

*Fort Monroe and the Need for Parkland in Hampton Roads*

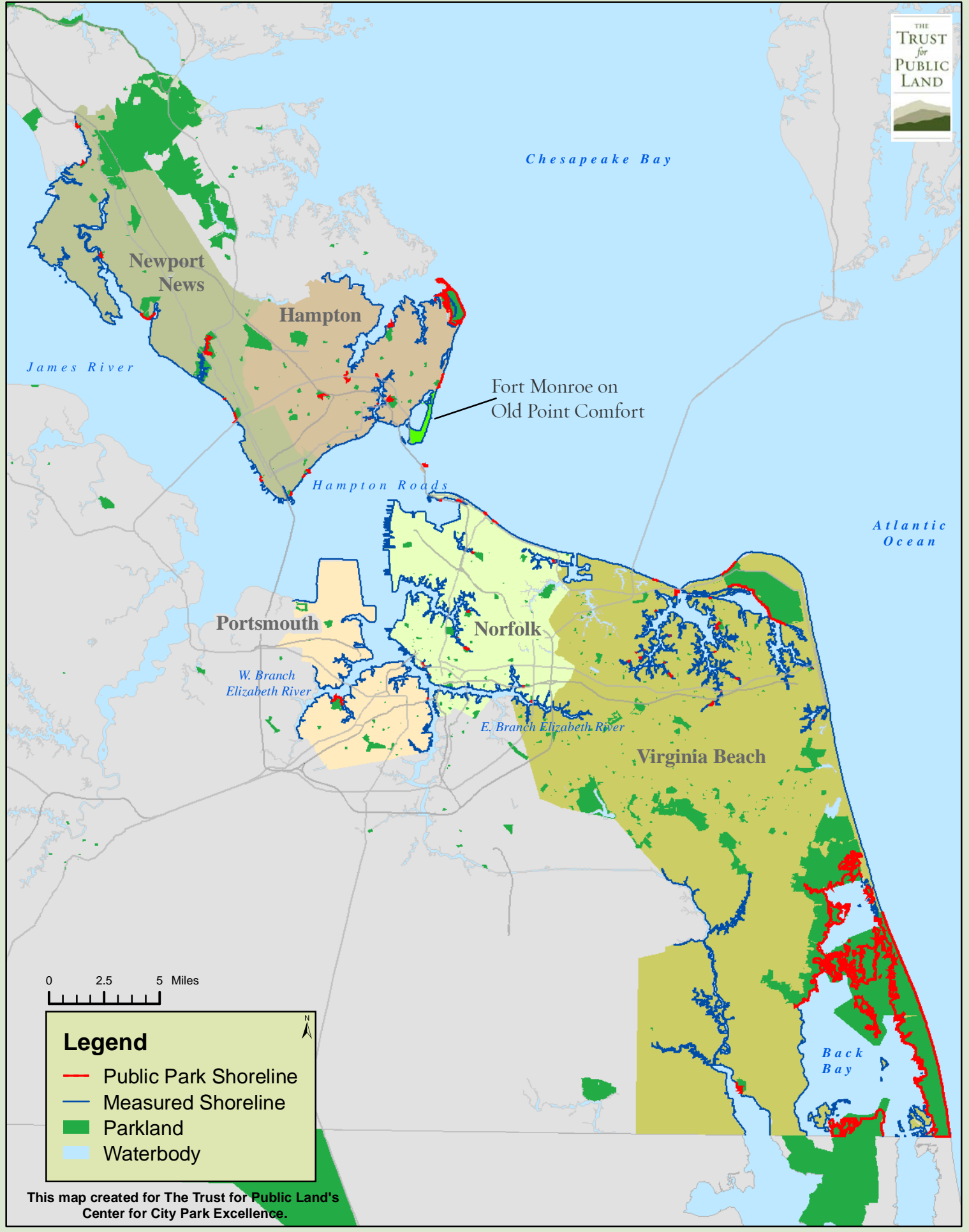
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# Bracing for Change



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# The Parks of Hampton Roads - The Principal Five Cities Around the Harbor



This map created for The Trust for Public Land's Center for City Park Excellence.

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The Trust for Public Land  
Center for City Park Excellence  
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Fort Monroe and the Need for Parkland in Hampton Roads

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*Cover photo: At 570 acres, Fort Monroe is an active military base slated for closure in 2011. With a deficit of parkland in the Hampton Roads area, Fort Monroe could add numerous recreational opportunities for locals and visitors alike.*

*Photo: © 2008 Fort Monroe National Park Foundation, Inc.*



Sitting upon Old Point Comfort, a spit of land at the confluence of Virginia's James River and Chesapeake Bay, is the extraordinary military complex of Fort Monroe. The invariable reaction of first-time visitors to the site is a gasp: is this 21st-century America or 12th-century Europe? Arguably the most historic of all U.S. military strongholds, Fort Monroe and its predecessor installations have formed for 400 years the key link of the defense of the Hampton Roads area as well as Chesapeake Bay and Washington, D.C. And with the base scheduled for decommissioning, a profound debate is now swirling on the fate of its 570 acres for the next four centuries and beyond.

Geographically, Old Point Comfort is located in almost the bull's-eye center of the sprawling, nine-city, six-county Hampton Roads metropolitan area. Legally, it is located within the city limits of Hampton. Attached to the city on the north by a sandbar, the peninsula's other borders consist of Mill Creek to the west, Hampton Roads to the south, and Chesapeake Bay to the east. From the ramparts of the base, the cities of Norfolk and Portsmouth can be made out in the far distance. Nearby to the west, Interstate 64—the Hampton Roads Bridge-Tunnel—dives under the waters to allow the passage of huge navy vessels, container ships, and colliers moving to and from the nearby bases and port facilities.

The 570 acres of Fort Monroe compose an active military post. There are many unique features on Old Point Comfort, including 181 historic buildings (both inside and outside the

fort), a lighthouse in continuous use since 1802, the historic Chamberlin Hotel (now a retirement community), a restored gazebo, a two-mile paved promenade along the bay, a deep-water marina, a fishing pier, Walker Field airfield, wetlands, and Dog Beach. In addition, the army runs the Casemate Museum, located within the walls of the fort, which portrays the history of the peninsula and Fort Monroe. The museum, which opened in 1951, highlights the Civil War period and includes views of the prison cell that held Confederate President Jefferson Davis.

With the army vacating Fort Monroe, what should happen to this unique site? Should it become a park? Should it be redeveloped into housing? Should it be retained in public ownership? Should it be broken up for several different uses?

The closing of Fort Monroe presents the region with the opportunity to gain hundreds of priceless acres of waterfront parkland. However, there is no regional consensus on whether parkland is what the area needs. In order to add some hard data to the debate, the Fort Monroe National Park Foundation has contracted with The Trust for Public Land's Center for City Park Excellence to undertake a study of parkland in the five major cities of the Hampton Roads area. How well do the cities of Hampton, Newport News, Norfolk, Portsmouth, and Virginia Beach presently fare in regard to park provisions for their residents, workers, and visitors? Does the region need more parkland?

