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# I. Project Background

## A. Project Objectives

## B. Study Area

## C. Process

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## Project Objectives

The purpose of creating a Master Plan for growth along the Rt.17 corridor is to accommodate orderly, beneficial development that promotes public health, safety, convenience, comfort, and general welfare for the citizens of Isle of Wight County. More specifically, the Route 17 Master Plan should provide a sustainable, safe, and stimulating design framework to guide the location, form, and design of new development consistent with the Isle of Wight County Comprehensive Plan. In addition, the Master Plan should identify Bartlett as a key activity center, treat Carrollton Boulevard appropriately given its role as a major transportation corridor, and designate a mix of uses for a substantial portion of the study area. The Master Plan will be adopted into the existing County Comprehensive Plan upon completion.

### County Comprehensive Plan Principles

In addition to the specific direction regarding the Route 17 corridor provided by the County Comprehensive Plan, the plan also provides the following principles:

- Conserve natural resources, historic rural character and public funds by locating most new growth in Development Service Districts.
- Use infrastructure policy to focus growth in appropriate areas within Development Service Districts.
- Create activity centers within Development Service Districts to accommodate higher intensities and a true mix of uses.
- Create neighborhoods with a variety of housing types and prices.
- Design connective street systems and an extensive bike/pedestrian network.
- Accommodate cars but emphasize pedestrians.
- Ensure visual quality, architectural character, and local identity.
- Maintain and protect sensitive environmental areas and rural lands and open spaces.
- Allow opportunities for recreation and alternative transportation options.

### Purpose of the County Comprehensive Plan

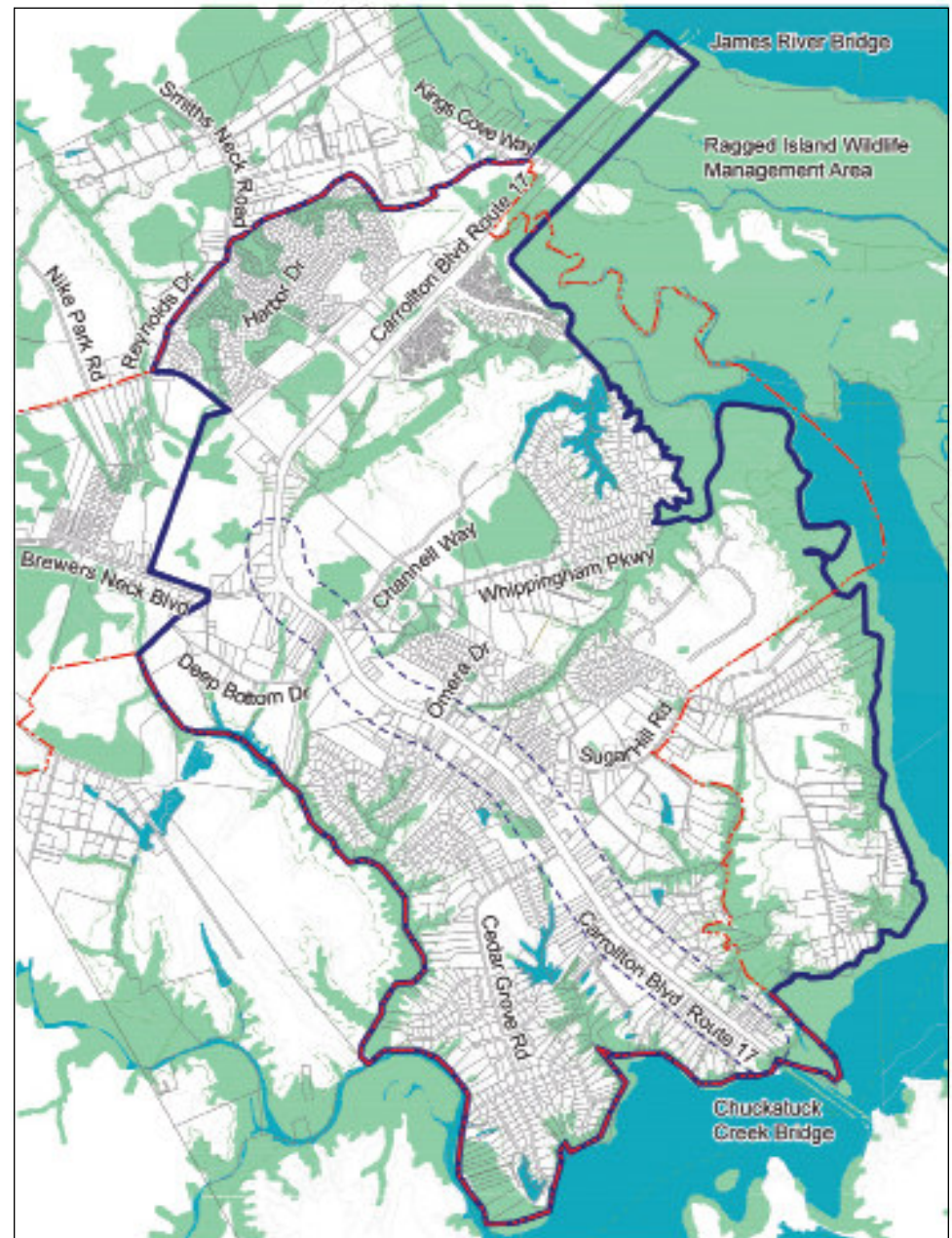
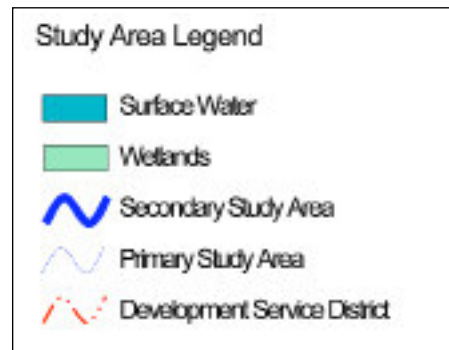
“The Plan is a general, long-range policy and implementation guide for decisions concerning the overall growth and development of the County. Although adopted as an official public document, the Comprehensive Plan is not a development and preservation ordinance. This plan serves as a catalyst and guide to the establishment of, or revisions to, other ordinances or planning tools, including the zoning and subdivision ordinances, the Capital Improvements Program, and area plans for various sections of the County. The Land Use Concept Plan Map, included with this Plan, serves to illustrate how and where the Plan’s policies and recommendations will be carried out. This mapped information is general in nature and not appropriate for determining the suitability of specific sites for any specific use.” – *Isle of Wight County Comprehensive Plan, 2001. Introduction, pg ii.*

## Study Area

Dating back to 1619, Isle of Wight County is one of the nation's oldest settlements. Throughout most of the County's past, growth has been gradual and slow and the County has remained predominately rural in character. In recent decades development within the County has increased in response to the development and expansion of the Hampton Roads region.

Carrollton Boulevard (Route 17) is a four-lane divided highway that traverses the northeastern corner of the County from the City of Suffolk and Chuckatuck Creek to the City of Newport News and the James River. Containing 4.9 miles, Route 17 serves to connect Southside Virginia and points south in North Carolina with the Lower and Middle Peninsula.

The boundaries of the primary and secondary study area are shown on the accompanying map. The primary study area is the corridor within 300 feet of the road, with focus on the segment between the intersections of Routes 32/258 and the Suffolk City line, and the secondary study area includes lands in proximity to and served by the road. Route 17 is a major regional transportation corridor, and it is the only major road serving the properties north and east of the highway and a portion of the properties south of the highway. The Primary and Secondary Study Areas are defined on the accompanying maps.



# Process



- Task 1:**  
Background Research & Analysis
- Task 2:**  
Charrette & Corridor Concept Plan
- Task 3:**  
Design Guidelines Workshop & Review
- Task 4:**  
Develop Master Plan & Design Guidelines
- Task 5:**  
Final Plan & Presentation

## Project Methodology

The approach used to prepare the Isle of Wight Route 17 Master Plan is a five-step process in which each step is logically sequenced to build upon the previous step. Each of the steps, represented by the primary tasks at right, included opportunities for public input.

## Process



*The Plan is based upon public input at each step of the planning process.*

### Public Process

The Plan is based upon public input garnered through meetings and web-based access at each step of the planning process:

- Background trip stakeholder meetings
- Public kick-off meeting discussion
- Charrette workshop participants plan development and review
- Concept Plan public presentation and discussion
- Concept Plan web availability and comment process
- Design Guidelines stakeholder and public workshops
- Design Principles web availability and comment process
- Draft Plan public presentation and discussion
- Draft Plan availability and comment process

A summary of the public input is provided as Appendix A.



## Process

### Corridor Planning Opportunities and Challenges

The citizens of Isle of Wight County who are dependent upon the Route 17 corridor expressed the following opportunities and challenges of living near and traveling along the corridor:

#### Opportunities

- Attract higher quality retail stores and development
- Use the plan to influence VDOT decisions
- Maintain a scenic corridor with native plantings screens
- Shift local traffic off Route 17 onto connected parallel roads
- Use design of development to create sustainable places
- Create mixed-use areas to live, work, and shop on foot
- Provide more predictability to the development approval process

#### Challenges

- Small residential lots in eastern part of corridor that are difficult to assemble and redevelop
- Lack of a strong identity or theme to build upon
- Buffer requirements between different land uses
- General Commercial zoning allows undesirable uses
- Identifying alternatives to individual retention ponds
- Housing affordability
- Large and unattractive signage



*Citizen input formed the foundation of the Route 17 Corridor Master Plan.*



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## II. Existing Conditions

**A. Existing Conditions Overview**

**B. Natural Resources**

**C. Roads**

**D. Site Access, Driveways and Parking**

**E. Public Facilities, Parks and Recreation, and Historic Resources**

## Existing Conditions Overview

Generally, the entire study area is dominated by Route 17 (Carrollton Boulevard), a major north-south highway serving the Hampton Roads region. Highway 258 / Route 32 (Brewer's Neck Boulevard) intersects with Route 17 at the Bartlett community. Along Route 17 are older, scattered commercial sites, most of which are on individual parcels directly accessing the road with their own driveways. There are also newer commercial uses, which typically take the form of conventional highway strip commercial centers with outparcels.

Residential neighborhoods, both old and new, tend to be set back from the highway and accessed by interior roads, although there are some older individual house lots that front directly on the highway. Other assorted uses include civic/institutional uses (churches, emergency service), mini-storage, auto repair and marine supply.

While much of the corridor north of the Bartlett intersection has already been developed, many vacant tracts remain along the southern portion; hence, the focus of the corridor plan is on the southern part.

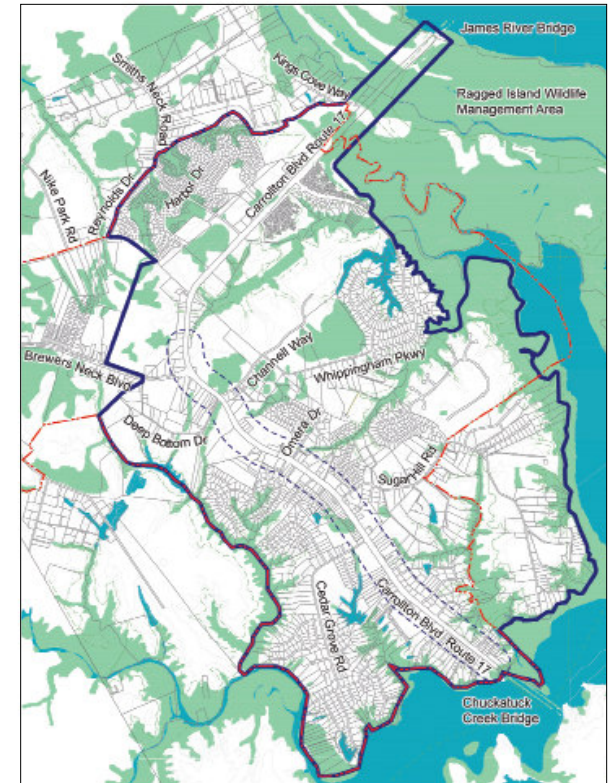
*A wide range of physical conditions exist in the study area: from large tracts of undeveloped land to strip commercial development and residential subdivisions.*



# Existing Conditions Overview



Land uses and physical conditions in the study area include commercial development and residential subdivisions. Travel on the corridor is regional as well as local.



# Natural Resources

## Waterways & Wetlands

Surface waters in the study area include streams passing through wooded, agricultural, and residential areas. Ditches and stormwater outflows feed into these streams, and thereby contribute any pollutants or sediments they may be carrying into surface waters.



*A typical mixed hardwood forest of beech, tulip poplar, oak, and maple, with understory vegetation of holly and bayberry.*

Extensive wetlands occur at the north end of the study area, much of which consists of salt marsh adjacent to the tidal James River. Freshwater wetlands also occur in various locations in the study area, either in stream corridors or as isolated wetlands.

Ultimately, streams in the study area flow into the James River, Chuckatuck Creek, and the greater Chesapeake Bay estuary. Thus, water quality in the study area and its tributaries is linked to the health of the Bay ecosystem, including its fisheries and recreational uses.

Prevalent soil types in the study area have less than optimal characteristics for septic systems and assimilation of waste, primarily because



*This ditch will carry roadside litter, as well as nutrient pollution from fertilizers, into streams and rivers and ultimately into the Chesapeake Bay.*



*Local fisheries are important to the Tidewater economy, and abundant fresh seafood is a hallmark of local culture and quality of life.*

of shallow depth to groundwater and high permeability. Failing septic systems do occur in some instances, which harm groundwater and surface waters by contributing harmful bacteria such as E. coli.

## Shorelines

The study area is surrounded on three sides by water, with expansive views over water at the north and south ends of Route 17. The shoreline provides opportunities for public and private access to the James River and Chuckatuck Creek. This can take the form of direct physical access to the water bodies for boating and swimming, access to shorelines for picnic sites, fishing, and the like, or simply waterfront views.

## Natural Resources

### Ragged Island WMA

The Ragged Island Wildlife Management Area, 1,537 acres of brackish marsh and small pine hummocks along the James River, is open to the public for canoeing, hunting, fishing, and wildlife viewing. Improvements include small parking areas adjacent to US 17, a boardwalk, short trails, and a viewing platform at the water's edge.

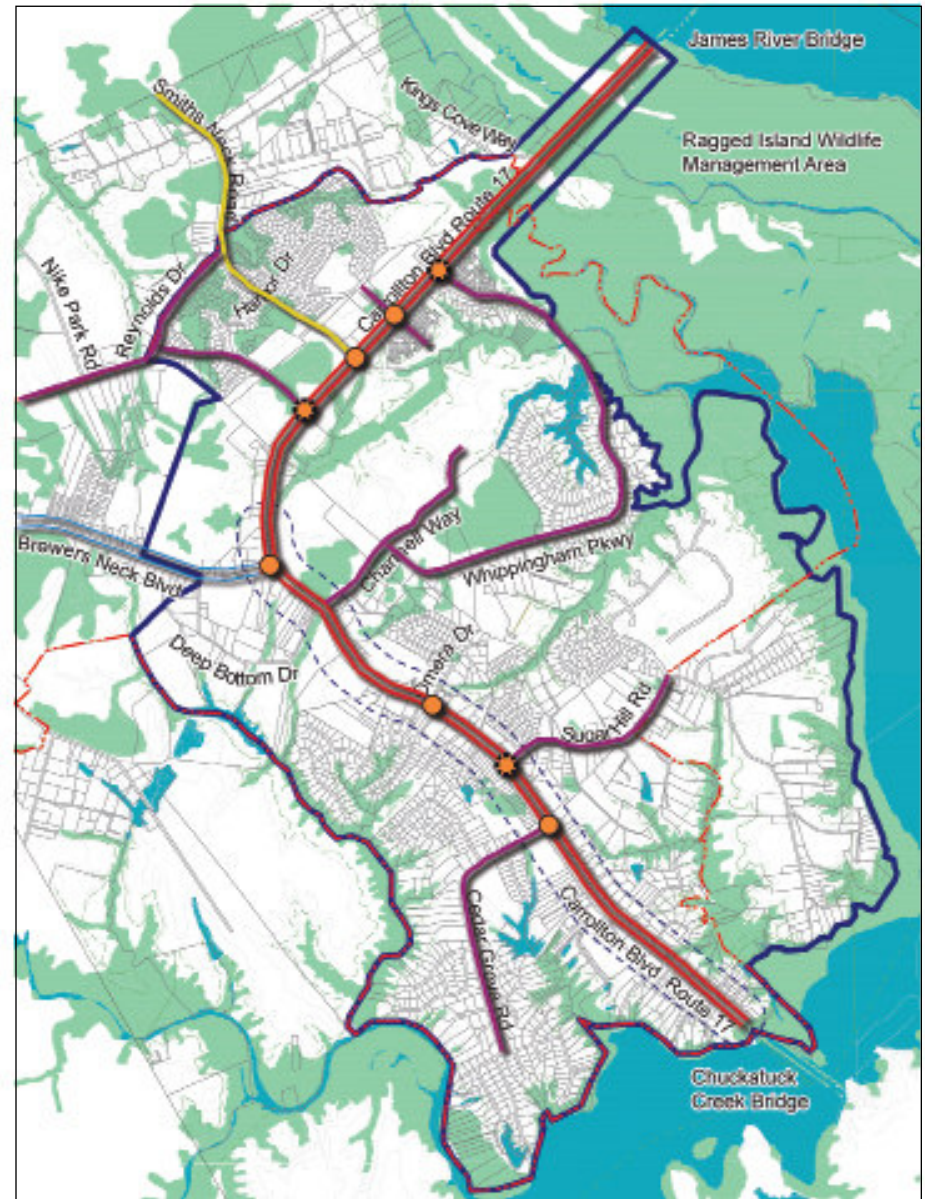
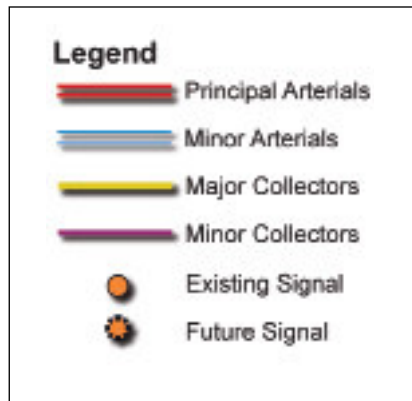


# Roads

## Route 17

US Route 17 is a principal arterial connecting Norfolk, Chesapeake and Suffolk to the east and south, across Chuckatuck Creek and the Nansemond River, with Newport News and Hampton to the north. It is a 4-lane divided roadway with no control of access, with a posted 55 MPH speed south of its intersection with Route 32/US 258 (Brewer's Neck Boulevard), dropping to 45 MPH north towards the James River where it reverts back to 55 MPH on the bridge. The reduced speed limit and resulting loss of mobility is due to the frequency of traffic signals, cross streets and driveways along this segment of highway. As new development occurs, access to Route 17 is limited to some extent to minimize additional points of conflict. However, access to individual residences, especially along the southern section of the corridor, are common, as these uses have existed for many years, no doubt including when the corridor was a 2-lane local road.

The primary function of Route 17 is to provide a regional high volume, high-speed connector between the Newport News/Hampton areas to the north, and Norfolk/Chesapeake/Suffolk areas to the south. Its minor function is to connect with collector streets which then provide access to adjacent residential and commercial developments and local streets. Current average daily traffic volumes on Route 17, north of Route 32 are approximately 30,000 vehicles per day, and south of Brewer's Neck Boulevard are approximately 15,000 vehicles per day.



Primary roads and signalized intersections

## Roads

### Route 17 / Route 32 (Brewer's Neck Road) Intersection

This existing “T” intersection connects major regional travel between Chesapeake, Newport News/Hampton, and Smithfield/Isle of Wight areas to the south and west. Route 17 has two through lanes per direction, and a single left-turn lane serving northbound Route 17 and eastbound Route 32 travel. As a high-volume, high-speed signalized intersection, crashes are a concern.

Current levels of service for Routes 17 and 32 were not calculated as part of this study. Observation indicates that some delay is experienced during peak hours but at levels considered acceptable by VDOT standards for such facilities.

Crash data for this intersection was not analyzed but the less complex operation of a three-leg T intersection tends to result in lower crash rates than for a conventional four-leg intersection.

### Roads and Major Driveways Intersecting with Route 17

The Primary roads and signalized intersections map depicts the current and anticipated future signalized intersections. Also shown, in addition to Brewer's Neck Boulevard, are the

other current principal cross streets providing access between Route 17 and adjacent uses. These include:

- Whippingham Parkway
- Eagle Point/Kings Crossing
- Smith's Neck Road
- Channel Way
- Sugar Hill Road
- Cedar Grove Road

Five of these intersecting streets (including Route 32) are signalized and three additional intersections or commercial entrances are in the planning or design stages. Based upon the extent of the development pattern north of the Route 32 intersection, it is reasonable to assume that the proposed signals will be implemented at Northgate (South of Smith's Neck) and at Whippingham Parkway. Much of the Route 17 corridor in this area has already been developed in a conventional suburban pattern – high intensity commercial land uses separated from low intensity residential areas, served by a poorly connected road system with all vehicle trips directed onto Route 17. This development pattern and traffic system induces the need for signal controlled intersections.



*Small building with direct access to route 17*



*Route 17 and 32 Intersection*

# Site Access, Driveways and Parking

Development is usually thought of in terms of buildings and other vertical elements, but “horizontal” features make up a substantial part of development conditions. Paved and vehicular use areas, in fact, often cover more land area than the buildings on a site.

The examples on this page show typical conditions in the study area for site access, driveways, and parking.



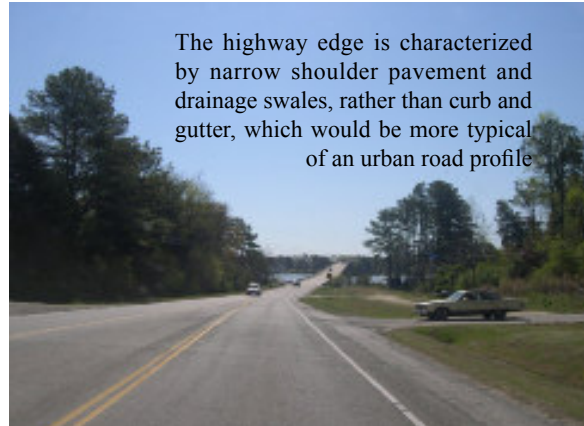
Gravel driveway without an apron to protect the road edge



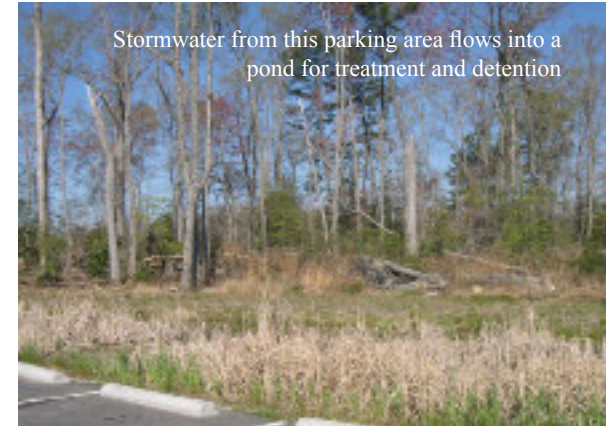
Multiple driveway access points serving one development site; gravel parking lot without delineated spaces or landscaping



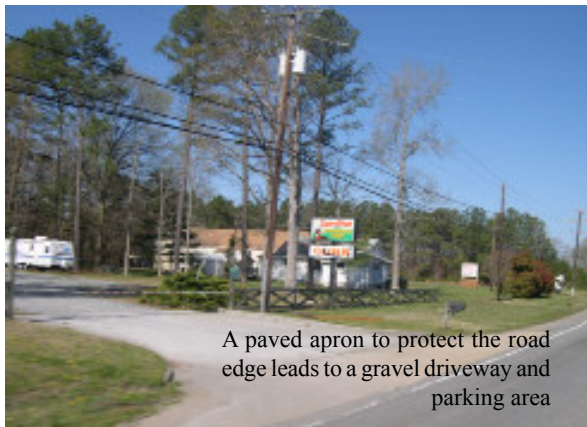
Ribbon pavement roads with swales on both sides



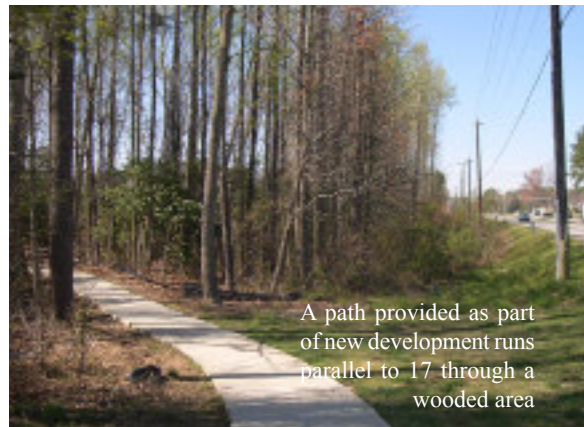
The highway edge is characterized by narrow shoulder pavement and drainage swales, rather than curb and gutter, which would be more typical of an urban road profile



Stormwater from this parking area flows into a pond for treatment and detention



A paved apron to protect the road edge leads to a gravel driveway and parking area



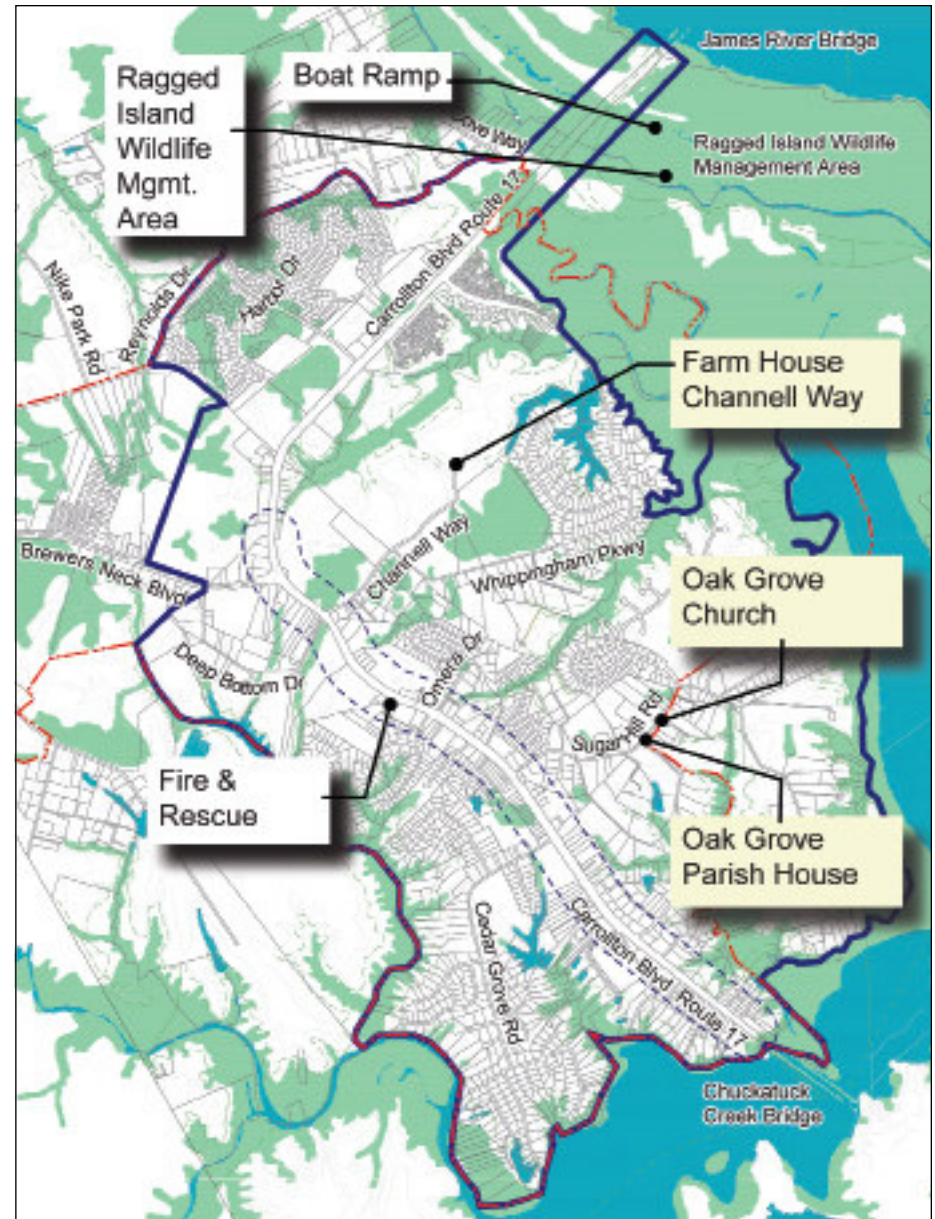
A path provided as part of new development runs parallel to 17 through a wooded area



Ribbon pavement roads with swales on both sides

## Public Facilities, Parks and Recreation, and Historic Resources

The study area contains certain features worth noting. There is an emergency services (fire and Emergency Medical Services) station on the west side of the southern leg of Route 17. The only park is the sizable Ragged Island Wildlife Management Area, where the land meets the James River to the north. There are also various historic sites noted on the map. Although not in the study area, a library and school (Carrollton Elementary) are situated a short distance to the west.



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### III. Market Report Summary

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# Market Report Summary

## Introduction

Isle of Wight is a county of 319 square miles located within the Hampton Roads (Norfolk-Virginia Beach-Newport News) Metropolitan Area. This metro area has over 1.5 million people and is comprised of diverse communities like Norfolk, Suffolk, Portsmouth, Chesapeake, and Virginia Beach (in addition to Isle of Wight); as well as Hampton, Newport News, Poquoson, and Williamsburg. These communities share a common history and a large federal government presence focused on the military. They are also linked geographically by a network of waterways and highways. However, they tend to operate independently with very little regional cooperative planning. In fact, the jurisdictions tend to compete for resources and establish planning and economic development policy without significant regional consultation.

Despite the County's efforts to manage growth, Isle of Wight's housing base has increased by over 10% in only four years (2000 to 2004), with the addition of 1,250 units or about 312 per year. The increase in housing units translates into growth in households and population. The county's population has increased at an even faster rate of 11.3% since 2000. Interestingly, however, population growth has been led by the "baby boom" generation or those generally aged between 40 and 60. This is evidenced by the declining percentage of families with children

(the population under age 5 represents just 5.7% of the total, compared with 7.6% in 1990), and confirmed based on information from housing brokers, realtors, and rental managers. Isle of Wight does not have a substantial rental housing market, with more than 80% of housing in owner-occupancy (compared with 65% nationally). The owner-occupancy rate is increasing, as it is nationally.

## Opportunities & Constraints

The following summarizes key market opportunities and constraints, based on field reconnaissance and analysis of existing data.

### *Housing*

Isle of Wight County offers a rural lifestyle and benefits from its strategic location proximate to employment and amenities in a large metropolitan area. As a result, there will continue to be market pressures for development of new housing in the county and in the study area. Rapid price escalations throughout Hampton Roads have only added to the pressures for affordable housing and land in Isle of Wight, while local policies have further restricted development. Thus, housing prices have increased dramatically and reduced opportunities for county residents to afford new housing. While interest rates may help alleviate some of this price pressure, there is a perceptible shift toward demand for more

rental housing. This may provide opportunities for mixed-use development including rental housing within the study area.

Isle of Wight offers a few housing options for those workers who earn less than necessary to support a mortgage at the region's \$260,000 average housing price. There are relatively few rental options in the county, with only 19.2% of housing in Isle of Wight County renter-occupied in 2000, versus a national average of 33.8% (according to the U.S. Census). Many renters live in mobile homes, such as those located in 100-lot Jones Creek Landing that rent for \$241 per month or sell for \$55,000.

There are a number of residential projects in various stages of development within Isle of Wight County. An inventory of these projects plus several other additions have a total of 3,400 planned units at full-build out. Of these, about 1,200 were sold as of 2007. Thus, there were another 2,200 units remaining in the planned inventory at that time. Based on this sample of new home projects, Isle of Wight County new homes range in list price from \$295,700 to \$504,200, for an average of \$395,950. Isle of Wight County's new construction housing is attracting mainly middle-age buyers (35 to 55) who can afford the prices.

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## Market Report Summary

### *Retail and office*

The growth of housing in the county will, by necessity, increase demand for retail and professional services space. The growth in demand for retail space to serve the local community has been estimated at 220,000 to 450,000 square feet, based on gross untested assumptions and in the absence of a competitive market analysis. Most of this demand is likely to be captured in already-planned retail development, but anything above 450,000 square feet would rely on a regional market base (meaning it exceeds the demand generated within the County and would be supported by inflow from other locations outside the County). Currently, in excess of 1.5 million square feet is planned (See the “Market Report Planned Retail Development and Implications” section in the Appendix for detail.) As such, regional retail development will generate inflow sales as well as traffic to Isle of Wight County from other parts of the Hampton Roads region.

If the County has an interest in promoting smaller, more community-based businesses and creative outlets (rather than corporate chains and franchises) that preserve the rural character of the area, then it will need to ensure

that new retail development does not infringe on these opportunities and that there is a proactive effort to create destination potential for the independent businesses. Efforts should also be made to avoid direct competition to existing businesses, by encouraging new business (or expansion of existing business) that diversifies and compliments the existing business mix. Modest growth in professional office space is possible. Office uses are likely to be best located in Smithfield or key nodes near new housing development (such as in the Bartlett-James River Bridge segment of Route 17).

While the region is increasingly positioned as a corporate and government office hub, Isle of Wight County is not likely to capture a significant share of that market but is competitive for back office and similar administrative functions in the near term. There will continue to be growing demand for professional office uses on a small scale that serve the local market. Some of the near-term demand will be captured by both the major office development at the proposed Benn’s Grant development as well as smaller professional office parks like those already under development.

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## IV. Public Policy Context

**A. Comprehensive Plan**

**B. Zoning Ordinance**

**C. Subdivision Ordinance**

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## Comprehensive Plan

A new Comprehensive Plan for Isle of Wight County was adopted in 1991 and updated in 2001. In general, the Comprehensive Plan is a high-quality document for ensuring good development in the County. It includes a strong growth management strategy that directs most development to three Development Service Districts (DSDs), where public infrastructure (including roads, water, and sewer service) is either available or planned. Development within each DSD is further subcategorized into land use planning districts for commercial, office, suburban estate, suburban residential, urban residential, and mixed use development. Particularly in the higher-intensity categories, good community design is emphasized to ensure visual quality and compatibility.

One chapter in particular (Chapter 4, Growth Management) lays out the basic philosophy for accommodating growth in the County. It envisions compact development nodes that limit the incursion of sprawl into the County's rural areas, and help to prevent the rural landscape from being replaced with a suburban one. The chapter states the advantages of locating compact development in designated service areas: it reduces per-unit costs of infrastructure and public services (roads, water, sewer, EMS/public safety, and solid waste); it reduces harm to the natural environment, primarily by reducing the amount of land converted to

development and thereby reducing soil erosion, stormwater impacts, wetlands loss, and habitat loss; and it protects community character by preventing the loss of scenic vistas to suburban sprawl. Compact development also allows traditional rural activities, such as agriculture and hunting, to continue; these activities are incompatible with suburban development.



*Farm field east of Route 17*

The Growth Management chapter recognizes that a key issue in promoting compact development is good community design and form. With good site design, environmental protection standards, and building character, denser development is more harmonious and compatible. To achieve these characteristics, traditional neighborhood design (TND) concepts are emphasized. These concepts include small front yards, a well-defined streetscape,

mixing of land uses, interconnected streets, good pedestrian circulation, intensively used open space, and good architectural character. While all of these design elements are typically associated with urban areas, they are important for Isle of Wight as a rural county because they help promote the success of compact efficient development in selected, limited development areas, resulting in preservation of the larger, rural landscape.

The Newport DSD, which is one of the designated accommodation zones for this compact, efficient growth, is largely co-incident with the study area for the Route 17 Corridor Plan. As in the other DSDs, there are six subcategories for land use in the Newport DSD:

- Conservation Development areas
- Suburban Estate Residential areas
- Suburban Residential areas
- Mixed Use Activity areas
- Business and Employment areas
- Resource Protection Areas

In addition to these area designations, the Newport Overlay District is identified as a special area of concern for architectural and aesthetic controls, access, and buffering requirements along major highway routes, including Routes 17 and 258/32.

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## Comprehensive Plan

Planning considerations for the Newport DSD are outlined in the Comprehensive Plan. These call for development regulations to be revised to include performance standards for landscaping, access control, lot coverage, and buffering from transportation corridors. Strip commercial development is to be discouraged, because of its harmful effects on visual character and road function. Areas for commercial development are intended to be at least 10-15 acres so that they are large enough to accommodate several uses with shared access, as well as landscaping, parking, and internal roads. Parking should be located behind commercial and office buildings instead of being visible from roads. Residential development should be clustered and buffered from roads.

