

PARADISE CREEK INDUSTRIAL CORRIDOR FUTURE USE PLAN

Portsmouth, Virginia

October 2013



PARADISE CREEK INDUSTRIAL CORRIDOR PLAN

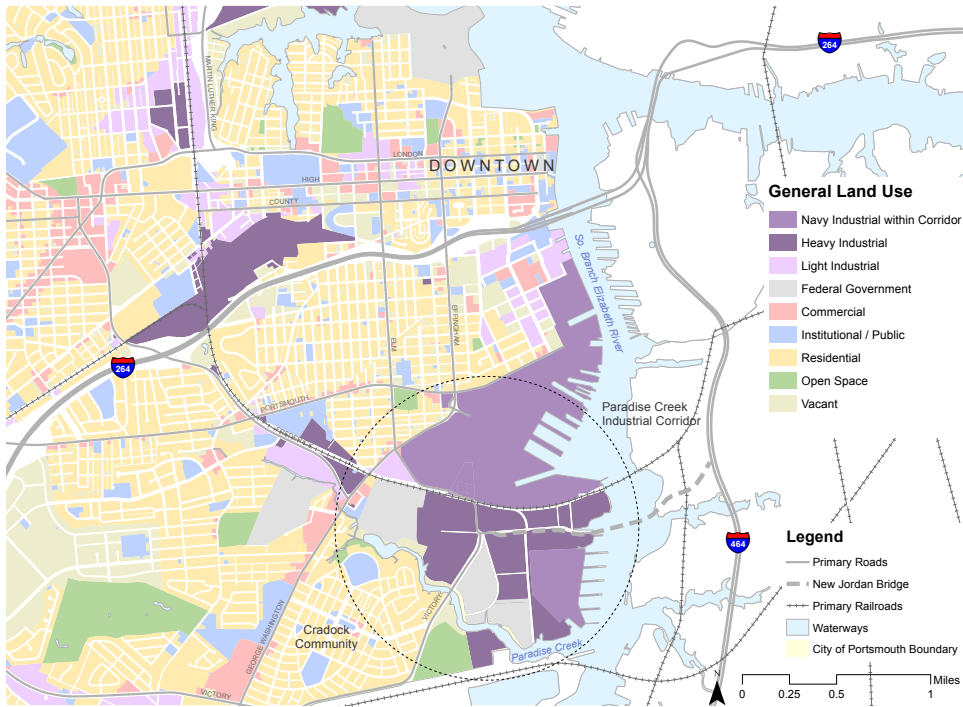
INTRODUCTION

The Paradise Creek Industrial Corridor is poised to achieve new economic and environmental goals. The area north of Paradise Creek represents Portsmouth's largest industrial district. Anchored by a number of active businesses, this industrial area has tremendous opportunity to increase economic prosperity by leveraging proximity to naval operations, rail access and deep water ports. The opening of the new Jordan Bridge will significantly enhance access to the area, further boosting its market potential.

In addition, Paradise Creek offers a valuable natural resource for residents of Portsmouth, especially the nearby Cradock community. A tributary of the Elizabeth River and ultimately the Chesapeake Bay, Paradise Creek is the largest riparian creek habitat in Portsmouth. With the leadership of the Elizabeth River Project and others, significant restoration efforts have resulted in new habitat and recreational opportunities all along the Paradise Creek riparian corridor. The new Paradise Creek Nature Park provides a capstone to this extensive effort. When finished, it will greatly increase recreational opportunities, access to the creek, and habitat. With completed cleanups expected at several properties in the near future, the City of Portsmouth recognized an opportunity to bring local stakeholders together and develop a unified corridor plan for optimizing the area's economic and recreational potential.



The Paradise Creek Industrial Corridor is situated along the Southern Branch of the Elizabeth River. It is characterized by existing industry, active naval facilities, several Superfund sites, ongoing cleanup and redevelopment, the newly constructed South Norfolk Jordan Bridge, the adjacent residential Cradock community and important recreational assets.



The Paradise Creek Industrial Corridor is one of Portsmouth's primary industrial districts.

