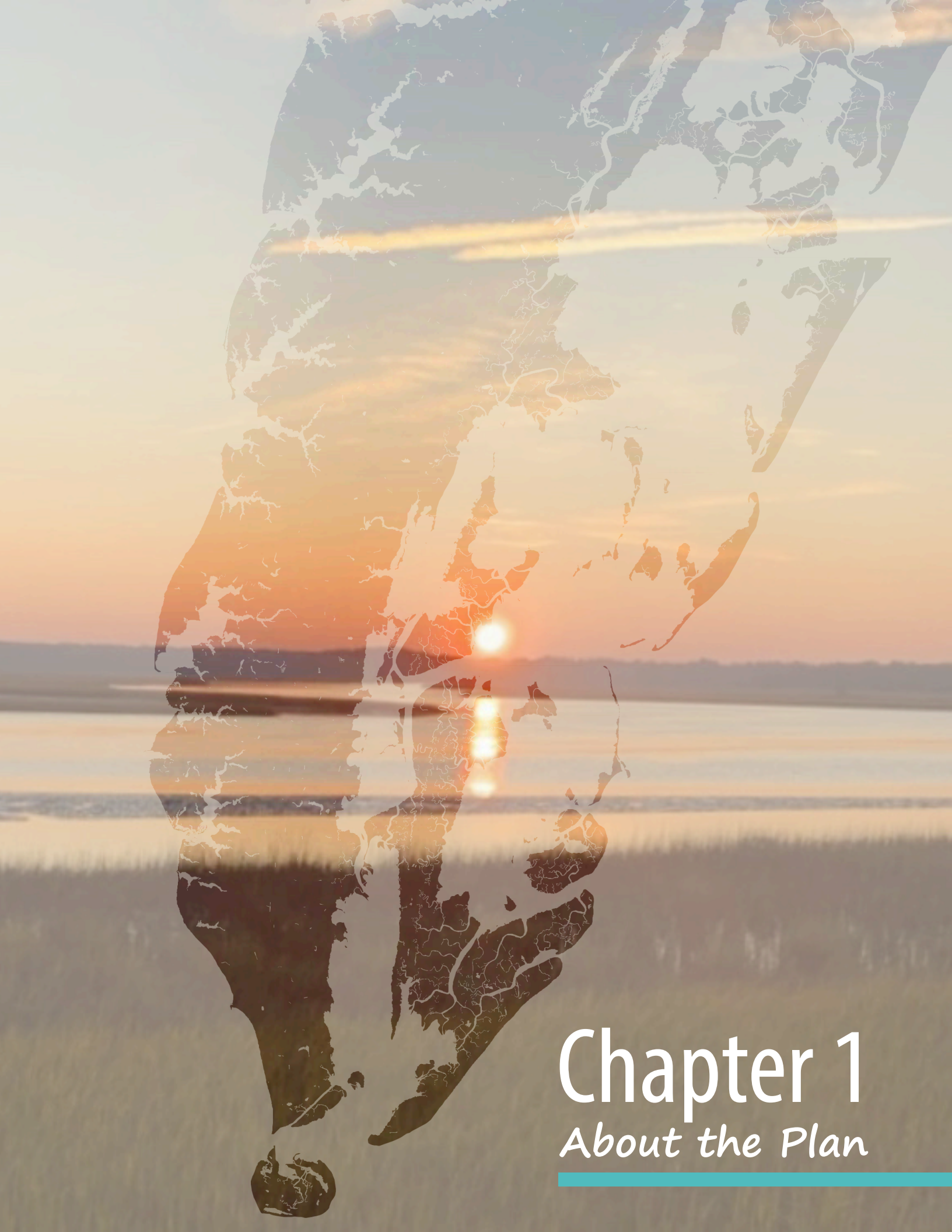
Chapter 10

Implementation Plan

Chapter 10 brings the Comprehensive Plan to life. The Implementation Plan prioritizes the strategies from each Planning Element and provides accountability by assigning responsibility for each strategy. The Implementation Plan provides specific guidance for decision-making and defines the ongoing process that will be used to monitor progress towards Northampton's vision for the future.

Appendix

The Appendix contains a detailed community profile that informed the ideas contained within the Comprehensive Plan. The Appendix also contains a glossary of terms used within the plan.



Chapter 1

About the Plan



About the Plan

What is *Your Northampton County 2040*?

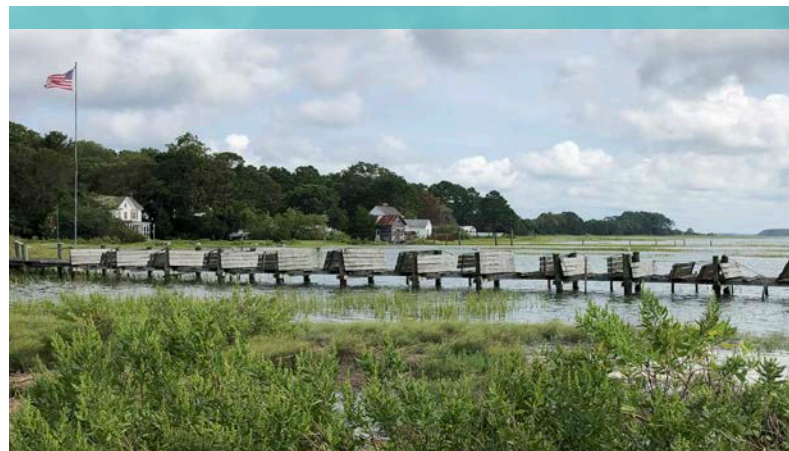
Your Northampton County 2040 is Northampton County's Comprehensive Plan. **A Comprehensive Plan is an adopted policy document** for long-range planning and future development of a locality. While **it is not a regulation**, the Plan is the county's guide to the future and will be used to inform county staff and elected officials as they make decisions regarding the county. The Plan describes the community's vision for where it wants to be in the next 20 years, along with strategies to achieve the community's goals.

Legal Basis for Comprehensive Plans

Every locality in Virginia is required by state code to adopt a Comprehensive Plan. The Code of Virginia Sections 15.2-2223 and 15.2-2224, among others, outline the required and optional Plan elements and offer a general framework for plan activities. Typical elements of the Comprehensive Plan, include, but are not limited to:

- Future land use planning maps and recommendations for development.
- A comprehensive system of transportation facilities, including maps and cost estimates for improvements.
- A system of community service facilities.
- Areas and implementation measures for the construction, rehabilitation, and maintenance of affordable housing.
- Strategies to provide broadband infrastructure.
- Urban development areas appropriate for higher density development, redevelopment, and infill.
- Coastal resource management guidance.

State requirements for Comprehensive Plans also recognize that community development is on-going and ever changing. For this reason, the Code of Virginia sets a requirement that all Comprehensive Plans be reviewed every five years and amended as needed. Virginia Code Section 15.3-2230 requires localities to review the Comprehensive Plan every five years to ensure its continued applicability and usefulness to the community.



Virginia Code Section 15.2-2223:

"The Comprehensive Plan shall be made with the purpose of guiding and accomplishing a coordinated, adjusted and harmonious development of the territory which will, in accordance with present and probable future needs and resources, best promote the health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity and general welfare of the inhabitants, including the elderly and persons with disabilities."

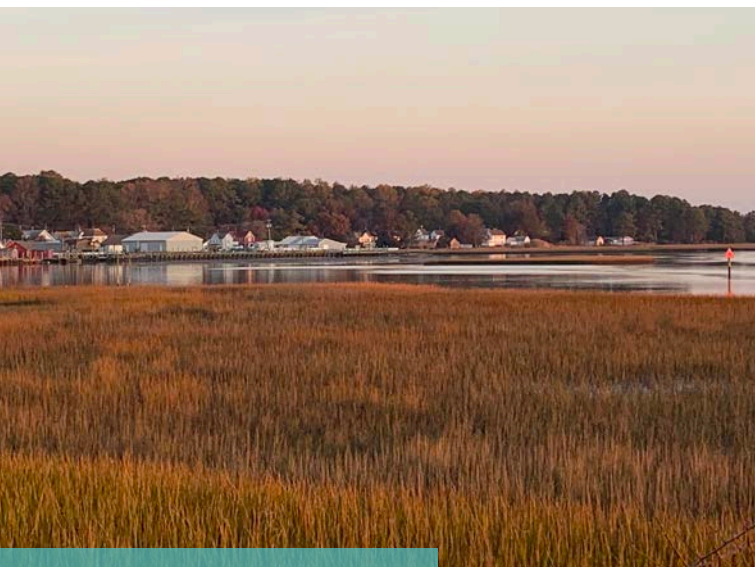
Planning Jurisdiction

This Comprehensive Plan applies to Northampton County's official planning jurisdiction, which ends at County boundaries and does not include incorporated towns. Northampton County is approximately 35 miles in length and contains 795 square miles with an estimated 212 square miles of land surface.

While Northampton County relies on and is impacted by development and employment within its towns, it is important to recognize that town planning does not fall under the purview of this Comprehensive Plan. Although this Plan suggests that growth be directed in and around towns, each town is subject to its own Comprehensive Plan to guide and direct land use and development decisions within their jurisdiction.

With its relative isolation on the Eastern Shore, Northampton County is also integrally tied to jobs, resources, and development in neighboring Accomack County. While Northampton County has no political jurisdiction over decisions in Accomack County, it works as a regional partner with Accomack County as a member of the Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission (ANPDC), a regional organization that provides planning services and technical assistance to its member jurisdictions. Northampton County is also tied to the larger Hampton Roads area across the Chesapeake Bay. Many residents are employed in Hampton Roads and make a daily commute to that area. Much of the information in this plan builds on existing regional studies and efforts, and many of the strategies will require regional coordination to realize the highest benefit to Northampton County.

Northampton County's connections to the towns and the region shape the County's future. As such, the Comprehensive Plan recognizes and prioritizes collaboration with its regional partners as a critical component of long-range planning.



Relationship to Other Plans & Policies

Your Northampton County 2040 is intrinsically tied to other plans, policies, and ordinances. This Plan includes data, ideas, and recommendations from many existing plans, studies, and strategic documents. The Comprehensive Plan forms and influences future updates to these documents as well.

Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances

The zoning and subdivision ordinances are the primary tools to implement the Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan features a Future Land Use Map and policies that exemplify the desired, future location, character, type, and density of development throughout a community. Zoning ordinances and development regulations directly control the management of the location, form, and character of private projects. The Comprehensive Plan should guide and direct updates to the zoning and subdivision ordinances. In addition, when a development or rezoning project comes before the County, decision makers must ensure that the project meets the specific standards of the ordinance and the overarching vision of the Comprehensive Plan.

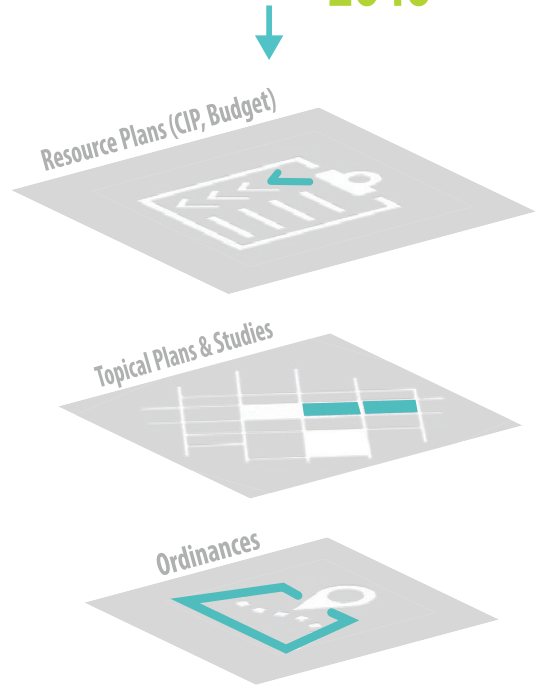


Plans, Studies, and Initiatives

Existing plans and studies considered in the development of this Plan include, but are not limited to:

- *Groundwater Resource Protection and Preservation Plan, 2013 with 2017 addendum*
- *Eastern Shore Bike Plan, 2014 Update*
- *Eastern Shore Pedestrian Facilities Study, 2017*
- *Eastern Shore Rural Long-Range Transportation Plan*
- *Eastern Shore of Virginia Transportation Infrastructure Inundation Vulnerability Assessment*
- *Eastern Shore of Virginia Hazard Mitigation Plan*
- *Eastern Shore of Virginia Regional Dredging Needs Assessment*
- *Northampton County RAFT Scorecard*
- *Virginia Working Waterfront Master Plan, 2016*
- *Hampton Roads Sanitation District Phase 1 Plan (ESVA)*
- *Chesapeake Bay Phase III Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP)*
- *Update of the Visions for the Villages of Willis Wharf and Oyster, 2011*

YOUR
Northampton
2040



Capital Improvement Plan

A Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) is a community planning and fiscal management tool used to coordinate the location, timing, and financing of capital improvements over a multi-year period. Capital improvements refer to major, non-recurring physical infrastructure and equipment. Under Virginia Code §15.2-2239 the Board of Supervisors may direct the local Planning Commission to annually prepare and revise the CIP for up to 5 years to reflect changing community needs, priorities, and funding opportunities for the governing body's approval. The community benefits and the long-range vision is achieved when the priorities of the CIP align with the County's Comprehensive Plan.

Other Plans, Studies, and Initiatives

Many other plans, studies, and initiatives have contributed to the creation of the Comprehensive Plan. Regional studies, transportation plans, housing initiatives, and other documents and planning efforts have informed the recommendations and strategies found in the Comprehensive Plan. This Plan recognizes these existing documents and identifies new plans and studies that may be needed to support implementation.



About the Plan

Creating *Your Northampton County 2040*

Your Northampton County 2040 is the culmination of extensive research, data analysis, and most importantly, community input and engagement. Throughout the planning process, this Comprehensive Plan update has taken deliberate steps to guarantee that a wide range of citizen voices define Northampton County's vision and goals.



Community Workshops

The first community workshop was held on September 9, 2019. Five simultaneous workshops were held across Northampton County (representing each voting district). These workshops, attended by 109 people, presented an overview of the Comprehensive Plan and the update process. Attendees were asked to break into small groups to identify strengths and challenges and develop a vision statement. Some of the most commonly cited strengths include rural character, caring and participatory community, diversity and inclusion, tourism, and the aqua- and agriculture industries. Affordable housing, education, and employment were the top three challenges faced by Northampton County as cited by the participants.

A second community workshop was held on November 19, 2019. This community workshop, held at the Northampton High School cafeteria, focused on gathering community input regarding open space, traffic, economic development, and other land use related issues. With nearly 60 participants, small groups worked to identify areas appropriate for development, areas of heightened congestion and methods to control traffic flow, opportunities for alternative transportation and active and passive recreation, and areas to prioritize for preservation. The towns of Exmore and Nassawadox were identified as the two areas most ready for change and development by the participants.

Community Representative Meetings

Community representative input meetings were held on September 10, 2019. Focus discussion topics included understanding community strengths and challenges. Some of the major themes discussed across the stakeholders include affordable housing, economic development, public services, facility maintenance, access to recreational assets as a driver for economic development, and access to healthcare. Limiting commercial and residential growth to already developed areas was a desire that arose in several interviews and across various interests. These meetings were intended to receive focused input from representatives of a cross-section of diverse interests, including:

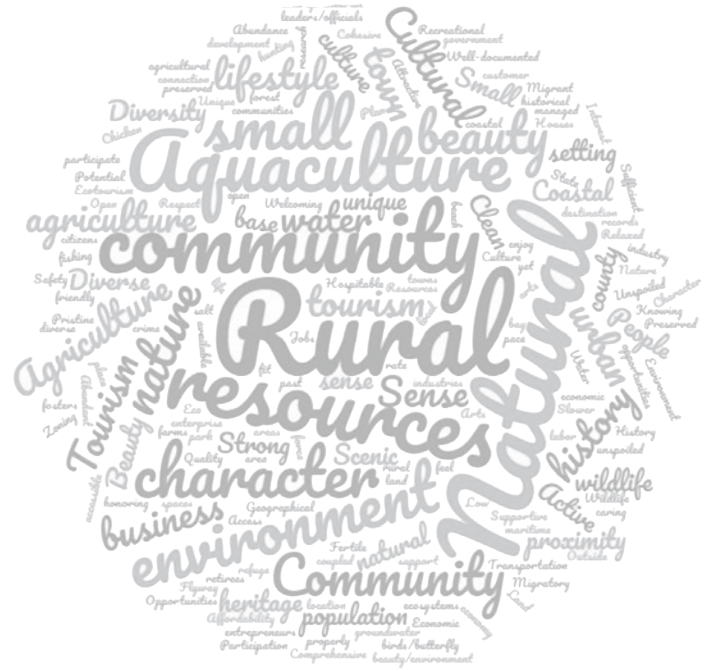
- Real estate
- Agriculture
- Aquaculture
- Religious Organizations
- Education
- Commissioner of Revenue
- Local business owners
- Chamber of Commerce
- Citizen interest groups
- Natural resource and environmental organizations






Community Survey


The County administered a community survey, available online and in hard copy format, from September 30, 2019 to January 1, 2020 to gather input about community needs, strengths, concerns, and desires. The surveys were made available in both English and Spanish versions. Nearly 900 individuals took the survey, answering questions on topics such as housing, employment, education, and economic development.





852 Survey Responses (English and Spanish Language)


 **Top 3 things** respondents like **best about living** in Northampton County: **Rural character** and open space, **sense of community**, and **clean air and water**.


 **Top 3 concerns** for Northampton County's future: **Quality of public schools**, lack of **job opportunities**, and lack of **close emergency healthcare**.

 **Top 3 focus areas** for Northampton County's future: Improving the **public schools and education** opportunities, encouraging **economic development and job growth**, and promoting **affordable housing** opportunities.

 Types of **desirable jobs** in the County: **Light manufacturing and warehousing**, **commercial** businesses (retail, wholesale, shopping centers), and **offices** and **high-tech** services.

 Types of **desirable commercial development**: **Healthcare** (doctors, dentists, etc.), general **retail** (grocery, pharmacy, hardware, etc.), **restaurants**.

 **Top 3 housing types** for Northampton County: **single family** homes, housing for **seniors or elderly**, and **affordable** housing.

 A majority of respondents (over 60%) listed **public schools as their number one priority for improving public facilities and services**. Parks and recreation was the least selected priority item, with 26% of respondents choosing it as their lowest priority item (ranking from 1-6). Other priority items included streets and roads, emergency services, public water and sewer, and social services.

 While 86.3% of respondents said **internet** is available at their home, **only 56.6% said it was sufficient** for their daily needs.



Drafting

The County's Planning Commission is responsible for reviewing and recommending changes to the Comprehensive Plan as directed in the Code of Virginia §15.2-2223. Virginia Code §15.2-2230 calls for the Comprehensive Plan to be reviewed by the local planning commission at least once every five years to determine whether it is advisable to amend the plan. The Planning Commission drafted this Plan using the crucial information gathered during the community engagement process. The Planning Commission worked diligently through regular commission meetings and joint work sessions with the Board of Supervisors to produce the Plan.

Public Review

Comprehensive Plans are a product of the community's input as interpreted through the lens of appointed and elected decision makers. As such, the Comprehensive Plan follows a public review and refinement period that ensures the Plan accurately represents the community's concerns desires and has developed a path to address them. The draft plan was made public for review and the Planning Commission held a public review meeting to solicit public opinion.

Refinement & Adoption

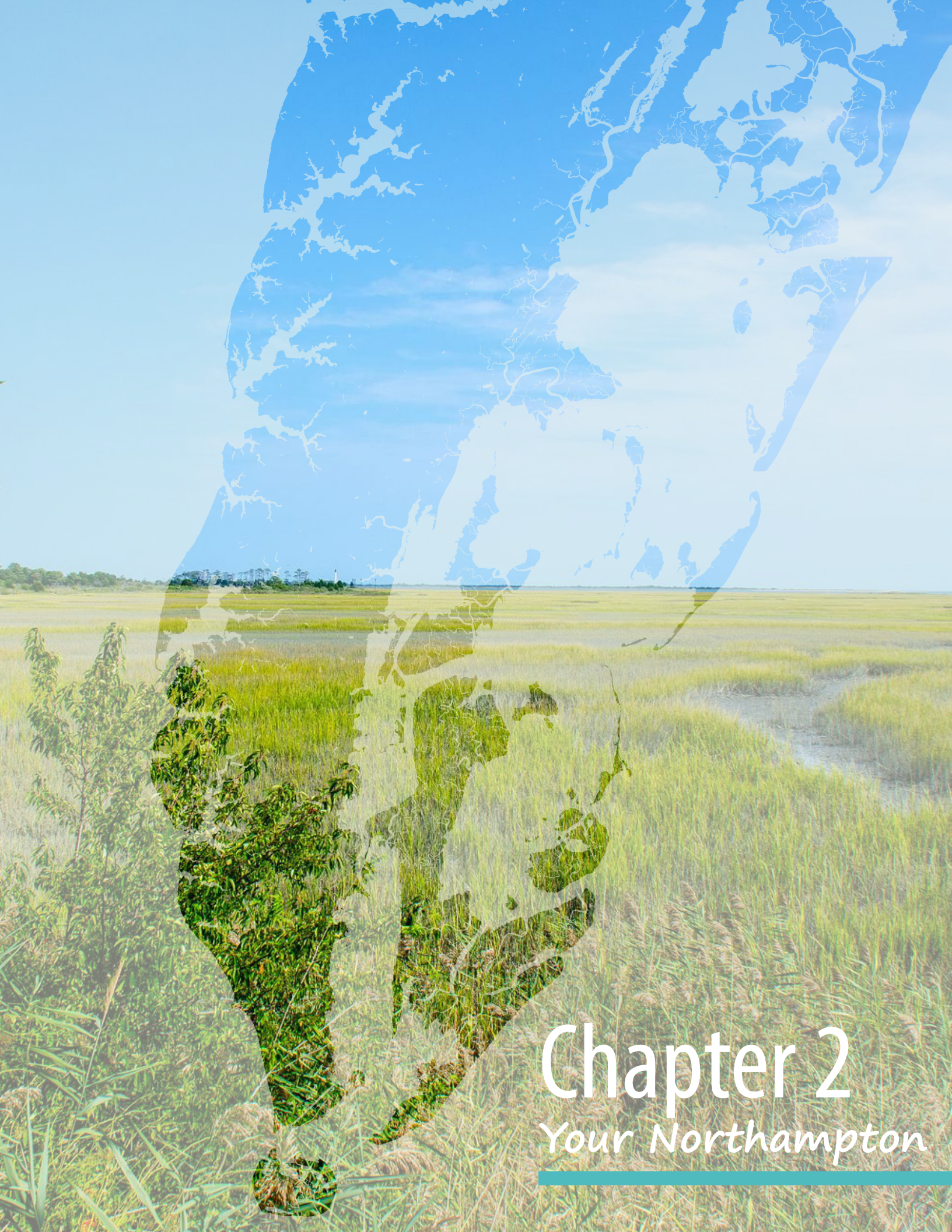
With the inclusion of changes suggested during the public refinement period, the revised draft Plan was made available for public review and considered by the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors through a formal public hearing process.

Using the Plan

The Comprehensive Plan is used by a variety of individuals and stakeholder groups.

- Private citizens, business owners, and developers use the Plan to better understand the community's assets, vision, and development goals.
- County staff and Planning Commission use the Plan when reviewing zoning applications and drafting ordinances, striving for consistency with the community's vision.
- The Board of Supervisors uses the Plan to guide decisions on budget priorities, capital projects, and ordinance amendments.
- Regional partners use the Plan to understand local priorities and advocate for grant funding and studies.

The Comprehensive Plan best serves the community when it is actively used to make recommendations and decisions. Annual review of the Plan is also a best practice that helps bring the community's vision to fruition. Annual review allows for the Planning Commission to identify necessary amendments and track progress. The Implementation chapter of the Plan includes an implementation matrix and is a prime place to start the annual review. The implementation matrix and performance indicators included in the Implementation chapter should be analyzed and updated annually to measure achievements and reprioritize strategies, as needed to meet community goals.



Chapter 2

Your Northampton



This is Your Northampton County

This is Northampton County

Northampton County is the southern 35 miles of the 70-mile-long stretch of the Delmarva Peninsula known as Virginia's Eastern Shore. "The Shore," as it is affectionately named, sits nestled between the Atlantic Ocean to the East and the Chesapeake Bay to the West – or what is known locally as Seaside and Bayside. Home to just under 12,000 people, the County's location and landscape has defined its history as a rural, independent, and self-sufficient community.

The proximity to both the Chesapeake Bay and the Atlantic Ocean, combined with the area's highly fertile soil, has supported generations through agriculture and fishing. The relative isolation of the County necessitated a self-sufficient way of life that relied on the resources at hand. From the region's early Native American inhabitants – the Accomac people – to the European settlers, the freed and enslaved Africans, and to the modern influx of Hispanic workers, the bounty of the waters and lands have sustained and defined the character of settlement throughout Northampton County. Historic working waterfronts and agricultural villages are a legacy of these settlement types. Both the arrival of the railroad in the 1880s and the opening of the Chesapeake Bay-Bridge Tunnel nearly 80 years later, in 1964, changed the economic and development patterns of the area. With easier connection to urban areas, tourism began to play a more important role in the economy and development shifted away from the waterfront to Route 13 and the towns located along it.

Though current development in Northampton County largely reflects the influence of the highway, the importance of the land and water are still recognized in the community and continue to be protected. The County contains some of the last remaining stretches of undeveloped coastline on the East Coast and large portions of the County are protected through conservation – including two large public parks, the Eastern Shore of Virginia National Wildlife Refuge, and Kiptopeke State Park.

Northampton County remains a rural gem, with the major industries of the area reliant on the abundant natural and cultural resources of the County – agriculture, aquaculture, and tourism. National and global forces such as climate change, sea-level rise, economic recessions, and population shifts influence the County.

The question for Northampton County today is how does the community protect what is valued, while evolving with changing times to create a more thriving and resilient future for Northampton County residents?

Plan Vision

Northampton County will pursue a thriving, resilient future that provides for social equity and opportunity for all residents; cultivates stewardship and protection of the natural environment; and builds on its regional heritage while leveraging a twenty-first century economy.





This is Your Northampton County

Your Northampton County Today

Achieving Northampton County's vision for 2040 requires understanding the successes and deficiencies of today. What is it getting right? Where is it falling short? By understanding the challenges and opportunities facing the community, Northampton County can decide what works and what it can do better. The Comprehensive Plan process allows the community to assess shortcomings and to identify strategies to address any critical gaps. The following summarizes the key challenges and opportunities faced in making the Northampton County of today Your Northampton County 2040.



Unparalleled Natural Resources

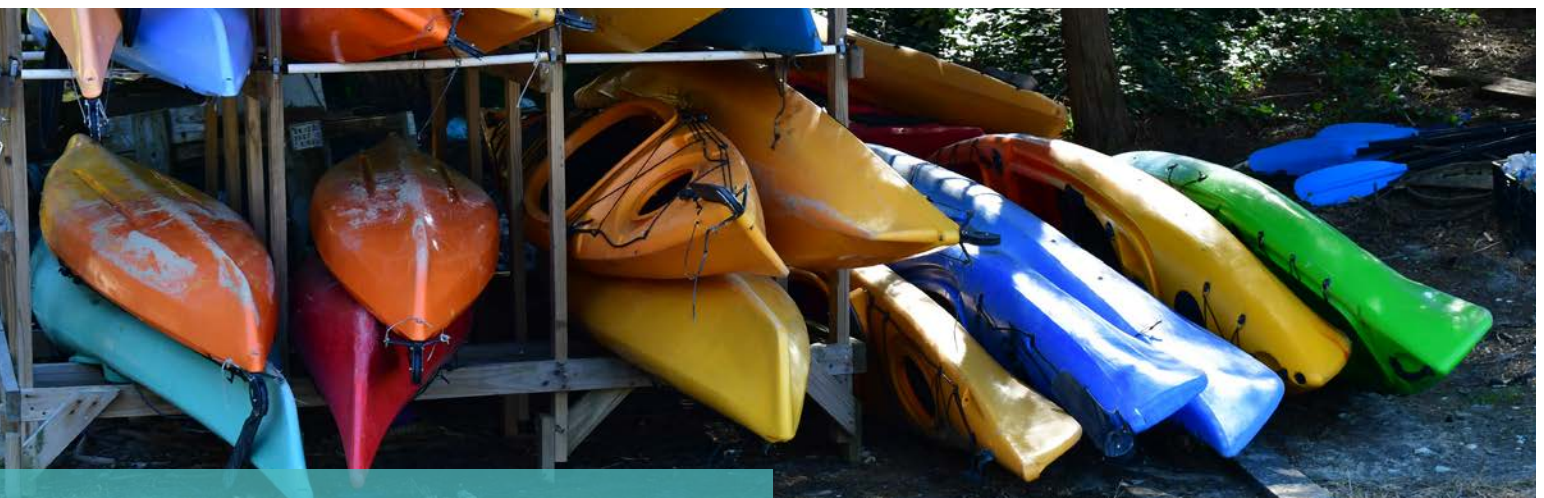
Northampton County contains unparalleled natural resources. As one of the last remaining stretches of undeveloped coastline on the East Coast, Northampton County's waterways, beaches, and wetlands provide critically important habitat for wildlife and migratory birds. Nearly 80 of Virginia's 883 Species of Greatest Conservation Need are found in the region, with nearly 70 of those species dependent on the habitat found here. The County's isolated geographic location makes the area an important and widely used stopover for birds during the annual fall and spring migrations. With globally significant habitat located at our back door, Northampton County has an imperative responsibility to protect and manage growth such that it does not negatively impact these resources. Conservation activities and land protection efforts have been a priority in the County. About 60 square miles in the County are owned and managed as conservation lands by federal, state, and nonprofit entities. An additional 20 square miles of private land are held as conservation easements.

The protection of land includes the protection of the traditional working landscapes and waterfronts of the County. The lands and waters of the County not only include important resources and habitat but also support the vibrant agriculture and seafood industry of the region. Collectively, wetlands and croplands make up two-thirds of the County's total land area, providing significant environmental and economic value to the County. Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting is one of the largest industry sectors in the County, making up 18.9% of all jobs and surpassing national averages. In 2017, aquaculture commodity sales in Northampton County topped \$28 million. This makes Northampton County not only the leader in aquaculture sales in Virginia, but also along the entire East Coast. As a vital player in the local economy, agriculture and aquaculture resources must be responsibly managed and protected such that they continue to contribute to the economic resiliency of the region.

Growth & Development

Protecting sensitive ecological resources requires particular attention to the location and impacts of new development. Community engagement through this planning process confirmed that while residents desire new development, it should be focused in towns and town edges and away from agricultural and environmentally sensitive areas. Citizens also expressed a preference for infill uses, redevelopment, and rehabilitation of existing buildings, with clear growth boundaries for towns and town edges.

Further supporting the need to concentrate additional growth around towns and town edges are the issues of water quality and sea level rise. Community input not only reiterated the desire to avoid suburban style sprawl and other activities that would endanger our agricultural lands and working waterfronts, but also manage all land use activities to limit runoff, maximize infiltration to recharge our groundwater supply, and protect surface water quality. Northampton County relies on a sole-source multi-aquifer system to supply groundwater for all its water needs. Locating development out of the aquifer recharge area is important to protecting the quality and safety of the region's water supply. Additionally, locating development outside of recurring flood and potential sea-level rise zones is vitally important for residents' safety and long-term survival of the community. The Mid-Atlantic region has the second highest rate of sea level rise in the United States, according to NOAA. A 2013 Virginia Institute of Marine Sciences (VIMS) report estimated a sea level rise of 1.5 feet over the next 20 to 50 years, which could impact over 132,000 acres of Northampton County located on or near water bodies and flood zones.



The Impacts of Tourism

Tourism has played a role in Northampton County's economy since the opening of the Pennsylvania Railroad in the 1880s. Over time, the importance of and focus on the tourism economy has only increased. In 2017, Accommodation and Food Service was the second largest industry in the County with 586 total jobs. Pristine waters, beautiful beaches, and breath-taking vistas not only enrich residents' lives but have facilitated the burgeoning growth of ecotourism. Artists, artisans, niche farmers, and entrepreneurs have all found inspiration and opportunity in Northampton County's communities and countryside. In recent years, the County has attracted more retirees and second home buyers with its scenic beauty, recreation, and, when compared to many other coastal communities, relatively affordable land. Subdivisions have sprouted to accommodate the new arrivals, and historic structures have been given new life through renovation and repurposing.

Fostering the continued and sensitive growth of this market will play a key role in building a sustainable tax base and creating a more resilient economy. At the same time, care must

be taken to protect against displacement of existing residents. While tourism benefits Northampton County's economy, it has some significant impacts on housing. At approximately 30% vacancy, Northampton County has a high proportion of vacant housing structures compared to the rest of the state. Vacation homes and short-term rentals take homes off the market for full-time occupancy and can drive up rental prices beyond the reach of low to moderate income individuals and families. In fact, many of the County's households continue to be cost burdened, meaning the occupant pays 30 percent or more of its gross income towards rent. In 2018, about 45 percent of renters and 27.3 percent of homeowners with a mortgage were considered cost burdened. Many of these households make up the prime workforce for the County's primary industries. Addressing the gap in affordable housing, to keep these workers in Northampton County, is imperative to the long-term vitality of the County.

The Challenges of Rural Areas

Many of the most challenging issues facing Northampton County and its communities are shared by rural counties throughout Virginia and the country – employment opportunities, outdated and/or inadequate infrastructure, shortage of affordable and/or workforce housing, population loss, faltering family farms, a disconnect between workers’ skills, workforce, and available jobs, a rising cost of living, and the environmental impacts from climate change. Some of these problems are caused by national market forces, compounded by a major economic recession, the accelerating technological transformation of the workplace, and an aging population. Whatever their origin, the impacts are local and collectively they are taking their toll on Northampton County’s economy and future economic growth and stability.

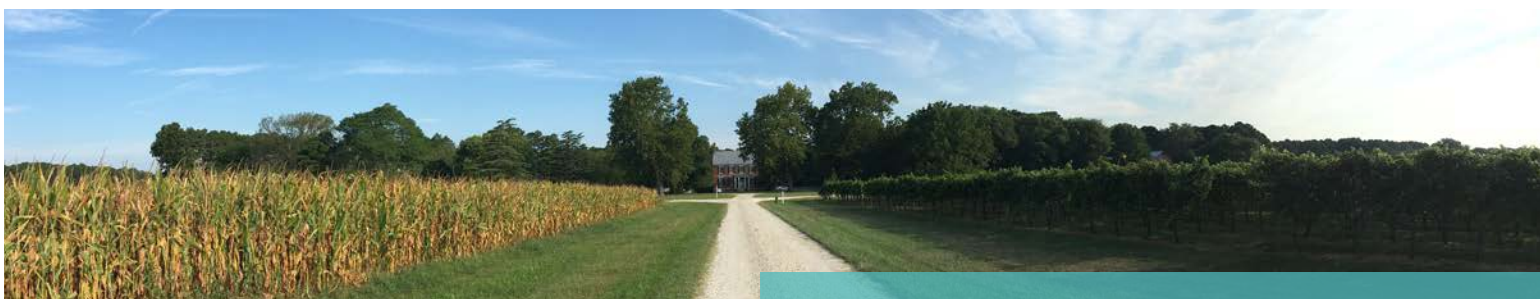
Northampton County recognizes that retaining its agriculture, aquaculture, fishing, and crabbing roots while attracting young workers and families is integral to its success. Like most rural counties in Virginia, Northampton County has seen a population shift: the population declined by approximately 5% between 2010 and 2018, and the median age increased to 48.5 years – about ten years above the Virginia median age of 38.3 years. Reversing this trend will require continued focus on preserving existing industries, preparing the next generation for employment, and creating new jobs and quality of life amenities within the community. Given the importance of agriculture, aquaculture, fishing, and crabbing to the economy, protecting family farms from external economic stresses and the realities of an aging farm operator population must be part of a multi-pronged approach to building a resilient local economy. The County proactively supports the agriculture economy through the Agricultural-Forestal District incentive program, which is widely used by local farmers. Signaling a positive shift, generational farmers are beginning to take over family farms, and agricultural techniques are evolving to improve efficiency and reduce environmental impacts – especially important given the aquaculture, fishing, and crabbing industries’ reliance on unimpaired waters.

Investing in both innovative workforce education and the infrastructure to support business and housing growth are critically important strategies for keeping Northampton County attractive to employers and young workers alike. Northampton County is consistent with other rural localities with utilities provided in the towns, while most County

development is supplied by private well and septic systems. The towns of Cape Charles and Exmore are natural development hubs with public water and public sewer availability. Both Towns include Enterprise Zone designations, and areas surrounding Cape Charles are identified as a federally-designated Opportunity Zone. Improving infrastructure capacity and prioritizing and easing the development process for businesses and housing in these areas will be vital to the long-term success of the economy. Furthermore, public engagement supported the focus of growth in these areas as a means to bolster the economy, provide new housing options, and protect agricultural and environmentally sensitive lands from inappropriate development.

A lack of affordable broadband availability in rural areas is an additional contributor to the employment struggle. Providing adequate internet access attracts businesses, increases telecommuting, and opens education opportunities. The Covid-19 Pandemic brought to light the ability for businesses to effectively work from remote locations. Northampton County can increase attraction to remote and teleworkers by improving technology infrastructure and making a focused effort to recruit those individuals. Communication networks are improving but both cellular and broadband are limited in the most rural areas. Continued partnerships and incentives for additional internet access will bolster the economy and reduce out-commuting.

As Northampton County plans for the future, there is a clear need for increased and diversified economic activity and opportunity, expanded infrastructure to support businesses and affordable housing, improved schools, additional workforce training and jobs, new tax revenue sources, and more convenient amenities. The County’s economic resilience depends on successfully addressing the above issues. The overall objective is to expand opportunities for a larger segment of our population and improve services and amenities for all. Limited financial resources hamper the ability to address all of these problems simultaneously. Priority should be given to establish policies and formulate a limited number of recommendations directed towards addressing the fundamental issues that impact the local economy and produce the greatest long-term return to most residents. Achieving these objectives will require careful, thoughtful, and innovative planning, which will create the foundation for a vibrant and resilient future.





This is Your Northampton County

Your Northampton County 2040

Plan Vision

A meaningful Comprehensive Plan looks 10 to 20 years into the future towards a vision of what a place can be. This vision is based on collective input from community representatives and should be supported by residents, business owners, and other community members. The vision serves as the overarching principle for the Comprehensive Plan, guiding the development of goals and strategies for each Planning Element. The vision is a broad, aspirational statement headlining the entire Comprehensive Plan — the words are carefully chosen to reflect the most important issues on the minds of community members.

How the County achieves this vision is a long-term project, and one that will require input and cooperation from a variety of people and organizations. This vision can be

achieved by setting goals with specific objectives and strategies, continuously working toward implementation, and monitoring progress after the Plan is adopted.

The distinct benefit of a Comprehensive Plan is that it provides the direction to make the vision a reality. The Comprehensive Plan fully considers how the whole community's values, people, places, and prosperity are interrelated and interdependent. In creating this plan, we identified the defining issues that are central to the future success of Northampton County. The challenge before us now – in shaping Your Northampton County – is to leverage our strengths, while mitigating the negatives. The Your Northampton County 2040 Comprehensive Plan provides the direction to do that.

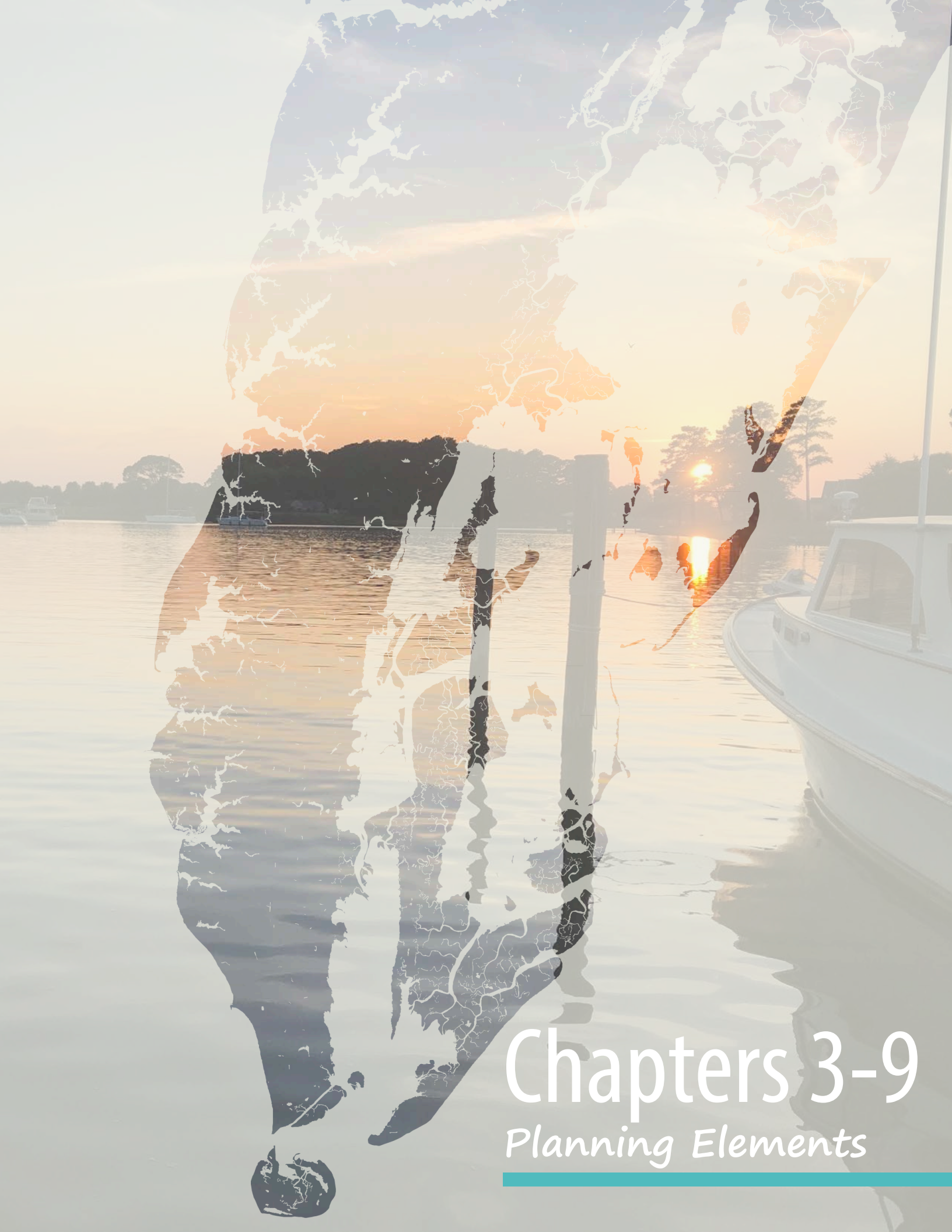
Plan Vision

Northampton County will pursue a thriving, resilient future that provides for social equity and opportunity for all residents; cultivates stewardship and protection of the natural environment; and builds on its regional heritage while leveraging a twenty-first century economy.

Achieving the Vision

Every community is comprised of physical elements, economic factors, and social structures that combine to create the distinct places people call home. When we plan for communities, we must consider each of these elements. While residents may require the same basic necessities, every community is unique and has different priorities. Through the development of this Comprehensive Plan, Northampton County identified seven elements or topics, shown below, as important to the community. The following chapters describe these topics in detail. Each chapter contains an assessment of needs, an overarching goal, and specific strategies to bridge any gaps. These chapters are supported by a thorough community overview located in the appendix of this document. Northampton County's Vision is achieved through the work done to improve each of these topics.

| Planning Element | Goal |
|--|--|
|  <p>Cultural Heritage</p> | Northampton County will value, protect, and promote its rich cultural heritage and well-preserved history, leveraging the County's unique assets to enhance community character and foster economic growth. |
|  <p>Land Use & Community Character</p> | Northampton County will preserve and enhance its scenic small towns, working waterfronts, unique rural character, and connection to its coastal environment by accommodating and guiding growth to create a stronger, vibrant community. |
|  <p>Resilient Environment</p> | Northampton County will respect and embrace its unique environment and natural resources, emphasizing protection of its sole-source multi-aquifer system and coastal ecosystem as fundamental to the creation of a resilient future. |
|  <p>Sustainable Economy</p> | Northampton County will strive to be an economically thriving, business-friendly community that offers innovative jobs and businesses that are unique to the Shore and enhance the County as a place to live, work and visit. |
|  <p>Housing</p> | Northampton County will provide high-quality residential areas and housing to meet the needs of all residents while preserving the character and environmental fabric of the community. |
|  <p>Mobility</p> | Northampton County will provide a safe, efficient, multi-modal transportation system with well-connected bike and pedestrian infrastructure, accessible public transit, and limited impact on existing communities. |
|  <p>Community Facilities</p> | Northampton County will provide high-quality facilities, superior services, and a diversity of amenities that meet resident needs, support economic development, and attract recreational, heritage, and eco-tourism. |



Chapters 3-9

Planning Elements



3

Cultural Heritage

Northampton County will value, protect, and promote its rich cultural heritage and well-preserved history, leveraging the County's unique assets to enhance community character and foster economic growth.

For over 400 years, Northampton County residents have lived and **thrived on the bounty of nature**. The area's long and well-preserved history predates the earliest English settlements and is uniquely integrated into life and the community today. Northampton County's history is reflected in its Towns, working waterfronts, and many colonial-era homes and documented in its collection of continuous court records, which are the oldest in the nation. Throughout its rich history, Northampton County's geography and abundant natural resources have **attracted inhabitants and visitors** – Native American tribes, early explorers and colonists, railroad and ferry speculators, and today's retirees and tourists have all contributed to the physical and cultural development of the community.

The **lifestyle in Northampton County** has been shaped by the area's unique natural features – tidal marshes abundant in seafood; productive soils; woodlands; long growing season for agriculture; and clean air. The availability of these resources has produced an economy based on agriculture and seafood production with people living on farms or in small towns and villages. Northampton County's rural character, **working waterfronts**, and historic communities are a point of pride for residents and an integral component of the **economy and culture**.

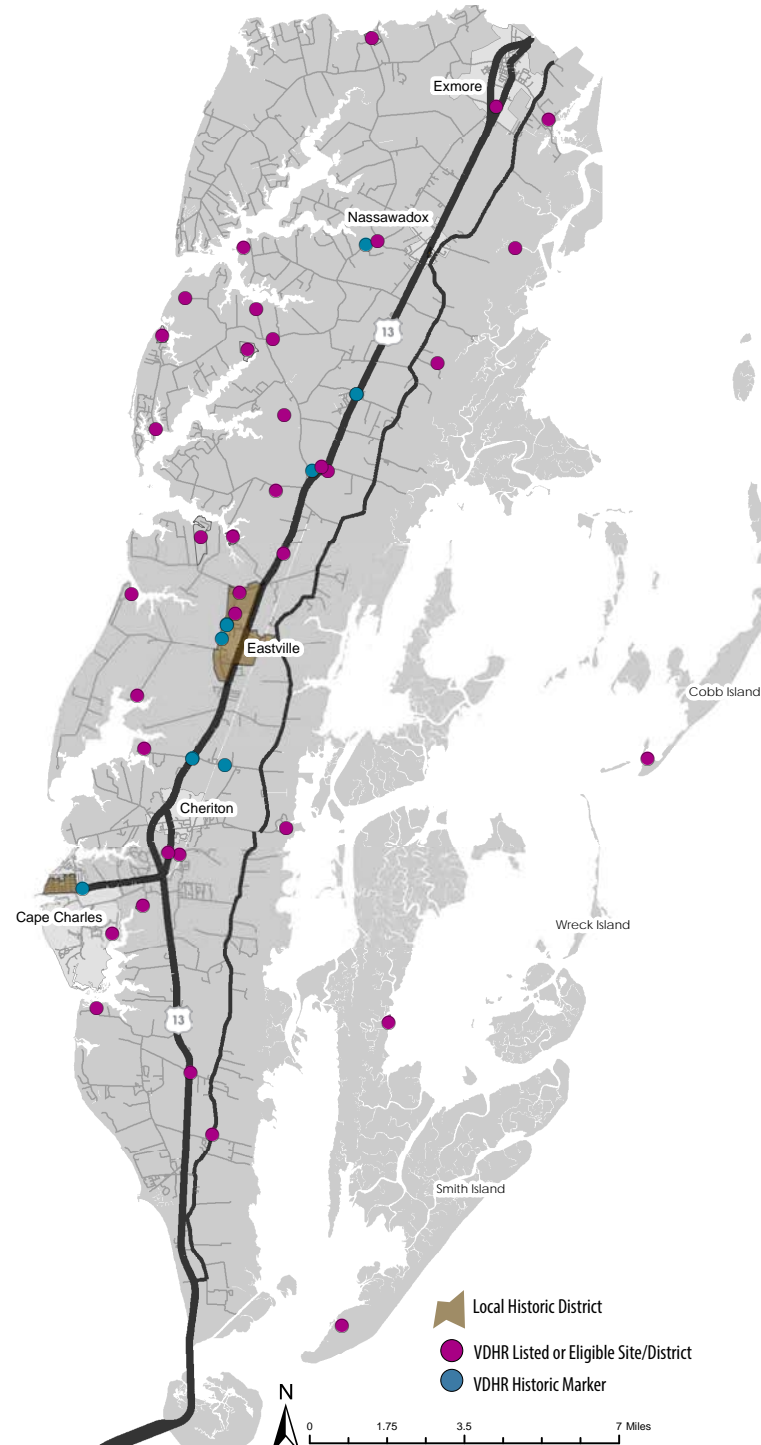
Your Cultural Heritage

Cultural Resources are discussed in detail in the Community Overview, Appendix A. Key considerations and strategies are described below.

Historic Areas & Sites

Preserving the unique heritage of Northampton County is critical to its future. While the current economy continues to be based in the agricultural and seafood industries and most development remains in towns and villages, tourism and strip development has begun to have an impact. Historic areas and sites require consistent preservation efforts to ensure their future benefit to Northampton County. Historic areas and sites can often be overlooked and even destroyed without local interest and assistance. Land use strategies to guide growth and development and complement existing character will be essential in historic areas.

1. Ensure the continued preservation of recognized sites of historic and cultural significance in Northampton County.
2. Pursue identification, recognition, and protection of historic areas representing Northampton County's diverse culture, including native and African American sites.
3. Consider pursuing Certified Local Government status through the National Park Service and State Historic Preservation Offices to access federal historic preservation funds and resources.
4. Develop and adopt land-use practices and zoning regulations, including Historic Overlay Districts, to protect historic sites and structures and their gateways and provide adequate buffer areas.
5. Continually update the County's inventory of historic sites and structures.
6. Study the need for regulations requiring archaeological surveys of land proposed for development.
7. Ensure that new development is sensitive to the character and context of historic areas.
8. Ensure protection of archaeological resources found during the construction process according to state and federal guidelines.
9. Collaborate with the Eastern Shore Public Library System and ESVA Museum Network members to promote to visitors and educate residents about historic areas and sites through the development of exhibits, history trails, collection development, and programs.



Map 3.1 Designated Historic Sites & Districts

Data Source: Virginia Department of Historic Resources

Historic Reinvestment

Northampton County's historic cultural resources are a benefit to the community. Culturally, well-preserved resources help to connect us to our past. Economically, these same resources serve as a draw for tourists to visit the County. Renewed investment in historic cultural resources ensures their continued utility for the next generations. Specific attention is needed to preserve historic resources and encourage reinvestment in historic sites. Northampton County should work to improve historical resources when possible by working with historical societies and other groups in pursuit of preservation funding opportunities.

Strategies to Promote Historic Reinvestment

10. Promote existing federal and State historic tax credit programs available for the rehabilitation of income-producing historic properties.
11. Encourage efforts to maintain and repair historic structures and support the donation of historic easements.
12. Support efforts of local historical societies to protect sites and encourage restoration of buildings.



What are Rehabilitation Tax Credits?

The Rehabilitation Tax Credits are dollar-for-dollar reductions in income tax liability for taxpayers who rehabilitate historic buildings. Credits are available from both the Federal government (from income-producing properties) and the state of Virginia (for residential or income-producing properties). In order to qualify a building must be listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The amount of the credit is based on total rehabilitation costs. The Federal credit is 20% of eligible rehabilitation expenses. The State credit is 25% of eligible rehabilitation expenses. In some cases, taxpayers can qualify under both programs, allowing them to claim credits of 45% of their eligible rehabilitation expenses.

Source: Virginia Department of Historic Resources <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/tax-credits/>



Economic Impact of Tourism

The full economic impact of the tourism industry can be hard to quantify, but the Virginia Tourism Corporation estimates that 2016 travel expenditures in Northampton County totaled \$77,532,198. (See Appendix A for more detail.)

Heritage Tourism

Heritage-based tourism, such as fishing excursions, oyster roasts, farm-to-table dinners, garden tours, heritage trails, and genealogical research, offers opportunities to share and sustain Northampton County's tranquil way of life. These tourism opportunities are an important aspect of Northampton County's economy and should be promoted whenever possible. The experience visitors have while in Northampton County may determine if they return to visit again, so improving the tourist experience through better wayfinding and promotion of historic resources, for example, is critical. The County should make efforts to boost tourism and encourage travelers to engage with the historical resources found in Northampton County.

Strategies to Enhance Heritage-Based Tourism

13. Support local, regional and state efforts to develop and promote heritage tourism and eco-tourism opportunities in the County, such as the Heritage Trail, John Smith Water Trail, Southern Tip Bike and Hike Trail, and Eastern Shore Rail-to-Trail.
14. Develop an interpretive signage program for historic parks and selected sites.
15. Promote the efforts of local artists, artisans, musicians and writers to publicize events where their work is offered.
16. Support the preservation and digitization of local archival materials for use in promoting tourism and educating citizens about the value of history.
17. Develop regional collaborations to include Northampton's heritage in the history narrative of the broader Hampton Roads region, the state, and the nation.



4

Land Use & Community Character

Northampton County will preserve and enhance its scenic small towns, working waterfronts, unique rural character, and connection to its coastal environment by accommodating and guiding growth to create a stronger, vibrant community.

Northampton County is a **coastal treasure** rich in agricultural, ecological, and maritime resources. The County's scenic small towns, working waterfronts, and unspoiled farms are defining elements of the community's character. These elements are **highly valued** by the Northampton County community and should be carefully preserved and protected through **thoughtful land use planning, policies, and regulations**.

Northampton County's approach to the challenges and opportunities facing the community today will ultimately define its future. This chapter addresses these challenges and builds on existing **strengths and opportunities** to guide the County toward its vision – a vision that can only be achieved through an **engaged community** and **effective partnership** between government, residents, businesses, institutions, and community organizations. The chapter lays out specific objectives and strategies and presents a Future Planning Framework for development, which together serve to implement Northampton County's land use and community character goal.

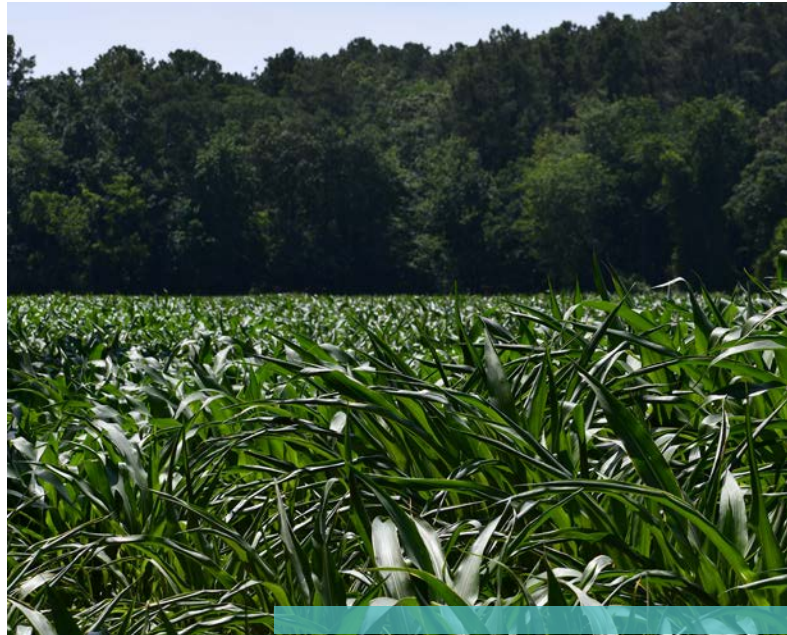
Your Land Use

Environmental Constraints & Resources

Northampton County boasts a pristine sole-source multi-aquifer system, precious saltwater ecosystems, and unique natural features that require long-term protection, particularly in the face of the growing impacts of climate change. The County is increasingly vulnerable to storm surges, inundation, and sea level rise, which must be addressed when considering development and future land use. Mitigation and retrofits to improve safety, health, and environmental quality are also encouraged for existing development. (See the Environmental Resilience chapter for additional information and strategies).

Strategies to Preserve Community Resources

1. Preserve the County's rural character by directing development to areas within and adjacent to existing towns with existing or planned public utilities.
2. Maintain and protect agriculture, aquaculture, and other water dependent uses along working waterfronts and in other predominately rural portions of the County with appropriately scaled lots, uses, and development standards.
3. Discourage inappropriate development and land uses that may have detrimental impacts to prime farmland and water quality needed to support aquaculture, fishing, and crabbing operations.
4. Work with existing shoreline communities to plan for resiliency and mitigate negative environmental impacts through techniques such as shoreline stabilization, low impact development, alternative wastewater systems, stormwater management, native plantings, living shorelines, building elevation, and managed retreat.
5. Conserve, preserve, and protect the County's natural resources, including prime agricultural soils, surface waters, and the environmental attributes that contribute to a healthy coastal ecosystem, such as its wetlands, barrier islands, bird habitats, and coastal shellfish areas.
6. Protect the County's sole-source multi-aquifer system by protecting and sustaining ground-water recharge areas through policies that reduce and/or mitigate land disturbance, stormwater runoff, impervious surfaces, water usage, and pollution.
7. Evaluate residential rezoning requests for consistency with the Comprehensive Plan and fiscal impact on the community.
8. Continue to maintain, enforce, and update zoning requirements for intensive animal production operations to protect water quality.



Development & Growth

With its relative accessibility to urban areas, Northampton County has become an attractive vacation destination, particularly in the Town of Cape Charles. Tourism and development are a vital component of the County's economy, and the County recognizes that additional development is needed to provide jobs, diversify the tax base, and accommodate housing needs. To the extent possible, this growth is to be directed in and around existing towns, with a focus on revitalization, compatible infill, and adaptive reuse, due to the availability of infrastructure to support it. Any new development must be carefully planned and accompanied with initiatives and policies that address community character, affordable housing, and resource protection.

Strategies to Guide Growth

9. Work cooperatively with the Towns to attract compatible and creative development and infill that contributes to their economic and community vitality.
10. Provide schools, community facilities, and infrastructure necessary for vibrant growth of the county.
11. Encourage adaptive re-use and appropriate infill development while also supporting the restoration and continuance of existing businesses that may not conform to the cluster development land use method.
12. Allow for a range of residential densities in designated development areas, to provide housing options to meet the needs of all people.
13. Promote cluster development along Route 13 located in existing towns and town edges, implementing vehicular and pedestrian strategies that ensure safety and flow during peak seasons.
14. Promote compact, mixed-use development within identified development areas and encourage innovative, inclusionary, pedestrian-oriented livable communities.



Community Character

An important function of this chapter is to articulate the design and land use considerations for different types of development that define Northampton County's landscape. Each community in Northampton County has developed with its own unique character – often defined by environmental resources and prevailing building methods, infrastructure, and transportation options at the time of construction. While only some areas are appropriate for new development, many areas throughout Northampton County can benefit from revitalization and reinvestment. Where new development is recommended, the County has embraced the Livable Communities principles to enhance community character while addressing other housing, environmental, and economic goals identified in this plan.

Strategies to Protect Community Character

15. Encourage revitalization, repurposing, and rehabilitation of existing structures by promoting available resources, such as grants and tax credits, and pursuing funding to support such efforts.
16. Ensure that new development complements and enhances its surroundings through proper land use, design, landscaping, and transitional buffers.
17. Establish and maintain usable public access to and along the waterfront.
18. Ensure new development provides access to lifelong learning and wellness spaces, such as libraries, community centers, and outdoor public green spaces.
19. Continue to maintain, enforce, and update zoning building height requirements to support and protect community character.



