

Suffolk 2045

Connecting Our City, Shaping Our Future

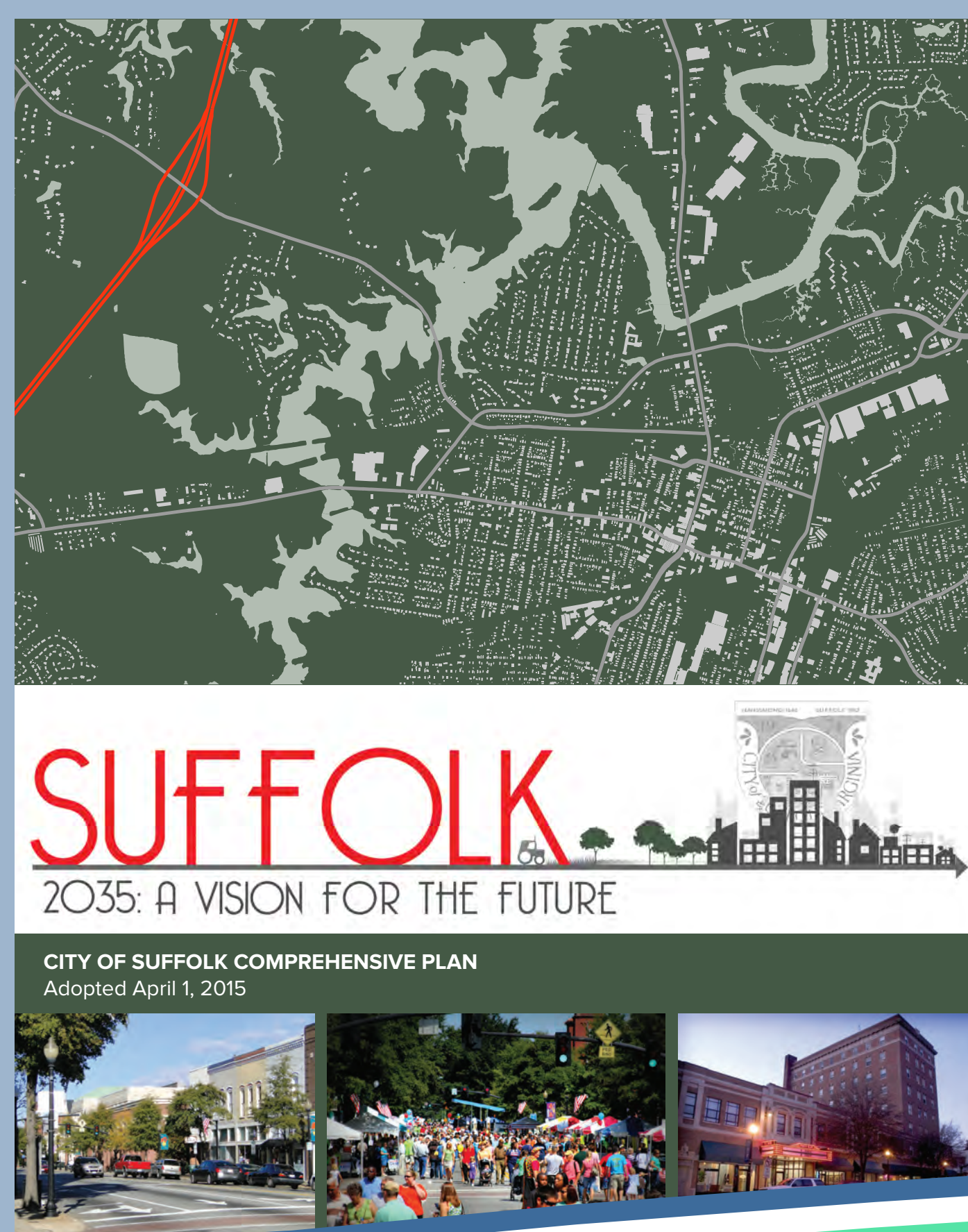
Help Set the Direction for Suffolk!

Do you want to have a voice in the future of Suffolk? Now is your chance through the Suffolk 2045 comprehensive planning process! We're seeking insights from the public to inform a plan that will address a range of important topics that will directly impact all who live, work, or spend time in the City. Please review the content on these display boards and share your thoughts to help make Suffolk the best it can be!



Suffolk 2035

The current comprehensive plan (Suffolk 2035) was adopted in 2015. While many of its overarching values remain valid today, the update provides an opportunity to address new planning issues and consider new strategies.



What is a Comprehensive Plan?

A comprehensive plan is a long-term guide that expresses the values and aspirations of a community. It is the broadest public policy document a community can create for its future physical development considering the input of residents, businesses, and stakeholders.

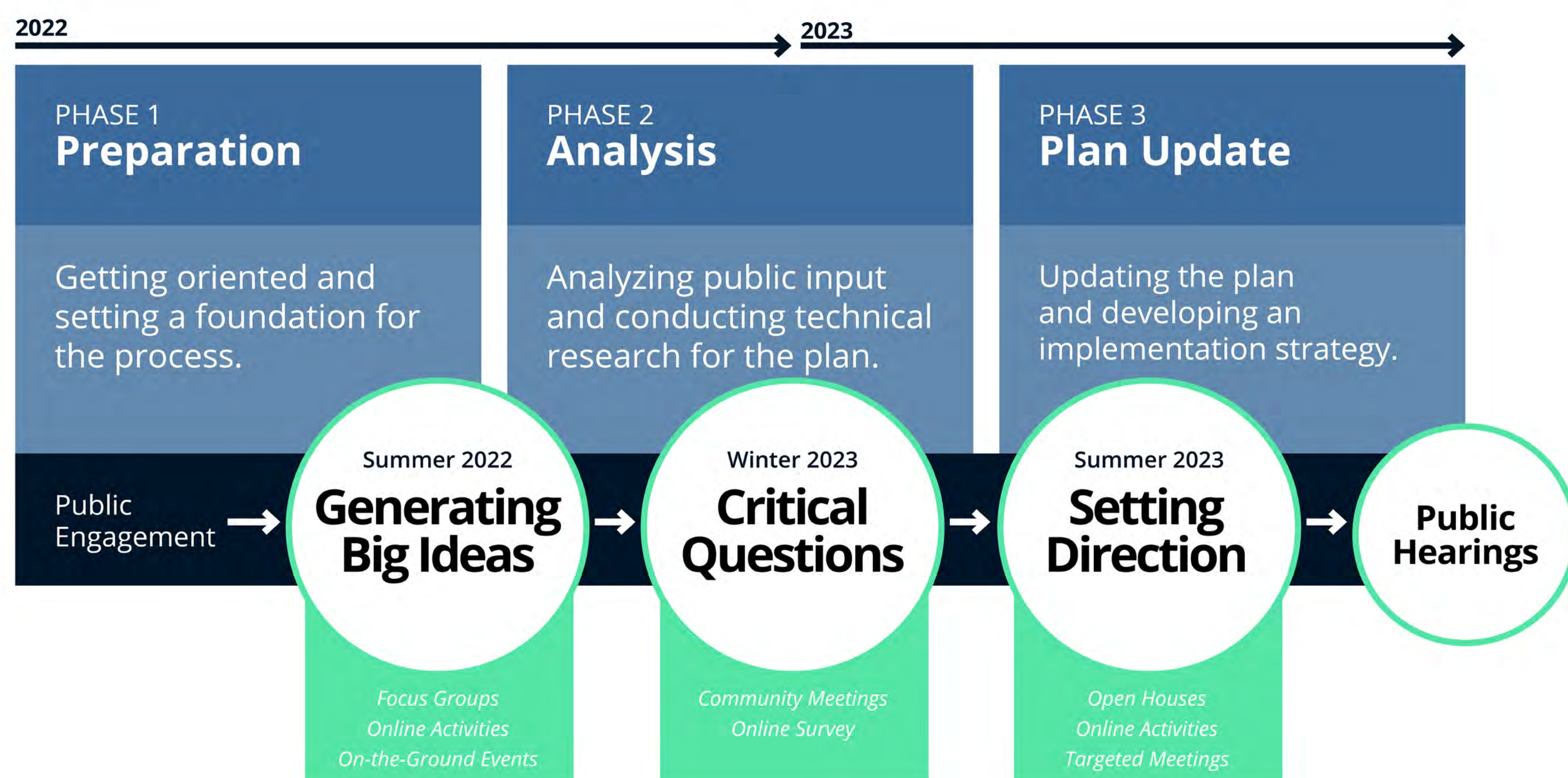
A comprehensive plan should:

- set forth the **long-range vision** for topics such as land use and community character; transportation and mobility; economic development; housing; and natural, historic, and cultural resources
- address community needs to **prepare for change and protect treasured assets**
- help sustain the City's **fiscal health**
- serve as a **marketing tool** for the City to clearly convey the community's priorities
- include specific actions and identify **timing and responsibilities** for those undertaking those actions
- contain map-based recommendations that indicate the City's intent for where and how it will **direct growth and change**
- be **implemented over time** through many distinct decisions, including annual budgeting, departmental work programs, and setting priorities
- recommend an **approach for implementation** of recommendations

Process

The plan update will be shaped by input from the community and technical research. A preliminary round of engagement was conducted in Summer 2022 and a second round in Winter 2023. Hundreds of community members participated, and over 5,700 individual comments have been received.

Now, community members have the chance to review preliminary ideas for the plan and shape specific recommendations.



Values

The values from previous plan documents have been largely consistent over time. Following are the draft values proposed to guide the development of Suffolk 2045.

Maintain an efficient transportation network with effective choices for mobility.

Preserve the agricultural heritage and character of the City.

Support economic development opportunities with benefits across the community.

Protect the natural, cultural, and historical assets of the City.

Support and enhance variety in character and types of places in the City.

Maintain high-quality services and facilities as growth occurs.

Promote a diverse housing stock, providing options in terms of type, location, and affordability.

Support responsible regionalism.



Land Use Considerations

Land use considerations draw from and provide an update to themes from previous plan documents. Following are the land use considerations to guide the development of Suffolk 2045.

