ST. MICHAELS COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2008

St. Michaels Comprehensive Plan
2008

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements

Introduction and Summary

St. Michaels, A History

Vision Statement

Plan Elements

- Chapter 1: Land Use and Growth Management
- Chapter 2: Municipal Growth Element
- Chapter 3: Environmental Resources and Sensitive Areas Protection
- Chapter 4: Water Resources Element
- Chapter 5: Community Facilities and Public Services
- Chapter 6: Transportation
- Chapter 7: Economic Development
- Chapter 8: Historic and Cultural Resource Protection
- Chapter 9: Parks, Recreation and Open Space
- Chapter 10: Housing
- Chapter 11: Community Character, Design and Appearance
- Chapter 12: Governance and Communications
- Chapter 13: Mineral Resources

COMMISSIONERS OF ST. MICHAELS

Joanne R. Clark, President
Michael W. Brady, Vice President
Robert T. Snyder, Treasurer
Donna P. Hunt
George M. Walish, Jr.

ST. MICHAELS PLANNING COMMISSION

William Rose, Chairman
Glen Albrecht
Dorcas McGuiness
William Frost
Aida Khalil

ST. MICHAELS TOWN MANAGER

Cheril S. Thomas

ST. MICHAELS CODES ENFORCEMENT OFFICER/ZONING INSPECTOR

Deborah A. Renshaw

ST. MICHAELS TOWN STAFF

Jean Weisman
Kim Shellem
Dorothy Olley
Sabrenia L. Yohn
Suzanna Warnick
Pamela Newell

Additional Assistance was provided by

Mark Cahoon, Talbot County GIS Manager
St. Michaels Police Department
The Merchants and Business Owners of St. Michaels
Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum
Jeff Richardson, St. Michaels Department of Public Works
Ray Clarke, Talbot County Engineer

The Residents of St. Michaels

Consulting assistance was provided by
KCI Technologies, Inc.

Acknowledgments

The Commissions and Boards of the Town of St. Michaels met throughout the process of developing this Comprehensive Plan and their individual contributions to this document represent hundreds of hours of work. Their responsible dedication in addressing the many and complex issues facing the Town assures this document reflects the wide range of views they collectively brought to the planning process and the consensus they achieved in establishing an implementation framework. These Commissions and Boards volunteered countless hours in the preparation of this plan and their commitment to the process is hereby acknowledged.

The members of the St. Michaels Board of Appeals

Barry Gillman, Chairman
Harold Britt
Alexandra Drobnick
Gary Van Vlandren, Alternate

The members of the St. Michaels Historic District Commission

Peter Lesher, Chairman
Alan Meyers
Christian Chute
Marian Thomsen Brown, Vice Chairman
Steve Florkewicz

The members of the St. Michaels Parks & Recreation Advisory Board

Marie Wroten, Chairman
Morris Osborn
Deborah Colborn, Secretary
Marie Martin

The Executive Board of the St. Michaels Business Administration

Jim Camarata, Vice President
Irene Pasta
Carol Parlett

Introduction and Summary

The Comprehensive Plan is the result of thoughtful discussions and effort by many citizens to focus on the Town's long-range future, balancing many desires with what is in the best interest of the community. The Comprehensive Plan is a guide for public officials and citizens. The Plan presents a future vision for St. Michaels in the year of 2028 and beyond, and outlines a framework for consistent decision-making that would bring that vision to fruition. The Plan presents recommendations that are well-reasoned and feasible. It gives citizens an active role in planning, encourages greater cooperation between the Town and Talbot County and provides strong recommendations for the protection of the Town's historic nature, its sensitive environmental resources and rural surroundings.

I. LEGAL BASIS FOR PLANNING

St. Michaels is a Chartered Municipality and as such derives its authority for planning from Article 66B of the Annotated Code of Maryland (Zoning and Planning). Portions of Article 66B set forth the minimum requirements for a Comprehensive Plan which shall include, among other things:

- A statement of goals and objectives/vision element;
- A land use plan element;
- A transportation plan element;
- A community facilities plan element;
- A mineral resources plan element (if applicable);
- A sensitive area element;
- A historic preservation element;
- A community character element;
- A municipal growth element;
- A water resources element

The context for planning for future development in the Town of St. Michaels must also take into consideration the role that the Town will play in implementing the overall growth management policies established by the State of Maryland in the State's Economic Growth, Resource Protection, and Planning Act of 1992. These policies, stated as "Visions" for the future, include:

- Development is concentrated in suitable areas;
- Sensitive areas are protected;
- Growth is directed to existing population centers and resource areas are protected in rural areas;
- Stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay and the land is a universal ethic;
- Conservation of resources is practiced;
- Economic growth is encouraged and regulatory mechanisms are streamlined;

- Adequate public facilities and infrastructure under the control of the county or municipal corporation are available or planned in areas where growth is to occur
- Funding mechanisms are in place to achieve all visions

Under the Charter of St. Michaels, the Planning Commission makes advisory recommendation to the Commissioners relating to the Comprehensive Plan. The Commissioners have the ultimate authority to determine the content of the Comprehensive Plan, taking the Planning Commission's advisory recommendations into account.

II. PURPOSE OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The St. Michaels Comprehensive Plan is an official public document adopted by the Commissioners of St. Michaels. The Plan is a long-range guide for growth, land use and development decisions in the Town. It is also a guide for other growth and development-related decisions and how it should be used. Additionally, the plan will help the Town determine when and where lands should be annexed and where new public facilities and improvements are needed.

The Plan is comprehensive in that it covers a broad range of elements that are related to development. The Plan is long-range because it outlines a vision of what the Town should be like in ten or more years and sets out a framework for how that vision can be implemented.

The majority of Plan policies focuses on the next twenty years and provides guidance for investment and development decisions. These policies can be amended as new information becomes available, or to address a specific change in circumstances without straying from the basic goals of the Plan. The Plan is not a static document and should be updated on a regular basis.

Although the Comprehensive Plan is adopted as an official Town document, it is not an ordinance. The Plan sets the framework and basis for the Town's Zoning and Subdivision Regulations and other development regulations. The Plan will also serve as the basis for amendments to the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations to ensure that the Town's goals are implemented through the regulatory process.

Measurable positive results are required as The Town of St. Michaels progresses toward achieving the Vision. A monitoring program compares baseline data and the goals and objectives of the plan, against actual and proposed changes.

St. Michaels, A History.

The earliest mention of St. Michaels by name is in a legal action of 1680 to collect on a bet on a horse race. Earlier, a log building, the first chapel of today's Christ Episcopal Church, was erected on the site of the present church. The parish was named "St. Michaels" after the Archangel, St. Michael. St. Michaels also became the name of the village, the church, and the river (although the river's name was eventually changed to Miles). The actual settlement and development of the Town of St. Michaels did not occur until the middle of the eighteenth century. As with many early settlement churches, the Anglican (now Episcopalian) churches of the time were rural churches designed to be in the center of scattered settlement and not in an identifiable village. St. Michaels is one of the few Eastern Shore communities that actually grew up around its church.

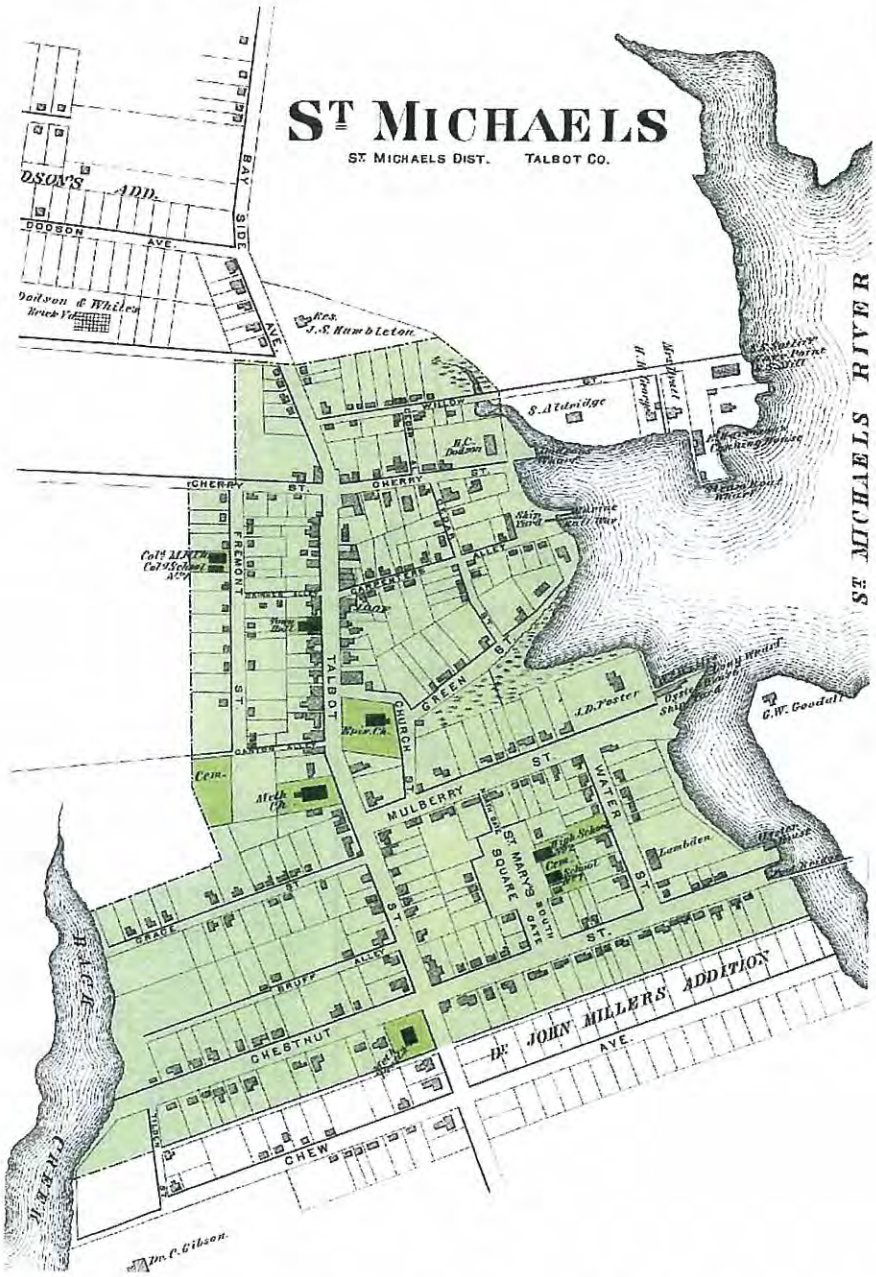
The Town of St. Michaels was laid out as a community by James Braddock in the late 1770s. As an agent for a British merchant firm, Braddock had access to financing and a motive for acquiring the rights of the largest landowner, shipbuilder Philip Wetheral, when he died in 1774. Braddock laid out the town on the land he bought from Wetheral's estate and devised a town system of thirty-six lots around a central square. That first square is St. Mary's Square. He also laid twenty-two other lots on Church Cove and on land along our present harbor. An interesting feature of Braddock's plan was a special reserved lot for a Methodist church. At the time, Methodism was a breakaway sect from the British crown supported Anglican Church. Braddock's town was successful and in 1806, the Town was granted its first charter by the State of Maryland. By 1783, twenty lots had been sold and several houses built. By 1800, St. Michaels boasted at least thirty dwellings. The first two decades of the nineteenth century saw the construction of Federal style homes on Talbot and Mulberry Streets and by the second quarter of the nineteenth-century prosperity led to expansion beyond the original boundaries laid down by James Braddock. Development spread north along Talbot Street and into the area of Carpenter Street and Cherry Street. On the south and west side of Town, houses were built in Thompson's Square and Miller's Addition.

St. Michaels continued to grow economically during the first years of the nineteenth century. The main activity was shipbuilding and many of the Town's residents were employed in the yards or in support activities. Swift schooners, known as "Baltimore Clippers," were built in St. Michaels. A clipper brig called the "John Gilpin," launched from the harbor in 1830, set a trans-Pacific speed record which stood for thirteen years, sailing to Canton, China from Callao, Peru.

The importance of the shipyards was demonstrated by the need to protect them from British attack during the War of 1812. An attempt was made to capture the Town and its shipyards in 1813. This raid was repulsed and the shipyards and the Town saved from further efforts by the British to destroy the yards. However, changes in the national economy and the rise of Baltimore as a ship building town made it difficult for St. Michaels to compete in shipbuilding and the town went through a period of little growth.

The 1850s brought the beginnings of commercial oystering and fishing in the Chesapeake Bay and in the other rivers of the Eastern Shore. Oystering brought renewed prosperity and a new round of shipbuilding for that industry. Other types of vessels crafted at the boatyards of St. Michaels included pungys, schooners, bugeyes, and skipjacks. Many of these designs are unique to the

Chesapeake Bay. The area also began to see the development of canneries and processing plants for oysters and later for crabs. Vegetable canneries also became important to the local economy and to farmers in the region.



The street system and structural fabric of St. Michaels Downtown and surrounding area have changed very little since 1877 as shown here.

By 1877 the Town showed considerable growth including the development of the northwestern section and the central western area which now makes up the business district. With the exception of growth to the south and west of Town, St. Michaels has changed very little in structural character and design during the past century. Those changes were captured on an agricultural atlas that was published for the Eastern Shore counties in that year, as displayed above.

The extension of the railroad into Talbot County and the advent of steamships stimulated agriculture and fishing by opening markets to the north and across the Bay. In the 1870's, the Episcopal and Methodist congregations built large churches on Talbot Street, and in 1895 the New Union Methodist Episcopal Church was built at the corner of Fremont Street and Railroad Avenue.

By the 1890s, the Town's population had grown to 1,200 people. St. Michaels continued to grow in the twentieth century, with many bungalows constructed on the south side of Town before the Depression and a number of colonial revival and ranch-style houses built after World War II. However, the 2007 population was 1,176, evidence of the changing demographics in the Town with many new retirees and second home owners.

Talbot Street, the commercial and main street of St. Michaels, has been the scene of business activity since the eighteenth century. Although no buildings remain from that period, the nineteenth-century buildings which line Talbot Street today reflect the influence of architectural styles from the Colonial and Federal periods as well as Greek Revival, Italianate, Gothic Revival and Queen Anne periods. With the exception of a few large public buildings, the architecture of Talbot Street was scaled to residential and pedestrian standards, although evidence exists of combined residential and commercial use from the beginning.

Photographs of Talbot Street from the early twentieth century show large, graceful trees arched over rows of houses and shops with brick sidewalks and an oyster shell roadway in front. The spires of the Episcopal and Methodist churches towered above everything, as they do today. The character of Talbot Street changed radically when modern improvements - -water/sewer, curbs, asphalt paving, and utility poles -- resulted in the removal of these trees. By the 1920's, Talbot Street looked much as it does today.

The twentieth century brought other changes to St. Michaels. The Canneries and the watermen were economic mainstays but tourism began to play a role in the economy of the Town. The Claiborne Ferry and the construction of the railroad from the ferry to Ocean City helped showcase St. Michaels to visitors from the Western Shore of Maryland. They started to stop in Town and commercial and other services began to cater to their needs. One of the principal reasons for the continued tourist industry in St. Michaels has been the presence and expansion of the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum, a significant asset to the Town. Currently both the Museum and the shops in the business district continue to attract thousands of visitors on a yearly basis.

Our Vision for St. Michaels

This Vision and the vision statements that introduce each chapter reflect the intended direction of St. Michaels' land use decision making.

The primary goal of the St. Michaels Comprehensive Plan is to preserve the Historic Character, the Quality of Life of the Town and to promote Environmental Stewardship while protecting the health, safety and well being of its residents and visitors. Recognizing that the overall environment is an important economic asset of the Town, protection of our lands and waterways is a high priority. Ensuring that our harbor, rivers, creeks and their fragile eco-systems are protected is critical, as is maintaining the high quality of our Town's infrastructure. The livability and economic vitality of our town, along with our Historic Character and cultural amenities are highly valued.

Our vision is that St. Michaels creates and sustains a year-round business district, provides a greater housing diversity to meet a broader range of resident needs and provides opportunities for economic development. We address traffic congestion and place more emphasis on connectivity, mobility and alternative modes of transport to the automobile, while maintaining high quality public facilities and emergency services that meet the needs of our residents, businesses and visitors.

Additionally, our vision is that St. Michaels continues to protect its centuries old character by complementing its natural waterways on the east and west with greenways. St. Michaels also maintains gateways at the north and south edges of town to provide a quality visual image at the entrances to the Town and act as a buffer between the Town's more densely-development areas and its environments for everyone traveling to and from our Town.

Our comprehensive planning, land use decisions and growth management strategies are all oriented to sustaining and enhancing this unique waterfront town.

DEFINITIONS

Vision Statement. A statement that communicates a compelling vision of the future that is critical to implementing strategies and that answers the question "What will success look like in the effective implementation of the St. Michaels Comprehensive Plan?"

Quality of Life is a condition of one's existence that can be improved or degraded by land use decisions based on this Comprehensive Plan. For the purpose of this document, Quality of Life includes: wildlife; clean water in the Bay and its tributaries; clean air; sufficient, potable water in our aquifers; a low level of crime; employment opportunities; the relative absence of traffic congestion and excessive noise; access to diverse cultural, employment, recreational, education and entertainment activities; convenient access to goods and services and an ethic of personal involvement.

Historic Character. The character or "identity" of a district is established by its form, size, scale and architectural features. Preservation of the integrity of a district or town is based on the retention of historic features, craftsmanship and the tangible evidence of its cultural heritage.

Environmental Stewardship is the philosophy and accompanying actions of valuing and protecting the environment as something held in trust for future generations.

Chapter 1:
Land Use and Growth Management

INTRODUCTION

The Land Use Plan provides the means to integrate the various planning goals and objectives into a comprehensive guide for development. The St. Michaels Land Use Plan is the fundamental element that will determine the Town's future pattern of growth and development, Map 1-1 represents the current zoning classifications within the incorporated limits of St. Michaels.

The Town Land Use Plan graphically represents the desired land use pattern for St. Michaels and serves as the basis for delineating zoning districts. This pattern is based in large part on an interest in maintaining historic settlement patterns and the character of St. Michaels as it exists today. Future growth and development in and adjacent to the Town should generally be in conformance with the Build Out Analysis Map contained in Chapter 2 of this Plan and the Land Use Objectives and Implementation Strategies established herein.

St. Michaels is characterized by its unique waterfronts, harbors, public parks, and historic structures. The growth areas identified in the foregoing paragraph are planned to complement this ambience.

