

# St. Michaels Comprehensive Plan 2015

Adopted October 28, 2015

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*Adopted by Resolution 2015-09 by the Commissioners of St. Michaels on this date, October 28, 2015.*

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*Cover photo by William Wilhelm*

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### **The Residents of St. Michaels**

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# PREFACE TO THE TOWN OF ST. MICHAELS COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The 2015 Comprehensive Plan defines the mission of our local government and a vision for the future of St. Michaels. A core set of values also exists to guide behavior and actions concerning the management of the Town. For staff and residents of St. Michaels, the document represents a promise for the future and provides clear direction for where our Town is going. To “get there” the Commissioners have committed to a set of priorities, known as “a strategic plan”, where the Town’s financial and human resources will be focused in the coming years. St. Michaels’ Vision, Values and Goals (Strategic Plan) are set forth as follows:

## VISION STATEMENT

The Town of St. Michaels continues to be a vibrant and livable community preserving the town’s strong historic character and long-standing waterfront orientation. We will protect our small town quality of life and promote environmental stewardship and economic vitality. We value opportunities in housing diversity, arts and culture, connectivity, walkability and transportation options.

## OUR TOWN CORE VALUES

**Respect:** The best quality of life will be achieved when the needs of all of its citizens, business owners, tax payers and other stake-holders are respected and considered.

**Integrity:** Demonstrate honesty and sincerity in all of our dealings, upholding only the highest ethical principles; to provide open and transparent communications to create informed opinion.

**Compassion:** Sensitivity to, and meeting the requirements of all residents with special needs and interests, and those less fortunate.

**Fiscal Responsibility:** Elected officials, appointees and staff are always mindful of the need to balance town services with reasonable fiscal responsibility.

**Community Involvement:** Achieve the best quality of life for all of its citizens by ensuring business owners, tax payers, and other stake-holders are actively engaged in the town’s decision making and work cooperatively to achieve the overall goals as set forth herein.

**Innovation and Imagination:** Seek innovative and imaginative ways to address the future, while maintaining the historic character of the town.

## GOALS

Protect the Town's historic and cultural resources by continually updating the Town Code.

Invest in technology and infrastructure necessary to serve the town's residents and to attract and maintain businesses.

Work with our government partners, in particular Talbot County, to assure decisions regarding new development outside the municipal boundaries of St. Michaels have no adverse impacts on the Town, which includes working with the County to improve the gateway approaches to Town.

Promote and provide town services that residents can rely on and which support the community's quality of life.

Strive to make St. Michaels a place where persons of all levels of income and ages can work and live. Promote the development of arts, culture and our historic heritage.

Continue to promote the health of the Harbor and other adjacent waterways.

Efforts should be continued to make our Town green through the establishment of programs targeted to tree preservation/planting, stormwater management and recycling.

Communicate clearly and effectively with the public about town services and their costs.

Pursue grant opportunities which help to fund infrastructure improvements, historic preservation, and recreational, educational and cultural enhancements.

## THE STATE OF MARYLAND TWELVE VISIONS AND GOALS

The following twelve Vision statements are based on the 1992 Planning Act, and subsequent amendments thereto, and are incorporated into this Comprehensive Plan as fundamental goals which will be achieved through a variety of objectives, policies, principles, recommendations, and implementation techniques.

1. **Quality of Life and Sustainability.** A high quality of life is achieved through universal stewardship of the land, water, and air resulting in sustainable communities and protection of the environment.
2. **Public Participation.** Citizens are active partners in the planning and implementation of community initiatives and are sensitive to their responsibilities in achieving community goals.
3. **Growth Areas.** Growth is concentrated in existing population and business centers, growth areas adjacent to these centers, or strategically selected new centers.

4. **Community Design.** Compact, mixed-use, walkable design consistent with existing community character and located near available or planned transit options is encouraged to ensure efficient use of land and transportation resources and preservation and enhancement of natural systems, open spaces, recreational areas, and historical, cultural, and archeological resources.
5. **Infrastructure.** Growth areas have the water resources and infrastructure to accommodate population and business expansion in an orderly, efficient, and environmentally sustainable manner.
6. **Transportation.** A well-maintained, multimodal transportation system facilitates the safe, convenient, affordable, and efficient movement of people, goods, and services within and between population and business centers.
7. **Housing.** A range of housing densities, types, and sizes provides residential options for citizens of all ages and incomes.
8. **Economic Development.** Economic development and natural resource-based businesses that promote employment opportunities for all income levels within the capacity of the State's natural resources, public services, and public facilities are encouraged.
9. **Environmental Protection.** Land and water resources, including the Chesapeake Bay and Coastal Bays, are carefully managed and maintain healthy air and water, natural systems, and living resources.
10. **Resource Conservation.** Waterways, forests, agricultural areas, open space, natural systems, and scenic areas are conserved.
11. **Stewardship.** Government, business entities, and residents are responsible for the creation of sustainable communities by collaborating to balance efficient growth with environmental protection.
12. **Implementation.** Strategies, policies, programs, and funding for growth and development, resource conservation, infrastructure, and transportation are integrated across the local, regional, State, and interstate levels to achieve these Visions.

## DEFINITIONS

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

**Quality of Life** is a condition of one's existence that can be improved or degraded by land use decisions based on this Comprehensive Plan. For the purpose of this document, Quality of Life includes: health, safety and welfare of the Town; wildlife conservation; clean water in the Bay and its tributaries; clean air and quality drinking water; sufficient and potable water in our



aquifers; a low level of crime; employment opportunities; the relative absence of traffic congestion and excessive noise; access to diverse cultural, employment, recreational, education and entertainment activities; convenient access to goods and services and an ethic of personal involvement.

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

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

**Connectivity.** Connecting the community through technology and accessible public transportation, with provisions for safe pedestrian and bicycle access and services which will assure the health and safety of our residents and visitors.

**Smart Growth.** As per the State of Maryland *Smart and Sustainable Growth Act of 2009*, Smart growth concentrates development in areas that have existing or planned infrastructure to avoid sprawl. Smart Growth should support development in areas where infrastructure exists, save our most valuable natural resources, reduce the cost of infrastructure, and provide everyone in St. Michaels with a high quality of life.



## St. Michaels, A History.

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

By the 1890s, the Town's population had grown to 1,200 people. St. Michaels continued to grow in the twentieth century, with many bungalows constructed on the south side of Town before the Depression and a number of colonial revival and ranch-style houses built after World War II. However, the 2010 population was 1,029, evidence of the changing demographics in the Town with many new retirees and continued increase in second home owners.

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

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

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

# Chapter 1: Land Use and Growth Management

## INTRODUCTION

The character of St. Michaels has evolved from its rich history as a maritime community to a quaint small waterfront town which provides our residents and visitors a wide array of residential and commercial opportunities. This plan seeks to maintain our historic character by guiding new development and redevelopment efforts through the creation and implementation of zoning regulations and environmental regulations focused on the core of our Town. The Commissioners of St. Michaels continue to support their limited growth policy concentrating primarily on rehabilitation and redevelopment rather than the extension of the Town's municipal boundaries.

The Town includes a vibrant downtown commercial area that serves the needs of residents and visitors, as well as a waterfront commercial areas consisting of restaurants, marinas and the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum. St. Michaels is characterized by a unique blend of waterfront, harbors, public parks, historic structures and wide variety of residential and commercial structures and uses.

Although St. Michaels is a small community, we share some of the same land use, growth, and development issues of larger towns. Our community is concerned with maintaining our unique historic water-oriented character. We are concerned about over-development within the town, as well as inappropriate development in the approaches to the town. We are also committed to maintaining a healthy environment, protecting our harbors and the Chesapeake Bay, and maintaining the town's historic feel.

The St. Michaels Land Use Plan is the fundamental element that will determine the Town's future pattern of growth and development. This plan also provides the underlying guidance when considering changes to our zoning and land-use ordinances, as well as addressing potential development within the Town.

## EXISTING LAND USE

### Residential Areas

Approximately half of the Town's land is devoted to residential use, characterized by single family homes on half acre lots or smaller. As an older community, St. Michaels has many homes and entire neighborhoods that are on very small and/or narrow lots. This gives many sections of town a village feel while still lying in the rural setting of Maryland's Eastern Shore.



### Residential Gateways

Those lands adjacent to the Perry Cabin ball fields and extending to Rolles Range Road which lie at the northern edge of the Town and the land area at the southern end of town known as Marea carry this zoning designation. It is the Town's intent is to use the Residential Gateway Zone to preserve the existing rural appearance up to the current edges of town development. This area allows for an entrance into the Town that is gradual and also acts as a transition to the Talbot County Countryside Preservation Zone, the purpose of which is to slow sprawl by creating a greenbelt.

### Commercial Areas

St. Michaels has two dominant areas of commercial activity. One commercial section is situated along both sides of Talbot Street, providing the majority of goods and services for the day-to-day needs of residents and contains most of the shops as well as some restaurants that appeal to tourists. A second area of commercial activity is located adjacent to the harbor. Larger restaurants, inns, and the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum are there. Fremont Street which lies immediately to the west of Talbot Street has long been recognized as an area suitable for



neighborhood commercial redevelopment. In recent years, the Police Station, the St. Michaels Library and several small businesses and restaurants have located in that area. The Town recognizing the value of this area is investing in stormwater, street and sidewalk upgrades in an effort to promote the continued re-development of this street.

### Industrial Areas

Much of the industrial activity that existed in the 1970's has ceased. Some limited manufacturing still occurs in the old mill complex on Talbot Street between East Marengo and East Chew. Boat building, electrical fabrication, power generation, and milling either no longer occur or are done at much lower levels of activity. One boat yard has been replaced by the St. Michaels Harbor Inn, reflecting the changing focus away from industry and toward tourism. The only area zoned for industrial uses is located at the north end of Grace Street which is the siting of a large building which is utilized for light manufacturing and a power substation.

### Maritime Uses

The town has a special category of commercial land use related to our waterfront setting; Maritime Commercial, including commercial activities that are water dependent by their nature. They include boatyards, fuel docks, marinas, and restaurants and inns that have docks and landings.



Areas designated for loading and unloading of commercial shellfish and fin fish should be protected by appropriate zoning and other regulations. Existing commercial activity on our harbor should be protected by limiting commercial waterfront uses to these commercially-zoned areas.

Both the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Overlay District (340-27) and the Waterways Management (333) Chapters of the Town Code, address water dependent uses and the nature of existing and future development along our waterfront. The policies of those plans are incorporated here by reference.

### Waterfront Development

This zone is intended to promote the development of the tourism related activities in the area adjacent to the Town harbor while preserving historic features and protecting adjacent residential areas.



### Museums

The economic impact of the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum to the Town of St. Michaels is substantial. The museum's waterfront campus occupies more than 18 acres with approximately 18%, fronting on St. Michaels Harbor. The museum and their surrounding lands carry a Maritime Museum zoning designation which is specific to the use and operation of the museum. The museum continues to expand their exhibits and educational programs concentrating on preserving and exploring the history, environment and people of the Chesapeake Bay.

The Museum at St. Mary's Square continues to provide the Town with a window to its past form and character through their ever increasing collections, three historic buildings and educational walking tours, programs and presentations.

### Community Parks

St. Michaels is proud of its myriad of public parks, ranging from small pocket parks, located throughout the Town to the three waterfront parks fronting on the Harbor, and San Domingo Creek. These parks offer scenic overlooks, passive recreation opportunities, temporary mooring for boaters and a newly created kayak launching ramp. In addition, the Town offers a large childrens park with playground equipment and picnicking facilities which lies adjacent to a 1.3 mile nature trail which is accessible for pedestrian and bicyclists.

### Agricultural and Resource Conservation Areas

Proximity to agricultural and resource conservation activities help anchor the rural setting of St. Michaels and plays an important role in defining the Town's character and sense of place. The transition from agriculture to developed areas establishes a sense of arrival into St. Michaels and is crucial in defining the feel of the Town. The Town has various resource conservation areas near the





Town of St. Michaels  
Future Land Use

**Land Use**

Green	(AC) Agriculture and Conservation
Orange	(C) Commercial
Yellow	(M) Medium Density Residential
Pink	(MP) Municipal
Light Blue	(R) Residential
Dark Blue	(RD) Residential Gateway
Red	(WD) Waterfront Development

Map 1 - 2

Town boundaries that limit growth, including Canton Park Farm at the West of Railroad Avenue. The property known as Miles Point at the northern limit of Town contains 72 acres placed under conservation easement and back into agricultural production increasing the overall acreage of undeveloped lands within the Town. Additionally, the Marea Terrace development at the southern entry of Town has a resource conservation covenant along the front portion of the subdivision to preserve the rural entry and the Inn at Perry Cabin intends to place the front portion of their property at the Northern portion of Town under an agriculture covenant.

The current land use designations are shown on Map 1-1 and summarized in Table 1-1.

**Table 1-1**  
Current Land Use  
Town of St. Michaels Area Calculations

<i><b>Zone</b></i>	<i><b>Area Sq. Ft</b></i>	<i><b>Acres</b></i>
Agriculture and Conservation	7,280,572.00	167.14
Commercial	2,073,269.80	47.57
Maritime	1,146,429.00	26.31
Residential	18,531,780	425.43
Waterfront Development	492,634	11.31
Residential Gateway	3,454,831	79.31
Public Facilities	55,063	1.26
Community Park Lands	1,169,586.00	26.85
<b>Total Town Acres</b>		<b>785.18</b>

**Table 1-2**  
Future Land Use  
Town of St. Michaels Area Calculations

<i><b>Zone</b></i>	<i><b>Area Sq. Ft</b></i>	<i><b>Acres</b></i>
Agriculture and Conservation	7,280,572.00	167.14
Commercial	1,809,279.20	41.54
Maritime	1,088,608.60	25.00
Residential	17,133,369.60	393.33
Waterfront Development	1,131,402.90	25.97
Residential Gateway	5,509,258.60	126.34
Public Facilities	1,302,691.00	29.91
<b>Total Town Acres</b>		<b>809.23</b>

## **FUTURE LAND USE CHANGES**

The Comprehensive Plan focuses on infill, revitalization and redevelopment within the Town’s current boundaries rather than significant expansion of the Town municipal boundaries. As such, the following future land uses are anticipated for the next 10 years. As unanticipated projects may require further consideration beyond the future land use in this Plan, changes may be recommended

as part of the Zoning Map amendment process should the projects be found consistent with other portions of the Comprehensive Plan or zoning overlay criteria. The future land use changes noted below are shown on Map 1-2 and summarized in Table 1-2, including areas of potential annexation noted in Chapter 2.

200 Fremont Street	Residential to Commercial
505 South Talbot Street	Residential to Commercial
211 North Talbot Street	Maritime to Commercial
107 Mill Street	Commercial to Maritime
123 Grace Street	Commercial to Residential
Eastern Portion of Inn at Perry Cabin	Residential to Waterfront Development
Habitat at Brooks Lane Annexation	Future Residential
Roles Range Future Annexation	Future Residential

## VISION

St. Michaels is a town, which, through coordinated land use management practices, will succeed in protecting and perpetuating its historic character, green spaces, commercial viability, environmental stewardship and a vibrant residential community.

## OBJECTIVES AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

- 1.1 Preserve the Town's unique historic identity in the larger landscape.
  - 1.1.1 Support the County's greenbelt concept to define town edges and to ensure that County development along the borders of the town does not detract from the community's image.
  - 1.1.2 Continue to participate in the County's Technical Advisory Committee, providing the Commissioners and Planning Commission an opportunity to comment on any land subdivision or development proposals in locations near town.
  - 1.1.3 Consistent with The Annotated Code of Maryland (2012), establish a process with the County, similar to their existing technical advisory committee, for the purpose of development, annexation and/or rezoning of land within the Town's "Areas of Interest."
  - 1.1.4 Schedule regular working sessions with representatives of the Talbot County Planning Commission and the St. Michaels Planning Commission and staff to discuss projects which may affect the Town.
- 1.2 Ensure management tools for Town growth are adequate, effective, and consistently executed.
  - 1.2.1. To accommodate planned growth, evaluate existing ordinances and fee structures

governing necessary services and community facilities. This includes but is not limited to stormwater management, public water, public sewer, infrastructures, parks, open space, roads and public landscaping.

- 1.2.2 Continue to review, establish and adopt environmental ordinances as required by State law.
  - 1.2.3 Evaluate policies to ensure that developers pay for all the direct and associated costs of development as well as for independent studies of development impacts when such studies are determined by the Town Commissioners to be necessary.
  - 1.2.4 Ensure that development occurs within those areas as identified on the St. Michaels Growth Tier Map (Map 1-3) as incorporated within the St. Michaels Comprehensive Plan.
  - 1.2.5 Support appropriate infill and mixed-use development projects that are compatible with the existing community fabric.
- 1.3 Ensure Town codes are effective, enforced, and simplified to the extent possible.
- 1.3.1 Review permitting processes and procedures.
    - Conduct a comprehensive review of the Zoning Ordinance.
    - Conduct a comprehensive review of the Subdivision Ordinance.
- 1.4 Continue to work with those businesses on Rt. 33 within the commercial zone which borders the town boundaries to maintain and enhance the historic character of the Town.
- 1.4.1 Continue to work with the County regarding the southern approach to the Town in an effort to implement and strengthen their gateway zoning and to restrict any expansion of this commercial district or intensification of its table of approved uses.
- 1.5 Enhance the development of the commercial district.
- 1.5.1 Develop and implement a redevelopment plan for Fremont Street.
  - 1.5.2 Develop and implement a commercial street plan which encompasses pedestrian corridors, lighting, parking and aesthetics.
  - 1.5.3 Promote the use of funding sources available through the Sustainable Community Program, Legacy Plan and other grant opportunities.
  - 1.5.4 Investigate the benefits to the Town of establishing St. Michaels as a “Main Street Community.”

- 1.5.5 Encourage business owners to maintain their storefronts in keeping with the historic character of the town.
- 1.5.6 Continue to Support redevelopment of the Mill as a mixed-use project.
- 1.6 Recognize the concerns of multi-generational residential needs with consideration being given to accommodations for in-law suites or facilities for care givers.
- 1.7 Connectivity.
  - 1.7.1 Continue to evaluate the feasibility of burying or relocating utility lines.
  - 1.7.2 Pursue opportunities to optimize internet accessibility, connectivity and speed for the businesses and residents of the Town in an effort to enhance economic opportunities.
  - 1.7.3 Encourage the upgrade and construction of sidewalks, walking and bike paths, which will allow residents and visitors to pass from one end of St. Michaels to the other with as much ease as possible. Such improvements should enhance the ability of residents and visitors to safely walk or bike to businesses, restaurants, museums and other community amenities.

