



PHOEBUS WATERFRONT PARK **VISION BOOKLET**



PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Phoebus Waterfront Park Vision Plan offers a **long-term vision to enhance the Phoebus neighborhood's only waterfront public park** as a community destination and a model for environmental restoration and education. The plan is the result of a public engagement process and a partnership between the American Flood Coalition (AFC) and the Phoebus Partnership. The City of Hampton also provided key information and support, and local consultants provided additional technical expertise.

With funding from the Kresge Foundation, AFC and the Phoebus Partnership began working together in February of 2021 with the goal of **advancing a community-driven vision for the Phoebus Waterfront Park, with special attention to reducing the effects of flooding** in and around the park. Throughout the course of the partnership, the Phoebus Partnership hosted two workshops and conducted surveys to gather community input. One of these workshops included a volunteer planting event to make improvements to the park's living shoreline - a system of rocks and plants designed to reduce flooding. Overall, this work culminated in the creation of a vision plan for the future use of the park, including its living shoreline and other elements.

Project timeline

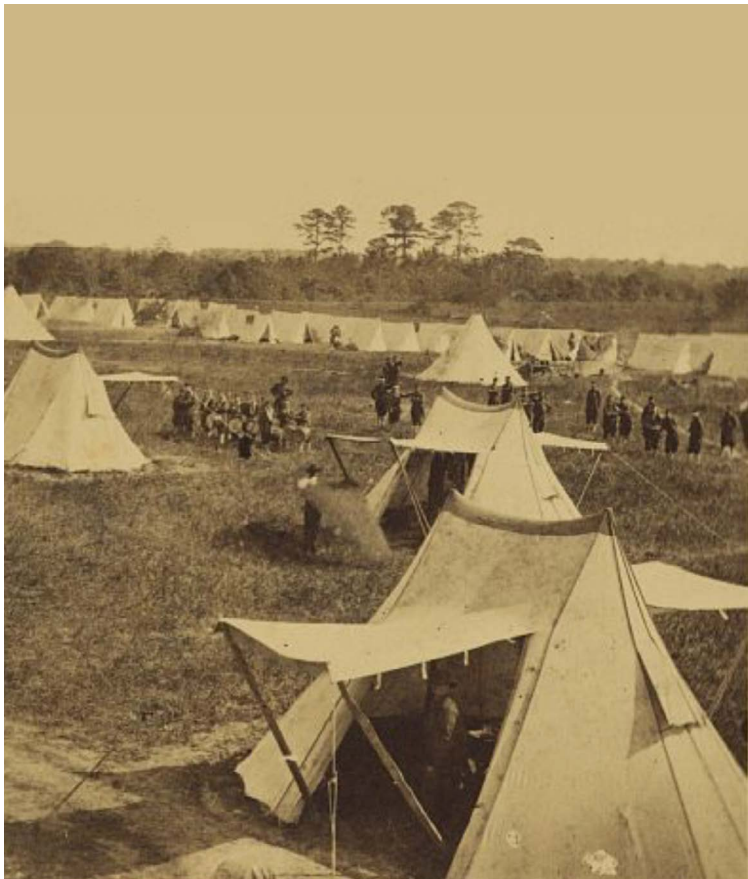


PHOEBUS HISTORY

Phoebus is a neighborhood in the City of Hampton, located in the Hampton Roads region of Virginia. Both Phoebus and Hampton sit today on land that was seized in 1610 from the Native American village of Kecoughtan. Present-day Phoebus was incorporated as a town in 1900 in honor of its leading citizen, Harrison Phoebus. Hampton was incorporated as a city in 1908. In 1952, Elizabeth City County, including the town of Phoebus, was consolidated into the City of Hampton.

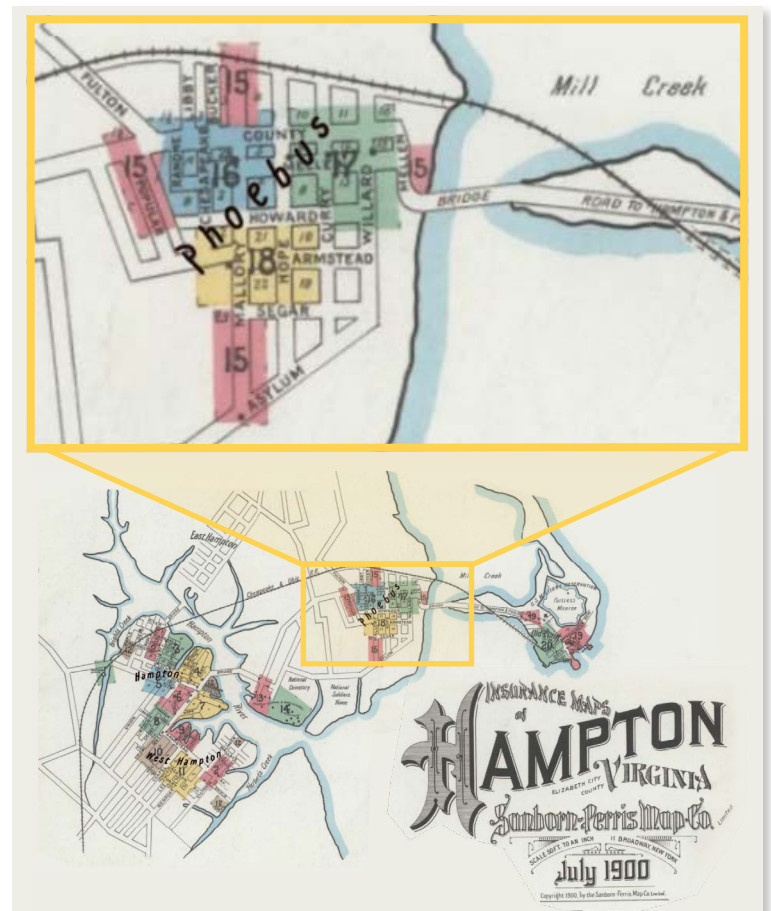
The map below shows Phoebus in 1900, with the Hampton River and City of Hampton to its west, and the tidal lagoon of Mill Creek and Fort Monroe to its east. Fort Monroe was built between 1819 to 1834, on land previously known as Point Comfort. In 1619, the English privateer ship, the White Lion, arrived at Point Comfort carrying the first known group of enslaved Africans to the continent, marking the beginning of the North American slave trade.