FUTURE USE GOALS

During the planning process, the focus group generated the following goals to guide concept plan development:

- Foster local economic development.
- Spark investment in underused properties.
- Improve access to and through the corridor.
- Connect and enhance habitat and recreation opportunities.
- Improve community access to open space and waterfront amenities.

CONCEPT PLAN OVERVIEW

The concept plan focuses on the following three themes:

- 1) Future Land Use & Development
- 2) Access and Circulation
- 3) Environment & Neighborhood

Detailed plans for each theme are provided on the following pages. The Corridor Concept Plan is on page 10.

PLANNING PROCESS

During 2012, the City of Portsmouth, the Elizabeth River Project, the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency convened a focus group of key stakeholders to identify goals, strategies and a concept plan to guide cleanup activities and local investments.

Following the Destination Portsmouth planning model, the focus group met several times over the course of the year to articulate a vision for the Paradise Creek Industrial Corridor.

This document summarizes the outcomes of the process and the resulting concept plan. The plan reflects the ideas and recommendations of focus group participants and is provided as a tool for the City of Portsmouth's long-range planning purposes. Further discussion with the Navy and property owners in the area would be needed to evaluate and refine specific strategies to implement the plan.

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PLANNING PROCESS

KICKOFF & SITE TOUR



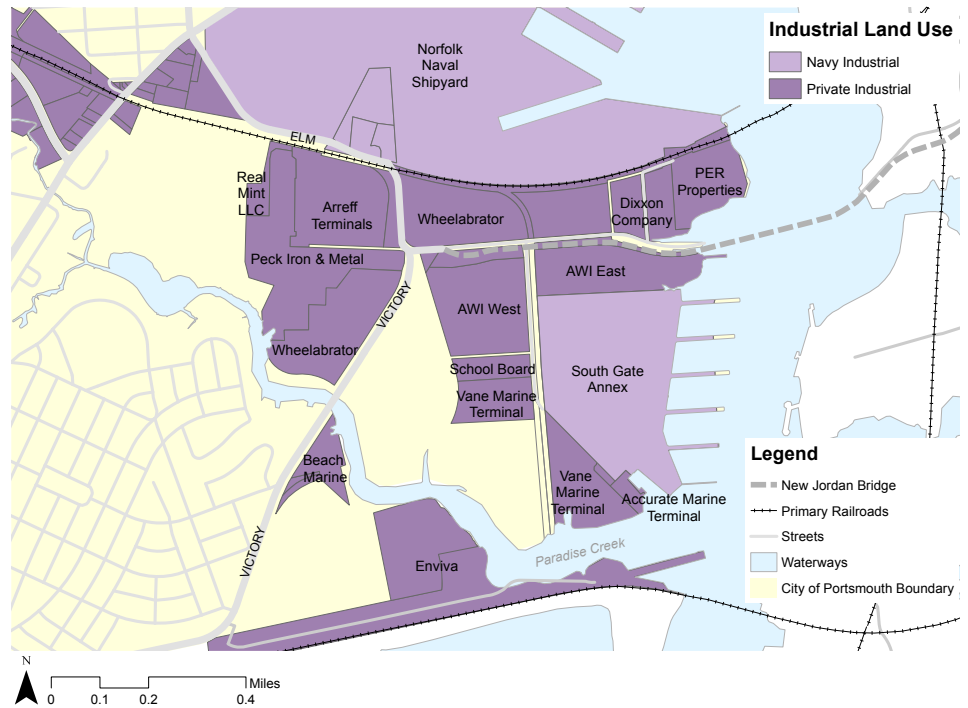
In February 2012, project partners, including EPA, VA DEQ, the City of Portsmouth and the Elizabeth River Project met to discuss corridor opportunities and constraints and tour the area. A brief presentation was also made to Portsmouth City Council to kick off the project and outline next steps.