*A TND under construction*



In addition to these considerations, the Comprehensive Plan's goals for the DSD also emphasize TND patterns for development in the Mixed-Use Activity centers. The characteristics of TND are seen as those found in older market towns (the Plan mentions Smithfield as a good example), and they include:

- Mix of land uses
- Grid / interconnected street patterns
- Design emphasis on pedestrian circulation
- Intensively used open spaces, often including a “village green” to define a village center
- Clearly defined streetscape created by smaller front yards on narrow lots to create a sense of enclosure
- Architectural character reflecting patterns of the late 19<sup>th</sup>-early 20<sup>th</sup> century

As the primary tool for accomplishing development in Mixed-Use Activity centers, the Comprehensive Plan suggests the use of Planned Development zoning. It states that development proffers should provide substantial public benefits and demonstrate consistency with Plan objectives. This approach, as outlined, would create performance standards such as those described above, and allow flexibility in design and layout in exchange for conditional approval

based on those designs. The Plan states that, in addition to its use in Mixed-Use Activity Centers, Planned Development zoning could also be considered for use elsewhere within the DSD, to achieve other public benefits listed in the plan – such as highway improvements, affordable housing, parks, or provision of sites for schools or other community facilities – as part of the development approval process in exchange for higher densities.

Implementation of the Comprehensive Plan is being carried out on multiple fronts. The zoning ordinance was updated recently (2005) as an implementation tool for carrying out the goals of the Comprehensive Plan; the subdivision ordinance will also be updated, although this task has not been completed yet. The Comprehensive Plan also calls for follow-up planning efforts to determine how development within the Newport DSD (and the other two DSDs) will be located and distributed by type and amount to ensure efficiency and cost-effectiveness, thereby limiting sprawl and its effects. The Route 17 corridor planning effort was undertaken to implement this call for a more focused look at the area.

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## Zoning Ordinance

The County has a new zoning ordinance that was adopted in 2005 in support of the recent Comprehensive Plan. Overall, the ordinance is a quality document that includes many features for ensuring the quality of new development. It is a use-based zoning approach that is similar in many respects to other ordinances in widespread use.

There are a number of requirements in the ordinance that are inconsistent with desired outcomes stated in the Comprehensive Plan, by County residents, and goals of the Route 17 Corridor Master Plan. Revisions to the ordinance would make it a better tool to achieve those goals, and in some cases the ordinance is actually a barrier to those objectives. The following text describes such instances, as well as the types of revisions that would be needed to implement objectives of this Master Plan, and in many cases the Comprehensive Plan as well.

**Allowable uses.** The zoning ordinance contains a wide range of allowable uses. The County may wish to allow accessory dwelling units (dwelling units that are subordinate to the primary residence on a single-family lot) in the higher-density zoning districts. A condition that these units may only be leased when the primary property is owner-occupied will ensure compatibility while addressing the County's

increasing need for affordable housing, both for the property owner and the tenant.

Live-work units (as a separate type of dwelling from multi-family) should also be added to the allowed uses in the mixed-use and higher-density districts such as the UR district. Live-work units are dwellings which are partly designed for use as a place of business and partly as the principal residence of the business operator. Incubator space (a special category of commercial space designed to provide fledging businesses with support services and low-cost workspace, often with shared common areas such as conference rooms and photocopying/ mailing facilities) should be included as an allowed use in the mixed-use and office/employment districts.

**Site design and layout.** Street connection requirements should be added to further protect access management goals. Site design of new subdivisions should require lot placement using natural contours, treelines, and other site features to locate building sites in the least visually intrusive locations that are consistent with protection of sensitive natural areas. (This is a standard that would properly be included in the subdivision ordinance when the update of that ordinance is made.)

**Open space in new development.** The zoning

ordinance provides that subdivision may not occur in the RAC district without rezoning to a residential district (Section 4-2004). Typical provisions for residential development state that it will either obtain a density bonus for clustering or will occur as a “sliding scale development” in which one division is allowed for a tract of 20 acres, plus one for every additional 40 acres. Minimum lot requirements must still be met for the district (40,000 square foot minimum in the RR district).

The cluster development option of the RR district requires that site be set aside as 50% permanent open space, but does not provide type or configuration standards for the open space. This and other zoning districts where open space is to be maintained should specify that unusable areas like wetlands and floodplains may constitute only a maximum percentage of the required open space, and that open space shall be configured as usable, reasonably compact areas rather than left-over strips.

The Suburban Estate (SE) zoning district is intended for use in DSDs to provide a “superior living environment” and calls for “extensive open space.” However, the minimum lot size (20,000 square feet with public water and sewer) and maximum density (2 dwellings per acre) are problematic, taken together, for achieving

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## Zoning Ordinance

open space conservation. Also, the dimensional requirements for setbacks (50 or 75 feet front and 20 feet side) do not allow for conservation development patterns. With smaller setbacks, it would be possible to have estate-density residential areas where houses are on small lots. Large setbacks simply encourage more land to be platted and consumed within suburban lawns

on large lots. Smaller minimum setbacks would enable developers to provide a different product if the market calls for it (smaller individual lots with larger conserved open space), while still allowing large lawns for those who desire that format. An example of how reduced lot sizes could work to preserve open space is provided

in the box on this page.

The Suburban Residential (SR) district states that most residential development in DSDs will be of this type. It calls for “significant areas of open space.” The minimum lot size is 15,000 sf (or about 1/3 acre), and the maximum density is 3 dwelling units per acre. When taken together, this does not provide much opportunity for

### **Density, Lot Dimensions, and Open Space Preservation**

The requirements of the SE and SR districts can be adjusted to allow more open space to be preserved in new subdivisions, while still allowing full density credit on a given amount of land.

The example given in Section 5-4000 D. of the Zoning Ordinance may be used as a starting point. A 100-acre tract in the SE (Suburban Estate) district having 65.2 net developable acres would currently allow 2 dwelling units per net developable acre, or 130 dwellings.

Applying the cluster approach, if 50% of the tract is preserved, all 130 dwellings could be accommodated on the remaining 50 percent of the tract, using smaller building lots (averaging 16,753 square feet), with no loss or gain of net density. The area preserved would increase by 15.2 acres over the 34.8 acres if developed without clustering, for a total of 50 acres.

Going further and applying the density bonus, if 60% of the tract were preserved, a density bonus of 10% or 2.2 dwellings per acre could apply to the net developable acreage. This would give 65.2 x 2.2 or 143 dwellings to be accommodated on 40 developable acres, with an average lot size of 12,185 square feet. The developer of the tract would get a bonus of 13 units, while the area preserved would increase from 34.8 acres (with no clustering) to 60 acres.

This approach would require the minimum lot size in the SE district be reduced. The exact lot size reduction should be determined as part of ordinance revisions, but depending on the County’s preferences, it could be as small as 6,000 to 11,000 square feet. Although it sounds surprising to have lots this small, the preserved open space will result in a spacious effect similar to a large-lot subdivision.

The smaller lot size is possible because of the availability of public water and sewer. It provides other benefits in addition to the land in preservation. Less land area in turfgrass lawns will reduce the amount of fertilizer runoff into sensitive surface waters and conserve the public water supply by reducing the need for irrigation. Meanwhile, the perceived (and actual) density of the entire tract is still very low because of the extensive open space in preservation.

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## Zoning Ordinance

open space conservation. Like the SE district, the dimensional requirements in the SR district are too suburban to allow TND development to occur (35- or 60-foot front setbacks and minimum 64-foot lot frontage even with water and sewer). When one takes into consideration that this district is intended for the “majority of residential development” in DSDs, this is a problem in light of Comprehensive Plan goals for compact, traditional-style development in DSDs. In fact, without a better available zoning approach, the goals of the Comprehensive Plan will not be achieved.

***Maintenance of open space.*** The ordinance provides that membership in the property owners’ association that will maintain reserved open space is mandatory; however, there is no recording requirement. A recording requirement should be added to put all buyers on legal notice by virtue of the chain of title so that there will be a responsible party in case of issues with maintenance of the open space.

***Higher-intensity districts.*** The Urban Residential (UR) district is intended for high density residential uses in DSDs, and it is supposed to provide for affordable housing. (It is worth noting that dense development should not be confused with affordable development; many new, dense developments are very high-end.) In any case, at 12,000 square feet

minimum lot size (even with water and sewer) and a maximum single-family density of 3 units per acre, however, the UR district is not going to achieve high density. The allowances for townhouses and condos are more consistent with density goals, at 10 and 14 units per acre respectively. However, these dwelling types tend to be less palatable politically, and as a result may not be capable of being provided as readily as single-family house types, so single-family homes should also be capable of being developed at higher densities.

The Limited Commercial (LC) district allows neighborhood / basic daily commercial uses and is generally well suited to small commercial nodes (outside of the main activity center) that serve residential areas, such as those indicated on the land use diagram for this Master Plan. It could benefit from the addition of design and form standards, including a requirement for 4-sided architecture, and compatibility standards to ensure harmony with nearby residential development.

Compatibility requirements could include utility area screening, parking location and design, locating service areas away from adjacent residential, accommodating foot travel from nearby areas with convenient sidewalks and building façade orientation, and accommodating traffic entry off collector streets

or access roads instead of from driveways fronting directly on the highway.

The General Commercial (GC) district allows the full range of commercial uses not primarily related to immediate neighborhood needs, including highway-oriented commercial. The front setback of 35 feet should be reduced, as it is not compatible with TND character, and the side setback should be 0 feet to allow a village pattern in commercial development. The GC district could also benefit from the application of standards similar to those recommended above for the LC district, as well as additional requirements mandating TND-style character – street connections, a block and building layout reflective of village commercial character, and so on. (A full list of principles that should be applied to commercial development is provided in the Design Guidelines section of this plan.)

### ***Planned Development districts.***

Planned Development (PD) districts are permitted only in accordance with a master development plan and must be timed to coincide with the availability of services. They are required to be served by public utilities. There is no specified open space minimum requirement, although the PD category does state that natural areas shall be preserved and designed. Although the PD category is flexible, mixed-use and residential PD development must

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## Zoning Ordinance

comply with certain standards. For residential areas (PD-R), these include dimensional standards, and density regulations. The lot size and dimensional standards are too large to permit TND, especially the minimum 25-foot front setback, the 60-foot minimum lot width for detached houses, eight-foot side setback, and 3.5 dwelling units per acre density for single-family houses. The PD-R district should instead specify maximum lot area and dimensional standards and then direct that the residue of the conserved acreage should be allocated to open space, with clear standards provided for the type, configuration, use, and maintenance of the open space.

Likewise, the PD-CP (commercial park) district has standards, but they are not geared toward achieving the compact, walkable areas that the Comprehensive Plan envisions for the DSDs. There are no requirements for active uses at ground level, physical elements that ensure pedestrian interest, and other standards that ensure a town-like setting, such as those described in Chapter 11 (Community Character and Design) of the Comprehensive Plan. Applying more distinct and measurable standards is necessary to ensure that the PD-CP district results in the vision articulated in the Comprehensive Plan.

In a similar vein, the PD-MU (mixed-use) district encourages, but does not mandate, integration

of land uses and increased walkability. There are no minimum lot area, width, or setback requirements, but there should be specified standards consistent with TND. Again, the maximum density for single-family dwellings is 3.5 units per acre, which will never achieve the degree of compactness that would make these areas functional as envisioned in the plan. There is no limit on large parking fields and no minimum quantity, configuration, or other requirements for open space and common areas. Standards are needed to ensure active streetfronts and sidewalks.

In short, the TND goals of the Comprehensive Plan are not at all likely to be achieved using any of the by-right residential zoning districts for the DSDs. If PD or negotiated zoning is the only means of building TND and compact development patterns, then that places an additional obstacle to development, and potentially subjects the desired patterns to political gaming. TND patterns should be developable just as easily as (or preferably, more easily than) conventional sprawl patterns.

***Newport Development Service Overlay.*** The NDSO district provides supplementary regulations (in addition to other zoning requirements) in the Newport DSD. It provides for a 70-foot vegetated buffer along the road corridor, which may include paths

and bikeways. Earthen berms and plantings may be substituted for the retention of existing vegetation.

The access requirements of the overlay district allow individual parcels in existence prior to 1992 and fronting on the highway at least one individual access point. This can be expected to result, eventually, in degradation of the corridor's functionality and safety if all existing parcels, or many of them, were to be developed with such access. It is therefore recommended that the access allowances be revised in accordance with the transportation recommendations of this corridor plan so that direct access is consolidated to the extent possible and, where secondary / alternative access is feasible, so that short local trips between sites can avoid accessing the highway altogether.



*Existing shopping center in the study area*

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## Zoning Ordinance

The NDSO also requires the installation of concrete curb and gutter around all driveways and parking areas. This requirement should be altered to allow for rolled curbs or flat concrete pavement edge protection so that stormwater runoff can leave paved areas by sheet flow into adjacent vegetated absorption areas.

Although the NDSO does specify that site design shall be “integrated and consistent,” it lacks specific standards to ensure TND design and good streetscapes. Nonetheless, a number of good standards are included for sidewalks and crosswalks/bulbouts, pedestrian and bike paths & bike storage facilities, and screening of utility and service areas. Some minimum design standards for buildings are also provided, which mandate façade recesses every 100 feet and compatible building materials and colors. These should be augmented with additional, clear standards to provide full pedestrian interest and quality visual character; detailed guidelines are recommended in the design guidelines section of this Master Plan. Landscaping provisions should also be added that reflect the community character section recommendations in this Master Plan.

**Site design.** Site development procedures and standards in Section 7-1004 state that development shall be based on site analysis and shall be located to preserve and avoid impacts

on natural and environmentally sensitive areas. Some descriptive standards are given, which are good. These standards should be further strengthened by adding quantitative requirements and firmer language that mandates preservation more clearly. When combined with quantitative requirements for the PD and other zoning districts, and with dimensional standards that are more appropriate to compact TND-style development, the site development regulations in this section will effectively result in the County’s stated goals for compact resource-conserving development patterns and highly livable places.

**Supplemental regulations.** Revisions to supplemental regulations (such as standards for parking; lighting; floodplains; and conforming situations) would help achieve the County’s goals for the Route 17 corridor and potentially other areas as well. Suggested changes are as follows:

- **Parking:** Allow on-street parking to be counted toward residential parking requirements. Require that gravel or shell parking areas have stabilized edges to prevent movement of the material off the site. If possible, reduce the parking requirements for most residential uses (using average vehicle ownership information from the U.S. census), and allow single-family parking spaces in driveways and

garages to be located one behind another rather than as provided in 10-1005D. Allow no more parking spaces than specified in the parking requirements table, except up to a percentage of the stated number and then only if the excess is provided using a stable pervious surface such as grass pavers. Runoff from parking areas should be directed as sheet flow over adjacent vegetated areas, or to stormwater treatment ponds or other treatment devices, to ensure that pollutants, velocity, and volume are reduced before the runoff reaches surface waters.

- **Lighting:** Pole heights in parking areas should be limited to 16 feet, and direct light trespass (light elements shining directly onto adjacent properties) should be prohibited. All fixtures should be specified of full cutoff design, and lamp elements should provide accurate color rendition (no “orange” sodium vapor lights).
- **Flood hazard areas:** Filling in the 100-year flood plain and the floodway, which are currently allowed under some conditions, should be prohibited.
- **Nonconforming situations:** Eliminate the one-time exemption for the HCOD from the requirement that parking and other site features (such as landscaping and buffering) must be brought up to date upon expansion of a building.

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## Subdivision Ordinance

The subdivision ordinance dates in large part to 1969 with numerous amendments dating from the mid-1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. It generally needs to be updated to reflect the growth management and land use goals and other goals expressed clearly in the Comprehensive Plan, and to facilitate the administration of the newly updated zoning ordinance. Equally important, the ordinance needs to be updated to allow the best current practices in site planning and development. These include as open space / conservation subdivision, traditional neighborhood design, and stormwater management focusing on retention and treatment rather than conveyance and drainage. Each of these goals is impeded by the provisions of the existing subdivision ordinance. The following text describes provisions that tend to hinder the County's goals, as well as the types of revisions that would be needed to implement plan objectives, not only of this Master Plan, but in many cases the Comprehensive Plan as well.

**Flood zones.** Land subject to flooding may not be platted for residential occupancy, but must be set aside for uses that are not endangered by periodic flooding. This is a good standard; however, the zoning ordinance allows filling in floodplains. The two ordinances should be amended to work in concert so that filling of floodplains is prohibited and only appropriate

uses, and very limited structures, are allowed in flood zones.

**Street connectivity.** The minimum street connectivity requirements for streets in Section 4-4-1-1 are weak and put staff in the position of making judgment calls to be implemented. These should be strengthened by adequate descriptive and quantitative standards and by mandating, rather than suggesting, minimum connective patterns consistent with TND, good alternative access in the event of emergencies, and alternative traffic routes to collector and arterial roads.

**Highway access.** Section 4-4-1-2 requires service drives along limited access highways. Route 17, though not a limited access highway, should be included in this requirement and additional standards provided pursuant to the access management goals and recommendations of this Master Plan.

**Street standards – width.** Minimum specified street widths are overly generous at 50 feet for minor streets and local drives and 80 feet for major streets. Roadways are to be graded to 30 feet, plus ditches. Pavement is to be at least 22 feet wide. Where VDOT requirements are less than these, the subdivision ordinance is to prevail, with the result that streets can never be narrower or designed for more traditional patterns than VDOT provides for. The street

standards for right-of-way width and pavement width and design should be overhauled to reflect best current practices, including TND standards and the design principles outlined in this Master Plan.

**Street standards – improvements.** Section 4-4-1-5 requires that interior streets in certain zoning districts must have curbs and gutters. Although curb & gutter is appropriate for medium to high-density settings, it is inadvisable in lower-density areas and in some cluster development situations. In many cases, ribbon pavement (pavement without curb and gutter) with vegetated side swales would be more consistent with the rural pattern of the County and better for stormwater management purposes. Although ribbon pavement is not appropriate for higher-density areas, there are alternatives for hardening road edges other than conventional curbs. Flat and rolled curbs can be used to allow sheet flow of stormwater into vegetated areas, for example. Newer design manuals for stormwater, which are moving away from the conventional collect-and-convey approach, should be consulted for design applications that are suitable for the County's topography, soil conditions, and the identified priorities for water quality protection.

**Street standards – block length.** Maximum and minimum specified block lengths (1,200 feet and 500 feet, respectively) are far too large to

## Subdivision Ordinance

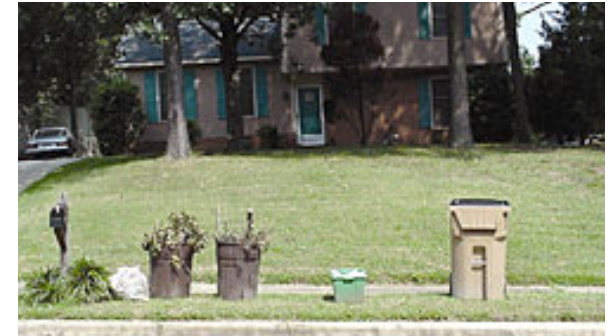
be consistent with TND goals, connectivity, and pedestrian-friendly living arrangements. The maximum block size should be no more than 600 feet generally, and no more than 400 feet in higher density or mixed-use areas.

**Street standards – cul-de-sacs.** Cul-de-sacs are allowed, and maximum lengths specified for these dead-end streets are excessive at 800 feet and 1,200 feet depending on the lot size served. Cul-de-sac turnarounds must be 30 feet (45 feet for those serving more than 25 dwelling units). These standards are entirely inconsistent with quality development design and stormwater mitigation goals, and several revisions are advisable. First, dead-end streets should be prohibited except where necessitated by topographic limitations such as minimizing stream crossings. Second, any necessary streets with no outlet should take the form of loop lanes and pocket-park (or “median court”) streets having a wide landscaped median. Third, the need for safety and privacy that cul-de-sacs supposedly address is better managed through properly designed residential streets. Once appropriate street design standards (including traffic calming practices, such as T-intersections and narrow lane widths) are applied through design review and incorporated into the subdivision ordinance, better alternatives to cul-de-sacs will be available. Finally, there are very few situations where alternatives to a cul-de-sac turnaround would not be practicable, but

in the unlikely event that a circular turnaround is necessary, pavement should be minimized by including a landscaped island or (even better) a bioretention “rain garden” in the center of the turnaround.

**Street standards – alleys.** Section 4-4-1-7, like those in many older subdivision ordinances, states that “alleys should be avoided wherever possible.” Alleys should not only be allowed; they should be mandated whenever lot frontages in a new development would be narrow enough (averaging 50 feet or less) that driveways and garages would dominate the streetscape if accessed from the front.

**Stormwater.** Section 4-4-8 requires the adequate planning of storm drainage facilities. It should be strengthened with standards to mandate appropriate stormwater management for quality and quantity, not just runoff conveyance. Likewise, Section 5-3-5 requires the submittal (on preliminary plats) of complete “drainage layout” information, including “pipe sizes, types, drainage easements and means of transporting the drainage to a well defined open stream which is considered natural drainage.” Again, this language is evidence of a long-outmoded approach to stormwater which emphasizes collection and conveyance with very harmful effects on the receiving waters. Revisions should accommodate LID (low-impact development, described in the



*The residential street (above) unfortunately has been transformed into a “garagescape” by the lack of rear alleys.*



*Without alleys, utility clutter and waste disposal functions are visible from the street.*



*Alleys are better locations for vehicular access and storage, as well as waste collection functions.*

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## Subdivision Ordinance

Environmental Protection section of this plan) and other means of treating stormwater for quantity and quality.

**Open space.** Section 4-5-5 states that all remnants of lots below minimum size left over after subdividing a tract must be added to adjacent lots or otherwise disposed of rather than allowed to remain as unusable parcels. While the intent of this section is presumably to prevent the creation and persistence of unbuildable lots that might create future development problems, it may stand in the way of conservation subdivision techniques in which open space is deliberately set aside as dedicated land in common ownership or with a conservation easement. A good update of the subdivision ordinance should include provisions for dedication, retention, and maintenance of the common open space by an appropriate entity.

**Subdivision design process and standards.** Section 5, concerning the approval of subdivision plats, provides that the subdivider may at its option submit a preliminary sketch for review by County staff prior to preparing engineered plans; this requirement is good as far as it goes. When the subdivision ordinance is updated, a full overhaul of the approval process should require sketch plan and informal early review prior to any changes being made to the land's surface in preparation for subdivision (such as

clearing or grading). A site design process that includes requirements for early identification of features such as natural areas, floodplains, wetlands, forested portions, vegetation and soils that would serve stormwater treatment functions will enable good design of new development in harmony with nature.

Such a process has been used with success in other areas of the east coast, including many that drain to the Chesapeake Bay system, and the County would do well to emulate the procedural and substantive regulatory framework that has worked in those locations (see text box). In addition to procedural rules, substantive standards can also be adapted from those areas; the key is to ensure that the issues are similar in jurisdictions that are used as models. Similar

issues would include, for example, pollution prevention goals and topographic settings, and legal framework (with other Virginia local governments being the most likely to have the authority and constraints most comparable to those that apply to the County).

Applying an improved design process and substantive standards for development should not be regarded as mere red tape. In fact, good development design that protects the County's natural setting is a value-adding activity that will make the County more attractive and pleasant as a place to live and work – increasing its economic competitiveness. Thus, a high-quality subdivision ordinance is a key part of achieving the County's planning and development goals.

### Sources for conservation design precedents and technical advice

**Conservation Design in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed** (Natural Lands Trust, November 2000) contains a detailed description of a 4-step design process, along with specific case examples where conservation design was applied in four counties in Virginia and Maryland.

**Better Site Design: An Assessment of the Principles for Communities Implementing Virginia's Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act** (Center for Watershed Protection with assistance from the Chesapeake Bay Local Assistance Department) provides 16 site design principles for water quality protection; design steps for using the principles; and four in-depth case studies applying them.

**Conservation Design for Stormwater Management** (Delaware Dept. of Natural Resources and the Brandywine Conservancy, 1997) outlines how to analyze natural resources on-site, and provides guidance on how to apply design principles for conservation. Six case studies illustrate the conservation design principles and process.

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## V. Corridor Land Use Plan

**A. Corridor Land Use Plan Overview**

**B. Town Center**

**C. Traditional Neighborhood Residential Development**

**D. Neighborhood Centers**

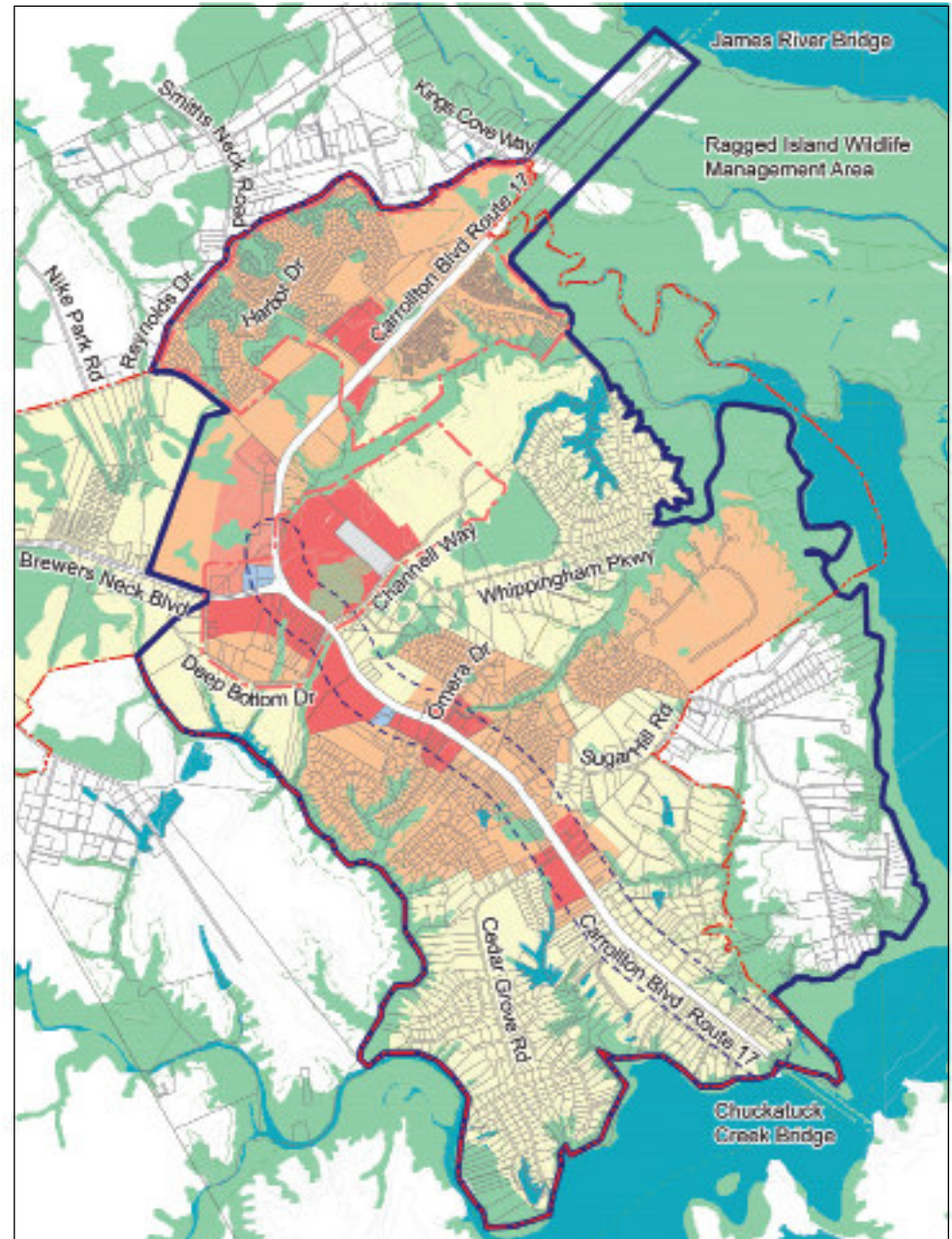
**E. Chuckatuck Bridge Vicinity**

# Corridor Land Use Plan Overview

## Route 17 Corridor Land Use Plan

The adjoining Land Use Plan and Legend provide an overview of the existing and proposed land uses and their distribution within the Route 17 Corridor Master Plan study area. This section provides:

- I. The County planning context for this Master Plan
- II. New information developed since the 2001 Isle of Wight Comprehensive Planning Process
- III. Land use boundary updates
- IV. Descriptions of the Comprehensive Plan Land Use District types
- V. Detailed examinations of four locations in the study area that describe recommended development patterns in and near the Master Plan's Primary Study Area



Land Use Plan

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# Corridor Land Use Plan Overview

## I. Planning Context

### *Development Service Districts*

The 2001 Isle of Wight Comprehensive Plan projects growth, land consumption and cost of services countywide, balancing these factors with concerns about community character, environmental protection and development quality to arrive at a growth management and land use strategy of “contained growth”. This strategy emphasizes the protection of rural and environmentally sensitive areas, while clustering projected growth in three Development Service Districts (DSDs): the Newport, Windsor and Camptown Districts.

### *Land Use Planning Districts*

This Route 17 Corridor Master Plan area encompasses approximately the eastern one-half of the Newport DSD, and therefore is designated to receive greater development intensity than areas outside the DSDs. Within the Master Plan area, the Comprehensive Plan designates six land use planning districts (itemized below) describing a range of development characters, intensities and locations related to existing conditions and development potentials intended to meet the Comprehensive Plan’s growth management and land use goals and objectives (Comprehensive Plan pages 4.8 – 4.9). These districts are

meant to represent broad categories of land use types and are not representative of existing or proposed individual property zoning.

### *Newport Service Overlay District*

In addition to the six land use planning districts, the Comprehensive Plan identifies the Route 17 and Brewers Neck Blvd corridors within the study area as part of a Highway Corridor Overlay District. As such, the entire Newport DSD received overlay zoning (the Newport Service Overlay District, or NSOD) intended to protect and improve visual character along the corridor, with buffering and visual character controls that influence land use. Comprehensive Plan Chapter 11 includes design recommendations that will also influence the character of development: Avoid continuous commercial zoning and strip development, and designate commercial nodes in compact areas with visually important landscape in between.

The Route 17 Corridor Master Plan parallels the Comprehensive Plan’s Newport DSD land use designations, recognizing the range of existing environmental conditions, existing developments and development potentials that are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan goals and objectives.

## II. New Information

In preparing this corridor plan, the recent projects and stakeholder input subsequent to the 2001 Comprehensive Plan must be considered. Thus, this Master Plan acknowledges recent developments and development approvals within and near the study area, as well as local stakeholder land use preferences gathered during the planning process.

Stakeholder preferences generally supported the Comprehensive Plan land use goals for the study area:

- protecting, enhancing and improving recreational access to natural areas
- managing traffic and congestion along Route 17
- providing improved pedestrian and bicycle networks
- preserving existing neighborhood character and rural character where possible
- improving the quality of existing run-down properties along major travel routes
- providing higher quality new development, to include: commercial and civic uses serving the surrounding neighborhoods, as well as improved building, landscape design, and community form standards

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# Corridor Land Use Plan Overview

## III. Master Plan Updates

Using this new information, this Master Plan updates several Newport DSD land use planning district boundaries. Changes occurred in three Update Areas:

**Update 1** - In the vicinity of the Eagle Harbor, the Master Plan reflects the actual pattern of development that has occurred since 2001, substituting Suburban Residential in peripheral areas of a large zone previously designated Mixed Use Activity Center.

**Update 2** - In the vicinity of the Bartlett intersection, much of the previously designated Business & Employment has been redesignated Mixed use Activity Center in a town center pattern. This includes a core of walkable commercial, attached residential and multifamily housing, surrounded by a compact, interconnected traditional neighborhood pattern.

**Update 3** - Along Route 17, south of the Bartlett intersection, the Master Plan replaces the previously designated zone of Business & Employment land use with two smaller Mixed Use Activity Centers. Each of these Neighborhood Centers is designed to provide a compact, walkable focus for neighborhood-supportive retail and services.

## IV. Planning District Types

The Comprehensive Plan Land Use Planning Districts are listed below from lower to higher development intensity. Districts 1 & 2.

### 1. Resource Conservation Areas

**Location:** Wildlife management and wetland areas

**Character:** Coastal estuarine, wetlands and streams

**Intensity:** Development limited to improving recreational access and use consistent with preservation of natural resources and habitat. Primary opportunities include park sites at Ragged Island Wildlife Management Area and adjacent to the Chuckatuck Creek Bridge. These sites could be extended by providing ‘blueways’ at Batten Bay and Chuckatuck Creek.

### 2. Rural Agricultural Conservation

**Location:** Bayview area, east of the Newport DSD boundary

**Character:** Agricultural, forested and scattered low-density residential

**Intensity:** Limited additional development, consistent with constraints of access, well and septic requirements, and other coastal development regulations.

## 3. Suburban Estate

**Location:** Located in areas that have or will have access to water and sewer service, but are removed from major transportation access.

**Character:** Single family residential, detached

**Intensity:** 0.5 to 1 dwelling unit per acre

## 4. Suburban Residential

**Location:** Close to major transportation access and existing or proposed water and sewer service and adjacent to Mixed Use Activity Centers or Business and Employment areas.

**Character:** Single family residential, detached; interconnected grid of streets with neighborhood parks and greenways; potential cluster development with reserved open space.

**Intensity:** 1 to 4 dwelling units per acre

## 5. Business and Employment

**Location:** At existing or proposed major road intersection with adequate road, water and sewer capacity.

**Character:** Planned office parks and large independent facilities in park-like or campus

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## Corridor Land Use Plan Overview

setting with support retail or community shopping center when planned as integral facilities

**Intensity:** Not stated in Comprehensive Plan

### 6. Mixed Use Activity Center

**Location:** At existing or proposed major road intersection with adequate road, water and sewer capacity, with tract size adequate to accommodate diversity and integration of uses.

**Character:** High degree of planning with emphasis on pedestrian scale, with a high standard of landscaping, open and public spaces and building design. Traditional neighborhood development (TND) principles encouraged. Mix of attached and detached dwelling types on smaller lots with coordinated streetscapes, with allowance for some larger lots (to accommodate the strong market for this development type and to ensure that applicable impervious surface limitations are not exceeded). Architectural character reminiscent of late 19th and early 20th century

**Intensity:** Up to 12 dwelling units per acre

### V. Recommended Patterns

The following several pages examine four locations in the study area that describe recommended development patterns in the Master Plan study area:

- Bartlett Town Center
- Traditional Neighborhood Residential Development
- Neighborhood Centers
- Chuckatuck Bridge Vicinity

## Town Center

Within the Newport Development service District, The Isle of Wight Comprehensive Plan applies six land use planning districts in a tiered management concept that locates the most intense land use – Mixed Use Activity Center (MUAC) – along major highway corridors where transportation and services are either already in place or can be cost effectively provided. Based on this planning framework as well as stakeholder input and market reconnaissance associated with this planning process, the Route 17 Corridor Land Use Plan locates a MUAC at the Bartlett intersection of Route 17 and Route 32.

At the heart of each MUAC is a compact commercial core that emphasizes interconnectivity with transportation infrastructure and surrounding supportive residential land uses, pedestrian orientation, and appropriate streetscapes and architectural character that reinforce local heritage and the center’s role as the focus of the traditional town development pattern.

The Bartlett Town Center Diagram illustrates how a compact commercial core could be developed at the Bartlett intersection. The two story mixed use buildings are arranged to create a pedestrian oriented street environment that provides excellent access both from Route 17 and for pedestrian and vehicular access from nearby residential developments. In addition to ground floor retail, this arrangement envisions



*This is a good example of 2-story mixed use building, with a range of desirable vernacular forms and materials. The placement, however, of a parking lot directly in front of the building should be avoided.*

office and service establishments on the second floor of the mixed use buildings, with higher density residential uses such as townhouses, condominiums and apartments close by. Adequate and convenient parking is critical to retail success. The town center emphasizes on-street parking, but puts most parking behind the mixed use buildings to preserve the pedestrian oriented, main street character.



# Traditional Neighborhood Residential Development

One of the key land use objectives identified in the Isle of Wight Comprehensive Plan is to encourage new development in designated activity centers to incorporate traditional neighborhood design (TND) concepts, including smaller front yards, clearly defined streetscapes, mixed uses and interconnected street patterns, with an emphasis on pedestrian circulation, intensively used open spaces and architectural character.

These TND design concepts are incorporated in the Traditional Neighborhood Residential Diagram. The diagram shows a tightly connected pattern of attached and multifamily housing clustered around an intensely designed open space in the form of a community green or commons. Further east, as environmental elements such as streams and wetlands become more prevalent, housing densities are reduced and the street grid gives way to a pattern more responsive to the natural conditions. Cul-de-sac street patterns are nonetheless minimized, while convenient connections to adjacent commercial centers, recreational facilities and other residential developments are provided.

