Comprehensive Plan

2005

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INTRODUCTION TO THIS DOCUMENT

Authority

Article 66B of the Annotated Code of Maryland, entitled Zoning and Planning, delegates basic planning and land use regulatory powers to the Town of Preston. Accordingly, this Comprehensive Plan for Preston was prepared in compliance with Sections 3.05, 3.06, 3.07 and 3.08 of the statute. Sections 3.05 and 3.06 address the Plan's content and organization, and Sections 3.07 and 3.08 address procedures for the Plan's review and adoption.

Plan Purpose

The purpose of this Comprehensive Plan is to ensure coordinated and harmonious development in the Town and its environs, while conserving the natural and historic settings so central to our character. Our Comprehensive Plan is the primary guiding document for all decisions pertaining to the orderly development and conservation of the Town of Preston. The plan is also the repository of our goals and objectives for the future. It is the basis for the subsequent development of land use laws, ordinances, and regulations. The Plan's recommendations, policies, goals, objectives, principles, and standards are to be carried out through these land use laws. The Plan's geographic description and delineation of recommendations and policies are to be carried out in the comprehensive zoning map. The Plan's recommendations and policies are to be relied on in deciding possible piecemeal zoning changes, special exceptions, and floating zones, if adopted. The Plan's recommendations and policies are to serve as the basis for functional plans like the Comprehensive Water and Sewerage Plan, Land Preservation and Recreation Plan, and the Public School Construction Program and capital funding decisions. In order to qualify for State and federal funds, all projects must demonstrate consistency with the Comprehensive Plan, as specified in our adopted project review procedures.

In pursuit of these purposes, the Plan seeks to promote health,

safety, order, convenience, prosperity, and the general welfare, as well as efficiency and economy in the development process. Our goals include adequate provisions for light and air, and for traffic, utilities, and other public requirements; promotion of the healthful and convenient distribution of population, good civic design and arrangement; conservation of natural resources, reduction in resource consumption and prevention of environmental pollution; and wise and efficient expenditure of public funds.

Seven Visions

The content, focus, and thrust of the Preston Comprehensive Plan are guided by the following seven visions which provide the framework for growth management and sound planning within Preston and its environs:

(1) We will concentrate development in suitable areas;

(2) We will protect our sensitive areas;

(3) We will work with Caroline County to ensure growth is directed to existing population centers and that resource areas are protected;

(4) We will work to develop a universal stewardship ethic for the Chesapeake Bay and our land;

(5) We will work to reduce resource consumption and promote conservation and recycling;

(6) To assure the achievement of paragraphs (1) through (5), we will encourage economic growth and streamline our regulatory mechanisms where appropriate. We will also explore flexible and innovative techniques to achieve our development objectives; and

(7) We will actively seek out funding mechanisms to achieve these visions.

Scope

The Comprehensive Plan deals with growth and development of the Preston planning area for the next ten to fifteen years. Many of the issues and opportunities addressed by the Plan may be valid beyond this immediate time horizon. Specific determinations, additions, refinements, and amendments may be undertaken from time to time, as needed. However, State law requires at a minimum that a comprehensive review of the Plan be undertaken at regular six year intervals.

Our Comprehensive Plan is not intended to be a rigid set of specifications forcing specific development projects. It is intended, rather, as a practical guide to assist development decisions and provide continuity of vision about the character, location, and types of future land uses. It also establishes the "big picture" of community needs. The Plan provides the basis for housing, economic development, and other public policy initiatives that may be developed in further detail by our Town leaders.

The Preston Planning Commission has reviewed the Comprehensive Plan which was adopted in 1973. The review disclosed a Plan that is out of date and in need of revision. Therefore, the Planning Commission, with assistance from the Maryland Department of Planning, has prepared this updated Plan.

Planning Area

We have established a planning area of about 1,374 acres. It extends beyond Town limits to include parcels that we think will have an effect on our growth management strategies and priorities (for example, lands which may be considered for future annexation and growth). Maps showing the planning area are included in the Land Use element. The planning area is bounded on the west by farms adjacent to Marsh Creek Road and Havercamp Road. Farms on the east are adjacent to the town limits. North to south, the area is bounded by natural drainage ways, Seaman Road, and the Caroline County Dorchester County boundary line.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
2004

Town of Preston, Maryland

Prepared by

PRESTON PLANNING COMMISSION

The preparation of this report was aided through technical assistance provided by the Maryland Department of Planning, Audrey E. Scott, Director.

Honorable Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr., Governor

Appreciation is expressed for the efforts of:

Markus Gradecak, Regional Planner
Upper Eastern Shore Regional Office

CERTIFICATE OF RECOMMENDED ADOPTION

This Comprehensive Plan has been designed to guide the physical development of the Town of Preston pursuant to the provisions of Article 66B of the Maryland Annotated Code.

By resolution of the Preston Planning Commission on _____ after a duly advertised public hearing held on this Plan was recommended to the Mayor and Town Council of Preston for adoption.

Preston Planning Commission

Robert H. Lorenz, Chairperson
James L. Gallagher, Member
Dennis Gadow, Member
Martin Hudson, Member
Andrew Burke, Member

Board of Appeals

Beverly Blades, Chairperson
Robert Stacey, Member
Ronald Warden, Member

Commissioners

J. Ellery Adams, President
William Ashley Sand, Vice President
James Shannon Wright

ATTEST:

_____

RESOLUTION OF ADOPTION

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR THE TOWN OF PRESTON

WHEREAS, the provisions of Section 3.08 of Article 66B of the Annotated Code of Maryland directed that the Comprehensive Plan be updated; and

WHEREAS, an updated Comprehensive Plan for Preston, Maryland, has been approved by the Preston Planning Commission on _____;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Town Council of Preston, Maryland, that the Comprehensive Plan for Preston, Maryland, as updated, _____, be and is hereby adopted as the official Comprehensive Plan for Preston, Maryland;

AND, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Resolution be affixed to and be made a part of the Comprehensive Plan for Preston, Maryland.

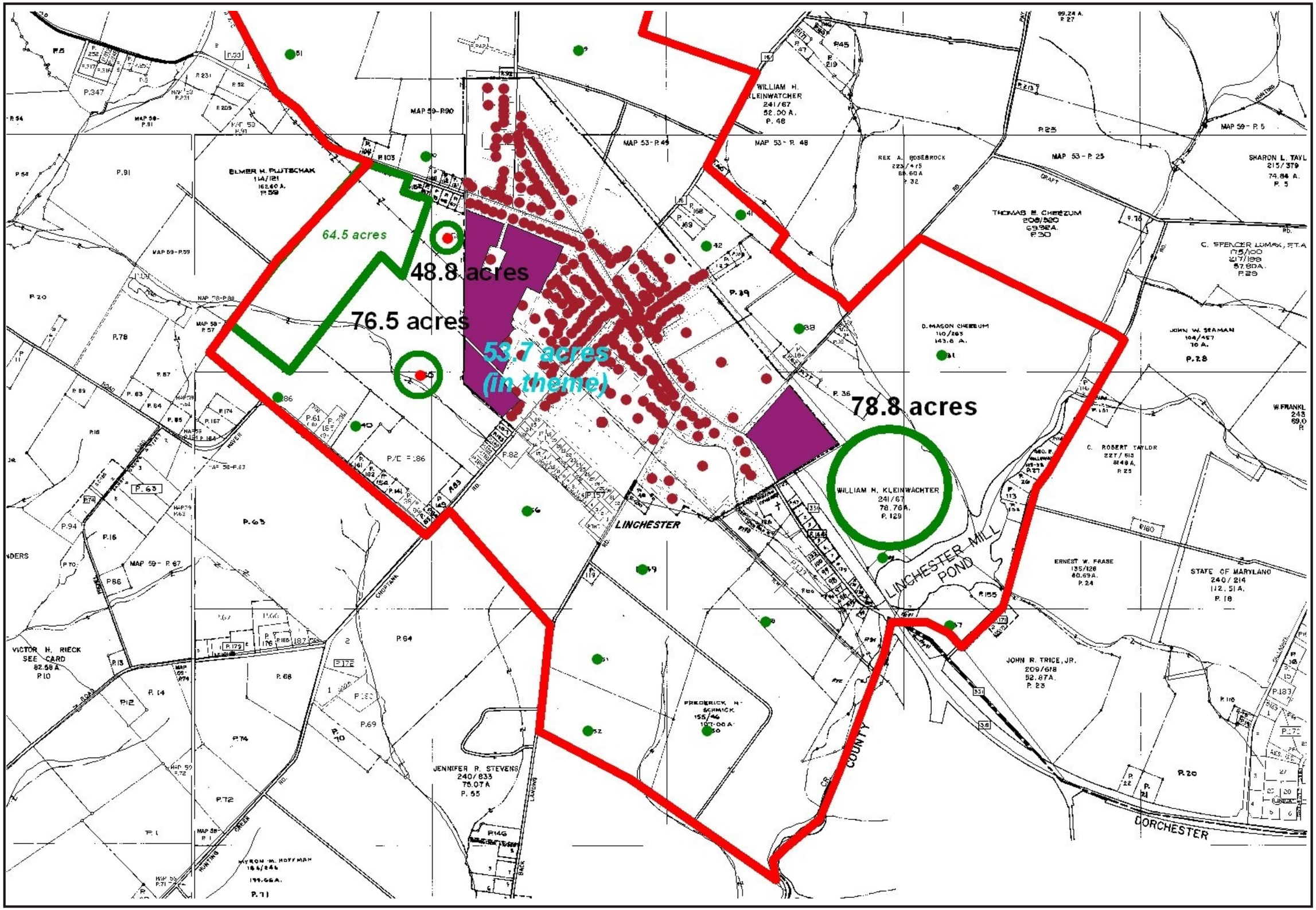
ADOPTED this _____ day of _____ 2004.

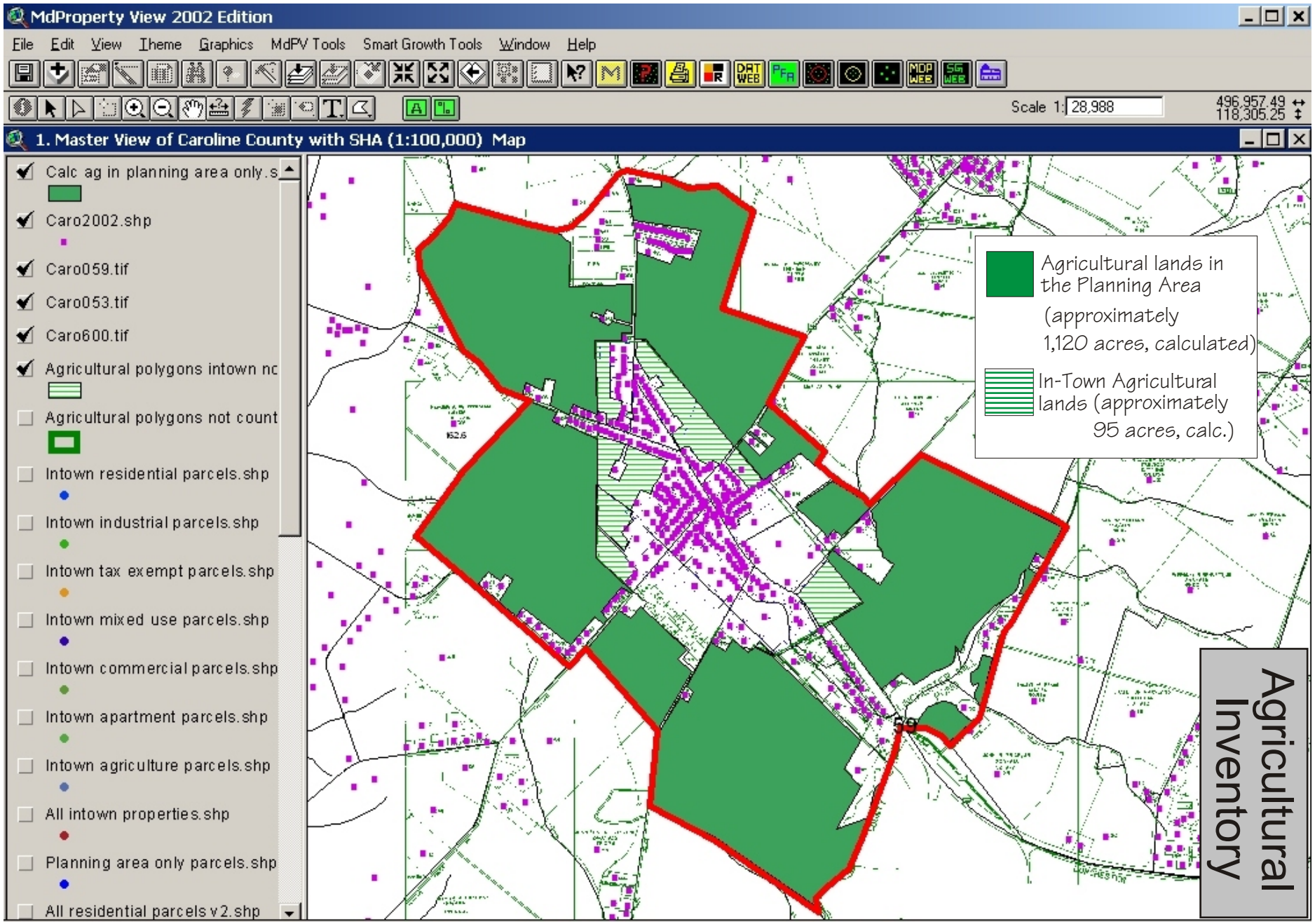
The Mayor and Town Council of
PRESTON, MARYLAND

_____
J. Ellery Adams

_____
J. Shannon Wright

_____
Ashley Sard


64.5 acres
48.8 acres
76.5 acres
53.7 acres
(in theme)
78.8 acres
LINCHESTER
LINCHESTER MILL POND
DORCHESTER
COUNTY
WILLIAM H. KLEINWACHTER
241/67
78.76A.
P. 129
WILLIAM H. KLEINWATCHER
241/67
52.00 A.
P. 48
ELMER H. PLUTSCHAK
114/121
162.60 A.
P. 59
REX A. ROSEBROCK
223/415
88.60 A
P. 32
THOMAS M. CHEEZUM
208/520
69.92A.
P. 30
D. MASON CHEEZUM
110/265
143.6 A.
JOHN W. SEAMAN
104/457
70 A.
P. 28
C. ROBERT TAYLOR
227/513
84.49 A.
P. 25
ERNEST W. FRASE
135/126
40.69A.
P. 24
STATE OF MARYLAND
240/214
112.51A.
P. 18
JOHN R. TRICE, JR.
209/618
52.87A.
P. 23
FREDERICK H. SCHMICK
155/46
JENNIFER R. STEVENS
240/833
78.07A
P. 55
VICTOR H. RIECK
SEE CARD
82.58 A.
P. 10
MYRON M. HOFFMAN
186/246
199.66A.
P. 71
SHARON L. TAYL
215/379
74.84 A.
P. 5
C. SPENCER LUMAX, ET.A
175/100
217/188
57.80A.
P. 29
W. FRANKL
243
69.0
P.


