

THE TOWN OF WILLARDS

ORDINANCE NO. 2020-2

AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN COUNCIL FOR THE TOWN OF WILLARDS IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE MARYLAND ECONOMIC GROWTH, RESOURCE PROTECTION AND PLANNING ACT OF 1992, AS AMENDED, AND PURSUANT TO THE ANNOTATED CODE OF MARYLAND, LAND USE ARTICLE, TITLE 3, AS AMENDED, ACCEPTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE WILLARDS PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION TO UPDATE THE EXISTING COMPREHENSIVE PLAN KNOWN AS THE 2009 TOWN OF WILLARDS COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, AS ADOPTED IN 2010, AND ADOPTING A NEW 2020 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN WHICH COMPLIES WITH THE MANDATES OF THE MARYLAND ECONOMIC GROWTH, RESOURCE PROTECTION AND PLANNING ACT OF 1992, AS AMENDED, THE ANNOTATED CODE OF MARYLAND, LAND USE ARTICLE, TITLE 3, AS AMENDED, AND STATE LAW.

WHEREAS, pursuant to the Maryland Economic Growth, Resource Protection and Planning Act of 1992, The Willards Planning and Zoning Commission is to prepare and approve an updated Comprehensive Plan which shall be recommended to The Town Council for The Town of Willards for adoption and which shall serve as a guide to public and private actions and decisions to insure the development of public and private property in appropriate relationships and which shall include any areas outside of its boundaries which, in the Commission's judgment, bear relation to the planning responsibilities of the Commission, which said Plan is to be reviewed and updated in ten year intervals; and

WHEREAS, the elements of the Comprehensive Plan may be expressed in words, graphics, or other appropriate form and they shall be interrelated and each element shall describe how it relates to each of the other elements and to the statement of objectives, principals, policies and standards; and

WHEREAS, the Comprehensive Plan shall contain as a minimum the following elements:

(i) A statement of goals and objectives, principles, policies and standards which shall serve as a guide for the development and economic and social well-being of the jurisdiction, as well as the twelve state "visions" as outlined in The Annotated Code of Maryland, Land Use Article, Title 3;

(ii) A land use plan element which shall show proposals for the most appropriate and desirable patterns for the general location, character, extent, and interrelationship of the manner

in which the community should use its public and private land at specified times as far into the future as is reasonable. Such land use may include, without being limited to, public and private, residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural and recreational land uses;

(iii) A transportation plan element which shall show proposals for the most appropriate and desirable patterns for the general location, character, and extent of the channels, routes, and terminals for transportation facilities, and for the circulation of persons and goods at specified times as far into the future as is reasonable. The transportation plan element shall also provide for bicycle and pedestrian access and travelways. An estimate of the probable utilization of any proposed improvement shall be included. Such channels, routes, travelways and terminals may include, without being limited to, all types of highways or streets, bicycle ways, sidewalks, railways, waterways, airways, routings for mass transit, and terminals for people, goods and vehicles related to highways, airways, waterways and railways.

(iv) A community facilities plan element which shall show proposals for the most appropriate and desirable patterns for the general location, character, and extent of public and semipublic buildings, land, and facilities for specified times as far into the future as is reasonable. Such facilities may include, without being limited to, parks and recreation areas, schools and other educational and cultural facilities, libraries, churches, hospitals, social welfare and medical facilities, institutions, fire stations, police stations, jails, or other public office or administrative facilities;

(v) If current geological information is available, a mineral resources plan element that:

(a) Identifies undeveloped land that should be kept in its undeveloped state until the land can be used to provide or assist in providing a continuous supply of minerals, as defined in Section 15-801(i) of the Environmental Article;

(b) Identifies appropriate post-excavation uses for this land that are consistent with the county's land planning process;

(c) Incorporates land use policies and recommendations for regulations to balance mineral resource extraction with other land uses and, to the extent feasible, to prevent the preemption of mineral resources extraction by other uses; and

(d) Has been reviewed by the Department of the Environment to determine whether the proposed plan is consistent with the programs and goals of the Department;

(vi) A water resource plan element that: identifies drinking water and other resources that will be adequate for the needs of existing and future development proposed in the land use plan element considering available data provided by the Department of the Environment; identifies suitable; that identifies suitable receiving waters and land areas to meet stormwater management and wastewater treatment and disposal needs of existing and future developments proposed in the land use plan element, considering available data provided by the Department of the Environment; and that has been reviewed by the Department of the Environment to

determine whether the proposed plan is consistent with the programs and goals of the Department reflected in the general water resources program.

(vii) An element which shall contain the planning commission's recommendation for land development regulations to implement the plan which encourages the following:

(a) Streamlined review of applications for development, including permit review and subdivision plat review within the areas designated for growth in the plan;

(b) The use of flexible development regulations to promote innovative and cost-saving site design and protect the environment; and

(c) Economic development in areas designated for growth in the plan through the use of innovative techniques;

(viii) Recommendations for the determination, identification and designation of areas within the county which are of critical State concern; and

(ix) A sensitive area element that contains goals, objectives, principles, policies and standards designed to protect from the adverse effects of development, sensitive areas, including the following:

(a) Streams and their buffers;

(b) 100 year floodplains;

(c) Habitats of threatened and endangered species; and

(d) Steep slopes.

(x) A municipal growth element which shall include consideration of: anticipated future municipal growth areas outside the existing corporate limits of the Town; past growth patterns of the Town; the capacity of land areas available for development within the Town including in-fill and redevelopment; the land area needed to satisfy demand for development at densities consistent with the long term development policy; public services and infrastructure needed to accommodate growth within the proposed Town growth areas, including those necessary for public schools, libraries, public safety, water and sewerage facilities, stormwater management systems, and recreation; anticipated financing mechanisms to support necessary public services and infrastructure; rural buffer and transition areas; any burden on services and infrastructure for which the Town would be responsible for development in areas proximate to and outside the proposed Town growth area; protection of sensitive areas; population growth projections; and the relationship of the long term development policy to a vision of the Town's future character.

(xi) A housing element which shall address the need for affordable housing, which shall include consideration of workforce housing and low-income housing within the existing corporate limits of The Town.

WHEREAS, by Ordinance No. 2010-1, passed on March 8, 2010, The Town Council for The Town of Willards adopted The Town of Willards 2009 Comprehensive Plan; and

WHEREAS, The Willards Planning and Zoning Commission has now completed a comprehensive study of the existing The Town of Willards Comprehensive Plan and, as mandated by State Law, does hereby desire to update The Town of Willards Comprehensive Plan, said updated Comprehensive Plan to be known as “The Town of Willards 2020 Comprehensive Plan”; and

WHEREAS, in the preparation of the Plan, The Willards Planning and Zoning Commission has made careful and comprehensive surveys and studies of present conditions and future growth within The Town of Willards giving due regard to its relation to neighboring territory for the general purpose of guiding and accomplishing the coordinated, adjusted and harmonious development of The Town of Willards, and its environs which will, in accordance with present and future needs, best promote health, safety, rules, order, convenience, prosperity and general welfare, as well as efficiency and economy in the process of development; and

WHEREAS, The Willards Planning and Zoning Commission addressed various visions including concentration of development in suitable areas, protection of sensitive areas, directing growth towards existing population centers and resource areas, stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay and the land, conservation of resources, streamlining of regulatory mechanisms, and appropriate funding mechanisms; and

WHEREAS, The Willards Planning and Zoning Commission has reviewed and discussed the preparation and finalization of an updated Comprehensive Plan as required by the Maryland Economic Growth, Resource Protection and Planning Act of 1992, and the Annotated Code of Maryland and has completed said Plan; and

WHEREAS, at least sixty (60) days prior to public hearing, The Willards Planning and Zoning Commission has forwarded copies of the recommended Plan to state agencies and adjoining jurisdictions and has received comments from various state agencies and adjoining jurisdictions; and

WHEREAS, The Willards Planning and Zoning Commission has received comments from the following agencies and/or jurisdictions which are attached as follows:

(i) Wicomico County, Maryland, which comments are attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference as Exhibit “B”;

(ii) Maryland Office of Planning, which comments are attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference as Exhibit “C”;

WHEREAS, the aforesaid comments are hereby made a part of the record of the public hearing hereinafter referenced; and

WHEREAS, The Willards Planning and Zoning Commission has received comments from Peter Johnston and Associates, LLC in response to the above agency comments, which said responses are collectively attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference as Exhibit "D" and are hereby made a part of the record of the public hearing hereinafter referenced; and

WHEREAS, in light of the Maryland Economic Growth, Resource Protection and Planning Act of 1992, as embodied in the Annotated Code of Maryland, it is the opinion of The Willards Planning and Zoning Commission that the Comprehensive Plan for The Town of Willards, adopted in 2010, should be updated and a new Comprehensive Plan adopted; and

WHEREAS, a public hearing, before The Willards Planning and Zoning Commission having been duly advertised and published as required by the Annotated Code of Maryland, Land Use Article, Title 3, was held on Monday, July 6, 2020, at 7:00 p.m. for purposes of receiving comments and discussion of the proposed Comprehensive Plan; and

WHEREAS, The Willards Planning and Zoning Commission by the affirmative votes of not less than the majority of its membership has recommended the update of the existing Comprehensive Plan for The Town of Willards, as adopted in 2010; and

WHEREAS, upon addressing the comments of the various agencies and jurisdictions and after taking comments from the general public and discussion thereof, The Willards Planning and Zoning Commission by the affirmative vote of not less than a majority of its membership recommended adoption of The Town of Willards 2020 Comprehensive Plan attached hereto and certified to be the Comprehensive Plan approved and recommended by The Willards Planning and Zoning Commission, as required by the Annotated Code of Maryland, Land Use Article, Title 3, which said Comprehensive Plan consists of an Introduction, Land Use, Community Facilities, Municipal Growth, Natural Resource Conservation, Water Resources, Housing, Transportation, Historic Preservation, and Implementation Recommendations and incorporates various related maps including, but not limited to, an Existing Land Use (Map 1.1), Existing Zoning (Map 1.2), Land Use Plan (Map 1.3), Community Facilities (Map 2.1), Sewer System (Map 2.2), Water System (Map 2.3), Priority Funding Area (Map 2.4), SB 236 Growth Tiers (Map 3.2), Rural Buffer (Map 3.3), Streams and Stream Buffers (Map 4.1), Sensitive Species Habitat (Map 4.2), Conservation Land (Map 4.3), Upper Pocomoke River Watershed (5.1), Functional Classification System (Map 7.1), Transportation Plan (Map 7.2), Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (Map 8.1), and Sustainable Communities Area (Map 8.2); and

WHEREAS, The Town Council for The Town of Willards, has received the recommendation of The Willards Planning and Zoning Commission and, after public hearing and discussion of same, does hereby desires to accept and adopt said recommendations.

SECTION ONE: NOW THEREFORE, BE IT ENACTED AND ORDAINED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL FOR THE TOWN OF WILLARDS that the Comprehensive Plan for The Town of Willards, as adopted in 2010, be updated and a new Comprehensive Plan be adopted.

SECTION TWO: BE IT FURTHER ENACTED AND ORDAINED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL FOR THE TOWN OF WILLARDS that the statements and findings noted above be incorporated by reference herein and are deemed a substantive part of this Ordinance.

SECTION THREE: BE IT FURTHER ENACTED AND ORDAINED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL FOR THE TOWN OF WILLARDS that The Town of Willards 2020 Comprehensive Plan, attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference as Exhibit "A," consisting of an Introduction, Land Use, Community Facilities, Municipal Growth, Natural Resource Conservation, Water Resources, Housing, Transportation, Historic Preservation, and Implementation Recommendations and incorporates various related maps including, but not limited to, an Existing Land Use (Map 1.1), Existing Zoning (Map 1.2), Land Use Plan (Map 1.3), Community Facilities (Map 2.1), Sewer System (Map 2.2), Water System (Map 2.3), Priority Funding Area (Map 2.4), SB 236 Growth Tiers (Map 3.2), Rural Buffer (Map 3.3), Streams and Stream Buffers (Map 4.1), Sensitive Species Habitat (Map 4.2), Conservation Land (Map 4.3), Upper Pocomoke River Watershed (5.1), Functional Classification System (Map 7.1), Transportation Plan (Map 7.2), Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (Map 8.1), and Sustainable Communities Area (Map 8.2), all of which are intended to form the whole of the Comprehensive Plan, be and the same is hereby adopted by The Town Council for The Town of Willards as The Town of Willards 2020 Comprehensive Plan and certified copy of same shall be maintained among The Town records for The Town of Willards.

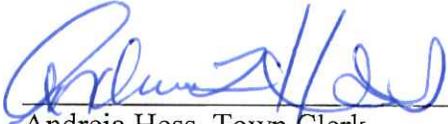
SECTION FOUR: BE IT FURTHER ENACTED AND ORDAINED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL FOR THE TOWN OF WILLARDS that the actions taken by The Town Council for The Town of Willards be recorded on or with the Comprehensive Plan including the text and any incorporated maps by the identifying signature of the President and be duly attested and certified as The Town of Willards 2020 Comprehensive Plan adopted by The Town Council for The Town of Willards.

SECTION FIVE: BE IT FURTHER ENACTED AND ORDAINED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL FOR THE TOWN OF WILLARDS that the recommendations and comments of the various State Agencies and or Jurisdictions, the recommendations and responses of The Town's Planning Consultant, and The Willards Planning and Zoning Commission Resolution No. 2020-1 be incorporated in this order by reference as Exhibits "B", "C", "D", and "E" and is deemed to be a part of the record of the hearing before The Town Council for The Town of Willards.

SECTION SIX: BE IT FURTHER ENACTED AND ORDAINED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL FOR THE TOWN OF WILLARDS that this Ordinance shall be known as "The Town of Willards 2020 Comprehensive Plan Ordinance" and shall take effect upon passage.

The above Ordinance was introduced and given first reading by The Town Council For The Town of Willards at a meeting of The Town Council on August 10, 2020, and having been published as required by law, in the meantime, was finally passed at a meeting by The Town Council For The Town of Willards on September 14, 2020.

ATTEST:



Andrea Hess, Town Clerk

THE TOWN COUNCIL FOR
THE TOWN OF WILLARDS

By 

Margaret E. White, President

By 

George E. Smith, Vice President

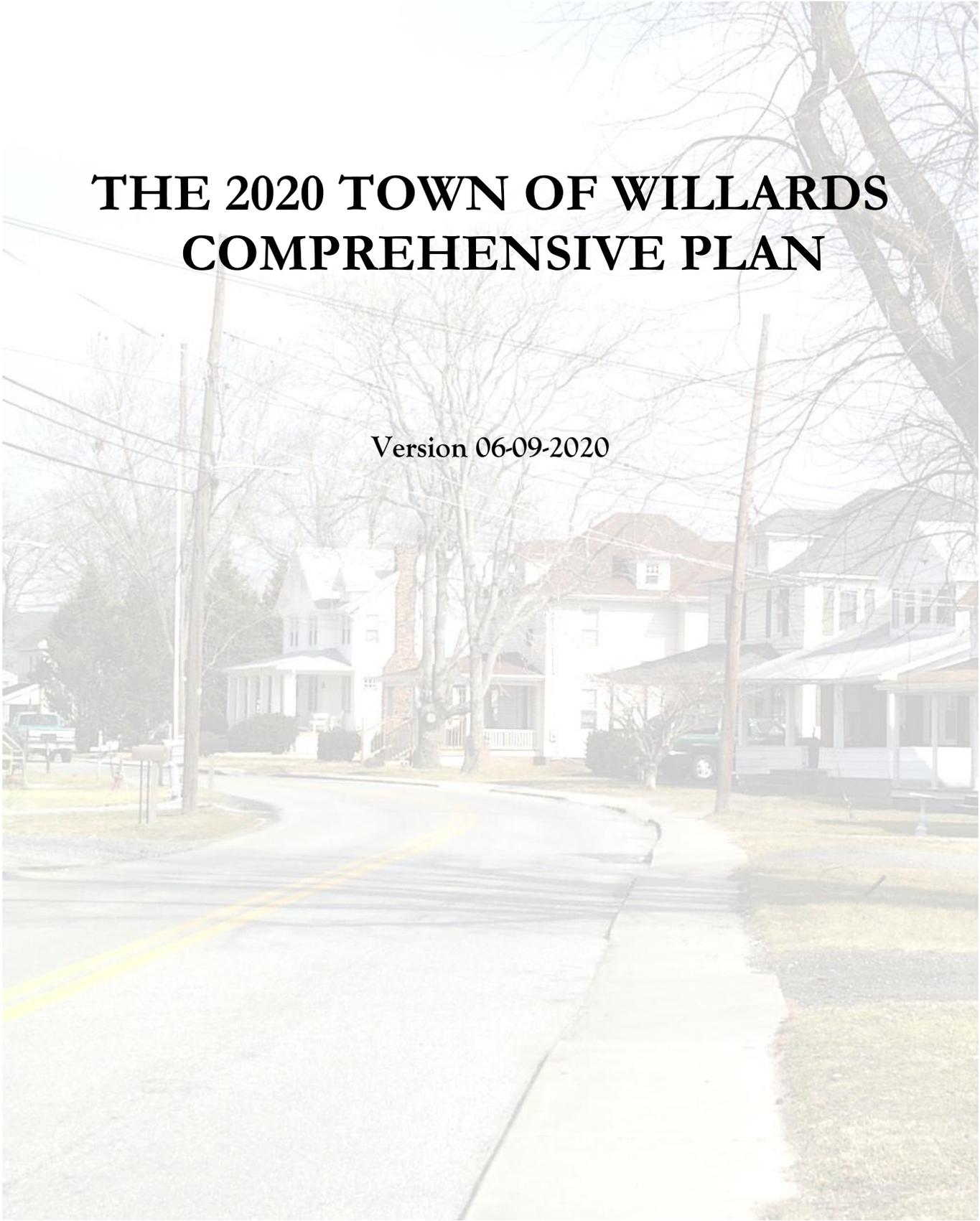
By 

Ralph Seaton

By 

Laura Mears

By VACANT_____



THE 2020 TOWN OF WILLARDS COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Version 06-09-2020

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INTRODUCTION

The *2020 Town of Willards Comprehensive* (Comprehensive Plan) replaces the *2010 Town of Willards Comprehensive Plan*. As “Willards” and surrounding areas grow over the next twenty years, the Comprehensive Plan will serve as a guide for making decisions regarding community development. Its purposes are to ensure that these decisions to the maximum extent possible: 1) preserve public goods and minimize negative externalities; 2) minimize public fiscal impact; 3) maximize social equity, and 4) elevate the quality of life for residents.

DEVELOPING THE TOWN OF WILLARDS COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Comprehensive Plan outlines a series of goals, objectives, and recommendations for managing and directing physical changes to the Town of Willards. The Comprehensive Plan considers current socioeconomic conditions, historical growth patterns, and future conditions indicated by recent and projected trends. Once adopted, it becomes the basis for the preparation of specific policies, programs, and legislation, such as zoning and subdivision regulations, to implement the strategies and recommendations outlined in the Plan.