Sidewalks would be standard along all neighborhood streets and landscaped boulevards, and greenways would interconnect with the sidewalk system to take advantage of the adjacent natural areas, providing additional recreational opportunities.

In order to emphasize the historic character of the dwellings, front-loaded parking pads and garages are discouraged. Instead, rear alleys and driveways to back yard garages are encouraged.



*Traditional Neighborhood Residential Diagram*



*These photographs are examples of historic Isle of Wight County homes that could serve as precedents for new housing.*

*The Ashburn House (right) displays finely crafted woodwork and could be a prototype for an attached housing type.*

*The nearby Channell Way farmhouse (left) is an excellent source of design precedents for single family homes, including generous porches and simplified classical detailing.*

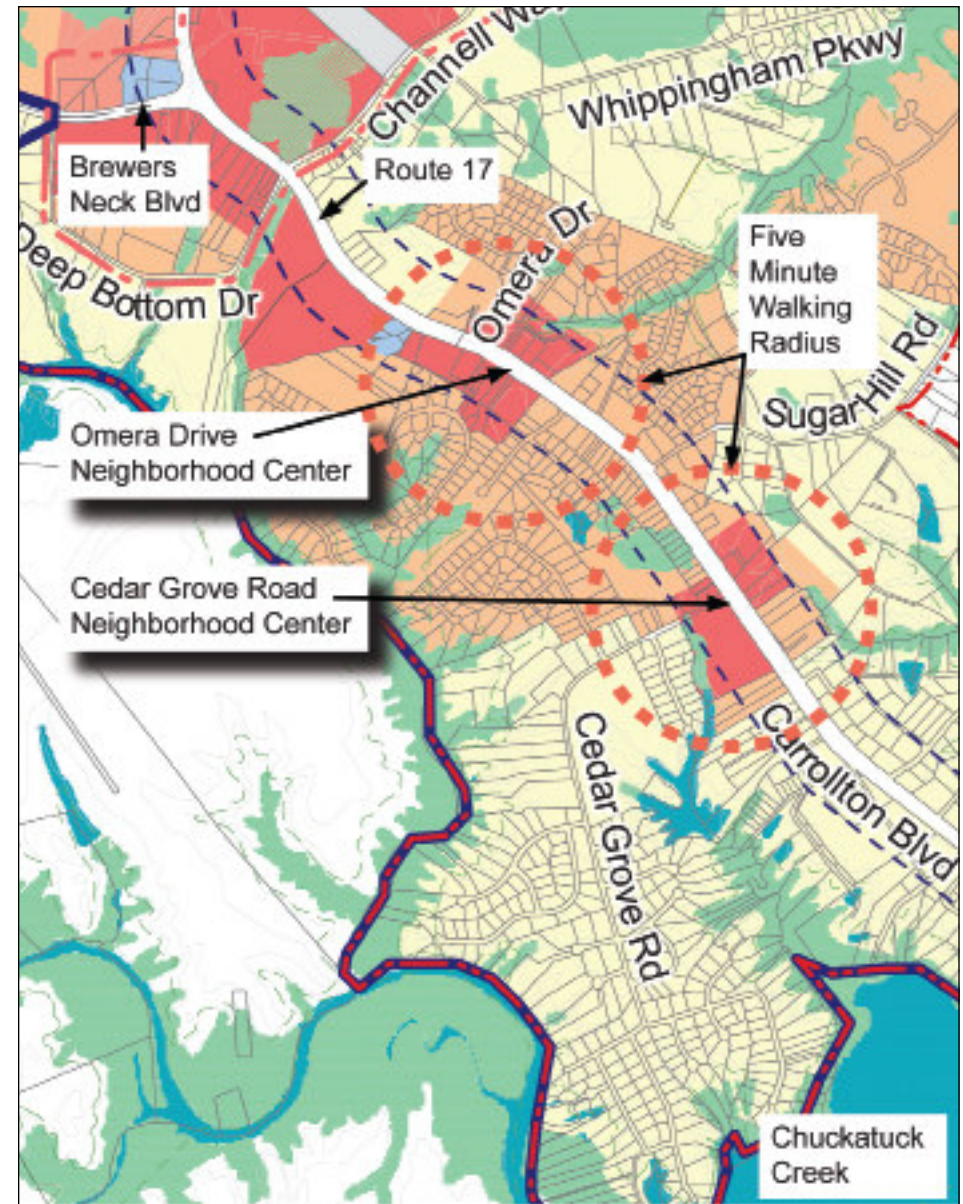
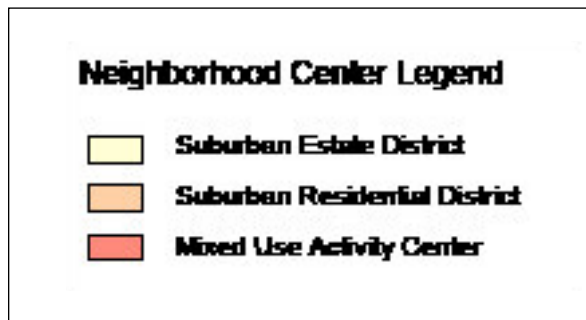


## Neighborhood Centers

Route 17 arcs through Isle of Wight County from the northeast across the James River Bridge, past the Route 32 (Brewers Neck Blvd) intersection, and then south to the Chuckatuck Creek Bridge. The segment northeast of Route 32 has been more intensely developed, while the southern segment retains more of the County's rural character.

In order to maintain this visual character along this southern segment of Route 17 and minimize the typical pattern of continuous, "strip" highway-oriented commercial establishments, the plan proposes to focus commercial development in two Neighborhood Centers in the vicinity of Omera Drive and Cedar Grove Road. Other frontages along this southern segment of Route 17 should retain and enhance their rural/agricultural character, or be developed with adequate buffering and landscaping to screen new construction.

While the majority of new commercial development along the Route 17 corridor will be located in the Bartlett Activity Center at the Route 32 intersection, commercial development at these Neighborhood Centers will be oriented toward neighborhood-scaled retail and services establishments.



Neighborhood Centers Vicinity Map

# Neighborhood Centers

The diagram at right shows how each half of a Neighborhood Center is located at a prominent Route 17 intersection. The commercial uses are clustered in the Mixed Use Activity Center Land Use District and are oriented to create a pedestrian friendly environment, with buildings fronting the intersecting the cross street and access road paralleling Route 17. Individual tenant spaces should not exceed 7,000 square feet and total commercial space in each center should not exceed 30,000 square feet.

Sidewalks are provided throughout and connect with the proposed greenway that runs along each side of Route 17 in the required 70' buffer zone. Sidewalks would be extended into existing adjacent neighborhoods over time.

While the conditions at each Neighborhood Center vary, the intent shown in this diagram is that new residential development will be higher density adjacent to the commercial core, with apartments, townhouses and attached units closest, as well as along the Route 17 frontage parcels.



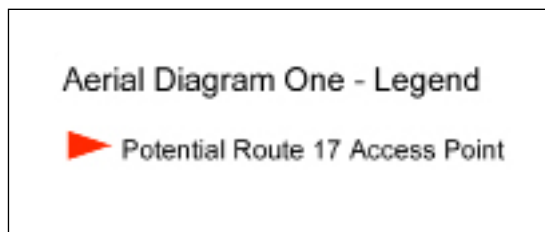
Neighborhood Center Diagram

## Chuckatuck Bridge Vicinity

Route 17 Land use in the vicinity of the Chuckatuck Bridge is characterized by a narrowing of developable land and multiple, smaller frontage lots. The two-lane capacity of the Chuckatuck Bridge (versus four lanes at the James River Bridge at the other end of Route 17), and the smaller employment center to the south, have acted to limit development pressure here, compared to the northern segment of Route 17. However, it is anticipated that the Chuckatuck Bridge will eventually be widened to four lanes to accommodate increasing arterial traffic.

As trips in this vicinity increase and more of the frontage lots are subdivided and developed, there will be increasing conflicts between local traffic turning in and out of the frontage lots and the arterial traffic moving at higher speeds along Route 17.

Aerial Diagram One on this page shows the existing conditions at the Chuckatuck Land Use Zone. Route 17 and existing local streets are highlighted in white. Existing and potential frontage lot access points are indicated by red arrows. There are forty-seven access points shown. Clearly, the number of frontage access points has the potential to increase greatly.



## Chuckatuck Bridge Vicinity

Aerial Diagram Two on this page shows a hypothetical system of parallel and alternate access roads that would provide Route 17 frontage parcels in this vicinity an alternative means of vehicular access to Route 17, instead of directly onto the highway. This system of access roads would reduce access points onto Route 17 from about forty-seven or more to seven.

This alternative access road system is hypothetical; actual road locations would depend on the rate of development, land value and other factors. This concept, however, illustrates one way of providing access alternatives in a challenging retrofit setting, where a high degree of parcelization, and some development, has already occurred.

The subdivision of land at Muddy Cove Circle is particularly problematic for two reasons. First, the recombination of these small frontage lots is unlikely. Second, the available space to serve them with an access road is very limited and the cost to construct such an access road would be relatively high.

Further subdivision of frontage parcels should be prohibited, and new development should be required to provide alternative access in accordance with policies similar to those being applied to controlled-access highways in the County. Recombination and consolidation of parcels should be encouraged, with facilitation by the County if warranted.



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## VI. Transportation

### A. Transportation Overview

### B. Roads

### C. Street Network for Mixed Use & Residential Development

### D. Parking

### E. Public / Mass Transit

### F. Pedestrian Systems

### G. Bicycle Lanes

### H. Corridor Greenway

# Transportation Overview

## Introduction

Multi-modal transportation encompasses automobiles, trucks, transit, pedestrians, bicyclists, air travel and water travel. Transit as a transport mode includes commuter ridesharing (carpools and vanpools), private transit (Council on Aging vans, retirement center buses, etc), public buses and paratransit vehicles providing mobility to the disabled, light rail and commuter rail. Public transit is neither currently available in nor planned for the corridor. Although rail transit was discussed during the public sessions, rail systems must be developed at the regional level.

This study primarily addresses roads as well as on- and off-road facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists. The mobility provided by the corridor will also serve most forms of transit quite well, while the high level of local accessibility proposed by this study accommodates pedestrians, bicyclists and private transit.

## County Highway Classification System

The highway system in Isle of Wight County has been classified according to the function of each road as Principal Arterial, Minor Arterial, Major Collector, Minor Collector, or Local

Service. Principal and Minor Arterial Highways provide longer distance service between cities and larger towns and are higher speed, higher volume facilities. Collector roadways serve small towns directly, providing local mobility over shorter distances and connecting local roads to the arterial system. Arterials provide a high degree of regional mobility but a low level of property access, local streets provide a high degree of property access but very little mobility, while collector roadways balance mobility and access. No changes from VDOT’s functional classifications of County roadways are proposed as part of this study.

## Functional Road Hierarchy

Function Classification	Function Provided
Principal and Minor Arterial	High mobility, higher speed, longer distance, most access control, little or no land access
Major and Minor Collector	Balance mobility and land access, moderate speed, medium distance, connects arterial and local roads
Local	High land access, lower speed, shorter distance, minimal access control

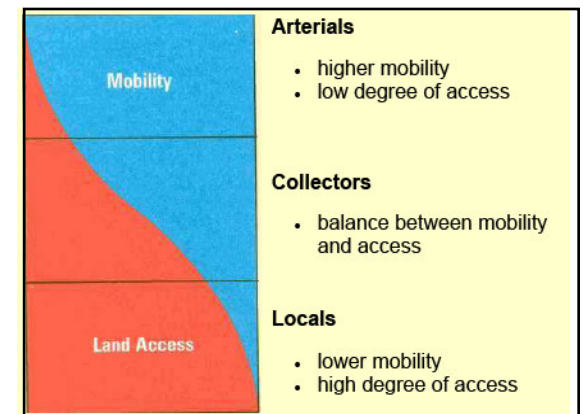


Chart of functional road classification

Relationship of mobility to land access by road category

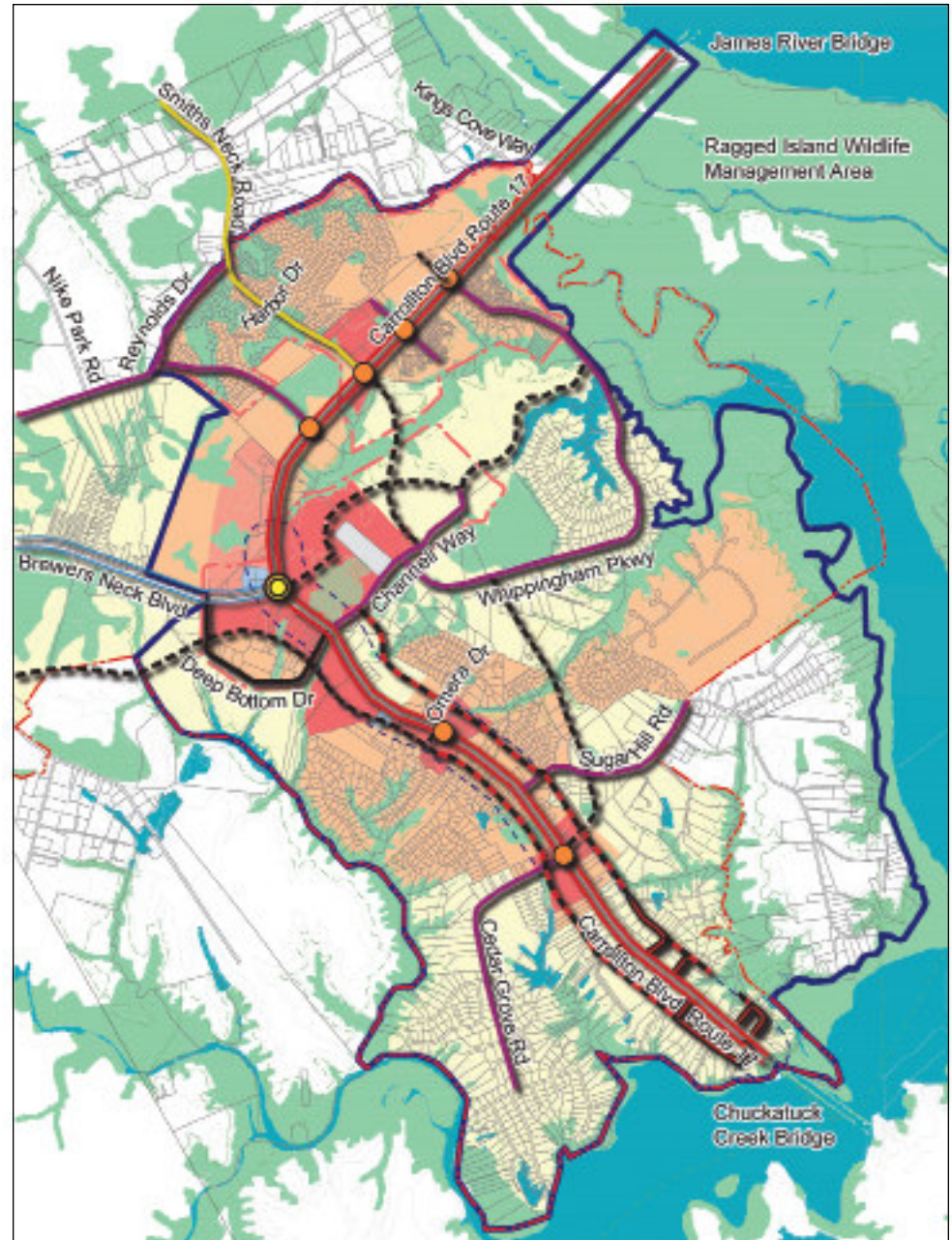
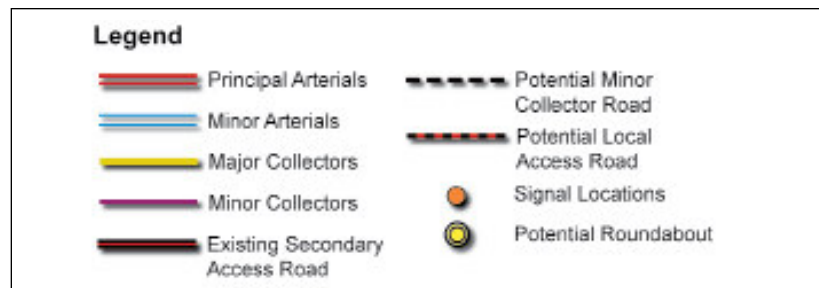
## Roads

The Route 17 corridor will continue to experience considerable development between the Route 32 intersection and the James River Bridge. In addition, major commercial and mixed use developments west of the corridor along Benn's Church Blvd accessible via Route 32 are approved or in the approval process. Development has been slower along the south corridor between Route 32 and the Chuckatuck Bridge. This planning effort has focused on that less developed portion of the Route 17 corridor.

### Route 17

Route 17's primary function will continue to be a major arterial providing high speed, high volume regional travel. For Isle of Wight County its key purpose is long distance movement of people and goods – to provide a means for residents to access major employment centers throughout the region and for businesses to receive materials and ship products. Access to adjacent development must have minimal adverse impact to the safe and efficient through travel.

As traffic volumes increase from continuing growth, safe and efficient travel on Route 17 will be maintained through a combination of highway widening and access management. The land use pattern recommended in this plan supports these valuable transportation strategies.



Potential primary roads and intersections

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## Roads

### Planned Highway Widening

To support regional mobility, Virginia Department of Transportation's (VDOT's) 2025 Transportation Plan recommends:

- 1) an additional 2-lane bridge, parallel to the existing 2-lane Chuckatuck Bridge, providing a minimum of four through lanes along Route 17 between Chesapeake and Newport News; and
- 2) two additional lanes on Route 17, for a total of six through lanes, between Route 32 and a point south of the James River Bridge.
- 3) No funds have been allocated by the State.

### Access Management

#### Street network connectivity

Existing and future adjacent development should be served by an enhanced road system on both sides of the corridor that increases parcel accessibility by allowing more local trips to be made without having to access Route 17. While it is not possible to provide a complete alternative network due to the

presence of existing development, natural features, and parcelization patterns, the plan recommends interconnecting the streets on each side of the corridor to provide a parallel network to the maximum extent practicable given these limitations. More specifically, the components of this alternative network would consist of a street grid in the main activity center, a parallel secondary road system along other parts of the corridor, and a number of interconnected streets with indirect routing. Additional connections between the Route 17 corridor and the Route 10 corridor through Smithfield should be examined during future transportation planning efforts. The indirect route network discourages cut-through traffic and speeding. Conversely, earlier “suburban sprawl” patterns characterized by limited travel options – local cul-de-sac to collector to arterial – with no mode choice but the automobile, should be actively discouraged.

The increased interconnectivity patterns also would enhance on-road and off-road bike lane and trail opportunities. The accompanying transportation map illustrates the potential new collector roads that would allow this street network to function as intended. The specific



*Street interconnectivity*

number and locations goes beyond the scope of this report and will need to be determined through a transportation study.

## Roads

### Parcel interconnectivity

In addition to street network connectivity, access options can be further enhanced by interconnecting commercial parking lots. Customers would be able to drive from one shopping center or office complex to another using driveways between parcels, rather than having to enter and exit Route 17 repeatedly while running errands. Cross-parcel connectivity also enhances opportunities for internal connectivity within developments, so that outparcels are accessed from within the development rather than from the highway. The County can continue to use its development review authority to mandate interconnected commercial parking lots as well as internal access for outparcels within larger developments.

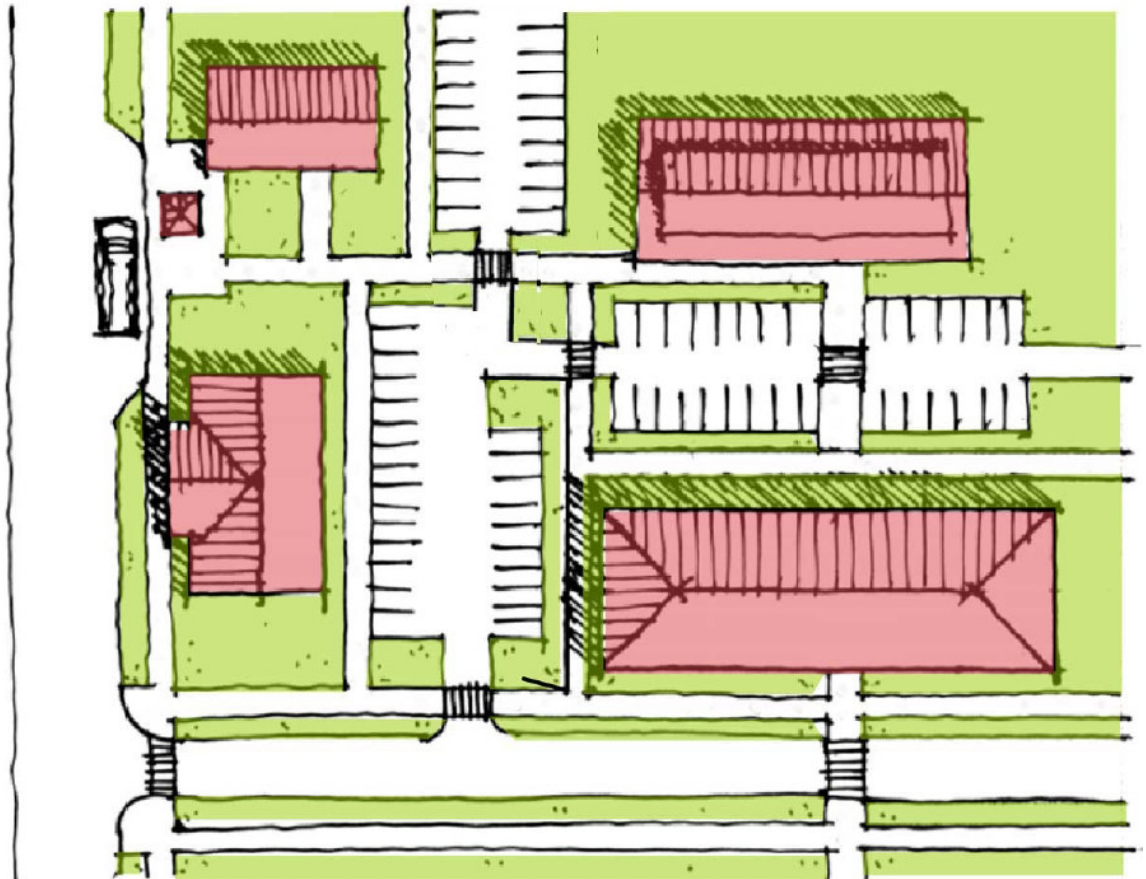
### Minimize curb cuts

All of these connectivity strategies can help minimize and limit the number of curb cuts (vehicle access points) along Route 17 while still providing a high level of property access to support economic development. Minimizing curb cuts will also improve safety since the number of access points and frequency of turning movements directly affect crash rates. The County can use its development review authority to limit new driveways, to redirect access points to the local street network rather than the highway, and to encourage the

consolidation or closure of existing curb cuts. Consolidation of existing parcels, although largely a matter of property owners' private decisions, should be encouraged as a condition of development approval.

### Limit signalized intersections

The proposed transportation map recommends two signalized intersections between Routes 17/32 intersection and the Chuckatuck Bridge. The Omera Drive signal is retained and the planned Sugar Hill Road signal is relocated to Cedar Grove Road. A signal is

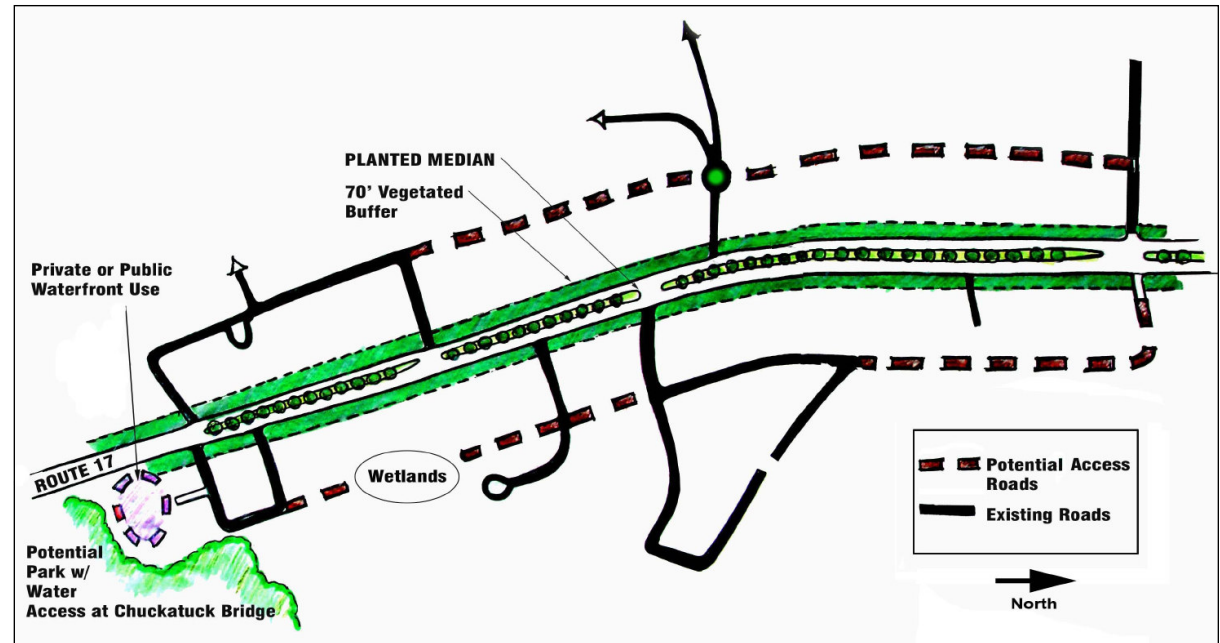


*Parking lot interconnectivity*

## Roads

not recommended at Channell Way. More signalized intersections along Route 17 would decrease vehicle throughput and travel speeds, while increasing delay for drivers on both Route 17 and intersecting streets. As signal phases become more complex, both crash frequency and severity will increase. Although signals ease access to and from side streets they will further erode the safe and efficient travel along the corridor itself.

The combination of street network connectivity, parcel interconnectivity, minimal curb cuts, and limited signalized intersections will enhance the regional mobility function of Route 17 while providing expanded alternative local access within the study area.



*Secondary street network illustration*

### Low Vehicular Volume Roads With Single Access Via Route 17

As Route 17 vehicular volume increases, intersecting, single access low volume roads may experience inconvenient modifications to traffic patterns as the intersections with Route 17 are modified to address safety and traffic flow issues. It would be prudent to address single access, low volume candidates as development is being planned in areas adjacent to such roads.

For example, Kings Cove Way (Route 659), a residential street just south of the James River Bridge serving several residences, is only connected to the street network via Route 17. It is reasonable to anticipate that at some future time VDOT will eliminate the median on Route 17 resulting in right in / right out movements only. The vehicular volumes generated by the residents are unlikely to warrant a signalized intersection. In the alternative, if an extension of Whippingham Parkway west of Route 17 is designed to provide a potential future connection to Kings Cove Way, the inconvenience of the right in / right out only is minimized. Further, increased safety is provided by the signalized intersection at Whippingham Parkway.

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## Street Network for Mixed Use & Residential Development

### Town Center

The proposed Town Center is a human-scale, walkable, mixed-use central core for the project area. It must have excellent pedestrian connections with the moderate-density residential areas adjacent to it, as well as a highly connected pedestrian network within it to accommodate customers who drive to it. The Town Center should be thought of as a “park once” destination, meaning that once there its both convenient and comfortable to reach multiple destinations by foot rather than move the car from parking lot to parking lot. However, with Routes 17 and 32 dividing the Center into thirds, the Town Center will likely function as three park-once areas of a central destination.

Commercial and civic buildings in the Town Center have visibility to Routes 17 and 32 but would not be oriented towards the highways with multiple driveways and large parking lots abutting the right of way. Rather, buildings should be oriented towards internal access streets and sidewalks, with smaller, dispersed parking lots, to create a sense of place that is small town “main street” rather than suburban highway strip.

The Town Center requires a compact, highly connected network of collector and local streets to slow and disperse traffic and provide a

pedestrian friendly environment. Short blocks reduce travel distances needed for pedestrians to walk. Every parcel can be reached by at least two routes, which not only accommodates workers, shoppers and residents, but improves access for delivery and emergency vehicles as well.

Virtually all streets should have some form of on-street parking. On-street parking along commercial core streets should be signed, marked or otherwise clearly designated. Within residential parts of the Town Center, on-street parking may be more informal.

Areas with high levels of pedestrian traffic should incorporate various traffic calming techniques into street design. These may include “bulbouts” or curb extensions to reduce crosswalk distances, placing crosswalks on top of speed tables, use of textured pavements, speed humps, and various other practices as deemed appropriate.



*Town Center*

### Neighborhood Centers

Proposed Neighborhood Centers are human-scale, walkable, commercial centers for smaller project sub-areas. These centers must have excellent pedestrian connections with the residential areas surrounding it, as well as a well connected pedestrian network within it to accommodate customers who drive to it. Neighborhood Centers should be thought of as not only “park once” destinations but frequently as “walk to” as well. With Route 17 dividing Centers in half, it may be a challenge to safely and comfortably accommodate pedestrian connections across the corridor.

The potential for compact, mixed use development to reduce parking demand is substantial. The Institute for Traffic Engineers and the Urban Land Institute, among others, have developed practices for projecting actual parking needs, reflecting shared parking, linked vehicle trips and shifts to walking and bicycling. Development specific parking demands should be considered rather than dependence on generic “one size fits all” parking standards.

Commercial and civic buildings in the Neighborhood Centers have visibility to Routes 17 but will not be oriented towards the highway with driveways and parking lots along the right-of-way. Rather, buildings are to be accessed from an interior collector street

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## Street Network for Mixed Use & Residential Development

paralleling the highway, as well as local streets and sidewalks, with smaller parking lots to the sides and rear, to create a sense of place that is more “rural crossroads” rather than suburban highway strip.

These Centers require a connected network of collector and local streets to slow and disperse traffic and provide a pedestrian friendly environment. A relatively narrow, and thus slow, collector street allows pedestrians from nearby neighborhoods to walk or bicycle across to destinations. Local streets should minimize through traffic by the design of the street and the location of land uses. Still, every parcel within a Center can be reached by at least two routes, which not only accommodates workers, shoppers and residents but improves access for delivery and emergency vehicles as well.

All streets adjacent to these Centers should have some form of on-street parking. On-street parking may be formally marked or more informal, depending on the intensity of the uses.

Areas where pedestrians must cross collector streets should incorporate various traffic calming techniques into street design. These may include “bulbouts” or curb extensions to reduce crosswalk distances, placing crosswalks on top of speed tables, use of textured pavements,

speed humps and various other practices as deemed appropriate.

### Residential Development

The study area has a limited amount of developable land. To make the most of this finite resource, new suburban residential development should reflect change from large lots with individual septic systems to a more compact pattern served by centralized sewer.

Providing multiple means to access houses improves pedestrian and bicyclist connectivity, expands emergency access, and increases route efficiency for school buses, garbage trucks and the like. Long, poorly connected cul-de-sacs and other types of dead-end roads are to be actively discouraged unless dictated by topography or to minimize impacts to water resources. Wherever practical, loop roads, stem-less cul-de-sacs with center islands commonly called “closes”, and other connected street networks to provide a higher level of access to clustered housing. Where such roads are not feasible, moderate levels of connectivity can still be provided by the use of non-vehicular paths and greenways.

Residential streets should be designed appropriately for low volume, low speed traffic. Narrow shoulder/swale cross sections (in lieu of wide pavement and curb-and-gutter



*Shared street*

installation) will reduce impervious surfaces and minimize stormwater runoff. Flat concrete curbs can be used to protect pavement edges while still allowing drainage. Pervious materials may be used to reinforce and protect shoulders from erosion as well as compaction from parked vehicles.

Accommodation of off-street travel for pedestrians and bicyclists will be discussed under the “Pedestrian Systems” and “Bicycle Networks” sections that follow. What will be discussed here is the concept of “shared streets”. A shared street is one designed so that it can be safely used by cars, both moving and parked, pedestrians and bicyclists. Shared streets can be fairly narrow, as long as sight lines are adequate and travel speeds low. Vehicle volumes should be low, as in less than 500 vehicles per day, design speed for vehicles should be low (15 to 25 mph), block

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## Street Network for Mixed Use & Residential Development

lengths should be short (less than 600 feet), and no linear street corridor should be longer than 5 or 6 blocks before terminating (i.e., a T intersection). Long, straight segments between intersections encourage speeding, so shared street segments need to be broken up. When needed, traffic calming devices such as chokers, chicanes, speed humps, neighborhood traffic circles and T intersections can be used to keep vehicle speeds appropriate for sharing the road with non-vehicles.

### **Specific traffic calming techniques in more detail:**

***Speed humps.*** Speed humps are rounded raised pavement areas typically 12' to 14' in length. They are often very effective when used in a series along a street, spaced 300' to 600' apart. Speed humps are for residential streets and similar lower speed, lower volume roads but are inappropriate for major roads, bus routes and emergency response routes, or roads with high volumes of oversized vehicles.

***Speed tables.*** Speed tables are speed humps with a flat top – often long enough to accommodate a car's wheelbase, making them less abrupt than a speed hump. Because of this characteristic and the ability to drive over them at a slightly higher speed (25 mph), speed tables may be more appropriate than speed humps for collector type roads and busier streets, and tend to be preferred over speed humps by Fire Departments.

***Raised crosswalks.*** A speed table with a sidewalk-level crosswalk on top. Pedestrians have a better view of traffic while they themselves are more visible to drivers.

***Raised intersections.*** A flat, sidewalk-level raised area covering the entire intersection. Very pedestrian friendly as it slows vehicle speeds through intersections (including slowing emergency vehicles to approximately 15 mph).

***Roundabouts and traffic circles.*** Roundabouts and the much smaller neighborhood traffic circles require drivers to steer around a center island within an intersection. Entering drivers must yield to those already within the intersection. Small traffic circles are for neighborhood streets where large vehicles are infrequent – these generally replace stop signs. Roundabouts are appropriate for higher volume intersections and must be sized accordingly to accommodate anticipated transit bus and other large vehicle traffic.

***Chicanes.*** A series of mid-block curb extensions that shift from one side of the street to the other to create an S or Z shaped curve. Chicanes work best when traffic is balanced in both directions to ensure adequate friction to slow drivers.

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## Street Network for Mixed Use & Residential Development

### Specific traffic calming techniques in more detail:

**Chokers.** A narrowing technique that basically makes part of a street one lane wide, so that drivers must yield to those already within the choker. Chokers are mostly used on residential streets. Charlotte has used chokers on connector streets between subdivisions. This technique is generally inappropriate for use on streets shared between vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians.

**Curb Extensions.** Curb extensions (also called neckdowns or bulbouts) are designed to narrow the travel lanes. This technique is frequently used at intersections in combination with curve radii reduction, and sometimes with raised crosswalks, to give pedestrians a better view of traffic while increasing their visibility to drivers, while also reducing the street crossing distance. These curb extensions can also be used in mid-block locations to narrow streets when on-street parking is infrequent.

**Narrowing.** Overly wide streets can be narrowed through the installation of medians or mid-block center islands. This technique may be particularly useful on streets with frequent driveways that would make edge narrowing difficult or cost prohibitive. Enhanced landscaping, as well as providing a pedestrian refuge for mid-block crossings, may help mitigate reduced driveway access.

**Curve radii reduction.** Reducing the curve radius at an intersection will greatly reduce the speed at which drivers can turn right. This can be especially important at intersections where right-turn-on-red or right turn slip lanes conflict with pedestrian crossing movements or on-street parking. In lower volume situations it is generally acceptable to expect stopped traffic to back up in order for an oversized vehicle to complete a right turn. In higher volume situations as well as areas with large amounts of oversized vehicle traffic curve radii reduction must take into account that some vehicles will mount the curb during turning movements. Due to the very low speeds involved this is not as much of a threat to pedestrians as it is to fixed objects – utility poles and other street furniture must be set back accordingly.

VDOT Road Design Manual, Appendix B Subdivision Street Design Guide  
See [http://www.vdot.virginia.gov/projects/resources/RDM\\_Ap\\_B\\_010105.pdf](http://www.vdot.virginia.gov/projects/resources/RDM_Ap_B_010105.pdf)  
VDOT Traffic Calming (Brochure)  
See <http://www.vdot.virginia.gov/info/resources/TrafficCalming.pdf>

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## Parking

Parking along Route 17 is prohibited and will remain so – it is a highway, not a main street.

