

COUNTY COUNCIL
OF
TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND

2016 Legislative Session, Legislative Day No. : April 12, 2016

Bill No.: 1329

Expiration Date: June 16, 2016

Introduced by: Mr. Callahan, Mr. Pack, Ms. Price, Ms. Williams

A BILL TO REPEAL THE *COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND*, ADOPTED FEBRUARY 15, 2005, AND ENACT THE *TALBOT COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, 2016*, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF LOCAL GOV'T. ART. § 10-324, LAND USE ART. §1-405, MD. ANN. CODE, AND TALBOT COUNTY CHARTER § 403 (b) AND § 404 (c)

By the Council: April 12, 2016

Introduced, read first time, ordered posted, and public hearing scheduled on Tuesday, May 10, 2016 at 2:30 p.m. at the Bradley Meeting Room, Talbot County Court House, South Wing, 11 North Washington Street, Easton, Maryland 21601 and at 6:00 p.m. in the Meeting Room of the Talbot County Free Library in Easton, 100 W. Dover St., Easton, Maryland 21601.

By Order 
Susan W. Moran, Secretary

A BILL TO REPEAL THE *COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND*, ADOPTED FEBRUARY 15, 2005, AND ENACT THE *TALBOT COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, 2016*, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF LOCAL GOV'T. ART. § 10-324, LAND USE ART. §1-405, MD. ANN. CODE, AND TALBOT COUNTY CHARTER § 403 (b) AND § 404 (c)

SECTION ONE: BE IT ENACTED BY THE COUNTY COUNCIL OF TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND, that the *COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND* adopted February 15, 2005, shall be and is hereby repealed.

SECTION TWO: AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, that the *TALBOT COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, 2016*, attached hereto as Exhibit "A," which is incorporated by reference herein, shall be and is hereby adopted.

SECTION THREE: AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, that the title and a summary of this Bill shall be published once on the first publication date after enactment of the Bill in accordance with County Charter § 213 (c). The title is not a substantive part of this Bill. If the Bill is amended, the title may be administratively revised if required to conform the title to the content of the Bill as finally enacted.

SECTION FOUR: AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, that if any provision of the *TALBOT COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, 2016*, or the application thereof to any person or circumstance is held invalid for any reason in a court of competent jurisdiction, the invalidity does not affect other provisions or any other application of such Plan which can be given effect without the invalid provision or application, and for this purpose the provisions of such Plan are declared severable.

SECTION FIVE: AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, that the Talbot County Office of Planning & Zoning, or the Talbot County Office of Law, in consultation with and subject to the approval of the County Manager, may make non-substantive corrections to codification, style, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, spelling, and any internal or external reference or citation included in the *TALBOT COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, 2016*, as finally adopted, that are incorrect or obsolete, with no further action required by the County Council. All such corrections shall be adequately referenced and described in an editor's note following the section affected.

SECTION SIX: AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, that this ordinance shall take effect sixty (60) days from the date of its passage.

PUBLIC HEARING

Having been posted and Notice of time, date, and place of hearing, and Title of Bill No. _____ having been published, a public hearing was held on _____.

BY THE COUNCIL

Read the third time.

ENACTED _____

By Order _____
Susan W. Moran, Secretary

Pack -
Williams -
Bartlett -
Price -
Callahan -

Effective date: _____



Talbot County Comprehensive Plan, 2016

Talbot County Council

Corey W. Pack, President
Jennifer L. Williams, Vice President
Dirck K. Bartlett
Laura Everngam Price
Chuck F. Callahan

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John N. Fischer, Vice Chairman
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Comprehensive Plan Chapter Review Committees

Land Use Plan

Phillip 'Chip' Councill · Don Cochran · Amy Owsley, Eastern Shore Land Conservancy
Jennifer Shull, Town of Trappe · Lynn Thomas, Town of Easton · Margaret Young

Transportation

Robert Amdur · Robert Greenlee · Mike Henry, Easton Airport Manager · Jack Sherman

Community Services

Nancy Andrew, Habitat for Humanity Choptank · Gary Gunther, Upper Shore Aging, Inc. · Robert Horvath, Talbot County Free Library · Julie Lowe, Talbot Interfaith Shelter · Bertha Wilson
Sandy Redd, Neighborhood Services Center

Agricultural and Rural Conservation

Jack Fischer · Ed Heikes, Talbot County Farm Bureau · Amy Owsley, ESLC · Vicki Sump
John Swaine, Talbot Soil Conservation District

Natural Resource Conservation

Robert Amdur · Brice Gambier · Mike Mielke · Mark Scallion, Pickering Creek Audubon
Dan Schwaninger · John Wolfe

Economic Development and Tourism

Shannon Dill, UMD Extension · John General · Talbot County Waterman's Assoc. · John Murray
Al Silverstein, Talbot County Chamber of Commerce

Historic and Cultural Preservation

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Community Design and Appearance

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Additional acknowledgments and recognition:

Michael L. Pullen, County Attorney
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Martin Sokolich, Senior Planner
Jeremy Rothwell, Planner I
Sandy Coyman, Former Talbot County Planning Officer
Thomas Hughes, Former Planning Commission Member

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Vision Statement for the Talbot County Comprehensive Plan

This Vision, and the vision statements that introduce each chapter, reflect the intended focus of Talbot County land use decision-making.

The primary goal of Talbot County's Comprehensive Plan is to promote a high quality of life, to preserve the rural character of our County and to protect the health, safety and well-being of its citizens, in a resilient community.

Recognizing that the overall environment is an economic asset of the County, protection of our agricultural lands and waterways, and their harvests, is a high priority. Our rivers, creeks, 600 miles of shoreline and fragile ecosystems are valued and protected with zeal and vigilance. The high quality of the County's infrastructure (including schools, roads, sewer and water) is maintained as the County's needs change and grow. The livability and economic vitality of our towns, along with our historical treasures and cultural amenities, are highly valued.

Talbot County affords those who live here an unusually high quality of life. Our comprehensive planning, our land use decisions, and our growth management strategies are all completely oriented to sustaining and enhancing this remarkable place "where land and water intertwine." To handle the development pressure in Talbot County we blend state-of-the-art planning tools, strong coordination with and support of our municipalities, and effective legislation to ensure that the quality of life associated with our rural character is maintained. We cooperate fully with other counties in the midshore area in dealing with common concerns that cross county lines.

Measurably positive results are required, and Talbot County's progress toward achieving the vision is monitored. A monitoring program compares baseline data and the goals and objectives of the plan against actual and proposed land use changes.

Talbot County, 2015

Talbot County is a predominantly rural county located in the west-central portion of Maryland's Eastern Shore. The County's land and waterways are intertwined in a unique mosaic of tidal waters, streams, farmlands and forests. The historic settlement patterns of this rural landscape have created a scattered patchwork of farms, estates, subdivisions, villages and towns. The natural and built environments of Talbot County blend together to form a pleasant rural character where residents enjoy a generally high quality of life.

The land area of the County is approximately 171,000 acres. The underlying geology is typical of coastal plains and the topography is flat to gently rolling. Approximately 95,000 acres are farmland, over 40,000 acres are forested land, and 3,650 acres have been developed.

On land, Talbot County is surrounded by Queen Anne's County to the north, Caroline County to the east and Dorchester County to the south. The County has approximately 600 miles of shoreline and is almost entirely surrounded by the waters of the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. The waters that border the County are the Chesapeake Bay to the west, the Choptank River to the south and east, and the Tuckahoe River to the northeast.

On its western edge, the County is defined by numerous peninsulas, or necks. Major tributary and tidal waterway systems which border these necks include the Wye, Miles, Tred Avon and the Choptank Rivers, as well as Harris Creek and Broad Creek.

The County is divided into five election districts: Easton, St. Michaels, Trappe, Chapel and Bay Hundred. There are five incorporated towns within Talbot County:

- Centrally located along U.S. Route 50, the Town of Easton is the County seat and the major residential, commercial, and employment center of the County.

- St. Michaels is located along Route 33 on the shores of the Miles River.
- Oxford is located at the end of Route 333 along the Tred Avon River.
- The Town of Trappe is located in the south-central portion of the County along U.S. Route 50.
- The Town of Queen Anne straddles the Talbot County and Queen Anne's County border in the northeast.

Other clusters of settlement are the County's villages, with histories ranging from 100 years to over 300 years. Over time, waterfront and crossroads settlements have evolved into 22 recognized villages of various characters and sizes. These unincorporated communities include: Wye Mills, Cordova, Unionville, Royal Oak, Bruceville, Claiborne, and Tilghman.

Over the years Talbot County has grown from an isolated rural area with a population of 20,342 in 1900, to a growing and diverse community of 33,812 in 2000.

In the early 1900s Talbot County saw a loss of population, as families moved to more urban areas. The opening of the first Chesapeake Bay Bridge in the early 1950s began to reverse the population trend. This engineering feat marked the onset of substantial change for Talbot and many of the other Eastern Shore Counties, as the area became less isolated.

Greater accessibility led to some changes in development patterns over time, the waterfront subdivisions of the 20th century represent the greatest departure from prior settlements, expressing a changing relationship with the Bay and rivers, from commerce to recreation.

The second half of the 20th century also saw a change in County's economy, as it shifted from agriculture and seafood production to a more diversified base, particularly in the areas of construction, real estate, light manufacturing, trade, tourism and service industries.

Today, the County is still known for its open rural landscape, woodlands, rivers, streams and wetlands and abundance of wildlife. Agriculture and tourism account for a significant portion of the County's business economy.

Through coordinated land use policies, the County has successfully encouraged residential and commercial growth in the incorporated towns or villages. Easton, Trappe and St. Michaels are expected to grow more noticeably in the future, as planned sewer and utility expansions are completed.

Talbot County is at an important decision point. The population is projected to continue to grow at an annual rate of 1 percent. Many of the new residents will be retirees and empty nesters. Already, 23 percent of the County population is 65 years of age and above, and the median age is ten years older than the State average.

The County has also captured the attention of national retailers and travel related businesses. An older, wealthier population represents attractive market opportunities for restaurants, home improvements, automobile sales and other consumer services. The County is

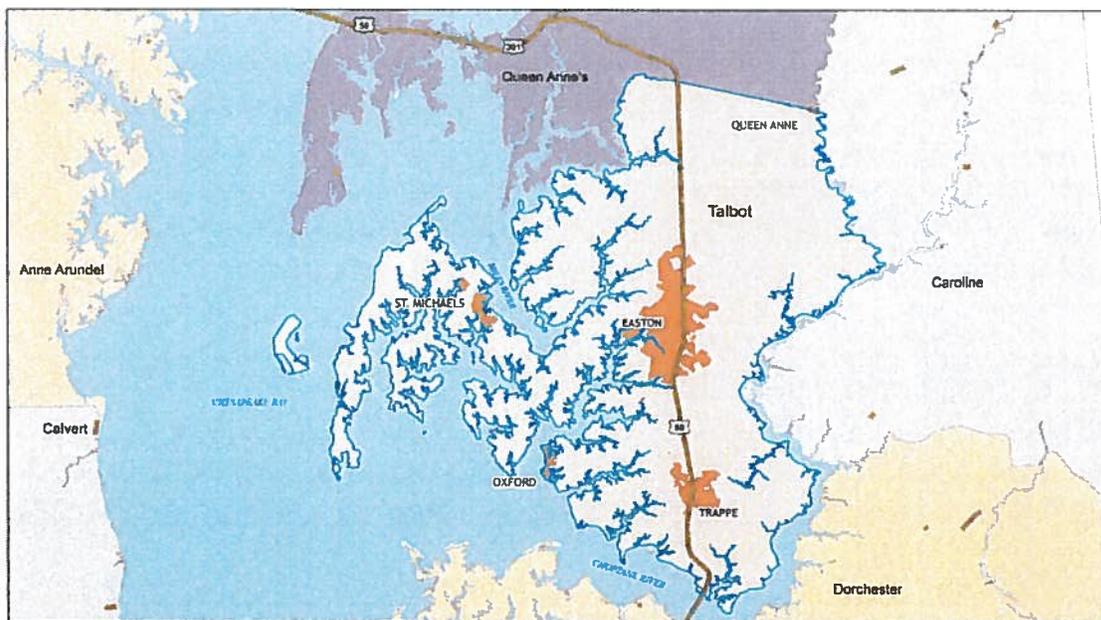
experiencing increasing pressure for both residential and commercial development, with some attendant problems.

As US Route 50 becomes an increasingly used route through the County, increased traffic frustrates permanent residents. Rural roadways have become congested and cross county travel becomes nearly impossible at times.

Finally, citizen concerns about rural character, environmental protection, growth and future development patterns loom large.

The Comprehensive Plan attempts to address these and other complex issues and concerns, striving to balance quality of life and retaining rural character with the obligation to accommodate and guide future growth.

This Comprehensive Plan seeks to meet the challenges of protecting and preserving the fragile environmental resources of the County's tidal waters, streams, shorelines, forests and open space; continuing to support and encourage the active and economically vital agricultural and maritime industries; and providing guidelines for residential and commercial development at a scale and location that benefits all County residents.



Definitions

Designated Growth Areas are those areas identified in this plan and the County Zoning Ordinance as anticipated for major subdivision and development within the planning period. These are between incorporated towns and the County's Countryside Preservation (CP) zoning designation.

Infill, Redevelopment and New Development in Talbot County consists of minor development projects within existing developed areas.

As defined by the Maryland Department of Planning, infill in a rural village is characterized by new development on vacant parcels typical in size and shape to developed parcels in the community.

Redevelopment means building or rebuilding on parcels that have been previously developed. Typical examples will be vacant lots in rural villages, replacement of deficient buildings and adaptive reuse of obsolete structures.

New development includes subdivision, revisions and site plans on or creating parcels previously not developed.

Master Plans include a comprehensive study to evaluate the compatibility and suitability of existing and proposed land uses, infrastructure, facilities and services associated with new development and redevelopment, and assist County planning efforts. Master Plans, or small area plans, are required to evaluate traffic, emergency response and other infrastructure impacts of development on village character. The plans also provide a general understanding among residents on the nature and scale of proposed development.

Population Centers are areas settled at a substantially greater concentration than the surrounding land, consisting of a mix of residential and non-residential uses and community services. Incorporated towns are all population centers, as are those rural villages with the greatest populations, widest diversity of land uses, and the presence of public facilities.

Quality of Life is a condition of one's existence that can be affected by the land use decisions based on this Comprehensive Plan. For the purpose of this document, quality of life includes:

- abundant fields and forests, wildlife, clean water in the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries;
- clean air, sufficient potable water in our aquifers;
- a low level of crime;
- the relative absence of traffic congestion and excessive noise;
- a diversity of economic and employment opportunities for individuals and businesses;
- good educational, social and community service systems;
- access to an adequate supply of affordable and workforce housing opportunities for residents of all ages and incomes;
- access to diverse cultural, recreational, and entertainment activities;
- convenient access to goods and services; and
- an ethic of personal involvement.

Definitions

Rural Character is a predominance of farm fields and woodlands; the visible presence of wildlife; an abundance of thriving rivers, streams and wetlands; large, open spaces separating functional towns; rural villages reflecting County history; low speed roadways which are uncongested; access to farms and other private properties; a minimum of light pollution in the night skies; the absence of strip malls or retail outlets, large and prominent names or logos on building exteriors, and large commercial or residential development.

Village Planning Areas are Master Planned areas within Village Centers and Village Hamlets with suitable land available for infill, redevelopment and new development that shall mirror and complement the historic fabric of the respective village. The County or a developer may initiate the Master Planning process. County-initiated Master Plans will be commissioned and paid for by the County. Developer-initiated plans shall be subject to the third party review as described in the policies defined in the *Talbot County Code*.

Vision Statement is a statement that communicates a compelling vision of the future, is critical to implementing strategy, and that answers the question 'What will success look like in the effective implementation of the Talbot County Comprehensive Plan?'



Introduction



The Talbot County Comprehensive Plan is the result of thoughtful discussions and effort by many citizen and stakeholder groups to focus on the County's long-range future. The Plan presents a range of visions for Talbot County in the coming decades and outlines a framework for consistent decision making to bring those visions to fruition.

The Comprehensive Plan provides policy guidance for public officials and citizens who will shape the County's growth and development over the next twenty years. This Plan is an update of the 2005 Comprehensive Plan. The format and some content have been reorganized and there are a few new items that have been adopted by the Talbot County Council as amendments to the 2005 Plan.

Maryland's HB 297 Smart, Green and Growing—Smart and Sustainable Growth Act of 2009 requires that in order for an action to be consistent with a comprehensive plan:

“the term shall be defined to mean an action taken that will further, and not be contrary to, the following items in the plan:

1. *Policies;*
2. *Timing of the implementation of the plan;*
3. *Timing of development;*

4. *Timing of rezoning;*
5. *Development patterns;*
6. *Land uses; and*
7. *Densities or intensities.”*

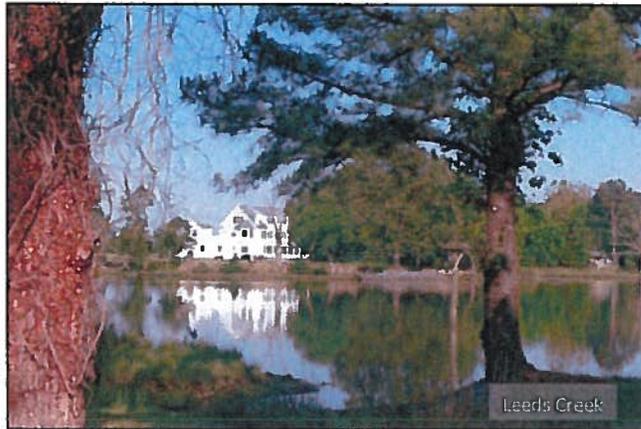
This act requires implementation measures to be consistent with the above components of this plan.

The Plan encourages citizens to take an active role in planning, encourages greater cooperation between the County and Towns and provides strong recommendations for the protection of the County's key assets including sensitive environmental resources and rural lands. The policies outlined in each chapter attempt to strike a balance between competing interests for the community's best interest.

I. Purpose of the Plan

The Talbot County Comprehensive Plan is an official public document created by the community and adopted by the County Council. It is the policy guide for public officials and citizens who will oversee the County's growth and development. It is also the guide for other public policy decisions and will help the County determine when and where new public facilities and improvements are needed.

The Plan is comprehensive because it covers a broad range of elements related to growth and development, preservation and sustainability. Its recommendations are broad, rather than narrowly defining specific land use decisions. Policies may be amended as circumstances change over time, without straying from the basic goals of the Plan.



The Comprehensive Plan is not a development ordinance, but sets the framework and basis for the County's Zoning Ordinance and other development regulations, including amendments to existing ordinances.

Talbot County's first major Comprehensive Plan was prepared in 1973 and was updated in 1990 and again in 1997. The 2005 Comprehensive Plan replaced the County's 1997 Plan as the guiding document for the County's planning efforts. This document is based on the 2005 Plan and this review began in 2011.

II. Comprehensive Plan Process

The 2005 Plan was the product of citizens, the Planning Commission, County Council, County staff and consultants and evolved through a series of citizen committees, work sessions and public hearings.

This edition reviews the extensive document adopted in 2005. Committees comprised of stakeholder organizations and citizens reviewed the contents of each chapter and assessed the County's progress towards achieving the goals of the Plan.

For the 2005 Plan, over 100 citizen committee members expressed growing County-wide

concerns about the rate of growth and change that had been occurring. The committees reaffirmed the County's long term commitment to environmental and critical area protection and articulated the desire to retain the rural character of the community by managing growth to prevent sprawl and to protect agriculture as a primary industry.

III. Organization of the Plan

The Comprehensive Plan is organized into nine chapters. Chapter One provides context and background information. The remaining chapters contain plan elements organized in related topic areas. In practice, concerns and topics overlap and may not be thoroughly discussed in a single chapter.

Each chapter begins with statements of visions and goals followed by a discussion of existing conditions, circumstances and programs. Policies are listed under major sections of each chapter.

IV. Legal Basis for Planning

Talbot County is a Charter County and as such derives its authority for planning from the Annotated Code of Maryland and the County Charter of 1974.

The Land Use Article, revised, clarified and passed by the Maryland General assembly in 2012, enables local governments to guide growth and development; outlines the responsibilities, roles and functions of the Planning Commission and Board of Appeals; and sets the 'ground rules' for planning and zoning.

The Smart and Sustainable Growth Act of

2009 clarifies the requirement for consistency between local comprehensive plans and zoning ordinances. The definition of consistency applies to zoning ordinances, special exceptions, annexations, water and sewer amendments and Critical Area growth allocation. All must be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

The Land Use Article requires that comprehensive plans address certain components of the jurisdiction's vision, including:

1. Goals and Objectives as a guide for the development and economic and social well being;
2. A land use element which outlines the most appropriate and desirable patterns of growth and development;
3. A transportation element describing the entire spectrum of transportation facilities applicable to the jurisdiction;
4. A community facilities element which identifies public and semi-public buildings, lands and facilities;
5. A mineral resources element including land use policies to balance resource extraction with other land uses;
6. A development regulations section that identifies development tools to implement the plan;
7. A section which includes recommendations for areas of critical State concern and a sensitive areas element to protect sensitive areas from the adverse effects of development;
8. A fisheries element designating areas for loading, unloading, and processing finfish and shellfish, and for docking and mooring commercial fishing boats and vessels;
9. A water resources element to identify drinking water supplies needed, suitable receiving waters for wastewater and stormwater management and a

- development capacity analysis; and
10. An implementation section to recommend regulations for land development and encouraging streamlined review of applications for development in areas designated for growth.

The planning context for future development in Talbot County must also take into consideration the role that the County will play in implementing the overall growth management policies established by the Planning Act of 1992 and subsequent legislation.

V. Maryland's Twelve Planning Visions

As part of the 2009 *Smart, Green & Growing* legislation, the General Assembly modernized the state's previous planning visions with 12 new visions to more broadly represent state policies. The following visions provide the framework for this Plan:

1. Quality of Life and Sustainability--A high quality of life is achieved through universal stewardship of the land, water, and air resulting in sustainable communities and protection of the environment;
2. Public Participation--Citizens are active partners in the planning and implementation of community initiatives and are sensitive to their responsibilities in achieving community goals;
3. Growth Areas--Growth is concentrated in existing population and business centers, growth areas adjacent to these centers, or strategically selected new centers;
4. Community Design--Compact, mixed-use, walkable design - consistent with existing community character and located near available or planned

transit options- is encouraged to ensure efficient use of land and transportation resources and preservation and enhancement of natural systems, open spaces, recreational areas, and historical, cultural, and archeological resources;

5. Infrastructure--Growth areas have the water resources and infrastructure to accommodate population and business expansion in an orderly, efficient, and environmentally sustainable manner;
6. Transportation--A well-maintained, multimodal transportation system facilitates the safe, convenient, affordable, and efficient movement of people, goods, and services within and between population and business centers;
7. Housing--A range of housing densities, types, and sizes provides residential options for citizens of all ages and incomes;
8. Economic Development--Economic development and natural resource-based businesses that promote employment opportunities for all income levels within the capacity of the State's natural resources, public services, and public facilities are encouraged;
9. Environmental Protection--Land and water resources, including the Chesapeake and coastal bays, are carefully managed to restore and maintain healthy air and water, natural systems, and living resources;
10. Resource Conservation--Waterways, forests, agricultural areas, open space, natural systems, and scenic areas are conserved;
11. Stewardship--Government, business entities, and residents are responsible for the creation of sustainable communities by collaborating to balance efficient growth with resource protection; and

12. Implementation--Strategies, policies, programs, and funding for growth and development, resource conservation, infrastructure, and transportation are integrated across the local, regional, state, and interstate levels to achieve these Visions.

VI. Relationship to Other County Planning Documents

The Comprehensive Plan is not a stand-alone document, but is supported by (and, in turn supports) related planning program documents including:

Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Plan
Comprehensive Water and Sewer Plan
Land Preservation and Recreation Plan
Floodplain Ordinance
Zoning, Subdivision and Land Development (Zoning Ordinance)
Septic Tier maps (SB 236)
Roads Ordinance
Forest Conservation Ordinance
Building Code
Livability Code
Stormwater Management Ordinance

These and other plans and ordinances must be in conformance with the Comprehensive Plan. However, as with any update or revision of a major planning document, conflicts may arise between previously adopted policies and newly proposed policies. The policies and guidelines contained within this Comprehensive Plan supersede any conflicting policies and/or guidelines contained in the above mentioned plans. See the list of links to related State regulations and other guidance, at the end of this chapter.

The Talbot County Comprehensive Plan takes into consideration the comprehensive development plans and ordinances of the incorporated municipalities within the County.

The Plan also refers to applicable State plans and ordinances which affect the growth and development of Talbot County.

Under the Talbot County Charter, the Planning Commission makes advisory recommendations to the Planning Officer and the County Council relating to the Comprehensive Plan. The Planning Officer also has the continuing responsibility and duty of making recommendations to the Council for the revision of the Comprehensive Plan. The Talbot County Council has the ultimate authority to determine the content of the Comprehensive Plan, taking the Planning Commission's advisory recommendations and the Planning Officer's recommendations into account.

VII. Implementation

The Comprehensive Plan is a policy document guiding public and private land use decisions and will be implemented through a variety of regulatory and financial tools.

Comprehensive plans are implemented through the zoning ordinance, and other county planning and regulatory documents, the capital improvement program, state and federal regulations and funding, and non-regulatory programs such as voluntary land management programs.

Talbot County has, over time, implemented a number of progressive growth management strategies that have begun to direct the pace and location of development. This Plan recommends further implementation strategies to better manage the density and location of growth, improve environmental quality, and ensure the provision of public facilities that meet the changing needs of residents and reduce the burden on existing residents of expanding public infrastructure.

To monitor progress in achieving the goals and strategies of this Plan, the Planning

Commission and Planning Officer may establish a process to review the effectiveness of regulatory and non-regulatory tools and make recommendations to the County Council when appropriate, which the Council may or may not approve as it sees fit.

The Planning Commission and Planning Officer, in the course of their duties, periodically review and update indicators of change. On an annual basis, the Planning Commission and Planning Officer reports on indicators of growth to the Maryland Department of Planning and to the public. Review and analysis of short term changes is an important step in evaluating and predicting potential shifts in the Plan's assumptions.

The Planning Commission and Planning Officer should maintain a dynamic relationship with the incorporated towns to review proposed developments in the designated growth areas. Managing the density and design of growth in population centers is critical to the success of the Plan's overarching goal to protect the rural character of the County.

Amendments to the Comprehensive Plan may be needed over time depending on new initiatives, more detailed planning, changes in growth projections, or changes in government policies. While annual review will provide indicators of short term changes, significant changes in development trends frequently take more years to become apparent. The Comprehensive Plan is intended to be long-range, establishing goals policies and implementation strategies that will be accomplished in five to twenty years. Further, within ten years this edition of the plan will be reviewed and updated as circumstances require.

Chapter 1 follows and provides the demographic and statistical background which provides some basic parameters and projections for this plan.

VIII. Comprehensive Planning Resources

The references below are provided for informational purposes and are not part of this Comprehensive Plan. Rather, the sites may supplement the information found in this document.

Maryland Department of Planning, *Local Government Planning*

<http://planning.maryland.gov/OurWork/localplanning.shtml>

Maryland Department of the Environment, overview of regulatory authority

<http://www.mde.state.md.us/programs/regulations/Pages/index.aspx>

University of Maryland Environmental Finance Center

Sustainable Maryland

<http://sustainablemaryland.com/>

Maryland Department of Agriculture, *Resource Conservation*

[www.mda.maryland.gov/resource conservation](http://www.mda.maryland.gov/resource%20conservation)

Maryland Historical Trust

<http://mht.maryland.gov/governments.html>

Maryland Emergency Management Agency

<http://mem.maryland.gov/pages/default.aspx>

Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development

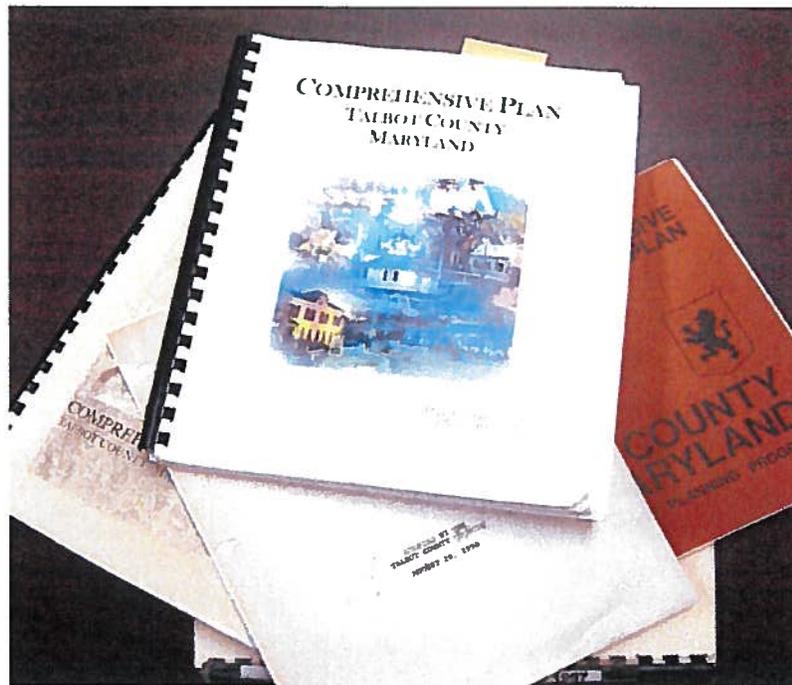
<http://dhcd.maryland.gov/website/programs>

Maryland State Highway Administration

www.roads.maryland.gov

American Planning Association, *community planning*

www.planning.org/community



Chapter 1 Background

Comprehensive planning provides a process and a framework for anticipating change and its implications. The process is built on a foundation constructed from the demographic, economic, social and natural resource factors driving change along with extensive citizen input. An assessment of trends and changes, coupled with a thoughtful review of public policy, permits a clear-eyed review of Talbot County's progress and its areas in need of more work.

To accomplish this assessment, Chapter 1 provides a variety of information, which when linked with the Plan's citizen input yields an effective basis for the Plan's recommendations. Specifically, this chapter reviews important trends, projections, and planning assumptions that undergird the analysis and policies in the succeeding chapters.

It is important to consult reliable baseline data in order to set goals and monitor progress. Trend data provide a numerical benchmark to help determine if a plan is realistic and reasonable. Unless otherwise noted, the U.S. Census Bureau and Maryland Department of Planning are the sources for this chapter's information. Maryland State Data Center (SDC) provides Census 2010 and other data cited in the *Maryland Statistical Handbook*, found at www.mdp.state.md.us/msdc/.

The chapter begins with a look at population changes and then addresses housing, income, employment and land use trends.

I. Demographics

A. Population

Figure 1-1 provides historic population data from 1950 through the last Census in 2010. Population change affects the demand for public and private goods and services. Location and age distribution have implications for the school system and other public infrastructure and services. The age and sex composition also affects government services and the economy.

Talbot County's population is estimated to be among the lowest in the state, at 37,782 persons (Census, 2010). Between 1900 and 1950 Talbot County's population remained almost unchanged at under 20,000. The 1950's brought the opening of the first Chesapeake Bay Bridge marking the beginning of increased County and regional growth.

Figure 1-1 Population Change 1950—2010

Census Year	Population	Increase	Percent Change	Per-cent Annual Change
1950	19,428			
1960	21,578	2,150	11.1	1.11
1970	23,682	2,104	9.7	.97
1980	25,605	1,923	8.12	.81
1990	30,541	4,936	19.27	1.92
2000	33,812	3,271	10.7	1.07
2010	37,782	3,970	11.7	1.17
Average Annual Growth 1950—2010				1.175

Source: US Census Bureau

Between 1950 and 2010, the population increased from 19,428 to 37,782, an annual growth rate of 1.17 percent.

The first half of the last decade saw a 5 percent rise, followed by a less dramatic increase of just 3.1 percent from 2005 to 2010. This slower trend reflected changes in the housing market, availability of credit and other consequences of the financially driven recession that began in 2008.

1. Geographic and Age Distribution

Like most rural areas, population growth in Talbot County is not evenly distributed. Figure 1-2 contains the distribution by jurisdiction for Talbot County's municipalities. Easton has traditionally been, and continues to be, the

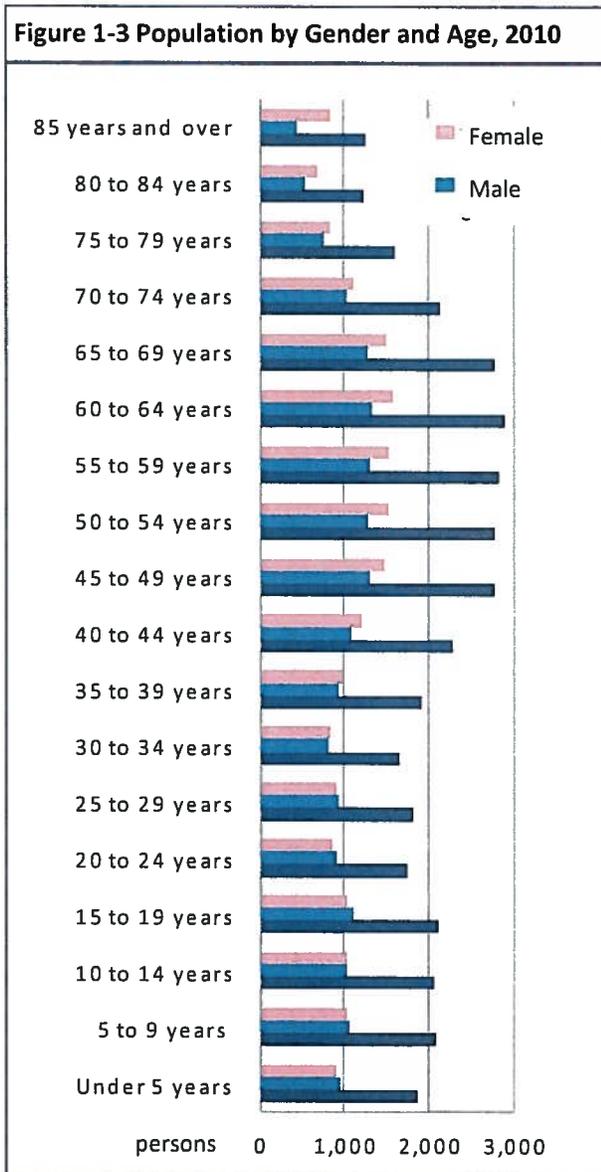
County's population center. The population of Easton was 15,945 persons, or 43 percent of the County's population, in the 2010 Census, and Easton has experienced continuous growth through the years. However, the County's other municipalities, with the exception of Queen Anne, lost population. This most likely results from the increased portion of County housing serving as second homes.

Figure 1-2 County and Municipal Population Distribution, 2010	
Talbot County Population	37,782
Total Municipal Population	18,796
Percent of County	49.7%
Easton	15,945
Oxford	651
Queen Anne (pt.)	94
St. Michaels	1,029
Trappe	1,077
Balance of County	18,986
Percent of County	50.3%

Easton is not only the commercial and business center of Talbot County, but also has the most suitable land for development, supported by robust urban infrastructure and services. The County's other towns are either land locked, limited in sewer, road or other infrastructure capacity, or host limited employment generators. County and Town growth plans are discussed in the following chapter (Land Use). The 2010 median age in Talbot County rose to 47.4 years, up from 43.4 in the 2000 Census. Talbot has the second highest median age among Maryland counties. The statewide median age was 38 years, with just 12.3 percent of the population age 65 or over. Locally, some 8,958 persons, or about 24 percent of the County population, were reported to be age 65 or over, as shown in Figure 1-4. Talbot County's relatively high median age is a function of a

population that is aging in place, in-migration of retirees and out-migration of younger people.

The Census' American Community Survey reports that about one fifth of the County's population is less than 18 years of age. The total male and female population is somewhat evenly distributed through all age groups up to the age of 45, where women become a slightly larger proportion of each age group, as illustrated in Figure 1-3.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005-2009 American Community Survey

2. Population Projections

Despite the present downturn in home sales and new home construction, the Maryland Department of Planning has predicted modest but steady growth for Talbot County. The greatest component of growth over the past few decades and expected through the next several decades is domestic in-migration. In recent periods deaths have outnumbered births in the County (530 to 449 in the 2011 estimate), contrary to the statewide trend of greater numbers of births versus deaths.

Figure 1-4 Census 2010 Age Comparisons, Maryland and Talbot County

	2010 Total Population	Pop. 18 Years and Over	Pop. 65 Years and Over
Maryland	5,773,552	4,420,588	707,642
		76.6%	12.3%
Talbot Co.	37,782	30,407	8,958
		80.5%	23.7%
	Median Age, All	Median Age, Male	Median Age, Female
Maryland	38.0	36.4	39.3
Talbot Co.	47.4	45.8	48.9

Figure 1-5 contains historic and projected County Census population and households from 1970 through 2010 and the Planning Data Service's projections through 2040. Talbot County can expect modest population growth, but a somewhat greater growth rate in the number of households as the size of households continues to decline.

In the *2005 Comprehensive Plan*, it was estimated that by 2030 the County's population would grow to 38,950, reflecting an average annual growth rate of about 0.5% per year (though some variability from year to year can be expected). The 2010 projections used in this update continue to predict a similar average annual growth rate of 1 percent or less, over the next 30 year period, which represents a substantially lower population growth rate than over the past 30 years.

3. Current and Projected Households

The growth in the number of households has been a steady trend over time. Between 1970 and 2000, the household rate of increase was 80.8%, nearly twice the rate of population growth (42.8%) over the same period.

The 2010 Census reports that 40 percent of all households consist of two persons and 28.3 percent are single person households. In addition to small household size, there is a growing number of nonfamily households — over 30 percent of all households in the County are nonfamily and almost one fourth are single person households. Figure 1-4 shows population numbers and gender and age brackets.

In summary, the demographic outlook indicates Talbot County will continue to become older on average with greater number of retirees living in smaller households. The school-aged and prime working age populations will remain relatively unchanged in terms of numbers, resulting in only modest growth of the workforce.

Figure 1-5 Historic and Projected Talbot County Population and Households, 1970 – 2040

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020	2030	2040
Population	23,682	25,604	30,549	33,812	37,780	40,850	42,900	44,000
Growth Rate		8.1%	19.3%	10.7%	11.7%	8.1%	5%	2.6%
Households	7,914	9,934	12,677	14,307	16,150	18,000	19,275	19,800
Average Household Size	2.94	2.55	2.39	2.32	2.31	2.25	2.20	2.19

Source: Maryland Department of Planning, July 2014

The implications for the economy, prosperity and livability of the County will be considered in subsequent chapters of the Plan. The relationship between population, growth and housing is outlined in the next section.

II. Housing

The U.S. Census American Community Survey (ACS) estimates that 19,618 housing units existed in the County in 2012, including the incorporated towns. This figure is an increase of over 3,000 units from the Census 2000 total of 16,500 units.

Countywide, 16,375 housing units, or over 80% of the County’s residences, are single-family homes. This figure is about 10 percent higher than the statewide average for single family housing.

Multi-family housing is almost exclusively located in the municipalities. ACA data indicate that Easton has the highest proportion of multi-family housing at 20 percent of all housing units. In contrast, the villages and rural areas of the County are reported to have little to no multi-family housing.

Of all housing units, just over 80 percent were occupied. In 2010, the percentage of vacant units rose to 19.2 percent, from the 13.3 percent

vacant reported in the 2000 Census. The majority of vacant units were in the category of seasonal or occasional use, which includes guest homes and ‘second’ homes.

The Maryland Department of Planning reports that 2,953 new single family parcels were created between 2000 and 2009. The number of new parcels created has increased every decade since the 1960s (see Figure 1-6).

Figure 1-6 also reveals an ebb and flow to residential development in the County over the past seventy years. Using the Priority Funding Areas (PFAs) established in 1992 as a basis, new construction has gravitated from the towns to suburban and rural development and gradually back to the towns.

The percentage of new subdivision in urbanized areas in the 1940s was not achieved again until the last decade, with nearly four times as many new lots created within PFAs, primarily in Easton. Over the past few decades the proportion of subdivision in towns steadily increased from 47% in the 1980s, to 58% in the 1990s to over 70% in the 2000s.

Data from the Maryland Association of Realtors’ Metropolitan Regional Information System reveal the demand for, and economic

Figure 1-6 New Residential (Single Family) Parcels Created by Decade 1940 —2009

YEARS	Total	Inside PFA	Percent	Comment Area	Percent	Outside PFA	Percent
1940-49	585	421	71.97%	20	3.42%	144	24.62%
1950-59	1,102	777	70.51%	44	3.99%	281	25.50%
1960-69	1,025	457	44.59%	124	12.10%	444	43.32%
1970-79	1,796	782	43.54%	169	9.41%	845	47.05%
1980-89	2,307	1,085	47.03%	122	5.29%	1,100	47.68%
1990-99	2,465	1,426	57.85%	97	3.94%	942	38.22%
2000-09	2,953	2,118	71.72%	49	1.66%	786	26.62%
1940-2009	12,233	7,066	57.76%	625	5.11%	4,542	37.13%

Source: Maryland Department of Planning

contributions of, single family housing in Talbot County. Since the last planning period, both the number of sales and the median price for single family homes declined in the recent recession. The number of sales fell by almost half and has yet to recover in volume. Median sale prices made a corresponding though less severe decline and remain below historic highs.

These trends not only slowed new development in the County but impacted revenues as well. Transfer taxes and real estate taxes are significant elements of the County budget and the combination of fewer real estate transfers and lower sales values will continue to influence the provision of community services. Figure 1-7 shows recent trends in home sales and the effect of the recent economic downturn.

Future subdivision and development is likely to be centered in the towns for the foreseeable future, due to a combination of State, County and municipal policies and growth management strategies. Public utilities and infrastructure, zoning regulations and land preservation strategies are directed towards a manageable pattern of growth across the County, with the majority occurring in the towns.

As housing is related to income, gross rent is a typical indication of housing affordability.

The American Community Survey reported that more than half of all renters countywide paid 30% or more of their income for rent alone. Of all 2,030 renters in this category, 1,428 are reported to be in Easton.

Such statistics for Talbot County should be viewed in a local context. For example, the greatest proportions of renters paying high portions of their income for housing are in the waterfront communities west of St Michaels. There, 62% of renters are likely short term and seasonal vacationers rather than full time residents.

III. Income

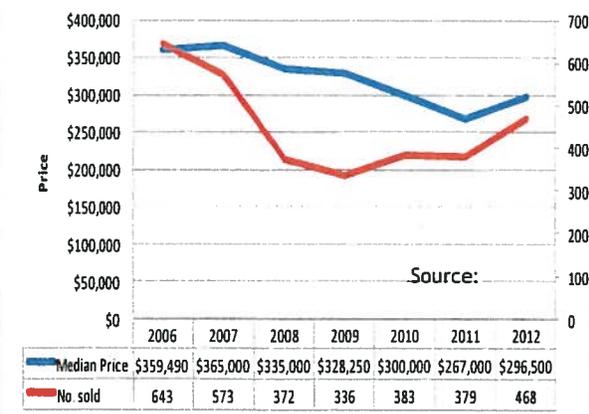
Income is composed of salary or wages, self-employment income, and dividends or interest income. Talbot has traditionally ranked among the highest median income counties in the state and generally exceeds the national county average.

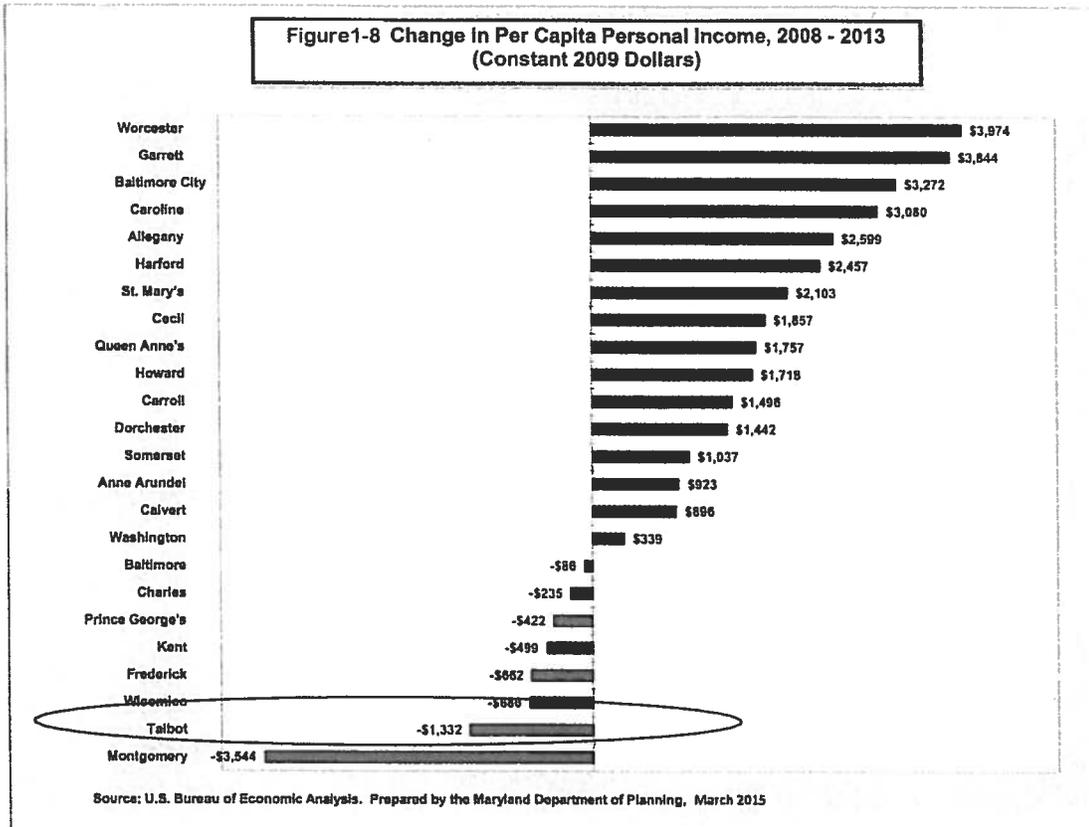
Median household income indicates the relative earnings of households and can be compared to other jurisdictions. The *2014 Maryland Statistical Handbook* reported the 2013 median household income for the County at \$57,525, compared to a statewide median of \$72,482.

However, per capita income data reveal how income varies within households and among wage earners. The same *Maryland Statistical Handbook* reports the County's average individual income for 2013 at \$56,955; the third highest among Maryland counties and well over the state per capita income of \$50,149.

Other per capita income statistics tell another aspect of the story, showing Talbot County with only modest gains in a statewide comparison. Talbot net per capita earnings fell by \$1,332 between 2008 and 2013 (see Figure 1-8). This 2.3 percent drop in individual earnings is one of the largest declines in the State.

Figure 1-7 Single Family Housing Sales 2006 -2012



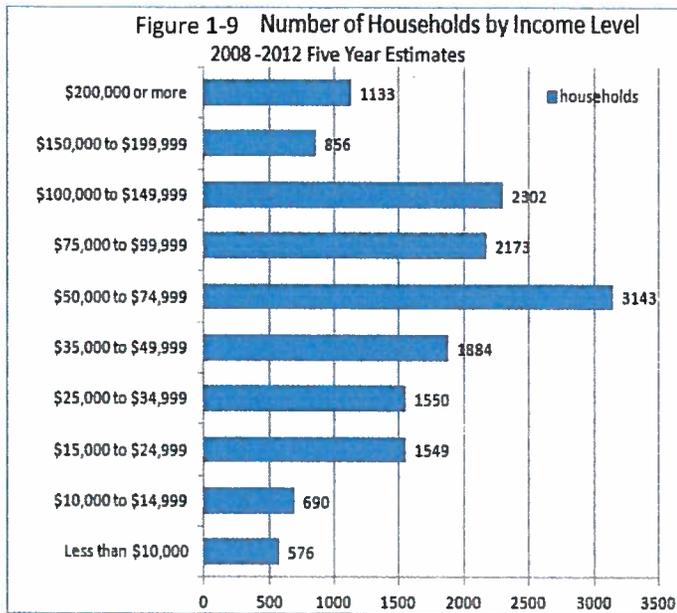


The *Handbook* also reports that Talbot County's poverty rate increased to 10.9 percent in 2013, a 3 percent increase from the 7.7 percent figure for 2006. This is somewhat greater than the statewide poverty rate increase over the same period from 8 percent in 2006, to 10.2 percent in 2013. The poverty threshold is not a single line, but a series of calculations based on family size and other variables, determining whether the income of a household is adequate to meet basic needs. Though the County may have a reputation as a haven for the well off, statistics depict a solidly middle class, middle aged residential community. The latest American Community Survey five year estimates reveal the following distribution of income among residents: Over 47 percent of all households in the County had incomes between \$50,000 and \$125,000, while 7.9 percent of households in the survey data set reported

incomes of less than \$15,000.

Other statistics report that the largest householder group (6,359 households) is aged 45 to 64. Within that group, 18.5 percent fall in the \$50,000 to \$125,000 income bracket. The next largest group consists of householders aged 65 years and over. Of those 5,108 households (12.3 percent) have incomes in the same middle bracket.

The demographic and income data above, combined with the employment and land use data below, can assist the County as it manages community services and programs. Income can predict revenues and population trends help anticipate local needs. While short-term economic variability can be managed, long-term changes could be problematic for public service provision and so should be monitored.



IV. Employment

State agencies including the Maryland Department of Commerce track business and employment data and provide annual updates and long-range projections. Their most recent *Brief Economic Facts, Talbot County, Maryland* reports the following data:

The 2015 County civilian labor force was comprised of 19,239 persons. In the 16,852-person private sector, Health Services employed the greatest number of people with over 2,000 jobs. Trade and Transportation employed 3,286 persons, Leisure and Hospitality services employed 3,152, while Manufacturing employed 1,104. The largest single employers in the County are the University of Maryland Shore Regional Health (1,640 employees), Genesis Health Care (250 employees), Bayleigh Chase (formerly William Hill Manor, 220 employees) and Wal-Mart (205 employees). All governments combined employ 1,409 persons in Talbot County.

The December 2015 unemployment rate was approximately 5.1 percent compared to the state's rate of 4.7 percent. The Department of Commerce reports that Talbot County's total civilian employment in 2015 was 18,226 full

and part time jobs. The Bureau of Economic Analysis reports that between 2008 and 2013 County employment fell by 1,204 full or part time jobs (approximately 4.1%). That figure includes 670 jobs regained from the low point of 27,225 in 2010. Most Eastern Shore counties except Worcester and Cecil experienced similar downturns in employment.

Other data on the County's workforce from the Maryland Department of Planning indicate that just over 38% of Talbot County workers live outside the County. Of the 8,030 persons entering the County for work, an estimated 3,327 live in Caroline County, 2,208 in Dorchester County and 1,064 in Queen Anne's County. Smaller numbers come from as far as Lancaster County, PA and Fairfax County, VA.

Somewhat fewer Talbot County residents work elsewhere, with an estimated 4,885 persons commuting to other locations. The largest proportion (960) travel to Queen Anne's County, followed by Anne Arundel County (738) and Caroline County (697). A few County residents travel as far as Philadelphia and Adams County, in Pennsylvania.

Figure 1-10 Inter-County Commuters

COMMUTING INTO	COMMUTING OUT OF	NET (IN-OUT)
8,060	4,885	3,175

Clearly, Talbot County is part of a regional economy centered in, but not restricted to, the Eastern Shore. Workers commuting into the County make possible a dynamic retail and service economy that serves the region. Residents who work outside the County spend on housing, goods and services in their community. All will use County infrastructure and facilities, along with the considerable number of tourists and visitors who visit or pass through the County every year.

Employment and unemployment add to an

already complex calculation of future demands for County services. While job opportunities remain tight, Maryland statistical projections indicate that younger workers are likely to continue to relocate outside the area. New residents replacing them will invariably be older, perhaps more prosperous and most likely retired persons attracted by Talbot's combination of rural character and urbane attractions. They will be consumers of the retail, hospitality and medical services that are already a large portion of the local economy. See Chapter 7, Economic Development and Tourism, for further discussion.

V. Existing Land Use

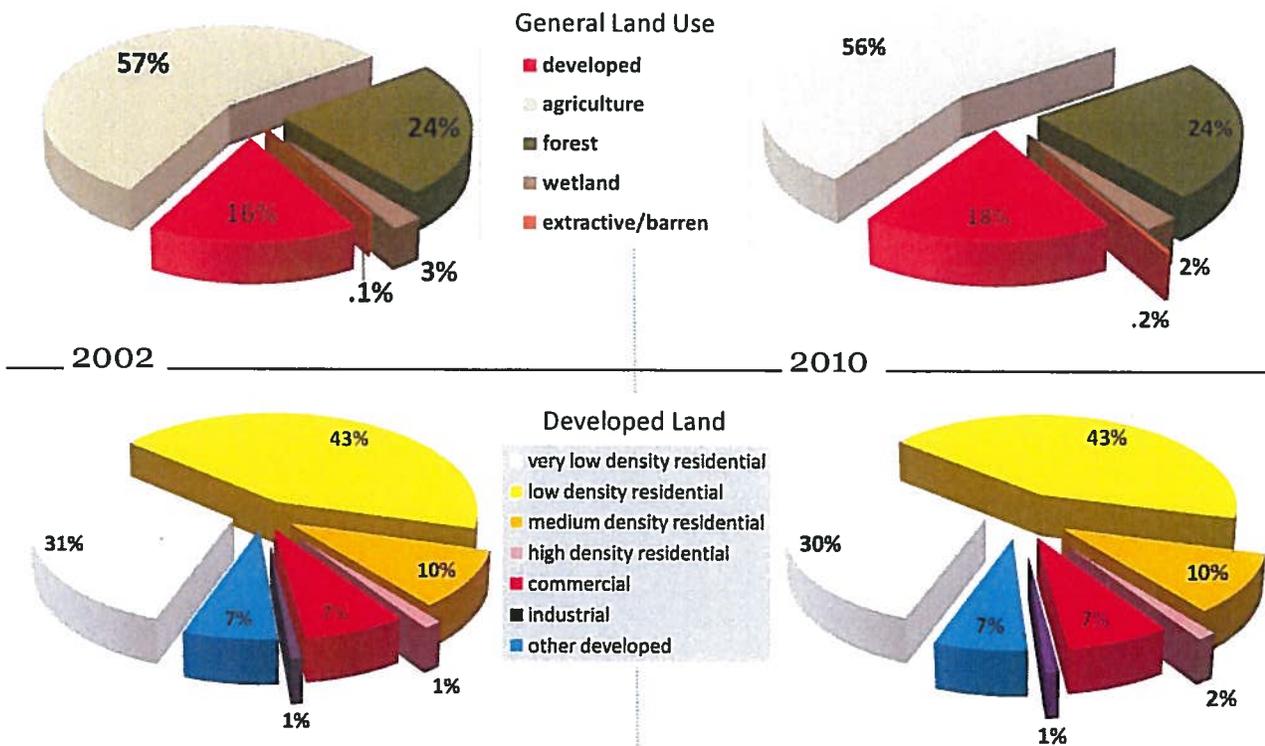
Map 1-A (at the end of this chapter) depicts the geographic distribution of land use/land

cover in Talbot County from 2010 data.

As the map illustrates, medium and high density residential development in the County is concentrated in the incorporated towns, while lower density residential development comprises the majority of the residential use in the unincorporated areas. The County's rural villages, as historical centers predating the automobile, formed small concentrations of somewhat higher density development, along with the remnants of earlier commercial and industrial uses.

Figure 1-11 illustrates that land use has remained relatively stable through the past decade. The Maryland Department of Planning estimates that 30,654 acres of Talbot County's 171,657 acre land area could

Figure 1-A Talbot County Land Use, 2002 and 2010



be classified as developed in 2010. By comparison in 2002, 27,987 acres were classified as developed.

Within the category of developed land, commercial and industrial uses accounted for about 3,041 acres in 2010, up from 2,292 acres in 2002. Most commercial and industrial development in the County is located in the incorporated towns, with some development in unincorporated areas along routes U.S. Route 50 and MD 33.

The vast majority of land classified as resource land is in agricultural use. Agriculture occupied 95,662 acres in 2010, down from 97,739 acres in 2002. Forests, which are also agricultural resources, covered an additional 40,510 acres in 2010, 757 acres below the 2002 figure of 41,270.

The 2012 Census of Agriculture collects and reports farmland acreage using a different methodology and reports that Talbot County had 119,481 acres in farmland. Census of Agriculture statistics are also discussed in Chapter 5.