Livable Communities

In 2011, the County adopted the Eastern Shore Healthy Communities "Livable Communities" concept for inclusion in the Comprehensive Plan. The concept encourages development in towns and villages, saving the rural landscape for farming and forestry. This reduces sprawl, redevelops existing downtowns, and may lead to improvements in existing infrastructure, like water, wastewater treatment, sidewalks, and roads.

Livable Communities promote construction of varied housing types for varying income and age levels. Building apartments, condos, townhouses, and free-standing homes on smaller sites creates more affordable housing. Homes built in "Livable Communities" may appreciate faster, improving town economy and personal investment. When people of different incomes and ages live nearby in well-designed residences, socialization and neighborliness may produce safer and healthier outcomes. Livable Communities support pedestrian transportation options like safe sidewalks and bike lanes. The Livable Communities concept encourages desirable amenities within walking distance like grocery, medical, library, education, arts and play facilities.

Existing Regulations

Northampton County has a complex set of zoning and subdivision regulations to address the land use issues and environmental needs of its diverse territory. Over time, amendments to the zoning map and regulations have resulted in disjointed regulations that some members of the community find difficult to understand and interpret. Consolidating the ordinances and restructuring them into streamlined regulations with fewer districts and clear policy is needed to promote development that is consistent with the County's comprehensive plan.

Strategies to Align and Streamline Regulations

20. Review existing zoning ordinances and procedures and recommend changes necessary to align County ordinances with the Plan's concepts and goals.
21. Update land use regulations to provide clear and simplified requirements that promote economic development, enable creative housing choices, and protect sensitive resources.



Community Participation

Northampton County residents are engaged and invested in the development that happens in their community. Residents actively participated in the development of this Plan, and the resulting vision, goals, and strategies derive directly from that input. The unique assets and issues in each community within Northampton County sometimes requires a hyper-localized approach to community planning. Recognizing this, small area plans have been developed for the Villages of Willis Wharf and Oyster, and other areas may benefit from this process as well. The County also has a robust website that it can continue to utilize and expand to benefit the community. Achieving the long-term community vision will require continued and expanded efforts to empower citizen involvement, with particular attention to engaging underserved and minority communities.

Strategies to Engage the Community

22. Continue to work with residents to prepare and implement specific area plans, as requested and supported by each community.
23. Engage the community in land use decisions by promoting broader participation in public meetings and hearings using a variety of platforms (e.g., online engagement, community surveys, social media).
24. Provide public education on the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act and local land use regulations and processes through workshops, online resources, and brochures.
25. Maintain and update online mapping resources to assist residents and businesses in identifying zoning requirements, floodplains, prime agricultural lands, locally designated RPA/RMA areas, and other land use information.
26. Promote environmental justice in all land use policies and decisions by engaging community representatives of underserved and minority groups, to understand the potential adverse effects of land use decisions; including but not limited to development and zoning decisions.

Future Planning Framework

As a coastal community, Northampton County must carefully plan for development and growth to protect its heritage and character and ensure a sustainable and resilient future. The following Future Land Use Framework establishes the desired pattern and character of future development based on distinct pattern areas. Each Pattern Area provides location and development criteria carefully designed to:

- *Promote growth where it can be supported by infrastructure improvements, such as water and sewer.*
- *Maintain and enhance existing community character.*
- *Preserve natural resources that support agriculture, aquaculture, eco-tourism, and maritime activities.*
- *Build a more resilient community protected against the hazards of climate change.*

This framework is not intended to substitute for detailed zoning and subdivision regulations, but rather provide broad land use concepts that support Northampton County's vision for the future. In weighing development applications, staff, Planning Commission, and the Board of Supervisors should be mindful of this framework as well as the environmental and infrastructure impacts of development and the economic necessity of improving the County's tax base.

New development should assess fiscal impacts specifically attributable to the development. Sufficient mitigation should be provided to offset impacts in excess of existing capacity levels, subject to limitations under the Code of Virginia.

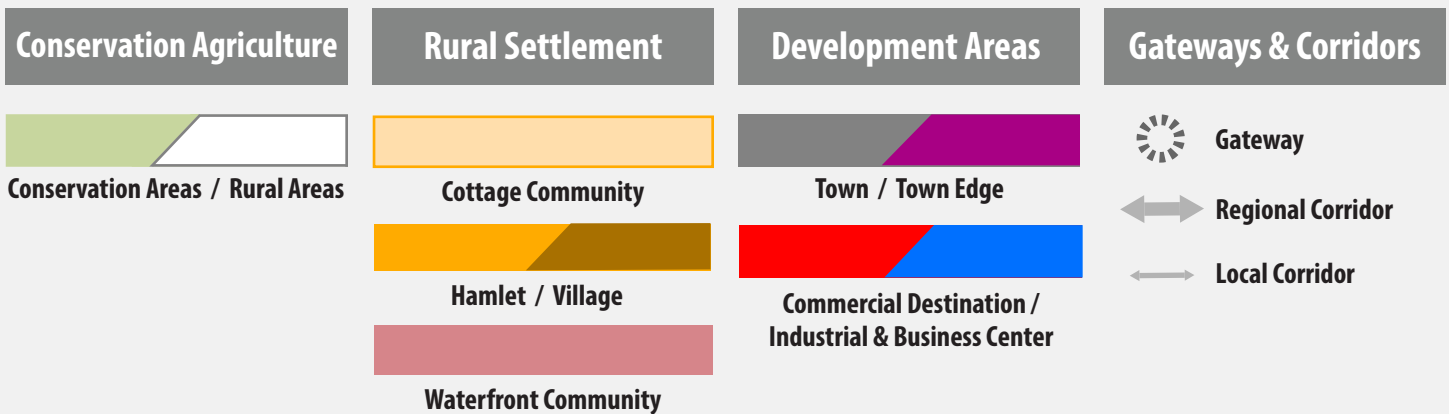
The sections that follow provides the Future Land Use Map, planning objectives, descriptions, and use and design guidelines for each Pattern Area within the Future Planning Framework. The location of each Pattern Area on the Future Land Use Map (See Map 4.1) is informed by environmental features, existing development patterns, and existing and planned transportation and utility networks. The map and associated planning objectives (See Table 4.1) and design strategies are crafted to provide flexibility for future conditions while holding to an overall defined pattern for shaping development in Northampton County.

The Use and Design Criteria chart included for each Pattern Area provide principles to guide development in accordance with Northampton County's land use goal and vision. Land use applications, capital improvement projects, and County regulations should be assessed according to the use, density, design, and community facility/utility principles provided based on the appropriate pattern area .

Generally, primary uses are considered the appropriate uses for the district. Secondary uses are intended to be accessory or incidental to primary uses or permitted by special use permit only in accordance with the general intent of area. Additional design and use standards may be applicable to secondary uses.

When the plan states a range of densities for potential residential development within a planning category, the low end of the stated range is considered most appropriate. Clear justification is needed before development at a higher density is warranted or appropriate.

Pattern Areas



Map 4.1 Future Land Use

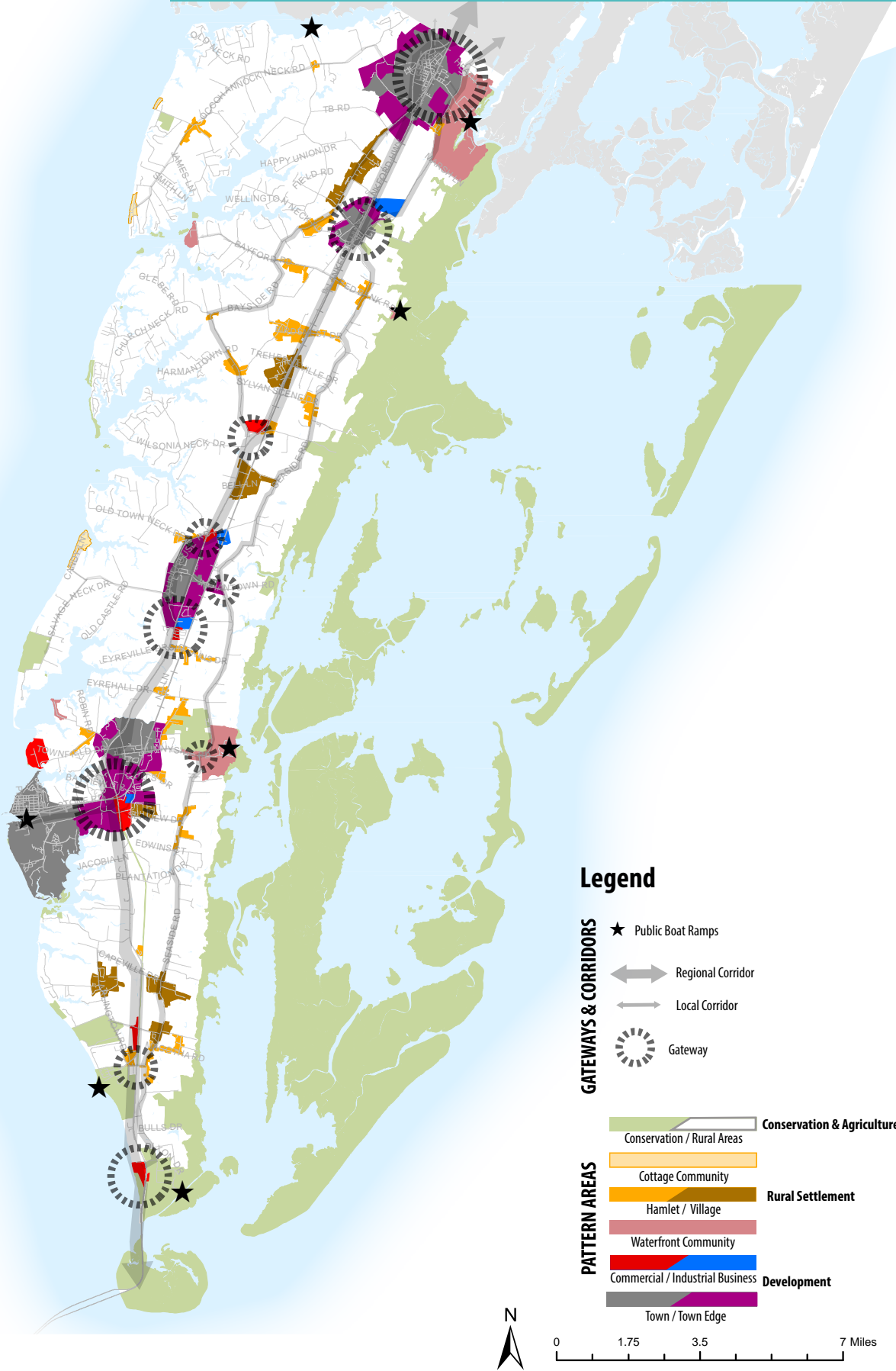















Table 4.1 Planning Objectives

| | Preserve agriculture & working waterfronts | Conserve and protect natural resources | Enhance and protect historic resources | Revitalize, rehabilitate, and retrofit | Encourage infill development | Allow new development | Complement local character and identity | Foster housing opportunity | Enhance design & development standards | Improve pedestrian connectivity and safety | Improve access management & traffic flow | Improve wayfinding measures | Incorporate sustainable development standards | Plan for climate change resiliency |
|---|--|--|--|--|------------------------------|-----------------------|---|----------------------------|--|--|--|-----------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| Conservation and Agriculture | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  Conservation Areas | ● | ● | | | | | | | | | | | | ● |
|  Rural Areas | ● | ● | ● | | | | ● | | | | | | | ● |
| Rural Settlement | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  Cottage Communities | ● | ● | ● | ● | | | ● | | | | | | | ● |
|  Hamlets | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | | ● | | | | | | | |
|  Villages | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | | ● | | | | | | | |
|  Waterfront Communities | ● | ● | ● | ● | | | ● | | | | | | | ● |
| Development Areas | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  Towns | | | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | | | | ● |
|  Town Edges | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | |
|  Commercial Destinations | | ● | | | ● | ● | ● | | ● | ● | ● | | ● | |
|  Industrial & Business Centers | | ● | | | ● | ● | ● | | ● | ● | ● | | ● | |
| Gateways and Corridors | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  Gateways | | | | | | | | | | ● | ● | ● | | |
|  Regional Corridors | | | | | | | | | | ● | ● | ● | | |
|  Local Corridors | | | | | | | | | | ● | ● | ● | | |

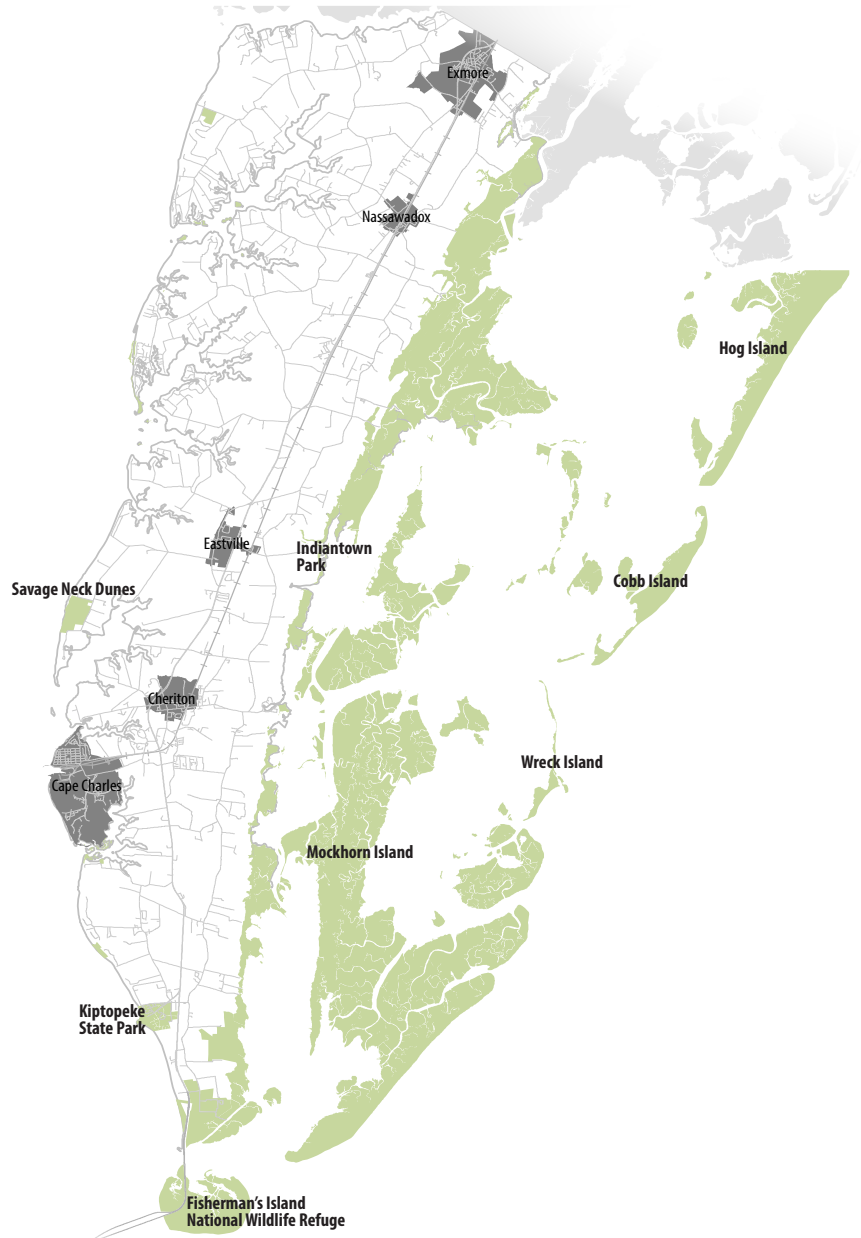
Conservation and Agriculture

Conservation Areas

Conservation Areas are areas with significant environmental sensitivity, and/or those areas that are currently protected from development. They are established to minimize flooding impacts, maximize ground-water-recharge capacity, and to protect key natural resources, such as migratory-bird habitats and coastal waters. Examples include tidal wetlands, freshwater wetlands, salt marsh and similar sensitive lands. These areas include but are not limited to state lands, private preserves such as the Barrier Islands and other lands subject to private-conservation easements, riparian areas, and Carolina bays. This planning area is the least densely developed of the planning areas and includes largely undeveloped areas of the County.

Conservation and low-intensity agriculture, aquaculture, and recreation are the primary land uses in this area. Private and public land conservation and farmland/seafood production retention programs should be focused in this area. While existing non-conforming uses may continue, they should not be expanded or enlarged. Rezoning to allow higher intensity or higher density uses would not be appropriate.

Note: Conservation Pattern Areas do not include all properties protected by conservation easement. Many private properties protected by conservation easement are not solely in conservation use and may still retain development rights. Rather, Conservation Pattern Areas are those areas in permanent conservation or recreation use, such as parks, wildlife management areas, and other open space or natural areas.





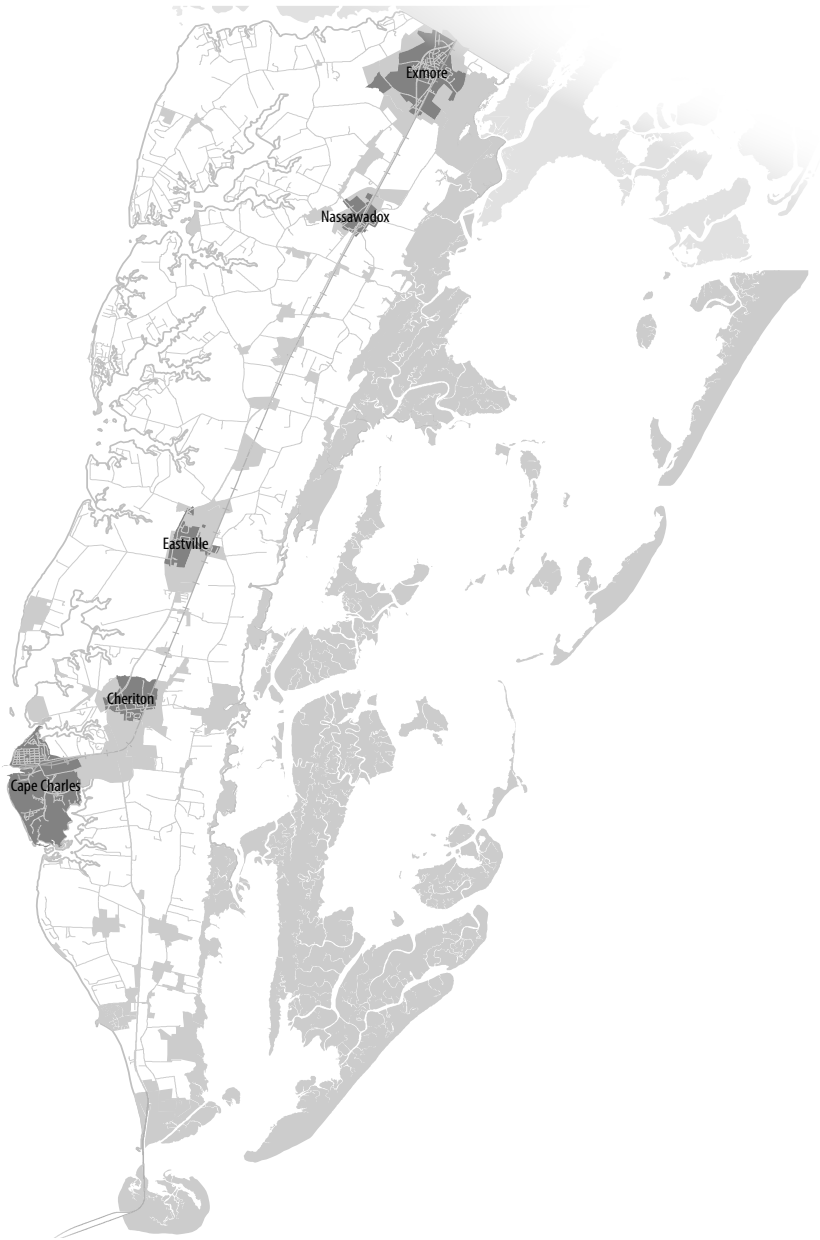
| | | |
|-----------|--------------------------|--|
| Uses | Primary | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation • Low-impact outdoor recreation • Parks, recreation, and trails • Low-impact agriculture • Seafood harvesting • Other natural resource-based uses |
| | Secondary | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very low-density residential, where not otherwise precluded by environmental regulation, is permitted but not encouraged. • Non-residential uses incidental to and supportive of primary uses. • Conservation-related or low-impact institutional complementary to conservation. |
| Character | Maximum Density | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 unit per 50 acres |
| | Design Principles | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development should incorporate conservation design principles to preserve and protect resources. • Conservation easements should be used to limit future development. |
| Other | Facilities and Utilities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public water and sewer will not be extended. • Individual, alternative, on-site wastewater systems may be permitted to serve conservation uses where more environmentally appropriate than traditional septic. • Community facilities should be limited to public parks, preserves, outdoor recreation, and trails. • Transportation improvements should be limited to the minimum necessary to serve uses. |
| | Special Considerations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection of the migratory flight path, endangered and threatened species. • Nonconforming uses may continue but not expand. |

Rural Areas

Rural Areas are those areas of the County that are predominantly in agricultural and forestal uses and are not served by public utilities. These areas generally include the County's prime agricultural soils and viable farm and forestry operations. Rural Areas typify the historic, managed open landscape of Northampton County that includes farm fields, pasture, wood lots and rural homesteads. These areas include active agricultural operations, related forest uses, and some scattered low-density rural residential uses.

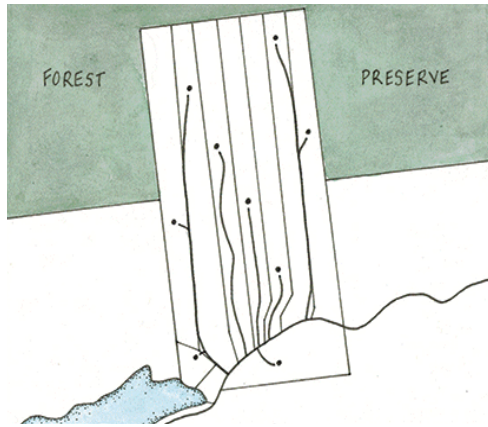
While single-family residential subdivisions exist, this use is not to be expanded or intensified in Rural Areas. Existing subdivisions in Rural Areas do not have public utilities and frequently do not meet current zoning, subdivision, Health Department, Storm Water Management or Chesapeake Bay Protection standards. It is the intent of this Plan to maintain existing subdivisions in Rural Areas consistent with their current zoning. Except for infill on existing residentially-zoned parcels, additional subdivision development is not appropriate. The current development form should be maintained and stabilized, but not expanded into adjacent areas. Rezoning to allow increased density or intensity would not be appropriate or consistent with the policies of this Plan. Alterations and retrofits to enhance resiliency and conform to current health, environmental, zoning and subdivision standards is appropriate and encouraged.

The County seeks to maintain the existing agricultural character of Rural Areas through use, design, and regulatory means. Farmland retention programs are encouraged in this area, and "right-to-farm" policies will be vigorously promoted to protect farms from nuisance complaints from rural residents. Plats for new residential lots located within the Rural/Agricultural Area should disclose that the preferred land use in the immediate vicinity of the new lot is agriculture and identify adjacent agricultural/farm uses. Non-agriculture related industrial and commercial uses and rezonings to allow higher-intensity or higher density uses are discouraged. Any uses, agricultural or otherwise, that negatively impact coastal waters and the viability of the seafood industry are not desired or recommended.



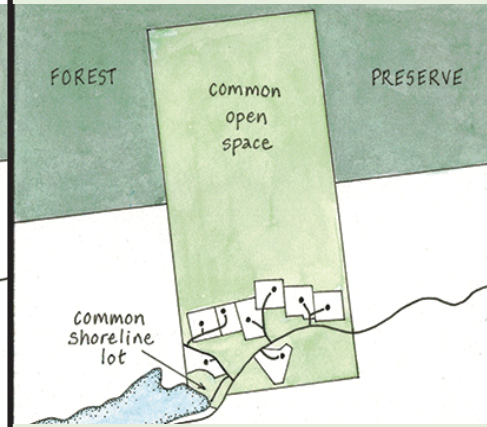
Rural Areas Use & Design Criteria

Traditional Subdivision



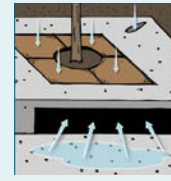
- Uniform lots.
- No open space.
- Greater land disturbance.
- No shoreline protection.

Conservation Design



- Flexibility in site design and lot size.
- Thoughtful protection and management of natural areas.
- Reduction of impervious surface areas.
- Use of Low Impact Development.

Low Impact Development



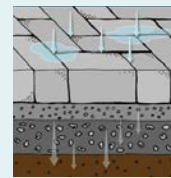
Tree Filters

Clean and reduce stormwater by collecting runoff at the base of a tree to absorb contaminants.



Rain Gardens

Utilize native plants to act as sponges to reduce the amount of runoff and filter contaminants.



Permeable Pavers

Allow rainwater to filter between hardsurface blocks into filtering gravel layers underneath.

| | | |
|------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| Uses | Primary | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditional and innovative agricultural uses • Rural uses that complement and support farming • Parks, recreation, and trails |
| | Secondary | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single-family residential is permitted, with right-to-farm disclosure, but not encouraged • Agriculture and heritage tourism • Non-agricultural low impact uses complementary to agriculture and open space |
| Character | Maximum Density | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 unit per 20 acres |
| | Design Principles | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development should incorporate conservation design principles to preserve resources and minimize conflict with farming. • Residences should be buffered from adjacent agricultural uses. • Increases in floor area and/or lot coverage should be discouraged where the existing lot size, drainfield size and separation distances, and environmental protection are below current standards. |
| Other | Facilities and Utilities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public water and sewer will not be extended. • Individual on-site wastewater systems may be permitted to serve conservation uses where more environmentally appropriate than traditional septic. • Off-site sewage disposal is discouraged. • Community facilities should be limited to public parks and outdoor recreation. • Maintenance, enhancement, and expansion of private community amenities in existing neighborhoods is acceptable. • Transportation improvements should be limited to the minimum necessary to serve uses and improve public safety. Neither the County nor the State will maintain private streets. |
| | Special Considerations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of prime agricultural soils is discouraged. • Use and development that negatively impacts coastal waters and the viability of the seafood industry is discouraged. • Nonconforming uses and existing residential subdivisions may continue at existing densities but not expand. • Negative environmental impacts should be improved with shore-line stabilization-measures, alternative wastewater systems, and native plantings for filtration of runoff. |

Cottage Communities

Cottage Communities are existing rural residential areas, typically of 50 or more lots located on or near the water in rural locations. Cottage Communities are not served by public utilities, and most were developed under older zoning standards or prior to the County’s adoption of a zoning ordinance. These frequently do not meet current zoning, subdivision, Health Department, Storm Water Management or Chesapeake Bay Protection standards. Cottage Communities should be conserved and maintained in their current form but not expanded.

Planning for climate change resiliency, sea level rise, and hazard management is critical to these communities. Alterations and retrofits to enhance resiliency and conform to current health, environmental, zoning and subdivision standards is appropriate and encouraged.

With the exception of infill parcels, new development is discouraged in Cottage Communities. Improvements to facilities, infrastructure, and structures should be limited to maintenance, preservation, and rehabilitation in order to maintain property values, improve public safety, contribute to the availability of housing options, and to enhance community character, economic potential, and resiliency. Any infill development must be compatible with the character of the neighborhood, natural resources, and surrounding residential uses.





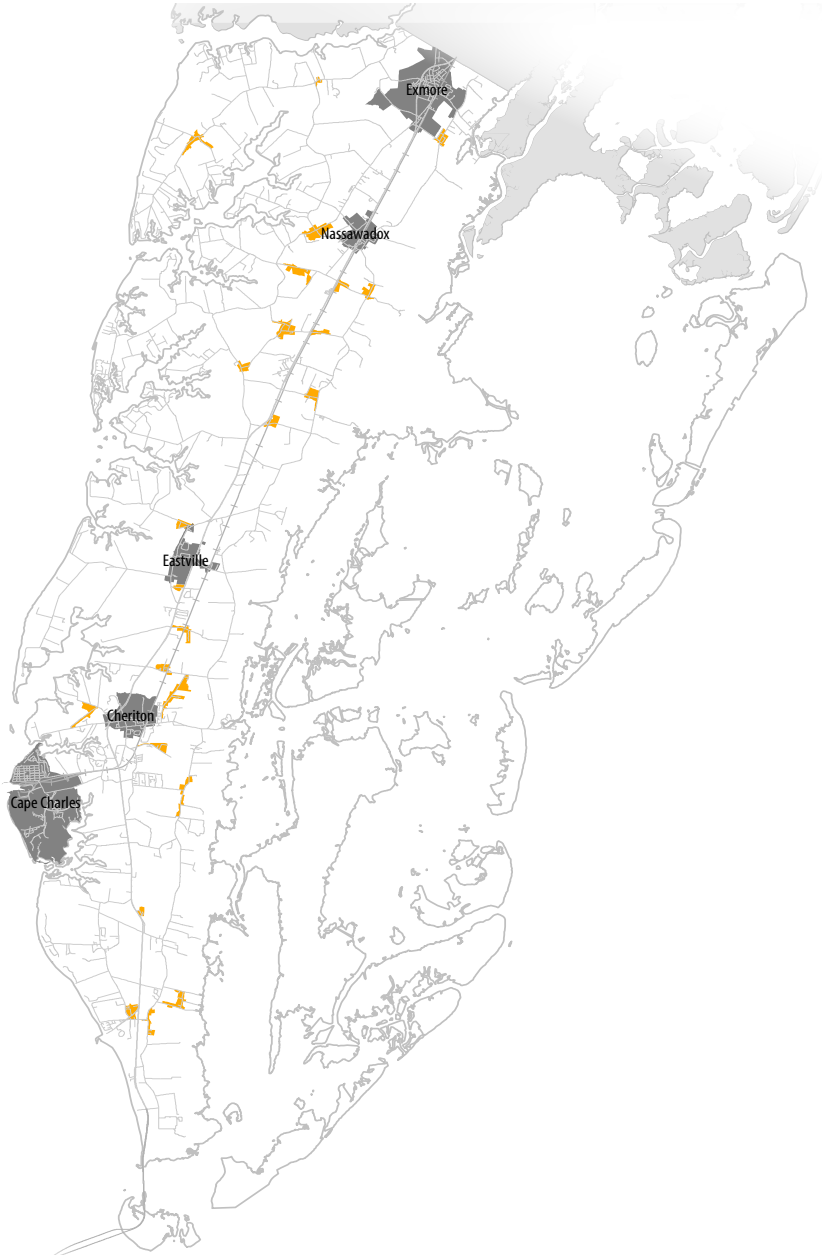
| | | |
|-----------|--------------------------|--|
| Uses | Primary | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Single-family residential |
| | Secondary | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low-impact nature based tourism Small-scale, adaptive reuse businesses and home occupations Low-impact recreational uses complimentary to residential Small scale and low impact marine related uses complimentary to residential |
| Character | Maximum Density | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 units per acre |
| | Design Principles | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traditional small-lot patterns should remain. Interconnected street network and defined open spaces should be provided. Maintain low-speed, pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly streets. New structures should be of a scale and type that are consistent with existing structures and built in a style and with materials that are compatible with the local architecture. |
| Other | Facilities and Utilities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public water and sewer will not be extended, and natural resources are limited. Individual on-site wastewater systems and alternative on-site wastewater systems may be permitted to serve community uses where more environmentally appropriate than traditional septic. Community facilities should be limited to community based recreational facilities and private facilities that serve the residents of the community. Limited road improvements may be necessary to improve safety at intersections. Street design must be compatible with the historic character of the local roads in terms of pavement width, building setbacks, etc. |
| | Special Considerations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infill development should complement the character and compact design of the community. |

Rural Settlement

Hamlets

Hamlets are existing, unincorporated, small rural settlements, typically of 10 to 30 houses. They are often of local historic or cultural significance. These communities grew up at crossroads areas and usually have specific place names. Hamlets traditionally functioned and continue to function as community focal points and gathering places because they may include such things as a post office, church, general store, or similar facility that serves residents of the immediate rural area. Hamlets are mostly residential but may include areas zoned for limited commercial, employment, and higher-intensity residential uses than the surrounding rural area. The traditional, compact-development pattern in these areas should be preserved.

Maintenance and rehabilitation of existing structures is a priority to maintain property values, provide a range of housing options for all income levels, and address affordable-housing concerns in the county. Any infill development should complement the unique character and compact design of each hamlet community and be supported by existing roads.





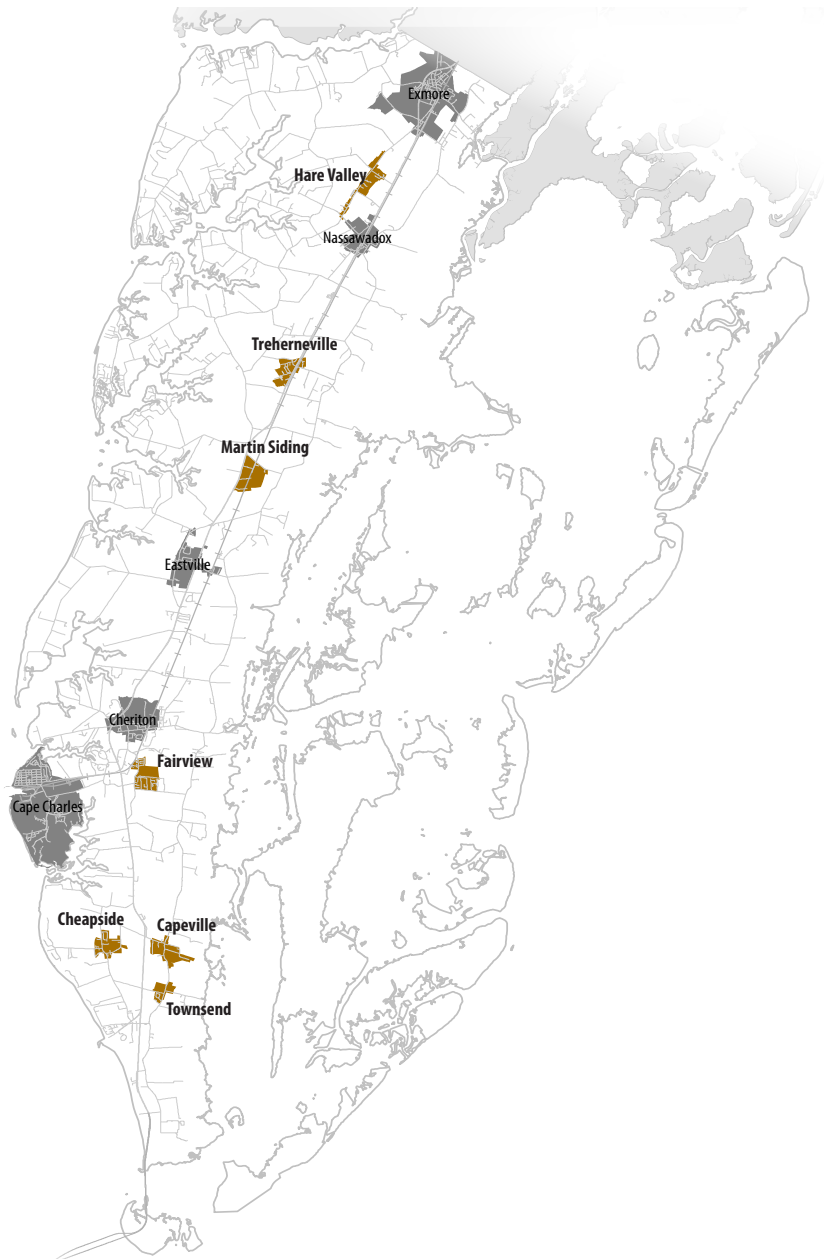
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| Uses | Primary | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single-family residential • Small-scale business / employment • Parks, recreation, and trails |
| | Secondary | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vertical and horizontal mixed use • Small-scale institutional |
| Character | Maximum Density | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent with existing zoning, but not to exceed 2 units per acre |
| | Design Principles | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditional small-lot patterns should remain. • Interconnected street network and defined open spaces should be provided. • New buildings should front the street. • Maintain low-speed, pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly streets. • Pedestrian connections and safety enhancements, such as stop bars and crosswalks, should be incorporated. • New structures should be of a scale and type that are consistent with existing structures and built in a style and with materials that are compatible with the local architecture. |
| Other | Facilities and Utilities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public water and sewer will not be extended, and natural resources are limited. • Individual on-site wastewater systems may be permitted to serve community uses where more environmentally appropriate than traditional septic. • Community facilities should be limited to those serving a local need, such as post offices, public parks, and recreation facilities. • Limited road improvements may be necessary to improve safety at intersections. • Street design must be compatible with the historic character of the local roads in terms of pavement width, building setbacks, etc. |
| | Special Considerations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infill development should complement the character and compact design of the hamlet. |

Rural Settlement Villages

Villages are larger unincorporated rural communities, typically of 30 to 100 houses. Villages historically grew up along major thoroughfares, around train stations, and at major crossroads. Although the Villages generally do not have access to central sewer and water, they usually have a higher-density identifiable core that includes a mix of residential, business, industrial, and institutional uses in a traditional development pattern. They are separate and distinct from each other and from nearby towns. Villages have served as, and will continue to serve as, focal points for surrounding Rural Areas.

The maintenance, preservation, and rehabilitation of existing structures in Villages is also a priority to maintain property values, to provide a range of housing options for all income levels, and to provide business opportunities. New development within the Village should be limited to undeveloped infill parcels and closely related to the existing, historic character and design of the Village.

Recognizing the unique character and challenges of each Village, the preparation and implementation of specific area plans for individual Villages, as requested and supported by residents, is recommended.





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| Uses | Primary | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residential Small-scale business, commercial, and employment uses Marine and water-related industries, such as aquaculture, fisheries, seafood businesses, nature-based tourism Low-impact commercial Parks, recreation, and trails |
| | Secondary | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accessory dwelling units Live/work units Vertical and horizontal mixed use |
| Character | Maximum Density | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Single-family: 2 units per acre Multifamily: 4 units per acre |
| | Design Principles | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development should preserve historic structures and existing patterns of development. Development should maintain compact traditional form at densities that are consistent with adjacent properties. Scale and character should be compatible with existing structures. Interconnected street network and defined open spaces should be provided. New buildings should front the street. Maintain low-speed, pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly streets. Pedestrian connections and safety enhancements, such as stop bars and crosswalks, should be incorporated. Visual impact of parking for commercial uses should be minimized through design, building placement, landscaping, or other means |
| Other | Facilities and Utilities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public water and sewer will not be extended, except for public health reasons after identifying specific service boundaries through a public process. Individual on-site wastewater systems may be permitted to serve community uses where more environmentally appropriate than traditional septic. Maintenance, enhancement, and expansion of existing community facilities is appropriate. Pedestrian facilities and traffic-calming measures should be employed. Street design must be compatible with the historic character of the local roads in terms of pavement width, building setbacks, etc. |
| | Special Considerations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infill development should complement the character and compact design of the village. |

Waterfront Communities

Waterfront Communities are unique communities that require careful development considerations because of their location and character. Although they do not have access to public sewer and water, they usually have a higher-density identifiable core that includes a mix of residential, business, industrial, and institutional uses clustered compactly around a working waterfront and harbor area. They are separate and distinct from nearby towns and other settlements, with an existing buffer of open farmland at their periphery.

Waterfront Communities are focal points for marine-related industries. Appropriate business locations on the waterfront are important to the long-term economy of the County and should be carefully protected and utilized in a productive manner. Preference should be given to promoting areas and sites for working waterfront operations, fishing, aquaculture, and habitat preservation that will support the economy, enhance the environment, and ensure quality production of fish and shellfish.

Planning for climate change resiliency, sea level rise, and hazard management is critical to these communities. Alterations and retrofits to enhance resiliency and conform to current health, environmental, zoning and subdivision standards is appropriate and encouraged.

The maintenance, preservation, and rehabilitation of existing structures in Waterfront Communities is also a priority to maintain property values, to provide a range of housing options for all income levels, and to provide business opportunities.

All new development within Waterfront Communities should be limited to infill parcels. Rezoning to allow higher density or intensity uses at the edge of Waterfront Communities is not recommended unless all of the following criteria are met (i) any new development will be designed, built, and sited to be compatible with the existing character of the area, including but not limited to the style of the buildings; (ii) adequate connections to existing streets are provided in appropriate locations; (iii) proposed new structures are adjacent to or near buildings and houses in the existing Waterfront Community; (iv) connections to available public or central utility systems are provided, and such connections are consistent with the County utility policies and feasible from an engineering standpoint; (v) the new development is designed so that a clear boundary, or edge, is provided between developed and undeveloped areas in the Waterfront Community.

Recognizing the unique character and challenges of each Waterfront Community, the preparation and implementation of specific area plans for individual Villages, as requested and supported by residents, is recommended. The waterfront Villages of Willis Wharf and Oyster have completed such plans, which are adopted into the County-wide Comprehensive Plan (See Appendix C).





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| Uses | Primary | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residential Small-scale business, commercial, and employment uses Marine and water-related industries, such as aquaculture, fisheries, seafood businesses, nature-based tourism Low-impact commercial Vertical and horizontal mixed use Parks, recreation, and trails |
| | Secondary | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accessory dwelling units Live/work units |
| Character | Maximum Density | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Single-family: 2 units per acre |
| | Design Principles | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development should preserve working waterfronts, historic structures, and existing patterns of development. Development should maintain compact traditional form at densities that are consistent with adjacent properties. Scale and character should be compatible with existing structures. Interconnected street network and defined open spaces should be provided. New buildings should front the street. Maintain low-speed, pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly streets. Pedestrian connections and safety enhancements, such as stop bars and crosswalks, should be incorporated. Visual impact of parking for commercial uses should be minimized through design, building placement, landscaping, or other means |
| Other | Facilities and Utilities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public water and sewer will not be extended, except for public health reasons after identifying specific service boundaries through a public process. Individual on-site wastewater systems may be permitted to serve community uses where more environmentally appropriate than traditional septic. Maintenance, enhancement, and expansion of existing community facilities is appropriate. Pedestrian facilities and traffic-calming measures should be employed. Street design must be compatible with the historic character of the local roads in terms of pavement width, building setbacks, etc. |
| | Special Considerations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development in Waterfront Communities must consider availability of natural resources, potential for sea-level rise and 500-year storm events, and protection of area waters for continued aquaculture, fishing, and other marine industries. Existing buffer areas should be preserved for managed inland retreat. |

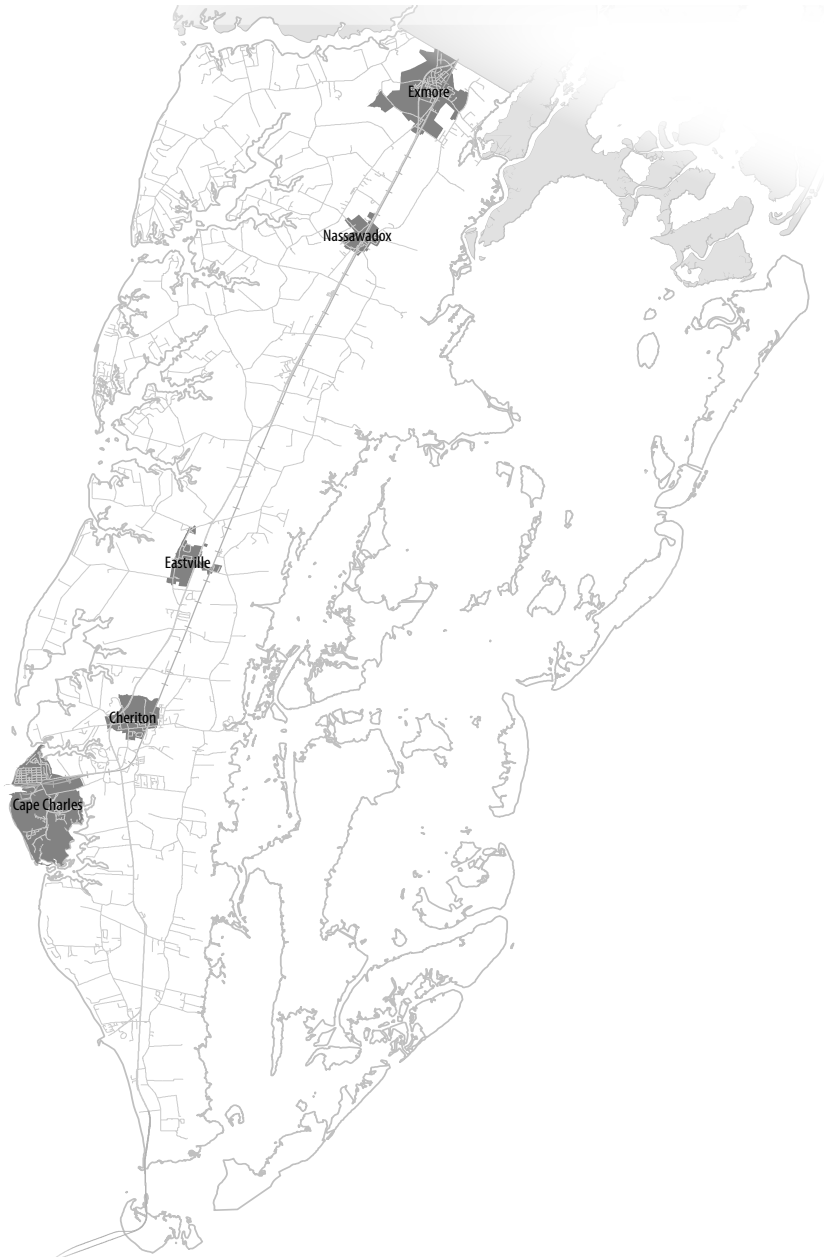
Development Areas

Towns

Northampton County's six towns, Nassawadox, Eastville, Cheriton, Cape Charles, Exmore, and a portion of Belle Haven, serve as the social and economic focal points of the County. All towns, except for Cape Charles, have frontage on US Rt. 13. Towns have their own governing bodies and distinct land use planning and zoning controls and are not subject to the requirements of this Comprehensive Plan; however, the County and the towns will work cooperatively in plan implementation efforts.

Towns have long been designated as the preferred development areas, and zoning reflects that expectation. The Towns continue to be the most appropriate location for development in the County. The County will work cooperatively with the Towns to ensure that development adjacent to the Towns is compatible with and complementary to development within the corporate limits of the Town.

The amount of new growth that can be accommodated in each Town varies substantially based upon the availability of municipal sewer and water service. Currently, only Cape Charles and Exmore offer public sewer and water service. Eastville operates a municipal water system and will also be more likely to attract development interest than the other incorporated towns that do not. Belle Haven, Nassawadox, and Cheriton are limited by the lack of public sewer and/or water services. The County will consider each Town's Comprehensive Plan and will work cooperatively with the Towns on all land-use matters.



Development Areas

Town Edges

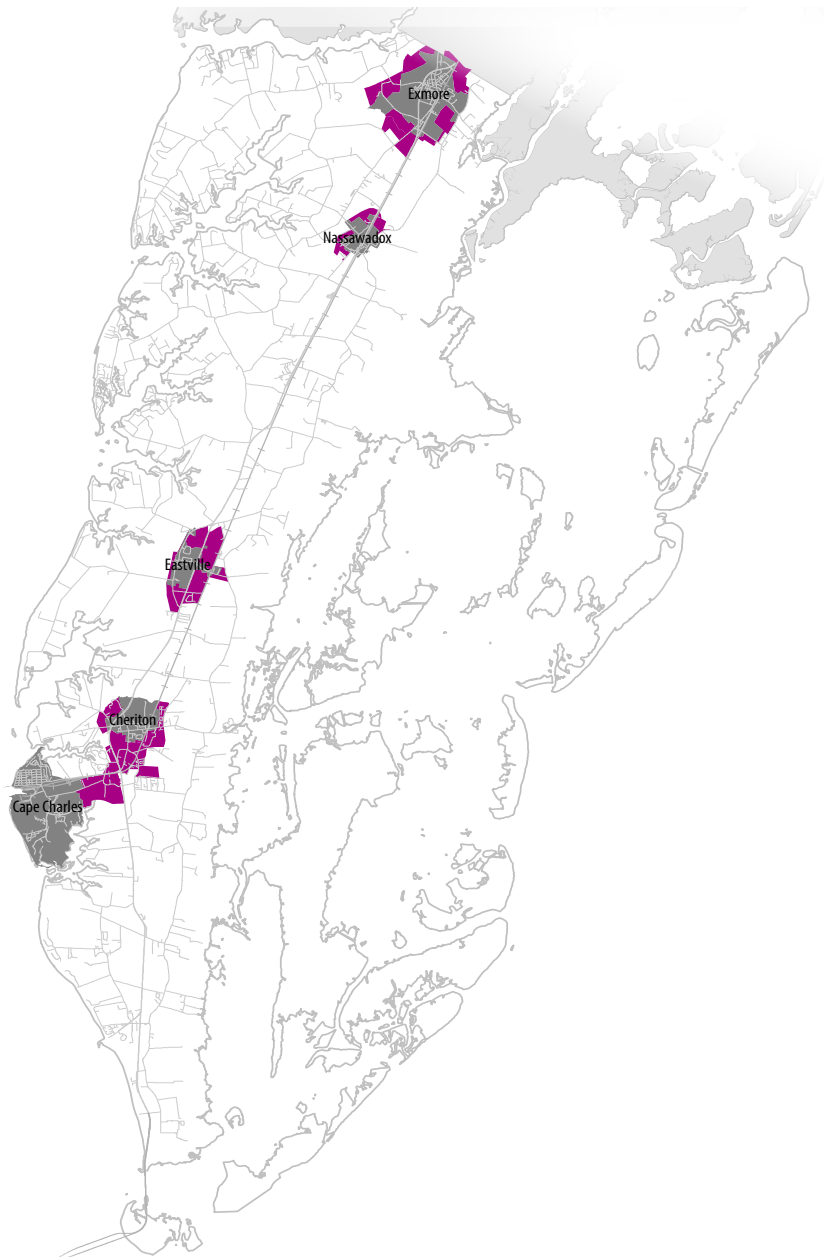
Town Edges are unincorporated areas of the County adjacent to Towns and are under the jurisdiction of the County and its land use planning and zoning controls. Town Edges are natural future-expansion areas for the incorporated Towns and may potentially be served by future public sewer and water extensions and community facilities.

High quality residential and non-residential development is encouraged in Town Edges, particularly if the possibility of infill development in the adjacent towns is precluded. Town Edge Areas could potentially be rezoned to accommodate a wide range of residential unit types and densities, with densities that decrease as the distance from the town center increases. While mixed uses are encouraged, Town Edge areas are more appropriate for neighborhood-oriented, convenience-commercial uses than for large-scale commercial development.

Development in Town Edges should be designed to complement and augment the historic character and development pattern of the adjacent Town by becoming a natural “extension” of the existing community. New development in the Town Edge areas should relate closely to the existing community and should be an “organic” and natural continuation and expansion of the historic design of the adjacent Town. Development should gradually transition from Towns to Town Edge to rural areas and provide vegetated open space buffers to protect adjacent agricultural operations.

Town Edge development should exemplify Livable Communities design principles, incorporating variety in housing options, amenities, and transportation alternatives to create compact, mixed use, pedestrian-friendly communities with ample open space. Residential development designs should provide neighborhood open space as key, central focal points of the neighborhood, designed as true community spaces that are well-defined by the street network and adjacent buildings. These options can assist in addressing inclusionary and affordable housing issues in the County.

The preparation and implementation of specific area plans for individual Town Edge areas, as requested and supported by residents and coordinated with the respective town, is recommended.



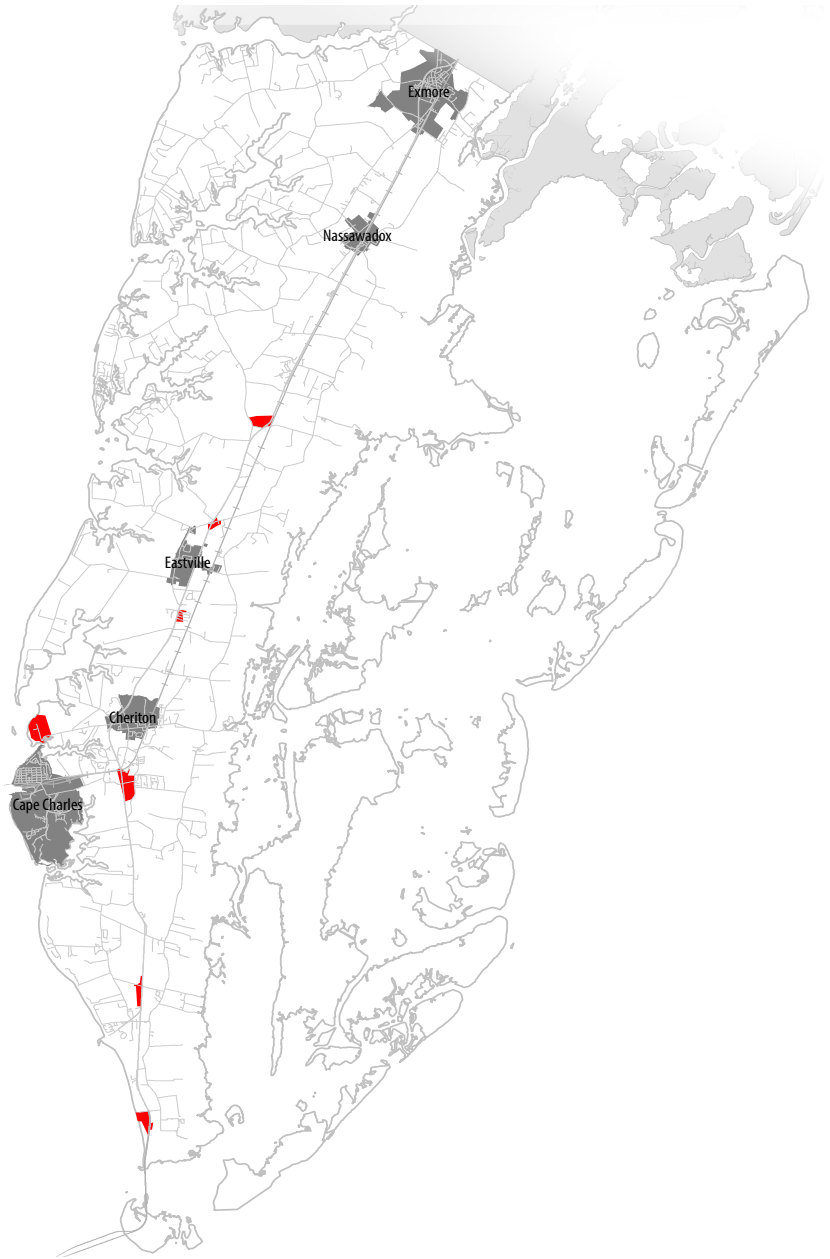


| | | |
|-----------|--------------------------|--|
| Uses | Primary | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residential Neighborhood commercial Office Vertical and horizontal mixed use Institutional Parks, recreation, and trails |
| | Secondary | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accessory dwelling units Live/work units |
| Character | Maximum Density | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 dwellings units per acre to 1 dwelling unit per 2 acres with density decreasing as distance from town center increases |
| | Design Principles | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compact development patterns, including cluster and traditional neighborhood development are encouraged. Development should complement the scale, size, proportion, and character of adjacent Towns. Preservation, renovation, reuse, and adaptive use of existing structures is encouraged. Open space should be integrated and provide community spaces well-defined by streets and adjacent buildings. |
| Other | Facilities and Utilities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Future public water and sewer service is anticipated. Community facilities that cannot otherwise be located in existing towns are appropriate. Transportation improvements tie into the existing street network serving the Town and the County and to be compatible with the Town's streets. |
| | Special Considerations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proximity to the town for the prevention of sprawl is encouraged. Housing options should vary to be inclusive of all income levels. Traffic during peak times shall be designed to allow safe ingress and egress of Town Edge developments and the main thoroughfare. |

Development Areas

Commercial Destinations

Commercial Destinations lack the historic significance or tourism interest of the Towns but provide goods and services that are necessary to everyday living. Uses include grocery, pharmacy, general retail, fueling, automotive service, and other day-to-day uses. These areas also differ from the Towns in that they are primarily automobile oriented rather than pedestrian oriented, including shopping centers that provide ample parking. Commercial Destinations are primarily within and adjacent to Towns, but existing locations are dispersed along Rt. 13. The most appropriate locations for new Commercial Destinations are within and adjacent to Towns. Additional strip development along Rt. 13 is not encouraged.





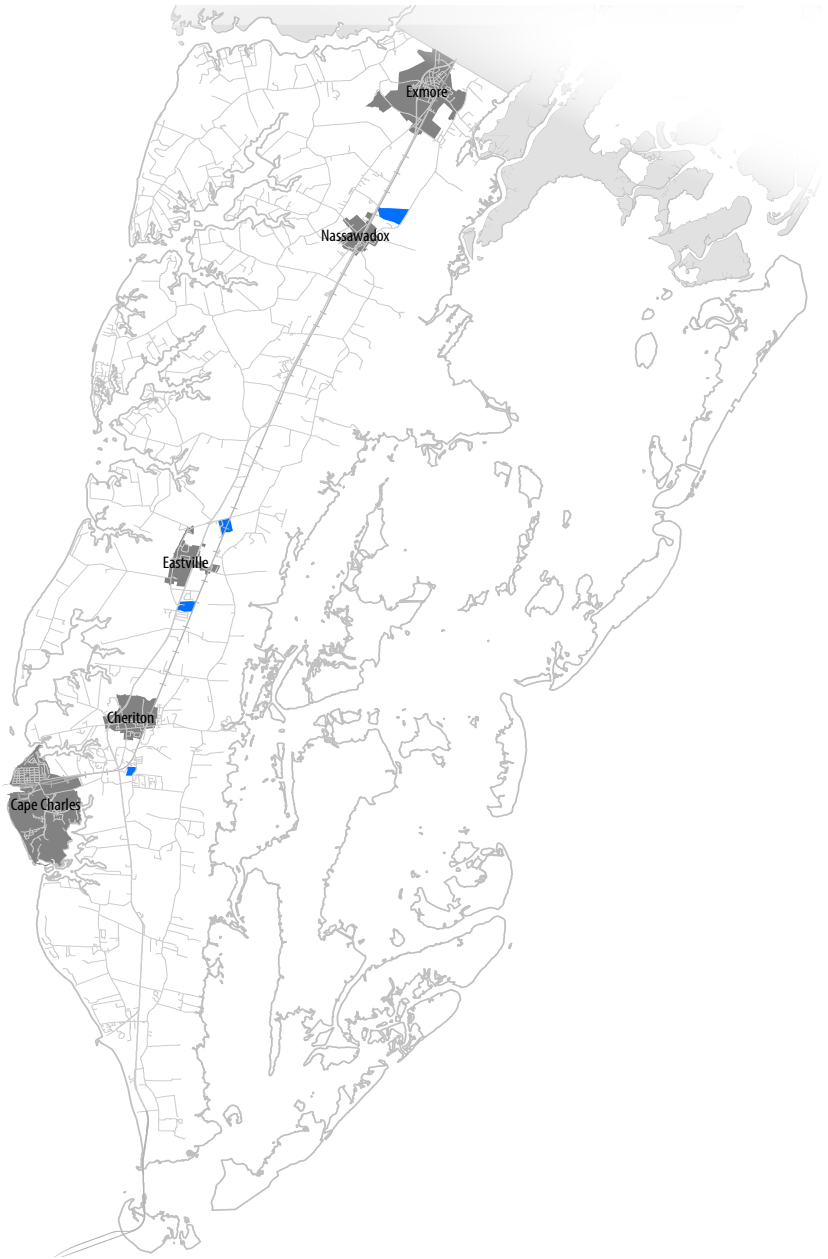
| | | |
|------------------|--------------------------|---|
| Uses | Primary | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commercial Vertical and horizontal mixed use Office Institutional Marine and water-related industries, such as aquaculture, fisheries, seafood businesses, nature-based tourism |
| | Secondary | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accessory dwelling units Live/work units |
| Character | Maximum Density | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A |
| | Design Principles | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developments should reflect coordinated site design, architecture, signage, and lighting. The scale, massing, and character of buildings should be compatible with the surrounding buildings and uses, to the extent possible. Buildings, including franchise architecture, should incorporate pedestrian-scaled, vernacular Eastern Shore architecture and enduring materials. Perimeter buffers should be incorporated between incompatible land uses. Trees, colorful landscaping, and native plants should add aesthetic and environmental benefits along streets and parking areas. Parking should be located to the side or rear of buildings or screened from view by outparcel development. Access management and inter-parcel connections should be provided. Pedestrian connections and safety enhancements, such as stop bars and crosswalks, should be incorporated. |
| Other | Facilities and Utilities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transportation improvements tie into the existing street network serving the Town and the County. |
| | Special Considerations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commercial water usage should be encouraged to utilize the Columbia aquifer. Proximity to the town for the prevention of sprawl is encouraged. |

Development Areas

Industrial and Business Centers

Industrial/Business Centers are highly accessible locations, primarily located near towns, that provide opportunities for office, wholesale, manufacturing, distribution, heavy commercial, and accessory services. Industrial uses that are compatible with the County's rural and natural heritage are the most appropriate. All uses should be compatible with the County's primary economic base of agriculture and aquaculture industries and should not strain or degrade the County's sole-source multi-aquifer system.

