

Pocomoke City Comprehensive Plan

SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION

Pocomoke City has long benefited from its relationship with the Pocomoke River. Historically, the River has provided a means of transportation of goods and people. While still an important economic resource, the prevalent use of the river now is for recreation. Meanwhile, two 4-lane highways transporting vehicles southward to Virginia, northward to the Metro Areas, and eastward to beach communities circumvent the historic core of the City. The City has grown to encompass these natural features and man-made infrastructure, both with capitalizing on them as well as being constrained by them.

Comprehensive planning in Pocomoke City takes place in this most basic context.

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

A comprehensive plan sets forth policies governing growth, development and conservation. It is long range, general, and comprehensive.

Long range: The plan anticipates future trends.

General: The plan does not focus on matters of detail which can distract from important policies and proposals.

Comprehensive: The plan uncovers relationships between local and regional factors that impact development. It addresses major elements of the natural and man-made environment.

A comprehensive plan expresses basic community goals regarding future development. It does not predict future events nor list activities or projects. As a guide, a comprehensive plan allows a community to make day-to-day development decisions on the basis of reasoned and adopted policies, rather than on the individual merits of particular proposals.

1.2 PLANNING PROCESS

The City Planning and Zoning Commission prepared this Comprehensive Plan as called for by Article 66B of the Annotated Code of Maryland.

Public participation has been accomplished through open work sessions sponsored by the Planning and Zoning Commission.

The major planning issues center on how to maintain "small-town" character in light of growth pressures. Long range planning concerns include:

- Impact of new development on existing neighborhoods, on the existing road network, and riverfront access;
- Compatibility of new development with existing buildings and streets;
- Pedestrian safety and accessibility;
- Continued strength of existing and development of new downtown businesses;
- Environmental quality; and
- Maintenance of the City's position as a regional economic sub-center for a 15 to 20 mile radius.

The objectives of this Comprehensive Plan are based on these concerns.

1.3 LOCATION

The location of Pocomoke City may be defined on several levels. Figure 1, the Regional Location Map, shows the City's location on the Delmarva Peninsula.

- The Delmarva Peninsula: Agricultural and fishing activities dominated the region's economy in the past. However, the low population density of the region is changing as new residents buy second homes, retire in the area, or establish primary residences to commute to distant job centers.
- Worcester County: Led by home buyers in the Ocean City area, the County has shown steady population growth for decades.
- Proximity to the Chesapeake Bay: Pocomoke City is one of the few Maryland municipalities located within a few miles of the Chesapeake Bay with direct water access to the Bay.

1.4 PLAN ORGANIZATION

This Comprehensive Plan is organized into four sections.

- Section 1: Introduction
- Section 2: Existing Conditions
- Section 3: Future Conditions
- Section 4: Visions, Goals, and Recommendations

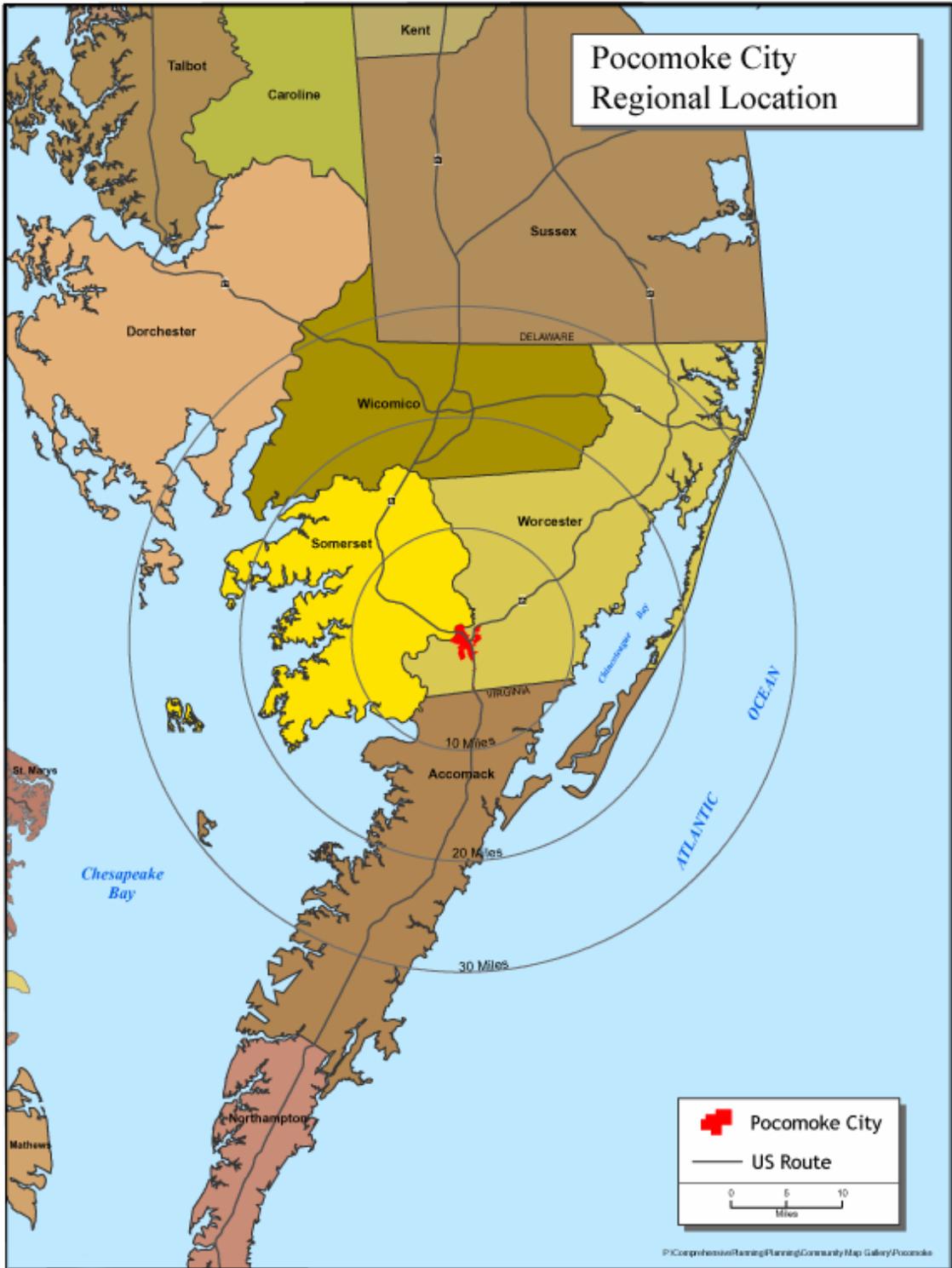


Figure 1: The Regional Location Map

SECTION 2 - EXISTING CONDITIONS

An understanding of the existing conditions allows the Planning and Zoning Commission to:

- Understand the community character in planning for the future;
- Create a baseline for anticipating how change will impact our resources and people; and
- Become informed, thus allowing better choices for the future.

The Comprehensive Plan will discuss existing conditions in terms of ongoing plans and projects, demographics and economics, the natural environment, land use, transportation and circulation, and community facilities.

2.1 ONGOING PLANS AND PROJECTS

Ongoing public and private projects and plans help define baseline conditions. They are an important source for the projection of future growth and development by the public and private sectors.

The list below summarizes major public works projects. Some have firm funding commitments and others, especially long-range highway projects, are less certain.

Most public works projects require cooperation among government agencies on various levels and to some extent, the private sector. The City's continued leadership will be necessary for implementation. Where it is clear that projects are solely the responsibility of the State of Maryland, it is so designated below.

Listing of a project does not denote a recommendation, only that the project is in some stage of planning and/or implementation.

Among private development projects, only those major projects, which have received at least preliminary concept approval from the City Planning and Zoning Commission or are the subject of a pending annexation petition, are included in the list.

A. Public Works Projects in Planning/Design

In 2004, the City completed its new Biological Nutrient Removal (BNR) Sewage Treatment Plant on Dunn Swamp Road, with a capacity of 1.47 million gallons per day (mgd). The City has submitted a pre-application for State funds to further upgrade the wastewater treatment plant with an Enhanced Nutrient Removal (ENR) project in approximately 3 years. The City expects the cost of this upgrade to cost approximately \$4.5 million.

Similarly, the City plans to upgrade its water plant. Within a 1 - 2 year time frame, the City expects to upgrade water pumping stations by installing new controls. The cost of these improvements is approximately \$250,000.

The County Board of Education is in the process of proposing a 50,000 square-foot addition that will increase the capacity of Pocomoke City High School. The new construction, accompanied by renovation of existing facilities, may be in use by the fall of 2008.

Although not technically a public entity, the Pocomoke City Volunteer Fire Company provides a public service to the residents of Pocomoke City and the surrounding areas. The Fire Company plans to construct a new fire station on Market Street.

The City has commissioned a new test well to supplement its three existing wells. A permanent new production well is being considered on Clarke Avenue-extended in 2007. This well will cost approximately \$150,000.

In 2006, the City hired a part-time downtown redevelopment coordinator to work with existing businesses, recruit new business, and help downtown cultural and historic institutions to grow and develop. These cultural and historic institutions are the Costen House, the Mar-Va Theater, the Discovery Center, and the Sturgis One-Room School Museum. The City must continue its vigorous support of the downtown area as it is the "heart" of the community.

B. Major Private Development Projects

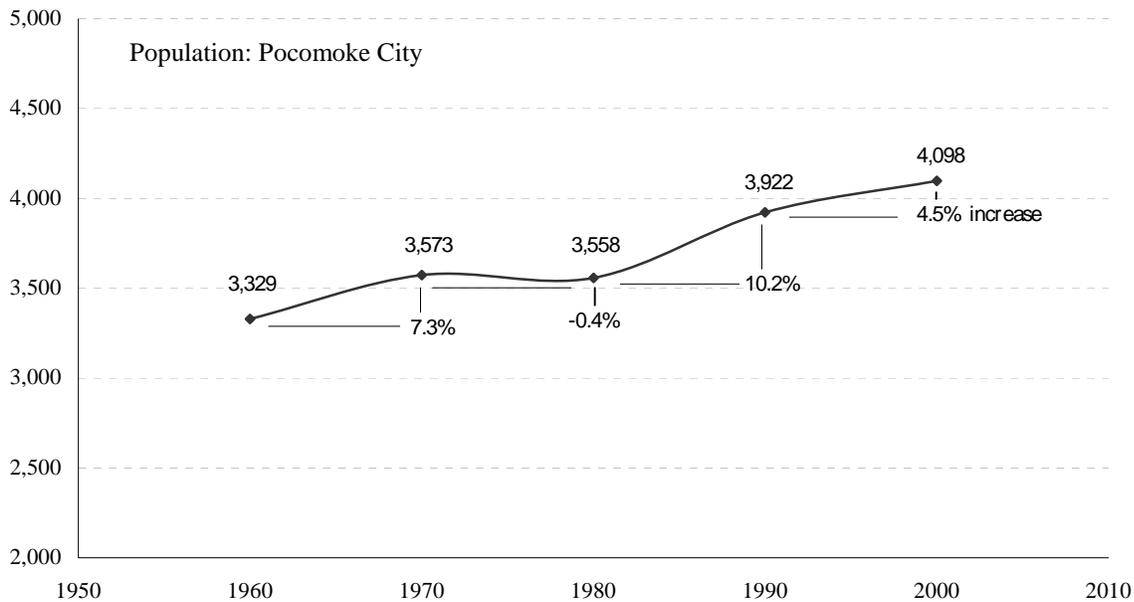
The private sector is responding to the immediate market demand for housing of various types. As of March 2005 there were 9 residential projects with a total of about 500 units in the development approval or construction phase. The majority of these projects are single family homes, with the remainder being townhouses and duplexes.

2.2 DEMOGRAPHICS AND ECONOMICS

This overview compares the City's population and housing to Worcester County. This provides a point of reference for local statistics to be seen in a meaningful and broader context.

A. Population ¹

Between 1960 and 2000, Pocomoke City added 769 residents as shown in the graph that follows



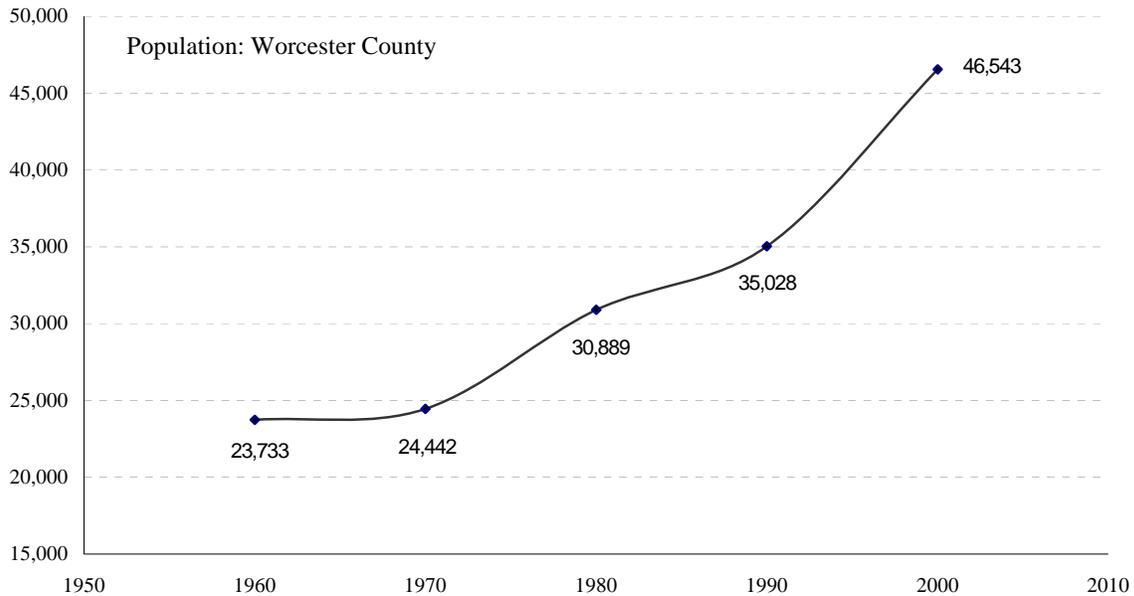
The most significant growth occurred during the 1980's, when population grew by over 10 percent, or at an average annual rate of almost 1 percent. As shown below, the annual growth rate between 1980 and 1990 far exceeded that recorded over the last 40 years - .52 percent per year.

¹The source of population, age, and housing data in this Plan is the U.S. Census with analysis, summary, and presentation by Jakubiak & Associates, Inc.

Population Growth Percentages by Decade: Pocomoke City and Worcester County

	1960-70	1970-80	1980-90	1990-00	1960-2000
Pocomoke City					
Change	7.3	-0.4	10.2	4.5	23.1
Rate of Growth	0.71	-0.04	0.98	0.44	0.52
Worcester County					
Change	3	26.4	13.4	32.9	96.1
Rate of Growth	0.29	2.37	1.27	2.88	1.7

The City's percentage of the County's population has decreased from 14 percent to slightly below 9 percent. The County's population, mainly through in-migration, has grown significantly. Between 1960 and 2000, it grew at an average rate of 1.7 percent, somewhat faster than Pocomoke City.



B. Age

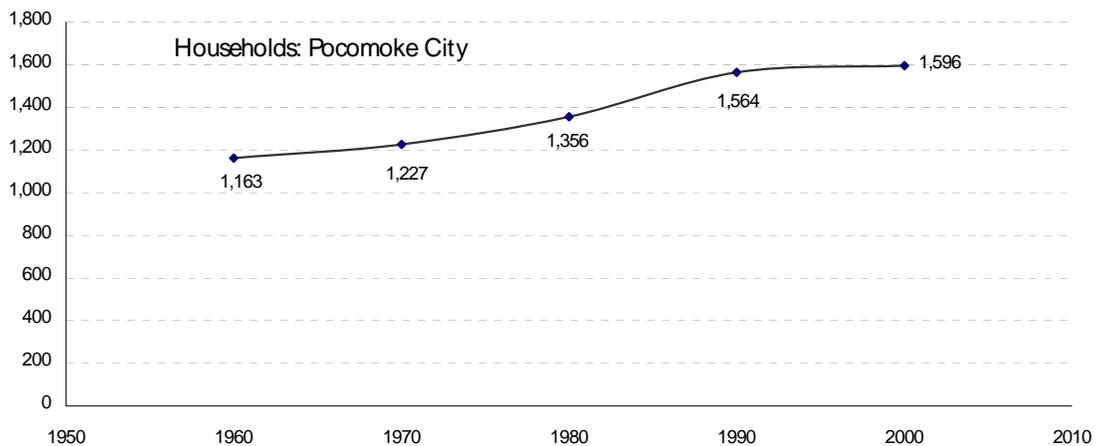
The composition of population by age is an important indication of community character. In 2000, the median age of City residents was 35.5 years, which much less than the County's median age of 43 years. Almost 41 percent of the City residents are under 18 years or over 65 years; compared to about 31 percent county-wide.