EXISTING LAND USE

Residential Areas

While less than half of the Town's land is devoted to residential use, almost 85% of our residential land could be considered low-density residential, characterized by single family homes on half acre lots or smaller. However, as an older community, St. Michaels has many homes and entire neighborhoods that are on very small and/or narrow lots. This gives many sections of town an urban feel while still lying in the rural setting of Maryland's Eastern Shore. The majority of the older multi-family residences are scattered throughout Town within a block of Talbot Street. A 28-unit public housing project is located near Fremont and Dodson Avenues. A 27-unit project containing predominantly elderly housing is located near the southern entrance to Town on the east side of MD Route 33. A refurbished former school building on the north end of Town contains 16 rental units.

Residential Gateways

On the north end of town, beginning with the Perry Cabin ball fields to the west and (in the event of annexation) Yacht Club Road to the east, the Town intends to use the Residential Gateway Zone to preserve the existing rural appearance up to the current edges of town development. This

area allows for an entrance into the Town that is gradual and in the same character as the downtown area. This gateway zone also acts as a transition to the Talbot County Countryside Preservation Zone, the purpose of which is to slow sprawl by creating a greenbelt. Heatherington Harbor and Hatton's Gardens, on the south side of the Town, exemplify the residential gateway neighborhoods.

Agricultural Areas

Proximity to agricultural activities helps to anchor the rural setting of St. Michaels and plays an important role in defining the Town's character and sense of place. The transition from agriculture to developed Town density establishes a sense of arrival and is crucial in defining the feel of the Town.

Commercial Areas

St. Michaels has two dominant areas of commercial activity. One commercial section is situated along both sides of Talbot Street, providing the majority of goods and services for the day-to-day needs of residents and contains most of the shops as well as some restaurants that appeal to tourists. A second area of commercial activity is located adjacent to the harbor. Larger restaurants, inns, and the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum are there. There is another growing area of commercial activity along Fremont and Conner Streets, where redevelopment is beginning to take hold. Future revitalization of this area will extend the downtown commercial area of Talbot Street west to include the area from Fremont Street to Conner Street.

Museums

The impact of the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum on the Town of St. Michaels is substantial. Overwhelmingly the largest business in Town, the museum occupies more than 18 acres on its waterfront campus, 18%, of the waterfront on St. Michaels Harbor, which carries a special Museum zoning designation. The campus occupies eight percent of the total land area in Town. The museum has added buildings at a steady pace in the last few years and a new entrance and new parking facilities.

The St. Michaels Museum at Mary's Square continues to provide the Town with a window to its past form and character.

Maritime Commercial Uses

The Town has a special category of commercial land use related to our waterfront setting; Maritime Commercial, including commercial activities that are water dependent by their nature. They include

boatyards, fuel docks, marinas, and restaurants and inns that have docks and landings. Areas designated for loading and unloading of commercial shellfish and fin fish should be protected by appropriate zoning and other regulations. Existing commercial activity on our harbor should be protected by limiting commercial waterfront uses in these commercially zoned areas.

Both our Critical Area Program and the Waterways Management Ordinance address water dependent uses and the nature of existing and future development along our waterfront. The policies of those plans are incorporated here by reference.

Industrial Areas

Much of the industrial activity that existed in the 1970's has ceased. Some limited manufacturing still occurs in the old mill complex on Talbot Street between East Marengo and East Chew. Boat building, electrical fabrication, power generation, and milling either no longer occur or are done at much lower levels of activity. One boat yard has been replaced by the St. Michaels Harbor Inn, reflecting the changing focus away from industry and toward tourism.

The 2007 land use pattern in Town is summarized in Table 1-1.

Table 1-1
Existing Land Use – 2007
Town of St. Michaels Zoning Area Calculation

Zone	Area Sq. Ft	Acres
A (Agricultural)	7,280,572	167.14
CC (Central Commercial)	962,865	22.10
LC (Limited Commercial)	118,562	2.72
MC (Maritime Commercial)	202,302	4.64
MM (Maritime Museum)	944,127	21.67
NC (Neighborhood Commercial)	235,132	5.40
PF (Public Facilities Zone)	55,063	1.26
PR (Planned Re-development)	93,810	2.15
R-1 (Residential 1 Single Family)	16,894,901	387.85
R2 (Residential 2 Two Family)	1,367,693	31.40
R3 (Residential 3)	269,186	6.18
SL (Select Light Commercial)	155,225	3.56
WD (Waterfront Development)	492,634	11.31
RG (Residential Gateway)	3,454,831	79.312
Total Town Acres		746.70

VISION

St. Michaels is a town, which, through coordinated land use management practices, will succeed in protecting and perpetuating its historic character.

OBJECTIVES AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

1.1 Preserve the Town's unique historic identity in the larger landscape.

1.1.1 Support the County's greenbelt concept to define town edges and to guarantee that County development along the borders of the town do not detract from the community's image.

1.1.2 Participate in Talbot County's Technical Advisory Committee, providing the Commissioners and Planning Commission an opportunity to comment on any land subdivision or development proposals in locations near town.

1.1.3 Consistent with Article 66B, as amended in 2006, establish a process with the County, similar to their existing technical advisory committee, for the purpose of development, annexation and/or rezoning of land within the Town's "Areas of Interest".

- Rezone the area west of MD 33 from the County ball fields to the Town's current northern boundary at Rolles Range Road to Residential Gateway.
- Rezone all gateway areas to Residential Gateway in the event they are not full developed.
- Review the zoning of the undeveloped area south of Railroad Avenue at Chesapeake and Miles Avenues.

1.1.4 On the approaches to Town along MD Route 33, zone properties Residential Gateway, preserving the existing limits of the urban development pattern.

1.2 Ensure management tools for Town growth are adequate and effectively employed.

1.2.1. Adopt applicable ordinances and fees governing the necessary services and additional community facilities, including but not limited to stormwater management, public water, public sewer, infrastructures, parks, open space, roads and public landscaping, to accommodate planned growth.

1.2.2 Establish appropriate measures to minimize environmental impacts particularly stormwater management.

1.2.3 Evaluate policies to ensure that developers pay for all the direct and associated costs of development as well as for independent studies of development impacts when such studies are determined by the Town Commissioners to be necessary. This may be accomplished through the

use of development rights and regulations as necessary.

1.2.4 Develop a Public Facilities Ordinance to include appropriate measures, i.e. permit planned growth to proceed at a rate that will not impact the Towns' finances.

1.2.5 Support appropriate infill and mixed-use development projects that are compatible with the existing community fabric.

1.3 Ensure Town regulations are effective, enforced, and simplified to the extent possible.

1.3.1 Review permitting processes and procedures.

- Conduct a comprehensive review of the Zoning Ordinance.
- Conduct a comprehensive review of the Subdivision Ordinance..

1.3.2 Establish a site plan review process for structural alterations and/or additions to commercial and industrial structures as well as, public buildings and facilities.

1.3.3 Strengthen enforcement through the employment of an assistant to the Code Enforcement Officer.

1.4 Enhance the appearance of the commercial districts on the ends of town along MD Route 33.

1.4.1 Replace the current Limited Commercial (LC) and Neighborhood Commercial (NC) zoning with a Commercial Gateway Zone; expand the range of permitted uses, while establishing landscaping requirements and more uniform building standards.

1.4.2 Consider rezoning the northeast corner of the Hatton's Garden property to Commercial Gateway in order to permit a welcome center, trolley station, and associated parking as permitted uses.

1.4.3 Along the southern approach to town, work with the County to implement and strengthen its gateway zoning and to restrict any expansion of this commercial district or intensification of its table of approved uses.

1.4.4 Participate with the County in its preapplication conferences (TAC).

1.4.5 Consider conversion of R-3 areas south of the Town to the Commercial Gateway zone, if established, or to Neighborhood Commercial.

1.4.6 Consider other zoning classifications consistent with surrounding areas for selected light commercial areas.

1.5 Support redevelopment of the Mill as a mixed-use project.

1.5.1 Review the Planned Redevelopment Area zoning provisions as set out in the Section 340 of the Code of the Town of St. Michaels to protect surrounding residential neighborhoods from potential impacts of activities and consider additional uses if they are compatible with the surrounding residential setting.

- Amend Chapter 340 of the Code of the Town of St. Michaels to include landscaping, off-site parking, hours of operation, noise abatement and limitations and placement of permitted uses.

- Establish parking requirements for the Planned Redevelopment Area zone (§340-34 Off-Street Parking of the Code of the Town of St. Michaels)

1.6 Support the establishment of an Urban Renewal Area.

1.6.1 Establish urban renewal areas for those areas within the Central Commercial Zone of Fremont, Conner and Canton Streets, as well as other commercial areas where appropriate, **Map 1-1**.

1.6.2 Evaluate the best use of Town properties which carry a Central Commercial classification.

1.7 Examine the zoning structure for the downtown area.

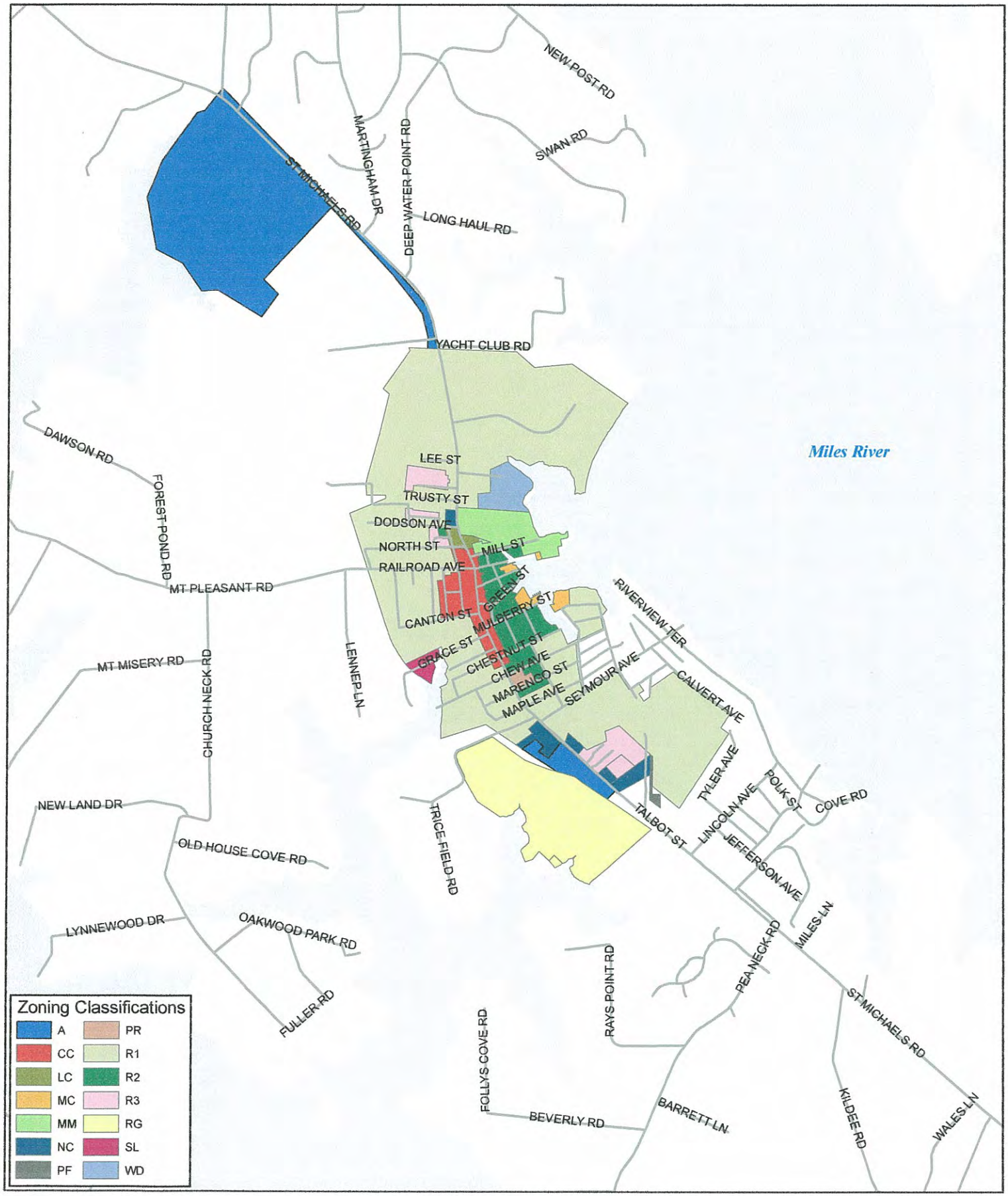
1.7.1 Create a Commercial Gateway Zone which could be utilized in the north and south commercial approaches to the Town. *(Currently underway)*

1.7.2 Amend the Town's Zoning Ordinances

- To promote the use of second and third floor residential use of downtown buildings (§340-22 Neighborhood Commercial Zone, §340-26 Central Commercial Zone, §340-30 Limited Commercial Zone, and §340-34 Off-street Parking of the Code of the Town of St Michaels.

- To allow for the conversion of single family dwelling units to multi-family units in the commercial zones.

2008 Comprehensive Plan
St. Michaels, Maryland



Map 1-1 Town of St. Michaels Land Area
by Zoning Classification

Chapter 2:
Municipal Growth Element

Introduction

Recent amendments to Article 66B now require that all municipalities exercising zoning authority develop a municipal growth element. The purpose of this element is to attempt to quantify the potential impact of growth that may occur as a result of potential annexations beyond the existing municipal boundaries. After completion of this element (but no later than October 2009), an area may not be annexed by the Town of St. Michaels unless the impact of that annexation has been analyzed as part of this element. That is, inclusion of an area in this element is a ***prerequisite*** for any consideration of annexation in the future, until this Plan is amended. On the other hand, the fact that an area has been included in this element ***does not commit*** the Town of St. Michaels to proceed with an annexation for any particular area. Those decisions will be made by the Commissioners of the Town of St. Michaels on a case by case basis.

The Municipal Growth Element seeks to analyze potential growth in the Town of St. Michaels and potential growth areas based on existing and projected land use policies. It will assess how that growth will impact existing and future facilities and services. Instead of using traditional population projections, which can become inaccurate over time due to the change of growth rates, this growth element seeks to understand how full build-out conditions in the Town and possible annexation areas would affect the Town's services and infrastructure. Many of the areas considered for annexation, as well as the Town itself, have current residents, but still offer the possibility of population growth consistent with existing zoning and future zoning for potential annexation areas.

Substantial growth in and around the Town of St. Michaels may cause impacts to the many public services already granted to Town residents. Currently anticipated growth, on the whole, will not cause the need for expansion of public facilities/services, but in the event that the Town builds out, there may be impacts on schools, new parks may be needed, water and sewage capacity may need to be increased and more police officers may be required. Population estimates based on build-out conditions will therefore be analyzed in reference to public schools, libraries, public safety, water and sewer, recreation, stormwater management, rural buffers and transitional areas, outside area impacts, the protection of sensitive areas, and the impact this growth may have on the future vision of St. Michaels.

The Talbot County Comprehensive Plan states that incorporated towns are the best possible location to focus future growth be it residential, commercial or industrial. This is due to the presence of existing infrastructure for development, as well as the existing opportunities for infill and redevelopment.

Analysis of Development Capacity and Build-Out Conditions

Build-out numbers were generated using the analytical processes within Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and Microsoft Excel to calculate buildable area on existing lots. This included taking inventory of lands within the Town boundary, as well as land within each of the possible annexation areas planned for residential growth. Environmental constraints were then applied to the land area and buildable area was re-calculated. Population estimates were generated from the average number of people per dwelling in the Town of St. Michaels. If the demographics of St. Michaels should significantly change, the population estimates generated may not accurately account for growth.

To create a baseline for assessing the differences between the existing Town boundary and any possible annexation area, build-out numbers were generated for the Town of St. Michaels simulating infill and community redevelopment. It was assumed that areas within existing residential zones would experience infill development where possible. After all the data was gathered, as detailed above, the number of existing dwellings was subtracted from the total possible dwellings the parcel could sustain, creating the build-out number for that parcel. For areas already built to its designated density, or previously developed at a higher density, the total buildable area was zero. The total build-out of the Town would add another 491 dwellings, totaling an additional 1,065 people, bringing the total population to 2,241 people.

The same process was then applied to each possible annexation area, using the St. Michaels' zoning category that would most likely apply. Again, once total build-out numbers were generated, environmental constraints were applied and final build-out numbers were created. If the area includes a subdivision with a maximum lot size, the maximum number of lots was used in place of area-generated build-out totals.

Table 2-1: Build-out Results for Possible Annexation Areas

Reference Name	*Proposed Zoning*	*Use*	*Density*	*Total Dwellings (permitted)*	*Existing Dwellings*	*Dwelling Balance*
In-Town	N/A	N/A	N/A	1143	652	491
Area 1	Agriculture B	Part of Miles Point	Maximum 2 lots	2	2	0
Area 2	Agriculture B	Greenway	1 du./ 20 acres	2	2	0
Area 3	Residential Gateway (RG)	Heatherington Harbor	Maximum 5 lots	5	1	4
Area A	Residential Gateway (RG)	Large Lot Residential	1 du./ 5 acres	9	9	0
Area B	Agriculture B	Greenway	1 du./ 20 acres	12	12	0
Area C	Residential Gateway (RG)	Large Lot Residential	1 du./ 5 acres	7	5	2
Area F	Residential Gateway (RG)	Tricefields	Maximum 21 lots	21	20	1

Rio Vista Area	Residential (R1)	Rio Vista	1 du./ 7200 square feet	422	379	43
Pea Neck	Residential (R1)	Residential	1 du./ 7200 square feet	60	60	0
Annexation Area Sub-Totals				540	490	50
Totals				1682	1142	541

Potential Future Growth Areas – Areas of Interest

Each potential annexation area listed in the table above is defined below in location and importance to the Town, Map 2-1. The areas designated with a number represent areas of interest to the Town of St. Michaels; whereas, areas designated with a letter represent County designated Growth Areas. Some residential growth is anticipated in these areas.