Maintaining the focused growth approach and expanding growth opportunities

Coordinating transportation and land use considerations

Supporting fiscally sustainable land use choices

Ensuring a high quality and character of development

Protecting natural resources and agricultural lands

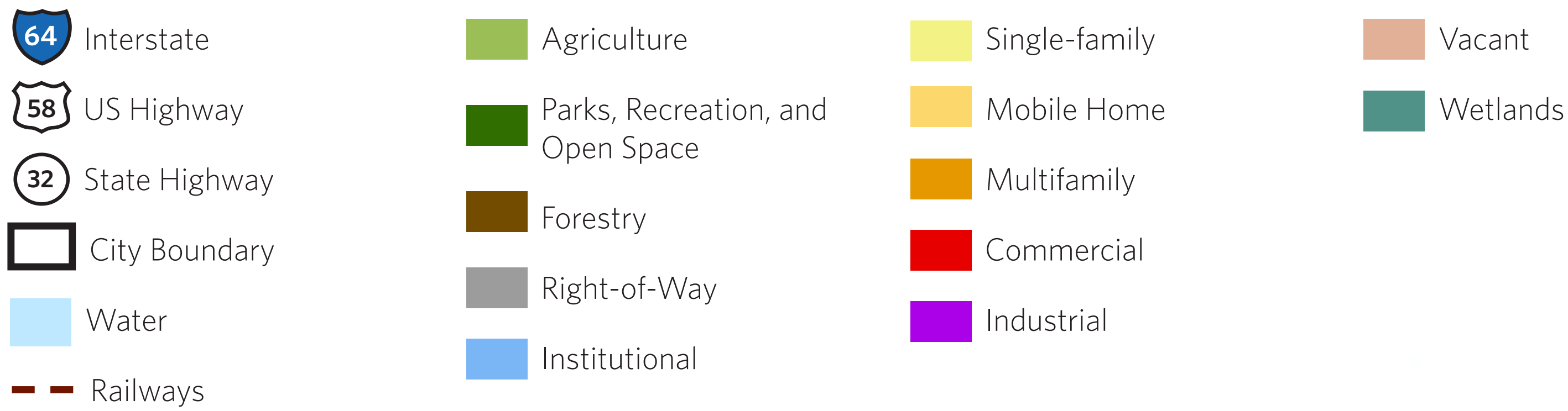
Promoting synergy between economic development and land use



How Land is Used Today

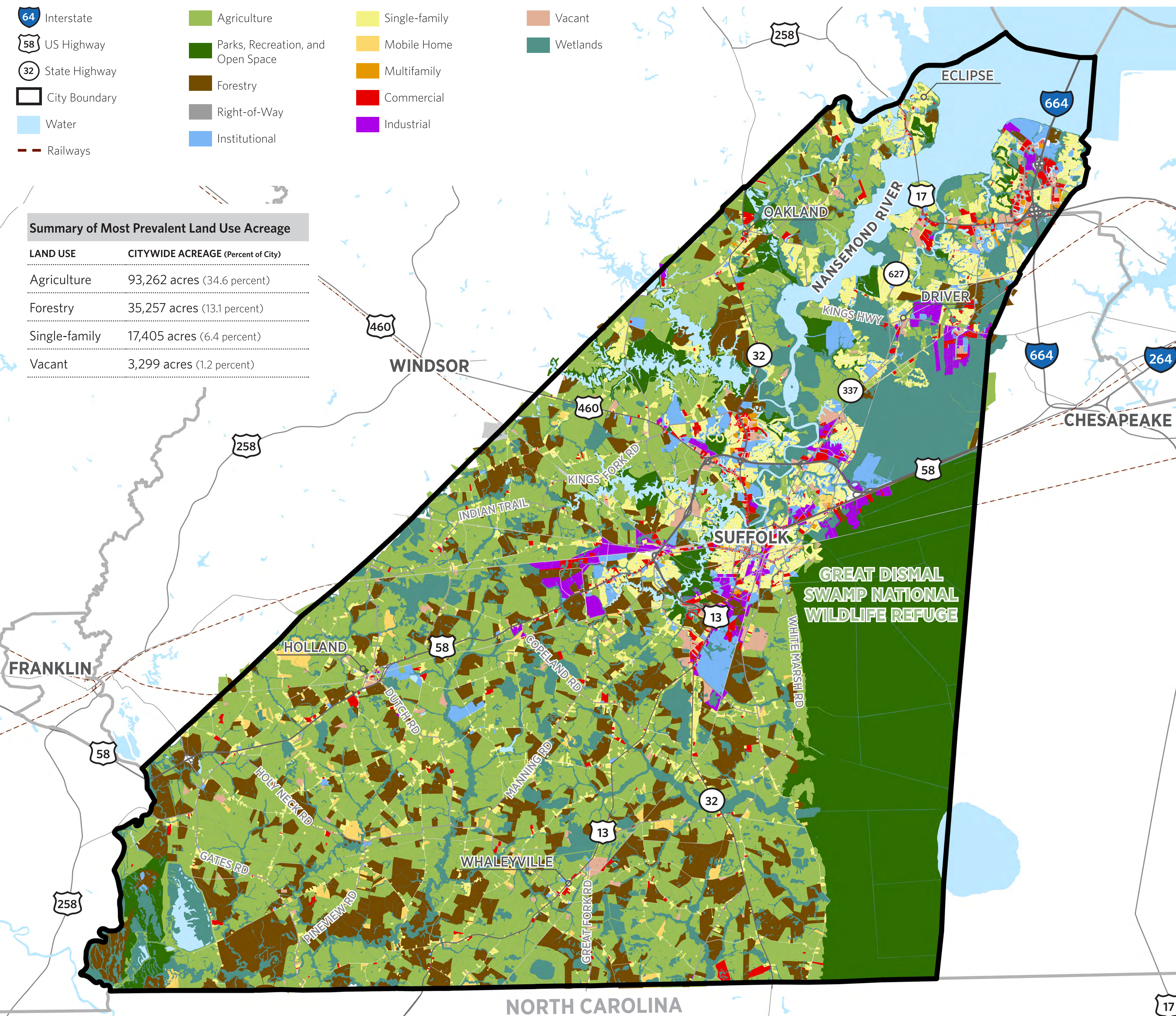
Understanding the existing land use patterns in Suffolk is an important starting point for considering potential future change.

- **Two concentrated areas of development.** There is a mix of commercial, residential, industrial, and parks and open space concentrated around the downtown urban core and North Suffolk.
- **Development along corridors.** Extending from the two urbanized areas along major corridors are similar uses to the urbanized areas, with a higher concentration of commercial and industrial uses along certain corridors.
- **Large portion of agricultural land.** Agriculture and forestry make up over one-third of the total land area of the City. In these rural areas are also wetlands, single-family residential development, and some commercial uses.
- **Preserved Great Dismal Swamp.** A portion of the Great Dismal Swamp is in the southeast of the City. It is the most significant large area of parks and open space in Suffolk and contains some of the most important wildlife habitats in the mid-Atlantic region.

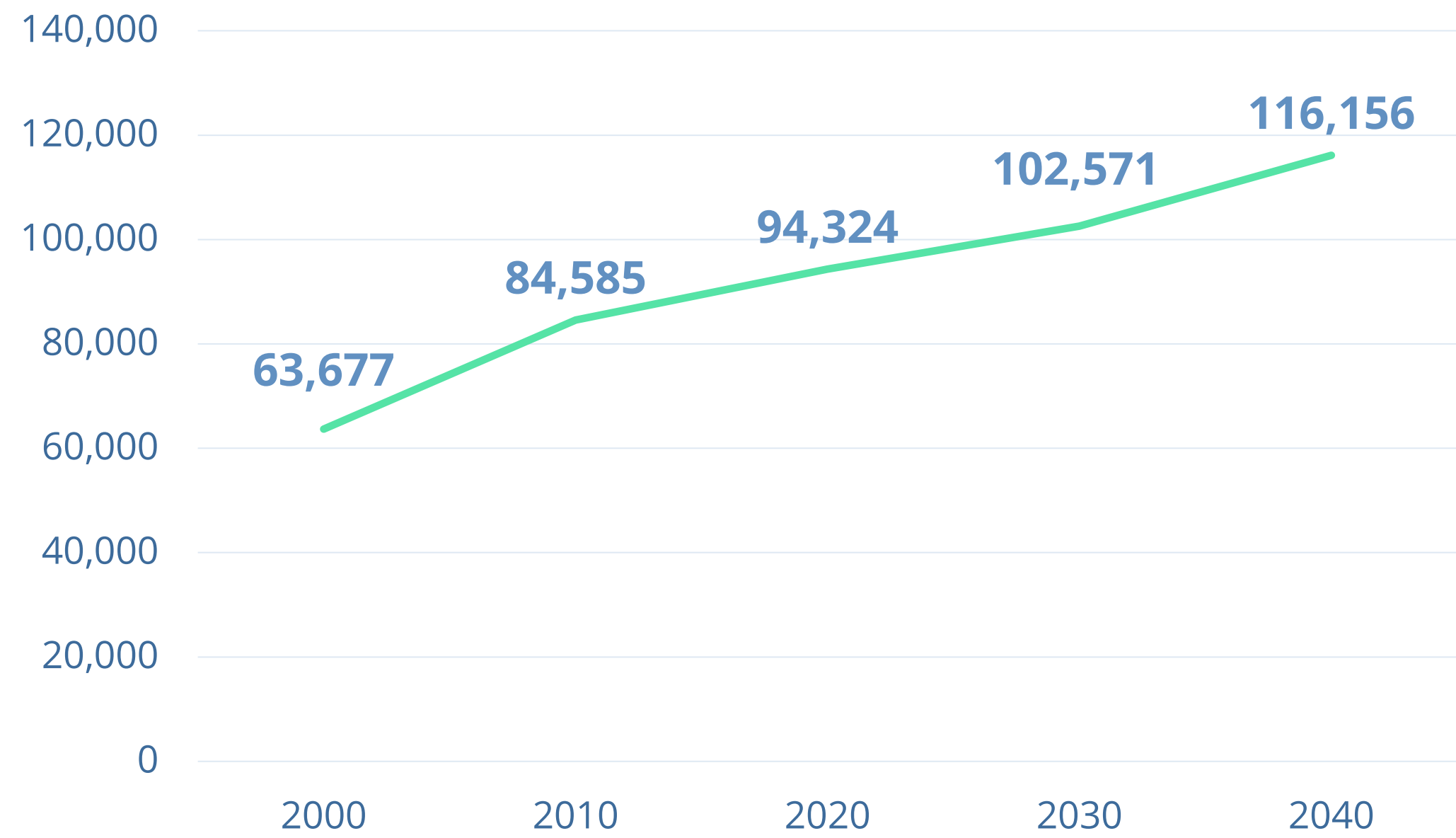


Summary of Most Prevalent Land Use Acreage

LAND USE	CITYWIDE ACREAGE (Percent of City)
Agriculture	93,262 acres (34.6 percent)
Forestry	35,257 acres (13.1 percent)
Single-family	17,405 acres (6.4 percent)
Vacant	3,299 acres (1.2 percent)



Population Growth and Projections (2000-2040)



Source 1 - 2000-2020 Decennial Census and Virginia Population Projections
Source 2 - University of Virginia Weldon Cooper Center (2022)

Suffolk Population

The City of Suffolk's population has steadily increased in recent decades and population projections indicate that this trend will continue.