## Brief History of Fort Monroe

Old Point Comfort was first visited in 1607 by English colonists who then settled nearby in Jamestown. The site has the momentous distinction of being the spot upon which, in 1619, the first Africans destined for the British continental North American colonies landed—the vanguard of an estimated 10–12 million Africans forcibly brought to the colonies and, later, the United States.

Two years after the initial landing, a fort, named Algernon, was constructed at the point, lasting only until it burned to the ground in 1612. A second fort was destroyed by a hurricane in 1667. In 1728, a third fort, Fort George, was constructed but it, too, was destroyed by a hurricane in 1749. After the numerous naval incursions by Great Britain during the War of 1812—culminating in the burning of the nation’s capital—it became obvious that a massive structure was needed to protect the main Hampton Roads shipping channel, the inland rivers, and Chesapeake Bay. Designed by Simon Bernard, Fort Monroe was begun in 1819 and completed in 1834. With a seven-sided shape, walls of stone, ramparts over a mile in circumference, completely surrounded by a water-filled moat, and bristling with huge artillery guns, Fort Monroe was given the nickname “Gibraltar of the Chesapeake.” It remains the largest fort ever built in the United States.

In fact, during the American Civil War, Fort Monroe was one of only a very few strongholds in the South, aside from the immediate outskirts of Washington, D.C., that never fell to the Confederates. (Because of the impregnable fort, Virginia not only abandoned the city of Hampton but even burned it to the ground to prevent it from being used by the North.) Among notable military events that occurred at Fort Monroe were the command by President Abraham Lincoln to capture the

city of Norfolk and to blockade the Confederate seaboard from Virginia to South Carolina, and the launching by General George B. McClellan of the Peninsula Campaign to seize Richmond. Also, the famous naval encounter between the ironclad ships USS *Monitor* and CSS *Virginia* (USS *Merrimack*) took place a few miles from the fort off Sewell’s Point. After the war, Fort Monroe served for two years as the imprisonment site of Confederate President Jefferson Davis.

But Fort Monroe’s most extraordinary contribution to American history involved words, not bullets. In May 1861, three escaped slaves, Frank Baker, Sheppard Mallory, and James Townsend, fled to Fort Monroe seeking sanctuary with the Union troops. War had already been declared, but it would be more than 18 months before President Lincoln would issue the Emancipation Proclamation. Technically, the onerous and virtually airtight Fugitive Slave Act was still the controlling law of the land and the Northern army was required to return any escapee to his or her master. After some



Coleen Gentles

Overlooking Chesapeake Bay, Fort Monroe was the fourth fort built on Old Point Comfort and remains the largest fort ever built in the United States.

**Table 1: Parkland as Percent of City Size, Hampton Roads Cities**

	City Size (acres)	Acres of Parkland	Park Acres as Percent of City Size	Average, Cities of Similar Population Density*	Above or Below Average?
<b>Hampton</b>	33,280	2,074	<b>6.2%</b>	8.8%	<b>Below</b>
<b>Newport News</b>	43,520	3,693	<b>8.5%</b>	8.8%	<b>Below</b>
<b>Norfolk</b>	34,560	590	<b>1.7%</b>	9.9%	<b>Below</b>
<b>Portsmouth</b>	21,120	388	<b>1.8%</b>	9.9%	<b>Below</b>
<b>Virginia Beach</b>	158,903	23,738	<b>14.9%</b>	8.8%	<b>Above</b>

\* based on a national study of 60 major cities by the Center for City Park Excellence

consideration and research, Major General Benjamin Butler, who was also a lawyer, announced his decision. Breaking new legal ground, he declared that any slave escaping to Fort Monroe would not be returned but would be kept as “contraband of war.” As word of the novel legal decision spread, thousands of slaves found their way to Fort Monroe, which soon became known as “Freedom’s Fortress.” By the end of the war, thousands of “contraband” were living around the fort and among the ashes of the city of Hampton. The spot of the first landing of slaves became, after more than 200 years, the spot of their first emancipation. (Later, thanks to the efforts of General Samuel Chapman Armstrong and the American Missionary Society, fledgling efforts to educate the freed slaves resulted in the creation of the Hampton Normal and Industrial Institute, today’s Hampton University.)

Fort Monroe continued as an active military base through World Wars I and II. In 1960, the entire post, both inside and outside the moat, was designated a national historic landmark because of its rich military and cultural significance. Under federal law, national historic landmarks are “nationally significant historic places designated by the Secretary of the Interior because they possess exceptional value or quality in illustrating or interpreting the heritage of the United States.” In 1973, the army’s Training and Doctrine Command was moved there. In 2005, under the Base Realignment and Closure Act, Fort Monroe was ruled surplus by the army and mandated for closure by 2011.

## Parkland in the Cities of Hampton Roads

The five main cities of the Hampton Roads area encompass 291,383 acres of land and water and are home to 1.1 million people.<sup>1</sup> Its Native American history goes back thousands of years, and it played a formative role in the establishment of the American colonies and the United States, as memorialized through the historic triangle of Jamestown, Williamsburg, and Yorktown, all of which have been preserved. But it is far from a relic. Today Hampton Roads is the nation’s 34th-largest metro area, a bustling metropolis with 12 major military bases, 13 colleges and universities, a 65-million-ton-per-year coal-shipping industry (the largest in the world) and the third-largest port in the United States when import and export tonnages are combined. Having grown at a 5.2 percent rate in the past 7 years, it is one of two economic engines of the state of Virginia (along with the Washington suburbs). However, because of growth, the region is not without its problems—water pollution into Chesapeake Bay and James River, traffic congestion, air pollution from cargo ships, loss of species, shortage of drinking water, pockets of poverty, an education gap, loss of historic architecture, and a shortage of usable parkland.

<sup>1</sup> The official Hampton Roads combined metropolitan statistical area, which includes numerous unincorporated communities in nine counties and two states, has an area of 2.5 million acres and a population of 1.6 million.

## *Hampton*

The most northeasterly of the five cities and the location of Fort Monroe, Hampton has a land area of 33,280 acres and a population of 145,017. Although founded in 1619, Hampton has been so swept by hurricanes and fires—purposefully set as well as accidental—that nothing remains from the early days. The two worst conflagrations were in 1861, at the start of the Civil War, when Confederate troops burned all but six buildings rather than allow Hampton to be used by Union forces. In 1884, a fire almost completely devastated the downtown business district.

Because of the presence and protection of Fort Monroe, Hampton received a large influx of African Americans during and after the Civil War. For many years the city's economy was based on the harvesting and packing of crabs and oysters from Chesapeake Bay. Following World War I there was a steady increase in the presence of both the military and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. Home not only to Fort Monroe but also to massive Langley Air Force Base and NASA Langley Research Center, Hampton is the second-wealthiest of the five cities with the second-lowest poverty rate (after Virginia Beach).