During the Civil War, Fort Monroe served as a refuge for thousands of freed slaves and earned the nickname “freedom fortress”. During this time, the southeastern part of present-day Phoebus, including the current site of the Phoebus Waterfront Park, was home to the first Union Army camp in Virginia, known as Camp Hamilton. Fort Monroe continued to be a commissioned military installation until it was decommissioned and recognized as a historic landmark in 2011.



Above: The present-day site of the Phoebus Waterfront Park was used as a Union Army camp during the Civil War. Source: Stacy George, photographer. (1861) Camp Hamilton, Fortress Monroe, Va. United States. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2009630936/>.

Below: A map from 1900 of Hampton, Phoebus, and Fort Monroe. Source: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Hampton, Independent Cities, Virginia. Sanborn Map Company, Jul, 1900. Map. https://www.loc.gov/item/sanborn09028_004/.



SITE CONTEXT

Phoebus is a demographically diverse community of over 14,400 residents with a strong sense of **local pride in its history and historic downtown area**. The Phoebus downtown business area is home to attractions such as breweries, restaurants, shops, and a number of historic buildings including the landmark American Theatre, the first desegregated movie theater in the state, and the Phoebus Post Office, home to a Works Progress Act funded mural.

Located within a ten-minute walk of the downtown area, the Phoebus Waterfront Park is the neighborhood's only public space along the Mill Creek waterfront, and one of only three public parks in the neighborhood overall. The park was opened to the public in 2013, making it a relatively new attraction for locals and visitors alike. With its pedestrian accessibility, parking lot for car access, and wildlife drawing bird watchers and fishing enthusiasts, and proximity to downtown Phoebus, the **park is well-situated to be a vibrant multi-use community space**.

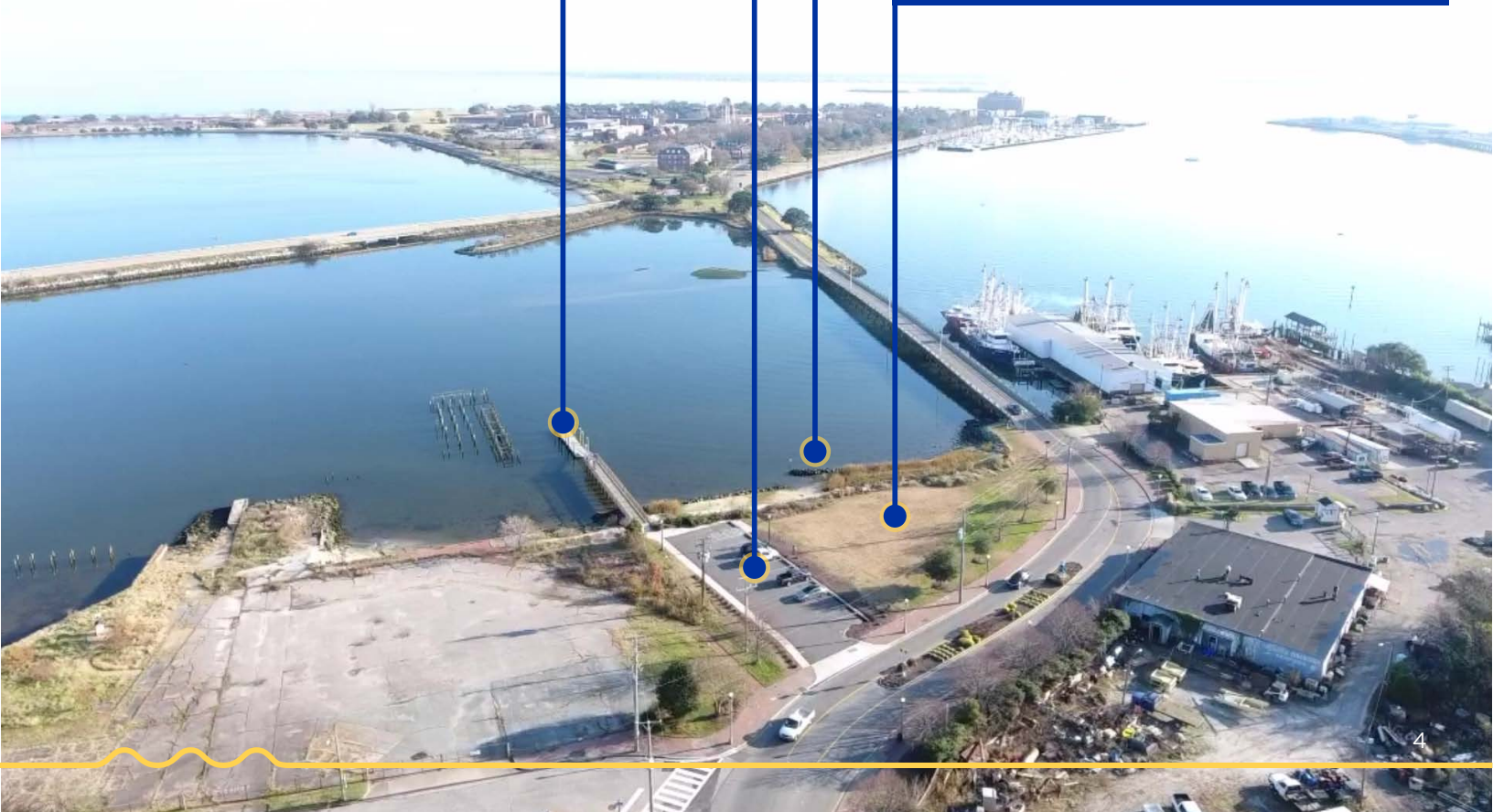
In 2006 and 2007, the City of Hampton prepared a Master Plan for Phoebus to guide future growth and investment. The city conducted outreach to residents, business leaders, and institutions to guide the plan, which led to the establishment of Phoebus Waterfront Park. The Master Plan proposed a range of park amenities. Of these proposed amenities, **a parking lot, lawn, dinghy dock, and living shoreline** have been established to date in the park.