The documents' policies are comprehensive and long-range in nature. The Plan encompasses all functional elements that bear upon the Town’s physical development, such as land use, municipal growth, transportation, and community facilities. It outlines policies and recommended implementation strategies but is not regulations. It looks beyond current issues to problems and opportunities related to future growth over the next twenty years and beyond.

The Comprehensive Plan complies with the laws and regulations of the State of Maryland and its various regulatory agencies. Also, it is responsive to Wicomico County’s plans for the surrounding unincorporated areas.

The Comprehensive Plan provides the basic framework and direction for all components of planning and programming for the community. It is not a “stand-alone” document but is supported and, in turn, supports other planning and regulatory tools such as the following:

- The Town of Willards Zoning Code;
- The Town Willards Subdivision Regulations;
- The Town Willards Capital Improvement Plan and Budget-CIP; and
- The Town Willards Water & Sewer Facilities Plans.

The Comprehensive Plan is not a static document. It should be reviewed and updated as needed to reflect new development trends, shifts in the economy, or changes in the community's goals and objectives.

MARYLAND PLANNING LAWS AND POLICIES

The following briefly summarizes State laws intended to ensure coordinated and effective growth management and resource protection policies and programs at all levels of government.

The Land Use Article – Planning & Zoning Enabling Act

The Land Use Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland is the Planning and Zoning enabling legislation from which the Willards derives its powers to regulate land use. Title 3, Subtitle 1 of the Land Use Article sets forth the minimum requirements for a comprehensive plan, which shall include, among other things:

- a community facilities element;
- an area of critical State concern element;
- a goals and objectives element;
- a land use element;
- a development regulations element;
- a sensitive areas element;
- a transportation element;
- a municipal growth element;
- a water resources element; and
- if current geological information is available, the plan shall include a mineral resources element.

Maryland's Visions

Planning for Willards has been guided by the twelve components of Maryland's visions outlined in § 1-201 of the Land Use Article. Maryland's "Visions" are as follows:

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 are 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 provide 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 its coastal bays, are carefully managed to restore 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 resource 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.

Sensitive Environmental Areas

The Maryland Economic Growth, Resource Protection, and Planning Act of 1992 added the requirement that a comprehensive plan must contain a “Sensitive Areas Element,” which describes how the jurisdiction will protect the following:

- Streams and stream buffers;
- 100-year floodplains;
- Endangered species habitats;
- Nontidal wetland;

- Steep slopes; and
- Other sensitive areas to protect from the adverse impacts of development.

Smart Growth Areas Act of 1997

The "Smart Growth" Areas Act of 1997, Chapter 759 of the Laws of Maryland of 1997, requires the State to target funding for "growth-related" projects to Priority Funding Areas (PFAs) beginning October 1, 1998. Growth related projects are defined in the legislation. They include most State programs which encourage or support growth and development such as highways, sewer and water construction, economic development assistance, and State leases and construction of new office facilities.

The legislation intends to marshal the State's financial resources to support growth in Maryland's communities and limit development in agricultural and other resource conservation areas. At the heart of the Smart Growth concept are the "Priority Funding Areas" (PFAs), which represent local growth areas targeted for State funding. PFAs include municipalities, rural villages, communities, industrial areas, and planned growth areas to be served by public water and sewerage.

Local comprehensive plans must show designated "Growth Areas," including areas planned for annexation by municipalities. Land within regional growth boundaries may be designated as a Priority Funding Area (PFA) provided sewer service is planned in a 10-Year Water and Sewerage Plan. Further provided such designation is a long-term and planned development policy that promotes efficient land use and public infrastructure. Plans must include areas considered as PFAs, such as planned water and sewerage service areas, residential development areas, industrial development areas, economic development areas, and parks.

2006 Maryland House Bill 1141

In 2006, the Maryland State Legislature passed House Bill 1141 (HB 1141), which provides for amendments to the Land Use Article and Article 23A: "Municipal Annexation Act" of the Annotated Code of Maryland. Changes include provisions for the inclusion of a "Water Resources Element" and "Municipal Growth Element" in local comprehensive plans.

HB 1141 establishes additional substantive and procedural requirements for municipalities preparing comprehensive plans. HB 1141 includes provisions for inter-governmental coordination for land use and growth management planning.

Information developed under the provisions of HB 1141 will be reviewed and evaluated by State agencies, including the Maryland Departments of the Environment, Natural Resources, and Planning. Substantive, procedural requirements include the following:

- The Town must include in its Comprehensive Plan a “Municipal Growth Element” that specifies where Willards intends to grow during the planning period, if at all, outside its existing corporate limits. It also must discuss how the Town plans to address services, infrastructure, and environmental protection needs for the Growth Area.
- The Town must develop the “Municipal Growth Element” in coordination with Wicomico County. Before approving a Growth Element, the Town must provide a copy to the County, accept their comments, meet and confer with the County, and, on request from either entity, engage in mediation to facilitate the Growth Element.
- The Town and County must include in their respective comprehensive plans a “Water Resource Plan Element” that identifies drinking water and other water resources to meet current and future demands. It also must identify suitable water and land areas to receive stormwater and wastewater derived from development.
- For land annexed after September 2006 to qualify for State assistance as a Priority Funding Area-PFA, the Town must complete an analysis of land capacity available for development.
- The Town must develop and share with other planning agencies an “Annexation Plan” that is consistent with its Growth Element in the Comprehensive Plan.

Sustainable Growth & Agricultural Preservation Act of 2012

The Maryland General Assembly approved the Sustainable Growth and Agricultural Preservation Act of 2012, also known as the septic law, during the 2012 General Assembly session. Mapping the Growth Tiers (Tiers) is intended to be a straight-forward exercise based on existing local government plans and goals for growth and land preservation. Tier mapping accounts for existing zoning, policies, and programmed sewer service. The law applies only to residential subdivisions, not to commercial, industrial, or other non-residential subdivisions.

Four Tiers of land use categories identify where major and minor residential subdivisions are permitted and what type of sewerage system will serve them. Tier I areas are currently served by sewerage systems. Tier II areas are planned sewer service regions, and no sewer service is expected in Tier III areas. Residential development on septic systems can occur in Tier IV areas, but major subdivisions are prohibited.

House Bill 1045

House Bill 1045, enacted in May 2019, requires the comprehensive include a housing element. The Bill states that the housing element may include goals, objectives, policies, plans, and

standards, and must address the need for affordable housing, including workforce housing and low-income housing.

Other Changes

Since 2010 changes to Maryland’s planning requirements instituted include setting educational requirements for planning commissioners and members of boards of appeal. The Land Use Article also now includes annual reporting requirements that include quantitative measures and indicators.

COMMUNITY PROFILE

SETTING

The State of Maryland is located on the East Coast of the United States in the Mid-Atlantic region, which also includes Delaware, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, and Virginia. As a regional corridor within the United States, the Mid-Atlantic region is one of the most densely populated areas in the nation.

Major regional cities include New York City, NY; Philadelphia, PA; Baltimore, MD, and Washington D.C. These cities serve as major social, economic, and political metropolitan areas for the United States. Regional satellite cities linked to these larger cities include:

- Annapolis, MD;
- Richmond, VA;
- Trenton, NJ;
- Pittsburgh and Harrisburg, PA; and
- Wilmington/Newark and Dover, DE.

According to the 2010 U.S. Census statistics, Maryland ranked 19th in the nation for population size, with approximately 5.774 million people and 6th in terms of population density (people per square mile). Estimates place the state's 2018 population at 6.046 million. Maryland has six regional areas that include the Baltimore Region, Washington Region, Southern Maryland, Western Maryland, Upper Eastern Shore, and the Lower Eastern Shore, which includes Wicomico County and Willards.

POPULATION TRENDS

Wicomico County and The Town of Willards are located on Maryland's Lower Eastern Shore. From 1980 through 2010, more than three percent of the State's population resided on the Lower Eastern Shore. In the thirty years from 1980 to 2010, the population of the Lower Eastern Shore increased by over 44 percent (see Table CP-1). Except for Dorchester County, the population of the Lower Eastern Shore counties experienced a faster rate of population growth than that of the State.

Table CP-1: Regional Population Statistics 1980-2010

	1980	1990	2000	2010	Chg.	% Chg.
Maryland	4,216,933	4,780,753	5,296,486	5,773,552	1,556,619	36.9%
Lower Eastern Shore Region						

Table CP-1: Regional Population Statistics 1980-2010

	1980	1990	2000	2010	Chg.	% Chg.
Dorchester County	30,623	30,236	30,674	32,618	1,995	6.5%
Somerset County	19,188	23,440	24,747	26,470	7,282	38.0%
Wicomico County	64,540	74,339	84,644	98,733	34,193	53.0%
Worcester County	30,889	35,028	46,543	51,454	20,565	66.6%
Total	145,240	163,043	186,608	209,275	64,035	44.1%

Source: Maryland Department of Planning

The Town of Willards experienced a significant period of population growth beginning in the 1980s through 2000 when more than thirty years of slow growth came to an end. Between 1980 and 2000, the Town's population increased by 73 percent. During the last three decades, Willard's population grew at a rate exceeding that of the County. The significant increase in population growth between 1990 and 2000 is, in part, attributable to the development of the "Old Mill Subdivision," which added about 50 new homes to the corporate area.

More recently, Willard's population growth appears to have slowed considerably; however, the Town remains at about one percent of the County population. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, the Town of Willards grew to 958 residents, an increase of approximately 3 percent over 2000 (see Table CP-2) Census figure.

Table CP-2: Willards Population as a percentage of Wicomico County

	1980	1990	2000	2010	Chg.	Annual Rate
Wicomico County	64,540	74,339	84,644	98,733	34,193	1.43%
Town of Willards	540	708	938	958	427	1.93%
Percent of County Population	0.84%	0.95%	1.11%	0.98%	1.25%	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

Age

Slightly more than 70 percent of Willard's population in 2010 was 18 years and over (labor force eligible) somewhat lower as compared to 78 percent for Wicomico County and Maryland. In 2018 Willards' estimated median population age of 34.8 years was lower than that of the County and State (see Table CP-3). One characteristic affecting the median age was a lower percentage of persons 65 years and older.

Table CP-3: Age Characteristics 2018

	Willards	Wicomico	Maryland
16 years and over	78%	81%	80%
18 years and over	76%	78%	78%
21 years and over	71%	70%	74%
62 years and over	14%	19%	19%
65 years and over	12%	16%	15%
Median Age (years)	34.8	35.5	38.8

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Sex

Estimates of the male/female breakdown of the population in 2018 (see Table CP-4) were like that of the County and the State. The percent of the female population was slightly higher for all jurisdictions.

Table CP-4: Sex distribution 2018

	Willards	Wicomico	Maryland
Male population	45%	47%	48%
Female population	55%	53%	52%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Race

Unlike Wicomico County and Maryland, Willards' population is predominantly white (see Table CP-5) with significantly lower percentages of the population Black or African American.

Table CP-5: Race Characteristics 2018

	Willards	Wicomico	Maryland
Total population	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
One race	97.3%	97.4%	96.3%
White	85.2%	67.1%	54.7%
Black or African American	9.9%	25.9%	30.0%
American Indian and Alaska Native	0.0%	0.2%	0.2%
Asian	0.0%	3.2%	6.3%
Some Other Race	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%
Two or More Races	2.2%	1.0%	5.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Hispanic and Latino

Hispanic and Latino populations were a significantly smaller percentage of the total population in 2018 as compared to the State of Maryland. The 2018 estimates by the U.S. Census Bureau

indicate the Hispanic or Latino portion of the Town’s population has increased from 3.5 to 5.8 percent, a sixty-five percent increase in the eight years from 2010 to 2018.

Table CP-6: Hispanic or Latino Population

	Willards	Wicomico	Maryland
Total population	100.00%	100.0%	100.0%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	5.8%	5.1%	10.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018 ACS 1 Year Estimates

HOUSEHOLD AND FAMILY CHARACTERISTICS

“Family households” consist of a householder and one or more other people related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption. They would not include same-sex married couples even if the marriage were performed in a state issuing marriage certificates for same-sex couples. Same-sex couple households are included in the family household category if there is at least one additional person related to the householder by birth or adoption. Same-sex couple households with no relatives of the householder present are tabulated in nonfamily households. ‘Nonfamily households’ consist of people living alone and households which do not have any members related to the householder.”

Households and families tended to be slightly larger in Willards as compared to Wicomico County and Maryland, according to 2018 Census estimates (see Table CP-7). Willards had a higher percentage of family households with their children under 18 years and households with individuals under 18 years old. Also, the percentage of households with individuals 65 years and over was less than the County and State.

Table CP-7: Households by Type 2018

	Willards	Wicomico	Maryland
Total households	100.00%	100.0%	100.00%
Family households (families)	66.04%	65.2%	65.70%
With own children under 18 years	24.30%	16.9%	19.00%
Husband-wife family	41.74%	44.5%	48.30%
Male householder, no wife present	3.43%	6.3%	4.90%
Female householder, no husband present	20.87%	14.4%	12.60%
Nonfamily households	33.96%	34.8%	34.30%
Householder living alone	23.05%	25.7%	27.70%
Households with individuals under 18 years	43.61%	31.7%	31.40%
Households with individuals 65 years and over	25.86%	29.5%	28.70%
Average household size	2.71	2.61	2.63
Average family size	3.32	3.14	3.23

Table CP-7: Households by Type 2018**Willards Wicomico Maryland**

U.S. Census Bureau, 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Educational Attainment

Recent estimates of educational attainment in Willards paint a mixed picture of achievement (see Table CP-8). The percent of the population that did not graduate high school was higher as compared to Wicomico County but lower when compared to Maryland and the estimated national average for the same period. The segment of the Willards' population 18 to 24 years that graduated high school or achieved an equivalency and those with some college or an associate degree also was slightly lower. The percent of residents with a bachelor's degree or higher was well slightly below that of Wicomico County and well below that of Maryland and the Nation.

Table CP-8: Educational Attainment

	Willards	Wicomico	Maryland	US
Population 18 to 24 years	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Less than high school graduate	8.4%	7.6%	10.7%	12.5%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	25.3%	30.8%	31.3%	32.0%
Some college or associate's degree	64.2%	58.5%	43.6%	43.9%
Bachelor's degree or higher	2.1%	3.0%	14.4%	11.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

EMPLOYMENT AND LABOR FORCE CHARACTERISTICS**Industry of Employment**

According to recent estimates by the U.S. Census Bureau, 471 residents of Willards were part of the civilian labor force¹. The leading industries of employment (approximately 75 percent) for employed population 16 and over were (see Table: CP-9):

- Arts, entertainment, recreation, and accommodation and food services;
- Educational services and health care and social assistance;
- Retail trade;
- Construction; and
- Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing.

¹ Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Willards' two leading industries of employment, arts, entertainment, recreation, and accommodation and food services and educational services and health care and social assistance is like that of the County and the State of Maryland.

Table CP-9: Industry for the civilian employed population 16 years and over - 2018

Industry	Willards	Wicomico	Maryland
Civilian employed population 16 years and over	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	2.12%	1.43%	0.51%
Construction	10.62%	5.07%	7.13%
Manufacturing	2.34%	8.81%	4.47%
Wholesale trade	1.70%	1.87%	1.59%
Retail trade	12.10%	13.59%	9.38%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	0.42%	5.00%	4.75%
Information	1.70%	0.81%	1.95%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	8.28%	3.88%	5.93%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	7.22%	3.99%	15.56%
Educational services and health care and social assistance	21.23%	30.94%	23.82%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	22.29%	13.20%	8.63%
Other services, except public administration	4.25%	3.99%	5.67%
Public administration	5.73%	7.40%	10.62%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

The estimated unemployment rate for Willards in 2018 was 9.2 percent, which was higher than Wicomico County's (7.0 percent) and significantly higher than the State of Maryland's (4.9 percent)².

The principal estimated occupations for Willards' civilian employed were:

- Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services;
- Retail trade;
- Construction;
- Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing; and
- Educational services and health care and social assistance

Compared to Maryland but not Wicomico County, a significantly large portion of Willards' labor force was employed in the industry segment arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services (see Table CP-10). Retail trade, construction, finance, and

² 2014-2018 American Community Survey, 5-year Estimates

education services were less representative of industry employment in the State. Construction and finance were the industry sectors more apparent in Willards compared to Wicomico County.

Table CP-10: Industry for the civilian employed population 16 years and over - 2018

Industry	Willards	Wicomico	MD	Difference compared to	
				Wicomico	MD
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	22.29%	30.94%	8.63%	8.65%	-13.67%
Retail trade	12.10%	13.59%	9.38%	1.49%	-2.72%
Construction	10.62%	5.07%	7.13%	-5.55%	-3.48%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing:	8.28%	3.88%	5.93%	-4.40%	-2.35%
Educational services and health care and social assistance	21.23%	30.94%	23.82%	9.71%	2.59%
Total	74.52%	84.43%	54.69%		

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Occupation

Estimated of the leading occupation for Willard's civilian employed population 16 years in the period 2013 to 2017 were service, sales and office, and natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations. As compared to Wicomico County and Maryland, more of Willards' population was employed in occupation categories (see Table CP-11).

The occupation of Willards' workers in 2018 was more likely in sales and office and natural resources, construction, and maintenance than that of Wicomico County or Maryland (See Table CP 11). The occupation of these workers was less likely to be production, transportation and material moving, and management, business, and science. The highest-paid occupations of residents, by median earnings, are Business and financial operations occupations (\$78,750), Production occupations (\$68,125), and Management, Business, & Financial Occupations (\$51,875).³ Compared to Maryland and Wicomico County, Willards' civilian labor in the same occupation class earned less than Wicomico County and Maryland (see Table CP-12).

Table CP-11: Occupation civilian employed population 16 years and over

	Willards	Wicomico	Maryland
Civilian employed population 16 years and over	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Management, business, science, and arts occupations:	18.05%	31.57%	46.17%
Service occupations:	30.36%	24.37%	17.44%
Sales and office occupations:	34.39%	23.86%	19.70%
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations:	11.68%	8.59%	7.83%
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations:	5.52%	11.61%	8.86%

³ 2014-2018 American Community Survey, 5-year Estimates

Table CP-11: Occupation civilian employed population 16 years and over**Willards Wicomico Maryland**

Source: 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Table CP 12: Median earnings by occupation, civilian labor force 16 years and over

	Willards	Wicomico	Maryland
Civilian employed population 16 years and over with earnings	\$30,306	\$43,128	\$47,083
Management, business, science, and arts occupations	\$47,813	\$59,996	\$72,061
Service occupations	\$25,694	\$27,333	\$24,680
Sales and office occupations	\$30,648	\$40,045	\$36,048
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	\$32,292	\$45,513	\$42,267
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	\$31,250	\$36,512	\$31,962

Source: 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Means of Transportation, Travel Time and Place of Employment

People in Willards have an average commute time of 24.2 minutes, and they commute by Drove Alone. Car ownership in Willards is approximately the same as the national average, with an average of 2 cars per household.