Infill and expansion of the established industrial districts is encouraged over new industrial centers or parks that would detract from the economic viability of existing areas. Expansions, as appropriate, should provide a "park-like" campus setting with landscaping and good transportation access. Sustainable development practices, including stormwater management, water conservation, and pollution reduction strategies should be a high priority in facility and site design.



Industrial & Business Centers Use & Design Criteria



| | | |
|-----------|--------------------------|--|
| Uses | Primary | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Light and moderate industrial uses • Office • Heavy commercial • Institutional • Marine and water-related industries, such as aquaculture, fisheries, seafood businesses, nature-based tourism |
| | Secondary | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial |
| Character | Maximum Density | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A |
| | Design Principles | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developments should reflect coordinated site design, architecture, signage, and lighting. • Buildings should incorporate high quality design and enduring materials. • The scale, massing, and character of industrial buildings should be compatible with the surrounding buildings and uses, to the extent possible. • Buildings should incorporate sustainable and energy efficient design. • Perimeter buffers should be incorporated between incompatible land uses. • Trees and colorful landscaping should add aesthetic and environmental benefits along streets and parking areas. • Fleet vehicle parking should be located to the rear of the property. • Parking should be well-landscaped and provide on-site stormwater management. |
| Other | Facilities and Utilities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transportation improvements tie into the existing street network serving the Town and the County. |
| | Special Considerations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industrial/business water usage should be encouraged to utilize the Columbia aquifer. • Pollution prevention and water conservation are priorities. |

Gateways and Corridors

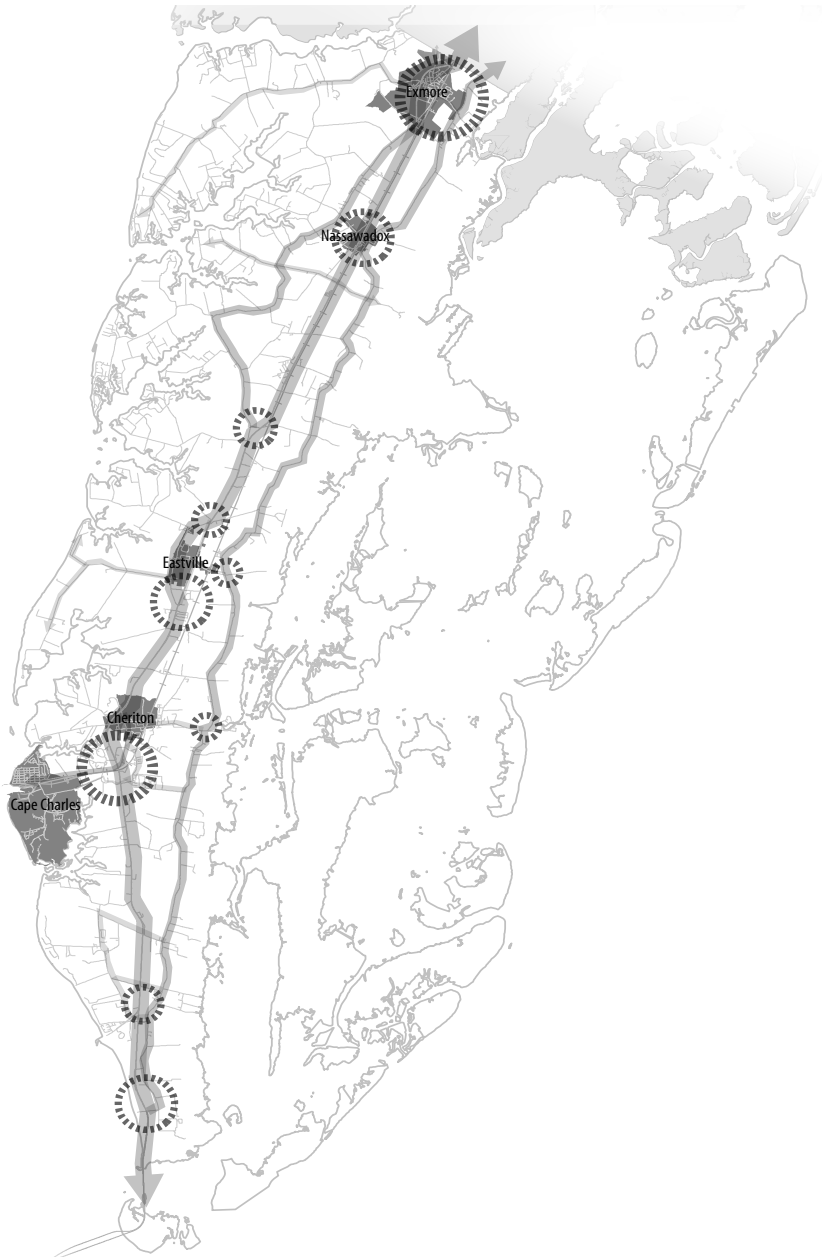
Gateways 

Regional Corridors 

Local Corridors 

Gateways and Corridors serve as an orienting network that overlays the designated Pattern Areas. The appearance and functionality of Gateways and Corridors help to integrate the distinct areas and create a strong impression for the overall community.

Development along and within Gateways and Corridors should incorporate features within the public and private realm that enhance the design character and quality of the community. Landscaping, sign controls, and underground utilities, where feasible, should be provided to elevate community appearance. Removal of existing mature trees should be discouraged along the frontage of sites, and parking should be screened from off-site views using plants of different types and heights. Gateways should incorporate special signage, public art, and landscaping to create a sense of arrival into the County. Corridors should incorporate enhanced streetscaping and encourage multiple travel options. Gateway and Corridors should also be prioritized for enhancement projects, such as sidewalk infill, bike lanes, and wayfinding signage.





Northampton County will respect and embrace its unique environment and natural resources, emphasizing protection of its sole-source multi-aquifer system and coastal ecosystem as fundamental to the creation of a resilient future.

Northampton County's position on the Eastern Shore of Virginia offers **natural beauty, abundant resources, and a remarkable ecological environment**. Fertile soils; hundreds of bird species including songbirds and raptors; aquatic life including shellfish; critical shorelines, marshland, and barrier islands all come together to create the County's natural ecosystems. The people of Northampton County have relied on these resources for centuries, both **cultivating and utilizing the natural environment** to sustain their way of life.

Northampton County's **environmental assets** provide innumerable benefits. Residents rely on the limited groundwater resource, the recreational use and enjoyment of public lands, and the ecosystem services provided by wetlands, dunes, forests, and waterways. In addition, the county's **economic drivers** – tourism, agriculture, aquaculture, fishing and crabbing – depend largely on these high-quality natural resources.

Facing the threats of climate change, it is now more critical than ever to be **responsible stewards** of the environment and take action to enhance community resiliency. The strategies in this chapter will help to address this by **conserving and protecting** natural resources, while at the same time minimizing environmental risks, mitigating negative impacts, and adapting to change with innovative development practices.



What is Environmental Resilience?

Environmental resilience means “minimizing environmental risks associated with disasters, quickly returning critical environmental and ecological services to functionality after a disaster while applying this learning process to reduce vulnerabilities and risks to future incidents.” (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency).

Your Environment

Environmental resources are discussed in detail in Appendix A, Community Overview. Key considerations for the strategies in this chapter are described below.

Sensitive Lands & Ecosystems

Northampton County's ecosystems perform a vast array of functions, including shoreline stabilization, improved water quality, and habitat – from which humans derive direct and indirect benefits. Habitat destruction, intrusion of invasive plants, and loss of prime farmland, beaches, dunes, wetlands are among the many issues facing the County's sensitive lands and ecosystems. The county has a variety of existing programs to encourage conservation, such as conservation zoning, primary dune ordinance, cluster subdivisions, Agricultural/Forestal Districts, and Purchase of Development Rights. Several areas in the county are protected at the state and federal level, and many more areas are protected under private conservation easements. Continued stewardship, land conservation, and innovative practices are needed to preserve coastal resources and protect sensitive habitat, wildlife, and land resources for future generations.

Strategies to Conserve and Protect Sensitive Lands & Ecosystems

1. Continue to enforce regulations and programs for land conservation and protection, including the wetlands ordinance, the primary dune ordinance, conservation zoning, Chesapeake/Atlantic Preservation Zone (CAP) zoning district, and vegetated buffers along the bayside and seaside waterfront.
2. Promote and expand non-regulatory strategies to conserve sensitive lands, such as transfer or purchase of development rights, conservation easements, and tax incentives.
3. Participate with the Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission in the Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program to bring resources to the county for coastal resource protection, coastal resource sustainable use, and coastal management coordination.
4. Implement an integrated approach to shoreline management that incorporates Virginia Marine Resources Commission and Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) policy guidance and decision-making tools.
5. Continue to utilize VIMS Comprehensive Coastal Resource Management Portal (CCRMP) Shoreline Best Management Practices for management recommendations for all tidal shorelines, and Coastal Resilience's Virginia Eastern Shore tool to visualize sea-level rise and storm surge.
6. Use visible public spaces to provide education on conservation, shoreline management, environmental stewardship, and Chesapeake Bay Act guidance.
7. Pursue partnerships and funding opportunities, including grants, loan funds, and cost share opportunities, to increase the extent of natural areas along the waterfront, using shoreline restoration projects such as living shorelines, and consider incentives that could encourage their use.



Map 5.1 Conservation Lands



Water Resources

One of the key features of the county is its relationship with and proximity to water. The seafood industry, a critical component of Northampton County's economy, relies on pristine water quality that is highly susceptible to pollution from agricultural fertilizers, septic system failure, and stormwater runoff from development and roads. Saltwater, marshland, and protected wetlands make up a large portion of the water resources in the county, providing ecosystem services while also creating challenges for land use and development.

The sole-source multi-aquifer system that provides the county's drinking water must be studiously cared for and protected against overdraw and impairment.

Northampton County has adopted a floodplain management ordinance and Chesapeake/Atlantic Preservation (CAP) Zoning District to incorporate water quality protection measures consistent with Virginia's Chesapeake Bay Act Regulations. These existing programs will continue, while new and innovative practices, policies, and technologies are explored.

Strategies to Protect Water Quality

8. Work with the Health Department to control the location, density, design, and maintenance of on-site septic systems to reduce threats to water quality.
9. Continue to enforce the stormwater management, Erosion and Sediment Control, and Floodplain Management Ordinances, and require regular maintenance, monitoring, and enforcement.
10. Implement the Eastern Shore of Virginia Groundwater Resource Protection and Preservation Plan, as amended, including encouraging the use of green infrastructure for stormwater management practices, encouraging the use of membrane treatment technology and wastewater reclamation and reuse, and encouraging use of the surficial Columbia aquifer for irrigation and commercial/industrial wells.
11. Work with community partners including, but not limited to, the Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission, the Department of Environmental Quality, local advocacy groups, and others, to explore potential designation of Northampton County's waterways as "No Discharge Zones."
12. Conduct public outreach and provide education regarding water efficiency practices, green infrastructure, responsible use of fertilizer, proper disposal of animal waste, and other actions to conserve water and improve water quality.
13. Conduct public outreach and provide education regarding septic system technologies, maintenance, and funding sources.
14. Encourage residents and property managers to implement water efficiency practices and conservation techniques by educating them on their water usage statistics, potential water supply issues, and the benefits of participating in water audits.
15. Participate with the Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission in implementing the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Implementation Plan to meet Total Maximum Daily Load standards.



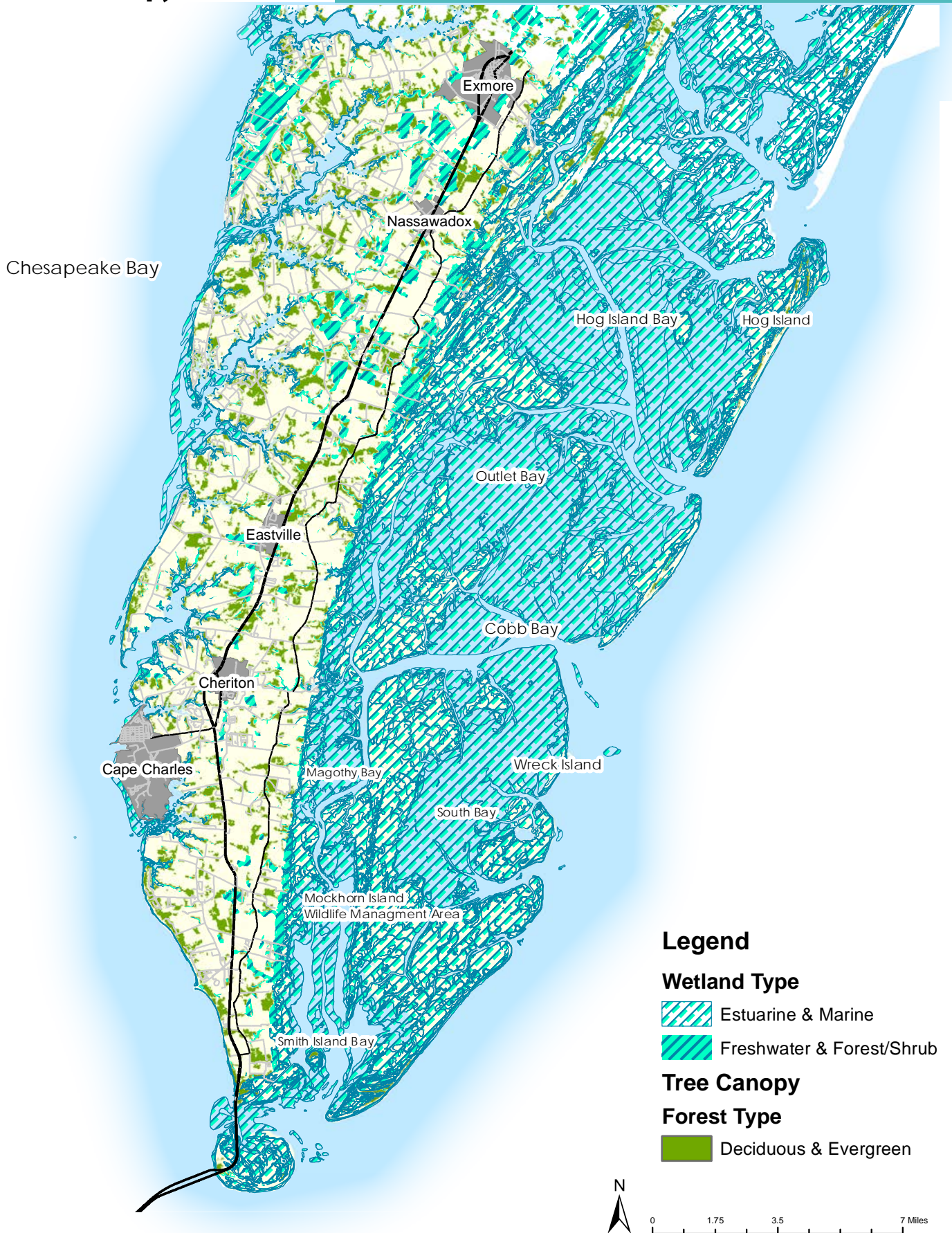
Pursuant to **Code of Virginia §15.2-2223.3:**

This Comprehensive Plan incorporates Coastal Resource Management Guidance from the Virginia Institute of Marine Sciences (VIMS). The guidance cultivates long-term sustainability for shoreline resources with consideration of current resource condition, priority planning, and forecasting of projected sea level rise impacts into the future. Under this guidance, the use of living shorelines as a preferred approach for stabilization of tidal shoreline is encouraged. The "guidance" communicates to stakeholders (including local governments) the policy of the Commonwealth with respect to living shorelines, identifies preferred solutions for erosion control, and defines the risks and benefits of shoreline management strategies in an integrated comprehensive manner.

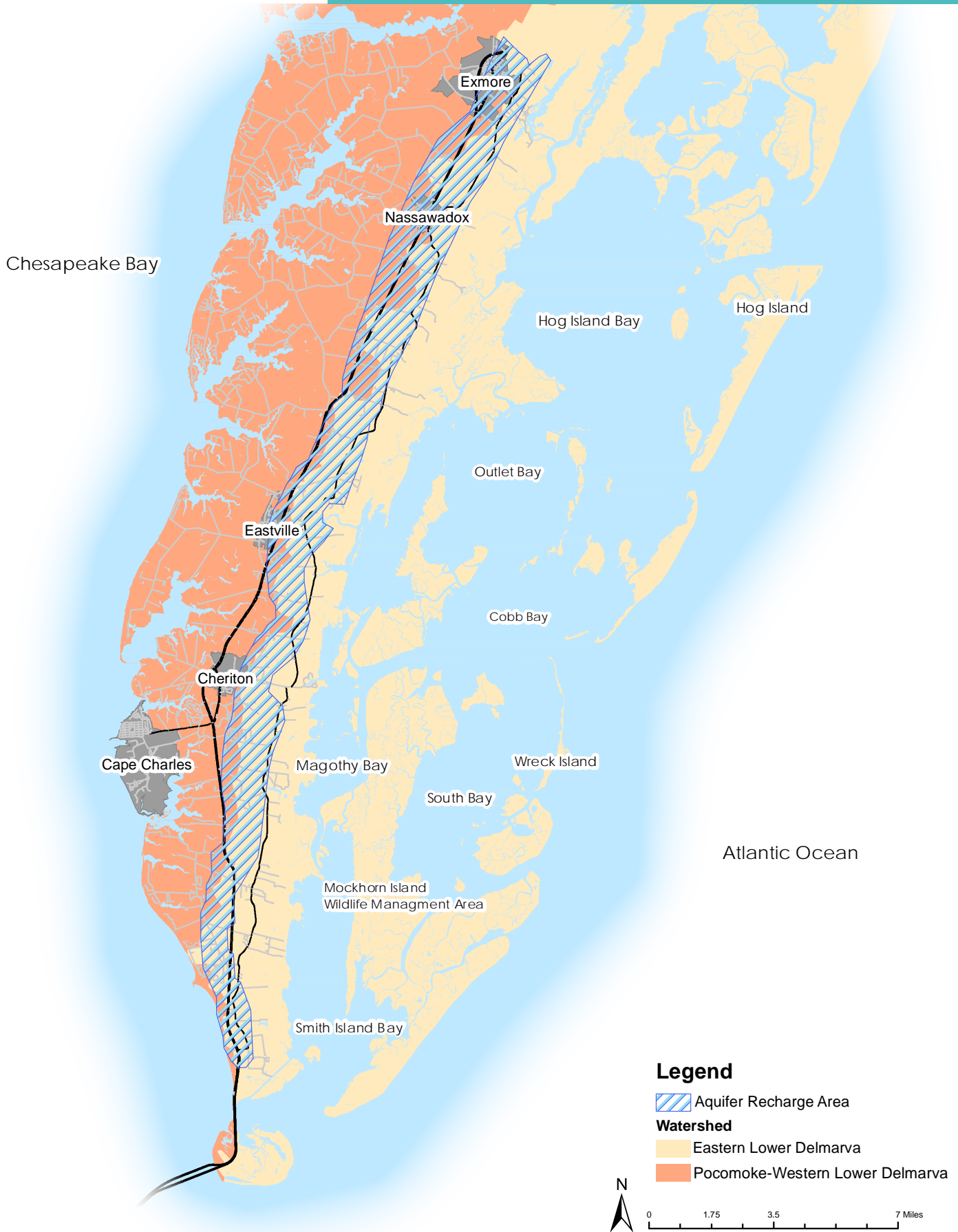
The coastal resource management strategies in this chapter are adapted from model language provided by VIMS. The VIMS website also offers a locality portals with additional risk tools, resources, and guidance specific to Northampton County.



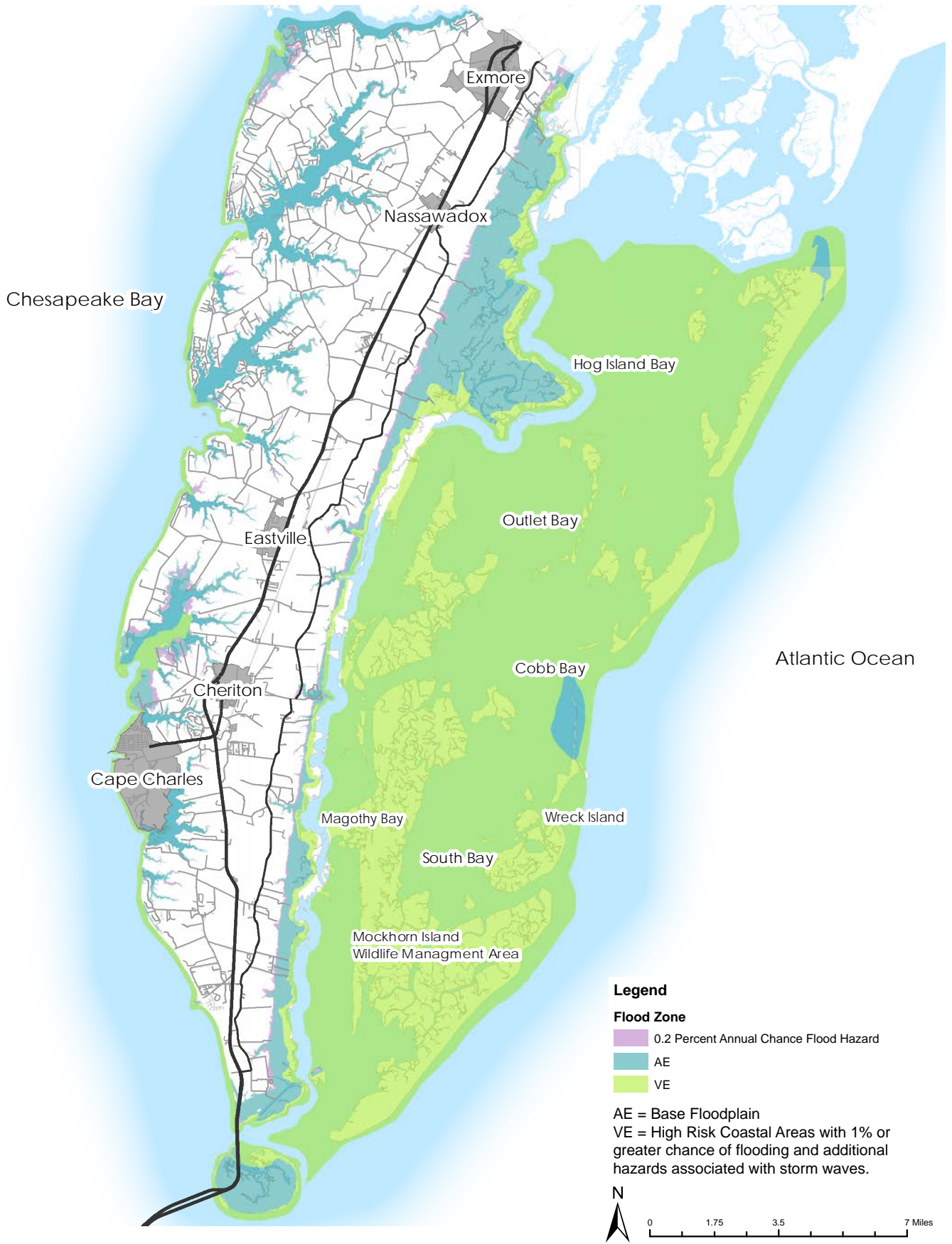
Map 5.2 Tree Canopy & Wetlands



Map 5.3 Groundwater Resources



Map 5.4 Flood Zones





What is the Chesapeake/Atlantic Preservation Zone (CAP)?

The purpose and intent of the CAP is to protect water quality, restore water quality, prevent pollution, reduce existing pollution, and promote water resource conservation. The CAP includes the Resource Protection Area (RPA) and Resource Management Area (RMA). The RPA includes tidal wetlands, water bodies with perennial flow, connected non-tidal wetlands, tidal shores and beaches, coastal primary sand dunes including beaches, and a 100-foot vegetated buffer area located adjacent to and landward of the components listed above. The RMA is composed of all land in the Northampton County which is not designated as an RPA.

Northampton County has established the Resource Protection Area on both the Seaside and Bayside through the CAP in order to protect the quality of water in the Chesapeake Bay and Atlantic Ocean and consequently the quality of life in Northampton County and the Commonwealth of Virginia.

The CAP performance standards establish the means to minimize erosion and sedimentation during construction, reduce land application or nutrients and toxins, reduce stormwater runoff post-construction, maximize rainwater infiltration, and reduce septic failure through regular pump out of all on-site sewage disposal systems not a Virginia Pollution Discharge Elimination System (VPDES) permit.

Climate Change and Hazard Mitigation

Northampton County is subject to many of the issues created by a changing global climate including warming water temperatures, increasing storm intensity, heat waves, and others. With much of the land either at or just above sea level, sea level rise threatens county property and water supply, while storm events pose high risk to established neighborhoods and critical facilities. For planning purposes, Virginia Institute of Marine Sciences recommends anticipation of a 1.5-foot rise in sea level above the 1992 datum within the next 20 to 50 years (2033 - 2063).

Building community resiliency will require adapting to climate change and mitigating the risks associated with flooding, dangerous storms, and other risks. While the County seeks innovation, its sensitive ecosystems are particularly vulnerable to negative impacts from renewable energy sources used to combat climate change, including fatal bird strikes from windmills and excessive stormwater runoff and habitat destruction associated with utility-scale solar facilities. Flood insurance, the most common tool used to restore value to property owners affected by flooding, is becoming increasingly difficult to attain, requiring new mechanisms to help property owners recoup economic value lost to water rise. Creating a more resilient County will require adaptive land use practices and new technologies to reduce flood risks, while focusing infrastructure investments on improvements that extend resilience.

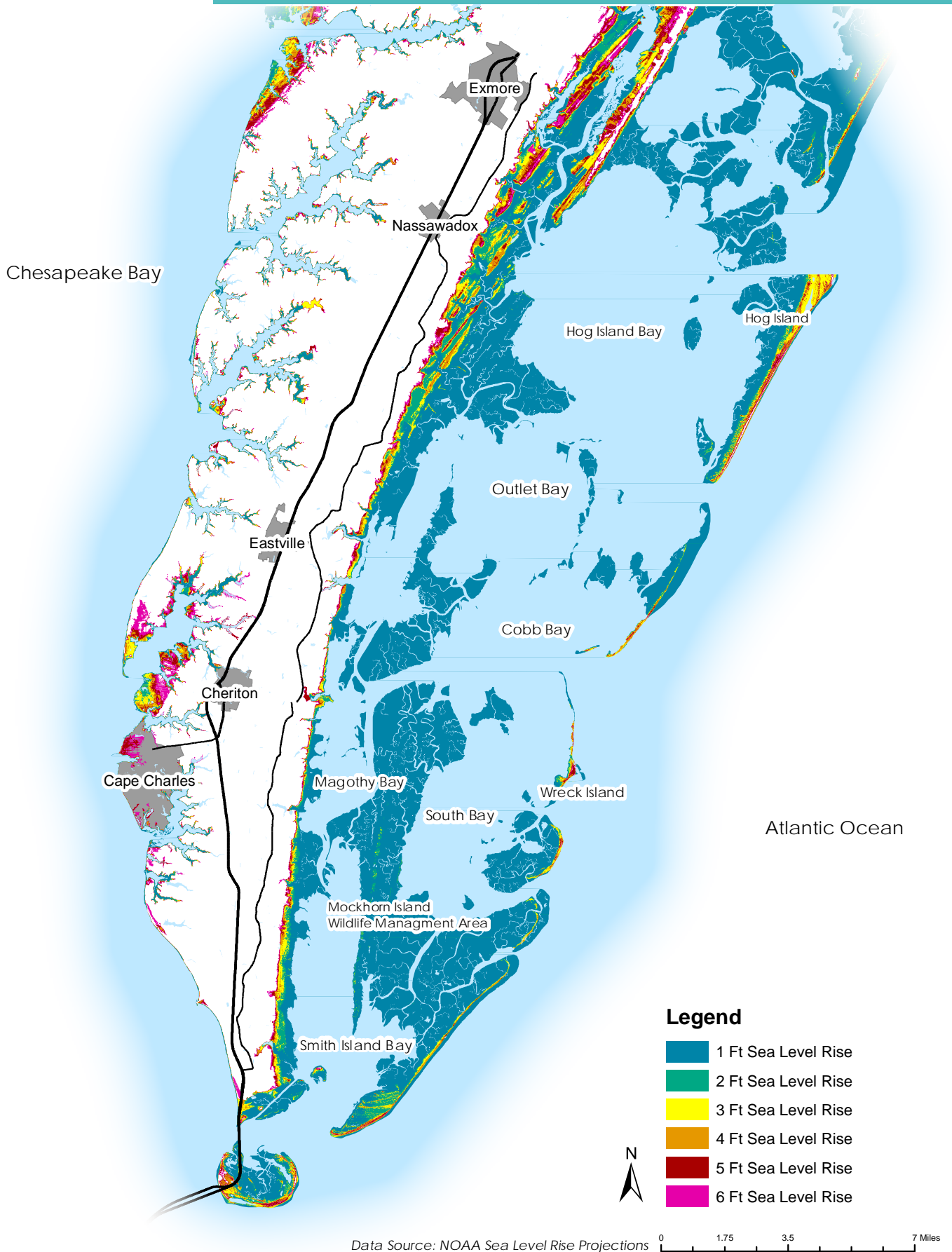
Strategies to Adapt for Climate Change

16. Participate in regional energy and climate change planning, including the development of a greenhouse gas emissions inventory and emission reduction targets.
17. Encourage the use of design techniques to slow water's rise and help absorb water into the landscape, such as living shorelines, rain gardens, and green roofs.
18. Identify opportunities to increase renewable energy use to diversify the energy grid and mitigate climate related impacts without impacting Northampton County's sensitive ecosystems.
19. Preserve available open spaces adjacent to marsh lands to support marsh migration and inland retreat of the marshes under rising sea level.
20. Review non-conforming lot and structure standards to encourage safe building and rebuilding in areas subject to sea level rise.
21. Consider establishing a transfer of development rights (TDR) program to encourage density reductions in vulnerable areas.
22. Guide new development and locate critical facilities and infrastructure outside areas at a high risk for flooding, area subject to inundation within 100 years (as identified by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration), and other hazards.
23. Utilize the Coastal Resilience Mapping portal to visualize flood and sea-level rise risks, identify sustainable natural solutions for resiliency, and demonstrate historic coastline changes when considering land-use applications.
24. Participate in the development and implementation of the Statewide Coastal Resiliency Master Plan.

Strategies to Minimize & Mitigate Environmental Hazards

25. Review and update local floodplain regulations in accordance with the National Flood Insurance Program requirements.
26. Proactively implement the Northampton County-specific strategies and projects in the Eastern Shore Hazard Mitigation Plan, as amended.
27. Amend the emergency management plan to include direct communication with the business sector.
28. Recommend the provision of independent back-up sources of power (e.g. gas generators) for commercial and institutional uses when primary power source is interrupted for an extended period.
29. Participate in the "Advancing Ecosystem and Community Resilience" project through the Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program to identify the County's resiliency needs, establish resilience priorities, and conceptualize potential projects.
30. Provide education and outreach materials on hazard preparedness, flood management, sea level rise, and recommended mitigation steps to homeowners and private businesses that have been identified as located in vulnerable areas.

Map 5.5 Sea Level Rise



Land Use & Sustainable Development

Each land use in Northampton County has benefits and impacts that must be balanced to ensure a sustainable future. Commercial agriculture, though an important part of Northampton County's economy, can cause negative impacts to water quality due to fertilizers and pesticides, and improper land management practices. Likewise, urbanization causes increased stormwater runoff, groundwater withdrawal, and greenhouse gas emissions, among other issues. Sustainable land use and development practices help mitigate unintended environmental impacts and protect against habitat disruption, resource strain (including freshwater and energy consumption), and greenhouse gas emissions. Also, of critical importance is the need to concentrate development and community facilities and resources away from sensitive ecological areas, floodplains, and areas susceptible to sea level rise – a topic discussed in detail in the Land Use Chapter of this plan.



Strategies to Implement Sustainable Development & Operations Standards

31. Promote sustainable agricultural practices, such as organic and regenerative organic agriculture, integrated pest management, reduced or no-till practices, and vegetated buffers.
32. Explore changes to zoning and development provisions to reduce parking requirements and encourage permeable paving and other materials that promote infiltration of stormwater.
33. Revise landscaping regulations to require the placement of shade trees in parking lots and use of native plants in all commercial and institutional landscaping.
34. Encourage the use of energy-efficient lighting and adopt outdoor light standards to reduce the impacts of over-lighting, glare, and light pollution.
35. Continue partnerships to advance environmental sustainability and resilience practices, including the Northampton County Wetlands Board, the Eastern Shore of Virginia Ground Water Committee, and the Eastern Shore Soil and Water Conservation District.
36. Coordinate development review with the County Planning and Building Departments, State Water Control Board, Federal Emergency Management Agency, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and state resource agencies when applicable.





6

Sustainable Economy

Northampton County will strive to be an economically thriving, business-friendly community that offers innovative jobs and businesses that are unique to the Shore and enhance the County as a place to live, work and visit.

Historically, Northampton County developed as a **self-sufficient** seafood agriculture community with shipping, rail, and even a hospital on the peninsula which all provided an economic boost that sustained Northampton County for many years. Today, **seafood and agriculture** remain vital economic drivers, while new industries, such as tourism, recreation, and ecological research have grown significantly in the past few years. Also, with the Broadband Authority established in the last 10 years and the increasing infrastructure being created, telecommuting and home-based businesses are starting to flourish.

Northampton County needs to continue to grow the value of the county tax base, total taxable assets, and especially grow the commercial tax base. This will require encouraging development and construction to create new property taxes and jobs consistent with the **environmental sensitivity** of Northampton County's natural resources. Hospitality, agritourism, telecommuting, and home and farm-based businesses are anticipated to be important drivers for future growth. These uses benefit the county in a variety of ways, including real estate taxes, personal property taxes, local sales and meals tax, Transient Occupancy Tax, and tourist/visitor spending for other services provided by businesses in the county.

A **strong workforce** is vital to operate and grow county businesses. Employee development, attraction, and retention has a direct impact on the future economic health of Northampton County's local government, schools, infrastructure, housing, and public safety. Economic development should be viewed as **synergistic and supportive** of other comprehensive plan chapters.

Your Economy

Additional economic details are provided in the Community Overview, Appendix A. Key considerations for the strategies in this chapter are described below.

Business Development

Northampton County actively supports business investments that increase the County's tax base, provide job opportunities for residents, and attract tourism. While Northampton County's isolated location creates added challenges, there are many resources and incentives available through federal, state, and regional programs to promote business development. Portions of the County and/or towns are designated as Opportunity Zones, Enterprise Zones, HUBZones, Major Business Facility Job Tax Credit incentive areas, and Technology Zones – each offering benefits to investors, which are detailed further in the Community Overview. Additionally, the Town of Cape Charles is a designated tourism zone, offering economic stimulus credits for qualified tourism businesses. The local Economic Development Authority is also active and provides financing, infrastructure, and recruitment support to qualified businesses.

Local entrepreneurs have found success growing their small businesses through marketing and distribution into companies that serve a nationwide customer base and bring jobs and capital into the area. The Covid-19 Pandemic brought to light the ability for businesses to effectively work from remote locations. Northampton County can increase attraction to remote and teleworkers by improving technology infrastructure and making a focused effort to recruit those individuals. The County has also attracted an increasing number of retirees and telecommuters which brings more capital into the County. These new resources have varied corporate and managerial experience which is stimulating creation of more business opportunities and adding staff support to the new and existing businesses. While outside investment is welcomed, the retention and expansion of existing businesses and local entrepreneurs should be a core element of the community's economic development efforts. Efforts to grow and attract business requires a comprehensive approach that is readily adaptable to shifting market and business trends – reducing regulatory barriers and offering supportive services, programs, and marketing are key to success.

Strategies to Create Opportunities for Growth

1. Assess and enforce business licensing, permitting, and fees and streamline processes, where needed.
2. Connect businesses, developers, real estate professionals, and lenders with resources, incentives, and data to encourage desirable investments.
3. Encourage new and infill commercial and industrial development by improving zoning and parking requirements.
4. Explore opportunities to expand grants and incentives, such as Technology and Tourism Zones, to attract identified target/growth industries.
5. Consider developing an existing business visitation program to identify and assist businesses poised for growth.
6. Create and foster business incubation, startup, and small business development support services.
7. Utilize the Economic Development Authority of Northampton County and its incorporated towns as a tool for acquiring properties and providing financing for redevelopment and investment.
8. Partner with towns and private entities to increase capacity of water and sewer and extend service to prioritized prime Commercial and Town Edge areas.
9. Work with industry experts to identify opportunities for industries with high-growth/high-value potential such as life sciences, information technology, healthcare, and marine-related industries.



Map 6.1 Major Economic Drivers

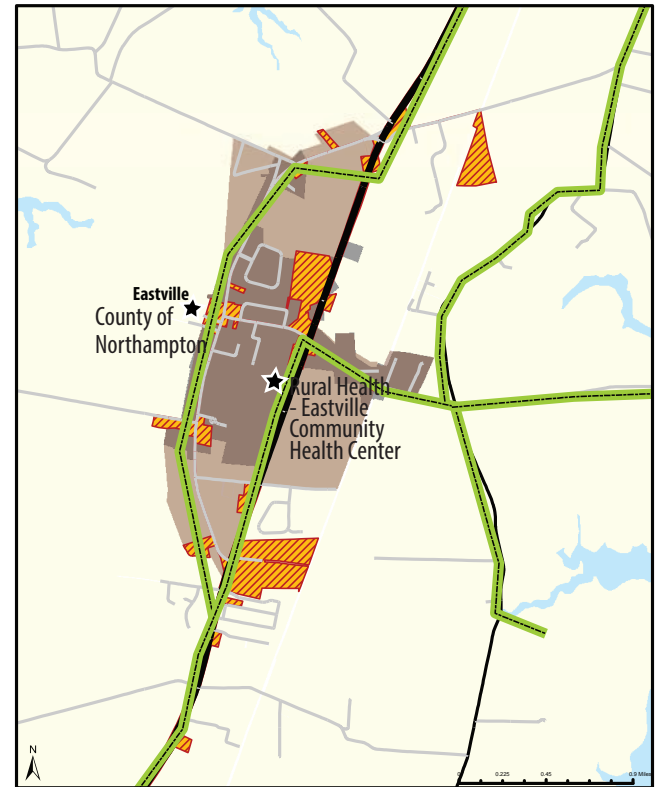


Map 6.1 Major Economic Drivers

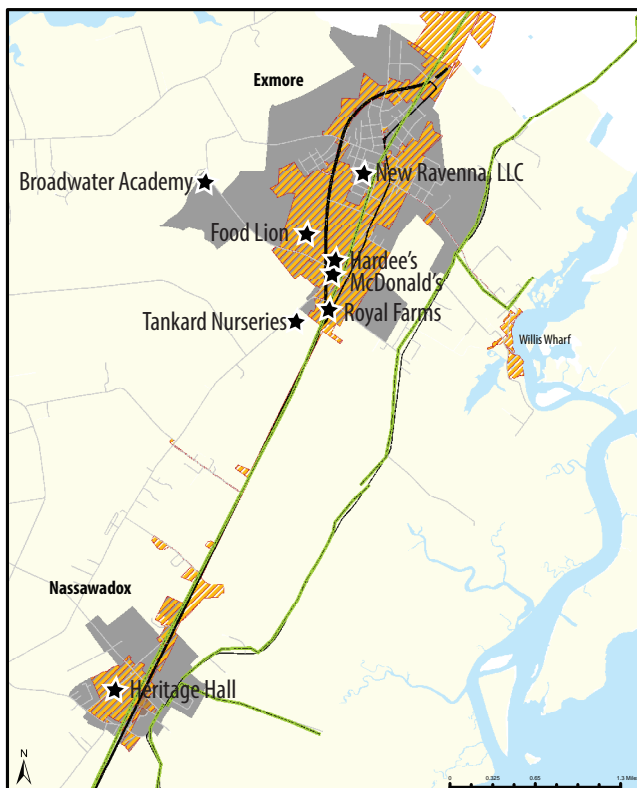
Inset A - Cape Charles & Cheriton



Inset B - Eastville



Inset C - Exmore & Nassawadox



Legend

- ★ Major Employers
- State/Federal/Local Recreation Natural Areas
- State Designated Birding & Wildlife Loop
- Designated Historic District
- ▨ Designated Enterprise Zone
- ▭ Mainland Portion of Federal Opportunity Zone

HUBZones (Applies Countywide)

Major Business Facility Job Tax Credit incentive area (Applies Countywide)

Technology Zone and Tourism Zone (Applies to Cape Charles)



Future Economic Growth

Residents have indicated support for job and business growth across all sectors. Light manufacturing, warehousing, agriculture, aquaculture, commercial businesses, office, and high-tech services all had high levels of interest in the 2019 community survey. In addition, there was strong support for healthcare, retail, restaurants, and professional services.

The regional industry growth clusters identified in the 2017 regional economic development plan, Stronger Economies Together, include:

- Aerospace and Defense, including building upon the Wallops Complex, expanding unmanned systems operations, and marketing the area for coastal research.
- Agribusiness and Food Process, including a value-added fresh food marketing cooperative, creation of a wholesale production facility, enhanced workforce development, and promoting regional forestry industry.
- Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, and Visitor Industries, including developing the regional tourism industry, creating hospitality, ambassadorship, mentorship, and internship programs, and developing recreational facilities.
- Foundational and Entrepreneurship Development, including building an entrepreneurship culture, increasing funding for local businesses, increasing market and value-added opportunities, and developing infrastructure to facilitate local businesses.

Seafood & Working Waterfronts

Agriculture and working waterfronts continue to be a staple of the County economy. Even today, the majority of the County's land area consists of productive crop and forest land. Protecting the integrity of these working landscapes is vital to the long-term viability of family farms and the agriculture industry as a whole. The County already utilizes Agricultural and Forestal Districts - which discourage subdivisions, offer landowners a more equitable tax structure, and protect water quality and natural resources - but more strategies are necessary to support agricultural industries.

Northampton County must continually take action to protect from the dense development of the waterfront areas in order to support the aquaculture and recreational boating industries that rely heavily upon these assets for access to the water and the clean water required by fish and shellfish.

Strategies to Support Agriculture, Aquaculture, Fishing, and Crabbing

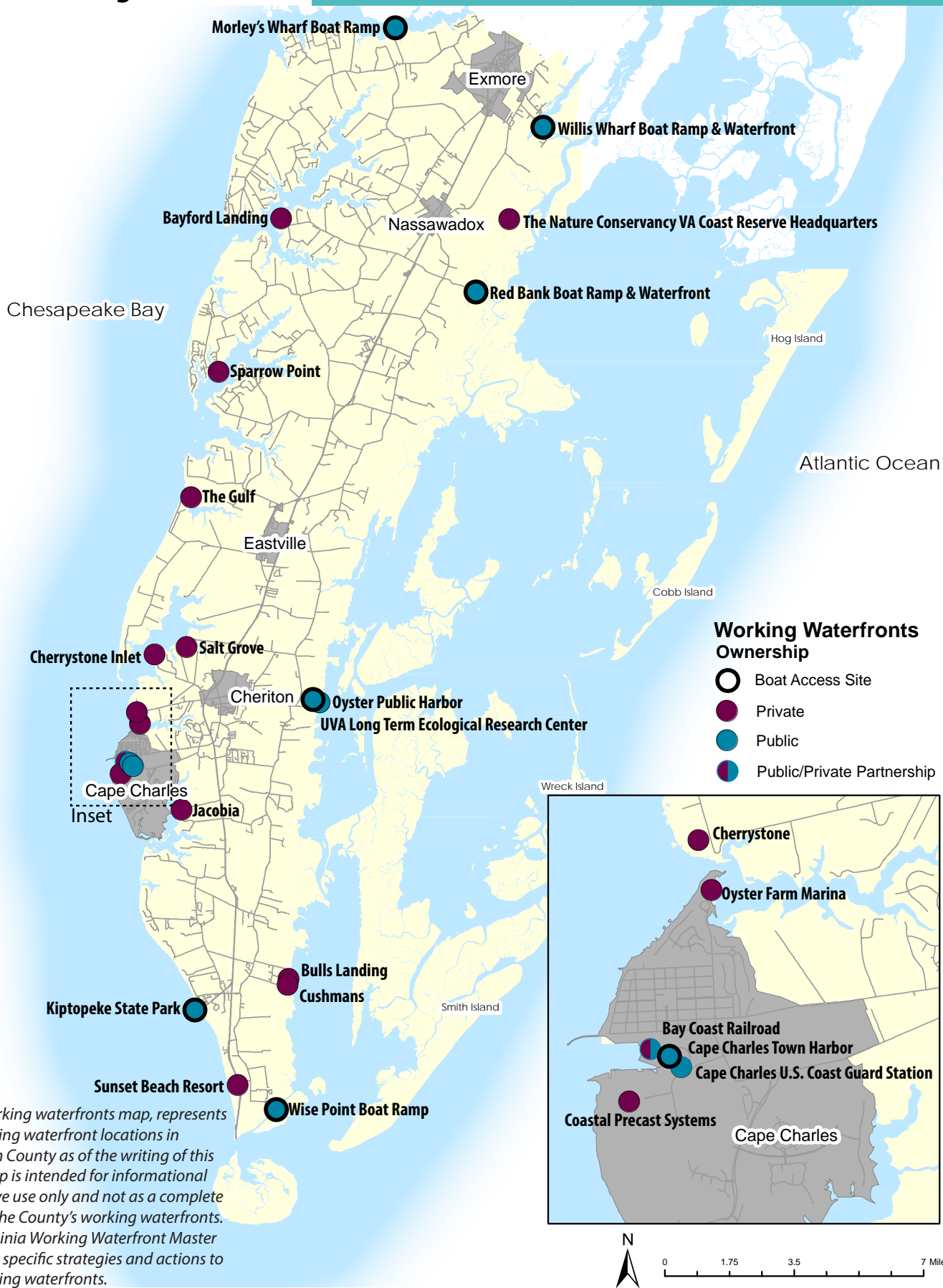
10. Support expansion and diversification in the agricultural, forestry, and seafood industries by adding production and processing with local exporting while maintaining and encouraging environmentally friendly and sustainable practices.
11. Actively seek opportunities to provide additional marine facilities on lower Northampton Bayside and explore incentives for owners and operators to make infrastructure improvements to address sea level rise and reoccurring flooding.
12. Establish local tax policies that stimulate water-dependent business development.
13. Establish and promote incentives encouraging appropriate uses of working waterfronts, such as Enterprise Zones, Technology Zones, Community Development Authorities, and Tax Increment Financing.
14. Consider implementing Working Waterfront (WWF) Development Areas (VA Code Sec. 15.2-2306.1) to allow financial incentives, such as reduction of permit fees, user fees, gross receipts tax, or waiver of tax liens, or ordinance exemptions.



The Shellfish Industry

The shellfish industry on the Eastern Shore is one of our primary economic drivers. Total value of commercial landings (both fin and shellfish) for the Eastern Shore was about \$51.5M in 2016 (VMRC, 2016). This does not include the value associated with recreational boating, support industries (e.g. tackle shops, marinas, and boat repair and maintenance services), lodging, or restaurants.

Map 6.2 Working Waterfronts



Note: The working waterfronts map, represents existing working waterfront locations in Northampton County as of the writing of this plan. This map is intended for informational and illustrative use only and not as a complete inventory of the County's working waterfronts. The 2016 Virginia Working Waterfront Master Plan provides specific strategies and actions to support working waterfronts.

Education & Workforce Development

Northampton County is already taking steps to sustain a vibrant economy through education and workforce development. County schools offer career and technical education, and renovations to the High School/Middle School have been approved. Northampton County also benefits from the three workforce development centers in Accomack County, and partners with the Eastern Shore Community College to offer courses to high school seniors.

Continued support and expansion of programs will diversify and elevate the workforce. Employee development in hospitality, aquaculture, agriculture marine services, yacht repair, machining, and auto repair are critical needs.

Strategies to Invest in People

15. Support the school system in developing an educated, skilled workforce to fill the community's needs.
16. Establish funding through grants or other local sources for high school juniors to attend the community college.
17. Partner with businesses and the Eastern Shore Community College to identify employment gaps and fund workforce training apprenticeships, mentoring, and on-the-job school training programs for the highest priority needs.
18. Partner with the public library system to develop work/study spaces, provide technology and educational resources that support life and work skill development, and enhance virtual learning access for all age groups.
19. Collaborate with regional partners to identify and create education & workforce programs that are tailored to the needs of Northampton County's underserved, minority, and most-at-risk communities.



Tourism

Northampton County's natural areas, parks, and historic small towns are a draw for vacationers, while high traffic volume on Route 13 makes the area ideal for pass-through visits. Northampton County's unique recreational uses include deep sea fishing, hunting, swimming, and water sports. Attracting travelers requires visibility from the highway, which can best be achieved by allowing a limited number of concentrated commercial clusters at strategic location, such as town gateways, and developing a coordinated wayfinding system to direct visitors. The growth of tourism and travel will also depend upon leveraging partnerships with the Eastern Shore Tourism Commission, increasing the facilities and amenities available to tourists, and extending use into the off season. New and expanding markets, such as special events, agritourism, and ecotourism, are important opportunities for Northampton County to take advantage of.

Strategies to Enrich the Tourists' Experience

20. Develop a wayfinding system that is partnered with tourism marketing campaigns to provide clear and consistent signage that enhances the travel experience.
21. Expand water access, trails, and bike infrastructure that promote outdoor sports and ecotourism.
22. Continue supporting the Eastern Shore rail-to-trail projects as a transformational economic development investment.
23. Continue partnering with the Eastern Shore Tourism Commission to promote and enhance tourism in Northampton County.
24. Include public libraries as both a destination, part of the tourism infrastructure, and resource for information about trails, events, and sites throughout the County.



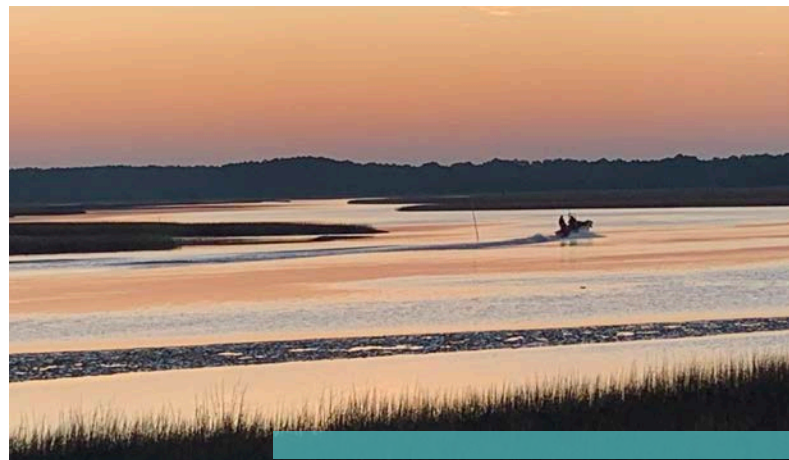
Quality of Life

Investments in quality of life improvements can also be viewed as investments in Northampton County's economy. In addition to workforce availability and the costs of doing business in a community, employers are increasingly interested in quality schools, housing, recreation, and cultural amenities. Northampton County faces challenges of low household income paired with high housing costs along with the need to grow and attract a skilled workforce. The Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel tolls and limited broadband access are added challenges. Quality of life improvements, including expanded internet access, parks, recreation, and trail access can help attract businesses, support telecommuting, and open education opportunities. In addition, targeted marketing campaigns that highlight the community's assets may also help to attract new investment to the County.



Strategies to Promote a High Quality of Life

25. Identify strategic capital improvement projects to facilitate private investment that results in revitalization or other quality of life benefits.
26. Continue to extend high-speed internet and cellular service throughout the County with bandwidth capable of serving businesses and maintaining viability during technological advances.
27. Utilize electronic media, collateral materials, and targeted advertising to highlight community success, vibrancy, and opportunities for new businesses, tourists, and telecommuters.





7

Housing



Northampton County will provide high-quality residential areas and housing to meet the needs of all residents while preserving the character and environmental fabric of the community.

Northampton County is committed to **clean, safe, and attractive residential areas**, and to the elimination of neighborhood blight and substandard housing. The County recognizes that quality housing is critical to the community's **health, well-being, and economic vitality**, and that a variety of options are needed to support **affordable housing for all** segments of the population.

Northampton County can improve and expand housing options through strategic planning and investment. Town Edge Areas can support new, **diversified housing options** in walkable residential areas, while hamlets, villages, and rural areas can appeal to those desiring a more **rural lifestyle**. Perhaps the greatest asset of all are the organizations and partnerships that are actively working to address housing needs and ensure safe, quality, affordable **housing for generations** to come. The regulatory and programmatic solutions in this chapter are designed to leverage these opportunities to achieve the community's housing goals.

Your Housing

The Community Overview, Appendix A, provides detailed information on Northampton County's existing housing stock. Key considerations for the strategies in this chapter are described below.

Existing Housing Stock

Of the County's approximately 7,400 homes, nearly one in four is at least 80 years old, compared to less than one in ten for the rest of Virginia. While older homes can contribute to community character, they can also be expensive to maintain and may not meet the accessibility, energy efficiency, or other needs of modern consumers. Septic system failure is a concern with some older homes, and smaller, non-conforming lots may not have sufficient reserve space for a new system. Housing rehabilitation programs can help prevent the displacement of low-income households and aging residents who otherwise may struggle to keep their homes in livable condition or require accessibility improvements. Code enforcement programs help to protect the quality and character of the community. Renovating and retrofitting homes to improve energy efficiency can also help to reduce the overall cost of owning a home.

Strategies to Preserve Existing Housing

1. Work with housing partners to educate property owners on permitting processes for home improvements.
2. Continue to provide and publicize the tax exemption for rehabilitated structures, available through the Commissioner of Revenue office, as incentive for property owners to rehabilitate real estate.
3. Establish a resource list and promote state, federal, and non-profit housing programs and resources that support homeownership, home repair/rehabilitation, and weatherization.
4. Preserve existing residential areas by enforcing the County's dangerous structures ordinance.
5. Continue to enforce the County's septic pump-out provisions.
6. Connect homeowners with resources for septic system repair and replacement, including low interest loan programs and grants through the health department, Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission, and other state and federal funding sources.



Existing Maintenance Regulations

Northampton County has not adopted the Virginia Maintenance Code, but has adopted various nuisance regulations including:

- Owners of vacant developed or undeveloped property to cut grass, weeds and other foreign growth
- Control of Johnson Grass
- Dangerous Structures
- Derelict Buildings
- Abandoned, Inoperable and Unattended Motor Vehicles

Homeowners and renters in Northampton County face high levels of cost burden, meaning that housing is unaffordable to many residents. Cost-burdened households are often forced into difficult financial tradeoffs and may be unable to meet other basic needs. In Northampton County, housing affordability is further complicated by the proliferation of vacation homes and short-term rentals, which drive up rental prices beyond the reach of low- to moderate-income individuals and families. Historically significant areas, such as Bayview, and those areas which are home to minority groups, are particularly subject to unbalanced housing cost. Addressing housing affordability is a complex issue that requires strong partnerships and identification of alternative solutions that can be adapted to changing conditions and resource availability.

Like many rural communities, Northampton County's housing stock is primarily single-family detached homes. Through the Comprehensive Plan community outreach process, residents expressed desire for expanded housing opportunities, including more options for cost-burdened households and aging residents. Adding housing supply and diversity of housing options can help alleviate housing cost burden by making units available at different price points and create opportunities for aging residents who wish to downsize or require additional care.

Strategies to Increase Housing Affordability

7. Continue participating in the Eastern Shore Regional Housing Coalition, working collaboratively with regional partners to support and implement affordable and workforce housing initiatives that benefit Northampton County residents.
8. Develop a comprehensive housing study that identifies barriers to housing affordability and recommendations for code reform, infrastructure improvements, and capacity building.
9. Participate in programming, loan, and grant initiatives that support affordable housing, such as Tax-Exempt Bond Financing, the Housing Choice Voucher Program, and the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Program.
10. Work with state and regional housing partners to leverage funds for conversion of vacant or underutilized buildings to low-moderate income housing.
11. Consider the effects on underserved and minority communities, including but not limited to gentrification and housing affordability, when assessing housing and development in Northampton County.

Strategies to Diversify the Housing Supply

12. Diversify housing stock by allowing small-lot, attached, and multifamily residential in appropriate areas as identified in the Future Land Use Plan, including Town Edges.
13. Examine opportunities to streamline residential permitting processes and timelines.
14. Consider reducing minimum parking requirements for residential uses, which may be a barrier to development due to associated stormwater management costs.
15. Review the zoning ordinance to consider allowing accessory dwelling units by-right to provide affordable rental options and ease cost burden for homeowners.
16. Review the zoning and subdivision ordinances to expand housing opportunities for senior, elderly, multigenerational households, and special needs populations, both with and without care.



Livable Communities

Livable Communities promote healthy and active living by providing a mix of housing types in sustainable, walkable communities with ample open space. New housing development in Northampton County should embody Livable Communities principles, while targeted retrofits and revitalization projects may be needed to enhance livability in established communities. To protect against rising sea levels, future development should incorporate sustainable design principles and be targeted away from coastal zones, floodplains, and other sensitive areas. (See the Environmental Resilience and Land Use chapters for additional information and strategies.)

Strategies to Create Livable Communities

17. Support new housing development that aligns with Livable Community design principles in Town Edge pattern areas.
18. Support residential area investments (lighting, sidewalks, crosswalks, roads) that allow Northampton County residents to improve residential safety and walkability and promote aging in place.
19. Utilize state and federal grant and loan programs for community revitalization projects that embody Livable Communities principles.
20. Promote the use of “green” building technologies, including weatherization and low impact development, to provide energy conservation benefits and increase community resilience.
21. Incorporate access to lifelong learning and wellness venues in housing developments to increase convenient access and walkability to public libraries, parks and green spaces, and community centers.



Potential Partnerships

Effective partnerships will be key to achieving the housing strategies identified in this chapter. The Eastern Shore of Virginia Housing Alliance is actively working to bring together housing organizations, such as:

- Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission
- Accomack-Northampton Regional Housing Authority
- Accomack Interfaith Crisis Council and Northampton Interfaith Crisis Council (A.I.C.C. and N.I.C.C.)
- Bayview Citizens for Social Justice (BCSJ)
- The Eastern Shore of Virginia Housing Alliance
- Eastern Shore of Virginia Habitat for Humanity
- New Road Community Development Group of Exmore, Inc. (NRCDG)
- Virginia Department of Health
- Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development
- Virginia Housing (formerly known as the Virginia Housing Development Authority)

Collectively, these groups offer innumerable programs – housing development, rental assistance, homeowner education, home improvement grants, first-time homebuyer grants, and many others – that can be leveraged to improve housing in Northampton County.



Potential Programs & Funding Sources

There are many different grants and programs that Virginia communities and individuals can use to address housing needs. The table below provides a small sampling of some of these opportunities. Each program is unique and subject to varying applicant eligibility criteria.