Area 1

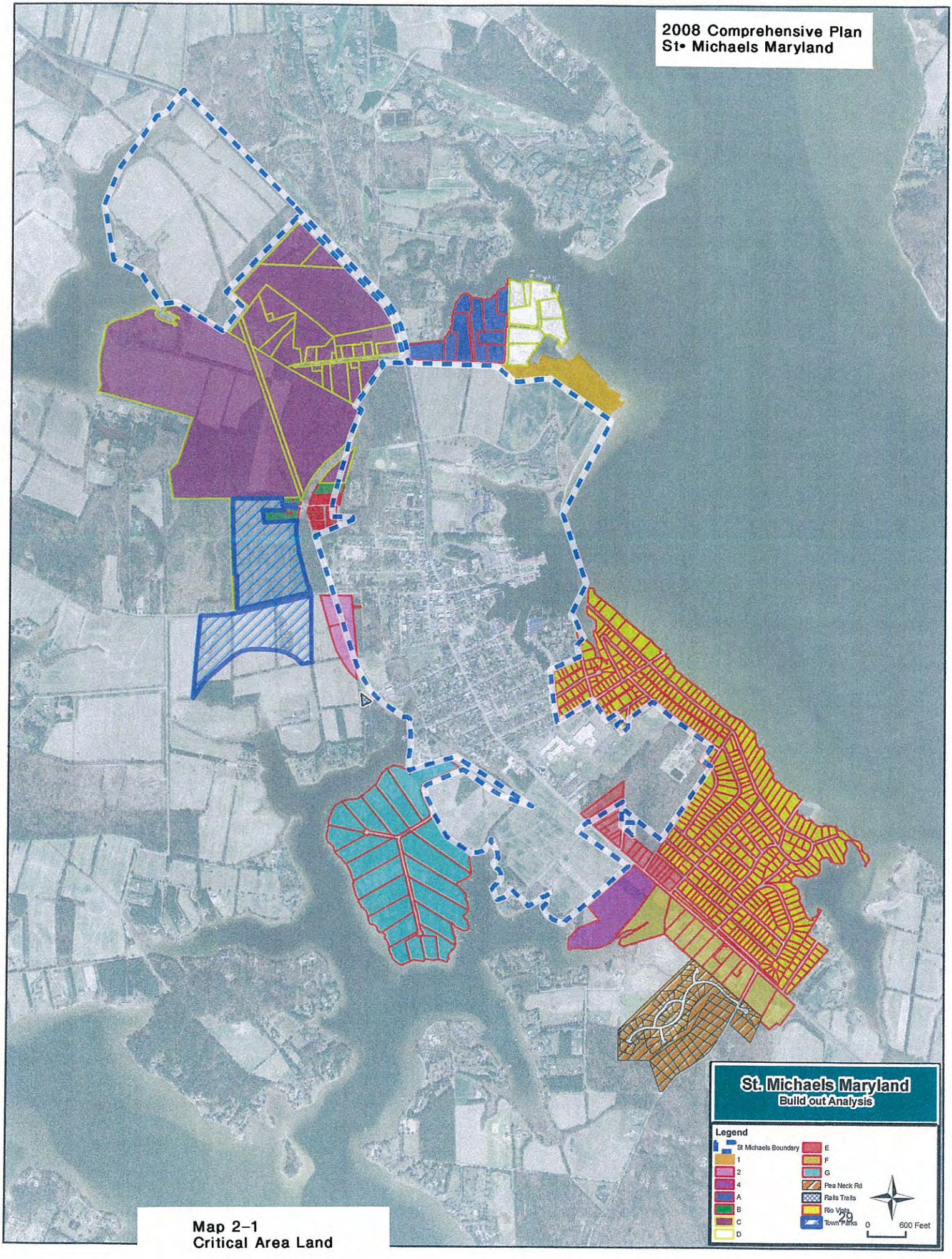
Area 1 has traditionally been referred to as the Hunteman Property. This area has formerly been considered for annexation as part of the proposed Miles Point Development, occurring adjacent to the site's southern boundary. The Town of St. Michaels proposes annexation of the property as an integral part of the Miles Point Development. Adding the Hunteman Property to the Miles Point Development property will generate only two additional lots to the total of the Miles Point Development, though the analysis does not speak to the distribution of lots within the Miles Point Development and over this property. Therefore, for the build-out analysis, this area was given a maximum dwelling count of two units. Talbot County designates this area as Countryside Preservation, allowing low-density residential, open space, resource conservation, and agriculture uses.

Area 2

Area 2 is identified for future annexation to extend the Town of St. Michaels boundary along its western edge, corresponding with the location of a proposed bypass/parkway. This addition to the Town will facilitate management of growth in this area to limit development along any future traffic relief route, avoiding any commercial development that would adversely impact the Town Business District. This area was calculated using the Agriculture B zoning, allowing one dwelling per 20 acres. This zone was used due to the importance of the property as a greenbelt or as an area to extend the Town trail system.

Area 3

Area 3 is known as Heatherington Harbor, located south of the Town of St. Michaels adjacent to the Hatton's Garden subdivision. Should this area be annexed, it will be developed in accordance with Residential Gateway zoning. This area is important to retain as it is prime residential land that will likely extend from the Hatton's Garden subdivision. Annexing this property would allow preservation of the gateway into the Town. This area is designated as Countryside Preservation in the Talbot County



Map 2–1
Critical Area Land

Comprehensive Plan, allowing for low-density rural residential uses. In the build-out, Heatherington Harbor is seen as producing only five lots maximum, which corresponds with Countryside Preservation.

Areas of Mutual Interest to the Town and County

There are, however, other areas of interest that are included due to the Town's interest in them for possible greenbelt land and recreational areas. Talbot County has designated many of those areas as Countryside Preservation to create a greenbelt and reduce residential sprawl. The primary desire for annexation is to increase the amount of waterfront park area available to Town Residents. The park will allow for both passive and active uses.

Area A

Area A is located within the planning area around the Town of St. Michaels, just north of Yacht Club Road. This area is located within Talbot County's Countryside Preservation Zone and is currently developed in a large lot estate subdivision. No changes are planned for this area, but homes have individual septic systems to treat wastewater. Consideration should be given to the extension of public wastewater and stormwater facilities to this area to avoid future water quality problems in Long Haul Creek and the Miles River. Within this area, the current intersection of Yacht Club Road and MD Route 33 may also require intersection improvements to support traffic flow if and when the St. Michaels' relief route is constructed. If this area is annexed, the applicable zoning would be Residential Gateway (RG), which would allow for further divisions, unless expressly stated in the property's covenants and restrictions. For the purpose of analyzing possible impacts to St. Michaels' facilities and services, build-out was calculated in this area at the residential density of one dwelling per 5 acres.

Area B

This area lies between the Strausburg Property and Chester Park. This area would connect the Strausburg Property more directly with the Town of St. Michaels and also allow for waterfront connections between the Town and Broad Creek. This site is also designated Countryside Preservation by Talbot County, but would be annexed by the Town to reinforce a greenbelt around the developed portions of the town. For this reason, build-out was calculated for Area C at one dwelling per 20 acres.

Area C

Area C is located adjacent to Area A, north of Yacht Club Road. Area C specifically includes the Miles River Yacht Club. This area is also a large lot subdivision, with no future plans for change. However, if it is annexed, the resulting zoning would be Residential Gateway (RG), allowing potential for one dwelling per 5 acres. The Miles River Yacht Club will remain a nonconforming use within the residential zone.

Area D

This area includes land east of Route 33, at the south end of Town, which defines the entrance or gateway to the Town of St. Michaels. A mix of uses is located including a

shopping center, gas station, and antique sales among others. Within this area, redevelopment over time should be designed to enhance the character of this Town Gateway which serves as the front door to St. Michaels. Since this property currently sustains non-residential development, the build-out analysis was not applied to this property.

Area E

Area E includes land west of Route 33 at the south end of the Town of St. Michaels. This area was recently included in the new Gateway Zone District established by the County. This area also serves at the front door to St. Michaels and the character of development in the future will say much about the Town. Within this area, the Town, County and State should encourage redevelopment to enhance the area's image. This redevelopment might include improved access control, a possible service road, improved landscape treatment along Route 33 and the relocation of boats and vehicles for sale that currently abut the corridor. This area does not include residential development, so this property was also not included in the build-out analysis.

Area F

This area encompasses the existing community of Tricefields. Residents are dependent on utilization of Boundary Lane, a Town Street, for access to and from their community. Tricefields is already developed in large lot estate form and is adjacent to the Town's Hatton's Garden subdivision. Any future consideration of annexation of this area should correspond to extension of public wastewater treatment facilities to reduce septic system use in the area. This area was allowed a maximum of 21 lots for the build-out analysis under the Residential Gateway (RG) zone.

Rio Vista/Bentley Hay

Rio Vista/Bentley Hay is adjacent to the Town, southeast of Historic St. Michaels and adjacent to the Miles River. When the community of Rio Vista was developed and gained connection to the Town water system, agreements were signed that made future annexation of those areas an option available to the Town of St. Michaels. Rio Vista is included in the municipal growth area and in this analysis to retain that option given the new requirements of Article 66B and the effects of those requirements on future annexations. This area lies within the Talbot County Growth Area. This area would become a residential gateway to the Town and allow for a large amount of residential growth. For the purposes of analysis, build-out was calculated at a density of one dwelling per 7,200 square feet.

Pea Neck

This area encompasses an existing subdivision south and west of the Town of St. Michaels. The subdivision is adjacent to Area F, designated as a Commercial Gateway into St. Michaels. This area will be a residential gateway extension from Area F. This area includes 60 lots that are already built-out; therefore no additional lots were calculated in the build-out analysis.

Nature Trail

This area is located west of the center of Town, which will offer quality land to further develop the trail system through St. Michaels. This area would be designated as open space or greenway to retain the aesthetic environmental quality. Additionally, the trail system would be extended through this parcel to offer a more extensive and valuable trail system. The Town sees this area as strictly trail lands, so the applicable zoning was determined to be Public Facilities (PF) allowing no build-out growth allocated for the analysis.

Town Parks

Town Parks lies west of the Town of St. Michaels and immediately north from the Rails Trails area. The property will be used to extend the acreage and park system of the Town, while offering recreation opportunities for residents. This land will remain open space or parkland, under the Public Facilities (PF) zone, with no build-out growth allocated for the build-out analysis.

Assessment of Impacts on Infrastructure and Services

This section describes the impact of build-out conditions on existing public facilities and services in the Town of St. Michaels. The information discussed here includes just the analysis of the proposed growth, by individual areas and as a total; however, the information is further discussed in ancillary chapters of the Comprehensive Plan. To reduce overlap, general descriptions of the facilities can be viewed under the Community Facilities and Public Services chapter of this plan.

Public Schools

St. Michaels' students attend the St. Michaels School Complex, housing an elementary and middle/high school. These schools can account for a State Rated Capacity of 491 and 503 students, respectively. Currently, there is some room to accommodate additional students that may move into the Town.

The calculations for public school impacts use a rate of 0.2 elementary school students per dwelling, and a rate of 0.25 middle/high school students per dwelling. If the Town of St. Michaels were to reach full build-out, the total number of students would rise to 552 elementary school students and 690 middle/high school students, creating the utilization rates of 112 percent and 137 percent, respectively. In the event of full build-out in the Town, additional school capacity would be needed, either by adding portable classrooms or expanding the existing facilities. Due to the school complex's proximity to residents, re-aligning the school district boundary would be unlikely to alleviate the capacity issue. It should be noted that because of the substantial percentage of new development in St. Michaels that consists of retirees, the number of children per unit in St. Michaels might be substantially lower in the short-term. However, over time, houses originally bought in those developments that are not age-restricted as second homes or retirement homes could be sold to new owners with a different demographic profile. At that point, the number of units could produce a larger number of school age residents.

When analyzed with respect to the areas suggested for possible annexation, the schools would reach an over-crowded situation with the elementary school theoretically reaching a 135 percent capacity and the middle/high school reaching a 164 percent capacity. These increases are driven

primarily by potential build-out in the Rio Vista community, which could occur whether or not annexation occurs. Students in the Rio Vista community currently attend the St. Michaels Elementary and Middle Schools and will continue to attend the schools regardless of annexation. The main impact of the Rio Vista community, therefore, would be the additional students in a build-out situation.

Nevertheless these capacity numbers are unlikely to be reached unless the nature of residential development changes substantially and full build-out of both the Town and potential annexation areas occurs. Individually, each annexation area would increase the school student population, but the schools would both function at about a 100 percent capacity. If any of these areas would be annexed, future consideration of school expansion would be needed to accommodate any additional growth from within the Town in conjunction with the annexed area, including possible portable classrooms.

Current enrollment projections from the State of Maryland and Talbot County do not envision the addition of school age populations suggested by this analysis. According to Talbot County Public Schools, St. Michaels' school campus enrollments have been extremely stable for the past 20 years. Based upon the demographics of persons purchasing and/or building homes in and around the Town, the Talbot County Public Schools believes that this trend will not change and there is adequate capacity in our facilities for pre-kindergarten through grade 12 students for at least the next 15 to 20 years.

Libraries

The Talbot County Public Library System operates a branch in the Town of St. Michaels. The facility is 3,000 square feet offering enough square footage for a population of 30,000 people, according to the American Library Association. The library should have two fulltime employees, regardless of which possible annexation areas would be annexed. The library functions above the current needs of St. Michaels and could accommodate any of the areas of interest discussed.

Public Safety

The potential increase in land area and population may impact the Emergency Services offered by the Town of St. Michaels. The Police Department has a relatively new facility located on Fremont Street. The Town currently has eight police officers, including the Police Chief. The number of officers is more than the commonly used ratio of 1.6 police officers per 1,000 people. There is currently no need, even with build-out conditions, for more police officers. Likewise, the fire department already has six engines for use in case of emergency. For further information on public safety, please see Chapter 5: Community Facilities and Public Services.

Water & Sewerage

Based on the total water usage from existing residences and the residents of Rio Vista who are already on the Town of St. Michaels water system, the Town of St. Michaels is within the limits of their Water Appropriation and Use Permit from the Maryland Department of the Environment. Should the additional in-town 491 possible build-out residences be constructed, the water usage would increase to 248,031 gallons per day which is still within the limits of the Water

Appropriation and Use Permit.

If the Town of St. Michaels were fully built out and all the possible annexation areas were annexed and fully built out, the total water usage would rise to 365,211, which would still be within the limits of the Water Appropriation and Use Permit

As the build-out analysis indicates the potential demand for additional development due to annexation would be 50 units. Assuming that each would contribute 185 gallons per unit additional flows would be 9,300 gallons per day.. Any existing units in the potential annexation areas (Rio Vista is an example) would already have allocated capacity in the system. It is clear that full build-out is NOT constrained by sewer capacity.

A more detailed discussion of these issues may be found in Chapter 4 – Water Resources Element.

Recreation

The Town of St. Michaels has 14 Town Park Facilities throughout the town, taking up 98.45 acres of land. The State suggests a total of 30 acres of parkland per 1,000 people. To accommodate growth generated from build-out conditions for all potential annexation areas, the Town would need a maximum of five additional acres of recreation land. Of these additional acres, half should be owned by the Town, requiring up to three acres of Town-owned land.

Stormwater Management Systems

The additional growth may create the need for better or more stormwater management strategies. Redevelopment areas will need to comply with the State 20 percent impervious surface reduction requirements of the State Stormwater Management Regulations; however, existing stormwater management may be sufficient to handle the additional flow. Off-site stormwater management may need to be examined, especially if new water and wastewater treatments are also being examined.

New development, such as Heatherington Harbor, should comply with Stormwater Management Regulations, utilizing both low-impact on-site stormwater management techniques and also off-site techniques, if warranted. These requirements will be governed by the Town and the State to ensure compliance. If it is found that stormwater management issues will arise with additional redevelopment, these areas should be incorporated with new development stormwater management as applicable.

To reduce redundancy, further discussion of stormwater management will be completed in the Water Resources Element of this Comprehensive Plan.

Financing of Infrastructure Expansions Needed

Current analysis of growth shows that the Town of St. Michaels already has sufficient infrastructure to handle some of the areas of interest that may be considered for annexation.

New development will require:

- Water and Sewer lines

- Stormwater Management
- Additional police officers for increased tourism

The Town should require developers to incur costs relating to water and sewer lines and stormwater management systems.

State and County financial help should be examined for help updating the existing infrastructure for redevelopment areas. Community Legacy programs will help maintain streets and create streetscapes. Additionally, Neighborhood Conservation programs will help improve the infrastructure to increase redevelopment potential.

Rural Buffers and Transitional Areas

The major impact of the areas of interest on the rural buffers and transitional areas of the Town of St. Michaels would be an improvement. Currently, most of the areas of interest lie along the existing town boundary, creating a buffer to the Town. Heatherington Harbor will create a Residential Gateway transitional area into the Town. Likewise Area 2 and Area B would be maintained as potential greenbelt land to create a rural and natural buffer.

Burdens on Municipally Provided Services and Infrastructure Lying Beyond Proposed Municipal Growth Area

St. Michaels does not have major infrastructure lying outside of its Town boundary, though it does share infrastructure with Talbot County. This includes the Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) currently serving the Town and other County areas. The Town and County should work together to allow for appropriate capacity and expansion. Further discussion on the WWTP can be found in the Water Resources Element of this Comprehensive Plan.

Protection of Sensitive Areas

The Town of St. Michaels is largely within the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area, though the Town has growth allocation for development in newly annexed areas and from Limited Development Areas to Intensely Developed Areas. Included in the Critical Area Regulations are protection clauses to ensure that parcels are developed while protecting the sensitive Chesapeake Bay areas, including the Miles River. National Wetland Inventory and FEMA Floodplain information were used as environmental constraint criteria through the build-out analysis. Wetlands were not counted as developable land and floodplain areas were considered developable given adherence to development regulation.

VISION

The future vision of the Town of St. Michaels includes maintaining its historic character, environmental quality and economic development. The areas of interest described in this chapter ensure that the gateway into Town will develop into areas that welcome people into the Town. Areas D and E, though not residential in nature, would offer greater economic value to the Town. Overall, the areas of interest are sections that will create functional transition areas into and out of the Town, or the areas provide valuable greenbelt opportunities. These all fall under the current vision of the Town, as St. Michaels is not a fast-growing town and does not want to overgrow its historic character.

OBJECTIVES AND IMPEMENTATION STRATEGIES

2.1 Ensure future annexations occur within the zoning classifications dictated in this element.

- 2.1.1 Preserve areas identified for possible greenway and/or park development
- 2.1.2 Monitor growth in residential areas

2.2 Coordinate with Talbot County to monitor development on possible annexation areas.

- 2.2.1 Allow only substantial growth in accordance with this element
- 2.2.2 If any land is developed in a way not in accordance with this element's projection, remove from Municipal Growth Element

2.3 Monitor community and public facilities to ensure that upgrades and additions occur when needed.

2.4 Ensure sufficient police, medical emergency, and fire station staff exists for increased demands of the tourist industry and population.

