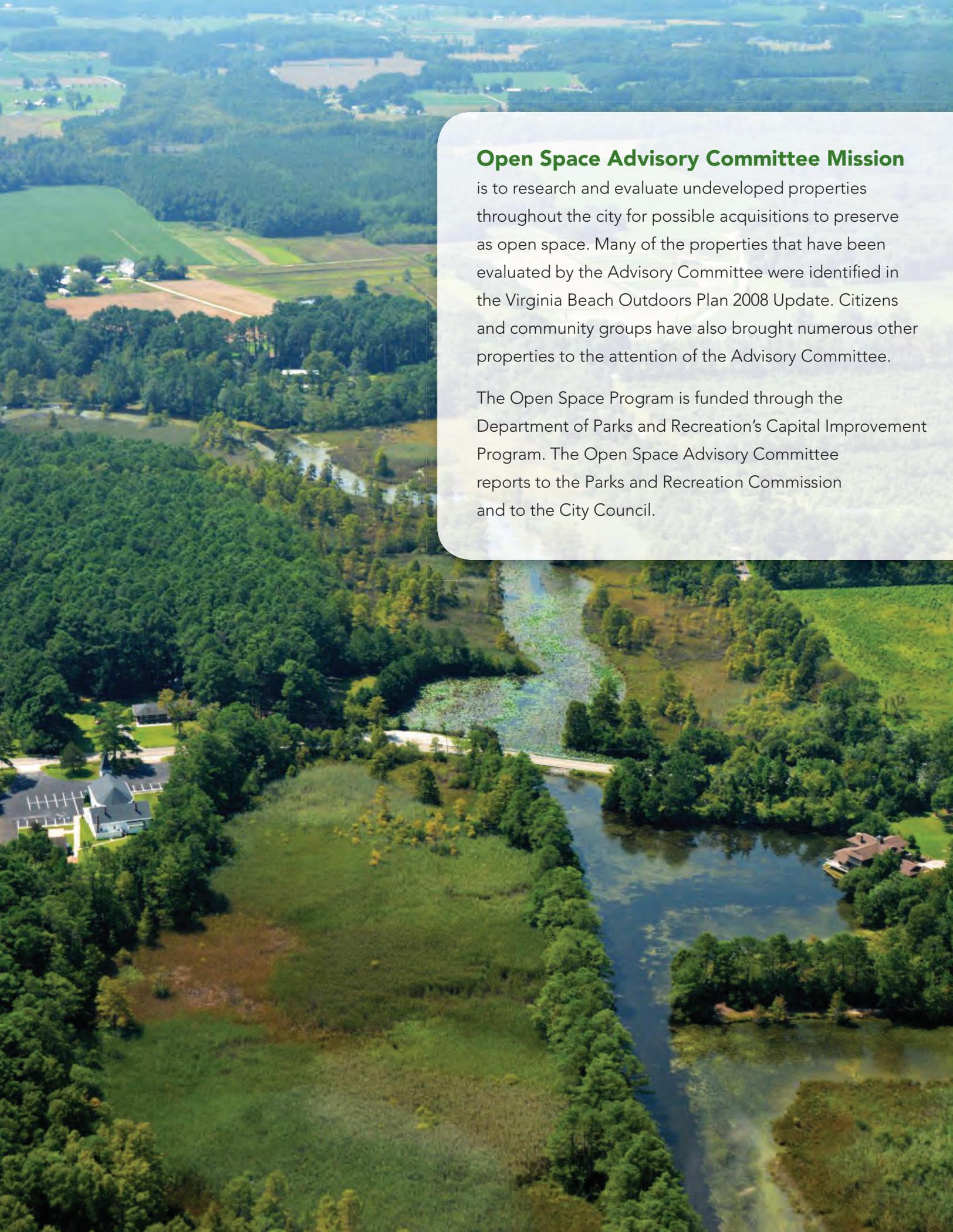


2015 ANNUAL REPORT
VIRGINIA BEACH
OPEN SPACE PROGRAM



VIRGINIA BEACH PARKS & RECREATION
PLANNING, DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT



An aerial photograph of a rural landscape. In the foreground, there is a large, dense forest. A winding river or stream flows through the middle ground, surrounded by lush greenery and some marshy areas. In the background, there are rolling hills, open fields, and scattered houses. The sky is clear and blue.

Open Space Advisory Committee Mission

is to research and evaluate undeveloped properties throughout the city for possible acquisitions to preserve as open space. Many of the properties that have been evaluated by the Advisory Committee were identified in the Virginia Beach Outdoors Plan 2008 Update. Citizens and community groups have also brought numerous other properties to the attention of the Advisory Committee.

The Open Space Program is funded through the Department of Parks and Recreation's Capital Improvement Program. The Open Space Advisory Committee reports to the Parks and Recreation Commission and to the City Council.

CONTRIBUTORS

CITY OF VIRGINIA BEACH



MARSHVIEW PARK

The members of the Open Space Advisory Committee provide guidance for the Virginia Beach Outdoors Plan open space acquisition initiative. To accomplish this initiative, Advisory Committee members have met regularly since June 2001 and have dedicated numerous hours to evaluate properties for possible acquisition by the City of Virginia Beach for open space preservation.