PARKING LOT

DINGHY DOCK

LIVING SHORELINE

PARK LAWN



SITE CONTEXT

Due to its location on the Chesapeake Bay, and along the James and Elizabeth Rivers, as well as storm events such as Nor'easters and heavy rainfall, the City of Hampton is no stranger to flooding. Similarly, the **Phoebus Waterfront Park experiences frequent flooding** from tides, sea level rise, storm surge, and stormwater runoff.

The park's living shoreline was designed to mitigate coastal flood impacts and improve wildlife habitat. However, as of 2021, the living shoreline was in need of maintenance and reconstruction, due to factors including erosion from stormwater runoff and pedestrian traffic, and there was **strong community interest in improving the living shoreline**.

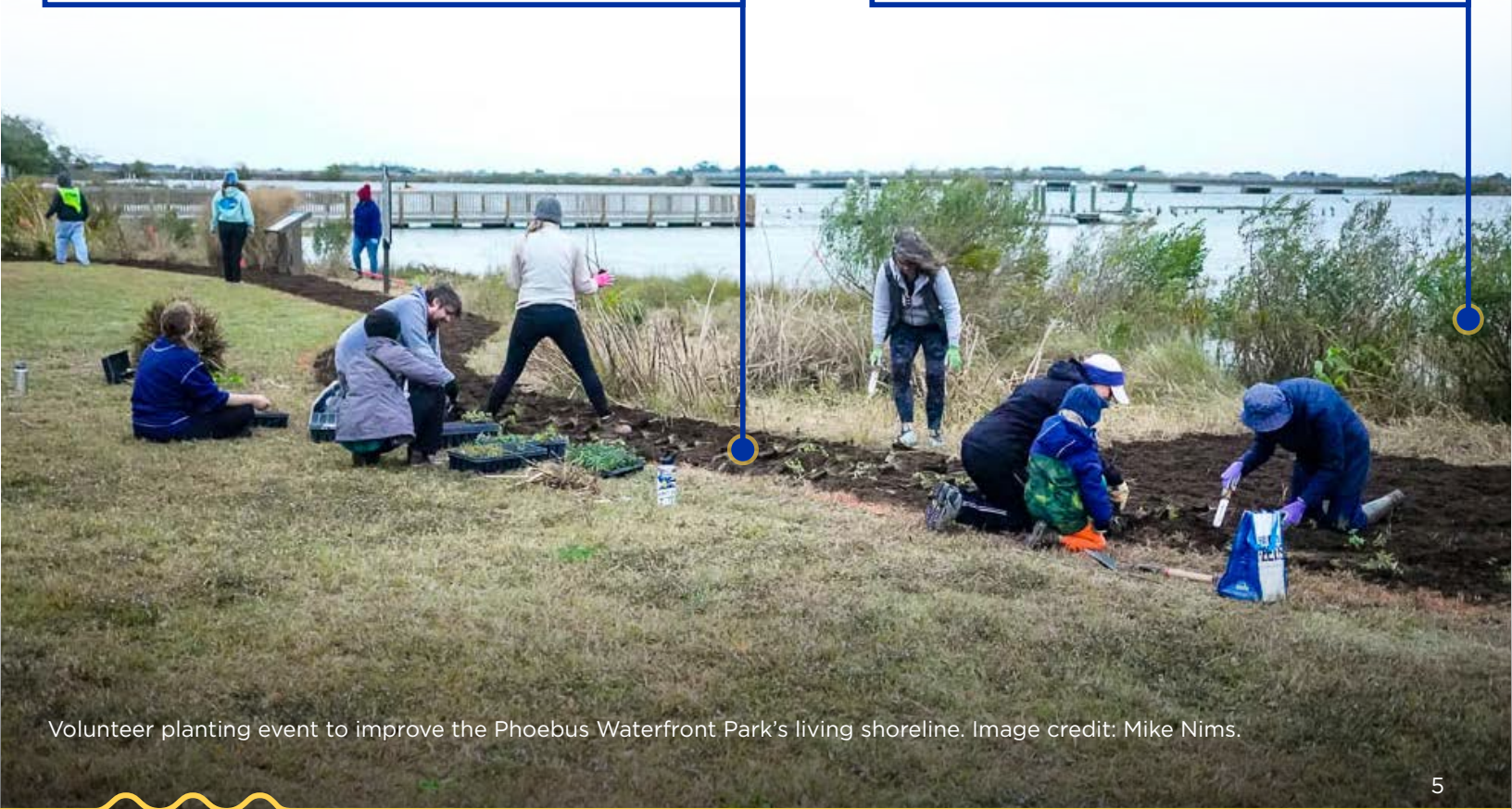
The volunteerism of Phoebus community members has played a vital role in the maintenance of the park since it was first opened to the public. As shown below, the Phoebus Partnership and AFC organized a volunteer event in the fall of 2021 to bolster the living shoreline by adding new plants and landscaping in a planted buffer area. This event also kicked off the first-ever pilot supported by the **City of Hampton's Adopt-a-Spot program for flood resilience**.