VI. Summary

Talbot remains by design one of Maryland's sparsely populated rural counties, despite development pressures brought on by regional trends and a growing number of individuals, retirees and small families settling in the area.

The County is projected to continue to age with little growth in its work force. These trends have implications for the County's communities, economy and land use.

Long-standing land use policies have protected farmland and open space from development and retained the County's rural character. Agriculture remains an important and viable industry in part because fragmentation of farm landscapes has been discouraged.

Talbot is a comparatively prosperous County. Though some poverty exists, incomes of most residents are adequate to meet their needs. Unemployment in the County is nearly equal to the State average. Hospitality businesses, medical services, education and government are important employers.

The statistics outlined in this chapter suggest some challenges that will be discussed in subsequent chapters. These range from protection of natural and historic resources, to the provision of public services and amenities, to promoting a resilient economy. The economic downturn of the last few years have impacted Talbot County less than some other areas but nevertheless have exposed some vulnerabilities that should be considered.

Chapter 2 addresses land use and provides a strategy based on the trends identified in Chapter 1.

Existing Land Use, 2010
From MDP data

Developed Areas

- Low Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Commercial
- Institutional
- Industrial
- Bare/Extractive
- Open Urban Land

Rural Areas

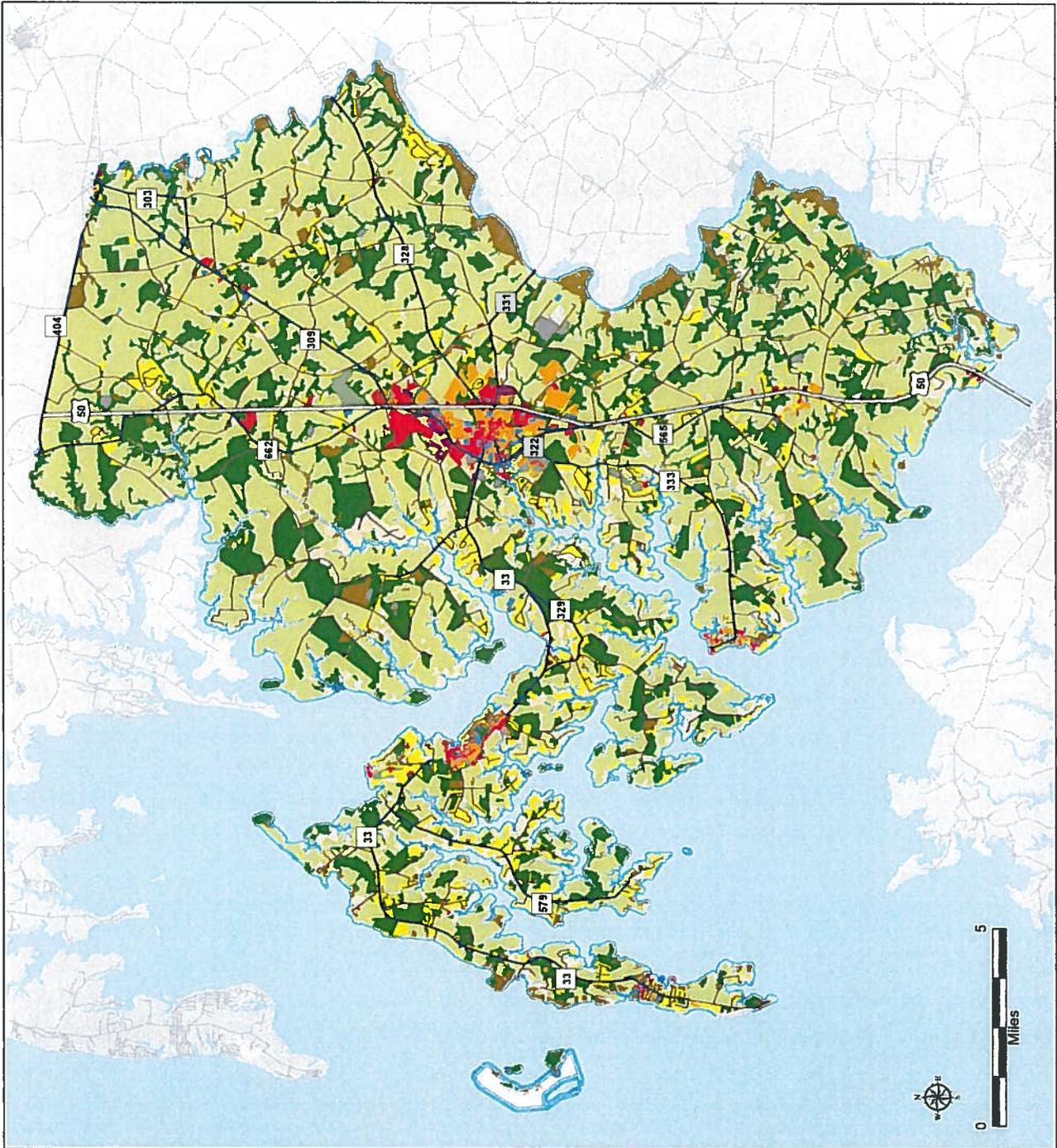
- Large Lot Subdivision
- Agriculture
- Forest

Sensitive Areas

- Wetlands

Roads

- US
- MD
- CO



Chapter 2 Land Use Plan



Vision

Land use decisions preserve and enhance the rural character and natural resources of Talbot County and are based on full participation of our citizens. The desirable Talbot County growth rate shall maintain or improve our quality of life. Growth management in the County recognizes the fragile nature of our unique geography. Sustainable growth is related to the ability to provide resources and infrastructure.

Most business and residential development will be guided into the incorporated towns and Designated Growth Areas consistent with the principles of smart growth. The Countryside Preservation designation, with its limited development allowance, surrounds the towns and creates a distinct boundary between urban and rural landscape.

Further, the Towns and the County, respecting each other's values, work and plan together, striving for harmonious transitions at their boundaries. The resulting compact land use pattern provides sufficient urban locations for anticipated growth while the County's rural lands remain so.

Land use policies recognize the very special nature of the County's bayside with its fragile ecological composition. The narrow peninsulas bounded by tidal streams feature farmlands interspersed with modestly scaled historic towns and villages. This environmental gem, along with its waterborne and agricultural heritage, needs finely tuned land use tools and environmental protection to ensure its viability for the generations to come.

Goal

Promote and maintain a well-planned pattern of land and water resource use, through which compatible and efficient development is concentrated in areas where environmental impacts will be minimized; the County's overall rural character is retained; and anticipated growth occurs in appropriate locations with suitable public and private community services.

I. Introduction

Talbot County's rural landscape evolved from its rich history as a farming and maritime community. The landscape is dotted with classic towns and villages that developed at crossroads, landings and former mill sites to serve the seafood, boat building and agriculture industries.

This plan seeks to maintain Talbot County's rural pattern of settlement by guiding urban development to Population Centers where public infrastructure exists and by discouraging development in the County's most rural and environmentally sensitive areas.

Growth management is not a new concept for Talbot County. The 1973 *Comprehensive Plan* included the objective to "Encourage new development to locate in and around existing population centers." However, the efforts to accomplish this objective were overcome by a growing demand for then-permitted two-acre rural lots.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, two important actions significantly strengthened policies to maintain the County's rural character. In 1989, the Talbot County Critical Area Program was adopted, establishing the **Rural Conservation (RC)** zoning district within the Critical Area. This action to implement the state's Critical Area program effectively converted 57,498 waterfront acres from two and five acre residential lots to a one dwelling unit per 20 acre density.

Following the 1990 comprehensive plan update, which reaffirmed core land conservation goals, the County adopted a Rural Agricultural Conservation (**RAC**) zoning district. The **RAC** replaced a 2-acre per lot zoning density with a residential development density closer to one dwelling unit per 20 acres. Three lots were permitted for the first six acres of a parcel with the

remaining acreage requiring 20 acres for each additional dwelling unit.

These zoning changes reduced development density over more than 87% of the County's land mass. The 1990 *Comprehensive Plan* also called for significant changes to County development ordinances and policies, which were reinforced by the 1997 Plan update, and were largely implemented.

The 2005 *Comprehensive Plan* built on the goals and policies of prior plans; that is, strengthening the growth management policies that guide development in and around existing Population Centers and limit the outward expansion of those centers into the rural areas. **Countryside Preservation (CP)** zoning districts were established around the towns, defining the ultimate extent of urban development and providing for an orderly transition between town and County.

As framework for organizing land use policy, the County has been divided into three primary land use policy sectors: Development and Growth, Rural Reserve, and Sensitive Areas, which are described in Section II, General Land Use Plan. For each sector guiding principles are outlined and ensuing implementation measures are coordinated for their consistency with the principles. Community character and a pattern scale, and mix of land uses can be readily discerned within the sectors.

The Plan's land use strategies focus on limiting development in environmentally sensitive and rural areas while encouraging growth in the incorporated towns and their adjacent Designated Growth areas. These strategies are designed to accomplish the County's land use visions and goals.

In addition, some village communities have been identified as Priority Funding Areas (PFAs), where the state may make economic infrastructure investments to support

sustainable development. Future development in PFAs should be compatible with the pattern, scale and mix of land uses proposed in this Comprehensive Plan.

In Section II the General Land Use plan is

presented, which includes a discussion of existing and future land use conditions followed by an implementation strategy for the chapter's land use policies and recommendations.

Countywide Land Use Policies

2.1 The County should preserve its unique rural landscape through conservation of farmland, forestlands, and environmentally sensitive lands by application of land use regulations and easement programs that conserve open space in rural areas.

2.2 The County should continue a restrictive approach toward the use of land over which it has zoning authority, and new development should be of a controlled nature and channeled into the most appropriate areas and discouraged in others.

2.3 Most new residential, institutional, commercial, business and industrial development should be located in Designated Growth areas and incorporated towns. Most new development in rural areas should be located in Village Planning Areas.

2.4 County Village zoning densities shall support the primary goal of the Plan to preserve the existing rural character of the County and shall not overburden roadways and other existing infrastructure.

2.5 The County shall prohibit strip commercial development along County and State roadways.

2.6 In certain areas where the County Council deems redevelopment or reinvestment to be appropriate to support tourism and economic development, the County should provide greater design flexibility for redevelopment projects that will allow for the improvement or replacement of functionally obsolete nonconforming structures and/or uses.

2.7 Sensitive environmental areas shall be protected or mitigated onsite to the greatest extent possible.



II. General Land Use Plan

The strategy for keeping the County's rural character is dependent upon preserving rural lands and open space, and encouraging most future residential, commercial, and industrial growth to occur in the incorporated towns and existing Designated Growth Areas.

Development in rural areas will be limited to low density residential and low intensity uses that preserve open space and supports conditions for farming to continue. Farmland accounts for most of the County's open space and scenic character. The box below lists the County's general land use policies.

As noted earlier, the County's general land use policy sectors are:

- A. Development and Growth
- B. Rural Reserve
- C. Sensitive Areas

To use a finer grain to analyze particular regions of the County, the land use sectors are further broken down into geographic planning areas, which include:

- A. Development and Growth Sector
 - 1. Designated Growth and Future Growth
 - 2. Existing Commercial
 - 3. Community Character
 - 4. Rural Residential
- B. Rural Reserve
 - 1. Agriculture
 - 2. Countryside Preservation
- C. Sensitive Areas
 - 1. Chesapeake Bay Critical Area
 - 2. Western Rural Conservation

The Land Use Policy and Planning Area map graphically represents the County's preferred land use pattern. The map and plan provide the basis for delineating zoning districts, developing public works plans and establishing development standards.

Future County growth and development should

generally conform to this map and the accompanying planning area policies. Adopted implementing ordinances shall be consistent with this plan with regard to both local and state policy.

A. Development and Growth Sectors

1. Designated Growth Areas and Future Growth Areas

a. Relationship to Municipalities

The Designated Growth Areas and Future Growth Areas are focused on four of the County's five incorporated towns (Easton, St. Michaels, Oxford and Trappe). These are the County's principal residential, commercial and industrial centers. Prior to 1940, about 40% of new arrivals have settled within incorporated towns. The majority of County businesses (and hence places of employment) are also located in the towns.

The Town of Queen Anne, with its population of 220, lacks public infrastructure and is in some respects more akin to a village than a town. Limited growth is anticipated in Queen Anne and so it is not considered in the Development and Growth sector.

Talbot County's municipalities possess adequate public facilities and services. Also, additional facilities can most efficiently be provided in these towns. The four full-service towns therefore are the logical locations for compact development and future investments in public infrastructure. Concentrating residential, commercial and industrial growth in the four towns will deflect development pressure from the County's agricultural and environmentally sensitive areas.

The four towns discussed above have their own planning and zoning authority along with an existing infrastructure network capable of supporting planned growth. They have identified areas for future annexation and growth in their own comprehensive plans,

which are recognized in delineating the Development and Growth sector. The County will continue to support efforts of municipalities to plan for and provide the infrastructure necessary to accommodate their planned portion of the County's residential and business growth. Doing so will further this Plan's objectives to direct growth to the County's existing population centers.

The Designated Growth Areas and Future Growth Areas are selected by mutual agreement with the towns. These areas are bounded by existing urban and suburban development at the inner edges and

Town Conservation and Countryside

Preservation zoning designations at the outer limits of future urban scale improvement.

Designated and Future Growth Areas encompass over 4,275 acres countywide. Development is anticipated to occur in these areas only after annexation into the adjacent town. Such development will then be regulated by the municipalities, ideally creating compact mixed-use neighborhoods and non-residential districts.

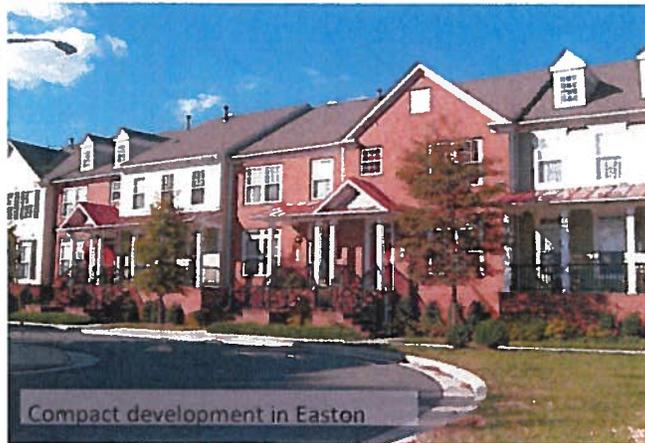
Annexation and development within growth areas should occur incrementally, with properties on the inner ring receiving the higher priority for annexation and development. "Leapfrog" development of properties at low densities on the outer perimeter of growth areas shall be avoided, along with "pipestem" or "panhandle" annexations by towns. The County supports orderly town expansion and discourages

premature development at the growth areas' extremities.

Future commercial development is encouraged to locate within the towns or as infill and redevelopment of existing commercial areas. Large-scale commercial uses, including shopping centers and 'big box' retail will not be permitted in the identified growth areas while under County land use

authority, but may be developed upon annexation into a town.

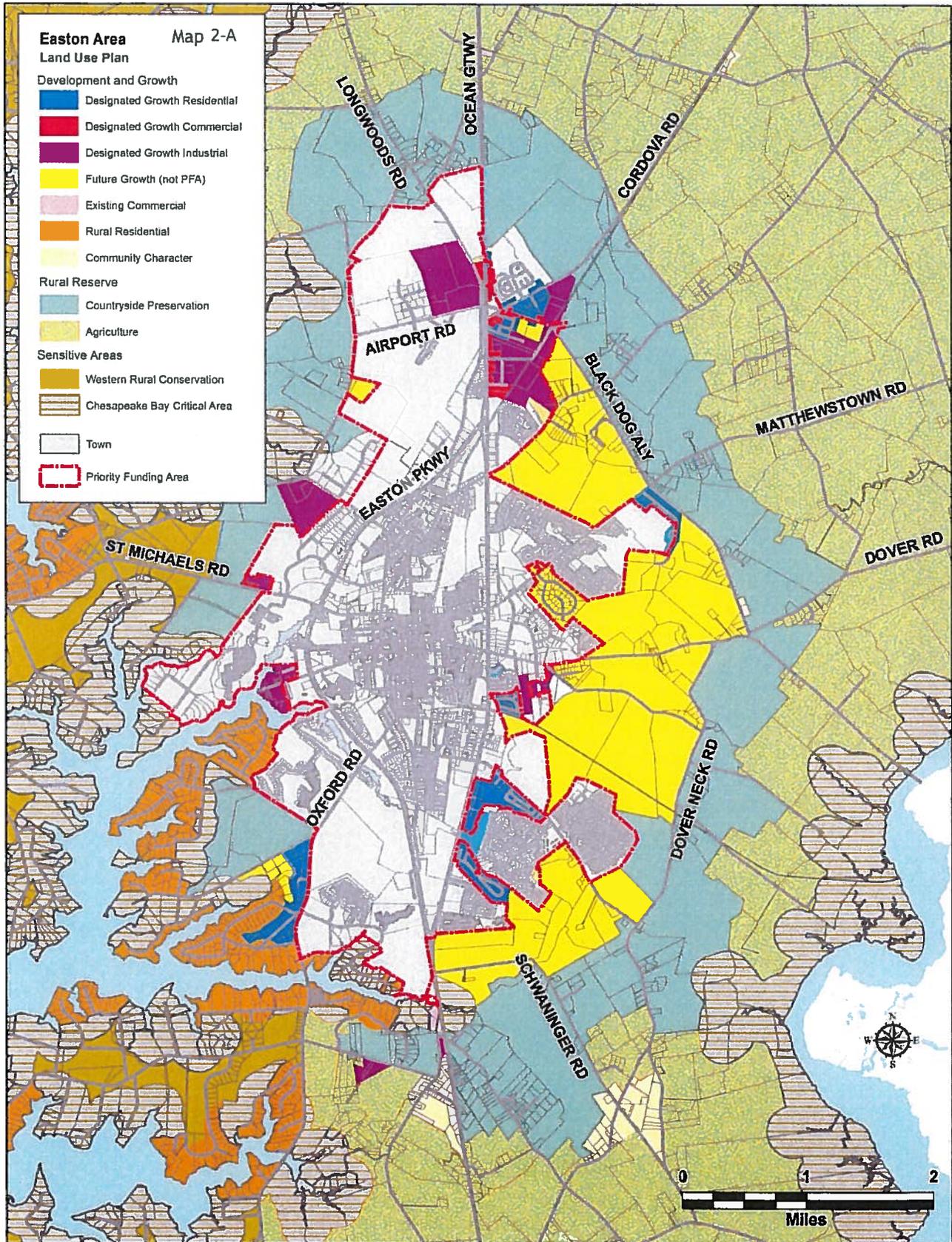
Business and industrial uses will also be encouraged to locate within the towns but may be located in appropriate County zoning

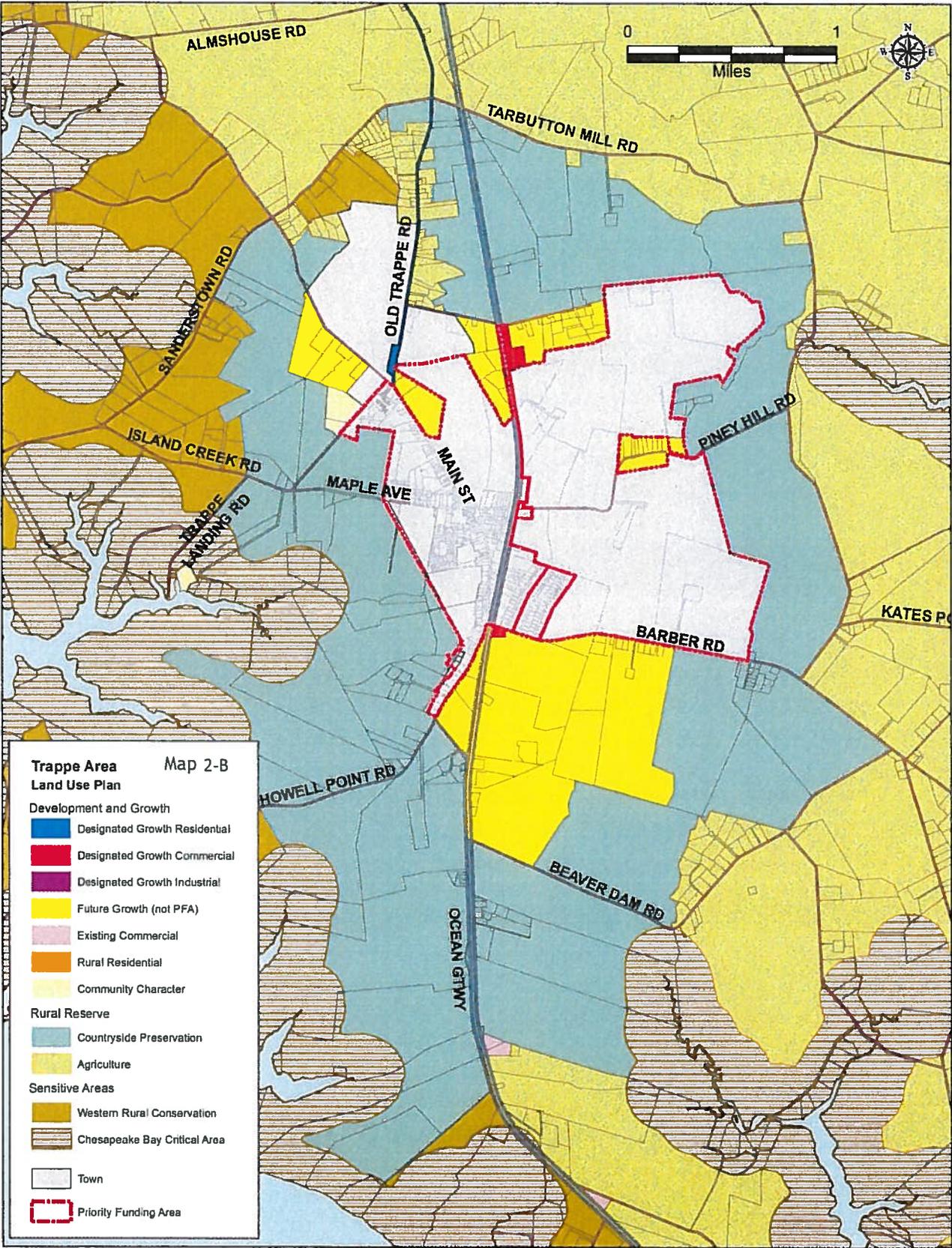


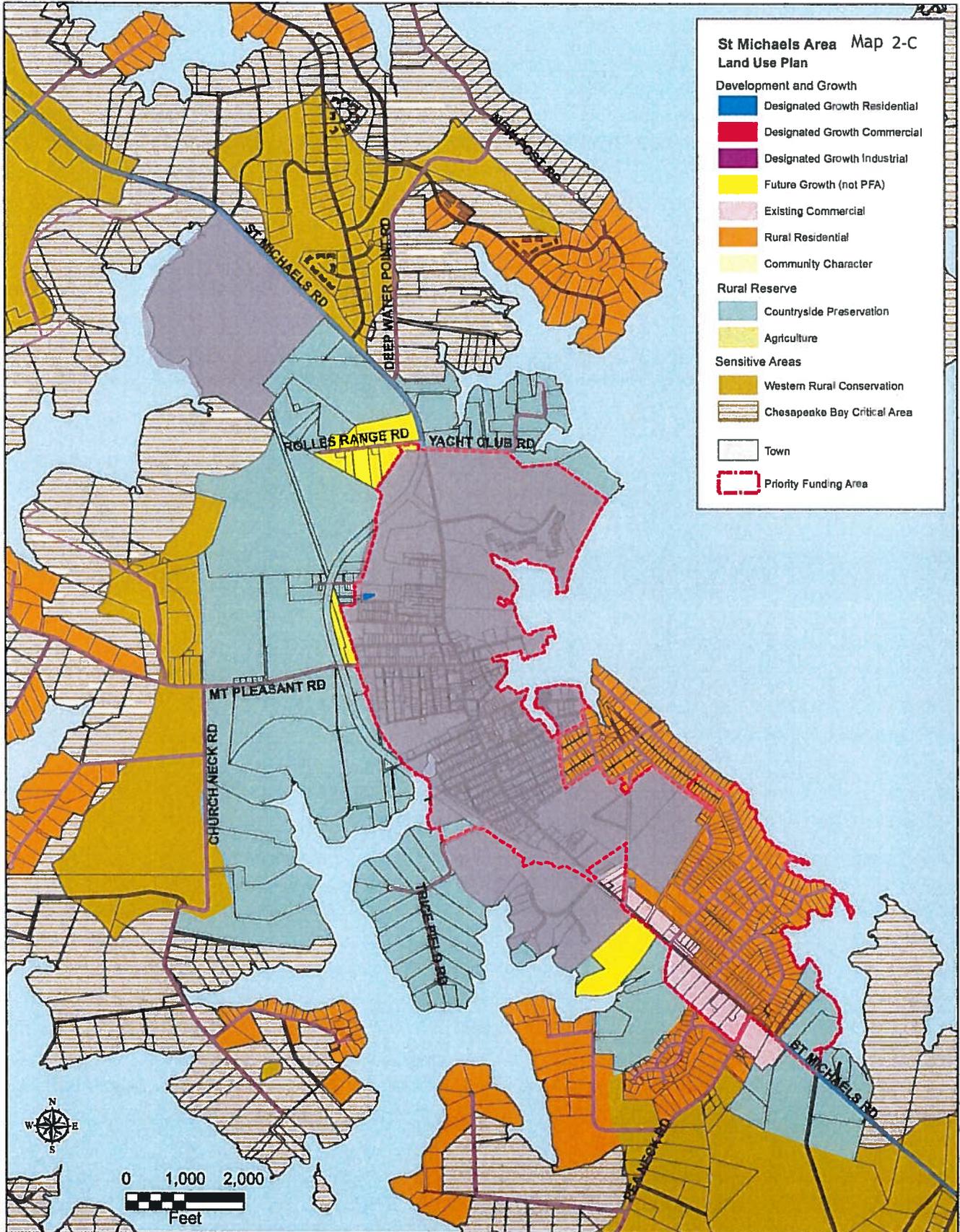
districts. Commercial and industrial areas within growth areas contain parcels zoned for such activities. The purpose of these sites is to provide appropriate and adequate areas for future employment. They are not appropriate locations for large-scale retail. There are a limited number of un-annexed acres in the County designated for industrial and commercial development, primarily surrounding the Town of Easton.

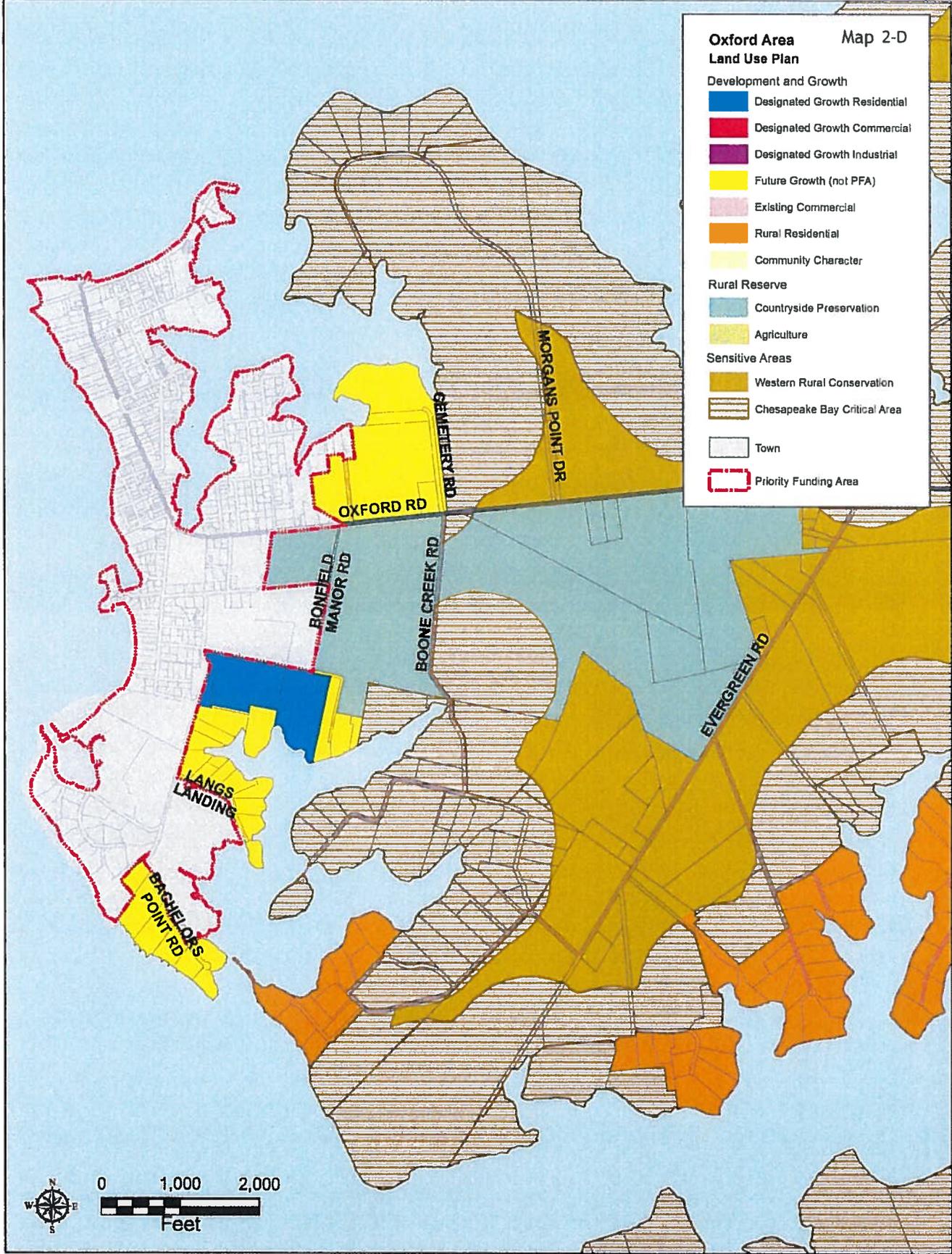
The County will coordinate with towns to ensure that growth areas are developed with adequate public facilities and services, proper quality community design and appropriate environmental safeguards. The growth areas associated with the towns are discussed below, along with any special circumstances.

Detailed land use plan maps for areas surrounding the four incorporated towns begin on page 2-6.







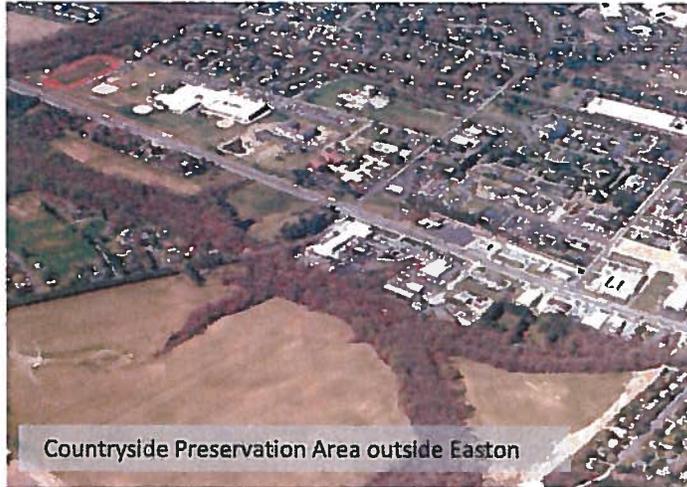


b. Easton Growth Areas

The *Town of Easton's 2010 Comprehensive Plan* identifies an urban growth boundary that corresponds to this plan's **Town**

Conservation

(TC) zoning designation. The land located between the existing municipal boundary and the inner edge of the **Countryside Preservation** (CP) zoning designation are delineated by Easton's comprehensive



plan as priority 1,2, and 3 growth areas. Individual properties may be zoned for residential, commercial or industrial uses under the County Zoning Ordinance (see Map).

The first priorities are Easton's 'Boundary Refinement' areas, i.e., properties expected to be annexed within five years to 'clean up' the Town boundary or to be served by municipal sewer and water for health and safety reasons. Priority 2 areas are anticipated to be annexed within a five to twenty year planning period. Lands designated TC in the County's Zoning Ordinance is limited in development density until they are annexed by the Town. Generally, Priority 2 and 3 areas are identified by the state as priority funding "comment areas", and are not automatically eligible for state development funding.

The Priority 3 (future) growth areas include all other land between the County's **Countryside Preservation** areas and town boundaries. These areas are identified in Easton's plan for urban expansion in the very long-range plan (20 years or later). These areas are not designated as Priority Funding Areas by the

state. These areas are identified as "Future Growth Areas" in Map 2-I.

Easton plans to permit future residential growth at urban densities, consistent with priority funding area densities (3.5 or greater units per acre). The proposed land use patterns in the Town's Designated Growth areas include well-defined, connected neighborhoods with an integrated mix of residential,

neighborhood-scale commercial, civic, and open space uses. This is designed to encourage functioning neighborhoods complete with recreation and opportunities for social interaction, rather than single-use suburban style subdivisions.

2. Existing Commercial

Certain mall, isolated areas of the County are zoned **General Commercial (GC), Limited Commercial (LC), or Limited Industry (LI)**, based on past land uses such as country stores, vegetable canneries, etc. No significant growth or expansion is anticipated for these small sites.

3. Community Character

Notable among the County's residential areas are its villages, unincorporated communities that are found distributed throughout the County.

Villages are low or moderate density historic residential communities with limited neighborhood commercial and other uses or services. They are an important component of rural character, providing a pleasingly scaled and textured contrast to the County's more

urban areas.

Villages are recognized for their significant heritage and pattern of development. Villages are designated

Community Character in order to safeguard these attributes while providing for some measure of growth and redevelopment. In its Smart Growth Act of 1998, the State of Maryland defines a rural village as an:



“...unincorporated area that is primarily residential, including an area with historic qualities, that is located in an otherwise rural or agricultural area and for which new growth, if any, would derive primarily from in-fill development or limited peripheral expansion.

The State also provides guidance for establishing rural village boundaries in the *Models and Guidelines* document *Smart Growth: Designating Priority Funding Areas*. This and other planning guides can be viewed and downloaded at <http://www.mdp.state.md.us/OurProducts/publications.shtml#planningGuides>.

Several village communities experience problems with failing septic systems due to combinations of small lot sizes, poor soil conditions and a high groundwater table. These villages have been designated as Water Quality Strategy Areas in the Tier Maps, following the policy that connections to existing wastewater treatment facilities or local shared facilities are the most practical approaches for correcting existing problems without promoting excessive new

development. Methods will be pursued through comprehensive sewer and water plans updates to address public health concerns.

Villages should be required to maintain their sense of place as identified by their existing architectural character, scale, mix of uses and density of development. For this Plan’s purposes, infill shall be limited to

completing development on existing lots of record at the density permitted. This chapter reemphasizes the recommendations of the *2005 Comprehensive Plan* concerning village boundaries with respect to the state’s criteria and County land use policies. Maps of the County’s 22 villages attached as Appendix A provide illustrative examples of reasonable boundary modifications. All village areas should be examined as part of a comprehensive rezoning based on this Plan. Village planning is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 9, *Community Design and Appearance*.

4. Rural Residential

Other moderate density residential communities are identified in this plan as **Rural Residential** and are also designated as **Limited Development Areas (LDA)** in the County’s Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Plan. Though these areas are largely developed, some infill and redevelopment is anticipated.

During the second half of the twentieth century, Talbot County experienced suburban style large lot growth, characterized by

uniform subdivisions that consumed farm and forest with curvilinear and cul-de-sac street patterns. Largely built out, these developments have little if any additional growth capacity.

The County does not foresee permitting more development of this type. Rather, the primary

emphasis in these areas is to insure that infill and redevelopment is done in an environmentally sensitive manner. Development in the County's Critical Area is regulated to insure water quality and to reduce habitat impacts.

Development and Growth Planning Sector Policies

2.8 The County should coordinate with the towns in the review and approval of development projects adjacent to the towns and in matters of town annexations.

2.9 County development regulations for Designated Growth Areas should support the orderly expansion of the towns by discouraging premature development in these areas.

2.10 The application and enforcement of the County Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance in the vicinity of the Easton Airport will be in conformance with FAA safety and noise abatement regulations.

2.11 County development regulations in the Easton and Trappe Future Growth Areas should prohibit premature urban or suburban development until such time as these areas are annexed into the adjoining town.

2.12 Large-scale commercial uses, including shopping centers/districts and big box retail shall be limited to the incorporated towns.

2.13 Concentrations of commercial and industrial uses should be located in well-planned centers or parks within the towns, or as infill and redevelopment of existing commercial/industrial areas.

2.14 Industrial uses in villages should be limited to those that support agriculture, forestry and commercial maritime uses.

2.15 The County will prepare development standards requiring that new non-residential development be compatible with the scale and architecture of rural villages.

2.16 Village growth should derive primarily from infill, redevelopment, and limited new development, and should be compatible with the existing character and density of the village.

2.17 Master Plans are required in designated Village Planning Areas to help describe a village's character, to evaluate the compatibility and suitability of existing and proposed land uses, infrastructure, facilities and services associated with development and redevelopment, and to assist County planning efforts. Draft village plans shall be vetted with village residents to determine a general consensus on the village's recommendations to the County for applicable future growth policies.

2.18 The County will promote housing rehabilitation and affordable housing initiatives.

2.19 Infill development and redevelopment of existing residential subdivisions and existing neighborhoods in rural areas should be compatible with existing character and density.

2.20 New buildings or redevelopment of existing buildings on existing lots should be located outside of habitat protection areas or lands threatened by flooding or shoreline change.

Neighborhoods in rural areas should be compatible with their existing character and density.

B. Rural Reserve

The County's rural reserve contains the majority of the County's working lands (labeled Agriculture and zoned **Agricultural Conservation, AC**) and the boundary area between urban areas and the County's rural lands (labeled and zoned **Countryside Preservation, CP**). The Rural Reserve is designated to maintain a critical mass of cropland, pasture and forest to support agriculture and define the edge between urban and rural Talbot County. The two sub-units of the Reserve are discussed below.

1. Agriculture

The agriculture planning area encompasses the bulk of rural land in the eastern half of the County. These areas are characterized by farms, forestry, open space, low-density single-family homes, and agriculturally related commercial and industrial establishments.

Agricultural and forestry activities are the preferred land uses within these areas. Future residential development in the Agriculture planning area should be designed to preserve productive agricultural lands, woodlands, open space, environmentally sensitive resources and rural character.

Conservation of agricultural lands and open space through purchase of development rights (PDR) programs is encouraged in this region, which is identified as a Priority Preservation Area for agriculture (see Chapter 5, Agriculture). Some 11,000 acres of farm and forest land have been permanently protected through the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Program (MALPF), a purchase of development rights program established by the state in 1977. The County should continue its participation in this program to meet its agricultural land preservation goal.

These lands are generally classified **Tier IV** in the Maryland regulations for subdivision on septic systems known as SB 236 (see detailed explanation beginning on page 2-15). Clustering is required for the majority of lots in new residential subdivisions permitted in this planning area. Clustering shall be designed to maintain agricultural use on the remaining nonresidential portion of the parcel.

Permanent land preservation, mandatory clustering and lower residential densities have successfully conserved valuable agricultural land and open space, while allowing landowners to retain a degree of development potential and equity. This approach should be continued.

Rural Reserve Planning Area Policies

2. 21 A definitive **Countryside Preservation** area shall be maintained at the outer perimeter of the Designated Growth areas.

2. 22 Open space, agriculture, forestry, and low density single-family detached residential uses are the preferred uses in the Rural Reserve Planning Area.

2.23 The County will continue to encourage cluster development and preserve open space to maintain or enhance rural character.

2.24 The County will promote Transfer of Development Rights as a means of preserving prime farmland and encouraging appropriate residential development patterns in rural areas.

2.25 The County will continue and strengthen the current countywide farmland and resource land protection PDR programs. Additional public and private funding sources should be sought to expand the program.

2.26 Agriculturally related commercial and industrial uses are permitted in the Rural Reserve planning areas.

C. Sensitive Areas

Talbot County's sensitive lands are composed of the tidal perimeter of the County along the Chesapeake Bay and its local tributaries. The non-tidal portions of the many necks in the western half also require special attention, as all lands here have a sensitive relationship with the natural environment.

The Maryland Department of Planning also suggests another kind of sensitive area in its publication, *Design Characteristics of Maryland's Traditional Settlements*. It is the rural cultural landscape, the character of which is dependent on coexisting manmade and natural scenic values. These landscapes are considered sensitive to development that is out of context with historic and traditional patterns.

Descriptions of these sensitive lands' character and methods necessary for their stewardship follow.

1. Western Rural Conservation

The upland portions (non-Critical Area) of Talbot County's western necks are zoned **Western Rural Conservation (WRC)** in recognition of the high concentration of sensitive natural areas in close proximity to tributaries of the Chesapeake Bay. This planning area features a mix of agriculture, low-density residential and natural resource areas.

These narrow land areas have few routes to inland parts of the County. Flooding, traffic and other road obstructions have demonstrated legitimate cause for concern, should development overcome the capacity for safe transit through these areas.

Conserving the agriculture, forestry, recreational and resource conservation uses that form the character of these areas is a high priority. The **WRC** zone will be targeted for development controls and resource enhancement programs

designed to protect natural resources while providing for limited, low-density residential development with appropriate safeguards for resource protection.

2. Critical Area

The County has adopted a Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Plan which affects all waterfront areas of the County 1,000 feet landward from the shoreline or the inland edge of tidal wetlands. In the Critical Area, Talbot County zoning districts are concurrent with its Critical Area designation. The **Rural Conservation (RC)** zoning district corresponds to the Resource Conservation Area (**RCA**) designation in the Critical Area Program.

These areas are characterized by natural environments, agriculture, forestry and fisheries and it is the County's intent to retain these areas in such uses. Only low-density residential development is permitted, provided such development is located outside of habitat protection areas and can demonstrate that water quality and habitat have been maintained or improved.

Within the Critical Area, detailed regulations have been adopted which direct, manage and control residential, commercial and industrial development to minimize adverse impacts of growth. The Talbot County Critical Area Plan and the development standards it contains are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 6, Natural Resource Conservation. Regulations are detailed in the County Zoning Ordinance.

Critical Area law makes some provision for growth allocation, or re-designating land for more intense development. The total land area available for re-designation is limited to five percent of the County's Resource Conservation Area (RCA) lands as of 1989 (about 2,500 acres). Growth allocation should only be permitted where it advances the land use policies and objectives of this Comprehensive Plan.

Sensitive Areas Planning Policies

- 2.27 Future development in the Sensitive Areas should be primarily characterized by open space, agriculture, forestry, and low-density single-family detached homes.
- 2.28 Within the Sensitive Areas, agriculture and forest cover should remain the dominant land uses.
- 2.29 Residential Development in the RC and WRC zoning districts will be limited to one dwelling unit per 20 acres.
- 2.30 The impact of sea-level rise and extreme weather events on the health and safety of our citizens will be considered when evaluating development proposals along one-way in/one-way out roads and our narrow peninsulas.
- 2.31 Developments utilizing Growth Allocations must be in compliance with the policies and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan.
- 2.32 Sensitive environmental areas shall be protected to the greatest extent possible. The use of tradeoffs or incentives that increase overall density in or near sensitive areas are discouraged.
- 2.33 Regional plans should be developed to integrate infrastructure, growth, recreation, natural resources, climate impacts and environmental conservation plans and initiatives. Adjoining villages, subdivisions and agricultural lands should be incorporated into regional plans. A priority for the development of a regional plan should be areas served by the Route 33 corridor.

III. Implemented Recommendations

The *2005 Comprehensive Plan* recommended specific land use and other policies that have been implemented through adopted regulations, ordinances, and programs. The following section outlines these management tools.

A. Urban Growth Boundaries or Development Districts

Talbot County has adopted urban growth boundaries in the form of **Countryside Preservation** zoning areas to delineate the boundary between the County's urban and rural areas.

B. Density/Intensity Regulations

Density regulations control growth by regulating the number of units that may be built per unit area of land (for example, one dwelling unit per acre). Intensity regulations may limit the floor area or bulk of a building to

a percentage of the site, establish impervious surface ratios, limit lot coverage, restrict hours of operation, or place a cap on total vehicle trips per acre per day. Both density and intensity regulations are used in Talbot County.

Density limits in the County's Zoning Ordinance were developed with the preferred character of planning areas in mind. For example Sensitive Area and Rural Reserve zoning districts limit the allowable base density for development, consistent with the stated purpose of preserving rural character and natural resources.

Consistent with the vision and policies of this Plan, three village zoning classifications have been defined in Chapter 9 and will be implemented to recognize the unique character of the twenty-two villages. Village characteristics including size, density, land uses, services and infrastructure will be reviewed in implementing these policies to ensure each village maintains its unique "sense of place".

Following the 2005 Plan, the County adopted the **Town Conservation (TC)** zoning designation which retains a rural density (one unit per 20 acres +3) in order to discourage suburban style development in areas identified for eventual annexation and urban scale development.

C. Open Space or Conservation Development

These are regulatory strategies designed to cluster or concentrate permitted development on a parcel to retain larger contiguous areas for agriculture. As a bonus, clustered development on smaller sized lots may also reduce development costs and requires less infrastructure investment.

Prior to 2009, clustering had been a voluntary subdivision option in the Rural Reserve planning districts, permitting density increases from one dwelling unit per 20 acres to one unit per 10 acres. Transfers of development rights had permitted additional density increases to a maximum of one unit per five acres. These density bonuses were used to protect over 3,800 acres of land through reservation of development rights agreements.

However, zoning ordinance revisions following the 2005 Plan eliminated voluntary clustering in favor of mandatory clustering of a portion of available lots in a subdivision. Open space is conserved by recordation as 'reserved land' after development rights are assigned.

D. Overlay Zones

Overlay zones impose a set of requirements in addition to those of the underlying zoning district. Such zones are typically applied when there are additional planning considerations within a larger zoning district (e.g. the presence of sensitive natural features or notable scenic qualities).

The adopted **Gateway Overlay District** is an example of an overlay establishing design

standards for new development and redevelopment in a commercial corridor. The Overlay Districts are shown on the adjoining page .

Overlay zones are designed to improve property values and permit desirable uses to locate only where appropriate conditions exist. **Gateway Overlay Districts** cover the major highway approaches to the four incorporated towns. This plan recommends periodic review of the effectiveness of the Gateway Overlay Districts and, when necessary, ordinance modifications to improve their performance.

E. Performance Standards for Environmental Protection

Performance standards can be used to protect environmentally sensitive areas by establishing specific levels or percentages of various site resources to be protected. For example, the County limits the amount of impervious surface in most of the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area to no more than 15 percent of the gross site area. Given the sensitive nature of land located in the **Western Rural Conservation** planning area, the County implemented additional environmental protection standards outside the Critical Area, including 15 percent impervious surface area limits on lot coverage and mandatory clustering of lots in subdivisions

IV. Remaining Recommendations

The tools noted below are additional regulatory and non-regulatory approaches to achieving plan objectives that were outlined in the 2005 Plan, but have yet to be fully implemented.

A. Transfer of Development Rights

TDR programs, or density exchanges, are used to transfer development potential from lands targeted for preservation to areas designated for growth. A TDR is typically a market-driven, incentive-based mechanism facilitating the purchase and sale of development rights

separate from the land itself.

The County should discuss the possibility for an inter-jurisdictional TDR or density exchange, to encourage greater development density in appropriate villages or other non-municipal settings.

B. Purchase of Development Rights

PDR programs purchase and extinguish the development potential of privately held land through a voluntarily transaction. In exchange the seller of development rights agrees to permanent development restrictions placed on the land by deed of easement. Land can be transferred; however, the easement runs with the land, restricting any further development to that provided for in the easement.

The Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF) is the primary PDR program available to Talbot County landowners. Other transaction programs arrange conservation easements in exchange for tax consideration and are managed by the Maryland Environmental Trust and Eastern Shore Land Conservancy. Organizations such as the Nature Conservancy and the Conservation Fund hold easements here but are less active in new acquisitions.

Talbot County should follow the lead of other counties in Maryland and develop a locally funded PDR program, which could be dedicated to the purchase of development rights especially within the **Countryside Preservation** zoning district. The County should discuss the possibility of raising preservation funds through a local agricultural transfer tax or other means to support its preservation goals.

C. Greenways

Greenways are hubs of natural land linked together by a network of corridors. Greenways often have scenic qualities, emphasize cultural and historic resources and include places or

trails with historic and cultural values providing educational, scenic, recreational or economic benefits to the community.

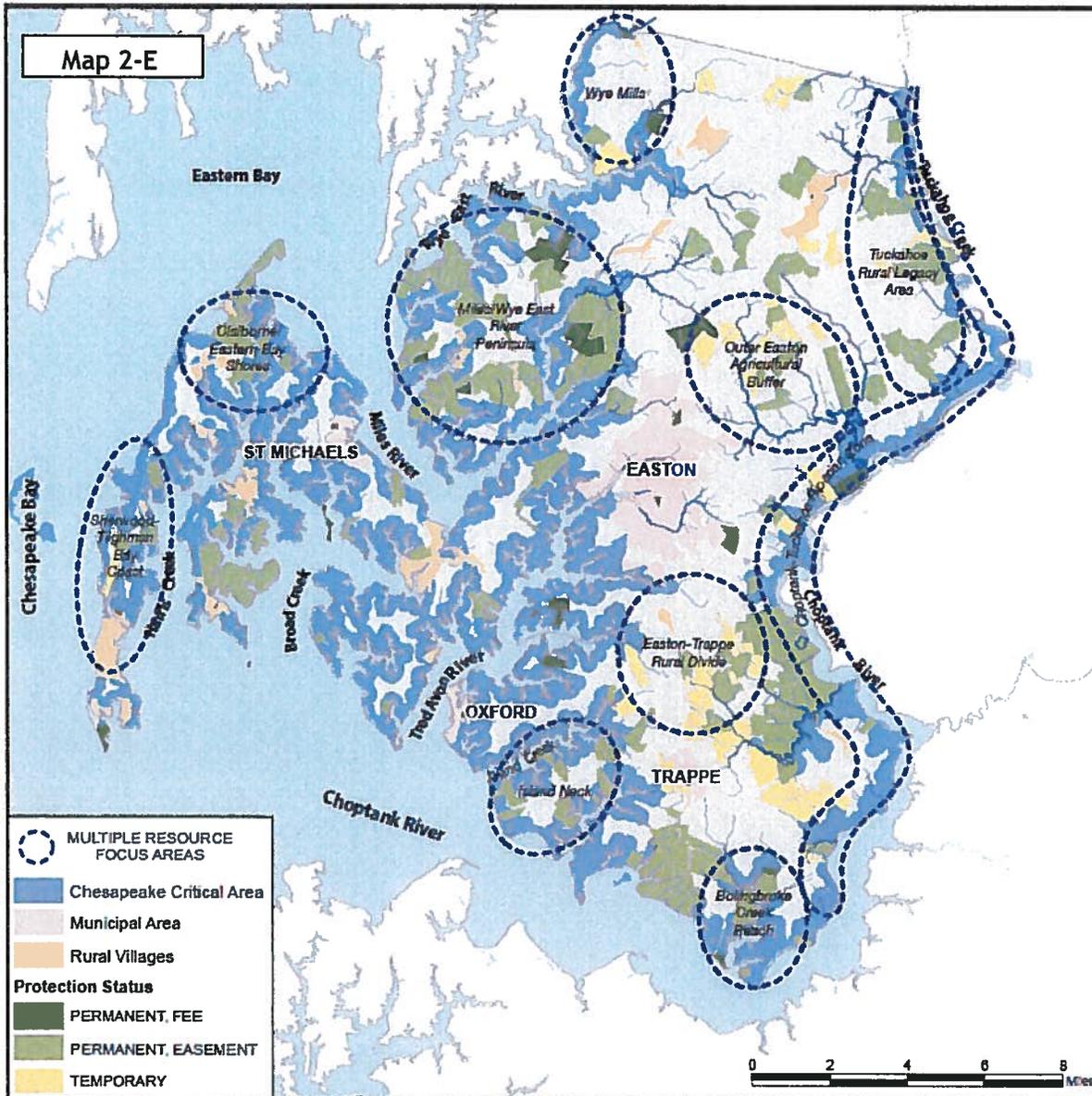
Appropriate areas include shorelines, natural corridors, abandoned rail beds or other public right-of-ways that provide for wildlife migration. Greenway hubs are significant areas that provide for wildlife habitat and biodiversity. Streams and forests are prime ecological greenways.

Talbot County's Green Infrastructure Plan, which was adopted in 2005 as an addendum to the Comprehensive Plan, identifies potential greenways throughout the County. The Conservation Fund, in 2004, produced a local-scale plan focused specifically on Talbot County. The Green Infrastructure Plan is an inventory of land and water areas that correspond with conservation priorities based on defined attributes. The purpose of the Green Infrastructure Plan is to provide the County with a methodology for prioritizing its land according to resource value and a tool that will enable County leaders to make the most educated conservation and land use decisions.

The Green Infrastructure Plan highlights the strategic value of protecting large blocks of contiguous land and establishing links and connectivity. It identifies opportunities to establish a connected matrix of natural areas, conservation lands and working landscapes. The Conservation Fund worked with Talbot County to develop a plan focusing on the protection of the County's valuable ecological, agricultural and aquatic resources. Resource evaluation involved a set of geographically based assessments to identify conservation priorities.

The Green Infrastructure Plan focuses on the preservation of:

1. Ecological resources, including sensitive species and their habitats and valuable ecosystems with their associated functions.
2. The agricultural and rural landscape, including economically productive working



lands and open spaces that give the landscape its character.

3. Critical aquatic resources, including wetlands, floodplains and riparian zones that contribute to water quality and the health of the greater Chesapeake Bay system.

The Green Infrastructure Plan ranks these three resource categories relative their suitability and conservation importance the County.

Map 2-J, excerpted from the Plan, summarizes

several locations that contain concentrations of high quality resources, recommended as high priority focus areas for coordinated protection efforts. The Plan also identifies state and federal funding sources available at the time and suggests mechanisms for protecting conservation lands.

More details on this plan can be found on the County's website. The County should consider reviewing the Green Infrastructure Plan and its implementation and making amendments where appropriate.

D. Infill and Community Redevelopment

Infill and community redevelopment can revitalize substandard neighborhoods by improving existing buildings and blighted or underutilized properties. These improvement strategies can foster stronger communities or neighborhoods, promote businesses revitalization, increase the supply of affordable housing on existing infrastructure, and reduce the consumption of resource lands to support growth.

Community redevelopment strategies have not been considered in the unincorporated areas of the County, since redevelopment opportunities are generally more effective in densely developed areas such as incorporated municipalities. The County should encourage cooperative strategies with towns and villages to better utilize existing infrastructure and reduce demand for development in rural areas, when consistent with existing scale and character and promote village viability.

Infill can provide an important development pressure relief valve, allowing sufficient development to occur within existing population centers, thereby reducing the pressure to develop unimproved rural locations. The State has begun an infill, renovation and redevelopment initiative to encourage use of this tool. Impediments including difficulties with land assembly, community acceptance, financing and other factors have limited this concept's use. Talbot County should work with the state to increase the acceptance and workability as infill melds with local land use goals and objectives.

V. Planning Tools that may be considered

In addition to the implementation recommendations described above, the following planning tools were outlined in the 2005 Plan and may be considered for use.

A. Bonus (Incentive) Zoning

Conventional zoning places limitations on the intensity of property use. Alternately, incentive zoning is a trade between the community and the property owner. In exchange for providing community benefit for affordable housing or parkland, a developer is given a density bonus.

B. Small Area Plan

Small area plans or site development plans provide a preplan layout of the development types, roads and other public facilities/amenities desired for a particular site or area. The term small area plan was used in the 2005 Plan in relation to **Village Center** planning. This Plan calls for comprehensive Master Plans for designated Village Planning Areas.

C. Performance Standards and Development Guidelines

Performance standards regulate the specific design or result of development. Uses are permitted, provided pre-set performance standards are met. Examples include standards to control site access, to maintain the capacity of a road system or requirements that limit the scale of a structure.

Talbot County currently uses a number of performance standards that must be met as conditions of development approval. Most of these standards are environmental protection performance standards. Fewer performance standards relate to the quality of development.

Performance standards and design guidelines may be appropriate for villages, and development guidelines could also be crafted to improve the quality of site design in Village Planning Areas. There are recommendations to update the County's 1991 *Design Manual* and some standards and guidelines are outlined in the Community Design chapter (Ch. 9) of this Plan.