Within areas already developed in a conventional manner, parking is provided through the use of surface lots. Conventional parking lots can be improved to meet the goals of this plan through a number of strategies, including driveway consolidation, enhanced landscaping, providing connections to adjacent parking lots, internal circulation to outparcels, and improved stormwater management. Most conventional parking lots are much larger than necessary for normal operations. Reducing impervious surfaces reduces runoff into surface waters and storm drainage systems, helping to recharge groundwater while both slowing and filtering stormwater.

As part of facility maintenance and property upgrade efforts, non-essential or overflow parking can be reconstructed using pervious materials. Porous pavement is a permeable pavement surface that temporarily stores surface runoff before infiltrating into the subsoil. Porous pavement is significantly more expensive than traditional asphalt. However, porous pavement can create cost savings in terms of storm drain costs and land consumption. Porous pavement requires extensive maintenance compared with conventional pavement. The cost of vacuum sweeping may be substantial if a community

does not already perform vacuum sweeping operations.

Conventional suburban development requires the parking for each use to be on the same site. This not only results in excess parking requirements but reduces the amount of land available for more productive structural development and requires the conversion of more land from natural or agricultural uses per unit of development. Within the Town Center and the smaller Village and Neighborhood Centers parking should be provided through a combination of on-street and off-street parking. Off-street parking requirements should be reduced in recognition of adjacent on-street spaces, and should also take into account nearby public parking facilities as well as



*Large surface parking lot at entrance to stores*

opportunities for shared parking.

Shared parking is basically determining the cumulative maximum parking demand for adjacent land uses, rather than requiring each use to provide for individual maximum demand. Shared parking is only practical within diverse mixed use areas or when adjacent uses either have different peak hours of parking demand (such as an office and a restaurant) or share many of the same customers. Shared parking is most effective in areas where development is compact and clustered. Shared parking lots must be walkable, with all spaces within a reasonable walking distance of all destinations they are intended to serve. Generally, the parking-space-to-front-door distance that a person is willing to walk for shopping or work is 400 to 800 feet, and the maximum is generally 1,200 feet.

There are two main approaches to shared parking: (1) contractual agreements between adjacent uses; and (2) parking management districts. The first approach involves only two adjacent users while the second encompasses an entire mixed use district with multiple property owners. Under a contractual agreement, the circumstances under which parking spaces would be shared would be explicitly defined in the contract. In a parking district, all uses within the district would have access to all the

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## Parking

parking spaces at any given time.

On-street parking, public parking lots and shared parking arrangements all allow greater development density on more valuable lands with high visibility and access, thus increasing private economic return and public tax values, while generating less stormwater and consuming less land and other natural resources.

Within centers and other mixed-use areas, most off-street parking facilities should be located to the rear or side of the building. This form of site design enhances customer visibility and pedestrian accessibility. Parking should not interfere with convenient pedestrian access between the sidewalk and front door. The physical layouts of walkable centers and compact mixed use areas encourages people to “park once” and to chain together most trips on foot. In areas with on-street parking, public parking facilities and shared parking, the relationship of buildings to the street and sidewalk is much more critical than their relationship to a parking lot.

Alley or common driveway access off of minor streets can provide parking access to customers as well as delivery vehicles while maximizing development and on-street parking along the major street. Combining driveways,

so one serves two parcels, minimizes impacts to on-street parking as well as conflicts with pedestrians, bicyclists and other drivers.

Pedestrian-friendly developments also accommodate bicyclists. Bicycle parking is usually accommodated between vehicle parking areas and sidewalks. Appropriate locations for bicycle parking are convenient to stores and other destinations but should be situated to avoid placing parked bicycles into pedestrian or vehicular areas.

The potential for compact, mixed use development to reduce parking demand is substantial. The Institute for Traffic Engineers and the Urban Land Institute, among others, have developed practices for projecting actual parking needs, reflecting shared parking, linked vehicle trips and shifts to walking and bicycling. Development specific parking demands should be considered rather than dependence on generic “one size fits all” parking standards.

Suburban residential parking is most commonly accommodated on-site, although guest parking may be on-street or along the shoulder. Use of pervious materials for driveways should be encouraged as part of an overall low-impact design approach to development.

Many “empty nesters”, couples without children, retirees and others are more interested in more compact housing options – small lot single-family homes, townhomes, garden apartments and retirement communities. Parking demand for such compact developments can be accommodated through on-street parking, alley-loaded garages, and off-street parking in combination with shared guest parking.

While there may be no parking on Route 17 itself, how parking is provided and how parking access is handled for development along the corridor is critical in helping to maintain its function as the main regional arterial connecting Isle of Wight County with regional centers.

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## Public / Mass Transit

Currently, Hampton Roads Transit, the regional transit provider, serves Isle of Wight County with Express Bus Service (Route 64) between Smithfield/Gwaltney and Northrup Grumman. Park and Ride facilities for this commuter express bus route are located in the shopping centers at Routes 10/258 and at Route 17/Smith's Neck Road. As commuter demand increases, Hampton Roads Transit may expand commuter bus service in the County.

In addition to commuter bus service, there may be demand for ridesharing – some combination of coordinated carpooling and managed vanpooling. The physical facilities needed to support ridesharing are almost identical to those for park-and-ride commuter buses, except that there may be multiple ridesharing boarding points at various locations within the study area. Whether express commuter buses or ridesharing, County officials and staff may be called upon to coordinate public transit operations with private property owners.

Route deviation allows enhanced neighborhood and business transit access by using smaller vehicles which can deviate from main routes to pick up and drop off riders at convenient locations. Hampton Roads Transit includes route deviation services among its proposed new and expanded services, although currently not proposed for Isle of Wight County.

The vehicles used to provide route deviation services are equipped to allow use by persons with disabilities. Specialized transit services for the disabled are often referred to as “para-transit”. Hampton Roads Transit provides the “Handi-Ride” service using wheelchair lift equipped vans.

Currently, Senior Services of Southeastern Virginia provides two transportation services in Isle of Wight County:

- I Ride - A 12-passenger, wheelchair-accessible bus includes a 31-mile fixed route with 31 stops and an upon request route deviation service. The transit route originates along Old Route 10 at Smithfield Apartments and continues south through Historic Smithfield to Benn's Church Bouvelard, before reversing course. The bus stops at each of the locations four times a day. It operates Monday through Friday beginning at 8 a.m., and ending at 4 p.m. (except holidays). All ages are welcome. Passengers 12 and under ride for free, but must be accompanied by an adult. Each ride costs a \$1.00.
- Transit Coordination – Countywide coordinates and provides transportation (12- and 14-passenger, wheelchair-accessible buses) for residents 60 and over with rides to medical appointments (5 days a week), Nutrition Centers/Senior Centers (2 days a week), and

legal aid (if surplus transit capacity available). There is a limit to one ride a week or four rides a month. There is a voluntary donation of \$4.00 per trip.

The goal for local shuttle transit service is to provide mobility for non-drivers or for those with limited access to a car.

The County is attracting an increasing number of retirees and “pre-retirees”. Currently most of these residents are considered to be active seniors or late middle age workers. But like many other parts of the US, the County must be prepared for the substantial challenges that will accompany the aging of the “Baby Boom” generation. The need for additional local transit may increase as more residents age in place.

More information may be obtained by contacting Hampton Roads Transit (phone 757-222-6100, website at [www.gohrt.com](http://www.gohrt.com)) and Senior Services of Southern Virginia (phone 757-461-9481, website at [www.ssseva.org](http://www.ssseva.org)). In addition, the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (website at [www.drpt.state.va.us](http://www.drpt.state.va.us)) is the lead state agency for federal and state transit programs, provider coordination, technical assistance, and funding.

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## Pedestrian Systems

A strong, well-connected network of pedestrian elements should be the goal of development in and around the Route 17 corridor. The ability to walk to parks, schools, workplaces, stores and natural areas strengthens both the physical and psychological bond of a community and reduces traffic congestion, parking requirements, and pollution. When sidewalks and paths are connected with a greenway network, the utility of the pedestrian system is enhanced as more places can be reached safely and in an attractive environment. Even in those residential areas considered too distant from other destinations for efficient linkages, the ability to walk the dog, push a stroller or, simply go for a walk is an important aspect of good public health and a high quality of life.

Pedestrian systems include sidewalks, paths, and greenways, although pedestrians may also be accommodated within shared streets. More specific guidance pertaining to the design and appearance of these features is found under the heading “Visual Character and Design Guidelines” found later in this plan and in the Recreation section as well. More information about shared streets may be found under the heading “Street Network for Mixed Use and Residential Development Patterns” within this section.

People are most inclined to replace a vehicle trip with a walking trip when the total walking trip time takes no more than 5 to 10 minutes, or typically distances of  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  of a mile. However, substantial delays—such as having to wait for a pedestrian crossing signal—will reduce the distance people are willing to walk, as will unpleasant, boring, or uncomfortable surroundings. Conversely, comfortable, stimulating, convenient pedestrian accommodations can encourage people to walk even greater distances. An excellent example of this can be found at any shopping mall, where people search for parking within feet of an entrance yet are willing to walk hundreds of yards once inside.

When discussing the creation of a walkable town center or of a “park once and walk” destination, the basic idea is much like turning a shopping mall inside out: it is equally or more convenient, comfortable, and pleasant to walk between different destinations than it is to drive. Thus, being pedestrian-friendly depends not only on providing sidewalks, paths, and crosswalks but on the density, proximity, and connectivity within the destination, as well as the activity and visual interest along the way.



*Greenway containing a multi-use concrete path*



*Kentlands-adult pulling child in wagon between fenced yards*

# Pedestrian Systems

## Sidewalks

Sidewalks are the connective tissue of urban and suburban development. Whether on foot or after parking their car, people must use sidewalks to reach commercial development, workplaces, and homes. In particular, sidewalks are critical within areas of compact commercial development, such as the Town Center, as well as other important pedestrian destinations such as parks, recreational areas, schools, and the Neighborhood Centers.

Within Town Center commercial areas, sidewalks should be wide enough to allow for multiple uses, no less than 10 feet along the full length of any building with a customer entrance, according to the 2006 Isle of Wight County Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities Master Plan. Groups of pedestrians should be easily able to pass, enough room should



*Typical commercial sidewalk*

be available to accommodate persons with physical disabilities, and businesses should be able to set out sign boards and possibly outdoor seating space. Sidewalks should be directly adjacent to backs of curb within commercial areas. Trees should be planted to provide shade and enhance the appearance of the street. These trees should be planted in the sidewalk space and protected by ornamental tree grates. A contiguous clear zone, free from tree grates, street furniture, lamp posts, and the like, of at least 5 feet must be maintained to meet Americans with Disability Act (ADA) requirements.

Within residential neighborhoods adjacent to mixed use and neighborhood centers, areas that typically have attached housing and a more urban feel, sidewalks may be more narrow in width—7 to 9 feet—and should have a small planting strip of an additional 4 to 6 feet between the curb and sidewalk. These strips, however, may be eliminated when sidewalks are buffered from the street by parked cars. Tree grates are acceptable here, although only when a 5-foot-minimum clear zone is provided.

Sidewalks within residential land uses containing detached homes should be wide enough to allow two people to pass or at least 5 feet. A planting strip of at least 4 to 6 feet should be located between the curb and edge



*Residential neighborhood sidewalk*

of sidewalk. Sidewalks along streets with shoulders or swales and no curbs should be located on the property side of the swale.

Sidewalks should be located along both sides of all arterial and collector roads, as well as all commercial and multi-family (including townhomes and condominiums) residential streets. Sidewalks are preferred along both sides of local residential streets. At densities between 2 and 4 dwelling units per acre, however, a sidewalk along one side is sufficient and limits the total amount of paved surface that generates stormwater. Shared streets, discussed under “Street Network for Mixed Use and Residential Development Patterns” for suburban residential areas, are also appropriate at this density. At densities below 2 dwelling

# Pedestrian Systems

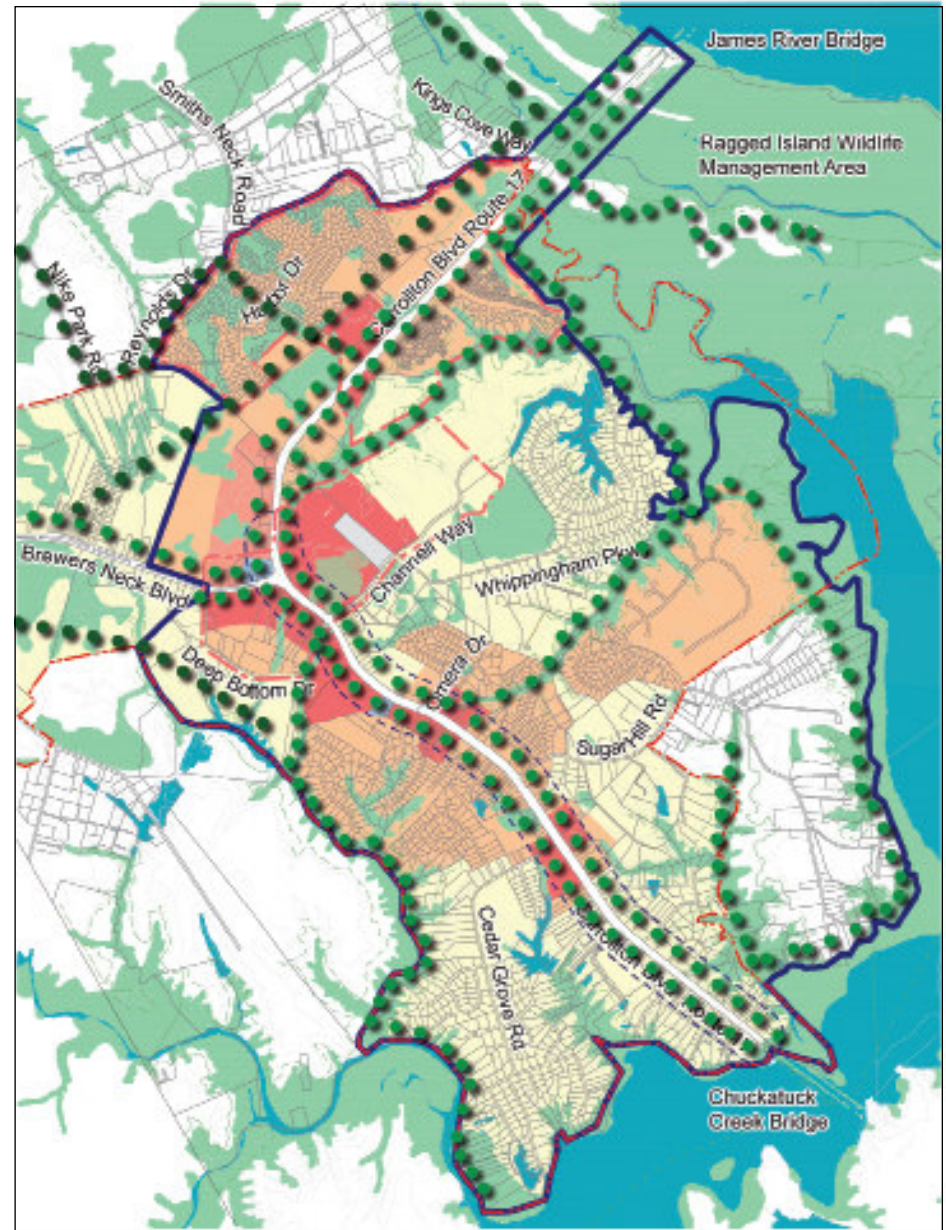
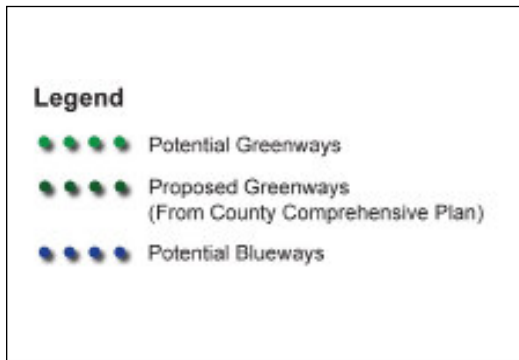
units per acre, the use of paths outside of the right-of-way and of a shared street are the more practical options in lieu of sidewalks.

## Paths and Greenways

Paths are less formal walkways that may or may not be related to the alignment of adjacent roads. Greenways are multi-use paths designed for pedestrians, bicyclists, and occasionally equestrians within their own rights-of-way or easements. Greenways are often considered to be linear parks providing recreational activities, yet also provide important transportation routes.

Paving materials should be hard-surfaced and ADA-accessible, such as concrete and asphalt. Within the Route 17 corridor, multi-use paths will be associated with the greenway system and be found farther away from the core of Neighborhood Center development - in particular, east of Smith's Neck Road and south of Channell Way.

Multi-use paths may be sized to accommodate both pedestrian and bicycle traffic to enhance their utility. This would best be accomplished by designating paths that link to schools, parks, neighborhoods, and other locations where bike travel would be beneficial to the public as multi-use. According to the 2006 Isle of Wight County Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities Master Plan, paved multi-use (or shared-use) paths should be a minimum of 10 feet wide and designed according to the standards in the *AASHTO Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities*.



Pedestrian and bicycle network

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## Bicycle Lanes

Two types of bicycle networks exist: on-road—wide paved shoulders, wide outer lanes or designated bike lanes; and off-road bike paths. Both types can be implemented within the study area.

On-road bicycle lanes and wide outer lanes are not appropriate on facilities with speeds above 45 mph. Although bicycles may be ridden on very wide paved shoulders - 8 feet or greater - off-road bike paths are preferable along high-speed highways.

On-road bicycle networks work in conjunction with greenways and multi-use paths. Along Route 17, bicycles should use the multi-use path, whereas along parallel collector and major local roads they could use wide outer lanes and paved shoulders. On-road bicycle networks need to be well-signed, have clear pavement markings, and bike racks or storage at major destinations.



*Bike Lane*



*Greenway Bike Path*

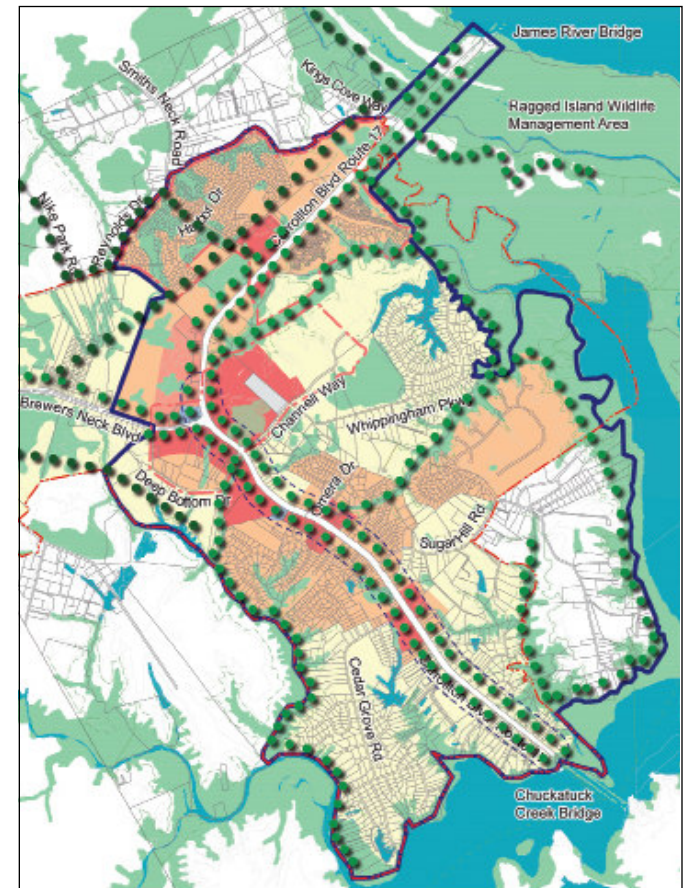
# Corridor Greenway



Cross-section of Route 17 greenway

A greenway on both sides of Route 17 will provide much-needed linkages between commercial, recreational, and residential uses through the use of a multi-use path. Users will be able to walk or bike to work, the grocery store, school, and parks. In addition, several greenway spurs will provide access to other portions of the study area and future planning should include investigation of safe options for pedestrian and bicycle crossing of Route 17.

The proposed Route 17 greenway, seen in the images found on this page, can be located within or near the 70' buffer required between new development and the road right-of-way. Vegetation will be retained or added, as necessary, within the buffer to provide a safe and enjoyable space for walking or biking.



Cross-section of Route 17

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## VII. Utilities

## Utilities

Adequate utilities infrastructure is required to support and facilitate the County's objective to direct the majority of County growth into the Development Service Districts including the Route 17 Corridor. Water and sewer services are provided through the County and electric, natural gas, telephone and fiber optics are provided by private suppliers.

### Water and Sewer Infrastructure

The principal water and sewer infrastructure necessary to support future development activities has been previously established within the Route 17 Corridor Study area limits.

#### Water system

The Western Tidewater Water Authority provides water to the Study Area and west into the County. The water main enters the County from the City of Suffolk at the Chuckatuck Creek Bridge and continues north along Route 17 to Brewer's Neck and there splits west and continues north to the James River Bridge. The existing water infrastructure consists primarily of a 16-inch diameter ductile iron (DI) water main and reduces to a 12-inch diameter DI water main at Smith's Neck Road. The 12-inch diameter DI water main continues along Route 17 approximately 1,000 feet towards the James River Bridge from Smith Neck Road.



Main water and sewer lines



## Utilities

A one million gallon capacity elevated water storage tank is located off of Brewers Neck Boulevard and serves as the primary source of stored water for the Corridor Study area. See accompanying map for general pipeline locations.

The existing water system infrastructure has been sized with the intent to serve the entire Corridor Study area. It is typical that private developers construct water mains for future development and connect to the water infrastructure, deeding the infrastructure to the utility.

### Sewer system

The sewer system infrastructure is provided by two entities. The Hampton Roads Sanitation District (HRSD) provides a 30-inch diameter DI wastewater force main that traverses the Corridor Study area along the western side of U.S. Route 17 and Brewer's Neck Boulevard. The Isle of Wight County (IOWC) owns and operates a 16-inch diameter high density polyethylene (HDPE) force main located along U.S. Route 17 from Brewers Neck Boulevard to Smiths Neck Road and a 10-inch diameter HDPE force main from Smith's Neck Road and along Route 17 for approximately 5,000 feet towards the James River Bridge. These force mains comprise the basic wastewater transport infrastructure in the project area. Wastewater is discharged into these force mains via pump

stations for conveyance to and treatment at the HRSD Nansemond River Treatment Facility located in the City of Suffolk.

The force main infrastructure has also been designed with the intent to handle the entire Corridor Study area. As with the water system,



*In-ground utilities construction*

future facilities (i.e., discrete sewer collection systems, pump stations and force mains) are typically constructed by private developers in support of new development and connected to the HRSD force main or the IOWC force main system.

### Adequacy of existing and future water and sewer infrastructure

In light of the intent to design capabilities to handle future Corridor needs, the existing water

### Flooding and Drainage Considerations in Low Lying Areas

Flooding of low lying areas near water bodies is caused by major storms that result in water levels rising above normal high tide elevations. These conditions are natural. Floodwaters will remain until the storm event has passed and water levels return to normal, dissipating the floodwaters. Flooding may be minimized by permanently increasing the land elevation in relation to the flood plain or building dikes (with walls above the flood plain) around areas to be protected. These solutions may be neither practical nor affordable. Under certain conditions flood insurance may be obtained from the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA), minimizing the financial impact of property loss as a result of flooding. The other option is to move outside the flood plain to higher ground.

Flooding may be caused or aggravated by inadequate or poorly maintained drainage facilities. Studies can be conducted to determine the cause or causes of continuing and periodic drainage issues. If the determination is inadequate or poorly maintained facilities, technical solutions may be evaluated for implementation or maintenance operations enhanced.

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## Utilities



*Onsite drainage materials*

and sewer infrastructure does not present any discernible roadblocks or negative impacts to the U.S. Route 17 Corridor planning initiatives. The capacity of water production and wastewater treatment facilities will require monitoring to determine if development outside the Corridor Study area is affecting capacity requirements within the Corridor Study area. To keep the water and sewer plan current, a master water and sewer plan was recently developed for the County to update the existing plan.

Existing water and sewer infrastructure should be capable of supporting future development provided that any required ancillary facilities (such as water storage and wastewater pump stations) for future development are designed with appropriate capacities. Existing utility policies are in effect which require future design of ancillary facilities to undergo appropriate planning and review prior to construction.

### **Extension of future water and sewer infrastructure**

The extension of future utilities should be carefully planned to insure the creation of adequate easements to allow access for infrastructure operation and maintenance activities. The location of landscaping or other obstructions within future utility easements should be prohibited or minimized in order to avoid disruption of utility service. Water and sewer pipelines should be separated by a minimum horizontal distance of 10 feet in accordance with State regulations. In general, single pipeline easements should be a minimum of 10 feet in width. Easements that share both water and sewer pipelines should be a minimum of 20 feet in width to allow for a separation of 10 feet between the pipelines.

### **Future drainage infrastructure**

Retention ponds on individual parcels are the typical method for managing stormwater runoff. Future development within the Corridor will continue to require drainage infrastructure to provide collection and discharge of stormwater resulting from new development activities. Such infrastructure will require careful planning to insure that drainage facilities are properly configured to meet State and County water discharge volume and quality requirements of the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Area regulations. Where possible, required stormwater basins and pipelines

should be designed to minimize infrastructure facilities and associated maintenance costs including the consideration of multi-parcel or regional stormwater basins. Also, where feasible and consistent with the intensity (degree of impervious surface) of proposed developments, low-impact design approaches should be included in development design as an alternative to collect-and-convey management approaches.

### **Continuation of individual lot well and septic utilities**

Several areas within the Secondary Study Area boundaries include parcels that utilize private wells and septic tank systems for water and wastewater service. The future use of these facilities will be dependent on their ability to provide for the parcel water supply and wastewater disposal needs within State and local parameters and, to some extent, the desire of the parcel owner to maintain the facilities. To account for the potential malfunction of these private wells and septic tanks or the desire of the parcel owner to forego continued maintenance, the capacity of future water and wastewater infrastructure should be designed to incorporate the replacement of these existing private wells and septic tanks. The inclusion of service capacity for these facilities will reduce overall infrastructure costs should such facilities require abandonment.

## Utilities

### Electric, Telephone, Natural Gas and Fiber Optics Utilities Infrastructure

In addition to the water and sewer service infrastructure identified in the foregoing paragraphs, the following utilities are located within the Corridor:

- Electric Service – Dominion Virginia Power
- Telephone Service – Verizon
- Natural Gas – Columbia Natural Gas
- Fiber Optics – Verizon

Existing electric service is primarily provided by means of pole structures and overhead wiring. Existing natural gas service is provided by means of underground pipelines and cables. Existing telephone service is provided by both

overhead and underground wiring and cables. The extension of these utilities for future development is coordinated by development owners with the utility companies to meet future development needs.

The provision of underground utilities is typically required for new construction projects throughout the Hampton Roads area. The underground location of utilities results in a project that is aesthetically more pleasing and provides a significant measure of protection during major storm events, minimizing the need for repair / reconstruction activities resulting from damage that can be caused by such events. Relocating existing aboveground utilities underground is generally very costly due primarily to the labor intensive efforts required to avoid existing underground utilities



*Overhead power lines*

and above ground structures. Consequently, the provision of underground utilities for new construction projects avoids both potential repair costs and future costs related to the underground relocation of above ground utilities.

### Conserving fiscal and natural resources through utility policy

Water and sewer utility policy has an effect housing price and the costs of providing services. Compact development is more efficiently served with linear utilities such as water and sewer, making installation and maintenance cheaper. Some of this cost savings may be reflected in house prices and utility bills. Thus, housing costs for County residents may be more affordable if infrastructure is compact and efficiently provided. The County will also conserve taxpayer dollars through efficient service costs.

The form and location of development are also influenced by utility policy. Compact development patterns consume less land, resulting in the destruction of fewer natural areas. They also conserve water, because less land is devoted to lawns that need to be irrigated, a major source of consumption. Since the County is in the southeastern Virginia groundwater management area, where declining groundwater levels and saltwater intrusion are issues, conserving water supplies is an important goal. Compact development also protects groundwater quality and quantity goals by reducing the total impervious surface (which allows absorption and aquifer recharge) and reducing the amount of fertilizer on suburban lawns (which reduces the potential for nitrate pollution of shallow groundwater aquifers).

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## VIII. Recreation

**A. Recreation Introduction**

**B. Standards for Parks and Recreation**

**C. Blueways and Water Access**

**D. Trailheads and Water Access**

**E. Implementation**

# Recreation Introduction

Given the increase in the County’s population in recent years, the number of recreation users has grown significantly. In addition, these users require continually updated and diverse types of activities. There is a very real need to plan for parks and recreational opportunities in this quickly-developing region, particularly when these land uses and activities may have been previously taken for granted given the large—yet diminishing—amounts of open space. In the 2001 Comprehensive Plan, County planners stated their need to ensure appropriate planning to meet a changing demographic, the necessity of purchasing or converting lands into public recreation areas to meet user demand, and set forth the following goals:

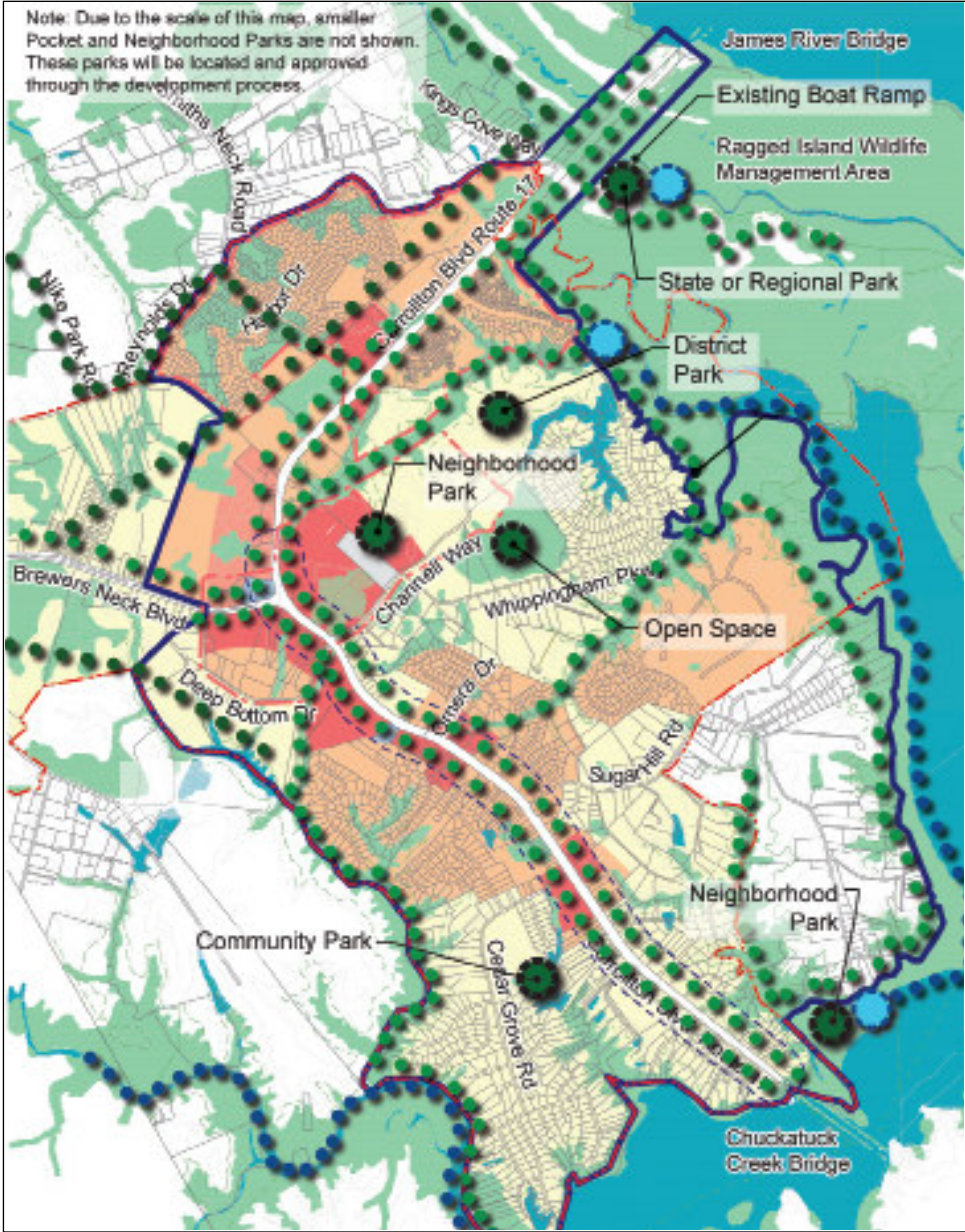
- Achieve environmental resource management objectives;
- Provide environmental interpretive facilities;
- Provide creative play areas that are often educational or interpretive in nature; and
- Integrate arts, culture, senior citizen activities, daycare, and adult education programs with traditional recreation and open space planning. (Comp Plan, 8.1)

**Legend**

- Potential Greenways
- Proposed Greenways (From County Comprehensive Plan)
- Potential Blueways
- Potential Water Access
- Potential Park\*

\*Potential parks are shown in all possible locations for planning purposes. Not all parks shown are intended to be constructed.

*Proposed and potential recreational and open space*



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## Recreation Introduction

To enable these goals, this portion of the Route 17 Corridor Plan identifies existing and potential opportunities and constraints; standards for parks and recreation types; proposed park, greenway, and blueway locations; and potential funding sources.

Isle of Wight County has twenty-one public/semi-public recreation/open space sites which include parks, a wildlife preserve, schools, and a roller skating rink. Of these sites, roughly six parks are used for active recreation, while others include the Bradshaw Fairgrounds, Franklin skating rink, and public boat ramps.

Within the Route 17 Corridor study area there are no public park facilities, with the exception of a canoe launch at the northern tip of Carrollton Road as it enters the Ragged Island Wildlife Management Area. Carrollton Nike Park is the closest recreational facility to the study area.

### Opportunities

- Access to water-based activities
- Access to natural resources, including wetlands, marshes, and a wildlife management area
- Potential for diverse recreational activities
- Potential for integrating natural and cultural resource interpretation with traditional recreation activities and planning
- Potential for sharing physical and financial resources with State and Federal entities, such as the Ragged Island Wildlife Management Area
- Potential to work with developers to shape master plans to include open space and recreation areas
- Potential to increase tourism through promotion of public recreation areas, such as parks and waterfront access sites

### Constraints

- Potential for number of parks and recreation users to exceed available facilities
- Must separate active recreation uses from ecologically-sensitive passive use areas
- Acquisition of park land and construction of new facilities must keep up with increasing population
- Few existing parks and recreation activities located within the Route 17 Corridor study area
- Lack of sufficient bike and pedestrian trails and greenways
- Lack of sufficient physical and visual public waterfront access
- Need to maintain existing facilities while funding new ones

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## Standards for Parks and Recreation

The Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) developed minimum standards for the development of parks and recreation facilities within communities. These standards are found in the Virginia Outdoors Plan—prepared by the DCR—and are used as a baseline for recommendations and guidelines in this study.

The Virginia Outdoors Plan classifies parks by size, population served, purpose, and types of facilities found within. It should be noted that the development standards for the park types are only guidelines to be considered when planning new parks or considering proposals for new development within the area. Each park type that may be feasible within the study area is described below and general guidelines for locations and programming are offered. Other park types not discussed within the Outdoors Plan are also included, as they could be utilized within the study area.

The location of parks ultimately depends on the population size, demographic, and demand of any particular community. Along Route 17, parks will be planned and constructed



*Example of a common green space that might be used as a mini park within a residential area*



*Playground located in a neighborhood mini park*

in relation to those areas where the influx or existing level of park users is highest. The map on page 68 shows all possible locations for the park types discussed in this section. The map is to be used as a guide for considering which lands might become parks and what type of park is best suited to a particular location. It is not recommended that all the parks shown on the map be constructed.

In addition, it is recommended that the County conduct a County-wide Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan to help facilitate the specific location of individual park areas.

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## Standards for Parks and Recreation

### Mini Parks

Mini parks often serve special purposes and are located in urban areas or densely populated neighborhoods where space is limited. Mini parks might be green spaces tucked between buildings; seating areas on sidewalks lined with retail or townhouse buildings; community markets; or enhancement of a major intersection to include plantings, benches, and informational kiosks. Due to their small size, they typically do not support athletic activities or large gathering spaces, but are meant to provide informal seating and serve as a place for rest, information gathering, and conversations. Some mini parks, however, may provide space for community flower or vegetable gardening or the placement of artwork.