PLANTED BUFFER

The buffer will **slow the flow of stormwater** from the lawn and parking areas toward the living shoreline, and includes native plants with foliage and flowers that will **provide year-round interest**

LIVING SHORELINE

With less erosion caused by stormwater, the living shoreline can establish a stronger root system and **improved ability to reduce tidal flood impacts to the park**



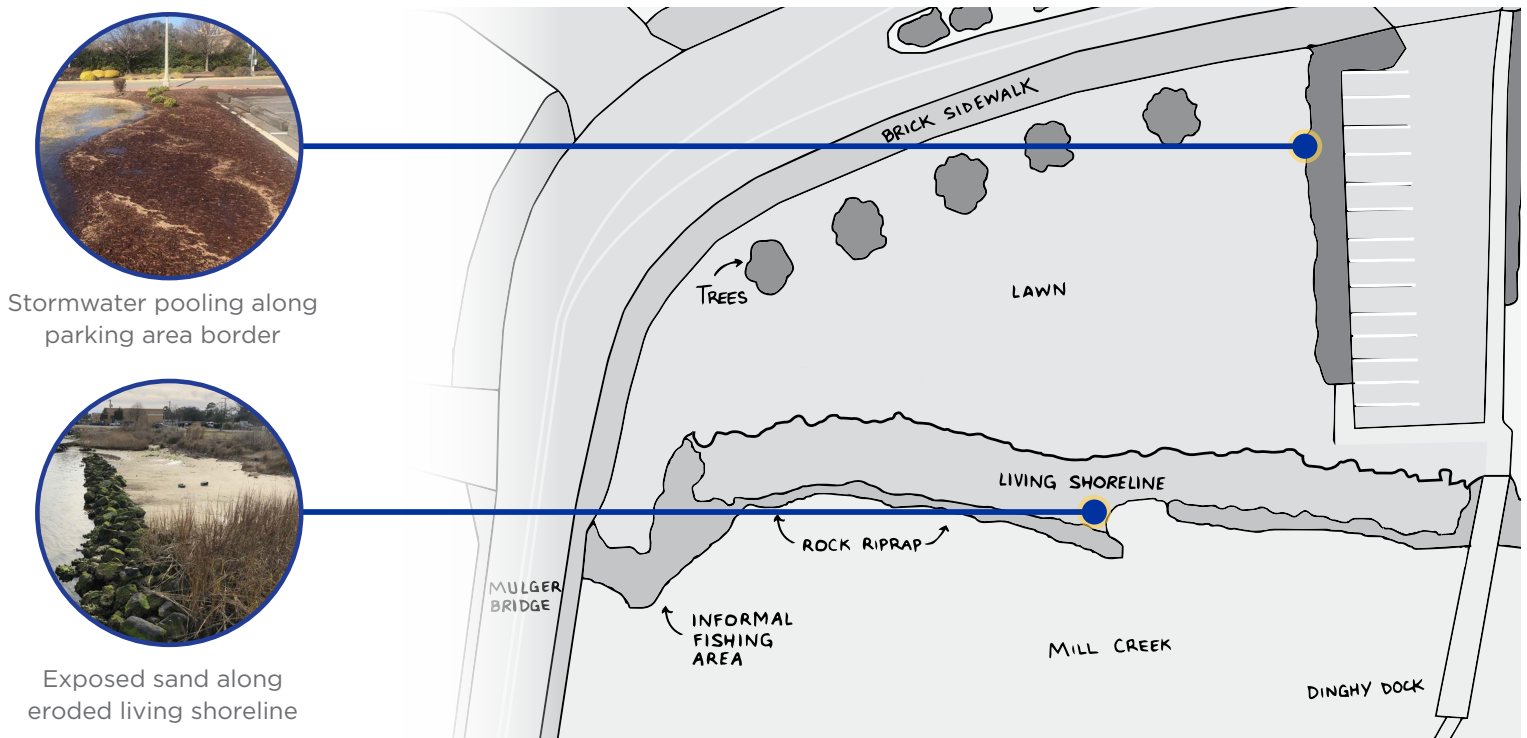
Volunteer planting event to improve the Phoebus Waterfront Park's living shoreline. Image credit: Mike Nims.

SITE OPPORTUNITIES

The project team analyzed existing constraints and potential opportunities related to the park's main features. Key flood-related features are shown in the table and drawing below. The table shows the multiple potential benefits associated with each opportunity.

AMENITY	CONSTRAINTS	OPPORTUNITIES	POTENTIAL BENEFITS
Dinghy dock & informal fishing area	The park is popular for fishing, but lacks a designated area for it. Foot traffic from fishing can damage the living shoreline. Fishing is not allowed on the dinghy dock, which is designed for (but underused by) moored boats.	Add a new fishing pier near Mugler bridge, or repurpose the existing dinghy dock as a fishing pier.	Recreation Flood reduction
Lawn area	Grass becomes trampled in high foot-traffic areas, exacerbating stormwater pooling issues.	Add a path to guide pedestrian traffic along the living shoreline.	Recreation Flood reduction
Parking area border	This mulched area is used at many points as a pedestrian entry between the parking lot and lawn, with stormwater pooling issues.	Add plantings and clearer entry points for pedestrians.	Recreation Flood reduction Pollinator habitat Seasonal interest
Living shoreline	Foot traffic from fishing and kayaking, stormwater runoff, and tidal flooding can damage the living shoreline.	Add a planted buffer and well-marked access points for fishing and/or kayaking.	Recreation Flood reduction Pollinator habitat Seasonal interest

