THE DEEP CREEK/MENCHENVILLE PLAN

Newport News, Virginia

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The Deep Creek/Menchenville Plan spells out how to make the most of this valuable area and its resources. It articulates the community's vision for the desired future of the area and provides a program of workable action strategies to achieve that future.

Setting

The Deep Creek/Menchenville area overlooks the James River at its confluence with the Warwick River and Deep Creek in Newport News and contains some of the most significant environmental resources in the City of Newport News and the Virginia Tidewater Region. Located here, Deep Creek/Menchenville contains the largest tract of undeveloped land overlooking the James River in Newport News and is in the harbor to the James River seafooding industry.

Merechelle, the suburbia outer landing site in Virginia, will be developed before the adjacent site with restaurants and a wholesale/retail seafood market.

LOCATION

Opportunities

More than 40 acres with over one-half mile of waterfront have been preserved from urban development at the Newport News City Farm with its agricultural land and stream setting.

The southern portion of the area, Deep Creek Harbor, is the northernmost outer landing site in Virginia. More than 40% of the entire Virginia oyster harvest has been brought ashore here in recent years. Also supplying the bulk of the Commonwealth's oyster supplies, Deep Creek Harbor is vital to the state's famous Virginia oyster industry. The quality wetlands, waterways and wooded areas of Deep Creek/Menchenville create a natural environment. The historic working harbor, panoramic views of the James and the quiet rural setting of the City Farm create a place of special character.

72 acres of wetland and forest will be preserved in the Deep Creek/Menchenville natural area system.

Chairman's Remarks

While the area has many unique and valuable attributes, it is faced with a host of challenges. In addition to the minimum security facility, Deep Creek/Menchenville is home to the James River wastewater treatment plant, a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers dredge spoil disposal area, and a former dredge spoil dump. Currently, less than one percent of the extensive Newport News shoreline is accessible to the public. Further development pressure, loss of facilities to serve the saltwater harbor, and water pollution from a variety of sources are causing serious impacts.

The Plan comprehensively addresses Deep Creek/Menchenville's assets and liabilities.

Process

The planning process involved comprehensive analysis of the area's existing conditions, including land use, coastal development, development potential, ownership, natural resources, and available facilities and services. An in-depth environmental analysis, examining the area's environmental features and hazards, water quality, and pollution sources was a critical element of the effort.

Following the completion of the background and program needs of the diverse land use in the area, several conceptual land use alternatives were developed.

Community Involvement

The extended involvement of the community was extremely important in the development of this Plan. Numerous residents, civic groups, property owners, businesses, public agencies, City departments and officials contributed directly to the work of the Plan.

To complete the process, action strategies to achieve the Master Plan vision were developed and specific development projects and a program for effective implementation were detailed.

The Deep Creek/Menchenville Plan was adopted unanimously by the Newport News City Council on March 27, 2018. Following a public hearing which was attended by more than 200 citizens.

The implementation program builds on the successful development of the Plan's communities and provides larger programs to achieve the Plan's strategies.

The Deep Creek/Menchenville Plan was developed using the Virginia Planning and Development Model in cooperation with the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, the Virginia Institute of Marine Science and the Newport News Planning Department.

MERCHANTVILLE, MERECHELLE, WARWICK, DEEP CREEK, NEWPORT NEWS CITY, MENCHENVILLE WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT Expansion

The Hampton Roads Sanitation District wastewater treatment plant will be expanded to provide for nutrient removal to improve the water quality of the James River. Under the Plan's arrangements, HRW will receive the operating necessary for the plant expansion from the City. In addition, HRW will own the share and will be adjacent to existing plants in the City for use in the park and nature area network.

Waste Treatment Plant Expansion

The Plan serves as a statement of policy to be followed in all actions affecting the area including, administrative, Planning Commission and City Council review and action regarding rezoning, conditional use, special exceptions, subdivision, site plan and all other development applications.

The majority of funding for the significant public components of the Plan will come from the City itself, primarily through Capital Improvement Program.

Development agreements providing for joint public/private funding will be explored for the Menchville-operated new, recreational harbor, and Deep Creek pier area improvements. Some state and cooperative funding from other local governments in the region may be possible for the new minimum security correctional facility. City farm labor and contractor experience serves as a valuable resource for carrying out the capital projects of the Plan.

Specific financing strategies will be included in the planning of individual component projects based on specific costs of these projects.

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Historically, more than 300 workboats have harbored at Deep Creek during the oyster season, as many as 300 in recent years.

Regulatory Review/Policies

The combined involvement of the community will be the key to successfully carrying out the follow-up projects. Areas of market risk losses, subject to implementing a specific component of the Plan's recommendations, and officials.

The Menchville seashore center, Deep Creek pier area improvements, and the new harbor will improve the recreational importance of the City and the property owners involved.

Intergovernmental cooperation between the City and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will provide for the development of the Menchville seashore, while the combined efforts of the tenant roads of Sanitation Districts and the City will facilitate the wastewater treatment plant expansion.

Administration

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Implementation

The Plan's long-range plan is a long-range plan and is laid out according to the guidelines of the program. Parallel goals can be met soon and with minimal funding. As individual component projects are carried out, they will form “building blocks” toward the accomplishment of the total program. The phasing program will allow those projects which are complete at any point to be ready to go without waiting for the completion of future projects.

The Plan is long-range and subject to change, but designed to be realistically achieved through a specific step-by-step program of action.

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