In 1952, Hampton reached its present geographical size through its consolidation with Elizabeth City County and the independent town of Phoebus. This is important today because the historic, charming, and redeveloping Phoebus neighborhood is the access and entranceway to Fort Monroe via Mellen Street Bridge.

The Hampton Parks and Recreation Department today has 2,074 acres of parkland in 39 park units, with most of the large parks, such as Grandview and Sandy Bottom, being relatively undeveloped natural preserves. A young department, it extends back only to 1964 (recreation) and 1966 (parks). Hampton's only parks and recreation

master plan was published in 1997; its most recent revision dates to 2001. Of its 39 parks, 14 are along the waterfront and compose a total of 1,111 acres.

In comparison to other similar cities, Hampton is below average in parkland as a percentage of city area—6.2 percent rather than an average of 8.8 percent. It is also below average in acres per 1,000 residents—14.3 as opposed to an average of 30.5.

In addition to its parks, the Hampton Parks and Recreation Department maintains 630 acres of public school grounds and athletic fields.

## *Newport News*

Directly west of Hampton is the long, narrow city of Newport News, a major railroad center and trading port. With a size of 43,520 acres and a 2006 population of 178,281, Newport News is the second least densely populated of the five cities. It also has the second-largest park system.

Originally founded as Warwick River Shire in 1634, Newport News is largely the creation of railroad tycoon Collis P. Huntington. Between 1865 and 1880, Huntington transformed the rural area of farms to make way for a railroad, coal piers, and a shipyard. In a burst of development between 1880 and 1886, he either chartered or took control of the Old Dominion Land Company, the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway (now CSX), and the Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company.

The Newport News Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism maintains 35 parks totaling 3,693 acres of parkland within the city limits of Newport News. Fifteen of them are located along water bodies, about half of them on the James River. By far the largest park in the system is Newport News Park with 2,713 acres in the city (and another 5,426 acres outside the city limits in York County). A combination recreation facility and drinking water conservation area, Newport News Park was



also the site of the Civil War Battle of Dam No. 1, where the Confederates temporarily thwarted a Union attempt to advance upon Richmond from Fort Monroe. The park was acquired largely in the 1960s to head off impending water shortages due to population growth. About 40 percent of the park is designated for recreational uses such as walking, hiking, jogging, bicycling, boating, fishing, archery, golf, disc golf, playing in playgrounds, and flying model airplanes.

By population, Newport News offers its residents 20.7 acres for every 1,000 persons, significantly below the rate for cities of comparable population density, which average 30.5 acres per 1,000. As a percent of the city’s size, parkland is almost exactly at the average of low-population-density cities—8.5 percent of the land area.

### *Norfolk*

Historically, Norfolk was the heart of the region. Today, the city, with a land area of 34,560 acres and a population of 238,832, is struggling to maintain its centrality among the spaghetti of regional roadways and the far-flung sprawl. Of the five cities, Norfolk in the 2000 census had the highest rates of poverty and unemployment, and the lowest median household income. It also has the least amount of parkland per capita.

Founded in 1682 on the Elizabeth River, near the mouth of Chesapeake Bay, Norfolk was

perfectly located to become a great eastern seaport and naval center. By the time of the Revolution it had become the most prosperous town in Virginia. But the city’s trajectory was difficult and uneven. Years of war and economic embargo hampered Norfolk until after the War of 1812. Yellow fever, imported on a vessel from the West Indies, ravaged the city in 1855, killing more than 2,000 people. Then came the Civil War, destructive through both direct fighting and a devastating blockade. After that things improved: the establishment of a street railway system, quickening suburban development, and revitalization of the city’s central business district aided Norfolk’s rehabilitation, leading to a pattern of urban expansion and annexation that was to continue for the next hundred years. In 1950, fueled by a booming post-World War II economy and a large contingent of returning veterans, Norfolk was one of the 10 fastest-growing cities in the United States. But sprawl and the formation of new cities abruptly curtailed Norfolk’s expansion. Neighboring Virginia Beach, with virtually no downtown, vastly surpassed Norfolk in population, and today Norfolk represents only 15 percent of the population of its metropolitan area. As a result Norfolk has experienced economic and social upheaval common to many of America’s port cities and eastern commercial-industrial hubs—cycles of decay and attempted urban renewal, gentrification of some neighborhoods, and near-abandonment of others. Fortunately, in the last 20

**Table 2: Parkland per 1,000 Residents, Hampton Roads Cities**

	Population	Acres of Parkland	Park Acres per 1,000 Residents	Average, Cities of Similar Population Density*	Above or Below Average?
Hampton	145,017	2,074	14.3	30.5	Below
Newport News	178,281	3,693	20.7	30.5	Below
Norfolk	238,832	590	2.5	17.4	Below
Portsmouth	101,377	388	3.8	17.4	Below
Virginia Beach	438,415	23,738	54.1	30.5	Above

\* based on a national study of 60 major cities by the Center for City Park Excellence

years Norfolk has been reborn as the cultural and economic hub of southeastern Virginia. The naval base and port facilities expanded, priming the city's economic engine. Norfolk seems to be discovering its potential to attract tourists and visitors with museums, convention facilities, and a minor league ballpark downtown.

Parks are a different matter. Norfolk's physical form and emotional resonance have been overwhelmingly influenced by water—the James, Elizabeth, and Lafayette Rivers and Willoughby and Chesapeake Bays. Unfortunately, the city's shape has been much less influenced from its landward side by its parks and preserves. Unlike other colonial-era towns, Norfolk was not designed around a central urban green space. There was an informal market square and parade ground, but Norfolk had nothing to rival the New Haven Green, the Boston Common, or the 22 centrally planned squares that give Savannah its distinction. It was not until 1892 that the city purchased 114 acres to construct City Park (later renamed Lafayette Park). By 1900 the

park was home to a small zoological collection that has been much expanded and remains to this day. As park uses evolved from passive to active recreation in the 1920s, Lafayette Park, along with others, was redeveloped to accommodate sports fields and recreation facilities.

In 1923, Norfolk annexed the Ocean View area along the shores of Chesapeake Bay. Ocean View's pristine beaches greatly expanded the open space and recreation opportunities available to Norfolk's residents and tourists alike, and proved to be a boon to the local economy. But the onset of World War II required yet more development of semirural areas within and around the city; open space was rapidly consumed by hastily assembled housing for service families—the lack of planning meant parks were largely left out. Town Point Park, a seven-acre gathering place along the banks of the Elizabeth River in downtown Norfolk, was created out of old parking lots and wharves in 1983 and has become one of Hampton Roads' premier sites for concerts and festivals (complete with fireworks),

simultaneously showcasing the city's natural beauty and urban sophistication.