City Council Liaisons

Barbara M. Henley
Robert M. Dyer

Advisory Committee Members

Nick Anoa
Richard L. "Tuck" Bowie, Chair
Robert Cantrell
Lillie R. Gilbert, Vice Chair
Paul Hamaker
Jeremy Johnson
Tommy Johnson
Parks & Recreation Commission Chair
Joseph F. "Frank" Walton
Kale Warren

Parks & Recreation Staff

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Greg Newman
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Trina Harrell
Chona O'Galvin



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COVER PHOTO taken by Chris Giersch | The morning sunrise creates a breath-taking view across the water at Lake Lawson/Lake Smith Natural Area. This 42-acre preserve spans more than 12,000 feet of shoreline located in the Bayside area of Virginia Beach at the corner of Shell Road and Northampton Blvd. An example of a municipal preservation area whose primary purpose is to preserve the indigenous vegetation and wildlife in order to serve as green infrastructure and as a scenic environment for Virginia Beach residents to enjoy, Lake Lawson/Lake Smith is a popular fishing destination, and recent improvements include a new boat ramp, formalized car and trailer parking, stabilization along the shoreline to prevent erosion and re-establish native vegetation, several fishing and overlook platforms, a floating crew dock, and a pedestrian bridge to connect the north and south parcel. Renovations were made to the existing soft surface trail along with installation of hard surface trails, and a new playground and picnic shelter were built.

The property was acquired in multiple parcels between 2005 and 2009 through the Open Space Acquisition Program from the City of Norfolk and private landowners. The Lake Lawson/Lake Smith Master Plan was established in December 2010 with input from the public.

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OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

January 15, 2015

The Honorable William D. Sessoms, Jr., Mayor
Members of City Council

Subject: Open Space Advisory Committee
January 2015 Open Space Program Annual Report

Dear Mayor and City Council Members:

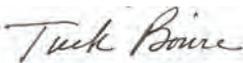
On behalf of the City Council-appointed members of the Open Space Advisory Committee, I am pleased to submit our Open Space Program Annual Report for the period of January 2014 - December 2014 for your review. Our report reflects a total of 2,829 acres that have been acquired by the City in fee simple or easement to date through the program. This annual report highlights the multitude of benefits these open space properties provide.

In 2014, no additional properties were acquired, but the committee reviewed several candidate properties brought forward by citizens. The committee recommended two parcels move forward to city leadership for purchase with open space funds. The first is a small parcel adjacent to Blackwater Park on Head River Road. This purchase will allow Parks & Recreation to expand Blackwater Park at the request of the park users. City Council approved the purchase of this parcel in November 2014, and closing on the Head River Road parcel is anticipated in early 2015. The second parcel is known as the Pungo Ferry Marina on Old Pungo Ferry Road. This parcel is currently zoned B-4 (urban mixed use) which is not compatible with the agricultural (AG) zoning in this area. Purchase is recommended to prevent incompatible development and to add a unique water access site on the North Landing River to our park inventory. Parks & Recreation staff is gathering information on the property at City Council's request and will be bringing the information forward to Council in February 2015.

Over the past year, we have continued our work to update the 2008 Virginia Beach Outdoors Plan. We are coordinating the update with the ongoing update of the Comprehensive Plan led by the Planning Department. We participated in joint public workshops in October/November 2014, and we plan to follow the same schedule as the Comprehensive Plan for additional public input, plan drafts and plan adoption. We will be meeting with our council liaisons often during the update process to make sure that your vision for open space is plugged into the update.

Should any members of City Council have any questions regarding the efforts of our Committee, please contact me at 757-460-1770 ext. 3002, tuckbow@terrypeter.com or Barbara Duke in the Department of Parks and Recreation at 385-1100, bduke@VBgov.com. In addition, the members of our Committee are available at City Council's request to provide a special briefing regarding this report or to discuss our Committee's future direction. We look forward to the City Council's continued support regarding the initiatives of the Open Space Program.

With warm regards,



Richard L. "Tuck" Bowie
Chair, Open Space Advisory Committee



(L) Birds splash in their natural habitat as the sun rises over Stumpy Lake Natural Area; (top right) aerial view of Williams Farm Recreation Center and skate park; (bottom right) mother and son enjoy fishing off the platform at Lake Lawson/Lake Smith Natural Area.

Open Space Program Benefits

In 1994, the City took a big step forward in park space planning with the adoption of the first Outdoors Plan. This plan provided a holistic framework for planning, managing and maintaining our natural resources and outdoor recreation resources. With the establishment of the Open Space Program in 2001, the City Council took another big step forward by designating funding for both property acquisition and property development for recreational use. It is now 20 years later, in 2015, that we can look back with pride on the great strides we have made in improving our outdoor park system. The projects accomplished through the Open Space Program have helped move us forward in developing an excellent system of outdoor spaces and amenities that is unsurpassed in the region and nationally recognized. In addition to healthy recreation, our outdoor park system provides multiple benefits to the City.

The Open Space Program is an extremely valuable tool to bring about solutions that meet several city objectives and goals in a wide variety of areas. An excellent outdoor park system is necessary to sustain the people and places that will make our community special for generations to come. The Open Space Program provides a solid foundation for our outdoor park system and has helped us to foster public/private partnerships, environmental stewardship, economic development and healthy lifestyles throughout our community. The multiple benefits of open space properties are undeniably evident within the following examples.

Recreation Facilities

The many recreation facilities constructed on the properties acquired through the Open Space Program have significantly expanded our inventory of recreation facilities available to all Virginia Beach residents. The facility list includes, but is not limited to, the following: skate parks, fishing piers, walking and biking trails, playgrounds, basketball courts, baseball fields, rectangular practice fields, lighted playing fields, picnic areas, kayak launches, boat ramps, and a golf course.