Population by Age Group: 2000

Years of Age	Pocomoke City	Worcester County
Under 18	30.5%	20.5%
Over 65	10.3%	11.0%

C. Households

The formation of new households, like population growth, has been steady over recent decades. Between 1960 and 2000, the City added 443 households.



The most significant household growth occurred during the 1980's when households were added at an average annual rate of 1.4 percent per year. The following table below compares annual growth rates in each decade with the 40-year annual average of .79 percent.

Household Growth Percentages by Decade: Pocomoke City and Worcester County

	1960-70	1970-80	1980-90	1990-00	1960-2000
Pocomoke City					
Change	5.5	10.5	15.3	2	37.2
Rate of Growth	0.54	1	1.44	0.2	0.79
Worcester County					
Change	8.6	48.1	21.3	39.3	171.7
Rate of Growth	0.82	4.01	1.95	3.37	2.53

The formation of new households has out paced population growth. The long-term reduction in the average household size made this possible. Between 1960 and 2000, average household size in Pocomoke City fell from 2.86 to 2.57 persons per household.

Like population and age, the make up of households is an important indication of community character. As shown below, 1,058 households, or about 66 percent of all households, were family-households in 2000, that is, they were composed of persons related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption. The remainder of households was considered to be "non-family households". Children were found to be a part of 600 households.

Households in Pocomoke City: 2000

Households	Children in Household		Sum	% of Total Households
	Yes	No		
Family Households				
Married Couple Families	315	301	616	38.6
Male Householder, no wife	32	27	59	3.7
Female Householder, no husband	302	81	383	24.0
subtotal	649	409	1,058	66.3
Non-Family Households				
	11	527	538	33.7
Total households	660	936	1,596	100.0

Other relevant findings from the 2000 Census regarding households includes:

- 41 percent had children;
- 10 percent had one or more persons 65 years or older;
- 30 percent were one-person households;
- 53 percent of housing units were owner-occupied; and
- 47 percent of housing units were renter-occupied.

D. Economic Structure²

A basic analysis of the economic structure can help illuminate land development patterns, such as the composition and character of the commercial land use base. The zip code area encompassing Pocomoke City (21851) contains 205 private business establishments or 9 percent of the total establishments county-wide.

Business Establishments by Sector: Pocomoke City and Worcester County, 2002

Industry Sector	Number of Establishments			
	Pocomoke City		Worcester County	
	#	% of Total	#	% of Total
Total Establishments	205	100.0	2,176	100.0
Forestry, fishing, hunting, and agriculture	1	0.5	14	0.6
Utilities	1	0.5	1	0.0
Construction	25	12.2	284	13.1
Manufacturing	5	2.4	46	2.1
Wholesale trade	11	5.4	82	3.8
Retail trade	50	24.4	455	20.9
Transportation & warehousing	4	2.0	40	1.8
Information	6	2.9	34	1.6
Finance & insurance	15	7.3	80	3.7
Real estate & rental & leasing	10	4.9	167	7.7
Professional, scientific & technical services	12	5.9	132	6.1
Management of companies & enterprises	0	0.0	4	0.2
Admin, support, waste mgt., remediation services	1	0.5	75	3.4
Educational services	0	0.0	7	0.3
Health care and social assistance	17	8.3	98	4.5
Arts, entertainment & recreation	2	1.0	66	3.0
Accommodation & food services	20	9.8	392	18.0
Other services (except public administration)	25	12.2	191	8.8
Auxiliaries (exc. corporate, subsidiary & regional mgt.)	0	0.0	2	0.1
Unclassified establishments	0	0	6	0.3

²The sources of economic data provided herein are the U.S. Bureau of Economical Analysis, U.S. Census, and in particular the Census's County Business Patterns Analysis, summary and presentation: Jakubiak & Associates, Inc.

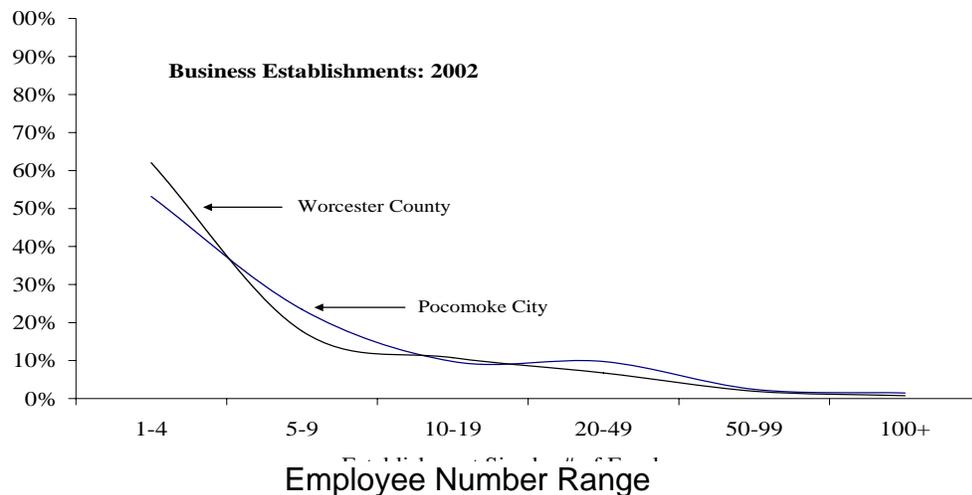
The City, relative to Worcester County, has noticeable concentrations of establishments in four industry sectors:

- Retail trade;
- Health care and social assistance;
- Other services (except public administration)³; and
- Finance and insurance.

The City, relative to Worcester County, has noticeable smaller grouping of establishments in two sectors:

- Arts, entertainment, and education; and
- Real estate, and rental and leasing.

The inclusion of Ocean City's summer resort activities is most likely the cause for the lower percentages of these types of businesses in Pocomoke City.



The chart above shows the distribution of business establishments by the number of employees grouped in ranges. Overall, Pocomoke City's business pattern is dominated by small businesses, much like the county-wide pattern. In fact, 76 percent of business establishments in Pocomoke City have fewer than 10 employees.

The most striking difference in business size occurs in establishments employing from 5 to 9 people. In Pocomoke City this represents more than 23 percent of businesses, while it is 17 percent in Worcester County. The establishment sizes differ mainly in the retail trade, finance, and insurance businesses.

³In Pocomoke City these are primarily automotive service businesses and religious organizations.

E. Employment, Earnings, and Income

A broader view of the economic character and change is discerned at the County and regional level.

Between 1970 and 2002 the number of jobs in Worcester County has increased from 7,049 to over 18,111. About 27 percent of the County's labor force commutes to locations outside of the County.

The broad structure of the County and regional economy has changed in fundamental ways since 1970. The share of jobs and earnings in the Manufacturing and Retail sectors has declined while it has increased in the Construction and Accommodation and Food Services sectors.

In terms of earnings from employment, the largest County industry sectors in 2002 were Accommodation and Food Services, Retail, Manufacturing, and Construction.

Earnings growth has been stronger in Worcester County, relative to the region. Earnings of persons employed in Worcester County increased at an annual average growth rate of almost 4 percent (in non-inflation adjusted dollars) between 1989 and 2003.

Unfortunately, the U.S. Census Bureau only releases data on income at the municipal level every ten years. Thus information on income of Pocomoke City residents is not current. The table shows the 1999 median household income for Pocomoke City and comparable municipalities on the lower Eastern Shore.

Median Household Income By Area: 1999

Area	Annual Income (\$)
Pocomoke City	\$28,938
Crisfield	\$17,979
Cambridge	\$25,967
Princess Anne	\$20,066
Salisbury	\$29,191
Snow Hill	\$29,730

Source: US Census Bureau

However, there are estimates of 2003 median household income at the County level to provide a more current picture of area income. In absolute dollars and by percentage,

the largest increase in annual median household income of the four lower Maryland Eastern Shore Counties occurred in Worcester County. County median household income (in inflation adjusted dollars) increased over 9 percent between 1989 and 2003. The following table shows the 2003 income estimates, the 1999 Census income figures, and the percent increase in income between 1999 and 2003.

Median Household Income By Area: 1999, 2003

County	1999 (Census)	2003 (est.)	% Increase
Worcester	\$40,650	\$45,200	11.2
Dorchester	\$34,100	\$36,750	7.8
Somerset	\$29,903	\$32,250	7.8
Wicomico	\$39,050	\$41,050	5.1

Source: US Census Bureau, MD Department of Planning

2.3 NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

The Pocomoke River is the main natural feature in the City. The City contains approximately 1.8 miles of shoreline of the 55 mile river as it flows from the Great Cypress Swamp in Delaware to the Chesapeake Bay. The river course contains some remnants of a cypress swamp that is the northernmost example of the riverine bald cypress-black gum swamps that are common throughout the South.

The river receives input from two local drainage systems in the City that run from south to north through a series of ditches, culverts, pipes, and open flows. One drainage system begins south of Eighth Street and becomes Terrapin Gut, a perennial stream. The other drainage system begins north of Homewood Drive then parallels Maple Street before it empties into the Pocomoke River. These drainage systems provide for stormwater runoff and deposit nutrients and sediment into the Pocomoke River.

Naturally, a significant portion of the City adjacent to the river is within the floodplain. The floodplain varies approximately from 100 to 1,750 feet in width. This area includes wetlands, a part of the Winter Quarters Golf Course, Cypress Park, some residential areas, a few industries, and undeveloped land. There are no identified habitat protection areas within this section of the river.

The map Pocomoke City, MD and the 100-Year Floodplain (Figure 2) shows the floodplain and drainage areas.

A. Ground Water

The water producing formation underlying the City is the Pocomoke Aquifer. The current City wells are drilled to this formation at a depth of 140 feet below grade.

B. Soils

The properties (such as depth to bedrock and drainage) of the soils underlying a community can severely limit land development. Soil conditions are not limiting factors for development in Pocomoke City except in two situations: tidal marsh areas and lands along streams and drainage ways.

C. Critical Area

Chesapeake Bay Critical Area law regulates development within designated areas in 16 Maryland counties, including Worcester County. The Critical Area is all waters and lands under the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries to the head of tide as indicated on the state wetlands map, and all land and water areas within 1,000 feet beyond the landward boundaries of and head of tides as indicated on approved Chesapeake Bay

Critical Area Overlay Zoning Map Amendments.

At the program's inception, Pocomoke City was granted an exclusion to the Critical Area regulation. However, in the City, the Critical Area regulations are still applicable for lands annexed after 1997 and during the development review process performed by the County for stormwater management and erosion and sediment control (see Figure 3a and 3b).

D. Forest Conservation

Forest Conservation is implemented and enforced for Pocomoke City by Worcester County. The Worcester County Forest Conservation Law shall apply to all comprehensive site plans required to be submitted which involve the development of an area of forty thousand square-foot or greater.

E. Mineral Resources

The City of Pocomoke recognizes that while a Mineral Resources element is required under Article 66B, there is no mining activity, nor any known commercial resources in Pocomoke City or in its potential growth area.

F. Analysis of Steep Slopes

In Pocomoke City's area of concern, no Analysis of Steep Slopes is required since there are no steep slopes due to the hydrographic nature of the Pocomoke River and the topography of the surrounding land.

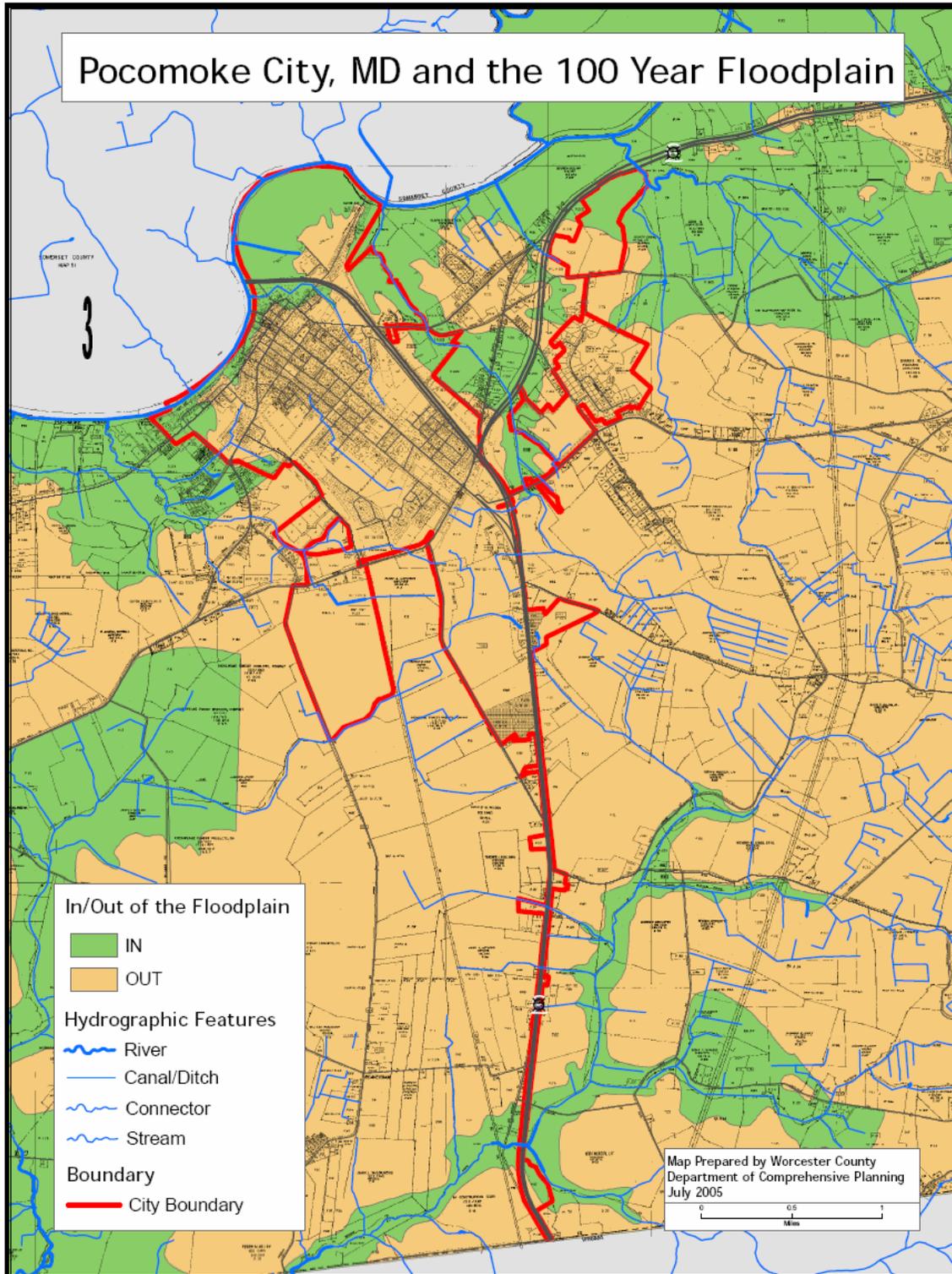


Figure 2: Pocomoke City, MD and the 100-Year Floodplain

Worcester County Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Guidance Map