MdProperty View 2002 Edition
File Edit View Theme Graphics MdPV Tools Smart Growth Tools Window Help
Scale 1: 28,988
496,957.49
118,305.25
1. Master View of Caroline County with SHA (1:100,000) Map
Calc ag in planning area only.s
Caro2002.shp
Caro059.tif
Caro053.tif
Caro600.tif
Agricultural polygons intown nc
Agricultural polygons not count
Intown residential parcels.shp
Intown industrial parcels.shp
Intown tax exempt parcels.shp
Intown mixed use parcels.shp
Intown commercial parcels.shp
Intown apartment parcels.shp
Intown agriculture parcels.shp
All intown properties.shp
Planning area only parcels.shp
All residential parcels v2.shp
Agricultural lands in the Planning Area (approximately 1,120 acres, calculated)
In-Town Agricultural lands (approximately 95 acres, calc.)
Agricultural Inventory

Appendix

Preston

This Element provides a general overview and summary of our Town, its residents, and how we grew. It provides a context for planning..

Background Element

Introduction

This background element presents an overview of our physical setting, some insight on our past, and a summary of current conditions. It includes statistical information about residents of our town. We have identified an area beyond town limits as our "planning area." The planning area includes parcels that have, or we think will have, an impact on us and affect our growth management strategies and priorities. Our current land use pattern, our available public services and community facilities, and environmental constraints are also discussed. This information provides a context, or framework, for our Comprehensive Plan.

An understanding of who we are, how our town evolved, and what our strengths and opportunities are provide the people of Preston with a foundation for a commonly shared vision of our future. That vision comprises the heart of our Comprehensive Plan. It is the basis for our goals for the future and specific objectives we want to realize to help us achieve our goals.

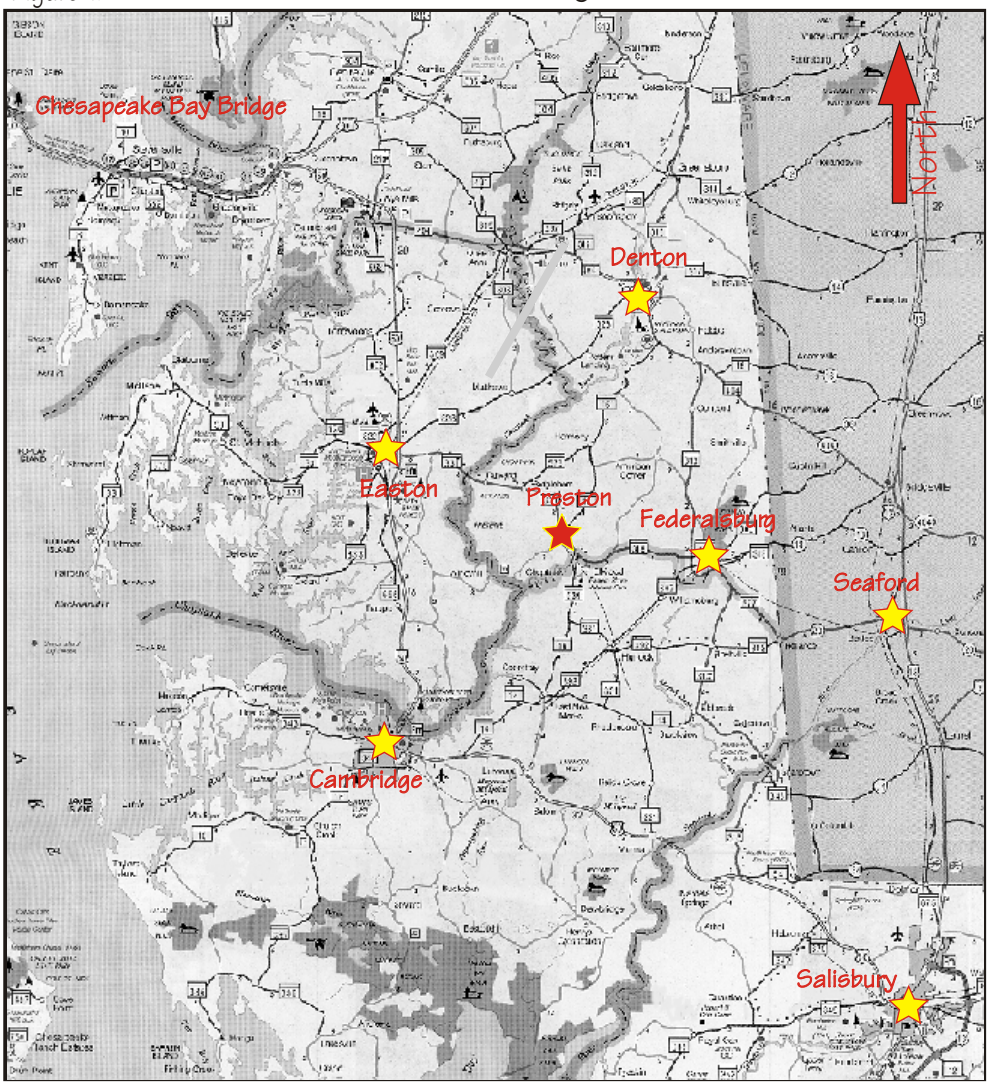
The background element provides a helpful starting point for thinking about such issues as growth management, economic development, infill development of vacant lots, municipal expansion, and the character of our community and quality of life our residents want.

Regional Setting

The Town of Preston is located in Caroline County within the Atlantic coastal plain region on Maryland's Eastern Shore. We straddle MD Route 331 about eleven miles east of the Town of Easton and seven miles west of Federalsburg. Denton, our

county seat, is about thirteen miles to the north via MD 16. Cambridge, the county seat of Dorchester County, is about fifteen miles to our south. Our location provides us a convenient commute to these four regional employment centers while our residents can enjoy the benefits of small town living. Seaford, Delaware and Salisbury, Maryland are also regionally significant destinations for us. We are less than two hours drive of both Baltimore and Washington, D.C. and are about two and a half hours south of Philadelphia. Our immediate region includes the southern part of Caroline County which is rural and mainly agricultural in nature. The Choptank River and its many small tributaries continue to influence the character and lifestyle in this region.

Figure 1. Greater Preston Region



Some History

Preston, like many of Delmarva's small rural towns, owes its earliest origins to the location of Methodist churches and Quaker meeting houses. Churches were built in centralized places that could be accessed by surrounding farm families. Often, these locations were also near mills and cross roads (which frequently led to landings that provided water access to major regional centers of population and commerce).

Linchester, located at the eastern end of our planning area, was the site of a colonial era grist mill, general store, post office, and a few surrounding residences, that predates Preston by nearly 175 years. This early post office was moved to a store at the corner of present day Maple Avenue and Main Street in 1845, where it was known as Snow Hill. Postal confusion over the name and location resulted due to a town by the same name in Worcester County. In 1856, a name change compromise led to the town being named after an attorney who impressed townspeople during a trial in Easton. However, 1890, the year the Baltimore, Chesapeake, and Atlantic railroad was constructed, marked the true beginnings of the Preston we recognize today. This railroad ran from Claiborne (a steamboat landing west of St. Michaels) to Ocean City. Prior to the railroad, commerce with Baltimore was focused through Choptank, a steamboat line landing about two and a half miles south on Maple Avenue extended. Choptank was also the terminus of the first telephone line from Preston, constructed by the Ben Trice Telephone Company in 1899.

The rail line became very important to the expansion of Preston. Four daily passenger trains and two freights stopped here. During the years before and after World War I it was common for twenty to twenty-five freight cars a day of canned tomatoes, apples, wheat and watermelons to be shipped during harvest time. A 1908 edition of the town newspaper reported that one-tenth of the total output of tomatoes was packed in Caroline County and that Maryland packed five-twelths of all that were canned in the whole country. Canneries, box companies, warehouses, hardware, blacksmithing, dry goods, millenary, groceries, restaurants, and a hotel flourished. At one time sixteen canneries existed within seven miles of Preston, and three were located within town near the railroad. A local entrepreneur established A.W. Sisk & Son which grew to into one of the largest canned

food brokerages in the United States. The Sisk company stored and transshipped tens of thousands of cases of canned fruits and vegetables that originated locally and in California and other western growing regions. Some of these warehouses remain today, although the canneries are now gone, as is the railroad.

Today, the largest structures in town are the Southern States grain elevator and storage silos. The remains of canneries and warehouses can be found if one knows where to look, but the appearance of Preston has changed much over the years.

Several interesting historical facts provide anecdotal insight on the physical and social character of our town. During the heyday of the canneries, almost half the male population of Preston was involved in the tomato canning business in one way or another, and practically everyone associated with this business had an income large enough to pay the new federal income tax. Preston at that time had a population of less than three hundred. On a per capita basis, it was found that we led the nation in the number who paid taxes. Other reasons that support our slogan: "The Biggest Little Town in the USA" include such facts as being the first town of its size to completely pave its sidewalks with concrete, a sewer system that was installed by about 1914, and electric street lights installed before 1910.

From a land use perspective, we may also hold the distinction of having moved more buildings between various locations in town than any other town. Our history records scores of residential, commercial, and institutional buildings that were relocated and often reused for different purposes, some more than once. Our tradition of mixed uses and numerous changes in commercial activity within many of our remaining smaller buildings reflect entrepreneurial initiative and a recognition that multiple structures on single lots and proximity between residential, commercial, and industrial activities did nothing to diminish the quality of life or the pride residents take in their town and their heritage.

Our cultural diversity is reflected in the history of our two largest religious congregations. A short history of the Bethesda Methodist Church dating back to 1787 is inscribed in one of the stained glass windows commissioned

by Col. Sisk. The Immanuel Lutheran Church, founded in 1897, at the other end of town bears witness to the many German immigrants that were encouraged to settle here. These efforts were the result of ethnic kinship as well as Col. Sisk. In addition to his cannery, warehouses, brokerages and numerous other business ventures, he owned large land holdings and wanted hardworking industrious farmers who would support both his business vision and political aspirations. He made commercially viable tracts of farm land available at affordable prices and encouraged families and friends to immigrate as well as relocate from other areas of the East.

At the turn of the century Preston had a German language school and an English language school. During World War I the German language school was closed, and the two schools merged at the site of the present Preston Elementary School.

Today, the largest employer is Preston Ford/Autoplex which grew out of the Preston Motor Company. This business was started locally from humble beginnings that saw the evolution of transportation from horse and buggy, blacksmithing, and teamsters to steamboats, railroads, and ferries, to modern roads and motor transport. These changes paralleled the changing fortunes and economic prosperity of our town and its residents. The most recent employer to locate in Preston is Provident Bank's corporate offices.

Geographically, our neighborhood character is defined generally in four parts:

1. Our historical residential-commercial mixed use core, which runs back a couple of blocks on both the north and south sides of Main Street between Lednum Avenue and Back Landing Road;

2. Our historical commercial-industrial areas that parallel the railroad tracks;

3. The West End addition, subdivided about 1909, covering the lots west and north of Lednum Avenue; and

4. The annexation and residential development of Apple Lane.

Our Street names and the names various buildings are known by and referred to reflect the family names of many of our prominent families from the turn of the century. While too lengthy to be included in this introduction, the personal recollections of Mr. Howard Harris were recorded in 1974 and provide a fascinating window on those earlier times. The reader is referred to this account for additional background on individuals, historical events, and the history of particular buildings. Such background is important to fully appreciate our community goals, objectives, and land use recommendations, as well as our recommendations for land use regulation.

Existing Land Uses

We have examined our existing pattern of land uses in the context of Mr. Harris historical descriptions and anecdotes. Interestingly, the cluster of commercial uses at the corner of Main Street and Maple Avenue has maintained its character since the days of livery stables, blacksmiths, and general stores. Only the nature of commercial activities themselves changed as technology evolved. Also, many of the buildings used for residential purposes have been relocated from their original in town locations. Table 1 summarizes the acreage totals and provides a convenient means for assessing their relative predominance, or "importance." The numbers were calculated by using a digital planimeter to measure individual parcels on our land use maps.

Table 1 Preston Land Uses - 2004

Agriculture	95	acres	27%
Residential	99	acres	28%
Commercial	45	acres	13%
Industrial	18	acres	5%
Mixed Uses	3	acres	1%
Public (or nontaxable)	45	acres	13%
Vacant	48	acres	13%
Totals:	353	acres	100%

Table 2 Planning Area Land Uses - 2004

Agriculture (calculated)	1120	acres	81.5%
Residential	88	acres	6.4%
Commercial	35	acres	2.5%
Industrial	45	acres	3.3%
Public (or nontaxable)	41	acres	3.0%
Vacant (residential)	13	acres	1.0%
Old mill pond (calculated)	32	acres	2.3%
Totals:	1,374	acres	100%

note: Some Agricultural parcels extend beyond the Planning Area Boundary line and therefore increase the acreage total that is tabulated by database selection from the Department of Assessment and Taxation data contained in Maryland Property View 2003 (which was used to tabulate the acreages in this table).