Table 7.1 Potential Programs & Funding Sources

| Program Area | Organization | Example Program |
|--------------------------------|--|---|
| Home Ownership | Virginia DHCD | Homeownership Down Payment Assistance Program |
| | Virginia Housing | Virginia Individual Development Accounts |
| Repair / Rehabilitation | U.S. Department of Agriculture | Housing Preservation Grants |
| | Virginia DHCD | Rural Homeowner Rehabilitation Program |
| Accesibility | Virginia DHCD | Livable Home Tax Credit |
| | Virginia Housing | Rental Unit Accessibility Modification Grant Program |
| Weatherization | Southeast Rural Community Assistance Project, Inc. | Community Development Financial Institution Loan Fund |
| | U.S. Department of Energy | Weatherization Assistance Program |
| Development | Virginia Housing | Community Homeownership Revitalization Program |
| | Virginia Housing | Acquire, Renovate, Sell Program |



8


Mobility

Northampton County will provide a safe, efficient, multi-modal transportation system with well-connected bike and pedestrian infrastructure, accessible public transit, and limited impact on existing communities.

The **safe and efficient** movement of people and goods is one of the most integral considerations for our communities. Planning for present and future transportation needs has long-ranging implications for land use and development.

Development in Northampton County has largely been shaped by, and for, transportation. Historically, development was concentrated in small waterfront communities, where **waterways** served as the principal means for transportation and commerce. The arrival of the **railroad** in the 1880s connected inland areas to larger metropolitan areas, allowing development in towns to flourish. Over time, railroad and ferry use gave way to automobile and truck traffic, made increasingly convenient with the opening of the **Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel** in the 1960s. Following similar trends nationwide, automobile-centric development shifted local commerce away from towns and toward the highway (US Route 13).

Today, the railroad is no longer active, and new development reflects the automobile-oriented influence of Route 13 in supporting the area's economy. Despite the linear growth that has occurred along Route 13, Northampton County has identified towns and town edge areas to be the most appropriate and desirable locations for **new development**.



By concentrating growth in **livable, mixed-use communities**, Northampton County can more easily achieve community goals for **safer streets** and create opportunities for walking, biking, and public transit access.

The Comprehensive Plan provides a framework for improving safety, accessibility, and connectivity while also adapting to emerging transportation needs and trends. Transportation improvements recommended in this chapter are based on an assessment of the existing transportation system and community needs. This chapter presents Northampton County's transportation and mobility network at a glance, VTRANS transportation needs, and project recommendations and strategies to address identified needs.

Your Mobility

Key considerations for the strategies in this chapter are described below. Additional background information on Northampton County's transportation network can be found in the Community Overview, Appendix A.

Road System

Northampton County's road network is shown in Map 8.1; further details such as traffic counts and crash data are provided in the Community Overview. The mobility network is centered around US Route 13, which bisects the length of Northampton County from the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel in the south to Accomack County in the north. US Route 13 is the only principal arterial road in Northampton County and is a designated Corridor of Statewide Significance¹. Traffic volume projections conducted on US Route 13 by VDOT show less than 1% annual growth through 2040².

Despite little projected growth, safety and congestion along Northampton County roads are concerns for citizens. Public outreach efforts conducted for this comprehensive plan determined a need to reduce congestion and increase safety along Route 13, especially around existing towns. (See Map 8.2) Crash data also indicate a need for safety improvements along U.S. Route 13. Several transportation projects (see Table 8.2 and 8.3) have been proposed to address these issues. Additional safety and congestion projects are identified in the A-NPDC 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan, as amended.

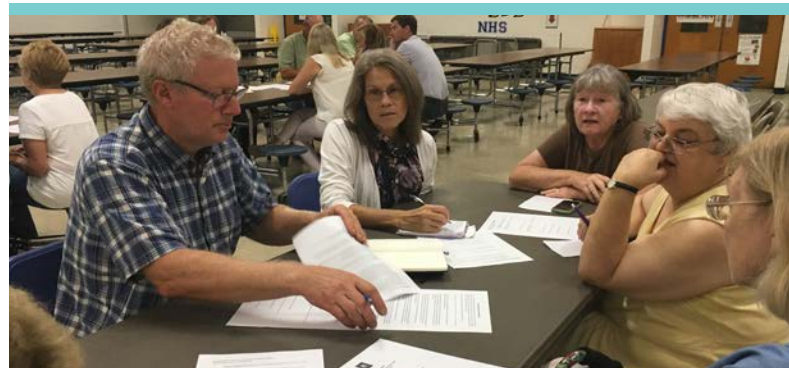
In addition to safety and congestion, inundation of roads is expected to be a growing problem as sea levels are projected to rise and weather events become more severe. Northampton County must work with VDOT and A-NPDC to accomplish the recommendations found in the 2015 Infrastructure Inundation Vulnerability Assessment.

Bridges and culverts that span Northampton County's waterways are in fair to good condition as categorized by VDOT³, with no posted weight-restricted structures. VDOT will continue monitoring these structures and provide preventative maintenance for those identified in fair condition to ensure their long-term safety and utility.

1 Corridors of Statewide Significance (CoSS) are those facilities and services which comprise the multimodal network connecting major centers of activity (RNs and UDAs) and accommodate inter-city travel between these centers as well as interstate traffic.

2 Based on VDOT annual linear growth rate based on 2019-2040 statewide model estimation provided on October 10, 2020.

3 These VA Responsible Structures include both bridges of any length and large culverts with total openings greater than 36 square feet. VDOT reports bridge status on an annual basis at: www.virginia-dot.org/info/bridges/state-of-structures-and-bridges.asp



Public input has shaped the transportation projects and strategies identified in this chapter. Many of the ideas and concerns expressed by citizens are supported by studies, assessments, and reports referenced in this chapter as well. Transportation needs identified during public outreach include:

- Biking and pedestrian improvements within and around the towns
- A reduction in the speed limit in the Hare Valley/ Bayside Road area for pedestrian and bicyclist safety
- Congestion relief
 - Within and around the Town of Cape Charles
 - Along U.S. Route 13
 - Around the Eastville Rural Health System
 - In and around Exmore (attributed to frequency of stoplights)

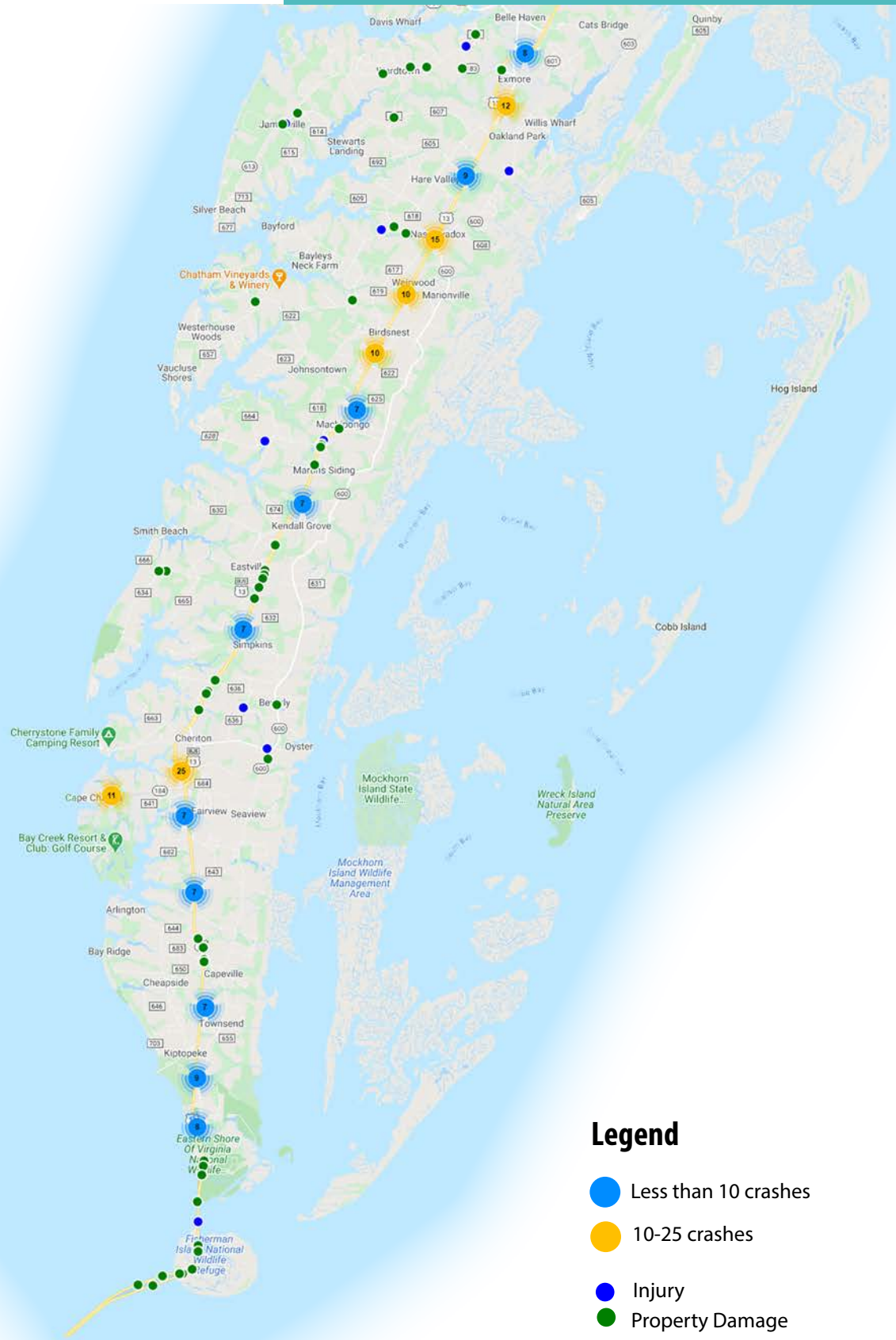
Strategies to Improve Northampton County's Road System

1. Partner with VDOT to complete the projects listed in the Six-Year Improvement Plan.
2. Work with VDOT to implement the safety recommendations outlined in the 2035 Eastern Shore Long Range Transportation Plan, as amended.
3. Partner with VDOT and the Town of Exmore to make improvements to the Urban Development Area on Hadlock Road listed in the VTrans Mid-Term Transportation Needs.
4. Partner with VDOT for continued monitoring of bridge status to ensure their continued safety and utility.

Map 8.1 Road Network Classifications



Map 8.2 2019 Crash Clusters



Legend

- Less than 10 crashes
- 10-25 crashes
- Injury
- Property Damage

Source: VDOT
www.treds.virginia.gov/Mapping/Map/Crashes-ByJurisdiction

Marine Transport

Northampton County's history, culture, and economy is uniquely tied to marine transportation and access to the Atlantic Ocean and Chesapeake Bay. Access to the surrounding waters is integral to the commerce of the County and ensuring continued access to these waters is a public necessity. Public comments point toward increased access to these water resources as an important priority for recreation, commerce, and tourism. Furthermore, as the region and the state's seafood industry continues to grow, access to their associated water-only accessible sites are becoming more challenging and dangerous. Maintenance of existing facilities and dredging of harbors and creeks is necessary to ensure safety and future access. Timely planning and prioritization of dredging projects is critical due to the long length of these types of projects, from project inception to completion.

The Eastern Shore Regional Navigable Waterways Committee (ESRNWC) is a bi-county committee ESRNWC, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and other relevant organizations to implement the findings of the Eastern Shore of Virginia Regional Dredging Needs Assessment and ensure long-term navigability of waterways. that studies water navigation needs and makes recommendations to their respective Boards for priority projects. Northampton County should continue partnerships with the ESRNWC, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and other relevant organizations to implement the findings of the Eastern Shore of Virginia Regional Dredging Needs Assessment and ensure long-term navigability of waterways.

Strategies to Ensure Effective Marine Transportation

5. Prioritize and implement the findings from Eastern Shore of Virginia Dredging Needs Assessment, assuring continued waterfront access for commercial and recreational access.
6. Apply for grant funds in the Virginia Waterway Maintenance Grant Program to fund feasibility and cost evaluations of dredging, maintenance of shallow-draft navigable waterway maintenance dredging, and the beneficial use of dredged materials from waterways for the restoration and the mitigation of coastal erosion and flooding.

Public Transport

STAR Transit, a public transportation program of the Accomack-Northampton Transportation District Commission, provides on-demand and local fixed-route bus service for Northampton County residents and visitors. In addition, specialized transportation services are offered by local nonprofit organizations, including the Eastern Shore Area Agency on Aging and the Eastern Shore Community Services Board. Input from the public highlighted the importance of these services and indicated a need for continued investment. Northampton County should continue working with its partners to implement the 2013 A-NPDC Coordinated Human Service Mobility Plan, as amended, and improve public transportation services for residents.

Strategies to Upgrade Public Transportation

7. Support public transportation improvement strategies identified in the 2013 Accomack-Northampton Coordinated Human Service Mobility Plan, as amended.
8. Work with STAR Transit to determine service needs and gaps in the public transportation network and prioritize for implementation.



Pedestrian & Bike Network

Northampton County's relatively flat terrain welcomes the use of pedestrian and bicycle facilities for transportation and recreational needs. Pedestrian and bike infrastructure is a key component of Northampton County's mobility network that promotes healthy, active living, supports tourism, and is a fundamental mode of transportation for those without access to an automobile. Northampton County is progressively creating biking and walking trails. The Southern Tip Bike and Hike Trail begins at the Eastern Shore Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center and continues to Capeville Road for an approximately 5-mile trail. The Eastern Shore Rails to Trails Feasibility Study evaluates extending this trail an additional 50 miles into Accomack County to the town of Hallwood.

Public outreach efforts determined a need for sidewalk improvements, handicap accessibility improvements, and additional greenways and trails. A-NPDC and VDOT, in partnership with Northampton County, have already undertaken numerous plans and studies to address these issues and to become more pedestrian and bike friendly. Northampton County should continue to work with organizations, including A-NPDC, VDOT, local commissions, nonprofit groups, and businesses, to implement the strategies and projects highlighted in the 2014 Eastern Shore Bike Plan, as amended, and the 2017 Eastern Shore Pedestrian Facilities Plan, as amended. The community also expressed support for conversion of abandoned rail lines for trail use, and Northampton County should continue to advocate for funding and construction of these assets for the benefit of residents and visitors.

Strategies to Develop Pedestrian & Bike Facilities

9. Work with VDOT and A-NPDC to implement the findings in the 2017 Eastern Shore Pedestrian Facilities Study and improve sidewalk infrastructure in Franktown and Town Edge land use areas.
10. Continue to make safety improvements on shared roads to protect cyclists and pedestrians from vehicles, using the recommendations found in the 2014 Eastern Shore Bike Plan, as amended.
11. Continue to work with VDOT and Accomack County to develop, fund, and construct shared use paths, including the Southern Tip Bike & Hike Trail and Eastern Shore Rail-to-Trail.



Map 8.3 Rails to Trails Projects



VTrans Transportation Projects

VTrans is VDOT’s statewide transportation plan and is used to identify critical transportation needs that can be addressed through policies or capital investments. VDOT has developed both a Mid-Term and Long-Term report for the Hampton Roads Construction District, which includes Northampton County.

The 2019 Hampton Roads Construction District Mid-Term Needs Transportation Plan, as amended, provides direction on the steps that can be taken over the next ten years toward reaching the VTrans Vision of a sustainable, reliable, and multimodal transportation system. The plan also serves as a screening tool for projects applying for SMART SCALE funding (described below).

VDOT has also identified transportation needs for Urban Development Areas (UDA) in Virginia. UDAs coordinate land use and transportation planning efforts are intended to embody the principles of Traditional Neighborhood Design. Traditional Neighborhood Development embodies classic characteristics of traditional communities such as:

- Walkable residential area centers
- Interconnected streets and blocks
- Diversity of land uses
- Easy access to jobs, housing, and recreation by a variety of travel options

The General Assembly has directed that transportation improvements that support UDAs be consistent with the needs assessment contained in VTrans 2040, as well as to be considered in the SMART SCALE statewide prioritization process for project selection. In 2014, House Bill 2 was passed, now known as SMART SCALE, concerning prioritization of projects funded by the Commonwealth Transportation Board. The legislation links transportation project eligibility for funding specifically to UDA needs.

Northampton County has one UDA: a 489-acre triangle of land along Hadlock Road and bounded by Lankford Highway and Bayside Road in the Town of Exmore. The future Land Use Map identifies this area as Town and Town Edge, which also steers future growth with greater densities and a wider variety of uses to this area. While this is an appropriate area for increased density and development, safety must also be a priority. There are several high-priority transportation needs listed in VTrans for this UDA, including a need for sidewalks, bicycle infrastructure improvements, and other pedestrian infrastructure. The full list of needs can be seen in Table 8.1. These needs were identified through a combination of socio-economic data analysis conducted by VDOT and local input from planning officials.

| | | UDA Need | | |
|----------------------|---|----------|-----------------------------|--|
| | | HIGH | MODERATE | LOW |
| Transportation Needs | Sidewalks | | Traffic Calming Features | Transit Frequency |
| | Other Pedestrian Infrastructure | | Street Grid | On-Street Parking Capacity |
| | Bicycle Infrastructure | | Safety Features | Roadway Capacity and Infrastructure Improvements |
| | Other Complete Streets Improvements | | Off-Street Parking Capacity | |
| | Intersection Design or Other Improvements | | | |
| | Signage/Wayfinding | | | |
| | Transit Capacity and Access | | | |
| | Transit Facilities and Amenities | | | |
| | Transit Operations | | | |
| | Roadway Operations | | | |
| | Improvements to the Natural Environment; Storm Water Management; Site Designs; or Landscaping | | | |

Priority Transportation Projects - SYIP

Funding for new transportation construction projects is appropriated through a competitive application process, known as SMART SCALE. Once appropriated, projects funnel into VDOT's Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP), Virginia's capital program for transportation investments. The SYIP outlines planned spending for transportation projects proposed for construction or study within a six-year horizon. Currently, Northampton County has five projects listed in VDOT's SYIP. **Table 8.1** identifies these projects.

Table 8.1 Northampton County Six-Year Improvement Program Projects

| Map ID | Description | UPC | Rt. | Road System | Estimate | Previous | FY20 | FY21-25 | Balance |
|----------|--|--------|-----|-------------|----------|----------|---------|---------|---------|
| | | | | | | | | | |
| A | Route 13 at Stone Road - Northampton County** | 111708 | 13 | Primary | \$2,070 | \$723 | \$1,017 | \$330 | \$0 |
| B | Bicycle Lane on US Business 13** | 115510 | 13 | Primary | \$2,360 | \$0 | \$0 | \$2,360 | \$0 |
| C | Median Crossover to Rte 13** | 115529 | 13 | Primary | \$1,120 | \$0 | \$0 | \$1,120 | \$0 |
| D | Rte 602 – Reconstruction* | 1850 | 602 | Secondary | \$924 | \$740 | \$40 | \$144 | \$0 |
| E | Smart20 Shoulder Widening Rte13** | 115506 | 13 | Urban | \$2,923 | \$0 | \$0 | \$2,923 | \$0 |

* Approved and funded future Secondary Six-Year Plan (SSYP) project.

** Approved and funded future SMART SCALE project.

Priority Transportation Projects

The projects and studies in **Table 8.2.1**, **Table 8.2.2**, and **Map 8.4**, in addition to the SYIP projects and the strategies in this chapter, were identified based on Northampton County's existing and future transportation needs. These transportation recommendations are separated into short-term and long-term phases, but are not otherwise ranked. Short-term projects can be completed based on relatively low impacts and ease of completion. Long-term projects make improvements to correct deficiencies based on projected costs and/or potential impacts that would require a greater number of years to plan and fund.

Table 8.2.1 Priority Transportation Projects - Short-Term Recommendations

| Map ID | Project | Description | Cost | Source |
|--------|---|--|--------------------|---|
| 1 | Hadlock Road UDA | Construct high priority UDA needs, including bike and pedestrian infrastructure | TBD | VTrans Mid-Term Transportation Needs |
| 2 | Route 608 Outside Lane Widening | Widen outside lanes for bicycle accommodation along Route 608 (Brownsville Road) from Route 600 (Seaside Road) to Brownsville | TBD | 2014 Eastern Shore Bike Plan, as amended |
| 3 | U.S. Route 13/Bayford Road | Installation of wider edge lines and safety edge treatment. Widening of paved shoulder. | \$95,277 | 2016 Eastern Shore Safety Study, as amended |
| 4 | U.S. Route 13 near Sylvan Scene Drive | Installation of wider edge lines, safety edge treatment, and corridor lighting | \$111,199 | 2016 Eastern Shore Safety Study, as amended |
| 5 | U.S. Route 13/Captain Howe Lane | Installation of wider edge lines. Provide a right-turn lane on one major road approach. | \$123,142 | 2016 Eastern Shore Safety Study, as amended |
| 6 | U.S. Route 13/Eyrehall Drive/Cobbs Station Road | Installation of wider edge lines, dynamic speed feedback sign, and directional medians to allow left-turns and u-turns. | \$378,589 | 2016 Eastern Shore Safety Study, as amended |
| 7 | Kings Creek Dredging | Dredging of Kings Creek for navigability. | \$177,000 | Eastern Shore Regional Navigable Waterways Committee |
| 8 | U.S. Route 13/Stone Road | Installation of wider edge lines, safety edge treatment, and retroreflective backplates. Widening of paved shoulder. Directional medians to allow left-turns and u-turns. Intersection lighting. | \$1.7 M | 2016 Eastern Shore Safety Study, as amended |
| 9 | Jonathan's Landing Lane | Installation of safety edge treatment, installation of wider edge lines, and widening of paved shoulder. | \$107,422 | 2016 Eastern Shore Safety Study, as amended |
| 10 | Road Inundation Improvements | Construct inundation mitigation improvements at all facilities inundated at 1 foot above Mean Higher High Water (MHHW) identified in the 2015 Infrastructure Inundation Vulnerability Assessment | Varies By Location | 2015 Infrastructure Inundation Vulnerability Assessment, as amended |

Priority Transportation Projects Continued

Table 8.2.2 Priority Transportation Projects - Long-Term Recommendations

| Map ID | Project | Description | Cost | Source |
|--------|--------------------------------|--|-----------|---|
| 11 | Eastern Shore Rail-to-Trail | Convert the former Bay Coast Railroad into a shared use path. | TBD | Eastern Shore Rail to Trail Study (under development) |
| 12 | Nassawaddox Creek Dredging | Dredging of Nassawaddox Creek for navigability. | \$100,300 | Eastern Shore Regional Navigable Waterways Committee |
| 13 | Hungars Creek Dredging | Dredging of Hungars Creek for navigability. | \$100,300 | Eastern Shore Regional Navigable Waterways Committee |
| 14 | Red Bank Dredging | Dredging of Red Bank for navigability. | \$100,300 | Eastern Shore Regional Navigable Waterways Committee |
| 15 | Southern Tip Bike & Hike Trail | Implement Phase III and IV of the Preliminary Engineering Report and Feasibility Study | \$7 M | Southern Tip Phases III and IV Preliminary Engineering Report and Feasibility Study |
| 16 | Road Inundation Improvements | Construct inundation mitigation improvements at all facilities inundated at 2-3 feet above MHHW identified in the Infrastructure Inundation Vulnerability Assessment | TBD | 2015 Infrastructure Inundation Vulnerability Assessment, as amended |

Map 8.4 Priority Transportation Projects



Note: Each numbered project is identified in tables 8.1, 8.2.1, and 8.2.2. See tables for project key.



9

Community Facilities & Services

Northampton County will provide high-quality facilities, superior services, and a diversity of amenities that meet resident needs, support economic development, and attract recreational, heritage, and eco-tourism.

Northampton County provides quality community facilities and services that contribute to high **quality of life** and **economic well-being** for residents and visitors.

In considering community facility and infrastructure, Northampton County must plan for current needs as well as the impact of future development and new challenges such as climate change. Future land development should be linked to the availability and adequacy of public facilities and services. Without water, wastewater treatment, roads, public safety, emergency services, and educational facilities, the potential for growth and development will be limited. Because public facility improvements are expensive, they should be prudently planned and provided in the most **economical, efficient, and sustainable** manner possible.

Recent planning and investments demonstrate a commitment to sustaining community **livability** and promoting economic **vitality**. The objectives and strategies in this chapter will advance the facilities and services of Northampton County, **enhancing the quality of life** and economic development while **sustaining fiscal health**.

Your Facilities & Services

Existing community facilities are shown in Map 9.1 (at the end of the chapter) and additional background information on each facility type is detailed in the Community Overview, Appendix A. Key considerations for the strategies in this chapter are described below.

Public Education

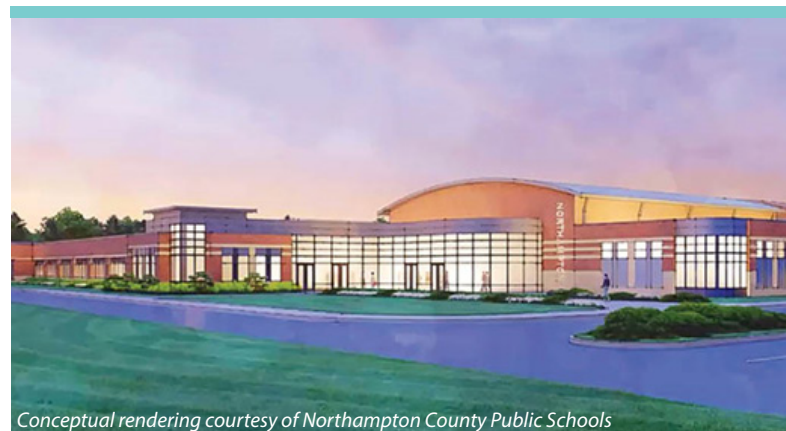
Public education is a top priority for Northampton County residents. Improving public schools and education opportunities was identified as the #1 area of focus through the county-wide Comprehensive Plan survey. Northampton County currently operates two elementary schools and a combined middle and high school. While the schools have adequate capacity to support student enrollment, the school system faces many challenges, including deferred facility maintenance, teacher retention, and funding challenges due to state aid formulas and competition from well-funded Maryland and Virginia Beach schools.

Northampton County recognizes the importance of quality education and has taken steps to improve the school facilities, including an approximately \$36 million Middle/High School facility renovation plan. The County also acknowledges that quality teachers, technology, and programs require ongoing investment to achieve and maintain excellence in education.

It should also be noted that direct investment in the school system both supports and is supported by the goals and strategies found throughout this plan. Strong schools and student outcomes are critical to economic development, and learning outcomes are often correlated to the quality of life, housing, and infrastructure offered in a community. Improving learning outcomes will likely require investment beyond physical classroom facilities and can also be expected to yield benefits to the broader community as well as to the individual student.

Strategies to Invest in Education

1. Implement plans to modernize public school buildings and grounds to provide state-of-the-art learning experiences, ensure student safety, and enhance community connections.
2. Support efforts to recruit and retain quality teachers, such as lobbying state support for Cost of Competing Adjustments (COCA) that help Northampton County and Accomack County compete with teacher salaries across state lines.
3. Evaluate school capacity, technology, and programs on a minimum five-year basis and develop specific action strategies to address identified service gaps.
4. Enable 21st century learning inside and outside the classroom by leveraging state and federal infrastructure support programs, such as E-Rate, and offering innovative solutions to increase internet connectivity, such as equipping school buses with WiFi and creating and advertising hotspot locations throughout the county.
5. Support access to educational resources outside of the K-12 school buildings by improving public library operations and infrastructure.



Conceptual rendering courtesy of Northampton County Public Schools

Middle School / High School Modernization Project

Northampton County is undertaking a major investment in its school system. The middle school and high school modernization project will consist of: replacing all major building systems including roof, heating and air conditioning, and electrical systems; separate wings for high school and middle school students; and demolishing 43,000 square feet of space and rebuilding to a total of 145,590 square feet. When complete, the facility will accommodate a combined 900 students, 400 middle school students (grades 6-8) and 500 high school students (grades 9-12). The approximately \$36 million renovation received overwhelming support from the community with 71% voting for the 1% sales tax referendum to fund the project in the November 2020 election.

Utilities & Infrastructure

Utilities and infrastructure generally includes electric, water, wastewater, and communications services. Northampton County provides limited infrastructure services, as most residents are served by town water/wastewater systems or by private well and septic systems, while electric service is provided by an electric cooperative. However, Northampton County's marine ecosystem (e.g. flora, fauna, aquaculture, marine recreation) and sole-source multi-aquifer system are distinguishing factors that must be considered and protected from septic failures and wasteful water consumption (See Chapter 5: Resilient Environment for more information). As it looks toward 2040, Northampton County will need to investigate, monitor, and identify solutions to address water and wastewater infrastructure needs.

Communication networks in Northampton County are improving, but both cellular and broadband are limited in the most rural areas. As recently as 2018, the Eastern Shore of Virginia Broadband Authority (ESVBA) announced plans to increase fiber optic access on the Eastern Shore. Broadband access is essential for businesses, telework, learning, and public safety, and increasingly can offset gaps in medical care through telemedicine. As technology evolves and new options, such as small cell wireless and residential area internet service providers, become available, Northampton County is committed to using innovative solutions to meet the changing needs of the community. Continued partnerships and incentives for additional internet access and cellular service will bolster the Northampton County economy and quality of life.

Strategies to Enhance Infrastructure

6. Develop a sustainable, fiscally-responsible plan for centralized sewer, whether public or private, to promote economic development and preserve water quality in priority commercial, industrial, and Town Edge areas.
7. Continue to work jointly with the Towns to upgrade and/or establish central sewer and water facilities within Town Edge areas.
8. Support the Eastern Shore of Virginia Broadband Authority and other partnerships to achieve reliable, effective, and affordable internet access in all homes.
9. Support siting of telecommunications structures to improve cellular service and coverage, with a preference for collocation and attached structures.



Hampton Roads Sanitation District

Adequate sewage treatment is essential for the environment and economy of the Eastern Shore. Only a small portion of the Eastern Shore is served by public sewer facilities. Local leaders have actively pursued a long-term solution for the region.

On October 2, 2020, a circuit court determined that Accomack and Northampton County would benefit from joining Hampton Roads Sanitation District (HRSD) and incorporated the two counties into the district's boundaries. With this decision, the counties are permitted to negotiate contracts with HRSD for the operation, maintenance, and upgrading of their sewer systems. Inclusion in HRSD gives localities the option, but not the obligation, to transfer ownership of their public sewer systems to HRSD, along with the responsibility to run, maintain, and upgrade the systems and bill customers.

The rollout of the system is proposed in three phases. The first will connect the Onancock treatment facility to customers south to Nassawadox. The first phase schedules to be complete by the end of 2023 will connect Exmore and Nassawadox to the treatment facility in Onancock. A proposed second phase would extend the line north to serve Chincoteague. A third phase would extend the system north and east from the Town of Cape Charles treatment facility to the towns of Cheriton and Eastville. If implemented, this system would support many of the goals elaborated in this Comprehensive Plan, including business and job growth, affordable housing development, and water resource protection.

Public Safety, Emergency Services, and Healthcare

An integrated system of public safety, emergency services, and healthcare is vital to the community's public health and welfare. Law Enforcement and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) are the first responders to natural disasters, individual health emergencies, vehicle crashes, and other health and safety incidents. Unfortunately, in medically-underserved areas like Northampton County, EMS services are strained with longer ambulance drive times and calls for non-emergent care. Ready access to healthcare encourages patients to seek primary care and/or mental health services that could help them manage their health and avoid costly hospitalizations and calls to EMS.

Northampton County's public safety and emergency services are provided through a combination of paid and volunteer services. The Sheriff's Department and EMS are paid services in the County. The County Sheriff's Department is located in Eastville, and EMS operates from three stations: Exmore; Machipongo; and Cheriton. The Fire Department is a volunteer service with stations located within each of the incorporated towns. The relocation of the Nassawadox hospital has forced Northampton County's EMS to expand its workforce to maintain service levels. Continued investment and support of police and EMS services is important to ensure a highly-trained staff, manageable workload, appropriate response times, and well-maintained facilities.

Residents access healthcare through a number of service providers, as detailed in the Community Overview. The Virginia State Department of Health is working to expand access to health services in Northampton County, which has been a designated Medically Underserved Area since 1972. Northampton County staff and elected officials should work with the Department of Health to implement the findings in the 2017 Eastern Shore of Virginia Community Health Assessment Synthesis and expand resident access to health care.



Strategies to Improve Emergency Services and Healthcare

10. Work with the Virginia Department of Health to implement the findings in the 2017 Eastern Shore of Virginia Community Health Assessment Synthesis.
11. Continue to work with and support Law Enforcement, Fire, and Rescue services to monitor, maintain, and improve service levels.
12. Enhance Emergency Medical Services, including adequate facilities, improved training for career and volunteer staff, acquisition of necessary emergency vehicles, collaboration with service providers, receiving hospitals, and other partners, and enhanced use of technologies as they become available.
13. Address deficiencies in Emergency Shelter preparedness identified in the Eastern Shore of Virginia Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Parks and Recreation

Northampton County citizens desire high-quality facilities and additional options for recreation. Community input revealed strong support for Rails-to-Trails projects and a general need for active recreation facilities. The Parks and Recreation Department has recently moved from Indiantown Park to the former middle school, offering an opportunity for creative reuse of the centrally-located facility for recreation purposes.

Public input gathered during the planning process indicated support to expand access to water resources for residents and tourists. Northampton County contains seven boat ramps and three public beach accesses, with limited opportunity for public beach access in the northern portion of the county. Additional public water access is an important recreation priority for 2040.

Strategies to Create Park and Recreation Opportunities

14. Support acquisition, preservation, and maintenance of trails and trailheads through a variety of means, such as but not limited to, private donations, rail banking, revenue dedication, and easement purchases.
15. Create physical and visual access to waterfronts for public recreational needs, prioritizing a northern public beach access and bayside boat ramps.
16. Identify opportunities to add community recreation amenities to existing public lands and facilities.
17. Employ wayfinding signage to reflect distinct recreational opportunities and promote park use.
18. Support community partnerships to enhance programming, amenities, and maintenance of existing parks.
19. Integrate accessibility and safety into park and facility design to provide parks and playgrounds that are safe and inclusive for users of all ages and abilities.



Capital Facilities Planning

Capital facility investments should be planned and executed in a coordinated manner that is guided by the Comprehensive Plan. A Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) is a powerful tool for prioritizing new facility investments, maintenance of existing assets, and capital equipment purchases. The CIP creates a systematic, transparent approach for implementing and financing major projects. If implemented through sound technical and financial expertise, a CIP will pinpoint hidden costs, identify sound financing options and partners, and prevent crisis-decision making.

While the County's budget leaves little room for additional capital expenditure, a CIP would help to identify and align priorities to improve quality of life and enhance business development all while being fiscally sound. Northampton County's CIP process should also ensure that investments are resilient to climate change in order to prevent damage or destruction of facilities and services that are critical to the economy and quality of life.

Strategies to Develop a Strategic Capital Facilities Planning Program

20. Establish a long-term capital improvement plan to ensure major expenditures are planned, programmed, and constructed in a transparent, coordinated, and fiscally-sound manner.
21. Incorporate climate change adaptation strategies into capital planning for long-term infrastructure protection and resiliency of critical services.
22. Create a database of community facilities with construction dates, current condition, capacity, and potential future demands for assessment and incorporation into capital plans.

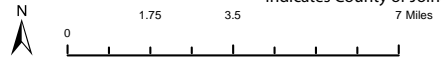
Map 9.1 Community Facilities

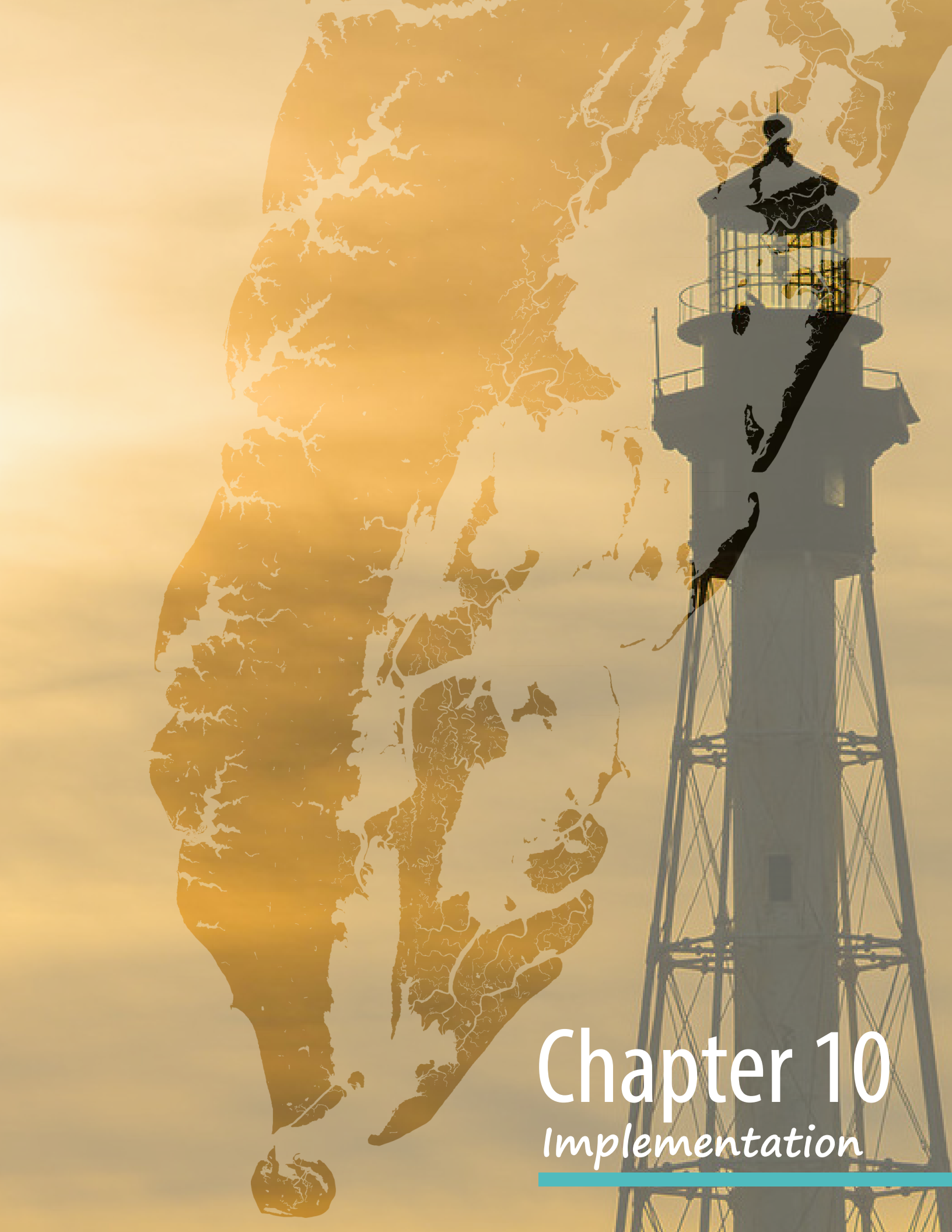


Legend

- 1 Northampton Middle/High School*
 - 2 Kiptopeke Elementary School*
 - 3 Occohannock Elementary School*
 - 4 Indiantown Park*
 - 5 Old Northampton Middle School (Future Park)*
 - 6 Kiptopeke State Park
 - 7 Cape Charles Town Beach, Cape Charles Central Park
 - 8 Cheriton Town Park
 - 9 Eastville Town Park
 - 10 Randy Custis Memorial Park (Nonprofit Park)
 - 11 Exmore Town Park
 - 12 Eastern Shore of Virginia National Wildlife Refuge
 - 13 YMCA
 - 14 Brownsville Preserve
 - 15 Edward S. Brinkley Nature Preserve *
 - 16 Northampton County Government Complex*
 - 17 Northampton County Circuit Court*, Sheriff's Office, Regional Jail*
 - 18 Transfer Station/Sanitary Landfill*
 - Waste Collection Center*
 - 19 Town of Cape Charles Police Department, Volunteer Fire Company
 - 20 Town of Eastville Police Department, Volunteer Fire Company
 - 21 Cape Charles Rescue Service*
 - 22 Cheriton Volunteer Fire Department
 - 23 Northampton Fire*
 - 24 Northampton EMS*
 - 25 Town of Exmore Police Department, Community Fire Company*
 - 26 Cape Charles Memorial Library
 - 27 Northampton Free Library
- *Indicates County or Joint-Operated Facility

- Conservation/Recreation Land
- County-Owned Land
- Boating Access Site
- Public Beach





Chapter 10

Implementation



Implementation

Using Your Northampton 2040

The Comprehensive Plan is Northampton County’s guiding document for the growth and development of the County. To ensure it is properly implemented, the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors should refer to the Comprehensive Plan and consider its vision prior to making recommendations and decisions.

Code of Virginia §15.2-2223 states that the Comprehensive Plan “shall control the general or approximate location, character, and extent of each feature shown in the plan.” Proper implementation of the Plan depends on a consistent measure of each land use application and budgetary decision against the long-range vision of the Comprehensive Plan.

Northampton County should assess the Plan’s effectiveness by reviewing and monitoring specific issues that impact the goals, objectives, and action strategies outlined within this document. The Plan should be amended periodically, when prudent and necessary. It is incumbent upon the Board of Supervisors to carefully consider whether specific amendments are congruent with the Plan’s overarching vision. Any modifications or amendments should be considered with long-term policy implications.



Tools for Implementation

Several tools are available to implement the vision set forth in the Comprehensive Plan. These tools include the annual budget, adopting a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), land use regulations, regional cooperation, and annual review and necessary updating.

Annual Budget

The Board of Supervisors and staff should keep the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan in mind when preparing the annual budget. The budget works in conjunction with the Comprehensive Plan to move the County towards a thriving, more resilient future.

Capital Improvement Plan

A Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) coordinates the location, timing, and financing of capital improvements over a multi-year period. Capital improvements refer to major, non-recurring physical expenditures such as land, buildings, public infrastructure, and equipment. The community benefits and the long-range vision is achieved when the priorities of the CIP and updates to ordinances align with the Comprehensive Plan. Northampton County does not currently have a CIP to guide future capital improvements; however, the creation of such a plan is included as a strategy within this Comprehensive Plan.

Land Use Regulations

The zoning ordinance, including the specific water quality protection and preservation regulations found in the CAP zoning district; subdivision regulations; landscaping, parking, and signage standards; and other land use and development standards and procedures are at the forefront in implementing the Comprehensive Plan. As legal documents, zoning and subdivision regulations outline what property owners may do with their land and how buildings and sites must be designed. Aligning land use regulations to the policies in this Comprehensive Plan is a critical step toward implementation. Many of the objectives in the Plan include strategies that suggest revisions to the zoning ordinance and other land use regulations. These administrative components work to enact the goals and vision of the Plan over time.

Land Use Actions

The process for development approvals, including rezoning and special use permits, are a central means of implementing the Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan should serve as a strong guide for decisions on all land use applications. Land use applications should be measured against the Comprehensive Plan, including the specific action strategies and the future land use map, to ensure consistency. In rare cases where unforeseen uses or changes in market conditions may warrant deviation from the adopted Plan, Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors should review and consider amendments to the Comprehensive Plan to ensure that the document remains current, relevant, and responsive to the community's needs.

Regional Cooperation

Regional cooperation on the Eastern Shore is a long-standing tradition, perhaps initiated out of geographic necessity. Ecological, environmental, transportation, equity, education, tourism, community facilities, job and workforce development, and many of the other issues covered in this Comprehensive Plan are issues that are best solved with a regional perspective. Successful implementation of the strategies in this Plan will require continued regional cooperation with the Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission and other regional groups and organizations. Some of these regional groups include the Eastern Shore of Virginia Regional Navigable Waterways Committee, Eastern Shore of Virginia Ground Water Committee, Eastern Shore Public Service Authority, and the Eastern Shore Tourism Commission. While regional cooperation can be difficult at times, it is paramount that Northampton County plays a significant leadership role in addressing regional issues.

Annual Review and Necessary Update

Continuous review and progress monitoring holds everyone accountable to the community's long-range vision. The Code of Virginia § 15.2-2230 requires that Comprehensive Plans be reviewed, and updated if needed, every five years. In addition to the five-year review and update, annual reviews and revisions of ordinances and plans is considered a best practice. Reviewing the Plan regularly helps measure success in achieving Plan goals. It also provides an opportunity to propose and integrate strategic initiatives and policy changes that can be incorporated into the annual budget process, if necessary. This annual review helps set budgetary priorities that are consistent with the community's vision and ensures that monitoring is systematic and planned.



Implementation Matrix

The implementation matrix provides the specific direction to make this Plan a reality. The matrix builds on the strategies included in each chapter by identifying tools, responsible parties, and anticipated timeframes for completion. The matrix also correlates strategies with specific policies, goals, and values set forth in the Plan. The implementation matrix should be reviewed annually as part of the budgeting process to set priorities as well as measure progress toward the plan's vision for the Northampton County of 2040.

"A Road Map" to 2040

The Implementation Matrix provided in this chapter is our roadmap forward. Listed below are the step-by-step directions to achieve our vision for the Northampton County of 2040. The key to its success will be a proactive approach by the Planning Commission in cooperation with the Board of Supervisors, County departments and boards, residents, businesses, and community institutions and organizations.

The Matrix includes the following information:

Implementation Strategy

- Specific action item

Type of Implementation Categories

- Regulation Updates and Enforcement
- Community Outreach and Education
- Partnerships
- Capital Projects
- Programs and Services
- Plans and Studies
- Land Use Application Review

Responsible Agency

The organization(s) responsible for partnering, administering, managing, and/or implementing the specific action item. These organizations include:

- Northampton County Staff/Board of Supervisors
- Nonprofit Organizations
- Regional and Institutional Partners
- Citizen Boards and Committees
- State and Federal Agencies
- Local Business Partners

Schedule

- Short-term (1-3 years) — short-term actions can be completed within 3 years of the Plan's adoption.
- Medium-term (3-5 years) — medium-term actions may be initiated within 3 years but will be completed by 5 years from plan's adoption.
- Long-term (5+ years) — long-term actions may be initiated between 3 and 5 years from the plan's adoption but will be completed beyond the first five years of the plan's adoption.
- Ongoing — ongoing actions should continue for the life of the plan.

Implementation Matrix

| Objectives | Strategy # | Implementation Strategy | Implementation Type | Responsible Agency | Schedule |
|--------------------------|------------|---|------------------------------------|--|-------------|
| Cultural Heritage | | | | | |
| Preserve History | 1 | Ensure the continued preservation of recognized sites of historic and cultural significance in Northampton County. | Regulation Updates and Enforcement | Northampton County Staff / BOS / State Agencies / Regional Institutions and Partners | On-going |
| | 2 | Pursue identification, recognition, and protection of historic areas representing Northampton County's diverse culture, including native and African American sites. | Regulation Updates and Enforcement | Northampton County Staff / BOS / State Agencies / Regional Institutions and Partners | On-going |
| | 3 | Consider pursuing Certified Local Government status through the National Park Service and State Historic Preservation Offices to access federal historic preservation funds and resources. | Programs and Services | Northampton County Staff / BOS | Medium-Term |
| | 4 | Develop and adopt land-use practices and zoning regulations, including Historic Overlay Districts, to protect historic sites and structures and their gateways and provide adequate buffer areas. | Regulation Updates and Enforcement | Northampton County Staff / BOS | Medium-Term |
| | 5 | Continually update the County's inventory of historic sites and structures. | Partnerships | Nonprofit Organizations | On-going |
| | 6 | Study the need for regulations requiring archaeological surveys of land proposed for development. | Regulation Updates and Enforcement | Northampton County Staff / BOS | Medium-Term |
| | 7 | Ensure that new development is sensitive to the character and context of historic areas. | Land Use Application Review | Northampton County Staff / BOS; Citizen Boards and Committees | On-going |
| | 8 | Ensure protection of archaeological resources found during the construction process according to state and federal guidelines. | Land Use Application Review | Northampton County Staff / BOS; Citizen Boards and Committees | On-going |
| | 9 | Collaborate with the Eastern Shore Public Library System and ESVA Museum Network members to promote to visitors and educate residents about historic areas and sites through the development of exhibits, history trails, collection development, and programs. | Partnerships | Northampton County Staff / BOS; Regional and Institutional Partners | On-going |

| Objectives | Strategy # | Implementation Strategy | Implementation Type | Responsible Agency | Schedule |
|--------------------------------------|------------|---|----------------------------------|---|------------|
| Cultural Heritage (Continued) | | | | | |
| Encourage Reinvestment | 10 | Promote existing federal and State historic tax credit programs available for the rehabilitation of income-producing historic properties. | Community Outreach and Education | Northampton County Staff / BOS | Short-Term |
| | 11 | Encourage efforts to maintain and repair historic structures and support the donation of historic easements. | Community Outreach and Education | Northampton County Staff / BOS | On-going |
| | 12 | Support efforts of local historical societies to protect sites and encourage restoration of buildings. | Partnerships | Northampton County Staff / BOS; Nonprofit Organizations | On-going |
| Promote Heritage-Based Tourism | 13 | Support local, regional and state efforts to develop and promote heritage tourism and eco-tourism opportunities in the County, such as the Heritage Trail, John Smith Water Trail, Southern Tip Bike and Hike Trail, and Eastern Shore Rail-to-Trail. | Partnerships | Northampton County Staff / BOS; Regional and Institutional Partners | On-going |
| | 14 | Develop an interpretive signage program for historic parks and selected sites. | Programs and Services | Northampton County Staff / BOS | Short-Term |
| | 15 | Promote the efforts of local artists, artisans, musicians and writers to publicize events where their work is offered. | Partnerships | Northampton County Staff / BOS | Short-Term |
| | 16 | Support the preservation and digitization of local archival materials for use in promoting tourism and educating citizens about the value of history. | Partnerships | Northampton County Staff / BOS; Regional and Institutional Partners | On-going |
| | 17 | Develop regional collaborations to include Northampton's in the historic narrative of the Hampton Roads region, the state, and the nation. | Partnerships | Northampton County Staff / BOS; Regional and Institutional Partners | On-going |

| Objectives | Strategy # | Implementation Strategy | Implementation Type | Responsible Agency | Schedule |
|------------------------------|------------|--|------------------------------------|---|------------|
| Land Use | | | | | |
| Preserve Community Resources | 1 | Preserve the County's rural character by directing development to areas within and adjacent to existing towns with existing or planned public utilities. | Land Use Application Review | Northampton County Staff / BOS | On-going |
| | 2 | Maintain and protect agriculture, aquaculture, and other water dependent uses along working waterfronts and in other predominately rural portions of the County with appropriately scaled lots, uses, and development standards. | Land Use Application Review | Northampton County Staff / BOS | On-going |
| | 3 | Discourage inappropriate development and land uses that may have detrimental impacts to prime farmland and water quality needed to support aquaculture, fishing, and crabbing operations. | Land Use Application Review | Northampton County Staff / BOS | On-going |
| | 4 | Work with existing shoreline communities to plan for resiliency and mitigate negative environmental impacts through techniques such as shoreline stabilization, low impact development, alternative wastewater systems, stormwater management, native plantings, living shorelines, building elevation, and managed retreat. | Capital Projects | Northampton County Staff / BOS; Regional and Institutional Partners | On-going |
| | 5 | Conserve, preserve, and protect the County's natural resources, including prime agricultural soils, surface waters, and the environmental attributes that contribute to a healthy coastal ecosystem, such as its wetlands, barrier islands, bird habitats, and coastal shellfish areas. | Regulation Updates and Enforcement | Northampton County Staff / BOS; Regional and Institutional Partners | On-going |
| | 6 | Protect the County's sole-source multi-aquifer system by protecting and sustaining ground-water recharge areas through policies that reduce and/or mitigate land disturbance, stormwater runoff, impervious surfaces, water usage, and pollution. | Regulation Updates and Enforcement | Northampton County Staff / BOS; Regional and Institutional Partners | On-going |
| | 7 | Evaluate residential rezoning requests for consistency with the Comprehensive Plan and fiscal impact on the community. | Regulation Updates and Enforcement | Northampton County Staff / BOS | On-going |
| | 8 | Continue to maintain, enforce, and update zoning requirements for intensive animal production operations to protect water quality. | Regulation Updates and Enforcement | Northampton County Staff / BOS | On-going |
| Guide Growth | 9 | Work cooperatively with the Towns to attract compatible and creative development and infill that contributes to their economic and community vitality. | Partnerships | Northampton County Staff / BOS | On-going |
| | 10 | Provide schools, community facilities, and infrastructure necessary for vibrant growth of the county. | Programs and Services | Northampton County Staff / BOS | On-going |
| | 11 | Encourage adaptive re-use and appropriate infill development while also supporting the restoration and continuance of existing businesses that may not conform to the cluster development land use method. | Land Use Application Review | Northampton County Staff / BOS; Citizen Boards and Committees | On-going |
| | 12 | Allow for a range of residential densities, particularly in designated development areas, to provide housing options to meet the needs of all people. | Regulation Updates and Enforcement | Northampton County Staff / BOS; Citizen Boards and Committees | Short-Term |
| | 13 | Promote cluster development along Route 13 located in existing towns and town edges, implementing vehicular and pedestrian strategies that ensure safety and flow during peak seasons. | Land Use Application Review | Northampton County Staff / BOS; Citizen Boards and Committees | On-going |
| | 14 | Promote compact, mixed-use development within identified development areas and encourage innovative, inclusionary, pedestrian-oriented livable communities. | Regulation Updates and Enforcement | Northampton County Staff / BOS; Citizen Boards and Committees | On-going |

| Objectives | Strategy # | Implementation Strategy | Implementation Type | Responsible Agency | Schedule |
|----------------------------------|------------|--|------------------------------------|---|-------------|
| Land Use (Continued) | | | | | |
| Protect Community Character | 15 | Encourage revitalization, repurposing, and rehabilitation of existing structures by promoting available resources, such as grants and tax credits, and pursuing funding to support such efforts. | Community Outreach and Education | Northampton County Staff / BOS; Nonprofit Organizations | Medium-Term |
| | 16 | Ensure that new development complements and enhances its surroundings through proper land use, design, landscaping, and transitional buffers. | Land Use Application Review | Northampton County Staff / BOS; Citizen Boards and Committees | On-going |
| | 17 | Establish and maintain usable public access to and along the waterfront. | Capital Projects | Northampton County Staff / BOS; State and Federal Agencies | On-going |
| | 18 | Ensure new development provides access to lifelong learning and wellness spaces, such as libraries, community centers, and outdoor public green spaces. | Land Use Application Review | Northampton County Staff / BOS; Citizen Boards and Committees | On-going |
| | 19 | Continue to maintain, enforce, and update zoning building height requirements to support and protect community character. | Land Use Application Review | Northampton County Staff / BOS | On-going |
| Align and Streamline Regulations | 20 | Review existing zoning ordinances and procedures and recommend changes necessary to align County ordinances with the Plan's concepts and goals. | Regulation Updates and Enforcement | Northampton County Staff / BOS; Citizen Boards and Committees | Short-Term |
| | 21 | Update land use regulations to provide clear and simplified requirements that promote economic development, enable creative housing choices, and protect sensitive resources. | Regulation Updates and Enforcement | Northampton County Staff / BOS; Citizen Boards and Committees | Short-Term |
| Engage the Community | 22 | Continue to work with residents to prepare and implement specific area plans, as requested and supported by each community. | Community Outreach and Education | Northampton County Staff / BOS | On-going |
| | 23 | Engage the community in land use decisions by promoting broader participation in public meetings and hearings using a variety of platforms (e.g., online engagement, community surveys, social media). | Community Outreach and Education | Northampton County Staff / BOS | On-going |
| | 24 | Provide public education on the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act and local land use regulations and processes through workshops, online resources, and brochures. | Community Outreach and Education | Northampton County Staff / BOS; Regional and Institutional Partners | On-going |
| | 25 | Maintain and update online mapping resources to assist residents and businesses in identifying zoning requirements, floodplains, prime agricultural lands, locally designated RPA/RMA areas, and other land use information. | Programs and Services | Northampton County Staff / BOS | On-going |
| | 26 | Promote environmental justice in all land use policies and decisions by engaging community representatives of underserved and minority groups, to understand the potential adverse effects of land use decisions; including but not limited to development and zoning decisions. | Community Outreach and Education | Northampton County Staff / BOS | On-going |

| Objectives | Strategy # | Implementation Strategy | Implementation Type | Responsible Agency | Schedule |
|---|------------|--|------------------------------------|--|------------|
| Resilient Environment | | | | | |
| Conserve & Protect Sensitive Lands & Ecosystems | 1 | Continue to enforce regulations and programs for land conservation and protection, including the wetlands ordinance, the primary dune ordinance, conservation zoning, Chesapeake/Atlantic Preservation Zone (CAP) zoning district, and vegetated buffers along the bayside and seaside waterfront. | Regulation Updates and Enforcement | Northampton County Staff / BOS | On-going |
| | 2 | Promote and expand non-regulatory strategies to conserve sensitive lands, such as transfer or purchase of development rights, conservation easements, and tax incentives. | Programs and Services | Northampton County Staff / BOS | On-going |
| | 3 | Participate with the Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission in the Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program to bring resources to the county for coastal resource protection, coastal resource sustainable use, and coastal management coordination. | Partnerships | Northampton County Staff / BOS | On-going |
| | 4 | Implement an integrated approach to shoreline management that incorporates Virginia Marine Resources Commission and Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) policy guidance and decision-making tools. | Regulation Updates and Enforcement | Northampton County Staff / BOS | Short-Term |
| | 5 | Continue to utilize VIMS Comprehensive Coastal Resource Management Portal (CCRMP) Shoreline Best Management Practices for management recommendations for all tidal shorelines, and Coastal Resilience's Virginia Eastern Shore tool to visualize sea-level rise and storm surge. | Land Use Application Review | Northampton County Staff / BOS | On-going |
| | 6 | Use visible public spaces to provide education on conservation, shoreline management, environmental stewardship, and Chesapeake Bay Act guidance. | Community Outreach and Education | Northampton County Staff / BOS | On-going |
| | 7 | Pursue partnerships and funding opportunities, including grants, loan funds, and cost share opportunities, to increase the extent of natural areas along the waterfront, using shoreline restoration projects such as living shorelines, and consider incentives that could encourage their use. | Partnerships | Northampton County Staff / BOS; State and Federal Agencies | Short-Term |

| Objectives | Strategy # | Implementation Strategy | Implementation Type | Responsible Agency | Schedule |
|--|------------|---|------------------------------------|--|------------|
| Resilient Environment (Continued) | | | | | |
| Protect Water Quality | 8 | Work with the Health Department to control the location, density, design, and maintenance of on-site septic systems to reduce threats to water quality. | Partnerships | Northampton County Staff / BOS | On-going |
| | 9 | Continue to enforce the stormwater management, Erosion and Sediment Control, and Floodplain Management Ordinances, and require regular maintenance, monitoring, and enforcement. | Regulation Updates and Enforcement | Northampton County Staff / BOS | On-going |
| | 10 | Implement the Eastern Shore of Virginia Groundwater Resource Protection and Preservation Plan, as amended, including encouraging the use of green infrastructure for stormwater management practices, encouraging the use of membrane treatment technology and wastewater reclamation and reuse, and encouraging use of the surficial Columbia aquifer for irrigation and commercial/ industrial wells. | Regulation Updates and Enforcement | Northampton County Staff / BOS | Short-Term |
| | 11 | Work with community partners including, but not limited to, the Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission, the Department of Environmental Quality, local advocacy groups, and others, to explore potential designation of Northampton County's waterways as "No Discharge Zones." | Partnerships | Northampton County Staff / BOS | Short-Term |
| | 12 | Conduct public outreach and provide education regarding water efficiency practices, green infrastructure, responsible use of fertilizer, proper disposal of animal waste, and other actions to conserve water and improve water quality. | Community Outreach and Education | Northampton County Staff / BOS | Short-Term |
| | 13 | Conduct public outreach and provide education regarding septic system technologies, maintenance, and funding sources. | Community Outreach and Education | Northampton County Staff / BOS; State and Federal Agencies | Short-Term |
| | 14 | Encourage residents and property managers to implement water efficiency practices and conservation techniques by educating them on their water usage statistics, potential water supply issues, and the benefits of participating in water audits. | Community Outreach and Education | Northampton County Staff / BOS | Short-Term |
| | 15 | Participate with the Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission in implementing the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Implementation Plan to meet Total Maximum Daily Load standards. | Partnerships | Northampton County Staff / BOS | On-going |