PHOEBUS WATERFRONT PARK, SPRING 2021



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Phoebus Partnership and AFC partnered to create multiple opportunities for both community input and volunteer engagement, resulting in **190 hours of volunteer service** throughout 2021 and 2022. Overall, community engagement included the following elements:

1. **Publicity campaign** to grow interest via social media, in-person canvassing, and email outreach.
2. **Surveys** to collect feedback during the two events described below, as well as online. Surveys were circulated to stakeholders in the faith community, recreation community, as well as through community programs including the City of Hampton's Resilient Hampton newsletter.
3. **Personal interviews** with fishing enthusiasts who expressed a preference for providing verbal instead of written input about the park's future programming and features.
4. **Community workshop** in May 2021 to give community members an opportunity to learn about the project, share their park memories, and weigh in on potential future park programming and features. The event was one of the first in-person engagements the Phoebus Partnership organized during the COVID-19 pandemic.
5. **Community planting event** in November 2021 to give community members an opportunity to provide additional input on the park's future, and to directly engage in the improvement of the buffer plant area bordering the living shoreline. The event brought together volunteers from different community stakeholder groups, including the **North Phoebus Community Center**, the **Hampton Clean City Commission**, and **Master Gardeners**.



Community members and park users provided input via written surveys, and volunteered during the 2-day planting event at the park in November, 2021.

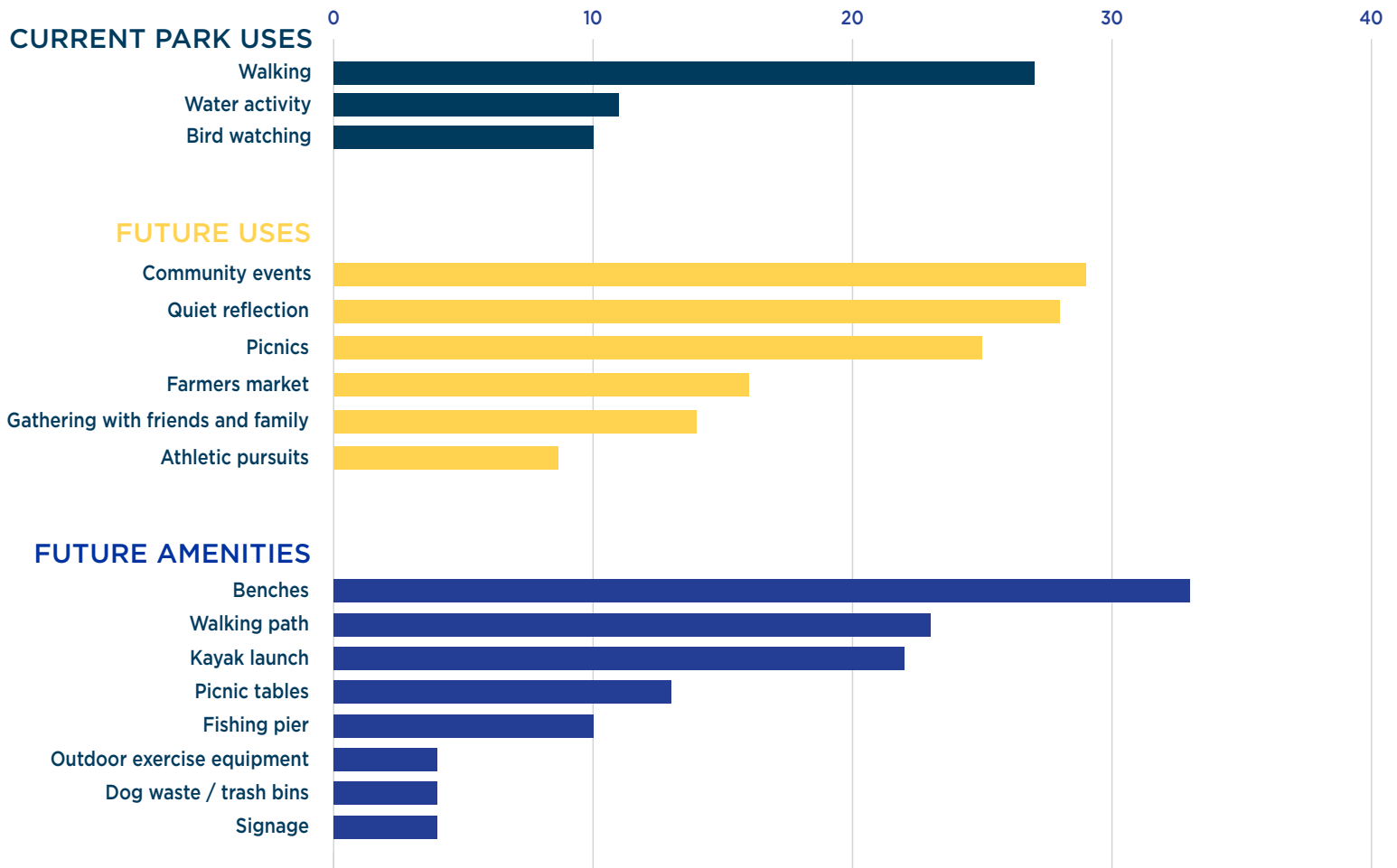
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Overall, **48 park users completed multi-question surveys** about their vision for the future of the Phoebus Waterfront Park, and many others provided informal comments through conversation at in-person events at the park.