FUTURE LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT

CONSIDERATIONS

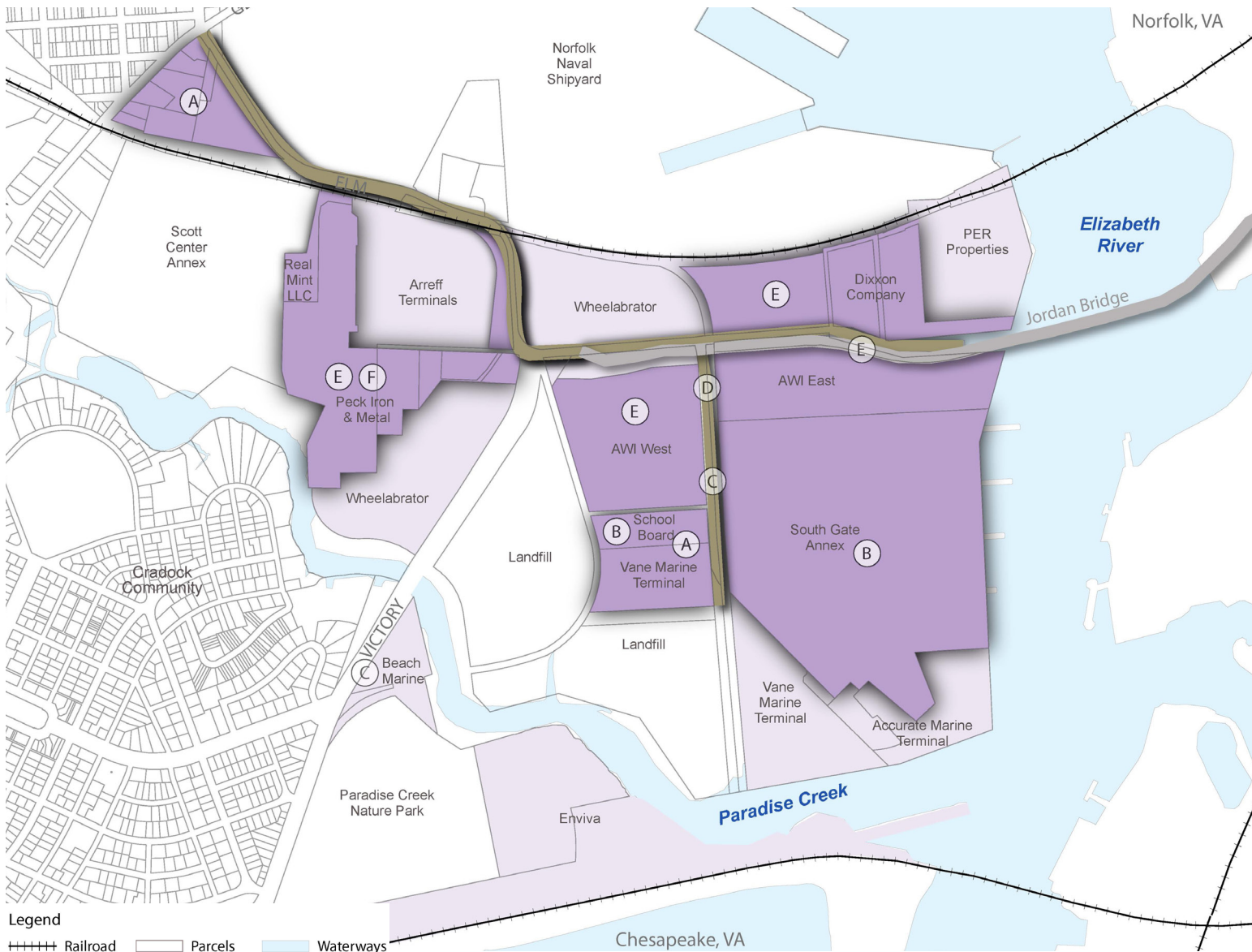
- The Paradise Creek Industrial Corridor is one of Portsmouth's primary industrial districts.
- Assets include its proximity to naval operations and the deep water port.
- The new Jordan bridge will increase access to and through the area.
- Much of the area is in active or planned cleanup, which may present future development opportunities.
- Portions of the area are currently underused.



View of the Peck Iron & Metal Superfund site at the intersection of Victory and Elm (bottom left); Jordan Bridge under construction adjacent to the berm put in place as part of the AWI Superfund site cleanup (middle); view south on Burton Point Road towards School Board property (bottom right).