Today Norfolk has only 590 acres of parkland spread across 95 park units. (There are also 868 acres of schoolyards and school fields.) Despite the city's extensive waterfront periphery, only five parks, totaling 32.5 acres, have beachfront access. Expressed as a percentage of the full city acreage, Norfolk devotes only 1.7 percent of its land area to parks—far lower than the average of 9.9 percent for



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The largest park within Newport News is a combination recreation facility and drinking water conservation area and was also the site of a Civil War battle.

comparable U.S. cities. (See Table 1.) On a population basis, the numbers are also extremely low—2.5 acres per 1,000 persons as opposed to an average of 17.4 acres per 1,000 among cities of comparable population density. (See Table 2.)

Norfolk is experiencing a renaissance, but its park system has not always benefited from it. Rather than seeing parks as nodes around which redevelopment could occur, public green spaces in Norfolk have sometimes been seen as impediments to economic activity. In some cases parks have even been seen as utilitarian patches of land waiting to be paved for parking lots, houses, roads, or commercial development. New parks, when created, have often been cobbled together from otherwise unusable land, rather than being designed and acquired as part of a comprehensive citywide network of parks, boulevards, and trails.

### Portsmouth

The smallest of the five cities, Portsmouth has a land area of 21,120 acres and in 2006 had a population of 101,377. It also has the least parkland of the group.

Located directly across the Elizabeth River from the city of Norfolk, the area was documented as far back as 1620 as an appropriate marine construction area by shipbuilder John Wood. The town was actually founded by Colonel William Crawford, a wealthy merchant and ship owner, in

1752. Soon thereafter Andrew Sprowle founded the Gosport Shipyard, which thenceforth set the course of the city. After Sprowle’s death, it was purchased by the Commonwealth of Virginia and then transferred to the U.S. government. During the Civil War it was defensively burned twice, first by retreating Union soldiers, then by retreating southerners. After the war it was renamed the Norfolk Naval Shipyard and today is the U.S. Navy’s largest industrial facility and one of the largest shipyards in the world.

The city of Portsmouth began its parkland acquisition in 1913 with the creation of its first playground. Today’s Parks and Recreation Department stems from a 1980 consolidation of earlier agencies. The city has never produced a park and recreation master plan.

Portsmouth maintains 388 acres of parkland in 52 park units. With only 1.8 percent of its city area devoted to parkland, Portsmouth is only slightly “greener” than Norfolk and still far below the 9.9 percent average of comparable U.S. cities. By population, Portsmouth offers only 3.8 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents, less even than such crowded cities as New York and Chicago.

Of its parks, only two—City Park and Reflection Walk Park—have waterfront access. Portsmouth City Park, developed on land purchased by the city for a new cemetery in 1918, is located in Simonsdale along the western branch of the Elizabeth River outside the original city limits. Today,

**Table 3: Parkland by Level of Development, Hampton Roads Cities**

	Total Acres	Developed Acres	Undeveloped Acres (natural)	Undeveloped Acres (closed to public)	Percentage of System Undeveloped
Hampton	2,074	856	1,124	94	59%
Newport News	3,693	3,293	400	0	11%
Norfolk	590	502	88	0	15%
Portsmouth	388	388	0	0	0%
Virginia Beach (total)	23,738	3,041	19,361	1,336	87%
(Virginia Beach municipal parkland)	4,661	2,627	1,298	736	44%
(Virginia Beach federal and state parkland)	19,077	414	18,063	600	98%

the 55-acre park offers a nine-hole golf learning center with lighted driving range and natural putting course, impressive playgrounds, lighted tennis courts, the Friendship Gardens, picnic shelters with grills, a three-pier boat ramp, sailboat launch area, and small watercraft beach. The Pokey Smokey miniature train traveled around the park for many years until age made further use uneconomical. The Portsmouth Community Foundation created the Pokey Smokey Fund to raise money to restore a similar train to the park.

Reflection Walk, a six-acre cancer awareness park in Port Norfolk, was dedicated on June 6, 2006. The park consists of benches in a circular sitting area with inscribed bricks underneath a gazebo, a landscaped walkway, and a bell that can be tolled by cancer victims.

Portsmouth does have one large piece of green open space—Hoffler Creek Wildlife Preserve—but it is privately maintained by the Hoffler Creek Wildlife Foundation and the 142-acre preserve is open to the general public only on Saturdays.



Virginia Beach Department of Parks and Recreation

Virginia Beach's signature park is 165-acre Mount Trashmore, converted from a landfill in 1973. The park is known for its skate park, hosts numerous festivals and events, and features two fishing lakes, a Kids Cove, and four volleyball areas.

## Virginia Beach

Of the five cities, Virginia Beach is by far the largest in size and population. It is also the most different—wealthier, less densely populated, and younger, with lower unemployment and a much higher percentage of Caucasian residents. With a 2006 population of 438,415, Virginia Beach is the largest city in Virginia (and the 41st largest in the United States); its residents are spread out across a vast and marshy land area of 158,903 acres, much of which is protected for wildlife conservation.

Virginia Beach, which began as a railroad resort, was not incorporated into a town until 1906 and didn't become an independent city until 1952 at the beginning of its phenomenal growth spurt. In 1963, the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Physical Education was created, an early response to the public's call to protect public land.

Virginia Beach has much more parkland—23,738 acres—than any of the other cities. However, consisting of landholdings by several different government agencies, that number implies

more usable parkland than is actually available. The city itself owns 4,661 acres of which a bit more than one-half is developed. (Of the rest, about two-thirds compose natural areas and one-third is not yet open to the public.) There are 230 park units, of which 23 are along the waterfront for a total of 557 acres. The most famous Virginia Beach park is 165-acre Mount Trashmore, converted from a landfill in 1973. At 60 feet high and over 800 feet long, Mount Trashmore is nationally known as a feat of environmental engineering; locally it's best known as *the* place for skateboarders, in-line skaters, and BMX riders. It also hosts



numerous festivals and events, and features two fishing lakes, a Kids Cove, and four volleyball areas. Red Wing Park, initially a “poor farm” that was acquired in 1879, became an official park in 1966; it contains athletic fields, sports courts, playgrounds, four gardens, the city’s first golf course, and its first off-leash dog park.

In addition, Virginia Beach is home to three state parks, one state wildlife management area, and two national wildlife refuges totaling more than 19,000 acres. First Landing State Park, bought in 1933, commemorates the initial landing of English explorer Christopher Newport and his crew in 1607. Largely built by African-American Civilian Conservation Corps workers in the early 1930s, today the 3,410-acre park offers boating, swimming, nature and history programs, hiking, biking, picnicking, a boat launch, cabins, and 19 miles of trails. It ranks as Virginia’s most visited state park.