More workers 16 years and older drove alone in a car, truck, or van than was the norm for the County or State during the period estimated by the U.S. Census Bureau (see Table CP-13). The general nature of small towns in rural settings with limited employment opportunities may explain the differences between the County and State estimates, namely low use of public transportation, bicycle, walking, and a taxicab.

Table CP-13: Means of transportation to work workers 16 years and over

	Willards	Wicomico	Maryland
Car, truck, or van	98.3%	92.9%	83.2%
Drove alone	90.0%	83.3%	74.3%
Carpooled	8.2%	9.6%	8.8%
Public transportation (excluding taxicab)	0.0%	1.6%	7.9%
Walked	0.4%	1.6%	2.1%
Bicycle	0.0%	0.2%	0.3%
Taxicab, motorcycle, or other means	0.0%	1.4%	1.1%
Worked at home	1.3%	2.8%	5.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Estimates indicate that Willards' workers, like those of Wicomico County, were more likely to have worked someplace in Maryland than was the case for the State. Unlike Wicomico County and Maryland, more of Willards' workers were likely to work outside of Wicomico County (see Table CP-14).

Table CP-14: Place of work workers 16 years and over

	Willards	Wicomico	Maryland
Worked in state of residence	91.3%	86.8%	83.0%
Worked in county of residence	32.1%	71.0%	54.0%
Worked outside county of residence	59.2%	15.8%	29.0%
Worked outside the state of residence	8.7%	13.2%	17.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Census estimates indicated that Willards' workers spent more time on average commuting to their place of work than that of Wicomico County and less commuting time than the average for Maryland workers (see Table CP-15). This comparison is especially applicable to the periods 20 to 34 minutes, after which the commute time for Willards' workers drops off.

Table CP-15: Travel time to work workers 16 years and over

	Willards	Wicomico	Maryland
Less than 10 minutes	4.8%	16.9%	7.1%
10 to 14 minutes	4.2%	17.9%	9.1%
15 to 19 minutes	21.5%	19.3%	12.5%
20 to 24 minutes	27.9%	10.9%	12.6%
25 to 29 minutes	15.6%	5.6%	6.3%
30 to 34 minutes	17.1%	9.5%	14.8%
35 to 44 minutes	3.3%	6.3%	9.5%
45 to 59 minutes	1.3%	4.6%	12.0%
60 or more minutes	4.2%	9.0%	16.0%
Mean travel time to work (minutes)	24.2	24.3	33.3

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Workforce characteristics, means of transportation, place of work, and travel time, indicate a worthwhile planning objective to increase opportunities for residents to live closer to where they work and to use modes of transportation other than driving alone.

INCOME AND POVERTY

The median income is the figure at which half of households or families in the community are above, and the other half are below. Mean income is the average for all households or families. Estimates by the U.S. Census Bureau indicate that the mean or average income for households and families in Willards was significantly lower than that of the County and State. Willards' mean household income was about 76 percent of that of the County and 53 percent of that of the State (see Table CP-16). Median income followed the same pattern that is less than that of the County or State.

Census Bureau 2016 household income estimates indicated like family income, household income in Willards lagged that of the County and State. Mean family income was about 73 percent of that recorded for the County and about half that of the State. Median family income was 80 percent that of the County and nearly 55 percent of that of the State (see Table CP-17).

Table CP-16: Household Income and benefits (in 2017 inflation-adjusted dollars)

	Willards	Wicomico	Maryland
Less than \$10,000	3.40%	5.20%	4.90%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	6.50%	4.60%	3.00%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	10.90%	11.90%	6.30%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	10.00%	10.10%	6.90%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	23.10%	14.90%	10.30%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	24.00%	18.50%	16.50%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	10.30%	12.90%	13.10%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	7.50%	13.00%	18.70%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	4.40%	4.90%	9.70%
\$200,000 or more	0.00%	4.00%	10.70%
Median household income (dollars)	\$45,417	\$54,493	\$78,916
Mean household income (dollars)	\$55,285	\$72,948	\$103,845

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Table CP-17: Family Income and benefits (in 2017 inflation-adjusted dollars)

	Willards	Wicomico	Maryland
Less than \$10,000	3.30%	3.90%	2.80%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	2.80%	2.90%	1.70%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	9.00%	7.50%	4.20%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	7.10%	8.70%	5.60%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	23.10%	12.90%	8.90%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	26.40%	19.80%	15.30%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	10.40%	15.60%	13.70%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	11.30%	17.00%	21.50%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	6.60%	6.50%	12.20%
\$200,000 or more	0.00%	5.30%	14.00%
Median family income (dollars)	53,375	66,657	95,597
Mean family income (dollars)	63,162	85,965	120,839

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Estimates of Willards' 2018 mean income per capita income were 16 percent less than that of the County and 47 percent less than that of the State. Slightly more than 10 percent of the population of Willards was estimated to have an income in the preceding 12 months that was below poverty

(see Table CP-18). Those most affected by poverty were families with female householder, no husband present, and persons 65 years and over.

Table CP-18: Percentage of families and people whose income in the past 12 months was below the poverty level Willards, Maryland

	Willards	Wicomico	Maryland
All families	7.9%	6.6%	6.0%
Married couple families	1.7%	2.4%	2.5%
Families with female householder, no husband present	15.8%	21.7%	17.5%
All people	10.9%	14.3%	9.0%
Under 18 years	6.7%	16.0%	11.6%
18 to 64 years	11.2%	14.8%	8.4%
65 years and over	17.5%	10.1%	7.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

The U.S. Census estimated there were 377 housing units in Willards in 2018. Approximately 89 percent or 335 units of these units were occupied. This occupancy rate was like that of the County and State (see Table CP-19). Of the occupied housing units, most (72 percent) were owner-occupied units (see Table CP-20), a figure higher than that of Wicomico County but lower than that of the State. Renter occupied units were much lower than the average estimated for Maryland.

Table CP-19: Housing tenure – 2018

	Willards	Wicomico	Maryland
Occupied housing units	100%	100%	100%
Owner-occupied	75.1%	59.2%	66.8%
Renter-occupied	24.9%	40.8%	33.2%
Average household size of owner-occupied unit	2.54	2.62	1.7
Average household size of renter-occupied unit	3.15	2.62	6.3

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Most of the housing units in the Town were classified as one-unit detached structures (see Table CP-20). The data indicate that Willards offers less housing variety than that of the County and State.

Table CP-20: Units in structure 2018

	Willards	Wicomico	Maryland
1-unit, detached	90%	69%	51%
1-unit, attached	2%	5%	21%
2 units	0%	2%	1%

Table CP-20: Units in structure 2018

	Willards	Wicomico	Maryland
3 or 4 units	1%	2%	2%
5 to 9 units	2%	5%	5%
10 to 19 units	2%	8%	8%
20 or more units	1%	5%	9%
Mobile home	3%	4%	1%
Boat, RV, van, etc.	0%	0%	0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Over 73 percent of householders moved into their unit in the period 2000 to 2014 (see Table CP-21). This settlement pattern is consistent with the fact that few new housing units have been built in 2010 or later. It also suggests that when housing units are built, most are soon occupied.

Table CP-21: Year householder moved into unit

	Willards	Wicomico	Maryland
Moved in 2017 or later	6%	6%	5%
Moved in 2015 to 2016	11%	13%	12%
Moved in 2010 to 2014	22%	27%	27%
Moved in 2000 to 2009	34%	27%	28%
Moved in 1990 to 1999	12%	13%	14%
Moved in 1989 and earlier	15%	14%	15%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Most housing units in Willards (61 percent) were built between 1980 and 2009 (see Table CP-22). The median number of rooms in units was comparable to Wicomico County but slightly less than that of the State (see Table CP-23).

Table CP-22: Age of structure

	Willards	Wicomico	Maryland
Built 2014 or later	1.9%	1.5%	1.4%
Built 2010 to 2013	1.9%	2.3%	2.5%
Built 2000 to 2009	18.3%	18.9%	11.7%
Built 1990 to 1999	19.9%	14.8%	14.5%
Built 1980 to 1989	19.1%	15.0%	15.4%
Built 1970 to 1979	9.8%	14.4%	14.2%
Built 1960 to 1969	4.8%	9.6%	11.5%
Built 1950 to 1959	2.7%	9.1%	11.5%
Built 1940 to 1949	4.2%	4.9%	5.3%
Built 1939 or earlier	17.5%	9.5%	12.0%

Table CP-22: Age of structure

	Willards	Wicomico	Maryland
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates			

Table CP-23: Rooms in housing units

Number of Rooms	Willards	Wicomico	Maryland
1 room	0.0%	2.2%	1.5%
2 rooms	0.0%	2.8%	2.0%
3 rooms	2.7%	7.0%	7.3%
4 rooms	15.6%	14.3%	12.9%
5 rooms	29.7%	20.2%	14.4%
6 rooms	23.9%	17.4%	16.8%
7 rooms	17.2%	14.4%	13.7%
8 rooms	2.7%	9.1%	11.3%
9 rooms or more	8.2%	12.5%	20.1%
Median rooms	5.6	5.7	6.2

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

On average, the estimated monthly expenses were lower in Willards as compared to the County and State (see Table CP-24). Conversely, monthly costs for housing units without a mortgage were slightly higher than that of the County and marginally less than that of the State (see Table 27). The difference may be attributable to the fact that many County housing units do not have associated monthly water and sewer payments.

Table CP-24: Selected monthly owner costs as a percentage of household income

	Willards	Wicomico	Maryland
Housing units with a mortgage			
Less than \$500	0.00%	1.40%	0.60%
\$500 to \$999	17.16%	18.20%	7.25%
\$1,000 to \$1,499	58.82%	39.20%	18.49%
\$1,500 to \$1,999	19.12%	25.10%	24.28%
\$2,000 to \$2,499	3.92%	8.20%	19.07%
\$2,500 to \$2,999	0.00%	4.10%	12.42%
\$3,000 or more	0.98%	3.80%	17.89%
Median (dollars)	\$1,239	\$1,366	\$1,987
Housing units without a mortgage			
Less than \$250	8.00%	5.40%	4.08%
\$250 to \$399	14.00%	24.40%	12.54%

Table CP-24: Selected monthly owner costs as a percentage of household income

	Willards	Wicomico	Maryland
\$400 to \$599	52.00%	36.10%	31.12%
\$600 to \$799	22.00%	20.20%	25.07%
\$800 to \$999	4.00%	9.30%	13.40%
\$1,000 or more	0.00%	4.70%	13.79%
Median (dollars)	\$464	\$503	\$617

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Estimates for the period 2014 to 2018 place gross rent in Willards lower than that of the County and State (see Table CP-25). Even with lower median rents, over 61 percent of renters paid 35 percent or more of household income for rent as compared to figures in the forty percent range for the County and State.

Table CP-25: Gross rent

	Willards	Wicomico	Maryland
Occupied units paying rent	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Less than \$500	0.00%	8.70%	7.44%
\$500 to \$999	60.00%	35.20%	17.30%
\$1,000 to \$1,499	28.00%	41.40%	35.43%
\$1,500 to \$1,999	12.00%	11.20%	24.91%
\$2,000 to \$2,499	0.00%	1.90%	9.75%
\$2,500 to \$2,999	0.00%	1.40%	3.24%
\$3,000 or more	0.00%	0.10%	1.94%
Median (dollars)	\$895	\$1,058	\$1,357

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Table CP-26: Gross rent as a percentage of household income

	Willards	Wicomico	Maryland
Occupied units paying rent	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Less than 15.0 percent	0.00%	12.10%	11.11%
15.0 to 19.9 percent	2.67%	11.60%	12.79%
20.0 to 24.9 percent	18.67%	13.10%	13.79%
25.0 to 29.9 percent	14.67%	9.50%	12.03%
30.0 to 34.9 percent	2.67%	9.30%	9.19%
35.0 percent or more	61.33%	44.40%	41.08%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Estimates of housing values indicate in Willards were well below that of the County and State (see Table CP-27). These estimates show that over 64 percent of owner-occupied housing units were valued at less than \$150,000.

The median property value in Willards was \$132,700 in 2018, which was over half that of the Maryland average of \$305,500. Between 2016 and 2017 the median property value went from \$129,400 to \$127,100, a 1.78% decrease. The homeownership rate in Willards is 72.3%, which is higher than the national average of 63.9%.

Table CP-27: Value Owner-occupied units

	Willards	Wicomico	Maryland
Owner-occupied units	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Less than \$50,000	3.54%	5.80%	3.05%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	11.42%	10.90%	3.96%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	50.00%	19.50%	6.62%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	24.02%	25.50%	10.49%
\$200,000 to \$299,999	10.24%	24.50%	24.79%
\$300,000 to \$499,999	0.79%	10.30%	31.72%
\$500,000 to \$999,999	0.00%	2.80%	16.34%
\$1,000,000 or more	0.00%	0.70%	3.03%
Median (dollars)	\$132,700	\$171,700	\$305,500

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

CONCLUSIONS

Planning Context

Socioeconomic and housing data highlight some of the characteristics of the community relevant to planning. The data provides a snapshot of community features and trends that have been the result of preceding policies and events, including regional and national economic patterns. They provide a starting point, a measurement for forwarding planning. Willards's planning goals and objectives establish a path forward for government policies and action to influence the trajectory of these data.

Collectively the intent of the plan's goals, objectives, policies, and recommendations is to improve Willards' overall livability and quality of life. Future measurements of socioeconomic and housing data will indicate progress toward ideal outcomes expressed in vision and goal statements.

A community's quality of life is a state and description of the general well-being of residents and visitors and includes physical health, family, education, employment, wealth, safety, security, freedom, religious beliefs, finance, and the environment. Livability, a closely related concept, is more relevant to local government actions and is measured in terms of housing, neighborhood, transportation, environment, health, engagement, and opportunity.

AARP describes their livability indices⁴ as follows:

- Housing - Great communities provide housing opportunities for people of all ages, incomes, and abilities, allowing everyone to live in a quality neighborhood regardless of their circumstances.
- Neighborhood - Two important qualities are access and convenience. Compact neighborhoods make it easier for residents to reach the things they need most, from jobs to grocery stores to libraries. Nearby parks and places to buy healthy food help people make smart choices, and diverse, walkable neighborhoods with shops, restaurants, and movie theatres make local life enjoyable. Additionally, neighborhoods served by good access to more distant destinations via transit or automobile help residents connect to jobs, health care, and services throughout the greater community.
- Transportation - How easily and safely we can get from one place to another has a major effect on our quality of life. Livable communities provide their residents with transportation options that connect people to social activities, economic opportunities, and medical care and offer convenient, healthy, accessible, and low-cost alternatives to driving.
- Environment - Good communities maintain a clean environment for their residents. Great communities enact policies to improve and protect the environment for generations to come. The Livability Index looks at air and water quality. It measures communities' actions to create resilience plans to prepare for emergencies and natural disasters, and it awards points to states that have policies promoting energy efficiency and that protect consumers from having their utilities cut off during extreme weather events.
- Health - Community conditions influence health behaviors. Healthy communities have comprehensive smoke-free air laws, offer easy access to exercise opportunities, and have high-quality health care available. Because health is so deeply related to the quality of life, many other categories of livability in this Index include metrics related to health. For example, access to healthy foods, jobs and education, number of walk trips, lower speed limits, social engagement measures, and air and water pollution are all related to health. Where you live matters.
- Engagement - A livable community fosters interaction among residents. From social engagement to civic action to Internet access, residents' individual opportunities to connect and feel welcomed help lessen social isolation and strengthen the greater

⁴ <https://livabilityindex.aarp.org/livability-defined>

community. The Index explores and examines the different ways in which residents engage with and support their communities and how they impact livability.

- Opportunity - America was built on opportunity—and our nation’s many thriving communities are no different. The degree to which a community embraces diversity and offers opportunities to residents of all ages and backgrounds is important to overall livability. Backed by a strong regional economy and fiscally healthy local governments, welcoming communities provide residents an equal chance to earn a living wage and improve their well-being, from jobs to education.

The State’s twelve planning Visions reflect many if the same livability indices. Collectively, quality of life topics, livability indices, and Maryland’s twelve Visions provide a context in which the community can frame the goals, objectives, policies, and recommendations for each element of the comprehensive plan.

Implications for Planning

Baseline socioeconomic and housing characteristics indicate that Willards is primarily a bedroom community offering some convenience sales and services to residents. Minimal employment opportunities within Willards required workers to commute to jobs. Willards’s labor force is not particularly hampered by educational attainment but neither so highly educated that residents are employed in high paying jobs. Willards is an attractive place to locate for individuals, families, and households fitting the socioeconomic data outlined herein. It may be that they have settled in Willards, for, among other things, lower rents, and housing values. An added attraction may be the elementary school valued by families and households with children.

With ample vacant land, and if adequate public facility and service capacity can be provided, Willards’s population will likely grow during the planning period. Growth, of course, is dependent on private investment in housing production. Land use and facilities planning should focus on actions and strategies to ensure facilities and services are adequate to meet demand, are environmentally appropriate, and involve sustainable processes, e.g., recycling of municipal waste. Infrastructure planning should include high-speed broadband service. Connection to the rest of the world is one of the determinants of economic success.

Land use objectives should focus on efficient use, including maximizing infill and redevelopment where existing infrastructure warrants and allowing higher-density mixed-use development. Increasing the supply of housing at appropriate densities will help keep housing affordable for the average family, household, or individual expected to settle in Willards and may be an incentive for private investment. Measures of land use efficiency include property values over time. In the last two assessment cycles (2014 and 2017), the total assessed value of land and improvements in Willards rose by slightly less than one percent from about \$57.4 million in 2014 to \$59 million in 2017. In a comparable period, 2013 to 2017, property values in

Wicomico County increased by more than seven percent. The Department of Assessment and Taxation land use categories residential, commercial, and industrial are the primary source of property tax revenues. Commercial and industrial values increased significantly while land and improvement values in the residential category only increased by slightly more than one percent (see Table CP-28).