VI. Recent Annexations

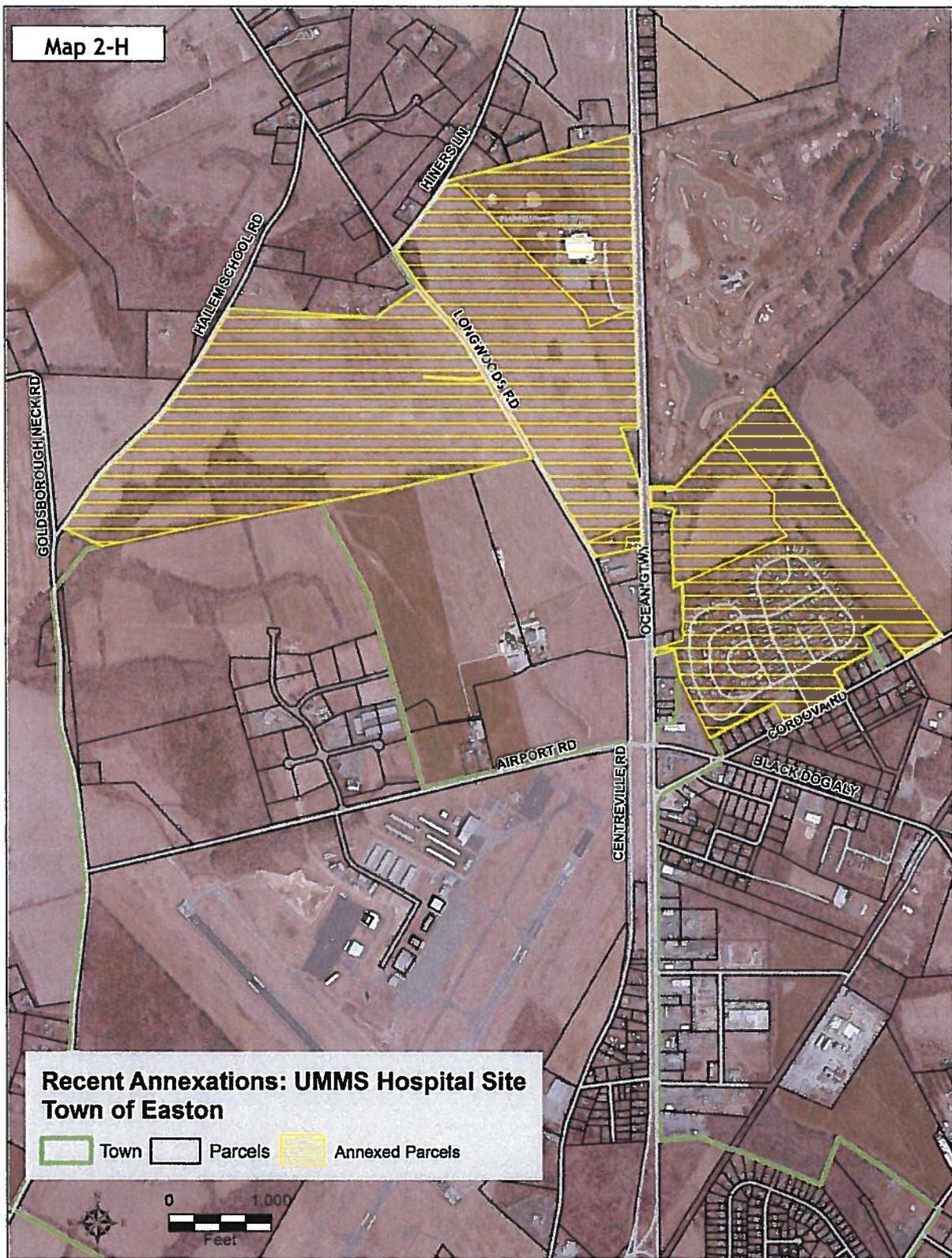
A significant change in assumptions from the previous Comprehensive Plan concerns the Memorial Hospital in Easton. The hospital, as part of Shore Health System, merged with the University of Maryland Medical System (UMMS) in 2006. The UMMS development plans are discussed in Chapter 4 (Community Services and Facilities).

Three parcels of land north of Easton between Hailem School Road and Ocean Gateway were annexed into the Town in order to qualify for the extension of sewer and water lines (see Map 2-G). The Town and County comprehensive

plans were both amended to accommodate a Health Care District, a new Easton zoning category. The annexation also included the site of the Talbot Community Center, which adjoins the hospital site. This was followed by the annexation of the Hyde Park community east of Ocean Gateway to take advantage of the availability of sewer lines to address a failing community sewerage system.

Other annexations (shown below) include Talbot Commerce Park and an industrial parcel west of Easton, consistent with municipal growth plans and County land use policy.





VII. Recent State Law and Amendments

A. Amendments

In compliance with the *Sustainable Growth and Agricultural Preservation Act of 2012* (SB 236), the Talbot County Council adopted septic tier designations for land in Talbot County in December, 2012. This system is designed to improve water quality and to encourage smart growth through the limitation of major growth on individual on-site septic systems.

The Act and the attendant guidance document describes four basic Tiers of land use categories, created to identify where major and minor residential subdivisions may be located in a jurisdiction and what type of sewerage system will serve them.

State Tier descriptions and other information about the Act can be found on the Maryland Department of Planning website at: <http://planning.maryland.gov/OurWork/SB236Implementation.shtml>.

In the process of Tier designation, local jurisdictions were encouraged to discuss variations from the four basic Tiers in order to accommodate local plans. Talbot County created subsets of **Tiers II and III** to better conform to land use policies and sewer service plans. The County's tier system is described below with the land use implications for each tier.

The County's original designations and maps were accepted by the Maryland Department of Planning in February, 2013. This plan presents slightly revised Tier definitions and a correspondingly revised map (Map 2-L) at the end of this chapter. Per state law the Tier map is hereby incorporated as part of the *Talbot County Comprehensive Plan*.

Tier I — Existing Sewered and Mapped Growth Areas

This tier consists of properties presently

served by an existing municipal sewer system for the purpose of growth and development. Private systems in areas not planned for growth and areas served by public sewer primarily for environmental health, safety and water quality improvement are not identified as Tier I.

Tier II — Mapped Growth Areas Planned for Sewerage

This Tier has been subdivided into sub-tiers A, B and C, for consistency with County and municipal growth as outlined in the respective comprehensive plans.

Tier II-C areas are not planned for sewer in the near term, in County Water and Sewer Plans. As described in Section II. A. (beginning on page 2-4), the County has delineated Designated Growth Areas and Future Growth Areas. Designated growth, generally within existing PFAs, is situated in Tier II-A. Other areas identified for future growth but not currently in a PFA are included in either Tier II-B or II-C, depending on the horizon for annexation and development.

Tier III — Mapped Water Quality Strategy Areas with Limited Septic System Capacity

Tier III-A — Rural Communities Not Planned for Sewerage

This sub-tier identifies areas that,

1. Are not planned for public sewerage systems in the County Comprehensive Plan or Comprehensive Water and Sewer Plan,
2. Are located in rural villages or other existing rural subdivisions,
3. Are not dominated by agricultural or forest land, and
4. Are planned for infill and limited development only.

Tier III-B — Water Quality Strategy Areas

This sub-tier identifies rural villages and existing developed subdivisions designated as water quality strategy areas that,

1. Have or may have public sewerage systems to address water quality and,
2. Are planned for infill, redevelopment and limited new development only.

These areas may have sewer service in order to improve water quality and efficiently manage sewer capacity.

Tier III-C – Areas of Limited Sewer Service

This sub-tier identifies existing developed subdivisions in environmentally sensitive areas currently served by septic systems that,

1. Where feasibly and reasonably practical, may be served by public sewer from the Region II or Region V Wastewater Treatment Plant, and
2. Where new development is limited to infill and redevelopment on existing lots within developed subdivisions.

Tier IV – Mapped Resource Protection Areas

This tier covers over 113,000 acres, which exceeds 80 percent of the land area in Talbot County and more than 88 percent of the non-municipal land area. This land is designated for limited development in the County Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance and has been identified for preservation under applicable state programs and regulations.

B. Other Land Use Amendments

The *2005 Comprehensive Plan* has been amended twice to comply with state mandates, and once to create a new land use category. The amendments are as follows:

1. An amendment to adopt a Priority Preservation Area Plan was adopted in March, 2010. The plan is incorporated into

the Agriculture chapter of this Plan.

2. A Water Resources Element was adopted in April of 2010. The amendment has been updated where new information is available and incorporated into the Natural Resources chapter of this Plan.

3. In December of 2008, a Resolution was adopted to amend the County land use map and Easton growth area map to incorporate a regional healthcare facility into a new growth area.

VIII. Summary

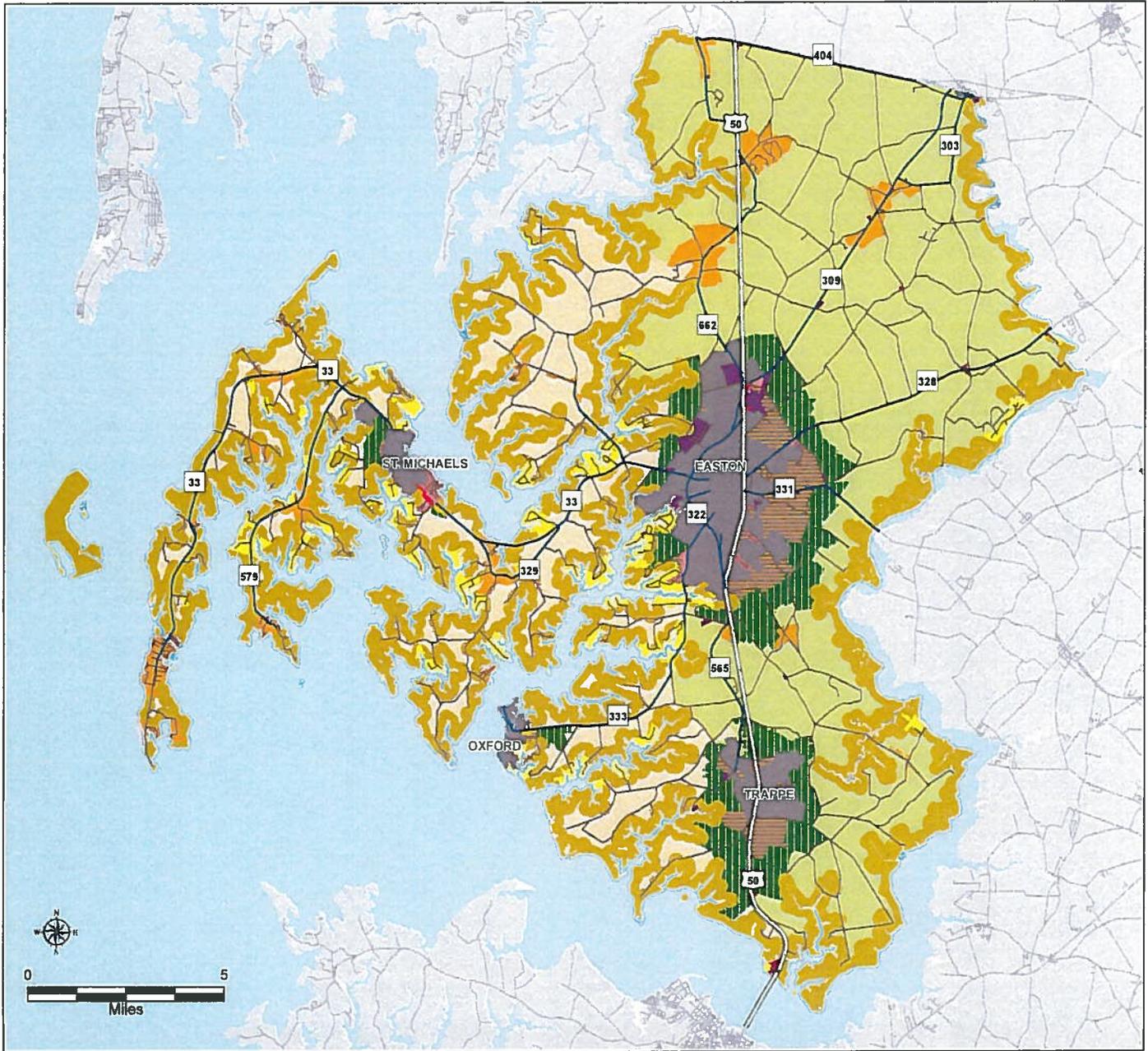
Growth management has been the foundation for Talbot County's comprehensive plans since the first plan in 1973. This Plan carries forward the objective of maintaining the County's rural pattern of settlement, by guiding urban development to areas where public infrastructure exists and by discouraging development in the most rural and environmentally sensitive places.

Talbot County has retained its historic rural character and land use patterns over time. Policies implemented over the past few decades have maintained a reasonable balance among land uses.

Land use plans continue to recognize the value of farmland and the importance of judicious growth management strategies. No substantial changes to the County's tradition of land use planning are suggested.

The remainder of this Plan addresses the other elements of the comprehensive plan and for each subject element provides an assessment of current conditions along with policies and recommendations to achieve the County's desired future conditions in that area. The next chapter addresses transportation and utilities.

Map 2-1



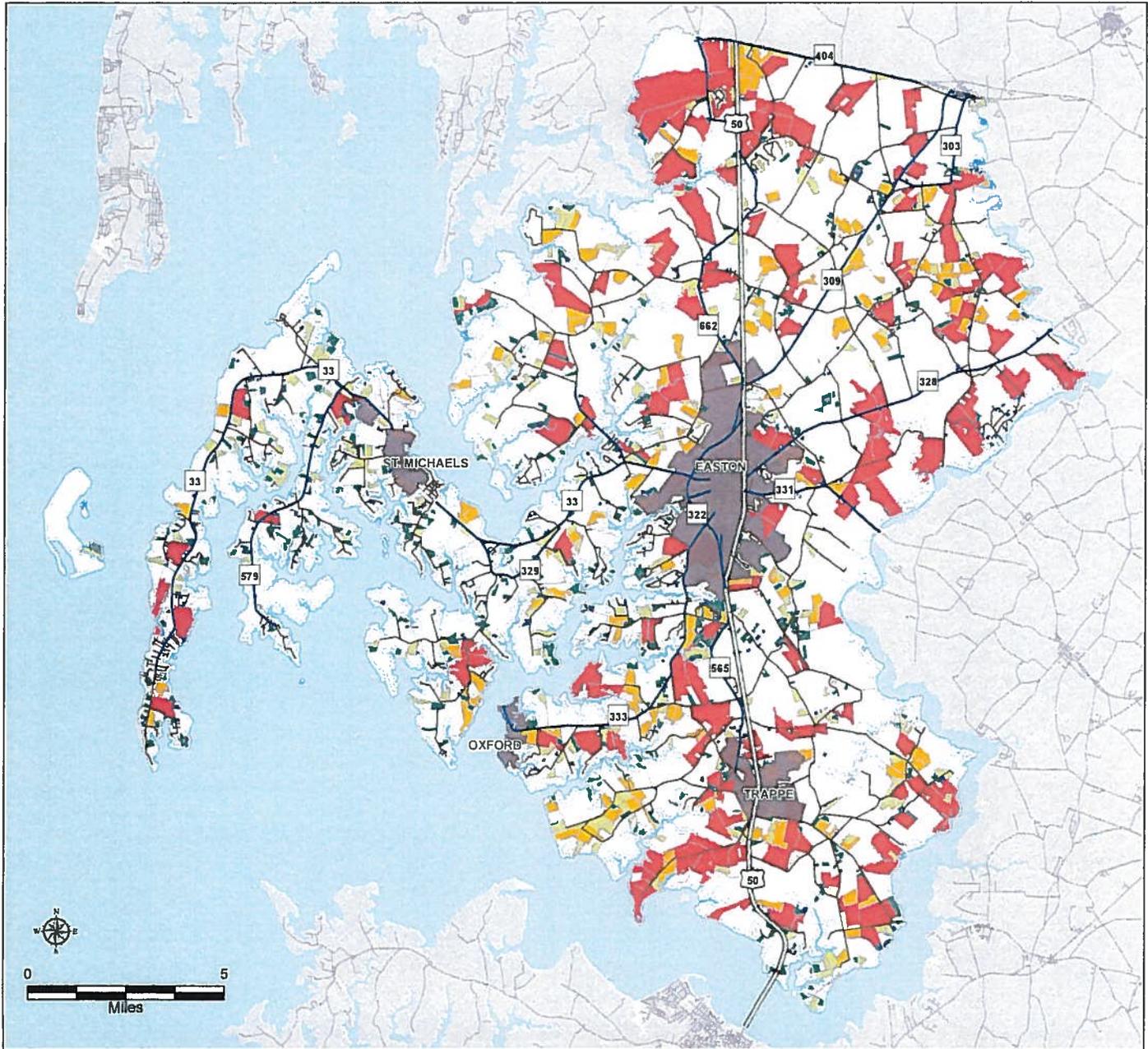
Existing Zoning, 2015

- Rural Residential
- Village Center
- Village Center Residential
- Village Center Hamlet
- Town Residential
- General Commercial
- Limited Commercial
- Limited Industry
- Town Conservation
- Countryside Preservation
- Agricultural Conservation
- Western Rural Conservation
- Rural Conservation
- Municipal

Roads

- US
- MD
- CO

Map 2-J



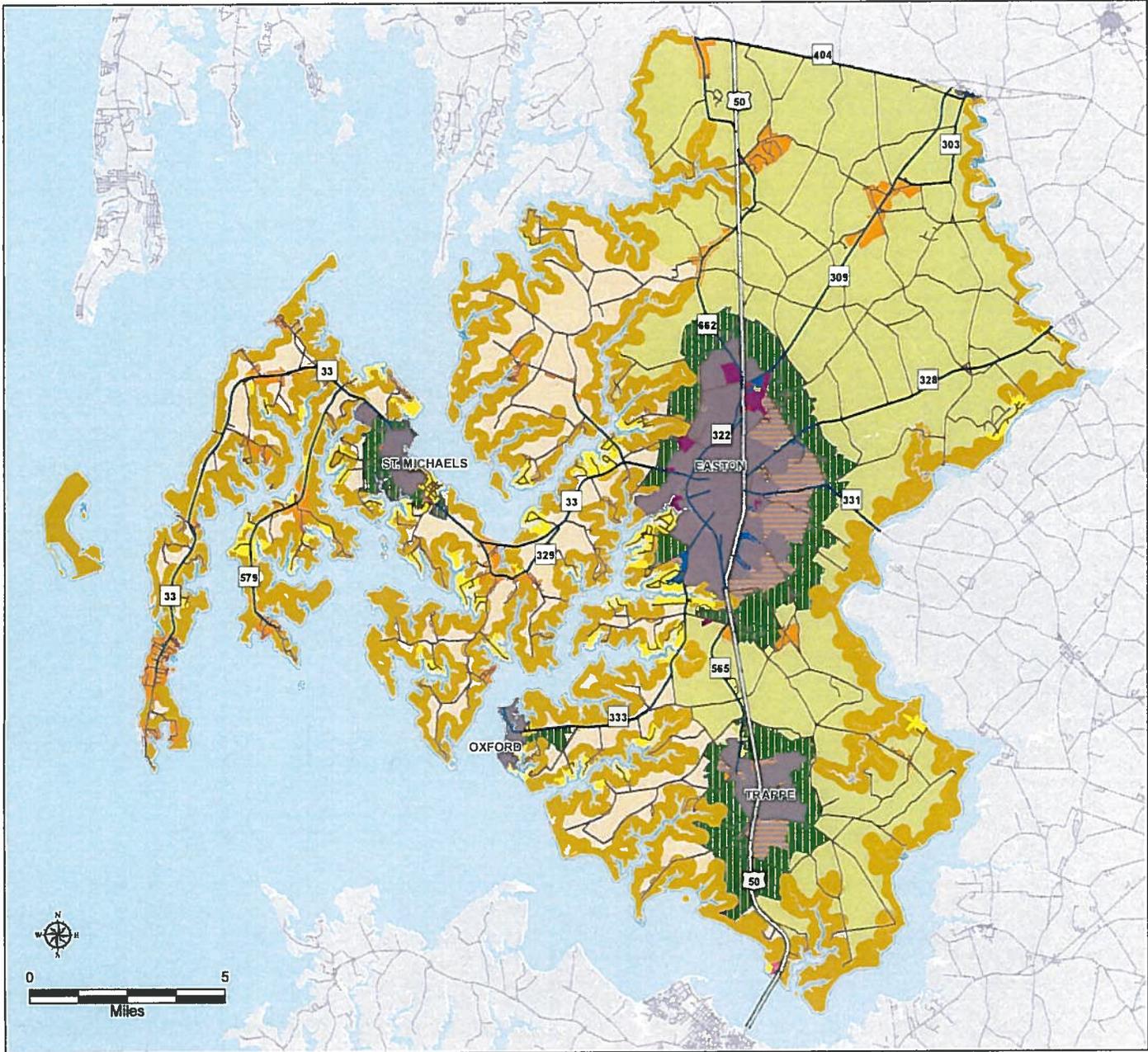
**Unimproved Residential Land
Parcels by Acreage (number)**

- ACRES
- 2 to 4 acres (456)
 - 4.1 - 20 (635)
 - 20.1 - 50 (233)
 - 50.1 - 100 (140)
 - 100.1 and over (150)

Roads

- US
- MD
- CO

Excludes industrial, commercial
and publicly owned land.
Source: SDAT



Proposed Land Use

Land Use Plan

Development and Growth

- Designated Growth Residential
- Designated Growth Commercial
- Designated Growth Industrial
- Existing Commercial
- Future Growth (not PFA)
- Community Character
- Rural Residential

Rural Reserve

- Countryside Preservation
- Agriculture

Sensitive Areas

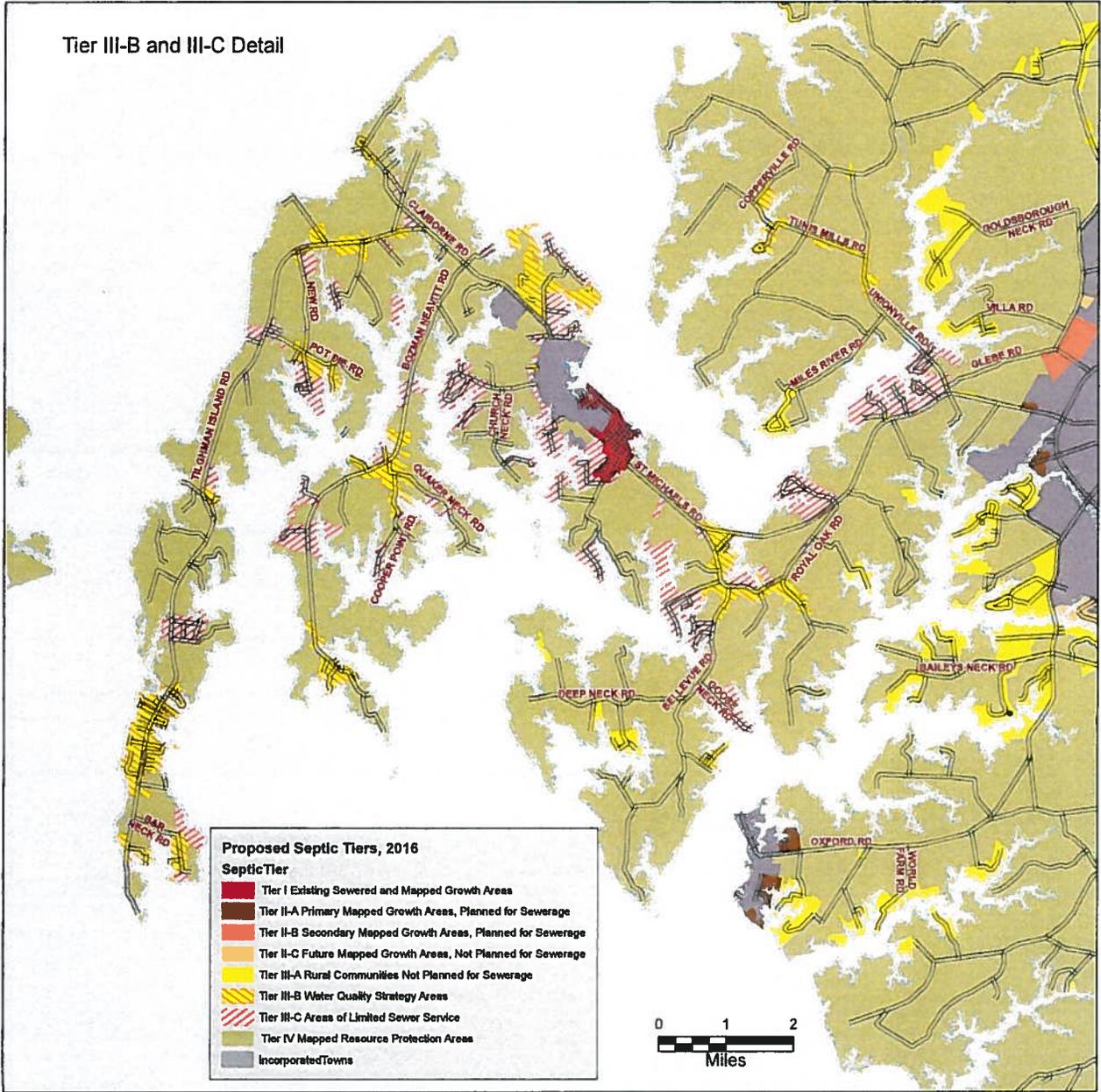
- Western Rural Conservation
- Chesapeake Bay Critical Area

Town

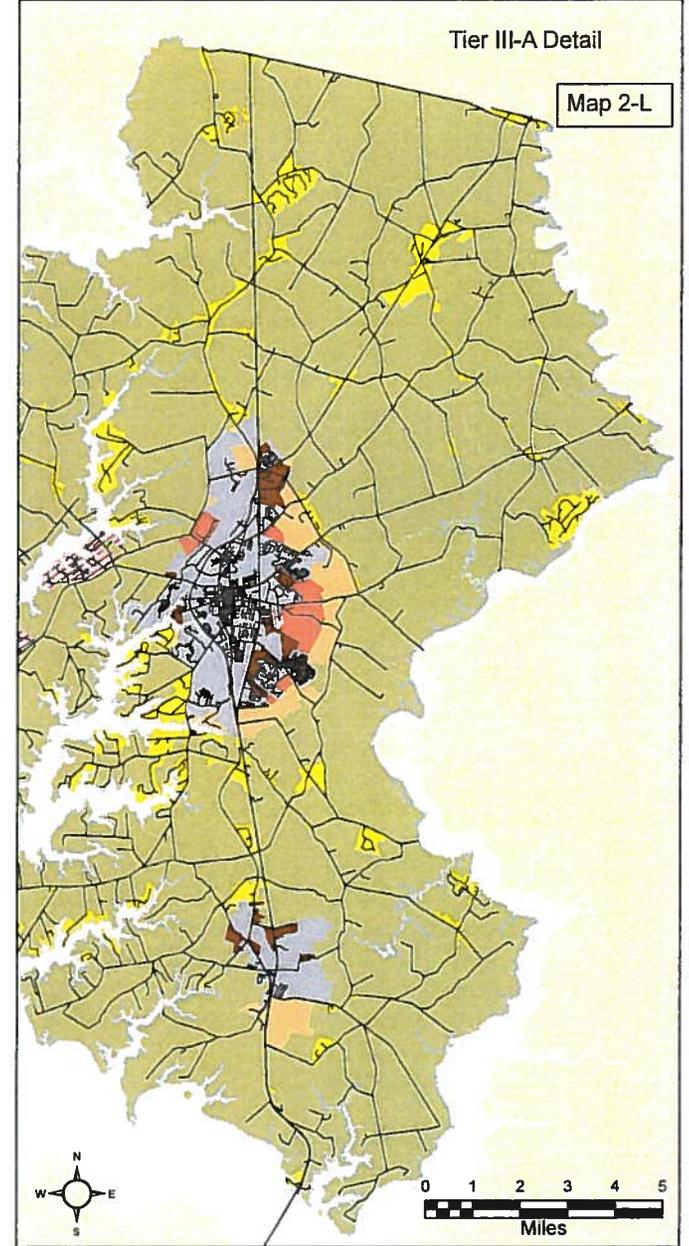
Roads

- US
- MD
- CO

Tier III-B and III-C Detail



Tier III-A Detail



Chapter 3 Transportation and Utilities



Vision

The automobile, the principal mode of transportation in Talbot County, shares the road with cyclists, pedestrians and others. The County continues to explore inter-county alternatives to the automobile as the principal means of transportation.

Through "beach" traffic on US 50 is managed by all appropriate means to minimize bottlenecks. Traffic lights and road improvements have alleviated the increased traffic loads over time.

State and County roads reflect the rural character of the area. Highway beautification projects are underway along major highways.

The Easton Airport is a regional hub for general aviation and aviation related businesses.

Residents have ample access to reliable broadband communications services throughout Talbot County.

Goal

Ensure the safe and efficient provision of transportation and utility services to the greatest degree possible.

I. Introduction

The efficient movement of people and goods and the provision of essential communications and other utilities are important to the quality of life and economic vitality of the community. The County recognizes the direct relationship between land use policies and the availability of these services.

The infrastructure policies outlined in this Plan will support local land use plans while ensuring adequate transportation facilities to serve the needs of residents and industry as

well as regional travel and utility needs.

The County's transportation system includes roads, trails, public transit, air transportation and port services. Motor vehicles are the County's primary mode of transportation and the transportation network is comprised of Federal, State, County, municipal, and private roads.

Transportation priorities include a strong emphasis on managing existing resources, especially roads serving the villages, towns and rural areas. Measures taken to conserve the capacity of State and County roads should not only improve safety and traffic

operations, but also should have the added benefit of enhancing the visual character of the County when viewed from roadways.

For transportation improvements, the County relies on funding and construction participation from both the public and private sectors. Other utility development is driven by private sector investment.

Utility services are evolving from what had been established as long as a century ago.

Traditional telephone service has been eclipsed by wireless services.

Television programming has also moved to broadband services from an abundance of sources. These

require a new infrastructure of communications towers, antennas and fiber optic cables.

Electric generation has begun on a similar path towards small scale independent facilities distributed across the landscape. Wind turbines and solar panels installed on County facilities are an indication of the changes on the horizon.

All future utility infrastructures should have the least possible impact on the landscape and character of the County, while providing the services necessary to maintain a high quality of life. Contemporary services must balance community character with the technical requirements for deployment.

II. Regional and Local Roads

Planning for State and Federal roadways in Talbot County is done by the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT), State Highway Administration (SHA), and is detailed in the Maryland Consolidated Transportation

Program (CTP). The CTP describes ongoing and new capital programs to be implemented over a six-year period.

The SHA Data Services and Engineering System reports there are 126 miles of State roads in Talbot County, yielding 2,250,000 square yards of paved surface.

The most extensive part of the roadway network consists of 374 miles of County roads. Planning for County roads is done by the Department of

Public Works, which is also actively involved in planning improvements for State roads as well as coordinating facility improvements with the local jurisdictions.

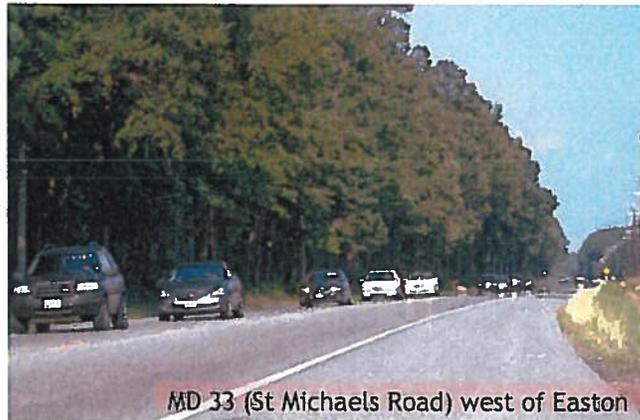
SHA estimates that in 2014, 620

million annual vehicle miles were traveled on all public roads in the County. Some 432 million annual vehicle miles were traveled on County roads alone. SHA reported average traffic counts at selected locations (see Figure 3.1). These figures are based on weekday counts of traffic in both directions over a single point.

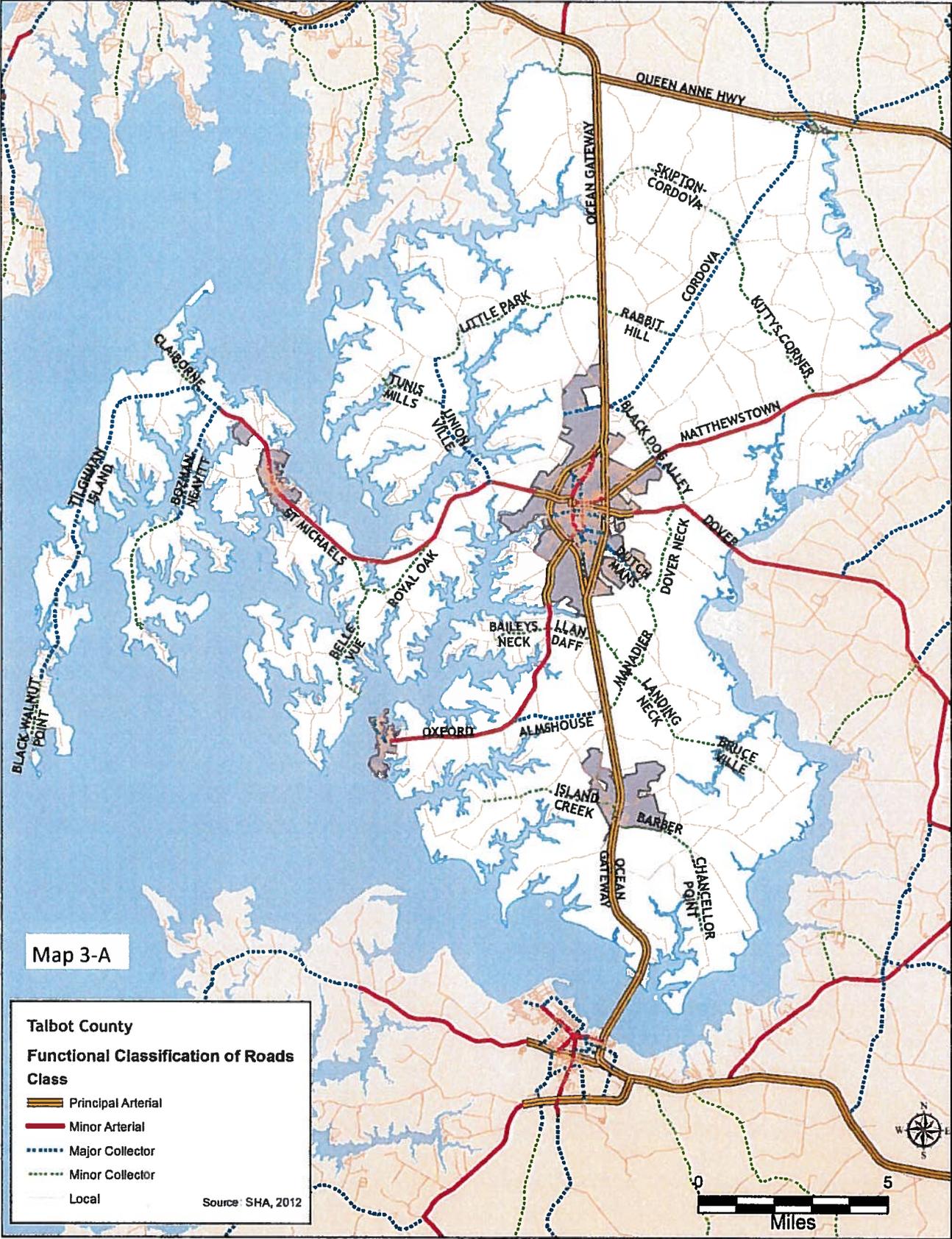
A. State Roadway System

The State Highway Administration uses the Federal Highway Functional Classification System for roadways to indicate the relative importance of any given road, to assign appropriate design standards and to evaluate roadways and prioritize needed improvements. When new roads are built by the public or private sector, they should be constructed to an appropriate standard for the road's intended function.

As illustrated on Map 3-A, the Federal Highway classifications for State roadways are:



MD 33 (St Michaels Road) west of Easton



- a. Principal Arterial
- b. Minor Arterial
- c. Major Collector
- d. Minor Collector
- e. Local Road

1. Principal and Minor Arterials

These are the State roadways in Talbot County that provide immediate regional access. U.S. Route 50, MD 322 and MD 404 are classified as principal arterials. Minor arterials include MD 331, MD 328, MD 333, and MD 33.

2. Major and Minor Collectors

The primary function of major and minor collector roads is to expedite vehicle movement within localized areas. They provide moderate levels of service within, rather than between, regions in the County. Major collectors connect areas of relatively dense settlement with each other and with other major traffic routes. Minor collectors are roads which, in addition to serving abutting properties, intercept minor roads, connect community facilities and are intended to serve neighborhood traffic.

3. Local Roads

Local roads are intended to provide access to abutting residential property and not to accommodate through traffic.

B. County Classification System

The County has established a local road classification system (separate and distinct from the Federal Highway Functional Classification System) for the purpose of planning for improvements and assigning appropriate design standards to County roads. This classification system, included in the Talbot County Code, uses the following road hierarchy:

- a. Heavy Use Road
- b. Major Road
- c. Village Road
- d. Minor Road
- e. Private Road

C. Transportation Facility Planning

The primary objective of the County’s 2006 Thoroughfare Plan is to provide the County Council the means to make informed fiscal decisions for existing, short-term and long-term (2030) infrastructure improvements.”

The Plan includes an inventory of roadway conditions and provides a methodology for evaluating the transportation impact of new development. It includes recommendations concerning roadway design and construction, access management, and pedestrian facilities. It also identifies mitigation measures to improve or reduce traffic impacts. Thoroughfare Plan findings and recommendations led to amendments to the

Figure 3.1 Selected 2014 Traffic Counts

ID	Intersection	Av. Count
1	US 50 at Easton Airport	35,240
2	US 50 at MD 565	33,660
3	MD 309 at Black Dog Alley	5,520
4	MD 328 at Elliott Rd	10,132
5	MD 331 at Elliott Rd	11,812
6	MD 322 at MD 662	14,142
7	MD 33 at MD 322	15,620
8	MD 33 at MD 370	12,690
9	MD 33 at Travelers Rest Rd	10,730
10	MD 33 at MD 579	4,563
11	MD 322 at MD 333	8,391
12	MD 333 at Evergreen Rd	3,184
13	MD 404 at US 50	15,550

Source: SHA Data Services, 2015

Talbot County Code Chapter 134, Roads and Bridges.

The SHA Traffic Safety Division monitors and reports on traffic volumes, accidents and highway safety. This information is used in planning for state-funded highway improvements as needed. While traffic volume studies indicate aggregate trends, they do not represent peak traffic volume. For example, high levels of through traffic on US Route 50 create bottlenecks in Easton and Trappe,

causing inconvenient and potentially dangerous situations for County residents. Since 2005, improvements have been made to US 50, especially in the Town of Easton, including additional travel lanes, dedicated left turn lanes, improved traffic signals and crosswalks. Despite the improvements, some congestion and safety problems remain.

In planning for roads, the demographic outlook for the County (reported in Chapter 1, Background) indicates that an increasing percentage of the local workforce will be composed of people commuting into the County from other jurisdictions. This information, along with local population figures, factor into County and municipal transportation plans.

The County should be mindful of ever-increasing traffic volumes on its roads. Of special concern are one way in/out roads such as MD 33 and MD 333. This is an important consideration in light of anticipated sea level rise and the certain needs for rapid egress in the event of a hurricane, as well as expedient access for emergency vehicles. For these reasons (and

because of the effects of traffic congestion on quality of life) the County should give careful consideration to the carrying capacity of those roads when making transportation or infrastructure decisions. The County has made significant investments in its roads in recent years to alleviate congestion, including the widening and rebuilding of Glebe Road from Unionville Road to MD 322. The development of a solution to congestion in the St Michaels town center would also help address concerns over traffic congestion and safety.

While the incorporated towns implement their own capital plans to support growth, the County must continue to support their efforts to provide the infrastructure necessary to accommodate growth, in order to further this plan's objectives to direct growth to existing population centers.

The County's smart growth strategy encourages compact, pedestrian-friendly development in the towns and villages. Outside of these growth areas, the goal of the Plan is to preserve the rural character of the road system.

Regional and Local Roads Policies

- 3.1 The County will work to coordinate land use and transportation goals of the Comprehensive Plan to promote transportation alternatives, with State and other partners.
- 3.2 The County will encourage continuous improvements to the entire road network and will ensure that all improvements further the land use, environmental, transportation and utility goals of the Comprehensive Plan.
- 3.3 Road construction and improvements will promote traffic safety, improve vehicular capacity (consistent with area land uses and regional demand) and conform to resource protection policies of the Comprehensive Plan.
- 3.4 Road construction and improvements shall be context sensitive and consistent with the County's goals of preserving the environment and rural character.
- 3.5 A County thoroughfare plan will guide future road development decisions through periodic intersection analysis including traffic counts and functionality.

Regional and Local Roads Policies

3.6 The County and towns should coordinate planning for transportation improvements within designated growth areas or at jurisdictional lines.

3.7 The State should emphasize system conservation and enhancement measures designed to improve operations on MD 33 from the intersection of MD 322 through St. Michaels.

3.8 Improvements to US 50 should facilitate traffic flow through the area and would be in the best interest of the County and its towns. Improvements could include service roads and overpasses at key intersections. Similar improvements have been made to US 50 in the City of Cambridge.

3.9 Access to the arterial road network should be from collector roads. Local roads should access the collector system rather than the arterial network.

3.10 State and County roadway capacity should be conserved by limiting and controlling future access points. Strip forms of development will be prohibited, and the number of existing access driveways onto major public roads shall be reduced where appropriate.

3.11 New roads in proposed developments may be required to provide appropriate connections to adjacent properties, in order to ensure adequate connectivity through the overall road system.

3.12 Agricultural equipment clearances and requirements should be recognized in the design and management of the County road system.

3.13 The County should address ways to expedite emergency traffic and manage critical lane volume in areas of limited egress, such as MD 33 and MD 333.

3.14 New roads serving residential developments should be designed to ensure safety and convenience for all users including motorists, cyclists, pedestrians and emergency vehicles.

3.15 Setbacks and other development lines should anticipate future traffic loads on adjacent roadways and provide for road expansion. A highway corridor or entrance corridor overlay should apply where such provisions differ from the setbacks prescribed by zoning.

3.16 The County should maintain and strengthen, where applicable, its system to define how developers participate in financing road infrastructure improvements. Plans should be based on traffic impact studies, including assessments of projected traffic operations on the road network. Impact studies shall comply with County roadway standards in instances where they exceed State standards.

3.17 The County should endorse State efforts to inform citizens of the costs of dependence on automobiles and promotion of transportation alternatives.

3.18 The County encourages the use of alternative fuel vehicles to save energy resources and improve air quality.

3.19 The County will continue to discuss existing conditions and opportunities to improve automobile, pedestrian and bicycle safety with SHA and other relevant agencies.

III. Other Transportation Modes

A. Transit Service

County and town residents are served by specialized transportation services serving the Midshore communities.

Delmarva Community Transit (DCT) offers fixed route shuttle services, flexible routes within and between counties, plus specialized services for seniors and persons with disabilities. Their County Ride program operates on a regular weekday schedule with connections to other transit systems. Queen Anne’s County’s program also operates a route from Stevensville to Easton, connecting with DCT shuttles. DCT also provides Demand-Response transportation service for seniors and the general public.

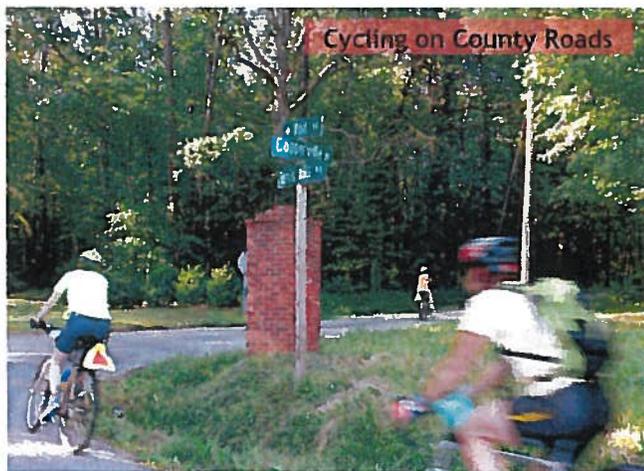
Easton Airport (discussed below) is a scheduled stop for BayRunner Shuttle, a commercial transit service connecting Ocean City and Salisbury, MD with BWI Marshall Airport. The BWI Amtrak station and Baltimore Greyhound Bus station are additional transit connections via the shuttle, which makes multiple daily trips east and west.

Comprehensive transit service in a rural county the size of Talbot would require substantial subsidy and would not be cost effective given the potential customer base and rural settlement patterns. Presently, the County can be most effective by encouraging new developments in Designated Growth Areas to provide pedestrian linkages between residential areas to nearby neighborhood services.

Higher density development near major roadways should be encouraged to establish locations for future ride-sharing and commuting facilities. The County can also be effective in reducing aggregate total commuting trips by collaborating with the State for “park and ride facilities” to encourage ride sharing.

B. Non-motorized Transportation

The infrastructure for non-motorized transportation includes sidewalks and pedestrian and bicycle trails. Because of the limited scale of rural development and the County’s strategy directing development to towns and Designated Growth Areas, there has been no requirement for rural subdivisions to include “complete streets” (sidewalks, bike trails or pedestrian connections) within a community. Easements for future pedestrian facilities to support



integrated pedestrian pathways are stipulated in the development standards for the County’s Gateway Overlay Zone in the current zoning ordinance.

The scenic views and rural roads of Talbot County are especially appealing to recreational bicyclists. These routes traverse scenic rural areas, form loops through various terrain and are interesting enough to appeal to bikers at all levels. Routes have been compiled, mapped and distributed by the Department of Parks and Recreation and promoted by the Office of Tourism. Perhaps the most popular is the Oxford- Bellevue Ferry loop. Other frequently traveled bicycle routes on the west side of the County include the roads to Bozman and Neavitt (MD 579) and Tilghman Island (MD 33).

With the advent of designated trails, especially in the incorporated towns, and the establishment of wide cycling shoulders on major routes in the County, bicycling is beginning to provide an alternative method of commuting. Bicycle traffic, whether recreational or commuting, has increased along with motorized transportation. Considering this, joint planning between the County and incorporated towns should be undertaken to ensure safe cycling. The Town of Easton has worked with the State Highway Administration in recent years to create safe crossings between the areas of Easton on the opposite sides of State highways.

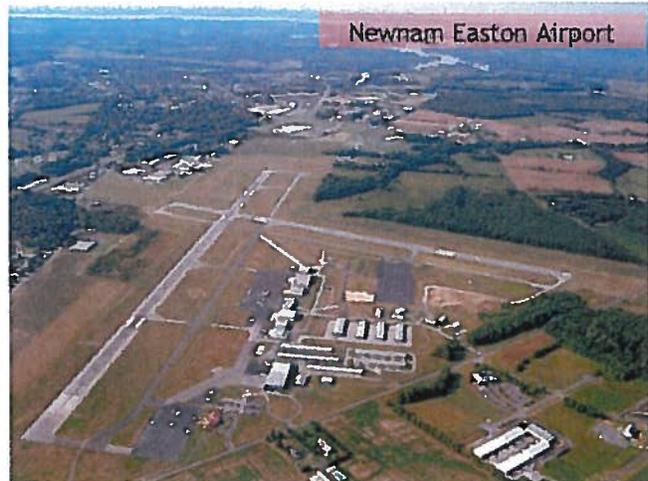
The SHA has published *Bicycle Policy and Design Guidelines* (http://roads.maryland.gov/OHD2/bike_policy_and_design_guide.pdf), a manual that should be consulted when considering and initiating transportation improvements. The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) has also released a *Twenty-Year Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan* (<http://www.mdot.maryland.gov/BikeWalk/PlanHomePage>) to implement a complete streets approach to roadway improvements, including dedicated programs and funding to achieve a balanced roads network that serves all users.

C. Air Transportation

The Easton Airport is a County-owned facility overseen by the Easton Airport Manager and County Council, assisted by a five-member Airport Advisory Board.

Easton Airport is one of 84 airports, of over 5,000 in the nation, to be designated as a National Airport. The designation recognizes the provision of international and national flights over 500 miles, as well as the airport's role in public service and the number of jet aircraft based there. The airport is served by a control tower, erected in 2007, and handled over 70,000 takeoffs and landings in the most recent fiscal year.

The Airport is a general aviation facility that presently hosts 176 aircraft, including 133 single engine planes, 18 multi-engine, 21 jets and four helicopters in its 100 hangar spaces. Tenants provide charter service to destinations throughout the United States and the world, flight training, aircraft maintenance and repair. It is a designated US Navy auxiliary facility for instrument training.



Easton Airport is the home base for Maryland State Police helicopter Trooper 6, providing emergency medical evacuation and law enforcement services in the region. The US Coast Guard uses the airport as an auxiliary operations site when responding to Chesapeake Bay or mid-Atlantic area missions.

Talbot County EMS also has an ambulance and crew stationed at the airport for deployment around the County. The airport is a secondary site in County Emergency Management plans owing to its emergency power generation, area under cover and relatively high elevation.

The airport property comprises 654 acres, making it one of the County's larger publicly-owned green spaces. When completely built out, runways, parking and other facilities will cover 84 acres in impervious surface. Onsite

storm water is diverted to a 20,000 gallon oil/water separator and a system of filter swales and sediment ponds. Onsite spill containment infrastructure includes two engineered fuel truck parking areas with containment features.

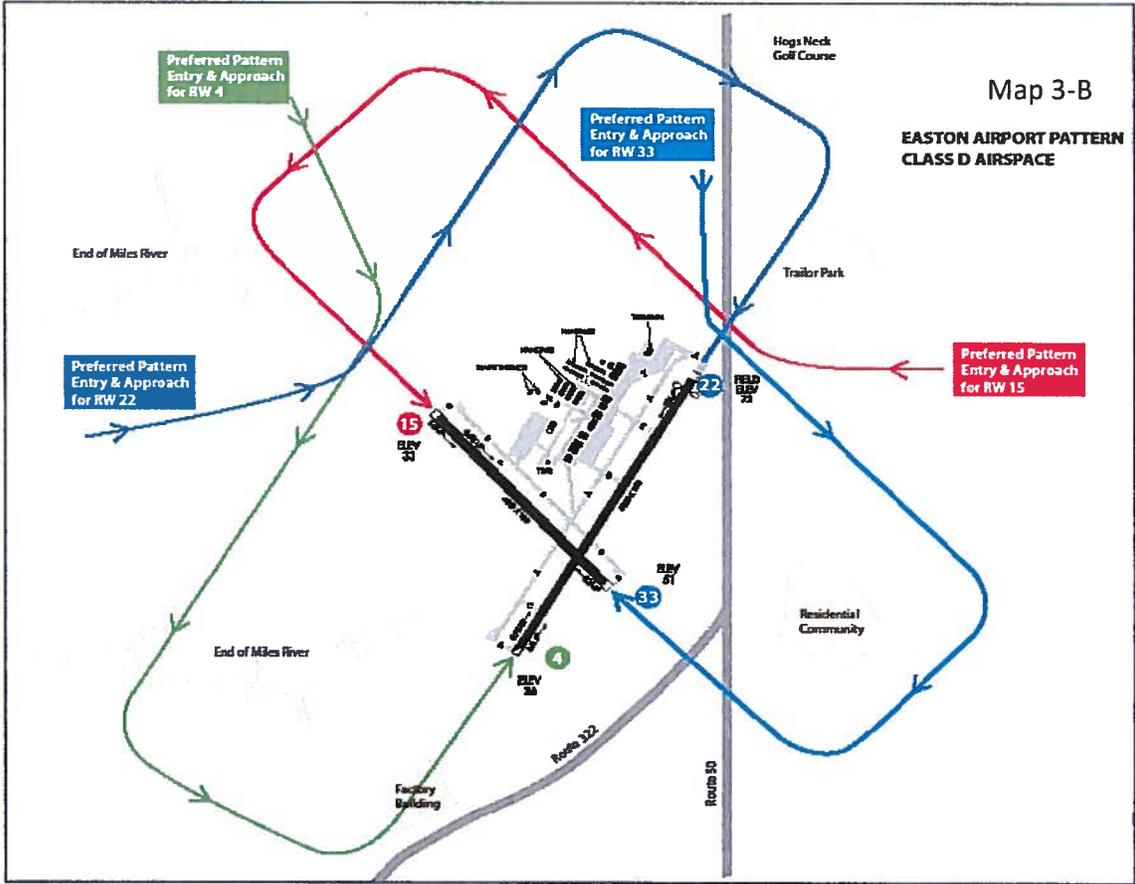
Easton Airport is a fiscally self-sufficient enterprise with an annual budget of about \$4 million. Capital projects are funded mainly through the FAA Airport Improvement Program, with matching funds through the Maryland Aviation Administration (MAA) and airport funds. The MAA has estimated the airport generates over \$40 million per year in business revenue and \$2.1 million in State and local taxes. It supports 483 jobs and \$20 million in personal income.

Roadway improvements are being planned for Airport Road and the portion of Goldsboro Neck Road bordering the airport, in support of the airport, the adjacent

business park, and future regional hospital development.

Compatible uses, such as airport-related businesses and light industry, should be encouraged in appropriate areas nearby. Easton Airport should continue promotion of its Fly Neighborly noise abatement procedures, reducing the amount of air traffic over residential areas.

In the event of a major disaster, Easton Airport may become essential as a hub for evacuation and to receive food, medical supplies and personnel. Given this role and the positive impact to the local economy, County policies should support the continued value of the Easton Airport by assisting the airport to meet FAA safety and operating standards, including reviewing the Airport Overlay Zone for consistency with FAA Part 77 airspace requirements.



D. Port Services

Easton Point is a small area of land at the Tred Avon riverside, under County jurisdiction but surrounded by the Town of Easton. It is the County's only industrial port, where bulk materials are delivered by barge in quantities equivalent to many truckloads each. It is also the site of a County public landing, a private marina with boatyards, and related facilities.

Historically, the County has recommended that the northern and western edges of Easton Point should continue to be planned for port-related and marine transportation activities, including regular dredging of the Tred Avon River approach channel. It would be an error to lose the critical industrial resource of a regional bulk materials landing site in Talbot County. Dredging for recreational use is only possible because of ongoing industrial activity at the port. If that activity were discontinued, maintaining a navigable channel may, if achieved, become a public expense.

However, this area has obvious redevelopment potential and is identified as a future growth area in the 2010 Easton Comprehensive Plan. The Plan states:

(T)he future of the port is most likely a mixed use project with a strong recreational component to include uses such as an expanded marina, boat ramp, and a waterfront park or open space with less emphasis on truly industrial uses. Higher density (i.e. townhouse or apartment) residential and commercial uses would also seem to be an appropriate part of the mix in any redevelopment plan.

The Town of Easton and the Easton Economic Development Corporation have been developing a small area plan for Easton Point and the Port Street Corridor. The small area plan should take into

consideration the impacts of new land use recommendations on existing land uses. It should avoid negative impacts and possible loss of channel dredging activities by the Army Corps of Engineers, and provide timelines for redevelopment



activities.

Easton's Redevelopment land use designation for the port area under the County's jurisdiction is inconsistent with the land use designations in this Comprehensive Plan. Addressing consistency with existing land use is a requirement for annexation.

E. Rail Service

Rail service in Talbot County has been discontinued for some years. Though new service is not anticipated, future uses could include the revival of limited light rail service

Other Transportation Policies

- 3.20 The County should support the development of safe, convenient and inviting bike routes and walkways and expansion of rails to trails.
- 3.21 The County should continue to improve air transportation services at the Easton airport.
- 3.22 The county should review the Airport Overlay Zone in the county Zoning Ordinance for consistency with the most current recommendations and best practices.
- 3.23 The County should partner with the Town of Easton to ensure that adequate access to County waters continues to be provided for commercial marine transportation, materials transfer and associated activities.
- 3.24 The County should work with the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) to preserve existing rail rights-of-way in the region for future rail service or other compatible use.

on rights-of-way owned by the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA). The County encourages the retention of rail rights-of-way for future use. Pedestrian/ bike trails are appropriate interim uses for these corridors.