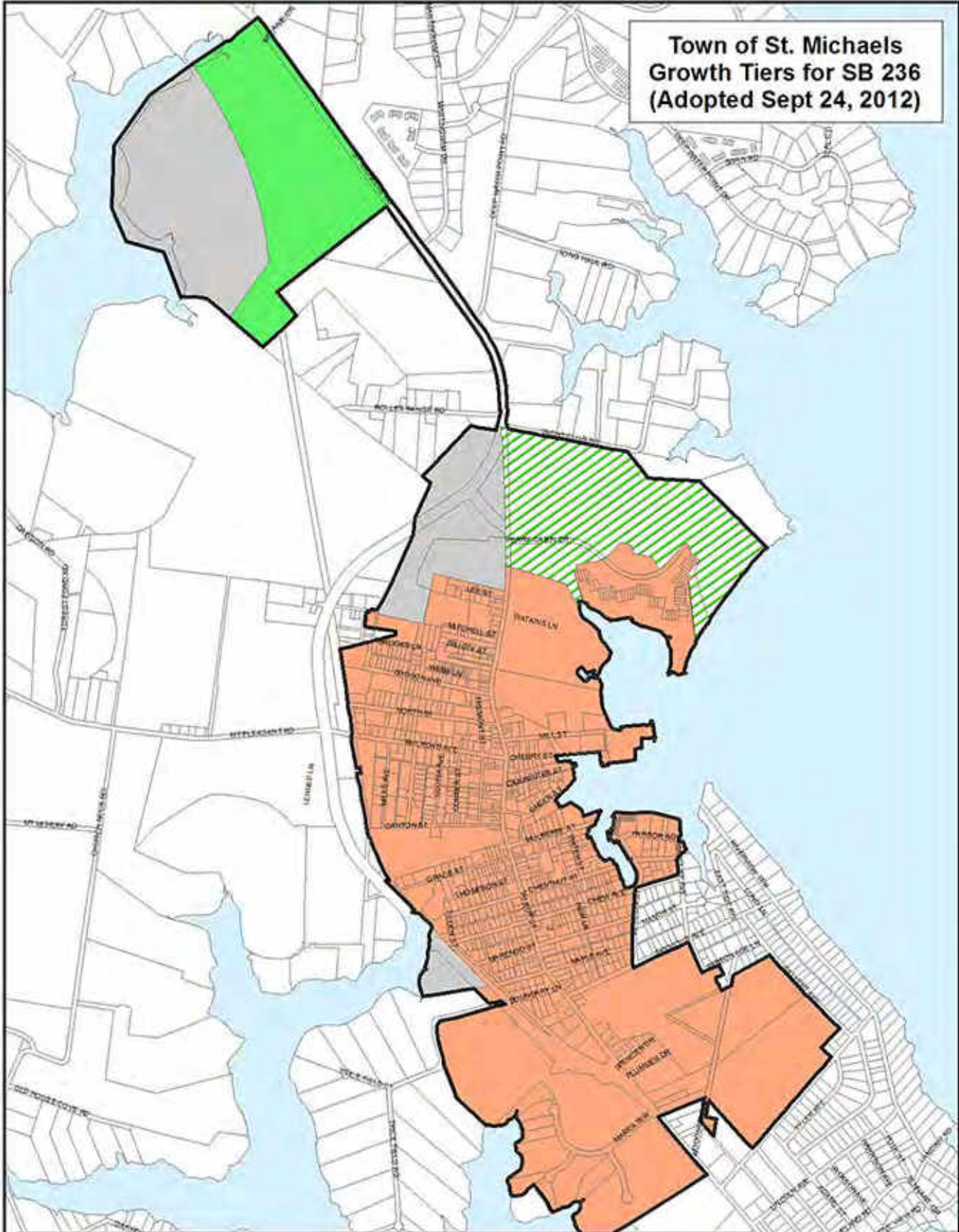
## **POLICIES**

It is the policy of the Town that new development and redevelopment be focused in the core of our Town as to limit outward growth.

It is the policy of the Town that existing commercial activity on our harbor shall be protected by limiting commercial waterfront uses to maritime areas.



**Town of St. Michaels  
Growth Tiers for SB 236  
(Adopted Sept 24, 2012)**



**SB 236 Growth Tiers**

- Tier 1: Existing Sewer
- Tier 1A: Existing Sewer, but Permanently Preserved Land
- Tier 2: Planned for Sewer, Municipal or Growth Area
- Tier 2A: Not Yet in County W&S Plan, Municipal or Growth Area, but Permanently Preserved Land

Note: Growth Tiers apply only to residential development.





## Chapter 2: Municipal Growth and Development Regulations

### INTRODUCTION

The Annotated Code of Maryland requires that all municipalities exercising zoning authority develop a municipal growth element. The purpose of this element is to attempt to quantify the potential impact of growth that may occur as a result of potential annexations beyond the existing municipal boundaries. The Town of St. Michaels currently receives sewer services from Talbot County and Growth Tiers are mapped consistent with [Talbot County Comprehensive](#)



[Water and Sewer Plan](#) and comply with the [State of Maryland's SB236 - Growth and Agricultural Preservation Act](#) as it relates to growth tier mapping.

After October of 2009, an area may not be annexed by the Town of St. Michaels unless the impact of that annexation has been analyzed and made a part of this element as required by the State of Maryland. This analysis was completed and included within this Chapter during the 2008 Plan update and updated herein. The Town recognizes that inclusion of an area in this element is a *prerequisite* for any consideration of annexation in the future or, until this Plan is amended. The Town has no plans to expand the municipal boundaries with the possible exception of the area adjacent to Rolles Range Road as noted below and shown on Map 2-1. The update to this plan will therefore focus on infill, revitalization and redevelopment within the Town's current boundaries rather than extensive expansion of the Town. In making this decision, consideration was given to potential growth on those properties immediately adjacent to the Town and possible impacts associated with development as they relate to this Chapter. The Municipal Growth Element seeks to analyze potential growth in the Town of St. Michaels based on existing and projected land use policies. It will assess how that growth will impact existing and future facilities and services. Instead of using traditional population projections, which can become inaccurate over time due to the change of growth rates, this growth element seeks to understand how full build-out conditions in the Town would affect the Town's services and infrastructure.

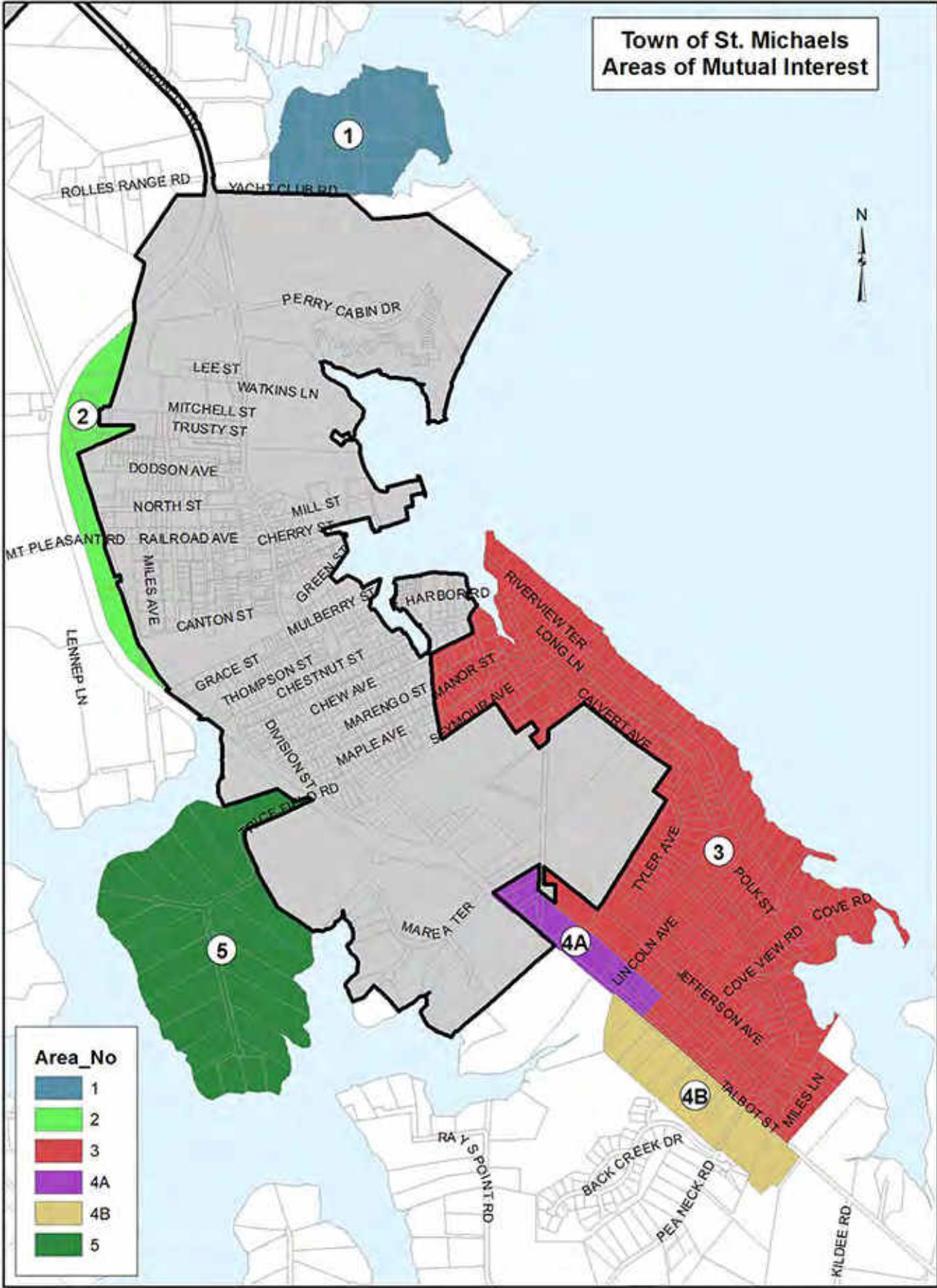
While the Town is not concentrating on large scale expansion, there is one area which lies between Rolles Range Road and the Strausburg Farm area, which is the northwest boundary of the Town, which may be considered for possible annexation. The Town would plan that the Rolles Range Road annexation area be a future land use of residential and should meet the priority funding criteria required in the Sewer Plan for Talbot County for proper sewer

**Town of St. Michaels  
Areas of Potential Annexation**



Map 2 - 1

**Town of St. Michaels  
Areas of Mutual Interest**



Map 2 - 2



allocation. There are several areas in the County which lie either in immediate adjacency or close proximity to the Town of St. Michaels which if new development or redevelopment were to occur, may impact the many public services already granted to Town residents. These areas are noted in the following table and further identified on Map 2-2. These lands are further described in that portion of this Chapter entitled “*Areas of Mutual Interest*”.

It should be noted that the original build-out analysis conducted in 2008 for the purpose of determining the impact of potential development on existing public facilities and services in the Town showed that capacity was available for an additional town build out of 538 dwelling units. These numbers included the development of the Miles Point Property which was slated to include single family dwellings, limited commercial areas and a small hotel. Since that analysis was completed, the Miles Point property has been placed under a perpetual conservation easement eliminating the potential development of these lands and their need for such services. As evidenced in the 2008 Plan adequate capacity was available to serve the proposed annexation areas as well as those “Areas of Mutual Interest”, should redevelopment occur at some future date. It should be noted that several areas which were proposed as future growth areas in the 2008 Plan have also been deleted from this plan update. Many areas noted as “Areas of Mutual Interest” are already developed and are served by Municipal water and County Sewer, so there is a very limited opportunity for future development/redevelopment. As will be noted in the following section, with the deletion of the Miles Point Development and several “Growth Areas” additional capacity for residential build out is available.

The State of Maryland Annotated Code, Land Use Article (Division 1, Title 3, Subtitle 1), which governs the required elements of a Comprehensive Plan, calls for the inclusion of a ‘Development Regulations Article.’ As such, the Town considers are development regulations to be consistent with Smart Growth related policies. St. Michaels continues to look for innovative ways to promote social, economic and environmental development and remains flexible in our plans, mostly in the use of general land uses shown in this Plan and the use of various overlay zones to encourage non-traditional development practices.

## **ANALYSIS OF DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY AND BUILD-OUT CONDITIONS**

The Town has determined that future growth should be limited to within municipal boundaries and those areas noted for future annexation. Calculations for those “*Areas of Mutual Interest*” have also been included and are based on the computations contained in the 2008 Comprehensive Plan. While these areas are not identified as future areas of annexation, they are being identified and included in this Chapter as they are areas around the Town that have a direct impact or receive services from the Town of St. Michaels currently. Should any of these areas request annexation for future servicing purposes, the Town recognizes a Plan update would be required to annex any of the “Areas of Mutual Interest,” but recognizes under this current plan that adequate facilities would be available to annex any of these areas. If the demographics of St. Michaels should significantly change, the population estimates generated may not accurately account for growth. Build-out numbers were generated using the analytical processes within Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and Microsoft Excel to calculate buildable area on existing lots.

To create a baseline for assessing the differences between the existing Town boundary and those “Areas of Mutual Interest” any build-out numbers were generated for the Town of St. Michaels simulating infill and community redevelopment. It was assumed that areas within existing residential zones would experience infill development where possible. After all the data was gathered, as detailed above, the number of existing dwellings was subtracted from the total possible dwellings the parcel could sustain, creating the build-out number for that parcel. For areas already built to its designated density, or previously developed at a higher density, the total buildable area was zero. In comparing the numbers from the 2008 Plan to this Plan update, it should be noted that the Miles Point Property which was to be developed with 278 homes, has been placed under a conservation easement with no development proposed. Therefore, even with the possible annexations, the number of projected dwelling units is considerably less than that set out in the 2008 plan. Based on the 2008 Plan, the projected number of dwelling units would have been 864 dwelling units. The proposed annexation area, which is adjacent to Rolles Range Road, if developed under the Gateway Residential standards of 1 home per 5 acres would result in an additional 17 dwelling units, four of the lots are already improved with dwelling units. The proposed annexation area, which fronts on Brooks Lane, if developed at the Residential 1 standard of 1 home per 7200 s. feet would result in an additional 8 dwelling units. Combining the total dwellings permitted as noted in the 2008 Plan (1143-278 (Miles Point) = 865 + 21 (annexations) results in a potential build out of 886 dwelling units. According to the tax records for the Town of St. Michaels, there are 711 dwelling units in the Town leaving adequate capacity for an additional 260 dwelling units without the need to upgrade the facilities currently available to the residents of the Town.

As noted previously, this process was also utilized in determining the potential build out for each of the “Areas of Mutual Interest” which are identified in this Plan. While these areas are not identified as future areas of annexation, they are being noted and included in this Chapter to demonstrate that should annexation requests be filed with the Town in the future, adequate facilities would be available.

**Table 2-1: Build-out Results for St Michaels and Areas of Mutual Interest**

<i>Reference Name</i>	<i>Proposed Zoning</i>	<i>Use</i>	<i>Density</i>	<i>Total Dwellings (permitted)</i>	<i>Existing Dwellings</i>	<i>Dwelling Balance</i>
<b>In-Town</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	865	711	153
<b>Potential Annexation Area “A”</b>	Residential 1	Low density residential	1 du/7,200 sq. ft.	17	4	13
<b>Potential Annexation Area “B”</b>	Residential 1	Low density residential	1 du/7,200 sq. ft.	8	0	8
<b>Areas of Mutual Interest</b>						

Area 1	Residential Gateway (RG)	Large Lot Residential	1 du./ 5 acres	16	14	2	
Area 2	Agriculture B	Greenway	1 du./ 20 acres	0	0	0	
Area 3	Rio Vista /Bentley Hay	Residential (TR)	Residential	1 du./ 7200 square feet	422	379	43
Area 4A & B	Commercial Gateway	Commercial		0	0	0	
Area 5	Tricefields	Residential Gateway (RG)	Tricefields	Maximum 21 lots	21	20	1
Totals				1349	1128	220	

*Potential Annexation Area (A)*

This area lies to the northwest boundary of the Town and lies between Rolles Range Road and the Strasburg Farm area and is shown on the following map 2-1 (Potential Annexation Area). The area is approximately is approximately 35 acres in site, is improved with several residential dwellings and a Bed and Breakfast facility. The area has been identified as containing soils having limited suitability for an on-site septic system.

*Potential Annexation Area (B)*

The property currently under consideration is split between two jurisdictions, the Town and County. Habitat for Humanity has entered into a contract to purchase this property, but due to the difficulties encountered when trying to develop within two jurisdictions, have approached the Town reference the annexation and development of this property under the Town’s zoning regulations.

*Areas of Mutual Interest to the Town and County*

Each area as designated below corresponds to the following Map 2-2 (Areas of Mutual Interest) and represents those areas within the County and which directly abuts or is in close proximity to the municipal boundaries of the Town. Further development or redevelopment in these areas may have an impact on the Town, and as such the Town has an interest in monitoring such activities. However, should the property owners in these areas, desire annexation, at some future date in time, the Town of St. Michaels would consider such request in that the properties are adjacent to the municipal boundaries and adequate public facilities would be available. However, it should be noted that annexation can only occur by request of the property owners.

### Area 1

Area 1 is located within the planning area around the Town of St. Michaels, just north of Yacht Club Road. This area is located within Talbot County's Countryside Preservation Zone and is currently developed in a large lot estate subdivision. No changes are planned for this area, but homes have individual septic systems to treat wastewater. Consideration should be given to the extension of public wastewater and stormwater facilities to this area to avoid future water quality problems in Long Haul Creek and the Miles River.

### Area 2

Area 2 is adjacent to the Town's western boundary corresponding with the location of a proposed bypass/parkway. With the apparent demise of the bypass, this area has been targeted for the extension of the nature trail. Both Talbot County and the Town support this effort. Development of any other nature would be inconsistent with the parks and recreation element of our plan.

### Area 3 Rio Vista/Bentley Hay

Area 3 comprises the subdivisions of Rio Vista/Bentley Hay and is adjacent to the, south and eastern boundaries of Historic St. Michaels and adjacent to the Miles River. The communities of Rio Vista/Bentley Hay are served by both community sewer and municipal water services. These areas are currently developed with limited opportunities for additional development or redevelopment.

### Area 4

Area 4 includes land on both the east and west sides of Route 33, and are located at the south end of Town, defining the entrance or gateway to the Town. A mix of uses are located in this area, including a strip mall, service station, personal service shops, a restaurant and antique sales among others. Within this area, redevelopment over time should be designed to enhance the character of the Town's Gateway which serves as the front door to St. Michaels. Since these properties currently sustain non-residential development, the build-out analysis was not applied to this property.

### Area 5

Area 5 encompasses the existing community of Tricefields. Residents are dependent on utilization of Boundary Lane, a Town Street, for access to and from their community. Tricefields is already developed in large lot estate form and is adjacent to the Town's Marea subdivision. This area is currently developed with limited development/redevelopment opportunities existing. With the approval of the Marea Subdivision, public sewer was made available to this development.

## **ASSESSMENT OF IMPACTS ON INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES**

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



### Public Schools

St. Michaels' students attend the St. Michaels School Complex, housing an elementary and middle/high school. These schools can account for a State Rated Capacity of 491 and 503 students, respectively. Currently, the cumulative student population is 758, which is well below the above noted capacity figures. Should the annexation and full build out of the above referenced area (A as shown on Map 2-1) occurs, it is anticipated that an additional seven (7) students could be incorporated in the St. Michaels school population. The calculations for public school impacts use a rate of 0.2 elementary school students per dwelling, and a rate of 0.25 middle/high school students per dwelling.

### Libraries

The Talbot County Public Library System operates a branch in the Town of St. Michaels. The facility is 3,000 square feet offering enough square footage for a population of 30,000 people, according to the American Library Association. The library has indicated that future expansion of the facility may be required in the future to accommodate the ever increasing needs of St. Michaels' residents and visitors.

### Public Safety

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

### Water & Sewerage

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

If the Town of St. Michaels were fully built out and the potential annexation area was annexed and fully built out, the total water usage would rise to 365,211 gallons per day, which would still be within the limits of the Water Appropriation and Use Permit.

As the build-out analysis indicates the potential demand for additional development due to annexation would be 13 units. Assuming that each unit would contribute 185 gallons per unit additional flows would be 2,405 gallons per day. Any existing units in the potential annexation areas (Rio Vista is an example) would already have allocated capacity in the system. It is clear that full build-out is not constrained by sewer capacity.

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

#### Recreation

The Town of St. Michaels has 14 Town Park Facilities including a 1.3 mile nature trail which lies adjacent to the Town's western boundary and encompasses 98.45 acres of land. The State suggests a total of 30 acres of parkland per 1,000 people. Based on the projections contained in Table 2-1, there is no need for additional park facilities.

#### Stormwater Management Systems

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

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

#### Financing of Infrastructure Expansions Needed

Current analysis of growth shows that the Town of St. Michaels already has sufficient infrastructure to handle some of the areas of interest that may be considered for annexation. New development will require water and sewer lines and stormwater management. The Town should continue to require developers to incur costs relating to water and sewer lines and stormwater management systems.

State and County financial help should be examined for help updating the existing infrastructure for redevelopment areas. Funding opportunities associated with the Town's Community Legacy programs could be utilized to help maintain streets and create streetscapes. Additionally, Neighborhood Conservation programs will help improve the infrastructure to increase redevelopment potential.