Table CP-28: Total Land and Improvement Values – 2014 - 2017

Land Use Category	2014	2017	Difference	% Chg.
All residential	\$39,667,300	\$40,184,700	\$517,400	1.3%
All commercial	\$4,983,300	\$5,183,300	\$200,000	3.9%
Industrial	\$487,100	\$795,500	\$308,400	38.8%
Subtotal	\$45,137,700	\$46,163,500	\$1,025,800	2.2%
Exempt	\$11,605,300	\$12,020,500	\$415,200	3.5%
Agriculture	\$632,200	\$863,500	\$231,300	26.8%
Total	\$57,375,200	\$59,047,500	\$1,672,300	2.8%

Source: MdProperty View, Computer Assisted Mass Appraisal (CAMA) data, State Department of Assessments and Taxation

CHAPTER 1 LAND USE

LAND USE AND GROWTH MANAGEMENT

The Town of Willards 2007 Comprehensive Plan (Comprehensive Plan) establishes policies concerning the relationship between the Town’s existing patterns of development as well as the location, distribution, and scale of future growth. Investments in public facilities and transportation system improvements support the land use plan and are essential determinants affecting community perceptions about such things as “quality of life” and “community character.” It is a continuation of the Town’s planning process, which began in 1997 with the adoption of the first Comprehensive Plan. This iteration establishes planning goals, objectives, policies, and recommendations in response to changing conditions, including factors outside the control of local officials, such as regional and national economic trends, local market conditions, and individual land-use decisions.

The “Land Use Plan” portion of the Comprehensive Plan outlines The Town of Willard’s primary land management strategies. It is a vital element of the Plan because it describes the preferred land use characteristics for various areas of the Town and establishes the basis for regulatory and capital improvement programs that follow. Town’s evolution patterns, as well as the effects of change on the “quality of life” for existing and future residents, will be influenced by the fundamental land use policy framework outlined in this Chapter.

Collectively the goals, objectives, policies, and recommendations contained in the Land Use plan provide a normative statement about how incremental changes should occur over time. As such, they reflect the Town’s aspirations for land use, economic development, natural resource protection, mobility, community facilities, housing, and community character. While mindful of those things the Town controls, the planning process also considers factors outside the control of local officials, such as regional and national economic trends, local market conditions, and individual land-use decisions.

LAND USE GOALS

Goals for land use within the Town of Willards include the following:

GOAL #1: Improved the financial stability of neighborhoods.

GOAL #2: Encourage the restoration, rehabilitation, and adaptive reuse of existing buildings.

GOAL #3: Improve existing property values and the climate for new investment and reinvestment in Willards by addressing key infrastructure issues, such as water and sewer, roads and streets, and other capital projects.

GOAL #4: Stabilize property values through the adoption of appropriate regulations.

GOAL #5: Expand the tax base of the Town by encouraging appropriate infill and redevelopment of vacant and underutilized properties.

GOAL #6: Encourage the development of new well designed and properly located commercial and industrial facilities that provide employment and services. Promote the maintenance and revitalization of existing business and industrial uses.

LAND USE OBJECTIVES

Objectives establish specific strategies for guiding development activities to achieve broad community goals. The Town of Willards will pursue the following land use objectives which have been prioritized by the level of action required:

- Make incremental improvements to the public realm beyond simple maintenance in neighborhoods where an increase in the level of public investment will create a proportional rise in private sector value, places where the return on investment increases by making incremental improvements.
- Encourage appropriate infill and redevelopment within existing neighborhoods and with the flexibility to adapt to changing conditions.
- Require development show respect for the surrounding context and reflects good design standards and practices.
- Prevent development on land that is unsuitable for development because of soil characteristics, high water tables, or other natural limitations.
- Control the location of new development in a manner consistent with the efficient use of existing planned facilities, services, and amenities.
- Evaluate development regarding the availability of, and impact on, public facilities and services. Ensure that new development produces a positive financial return.
- Encourage greater recognition by all citizens that land is a finite resource, and its wise use and effective conservation is essential for the survival of current and future generations. This objective is consistent with Vision 4 of the “Planning Act, “stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay, and the land is a universal ethic.”
- Encourage the preservation of historic and cultural resources that define Town character.

- Encourage energy conservation in residential development and establish subdivision and zoning regulations to accommodate techniques that achieve greater energy efficiency following Vision 5 of the Planning Act, which states the following "conservation of resources, including a reduction in resource consumption.
- Work with the County to develop inter-jurisdictional mechanisms to streamline mutually related processes.

EXISTING LAND USE

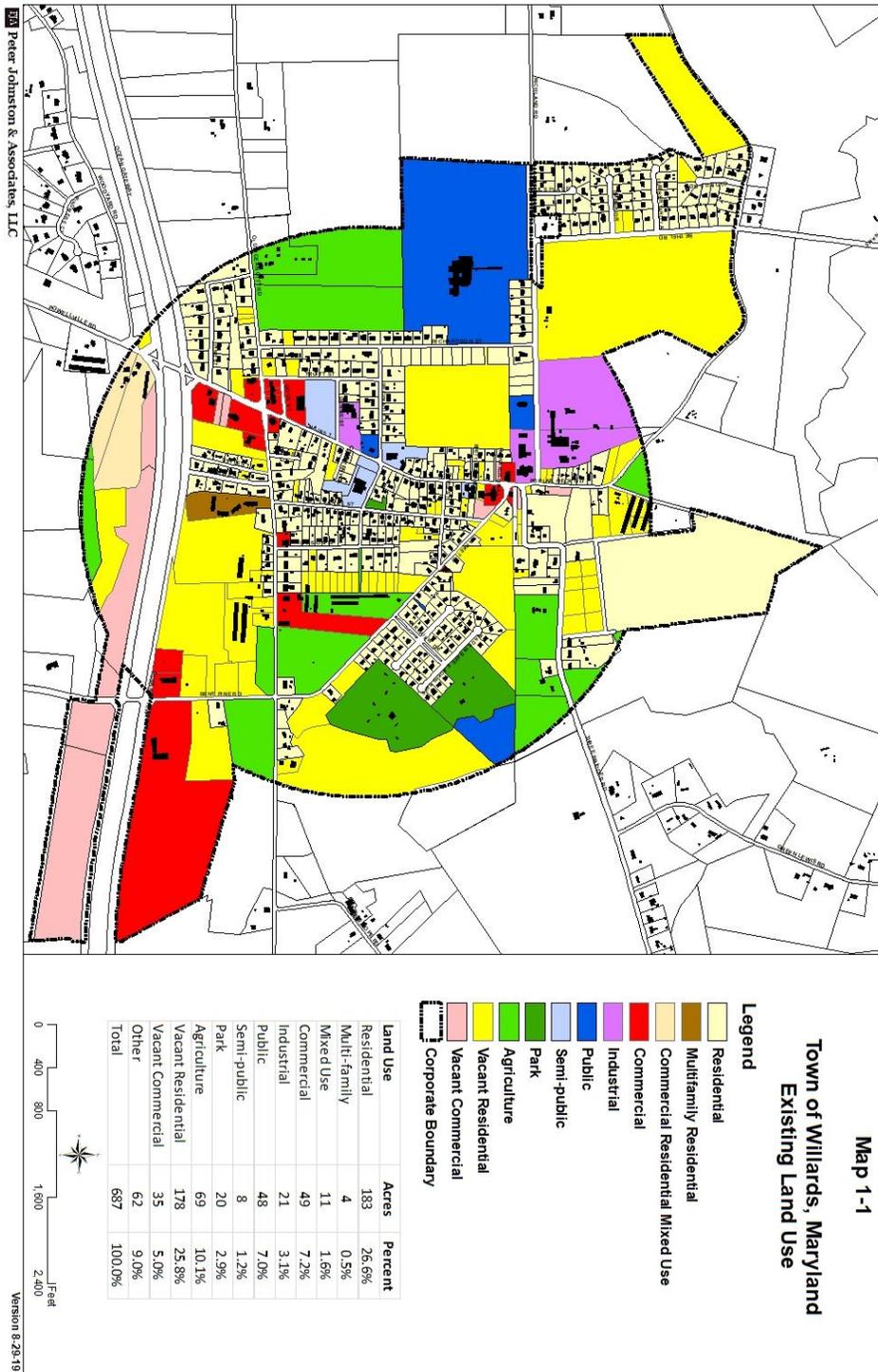
The corporate area of The Town of Willards encompasses approximately 687 acres. The largest developed land use categories are single-family residential and commercial that collectively included roughly a third of the existing land use in the Town in 2017 (See Table 1-1).

Table 1-1: Existing Land Use 2017

Land Use	Acres	Percent
Residential	183	26.6%
Multi-family	4	0.5%
Mixed-use	11	1.6%
Commercial	49	7.2%
Industrial	21	3.1%
Public	48	7.0%
Semi-public	8	1.2%
Park	20	2.9%
Agriculture	69	10.1%
Vacant Residential	178	25.8%
Vacant Commercial	35	5.0%
Other	62	9.0%
Total	687	100.0%

Source: Peter Johnston & Associates, LLC

The Mixed-use category includes properties the Department of Assessment and Taxation classify as “commercial-residential” and “residential-commercial,” meaning there was some combination of these uses in the building (see Map 1-1). The semi-public category included uses owned and operated by nonprofit entities such as civic and religious organizations and safety services, e.g., the fire department. The public category includes properties held by public bodies, including the Town of Willards, the Wicomico County Board of Education, and the US Postal Service. The “other” category includes public rights of way primarily in the streets. Over thirty percent of the land in Willards was vacant in 2017.



Map 1-1 Existing Land Use

Improved residential lots range in size from 3,685 square feet to nearly three acres with an average size of 0.39 acres. The size of almost ninety percent of lots in the Town is between 10,000 and 35,000 square feet or about 0.80 acres, and over one-third of the lots are between 10,000 and 15,000 square feet in size (see Table 1-2).

Table 1-2: Lot Sizes 2017

Lot Size (square feet)	Percent of Total
0 – 4,999	0.54%
5,000 – 9,999	14.59%
10,000 - 14,999	35.41%
15,000 - 19,999	28.38%
20,000 - 24,999	10.27%
25,000 - 29,999	3.78%
30,000 - 34,999	3.24%
35,000 - 39,999	1.89%
40,000 - 44,999	0.81%
45,000 and above	1.62%

Source: Peter Johnston & Associates, LLC

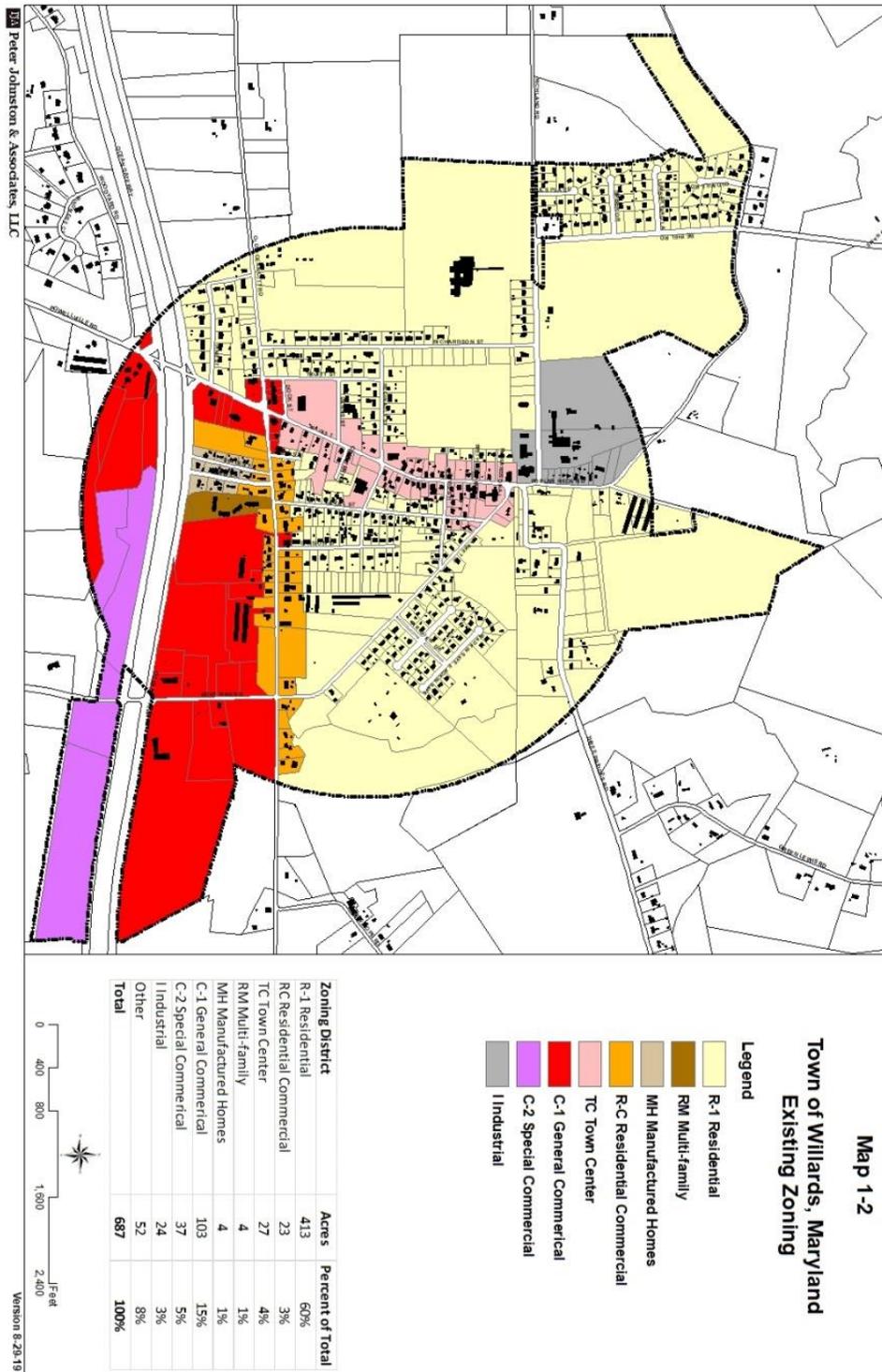
EXISTING ZONING

The Town of Willards is divided into eight zoning districts (See Table 1-3). The R-1 district the most extensive district covering roughly sixty percent of the Town (see Map 1-2). This district is limited to detached single-family units and modular homes on a minimum of 7,000 square foot lot.

Table 1-3: Existing Zoning Coverage

Zoning District	Acres	Percent of Total
R-1 Residential	413	60%
RC Residential Commercial	23	3%
TC Town Center	27	4%
RM Multi-family	4	1%
MH Manufactured Homes	4	1%
C-1 General Commercial	103	15%
C-2 Special Commercial	37	5%
I Industrial	24	3%
Other	52	8%
Total	687	100%

Source: Peter Johnston & Associates, LLC



Map 1-2 Existing Zoning

LAND USE PLAN

The “Land Use Plan” for The Town of Willards divides it into planning areas that reflect existing and/or planned patterns of private land use utilization (see Map 1-3) and community serving land uses Public and Semi-Public and Parks and Open Space. The Land Use Plan defines land use areas wholly located within the current corporate boundaries of Willards.

The land use planning areas recognize existing land use patterns and are responsive to the Goals and Objectives of this Comprehensive Plan. Each planning area emphasizes a type and intensity of land use and allows for an appropriate mix of development consistent with strategies for that specific planning area.

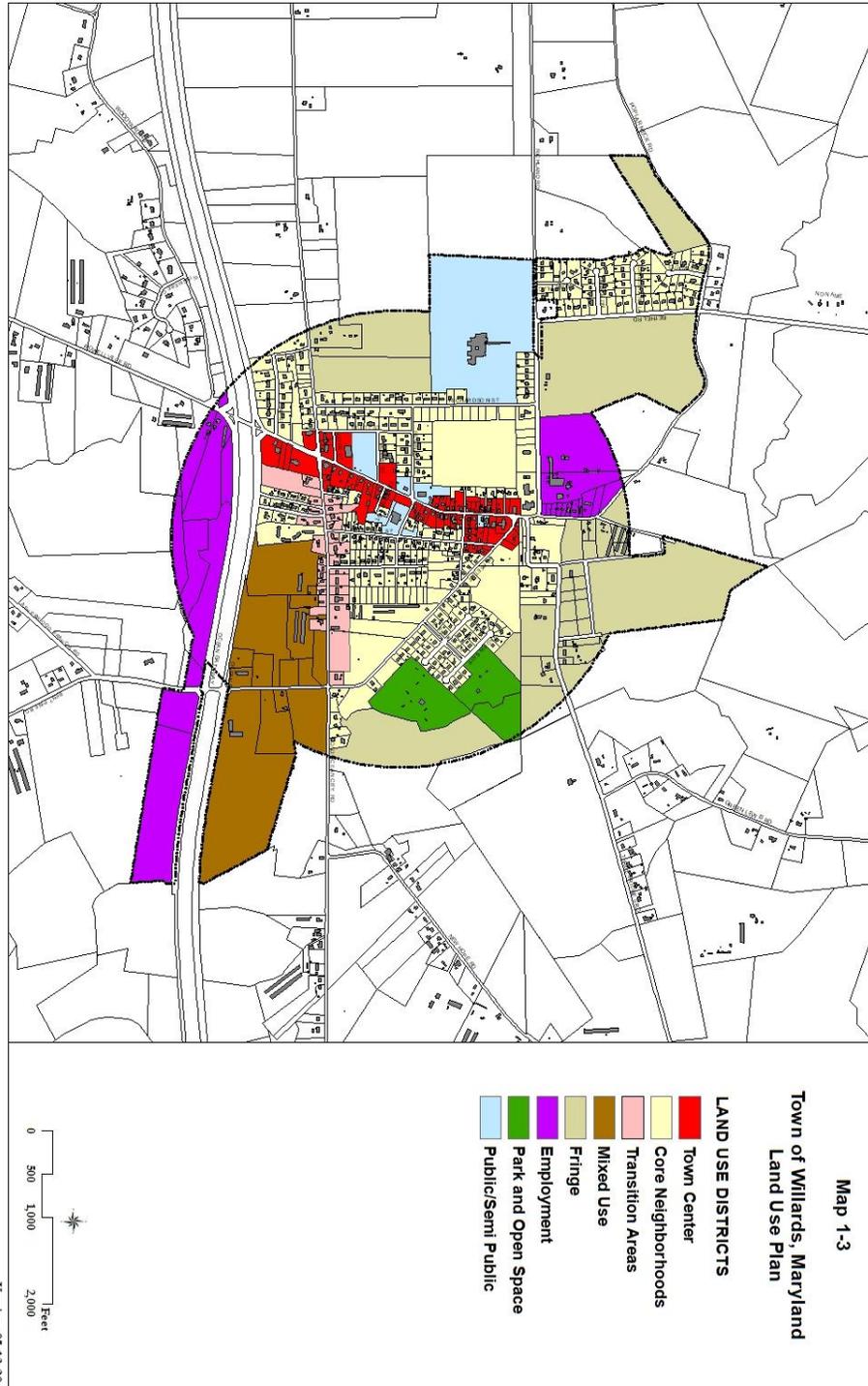
Planning areas will enable The Willards Planning and Zoning Commission and the Town Council to develop zoning ordinances and other building regulations and encouragements to manage growth appropriate to each area. Descriptions of the land use planning areas are intended to serve as a guiding framework for the creation of zoning districts and related development standards, used to implement this Comprehensive Plan as well as Zoning district provisions, including such things as permitted uses, density, and design standards.

