

# Planning Commission 2015 Annual Report



# Chairman's Message



On behalf of the Newport News City Planning Commission, I am pleased to present the Commission's annual report of activities for 2015 to the City Council and citizens of Newport News. The Planning Commission makes land use recommendations on proposed development within the City which can be both complex and difficult to resolve. The Commission fulfills its responsibility of determining the best use of land by striking a fair and equitable balance between the desires of the property owners and the community's needs. The Commission ensures a balance through its committees. The committees enable the Commission to focus on specific issues before they are presented and acted upon. The committees of the Commission include the Regulations Committee and the Comprehensive Plan Citizen Advisory Committee. The Commission is also represented on the Regional Business District Review Committee, the Subdivision Review Board, the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Application Committee and the Lee Hall Corridor Overlay District Committee.

In closing, the members of the City Planning Commission have enjoyed serving the City Council and the citizens of Newport News. We remain dedicated to improving our community by promoting orderly and wholesome growth. To this end, we encourage all citizens to become involved in our deliberations by attending or watching, on cable channel 48 or Verizon FiOS channel 19, future Planning Commission meetings.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael F. Carpenter". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Michael F. Carpenter



## Planning Commission



Michael F. Carpenter, Chairman  
Mark W. Mulvaney, Vice-Chairman  
Lorraine P. Austin  
N. Steve Groce  
Robert B. Jones  
Cleon M. Long  
H. Eugene Roberts  
Daniel L. Simmons, Jr.  
Elizabeth W. Willis

## Membership

There were no changes in membership on the Planning Commission in January of 2015.



## Department of Planning

### MISSION STATEMENT

"To analyze, prioritize and plan for the balanced and sustainable use of the city's land and other resources to enhance the quality of life for current and future generations."

### PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF

**Sheila W. McAllister, AICP**  
Executive Secretary/Director of Planning

**Lynn A. Spratley**  
Deputy City Attorney

**Melissa M. Leskovar**  
Administrative Assistant II/Recording Secretary

### PLANNING STAFF

**Claudia K. Cotton**  
Manager of Current Planning

**Britta S. Ayers, AICP, PMP**  
Manager of Comprehensive Planning

**Saul Gleiser**  
Senior Planner

**Angela Y. Hopkins**  
Senior Planner

**Regina E. Jensen**  
Senior Planner

**Flora D. Chioros, ASLA**  
Landscape Planner

**Johnnie E. Davis**  
Planner

**David F. Watson, AICP**  
Planner

**Sandra K. Hitchens**  
Planner

**Dedra M. Richardson**  
Administrative Coordinator

**Woodson Hopewell**  
Administrative Assistant II

# Applications Reviewed

The City Planning Commission deals with a variety of matters related to the future of the city of Newport News. Planning and zoning matters include the following:

**Comprehensive Plan Amendment:** *The Framework for the Future 2030* comprehensive plan is the policy plan for the development of Newport News. It sets forth policies and strategies for achieving the goals and vision of the City. Zoning of land within the city must be consistent with the *Framework for the Future 2030* comprehensive plan. If not, a plan amendment is required before a zoning change can be approved.

**Change of Zoning:** A change of zoning is required when a property owner proposes to use land for purposes other than those permitted within its designated zoning district.

**Conditional Use Permit:** A conditional use permit is required when a property owner proposes to use land for purposes other than those permitted by right within the designated zoning district, but may be permitted under certain conditions. Uses that can be requested through the conditional use permit process are identified in the Zoning Ordinance's summary of use matrix.

**Special Exception:** The Planning Commission reviews special exception applications for the Board of Zoning Appeals. The Commission forwards their recommendation to the Board of Zoning Appeals. A special exception can be approved if all the criteria for the exception, as identified in the Zoning Ordinance, are met.

**Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment:** The Zoning Ordinance designates the types of land uses permitted in zoning districts in the City. It also provides for area, dimensional and other regulations necessary for those uses and zones to protect the public health, safety and welfare of citizens. These provisions require periodic review and change due to evolving development issues and opportunities.

The Planning Commission's recommendations on all of the above planning matters, with the exception of special exceptions, are forwarded to City Council.

**During the calendar year 2015, the City Planning Commission processed 33 requests. A breakdown of type is below:**

Type	Total	Percentage	Approved	Withdrawn	Denied	No Recommendation	Pending
Comprehensive Plan Amendment	2	6	2	0	0	0	0
Change of Zoning	5	16	5	0	0	0	0
Conditional Use Permit	16	48	15	1	0	0	0
Special Exceptions	2	6	2	0	0	0	0
Text Amendments	8	24	8	0	0	0	0
Total	33	100	32	1	0	0	0

**Annual Apartment and Assisted Housing Survey:** The Planning staff conducts annual surveys of the number and availability of apartments and assisted housing within the city.

**Development Monitoring Report:** The Planning staff publishes an annual Development Monitoring Report which contains data on development activity in the city of Newport News. The report includes information on residential and non-residential subdivisions, site plans, buildings issued Certificates of Use and Occupancy, and zoning changes.