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

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

#### Protection of Sensitive Areas

A substantial percentage of the Town's land area lies within the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area, included in the Critical Area Regulations as set out in the Town Code are protection clauses to ensure that parcels are developed in such a manner as to assure the

protection of the sensitive Chesapeake Bay areas, including the Miles River. National Wetland Inventory and FEMA Floodplain information were used as environmental constraint criteria through the build-out analysis. Wetlands were not counted as developable land and floodplain areas were considered developable given adherence to development regulation.

## **VISION**

The vision of the Town of St. Michaels includes maintaining its historic character, environmental quality and enhanced economic development opportunities. The areas of mutual interest described in this chapter ensure that the gateway into Town will develop into areas that welcome people into the Town. Overall, the areas of mutual interest could serve to create functional transition areas into and out of the Town, and/or provide valuable greenbelt opportunities. St. Michaels recognizes that rapid growth and development would have a detrimental impact on the town's historic character and as such the placement of regulations which control the type and scale of development and/or redevelopment will be pursued.

## **OBJECTIVES AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES**

- 2.1 Ensure future annexations occur within the appropriate zoning classifications as dictated in this element.
  - 2.1.1 Preserve those areas identified for possible greenway and/or park/trail development.
  - 2.1.2 Ensure development is consistent with the Town's Tier Map.
  - 2.1.3 Monitor growth in residential areas.
- 2.2 Coordinate with Talbot County to monitor development on those lands identified as "Areas of Mutual Interest" to assure such development is consistent with the goals of the Town.
- 2.3 Monitor community and public facilities to ensure that upgrades and additions occur when needed.
- 2.4 Ensure sufficient police, medical emergency and fire station staff exists for increased demands of the tourist industry and population.
- 2.5 Work cooperatively with Talbot County to ensure those areas identified as "Areas of Mutual Interest" are developed in a manner consistent with the goals of the Town.
- 2.6 The Planning Commission shall serve as a recommending body that provides flexible land development regulations and reviews developments to consistency with the Comprehensive Plan.

2.7 The development regulations element shall encourage:

- The use of flexible development regulations to promote innovative and cost saving site design and protect the environment; and
- Within the areas designated for growth in the plan; and
- Economic development through the use of innovative techniques; and
- Streamlined review of applications for development, including permit review and subdivision plat review.

## **POLICIES**

The Town maintains a policy that developers shall bear the costs associated with installation and maintenance of water, sewer, sidewalk, stormwater and other infrastructure related systems caused by new development to reduce the financial burden of the Town and neighboring properties.

It is the policy of the Town that the Planning Commission shall have the powers necessary to enable it to fulfill its functions, promote planning, and execute the purposes of the Code of the Town of St. Michaels.

## Chapter 3: Environmental Resources and Sensitive Areas Protection

### INTRODUCTION

The Town of St. Michaels cherishes its environmental setting. Key components of that environmental setting include a natural harbor opening onto the Miles River and access to the Choptank River via San Domingo Creek on the southwest side of Town. This unique interface “where land and water intertwine” has made St. Michaels a settlement location since the seventeenth century. The Town’s waterfront orientation has served as the basis of an ever-changing economy that reflects St.



Michaels’ connection to these waterfront resources, from an historic economy rooted in boatbuilding, seafood and agriculture, to our economy today which is largely driven by recreational boating and tourism.

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

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

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

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

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

#### Topography, Drainage and Steep Slopes

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



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

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



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

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

#### Soil Characteristics

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

#### Ground Water

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

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

#### Vegetation

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

#### Other Features

The Town recognizes that other environmental features should be considered for protection, including but not limited to: threatened and endangered wildlife habitats, protected agricultural lands, open space and highly erodible, permeable and shoreline type soils. The Town also recognizes that our waterways are vital to our Town, both environmentally and economically, and will make any effort possible to preserve our working waterways.



### Wildlife and Habitat

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

Vegetation, whether cultivated crops, pasture, or the natural vegetation of forests, swamps, and marshes, determines what kinds of wildlife live in a specific area. Cultivated legumes and grasses valuable for wildlife habitat, food, and cover include lespedeza, alfalfa, clover, tall fescue, brome grass and bluegrass. Valuable native plants include switch grass and other prairie grasses, partridgepeas, desmodium, and various native lespedezas. Trees and shrubs include sumac, dogwoods, persimmon, pines, sassafras, hazelnut, shrub lespedezas, multiflora rose, autumn olive, oaks, hickory, blackhaw, sweetgum, holly, Norway spruce, and various fruit trees. Wetland plants are particularly valuable for food and cover to waterfowl and fur-bearing animals. These include smartweed, wild rice, barnyard grass, three-square, bulrush, spikerush, widgeongrass, rice cutgrass, pondweed, duckweed, sedge, cordgrass, cattail, arrow arum, pickerelweed, buttonbush, waterwillow, and spatterdock.



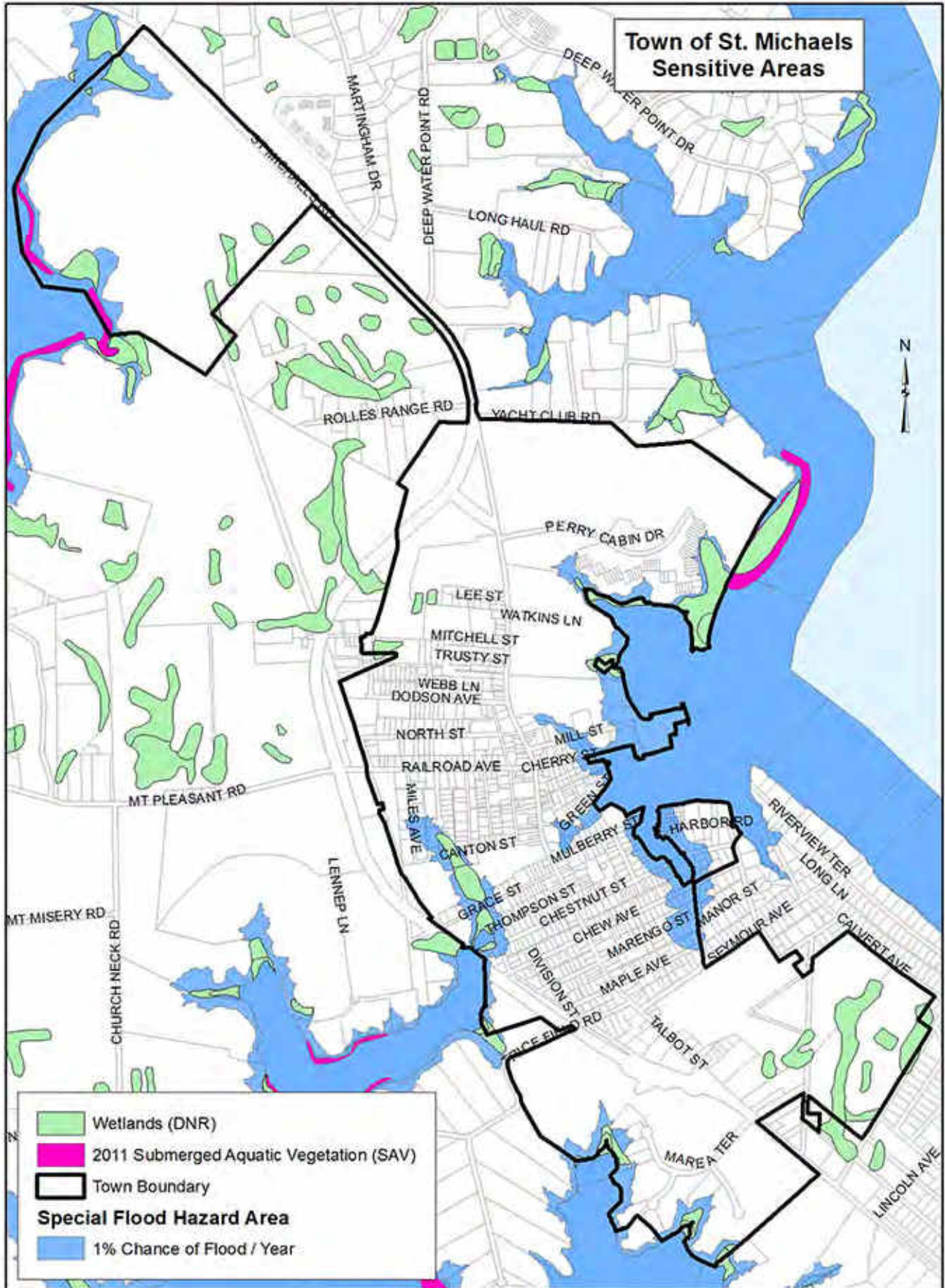
The extensive field-woodland edges north and south of Town provide a home for many species, especially birds. The edge is a critical place for nesting, breeding, hiding, and feeding. Where wildlife corridors are not isolated islands but are linked into continuous bands, woodlands support more species,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

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

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

### 100-year Floodplains

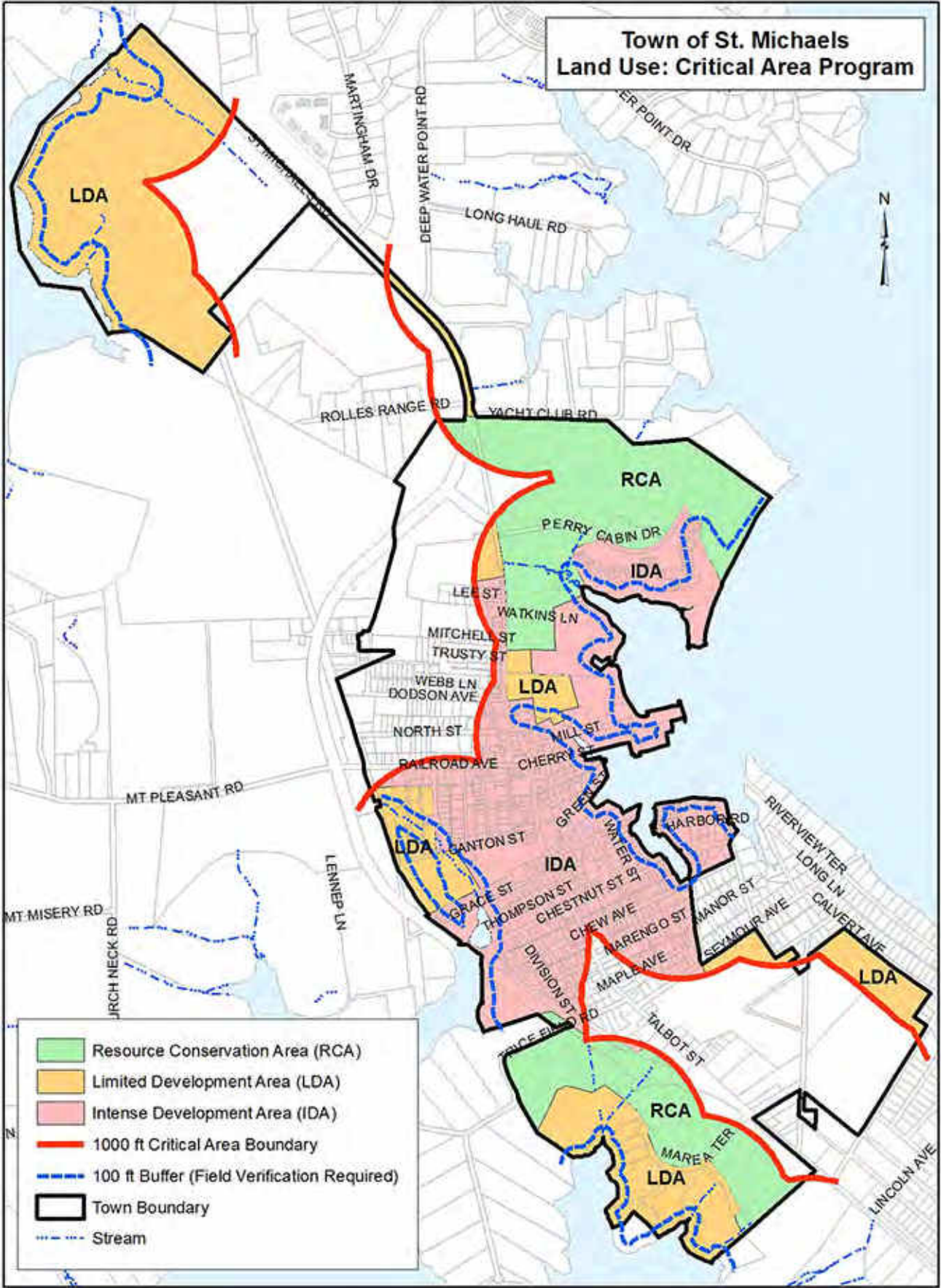
The 100-year floodplain is based on the [Flood Insurance Rate Map \(FIRM\)](#) prepared by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Many sections of Town are located within the 100 and 500-year tidal floodplains, as delineated by FEMA. Lands within the 100-year floodplain are



Map 3 - 1



**Town of St. Michaels  
Land Use: Critical Area Program**



- Resource Conservation Area (RCA)
- Limited Development Area (LDA)
- Intense Development Area (IDA)
- 1000 ft Critical Area Boundary
- 100 ft Buffer (Field Verification Required)
- Town Boundary
- Stream

defined as "special flood hazard areas inundated by types of 100 year shallow flooding where depths are between one and three feet." The 100-year flood is a flood condition that has a 1% chance of occurring in any given year and would be caused by exceptionally high tide/storm surges. All of the 100 year floodplain areas in the Planning Area are designated as Zone A." This zone is described in more detail on the FIRM maps for the St. Michaels area.

The Town should continue to monitor the potential impacts associated with global warming, the rise of tidal water levels and the severity of storms. The purpose of such monitoring is to assure that changes to the Town Code can be made as necessary to protect the residents and their properties.

#### Non-tidal Wetlands

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

#### Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Program

In accordance with the Critical Area Act, all affected jurisdictions were required to develop and implement a Critical Area Protection Program to control the use and development within their territorial limits. The 1,000-foot Critical Area boundary is defined as any land 1,000 feet from the mean high tide or landward edge of tidal marsh. The Town of St. Michaels adopted a Critical Area Program along with a series of implementing provisions contained in the Town's Zoning, Subdivision and Site Plan Review Regulations. The Town of St. Michaels has areas of our developed core, predominately lands adjacent to the harbor and San Domingo Creek that are in a Buffer Management Area. The policies and goals included in the Critical Area Program were developed to accommodate future growth of the Town while addressing the associated environmental impacts. Pursuant to 2008 Maryland Laws 119, effective July 1, 2008, the Maryland General Assembly authorized the Critical Area Commission to promulgate certain regulations for the administration and enforcement of state and local critical area programs. These revised regulations promulgated by the Critical Area Commission, as set forth in Title 27 of the Code of Maryland Regulations, were incorporated into Chapter 340 (Zoning) of the Town Code.

The Chesapeake Bay Critical Area includes all the land 1000 feet landward of mean high tide. The three principal land classifications are shown on the following map 3-2 (Town of St. Michaels Land Use: Critical Area Program) and identified as:

1. Resource Conservation Areas (RCA) in 20 acre minimum aggregates intended for forestry, farming, and resource conservation;
2. Limited Development Areas (LDA) 'allow housing at a density permitted by the underlying zoning district'; and
3. Intensely Developed Areas (IDA) for high density residential, commercial, and industrial uses served by public water and sewer.

About 62 percent of our critical area lands are classified as IDA. About 30 percent are classified RCA. The remainder is LDA. Conversion of RCA and LDA areas to IDA is the appropriate mechanism for permitting development keeping with the existing character in the Town, while ensuring protection of Critical Area resources.

## **VISION**

St. Michaels is a place where natural resources and sensitive environmental features have been protected and preserved.

## **OBJECTIVES AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES**

- 3.1 Preserve and protect the important natural features of the Town including streams, wooded areas, wildlife habitats, and other sensitive natural areas.
  - 3.1.1 Establish specific policies for reviewing all activities with respect to impact upon and protection of environmental features and sensitive areas and update these policies as needed.
  - 3.1.2 Review and amend if necessary the Town's implementation documents in order to maintain and enhance existing specific protection measures for the following sensitive areas: 1) streams and stream buffers, 2) 100-year floodplain, 3) endangered species habitats, 4) steep slopes, and 5) wetlands.
  - 3.1.3 Implement a Town Forest Conservation Program which establishes requirements for reforestation and afforestation when appropriate for those areas which lie outside the Critical Area boundaries.
  - 3.1.4 Augment street tree plantings as appropriate.
  - 3.1.5 Continue to employ environmental protection measures as developed by the State and set forth in the Town's Critical Area Program.
  - 3.1.6 Evaluate the use of the Town's Critical Area tree mitigation fund to implement the stormwater management practices which should be utilized in the Town.
- 3.2 Protect water quality and minimize siltation in St. Michaels Harbor, San Domingo Creek, Broad Creek and the Miles River.
  - 3.2.1 Continue to require the use of Best Management Practices (BMP's) to reduce nutrient loadings to the Miles River, St. Michaels Harbor and San Domingo Creek.



- 3.2.2 Use low-impact development stormwater management measures in the design of any new development. (Chapter 281 Stormwater Management of the Code of the Town of St Michaels)
- 3.2.3 Review all development adjacent to wetlands to assure compliance with buffer requirements established by federal, state and town environmental regulations. (§340-27 of the Code of the Town of Saint Michaels)
- 3.2.4 Establish specific policies for reviewing all development activities with respect to impact upon and protection of environmental features and sensitive area including natural drainage ways.
- 3.2.5 Require structural and nonstructural stormwater management improvements that benefit multiple properties.
  - Require the platting of easements and procedures which clearly define ownership and maintenance responsibilities of drainage easements and retention facilities.
  - Encourage property owners to adopt Best Management Practices for stormwater runoff and retention for existing homes
- 3.2.6 Evaluate future development proposals in light of the site's physical suitability to accommodate development while protecting natural resources.

### 3.3 Streetscape – Environmental

- 3.3.1 Encourage residents and businesses to plant trees on their properties utilizing native species.
- 3.3.2 Develop and distribute information relative to water quality and the benefits of vegetative plantings.
- 3.3.3 Develop a strategy for monitoring the success or failure of environmental policies as established by the Town.
- 3.3.4 Continue to monitor and encourage the use of environmentally enriching plants and features as scientific advances occur.