CONCEPT PLAN | Future Land Use & Development



RECOMMENDATIONS

Long-term economic viability of the corridor could be strengthened by diversifying industry, co-locating related industries, and targeting industries that depend on rail and port or naval operations. These economic development strategies could be supported by the land use strategies below. These ideas were generated during a working session and warrant further discussion with the Navy and other property owners in the area.

Enhance economic potential of key properties

- Consolidate key parcels. (A)
- Relocate government parking and storage.¹ (B)
- Prioritize rail and waterfront access properties.
- Modify easements and right-of-ways as appropriate to enhance development potential. (C)
- Co-locate similar industries.

Upgrade utilities and infrastructure

- Expand rail down Burton Point Road. (D)
- Install fiber-optic cables.
- Underground telecommunications.
- Modernize water and sewer service (Burton Point Road expansion completed).
- Improve drainage to address flooding.
- Upgrade road infrastructure.

Increase workforce amenities

- Provide additional parking facilities (*potential locations included the Peck Iron & Metal site, the area under the bridge, the Navy landfills, upgrading existing Navy parking lot to parking garage, and converting AWI West site to a paid park-and-ride*). (E)
- Locate multi-modal development. (F)
- Provide restaurant in area.

Diversify industry

- Consider attracting other types of industry to area that might benefit from available assets.

¹ While the South Gate Annex is currently in use for Navy operations, working session participants identified the annex as highly developable, commercial waterfront property that could be redeveloped should the property or a portion of the property become available at some time in the future.

² Participants identified the shortage of parking as a key consideration and suggested potential locations for additional parking. Further discussion with property owners, including the Navy, would be needed to determine availability of specific sites. Additionally, although AWI West is currently in use, converting the area into a paid park-and-ride could be accomplished through a land swap if other land was made available.

PLANNING PROCESS

WORKING SESSION #1

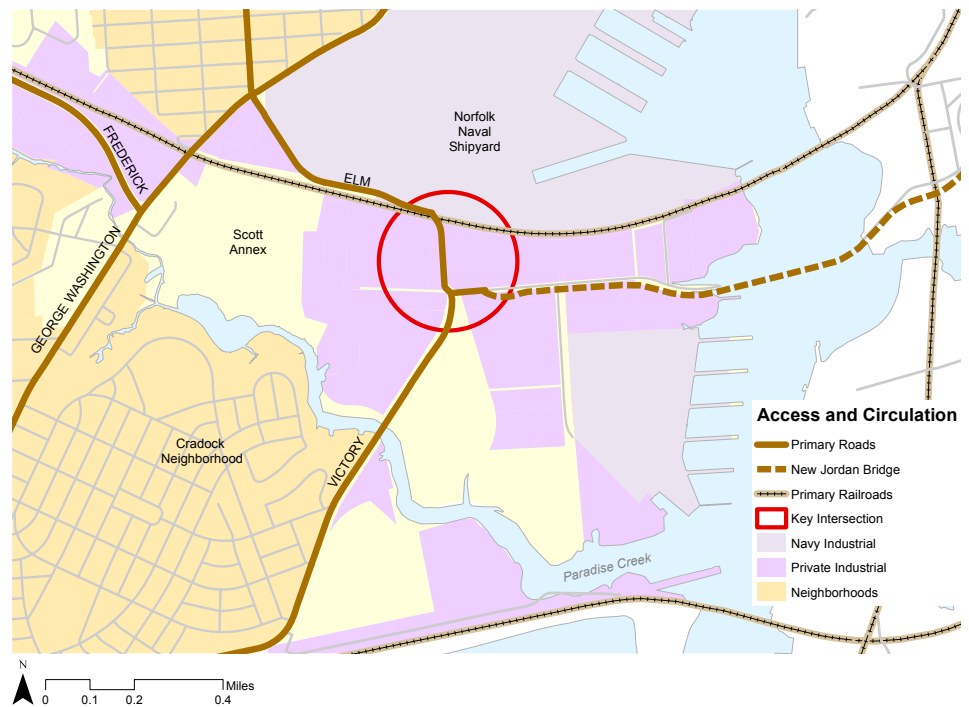


Local stakeholders met in July 2012 for a working session. Participants worked in breakout groups to identify opportunities and challenges for each of the three themes. Meeting materials were also posted on the City's website for eight weeks for public comment.