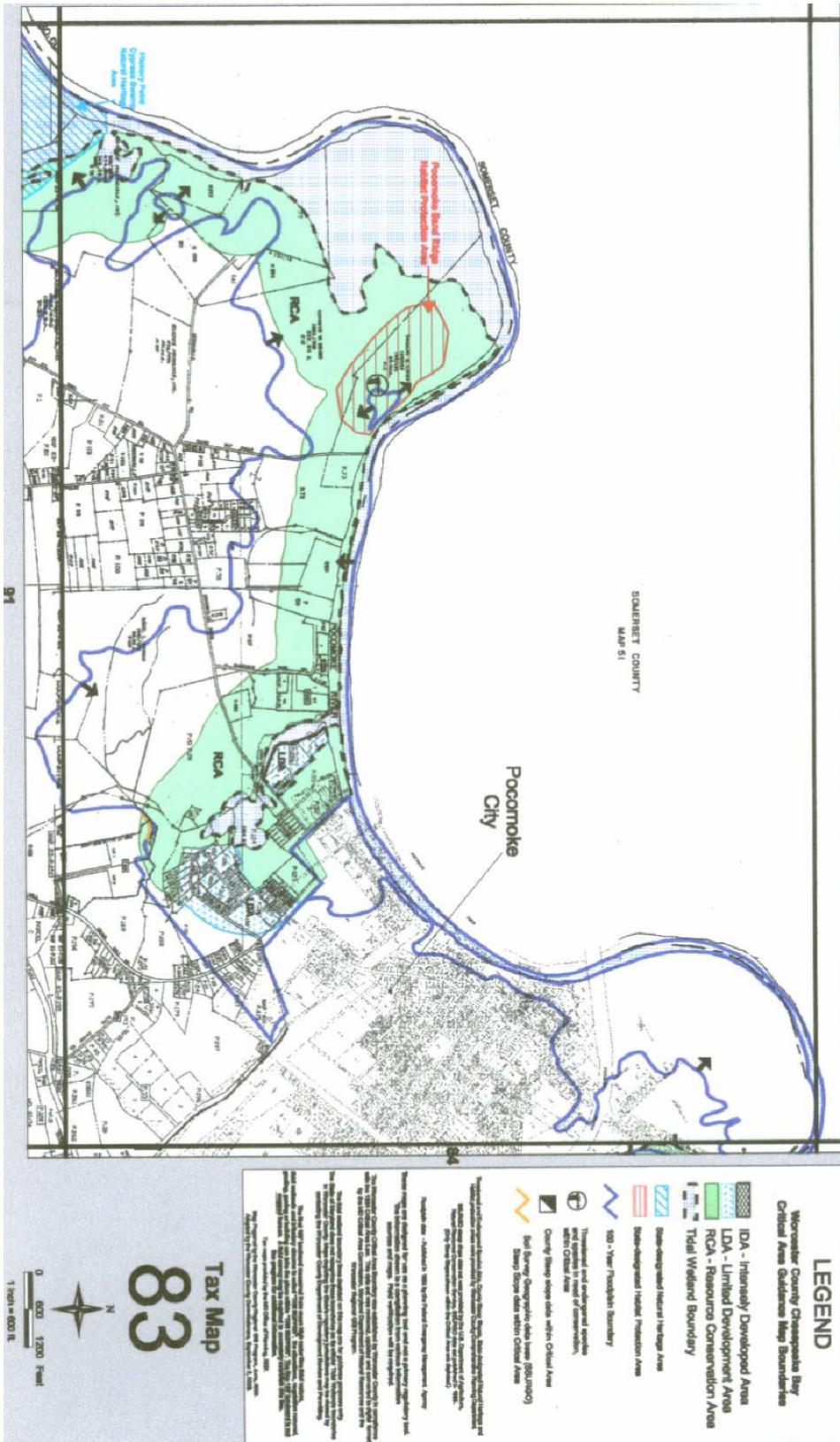


Figure 3a: Critical Area, west of Poconoke City. Source: Worcester County

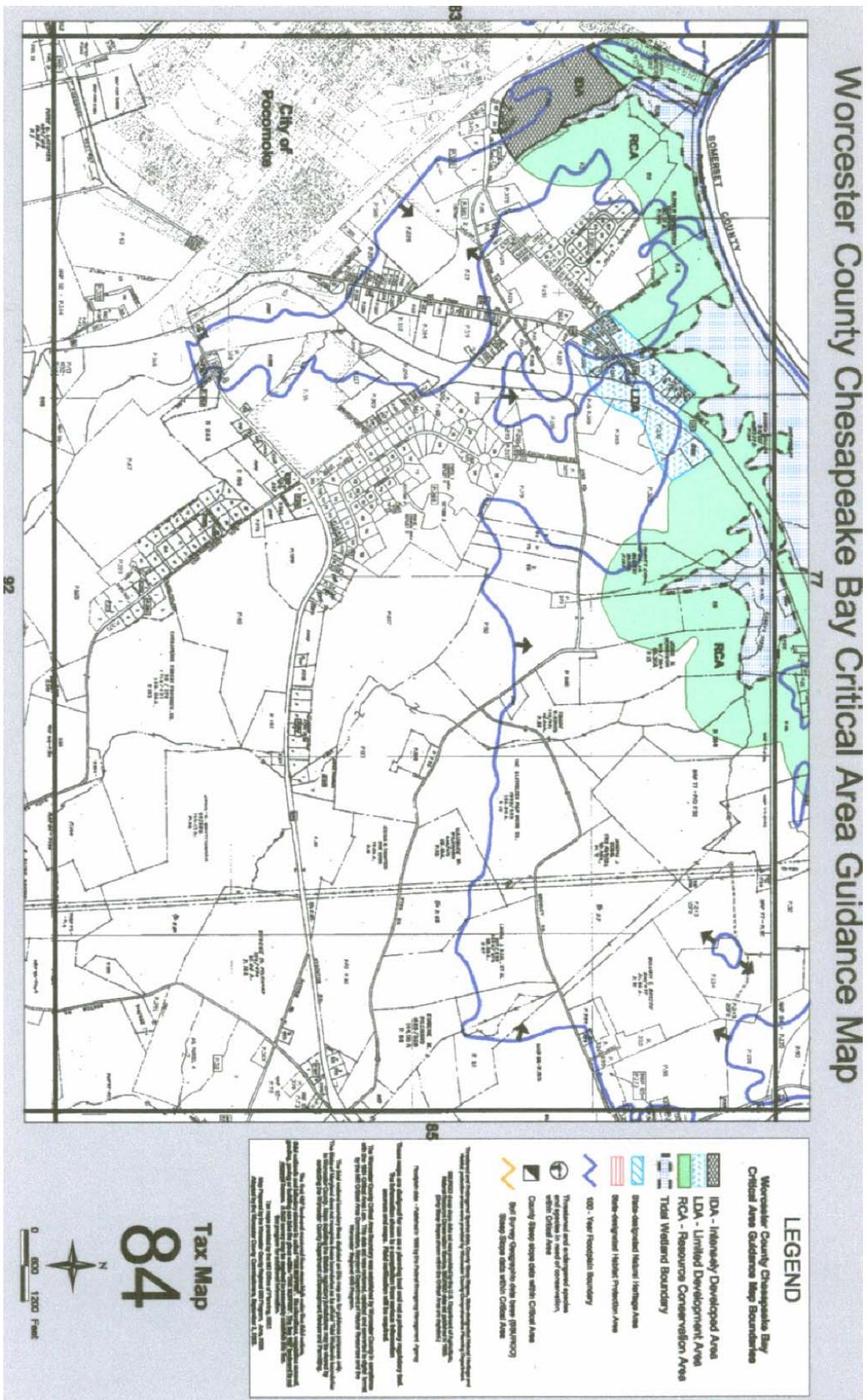


Figure 3b: Critical Area, east and north of Pocomoke City. Source Worcester County

2.4 LAND USE

Land use illustrates how population and economic activities are distributed over the landscape. This overview considers land use in areas surrounding Pocomoke City and the City proper.

Land use impacts the resources important to Pocomoke City including road, community facilities, and water quality.

A. Surrounding Area Land Use

The Surrounding Area Land Use Pattern (Figure 4) developed by the County Department of Comprehensive Planning illustrates the general distribution of land uses through the southwestern portion of Worcester County. It should be noted that a large percentage of all housing units in the area shown on the map are located in Pocomoke City. Three observations are most relevant:

1. In the County there are large swaths of preserved lands to the north, northeast, and the southwest of Pocomoke City. These lands primarily consist of the Pocomoke River State Park, the Pocomoke River Wildlife Management Area, and the Pocomoke River.
2. Except for the City's Industrial Park, downtown, and southern Market Street non-residential development (mostly commercial) is confined to the US Route 13 corridor.
3. Aside from industrial and commercial uses adjacent to US Route 13, the vast majority of lands outside of the City are developed in a very low density pattern accessible by a network of traditional county roads.

B. City Land Use

The Generalized Existing Land Use Map (Figure 5) illustrates the land use pattern. Three observations are most relevant:

1. Commercial land use follows the historic local (Market Street) and current regional (US Route 13) traffic arteries. This development has been influenced primarily by the availability of City services (sewer and water) and vehicular traffic volume. In general, the historic commercial development is more concentrated, sometimes rising to two or three stories in elevation, while the newer development is often single story structures surrounded by parking.
2. Residential land use has occurred with close proximity to commercial districts in the historic core of Pocomoke City and in strictly residential neighborhoods in more recent years. Residential building types and densities vary from multi-family structures directly west of US Route 13 to low-density single-family homes off Stockton Road.

3. There remains much undeveloped land within City boundaries. The properties are often City owned and reserved for commercial/ industrial development, or are not developable, such as the land bordered by the Winter Quarters Golf Course and the Pocomoke River. Most privately owned tracts within the City limits are now in the process of development and construction. This infill development will allow for more efficient use of the City's existing infrastructure.

Surrounding Area Land Use Pattern Pocomoke City

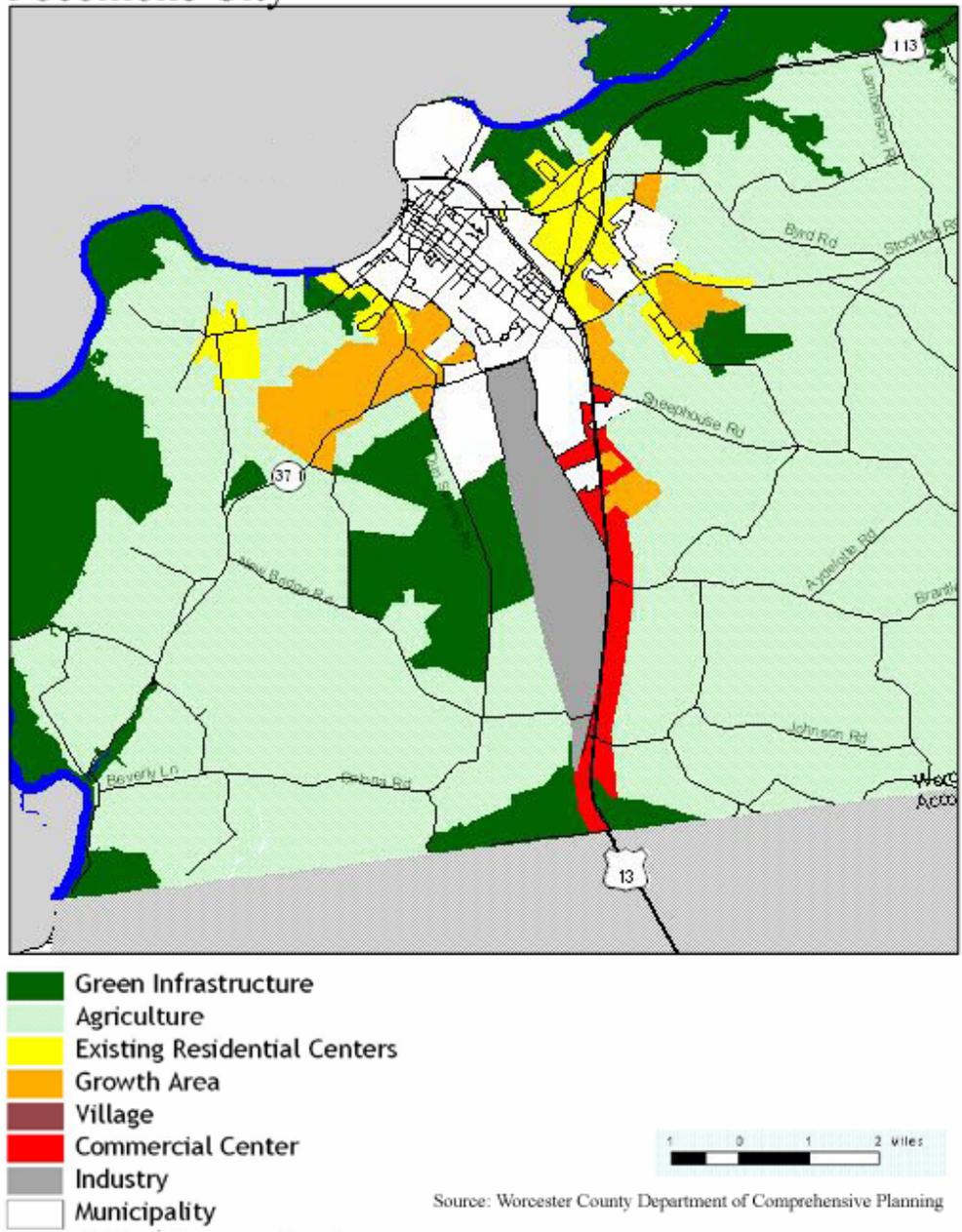


Figure 4: Surrounding Area Land Use Pattern

Generalized Existing Land Use

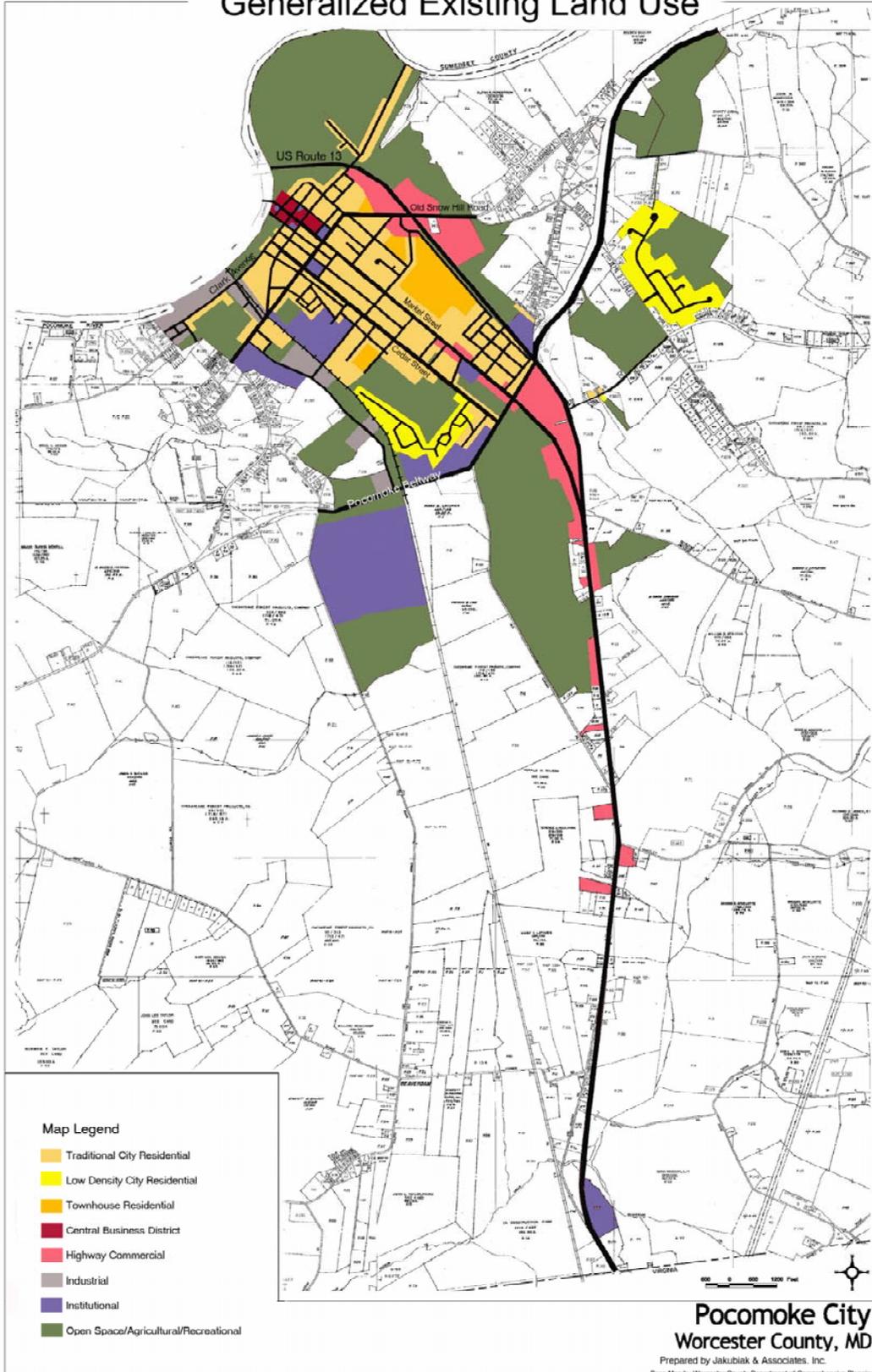


Figure 5: Generalized Existing Land Use

2.5 TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION

This overview considers current highway, public and commercial transportation, and pedestrian/bike facilities throughout Pocomoke City. It also considers how the settlement pattern helps and hinders vehicle and pedestrian movement.

A. Regional Highway Access

Pocomoke City has three major traffic arteries, US Route 13, Business Route 13 (Market Street), and US Route 113. US Route 13 is a heavily traveled four-lane divided highway that serves as the primary north-south route for Eastern Shore traffic, Business Route 13 serves as a major traffic route within Pocomoke City and US Route 113 serves as a connection to the Delaware and Maryland beaches. The Regional Location Map (Figure 1) illustrates the highway network.

The State Highway Administration (SHA) Highway Needs Inventory includes access control improvements for US Route 13 from the City border to the Virginia state line and lane reconstruction for Snow Hill Road (MD 756) from US Route 113 to US Route 13. SHA also plans to complete the dualization of US Route 113 between Berlin and Snow Hill.

SHA traffic counts show that since 1980 traffic has more than doubled on US Route 13 as it circumvents the historic City center. US Route 13 now bisects the City as the City has grown eastward over the past few years.