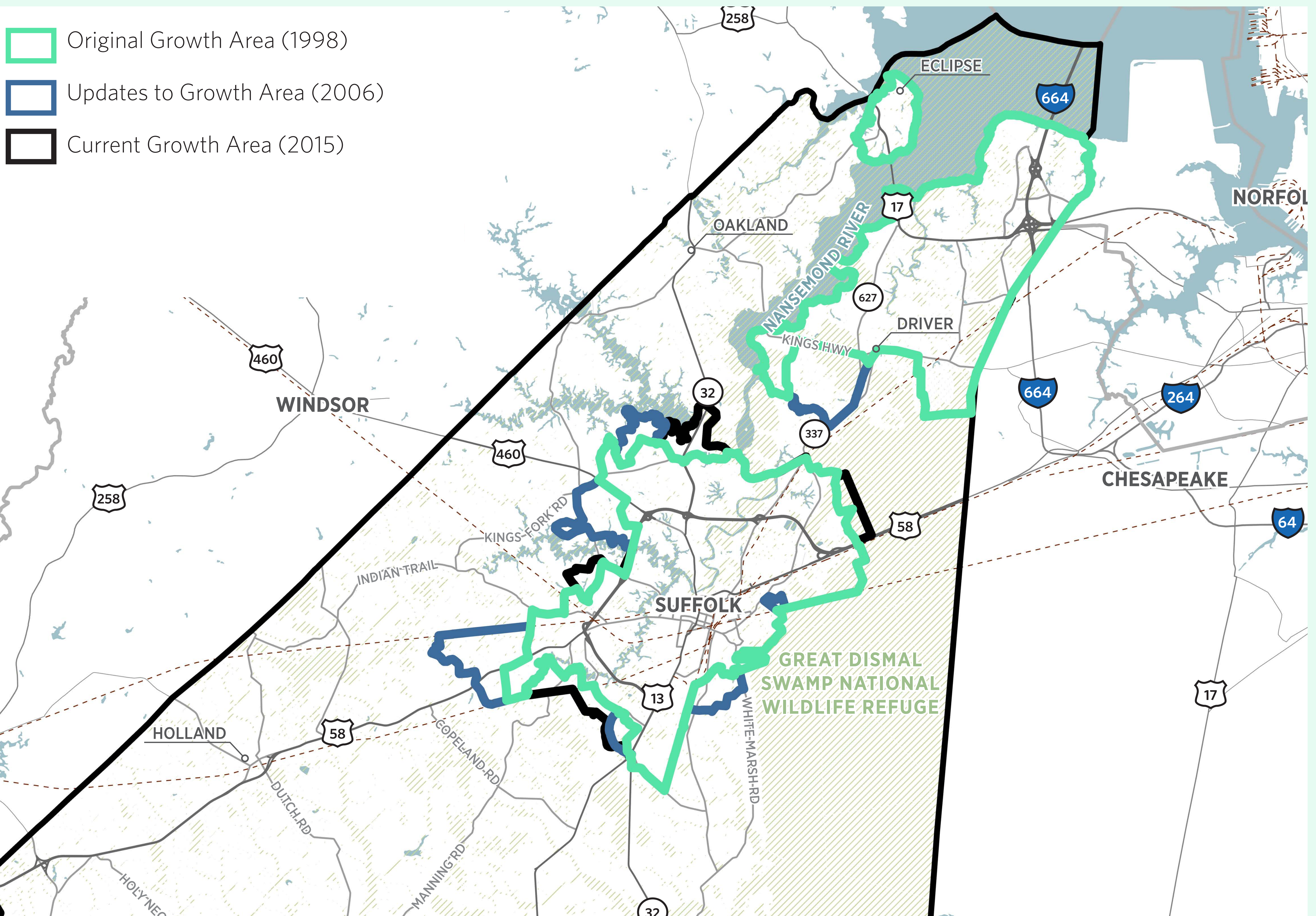
Growth and Fiscal Sustainability

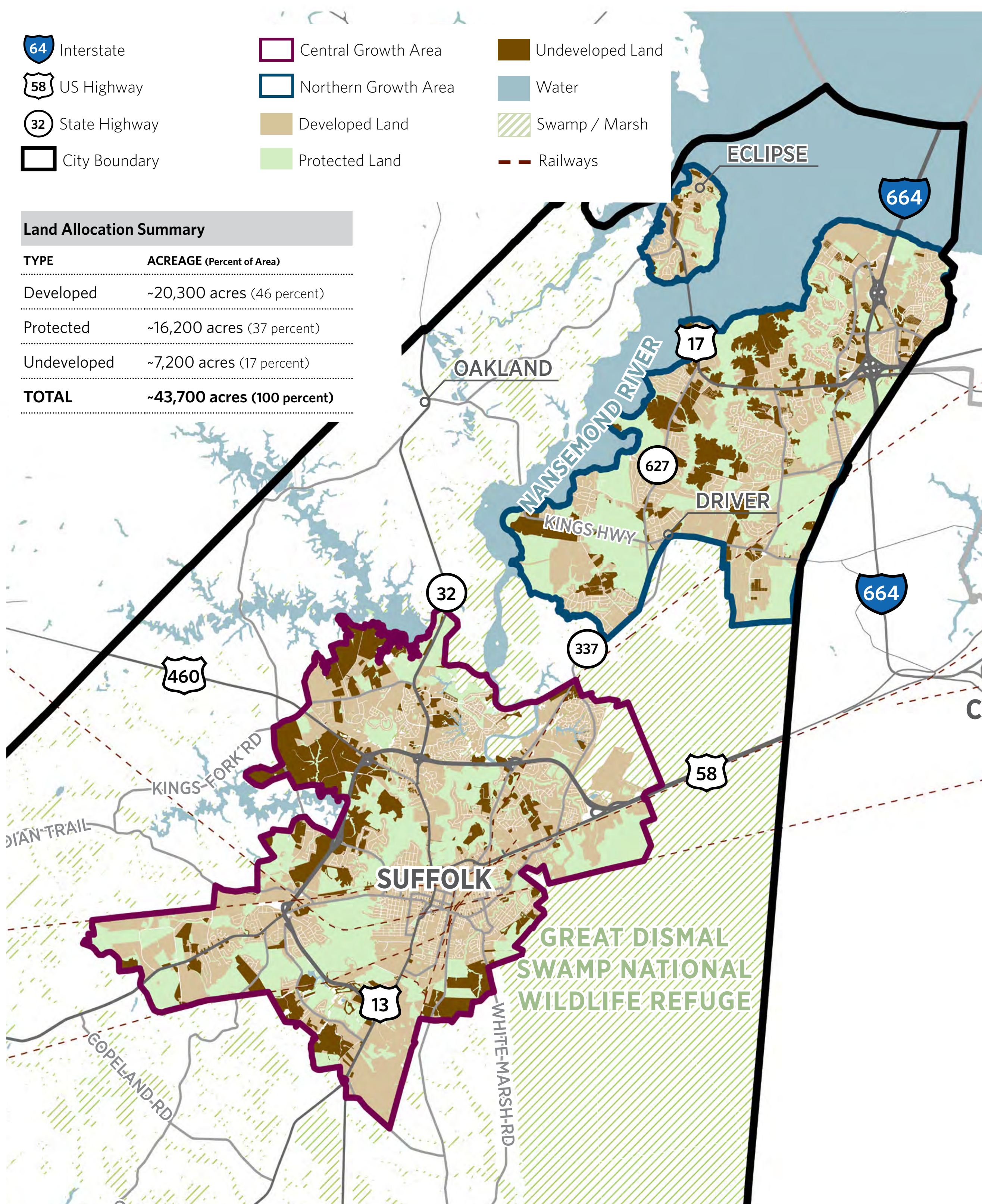
Different kinds of development have different impacts on the fiscal health of the City. Development that is not supported by existing infrastructure (roadways, water, sewer) and that is more consumptive of land can be a greater drain on the City's finances. Different growth patterns and uses also have different impacts on demands for services and facilities (schools, emergency services, parks and open space, etc.). Finally, each land use has different implications for the City's tax base. As Suffolk's population increases, the City has maintained a strategy of focusing growth to emphasize development that can rely on existing infrastructure, services, and facilities, while also strategically shaping the mix of uses in consideration of tax implications.

Growth Areas Over Time

Previous comprehensive plans include Growth Areas which are intended to show where urban and suburban scale development is anticipated to occur within the City. The Growth Areas could in the future be served by public infrastructure. Suffolk has two distinct Growth Areas: Northern and Central.

In each comprehensive plan update between 1998 and 2015, the City extended the Growth Area boundaries to accommodate anticipated new development. The boundaries were determined based on a combination of factors, including opportunities-based on-site conditions and roadway and utility infrastructure availability.





Capacity for New Development in Growth Areas

As part of Suffolk 2045, the team is examining how much developable land is available within the Growth Areas as defined in the most recent plan adopted in 2015 (Suffolk 2035). This analysis shows that approximately 7,200 acres (17%) of the land within the Growth Areas is undeveloped. Determining whether that amount of land can support growth depends on a number of factors, including the anticipated types and densities of new development, as well as specific site conditions.