| Objectives | Strategy # | Implementation Strategy | Implementation Type | Responsible Agency | Schedule |
|---|------------|---|------------------------------------|---|-------------|
| Resilient Environment (Continued) | | | | | |
| Adapt for Climate Change | 16 | Participate in regional energy and climate change planning, including the development of a greenhouse gas emissions inventory and emission reduction targets. | Partnerships | Northampton County Staff / BOS; Regional and Institutional Partners | Short-Term |
| | 17 | Encourage the use of design techniques to slow water's rise and help absorb water into the landscape, such as living shorelines, rain gardens, and green roofs. | Land Use Application Review | Northampton County Staff / BOS | On-going |
| | 18 | Identify opportunities to increase renewable energy use to diversify the energy grid and mitigate climate related impacts without impacting Northampton County's sensitive ecosystems. | Regulation Updates and Enforcement | Northampton County Staff / BOS; Citizen Boards and Committees | Short-Term |
| | 19 | Preserve available open spaces adjacent to marsh lands to support marsh migration and inland retreat of the marshes under rising sea level. | Land Use Application Review | Northampton County Staff / BOS; Citizen Boards and Committees | On-going |
| | 20 | Review non-conforming lot and structure standards to encourage safe building and rebuilding in areas subject to sea level rise. | Regulation Updates and Enforcement | Northampton County Staff / BOS; Citizen Boards and Committees | Short-Term |
| | 21 | Consider establishing a transfer of development rights (TDR) program to encourage density reductions in vulnerable areas. | Regulation Updates and Enforcement | Northampton County Staff / BOS | Medium-Term |
| | 22 | Guide new development and locate critical facilities and infrastructure outside areas at a high risk for flooding, area subject to inundation within 100 years (as identified by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration), and other hazards. | Land Use Application Review | Northampton County Staff / BOS | On-going |
| | 23 | Utilize the Coastal Resilience Mapping portal to visualize flood and sea-level rise risks, identify sustainable natural solutions for resiliency, and demonstrate historic coastline changes when considering land-use applications. | Land Use Application Review | Northampton County Staff / BOS | On-going |
| | 24 | Participate in the development and implementation of the Statewide Coastal Resiliency Master Plan. | Plans and Studies | Northampton County Staff / BOS / State Agencies | Medium-Term |
| Minimize and Mitigate Environmental Hazards | 25 | Review and update local floodplain regulations in accordance with the National Flood Insurance Program requirements. | Regulation Updates and Enforcement | Northampton County Staff / BOS | Short-Term |
| | 26 | Proactively implement the Northampton County-specific strategies and projects in the Eastern Shore Hazard Mitigation Plan, as amended. | Regulation Updates and Enforcement | Northampton County Staff / BOS | Short-Term |
| | 27 | Amend the emergency management plan to include direct communication with the business sector. | Plans and Studies | Northampton County Staff / BOS | Short-Term |
| | 28 | Recommend the provision of independent back-up sources of power (e.g. gas generators) for commercial and institutional uses when primary power source is interrupted for an extended period. | Land Use Application Review | Northampton County Staff / BOS | On-going |
| | 29 | Participate in the "Advancing Ecosystem and Community Resilience" project through the Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program to identify the County's resiliency needs, establish resiliency priorities, and conceptualize potential projects. | Programs and Services | Northampton County Staff / BOS | On-going |
| | 30 | Provide education and outreach materials on hazard preparedness, flood management, sea level rise, and recommended mitigation steps to homeowners and private businesses that have been identified as located in vulnerable areas. | Community Outreach and Education | Northampton County Staff / BOS | On-going |

| Objectives | Strategy # | Implementation Strategy | Implementation Type | Responsible Agency | Schedule |
|--|------------|--|------------------------------------|---|------------|
| Resilient Environment (Continued) | | | | | |
| Implement Sustainable Development and Operations Standards | 31 | Promote sustainable agricultural practices, such as organic and regenerative organic agriculture, integrated pest management, reduced or no-till practices, and vegetated buffers. | Community Outreach and Education | Nonprofit Organizations; Northampton County Staff / BOS | On-going |
| | 32 | Explore changes to zoning and development provisions to reduce parking requirements and encourage permeable paving and other materials that promote infiltration of stormwater. | Regulation Updates and Enforcement | Northampton County Staff / BOS; Citizen Boards and Committees | Short-Term |
| | 33 | Revise landscaping regulations to require the placement of shade trees in parking lots and use of native plants in all commercial and institutional landscaping. | Regulation Updates and Enforcement | Northampton County Staff / BOS; Citizen Boards and Committees | Short-Term |
| | 34 | Encourage the use of energy-efficient lighting and adopt outdoor light standards to reduce the impacts of over-lighting, glare, and light pollution. | Regulation Updates and Enforcement | Northampton County Staff / BOS; Citizen Boards and Committees | Short-Term |
| | 35 | Continue partnerships to advance environmental sustainability and resilience practices, including the Northampton County Wetlands Board, the Eastern Shore of Virginia Ground Water Committee, and the Eastern Shore Soil and Water Conservation District. | Partnerships | Northampton County Staff / BOS; Citizen Boards and Committees | On-going |
| | 36 | Coordinate development review with the County Planning and Building Departments, State Water Control Board, Federal Emergency Management Agency, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and state resource agencies when applicable. | Partnerships | Northampton County Staff / BOS; State and Federal Agencies | On-going |

| Objectives | Strategy # | Implementation Strategy | Implementation Type | Responsible Agency | Schedule |
|---|------------|--|------------------------------------|---|-------------|
| Sustainable Economy | | | | | |
| Create Opportunities for Growth | 1 | Assess and enforce business licensing, permitting, and fees and streamline processes, where needed. | Programs and Services | Northampton County Staff / BOS | Short-Term |
| | 2 | Connect businesses, developers, real estate professionals, and lenders with resources, incentives, and data to encourage desirable investments. | Programs and Services | Northampton County Staff / BOS | Short-Term |
| | 3 | Encourage new and infill commercial and industrial development by correcting complex zoning and parking requirements. | Regulation Updates and Enforcement | Northampton County Staff / BOS; Citizen Boards and Committees | Short-Term |
| | 4 | Explore opportunities to expand grants and incentives, such as Technology and Tourism Zones, to attract identified target/growth industries. | Programs and Services | Northampton County Staff / BOS; Citizen Boards and Committees | Short-Term |
| | 5 | Consider developing an existing business visitation program to identify and assist businesses poised for growth. | Programs and Services | Northampton County Staff / BOS; Local Business Partners | Short-Term |
| | 6 | Create and foster business incubation, startup, and small business development support services. | Programs and Services | Northampton County Staff / BOS | Medium-Term |
| | 7 | Utilize the Economic Development Authority of Northampton County and its incorporated towns as a tool for acquiring properties and providing financing for redevelopment and investment. | Capital Projects | Northampton County Staff / BOS | Medium-Term |
| | 8 | Partner with towns and private entities to increase capacity of water and sewer and extend service to prioritized prime Commercial and Town Edge areas. | Partnerships | Northampton County Staff / BOS; Towns | Short-Term |
| | 9 | Work with industry experts to identify opportunities for industries with high-growth/high-value potential such as life sciences, information technology, healthcare, and marine-related industries. | Partnerships | Northampton County Staff / BOS; Local Business Partners | Short-Term |
| Support Agriculture, Aquaculture, Fishing, and Crabbing | 10 | Support expansion and diversification in the agricultural, forestry, and seafood industries by adding production and processing with local exporting while maintaining and encouraging environmentally friendly and sustainable practices. | Partnerships | Northampton County Staff / BOS; State and Federal Agencies | Medium-Term |
| | 11 | Actively seek opportunities to provide additional marine facilities on lower Northampton Bayside and explore incentives for owners and operators to make infrastructure improvements to address sea level rise and reoccurring flooding. | Partnerships | Northampton County Staff / BOS; Local Business Partners | Short-Term |
| | 12 | Establish local tax policies that stimulate water-dependent business development. | Programs and Services | Northampton County Staff / BOS | Short-Term |
| | 13 | Establish and promote incentives encouraging appropriate uses of working waterfronts, such as Enterprise Zones, Technology Zones, Community Development Authorities, and Tax Increment Financing. | Programs and Services | Northampton County Staff / BOS | Short-Term |
| | 14 | Consider implementing Working Waterfront (WWF) Development Areas (VA Code Sec. 15.2-2306.1) to allow financial incentives, such as reduction of permit fees, user fees, gross receipts tax, or waiver of tax liens, or ordinance exemptions. | Regulation Updates and Enforcement | Northampton County Staff / BOS | Short-Term |

| Objectives | Strategy # | Implementation Strategy | Implementation Type | Responsible Agency | Schedule |
|--|------------|---|----------------------------------|---|-------------|
| Sustainable Economy (Continued) | | | | | |
| Invest in People | 15 | Support the school system in developing an educated, skilled workforce to fill the community's needs. | Programs and Services | Northampton County Staff / BOS | On-going |
| | 16 | Establish funding through grants or other local sources for high school juniors to attend the community college. | Programs and Services | Northampton County Staff / BOS | On-going |
| | 17 | Partner with businesses and the Eastern Shore Community College to identify employment gaps and fund workforce training apprenticeships, mentoring, and on-the-job school training programs for the highest priority needs. | Partnerships | Northampton County Staff / BOS | Short-Term |
| | 18 | Partner with the public library system to develop work/study spaces, provide technology and educational resources that support life and work skill development, and enhance virtual learning access for all age groups. | Partnerships | Northampton County Staff / BOS; Regional and Institutional Partners | On-going |
| | 19 | Collaborate with regional partners to identify and create education & workforce programs that are tailored to the needs of Northampton County's underserved, minority, and most-at-risk communities. | Partnerships | Northampton County Staff / BOS; Regional and Institutional Partners | On-going |
| Enrich the Tourists' Experience | 20 | Develop a wayfinding system that is partnered with tourism marketing campaigns to provide clear and consistent signage that enhances the travel experience. | Programs and Services | Northampton County Staff / BOS | Short-Term |
| | 21 | Expand water access, trails, and bike infrastructure that promote outdoor sports and ecotourism. | Programs and Services | Northampton County Staff / BOS | Short-Term |
| | 22 | Continue supporting the Eastern Shore rail-to-trail projects as a transformational economic development investment. | Programs and Services | Northampton County Staff / BOS | On-going |
| | 23 | Continue partnering with the Eastern Shore Tourism Commission to promote and enhance tourism in Northampton County. | Partnerships | Northampton County Staff / BOS | On-going |
| | 24 | Include public libraries as both a destination, part of the tourism infrastructure, and resource for information about trails, events, and sites throughout the County. | Partnerships | Northampton County Staff / BOS; Regional and Institutional Partners | On-going |
| Promote a High Quality of Life | 25 | Identify strategic capital improvement projects to facilitate private investment that results in revitalization or other quality of life benefits. | Capital Projects | Northampton County Staff / BOS | Medium-Term |
| | 26 | Continue to extend high-speed internet and cellular service throughout the County with bandwidth capable of serving businesses and maintaining viability during technological advances. | Capital Projects | Northampton County Staff / BOS | Short-Term |
| | 27 | Utilize electronic media, collateral materials, and targeted advertising to highlight community success, vibrancy, and opportunities for new businesses, tourists and telecommuters. | Community Outreach and Education | Northampton County Staff / BOS | Short-Term |

| Objectives | Strategy # | Implementation Strategy | Implementation Type | Responsible Agency | Schedule |
|--------------------------------|------------|--|--|---|-------------|
| Housing | | | | | |
| Preserve Existing Housing | 1 | Work with housing partners to educate property owners on permitting processes for home improvements. | Community Outreach and Education | Northampton County Staff / BOS | On-going |
| | 2 | Continue to provide and publicize the tax exemption for rehabilitated structures, available through the Commissioner of Revenue office, as incentive for property owners to rehabilitate real estate. | Community Outreach and Education | Northampton County Staff / BOS | On-going |
| | 3 | Establish a resource list and promote state, federal, and non-profit housing programs and resources that support homeownership, home repair/rehabilitation, and weatherization. | Programs and Services | Northampton County Staff / BOS | Short-Term |
| | 4 | Preserve existing residential areas by enforcing the County's dangerous structures ordinance. | Regulation Updates and Enforcement | Northampton County Staff / BOS | Long-Term |
| | 5 | Continue to enforce the County's septic pump-out provisions. | Regulation Updates and Enforcement | Northampton County Staff / BOS; State and Federal Agencies | On-going |
| | 6 | Connect homeowners with resources for septic system repair and replacement, including low interest loan programs and grants through the health department, Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission, and other state and federal funding sources. | Community Outreach and Education | Northampton County Staff / BOS; Regional and Institutional Partners | Short-Term |
| Increase Housing Affordability | 7 | Continue participating in the Eastern Shore Regional Housing Coalition, working collaboratively with regional partners to support and implement affordable and workforce housing initiatives that benefit Northampton County residents. | Partnerships | Northampton County Staff / BOS; Regional and Institutional Partners | On-going |
| | 8 | Develop a comprehensive housing study that identifies barriers to housing affordability and recommendations for code reform, infrastructure improvements, and capacity building. | Plans and Studies | Northampton County Staff / BOS; Regional and Institutional Partners | Short-Term |
| | 9 | Participate in programming, loan, and grant initiatives that support affordable housing, such as Tax-Exempt Bond Financing, the Housing Choice Voucher Program, and the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Program. | Programs and Services | Northampton County Staff / BOS; Regional and Institutional Partners | Medium-Term |
| | 10 | Work with state and regional housing partners to leverage funds for conversion of vacant or underutilized buildings to low-moderate income housing. | Partnerships | Northampton County Staff / BOS; Regional and Institutional Partners | Long-Term |
| | 11 | Consider the effects on underserved and minority communities, including but not limited to gentrification and housing affordability, when assessing housing and development in Northampton County. | Land Use Application Review / Partnerships | Northampton County Staff / BOS; Regional and Institutional Partners | On-Going |

| Objectives | Strategy # | Implementation Strategy | Implementation Type | Responsible Agency | Schedule |
|------------------------------|------------|---|------------------------------------|---|-------------|
| Housing (Continued) | | | | | |
| Diversify the Housing Supply | 12 | Diversify housing stock by allowing small-lot, attached, and multifamily residential in appropriate areas as identified in the Future Land Use Plan, including Town Edges. | Land Use Application Review | Northampton County Staff / BOS | Short-Term |
| | 13 | Examine opportunities to streamline residential permitting processes and timelines. | Regulation Updates and Enforcement | Northampton County Staff / BOS | Short-Term |
| | 14 | Consider reducing minimum parking requirements for residential uses, which may be a barrier to development due to associated stormwater management costs. | Regulation Updates and Enforcement | Northampton County Staff / BOS; Citizen Boards and Committees | Short-Term |
| | 15 | Review the zoning ordinance to consider allowing accessory dwelling units by-right to provide affordable rental options and ease cost burden for homeowners. | Regulation Updates and Enforcement | Northampton County Staff / BOS; Citizen Boards and Committees | Short-Term |
| | 16 | Review the zoning and subdivision ordinances to expand housing opportunities for senior, elderly, multigenerational households, and special needs populations, both with and without care. | Regulation Updates and Enforcement | Northampton County Staff / BOS; Citizen Boards and Committees | Short-Term |
| Create Livable Communities | 17 | Support new housing development that aligns with Livable Community design principles in Town Edge pattern areas. | Regulation Updates and Enforcement | Northampton County Staff / BOS; Citizen Boards and Committees | On-going |
| | 18 | Support residential area investments (lighting, sidewalks, crosswalks, roads) that allow Northampton County residents to improve residential safety and walkability and promote aging in place. | Capital Projects | Northampton County Staff / BOS; Citizen Boards and Committees | Medium-Term |
| | 19 | Utilize state and federal grant and loan programs for community revitalization projects that embody Livable Communities principles. | Capital Projects | Northampton County Staff / BOS | Long-Term |
| | 20 | Promote the use of "green" building technologies, including weatherization and low impact development, to provide energy conservation benefits and increase community resilience. | Community Outreach and Education | Northampton County Staff / BOS | Medium-Term |
| | 21 | Incorporate access to lifelong learning and wellness venues in housing developments to increase convenient access and walkability to public libraries, parks and green spaces, and community centers. | Partnerships | Northampton County Staff / BOS; Regional and Institutional Partners | On-going |

| Objectives | Strategy # | Implementation Strategy | Implementation Type | Responsible Agency | Schedule |
|--|------------|---|---------------------|---|-------------|
| Mobility | | | | | |
| Improve Northampton County's Road System | 1 | Partner with VDOT to complete the projects listed in the Six-Year Improvement Plan. | Capital Projects | Northampton County Staff / BOS; State and Federal Agencies | On-going |
| | 2 | Work with VDOT to implement the safety recommendations outlined in the 2035 Eastern Shore Long Range Transportation Plan, as amended. | Partnerships | Northampton County Staff / BOS; State and Federal Agencies | On-going |
| | 3 | Partner with VDOT and the Town of Exmore to make improvements to the Urban Development Area on Hadlock Road listed in the VTrans Mid-Term Transportation Needs. | Partnerships | Northampton County Staff / BOS; State and Federal Agencies | Medium-Term |
| | 4 | Partner with VDOT for continued monitoring of bridge status to ensure their continued safety and utility. | Partnerships | Northampton County Staff / BOS; State and Federal Agencies | On-going |
| Ensure Effective Marine Transportation | 5 | Prioritize and implement the findings from Eastern Shore of Virginia Dredging Needs Assessment, assuring continued waterfront access for commercial and recreational access. | Plans and Studies | Northampton County Staff / BOS; Regional and Institutional Partners; State and Federal Agencies | On-going |
| | 6 | Apply for grant funds in the Virginia Waterway Maintenance Grant Program to fund feasibility and cost evaluations of dredging, maintenance of shallow-draft navigable waterway maintenance dredging, and the beneficial use of dredged materials from waterways for the restoration and the mitigation of coastal erosion and flooding. | Capital Projects | Northampton County Staff / BOS; Regional and Institutional Partners; State and Federal Agencies | Short-Term |
| Upgrade Public Transportation | 7 | Support public transportation improvement strategies identified in the 2013 Accomack-Northampton Coordinated Human Service Mobility Plan, as amended. | Partnerships | Northampton County Staff / BOS; Regional and Institutional Partners | On-going |
| | 8 | Work with STAR Transit to determine service needs and gaps in the public transportation network and prioritize for implementation. | Partnerships | Northampton County Staff / BOS; Regional and Institutional Partners | Medium-Term |
| Develop Pedestrian and Bike Facilities | 9 | Work with VDOT and A-NPDC to implement the findings in the 2017 Eastern Shore Pedestrian Facilities Study and improve sidewalk infrastructure in Franktown and Town Edge land use areas. | Capital Projects | Northampton County Staff / BOS; Regional and Institutional Partners; State and Federal Agencies | Medium-Term |
| | 10 | Continue to make safety improvements on shared roads to protect cyclists and pedestrians from vehicles, using the recommendations found in the 2014 Eastern Shore Bike Plan, as amended. | Capital Projects | Northampton County Staff / BOS; Regional and Institutional Partners; State and Federal Agencies | Medium-Term |
| | 11 | Continue to work with VDOT and Accomack County to develop, fund, and construct shared use paths, including the Southern Tip Bike & Hike Trail and Eastern Shore Rail-to-Trail. | Capital Projects | Northampton County Staff / BOS; Regional and Institutional Partners; State and Federal Agencies | On-going |

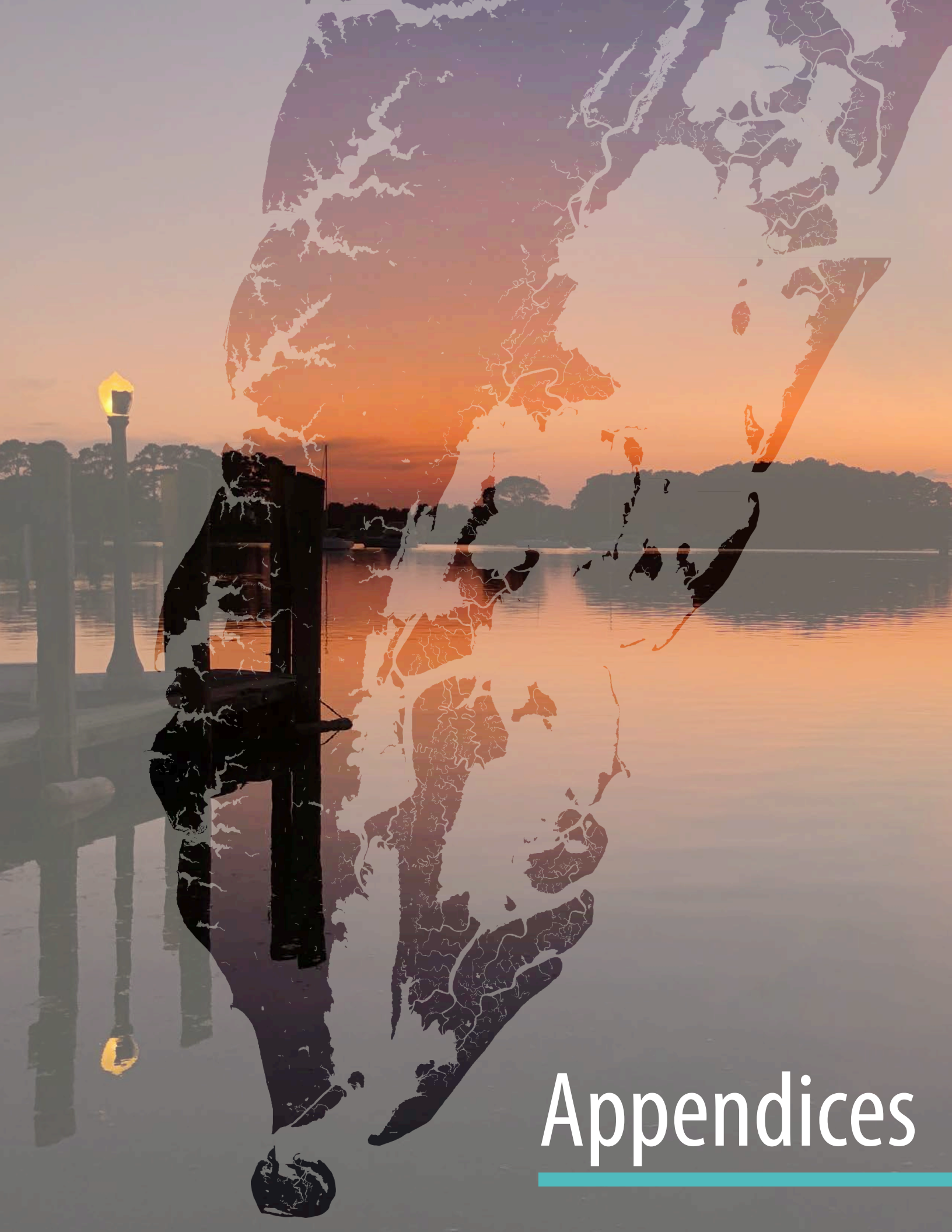
| Objectives | Strategy # | Implementation Strategy | Implementation Type | Responsible Agency | Schedule |
|---|------------|--|---|---|-------------|
| Community Facilities and Services | | | | | |
| Invest in Education | 1 | Implement plans to modernize public school buildings and grounds to provide state-of-the-art learning experiences, ensure student safety, and enhance community connections. | Capital Projects | Northampton County Staff / BOS | Short-Term |
| | 2 | Support efforts to recruit and retain quality teachers, such as lobbying state support for Cost of Competing Adjustments (COCA) that help Northampton County and Accomack County compete with teacher salaries across state lines. | Programs and Services | Northampton County Staff / BOS | On-going |
| | 3 | Evaluate school capacity, technology, and programs on a minimum five-year basis and develop specific action strategies to address identified service gaps. | Plans and Studies | Northampton County Staff / BOS | Medium-Term |
| | 4 | Enable 21st century learning inside and outside the classroom by leveraging state and federal infrastructure support programs, such as E-Rate, and offering innovative solutions to increase internet connectivity, such as equipping school buses with WiFi and creating and advertising hotspot locations throughout the county. | Capital Projects | Northampton County Staff / BOS | Short-Term |
| | 5 | Support access to educational resources outside of the K-12 school buildings by improving public library operations and infrastructure. | Partnerships | Northampton County Staff / BOS | On-going |
| Enhance Infrastructure | 6 | Develop a sustainable, fiscally-responsible plan for centralized sewer, whether public or private, to promote economic development and preserve water quality in priority commercial, industrial, and Town Edge areas. | Plans and Studies | Northampton County Staff / BOS | On-going |
| | 7 | Continue to work jointly with the Towns to upgrade and/or establish central sewer and water facilities within Town Edge areas. | Partnerships | Northampton County Staff / BOS; Towns | Medium-Term |
| | 8 | Support the Eastern Shore of Virginia Broadband Authority and other partnerships to achieve reliable, effective, and affordable internet access in all homes. | Capital Projects | Northampton County Staff / BOS; Regional and Institutional Partners | On-going |
| | 9 | Support siting of telecommunications structures to improve cellular service and coverage, with a preference for collocation and attached structures. | Land Use Application Review | Northampton County Staff / BOS | On-going |
| Improve Emergency Services and Healthcare | 10 | Work with the Virginia Department of Health to implement the findings in the 2017 Eastern Shore of Virginia Community Health Assessment Synthesis. | Programs and Services | Northampton County Staff / BOS; State and Federal Agencies | Short-Term |
| | 11 | Continue to work with and support Law Enforcement, Fire, and Rescue services to monitor, maintain, and improve service levels. | Programs and Services | Northampton County Staff / BOS | On-going |
| | 12 | Enhance Emergency Medical Services, including adequate facilities, improved training for career and volunteer staff, acquisition of necessary emergency vehicles, collaboration with service providers, receiving hospitals, and other partners, and enhanced use of technologies as they become available. | Programs and Services | Northampton County Staff / BOS | Short-Term |
| | 13 | Address deficiencies in Emergency Shelter preparedness identified in the Eastern Shore of Virginia Hazard Mitigation Plan. | Capital Projects; Programs and Services | Northampton County Staff / BOS; Regional and Institutional Partners | Short-Term |

| Objectives | Strategy # | Implementation Strategy | Implementation Type | Responsible Agency | Schedule |
|---|------------|--|---|--|-------------|
| Community Facilities and Services (Continued) | | | | | |
| Create Park and Recreation Opportunities | 14 | Support acquisition, preservation, and maintenance of trails and trailheads through a variety of means, such as but not limited to, private donations, rail banking, revenue dedication, and easement purchases. | Capital Projects; Programs and Services | Northampton County Staff / BOS; State and Federal Agencies | On-going |
| | 15 | Create physical and visual access to waterfronts for public recreational needs, prioritizing a northern public beach access and bayside boat ramps. | Capital Projects; Programs and Services | Northampton County Staff / BOS; State and Federal Agencies | Medium-Term |
| | 16 | Identify opportunities to add community recreation amenities to existing public lands and facilities. | Capital Projects; Programs and Services | Northampton County Staff / BOS; State and Federal Agencies | Medium-Term |
| | 17 | Employ wayfinding signage to reflect distinct recreational opportunities and promote park use. | Programs and Services | Northampton County Staff / BOS | Short-Term |
| | 18 | Support community partnerships to enhance programming, amenities, and maintenance of existing parks. | Programs and Services | Northampton County Staff / BOS; Local Business Partners; Nonprofit Organizations | Short-Term |
| | 19 | Integrate accessibility and safety into park and facility design to provide parks and playgrounds that are safe and inclusive for users of all ages and abilities. | Programs and Services | Northampton County Staff / BOS | On-going |
| Develop a Strategic Capital Facilities Planning Program | 20 | Establish a long-term capital improvement plan to ensure major expenditures are planned, programmed, and constructed in a transparent, coordinated, and fiscally-sound manner. | Capital Projects | Northampton County Staff / BOS | Short-Term |
| | 21 | Incorporate climate change adaptation strategies into capital planning for long-term infrastructure protection and resiliency of critical services. | Capital Projects | Northampton County Staff / BOS | Medium-Term |
| | 22 | Create a database of community facilities with construction dates, current condition, capacity, and potential future demands for assessment and incorporation into capital plans. | Programs and Services | Northampton County Staff / BOS | Medium-Term |

Performance Indicators

Tracking performance over time is an important way to ensure the Comprehensive Plan goals and objectives are being implemented. Performance indicators are not intended to track specific goals found in this Comprehensive Plan but rather provide insight on progress over time, understanding that many factors influencing these indicators are beyond the County's direct control. Performance indicators should be reviewed annually to assess progress, identify areas for improvement, and redirect priorities as needed to address critical changes.

| Indicator | Data Source | Desired Trend | Virginia | Northampton County | Baseline Year |
|--|---------------------------------|---------------|-----------------|---|---------------|
| Population | US Census | Increase | 8.4 million | 11,957 | 2018 |
| Unemployment Rate | VA Employment Commission | Decrease | 2.8% | 4.4% | 2019 |
| Median Annual Earnings (High-School Graduate and Equivalent) | US Census | Increase | \$31,115 | \$30,000 | 2019 |
| % of Cost-Burdened Renters | US Census | Decrease | 46.0% | 45.0% | 2019 |
| % of Cost-Burdened Homeowners (with Mortgage) | US Census | Decrease | 27.0% | 27.3% | 2019 |
| Building Permits | County | Increase | - | 276 | 2020 |
| Business Licenses | County | Increase | - | TBD | TBD |
| Aquaculture Commodity Sales | US Department of Agriculture | Increase | \$112.6 million | \$28 million | 2017 |
| Tourism Expenditures | VA Tourism Commission | Increase | \$23.7 billion | \$77.5 million | 2016 |
| % of Households with No Internet Subscription | US Census | Decrease | 17.5% | 32.9% | 2019 |
| % of Residents Age 25+ with a High School Diploma | US Census | Increase | 89.9% | 82.2% | 2018 |
| % of Residents Age 25+ with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher | US Census | Increase | 39.3% | 21.6% | 2018 |
| % of Households with Broadband Internet Access (Not including cellular data) | US Census | Increase | 74.7% | 55.6% | 2019 |
| # of Crashes on U.S. Route 13 | VA Department of Transportation | Decrease | N/a | 161 | 2019 |
| Average Sheriff's Department Response Time | County | Decrease | - | TBD | TBD |
| Average Fire Response Time | County | Decrease | - | 18 minutes, 24 seconds. | TBD |
| Average Emergency Medical Service Response Time | County | Decrease | - | Night- 10.29 minutes Day- 8.57 minutes | 2019 |



Appendices



Appendices

Appendix A - Community Overview

Appendix B - Glossary

Appendix C - Willis Wharf and Oyster Visions



Appendices

Appendix A - Community Overview

Northampton County Community Overview

The following Community Overview highlights the demographic changes, community facilities, environmental resources, transportation system, and development patterns in Northampton County that influence the Northampton County Comprehensive Plan. The overview documents relevant demographic data that is used in conjunction with public input to identify challenges and opportunities that will guide Northampton County's future. The analysis relies on data from the 2010 Decennial Census, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates from 2010 to 2018, and Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Employment Statistics. Census Block map data is based on the 2014-2018 American Community Survey five-year estimates.

Community Overview 118

Northampton County Geography..... 118

Northampton County Community History..... 118

Existing Development Patterns..... 120

 Incorporated Towns 120

 Working Waterfronts 121

 Villages and Hamlets..... 121

 Residential Sprawl 121

 Commercial and Industrial Strip Development 122

Demographic Analysis 123

Population Change 123

Population Distribution 124

Population Projections 125

Age 126

Diversity 126

Families 129

Education..... 129

Housing 130

Housing Stock 130

Household Size 131

Tenure 131

Age of Housing Stock..... 132

Housing Type 132

Housing Value, Cost, & Rent 133

| | |
|--|------------|
| Cost Burden | 133 |
| Subsidized Housing | 134 |
| Economy | 135 |
| Economic Trends | 135 |
| Income | 135 |
| Poverty Levels | 136 |
| Unemployment | 137 |
| Jobs and Commuting | 137 |
| Jobs by Industry Sector | 138 |
| Agriculture Subsector Jobs and Wages | 139 |
| Agriculture and Aquaculture..... | 140 |
| Crop Sales..... | 140 |
| Crop Distribution | 141 |
| Farm Size | 141 |
| Farm Operations | 142 |
| Aquaculture..... | 143 |
| Tourism & Travel | 143 |
| Economic Drivers..... | 144 |
| Economic Incentives..... | 144 |
| Workforce Development..... | 145 |
| Regional Economic Development | 145 |
| Broadband/Fiber Access..... | 146 |
| Water & Wastewater Infrastructure | 146 |
| Facilities and Infrastructure | 147 |
| Government Services | 147 |
| Public Safety | 147 |
| Fire & Rescue | 147 |
| Law Enforcement..... | 148 |
| Utilities | 149 |
| Water..... | 149 |

| | |
|--|------------|
| Wastewater..... | 150 |
| Electric..... | 150 |
| Propane Gas | 150 |
| Telecommunications..... | 151 |
| Solid Waste Management | 152 |
| Education..... | 152 |
| Public Schools..... | 152 |
| Private Schools | 153 |
| Higher Education | 153 |
| Parks and Recreation..... | 154 |
| Other Parks & Recreation Resources | 155 |
| Other Community Resources | 155 |
| Hospital/Health Services..... | 155 |
| Arts & Culture Resources..... | 156 |
| Libraries..... | 156 |
| Churches | 156 |
| Environment | 157 |
| Land Cover | 157 |
| Climate | 159 |
| Topography | 159 |
| Sensitive Ecosystems..... | 160 |
| Coastal Resource Management | 160 |
| Wetlands, Dunes, & Marshes | 160 |
| Barrier Islands | 160 |
| Forest Lands | 161 |
| Land Conservation..... | 162 |
| Flora & Fauna..... | 163 |
| Rare Species and Habitat | 163 |
| Migratory Birds..... | 163 |
| Soils..... | 164 |

| | |
|--|------------|
| Water Resources | 165 |
| Groundwater Resources..... | 165 |
| Surface Waters..... | 166 |
| Water Quality | 166 |
| Natural Hazards | 167 |
| Flooding..... | 167 |
| Sea Level Rise | 167 |
| Hazard Mitigation Planning..... | 168 |
| Transportation | 169 |
| Relationship to Land Use..... | 169 |
| Urban Development Areas (UDAs)..... | 169 |
| Hierarchy of Streets | 169 |
| Traffic Volumes | 170 |
| Safety | 172 |
| Marine Transportation | 172 |
| Public Transportation..... | 173 |
| Pedestrian and Bike Facilities..... | 174 |
| Trails..... | 175 |
| Airports | 175 |
| Port Facilities | 176 |
| Northampton County Budget | 177 |
| Expenses and Revenues | 177 |

Community Overview

Northampton County Geography

Northampton County is located on the Delmarva Peninsula - a large peninsula on the east coast that contains land within the three states of Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia. It is bounded by the Chesapeake Bay to the west and the Atlantic Ocean to the east. The southern portion of the Delmarva Peninsula, known as Virginia's Eastern Shore, includes Accomack County to the North and Northampton County to the south. The southernmost tip of the peninsula is connected to the Virginia mainland via the Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel.

Northampton County is approximately 35 miles in length with an average width of 6 miles. The County contains a total of 696 square miles with an estimated 357 square miles in land surface. The County has five incorporated Towns within its boundaries; they are, in order from north to south, Exmore, Nassawadox, Eastville, Cheriton, and Cape Charles. The County seat is located in the town of Eastville, which is 125 miles from Richmond and 30 miles northeast of the Norfolk and Virginia Beach area, which is part of the Tidewater Region of Virginia. Northampton is one of 95 counties in Virginia.



Northampton County Community History

Northampton County's location and landscape has defined its history as a rural, independent, and self-sufficient community. The proximity to both the Chesapeake Bay and the Atlantic Ocean, combined with the area's highly fertile soil, has supported an agriculture and fishing lifestyle with development concentrated in towns.

The first inhabitants of the Eastern Shore were tribes of Native Americans thought to be numbered about 2000 around the turn of the 17th century. They lived in small settlements scattered along the peninsula. The villages were located close and accessible to the water, as it was of major importance to their existence. In addition to living off the bounty from the sea, they hunted game and tended fields. They migrated among several locations along the coast as demands and supplies of these necessitated. The Native Americans of the Eastern Shore did not survive long after the onset of English settlement. The spread of disease brought by the Europeans was the major contributing factor to their demise. Less than a century after their introduction to Europeans, the Native American population on the Eastern Shore dwindled down to just a few villages inhabited by just a handful of people.

Captain John Smith explored parts of what is now Northampton County and the Eastern Shore in 1607. Soon thereafter, the earliest known European settlement began in 1614. By 1634, Virginia's Eastern Shore became one of the original eight shires of Virginia and was known as the Accomack Shire. In 1642, the name was changed to Northampton County. In 1663, Northampton County was officially split into what is now Northampton and Accomack Counties. The county continued to prosper as a rural agricultural community with only a few scattered small towns noted for its relative isolation.

Northampton County has long been home to communities of African Americans. Long before other Virginia communities, the 1664 Northampton County tax rolls list 62 free Africans living on the peninsula, including Anthony and Mary Johnson, who had migrated from Jamestown in the 1640s. Like native and European communities, freed blacks were drawn to and thrived off the abundance of the County's landscape. Anthony Johnson was known as an agricultural entrepreneur and is believed to be the first black slaveowner in Virginia. The legacy of these early African residents is seen in the historic communities, such as Bayview, which still exist in the County. Like the County's other rural communities, freed black communities waned with economic and transportation shifts.¹

In the 1880s, the county began to develop following the expansion of the Pennsylvania Railroad and the creation of a harbor which connected the region to larger metropolitan areas. The town of Cape Charles was incorporated in 1886 at the railroad's terminus and quickly became a center of residential and commercial activity in the county. The convenience of the automobile and the opening of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel in the 1960s began to drastically change the economy and development patterns of the county. As linear strip development took hold, US Route 13 gained increased development and traffic while towns and waterfront communities began to decline as centers for commerce.

Today, the original railroad is no longer in use, and development in Northampton County now reflects the influence of the highway in supporting the area's economy focused on tourism, agriculture, aquaculture, fishing, and crabbing. Strip development has occurred along U.S. Route 13, although most development remains concentrated in Towns. The County contains some of the last remaining stretches of undeveloped coastline on the East Coast and large portions of the County are protected through conservation. Northampton County faces many challenges – from economic shifts to climate change. Yet, Northampton remains a resilient and entrepreneurial community and is actively working to address its challenges and build a better future together.

¹ <https://www.nps.gov/ethnography/aah/aaheritage/ChesapeakeC.html>

Existing Development Patterns

The natural environment has affected the development patterns in Northampton County for nearly 400 years. While land use was once driven by fertile agricultural soils and fishing, the primary development drivers are now access to the ocean, the bay, and major transportation routes, primarily U.S. Route 13 which runs the length of the county. As it plans for new development, Northampton County faces the challenge of balancing preservation of their delicate ecosystem, their historic agricultural roots and economy, and their need for housing and economic development that will support the residents and improve their overall quality of life.

Incorporated Towns

Northampton's six incorporated towns (Exmore, Nassawadox, Eastville, Cheriton, Cape Charles, and a portion of Belle Haven) serve as the social and economic focal points of the County. Towns have their own governing bodies and land-use planning and zoning controls, and the County recognizes that it must work cooperatively with the Towns to achieve shared development goals.

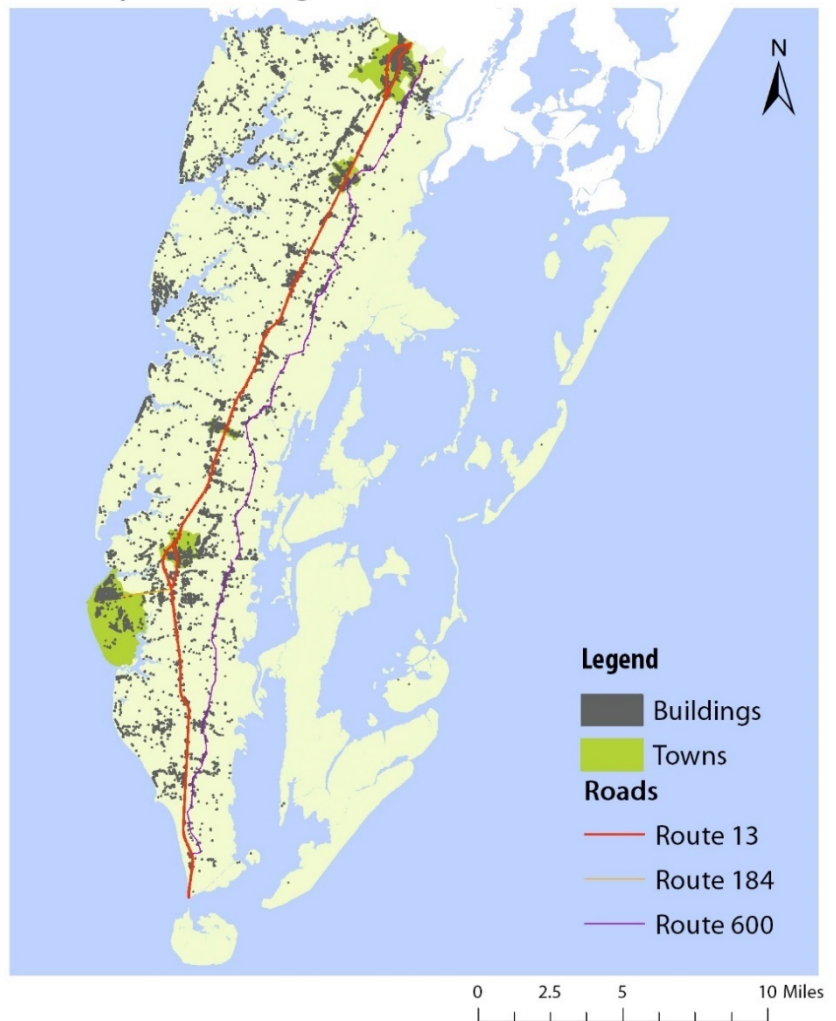
Development has historically been concentrated in the Towns, and the Towns continue to be the most appropriate location for development in the County. Many opportunities exist within the towns for various types of land use and development², including:

- Port access and 80 acres of industrial land with water and sewer in Cape Charles.
- Up to 100,000 square feet of land and buildings in the Cheriton area.
- Large parcels fronting US 13 for tech and office use in Exmore.
- The health care complex and former hospital in Nassawadox has ready access to utilities including fiberoptic connection.

The amount of new growth that can be accommodated within each town varies substantially depending upon the availability of municipal sewer and water service. Currently, only Cape Charles and Exmore offer public sewer and water service. Eastville operates a municipal water system and will also be more likely to attract development interest than the other incorporated towns that do not. Belle Haven, Nassawadox, and Cheriton are limited by the lack of sewer and/or water services.

² Northampton Economic Development

Developed Buildings



Working Waterfronts

Working waterfronts³ are important to Northampton's heritage, character, and economy. Before the advent of the railroad in 1884, almost all commerce on the Eastern Shore of Virginia was conducted by water; working waterfronts developed along the Atlantic and Chesapeake Bay shorelines, providing a source of livelihood for Northampton's citizens that continues to be an economic driver today.

Northampton's working waterfronts face many challenges. Primary pressures include redevelopment, governmental, flooding-related hazards, and shifts in seafood market economics⁴. Governmental regulations related to declining fish stock landings impact business operations that in turn result in changes to coastal land use. Lack of flood insurance coverage is another contributing factor to the decline of working waterfronts, as many are not rebuilt after a storm. Declining water quality due to stormwater runoff; failing septic and wastewater treatment systems; and poultry farms and farms that use plastic to plant crops have also been cited as critical issues to maintaining aquaculture operations and preserving working waterfronts⁵.

In addition, navigability of access channels has also become an issue due to siltation from storms, changes in land-use practices, and hard-scaping the shorelines near some channels. The Eastern Shore Regional Navigable Waterways Committee has been formed to work with the US Army Corps of Engineers to identify critical needs and ensure continued commercial access to working waterfronts. An update to the Regional Dredging Needs Assessment is also underway as of September 2020.

Villages and Hamlets

Villages and hamlets are unincorporated rural communities that have served as focal points for surrounding rural areas and are often of local historic or cultural significance. These communities grew up along major thoroughfares, around train stations, or at coastal locations with deep water access or at major crossroads and generally do not have access to central sewer and water. Villages usually have a higher density core that includes a mix of residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional uses. Hamlets are mostly residential, typically consisting of 10-30 houses, and may include areas zoned for limited commercial, employment, and higher-intensity residential uses than the surrounding rural area.

Residential Sprawl

Residential sprawl has occurred as primarily single-use residential subdivisions, located on or near the water and in rural locations throughout the County. These residential communities do not have public water and sewer, and some do not meet current zoning, subdivision, Health Department, Storm Water Management or Chesapeake Bay Protection standards. Many existing subdivisions are currently undeveloped.

Residential sprawl distributes the need for facilities and services over a wide area, increasing the cost of service delivery when compared to more compact development patterns. Without proper protections, residential encroachment into agricultural areas may also threaten working farms and negatively impact the environment.

³ As adopted by A-NPDC, the term 'working waterfront' means real property (including support structures over and adjacent to the water or inland property engaged in significant water-related activities) that provides access to coastal waters or that supports commercial fishing; recreational fishing businesses; aquaculture; ecotourism; national defense; public safety uses; marine research; shipping and rail yards; boatbuilding; support of offshore energy production; or other commercial, recreational, and industrial business.

⁴ Virginia Working Waterfront Master Plan, 2016

⁵ Case Study of Willis Wharf Working Waterfront, Zoning and Property Ownership Issues, 2015

Commercial and Industrial Strip Development

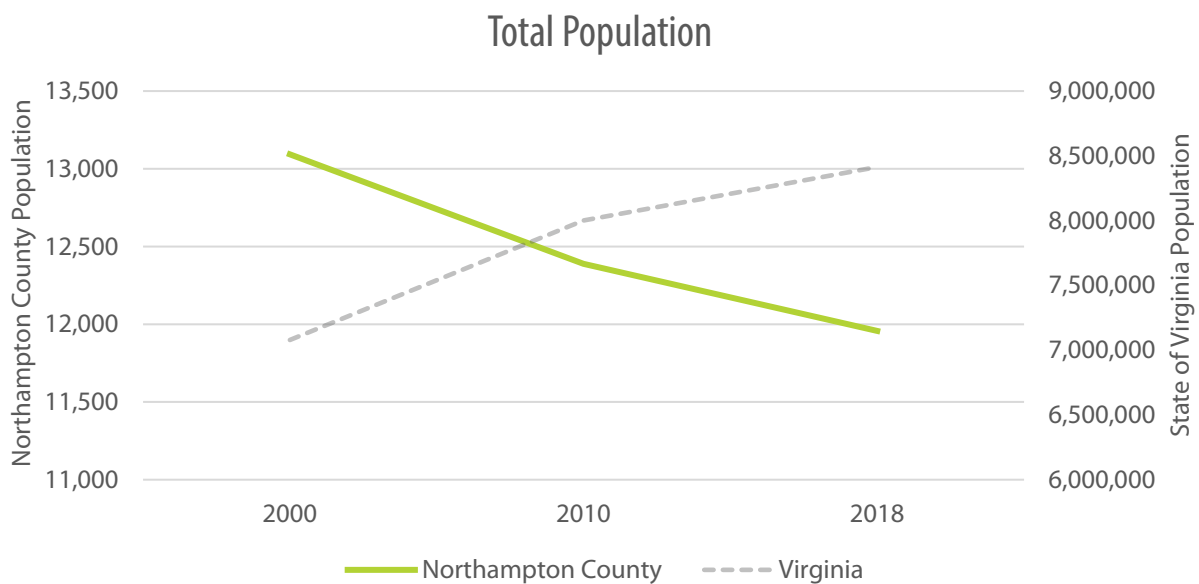
While most development in Northampton County is concentrated in incorporated Towns, some linear or “strip-style” commercial and industrial development has occurred along Rt. 13. The sprawling distribution of these uses is contrary to the current vision of protecting Northampton’s rural character, concentrating growth in areas served by public facilities, and preserving sensitive environmental areas and prime farmland. Though existing uses may continue, the comprehensive plan discourages this land use pattern and identifies appropriate areas for more intensive uses.

Demographic Analysis

Population Change

Northampton County's population has declined from 12,389 in 2010 to 11,957 in 2018, a decline of about 5.3%. These population trends are consistent with rural localities across Virginia. Rural areas tend to attract a growing retiree population, while young adults move elsewhere for education and work opportunities. This results in a gradual reduction in the younger populations, while older populations continue to age and experience natural decrease.

During this same time period, the state of Virginia has seen a population increase of about 5.2%, from 8,001,024 in 2010 to 8,413,774 in 2018.



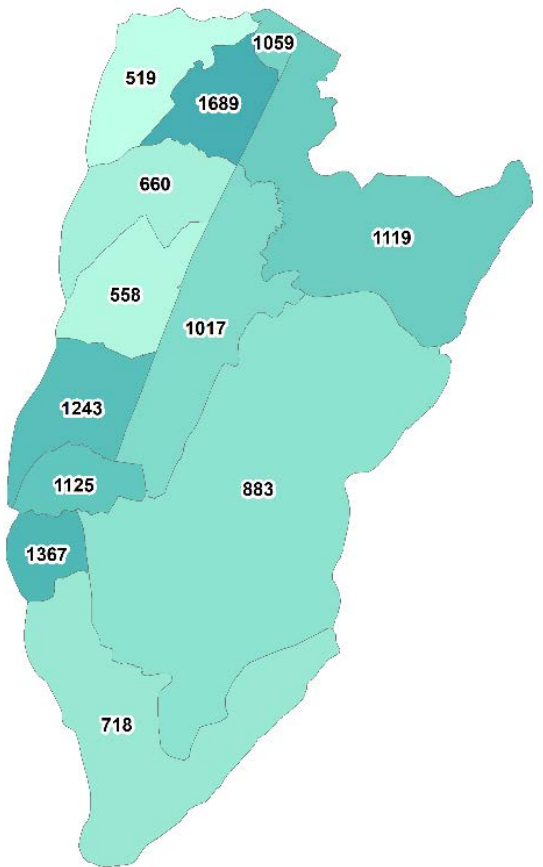
Population Distribution

Most of the county’s resident population resides in unincorporated parts of Northampton County, totaling an approximate 9,000 residents. The town of Exmore is the largest with a population of 891 in 2018. Cape Charles had a population of 803, while Nassawadox had a population of 300, Cheriton had a population of 310, Belle Haven had 441 people, and Eastville had 102 people.

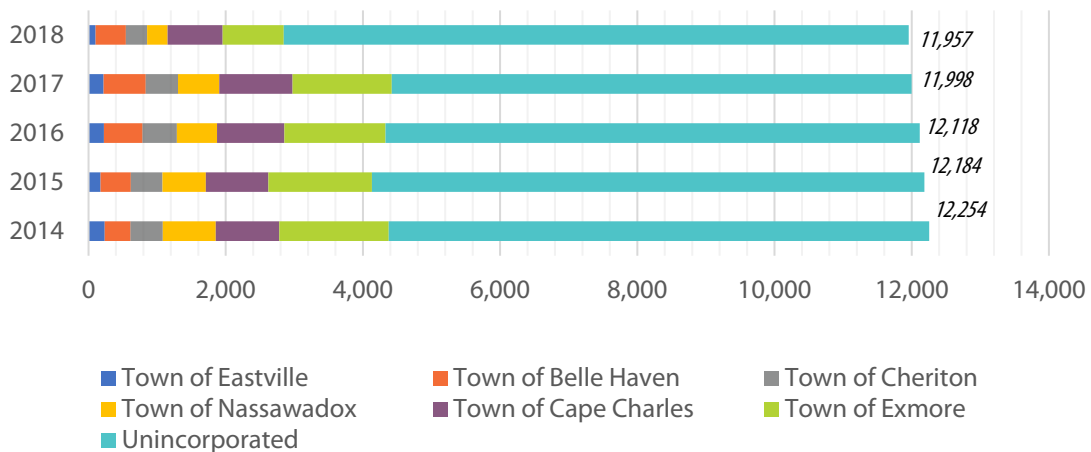
The Census Block Group population estimates show a much greater concentration of population along the western shore with the highest population concentration located directly around the county’s towns.

| Town Name | Square Miles (Sq. Mi.) | Population Density (Pop / Sq. Mi.) |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Unincorporated (approximate) | 201.9 | 45.1 |
| Cape Charles | 3.96 | 202.8 |
| Exmore | 2.6 | 342.7 |
| Cheriton | 1.01 | 306.9 |
| Nassawadox | 0.66 | 454.5 |
| Eastville | 0.23 | 443.4 |
| Belle Haven* | 1.56 | 282.69 |
| *Partially in Accomack County | | |

Population Distribution



Population by Town

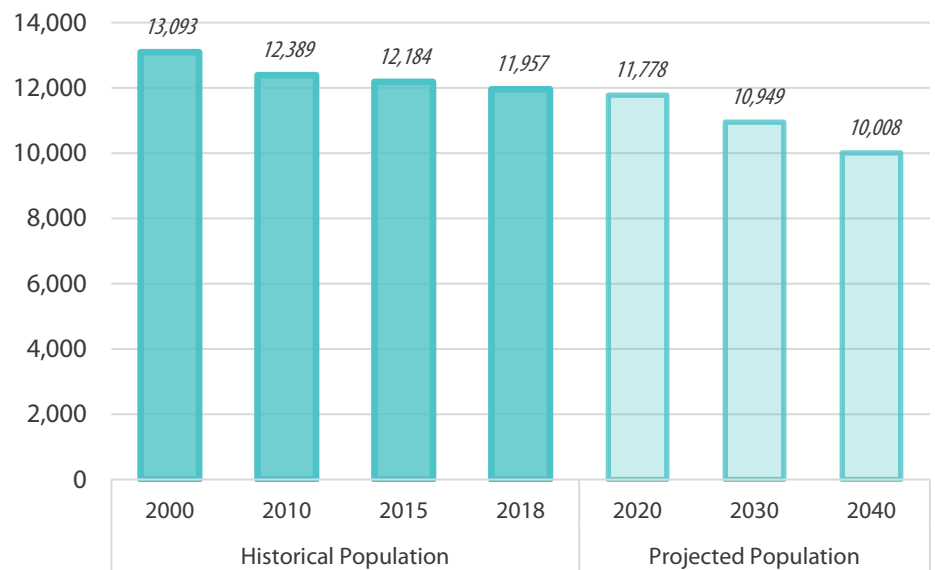


Source: ACS 2014-2018 (5-Year Estimate)

Population Projections

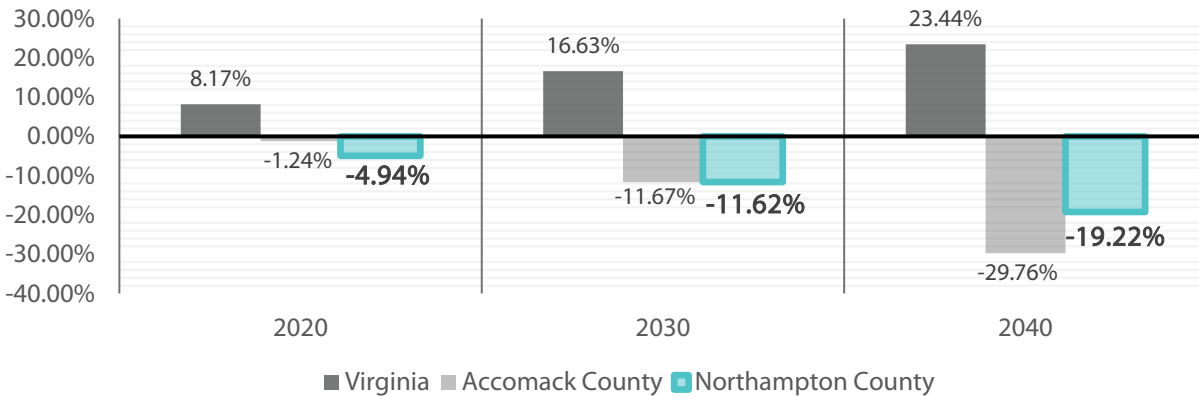
Future populations projections from the Weldon Cooper Center at the University of Virginia suggest that the county population will continue to decline as the Virginia population will continue to grow. By 2040, Northampton County is projected to have a population of 10,008, a decline of 19.2% from 2010 levels. This trend is reflected across the state with similar population shifts away from rural localities to urban and suburban areas.

Northampton Population Projections



Source: U.S. Census 2000/2010 & Cooper Center Demographics Group at UVA

Projected Percent Population Change from 2010 Population Levels



Source: U.S. Census 2000/2010 & Cooper Center Demographics Group at UVA

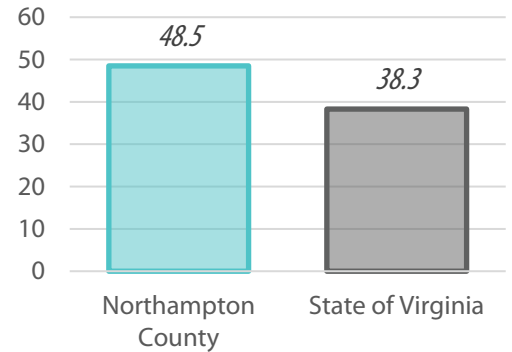
Age

The population of Northampton County is generally older than Virginia as a whole. Since 2010, the median age has increased slightly from 47.8 years to 48.5 years in 2018 — about ten years above the Virginia median age of 38.3 years.

In 2018, about 21.7 percent (2,705 individuals) of the County’s population was below the age of 20 compared to about 25 percent for Virginia overall. An estimated 34 percent (4,052 individuals) of the population was above the age of 60, compared to 20.6 percent for Virginia overall.

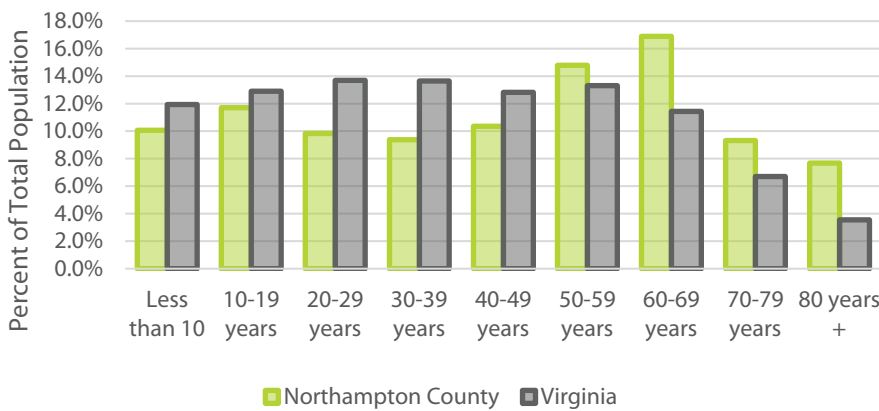
The Census Block Group data reveals large differences in median age across the county. The block groups with higher median age, also contain coastal neighborhoods that may be attractive for retirees.

Median Age



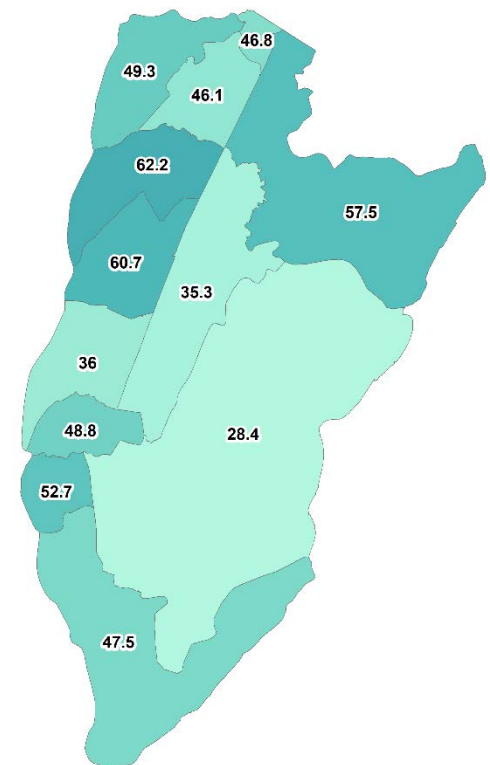
Source: ACS 2018 (5-Year Estimate)

Age Distribution



Source: ACS 2018 (5-Year Estimate)

Age Distribution

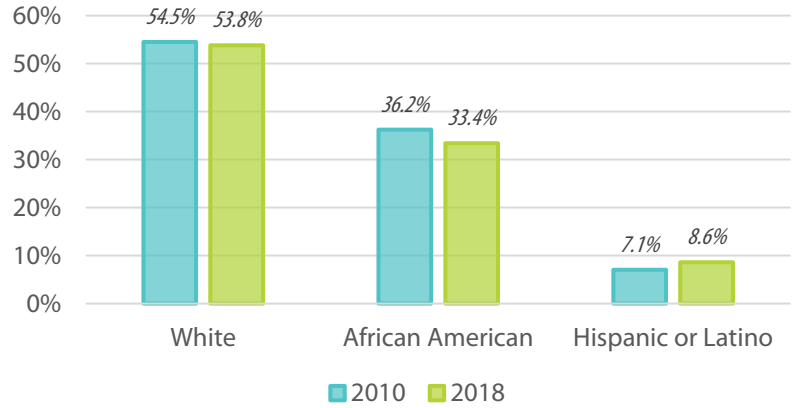


Diversity

The population of Northampton County has become increasingly diverse in recent years. Most notably, the younger population age groups have seen higher levels of diversity.

