

Back in 1930, the Chesterfield Heights neighborhood in the City of Norfolk, Virginia, was a developing, desirable residential area located just minutes from downtown along the Elizabeth River. Since that time, The City of Norfolk has almost doubled in population growing to over 240,000 residents, and Chesterfield Heights is now on the Historic National Register with over 400 homes. However, residents in this once desirable area have seen the neighborhood decline, as it is surrounded by industrial developments and has been negatively impacted by sea level rise.

The Hampton Roads region of Virginia, which includes the City of Norfolk, has seen a relative sea level rise of 14 inches since 1930– the highest rate on the East Coast. Unfortunately, the region and neighborhoods like Chesterfield Heights have experienced increased erosion and flooding from typical rain events, normal tidal influence, and storm surge. Seven of the 10 most severe recorded storms over the past 13 years have occurred in this region, exacerbating already challenging conditions. The entire City of Norfolk is exceptionally vulnerable to these forces due to its 144 miles of coastline and its extreme sensitivity to coastal flooding. Mature coastal neighborhoods with lower socioeconomic status, such as Chesterfield Heights, are most at risk to these forces of nature.

Competition (NDRC) for the Ohio Creek Watershed project, which encompasses the Chesterfield Heights and Grandy Village neighborhoods. Grandy Village is an adjacent public housing community with more than 300 residential units.

SOME RELIEF: THE OHIO CREEK WATERSHED PROJECT

In 2016, the City of Norfolk was awarded a \$112 million federal grant from the National Disaster Resilience

recreational use of the shoreline.

The Ohio Creek Watershed project will mitigate the negative effects of sea level rise through a relocated and raised roadway, earthen berms, wetland mitigation areas, improved stormwater drainage systems, coastal protection earthen berms, living shoreline, new stormwater pump stations, a raised bridge, box culverts, a resiliency park, bioretention basins, a stormwater park, a tide gate, concrete flood protection walls, landscaping, hardscaping, and improved water and sewer facilities.

Because this project is federally funded through The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the contractor is required to pay the locally prevailing wage rates and fringe benefits as outlined by the Davis-Bacon Act. Adherence to the Davis-Bacon Act is critical to maintain the federal funding and compliance is closely monitored.

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About the Author