Preliminary analysis of the capacity of the Growth Areas to accommodate residential development shows that if the City builds at the densities recommended in the current plan, there is at least three times more land available than is needed to accommodate this development. However, there are several important considerations to take into account:

- Suffolk 2035 includes a wide range of residential densities in many areas, which can make it difficult to predict what densities can be expected.
- Actual densities for new development have often been lower than densities recommended in the plan.
- The actual amount of land needed to support anticipated growth will depend also on the amount of land needed for other uses, including employment uses (office and industrial), commercial uses, and open space.

Suffolk 2045 therefore presents an opportunity to:

- Modify density ranges for new residential development so they are more in line with recent trends.
- Recommend smaller density ranges for greater predictability.
- Focus on the look and feel of new development so that more intense development is of a high quality and desirable character.
- Consider strategic new areas for growth (that may or may not be within the Growth Areas) but might help to achieve the goals of the plan.
- Put more specific criteria in place for areas recommended for future growth so that there is greater clarity on what can be expected.

Transportation and Development Decisions Should be Aligned

In order for Suffolk to grow, investments in transportation are needed. Specifically, the City should address the following issues:

Congestion and Safety

As the City grows, traffic congestion and safety issues need to be proactively addressed.

- Several critical corridors in the City are forecasted to experience moderate to severe congestion by 2045.
- Safety hot spots should be prioritized for future Strategically Targeted Affordable Roadway Solutions (STARS)/Smart Scale/Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) funding applications.
- Regional Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) growth scenarios should be reviewed for potential impact on future City traffic conditions.

Travel Choices

As Suffolk grows, there will be a need for more transportation options besides driving a single occupancy vehicle.

- On average, City of Suffolk residents are cost-burdened, paying more than 56% of their income on housing and transportation costs.
- Consider opportunities to identify separated bike/pedestrian networks that connect developed areas and expansions of transit.

Freight Traffic

Suffolk is a gateway to Hampton Roads. New regional development will bring with it some increase in truck traffic.

- Truck traffic will grow with Port of Virginia growth in coming years.
- Prioritizing improvements in areas with truck bottlenecks and supporting the shift of freight to rail can help address the issues of increasing truck traffic.

Integrating Transportation with Land Use

The transportation network is an integral component of land use and community planning.

- Places that are compact, close to jobs and services, with a variety of transportation choices lower transportation and energy costs and can influence the attractiveness of future development areas.

Responsible Regionalism

The City should consider transportation in its broader context.

- Suffolk is part of the Hampton Roads urbanized area. Where regional issues are involved, the City's plans and programs should be consistent with regional solutions.

Public Water and Sewer Utilities Should be Aligned with Development Decisions

In order for Suffolk to grow, investments in water and sewer utilities are needed. Specifically, the City should address the following issues:

Capacity for Accommodating Future Growth and Timing of Utility Expansion

- Additional water and sewer system capacity will be needed to support future growth.
- Utility expansions must be planned for and funded in advance of the arrival of new development.
- Balancing the capital costs of new or expanded facilities along with minimizing utility rate impacts to the City's customer base is important.
- Service for planned development is evaluated against the existing sanitary sewer system and water system and with expanded service areas to accommodate development needs.
- Extension of public sanitary sewer and water to areas currently not served by City public utilities will be based on the sanitary sewer and water system extension petition process.

Future Drinking Water Regulations

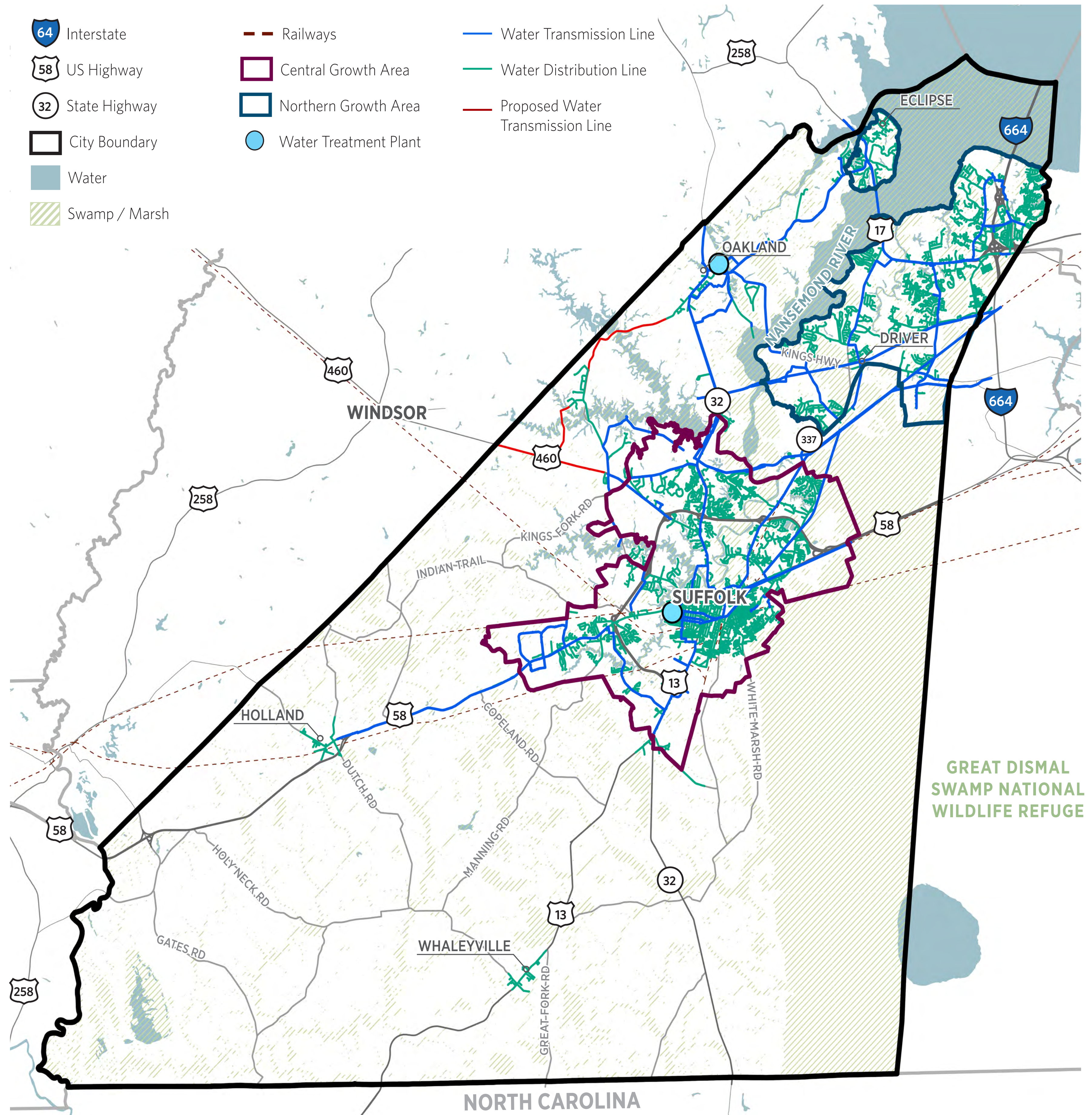
- Future fluoride regulations may require connection of the Village of Whaleyville water system to the main City of Suffolk water system.
- Future drinking water regulatory changes will have potential impacts on utility rates and will require planning to meet regulatory schedules.

Water Supply Planning and Protection

- Water Sources in the City serve as the primary water supply for the City and the Western Tidewater Water Authority. Expansion of the G. Robert House Water Treatment plant capacity will need to be balanced against planned growth.
- It is important to protect the City's surface water reservoirs from urban and agricultural runoff.