ACCESS & CIRCULATION

CONSIDERATIONS

- The Jordan Bridge will increase vehicular, pedestrian and cyclist traffic in the area.
- Access is challenged between the new Jordan Bridge ramp and George Washington.
- Many roads in the area are in poor condition and lack sidewalks and designated parking.
- The City's Master Transportation Plan identifies Victory Boulevard as part of a multi-modal corridor intended to provide safe access for all road users.
- This area is also part of a regional commuter light rail transportation corridor, which could include a line from Norfolk to Portsmouth in the future.



Victory Boulevard Bridge at Paradise Creek (bottom left). Key intersections in red circle in the above map are shown below: Elm Avenue and the rail crossing at the Norfolk Naval entrance (middle) and the intersection at Victory Boulevard and Elm Avenue (bottom left).



CONCEPT PLAN | Access & Circulation



RECOMMENDATIONS

The area is a multi-modal corridor that serves vehicular, rail, boat, cyclist and pedestrian movement. Access to and through the area is expected to increase with the new Jordan Bridge and increased rail activity. The following strategies could improve both industrial and recreational access to and through the area.

Improve circulation

- Create alternate route to Jordan Bridge through Peck Property to either Elm Ave. (A) or Frederick Blvd. (B) (specific alignment or overpass to be evaluated to ensure compatibility with existing uses and operations).
- Create alternate route to Burton Point Road. (C)

Improve road infrastructure

- Bring roads up to standard including sidewalks, drainage, marked lanes, appropriate width and turn radii, designated parking and traffic control signage and signals.
- Upgrade utilities.

Create safe and efficient intersections

- Ideas include bringing intersections up to standard, creating an overpass at Navy Gate and train alert with alternate route.

Increase multi-modal transportation

- Add bike and pedestrian lanes to Victory Boulevard.
- Upgrade Victory Bridge with sidewalks, bike lane and appropriate loading. (D)
- Create safe crossings from Cradock community to Paradise Creek Nature Park.

PLANNING PROCESS

WORKING SESSION #2 & PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE



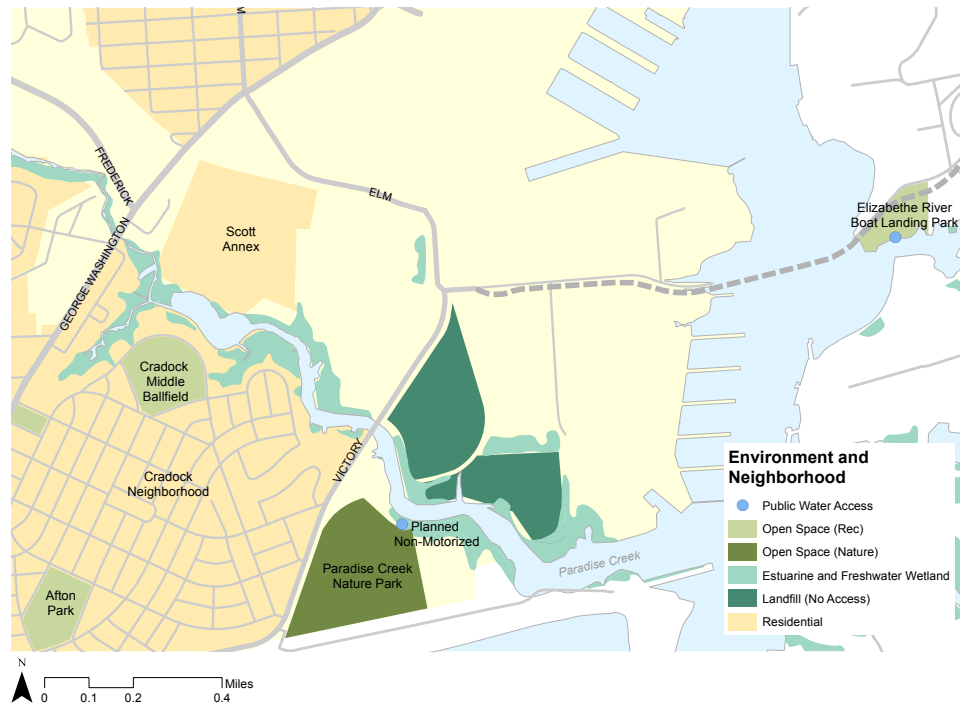
Ideas from the first working session were incorporated into a draft concept plan and shared with focus group participants in October 2012. The concept plan was also shared at a public open house and on the City's website for an eight-week public comment period.



