

# Bruceville

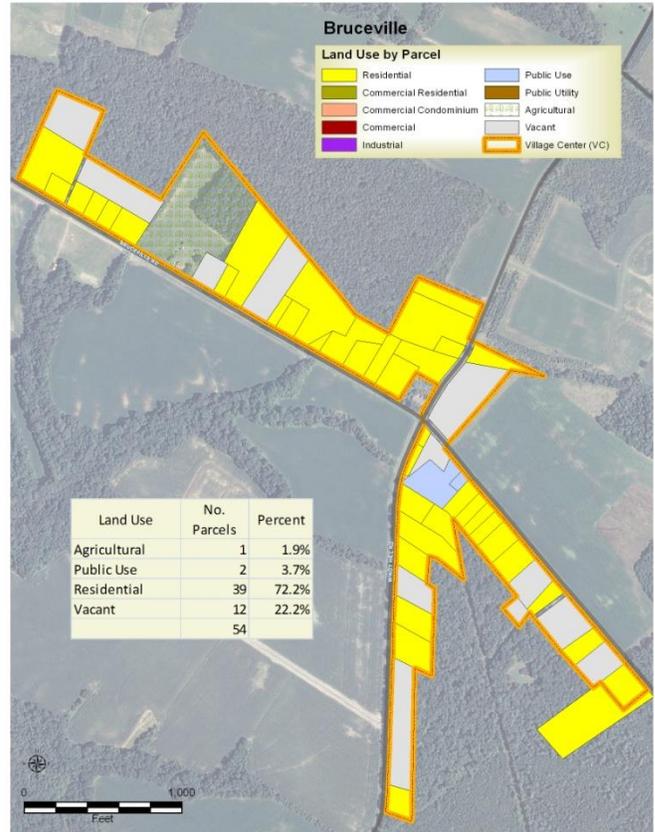
## Introduction and Village Description

Most of Talbot County’s geography, history, and culture are dominated by its many “Necks” or peninsulas. Bruceville is located at the crossroads of Bruceville and Windy Hill Roads and is the heart of Bambury Neck.

As described in the *Easton Star Democrat* of Nov. 5, 1927:

*There is a large eastern section of Talbot County, locally known as Bambury... It starts north of Raccoon Creek ... and skirts the river to Miles Creek ... and closed in by the county road from Wright’s mill pond to Barber... Windy Hill is the port of entry on the Choptank, and its twin city, Bruceville, one mile distant inland.*

*All this section seems to have been a part of the original tract granted to Col. Nicholas Lowe, known as Lowe’s Ramble ... Capt. Lewis Ross many years ago, became owner of part of Lowe’s Ramble, indeed a considerable part ... Rumor says that Col. Ross bought a thousand acres of land between Bruceville and Windy Hill for a hundred dollars... Bambury asks no favors of other sections. If in former days it was looked upon as being less progressive, less cultured, than some of the neighboring sections of the county, it takes only the present good roads, and good means of transportation, to link it in with Talbot’s best.*



Since pre-Colonial times, this area is enjoyed by natives, farmers, trappers, hunters and watermen alike. Located in the “Talbot Outback” that is the large area South East of the “Hole in the Wall”, it is literally on the other side of the tracks - of the railroad that once ran between Oxford and Easton. The tracks were later supplanted by the building of US Route 50.

Like many other historic Talbot settlements, this area also grew out of and prospered from the Chesapeake Rivers and access to them. For this area, it was the Choptank River. Water access is still provided via its

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enduring public landing at Windy Hill.

The sister cities of Bruceville and Windy Hill experienced their most prosperous times at the turn of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, before railroads and the automobile became the predominate modes of transport. This was an era when local fruits and other produce were in big demand by the canneries and other markets served by the steam powered riverboats crossing the Chesapeake Bay. It was particularly known at that time for its orchards and Whitely's Peaches.

The makeup of this multi-generational community of hard working folks has changed. This Village Center is no longer their "grandfather's" Bruceville. The area now hosts weekend kayakers and cyclists seeking to experience our wondrous natural beauty and laid-back nature of the region beyond the "Hole in the Wall".