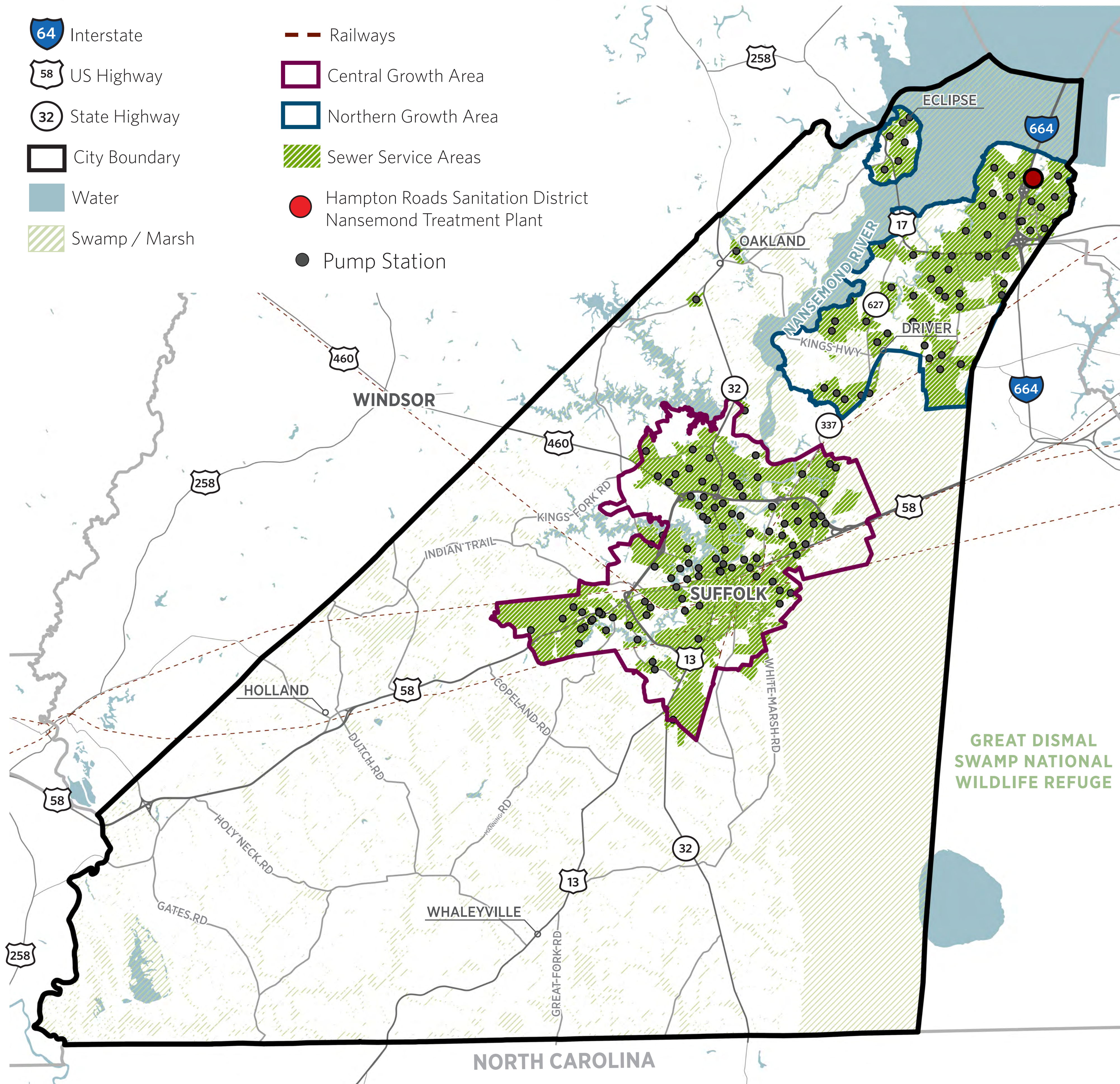
Water Distribution

The existing Growth Areas are well-served with respect to water. The City's two water treatment plants and transmission and distribution mains provide water to most developed and developable areas within both the Central and Northern Growth Area boundaries. Service is also provided along the Route 58 Corridor extending west beyond the current Central Growth Area. Generally, villages are not served by water with some exceptions, including in Holland and Oakland. A planned new transmission main along Route 460 to the west from the Central Growth Area boundary and north through Chuckatuck Borough will bring new service to that part of the City.



Sewer Service

The existing Growth Areas are well-served with respect to sewer. Sewer pump stations provide coverage to most developed areas within the Growth Areas. Significant new development outside of the Growth Areas, such as along major corridors of 58 and 460 or within developable land between the Central and Northern Growth Areas would require an extension of service.



Broadband Access

Broadband (high-speed internet access) is the primary means of educational opportunities, working, shopping, and communication in our current climate. Until recently, there were thousands of residents who had no connectivity at all.

The City of Suffolk has been aligned with the State of Virginia's goal of obtaining universal broadband coverage for over five years. Through public-private partnerships, the City of Suffolk will be universally covered by 2025. The installation of fiber internet throughout the City's most rural areas has already commenced and over 4,000 homes are currently receiving services.

In addition to serving those residents with little to no access, the City is also engaged with another provider giving our citizens the options they desire. The City of Suffolk welcomes the opportunity to grow alongside our communities and provide the necessary connectivity in our fast-paced connected world.

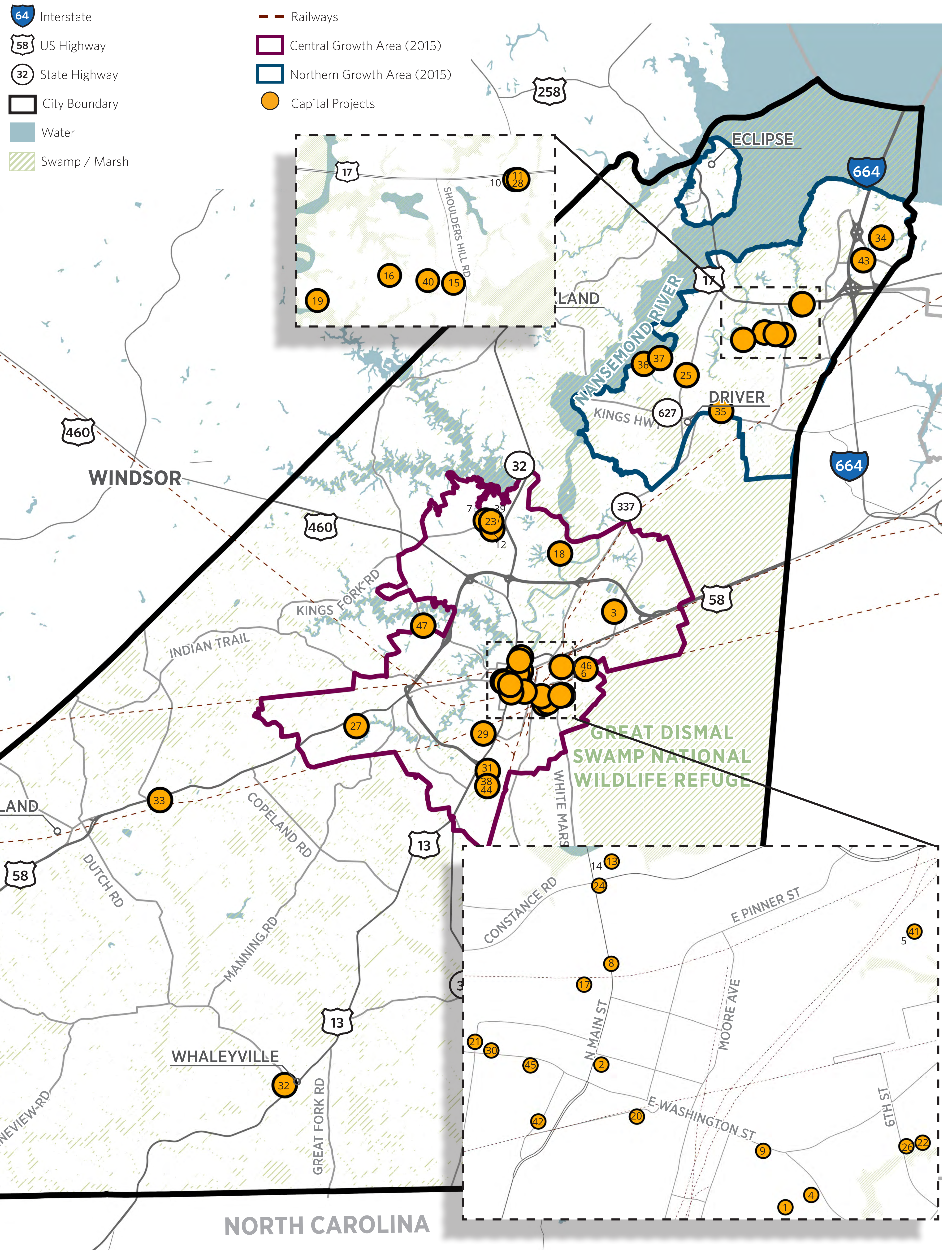
Capital Projects of the Past 25 Years

Project No. | Project Title | Date Completed

Completed		
1	Fire Station #3	1998
2	Godwin Courts Building	1998
3	Mack Benn, Jr. Elementary and Recreation Center	1998
4	Booker T. Washington Elementary & Recreation Center	1999
5	Cypress Park & Pool Replacement	2000
6	JFK Athletic Fields Improvements	2001
7	King's Fork Middle School & Recreation Center	2001
8	Seaboard Train Station Museum	2002
9	Police Precinct #1	2003
10	Fire Station #5	2003
11	Police Precinct #2	2003
12	King's Fork High School	2004
13	Hilton Garden Inn & Conference Center	2005
14	Constance Wharf Park & Marina	2005
15	Creekside Elementary & Recreation Center	2006
16	North Suffolk Library	2007
17	Suffolk Center for Cultural Arts	2007
18	Hillpoint Elementary	2008
19	Bennett's Creek Boat Ramp & Pier	2008
20	Health & Human Services Building	2009
21	Police Headquarters Building, Phases I & II	2009, 2014
22	East Suffolk Recreation Center	2009
23	King's Fork Public Safety Center	2010
24	Visitor Center and Pavilion	2010, 2012
25	Fire Station #10 Expansion, Driver	2011
26	Parks & Recreation Administration Building	2011
27	Animal Control Expansion	2012
28	Police Specialized Equipment Storage Building	2013
29	Public Utilities Operations Facility	2014
30	E-911/Municipal Center	2014
31	Public Works Operations Center	2014
32	Curtis R. Milteer, Sr. Recreation Center	2015
33	Pioneer Elementary School	2015
34	Col. Fred Cherry Middle School	2017
35	Florence Bowser Elementary School	2017
36	Sleepy Hole Shoreline Stabilization	2019
37	Sleepy Hole Golf Course Cart Storage Facility	2021
38	Parks & Recreation/Police Joint Operations Facility	2022
39	Fire Apparatus & Quartermaster Facility	2023
40	Bennett's Creek Recreation Center	2023
41	Cypress Park Pool Renovations	2023

Upcoming Projects in Design or Construction		
42	Festival Event Park	(exp.) 2024
43	Fire Station #11	(exp.) 2025
44	Fire & Rescue Training Facility Phase I	(exp.) 2025
45	Central Library	(exp.) 2025
46	JFK Middle School Replacement	(exp.) 2025
47	Fire Station #4 Replacement	(exp.) 2027

Since 1998, 41 capital projects have been completed. Another six are projected to be completed in the next four years. These projects include improvements to parks and recreational facilities, police precincts, fire stations, schools, and more.