Table 2 provides the numerical context for comparing our existing land uses within town to those within our planning area. This information should be studied together with our 2004 land use maps. Our agricultural setting is immediately apparent, as is the relative prevalence of residential, commercial, and industrial uses. The agricultural character of our immediate surroundings is very important to defining the character of Preston, because the change in land uses is abrupt and instantly obvious. The traveler knows when he is in town. Only a little "blurring" of urbanization is evident at the northern and southern edges of town. Maintaining and protecting our built up edges is a central theme in our land use element.

Soils

The soils in our planning area present few limitations for development. Considered "light" for some types of farming, the high sand content in local soil groups means that frost heave, which impacts road beds and structural foundations, is not a problem for us. Somewhat excessive drainage also means that we are not plagued by seasonal high water tables. However, potential pollution of our ground water supplies from septic systems that exist, or may be built in the County nearby, is an issue that concerns us. All septic systems will eventually fail and are considered "interim solutions" by public health authorities. Accordingly, the nature and amount of surrounding

development is an issue which impacts our land use, transportation, environmental protection, and Plan implementation goals and objectives.

Public Facilities

Water

Our public water system consists of two production wells and three older wells that have been discontinued. The two production wells tap into the Pincey Point aquifer at depths of 600 and 533 feet respectively. One well feeds a 6 inch pipe, and the other, drilled in 1991 feeds an 8 inch pipe. Chlorination is provided at our water treatment plant. That plant has a rated capacity of 120,000 gallons per day (gpd). Maximum peak flows with both wells in production are a little over 80,000 gallons per day. Our storage capacity is 150,000 gallons located at Chambers Street on Wright Street. Corrosion of some portions of our galvanized distrubution lines and some sections with inadequate diameter limit our ability to expand and serve customers on the outskirts of town. Existing plans call for extension of service toward the southeast and the southwest. Our existing usage is estimated at about 150 gallons per person per day. That includes watering of lawns and washing cars, etc.

Sewer

Our sewerage treatment system consists of a stabilization lagoon that was last upgraded and expanded in 1988 and 2003. The plant design capacity is 115,000 gallons per day (gpd), as is our NPDES permitted capacity. Average daily flows for 2001 were 36,000 gpd, and combined average flows for 2000 and 2001 were 41,000 gpd. MDE estimates we have approximately 74,000 gpd of additional capacity. This translates into about 295 additional households (assuming about 250 gallons per day per household). These estimates are general in nature, and any potential large scale development proposal should include a sewer impact and sewer capacity evaluation to determine whether the system needs to be expanded or upgraded. MDE is also in the process of updating their statewide sewer allocation table, so these numbers may be expected to change, and care should be taken to ensure coordination between Preston officials and officials at MDE.

Fire Protection

We are served by an all volunteer fire department located on Maple Avenue near the center of town. This facility is adequate for the town's fire protection needs.

Police

We have our own police force that is adequate for the enforcement of town ordinances and the general protection of local health and safety.

Public Buildings

We have a Town Hall located near the corner of Main Street and Maple Avenue. It is a small brick structure that once housed a bank. The vault is now the depository of town records. This building provides public meeting space for town boards and commissions and also provides office space for our police force. It is adequate for our needs. A community center is located on Williamson Avenue. Our public works facility and our sewerage treatment plant are located off Back Landing Road and the unpaved portion of Railroad Avenue. These facilities are adequate.

Schools

The Preston Elementary School has a State Rated Capacity of 416 and had a 2003 enrollment of 378 (K-5) full-time students, equal to the 1995 enrollment. The 2003 Caroline County Educational Facilities Master Plan projects enrollment declining slightly each year to 360 in 2006 then increasing to 398 in 2012. This is based on a projected aging of the population with fewer families with young children moving into the school district. This scenario suggests that our existing school size is adequate. The building is rated to be in very good condition. A roof replacement project, due to age, is programmed for FY 2005.

Parks

J. T. Wright Park, on Back Landing Road, is being upgraded. This facility

covers about four acres. It was designed with the assistance of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Greenways and Resource Planning. We have included a graphic prepared by the Maryland Office of Planning for additional information. The parcel behind the Preston Elementary School (off Noble Avenue) includes four ball fields, two tennis courts available to the public, and a parking lot. Program Open Space funds were used to help provide these facilities. Also, the Preston Lions Club owns and operates a Little League field off Railroad Avenue. Together, these facilities serve our youth during sports seasons. Potential exists for a cultural/historical park east of town. Funds have been located to restore Linchester mill pond and the mill site. This could be a very attractive regional park. This area is an annexation priority.

Solid Waste

Trash pick up is provided by private contractors. Currently, a Delaware based company provides trash pick up both in town and to properties within our planning area. The town currently has no plans to provide this service. There is a transfer station on Railroad Avenue.

Sidewalks

Most town streets have sidewalks, curbs, and gutters. These facilities have been in place for nearly one hundred years. We have completed the installation of new sidewalks on the north side of Main Street between Sunset Boulevard and Fooks Avenue (at the west end of town). Where sidewalks don't exist, pedestrians share the roadway with the occasional vehicle in typical Eastern Shore style.

Population

The 2000 census provides us with our most complete profile of our existing population. Actual census count data, as well as sample survey data, were made available by the Maryland Office of Planning. The tables on the following page summarize characteristics about our population that are useful for understanding the makeup of our current households and provide a framework for assumptions and projections for our anticipated future residents. (see tables 3, 4, & 5)

Table 3 Population Trends

Population Trends	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000
Caroline County	17,549	18,234	19,462	19,781	23,143	27,035	29,772
Election District 4	2,241	2,201	2,405	2,675	3,293	3,476	3831
Preston	369	353	469	509	498	437	566

Table 4 Percentage Shares

Percentage Shares	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000
Caroline County	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Election District 4	12.77%	12.07%	12.36%	13.52%	14.23%	12.86%	12.86%
Preston	2.10%	1.94%	2.41%	2.56%	2.15%	1.62%	1.90%

Table 5 Average Annual Growth Rates

average annual growth rate formula:
=(((2000/2990)^(.1))-1)*100

Average Annual Growth Rates	1940 to 1950	1950 to 1960	1960 to 1970	1970 to 1980	1980 to 1990	1990 to 2000
Caroline County	0.38%	0.65%	0.16%	1.58%	1.57%	0.97%
Election District 4	(-0.18%)	0.89%	1.07%	2.10%	0.54%	0.97%
Preston	(-0.44%)	2.88%	0.82%	(-0.22%)	(-1.30%)	2.62%

Maryland Department of Planning/UES

We have looked at the population trends of the County, our election district, and our town for the period 1940 to 2000. Over this 60 year period we have seen dramatic fluctuations in average annual growth rates that did not corresponded to the economic activity of the day. More recently, the "boom" years of the early 1990's spurred increasing demand for waterfront land in Queen Anne's and Talbot Counties. Caroline County experienced more modest but relatively steady growth during this time. Our election district also experienced growth during the last decade at the same rate that it did during the 1980's. However, it was Preston that dramatically reversed decades of decline.

Growth in jobs and population generally did not expand as rapidly on the Eastern Shore during the 1980's and 1990's as elsewhere in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. However, the increase in population and land consumption throughout the watershed correlated to declining water quality in the Bay and its tributaries. Concerns over the health of the Bay led to renewed efforts to improve water quality in the Bay and its tributaries. These efforts are anticipated to result in more stringent discharge limits that could also affect the future permitted capacity of our sewage treatment plant. It may be prudent to look toward annexing agricultural land for spray irrigation discharge before development pressure increases land costs. Rapidly escalating land costs in Talbot and Queen Anne's counties may help explain some of

the growth that has occurred in our region in recent years. Our election district's physical location near the employment centers of Federalsburg, Easton, and Cambridge also helps explain nearby rural residential growth. The Stat's Smart Growth initiatives and its emphasis on Priority Funding Areas for State infrastructure funding assistance may also be related to Preston's population resurgence. Most of the Upper Eastern Shore's municipalities have been the focus of intense developer interest over the last few years due to their designation as Priority Funding Areas, and Preston anticipates its share of annexation and development requests.

Since 1990, the Apple Lane development added 36 houses. At 2.5 persons per household, we can estimate that this development alone has brought 90 people to Preston. Admittedly, intown births, deaths, and net migration and relocations are not addressed, but that information is not readily available at this time. Some residents of Apple Lane may have moved from other existing intown housing units which are now either vacant or occupied by others. As a comparative exercise, the 90 "new" residents result in an average annual growth rate of 1.89%.

This discussion underscores the difficulty in making reasonable and realistic population projections for a population as small as ours. This is especially true in evaluating the impact of just one potential new development. Our land use review discloses significant amounts of undeveloped land within town and within our planning area subject to potential annexation. Our sewer and water capacity is sufficient to service nearly three hundred additional housing units. Accordingly, the likelihood of population increase is tied to private landowner decisions to subdivide and develop. If decisions are made to increase development opportunities and prices are affordable, it is reasonable to expect our population to increase beyond the numbers developed simply through trend extrapolation. School enrollment projections could be low, and other projected demands for public services could be low as well. As the counties become more restrictive with their zoning and disinclined to develop or expand public sewer systems, overall growth will be increasingly channeled into the towns of the region.

Population Projections

Projecting population is very difficult when working with such relatively small numbers as we have. Most projection methodologies that claim statistical accuracy depend on populations of 100,000 and higher. As previously noted, extrapolating trend data is subject to significant error from relatively minor development activity. Therefore, we have based our prognostications on local knowledge, common sense, and recent experience. Our land use policies will encourage a mix of development opportunities, few local development constraints, our existing ability to provide public services, a good and conveniently located elementary school, and central location within our region all suggest growth and development will continue within the Town of Preston. We have prepared a range of forecasts summarized in table 6 below. They all recognize recent and ongoing efforts by both Caroline County and the State of Maryland to direct growth to existing areas of development that are served by public water and sewer and have other public facilities such as schools.

Table 6 Population Projections

Projections	1990	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020
Caroline County	27,035	29,772	31,300	32,400	33,300	34,200
Preston (1.9% of County)	437	566	595	615	633	650
@ 2.2% avg. annual growth	437	566	630	700	778	866
@ 2.5% avg. annual growth	437	566	638	720	813	917
@ 2.0% of County (share)	437	566	626	648	666	684
@ 2.3% of County (share)	437	566	720	748	766	786

Maryland Department of Planning/UES

A year 2010 population approaching 700 may be a reasonable expectation if affordable housing is offered to the real estate market. Accordingly, we have selected a 2.2% average annual growth rate as our "target" and will annex land to ensure that sufficiently large parcels are available to support moderately sized residential development in patterns and character that blend with and extend the existing character of Preston. The town will ensure that water and sewer capacity exists or is planned that will support the development(s) that are contemplated. Preston is a good place for r.etirees as well as a good place for working families, and we expect that through increased renovation and maintenance of existing housing stock and by increasing building opportunities including senior housing our population will grow.

Table 7 Future Households

Future Households	1990	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020
(straight line projection)	190	225	242	260	277	295
@2.0% avg. annul. growth	190	225	245	270	295	325
@ 2.3% avg. annual growth	190	225	250	278	309	344
@ 2.5% avg. annual growth	190	225	252	283	318	358

Maryland Department of Planning/UES

Our growth projections translate into households that will need housing units. As previously noted, the Apple Lane development has already added 36 single family homes which puts us very close to the projected housing units from the 1990 base dwelling unit count. This is another indication that our projected growth rate in the 1996 Comprehensive Plan is fairly accurate for the near term. The State and County growth boom of the last few years suggests it is reasonable to move to a slightly higher anticipated rate of growth for at least the next decade. We may have the ability the provide both water and sewer service for the number of households and future housing units we anticipate. If additional capacity is needed, we may find a cost effective solution in evaluating and reducing system inflow and infiltration. This would be addressed through the use of consulting engineers. We would also need funding assistance from the State of Maryland for such an undertaking.

Table 8 Housing Occupancy

	Preston		County	
Total units	242	100%	12,028	100%
Occupied	225	93%	11,097	92%
Owners	182	81%	8,223	74%
Renters	43	19%	2,645	26%
Vacant	17	7%	931	7.7%
Persons/unit	2.52	n/a	2.64	n/a

US Census 2000

Table 9 Preston Commuting Statistics

Workers: 16 and older	294
Drive alone	84.0%
Use carpools	11.6%
Walk/work at home	4.4%
Use other means	0.%
Average travel time to work (min.)	28.1

US Census 2000

Table 10 Housing Unit Age

	Preston		County	
1990-2000 (March)	47	20%	2,546	21.2%
1980-1989	11	5%	2,015	16.8%
1970-1979	20	8%	1,893	15.7%
1960-1969	13	5%	975	8.1%
1940-1959	56	23%	1,976	16.4%
Before 1939	93	39%	2,623	21.8%
Total units	240	100%	12,028	100%

US Census 2000

Table 11 Educational Attainment

	Preston	County	State
less than grade 9	3%	7%	5%
9-12 no diploma	7%	18%	11%
H.S. grad.	39%	42%	27%
some college no degree	27%	17%	20%
AA degree	5%	4%	5%
BS/BA degree	13%	7%	18%
graduate degree	7%	5%	13%

US Census 2000

What the numbers mean

Compared to the County, a larger proportion of our housing units are occupied by home owners which suggests our population is somewhat less mobile. Our vacancy rate overall is about the same as in the County. However, a more detailed examination reveals that our vacancy rate for rental units was unusually high in 2000 (at 12.2%), compared to the average of 5.6% for the other towns throughout the County (with the exception of Goldsboro, at 14.3%). Our housing stock is somewhat older than the County's. However, the Apple Lane development has greatly altered the housing statistics for Preston. We believe the success of that project demonstrates the feasibility of providing affordable new homes, and the pent up demand that exists for developments of this type and upgraded type developments including senior citizen housing in our area will likely lead to annexation requests and subsequent subdivision development.. The fact that over half of our housing stock predates World War II, compared to about a quarter in the County, underscores the higher rate of population growth that has occurred in the County. Closer examination of the County's population distribution shows that most of the more recent development has occurred in the northern end of the County in the second and third districts. The cumulative increase for these districts was 1096 during the 1990's and 1,312 during the 1980's. The seventh district grew by 531 during the 1990's, further weighting the growth of the northern part of the County. The fourth district grew by 355 and 553 respectively during these decades. However, that was still substantially more than the growth seen in the first, fifth, sixth, or eighth districts. Therefore, we can again conclude that our location is conducive to growth, and demand exists for new homes in our area.