Throughout these engagement activities, the Phoebus Partnership and AFC sought to gather input on **what amenities and future uses of the park are most desirable**, in order to inform future discussions with city leaders and staff about the park's future. The input gathered was envisioned as a way to complement the recommendations from the City of Hampton's Master Plan for Phoebus that was completed in 2007, and to complement ongoing community-driven efforts to improve the park's living shoreline.

In addition to the survey responses shown in the graph below, respondents were also invited to specify on a map of the park where they would like some of their preferred amenities to be placed, and to write any additional comments about the park. This **community input informed the amenities in the future park vision** outlined in this booklet.

PHOEBUS WATERFRONT PARK SURVEY RESPONSES



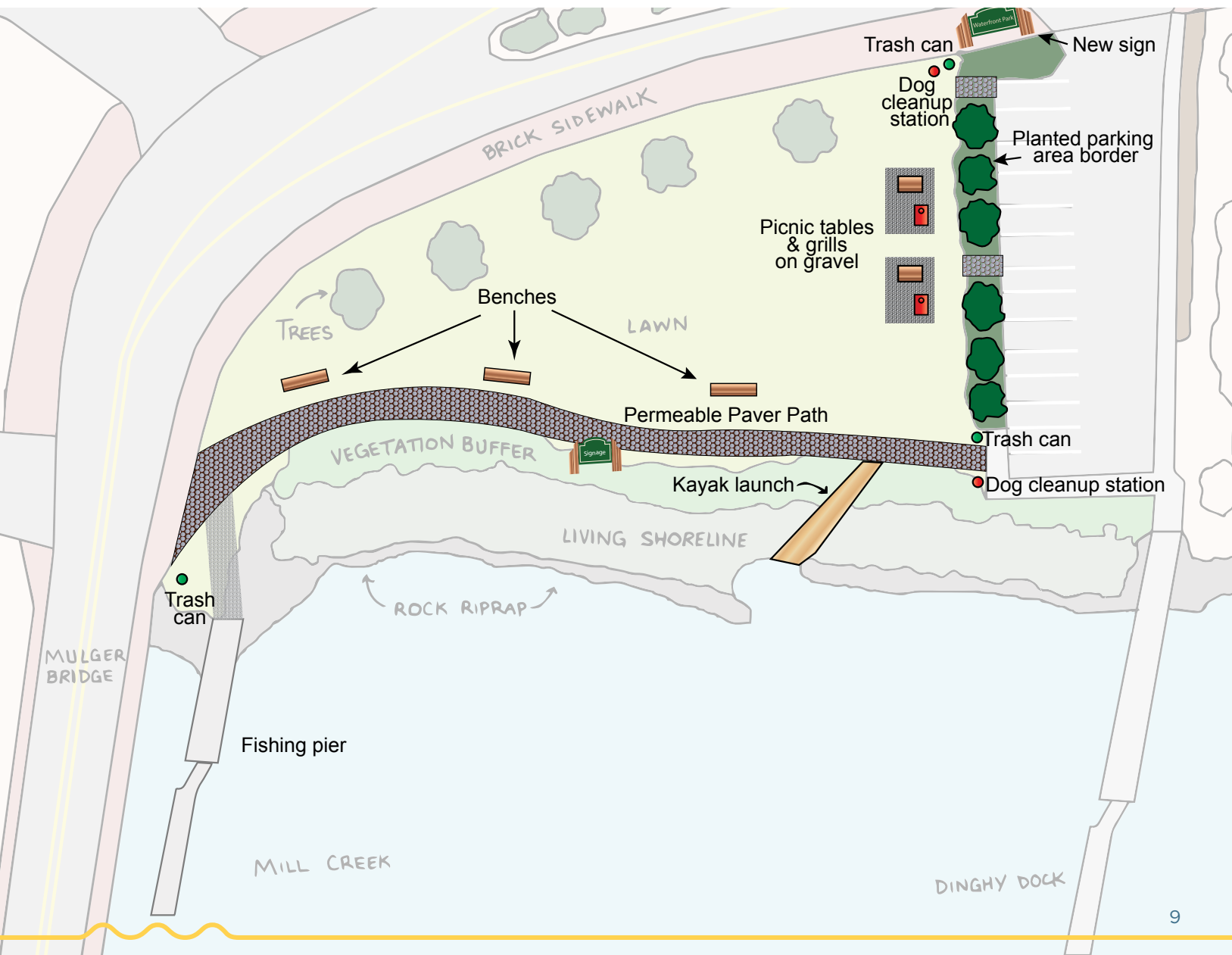
In addition to the future amenities listed above, a **playground, barbeque grills, shade structure, wind or solar power features, oyster gardening area, community garden, improved security and lighting**, and a **fenced dog park** were also suggested (fewer than 3 respondents expressed interest in each of these amenity types).

VISION PLAN

The vision plan below is based on the community input gathered and analysis completed by the Phoebus Partnership and AFC. The plan **creates dedicated spaces for park functions** including:

- 1) recreation** (fishing pier, kayak launch)
- 2) quiet reflection** (benches, open lawn)
- 3) gathering and events** (open lawn, picnic and grill areas)
- 4) wildlife habitat and flood reduction** (living shoreline, planted buffer, and parking area border)

As shown below, the recently-improved living shoreline, planted buffer, and kayak launch would be accompanied by a proposed new fishing pier, walking path, benches, and signage to educate visitors about the park and living shoreline. The new fishing pier will create more space for fishing enthusiasts in an already-popular fishing location within the park, and the path will provide a clear route between the fishing area and parking lot, reducing foot traffic that could harm the living shoreline. The plan also maintains a large open lawn area, with space for approximately 300 visitors for special events, as well as picnic and grill areas, benches, and additional dog waste and trash receptacles.