Traffic Volumes of Local Highways: 1980 and 2003

Measured in vehicles per day on section of highway

Section of Highway	1980	2003	Annual Rate of Growth
US 113 @ Old Snow Hill Road	3,200	8,225	4.19
US 13 South of Pocomoke City	9,450	18,875	3.05
Market Street (Bus. US 13) at 2nd Street	3,525	3,575	0.06

Source: Maryland State Highway Administration

B. Regional and County Transit Access

Shore Transit offers scheduled bus service to Ocean City via Snow Hill and Berlin, and to Salisbury University via Princess Anne.

C. Rail Service

The Norfolk Southern Corporation owns and operates the Delmarva main line railroad north of the City. The rail line south of the City is managed by the Accomack-Northampton Transportation District Commission. The City acts as the interchange point where the two railroad companies exchange rail cars three times per week. Commonly, the trains haul propane tanks for industrial use, stone for asphalt plants, and grain for the poultry industry. The presence of the rail line is an important asset to Pocomoke City's industrial park, which includes a public loading dock used by local businesses.

D. Air Transportation

The Salisbury-Ocean City-Wicomico Regional Airport provides air service for Pocomoke City and the surrounding area. The airport is owned by the Wicomico County, and is operated as an enterprise fund. Piedmont Airways, part of US Airways, offers daily flights to major metropolitan areas. The airport provides storage for 85 general aviation aircraft and is the location for 56,000 airport operations per year. The airport purchased 42 acres for runway protection and safety zones, as required by the Federal Aviation Administration. As a complement to its aviation operations, the airport recently received a \$350,000 community development block grant to redevelop the old airport terminal as a business incubator center.

E. Water Transportation

The Pocomoke River retains its commercial use for several Pocomoke City businesses to transport wood chips, and aggregate. In 2002 there were 369,000 tons shipped via the River. In 2003 this figure was 259,000 tons. The Market Street (Business Route 13) drawbridge opens up for pleasure craft an average of 840 times per year. This is an increase from 650 openings in 1998. The Delmarva Water Transport Committee based in Salisbury, monitors commercial uses of local waterways and advocates for the dredging and other projects with Federal and State agencies.

F. Local Circulation and Safety

The original City road network is based on a grid layout with Market Street (Business Route 13) being the main axis. There are several other north-south roads that parallel Market Street and provide adequate access and circulation for residents. There are fewer east-west City streets to cross the older sections of the City. The City has repaved approximately 80 percent of its 25 miles of paved roadway in the past 5-6 years and budgets approximately \$50,000 to \$100,000 per year on maintaining its road network.

Pocomoke City is sufficiently compact and generally organized in a way that promotes walking. This is especially the case of the older residential neighborhoods in the center of the City, which are served by a grid street pattern. However, many of the streets are narrow, consisting in many instances of pavement and sidewalks constricted within a 30 foot right-of-way.

An estimated 80 percent of City streets are equipped with sidewalks to capitalize on the City's favorable layout and mix of uses. Most residents in the historic core of Pocomoke City are able to walk downtown. In areas where sidewalks do not currently exist, a focus on providing streetscape improvements when redevelopment occurs would help improve pedestrian safety. The City's current policy is to require the construction of sidewalks in new subdivisions or on any lot which becomes developed.

2.6 COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Community facilities and services described here include those elements of infrastructure, which are impacted by growth and development.⁴

Community facilities and services sustain and strengthen Pocomoke City as the population increases. This increased strength is a byproduct when their capacity, quality and accessibility are monitored.

Many jurisdictions and agencies, both public and quasi-public, provide the community facilities that serve Pocomoke City.

A. Public Water Supply

The City water plan was upgraded in 1996 from a daily capacity of 600,000 gallons per day to 835,000 gallons per day to meet expected future needs. There are currently three wells to serve the City, and additional capacity is in planning and design (see 2.1 A). The following table shows the daily average water usage for a recent six month period. The monthly average was 555,000 gallons per day (gpd).

Pocomoke Water Treatment Plant Daily Average Flow

Month 2006	Amount (1,000 gpd)
April	541
May	559
June	542
July	541
August	586
September	603

B. Public Wastewater Treatment and Collection

The City completed the latest wastewater treatment plant expansion and upgrade in August 2004 at a cost of \$4.5 million. The expansion was accompanied by Biological Nutrient Removal (BNR) upgrades for the removal of nitrogen and phosphorus.

The wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) has a design capacity and permitted flow of 1,470,000 gpd. It has handled average flows of about 490,000 gpd in recent months. The City is using about 47 percent of its allocated capacity. The following table shows

⁴The transportation facilities infrastructure is discussed under the heading; Transportation and Circulation.

the average daily flows for a recent six month period.

There are no known users of septic tanks (residential or commercial) in the City of Pocomoke and the City has plans to provide sewerage service for its planning area (see Figure 6).

Pocomoke City Water Treatment Plant
Daily Average Flow

Month 2006	Amount (1,000 gpd)
April	545
May	562
June	414
July	542
August	321
September	549

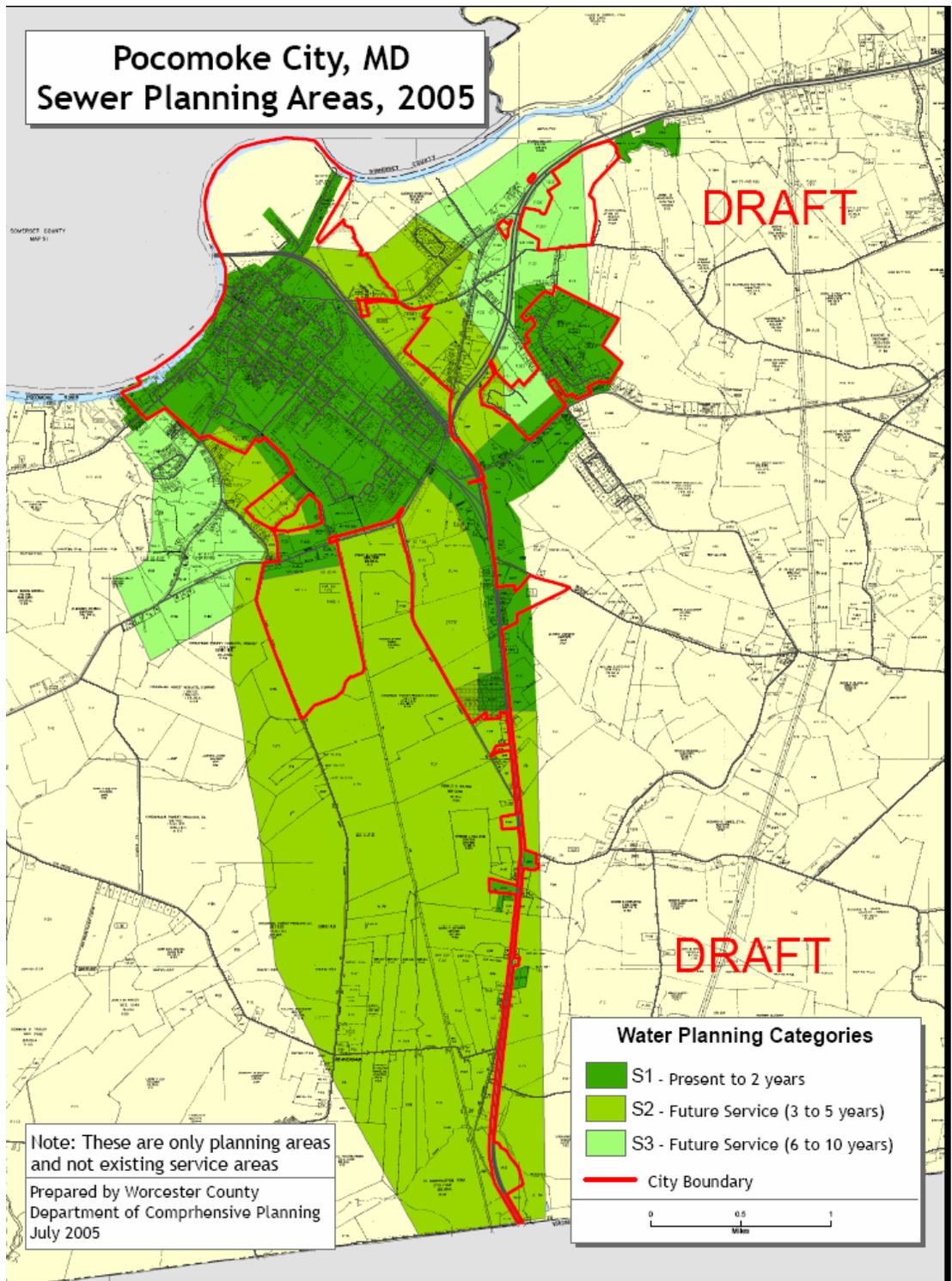


Figure 6: Pocomoke City, MD Sewer Planning Areas, 2005

The City has submitted a pre-application for State funds to further upgrade the plant with an Enhanced Nutrient Removal (ENR) project. The City expects the cost of this upgrade to be approximately \$4.5 million and to occur sometime in 2008/2009.

The City has also applied for State funds to conduct a study to document the level of inflow and infiltration into the sewer system. Resolving this problem would free up capacity in the treatment plant, though the extent of this is unknown.

The City maintains approximately 25 miles of sanitary sewer lines and related lift stations. Many are several years old and require constant maintenance or repair. The City should consider replacing and/or upgrading many of its sewer lines and lift stations to be more efficient and to avoid recurring failure which disrupt services to residents.

C. Schools

The public school system is operated by the Worcester County Board of Education. The three schools shown in the following table serve Pocomoke City residents. The Worcester County Board of Education uses local calculations to assess school capacity rates for facilities needs. Using the local criteria, the school capacities are as follows:

School Enrollment and Capacity; Fall 2004

School	Enrollment	Capacity	% of Capacity
Pocomoke Elementary	384	416	92.3
Pocomoke Middle	471	667	70.6
Pocomoke High	476	326	146

Source: Worcester County Board of Education.

D. Public Library

The Worcester County Library System includes the main library in Snow Hill with branch libraries in Ocean City, Ocean Pines, Berlin, and Pocomoke City. Pocomoke City's branch is located on Market Street and contains over 23,000 volumes of print material and almost 2,500 items in the non-print collection of compact discs, videos, and audio books. In addition, there are 12 adult patron computer terminals. The current building has approximately 4,800 square-foot of floor area. The branch received a 1,980 square-foot addition in 2004 when the entire library was renovated.

The Worcester County Library System is a part of the Shore 4, a consortium of three southern Maryland Eastern Shore counties, and the Eastern Regional Library System to allow inter-library loans of materials. This enables Pocomoke City residents to access a much larger collection of books and other library materials.

E. Community Meeting Facilities

Pocomoke City residents have access to several community meeting places for large groups on a rental basis. These facilities and their capacities are listed in the following table.

Facilities	Capacity
Winter Quarters Log Cabin	100
Railroad Station	100
Pocomoke Branch Library	52
Catholic Church	150
The Elks Club	320
Pocomoke City VFD (5 th Street)	200
Pocomoke City VFD (Market Street)	400 (proposed)

F. Park and Recreation Facilities

Pocomoke City is well served by local public park and recreation facilities. In addition to the local facilities, the Viewtrail 100 bicycling trail passes through the City, providing a connection to the 100 mile long continuous loop that circles the County.

The Nature Trail at Cypress Park will be extended to meet the northern terminus of the municipal docks at Cypress Park. This will allow users to walk from the Discovery Center on Market Street to the Winter Quarters Golf Course. All municipal docks in Pocomoke City were re-decked in 2006 using grant funds from the State Waterway Improvement Fund. Local recreational facilities are summarized in the following table.

Existing City Parks and Recreation Facilities

Park/Facility	Location	Intended Use/ Park Features
Cypress Park	Borders Pocomoke River from Market St. to US 13	Athletic field, tennis courts, restrooms, bicycle path, picnic tables, dock, tot lot, pavilion buildings, nature trail, fishing pier with non-licensed fishing area
Winters Quarters Park	On Pocomoke River at northerly end of Winter Quarters Drive	Playground equipment, picnic tables, boat ramp, boat dock, fishing pier with non-licensed fishing area
Winter Quarters Golf Course	Adjacent to Winter Quarters Park	Public golf course (9 holes), club house, log cabin building, putting green, cart rentals
Laurel Street Boat Ramp	At the end of Laurel Street	Boat ramp and dock
Downtown Mini-Park	Market Street at Clark Avenue	Passive recreation- benches, fountain, walkways
Community Center Building (former Armory)	Second Street	Gymnasium and auditorium for community activities
Pocomoke Elementary School	Pocomoke Beltway	Playground equipment, hard-surface play area, basketball court
Pocomoke Middle School	Eighth Street	Playfield, tennis and basketball courts
Pocomoke High School	Pocomoke Beltway	Tennis courts, soccer, field hockey, and baseball fields
Market Street Dock	Adjacent to Market St. Bridge	Dock for transient docking, fishing license not required
Newtown Recreational Area (Worcester County)	Stockton Road at Groton Road	Baseball, soccer, and softball fields, tot lot, concession stand

G. Public Safety Service

The Pocomoke City Police Department is responsible for enforcing law and order and responding to emergency needs within the City. The police force currently consists of 16 sworn officers and 8 civilian employees, which include 5 full-time and 1 part-time communications officers. There are numerous in-house certified police instructors in these areas; firearms, radar, OC spray, ASP, National Crime Identification Center, evidence technician, audio/video reconstruction technician, child exploitation, and communications.

The Department features a criminal investigator, a pistol qualification range, a six member special weapons and tactics (SWAT) response team, a school resource officer, a bicycle unit, and a DARE officer. The Department uses dogs for explosives and drug detection and tracking. Safety equipment includes 20 squad cars, most of which are equipped with radar units. The police headquarters is presently in the City Hall Annex (formerly the National Guard Armory) located at Second and Maple Streets. The Police Department occupies the basement and first floor of this building.

The City Hall Annex building is old and obsolete. New locations for the Police Department are being considered; particularly the current Fire Company building on Fifth Street, this building could be converted to a new police facility relatively easily once the Fire Company moves out.

The Pocomoke City Volunteer Fire Company, Inc. provides fire protection in Pocomoke City. The Company's service area encompasses about 65 miles, which includes about 6,000 residents in Worcester, Somerset, and Accomack (VA) counties. The Fire Company consists of a corps of 62 active volunteer fire fighters with 3 pumper trucks, a rescue vehicle, a tanker truck, a tower truck, and a brush truck. The Fire Company has begun construction on a new fire house at Market and Fourteenth Streets and has plans to rehabilitate a former retail space for a community/banquet hall on the same site.

H. Hospital and Emergency Facilities

There are numerous private medical practitioners and three regional hospitals located within a 30-mile radius to respond to the urgent health care needs of Pocomoke City residents.

Located in Berlin, Atlantic General Hospital, opened in 1993, is a 108,000 square-foot facility staffed by over 150 physicians. Physician specializations include pulmonology, gastroenterology, orthopedic surgery, gynecology, urology, neurology, rheumatology, anesthesiology, and pain management. The hospital contains 56 acute general and 6 critical care beds with emergency room facilities. Recently, Atlantic General opened a 1,500 square-foot diagnostic clinic in Pocomoke City at Market and Fifth Streets.

Located in Crisfield, McCreedy Memorial Hospital is a full service community hospital

with 24 hour emergency facilities and 20 "acute-care" hospital beds. The hospital provides emergency, surgical, diagnostic, respiratory and ancillary services for patients.

Located in Salisbury, Peninsula Regional Medical Center, a 323 bed facility, has over 300 physicians and 2,200 other health care workers available to meet a wide variety of health care needs. Services of the hospital include an emergency room, comprehensive cancer treatment, kidney stone treatment, occupational and speech therapy and rehabilitation, neurosurgery, neo-natal intensive care unit, and a sleep disorder lab.

Other health care facilities include a Veteran Administration Outpatient Clinic on Market Street in the downtown area and the Pocomoke Health Clinic, a branch of the Worcester County Health Department that provides public health programs such as disease control immunization and mental and physical health programs. They are located in the Mature Adult Center at Fourth and Walnut Streets. Numerous trained medical care professionals serve Pocomoke City residents such as optometrists, ophthalmologist, general practice physicians, internal medical physicians, physical therapists, dentist offices and psychologists with offices in the City. Other specialists are available on a scheduled part-time basis.

The Pocomoke City Ambulance Company consists of paid and volunteer staff to provide EMS services to approximately 8,000 people living in a 145 square-mile area. There are currently 6 paid paramedics and 4 drivers to provide continuous service. Volunteers supplement the paid staff to respond to over 1,400 calls per year, or about 120 calls per month. They operate from a recently constructed station on Eighth Street. Lifestar, a private ambulance company, also responds to transportation requests within the City.

I. Stormwater Management

The City is responsible for approximately 25 miles of stormwater pipes and open ditches that drain all areas of the City. Many of these systems were originally designed and built several decades ago, and are unable to properly handle even minimal to average rainfalls without resultant temporary flooding problems. The City should plan to replace or upgrade these systems to avoid neighborhood flooding as the City continues to grow. Developers of new areas should be required to improve existing conditions in adjacent stormwater management systems as well as handle from their own proposed projects.