In 2000, our work force drove (84% alone) about 28 minutes to work, an increase of 10 minutes each way over the average commute in 1990. Carpooling declined 6%. This suggests that much of our workforce may work in Delaware or surrounding counties. Just over four percent of the work force works at home or walks to work. Therefore, we can surmise there is only minor demand for more mixed use of existing buildings. We need focus little of our energies on regulating home occupations and home based businesses in our land use and implementation elements. While mixed use of property is historically consistent with the character of our town, Preston has become a bedroom community.

Preston

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- PUBLIC SERVICES

  Provide the public services needed to support compact and efficient land use patterns and the maintenance of public health and safety.

- NATURAL RESOURCES

  Protect and improve the environmental quality of our planning area and the Chesapeake Bay.

- INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

  Foster cooperation and mutual support between Preston and other government entities, particularly Caroline County and the State of Maryland.

- ESTHETICS

  Create and maintain a neat and attractive rural community.

- FISCAL

  Maintain a favorable balance between town revenues and the expenditures required to meet community needs.

Our goals and objectives provide the policy context that ties the various elements of our Plan together and relate specific actions and recommendations to the Seven Visions that set the overall tone for land use planning in Maryland. We have reviewed the goals and objectives we adopted thirty two years ago and note that they have served us well. While we add depth and breadth to those earlier statements, we restate and readopt the language we crafted then through the efforts of dedicated residents.

Readopted Goals

1. To preserve and enhance the heritage and environment which are sources of pride and an asset to the town.

2. To provide a balanced community in which industry, commerce, recreation and residence blend into a harmonious whole.

3. To preserve and enhance the special aura which is unique to a town of the Eastern Shore.

Readopted Objectives

1. The town will encourage and welcome suitable industry, being assured that such development will be compatible with the visual characteristics of the town and will not become objectionable in the long or short range time frame.

2. In the interest of providing better service, the town is prepared to expand its limits east and west if such expansion is in the best interest of the citizens of the town.

3. The town will use all available means to ensure that its citizens have decent, safe, and sanitary housing.

4. The town will use every practical means to continue to upgrade public facilities and services consistent with the intensity of development.

5. The town will continue to improve its transportation system through the improvement and installation of streets including a traffic light and sidewalks consistent with demand and with minimum impact on abutting properties.

6. The town will take the necessary steps to ensure that commercial development has minimum impact on nearby residential areas.

7. The town will encourage broadening of the economic base to the benefit of its citizens.

8. The town will ensure the compatibility of new development with that already in existence.

9. The town will encourage the creation of order and beauty and where possible will endeavor to provide both.

10. The town will endeavor to protect buildings of architectural and historical importance.

11. The town will work to preserve, protect, and enhance Linchester Mill and the mill pond to the east of town and promote that site as a point of interest and cultural/historical tourist destination. Annexation may be considered.

It should be noted that development proposals that are not compatible or consistent with our goals and objects will most likely not receive favorable consideration during the development review process. Our Board of Appeals is bound to review and consider in its entirety this Comprehensive Plan when making findings of fact regarding requests for variances, conditional uses, and appeals to the administrative implementation of this Plan and its ordinances. Hardships that are self-imposed, or created by the applicant in the process of furthering a request, must be discounted and are not valid reasons for subverting or diluting the intended effect of this Plan and its ordinances.

Objectives and "Visions" suggested by the 1992 Planning Act

LAND USE

Development resulting from Preston's anticipated growth should be coordinated so that new uses are compatible with each other and with existing uses. The following objectives should yield compatible and efficient land use:

1. Discourage additional residential development along Route 16, both within Preston and elsewhere.

2. Maintain and increase commercially zoned land along Route 331 within town and focus on the immediate commercial needs of town residents.

3. Encourage limited development north and south of Route 331 (in town) focusing new development on the western and eastern ends of town. Use annexation and infill to promote a compact pattern of buildings, streets and sidewalks.

4. Discourage development outside Town within our planning area. We want to discourage potential large lot residential sprawl on well and septic that will be very difficult to absorb in the future. Suburban scale development is inefficient to serve with public facilities, is inconsistent and incompatible with our goal to protect and preserve existing community character, and will be an impediment to future annexation and controlled growth within our planning area.

5. Encourage new development only in areas which can be economically served by Town water and sewer and incorporated into our existing Town pattern and character.

6. Provide and maintain adequate open space and park areas within Town, and evaluate the feasibility of annexing and creating a new park within the Linchester Mill/Pond area.

Objectives and "Visions" suggested by the 1992 Planning Act

TRANSPORTATION

Both local and inter-regional traffic must be accommodated in a manner that maintains the physical unity of our town. Efficient, safe circulation throughout town for both automobiles and pedestrians is necessary. MD Route 331 divides our town into northern and southern parts, and heavy highway traffic makes east-west circulation difficult and dangerous. Our transportation objectives seek to improve current conditions.

1. Support the development of alternative truck routes throughout our region and create a by-pass route around our town.

2. Maintain the high quality of our town road system.

3. Improve pedestrian safety by providing safe routes for pedestrians that do not include walking on the shoulders of high traffic volume roadways. Lobby the SHA for a traffic light.

4. Maintain low traffic volumes on local streets.

5. Encourage alternatives to single occupant automobile traffic such as park and ride facilities and bicycle routes.

6. Encourage new development to utilize platted streets that have not been constructed.

7. Encourage new streets and sidewalks to continue our existing modified grid pattern.

PUBLIC SERVICES

Our Town government is heavily involved in the provision of public services to Preston citizens. These services include central water and sewer service, police protection, street lighting, and recreation. Other organizations and governmental bodies also offer public services, including fire protection and ambulance service provided by the Volunteer Fire

Company and the medical facilities of the Memorial Hospital at Easton. Our public services objectives focus on maintaining and improving those services we currently provide.

1. Maintain adequate water and sewer services to meet growing town needs.

2. Maintain an adequate level of police protection.

3. Maintain an adequate level of fire protection and ambulance service.

4. Maintain adequate levels of recreation and meeting space.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Our most important resource is land. Approximately 27% of the acreage within our present corporate limits is farmland which will be directly impacted as we grow. Lands within our planning area are also mainly farms. Future use of these parcels is also important to our citizens. To preserve and enhance these resources, the following objectives are established:

1. Coordinate with State, County, and other bodies on all significant actions affecting unique wildlife habitats.

2. Give preference to preserving agricultural or other low-intensity land uses, especially in areas of existing forest cover and on fields that contain prime agricultural soils.

3. Protect and improve the water quality of streams and waterways that drain to the Chesapeake Bay.

4. Promote a universal stewardship ethic toward our land, water, air, and other natural resources.

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HOUSING

Liveability standards have been established and enforced to protect property values and to maintain the village character of the Town.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

As an incorporated municipality, we maintain contact with other governmental jurisdictions and local groups. Our small size and limited fiscal base prevent us from being entirely self-sufficient and make us dependent upon other bodies for some services. Accordingly, we should:

1. Coordinate closely with the County in decisions affecting the use of land within our planning area.

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ESTHETICS

Preston is, on the whole, neat and well maintained. A quality residential area necessitates pleasant, well kept structures and grounds. This can be accomplished if we:

1. Encourage the generous use of landscaping in all new development, and the use of additional landscaping where needed in areas of existing development.

2. Require buffers to separate high volume traffic from adjacent land uses and to screen the rear of commercial uses from adjacent non-commercial uses.

3. Maintain strict controls upon the design and use of signs, particularly in areas along Main Street.

4. Enhance the general appearance of Main Street and adjacent parking areas.

5. Maintain the crossroads village character of the central old town area.

6. Continue to encourage a high level of care and maintenance for Preston's existing housing.

7. Consider the extablishment of *design guidelines* to help ensure high quality projects by providing developers, citizens, and the Planning Commission and Board of Appeals better means to evaluate development proposals.

FISCAL

Future revenues, our ability to borrow, and our capacity to find alternative funding sources will determine what services can be provided for Preston residents. Consequently, we should:

1. Seek additional outside funding sources for identified town needs.

2. Maintain full fiscal benefit from commercial and or industrial development within town.

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IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation of our Comprehensive Plan will be mainly through the

application of our land use development regulations and our adopted procedures to ensure that projects utilizing public funds are determined to be consistent with our adopted Comprehensive Plan. Additionally;

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Our overall goal is to keep Preston a town that its citizens are proud of. We are dedicated to retaining the old-fashioned rural charm which has characterized Preston from the beginning. Our aim is to keep our Town a place which welcomes a broad cross-section of people from all walks of life.

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We recognize, however, that any Comprehensive Plan we prepare must be strongly influenced by a major consideration that seems to be beyond our control. That consideration is the increasingly disruptive, dangerous, and divisive influence of truck traffic on Maryland Route 331.

Traffic, with resulting noise and safety problems, has increased steadily during the past 20 years. The roar of truck traffic seems to grow louder every year. East - west traffic on Main Street has significantly increased an average of 2,450 trips per day in just the last ten years alone. Traffic counts by the State Highway Administration document our subjective sense that our small town quality of life is suffering. As far back as 1973 our Comprehensive Plan also contained references to these concerns and dissatisfaction with through traffic.

Therefore, we encourage State and County authorities to take all necessary steps to minimize further disruption of our way of life by meeting with the Planning Commission and elected officials of Preston to determine a viable solution that can be implemented. We have suggested a bypass, possibly north of Town, for twenty-five years. The longer a solution is postponed the more expensive it will ultimately be. We welcome the opportunity to discuss these issues with the State and County. We have reduced our traffic speed limits on Main Street to 25 miles per hour and enforce our law. However, truck traffic can still be a nuisance to residents trying to sleep during the "quiet hours." Also, as the only thru street in town, large farm vehicles use Main Street/MD 331 at times occupying both lanes of the two lane highway to get thru town.

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We will use our adopted project review procedures to ensure that proposals are consistent with this Plan.

Implementation

This element supports and addresses all seven Visions by setting out specific steps we will follow to achieve them.

The protection and enhancement of high quality living environments is an important aspect to achieving the goals of this Plan and the visions of the 1992 Planning Act. In order for new development and growth to occur in areas designated in the Plan, these "growth areas" must attract people.

One good way to attract people is to provide a visually stimulating and enjoyable sense of place that makes us feel glad to be home. When careful attention to detail, color, scale, materials, plants, lighting, signage, etc. all work together, the results can be stunning. One glance and we know if it looks and feels right; if it is somewhere that we want to be. Accordingly, we will reexamine our zoning ordinance, subdivision regulations, and other development controls to find ways to incorporate appropriate community design guidelines that encourage raising the overall level of quality in our built environment. We will also examine our public and private spaces to determine whether maintenance and repairs are needed. Where problems are identified, we will establish priorities and begin the needed work. Property owners will be encouraged to clean up, fix up, and improve their buildings and yards. Town officials will address publicly owned lands and rights of way.

The urban design profession has identified a number of basic tenets, or guiding principles, for creating high quality neighborhoods in rural settings:

- Neighborhoods are compact and identifiable, and their boundaries are visually discernible.
- Neighborhoods are linear, cross-roads or grid patterned, with variations to enhance views or landmarks.

- Neighborhoods are visually coherent. Character is established through consistent rules of organization and architecture.

- Street corridors are visually bounded and intimate in feeling. Street trees, sidewalks, and front yard design elements create visual layers and contribute to the intimacy of the streetscape.

- Street blocks help describe component neighborhoods, suggesting the role of the street as a channel for neighborly interaction.

- Neighborhoods accommodate a mix of uses, even at the "hamlet" scale.

- Neighborhoods typically include a range of housing types.

- Parking is accommodated in a mix of on-street and unobtrusive off-street strategies. Large-scale parking lots are avoided, and older lots are redesigned into smaller landscaped segments.

- Most important, neighborhoods and their settings convey a strong "sense of place."

These issues have contributed to our discussion of community character in our Land Use element. The next step is to incorporate traditional neighborhood design principles into our planning and development approval processes.

Growth Management

Our population projections are based on past and anticipated growth rates that have been refined to even out unusually high or low year-to-year building starts. Our approach is to plan on the basis of average annual growth rates. Our attempt to influence our future average annual rate reflects our attempt to manage our future and our future growth. We will focus our efforts on the location and quality of new construction while constantly evaluating its cost on our citizens. It is clearly our intent that possible infrastructure costs associated with the need to provide additional capacity to service new residents will be absorbed mainly by the

developers and newcomers who will directly benefit the most from additional system capacities. We will devise appropriate and fair fiscal policies to accomplish this.

Our traditional means to manage growth have focused on zoning to regulate use, density, and intensity of development. Density is a concept usually applied to residential uses in controlling the number of units that may be located per acre of land. Intensity is usually applied to commercial or industrial uses to arrive at height, bulk, parking or other similar numeric standards useful for reviewing anticipated impacts of proposed projects. However, these approaches do not address community character and quality of life issues. Performance standards that relate negative impacts such as traffic noise and vibration to the quality of site design come closer to helping us address some of the problems we have in regulating flexible small scale mixed use zoning while minimizing complexity..