ENVIRONMENT & NEIGHBORHOOD

CONSIDERATIONS

- The Elizabeth River Project has succeeded in significant restoration efforts along Paradise Creek, including the Scott Center Annex and the Navy landfills.
- The corridor includes a number of industries that have demonstrated a commitment to environmentally responsible business practices (such as River Star businesses).
- Paradise Creek Nature Park will include a constructed wetland, trails, education stations, access roads and parking.
- Future phases of the park's development will include non-motorized boat access, enhanced trails and access, and park amenities such as a children's playground and picnic shelters.
- There may be opportunities to build on this success to enhance access to the waterfront and other recreational open spaces nearby.



Wetlands under construction at Paradise Creek Nature Park (bottom left); Paradise Creek view toward the Cradock community (middle); an entrance to Cradock community (bottom right).



CONCEPT PLAN | Environment & Neighborhood



RECOMMENDATIONS

Significant progress has been made in restoring Paradise Creek. Recreational amenities include the new Paradise Creek Nature Park and local waterways for boating and fishing. The following strategies could build on the restoration efforts to date and improve safe recreational access to the creek and new park. In some instances, agreements with property owners may be needed.

Develop signage and educational programs

- Place signage along Jordan Bridge celebrating industrial heritage. (A)
- Place blueway and health risk signage along Paradise Creek. (B)
- Create a task force to educate residents regarding creek health risks.
- Create a website to provide news and announcements.

Improve the health of the creek

- Conduct a sediment cleanup at South Gate Annex. (C)
- Remove invasive species. (D)
- Enhance habitat at Navy landfills.