J. Solid Waste

The City collects solid waste from residential homes twice a week. Larger waste items (bulk) are collected from homes once a month. The waste is transported to the County landfill in Newark, MD. The City also provides recycling drop-off centers at two locations with the city.

K. City Code Enforcement

The City is responsible for enforcing codes regarding housing, building construction, building safety, and other concerns. Enforcement for some codes (electrical, plumbing, stormwater management) is delegated to the County. The City must consider adding an additional employee to assist with code enforcement and new building inspections.

SECTION 3 - FUTURE CONDITIONS

Current trends will suggest the level of population that Pocomoke City may reach by 2020. The magnitude and character of growth beyond 2020 is less certain and more likely to be impacted by policies set forth in this Comprehensive Plan. However, it does seem that Pocomoke City will remain a desirable place for residential development for decades to come.

The purpose of this section is to:

- Document the magnitude of growth anticipated through 2020;
- Document the potential impact of this growth on key community facilities and services;
- Document primary development opportunities and constraints; and
- Summarize the factors that will contribute to the long-term desirability of Pocomoke City as a place to live.

3.1 2020 HOUSEHOLD AND POPULATION GROWTH

The history of Pocomoke City building permits issued in the last ten years is shown in the following table.

Building Permits Issued in Terms of Dwelling Unit Type

Year	Single	Duplex	3-4 units	5+ units	Total
1995	20	-	-	-	20
1996	7	-	-	-	7
1997	16	-	-	-	16
1998	10	-	-	-	10
1999	9	-	-	2	11
2000	12	-	-	-	12
2001	18	-	-	-	18
2002	12	-	-	-	12
2003	12	-	-	-	12
2004	22	-	-	-	22
Total	134	-	-	2	136

Source: City of Pocomoke

The annual average of building permits issued was 13.6.

Many of the residential units recently permitted will be constructed and occupied in the latter years of the current decade. Many more permits may be anticipated through 2020.

. About 50 to 65 lots in existing subdivisions remain to be developed in the City. Most, if not all, will be absorbed by 2007. These projects include Jenkins Orchard and White Oak.

. Infill lots previously platted and residential projects with concept approval will contribute to household growth over the next decade. These projects, amounting to an estimated 400 to 430 units, include Drawbridge Villas, Butler's Village, Cedar Landing, and Cedar Street.

. Housing demand is related to job growth. For instance, the Wallops Facility is currently involved with producing a rocket for small-to-medium payload launches. The average aerospace industry salary is \$55,000. Workers at the facility could reasonably be expected to live and afford homes in Pocomoke City, thus increasing demand for homes.

. Large swaths of land available for development are becoming scarce in the northern part of Worcester County, previously the area of growth in the region. There is a strong demand for second homes and for individuals retiring to the Eastern Shore. Untapped capacity in the wastewater treatment plant and undeveloped land within or adjacent to Pocomoke City makes it attractive for residential development.

. The City may annex land that contains residences or land on which residential projects may be built. During the period between 2001 and mid-2006 Pocomoke City annexed 236 acres, some of which was land zoned for residential use.

Combined, these factors alone mean that the annual growth rate anticipated between 2006 and 2020 should out pace that recorded over the last 30 years.⁵ This would result in an estimated 40 percent increase in population for Pocomoke City by 2020. A far greater number of new households will be added each year during this period than for any previous similar period documented in this Plan.

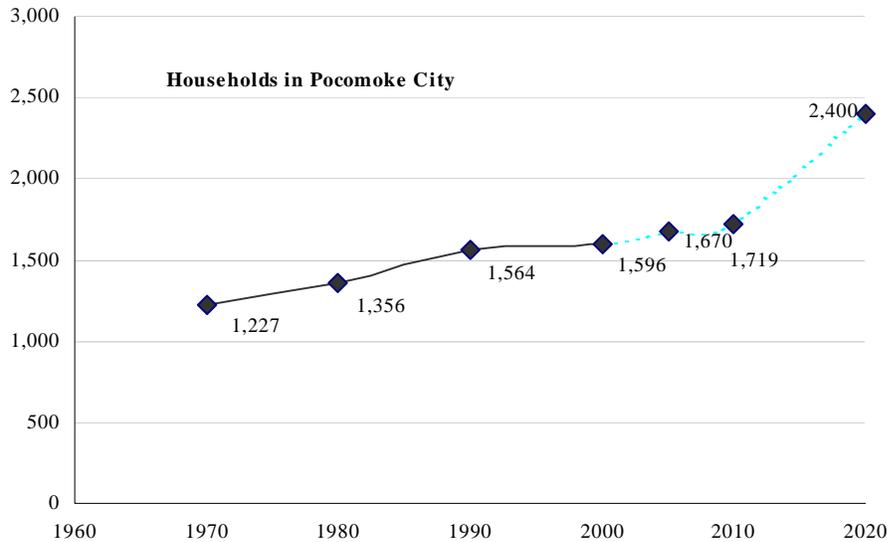
Potential residential development on lands outside the current boundaries of Pocomoke City may also contribute to household growth projected to 2020. This projected residential growth for Pocomoke City would be contained in the Worcester County's designated growth areas, and the household growth in these areas would be much less than the County's Residential Unit Target of 1,606 units for Pocomoke City.

In summary, about 450 to 500 residential units are currently programmed for

⁵The number of households increased at a rate of .79 percent annually between 1960 and 2000. This on average translated into about 10 new households per year. Even during the rapidly growing 1980's, households were added only at an average rate of 21 per year, which is substantially smaller than what may be expected over the next decade.

construction. It is not unreasonable to conclude that an additional 200 to 250 units may be developed as infill on currently undeveloped land.

This Comprehensive Plan therefore projects a 2.3 percent annual rate of growth in households from 2006 to 2020. Translated into dwelling units, this projection means that the City may expect an additional 650 to 750 units, or on average about 43 to 50 new units per year, through 2020.⁶ This projection is illustrated in the graph "Households in Pocomoke City".



This household projection may be converted into a population figure by multiplying projected households by an estimated average household size. The Comprehensive Plan projects that household size will continue to decline in Pocomoke City, by about 2.7 percent between 2006 and 2020.⁷ Average household size may be approximately 2.4 persons per household by 2020, down from 2.5 in 2000. The table "Household and Population Forecast: 2006 - 2020" summarizes these projections for Pocomoke City.

⁶This projection diverges substantially from the projection made by the MDP. The MDP projection methodology focuses on the number of births and deaths. The method we employed utilizes data on the number of housing units in the construction phase or in the development approval process, current development trends in the City and region, and interviews with real estate professionals.

⁷MDP projects a 3 percent decline in average household size between 2005 and 2015 for Worcester County.

Household and Population Forecast: 2020

	2006	2020	Percent Change	Annual Rate of Growth
Households	1670	2400	43.7	3.1
People per households	2.48	2.42	-2.5	-0.2
Population	4147	5800	39.9	2.8

Source: MDP, City of Pocomoke, Jakubiak & Associates, Inc.

For context, Maryland Department of Planning (MDP) projects that the population of Worcester County will grow by almost 9 percent from 51,000 to 55,900 by 2020.⁸ Should both the County and City projections holds true, the City's population would approach 10.3 percent of the County population by 2020 compared to 8.8 percent in 2000.

⁸For comparison, the City's share of County population has been: 14.0 % in 1960, 14.6% in 1970, 11.5% in 1980, 11.1% in 1990, and 8.8% in 2000.

3.2 IMPACT ON COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

This section describes the impact of the projected population and households along with the currently approved major non-residential development projects on existing infrastructure and facilities.

A. Public Sanitary Sewer and Water Supply

Assisted by State funding, the City plans to upgrade its water plant. The City expects to upgrade water pumping stations by installing new controls and drilling an additional well by the end of 2008. The cost of these improvements is approximately \$400,000.

Pocomoke City has a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination Permit (NPDES) which sets a goal of nitrogen levels and limits the amount of phosphorous per year. The City's Wastewater Treatment Plant is limited by the point source cap to 17,908 lbs/year of nitrogen and 1,343 lbs/year of phosphorous. At this time there are no plans to expand the capacity of Pocomoke City's wastewater treatment plant. As shown in the following table, in 2006, the wastewater treatment plant had a capacity of 1.47 million gallons per day (gpd). About 490,000 gpd of that capacity is currently being used. Residential development projects already approved, either in design or final form, along with additional commercial development will use approximately 540,000 gpd of existing capacity. It is important to note that following large rain falls, storm sewers connected to sanitary sewers contribute up to 150,000 gallons of runoff to the sewage treatment plant.

Public Sewage Treatment Plant Capacity and Use: 2006 and 2020
Total Treatment Plant (Million of gallons per day)

Year	Capacity	Used	Available
2006	1.47	0.49	0.98
2020	1.47	1.26	0.21

Note: The 2020 estimated use is based on the 2020 household projection included in this Plan plus an estimated build out of 1/3 of the currently undeveloped commercially zoned land with retail and office type uses.

Source: MDP and Jakubiak & Associates, Inc.

In summary, expansion of capacity at the treatment plant is not needed in the time frame of this Comprehensive Plan. Development expected over this time period may be readily served with the existing capacity of the sewage treatment plant. Therefore, public sewage treatment capacity does not appear to be a constraining factor to development. However, sufficient stormwater management is essential in future development in order to reduce inflow from runoff.

Public water supply facilities also do not appear to be a constraining factor on future development. The water plant produces up to 835,000 gpd. Current plans to drill a new well and construct improvements to the pumping station will serve demand through the foreseeable future. No problems are expected with future water quality.

B. Roads and Highways

Population and household growth will impact the road and highway system. While it is not possible to predict the exact nature of that impact, some basic inferences may be drawn.

- . Traffic on US Route 13 through Pocomoke City grew at an annual rate of just over three percent between 1980 and 2003. In 2003, US Route 13 carried about 18,875 vehicles per day. If traffic continues to grow at three percent per year through 2020, US Route 13 would carry over 32,000 vehicles per day and is likely to experience severe congestion during the rush hour periods.

- . New development along US Route 13 within the limits of Pocomoke City and beyond will contribute to traffic congestion to varying degrees.

- . Land uses that add large amounts of traffic to area roads during the peak travel periods will add to congestion and land uses that contribute only small amounts of traffic during peak periods will contribute less. The land development projects currently in plan approval stages (see Section 2) are a mix of high and low peak-period traffic generators.

In summary, access to US Route 13 is the most vulnerable part of the road system. The actual impact of any new development will depend on its location and its trip generation characteristics. Land uses that generate their greatest traffic when the surrounding road system is being under utilized (during non-rush hours) will not significantly degrade the capacity of area roads.

C. Emergency and Security Services

The projected increase in both population and size will certainly impact the emergency and security services. These services will require more manpower and technology. Zoning and development regulations must be written and enforced to secure the best health and safety environment possible.

The City will take direct control of the Emergency Medical Service and provide more manpower for it. Eventually, the City hopes that this service will become a part of a Worcester County EMS system.

Cameras installed in high crime areas and other technological innovations will help

abate the need for more police personnel while increasing the level of service. A new facility with state-of-the-art technology is planned for the Police Department. An increase in cooperation with the Worcester County Sheriff' Department will also aid in reducing the impact of new development.

The Fire service is a volunteer organization and it will remain so. The Pocomoke City VFD has an active recruitment and trainee program and there is every confidence that it will be up to the task of performing it mission in the future. The City will vigorously support this service by providing funds for modernization, pursuing safety programs through housing code enforcement, and insuring fire hydrant standardization and maintenance.

D. Solid Waste

The projected increase in both population and size will certainly impact the solid waste services provided by the City. It is to be expected that more personnel and equipment will be need to maintain the current level of service. However, the residents of Pocomoke City pay a monthly fee for this service and the increase in the number of households should help pay for the impact of new development.

E. City Staff

The job of the City's administrative staff will be impacted as the population grows. However, through the use of technology such as computers being used in new and innovative ways, water meters that can be monitored remotely, better communications, and faster and more efficient record keeping and data retrieval; the impact will be minimal.

The need for more housing inspectors, street maintenance and repair personnel, and other services that require "boots on the ground" must be planned for, but their focus will be primarily on the older housing stock and infrastructure.

F. Schools

The Pocomoke City public schools are under the direction of Worcester County Board of Education and they will certainly be impacted by new residential development. The public high school and elementary school are currently at over-capacity levels. The planned expansion of the high school in 2008 will help but the elementary school situation will worsen and the middle school will be stretched. Working with the County School Board, the projected increase in the student population must be planned for as early as possible.

G. Recreation

The impact on the recreational facilities will be felt due to greater demand by a growing population. The development of more recreational water activities on the Pocomoke River is being planned, a skate-board facility in Cypress Park, improvements for the Winter Quarters Golf Course, renovating and expanding the Nature Trail, the modern YMCA, and a planned new Community Center should not only meet some of the challenges of the developmental impact but increase the quality and diversity of recreation in Pocomoke City.

3.3 DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

A comprehensive plan must acknowledge the opportunities for sound development and the factors that constrain development. The following list is drawn from this and the foregoing sections of this Plan.

A. Opportunities

1. Compact Nature of the City

The compact nature of the historic section of Pocomoke City promotes accessibility, convenience, and community cohesiveness. Compactness is a prerequisite for a healthy and vibrant city.

2. Infill Potential

Though there still remain large unused parcels in Pocomoke City, many parcels are being developed for housing. Along Market Street it is possible to accommodate commercial growth within Pocomoke City's core as well as more dense residential development. In addition, lower land values as compared to northern parts of the County, make infill development attractive within Pocomoke City.

3. Waterfront Development

Potential exists for vibrant and economically self-sustaining development near the waterfront along the Pocomoke River. Space exists for a sizable increase in the intensity of marina and related tourism-oriented development. Through the use of good urban design, additional development may become an attractive asset to Pocomoke City's center.

4. Open Spaces on the Northern Edge

Pocomoke City has permanently preserved large tracts of land on its northern edge, adjacent to the Pocomoke River. This preservation helps protect water quality, wildlife habitat, and the overall environmental health of the region. These areas include Cypress Park, Winter Quarters Golf Course, Stevenson's Pond, and a large forested wetland area north of the golf course.

5. Sensitive Natural Areas

Opportunities exist for preserving natural resource lands and sensitive sites for the benefit of future generations. Pocomoke City abounds in sensitive natural environmental resources. These areas provide opportunities for recreation and will sustain Pocomoke City as it continues to grow. This is especially the case with respect to the large wetland areas adjacent to the Pocomoke River, which help attenuate

flooding, purify water, and support wildlife. As density increases, the importance of these natural features will grow.

B. Constraints

1. Inaccessibility of Recreational Areas

Lack of pedestrian facilities to cross US Route 13 at Stockton Road (MD 756) inhibits access for residents to Newtown Park.

2. Sensitive Natural Areas

Marshlands and floodplain limit the location of future development along the Pocomoke River. Parts of the City are located within the Chesapeake Bay Critical area, where development is limited. Additional environmental constraints include hydric soils, and protection of contiguous forests, aquifer recharge areas and source water. Pocomoke City has largely conformed itself to these features as it has developed over time and will need to continue to recognize these constraints.

3. Transportation Capacity

US Route 13 will become more congested over time. It is the only high-speed north/south route for Pocomoke City, serving both as a main artery for a significant level of commercial activity and as a regional highway link. Increasing the capacity of US Route 13 will require State funding and cooperation with the State Highway Authority. The ability to limit congestion is inhibited by the number of access points provided to adjacent landowners. In the future service roads may be necessary to alleviate congestion and increase the efficiency of this roadway.

4. Limited Developable Land within Historic Commercial Core

Most commercial developable lands within the historic commercial are in some form of developed use already. The lack of developable lands constrains opportunities for commercial establishments to compete successfully at a large scale with businesses that require large sites with ample parking and high traffic volumes. However, land scarcity compels businesses to establish a niche and employ creative marketing, encouraging preservation of the existing character of Pocomoke City. The presence of the Mar-Va Theater, the Costen House, and the Sturgis Schoolhouse offer unique attractions. In future years, demand for new development will need to be accommodated through thoughtful and well designed infill.

3.4 FACTORS IMPACTING LONG-TERM DEVELOPMENT

Three important and interrelated factors are helping to ensure that Pocomoke City remains an attractive location for new residents. The implication is that growth pressures will remain strong in Pocomoke City.

A. Waterfront Location

Pocomoke City is one of a few Maryland municipalities located on a major tributary of the Chesapeake Bay. The City's shoreline with the Pocomoke River extends about 1.8 miles. It offers a very scenic location with quality waterfront recreational opportunities.

B. Regional Location

Pocomoke City is located in the southern part of the Delmarva Peninsula, long known for its abundant natural resources, agriculture, and tourism industries. Residential development activity has recently increased significantly within the region. This demand for housing appears to be fueled by individuals seeking second homes or retiring from areas outside of Worcester County.

C. Growth Management Policies

County and State growth management policies seek to direct new residential and commercial development to planned and designated growth areas. These areas, known under the Maryland growth management policy as priority funding areas, include parts of Pocomoke City.