Town Center

The Town Center land use district includes 62 properties and encompasses approximately 26 acres. It is the historic Town core and its’ more recent extension past Old Ocean City Road to US 50. The district consists of a mix of traditional residential, small-scale commercial and public/semi-public uses.

The primary land use objective for this area is to reinforce and enhance its role as the central location for community and civic life as well and the Town’s identity. Land use development standards must be flexible to adapt to changing economic conditions and housing demand. Zoning and other development regulations must recognize the existing mix of land uses as an entitlement and permit their continuation and expansion, where appropriate.

Development standards will be crafted to encourage infill and redevelopment of vacant and underutilized sites to maintain an attractive diversity but at the same time, ensure compatibility with adjacent land uses and the existing character of downtown Willards.



Map 1-3 Land Use Plan

The purpose of this planning area is to promote investment and reinvestment in the Town Center, especially small business enterprises. The Town should maximize investment and reinvestment opportunities by allowing residential and nonresidential uses in context-appropriate structures. For this reason, it is an ideal location for the application of streamlined regulations and flexible development processes. For its part, the Town should invest in infrastructure improvements that increase public access, expand public parking, and improve vehicular and pedestrian safety.

Core Neighborhoods

The Core Neighborhood district presents many opportunities for residential infill and redevelopment and is the preferred location for housing growth in the planning period. It targets several large parcels for development that could increase the range of housing options available in Willards. There are 52 unimproved properties in the district, ranging in size from 0.07 to 17 acres. The average parcel size is 0.95 acres.

The Town anticipates a need to allow some home-based enterprises that are precursors to small business start-ups, incubators, or accelerator enterprises. Willards will encourage small business development emanating from the home and ideally creating a demand for flexible workspaces in the Town Center when activities are no longer compatible with the surrounding neighborhood.

Town policies for the Core Neighborhood land use district are to:

- encourage infill and redevelopment that moves housing and properties to the next increment of intensity, e.g., including adding accessory dwelling units and duplex conversions;
- support limited small business enterprises in residential areas;
- target capital investments in infrastructure and improvements (e.g., parks, sidewalks, street lighting, street trees);
- adopt flexible development regulations applicable to priority locations;
- target the district for new and improved public services; and
- utilize public buildings and spaces to create central identity features that strengthen the sense of place.

Mixed-Use

The Mixed-Use land use district encompasses 80 acres and 15 properties ranging in size from 0.25 to 32 acres. This district is where the Town will provide for a broad range of residential and

nonresidential uses allowing maximum flexibility to respond to emerging market demand. District regulations will include provisions for a full variety of residential unit types, business, office, and commercial uses, as well as limited industrial enterprises. All will be subject to Town policies that:

- development densities/intensities ensure a positive return on public investment in infrastructure;
- development design contributes to the Town’s objectives for walkability and place identity; and
- require appropriate gateway improvements.

Transition

The Transition land use district fronting on Old Ocean City Road includes 29 parcels encompassing nearly 19 acres. Parcel sizes range from 0.14 to slightly more than 3 acres. Out of this total, seven parcels ranging in size from 0.14 to three acres are vacant.

The Transitional district includes scattered business and commercial sites located just outside of the Town Center. The plan objective for this district is to recognize the transitional nature of the areas - where existing residential properties have or may be converted to commercial, service, or office uses. The Town intends to allow this transition, provided use minimize impacts to remaining existing residential uses, and address such things as pedestrian and traffic safety, off-street parking, landscaping, lighting, and signage. It also is the intent of the Town to work with the Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration (MDMDOT SHA) and adjacent property owners to improve pedestrian and bicycle access and safety along this corridor as it transitions. Town policies for this district include:

- Allow the most considerable flexibility to convert between residential and nonresidential uses while maintaining building scale and appearance
- Require mixed-use development at supportable intensities
- Target investments in pedestrian improvement and traffic calming features

Employment

The 102-acre Employment land use district includes 39 parcels ranging in size from 0.16 to 17 acres. The average parcel size is slightly less than four acres. The two areas within the community are the land south of U.S. Route 50 at the intersections of Bent Pine Road and

Powellville Road/Main Street and property to the north at the intersection of Poplar Neck and Richland Roads. The latter properties are a designated Priority Funding Area (PFA),

The Town's primary objective for these areas is the development of uses that will provide employment opportunities for residents. The south planning area is appropriate for larger-scale mixed regional commercial development. The Town has established and will continue to apply a highway corridor overlay zone here that includes relevant development standards and design guidelines, applicable to new and existing commercial uses.

The objective for the north employment district is to provide appropriate areas for new employment uses, including light industrial and to recognize existing industrial uses and permit their continuation with proper limitations to minimize their impact on adjacent properties and Town infrastructure.

Development standards and design guidelines for both areas will address such things as access management, road buffers, and landscaping, signage, parking, and lighting, including some multi-family residential uses.

Fringe Area

The Fringe Area contains a mix of large and small parcels. Thirty-five properties total approximately 189 acres in this Land Use District. Properties range in size from as little as 0.17 acres to as much as 44 acres. The average property size is about 5.4 acres. An agricultural assessment applies to three properties totaling approximately 27 acres.

For most of the larger parcels, it would take an extraordinary reversal in the national economy and settlement patterns in Maryland and the Eastern Shore for the Town to expect any substantial development on these properties. Nor is development on these parcels needed to accommodate projected growth through 2040.

These are areas of the Town where development may occur in the planning period but is not expected. These are not the preferred location for new housing, and any premature subdivision at densities that could yield a least 3.5 dwelling units per acre should be prohibited.

Town policies on large parcels the Town are that any development in the Fringe area shall include:

- mixed residential unit types;
- minimum densities that to ensure that the value created is enough to support any long-term obligation the Town accepts for maintaining infrastructure;

- development design that contributes to and enhances neighborhood and community-wide walkability, e.g., sidewalks, bike lanes, trails; and
- development design includes parks and/or civic structures that provide value to property owners, enhance the public realm, and reinforce neighborhood identity.

The Town will encourage maximize opportunities for appropriately scaled residential on small infill lots by:

- targeting infill for capital improvement
- providing maximum regulatory flexibility for targeted infill and redevelopment sites
- allowing mixed residential
- require minimum residential densities

Park and Open Space

One of the land use objectives is to make incremental improvements to the public realm. Parks and open space are an especially important component of the public realm. Appropriately designed and located parks and open space enhance the public realm and add value to surrounding properties.

Public/Semi-Public

Public and semi-public uses, like a park or open space, impact the quality of the public realm. Civic buildings and space, along with parks, greens, and squares, enhance the public realm and provide space for public gatherings, thus supporting the civic society of the community. The Town should plan a system of interconnected parks and civic structures that meet the needs of its residents and impart value to property owners within the community.

IMPLEMENTATION

Strategies for efficient use of land resources

- allowing uses and intensities that produce the highest return on public investments in infrastructure such as water and sewer facilities, streets, and sidewalks without dependence on government subsidy for the standard maintenance;
- ensuring the physical layout enhances the public realm and thus adds value to each property that fronts it;

- making transportation systems more efficient and affordable to create economic opportunity and to enhance the community, neighborhoods;
- allowing mixed-use, with appropriately scaled residential and commercial development;
- recognizing the value of a street comes from its ability to support land use patterns that create a financial return. The street with the highest value is the one that creates the greatest amount of tax revenue with the least amount of public expense over multiple life cycles;
- creating a system of interconnected parks and civic structures that impart value to property owners within the community. Parks, greens, squares, and civic buildings provide value when they enhance the public realm, create memorable landscapes, and provide for spontaneous gatherings;
- encouraging financially-sound business creation and expansion. Where possible, the land use plan should provide appropriate areas for employment uses, including small business and incubator enterprises. Increasing opportunities to live where you work will improve Willards’s overall livability rating;
- planning for diverse ages including park and recreation facilities appropriate for the young, old, and in between; and
- emphasizing community facilities that support community health, especially pedestrian connections and generally ensuring community walkability.

Recommendations

RECOMMENDATION #1: Revise the development regulations to implement the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan.

RECOMMENDATION #2: Revise zoning standards to allow residential units to evolve to the next level of development intensity consistent with the existing lot and development pattern in surrounding neighborhoods.

RECOMMENDATION #3: Allow for infill and redevelopment that may include housing units less than 1,000 square feet (e.g., cottage or pocket development).

RECOMMENDATION #4: Expand the scope of allowable residential use from “home occupations” to encompass more small home-based business activities.

RECOMMENDATION #5: Require open space and other improvements that enhance the public realm and add value to surrounding properties.

RECOMMENDATION #6: Ensure financial solvency. Evaluate the realistic revenues, expenses, assets, and long-term liabilities associated with future development and growth and ensure that costs do not adversely burden current and future residents and Willards' long-term prosperity.

RECOMMENDATION #7: Expand coverage of infill and redevelopment overlay. Facilitate the adaptive reuse of existing buildings.

RECOMMENDATION #8: Streamline current regulations enumerating uses by categories as opposed to listing individual uses and allow more "by-right" uses.

RECOMMENDATION #9: Create flexible processes/procedures to promote investment and reinvestment in existing properties and promote context-sensitive design for infill and redevelopment.

RECOMMENDATION #10: Develop parking requirements appropriate for the use proposed. Allow flexible parking arrangements (e.g., shared parking) where applicable.

RECOMMENDATION #11: Prepare a Capital Improvement Program (CIP) based on a complete inventory of all infrastructures the community is currently obligated to maintain, their condition, an estimate of their remaining life, and approximate replacement/ maintenance costs. Target capital investment in neighborhoods with the highest return on public investment.

RECOMMENDATION #12: Implement the strategies outlined in the town's Sustainable Communities application.

CHAPTER 2 COMMUNITY FACILITIES

INTRODUCTION

Public services and facilities provided by The Town of Willards and other government agencies ensure the health, safety, and welfare of existing and future populations. To ensure that adequate community facilities and services are available when needed, the Town must continually monitor demand and capacity to anticipate when and where expanded capacity will be required.

The preparation of a “Community Facilities Element” in the Comprehensive Plan is a preliminary step in addressing supply and demand for community facilities and services, including water, sewer, emergency services, schools, and parks. This element of the Comprehensive Plan establishes Town policies concerning community facilities and services. It examines existing conditions, and recommends actions the Town should take to ensure an appropriate level of investment in facilities and services that meet the needs of existing and future populations and support economic development.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES GOAL

GOAL: Provide an appropriate array of community facilities and services required to maintain the health, safety, and welfare of the residents of Willards.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES OBJECTIVES

- Ensure that all current and future residents and businesses in Willards have adequate public services necessary to protect the health, safety, and welfare and to promote an attractive environment in which to live and work.
- Expand public facilities and services capacity commensurate with financial capabilities.
- Supply potable drinking water to town residents.
- Dispose of town sewerage waste in an environmentally acceptable manner.
- Assure the provision of community services and facilities to all living and working areas of Willards is accomplished in a manner that is the least disruptive to sensitive environmental areas.
- Encourage the efficient use of natural resources of the area such as water, waterways, and scenic areas for the benefit of all residents of Willards.

- Use public lands and buildings to support the needs of the community.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Police

The Town of Willards has no municipal police force.

Fire Protection and Emergency Services

The Town is served by the Willards Volunteer Fire Department and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Station 8. The fire department, founded in 1927, is housed in a 15,046 square foot structure situated on 2.17 acres located 7384 Main Street (see Map 2-1).

In 2019, the department had 26 active volunteers, including officers and career staff. The Willards Volunteer Fire Department equipment includes two ambulances, two fire engines, one rescue vehicle, two tankers, one brush truck, a traffic control vehicle, and a fire safety trailer.

Fire and EMS calls are dispatched to the station by the Wicomico County Emergency Services Department, which is designated "Central" for all fire and emergency medical services communications in Wicomico. The station serves a radius of approximately four to five miles around Willards and has mutual aid agreements with Pittsville and Powellville for assistance.

Call volume for the Department is considerable, particularly ambulance service. In 2018 the Department responded to 313 calls, 208 or about 66 percent of which were for emergency medical services. By November of 2019, the Department has responded to 257 requests, 196 or about 76 percent were for emergency medical services.

TOWN HALL

The Town of Willards' administrative offices are housed in an approximately 2,200 square foot building situated on a 1.11-acre site in the center of town. Town offices are located adjacent to the water treatment plant and storage tank located at 7344 Main Street.

EDUCATION

Willard's school-age children attend Willards Elementary School for pre-kindergarten through grade 3, Pittsville Elementary/Middle School for grades 4 through 8, and Parkside High School for grades 9 through 12. The reported average student-to-teachers ratio for the school districts is 13:1 for the 2018-2019 school year.

Willards Elementary School

Constructed in 2003, the Willards Elementary School occupies a little over 42 acres on Richland Road in the northwest area of the Town. In 2005, Willards Elementary School underwent renovations and expansion, including a new façade and an additional four classrooms to accommodate increased student enrollment.

Willards Elementary School serves students in kindergarten through third grade. As of 2017, the Wicomico County Board of Education reported enrollment at Willards Elementary of 230, which is about 90 percent of the school's State Rated Capacity (SRC) of 262 students. Wicomico County Board of Education enrollment projections through 2027 show the school operating at or near the capacity. Applicable student-teacher ratio guidelines for Willards Elementary School are 20 students to one teacher for pre-K and 25 students to one teacher for Kindergarten through 3rd grade.

Pittsville Elementary/Middle School

The Pittsville Elementary/Middle School first opened in 1956 and serves grades 4 through 8. The SRC for Pittsville Elementary and Middle School is 505 students. Approximately 398 students attended the Pittsville Elementary/Middle School in 2017. Wicomico County Board of Education projections through 2027 show enrollment averaging about 82 percent of capacity. Applicable student-teacher ratio guidelines for Pittsville Elementary/Middle School are 27 students to one teacher for grades 4 through 8.

Parkside High School

Parkside High School, located at 1015 Beaglin Park Drive in Salisbury, serves Willards students in grades 9 through 12. Parkside High School SRC of 944. According to the Wicomico County Board of Education projections, enrollment will average more than 125 percent of capacity through 2027. This facility was rated number three on the Board of Education's Facility Needs Index, Major Capital Improvement, and number five on the Board's Facility Needs Index Systemic. Applicable student-teacher ratio guidelines for Parkville High School are 27 students to one teacher for grades 9 through 12.

Higher Education

Higher education facilities available to the residents of Willards include Worcester-Wicomico (Wor-Wic) Community College and Salisbury University, both located in Salisbury, as well as the University of Maryland, Eastern Shore campus located in nearby Somerset County. The Community College serves the postsecondary vocational and technical education needs of the residents of Worcester and Wicomico counties. It offers for-credit programs in several areas, including accounting and business, computer studies, construction engineering technology,

criminal justice, nursing, and radiologic technology, education, and hotel-motel-restaurant management. Salisbury University is a regionally accredited, four-year comprehensive university that offers 52 different undergraduate and graduate degree programs in liberal arts, sciences, and professional fields.

PARK AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

The largest parks in The Town of Willards are the East Side Youth Sports Complex (ESYC) and Willards Recreation Area/Park. The ESYC, contiguous to Willards Recreation Area/Park, is owned by Wicomico County. The ESYC occupies approximately 12 acres on West Adkins Avenue (see Map 2-3). Facilities here include two youth baseball fields, one youth softball field, a soccer field, a concession stand with a meeting area and restrooms, and a maintenance building. Willards Recreation Area/Park is owned by the Town and totals approximately 9 acres. Facilities include a softball field, basketball court, baseball fields, a multi-use field, stadium seating, playground, picnic area, concession stand, and public restrooms.

According to the 2017 Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks and Open Space Plan, “a notable acquisition goal includes 3 acres of land to accommodate additional parking needs at the Eastside Youth Sports Complex. As noted in Chapter 3, the Eastside Youth Sports Complex is the major County Park for east side residents and is relied upon as a secondary site for regional and national tournament events sponsored by the Department. Current parking is insufficient to meet the demand for high-volume events, which creates issues with neighbors and residents. The County will attempt to address this need before the adoption of the next Plan.”⁵ Other proposed capital improvements include replacing basketball courts and the addition of a playground module at Willards Recreation Area/Park.

Willards Elementary School also serves as a park site for the community and has a playground, a baseball diamond, a basketball court, and a playlot.

Ideally, parks are located within a convenient walking distance of residential neighborhoods. Areas of the Town need better access to park facilities. One strategy that the Town can employ is to require new developments to set aside land for neighborhood parks.

⁵ 2017 Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks and Open Space Plan



Map

2-1

Community Facilities

WATER AND SEWER FACILITIES

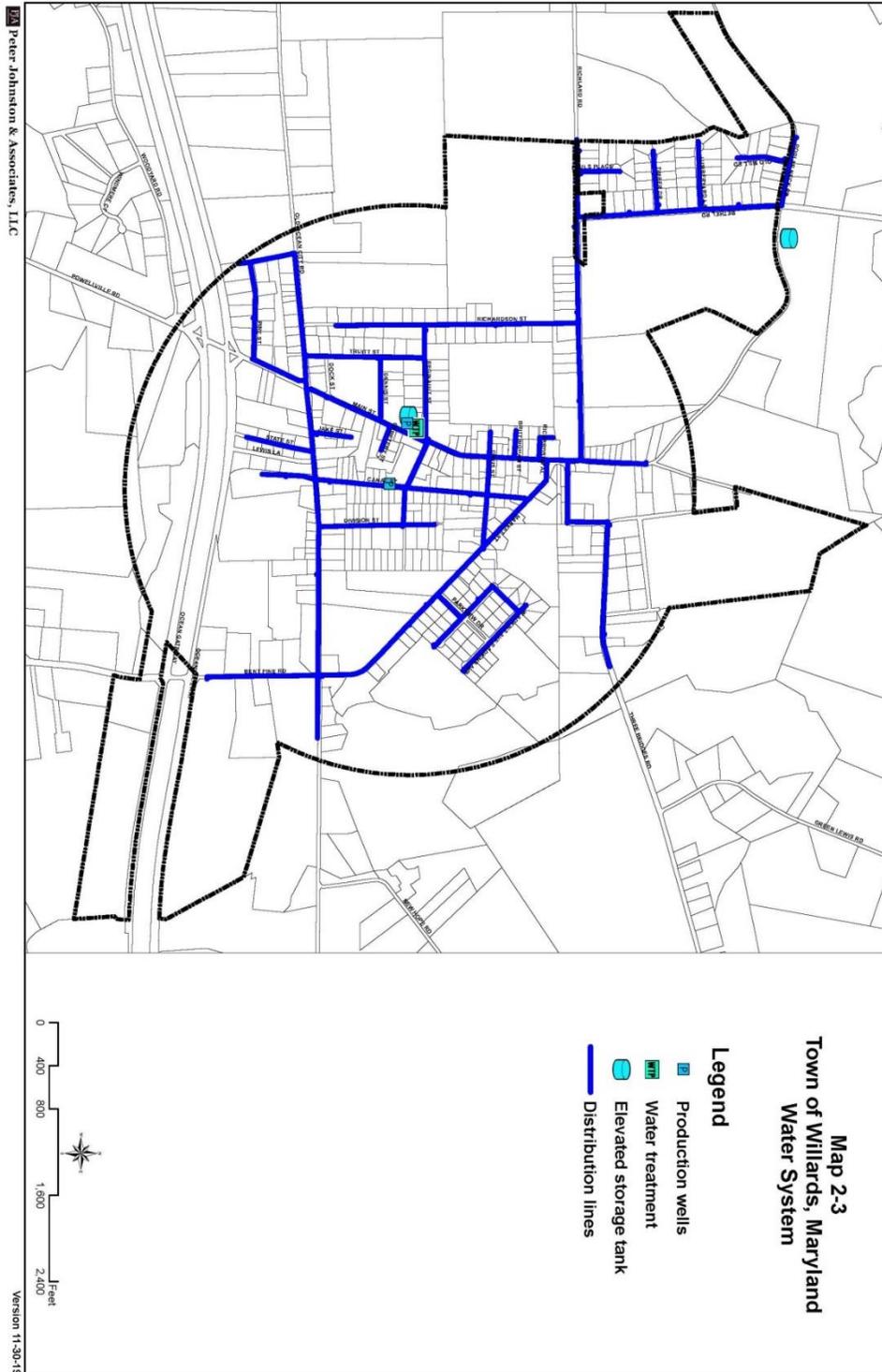
Sewer

The Willards' wastewater treatment system currently serves 450 residential, five industrial, and 20 commercial accounts within the corporate limits. The current average daily flows for 2017 and 2018 were approximately 73,000 gpd with a high in 2017 of nearly 78,000 gpd. The wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) is an ENR non-significant WWTP with a design capacity of 0.2 MGD and less than 0.5 MGD discharging into the Chesapeake Bay Water Quality Segment-02-13-02-03 (Upper Pocomoke River Area) watershed. Chapter 5, Water Resources provides additional details concerning the wastewater treatment system.