Community Parks and Community Centers

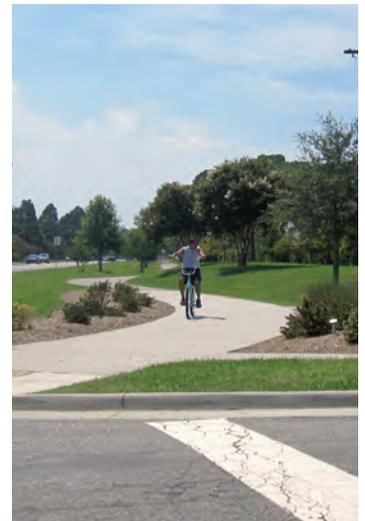
The property known as Williams Farm in the Bayside district is a phenomenal example of an open space purchase that provides multiple benefits for the city. A new school, a new community recreation center, skate park and community park with playing fields, shelters and walking paths have been developed on the property.

Lake Lawson/Lake Smith Natural Area provides the Bayside area with a spectacular waterfront park for all ages. This family friendly park features fishing platforms, scenic overlooks, playgrounds, picnic facilities, nature trails, a kayak launch and a boat ramp.

Three Oaks Community Park was purchased in 2003. The planning for improving this space will begin in 2015 with input from the growing residential communities located in the Transition Area. This land will provide a special place for the community to gather together close to home.



(Above left) Abundant sunshine pours through the clouds over the ballfields at Providence Park; (top right) aerial view of Pleasure House Point Natural Area; (immediate right) water view in the distance at Woods of Avalon Neighborhood Park; (far right) a cyclist travels along the Norfolk Avenue Trail.



Urban and Neighborhood Parks

The Norfolk Avenue Trail is a tremendously popular linear park that provides walking and biking connectivity to the Oceanfront for surrounding neighborhoods and has helped to keep this residential area vibrant and active. New residential developments along the route have embraced the trail as a valuable amenity.

Lake Edward Park This park provides basketball courts, picnic areas and green space in a location that is easily accessible to over 9,000 residents. This green space with mature tree canopy provides a connection to nature close to home in an area that contains vast impervious surfaces in the form of commercial shopping centers and dense apartment complexes.

Thalia Neighborhood Park, Amhurst property, and Woods of Avalon Park were also acquired for use as neighborhood park spaces.

Playing Fields

The Open Space Program has helped sports leagues continue to provide valuable recreational programs to our youth through partnerships with the city. In 2004, the City purchased Providence Park. This park provided a new home for the Kempsville Pony League when they had to relocate to accommodate road improvements at the Witchduck/Kempsville intersection. The park also has walking paths, playground, picnic areas and informal playing fields in addition to the baseball facilities.

Lynnhaven Athletic Complex was acquired in 2007, and an agreement was established for continued use of the fields by private athletic leagues while the City owns the grounds and both parties share management and maintenance duties.

Water Access

Pleasure House Point on the Lynnhaven River, Marshview Park at Owls Creek, Lake Lawson/Lake Smith Natural Area in the Bayside area, and North Landing Park with over a mile of waterfront on the North Landing River are all spectacular examples of well-loved public water access sites that have been acquired through the Open Space Program.

Woods of Avalon Neighborhood Park, located on the Elizabeth River, provides expansive views of the wetlands along the riverfront.



(Above left) scenic view of the wetlands at Marshview Park; (above right) aerial view of London Bridge Creek off Potters Road. (immediate left) historic Adam Thoroughgood House; (bottom left) property along Mill Dam Road contains dense tree canopy and wetland areas that filter stormwater from neighborhoods along First Colonial Road; (bottom right) quiet serenity among the wooded walking trail at West Neck Creek Natural Area.

Historic Resource Protection

The Lynnhaven House property was acquired in 2008 to preserve this important historical resource. Property adjacent to the Adam Thoroughgood House, Pleasure House Point and Marshview Park are also identified as important historic areas. An open space easement was acquired over the historic lawn of the Cavlier Hotel to preserve the context of this iconic structure.

Natural Resource Preservation

New Bridge Road and Owl Creek Preservation Area were acquired primarily for the purpose of natural resource protection.