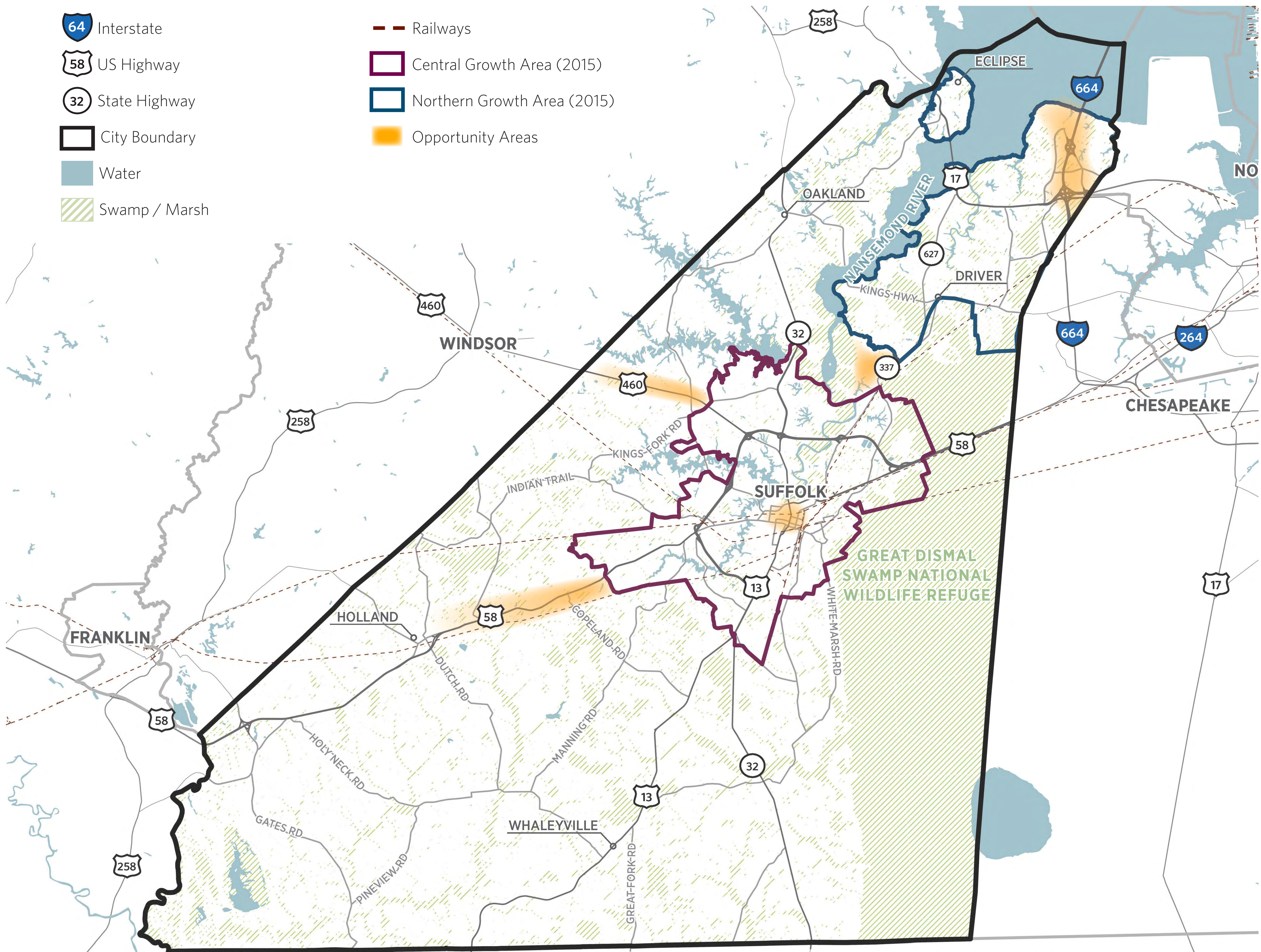
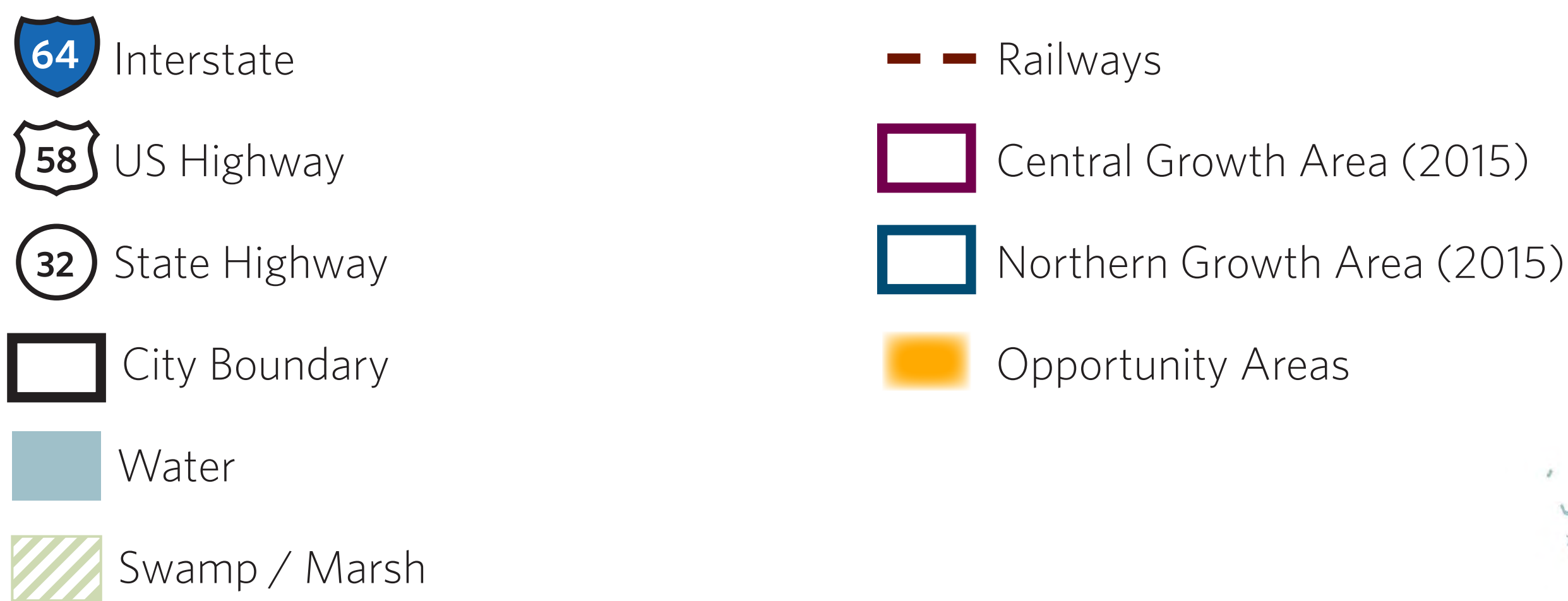
Considering Opportunities

Suffolk 2045 will be grounded in the same overarching idea as the previous plan—that focusing growth within the Growth Areas is the best way to protect rural areas, foster vibrant mix of uses and activities with services and amenities in Downtown and North Suffolk, leverage existing infrastructure, and promote fiscal responsibility. As part of Suffolk 2045, the City is also considering several strategic Opportunity Areas for special attention and strategies for growth. Some of these areas fall within existing Growth Areas and some fall outside of them.

These areas represent places that meet the following criteria:

- Feature strategies and guidance to take advantage of job creation opportunities.
- Consider opportunities within and outside of current growth area boundaries.
- Revitalize Downtown Suffolk: combine new land use strategies with City Council adopted Downtown Master Plan.
- Former TCC Campus Property: 300 acres along the James River with I-664 access. Central Hampton Roads location presents unique future opportunities.
- Consider combining growth boundaries along the Nansemond Parkway area.
- Strategic job creation opportunities along Route 460 and Route 58 corridors.

Please share your comments on the proposed Opportunity Areas on the worksheet provided.



Use Districts and Place Types



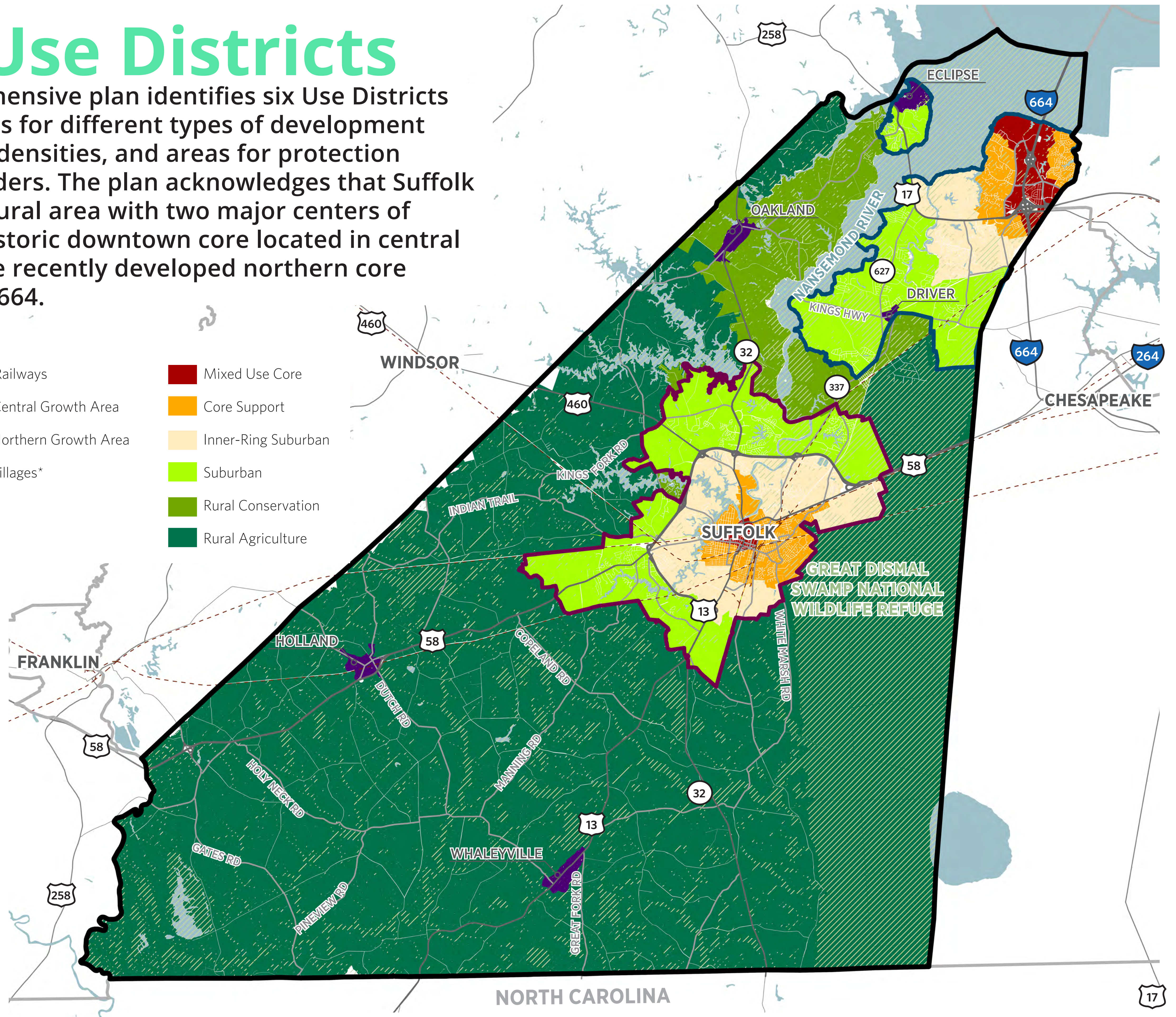
About Use Districts

The current comprehensive plan identifies six Use Districts to guide the locations for different types of development patterns, land uses, densities, and areas for protection within the City's borders. The plan acknowledges that Suffolk is a predominantly rural area with two major centers of development: the historic downtown core located in central Suffolk and the more recently developed northern core radiating out from I-664.