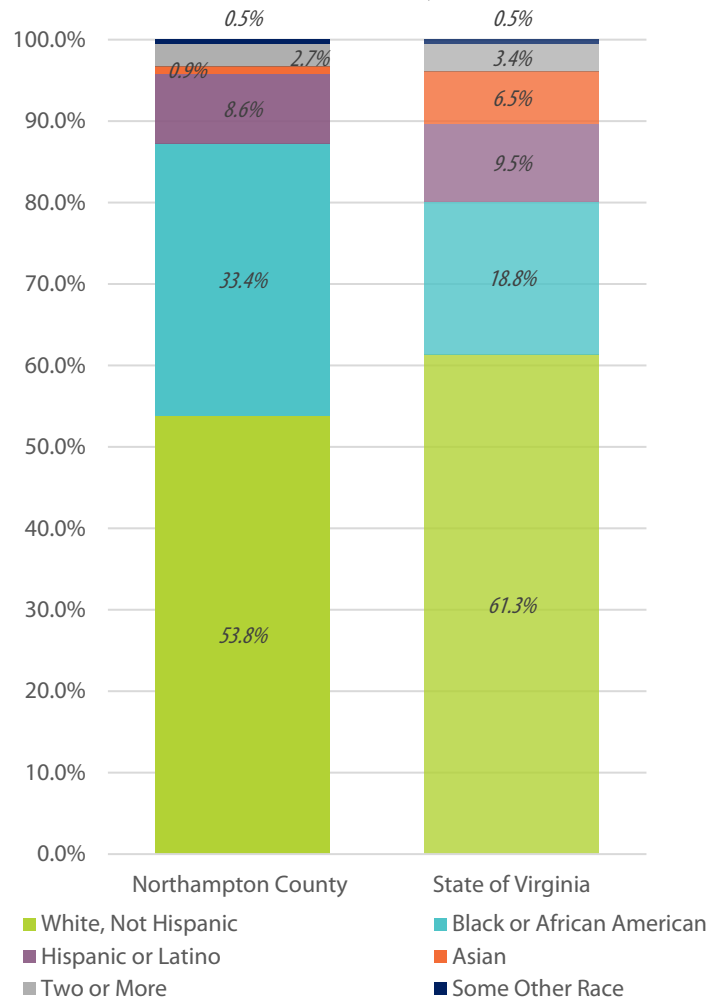
As of 2018, the white population makes up 53.8% of the county which is less than the statewide level of 61.3%. The African American population makes up about a third of the county population compared to 8.8% across Virginia. The Hispanic or Latino population makes up 8.6% of the population which is comparable to the statewide average. All other races only make up a small portion of the county population.

Racial Makeup 2010 vs. 2018

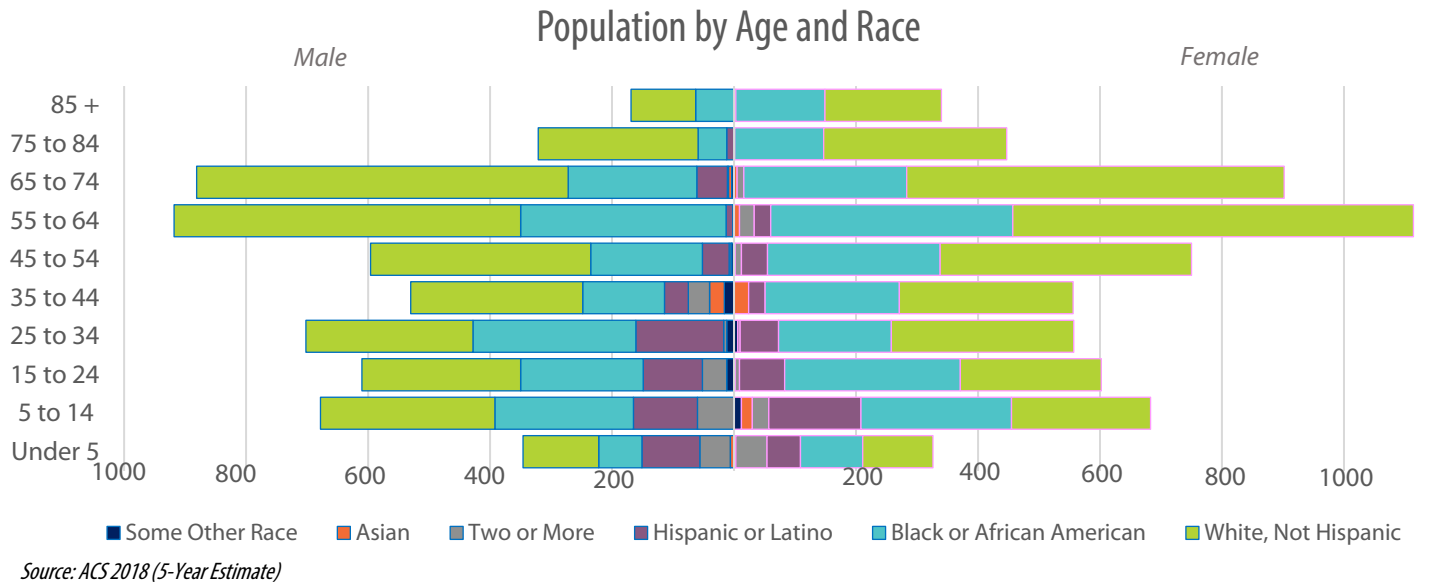


Source: 2010 U.S. Census/ACS 2018 (5-Year Estimate)

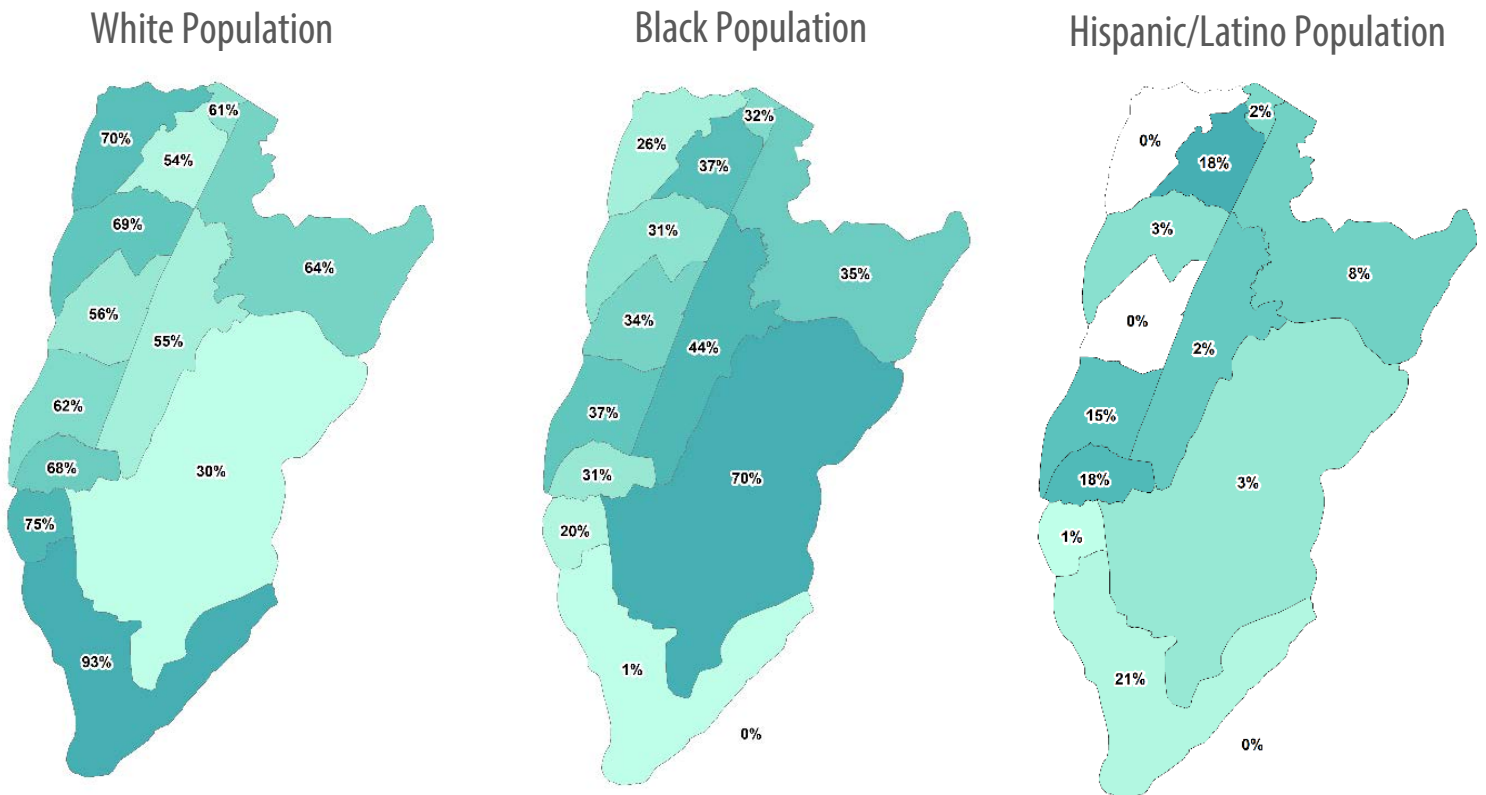
Population by Race



Source: ACS 2018 (5-Year Estimate)

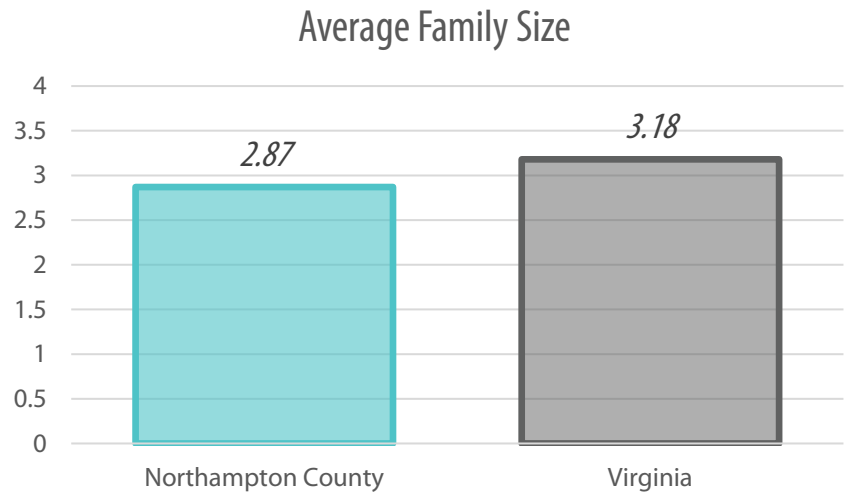


The Census Block Group data offers some insight into which areas of Northampton County contain the most and least diverse populations.



Families

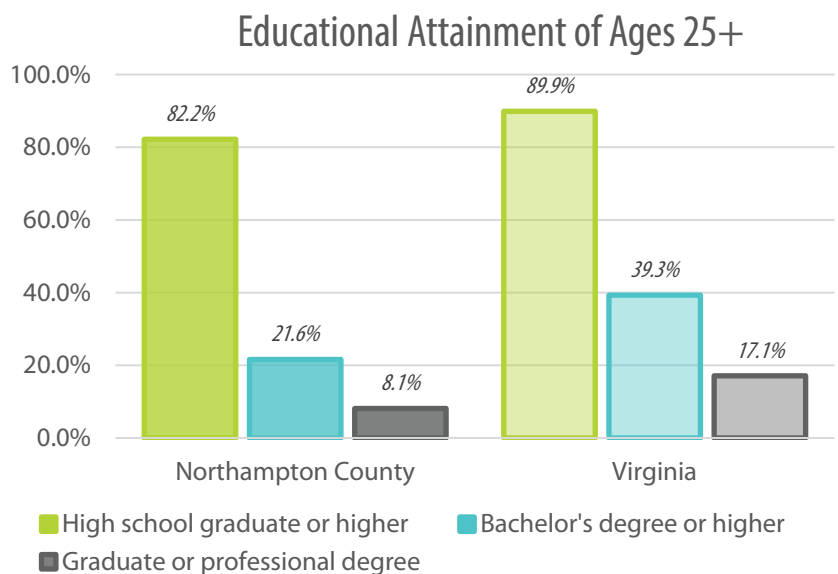
Since 2010, the percentage of family households in the County has decreased slightly from 63.1 to 61 percent. This figure is only slightly lower than the 2018 Virginia average of 66.7 percent of housing units as family households, although the proportion of family households in the County has generally trended downwards, while the rest of Virginia has gradually increased since 2010. During this time, the average family size in the County has also declined moderately from 3.11 persons in 2010 to an estimated 2.87 persons in 2018. In contrast, the average Virginia family size was estimated to be 3.18 persons in 2018. Smaller family sizes are consistent with trends associated with an aging population.



Source: ACS 2018 (5-Year Estimate)

Education

Based on 2018 estimates, 82.2 percent (7,198 individuals) of residents in Northampton County above the age of 25 have at least a High School degree, while 21.6 percent (1,888 individuals) had at least a bachelor's degree or higher level of education. This represents a slight increase from 2010 estimates, which show that 78 percent of the population above 25 years of age had at least a High School degree at the time, and 18.8 percent had at least a bachelor's degree or higher level of education. Northampton County has lower educational attainment rates than Virginia overall.



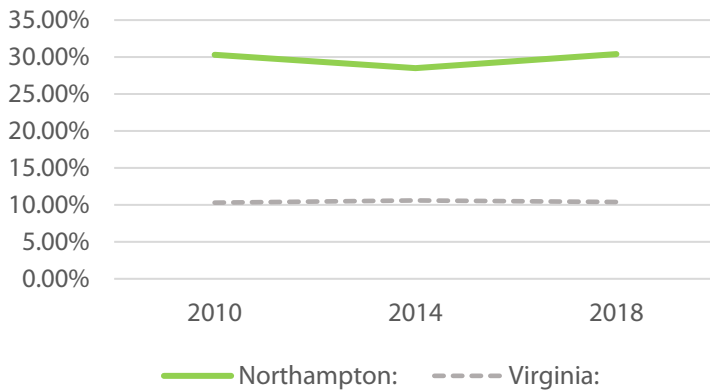
Source: ACS 2018 (5-Year Estimate)

Housing

Housing Stock

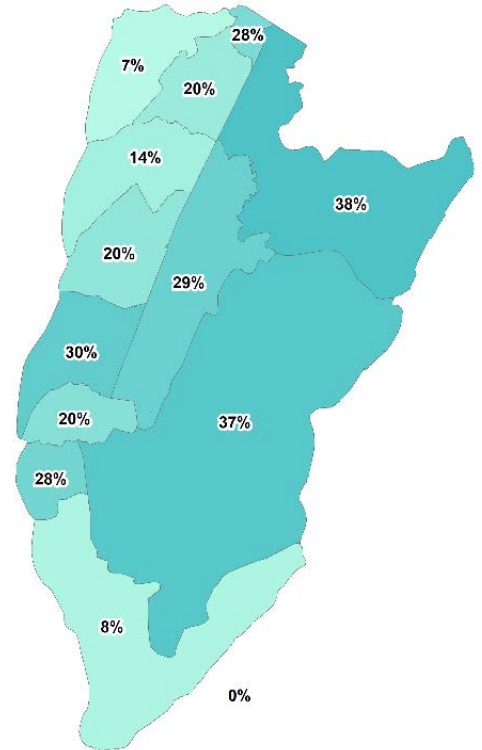
The total number of housing units in the County has increased slightly from 7,301 units in 2010 to 7,397 in 2018. However, the number of occupied housing units has declined from 5,323 units in 2010 (72.9 percent of total units) to 5,151 units in 2018 (69.6 percent of total units). This is far below the Virginia statewide average for occupied housing units (89.7 percent of total units). This may be reflective of a higher number of vacation rentals throughout the County, as vacation homes are considered in the vacant units.

Vacancy Rate



Source: ACS 2010-2018 (5-Year Estimate)

Vacant Housing Units



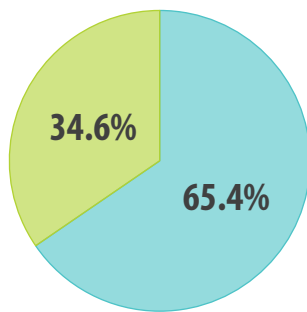
Household Size

In 2010, the average household size for owner-occupied units was 2.25 compared to 2.3 persons for renter-occupied units. By 2018, this gap had widened somewhat with an estimated average household size of 2.15 persons for owner-occupied units and 2.47 persons for renter-occupied units. The average 2018 Virginia household size for owner-occupied units was 2.67 persons and 2.5 persons for renter-occupied units. Across all households in the County, the 2018 average size was 2.26 persons as compared to the Virginia average of 2.61 persons.

Tenure

In 2018, the proportion of owner-occupied units was 65.4 percent (3,371 units), compared to 34.6 percent (1,780 units) for renter-occupied units. Renter-occupied units have increased by about 6% from 2010 (28.9 percent). Both the proportion of renter-occupied and owner-occupied units in the County were within only one percentile of the 2018 Virginia statewide averages of 66.2 percent and 33.8 percent for owner-occupied and renter-occupied units, respectively. Of the occupied housing units in the County, about 11 percent (574 units) were newly inhabited in 2015 or later.

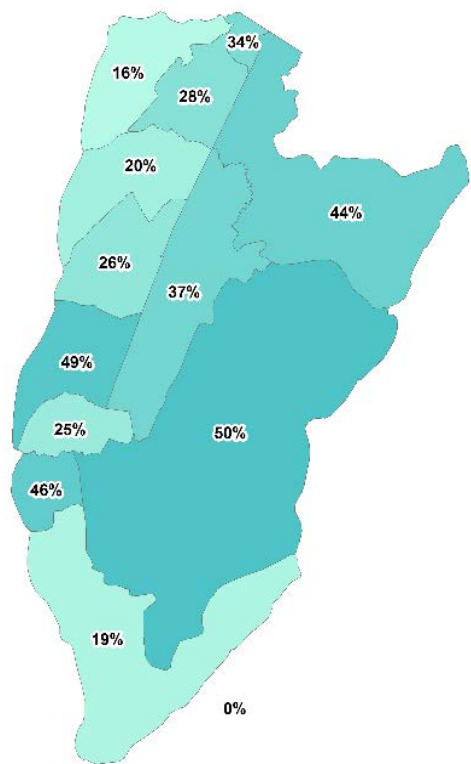
Tenure for All Occupied Units



■ Owner-occupied ■ Renter-occupied

Source: ACS 2018 (5-Year Estimate)

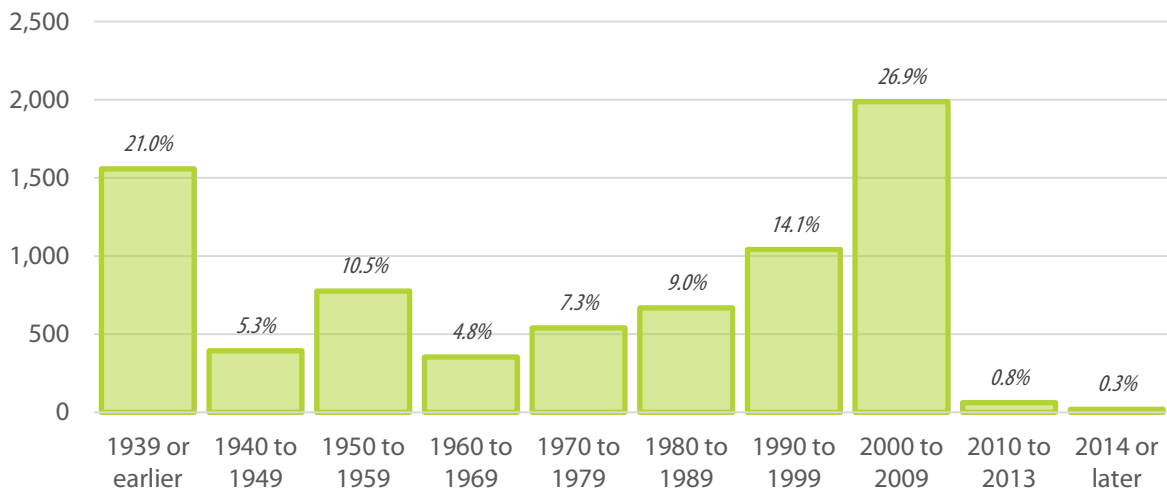
Renter Occupied Units



Age of Housing Stock

Although the County significantly outpaced the rest of Virginia in housing unit construction between 2000 and 2009 (15.4 percent), growth has slowed considerably below statewide averages in recent years, and nearly one in four housing units in the County are at least 80 years old. Just over 1 percent (81 units) of the County's existing housing stock was constructed in 2010 or later. About five percent of Virginia's 2018 statewide housing stock consisted of units built in 2010 or later. Similarly, only 7.5 percent of existing units were constructed in 1939 or earlier across Virginia in comparison to the County's 21 percent of housing units.

Year Structure Built in Northampton County

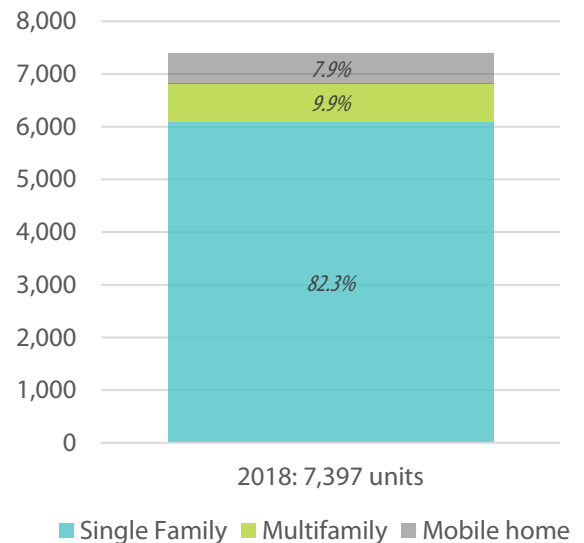


Source: ACS 2018 (5-Year Estimate)

Housing Type

The County has a significantly higher proportion of detached single-family housing units compared to Virginia overall. The vast majority of the County's units in 2018 (82.3 percent or 6,086 units) are single-family structures, increasing from 81.1 percent (5,920 units) in 2010. By comparison, 61.1 percent of 2018 housing units across Virginia are single-family structures.

Total Housing Units by Type



Source: ACS 2018 (5-Year Estimate)

Housing Value, Cost, & Rent

The values of owner-occupied housing units in the County have declined since 2010. In 2010, the median value for these housing units was \$199,600, which declined to \$164,000 by 2018. By comparison, the 2018 Virginia median value for owner-occupied units was \$281,700 in 2018.

In 2018, an estimated 48.6 percent of units (1,639) had a mortgage while 51.4 percent (1,732) did not. This is a significant departure from the rest of Virginia as an estimated 69.1 percent of units had a mortgage in 2018 while 30.9 percent did not. For those units in the County with a mortgage, the median monthly owner cost has increased slightly from \$1,150 in 2010 to \$1,213 in 2018.

Rental rates in the County have increased somewhat since 2010, although at a much slower pace than the rest of Virginia. In 2010, the median rent in the County was \$642 per month versus the Virginia median of \$970 at the time. By 2018 estimates, median rent rate in the County had increased to \$736 as compared to the Virginia median of \$1,202.

| | Northampton County | Accomack County | Virginia |
|---|--------------------|-----------------|-----------|
| Median Value for All Owner-Occupied Housing Units | \$164,000 | \$165,000 | \$281,700 |
| Median Selected Monthly Owner Costs | \$1,213 | \$1,165 | \$1,752 |
| Median Gross Rent | \$736 | \$797 | \$1,215 |

Source: ACS 2018 (5-Year Estimate)

Cost Burden

Many of the County's housing units are cost burdened, meaning a unit pays 30 percent or more of its gross income towards rent. In 2010, 43.2 percent of rental units in the County contributed more than 30 percent of their gross income towards rent, while about 48 percent of rental units across Virginia paid more than 30 percent during the same period. By 2018 estimates, about 45 percent of rental units in the County were considered cost burdened, compared to a slight increase to 48.7 percent of rental units for the rest of Virginia. By comparison, 27.3 percent of homeowners with a mortgage are cost burdened, and 21.3 percent of homeowners without a mortgage are cost burdened.

Subsidized Housing

The County has 423 subsidized residential housing units restricted to low income, elderly, disabled and/or agricultural workers. The County does not have residential units specifically designated for homeless, mental health or addiction rehab or recovery. Heritage Hall in Nassawadox provides nursing home residential living arrangements for elderly and disabled.

| | Income Restricted | Total Units | 1 BR | 2 BR | 3 BR | Other Restrictions | Location |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|-------------|------|------|------|--------------------------|--------------|
| Exmore Village 1 | X | 36 | 36 | | | Senior / Disabled | Exmore |
| Exmore Village 2 | X | 65 | 65 | | | Senior | Exmore |
| Peter Cartwright Manor (Exmore) | X | 47 | 47 | | | Senior | Exmore |
| AP's Freedom Apt. (Exmore) | X | 15 | 15 | | | Senior / Disabled | Exmore |
| Virginia Street | X | 10 | 3 | 7 | | | Exmore |
| New Roads Village Apts. | X | 16 | 4 | 8 | 4 | | Exmore |
| Crispus Attucks | X | 23 | | | | | Exmore |
| Dogwood View Apts. | X | 24 | 24 | | | Developmentally disabled | Nassawadox |
| Sunnyside Village | X | 16 | 11 | 4 | 1 | | Cheriton |
| Seabreeze | X | 28 | | 14 | 14 | | Cape Charles |
| Myrtle Landing | X | 93 | 93 | | | | Cape Charles |
| Culls Woods Apts. | X | 16 | 10 | 6 | | | County |
| William Hughes Apts. | X | 34 | 3 | 12 | 15 | Farm Workers | County |

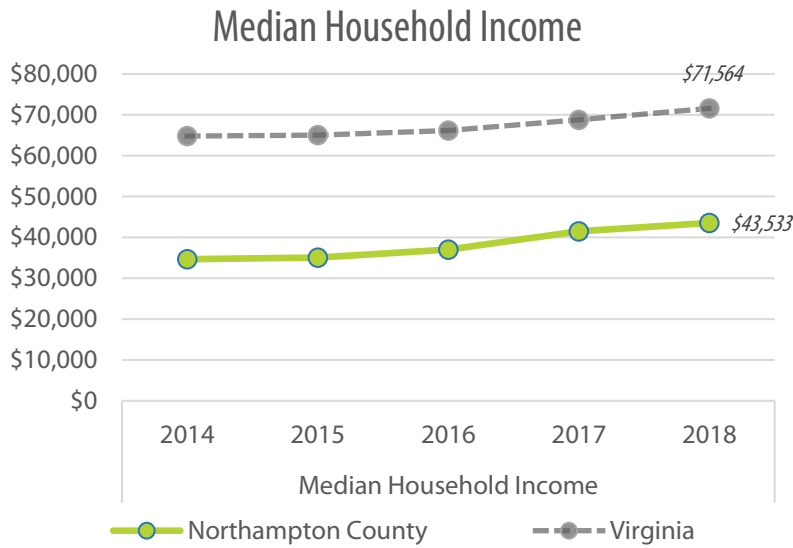
Economy

Economic Trends

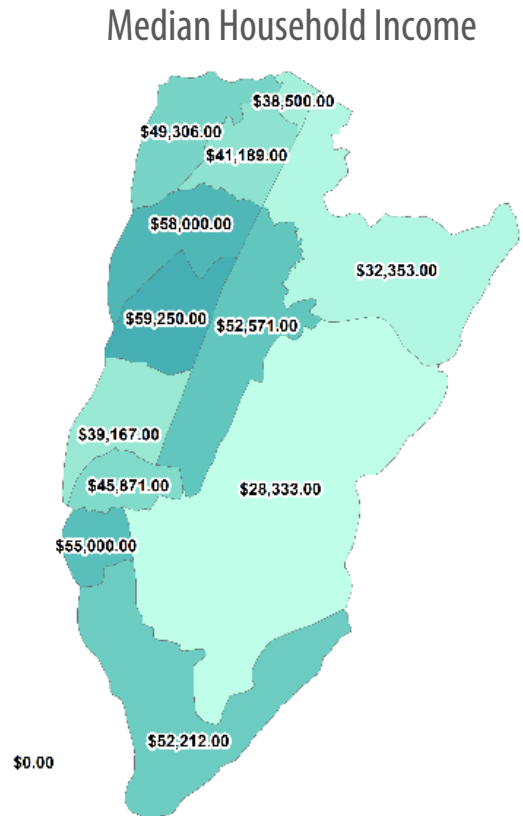
Income

Household income in Northampton has risen in recent years, but trails Virginia overall. In 2010, the median household income for the County was \$35,760, which increased by nearly 20 percent to \$43,553 in 2018. However, the 2018 Virginia median household income was estimated to be about 64 percent higher than that of the County at \$71,564.

The median family income⁶ for both the County and the rest of Virginia has also increased since 2010. The median family income for the County in 2010 was \$47,995, which increased by roughly 17 percent to \$57,492 by 2018. However, the County still trails the Virginia 2018 median family income of \$86,628 by more than 30 percent. The median household income by block groups shows a much more detailed picture of the income distribution across the county. There is a large disparity of income from one block group to another.



Source: ACS 2014-2018 (5-Year Estimate)



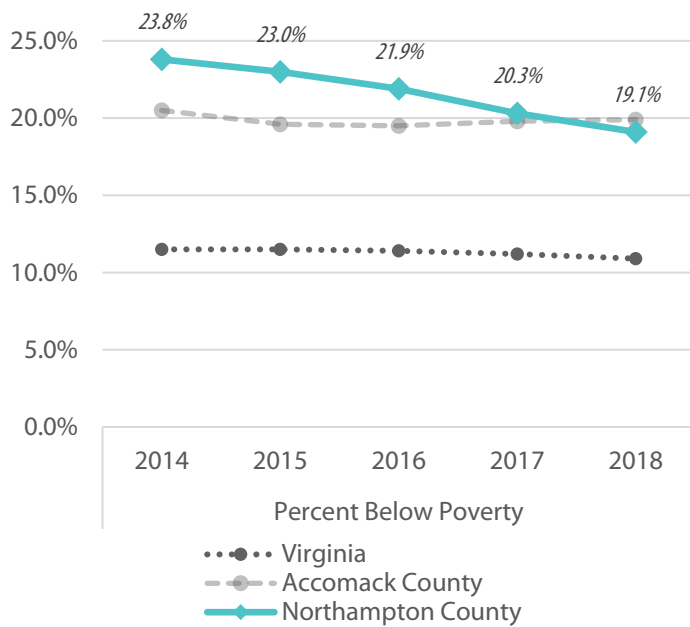
⁶ A family consists of two or more people (one of whom is the householder) related by birth, marriage, or adoption residing in the same housing unit. A household consists of all people who occupy a housing unit regardless of relationship. A household may consist of a person living alone or multiple unrelated individuals or families living together. Median family income is typically higher than median household income because of the composition of households.

Poverty Levels

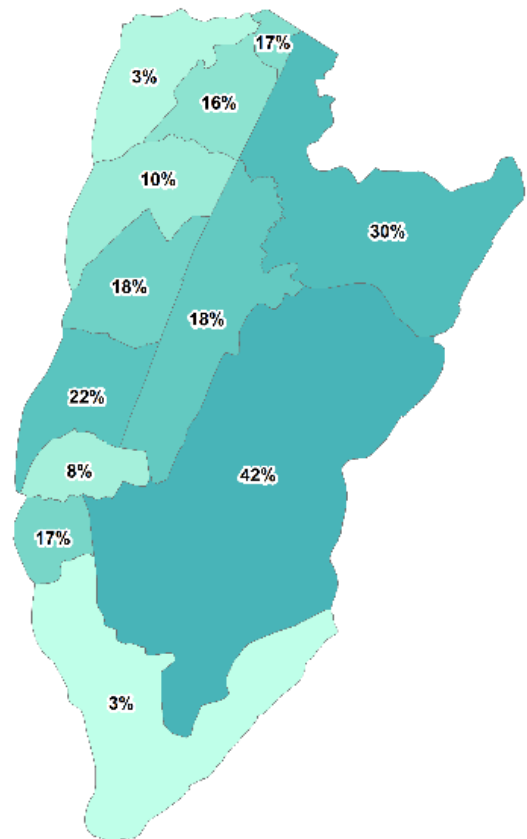
Nearly 20 percent of the County’s population lives below the poverty line, nearly double that of the rest of Virginia. The poverty level has closely followed poverty levels in Accomack County over the last 5 years. The block groups with the highest poverty rates are concentrated in the eastern half of the county.

Poverty is a complex and persistent problem in Northampton that requires coordinated efforts across each area of the Comprehensive Plan to improve housing, jobs, education, health care, and transportation options.

Historical Percent Below Poverty



Percent of Households Below Poverty Level



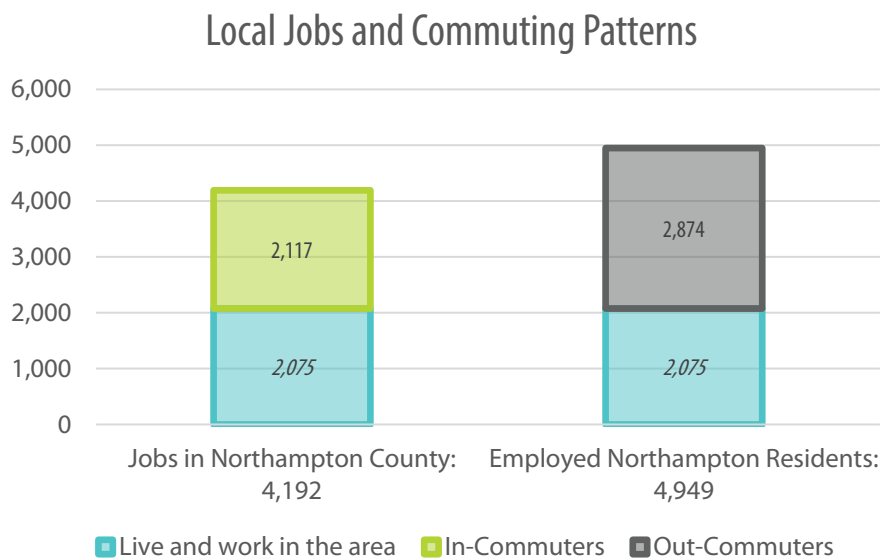
Source: ACS 2014-2018 (5-Year Estimate)

Unemployment

Between 2010 and 2018, the unemployment rate in the County has declined from 5.6 to 3.1 percent. While unemployment has also declined across Virginia during this time, it was still above the County's rate at 5 percent. However, this discrepancy may in-part be attributed to the significant disparity between the size of the labor force in the County compared to the rest of Virginia. In 2010, nearly 42 percent of the County's working-age population was not considered to be a part of the labor force, a proportion which had grown to 48.3 percent by 2018. By comparison, only 34 percent of Virginia's working-age population is not considered to be part of the labor force.

Jobs and Commuting

As of 2017, there were a total of 4,192 primary jobs⁷ in Northampton County along with 4,949 Northampton residents with a primary job. Of those totals, 2,075 people both live and work in Northampton County. In addition, there is a total of 2,117 in-commuters and 2,874 out-commuters. This leaves a net flow that favors out-commuters by 757 people, meaning that more Northampton residents are leaving the county for work than outside residents entering the county for work.



Source: OnTheMap U.S. Census Bureau, LEHD (2017)

⁷ While some individuals may have more than one job, the primary (or dominant) job for an individual is defined as the job that earned the individual the most money.

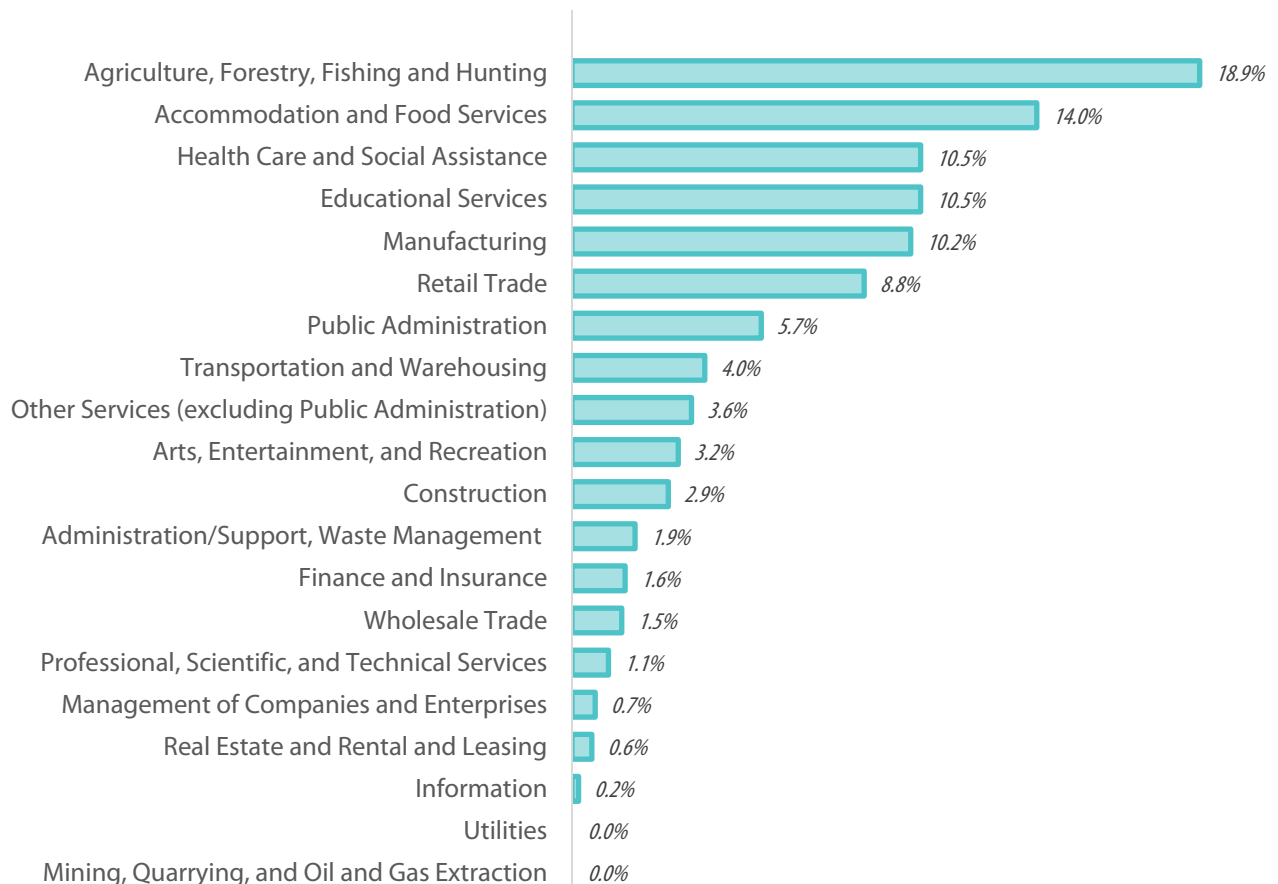
Jobs by Industry Sector

With a total of 793 jobs as of 2017, the Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting (NAICS code 11) was the largest industry sector in the county, making up 18.9% of all jobs. This level of employment surpasses national averages and is a major part of the local economy. Accommodation and Food Services (NAICS code 72) was the second largest industry with 586 total jobs. Health Care and Social Assistance, Educational Services, and Manufacturing were important industries as well with each having over 400 total jobs. Top employers range in variety across the top industry sectors.

| Top Employers | |
|---------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. | Northampton County Schools |
| 2. | County of Northampton |
| 3. | Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel |
| 4. | The Citadel |
| 5. | Food Lion |
| 6. | David's Nursery |
| 7. | Ballard Fish and Oyster Company, Inc. |
| 8. | New Ravenna Acquisition, LLC |
| 9. | Tankard Nurseries |
| 10. | Eastern Shore Rural Health System |
| 11. | Bay Creek Resort, LLC |
| 12. | McDonald's |
| 13. | Broadwater Academy |
| 14. | Ballard Brothers Fish Company |
| 15. | LFC Agricultural Services Inc. |
| 16. | Royal Farms |
| 17. | Hardee's |
| 18. | Coastal Precast Systems |
| 19. | C & E Farms |
| 20. | Town of Cape Charles |

Source: Virginia Employment Commission, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, 2nd Quarter (April, May, June) 2020

Primary Jobs by Industry Sector in Northampton County

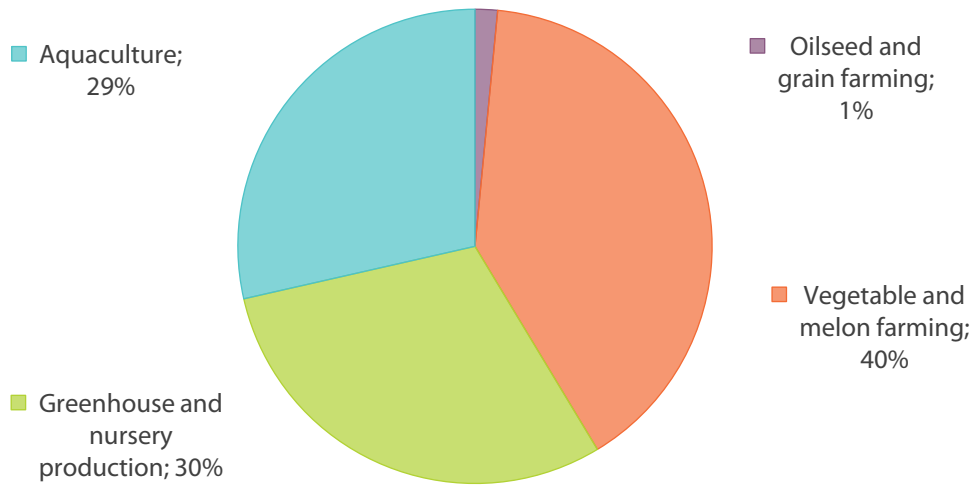


Source: OnTheMap U.S. Census Bureau, LEHD (2017)

Agriculture Subsector Jobs and Wages

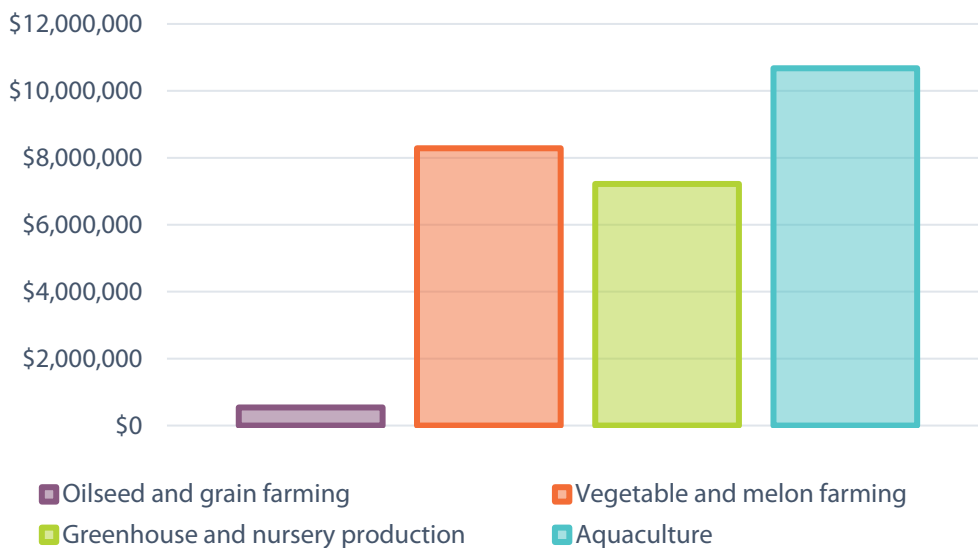
The local agriculture economy makes up 18.9% of jobs, which is well above the level of agriculture jobs statewide in Virginia (6.1%). Employment within the sector includes farming, nurseries, and aquaculture, with each subsector having over 250 employees. The aquaculture subsector has the highest total annual wages of any subsector with a total of \$10.6 million in 2017 despite having slightly lower levels of total employment.

Jobs by Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting Subsectors



Source: OnTheMap U.S. Census Bureau, LEHD (2017)

Total Annual Wages by Subsector



Source: OnTheMap U.S. Census Bureau, LEHD (2017)

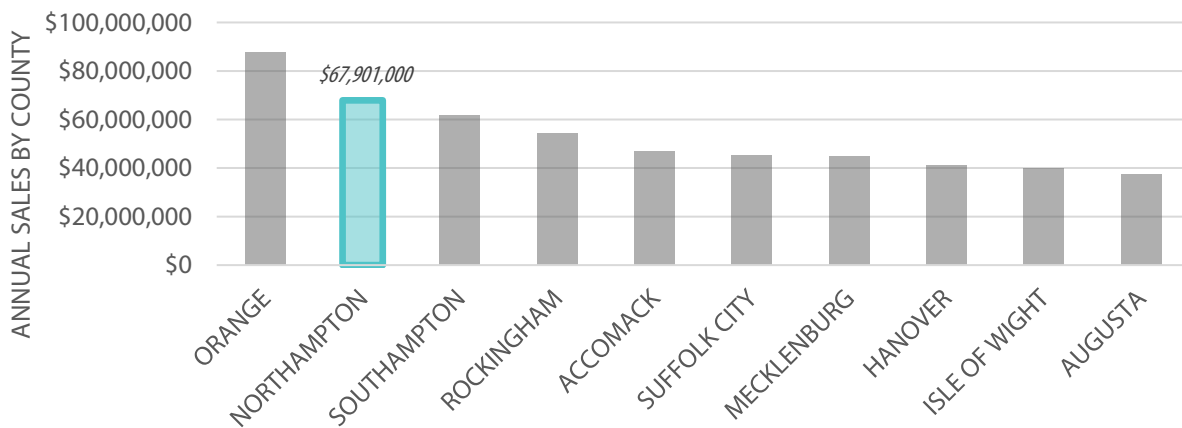
Agriculture and Aquaculture

According to the 2017 USDA Census of Agriculture, Northampton County had a total agriculture commodity sales value of \$95.9 million, which was the seventh highest of all localities in the state of Virginia.

Crop Sales

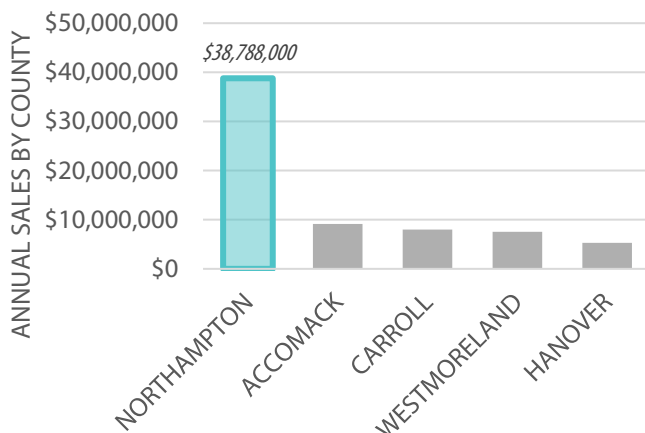
Harvested crops accounted for 71% of all commodity sales in the county in 2017. With a total of \$67.9 million, Northampton ranked 2nd in Virginia for total annual crop sales. Northampton County is the state leader in both total vegetable annual sales and total wheat annual sales. Vegetable farming, which also includes melons and potatoes, accounts for 57% of all crop sales in the county with a total of \$38.7 million. Northampton County alone accounts for about 35% of all vegetable crop sales in the state of Virginia.

Top Crop Producing Localities



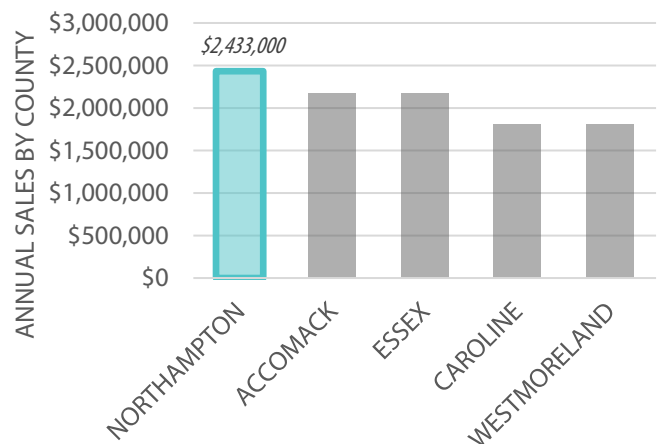
Source: 2017 USDA Census of Agriculture

Top Vegetable Producing Localities in Virginia



Source: 2017 USDA Census of Agriculture

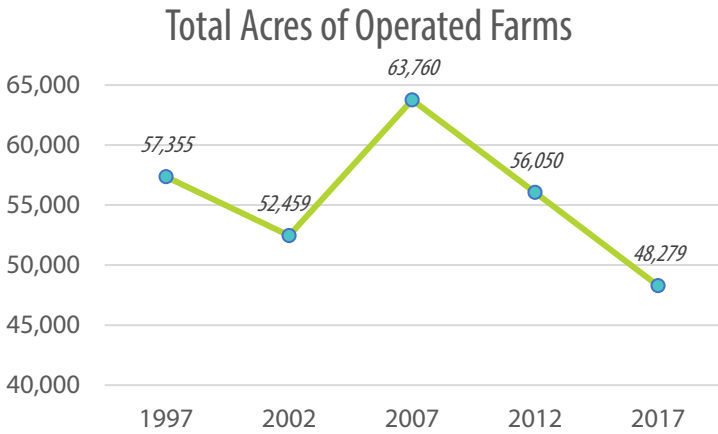
Top Wheat Producing Localities in Virginia



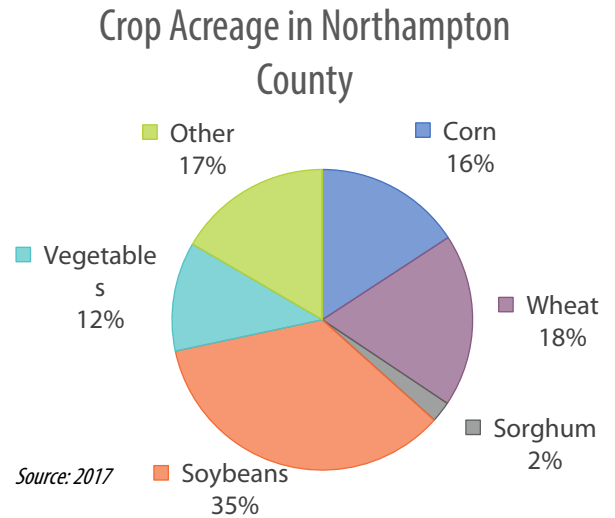
Source: 2017 USDA Census of Agriculture

Crop Distribution

The distribution of cropland in the county is mixed between a variety of different commodities and uses. Given crop rotation patterns, some of this distribution is likely to change from year to year. In 2017, soybeans were the leader accounting for 35% of all crop acreage. Other major crops in the county each make up between 10% to 20% of the total crop acreage.



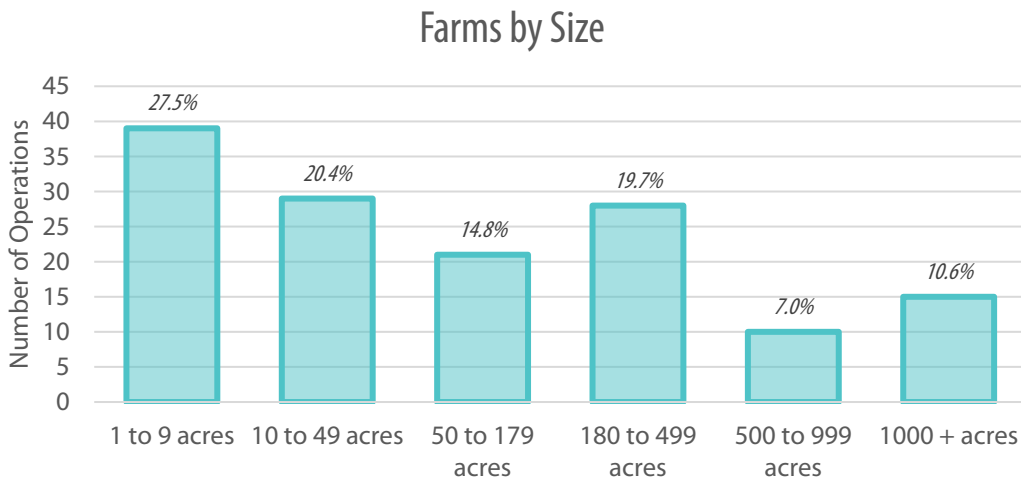
Source: 1997-2017 USDA Census of Agriculture



Source: 2017

Farm Size

As of 2017, Northampton County had a total of 48,729 acres of farmland. The total amount of farm acres has steadily declined since 2007 when there was a total of 63,760 acres of farmland. The average size of farms has also declined over the same period. The most common size of farm is 1 to 9 acres with 27.5% of all farms in the county falling in that size range. This suggests that family farms make up a large portion of the county's farmland.



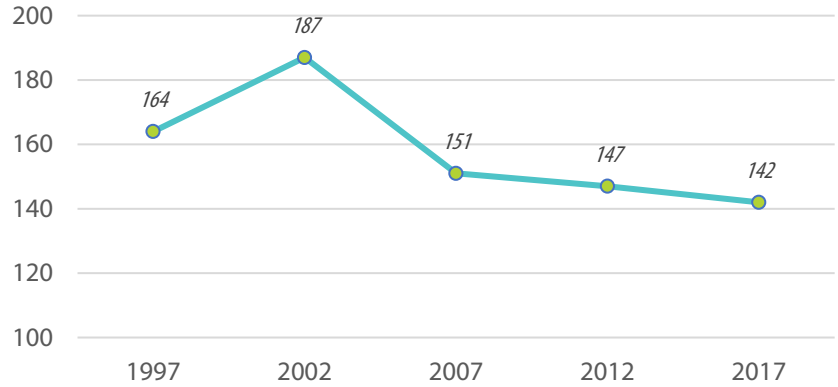
Source: 2017 USDA Census of Agriculture

Farm Operations

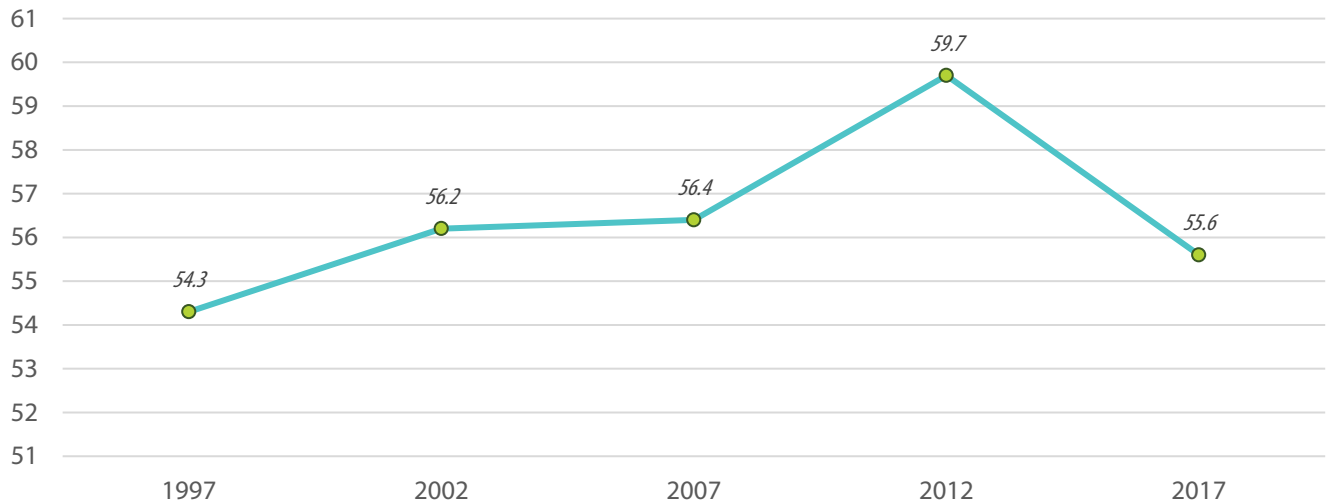
The total number of farm operations has remained largely unchanged in the last 10 years after a large decline from 2002 to 2007. Since the total number of operations has only declined slightly while the total farm acres in the county have declined more drastically, each farm operation on average is smaller.

The age of farm operators in the county follows similar national trends. In 2017, the average age of farm operators was 55.6 compared to 57.5 nationally. In Northampton County this was a slight decline from 2012. Nevertheless, farm operators in Northampton County like elsewhere in the country are becoming older on average, making succession a potential concern. The subdivision of land among heirs can affect the potential economic viability of continued agricultural operation, potentially leading to sale for other uses or to corporate buyers.

Number of Farm Operations



Average Age of Farm Operators



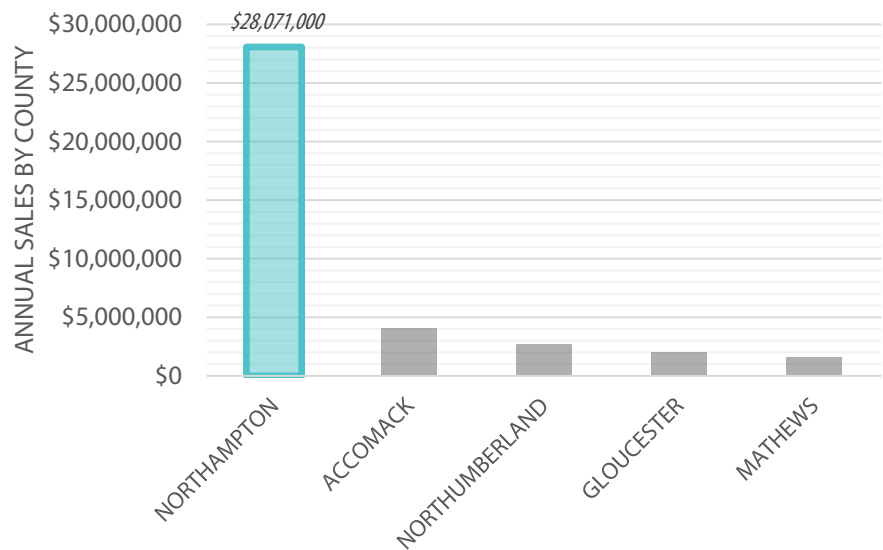
Source: 1997-2017 USDA Census of Agriculture

Aquaculture

The remaining portion of commodity sales in Northampton County that is not crop sales, is aquaculture sales which amounted to \$28 million in 2017. Accomack County is the next largest producer in Virginia with only \$4 million in sales. This makes Northampton County not only the leader in aquaculture sales in Virginia, but also along the entire East Coast. Northampton County ranks 11th in the entire United States in aquaculture sales based on the 2017 Census of Agriculture.

Aquaculture in Northampton County includes a variety of species, but shellfish farms are the main contributors to sales in the county. Clam and oyster farms make up the large portion of all aquaculture sales and employment in the county. Some of these farms rank as the top employers in the county. Additionally wild caught clams, oysters, and finfish also provide for additional revenue in the area.