### 3.4 Citizen Involvement in Environmental Matters

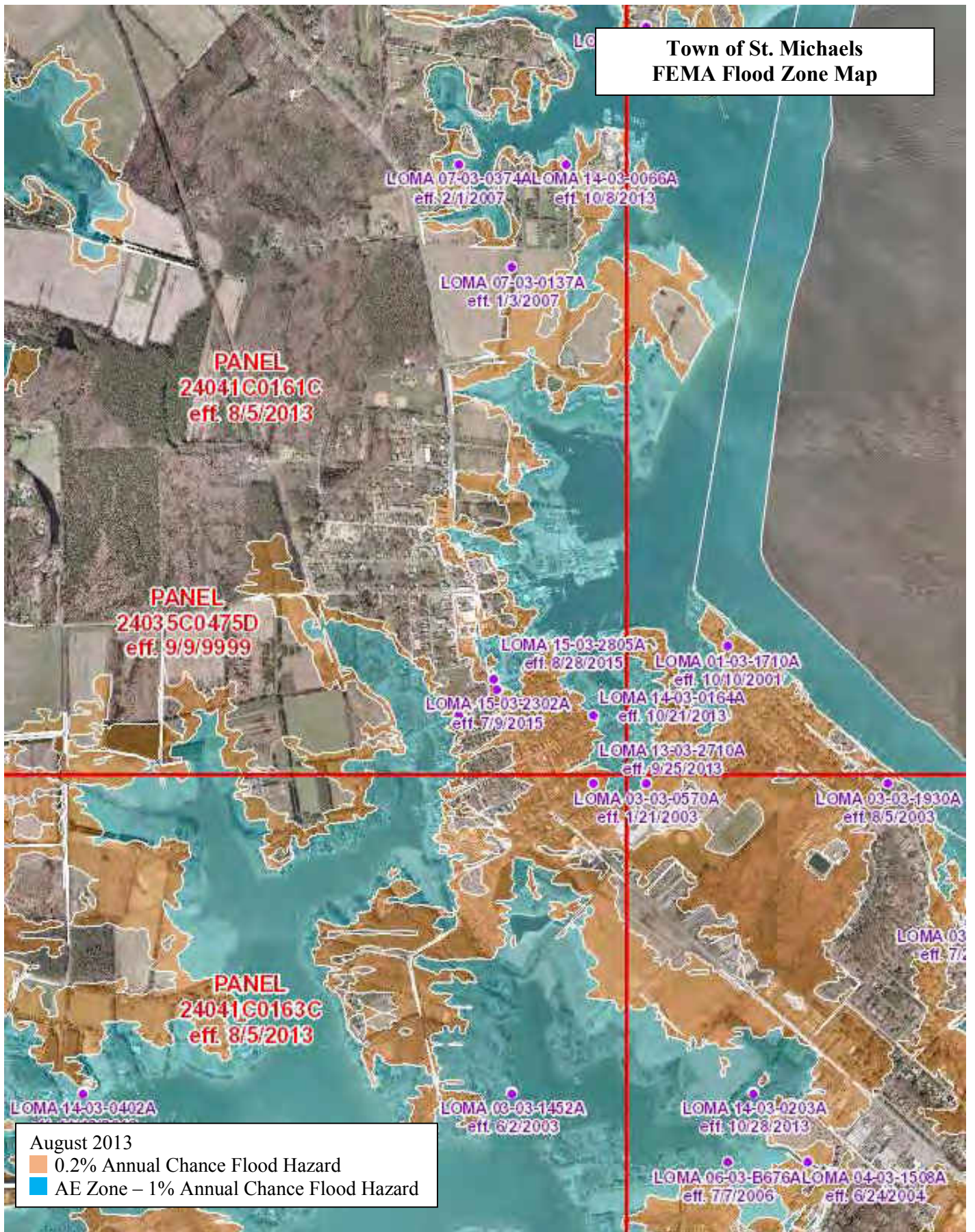
- 3.4.1 Work with the Town's Communications Manager to establish a "Friends of the Environment" site on the Town's website where environmental information e.g. rain gardens, tree and planting guidance, use of appropriate lawn supplements, etc., could be made available to the residents of the Town.

## **POLICIES**

It is the policy of the Town that environmental and natural resources be protected from land disturbances.

It is imperative to maintain policies that ensure the life and health of the Town's water resources.

**Town of St. Michaels  
FEMA Flood Zone Map**



August 2013  
 0.2% Annual Chance Flood Hazard  
 AE Zone – 1% Annual Chance Flood Hazard



# Chapter 4:

## Water Resources Element

### Introduction

This Water Resources Element is required by Section 3-106 of the Annotated Code of Maryland (Land Use) as amended in 2012. It requires all counties and municipalities that have planning and zoning authority to incorporate a Water Resources Element into their Comprehensive Plans as it relates to water supply, wastewater services, water quality and stormwater management.

The Town of St. Michaels recognizes our shared water resources with Talbot County are vital to the overall water quality, especially as it relates to the Talbot County Region II Waste Water Treatment Plant (St. Michaels) and the [Comprehensive Water and Sewer Plan](#). Specific flow data, forecasted nutrient loads, equivalent dwelling units (EDU) allocation amounts and full service information are maintained by Talbot County, but should be evaluated by the Town as it relates to future developments, water resource upgrades and associated impacts in the region. The Town has limited growth planned but shall evaluate growth annually as it relates to the State of Maryland Priority Funding Act and Smart Growth policies for water resources.

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

### Water Resource Element Goals

The goals of the water resource element are to:

- Maintain an adequate water supply for the Town of St. Michaels to serve not only the current water demands but future water needs resulting from population growth and development including both residential and commercial capacity.
- Protect and maintain water quality standards by reducing pollutant loadings, identifying potential pollution sources, and potential impacts of future land development to ensure public health and safety. Strategies to achieve this goal include upgrading all town water distribution lines to PVC pipe; an arsenic removal system on all Town wells to bring the arsenic levels into compliance with Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) standards; and updating the Town water distribution maps to reflect the most current data.
- Monitor nutrient or sediment total maximum daily loads (TMDL) derived from future development, wastewater and stormwater to determine the least impact on receiving waters.

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



- Install stormwater management best management practices (BMPs) to treat water flowing from the older parts of the Town that were built before such practices were required. When doing this work, care should be taken to improve, where possible, stormwater drainage from streets and private lots, but certainly not to make existing drainage problems worse or to create new drainage problems. A policy has been established to incorporate in all government construction activity, where possible, added stormwater BMPs with the capacity to treat untreated water coming from surrounding parts of town. BMPs are being retrofitted into the street renovation project that began in FY 2007 and is scheduled to be completed in 2015. Additional BMPs practices were incorporated into the Nature Trail Project that was completed FY 2008 to treat stormwater flowing from the older parts of town into waters that feed the Bay. Incentives should be developed for owners to install individual lot BMPs, such as roof-top disconnects, rain gardens, and French drains. Town support should be lent to construction of tidal-marshes and other programs designed to remove pollutants that continue to enter nearby rivers and streams.

## Public Utility Services of St. Michaels

### Water Supply System

According to the Talbot County Comprehensive Water and Sewer Plan, the existing water system consists of two deep wells, 500,000 gallons of elevated storage, and about 11 miles of distribution mains. The Town of St. Michaels water system also serves the Rio Vista area south of Town which includes a population of approximately 400 residents. In 2007, a new wastewater treatment facility located on the same site as the existing plant was constructed to treat up to 660,000 gallons per day (MGD) to serve St. Michaels and surrounding areas. Water bills are sent to 366 accounts in this area which include residents of the Bentley Hay area north of Seymour Avenue and east of Meadow Street. Total water usage ranges from about 0.16 million gpd in the winter to 0.32 million gpd in the summer. Maximum demand for one day has been just over .35 million gallons.



Only two of the three wells utilized in the past are currently in operation. Both wells are about 450 feet deep and draw from the Aquia Aquifer. Well No.1 is an eight-inch diameter well drilled in 1928. A new pump was installed in 1986 to increase capacity to 285 gallons per minute. Well No.2 is a ten-inch well drilled in 1965 with a capacity of 480 gallons per minute. Well No.3 is a 12-inch well completed in 1990 with a capacity of 600 gallons per minute. Following construction of well No.3, well No.1 was taken out of service because of age and excessive amounts of sand passing through the screens. This well has been sealed with concrete and the well pump and motor have been removed. Both wells No.2 and No.3 are in good condition. However, in order to provide redundancy in the system in the case of well failure an additional well and water storage tower will be needed.

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

The 500,000 gallons of elevated storage is comprised of one 200,000 gallon tank and one 300,000 gallon tank. The 200,000 gallon tank, constructed in 1981, is in good structural condition, but requires periodic painting. The 300,000 gallon elevated storage tank, referred to as the North Tank, located next to Perry Cabin Park has been in operation since 1999. By locating this tank at the opposite end of the water system from the existing tank, head pressure losses in the distribution lines have been minimized and flow rates improved. The Town has installed a new Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system that controls the on-off operation of the No.2 and No.3 well pumps, as well as monitors the North and South tank levels. This system enables the operations staff to closely monitor the Town's water supply and make necessary adjustments.

The Federal Government passed a law in 2001 requiring public water systems to have an arsenic level of less than 10 parts per billion (ppb), replacing the old standard of 50 ppb. The rule became effective on February 22, 2002. The date by which systems must comply with the new 10 ppb standard was January 23, 2006. The natural arsenic level in the water in St. Michaels is 34 ppb. The town constructed arsenic removal plants at both wells, using an absorption technique with a media that attracts the arsenic to the media particles. This system has been successful for Glory Avenue Well #3, but not at Well #2 on E. Marengo Street. The town is in the process of switching over to a filtration system for arsenic removal at the E. Marengo Street well, the work is scheduled to be complete during 2015.

#### Water Supply Resources

The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) is the agency responsible for authorizing use of all waters of the State. MDE issues the required Water Appropriation and Use Permit. The permit authorizes the Town of St. Michaels a water withdrawal limited to a daily average of 325,000 gallons on a yearly basis and a daily average of 450,000 gallons for the month of maximum use. The water withdrawn is to be used for the community water supply for the Town and is drawn from two wells in the Aquia aquifer. The location of the wells are at the Public Works facility located on Glory Avenue, and on the east side of Marengo Street at New Lane.

Growth Assessment

There are currently 711 residences existing in the Town of St. Michaels. To calculate the daily water usage for the Town, it was estimated that the average household size was 2.02 persons and the average water usage was 100 gallons per person per day. Based on the existing 711 residences, each using an estimated 202 gallons per day, a total of 143,622 gallons of water is being used per day.

Based on the build-out analysis completed in Chapter 2 – Municipal Growth Element, there is land available in the Town of St. Michaels to add an additional 154 residences. Applying the estimated average household size and the average water usage, these possible residences could use an additional 31,108 gallons of water per day.

In addition, there are 2 possible annexation areas which are described further in Chapter 2 – Municipal Growth Element. If these areas were annexed, 4 existing residences and up to 21 new residences could be added to the Town and would use an additional 5050 gallons of water per day. These numbers do not include the Rio Vista area which is already on the Town water system. Table 4.1 shows both the existing Town residences and possible annexation residences. Those lands identified as “Areas of Mutual Interest” and identified in Chapter 2 (Municipal Growth Element” have not been included in computations as they are governed by Talbot County and included in their Comprehensive Plan.

**TABLE 4.1  
EXISTING AND POSSIBLE FUTURE WATER USAGE**

Area	# of Existing Dwellings	# of Build-Out Dwellings	Total # of Possible Dwellings	Total potential water usage
<b>Current</b>				
Residences	711	154	865	174,730
<b>Potential Annexation</b>				
Area A	4	013	17	3434
Area B	0	8	8	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>715</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>890</b>	<b>179,780</b>

Based on the total water usage from existing residences and the residents of Rio Vista (410 du) who are already on the Town of St. Michaels water system, the Town of St. Michaels is within the limits of their Water Appropriation and Use Permit from the Maryland Department of the Environment. Should the additional in-town build out of 175 residences be constructed, the water usage would increase to 179,780 gallons per day which is still within the limits of the Water Appropriation and Use Permit.

If the Town of St. Michaels were fully built out and the possible annexation area was annexed and fully built out, the total water usage would rise to 179,780, which would still be within the limits of the Water Appropriation and Use Permit.

Sewer Service

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

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

St. Michaels – Existing flows:	133,950 GPD
Future Flows:	109,700 GPD
<u>Reserved Capacity for I&amp;I:</u>	<u>151,600 GPD</u>
<b>Total Flows:</b>	<b>395,250 GPD</b>

The Town of St. Michaels has evaluated flow contributions from potential infill and development projects not fully completed as follows utilizing an average of 125 gpd per dwelling unit:

Marea	2,000 GPD	16 dwelling units
Chesapeake Avenues	875 GPD	7 dwelling units
<u>The Point at Perry Cabin</u>	<u>1,750 GPD</u>	<u>14 dwelling units</u>
<b>Total potential flow of</b>	<b>4,625 GPD</b>	

Based on the potential for build-out in accordance with future land use in the Town of St. Michaels and taking into account the existing proposals enumerated above, an additional 154 units could be built in the existing Town limits. Assuming flow contributions of 125 gallons per unit, the Town could contribute an additional total of 19,250 GPD.

Existing Flow	133,950 GPD
Development Projects not completed as of plan preparation	4,625 GPD
<u>New units under build-out</u>	<u>19,250 GPD</u>
<b>Total future flow contributions</b>	<b>157,825 GPD</b>

As the build-out analysis indicates the potential demand for additional development due to annexation would be 21 units. Assuming that each would contribute 125 gallons per unit additional flows would be 2625 gallons per day. It is clear that full build-out is NOT constrained by sewer capacity.

Additional capacity may be gained by addressing infiltration and inflow (I&I). County policy makes it clear that the Town of St. Michaels does not gain 1 gallon of capacity for every gallon of I&I reduced. Nevertheless any reductions achieved should be documented and the capacity gained incorporated into the flow allocation calculations.

### Capacity Management Plan

Current State regulations require that a wastewater capacity management plan be established to manage new hookups when flow in any system reaches 80 percent of capacity. As the Region II Wastewater Treatment System is owned and operated by Talbot County, the preparation of any such capacity management plan would be the responsibility of the Talbot County Department of Public Works. The Town of St. Michaels would assist in any data and participation necessary for any requirement capacity management.

## **Point and Nonpoint Source Stormwater**

According to Chapter 281 of the Code for the Town of St. Michaels (Town Code), the purpose of proper stormwater management is to minimize damage to public and private property, reduce the effects of development on land and on the quality of water in the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries, control stream channel erosion, reduce local flooding, and maintain after development, as nearly as possible, the predevelopment runoff characteristics.

The objectives of stormwater management are to:

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

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

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

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

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

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

There is not yet in place a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) strategy which affects St. Michaels, but we are trying to do our part to reduce pollutant loadings by imposing the 10% pollutant reduction standard on those lands which lie within the mapped Chesapeake Bay Critical Area. It should be noted that approximately 75% of the Town lies within that area. In addition, the Town has adopted a no net loss policy for the removal of trees. Any tree removed must be replaced on an equal basis, utilizing the requirement that the tree be 2” in diameter at breast height and be of a native species.

The Town recognizes the impact of lawn-applied fertilizer on the waters quality of our rivers. The State of Maryland is requiring home improvement and similar stores to begin selling non-phosphorous lawn fertilizer. This will hopefully help to reduce the negative water quality impact associated with lawn fertilization in the future.

## **VISION**

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

## **OBJECTIVES AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES**

- 4.1 Ensure that the Town has an adequate safe and sanitary water supply.
  - 4.1.1 Continue to coordinate water system master planning with the Town’s Comprehensive Plan and Tier Map.
  - 4.1.2 Construct the capital improvements as required to satisfy the Federal Government’s standards for arsenic levels.
- 4.2 Provide adequate wastewater treatment service to the Town.



- 4.2.1 Encourage the County to continue their efforts to reduce infiltration and inflow in the sewer system to create additional capacity.
  - 4.2.2 Continue to coordinate sewer planning with the Town's Comprehensive Plan.
  - 4.2.3 Continue to work with Talbot County to assure that any modifications to sewer allocations will not diminish the Town's ability to grow in accordance with this plan.
- 4.3 Effectively treat stormwater runoff and reduce pollutant loadings entering St. Michaels' waterways.
- 4.3.1 Incorporate the latest guidance and requirements as found in the State Stormwater Design Manual following its approval.
  - 4.3.2 Provide educational opportunities focusing on water quality improvement methods which can be implemented by individual property owners.
  - 4.3.3 Consider incentives which may encourage the residents and or businesses to pursue best on-site management practices.
  - 4.3.4 Review the effectiveness of the existing practice of installing silt fences at construction sites. Adopt policies that establish more effective run-off protection and/or ensure more careful monitoring by responsible inspection agencies.
  - 4.3.5 Continue to work cooperatively with Talbot County to obtain grant funding for projects that address water quality to the Miles River and San Domingo Creek.
  - 4.3.6 Continue to Work with Talbot County and the State of Maryland to develop comprehensive projects and strategies to improve the water quality of stormwater runoff.
  - 4.3.7 Consider converting open ditch systems to bioretention systems in an effort to address water quality associated with stormwater.

## **POLICIES**

The Town maintains a policy to continue joint efforts with Talbot County as it relates to future water resources.

It is the policy of St. Michaels that future development plans are evaluated on wastewater generated, available drinking water and stormwater mitigation to protect water resources and public health while meeting State smart growth laws.

## Chapter 5: Community Facilities and Public Services

### INTRODUCTION

Community Facilities (Map 5-1) and public services contribute to the overall quality of life for the residents and visitors to St. Michaels. The conditions of our streets, the purity of our drinking water, the dependability of our emergency services and police department are important factors for the people who live in our town. The goal of this chapter is to assure that our public facilities, infrastructure and emergency services meet the current and futures needs of the St. Michaels citizen.

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

#### Public Safety

In 2005, the St. Michaels Police Department relocated from Talbot Street to Fremont Street in a newly constructed building which houses the police force and support staff. The police force consists of The Chief of Police, one administrative clerk and seven full time police officers who work on rotating shifts. The police jurisdiction ends at the Town limits. However, backup and special services are provided to the Talbot County Sheriffs Office and the Maryland State Police at their request.



#### Emergency Services

Fire, rescue, ambulance and emergency medical services are provided by the St. Michaels Volunteer Fire Department. These services are funded through multiple sources including State, County, Town, private contributions and fund raising activities. The Fire Department had two full time employees, but the responsibilities of these persons have been assumed by Talbot County. The



membership of the St. Michaels Volunteer Fire Department averages about 80 members with perhaps 20 available for response at a given time. The Fire Department building is located on Route 33 at the southern end of Town three pumper trucks, a ladder truck, a brush unit, a command unit, and a fire and water rescue boat. One of the largest issues facing not only the St. Michaels Fire Department but all Fire Departments in Talbot County is the recruitment and retention of volunteers. A continual impediment in recruiting and retention is the limited availability of work force housing in the Town. This issue will be further discussed in Chapter 10 Housing.

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

### Health Care

Memorial Hospital of Easton has been the primary medical and healthcare provider in Talbot County and the Mid-Shore region for over 100 years. In 2006, Shore Health System merged with the University of Maryland Medical System to enhance clinical programs and facilities and to facilitate physician recruitment. Subsequently Shore Health began to seek a site for a new regional medical facility. While a site was selected within the Town of Easton, and agreements for the construction of the required roads and extension of water and sewer, no construction has begun.

With the recent retirement of the Town's resident physician, medical services are now provided through an existing medical clinic. Their facility, located at the southern end of Town within a professional business complex, provides diagnostic and on site treatment with more intensive medical services directed to the hospital or specialists in their preferred fields. Should expansion of their clinic be considered in the future, available space limitations due to full occupancy of the business complex will become a major factor. The existing clinic provides services not only to the residents of the Town but also serves those communities located in the Bay Hundred area. It is therefore imperative that efforts be made to assure the continuation and expansion of these medical services.

### Hazard Mitigation

Hazard mitigation planning is the foundation for a long-term strategy to reduce disaster losses and break the cycle of disaster damage, reconstruction and repeated damage. As an incentive for State and local governments to develop plans, the Federal government requires mitigation planning as a condition of eligibility for hazard mitigation project funding. The Town of St. Michaels has added a Chapter 14 Hazard Mitigation to this Comprehensive Plan to raise awareness and provide guidance on the Town's coastal environment and flooding susceptibilities.

The Town of St. Michaels in cooperation with Talbot County has adopted a [Hazard Mitigation Plan](#). The purpose of the plan is to review assess and update areas vulnerable to natural hazards and prepare a long-term strategy to address them. The highest mitigation risks identified in the study were from winter storms, mass power outages, flash floods, tropical storms and shore

erosion. The plan details and prioritizes projects that could be undertaken to mitigate for all of the hazards identified.

### Education

Within the incorporated limits of St. Michaels lies the St. Michaels school complex. Talbot County operates three public schools serving St. Michaels and the surrounding residential communities including the Bay Hundred Area. The Tilghman Elementary School provides academic services to those students living in the Bay Hundred Area. The student population ranges from pre-school through and encompassing the 5<sup>th</sup> grade. Those students entering the 6<sup>th</sup> grade are transported to the St. Michaels Middle School and subsequently attend the St Michaels High School

The St. Michaels Elementary, Middle and High School lie on a fifty-five acre parcel of land south of the Central Business District. The Town's schools have the space to accommodate approximately 320 to 350 more students than are currently enrolled. The current capacity at St. Michaels combined middle and high schools are at 61% following major renovations. The school complex includes the Bay Hundred Community Pool which was opened in 2002. In 2014, grant funding from the State Highway Administration was given to the Town which will allow for the installation of a sidewalk on the grounds of the school from Talbot Street to Radcliff Avenue and adjacent to Seymour Avenue. The new sidewalk and associated ADA ramps and crosswalks will provide a safe pedestrian and bicycle route to and from the school complex for our Town residents and their children. The Critchlow Adkins Children Center, which provides pre-school educational opportunities, is located within the St Michaels School Complex. The facility can accommodate 105 youth with a current attendance of 90.