Performance standards focus on the activities and their impacts more than on the type of use that is proposed for a site. Uses are permitted by right if they meet specified preset standards. This may be a useful concept to apply in the commercial and industrial areas of town. Carefully constructed, straight forward performance standards can add additional ability to shape and control growth as it occurs. They promote a closer relationship between the Comprehensive Plan and the zoning districts than is normally the case with conventional zoning. Standards applied in tandem with site design guidelines can also help control the edge of the development envelope by providing additional oversight and review during the incremental phased development of larger sites.

Overlay zoning is another technique that should be considered for the central part of town. This tool applies a special set of conditions or constraints in addition to those that govern the underlying uses that are permitted by right. We will develop a Town Center zone whose purposes are to:

- promote a positive visual experience and provide flexibility for mixed land uses in the center of Town;

- promote commercial activity and encourage human interaction;

- stimulate private investment and commercial expansion on Main Street.

- increase the amount and appearance of off-street parking in the center of town.

- encourage better quality and improved use of signage and lighting in the center of town.

- reduce issues of nonconformance in existing use, setback, or bulk standards.

Our Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations will be amended to include provisions for implementing and administering traditional neighborhood design concepts in preferred growth areas. Mixed commercial/residential uses will be permitted, especially in our Town Center area. This will be further refined as we work on the Ordinance text. Innovation, good design and high quality construction will be encouraged and rewarded with streamlined approvals. Flexibility will be particularly encouraged on in-fill developments of small sites and in renovation and reuse proposals that revitalize existing structures and neighborhoods.

We will provide a mix of residential densities to ensure we meet the needs of our whole population; young and old, and those of all income levels. Density should be compatible with existing average density in nearby neighborhoods. Actual lot sizes should be varied but appropriate to nearby examples. Development on annexed lands should be compatible with and blend in with adjacent neighborhoods already in town.

We may annex lands within our planning area, and focus new growth on the opportunity sites identified in our Land Use and Transportation elements. New development should seem to be an integral part of town, not adjacent to and separate from town. Caroline County will be encouraged to apply very low density zoning to lands within our planning area and immediate surroundings. We want to encourage growth to occur within town, not nearby on individual well and septic systems that promote large lot sprawl. The town and County will maintain an ongoing dialog and develop a partnership approach to growth management that channels development

into town on central public water and sewer services.

We will refer to figure 8 on page 56 in discussions with the County to amend the type, amount, and location of growth proposed by the County Comprehensive Plan for the portion of our planning area that is beyond town limits. We will work with the County to incorporate our Comprehensive Plan as a "growth subarea plan" into their overall County Comprehensive Plan.

Toward that end, we will improve our information and development review processes. We will adopt site plan review and community design guidelines to further clarify these issues and to provide guidance to both developers and town officials.

We will add requirements for conceptual sketches and other graphics to be provided at the earliest stages of the development review process.

We will review our fee structures and explore appropriate means for generating sufficient additional revenues to allow us to hire professional consultant services to help review potentially large or complex developments, should any be proposed.

We will add sensitive areas controls and protections to our land development regulations consistent with our Sensitive Areas element.

We will provide mechanisms to allow home occupations and homebased businesses without detrimental impacts to neighboring properties.

We will streamline development reviews as much as possible. However, to the extent that State or federal agencies provide specific approvals, we see the greatest potential for improvement and streamlining through more flexible permit and program administration at those levels.

We will evaluate and adopt, as feasible, other innovate zoning techniques to provide additional planning tools for use by town officials in implementing this Comprehensive Plan.

We will consider provisions for accessory dwelling units (ADU) for the needs

of our elderly and extended families.

We will review our adopted Forest Conservation Program for possible needed amendments or revisions.

We will review the Caroline County Comprehensive Water and Sewer Plan to ensure that the information concerning our facilities and service area is

Design Principles

One of the recurring issues discussed during the drafting of this Plan was: *How do we make our land use regulations more easily understood, simpler to administer, and yet function to improve the level of development we are presented with?* We are interested in having projects that are attractive, with good site planning, including structures, circulation, and landscaping, and well thought out in terms of how they relate to all surrounding properties. The views of the site and from the site should be clearly considered by the developer and addressed within the draft site plan. Time spent on working out the details, both visual and functional, will be rewarded by speedy approvals and by consumer acceptance in the marketplace. Buyers want quality, and so do we. The following general "rules" serve to clarify our intent and hopefully will stimulate the submission of noteworthy projects:

- *Natural features and site constraints should suggest "natural" common sense design solutions. We need to design with nature, not fight, control, or dominate natural and ecological processes.*

- *The automobile should not be the dominant force that dictates the layout and design of residential communities. Streets designed by traffic engineers tend to be visually unattractive, overly wide, high speed barriers to social interaction and neighborliness. New residential streets should discourage through traffic, be well landscaped with shade trees, and recognized as the principal public spaces that they are. In view of their visual and functional importance, thought, deliberation, and investment in landscape and streetscape design should be evident.*

- *Substantial landscaping should be included in common open spaces*

that may be proposed. Landscaping should provide shade, shelter from wind, provide visual screens or buffers from unsightly elements on adjoining properties or such on-site things as parking lots, loading areas, dumpsters, or utility structures. Landscaping also separates and buffers incompatible land uses such as the rear of commercial buildings and loading areas from adjoining residential lots. Landscaping can also provide wildlife habitat and linkages toforested and natural areas, greenways, and walking paths.

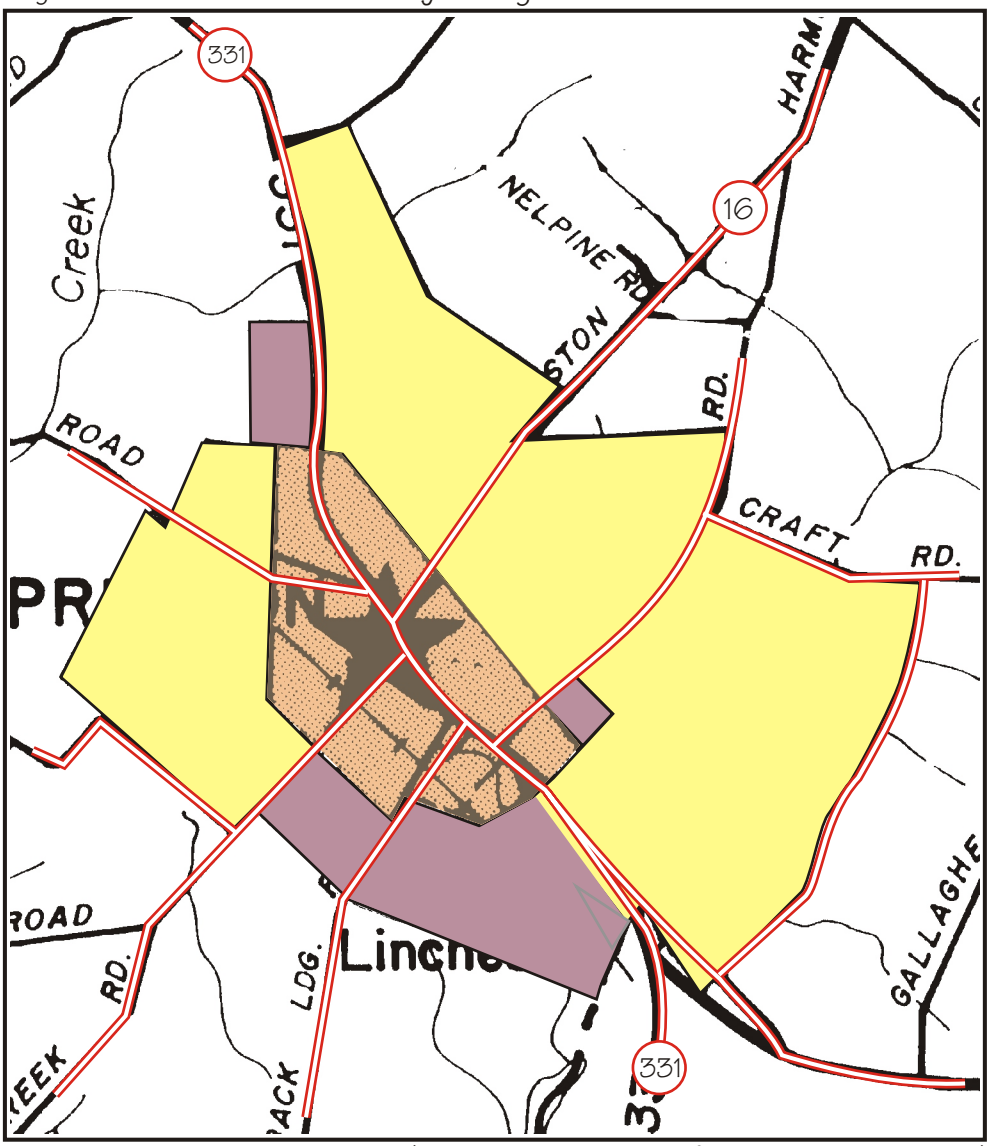
- Parking should not be a dominant site feature. Parking areas should be small scale, highly landscaped, attractive and inviting. Many examples exist of highly successful shopping areas where paved parking spots were reduced in favor of shade trees, landscaped berms, shrubs and flowers. Look at which spots fill up first on a hot summer day and which shopping centers tenants want to lease space in most. . . those with the most attractive highly landscaped parking areas. Parking stall numbers should not drive site planning. Whenever possible, it is better to give preference to green space over asphalt and paved parking.

- Signage should be informative without become intrusive. Signs should not dominate the visual landscape. They should not distract or attract undue attention. They can perform their function without being "tacky" or ugly. Signs should be compatible with their purpose, be clear, concise, and as small as reasonably possible. Small signs slow traffic, and low level pedestrian scale signage that is attached to its parent structure is preferred. Signs attached to roofs and second story facades should be prohibited. We will spend additional effort creating sign guidelines appropriate for Main Street and other guidlines appropriate for the rest of town.

- The architecture and styles proposed should be in keeping with the building types and styles that have evolved in our region. We strongly encourage traditional designs and materials so that new developments blend seamlessly with the old. We think of our undeveloped sites as an enduring natural canvas. The landscapes we create will be the ones bequeathed to our children. The marks

we make are long lasting, and we want them to reflect an improvement that we are proud to take some credit for. . . not an embarrassment to turn away from.

Figure 8. Caroline County Designated Growth Areas



Source: 1986 Caroline County Comprehensive Plan (Current and not significantly updated since).

The areas designated by the County for growth near Preston coincide fairly well with our planning area. The County has designated industrial development in the violet areas, residential in the yellow areas, and mixed indurstrial/commercial uses in the red/violet checked area. *The amount of development shown is too much and is not consistent with our Comprehensive Plan.* Comprehensive Plan consistency is an issue we will address cooperatively with the County as noted previously.

Preston

Protection and enhancement of our rural small town character is our guiding principle for managing growth and controlling future land use.

Land Use

This element supports and addresses five Visions:

- *Development is concentrated in suitable areas;*
- *Sensitive areas are protected;*
- *In rural areas, growth is directed to existing population centers and resource areas are protected;*
- *Stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay and the land is a universal ethic;*
- *Conservation of resources, including a reduction in resource consumption, is practiced.*

We have established goals and objectives for our community, its character, and its economic vitality. We want to ensure that we meet the needs of our residents, both present and future, in ways that allow us to sustain a high quality of life for all and also ensure that our built environment does not conflict with the preservation of a healthy natural environment.

Our background information suggests we have sewerage treatment capacity for about 295 additional homes (based on 2002 State sewer allocation data) without requiring an adjustment to our NPDES discharge permit. The design capacity of our plant should support these additional housing units according to average annul flows monitored by Maryland Department of the Environment.. We have selected a 2.3 percent average annual growth rate as a reasonable target for planning purposes, recognizing the inherent difficulty of predicting population increase for a town of our small size. Based on recent development and the 2000 census, we estimate our 2004 population to be over 600. We expect the majority of additional new housing units to be single family homes. However, we will probably also see some medium high density housing during the next ten years.

We define low density housing as single family housing; medium density housing as duplex or two unit attached designs, and high density housing as multifamily structures on one lot. The actual unit count per acre will be addressed in our Zoning Ordinance but will reflect existing conditions in town. It is our intention to evaluate current conditions to identify potential instances of nonconformity to our existing ordinance and make appropriate revisions to our standards to reduce nonconformance to the extent practical. We want land use controls that would permit us to recreate Preston as it exists. Some of our newer neighborhoods reflect a cul-de-sac street pattern that is at odds with our traditional modified grid. It is our intention to reintroduce the grid pattern as our preferred model of subdivision so that new development will present an orderly consistent extension of lotting practice and land use.

Structures should be located close to the street. Streets should include curbs, gutters, street trees, street lighting and sidewalks. Street lighting should be pedestrian in scale. And, intense landscaping including the planting of shade trees and flowering shrubs is encouraged. We want new development to mature in a natural harmonious manner so that, except for architectural style and the obvious evolution in building materials, the overall character and feel of our town is not drastically altered. We expect to grow, but in a manner that builds upon and extends existing uses and patterns.

Our more intense commercial and industrial activity will continue to parallel the railroad right-of-way. Our principal convenience commercial and service businesses will continue to be located on Main Street. Our residential neighborhoods will be maintained and expanded in compact, efficient, and logical ways. This can be best accomplished by developing those parcels that present opportunity and are already in town. We have identified sufficient land for residential development to accommodate the 80 anticipated housing units. The areas identified as residential development "priorities" are also planned for near term extension of water and sewer. However, the cost of extending mains and lines into larger parcels and creating service taps within the corporate limits of the town will be borne by the developers. Potential future annexation requests should include an analysis by the applicant of our implied obligations with respect to extending water and sewer service to existing vacant or developable intown parcels and lots. Preston will not extend any municipal services beyond town limits without concurrent annexation.