Mini parks are typically less than 5 acres in size and have a service radius of about  $\frac{1}{4}$  of a mile. Between .25 and .5 acres of this park type should be provided per 1000 people. In general, an even distribution of mini parks is needed to meet the needs of a community.

#### ***General Guidelines:***

- Administered by local government
- Locate in common spaces of new commercial or residential development to serve both visitors and community residents
- Community garden spaces, seating areas, kiosks, or outdoor art galleries
- Located along greenways or within buffers and serve as nodes



*Mini park tucked in between two buildings*

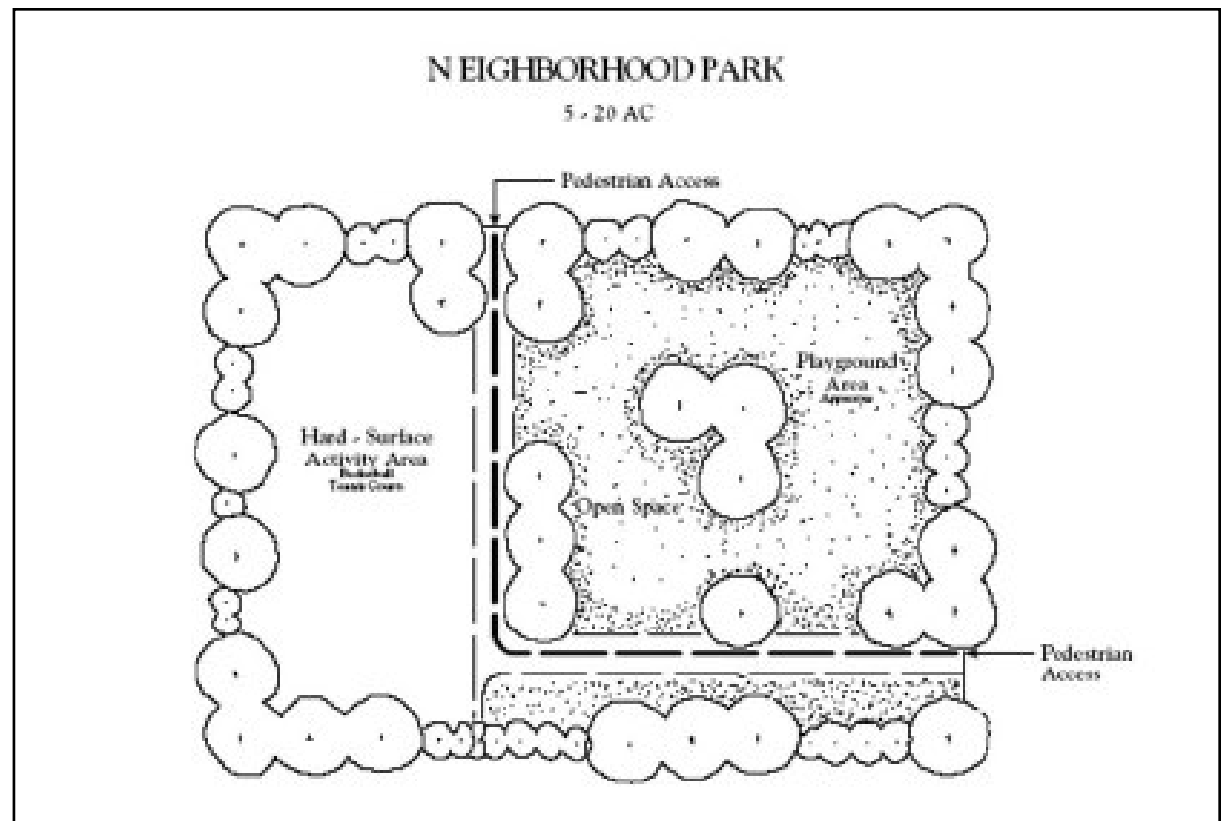
# Standards for Parks and Recreation

## Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks are the backbone of any park system and the primary open space type within traditional neighborhood developments. They are located within convenient walking distance of homes and provide limited types of recreation for the entire family and all age groups. These parks often include multi-use athletic fields, playgrounds, walking trails, picnic areas, and court games. According to the book *New Urbanism* by Peter Katz,

Like traditional town commons or courthouse squares, these spaces are regarded as the civic focus for neighborhoods. They are located in central, prominent places...and are often connected to major streets. Community facilities (such as day care, churches, schools or meeting rooms) are assigned special positions adjacent to these spaces...Buildings surrounding the space might be subject to special urban design guidelines, particularly streetwall and setback requirements that...help define the volume of the space.

Neighborhood parks are no larger than 20 acres in size and have a service radius of about ½ to 1 mile. Roughly 3 acres of this park type should be provided per 1000 people.



*Conceptual drawing of a Neighborhood Park (Virginia Outdoors Plan).*

### **General Guidelines:**

- Administered by local government
- Located away from the Route 17 corridor and within Mixed Use Residential areas
- Located near schools and away from railroads, major streets, and other hazardous areas
- Should be within walking distance for most neighborhood residents

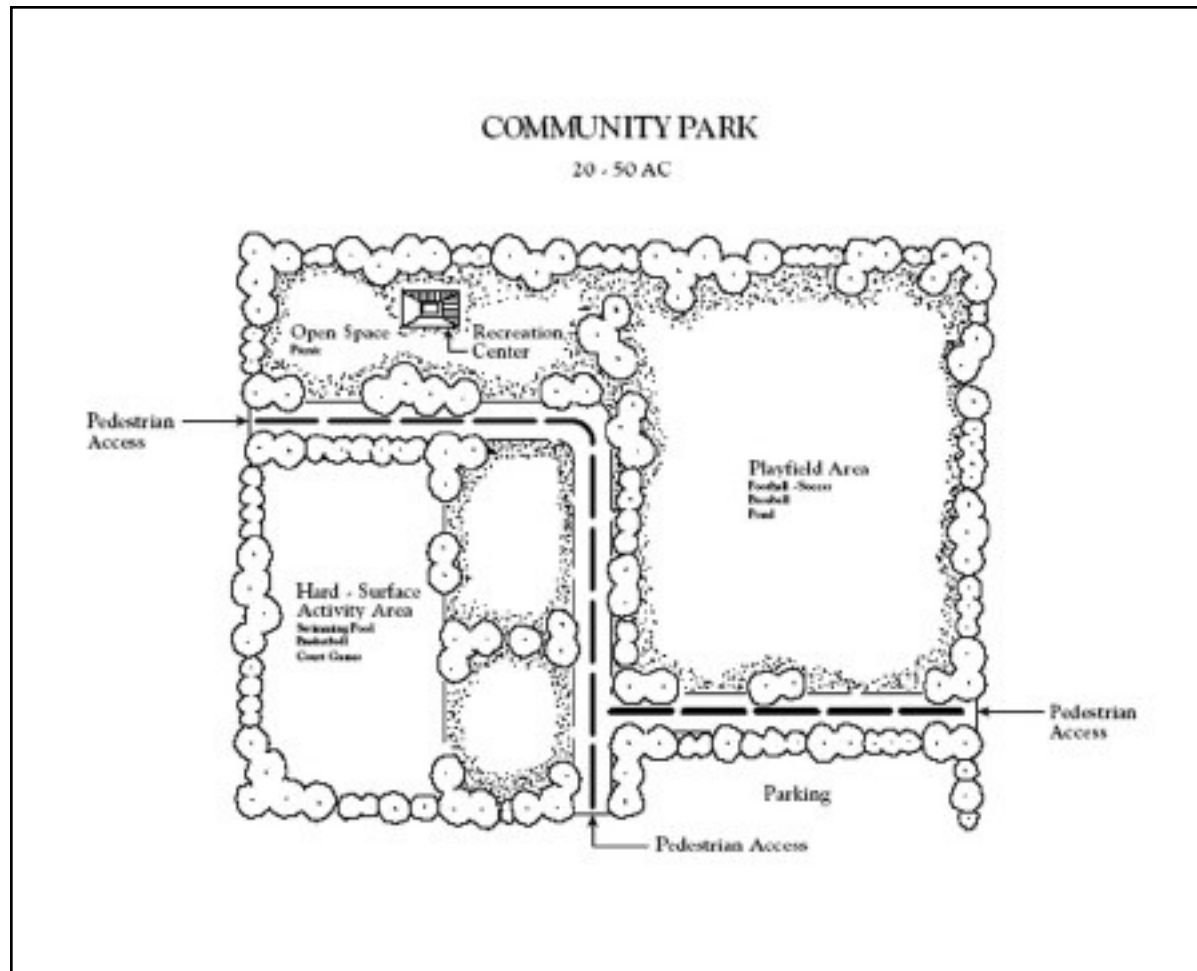
## Standards for Parks and Recreation

### Community Parks

Community parks serve special purposes—primarily active recreation—and in some cases take advantage of unique site opportunities. Community parks should be able to accommodate heavy usage by several groups simultaneously. They are typically less than 50 acres in size and have a service radius of about 3 miles. About 3 acres of this park type should be provided per 1000 people.

#### *General Guidelines:*

- Administered by local government
- May be used in place of a neighborhood park in rural areas
- Could contain a recreation center, playgrounds, court games, trails, a fishing lake, and beach area
- Locate near the geographic center of a community and along a public transportation route
- Could be located along waterfront to provide visual and physical access to the James River and its tributaries



Conceptual drawing of a Community Park (Virginia Outdoors Plan).

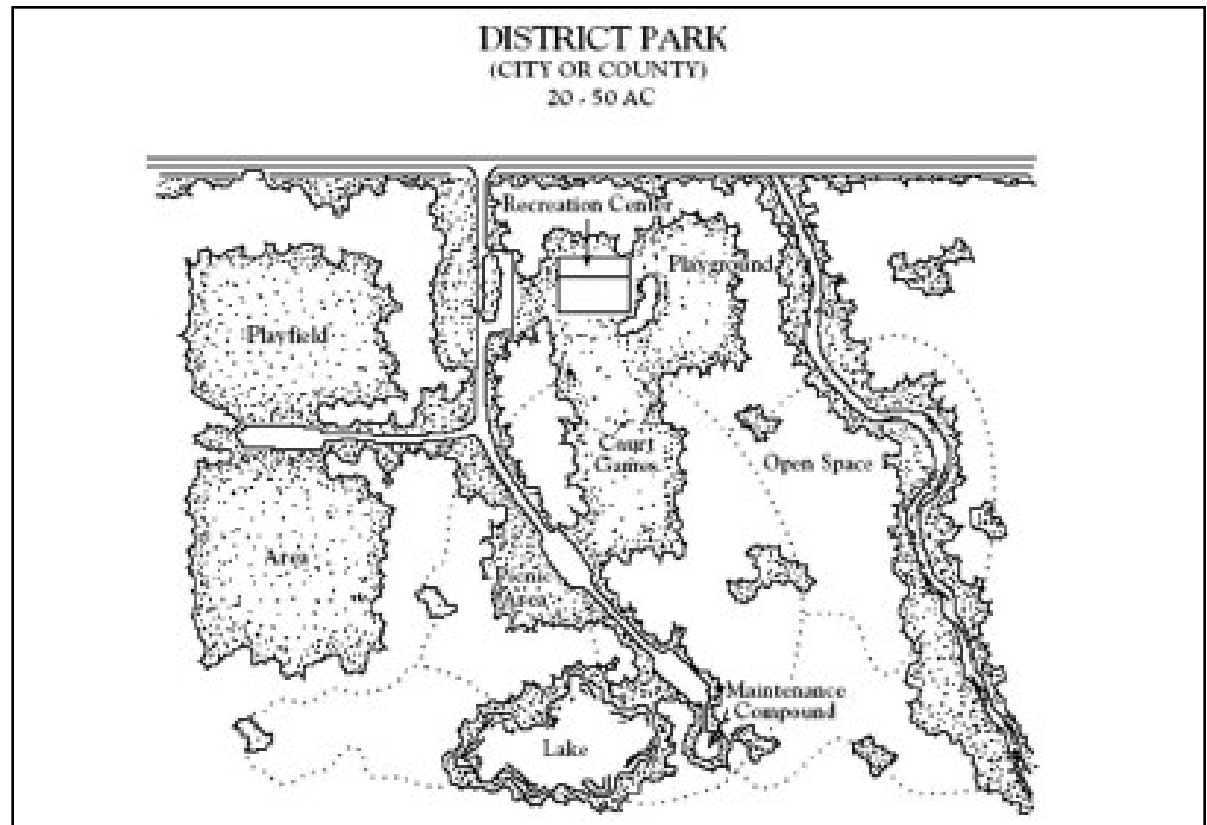
## Standards for Parks and Recreation

### District Parks

The district park should serve the recreational needs of large portions of the local population. It should contain a wide variety of intensively developed areas for day-use recreation, while providing ample open space with generous buffers between activity areas. The site can vary from flat open space to moderately or steeply sloping topography. It should be capable of supporting a wide variety of activities with ample buffer and natural areas. A stream, lake or tidal waterfront site is very desirable. The district park needs to be accessible by automobile, as well as by pedestrians and bicycles. District parks are typically no larger than 150 acres in size and should be provided at a ratio of 4 acres per 1,000 people.

#### *General Guidelines:*

- Administered by local government
- Should be accessible from a greenway and/or bike path systems, as well as by vehicle and mass transit
- Could contain active and passive recreation facilities and opportunities, such as walking trails, tennis courts, golf courses, soccer fields, and fishing/boating access



*Conceptual drawing of a District Park (Virginia Outdoors Plan)*

## Standards for Parks and Recreation



Conceptual drawing of a Regional Park (Virginia Outdoors Plan).

### Regional Parks

Regional parks are designed to provide recreational space for a relatively large population. As much as 80 percent of a regional park site remains as undeveloped open space to ensure that passive recreational opportunities are available. They should be located in areas with significant natural characteristics, including water resources, scenic viewsheds, and variable topography. The regional park should complement other park types and is not a substitute for neighborhood, community, and district facilities. They are typically between 100 and 500 acres in size, but can be created on any larger parcel of land.

#### *General Guidelines:*

- Administered by single or multiple governmental entities
- Should serve several communities
- Contains primarily passive recreation such as camping, trails, open spaces, and picnic facilities

### State Parks

A State park should provide significant

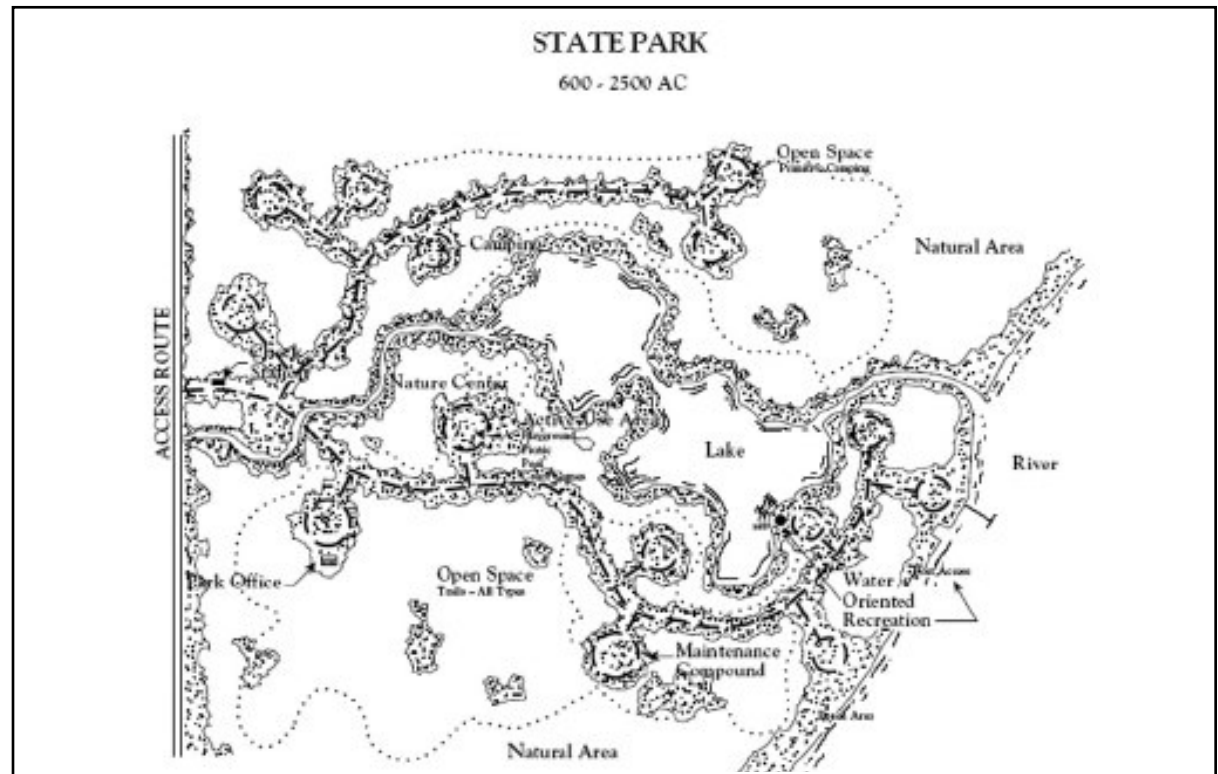
## Standards for Parks and Recreation

recreational experiences and protect a significant natural resource base or landscape. Extensive open space and/or unique natural features in the form of views, terrain, and vegetation are important qualities of the state facility. Compatible recreational uses are a necessity and access to a major lake, ocean, or river is very desirable. State are typically more than 600 acres in size and should be provided at a ratio of 10 acres per 1,000 people.

Ragged Island Wildlife Management Area functions much like a State park, and likely fulfills the current need for this park classification. The facilities at Ragged Island, however, require improvement in order to be useable by visitors. Additional trails; improved and enlarged parking areas; upgraded restroom facilities; removal of the chain link fence; the installation of trash receptacles, recycling containers, and benches; and an updated interpretive plan, including signage and kiosks would create an enjoyable and educational atmosphere for visitors. The County should work with Virginia's Department of Game and Inland Fisheries to improve and maintain facilities at Ragged Island.

### General Guidelines

- Administered by State government
- Primarily used for large-scale recreation



Conceptual drawing of a State Park (Virginia Outdoors Plan).

experiences and/or to protect and utilize significant natural resources

- Could contain camp sites, trails, overnight facilities, an amphitheater, and fishing/boating access
- Should utilize the Ragged Island Wildlife Management Area, unless additional State park facilities are required
- Work in conjunction with the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries
- Must consider that hunting is allowed within

Ragged Island and be aware of any safety issues created by conflicting uses. Consider allowing full park access only on Sundays when hunting is not allowed within Virginia, separating uses, or other methods of ensuring the safety of all users

- Must foster cooperation with the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, who will be the administrative entity

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# Standards for Parks and Recreation

## Athletic Complexes

In contrast to regional parks, whose primary focus is open space, athletic complexes accommodate concentrated uses of intensely programmed athletic fields and facilities. They are typically provided on a few strategically located sites. These complexes begin at around 25 acres in size and do not have a specific service radius. For convenience, they should be located near transportation route, yet not within neighborhoods due to the potential for high levels of noise, bright lights, and evening activities. There is no standard for acreage per population; for athletic complexes, this determination is based on user demand.

### *General Guidelines:*

- Locate athletic complexes near arterial roads, such as Route 17 or Brewer's Neck Boulevard, for easy access
- Avoid placing athletic complexes within neighborhoods due to noise, traffic, and light pollution issues



*Example of an athletic complex (Greensboro, NC Parks and Recreation Department).*

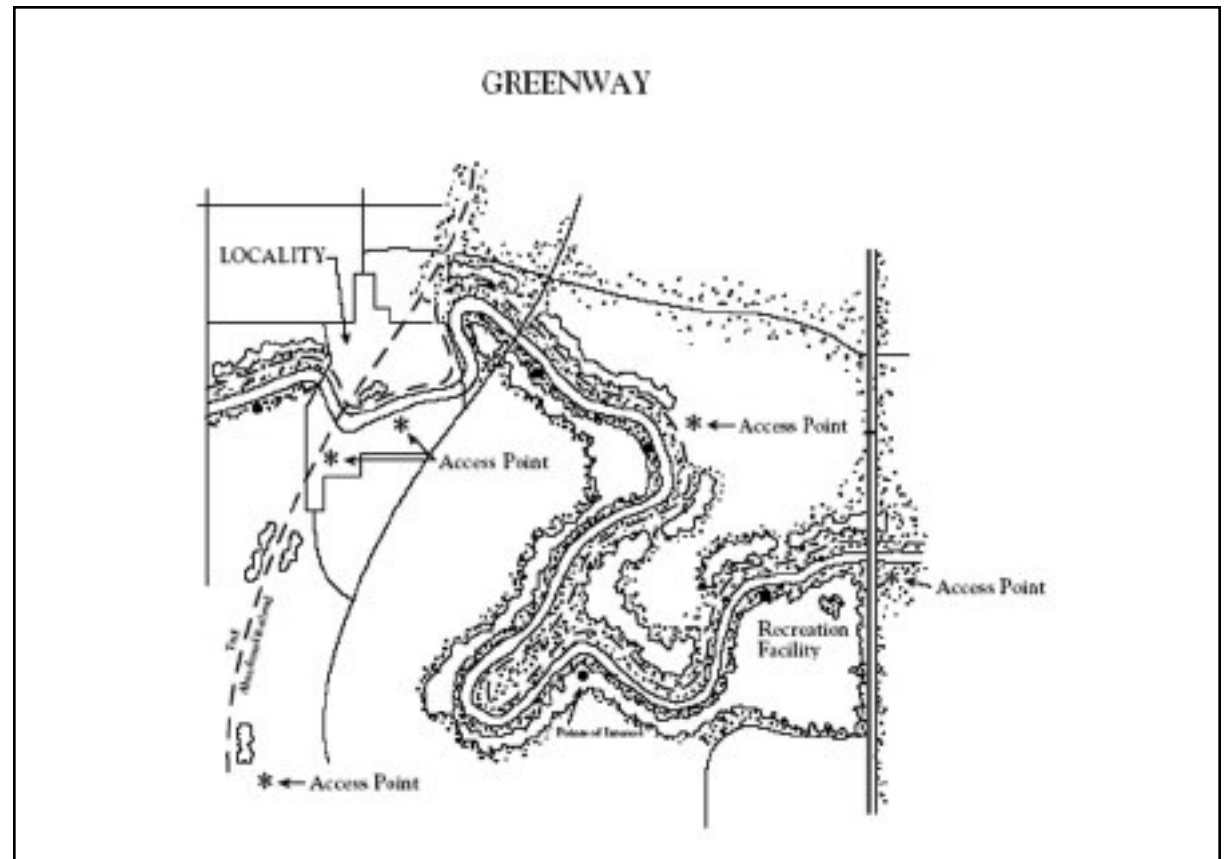
# Standards for Parks and Recreation

## Greenways

Greenways are open-space corridors that can be managed for conservation, recreation, and/or alternative transportation. The service area depends upon the location, size, and significance of the greenway corridor. For example, the longer greenways that link to more places will inherently draw greater numbers of people from farther distances. Refer to Chapter 8 of the 2001 Comprehensive Plan for additional county-related greenways guidance.



*Greenway along a watercourse*



*Conceptual drawing of a Greenway  
(Virginia Outdoors Plan)*

### **General Greenway Guidelines:**

- Longer than 1 mile, typically at least 75 to 100 feet wide
- Refer to the 2006 Isle of Wight County Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities Master Plan for additional information regarding greenway policies and proposed facilities
- Consider locating new greenways along drainage ways, along the edge of Ragged Island Wildlife Management Area, and connecting to new parks

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## Blueways and Water Access



*Waterfront open space held in common ownership by a subdivision homeowners' association*



*Trailhead near a blueway (BurnhamInk.com)*



*Watercourse being used as a blueway (Knox County, TN Parks and Recreation Department)*

### Blueways

Blueways are navigable streams and waterways that, similarly to greenways, can be used for conservation, recreation, and transportation. Typical blueway users include kayakers, boaters, swimmers, and fishermen.

#### ***General Blueway Guidelines:***

- Link blueways with water access points such as boat ramps, docks, beaches.
- Provide a blueway along Batten Bay and along Brewers Creek

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## Trailheads and Water Access

Trailheads are small gathering areas found at the beginning of trails, greenways, or blueways. They typically contain signage that conveys the name of the trail and a trail map. Some trailheads are formally designed and offer seating, trash receptacles, and water fountains, while others are simple earthen areas with a single sign. Within the study area, trailheads will be created at strategic spots that are safe, highly visible, well-lit at dusk and nighttime, and convenient to the highest number of users. A parking lot associated with a school or park could be used as a trailhead, as could a small paved area within a neighborhood. Trailheads might also be found at boat launches to orient blueway users. Water access could mean boat or canoe launches, swimming beaches, boardwalks, or simply visual access to scenic water-related views.



*Formal trailhead with signage and seating (Friends of the Pere Marquette Rail-Trail)*

### **General Guidelines:**

- For rural locations or areas that must be accessed by car, locate trailheads or water access points near parking lots
- Include amenities such as maps, signage, drinking fountains, seating, and or bike racks
- Locate water access points along Batten Bay, within the Ragged Island Wildlife Management Area, and along Chuckatuck Creek
- Locate trailheads at such convenient places such as schools, within parks, and at subdivision entrances.
- Coordinate trailheads and water access points with greenway and blueway locations and beginning/ending termini



*Boat ramp providing access to a watercourse (www.bill.innannen.com)*

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## Implementation

In order to introduce new parks, greenways, and blueways into the study area, the County must follow a process of needs evaluation, land acquisition, project funding, and construction. Many of the steps are outlined in the Chapter 8 of the County's 2001 Comprehensive Plan; this master plan concurs with the County's process and recommends that it proceed accordingly, as well as utilize the guidance offered in this section of the study.

To summarize the Comprehensive Plan, the County must follow the process described below:

- Inventory and evaluate existing facilities, the current gaps in levels of service, and the needs of park users
- Determine which lands are available that will meet the County's recreation needs
- Seek cost-effective means of acquiring needed park lands
- Seek cost-effective means of constructing parks and greenways
- Periodically re-evaluate parks and recreation needs to ensure that acceptable levels of service are being maintained

In general, the development of parks and recreation facilities, including greenways, should proceed in tandem with other area

development. The County has a much better chance of creating and enhancing recreation opportunities if potential sites are identified prior to the threat of commercial or retail development. Thus, the inventory and evaluation stages of the process are essential.

The Comprehensive Plan states the need to develop a greenways program and to aggressively pursue funding from both public and private sources to purchase easements or secure easements through donations. (Comp Plan, 8.14). The Comprehensive Plan also discusses funding sources including Virginia Recreational Trails Fund Program, The Conservation Fund's American Greenways Program, the National Park Service's Rivers and Trails Assistance Program, developer fees, and user fees. The box at right offers additional funding sources the County may wish to utilize.

To ensure that parks and recreation facilities are well-funded at the public level, park land acquisition and implementation should be part of the County's budgeting process and Capital Improvement Programs. The County may be able to estimate park development costs and identify appropriate funding sources prior to actually constructing facilities to better approximate budgeting needs.

### Potential Funding Sources

TEA-21 Programs

Community Development Block Grants

Bond Referendums

Local Capital Improvement Programs

Local Private Sector Funding

Land and Water Conservation Fund Grants

Wetlands Reserve Program

American Greenways Eastman Kodak awards

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## IX. Open Space

### A. Existing and Proposed Open Space

### B. Implementation

## Existing and Proposed Open Space

The 2001 Isle of Wight Comprehensive Plan makes a distinction between recreation areas and open space: recreation areas are used for activities such as tennis, basketball, camping, and hiking, while open spaces are managed primarily for natural resources protection. The plan notes, however, that combined in creative land planning and management programs, they can be mutually supportive toward achieving their respective objectives. The Route 17 Corridor Master Plan will make the same distinction and discuss open space in terms of natural, undeveloped places where human interaction is secondary to the need to protect valuable and sensitive resources, but will also recognize that lands utilized for parks and recreation will inherently be open space. The intent of this portion of the study is to identify locations of existing open space, identify areas that could be preserved or protected, and discuss the value and appropriate uses of such open spaces.

The preservation and creation of open space is worthwhile because these activities help to preserve the rural, agricultural character of the study area and region—a goal identified through stakeholder meetings. Not only is the physical space retained, but views to and across this landscape are preserved, which ultimately preserves and enhances rural character. Maintaining existing agricultural lands

inherently maintains agricultural character, including the field and forest patterns that historically existed in the region. The presence of undeveloped open space also helps mitigate the amount of stormwater runoff as well as the stormwater quality. For example, open vegetated fields will absorb water into the ground and help filter pollutants before the runoff reaches nearby creeks, bays, and other water bodies. Wildlife utilizes open space as habitat, adding yet another layer of value. Finally, when in combined use with a park, open space and active or passive recreation are an excellent way of creating and/or maintaining undeveloped, natural landscapes.

### Value of Open Space

- Preserve rural, agricultural character
- Preserve attractive viewsheds
- Reduce stormwater drainage problems
- Limit and reduce pollution
- Retain wildlife habitat

*A typical farm and forest landscape in Isle of Wight County*



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# Existing and Proposed Open Space

Because of its proximity to the James River and its tributaries and backwaters, Isle of Wight County has a wealth of natural resources and the potential for protection and enhancement of open spaces. Route 17 Corridor Master Plan abuts the Ragged Island Wildlife Management Area, is adjacent to Batten Bay and Chuckatuck Creek, and therefore has numerous water-related resources. Open spaces include open fields and uplands, woodlands, drainageways, creeks, wetlands, and open water. Many of the open fields and uplands are found near the intersection of Route 17 and Brewers

Neck Boulevard, which is also a prime location for commercial and residential development. Woodlands are typically located along drainage ways or within wetlands. Wetlands are interspersed throughout the study area, and given the cost of mitigating them for construction purposes, are best left alone or at least minimally altered.

The study area, however, has little dedicated or permanent open space. Much of the former agricultural and large-acreage residential parcels have been subdivided into higher-density

neighborhoods. Most of the remaining open space within the study consists of agricultural fields, marshes, wetlands, woodlands, and drainageways. While some of this land is unbuildable and will likely remain open in the future, development of other areas is inevitable. In order to retain the rural character of the study area, a balance must be struck between commercial and residential development and preservation of open space. This can be achieved in numerous ways.



*Existing open space near Ragged Island Wildlife Management Area*

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## Implementation

*Some of the methods for retaining open space amid encroaching development are as follows:*

### **Preservation of agricultural and undeveloped lands through easements, transfers of development rights, proffers, and similar conservation tools**

Numerous land conservation and development tools exist to protect land. The most prominent is the Transfer of Development Rights (TDR), where a landowner can sell the development rights on their property to a developer, who then builds his or her project in another location designated for growth. The land for which the rights are sold is then placed under a permanent conservation easement and can typically never be developed. Using a TDR, the landowner is still able to make a profit from their land, but residential and commercial growth is located in a more appropriate place.

Another approach would be for the County to begin long-term planning and identification of lands that should remain open space; these lands might remain undeveloped or eventually be utilized as greenways or parks. After these lands have been identified, the County can better evaluate development proposals and

suggest where developers might proffer land for open space.

### **Encouraging deep construction setbacks from road edges for both residential and commercial properties**

The Comprehensive Plan suggests setbacks of at least 50 to 100 feet for development located along Route 17; the County currently requires a 70-foot buffer of natural vegetation be retained along this corridor. These setbacks, when landscaped or maintained in native vegetation, serve multiple purposes. They add to the physical mass of open space, reduce automobile pollution, serve as noise and visual barriers between the road and developments, can be used as a corridor for wildlife, and could be used as a greenway with bike/ped facilities physically separated and somewhat buffered from the road by vegetation.

### **Instituting non-standard methods of residential development such as clustering**

Typical conventional subdivision layout utilizes a great deal of land and leaves little remaining area for open space or preservation of natural features. Cluster development, however, allows a greater density of housing units to be built

in a “cluster” thus preserving unused land as open space. Cluster development is discussed in Chapter 11 of the Comprehensive Plan and also in the Environmental Protection section of this plan.

### **Respecting natural features such as riparian buffers, floodplains, and wetlands**

Ensuring that riparian buffers, floodplains, and wetlands are respected will inherently retain and enhance open space within the study area. Prohibiting or limiting development within floodplains and wetlands will not only preserve natural features, but also reduce building costs and potential long-term issues of water quality, flooding, and damage to building foundations.

Ensuring that buffers are maintained, created, or enhanced along waterways will also increase the amount and quality of open space. Buffers screen views to development, filter polluted run-off, provide habitat for wildlife, and could be used as a greenway corridor.

One particularly large wetland is found in between Channel Way and Whippingham Way. The size of this wetland lends itself to protection as open space and possible use as a regional park.

## Implementation

Financial benefit programs for creating and enhancing buffers and natural features include:

- Virginia Department of Forestry's Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program
- Virginia Department of Forestry's Riparian Buffer Tax Credit
- Chesapeake Bay Program's Small Watershed Grants
- creating new parks and County-owned open space

Although programmed for separate uses, open space and parks serve the same purpose in relation to preserving and protecting relatively undeveloped lands. When the County purchases land for park development, it is ultimately preserving open space. The County should consider not only purchasing land for the creation of parks, but also acquiring land to be maintained in open space. County-owned open space could simply be maintained in a natural state to preserve viewsheds or could be utilized for environmental education and passive recreation. Lands preserved in their undeveloped state are frequently less costly to local governments (and consequently to taxpayers) than residentially developed properties that come with costs for infrastructure maintenance and community services.

### Open Space Preservation Resources

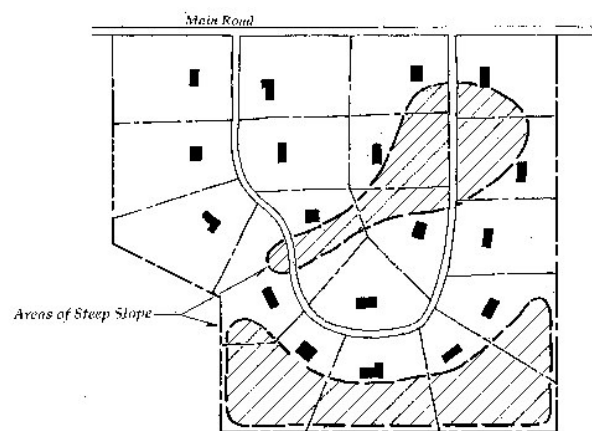
American Farmland Trust: [www.farmland.org](http://www.farmland.org)

The Conservation Fund: [www.conservationfund.org/](http://www.conservationfund.org/)

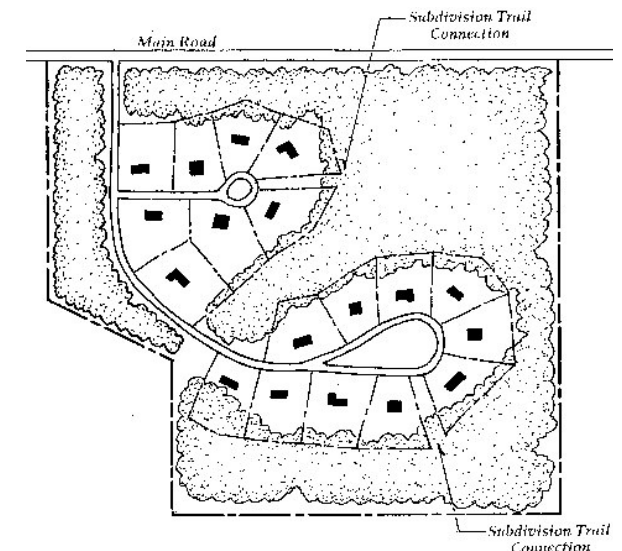
Land Trust of Virginia: [www.landtrustva.org/index.htm](http://www.landtrustva.org/index.htm)

Scenic Virginia: [www.scenicva.org/index.html](http://www.scenicva.org/index.html)

VirginiaOutdoorsFoundation: [www.virginiaoutdoorsfoundation.org/](http://www.virginiaoutdoorsfoundation.org/)



Example of traditional land development subdivision  
(Cumberland, MD Zoning Ordinance)



Example of clustered land development subdivision  
(Cumberland, MD Zoning Ordinance)

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## X. Visual Character

**A. General Community Appearance**

**B. Corridor**

**C. Viewsheds**

# General Community Appearance

## Introduction

At present, the visual character of the Route 17 study area is chiefly rural vernacular. Single-family homes face primarily un-curbed roads and local retailers operate from small plazas or roadside stands. Vegetation groupings range from natural, unmanaged hedge rows and fields to simple yet formal ornamental plantings found near developed areas and buildings. Buildings are generally low in height, simple in layout, and separated from the road by a wide grassy median and parking. The most visually-appealing views are found at the southern end of the corridor—where the road crosses over Chuckatuck Creek—and at the northern end of the corridor—where views of open countryside are available to the east. Indeed, participants in the public meetings preferred a rural and naturalistic look with native vegetation conserved in place, rather than manicured landscaping.