MAINTAINING MOMENTUM

Implementing the park improvement concepts outlined in the vision plan will require additional next steps. Improvements like walking paths or benches could be reviewed and supported by the City of Hampton through 1) existing Parks, Recreation & Leisure Services funding or 2) City Council for the Capital Improvement Project list. The Phoebus Partnership and the City of Hampton will continue to collaborate around community feedback and ways to continue restoring and improving the park. Next steps are further described below, and funding opportunities are listed on the following page.

AMENITY	NEXT STEPS
Living shoreline	Regular maintenance of the planted buffer and living shoreline are the main focus of the Phoebus Partnership moving forward. This includes ongoing coordination with the City of Hampton through its Adopt-a-Spot program.
Signage and dog waste receptacles	The Phoebus Partnership plans to coordinate with the City of Hampton and other partners to scope and implement pre-construction and installation.
Benches, walking path, and picnic area	The Phoebus Partnership plans to coordinate with City of Hampton and other partners to scope and implement pre-construction and installation.
Fishing pier	The Phoebus Partnership plans to coordinate with City of Hampton and other relevant partners to further scope the pre-construction process.

Temporary park activation opportunities can be used while amenities proposed by the community await installation at the Phoebus Waterfront Park. From friendly basketball tournaments to small concerts or live events, residents and visitors may take advantage of the park's location and great recreational space!



The Partnership for a New Phoebus

DOCK PARTY + SOCK BURNING

PHOEBUS WATERFRONT PARK
35 WATER ST. HAMPTON
noon - 6pm

Saturday March 26



Join us as we burn our socks celebrating the nautical tradition welcoming the beginning of boating season.

live music
food & beer
maritime displays
games

burn wool or cotton socks only
bring socks to donate to Salvation Army

BYO lawn chairs & blanket



Basketball Tournament

Come show off your three point shot and share your vision for how the Phoebus Waterfront Park could be improved!

Where: Phoebus Waterfront Park next to the Mugler Bridge

When: TBD

The Partnership for a New Phoebus will be gathering community input on how the Phoebus Waterfront Park can be a better community space. Your input will help us in the next steps of preparing design materials and a plan for implementation.



Temporary activities are already common at the park and are being planned for the future. The park can serve as a convenient place for **organizing community volunteers** (left), **dock parties** (middle), and **basketball tournaments** with temporary baskets installed on the parking lot (right).

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

WHAT COULD BE FUNDED?

GRANTING ENTITY	Funding range	Required Match?	Recreation (e.g., fishing pier, paths)	Gathering (e.g., grills, picnic tables)	Utilities (e.g., waste receptacles)	Education (e.g., signage)	Green infrastructure (e.g., living shoreline)	Planning and design (future phases)
Virginia Floodplain Management Association Community Flood Preparedness Fund	\$1K-4M		●					●
Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation Land and Water Conservation Fund	\$50K				●	●	●	●
Chesapeake Bay Green Streets, Green Jobs, Green Towns (G3) Grant Program	\$5K-150K		●	●	●	●	●	●
EDA Public Works Program	\$600K-3M	●			●			●
EPA Environmental Education Grants	\$50K-100K	●			●			
NOAA National Coastal Resilience Fund	\$250K-5M	●					●	●
FWS Youth Engagement, Education, and Employment	\$1K-2M	●	●		●	●	●	●
HUD Community Block Grant	Varies		●	●	●	●		●
US Fish and Wildlife Service Coastal Program	\$200K						●	●

RESOURCES AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

RESOURCES

Hampton and Phoebus Planning Resources related to this project:

- [Resilient Hampton](#)
- [Phoebus Master Plan](#)
- [Downtown Phoebus and Buckroe Resiliency Plan](#)
- [Buckroe Masterplan](#)
- [Bike Walk Hampton Plan](#)

Park Activation Resources for transforming underused public sites into community destinations:

- [Safe Places, Active Spaces! A Community Playbook for Transforming Public Spaces in Your Neighborhood](#), City of New York
- [District of Columbia Public Space Activation & Stewardship Guide](#), District of Columbia

Park Funding Resources on best practices for raising public and private funds for local park investments:

- [Park and Recreation Professionals' Guide to Fundraising](#), National Recreation and Park Association
- [Investing in Equitable Urban Park Systems: Emerging Funding Strategies and Tools](#), Urban Institute

Green Infrastructure Resources from the Environmental Protection Agency:

- [What is Green Infrastructure](#) and [Green Infrastructure Handbook](#), Environmental Protection Agency

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This booklet was produced by the **American Flood Coalition** and **Phoebus Partnership**, and it highlights community-based planning efforts supported through this partnership, with funding from the **Kresge Foundation**. The following collaborators, including multiple **City of Hampton** departments, have provided invaluable contributions to the ongoing efforts to improve Phoebus Waterfront Park since early 2021:

Special Advisors: Trista Imrich of [Wild Works of Whimsy](#), Ph.D. student Wendell Grinton, and Professor Freddy Paige of [Virginia Tech](#) advised throughout this project on community engagement, site planning, and living shoreline components of this project.

James River Association: This member-supported nonprofit organization serves to protect and advocate for the James River in Virginia. In the fall of 2022, the Association completed a project in the park by entering into an agreement with the Phoebus Partnership on a living shoreline collaborative, where material costs and labor are shared by both organizations in support of restoring the living shoreline.

Keep Virginia Beautiful 30 in 30 Green Grants Program: This program empowers groups across Virginia to make an environmental impact in their communities as a way to improve the natural and scenic environment. It has supported recent efforts in the park by providing grant funds for the Phoebus Partnership to purchase tools and equipment that helps volunteers maintain the park's pollinator plants and living shoreline areas. The grant was awarded in summer 2021.