The Town of Easton has constructed a pedestrian/bike trail along a portion of the old rail bed in the center of town. The original rail-trail extended from Idewild Avenue north to North Easton Park. Recently, trail connections have been planned to extend the trail network to other parts of town, creating the potential for a dedicated Easton to St Michaels trail.

IV. Utilities

Apart from wastewater treatment facilities (discussed in the Natural Resources chapter), Talbot County operates no public utilities. Nevertheless, the County has zoning and regulatory responsibility for several modern utility services. Cellular phone service emerged as an issue in the 1990s and has become one of the most contentious areas of public debate. In recent years broadband services, wind turbines and solar panels have come under some level of County oversight.

A. Wireless Communications

Towers

The Talbot County Council in 2008 commissioned a study to create an orderly process for the placement and use of communications towers. At issue was the prospect of competing utilities erecting stand-alone towers in proximity to one another and being incompatible with the character of rural communities.

Following a study of the existing network and gaps in coverage, the *Cellular Tower Requirements Study for Talbot County* and the resulting Priority Placement Areas map for future towers (see Map 3-D at the end of this chapter) were adopted as zoning ordinance amendments. Now, co-location is required when possible in order to expand coverage to underserved areas and to increase coverage in areas of existing service.

Since the zoning ordinance was amended in 2010, there have been several applications to fill gaps in the cellular network. Upgrades or additional antennas on existing towers have been installed. Because finding suitable sites for new towers in some areas has remained difficult, the Council passed a Concealed Towers amendment in 2012.

These actions have encouraged expansion of cellular service but coverage away from US 50 remains inadequate. The promise of full County coverage for 911 emergency calls is yet unfulfilled. An increasing dependence on mobile devices for both voice and data communication has been accompanied by decreasing carrier support for land lines. Despite this trend the market alone has provided an insufficient incentive for extending either cell or broadband coverage to rural homes and businesses, or 911 coverage to all of Talbot County.

B. Wind

Interest in alternative energy generation has grown in recent years as technology has advanced and equipment has been marketed



to homeowners. Talbot County has chosen to apply the existing zoning code to some aspects of wind generation systems.

Presently, small wind turbine systems are considered accessory uses and limited to single-site energy consumption. County zoning regulations include production, height and density limits and a maximum number of

units per property.

Other conditions are applied to small wind turbine production facilities, including an assessment of visual impact and design specifications.

Turbines can be up to 160 feet tall and developed at a

greater density than the single-site turbines.

C. Solar

Solar energy systems for residential use are

Utility Policies

3.25 When establishing sites for wireless communications towers, the County will first consider sites located within designated Priority Placement Areas. Co-location of antennae on existing towers or structures are the preferred alternative to new tower construction.

3-26 The County should monitor the placement and use of cell towers and evaluate the effectiveness of existing regulations to promote access to communications utilities to all residents.

3.27 The County shall seek mechanisms to supply the necessary broadband service for its economy by first establishing a task force charged with identifying models for an infrastructure to deliver efficient and equitable access to this service for commercial development, telecommuting workforce development, and community resilience. The County shall require installation of fiber optic infrastructure where feasible in development, redevelopment or other sewer extension projects.

3-28 The County encourages the use of cost-effective renewable energy resources at appropriate scale and on suitable sites.

3.29 When establishing sites for large-scale solar installations, preference should be given to sites using existing impervious surfaces and discourage placement on prime farmland.

regulated through the Building Code and are subject to lot coverage and setback requirements as well as structural standards. Larger solar installations generating power for off-premise uses are classified as utility structures and are permitted by special exception.

V. Summary

Talbot County is served by a robust transportation and utility infrastructure that meets contemporary needs while maintaining the county's rural character.

The road network in Talbot County extends to all portions of the area with roads built to accommodate varying volumes of vehicle traffic. All arterial roads and some collectors are Maryland routes managed and maintained to State standards.

Over time, the road network has grown to serve increasing amounts of through traffic, a steadily growing local population and a greater diversity of users, including

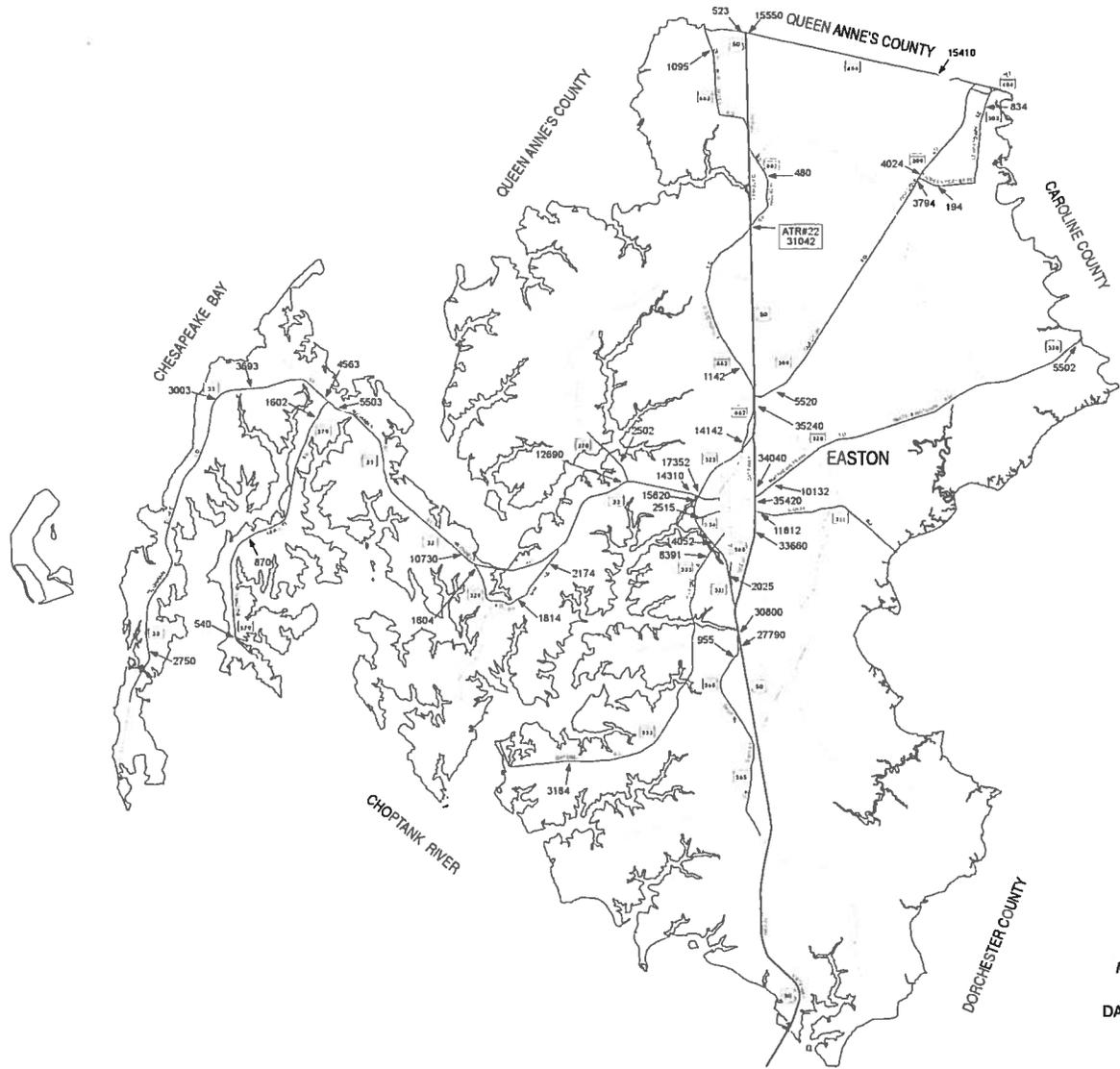
recreational and commuting cyclists.

The principal arterial in the County is US 50, which is a major commercial and tourist route through the area. There are places and times when the roads are burdened by high traffic volume and travel obstructions. Talbot County and the incorporated municipalities impacted by vehicular traffic will continue to work with the State Highway Administration to mitigate for safety and congestion problems. Several policies have been outlined to call attention to these conditions.

Fostering other transportation modes presents challenges in Talbot County's rural setting.

The County strives to balance other growing technologies and consumer needs with the quality of life it seeks to preserve. It is understood that maintaining this balance enhances livability.





LEGEND

- Interstate Highway
- US Highway
- State Highway
- Permanent Traffic Counter Location
- Permanent Traffic Counter With No Data Available
- Toll Station Location

The information on this map is provided as a public service by the Maryland State Highway Administration (MSHA).

NOTICE

Traffic count figures are estimates. The traffic count estimates are derived by taking 48 hour maximum count data and applying factors from permanent count stations. *(Restriction of Liability)*
 MSHA makes no claim, promise or guarantee about the accuracy, completeness, or adequacy of the contents of these maps and expressly disclaims liability for any errors and omissions in the contents of these documents.

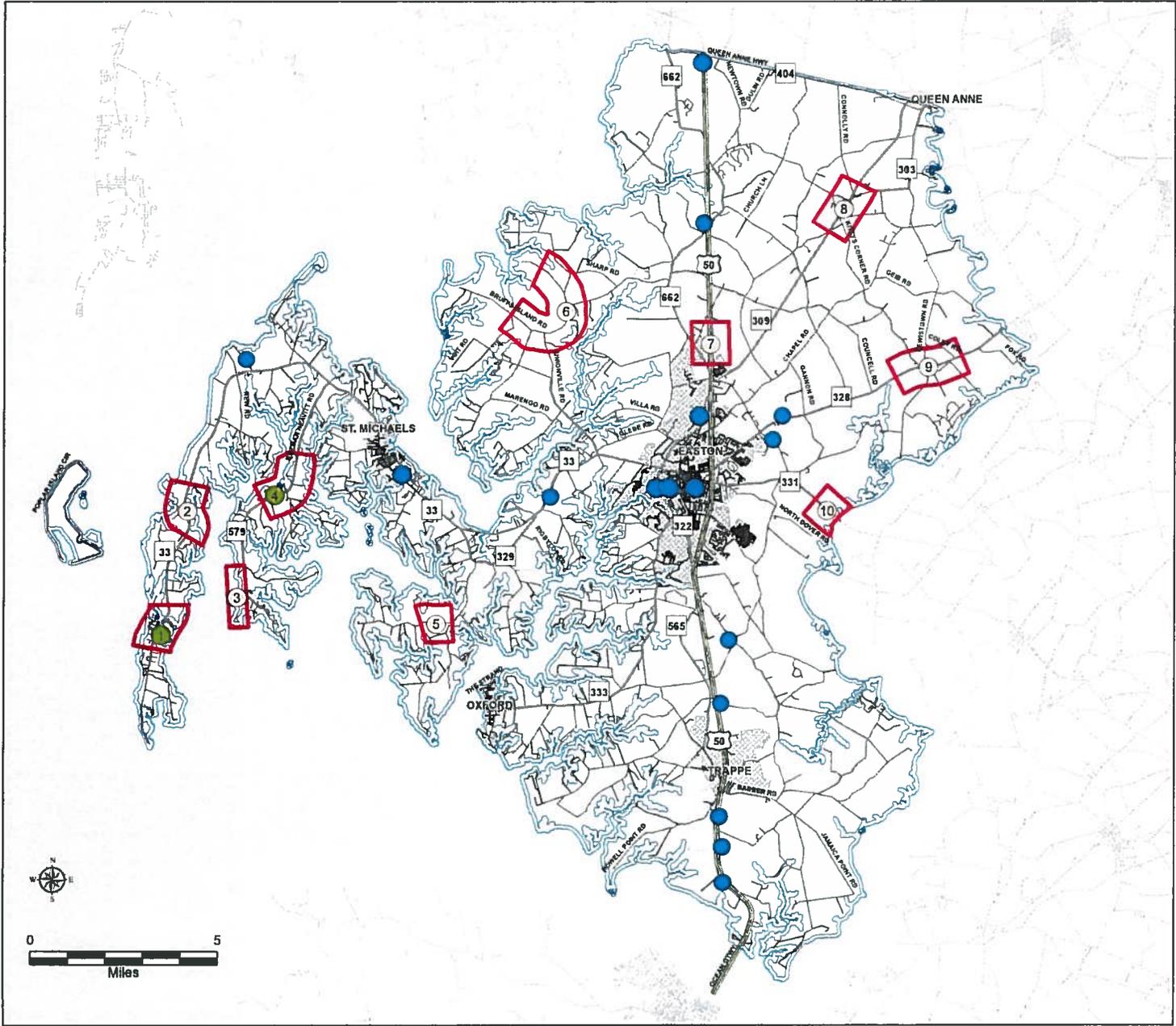


TALBOT COUNTY
TRAFFIC VOLUME MAP
2014
 ANNUAL AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC
 Prepared by the
Maryland Department of Transportation
STATE HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION
DATA SERVICES ENGINEERING DIVISION
 0 1 2 3 4
 Miles
 Published Date: 3-16-15

Wireless Communication Tower Priority Placement Areas

- Existing Wireless Antenna
- PPA Id
- Approved and Constructed in PPA
- Tower PPA

Id	PPAName
1	Tighman
2	Sherwood
3	Neavitt
4	Bozman
5	Bellevue
6	Todds Corner
7	Hog Neck
8	Cordova
9	Mathewstown
10	Dover



Chapter 4 Community Services and Facilities



Vision

Talbot County provides services that effectively meet the County's changing needs and are consistent with planned land use patterns.

Through thoughtful planning and the integration of programs, valuable community services and facilities enhance the quality of life in Talbot County.

The County, in coordination with nonprofit organizations, in incorporated towns and designated growth areas, strives to provide affordable housing opportunities to meet local needs. Successful plans and an emphasis on strategic growth contribute to keeping housing costs affordable. The County has programs in place requiring that adequate facilities and services are maintained and are not overwhelmed by new development. The County employs methods that assure the cost of development is borne by the developer.

All County residents find ample opportunities for recreation and relaxation in our park system. The Department of Parks and Recreation is attentive to the needs of County residents and offers a wide variety of programs and well-maintained facilities.

Population centers have conveniently located neighborhood parks with amenities for family-oriented activities. Larger community parks are connected by a greenway network including walking and biking trails. Waterfront parks and many public landings provide access to our miles of Bay and river shoreline.

Goals

Provide an equitable and resilient system of public facilities and services including emergency services, police protection, schools, healthcare, social services, housing, libraries and other services that effectively meet community needs and are consistent with land use plans.

Develop policies, initiate and support programs, acquire funding and form strategic partnerships to help alleviate substandard housing conditions.

Provide opportunities to accommodate a variety of housing densities, types, sizes and costs to meet existing and future needs.

Maintain and enhance the system of parks and recreation facilities based upon residents' needs.

I. Introduction

The availability, affordability and quality of community services are important indicators of the County's quality of life. Planning for community facilities and services should take into account current community needs, as well as projected changes in both the needs of the community and anticipated growth.

Community services and facilities are provided to Talbot County residents by local and state government, public/private ventures, and the private sector.

The demographic trend is an increase in the population of older and retired citizens, especially in the more distant and rural areas of the county. The towns of Easton and Trappe are expected to be the County's major growth areas in the coming years.

Demands for community services are changing along with demographic shifts. By 2030, the demand for schools and outdoor recreation may decrease, while the need for easily accessible services such as libraries, healthcare and emergency services are likely to increase.

County owned facilities are funded mainly through the Capital Improvements Program (CIP). Public schools are funded from local, state, federal and private revenue sources.

The community services and facilities discussed in this Plan element include: government offices, public safety, hazard mitigation, education, libraries, healthcare, social services, housing, parks and recreation, and solid waste management. Public sewer and water utilities are discussed separately in the Natural Resource Conservation chapter.

Countywide Community Service and Facility Policies

4.1 Public facilities and services intended to meet countywide needs should be centrally located. Likewise, facilities and services intended to serve local community needs should be located within the community.

4.2 Public facilities and services should be scaled to the needs of the area they are designed to serve.

4.3 The County should seek regional solutions to providing community services or facilities when demonstrated to be cost effective. Rural areas of the County should be provided facilities and services which match rural needs. Planned growth areas around towns should be provided a level of facilities and services matched to needs that are more intensive.

4.4 County public facility and service improvements should be efficiently coordinated with capital improvements. All planned major public facilities shall be prioritized and scheduled as part of a Comprehensive Five Year Capital Improvements Program.

4.5 Wherever possible, existing County and town public facilities should be expanded rather than creating new facilities. The County should provide adequate space for various county offices and facilities.

4.6 New development projects should not be approved or built in areas of the County where infrastructure and services such as roads, sewer service or fire protection are not adequate to accommodate the increased demand. Exemptions to this policy may be considered in the event that a developer bears the cost to improve such facilities.

4.7 The costs of new or expanded community facilities and services should be equitably and proportionally shared by all those who will benefit from the improvements.

4.8 The County should seek State coordination to assist with the establishment of effective public facilities for new development.

II. County Office Facilities

The Town of Easton is the county seat of Talbot County. Most County departments and offices are located in Easton, as well as State agency offices serving the County.

As operations grew over the past few decades, services and facilities spread to locations throughout the town. Residents with business to conduct were forced to visit several locations to get things done. Separation of facilities also hindered coordination between agencies and departments.

To better integrate service, the County purchased and renovated the building at 215 Bay Street in Easton, in close proximity to the Courthouse and other agency offices. This facility is currently home to the Department of Planning and Zoning, the Office of Permits and Inspections, the Department of Public Works and the Office of Environmental Health.



Pending further renovations, the County Manager's Office and Administrative Services will remain in the Courthouse. The long-term plan is for the Courthouse to be dedicated primarily to matters of the courts.

III. Public Safety

A. Law Enforcement

- a. Responsibility for law enforcement in the County is shared by the Talbot County Sheriff's Office, the Police Departments of Easton, St. Michaels, Oxford and Trappe, and the Maryland State Police.

The County constructed a Detention Center in 1992 with a maximum capacity of 132

inmates, designed to meet the needs of the County through the year 2018.

The Talbot County Community Service Program (TCCSP) was established in 1993 to offer sanctions other than incarceration, allowing participants to maintain family, job and community ties. Options for participants include performing community service, referral to addiction or substance abuse programs, GED programs, and counseling services.

- b. The Office of the State's Attorney for Talbot County has five attorneys and seven administrative staff. Each attorney handles

many types of cases, in both the District Court and the Circuit Court. Areas of responsibility include homicides, vehicular manslaughter, narcotics, child abuse, sex offenses, robbery and assaults, embezzlement, forgeries, and a Victim Witness program.

B. Emergency Services

1. Department of Emergency Services

The Department of Emergency Services has three divisions: the 9-1-1 Operations Center processes and dispatches emergency calls; Emergency Medical Services provides emergency care and medical transportation; and Emergency Management implements and coordinates responses to natural and man-made disasters.

Talbot County has a comprehensive road naming and property numbering program, a Geographic Information System (GIS) for dispatch and tracking emergency response, and a fully staffed operations center to effectively

deliver emergency services.

Talbot County will maintain a consolidated 9-1-1 Operations Center to receive all 9-1-1 emergency calls for assistance in Talbot County, dispatch law enforcement, fire, and emergency medical services, and monitor and appropriately issue alerts for developing local and regional emergency situations as well as state or national major emergency situations.

The emergency services department oversees the emergency management program, emergency medical services, emergency communications, and other appropriate emergency services as designated by the County Council. Talbot County will maintain an emergency medical service response system designed to deliver advanced life support services for medical emergencies to the community.

Talbot County has an effective emergency management division, with detailed hazard mitigation, evacuation and emergency plans and operations. The County will continue to maintain and update the Talbot County Emergency Operations Plan which exists to provide for continuity of government, the assignment of operational responsibilities, operational coordination, issuance of public alerts, and the coordination of evacuation and

sheltering. Coordination and evacuation planning will continue with local and State transportation officials, law enforcement, and other appropriate agencies and organizations to alert and facilitate the movement of threatened populations.

2. Volunteer Fire Companies

Fire, rescue, ambulance and emergency medical services are provided by the seven volunteer fire companies within the County. Volunteer fire companies are located in Queen Anne, Cordova, Easton, Oxford, Trappe, St. Michaels and Tilghman. Volunteer companies receive funding support from the State, County and towns, in addition to private donations and fund raising activities. Advanced Life Support (ALS) services have been established to provide 24 hour emergency response by trained paramedics and cardiac rescue technicians. ALS services are provided by volunteer and paid staff. Fire companies are challenged to raise funds to update and improve the equipment needed to respond to an ever growing number of calls. Many companies also have difficulty recruiting and retaining volunteers, though the need for fire, rescue, ambulance and emergency medical services has steadily increased.

Public Safety Policies

4.9 The County will continue to provide effective and efficient emergency services through a unified emergency services system using national and state regulations, standards, and guidelines to evaluate system performance and make system improvements.

IV. Hazard Mitigation

Hazard mitigation is a key element of community resilience.

A Resilient Community is one that is able to anticipate risk, limit impact, and bounce back rapidly through survival, adaptability, evolution, and growth in the face of change.

Resilience is achieved by identifying and

investing in the foundational pillars that support the community. These include public safety, health and welfare, infrastructure protection, education, economic stability, and environmental protection.

Hazard mitigation planning is the foundation for a long-term strategy to reduce disaster losses and break the cycle of disaster damage,

reconstruction, and repeated damage. As an incentive for State and local governments to develop plans, the Federal government requires mitigation planning as a condition of eligibility for hazard mitigation project funding.

A. Hazard Mitigation Plan

The Talbot County Council and the governments of the incorporated towns have adopted the *2011 Hazard Mitigation Plan* for the County. The purpose of the plan is to review, assess and update area vulnerabilities to natural hazards and prepare a long-term strategy to address them.

The Hazard Mitigation Plan is Talbot County's road map to evaluating hazards, identifying resources and capabilities, selecting appropriate actions, and implementing mitigation measures to eliminate or reduce future damage from those hazards.

The highest hazard risks identified in the plan were winter storms, mass power outages, flash floods, tropical storms, shore erosion, extreme heat and wildfires.

Other hazards ranging from extreme cold to drought were identified as having a high impact but were considered to occur less frequently.

The Hazard Mitigation Plan lists and prioritizes mitigation projects and contains information on responsible organizations, estimated costs, possible funding sources, and timeline for implementation. It also outlines the steps necessary to implement the mitigation strategies. These projects contribute to a larger goal of improving community resilience — that is the sustained ability to respond to, withstand

and recover from adverse situations such as natural disasters.

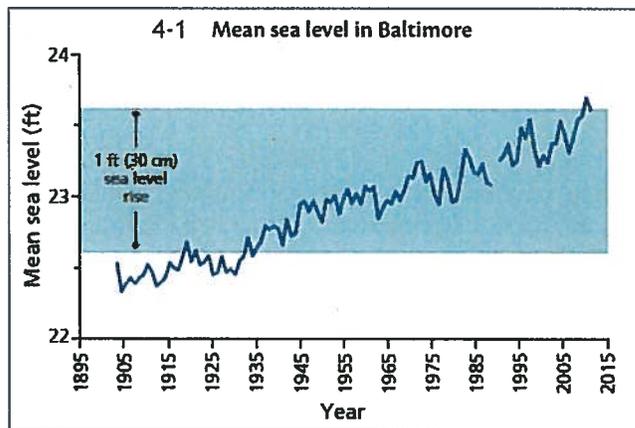
Following are priorities for implementation from the Hazard Mitigation Plan.

1. Establish the Talbot County Community Center as a State Mass Care Shelter for approximately 3,000 residents/evacuees, or to shelter evacuees transiting through the County if evacuation routes were closed. *Plans and Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) have been developed between the County and the State allowing the community center to be used as an emergency shelter for the Upper Shore region, and these documents are reviewed on an annual basis.*

2. Develop an enhanced flood warning system, to include the use of GIS and loss

estimation software in the development of flood stage forecast maps, flood depth maps and images of vulnerable structures, linked to parcels and flood stage maps.

3. Identify areas of concern throughout the County that experience repetitive flooding and/or flood related issues.



Source:

4. Maintain and enhance the Community Rating System (CRS) Program to reduce flood insurance costs in Talbot County. *Talbot County obtained CRS certification in October, 2014 and plans to continue to enhance its rating by implementing additional measures.*
5. Develop a system for recording and storing elevation certificates and first-floor elevation data using County GIS and database technology. *Elevation Certificates are now available online from Talbot County's website.*

6. Develop specifications for backup generators and fuel tanks to provide the municipalities, County and village community facilities with a continuous source of electrical power.
7. Resolve flooding issues on Route 33 that have caused parts St. Michaels and Tilghman Island to be cut off.
8. Conduct a detailed structural assessment for the buildings in the floodplain in St. Michaels to determine appropriate mitigation measures to reduce low level repetitive flooding.
9. Construct upgrades to the Oxford WWTP related to the facility and pre-draining to help mitigate flooding issues. *The Town of Oxford is proceeding through the development process for plant upgrades and the Town and County are cooperating on stormwater management improvements in the vicinity.*
10. Replace three existing culverts with bottomless culverts in the Dutchmans Lane vicinity. *A bottomless culvert has been constructed and other stormwater management projects are planned.*
11. Restore barrier islands for wave action protection to County coastlines.

B. Coastal and Climate Hazards

Past Comprehensive Plans have not adequately addressed the threat of coastal storms, sea-level rise, and the necessity of building resilience in the face of changing conditions. In the Vision Statement for the present Comprehensive Plan, the primary goals are to “preserve the quality of life and rural character of Talbot County while protecting the health, safety and well-being of its citizens.” With increasing evidence of sea level rise, and projections of stronger storms in a warming climate, the implications for the low lying Eastern Shore are clear.

1. Sea Level Rise Projections

A rise in Maryland’s average temperature over the last century has been documented from

published records. Sea level rise of one foot in the past 100 years has been recorded in Baltimore Harbor, as summarized in Chart 4.1. A recent update of sea level rise projections by the Scientific and Technical Working Group of the Maryland Climate Change Commission (Boesch et al., 2013) revealed two issues of concern:

First, the rate of sea-level rise in the Chesapeake Bay area is twice the average rate of rise over the rest of the globe. Primary reasons given for this elevated rate are: (1) the land is subsiding as a result of land adjustment after the last ice age; and (2) large amounts of water are being drawn from the aquifers to supply the needs of communities, especially on the Eastern Shore. Secondly, there is that evidence that this rate sea level rise is accelerating. The Scientific and Technical Working Group projects that, by 2050, sea level in Chesapeake Bay will increase between 0.6ft and, 1.6ft, with a best estimate of 0.9ft. Although projections beyond 2050 have greater uncertainty, estimates of sea level rise by 2100 range from 2.1ft to 5.7ft, with a 3.7ft rise as the most likely scenario.

These changes will impact human health, the built environment, agriculture, natural resources, and water resources in the County. The fact that areas of MD 33 from Sherwood through Royal Oak could be impacted by sea-level rise, or that Oxford, St Michaels, Tilghman and many other waterfront communities will likely be affected by the increasing frequency of Category 1 storm surges, requires planning in light of evidence which indicates that these events are likely to happen. Whether coastal flooding occurs through a slow sea level rise or from hurricanes and nor’easters, the potential for property damage in Talbot County with its long shoreline exposure cannot be underestimated.

Detailed analysis of trends and prediction of future conditions for the County and State can be found at Climatechange.Maryland.gov, including an interactive map of climate change impact areas.

2. Strategies

Strategies to respond to sea level rise and increasing storm frequency should include evacuation and refuge, construction, and engineering. Hazard mitigation planning can address certain events: those that are likely to occur, have a limited duration and a variable intensity, and can be life threatening. Emergency cooling or warming centers, proactive communications and warnings, evacuation routes and shelters to help residents are planned.

Other strategies can help to reduce property damage and break a cycle of repeated losses and reconstruction. As of 2014, almost 2,000 properties in special flood hazard areas were covered by National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) policies, representing over \$500 million in property coverage. Talbot County has achieved acceptance into the NFIP Community Rating System (CRS), which recognizes floodplain management efforts with flood insurance policy discounts for businesses and homeowners. CRS goals are to reduce future flood losses, avoid economic disruption and human suffering and promote awareness of the need for flood insurance.

In addition to buildings, infrastructure such as drinking water supplies, roads and other elements may be threatened by even short term inundation from a single weather event. Enhancement of wetlands and riparian buffers, infrastructure improvements, and improving the resilience of utilities and services can all anticipate these occurrences, arrest loss cycles

and protect against additional losses. Identifying trouble spots is the first step to mitigating damage.

Other existing, regional plans addressed in the Natural Resources chapter of this plan will help address impacts to the environment. Critical Area regulations, Bay TMDL strategies, habitat restoration plans, agricultural best management practices, etc. can all play a part in impeding a documented rise in water temperature and pH, the migration of invasive species and plant diseases from more tropical regions and the loss of some migratory species. Though these conditions are not hazards, the character of Talbot County would be diminished if trends continue unabated.

3. Community Resilience

The five pillars of community resilience in Talbot County are:

- Health, Safety, and Welfare
- Economic Stability
- Infrastructure
- Education
- Environment and Shoreline Protection

These pillars have been introduced into the Talbot County Comprehensive Plan as general guidance. It is the County’s intent to use the five pillars to direct capital projects, form working groups, and secure grant funding in the future. Community resilience cannot be supported by only one or several of the pillars; to be a truly resilient community in the face of emergencies of all sorts, it is the belief of Talbot County that we must invest in all pillars equally.

Hazard Mitigation Policies

4.10 Talbot County shall research and implement plans to improve County resilience in the face of coastal and climate hazards and other threats to the foundation of our County such as public safety, health, and welfare, the economy, education, the infrastructure, and the environment.

4-11 Talbot County will maintain an emergency management program as part of the federal, State, local, and private sector emergency management network to identify and recommend ways to mitigate hazards, effectively plan for response to major emergencies, monitor and appropriately issue public alerts, and coordinate evacuation, response and recovery operations.

V. Education

A. Primary

The Talbot County Public School System is operated by the Talbot County Board of Education. System facilities consist of five elementary schools, one middle school, one combined middle/high school and one high school, located in nine buildings.

In recent years more than 50% of the County budget has been devoted to public education; education

represented over 64% of the Public School's Fiscal 2015 budget. Despite the County's fifth place ranking for local per pupil expenditures (\$8,083), it is the lowest ranked for total per pupil revenues (\$12,636).

This is due to a per pupil contribution by the State (\$3,799) which is the second lowest percentage of all counties.

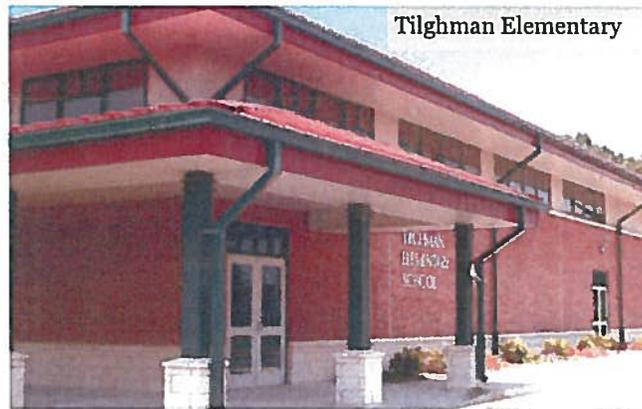
The 2015 *Talbot County Public Schools Educational Facilities Master Plan* projects a relatively steady school population. The number of students enrolled in 2014 was 4,372. In 2015 it was expected to rise slightly to 4,470. Projections for 2024 estimate a student population of 4,530.

The Talbot County public school system has adequate existing capacity on a County-wide basis to accommodate projected enrollment for the next ten years. However, facility utilization has shifted to relieve conditions at Easton Elementary schools which are at over 90% of capacity. Presently Easton High School is reported to be at 84% of capacity, while St. Michaels combined middle and high schools are at 69% following major renovations.

By 2021, schools expected to be enrolled at over

90% of capacity are White Marsh Elementary, Easton Middle School and Easton High School. Enrollment at Tilghman Elementary is projected to decline to 51.6% of capacity. Declines are also expected at Chapel Elementary (78.7%) and St Michaels Elementary (76.4%).

Nine private schools also enroll students from within and outside the County, including five which enroll only nursery school ages. The non-public schools include:



- The Country School (accommodates grades kindergarten through eight);
- St. Peter and St. Paul's School (accommodates grades kindergarten through twelve);
- The Chesapeake Christian School (accommodates grades kindergarten through twelve).

In 2014, total private school enrollment was 1,121 students. A significant number of students at some schools may be drawn from outside the County

Home instruction for K-12 students increased to 2.2% of County enrollment, from a reported 1.5% in 2008. Just over 33% of home instruction students were supervised by the Talbot County Schools in the 2014 academic year.

B. Secondary

Chesapeake College is a two-year community college located in Wye Mills and supported in part by the five Midshore counties. It offers 17 transfer and 20 career Associate Degree programs, including science and technology, liberal arts, education and various specialties of allied health.

The college had a fall 2013 full time enrollment of 2,572. Twenty four percent of enrollees were from Talbot County. There have also been over 17,000 registrations in non-credit continuing education courses, many related to aspects of the manufacturing and hospitality industries. Salisbury University and Washington College

are each located within an hour of the County. Salisbury University is part of the University System of Maryland, and offers 43 undergraduate and 14 graduate degree programs. Washington College is a private institution offering 40 majors and academic programs at the undergraduate level.

Education Policies

4. 12 Talbot County will support a full spectrum of educational resources and programs in support of a prosperous and skilled community.

C. Library Services

The Talbot County Free Library provides comprehensive library services to the public from its main library in Easton and the St. Michaels branch. Library initiatives and programs include small business and veterans' assistance, basic computer literacy, job seeking assistance, and an early literacy center. The library has sponsored a community conversations program, interviewing and recording the oral histories from community members. It has also partnered with the Maryland Humanities Council on their 'One Maryland, One Book' and 'Let's Be Shore' programs. In the 2014 fiscal year, the library held over 700 programs (66% for children) with a total attendance of 15,704.

The main library building has recently been renovated and expanded to a 28,000 square foot, energy-efficient structure, featuring two meeting rooms and an expanded audio-visual collection. There is also a separate children's wing and an improved Maryland Room dedicated to historical, genealogical and archival materials. The library has over 27,000 cardholders and 49 public access internet computers.

The library system is funded 75% by Talbot County while the State of Maryland contributes 18%. Public funds are used primarily for staff salaries, acquisitions, supplies, and routine

maintenance. There are 91 volunteers who work with the library, who in the last fiscal year contributed more than 8,000 hours of service.

VI. Healthcare and Social Services

A. Hospital

Memorial Hospital in Easton has been the primary medical and healthcare provider in Talbot County and the Mid-Shore region for over 100 years. Memorial Hospital offers a full range of inpatient and outpatient care services. It has 140 licensed beds and an Emergency Department designed to accommodate 60,000 visits a year. Additional outpatient centers for primary care, diagnostics, treatment, education, and rehabilitation are located throughout the Mid-Shore.

Shore Health System was formed in 1996 through the affiliation of two community hospitals: Memorial Hospital in Easton and Dorchester General Hospital, located in the city of Cambridge. In 2006, Shore Health System merged with the University of Maryland Medical System (UMMS) to enhance clinical programs and facilities, and to facilitate physician recruitment. Subsequently, Shore Health Systems began to seek a site for a new regional medical facility. With the encouragement and assistance of Talbot County and the Town of Easton, Shore Health Systems

selected a site north of Easton and adjacent to the County Community Center. Over 225 acres were annexed into the Town in order to provide public utilities for a complete medical campus.

The Shore Regional Health Medical Center facilities on the Eastern Shore were combined in 2013 to form University of Maryland Shore Medical Center (UMSMC). The University of Maryland Shore Medical Center took possession of the parcels in October, 2015, setting in motion a schedule to improve the site. Under the terms of the hospital property settlement, UMMS will commence planning and design of an acute care hospital within 5 years. If construction is not substantially completed within 15 years, the County has the legal authority to require the hospital to convey the property back to the County.

The University of Maryland Shore Center at Easton currently employs over 1,900 people, including a medical staff of over 200 attending, consulting and associate staff members, and a corps of over 500 volunteers.

The healthcare industry in Talbot County accounted for all growth in the education and health services sector between 2005 and 2011. Employment expanded by 436 jobs or 14.3 percent in this period, supported in large measure by the presence of Shore Health System.

B. Community Health and Assistance

The County Health Department is the local agency of the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. The department provides all County residents with a wide array of family health programs and services. Program areas include adult health and family services, clinical services, developmental disabilities and veteran's services. Areas of concern include communicable disease control services including immunizations, monitoring the spread of diseases, and testing and treatment for tuberculosis, sexually transmitted diseases and AIDS.

C. Environmental Health

The Office of Environmental Health is responsible for the enforcement of State regulations as delegated by the Maryland Department of the Environment and the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

Services include septic system and well site inspections, licensure and inspection of restaurants, seafood operations and other food processing facilities, outdoor air quality monitoring, and rabies surveillance and control.

The Office works in cooperation with the County Department of Planning and Zoning on approval and inspection of septic systems and regulation of conditions in trailer parks, foster homes, labor camps and day care facilities.

D. Special Needs Populations

Special needs populations include low income residents, the elderly, disabled residents and the homeless.

1. Social Services

The Department of Social Services is an agency of the State of Maryland, and is located at 301 Bay Street in Easton. The office provides a wide variety services, including adult protective services and social services, child and family support services, medical and in-home assistance and the SNAP (food stamp) program.

In the last reporting year (2009), the agency dispersed over \$2.7 million in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) assistance and more than \$2 million in foster care payments.

2. Senior Services

Upper Shore Aging, Inc. operates the Talbot County Senior Center in Easton, providing a range of onsite and home-based services.

The facility houses rooms for exercise and fitness, wellness, education, crafts, and games. It has a media room and dining room. The Senior Information and Assistance service

provides information about services, Medicare and Medicaid application assistance and referrals to other agencies.

The Senior Center also manages the Meals on Wheels program that delivered 17,126 meals to Talbot County residents in fiscal year 2013 and more than 19,000 in 2014. The Center served residents 3,940 congregate meals in its dining room in fiscal year 2013 and anticipates an increase of 1,000 meals in 2014.

Hambleton Village in St. Michaels is a 24 unit development owned and operated by the Upper Shore Aging Housing Corporation, serving low-income elderly residents.

3. Homeless Services

The Neighborhood Services Center (NSC) in Easton has operated a transitional homeless shelter since 1991. The NSC's Ridgeway House provides customers with case management, life skills training, job search information, budgeting, resume building and basic computer skills. The facility can shelter up to six adults (3 females and 3 males) for 30 days. Stays may be extended for residents who are close to achieving self-sufficiency.

The Talbot Interfaith Shelter (TIS) was established in 2009 to provide safe, temporary shelter to those who lack adequate housing and to raise awareness for the issues of homelessness. Until 2014, TIS provided shelter to a modest number of persons through the winter season in one of a consortium of area religious facilities.

More recently, TIS has worked to better address their clients' needs by acquiring and establishing a permanent shelter in the Town of Easton for homeless families and individuals. The six-bedroom, six-bath building is designed to house and feed up to 12 people in an easily accessible, well-maintained and secure environment. The organization has developed a strategic plan to provide a range of integrated services and to that end they have hired part-time staff and developed partnerships with other community organizations.

4. Mental Health Services

In addition to the Talbot County Department of Health, mental health services are accessible through Veterans Outpatient Clinics, a Talbot County Program for Public School Students, and the Memory Center of Bayleigh Chase (formerly William Hill Manor).

The Mental Health Association in Talbot County (MHATC) is a non-profit organization that promotes mental wellness and behavioral health with education and advocacy. Programs include Mental Health First Aid, a training program that teaches the signs and symptoms of mental disorders and provides tools to respond to a psychiatric crisis; the Kids on the Block Puppet Troupe, staging interactive performances to children on such topics as problem solving, feelings and school safety; and a distinguished speakers program.

5. Substance Abuse Services

Talbot Partnership is dedicated to motivating the community on issues pertaining to substance abuse prevention. The Partnership envisions a community free of the abuse of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs where youth and adults lead healthy, safe and productive lives.

Since its inception in 1991, Talbot Partnership has developed programs and activities such as Guiding Good Choices, Safe Homes, drug-free workplace training, Teen Court, Youth Coalition and First Night Talbot. The organization is supported in part by the Talbot County Council. The 2013 Maryland Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), part of the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS), found alcohol use, the most frequently abused substance by teens, decreased by 25% for 12th graders and 18% for 10th graders, compared to data from 2007.

In the same report, marijuana use by high school seniors declined by 33% while 10th

graders use remained nearly the same as in 2007. Cigarettes use by both 12th and 10th graders decreased 39% from the 2007, though the use of smokeless tobacco by 10th graders more than doubled.

Heroin abuse was reported on the rise in Talbot County and throughout the state. Heroin is an extremely addictive drug that can be injected, inhaled by snorting or sniffing, or smoked. It is easy to overdose on heroin. The YRBS survey queried whether teens had ever used heroin and found reported abuse by 12th graders increased by 41% and 10th graders rose by 70% compared to 2007.

Talbot County Sheriff's Office regards heroin and opiate addiction a community health issue as well as a criminal matter. Deputies are trained in the use of Narcan, a heroin overdose-reversing medication. Drug addiction is seen as an element of many crimes the Sheriff investigates.

Talbot County Narcotics Task Force is comprised of the County Sheriff's Office, the Maryland State Police, the St. Michael's Police Department, the Easton Police Department, the Trappe Police Department and the Oxford Police Department. The Task Force conducts investigations into the importation and distribution of wholesale quantities of marijuana and heroin into the Talbot County area.

Substance Abuse Services in Talbot County include:

- Eastern Shore Crisis Response and Resource Helpline
- Eastern Shore Psychological Services
- Talbot County Health Department
- Talbot Partnership
- Talbot Tip Line 410-820-4003
- Talbot County Liquor Inspector
- Talbot Parent Coalition

Healthcare and Social Service Policies

4. 13 Talbot County shall continue to support its healthcare and social service agencies in order to maintain and improve community resilience and foster community health.

VII. Housing

A. Workforce Housing

Some current or prospective County residents who are fully employed have difficulty obtaining housing to meet their needs due to a shortage of safe, affordably priced rental or for-purchase housing. Local housing costs may exceed the incomes of workers in instances of limited housing supply or strong competition that drives up purchase prices. Challenges also include difficulty in obtaining financing.

Early in 2015, the Talbot County Council appointed the first Affordable and Workforce Housing Commission as an advisory body to explore the availability of affordable and

workforce housing in Talbot County. The Commission is to offer insight and guidance to the Council on development of affordable and workforce housing initiatives, programs, funding and/or legislation.

In April, 2015 the Affordable and Workforce Housing Commission presented their initial research findings and recommendations to the County Council. The Commission found that addressing housing needs requires ongoing assessment, monitoring, planning, development and implementation across county and municipal lines. They made the following recommendations, presented in order of priority.

1. Establish definitions for affordable and workforce housing in Talbot County, based on actual wages, housing costs and needs.
2. Incorporate ongoing assessment of the housing inventory, community resources and best practices as a part of the County's commitment to affordable workforce housing.
3. Evaluate institutional barriers which may impede opportunities for affordable rentals and/or home ownership and build relationships with housing developers, service agencies and nonprofits to create housing opportunities.
4. Engage in education and public awareness campaigns to educate the public about the community-wide benefits of affordable workforce housing, inform consumers about affordable housing choices and resources and promote living and working in Talbot County.
5. Create and preserve affordable workforce housing opportunities by encouraging land banking, renovation, participation in State and Federal grant programs and creating zoning and development incentives for the construction of workforce housing.

Comprehensive Plan policies favor new development in Population Centers where the availability of public services enables homes to be built at a lower cost and on smaller parcels.

B. Affordable Housing

Providing affordable housing opportunities for lower income families is important to the long term economic and social vitality of Talbot County.

Families who pay more than 30% of their household income for housing are considered cost burdened and may have difficulty affording necessities such as food, clothing, transportation and medical care. This is in contrast to the assumed income range for workforce housing, because household income could be in the form of social security or disability income, which are well below average

employee wages.

The location of housing – its proximity to jobs, childcare, stores and services and whether or not these are accessible by car, transit, or walking – also has a significant impact on the cost of living and therefore affordability.

The towns of Easton and Trappe have adopted policies permitting a mix of housing types and price ranges to meet the needs of families with below median incomes.

Habitat for Humanity Choptank, headquartered in the Town of Trappe, is the local affiliate of the global organization. Habitat Choptank provides home ownership opportunities for lower income residents with construction, financing and educational assistance. Since 1992, the organization has given 55 low-income families in Easton, St. Michaels and Cordova the opportunity to purchase a home with an affordable mortgage.

C. Assisted Housing

The Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) serves the housing needs of people with limited incomes, the elderly and the handicapped in Talbot County and all state jurisdictions. The agency provides mortgage financing for single and multi-family housing, finances home and energy conservation improvements to existing homes and administers Federal rent subsidies.

The DHCD Special Loan Program provides low or no interest loans to moderate and low income landowners and landlords for home rehabilitation and lead paint risk reduction activity. Talbot County's Department of Planning and Zoning is available to assist DHCD and applicants with applications.

The USDA Office of Rural Development provides funding for low and moderate-income housing to families and the elderly, as well as loans and/or grants for repairs.

There are currently seven USDA Rural Development Multi-Family Housing projects

servicing low to moderate income tenants in county. Easton hosts six developments offering 178 subsidized units: ; Jowite Apartments, Mulberry Hill Apartments, Parkway Apartments, Quail Meadows I and II, and St. Marks Village. St. Michaels Apartments offers 19 subsidized units in the Town.

There are 140 public housing units in Talbot County – 65 in the Town of Easton and 75 in the Town of St. Michaels. These units are operated by the Housing Commission of Talbot County, which merged with the St Michaels Housing Authority in 2011. At the time of this 2015 update, there is an extensive waiting list for low-income families wishing to move into these units.

In 1987 and 2002, the County initiated studies of substandard housing. The 1987 study focused on housing problems of the elderly and disabled. The 2002 study found that between 1987 and 2002, Talbot County had significantly reduced its stock

of substandard housing in the unincorporated areas of the County. As of 2002, only 148 housing units were considered to be substandard and of those just 24 were occupied. In 1989 the County adopted a Minimum Livability Code to enhance enforcement of housing code violations.



Housing rehabilitation assistance

Housing Policies

4.14 In areas with public sewer and adequate infrastructure, the County encourages the development of a variety of housing types, styles and designs. Existing housing stock should be maintained, conserved and improved to support social and economic diversity within the community. Single accessory apartments or cottages should be permitted in agricultural or rural residential districts of the County.

4.15 The County should undertake an inventory of public and private sources of funding and make results available to those who are interested in State and Federal programs for rehabilitation or replacement of substandard housing in unincorporated areas of the County.

4.16 The County should seek means to provide affordable 'workforce' housing for low and middle income families, including consideration of a County Housing Authority, and should also study of the feasibility of establishing a Housing Trust Fund.

4.17 The County should explore opportunities to work with investors and home owners to address housing demand. Incentives should be provided to encourage the development of new affordable housing and to encourage restoration and rehabilitation of existing housing.

4.18 The County should develop a wide range of tools and methods to insure an adequate supply of affordable housing in new developments. The County should review zoning, subdivision and development regulations to ensure that regulations do not create barriers to affordable and workforce housing.

Housing Policies

4.19 The County should encourage the incorporated towns to require construction of a share of moderately priced housing units in new development and investigate other alternative methods to maintain affordable housing.

4.20 Manufactured or modular housing should remain among the options to supply affordable housing, provided such construction meets development, health and safety standards.

4.21 The county will request that the Affordable and Workforce Housing Commission, with Planning Department support, reconvene to gather information concerning government agencies and nonprofits that could provide expertise and data, and gather information about what other localities have done to successfully address the need for affordable and workforce housing, while protecting and preserving our unique area and quality of life.

4.22 The County should monitor the adequacy of existing homeless services in the County.

4.23 To ensure that affordable housing is practical and suitable, it should be located in close proximity, and with easy access to employment opportunities, social and health services, schools, food markets and other resources affecting the cost of living.

VIII. Parks and Recreation

The Talbot County Department of Parks and Recreation provides residents with a variety of recreational opportunities, from public landings for boating and fishing to ball fields. A Community Center offers ice skating and provides space for public and community events.

The Department of Parks and Recreation is responsible not only for recreational facilities and activities at County facilities; it also works to coordinate activities between the County and Towns. The Department also oversees the State funded School Community Centers program.

The Department is assisted by the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, which is appointed by the County Council and includes representatives from both the County and the incorporated towns. The Board provides plans and policy recommendations to the County Council and the Parks Department on land acquisition, administration, planning and

policy direction for the Community Center, annual reports and budget requests.

Long range plans for Department of Parks and Recreation are outlined in the Land Preservation Parks and Recreation Plan (LPPRP), which is required by the State of Maryland as a basis for Program Open Space funding. The LPPRP includes detailed assessment of Talbot County recreational facilities and programs and an accounting of publicly available recreation and open space. The LPPRP is regularly updated and contains comprehensive recommendations for maintaining and improving the County's recreational facilities.

The Department of Parks and Recreation is committed to developing facilities and programs to accommodate the needs of a growing population. Over the years, increased leisure time, a rise in the standard of living and a growing senior population have driven the demand for a changing mix of recreational sites and activities.

A. Park Facilities

There are several types of recreational facilities within Talbot County: State parks, County parks, community parks and neighborhood recreational areas, in addition to special parks and private recreational facilities.



Talbot County Community Center

1. County Parks

a. Recreation

The largest improved public recreational facilities serving County residents are Hog Neck Golf Course and the Talbot County Community Center. The 27-hole public Golf Course includes a driving range, clubhouse, and picnic area. The Community Center provides indoor facilities for ice skating and ice hockey and several rentable meeting rooms. The Community Center also features lighted outdoor baseball, lacrosse and soccer fields.

The County also supports 18 community parks that primarily serve residents within a five mile radius. These parks are often located adjacent to or near school facilities. Many community parks are under 25 acres and support field games, court games, and playground apparatus.

There are also 16 neighborhood parks ranging in size from one to five acres, designed to serve residents within a one or two mile radius. Neighborhood parks support active recreational activities with features such as playgrounds, playing fields and organized games, as well as

passive recreation

In recent years, the County has acquired two larger properties dedicated to passive recreation and open space protection; Lewistown Park, outside Queen Anne, and Boone Creek, outside Oxford. Passive recreation, habitat and conservation improvements, and other public amenities are planned for these former farmland sites.

b. Water-oriented facilities

The County operates twenty seven public landings featuring boat ramps, mooring facilities, fishing and crabbing piers, picnic areas and parking facilities. Most facilities occupy small land areas with limited parking capacity. The Department has an ongoing targeted improvement program that has upgraded several public access facilities in the past few years.

One hundred thirty slips are available at County landings, over 90% of which are reserved for use by watermen with commercial licenses. The slips range from the Wye Landing at the north end of Talbot County to Neavitt, Bellevue and Tilghman locations to the south and west. Seafood catches are also unloaded at the public landings without dock facilities. There are DNR-recognized buy stations at various landings throughout the county. Locations of all public landings are identified on Map 4-A.



Lewistown Park

2. Public/Private Parks

Other recreational opportunities in the County include natural areas, quasi-public facilities and historic and cultural areas owned and managed by nonprofit organizations, which are an important part of Talbot’s spectrum of recreational opportunities.

Major quasi-public facilities in Talbot County include Pickering Creek Audubon Center, the Easton Club and Martingham Golf Courses, and conservation lands of the Maryland Ornithological Society, Izaak Walton League, Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage, Nature Conservancy and Chesapeake Bay Foundation.

The public and quasi-public parks of Talbot County are supplemented by 1,264 acres of private parks and recreational areas. Private parks contain a full range of passive and active recreational facilities and range in size from small community clubs to large country clubs and golf courses.

B. Land Preservation Parks and Recreation Plan

Talbot County’s 2013 LPPRP is consistent with



the overall vision and goals of the County Comprehensive Plan. Many of the LPPRP’s goals, policies, and strategies are reflected in the Plan and LPPRP recommendations related to land preservation support the overall goals of this Plan.

Park and Recreation Policies

4.24 The County should continue to support the development, operation and funding of indoor and outdoor recreational programs for County residents.

4.25 The County should work to add additional properties when opportunities present themselves and continue to retain, maintain and improve existing facilities that provide access to public waters for Talbot County watermen and recreational users.

4.26 The County should further develop the existing system of walking and cycling trails in areas where safety can be assured. Trail development shall not occur without consideration of property or privacy rights or conflicting uses.

4.27 The County should explore the feasibility of developing public and private greenways and linear parks in appropriate areas.

4.28 The County should provide information that identifies park locations and facilities to ensure that as many citizens as possible are aware of the active and passive recreational and open space opportunities available.

4.29 The County should encourage developers to provide recreational space in new residential developments. Standards for provision of open space shall not permit golf course facilities or stormwater management areas to satisfy recreational space requirements.

Talbot County Public Landings

Map 4-A.

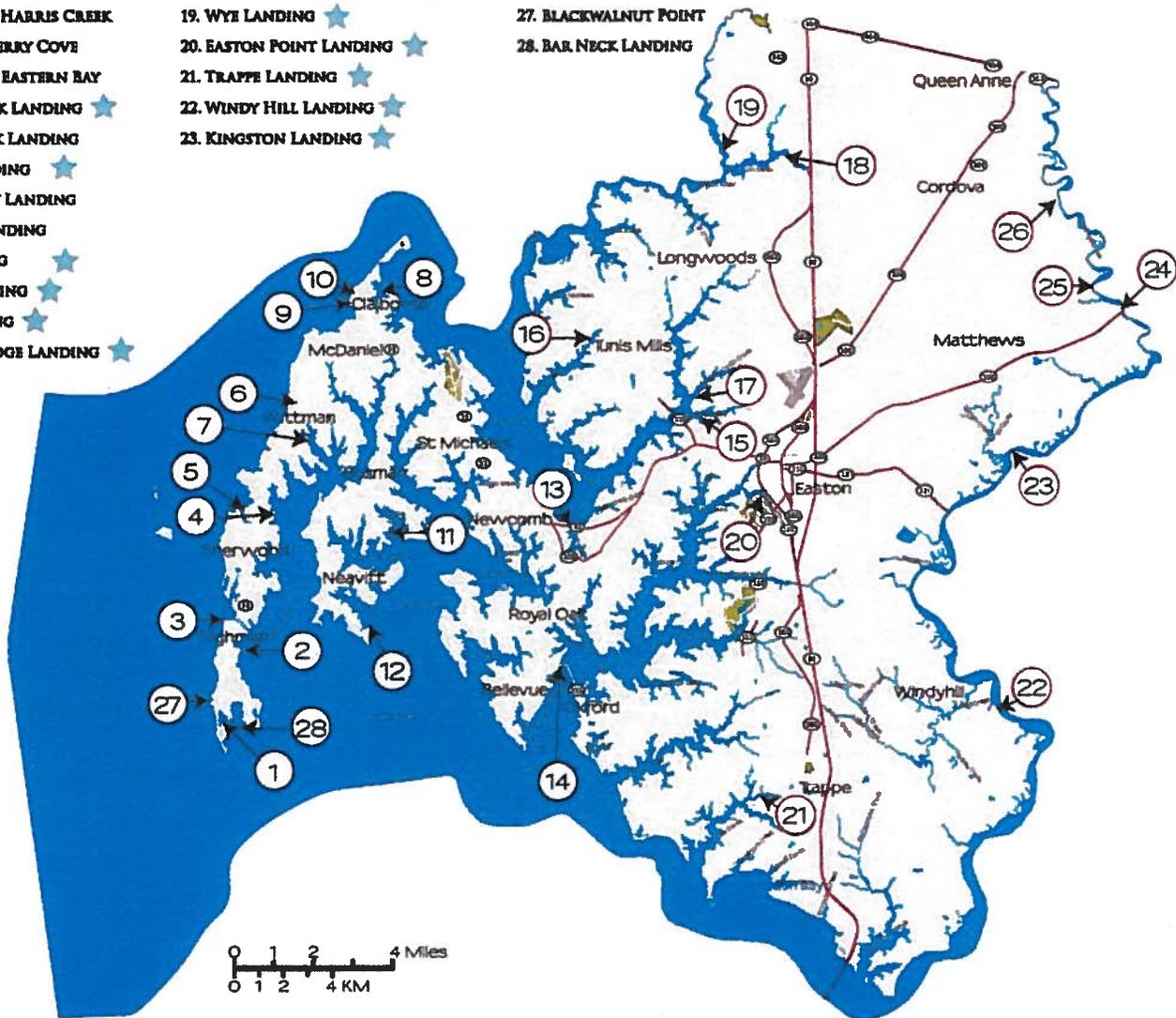
Landings

1. BLACKWALNUT COVE LANDING ★
2. DOGWOOD HARBOR ★
3. TONGERS BASIN
4. SHERWOOD PIER, HARRIS CREEK
5. LOWES WHARF, FERRY COVE
6. BAYSHORE ROAD, EASTERN BAY
7. CUMMINGS CREEK LANDING ★
8. TILGHMAN CREEK LANDING
9. CLAIBORNE LANDING ★
10. CLAIBORNE JETTY LANDING
11. GRACE CREEK LANDING
12. NEAVITT LANDING ★
13. OAK CREEK LANDING ★
14. BELLEVUE LANDING ★
15. MILES RIVER BRIDGE LANDING ★

16. TUNIS MILLS BRIDGE LANDING ★
17. VILLA ROAD LANDING ★
18. SKIPTON CREEK LANDING ★
19. WYE LANDING ★
20. EASTON POINT LANDING ★
21. TRAPPE LANDING ★
22. WINDY HILL LANDING ★
23. KINGSTON LANDING ★

24. NEW BRIDGE LANDING ★
25. REESES LANDING
26. COVEYS LANDING ★
27. BLACKWALNUT POINT
28. BAR NECK LANDING

★ Denotes Boat Ramp



IX. Solid Waste Management

Talbot, Caroline, Kent, and Queen Anne’s counties currently utilize the Midshore II Regional Landfill in Caroline County. The previous site was located outside Easton and is now used as a transfer station, recycling center and homeowner drop-off facility.