The overarching goal for the primary study area is to enhance the remaining scenic and rural qualities of the area while allowing for sensitive development along Route 17. To achieve this goal, the desired visual character of the study area needs to be taken into consideration. Elements such as community appearance; viewsheds; gateways; and models for desirable development are included in this plan.



*Examples of existing visual character within the study area*

# General Community Appearance

## Community Appearance Recommendations

Taking into account information gathered from public meetings, the desirable appearance of the Route 17 corridor is one that retains its historically rural and vegetated appearance. In general, the community expressed that the section of Route 17 south of Brewer's Neck Boulevard had a more pleasing character than the more heavily-trafficked portion to the north. Given this concept, the following goals should be taken into consideration when planning, reviewing, and approving new developments or changes within the corridor, or even those that might affect the corridor.

- Maintain the small-town, village-like character of the corridor.
- Buildings, parking lots, and other constructed features should not detract from or visually compete with natural resources such as woodlands and views to open space and water.
- Parking lots should be designed to provide for the minimum number of expected users and be proportional to the size of the associated building(s).
- Buildings should be designed and sized at a smaller scale and with façades that harmonize with the surrounding visual aesthetic of the area. Avoid “big box” stores with long, unbroken frontages in favor of



*Examples of appropriate mixed use and commercial development that may be applied along Route 17 ([www.stmichaelscountry.com](http://www.stmichaelscountry.com))*

- smaller 1- to 2-story buildings with minimal footprints.
- Avoid curbing Route 17 or any other road unless deemed absolutely necessary for safety and drainage reasons. Rather, handle drainage with swales, as is the current method within the corridor.
- Utilize street lights only in more intensely developed areas, such as within the mixed used portions of the study area near the intersection of Route 17 and Brewer's Neck Boulevard.
- Limit the scale of development to the minimum needed to provide services and housing to residents.
- Maintain a balance of natural open space and development.

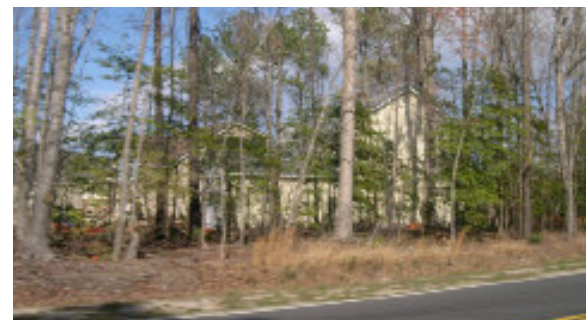
- Avoid shopping plazas and “strip malls” that place numerous buildings in a single row and require extensive roadside frontage. Rather, cluster commercial buildings at intersections or in a manner that requires a single entrance drive leading to parking behind or within the building cluster.
- Retain buildings and features that are characteristic of the area, such as historic buildings, attractive viewsheds, and native vegetation.
- Limit large-scale grading activities in favor of working with existing topography during construction activities.
- Avoid creating berms for screening in favor of retaining and/or enhancing existing topography and vegetation.

# Corridor

## Views

Along the Route 17 corridor, attractive views are quickly disappearing due to rapid development, as well as development that is not planned in a sensitive manner. As witnessed in the northern portions of Route 17, views of rural scenery are giving way to shopping plazas and subdivisions. There are, however, a number of ways to limit further destruction of viewsheds.

- Enforce the 70-foot buffer requirement along Route 17 and ensure that the buffers contain native vegetation that is capable of screening undesirable views.
- Enact wider and denser buffers for development that is particularly incompatible with the desired character of the road.
- Favor screening vegetation over large berms, which tend to be unnatural in character and be somewhat of an eyesore if not well designed. Plant native vegetation that will thrive and be easily maintained.
- Maintain the buffers so they survive and do not become overgrown with invasive plant species.
- Consider underground utilities whenever feasible.
- Remove condemned buildings as soon as possible to avoid an unkempt appearance along the corridor.
- When planning or reviewing any new development adjacent to the corridor, consider how it will impact the corridor viewshed. Questions to ask include:
  - Will this development be visible from the Route 17?
  - Do we want this development to be visible from the corridor?
  - Can we screen the development from view?
  - Should the screening be along the edge of the development or closer to the road?



*Illustration, above: Example of buffering and screening that might separate Route 17 from new development*

*Existing screening that adequately limits views to new development*



*Inappropriate use of berming to limit views creates unnatural landscape appearance and does not adequately screen buildings*

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## Corridor

### Landscape

The most valuable commodity available when attempting to preserve the character of Rt. 17 is the physical landscape contained within and available nearby. Once the landscape becomes developed, the rural character is either greatly diminished or no longer present. Therefore, it is imperative that much thought be put into how the landscape is modified and how it might be preserved. Additional information on land preservation techniques is available earlier in this master plan under the heading “Open Space.”

- In conjunction with preserving views, utilize buffers and medians to preserve undeveloped land between the road and development
- Cluster development together so more efficient use is made of the landscape and open space is preserved to the maximum extent possible
- Leave certain parcels undeveloped to preserve attractive views and open space along the corridor; encourage re-consolidation of smaller frontage parcels with adjacent lands so that development can occur in a coordinated manner, with limited direct access to the highway and development sited to reduce its visual impact as seen from the road

- Consider conservation easements or development proffers as tools to preserve land within and visible from the road corridor

### Gateways

Consider that the opportunity exists for two gateways: the first occurs as vehicles come off of the bridges, and the second takes place at a smaller scale as vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists enter the Bartlett Town Center development.

The initial gateways will require sizeable features, such as large-scale roadside and median plantings, lamp post banners, or sculpture, due to the typically high speed at which cars will be traveling. Consider locating attractive buildings with traditional tidewater architectural style at the bridge gateways to draw attention and create landmarks. Gateway buildings might include a regional visitor’s center or interpretive center for the Ragged Island WMA.



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## Corridor

The secondary gateways will be more traditional in nature and utilize varying pavement patterns and materials, signs, informational kiosks, and smaller-scale sculpture that will be visually accessible to drivers and physically accessible to pedestrians and bicyclists.

- Recognize that gateways can take on various forms, including buildings, roadside and median plants, picnic areas with directional and interpretational signage, or a change in light post height or design.
- Trailheads for greenways or blueways might be incorporated in gateway designs
- Gateways should be designed to harmonize with and incorporate traditional local architectural styles and characteristics. Gateways should not be ostentatious, over-scaled, or use bright colors or extravagant signage or lighting.
- The size and extent of gateways should be proportional to their locations and intended audience. Gateways to the overall Route 17 corridor will be of larger scale than those intended for Town Center development.
- Utilize colors that fit with the area, such as muted blues, natural green and brown tones, white, and black.
- Consider that a gateway from the northern entrance to Route 17 may have to rely solely on signage and roadside elements rather than buildings, due to the existing level of development already in place.

### Maintenance

The key to a beautiful community is having efficient, well-funded maintenance facilities and skilled staff. Maintenance personnel are the first line of defense against litter, graffiti, road deterioration, and other ills that plague the physical appearance of any community.



*Existing gateway signage along Route 17*

Below are guidelines for maintaining a community:

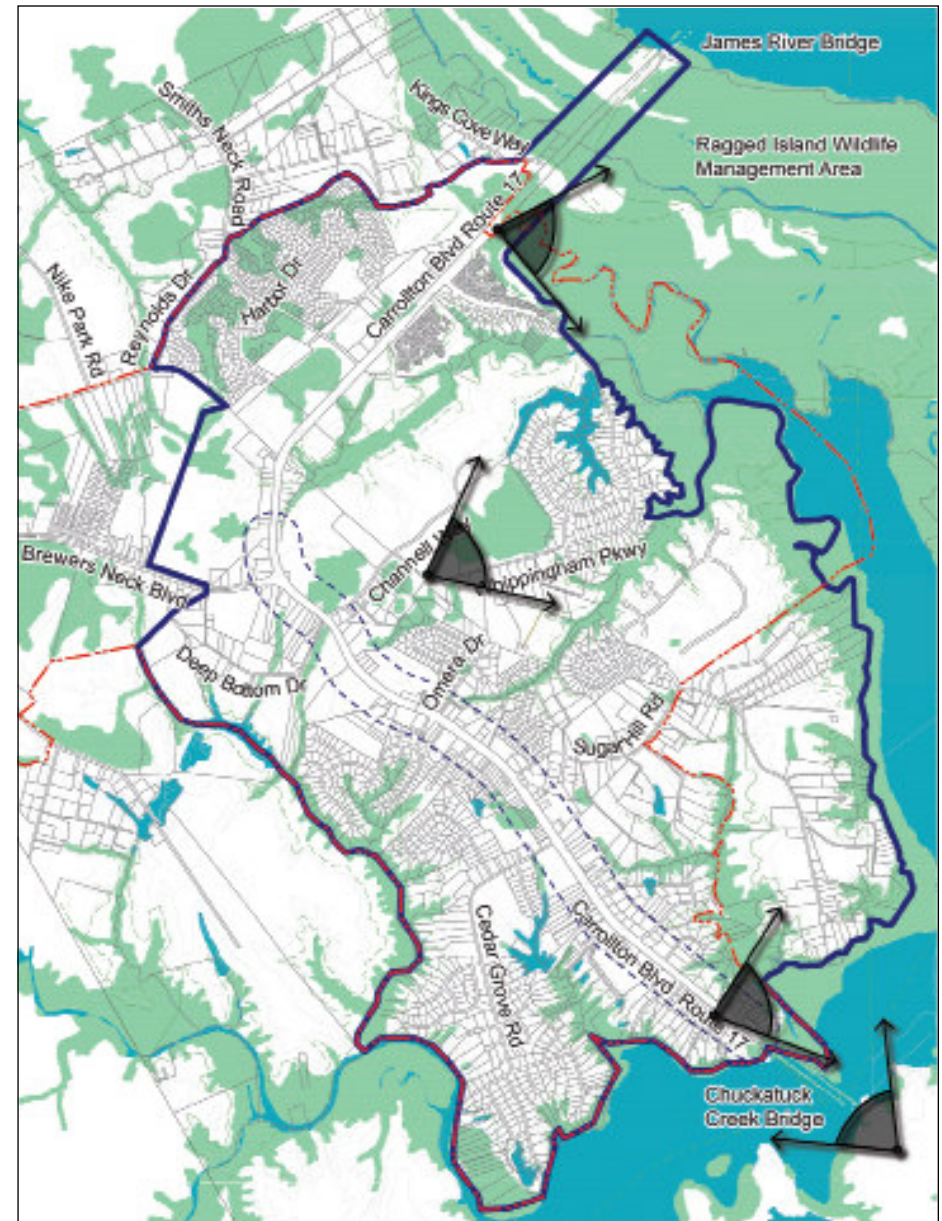
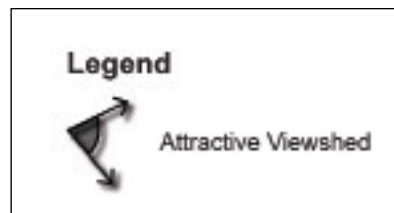
- For any new project, budget for long-term maintenance.
- Ensure that sufficient funds are appropriated each year for maintenance staff, facilities, and equipment.
- Include appropriate maintenance staff when planning for new projects and get their feedback on how a project can be developed to account for maintenance practices.
- When selecting or approving materials, consider how difficult it might be to maintain these elements. Consider vandal-proof, fade-resistant, or graffiti-resistant products, particularly in locations that might not receive daily foot or vehicular traffic.
- Clear litter and refuse from the medians and within the corridor as often as possible. Enforce litter laws to the greatest extent possible. Continue to promote and encourage the existing “Adopt-A-Highway” program to be utilized by local service clubs and school groups.

## Viewsheds

Viewsheds are considered as portions of the landscape that are visible from a particular place. Viewsheds are typically attractive in appearance and often contain appealing views to natural and/or historic scenery. Identifying particularly scenic viewsheds and protecting from degradation by incompatible development is one method of ensuring the desired character of a place.

Attractive viewsheds worthy of protection along the Route 17 corridor are shown on the accompanying map. They are located at the northern end of the corridor, near the Ragged Island WMA; at the southern end of the Route 17 corridor, near the Chuckatuck Creek Bridge; at Channell Farm; and looking back toward the corridor from Suffolk. These viewsheds contain views of natural areas, such as the Ragged Island WMA, as well as views that contain development but have been mitigated through the use of vegetative buffers along the road. It should also be noted that these are the primary viewsheds; other smaller views, such as along internal waterways and across wetlands, should also be considered when development is proposed nearby.

The 70-foot buffer along Route 17 will also promote viewshed protection within the road corridor as additional development occurs beyond this buffer. Ensuring the proper width and density of the buffer will both limit views to new development and help maintain and enhance the visual appeal of the Route 17 corridor. In the same turn, if there are views through the buffer to attractive open spaces and natural settings beyond, policies should allow thinning the buffer during seasonal maintenance operations or simply not installing extra vegetation.



Primary viewsheds

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## XI. Community and Cultural Resources

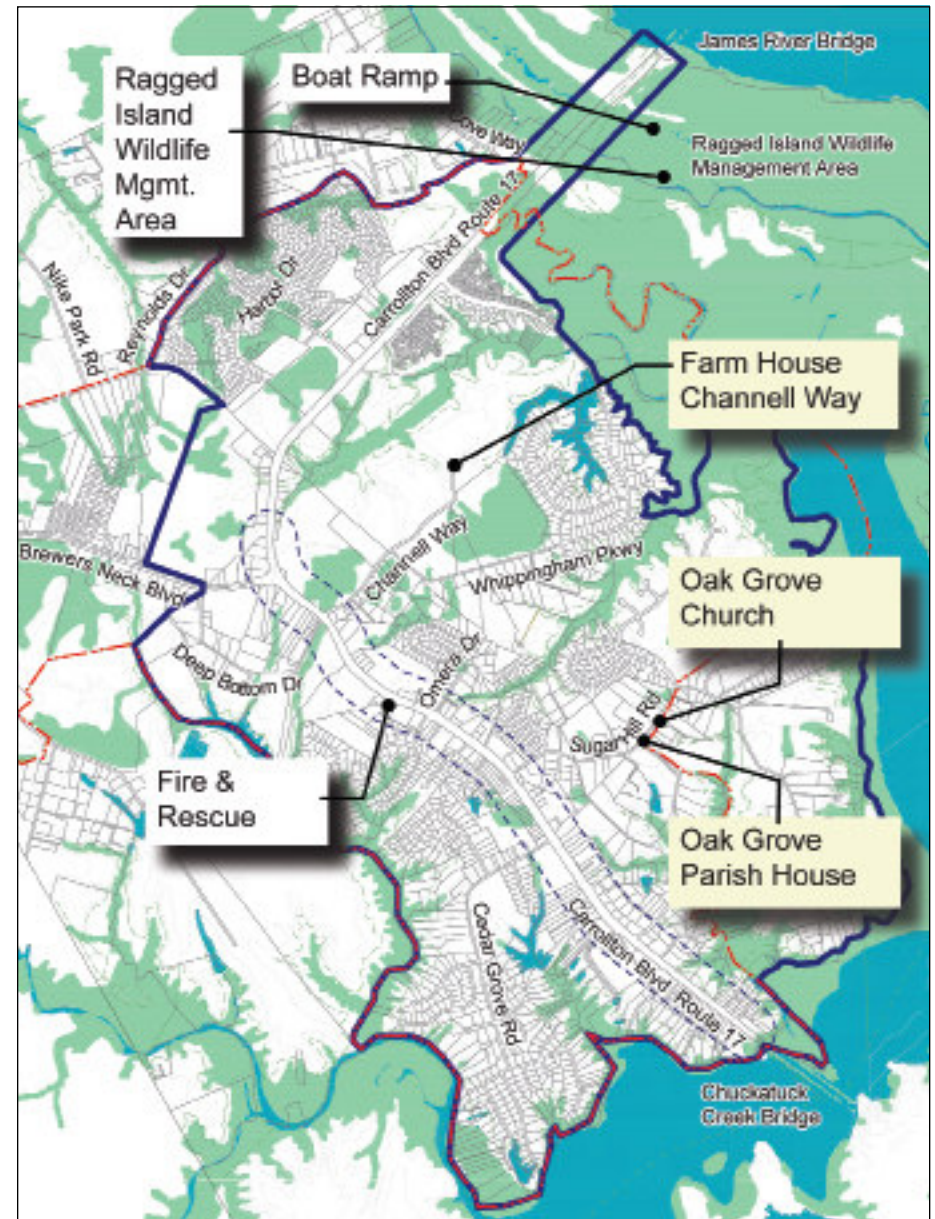
# Community and Cultural Resources

Existing resources in the study area include community facilities, historic structures and archaeological resources.

## Community Resources

Existing community facilities are the fire and rescue station on the west side of Route 17 and the only public park in the study area, the Ragged Island Wildlife Refuge.

There are no schools or sites designated for future schools in the study area, and public schools are beyond the scope of this corridor plan. A demographic and facilities study has been authorized by the Board of Supervisors and the School Board. When complete the conclusions of the study should be reviewed to determine potential future locations of school facilities in and near the study area. There may be opportunities for advantageous locations near parks, libraries, and neighborhoods.



Existing Community and Cultural Resources

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## Community and Cultural Resources

### Historic Resources

The Isle of Wight Comprehensive Plan describes the important cultural and economic benefits of preserving and enhancing historic resources. In keeping with the Comprehensive Plan implementation recommendations, Isle of Wight County has contracted with an architectural historian to produce the “Architectural Survey of Isle of Wight County and the Town of Windsor in Virginia”.

The contractor has done extensive research in the Route 17 vicinity and has noted three “identified historic resources”: The farmhouse at 23381 Channell Way, Oak Grove United Methodist Church and Oak Grove United Methodist Church Fellowship Hall (see photos on next page). Though these structures have been identified, no statement of historic significance can be made until a full evaluation is made of each structure.



*Farmhouse at 23381 Channell Way*



*Oak Grove United Methodist Church  
(Photos courtesy Kimble A. David)*



*Oak Grove United Methodist Fellowship Hall*

# Community and Cultural Resources

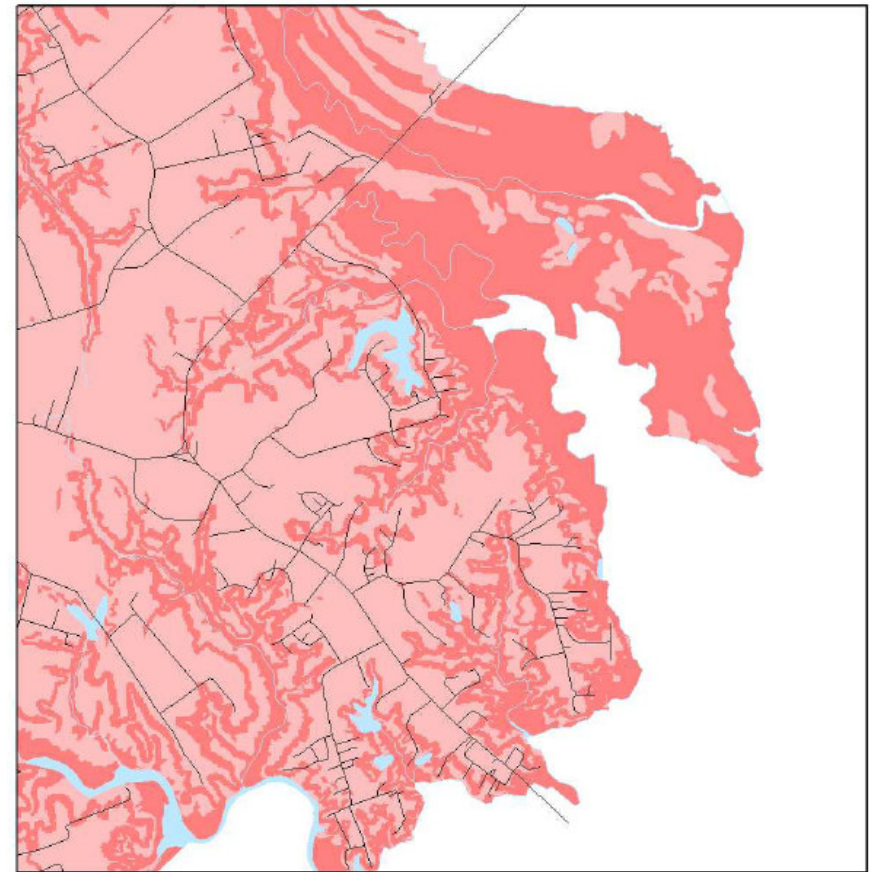
## Archaeological Resources

Because of its coastal location, Isle of Wight County is rich in archaeological potential. Known prehistoric and historic resources are compiled in the 2005 archeological assessment, “More Than Meets the Eye”, produced for the Virginia Department of Historic Resources by the William & Mary Center for Archaeological Research.

Since relatively few sites in the County have been surveyed, the report focuses on archaeologically sensitive areas that offer the highest probability of encountering artifacts during land disturbing activities. Typically these are undisturbed sites on land outside permanently waterlogged soils, such as tidal marshes. For example, terraced ground overlooking streams is known to support numerous prehistoric settlements. The map below shows the distribution of “High Sensitivity” sites in the Route 17 vicinity.

The report makes a number of recommendations for conserving as-yet unidentified archaeological resources. These include developing formal county-wide guidelines for addressing archaeological issues and programs to improve public awareness of the county’s archaeological heritage. The report proposes a per-acre development fee to fund a county archaeologist and pay expenses related to site investigations and protections.

*Archaeological Resources Map*



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## XII. Environmental Protection

### A. Water Quality

### B. Preserving Natural Resources

# Water Quality

## Stormwater

Stormwater management is the function of controlling the amount and cleanliness of stormwater entering surface waters (streams and coastal waters). Natural areas generally do an excellent job of cleaning and absorbing stormwater runoff; but when sites are developed, they generate much more stormwater, and more pollutants that are carried by that stormwater. Thus, the volume of stormwater (quantity) and its degree of pollution (quality) are both concerns.

### **Quality:**

Developed land also adds pollutants to stormwater. One of the biggest pollutants is sediment, the particles of loose soil that are eroded by runoff and carried into streams. This causes turbidity (that is, the water in the stream is less clear because it is clouded with particles); sunlight can't reach submerged plants, and invertebrates (such as crawfish and mollusks) are killed as their gills and filtering organs are clogged with sediment or they are simply physically buried.

Other common pollutants include excessive nitrogen and phosphorous, often from fertilized suburban lawns, which cause algae blooms that kill fish from oxygen deprivation and deprive aquatic plants of light; and bacteria that cause closure of shellfish beds and swimming areas.

Clearly, these problems are not consistent with a high-quality coastal environment, and they must be effectively addressed or the coastal way of life, including seafood traditions and abundant water recreation opportunities, will be harmed.

### **Quantity:**

Hard surfaces such as rooftops, streets, and parking lots mean that there is less vegetated land available to absorb rain, sending surges of stormwater into local waterways; the volume of water scours streambanks, erodes shorelines, and overwhelms invertebrates and fish by destroying their breeding and feeding areas.



*Stormwater management devices serving existing development in the study area*



## Water Quality

### Stormwater Management Practices

Means of addressing stormwater quality and quantity are known as “stormwater management practices” (often referred to as stormwater devices, BMPs or “best management practices”). Some common practices are outlined below.

- **Limiting impervious surface**– Limits on paved and hard surfaces reduce the amount of runoff and allow land to absorb rainfall. Building footprints are reduced to a percentage of lot area. Subdivision standards are revised to reduce road widths to a reasonable minimum, and parking lots are minimized.

As a management practice, impervious surface limits can be counterproductive if not carefully applied, see the box below for a full explanation.

- **Low-impact development (LID)** – Development is designed to treat and absorb stormwater on site, mimicking pre-development site hydrology. Small landscape features scattered throughout a development site (such as vegetated infiltration devices, sheetflow over vegetated surfaces, retention of forested areas, depression storage, and bioretention) are used instead of piping and large central ponds.

LID moves away from the old “collect, concentrate, and convey” approach to



*Swales, narrow pavement, flat road edges instead of curbs, and landscaped rain gardens are characteristic of low-impact development.*

### The “Limits” of Impervious Surface Limits

By itself, imposing a cap on impervious surface will not always reduce stormwater impacts. Caps on impervious surface simply spread the same amount of development over a larger area, resulting in spread-out, sprawling development patterns which eat up more land, cause the destruction of more natural areas. Larger suburban lawns generate more pollutant-laden runoff. Moreover, the roads that serve sprawl development create vastly more impervious surface over a larger area than for more compact development patterns. A model study in South Carolina revealed that sprawl development would cause 43% more runoff and 3 times the sediment compared to compact development with the same number of dwellings and commercial space. (South Carolina Coastal Conservation League, 1995)

Instead of large lots and low impervious surface limits, a better approach is to apply development patterns that conserve land, preserve natural vegetative cover, and concentrate built areas. This can be done by requiring open-space clusters, reducing minimum lot size, and retaining the saved land as permanent open space for stormwater treatment.

## Water Quality

stormwater. In lieu of curbs and gutters, piping systems, and other hard-engineered elements that quickly send a surge of stormwater to collection ponds, LID uses open drainage systems, such as grassed swales and rolled curbs, that allow sheet flow and filter and absorb runoff.

- **Compact development** – Development takes place in compact, walkable mixed-use centers. Large surface parking lots and overly wide roads are eliminated in favor of smaller-scale paved areas, and the need for car travel and parking is somewhat reduced. The same amount of development (in terms of commercial square feet and number of dwelling units) is accommodated on less land, leaving more land in a natural or agricultural state. Although single-family



*In compact development, single-family houses have smaller individual yards, but common open space and playlots provide plenty of room for recreation.*

houses have smaller individual yards, common open space and playlots provide plenty of room for recreation.

- **Site fingerprinting**– Before site planning or clearing begins, soils and vegetation on a site are evaluated for their stormwater treatment potential. The site is planned and designed around these features, and clearing and grading are limited to building pads and access areas.

### Wetlands

Wetlands perform critical functions in protecting water quality of streams and coastal waters. They trap excess nutrient pollutants such as phosphorus and nitrogen. Wetland vegetation re-oxygenates waters passing through it. Wetlands store water during floods and release water during drier periods, moderating the flow of surface streams. They are important habitat and reproduction areas for many rare species, and form an important basis of the natural food web.

Wetlands need to be protected by setting them aside and not permitting land disturbance where they exist. Vegetated buffer zones around them also help by limiting changes in their hydrology due to nearby development and grading.

Wetlands programs created in Virginia exceed

the federal Section 404 wetland protection program; since 2000, Virginia law requires a state permit for filling and alteration of wetlands (even if a 404 permit is not required) for activities of less than one-half acre, utility and public service company activities, linear transportation projects, and activities covered by Corps general permits. Compensatory mitigation is also required.

Recommended approaches for wetlands protection are similar to those for stormwater management. Grading and disturbance should be limited to the minimum necessary, so that changes to hydrology (the way water interacts with the land) due to topographic alterations are minimized. Extensive grading, filling and compacting of soil can change the way water flow both on the site and off-site, causing further changes to the function of wetlands. Impacts on wetlands can also be minimized by allowing conservation cluster subdivision, with flexible lot configuration and lot size, in zoning and subdivision regulations. A discussion of how this could work is included in the Public Policy Context: Zoning Ordinance section, under the heading “Density, Lot Dimensions, and Open Space Preservation”.

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## Preserving Natural Resources

Site planning should take into account the highest-quality natural areas, wetlands, significant forested tracts, views from and into the proposed development, and topography and soils, before proceeding with preliminary layouts, and certainly before any clearing or grading occurs. This approach is appropriate for low-impact design (LID) for stormwater management, as well as with conservation site design (also known as conservation clustering, conservation subdivision, or open space subdivision design).

The intent here is to focus development on those portions of a site that are least important for the functioning of natural ecological processes. This goal can only be accomplished if the site is examined carefully from an ecological perspective before beginning layout and site design. It does *not* automatically mean a loss of net density or developability; full density credit, or even a density bonus, can typically occur under this approach, and land development costs are frequently lower than for conventional, wholesale clear-and-grub site preparation. The critical keys are to develop compactly, to minimize graded/cleared areas and impervious infrastructure such as roads & driveways, and to set aside the most important natural areas in permanently conserved open space.

The open space that is conserved in this manner can serve multiple functions. It can filter, absorb, and slow stormwater runoff. It preserves habitat for local wildlife and flora. It serves as maintenance-free open space for the residents of the development, substituting for large suburban lots that, increasingly, working homeowners don't have time to maintain; this allows residents to maintain a smaller lot of their own while still enjoying the visual and recreational aspects of large amounts of open space.

Most importantly from the developer's perspective, lots and houses in conservation subdivisions sell at a premium when compared to conventional subdivisions in similar locations, commanding anywhere from 5 to 32 percent more than conventional developments. They also appreciate at an increased rate compared to conventional subdivisions. Open space developments are frequently less expensive to build for the developer, and more efficiently served with utility service by the local government.

The county's existing Comprehensive Plan emphasizes compact development in urbanized areas, and conservation / open space development in less urban areas.

This is an excellent goal very consistent with the outcomes envisioned in the Comprehensive Plan. However, the County's existing zoning and subdivision ordinances do not provide the flexibility needed to implement conservation development. In particular, the setbacks and minimum lot sizes in the zoning ordinance are larger than would be consistent with open space / conservation development. These constraints are discussed more fully under "Public Policy Context: Zoning Ordinance" section of this plan, under the heading "Density, Lot Dimensions, and Open Space Preservation."

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## XIII. Implementation

### A. Implementation Overview

### B. Implementation Table

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## Implementation Overview

### **Implementation Overview**

The goals of this plan are more than simply aspirational, and the time and energy invested in the plan process – by citizens, members of community organizations, County staff, businesspeople, and property owners – add up to more than just a community-building exercise. The vision articulated by the stakeholders and outlined in this plan is intended to become real over time. To make this happen, there are specific actions as well as ongoing activities that need to be carried out; this is known as “plan implementation.”

A primary task is to form an implementation committee to lead and oversee implementation. It should be comprised of County staff, a County elected official, a member of the Planning Commission, and citizen representatives. The committee may assign and coordinate the actions of others, and its members may also carry out activities themselves. The committee should schedule periodic review of implementation status, for example at quarterly intervals.

Other implementation tasks are described throughout this plan in detail; for convenient reference they are collected and summarized in the Implementation Table beginning on the next page. To increase the likelihood of successful implementation, responsibility for each task is assigned. The time frame for completion will be established by those responsible for the action. The Implementation Table is intended to serve as the guide for the implementation committee’s activities and periodic status updates.

# Implementation Table

<u>Category and Action</u>	<u>Responsibility</u>	<u>Time Frame for Initiation</u>
<b>A. Implementation Oversight</b>		
A1. Establish implementation oversight committee composed of elected official, Planning Commission member, County staff and neighborhood representatives; schedule periodic meetings and status updates on plan implementation.	Planning and Zoning	Immediately
<b>B. Comprehensive Plan</b>		
B1. Modify Planned Development zoning regulations to clarify that approval of their use in Mixed-Use Activity Center areas, and where density increases are sought in other areas of the DSD, shall be based on a finding that the TND development pattern goals of the Comprehensive Plan are achieved.	Planning and Zoning	Mid Term 3-5 years
B2. Revise the Zoning Ordinance according to the recommendations in the Public Policy section of this plan to adjust provisions regarding allowable uses; site design; open space conservation in designing new development; maintenance of open space; the UR, LC, and GC districts; the Planned Development districts; the NDSO; site development standards; and supplemental regulations for parking, lighting, flood hazard, and nonconforming situations.	Planning and Zoning	Mid Term 3-5 years
B3. Revise and update the Subdivision Ordinance according to the recommendations in the Public Policy section of this plan to adjust provisions regarding flood zones; street connectivity; highway access; street standards; stormwater; open space; and subdivision design procedure and standards.	Planning and Zoning	Short Term 1-3 years
<b>C. Land Use Plan</b>		
C1. Encourage lot recombination and consolidation of small, obsolete parcels during the rezoning and site plan process.	Planning and Zoning	Long Term On-going

# Implementation Table

<u>Category and Action</u>	<u>Responsibility</u>	<u>Time Frame</u>
<b>D. Transportation</b>		
D1. As part of the upcoming Countywide transportation planning initiative to enhance the road system, review the feasibility of the following transportation recommendations further explained in the plan: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access management opportunities including –               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) street network interconnectivity (street grid in the main activity center, parallel secondary access roads and indirect-routed secondary road network),</li> <li>ii) parcel interconnectivity (focus on commercial parking lot interconnectivity), and</li> <li>iii) minimize curb cuts</li> </ul> </li> <li>• A multi-lane improvement at the intersection of Routes 17 and Brewer’s Neck Blvd</li> <li>• Relocation of the existing signal at Sugar Hill Road to Cedar Grove Road</li> <li>• Eliminate the anticipated signal at Channell Way</li> </ul>	Engineering / Planning and Zoning	Short Term 1-3 years
D2. Develop a specifications manual for corridor improvement styles, including lights, guard rails, fencing, signs, etc.	Planning and Zoning / Engineering	Mid Term 3-5 years
D3. Provide Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) with consistent information about the County’s access and functional goals for the road corridor, and request that the County be notified and included in the decision-making process for road improvements including but not limited to the VDOT 2025 Transportation Plan.	Engineering	Long Term On-going
D4. Amend infrastructure (including new street network) installation policies, parcel interconnectivity standards, and access management standards to reflect plan recommendations for access management, driveways and curb cuts, and alternative street networks. Ordinance standards, engineering standards, and development approval policies should be included in this task.	Planning and Zoning / Engineering	Short Term 1-3 years

## Implementation Table

<u>Category and Action</u>	<u>Responsibility</u>	<u>Time Frame</u>
D5. Work with VDOT to determine placement of signals and crossings at intersections, and consolidate existing signals where possible.	Engineering	Long Term On-going
D6. Revise standards and ordinances to reflect roadway design appropriate for compact development patterns as detailed under the Residential Development section of the plan; including traffic calming and pedestrian comfort, connectivity, and bikeway standards.	Planning and Zoning / Engineering	Short Term 1-3 years
D7. Adjust parking standards to allow or require pervious surfaces, limit excessive parking amounts, and mandate shared parking and “park once” approaches where appropriate.	Planning and Zoning/ Engineering	Short Term 1-3 years
D8. Review opportunities for reducing travel demand by establishing a ride-sharing or travel pool clearinghouse, such as a local car pooling website.	County Administration	Short Term 1-3 years
D9. Review opportunities for establishing convenient ride-share/park and ride lots in the corridor and/or improving existing lots.	Planning and Zoning / County Administration	Mid Term 3-5 years
D10. Conduct a public transportation feasibility study for the Route 17 and Route 258 corridor and between the JRB and the Town of Smithfield. To include a review of opportunities, feasibility, and funding for regular and limited schedule mass transit, on-demand public transit, private transite service, and car pooling and zip car options.	Planning and Zoning/ County Administration /Engineering	Long Term 5-7+ years
D11. Update County Proffer Study and guidelines to address pedestrian, bicycle, and other multi-use transportation infrastructure, etc.	Budget and Finance/ Planning and Zoning	Short Term 1-3 years
D12. Amend County infrastructure installation policies to include the creation of a pedestrian greenway network as development occurs.	Engineering/Parks and Recreation	Short Term 1-3 years
D13. Adjust the Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) and annual budget s to insure adequate funding to proceed with road improvements, pedestrian/bike facility improvements, and other transportation infrastructure needs as identified in this plan.	Engineering/Parks and Recreation/ Budget and Finance	Long Term On-going

# Implementation Table

<u>Category and Action</u>	<u>Responsibility</u>	<u>Time Frame</u>
<b>E. Recreation</b>		
E1. Review level-of-service standards to allow for adequate parks and recreation facilities and programs to serve the County population, and update the County Proffer Study and guidelines to provide for adequate public facilities.	Parks and Recreation	Short Term 1-3 years
E2. Ensure that the development review process addresses identified parks and recreation opportunities in the study area, so that proffers of land and other facilities development opportunities are captured as buildout occurs.	Planning and Zoning / Parks and Recreation	Long Term On-going
E3. Amend the CIP and annual budget to accommodate parks and recreation acquisition and development for sites and opportunities identified in the study area.	Parks and Recreation / Budget and Finance	Long Term On-going
E4. Conduct a County wide Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan to determine County needs based on level of service; identify prime locations for new facilities; review and recommend improvements for existing facilities; and identify funding sources.	Parks and Recreation	Mid Term 3-5 years
E5. Coordinate with VDGIF, DCR, and citizens to develop a Ragged Island Wildlife Management Area Improvement Plan to improve the appearance of the area from the corridor; improve access and signage for the area; improve passive and active recreational opportunities in the area; and promote the area for citizen and visitor usage.	Parks and Recreation/ Tourism	Short Term 1-3 years
<b>F. Open Space</b>		
F1. Amend zoning and subdivision regulations as recommended above to enable better opportunities for site layout that conserves open space (cluster development or conservation subdivisions), and to strengthen protections for wetlands and flood zones.	Planning and Zoning	Short Term 1-3 years
F2. Develop Open Space design guidelines for development review to insure that provided open space is not just left-over green space and that it provides protection for sensitive lands and usable space for residents and other user groups.	Planning and Zoning	Short Term 1-3 years