South of First Landing is 4,321-acre False Cape State Park, a lovely but largely inaccessible preserve. Because the park is blocked by Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), autos are prohibited, and the only access is via hiking or bicycling, boating, or canoeing. Princess Anne Wildlife Management Area (WMA), established in 1963 and managed by the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, comprises four tracts totaling 1,546 acres, although 500–600 of these acres are nesting habitat for migrating waterfowl. Princess Anne WMA offers visitors nothing but public waterfowl hunting and fishing opportunities. Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) is a 9,000-acre refuge located just north of False Cape State Park along the same thin strip of coastline between Back Bay and the Atlantic Ocean. Established in 1938, Back Bay NWR was created to provide nesting habitat for migrating and wintering waterfowl; it also offers fishing, boating, hunting, trapping, educational programs, a visitor contact station, and a tram tour,

plus hiking and bicycling trails (although bicycling along the dikes is prohibited November through March to protect wildlife). Mackay Island National Wildlife Refuge, located mostly in North Carolina, has approximately 800 acres within the city limits of Virginia Beach. Only available for public use for about half the year, it offers nature activities such as hiking, fishing, and kayaking. One additional park, the 3,441-acre North Landing River State Natural Area Preserve, is currently closed due to illegal activity and the state’s lack of funding to support an operations steward to oversee the area.

On paper, Virginia Beach is among the nation’s leading park-rich cities, devoting 14.9 percent of its land area to parks and offering its residents 54.1 acres of parkland for every 1,000 persons. The city, state, and federal governments are to be commended for the very large areas that have been preserved for wildlife conservation and the protection of marshland and natural ecosystems. However, as far as human use goes, the numbers are deceptive. With fully 87 percent of its preserved land set aside primarily for birds and habitat, and so much of it essentially inaccessible (or even closed to the public), Virginia Beach only has a bit over 3,000 acres of traditional, usable parkland. (Even not counting all the federal and state parkland within the city limits, the Virginia Beach Department of Parks and Recreation itself has more than 2,000 acres—44 percent of its system—that is either undeveloped or not open to the public.) (See *Table 3*.) And essentially none of the parkland in the city has a link with the kinds of cultural, historical, or architectural elements that would be provided by a Fort Monroe Park.

## Comparison with Other Port Cities with Former Military Bases

Hampton Roads is not the first metropolitan area to confront the issue of a military base closing and what to do with the land. Other major port cities, including New York, San Francisco, and Boston, have been faced with this situation. It is instructive to learn what they have done. It is also instructive to compare the amount of parkland available and usable to the citizenry of these other cities and those of Hampton Roads.

### *New York*

Even though New York is by far the most crowded city in the United States, it actually has a great deal of parkland. In fact, New York has more parkland than all five of the Hampton Roads cities combined, even though the Hampton cities cover a

much larger area than New York. (Interestingly, the largest park in New York is not Central Park; despite this common misconception, there are six other parks that are even larger.) There are many reasons for the large amount of parkland in the city—agitation for green space by newspapers and citizens, the conversion of old landfills, property donations, the decking over of railroad tracks and highways, purchases of properties before they were developed—but a significant factor involves the conversion of abandoned military facilities to parkland. Over the years New York City has dealt with the shuttering of forts and military bases that include Fort Wadsworth, Miller Field, Rockaway Naval Air Station, Naval Air Station New York, Castle Clinton, and The Battery. (An exception to the trend, the Brooklyn Navy Yard will probably be retained as an industrial facility.) At present there is an intense conversation about turning Governors Island, a former Coast Guard facility, into parkland. (See Table 4.)

From the tip of Manhattan to Brooklyn’s East River waterfront to remote areas of Queens, military properties have served as the backbone of such parks as The Battery, Fort Greene Park, Jacob Riis Park, and the mammoth Gateway National Recreation Area.

The newest parkland conversion involves Fort Totten, an artillery emplacement in Northeastern Queens overlooking the Long Island Sound. The 100-acre base was closed in 2002 and, while final decisions have not been made, it appears that the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation will get about 40 acres consisting of the historic fortifications and the playing fields. There are also ten historic buildings that house nonprofit organizations.

While New York of course has thousands of other attractions, parkland and open green space are very significant to both the city’s livability

**Table 4: Parks Created from Military Bases**  
(Selected cities, in acres)

New York City	
Castle Clinton	1
Fort Greene Park	30
Gateway National Recreation Area	7,138
Jacob Riis Park	265
The Battery	25
Boston	
Fort Andrews/Pedocks Island	188
Fort Independence/Castle Island	22
Fort Standish/Lovells Island	60
Fort Warren/Georges Island	28
San Francisco Bay (S.F., Oakland, San Jose)	
Fort Funston	230
Fort Mason	13
Fort Point (within Presidio)	29
Fort Winfield Scott (within Presidio)	7
Presidio	1,480

quotient and its tourist economy. Each year Central Park alone logs an estimated 30 million visitor-days; Coney Island Beach, Prospect Park, and Gateway National Recreation Area record more than 8 million visitor-days each. Even six-acre Bryant Park gets 3.5 million user-days a year and is credited with raising rents and retail sales in the Times Square/42nd Street area.

Gateway National Recreation Area is a unique place with remnants of forts and military installations from the Revolutionary War as well as wildlife refuges and pristine beaches. A perfect balance between the historical and the natural, Gateway provides 7,138 acres of recreation, conservation, and learning opportunities to residents and visitors alike along Jamaica Bay and Lower New York Bay (plus almost 20,000 more acres in New Jersey).

Among Gateway's recreational offerings are swimming and beach access at Jacob Riis Park; permit fishing at Floyd Bennett Field, Fort Tilden, and Canarsie Pier; hiking at Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge; bicycling along the old runways of Floyd Bennett Field and Fort Tilden; boating at the

Gateway Marina; plus camping, golfing, horseback riding, picnicking, model airplane flying, gardening, and archery. In the Staten Island unit, there is swimming and beach access (with lifeguards) at Great Kills Park; surf and shore fishing by permit at Great Kills Park, Miller Field, and Fort Wadsworth; plus bike trails, numerous sports fields, a 1.5-mile walking trail from Great Kills Park to the Beach Center, boating at Nichols Marina, bird-watching, picnicking, gardening, model airplane flying, and a visitor center.

Governors Island, located just off the southern tip of Manhattan at the confluence of the Hudson and East Rivers in New York Harbor, is home to two of New York's major fortifications, Fort Jay and Castle Williams. Erected between 1796 and 1811, these two historic structures were actively used until the Civil War. (Originally 70 acres, the island was more than doubled in size in the early 1900s when fill excavated from the construction of the Lexington Avenue Subway was dumped on it.) From 1794 to 1966, Governors Island held the command headquarters and military post for the

U.S. Army. When the army left, the U.S. Coast Guard took up residency for the next 30 years. In 2003, ownership of the island was transferred—22 acres to the National Park Service as the Governors Island National Monument, and 150 acres to the Governors Island Preservation and Education Corporation, a New York State agency charged with preserving, maintaining, operating, and redeveloping the island. Funding for the corporation is provided equally by New York City and New York State.