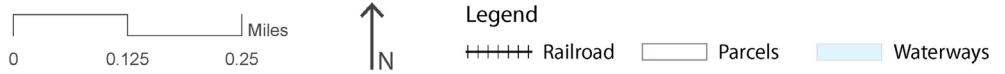
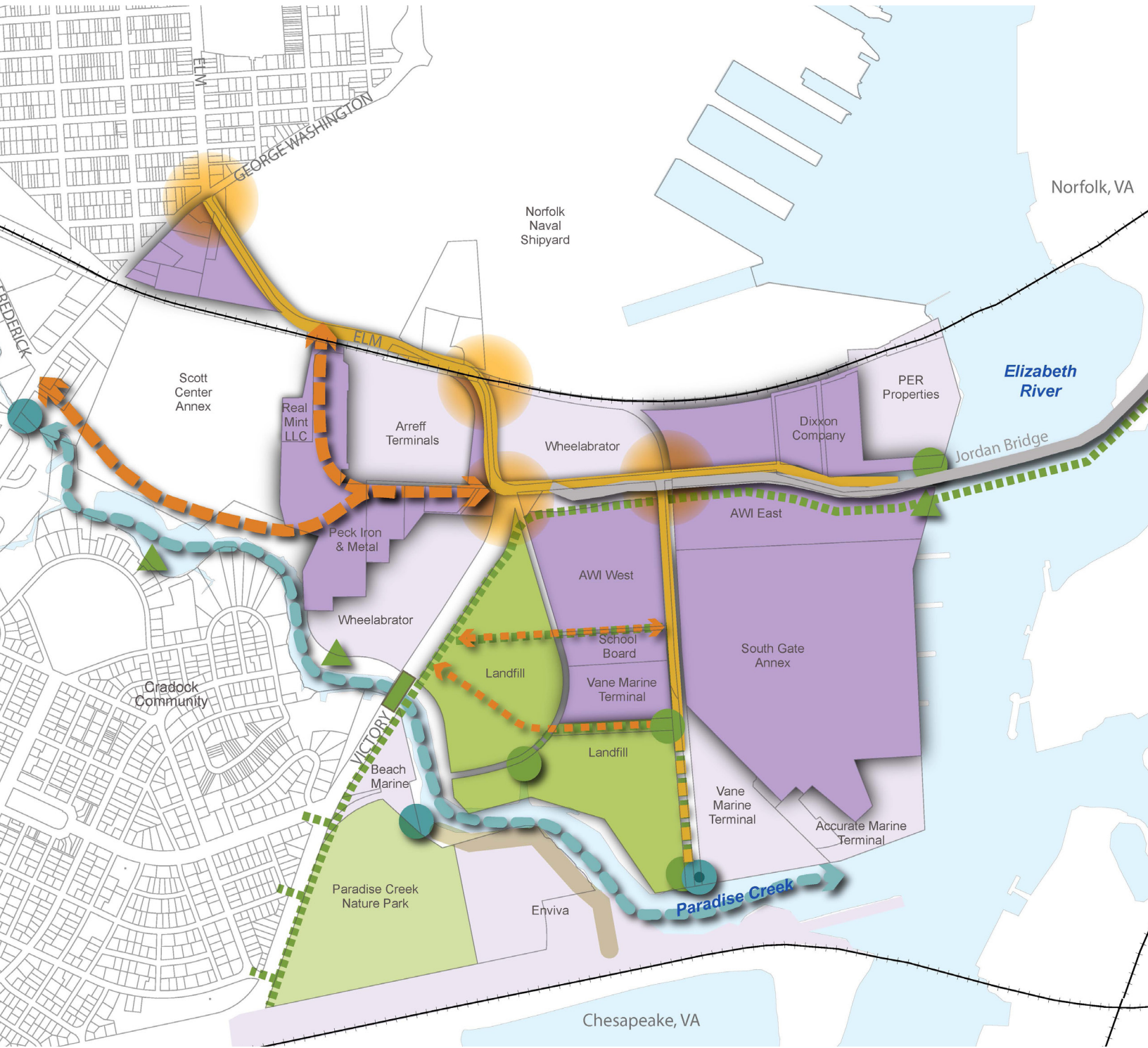
Promote recreational creek access

- Build a motorized boat launch.
- Create a non-motorized blueway with access points along Paradise Creek. (E)
- Create additional access points to the water.

Increase multi-modal transportation

- Add bike and pedestrian lanes to Victory Boulevard.
- Upgrade Victory Bridge with sidewalks, bike lane and appropriate loading.
- Create safe crossings from Cradock to Paradise Creek Nature Park.

CORRIDOR CONCEPT PLAN



PARADISE CREEK CONCEPT PLAN

Future Land Use & Development

1. Enhance economic potential of key properties.
2. Upgrade utilities and infrastructure.
3. Increase workforce amenities.
4. Diversify industry.

Access & Circulation

1. Improve circulation.
2. Improve road infrastructure.
3. Create safe and efficient intersections.
4. Increase multi-modal transportation.

Environment & Neighborhood

1. Develop signage and educational programs.
2. Improve the health of Paradise Creek.
3. Promote recreational access to creek.
4. Increase multi-modal transportation.

NEXT STEPS

During the final working session and open house, participants identified two important tasks required to move forward with a detailed strategic plan.

► Conduct Traffic Study

The group agreed a detailed traffic study would help business owners, policy makers and other stakeholders better understand short-term and long-term circulation issues in the area. The findings would help stakeholders prioritize how to use available corridor properties to alleviate congestion and mitigate environmental effects.

Next steps:

- Determine the timing of existing studies: a traffic study is underway to analyze traffic at entrances and on campus at the Norfolk Naval Shipyard.
- Integrate long-term transportation goals into the study: regional transportation plans, railroad plans, and the Figg Bridge Company long-term strategy for the Jordan Bridge can be incorporated into a comprehensive traffic study.
- Identify and assemble key stakeholders (such as the Navy, the City, Hampton Roads Planning District Commission, the Virginia Department of Transportation, Norfolk & Portsmouth Beltline and Figg Bridge) to develop the study's scope and timing.
- Pursue funding opportunities and develop a request for proposals.