The maps of existing and proposed land use patterns for our intown areas as well as our planning area should be studied for specific guidance on our development preferences. In addition, it is our intent to address the issue of home occupations and home based businesses with flexibility. We recognize the changing nature of business and the increasing emphasis on communication and data processing which can be relatively independent of location. Accordingly, we are more concerned that business activity does not create visual, noise, odor, or other similar negative impacts on nearby residences. Our residents have a right to the safe, quiet, private, and tranquil enjoyment of their property. So long as this standard is maintained and protected, we will consider mixed use of property on a case by case basis. This tradition is part of our historical use of land in town and was a strong contributing factor to our existing character, especially on Main Street. Attractive buildings, signage, lighting, and landscaping are perhaps more important than rigid separation of uses.

Traffic safety, including smooth flow, ease of ingress and egress, and sufficient and attractive off-street parking are the primary issues that concern us about small scale commercial and business activities that we expect to continue and possibly locate in town. We will also address the issue of exterior storage of inventory and materials. Where inside storage is not feasible, fencing, screening, and limitations on paved area will be considered. Rear yard screening of commercial properties from adjoining residential parcels is an issue we will explore in more detail with both the businesses and residents in town. We will also seek out the advice of our population prior to rewriting our Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations.

Mineral Resources

Sand and gravel are the only commercial mineral resources in Caroline County. No extraction sites or significant concentrations are located within our planning area. The sandy substratum phases of the Sassafras soils in our area are not suitable as a source of sand. The location of sand bearing soils do not conflict with present or planned development activities.

Preston

Protection and improvement of water quality and wildlife habitat is our overall goal for managing "sensitive areas."

Sensitive Areas Element

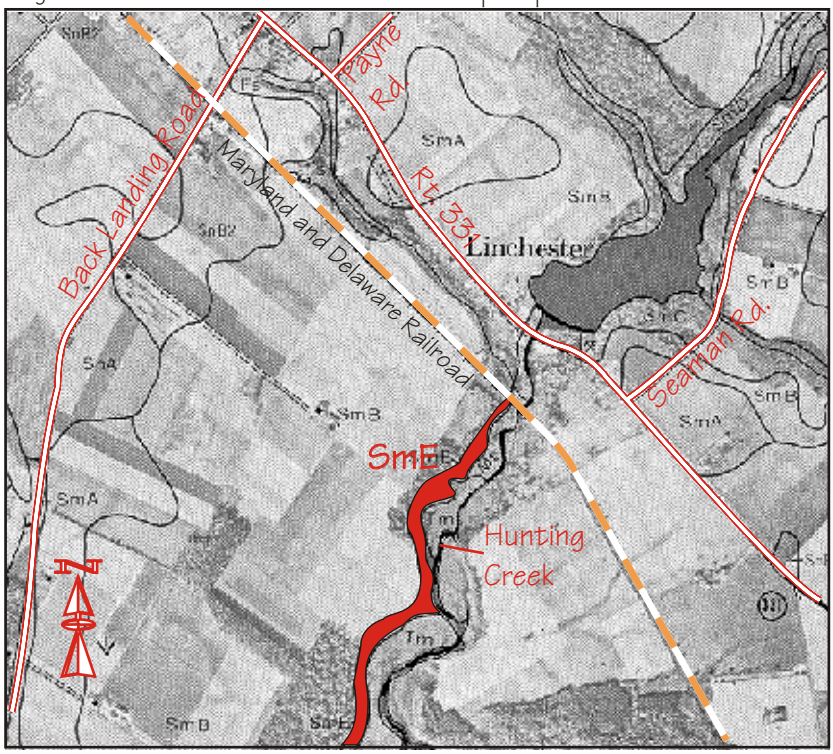
This element supports and addresses Vision Two:
Sensitive areas are protected.

The four sensitive areas mandated for management and protection include:

- streams and their buffers;
- 100-year floodplains;
- habitats of threatened and endangered species; and
- steep slopes.

There are only very limited areas within our planning boundary where slopes equal 15% or more. These areas correspond to the soils group: SmE, Sassafras loamy sand 15% to 30% slope. It is found along the west bank of Hunting Creek in the southern portion of our planning area. The graphic below provides detail.

Figure 2 Soils and Steep Slopes

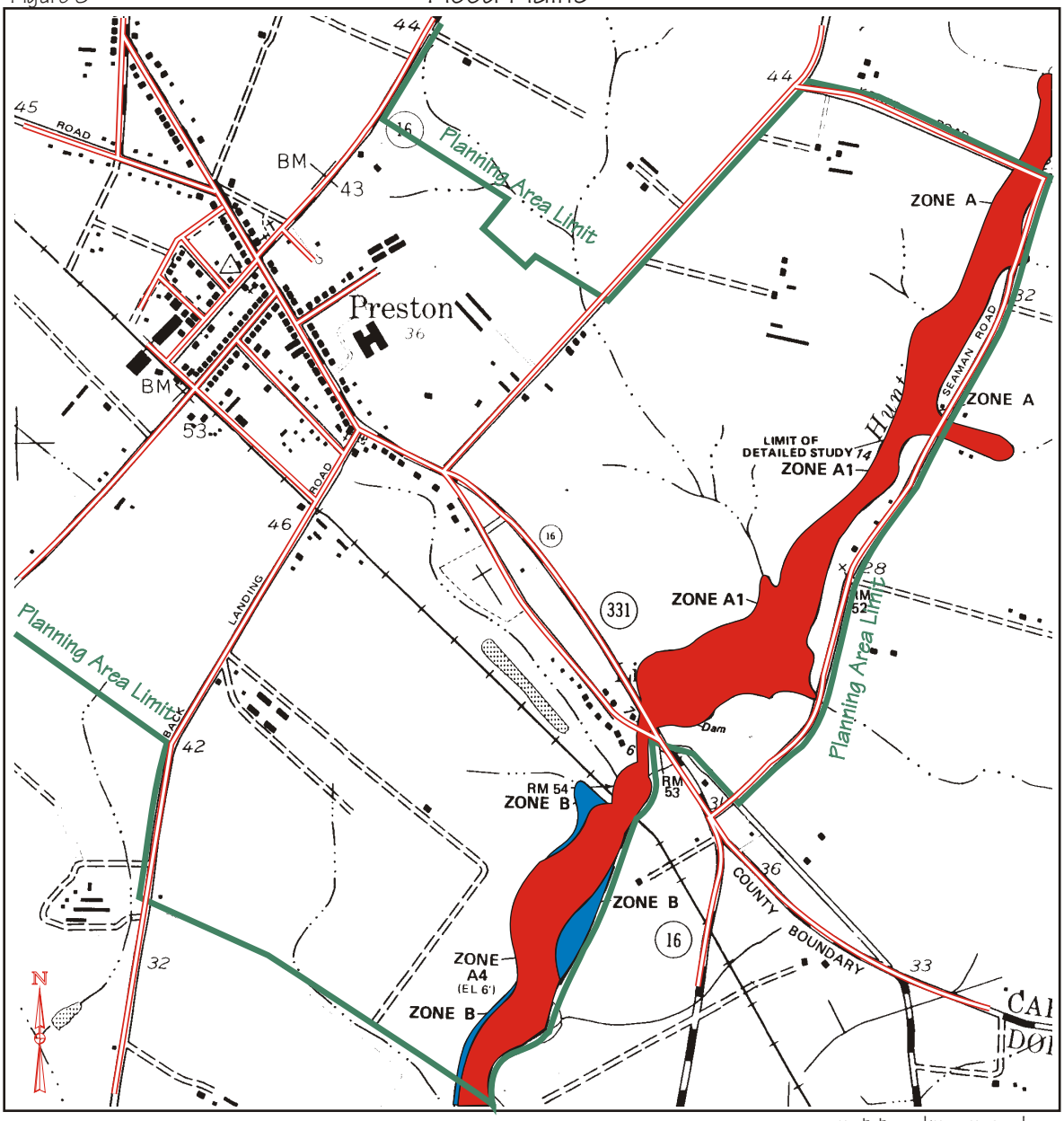


Scale 1:20,000 source: 1964 Caroline County Soil Survey. USDA

A 50 foot setback from the top of steep slopes will provide a nondisturbance buffer that will help ensure erosion and siltation do not adversely affect water quality or slope stability. Figure 3 locates the limits of the 100 year floodplain in red which exists along Hunting Creek. The blue areas are special cases involving limited flood hazard and are regulated under the County's Flood Insurance Ordinance. If these areas are annexed, we will adopt a flood insurance ordinance and ensure that new development is kept behind a 100 foot setback from the edge of the 100 year floodplain. Our ordinance will comply with FEMA regulations in order to ensure that property can be insured, financed, and transfered without undue hardship. There are no areas currently within town limits that are within any 100 year floodplain.

Figure 3

Flood Plains

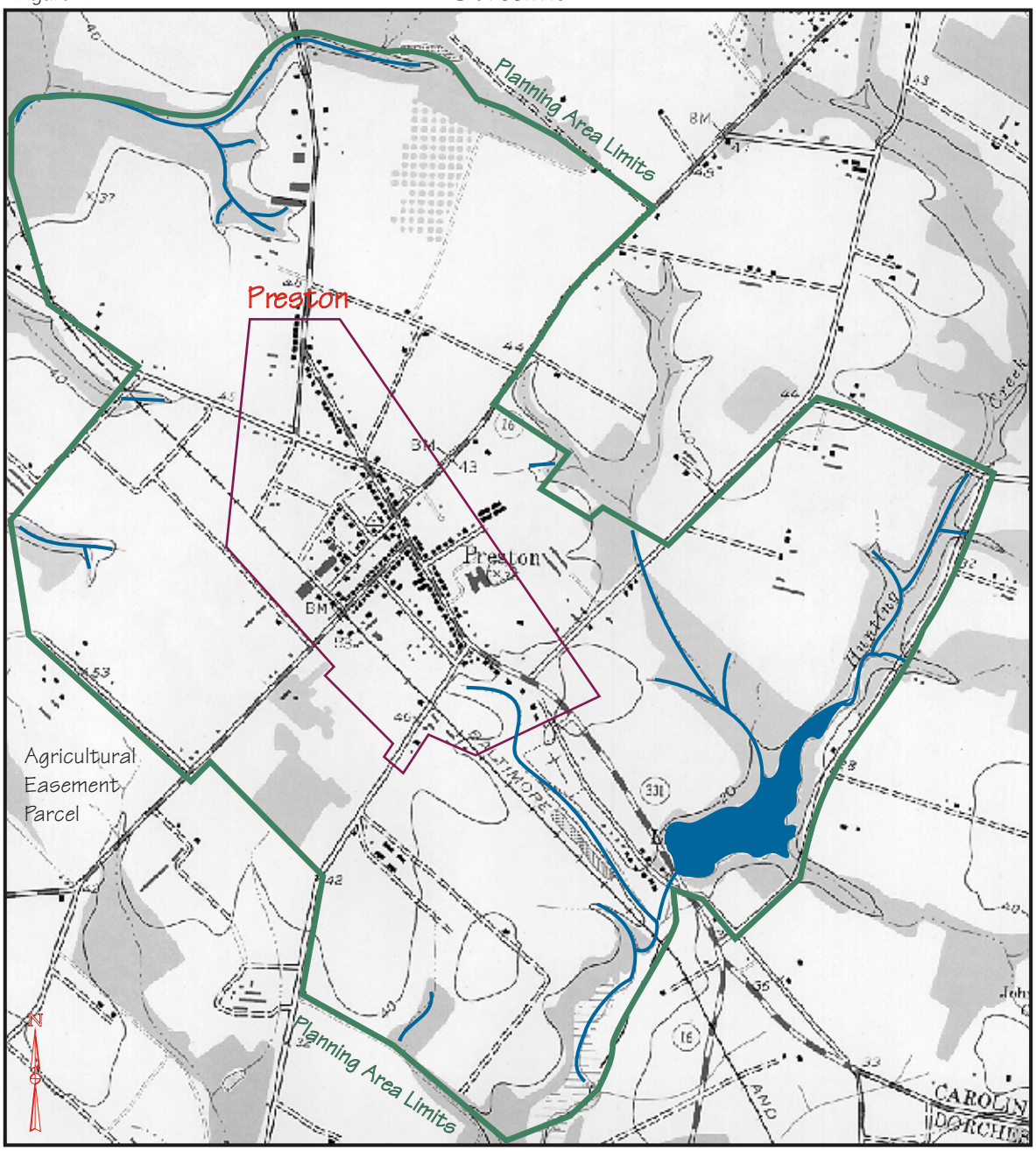


Source: FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Map, Oct. 15, 1980

not to a known scale

Streams and their buffers within our planning area are located in blue on figure 4 below. Our wastewater treatment plant discharges into the unnamed stream flowing into Hunting Creek. We will adopt a stream buffer to protect water quality in the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries from soil and chemicals carried by runoff known as nonpoint source pollution. Our buffer will consist of a 50 foot nondistrubance area measured back from the edge of stream banks. Potential site plan impacts and regulatory requirements will require field verification to ensure accurate location of streams and their buffers.