- Interstate
- US Highway
- State Highway
- City Boundary
- Water
- Swamp / Marsh

- Railways
- Central Growth Area
- Northern Growth Area
- Villages*

- Mixed Use Core
- Core Support
- Inner-Ring Suburban
- Suburban
- Rural Conservation
- Rural Agriculture



*Note: Map depicts villages as shown in Suffolk 2035. It does not include all villages.

About Place Types

Introduced in the current Comprehensive Plan (Suffolk 2035), the Place Types were a new element in the focused growth approach. They define special "places" that exist or are envisioned and provide more fine-grained guidance as to the specific design elements that should guide the development of these areas. Multiple Place Types are allowed in each Use District as shown in this table. Descriptions of the Place Types are presented on the following board.

PLACE TYPES

USE DISTRICTS

	MIXED USE CORE	CORE SUPPORT	INNER RING SUBURBAN	SUBURBAN	RURAL CONSERVATION	RURAL AGRICULTURE
DOWNTOWN/TOWN CENTER	●					
URBAN NEIGHBORHOOD	●	●				
TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER		●	●	●		
TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD		●	●	●		
VILLAGE				●	●	●
SUBURBAN CENTER			●	●		
SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD			●	●		
CORRIDOR		●	●	●	●	●
SPECIAL DISTRICT		●	●	●		

Use Districts and Place Types



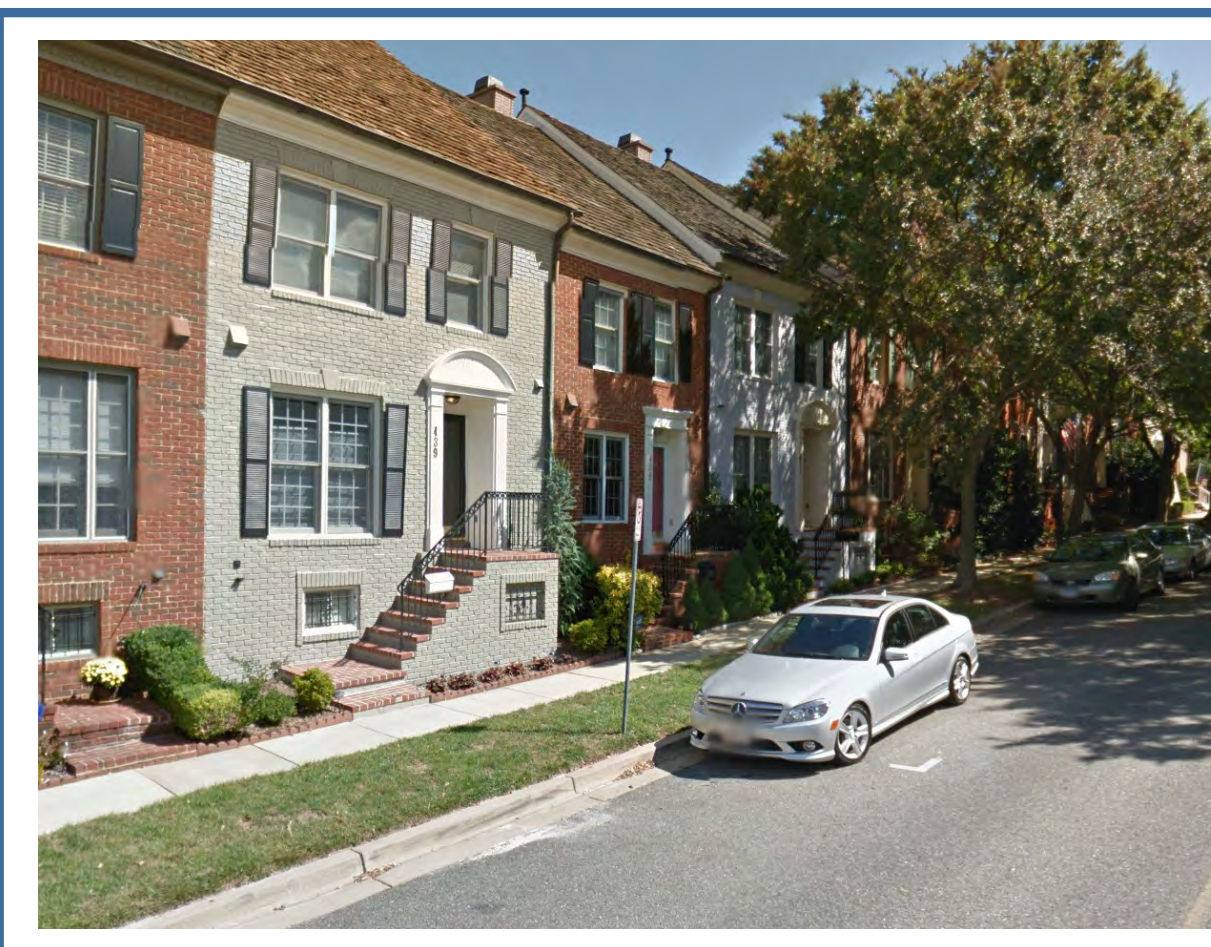
Place Types in Current Plan

The Place Types defined in the existing plan are depicted below. Some of the place types indicate types of areas that are existing today, while others are more aspirational, describing types of places Suffolk that might be envisioned for the future.



Downtown / Town Center

Key Uses: commercial and retail, some residential
Mode of Transportation: all



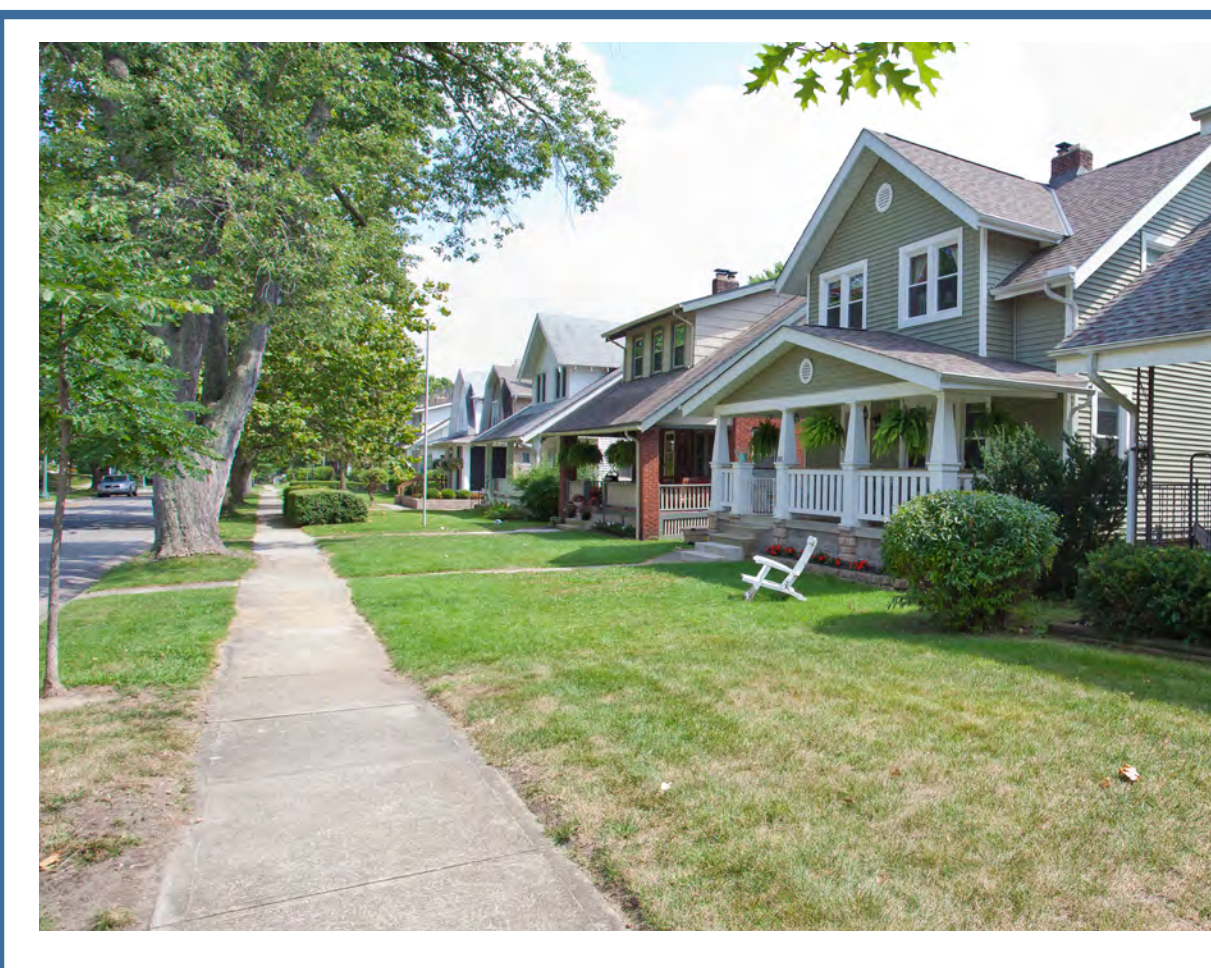
Urban Neighborhood

Key Uses: single- & multi-family residential, some commercial
Mode of Transportation: all