Chapter 3: Environmental Resources and Sensitive Areas Protection

INTRODUCTION

The Town of St. Michaels cherishes its environmental setting. Key components of that environmental setting include a natural harbor opening onto the Miles River and access to the Choptank River via San Domingo Creek on the southwest side of Town. This unique interface "where land and water intertwine" has made St. Michaels a settlement location since the seventeenth century. The Town's waterfront orientation has served as the basis of an ever-changing economy that reflects St. Michaels' connection to these waterfront resources, from an historic economy rooted in boatbuilding, seafood and agriculture, to our economy today which is largely driven by recreational boating and tourism.

This chapter of the Comprehensive Plan recognizes that the unique waterfront location and landform are among the many environmental resources that serve as the most important defining characteristics of the Town. At the same time, the Town acknowledges that these resources are sensitive to land disturbances prompted by development and by our day to day activities. The Town environment's sensitivity to disturbances underscores the need for stewardship of our environmental setting and natural resources. It is imperative to maintain policies that ensure the life and health of the Town's water resources. The preservation of our unique environmental resources should be one of the guiding principles in all decisions regarding Town development.

The natural attributes of the landscape continue to influence how and where St. Michaels will grow, despite advances in technology and the capability for altering many site limitations. To great extent topography, drainage, soil characteristics, and other natural features define areas suitable for development. A brief review of relevant characteristics will serve to highlight those features which exert an influence on our growth patterns and identify potential problem areas.

Disturbing sensitive areas can increase the speed and volume of surface runoff from fields and streets, which can lead to land erosion, sedimentation, and siltation. Pollution of the water column and a reduction in the amount of light reaching submerged aquatic plants choke important parts of the aquatic food chain. Ultimately, spawning grounds and benthic habitats are destroyed. In addition, soil particles carry chemicals such as fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides that have

bonded to the soil or leached from farmland and yards into the tributaries of the Bay. Additional pollution is carried by runoff from rooftops, streets and parking lots. Sensitive areas are depicted on Map 3-1 (Sensitive Areas Map). Sensitive natural features that need to be protected include:

- Streams and Stream Buffers;
- Wetlands;
- Woodlands and native vegetation;
- Threatened and endangered wildlife habitats;
- Surface and ground water systems;
- Floodplains;
- Steep slopes;
- Protected agricultural lands;
- Open space; and
- Highly erodible and permeable soils (including shorelines)

Topography, Drainage and Steep Slopes

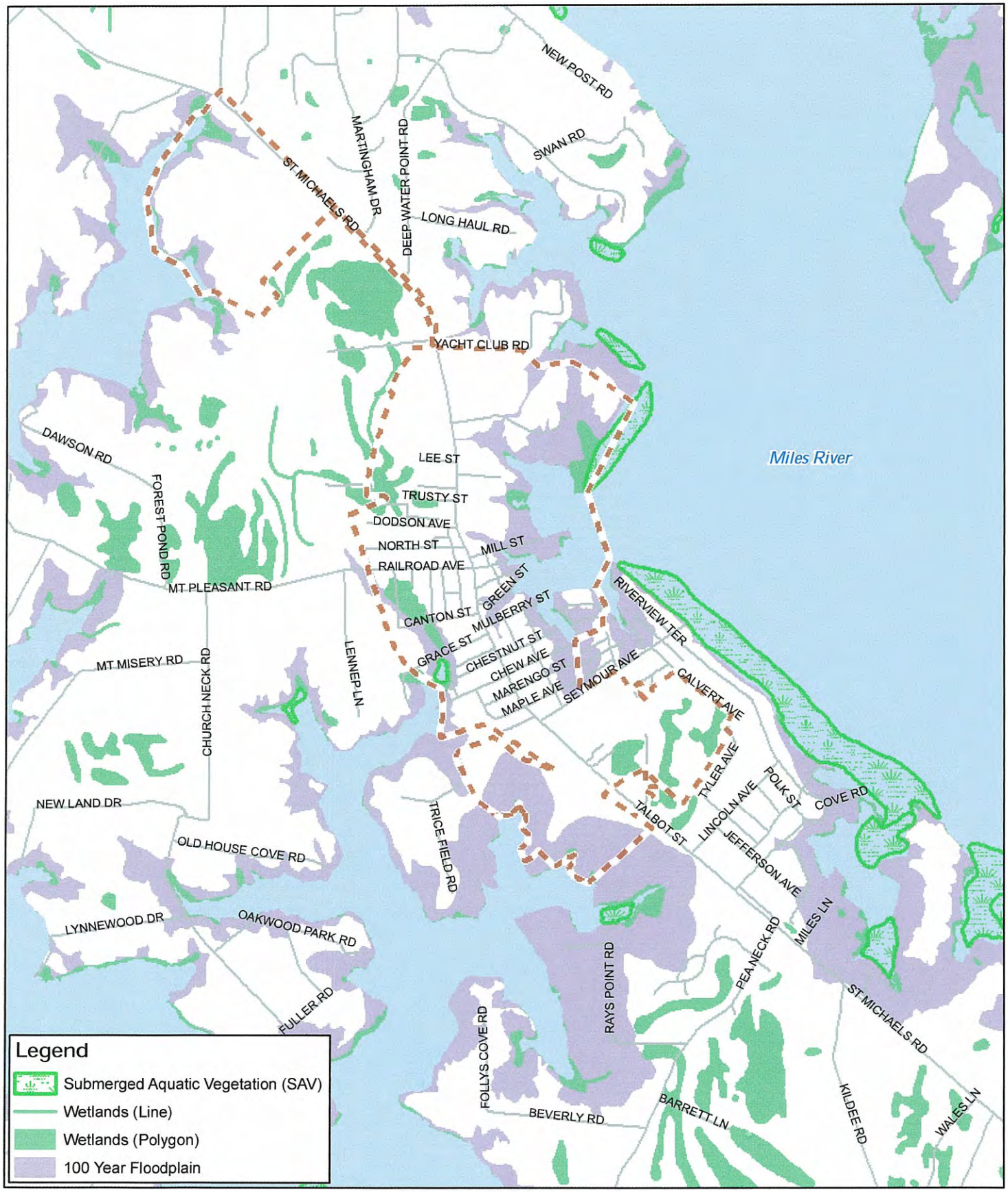
St. Michaels lies wholly within the Atlantic Coastal Plain region and averages elevations ten feet or less above sea level. The land in the immediate vicinity of Town features poorly defined streams and a close proximity to tidal water. Consequently, St. Michaels has characteristically poor surface drainage and a very high water table. The low-lying topography, high seasonal water tables, poor drainage, and high runoff characteristics of the soils combine to create a high flooding potential. When heavy rainfall and a high river discharge combine with storm tides, low-lying areas adjacent to rivers and estuaries become inundated with brackish water.

The underlying unconsolidated sediments slope gently toward the southeast at between approximately 10 to 95 vertical feet per horizontal mile. Beneath the coastal plain sediments lie older Paleozoic crystalline rocks at an average depth of 3,000 feet. Abundant groundwater is available throughout the St. Michaels area with the depth of the water table generally less than 25 feet and within three or four feet of the surface in many places. The maximum elevation in Town is approximately twelve feet along a ridge west of Talbot Street.

There are two drainage areas in St. Michaels with the drainage divide running approximately parallel with, and west of, Talbot Street. The eastern portion of Town drains into the Miles River, and the western portion drains into San Domingo Creek, which is in the Choptank River drainage area.

The irregular shoreline is a result of drowned river valleys formed by the gradually sinking land mass leading to a change in the overall drainage pattern. Extensive estuaries and tidal basins have resulted, producing a myriad of waterways.

There is only one location in the Planning Area where the soils maps indicate the possible existence of steep slopes. This area is located on the far northern tip of the point of land which defines the eastern edge of Hambleton Cove.



Map 3-1 Sensitive Areas

Soil Characteristics

The majority of soils in the western portion of Talbot County, and particularly in the vicinity of St. Michaels, have limiting development characteristics. According to the USDA's *Soil Survey - Talbot County, Maryland*, the soils in the St. Michaels area are subject to a high water table, creating problems with regard to drainage, erosion, and load bearing capacity. Ten soils predominate in the area; Elkton, Othello, and Barclay Silt Loams are the most common. Approximately 30 percent of the soil in the area falls into the category of Keyport Silt Loam, which is slightly more suitable for development than the previous three and is found primarily near the waterfront and within the corporate limits of the Town. The remainder of the planning area contains limited amounts of soils ranging from extremely poor to very suitable for development.

Ground Water

Caroline, Dorchester, and Talbot Counties lie in the Atlantic Coastal Plain which is underlain by a mass of sediments resting upon a sloping surface of hard crystalline rock. It has been estimated that not less that 100 million gallons of water a day are available from the layered aquifers. Water is pumped from ten aquifers or bodies of sediments capable of yielding water that range in depth from the surface to more than 1,400 feet. Three of these aquifers are used extensively down to depths of 600 feet.

The St. Michaels municipal water supply derives from wells drilled into the Aquia aquifer formation. The wells yield a good grade of water for domestic use. The water is moderately hard, has bicarbonate qualities, is low in iron, and has safe levels of chloride, fluoride and dissolved solids.

Vegetation

The woodlands in the area surrounding St. Michaels are primarily a mix of deciduous forest, evergreen forest, or mixed deciduous and evergreen forest. The deciduous areas are generally represented by oaks, hickory, tulip poplar, elm, and maple. The evergreen forests are usually represented by white pine, loblolly pine, and red pine. Some of the wooded lands surrounding St. Michaels have areas of excessive ponding which exceeds the typical high water table.

Wildlife and Habitat

A variety of natural areas support the bio-diversity that is characteristic of Maryland's Eastern Shore. Important habitats include uplands, lowlands, deep woods, narrow tree lines, wet meadows, stream banks, woodland edges, and tidal marshes. In St. Michaels, two major habitat features are readily apparent: 1) the Miles River, San Domingo and Broad Creek shore areas, and 2) the wooded areas which remain in patches around Town and in the planning area.

Vegetation, whether cultivated crops, pasture, or the natural vegetation of forests, swamps, and marshes, determines what kinds of wildlife live in a specific area. Cultivated legumes and grasses valuable for wildlife habitat, food, and cover include lespedeza, alfalfa, clover, tall fescue,

bromegrass, and bluegrass. Valuable native plants include switch grass and other prairie grasses, partridgepeas, desmodium, and various native lespedezas. Trees and shrubs include sumac, dogwoods, persimmon, pines, sassafras, hazelnut, shrub lespedezas, multiflora rose, autumn olive, oaks, hickory, blackhaw, sweetgum, holly, Norway spruce, and various fruit trees. Wetland plants are particularly valuable for food and cover to waterfowl and fur-bearing animals. These include smartweed, wild rice, barnyard grass, three-square, bulrush, spikerush, widgeongrass, rice cutgrass, pondweed, duckweed, sedge, cordgrass, cattail, arrow arum, pickerelweed, buttonbush, waterwillow, and spatterdock.

The extensive field-woodland edges north and south of Town provide a home for many species, especially birds. The edge is a critical place for nesting, breeding, hiding, and feeding. Where wildlife corridors are not isolated islands but are linked into continuous bands, woodlands support more species, and contiguous areas become large enough to support predators and larger animals.

Animals characteristic of St. Michaels' habitats include the following:

1. Open land wildlife such as rabbits and quail,
2. Woodland wildlife including deer, squirrel, and raccoon,
3. Wetland wildlife including muskrat and various types of waterfowl,
4. Fish and aquatic animals residing in the Miles River and San Domingo Creek basins.

100-year Floodplains

The 100-year floodplain is based on the Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) prepared by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Many sections of Town are located within the 100 and 500-year tidal floodplains, as delineated by FEMA. Lands within the 100-year floodplain are defined as "special flood hazard areas inundated by types of 100 year shallow flooding where depths are between one and three feet." The 100-year flood is a flood condition that has a 1% chance of occurring in any given year and would be caused by exceptionally high tide/storm surges. All of the 100 year floodplain areas in the Planning Area are designated as Zone A5." This zone is described in more detail on the FIRM maps for the St. Michaels area.

Non-tidal Wetlands

Non-tidal Wetlands include important environmental features that support plant and animal habitats important to our rural landscape. These wetland areas also support important groundwater recharge functions. Because federal regulations govern non-tidal wetlands, and wetlands have implications for limiting growth, we have identified locations of non-tidal wetlands mapped on the National Wetlands Inventory.

Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Program

In accordance with the Critical Area Act, all affected jurisdictions were required to develop and implement a Critical Area Protection Program to control the use and development within their territorial limits. The Town of St. Michaels adopted a Critical Area Program along with a series of implementing provisions contained in the Town's Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision

Regulations in June 1988. The policies and goals included in the Critical Area Program were developed to accommodate future growth of the Town while addressing the associated environmental impacts. In July 2006, Town Commissioners adopted Ordinance No. 309, which both updated the Town's 1988 Critical Area Program and codified the required provisions into Chapter 340, Zoning, of the Code of the Town of Saint Michaels.

The Chesapeake Bay Critical Area includes all the land 1000 feet landward of mean high tide. The three principal land classifications are:

1. Resource Conservation Areas (RCA) in 20 acre minimum aggregates intended for forestry, farming, and resource conservation;
2. Limited Development Areas (LDA) that allows housing at up to 3.99 units per acre on well and septic; and
3. Intensely Developed Areas (IDA) for high density residential, commercial, and industrial uses served by public water and sewer.

About 62 percent of our critical area lands are classified as IDA. About 30 percent are classified RCA. The remainder is LDA. Conversion of RCA and LDA areas to IDA is the appropriate mechanism for permitting development keeping with the existing character in the Town, while ensuring protection of Critical Area resources. We anticipate the need will arise to utilize this mechanism in two locations, one north and one south of town during the next ten years.

VISION

St. Michaels is a place where natural resources, sensitive environmental features, extensive open space and sensitive areas have been protected and preserved.

OBJECTIVES AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

3.1 Preserve and protect the important natural features of the Town including streams, wooded areas, wildlife habitats, and other sensitive natural areas.

3.1.1 Establish specific development policies for reviewing all development activities with respect to impact upon and protection of environmental features and sensitive areas and update these policies as needed.

3.1.2 Review and amend if necessary the Town's implementation documents in order to maintain and enhance existing specific protection measures for the following sensitive areas: 1) streams and stream buffers, 2) 100-year floodplain, 3) endangered species habitats, 4) steep slopes, and 5) wetlands.

3.1.3 Implement Maryland Forest Conservation Program requirements for reforestation and afforestation when appropriate.

3.1.4 Develop an urban forestry program to plant and care for trees on Town streets.

3.1.5 Employ environmental protection measures and development standards established in the Town's Critical Area Program.

3.2 Protect water quality and minimize siltation in St. Michaels Harbor, San Domingo Creek, Broad Creek and the Miles River.

3.2.1 Require the use of Best Management Practices (BMP's) to reduce nutrient loadings to the Miles River, St. Michaels Harbor and San Domingo Creek. (Chapter 281 Stormwater Management of the Code of the Town of St Michaels)

3.2.2 Amend implementation documents as necessary.

3.2.3 Use low-impact development stormwater management measures in the design of any new development. (Chapter 281 Stormwater Management of the Code of the Town of St Michaels)

3.2.4 Review all development adjacent to wetlands to assure compliance with buffer requirements established by federal, state and town environmental regulations. (§340-27 of the Code of the Town of Saint Michaels)

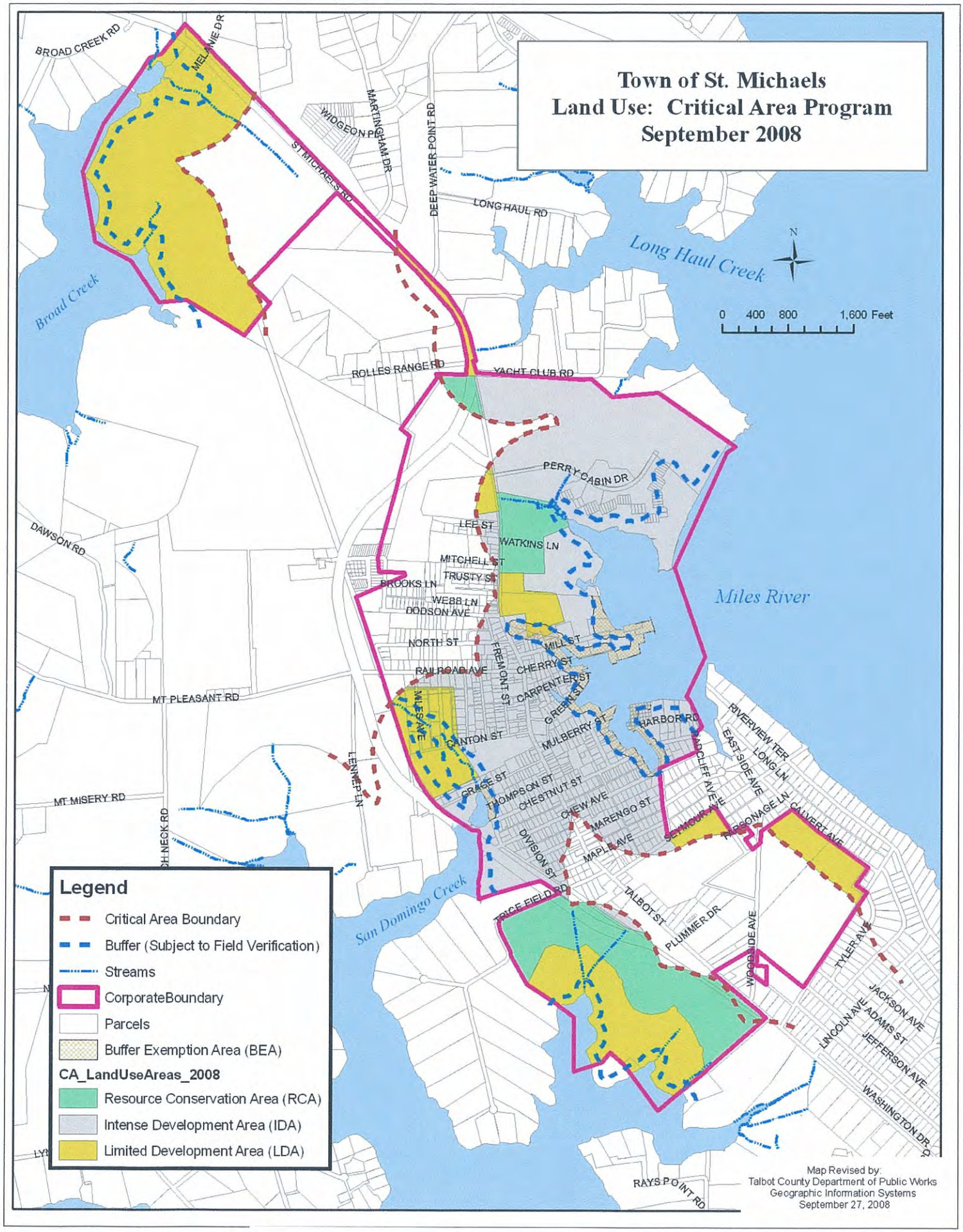
3.2.5 Establish specific policies for reviewing all development activities with respect to impact upon and protection of environmental features and sensitive area including natural drainage ways.