At present only about half the island—the historic district—is open to the public seasonally for



Wikipedia

Governors Island, located at the confluence of the Hudson and East Rivers in New York Harbor, houses two forts, 52 landmarked historic buildings, and 16 acres of recreational facilities, including a one-mile esplanade.

picnics, tours, concerts, and car-free biking and walking. (The remaining 80 acres, crammed with nonhistoric, decrepit barracks and warehouses, remains closed until major demolition work is complete.) The historic district has 52 landmarked buildings totaling 1.4 million square feet. A free ferry provides access to the island. There are 16 acres of recreational facilities, including a one-mile esplanade for jogging and walking. In addition to unparalleled views of the harbor and the skyline, Governors Island is the closest point of land with a view of the face of the Statue of Liberty.

The future Brooklyn Bridge Park is another example of a vacant industrial site transformed into a public riverfront park. Located along the East River from the Manhattan Bridge to Atlantic Avenue, Brooklyn Bridge Park will provide 85 acres of recreational opportunities, including three multipurpose fields, three playgrounds, six basketball courts, ten handball courts, three sand volleyball courts, two tennis courts, an in-line skating rink, and a seasonal ice-skating rink. The park includes six piers that provide direct access to the East River by means of a beach, spiral pool, water access ramps, and a 12-acre safe paddling zone for kayaks and canoes. In addition, the 3.5 miles of promenades and walkways in the park provide sweeping views of the Brooklyn waterfront and New York Harbor. The park will also contain many different natural plantings, including coastal shrublands, a rain garden wetland, coastal forest, wildflower meadow, marsh and

shallow water habitats, and freshwater swale and wetlands. Brooklyn Bridge Park will be the most significant park development in downtown Brooklyn since Prospect Park was built 135 years ago. It is owned by New York City Parks and Recreation Department and managed by the Brooklyn Bridge Park Conservancy.

## *Boston*

Although many of Boston's most famous parks were created by the end of the 19th century, the city—like New York—is remarkable for regularly adding to its parkland supply year in and year out. (Even today, hundreds of acres are added each decade, including everything from converted landfills to demolished house parcels to decks over highways and subsurface parking garages.) Among the most interesting efforts is the creation of the Boston Harbor Islands National Park Area, a collaboration between federal, state, city, and non-profit partners to manage more than 250 acres of parkland, including several old forts.

Fort Warren, located on Georges Island, defended the harbor from 1861 through the end of World War II and during the Civil War served as a prisoner-of-war camp and a jail for political prisoners. It was closed in 1947 and is now a national historic landmark and a tourism site operated as a state park by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation. Although the fort

**Table 5: Parkland as Percent of City Land, Selected Places**

	City Size (acres)	Acres of Parkland	Park Acres as Percent of City Size
New York City	194,115	38,169	19.7%
Boston	30,992	5,496	17.7%
Three-City San Francisco Bay Total	177,669	24,863	14.0%
<i>Five-City Hampton Roads Total</i>	<i>291,383</i>	<i>30,483</i>	<i>10.5%</i>



is accessible only by ferry, an estimated 100,000 tourists visit each year. Fort Independence and Castle Island are on the state and national registers of historic places, and the fort is a national historic landmark. Fort tours are conducted by the Castle Island Association, and there is interpretive signage for self-guided tours. The principal program theme, the History of Castle Island, stresses the role of the fort in harbor defense.

When the Charlestown Navy Yard closed in 1974 after nearly 175 years of service to the fleet, 30 acres of the facility were transferred to Boston National Historical Park. Today, the park is home to the USS *Constitution*, the world's oldest commissioned warship still afloat, and the USS *Constitution* Museum. As part of the Park Service's interpretive program, tours are given of the vessel as well as another one, the USS *Cassin Young*.

The Charles River Basin defines the center of Boston's metropolitan area and provides access to outstanding river scenery in addition to recreation opportunities. It was artificially dredged and shaped almost 100 years ago from tidal marshes and mud flats. Although not natural, it nevertheless provides outstanding wildlife habitat for hundreds of animal and plant species and plays a critical role in the ecology of the region.

Surrounding the river basin on both the north and south sides is a 19-mile loop of linear trails. Most famous is the Esplanade which connects more than 20 parks and natural areas and is suitable for road races, walkathons, biking, inline skating, running, dog walking, birdwatching, and sunbathing. The parks along the river provide city dwellers with concerts and performances, playgrounds, par courses for exercise, athletic fields for baseball, softball, football and soccer, tennis courts, swimming pools, seasonal ice-skating rinks, picnic areas, and community gardens. The river itself offers rowing, canoeing, kayaking, and sailing, with public boat ramps as well as private boat tours.

The basin parklands are owned and managed by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) with help from the Charles River Conservancy. Founded as an advocacy group, the conservancy's mission is to restore, enhance, and maintain the Charles River Basin and its surroundings, particularly its parks, parkways, and bridges.

On the city's south side, the Neponset River Greenway connects existing and proposed parkland in the neighborhoods of Hyde Park, Mattapan, and Dorchester as well as the town of Milton. When complete, the greenway will include 11 "urban wilds" and a ten-mile bike trail. There will also be a direct connection to the Dorchester Shores Reservation and to Castle Island. In the other direction, the greenway will connect to the 5,800-acre Blue Hills Reservation, one of the largest urban wilds within 35 miles of Boston. The greenway is also the site of an annual festival with canoeing, movies, dancing, and music.

Boston is one of the most densely populated cities in the United States, but its generous supply of parkland—17.7 percent of the city's area, more than twice the percentage of Hampton Roads' five cities—helps keep it a desirable place to live and work. Moreover, the city's skillful development and marketing of its parks, historical sites, and cultural landmarks continues to keep it at the forefront of the nation's tourism industry. (In 2006, the city of Boston received 18.8 million visitor-days.) Finally, Boston has been exceptionally successful—more than twice as successful as the Hampton Roads area—in preserving and providing parkland along its water shoreline, making available the great views, breezes, fishing, boating, and swimming opportunities that waterfronts provide the citizenry of great urban areas.

## *San Francisco Bay Area*

There are a number of similarities between the San Francisco Bay region and the Chesapeake Bay region at Hampton Roads. Both bodies of water are huge, both combine the attributes of natural resource wealth with heavy amounts of commerce and shipping, both contain giant naval bases and shipyards, both are surrounded by large cities, and both have been protected historically by forts at their mouths. However, there are at least two major differences: the number of people living around San Francisco Bay is much higher (about 6 million vs. about 1.6 million), and the amount of urban parkland in San Francisco/San Jose/Oakland is also much higher (an average of 14.1 percent of the cities' land area vs. an average of 6.6 percent for the five main cities of Hampton Roads). Just to give two examples: Oakland, California is almost the same geographical size as Hampton, Virginia, but it has 50 percent more parkland; and while the city of San Francisco is quite a bit smaller in geographical

extent than the city of Norfolk, San Francisco has nearly ten times the acreage of parkland.