The State of Maryland, largely through its funding of infrastructure, seeks to support capital projects that promote development within priority funding areas and to discourage projects that promote the dispersion of population and employment.

Worcester County's Comprehensive Plan designates certain areas as growth areas for the recommended growth of municipalities. The Plan's growth area for Pocomoke City is located primary to the west of current City boundaries and north of the Pocomoke Beltway (see Figure 4).

3.5 SUMMARY

The Development Capacity Analysis as required by the Development Capacity Analysis Executive Order of October 2004 has not been performed. The Maryland Department of Planning will be requested to assist Pocomoke City with the development of this analysis. The methodology to be used for the Development Capacity Analysis will be the methodology described at http://www.mdp.state.me.us/develop_cap.htm.

In summary, Pocomoke City may expect more residential growth between 2005 and 2020 than it has experienced during any other similar time period. The City's population may be expected to grow from 4,147 to about 5,800 persons. The number of households may grow from 1,670 to about 2,400.

If this projected growth occurs, Pocomoke City will not need to expand the capacity of the public sewer system. The public water supply will also be adequate through the foreseeable future. US Route 13 will experience congestion under projected conditions and key intersections will need to be monitored to ensure they handle future traffic safety.

Key development opportunities and constraints in Pocomoke City, reviewed in this section, have factored heavily in the design of this Comprehensive Plan.

SECTION 4 - VISIONS, GOALS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The policies are drawn from the research and analyses presented in Section 1 through 3 of this Plan. The Plan includes elements, goals, and land development regulation recommendations for plan implementation as required by Article 66B of the Annotated Code of Maryland. The visions, goals, and recommendations are divided into eight parts:

- 4.1 LAND USE
- 4.2 TRANSPORTATION
- 4.3 COMMUNITY FACILITIES
- 4.4 HOUSING
- 4.5 SENSITIVE AREAS
- 4.6 DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE REGION
- 4.7 IMPLEMENTATION
- 4.8 CONCLUSION

PREFACE

Pocomoke City is a small city in a unique and sensitive natural setting. It is a collection of residential and commercial areas on the banks of the Pocomoke River with adjacency to US Route 13 and 113.

It is a city with multiple land uses in a relatively compact space which represents a highly desirable model of city development. The core of the city is the traditional commercial center. Civic buildings and retail shops are within walking distance of many city households. This area has the historic pattern of "Main Street" development, including commercial, recreational, cultural, and institutional amenities.

Pocomoke City is a commercial destination for southern Worcester County and northern Virginia. It is located within an area that is facing increasing development pressures and will grow at a faster rate than in previous decades.

The Comprehensive Plan for Pocomoke City focuses on policies that will guide future development and conservation. It is an endeavor that is designed to preserve and enhance the best qualities of Pocomoke City. The Plan is long-range, general, and comprehensive and implements the goals of Pocomoke City.

The goals of Pocomoke City, in addition to its mandated duty of promoting the health, security, general welfare, morals of the community, and to attain the "visions" of Article 66B, are

1. The preservation of the historic downtown;
2. The development of the riverfront along the Pocomoke River;
3. The maintenance of a sense of neighborhood within the community;
4. Planned development in the US Route 13 and 113 corridors; and

5. The ability to implement the plan to achieve all of these goals.

The implementation of the "visions" as codified in Article 66B of the Maryland Annotated Code section &3.06(b) is outlined as follows

Vision 1. Development is concentrated in suitable areas.

- Development for the City will be concentrated in the growth areas designated by Worcester County or will be of an infill nature.

Vision 2. Sensitive Areas are protected.

- See 4.4 Sensitive Areas

Vision 3. In rural areas, growth is directed to existing population centers and resource areas are protected.

- Worcester County's designated growth areas for Pocomoke City has implemented this vision.

Vision 4. Stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay and the land is a universal ethic.

- This vision is followed in the plan's items 4.1 through 4.7.

Vision 5. Conservation of resources, including a reduction in resource consumption, is practiced.

- The plan promotes areas of compact commercial development, concentrates development in suitable areas, promotes a green infrastructure, and works with the County and State resource conservation policies.

Vision 6. To assure the achievement of items Vision 1 through 5, economic growth is encouraged and regulatory mechanisms are streamlined.

- 4.1 LAND USE promotes economic independence, 4.2 TRANSPORTATION promotes concentrated commercial areas, and 4.7 DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE REGION encourages economic growth and 4.7 IMPLEMENTATION promotes the streamlining of regulatory mechanisms.

Vision 7. 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.

- See 4.3 COMMUNITY FACILITIES.

Vision 8. Funding mechanisms are addressed to achieve these Visions.

- 4.7 IMPLEMENTATION, part B addresses funding mechanisms.

Additionally, the Plan

. Identifies a road network that supports a sound land use policy and allows for the safe and efficient movement of vehicles and pedestrians;

. Identifies a planning area outside of the City boundaries and establishes the

principles and standards for expansion;

- . Promotes infill development and the reinvigoration of neighborhoods;
- . Recommends that the State Highway Administration consider the conversion of US Route 13 and 113 into limited access expressways;
- . Maintains quality community facilities and services for all residents; and
- . Works in conjunction with the County and State growth management and conservation policies, and planning legislation.

4.1 LAND USE

A. Introduction

The Pocomoke River and a restrictive County agricultural zoning policy define a band of largely undeveloped land that surrounds Pocomoke City. Within the City there exists undeveloped and under utilized land. This provides a framework to sensitively and creatively incorporate vacant land into the City as it develops and expands. Four basic features describe the Plan's vision:

1. The Green Edge:

A distinct edge between urban and rural is defined. It serves to direct new development into arrangements that optimize street and social connectivity. This in turn increases accessibility of goods and services, and encourages the construction of buildings that contribute to the community's character.

2. Accessible and Naturally Functioning Green Spaces:

Pocomoke City is blessed with an abundance of green infrastructure: streams, forest corridors, and wetlands. Where possible, the City should restore the natural functioning of this green infrastructure and improve the access by means of pedestrian and bicycle pathways.

3. Special Areas:

Dedicated sections of Pocomoke City contribute specialized functions (entertainment, recreational, cultural, and educational) to the whole city. These areas possess the amenities that promote the vitality of the City.

4. Economic Independence:

Highlighting Pocomoke City's market potential and positioning the City for strong economic development will enhance the City's place in the regional economy. The City will continue to be a regional commercial center.

B. Community Goals and Objectives

1. Establish an extended planning area outside of the City's borders and in cooperation with the County, support low density land use in the extended planning area's side of the green edge (see Figure 4). Within the City's borders, set priorities to encourage infill development in support of a firm green edge. This green edge clearly defines the City boundaries and allows for a transition between the rural and urban.

2. Adopt a green infrastructure approach for the preservation and cultivation of natural areas within Pocomoke City's borders.
3. A sound annexation policy should determine the principles and standards for City expansion. Annexation parcels should only contribute to the resident's vision for Pocomoke City. Where possible, the City's street grid should be extended into newly developed annexed areas to incorporate them into the City's development pattern. Annexations along the perimeter of Pocomoke City should redefine new boundaries for the green edge so that the concept of a green edge is maintained.
4. Land use decisions should incorporate the quality of life features that Pocomoke City values. Because the natural and man-made environments form the economy, quality of life amenities can generate economical development. All residents benefit from sound land use decisions. For example, the Pocomoke River is a unique amenity to be shared by all residents for recreational, social, and civic purposes. The public benefit is preserved when its waterfront vista remains open and available for the pleasure of all residents.
5. The promotion of planned development in the US Route 13 and 113 corridors encourages sustainable commercial development.
6. Designate distinct areas for residents to enjoy vibrant civic spaces that feature the best amenities of Pocomoke City. Promote areas for entertainment, cultural enrichment, recreation, and "Main Street" commercial activity through coordinated public and private efforts.

C. Recommendations for Land Development Regulations

1. Development plans should, wherever possible:
 - a. show connections to existing green infrastructure corridors (see Figure 7 and Section 4.5);
 - b. include riparian, natural, and landscape buffers to improve water quality and scenic beauty; and
 - c. include connections to the existing street grid (see Section 4.2).
2. Annexation, unless there are overriding municipal objectives, should be supported only if:
 - a. the annexation parcel is a part of the designated growth area by the County and the Comprehensive Plan for development;
 - b. the annexation parcel has no major environmental factors, such as large wetland areas or a high water table;
 - c. that City streets and services can be reasonably extended into the annexed parcel;
 - d. the green edge is promoted when the annexed parcel is located along the

City's perimeter;

- e. annexed commercial parcels located along US Route 13 should be a part of the pattern of concentrated planned development sites and not be a part of commercial linear growth; and
- f. a development concept plan for parcels to be developed is contained in a negotiated annexation agreement with the City.

3. Zoning and subdivision Regulations:

a. Promote a downtown historic/entertainment area:

- i. Permit mixed use development; commercial, office, self-employment, civic, institutional, and residential uses within a compact area. Allow for mixed use within the same building. The goal is to allow residential and commercial mixed use redevelopment to encourage the growth of a downtown residential population, while reserving ground floor space for commercial use.
- ii. Promote compatible and historically sensitive commercial buildings and residential units. Standards should be set in the regulations to achieve this goal.
- iii. Standards for parking, signs, public access and safety, and street ambiance should be regulated to promote a "Main Street" commerce and entertainment area.

b. Promote a riverfront area: The riverfront should possess water dependent and water related commercial development and recreational opportunities for residents. Development standards encourage improvements of the riverfront areas by permitting flexibility in redevelopment that is environmentally sensitive and economically vibrant. Development should enhance public access and provide recreational amenities for Pocomoke City.

c. Promote infill development: Encourage sound infill development on vacant, abandoned, or under utilized land for projects that strictly adhere to the Zoning Ordinance. Consider the use of transferred development rights (TDR) to provide an incentive for desired infill development.

d. Provide examples in the Zoning Ordinance: For brevity, standards should have graphic illustrations of desired development. The illustrations may include standards for scale, compatibility, development, and local building types for each zoning district.

e. Protect natural resource areas (see Section 4.5).

f. Areas zoned for industry should be reserved for future economic development

(see Figure 8).

- g. Zone small mixed use commercial centers in new neighborhoods: Allow street corner business establishments on the edge of the neighborhoods as guided by the neighborhood concept explained in Section 4.4.
- h. Promote concentrated commercial areas in the US Route 13 corridor (see Section 4.2).
- i. Subdivision regulations should establish the requirements and standards for the subdivision of land and the construction and the maintenance of infrastructure to serve development.

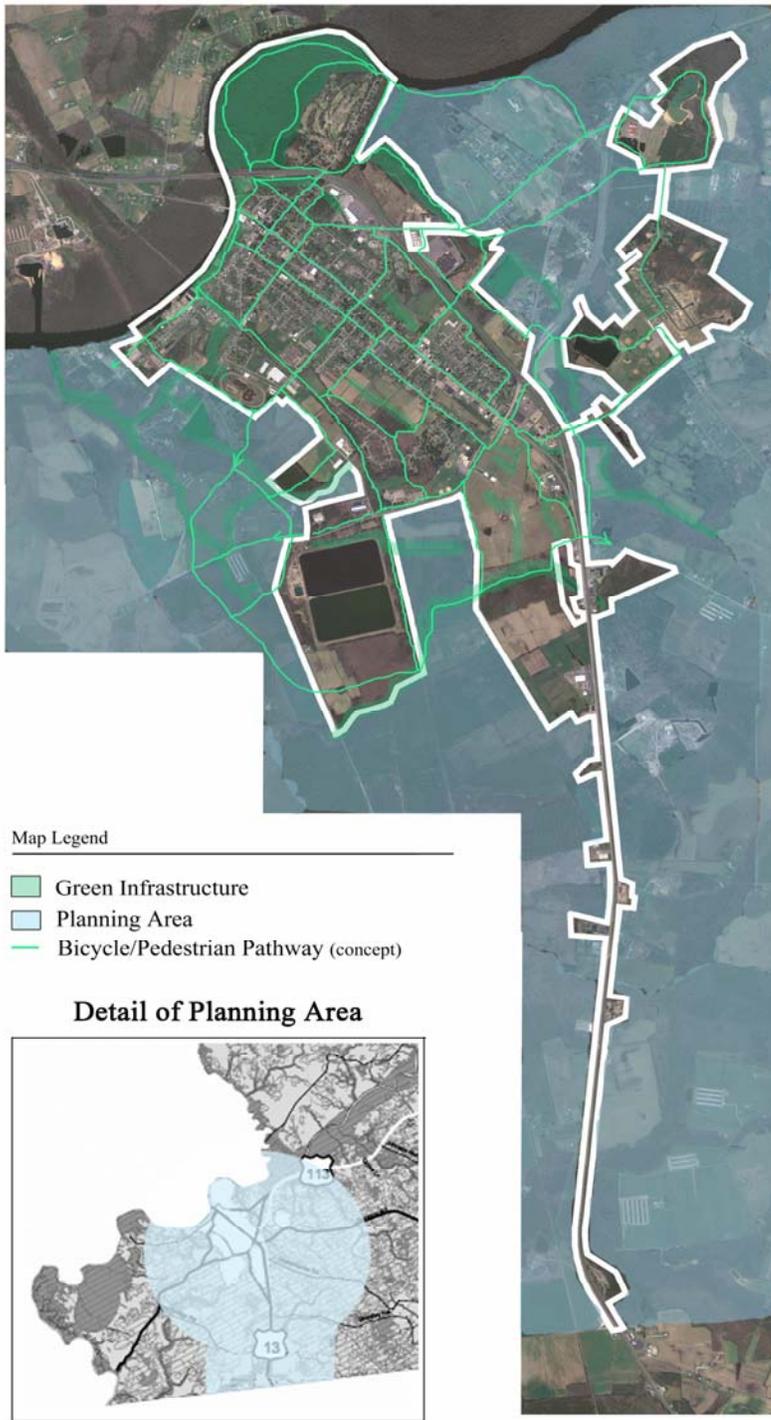


Figure 7: Pocomoke City Planning Area

Conceptual Land Use Plan

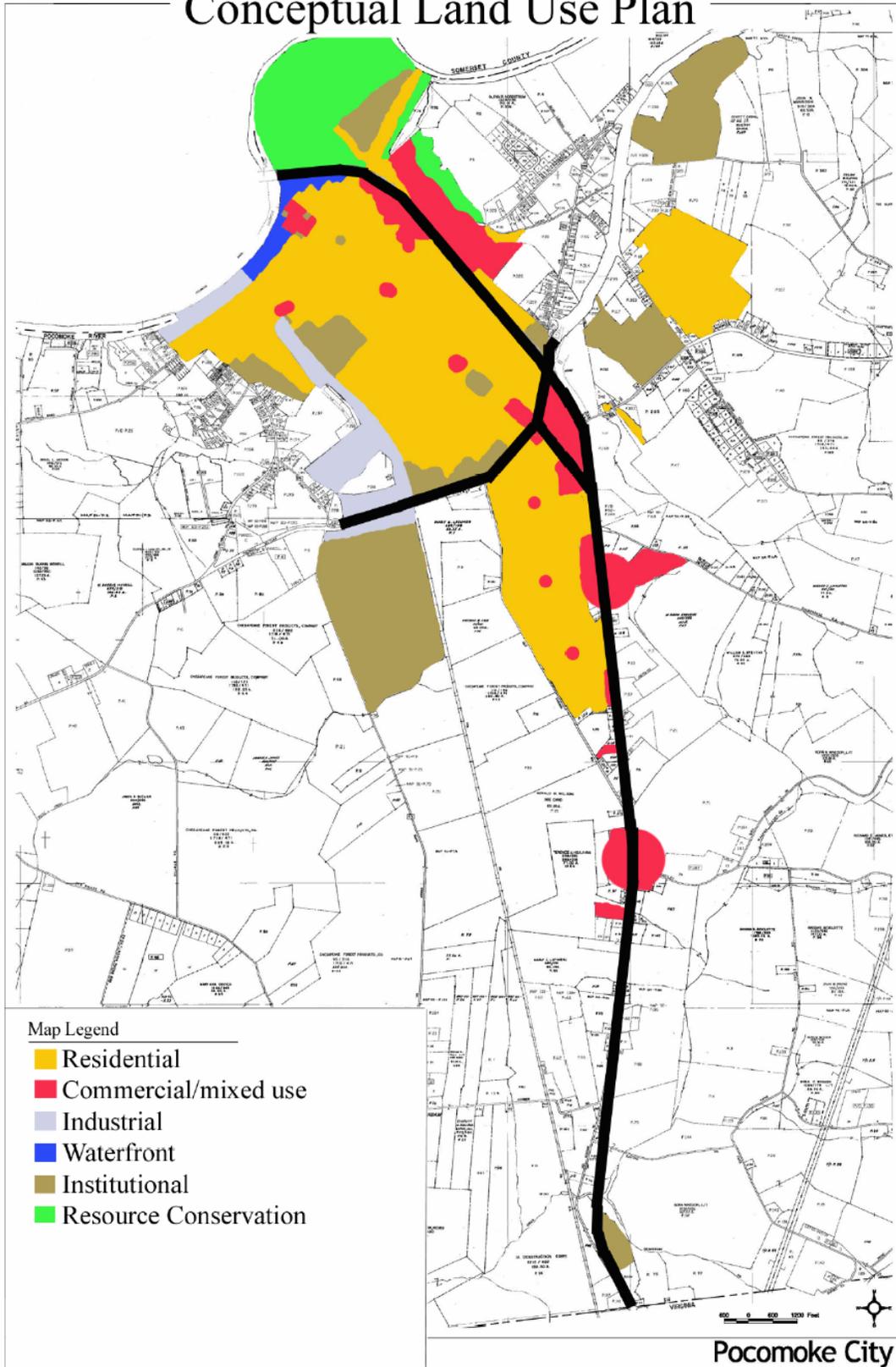


Figure 8: Conceptual Land Use Plan

4.2 TRANSPORTATION

A. Introduction

The average daily vehicle count on US Route 13 and 113 has been steadily increasing each year. This trend is expected to continue and new development in the County and region may add to this growth rate. The need for inter-parcel connectors or alternate access to businesses on US Route 13 is apparent.