Within the grounds of the St. Michaels School Complex is the anticipated future home of the St. Michaels YMCA. The YMCA currently has a store front presence in the shopping center which lies just beyond the corporate limits of the Town. This facility will provide a joint benefit to the schools as the students will have access to the facility without the need of leaving the school property and the YMCA can utilize many of the school amenities such as their gymnasium and auditorium to augment their programs.

### Library Services

The St. Michaels Public Library is a branch of the Talbot County Library system and is located on Fremont Street offering approximately 10,000 volumes, including resource information, and a meeting room for community meetings and activities. The 3,000 square foot, handicapped-accessible library is open to the public 37 hours per week and has a yearly attendance



of approximately 41,000 visitors. Based on the ever increasing needs of the public, the Library is considering an expansion of their facility to accommodate additional meeting and educational spaces. The branch participates in the County and State inter-library loan program.

Talbot County libraries are funded 75% by Talbot County and 18% by the State of Maryland. Public funds are spent primarily for staff salaries, acquisitions, supplies and routine maintenance.

### Housing

Providing affordable housing opportunities for middle and low-income families is important to the long term economic and social vitality of the Town. The location of such housing, its proximity to jobs, childcare, stores, services and accessibility by car, public transportation or walking, have a significant impact on the cost of living and therefore affordability. This issue is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 10 Housing of this document.



### Public Streetscapes

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

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

## **VISION**

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

## **OBJECTIVES AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES**

5.1 Maintain Town streets and sidewalks as necessary.

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

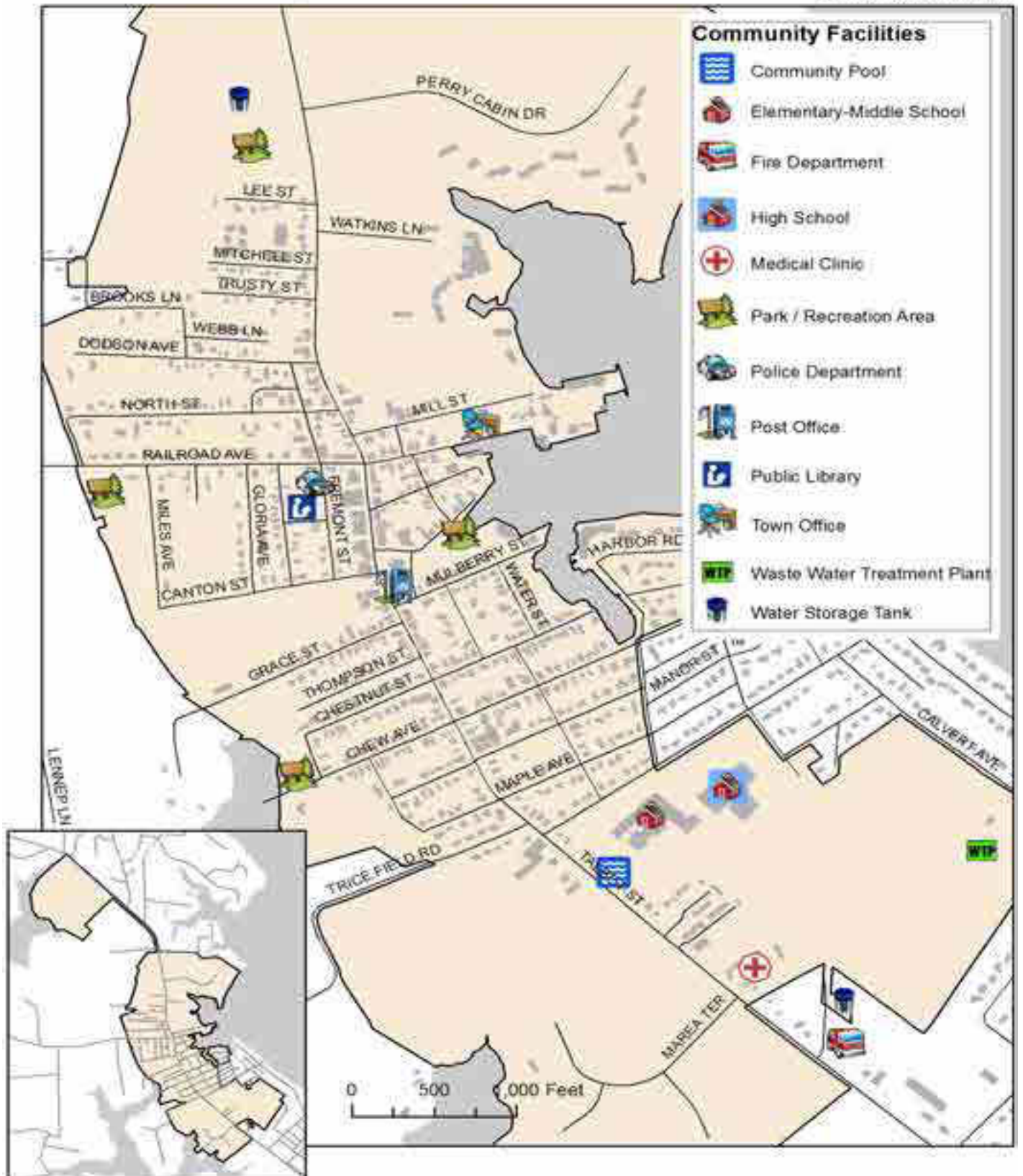


- 5.1.2 Prepare and annually update a Capital Improvement Plan that consists of a rolling five year financial plan and budget to orchestrate and schedule improvements to Town streets, sidewalks, and other Town facilities.
  - Maintain and improve streets as necessary.
  - All sidewalks in the business district should be bricked providing a visual indicator of commercial activity. The bricking of these sidewalks should be considered for inclusion in the Town's Capital Improvement Plan.
- 5.2 Provide street lighting in all appropriate areas within the Town.
  - 5.2.1 Continue to evaluate and upgrade streetlights.
  - 5.2.2 Historic lighting options should be considered, whenever street and utility improvements are proposed.
  - 5.2.3 Identify areas which are not adequately lit and develop a priority list of improvements.
  - 5.2.4 Include top priorities for street lighting in the Capital Improvement Plan.
  - 5.2.5 Coordinate with Choptank Electric Cooperative the installation of additional lighting along MD Rt. 33 to assure that each street intersection is adequately lit.
- 5.3 Establish a Town wireless network system to serve St. Michaels.
  - 5.3.1 In addition to providing service to the Town proper, such service should be provided within the Town's parks and harbor allowing for public internet access to residents and visitors within those areas.
  - 5.3.2 Encourage the St. Michaels Business Association to identify "Hot Spots" within their advertising media for distribution.
  - 5.3.3 Recognize the broadband requirements for medical, legal and other community support services and the need to assure that such capacity is available.
- 5.4 Establish and support community resources which serve the residents of St. Michaels and surrounding communities.
  - 5.4.1 Continue to support the St. Michaels Community Center in their efforts to secure a permanent location
  - 5.4.2 Encourage the utilization of the Housing Authority Administrative Building for community based functions and continuing education opportunities.

- 5.4.3 Continue to support the YMCA in their efforts to establish a permanent facility in the Town limits of St. Michaels.
- 5.4.4 Support the St. Michaels branch of the Talbot County Library in their expansion efforts.
- 5.5 Provide for increased demand for medical services within the Town and surrounding areas.
  - 5.5.1 Evaluate the establishment of zoning use classifications which would permit the establishment of a larger community health facility, either free standing or as part of a professional building.
  - 5.5.2 Support the continuation and expansion of medical facilities and services which will support not only the residents of St. Michaels but those persons living in the Bay Hundred area.
- 5.6 Support the needs of the St. Michaels Police Department.
  - 5.6.1 Recognize the rise in drug and alcohol related crimes and provide the tools necessary to curtail such activities in the Town.
  - 5.6.2 Continue to support the number of officers of the Police Department and recognize that during this planning period, additional personnel both administrative and enforcement may be required to assure the safety of the citizens of the Town and our visitors.
  - 5.6.3 The St. Michaels Police Department should continue to work with the State Police and local police departments including the Talbot County Drug Task Force.
  - 5.6.4 Continue to support applications for grant monies which will provide training or equipment.
  - 5.6.5 Continue to support outreach programs targeted to the youth of the Town, with a focus on community responsibility, drug awareness and personal growth.

# St. Michaels Community Facilities

2015 Comprehensive Plan  
St. Michaels, Maryland



Map 5 -1

# CHAPTER 6: TRANSPORTATION AND UTILITIES

## INTRODUCTION

The efficient and safe movement of people and goods and the provision of essential communications and other utilities are important to the quality of life and economic vitality of St. Michaels. As such the Town recognizes the direct relationship between land use policies and the availability of these services.

The infrastructure policies outlined in this Plan are intended to support local land use plans while ensuring adequate transportation facilities exist to serve the needs of residents, guests, businesses and utility needs. Since our economy is predominately driven by tourism, the Town recognizes that alternative transportation methods beyond individual vehicle are necessary. Additionally, alternative transportation methods will reduce traffic congestion and parking needs in Town.

### Town Streets

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

St. Michaels lies midway on State Route 33, a 23-mile sole artery connecting the towns of Easton and Tilghman Island. The one-mile section that runs through the center of town is named Talbot Street. According to surveys conducted by the Maryland Department of Transportation in 2013, approximately 14,000 vehicles per day enter St. Michaels from the direction of Easton and approximately 10,000 per day enter from the north. These figures represent a one (1) percent decrease below traffic volume counts published by the Department in the same locations in 2003.

Traffic in Town consists primarily of passenger and heavy commercial vehicles, often times, especially during the heart of the Town's tourist season, competing with bicycle and foot traffic. Pedestrian safety is a major concern, and as such, nine designated crossing areas have been established throughout the Town with a posted speed limit of 25 miles per hour. In addition, during school openings, closing and large events, crossing guards are employed.





St. Michaels has in recent years become a favorite destination for bicyclists with many of the hotels and marinas providing rental equipment for their guests. The end result is an increased conflict between vehicular and pedestrian traffic.

In total, there are 20 streets which culminate at MD Rt. 33 with St. Michaels. Five of these streets serve not only Town residents but provide the sole access to Route 33 from outlying developments in Talbot County. Responsibilities for maintenance of the Town streets lies with the Town Department of Public Works staff and State Highway Administration.

Many streets and sidewalks in town have been in need of repair for some time. To address these situations the Town initiated, with a multi-year \$5.5 million bond, a program addressing street and sidewalk maintenance. Road and sidewalk upgrades began in late 2007 with a projected completion date of mid-2015.

Transportation priorities include a strong emphasis on managing existing resources. Talbot County has taken a strong stand on controlling the overdevelopment of the County's Villages and rural areas, which will result in minimal impacts on MD Rt. 33 future flow numbers. By establishment of Town and County growth limitations, priorities toward managing existing resources can be established which will improve safety and traffic operations. An additional benefit will be the enhanced visual character of the Town and their entranceways.

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

St. Michaels continues to pursue park and ride services for the visitors to the Town during the peak tourism period of April thru January. A parking lot has been established at the south entrance into Town and adjacent to the Nature Trail, but to date no mechanism to mass transit from there into the Town itself has come to fruition, but is a walkable distance to the downtown with other parking lots located nearer to the center of Town.

#### State Roadway System

Planning for State roads in St. Michaels is done by the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT), State Highway Administration (SHA) and is detailed in the [Maryland Consolidated Transportation Plan](#) (CTP). The CTP describes ongoing and new capital programs to be implemented over a six-year period. In 2001, SHA worked with a Community Task Force to develop concept plans for comprehensive improvements to MD Rt. 33, including upgrades to storm drains, sidewalks, traffic calming and landscaping. During those discussions, the need to accommodate farm and construction vehicles was noted. Due to funding shortfalls at that time, the project was placed on hold prior to the beginning of final design. In September of 2014, the Town was advised that design funding for a new study had been approved from Pea Neck Road to Yacht Club Road. As of the writing of this plan, funding for construction has yet to be allocated for an overall Rte. 33 reconstruction project. However, some more immediate curb

gutter and sidewalk improvements are funded through the SHA Innovative Contracting Division to upgrade failing infrastructure on Route 33.

### Utilities

Apart from the Town municipal water system (discussed in the Water Resources Chapter), St. Michaels operates no other public utilities. Utility services are evolving from what had been established as long as a century ago. While the town has access to internet service and cellular phone service, there is an increasing awareness of the need to provide broad band services capable of supporting the needs of computer based companies, schools, medical facilities and hospitality based entities.

Nearly all aspects of life in Talbot County and the villages which lie in the Bayhunderd area rely either directly or indirectly on access to the Internet at broadband speeds (currently defined as 25 Megabit per second (Mbps) download and 3 Mbps upload by the U.S. Federal Communications Commission. Our residents connect to the Internet by two ways: first they connect via cable modems in their homes or offices, to hybrid fiber coaxial networks managed by internet service providers, who then connect to a fiber-optic “middle mile” backbone that is interconnected with Tier 1 Internet providers that are not located in close proximity to Talbot County; and second, they use wireless devices (smartphones, etc.) with cellular technology or wireless networks connected to a series of towers in the County and Town. From the towers, traffic routes along fiber-optic pathways out to the Internet. Older technologies, such as Digital Subscriber Line (DSL) service are no longer capable of providing broadband speeds. Over time, the number of interconnected devices, the amount of data each processes, and the speed at which they process that data has increased at exponential rates. Health care, public safety, education, commerce, entertainment and personal communication rely on this fiber-optic infrastructure. Expanding access to broadband internet over fiber-optic cable is a priority for Talbot County when evaluating not just communications projects, but any project that offers the ability to add fiber-optics or conduit for their future installation. Discussions with Talbot County and distributors are currently underway in an effort to finalize costs and feasibility related to fiber connections in Town.



*Photograph to left represents an artist's interpretation of Talbot Street with utility lines removed or relocated.*

A feasibility study has been undertaken to determine the Town's ability to bury and/or relocate the utility lines on Talbot Street. Successful completion of this project would result in less interruption of electrical and telephone service, beautification of Talbot Street which is the heart of the Town's business district and pedestrian safety as the pole removal will allow for a wider pedestrian corridor.

Additionally, Choptank Electric Cooperative, the main electric provider in St. Michaels, recently converted customers to a smart metering system and continually promotes "beat the peak" programs to reduce energy costs.

## **VISION**

St. Michaels will provide safe and efficient provision for transportation and utility services

## **OBJECTIVES AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES**

### Transportation

- 6.1 Explore options to alleviate traffic congestion and facilitate safe pedestrian movement on Talbot Street.
  - 6.1.1 Coordinate planning efforts with SHA in regard to traffic management and safe pedestrian accessibility.
  - 6.1.2 Continue to explore the opportunity for a land-based transportation systems to connect parking locations at the south end of Town to parking facilities at the north end of Town and connecting to commercial and harbor areas. If planned, the Town might:
    - Pursue alternative transportation funding.
    - Apply for local transit services assistance from MTA.
    - Coordinate regional travel with Delmarva Community Transit.
    - Create a Park and Ride areas at the north entrance to the Town.
    - Encourage walkability on Talbot Street.
- 6.2 Establish policies for tour buses.
  - 6.2.1 Identify areas suitable for the parking of tour buses at the edges of town.
  - 6.2.2 Designate areas for short term bus parking to facilitate unloading and loading of passengers in the downtown area.

- 6.2.3 Continue to monitor the transportation routes and parking of buses on Town streets with an eye to limiting such street access and parking in the event hazardous pedestrian and vehicular conditions are identified.
- 6.3 Ensure that vehicle and alternative transportation needs are an integral part of land use planning.
- 6.3.1 Require new development to design and construct streets, sidewalks, pathways and trails which provide opportunities for connectivity to the town for all modes of transportation.
- 6.3.2 Improve circulation by ensuring that new streets, ways, alleys, sidewalks and paths create safe and logical extensions of the existing grid pattern.
- 6.4 Continue to investigate safe and aesthetically pleasing walkways around town, in parks, adjacent to waterfronts and along recreational trails and pathways for public access.
- 6.4.1 Review and evaluate the current Town requirements regarding the cost of new sidewalks. Consider a new ordinance that will require the Town to cover the cost of sidewalks in existing residential areas when the Town mandates that new sidewalks be built.
- 6.4.2 Re-evaluate the feasibility of providing sidewalks on Railroad Avenue and Boundary Lane.
- 6.4.3 Establish pedestrian paths where practical and appropriate as an alternative to creating new sidewalks.
- 6.4.4 Evaluate the location and number of existing crosswalks and develop appropriate signing to help ensure the safety of pedestrians.
- 6.4.5 Increase the policing of pedestrian crosswalks and street intersections during periods of heavy traffic.
- 6.4.6 Create, maintain and enhance pedestrian walkways that provide access to parks and waterfront destinations.
- Extend brick sidewalks throughout the Business District.
  - Establish a pedestrian/bicycle connection between Mill Street and the entrance to the Maritime Museum.
  - Pursue appropriate federal, state and private funding sources for necessary improvements.



- 6.4.7 Coordinate with SHA regarding pedestrian and bicyclist safety on Talbot Street.
  - 6.4.8 Continue to pursue with State Highway Administration the reduction of speed limits and the creation of pedestrian crossings in the area of Perry Cabin Ball Fields on MD 33.
  - 6.4.9 The Town and County should coordinate planning for transportation improvements in or near the Town or within the designated Areas of Mutual Interest.
  - 6.4.10 Coordinate with State Highway Administration and Talbot County to develop an emergency evacuation plan, for use in the event of severe weather or a catastrophic event.
- 6.5 Improve the ease and safety of bicycle travel in, around and through Town.
- 6.5.1 Develop plans for establishing and marking bicycle routes.
    - Approach State Highway Administration, Maryland Department of Transportation or Department of Housing and Community Development for appropriate grant assistance programs.
  - 6.5.2 Consider the mapping and placement of bicycle parking racks in areas which will not conflict with pedestrian traffic patterns.
  - 6.5.3 Coordinate with the County to integrate town bikeways with those of the County.
  - 6.5.4 Provide safe travel and parking accommodations for bicyclists when considering future developments.
- 6.6 Continue to investigate the extension of the Nature Trail from Railroad Avenue to the Perry Cabin Ball Fields.
- 6.7 Assess the current and future vehicular and bicycle parking needs of the Town.
- 6.7.1 Commission a thorough study of the parking accommodations in town through the employment of a qualified professional.
    - Evaluate any acceptable fee the Town should charge for parking.
  - 6.7.2 The study should address both commercial and residential parking requirements.
  - 6.7.3 If more parking spaces are required, incorporate acquisition or development into the capital plan.
  - 6.7.4 Determine how to optimize existing parking spaces and areas.

- 6.7.5 Continue to explore alternative methods of transportation which would provide visitors an alternative transportation source into town, minimizing the need for utilizing their private vehicles.
  - 6.7.6 Consider establishing a parking facility in the Gateway Commercial Zone at the entrance to accommodate alternate transportation.
  - 6.7.7 Continue to explore and update the onsite parking requirements, shared use parking areas and business improvement fund requirements for commercial development.
- 6.8 Recognize the significance of the Town being located along the Chesapeake Country Scenic Byway and Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area.

### Utilities

- 6.9 Continue to pursue discussions with Talbot County and Broadband providers' reference providing adequate band width to support health care, public safety, education, commerce, entertainment and personal communication.
- 6.10 Encourage any project which requires access to a public right-of-way, either above ground or below, to evaluate the opportunity to install fiber-optic cable that is interconnected with existing networks, or at a minimum install conduit sufficient to provide for fiber-optic cable in the future.
- 6.10.1 Encourage multiple parcels to connect to fiber optic and other upgraded utilities to reduce associated infrastructure costs.
- 6.11 Encourage alternative energy where feasible and appropriate, taking into consideration the historic character of St. Michaels.
- 6.12 Continue to evaluate the feasibility of burying and/or relocating utility lines.
- 6.13 Consider the placement of underground conduit whenever new Town streets or major upgrades are proposed.