Water

The existing water system is a municipally owned central water system and treatment facility located at the corner of Reginault Street and Main Street (see Map 2-3). The overall system is composed of a water treatment plant, two pumping stations, and approximately six miles of 6-8-inch pipe. Also, there are two 125,000-gallon storage tanks to provide storage and maintain static pressure for the system.

The town's wells draw groundwater from the lower Manokin Aquifer. There are three wells, each drilled to the depth of 320 feet. Each well is 8-inches in diameter and has a deep well submersible pump that has a pumping rate of 145 gallons per minute (gpm) capable of supplying a maximum of 208,800 gallons per day (gpd). Chapter 5, Water Resources provides additional details concerning the water system.



Map 2-3 Water System

PRIORITY FUNDING AREA (PFA)

Priority Funding Areas are a mechanism to coordinate state and local government efforts to support economic development and new growth. PFA's are existing communities and places designated by local governments, indicating where they want State investment to support future growth. Growth-related projects covered by the legislation include most state programs that encourage or support growth and development such as highways, sewer and water construction, economic development assistance and state leases, or construction of new office facilities. Funding for projects in municipalities, other existing communities, industrial areas, and planned growth areas designated by counties receive priority for state funding over other projects.

Two Priority Funding Area (PFA) categories on Map 2-4 include a Municipal Priority Funding Area and a Priority Funding Area. The Municipal Priority Funding Area (MPFA) is the area designated by The Town of Willards and certified by the State as being eligible for State-funded projects per the State Finance and Procurement Article. The Priority Funding Area (PFA) is an existing industrial land that qualifies for PFA designation. When new areas are annexed, they will be submitted for PFA certification by the State when the Town has completed appropriate feasibility studies concerning public facilities and services and when construction permits are at-hand and construction phasing determined.

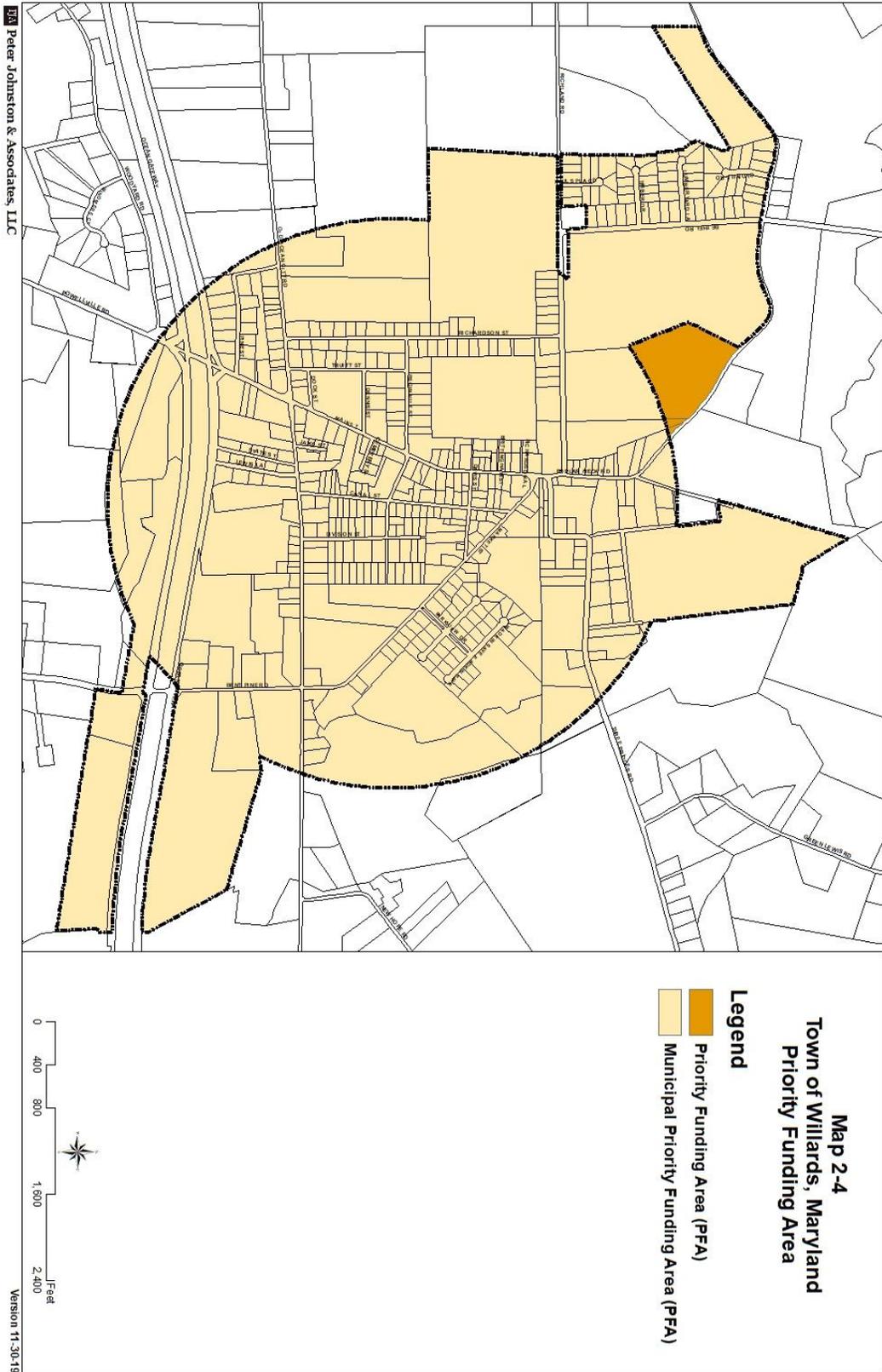
IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION #1: Plan on annexing the Town's existing wastewater treatment site (WWTP), which currently lies outside corporate boundaries. This area can be added in the future to provide Willards with flexibility for WWTP upgrades.

RECOMMENDATION #2: Regularly assess the need for additional support from the Wicomico County Sheriff's Department and/or the need to establish a Willards' police department as the Town's population increases.

RECOMMENDATION #3: Establish new neighborhood parks throughout the town so that residents of that area will be within quick and easy walking distance of a park area. As part of this recommendation require new developments to set aside land for neighborhood parks. These facilities should be centrally located for adjacent neighborhoods and easily accessible (pedestrians and vehicles) from anywhere within the Town.

RECOMMENDATION #4. Conduct a detailed analysis of the public and private value-added and the return on investment associated with all capital expenditures for new and expanded community facilities and services.



Map 2-4 Priority Funding Area

CHAPTER 3 MUNICIPAL GROWTH

INTRODUCTION

The Municipal Growth Element examines the interrelationships among land use, population growth, and impacts on public facilities and services associated with the Town's projected growth. With a better understanding of the multi-dimensional implications of land use and population change, Town officials will have a more robust basis for setting land use and growth management policies. In preparing the Municipal Growth Element, the Town intends to evaluate potential future patterns of growth and development in Willards and develop strategies to address associated impacts on facilities, services, and infrastructure.

MUNICIPAL GROWTH OBJECTIVES

- Address potential impacts on facilities, services, and infrastructure associated with future patterns of growth and development in The Town of Willards.
- Perform a detailed impact analysis of new growth and development on public services, facilities, and infrastructure.
- Identify potential impacts of growth and development to be addressed in the Town's Capital Improvements Program (CIP).
- Identify priority infill and redevelopment areas.
- Improve inter-jurisdictional initiatives with Wicomico County to coordinate growth and development for effective growth management.
- Update Town policies, processes, and regulations to address infill and redevelopment issues and opportunities.

GROWTH TRENDS & PATTERNS

Except for the decade 1970 to 1980, approximately one percent of Wicomico County's population resided in the Town of Willards in the sixty years beginning in 1950 to the most recent Census count (2010). However, Willards' population capture rate in the period was more uneven than that of the County. While the County experienced positive population growth throughout the decades, Willards' population declined by nearly seven percent in the 1960 to 1970 period, increased significantly in the 1990 and 2000 decades, and only slightly increased in the 2000 to 2010 period (see Table 3-1). The relative percentage of the Wicomico County population residing in Willard has remained relatively constant through 2018, according to U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division population estimates.

Table 3-1: Historic Population Growth – Wicomico County and Town of Willards

Jurisdiction	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
Wicomico County	39,641	49,050	54,236	64,540	74,339	84,644	98,733
Willards	464	531	494	540	708	938	958
% of County Population	1.17%	1.08%	0.91%	0.84%	0.95%	1.11%	0.97%
Percent Increase							
Wicomico County	--	23.74%	10.57%	19.00%	15.18%	13.86%	16.65%
Willards	--	14.44%	-6.97%	9.31%	31.11%	32.49%	2.13%

Source: Maryland Department of Planning, 2007: 1990-2000 U.S. Census – Historic Census Data.

POPULATION AND HOUSING SCENARIOS

Population Projections

Two potential growth scenarios in the planning period 2020-2040 provide the basis for the analysis of potential impacts. The two scenarios assume slightly different future trends that cover a range of potentials (see Table 3-2). Rejected was a scenario based on a 1.93 percent average yearly growth, the Town's historical population growth trend in the period 1980 to 2010.

Scenario 1 assumes population growth based on a constant 0.97 percent share of County population after 2020 and factoring in Census Bureau population estimates through 2018. This scenario is the result of an annual population growth rate of 0.62 percent or about half the rate projected in the period for Wicomico County by the Maryland Department of Planning.

Scenario 2 assumes an annual growth rate of 0.45 percent, a rate more reflective of recent population growth trends in Willards as recorded the Census Bureau annual population estimates since 2010. This scenario assumes a substantial drop off in residential construction and subdivision activity in the Town.

Table 3-2: 2040 Population Projection Scenarios

	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	Change	Average Annual
Willards, shift share	958	989	1,030	1,081	1,147	1,190	1,229	271	0.62%
Willards, slow growth	958	987	1,017	1,048	1,079	1,112	1,146	188	0.45%

Source: Peter Johnston & Associates, LLC

Dwelling Unit Projections

The average household size, a surrogate multiplier for estimating the number of dwelling units, defines housing stock added to accommodate projected growth in each scenario. It is not a perfect indicator as some population growth may locate in housing that is currently vacant. For

purposes of assessing alternative population growth scenarios, the 2010 vacancy rate for Willards, 10.6 percent, is held constant.

Estimates provided by the Maryland Department of Planning suggest that the average household size in Willards and Wicomico County will decrease in the planning period. The 2010 Census recorded an average household size in Wicomico County of slightly more than 2.53. The average for Willards was 2.69 persons per household. The average household size for Wicomico County is projected to decrease during the planning period to 2.47 persons per household.⁶ Should Willards experience a decreasing average household size by a similar rate, the average household size by 2040 will fall to approximately 2.68 persons per household. These slightly declining household size values present a generator to estimate the number of potential dwelling units added in the planning period (see Table 3-3).

Occupied dwelling units are the critical factor for assessing the impacts of increased demand for community facilities and services; however, to evaluate the potential effects associated with the demand placed on services and facilities, all dwelling units are assumed occupied. The two population and housing scenarios considered could increase the housing stock in Willards as much as 101 units in Scenario 1, 90 of which are assumed occupied. Scenario 2 increases the Town housing stock by 70 dwelling units, 63 considered occupied.

Table 3-3: Dwelling Unit Projection Scenarios

	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	Change
Scenario 1								
Dwelling Units	398	410	425	444	468	485	499	101
Occupied Dwelling Units	356	366	380	397	419	433	446	90
Annual Average	--	2	3	3	4	3	3	
Scenario 2								
Dwelling Units	398	409	420	432	443	455	468	70
Occupied Dwelling Units	356	366	376	386	396	407	419	63
Annual Average	--	2	2	2	2	2	2	

Source: Peter Johnston & Associates, LLC

⁶ Maryland Department of Planning, Projections and State Data Center, August 2017

CAPACITY ANALYSIS

Vacant and Underutilized Land

Each of the population and housing scenarios outlined raises the question, is there enough vacant or underutilized land on which to accommodate additional dwelling units? A corollary consideration is what constitutes developable commercial and employment land?

Including vacant and underutilized land, Willards has 390 acres of land within its corporate boundaries on which to accommodate the projected population and dwelling unit increases. Over 152 acres of vacant and underutilized land, including 95 acres of residential and 57 acres of commercial land (see Map 3-1), are served by the existing water and sewer system (see Table 3-4).

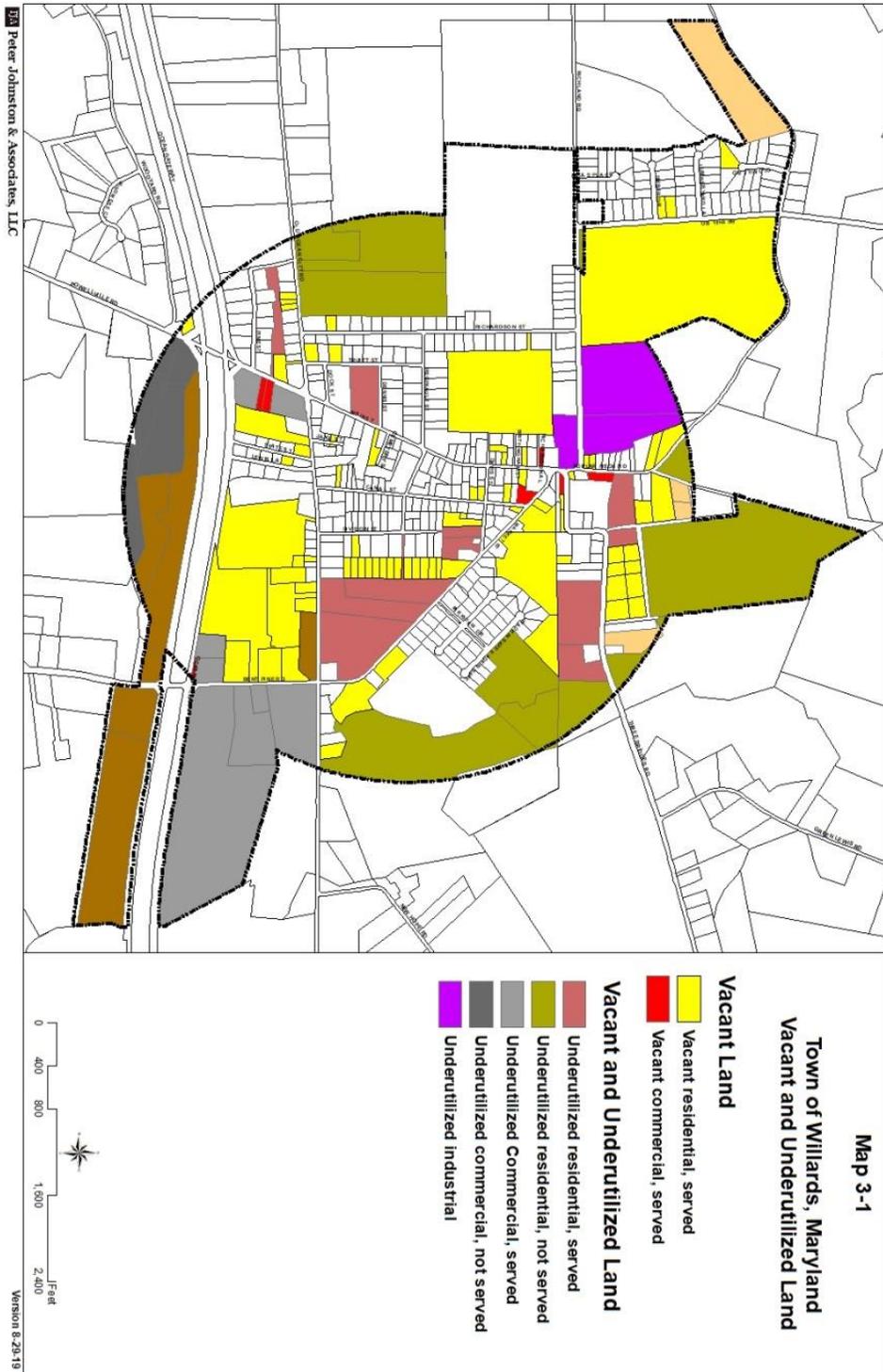
Table 3-4: Residential and nonresidential land development capacity

Served by water and sewer	Acres
Vacant residential	67
Underutilized residential	28
Vacant commercial	6
Underutilized commercial	51
Total	152
Not served by water and sewer	
Vacant residential	14
Underutilized residential	154
Vacant commercial	55
Underutilized commercial	15
Total	238
Combined total	390

Source: Peter Johnston & Associates, LLC

Development Capacity

Evaluating development capacity rests on assumptions. For residential capacity, the estimates are about square feet of land needed per dwelling unit factoring in such things as land for streets and utilities and stormwater management features. A seven thousand square foot lot size for residential units is the current required minimum. A twenty percent factor accounts for off-site land necessary for improvements or 8,400 square feet per unit; the factor applied to estimate the capacity for residential development on vacant and underutilized residential land served with public water and sewer.