Uncoordinated linear development along the highways results in increased conflicts between local and through traffic. It creates a dangerous environment for vehicles entering and exiting the highway and produces frequent traffic congestion and accidents. Pocomoke City can preserve the rural and scenic character of the community by controlling signage on streets and highways.

The main line railroad from Wilmington, Delaware to Norfolk, Virginia runs through Pocomoke City. It is operated by Norfolk-Southern Railroad, north of Pocomoke City and by the Accomack Northampton Transportation District south of Pocomoke City. The rail system is an asset for commerce and has the potential to promote tourism and recreation. It is important to maintain the railroad through Pocomoke City and to maintain and expand sidings for economic development.

The City is also fortunate to be situated on the Pocomoke River, which is a significant benefit for both commerce and recreation.

B. Community Goals and Objectives

1. Transportation planning is best accomplished in conjunction with land use planning. The efficient use of land can minimize the burden on the transportation system by easing traffic congestion and maximizing transportation choices. The conversion of US Route 13 and 113 into limited access expressways accomplishes the goal of maintaining the highways as regional arteries, preserving the rural scenery, and allowing for concentrated development at planned areas. A focus on safety requires local coordination with state highway officials to minimize the number of highway access points. Reduction of traffic conflicts and efficient land use are optimized by comprehensively planning development in concentrated areas whenever possible. An additional access ramp onto US Route 13 South between MD 756 and US Route 113 would relieve significant traffic problems at the intersection of US Route 13 and MD 756.

2. Infrastructure is similarly planned with sewer and water service and public road extensions, primarily where they reinforce the creation of planned compact development areas.

3. Preserve the rural and scenic nature of the gateways into Pocomoke City. Future development should be consistent with maintaining an aesthetically pleasing roadway that promotes the City's assets.

4. Gateways constructed at major road intersections or adjacent to the Pocomoke River signal transitions. These transportation enhancements welcome visitors and inform travelers that they are entering Pocomoke City. Road signs and civic billboards and markers would announce the entrance into Pocomoke City, encourage drivers to moderate their speed and attract visitors.

5. Green infrastructure corridors and sidewalks will play a vital role in creating a network of pedestrian/bicycle pathways. A system of sidewalks, bikeways, and green spaces could connect neighborhoods to each other, to the City center, and to green corridors outside of the City. This network would offer an alternate means of transportation. Where needed, sidewalks should be built to serve all three local schools, especially Pocomoke Middle School. Existing sidewalks and paths must be maintained in a safe condition.

6. Shore transit should be expanded to provide more transit service in Pocomoke City.

7. Street connectivity within and between neighborhoods allows for more transportation choices, increased safety, and reduces the cost of delivering City services. New neighborhood development should have good street connectivity with existing neighborhoods and maintain the existing pattern of development. It provides better accessibility for emergency services. Whenever possible, new connections in the existing street network should be encouraged to allow greater connectivity between neighborhoods. New neighborhood development should extend the existing street network.

8. Consideration should be given to the width of streets in new developments. When drivers perceive a street to be narrow, they respond by slowing down. The street becomes safer pedestrians and bicyclists and encourages the use of the sidewalks as a social meeting place.

9. The City should increase its efforts to encourage the State of Maryland Department of Transportation to provide all necessary support for the continuation and maintenance of the main line railroad through Pocomoke City. Rail service is vital for the City's industrial park and for several local area businesses that depend on rail shipments. The City should also encourage the Norfolk and Southern Railroad as well as, the Accomack-Northampton Transportation District to work together to assure continued rail service. Finally, the City should work with the railroad to provide occasional passenger train excursions between the Eastern Shore of Virginia and Pocomoke City to stimulate tourism in both areas.

10. The City should increase its promotion of all activities on the Pocomoke River. These would include transportation of bulk items and commodities for local businesses

such as aggregates and wood products. In order to facilitate these businesses, the City should continue to support the efforts of the Delmarva Water Transport Committee to work with the US Army Corps of Engineers to perform maintenance dredging as needed at the mouth of the river. The City should also continue to promote recreational boating and tourism on the Pocomoke River by providing docks, ramps, lighting, paths, and other amenities for boaters, with assistance from the State Department of Natural Resources and other sources.

C. Recommendations for Land Development Regulations

1. Development should be concentrated within established growth areas with appropriate zoning and development standards along US Route 13 and 113 corridors (see Figure 9).
2. Promote the construction of inter-parcel connectors between existing commercial properties along US Route 13 and consolidate driveways in order to minimize future congestion and improve traffic and pedestrian safety.
3. Development plans should show connectivity to the pedestrian/bicycle network to link neighborhoods.
4. When possible, new development should extend the existing street grid system and provide for future street connections with adjoining undeveloped lands.
5. Zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations should establish the fundamental dimensions of streets that would safely accommodate different modes of transportation. A sense of "street enclosure" (see Section 4.4) is emphasized in street design to increase safety and comfort.
6. Encourage forestation and landscaping along new roadways.

D. Recommendations for Plan Implementation

1. In collaboration with the State Highway Administration, Pocomoke City should:
 - a. create and support a mutually beneficial access control plan;
 - b. coordinate a comprehensive sign scheme for the corridor;
 - c. create signature gateway designs to promote Pocomoke City and define its boundaries for traffic entering US Route 13 and 113;
 - d. coordinate safe access to properties with frontage on US Route 13 and 113;

- e. conduct a study to analyze how projected traffic flows and access demands can be accommodated. This should include, but is not limited to, traffic surveys and target studies; and
 - f. create a US Route 13 South access point on Lynnhaven Drive between MD 756 (Linden Avenue) and US Route 113 to relieve the traffic congestion at the intersection of US Route 13 and MD 756.
2. Consider a transportation alignment study to determine how to plan future alternate access to City properties on US Route 13 and 113 that would be independent of these highways. This study may become the basis for a future arterial collector road network that would allow the safe and efficient movement of vehicles and pedestrians in the transportation corridor (see Figure 9).
 3. Develop strategies to facilitate movement of non-vehicular traffic across US Route 13 and 113. One option is to extend the pedestrian/bicycle network over these highways to provide access to the commercial establishments east of US Route 13 and north of US Route 113. The State Highway Administration has installed a new pedestrian crossing at US Route 13 and MD 756.
 4. Consideration should be given to the possible extension of Eleventh Street to provide an additional route between Market Street, and Lynnhaven Drive, and Pocomoke Heights.

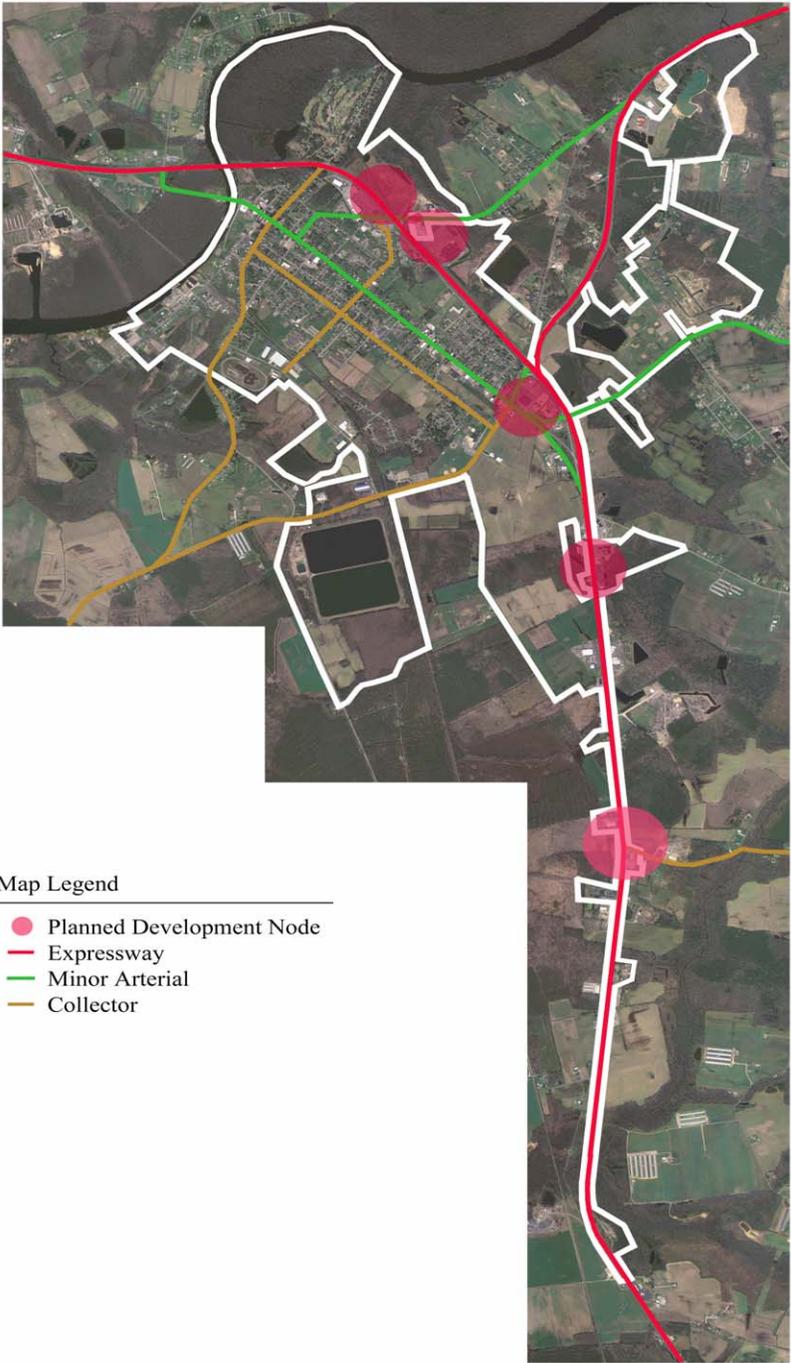


Figure 9: Planned Commercial Areas/Primary Road Network

4.3 COMMUNITY FACILITIES

A. Introduction

It is projected that Pocomoke City will issue an average of 40 residential building permits per year through 2020. This will add approximately 600 housing units by the year 2020. Adequate capacity currently exists to serve the anticipated demand for water and sewage. The capacity of the elementary and high schools will be addressed by the Worcester County Board of Education. The Pocomoke City branch of the County library system has been recently expanded and should be adequate.

Maintaining the balance between growth and community facilities and services requires the early recognition of capacity constraints and that adequate and accessible services will be provided in an economic and timely manner. Pocomoke City's infrastructure and community facilities are constructed to maximize efficiency and minimize sprawling development.

B. Community Goals and Objectives

1. Highly accessible community and civic facilities better serve Pocomoke City. The quality of facilities is improved when they are linked to the City's future pedestrian/bicycle network. Civic gathering places such as playgrounds, squares, plazas, greens, and gazebos located within each neighborhood reinforce community identity and cohesiveness. A community center which appeals to all age groups provides a welcoming gathering place, encourages development of a sense of community, and provides recreation and learning opportunities.
2. Efficient and prudent management of Pocomoke City's road network, sidewalks, stormwater, water, and sewer services is vital to the City's well being. A vigilant program to maintain the City's infra-structure results in cost savings and energy conservation. Infra-structure that is maintained according to a schedule and extended to serve development that is consistent with this Plan is both efficient and cost effective. Whenever possible, the City should adopt advancing technology that improves water quality, the handling of stormwater runoff and sewage effluent, and promote water conservation. Dead end lines in existing areas should be looped or otherwise eliminated whenever possible.
3. Good quality City services are maintained when growth and development are monitored to ensure that City services are not over extended through population growth or increased service area. Sound annexation policies ensure that construction of community facilities and infrastructure occurs in tandem with expansion. A safe environment is supported by infrastructure when there is a grid street pattern to enable rapid emergency response times. As new development is proposed, the impact upon City services is assessed to prepare for any necessary expansion. The programming of

capital facilities through a Capital Improvement Program provides both public and private development sectors the information needed to make sound real estate investments.

4. Land is dedicated for open spaces in major residential developments. These open spaces are reserved for recreation, habitat conservation, and the pedestrian/bicycle network. Dedicate land for civic gathering spaces where possible.

C. Recommendations for Land Development Regulations

1. Civic buildings and structures should be located at prominent locations whenever possible and should employ architectural details that clearly identify their civic use.

2. New neighborhoods development plans should dedicate at least five percent of the area for civic use and these areas should be easily accessible by foot and bicycle.

3. New residential development plans should dedicate a percentage of land to open spaces reserved for public use.

4. New residential development plans should include provisions for water flow connectivity that eliminates low flow rates and prohibits dead ends.

D. Recommendations for Plan Implementation

1. It is in the City's interest to cooperate with Worcester County on school issues to insure that the schools attended by the City's children retain their quality and accessibility.

2. Create a centrally located community center with amenities for and access by all the City's residents, especially for youth and senior citizens.

3. Monitor, maintain, and upgrade Pocomoke City/s service infrastructure including streets, sidewalks, water, sewer, parks, and stormwater management, street lighting, golf course, fairgrounds, nature trail, docks, boat ramps, landscaping and bike paths.

4. Provide an adequate supply of high quality water; develop a new well to assure future supplies. Maintain the City's two existing 300,000 gallon water towers. Consider the extension of water service southward along US Route 13. Upgrade the sewer collection system by reducing infiltration/inflow and by separating any remaining combined sewers. Utilize State funds to upgrade sewer treatment to meet Enhanced Nutrient Removal (ENR) standards.

5. Upgrade the City facilities including the Police Department, Volunteer Fire Department, Public Works and Golf Course. Relocate the Police Department to

eliminate problems at the current facility (the former Armory Building on Second Street). The Volunteer Fire Department will relocate to 1409 Market Street in early 2008.

6. Continue to support and provide essential public services such as the police, fire, ambulance, water, sewer, stormwater management, solid waste collection and recycling.

7. The City should continue to promote and support the economic vitality of Pocomoke City in its industrial park; the US Route 13 business corridor; in increasing tourism; in the downtown business district; and in its Enterprise zones. Such activities will enhance the City's tax base while providing additional jobs, products, and services for residents and visitors.

4.4 HOUSING and COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

A. Introduction

An aging housing stock presents challenges in maintaining the quality of existing neighborhoods. According to the 2000 Census, over half of Pocomoke City's housing units are over 65 years old. This percentage is expected to double by the year 2030. Among other actions, the City has hired a downtown coordinator, designated a historic district, and has pursued and been awarded Community Development Block Grant funds, in response to these challenges.

Reinvigorating Pocomoke City as a city of compact and pedestrian friendly neighborhoods allows independence from the automobile. This allows seniors to age in place and provides health benefits for all residents in the form of more opportunities for an active lifestyle.

The preservation of sites, structures, and Historic District of Pocomoke City is a public purpose of this Plan. Pocomoke City has a Historic District (see Figure 10). There are many historic structures that may qualify for grants and loan funding programs to assist in the renovation and preservation of these valuable assets to the City. There are many individual properties included in the Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties and survey area (MIHP WO-187) which have been found eligible for National Register Listing.

B. Community Goals and Objectives

1. New neighborhoods that meet a broad range of resident's daily needs are a vital resource. A mix of uses (work, shopping, school, recreation) close to home minimizes the use of automobiles, increases social contact and allows independence for residents who do not drive. Subdivisions based on the traditional neighborhood concept may help achieve this goal.
2. Revitalization relies on using existing resources and outside assistance to confront local challenges.
 - a. Encourage the infill of under utilized land and fuel economic development by permitting the inclusion of studios and professional offices in predominantly residential neighborhoods.
 - b. New development increases the municipal tax base immediately while the municipal costs incurred by new growth may lag years behind. The City can leverage new development to support ongoing revitalization efforts.
3. Community design standards can produce aesthetically pleasing neighborhoods

with community character. Detailed attention to street design can lead to the creation of attractive streetscapes. Communities are strengthened when traditional architecture, suited for local climate and lifestyles, is employed in new construction. Well designed communities will retain their value longer and reward Pocomoke City with property tax revenues that increase over time.