### **POLICIES**

The Town resolves to make broadband internet service a priority as future developments and utility improvements are considered.

## Chapter 7: Economic Development

### INTRODUCTION

The twentieth century brought many changes to St. Michaels. The harvesting of shellfish and canning and food processing businesses that once were the economic backbone of the area, have given way to pleasure boats, tourists, boutiques and real estate offices.



The Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum, together with the quaint, historic nature of our town and businesses, attracts tens of thousands of visitors on an annual basis and has made St. Michaels a unique tourist destination.

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

on prospective income derived from business operations.

Talbot Street is the historic business core of our community. Its buildings embody the community's past and its visual identity; offering a unique shopping experience to the residents and visitors.

The commercial district offers convenience as it is within walking distance of residential areas and provides easy access to the community reducing the reliance on automobiles. Rehabilitation of buildings along Talbot Street and the construction of a business/office park at the southern entrance to the town has provided a controlled environment for new businesses while providing site amenities which contribute to the beautification of the Town. Although there are many attractive stores on Talbot Street many of the Town's full-time residents feel their personal shopping needs can not be fulfilled within St. Michaels.



There has long been interest expressed in pursuing revitalization efforts in the Fremont Street area. The location of the public library and police station on Fremont Street has acted as a catalyst for such revitalization. The Town is currently working with the Eastern Shore Land

Conservancy's Town Revitalization Program to develop a plan for Fremont Street which will encompass environmental, aesthetic and infrastructure upgrades which in part will provide a visual buffer to that area behind the Acme Market. It is the Town's belief that by making these improvements, businesses will be incentivized to move to this area. While Talbot Street will in all likelihood remain the primary retail shopping area, Fremont Street is well suited for neighborhood based shopping opportunities and office space.



The Mill Complex which houses the Historic Mill, Sewing Factory, adjacent properties and buildings have in recent years seen a resurgence of development with many small start-up businesses making this area their home. The Mill Complex located between Marengo and East Chew Avenue is the home to a brewery, distillery, winery and various craft and retail outlets.

Directly across Marengo Street will be the home of the new "Classic Car Museum" which will offer residents and visitors an opportunity to observe vintage vehicles and the history associated with these vehicles, including the relocation and restoration of the Pinkett House. With the completion of the Museum and the continued occupancy of the Mill Complex a solid commercial presence will be established within the Town.

While we recognize that tourism will in all probability remain the economic driver for the Town, we are pursuing additional economic resources, such as small computer based businesses, enhanced medical facilities and home based industries. As the national economy increasingly relies on information based services, a robust data infrastructure has become critical to local success in business, education and workforce solicitation and retention. This issue is further detailed in Chapter 6 Transportation and Utilities.

In 1988, the [Maryland Scenic Highway Program](#) was established as part of Highway Administration America's Byways. The Town of St. Michaels is included as part of the program to promote tourism in and around St. Michaels, to enhance the quality of life for residents, promote the area to visitors and encourage responsible management and preservation of our



historic roads and surrounding resources. Maryland Rt. 33, which runs through the heart of St. Michaels, has been designated as part of the [Chesapeake Country Scenic Byway](#) program, as part of the Michener's Chesapeake area. Because of national, state and local byway marketing and product development initiatives, destinations along these byways receive more exposure from heritage tourists who value the travel experience as much as visitor attractions.



While retail and hospitality based businesses continue to be the prime economic engine for the Town, we have identified an increased interest in heritage and nature-based tourism (eco-tourism) opportunities. The rich history of the Town, its waterfront setting, the Michener's Chesapeake Country Byway designation and the close proximity to an abundance of varied wildlife and other natural features makes St. Michaels a target area for this type of business. The Commissioners recognizing the need to foster the continued interest in the Town has hired a Communication Manager who is charged with promoting tourism and stimulating economic growth in the town, while balancing the needs of residents and businesses.

## **VISION**

St. Michaels attracts and retains businesses that support the Town, its residents and visitors while protecting its historic and environmental assets.

## **OBJECTIVES AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES**

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

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

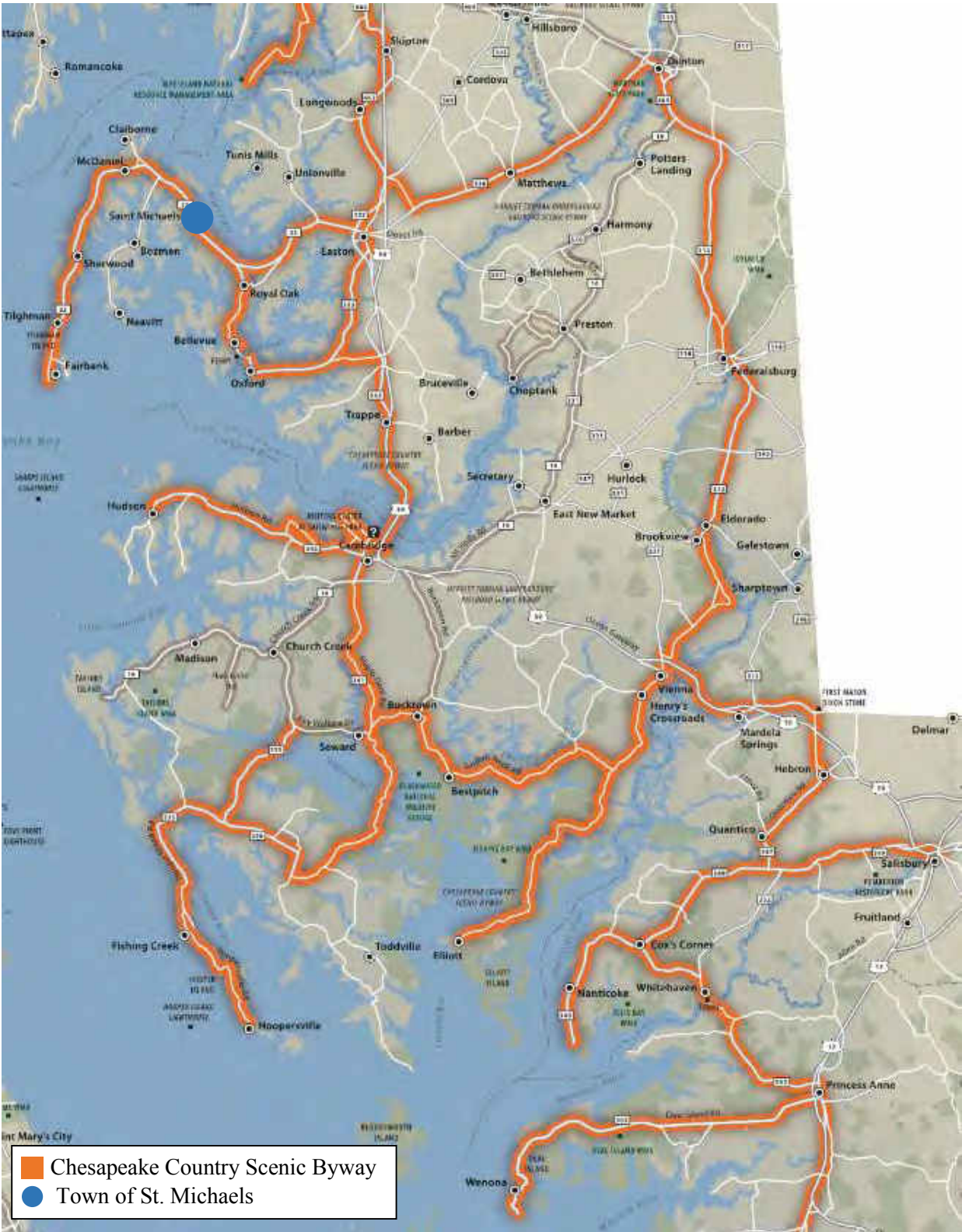
- Create a Master Improvement Plan with particular focus on redevelopment of the Fremont Street area and ways to stimulate small town commercial revitalization.
- Create an improvement priority list for better lighting, benches, brick sidewalks and landscaping in the commercial areas.
- Integrate the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

7.1.2 Develop with the involvement of the private sector a plan for the re-development of Fremont Street, The goal of this plan will be a better mix of civic, residential, commercial and business uses to enhance the downtown's role as an activity center while protecting the quaintness of the Town.

- Research federal and state grants that may be applicable
- Create a revitalization zone and study other possible revitalization measures that can be taken.

- Research the advantages and disadvantages of having a business in Town versus surrounding areas and formulate ways to encourage the retention and establishment of businesses in Town.
  - Provide data on statistics of visitors per season and income generated via different sources, such as sales tax or room tax generated.
- 7.1.3 Coordinate economic development goals and activities with those undertaken by Talbot County and Maryland State government.
- 7.1.4 Identify the most appropriate locations for development of additional public restroom facilities and construct and maintain such facilities.
- 7.1.5 Evaluate current standards and requirements for permanent signs and consider broadening the range and type of signs that can be utilized by businesses to identify their location. Signs should provide direction and contribute to the image and identify of the downtown.
- 7.2 Identify and utilize incentives to encourage investment and development in the commercial zones.
- 7.3 Evaluate the potential for subdivision and development of those properties which extend from Talbot Street to Fremont Street recognizing that access and parking issues would need to be concurrently considered.
- 7.4 Support and accommodate the development and expansion of tourism-related businesses, including historic and natural sites, water access, museums, outdoor recreation, hospitality, cultural/ arts facilities and performing arts ventures
- 7.5 The Town will encourage cooperation among public and private organizations that publicize and promote tourism.
- 7.6 Recognize the value of being situated along the Michener's Chesapeake Country byway and encourage sensitivity in decision making concerning the visual quality surrounding this important resource.
- 7.7 The Town recognizes the positive economic impact an active harbor has on the economic success of St. Michaels and shall encourage continued uses associated with an active harbor.

**Town of St. Michaels  
Chesapeake Country  
Scenic Byway**



Map 7 -1

## Chapter 8: Historic and Cultural Resource Protection

### INTRODUCTION

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

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

With its roots as a planned town of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, with lots arranged around a central public square, St. Michaels exhibits the scale of a small tidewater town nestled against and dependent upon its waterfront. While a handful of structures in town date from the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century, much of the built environment reflects the building boom of the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when St. Michaels prospered on the abundant oyster harvests. Of the



several tidewater Chesapeake Bay towns that grew in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, St. Michaels particularly stands out as a well-preserved and intact example.

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

The Town of St. Michaels recognizes the importance of its historic resources and encourages preservation and rehabilitation efforts by private owners and local



government. Private houses and public buildings are often carefully restored. New uses are found for historic buildings which no longer serve their original functions.

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

- Promotion of a strong sense of community identity, pride and tradition.
- Managing change over time to promote quality of life in the community by ensuring neighborhood stability and a sustained cultural heritage.
- Revitalization through the preservation, restoration and adaptive reuse of structures that contribute to the historic character of the town.
- Increased property values and tax revenues as a result of sensitive rehabilitation and restoration.
- Increased revenues from tourism activities generated by an interest in historic buildings and sites.

The [Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area](#) encompasses heritage sites and places in Talbot and adjacent Counties which were designated a certified heritage area by the Maryland Heritage Area Authority on April 20, 2005. This program recognizes St. Michaels as offering a number of heritage resources of importance to the region. Based on the afore noted, The Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area Management Plan dated April 20, 2005, and as may be amended from time to time in the future, is hereby incorporated, by reference, in the Town of St. Michaels' Comprehensive Plan.<sup>1</sup>

New commercial and residential development and rehabilitation projects have been designed to complement historic buildings, rather than clash with them. The Town, our business community and residents have invested in preservation, restoration and improved access to many



previously endangered or neglected historical buildings and sites. A heritage tourism industry has developed in the region and St. Michaels is a key destination taking full advantage of such opportunities.

According to the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum, *“the Chesapeake Bay’s racing log canoes are descended from workboats used by oyster tongers in the 19th century.*

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<sup>1</sup> Resolution 2011-19 Adopted 12.14.11

*Inevitably, competition among the watermen led to racing and organized races, and larger masts and sails were added in the pursuit of speed. On summer weekends today log canoes continue to compete in races on the nearby Miles River.”* At the time of this Plan, eleven (11) log canoes on the National Register are docked in St. Michaels. Additionally, St. Michaels has long been known as a working waterfront town, including ship building and other activities related to Watermen’s heritage. With the State of Maryland declaring Watermen an endangered culture, the preservation of local Watermen’s culture is important to the Town.

#### National Register Historic District

The National Register of Historic Places, an inventory of historic resources, is maintained by the National Park Service. Listing in the National Register provides recognition to sites, buildings, structures, objects, and districts that are significant to American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, or culture. The St. Michaels National Register Historic District was surveyed, nominated, and approved in 1986. In addition to providing recognition of significance, listing in the National Register mandates consideration in the planning of any federal or federally-assisted project and provides eligibility for federal and state tax credits for historic preservation projects.



#### St. Michaels Historic District

The Town has a Historic District Commission and two museums, the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum and the St. Michaels Museum at Saint Mary’s Square. The St. Michaels Historic District (formerly named the St. Michaels Historic Area) was created in 1972 and has been expanded and modified several times since. The five-member Historic District Commission is composed of volunteer citizens with interest or specific expertise in historic preservation and appointed to three-year terms by the Town Commissioners. The Commission reviews proposed exterior changes to any structure or appurtenance in the defined district, based on an approved and published set of guidelines. The guidelines that provide standards for this design review were modified and readopted in 2014. This review process provides the best tool for protecting and enhancing the historic character of St. Michaels. In addition to the review of proposed projects, inclusion in the Historic District also provides eligibility for a state historic preservation tax credit to home property owners who undertake historic preservation projects, whether or not the property produces income.

Currently, the St. Michaels National Register Historic District includes several neighborhoods in the town that are not included in the locally-zoned St. Michaels Historic District. Historic resources located outside of the locally-zoned Historic District may be threatened by demolition or character changing alterations or additions.

Measures to consider expanding the Town Historic District boundaries to coincide with the National Register Historic District and educating residents about the value of these properties to neighborhood character could help address these threats. Another threat to historic properties is demolition by neglect, which has been addressed by expanding the “demolition by neglect” provision in the zoning code from addressing only income-producing properties to cover all properties except owner-occupied residences. Another measure that could help to address this problem is a property maintenance code.

## **VISION**

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

## **GOALS AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES**

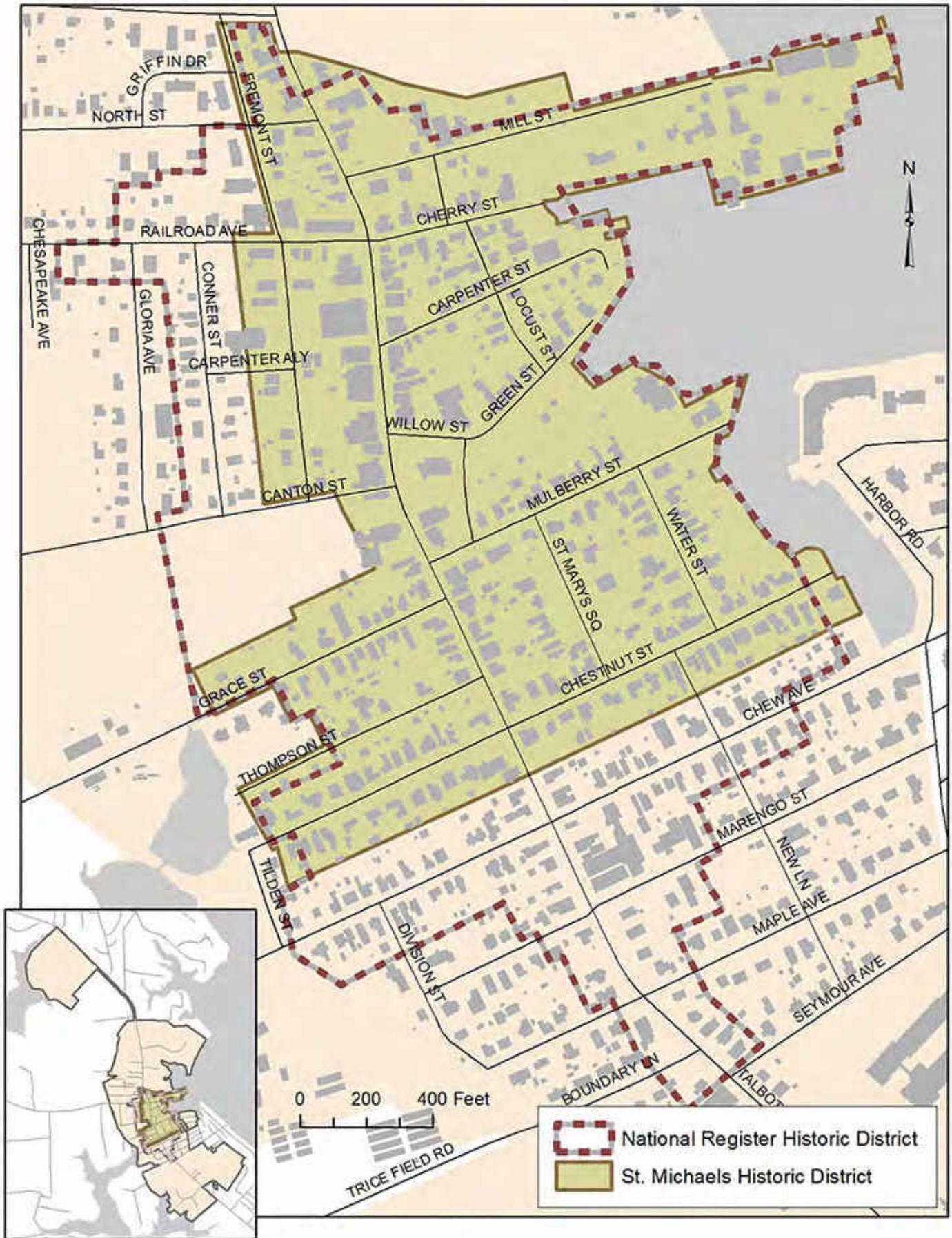
- 8.1 Further the goal of restoration, adaptive rehabilitation and preservation of historic structures, sites, streetscapes, and settings.
  - 8.1.1 Consider expansion of the St. Michaels Historic District to include areas of the National Register Historic District and other neighborhoods that may be determined to be historically significant should such requests be made by the affected property owners..
  - 8.1.2 Periodically revise the St. Michaels Historic Area Guidelines to address more specific materials, techniques, and other aspects of historic structure rehabilitation while conforming to the Secretary of the Interior’s Guidelines for Rehabilitation of Historic Structures.
  - 8.1.3 Continue to evaluate the feasibility of burying or relocating utility lines.
  - 8.1.4 Continue a program of planting and replacing street trees to improve streetscapes throughout the Historic District.
  - 8.1.5 Consider updates to guides and assessments of the Historic District as it relates to evaluation of contributing structures.
- 8.2 Support the St. Michaels Historic District Commission and zoning regulations applicable to the Historic District.
  - 8.2.1 Pursue Certified Local Government status with the Maryland Historical Trust to provide eligibility for continuing education grants for staff and members of the Historic District Commission.
  - 8.2.2 Evaluate the zoning ordinance to allow consideration for historic character in reviewing variances for front lot line setbacks and to allow consideration for historic character in side and rear lot line setbacks for accessory structures.

- 8.3 Educate residents, realtors and property owners about the benefits, boundaries and requirements of the Historic District review process and design standards and about the availability of state and federal tax credits for historic preservation projects.
  - 8.3.1 Encourage distribution of a brochure to area realtors to be given to potential buyers setting forth the Town's Historic District Boundary and the benefits and responsibilities of being in such a district.
  - 8.3.2 Encourage property owners to seek the expertise of the Historic District Commission when considering improvements to their property through informal discussions with the Commission.
  - 8.3.3 Post signs to mark the boundaries of the historic district and encourage the marking of individual historic structures with date plaques.
  - 8.3.4 Facilitate workshops to educate local property owners on financial incentives for preservation and rehabilitation.
  - 8.3.5 Generate and distribute a list of alternative materials accepted and conditions under which they are accepted in either rehabilitation projects or additions and new construction. Generate and distribute a list of supplies of approved alternative materials.
- 8.4 Encourage sponsorship of Town events that celebrate the historic and cultural resources in St. Michaels.
- 8.5 Recognize the heritage associated with log canoes and other historic boats on National Register that are docked in our waterways.
- 8.6 Continue to explore opportunities to preserve the working Watermen's heritage associated with St. Michaels.
- 8.7 Protect historic and culture sites from climate and weather related events.