Like Hampton Roads, the San Francisco Bay area brings together outstanding wetlands and riparian habitat, a huge expanse of sheltered water, and a long history of military fortification and bases. In the case of the third-largest city on the Bay—Oakland—much of the vast military infrastructure is still in place. In the case of San Francisco itself, almost all the defenses have been decommissioned and converted into the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA). The largest city on San Francisco Bay, San Jose, has little military presence but has vast acreages of marshland and natural parkland in and alongside the bay.

GGNRA, created in 1972, spans three counties and comprises more than 75,500 acres. (Since this study tabulates only parkland within major cities, much of this vast acreage, which is outside municipal boundaries, is not counted.) The park is home to many distinct historic and cultural resources and ecological zones, and many San Fran-

cisco Bay area residents rate GGNRA as one of the primary benefits of living in the region.

Among GGNRA's highlights are Alcatraz Island, numerous beaches, Crissy Field, Land's End, Cliff House, Sutro Baths, Forts Mason and Funston, and the Presidio. Alcatraz was the site of the first fortress and military prison on the West Coast.

U.S. Army troops were permanently stationed



Presidio Trust

A unique public-private partnership, the Presidio became part of Golden Gate National Recreation Area in 1994 and added 1,480 acres of public parkland to the San Francisco area.

on Alcatraz by 1859 and remained there until 1934. From 1934 to 1963, Alcatraz was known for its federal penitentiary, but the most influential event in the island's history was actually the American Indian occupation in 1964 and again from 1969 to 1971. Today, the island is accessible via ferry; upon arrival, the public can take a day or evening tour of the island or picnic near the dock.

Two popular beaches within GGNRA are China Beach and Ocean Beach, with dunes, grills, picnic areas, sunbathing, kite flying, fishing, play spots for children, and spectacular views of the Marin Headlands and Golden Gate Bridge. Land's End, a wild and rocky coast, is strewn with the remains of three shipwrecks and has a memorial to the USS *San Francisco*. Trails offer a cliff-top walk with scenic overlooks, 30-mile views of the coast and foot access to several shoreline pocket beaches. There is also a grassy picnic area. The Cliff House, dating to 1863 although twice destroyed by fires, provides a beautiful overlook to the ruins of Sutro Baths, a massive three-acre, 25,000-person swimming facility and museum built in the 19th century. At one time the baths attracted thousands of patrons with dining, stage shows, rare tropical plants, and foreign antiquities. Its seven swimming pools (ingeniously filled by high tides at varying temperatures) had slides, trapezes, springboards, and a high dive. The baths were destroyed by fire in 1966 and added to the recreation area in 1973. Today visitors can wander freely through the ruins and gardens.

The three most famous abandoned military facilities within GGNRA are Fort Mason, Fort Funston, and the Presidio. Fort Mason's Great Meadow, perfect today for picnicking, sunbathing, walking, or sports activities, has the distinction of serving as headquarters for army field operations at the time of the 1906 earthquake. The fort provided care to thousands of hungry and homeless refugees after the calamity. After closing in 1965, Fort Mason became a

unit of GGNRA. The fort is also home to National Park Service headquarters, Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy, an international hostel, and the Fort Mason Center, a compound of more than 50 different environmental, cultural, and arts organizations. Located on the waterfront and run by the nonprofit Fort Mason Foundation, Fort Mason Center consists of old piers and warehouses that have been renovated into workspaces, theaters, galleries, museums, and event pavilions. Fort Funston, located on the southwest corner of San Francisco, is used for hang-gliding, an off-leash dog park, and a native plant nursery. This fort is also home to an impressive 146-ton gun at Battery Davis.

Most significant is the Presidio, which overlooks San Francisco Bay and has a rich and varied military history. Before the Spanish established the fort in 1776, Native Americans of the Ohlone tribe lived there. For the next 218 years, the Presidio was used as a military garrison first by Spain (1776–1822), then Mexico (1822–1846), and finally the United States (1846–1994). During the nearly 150 years the U.S. Army held post at the Presidio, the garrison included troops from all major combat arms: infantry, cavalry (including the four African-American regiments nicknamed “Buffalo Soldiers”), and artillery. Beginning in the 1890s, cavalry troops served as pseudo “park rangers” for Yosemite, Sequoia, and Kings Canyon (General Grant) National Parks before the establishment of the National Park Service. During the Spanish-American War nearly 80,000 men passed through the post to and from the Philippines. The sick and wounded were treated there at the army's first permanent general hospital. During World War II the Presidio was used to train Nisei (Japanese American) soldiers at the Military Intelligence Service Language School at Crissy Field, a precursor to the current Defense Language School in Monterey, California.

In 1962, the Presidio, with 470 historically significant buildings, was designated a National Historic Landmark District. Among militarily significant sites are Battery East, Cavalry Stables and Pet Cemetery, Crissy Airfield, Fort Winfield Scott, Infantry Row, Letterman Complex, the Main Post, Pershing Square, Public Health Service Hospital, San Francisco National Cemetery, and the World War II Memorial. Among the many recreational opportunities at the Presidio are 11 miles of hiking trails; 14 miles of paved roads for cyclists; Lovers' Lane, a one-mile foot trail; a world-class board-sailing area bordering Crissy Field; fishing and crabbing from rocks and a pier; camping; golf; bowling; tennis; and more.

Other unique facilities include the Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary Visitor Center (featuring hands-on educational exhibits about local marine life), the Crissy Field Center (including an activity area, computer labs, teaching kitchen, library, information center, and bookstore), the Exploratorium (a world-renowned museum and educational center with hundreds of exhibits on science, art, and human perception), the Golden Gate Club (a full-service conference and events center), Fort Point, and Battery Chamberlin at Fort Scott. Natural sites include the mile-long Baker Beach, coastal bluffs, Crissy Field Marsh and Beach, El Polin Spring, Lobos Creek Valley, Mountain Lake, and the Presidio Forest.

The Presidio became part of GGNRA on October 1, 1994, when the 6th Army was moved out. But with city-like infrastructure (including police, fire, an emergency medical response team staffed by paramedics, and an emergency dispatch and communications center), the nearly 800 buildings and extensive 300-acre cultivated forest and natural areas are more costly to manage than other national parks. In 1996, Congress, recognizing that the Presidio could not be run as a traditional national

park but needed a permanent source of funding for operations and long-term care, established the Presidio Trust, a novel entity created to guide the park into financial self-sufficiency by 2013. (Although the trust continues to receive federal appropriations until the end of fiscal year 2012, the appropriations decrease each year.) On July 1, 1998, management of the noncoastal areas of the Presidio was transferred to the Presidio Trust, and today the trust manages 80 percent of the Presidio—the interior lands including most of the buildings and infrastructure—while the National Park Service manages the remaining 20 percent, along the coast.