Top Virginia Localities by Aquaculture Sales



Source: 2017 USDA Census of Agriculture

While aquaculture remains vital to Northampton's future, there are certain impediments to the sector's growth. Aquaculture is dependent on access to the intertidal zones and public shellfish areas that are owned by the state, and leased under an outdated survey that was made over 125 years ago. Updating this survey should be a priority to provide additional opportunities. Access to the waters of the area are essential to this sector, and operators complain that there is a lack of convenient boat ramps for workers. Water quality is also a major concern, which puts this sector in conflict with certain other economic sectors of the local economy. Aquaculture's ability to maintain control over its distribution system is a significant advantage, with many farmers/growers able to directly negotiate and supply buyers without having to go through brokers. There is potential for additional employment opportunities if value added facilities, such as processing or packaging operations are built on the shore, although water demand from such facilities must be carefully evaluated and managed to protect the County's precious groundwater resources.

Tourism & Travel

Tourism and travel-related activity is an important part of the Northampton economy. Accommodation and food service, which are primarily concentrated in the towns and along Route 13, represents the second largest industry (by primary jobs) in Northampton.

Because tourist spending is difficult to distinguish from resident spending, it is hard to quantify the full economic impact of this industry. The Virginia Tourism Corporation estimates that travel expenditures in 2016 in the County totaled \$77,532,198. This includes the total spending for those economic sectors which tourists⁸ utilize, such as restaurants, gas stations, grocery stores, retail shops, but does not distinguish between spending in such places between locals and travelers. The future growth of tourism and travel will be greatly dependent upon increasing the facilities and amenities available to tourists and extending use into the off season.

⁸ A tourist is defined as anyone who travels from a distance of more than 50 miles, which would include those who own second homes in the area.

The Eastern Shore Tourism Commission, in conjunction with the Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission, has created an ambitious tourism promotion and marketing program. Increased revenues from sales in related industries indicate that the efforts are having a positive effect. The Eastern Shore Regional Development plan is also promoting the potential for increased marketing of local products through placement of Shore Made/Grown products in existing retail stores.

While tourism is an important component of Northampton's economy, it also presents potential externalities and costs, such as a need for additional infrastructure and housing opportunities. There may also be a need for additional public amenities, such as beaches, boat access ramps, golf courses, parks, and recreational trails. It is important that the County and the towns be active participants in the planning process to ensure that there is a coordinated approach that does not strain or overburden governmental resources. Additionally, according to the Virginia Employment Commission's figures, tourism is the lowest paying sector of the economy with a high turnover, making it difficult for this sector to be the bedrock of an economic plan.

Economic Drivers

The primary economic resources of Northampton County have remained much the same over the last 400 years as the water resources and the prime agricultural soils continue to provide sustenance for its residents; however, there are some new economic drivers that are influencing the local economy as well. Just as local agricultural producers have been forced to adapt to changes in the market supply and demand and have continued to produce economically viable products, the non-agricultural community must embrace opportunities for innovation as well.

Economic Incentives

Many other economic development incentives are available to businesses and investors in Northampton. Major programs include:

- **Opportunity Zone** – The southern portion of Northampton is designated as an Opportunity Zone under the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. This designation provides an economic and community development tax benefit to investors with capital gains. It is designed to encourage long-term private investment in low-income census tracts. The designation is current through December 31, 2028.
- **Enterprise Zone** – The Virginia Enterprise Zone program encourages job creation and private investment in designated areas throughout the state. The program includes two grant-based incentives, the Job Creation Grant (JCG) and the Real Property Investment Grant (RPIG), to qualified investors and job creators within those zones, while the locality provides local incentives.
- **HUBZone** – The whole of Northampton County is designated as a Historically Underutilized Business Zone (HUBZone). Through this federal program, small businesses gain preferential access to federal procurement opportunities. To qualify for the HUBZone program, businesses must meet certain size, ownership, and employment thresholds.
- **Major Business Facility Job Tax Credit** – Qualified companies locating or expanding in Virginia are eligible to receive a \$1,000 income tax credit for each new full-time job created over a threshold number of jobs. Companies locating in an economically distressed locality or an Enterprise Zone are required to meet a 25-job threshold; all other locations have a 50-job threshold. Northampton County meets this lower job threshold requirement.
- **Technology Zone** - Virginia cities, counties, and towns may establish, by ordinance, one or more technology zones to attract growth in targeted industries. Each locality designs and administers its own program, designating special incentives for qualified businesses that locate or expand within a zone. Cape Charles is a designated technology zone.
- **Tourism Zone** - The Town of Cape Charles is a designated tourism zone, offering economic stimulus credits for qualified tourism businesses.

Workforce Development

Workforce skills are an important consideration to businesses seeking to relocate or expand. Opportunities for workers to improve their skills have increased through courses on the internet as well as those available through community colleges and advanced placement courses and special training classes offered by the high school. With a limited population and most businesses having few employees, it is difficult for educational institutions to attract enough students to justify the cost of providing specialized training. Many of the jobs in the County can be performed without a college degree, but given the technological advances, future jobs will require specialized training and certification beyond high school. Efforts should be made at all levels to provide additional educational opportunities beyond the traditional academic studies and to encourage student and adult participation.

Educational systems are the logical and most equipped institutions to provide workforce training, beginning at the secondary level and continuing through college, especially in terms of providing certifications for specific skills. There currently are three workforce development centers on the Eastern Shore, all physically located in Accomack County, 2 of which are a part of the Accomack School system and the third is connected to the Community College. The Eastern Shore Community College has been actively working to expand its workforce programs and offers dual enrollment opportunities for Northampton seniors. The high school also offers Career and Technical training programs.

To be effective, these programs must be coordinated with the needs of local employers, which requires cooperation with the business community. Businesses can also create training programs and offer apprenticeships to teach specific skills. However, in some cases, especially for low-income workers or those without jobs, a more comprehensive approach is required that extends beyond simply job training but incorporates supplying the basic needs to the individual and their family through a combination of safety net assistance programs.

Regional Economic Development

Northampton and Accomack Counties are geographically and economically connected. Agriculture and tourism are major industries in each, and both are served by a single hospital, grocery chain, airport, one big box Walmart, highway, utility, public transportation system and broadband authority. Residents of each county share contractors, insurance agents, doctors, dentists, and lawyers. They share common problems of a sole source aquifer, rising sea levels and land subsidence, erosion, a declining and aging population, outmigration of young people, and a lack of living wage jobs.

A variety of local and regional economic development plans have been undertaken over the years. Most recently, the Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission has developed a regional economic development strategy under the Stronger Economies Together initiative (2017). The plan recognizes that a concentration of similar businesses enables the development of a skilled workforce and an identifiable source of services and supplies for the industries they supply, which attracts other businesses to the area. This approach stresses prioritizing building strong business ecosystems of core industries that attract workers and new businesses and facilitate growth and prosperity.

The core industry clusters identified for growth and expansion in the region include:

- Aerospace and Defense, including building upon the Wallops Complex, expanding unmanned systems operations, and coastal research.
- Agribusiness and Food Process, which focuses on establishing a value-added fresh food marketing cooperative, creation of a wholesale production facility, enhanced workforce development, and promoting regional forestry industry.
- Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, and Visitor Industries involving the development of a regional tourism industry, creating hospitality, ambassadorship, mentorship, internship programs, and developing recreational facilities.
- Foundational and Entrepreneurship Development which involves building an entrepreneurship culture, increasing funding for local businesses, increasing market and value-added opportunities, and developing infrastructure to facilitate local businesses.

Regional economic development planning offers the advantage of exposing Northampton to larger companies that are initially attracted to the general area by a more diversified and skilled workforce, installed infrastructure, affordable housing, and access to universities and transportation that exist in the surrounding communities. It is critical for the County to become a more active participant in existing regional policy making organizations if it is to control its destiny.

To support these regional efforts, Northampton County has an Economic Development Authority, formerly known as the Joint Industrial Development Authority of Northampton County. The Northampton County EDA was created to enhance and promote industrial and commercial development in Northampton County. Typical duties include assembling land, raising funding for infrastructure construction, administering design and construction, managing property, administering industrial revenue bond financing for qualified applicants, supporting recruitment and development of corporate tenants, coordinating development of incentives, and facilitating coordinated unified development activities of County and participating towns.

Broadband/Fiber Access

As commerce becomes more dependent upon technology, businesses need access not just to skilled workers but to the technology itself. Expanding broadband and fiber access throughout Northampton will enhance existing sectors, such as tourism, research, and entrepreneurship. This new digital infrastructure offers many benefits including: supporting business retention and attraction, increasing employment opportunities through telecommuting; expanding education opportunities by allowing more residents to take advantage of online degrees and certifications; and increasing health care access through telemedicine. As more commerce and services become dependent upon technology, access to broadband cannot be considered a luxury, but an essential component of modern life. Efforts are on-going and discussed further under Facilities and Infrastructure.

Water & Wastewater Infrastructure

Access to quality water and wastewater infrastructure is an important consideration in the location of new businesses and industries. Efforts are on-going and discussed further under Facilities and Infrastructure.

Facilities and Infrastructure

Community facilities and services are the improvements, infrastructure, and programs made available to an area to serve the public. They include both facilities owned by the public, but also those owned and operated by private enterprise for the benefit of the community. This section describes existing facilities, infrastructure, and services in Northampton County.

Government Services

The County of Northampton has a five-member Board of Supervisors with a County Administrator overseeing the day-to-day operations and the implementation of policy adopted by the Board of Supervisors. The County’s primary campus in Eastville houses the courthouse, Social Services building, jail and sheriff’s offices, and Juvenile Court services building. The former courthouse has been renovated to house various administrative offices.

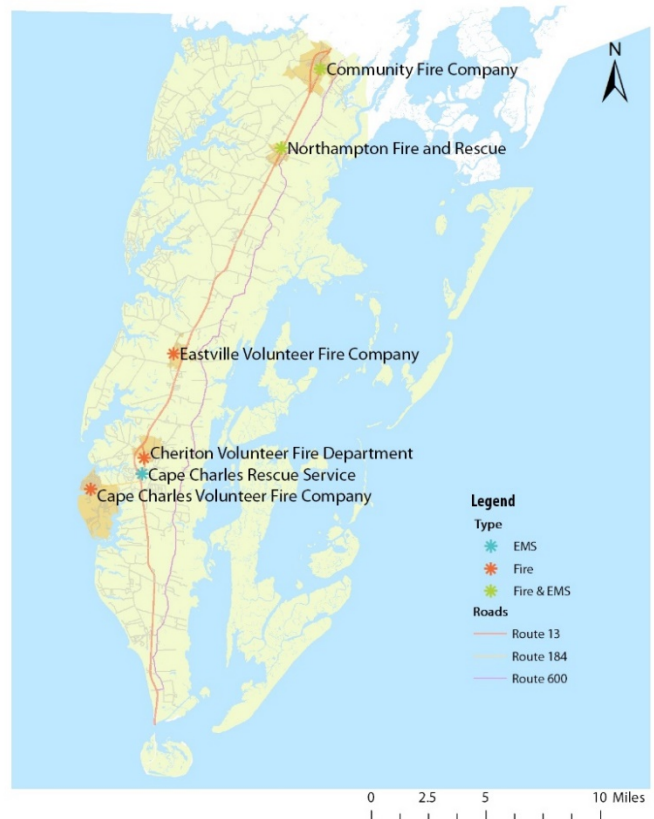
Public Safety

Fire & Rescue

All emergency calls in Northampton County are directed through the Eastern Shore of Virginia 9-1-1 Communications Center, which also serves Accomack County. Calls are then dispatched to Northampton County which currently has three volunteer fire stations, two combination fire and EMS stations, and one dedicated EMS station. Volunteer fire stations are in each of the towns. Shared EMS stations are in Exmore and Nassawadox. A dedicated EMS station is located just outside the Town of Cheriton. The county currently funds 25 full-time EMS providers and 15 part-time EMS providers.

The relocation of the hospital from Nassawadox (and particularly the emergency services) to Onley (18 miles North in Accomack County), has increased the workload of Northampton’s EMS. Additional rolling stock (an ambulance) and staff (two full time employees) have been added. A new addition was recently completed to the current EMS facility near Machipongo.

Fire and EMS Stations



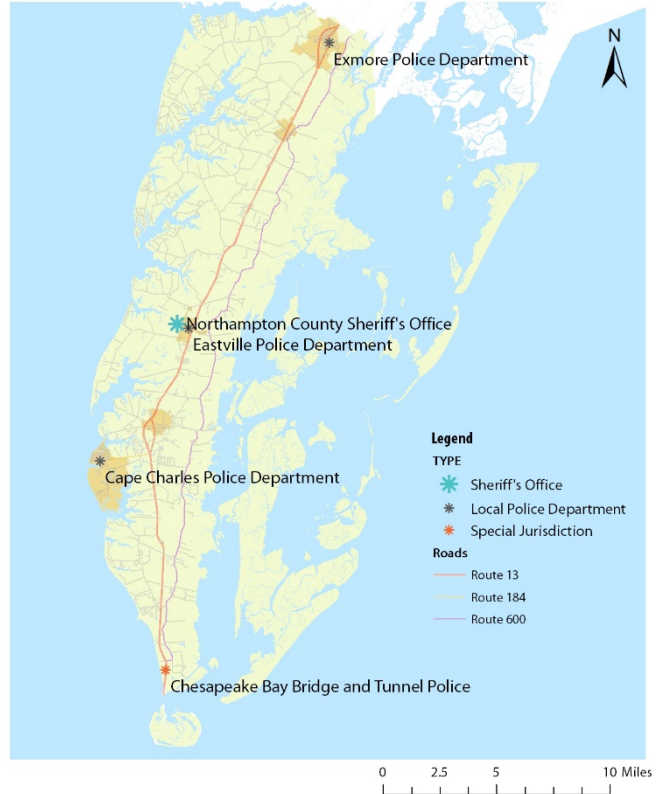
Law Enforcement

The Northampton County Sheriff's Department and County jail are located just outside the town of Eastville. In addition to the Sheriff and Major, there are 20 law enforcement deputies, 40 jail deputies, and 6 communications officers. The jail also employs 8 persons for medical and kitchen staff.

Additionally, the towns of Cape Charles, Eastville, and Exmore also have small police departments. The Town of Cape Charles has six police officers and a chief, the Town of Eastville has two officers, and the Town of Exmore has seven officers. The Virginia State Police, with a station in Melfa in Accomack County, also provides significant support in the county. Other agencies active in the county include:

- Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel Police, which has a police station located in the county.
- Virginia Marine Police of the Virginia Marine Resources Commission.
- Department of Wildlife Resources officers responsible for enforcing all laws relative to the taking of wildlife and Virginia's boating safety laws.
- U.S. Coast Guard Station Cape Charles and the Coast Guard Auxiliary, which teaches and enforces boating laws.
- National Wildlife Refuge officer authorized to protect U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service property and enforce wildlife and public use laws and regulations in the local area or as directed.

Police Stations



Utilities

Water

Cape Charles, Eastville, Exmore, Bayview, Riverside Hospital, and the County Complex presently maintain public water systems. Each of these water systems are supplied using groundwater wells into the Yorktown-Eastover aquifer system. These systems serve about 25 percent of the total County population.

Cape Charles has two production wells and a permitted withdrawal limit of 360,000 gallons per day and a storage capacity of 300,000 gallons. Currently, the water system serves 1,200 customers and have a peak usage of approximately 290,000 gallons per day. While the facility could serve approximately 200-300 more customers, two additional wells have been installed but have not been connected to the Water Treatment Plant. The Town anticipates planning this connection during the next Capital Improvement Plan update. Once connected the facility would have a 500,000 gallons per day capacity.

Eastville operates a small municipal water supply system. The water tank has a storage capacity of 75,000 gallons, and average usage is 51,000 gallons per day.

Exmore has two production wells withdrawing 125,000 gallons per day and a storage capacity of 200,000 gallons. Currently, the water system serves 815 customers. The Water Treatment Facility has a capacity of 300 gallons per minute and the potential to serve additional customers has not been estimated, however, the Town reports a 15-million-gallon annual surplus.

The County Public Works Department operates the Bayview Community Water System, the Northampton Government Complex, and the Northampton Community Facilities. The Bayview System permitted volume is not to exceed 300,000 gallons per month for three consecutive months. There is a 15,000-gallon storage capacity and the system withdraws approximately 8,000 gallons per day.

Public Water Systems



| Name | Type | Owner | Connections | Population |
|---|-----------------------------|---------|-------------|------------|
| Bayview Community | Community | County | 80 | 160 |
| Northampton County Government Complex | Community | County | 4 | 64 |
| Northampton County Community Facilities | Non-Transient Non-Community | County | 3 | 61 |
| Shore Memorial Hospital | Community | Private | 4 | 400 |
| Town of Cape Charles | Community | Town | 1113 | 2276 |
| Town of Eastville | Community | Town | 161 | 1030 |
| Town of Exmore | Community | Town | 689 | 2000 |

Shore Memorial Hospital operates a community water system for private use. While located in the town of Nassawadox, it does not provide water town-wide. The system supplies water for a nursing home and a few other commercial properties.

The county also has several private community water systems including at the Arlington Plantation, Kiptopeke Condominiums, and Holiday Acres Mobile Home Park. Many commercial sites also have small non-community water systems. Previous estimates from the Northampton Regional Water Supply Plan suggests there are an estimated 3,845 small, self-supplied residential wells in the county.

Wastewater

Public access to sewer and wastewater infrastructure is mostly limited to towns, but recent plans to join the Hampton Roads Sanitation District could expand access. The district proposes extending a sewer main from a treatment plant in Onancock in Accomack County through the town of Exmore and terminating in the town of Nassawadox. This proposal would reduce the need for local wastewater treatment plants in the county.

The Cape Charles sewer capacity is 250,000 gallons per day with an average daily flow of 160,000 gallons per day. Currently, the Town is considering extension to a multi-family residential development. This project will also be considered during Capital Improvement Planning and may include expanding the Waste Water Treatment Plant to 375,000 gallons per day or as much as 500,000 with beneficial reuse of treated effluent if expanded beyond 250,000 gallons per day.

The Exmore sewer is operated through two Waste Water Treatment Systems, the New Road System permitted at 50,000 gallons per day and the Downtown System with 60,000 gallons per day. These systems see a 12,000 and 30,000 gallon per day flow, respectively. Together these systems currently serve approximately 300 customers. The Town plans a complete overhaul of these two systems to create one system with the ability to serve approximately 900 customers. This project is projected to finish in 2022.

The Bayview wastewater system was placed in service in 2003 and was acquired by the County in 2012. The current system capacity is 97 units.

Approximately 15% of the County housing units are served by public sewer. Almost all remaining units are served by septic tank and drainfield systems. The sandy nature of Eastern Shore topsoils coupled with typically high water tables may allow septic tank drainfield effluent to rapidly reach groundwater aquifers without adequate treatment. The County has a 5-year requirement for septic tank pump out.

Electric

The County's electric power is supplied by the Accomack-Northampton Electric Cooperative (ANEC). This company is capable of supplying services to meet demands expected from future projected growth. The transmission line is owned, managed, and operated by Old Dominion Electric Cooperation (ODEC). A new transmission line has been constructed between Tasley and Exmore substations to increase reliable service to customers south of Tasley.

Propane Gas

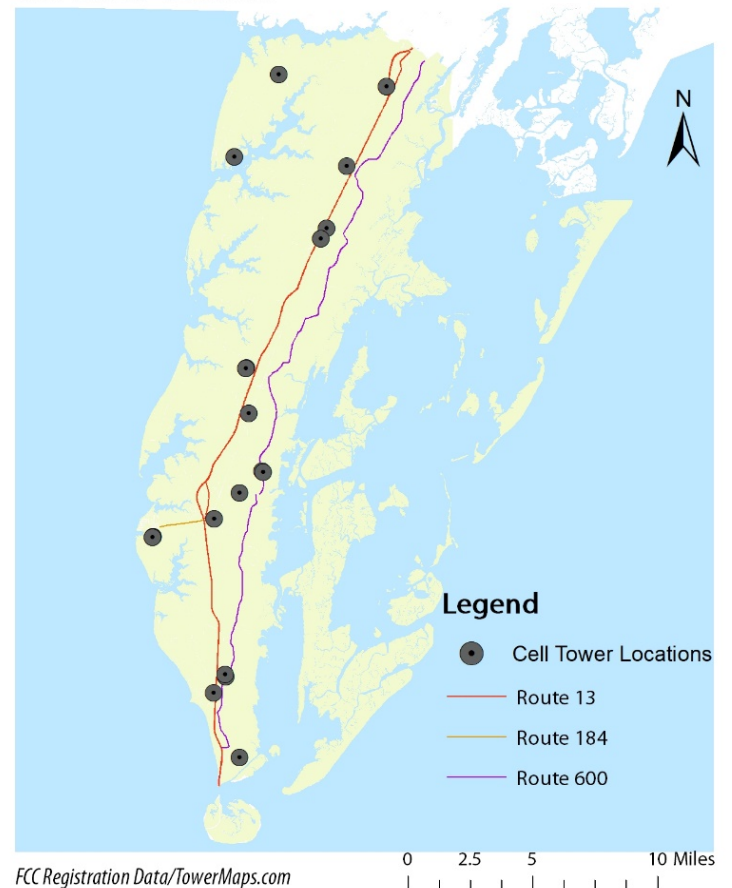
Propane gas is available from local companies, but no natural gas is available. These vendors are capable of supplying services to meet demands expected from future projected population growth.

Telecommunications

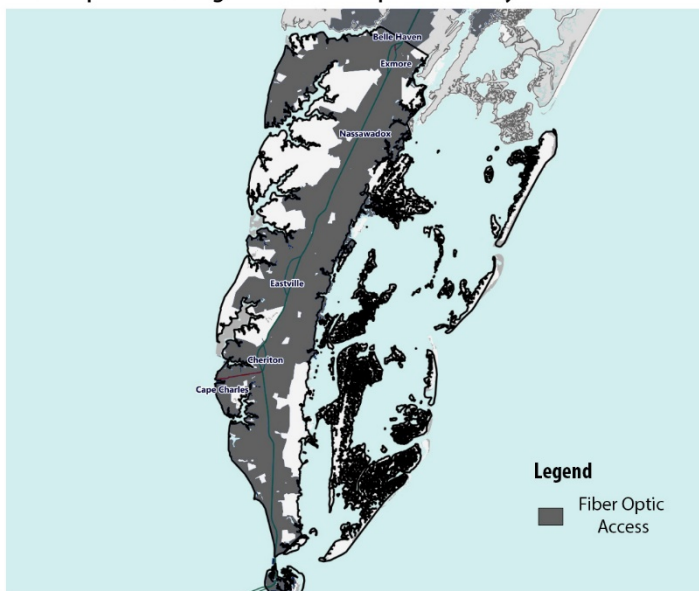
In recent years, Northampton County has made progress in becoming an internet-connected rural region. Cell towers in the county currently provide access to networks on all major cell phone networks. Most of the county now has access to 4G and LTE coverage according to information from various cell phone companies.

In addition, Northampton County has become a state leader for broadband access in rural areas. The Eastern Shore of Virginia Broadband Authority (ESVBA) created in 2008 provides an open access network to Accomack and Northampton counties. ESVBA is a public not for profit company and its open access network provides high speed fiber optic cable connection directly to a variety of commercial, government, and residential needs. As an open access network, nine different private certified internet providers also use the network to provide services to rural customers using fixed wireless Internet service, known as WISPs. Other portions of the county may have slower DSL internet access that is considered underserved if download speeds are below 25 Mbps. Unserved areas are locations with speeds below 10 Mbps. Nevertheless, ESVBA remains committed to improving internet access in the county. ESVBA currently operates six free Wi-Fi sites in the county. In August of 2018, ESBA also announced expansion plans to increase fiber optic access to 70% of the Eastern Shore.

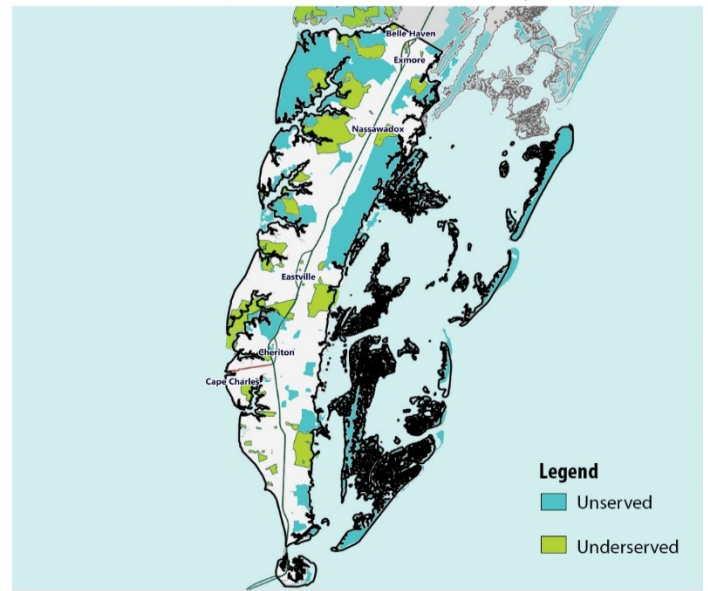
Cell Tower Locations



Fiber Optic Coverage in Northampton County



Broadband Coverage in Northampton County



Virginia Tech Integrated Broadband Planning and Analysis Toolbox

Virginia Tech Integrated Broadband Planning and Analysis Toolbox

Solid Waste Management

The County collects all residential waste from its six waste collection sites through a third party. The waste collection sites are located in Wardtown, Hare Valley, Birdsnest, Eastville, Bayview, and Cheapside. In addition, waste is collected from nine (9) non-public sites including each of the school facilities, courthouse, Indiantown Park, and the Health Department. Recycling services and clothes donation boxes are also offered at the County's waste collection centers. Household hazardous waste disposal is available at a regional facility in Accomack.

Northampton County operates a transfer station near the community of Oyster. In addition to regular household waste, construction debris, yard waste, and bulk household items are also accepted. The waste is transported by a third-party vendor to the King and Queen Landfill for disposal. In accordance with state regulations, the Northampton County Landfill was closed and capped in 2009.

The County has a Solid Waste Management Plan in accordance with State Code and the Virginia Waste Management Act.

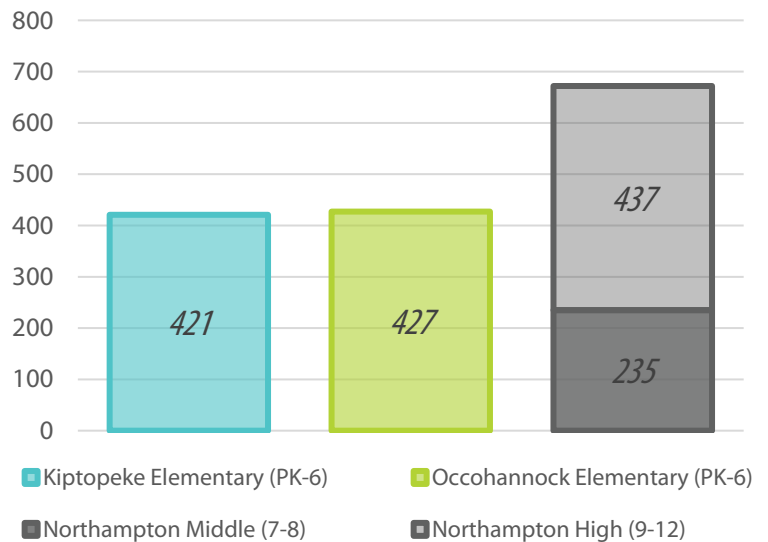
Education

Public Schools

Northampton County operates two elementary schools (grades pre-K-6) and one combined middle school and high school (grades 7-12). The school system offers a variety of programs including advanced placement and honors courses, career and technical education, gifted education, special education, Governor's School programs, and extracurricular and athletic programs. Northampton High and Occohannock Elementary are accredited, while Kiptopeke Elementary and Northampton Middle are accredited with conditions.

As of the fall of 2019, the Northampton County school system had a total of 1,520 students. Total enrollment has steadily declined over the past decade. Currently each school building operates below maximum capacity. Each elementary school has similar attendance numbers. Additionally, enrollment by grade level is equally distributed in the county.

School Enrollment



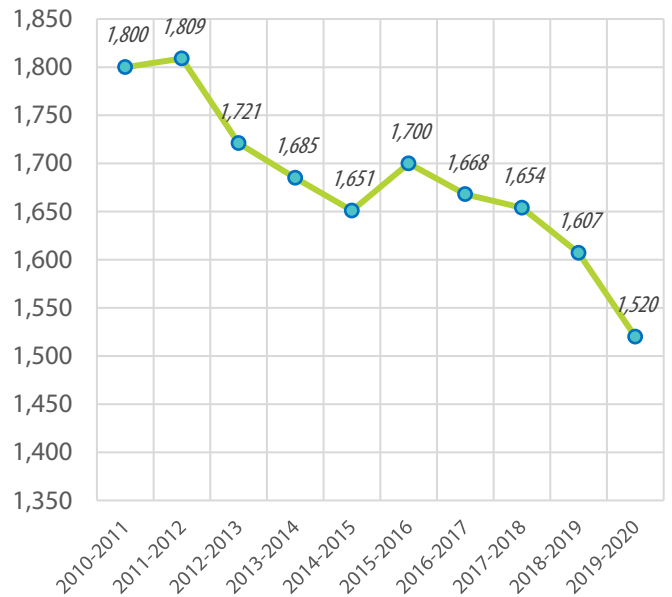
VDOE Fall Membership 2019

Northampton County has initiated a \$25+ million renovation of the high school building. The renovations are expected to add a formal middle school wing to the building, while also renovating the older portions of the building that were built in 1954 and 1978.

Portions of the former middle school building are being used by the Parks and Recreation department. While the school system still has administrative offices on the campus, it is expected that the school building and its campus will be reused for the county's needs. Northampton County is slated to receive \$2 million to make it into a multi-purpose community center, hurricane shelter, and business incubator.

| School Building | Year Built |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Kiptopeke Elementary School | 1993 |
| Occohannock Elementary School | 1993 |
| Northampton Middle/High School | 1954 Addition: 1978 Partial Renovation: 2008 |

District Enrollment



VDOE Fall Membership 2010-2020

Private Schools

There are currently four private schools located in the County:

- Broadwater Academy – Grades Pre-K through 12, located in Exmore
- Shore Christian Academy – Grades Pre-K through 8, located in Exmore
- Franktown Montessori – Ages 2 through 12, located in Franktown
- Cape Charles Christian School – Grades Pre-K through 8, located in Cape Charles

Higher Education

The Eastern Shore Community College (ESCC) near Melfa serves residents of both Northampton and Accomack Counties. It is a two-year institution offering transfer and occupational-technical certificate programs and a variety of credit and non-credit courses for residents of the two Counties. The 115-acre campus includes a new academic building, which opened for classes in spring 2020, and a Business Development and Workforce Training Center, which opened in 2009. The college also operates an Adult Basic Education Program in cooperation with both County school systems and the Eastern Shore Literacy Council (ESLC) to provide adult learning and General Educational Development (GED) degrees. Northampton County high school seniors may enroll in courses at ESCC.

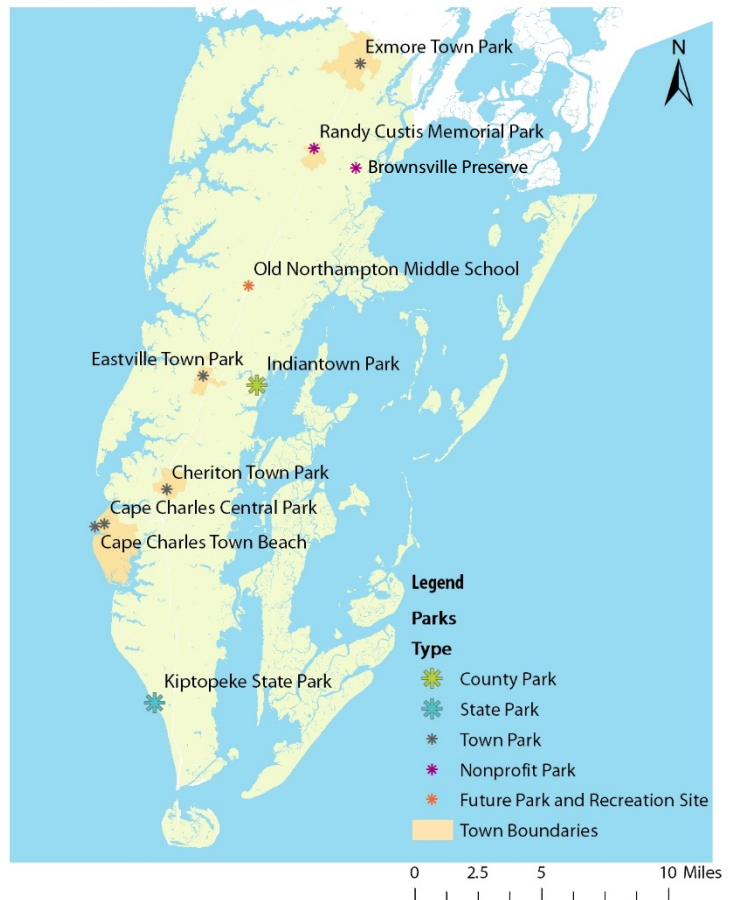
Parks and Recreation

Northampton County currently operates one park, Indiantown Park. At 52 acres, the park offers walking trails, picnic shelters, a softball field, playground, a disc golf course, soccer field, and recreation center. Northampton County Parks and Recreation office offers a variety of programs for all ages. Programs that are offered are summer camp, youth basketball, coed volleyball, adult softball, coed softball, adult basketball, disc golf, teen dances, and much more.

The county's Park and Recreation Department's administrative offices have relocated from Indiantown Park to the former Northampton Middle School Building. The school building and campus are proposed to be repurposed as a recreation center. Located at a central area of the county, the former school building represents a unique opportunity to reuse county buildings and improve recreation access for county residents.

An appointed advisory board supports planning and decision making related to County parks and recreation. Friends of Northampton County Parks and Recreation, a private, non-profit organization, supports fundraising and improvements.

Parks and Recreation



Other Parks & Recreation Resources

County residents also benefit from town, state, and national parks and recreation resources, including:

- Small town parks in Cheriton, Eastville, and Exmore.
- Cape Charles town beach and Central Park.
- Randy Custis Memorial Park in Nassawadox offers various athletic fields for organized play.
- Eastern Shore of Virginia National Wildlife Refuge serves as habitat for wildlife, including several endangered species, and offers a small museum and passive recreation opportunities.
- Kiptopeke State Park offers two beaches for public use as well as kayak rentals and other amenities. The beaches are connected to the campsite areas by boardwalks and 5.1 miles of nature trails.
- Savage Neck Dunes Natural Area Preserve is a 298-acre preserve containing Chesapeake Bay beach, dune, and maritime forest communities, migratory songbird habitat, and northeastern beach tiger beetles.
- The Southern Tip Hike & Bike Trail is an approximate 5-mile paved trail along the old railroad bed that connects the Refuge to Kiptopeke State Park. Phase II of the trail, Cedar Grove Drive to Capeville Drive has been completed. There are plans to extend the trail further north to the Cape Charles area.
- The Nature Conservancy’s Brownsville Preserve.
- Public fishing piers at Morley’s Wharf boat ramp, Cape Charles, and Kiptopeke State Park.
- Northampton County YMCA in Cape Charles.
- Eastern Shore portions of Virginia Water Trails.
- Northampton Middle School provided recreation programs.

Boat ramps within Northampton County include: Cape Charles (town harbor with 96 slips), Kings Creek (privately owned with 125 slips), Oyster (County owned with 10 slips), Willis Wharf (County owned with 50 slips), Morley’s Wharf (County owned), Red Bank (Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries), Wise Point Boat Ramp (Fish and Wildlife Services), and Kiptopeke State Park.

| Location | Type | Size |
|--|------------|-------------|
| <i>Indiantown Park</i> | County | 52 acres |
| <i>Kiptopeke State Park</i> | State | 562 acres |
| <i>Randy Custis Memorial Park</i> | Non-Profit | 31 acres |
| <i>Cape Charles Central Park</i> | Town | 5.6 acres |
| <i>Cape Charles Town Beach</i> | Town | 7.3 acres |
| <i>Cheriton Town Park</i> | Town | 1.3 acres |
| <i>Eastville Town Park</i> | Town | 1.2 acres |
| <i>Exmore Town Park</i> | Town | 3.4 acres |
| <i>Eastern Shore of Virginia National Wildlife Refuge</i> | National | 653 acres |
| <i>Brownsville Preserve and William B. Cummings Birding & Wildlife Trail</i> | Non-Profit | 1,250 acres |

Other Community Resources

Many private and non-profit organizations offer resources that benefit the community.

Hospital/Health Services

Northampton County was federally designated as a Medically Underserved Area (MUA) in 1978. A MUA is defined as a region that has a relative or absolute deficiency of health care resources– e.g., hospital beds, equipment, and/or medical personnel. On the Index of Medical Underservice (IMU), where 0 represents completely underserved and 100 represents best served, Northampton County rates 59.7 (Health Resources Administration). Clinics serving rural areas designated as MUAs are eligible for certification as Rural Health Clinics by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid services.

The Virginia State Department of Health in Richmond oversees the area’s health planning services. Through its Eastern Virginia Regional Office, the State Department of Health is mandated to increase accessibility, acceptability, continuity, and quality of health care service. In addition, the Office monitors and evaluates the costs of health care to restrain cost increases and to ensure that services are not duplicated. Northampton County contributes funding to the Health Department. Approximately 50 private health

care providers including physicians, dentists, and chiropractors provide care to citizens of the Eastern Shore. The majority of the offices are currently concentrated in the Nassawadox area.

Major health service providers include:

- Eastern Shore Rural Health Systems, Inc. – Primary health and dental care with locations in Bayview, Franktown, and Eastville
- Eastern Shore Health District – Health and clinical services, food and environmental safety, and emergency preparedness and response services.
- The Citadel Nassawadox - Rehabilitation services with physical therapy, occupational therapy, and speech therapy.
- Eastern Shore Community Services Board – Provides services, supports, prevention and education regarding mental health, intellectual disabilities, developmental disabilities, and substance use issues.
- Eastern Shore Area Agency on Aging/Community Action Agency – Provides resources and services for children, families and seniors, including a senior center in Exmore and Head Start early childhood programs.
- Bayside Rehabilitation – Rehabilitation services including orthopedic, sports medicine, and neurological services.

Arts & Culture Resources

Northampton has several arts and cultural resources, and many visual, graphic, and performing artists have made Northampton County their home. Major arts and culture organizations include:

- Arts Enter and the historic Palace Theater in Cape Charles
- Cape Charles Historical Society
- Eastern Shore’s Own (ESO) in Belle Haven
- Barrier Islands Center museum and cultural center
- Arts Council of the Eastern Shore (ACES)
- Eastern Shore Art League
- Artisans Guild-Eastern Shore of Virginia
- Rosenwald School

Libraries

The Eastern Shore Public Library is a regional library system serving Northampton and Accomack Counties. It consists of a regional library in Parksley, a branch library in Nassawadox and two affiliated libraries – Chincoteague Island Library, Inc. and Cape Charles Memorial Library. The library is an active participant in the interlibrary loan system.



Churches

There are approximately 45 churches in Northampton County, with most denominations represented. In a county with a modest population, churches are a catalyst for many community services and programs such as AA, serving as polling places, Food Banks, thrift shops, and others.

Environment

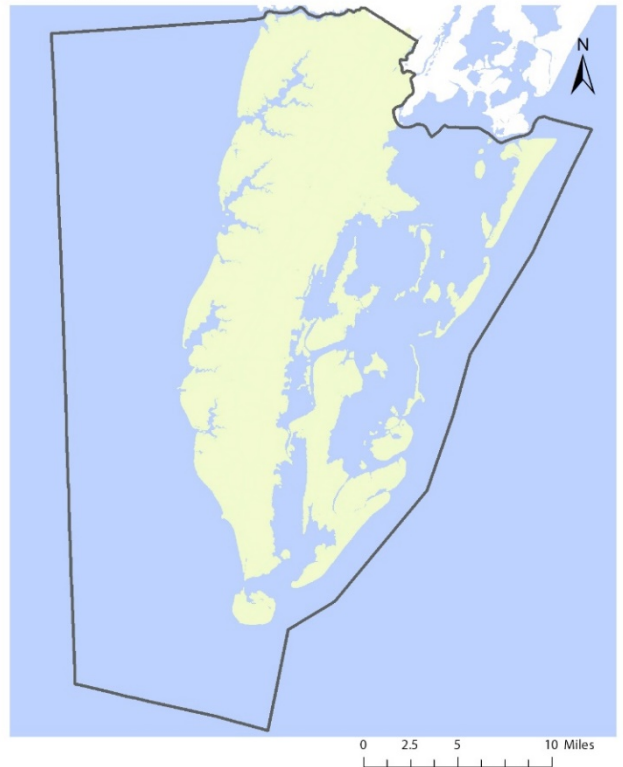
Natural features and conditions of the land are both impacted by and influence settlement patterns. The features of topography, soils, geology, water, and vegetation establish the basic suitability and capacity of the land for development, influencing overall land use patterns, economic opportunity, quality of life and the cost of public facilities and services. When land use is not planned to consider impacts to natural resources, the environment can be at risk for permanent alteration and diminution of resources.

Land Cover

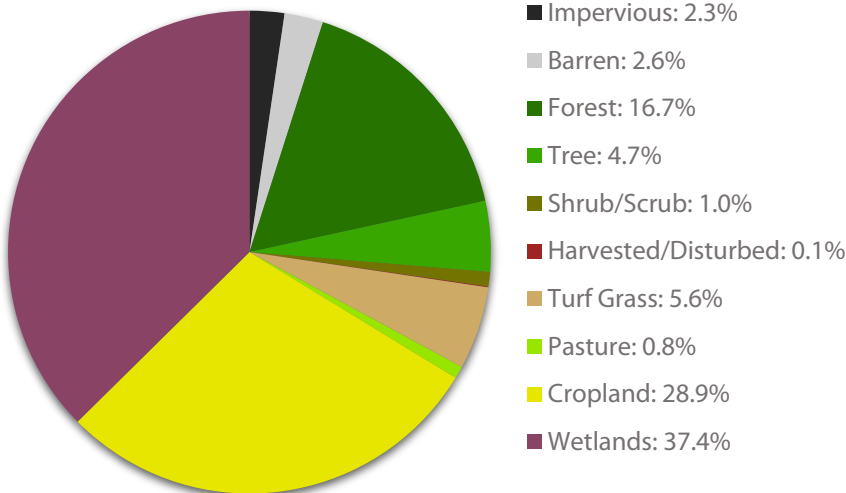
The administrative boundary of Northampton County covers nearly 795 square miles and includes portions of the Chesapeake Bay and Atlantic Ocean. Only 212 square miles (approximately 27%) is comprised of land surface area. This ranks Northampton County 83rd of 95 counties by land area in the state of Virginia. The rest of the area consists of wetlands, estuaries, and open water.

Of the 212 square miles, the most common land cover is wetlands making up 37.4% of the land surface. These wetlands provide important habitats for the region’s various rare species as well as supporting a vibrant seafood industry in the region. Most of the wetlands are in the eastern portion of the county and are protected as conservation areas. Cropland also makes up an important use of the land area making of 28.9% of the land area. Collectively, wetlands and croplands, which make up two-thirds of the county’s total land area, provide significant environmental value to the county. Impervious surfaces only make up 2.3% of the county.

Land Area

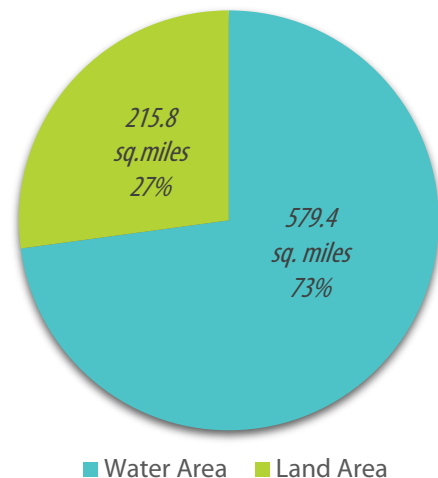


Land Cover



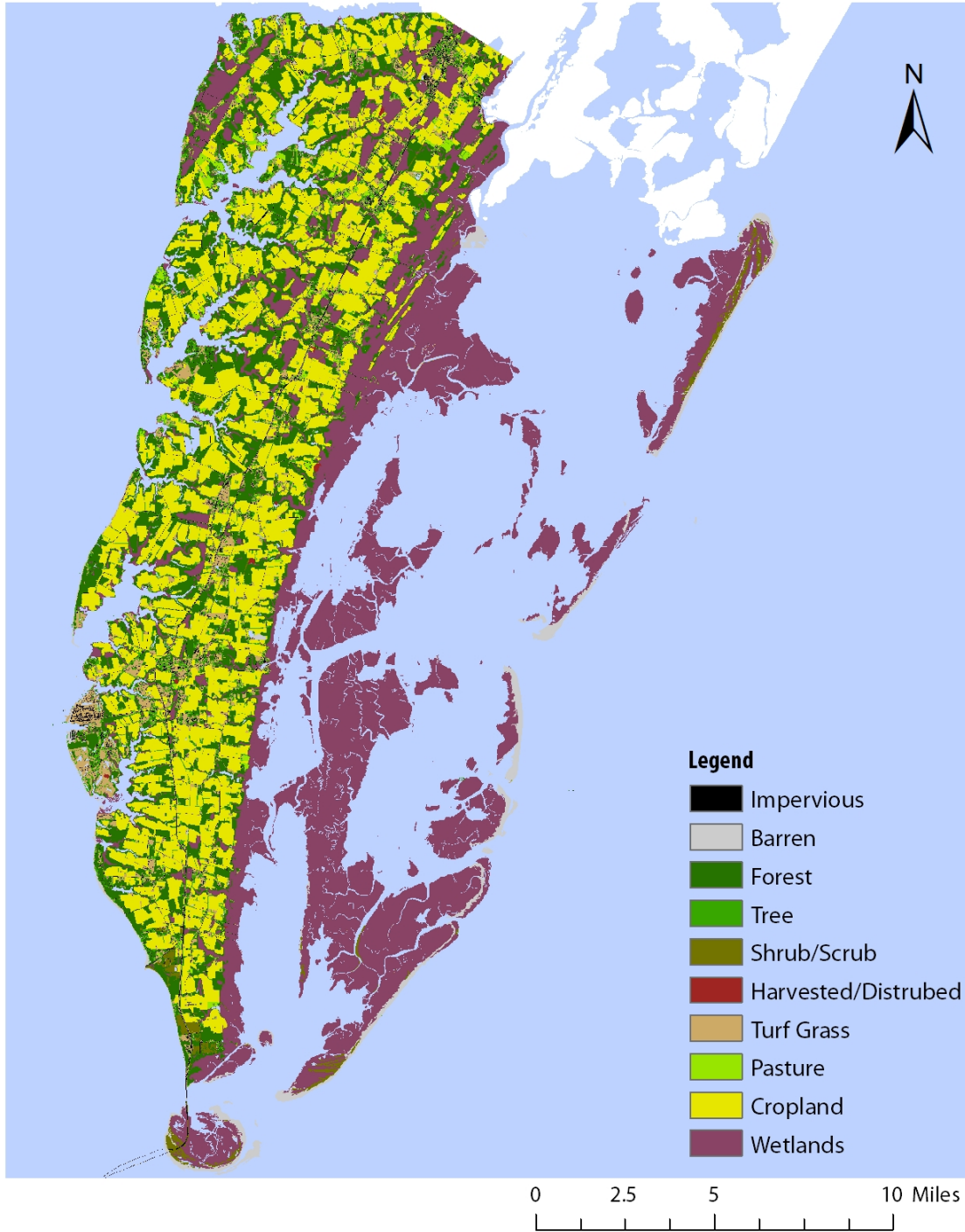
Source: 2017 Virginia Land Cover Dataset

Area Distribution



Source: 2017 Virginia Land Cover Dataset

Land Cover



Climate

The climate of Northampton County is classified as temperate with mild winters and warm, humid summers. Latitude, topography, prevailing winds, and the proximity to the Chesapeake Bay and Atlantic Ocean all exert an influence on the climate. The County generally lies near the mean path of both winter storm tracks and warm moist tropical air from the southwest Atlantic Ocean and Gulf of Mexico during the summer and early fall.

The Eastern Shore is vulnerable to hurricanes; at least 10 hurricanes caused destruction in this region since 1901. During hurricane periods, coastal lagoons receive a great influx of sediments from wash-over. When storms are of unusual severity, new inlets may be formed, or existing ones may be closed. The hurricane season begins in June and extends through November 30.

Northeasterly storms, which occur primarily during the fall and winter, are a more significant cause of erosion along the coastal area than the summer hurricanes. Typical "nor'easters" are accompanied by heavy rain and strong northeast winds which may cause unusually high tides and seas, and flooding of exposed coastal and low-lying areas. Durations of these storms are variable, but usually persist for two to five days.

As global temperatures continue to change, it becomes imperative for localities and individuals to prepare for potential impacts. Northampton's sensitive ecosystems are particularly vulnerable to impacts of climate change, including increasing temperatures, sea level, and storm intensity. (See Natural Hazards for additional information on mitigating the impacts of climate change.)

Topography

There are three noticeable topographic corridors running the length of the County:

- The bayside corridor faces the Chesapeake Bay with a varied coastline consisting of 25-foot bluffs, 50-foot dunes to flat sandy beaches, and marshlands at and below sea level.
- The middle ridge is the high ground between the Chesapeake Bay and the Atlantic Ocean where elevations range between 25 to 50 feet above sea level. This ridge approximates the boundaries between the Atlantic Ocean and Chesapeake Bay drainage basins.
- The seaside of the mainland drops down from the ridgeline 25-foot contour to land that is inundated at high tide and emergent at low tide. There is an extensive tidal marsh system between the fast-land on the seaside coast and the barrier islands off the coast with a few deep-water channels leading to the Atlantic.

Historically, most of the development in the County was located within the central ridge-corridor. In recent decades, the Bay side has experienced more development because of the many creeks and extensive waterfront land along the Chesapeake Bay and its tributary creeks. Five large creek basins, each with deep water access and unique characteristics are located within the Bay drainage area. Most of the development pressures during the last two decades have been near this waterfront and this trend is continuing.

Sensitive Ecosystems

Coastal Resource Management

Coastal ecosystems reside at the interface between the land and water and are naturally very complex. They perform a vast array of functions by way of shoreline stabilization, improved water quality, and habitat for fishes; from which humans derive direct and indirect benefits.

The science behind coastal ecosystem resource management has revealed that traditional resource management practices limit the ability of the coastal ecosystem to perform many of these essential functions. The loss of these services has already been noted throughout coastal communities in Virginia as a result of development in coastal zone areas coupled with common erosion control practices. Beaches and dunes are diminishing due to a reduction in a natural sediment supply. Wetlands are drowning in place as sea level rises and barriers to inland migration have been created by construction of bulkheads and revetments. There is great concern on the part of the Commonwealth that the continued armoring of shorelines and construction within the coastal area will threaten the long-term sustainability of coastal ecosystems under current and projected sea level rise.

In the 1980s, interest arose in the use of planted wetlands to provide natural shoreline erosion control. Today, a full spectrum of living shoreline design options is available to address the various energy settings and erosion problems found. Depending on the site characteristics, they range from marsh plantings to the use of rock sills in combination with beach nourishment.

Research continues to support that these approaches combat shoreline erosion, minimize impacts to the natural coastal ecosystem and reinforce the principle that an integrated approach for managing tidal shorelines enhances the probability that the resources will be sustained. The Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) is the state-designated organization that provides Comprehensive Coastal Resource Management Guidance for localities, tools for selecting appropriate erosion control/shoreline best management practices, and other resources.

Wetlands, Dunes, & Marshes

The seaside shoreline grades quite gradually into vast tidal marshes and shallow bays which extend seaward to the barrier islands. Old dune lines are absent, and streams are narrow and generally without significant embankments. The immediate shoreline is almost continually fringed with broad marsh, making access to open water difficult except where natural deep water or maintained channels exist. Between this seaside shoreline and the barrier islands is a maze of tidal flats, salt marshes, and shallow bays, which constitutes generally one of the finest, most pristine aquatic ecosystems of its kind. Ecologically these areas are extremely rich, supporting a vast array of marine, avian, and terrestrial life. The visual quality of these areas is another of their chief attributes.

Sand dunes, both primary and secondary, are very valuable resources. Primary and secondary dunes are the first line of defense against the sea. When storms occur, dunes act as flexible barriers to high tides and waves. Dunes also act as sand reservoirs to help keep shorelines intact. In addition to providing valuable and inexpensive protection from storms, the dunes provide aesthetic value and serve as wildlife habitats where vegetated.

The County has adopted a wetlands ordinance and established a Wetlands Board. The Board's primary function is to review and pass judgment on applications for permits dealing with proposals that may impact on wetlands.

Barrier Islands

Northampton County's barrier islands are among its most important and unique natural resources. For centuries, they played a major role in the history, economy, and culture of the area. Although there once were small fishing villages and hunting lodges on the islands, today they are uninhabited. Most of the islands are included in the Volgenau Virginia Coast Reserve, which is an island and salt marsh preserve owned by The Nature Conservancy of Arlington, Virginia. The Volgenau Virginia Coast Reserve, along with the coastal bays and mainland of the Eastern Shore, have been designated an International Biosphere Reserve by the United Nations in recognition of the importance and fragility of the ecosystem. The barrier island system is also part of the Western

Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network and is designated as an Audubon Area of Importance. Northampton County's islands, together with contiguous islands in neighboring Accomack County, represent the last undeveloped barrier island system on the Atlantic Coast.

There are twelve barrier islands in Northampton County. Hog, Rogue, Cobb, Little Cobb, Ship Shoal, Godwin, Myrtle, Mink, and Smith Islands are mostly owned by The Nature Conservancy. The Commonwealth of Virginia owns Mockhorn and Wreck Islands. Fisherman's Island, on the tip of the peninsula, is owned by the Federal government and is part of the Eastern Shore National Wildlife Refuge. The Nature Conservancy has specific rules regarding the use of the islands they own. Most of the islands are open to the public for low-impact, non-commercial, recreational day use (hiking, bird watching and fishing). Motorized vehicles, pets, and overnight camping activities are prohibited. There are also seasonal restrictions to protect nesting birds.

The barrier islands play a number of important roles in Northampton County including: protection from storms as buffers to dissipate the energy of the ocean; economic benefits including commercial and recreational fishing; recreation including fishing, hunting, crabbing, clamming, hiking, boating, and bird watching; and nature study as an educational resource, increasing awareness of the importance and rarity of the island system, and protection of threatened species, offering sanctuary to many species of birds, mammals, and reptiles that are threatened or endangered. The islands are dynamic in nature, migrating westward over the past 160 years.

Because the Volgenau Virginia Coast Reserve is gaining national and international attention as one of America's last remaining intact barrier island systems, Northampton County benefits through research and educational programs centered around the island system. The University of Virginia has established a National Science Foundation Long Term Ecological Research Center in Northampton County and established its headquarters in the Village of Oyster.

Most of the barrier islands are included either in the Volgenau Virginia Coast Reserve, the Federal National Wildlife System, or the Virginia Natural Areas Program, but even limited development on any of the islands would drastically alter the system scientifically and aesthetically. In managing the barrier island system, biological diversity has been the priority. It is important to recognize that the island system functions as an interdependent whole. The system includes related natural communities of beaches, dunes, upland forest, extensive salt marshes, bays, creeks, guts, unvegetated wetlands, mainland salt marshes, and any seaside mainland which is part of the watershed.

Forest Lands

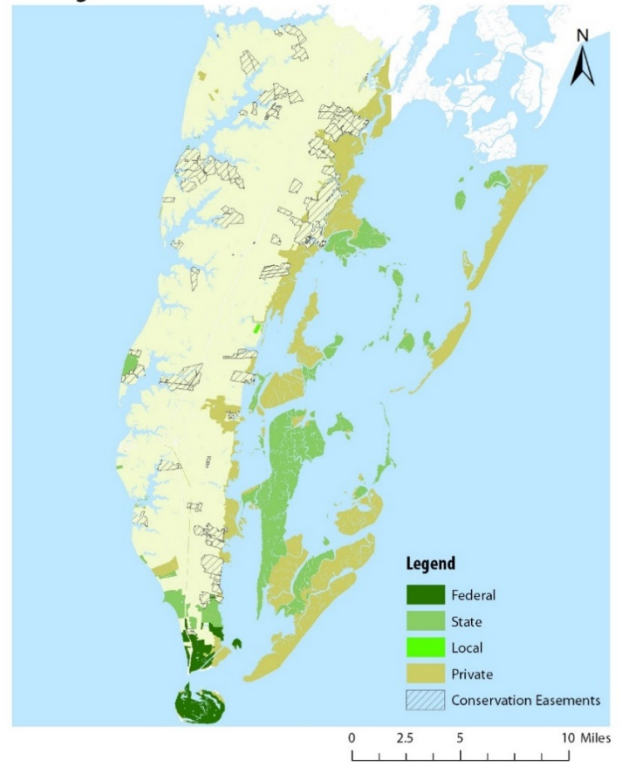
Loblolly pine is the predominant forest type with pine/hardwood, hardwood, and bottomland hardwood forests also present. Forest lands complement the other components of Northampton County's unique environment by providing habitat for wildlife and opportunities for hunting and other recreational activities. The forested areas in the lower Delmarva are significant for the survival of Neotropical migratory songbirds that utilize the forests for resting and foraging during the fall migration. Forests also function as natural buffers and windbreaks. Forests serve as the most effective filtering agents for sediments and pollutants that might run off into surface waters and they protect groundwater recharge areas as well as preventing erosion on steep slopes. In view of these benefits, the retention and restoration of forested areas warrant consideration in land use planning and establishment of related regulations. Climate change is expected to impact the forest ecosystems of the Virginia Eastern Shore due to increased spread of disease, invasive species, and changes to ideal growth ranges of various plants.

Land Conservation

With outstanding natural resources, Northampton County plays an important role in preserving biodiversity along the East Coast. As a result, conservation activities and land protection efforts have been a priority in the county. About 60 square miles in the county are owned and managed as conservation lands by federal, state, and nonprofit entities. An additional 20 square miles of private land are held as conservation easements.

Government managed conservation lands in the county include a variety of National Wildlife Refuges, State Natural Area Preserves, State Parks, and State Wildlife Management Areas. Over 2,000 acres are protected in Virginia’s Natural Area Preserve System. A total of five State Natural Area Preserves in the county, and three are open for public access. These areas include: Cape Charles on the southern tip of the Eastern Shore, Savage Neck Dunes, featuring a globally rare maritime dune woodland, and Magothy Bay, providing a home to migratory birds in autumn. Also, the Eastern Shore of Virginia National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1984 for migratory and endangered species management. This nearly 1,200-acre refuge is found at the southern tip of Northampton County and is also home to Fisherman Island, which is one of only 17 sites in the country classified as a “Wetland of International Importance.” The Nature Conservancy also owns large portions of conservation lands in the county.

Managed Conservation Lands



| Name | Type | Public Access | Area |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------|------------|
| Eastern Shore of Virginia | <i>National Wildlife Refuge</i> | Open | 1127 acres |
| Fisherman Island | <i>National Wildlife Refuge</i> | Closed | 1850 acres |
| Cape Charles | <i>State Natural Area Preserve</i> | Open | 29 acres |
| Magothy Bay | <i>State Natural Area Preserve</i> | Open | 286 acres |
| Pickett's Harbor | <i>State Natural Area Preserve</i> | By arrangement | 123 acres |
| Savage Neck Dunes | <i>State Natural Area Preserve</i> | Open | 298 acres |
| Wreck Island | <i>State Natural Area Preserve</i> | By arrangement | 1380 acres |
| Kiptopeke | <i>State Park</i> | Open | 562 acres |
| Mockhorn | <i>State Wildlife Management Area</i> | Open | 7642 acres |

In addition to federal, state, and private conservation programs, the County has established an Agriculture/Forestral District (AFD) program and a Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program to support land conservation. Each AFD, as it is applied for and approved by the Board of Supervisors, becomes its own district with specific terms and conditions. The PDR program allows landowners to sell the development rights of their property.

Flora & Fauna

Northampton County supports a variety of flora and fauna that are ecologically significant (i.e., unique and/or critical to species survival) and arise from a combination of factors, including location along the Atlantic seaboard, island biogeography, and location within a major migratory bird flyway.

Rare Species and Habitat

Northampton County supports a precious variety of unique species supported by highly protected habitats. Nearly 80 of Virginia's 883 Species of Greatest Conservation Need occur or are believed to occur between Northampton and Accomack counties. Of these 79 species, 67 are dependent upon the habitats found in the two counties, including the Glossy ibis, the Gull-billed tern, Red knot, and Wilson's plover.