Municipal waste collection is a public utility in the town of Easton. All other communities, rural residential areas and non-residential users contract for private services.

The Maryland Recycling Act of 1988 requires that each county recycle at least 15 percent of its

solid waste. Talbot County meets that target through voluntary programs. Recyclable materials are delivered to collection sites throughout the county.

X. Summary

Talbot County provides a range of community services, both directly through county facilities and through cooperation with the State and other agencies. The goal of all community services is to provide an equitable and resilient system that effectively meets community needs and is consistent with the County’s other plans and goals.



Map 4-B

Selected Community Facilities

Parks and Public Lands

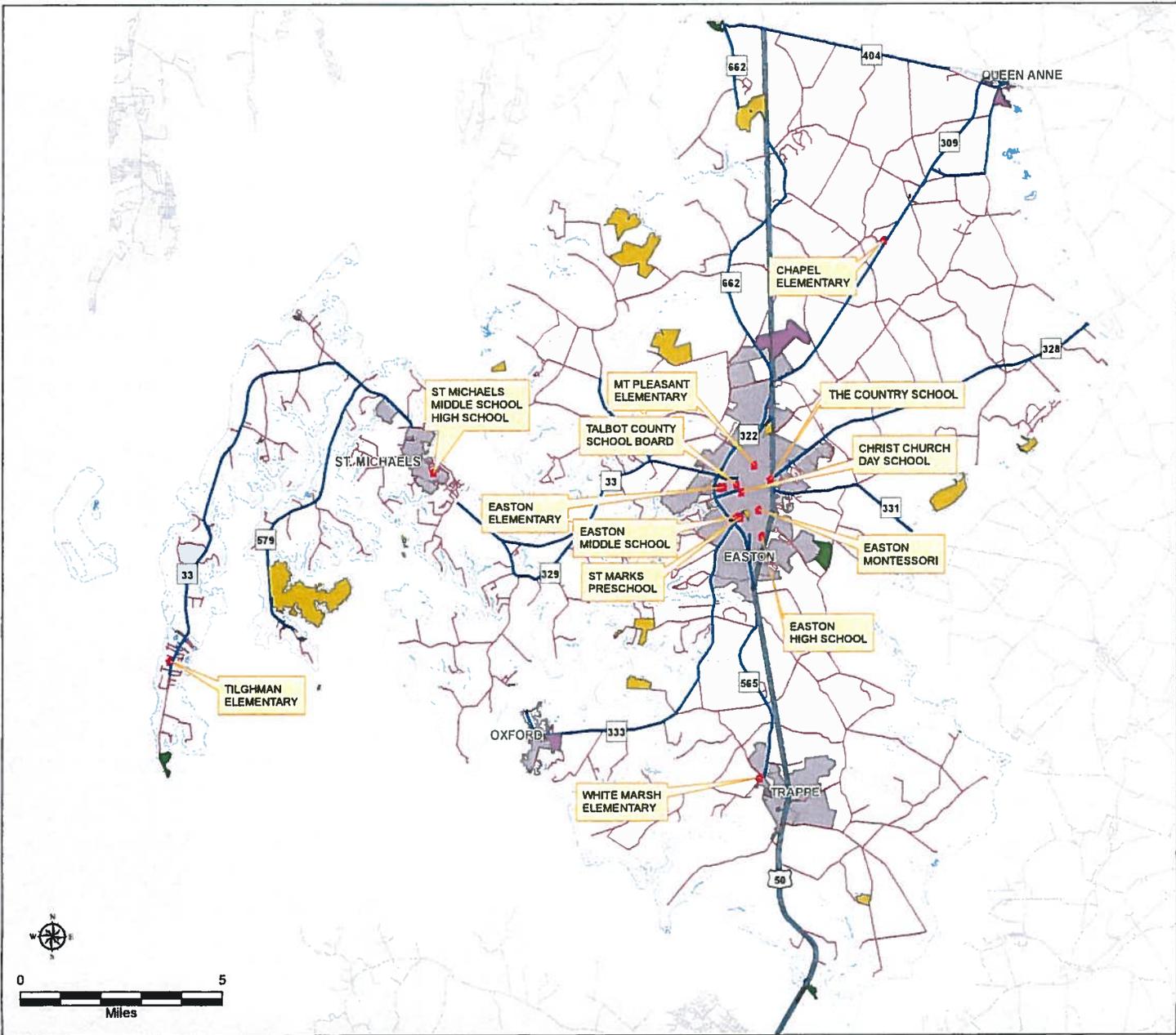
- COUNTY PARK
- STATE/DNR
- OTHER NGO

Schools

- [Red dot symbol]

Roads

- US
- MD
- CO



Chapter 5 Agricultural and Rural Conservation



Vision

Talbot County's undeveloped and working agricultural lands are precious resources that are critical to the rural character and quality of life which the Comprehensive Plan seeks to preserve. Residential and commercial development pressures are no longer in conflict with preservation of the rural landscape, thanks to the land use policies put in place to direct growth toward designated areas and otherwise preserve agricultural and forest lands.

The keystone preservation strategy is for critical tracts of undeveloped land to be placed under conservation easements. Comprehensive planning that designates preservation and growth areas, combined with rigorously enforced zoning ordinances and a range of land preservation incentives, maintain a balance of land uses and foster agricultural operations.

Goal

Conserve Talbot County's agricultural land base and preserve its rural character by directing growth to existing population centers and securing permanent conservation easements in predominantly rural areas.

I. Introduction

Agriculture is a significant part of Talbot County life, both as a major industry and as an important contributor to the county's distinctive character. Working farmland is a valuable and limited natural resource that once developed, cannot be reclaimed for agricultural use.

Conservation of working land is an important component of support to the agricultural industry. In spite of increasing development

pressure on agricultural and open space lands, Talbot County continues to derive benefit from conserving these elements of rural character.

In order to preserve agricultural land and open space, the County, in 1991, adopted a comprehensive rezoning of rural and agricultural lands, reducing the density permitted in agricultural areas from one dwelling unit per two acres. In its place, zoning now allows a variable density somewhat less than one unit per twenty acres on most

Figure 5-1 Talbot County Farm Statistics, 1982-2012							
Farm number and size	1982	1987	1992	1997	2002	2007	2012
Number of farms	350	280	250	240	288	305	328
Average size (acres)	342	389	423	457	367	357	364
Land in farms (acres)	119,684	109,032	109,108	109,572	105,729	109,002	119,481
Source: USDA Census of Agriculture							

farmland. This density has been modified by SB236, discussed in Chapter 2 (Land Use).

To maintain the commercial viability of agriculture, clustering of subdivided lots is generally required. Code amendments passed in 2007 eliminated the opportunity to increase development intensity through the use of Transferable Development Rights (TDRs).

To further protect agriculture as a land use activity, a Right to Farm ordinance was enacted in 2000, stressing the County's commitment to agriculture and helping to protect farmers from unwarranted nuisance complaints.

The most current Census of Agriculture reports an increase in area and number of farms from 2002 to 2007, and again in 2012. New calculations bring numbers close to the farm acres from 1982. The average farm size remains below the historic high in 1997.

Some of these fluctuations may be due to changes in the definition of farming operations or the way census data were gathered. The period was also one of industry consolidation, followed by a recent interest in the establishment of smaller specialty farms.

General Agricultural Land Use Policies

5.1 Agricultural and forestry activities are the primary and preferred land use activity in rural areas of the county.

5.2 Agricultural and forestry activities should be conducted in accordance with best management practices for soil and water conservation which are approved by the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

5.3 Agriculturally-related commercial and industrial uses are permitted in the non-Critical areas of the county, provided these uses can be compatible with surrounding land uses and do not adversely impact environmentally sensitive areas.

5.4 Low density single-family residential construction is permitted in agricultural areas. Development design standards for rural residential development should insure the conservation of agricultural lands, open space, woodlands, environmentally sensitive areas and rural character.

5.5 Rural landowners should be provided the opportunity to transfer development rights from a property in order to maintain development equity and conserve agricultural lands and open space.

II. Existing Land Preservation Programs

A. MALPF

Founded in 1977, the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF) is one of the oldest and most successful programs of its kind in the nation.

The MALPF program is intended to permanently protect farmland by offering landowners financial incentives to voluntarily sell development rights. The Foundation's purpose is to preserve sufficient agricultural land to maintain a viable food and fiber production capacity for present and future citizens of Maryland. The program is administered by the County and State in an equitable partnership.

Talbot County has a moderately successful MALPF program. Community participation has been steadfast and increasing. Landowners have applied to establish easements on an increasing number of farms in every application period. Each annual round of easement purchases has been highly competitive, with only the highest quality farmland purchased in any year.

Presently, Talbot County's MALPF holdings consist of 10,905 acres in 71 easements, with 11,003 acres on 88 properties vying for future easement purchases. See Map 5-A for the locations of properties that have been permanently preserved by through MALPF and other easement programs.

As a MALPF Certified County, Talbot is qualified to retain a portion of agricultural transfer taxes collected in the county, to be



reserved for land preservation. The County has used, and intends to use, all retained funds to purchase development rights, supplement MALPF payments, or promote the sale or purchase of easements. Certification allows Talbot County to retain 2/3 of all agricultural transfer tax revenues collected, for the sole

purpose of purchasing agricultural easements in the county.

Easement applications reached a record high in 2006, as State funds for land preservation peaked. Most of the decade was characterized by

dramatic increases in land value, and a corresponding increase in easement acquisition costs. The net effect was a greater per-acre cost to purchase agricultural easements.

By 2008, land preservation in the County and State came to a halt, due to the economic recession and its impact on tax revenues which fund the MALPF program. With little funds available to purchase easements, progress in land preservation has slowed considerably.

In order to add predictability and a greater degree of local control, the County should pursue additional sources of funding, both public and private, to acquire conservation easements.

Talbot County remains committed to assisting local property owners who are interested in participating in MALPF or other local, regional, state and national conservation programs. The County will continue to work with the State to actively encourage more farmers to participate in MALPF and other programs.

B. Conservation Programs

1. Land Trusts

Non-profit land trusts play an invaluable role helping to protect the county's rural and agricultural landscape. Unlike MALPF, which purchases easements for cash, land trusts typically accept donated easements in exchange for federal and State income tax credits and deductions.

Over one half of the land that is preserved from future subdivision and development in the county has been protected (at no cost to the County) by two such organizations the Eastern Shore Land Conservancy (ESLC)

and the Maryland Environmental Trust (MET). These organizations craft conservation easements that extinguish legal development rights and hold easements on preserved lands. The easements are recognized as tax deductible donations. Property owners who wish to voluntarily conserve land agree to deed restrictions that preserve farmland, forests, streams, shorelines and other important resources.

As of this report, approximately 100 such easements protect about 15,000 acres of land within the county. Most properties are in areas designated for limited development and environmental conservation in County land preservation plans. The County should continue to support these organizations with data sharing and other resources in their efforts to acquire conservation easements.

Historically, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation and the Nature Conservancy have also acquired land or easements to protect critical resources such as old growth forests and marshland. These

sensitive resources are valued habitat protection areas for threatened and endangered species and the ecological diversity they preserve.

2. Rural Legacy and Program Open Space

The Agricultural Security Rural Legacy Area was developed by the Eastern Shore Land Conservancy, in cooperation with Talbot and

other Midshore counties, in order to preserve lands bordering waterways such as the Tuckahoe River in the northeast corner of the county.

The Talbot portion on the Tuckahoe is part of an upper shore Agricultural

Security Corridor, established to help safeguard the Eastern Shore's agricultural economy. The northeast quadrant of the county is a hub of agricultural production and investment, stressing the importance of land preservation. About 830 acres in the county have been preserved through Rural Legacy easements.

Future Rural Legacy Areas may provide for additional protection of farmland paralleling MD Route 404, in cooperation with Queen Anne's County, in an effort to maintain the Corridor's Rural Character in spite of ongoing transportation system improvements.

3. DNR Lands

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) manages several publicly owned parks and protected sites in Talbot County. These 238 acres of public lands include Black Walnut Point Natural Resource Management Area, Bill Burton Fishing Pier State Park, Wye Oak State Park and Seth Demonstration Forest. The sites provide



recreational water access, passive recreational opportunities and natural resource services to local residents and visitors alike.

4. TDR Lands

Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) lands are properties that have participated in a County managed TDR program and have sold or transferred development rights from one property to another, preserving land as open space or agricultural lands. The County does not permit TDRs at present.

C. Priority Preservation Areas

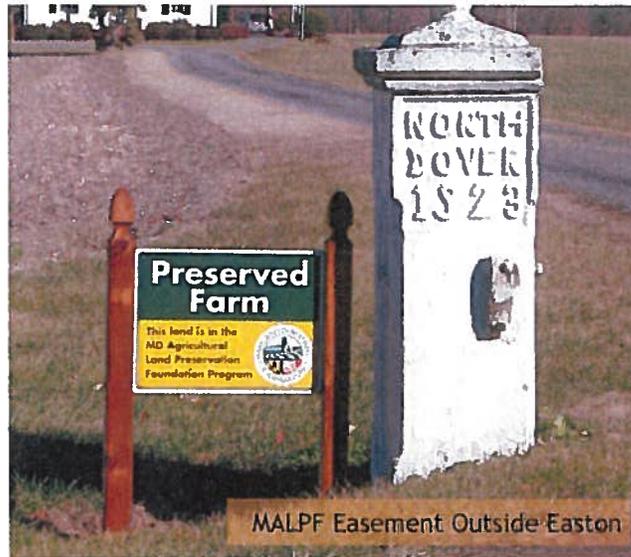
The Talbot County Department of Planning and Zoning adopted a Priority Preservation Area (PPA) plan as an element of the Comprehensive Plan, in 2009. The element was required for counties with certified MALPF programs. The intent was to assure that State funds were used in a strategic fashion to meet local goals.

The Talbot County PPA encompasses approximately 83,000 acres and includes the majority of existing MALPF easements and prospective properties, the Tuckahoe Rural Legacy area, and several conservation easements (see Map 5-A). The PPA is home to a high percentage of local farm owner/operators. Farm operations are diverse, ranging from grain and poultry, to aquaculture, greenhouse and hydroponic growers, wine grapes, artisan cheeses and

specialty produce. The area hosts a variety of agricultural support services including grain storage facilities, agricultural equipment dealers and a network of specialized service providers.

The PPA also contains high concentrations of the most productive soils in the county and is

capable of supporting profitable agricultural and forestry enterprises. In 2004, Talbot County partnered with The Conservation Fund to develop a Green Infrastructure Plan identifying and evaluating areas of high natural resource and agricultural value



(see Chapter 2, Section IV). This research provided important background toward establishing a viable priority area.

Virtually all land in the PPA is designated for agriculture in the County Zoning Ordinance. **Agricultural Conservation (AC)** zoning predominates, with slightly more restrictive **Rural Conservation (RC)** zoning in the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area. The County has no plans to extend sewer or water into the PPA.

Almost all of the PPA has been designated Tier 4 in accordance with the *Sustainable Growth and Agricultural Preservation Act*. Tier 4 is designated for limited development, and each parcel is limited to seven new subdivisions, regardless of the acreage of the parent parcel.

Zoning places other constraints and restrictions on non-agricultural development

activities in order to minimize conflicts with agriculture. Among the uses not permitted in the PPA are Auto Service Stations, Hospitals, Hotels, Manufacturing, Nightclubs, Offices, Indoor Recreation Facilities, Major Retail and Solid Waste Disposal. Prohibiting large or intensive non-residential development will minimize the threats of conflicting uses, heavy traffic and the lure to take land out of agricultural production.

The County has worked to minimize constraints or restrictions on farm related activities by amending zoning regulations to accommodate a range of contemporary uses. For example, farm markets, produce stands, wholesale and retail greenhouses, fish and game hatcheries, and riding stables are all permitted uses in agricultural areas.

The PPA is bound and bisected by major traffic and tourism routes to Maryland and Delaware beaches. Despite the obvious attraction to develop these byways, non-agricultural development has been restricted almost exclusively to the incorporated towns along the

highways.

Also included in the PPA are the villages of Cordova, Bruceville, Ivytown, Williamsburg and Wye Mills, which are emblematic of Talbot County’s agricultural heritage. For example, Wye Mills traces its roots to the Colonial period when the extant grain mill was first established. Cordova’s history dates to the 20th Century commodity-based agricultural boom, and remains central to grain and poultry production.

There are approximately 4,130 parcels of record in the PPA. Of those, about 650 parcels are 50 acres or greater; 488 of those MALPF-qualifying parcels are not yet preserved or enrolled in a preservation program. The parcels that would qualify for the MALPF program amount to approximately 70,000 acres of farm and forest land.

Talbot County has retained a ‘district’ registration system based on the former statewide requirement, with a nonbinding 3 year program commitment. The Department of



	acres	Farms (est.)	% of farm land
Farm Land (Census of Agriculture, 2012)	119,481	328	100%
MALPF Preserved Land (2012)	10,905	71	10%
MALPF Eligible Land in PPA	70,000	488	64%
20 Year MALPF Preservation Goal	56,000	391	51%

Land Preservation Policies

- 5.6 The County should encourage rural property owners to participate in land preservation easement programs offered by national, State, regional and local land trust organizations.
- 5.7 The County should work with local farmers and the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation to encourage the greatest possible participation in the program.
- 5.8 The County should monitor the effectiveness of current incentives designed to preserve working farmland and open space by reviewing land use changes in the Rural Reserve planning area.
- 5.9 The County should examine opportunities to create additional tax or other incentives to preserve farmland.
- 5.10 The County will maintain a Priority Preservation Area program that specifies goals, an implementation program, program evaluation, and program development strategy.

Planning and Zoning encourages registration as a district to assure that a parcel meets program requirements and that landowners are contacted during each application cycle.

III. Summary

If Talbot County continues to secure MALPF easements at its historic rate, it will take over 100 years to reach agricultural land preservation goals. In order to achieve a 20-year preservation goal of 56,000 additional acres, easements would need to be acquired at a rate of 2,800 acres per year.

Adequate funding is the most significant impediment to achieving County preservation goals. Funds are scarce at every possible level of source. Interest in land preservation has remained strong through periods of scarce funding and episodes of extraordinary fluctuations in land and easement values.

To the public, there is no apparent difference between permanently preserved land and other farm property. Whether land remains in agriculture because commodity prices are high, or because the demand for new housing is low, County policies appear to be working when new residential subdivisions are not emerging on the landscape.

Talbot County is not unique in this respect.

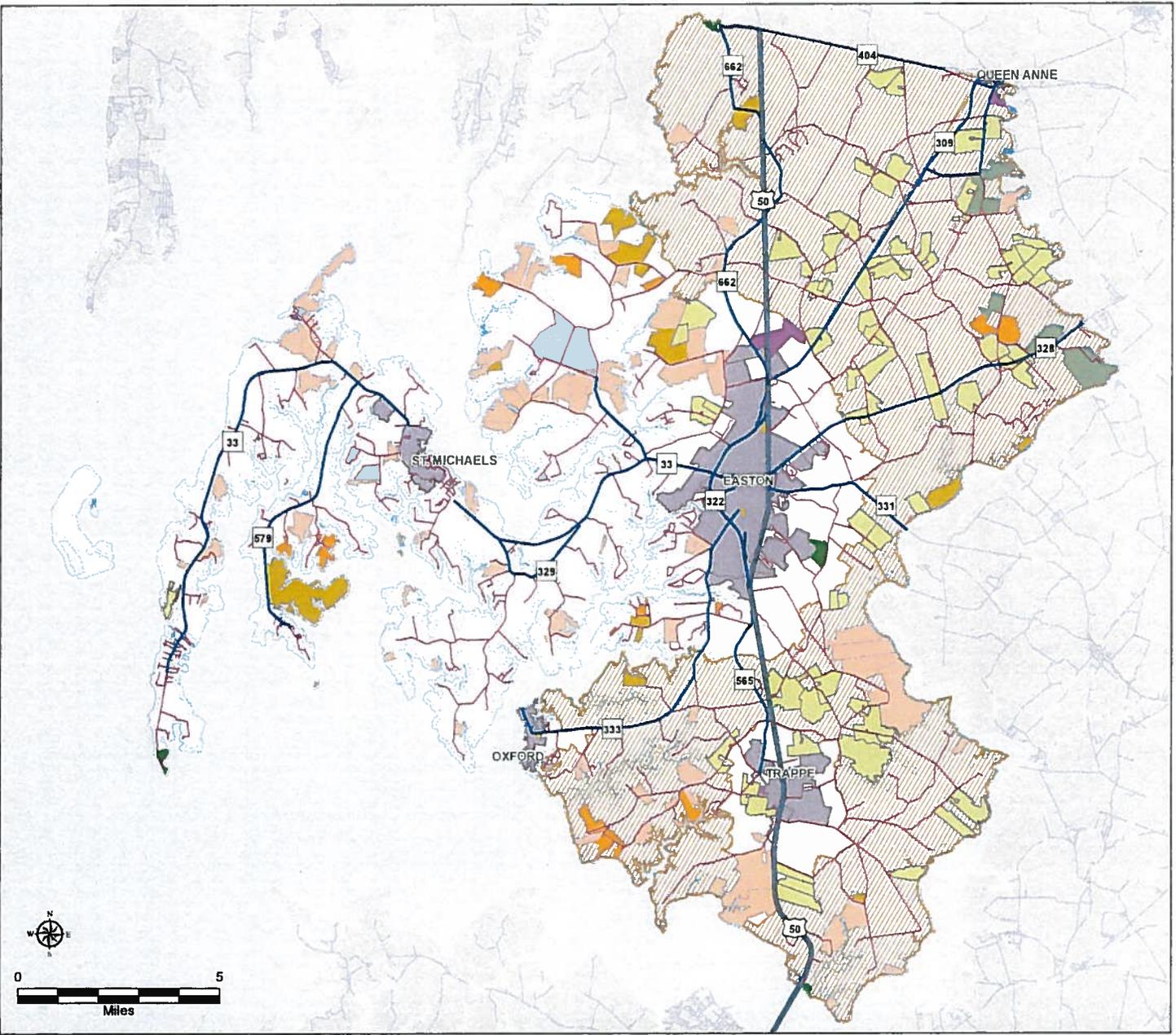
All Maryland counties face challenges and tradeoffs in their efforts to manage land development while working cooperatively with landowners. As development restrictions increase, the motivation for landowners to participate in preservation programs diminishes.

State legislation establishing Priority Preservation Areas and limiting the number of subdivisions allowable on septic systems (see Chapter 2, Tiers) have added greater focus to the goals of preserving viable agricultural areas and limiting a pattern of sprawling development. The challenge for Talbot County is to combine such regulations with policies that support farm families and businesses in their endeavors.

To a great extent, County policies have been working. A combination of 'moderately protective' zoning, land use priorities backed by incentives and regulations, and Right to Farm legislation all serve to keep agriculture viable.

Thanks to Talbot County's longstanding local traditions, affinity for a rural landscape, and a healthy regional market for agricultural products, the motivation to preserve agricultural land and agricultural industry remains strong.

Map 5-A



Protected Lands and Priority Preservation Area

Easement Type

-  MALPF
-  RURAL LEGACY
-  STATE/DNR
-  OTHER NGO
-  ESLC
-  MET
-  COUNTY PARK
-  PPA

Towns

Roads

-  US
-  MD
-  CO

Chapter 6 Natural Resource Conservation



Vision

Because our natural resources and sensitive areas are critical to the quality of life in Talbot County and because significant components of our local economy depend upon clean and abundant waters, the County takes the necessary steps to reduce runoff and other pollutants into its waters. The means of enforcing these provisions are adequately funded, and measurable, objective criteria for monitoring the success of our efforts are in place.

Groundwater and aquifers—as well as wetlands, rivers and bays — are aggressively protected for the future. Measurable standards are in place to determine whether development threatens to deteriorate our groundwater or reduce our aquifers to unsustainable levels.

Thanks to adequate safeguards, sand and gravel extraction and closure of extraction sites avoid environmental damage. Site recovery and conversion to ponds and wooded areas controls runoff, helps maintain groundwater tables, beautifies the landscape and creates opportunities for parks and recreational areas.

To ensure the adequacy of the infrastructure prior to any development, the County strives to ensure that the cost of development is borne by the developer. Public infrastructure capacities are based on peak, rather than average, load requirements.

Goals

Conserve and protect Talbot County's most valuable and attractive assets, its natural resources.

Maintain, in cooperation with the local municipalities, a safe and adequate water supply and adequate amounts of wastewater treatment capacity.

Take steps to protect and restore water quality, and to meet water quality requirements in rivers and streams.

Conserve major accessible mineral resource deposits for future extraction while safeguarding the public by minimizing the environmental impacts of resource extraction and transport.

Establish and enforce programs and regulations to ensure preservation of natural resources, provide tax, financial, and any other incentives for compliance while allowing for moderate planned growth and development on existing lots or record.

I. Introduction

Talbot County's most notable feature is its proximity to the Chesapeake Bay and its 600 mile, irregular shoreline. Bordered by the Chesapeake Bay to the west, the Choptank River to the south and east, and the Tuckahoe River to the northeast, Talbot County is nearly surrounded by tidal waters. Along its western edge, the county takes the form of numerous peninsulas, necks, coves and creeks.

The County's history is reflected in its landscape. The land and waterways are intertwined in a unique mosaic of tidal waters, streams, farmlands and forests, following settlement patterns dating to pre-Colonial times. A scattered patchwork of farms, estates, villages and towns grew from traditions long centered on farming, seafood and maritime industries.

This Plan references the 2010 Census counts and projections. It also incorporates the septic tier system required by SB 236 into the Comprehensive Plan (see Chapter 2). New to this chapter are the recent State requirements for a Water Resources Element in the Comprehensive Plan and the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) program.

The conservation and protection of sensitive natural resources transcends man-made boundaries. Loss of forest land, polluted runoff coursing into local waters, loss of agricultural land, and development in sensitive areas are all significant issues countywide.

Uniquely, over one third of the county's land

area is within the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area. The County's Critical Area program contains strict regulations for the protection of these sensitive shoreline areas. Floodplain regulations extend additional safeguards within the 100-year floodplains.

Because sensitive areas are more vulnerable to environmental degradation, future development should be directed away from such areas and guided toward areas where

environmental impacts would be less severe. All future development, regardless of location, should be subject to minimum performance standards for environmental protection and natural resource conservation.



The costs of resource restoration are far greater than those of resource conservation and protection. The loss of natural resources must either be accepted or the costs must be borne by County taxpayers to address the consequences of environmental degradation. The cost in tax dollars expended for water quality remediation in the Chesapeake Bay is a case in point.

Environmental quality is one attribute that makes Talbot County an especially desirable place to live and work. Efforts to conserve and protect natural resources yield long-term public benefits. The intent of County environmental protection measures is not to stop growth or development, but to ensure that development occurs without impairing the environmental sustainability of sensitive areas.

Natural Resource Policies

- 6.1 The County shall maintain countywide policies for conservation and protection of natural and cultural resources.
- 6.2 The County will enforce mandatory programs and regulations, and develop financial incentives to insure preservation of natural resources.
- 6.3 Where required, the County shall call for evidence of federal and State environmental permits as a condition of local development approval.
- 6.4 The County requires all new major subdivisions to submit an environmental impact assessment prepared by a qualified professional as part of a development application. The assessment must include all environmentally sensitive features on and adjacent to the site.
- 6.5 The County will maintain a Geographic Information System (GIS) inventory and map of countywide natural resources to assist with resource preservation management.
- 6.6 The County should promote and encourage partnerships to maintain comprehensive baseline data providing a measurable basis for pollution monitoring. Baseline data for air and water quality should be tracked to measure progress on environmental quality indicators.
- 6.7 The County will maintain cooperative partnerships with State, federal and town government agencies to address environmental problems as needed.

II. Water Resources Element

A. Background

The Water Resources Element represents a policy framework for sustaining public drinking water supplies and protecting the county's waterways and riparian ecosystems by effectively managing point and nonpoint source water pollution.

1. State Requirements for Water Resources Element

This Water Resources Element complies with the requirements of State law as modified by Maryland House Bill 1141, passed in 2006. Among the requirements addressed in this section are:

- a. To identify drinking water and other water resources that will be adequate for the needs of existing and future development proposed in the Plan's land use element, considering available data;
- b. To identify suitable receiving waters and land areas to meet stormwater management and wastewater treatment and disposal needs of

existing and future development proposed in the land use element of the plan, considering available data provided by the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE);

- c. To deliver the Plan for review by the Department of the Environment to determine whether the proposed Plan is consistent with the program goals of the Department.

The original element was reviewed by MDE, and adopted by the Talbot County Council in December, 2010. It has been amended to include more recent data from the 2010 U.S. Census, along with updated growth projections as described in Chapter 1 (Background).

The Water Resources Element incorporated in this Plan identifies opportunities to manage existing water supplies, wastewater effluent, and stormwater runoff in a way that balances the needs of the natural environment with the County's land use plans, including the County's municipalities. The emphasis is to protect the local and regional ecosystem while ensuring clean drinking water for future generations of County residents.

This Element takes a watershed-based approach to analyze the impact of future growth on Talbot County's water resources, particularly in relation to discharged nutrients.

2. Inter-jurisdictional Coordination

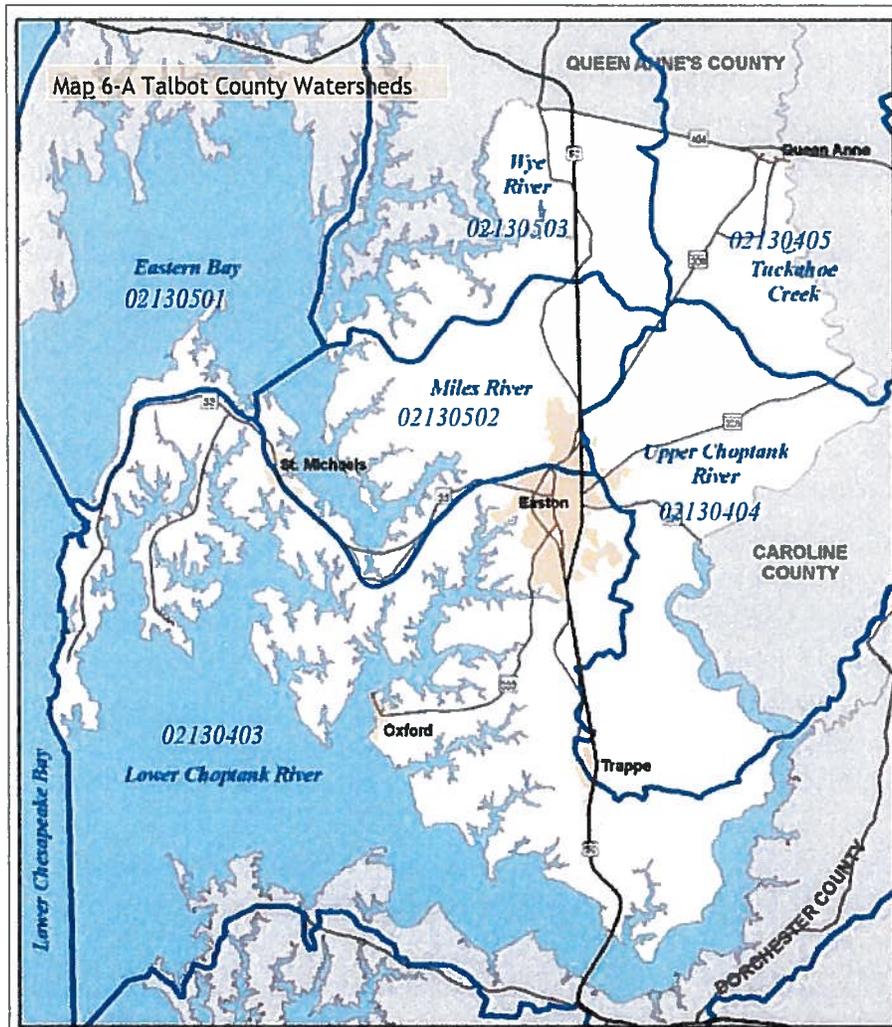
The County recognizes the importance of inter-jurisdictional water resources planning. This Plan compiles, to the greatest degree possible, up-to-date statistics in order to coordinate water resources, growth, and land use planning. Data from municipal plans were used for this assessment. Where possible, Talbot County has also obtained data and information on water resources from adjoining counties, in order to paint the fullest possible picture of

future impacts to the Choptank, Wye, and other rivers and streams that form Talbot County's boundaries.

There are five incorporated municipalities in Talbot County. Residents and businesses of the communities of Easton, Oxford, St. Michaels and Trappe receive public water and/or sewer service. Queen Anne residents and businesses do not receive public water or sewer service. Municipalities own and operate all of the public water systems in Talbot County. Easton, Oxford, and Trappe operate their own wastewater treatment plants.

3. County Projections and Scenarios

This chapter uses countywide population



projections by the Maryland Department of Planning (MDP), referenced in Chapter 1. These projections indicate that the county population will reach approximately 42,900 by the year 2030, an increase of roughly 5,120 persons from the 2010 population of 37,782. At the time the Water Resources Element was prepared in 2010, the County and its municipalities had granted at least preliminary approval for more than 5,500 housing units. Three thousand of these were planned by the Town of Trappe. For the purposes of the following analysis, it is understood that some of the approved units will not be built and occupied by 2030, nor be occupied by full-time

residents.

Though MDP conducted a Development Capacity Analysis in 2010 indicating that over 20,000 new housing units could be accommodated under County zoning, subsequent actions have rendered such an outcome less likely. For example, the Sustainable Growth and Agricultural Preservation Act of 2012 (the septic tier system) has substantially limited subdivision potential for large rural parcels.

4. Future Development Scenario

A single future development scenario, based on pre-2010 population projections, was developed for the 2010 Water Resources

Figure 6-1
Projected Housing Unit Growth by Watershed, Through 2030

Watersheds	2007 Existing ²	2007-2030 Growth	
		Increment	2030 Total
Eastern Bay	242	85	327
Lower Chesapeake Bay	5	0	5
Lower Choptank River			
Easton ¹	5,224	1,141	6,365
Trappe ¹	368	116	484
St. Michaels ¹	327	5	332
Oxford	963	20	983
Remainder of Watershed	6,077	237	6,314
Miles River			
Easton ¹	896	119	1,015
St. Michaels ¹	693	91	784
Remainder of Watershed	2,087	119	2,206
Tuckahoe Creek			
Queen Anne	48	4	52
Remainder of Watershed	567	103	670
Upper Choptank River			
Easton ¹	506	45	551
Trappe ¹	117	336	453
Remainder of Watershed	1,386	185	1,571
Wye River	677	156	833
Total	20,183	2,762	22,945

Notes:

1: Includes the portion of the municipality (including areas likely to be annexed, based on the Talbot County Water and Sewer Master Plan) that falls within this watershed.

2: Source: Maryland Property View 2007

Element in order to evaluate the sustainability of the County's 2005 Comprehensive Plan.

The non-point source loading analysis continues to anticipate the use of septic denitrification technologies to improve the quality of the County's receiving waters. Also, plans are underway to extend sewer to areas of failing septic systems and mapped communities and subdivisions in environmentally sensitive

areas, further reducing the amount of nitrogen and bacteria released into rivers and the Chesapeake Bay.

Because water and sewer service is often measured in terms of equivalent dwelling units (EDU), the Water Resources element uses housing units as the basis for its water, sewer and non-point source pollution analyses.

Figure 6-1 shows the projected watershed-level distribution of housing units in the 2010 scenario. Revised (2012) population estimates change the projections slightly: There were slightly fewer households than estimated (19,577 rather than the 2007 estimate of 20,183). The number of households projected in 2030 has also been revised from 22,866 to 22,945. However, the assumption remains that about 70 percent of new housing units will be built in municipalities, including those areas identified as the towns' future growth areas. The updated projections have not changed the core planning assumptions and so the scenario has been altered little from the original.

B. Drinking Water Assessment

This section describes existing conditions and projected future demand for drinking water in Talbot County.

1. Public Water Systems

Groundwater is the source of all public and private drinking water in Talbot. Groundwater quality in the county is generally good.

Elevated levels of naturally-occurring arsenic are known to be present in some areas.

Saltwater intrusion in the Aquia aquifer is a known problem in the region of the Eastern Shore and may also be a special concern in the

County's coastal areas. These issues are discussed in more detail in the section below.

Figure 6-2 summarizes municipal and community water sources in the County. The *Talbot County Comprehensive Water and Sewerage Plan (CWSP)* provides detailed information on county water supply sources, existing and proposed water facilities, and schedules for improvements. The County has a groundwater protection plan, and during the update process the County applied changes in accordance with



new federal water quality standards.

Approximately 9,600 dwelling units in Talbot County, and a considerable share of businesses, receive drinking water from municipal and community water systems. The Towns of Easton, Oxford, St. Michaels, and Trappe all operate municipal water systems. There are also private community water systems in the communities of Claiborne, Martingham under the County's jurisdiction, and Hyde Park in the Town of Easton.

All of the major public water systems in the County have available system capacity to support projected growth through 2030. Available source water supply is covered in the

Issues and Discussion section on the subsequent page.

2. Other Water Use

All residential units and businesses in Talbot County not served by the public water systems rely on individual or community wells. These wells are drilled in a variety of water-bearing formations, particularly the Columbia (or surficial) aquifer, Miocene, Piney Point and Aquia aquifers. Although not a precise representation of current water use, public water and private residential wells represent almost two thirds of all water use in the County.

There were 329 active groundwater appropriation permits in Talbot County in 2002, drawing a daily average of 6.4 million gallons per day (MGD). A complete summary, *Hydrogeology of the Coastal Plain Aquifer System in Queen Anne's and Talbot Counties*, can be accessed at http://www.mgs.md.gov/publications/report_pages/RI_72.html.

The remainder of this section discusses non-public water uses in greater detail.

3. Private Residential Wells

About 10,500 residential units in Talbot County rely on individual wells or (in a few cases) community wells for drinking water supply, as do most businesses in rural areas. Private residential wells generally draw water from the Piney Point aquifer in the western and southern portions of the county, and the Aquia and Miocene aquifers in the central portion. Some older residences, particularly in the north and east continue to draw from the Columbia aquifer.

The total projected new demand for public water systems includes the transfer of some homes and businesses from private wells to public systems. These connections would add to the demand for public water service but not to the overall withdrawals from aquifers.

4. Major Commercial and Industrial Users

Commercial and industrial activities outside of municipal systems account for approximately one-fifth of all water used in Talbot County.

Figure 6-2 Source Aquifers for Existing Public Water Systems, 2000		
Water System ¹	Source Aquifer (number of wells)	Source Concerns / System Issues
Easton	Aquia Greensand (1), Magothy (3), Upper Patapsco (2)	Elevated arsenic levels
Oxford Area	Aquia Greensand (2)	Elevated arsenic levels
St. Michaels	Aquia Greensand (2)	Elevated arsenic levels
Trappe ¹	Piney Point (2)	
Claiborne	Aquia Greensand (2)	System size limitations, leakage. Elevated arsenic levels
Hyde Park	Aquia Greensand (2), Federalsburg (1)	Elevated arsenic levels
Martingham	Aquia Greensand (2)	Elevated arsenic levels

Notes:

1: Trappe also has groundwater allocations from the Matawan Aquifer, although there are no active production wells in this formation.

Sources: 2002 Talbot County Water and Sewer Master Plan; 2009 Trappe Comprehensive Plan (WRE); 2009 Easton

The largest concentrations of such water use are found in Cordova and in areas adjacent to Easton and Trappe. The majority of non-municipal commercial/industrial water use is scattered throughout the county's rural areas, typically along U.S. 50 and other major roads.

5. Agricultural Water Users

As is the case throughout the Eastern Shore, Talbot County's farmers employ irrigation using both surface water and groundwater. Irrigation is most frequently used in areas to the south and east of Easton. Most surface water used for irrigation is drawn from Tuckahoe Creek. Groundwater for irrigation is generally drawn from the surficial aquifer. Recent droughts and near-droughts have led to an increased number of acres under irrigation since 2000, however usage is not consistent from year to year. In the 2014 Farm Services Agency report, irrigation was available on approximately 4,660 acres of farmland.

6. Issues and Discussion - Water

a. Groundwater Recharge

Talbot County's public and private water users draw drinking water from several major confined aquifers, many of which are widely

used throughout the region. The capacity of these confined aquifers is increasingly strained by new development on the Delmarva Peninsula and west. (See Figure 6-3, Talbot County Groundwater Withdrawals by Use Category, 2007.)

The U.S. Geological Society (USGS) reports that "withdrawals from Maryland Coastal Plain aquifers have caused ground-water levels in confined aquifers to decline by tens to hundreds of feet from their original levels. Continued water-level declines could affect the long-term sustainability of ground-water resources in agricultural areas of the Eastern Shore" (*Sustainability of the Ground Water Resources in the Atlantic Coastal Plain of Maryland*. USGS Fact Sheet 2006-3009). In most cases, the recharge areas for these aquifers extend to the Western Shore.

No comprehensive study exists of the water-bearing formations used by Talbot County residents and businesses. While the County understands that its groundwater supplies are limited and declining, there is no reliable measure of water supply against which to compare current and especially projected water demands. Project-specific groundwater studies

Figure 6-3
Talbot County Groundwater Withdrawals by Use Category, 2007

Type of Withdrawal	Total Withdrawals (MGD)			Percent of County Withdrawals
	Surface Water	Groundwater	Total	
Industrial	0	0.88	0.88	11%
Livestock Watering	0.02	0.12	0.14	4%
Irrigation	0.69	1.35	2.04	14%
Residential self-supplied	0	1.61	1.61	26%
Public Supply	0	2.55	2.55	39%
Total	.71	6.51	6.00	100%

Source: USGS MD-DE-DE Water Science Center <http://md.water.usgs.gov/freshwater/withdrawals/>

do not take into account the cumulative impacts, on both sides of the Chesapeake Bay, of increasing demand on the Aquia and other formations.

MDE, the Maryland Geological Survey (MGS), and the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) have begun work on a Coastal Plain Aquifer Study, but that study remains incomplete. The County should use the data and recommendations of the Coastal Plain Aquifer Study (once completed) to shape its own water use policies and ordinances.

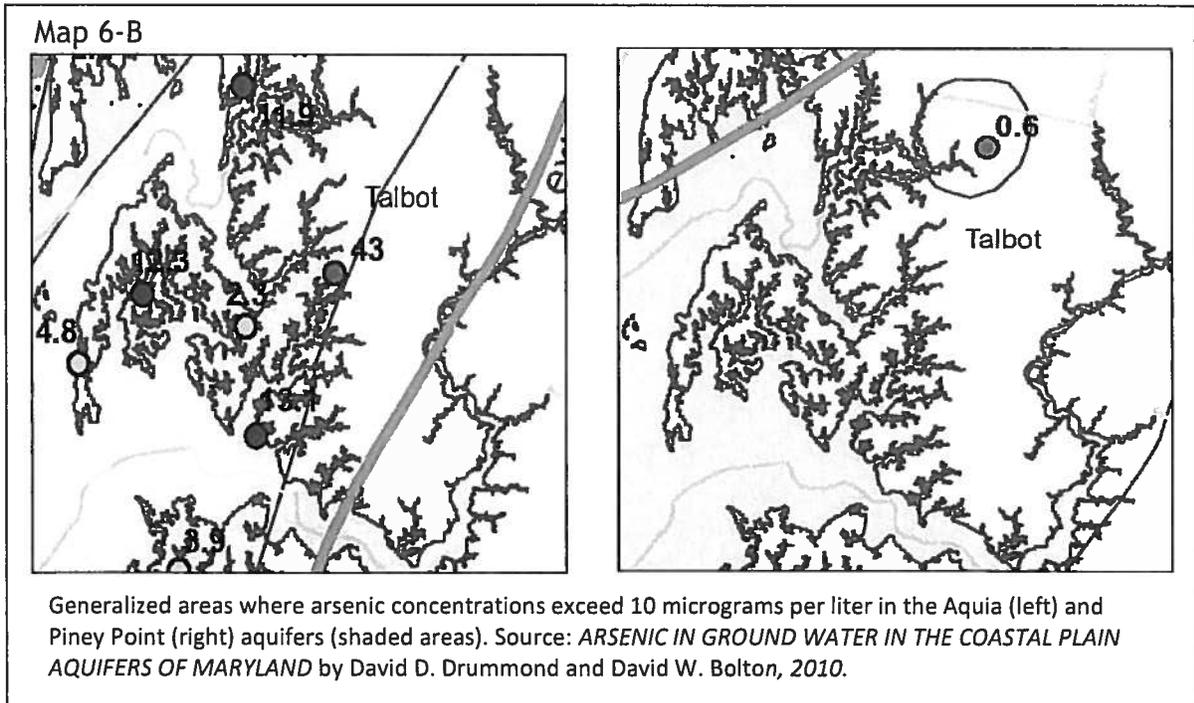
For purposes of this Plan, it is assumed that groundwater permits issued for public drinking water systems by MDE reflect the maximum safe yield of the aquifer or aquifers used by that system. However, the County also recognizes the need for the development of regional plans and policies to protect our diminishing groundwater resources. To that end, the County will work with the State and appropriate county governments to encourage the establishment of a multi-county organization to better manage our major aquifers. Talbot County supports the commitment by the MGS and USGS to

complete the Coastal Plain Aquifer Study, followed by a management plan to steward our shared water resources. Local resources are inadequate to the task. Implementation of a management plan will require effective inter-jurisdictional coordination and management.

b. Groundwater Protection

In addition to these concerns about water supply in the Aquia, individual wells in the surficial aquifer are at risk for elevated nitrate levels due to cross-contamination from failing or inadequate septic systems or agricultural fertilizer.

The *Talbot County Groundwater Protection Plan (GPP)* was developed in 1987, and identifies areas where septic systems may be allowed. The GPP establishes the design criteria and construction requirements for all septic systems, and designates areas that require maximum protection of shallow groundwater aquifers. The GPP is adopted as an appendix to the County's *Water and Sewer Master Plan*, and is enforced by the Talbot County Health Department.



c. Water Conservation

The County and its municipalities implement, through building codes, the Maryland Water Conservation Plumbing Fixtures Act (MWCPFA), which requires that plumbing fixtures sold or installed for new construction be designed to conserve water. In addition, the *Water and Sewer Master Plan* enumerates several benefits of water conservation and encourages water conservation as an official policy. The County and its municipalities actively encourage water conservation through education and water use monitoring.

d. Potential New Water Supplies

To assure sustainability, the County and its municipalities should begin to investigate the limits of existing source capacity and the feasibility of other drinking water sources, including different aquifers and surface waters. Although not widely used for water supply, the Matawan, Patapsco, and Upper and Lower Pawtuxet formations are also under Talbot County, as described in *Hydrogeology of the Coastal Plain Aquifer System*. The Town of Easton draws some of its water from the Matawan, while the other aquifers listed above are not widely used for water supply.

More detailed investigation is necessary to determine whether these aquifers are of sufficient quality to produce a reasonable quantity for human consumption. Also, the aquifers listed above also exist at significantly greater depths than the Aquia and Piney Point, adding to the cost of wells.

Surface water impoundments are not currently used for drinking water in Talbot County. Nevertheless, surface water cannot be ruled out as a potential new source and should be included in any comprehensive study of new drinking water sources.

The County acknowledges however, that surface water is unlikely to be a preferred source. Though the County has access to the Choptank and other moderate-sized rivers,

preparing surface water for public consumption can be costly and difficult. All of the County's major rivers are impaired by nutrients and several are also impaired by a variety of other pollutants, including biological material, bacteria, and sediments.

To address concerns about water supplies, some Maryland counties have begun to investigate the feasibility of withdrawing and treating brackish tidal waters for public water supplies. Though desalinization technology necessary for such systems is expensive and energy-intensive, it should also not be ruled out over the very long term.

C. Wastewater Assessment

This section describes existing conditions and projected future demand for public wastewater treatment capacity in Talbot County.

1. Public and Community Sewer Systems

Wastewater systems in Talbot County are quite varied, ranging from individual systems with septic systems, to innovative community systems, to municipal systems using mechanical equipment. The *Comprehensive Water and Sewer Plan* (CWSP) outlines the characteristics and capacities of the central and community wastewater treatment collection and disposal systems within the County. The CWSP also details plans for expansions and improvements at each of these facilities. The County has adopted a Shared-Facilities Ordinance which allows for the expanded development of community-owned and operated wastewater disposal systems and the creation of new types of systems serving more than one household.

County owned and operated facilities are:

- Region II: located in St. Michaels, serving the Town of St. Michaels, the communities of Rio Vista, Bentley Hay, and the villages of Newcomb, Royal Oak, Bellevue, Unionville, Tunis Mills, and Copperville.

**Figure 6-4
Overview of Existing Wastewater Treatment Systems**

Wastewater Treatment Plant	Discharge Location (Watershed)	Treatment Technology	Planned/Potential Upgrades or Expansions
<i>Public Systems</i>			
Region V (Tilghman)	Chesapeake Bay (Lower Chesapeake)	Lagoons	Potential upgrade/expansion
Easton	Upper Choptank River	Enhanced Nutrient Removal (ENR)	Service to additional areas around Easton (see below)
Oxford	Town Creek (Lower Choptank River)	Lagoons	Potential phosphorus upgrade, relocated discharge point.
Trappe	La Trappe Creek (Lower Choptank River)	Biological Nutrient Removal (BNR)	Likely upgrade/expansion of existing WWTP and/or construction of new WWTP.
Region II (St. Michaels)	Miles River	ENR	None planned
<i>Private/Community Systems</i>			
Hyde Park	Onsite Bermed Infiltration Pond		Annexed and Connected to Easton WWTP.
Martingham	Lagoons and spray irrigation		Flow permanently diverted to Region II WWTP.
Preserve at Wye Mills	Onsite Spray Irrigation	BNR	None planned
Source: 2002 Talbot County Water and Sewer Master Plan, updates 2012, 2014.			

**Figure 6-5
Capacities and Projected Demands for Public Wastewater Systems**

		Region II (St. Michaels)	Region V (Tilghman)	Easton ⁴	Oxford	Trappe ⁵
Current System Capacity	MGD	0.66	0.15	4.00	0.10	0.20
	EDU	2,640	600	16,000	416	800
Current Average Daily Flow	MGD	0.37	0.09	2.65	0.09	0.15
	EDU	1,460	368	10,596	360	582
Current Net Available Capacity	MGD	0.30	0.06	1.35	0.01	0.05
	EDU	1,180	232	5,404	56	218
System Capacity, 2030 ¹	MGD	0.66	0.15	4.00	0.10	0.20
	EDU	2,640	600	16,000	416	800
Total Projected New Demand, 2008-2030	MGD	0.16	0.06	0.39	<0.01	0.13
	EDU	648	256	1,577	23	520
Total Demand, 2030	MGD	0.53	0.16	3.04	0.09	0.28
	EDU	2,108	624	12,173	383	1,102
Net Available Capacity, 2030	MGD	0.13	(0.01)	0.96	< 0.01	(0.08)
	EDU	532	(24)	3,827	33	(302)

Notes:

- 1: Incorporates all ongoing or planned capacity upgrades.
- 2: Estimated. Assumes that new nonresidential development in Towns is 15% of residential development. See note in Figure 4
- 3: Source: Maryland Property View 2007 and Talbot County Water and Sewer Master Plan. Based on acreage of active non-residential properties, using 0.892 EDU per acre, the default value in the MDE nonpoint source model.
- 4: For Easton, 2007 Average Daily Flow includes existing flow, plus capacity committed to future development, based on the Town's WRE. Future demand assumed that Hyde Park system will eventually be connected to the Easton WWTP.
- 5: Trappe future system capacity does not reflect conceptual system improvements as outlined in public sewer discussion.

The community system in Martingham, on the outskirts of St Michaels, pumps effluent to Region II for processing.

- Region V: located in and serving the Village of Tilghman and presently serving only that community.

Public systems not owned and operated by the County include:

- Easton’s municipal system, serving the largest proportion of county residents, has begun processing effluent from the community system in Hyde Park, which has been annexed into the Town.
- The Towns of Oxford and Trappe operate municipal systems.

Also, the MEBA Engineering School operates a private community system.

More than half of all dwelling units in the county (over 13,500 EDUs), and a considerable share of businesses, discharge wastewater to one of the county’s municipal or private wastewater treatment plants (WWTP). Figure 6-5 shows existing and projected public sewer supplies, demands, surpluses and deficits for these wastewater systems in 2030.

All of the county’s major public sewer systems have available capacity to support some additional growth and development. The Region V plant may not have adequate capacity to accommodate projected growth through 2030 without system improvements.

The Town of Trappe’s municipal sewer system will not have adequate capacity to support projected development, unless the proposed 540,000 gpd WWTP upgrade (and spray irrigation system) is built to support the planned Lakeside development.

2. Private Septic Systems

The majority of residential properties in the county are served by individual on-site septic systems. Permits for these systems are reviewed and approved by the Talbot County Health Department as an agent of the Maryland

Department of Environment.

Soil and water table conditions generally determine the suitability of sub-surface disposal systems. The County Groundwater Protection Plan has delineated soils in the area mainly to the east of U.S. 50 as suitable for sub-surface discharge of wastewater, except in areas with a high water table. The historic riverfront Town of Queen Anne is an exception, with generally less suitable soils for on-site septic systems.

The groundwater protection plan has designated most areas to the west of U.S. 50 as susceptible to sub-surface system failures because of high water tables, low elevations, and soils with low permeability.

Communities in this area are impacted by failing septic systems, groundwater infiltration or concentrations of small lots on poorly drained soils; the communities include the Villages of Williamsburg, Sherwood, Wittman, McDaniel, Bozman, Neavitt, Claiborne, Fairbank and Bar Neck. The County will work to revise sewer connection and allocation policies to concentrate available capacity on addressing existing failing or polluting septic systems in villages, and allow for moderate planned growth and development on existing lots of record within established sewer service areas.

Plans to extend sewer service to these areas have been drafted while funding is being pursued. Connecting communities to effective wastewater treatment plants will help achieve the County’s water quality improvement and environmental health objectives.

3. Nutrient Discharges

Nitrogen and phosphorus (more generally referred to as nutrients) from wastewater treatment plants (WWTPs), stormwater and other non-point sources have been identified as primary contributors to degraded water quality in the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. Through the Water Resource Element, local

governments are required by the State to identify suitable receiving waters for the discharge of additional stormwater and wastewater.

The Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) is a series of calculations required by the federal Clean Water Act. A TMDL is the maximum load of pollutant that a water body can receive without impairing its quality below water quality standards. The TMDL is typically expressed as separate discharge limits from point sources such as WWTPs, and non-point sources such as stormwater or agricultural runoff.

Water bodies are classified as impaired when they are too polluted or otherwise degraded to support their designated and existing uses. Like other waterways in the state, all of Talbot County's major waters are classified as impaired for nutrients, sediments and in some areas fecal contamination, and so by definition are not suitable receiving waters (see Figure 6-8). All counties are committed to Watershed Improvement Plans (WIPs) under an

agreement between the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the State of Maryland. The WIP, which maps a strategy for reducing pollutants to meet the TMDL, is discussed in Section II C of this chapter.

