

## Tunis Mills

### Introduction

#### Location and Composition

The village of Tunis Mills is not incorporated, so its boundaries for the purpose of this plan is the village zoning district. The larger community is comprised of those properties near the headwaters of Leeds Creek, along both sides of the creek and accessible from Tunis Mills Road and adjoining roads.

The village has fewer than one hundred homes and there are no existing commercial operations in the village. Lots range in size from one-quarter to three acres. There are five or fewer vacant properties considered to be developable.

The tree lined streets and modest scale architecture of Tunis Mills exemplifies Talbot County's smaller residential communities. Well manicured landscaping abuts narrow streets framing the village's buildings. Throughout the village, shade trees and beautiful landscaping charm visitors and residents alike.

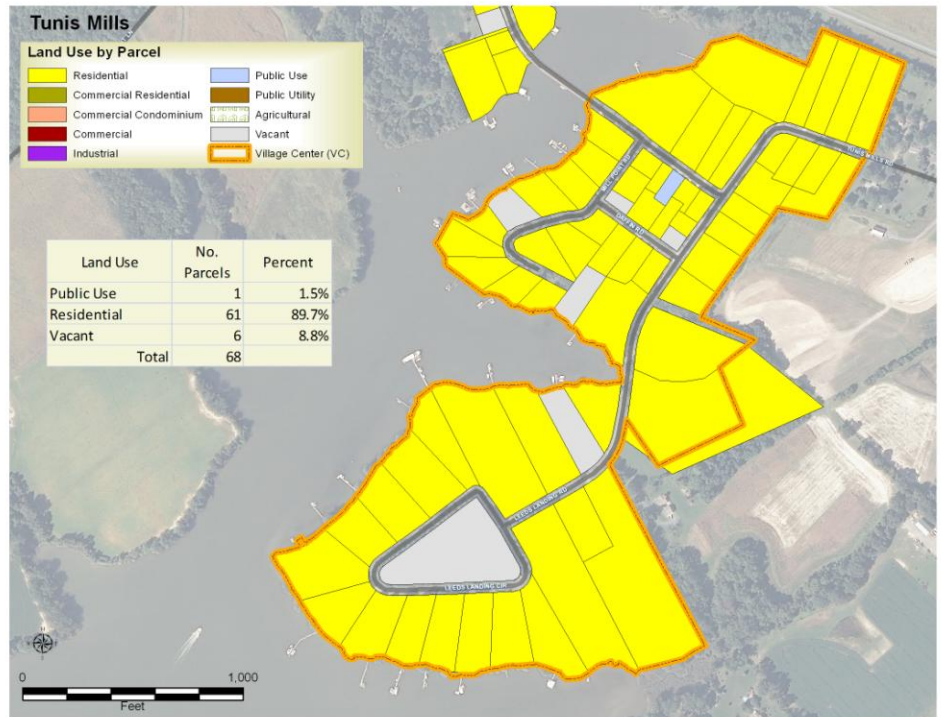
#### History and Character

Tunis Mills, originally named the Village of Oakland Mills, developed around a sawmill established in 1864 by the Tunis Brothers. The village grew to include two stores, two churches, a blacksmith shop, a wheelwright shop, a post office, a school and a tomato cannery. Little remains of these activities. The sawmill closed in 1915 and the cannery

closed in the late 1930's. The blacksmith and wheelwright shops, together with the post office soon disappeared. The last store closed in 1958. Homes were built on some former industrial sites.

The village has evolved into a blend of full and part-time residents comprising of working families and retirees. Many residents have ties to the original village and carry on the traditional Tunis Mills livelihoods of agriculture, carpentry, seafood and marine construction.

The built environment mainly contains single family detached homes with associated out buildings. The two most notable exceptions are the All Faith Chapel and the wooden bridge over Leeds Creek. Both structures serve as village landmarks and the focus of community pride. Tunis Mills has a County boat ramp next to the western foot of the bridge and a boating pier is also attached.



## Tunis Mills

Village architecture spans diverse eras of residential construction. Examples of Colonial Revival, Cape Cod, Bungalow, Craftsman, Ranch, and contemporary styles amiably coexist. The buildings are one or two stories, pitched roofs are the norm, and dormers adorn many roofs. Porches welcome visitors to many of the homes.

The older section of the village has smaller lots and setbacks. Later additions to the village have larger lots and setbacks. The village is surrounded by farms and large-lot residential properties. These “gateway” properties add to the character and quality of the village.

### Planning Goals

The goal of the Village Plan can be summarized in a few words: Keep things as they are. While recognizing the necessity of change to accommodate the needs of residents, there is a desire to limit or prevent changes that will detract from or depreciate the character of the village.

This document



attempts to express the vision of the village’s property owners for the Village with respect to village boundaries and preserving the character of the village.

### Modifying the Village Boundary

The zoning district boundary should be modified to include the current properties in the VC zone, plus the adjoining RR zone and the five adjacent properties along Tunis Mills Road.

- The five adjacent properties referenced above seem to most observers to be in the Village. Given their proximity, current lot sizes and existing uses, we recommend that they be re-zoned.
- The impact of re-zoning the existing RR should be examined because of the potential for creating non-conforming lots or uses.



- The County should also consult with the owners whose properties are bisected by the VC zone boundary to determine whether classifying the properties entirely one zone or the other



would be practical.

### Preserving the Character of Tunis Mills

The following recommendation is designed to promote the goal of preserving the character of Tunis Mills without unnecessarily restricting owners' property rights.

Village residents care a lot about the appearance and general upkeep of homes, as evidenced by the generally attractive landscaping attention to keeping homes in good repair. No recommendation is being made for design guidelines or maintenance standards.

The Talbot County Zoning Ordinance and land use regulations seem adequate for the community and the County generally enforces these guidelines in response to complaints.

### Other Goals

Village residents may proceed with the following initiatives on a volunteer basis, much as was done with respect to mosquito spraying. They are not recommendations to the County.

- Residents have discussed erecting village entry signs to “announce” to drivers that they are entering a village rather than driving on a thoroughfare, in order to encourage traffic safety.
- Since emergency response times for to reach



Tunis Mills is too long, village residents may purchase an automatic defibrillator device for placement in a central and accessible location and arranging for training in its use and available to render emergency assistance.

- Residents may explore the usefulness and practicality of setting up a blog or website for communication among village residents, in order to promote neighborliness and cultivate the texture of village life. Information could include share/barter services and equipment; announce events, recognize achievements, share interests, etc.