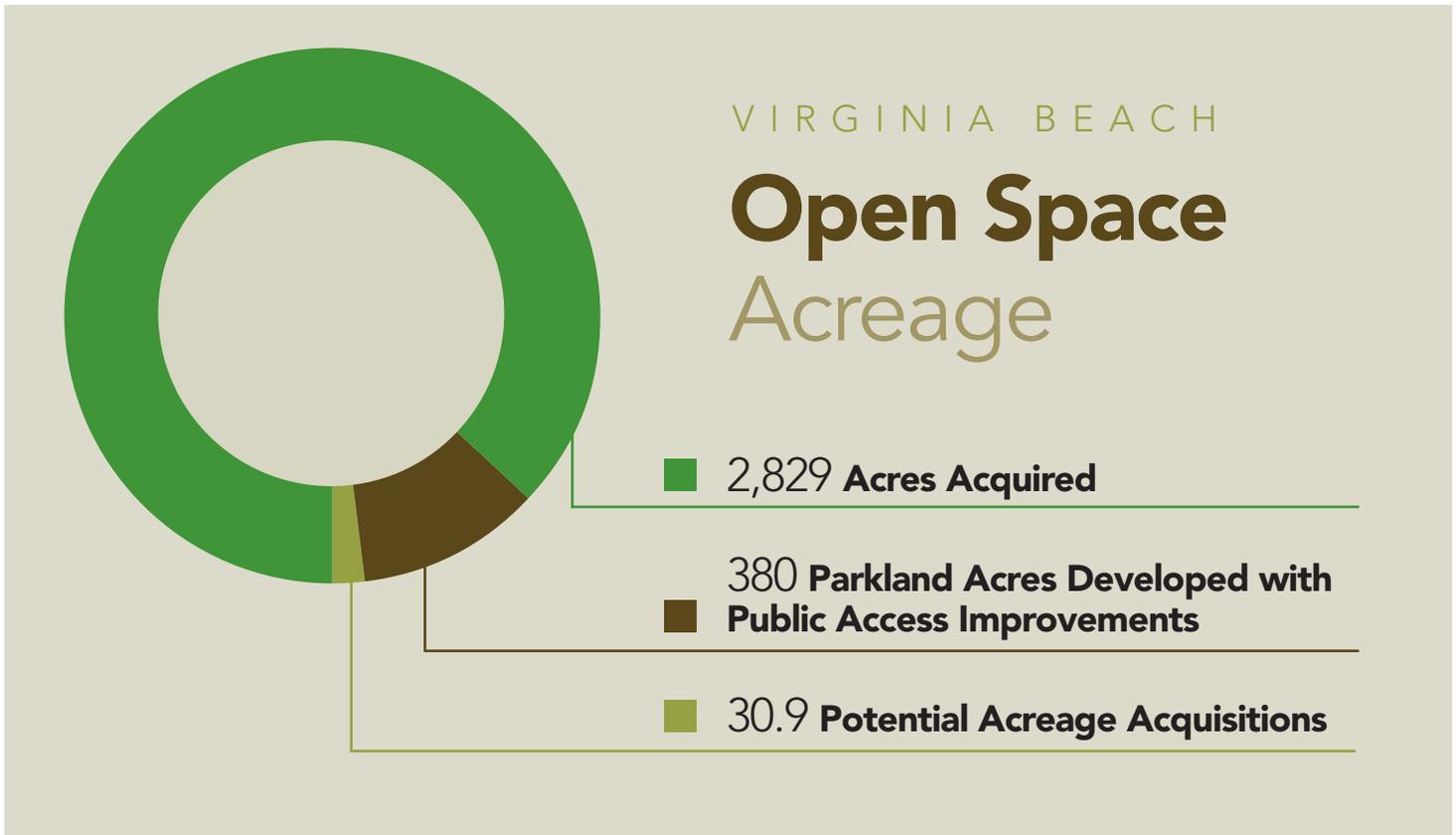
Stumpy Lake, Pleasure House Point, Lake Lawson/Lake Smith Natural Area, Marshview, North Landing Park, Mill Dam Road and West Neck Creek Park Expansion also have significant natural resource value.

Wetland Mitigation

Planning is underway at Pleasure House Point to create a large wetland bank that will provide the City with mitigation credits for future public projects within the Lynnhaven River watershed as well as the Elizabeth River watershed and Southern watersheds.

Many other open space sites, such as Marshview Park, North Landing Park and Woods of Avalon Park, have extensive existing wetland areas that can be used for mitigation credits in the future.





(Immediate right) A goalie youth awaits his opponent's next move at a soccer tournament taking place at one of the multi-purpose fields at Princess Anne Athletic Complex. Athletic tournaments generate substantial tourism dollars and provide valuable visibility to Virginia Beach's high-profile recreational facilities.



Stormwater Management

Several properties acquired through the Open Space Program have been identified as regional BMPs and areas where stormwater is filtered through natural methods prior to outfall into tidal waters. Property along Mill Dam Road contains dense tree canopy and wetland areas that filter stormwater from neighborhoods along First Colonial Road. Pleasure House Lake serves as a regional BMP for the Chesapeake Beach residential area. This property also contains parking for the beach and picnic facilities.

Stumpy Lake serves a regional BMP for a very large portion of the Centerville/Kempsville area. Pleasure House Point and Marshview Park both contain major drainage outfall channels for surrounding neighborhoods.

The wooded areas on all open space sites contribute greatly to the overall urban forest canopy cover providing cleaner air and water, temperature moderation and other benefits of green infrastructure. Tree planting and preservation are recognized best management practices for water quality in the TMDL implementation program for the Chesapeake Bay watersheds.

Roadside Buffers

Little Neck Road, London Bridge Creek and the property acquired along Centerville Turnpike serve as roadside buffers for heavily travelled corridors.

Tourism and Economic Value

All of our park spaces acquired through the Open Space Program provide recreational activities for both citizens and visitors alike to enjoy. Some of the most popular activities that attract visitors to our parks are fishing, boating and team sports. These are all year-round activities that can help bolster tourist visits outside the prime summer months.