3.2.6 Amend implementation documents as necessary

3.2.7 Require structural and nonstructural stormwater management improvements that benefit multiple properties.

- Require the platting of easements and procedures which clearly define ownership and maintenance responsibilities of drainage easements and retention facilities.
- Encourage property owners to adopt Best Management Practices for stormwater runoff and retention for existing homes.

3.2.8 Evaluate future development proposals in light of the site's physical suitability to accommodate development while protecting natural resources.



Map 3-2 Critical Area Land Use

Chapter 4:
Water Resources Element

Introduction

This Water Resources Element is required by Article 66B of the Annotated Code of Maryland as amended in 2006. It requires all counties and municipalities that have planning and zoning authority to incorporate a Water Resources Element into their comprehensive Plans by October 1, 2009.

The purpose of this Water Resources Element is to ensure that any future development plans of the Town of St. Michaels take into account the opportunities and limitations of local water resources. It is required to evaluate both the wastewater generated and the available drinking water supply. This will serve to better protect both state water resources and public health while meeting state smart growth policies.

Water Resource Element Goals

The goals of the water resource element are to:

- Maintain an adequate water supply for the Town of St. Michaels to serve not only the current water demands but future water needs resulting from population growth and development including both residential and commercial capacity.

- Protect and maintain water quality standards by reducing pollutant loadings, identifying potential pollution sources, and potential impacts of future land development to ensure public health and safety. Strategies to achieve this goal include upgrading all town water distribution lines to PVC pipe; an arsenic removal system on all Town wells to bring the arsenic levels into compliance with EPA standards; and updating the Town water distribution maps to reflect the most current data.

- Provide adequate wastewater and stormwater systems. Costs for new or expanded facilities should be allocated so that they are equitably and proportionally shared by all those who benefit. Technical review of development projects should be coordinated with required County and/or Town departments to ensure that easements are provided. Stormwater issues should be addressed as an element of the street upgrade program.

- Install stormwater management best management practices (BMPs) to treat water flowing from the older parts of the Town that were built before such practices were required. When doing this work, care should be taken to improve, where possible, stormwater drainage from streets and private lots, but certainly not to make existing drainage

problems worse or to create new drainage problems. A policy has been established to incorporate in all government construction activity, where possible, added stormwater BMPs with the capacity to treat untreated water coming from surrounding parts of town. BMPs are being retrofitted into the street renovation project that begins in FY 2007. Additional BMPs should be incorporated into the Nature Trail Project that will take place in FY 2007 and FY 2008 to treat stormwater flowing from the older parts of town into waters that feed the Bay. Incentives should be developed for owners to install individual lot BMPs, such as roof-top disconnects, rain gardens, and French drains. Town support should be lent to construction of tidal-marshes and other programs designed to remove pollutants that continue to enter nearby rivers and streams.

Public Utility Services of St. Michaels

Water Supply System

According to the Talbot County CW&SP, the existing water system consists of two deep wells, 500,000 gallons of elevated storage, and about 11 miles of distribution mains. The Town of St. Michaels water system also serves the Rio Vista area south of Town which includes a population of approximately 400 residents. Water bills are sent to 366 accounts in this area which include residents of the Bentley Hay area north of Seymour Avenue and east of Meadow Street. Total water usage ranges from about 0.22 million gpd in the winter to 0.32 million gpd in the summer. Maximum demand for one day has been just over 0.4 million gallons.

Only two of the three wells utilized in the past are currently in operation. Both wells are about 40 feet deep and draw from the Aquia Aquifer. Well No.1 is an eight-inch diameter well drilled in 1928. A new pump was installed in 1986 to increase capacity to 285 gallons per minute. Well No.2 is a ten-inch well drilled in 1965 with a capacity of 480 gallons per minute. Well No.3 is a 12-inch well completed in 1990. It has a capacity of 600 gallons per minute. Following construction of well No.3, well No.1 was taken out of service because of age and excessive amounts of sand passing through the screens. This well has been sealed with concrete and the well pump and motor have been removed. Both wells No.2 and No.3 are in good condition. However, in order to provide redundancy in the system in the case of well failure, an additional well and water storage tower will be needed.

Maryland's approval guidelines stipulate that community wells be capable of meeting the maximum daily water demand with all wells in service and be able to meet the average daily demand with the largest well out of service. The Town's system meets these criteria assuming the pumps run an average of 16 hours per day.

The 500,000 gallons of elevated storage is comprised of one 200,000 gallon tank and one

300,000 gallon tank. The 200,000 gallon tank, constructed in 1981, is in good structural condition, but will require periodic painting. A new 300,000 gallon elevated storage tank, referred to as the North Tank, located next to Perry Cabin Park has been in operation since 1999. By locating this tank at the opposite end of the water system from the existing tank, head pressure losses in the distribution lines have been minimized and flow rates improved.

The Town has installed a new Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system that controls the on-off operation of the No.2 and No.3 well pumps, as well as monitors the North and South tank levels. This system enables the operations staff to closely monitor the Town's water supply and make necessary adjustments.

Water Supply Resources

Information regarding receiving waters for the Town of St. Michaels was requested from the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE), which is the agency responsible for authorizing use of all waters of the State. MDE provided the Water Appropriation and Use Permit that was granted to the Town of St. Michaels, effective January 1, 2003. The permit, which expires on January 1, 2015, permits the Town of St. Michaels a water withdrawal limited to a daily average of 325,000 gallons on a yearly basis and a daily average of 450,000 gallons for the month of maximum use. The water withdrawn is to be used for the community water supply for the Town and is drawn from two wells in the Aquia aquifer. The location of the wells is the northeast corner of the junction of Glory Avenue and Carpenter Street and on the east side of Marengo Street at New Lane site.

Growth Assessment

There are currently 652 residences existing in the Town of St. Michaels. To calculate the daily water usage for the Town, it was estimated that the average household size was 2.17 persons and the average water usage was 100 gallons per person per day. Based on the existing 652 residences, each using an estimated 217 gallons per day, a total of 141,484 gallons of water is being used per day.

Based on the build-out analysis completed in Chapter 2 – Municipal Growth Element, there is land available in the Town of St. Michaels to add an additional 491 residences. Applying the estimated average household size and the average water usage, these possible residences could use an additional 106,547 gallons of water per day.

In addition, there are 11 possible annexation areas which are described further in Chapter 2 – Municipal Growth Element. If these areas were annexed, 111 existing residences and up to 7 new residences could be added to the Town and would use an additional 25,606 gallons of water per day. These numbers do not include the Rio Vista area which is already on the Town water system. Table 4.1 shows both the existing residences and possible annexation residences and their total water usage.

TABLE 4.1
EXISITNG AND POSSIBLE FUTURE WATER USAGE

Area	# of Existing Dwellings	# of Build-Out Dwellings	Total # of Possible Dwellings	Total potential water usage
Current				
Residences	652	491	1,143	248,031
Possible Annexation areas				
Area 1	2	0	2	434
Area 2	2	0	2	434
Area 3	1	4	5	1,085
Area A	9	0	9	1,953
Area B	12	0	12	2,604
Area C	5	2	7	1,519
Area F	20	1	21	4,557
Rio Vista	379	43	422	91,574
Pea Neck	60	0	60	13,020
Nature Trails	0	0	0	0
Town Parks	0	0	0	0
Annexation Total	*490*	*50*	*540*	*117,180*
TOTAL	**1,142**	**541**	**1,682**	**365,211**

Based on the total water usage from existing residences and the residents of Rio Vista who are already on the Town of St. Michaels water system, the Town of St. Michaels is within the limits of their Water Appropriation and Use Permit from the Maryland Department of the Environment. Should the additional in-town 491 possible build-out residences be constructed, the water usage would increase to 248,031 gallons per day which is still within the limits of the Water Appropriation and Use Permit.

If the Town of St. Michaels were fully built out and all the possible annexation areas were annexed and fully built out, the total water usage would rise to 365,211, which would still be within the limits of the Water Appropriation and Use Permit.

Sewer Service

In the spring of 2008 Talbot County completed construction of a 660,000 gallons/day treatment plant which will include Biological Nutrient Removal technology. The plant discharge concentrations for total nitrogen will be 3.0 mg/l or less with the total phosphorus concentrations of 0.3 mg/l or less.

The latest information available from Talbot County relating to wastewater treatment flow and capacity volume of the Talbot County region II Wastewater treatment Plant allocated for use within the municipal boundaries of St. Michaels indicates the following:

St. Michaels – Existing flows: 133,950 gpd
Future Flows: 109,700 gpd
Reserved Capacity for I&I: 143,500 gpd
Total Flows: 387,150

The Town of St. Michaels has evaluated the potential flow contributions from existing proposals under development review as follows:

Miles Point - 55,795 gpd. Includes 279 dwelling units, commercial development and a 24 room Inn to be built out over a 7 year period.

Hattons Garden - 3,220 gpd. 16 dwelling units

Chesapeake Avenues - 1,290 gpd. 7 dwelling units

Total potential flow of 60,310 gpd

Based on the potential for build-out in accordance with existing zoning in the Town of St. Michaels and taking into account the existing proposals enumerated above, an additional 189 units could be built in the existing Town limits. Assuming flow contributions of 185 gallons per unit, the Town could contribute an additional total of 34,065 gpd.

Existing Flow	133,950 gpd
Proposal under review	60,310 gpd
New units under build-out	34,065 gpd
TOTAL	229,225 gpd

As the build-out analysis indicates the potential demand for additional development due to annexation would be 50 units. Assuming that each would contribute 185 gallons per unit additional flows would be 9,300 gallons per day. Any existing units in the potential annexation areas (Rio Vista is an example) would already have allocated capacity in the system. It is clear that full build-out is NOT constrained by sewer capacity.

Additional capacity may be gained by addressing infiltration and inflow (I&I). County policy makes it clear that the Town of St. Michaels does not gain 1 gallon of capacity for every gallon of I&I reduced. Nevertheless any reductions achieved should be documented and the capacity gained incorporated into the flow allocation calculations. Finally any areas of existing growth on the sewer system that are annexed (Pea Neck is an example) should not count against the Town's capacity because the hookups were approved by the County prior to annexation.

Capacity Management Plan

Current State regulations require that a wastewater capacity management plan be established to manage new hookups when flow in any system reaches 80 percent of capacity. St. Michaels has instituted a capacity management plan as follows:

PURPOSE:
The purpose of this management plan is to track remaining capacity available to the

Town of St. Michaels consistent with the Town's responsibilities to manage growth and to appropriately exercise its planning and zoning authority under Article 66B of the Annotated Code of Maryland. By implementing these procedures the Town of St. Michaels commits to:

- Identify when actual flows are approaching the wastewater capacity allocated to the Town of St. Michaels;
- Commit for new connections, with confidence, that there is adequate capacity to serve the new as well as existing customers;
- Determine when the issuance of additional building permits must be curtailed until improvements are completed so that the treatment plant can maintain compliance with its discharge permit;
- Have more lead-time to plan for needed collection and wastewater treatment system upgrades to accommodate new growth and to arrange for the financing of the improvements;
- Become more aware of how the collection system in the Town is performing and encourage the appropriate steps to be taken to address or prevent increased flows before effluent violations, regular bypassing, or overflows occur; and
- Provide all decision-makers in a municipality (elected officials, health department, public works, assessment and taxation, etc.) with the information needed to make informed decisions about available capacity allocations and the ability to accommodate new connections.

APPROACH:

The assumptions that are in the existing Comprehensive Water &Sewer Plan (CW&SP) is that St. Michaels has existing flows of 133,950 gpd, future flows of 109,700 gpd, reserved capacity for I & I. of 143,500 gpd with a total projected flow of 387,150 gpd. As of the date of this Comprehensive Plan, there is available to the Town of St. Michaels, excluding infiltration & inflow, existing and projected flows of 243,650 gpd. Future flows available to the Town of 109,700 gpd are the subject of this policy. Proposed development already under review by the Town of St. Michaels shall have an immediate allocation. That allocation will be subtracted from the immediate flows. This allocation is for the purpose of assuring that there are adequate flows to accommodate future and current users and is not binding on the other approval processes. This allocation will be subject to a yearly review until such time as the allocated flow is utilized.

The Town of St. Michaels will on an annual basis, monitor, and report to the Talbot county DPW and MDE the number of equivalent dwelling units and other capacity that have been allocated from the available flow of 109,700 gallons.

When the annual report indicates that allocation of available flow approaches or exceeds 80% of the total flows available to the Town, additional monitoring and approval process will be put in place in accordance with the guidance document entitled "Maryland Department of the Environment Wastewater Capacity Management Plan," dated 2006.

Point and Nonpoint Source Loading Status and Remediation

According to the general code for the Town of St. Michaels, the purpose of proper stormwater management is to minimize damage to public and private property, reduce the effects of development on land and on the quality of water in the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries, control stream channel erosion, reduce local flooding, and maintain after development, as nearly as possible, the predevelopment runoff characteristics.

The objectives of stormwater management are to:

- Reduce or eliminate water pollution by reducing the amount and nature of impervious cover, increasing groundwater recharge, eliminating sources of contaminants, and removing pollutants from stormwater runoff;
- Design, construct, operate, and maintain stormwater management systems to control runoff from all land developed in accordance with Chapter 281 of the general code;
- Design stormwater management systems used for new development to the limit of technology and meet any pollutant removal goals established by the Town for a specific project;
- Ensure the use of decentralized nonstructural stormwater management practices to the maximum extent reasonably practical; and
- In conjunction with a proposed stormwater management system, establish controls and enforcement procedures applicable to the land area to be served by that proposed stormwater management system, to reduce the unnecessary us of pollutants on that land.

Stormwater management practices that control and manage stormwater runoff are to be applied to any land developed for residential, commercial, industrial, or institutional uses in accordance with an approved stormwater management plan. Stormwater management practices should be designed, constructed, and operated in accordance with the standards set forth in the Stormwater Design Manual and Chapter 281 of the General Code.

A variance can be granted from any requirement of the Stormwater Management Criteria of Chapter 281 of the General Code by the St. Michaels Board of Appeals if special circumstances are met. More information on the special circumstances to be met can be found in Section 281-9 of the General code.

For any proposed development, the owner shall submit a stormwater management plan or waiver application to the enforcement authority for review and approval.

- Prior to granting approval, the endorsement authority shall review the plan to determine compliance with the requirements of the stormwater management code. The process for the review shall be the same as for applications for subdivisions and shall include a review by the Technical Advisory Committee.
- Major projects shall not be approved earlier than 45 days after a complete application is received by the enforcement authority.

- The approved stormwater management plan shall serve as the basis for all subsequent construction.

Notification of approval or reasons for disapproval or modification shall be given to the owner. If a decision is not made within 90 days, the owner shall be informed of the status of the review process and the anticipated completion date. The stormwater management plan shall not be considered approved without the inclusion on the plan of the dated signature of the enforcement authority.

Vision

The Town of St. Michaels seeks to protect its water resource and control development to allow for the conservation of these resources.

OBJECTIVES AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

4.1 Encourage the County to pursue reductions to infiltration and inflow in the sewer system to create additional capacity.

4.2 Establish a process to implement a capacity management system as the sewerage system capacity approaches 80 percent of capacity, consistent with State regulations.

4.3 Continuing implementation of the Town's Stormwater Management Ordinance.

4.3.1 Encourage property owners to install Best Management Practices for stormwater run-off and retention.

Chapter 5:
Community Facilities and Public Services

INTRODUCTION

Community Facilities (see Map 5-1) and public services contribute to the overall quality of life for the residents and visitors to St. Michaels. The conditions of our streets, the purity of our drinking water, the dependability of our emergency services and police department are important factors for the people who live in our town. St. Michaels is served by the Talbot County Region 2 Wastewater Treatment Facility and the Town's municipal water supply. The goal of this chapter is to assure that our public facilities, infrastructure and emergency services meet the current and futures needs of the St. Michaels citizen.

Hollis Park, which was acquired by utilizing Program Open Space funding, houses the Edgar M. Bosley, Jr. Municipal Building where the administrative offices and the Town meeting room are located. The St. Michaels Department of Public Works is located on Glory Avenue in a building adjacent to well #3 and includes three maintenance bays and an adjacent storage yard.

In 2005, the St. Michaels Police Department relocated from Talbot Street to Fremont Street in a newly constructed building which houses the police force and support staff. The police jurisdiction ends at the Town limits. However, backup and special services are provided to the Talbot County Sheriffs Office and the Maryland State Police at their request.

Fire and rescue services are provided by the St. Michaels Volunteer Fire Department. State, County, and Town contributions account for about one fourth of the Fire departments annual budget. The balance is made up from local private contributions. The Fire department has two full time employees and averages about 80 members with perhaps 20 available for response at a given time. The Department moved into a new building located on Route 33 at the southern end of Town in April 1995. The company maintains three pumper trucks, a ladder truck, a brush unit, a command unit, and a fire and water rescue boat.

The Talbot County Advanced Life Support Service (ALS) is headquartered at the St. Michaels Volunteer Fire Department and responds to about 1,500 emergencies each year. The majority of funding for Talbot ALS comes from dedicated revenue provided by the Talbot County Council. For medical emergencies and other situations requiring advanced treatment, residents of the Town and surrounding area have access to three hospitals: Memorial Hospital at Easton, Dorchester General in Cambridge, and Peninsula Regional Medical Center in Salisbury.

Within the incorporated limits of St. Michaels lies the St. Michaels school complex. Talbot County Board of Education operates three public schools serving St. Michaels. St. Michaels Elementary and Middle/High School lie on a fifty-five acre parcel of land south of the Central Business District. The Town's schools have the space to accommodate approximately 320 to 350 more students than are currently enrolled. The school complex includes the Bay Hundred

Community Pool which was opened in 2002. The Town supports building a new community center close to the school to provide a needed transition from school to after-school activities.