Figure 4 Streams

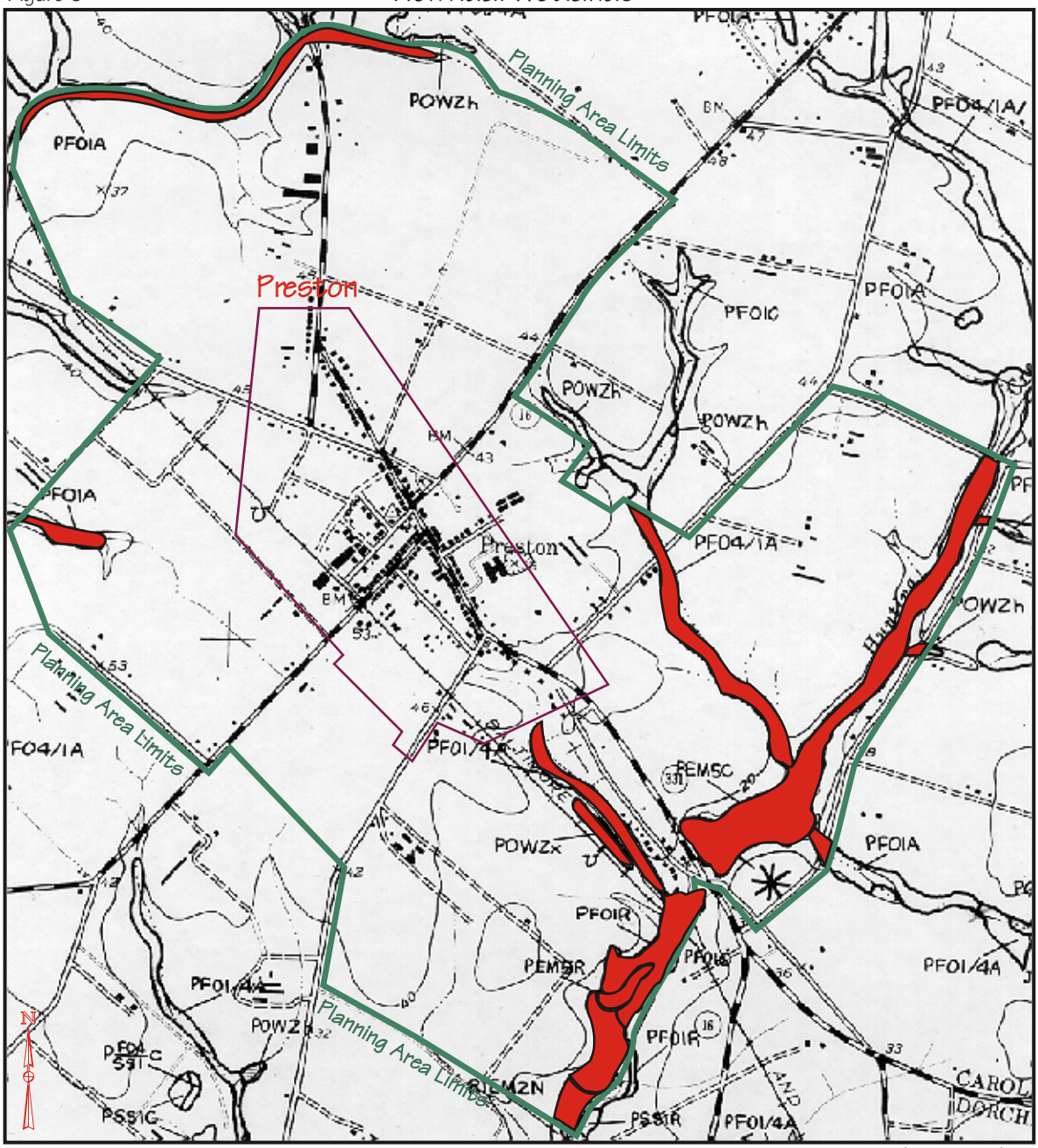


USGS 7.5 Minute Preston Quadrangle

original scale is 1:62,000

Nontidal wetlands are regulated by the US Army Corps of Engineers and are protected by a 50 foot setback from the edge of the designated wetland. We have identified the nontidal wetlands that are mapped on the national wetlands inventory and located within our planning area. They are shown in red in figure 5 below. We have included them as an issue for protection in our Sensitive Areas element for clarity and consistency. These wetlands are also indicators for intermittent streams which we protect with a 50 foot buffer back from the edge of the stream bank. The stream environment supports the conditions that help define wetlands.

Figure 5 NonTidal Wetlands



Source: US Department of the Interior, National Wetlands Inventory Map,April 1981

not to a known scale

No forests exist within our planning area. Most of the land is actively farmed. However, some trees exist in wetland areas because they are not suitable for farming. Typically, trees are found along Hunting Creek and some of its intermittent tributaries. If these areas are annexed in the future, we will encourage property owners to protect existing tree stands and add additional tree plantings to expand the habitat range of woodland species. There are no agricultural easements within our planning area. However, a farm off Choptank Road south of Havercamp Road is protected. Other easements and agricultural districts have been created within our general region, but they do not impact this Comprehensive Plan.

No threatened or endangered species are known to exist within our planning area. Preston has adopted its own Forest Conservation Ordinance.

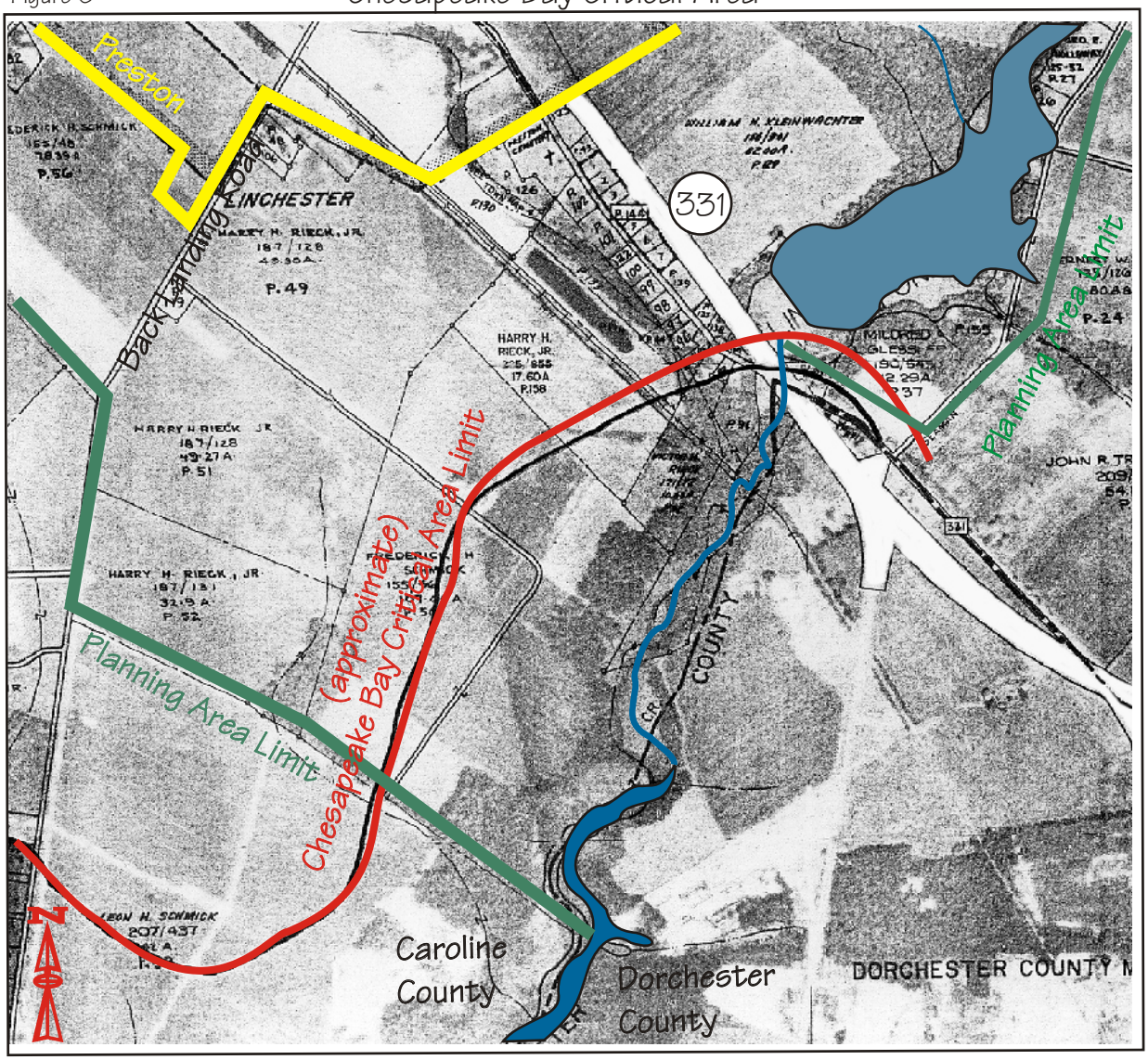
Chesapeake Bay Critical Area

The Chesapeake Bay Critical Area was established by the General Assembly in 1984 to address environmental pollution and declining water quality. A primary focus of the Program is to reduce the impacts of development within 1,000 feet of the head of tide in tidal waters. Its effect was to create a 1,000 foot buffer around the Bay and its tidal tributaries. Land is regulated based on its developed status when the law took effect. Three levels of development intensity were mapped and provide threshold measure for a variety of regulatory limitations.

These development intensities are defined as Intensely Developed Areas (IDA), Limited Development Areas (LDA), and Resource Conservation Areas (RCA). The base development intensity in RCA's is one dwelling unit per 20 acres serviced by individual well and septic systems. There are no lands within the Town of Preston that lie within the Critical Area. However, some land in the southern portion of our planning area are within 1,000 feet of the head of tide on Hunting Creek. These lands have been designated RCA and are controlled under the County's administration of its approved Critical Area Program. Figure 6 on the following page provides visual detail and reference to these lands. The County administers a specific set of regulations that controls in great detail how development occurs within the Critical Area. If these lands are ever annexed, we will develop and adopt a Critical Area Program to ensure continued administration of policy.

Figure 6 shows the approximate location of the Critical Area boundary limit (in red)which is established by field survey to be 1,000 feet landward of mean high tide on tidal waters (as determined by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources and administered by the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Commission.

Figure 6 Chesapeake Bay Critical Area



source: Maryland Department of Planning, Caroline County Critical Area maps original scale 1:7,200

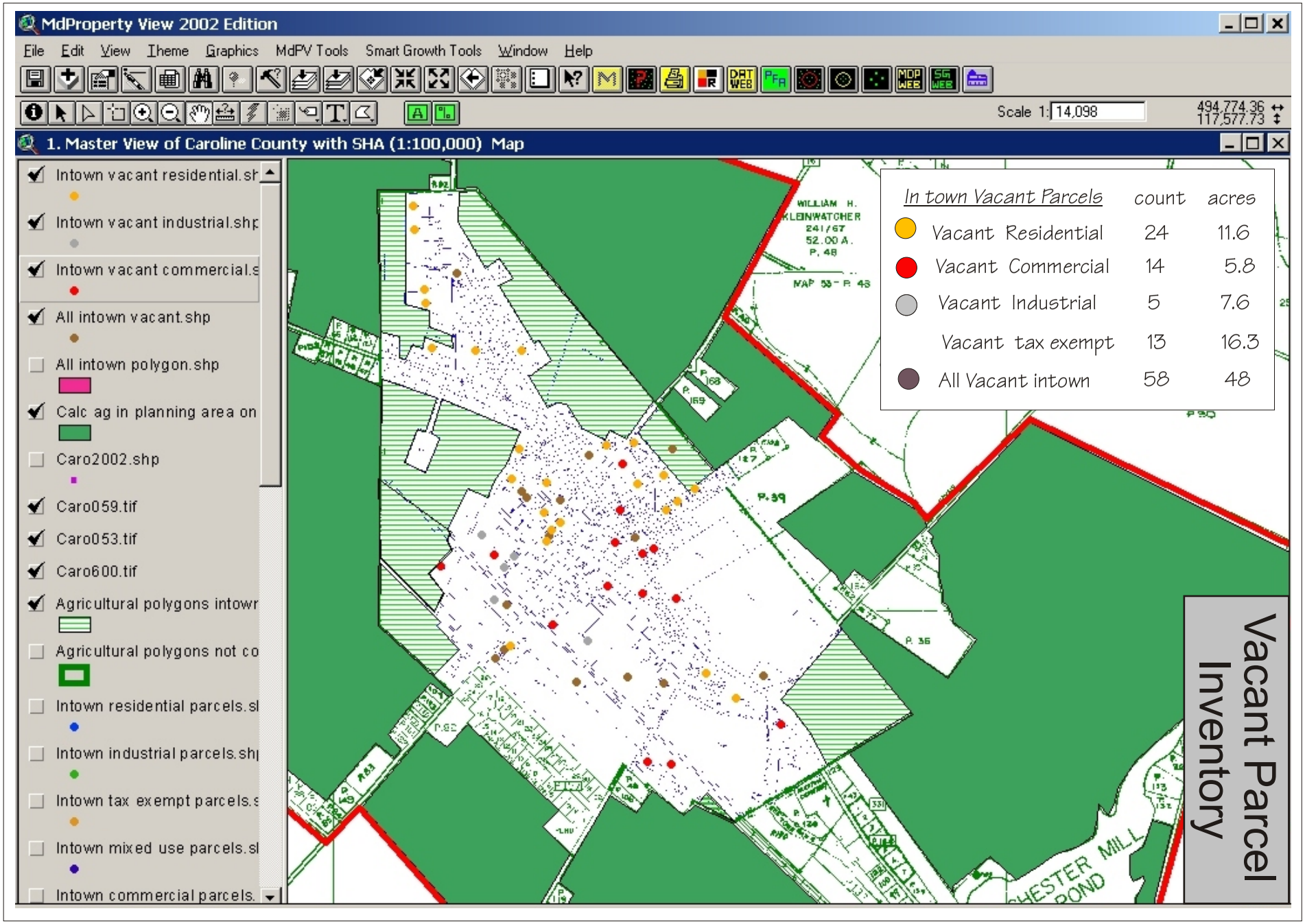
Preston

Planning Area Limit

Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Limit

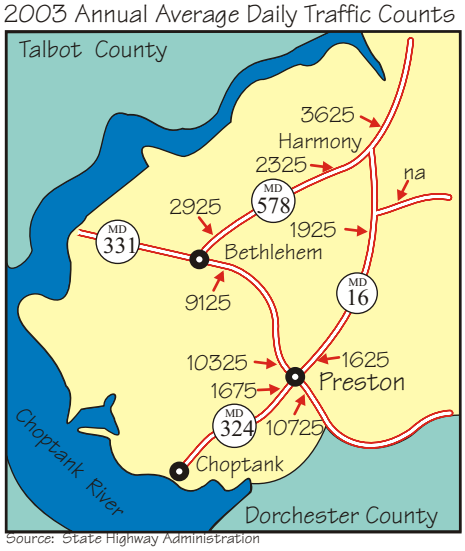
TOWN OF PRESTON MARYLAND
Comprehensive Plan
1892
2005 - Final
Inc. Commissioner edits
TERRA DULCIS HAVENOMIA