Open Space Properties & Features

OPEN SPACE SITE (DATE ACQUIRED)	VOTING	TOTAL ACRES	LAND COST
Little Neck Road (August 2000)	Lynnhaven	7.2	\$2,200,000
Amhurst Area (February 2001)	Kempsville	3	\$159,000
Stumpy Lake Natural Area and Indian River Rd Parcels (June 2001)	Centerville	1,500	\$13,116,330
London Bridge Creek/Potters Road (December 2001)	Rose Hall	11	\$1,500,000
First Colonial Road/Mill Dam (January 2001)	Lynnhaven	11	\$835,000
Lake Edward (July 2002)	Kempsville	4.0	\$745,344
Norfolk Avenue (October 2002)	Beach	1.2	\$238,788
Three Oaks Community Park (future) (October 2003)	Princess Anne	36.8	\$1,260,000
Williams Farm (January 2004)	Bayside	57.6	\$5,000,000
Providence Park (February 2004)	Centerville	18	\$3,650,000
Centerville Turnpike (October 2004)	Centerville	6.7	\$850,000
Pleasure House Lake (April 2005)	Bayside	4.6	\$1,682,000
Owl Creek Preservation (February 2006)	Beach	38.6	\$1,406,000
New Bridge Road (May 2006)	Princess Anne	45.8	\$1,925,070
Thalia Neighborhood Park (July 2006)	Lynnhaven	3	\$985,000
Adam Thoroughgood House Expansion (May 2007)	Bayside	2.5	\$850,000
Lynnhaven Athletic Complex (August 2007)	Lynnhaven	15.6	\$0
Woods of Avalon Neighborhood Park (August 2008)	Kempsville	13.2	\$600,000
Lake Lawson/Lake Smith Natural Area (2005 - 2008)	Bayside	39.8	\$5,192,000
Lynnhaven House (October 2008)	Bayside	4.9	\$535,000
Marshview Property (May 2010)	Beach	98	\$0
Rock Ministries Property (November 2011)	Princess Anne	792	\$750,000
Pleasure House Point Property (July 2012)	Bayside	107.8	\$4,012,775
Princess Anne Exec Park (June 2013)	Princess Anne	5	\$6,000
Cavalier Hotel Open Space Easement (July 2013)	Beach	2.05	\$2,370,000
TOTAL ACREAGE & LAND COST		2,829	\$49,868,307



TABLE 1

Financial Summary

of Parks & Recreation CIP #4-308 Open Space Program Site Acquisition III

This table outlines the current gross and net balance of the Open Space Site Acquisition Capital Improvement Program Projects as of January 1, 2015 taking into account the funds that have been reserved by Department of Parks and Recreation staff that are estimated to be needed to fund pending acquisitions as directed by City Council.

This table also tracks the \$5,000,000 that was transferred from the Agricultural Reserve Program (ARP) to create the original Open Space Site Acquisition Program. The intent of the ARP transfer was that the \$5,000,000 would be utilized toward fee simple acquisitions in the ARP-eligible area.

OPEN SPACE SITE ACQUISITION PROGRAM FUNDING AVAILABLE - GROSS

CIP #4-308 Open Space Program Site Acquisition Phase 3 Project Account Balance	\$3,989,965
--	-------------

OPEN SPACE SITE ACQUISITION PROGRAM FUNDING AVAILABLE - NET

Reserved Funding for Pending Site Acquisition (See Table 2)	\$2,829,930
---	-------------

Total Open Space Program Site Acquisition Project Remaining Appropriations	\$1,160,035
---	--------------------

OPEN SPACE SITE ACQUISITION PROGRAM FUNDING WITHIN ARP-ELIGIBLE AREA

Total ARP Funding Originally Transferred to Open Space Site Acquisition Program with Commitment to Acquire Open Space in ARP-Eligible Area	\$5,000,000
--	-------------

Open Space Site Acquisition Program Funding Spent in ARP-Eligible Area To-Date	-\$3,935,070
--	--------------

Funding reserved for Old Pungo Ferry Road	-\$1,564,930
---	--------------

Sale of 10-acre Portion of New Bridge Road Open Space Site to U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service back to Open Space Site Acquisition Program	\$500,000
--	-----------

Remaining Funding for Open Space Acquisitions in ARP-Eligible Area	\$0
---	------------

Total Open Space Program Site Acquisition Project Remaining Appropriations	\$1,160,035
---	--------------------

Total Remaining Funding for Open Space Acquisitions in ARP-Eligible Area	\$0
--	-----

Remaining Funding for Open Space Acquisitions North of ARP-Eligible Area	\$1,160,035
---	--------------------



TABLE 2 | FUNDED

Properties Currently Under Review

with Funding Reserved For Possible Open Space Acquisition

The following properties were identified in the 2008 Virginia Beach Outdoors Plan as possible open space acquisition sites or have been brought to the attention of the Open Space Advisory Committee by property owners, citizens, or community groups as potential open space acquisition sites. The sites listed below have funding reserved or encumbered for acquisition or due diligence of the sites in the amount of \$2,829,930.

SITE LOCATION	PROPERTY OWNER	GPIN	VOTING DISTRICT	ACRES	ZONING	STATUS
Old Pungo Ferry Road	Pitsilides Land Trust	2309-23-6398	Princess Anne	22	B-4	Reserved
Thalia Creek Water Access and Dredge Site	Multiple	Multiple	Lynnhaven	2	B-2	Reserved
3380 Head River Road	Harold	1389-43-5679	Princess Anne	0.85	AG-1	Reserved
Washington Square	Wayne McLeskey	2407-09-4435 2407-09-6257	Beach	1.4 4.6	R-10 A-18	Reserved