St. Michaels Historic Area  
and National Register District

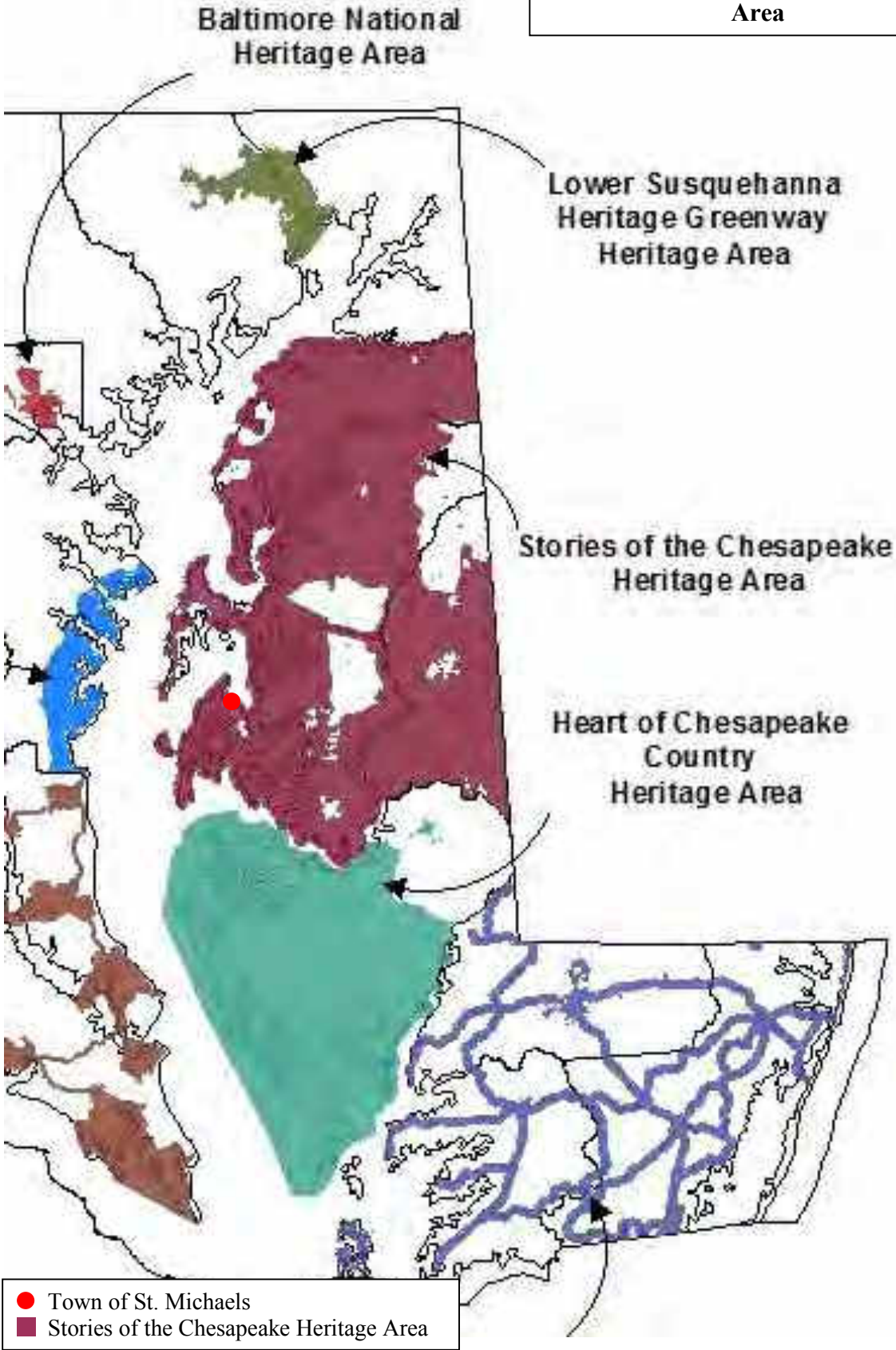
2015 Comprehensive Plan  
St. Michaels, Maryland



Map 8-1



**Town of St. Michaels  
Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage  
Area**



Map 8 -2

## Chapter 9: Parks, Recreation and Open Space

### INTRODUCTION

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

The Town has in recent years been focusing on the acquisition and improvement of smaller parks to serve the needs of residents. This element proposes that parks and recreation offerings be viewed in a broader context in the future as a tool to accomplish a number of other related community development objectives, such as:

- Achieve environmental resource protection or management objectives.
- Provide a diverse range of recreational opportunities to provide creative play for children, and active and passive recreation of all segments of the population.
- Educational and provide opportunities to observe natural landscapes and wildlife.
- Integrate arts, culture, and community events within traditional park areas.
- Appreciate the historic contribution of Talbot County watermen to the character and Development of the Town of St. Michaels and their continued efforts to preserve a life style indigenous to the Chesapeake Bay.

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



There is currently a 1.3 mile walking trail constituting Phase I of the St. Michaels Nature Trail, which extends from Bradley Park off Railroad Avenue to the southern edge of town across from the Fire Department. The residents and visitors to the Town have expressed overwhelming support for the extension of the nature trail



from Bradley Park to the Perry Cabin Ball Field (Talbot County Recreation Area). This extension would allow for a continuous route from the southern boundary of the Town to its' northern boundary providing an alternative to pedestrians and bicyclists traveling on MD Rt. 33. There is also consideration being given to the creation of a spur from the nature trail across the Marea Subdivision property, at the south end of Town, to an area overlooking San Domingo Creek.

In the transportation element of this plan, reference is made to the establishment of a pedestrian walkway from Yacht Club Road to the entrance of the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum. Should this goal be achieved, an additional passive recreational opportunity will be established for both the residents and visitors of St. Michaels.

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

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



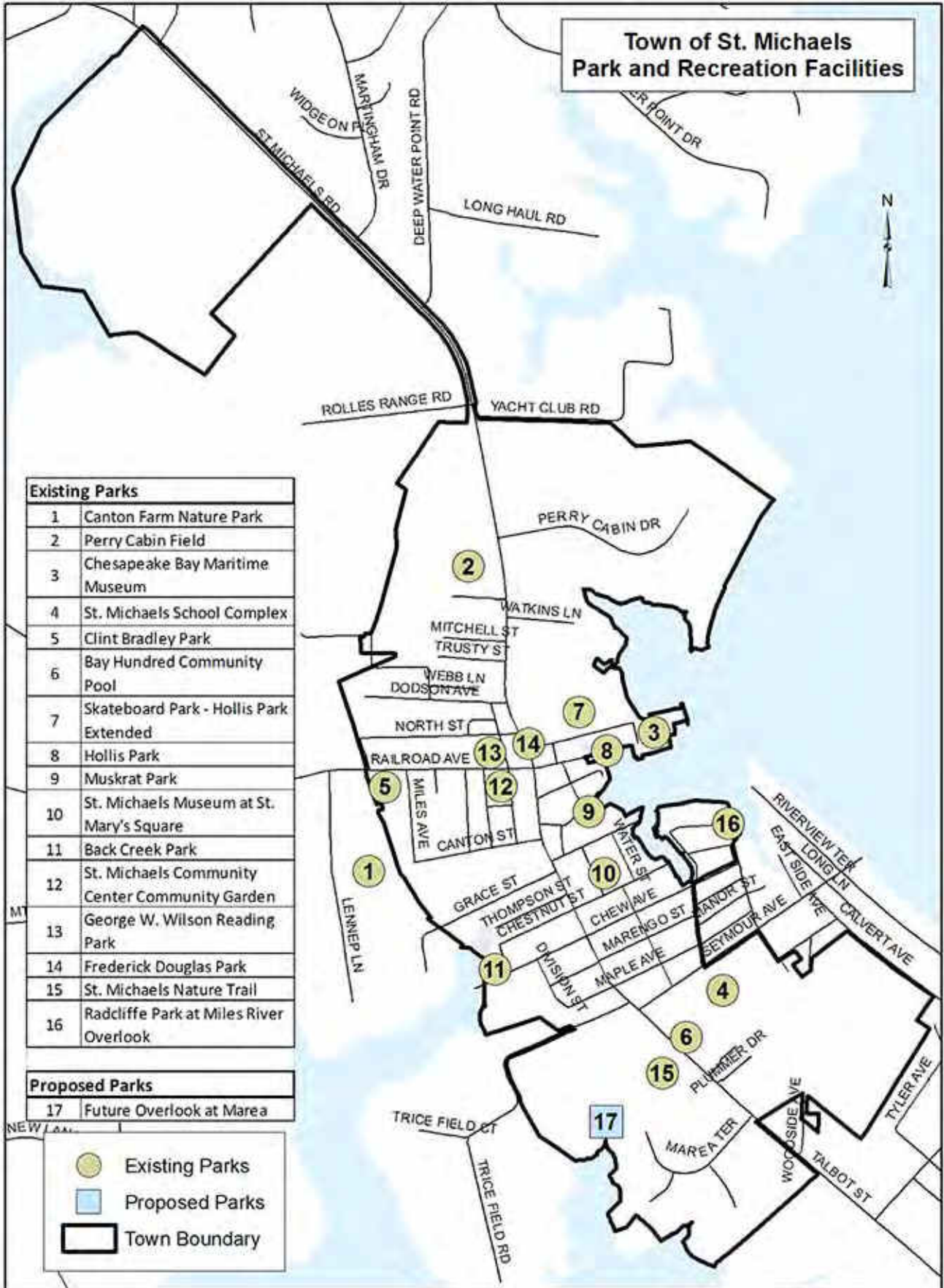
*Table 9-1 provides an inventory and overview of the size and characteristics of the Park and recreation and/or museum facilities located in and adjacent to the Town.*



<b>Table 9-1 Approximate Size and Characteristics of Town Park Facilities (public and private)</b>		
<b>Site</b>	<b>Size</b>	<b>Park Features</b>
1. Canton Farm Nature Area	40 acres	Nature Preserve and Wildlife Observation area located in the County adjacent to Town, but owned by the Town and partially under conservation easement.
2. Perry Cabin Field	20 acres	General recreation facility with approximately 20 acres developed to include; baseball/softball fields (lighted), basketball court, playground areas, picnic shelter, picnic areas, walking trail, soccer fields, public restrooms, and open space.
3. Chesapeake Bay Maritime* Museum	18 acres	Exhibit buildings, lighthouse, children’s outdoor exhibits and play areas, boardwalk, piers, picnic tables, bench seating, and views of the Miles River and Foggs Cove.
4. St. Michaels School Complex	15 acres	Running track, tennis courts, basketball courts and playgrounds.
5. Clint S. Bradley Park	2 acres	Park facility to anchor one end of the St. Michaels Nature Trail. Includes play equipment, gazebo, picnic tables, and restroom.
6. Bay Hundred Community Pool*	1 acre	Outdoor pool facilities, showers, lockers and pool building.
7. Skate Board Park – Hollis Park Extended	.5 acres	Provides skating area and parking on Mill Street.
8. Hollis Park	1.9 acres	Park facility providing playground, picnic tables, bench seating and views of St. Michaels Harbor.
9. Muskrat Park	.5 acres	Features gazebo, picnic tables, bench seating, parking area and views of St. Michaels Harbor and the Miles River. Also features historic replica cannon.
10. St. Michaels Museum at St. Mary’s Square*	.3 acres	Park-like setting featuring three circa 1860 buildings with artifacts significant to history and culture of the area.
11. Back Creek Park **	.3 acres	Recreation area with pier, kayak launch ramps and storage racks**, picnic tables, bench seating, play equipment and views of San Domingo Creek.
12. George W. Wilson Reading Garden	.25 acres	Reading garden located adjacent to the Library includes bench seating, patio area and rain garden.
13. St. Michaels Community Center Community Garden *	.50 acres	40 beds for vegetables, herbs and flowers, with benches, mulch and compost area.
14. Frederick Douglas Park	.1 acre	Downtown seating area and information kiosk. Restrooms located in adjoining parking area.
15. St. Michaels Nature Trail	1.3 miles	Eight foot wide walking and biking trail – handicap accessible, with benches, doggie bag stations.
16. Park at Radcliffe Avenue	.05 acre	Small historic park with great water views located in the adjoining community of Bentley Hay
* Denotes a fee required for admittance or use ** Denotes a fee required for storage		

There are two public boat ramps on North Harbor Drive and public landings in other parts of Town. The Town owns 53 boat slips that are rented to those persons whose boats are registered in the State of Maryland. Two of these slips are made available to the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. One additional slip is used by St. Michaels Fire and Rescue Services.

# Town of St. Michaels Park and Recreation Facilities



### Existing Parks

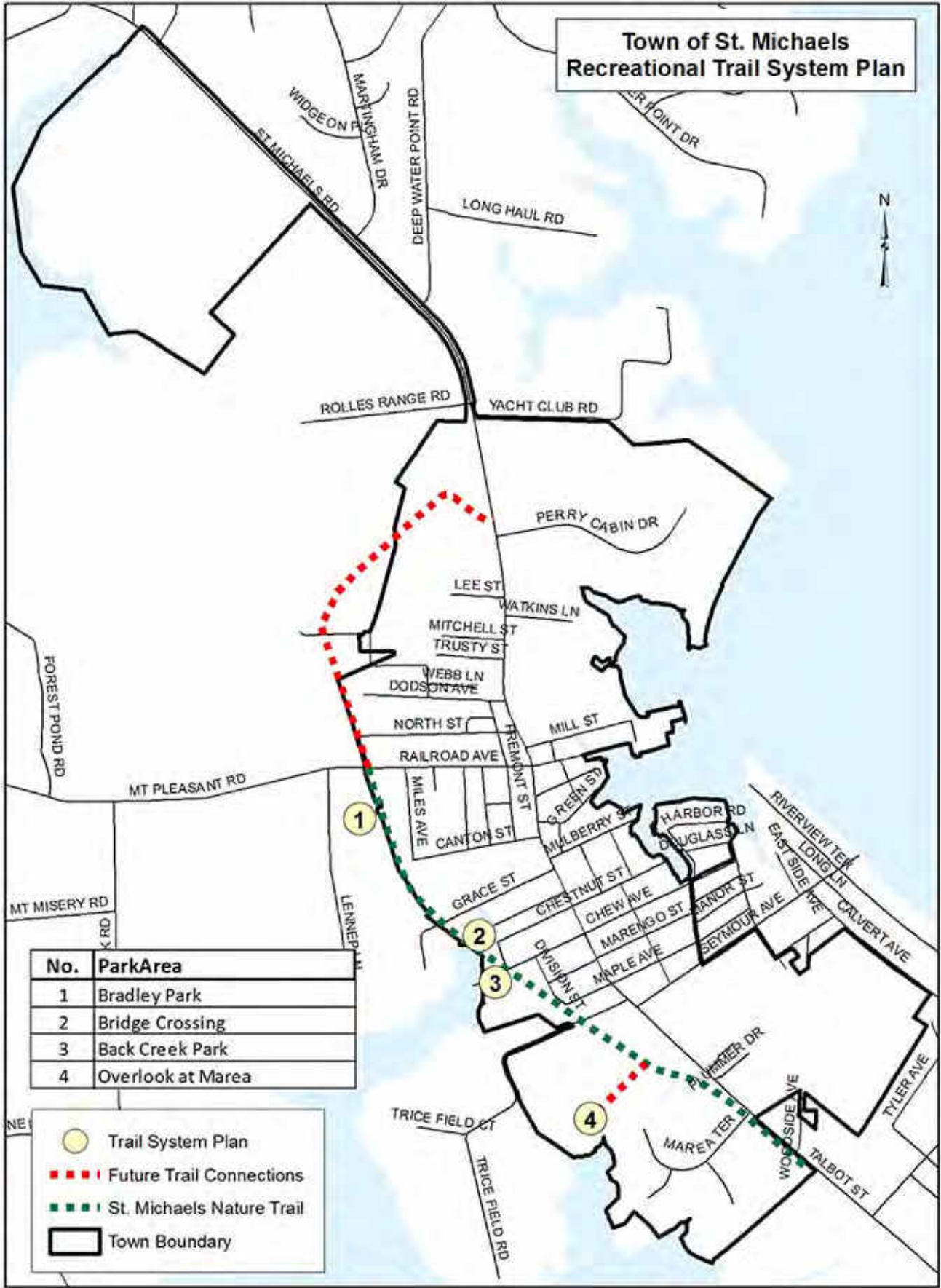
1	Canton Farm Nature Park
2	Perry Cabin Field
3	Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum
4	St. Michaels School Complex
5	Clint Bradley Park
6	Bay Hundred Community Pool
7	Skateboard Park - Hollis Park Extended
8	Hollis Park
9	Muskrat Park
10	St. Michaels Museum at St. Mary's Square
11	Back Creek Park
12	St. Michaels Community Center Community Garden
13	George W. Wilson Reading Park
14	Frederick Douglas Park
15	St. Michaels Nature Trail
16	Radcliffe Park at Miles River Overlook

### Proposed Parks





17	Future Overlook at Marea
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- Existing Parks
- Proposed Parks
- Town Boundary

# Town of St. Michaels Recreational Trail System Plan



No.	Park Area
1	Bradley Park
2	Bridge Crossing
3	Back Creek Park
4	Overlook at Marea

-  Trail System Plan
-  Future Trail Connections
-  St. Michaels Nature Trail
-  Town Boundary



See Table 9.2 for list of Public Boat Ramps and Landings in St. Michaels.

<b>Table 9-2 Public Boat Ramps, Landings and Temporary Docking Facilities in St. Michaels</b>	
<b>Site</b>	<b>Dock Features</b>
1. Back Creek Park	Town-owned pier with docking privileges for watermen and residents, kayak launch ramp, and kayak racks for registered users only, landing
2. Honeymoon Bridge at Hollis Park	Town-owned boat slips and temporary docking
3. North Harbor Drive	55 town-owned boat slips, two boat ramps and limited temporary parking for trailers
4. Carpenter Street	Small bulkhead area for temporary docking
5. Mulberry Street	Small bulkhead area for temporary docking

There is public waterfront access from several of the parks. The Town should continue to pursue opportunities to secure property for parks and recreation facilities, grant funding, private donations, easements, availability of public lands for parks use, and dedication of private land as part of the development review process.

In 2014, the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development approved the Town’s request to be designated as a Sustainable Community. To qualify for such a designation, the Town had to evaluate its strengths and weakness in areas, including housing, transportation, utilities and recreation. The Town recognized the intrinsic value of our parks to both the residents and visitors and supported the continued efforts necessary to maintain the conditions of these facilities while expanding the recreational, cultural and artistic opportunities offered.



The State Highway Administration continues to offer their support in the expansion of the Nature Trail, recognizing the health and safety benefits to all persons utilizing the trail.

In 2011, The Commissioners of St. Michaels, by adoption of Resolution 2011-13 approved the inclusion of the Town as part of the Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area. This program focuses attention on the preservation and enhancement of historic, cultural, natural, scenic and recreational resources. Recognition and participation in these programs, allows access to potential funding for improvements to our parks and open spaces. It should be further noted that



the State Highway Administration has several programs which may be considered in funding transportation alternatives, such as the expansion of the Nature Trail.

## **VISION**

St. Michaels is a town with a diverse park system that serves multiple uses, preserves open space, provides access to waterfront and maintains the historic character for residents and visitors.