Traditional Neighborhood Center

Key Uses: commercial and retail, some residential
Mode of Transportation: all



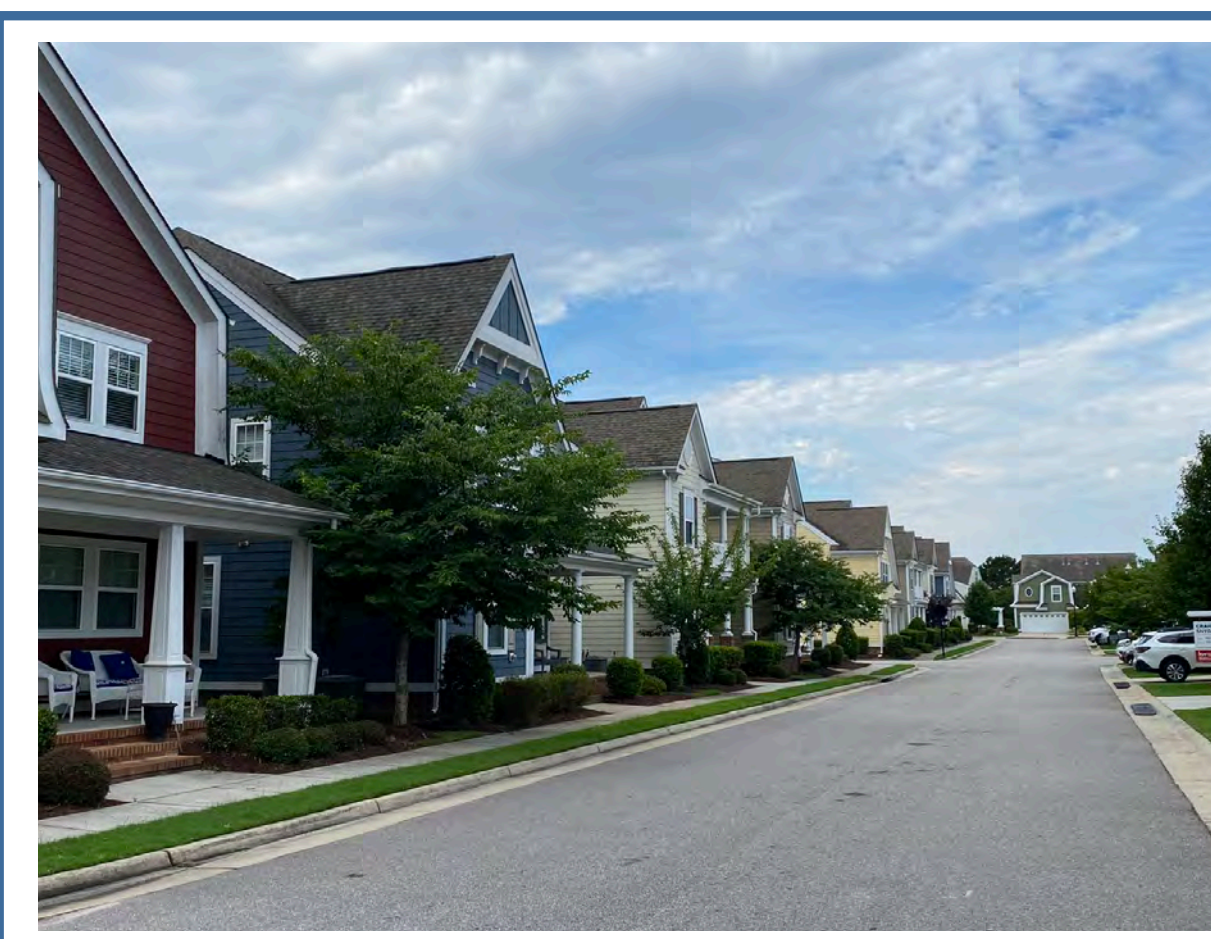
Traditional Neighborhood

Key Uses: single- & multi-family residential, some commercial
Mode of Transportation: all



Suburban Center

Key Uses: office and retail, residential, civic and institutional
Mode of Transportation: automobile



Suburban Neighborhood

Key Uses: residential
Mode of Transportation: automobile



Village

Key Uses: low-density residential, some commercial
Mode of Transportation: all



Rural

Key Uses: agriculture, forestry, conservation
Mode of Transportation: automobile



Corridor

Key Uses: commercial and retail, civic or institutional
Mode of Transportation: mostly automobile



Special District

Key Uses: industrial, civic or institutional
Mode of Transportation: automobile

Use Districts and Place Types



Picturing Place Types

In the Suffolk 2045 plan, there is an opportunity to provide additional guidance on the desired look and feel of different parts of the City, through images and descriptions.

Please review the images below and let us know whether you would like to see each type of place in Suffolk, why you would or would not like to see it, and where it should go.

Traditional Neighborhood Center

Traditional Neighborhood Centers are walkable and accommodate neighborhood-serving retail, such as small grocery, dry cleaners, and coffee shops, as well as civic or institutional uses including churches and schools.

Traditional Neighborhood

Traditional Neighborhoods are residential areas that are generally near the Downtown or a Town Center. Their street character will vary but they are generally walkable and human-scale, depending on street width, traffic, and building form.



Mostly like the place



Mostly do not like the place



Mostly like the place



Mostly do not like the place

Why and Where?

Why and Where?

Use Districts and Place Types



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Suburban Center

Suburban Centers include residential, commercial, and civic uses. They are normally made up of single-use buildings or shopping centers, with ample parking, and should be designed to foster connectivity and have qualities that make them distinct from each other.

Suburban Neighborhood

Suburban Neighborhoods are residential districts, built on irregular blocks. They may include a range of housing types, primarily single-family, and can accommodate amenities such as small parks and street furniture, as well as community gathering spaces. They should accommodate walking and biking, including connections to other neighborhoods.



Mostly like the place



Mostly do not like the place

Why and Where?



Mostly like the place



Mostly do not like the place

Why and Where?

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Use Districts and Place Types



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Commercial Corridor

Corridors are linear pathways that connect places and allow for the movement of people, goods, or wildlife. They often center around transportation infrastructure such as streets, highways, and public transit. They usually follow the urban characteristics of the Place Types they connect.

Special District

Special Districts are typically single-use areas with a form and character specific to their function. They may include industrial areas, office parks, and large institutional uses such as hospitals. Special Districts should include amenities such as walkways, open spaces, benches, and lighting.



Mostly like the place



Mostly do not like the place



Mostly like the place



Mostly do not like the place

Why and Where?

Why and Where?

		<p>Y</p>	<p>BB</p>		
		<p>Z</p>	<p>CC</p>		
		<p>AA</p>	<p>DD</p>		

Focusing on Critical Topics

Based upon public input and analysis conducted to date, the following preliminary draft recommendations have been developed.

Please review and comment on the key recommendations using the worksheet provided.

Land Use and Development Character

1. Review current **zoning districts to align with growth districts** and pursue a City-initiated rezoning effort to improve compatibility with the comprehensive plan.
2. Continue to develop new and expand existing incentives that **encourage mixed-use development**. Encourage affordable housing within these districts.
3. **Adjust residential density range targets** within Use Districts to better align with recent trends and market demands. (See station C for more information on Use Districts.)
4. Revise the Unified Development Ordinance (which includes zoning and subdivision regulations) to promote additional **affordable/work force housing** in the City.

Natural and Cultural Resources

5. Continue to promote use of **cluster developments** to protect environmentally sensitive areas.
6. Seek public outreach opportunities to educate citizens and stakeholders on **new shoreline management strategies** including Living Shorelines.
7. Utilize VIMS' Comprehensive Coastal Resource Management Portal (CCRMP) Shoreline Best Management Practices for **management recommendations for all tidal shorelines** in the City.

Economic Development

8. Identify **priority economic development sites** and make strategic investments to advance site readiness.
9. Develop a policy in privately-owned master-planned commerce/industrial parks to **encourage a diverse industrial base** for long-term economic sustainability.
10. Develop a **publicly owned commerce/industrial park** to promote diverse industry growth in support of higher-paying jobs.
11. Prepare **master plans and implement development strategies** at a strategic area/district scale for Downtown Suffolk and the North Suffolk/Harbor View mixed use core districts.
12. Develop a **cultural arts district for Downtown Suffolk** to support existing and attract new cultural arts activities and related organizations and businesses.



Rural Lands Conservation

- 13. Develop/amend ordinances to **mitigate the impacts of utility scale solar** installations on surrounding properties and agricultural and environmental resources in the City.
- 14. Identify and implement strategies to **protect and grow the City's agriculture** and agriculture-related businesses.
- 15. Continue to **review the minor subdivision ordinance** requirements to ensure compliance with adequate public facilities standards and other growth management objectives.

Schools

- 16. Focus on **rehabilitating, expanding or rebuilding schools**, while conducting priority preventative maintenance needs of existing schools such as replacing HVAC, roofs and playgrounds in accordance with the joint facilities plan.
- 17. Implement a regular data collection and review of school capacity, attendance zones, and student population to **accurately anticipate student generation** as populations shift and family dynamics change generationally.

Transportation

- 18. Prioritize **transportation investments** to address corridors that will be most affected by growth in local development and regional traffic, both within and outside of the Growth Areas.
- 19. Ensure that new growth will improve **multimodal connectivity** in the Growth Areas through complete streets and better pedestrian, bike and transit connections.

City Services

- 20. Continue to support provision of **high-speed, reliable, and affordable fiber internet service** to City residents and businesses.
- 21. Continue to focus on the **adequacy and funding of public facilities**, including roads and public utilities in the review and approval of new development.
- 22. Continue to develop and implement projects within the **City's Capital Improvement Plan** for the timely repair or replacement of system assets to ensure sufficient capacity to meet current and future demands, promote economic development, and protect adjacent surface water bodies within the City.
- 23. Ensure that the planning for and **availability of public infrastructure services and facilities is coordinated** within the Growth Areas.

Plan Implementation

- 24. Develop and implement an ongoing process to **engage the community in the implementation of the Suffolk 2045 comprehensive plan**.