**Comprehensive Plan Update:** With support from the Comprehensive Plan Citizen Advisory Committee (CPCAC), Planning staff completed Phase 2 (Data Collection and Analysis) of the comprehensive planning process in summer 2015 and prepared the Existing Conditions Summary. Diverse interests and perspectives from across the city were considered and incorporated into the *One City, One Future* Comprehensive Plan through various outreach methods including quality of life questionnaires, comment cards, focus groups, and interviews conducted through spring of 2015. "What We Heard – Part II" was prepared and presented to the CPCAC in early 2015 to provide a summary of citizen input for consideration and discussion from the second round of outreach activities. The report is available on the Comprehensive Plan Update webpage at: [www.nnva.gov/1763/Comprehensive-Plan-Update](http://www.nnva.gov/1763/Comprehensive-Plan-Update). A consolidated report will be included as an appendix to the comprehensive plan.

Focus groups were conducted with a variety of stakeholders to gather more detailed information and insight on specific topics. Focus groups in 2015 included Newport News Public Schools, Fort Eustis, Virginia Peninsula Chamber of Commerce, and HRACRE.

**Regional Planning:** Planning staff continued to participate in regional planning forums through Hampton Roads Planning District Commission, Hampton Roads Transportation Planning Organization, and Hampton Roads Transit. Staff regularly attends board and commission meetings and participates on subcommittees focused on addressing issues of a regional importance including transportation and land use planning.

**Public Outreach:** Planning staff continued to support various community and business groups including the Downtown Newport News Merchants and Neighbors Association, North District Town Hall, and Denbigh Warwick Business Association. Staff routinely provides updates on citywide planning and development activities.

**Public Transit:** Planning staff continued to work with HRT to implement the City's Bus Shelter Program which replaces, upgrades or installs new bus shelters throughout the city. This program is funded by CMAQ grants totaling over \$632,000. Phase 1, which replaced all existing bus shelters with the new designed HRT shelter, was completed in 2014. Phase 2, which will provide approximately 30 shelters at new locations throughout the city, will begin in spring 2016.

**Superblock Charrette:** The Planning Commission participated in a public charrette, or intensive brainstorming session, to develop a shared community vision and identify strategies for jump-starting change downtown through the development of the Superblock. This consultant-led effort resulted from Mayor McKinley Price's participation in the August 2013 Mayors Institute on City Design. A final report and presentation of the findings and recommendations was presented to the Planning Commission and City Council in February 2015. A follow-up activity began in late 2015 to broaden the vision to the entire downtown. Work on the Downtown Design Vision continues into 2016.

# Executive Secretary's Message



The City Planning Commission reviewed and made recommendations on 33 requests in 2015.

The department saw three staff changes in 2015. Regina Jensen, Senior Planner, started with the comprehensive planning team in April 2015. She has a Bachelor's degree in Communications from Monmouth University, and is completing her Master's in Public Administration at Villanova University. She brings more than 12 years of experience in planning and public outreach, and has an extensive background in technical writing and editing. Regina

has successfully prepared numerous studies and plans in her career, including bicycle and pedestrian master plans, greenway development along rail corridors, multi-modal long-range transportation plans, and trail feasibility assessments. She is a certified Professional Transportation Planner. The department gained a new Administrative Assistant II, Mr. Woodson Hopewell. Mr. Hopewell mans the front desk position and has been a great addition to the office team. A new position, Planning Coordinator, was created in the Department. The Planning Coordinator will be responsible for ensuring businesses and developers looking to do business in Newport News have a positive experience as they maneuver the city's development review process.

Phase 3 of the comprehensive plan update is in full swing. The CPCAC continued to meet, assessing citizen feedback and discussing opportunities and needs. Towards the latter part of the year, the committee started their review of the draft Existing Conditions Summary. The CPCAC will complete the Existing Conditions Summary in early 2016. A draft document is anticipated in summer 2016.

Planning staff is actively engaged with regional groups such as Hampton Roads Transit, Hampton Roads Planning District Commission and the Hampton Roads Transportation Planning Organization.

Staff will continue supporting the activities of other City departments and the City Manager's office, including the ongoing support of the City Planning Commission, the Hilton Village and North End/Huntington Heights Architectural Review Boards, the Lee Hall Corridor Overlay District Committee, the Regional Business District Review Committee and the Commemoration Advisory Commission. Staff support for the Architectural Review Boards includes board training, updating guidelines and issuance of Certificates of Appropriateness. Staff support for the City Planning Commission involves the review of rezoning applications, conditional use permits, zoning ordinance text amendments, special exception applications and comprehensive plan amendments. Staff support continues after City Council approval of applications through site plan approval, to final occupancy to ensure all conditions of approval are met. Additionally, Planning staff reviews site development plans and subdivision plats for conformance with zoning and site regulations requirements. In 2015, 134 site plans and 75 subdivision plats were reviewed.

I look forward to working with you on the challenges that await us in 2016.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sheila W. McAllister". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Sheila W. McAllister

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