4. Point Source Caps and Discharges

To address nutrient loads from point sources such as WWTPs, the State has established numerical limits, expressed as pounds per year, on the amount of nitrogen and phosphorus that can be discharged into the Bay and its tributaries. Point source caps for nitrogen and phosphorus have been established for the Region II (St. Michaels) and Easton WWTPs. A phosphorous cap has been established for the Trappe WWTP, and a nitrogen cap has been established for the Oxford WWTP.

Figure 6-6 lists nutrient caps as well as existing and projected future nutrient discharges for the county's major WWTPs. This summary assumes that by 2030, the Region V (Tilghman) and Oxford WWTPs will both be upgraded to BNR, or biological nutrient removal technology.

Figure 6-6

Nutrient Loads and Discharge Capacities for Public Wastewater Systems

		Region II	Region V	Easton ²	Oxford	Trappe
Existing Nutrient Loads	TN ¹	5,000	5,000	23,800	4,900	4,900
	TP ¹	603	1,700	2,400	1,600	183
Likely Nutrient Caps, 2030	TN	8,040	4,406	48,729	5,621	6,100
	TP	603	457	3,655	457	183
Projected ADF, 2030	MGD	0.53	0.16	3.00	0.10	0.28
Assumed Treatment Technology, 2030		ENR	BNR	ENR	BNR	ENR
Estimated Nutrient Discharges, 2030	TN	4,810	3,794	27,415	2,330	1,328
	TP	481	948	2,742	583	251
Remaining Discharge Capacity	TN	3,230	612	21,314	3,291	4,772
	TP	122	(491)	913	(126)	(68)

Notes:

1: TN = Total Nitrogen (lbs/year); TP = Total Phosphorus (lbs/year)

2: Includes the Hyde Park system as connected to the Easton system.

A Region V plant upgrade would trigger the establishment of a nutrient cap for that facility. The default cap for such minor facilities (those that discharge less than 0.5 million gallons per day) is 6,100 lbs/year of nitrogen and 457 lbs/year phosphorus. The Tilghman facility may need to go beyond BNR or consider alternative effluent disposal methods (see below) to meet the phosphorus cap. A similar situation may exist for the Oxford WWTP.

The Trappe WWTP would be upgraded to enhanced nutrient removal (ENR). Such upgrades will be necessary to support projected growth in Trappe. It appears that even with ENR upgrades, the Trappe WWTP will not be able to meet the very stringent phosphorus cap for La Trappe Creek, the WWTP's current discharge point. The Town may need to consider relocation of its outfall pipe, or alternative effluent disposal methods.

The Region II (St. Michaels) and Easton WWTPs have adequate nitrogen and phosphorus discharge capacity to support projected growth through 2030 and beyond.

5. Alternative Wastewater Disposal

The application of treated wastewater effluent directly to the soil allows nutrients to be naturally disposed of by bacteria before the effluent reaches receiving streams or groundwater. Spray irrigation is the most common form of land application, although other options such as drip irrigation or subsurface discharge can also be considered. Spray irrigation is already used as a disposal method for the Preserve at Wye Mills and may be appropriate for larger public systems in addition to, or instead of, point source outfalls. Factors such as slope, soil depth and granularity, water table depth and behavior, and buffers from streams and developed areas are important in determining true suitability.

Beyond soil and water table characteristics, other important considerations for land

application include storage and seasonal restrictions. Land application systems typically require large storage lagoons capable of holding several months' worth of effluent. Land application is not permitted during winter months when frozen soil prevents infiltration of the effluent, or during other months when water tables rise, again preventing absorption. Any future land application system would likely be paired with the nearby surface discharge to maximize system capacity without exceeding nutrient caps or TMDLs.

6. Programmatic Assessment of Nonpoint Source Policies

This section characterizes the policies and procedures in place to manage non-point source pollution in Talbot County.

Nonpoint sources of nutrient pollution include agricultural runoff, erosion and sediment from development, stormwater runoff from roads, atmospheric deposition, and any other source other than an outfall pipe. Non-point sources involve widely dispersed activities that are difficult to measure. All non-point sources of pollution eventually reach the waters of the Chesapeake Bay unless filtered or retained by some structural or nonstructural technique.

The Chesapeake Bay Program and other researchers report that statewide, agriculture is the largest source of non-point nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment loads. Stormwater runoff from developed land is also a significant contributor and has remained steady or increased over the past several decades.

Nutrient reduction technologies for non-point source pollution, referred to as best management practices (BMPs), include animal waste storage, agricultural nutrient management planning, stormwater settling ponds, and erosion controls. Natural controls or "low-impact" development techniques are extremely effective in reducing the amount of

pollutants that reach waterways. Woodlands and wetlands release fewer nutrients into the Bay than any other land uses. For these reasons, forests, grasslands, and wetlands are critical to restoring and maintaining the health of the aquatic environment.

a. Septic Denitrification

Maryland law requires all new development on septic systems to use best available technology (BAT) for nitrogen removal, as defined by MDE. Septic system repairs and replacements in the Critical Area must also upgrade to a BAT system.

Strategies for non-point source improvements assume that rural (i.e. not connected to a public sewer system) residential and commercial development will use denitrification units. Installation of denitrification retrofits will continue at the pace of 100 per year through 2030, contingent on the availability of Bay Restoration Fund fees.

As of 2013, 314 residential and commercial septic systems in Talbot County have been upgraded with denitrification units. The County Department of Public Works' objective is to maximize use of the State's Bay Restoration Fund to continue such installations.

b. Stormwater

The 2000 Maryland Stormwater Design Manual, which is incorporated by reference into the Talbot County Code, serves as the official guide for stormwater management principles and practices.

The 2007 Maryland Stormwater Management Act mandated substantial revision to the Stormwater Design Manual. The most notable provision of the 2007 Act is the requirement that new development use Environmental Site Design (ESD) techniques to the maximum extent possible, which will ideally "maintain pre-development runoff characteristics" on the site. ESD emphasizes the minimization and treatment of stormwater on each parcel through a variety of small-scale techniques that mimic natural stormwater absorption and dispersal processes.

In January of 2012, the County amended its stormwater management ordinance to incorporate the revision of the *Maryland Stormwater Design Manual* and other enhanced stormwater management policies recommended by MDE, pursuant to the Stormwater Management Act of 2007.

County departments will coordinate activities in recognition of the following stormwater management objectives:

- 1.) Stormwater retrofits can help to reduce non-point source pollution, particularly in more densely developed areas. The County strives to identify locations where retrofits could address concentrations of non-point source pollution or help to protect environmentally sensitive areas. Future retrofit funds and implementation activities should be targeted to these priority areas.
- 2.) Outside of towns and populated areas where pedestrian facilities are a priority, new roads in the



Rural stormwater retrofit demonstration

county should continue to be developed with open sections (i.e., without curb and gutter), to better disperse stormwater.

3.) Sedimentation and other impacts resulting from construction activity and increased stormwater flows to streams and rivers from development are also a potential threat to water quality. All new non-agricultural development with a disturbance greater than 5,000 sq. ft. requires a sedimentation and erosion control plan.

c. Impervious Land Cover

Impervious surfaces create runoff that can cause stream bank erosion, sedimentation of streams, and adverse effects on water quality and aquatic life. The amount of impervious surface in a watershed is a key indicator of water quality.

Countywide, no more than three percent of all land is impervious. Even in Talbot County's

most developed watersheds—the Miles River and Lower Choptank River—impervious surface coverage is under five percent.



Under the land use and development scenarios considered here, most watersheds would experience some increase in impervious coverage. While none of the county's major watersheds would approach ten percent impervious (the first tipping point with regard to water quality), some smaller sub-watersheds, particularly in and around municipalities, may already approach or exceed such thresholds. In these cases stormwater management retrofits can

help reduce the impact of large areas of impervious surface.

Figure 6-7 summarizes existing and potential impervious coverage in the county by watershed.

Figure 6-7
Existing and Projected Impervious Cover by Watershed, Through 2030

Watershed	Total Acreage ¹	Impervious Surface			
		Existing		2030	
		Acres	Percent	Acres	Percent
Eastern Bay	2,870	55	1.9%	56	2.0%
Lower Chesapeake Bay	142	1	0.4%	1	0.4%
Lower Choptank River	68,521	3,157	4.6%	3,352	4.9%
Miles River	27,368	1,225	4.5%	1,256	4.6%
Tuckahoe Creek	15,583	209	1.3%	230	1.5%
Upper Choptank River	36,371	717	2.0%	810	2.2%
Wye River	20,811	271	1.3%	292	1.4%
Total	171,666	5,634	3.3%	5,997	3.5%

Notes:
1: Excludes areas of open water within County boundaries.

D. Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs)

The federal Clean Water Act of 1972 required the estimation of the amount of pollutants that could be assimilated by the waters of the United States. This requirement resulted in the creation of the TMDLs. Each impaired water body is required to have a TMDL calculated for it, along with its current loading of the pollutant of concern.

All of the State's major watersheds are on the 303(d) list of impaired waters and so fall under the Chesapeake Bay TMDL as well as a TMDL for each water body.

To address TMDLs, the State and its jurisdictions have prepared Watershed Implementation Plans. These Plans contain goals for improvement by land use sector and a strategy for implementing Best Management Practices to meet the TMDLs. Also, two-year milestones are established to produce short term progress toward achievement of TMDLs.

Talbot County has produced its Watershed Implementation Plan which contains a scenario of currently accepted best management practices that numerically achieve the improvement standards for the Bay TMDL. This scenario will be refined as more cost effective Best Management Practices are vetted and accepted by the State and the Environmental Protection Agency.

Talbot County expects that its Watershed Implementation Plan will use adaptive management to produce the greatest pollution reduction for each dollar of investment. For this reason, the County will pursue no and low cost Best Management Practices as a first priority. One such approach may include participation in the State's nutrient trading program. The County will also pursue lawn fertilizer management programs to meet its nutrient reduction goals.

**Figure 6-8
Approved TMDLs for Talbot County
Watersheds
Source: MDE**

Watershed	Substance	Approval Date
Choptank (upper)	Nitrogen	12/2010
Choptank (upper)	Phosphorus	12/2010
Choptank (upper)	Sediment	12/2010
Choptank (upper, segments)	Fecal Coliform	11/2006
Choptank (lower)	Nitrogen	12/2010
Choptank (lower)	Phosphorus	12/2010
Choptank (lower)	Sediment	12/2010
Choptank (lower, segments)	Fecal Coliform	11/2006
Eastern Bay	Nitrogen	12/2010
Eastern Bay	Phosphorus	12/2010
Eastern Bay	Sediment	12/2010
Miles River	Nitrogen	12/2010
Miles River	Phosphorus	12/2010
Miles River	Sediment	12/2010
Miles River (segments)	Fecal Coliform	09/2005, 09/2010
Tuckahoe Creek	Nitrogen	12/2010
Tuckahoe Creek	Phosphorus	12/2010
Tuckahoe Creek	Sediment	12/2010
Tuckahoe Creek (segments)	Fecal Coliform	11/2006
Wye River	Nitrogen	12/2010
Wye River	Phosphorus	12/2010
Wye River	Sediment	12/2010
Wye River (segments)	Fecal Coliform	11/2006

Water Resource Policies

6.8 The County will continue to study groundwater resources and establish follow-up mechanisms to monitor changes that may occur over time.

6.9 The County will encourage policies and programs that support reasonable water use.

6.10 The County's building and land development codes will ensure that, per the International Building Code (IBC), water conserving fixtures and appliances are required for all new development and retrofits outside of public water systems.

6.11 The County will work with MDE, MGS, and USGS to complete the Coastal Plain Aquifer Study and use the results of this Study to guide future decisions regarding groundwater withdrawals.

6.12 The County will work with MDE to identify new sources of drinking water, specifically by evaluating the quality and quantity of water in the County's deeper and less frequently used aquifers.

6.13 The County should increase efforts to monitor the condition of county surface waters including streams, rivers, and submerged aquatic plant resources.

6.14 The County will require properties with failing septic systems to be connected to sewer if that service is available, or, if it is not, the property owner will be encouraged to install a "Best Available Technology (BAT) septic system.

6.15 The County will work to identify and prioritize for connection to sewer systems, areas of failing, inadequate and substandard septic systems and other non-point source pollution "hot spots", especially in coastal communities and subdivisions but not limited to villages and current PFAs.

6.16 The County will continue to identify communities and subdivisions where failing, inadequate and substandard septic systems or other public health concerns exist, and work to extend public water and/or sewer service to existing lots of record within Tier III-B and Tier III-C.

6.17 The County should insure that privately owned and operated water and sewer facilities are adequately maintained by requiring comprehensive and legally binding maintenance agreements between system owners and users.

6.18 As wastewater treatment facilities are modified or upgraded, increased demand for sewer treatment should be limited to the plant's peak capacity at the most current State standards.

6.19 The County will encourage the establishment of a multi-county organization to manage our major aquifers.

6.20 The County shall actively seek ways to implement the periodic inspection of septic systems, in order to protect public health and environmental quality by correcting failing conditions.

6.21 The County shall work to provide sewer service to western villages, communities and subdivisions mapped as Tier III-B and III-C for the purpose of protecting the health and safety of its citizens through improvements in water quality. This extension of sewer service is not intended for the purpose of supporting new development outside the boundaries of Tier III-B and III-C.

III. Natural Resource Conservation

County resource conservation policies are broad and extend beyond mandated requirements for targeted areas. All parts of the county feature valued natural resources that should be protected and conserved. The level of protection required for each resource should be appropriately scaled to its significance.

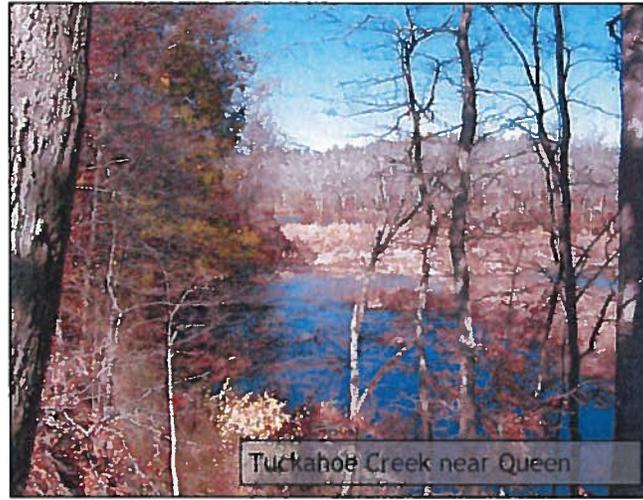
A. Chesapeake Bay Critical Areas

The Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Protection Program was passed by the Maryland General Assembly in 1984 to address concerns about the decline of the Chesapeake Bay.

This legislation required each Maryland county and municipality adjacent to the Bay or its tributaries to adopt a local Critical Area Plan and corresponding development ordinances. Local Plans are required to meet land use and development criteria established by the Maryland Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Commission and are intended to minimize impacts on the Bay's water quality and plant, fish and wildlife habitat.

The Critical Area includes all lands and waters within 1,000 feet landward of the boundaries of State or tidal wetlands and the heads of tides. It encompasses 65,260 acres, or about 38 percent, of the county's total land area. These 600 miles of shoreline are an important environmental, recreational and scenic resource.

Portions of Talbot County are subject to severe



Tuckahoe Creek near Queen

soil erosion caused by wind and wave action. The western-most part of the county is subject to the direct wave action of the Chesapeake Bay and some shoreline reaches can incur losses of as much as 18 feet of land per year.

Talbot County adopted its Critical Area Program in 1989. The County Zoning Ordinance and maps are tied to Critical Areas

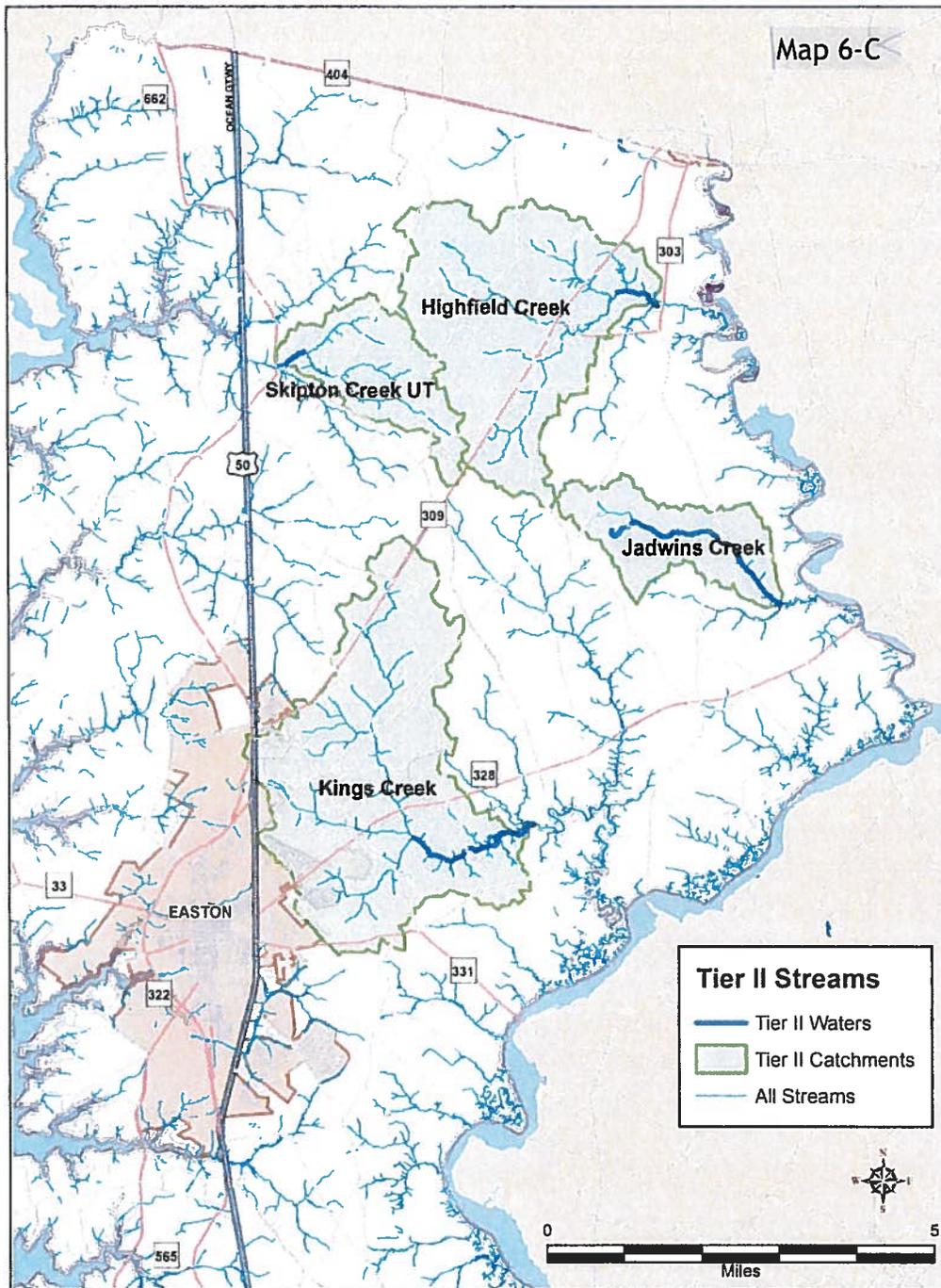
maps and were revised to incorporate boundary updates (see Map 6-D at end of chapter). Local zoning and other regulations implementing Critical Area Program policies are also updated as necessary; most recently in the fall of 2014.

B. Sensitive Area Protection

The State of Maryland requires local comprehensive plans to contain a Sensitive Areas element which describes how the County will protect streams and stream buffers; 100-year floodplains; habitats of threatened and endangered species; and steep slopes. In Talbot County, these sensitive areas are protected through a variety of means, including agricultural zoning, Priority Preservation Area designation (see Chapter 5) and Tier IV designation (see Chapter 2).

1. Rivers, Streams and Stream Buffers

County streams and their buffers are important resources supporting recreational fishing and serving as spawning areas for commercial fish stock. Streams and their adjacent buffers are home to countless species of animals and plants and transport valuable nutrients to rivers and creeks, and in turn the Chesapeake Bay. The floodplains, wetlands, and wooded slopes along



streams are important parts of the stream ecosystem.

Stream buffers serve as protection zones and reduce sediment, nitrogen, phosphorus, and other runoff pollutants by acting as a filter,

thus minimizing stream damage. The effectiveness of buffers to protect stream water quality is influenced by their width, the type of vegetation within the buffer, as well as proper maintenance. Other aspects of buffer effectiveness include contiguous or nearby

slopes, soil erodibility, or the presence of adjacent wetlands or floodplains.

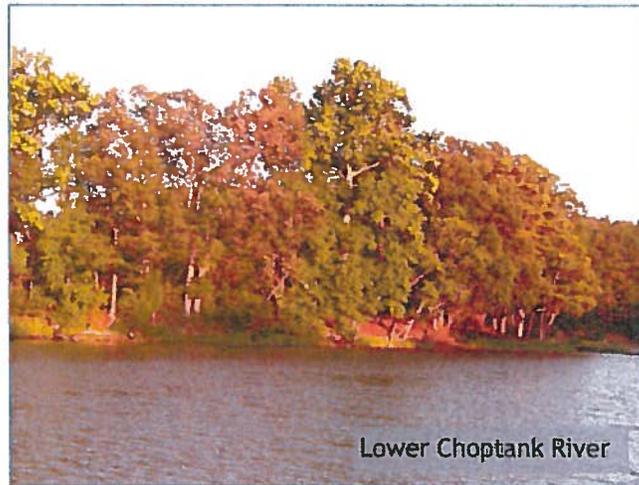
Buffers also provide habitat for wetland and upland plants which form the basis of healthy biological communities. A wide variety of animals use the natural vegetation as travel corridors, for food and for cover. A natural buffer system provides connections to support wildlife movement between remaining patches of forest in the county.

Tributary stream buffers in the Critical Area must be at least 100 feet wide, and may be expanded beyond that distance to include contiguous sensitive areas. For waterways outside the Critical Area, the County requires a 100 foot natural buffer for perennial streams and a 50 foot natural buffer for intermittent streams.

Maryland's anti-degradation policy significantly limits new discharge permits that would degrade water quality in Tier II (high quality) waters, as defined by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Four stretches of Tier II waters have been identified in Talbot County; portions of Highfield Creek, Jadwins Creek, Kings Creek, and Skipton Creek (see map 6-C).

New nutrient discharges can be permitted in these areas, as long as they do not degrade existing water quality below water quality standards. All development activities near these rivers and streams are required to provide a natural buffer.



Lower Choptank River

2. Floodplains

Certain areas of the County are subject to periodic flooding which pose risks to public health and safety, and potential loss of property. Flood-related property damage is most often the result of locating a dwelling or structure within a designated floodplain, or by

constructing structures in a floodplain to an inadequate elevation.

Two types of flooding occur within the County: riverine and coastal. Nontidal areas of the County are subject to riverine flooding. In these areas,

stream buffers will provide substantial protection to nearby floodplain resources.

While protection of life and property is the initial basis for limiting development within floodplains, it can also serve a variety of additional functions with important public benefits. Floodplains moderate and store floodwaters, absorb wave energy, and reduce erosion and sedimentation. Wetlands within floodplains help maintain water quality, recharge groundwater supplies, protect fisheries, and provide habitat and natural corridors for wildlife.

3. Steep Slopes

Slopes precipitate movement of soil and pollutants when land disturbances occur. Control of erosion potential is usually achieved through regulation of development on steep slopes because such areas represent the greatest danger for accelerated soil loss and resultant sedimentation and stream pollution.

4. Threatened and Endangered Species

As a basis for establishing habitat protection measures for threatened and endangered species in Talbot County, this Plan defines habitat as *'Areas which, due to their physical or biological features, provide important elements for the maintenance, expansion, and long-term survival of threatened and endangered species listed in COMAR 08.03.08. Such areas may include breeding, feeding, resting, migratory, or overwintering areas.'*

The key to protecting threatened and endangered species is protecting the habitat in which they exist. The Maryland Nongame and Endangered Species Conservation Act provides definitions of threatened and endangered species. Twelve animal and 32 plant species are considered to be rare, threatened, or endangered in Talbot County, as of 2010. (Though the status of at least two species may have been changed from endangered to threatened or rare, State regulations and documents have not been revised to date, and the two species remain a conservation concern.) Habitat destruction and degradation is estimated to threaten some 400 native Maryland species with extinction.

Maintenance of biological diversity today sustains future opportunities to advance healthcare and provide a number of other societal benefits. Materials and chemicals produced by plants and animals are potential storehouses for beneficial products. More than half of all medicines in use today can be traced to wild organisms. Plant chemicals are the sole or major ingredients in 25 percent of all prescriptions written in the United States each year.

Likewise, agriculture depends on the development of new varieties of crops, often created by cross-breeding strains with wild

relatives of crop species, in order to promote a desired trait.

5. Wetlands

Wetland areas are valuable natural resources for the ability to act as collectors and filters of excess nutrients. Wetlands also reduce floodwater peaks by storing water and reducing velocity, serve as groundwater discharge and recharge areas, improve water quality and provide food and habitat for fish and wildlife. Wetlands are recreational and aesthetic resources as well.

Development activities in wetland areas are regulated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Maryland Department of the Environment. Tidal wetlands are protected by a 100 foot natural buffer and nontidal wetlands are protected by a 25 foot natural buffer. No development activities are allowed within the wetlands or buffer areas without all required federal, State and County approvals and permits, and compliance with all mitigation requirements.

6. Forest and Vegetation

Approximately 25 percent of the County is in forest cover (See Map 6-E, and Figure 1-11). Forests are the ideal land use for maintaining water quality because they generate low levels of pollutants while filtering pollutants from both surface and subsurface flows. Trees serve as natural habitat for wildlife, and are important to the carbon and oxygen cycle. Forest areas also provide a cooling effect and visual buffer in both developed and undeveloped areas.

The Forest Conservation Act of 1991 was enacted to protect the forests of Maryland by making forest conditions and character an integral part of the site planning process. The Act is regulated by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, but implemented and administered by local governments. The Forest Conservation

Chapter (73) of the *Talbot County Code* was most recently amended in July, 2011 to conform to the most recent State legislation. Regulations require that any person making an application for subdivision of a tract of land 40,000 square feet or greater, or disturbing more than 40,000 square feet of forest in conjunction with a project plan, building permit or sediment and erosion control plan; must submit a Forest Stand Delineation and Forest Conservation Plan to the Planning Department for review and approval. Mitigation for forest removal and forest establishment are both required by the act under specified circumstances.

7. Soils

Prime farmland is the foundation of the county's agricultural industry, one of Talbot's largest and most valuable economic sectors. The importance of agriculture in the County's economy and lifestyle makes high quality

soils an especially important resource which, once lost, cannot be reclaimed. Therefore the County strives to maintain agriculture and the soil that supports farming.

Prime agricultural soils are those best suited for continuous agricultural use and account for approximately 51 percent of the county's soils. They are usually found in areas that are nearly level and well drained and watered. The strategy for addressing conservation of this resource correlate with policies in the agriculture chapter (Ch. 5).

Generally, the soils of the eastern half of the county tend to be the best for both agriculture and development. Many areas in the western part of the county contain soils that are poorly drained and have a high water table, presenting severe limitations for development. However, notable pockets of prime agricultural soils are located on the western peninsula between St. Michaels and Tilghman Island (see Map 6-F).

Natural Resources Policies

6.22 The County will continue to enforce regulations to implement the Talbot County Critical Area Program.

6.23 The County will continue to enforce its floodplain regulations and development within the 100-year floodplain will be limited to minimize disturbance and protect life and property.

6.24 The County recognizes the importance of stream corridors as water quality buffers and wildlife habitat and encourages their protection in an undisturbed state. The County should continue to enforce buffer requirements for all tributary and intermittent streams in the County.

6.25 The County should continue to monitor shoreline erosion conditions and recommend appropriate standards for shoreline stabilization and protection. Also, the County should adopt legislation improving the effectiveness of shoreline buffers for all land uses when research and science indicates such actions can improve buffer functions.

6.26 In order to reinforce existing regulatory protection programs, the County should maintain and review protection measures for sensitive areas including streams and their buffers, 100-year floodplains, steep slopes adjacent to streams and habitats of threatened and endangered species.

6.27 New development shall be restricted in sensitive areas and the protection and enhancement of environmental resources should be ensured.

Natural Resources Policies

6.28 The County will recognize the interdependence of floodplains and preservation of sensitive areas, wetlands, wildlife habitat and stream corridors.

6.29 Forests and vegetation should be preserved in stream corridors to preserve the integrity of associated waterways. The County should adopt legislation authorizing substantial fines and penalties for clearing trees and vegetation in forest shoreline buffers. Any trees cut should be replaced per County mitigation regulations.

6.30 The County will coordinate with federal and State agencies to preserve existing wetlands where possible and to mitigate their destruction when necessary, in accordance with federal and State Policy and goal of “no net loss” of wetlands.

6.31 The County should develop and enforce mandatory programs and regulations, as well as financial incentives, to ensure preservation of natural resources.

6.32 All new development and redevelopment shall result in minimized pollutant loadings and runoff through the implementation of sediment, stormwater and erosion control plans.

6.33 Forest and woodland resources should be conserved and replenished through tree conservation, reforestation and compliance with the Maryland Forest Conservation Act. Alternatives should be developed to avert tree planting on prime agricultural soils.

6.34 In development plans, maintaining natural topography, drainage ways and tree cover should be a priority when determining the location of roads, placement of structures and site improvements. Local regulations should be developed to ensure that the landscape is preserved insofar as practical, by minimizing tree and soil removal.

6.35 The County shall coordinate with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources and the U.S. Department of Interior in the protection of rare, threatened, and endangered species habitat and shall take direct action when necessary to insure habitat protection. County zoning will direct intense growth and development away from threatened and endangered species habitat and maintain low density conservation zoning in areas where such habitats are identified.

6.36 The County should utilize open space and recreation planning efforts to pursue acquisition and protection opportunities in sensitive areas.

6.37 Marina facilities should be required to comply with Maryland’s Clean Marina Initiative.

IV. Mineral Resources

The sand and gravel extraction industry in Talbot County provides basic raw materials for the construction and paving industries and plays an important role in supporting local growth and development. Talbot County’s mineral resources consist primarily of sand and to a lesser extent, gravel.

Because geologic conditions dictate the location of economically recoverable mineral deposits, opportunities to meet the future demand of the

county’s construction industry will be controlled by the availability of these deposits and future access to these deposits for construction industry use.

To be economical, sand and gravel must be mined close to where they will be used. According to industry and regulatory agency sources, transportation costs quickly exceed the on-site cost of these resources, with the price of sand and gravel roughly doubling every 25 to 40 additional miles the material is transported.

Sand and gravel deposits are confined principally to two stratigraphic units that can be in excess of 25 feet thick. They are principally located east of U.S. 50 and are generally found on major stream corridors, in areas where conservation of forests and farmlands are a key issue.

Deposits commonly vary in thickness and composition over short distances, so site investigations are typically required to estimate reserves on a specific site. Based on estimates provided by the Maryland Department of the Environment and various sand and gravel operators, annual production has been in the range of 200,000 tons in recent years.

Mineral extraction is permitted by special exception in the **Agricultural Conservation (AC)**, **Countryside Preservation (CP)**, **Western Rural Conservation (WRC)** and **Rural Conservation (RC)** zoning districts. The County has enacted policies prohibiting mining activities in the Critical Area and designated habitat protection areas. Proposals for new mining operations are subject to site plan review for compliance with environmental protection regulations.

To ensure mining sites are restored to a usable state, appropriate action must be taken before, during, and after extraction. Currently, the licensing process for an extraction permit requires reclamation plans for any site mined. As part of the application process, the post-extraction intended use of the property must be identified. The restoration plan should be consistent with the future land use of the site. The County recommends the following post-extraction uses:

- 1.) Recreational land uses: parks and lakes
- 2.) Forestry
- 3.) Aquaculture
- 4.) Residential Development

5.) Disposal of non-toxic solid fill material, clean fill material, and inorganic solid fill material originating from Talbot County.

Bonds are required to be posted to assure the availability of funds for reclamation should an operator abandon the site. Restoration guidelines and regulations have been successful in ensuring the remediation of sites where extraction has taken place since the licensing process was established.

Reclamation of abandoned extraction sites is also a concern. An initial step toward addressing reclamation would be an inventory and evaluation to determine reclamation needs and the potential for other land uses. Such an inventory could provide a basis for future targeting of priorities, evaluating funding needs, and assessing opportunities to secure assistance for site reclamation.

Options for funding reclamation of abandoned sites include imposing a tax on mineral products, a tax exemption, or a reduction or rebate for landowners who reclaim sites.

Mining operations to date have been limited in number and have not significantly impacted the County road system. However, long-term mining utilization can cause increased damage to low-capacity roads by haulers' trucks and disturbance to neighbors or travelers who use the same routes.

The County should continue to monitor levels of extraction activity and be prepared, should the need arise, to seek legislation to allow imposition of a surcharge or tax on mineral products that would generate revenue for a roadway maintenance or improvement fund. These funds could be directed specifically to roads frequently used to haul mineral products, or pro-actively, to areas where the County wishes to facilitate recovery of mineral deposits.

Mineral Resources Policies

6.38 The County will maintain land use policies and regulations that discourage the preemption of mineral extraction by other uses.

6.39 The County will provide adequate regulation and monitoring of mineral extraction operations to ensure compliance with applicable permitting requirements, including those established for reclamation or restoration of mineral sites.

6.40 The County will use appropriate methods to protect existing neighborhoods from the impacts of extraction operations and the transportation of extracted resources.

6.41 The County will ensure that all available measures are taken to protect the natural environment from all sources of pollution resulting from extraction activities.

6.42 The County will require post excavation uses for mined sites to be consistent with its plans and regulations.

6.43 The County will require that any post excavation use of a quarry for rubble fill is limited to product generated in Talbot County, and will provide opportunities for construction of rubble recycling facilities in conjunction with extraction facilities.

6.44 The County will identify and use any programs that support reclamation or reforestation of older or abandoned borrow pits or mined sites not subject or reclamation requirements.

V. Summary

Talbot County's 1990 Comprehensive Plan begins by characterizing the County's landscape as land and waterways intertwined in a mosaic of tidal waters, streams, farmlands and forests with 600 miles of shoreline on the Chesapeake Bay and rivers. Even the first Comprehensive Plan — from 1973 — expresses the objectives to preserve the county's natural assets, agricultural soils, wetlands and wildlife habitats and waters. The strong affinity for the area's natural resources informs the conservation objectives outlined in each successive edition and is carried forward in this Plan.

Talbot County's concerns have coincided with growing State concerns about natural resource conservation, growth management and strategic planning. Significant legislation has been passed in attempts to reverse past trends of resource degradation. Many of the laws and regulations dealing with these concerns are reflected in this chapter, from Critical Areas

legislation, septic tier designation, water resources planning and the Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs).

The County has consistently required that, in order to protect its resources as well as to meet State requirements, all future development will be subject to minimum performance standards for environmental protection and natural resource conservation. This approach has received an even stronger mandate with the advent of the Bay TMDL. This Plan and this chapter in particular establish a basis for such standards and an evaluation of the current state of natural resources.

The water resources element of this chapter is the most current and most comprehensive study of drinking water, stormwater and wastewater management to date. It establishes the County's pro-active stance on managing the resources within its jurisdiction. The analysis indicates that:

A. The largest County wastewater facility uses the best available treatment technology and discharges minimal quantities of nitrogen and phosphorus.

B. Drinking water, derived from private wells outside municipal areas, generally deliver water of good quality in ample supply.

C. Water supplies and wastewater treatment capacity appear to be adequate to meet projected population growth through the next 20 years or more.

D. Nonpoint source water pollution has been, and continues to be, a challenging and costly problem. The strategies to address existing sources involve retrofits to existing infrastructure or utilities arrayed throughout the County. Managing potential new non-point sources imposes additional regulations on construction and development and implies long-term monitoring responsibilities on the part of County government.

Critical Area regulations are a long-standing and complex group of development standards, restrictions and offset that impact a significant proportion of rural residential property. Program accomplishments are measured in acres of undeveloped land and numbers of trees planted or conserved, though the ultimate goal of the program is more qualitative than quantitative. It is impossible to know the amount of erosion that has not occurred or the amount of stormwater that has been absorbed to recharge water tables. However, most will agree that the natural landscape has been preserved and enhanced through compliance with the regulations.

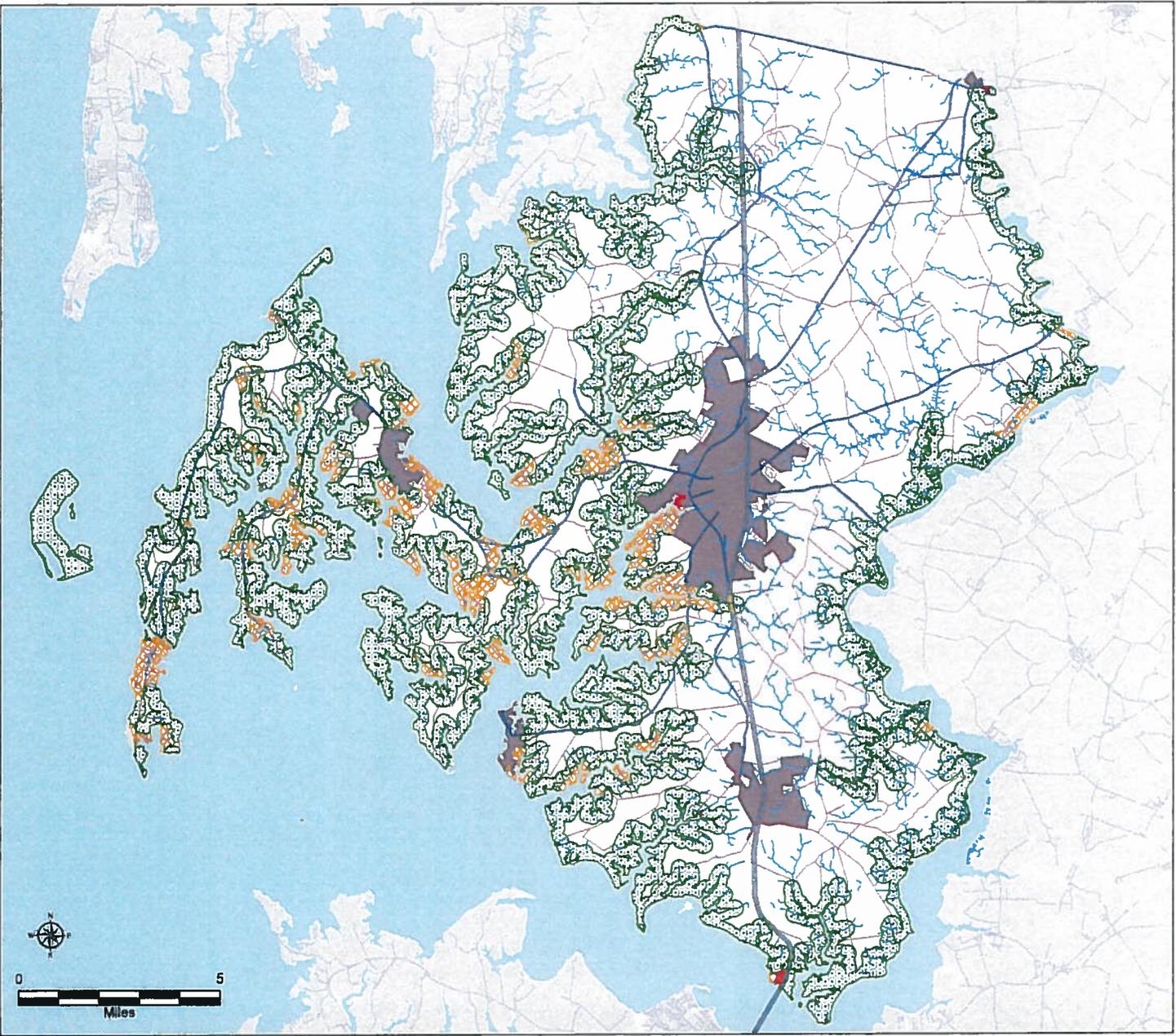
Talbot County partnered with the Conservation Fund, State and federal agencies to develop a Green Infrastructure Plan, published in 2004. The Conservation Fund analyzed protected land, land use, acreage of undeveloped land and proximity to important natural resources to generate several focus areas for natural resource protection. The recommendations are consulted when opportunities arise to permanently preserve properties or to evaluate development proposals.

The Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load, or Bay TMDL, attempts to consolidate all the point and non-point source pollution strategies and Critical Area strategies into a series of Watershed Implementation Plans (WIPs) for the State and each county.

Nutrient reduction goals for each county are divided into land use sectors, including agriculture, industry and 'urban'. The County's responsibility to address non-point source pollution from the built environment relates directly to the water resources analysis, the Watershed Implementation Plan and other analytical tools developed by the State in recent years. These strategies are discussed in detail in the County Watershed Implementation Plan recorded with the Maryland Department of the Environment.

These and other programs are all directed toward the goal of maintaining and protecting the natural resources of Talbot County for the enjoyment, health and benefit of its current and future citizens. In embracing these policies, Talbot County also affirms its contribution and commitment to regional environmental quality.

Map 6-D



**Chesapeake Bay
Critical Area**

**Critical Area
Land Use Designation**

 RCA

 LDA

 IDA

 Towns

Roads

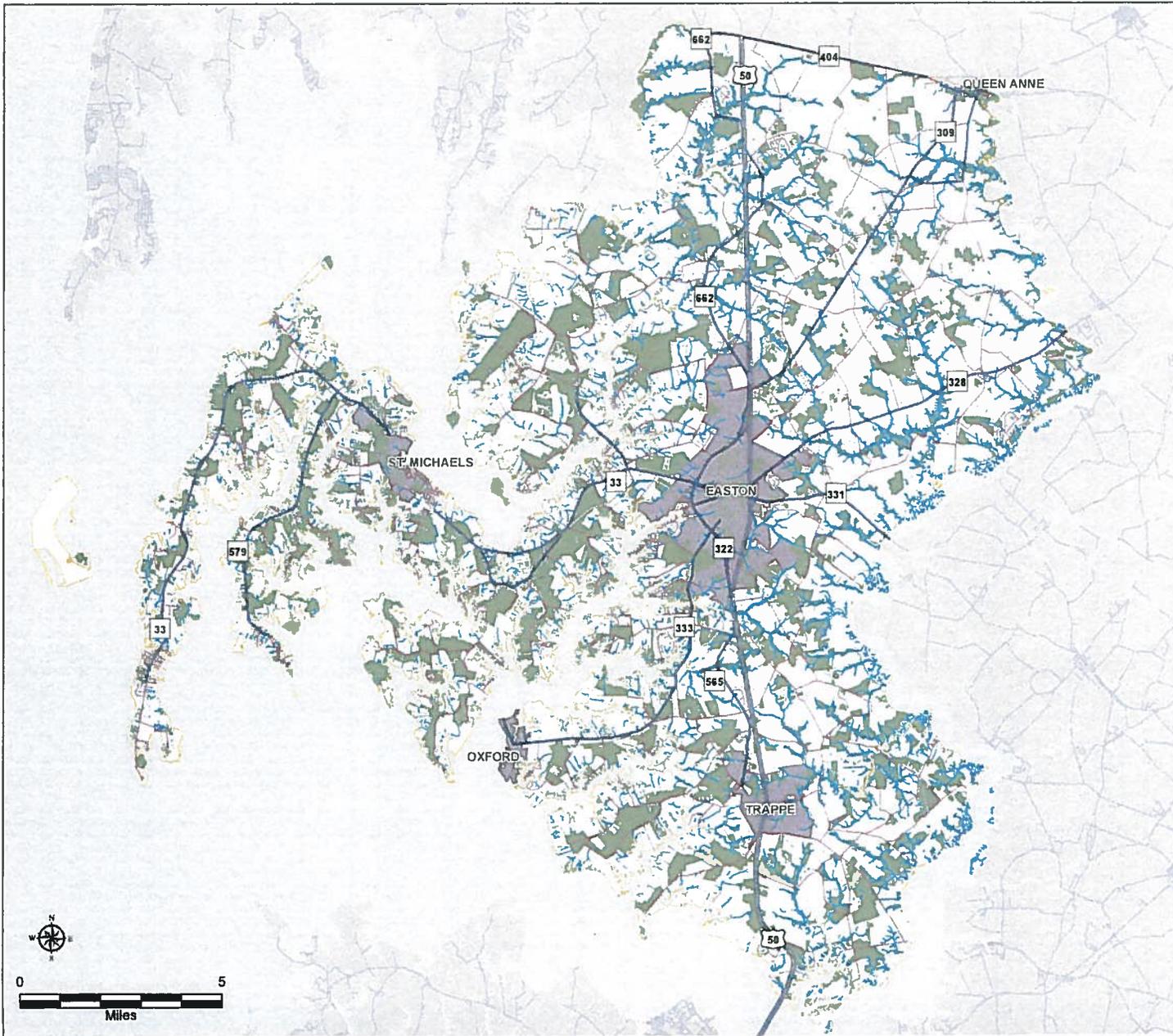
 US

 MD

 CO

 Streams

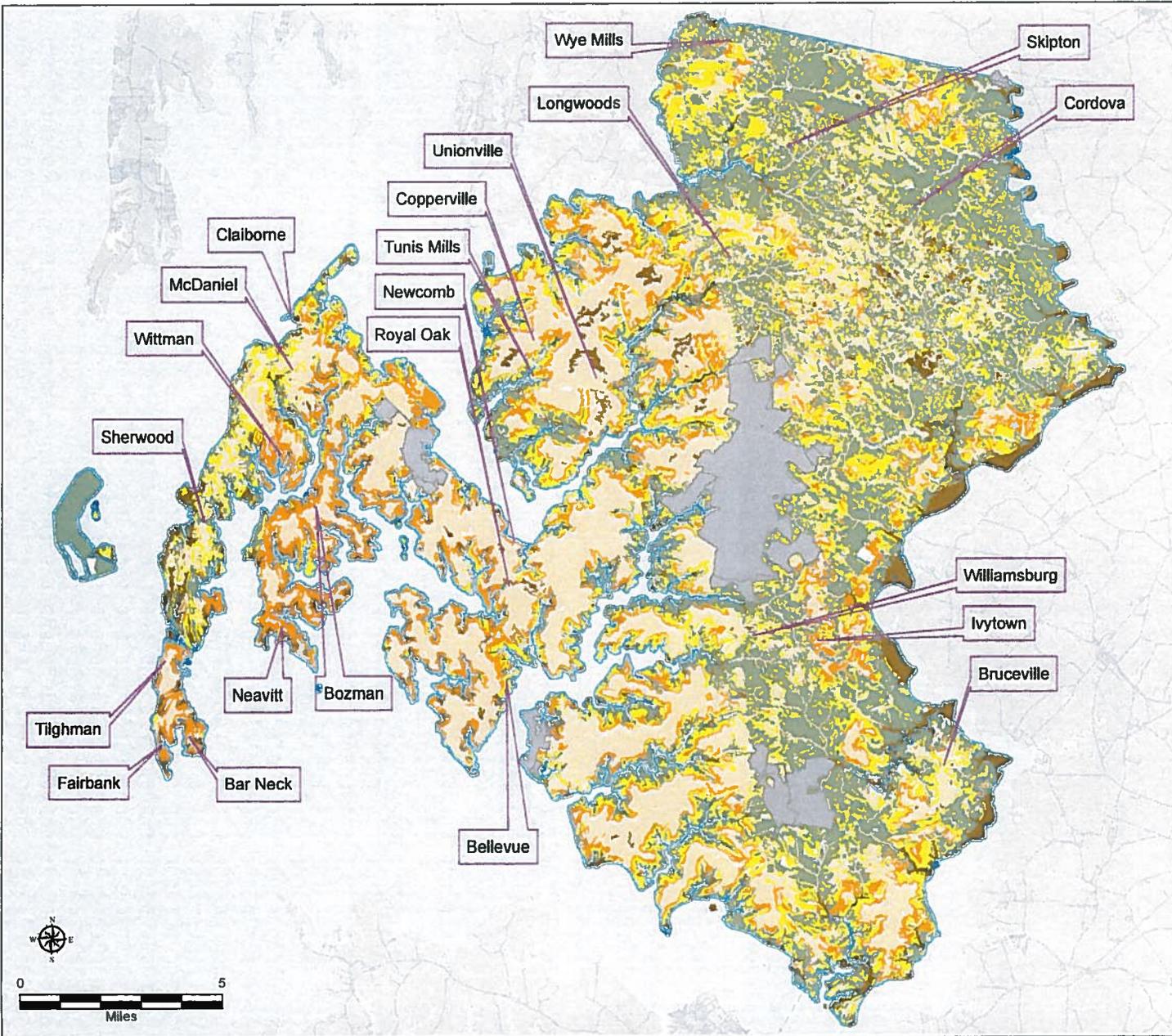
Map 6-E



Tree Cover and Streams

-  Forested
-  Streams
- Roads**
-  US
-  MD
-  CO
-  Towns

Map 6-F



Chapter 7 Economic Development and Tourism



Vision

Talbot County, Maryland, has the premier location to attract and retain modern business enterprises. The county has clean, safe communities that boast strong, balanced economies. The County has targeted key industry sectors to attract, including environmentally friendly technology companies, light manufacturing, tourism, healthcare and service industries.

Economic vitality is supported by the availability of properly zoned land with access to water, sewer, transportation, broadband and energy. Jobs for all age ranges provide families with opportunities to attain upward mobility, higher education and a comfortable living standard. The county seeks to retain young professionals and working families through high quality job training and educational opportunities to help them find work and careers in an evolving local and regional economy.

The county's unspoiled rural character, vibrant historic towns and abundant shorelines support a healthy tourism industry. The Chesapeake Bay's water resources and water quality in our bays, rivers and streams draw visitors to experience recreational activities, cultural assets and the robust populations of crab, oysters, fish, and wildlife. The County's strong agribusiness, seafood, forestry and food industries coexist with modern technology companies, light manufacturing, recreation and service industries.

The County has responded to a sustained interest in heritage tourism with the coordination of historic trails, sites and events. The Towns have designated historic districts and established incentives for historic rehabilitation, which has attracted profitable merchants and residents. Cottage industries and local vendors prosper and enjoy support from the local communities.

Residents and elected officials are actively engaged in proactive, innovative efforts to maintain their quality of life and determine their future. Successful economic development is described in a strategic plan for the County and towns with goals that create local job opportunities and sustain the quality of life in the county. A diversified and expanded tax base, made possible through targeted marketing, contributes revenue to provide enhanced public services, updated infrastructure, public safety and facilities for our residents.

Goal

Diversify and expand the County's economic base to provide a broad range of employment opportunities, resulting in a strong and balanced tax base that provides a net benefit to the community.

I. Introduction

Since its colonial founding, Talbot County's economic base has transitioned from agriculture and maritime industries to a predominantly service sector economy. Tourism was already a significant source of revenue by the late nineteenth century.

Talbot County's location, rural character and scenic attributes form a framework of assets to support economic growth and continued diversification in the economic base. Talbot County offers a strategic location, a superior quality of life with abundant recreational, cultural and social opportunities and a host of economic opportunities that belie its rural setting. The County's existing commercial centers are located in proximity to the incorporated Towns of Easton and St. Michaels. The Town of Trappe has the opportunity to grow its economic base to further serve the southern area of the county. Very little undeveloped land is zoned for commercial growth outside the incorporated towns.

Economic development activities are allied through retention, expansion and attraction efforts to contribute to a tax base that will help sustain the County's prosperity. A stronger tax base enables a community to support a higher quality of life, advanced educational opportunities, a sophisticated infrastructure system and a safe community through investment in community services and amenities.

II. Economic Development

A. Economic Sectors

The 2010 Census statistics reviewed in Chapter 1 (Background) reveal that the service industry remains the largest business sector in the county. Education and Health Services employ about 20% of the non-governmental workforce, followed closely by trade, transportation and utilities.

The Maryland Department of Labor reports that, following current trends, low skilled service occupations have the highest expected demand for employees with about one third of all workers needed. Highly skilled professionals comprise another 20% of projected demand (See Chapter 1 for more on employment). The rest of the workforce will be made up of highly skilled and educated individuals with knowledge and expertise in a variety of disciplines.

An appreciable portion of Talbot County's workforce is drawn from the surrounding counties of the Eastern Shore, with some workers coming from more distant Delaware and Pennsylvania. In 1990, 67% of the workforce was employed locally. In 2010, that number rose to 72.8% of the workforce.

Residents traveling out of the county for employment increased from 3,836 in 2000 to 4,885 in 2010. Employment destinations

	1990	2000	2010
Live and work in County	12,524	12,194	13,071
Live in and work out of County	3,083	3,836	4,885

included Anne Arundel County and Washington, DC.

Inbound commuters generally account for 38% of the county workforce. Most commute from nearby, with over half of the workers coming from upper Eastern Shore counties.

Many of the county's residents are under-employed. For example, over 15% of the workforce is employed in the leisure and hospitality sector, with an average weekly wage of \$360. In contrast, manufacturing employs 5.4% of the workforce at an average weekly wage of \$731, according to statistics provided by the Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation (DLLR).

B. Traditional Industries

Talbot County's agricultural industry remains a significant component of the economic base. The 2012 Census of Agriculture reported the total market value of products sold at \$85.7 million. The major products were poultry and grains. Talbot was the sixth ranked producer of grain crops in the state and the seventh ranked producer of chicken. The sales figure represents a 77% increase from the 2007 Census figure of \$50.5 million.

While the gross sales in agricultural industries are one measurement of the impact of agriculture on the economy, industries that are linked to agriculture give a more complete picture of its economic impact. "Backward-linked" industries are all of those that the agricultural industry supports through purchases. These industries include fuel, fertilizer, machinery sales and repair, feed and many others. "Forward linked" industries purchase agricultural commodities and in some way add value to them through packaging and/or processing. Backward and forward linked industries contributed more than \$165 million to the local economy in the 2007 Census.

The seafood industry also plays a role in the local economy. There are twelve seafood processing facilities in Talbot County. One operator is also listed as a food manufacturing facility. Independent watermen, oyster hatcheries and retail markets are also components of the non-tourism segment of the local economy. As described in Chapter 3 (Transportation),



Agriculture and related industries

Easton Airport contributes \$50 million per year to the local economy through fuel sales and related jet and aircraft activity.

The County is home to the University of Maryland Shore Medical Center, the County's largest employer. UMSMC includes several ancillary facilities such as eldercare and support for the large community of retired persons. The wide-ranging manufacturing and technical sector in Talbot County promotes

resiliency through economic diversification. The County offers the lowest Real Property Tax rate and the second lowest Income Tax rate in the state, to attract and retain its base of business activity.

C. Economic Development Planning Partners

The Talbot County Office of Economic Development (OED) was established in 1994. Its traditional focus has been the retention and expansion of existing businesses with additional efforts to assist new business start-ups and a reactive stance toward the relocation of businesses from outside the County. The role of the Economic Development Commission is to advise the Talbot County Council on economic matters and to support economic development initiatives.

The OED is advised in its plans and programs by the eighteen member Talbot County Economic Development Commission. The Commission consists of seven members appointed by the County Council and four representatives of incorporated Towns. The

remaining members, are Ex-Officio representatives of County agencies. The OED hosts an annual business appreciation breakfast to raise the awareness of business activities in the County and to recognize outstanding investment, employment and innovation.

More recently, the OED has positioned the County to become proactive in the recruitment of targeted businesses. The “Environmental Peninsula” (EP) effort was spearheaded by Talbot County to create a cluster of environmental businesses on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. The OED continues to focus on business attraction through links to institutions of higher learning and federal facilities, forming a synergy to promote continued business investment. The County engages in marketing efforts to attract businesses that will have minimal environmental impact but can employ skilled wage workers.

Services offered by the OED include access to financial assistance programs; education and training programs; regulatory assistance; statistical and demographic information; an inventory of available sites and buildings; and assistance with information on housing, finance, zoning, and licensing. Additionally, the OED has formed partnerships with local, regional, State and federal governments, as well as with education and workforce development organizations.

The Talbot County Chamber of Commerce offers assistance to local businesses trying to expand in the community through programs such as the Service Corp of Retired Executives (SCORE).

The Town of Easton promotes economic vitality through the Easton Economic Development Corporation (EEDC), a public/private partnership. The EEDC drives investment in the Town of Easton with a focus on smart redevelopment and business formation. The OED partners with the EEDC

on business attraction and retention and other programs of mutual benefit.