Map 3-1 Vacant and Underutilized Land

The 2015 average floor area ratio in Willards is 6,534 square feet of floor area for every acre of developed commercial land. The current ratio of commercial floor area to population is sixty square feet per capita. Utilizing these 2015 ratios as the basis, the following assumptions underlie estimates of demand for commercial development:

- each acre of commercial land has capacity for 6,534 square feet of floor area (floor area ratio = 01.5), and
- each new resident will create demand for an additional sixty square feet of commercial floor area (the service level).

Table 3-5 summarizes the results of the capacity analysis for land currently served with public water and sewer. What is apparent is that Willards has the adequate land capacity to accommodate projected population and dwelling unit increases outlined in the two growth scenarios. Almost 500 dwelling units can be provided on vacant and underutilized land zoned for residential use and already served with public water and sewer. Adding in the empty and underutilized residential property not served with public water and sewer, the total or build-out capacity for residential units is over thirteen hundred units.

In areas served with public water and sewer, the Town could accommodate an additional 370,000 square feet of commercial floor area. Commercial development capacity rises to over eight hundred and twenty-five thousand square feet of floor area factoring in vacant and underutilized properties.

There are twenty-four acres of the underutilized industrially zoned property served with public water and sewer. The current floor area ratio is less than 0.009. If these properties redevelopment at a more efficient floor area ratio, e.g., 010, the Town has adequate land to accommodate over one hundred thousand square feet of industrial use.

Table 3-5: Residential and nonresidential development capacity

Served by water and sewer	Acres	Dwellings	Floor area
- Vacant residential	67	347	
- Underutilized residential	28	147	
- Vacant commercial	6		37,122
- Underutilized commercial	51		333,497
Total	152	495	370,619
Not served by water and sewer			
- Vacant residential	14	73	
- Underutilized residential	147	761	
- Vacant commercial	55		362,165
- Underutilized commercial	15		94,925
Total	231	834	457,090
Combined total	383	1,329	827,709

Table 3-5: Residential and nonresidential development capacity

Source: Peter Johnston & Associates, LLC

FUTURE GROWTH AREAS

Annexation to provide land for future growth is not a priority for Willards during the planning period, and the Town has no specific annexation plan. Before annexing any land, the Town will initiate appropriate amendments to this Comprehensive Plan, including the addition of an Annexation Plan. Willards will follow the procedural requirements for plan updates and annexation established in state law, including those of Maryland House Bill 1141. This process will ensure that the proposed annexation is consistent with the goals and objectives of the Town’s Comprehensive Plan. It also will ensure that appropriate consideration for the adequacy of public facilities and services and the Town’s rate of return on committed infrastructure investments. County and state agencies will be allowed to comment on such proceedings. All annexations will be subject to the following policies to ensure proper growth patterns and fiscal responsibility:

- Annexed areas will be contiguous to the corporate limits and create a natural extension of the Town's boundaries.
- Annexation will not result in public expenditures higher than anticipated revenues.
- The provision of Town services will be a condition of annexation, and areas desiring Town services will be studied to determine the cost-effectiveness of annexation before servicing.
- Zoning of the annexed areas is consistent with the Land Use Plan and other recommendations contained in this Comprehensive Plan.
- Depending on the size of the proposed annexation, the Town may require an applicant to complete studies addressing the potential impacts of such development on Town staffing and finances, traffic, and the provision of County facilities and services, where appropriate. Also, applicants proposing annexation will prepare an “Environmental Impact Assessment” that includes a discussion of proposed strategies to address the environmental protection needs for the growth area and its surrounding environs.
- An Annexation Agreement will establish the conditions applicable to any annexation and, if appropriate, will be reflected in a “Developers Rights and Responsibility Agreement” (DRRA).

GROWTH IMPACTS

Population growth will have impacts on public services and facilities provided by The Town of Willards and Wicomico County. Table 3-6 summarizes the estimated potential effects on public facilities and services associated with planned developments and commercial infill and

redevelopment in Willards during the planning period. Impacts project dwelling units, population increases, sewer, and water demand, as well as other public facilities and services such as Town administrative and public works space, schools, libraries, police, recreation land demand, and fire and rescue (emergency services).

Public Schools: Either scenario implies capital and operating increases affecting schools serving Willards, are all operating near or over capacity, especially Parkside High.

Library: There are no library facilities in Willards. The analysis suggests that the population of Willards will not support a separate library facility under either scenario. Fortunately, the residents of Willards are within an easy drive of the Wicomico County Public Library in Salisbury, Maryland. Also, the Wicomico County Capital Improvements Program includes \$2.9 million in funding for the planning and construction of a new Pittsville Branch Library in the period FY 22 through FY23.

Recreation Land: Willards currently has 21 acres of parkland in the Town. Projected impacts indicate an additional 8 acres of recreation land is needed. More important than the number of acres is the need to provide park and recreation land where it is easily accessible to and serves the needs of the surrounding neighborhoods. Primary considerations for the location and types of the new park and recreation land provide are its positive effects on community health and walkability and its ability to enhance surrounding property values.

Public Safety: Wicomico County Department of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and the Willards Volunteer Fire Department provide primary fire and emergency medical services to Willards. The Wicomico County Sheriff's Department and the Maryland State Police protection provide police services.

The projected increase in the Town's population only slightly impacted police and emergency services. Based on industry standards for calculating staffing levels of emergency services personnel, one additional police officer would be required. Based on current service levels, up to seven additional volunteers, and no additional equipment or storage area are needed to serve the projected increase in population in either scenario.

Town Administrative Offices & Public Works Space: Willards recently constructed a 2,200 square foot town hall that provides approximately 2.3 square feet of floor area per capita. Projected space needs are based on the current service level and imply an additional 400 to 600 square feet of building space. No other administrative staff is required under either scenario.

Water and Sewer: The Willards Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) and water system have adequate capacity to support the projected population and economic growth of the Town through the planning period.

Table 3-6: Estimated impacts of growth on public facilities and services - 2040

GROWTH FACTORS	SCENARIO 1	SCENARIO 2	MEASUREMENT UNIT
- Dwelling Units	101	70	New dwellings
- Population	271	188	Population increase
ADDITIONAL FACILITY/SERVICE DEMAND			
SCHOOLS			
Elementary School			
- Students	27	19	New Students
- Teachers	1.1	0.8	Additional Teachers
Middle School			
- Students	14	9	New Students
- Teachers	0.5	0.4	Additional Teachers
High School			
- Students	3	2	New Students
- Teachers	0.1	0.1	Additional Teachers
TOWN ADMINISTRATION			
- Personnel	0.8	0.6	Personnel
- Facilities (GFA)	622	432	Building Space
LIBRARY			
- Personnel	2	2	Personnel
- New facility (GFA)	798	744	Building Space
RECREATION LAND)			
- Park land	8	6	Acres
FIRE & RESCUE			
- Personnel	7	5	Personnel
- Facilities (GFA)	4,256	2,953	Building Space
- Tank trucks	0.6	0.4	
- Engines	0.6	0.4	
- Ambulances	0.3	0.2	
SEWER & WATER			
RESIDENTIAL			
- Sewer flows	25,250	17,500	GPPD gallons per person per day
- Water demand	25,250	17,500	GPPD gallons per person per day
COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL			
- Sewer	163	113	GPD
- Water	163	113	GPD
EXISTING AVERAGE DAILY			
- Sewer flows	78,000	78,000	
- Water demand	78,000	78,000	
Total			
- Sewer flows	25,413	17,613	Gallons Per Day (GPD)
-Water demand	25,413	17,613	Gallons Per Day (GPD)
Capacity			

Table 3-6: Estimated impacts of growth on public facilities and services - 2040

GROWTH FACTORS	SCENARIO 1	SCENARIO 2	MEASUREMENT UNIT
- Sewer	250,000	250,000	Gallons Per Day (GPD)
-Water well capacity	173,000	173,000	Gallons Per Day (GPD)
- Water storage capacity	250,000	250,000	Gallons Per Day (GPD)
REMAINING CAPACITY/DEFICIT			
- Sewer	224,587	232,387	Gallons Per Day (GPD)
Water			
- Well capacity	147,587	155,387	Gallons Per Day (GPD)
- Storage	224,587	232,387	Gallons Per Day (GPD)

Source: Peter Johnston & Associates, LLC

Potential Funding Sources

Table 3-7 lists potential funding sources to address the impacts of growth on public facilities and services.

Table 3-7: Potential Funding Sources

Facility/Service	Potential Funding Sources
School Facilities	Property Tax, Excise Tax, Impact Fee, Land Dedication, Federal/State School Construction Funds
Town Administration	
- Facilities	Property Tax, Developers Rights and Responsibilities Agreements-DRRA's, Impact Fees, Grants and Loans
- Services	Property Tax, Service Fees (e.g., zoning certificate fee, inspection fees), Grants
Town Public Works	
- Facilities	Developers Rights and Responsibilities Agreements- DRRA's, Impact Fee, Connection Fees, User Fees, Public Works Agreements-PWA's, Grants and Loans
- Services	Property Tax, Service Fees (e.g., water and sewer charges)
Library Facilities	Property Tax, Excise Tax, Impact Fees, Grants and Loans
Recreation Land	Developers Rights and Responsibilities Agreements- DRRA's, Land Dedication, State Program Open Space (POS)
Fire and Rescue – Non-Profit	
- Facilities	Developers Rights and Responsibilities Agreements- DRRA's, Grants, Public, and Private Contributions
- County Provided Fire and – Rescue	
- Facilities	Property Tax, Excise Tax, Impact Fees, Special Taxes (e.g., fire districts tax), Grants
- Services	Property Tax, Special Taxes (e.g., fire districts tax)
Water and Sewer Facilities	Developers Rights and Responsibilities Agreements- DRRA's, Public Works Agreements-PWA's, Connection Fees, User Charges, Grants and Loans

**SUSTAINABLE GROWTH AND AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION ACT OF 2012
(SB 236)**

On December 10, 2012, the Town of Willards adopted a Growth Tier Map following the requirements outlined in the Sustainable Growth and Agricultural Preservation Act of 2012 (the Act). This map was amended in 2016 (see Map 3-2). Per the Act, Map 3-5, the Town of Willards Growth Tier for SB236, is now incorporated as part of this Comprehensive Plan.⁷

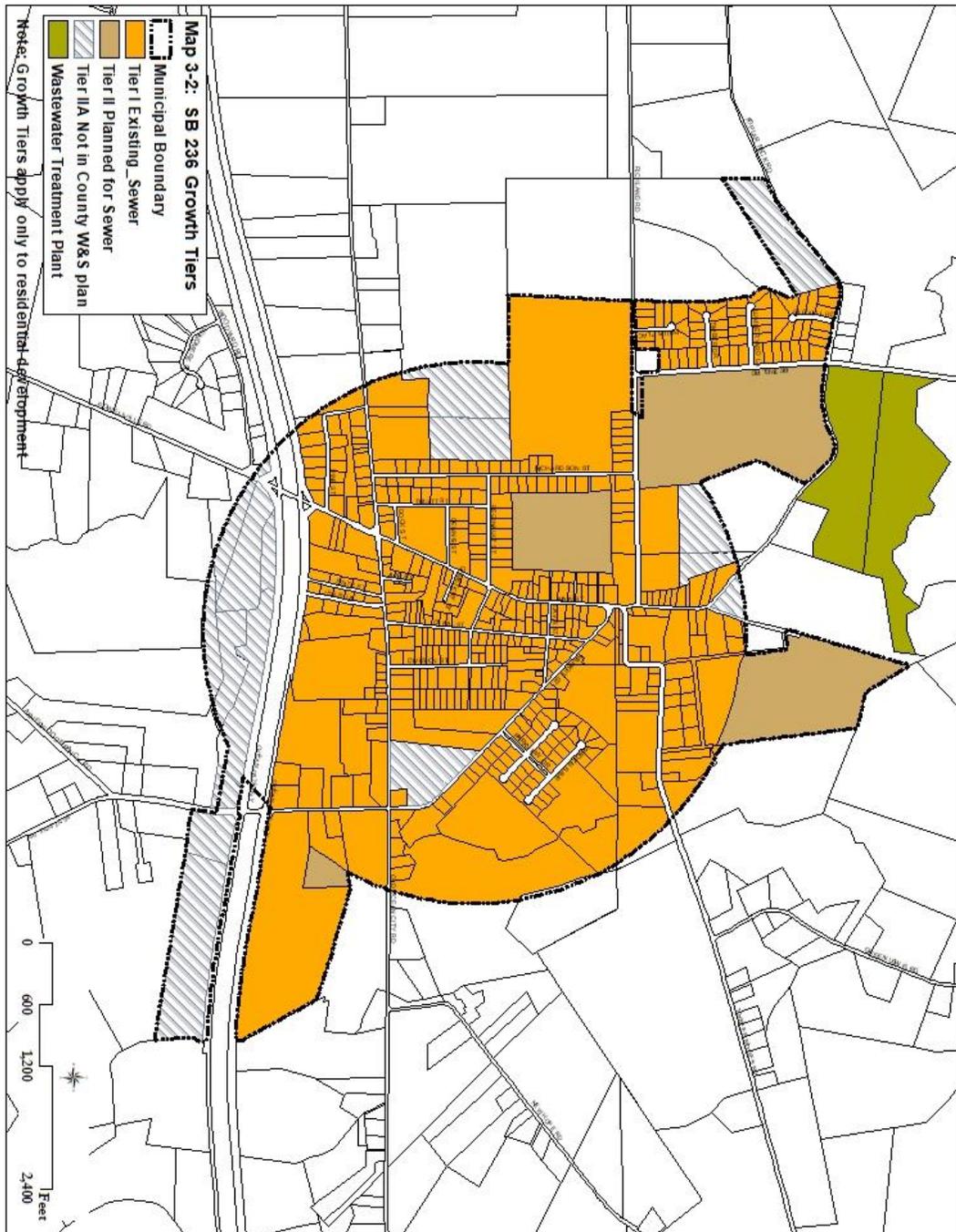
The purpose of the Act is to improve water quality and to encourage smart growth by limiting where major residential subdivisions can be located and establishing parameters for public sewerage system service. The Act outlines four basic Tiers (Tiers I, II, III, and IV) which identify where new major and minor residential subdivisions may locate and what types of sewerage system serve them.

In the Tier designation process, local jurisdictions were encouraged to discuss variations from the four basic Tiers to accommodate local planning objectives consistent with local comprehensive plans. The Town of Willards created a subset of the category Tier II to better conform to existing land use policies and sewer service plans. The Town's Growth Tier Map does not contain any Tier III or Tier IV designations, as is the case for many municipalities in the State.

The Town's Tier I designation depicted encompasses those areas that are within the municipal boundary and are currently shown as an existing sewer service area in the Wicomico County 2010 Comprehensive Water and Sewerage Plan. Tier II designations are those areas in the municipal boundary that are planned for sewer service in the Wicomico County 2010 Comprehensive Water and Sewerage Plan. Tier 2A designations are those areas in the municipal boundary, or within the municipal growth boundary, not yet planned for sewer service in the Wicomico County 2010 Comprehensive Water and Sewerage Plan.

⁷ Town Willards Ordinance 2016-4

Map 3-2 SB 236 Growth Tiers



RURAL BUFFER AND TRANSITION AREA

Much of the unincorporated land surrounding the town is presently agriculture with some scattered low-density residential development along roadways and near municipal peripherals. County zoning for these properties is A-1 Agriculture-Rural and Town Transition, a classification intended to establish a rural/municipal transition district along the periphery of existing incorporated towns.

Rural Buffer

Properties designated Agriculture Resource in the Wicomico County Comprehensive Plan and zoned A-1 Agriculture-Rural by Wicomico County effectively provide Willards a Rural Buffer (Map 3-3) The Rural Buffer encompasses land the County wants to preserve for sustainable agricultural activity. The Rural Buffer is a non-designated growth area intended to be supportive of the agricultural base and rural lifestyle while permitting residential developments that do not require urban services or community water and sewer systems. The primary land uses expected in these areas should be agriculture, forestry, and related activities. District standards that protect agriculture from incompatible residential, commercial, and industrial development and limit residential use to low-intensity development designed to protect natural resource protection and preservation of rural character apply here.

Transition

The Transition area establishes a rural/municipal transition district suitable for commercial development and other uses appropriate in scale to the surrounding environs. Development standards here ensure that development complements the existing character of the area and results in efficient and orderly growth in areas adjacent to Willards that is compatible with the existing town character.

INTER-JURISDICTIONAL COORDINATION AND COOPERATION

The *Economic Development, Planning, and Resource Protection Act of 1992* and later the *Smart and Sustainable Growth Act of 2009* encourages local governments and the State to coordinate their planning and development efforts to achieve the twelve “Visions” of the Act. Local governments must adopt comprehensive plans, which include the State’s “Visions.”

Maryland defines inter-jurisdictional coordination as “...the act of establishing a regular means of communication among officials of two or more political jurisdictions for the purpose of addressing and resolving issues of mutual interest related to the operations, and the future physical, economic and social development of the jurisdictions.” Also, the State further defines the comprehensive planning process as the cornerstone of inter-jurisdictional coordination through the mutual development of policies, goals, and strategies.

“Inter-jurisdictional Coordination and Cooperation” can assist Wicomico County and The Town of Willards to achieve their respective growth management objectives. The Town of Willards is open to working with County officials and staff. Town officials recognize it is in their best interest to help ensure the preservation of the rural areas surrounding the Town. They also understand the role the Town can play in the context of the County’s “Smart Growth” policies.

For this reason, Willards supports the objective of improved inter-jurisdictional coordination with Wicomico County, including cooperative planning and zoning efforts. The County and Willards will work together to determine appropriate coordination procedures. At a minimum, coordination should include informing town officials of any proposed development projects in what the County terms the “Town Transition” area and allowing town officials an opportunity to comment on these projects. Likewise, town officials should inform Wicomico County regarding proposed Town developments in the corporate limits.

Wicomico County and The Willards Planning and Zoning Commissions should meet annually or periodically to discuss planning issues of mutual interest. The Town should work with Wicomico County during the update of the County comprehensive plan to ensure planned development near the Town is consistent with the goals of the *Wicomico County Comprehensive Plan* and the desire and needs of the citizens of Willards to maintain their unique identity as a community.