The St. Michaels Head Start Center located at Fremont and Railroad Avenues is operated by Shore Up Inc., and St. Luke's Church operates a private kindergarten and pre-kindergarten. The St. Michaels Housing Authority operates an after school enrichment and tutoring program in Community House; a structure built in 1993 with funds from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The newly constructed St. Michaels Public Library is a branch of the Talbot County Library system and is located on Fremont Street offering approximately 10,000 volumes, including resource information, and a meeting room for community meetings and activities. The 3,000 square foot, handicapped-accessible library is open to the public 37 hours per week. The branch participates in the County and State inter-library loan program. The State's SAILOR network is available at the Branch. This system links users to Maryland libraries, universities, and government agencies.

The Town has about 50 acres of land devoted to streets, alleys, and public rights of way. Sidewalks line Talbot Street from Seymour Avenue to Dodson Avenue and are found throughout the Historic Area. Some street and sidewalk sections are in deteriorated condition. Many Town streets are lit by sodium vapor lights attached to utility poles; however, West Chestnut Street, St. Mary's Square, and Water Street are lit by pedestrian-scale period lanterns which the town maintains.

The Commissioners of St. Michaels have made it a priority to preserve the historic character of the town while providing improvements to include road upgrades and maintenance, new public restrooms, improved street lighting and enhanced pedestrian walkways which contribute to the beautification of the town. These improvements are linked to the Capital Improvement Plan.

VISION

St. Michaels is a town where public facilities and community services meet the needs of our residents, children, businesses, and visitors.

OBJECTIVES AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

5.1 Maintain Town streets and sidewalks as necessary.

5.1.1. Evaluate the conditions and quality of the Town street system and develop a street system improvement program as a component of the Town's Capital Improvement Plan. As of the writing of this element, the Town has completed their evaluation of all streets and has begun the phased rehabilitation of such streets.

5.1.2 Prepare and annually update a Capital Improvement Plan that consists of a rolling ten-year financial plan and budget to orchestrate and schedule improvements to Town streets, sidewalks, and other Town facilities.

- Maintain streets as necessary.
- All sidewalks in the business district should be bricked.

5.1.3 The Town should evaluate the Code provisions requiring property owners to install and maintain sidewalks.

- Investigate funding opportunities for assistance in installation.

5.2 Provide street lighting in all appropriate areas within the incorporated limits of the Town.

5.2.1 Identify those areas in need of street lighting.

5.2.2 Develop a priority list of improvements.

5.2.3 Include top priorities for street lighting in the Capital Improvement Plan.

5.2.4 The Town should coordinate with Choptank Electric to provide additional lighting along MD 33 in the Town limits.

5.3 Establish a Town wireless network system to serve St. Michaels.

5.3.1 Provide a town wireless fidelity system (Wi-Fi) for internet access for residents and visitors.

5.3.2 Provide access within Town parks and harbor areas

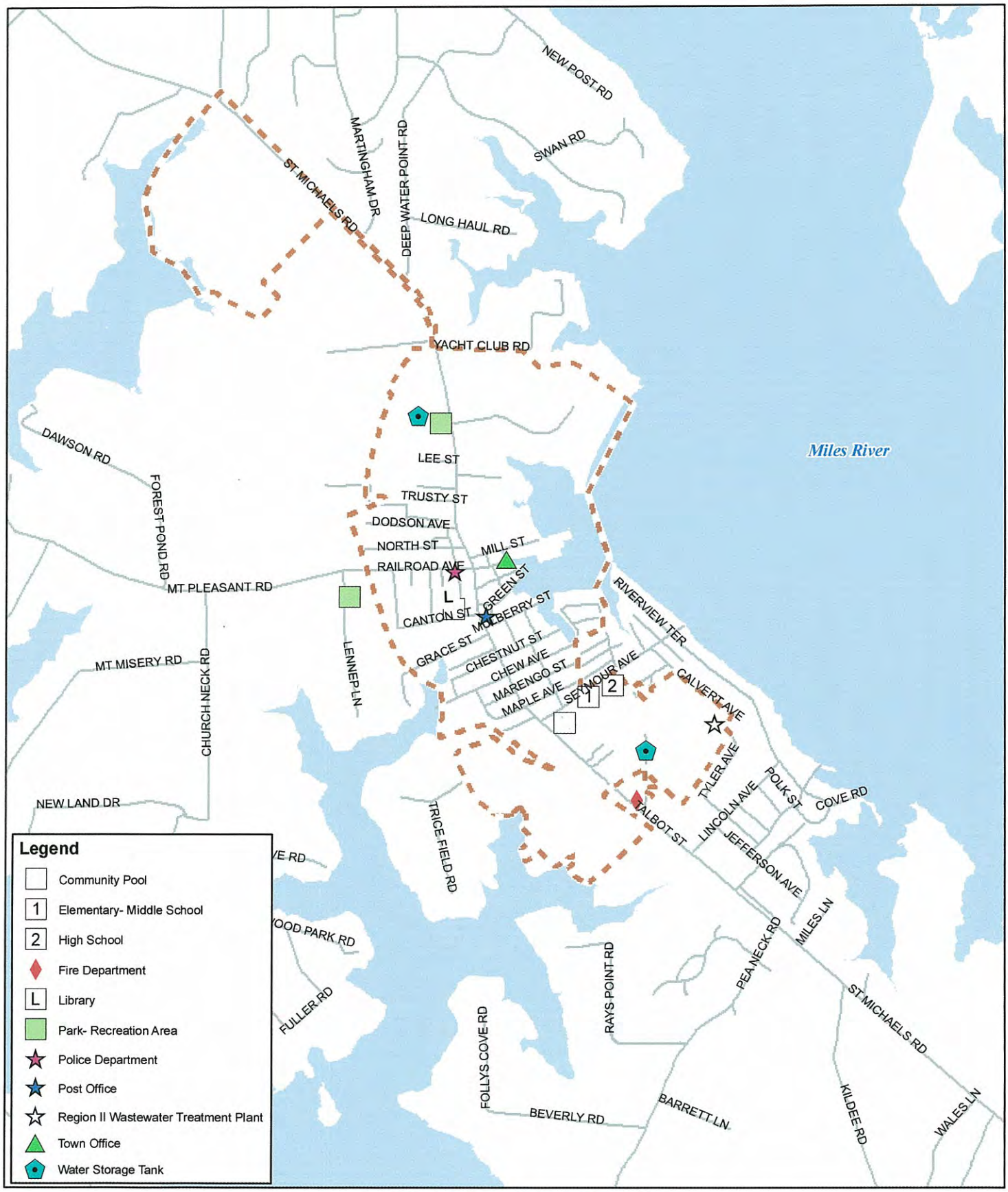
5.4 Establish a community center for residents

5.4.1 Support a community center for residents and children of the community to foster a safe environment for after school activities, continuing education, and the recreational

needs of Town citizens.

5.5 Establish a recycling program consistent with the goals and purposes of the Midshore Regional Recycling Program.

2008 Comprehensive Plan
St. Michaels, Maryland



Map 5-1 Community Facilities

Chapter 6: Transportation

INTRODUCTION

As with many other early tidewater settlements, St. Michaels relied on water access and boat traffic to bring people and goods to the settlers in the Bay Hundred region. Today, St. Michaels attracts more visitors by car than by boat, with an attendant increase in vehicular congestion.

St. Michaels lies midway on State Route 33, a 23-mile sole artery connecting the towns of Easton and Tilghman Island. The one-mile section that runs through the center of town is named Talbot Street. According to surveys conducted by the Maryland Department of Transportation in 2004, approximately 15,000 vehicles per day enter St. Michaels from the direction of Easton and approximately 10,000 per day enter from the north. These figures represent a 75 percent increase over traffic volume counts published by the Department in the same locations in 1989. Traffic in Town consists of passenger and heavy commercial vehicles competing with bicycle and foot traffic. Vehicular traffic must stop for pedestrians at nine designated crossing areas. The speed limit through town is posted at 25 miles per hour.

Five side streets provide the sole access to Route 33 from outlying communities and also bring traffic into Town: Railroad Avenue, Dodson Avenue, and Boundary Lane from the west, and Seymour Avenue and East Chew Avenue from the east. These streets carry considerably more traffic than they were designed to carry. Their bases and surfaces are inadequate, they are too narrow, and, except for Seymour Avenue, have no sidewalks. Traffic volumes and speeds on these streets create a nuisance for the residents and a hazard for pedestrians. Many streets and sidewalks in town have been in need of repair for some time. To address these situations the Town has initiated, with a multi-year $5.5 million bond in the FY 2006 budget, a program addressing street and sidewalk maintenance. Over a five year period, beginning in late 2007, the Town is planning on completing a renovation of almost all streets within the Town. Many

streets will be completely removed, regarded, and rebuilt.

The Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) is responsible for general maintenance and repair of Talbot Street, MD 33. The Town does not have authority to install crosswalks, traffic lights, or stop signs on Talbot Street and is therefore dependent on an on-going working relationship with SHA to seek measures managing traffic through the Town. From 2004 to 2007 an Advisory Committee on Traffic Calming and Pedestrian Friendly Streets ("Traffic Committee"), charged with investigating and analyzing the Town's transportation concerns. It reviewed ways to handle speeding issues on the streets leading into the Town from the County, as well as the need for speed tables and stop signs on a number of streets. The Traffic Committee also reviewed other opportunities to help traffic flow through the Town, such as modifications to the intersection at Church and Willow Streets, in order to clarify the traffic lanes. Some recommendations made by the Traffic Committee to the Town Commissioners are in the process of being completed.

Talbot County forecasts that the amount of traffic entering St. Michaels will continue to grow over the next ten years. A bypass proposal was studied in the past and discarded due to environmental impacts. St. Michaels is bounded by water on the east and the west making a bypass unlikely within the timeframe of this Plan. The County's forecast is based, in part, on the development in the County, primarily in the vicinity of the MD Route 322 (Easton Bypass)/MD 33 intersection, where a shopping center and residential community are being developed, and in residential developments being planned in St. Michaels and Tilghman Island. Tourist traffic will also increase as the Town's economic development and tourism goals are achieved. The study further suggests ways to mitigate the problem, such as widening MD 33 from Easton to four lanes and connecting it to a route that would bypass St. Michaels; however, these solutions seem unlikely due to both state budgetary considerations as well as likely adverse public sentiment.

There is weekday public bus service provided by Delmarva Community Transit (DCT) between Easton and St. Michaels, with five runs daily to and from five designated stops in St. Michaels. On-call door-to-door public service is also available for senior and disabled citizens. Provision of weekend service has been discussed with DCT, but is dependent upon receipt of additional County, State and Federal funding.

Discussions have also been initiated with DCT for provision, at some time in the future, of shuttle service within St. Michaels during the months of heaviest traffic. Space for automobile parking and a shuttle bus stop at the southern entrance to Town has been included as part of the Hatton's Garden development. This in-town shuttle service, however, might require Town funding assistance. There also has been some discussion of a private Trolley service that would serve the St. Michaels downtown are during weekends.

VISION

St. Michaels will continue to improve and enhance pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular transportation to provide safe and efficient movement.

OBJECTIVES AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

6.1 Explore options to alleviate congestion and facilitate pedestrian movement on Talbot Street.

6.1.1 Coordinate planning efforts with SHA in regard to traffic management.

6.1.2 Explore the opportunity for a land-based transportation system connecting a parking location at the south end of Town to parking facilities at the north end of Town and connecting to commercial and harbor areas. If planned, the Town might:

- Apply for local transit services assistance from MTA.
- Coordinate regional travel with Delmarva Community Transit.
- Create Park and Ride areas at the entrances to the Town.
- Work with a private vendor to establish a safe and functional trolley route in the Town.

6.2 Establish policies for tour buses

6.2.1 Establish parking facilities for tour busses at the edges of town.

6.2.2 Designate areas for short term bus parking to facilitate unloading and loading of passengers in the downtown area.

6.3 Ensure that transportation needs are an integral part of land use planning.

6.3.1 Require new development to design and develop streets, sidewalks, pathways and trails which provide opportunities for connectivity to the Town.

6.3.2 Improve circulation by ensuring that new streets, ways, alleys, sidewalks and paths create safe and logical extensions of the existing grid pattern.

6.4 Encourage a pedestrian-friendly environment on walkways around town, in parks, adjacent to waterfronts and along recreational trails and pathways

6.4.1 Review and evaluate the current Town Code regarding the cost of new sidewalks. Consider a new ordinance that will require the Town to cover the cost of sidewalks in existing residential areas when the Town mandates the sidewalks

be built.

6.4.2 Study the feasibility of providing sidewalks on Railroad Avenue and Boundary Lane.

6.4.3 Establish pedestrian paths where practical and appropriate as an alternative to creating new sidewalks. Consider using the town's alleys, lanes and "paper" streets.

6.4.4 Evaluate the location and number of existing crosswalks and develop appropriate signing to help ensure the safety of pedestrians.

6.4.5 Increase the policing of pedestrian crosswalks and street intersections during periods of heavy traffic.

6.4.6 Create, maintain and enhance pedestrian walkways that provide access to parks and waterfront destinations.

- Extend brick sidewalks throughout the Business District.
- Establish a pedestrian/bicycle connection between Mill Street and the entrance to the Maritime Museum.
- Approach SHA or DHCD for appropriate Neighborhood Conservation Assistance.

6.4.7 Consider establishing a permanent "Traffic" committee to recommend priorities for spending on streets and sidewalks, as part of an on-going program of traffic and pedestrian safety.

6.4.8 Coordinate with SHA regarding pedestrian and bicyclist safety on Talbot Street.

6.4.9 Approach SHA to reduce speed limits and promote safety of the Perry Cabin ball parks on MD 33 with crosswalks.

6.5 Improve the ease and safety of bicycle travel in, around and through Town.

6.5.1 Develop plans for establishing and marking bicycle routes.

- Approach State Highway Administration or Department of Housing and Community Development for appropriate Neighborhood Conservation Assistance.

6.5.2 Provide bicycle parking racks as needed.

6.5.3 Coordinate with the County to integrate town bikeways with those of the County.

6.6 Establish a Traffic and Street Committee

6.6.1 Report at least semiannually to the Planning Commissioners on progress of the achievements of the Objectives of this chapter.

6.6.2 Recommend priorities for spending on streets and sidewalks.

6.7 Perform a study to determine the parking requirements of the Town.

6.7.1 Commission a thorough study of the town's parking arrangements. The study should also evaluate the acceptable fee the town should charge for parking.

6.7.2 The study should address both commercial and residential parking requirements, provision of resident-only parking on certain side streets, and the subject of parking fees on public lots.

6.7.3 If more parking space is required, build its acquisition into the capital plan.

6.8 Recognize significance of the Town being located along Chesapeake Country Scenic Byway.

Chapter 7:
Economic Development

INTRODUCTION

The twentieth century brought many changes to St. Michaels. The harvesting of shellfish and canning and food processing businesses that once were the economic backbone of the area, have given way to pleasure boats, tourists, boutiques and real estate offices. The Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum, together with the quaint, historic nature of our town and businesses, attracts tens of thousands of visitors on an annual basis and has made St. Michaels a unique tourist destination.

As tourism increased, the business district was transformed from a community supported shopping area to a tourist oriented downtown. This situation has been accompanied with a substantial increase in real estate values. Rents for business locations in downtown are often driven by these values rather than values based on prospective income derived from business operations.

Talbot Street is the historic business core of our community. Its buildings embody the community's past and its visual identity; offering a unique shopping experience to the residents and visitors. The commercial district offers convenience as it is within walking distance of residential areas and provides easy access to the community reducing the reliance on automobile dependent shopping. Rehabilitation of buildings along Talbot Street and the construction of a business/office park at the southern entrance to the town have provided a controlled environment for new businesses while providing site amenities which contribute to the beautification of the Town. Although there are many attractive stores on Talbot Street many of the Town's full-time residents feel their personal shopping needs cannot be fulfilled within St. Michaels.

There has long been interest expressed in revitalizing the commercial district westward to encompass Fremont and Connor Streets. With the development of the urban renewal process underway, the core of St. Michaels' downtown will include the Planned Re-development Area – Urban Renewal District, currently revolving around Freemont and Conner Streets. The completion of the public library and police station has

started the much desired redeveloped process in this area. Similar revitalization projects, in the downtown district, can provide for more retail and residential living space. This, in turn, will bring more economic and financial growth to the Town and its residents.

Another area of interest is the Mill property, located between Marengo Street and East Chew Avenue, which may be redeveloped with a mix of uses in a manner that minimizes the impact on the surrounding residential properties. The Commissioners with the support of the residents of the Town have recognized the potential benefits of preserving the Mill complex and have allowed for increased uses in the Planned Redevelopment Area zone. To protect the residential neighborhood from adverse impacts of the expansion of uses permitted within the Mill complex stringent review criteria have been created and made a part of the Town's Zoning Ordinance. Further goals associated with the Mill complex are discussed in Chapter 1, Land Use.

VISION

St. Michaels has broadened its core central business area westward, and in the area of the Mill, to strengthen the existing economic base and while preserving the integrity of its historic identity and providing protection to the neighboring residential areas. Future expansion of these areas may include some civil buildings and common space that will enhance the development, yet protect the quaintness of the Town that is held dearly to the hearts of the residents.

OBJECTIVES AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

7.1 Promote a healthy business district that provides needed goods and services to residents as well as an inviting and attractive atmosphere to all.

7.1.1 Establish a Business District Improvement Committee composed of the St. Michaels Business Association, business owners and town officials.

- Create a Master Improvement Plan with particular focus on redevelopment of the Fremont and Conner Street areas and ways to stimulate small town commercial revitalization.
- Create an improvement priority list for better lighting, benches, and landscaping in the commercial areas.
- Integrate the recommendations into the Town's Capital Improvement Program, as appropriate.
- Authorize an updated study of the parking requirements for the Town that accommodates both the residents and visitors.

7.1.2 Develop a stated policy with the private sector to continue the re-development of Fremont and Connor Streets, providing a better mix of civic, residential, commercial and business uses and reinforce or enhance the downtown's role as an

activity center yet protecting the quaintness of the Town.

- Research Federal and State grants that may be applicable.
- Create a revitalization zone and study other possible revitalization measures that can be taken.
- Research the advantages and disadvantages of having a business in Town versus surrounding areas and formulate ways to encourage the retention and establishment of businesses in Town.
- Provide data on statistics of visitors per season and income generated via different sources, such as sales tax or room tax generated.

7.1.3 Coordinate economic development goals and activities with those undertaken by Talbot County and Maryland State government.