An Accommodation Tax is collected from hotels, motels, bed and breakfasts, country inns, and vacation rentals throughout Talbot County. Revenues are returned to the municipalities that collected the taxes, less a minimal fee. Other taxes collected remain with the County government and are used to support the Talbot County Office of Tourism and Office of Economic Development.

D. Planning Initiatives

In 2008, the Talbot County Economic Development Commission compiled a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis that detailed the county’s local economic conditions. Included with the analysis were suggested actions the community could take to capitalize on or counter the findings. Recommendations included developing initiatives aimed at agricultural expansion, tourism, education, job creation and workforce development. Opportunities were also identified to expand the County’s commercial base, recruit federal entities, improve the transportation infrastructure and reverse threatening trends including the loss of businesses.

In 2010, the OED completed an economic analysis based on currently available Census data. The report provided comprehensive information regarding the county’s major industries, demographics, labor force, employment, wages, business environment, housing, educational system, tax base, land use, and development environment. It also provided information concerning the community’s major employers.

In 2011, the County Economic Development Commission completed a land use recommendation report, which discussed land use in the county, described limitations on industrial growth and development and identified parcels of land available for future

industrial use. The report also underscored the lack of dedicated industrial land and infrastructure necessary to develop technology-based businesses and higher wage jobs. It pointed out that the statewide average for commercial tax revenues is 19%, while just 10% of Talbot County tax revenues are generated from commercial businesses.

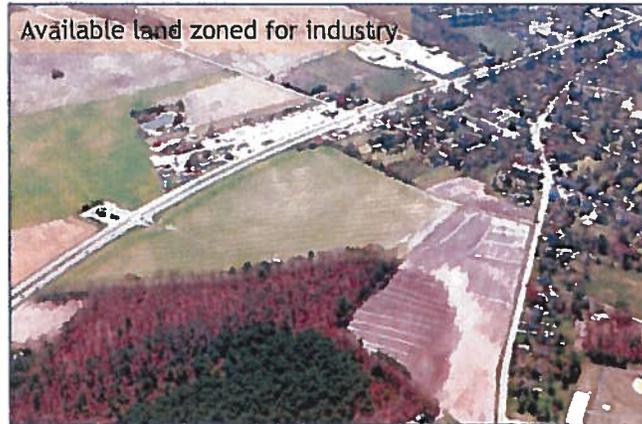
E. 2013 Talbot County Economic Development Strategic Plan

The Talbot County Office of Economic Development contracted Sage Policy Group, Inc. to develop an Economic Development Strategic Plan for Talbot County and the incorporated Towns. Its purpose is to, “Help guide future management, prioritization and allocation of resources for the development of infrastructure to support a viable tax base for the County and Towns.”

The study team interviewed stakeholders representing every community, reviewed strategic planning and reports such as those noted above and analyzed local data. The Plan strives to develop a consistent and mutually agreeable direction for economic development.

An economic analysis concluded that more than 77% of businesses in Talbot County are classified as micro-enterprises (with up to 9 employees) and represent roughly 22% of total employment. Another 14.4% are considered small businesses (between 10 and 24 employees) comprising an additional 21% of County employment.

The study identified several areas of economic development opportunity, including:



1. Embracing the county’s role as senior living/retirement community. Health services represent an opportunity for economic growth and the county remains an attractive retirement destination with a significant

healthcare infrastructure. Higher demand for senior-related services would create more middle-wage and entry level jobs in the community.

2. Building on the county’s diverse base of manufacturing companies. The

study team believed that the County should focus on attracting more high-tech manufacturing companies, particularly those that develop environmental or renewable energy technologies.

3. Attracting management and technical consulting services and business support services. These types of businesses tend to support higher-wage jobs and could make the county more attractive to other firms who will be able to take advantage of such services.

4. Supporting financial advisory and insurance services. These establishments and agencies represent a particularly important opportunity for Talbot County, owing to an ongoing demand for services on the part of businesses, residents and families. These segments are associated with high wages and create a range of job opportunities.

5. Developing Easton Airport as a source of economic opportunity for Talbot County. The airport could provide substantial value-added services to corporate and other citizens. Developable land has been identified for future improvements in the *Airport Master Plan*.

Economic development challenges were identified in the key inputs of labor, physical capital and land.

The County's industrial/commercial base is small and the number of firms has fallen sharply relative to other communities in recent years.

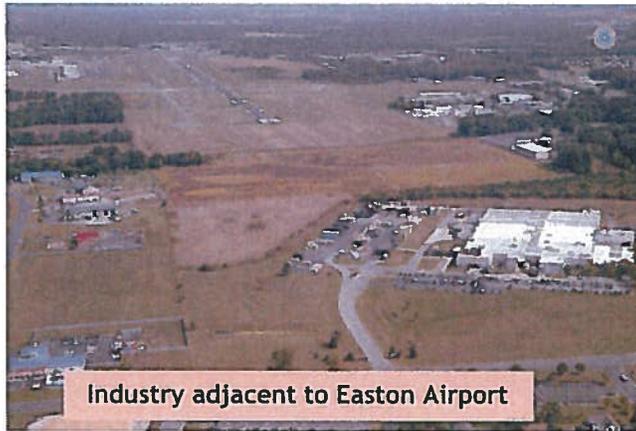
The Sage Policy Group, Inc.'s report also made the following observation:

Talbot County requires a long term enhancement to its tax base if it is to preserve the current level of services to its citizens. At the same time, the County needs to attract the type of businesses that will provide challenging, well-paying jobs in an effort to retain the community's young people after they have completed their education. While the County currently supports retail sales and food services, these types of jobs will not provide the level of tax revenues nor the professional and artisan positions needed for long-term growth and stability.

Recommendations were outlined to address the identified challenges. Implementation guidelines were provided for each recommendation. Sage evaluated Priority Funding Areas (PFAs) in the county and determined that current PFAs are consistent with long-term community economic development objectives.

Among the 15 recommendations to the County Council, the report identified the

following activities for immediate implementation:



1. Consider becoming more business friendly by improving government customer service and reviewing existing regulations, as well as initiating greater contact with entrepreneurs and major employers.

2. Aggressively pursue target industries for retention and attraction by creating new resources for economic development. Potential services include start-up advice and training, financial assistance, business location and site selection assistance and employee recruitment and training assistance.

3. Modify qualifications of the Real Property Tax Credit to provide the Office of Economic Development with greater flexibility and opportunity to use it, as well as lowering the threshold to \$1 million invested and 15 employees hired in order to receive the credit.

4. Increase the amount of strategically situated industrial & commercially-zoned land in Talbot County, including in larger towns; several properties were identified & prioritized.

F. Technology to Support Economic Development

As the national economy increasingly relies on information-based services, a robust data

infrastructure has become critical to local success in business, education and workforce retention. In its analysis of development potential, the *2013 Economic Development Strategic Plan for Talbot County* identified poor internet access as a weakness.

Access to high speed network capacity is key to present-day business location decisions and the quality of information available to community residents. Neither the traditional telephone system nor the cable television franchise system is built to provide the level of service modern industry requires.

Talbot County is working to establish the necessary broadband capacity to support its

economy and workforce. Providing a network to improve the quality and availability of high speed data services to businesses and residents is essential.

The County should take a forceful and active leading role in developing a high speed broadband network to improve the quality and availability of data services to businesses and residents.

A high-capacity broadband backbone parallels the major transportation artery through the County, providing network accessibility. The County must seek strategic partnerships which are needed to build the infrastructure to connect users to the broadband network.

Economic Development Policies

7.1 The County will continue to support the Office of Economic Development in its efforts to retain and/or expand existing businesses within the County and to market the Midshore Region as a premier location for a broad range of innovative businesses which will accentuate and capitalize upon the area’s assets while preserving its rural character.

7.2 To be competitive, the County shall seek mechanisms to supply broadband services , with the objective of developing efficient and equitable access for commercial development, remote work, workforce development and community wellbeing. The County shall require installation of fiber optic infrastructure where feasible in development, redevelopment or sewer extension projects.

7.3 The County should consider promoting and negotiating broadband service and should establish a task force to seek ways to improve access to wireless communication.

7.4 Development will be directed to Designated Growth Areas in towns with commercially and industrially zoned land. Business parks will not be developed on septic systems.

7.5 Workforce housing will be a priority for infill development projects in the County’s incorporated towns, and will be encouraged with planning and development incentives that result in the retention and attraction of workers to supply target industry sectors and support communities.

7.6 The County will seek regional partnerships to establish and nurture lifelong learning opportunities in support of job opportunities, workforce training and upward mobility and an educated populace. The County should form a Blue Ribbon Panel to examine the existing educational and training opportunities in the region, identify models for cooperation and expansion of opportunities, and prepare recommendations to increase access to all citizens.

7.7 The County supports preservation and enhancement of agriculture, forest lands, waters and open space as key components of the area’s economic, social, cultural and environmental

Economic Development Policies

7.8 The Office of Economic Development shall track and monitor the market needs and opportunities for retail, office, commercial storage, manufacturing and other target industries. The County should strive to ensure that a reasonable balance is reached to provide access to appropriately zoned land for commercial and industrial purposes.

7.9 The County should encourage development of modern aquaculture industries in keeping with our maritime heritage, taking advantage of our coastal geography to create employment opportunities and to support the local economy.

7.10 The County should support and encourage the appropriate enhancement, redevelopment, and reinvestment in existing tourism related nonconforming structures and uses so that they may contribute positively to the County's economic base.

III. Tourism

A. Overview

Tourism has a complex role in the local economy, providing direct economic benefits plus the economic rationale for preserving a high percentage of County land in farms and open space.

The County's most unique characteristics, including abundant historic and cultural resources, many miles of shoreline, towns and villages, and largely rural character, provide the qualities that create a premier destination for visitors seeking an authentic experience.

The goal of the Office of Tourism is to bring people to Talbot County to enjoy its vast beauty and to visit local shops, restaurants and hotels.

The mission of the Talbot County Office of Tourism is to:

1. Serve as Talbot County's official destination marketing organization (DMO), promoting attractions, accommodations and services;
2. Provide residents and visitors with information and services to ensure a positive experience; and
3. Position Talbot County as a premier travel destination.

While traditional industries in the County, like restaurants or boating, have long benefited

from the tourist economy, the local focus in recent years has been on the development and growth of heritage and nature-based tourism.

Tourism is a major economic driver in the County. The 2013 Report, *The Economic Impact of Tourism in Maryland*, compiles some recent statistics on Talbot County tourism:

- The number of visitors increased by 9% from 2008 to 2012, with the steadiest gains in day visits;
- Annual tourism revenues grew to over \$170.2 million in 2012, from \$157 million in 2008; and
- Hotel tax receipts were over \$1 million in each of the five years, while other State and local tax receipts remained at over \$21 million;
- Tourism generated over 13% of labor income at \$55.9 million and 13.8% of all employment with 1,760 jobs.

The Accommodation Tax is used to support tourism and economic development activities in the county.

The Office of Tourism continues to support a combined effort among all the county's towns to present a cohesive visitor experience. It strives to offer state-of-the-art digital marketing and web presence, combined with strategically targeted advertising and public relations.

Agriculture serves a dual role in economic development, generating revenue to the County as well as serving as a basis for preservation of a particular quality of life. The farms, open space and shoreline are also important to the County's image throughout Maryland and the nation as a place to live and visit. To maintain its allure, agriculture must remain viable and significant acreage must be maintained in farmland and low density development.

B. Scenic Byways

The Office of Tourism also cooperates with other County tourism offices in the region to promote the Midshore region to vacationers from around the world. One such collaborative project is a proposal to connect the Midshore area to a National Scenic Byway. Talbot, Dorchester and Caroline Counties, in partnership with the Maryland Office of Tourism Development, crafted a Corridor Management Plan (CMP) to be included in an expansion of the Chesapeake Country National Scenic Byway. The project lays out the remaining portion of the State-designated Byway and paves the way for a national designation covering the entire Eastern Shore.

The purpose of the CMP is to help the counties and their agency partners to protect and promote the rich natural and cultural resources found throughout the byway corridor and to implement strategies for

sustainable tourism development based on that heritage. The byway will benefit the area communities by supporting regional collaboration, enhancing the capacities of groups and agencies involved in tourism, and creating new economic opportunities based on increased visitation to the region.

The *Michener's Chesapeake Country Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan* has been adopted by reference as an amendment to the *Talbot County Comprehensive Plan*. The corridor management plan describes the goals, strategies and responsibilities for

conserving and enhancing the byway's unique qualities. It includes both a long-term vision for what the byway may become over time, as well as a short-term action plan. The management plan is required in order to apply for national designation through the America's Byways Program.

In order to generate economic value for the Talbot County communities through which the byway passes, it is important

to maintain the character-defining features that are attractive to potential visitors. The byway plan is consistent with the County's tradition of land stewardship, resource conservation and historic preservation, and the related policies already in place.



Tourism Policies

7.11 The County should continue to encourage and promote actions by the Office of Tourism.

7.12 The County should encourage increased cooperation among public and private organizations that interpret resources, publicize County attractions and promote tourism via partnerships among local and regional leaders, non-profit organizations, businesses, and State agencies.

7.13 The County should consider broadening the range of available interpretive and educational programs to enhance understanding and support by residents and visitors of the County.

7.14 The Management Plan of the Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area was adopted and made a part of the Comprehensive Plans of Caroline, Kent, Queen Anne's and Talbot counties in 2005. This update of the Comprehensive Plan incorporates by reference all applicable portions of the Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area Management Plan.

IV. Summary

Talbot County has a diverse economy that encompasses traditional industries dating back to the first Maryland settlements as well as the cutting edge of technology. The County continues to be a popular tourist destination, bringing visitors who enjoy its natural attributes, arts and history. As the patterns of commerce and industry have changed, the County has pursued strategies to attract and retain businesses and families, to maintain vibrant and resilient communities.

Some identified economic development challenges, such as expensive land and costly housing, are not addressed in this chapter. However the policies found in other chapters

of this Plan are intended to complement one another's goals.

The Talbot County Office of Economic Development offers access to financial assistance programs, regulatory assistance and other valuable services. The OED also forms partnerships with all levels of governments and key organizations.

The Talbot County Office of Tourism supports efforts to present a cohesive visitor experience and position the County as a premier travel destination. These efforts range from promotion of seasonal events to the development of byway plans that expose visitors to the area's many aspects and attractions.

Chapter 8 Historic and Cultural Preservation



Vision

Talbot County recognizes the importance of its historic resources. There are numerous groups in the region dedicated to the preservation of historic and cultural heritage. Efforts to increase public awareness of the importance of preserving the County's past have been successful. The County has an attractive program of local incentives to assist owners of historic properties to enroll and rehabilitate their properties. Easement programs have also been successful in protecting key historic resources throughout the County.

Goal

Preserve and enhance Talbot County's rich cultural and historic heritage.

I. Introduction

It is possible to experience Talbot County's history through appreciation of its historic resources and events. The early period of colonial settlement and subsequent eras are well represented in the County's historic architecture. These physical reminders of our history give depth and richness to the County, to past events, and to people's lives. Historic preservation enables this legacy to be protected and remembered. It allows the past to be integrated with the present and reminds us that the old has a useful place alongside the new.

Talbot County has maintained a longstanding interest in historic preservation. Many Talbot County families can trace their roots to the earliest colonial settlements of the County. Private houses and public buildings are often carefully restored. New uses are found for historic buildings that no longer serve their original functions. A number of historic properties in the County have been designated or preserved through private efforts, local Historic District zoning and designation on the National Register of Historic Places.

Historic resource preservation is about much more than the protection of historic structures.

Historic resources are elements that are significant for their connection or linkage to events or persons that were important in the past. The County's history is reflected in archeology and cultural events and is present in sites and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship or association.

In addition to preserving historic buildings and places, county residents also have a strong interest in preserving the cultural heritage of Talbot County by preserving traditional lifestyles, like that of the working waterman, whose heritage is threatened by a changing environment. Talbot County's traditions have long centered on farming, the seafood and maritime industries, and the many small rural villages in the County. It is important that these elements of cultural heritage be preserved as the County grows.

Many private historic preservation organizations play an important role in championing preservation efforts. The Talbot County Agricultural Fair, Tilghman Island Day Festival, Waterfowl Festival, Nace's Day Parade in Trappe and the Tuckahoe Steam and Gas Association Show are only a few of the many annual events and venues which honor the County's heritage and signify the importance of traditional cultural lifestyles to the people of Talbot County.

Talbot County Council and Historic Preservation

The Talbot County Council has long recognized the importance of protecting historic resources

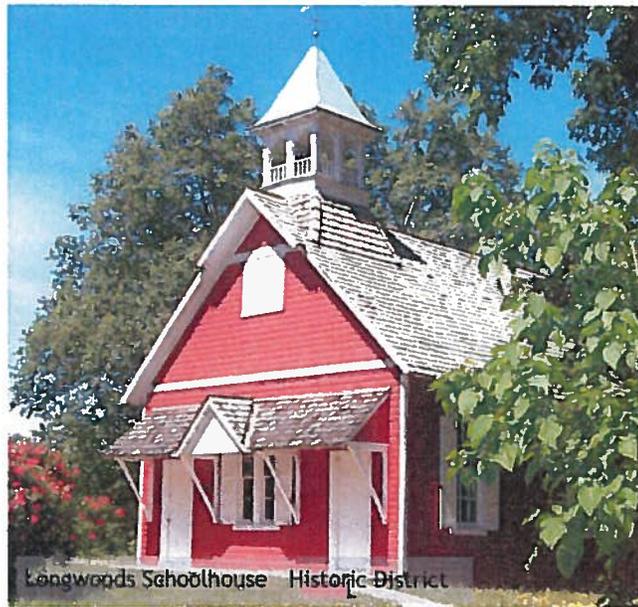
within the county. In 1976, the Council passed the Talbot County Historic District Ordinance empowering the Historic Preservation Commission to protect historic properties as a safeguard for the heritage of the county.

The County Zoning Ordinance provides protection for historic properties by designating Historic District Overlay Zones. A historic

district can consist of an individual building and grounds or a grouping of buildings.

Establishing local historic districts is entirely the product of local initiative.

District controls are created and administered by local citizens and local government.



II. Talbot County Historic Preservation Commission

The Talbot County Historic Preservation Commission (TCHPC) is made up of seven county residents appointed by the Talbot County Council for three-year terms on the basis of qualifications in architecture, history, or historic preservation, according to standards established by State and federal programs. The Historic Preservation Commission receives part-time administrative and technical assistance from the County Department of Planning and Zoning.

The Commission reviews properties of historic and architectural significance, selects historic properties for nomination as local Historic

Districts and reviews applications for changes to exterior features within existing districts. The Commission is also involved in the nomination of County properties to the National Register of Historic Places. As of 2015, the efforts of the Historic Preservation Commission have resulted in the designation of twenty one County Historic Districts. In addition, the Commission has undertaken several studies of historic properties and communities throughout the County.

Talbot County was approved as a Certified Local Government (CLG) in 1987. Local governments can participate in this program when the State Historic Preservation Officer certifies that the local government has established its own historic preservation commission and a program meeting federal and State standards. The CLG Program was established under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, a nationwide program of financial and technical assistance to preserve historic properties — buildings, structures, sites, neighborhoods and other places of importance in the historical and cultural life of the nation.

A. Community Awareness and Education

Efforts should be made to increase local public awareness and education concerning the importance of historic preservation and the functions and role of the Historic Preservation Commission through use of print and electronic media.

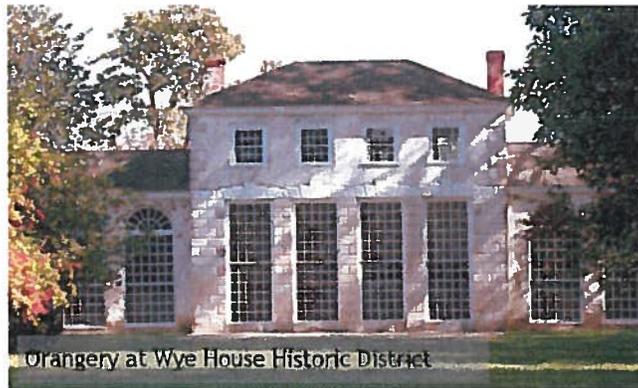
Community interest in preservation is

directly related to an understanding of the importance and value of preserving our heritage. Greater community awareness of the importance of historic preservation in the County could be achieved in a number of ways:

1. In conjunction with National Historic Preservation Week each May, the Historic Preservation Commission could sponsor local events geared toward recognition of

Talbot County's commitment to preservation.

2. The TCHPC could more broadly publicize its role by reprising its annual awards program to recognize local excellence in restoration of



historic properties.

3. Community awareness of historic preservation could also be enhanced by providing all Historic District property owners with a plaque for their properties which distinguishes them as historic or architecturally significant places. Several owners purchased plaques when the offer was last made by the Commission.
4. More historical markers identifying and describing historic sites and events within the County would also serve to inform local residents and visitors of Talbot's rich heritage.
5. Participation in State and national scenic byway improvements and programs may be an opportunity to increase public education and awareness of historic resources.

B. Action Items

The following actions would support the Historic and Cultural Preservation Policies of this Plan.

1. The Talbot County Historic Preservation Commission (TCHPC) should be supported by a planner trained and experienced in historic preservation, to support the efforts of the Commission and to promote and support historic preservation programs.
2. The TCHPC should be consulted by the County's Technical Advisory Committee in the review of subdivisions or site plans that may impact historic resources.
3. The TCHPC should work to identify other properties eligible for Historic District status by updating the inventory of historic structures for the County, actively soliciting enrollment of eligible structures, seeking financial or other incentives for owners establishing Historic Districts, and reviewing permits for demolition or substantial alteration of identified structures.
4. The TCHPC should review the *Talbot County Code* in relation to the State model historic preservation ordinance and evaluate whether modifications to local legislation are appropriate.
5. The TCHPC should explore implementation of local incentives for adaptive reuse of historic properties.
6. The TCHPC should investigate and review other counties' preservation incentives to property owners, with a goal of adopting a local incentive program.

III. Cooperation and Collaboration

There are many public and private groups in

the County which support historic preservation. These include the Historic Preservation Commissions of Talbot County, Easton, St. Michaels and Oxford; Historic St. Michaels — Bay Hundred, Inc.; Historic Easton; and the Talbot County Historical Society. Talbot County cooperates with the surrounding historic organizations as needed. It would be fitting for these groups to meet on a regular basis to discuss common concerns, to maintain planning cohesion among all entities with respect to inventories and actions, and to share in each other's successes.

In 2005, the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority granted certification to the Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area. This Heritage Area offers a mechanism for coordinated and enhanced heritage tourism by recognizing heritage sites in a four county area, including Talbot County.

Certification requires the Management Plan of the Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area to be adopted in each county's Comprehensive Plan. Talbot County recognizes and references the Management Plan in order to further opportunities for heritage tourism and support economic development. Talbot County also supports the goals of the Maryland Heritage Areas Program's ten year plan for its Heritage Areas.

The County should continue to actively support and encourage community events which focus on the cultural heritage of the County. Museums and cultural events provide residents and visitors an opportunity to learn about the traditional ways of life that are an important part of the County's heritage.

IV. Summary

Talbot County established a Historic Preservation Commission almost forty years ago and created a system of voluntary zoning overlays to designate Historic Districts. Since then, just twenty one of arguably hundreds of historic structures in the County jurisdiction have been designated as Historic Districts.

Education and collaboration are two important strategies to increase participation in the Historic District program. However, additional property owner incentives are necessary in

order to preserve the remaining links to the County's rich history.

Historic preservation is a challenge in any rural area. Historic resources are less visible than in towns and cities and can be overlooked. Such resources are nevertheless significant elements of the area's rural and historic character that should be protected wherever possible.

The Historic Preservation Commission remains a valuable means of assisting homeowners and the community to appreciate and protect its heritage.

Historic Preservation Commission Policies

8.1 The County will continue to encourage and support the Talbot County Historic Preservation Commission.

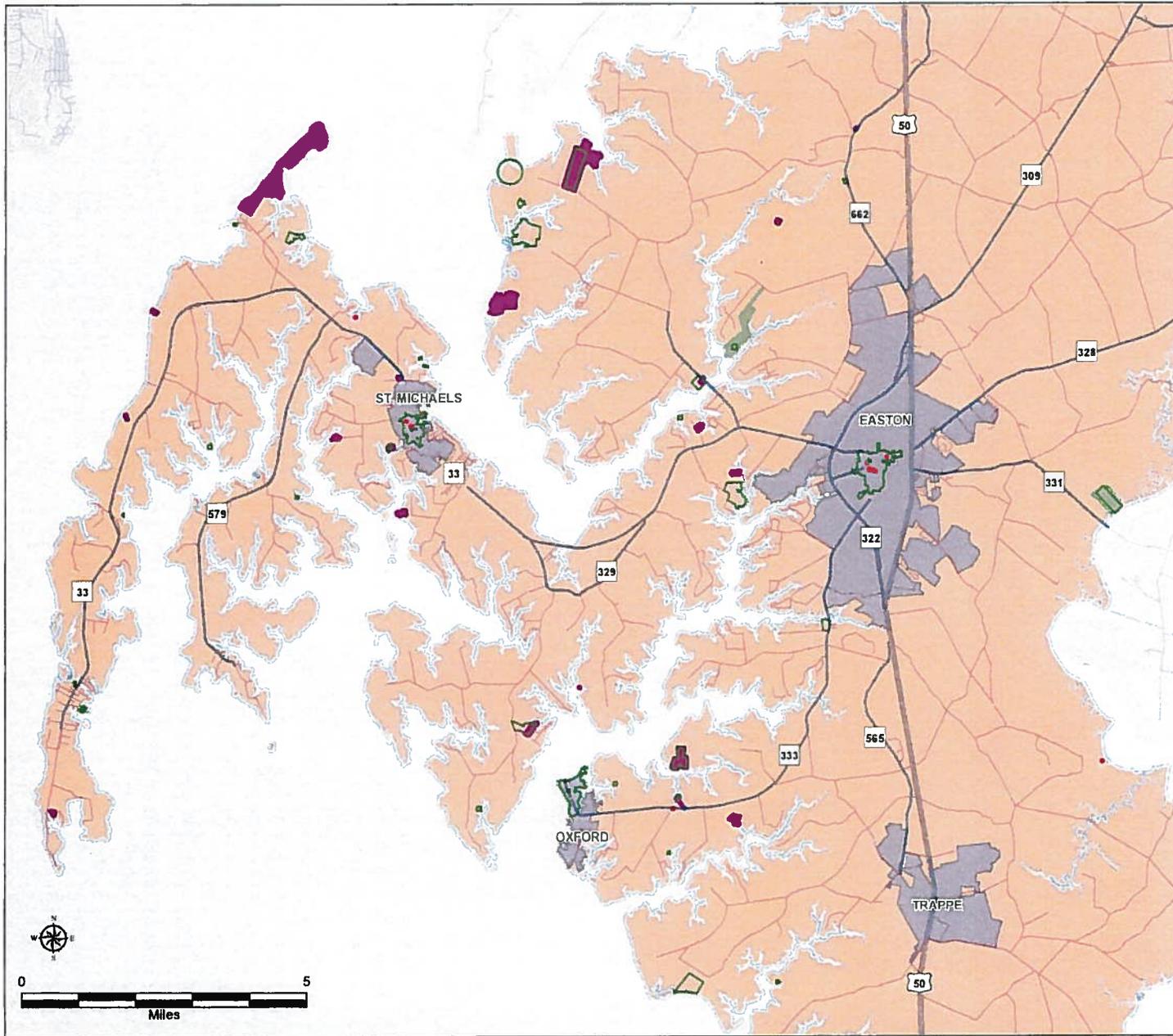
8.2 The County will encourage restoration and/or adaptive reuse of historic sites and structures.

8.3 The County shall make a clear statement of policy that the Historic Preservation Commission shall have the authority to oversee the creation of Historic Districts and preservation of historic structures.

8.4 The Management Plan of the Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area was adopted and made a part of the Comprehensive Plans of Caroline, Kent, Queen Anne's and Talbot counties in 2005. This update of the Comprehensive Plan incorporates by reference all applicable portions of the Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area Management Plan.

8.5 The County will expand its efforts to protect and enhance the cultural heritage of the area by sponsoring heritage events and activities.

Map 8-A



Historic Preservation Easements and Overlays

-  National Register Listing
 -  National Trust Easement
 -  MHT Easement
 -  County Historic District
 -  Towns
- Roads**
-  US
 -  MD
 -  CO

Chapter 9 Community Design and Appearance



Vision

Through application of its design standards, Talbot County continues to project the image of a rural but sophisticated region; proud of its legacy and determined to protect its future with sound and decisive action. Land use policies that focus growth within town boundaries and design standards appropriate to the region significantly contribute to the objectives of sustainability and open space preservation.

Standards that guide community appearance and building design are in place and protecting the integrity of our rural landscape, our population and our infrastructure. Higher density residential development, out of scale with the small-town and rural surroundings, is directed toward designated growth areas. Development building patterns, more suitable in already built-up areas, are not located outside of our towns and villages.

Some past development has been mitigated through buffering and landscaping. Utility lines have been buried to avert service disruptions and enhance the views along highways and byways. Signage standards emphasize proper scale and appearance that is harmonious with the overall character of the area.

Goal

Ensure that development preserves and enhances the appearance and rural character of Talbot County through the application of design and subdivision standards.

I. Introduction

Managing the design of new development to enhance community appearance is an important goal of this Plan. Design standards significantly enhance real estate values, community pride, a sense of obligation to property, personal enjoyment and satisfaction, an ability to withstand natural disasters, and

the overall investment and development climate in the County.

Chapter 2 (Land Use Plan) describes the present and future land uses for each planning area. This chapter presents the policies, guidelines and general standards for the physical development in each planning area. This chapter begins with general guidance,

followed by more specific comments for various types of development. The final section concerns design and appearance in the County's rural villages.

Within the guidance, the specific policies and implementation strategies are included to encourage innovative building design and site planning, while ensuring that principles of good community design are reinforced. Some of the implementation strategies recommend changes to existing site development ordinances and standards, while other strategies suggest ways to preserve the rural character of the County by controlling the form and pattern of future development.

II. Design and Appearance

Talbot County's development pattern reflects the traditional mix of farms interspersed with small settlements, villages and towns, and water-oriented residential enclaves.

Maintaining this traditional pattern is important to protecting land for agricultural use, open space, and the conservation of fragile environmental resources.

This section addresses design guidance for

growth areas, highway corridors and rural areas as well as non-residential development.

The *Talbot County Design Manual* (1991) identifies and illustrates site design concepts and principles. Until updated, the County should continue to use the manual to illustrate desired architectural and site development precepts.

Applicants for major subdivisions and commercial or industrial development are encouraged to actively seek community input in the planning and design process, prior to a formal submission of a development plan. Applicants may be required to advertise and conduct a community meeting in the vicinity of the proposed development site, prior to submission of the final plan to the Planning Department and Planning Commission.

A. Designated Growth Areas and Future Growth Areas

The County's Designated Growth and Future Growth areas are adjacent to the incorporated towns, and most are zoned **Town Conservation (TC)**. This zoning is intended to support development at a scale and density

Countywide Design Policies

9.1 The County seeks to preserve its irreplaceable unique rural landscape through land use regulations and easement programs that conserve open space in rural areas.

9.2 The County encourages site designs that complement the scale and character of existing and planned development. The *Talbot County Design Manual* should be updated or replaced, and should contain specific and enforceable design standards based upon the design guidelines outlined in this chapter. The manual should contain illustrations to help explain the guidelines. Lighting standards should be developed as a component of the manual and established in appropriate ordinances.

9.3 The County will encourage developers to solicit community input early in the development process.

9.4 Screening and/or setbacks shall be used to buffer adjoining properties from incompatible land uses.

9.5 The County should encourage vegetative buffers and landscaping for new and existing development, where such planting can be accommodated.

appropriate to land planned for eventual annexation. Until such time as a growth area is annexed into the adjacent town, County development regulations and design guidelines seek to maintain the rural character of these areas (see Chapter 2).

Traditional residential development patterns -- with a mix of housing types and densities, neighborhood businesses, civic and community facilities -- are the preferred development form for growth areas.

The annexing municipality should plan for streets that are interconnected and equipped with street trees, sidewalks and lighting, and designed to be shared by pedestrians, bicyclists and automobiles. Plans for new residential neighborhoods should incorporate easements and rights-of-way that will be required when public utilities are extended by the town.

Growth Areas envision a range of housing types and densities upon annexation. Accessory apartments and small multi-family buildings should provide opportunities for the elderly and small families to secure affordable housing that is accessible to community services and employment.

B. Rural Residential Development

Most of the County’s agricultural and rural lands are designated in the zoning ordinance as **Agricultural Conservation (AC), Rural Conservation (RC), Western Rural Conservation (WRC) and Countryside Preservation (CP)**. Base zoning densities

are generally limited to 1 unit per 20 acres, with an original parcel having 3 additional lots in some zones. Additional restrictions on subdivisions in rural areas are covered by the Tier IV designation as outlined in Chapter 2.

Agriculture is the preferred use within these areas, though low density, single-family housing is also permitted. The traditional residential development pattern in these areas can be described as single family residences, frequently buffered by trees, hedgerows and vegetation.



Agricultural outbuildings, barns, silos and other structures are frequently located in the vicinity of the primary residence. Creeks, streams and wetlands are usually buffered and protected to the greatest degree possible.

Land use regulations and easement programs are used to encourage the preservation of the rural landscape and encourage conservation of farmland, forests and environmentally sensitive areas (see Chapter 5).

1. Large Lot Residential Development

When subdividing large agricultural and rural parcels for residential development, every effort should be made to conserve natural features and prime agricultural soils. When structures are sited along existing roadways, building setbacks should complement existing development patterns. New buildings are encouraged to emulate the character of the area in height, setbacks, and massing.

To preserve the integrity of agricultural lands



and open space, new lots should be clustered when land is subdivided for residential development. Multi-lot subdivisions should be accessed from a shared road. New residential lots shall be drawn to respect existing vegetation, hedgerows, and farm fields to the greatest extent possible. To avoid fragmentation of agricultural lands and environmentally-sensitive features, new residential building lots should be less than 5 acres in size. Building lots should be situated to conserve open space, farmlands, and the commercial viability of agriculture. New development shall be screened wherever possible to minimize potential conflicts between residential and existing agricultural uses.

Buildings should be set back and/or buffered from public roads to preserve scenic rural views. On wooded lots, buildings should be located within the wooded fringes to preserve the tree cover and habitat.

Environmentally sensitive areas of development sites should be protected as open space. Lots should be located on portions of the site that have the fewest environmental constraints. Natural features such as creeks, streams, and wetlands should be protected from disturbance.

2. Rural Villages

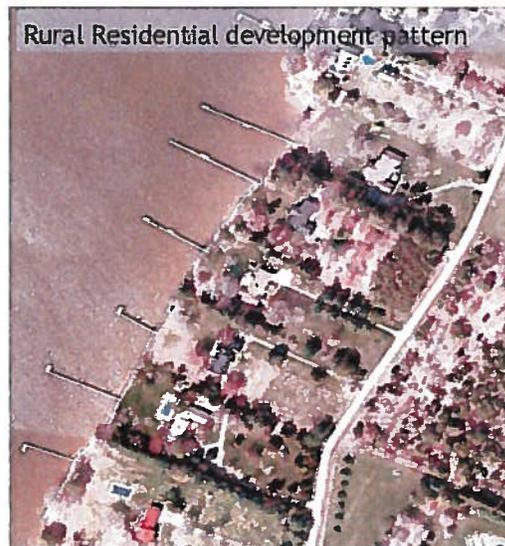
Talbot County has 22 unincorporated villages

(see maps at the end of this chapter). Villages have their own zoning designation and are considered to be unique areas in terms of development. Most villages are a mix of residential, small-scale commercial and other uses, primarily serving local communities. Infill is the preferred development type, and where permitted, non-residential uses and development should be sensitive to existing development patterns.

Villages are discussed more extensively in Section III of this chapter, with recommendations for modifications to some village zoning districts, as illustrated in Appendix A.

3. Mid-sized Rural Residential Development

Lands currently zoned **Rural Residential (RR)** represent mid-sized rural subdivisions on lots generally of 2 to 10 acres in size. Most frequently found along waterfront areas, these subdivisions were generally platted and built-out prior to the adoption of the County's Critical Area Ordinance in 1989. More stringent subdivision requirements have followed since. New in-fill buildings on vacant lots should be sited to protect the existing natural resources and attributes that make these areas distinctive. Development plans should recognize the



Future Residential Growth Policies

9.6 The County should coordinate with the incorporated municipalities in the review and approval of development projects adjacent to the towns and in matters of town annexations.

9.7 The County and Towns should co-adopt a master thoroughfare plan that includes future connections to town road networks.

9.8 Design of new development within designated growth areas should complement and enhance the development patterns of the neighboring town.

9.9 Developers are encouraged to provide recreational space in residential development projects. Standards for provision of open space should be evaluated and updated as needed. Such standards shall not permit land area utilized for golf course facilities to satisfy recreational space requirements.

importance of environmental features and the natural terrain. Buildings should be placed in such a way to minimize the need for excessive land disturbance. The County encourages the renovation or rebuilding of existing residential structures to comply with current Floodplain requirements.

C. Rural Non-Residential Development

Non-residential development permitted in the agricultural and rural areas includes agribusinesses or maritime businesses including, but not limited to, grain storage facilities, aquaculture, seafood processing, farm markets, farm equipment dealers, and on-farm processing that provide services to the nearby farms and marine uses.

Agricultural and rural areas are the preferred locations for these businesses. New residential subdivisions should not be located near such uses to avoid potential conflicts over noise, dust or odors that these businesses may generate.

Commercial and industrial development in agricultural and rural areas should be located on appropriately sized roads. Buildings should be sited close to the roadway, while providing appropriately sized entrances and parking for large commercial and farm vehicles.

Consideration should be given to providing deceleration or turning lanes to reduce conflicts

between turning vehicles and through traffic.

To preserve the rural character of these areas, lighting should be shielded and directed downward. Consideration should be given to reducing lighting between 10:00 PM and 5:00 AM to the minimum required for safety and security.

D. Commercial Development near Designated and Future Growth Areas

In Talbot County and across the nation, commercial development along major roads once followed a pattern of individual businesses, served directly from the highway with individual, closely spaced driveways -- a pattern which impaired traffic safety and created roadway congestion. Such development characteristically made little allowance for open space or landscaping, obscured the rural viewsapes and contributed greatly to a loss of rural character.

Many of the County's existing commercial uses are located in the gateways to incorporated towns, with other scattered sites throughout growth areas. Gateways signal the transition between the rural and urban areas. They create the first impression of the community and should be attractive and well designed. 'Chain' commercial and retail architectural styles are discouraged in the gateway corridors.

Gateway overlay zoning adds design guidelines for new commercial development and is intended to ensure compatibility with the neighboring town's long-range vision for the corridor development. As existing commercial buildings or shopping centers are redeveloped, property owners should be encouraged to gradually transform them into inter-connected mixed-use centers compatible with the design guidelines for the corridor (see Gateway maps at the end of this chapter).

Commercial, retail and service uses should be limited to gateway corridors, expansion of existing developments, or neighborhood centers proposed in conjunction with a residential community. Non-residential development located in the major and minor arterial corridors should be compatible with the scale and character of the adjoining town.

Mixed use development is encouraged in and around existing towns to reinforce the traditional growth patterns, reduce auto trips, minimize additional road improvements and encourage walking to employment and shopping.

New commercial site design shall feature a unified streetscape with continuous street trees and sidewalks along the frontage, high quality landscaping and, where possible, planted medians to prevent unlimited left turns. A mix of housing and other uses near the shopping is desirable to begin creating a walkable neighborhood rather than a strictly 'auto-centric' district.

1. Design and Redevelopment

Design standards should be crafted to guide



new construction and gradually transform commercial strip development into mixed-use centers. Minimum standards exist in State and County regulation to:

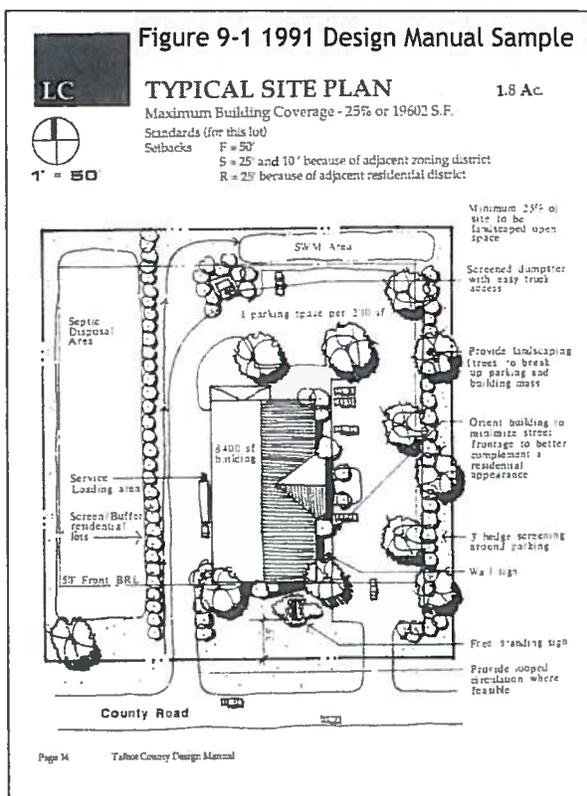
- a. Consolidate entrances along roadways to a few main driveways with internal service streets to connect between businesses;
- b. Provide for sidewalks and crosswalks throughout the area to create connections and safe passages between commercial businesses and nearby residential areas; and

c. Require parking lots to be landscaped and screened from the roadways.

2. Building Design

Continued good appearance depends upon the extent and quality of maintenance. The choice of materials and their use, together with the types of finishes and other protective measures should be conducive to easy maintenance and upkeep.

- a. Material should be of high architectural quality and should be selected for harmony with adjoining buildings.
- b. The height and scale of each new building should be compatible with its site and existing adjacent buildings.
- c. Building scale should be in conformance with neighboring development.
- d. Monotony of design in multiple building developments should be avoided. Adjacent buildings of different architectural styles should be made compatible by such means as screens, site breaks and materials.
- e. Mechanical equipment or other utility hardware on roof, ground or buildings should



be screened from public view with material harmonious with the building, or be located so as to not be visible from public ways. Utility and service connections should be placed underground wherever possible.

3. Landscaping and Site Treatment

Landscaping should be provided to enhance architectural features and design. Landscaping on each site should be planned to provide an attractive transition along the streetscape, safe pedestrian movement, and screened parking areas. Landscaping or buffers should maximize the use of native plant materials over non-

native vegetation to the greatest extent possible.

a. Screening of service yards and other places that tend to be unsightly should be accomplished by use of walls, hedges, fencing, plantings, or an appropriate combination thereof. Screening should be effective in all seasons.

b. Parking areas should be screened from public streets and paths. Parking areas and traffic ways should be enhanced with landscaped spaces containing trees or tree groupings.

c. Required landscaping and/or screening should be located so that site lines are preserved for pedestrian and vehicular traffic, particularly when adjacent to points of ingress and egress.

d. Landscaping should be protected by appropriate curbs, tree guards or other devices in locations where susceptible to injury by pedestrian or motor traffic.

e. Attractive landscape transitions to adjoining properties should be provided. In areas where vegetation or plantings will not do well, other materials such as fences, walls, and surfaces of wood, brick, stone, gravel and cobbles should be used.

f. Adjacent incompatible land uses should be screened from one another. The degree of screening should be directly related to the degree of incompatibility between the land uses.

g. Natural or existing topographic patterns should be preserved where they contribute to the beauty and utility of a development site.

Commercial Development Policies

9.10 The County should require new commercial development projects and the redevelopment of existing commercial centers to address this chapter's community design and appearance standards. Commercial and industrial development or redevelopment within the county should result in an overall enhancement to the appearance of the built environment.

9.11 The County will enforce standards for new development requiring vegetative buffers and landscaping along highway corridors.

4. Signage

Every sign should respect scale and proportion in its design and in its visual relationship to buildings and surroundings.

- a. Signs should be designed as integral elements of the building and site to which they relate.
- b. The number of graphic elements on a sign should be held to the minimum needed to convey the sign's message and should be composed in proportion to the area of the sign face.
- c. The color, materials and lighting of every sign should be restrained and harmonious with the building and site to which it relates.
- d. The use of natural materials (wood, brick) for signs located in the agricultural and rural areas is encouraged.
- e. Pylon and flashing signs should not be permitted. Monument signs are the preferred sign type.

III. Villages

Talbot County features 22 unincorporated villages dispersed geographically throughout the County. While most of the villages have some characteristics in common, many have developed differently over time.

Historically the villages served many different purposes. Some were founded as maritime communities, others as commercial centers and several were founded by former slaves.

Some have sewer service while others rely on septic systems. A few have a good deal of commercial activity while others have evolved into entirely residential communities. Several villages cover large land areas, others are small in size. Many villages consist of a historic center (structures over 100 years old), along with areas of more recent development.

Many villages were settled in an age when motor vehicles were few and workers walked from their homes to their nearby jobs or

businesses. Around the turn of the Twentieth Century, visitors from cities throughout the mid-Atlantic traveled by steamboat and railroad to relax at the County's holiday resorts and boarding houses.

House lots in the center of most villages are generally narrow and elongated, and 1 acre in size or less. Homes range in size from large to small, typically with two stories, front porches and few other improvements apart from small outbuildings. Mature trees line the streets and lanes of most villages.

Ratios vary as to the number of homes serving as the owners' principal residences versus vacation homes and rental properties. Those villages directly on the Bay typically have more 'weekenders'. A number of stores and businesses once thrived in the villages and most have or had post offices. Businesses served village residents and supported a local economy. Today, few such amenities remain.

Villages have become a focus for replacing septic systems with sewer system connections because of failing and outmoded systems polluting local waters. Lots developed 100 years ago or longer -- often in areas with a high groundwater table -- are of inadequate size to support a functional septic drain field, and are of insufficient size to replace or upgrade failing systems. Villages represent concentrations of properties with marginal or failing septic systems, whose diversion to enhanced nutrient removal (ENR) sewage treatment would yield appreciable water quality benefits.

Through the years, Talbot County has acted to eliminate failing septic systems in several villages by extending sewer service from the St. Michaels wastewater treatment plant to the villages of Tunis Mills, Unionville, and Copperville, and later to Newcomb, Royal Oak and Bellevue. The village of Tilghman is served by its own treatment facility.

Extension of sewer service was conceived, planned, funded, and constructed to resolve

public health problems caused by fecal contamination of shellfish waters.

A. Village Planning Process

The 2005 Comprehensive Plan included an implementation strategy to establish a method for undertaking a master planning process for each of the villages, in order to establish guidelines for future infill and redevelopment. The County Council established the Talbot County Village Center Board in response to concerns raised in the Plan for the vulnerability of the villages to excessive and incompatible development.

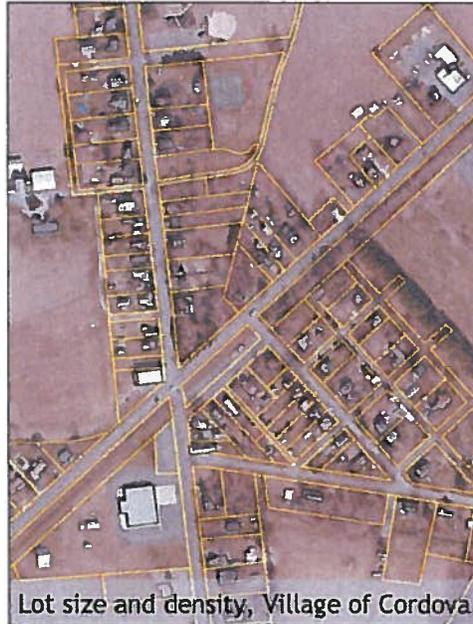
The Village Center Board also drafted a text amendment to the County Zoning Ordinance, creating two additional zoning classifications for villages. The Board recognized that the twenty-two villages vary significantly in their size, density, and diversity of land uses; and that a “one size fits all” approach of the existing Village Center zones did not adequately serve the needs of all of the villages.

Recognizing the special needs and desire of the villages to maintain their unique sense of place, the County Council adopted legislation in July, 2011 to create the following village zoning districts:

Village Center (VC) zoning provides mix of low to moderate intensity residential and commercial uses that serve the village residents. This district may have public water and/or sewer service and relatively small lots and higher densities. This designation

presently applies to all villages.

Village Center Hamlet (VC2) is characterized by primarily low or moderate intensity residential with limited compatible commercial uses.



Lot size and density, Village of Cordova

The Village Center Residential (VC1) provides for low or moderate density residential use. This district may have public water and/or sewer service; however, services should not be the basis for new development inconsistent with the existing village scale or character.

The three classifications listed in the Zoning Ordinance permit an increasingly diverse range of uses to better assure that new

development is compatible with village scale and to achieve their village’s distinctive objectives. The Zoning Ordinance shall provide greater detail and characterization of the three village zoning districts to include density and bulk requirements. The general village provisions of this Plan shall be applied to all village zoning districts as appropriate for the classification.

Recognizing the unique character of each of the county’s villages, new development will ideally occur as infill or redevelopment of existing sites and be compatible with the surroundings. Where new construction is surrounded by existing historic buildings, building height and exterior materials should be harmonious with those of adjacent properties. Compatible uses should be permitted to coexist near one another.

B. Village Priorities

The Village Center Board has been charged with developing village master plans, with guidance from the Planning Department

Several villages have developed their own plans to reflect and preserve the diversity and individual character of their respective communities.

These plans will be published separately from this Plan and will be made available to the public, as well as to the Planning Commissioners, for guidance in deliberations that may affect individual villages. The existing plans provide useful information that may assist County staff and organizations in future decision making. Plans can be found on the County website.

The following comments are derived from village plans and represent their common concerns.

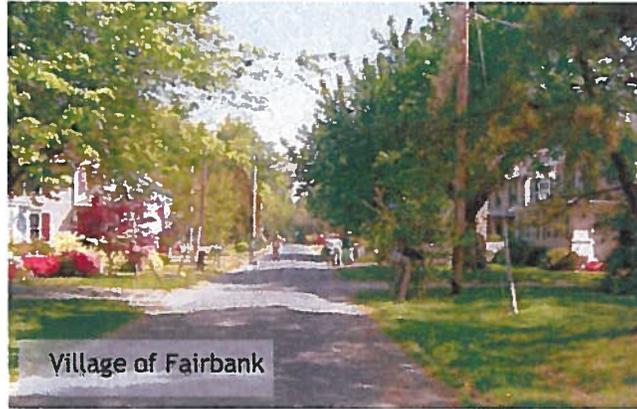
1. Preserve Community Character

- a. Existing homes should be retained and preserved as long as possible.
- b. When re-development or in-fill occurs, new structures should be comparable in size and style with the existing homes.
- c. New construction shall be infill or limited peripheral development in keeping with the existing village's scale (see village discussion in Chapter 2, Land Use).
- d. The County encourages the renovation and repurpose of older storefront buildings in the villages for commercial purposes to serve local residents.

2. Encourage Compatible Activities

- a. Regulations should continue to permit and

support the establishment of commercial business that can serve the local community while remaining consistent with the village's character and appearance.



- b. The County should ensure that residents affected by building permits, zoning variances, road work, and shore line proposals are proactively notified.

- c. The zoning ordinance provides a simple

and effective way for villages to maintain or modify land uses to one of the alternate designations established for rural villages. Residents will have the opportunity to seek revision during Zoning Ordinance review subsequent to adoption of this Plan.

3. Strengthen the Sense of Community

- a. Village residents wish to recognize and embrace the benefits of their diverse populations, which includes multigenerational families and recent arrivals, full-time and part-time residents, working people and retirees, and people with a variety of religions and ethnic backgrounds.

- b. The County should encourage and support efforts by village residents to convey their particular heritage within and beyond the communities through the use of websites, publications, and social media and marketing.

4. Assure Pleasant, Safe and Adequate Public Facilities

- a. The County should protect its considerable investment in village parks and recreational facilities

and watercraft landings by supporting a

strategy for continuous supervision and maintenance.

b. The County should continue to insure that the maintenance and improvements to infrastructure will benefit the safety, health, and quality of life for its residents.

c. Post Offices are important institutions to the character of villages and the lives of village residents. Every effort should be made to prevent further losses, and to retain village post offices wherever possible.

d. The County should continue to seek means of providing sewer services to villages where possible, to improve environmental quality.

5. Maintain a Safe and Secure Village

a. Speed limits within all villages should be set at safe and reasonable rates. Streets should be appropriately scaled to help slow automobile traffic through villages, and provide a safe atmosphere for pedestrians.

b. Entry signs and road signs are important reminders to drivers as well as helping to delineate the village from the open land. Appropriate signage should be commissioned for Village Centers.

c. Village residents should be assured of adequate response times and patrol coverage by enforcement and emergency services.

6. Protect and Improve Environmental Quality

a. Village residents expect that County and state agencies will continue to improve management of stormwater for quality of runoff entering the waterways, and to ensure compliance with all applicable laws and regulations.



Village of Tilghman

b. Village residents are encouraged to educate themselves about ways to safeguard the natural resources of their community and where

practical, engage in conservation landscaping.

c. Village residents should strive where applicable, to maintain shorelines and prevent erosion with the least amount of environmental disturbance.

d. The County should identify and develop incentives to owners of undeveloped properties surrounding villages to sell or donate conservation easements in order to protect rural character and provide a clear delineation between village and countryside, while retaining value for landowners.

7. Other Village Concerns

a. Village residents should encourage and support the continued viability of commercial watermen and farmers, small businesses and service providers of appropriate scale and scope.

b. Village residents should encourage the development of programs enabling convenient and economical travel to other parts of the County and beyond, through ride sharing and public transportation programs.

C. Village Design Guidelines

This guidelines section is carried forward from the 2005 Comprehensive Plan. This section includes some recommendations that may be considered as part of the development review process and some suggested design elements.

As discussed in Chapter 2, Village Planning Areas are Master Planned areas with suitable land available for infill, redevelopment and new development. Master Plans, or small area plans,

are required to evaluate traffic, emergency response and other infrastructure impacts of development on village character. The plans also provide a general understanding among residents on the nature and scale of proposed development.

Village character can be described by types of uses, building heights, massing and setbacks, and lot size and configuration. Community design characteristics include such elements as landscaping and vegetation, signage, lighting, location of parking and garages, and roadway character.

1. Villages should continue to have a mix of residential, small-scale commercial, civic and institutional uses. Infill development should be compatible with the existing building height, massing and front and side setbacks. New and infill buildings should conform to the prevailing setbacks to enhance traditional street-to-building relationships. All development should be sensitive to community character and existing development patterns.
2. Mature trees, located along roadways or on undeveloped sites, should be preserved. New and replacement roadway trees should be chosen to diversify the tree species and prevent loss due to disease. All new non-residential development should be required to provide both street trees and street front landscaping consisting of a mix of trees and shrubs.
3. Commercial and industrial uses adjacent to residential or lower intensity nonresidential uses should be buffered by landscaping or screening.
4. In villages where on-street parking is permitted, off-street parking for infill retail and commercial development should, wherever possible, be located to the rear of the building. When off-street parking is provided to the side of commercial

buildings, the parking area should be screened by a mix of trees, hedges, fencing, shrubs, or an appropriate combination of any of the above. Sidewalks and pedestrian paths should be provided where appropriate, and if specified in the village master plan.

5. Residential and commercial lighting should be specified, and generally pedestrian in scale, to maintain the rural character of the villages and to prevent excessive illumination or glare onto neighboring properties or public ways.
6. Commercial signs in Village Centers should be oriented to pedestrians and people in slow moving vehicles. The size, materials, color, lettering, placement, and illumination should respect the unique character of existing buildings and be designed as an integral architectural element.
7. Commercial outdoor storage areas, exposed machinery and outdoor areas used for storage and collection of trash should be visually screened from roads and surrounding uses. This does not include the personal property or equipment of watermen, farmers or other residents who are not regulated as cottage industries. Storage yard requirements for landscape materials and other cottage industries are specified in the County Zoning Ordinance.
8. Roadways through and in villages should be of the appropriate width and function. Many villages are served by substandard roads and therefore present development challenges. The County should facilitate the location of utility easements within public rights-of-way, and the collocation of utilities within easements. Utility and service connections should be placed underground wherever possible, where they may be protected from ice, wind or other conditions that may disrupt service.