► Strategic Planning at Peck Property

Stakeholders agreed that the Peck property might be developed with critical roadways and supporting services to ease traffic issues and provide amenities for the area. Participants prioritized exploring the feasibility and opportunities to phase reuse and cleanup of the site.

EPA will conduct a remedial investigation/feasibility study (RI/FS) for the Peck Iron & Metal Superfund site. An RI/FS characterizes site conditions, determines the nature of the waste, assesses risk to human health and the environment, and evaluates remedial action alternatives. Reuse goals can help inform risk assessments and remedial action alternatives. The RI/FS can also provide information to help establish realistic expectations for a site's reuse.

Next steps:

- Identify timing and next steps for the RI/FS.
- Consider evaluating different transportation and mixed-use scenarios as part of the RI risk assessment.
- Incorporate findings from the RI/FS, such as the delineated extent of waste and areas of concern and remediation options as part of the traffic study to identify areas that could be used sooner. The RI/FS can also help parties better understand the cost and feasibility of remediating the site to support specific uses.

A HEALTHIER CORRIDOR

This concept plan integrates the key strategies developed during the community planning process. Specific priorities are listed below for each focus area.

Future Land Use & Development

- Enhance economic potential of key properties.
- Upgrade utilities and infrastructure.
- Increase workforce amenities.
- Diversify industry.

Access & Circulation

- Improve circulation.
- Improve road infrastructure.
- Create safe and efficient intersections.
- Increase multi-modal transportation.

Environment & Neighborhood

- Develop signage and educational programs.
- Improve the health of Paradise Creek.
- Promote recreational access to creek.
- Increase multi-modal transportation.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The following individuals and organizations contributed to the Paradise Creek Industrial Corridor workshop and outcomes outlined in this report.

Local Government / Agencies

City of Portsmouth
City of Chesapeake
Portsmouth Port and Industrial Commission
Hampton Roads Planning Commission
Virginia Port Authority
Portsmouth Partnership

State & Federal Agencies

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
U.S. Navy
Virginia Dept. of Environmental Quality
Virginia Marine Resources Commission

Local Organizations

Elizabeth River Project

Community

Cradock Civic League

Local Businesses & Landowners

Atlantic Metrocast
Wheelabrator
Peck
PER Properties
Vane Brothers Company
Accurate Marine
Enviva
Beach Marine
Navy Shipyard
City of Portsmouth School Board
Figg Bridge Company
Norfolk & Portsmouth Beltline
Fornazor International



FROM CLEANUP TO REDEVELOPMENT

A history of industrial use has led to contamination in the Paradise Creek Industrial Corridor. The Atlantic Wood Industries (AWI) Superfund site includes about 48 acres of land along the industrialized waterfront, and 30 to 35 acres of contaminated sediments in the Southern Branch of the Elizabeth River. The 33-acre Peck Iron & Metal Superfund site on Elm Avenue is characterized by soil and ground water contamination from former metal recovery operations.

Cleanup is currently underway at the AWI site. EPA listed the Peck Iron & Metal site on the Superfund program's National Priorities List in November 2009 and has started the site's remedial investigation and feasibility study. A cleanup plan for the Peck site has not yet been put in place.

EPA's Superfund Redevelopment Initiative (SRI) and Conflict Prevention and Resolution Center (CPRC) and EPA Region 3 sponsored a reuse assessment and planning process to develop a vision for future land use that can help inform cleanup and redevelopment efforts in the Paradise Creek Industrial Corridor. As shown on the map below, the area has a number of sites where cleanup has been necessary. Outcomes from this planning process can help ensure that future development in the area is protective of human health and the environment.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information about the Superfund sites, please contact:

- Larry Johnson, EPA Community Involvement Coordinator
johnson.larry-c@epa.gov, 215-814-3239

For the City of Portsmouth, please contact:

- Patrick Small, Director of Economic Development,
smallp@portsmouthva.gov, 757-393-8804
- Planning Department, 757-393-8836

For more information about the Paradise Creek Industrial Corridor Planning Project, please visit:

- <http://www.portsmouthva.gov/planning/Paradise-Creek-Industrial-Corridor-Concept-Plan.aspx>