The unique partnership between the National Park Service and the Presidio Trust is a critical part of the Presidio's continued survival as a National Park. Funds from the federal government and lease revenues are used to rehabilitate and maintain the park's buildings, restore the forest and native habitats, and provide programs for visitors. Over time, lease revenues have grown while federal support has shrunk. In 2002, after a two-year public process with widespread community input, the trust approved a management plan for the preservation and protection of the park's cultural, natural, and recreational resources as well as a vision for financial sustainability. The Trust also completed a five-year Strategic Plan. The Presidio Trust is governed by a seven-member board of directors consisting of the secretary of the interior plus six other persons appointed by the president. The board appoints an executive director to oversee staff and report back to it.

Comparing the Presidio and Fort Monroe is instructive. The Presidio, with 1,480 acres, is about two-and-a-half times the size of Fort Monroe. It also had, at the time of closure, about 800 structures (more than twice as many as Fort Monroe has). It had 300 acres of relatively undisturbed forestland (comparable to the 53 acres of relatively



pristine beach and marshland at Fort Monroe), and a commitment was made to retain about 1,000 acres (about 70 percent of the base) as permanent open space. The remainder is being leased for both office and residential use under a precedent-setting agreement whereby the Presidio is a national park unit that will become self-funded in the near future.

Outside San Francisco itself, there is also a great deal of parkland in the other two major Bay Area cities—Oakland and San Jose. In Oakland, the East Bay Regional Park District has more than 1,000 acres in four parks, two of which have direct waterfront access: Martin Luther King, Jr. Regional Shoreline, located along San Leandro Bay, offers picnicking; birdwatching; fishing; sunbathing; boat launching; paved trails for hiking, bicycling, running, and jogging; and an exercise course. Also, the Port of Oakland built Middle Harbor Shoreline, a 38-acre park, on the site of the former Oakland Naval Supply Depot. The park has almost three miles of pathways (extensions of the San Francisco Bay Trail) and views of the bay, natural habitats, and maritime activity. It also has areas for picnicking and fishing, an amphitheater for live entertainment, sunbathing on Oakland's first and only beach, and two viewing towers. (In addition, the Port of Oakland and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers are currently working on a 180-acre environmental restoration project to return shallow wildlife habitats to the harbor.)

San Jose, on the southern tip of San Francisco Bay, also has a great deal of parkland—16,008 acres, to be precise. The largest chunk of that comprises the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge—30,000 acres total, of which 6,800 acres fall within San Jose city limits. Officially established in 1974 as the nation's first urban National Wildlife Refuge, the refuge is located along the Pacific Flyway. With a mission to preserve and enhance wildlife habitat and protect migratory

birds and threatened and endangered species, the refuge offers wildlife-oriented recreational opportunities and nature studies to the public, including more than 30 miles of hiking trails, some of which accommodate bicycles; interpretative programs at the Visitor Center and Environmental Education Center (which also lends binoculars); fishing; hunting; and boating on the bay and its tributaries.

In addition, Santa Clara County Department of Parks and Recreation maintains eight county parks within the city limits of San Jose, one of which lies directly along San Francisco Bay. Alviso Marina County Park is a 17-acre bayside facility that provides opportunities for picnicking and birdwatching, hiking and, mountain bicycling. Finally, the city itself has more than 3,600 acres of municipally owned and operated parkland.

## Conclusion

That Fort Monroe is a national treasure is indisputable and undisputed. What should happen to the fort after its decommissioning, however, is the subject of lively debate.

Based on the findings of this study, we believe that the urban portion of the Hampton Roads area is short of parkland overall, particularly in certain strategic locations such as its urban core and its waterfront. The five major cities of the Hampton Roads area have a combined total of 30,483 acres of public parkland, just over 10 percent of the five cities' combined land area. (See Table 5.) By comparison, much more crowded New York City actually has more parkland than all five of the Hampton Roads cities combined. And even though the five Hampton cities cover a much larger area than New York, Boston, or the main cities of San Francisco Bay, the other three regions all have more parkland as a percentage of their cities' land area than Hampton Roads.

Even more striking is the deficit of public parkland along the shoreline in the Hampton Roads region compared to the three other port cities. Hampton Roads has almost twice as much city shoreline as New York City and more than nine times as much city shoreline as either Boston or the three San Francisco Bay cities. (Shoreline parks include all public parks along a body of water that is either along or a tributary of the Elizabeth River, James River, Chesapeake Bay, or Atlantic Ocean with waterfront access. Parks along inland bodies of water are not included.) Yet only 19.3 percent of Hampton Roads shoreline has parkland. (See Table 6.) Both New York City and the San Francisco Bay area have double the percentage of parkland along the shore, while Boston has almost three and a half times as much waterfront parkland.

This shortage deprives the region of many benefits that parks bring. These benefits include: recreational opportunities; natural preservation; enhanced property value; greater tourism revenue; improved human health outcomes; increased community cohesion thanks to volunteerism in parks and the increased competitiveness of the region; businesses considering relocating to the area, especially those with a significant number of white-collar workers; and more.

It is important to recognize that some of Hampton Roads' park shortage is due to the area's heavy military presence. Of the region's 12 major bases, nine are in the main cities. And because the shoreline along these bases is not publicly accessible, it is critical that Fort Monroe's shoreline be conserved as open, public parkland in the future. Last, it is indisputable that parks created from old military installations prove themselves as significant tourism draws. Two nearby cases in point—Fort Pulaski in Savannah, Georgia and Fort Sumter near Charleston, South Carolina—attract hundreds of thousands of visitors every year as national parks. As a more impressive fort in a larger metropolitan area, Fort Monroe could be expected to have an even greater tourism impact.

Because of Fort Monroe's bull's-eye central location within Hampton Roads, combined with its extraordinary collection of architectural, historical, recreational, and conservation resources, we believe that its conversion to parkland would help reduce the parkland deficit of the entire Hampton Roads area and would also have significant positive spin-offs—economic and otherwise—for the entire region.

**Table 6: Comparison of Shoreline that is Parkland**

	Total City Shoreline (linear miles)	Shoreline that is Parkland (linear miles)	Percent of Shoreline that is Parkland
Boston	90.5	58.5	64.6%
San Francisco Bay Area*	90.8	36.2	39.9%
New York City	430.5	160.5	37.3%
<b>Hampton Roads Area**</b>	<b>846.2</b>	<b>163.3</b>	<b>19.3%</b>

\* only the cities of Oakland, San Francisco, and San Jose  
 \*\* only the cities of Hampton, Newport News, Norfolk, Portsmouth and Virginia Beach

The Trust for Public Land conserves land for people to enjoy as parks, gardens, and other natural places, ensuring livable communities for generations to come. The mission of the Center for City Park Excellence is to make cities more successful through the innovative renewal and creation of parks for their social, ecological, and economic benefits to residents and visitors alike.

The Fort Monroe National Park Foundation, Inc., is a nonprofit educational foundation dedicated to educating the public and promoting better understanding nationally, regionally, and locally of the importance and potential of the 570 acres constituting Fort Monroe.

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