## **OBJECTIVES AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES**

- 9.1 Recognize that the primary function of the town parks is to provide a serene setting where residents and visitors can enjoy passive recreational endeavors.
- 9.2 Provide opportunities to meet recreational needs and offer environmental observation and enjoyment.
  - 9.2.1 Continue to maintain an accurate inventory of Town recreational facilities and improvements.
  - 9.2.2 Maintain adequate public waterfront access points.
  - 9.2.3 Enhance and retain the natural qualities of all parks in St. Michaels, in addition to expanding the trail and interpretation elements.
  - 9.2.4 Enhance existing Town park facilities through the use of amenities such as restrooms, drinking fountains, benches, picnic tables and bike racks.
  - 9.2.5 Ensure public safety of public recreational facilities through the use of adequate lighting, policing and maintenance.
  - 9.2.6 Encourage volunteerism in the acquisition, construction, operation, and maintenance of parks, trails and recreation facilities.
  - 9.2.7 Include the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum as a key partner in the Recreation Plan objectives.
  - 9.2.8 Promote opportunities for public participation in planning parks, trails, and recreational facilities.
  - 9.2.9 Task the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board to maintain the implementation strategies of these objectives.
- 9.3 Develop and extend the Town's trail system for shared use by pedestrians and bicyclists.

- 9.3.1 Work with Talbot County Parks and Recreation Department to provide a pedestrian and bicycle trail system from Easton to the County ball field at the north end of St. Michaels. With Phase 1 of such expansion being from Railroad Avenue to the ball field.
- 9.3.2 Coordinate safe biking trails within the Town's bicycle route system with other existing and planned bicycle facilities.
- 9.3.3 Sidewalk connecting Perry Cabin to Town. Work with the owners of the Inn at Perry Cabin and the St. Michaels Maritime Museum to construct an ADA compliant sidewalk tying into the existing Town sidewalk system.
- 9.4 Develop a comprehensive bicycle and pedestrian plan that includes existing and proposed bicycle and pedestrian facilities to better understand how and where new linkages would be built.
- 9.5 Parks and Recreation Advisory Board.
  - 9.4.1 Recommend and support amendments to Chapter 98: Boards and Commissions, Committees and Panels.
  - 9.4.2 Continue open dialogue and budgeting with Commissioners pertaining to park improvements.
  - 9.4.3 Improve and maintain landscaping in parks.
  - 9.4.4 Assign a level of maintenance to parks and recreation facilities appropriate to sustain them as attractive and useful facilities. Before acquisition or construction, a funding plan for long-term operation and maintenance shall be established.
  - 9.4.5 Provide park facilities for all age groups and, where feasible, conform its park facilities to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements.
- 9.5 Use recreation facilities to promote environmental and historic awareness.
  - 9.5.1 Implement historic markers.
  - 9.5.2 Provide better signage for parks. Signage may include interpretive and historical information.
  - 9.5.3 Identification and celebration of historic activities that have occurred in St. Michaels.
  - 9.5.4 Support historical, environmental and cultural education through the preservation of historical sites and the support of festivals and events reflecting the heritage of the Town.

9.5.5 Continue to evaluate the feasibility of burying or relocating utility lines.

9.5.6 Continue to evaluate and enforce the rules and guidelines for public parks in the Town.

## **POLICIES**

The Town maintains a policy to pursue opportunities to acquire properties and/or easements for parks and recreation based on the availability of public lands and/or dedication of private land as part of the development review process.

# Chapter 10: Housing

## INTRODUCTION

Housing in the town of St. Michaels consists primarily of single family residences, typically on lots of 7,200 square feet or less, and for the most part contained in three areas zoned for residential use. According to the Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation There are 621 single family homes in St. Michaels. Of these homes 53% are full time residents with the remainder being second homes. This is a slight increase in full time residency since the last Comprehensive Plan update. The Housing Authority for Talbot County has noted that there are 101 income restricted units which are housed in multi-family units. The high percentage of second-home ownership adversely impacts the number of persons available for civic activities, such as voting, volunteer work and participation in the many aspects of town government, as well as everyday support of the business community. Historically these second-home owners will eventually become full time residents with an active interest in in our community.

The housing issues in St. Michaels can be generally categorized as one of three problems: housing cost, housing quality, and housing availability. To some extent these problems are inter-related.

According to a report prepared by USA City Facts only 5.4% of the housing stock in St. Michaels is available for sale. Based on the limited housing availability and considering the median income of residents of \$51,053.00 home ownership is often not an achievable goal.



In an effort to address the home purchase needs of our residents, a 13 unit income restricted multi-family two story structure is in the process of being rehabilitated with the purpose of providing first time home buyers an opportunity to purchase a townhome with a price range which may encourage young families to stay in St. Michaels.

The residential rental market in the Town of St. Michaels is also very limited, with only 2.8% of the total housing stock being available for such rentals. The bulk of rentals are contained within, condominiums and apartments above commercial establishments. The median rent in St. Michaels is \$823.00 per month.

The Town is also experiencing the deterioration of a small portion of our housing stock, through home abandonment or neglect. While the Town has adopted the International Building Code as general livability standards, citations related to blight have proven cumbersome and limited



success in resolving the renovations necessary to bring these dwellings back into code compliance.

A few small cottages, formerly watermen's homes, have been restored and placed on the market as vacation rentals. These historic cottages, interspersed throughout residential areas, had fallen into disrepair and were permitted to be restored and used for short term rental, thereby saving them from blight and demolition.

As noted above, the rental market in St. Michaels is very restrictive. While zoning changes have been enacted to allow apartments above commercial establishments fire and safety issues often make this conversion not financially feasible. The Town continues to support mixed use structures in the business area as they provide greater security during off hours and broaden the range of housing options in proximity to shops and services. Market conditions and high commercial rental rates make doing business in St. Michaels difficult; therefore the addition of residential rental income should be an attraction for business investment.

Since the last Plan update, real estate assessments have taken a downward turn state wide. However, as a result of successful historic preservation efforts and our unique geographic location, home prices are still generally higher than comparable houses in many other Eastern Shore towns.

According to the 2010 census, 50.2% of the Town's population is 50+ in age. It is a well-documented fact that as people age, they prefer to remain in their homes. However, living independently is not always possible and there is often a need for assistance in everyday living. This need has been met in other jurisdictions, where space permits, by conversion of part of the residence to live-in accommodations. Alternately, where space is available in homes occupied by pre-retirement persons, older relatives can be accommodated in attached suites or within accessory structures converted to accommodate such a use. However, such accommodations should not affect the historic architectural appearance of the Town's homes. Guidelines should be considered to assure that such modifications do not impact the historic character of the Town.



Opportunities for revitalization exist in several areas of the Town including commercial and residential properties. Many of these areas as noted in the Town's adopted [Sustainable Community Plan](#) (See Map 10-1) and [Community Legacy Plan](#) (adopted in December 2008). Such revitalization efforts should be concentrated on improvements which do not change the character of a neighborhood, but offer opportunities for home and business structural improvements, landscaping, street and sidewalk improvements and a potential for new rental or

home ownership opportunities. Additionally, attention needs to be directed toward ensuring that infill and restorative projects do not create architectural anomalies in their respective neighborhoods.

## **VISION**

The Town of St. Michaels will retain its historic, small town character, while providing for the preservation of the Town's historic structures. The Town will enact rules and regulations necessary to address the housing needs of residents regardless of income and age.

## **OBJECTIVES AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES**

- 10.1 Maintain and restore the integrity and appearance of residential neighborhoods and commercial properties.
  - 10.1.1 Maintain a single residence appearance in the St. Michaels Historic District.
  - 10.1.2 Enforce Chapter 96, Blight, which is intended to prevent and prohibit blighted structures within the Town of St. Michaels.
  - 10.1.3 Closely monitor the construction and development of any new project for compliance with applicable zoning and site plan requirements.
  - 10.1.4 Consider the drafting of an Ordinance that addresses the requirement that new structures and renovations be in-keeping with the general appearance of the neighborhood in which they are located.
  - 10.1.5 Explore with Talbot County the possibility of tax relief for families who are active members of the St. Michaels Volunteer Fire Department.
- 10.2 Create a Revitalization Overlay Zone which would allow for a predetermination of areas which revitalization should be encouraged. Care must be taken to assure that the historic characters of such neighborhoods are not negatively impacted by such revitalization efforts.
  - 10.2.1 Seek federal, state and other funds specific to revitalization and rent-to-own opportunities.
  - 10.2.2 Continue to coordinate with the St. Michaels Housing Authority to improve site conditions through structural upgrades, sustainability landscaping and security measures.
- 10.3 Increase alternatives to single residential units within town.
  - 10.3.1 Continue to encourage the mixed-use in commercial buildings to include rental units on upper floors of commercial buildings.

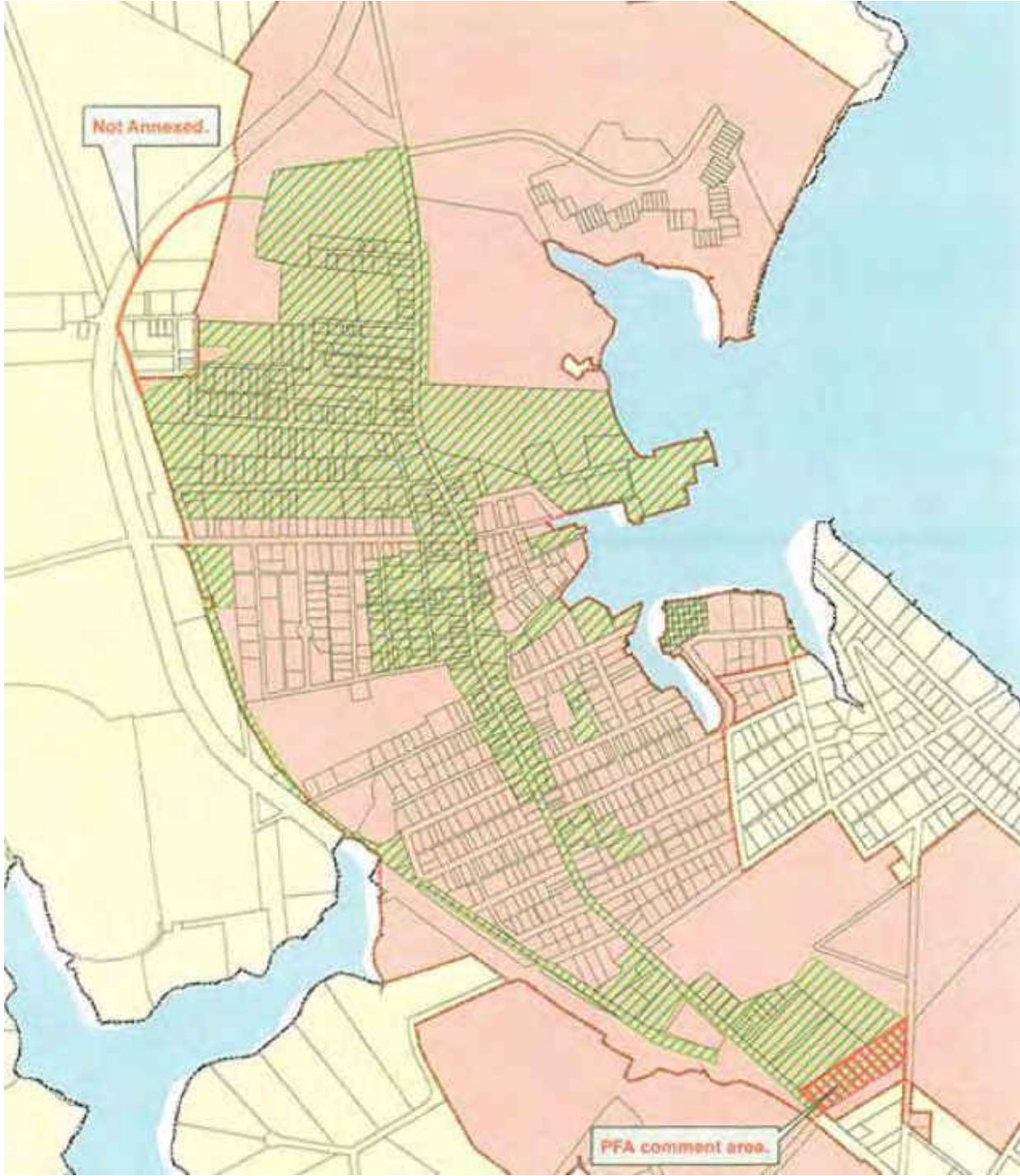
10.3.2 Explore the use of extended family accommodations through in-home modification or accessory dwelling units in appropriate zones.

Establish specific criteria to ensure accessory dwelling units contribute to the neighborhood in which they are located.

- Require that the property owner or a family of the owner reside in the accessory dwelling unit.
- Require a minimum square footage or density ratio as a prerequisite for a house to be considered eligible for conversion.
- Place a limit on the number of people who can occupy the accessory structure or designating the aggregate number of people to occupy an entire parcel.
- Modify Chapter 340 of the Town Code to permit live/work configurations in future redevelopment or infill projects.
- Encourage long term rentals and possible routine inspections to ensure compliance.

10.4 Encourage and support grant requests or tax credits for rehabilitation and/or construction for housing for low to moderate income or elderly residents.

**Town of St. Michaels  
Sustainable Community  
Designation Area**



- Round 7 Sustainable Community
- Municipal Boundaries



## Chapter 11: Community Character, Design and Appearance

St. Michaels is truly a community in every sense of the word. There is a central commercial zone, established residential areas, a well-defined historic district, two protected harbor areas, a library, a police and fire department, community center, museums, and a school complex. In addition, the town residents are quick to volunteer their time to serve on various Boards, Commissions and nonprofit organizations.



The physical details of the Town which include building and landscaping elements, intimate views, walkability and expansive vistas are important to the definition of the town's character. These details influence how residents and visitors feel about the Town and we recognize the need to preserve and protect these physical details.

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

St. Michaels is the only incorporated Town in the larger Bay Hundred Region. Residents and Visitors to the Bay Hundred Region have to pass through St. Michaels on Route 33. The Town serves as the center for commercial services and community facilities for its residents and surrounding communities.

### **VISION**

The Town of St. Michaels has recognized the need to preserve its small town atmosphere and historic character, while acknowledging the commercial and housing needs of the Town's residents.

### **OBJECTIVES AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES**

- 11.1 Encourage design qualities in future redevelopment that reinforce St. Michaels' unique character and identity.
  - 11.1.1 Consider the creation of Design Guidelines for all new development, including residential, commercial and infill/redevelopment, in St. Michaels which will result in re-development that is more sensitive to existing housing and neighborhoods.

- 11.2 Create landscaping and setback standards for new or expanded commercial uses adjacent to residential zones.
- 11.3 With respect to all new construction existing significant trees and natural features, such as drainage corridors must be preserved.
- 11.3.1 Require significant trees to be preserved and integrated into the site or lot layout and replace of trees whose loss is unavoidable.
- Seek guidance from the Department of Natural Resources for appropriate strategies.
  - Include these standards in the Town Zoning Ordinance.
- 11.4 Review and revise the review process for the Planned Redevelopment Overlay Zone.
- 11.4.1 Consider mapping those areas where re-development is considered appropriate.
- 11.4.2 Mapping should be based in part on the sustainable community mapping.
- 11.5 Create a sustainable streetscape program for the streets on which commercial properties abut.
- 11.5.1 Work with the businesses owners, operators and the St. Michaels Business Association to establish an esthetically pleasing district for our residents and visitors.
- 11.6 Evaluate setback requirements and shared parking options in the Central Commercial Zone.

# Chapter 12: Governance and Communications

## INTRODUCTION

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



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

A primary goal in the 2008 Comprehensive Plan was to establish a town website and email distribution list to provide information to the residents, businesses and visitors in St. Michaels. In 2014, the Commissioners employed a Communications Manager who was tasked with creating a new website which was to include a directory of elected officials, members of appointed bodies and town personnel. In addition schedules of meetings, agenda, minutes, legal notices and enforcement documents and applications were to be made available and updated as legislative changes were promulgated. The site also includes links to local and state resources and local clubs and organizations.



## VISION

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



## OBJECTIVES AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

- 12.1 Continue to develop electronic communications between the Town and individual citizens and businesses.
  - 12.1.1 Create an email contact list which encompasses all residents and businesses of the Town.
  - 12.1.2 Develop a comprehensive community calendar with events of the community center, library, churches, art league, etc.
- 12.2 Continue to support the tourism efforts of the Town.
  - 12.2.3 Support tourism efforts by publicizing special events and programs utilizing print and electronic venues.
  - 12.2.4 Support historic and cultural events relating to the history of the Town through print and electronic venues.
- 12.3 Obtain a more accurate “.gov” extension from the Government Services Agency.
  - 12.3.1 Continue to research the advantages of transitioning from our current “.org” and “.com” to a “.gov” domain.
- 12.4 Strengthen communication between the Town Commissioners and the various Town Boards and Commissions.
  - 12.4.1 Consider designating an elected Town Commissioner to be an *ex-officio* member of each Board and Commission.
  - 12.4.2 Continue to draw on the expertise of Town residents to provide support and assistance to Town Government.
- 12.5 Strengthen communication between the Town Commissioners and residents.
  - 12.5.1 Continue the Commissioners efforts to provide transparency in government.
  - 12.5.2 Consider altering the hours of the Commissioner’s public meeting times to afford greater participation by the residents.
  - 12.5.3 Consider ways to allow part-time residents to be more actively involved in governmental decisions.



# Chapter 13: Mineral Resources

## **INTRODUCTION**

Division 1 of the Annotated Code of Maryland (Land Use) Title 3 (Comprehensive Plan) requires a Mineral Resources Element be included in the Town's Comprehensive Plan. This chapter shall incorporate land use policies and recommendations for regulation necessary:

- To balance mineral resource extraction with other land uses.
- To the extent feasible, to prevent the preemption of mineral resources extraction by other uses.

## **VISION**

St. Michaels has no active or potential mineral sites.

# Chapter 14: Climate Resilience

## INTRODUCTION

The Town of St. Michaels recognizes the challenges associated with being a coastal community on the east coast with low sea level, high water tables and hurricane risks. The Town has experienced numerous weather related events that have debilitated the basic functions of the Town including Hurricane Isabelle and Sandy. Namely flooding associated with heavy storm events and high tides in the past, the Town has taken many preventative measures to reduce flooding including duck bills in some storm drains that terminate in areas of high tide. Based on the Maryland Commission on Climate Change, tide records reveal that due to both global sea level rise and land subsidence, sea levels have risen approximately one foot over the last 100 years. Sea levels in Maryland coastal communities are projected to rise an additional foot by 2050, based on the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Climate Program Office. Additionally, many residents have taken measures to raise their homes or install alternative energy to be more climate resilient and sustainable. St. Michaels has also adopted Code requirements in the floodplain for additional freeboard venting. The Town has also partnered with Talbot County to adopt a Hazard Mitigation Plan and evacuation route for the Bay hundred area.



## VISION

St. Michaels shall evaluate vulnerabilities in the Town and look for opportunities to reduce risk associate with climate change, energy consumption and sea level rise.

## OBJECTIVES AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

- 14.1 With climate change and sea level rise continuing to increase, it is crucial that the Town improve its resilience measures. The ability of neighborhoods, buildings and infrastructure to withstand and recover quickly from weather-related events is imperative to the sustainable of St. Michaels.

- 14.2 Look for partnerships in the Town and beyond to build public projects that reduce climate risks.
- 14.3 Continue to update our floodplain mappings and building codes that encourage reducing risk in flood prone areas and climate change.
  - 14.3.1 Encourage residents to retrofit existing properties to reduce flood risk.
  - 14.3.2 Inventory and protect history properties susceptible to climate change.
  - 14.3.3 Adopt flood-resistant construction methods that meet the needs of our Town.
  - 14.3.4 Consider code revisions that encourage alternative energy use.
- 14.4 Continue to update our Hazard Mitigation Plan as Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) requires.
  - 14.4.1 Explore eligibility for FEMA hazard mitigation funding to execute projects that reduce the risk of public facilities and infrastructure.
- 14.5 Evaluate procedures that allow for proactive adaptations rather than reactive changes relating to storm and/or flood occurrences.
- 14.6 Update our Sustainable Communities Plan regularly as it relates to climate resilience.
- 14.7 Apply and maintain an inventory for the National Flood Insurance Program Community Rating System.
- 14.8 Regularly map projected sea level rise projections based on NOAA Climate Program Office data.