7.1.4 Identify the most appropriate locations for development of additional public restroom facilities and construct and maintain such facilities.

7.1.5 Evaluate current standards and requirements for permanent signs and consider broadening the range and type of signs that can be utilized by businesses to identify their location. Signs should provide direction and contribute to the image and identify of the downtown.

7.2 Evaluate the range of taxes paid by downtown businesses to determine their impact on (re)investment.

7.2.1 Identify and utilize incentives to encourage investment and development in the commercial zones.

Chapter 8:
Historic and Cultural Resource Protection

INTRODUCTION

It is possible to see the history of St. Michaels in its historic buildings and events which date back over three centuries. Physical reminders of early history give depth and richness to the Town, to past events and to people's lives. Historic preservation allows the legacy of the past to be protected and remembered. It allows for the past to be integrated with the present and reminds us that the old has a useful place alongside the new. The preservation of historic buildings and structures includes consideration of the integrity of the location, neighborhood, design, setting, materials and workmanship.

St. Michaels has a substantial and well-documented stock of historic structures, streetscapes, sites, and settings. Over 250 historic structures have been surveyed and documented, forming a largely intact historic district, in which houses, churches and commercial structures from the late nineteenth century are particularly well represented. A number of these sites can be viewed on Map 8-1, St. Michaels Historic Areas and National Register District.

Preservation and rehabilitation of these structures and streetscapes enhances the historic character of the Town, stabilizes neighborhoods, protects property values, and attracts visitors to St. Michaels who support the business community by eating, lodging, and shopping.

The Town of St. Michaels recognizes the importance of its historic resources and encourages preservation and rehabilitation efforts by private owners and local government. Private houses and public buildings are often carefully restored. New uses are found for historic buildings which no longer serve their original functions.

Continued historic and cultural preservation will provide St. Michaels with a number of aesthetic and economic benefits, including:

- Promotion of a strong sense of community pride and tradition;
- Revitalization through the restoration and adaptive reuse of older structures;
- Increased property values and tax revenues as a result of renovation and restoration; and
- Increased revenues from tourism activities generated by an interest in historic buildings and sites.

The "Stories of the Chesapeake" Certified Heritage Area encompasses heritage sites and places in Talbot and adjacent Counties which were designated a certified heritage area by the Maryland Heritage Area Authority on April 20, 2005. This program recognizes St. Michaels as offering a number of heritage resources of importance to the region.

New commercial and residential development and rehabilitation projects have been designed to complement historic buildings, rather than clash with them. The Town, our business community and residents have invested in preservation, restoration and improved access to many previously endangered or neglected historical buildings and sites. A heritage tourism industry has developed in the region and St. Michaels is a key destination taking full advantage of such opportunities.

National Register Historic District

The National Register of Historic Places, an inventory of historic resources, is maintained by the National Park Service. Listing in the National Register provides recognition to sites, buildings, structures, objects, and districts that are significant to American history, architecture,

archaeology, engineering, or culture. The St. Michaels National Register Historic District was surveyed, nominated, and approved in 1986. In addition to providing recognition of significance, listing in the National Register mandates consideration in the planning of any federal or federally-assisted project and provides eligibility for federal and state tax credits for historic preservation projects.

St. Michaels Historic District

The Town has a Historic District Commission and two museums, the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum and the St. Michaels Museum at Saint Mary's Square. The St. Michaels Historic District (formerly named the St. Michaels Historic Area) was created in 1972 and has been expanded and modified several times since. The five-member Historic District Commission is composed of volunteer citizens with interest or specific expertise in historic preservation and appointed to three-year terms by the Town Commissioners. The Commission reviews proposed exterior changes to any structure or appurtenance in the defined district, according to an approved and published set of guidelines. The guidelines that provide standards for this design review were adopted in 1989. This review process provides the best tool for protecting and enhancing the historic character of St. Michaels. In addition to the review of proposed projects, inclusion in the Historic District also provides eligibility for a state historic preservation tax credit to home property owners who undertake historic preservation projects, whether or not the property produces income.

Currently, the St. Michaels National Register Historic District includes several neighborhoods in the Town that are not included in the locally-zoned St. Michaels Historic District. Historic resources located outside of the locally-zoned Historic District may be threatened by demolition or character changing alterations or additions. Measures to consider expanding the Town Historic District boundaries to coincide with the National Register Historic District and educating residents about the value of these properties to neighborhood character could help address these threats. Another threat to historic properties is demolition by neglect, which has been addressed by expanding the "demolition by neglect" provision in the zoning code from addressing only income-producing properties to cover all properties. Another measure that could help to address this problem is a property maintenance ordinance.

VISION

St. Michaels is a place where historic resources have been valued and preserved.

GOALS AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

8.1 Further restoration, adaptive rehabilitation and preservation of historic structures, sites, streetscapes, and settings.

8.1.1 Expand the St. Michaels Historic District to include areas of the National Register Historic District and other neighborhoods that may be determined to be historically significant.

8.1.2 Revise the St. Michaels Historic Area Guidelines to address more specific materials, techniques, and other aspects of historic structure rehabilitation while conforming to the Secretary of the Interior's Guidelines for Rehabilitation of Historic Structures.

8.1.3 Revise the zoning ordinance to protect all structures within the Historic District from "demolition by neglect."

8.1.4 Identify historic structures and sites outside the Historic District and offer assistance to property owners planning rehabilitation projects not subject to review by the Historic District Commission. (Chapter 96 Blight of the Code of the Town of St Michaels)

8.2 Support the St. Michaels Historic District Commission and zoning regulations applicable to the Historic District.

8.2.1 Use the part-time assistant zoning inspector to monitor permit compliance for projects in the Historic District. These responsibilities have been assigned to the Assistant Codes Enforcement Office.

8.2.2 Any new development which may affect historic resources is to be referred to the Historic District Commission for comment.

8.2.3 Pursue Certified Local Government status with the Maryland Historical Trust to provide eligibility for continuing education grants for staff and members of the Historic District Commission.

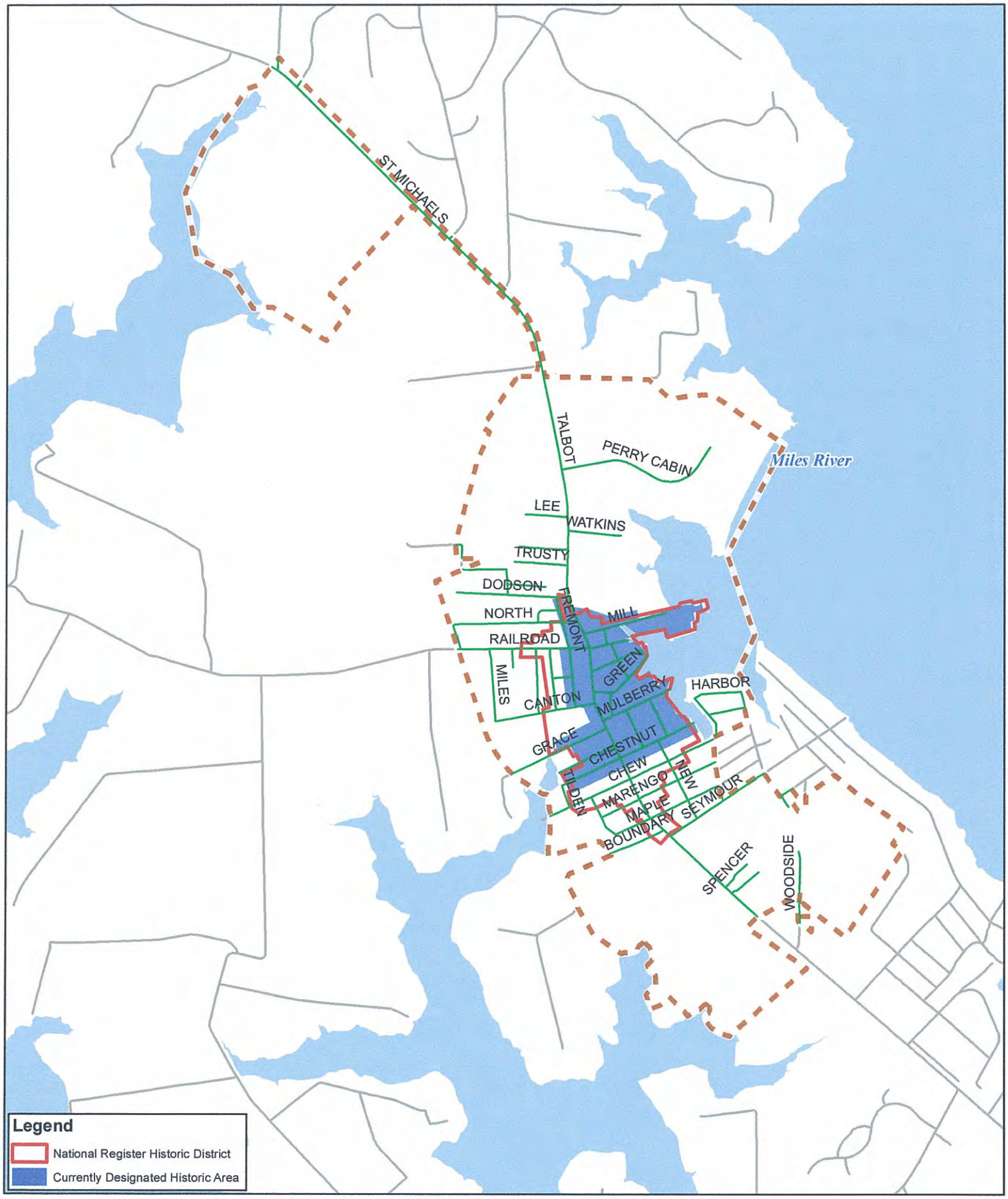
8.2.4 Evaluate the zoning ordinance to allow consideration for historic character in reviewing variances for front lot line setbacks and to allow consideration for historic character in side and rear lot line setbacks for accessory structures.

8.3 Educate residents, realtors and property owners about the benefits, boundaries and requirements of the Historic District review process and design standards and about the availability of state and federal tax credits for historic preservation projects.

8.3.1 Prepare a brochure for distribution to the realtors to be given to potential buyers setting forth the Town's Historic District Boundary and the benefits and responsibilities of being in such a district.

8.3.2 Encourage property owners to seek the expertise of the Historic District Commission when considering improvements to their property through informal discussions with the Commission.

8.4 Encourage sponsorship of Town events that celebrate the historic and cultural resources in St. Michaels.



Map 8-1 St. Michaels Historic Area
and National Register District

Chapter 9:
Parks, Recreation and Open Space

INTRODUCTION

Outdoor recreation contributes to the physical fitness and mental well-being of Town residents and visitors. The quality of St. Michaels' parks and its park system serves as a clear indicator of the Town's pride in its fundamental character, historic beginnings, and waterfront community image. A quality park system serves not only area residents but also diversifies the Town's offerings to the visitor population upon which much of its economy depends.

The primary focus of the Town in recent years has been to acquire smaller parks to serve the needs of residents as opportunities arose. This plan proposes that parks and recreation offerings be viewed in a broader context in the future as a tool to accomplish a number of other related community development objectives, such as:

- achieve environmental resource protection or management objectives
- augment the range of recreational opportunities
- provide creative play areas that are educational and provide opportunities to observe
- natural landscapes and wildlife
- integrate arts, culture, and community events with traditional park areas

In planning for recreation and open space in St. Michaels, an important distinction must be kept in mind: recreation areas, such as community parks and boat landings, are used actively, while open space areas are primarily passive in nature and managed for natural resources protection. These two uses, while not attempting to achieve the same objectives, are not always incompatible. Combined in creative land planning and management programs, they can be mutually supportive toward achieving their respective objectives.

While there currently are no paths on the periphery of Town for recreational walking or bicycling, the Rotary Club of St. Michaels and Environmental Concerns, Inc. have teamed to build a nature trail on the western edge of Town from Boundary Lane to Railroad Avenue. This is considered the first phase of a larger trail system that would extend from MD

33, through Hatton's Garden, and connect with the Midlands waterfront park to the north of Town, with the support of Elm Street LLC and private donations.

St. Michaels provides varying park or recreational functions, ranging in scale from smaller intimate areas (typically less than an acre in size) that permit access to St. Michaels Harbor or San Domingo Creek, to two larger County park facilities, over ten acres in size, located at each end of Town (See Map 9-1). Some of these locations support a wide range of athletic and recreational activities, while others, like Muskrat Park or Hollis Park provide for passive enjoyment of St. Michaels Harbor, and are more single-purpose in nature.

The St. Michaels school complex, which falls under the jurisdiction of the Talbot County Board of Education, allows use of the school site for public recreation. Three of the facilities identified on the map, and in the inventory provided in Table 9-1, are privately owned and access to these facilities is on a fee basis.

Table 9-1 provides an inventory and overview of the size and characteristics of the Park and recreation and/or museum facilities located in and adjacent to the Town.

Table 9-1
Approximate Size and Characteristics of Town Park Facilities
(public and private)

Site	Size	Park Features
1. Canton Farm Nature Area	40 acres	Nature Preserve and Wildlife Observation area.
2. Ball Fields at Perry Cabin Field	20 acres	General recreation facility with approximately 20 acres developed to include; baseball/softball fields (lighted), basketball court, playground areas, picnic shelter, picnic areas, walking trail, soccer fields, public restrooms, and open space.
3. Chesapeake Bay Maritime* Museum	18 acres	Ten exhibit buildings, aquarium, lighthouse, children's outdoor exhibits and play areas, boardwalk, piers, picnic tables, bench seating, and views of the Miles River and Foggs Cove.
4. St. Michaels School Complex	15 acres	Running track, tennis courts, basketball courts and playgrounds.
5. Clint S. Bradley Park	2 acres	New developing park facility to anchor one end of the San Domingo Trail. Includes or will include active play areas, gazebo, picnic tables, trails and facilities for passive recreation use.
6. Bay Hundred Community Pool*	1 acre	Outdoor pool facilities, showers, lockers and pool building
7. Skate Board Park – Hollis Park Extended	.5 acres	Provides skating area, public restrooms and supplemental parking on Mill Street.
8. Hollis Park	1.9 acres	Passive park facility providing playground, picnic tables, bench seating and views of St. Michaels Harbor.
9. Muskrat Park	.5 acres	Features landscaping, pavilion, picnic tables, bench seating, and views of St. Michaels Harbor and the Miles River.
10. St. Michaels Museum at St. Mary's Square*	.3 acres	Park-like setting featuring two circa 1860 buildings with artifacts significant to history and culture of area.
11. Back Creek Park	.3 acres	Passive recreation area with pier, kayak launch ramps, picnic tables, bench seating, and views of San Domingo Creek.

Table 9-1 Approximate Size and Characteristics of Town Park Facilities (public and private)		
Site	**Size**	**Park Features**
12. Wilson, Reading Garden at Carpenter Alley	.25 acres	Reading Garden located adjacent to the Library to include bench seating, patio area and rain garden.
13. Frederick Douglas Park	.1 acre	Downtown seating area and information kiosk
14. St. Michaels Nature Trail		single multi-use 6,860 linear foot, eight foot wide trail,
Source: Redman/Johnston Associates, Ltd. and Town Staff, 2008 * Denotes a fee required for admittance or use		

There are two public boat ramps on North Harbor Drive and three public landings in other parts of Town. There are six additional public boat ramps and two public landings distributed throughout the Bay Hundred region. The Town owns 57 boat slips that are rented to those persons whose boats are registered in the the State of Maryland. Two of these slips are made available to the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. One additional slip is used by St. Michaels Fire and Rescue Services.

There is presently limited public waterfront access. Opportunities to acquire such land are virtually non-existent in developed areas of the Town and will come about only through annexation and growth at its northern and southern boundaries where the development approval process provides a venue for acquiring such lands.

Muskrat Park is located on the harbor in the center of St. Michaels. There is overwhelming citizen support for using the open area that resulted from the old firehouse's demolition to expand Muskrat Park. In 2008 a plan designed by renowned landscape architect for the redevelopment of the park was enthusiastically adopted by the community and funding is currently being raised for the planned work. At its completion in 2011, Muskrat Park will have expanded public facilities for community activities such as the Fresh Farm Farmers market and Thursday evening Concerts in the park and will offer improved ADA access to the waterfront in the center of Town.

VISION

St. Michaels is a place with a diverse park system that serves both active and passive uses, preserves open space, and provides greater access to its waterfronts.

OBJECTIVES AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

9.1 Provide opportunities to meet recreational needs and offer environmental observation enjoyment.

9.1.1 Maintain an accurate inventory of Town recreational facilities and improvements.

9.1.2 Develop and extend the Town's trail system.

9.1.3 Maintain adequate public waterfront access points.

9.1.4 Encourage community organizations to make use of available recreational facilities for other uses.

9.1.5 Enhance existing Town park facilities through the use of amenities such as restrooms, drinking fountains, benches, picnic tables and bike racks.

9.1.6 Ensure public safety of public recreational facilities by the use of adequate lighting, policing and maintenance.

9.1.7 Encourage public and private organizations who offer recreational opportunities to work together to ensure that available resources are effectively and broadly used by Town residents.

9.1.8 Task the Parks & Recreation Committee to maintain the implementation strategies of this objective.

9.2 Include the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum as a key partner in achieving the Recreation Plan objectives.