Vacant Parcel Inventory



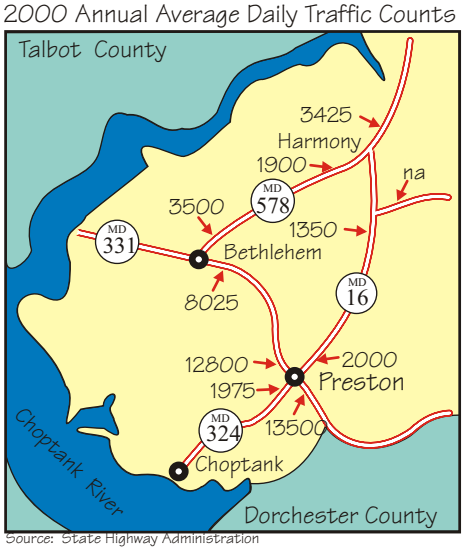
In town Vacant Parcels	count	acres
Vacant Residential	24	11.6
Vacant Commercial	14	5.8
Vacant Industrial	5	7.6
Vacant tax exempt	13	16.3
All Vacant intown	58	48

2003 Annual Average Daily Traffic Counts



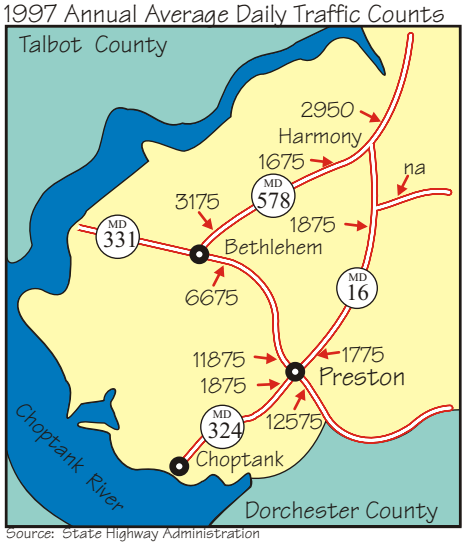
Source: State Highway Administration

2000 Annual Average Daily Traffic Counts



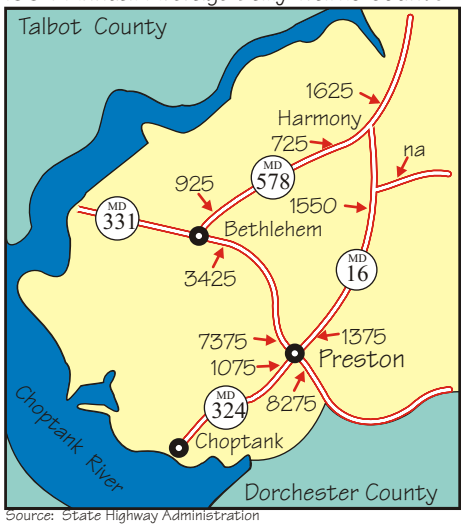
Source: State Highway Administration

1997 Annual Average Daily Traffic Counts



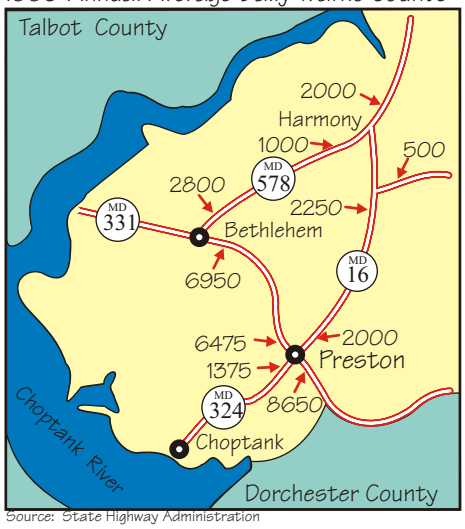
Source: State Highway Administration

1994 Annual Average Daily Traffic Counts



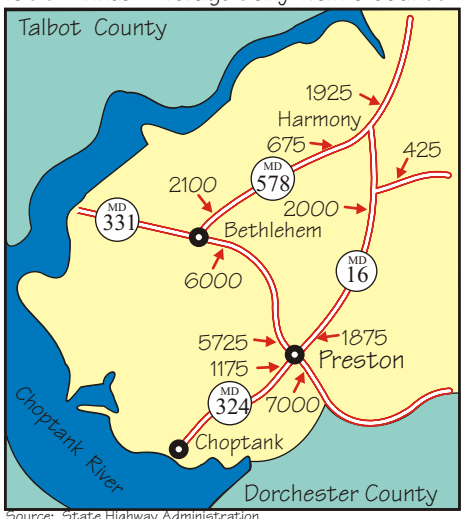
Source: State Highway Administration

1990 Annual Average Daily Traffic Counts



Source: State Highway Administration

1988 Annual Average Daily Traffic Counts



Source: State Highway Administration

Source: Maryland State Highway Administration

figure 7

Preston

The safe and efficient movement of people and goods, both within and through our planning area, is our primary transportation objective.

Transportation Element

This element supports and addresses Visions One through Five:

- *Development is concentrated in suitable areas;*
- *Sensitive areas are protected;*
- *In rural areas, growth is directed to existing population centers and resource areas are protected;*
- *Stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay and the land is a universal ethic;*
- *Conservation of resources, including a reduction in resource consumption, is practiced.*

Transportation and land use are closely linked. First as a place where Indian trails crossed, then as a mill and general store location, and now as the Town of Preston, people traveled here, settled, and used the land for a variety of purposes. Colonial era horse paths were widened and improved, and additional roads were added to the circulation system until we achieved our present pattern. The various maps and graphics included throughout this Comprehensive Plan adequately show this relationship between land use and roadways.

Roadway Inventory

The *Federal Highway Functional Classification System* is used to prioritize highway segments based on their mobility role. Routes 331 and 16, through town, are classified as Minor Arterials. Their primary role is to provide a continuous and efficient route for medium volume traffic between towns or major traffic generators and especially interregional traffic between centers. Generally, direct access to adjoining uses should be minimized, and on-street parking should be discouraged. However, in the case of Main Street, these guidelines are impossible to follow. MD 16, north of MD 331, is a Major Collector. MD 16, south of Town, is designated a Major Collector. The primary

purpose of collector routes is to facilitate movement within a localized area. Collectors provide moderate levels of service within, rather than between, regions of the County. They collect traffic from local streets and channel travel to commercial and industrial areas and the arterial highways. Minor collectors provide both access to adjoining property and connect local streets with community facilities and are intended primarily to serve neighborhood traffic.

The primary purpose of local roads and streets is to provide access to adjoining property, and they are designed to discourage through traffic. They are designed for low speed and low traffic volumes. They provide the first access link between individual properties and the higher mobility roadway system. All other roads in our planning area are local roads and streets, owned either by the County or the town.

Level of Service

The ability of a roadway system to carry traffic is qualitatively measured as Level Of Service (LOS). LOS is based on the ratio of measured volume to design capacity. Levels of service are normally used as a measure of system performance and to define public policy concerning highway performance. They are also used in traffic impact analysis to determine local traffic impacts of proposed developments. LOS is related to the relative degree of congestion, including speed and travel time, traffic interruption and delays, freedom to maneuver, safety, and driving comfort.

- LOS A represents "ideal" conditions of free flow where users are virtually unaffected by others in the traffic stream.
- LOS B represents stable flow, but the presence of other users begins to be noticeable.
- LOS C also represents stable flow, but the presence of others starts to significantly affect individual interactions in the traffic stream.
- LOS D represents high density, but stable flow.

- LOS E represents operating conditions at or near the design capacity of the roadway.

- LOS F is used to define conditions of forced or "breakdown" in traffic flow.

The traffic flow within our planning area functions at LOS A most of the time. However, traffic on Main Street is often at LOS C and worse. Truck traffic, traffic volume and speeding by "out of towners" trying to get through town are our three biggest traffic problems, especially on Main Street.

A good roadway system is essential to the orderly functioning of our town. We depend on our roads for communication, commerce, emergency services, and physical access to our surrounding region and beyond. Too often, transportation planning begins in reaction to a problem. Our Comprehensive Plan and the Planning Act of 1992 suggest that a proactive approach to mobility issues is needed. it is our intent to plan in a manner that defines a coordinated, evolutionary approach toward achieving less reliance on driving alone, in order to enhance the choice, mobility and quality of life for our citizens. Our vision for our future streets and roadways is that they are pleasant to walk along, safe and efficient bike routes are available, and effective incentives for carpools and vanpools are accommodated on a network of roads that moves people and goods efficiently throughout our region, and especially throughout our planning area. The goal must be to shift from moving vehicles to strategies that will result in balancing the need for cars and trucks, transit riders, bike riders, walkers, agricultural operations and emergency services locally with the needs of those passing through on Route 331. We will determine the need for and feasibility of creating a park and ride lot to encourage carpooling. We are interested in working with the County and others to identify appropriate strategies that encourage bicycle usage. Most of our sidewalks are adequate for in town needs. We will ensure that future residential developments add to our existing network of sidewalks by requiring them during subdivision review. We will also look for opportunities to develop less formal designated walking paths and routes utilizing easements and/or "community" parcels.

Traffic counts on Route 331 suggest that much of the traffic that that moves on Main Street originates elsewhere and travels through town toward Federalsburg, Denton, or Easton.. While the counts do not differentiate between truck and automobile trips, they indicate a significant flow toward the east. This suggests destinations in Delaware, the City of Salisbury on the Lower Eastern Shore, and destinations via US Route 13. Route 13 is the main north/south highway linking the Delmarva peninsula with the Wilmington - Philadelphia metroplex to the north and the major port of Norfolk, Virginia to the south. Connections to Interstate 95 are also possible for trips anywhere on the entire east coast and beyond.

Without detailed vehicle surveys, we can't say with certainty where the traffic on Main Street is going or coming from. However, traffic volumes on Rt 331 are second only to Route 404 in Caroline County's east-west travel pattern. Trucking has replaced rail traffic in importance, and this also affects Preston. The Maryland - Delaware Railroad, headquartered in Federalsburg, provides little or no freight traffic on the line running through town. The four freight trains and two passenger trains per day that once stopped in town are gone. We do not expect rail service to regain its former importance. On the other hand, we do not want to lose the rail service. The railroad was a cornerstone in the development of Preston and was instrumental in shaping our early character as a town. We support efforts to maintain the commercial viability of rail service on this line. While the tomato canneries are gone now, bulk rail service is still important for shipping grain from Southern States and Nagel Farm Service grain elevators located along the rail line between Maple Avenue and beyond Back Landing Road. We want to ensure the continued viability of the industrial/commercial uses in town that depend on the railroad.

The main traffic problem we have is that our streets and highways carry both local and through traffic. The Route 331 situation is the most troublesome. It is the main route for regional through traffic and also serves as our Main Street, dividing the north side from the south side of town. The existing built up fabric of curbs, walks, and buildings precludes any practical widening of Main Street. No alternative route exists for diverting heavy truck traffic, general through traffic, or even local traffic. Main Street is serving vehicles and traffic volumes it was not designed for. The capacity of Main Street is not sufficient to absorb additional intown growth and additional through traffic or more big trucks.

To achieve our transportation goals and objectives, we endorse the following policies:

- Design and construction of new roads should be suited to the road's primary function.
- We should avoid development that would result in unacceptable level of service on roads serving the development.
- Roadway capacity on County and State roads should be conserved by limiting and controlling future access points.
- We should use our roadways in conjunction with detailed land use and site planning to create gateways to town that create a definite and welcoming sense of arrival.
- We strongly restate our desire for a new section of Route 331 to allow us to divert truck , farm equipment, and through traffic from Main Street.
- The creation of a bypass should remain in the State Highway Administration's Highway Needs Inventory and be assigned a high priority.
- We should work with County officials and with our Senators and Delegates to ensure our traffic concerns receive favorable and satisfactory consideration.
- *Our preferred bypass alignment is a northern route that would roughly follow the present northern corporate limit line of Preston, passing beyond the end of Noble Avenue and the Board of Education property, and blending smoothly into Route 331 on the north and in the vicinity of Linchester Pond on the south.*
- The bypass should only include one other access point, at Route 16. Potential future development should not be provided access to the bypass.
- A traffic light is needed on Rt. 331. A road connection from the ball field behind the school to Rt. 16 is also needed.

- The parking situation on Main Street should be reviewed periodically to determine whether additional measures need to be taken to improve traffic safety and traffic flow.

- We encourage the strategic placement of bicycle racks and will explore funding options with local businesses, service organizations, and such potential outside sources as federal ISTEA funds.

- We encourage cooperative interjurisdictional planning efforts such as the scenic byways program to facilitate coordinated planning and qualification for federal funds to make regional roadways more attractive and suitable for bicycle usage.

Public Facilities

As discussed in our background section, our public facilities are generally quite adequate. However, we need an aggressive maintenance program to ensure the timely and cost efficient maintenance of our water, sewer, street, and recreation systems. Water pressure and sewerage system inflow and infiltration should be systematically evaluated, problem areas identified, corrective costs estimated, and a comprehensive maintenance schedule adopted that will assist the mayor and council with their capital budgeting responsibilities. Priorities for system extensions follow and reflect our priorities. The County Water and Sewer Plan requires revision.

We should continue our program of sidewalk extensions to eventually encompass every street in town. We should add pedestrian scale street lighting, especially on Main Street. We have constructed James T. Wright park with the assistance of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. We should continue efforts to expand recreational opportunities in town by working with the Lions Club to upgrade and beautify the ball field and tennis courts. We should help the restoration of the mill and millpond at Linchester and creating a regional recreational opportunity there. Additional specific projects may be amended into this Plan from time to time as appropriate.