TABLE 3 | NOT FUNDED

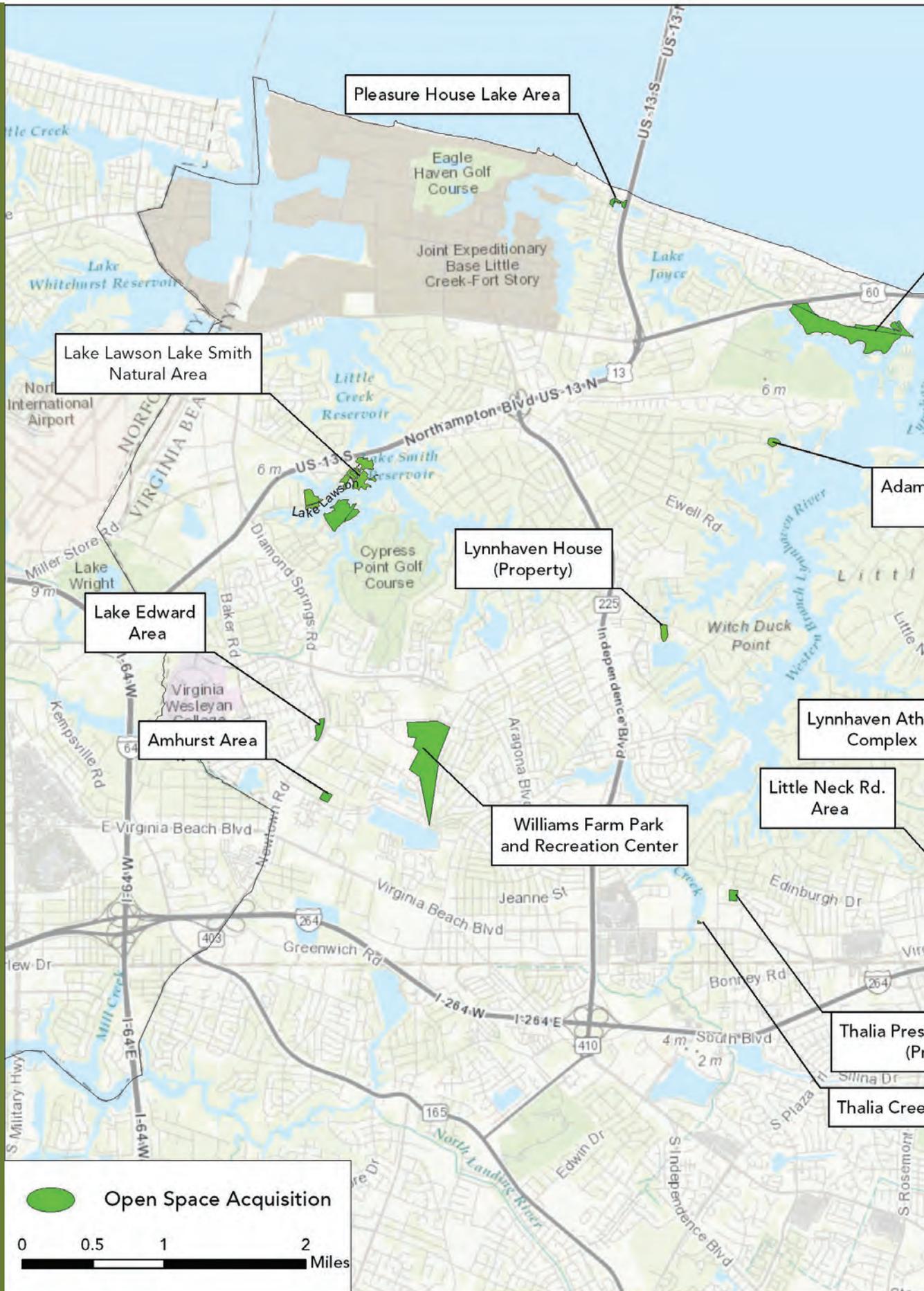
Properties Currently Under Review

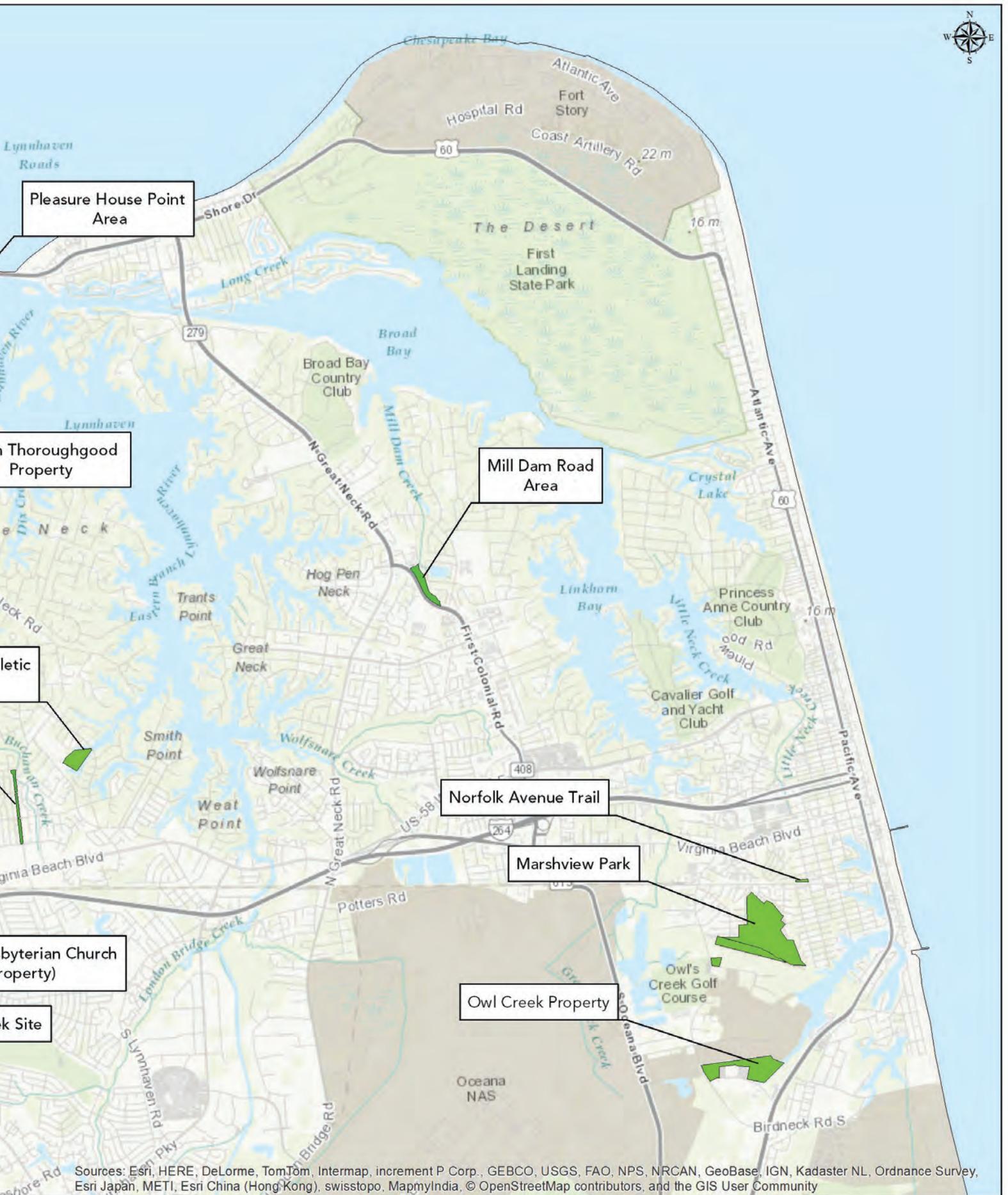
with No Funding Reserved For Possible Open Space Acquisition