# Implementation Table

<u>Category and Action</u>	<u>Responsibility</u>	<u>Time Frame</u>
<b>G. Visual Character</b>		
G1. Amend zoning and subdivision regulations to reflect the visual character principles outlined for the corridor, including lighting standards, parking, building design, and other aspects of site and building design and layout as stated in the Route 17 Corridor Design Guidelines Handbook.	Planning and Zoning	Short Term 1-3 years
G2. Enforce code provisions regarding unsafe and abandoned buildings. If current County code provisions are inadequate, amend them to ensure that they include the strongest provisions permissible under Virginia law.	Planning and Zoning / Building Inspections	Short Term 1-3 years
G3. Begin planning for expanded gateway treatments, including cost estimates in the budgeting and CIP process.	Planning and Zoning / County Administration / Beautification Committee	Long Term 5-7+ years
G4. Research alternatives for beautification of roadsides and gateways to reduce maintenance costs and review funding options, including grants and sponsorship to help maintain adequate funding for maintenance costs.	County Administration / Beautification Committee	Short Term 1-3 years
I5. Amend development approval standards to ensure that high-quality viewsheds identified in the plan are addressed in the approval process. Viewshed protection should be given priority in clustering & conservation subdivision standards when these are amended.	Planning and Zoning	Short Term 1-3 years
<b>H. Community and Cultural Resources</b>		
H1. Develop additional review guidelines and procedures for properties with archaeologically sensitive land and adopt them into the zoning and subdivision ordinances and other infrastructure policies.	Planning and Zoning/ Historic Resources	Short Term 1-3 years
H2. Seek Certified Local Government status	Historic Resources	Short Term 1-3 years

# Implementation Table

<u>Category and Action</u>	<u>Responsibility</u>	<u>Time Frame</u>
<b>I. Environmental Protection</b>		
I1. Introduce the concepts of Low Impact Development (LID) and “site fingerprinting” with a pilot program or demonstration project that applies these techniques to the development of a County-owned site (such as a recreation facility or governmental office).	Planning and Zoning	Long Term 5-7+ years
I2. Develop educational materials and specifications for LID and environmentally sensitive design principles and acceptable technologies and make it available to land developers and property owners.	Planning and Zoning/ Engineering	Mid Term 3-5 years
I3. To improve water quality, update development regulations to require an additional vegetated buffer to be protected around delineated wetlands and small headwater streams.	Planning and Zoning	Mid Term 3-5 years
<b>J. Economic Considerations</b>		
J1. Develop a Corridor Marketing Strategy which would include branding/logo/consistent image development; signage and lighting styles; and additional gateway treatments such as banners, flags, etc.	Economic Development/Tourism	Short Term 1-3 years
J2. Develop and implement programs to preserve and market smaller, more community-based businesses and encourage new businesses that diversify and compliment existing businesses.	Economic Development/Tourism	Long Term On-going
J3. Develop location for and install an informational kiosk in the corridor to guide visitors.	Tourism	Short Term 1-3 years
J4. Expand the development of housing policies that provide incentives to developers to include housing priced to meet the needs of the local work force including potential market-rate and workforce incentive housing as a component to the mixed-use nodes.	Planning and Zoning / Affordable Housing Task Force	Short Term 1-3 years
J5. Investigate the Chuckatuck Bridge area for possible access points to the proposed park and blueway areas and explore options for welcome/directional signage to the access point.	Tourism	Mid Term 3-5 years

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## Implementation Table

<u>Category and Action</u>	<u>Responsibility</u>	<u>Time Frame</u>
J6. Investigate options for water-dependent small businesses along the corridor and especially at public access points, such as canoe/kayak rentals and tours.	Tourism/Economic Development	Long Term On-going
<b>K. Design Guidelines</b>		
K1. Adopt the design guidelines as stated in the Route 17 Corridor Design Guidelines Handbook, as standards in the Zoning Ordinance and/or guidelines for discretionary approvals such as rezonings.	Planning and Zoning	Mid Term 3-5 years

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## XIV. Appendix

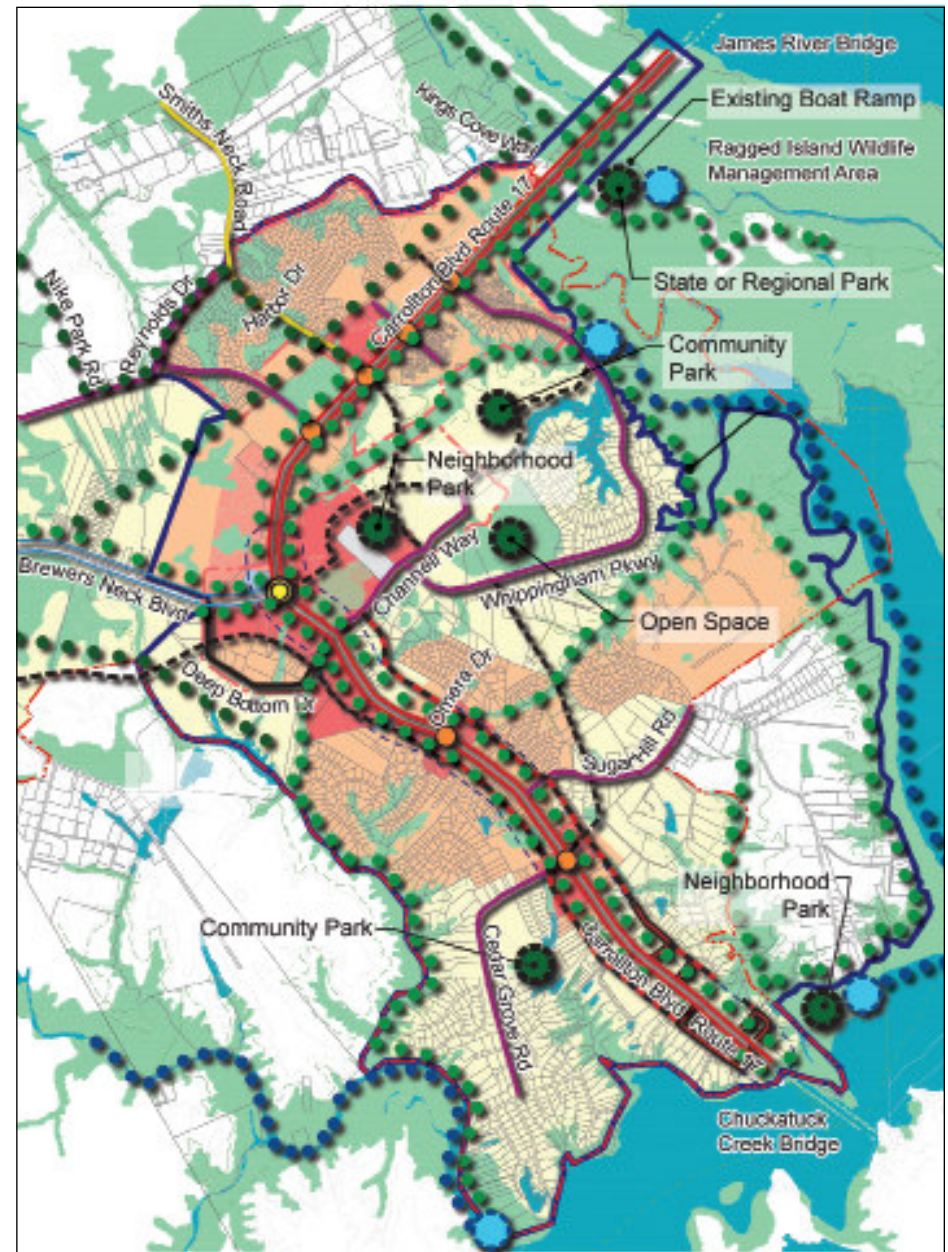
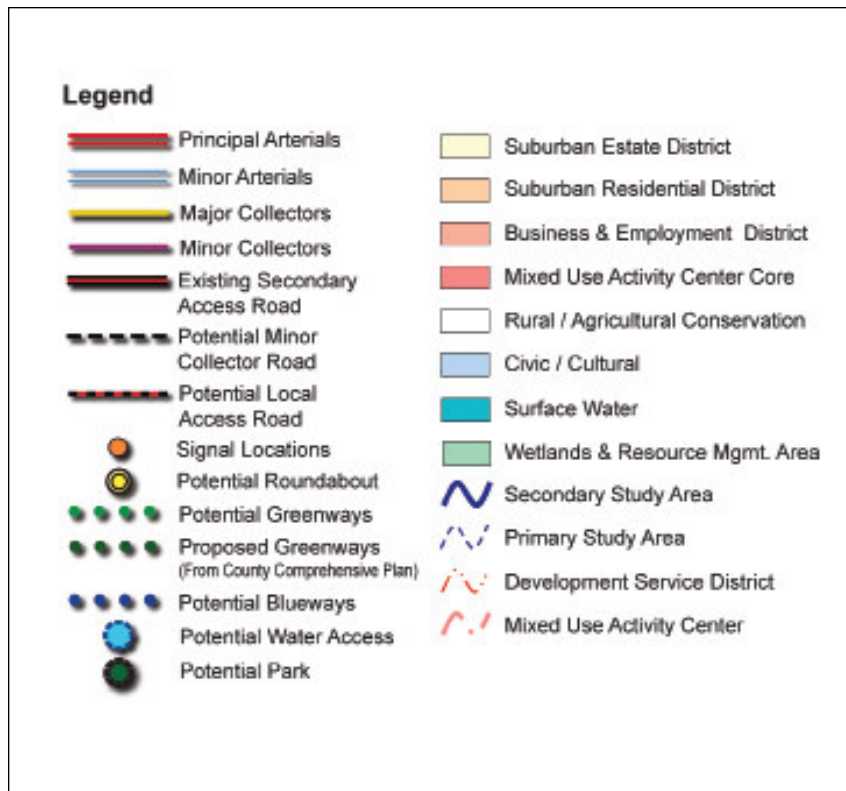
**A. Master Plan Map**

**B. Summary of Public Input**

**C. Market Report**

**D. Concept Plan**

# Master Plan Map



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## Summary of Public Input

Throughout on-site planning activities, the Project Team met with a variety of stakeholders identified by the County to collect input relevant to the Route 17 Corridor Master Plan. In numerous individual and group sessions collectively totaling over 30 hours, members of the team heard from residents, property owners, civic volunteers, County officials, business owners, and other interested persons. The following is a very condensed summary of the observations and comments received throughout the planning process, organized loosely within topical headings.

### **Environmental Quality**

- Use low-impact development as an alternative to stormwater retention ponds.
- Preserve the unique natural resources of the County: wetlands, marshes, etc.
- Pursue ecotourism.
- Enhance the Ragged Island Game Refuge with better interpretive and visitor facilities.
- Prevalent soil types don't handle building foundations well.
- Development should be sustainable.

### **Public spaces**

- A large-scale farmers market (featuring local products such as hams, peanuts & seafood) should be established and 17 may be a good location.
- The corridor needs more parks, including the full range of public spaces.
- Include greenways and make sure they are designed for public safety.

### **Transportation**

- Questions regarding roundabout: function, capacity, and physical elements.
- Improve bicycle and pedestrian mobility  
Synchronize corridor traffic signals.
- Provide consistent posted speed.
- Enhance school bus safety.

### **Stormwater**

- Minimize impervious surface in new development.
- Language is subtly influencing built environment (urban terminology).
- Use natural surfaces instead of paving wherever possible.
- Formulate stormwater management areas as site amenities.
- Low Impact Design to replace/enhance current stormwater management approaches.

- Create regional stormwater ponds, especially for the eastern section of the corridor.

### **Community identity, character, and design**

- Name new streets and places after local historic figures.
- Don't allow new development to look like "anyplace USA"; architecture should reflect County's heritage as one of Virginia's 8 original shires
- Proportions should be consistent with historic precedents
- Use a consistent vocabulary when using historic precedents; don't mix styles
- Guard against monotony (same 2 or 3 facades used to excess in residential areas)
- Encourage detached garages in both large lot (with driveway) and small lot (rear access) settings
- Prevent "snout houses"
- Make sure double garages have two separate doors, or make them look like barn or carriage house doors, or require them to be set back significantly from the façade
- Do not make design principles overly prescriptive; that would limit creativity
- Use topography to hide development
- Do away with outparcel-style shopping center development

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## Summary of Public Input

- Ensure that service areas for dumpsters, etc., are located behind buildings
- Require 4-sided architecture
- One to two stories is appropriate scale of development
- Use rural landscape and village center design along corridor
- Gas stations: limit number of pumps and location, size of canopy, and lighting
- Developers may abuse New Urbanist principles; new urbanism may not be appropriate for rural jurisdiction; however, cluster development is OK if open space is conserved.
- Need trade-off: Open space must come with ability to do denser development
- Ground-mounted signs are not visible enough to motorists behind trucks and other traffic
- Concerns about glare and spillover from spot-lit signs

### Highway 17 visual character

- Use native plants
- Corridor should look manicured.
- Corridor should look scenic and rural, not suburban or manicured
- Corridor should “kindly” convert rural character to more suburban development.

- Standard-issue guard rails by VDOT are very ugly
- Eliminate overhead wires; put utilities underground
- 80% of landscaping should be green year round
- Possible median removal for road widening by VDOT
- More intensity may be OK up near focus areas, but majority of DSD needs to “stay open”
- Preserve rural character
- Parking should not front on 17, but be located internally to development

### Land use

- Need higher-end retail and dining
- Want multiple land uses (live-work, professional/medical offices, multi-family)
- Vertically mixed uses are good
- Combine schools and public libraries, site them in mixed-use settings
- Affordable housing: Need workforce housing; require percentage of affordable housing in new development; address fear of reduced property values by fully integrating affordable units, rather than segregating them

### Challenges

- Transportation challenges: traffic congestion; not enough signals and turn lanes; need smooth traffic flow; provide limited access alternatives; safe travel for school buses; sight distances at Deep Bottom Road and fire station; Carrollton Bridge as a bottleneck
- Overcrowded schools
- Stormwater management
- Coordinating diverse interests
- Plan for transit nodes and stops
- Impacts from growth outside the county
- Paying for growth (public safety, utilities expansion) with new revenue sources
- Maintaining rural character
- Preserving historic resources
- Mitigating inappropriate signage
- Small parcels with nonconforming or residential uses: not enough room with current set back requirements to do anything; need deeper/larger parcels, but difficult to assemble land
- Questionable viability of residential right on highway – too much highway noise
- No positive personality along the corridor
- County approval process is long, arduous and costly

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## Summary of Public Input

### **Opportunities**

- Use the plan to influence VDOT decisions
- Shift internal traffic off 17 with connectivity and/or parallel roadway
- Be creative, not cookie cutter
- Increase quality of development
- Incorporate environment into development plans
- Incorporate other transportation models (including transit)
- Coordinated (versus fragmented) land development plan
- Diversify the economic base and services provided
- Create attractive gateways; beautify the median
- Expand utilities to areas that do not have them
- High-speed light rail, especially northern half
- Bike, walking trails to a walkable community and town center
- Plan to avoid monotonous strip development
- Need more office & medical uses (versus retail only)
- Increased landscaping/public space as part of development

- More landscape “buffers” along corridor; native plants
- Create public accesses to natural areas near bridges

### **Models to emulate**

- Oyster Point, Newport News
- Governor’s Point, Suffolk
- James City County New Town
- Multi-use path along Route 17 in Jacksonville, FL
- Boca Raton, Palm Beach, Albacore (Florida)
- Reston, VA – mixed-use area including restaurants
- Charlotte, NC – mixed-use centers with neighborhoods
- Parts of Columbia, MD – mixed-use and rural development
- Suffolk, VA – Harbor View
- Port Warwick in Newport News – residential with mixed uses
- Roundabouts, when done correctly
- Petersburg, VA farmer’s market
- Hilton Village
- Hampton County park
- Chesterfield County highway corridor
- Virginia Beach town center

### **Examples to avoid**

- Commercial strips with many fast food places
- Route 17 in York and Gloucester

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# Market Report

MEMORANDUM, Revised October 6, 2006

TO: Warren Raybould, Raybould & Associates

FROM: Randy Gross

SUBJECT: Isle of Wight – Route 17 Corridor Master Plan

Preliminary Market Reconnaissance / Review

This memorandum summarizes initial findings from market reconnaissance for Isle of Wight County's Route 17 Corridor Master Plan, conducted during the first week of June, 2006. Baseline market opportunities and constraints for retail, office, residential, and selected other uses are also identified. Furthermore, analyses of development costs are provided to help inform the overall planning and development process in the Route 17 Corridor.

## **Demographic & Economic Trend**

Overall demographic and economic trends in the county were analyzed as a part of the baseline review of selected markets. These trends provide some context for discussion of key issues impacting on the county's growth and on the Route 17 Corridor in particular.

## **Regional Context**

Isle of Wight is a county of 319 square miles located within the Hampton Roads (Norfolk-Virginia Beach-Newport News) Metropolitan Area. This metro area has over 1.5 million people and is comprised of diverse communities like Norfolk, Suffolk, Portsmouth, Chesapeake, and Virginia Beach (in addition to Isle of Wight); as well as Hampton, Newport News, Poquoson, and Williamsburg. These communities share a common history and a large federal government presence focused on the military. These communities are also linked geographically by a network of waterways and highways. However, they tend to operate independently. In fact, there is very little regional cooperative planning. On the contrary, the jurisdictions tend to compete for resources and establish planning and economic development policy without significant regional consultation.

Furthermore, Isle of Wight is also within an hour's drive of Richmond, and an adjacent metropolitan region of 1.0 million linked by Interstate 64 along the Peninsula and by Route 10 through Isle of Wight County. Together, these two metros have a growing population of more than 2.5 million, equivalent in size to Denver or Tampa. Despite Isle of Wight's location near the nexus of this growing metropolitan region, the county has maintained a relatively undeveloped, rural character and small-town lifestyle. Not surprisingly, there are strong and increasing development pressures on Isle of Wight County as the region's available land diminishes and as more people seek the rural lifestyle that Isle of Wight offers within easy reach of the area's jobs and amenities. In response, the County has sought to preserve its rural heritage through policies that are designed to more effectively manage growth.

# Market Report

## Key Housing & Demographic Factors

Despite the County’s efforts to manage growth, Isle of Wight’s housing base has increased by over 10% in only four years (2000 to 2004), with the addition of 1,250 units or about 312 per year. This development trend compares with housing growth of about 231 units per year from 1990 to 2000, based on Census data.

The increase in housing units translates into growth in households and population. The county’s population has increased at an even faster rate of 11.3% since 2000. Interestingly, however, population growth has been led by the “baby boom” generation or those generally aged between 40 and 60. This is evidenced by the declining percentage of families with children (the population under age 5 represents just 5.7% of the total, compared with 7.6% in 1990), and confirmed based on information from housing brokers, realtors, and rental managers. Isle of Wight does not have a substantial rental housing market, with more than 80% of housing in owner-occupancy (compared with 65% nationally). The owner-occupancy rate is increasing, as it is nationally.

**Table 1. SELECTED DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS, ISLE OF WIGHT COUNTY, 1990-2004**

Factor	1990	2000	2004	2000-2004 Change	
				Number	Percent
Population	26,063	29,276	32,559	3,311	11.3%
Over Age 65	11.2%	12.4%	12.7%	0	2.2%
Under Age 5	7.6%	6.0%	5.7%	-0.3%	-5.0%
Households	8,032	11,319	N/A	N/A	N/A
Housing Units	8,763	12,065	13,315	1,250	10.4%
Owner Occupied	73.6%	80.6%	N/A	N/A	N/A
Household Income	\$28,185	\$32,587	\$40,257	(3,240)	-8.2%
In Labor Force	76.1%	64.3%	N/A	N/A	N/A

**Notes:** N/A means data not available.  
Income expressed in current dollars.  
2004 Population is based on 2005 Census estimate.

**Source:** U.S. Bureau of the Census and Randall Gross /

## Key Economic Factors

The growth in Isle of Wight’s middle-age and senior resident base helps explain why the labor force participation rate is falling. Between 1990 and 2000, the county’s labor force participation rate fell from over 75% to 64.3%. There are more retirees moving into the county, including retired military, and others who are not actively working.

Given Isle of Wight’s location in a large metropolitan region, where job opportunities are scattered over a broad area, it is not surprising that 50% of the county’s labor force commutes out of the county to work. Many are employed, for example, by Northrup Grumman and other companies in the Newport News shipbuilding industry. What is surprising is that Isle of Wight has been able to maintain a relatively large and growing manufacturing base despite regional and national declines in this sector. Many rural counties depend on manufacturing jobs, but it is somewhat unusual for a metropolitan county to retain and grow its manufacturing base in this competitive environment.

# Market Report

## Industrial Base

Isle of Wight had almost 10,000 non-government jobs in 2004, up by almost 500 or 5.0% since 1998. This increase is notable since it occurred during a period that included a national recession. Of the total, Isle of Wight has 5,000 manufacturing jobs in companies producing paper products, lumber, food, building materials, tractors, and equipment, among others. The county is competitive because of its location not far from the Portsmouth and Norfolk Marine terminals, its transportation access and available industrial land.

Key industrial employers include International Paper (1,300 employees), Franklin Equipment Company (providing industrial tree harvesting equipment), and world-famous Smithfield Foods. Smithfield Foods is a growing, Fortune 500 company headquartered in Isle of Wight County. Employing approximately 5,000 people, Smithfield Foods is the “world’s largest pork producer and 4th largest national beef producer,” according to County marketing materials. The community of Smithfield is home to the famed Virginia Ham, but is also one of the country’s best preserved colonial-era port towns.

Most of Isle of Wight’s other manufacturing and distribution use is located in the southern part of the county, away from Smithfield and Route 17. The County is promoting the Shirley T. Holland Commerce Park, a 450-acre industrial development at State Route 607 and U.S. Route 460. A 1.0-million square-foot Cost Plus distribution center is located in the park, as well as a new 329,000 square-foot speculative industrial building. According to a recent zoning request, another 300,000 square-foot building is planned for construction in the park. The park’s concept plan calls for development of almost 3.7 million square feet of space at full build-out.

Closer to Route 17 is the Isle of Wight Industrial Park, started at least 16 years

**Table 2** AT-PLACE EMPLOYMENT TRENDS, ISLE OF WIGHT COUNTY, 1998-2004

Industry	1998	2004	1998-2004 Change	
			Number	Percent
Agriculture/Fishing	88	119	NA	NA
Utilities	80	80	NA	NA
Construction	628	616	(12)	-2.0%
Manufacturing	4,636	4,850	NA	NA
Wholesale Trade	180	161	(19)	-10.5%
Retail Trade	876	1,044	168	19.1%
Transport	464	374	(90)	-19.4%
Information	83	106	23	27.7%
Finance	140	162	22	15.7%
Real Estate	108	86	(22)	-20.4%
Professional Svcs	181	177	(4)	-2.2%
Management Svcs	176	176	NA	NA
Admin Support	173	126	(47)	-27.2%
Education Svcs	78	131	53	67.9%
Health Care/Social	412	461	49	11.9%
Arts/Entertainment	80	76	NA	NA
Accommodation	676	826	150	22.2%
Other Svcs	328	354	26	7.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,388</b>	<b>8,934</b>	<b>546</b>	<b>6.5%</b>

**Note:** NA is Not Applicable due to Census rounding.

**Source:** U.S. Bureau of the Census and Rental Growth / Development Economics.

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## Market Report

ago along Route 10/32. Southern Structured Steel is located in the park. Space added to the 16,000 square-foot Markham Building will be leased as warehouse. The unfinished 6,000 square-foot Gibson Mechanical building has been sold to a surveyor who will complete the structure.

### **Other Sectors**

Despite Isle of Wight's rural character and its reputation as an agricultural county, only about 100 people are employed full-time in agriculture, mining, and other extraction industries in the county (based on Census Bureau statistics). There are a number of farms, but only a few of their employees may be actively engaged in production on a full-time basis. Despite the low number of workers counted by the Census in this sector, agriculture remains an important land use in the county and clearly influences the character and lifestyle of the area.

Isle of Wight County is acting to retain its agricultural character and assist local farmers through the office of its Rural Economic Development Manager and through the Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easements (PACE) Program. PACE allows farmers to voluntarily sell the development rights for their land to the County, while retaining the right to continue agricultural operations.

The county's other important economic sectors include retail (1,000 jobs), accommodation & foodservice (825 jobs), construction (515) and health care / social services (450). Other industries as noted in the table employ the remaining 3,000-plus workers in the county

### **Employment Trends**

During the 1998 to 2002 period, growth was concentrated in manufacturing, accommodation, retail, and education. Private (non-government) Education saw the fastest rate of growth, with a 68% increase in employment between 1998 and 2004. Information services also saw rapid growth. The county is headquarters to Monnette information Systems, a computer/IT service provider for health care and long-term care clients. The county saw declining jobs in administrative support services and transport, among several others.

### **Income**

As noted in Table 1, household incomes increased dramatically from 1990 to 2000, as they did nationally. However, incomes have declined slightly since 2000 due to recession and other factors that are impacting on incomes nationwide. Median household income was down from \$52,600 in 2000 to about \$49,300 in 2004 (current dollars), according to the Census.

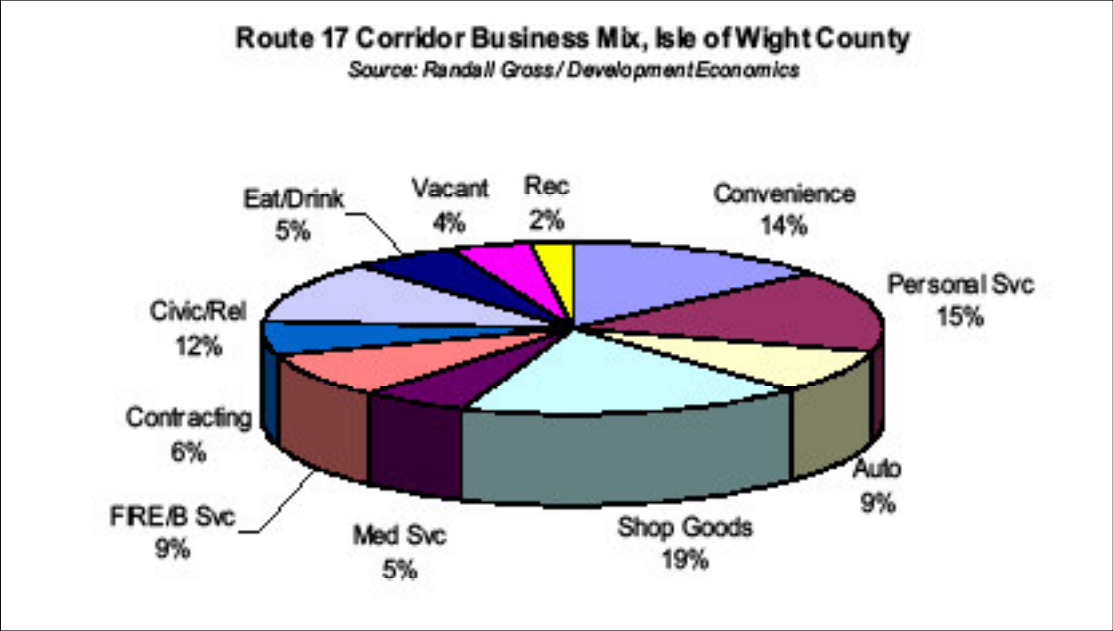
### **Route 17 Corridor Site Analysis**

A Site Analysis was conducted of the Route 17 study area, to assess the corridor's overall physical environment and its marketability for selected land uses. The study area includes land on both sides of U.S. Route 17 between the James River Bridge and the Chuckatuck Creek Bridge.

# Market Report

## Physical Characteristics

The study area includes portions of Isle of Wight County on both sides of Route 17 from Suffolk northward, and curving eastward through Bartlett towards Newport News via the James River Bridge (JRB). Ragged Island Wildlife Management Area is located at the northern section of the corridor adjacent to the JRB. Beyond this natural area, new residential and commercial development has concentrated on the Bartlett intersection-JRB portion of the corridor, while the area south of the Bartlett intersection remains relatively undeveloped and rural in character. There are no major existing towns along the length of the corridor. Although much of the land in this area appears to be relatively flat and developable, it has an extensive network of wetlands as well as existing rural agriculture zoning. Route 17 takes on a more suburban character further into Suffolk. Across the JRB in Newport News, Route 17 north (and U.S. 258 directly east) has a distinctively urban land use pattern. Residents complain of increasing traffic bottlenecks along the commercial portions of Route 17 near the JRB.



## Business Inventory

The Route 17 corridor has a somewhat diverse business mix, with about 19% in shopper goods (e.g., furniture stores, gift shops, office supplies, apparel), 15% offering personal services, 14% in convenience retail, 12% in religious or civic uses, 9% in automotive retail or service, 9% in finance or business services, and about 5% to 6% each in medical services, specialty contractors, and restaurants. The remaining 11% is split among a variety of uses. In addition to Smithfield Hams, Isle of Wight has also been “famous” among the region’s residents as the place to buy cigarettes because of the county’s lower tax rate. Thus, several convenience businesses advertise their tobacco products as a “lure” to attract commuters and others traveling through the county.

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## Market Report

Despite this apparent diversity, most of the corridor’s shopper goods stores and restaurants are concentrated in the new Eagle Harbor Shopping Center and medical offices in the Riverside Healthcare Center. Outside of these two facilities, much of the Route 17 corridor is characterized by small independent businesses that cater to local convenience (e.g., gas & cigarettes), automotive, or contracting needs. A few businesses are clustered in several strip shopping centers such as Carrollton Shoppes. In fact, “Carrollton” is the name most often associated with businesses and institutions inside or just outside of the study area, as exemplified by:

- Carrollton Furniture
- Carrollton Antiques
- Carrollton Baptist Church
- Carrollton Used Cars & Auto Parts
- Carrollton Mini-Storage
- Carrollton Volunteer Fire Department
- Carrollton Cove Shoppes (planned shopping center)
- Carrollton Post Office
- Carrollton Shoppes (strip center)
- Carrollton Meadows (new homes)
- Carrollton Sportsmen’s Shop
- Carrollton Tobacco
- Carrollton Church of God, and others

### **Surrounding Area**

Smithfield is the largest town in the county and also its economic hub. Smithfield is important not only as the home of Smithfield Hams, but also because of its tourist appeal and attractive community character. References to Smithfield in this report refer primarily to the historic core of the Town of Smithfield. The town has a wonderful collection of small shops and businesses that help Smithfield retain its small-town charm. Much of the community’s “strip” commercial development is concentrated on South Church Street, which has a typical collection of franchises (e.g., Food Lion, Hardees, 7-11, Dollar General, Shell, McDonald’s) and home-grown businesses (Anna’s Shoppes) as well as law firms, business services, real estate brokers, schools & civic uses, banks, car dealers, and other businesses. A new, relatively high-density retail center is listed by Divaris along this commercial strip.

South of town, between Church Street and Benn’s Church is a newer concentration of commercial strip uses and professional offices. In this location are located a new Rite Aid, Wendy’s, Eckerd Drugs, and similar franchises. A new professional office park is also under development

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## Market Report

not far from the new Smithfield Plaza Shopping Center and the Express Run Plaza. Smithfield Plaza is a typical community center anchored by Farm Fresh, Peebles, and Maxway, and with a collection of take-outs, hair salons, and other local-serving uses. The center also has a Newport News Shipbuilding Employee Credit Union, which provides some indication of the employment base for area residents. Express Run Plaza serves a distinctive clientele, with a cluster of hair/nail and tanning salons, spas, weight loss clinics, and similar businesses. Other businesses in the area include Hearn Furniture, plus several convenience-oriented stores.

The Benn's Church area (Routes 32 and 258), not far from Route 17, has historic St. Luke's Church and a small collection of commercial businesses offering ice cream, deli/bakery, and contracting services, among others. South from Benn's Church along Routes 10/32, commercial uses give way to farmland, mobile homes, churches, houses, auto repair shops, and the Isle of Wight Industrial Park. The rural context continues into Suffolk, where historic houses and small convenience uses are clustered in the Chuckatuck area. The Governor's Pointe mixed-use community (including the quaint Shoppes on the Village Green) is under development just south of the study area along Crittenden Road in Suffolk. The Crittenden Station post office is located on this portion of Route 17, along with Sunoco, The Market (produce), pH Automotive (used cars), and others.

Route 258 south to Isle of Wight Courthouse retains more of a rural character, with farmland and the Southern States Farm Co-Op, as well as a lumber yard, funeral home, storage, and convenience uses. The County Courthouse complex is located in a relatively undeveloped area of Route 258.

### **Market Review**

The following section provides a brief overview of opportunities and constraints under existing market conditions, based on field reconnaissance and existing market data. This assessment does not constitute a full market analysis that would determine the development potential for different uses in the study area. Rather, it is limited to an assessment of existing opportunities and constraints on the market. Key uses include residential, retail, office, and lodging, as discussed below.

### **Residential**

Isle of Wight County is dominated by agricultural and residential land uses. New housing development has helped diversify the county's housing mix somewhat, but high prices are forcing many people out of the market.

Hampton Roads Overview. The Hampton Roads housing market, like other east coast markets, has experienced a relatively rapid acceleration in housing prices (especially since 1998) in part due to the combination of pent-up demand and historic low interest rates. The Hampton Roads market has also received a boost from the purchase of second homes (such as in Virginia Beach) by "baby boomers" nearing retirement age. Isle

## Market Report

of Wight County may also be seeing a portion of this boomer market.

There is the likelihood that rising interest rates will soften demand, thereby reducing price pressures in the market. However, the region's continued job growth and healthy federal presence will counter-act these effects. There is likely to be a slight shift in demand from for-sale to rental housing to meet the needs of those relocating to the area for work (and including active military duty). This shift is also apparent in investor trends, which have accounted for almost 25% of the national for-sale housing market during the recent run-up in prices. Overall regional housing sales trends are summarized in the following table.

### Hampton Roads Overview

Almost 250,000 homes have sold in the Hampton Roads metropolitan areas since 1996, based on data from the Virginia Association of Realtors. The number of housing sales increased every year from 1997 through 2005. However, based on preliminary data to-date from 2006, total housing sales are expected to drop for the first time in ten years thanks in part to increasing interest rates and other factors. The average home sale price also increased dramatically over the 1996-2006 period, from \$115,736 to \$261,937, an increase of 126% over ten years. Home sale prices in the region increased at a modest to healthy pace through 1998. Since that time, however, prices increased at a more rapid pace per year. Prices are more likely to stabilize in the next few years.

### Isle of Wight

Isle of Wight County has seen increasing demand pressures for new housing as prices accelerate in surrounding, more urban jurisdictions. While nearby cities have long generated demand for Isle of Wight County's land to support homebuyers seeking more space and a rural lifestyle ("country ambiance") with lower taxes, the county also became attractive as a potential "relief valve" for accelerating housing prices in neighboring areas. Increasing restrictions on development within the county counter-acted against these pressures by reducing available development land and adding to the cost of development, thereby

**Table 3. HOUSING SALES TRENDS, HAMPTON ROADS METRO AREA, 1996-2006**

Year	Number of Sales	Average Price	Days on Market
1996	18,092	\$ 115,736	78
1997	15,127	\$ 120,954	83
1998	20,035	\$ 126,065	77
1999	20,522	\$ 127,812	70
2000	20,539	\$ 130,960	69
2001	23,413	\$ 140,821	64
2002	24,808	\$ 154,225	49
2003	26,172	\$ 171,961	38
2004	28,124	\$ 204,803	29
2005	29,085	\$ 250,304	31
2006	23,850	\$ 261,937	46
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>249,767</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Average</b>	<b>22,706</b>	<b>\$ 164,107</b>	<b>58</b>

**Note:** 2006 data annualized based on year-to-date.  
N/A means Not Applicable.

**Source:** Virginia Association of Realtors and Randall Groce / Development Economics.

## Market Report

increasing the price for new housing in the county.

Nevertheless, there are a number of residential projects in various stages of development within Isle of Wight County. An inventory of these projects maintained by the county plus several other additions have a total of 3,400 planned units at full-build out. Of these, about 1200 were sold as of 2007. Thus, there were another 2,200 units remaining in the planned inventory at that time.