4. If downtown buildings are rehabilitated to include residential units, a resident customer base for businesses is created, vitality is injected into the area, and the options for Pocomoke City's housing stock are expanded.

5. The active promotion of the Historic District and a concerted effort to preserve it will:

- a. Safeguard the heritage of Pocomoke City which reflects elements of cultural, social, economic, political, and architectural history;
- b. Stabilize and improve the property values of the District;
- c. Foster civic beauty;
- d. Strengthen the local economy; and
- e. Promote the preservation and appreciation of the District for the education and welfare of the residents of Pocomoke City.

C. Recommendations for Land Development Regulations

1. Promote the reinvigoration of neighborhoods through a system of loans to landlords and deferred loans or grants to low income owners funded by Community Development Block Grants to the City and from other sources, such as a percentage of tax revenues from new development, impact fees, and negotiated annexation agreements. The focus of this policy should be on quality of life improvements and the promotion of private capital investment.

2. Adopt Maryland's Smart Code to facilitate rehabilitation of existing structures. Suitable downtown buildings may be rehabilitated through incentives in zoning and promotion of federal tax credits. Continue active enforcement of housing, zoning, and building codes.

3. Permit residential and commercial mixed use development in new neighborhoods and downtown. In new residential neighborhoods, the zoning ordinance should allow a mix of low impact, owner occupied professional offices, studios, and live/work units. In the downtown ("Main Street") area, residential units should be allowed above commercial establishments.

4. New compact neighborhoods should:

- a. Allow single family homes on smaller lots accessed by rear alleys or common driveways;
 - b. Discourage automobile oriented site planning which includes drive-through service windows and large roadway setbacks;
 - c. Allow civic and institutional land uses in large development and redevelopment areas with a mix of housing types and sizes; and
 - d. Maintain the architecture of surrounding neighborhood structures in style, material, and scale.
5. Comprehensively design the look of streets in new neighborhoods as recommended in Section 4.2 of this Comprehensive Plan.
 6. Consider overlay areas that foster historic preservation, revitalize the aging housing stock, and promote the construction of historically sensitive infill development.
 7. Consider a fee that would be levied for changes that would negatively impact the nature of the Historic District.
 8. Obtain grants, donations, and loans for the improvement and development of the Historic District that would promote commerce and tourism. This would include the downtown's Mar-Va Theater, Costen House, Sturgis One-Room Schools, the Discovery Center and the development of a restaurant at the Discovery Center on the Pocomoke River; as well as, the development of signage, walking tours, lighting and other attractions for the entire District.
 9. Encourage property owners to take advantage of State and Federal incentives to rehabilitate and redevelop historic properties.
 10. Encourage and support development and revitalization of the downtown area as the central core of the City, including new decorative street lights; low interest loan programs for businesses; facade improvements and upper floor remodeling; landscaping; non-profit facilities; U.S. Post Office; Library; water-based tourism; and City Hall.
 11. Discourage the conversion of residential homes to increase the number of units in an existing building or home. Consider the upgrading of zoning in some older R-3 zones to R-2. Encourage home ownership whenever possible to reduce the relatively high percentage of rental properties in Pocomoke City.

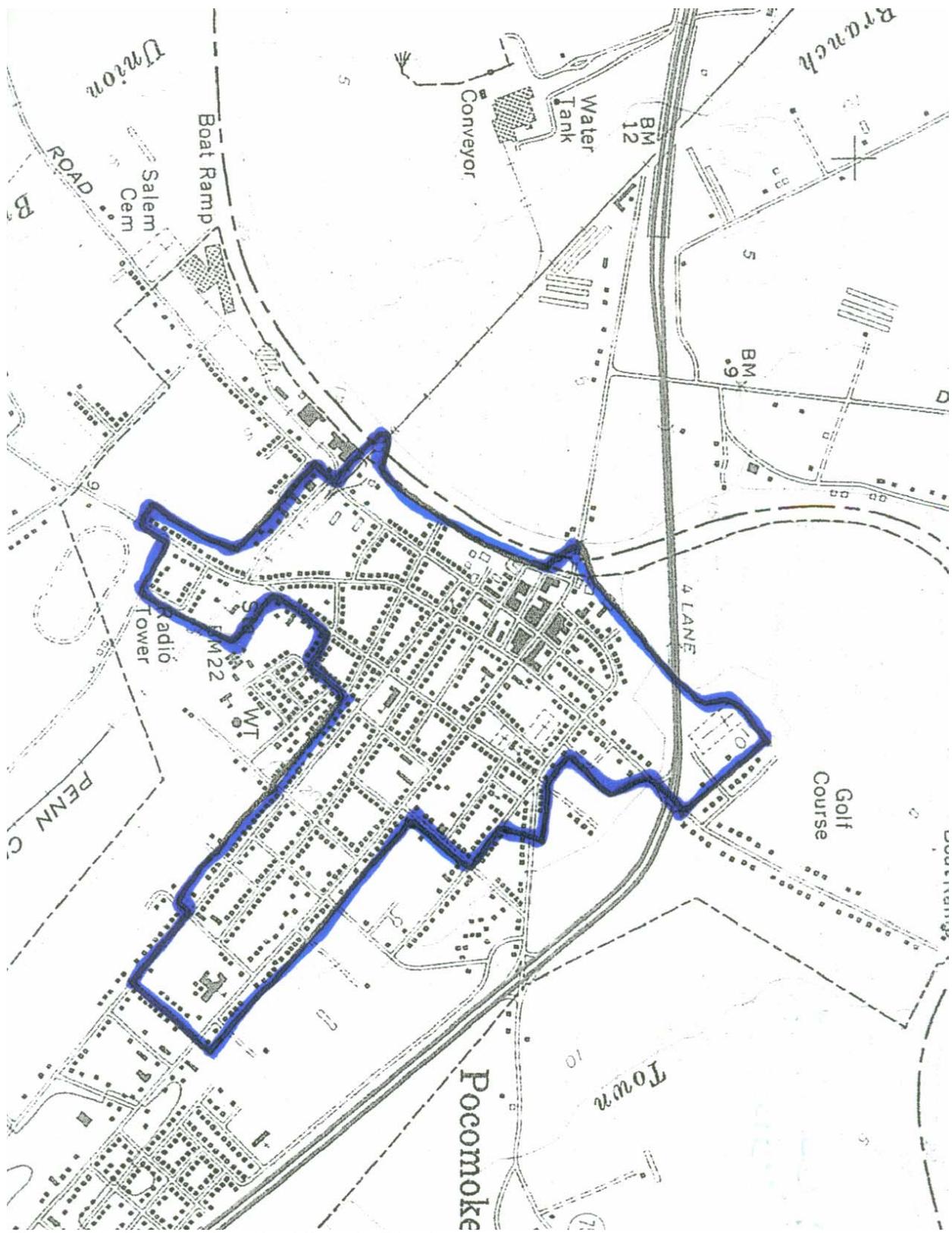


Figure 10: Pocomoke City Historic District

4.5 SENSITIVE AREAS

A. Introduction

The Pocomoke River forms the northern border of Pocomoke City and natural waterways are present throughout the City (see Figure 2). Significant forest and agriculture land uses continue the extensive environmental corridors outside of the City's boundaries. This green infrastructure functions to reduce flooding of developed areas and preserves existing habitat.

B. Community Goals and Objectives

1. Preservation and cultivation of natural areas within municipal boundaries is desired. Hydrological features are preserved and promoted as valuable assets to Pocomoke City. Redevelopment plans should include the restoration and maintenance of naturally functioning sensitive areas where they may have been impaired.
2. Reasonable efforts must be taken to promote and preserve the natural functioning of streams and wetlands. Sensitive natural areas should be avoided and all reasonable measures taken to protect these areas during and after development. Care should be taken to conserve sensitive areas when annexations occur.
3. Landscaping should be treated as an integral part of site planning that accentuates public and private spaces. It offers both aesthetic and environmental benefits.

C. Recommendations for Land Development Regulations

1. Support an urban forestry program to substantially increase the number of trees in the floodplain and preserve standing wooded areas throughout Pocomoke City.
2. A street tree program should encourage the planting of native species of trees.
3. Development plans should preserve and cultivate natural corridors within the City with connections to existing green infra-structures in Pocomoke City and Worcester County.
4. In redeveloping high density areas, landscape buffers should be planted to improve water quality and scenic beauty.
5. Impervious surface areas should be reduced within the floodplain and 100 feet of the Pocomoke River. Standards for coverage percentages for maximum impervious surface areas should be agreed upon and defined.

6. Stream corridors and wetlands should be repaired to regain their natural functioning. Development standards should include minimum widths for riparian corridors.
7. Annexation agreements should be drafted with consideration for the enhancement and preservation of green infrastructure. Pocomoke City's green corridors should be extended into newly annexed areas wherever possible.
8. New development should avoid sensitive natural areas.
9. Areas where development is strictly limited by the presence of wetlands should be zoned as conservation areas (see Figure 8).

4.6 DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE REGION

A. Introduction

County and State growth management policies direct new development to designated growth areas. The State has defined as a Priority Funding Area the area within the boundaries of Pocomoke City as of January 1, 1997 and those annexed areas which have successfully gone through the State certification process for Priority Funding Areas. Other funding opportunities may be available for mutual benefit through inter-governmental cooperation.

Cooperation among jurisdictions is important to long-term Plan implementation. The interest of both Pocomoke City and Worcester County can be advanced through cooperation. Cooperation ensures that; the development goals and roles of each jurisdiction in community development are clarified, sources of funding are recognized, use of political and technical input and support is directed, priorities are defined, and allocation of resources is made more efficient through linking related efforts and eliminating conflicts. Worcester County has provided a development policy to direct development of future residential areas adjoining Pocomoke City and commercial growth along US Route 13 and 113. The County also has adopted a policy of identifying and protecting green infra-structure.

B. Community Goals and Objectives

1. Pocomoke City's priorities and plans can be advanced through coordination of local projects with the broader goals of surrounding jurisdictions and government agencies. Cooperation with the State Highway Administration can achieve projects that meet shared objectives. Cooperation with the regional transit agency can ensure that public transit services are expanded to meet commercial and residential needs.
2. Recognizing that Pocomoke City's economy is interconnected with the regional and state economy, initiatives to promote economic development should be coordinated with County and State economic planners.
3. Continue to participate in the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area program.

C. Recommendations for Plan Implementation

1. Coordinate with Worcester County and the State Highway Administration to meet regional transportation needs (see Section 4.2).
2. Coordinate with Worcester County to ensure that public transit services are provided as needed.

3. Coordinate with Worcester County and the State community and economic development agencies to promote commercial development in Pocomoke City.

4.7 IMPLEMENTATION

A. Introduction

Interactions of people, working together will result in successful implementation of this Comprehensive Plan. Pocomoke City has successfully directed the energies of interested and concerned citizens to achieving positive results while maintaining a small and efficient government. Recent examples include the rehabilitation of the Mar-Va Theater, Historic District designation, and the construction of the Discovery Center. Ongoing examples include the Railroad Station and the proposed redevelopment of the riverfront. Citizen involvement and leadership is a vital element of plan implementation.

B. Funding Mechanisms

Pocomoke City should create and maintain a five-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP). CIP is a financial planning tool that allows Pocomoke City to schedule infrastructure priorities with available and expected future revenues. The CIP identifies capital project priorities and revenue sources; such as general obligation bonds, general fund balances, County, State or Federal sources in addition to water and sewer revenues.

Pocomoke City should continue to work cooperatively with funding programs administered by Worcester County and State agencies to implement key priorities. Each of these agencies has a long-term interest in promoting the harmonious and prosperous development of Pocomoke City.

Community revitalization funds may be obtained through many sources. A grant writer either contracted or a City employee should continue to pursue funding opportunities. Many funding organization do not have application deadlines. An example of a revolving loan program administered by private banks to assist individual homeowners in the rehabilitation of their homes can be found at:

<http://www.treasurer.cuyahogacounty.us/homeimprove/Helpandout.pdf>

Revitalization funds may be obtained to assist in the rehabilitation of a group of residences for purchase or rental through private developer and homeowner initiative:

<http://www.enterprisefoudation.org/resources/green/about-essentials-grants.asp>

Similarly, the Maryland Housing Rehabilitation program - Single Family program is available at:

http://www.dcd.state.md.us/website/programs/mhrp_sf/mhrp_sf.aspx

For multiple applications, a listing of funding organizations may be found at:

<http://www.enterprisefoundation.org/resources/Funding/moneynet/index.asp>

State assistance for neighborhood revitalization may be available through application to the State's Community Legacy Program, Maryland Affordable Housing Trust, Community Development Block Grants, Rural Legacy, and other programs.

The Department of Natural Resources offers grants for the creation of green spaces and playgrounds through the Community Parks and Playgrounds programs. Details can be found at:

<http://www.dnr.state.md.us/grantsandloans/cpp.asp>

A portion of tax revenues from new development is invested in the improvement of existing neighborhoods. This policy should focus on improvements that have the dual benefits of improving the quality of life and promoting private capital investment; e.g., code enforcement, infrastructure repair, and tree planting). A revolving loan fund program to assist homeowners rehabilitate properties may also be funded through new tax revenues or through negotiated annexation agreements.

The funding for the Plan's implementation may also be supported by impact fees, annexation agreements, and developer rights and responsibility agreements.

C. Regulatory Mechanism

Zoning regulates the use of land and defines the intensity and character of development. It is an effective tool in guiding a city's physical development. Changes will be needed to the Zoning Ordinance and Map so that they conform to this Comprehensive Plan.

Subdivision Regulations should establish the requirements and standards for subdivision of land and the construction of infra-structure to serve new development. In addition, they should establish requirements and standards for insuring those adequate public facilities such as street capacity and public water and sewer services are maintained. Developers of all significant proposed projects shall be required to submit an impact study on Pocomoke City's public facilities and services.

D. Continued Planning Program

City planning is a continuous process. Monitoring and review of public and private development projects is essential. This Comprehensive Plan provides a guide for Pocomoke City in its consideration of new projects and programs.

Pocomoke City should continue a strong on-going planning relationship with Worcester County and the State Highway Administration to discuss shared interests and projects.

Article 66B of the Annotated Code of Maryland mandates:

- . The City shall formally evaluate and update the Plan every six years (section 3.05(b)(3)),
- . The City's Planning and Zoning Commission shall conduct a yearly assessment of growth and development as part of their Annual Report (section 3.09), and
- . All proposed capital projects in the City that affect physical growth and development shall be referred to the Planning and Zoning Commission for review (Section 3.08).
- . The Water Resources Plan element and the Municipal Growth element required by House Bill 1141 of 2006 are planned to be incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan by October 2009. The Work Force Housing element is not planned to be included because there is no anticipated need for Workforce Housing Grant Program monies.

E. Streamlining the Regulatory Process

Regulations are to be crafted with the use of "plain English" whenever possible, to have a similarity of style, to have a logical sequence and structure, and to contain examples for clarity and brevity. Complex terms and concepts will be defined prior to usage. Where possible, the use of acronyms and abbreviations are to be avoided. Regulations that are easily read and understood will result in less time, less confusion, and fewer mistakes by the regulated as well as by the regulators.

Pocomoke City will seek to continue its project review schedule of less than 60 days from the time of receipt of project plans to the time of their Planning and Zoning Commission review.

4.8 CONCLUSION

One purpose of the Comprehensive Plan is to highlight the challenges and assets of Pocomoke City and present a compelling image of its future. The Plan inspires a desire in residents and businesses to be a part of that future. Yet, the plan is only a collection of tools and has no effect. It is the people, who live and know Pocomoke City, who must use these tools for the Plan's vision to be realized. Those who live, work, play, shop, and cherish Pocomoke City will determine whether this Plan's vision will thrive and become a legacy for succeeding generations.

Recognizing that citizen involvement is the key to achieving the vision contained in this Plan, the sections of this document have been structured with illustrations and data to encourage and enable citizens to work for its full realization. The realization of this Plan will require much work. A systematic method to tackling current growth management and development issues and mitigating negative impacts of projected conditions will require effort and coordination of residents and government agencies.

The strength of Pocomoke City, with its traditional town fabric, advantageous location on the scenic Pocomoke River, and vitality of community relationships, will ensure that ample rewards will follow the implementation of this Plan. The preservation and repair of green infrastructure within the City, the establishment of a distinct edge, the promotion of special areas, and the achievement of sustainable economic independence will make Pocomoke City a featured destination on the Delmarva Peninsula. Pocomoke City will continue to offer a unique and high quality of life, where the benefits of urban and rural life are united.

This Plan's vision reveals the belief residents have in the vitality of their City and the pride they have taken in Pocomoke City's assets. When a city feels pride in itself, the feeling is contagious; people want to be a part of a team. The Plan lays the foundation for Pocomoke City to build the future it desires.