The Virginia Natural Landscape Assessment has identified many parts of the county for its outstanding and high ecological integrity. The ecological cores reflect a wide range of important benefits and ecosystem services which include biodiversity conservation, wildlife habitat, aesthetic values, recreational opportunities, and protections for air and water quality. Additionally, many of the county's barrier islands are a part of The Nature Conservancy's Volgenau Virginia Coast Reserve which is recognized as a UNESCO International Biosphere Reserve for its unique habitats that support numerous local species and migratory birds.

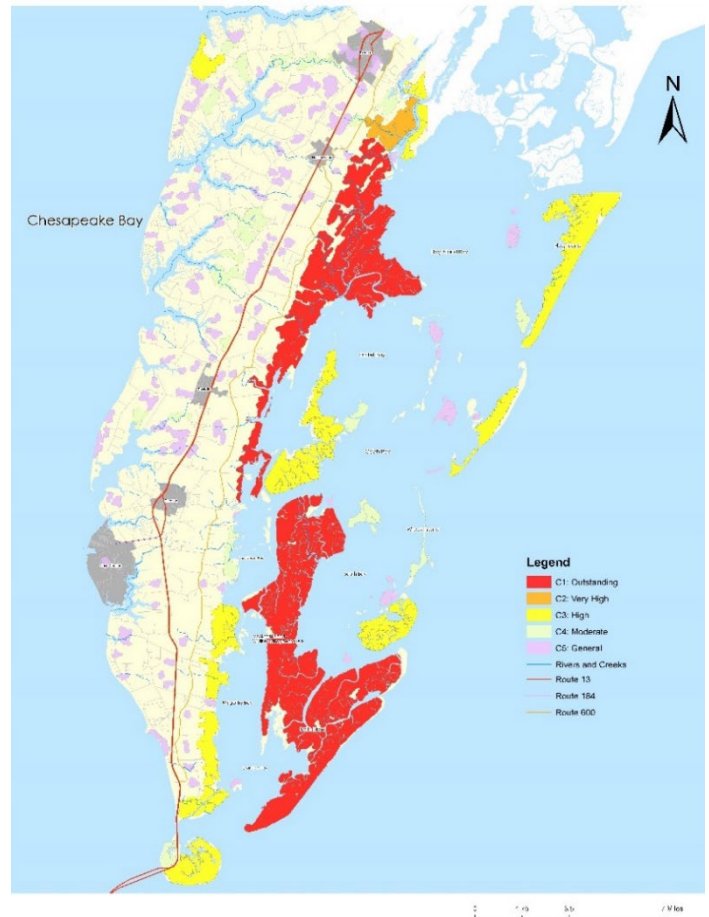
Migratory Birds

The southern tip of the Delmarva Peninsula, entirely within Northampton County's jurisdiction, is of vital biological significance to avian biodiversity. The county's isolated geographic location on the Delmarva peninsula makes the area an important and widely used stopover for birds during the annual fall and spring migrations. As a result, the National Audubon Society recognizes much of the county's coastline as a Global Important Bird Area.

Estimates from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service suggest that 439 different bird species have been recorded in the Eastern Shore, with 406 different species having been found on the southern tip of Northampton County. An estimated 5 to 6 million Neotropical migrants – birds that spend the winter months in the tropical forests of Central and South America – funnel through Northampton County on their journey southward. In addition, temperate migrants – birds that migrate on a more limited scale, never leaving North America and often spending the entire winter on the Delmarva Peninsula – and raptor species utilize the habitat and food supply available in Northampton.

For some avian species, Northampton County is the last feeding stop before a non-stop flight to the Caribbean or South America. Reduction in food availability, which is correlated to habitat loss, would undoubtedly result in large proportions of migrant birds failing to obtain food supplies in amounts sufficient to meet their nutritional requirements for a long-distance migration. Thus, significant loss of migratory songbird stopover habitat in Northampton County could lead to severe declines in breeding songbird populations throughout the New England states and Canada.

Ecological Cores



Soils

Soil types have a significant influence on agriculture as well as residential and industrial development. The percentage of the County's total land area in prime or unique soil types has influenced agricultural practices and productivity, making it a significant factor in land use decisions. The ability of soils to absorb septic wastes and their suitability for buildings and roads impacts development.

The four most common soil types comprising about 85% of all soil in the County include: Bojac, Chincoteague, Munden, and Nimmo soils. Prime farmland⁹ soils include the upland soils of Bojac and Munden, as well as Dragston and Nimmo if drained.

The soil in the county presents some significant limitations to development in the area. Bojac is the only soil type that represents any potential for septic systems. Nevertheless, Bojac soils makes up about 40% of the county. Most of the Bojac soil is mixed throughout the central and eastern parts of the county. All other soil types are classified as having severe risks. Similarly, many other types of soil also prevent risks for other types of development. Only Munden and Bojac soils can sufficiently support buildings and roads.

Septic Potential



| Soil Type | Percent | Septic Systems | Dwelling without basements | Dwellings with basements | Small commercial buildings | Roads |
|-----------------------------|---------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Bojac: BhB, BkA, BoA | 40.2% | Moderate: <i>wetness</i> | Slight | Moderate: <i>wetness</i> | Slight | Slight |
| Chincoteague: ChA | 24.4% | Severe: <i>flooding, ponding</i> | Severe: <i>flooding, ponding</i> | Severe: <i>flooding, ponding</i> | Severe: <i>flooding, ponding</i> | Severe: <i>low strength, flooding</i> |
| Munden: MuA | 10.4% | Severe: <i>wetness</i> | Moderate: <i>wetness</i> | Severe: <i>wetness</i> | Moderate: <i>wetness</i> | Moderate: <i>wetness</i> |
| Nimmo: NmA | 9.2% | Severe: <i>wetness, poor filter</i> | Severe: <i>wetness</i> | Severe: <i>wetness</i> | Severe: <i>wetness</i> | Severe: <i>wetness</i> |

⁹ Prime farmland, as defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, is land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops and is available for these uses. It could be cultivated land, pastureland, forestland, or other land, but it is not urban or built-up land or water areas.

Water Resources

Groundwater Resources

Northampton County relies on a sole source aquifer to supply groundwater for drinking water, as well as most other supplies such as irrigation water. Called the Columbia and Yorktown-Eastover Multi-aquifer System, the U.S. EPA recognizes this as a Sole Source Aquifer because the local community is dependent on the aquifer for drinking water and there is no possibility of a replacement water supply. The designation provides protection to the Shore's water supply by requiring the EPA to review proposed projects on the Shore that are receiving federal financial assistance to ensure they do not endanger the water source. The report, *Hydrogeological Framework of the Eastern Shore of Virginia* by Randy McFarland and the USGS, provides a detailed look into the Yorktown-Eastover aquifer system of the Virginia Eastern Shore.

Yorktown-Eastover Aquifer

Groundwater quality is generally good in the deep Yorktown-Eastover aquifer system, though localized problems with high iron content have been encountered. Nitrate levels tend to be higher in shallow wells, principally a result of fertilizer application on the land. While nitrate may be higher in the shallow wells, only a small percentage of the shallow groundwater exceed the drinking water Maximum Contaminant Level. Wells associated with the deep Yorktown-Eastover aquifer system did not indicate pollution problems. However, high salt levels in Yorktown-Eastover aquifer wells are common in areas near the Bay and Seaside. In some cases, the salt levels can exceed drinking water Maximum Contaminant Levels.

The Yorktown-Eastover aquifer can range in depth from 80 to 600 feet below the land surface, though most wells are pumping from layers between 150 and 300 feet deep. The amount of water available from the Yorktown-Eastover aquifer is location dependent. In general, fresh groundwater becomes scarcer: 1) with greater depth, 2) closer to the Bay and Seaside, and 3) further south, toward the tip of the County.

Columbia Aquifer

The shallow Columbia aquifer is used to a lesser extent. Some of the highest yields per minute found on the Shore have come from the Columbia aquifer. Unfortunately, the continued use of this source for drinking water supply is limited in many localized areas due to nitrate contamination from agricultural runoff and septic system failure. Close monitoring of septic systems is needed to prevent long-term health hazards from occurring.

Use of the Columbia aquifer should be encouraged over the Yorktown-Eastover aquifers in areas where the yield and quality meet the beneficial use. Some groundwater users already use the Columbia aquifer as a source of water, either solely or in conjunction with the Yorktown-Eastover aquifer for potable drinking water, irrigation, and industrial uses. This source is especially amenable to agricultural use since there is not the need for low nitrate levels as it is for drinking water.

Groundwater Management

Groundwater resources in Northampton County are vulnerable to impacts from saltwater intrusion, impairment to groundwater recharge, over withdrawals, well to well interference, and contamination from activities occurring on the land (e.g., poorly operated sewage management, leaking underground storage tanks, chemical spills). Because the total available groundwater supply is limited to the amount of fresh water recharging the aquifers from precipitation directly falling on the Shore, protection of the groundwater recharge area is critical to preserving Northampton's water supply.

Local, state, and federal authorities have studied and regulated the fresh groundwater resources of the entire Eastern Shore over the past several decades in order to both understand and prevent the loss of the valuable groundwater resources. The Eastern Shore Groundwater Resource Protection and Preservation Plan¹⁰, as amended, consolidates past research, identifies additional research and monitoring needs, and identifies recommended actions to preserve the water supply. Key recommendations include:

¹⁰<http://www.a-npdc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/ESVAGroundwaterResourceProtectionAndPreservationPlan2013compress.pdf>

- Encouraging use of the Yorktown-Eastover aquifers in areas where the yield and quality meets the beneficial use.
- Continue utilizing membrane treatment technologies, which will be most appropriate in local areas, such as near the Bay or Seaside, where fresh groundwater is naturally limited.
- Encouraging wastewater reclamation and reuse where practical.
- Enhancing recharge and aquifer storage and recovery through low impact development stormwater management practices that facilitate recharge and reduce contamination from rapid runoff, as well as other available technology.

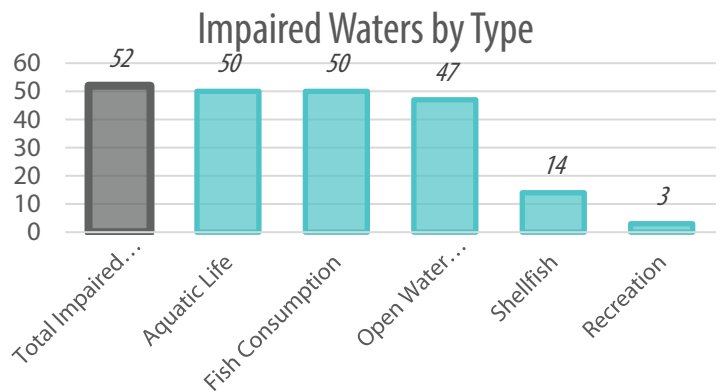
Surface Waters

Northampton County is surrounded by salt water and has no freshwater streams of significance. There are about one dozen tidal creeks in Northampton County and those are largely supplied from groundwater flows, with some contribution from surface water runoff, precipitation, and tidal inflow. Surface waters are not an important source of drinking water, but they do provide some irrigation water and are important to shellfish, finfish, and other wildlife.

Water Quality

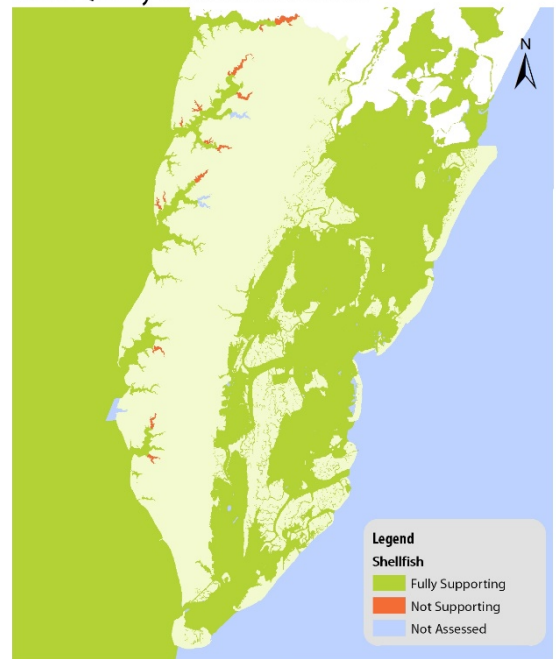
Given the importance of aquaculture in Northampton County, water quality is of particular concern. The 2018 *Water Quality Assessment Integrated Report*, completed by Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, finds that many local creeks and coves in addition to the Chesapeake Bay are considered impaired. In most cases, the cause of the impairment is from dissolved oxygen levels, fecal coliforms, and excessive aquatic plants created by local and regional water runoff and discharge. All bayside creeks are impaired in addition to a few seaside creeks in the county. As it relates to the county’s aquaculture production, most of the county’s water is not impaired and fully support shellfish. However, many of the bayside waters are impaired for fish consumption.

In response to water quality concerns, the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act passed by the Virginia General Assembly in 1988 is intended to reduce and prevent nonpoint source pollution that affects the water quality and wildlife. Northampton County has also adopted the Chesapeake/Atlantic Preservation Zoning District to incorporate water quality protection measures consistent with Virginia’s Bay Act Regulations. This zoning district defines two types of land that make up the Chesapeake/Atlantic Preservation District: Resource Protection Areas, which are identified as lands that protect and benefit water quality directly, and Resource Management Areas, which are lands that, without proper management, have the potential to damage water quality. Land within these areas is subject to additional development restrictions and requirements, while all land in the County is subject to additional development restrictions under the CAP.



Source: 2018 VA DEQ Water Quality Assessment Report

Water Quality Conditions: Shellfish



VA DEQ 2018 Water Quality Assessment Integrated Report

Natural Hazards

Flooding

Flooding caused by hurricanes, northeasters, and tropical storms has proven to be the greatest natural hazard to people and property on the Eastern Shore of Virginia. A FEMA Flood Risk Report estimates that 212 square miles of the county's land area is within some Flood Hazard Area. Much of this land which is undeveloped consists of Coastal High Hazard Areas where a 1% annual chance of flooding exists as the result of storm-induced wave action. Other portions of the county are in areas that require flood insurance because a 1% chance of annual flooding is possible.

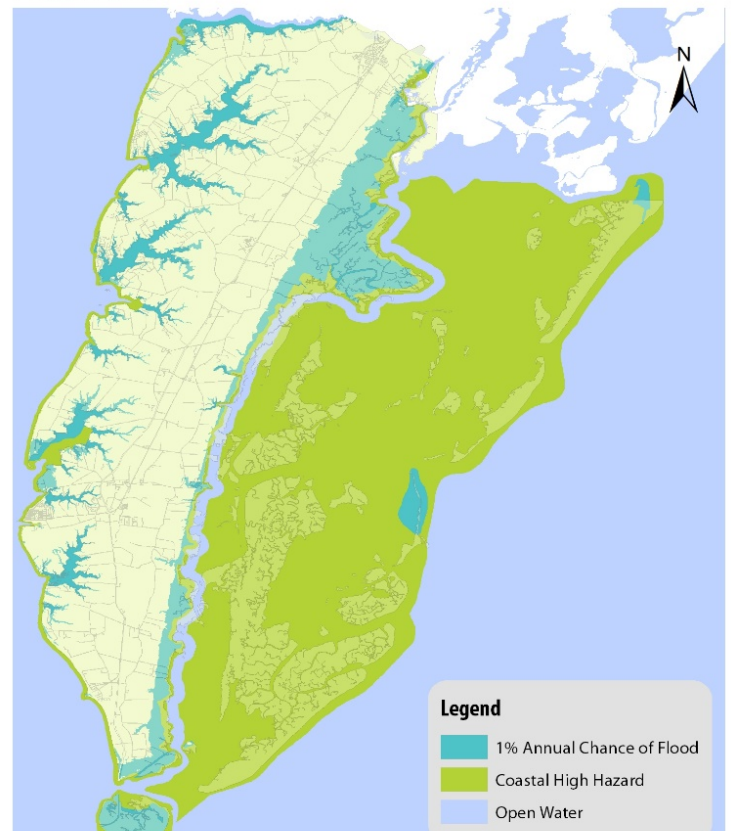
As of January 2016, there were 572 National Flood Insurance Program policies in the County, with 334 of those being in the unincorporated portions of the County. There have only been 102 claims since 1978, only 87 in the unincorporated portions of the County. A total of 24 homes in Northampton County have been documented as having been elevated out of the floodplain. With changes to the Flood Insurance Rate Map delineations of the Special Flood Hazard Areas, there are 139 fewer buildings insured in 2016 than in 2011, while this could indicate less buildings being in high hazard areas, insurance is important for the resiliency of a community to rebound following a natural disaster (Source: A-NPDC 2018).

Sea Level Rise

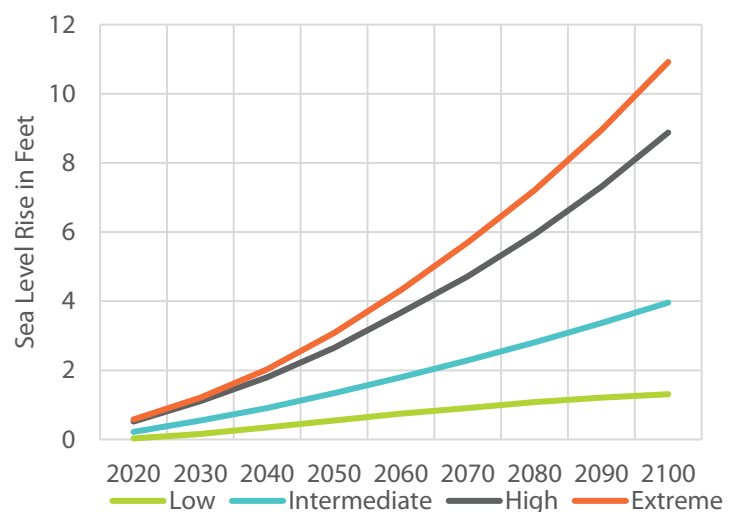
The Mid-Atlantic region has the second highest rate of sea level rise in the United States, according to NOAA. Sea levels are rising due to the combined impacts of climate change and land subsidence; the land mass in the Mid-Atlantic is sinking at a rate of approximately 0.1 inch per year.

Northampton County can expect to see recurrent flooding caused by sea level rise and stronger, more frequent precipitation events and storm surges associated with climate change. Barrier Islands, intertidal areas, and marshes, as well as any development in the inundation areas, will be impacted. NOAA sea level projections expect at least a 1-foot rise within the next fifty years, even in low projections.

Flood Zones



Sea Level Rise Projections



Source: 2017 NOAA Sea Level Projections

In 2013, the Virginia Institute of Marine Sciences (VIMS) identified the locations on the Eastern Shore where recurrent flooding is currently a problem and could be expected to increase under projected climate change and land subsidence scenarios. Based on an estimated sea level rise of 1.5 feet over the next 20 to 50 years, the report concludes that of 132,032 acres of Northampton County, 0.46 percent more land acreage, and 44 additional miles of road could be flooded over the next 20 to 50 years due to sea level rise with accompanying 3-foot storm surges. Of this additional area, only 0.01 percent was developed with housing or commercial structures.

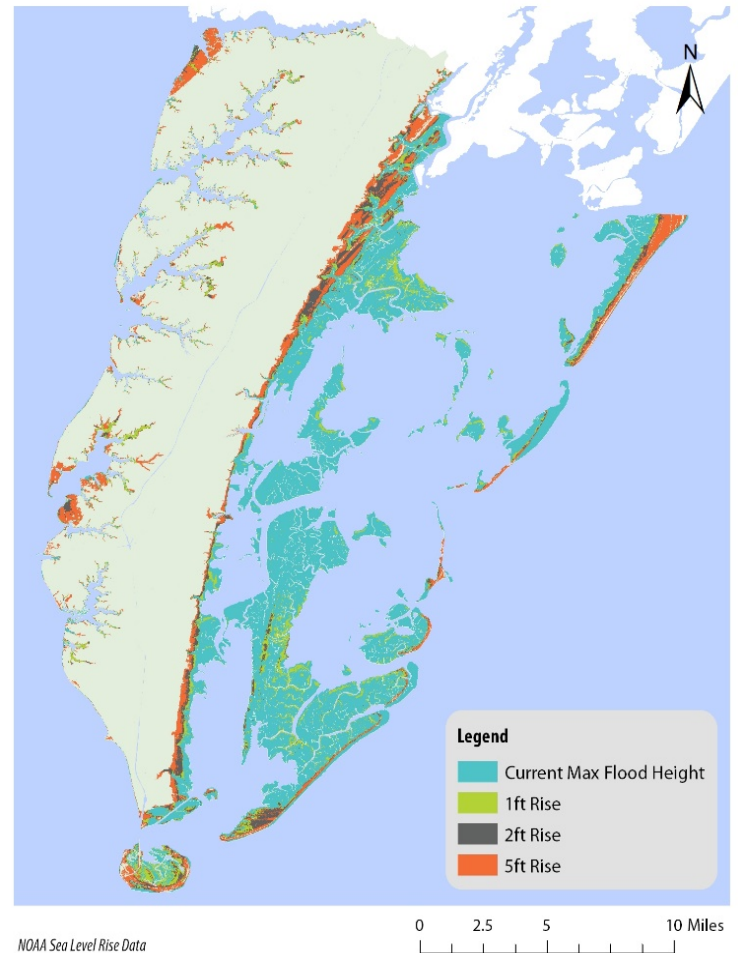
Given that portions of Northampton County already experience recurrent flooding, future development should avoid areas most likely to be inundated by future sea level rise.

Hazard Mitigation Planning

Flooding, coastal erosion, high coastal winds, storm water flooding, fires, ice storms, and drought have caused substantial damage to the communities and environments on the Shore. These events have destroyed property, caused extended isolation of communities where provisions such as fuel and food have grown thin, and at several times whole industries have been wiped out or dealt such a heavy blow that months or years were necessary to recover. In modern times, investments in real estate, infrastructure, and industry have increased the potential for significant damage and the need for advance planning.

Northampton County participates in hazard mitigation planning with A-NPDC. The 2016 Eastern Shore Hazard Mitigation Plan¹¹ identifies the greatest threats to Northampton County as coastal flooding and high wind events. The plan found that established neighborhoods, particularly areas along the bayside, are at great risk to damage and notes the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel as a critical facility that affects the local economy, communications, and emergency response capabilities. The plan sets goals and identifies specific strategies and projects needed to mitigate and rebound from natural hazards.

Sea Level Rise



¹¹<http://www.a-npdc.org/accomack-northampton-planning-district-commission/coastal-resources/hazard-mitigation-planning/#:~:text=The%20Eastern%20Shore%20Hazard%20Mitigation,or%20helped%20along%20%E2%80%93%20by%20humans.>

Transportation

Relationship to Land Use

Urban Development Areas (UDAs)

Under § 15.2-2223.1 of the Virginia Code, comprehensive plans are to include consideration of urban development areas to inform investment and funding for transportation infrastructure. Urban development areas are intended to provide higher density development (including infill and redevelopment) in proximity to existing infrastructure. These areas are intended to meet projected residential and commercial growth in the locality for at least the next 10 years and incorporate traditional neighborhood design principles. Northampton County has designated 489 acres in the Town of Exmore as a UDA.

Hierarchy of Streets

The Virginia Department of Transportation maintains a standardized classification system for the transportation network at the local level. This classification system is a result of the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1973, which required the alignment of all federal aid roads with a nationwide standard. Maintaining this functional class of roads is required to be eligible for federal transportation funds, frequency of VDOT maintenance inspections, and other benefits.

Northampton County's roads can be classified as:

- **Principal Arterial**
These roadways serve corridors of substantial statewide or interstate travel and provide an integrated network without dead ends. They also carry a significant amount of intra-area travel and serve demand between business and residential areas. Principal Arterial roads generally receive the highest levels of federal funding.
- **Minor Arterial**
Minor arterial roadways link cities and large towns, along with other major traffic generators, and form an integrated network providing interstate and inter-county service. They serve trips of moderate length at a somewhat lower level of travel mobility than Principal Arterials and distribute traffic to smaller geographic areas.
- **Major Collector**
These streets are longer in length and have lower connecting driveway densities. They also have higher speed limits, are spaced at greater intervals, have higher average daily traffic volumes, and may have more travel lanes than minor collectors. Major collectors pull in traffic from local streets and channel it to the arterial system.
- **Minor Collector**
In rural areas, minor collectors are spaced at intervals, consistent with population density. Minor Collectors collect traffic from local roads and bring all developed areas within a reasonable distance of a collector road. Minor Collector facilities provide service to the remaining smaller communities and link local traffic generators with their rural areas
- **Local Roads**
These facilities account for the largest percentage of all roadways in terms of mileage. They provide service to travel over relatively short distances. All facilities not classified on one of the higher systems are typically considered as Local Roads.

Traffic Volumes

Northampton County's rural nature is reflected on the relatively low annual average daily traffic (AADT) counts on many of its roads. Lankford Highway/ U.S. Route 13 is the heaviest trafficked road in Northampton, with AADT counts approaching 20,000 in some stretches and all stretches having more than 10,000 AADT. The AADT counts drop considerably on other roads in the county, with the next highest AADT road being Stone Road traveling from Heritage Acres Ct. in Cape Charles to US 13 South of Bayview. Traffic along Lankford Highway/U.S. Route 13 is generally manageable but must be continually assessed to ensure efficient and effective future usage.

| Road Classification | Route Label | Route Alias | Start Label | End Label | Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) 2019 |
|----------------------------|-------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <i>Principal Arterials</i> | | | | | |
| | US 13 | Lankford Highway | US 13 Bus Exmore; 65-687 | Accomack County Line | 18000 |
| | US 13 | Lankford Highway | SR 183 Exmore | SR 178 Belle Haven Rd | 17000 |
| | US 13 | Lankford Highway | Bus US 13 N of Cheriton | NCL Cheriton | 16000 |
| | US 13 | Lankford Highway | NCL Cheriton | Bus US 13 S of Eastville | 16000 |
| | US 13 | Lankford Highway Lankford Highway | 65-678 Pine Ave | NCL Nassawadox | 16000 |
| | US 13 | Lankford Highway | NCL Nassawadox | Bus US 13 S of Exmore | 16000 |
| | US 13 | Lankford Highway | Bus US 13 S of Exmore | SCL Exmore | 16000 |
| | US 13 | Lankford Highway | SCL Exmore | SR 183 Exmore | 16000 |
| | US 13 | Lankford Highway | Bus US 13 S of Cheriton | SWCL Cheriton | 15000 |
| | US 13 | Lankford Highway | SWCL Cheriton | S Mid CL Cheriton | 15000 |
| | US 13 | Lankford Highway | S Mid CL Cheriton | N Mid CL Cheriton | 15000 |
| | US 13 | Lankford Highway | N Mid CL Cheriton | Bus US 13 N of Cheriton | 15000 |
| | US 13 | Lankford Highway | Bus US 13 N of Eastville | 65-628 James Allen Dr | 15000 |
| | US 13 | Lankford Highway | 65-628 James Allen Dr | 65-620 Birdsnest Dr | 15000 |
| | US 13 | Lankford Highway | 65-620 Birdsnest Dr | SCL Nassawadox | 15000 |
| | US 13 | Lankford Highway | SCL Nassawadox | 65-678 Pine Ave | 15000 |
| | US 13 | Lankford Highway | SR 178 Belle Haven Rd | NCL Exmore | 15000 |
| | US 13 | Lankford Highway | NCL Exmore | Bus US 13 Exmore; 65-687 | 15000 |

| Road Classification | Route Label | Route Alias | Start Label | End Label | Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) 2019 |
|-------------------------|-------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| | US 13 | Lankford Highway | 65-624 Capeville Dr | Bus US 13 S of Cheriton | 14000 |
| | US 13 | Lankford Highway | Bus US 13 S of Eastville | SCL Eastville | 14000 |
| | US 13 | Lankford Highway | SCL Eastville | NCL Eastville | 14000 |
| | US 13 | Lankford Highway | NCL Eastville | Bus US 13 N of Eastville | 14000 |
| | US 13 | Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel | NCL Virginia Beach | 65-600 Seaside Rd | 11000 |
| | US 13 | Lankford Highway | 65-600 Seaside Rd | 65-624 Capeville Dr | 11000 |
| Minor Arterials | | | | | |
| | VA 184 | Stone Road | Heritage Acres Ct | ECL Cape Charles | 5500 |
| | VA 184 | Stone Road | ECL Cape Charles | US 13 South of Bayview | 5500 |
| Major Collectors | | | | | |
| | VA 178 | Belle Haven Road | US 13 Lankford Highway | SCL Belle Haven | 3300 |
| | VA 178 | Belle Haven Road | NCL Exmore | Accomack County Line | 3300 |
| | Bus US 13 | Lincoln Ave | NCL Exmore | US 13 N of Exmore | 2600 |
| | 65-639 | Sunnyside Road | Bus US 13 | 65-638 Mill St | 1900 |
| Minor Collectors | | | | | |
| | 65-600 | Seaside Drive | 65-604 Oakland Dr | Accomack County Line | 920 |
| | 65-630 | Cherrydale Drive | US Lankford Highway | 65-600 Seaside Rd | 200 |

Safety

Any consideration of a community's mobility network requires an analysis of safety for vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists. In 2019, Northampton County had a total of 215 reported crashes, with one incident involving a pedestrian and one crash resulting in a fatality. While many of the crashes are dispersed throughout the county, there are several areas that have experienced multiple crashes.

High Traffic Crashes

- Lankford Highway/U.S. Route 13: A majority of crashes in Northampton County occurred along Lankford Highway/U.S. Route 13. Of the 215 crashes reported in 2019, 161 (74.88%) were along this road.
- Stone Rd.: Nine crashes occurred along Stone Rd in 2019, though no injuries were reported.
- Seaside Rd: Eight crashes were reported on Seaside Rd in 2019.
- Bayside Rd and Occohannock Rd: Seven crashes were reported on both Bayside Rd and Occohannock Rd in 2019.

Pedestrian Crashes

- One (1) crash involved a pedestrian in 2019. This incident occurred on the intersection of Lankford Highway/U.S. Route 13 and Rogers Drive. Speed was a related factor in this incident.

Marine Transportation

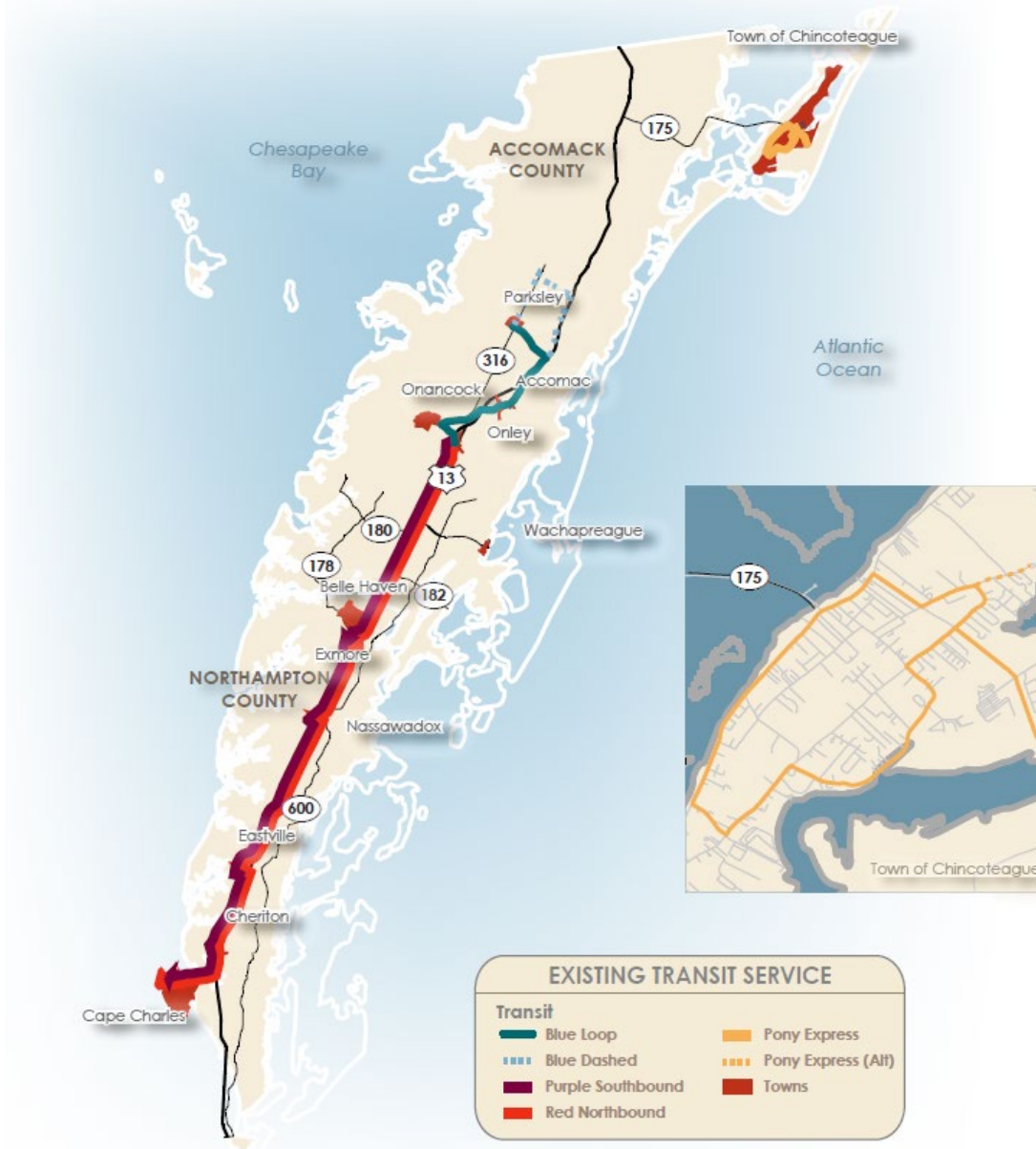
Navigable waterways are a vital aspect of life in Northampton County. Northampton residents and visitors enjoy access to the water by harbors, marinas, boat ramps, and water access trails. The Regional Navigable Waterways Committee works to ensure the safety and continued navigability of the entire Eastern Shore by working with the United States Coast Guard, United States Army Corps of Engineers, the Virginia Marine Resources Commission, and the Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission.

On the bayside of the county, waters can be accessed by the Cape Charles Harbor, King's Creek, Kiptopeke State Park Boat Ramp, Nassawadox Creek, and Occohannock Creek. On the seaside of the county, Oyster Harbor, Red Bank Boat Ramp, Willis Wharf Harbor, Wise Point Boat Ramp, and the Seaside Water Trail provide access to the water.

Public Transportation

Northampton County is served by Star Transit, a local fixed route bus service that also serves Accomack County. Star Transit has six routes with fixed stops, with several stops that require passengers to call in advance or flag down the bus. Star Transit also offers an ADA Route Deviation Service that must be scheduled 24 hours in advance. All Star Transit buses come equipped with bicycle racks for passenger accessibility.

Two nonprofit organizations also provide transportation services on the Eastern Shore: Eastern Shore Area Agency on Aging and Eastern Shore Community Services Board. The Eastern Shore Area Agency on Aging provides clients with transportation to senior centers while the Eastern Shore Community Services Board offers transportation services to clients to therapy sessions and medication management appointments. These services must be scheduled with the organization and include travel to and from the organization.



Source: 2035 Regional Long-Range Transportation Plan

Pedestrian and Bike Facilities

Northampton County's relatively flat terrain welcomes the use of pedestrian and bicycle facilities for transportation and recreational needs. Northampton County residents enjoy walking and biking throughout the county's beautiful natural settings, towns, and villages. The following table inventories the total miles of sidewalks in Northampton County and its towns. Category 1 sidewalks are considered fully ADA compliant, Category 2 sidewalks are considered functional but not ADA-compliant, and Category 3 sidewalks are considered non-functional under ADA rules. Category 4 is reserved for crosswalks.

| Location | Total Miles Inventoried | Total Miles Category 1 | | Total Miles Category 2 | | Total Miles Category 3 | | Total Miles Category 4 |
|--------------|-------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|
| | | Total Sidewalk Miles | % of total In Jurisdiction | Total Sidewalk Miles | % of total In Jurisdiction | Total Sidewalk Miles | % of total In Jurisdiction | Number |
| Northampton | 27.59 | 2.68 | 10% | 17.98 | 65% | 7.06 | 26% | 0.09 |
| Cape Charles | 15.1 | 1.96 | 13% | 11.04 | 73% | 2.03 | 13% | 0.07 |
| Cheriton | 3.04 | 0 | 0% | 1.33 | 44% | 1.71 | 56% | 0 |
| Eastville | 1.77 | 0.03 | 2% | 0.9 | 53% | 0.8 | 45% | 0.01 |
| Exmore | 3.24 | 0.68 | 21% | 1.44 | 44% | 1.12 | 35% | 0 |
| Franktown | 1.15 | 0 | 0 | 0.7 | 61% | 0.45 | 39% | 0 |
| Nassawadox | 3.29 | 0 | 0 | 2.53 | 77% | 0.76 | 23% | 0 |

The 2014 update to the Eastern Shore Bike Plan provided an updated bicycle inventory, found in the table below. This plan also identified deficiencies and barriers in the bicycle network across the Eastern Shore and includes proposed bicycle facilities for each locality. Some of the identified deficiencies and barriers include connections between homes, workplaces, and amenities including recreation centers, schools, and shopping destinations. Few off-road and shared-use paths for inexperienced bikers, narrow rural road with unpaved shoulders, hostile motorists unwilling to share the road, lack of shoulder maintenance, and lack of sufficient right-of-way on older streets were also identified as barriers.

| Route | Facility Type | AADT | Posted Speed | Road Width |
|---|-----------------|-------|--------------|------------|
| Business Rt. 13 in Exmore | Wide Lanes | 2,500 | 25/55 | 30 ft. |
| Business Rt. 13 in Eastville | Wide Lanes | 1,700 | 25/55 | 30 ft. |
| Business Rt. 13 in Cheriton | Wide Lanes | 2,300 | 25/55 | 30 ft. |
| Rt. 184 (Stone Road) from Cape Charles to Business Rt. 13 North | Wide Lanes | 3,900 | 25/55 | 30 ft. |
| Rt. 704 (Kiptopeke Drive), Kiptopeke State Park Entrance Road | Bicycle Lanes | 240 | 25 | 48 ft. |
| Southern Tip Bicycle and Hiking Path | Shared Use Path | N/a | N/a | 14 ft. |

Trails

Northampton County residents and visitors can access the natural beauty of the county, Chesapeake Bay, and the Atlantic Ocean through walking trails. Several trails are accessible, including bayside trails found at Savage Neck Dunes, Indiantown Park, and Kiptopeke State Park and seaside trails at the Eastern Shore of Virginia National Wildlife Refuge and the William B. Cummings Birding and Wildlife Trail. Other trails include Cape Charles Natural Area Preserve, Magothy Bay Natural Area Preserve, Northampton County Preserve, and The Nature Conservancy Horse Island Trail.

In May of 2019, Phase II of the Southern Tip Bike and Hike Trail added an additional 2.4 miles to the existing 2.6 miles of trail. This paved path carries cyclists and walkers from the Eastern Shore of Virginia National Wildlife Refuge to the recently completed trail head near Capeville Road.

In December of 2019, the Accomack and Northampton Boards of Supervisors passed supporting resolutions to convert and develop nearly 50 miles of railroad right-of-way from Cape Charles to Hallwood for a rail-to-trail project. The Bay Coast Railroad (formerly known as the Eastern Shore Railroad) terminated all operations on the only railway in Northampton County in April 2018. Originally built and operated by The Pennsylvania Railroad in 1884, the railway helped the county prosper for generations. However, as of November 2019, the federal Surface Transportation Board officially approved the discontinuance and abandonment of all the railroad segment in Northampton County.

The abandoned railroad corridor which spans 50 miles through Northampton and Accomack counties has been proposed to be converted into a shared use path. VDOT initiated the Eastern Shore Rail to Trail study in January 2020 and is expected to complete the study in late fall of 2020. The study is evaluating the existing conditions, cost estimates, and alignment options. The proposed path would run from the Town of Cape Charles north to the Town of Hallwood in Accomack County.

Abandoned Rail Right-of-Way



Airports

The nearest commercial airfields to the Eastern Shore area are Norfolk International Airport and Salisbury-Ocean City Wilcomico Regional Airport in Maryland. Campbell Field can also be found in Northampton County; Accomack County Airport in nearby Melfa, Virginia; and other additional private airstrips exist on the Eastern Shore.

Port Facilities

Northampton County currently has nine different boat ramps for recreation and commercial use. Boat ramp sites are located on both the bayside and the seaside of the county. Many of these boating access sites are used extensively by fishing and shellfish harvesting businesses in addition to commercial fishing and recreational vessels. Morley's Wharf, Oyster, and Willis Wharf are owned by Northampton County. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service owns and operates the Wise Point Ramp, the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries owns the Red Bank boat ramp, and the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation operates a boat ramp in Kiptopeke State Park. The two largest marinas in the county are in Cape Charles and includes the town's harbor and the private Oyster Farm Marina (previously known as Kings Creek Marina).

The Town of Cape Charles Harbor, along with portions of Cherrystone Creek channels, are federally maintained as a deep-water port. It is also a US port of entry. It currently serves industries such as Coastal Precast Systems, Cape Charles yacht center and is a commercial fishing port. It also has US Coast Guard Station Cape Charles. With its 18-foot maintained depth and available land to the south and north, there is opportunity for economic growth with skilled labor positions. The county also has several other smaller port facilities and docks that are used for commercial uses as noted by the U.S. Department of Transportation in the National Transportation Atlas Database.

Boat Access and Port Facilities



Northampton County Budget

Expenses and Revenues

Northampton’s budget creates a financial plan that reflects the priorities established by the Board of Supervisors. The County publicizes budget data on an annual basis. As reported in the FY20 budget, general fund revenues and expenditures have both risen since 2017. The net grand total revenues and expenditures have also increased since 2017, as seen in the Revenues and Expenditures over Time table below. The County remains fiscally sound with revenues continuing to exceed expenditures.

The 2019 Revenues and 2019 Expenditure tables provide the County’s general fund revenues and expenditures for 2019. The majority of Northampton’s revenues come from general property taxes, while other major sources of revenue come from other local taxes, charges for service, and shared expenses. Transfers out, which are funds transferred from the County’s general fund to other County funds, is the largest general fund expenditure. These transfers include the school operating fund, social services fund, debt services, and other uses as seen in 2019 General Fund Transfers table.

Like all local governments in Virginia, Northampton County’s ability to finance operations is tied to County’s taxable land value. It is of utmost importance that property tax collection is done accurately and timely to ensure the continued financial success of the County. Due to the Coronavirus pandemic of 2020, Northampton’s projected budget growth may be lower than previously expected prior to the pandemic.

| Revenues and Expenditures Over Time | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | Year | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 |
| Revenues | Amount | \$24,689,239 | \$25,359,508 | \$25,763,594 | \$26,557,824 | \$28,863,790 |
| | % change | -- | 2.71% | 1.59% | 3.08% | 8.68% |
| Expenses | Amount | \$24,796,983 | \$26,158,548 | \$25,789,732 | \$26,936,653 | \$27,843,623 |
| | % change | -- | 5.5% | -1.4% | 4.44% | 3.37% |
| Net Grand Total (Revenues) | Amount | \$54,818,447 | \$55,180,003 | \$56,006,698 | \$57,653,299 | \$60,463,782 |
| | % change | -- | 0.66% | 1.50% | 2.94% | 4.9% |
| Net Grand Total (Expenditures) | Amount | \$42,334,663 | \$42,255,641 | \$42,126,737 | \$43,458,553 | \$46,274,524 |
| | % change | -- | -0.19% | -0.03% | 3.16% | 6.48% |

| 2019 General Fund Revenues | |
|--|---------------|
| Type | 2019 Revenues |
| General Property Taxes | \$18,420,145 |
| Other Local Taxes | \$3,568,690 |
| Permits, Privilege Fees & Reg Licenses | \$155,800 |
| Fines & Forfeitures | \$760,000 |
| Use of Money & Property | \$16,522 |
| Charges for Service | \$1,198,456 |
| Miscellaneous | \$6,500 |
| Recovered Costs | \$120,958 |
| Payments in Lieu of Taxes | \$33,129 |
| Non-Categorical | \$1,483,958 |
| Shared Expenses | \$1,597,243 |
| Categorical Aid | \$117,797 |
| Other Financing Sources | \$88,532 |
| Appropriated Fund Balance | \$566,916 |

| 2019 General Fund Expenditures | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|
| Type | 2019 Expenditure |
| General Government Administration | \$2,244,853 |
| Judicial Administration | \$673,490 |
| Public Safety | \$5,670,801 |
| Public Works | \$2,716,342 |
| Health & Welfare | \$629,032 |
| Education | \$20,723 |
| Parks, Recreation & Culture | \$425,609 |
| Community Development | \$1,135,264 |
| Insurance | \$147,115 |
| Transfers Out | \$14,180,393 |
| Debt Service | -- |
| Contingency | -- |

| 2019 General Fund Transfers | |
|-----------------------------|-------------|
| Transfers Out | 2019 Amount |
| School Operating | \$8,821,813 |
| Social Services | \$518,169 |
| ESRJ Operating Fund | \$1,845,379 |
| NC Tourism Comm Capital | \$52,500 |
| School Debt Service | \$344,732 |
| General Debt Service | \$2,597,798 |
| Capital Reserve Fund | \$0 |
| Parks & Rec Capital Fund | \$0 |



Appendices

Appendix B - Glossary

The following terms and definitions are provided to assist in the understanding and interpretation of the Comprehensive Plan. These terms and definitions are not intended to modify or supersede those provided in the Northampton County zoning ordinance, subdivision ordinance, or other regulatory document.

Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU): A separate, complete housekeeping unit with a separate entrance, kitchen, sleeping area, and full bathroom facilities, which is an attached or detached extension to an existing single-family structure.

Access Management: Systematic control of the location, spacing, design, and operation of driveways, median openings, interchanges, and street connections to a roadway.

Affordable Housing: Housing where the occupant is paying no more than thirty (30) percent of gross income for gross housing costs, including utility costs.

Alternative Wastewater System: A system for treatment and disposal of domestic wastewater which consists of a building sewer, a septic tank or other sewage treatment or storage unit, and a disposal facility or method which is not a conventional gravity system or conventional pressure distribution system.

American Community Survey: An ongoing survey conducted by the United States Census Bureau that provides vital information on a yearly basis about our nation and its people.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA): A civil rights law that prohibits discrimination based on disability.

Aquaculture: The hatching, raising, and breeding of fish or other aquatic plants or animals for sale or personal use.

Aquifer: A saturated geologic formation that will yield a sufficient quantity of water to serve as a private or public water supply. See also Sole-Source Multi-Aquifer System.

Aquifer, Sole Source: An aquifer that 1) supplies at least 50 percent of the drinking water for its service area and 2) there are no reasonably available alternative drinking water sources should the aquifer become contaminated.

Area Median Income (AMI): The household income for the median household in a defined geographical area. The AMI is determined and published annually by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The local AMI list is used to determine individuals' and families' qualifications for various federal and state assistance programs, including affordable housing programs.

Average Daily Traffic Volume (ADT): The average number of vehicles passing a specific point during a 24-hour period.

Boat Slip: A space designed for the mooring of a single watercraft. Such spaces may extend from a dock or shoreline but shall not be allowed to project from a pier.

Buffer: An area of land established to separate land uses, or a natural area designated to intercept pollutants and manage other environmental concerns or provide for open space.

Best Management Practices (BMP): Structural, vegetative, or managerial practices (e.g., schedules of activities, prohibitions of practices, including both structural and nonstructural practices, maintenance procedures, and other management practices) to prevent or reduce the pollution of surface waters and groundwater systems from the impacts of land-disturbing activities.

Capital Improvement Plan (CIP): A community planning and fiscal management tool used to coordinate the location, timing, and financing of infrastructure projects, land acquisition, major studies, equipment purchases, and capital improvements over a multi-year period.

Centers: Anchors of the community where services and amenities for the surrounding neighborhoods may be clustered.

Certified Local Government (CLG): A program administered by the National Park Service (NPS) and the State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs) to link federal, state, and local government in the identification, evaluation, and protection of historic properties.

Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act (Bay Act): Enacted by the Virginia General Assembly in 1988 as an element of Virginia's non-point source management program focusing on land use planning and land management to affect a positive impact on the water quality in the Chesapeake Bay and other waters of the State.

Cluster Development: A design concept that attempts to achieve balance between growth and preservation by grouping residential and/or commercial uses together in a suburban setting and preserving other rural settings.

Conservation Design: Controlled-growth land use that allows limited sustainable development while protecting the area's natural environmental features, including preserving open space, farmland, mature trees and forests, water resources, coastal zones, and wildlife habitats, and maintaining the character of rural communities.

Cost Burden: Paying more than 30% of the household income on housing costs, according to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

County Budget: Establishes the plan of revenue and expense activities for the fiscal year and provides a coordinated financial program to attain the County's goals and objectives, including those identified in the Comprehensive Plan.

County Code of Ordinances: The collection of laws passed by a local governing body.

Comprehensive Plan: A long-range planning document that serves as a guide for the development of a locality.

Conservation Easement: A property interest or right granted by the landowner to a land trust to maintain in a natural state or limit the use of that land to preserve the historical, architectural, archaeological, or cultural aspects of real property. A property interest or right granted by the landowner to a land trust to maintain in a natural state or limit the use of that land.

Corridors: Corridors are important local and regional travel routes connecting major and commercial destinations. These areas strongly influence the City's accessibility, attractiveness, and economic vitality. Civic corridors are intended to be regional connectors, while neighborhood corridors are intended to connect residential areas to centers and commercial areas. Improving the conditions, character, and quality of these corridors is a primary planning focus.

Density: The average number of dwelling units per gross acre of land on a development site, including all land within the land within the boundaries of the site for which the density is calculated.

Economic Development Administration (EDA): The U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) is an agency in the United States Department of Commerce that provides grants and technical assistance to communities in order to generate new employment, help retain existing jobs and stimulate industrial and commercial growth through a variety of investment programs.

Economic Development of Authority of Northampton County: The Economic Development Authority of Northampton County and Towns, formerly known as the Joint Industrial Development Authority of Northampton County, was created to enhance and promote industrial and commercial development in Northampton County. Typical duties include assembling land, raising funding for infrastructure construction, administering design and construction, managing property, administering industrial revenue bond financing for qualified applicants, supporting recruitment and development of corporate tenants, coordinating development of incentives, and facilitating coordinated unified development activities of County and participating towns.

Ecosystem: A biological community of interacting organisms and their physical environment.

Enterprise Zone: A special economic area identified through a partnership between the state and local government, where companies can locate free of certain local, state, and federal taxes and restrictions. These areas are intended to encourage job creation and private investment in deprived neighborhoods.

Environmental Justice: The fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.

Easement, Conservation: A non-possessory interest of a holder in real property imposing limitations or affirmative obligations for conservation purposes or to preserve the historical, architectural, archaeological, or cultural aspects of real property.

Floodplain: A relatively flat or low land area adjoining a river, stream, or watercourse which is subject to partial or complete inundation; or, an area subject to the unusual and rapid accumulation of run-off or surface waters from any source.

Gateways: Gateways are key places of transition where the regional road network enters the County or meets the Towns. These gateways serve as the community's front door, establishing first impressions and reinforcing perceptions of the City. Planning strategies should prioritize improving the image and attractiveness of these gateways.

Geographic Information Systems (GIS): A means of producing, analyzing, and storing computerized maps data.

Green Infrastructure: Natural and nature-based assets including sites (parks, sports fields, playgrounds, nature reserves, forests, community gardens, cemeteries), linkages between sites (sidewalks, bike lanes, and trails), and waterways (streams, rivers, and wetlands). Constructed green infrastructure features blend in with natural assets in a synergistic manner to survive and rebound from the impacts of natural and human-induced hazards.

Ground-Water Recharge Area: An area where the hydrologic process of surface water moving downward into groundwater occurs.

Heavy Commercial: Uses that include any of the following on-site attributes: outdoor materials storage or sales; outdoor equipment storage, sales, or rental; outdoor motor vehicle storage, sales, or rental; indoor or outdoor heavy equipment or motor vehicle repair.

HUBZones: A United States Small Business Administration (SBA) program for small companies that operate and employ people in Historically Under-utilized Business Zones (HUBZones).

Impervious Surface: Any hard-surfaced, man-made area that does not readily absorb or retain water, including but not limited to building roofs, parking and driveway areas, graveled areas, sidewalks, and paved recreation areas.

Infill: The development of housing or other uses on vacant parcels or sites within already built-up areas.

Land Use Plan: A basic element of a comprehensive plan that designates the present and future location, form, class, and extent (size) within a planning jurisdiction for residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional use or reuse. The land use plan includes a map and a written description of the different land use areas or districts.

Low Impact Agriculture: Incorporating natural approaches to farming. Using ecosystem-based approaches and often requiring more knowledge and labor per acre than those based on chemical inputs. Utilization of natural pest management, crop rotation, and recycling water are principal practices.

Low Impact Commercial: Retail uses and personal services with minimal exterior impacts, to include small-scale uses such as beauty salons, convenience stores, drug stores, restaurants, and specialty shops.

Low Impact Development (LID): Systems and practices that use or mimic natural processes that result in the infiltration, evapotranspiration or use of stormwater in order to protect water quality and associated aquatic habitat. Often utilizing green infrastructure to preserve, restore, and create green space using soils, vegetation, and rainwater harvest techniques that work with nature to manage stormwater as close to its source as possible.

Marina: A facility for securing mooring of boats and may , including facilities for storage and repair of boats and sale of boating supplies and fuel, for use by the owner or resident of the lot, and those other than the owner or resident of the lot, upon which the facility is located.

Mixed Use: A building, development, or area that incorporates two or more uses such as, but not limited to, residential, retail, public, or entertainment. Vertical mixed-use developments incorporate a mix of uses within the same building, typically with uses on different floors. Horizontal mixed-use developments incorporate a mix of uses within adjacent buildings.

Open Space: An area or portion of land, either landscaped or essentially unimproved and which is used to meet human recreational or spatial needs, or to protect water, air, or plant areas.

Opportunity Areas: Represent key areas of focus for revitalization, infill, or redevelopment, or development.

Opportunity Zone (OZ): A federal economic development and community development tax benefit available to investors with capital gains designed to encourage long-term private investment in low-income census tracts. The designation is permanent until December 31, 2028.

Passive Recreation: Refers to non-consumptive recreation uses such as wildlife observation, walking, biking, and canoeing.

Pattern Areas. Areas of the County that share distinct characteristics by virtue of geographic location, built form, and/or types of use.

Pedestrian-Friendly Development: Pedestrian-friendly developments are designed with an emphasis primarily on the sidewalk and on pedestrian access to the site and building, rather than auto access and parking areas. A walkable environment The development should have all or some of these characteristics: well-maintained and continuous wide sidewalks, well-lit streets, high street connectivity, a safety barrier between pedestrians and motorized vehicles (such as trees, shrubs, street parking, green space between pedestrians and cars), minimal building setbacks, cleanliness, and land use patterns characterized as mixed-use.

Prime Agriculture Soils: A designation by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) for lands and soil that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops and that is available for these uses.

Redevelopment: The placement or reconstruction of buildings that are not making efficient and effective use of the land on which they are located, or located or are in substandard physical condition.

Seafood Industry: Any industry or activity, commercial or recreational, concerned with taking, culturing, processing, preserving, storing, transporting, marketing and/or selling seafood, both wild caught and aquaculture.

Secondary Six Year Plan (SSYP): A plan for road improvements that is updated annually by the Board of Supervisors and funded by the Virginia Department of Transportation.

Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP): Funding for public transportation facilities, commuter and public transportation programs, and all interstate and primary highway projects that are being studied, designed, and constructed throughout Virginia over six fiscal years.

SMART SCALE: The method used by the Virginia Department of Transportation to score planned projects included in VTrans that are funded by House Bill 1887. Transportation projects are scored based on an objective, outcome-based process that is transparent to the public and allows decision-makers to be held accountable to taxpayers.

Aquifer, Sole- Source Multi-Aquifer System: An aquifer that 1) supplies at least 50 percent of the drinking water for its service area and 2) there are no reasonably available alternative drinking water sources should the aquifer become contaminated. The Northampton system includes the confined upper, middle, and lower Yorktown-Eastover aquifers for drinking water and the unconfined Columbia aquifer which is closest to the surface and susceptible to contamination and penetration into the Yorktown-Eastover aquifers.

Statewide Planning System (SPS): A Virginia Department of Transportation data system design to organize transportation planning related data and information such as roadway geometric inventories, traffic volumes, capacity analyses, and traffic projections.

Streetscaping: Elements to improve the appearance and experience within a particular corridor or street, including traffic management, sidewalk conditions and materials, landscaping, street furniture (utility poles, benches, garbage cans, etc.), and signage.

Subdivision: The division of a parcel of land into three or more lots or parcels of less than five acres each for the purpose of transfer of ownership or building development, or, if a new street is involved in such a division, any division of a parcel of land.

Sustainable: Community use of natural resources in a way that does not jeopardize the ability of future generations to live and prosper.

Technology Zone: Local established zones encouraging the development of commercial and industrial businesses engaged in technological research, design, and manufacturing.

Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL): A regulatory term that identifies the maximum amount of a pollutant that a body of water can receive while still meeting water quality standards for that particular pollutant.

Traditional Neighborhood Development: Also known as 'new urbanism,' 'neo-traditional,' or 'village-style' development, this type of development typically includes principles such as pedestrian-friendly road design, interconnection of new local streets with existing local streets and roads, connectivity of road and pedestrian networks, preservation of natural areas, satisfaction of requirements for stormwater management, mixed-use neighborhoods, including mixed housing types, reduction of front and side yard building setbacks, and/or reduction of subdivision street widths and turning radii at subdivision street intersections.

Transfer of Development Rights: A legal covenant that protects the subject land in perpetuity from development by redirecting development to an area planned to accommodate development.

Thermal Inversions: A reversal of the normal behavior of temperature in the troposphere (the region of the atmosphere nearest the Earth's surface), in which a layer of cool air at the surface is overlain by a layer of warmer air. Under normal conditions air temperature usually decreases with height.

Pedestrian-Friendly Development: Pedestrian-friendly developments are designed with an emphasis primarily on the sidewalk and on pedestrian access to the site and building, rather than auto access and parking areas. A walkable environment should have all or some of these characteristics: well-maintained and continuous wide sidewalks, well-lit streets, high street connectivity, a safety barrier between pedestrians and motorized vehicles (such as trees, shrubs, street parking, green space between pedestrians and cars), minimal building setbacks, cleanliness, and land use patterns characterized as mixed-use.

Traffic Calming: Design and management strategies that aim to balance vehicular traffic on streets with other uses and users by incorporating design features to slow motor vehicles and improve the environment for pedestrians and cyclists.

Urban Development Area (UDA): An area designated by a locality that is appropriate for higher density development due to its proximity to transportation facilities, the availability of a public or community water and sewer system, or a developed area and, to the extent feasible, to be used for redevelopment or infill development.

VTrans: A long-range, statewide multimodal plan that lays out overarching vision and goals for transportation in Virginia. It identifies transportation investment priorities and provides direction to transportation agencies on strategies and programs to be incorporated into their plans and programs.

Wayfinding: A system of gateway signs, vehicular and/or pedestrian sign systems, or area-specific identification signs that help orient residents and visitors while promoting civic pride and enhancing community character.

Workforce Housing: Housing that is affordable for households earning between 60 and 120 percent of the area median income (AMI). This housing usually targets middle-income workers such as police officers, teachers, and health care workers.

Working Waterfront: An area or structure on, over, or adjacent to navigable bodies of water that provide access to the water and are used for water-dependent commercial, industrial, or government activities, including commercial fishing, recreational fishing, tourism, aquaculture, boat and ship building, boat and ship repair, boat and ship services, seafood processing, seafood sales, transportation, shipping, marine construction, military activities, and other water dependent uses.

Zoning Ordinance/Zoning Map: A zoning ordinance, along with a zoning map, controls land use by providing regulations and standards relating to the nature and extent of uses of land and structures. The zoning ordinances should be consistent with the comprehensive plan. The County's zoning ordinance divides Northampton County into eight zones and specifies allowed uses and dimensional requirements for each zone.



Appendices

Appendix C - Willis Wharf and Oyster Visions