The following properties were identified in the 2008 Virginia Beach Outdoors Plan as possible open space acquisition sites or have been brought to the attention of the Open Space Advisory Committee by property owners, citizens, or community groups as potential open space acquisition sites. The sites listed below do not have funding reserved for acquisition or due diligence of the sites.

SITE LOCATION	PROPERTY OWNER	GPIN	VOTING DISTRICT	ACRES	ZONING	STATUS
Camp Pendleton (Partial)	Commonwealth of Virginia	2416-85-3142	Beach	200	P-1	Not Reserved
Point O' Woods	Lawrence J. Goldrich	2407-16-4082	Beach	2.7	O-2	Not Reserved
Pleasure House Creek	M.M. Newton	1489-18-8897 1489-18-4922	Bayside	2.1	P-1	Not Reserved
Witchduck Lake	Old Dominion Tobacco, Inc.	1467-58-7545	Kempsville	12.2	I-1	Not Reserved
Owl Creek Lane	Sea Shadow Inlet, LLC	Multiple	Beach	22.7	B-4 R5-D	Not Reserved
Thalia Creek Greenway (Easements)	Multiple	Multiple				Not Reserved

Northern Site Acquisition





Pleasure House Point Area

Mill Dam Road Area

Norfolk Avenue Trail

Marshview Park

Owl Creek Property

Thoroughgood Property

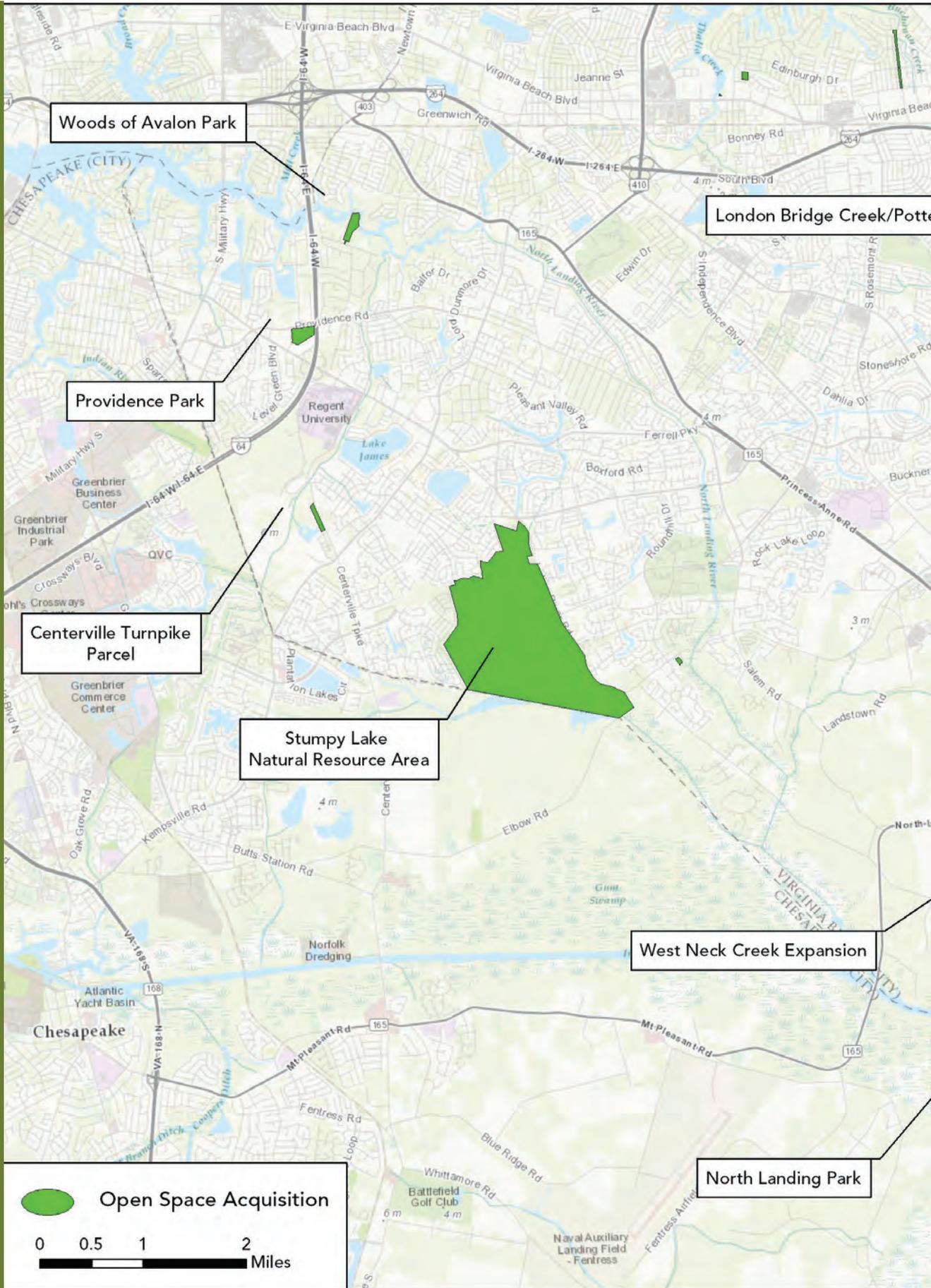
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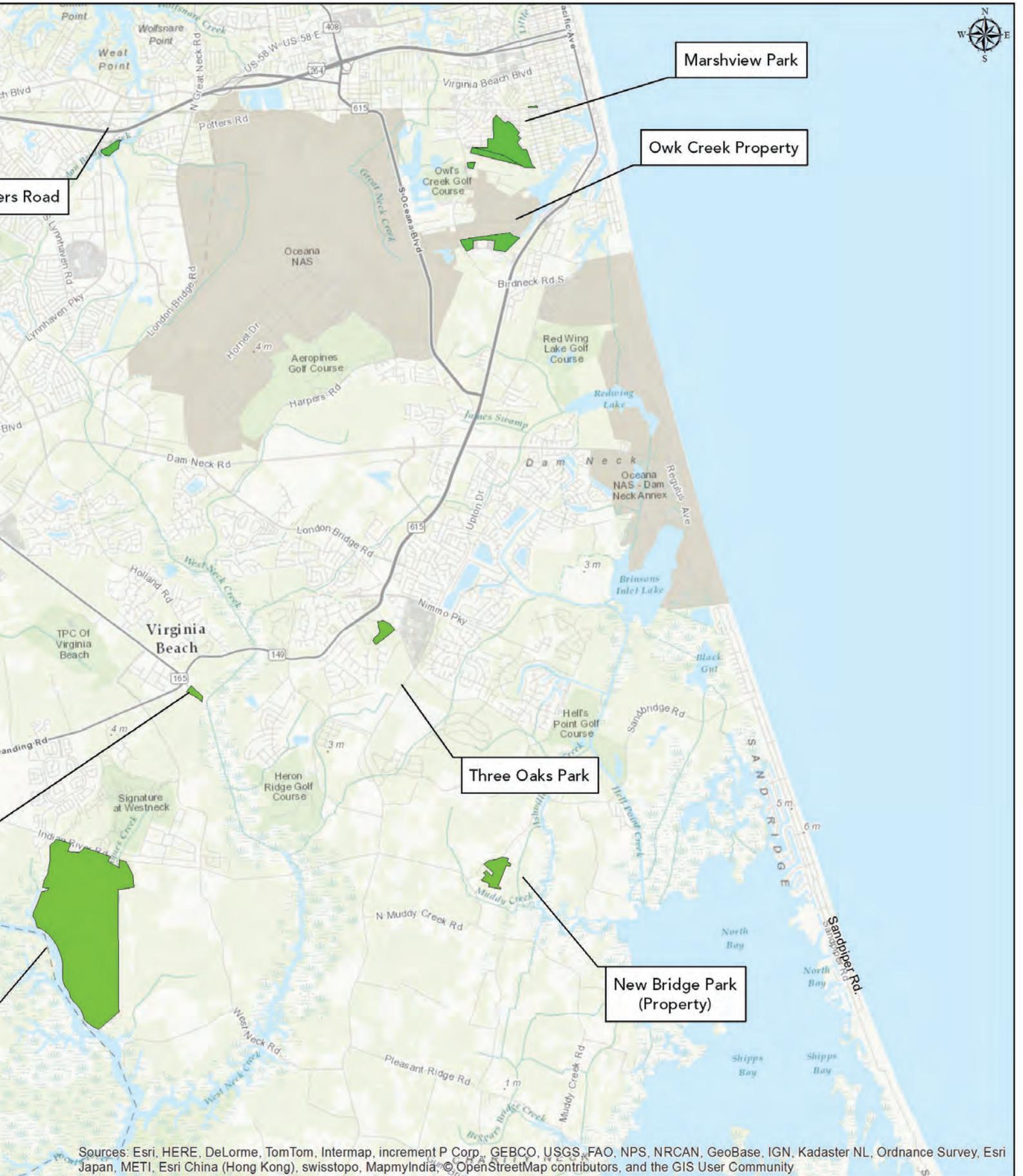
byterian Church Property)

rk Site

Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, TomTom, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), swisstopo, MapmyIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

Central Site Acquisition





Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, TomTom, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), swisstopo, MapmyIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

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