

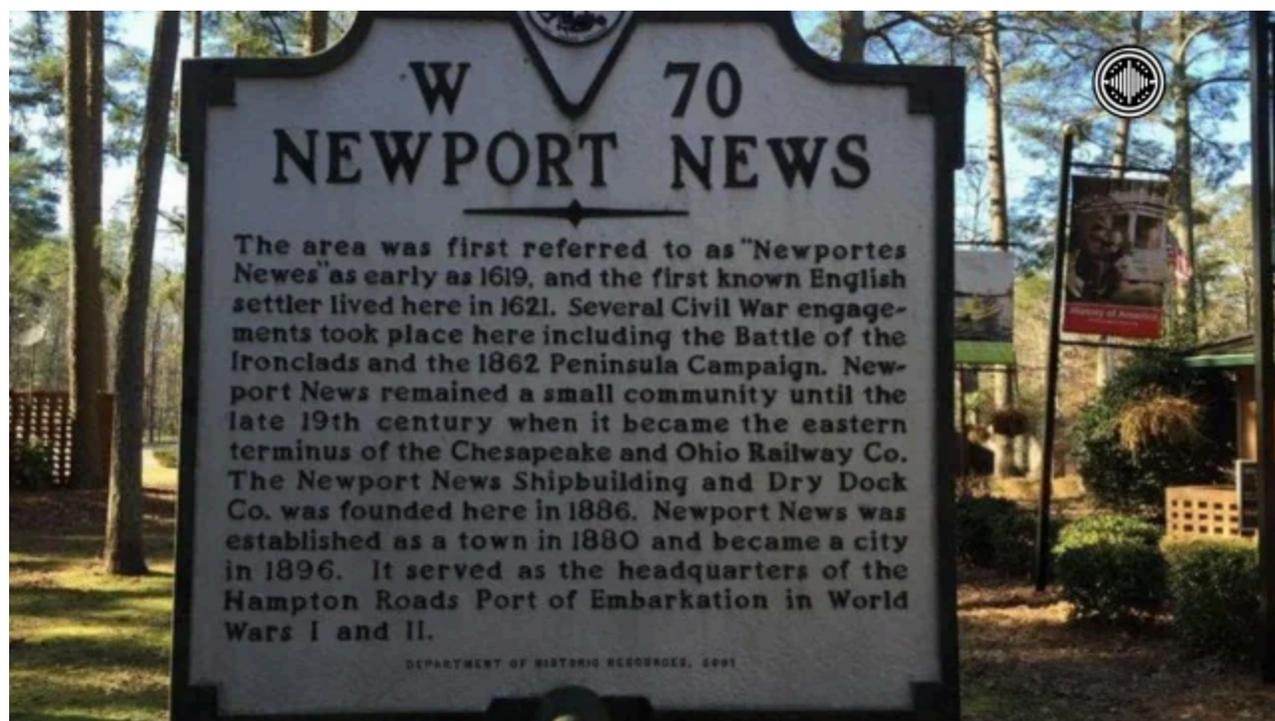
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Newport News Eyes 638-Home Plan for Camp Morrison Site

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The once-bustling Camp Morrison Industrial Park in Newport News now sits silent and overgrown, its gravel drives cracked and weeds creeping through the empty lots. This 110-acre site, steeped in history as a World War I Army air service depot, has been dormant for decades, with its warehouses left to slowly rust and decay.

Now, Newport News is looking to breathe new life into this long-neglected area. The city is considering a bold new plan to transform the vacant lot into a vibrant residential community with hundreds of homes. This proposal reflects the city's growing commitment to increase housing availability and meet the needs of its expanding population.

The Camp Morrison site has a rich history. Originally established in 1917 to support the Army's air service during World War I, the area later evolved into an industrial park featuring warehouses built during the 1930s and 1940s. Over the years, however, the industrial park fell into disuse, and the site has been largely empty for nearly two decades.

The current plan, proposed by developer D.R. Horton, calls for a large-scale housing development with 638 homes in various styles. The project would include 201 single-family houses, 237 townhomes, 96 duplex units, and 56 quadplex units. Alongside the homes, the design includes wider roads, measuring 50 to 60 feet, and community amenities like open spaces, walking trails, and even a dog park.

While this plan represents a significant step forward in addressing Newport News' housing challenges, it has sparked some debate. The city's Planning Commission decided in June to delay its vote on rezoning the site. This pause allows more time for community feedback and gives the developer a chance to revise the proposal based on residents' concerns.

Notably, the plan differs somewhat from a community-involved master plan developed back in 2013. The current proposal reduces the number of housing units slightly and features smaller homes. Additionally, it includes provisions that would allow the use of more cost-effective construction materials, raising some questions among local stakeholders about quality and long-term impacts.

Despite these concerns, the project symbolizes a promising effort to revitalize a historic but neglected part of Newport News. By turning the abandoned industrial park into a lively neighborhood, the city hopes to create new housing opportunities while respecting the site's past.

As Newport News continues to grow, projects like the Camp Morrison development highlight the balancing act between honoring history, meeting present-day needs, and planning for the future. The coming months will be crucial as officials, developers, and the community work together to shape the future of this important site.

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