Village Center Design Policies

9.12 New development and redevelopment in villages should be compatible with existing character in terms of land use, density, scale, setbacks, site layout, mix of use, and general design to maintain their unique “sense of place.” In Village Planning Areas, Master Plans shall be required for review of small scale and major subdivision, and major site plans. Master Planning shall include a comprehensive study addressing compatibility and suitability of existing and proposed land uses, infrastructure, facilities and services associated with new development and redevelopment.

9.13 New village residential development and infill should be designed to be compatible with and complement that of the adjacent or surrounding community.

9.14 The County will review permitted land uses in the village zoning districts to ensure that those uses that are compatible with the existing village character will be permitted in the future. Review will include development of Master Plans to guide proposed new development in villages.

9.15 The County will review permitted density and bulk requirements for all village zoning districts. Consideration of village rezoning shall be completed through the comprehensive mapping process keeping in mind the unique character of each village.

9.16 The County will work to revise sewer connection and allocation policies in Water Quality Strategy Areas mapped Tier III-B to concentrate available capacity on addressing existing failing, inadequate and substandard septic systems within villages and allow for infill, redevelopment and new development on existing lots of record within established sewer service

IV. Summary

In most instances, the land use and zoning regulations established since the 1970s have served to protect Talbot County’s agricultural and maritime heritage, rural character and unique relationship with the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. Talbot County has established general design guidelines in order to retain character while allowing for appropriately scaled growth in carefully selected areas, which are reflected in planning areas and zoning designations.

Designated Growth Areas are intended to support development at a scale and density appropriate to future urbanized areas. Until such time as land is annexed into an adjacent town, design guidelines seek to maintain the rural character of these areas.

Throughout the Rural Reserve Area, agriculture is the preferred use. Low density, single-family

housing is also permitted, in settings that minimize potential conflicts with agricultural activities.

Development guidelines for non-residential structures recommend limiting development to gateway corridors, expansion of existing developments, or neighborhood centers proposed in conjunction with a residential community. Non-residential development should be compatible with the scale and character of the adjoining town. Treatments for such development should emphasize the relationship of a proposed building to its site; relationship to adjoining buildings and sites; site landscaping; building design; signs and maintenance.

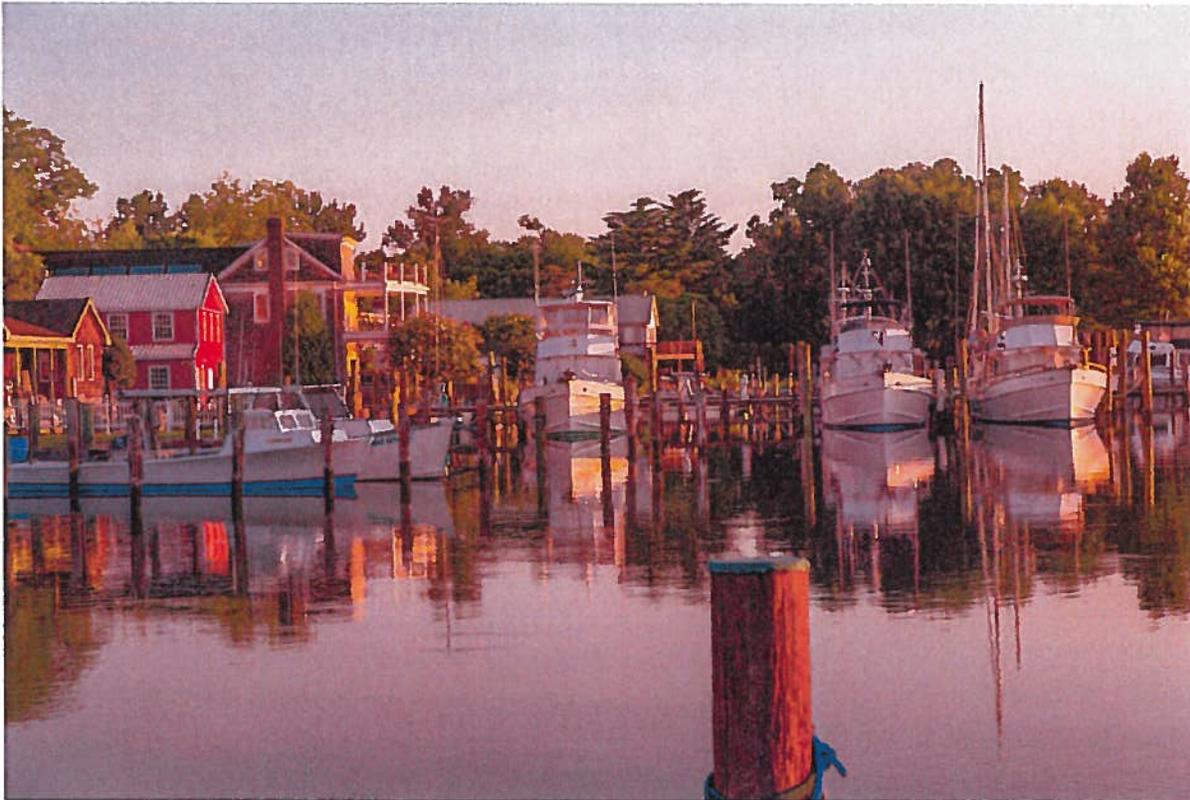
Villages, like other areas of the County, are subject to zoning regulations for purposes of environmental management, preservation of character, public safety, etc. Many villages have changed significantly since village zoning was

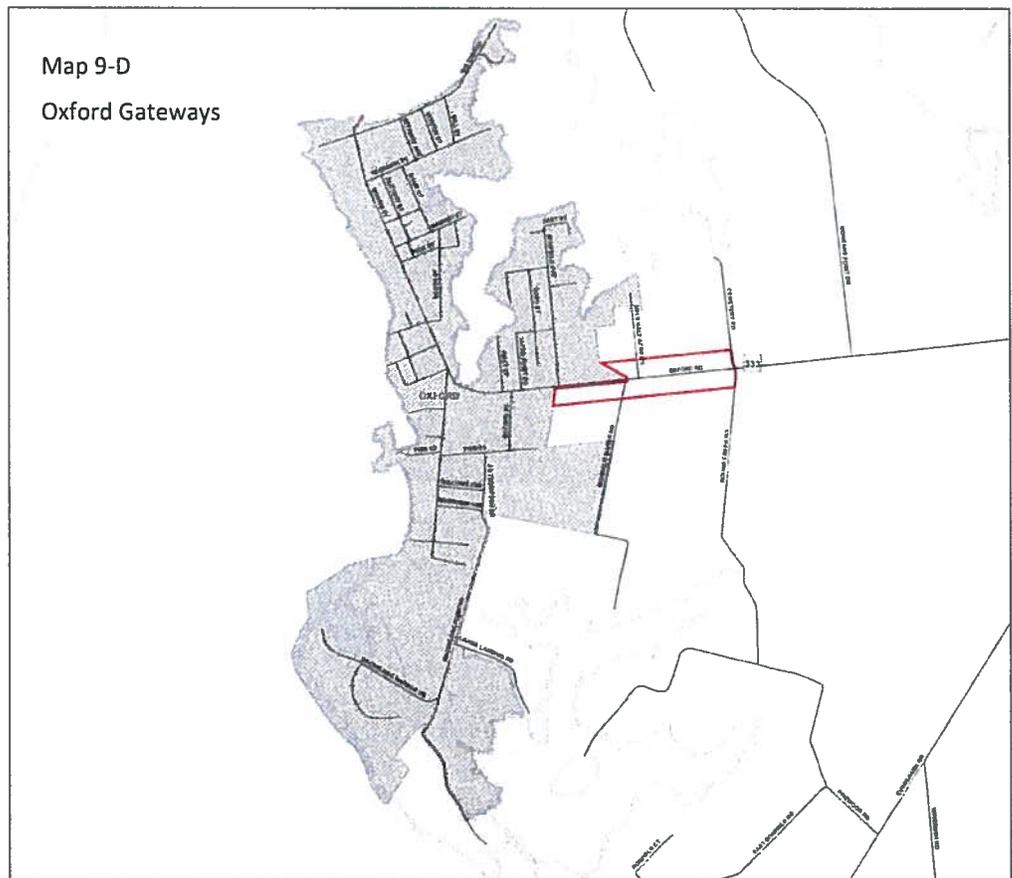
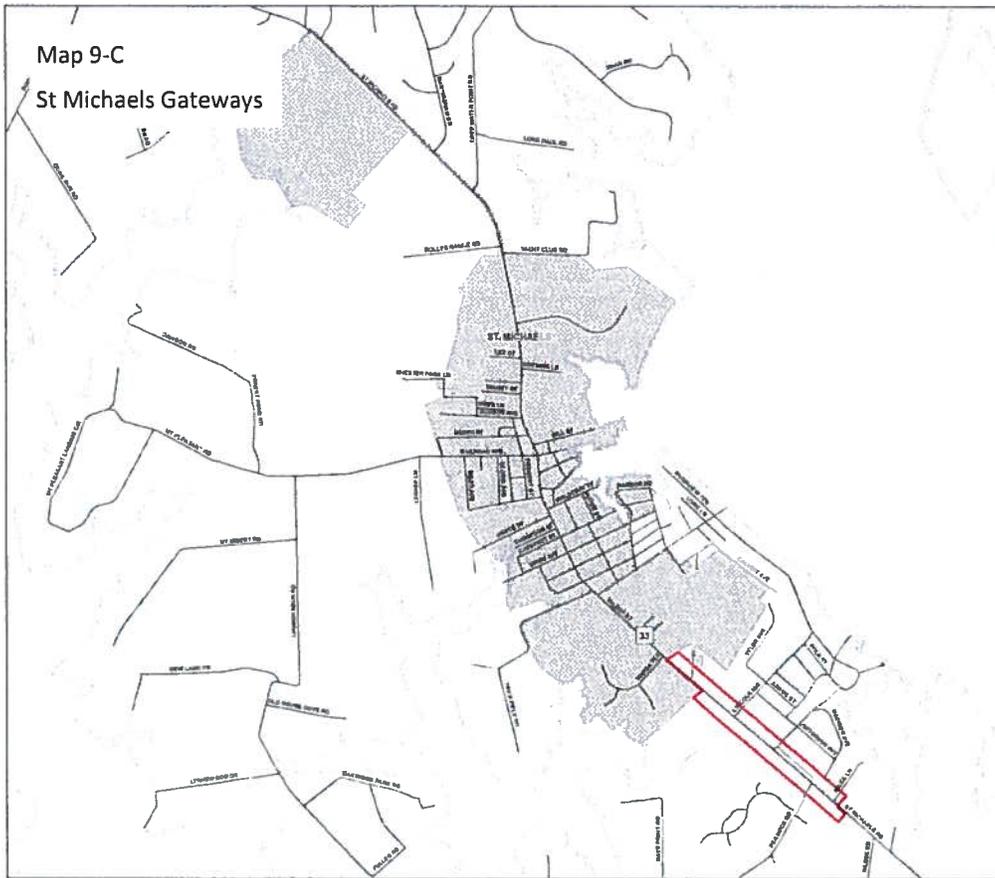
first established, evolving from bustling commercial centers to quieter residential neighborhoods. Zoning designations and sometimes conflicting regulations that have been superimposed on the entire group of villages are overdue for reconciliation.

Village policies are especially relevant in the context of environmental regulations and concerns discussed throughout this Plan. Updated village zoning will be critical to the

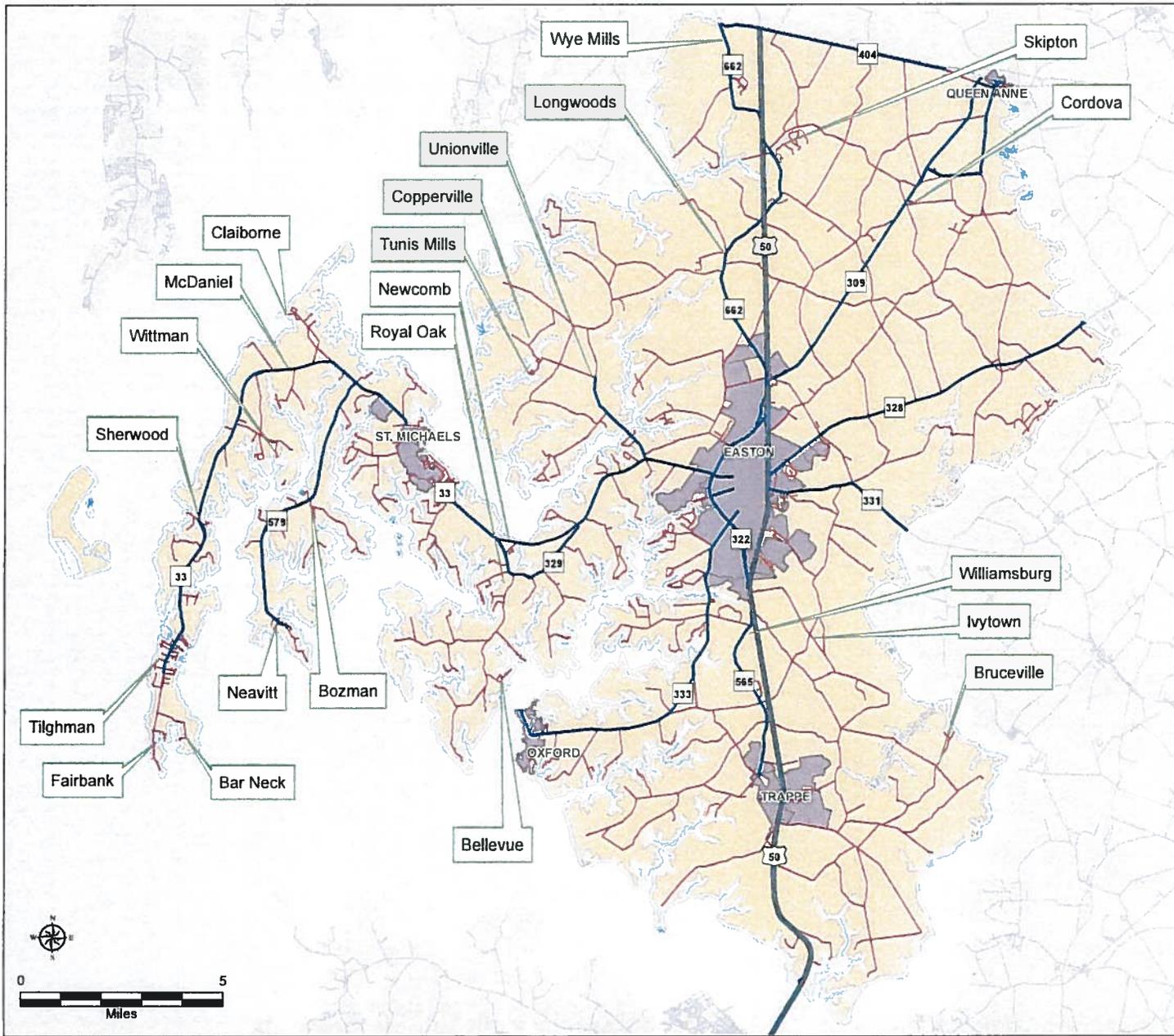
County's Watershed Implementation Plans (WIPs). Many villages are also in low lying areas and so are vulnerable to storm surge and sea level rise. Therefore, development decisions must take these potential impacts into account.

The comprehensive planning process provides all county citizens with an opportunity to participate in the reevaluation of design standards in order to ensure that principles of good community design are maintained.





Talbot County's Rural Villages



Appendix A Village Boundary Recommendations

The following maps represent modifications that should be considered during Comprehensive Rezoning, to the boundaries of several rural villages. The recommendations are based on policies contained in the Comprehensive Plan, concerning village character and scale.

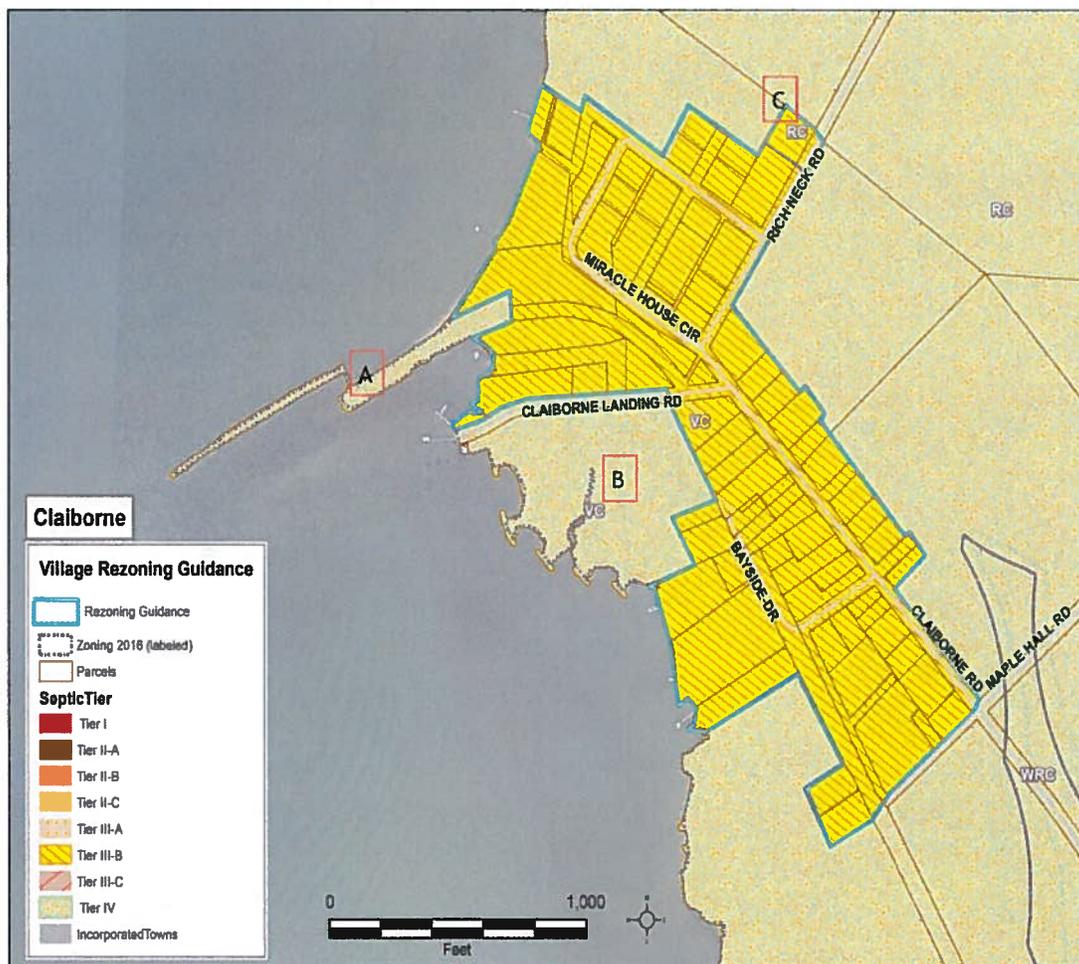
In general, it is recommended that the village boundaries on larger parcels, with the greatest potential for excessive growth, be reduced to areas that are compatible with the existing

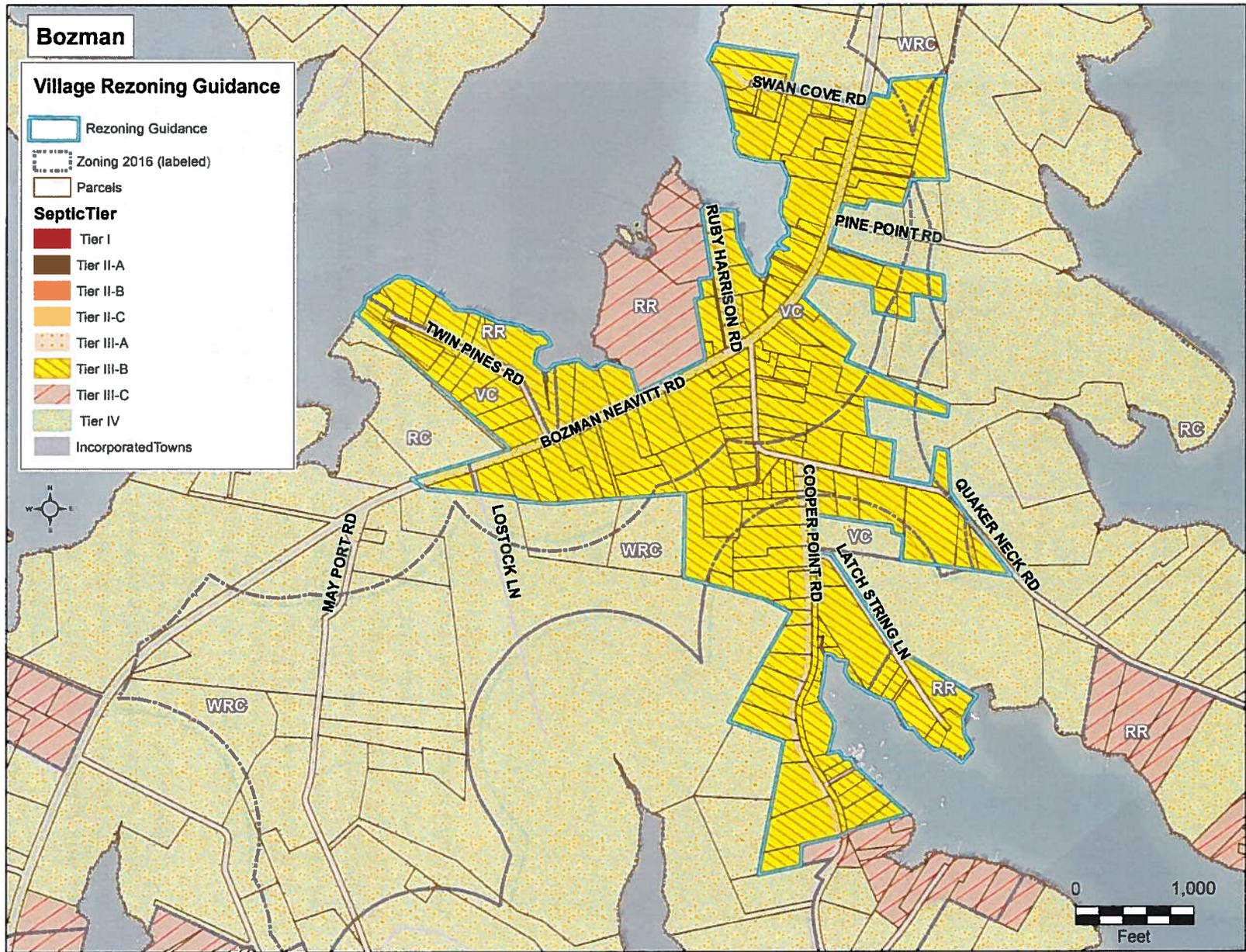
village's character and allow for moderate infill and redevelopment.

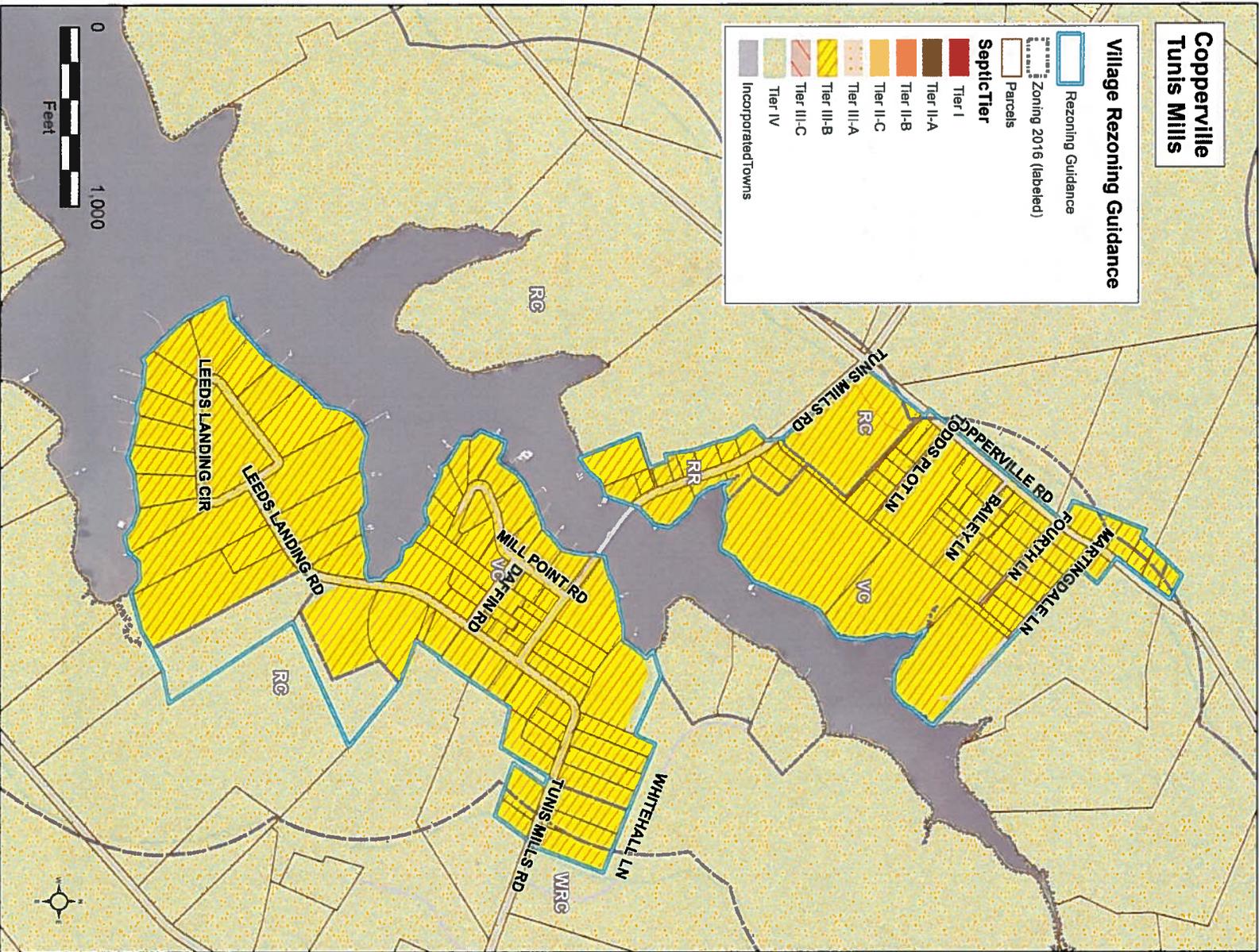
In most cases, the recommended growth areas are contiguous to Tier III designations; III-A for eastern villages not planned for sewer service, III-B for western villages with or planned for sewer service.

Parcels may have been recommended for removal or inclusion due to other factors. For example, on the Claiborne map below, it is recommended that two areas of protected and undevelopable land (marked A and B) should be rezoned, and a small portion of an adjacent parcel should be added to the village.

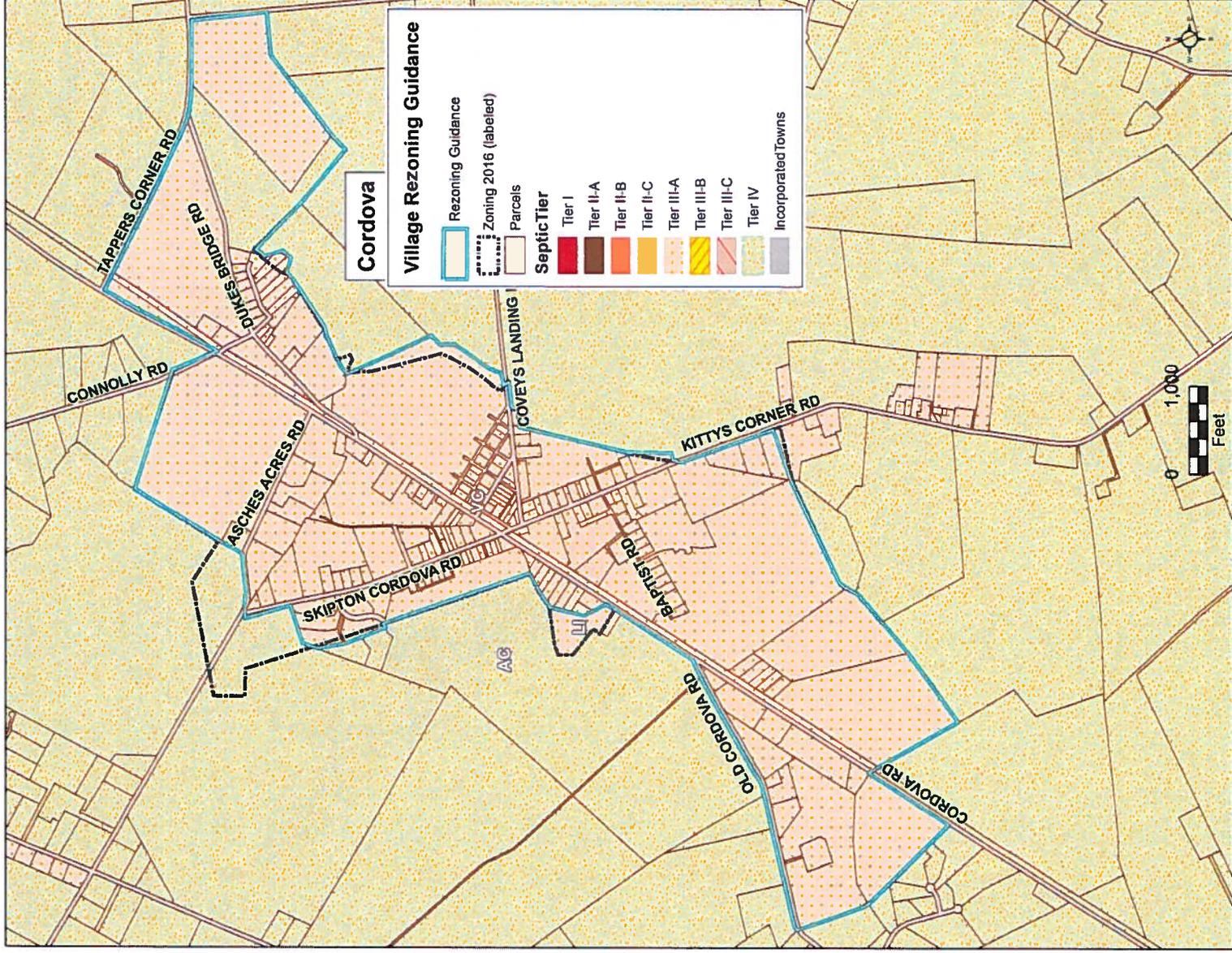
No changes are recommended for villages not shown on the following pages.

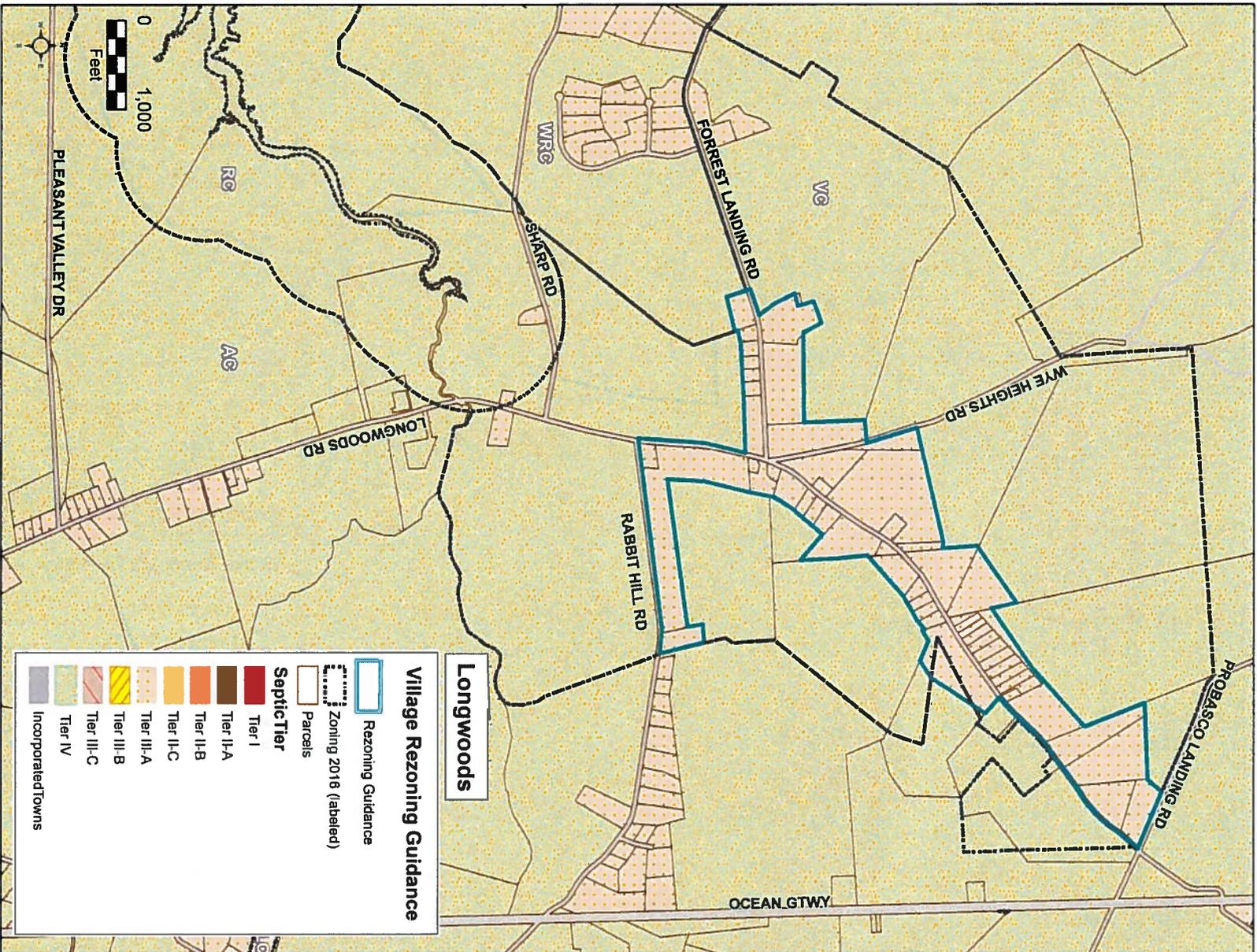




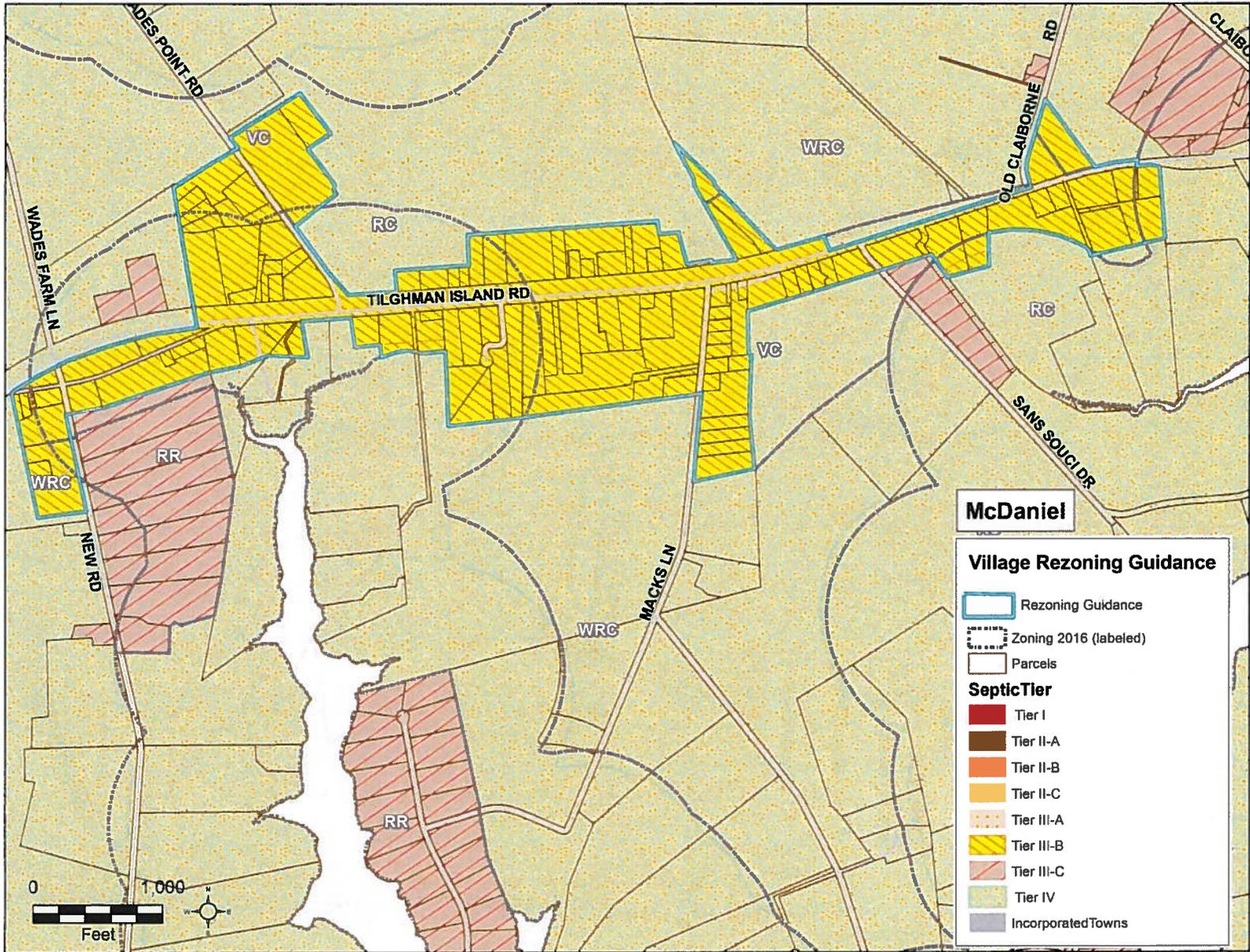


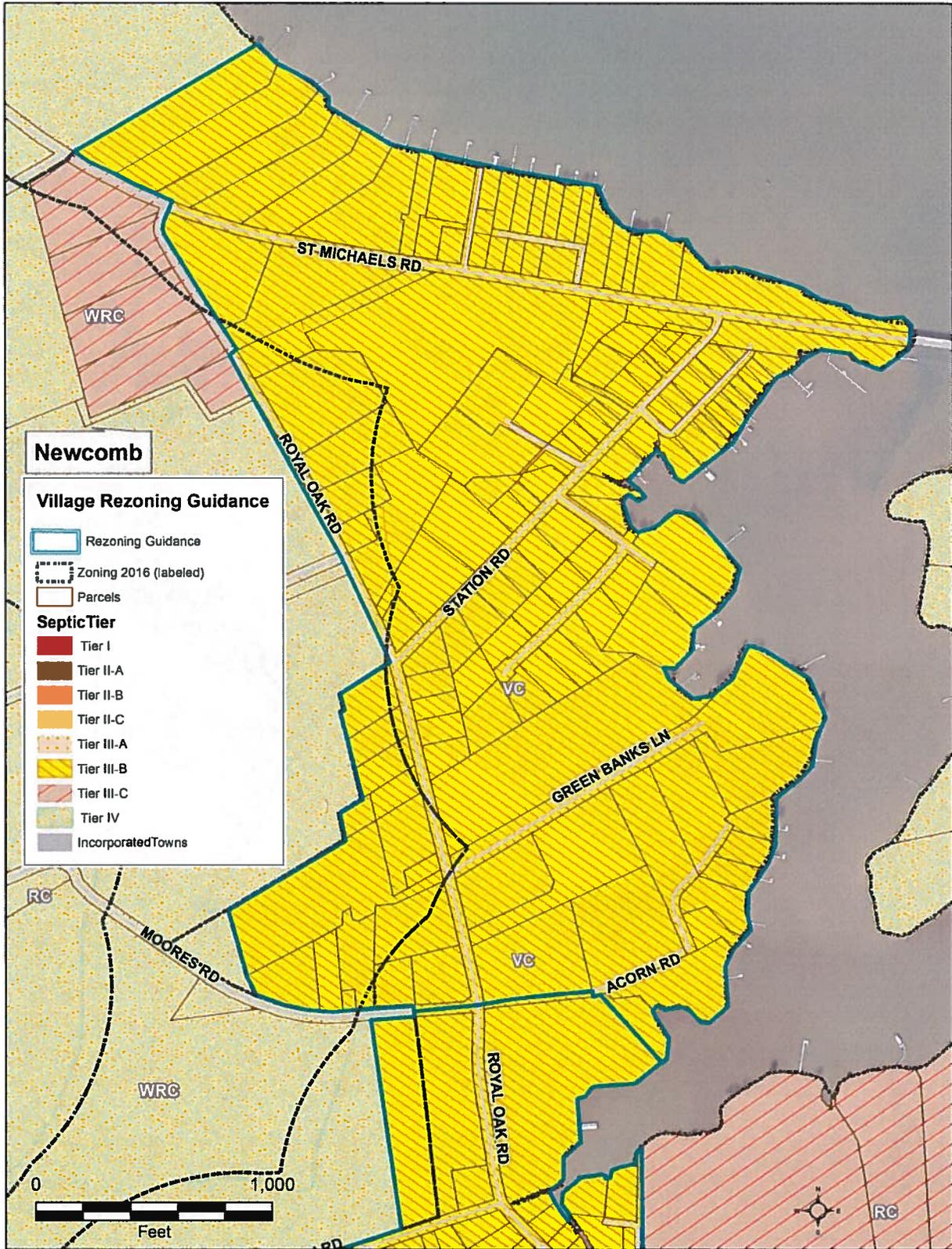
Appendix A Village Zoning Recommendations

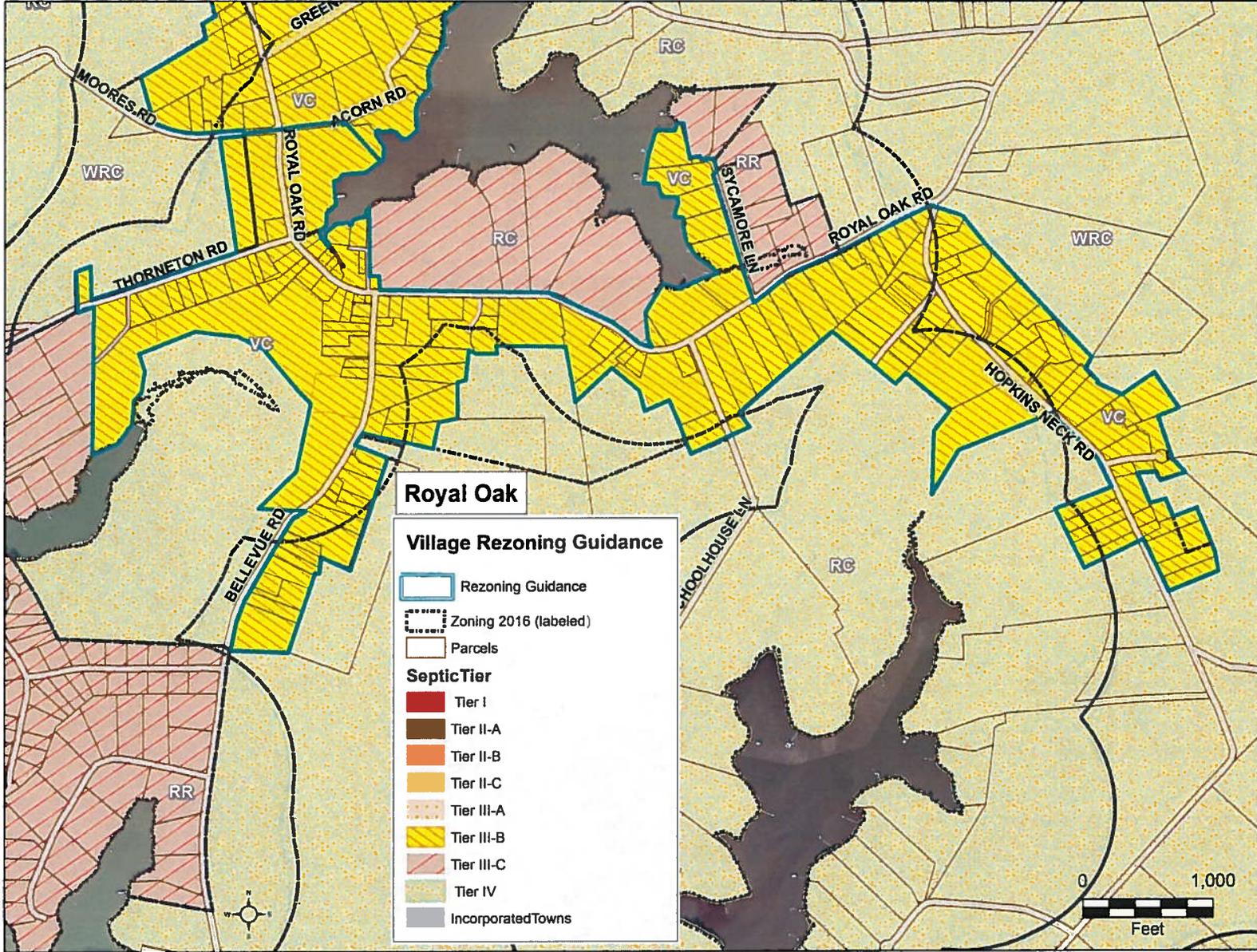


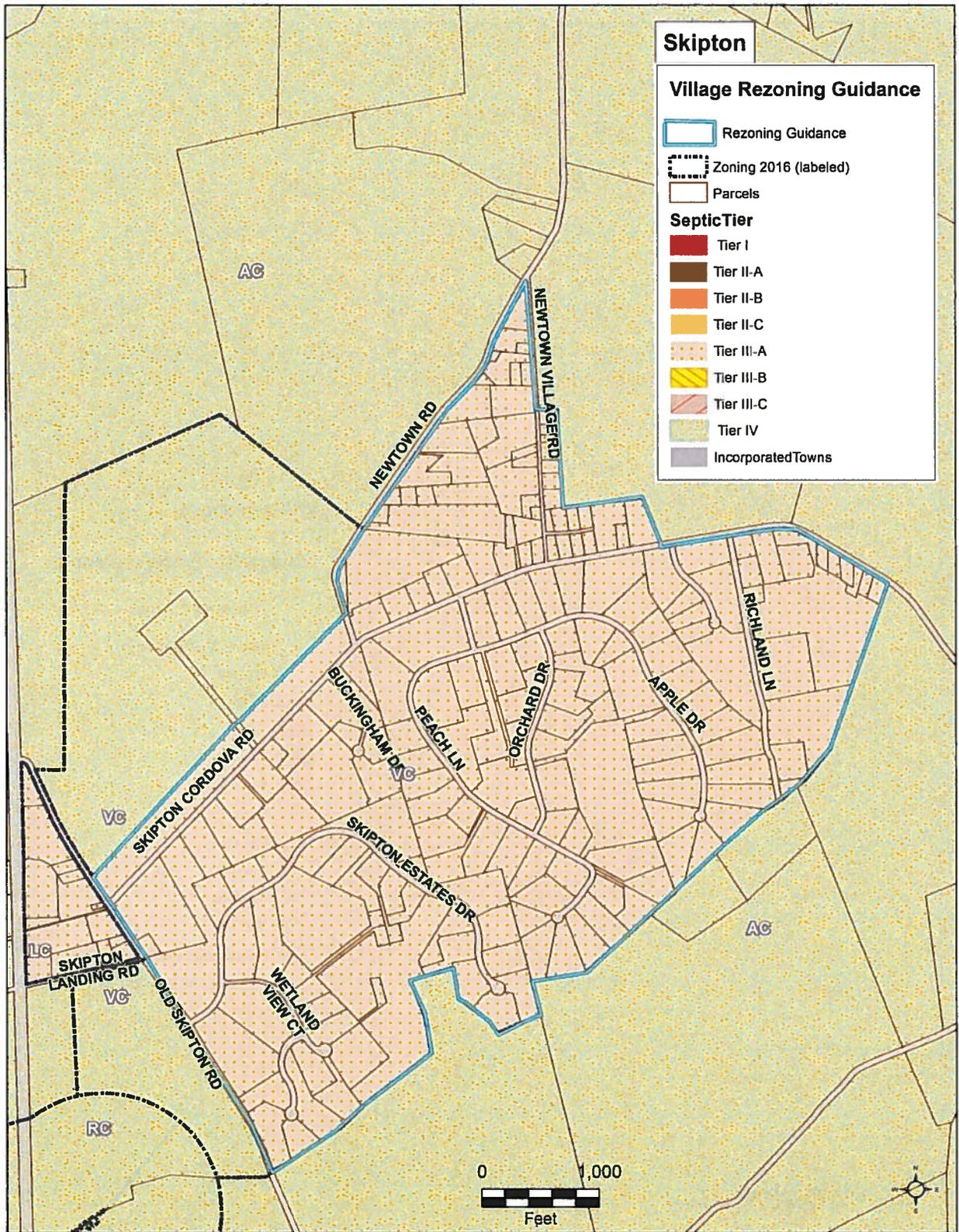


Appendix A Village Zoning Recommendations

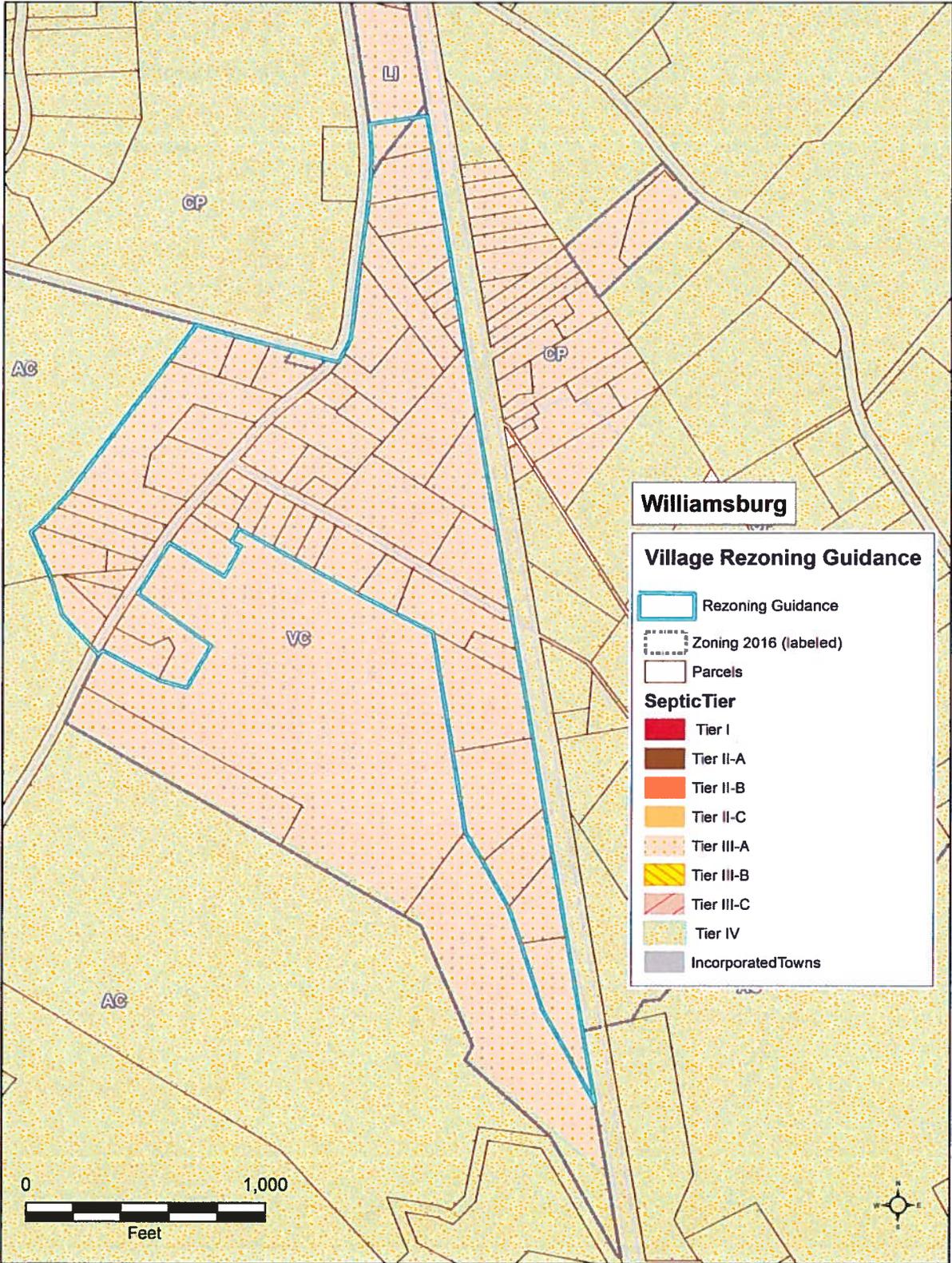


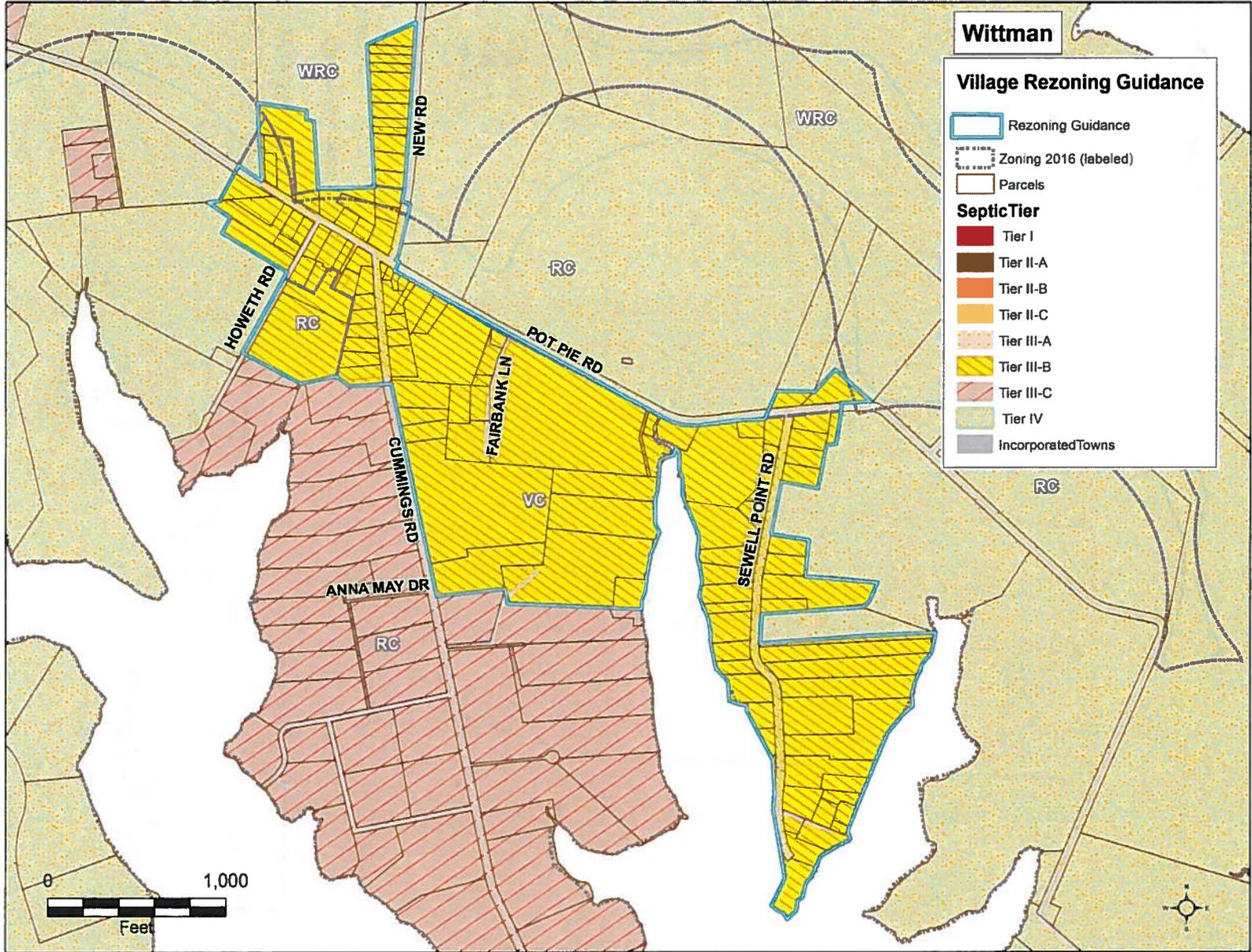






Appendix A Village Zoning Recommendations





Appendix A Village Zoning Recommendations