**Sample Projects.** Key existing projects include Gatling Pointe, which is largely built out. Homes there have sold in the \$200,000 to \$800,000 price range. The project has proven to be very successful in attracting working professionals and their families, as well as military and other retirees with its yacht club and other amenities.

Eagle Harbor is a newer and more comprehensive development clustered within the study area near the James River Bridge. This East-West Realty development is master-planned to include almost 1,200 housing units, of which 770 had been sold as of 2007. Eagle Harbor Apartments includes 240 units (72 1-BR, 144 2-BR, and 24 3-BR), some of which opened in June 2007. About 40 units built in March 2006 remained to be leased as of June. Military staff represent 60 to 70% of the tenants in the apartments, with transfers (those relocating for jobs) accounting for another 25%. Local-originating residents accounted for only 5 to 10% of tenants. About 400 rental units are planned overall.

Lighthouse Commons (at Eagle Harbor) is one of the few, higher-density for-sale housing developments in the county. A total of 111 of the 119 townhouses have sold since opening in August 2004, yielding an absorption rate of about 4.4 per month. Prices started at \$205,000 at opening, but have increased to \$270,000-\$290,000 at present. Like the Eagle Harbor renters, military represent the largest group of Lighthouse Commons buyers (40%). About 20% of buyers were job transfers and

**Table 4. APPROVED RESIDENTIAL BUILD-OUT, ISLE OF WIGHT COUNTY, 2007**

Project	Total	Residential Units		
		Developed	Sold	Remaining
Cypress Creek	450	240	200	250
Villas-Smithfield	76	76	54	22
Wellington	217	217	120	97
Eagle Harbor	1,170	-	770	400
Founders Pointe	320	-	80	240
Church Square	118	-	-	118
Mallory Pointe	255	-	-	255
St Lukes Village	435	-	-	435
Holland Meadows	85	-	-	85
Windsor Station	40	-	-	40
Lawnes Point	155	-	-	155
Carrollton Cove	43	-	-	43
Ashby	28	-	-	28
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,392</b>	<b>533</b>	<b>1,224</b>	<b>2,168</b>

Source: Isle of Wight County and Randall Gross / Development Economics.

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## Market Report

20% move ups or move-downs (selling a larger house) from within the region. About 20% moved due to the lower tax rates in the county. Only a small percentage of buyers moved from within Isle of Wight County.

At the higher end of the county's residential projects is Smithfield on the James, which is offering 13 waterfront amenity lots priced at \$800,000. A total of 9 lots have sold by 2006, according to brokers. Cypress Creek offers golf-course homes from \$500,000. Other amenities include clubhouse, pool, and tennis courts. Ashby is a smaller development underway within the study area. Also within the study area are several subdivisions off of Sugar Hill Road. For example, Founders Pointe by East-West Realty offers homes from the high \$300,000 range up to \$700,000.

Outside of Isle of Wight, there are several developments in Suffolk that are indicative of the current market and its push north-west along the Route 17 corridor into the study area. One of these projects is Governor's Landing, which offers large houses (3,500 to 6,000 square feet) starting in the high \$400,000 range up to and beyond \$1.0 million. This one-year old planned community also offers a quaint commercial development, Shoppes on the Village Green, designed to replicate a small Virginia colonial-era village. Other projects in adjoining areas of Suffolk offer homes in the \$300,000 range.

**Planned Residential Development.** Isle of Wight County development proposals are pending for several new residential developments including Benn's Grant, located in the Benn's Church area, just outside of the study area. This mixed-use development would include 1,098 housing units priced in the \$140,000 to \$500,000 range, as well as 100 acres of commercial space, 100 room hotel, 35 acres of ballfields, 32 acres of medical office space, and 80 acres of community college and related office space. Retail is expected to include a Wal\*Mart Super Center, "big box" home improvement store, 11 out-parcels, and interior retail space, with a total commercial mix of close to 1.45 million square feet. The County expects the project to take 10 years to build-out. Other prospective developments include Windsor Castle (200 units, 6-year build-out) and Crown Creek (340 units, 9-year build out). St. Luke's Village, a mixed-use traditional neighborhood development (TND) project also to be located at Benn's Church, would include 435 homes with an average price of \$275,000, plus a 100-room hotel and 80,000 square feet of retail uses.

**Overall Pricing & Market Implications.** Isle of Wight offers a few housing options for those workers who earn less than necessary to support a mortgage at the region's \$260,000 average housing price.

There are relatively few rental options in the county, with only 19.2% of housing in Isle of Wight County renter-occupied in 2000, versus a national average of 33.8% (according to the U.S. Census). Many renters live in mobile homes, such as those located in 100-lot Jones Creek Landing that rent for \$241 per month or sell for \$55,000. Sample pricing at various local projects is shown in the table above, based on 2005 data supplied by the County coupled with Multiple Listing Service information.

## Market Report

Based on this sample of new home projects, Isle of Wight County new homes range in list price from \$295,700 to \$504,200, for an average of \$399,950. Thus, to purchase a new home in the county, households would need an average income of at least \$85,000 per year. Given that the average household income within the county is about \$50,000 per year, these housing options do not offer significant opportunities for existing residents to move up to new homes. Clearly, these new developments are dependent on attracting residents from outside of the county.

Isle of Wight County's new construction housing is attracting mainly middle-age buyers (35 to 55) who can afford the prices. And, whereas many from within the county and throughout the region would like to purchase large lots that take advantage of Isle of Wight's rural setting, the land prices are out of reach for many working people. Land prices are averaging \$85,000 (1.5 acres) in many parts of the county, but are priced starting at \$125,000 in the Carrollton portion of the study area.

A residential development pro forma was completed for illustrative purposes as requested by the County. This pro forma illustrates how the County's fee structures and planning policies can contribute to the price of a home when such fees are passed on to the consumer. The pro forma shows the average construction costs, plus the developer's fee and marketing expense. The county's fee structure is made explicit, including the current cash proffer price required per housing unit to cover the impact on County schools, fire, water, sewer, and other services from development of additional housing.

Also explicit is the price for finished lots, which can vary significantly in the county depending on location. As noted previously, lots can be purchased for \$85,000 in the rural zones, but range up to \$125,000 in Carrollton. For the purposes of this pro forma analysis, a price of \$100,000 was selected to reflect a smaller lot size as envisioned in a "new urbanist" vision for the

**Table 5.**

**RESIDENTIAL PROJECT PRICING  
ISLE OF WIGHT COUNTY, 2005**

Project	Price Range			Average
	Low		High	
Cypress Creek	\$ 500,000	-	\$ 1,000,000	\$750,000
Villas-Smithfield	\$ 190,000	-	\$ 250,000	\$220,000
Wellington	\$ 400,000		-	\$400,000
Eagle Harbor	\$ 240,000	-	\$ 450,000	\$345,000
Condominiums	\$ 180,000		-	\$180,000
Gatling Pointe	\$ 200,000	-	\$ 800,000	\$500,000
Croatan Landing	\$ 150,000	-	\$ 170,000	\$160,000
Pocohontas Court	\$ 150,000	-	\$ 170,000	\$160,000
Smithfield on James				
Founders Pointe	\$ 400,000	-	\$ 800,000	\$600,000
Church Square	\$ 150,000	-	\$ 300,000	\$225,000
Mallory Pointe	\$ 300,000	-	\$ 500,000	\$400,000
St Lukes Village			-	\$ -
Windsor Woods	\$ 255,000	-	\$ 285,000	\$270,000
Hidden Acres				
Holland Meadows	\$ 275,000	-	\$ 325,000	\$300,000
Windsor Station			-	\$ -
Lawnes Point	\$ 750,000	-	\$ 1,000,000	\$875,000
Carrollton Cove			-	\$ -
Ashby			-	\$ -
<b>AVERAGE</b>	<b>\$ 295,700</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>\$ 504,200</b>	<b>\$399,950</b>

Sources:

Isle of Wight County and Randall  
Gross / Development Economics.

# Market Report

study area’s mixed-use Carrollton node.

The pro forma assumed an average house size of 2,258 square feet, based on a sample of houses currently listed in the county. However, sensitivity analysis was conducted to determine the size of house required to meet the current average list price, holding constant all of the other pro forma assumptions. Using this analysis, the house size was reduced in the pro forma to 2,186 square feet. The results are shown at right.

It is fairly easy to see how the cost of development has translated into the typical list price in today’s Isle of Wight market. The role of county fees is significant (adding about \$17,000 to the price of a house), which helps pay for the cost of providing County schools and services. However, the lot price is also clearly a factor. Demand in general would have driven up the price of land in Isle of Wight County over time, but County policy has accelerated that trend by constricting development. This has had the effect of pushing up land values within the higher-density developable areas (\$125,000 versus \$85,000). In this pro forma, the County’s land use policies have in effect added another \$15,000 to \$20,000 to the price of a house in the growth areas of the county. These policies are achieving their objectives, from a land use and growth management perspective. The purpose of this analysis was only to demonstrate how such policies also have an effect on the affordability of housing.

## Summary

The residential housing market is feeling pressures in Isle of Wight County due to a rapid acceleration in pricing throughout the Hampton Roads Metro Area, coupled with continued job growth. Local restrictions and costs on development have added to the demand pressures to drive up prices in the county. As a result, prices for new housing are such that the average Isle of Wight household cannot afford to purchase the average new house within the county. At the same time, a shift upward in interest rates will relieve some pressures on for-sale housing, but with continued job growth, will help increase

<b>TYPICAL RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT PRO FORMA, ISLE OF WIGHT COUNTY, 2005</b>		
	<b>Factor</b>	<b>Amount</b>
<b>Development Cost</b>		
Lot-Finished		\$ 100,000
Water/Sewer Connection Fee		\$ 4,000
Cash Profit		\$ 11,950
<b>Plan Review Process</b>		
Zoning Permit		\$ 25
Re-zoning		\$ 820
Site Review		\$ 300
<b>Inspection Fees</b>		
Plan		\$ 55
Plumbing	\$ 25.00	\$ 75
Electrical-Plumb		\$ 45
Mechanical	\$ 8.00	\$ 43
Permit - Under Roof	\$ 0.12	\$ 292
Permit - Not Under Roof	\$ 0.10	\$ 45
Sub-Total		\$ 175,850
<b>Construction Cost</b>		
Average Square Feet (2,186 SF)	2,186	
Building Cost / SF (Includes)	\$ 100.00	
Sub-Total		\$ 218,576
Marketing & Soft Costs (10%)	10%	\$ 21,858
Builder Profit (7%)	7%	\$ 23,489
<b>TOTAL HOUSING COST</b>		<b>\$ 342,363</b>
Average List Price		\$ 382,300
<b>Source:</b>	<b>Isle of Wight County, Area Developers, and Ruralist Group / Development Economics</b>	

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## Market Report

demand on the very small supply of rental housing in the county.

### **Retail & Office**

Isle of Wight County does not have a major commercial center outside of Smithfield. However, as the population and housing base continue to increase, the county will see increasing demand for both retail and professional service uses.

### **Retail**

Smithfield has its quaint downtown retail businesses, as well as strip retail along Church Street, out U.S. 258. By comparison, the county has relatively little retail development. As noted earlier, the study area has a new shopping center at Eagle Harbor, plus several strip retail centers and scattered convenience uses. The county was known for its low cigarette taxes, and convenience stores along Route 17 still advertise their tobacco products. The county is also known for its meat products, but there are very few outlets to attract buyers. One exception is Jeb's market, in Route 17, which offers a full line of fresh meats as well as other grocery products. Known for his excellent service, Jeb's attracts business from throughout the region but according to the owner, is negatively impacted by theft and by the lack of other retailers in the corridor.

The lack of other retail results from the rural nature of the county but also from a development approval process that slows commercial development within the corridor. To this end, the County has partly succeeded in avoiding the "commercial sprawl" and resulting traffic that plagues other parts of the region. On the other hand, the growing population will demand retail goods and services to meet their needs and as an amenity. The new Food Lion helped bridge a serious gap in the supply of supermarket items and other convenience goods for the growing population in the eastern side of the county. However, there is a need to examine what additional retail is necessary to meet the demands of local residents.

***Growth-Generated Demand.*** A "back of the envelope" assessment finds that the 2,800 units of additional housing planned as part of existing and proposed projects (excluding Benn's Grant) may generate demand for 100,000 to 150,000 square feet of convenience (e.g., grocery, drugstore, gas station) retail space, most of which would need to be located inside or near the Route 17 Corridor. This amount does not include demand for shopper goods (e.g., apparel, furniture, hardware, general merchandise, etc), some of which might be captured by existing and planned retail stores in other jurisdictions but some of which would most likely require local development. Assuming that up to 30% of shoppers goods demand would be captured locally there may be additional demand for about 120,000 to 170,000 square feet of shopper goods space. Overall, the additional housing units may generate demand for at least 220,000 to 320,000 square feet of retail space or more over the next few years within the Route 17 corridor and in other parts of Isle of Wight County. These theoretical figures are based on assumptions that would need to be tested through actual market analysis.

Benn's Grant's 1,200 housing units will add further demand for retail uses. Again, a similar back-of-the-envelope analysis suggests that these units might add demand for another 80,000 to 130,000 square feet of retail space. Altogether, the new developments might add demand for at

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## Market Report

least 300,000 square feet of retail space (and a maximum of 450,000 square feet), but again, these numbers are based on theoretical modeling.

**Inflow.** In addition to supplying the needs of its own residents, Isle of Wight County may also have an implicit or explicit interest in promoting at least small scale / low-impact retail development that attracts destination sales (from outside of the county) and adds to the county's tax base. Several concepts for such development have been suggested, such as a small craft-oriented business cluster that is consistent with the agricultural heritage and rural character of the county. Interviews with several highway-oriented businesses in the corridor found that they already generate more than 30% of sales from tourists or other visitors, with the remaining 70% from commuters. Thus, there is already significant inflow into the county for retail goods. Continued housing development will not reduce this inflow but will reduce the businesses' dependency on outside sales.

**Grade and Income.** With new, higher-priced housing development, demand for retail is changing in the county. Even if the number of households remained constant, the higher incomes associated with new housing will bring additional income into the county. That income translates into higher expenditure potentials and changing preferences for the types and grades of retail merchandise. The craft concept, especially as it applies to home furnishings and specialty foods, may be very attractive to new local markets. Thus, should housing development continue as planned, there is likely to be more demand for high grade stores such as specialty food and wine shops, bookstores, women's specialty apparel, quality home furnishings stores, etc. These assumptions and the actual volume of demand for such stores would need to be tested through more thorough market analysis.

It is also critical that every effort is made to avoid creating competition to existing local businesses, such as specialty stores in downtown Smithfield or other areas. Rather, new business should be welcomed that diversifies the business base and compliments existing uses.

### **Planned Retail Development & Implications**

Benn's Grant, as discussed previously in this report, would include 100 acres and about 1.4 million square feet of retail and office space including a Super Wal\*Mart, a home improvement store, and additional retail in 11 out-parcels and interior space. Part of the development will include a specialty "Main Street" retail shopping district, the concept including coffee shops, restaurants, and specialty shops. In addition, Marketplace-on-the-James (formerly "The Crossings") is proposed as a 60.75-acre, commercial development at Routes 17 and 258 in the Bartlett Town Center. This development would primarily include a 396,000 square-foot shopping center to be built in two phases, with 202,100 square feet in Phase 1 and 193,900 square feet proposed for Phase 2. There would also be eight out-parcels on a total of about 6.7 acres. St. Luke's Village would add another 80,000 square feet of retail space in the area. Additional retail uses are also proposed near the County library on Route 258. Other projects, such as additional phases at Eagle Harbor or 150,000 square feet planned in Smithfield, will also add more space to the market.

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## Market Report

Assuming that Benn's Grant would build up to 800,000 square feet of retail space within the next five to ten years, there would be a total of about 1.6 million square feet of retail space developed in the near term (excluding Phase 2 of the Marketplace and any other independent retail development). All of this space would be developed within or near the study area (such as in Benn's Church or at Eagle Harbor), and most of the space is likely to be occupied by franchises and other chain store operators.

Given that there will be theoretical demand for 300,000 to 450,000 square feet of retail space generated by new housing development within the next ten years, the planned development is likely to capture most of this new demand. The planned development will also probably require both of the following in order to be economically viable:

- Re-capturing the county's existing outflow, and
- Attracting new inflow from a broad regional market

There is also the strong possibility that these new developments will reduce opportunities for smaller, independent entrepreneurs that already operate or may wish to open a business in the study area. Again, this analysis is not based on market analysis and is therefore subject to the findings of a "back of the envelope" assessment. But if true, then the concept of attracting or growing smaller retail businesses in the county may not be possible without a pro-active effort by the county to enhance destination market opportunities for these smaller businesses. Such pro-active efforts might include:

- Establishing a craft "incubator" or other facility that might serve as a destination anchor for small businesses in the corridor. A craft incubator would provide low-rent (possibly subsidized) spaces for small Isle of Wight-based companies that are engaged in the design or production of craft or artwork. As a non-profit entity, the incubator might also provide access to resources such as training, joint marketing, or operating capital for emerging craft businesses.
- Creating fiscal or financial incentives (e.g., small business loans, tax abatements, etc) as possible for small business operators who locate at specific sites within the corridor.
- Working with the Chamber of Commerce to establish a corridor marketing committee that would focus on small business development and on improving the operating environment for small businesses within the corridor.
- Limiting or restricting "big box" retail development (beyond those that are already planned) in order to reduce the competition on small businesses. Many communities nationally have instituted restrictions on the size of retail buildings.

### **Office**

Isle of Wight County has a small multi-tenant office market, oriented primarily to housing businesses that service the local population. However, the county and historic Smithfield are also home to the corporate headquarters of at least two significant companies, one of which (Smithfield Foods) is a Fortune 500 corporation that occupies office buildings totaling 50,000 square feet. Monette Information Systems, headquartered in

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## Market Report

Smithfield, provides computer support to the healthcare and long-term care industry nationwide.

Isle of Wight is part of the nation's 28th largest metropolitan area, which has a growing job base and a major federal presence. As such, there is increasing demand for office space in the region. The College Drive area has proven to be an important nexus for defense contractors. Suburban Class A office space (i.e., newer elevator buildings with a high finish and amenity value) has relatively high occupancy (92%), despite the fact that there is an increasing supply. There are opportunities for Isle of Wight to capture some of this corporate office growth in the Route 17 Corridor, although this opportunity may be some years into the future.

In the near term, the opportunities for office development are more likely to be associated with smaller professional office needs such as those being captured by Gumwood Drive Professional Park, under development off of Route 258 in Smithfield, or in Benn's Grant. Gumwood is a small, 2-acre office park that will include five buildings with a total 14,400 square feet of office space. One 2,880 square foot building has been completed and is partly leased for doctor's offices. Condominium units (1,440 square feet) are listed at \$244,900. Benn's Grant is planned to include perhaps 700,000 square feet of Class A office space presumably for medical, professional, and back-office uses. Back office refers to ancillary office space that is generally used by financial institutions, airlines, and other service companies for functions such as telemarketing, account processing, and customer support. These functions often require buildings with large floor plates and operate more efficiently and cost-effectively in exurban locations with lower land and labor costs.

Based on an assessment of recent employment trends in the office sectors (primarily: Information, Finance & Insurance, Real Estate, Professional Services, Management Services, Administrative Support, and Medical Professionals), there has been little growth in the local demand for office space partly because of a decline in administrative support positions. Excluding that sector, however, there has been growth in employee-generated need for about 2,000 square feet per year (assuming 200 square feet per employee) or about 12,000 square feet between 1998 and 2004. Much of this need is being accommodated in office space in Smithfield or near the new residential development. Additional demand for office space might be accommodated within the study area, again, close to new housing developments. These numbers are based on assumptions regarding employment growth. Actual demand and type of office space can only be determined through market analysis.

**Summary.** Both retail and office demand will be generated by an increasing household base within the county. Perhaps up to 450,000 square feet of retail demand may be generated by the additional housing that is planned in the county. Some of this demand could be accommodated within the study area, since much of the new housing is also planned within the study area. There are opportunities to capture more resident "outflow" (or "leakage" to surrounding communities) as well as destination retail "inflow" into the county, but the latter may run against residents' interests in maintaining Isle of Wight's rural character and reducing traffic impacts. On the other hand, there are concepts that may accommodate retail that serves an increasingly "up-market" clientele while retaining the small town charm.

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## Market Report

While the region is increasingly positioned as a corporate and government office hub, Isle of Wight County is not likely to capture a significant share of that market but is competitive for back office and similar administrative functions in the near term. There will continue to be growing demand for professional office uses on a small scale that serve the local market. Some of the near-term demand will be captured by both the major office development at Benn's Grant as well as smaller professional office parks like those already under development.

### **Hotel/Conference**

Historic Smithfield (referring to the historic core of the Town of Smithfield) is recognized not only for its famed hams but also as an attractive, colonial era seaport that attracts day-trippers from Richmond, Hampton Roads, and beyond. Isle of Wight County is also home to St. Luke's Church, the oldest established church with brick foundation in the U.S. Isle of Wight has a visitor base of 2.8 million within a one-hour drive. Thus, it is no surprise that the county's largest hotel/conference center (Smithfield Station) is doubling in size from its current 22 rooms in order to capture more of this growing market. The county's only other significant lodging is in the 70-room Econo Lodge and in the Franklin Inn.

Certainly there are opportunities to capture more of the day-tripper visitor market, but also to capture more of the regional tourism that brings 750,000 paid visitors to Colonial Williamsburg plus thousands more to the area's other heritage destinations. A market study completed by this consultant found (in 1993) that there were opportunities for waterfront (wharf) attractions and amenities including amphitheater and museum. The lack of conference space already prevents the county from attracting more substantial meetings and conferences, which also require additional room capacity. However, the scale and need for additional hotels and conference facilities should be tested more thoroughly through market analysis. Furthermore, the ability of Isle of Wight County to attract larger or more numerous conferences and meetings would depend in part on the availability of restaurants, shopping, recreation, and other amenities that may be required in order to market new facilities for such events.

The appropriate location for additional lodging, tourism attraction, and meeting facilities would depend in large measure on the environment that could be created to appeal to those markets. The reason that tourists and conference planners choose Isle of Wight County is precisely the same reason that many residents prefer to live there – the rural character and ambiance. While the Route 17 Corridor does offer a rural setting, it does not offer maximum amenity value at present with respect to the visitor offering as defined to include:

- Natural setting, especially waterfront and wooded areas
- Lack of visual obstruction (e.g., used car lots)
- Lack of highway traffic
- High-value recreation amenities
- Shopping and entertainment
- High-quality sit-down restaurants

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## Market Report

Better locations in the county may exist for higher-end hotel and conference center facilities that can take advantage of the county's miles of waterfront and natural areas, or that benefit from proximity to the quaint and "walkable" Historic Smithfield business district. Again, some of this amenity value could be created artificially, but the Study Area does not have an optimal location for such an opportunity.

### **Summary of Market Opportunities & Constraints**

The following summarizes key market opportunities and constraints, based on field reconnaissance and "desktop" analysis of existing data. Additional information was collected and analyzed during the charrette process and is included in this report as appropriate.

#### **Housing**

Isle of Wight County offers a rural lifestyle and benefits from its strategic location proximate to employment and amenities in a large metropolitan area. As a result, there will continue to be market pressures for development of new housing in the county and in the study area. Rapid price escalations throughout Hampton Roads have only added to the pressures for affordable housing and land in Isle of Wight, while local policies have further restricted development. Thus, housing prices have increased dramatically and reduced opportunities for county residents to afford new housing. While interest rates may help alleviate some of this price pressure, there is a perceptible shift toward demand for more rental housing. This may provide opportunities for mixed-use development including rental housing within the study area.

#### **Retail and Office**

The growth of housing in the county will, by necessity, increase demand for retail and professional services space. The growth in demand for retail space to serve the local community has been estimated at 220,000 to 450,000 square feet, based on gross untested assumptions and in the absence of a competitive market analysis. Most of this demand is likely to be captured in planned retail development, but such retail development as planned would rely on a regional market base in order to support anything above 450,000 square feet. As such, regional retail development will generate inflow sales as well as traffic to Isle of Wight County from other parts of the Hampton Roads region.

If the County has an interest in promoting smaller, more community-based businesses and creative outlets (rather than corporate chains and franchises) that preserve the rural character of the area, then there would need to ensure that new retail development does not infringe on these opportunities and that there is a pro-active effort to create destination potential for the independent businesses. Efforts should also be made to avoid direct competition to existing businesses, by encouraging new business (or expansion of existing business) that diversifies and compliments the existing business mix. Modest growth in professional office space is possible (but not tested through market analysis). Office uses are likely to be best located in Smithfield or key nodes near new housing development (such as in the Bartlett-JRB segment of Route 17).

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## Market Report

### **Lodging & Conference**

The county is clearly well-positioned to capture more of the region's day-tripper market, let alone a larger portion of tourism flow to national attractions like Colonial Williamsburg. However, the setting and amenity value are key selling points for attracting tourists and conference visitors. Just building a hotel or a conference center, even if there may be demand, does not mean that "they will come," since these facilities are highly dependent on the supporting amenity infrastructure (restaurants, shopping, recreation facilities, etc). The Route 17 Corridor does not at present provide the optimum environment for attracting specialty meetings or conferences (nor the business base for the marginal meeting client). So, such facilities might be better suited to other locations in the county.

### **Overall Development Process & Cost Constraints**

Isle of Wight County has clearly stated an objective of maintaining its high quality of life, particularly by maintaining/preserving the rural character of the area. The County Government and its constituents are focused on efforts to improve the appearance of the county's roadways (such as Route 17) and to manage and encourage high-quality development.

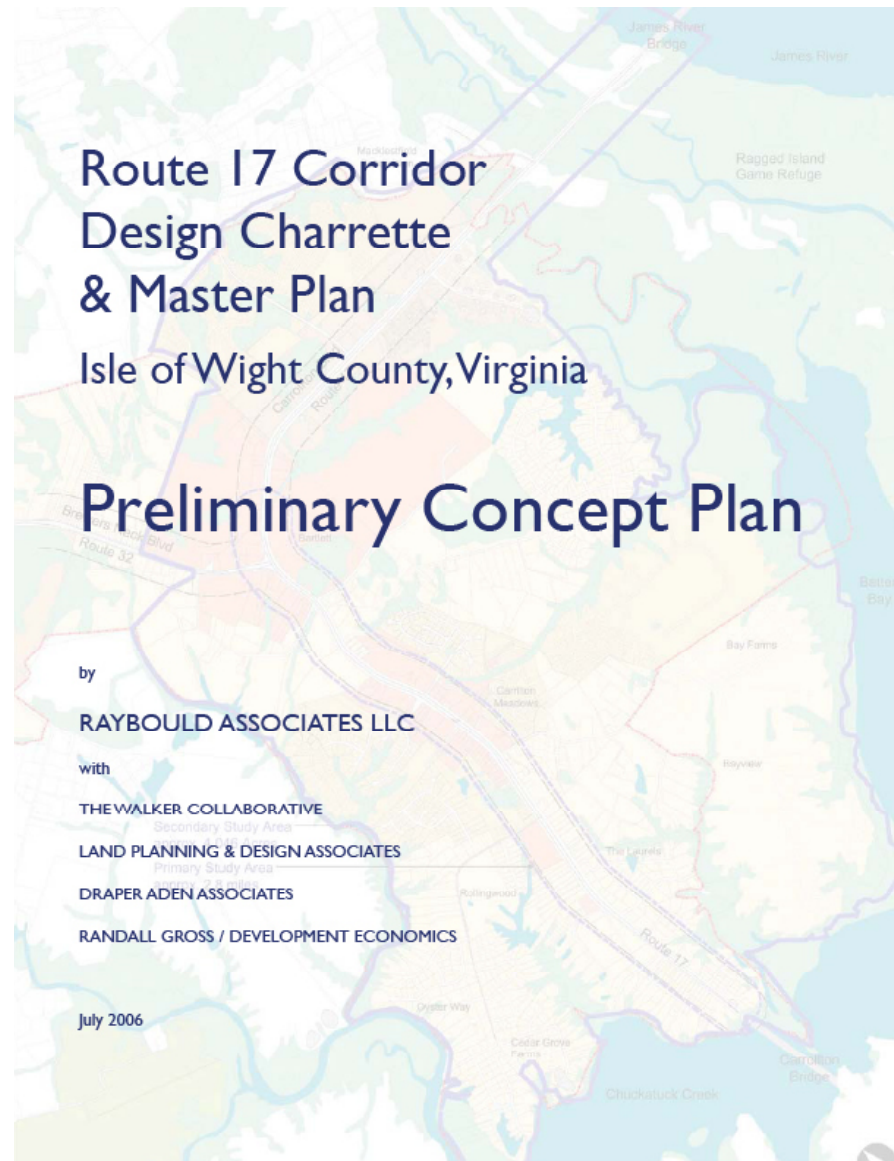
At the same time, there is a need to ensure that County policies support these objectives by assisting small businesses and property owners wherever possible, since it is they who are in fact contributing to the very "quality of life" and rural character that the county wishes to maintain. Small businesses are at the heart of the rural economy. Additionally, there is a need to ensure that the county has a balanced and diversified housing base and that the affordable housing needs of the average citizen are met. If the average price of new housing exceeds the abilities of local residents to purchase that housing, then some residents could be displaced.

In order to better understand the relationship between County policy and constraints placed on small property owners and housing consumers, the County requested the consultant to translate these policies into a cost measure. As such, the consultant prepared a development "pro forma" to illustrate the costs added by various layers of County policy to the development process.

The pro forma indicates that certain fees, coupled with planning policies that have helped increase demand (and prices) for land within higher-density development zones, contribute to the overall cost of housing. In effect, the County's policies are achieving their stated objectives of funneling development into areas where the County's infrastructure can best handle growth. While larger developers can spread the higher cost of development over many residential units, a smaller builder or property owner who subdivides their property cannot do so as easily.

For many working residents of Isle of Wight County (such as County employees) who wish to purchase housing, prices may be increasingly out of reach. Turnover in older existing houses (which are much more affordable) is not likely to provide enough units to meet growing demand generated from within and outside of the county. Thus, there is a need for housing policies that provide incentives to developers for including housing priced to meet the needs of the local work force. The County has already begun to offer such incentives and is in the process of designing its affordable housing policies to better meet this objective.

# Concept Plan



## Introduction to the Route 17 Corridor Plan Preliminary Concept Plan Graphics

### *(1) What does the concept plan say about growth?*

The concept plan for Route 17 is not designed to create additional growth, but rather is a tool for guiding growth as it occurs, according to community priorities.

The plan is intended to provide guidance for the form, type, and location of new development as growth occurs. In other words, the plan is concerned with how future development should “behave” – so that when growth occurs, it takes the form that the citizens expect and support. Above all, the plan is an opportunity to get in front of coming change and formalize the community’s priorities and expectations in advance. When this is done, the plan’s guidelines and principles will provide the County with a “yardstick” to evaluate development proposals and determine how well they comport with the community’s expressed priorities.

Incrementally, from year to year, a community gains new subdivisions, shopping and restaurants, offices, and institutions. With a good overarching plan, these incremental parts add up to a high-quality environment that retains community character, where residents enjoy open space, parks, and trails, where traffic is manageable and pedestrians are safe. Having a plan in advance is a critical step in achieving those goals.

### *(2) What was the basis for the Concept Plan?*

The concept plan is thoroughly based on public input by citizens. Participants expressed their views at evening public workshops, stakeholder interviews, small group meetings, and one-on-one conversations with the planning team. These citizen participants generously provided their ideas, concerns, potential solutions, and priorities to the consulting team, who then incorporated and harmonized the ideas expressed by the public to the greatest extent possible in the concept plan.

### *(3) What type of process is being used to develop the Master Plan?*

This concept plan is the product of the second step in the public process being used to develop the finished master plan. Here are the overall process steps:

#### **Task 1: Background Research & Analysis (April 2006)**

During a two-day trip, the consulting team visited the study area, conducted interviews with stakeholders and small group meetings with interested persons and representatives of civic groups and other organizations. During a two-hour evening public workshop, participants learned about the project objectives and contributed their views directly. The consulting team also followed up with additional telephone contacts, site visits to the area and other communities named as models by participants, and background research.

# Concept Plan

## Task 2: Charrette and Corridor Concept Plan (June 2006)

During this three-day trip, the consulting team gathered additional information about the study area, met with County staff and other interested persons. The centerpiece of the public input component for this trip was an intensive, hands-on evening workshop during which citizen participants worked in small teams to convey their ideas for the study area, using colored markers on detailed base maps, and focusing attention on a series of topics (such as environment and open space, public facilities, and transportation). At the end of the workshop, a representative from each citizen team presented the team's plan and concepts to the entire group. Due to the degree of interest, this workshop lasted over 2 ½ hours and produced seven concept plan maps, accompanied by a great deal of information about citizen preferences, concerns, and priorities.

The consulting team then worked in an intensive session ("charrette") over the next two days to produce a concept plan incorporating the ideas expressed by citizens. The concept plan was presented to the public on the third and final evening of the charrette trip, and additional public input was received on the plan as formulated.

## Task 3: Design Guidelines Workshop & Review (August 2006)

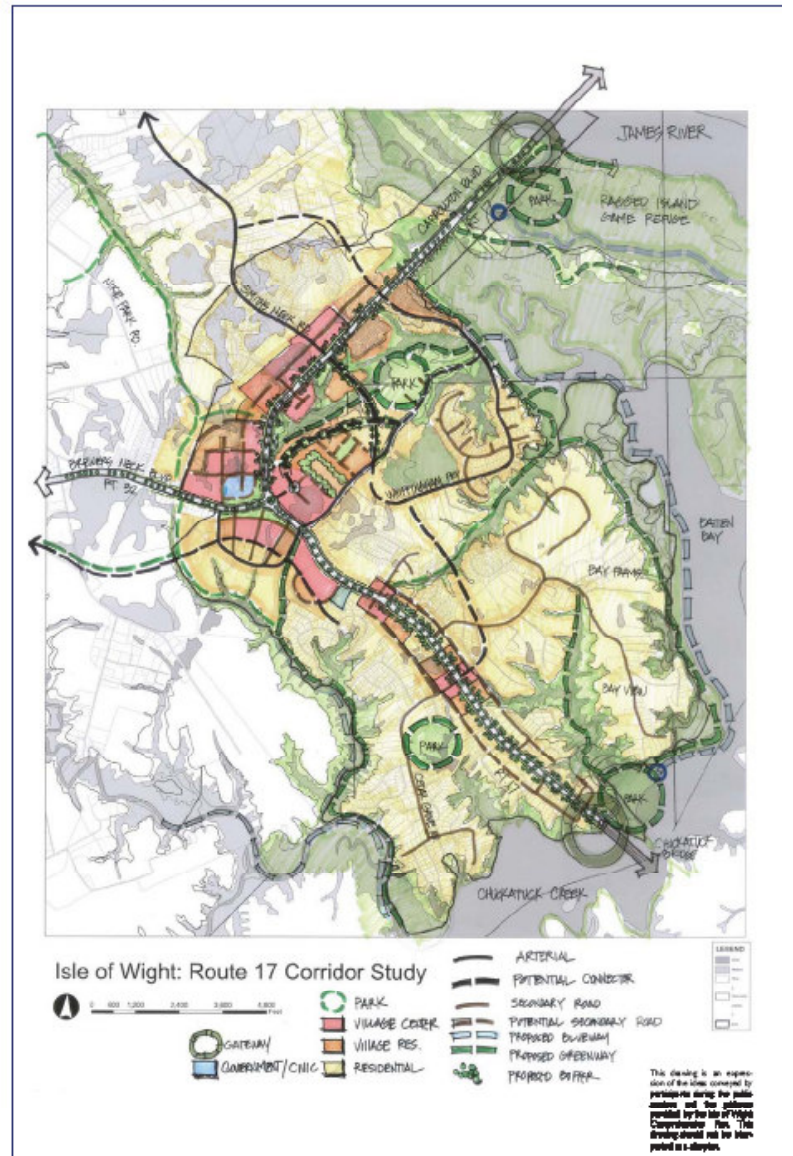
This special workshop to be held on the morning of August 7 will allow the public to express their input and preferences about design options for new development, including commercial and residential buildings, community character, streetscapes, and related design elements. This public input will be used to formulate design guidelines for all of these elements, which will become part of the corridor plan.

## Task 4: Development of Master Plan and Design Guidelines (Fall 2006)

Based on the background research, public input, the concept plan, and preliminary design guidelines, the consultant will prepare a draft Master Plan & Design Guidelines for review.

## Task 5: Final Plan and Presentation (Fall 2006)

At another public meeting designed to provide additional opportunities for input, the consultant will present the Master Plan and Design Guidelines. The plan and guidelines will then be finalized and submitted to the County.



# Concept Plan

Isle of Wight County - Route 17 Corridor Plan  
 Preliminary Concept Plan Detail

Republic Association  
 July 2016



# Preliminary Access Roads