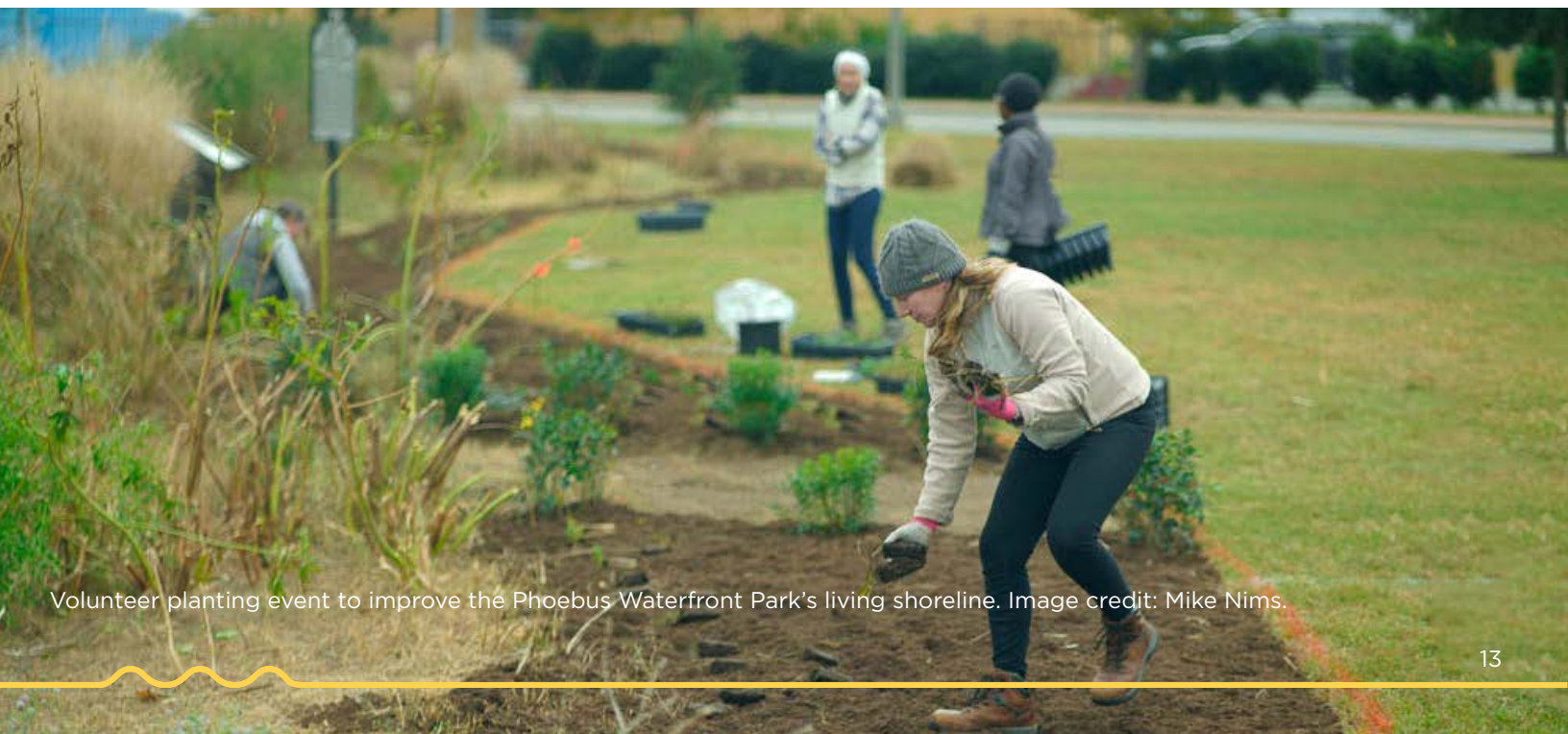
RESOURCES AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Hampton Clean City Commission: The Hampton Clean City Commission works to improve public spaces within the city through beautification, solid waste management education, coastal awareness activities, and litter abatement programs. The Commission has supported recent efforts in the park by providing equipment including trash bags, litter sticks, gloves, and vests for monthly cleanups organized by the Phoebus Partnership. The Commission also brokered the Adopt-a-Spot pilot program between the City of Hampton and the Phoebus Partnership for perpetual maintenance of the living shoreline from Fall 2021 through Fall 2024.

Resilient Hampton: The Resilient Hampton team's mission is to envision, create, and empower the City of Hampton to live and thrive with water and the impacts of climate change through approaches driven by data and value. Resilient Hampton provided frequent input throughout the planning and installation of the recent living shoreline improvements in the park, and is also leading ongoing broader master planning efforts in the communities surrounding the park. Resilient Hampton and the Phoebus Neighborhood Commissioner are also working together to locate other living shoreline opportunities in Phoebus.

Hampton Public Works: The heart of most road, water and waste issues in Hampton, the Public Works office participated in the planning and installation of the recent living shoreline improvements in the park, assisting with equipment operation during the planting event in Fall 2021 and again in Fall 2022 to move sand and rock materials using excavators from the parking lot to the shoreline for volunteers to put into place.

Hampton Parks & Recreation: The City of Hampton Department of Parks and Recreation strives to serve and create a vibrant community that residents and visitors can enjoy. Hampton Parks & Recreation participated in the planning and installation of the recent living shoreline improvements. Parks & Recreation collaborates with the Phoebus Partnership to monitor and support volunteer efforts to make park improvements.



Volunteer planting event to improve the Phoebus Waterfront Park's living shoreline. Image credit: Mike Nims.