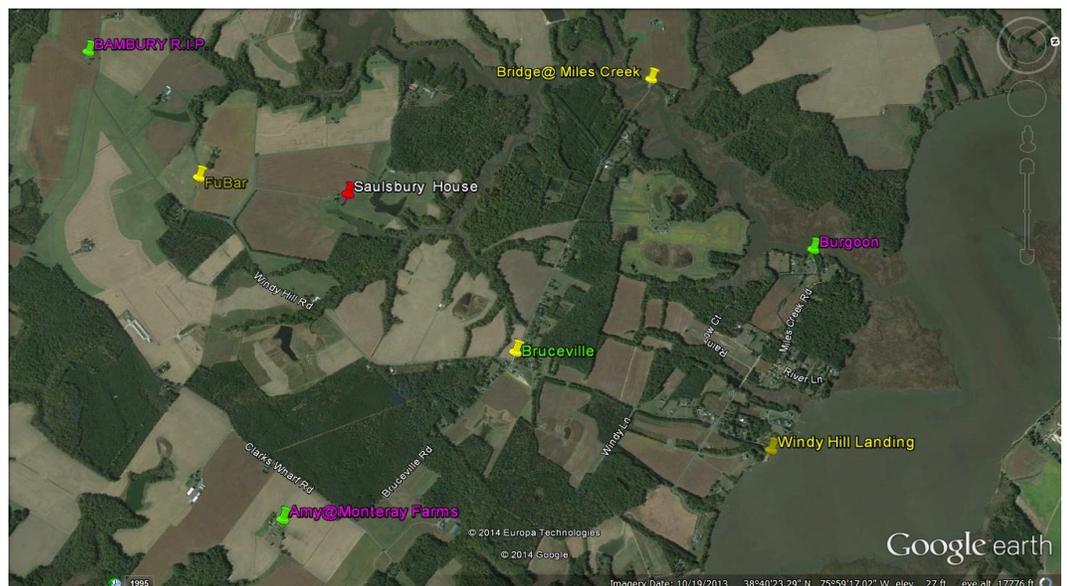
Most, if not all of the new housing built in the area over the last

10-20 years has been the high valued waterfront estates in Windy Hill, along the Choptank shoreline. As for the Bruceville itself, the newest full-time occupied residence is Bambury Manor, built in 2012 at the historic crossroads of Bruceville and Windy Hill roads.

### Vision Statement

Over the next 10 to 20 years, we would like this Village to remain pretty much as is. What it is...is why we live here. We would rather be left alone to grow smartly into a "next generation", self-sufficient, multi-generational family community.

We know as a County PFA (Priority Funding Area), the Bruceville VC probably ranks at or near the bottom of the County's PFA list. That said, we would however, like just a few minor zoning clarifications and Public utility infrastructure upgrades to encourage the continued investment in this Village community...so it will not evolve into a "slum"... as one County Council member has offered as a potential future.



## Actions Necessary to Achieve Vision

*The County Council and County plans should recognize that the future of Bruceville and Windy Hill are intertwined as one community.*

1. **First and foremost**, do not change Bruceville’s current and least restrictive VC zoning designation.
2. **Preserve the Village’s unique setting.** Please note that the current and very unique arrangement of Bruceville’s residential properties provide virtually all residents with an unobstructed view from their front porches to the tree line and the stars. Planning maps for Bruceville should recognize its two scenic and nature eco-hemispheres. Views in all directions from the village take in the tree lines of surrounding protected areas.
3. **Poor storm water runoff management.** Stagnant ditches and collapsed drainage pipes are creating safety hazards and poor insect control. Some major maintenance of the ditches and drainage pipes in the village is required.
4. **Poor or Non-existent Information Age Infrastructure.** Bruceville and its surroundings are being totally ignored by public utility providers. The landline telephone company (with the granted right-of-way) no longer offers any digital



communications options (e.g.; POTS, DSL) and fiber-to-the-home (FTTH) service that were promised our children and grandchildren.

Though we have satisfactory broadcast HDTV video services via satellite providers, our wireless Internet services (3G, 4G, etc.) are poor and much more expensive than the broadband services offered to Easton’s citizens. This is an issue the County should take up with the State. Bruceville does not need to remain a community of information “have-nots”.

5. **Traffic Issues.** Like many other villages, Bruceville has traffic issues. Because of our remote rural locations, drivers may not recognize that they are entering a pedestrian zone. We support a “Share the Road” attitude, inclusive of motorcycles, horses, farm tractors, or mothers with baby strollers visiting their neighbors. Traffic

calming measures or speed bumps should be considered to alert all drivers to stop at every corner.

**Hurricane Preparedness.** The important thing to remember about a peninsula or “neck” is that if the water level

surges high enough they become islands. The first sign of problems will be the bridge at Miles Creek. Some kind of automatic high water warning system would be valuable to signal that traffic should be diverted to Wright’s Mill and Clark’s Wharf Roads, and may even prevent a tragedy.

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(There are residents down Orchard Lane in Windy Hill that face an even greater chance of isolation by flooding, but are technically outside the scope of this plan.)

7. **The Environment.** Just as important to Bruceville as to Windy Hill, DNR's fishing pier at Windy Hill Landing is fine, but the boat ramp needs to be fixed. The slope is wrong, making the launching and loading of boats on trailers difficult, if not impossible.
8. **Nuisances.** The biggest nuisance and detriment to the VC's future are the few unoccupied and neglected properties. The County should already have a way to deal with this problem.

### Resident Support

A Village Meeting was held at 31510 Bruceville Road on Sunday, April 27, 2014 and was attended by over 20 property owners and residents where they were

permitted to review and comment on the April 17<sup>th</sup> Draft VMP. There was an overwhelming consensus support for this Village Master Plan.