9.2.1 Use the Maritime Museum as a campus for entertainment venues.

9.2.2 Encourage the Maritime Museum as a magnet for Tourism.

9.3 Use recreation facilities to promote environmental awareness.

9.3.1 Increase promotion and awareness of the natural environment.

9.4 Expand and improve Muskrat Park to encourage increased utilization.

9.4.1 Increase existing amenities to include park benches and seating.

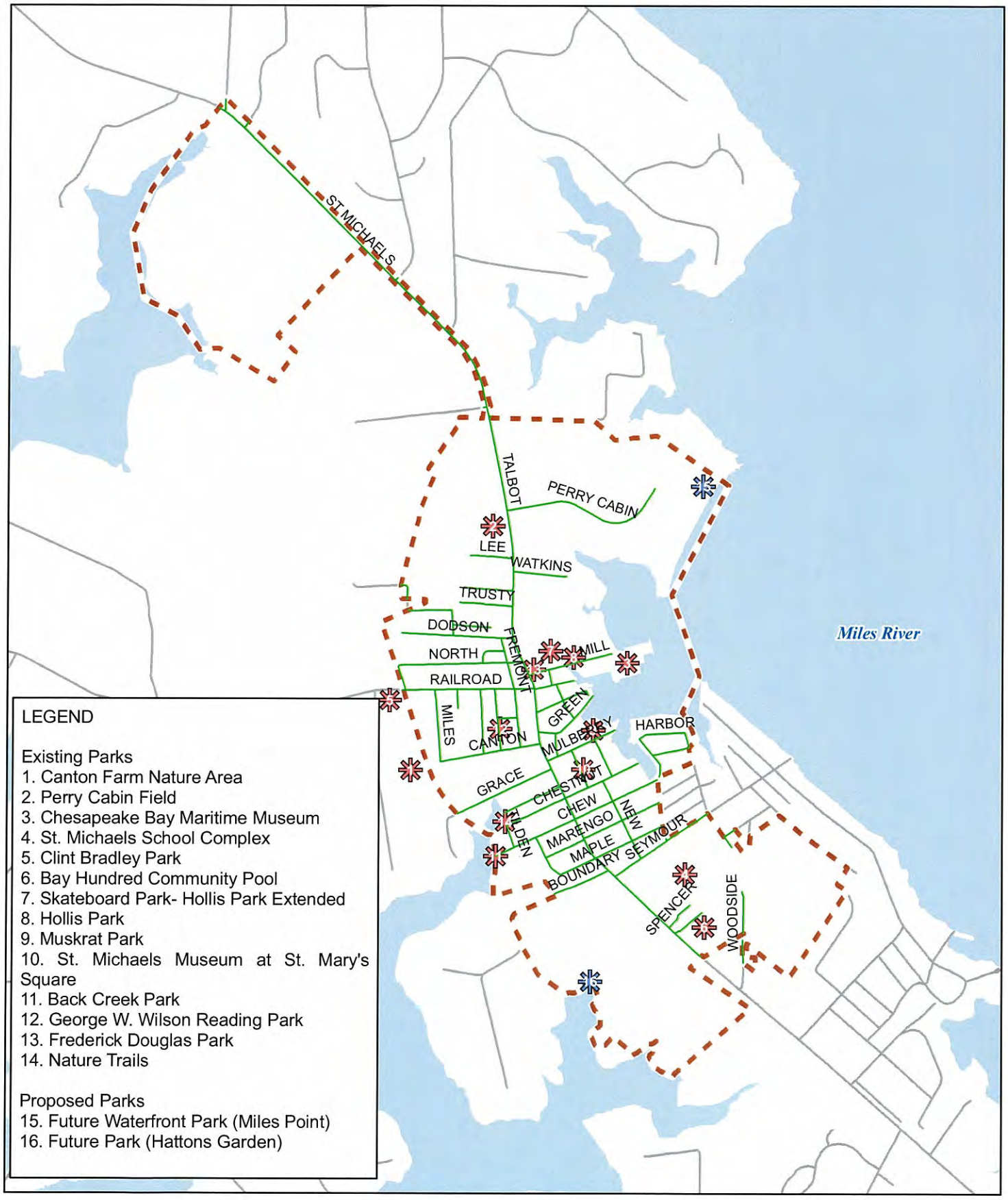
9.4.2 Provide ADA accessibility to the waterfront.

9.4.3 Enhance lighting to provide increased security in the evenings.

9.4.4 Provide a parking area which could be used for community functions such as a farmers market.

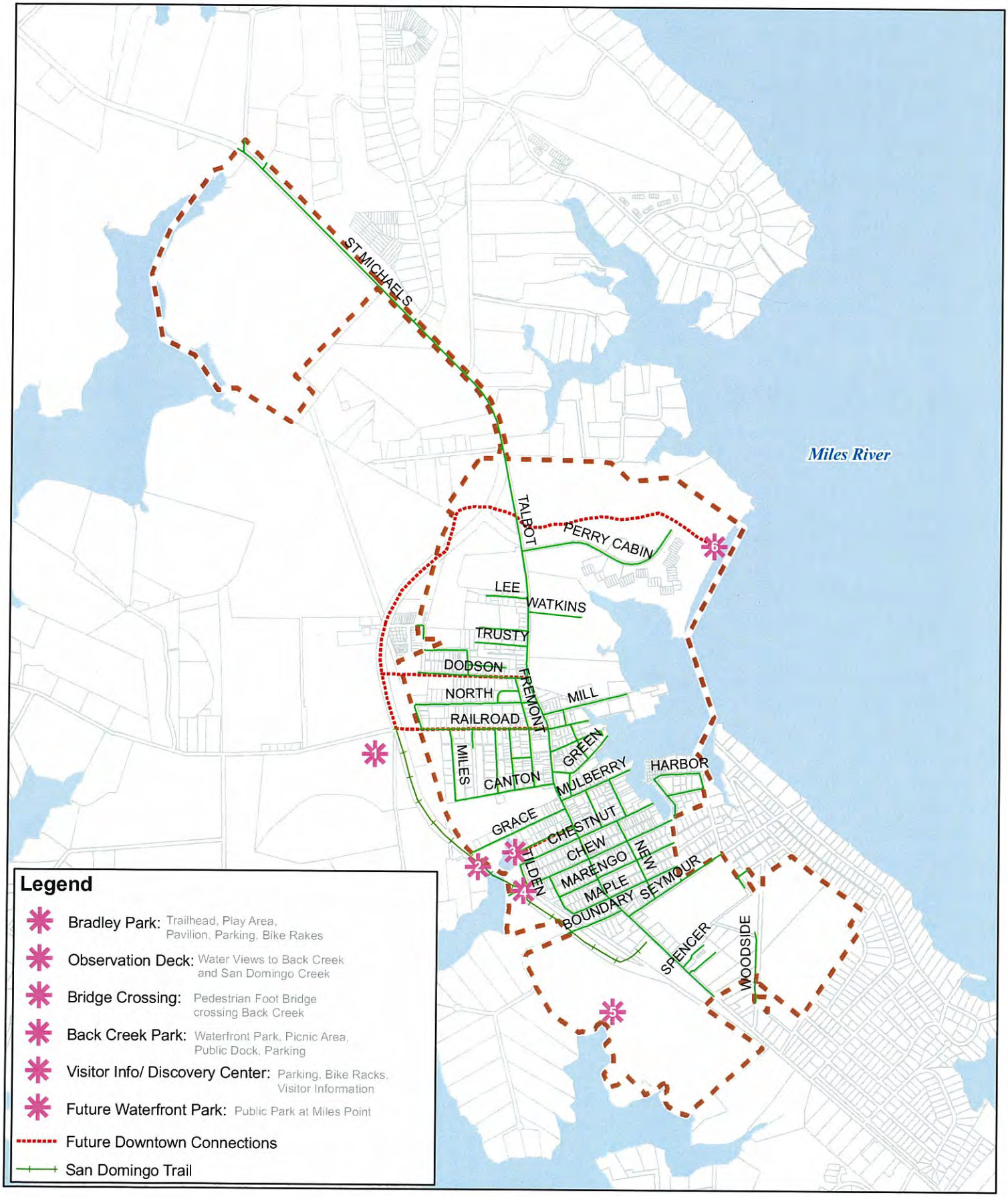
9.4.5 Improve landscaping.

2008 Comprehensive Plan
St. Michaels, Maryland



Map 9-1 Park and Recreation Facilities

2008 Comprehensive Plan
St. Michaels, Maryland



Map 9-2 Recommended Recreational
Trail System Plan

Chapter 10: Housing

INTRODUCTION

Housing in the town of St. Michaels consists primarily of single family residences, typically on lots of 7,200 square feet or less, and for the most part contained in three areas zoned for residential use. According to the 2000 Census, homes in St. Michaels are occupied by a larger percentage of secondary homeowners than primary homeowners. The number of homes occupied by full time residents has decreased by approximately one-third over the past decade. The high percentage of second-home ownership has adversely impacted the number of persons available for civic activities, such as voting, volunteer work and participation in the town governmental apparatus, as well as everyday support of the business community. The upside of the situation is the hope that these second-home owners will eventually become full time residents and help to reverse the present demography.

The residential rental market in the Town of St. Michaels is limited, consisting of single family dwellings, condominiums and apartments above commercial establishments. A few small cottages, formerly watermen's homes, have been restored and placed on the market as vacation rentals. These historic cottages, interspersed throughout residential areas, had fallen into disrepair and were permitted to be restored and used for short term rental, thereby saving them from blight and demolition.

There are opportunities in Town to meet the needs of those for whom the purchase of individual residences is not financially feasible. These opportunities are in the form of apartments above commercial establishments. Some spaces are used as such now while others can be adapted for this use. Mixed use structures in the business area provide greater security during off hours and broaden the range of housing options in proximity to shops and services. Market conditions and high commercial rental rates make doing business in St. Michaels difficult; therefore the addition of residential rental income should be an attraction for business investment.

The cost of housing in St. Michaels has risen over the past several years and, as a result of successful historic preservation efforts and our unique geographic location, home prices are generally higher than comparable houses in many other Eastern Shore towns.

At the same time many lifelong residents of various trades and backgrounds are being stressed by the higher costs of property maintenance and taxation, often resulting in the sale and redevelopment of their property. This section of the population constitutes an important element of the waterfront history of St. Michaels and its presence and real estate need to be retained as part of the fabric of St. Michaels' culture. Nevertheless, the majority of private homes in the Town are now second residences.

The dwindling percentage of lifelong residents, as well as an aging population of newer residents, understandingly prefers to remain in their homes during their advanced retirement years, but need assistance in everyday living and in maintaining their properties. This need has been met in other jurisdictions, where space permits, by conversion of part of the residence to live-in accommodations. Alternately, where space is available in homes occupied by pre-retirement persons, older relatives can be accommodated in attached suites. Restructuring the St. Michaels Zoning Ordinance should be considered to permit such arrangements.

Additionally, attention needs to be directed toward ensuring that infill and restorative projects do not create architectural anomalies in their respective neighborhoods. Zoning ordinances need to be structured to preserve the appearances of the diversity of neighborhoods which characterize St. Michaels.

VISION

The Town of St. Michaels has retained its historic, small town character, while providing for the preservation of its present housing stock. Provisions have been made to provide for the housing needs of the community in its entirety.

OBJECTIVES AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

10.1 Maintain the integrity and appearance of residential neighborhoods.

10.1.1 Strictly enforce existing zoning regulations by thorough and frequent inspection through the employment of a part time Zoning Inspector. The position of Assistant to the Codes Enforcement Officer was created in 2007.

10.1.2 Maintain the single residence appearance in Residential Zone 1 (R-1).

10.1.3 Enforce Chapter 96, Blight, which is intended to prevent and prohibit blighted structures within the Town of St. Michaels.

10.1.4 Closely monitor the construction and development of any new project for compliance with applicable zoning and site plan requirements.

10.1.5 Institute a Zoning Ordinance that addresses the requirement that new structures and renovations to existing structures not violate the general appearance of the neighborhood in which they are located.

10.1.6 Explore the possibility of Town tax relief for homeowners whose income is below a certain level.

10.2 Coordinate with the St. Michaels Housing Authority to improve site conditions.

10.2.1 Improve appearance of housing complexes through landscaping and general maintenance.

10.2.2 Encourage increased provision of community services to residents, i.e. increased solid waste collection and public transportation.

10.3 Increase alternatives to single residential units within Town.

10.3.1 Encourage the mix of uses in commercial buildings to include a great number of rental units on upper floors. (§340-22 Neighborhood Commercial Zone, §340-26 Central Commercial Zone, §340-30 Limited Commercial Zone, and §340-34 Off-street Parking of the Code of the Town of St Michaels).

10.3.2 Permit extended family accommodations through in-home modification or accessory use structures. To insure against abuse, create such policies as:

- Require that the homeowner reside in one of the units.
- Require a minimum square footage as a prerequisite for a house to be considered eligible for conversion..
- Place a limit on the number of people who can occupy the accessory structure or designating the aggregate number of people who can occupy the entire house.
- Modify Town Zoning Ordinances to permit live/work configurations in future re-development or infill development projects.
- Modify the minimum lot size or area requirements contained in the current zoning ordinance for duplexes.

Chapter 11:
Community Character, Design and Appearance

The Town of St. Michaels exemplifies many of the principles now termed by Planners as "smart growth," as evidenced by the form of development in the downtown business area and older established residential neighborhoods. These principals have governed infill and new development within the Town.

The physical details of the Town which include building and landscaping elements, intimate views and expansive vistas are important to the definition of the town's character. These details influence how residents and visitors feel about the Town and need to be preserved and protected.

The character of St. Michaels is not limited to the historic area or to the physical structure of our Town. It is in large measure reflected in the overall quality of its neighborhoods and the neighborliness of our residents. In its most basic aspects the character of the Town flows from the character of our people.

St. Michaels is part of the larger Bay Hundred Region. The Town serves as the center for commercial services and community facilities for its residents and surrounding communities.

VISION

The Town of St. Michaels has recognized the need to preserve its small town atmosphere and historic character by developing guidelines for the preservation of these elements.

OBJECTIVES AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

11.1 Encourage design qualities in future (re)development that reinforce St. Michaels' unique character and identity.

11.1.1 Review Miles Point and the Hunteman project submittals using the traditional development patterns of the Town.

11.1.2 Encourage use of Residential Gateway Zoning in appropriate areas.

11.1.3 Create guidelines which are intended to ensure quality infill development and redevelopment of existing residential structures.

11.2 Establish design principles that result in new single family detached in-fill housing and rebuilds that are more sensitive to existing housing and neighborhoods.

11.2.1 Ensure that structures maintain the scale of the surrounding block face with respect to height, bulk, and structure size.

- In areas where existing dwelling units are predominantly one story in height, new infill development and rebuilds should be limited to no more than two stories, even if existing zoning regulations allow two and a half stories.

- In areas with predominantly smaller dwelling units, ensure that new infill development and rebuilds respect the existing scale of development so as not to become dominant features.

11.2.2 Where there is not a consistent streetscape in a block, ensure that the proposed dwelling unit relates to its immediate neighbors possibly incorporating some of the more appealing features found along the street.

11.2.3 Revise the St. Michaels Zoning Ordinance to incorporate the above strategies.

11.3 Create landscaping and setback standards for new or expanded commercial uses adjacent to residential zones.

11.3.1 Require full compliance with rear yard setback when accessory structures associated with the commercial use of the property are proposed.

- Amend Section 6 of the St. Michaels Zoning Ordinance,

11.3.2 Require that vegetative buffers be established between proposed commercial uses and residential uses.

- Amend the St. Michaels Zoning Ordinance.

11.3.3 Establish site plan review for all new and expanded commercial uses, including landscaping and property screening criteria.

- Amend the St. Michaels Zoning Ordinance.

11.4 With respect to all new construction existing significant trees and natural features, such as drainage corridors must be preserved.

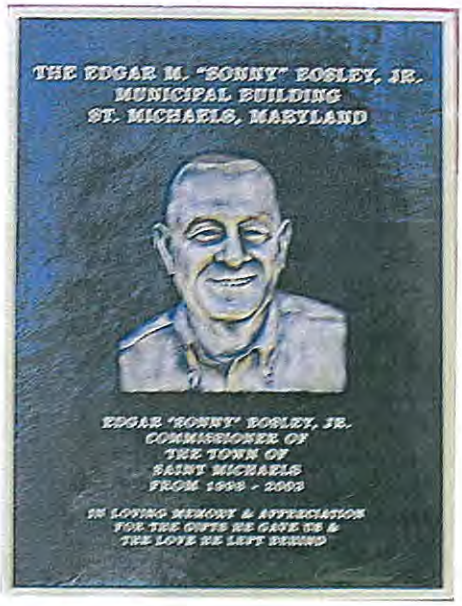
11.4.1 Require significant trees to be preserved and integrated into the site or lot layout and replace of trees whose loss is unavoidable.

- Seek guidance from the Department of Natural Resources for appropriate strategies.

- Include these standards in the Town Zoning Ordinance.

Chapter 12:
Governance and Communications

INTRODUCTION



St. Michaels is governed by five elected Commissioners serving staggered terms and elected by the Town citizens at-large. The Town Manager, the Zoning Officer and the Planning Commission members are appointed by the Town Commissioners, as are members of the Appeals Board, the Historic District Committee, the Park and Recreations Committee, the Waterways Management Advisory Committee, and the St. Michaels Housing Authority. The number of boards and commissions has grown over time, as has the number and composition of those interested in and affected by the Town's decisions and regulations.

Communications amongst the Town's citizenry, its government bodies and its business community, deserve to be supported by the most advanced technology. Technology carries a cost as does the need to keep an informed citizenry to support Town government, attend its meetings, participate in its activities, and keep abreast in a timely manner of its decisions and regulations.

VISION

St. Michaels continues to employ modern communications technology as a governance tool to impart to its residents and its business community the Town's notices, activities, plans, decisions, and regulations in as timely a manner as is available.

OBJECTIVES AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

12.1 Maintain a website that posts current information of the Town government organization, activities, and records.

12.1.1 Obtain a more accurate ".gov" extension from the Government Services Agency.

- Engage the services of a website manager. In 2007, the Commissioners employed an Internet Service Company for the purpose of expanding the Town's website to allow for the posting of Commission and Board memberships, agendas, and other matters of interest to the general public.

- Post a directory of elected officials, appointed bodies and members, and town personnel.
- Post a calendar of upcoming town meetings.
- Post agendas of upcoming meetings.
- Post minutes of meetings.
- Post legal notices.
- Provide application forms.

12.1.2 Post links to the websites of the State of Maryland, Talbot County Government, the St. Michaels Business Association, and the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum.

12.1.3 Establish an electronic communications capability between the Town and individual citizens.

12.1.4 Investigate the possibility of providing Town WiFi service, if available, for public use.

12.2 Establish and maintain a database of Town ordinances and regulations.

12.2.1 As a first priority, place zoning ordinances in electronic medium.

12.3 Strengthen communication between the Town Commissioners and the various Town Boards and Commissions.

12.3.1 Consider designating an elected Town Commissioner to be an *ex-officio* member of each Board and Commission.

12.3.2 Draw on the expertise of Town residents to provide support and assistance to Town Government. The Commissioners have recently created the Waterways Management Advisory Board (Chapter 98 Boards, Commissions, Committees and Panels) and the St. Michaels Streetscape Advisory Task Force.

Chapter 13:
Mineral Resources

INTRODUCTION

Article 66B of the Maryland Code requires a Mineral Resources Element. This chapter of the plan is to identify potential undeveloped land for mineral excavation, establish post-excavation land uses for property and incorporate land use policies to balance surrounding land uses, mineral extraction and other users' extraction of mineral resources. Additionally, this element should be reviewed by the Maryland Department of the Environment.

VISION

St. Michaels has no active or potential mineral sites.