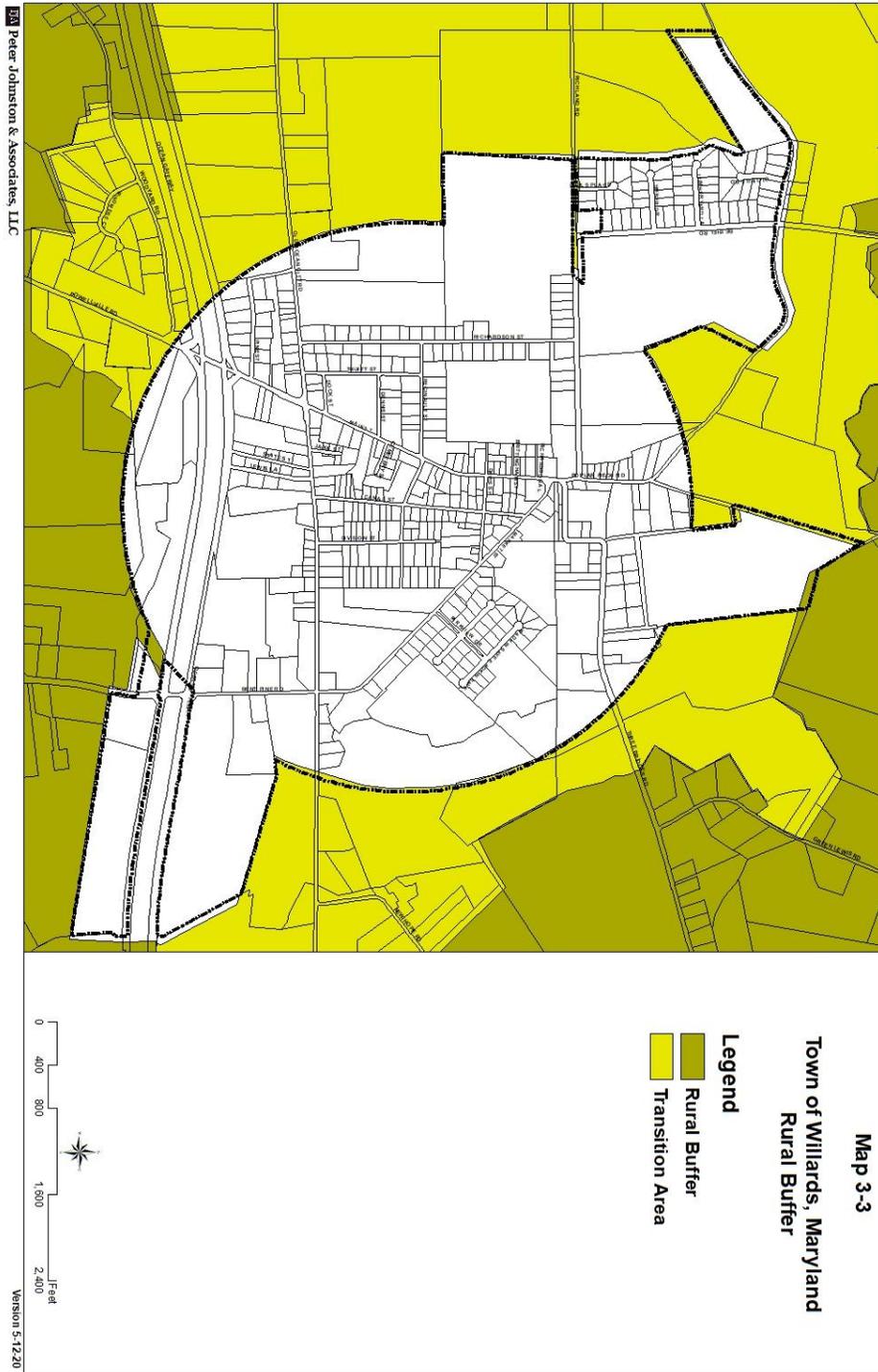
IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION #1: Review, update, and revise development standards, guidelines, regulations, processes, and procedures to achieve consistency with the Comprehensive Plan.

RECOMMENDATION #2: Require a mandatory percentage of open space for new development areas that promote sensitive area protection and passive and active recreation for residents.

RECOMMENDATION #3: Require new planned development to assess their impacts, including fiscal and environmental impacts.

RECOMMENDATION #4: Contain the costs of future development and growth to ensure that costs do not burden current and future residents and businesses. Accordingly, new development should pay for the extension of municipal services and capital improvements resulting from such new development. Be obsessive about accounting for revenues, expenses, assets, and long-term liabilities.



Maps 3-3 Rural Buffer

RECOMMENDATION #5: Emphasize open, transparent, inclusive, and efficient governance, as well as active and forward-thinking engagement with citizens. Use a variety of methods, including social media, to ensure transparency and to involve the public in decisions concerning capital budgeting.

RECOMMENDATION # 6: Reduce dependence on government subsidy for the everyday maintenance of essential infrastructure systems to ensure long-term financial stability.

RECOMMENDATION #7: Promote inter-jurisdictional coordination and future cooperative planning and zoning efforts with Wicomico County.

CHAPTER 4 NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION

Managing land use includes regulating stormwater runoff to prevent flooding and minimize pollutants that reach receiving water in response to identified water quality issues. Best management practices, such as environmental site design and stream buffers, address pollution loadings that affect water and habitat quality. Implementation of these practices along with maintaining natural stream configuration, e.g., natural channelization, eddy and pool formation, and in-stream habitat production, is critical to protecting the quality of natural resources, especially the most sensitive natural areas.

Concern for the conservation of agriculture land, forest, and mineral resources, as well as the protection of sensitive environmental areas, transcend arbitrary boundaries. Issues such as the loss of forest, sedimentation of streams, degradation of receiving waters, and loss of wildlife habitat in the surrounding watersheds and beyond are of concern for all levels of government. The Town of Willards and Wicomico County share responsibility for conserving natural resources and protecting sensitive environmental areas and must be mindful of potential negative impacts on sensitive natural features when planning for future growth, redevelopment, and infill.

Three of the State's Vision statements are relevant to the discussion of natural resource conservation. These are:

- Environmental Protection – Land and water resources, including the Chesapeake Bay and Coastal Bays, are carefully managed to restore and maintain healthy air and water, natural systems, and living resources.
- Resource Conservation – Waterways, forest, agricultural areas, open space, natural systems, and the scenic regions are conserved.
- Stewardship – Government, business entities, and residents are responsible for the creation of sustainable communities by collaborating to balance efficient growth with resource protection.

RESOURCE CONSERVATION GOALS

GOAL: Protect natural resources and sensitive environmental areas from the adverse impacts of land-use change.

RESOURCE CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES

The following are Comprehensive Plan objectives for the conservation of natural resources:

- Provide protection measures for the following areas: 1) Streams and stream buffers; 2) 100-year floodplain; 3) endangered species habitats; and 4) steep slopes.
- Protect fragile groundwater resources.
- Conserve forest and woodland resources and, wherever possible, replenish them through tree conservation measures and replanting programs.
- Ensure that all new development and redevelopment minimize pollutant loadings and runoff from the site through the implementation of stormwater and sediment and erosion control plans.
- Protect and preserve the most valuable remaining ecological lands (Green Infrastructure) in and around Willards and encourage restoration.
- Assess future development proposals considering the site's physical suitability to accommodate development while protecting natural resources.

TOPOGRAPHIC FEATURES

Located in the Atlantic Coastal Plain, the countryside around the town is a broad, gently rolling landscape broken only by the small streams that feed the Pocomoke River. Most of the land in the planning area has been cleared for agricultural uses or is forested. Elevation above sea level in Willards and vicinity ranges from about twenty-five to forty feet above sea level. The overall drainage pattern is generally from the west to east, primarily through existing drainage ditches leading to streams.

SOILS

Many of the soil types in and around Willards are classified by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) as somewhat poorly drained, poorly drained, or very poorly drained. These soil types present challenges for meeting stormwater management requirements.

SENSITIVE AREAS

The *Maryland Economic Growth, Resource Protection, and Planning Act of 1992* added the requirement to the Land Use Article that comprehensive plans contain a "Sensitive Areas Element," which describes how the jurisdiction will protect the following sensitive areas:

- 1) Streams and stream buffers,

- 2) 100-year floodplain,
- 3) Endangered species habitats,
- 4) Steep slopes, and
- 5) Other vulnerable areas, such as wetlands or forested areas that a jurisdiction wants to protect from the adverse impacts of development.
- 6) Agriculture and forest lands intended for resource protection or conservation.

Sensitive Areas Policies

Willards is situated among a wide variety of natural features that should be conserved. These features include wetlands, floodplain, wildlife habitats, creeks, and aquifers, among others. These features help maintain the ecological balance of life and contribute to the quality of our environment, both urban and rural.

Especially critical is the alteration of wetlands and drainage paths resulting from public or private development. Wetlands are important because they are essential to filtration. Adequate drainage is vital to the management of stormwater and the protection of property. Management techniques must balance efficiency with proper control of pollutants carried to receiving streams.

Willards policies for sensitive areas are as follows:

- To the greatest extent possible, direct intensive activities away sensitive environmental areas.
- Implement measures to protect sensitive areas.
- Buffer streams and significant drainage ways where feasible.
- Increase urban tree coverage and urban canopy.

Streams and Stream Buffers

Streams and their buffers are essential resources (see Map 4-1). Streams feed runoff into primary tributaries that provide spawning areas for commercial fish stock and home to countless species of animals and plants. Stream corridors typically include floodplains, wetlands, and wooded slopes that are essential components of the regional ecosystem.

Stream buffers protect water quality and are integral parts of the larger watershed. Enhanced buffering along streams and primary drainage paths is critical for the healthy functioning of the overall hydrologic ecosystem and restoration of the Chesapeake Bay. Buffers serve as protection areas when located adjacent to streams. Buffers reduce sediment, nitrogen, phosphorous, and other runoff pollutants by acting as filters, thus minimizing the potential damage of pollution.

Development near streams may be subject to flooding that could result in the loss of life and/or property. Development can result in reduced forests and natural vegetation cover adjacent to

streams and feeder drainage ways. The cumulative loss of these features reduces the ability of the surrounding land to filter the effects of stormwater runoff.

Buffers serve as protection areas when placed adjacent to streams, help to preserve the biological and hydrological integrity of the stream basin. These areas act as run-off and groundwater pollution control systems by filtering pollutants through the soil and root zone of natural growth. For example, microscopic organisms that inhabit the ground in a forested buffer assist in the decomposition of contaminants, much like microbes in a sewage treatment plant.

100-Year Floodplain

While the protection of life and property provide the fundamental basis for the protection of floodplains, there has been a growing recognition that limiting disturbances within floodplain results in a variety of benefits. Floodplains moderate and store floodwaters absorb wave energies and reduce erosion and sedimentation. Wetlands found within floodplains help maintain water quality, recharge surface water supplies, protect fisheries, and provide habitat and natural corridors for wildlife.

Willards has areas that are prone to flooding during storm surges and heavy rainfall. Development restrictions within the floodplain apply, including ensuring the proper construction of new structures to avoid destruction and loss of property during adverse weather conditions.

Willards participates in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). The Town's Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM), prepared by the FIA and the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, shows flood elevations and outlines risk zones for insurance purposes (see Map 4-1 for approximate coverage). They adopted a revised Town Flood Plain Ordinance that regulates development activities within the floodplain.

Tidal and Non-Tidal Wetlands

Within and surrounding the Town are relatively extensive areas of Palustrine class nontidal wetlands (see Map 4-1). The Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) defines Palustrine systems as "all nontidal wetlands dominated by trees, shrubs, persistent emergents, emergent mosses or lichens, and all such wetlands that occur in tidal areas where salinity due to ocean-derived salts is below 0.5 parts per thousand." Nontidal palustrine wetlands that border tidal wetlands are of moderate to high significance for serving to store water during storm events.

Wildlife Habitat

Sensitive Species Project Review Areas

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources Sensitive Species Project Review Areas (SSPRA) is a statewide vector file showing buffered areas that primarily contain habitat for rare,

threatened, and endangered species and unique natural community types. The coverage area generally includes but does not explicitly delineate, such regulated areas as Natural Heritage Areas, Wetlands of Special State Concern, Colonial Waterbird Colonies, and Habitat Protection Areas. This data layer was created to provide information to local jurisdictions and state agencies to assist with assessing environmental impacts and reviewing potential development projects or land-use changes. This version updates the information included and provides additional information through the "Group" attribute. The Group 2 identifier for the buffered area along the stream segments Burnt Mill and Gordy's branches of the Pocomoke River connotes the presence of State-listed species of concern within the area (see Map 4-2).

Targeted Ecological Areas (TEAs)

Map 4-2 includes Targeted Ecological Areas (TEAs), sensitive and targeted habitat protection areas designated by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. "TEAs are lands and watersheds of high ecological value that have been identified as conservation priorities by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for natural resource protection. These areas represent the most ecologically valuable areas in the State: they are the "best of the best."⁸ TEAs are preferred for conservation funding through Stateside Program Open Space.

Forest Interior Dwelling Species

Large blocks of high-quality forest interior habitat tend to be along tributary stream corridors or in headwater areas for those streams. High-quality Forest Interior Dwelling Species (FIDS) habitat is predominantly mature hardwood or mixed hardwood-pine forest tract at least 100 acres in size, of which forest interior habitat comprises at least 25% of the total forest area. A FIDS habitat with high-quality contiguous interior forest greater than 500 acres are designated as Class 1. Class 2 FIDS is a habitat with a high-quality adjacent interior forest less than 500 acres. Class 3 FIDS is a habitat of 50 acres or less.

These data are only the results of a model depicting where FIDS habitat might occur based on specific criteria. This information is for planning and analysis for the conservation of a group of species called Forest Interior Dwelling Species (FIDS), known to require habitat conditions in the interior of forests for optimal reproduction and survival. The forested areas adjacent to Willards are part of larger forested areas with Class 1, 2, and 3 FIDS habitat designations.

Tree Preservation and Forest Conservation

The Town of Willards has areas of forested land along the perimeters of its easternmost and southernmost boundaries. Smaller pockets of wooded areas lie adjacent to and between residential neighborhoods (see Map 4-3).

⁸ <http://dnrweb.dnr.state.md.us/gis/data/data.asp>

The Forest Conservation Act of 1991 (Natural Resources Article Sections 5-1601-5-1613) was enacted to protect the forests of Maryland by making forest conditions and character an integral part of the site planning process. The Act's purpose is to maximize the benefits of forests and slow the loss of forest land in Maryland while allowing development to take place. The Forest Conservation Act requires that local governments adopt legislation that addresses State requirements outlined in the Act. The Town currently has an agreement with Wicomico County to enforce the County Forest Conservation regulations as its own. Wicomico County implements the Program on behalf of the Town.

Steep Slopes

Steep slopes are inclines of 15% or higher. Usually located along river and stream beds, steep slopes provide an environment that facilitates the movement of soil and pollutants if land disturbances occur. Erosion control is achieved by the regulation of development on steep slopes because such areas represent the most significant opportunity for accelerated soil loss, which carries sedimentation and pollution to streams. There are few steep slopes in Willards as most of the topography in the area is flat.

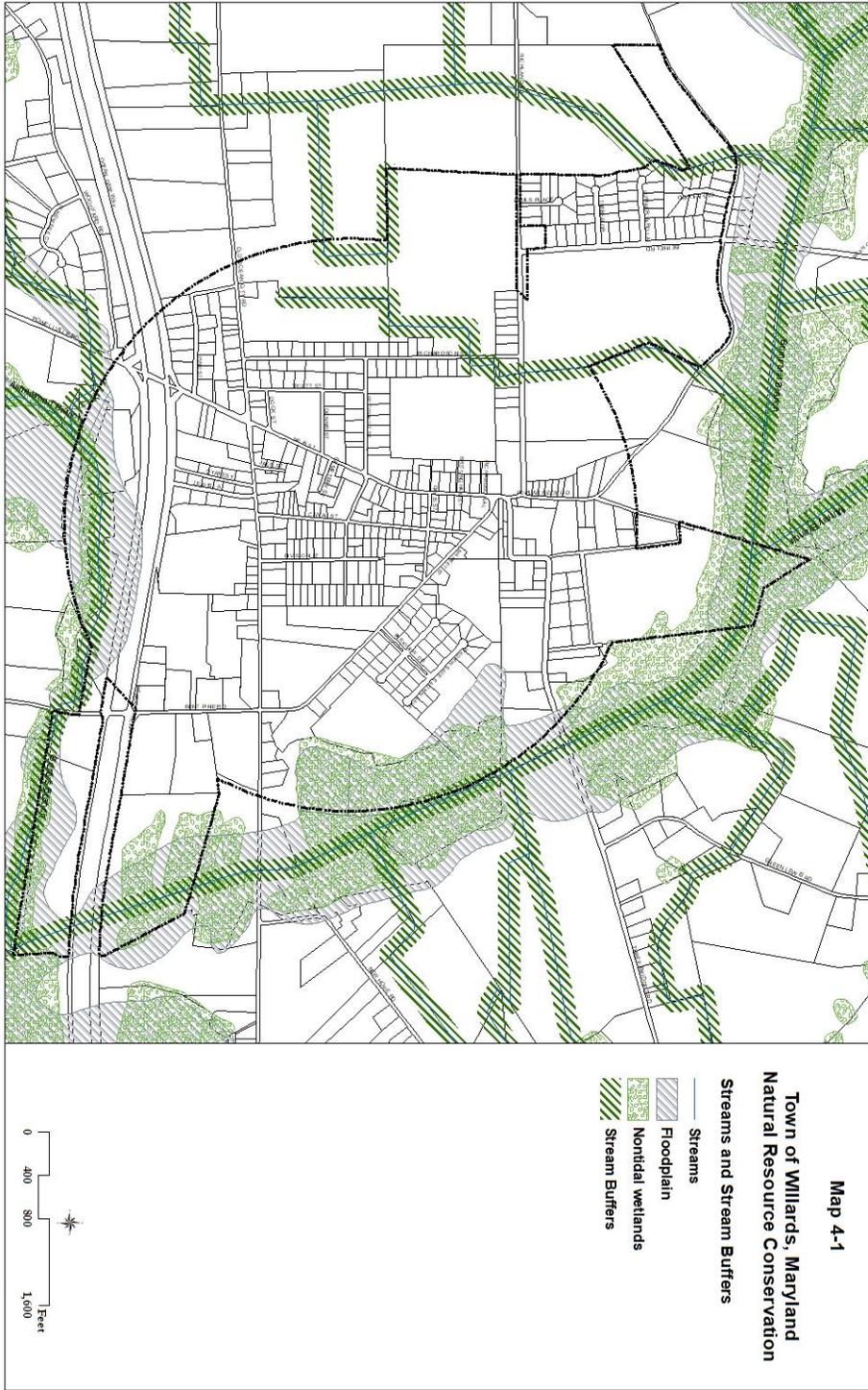
Agricultural Land

A key component of Maryland's efforts to preserve prime agricultural land is the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF). Its primary purpose is to preserve agricultural land to maintain a viable local base of food and fiber production for the present and future citizens of Maryland. Wicomico County Agricultural Land Preservation District Advisory Board and the County Council recommend the designation of agricultural preservation districts and easements approved under the MALF program. There are no Agriculture Districts adjacent to or near Willards.

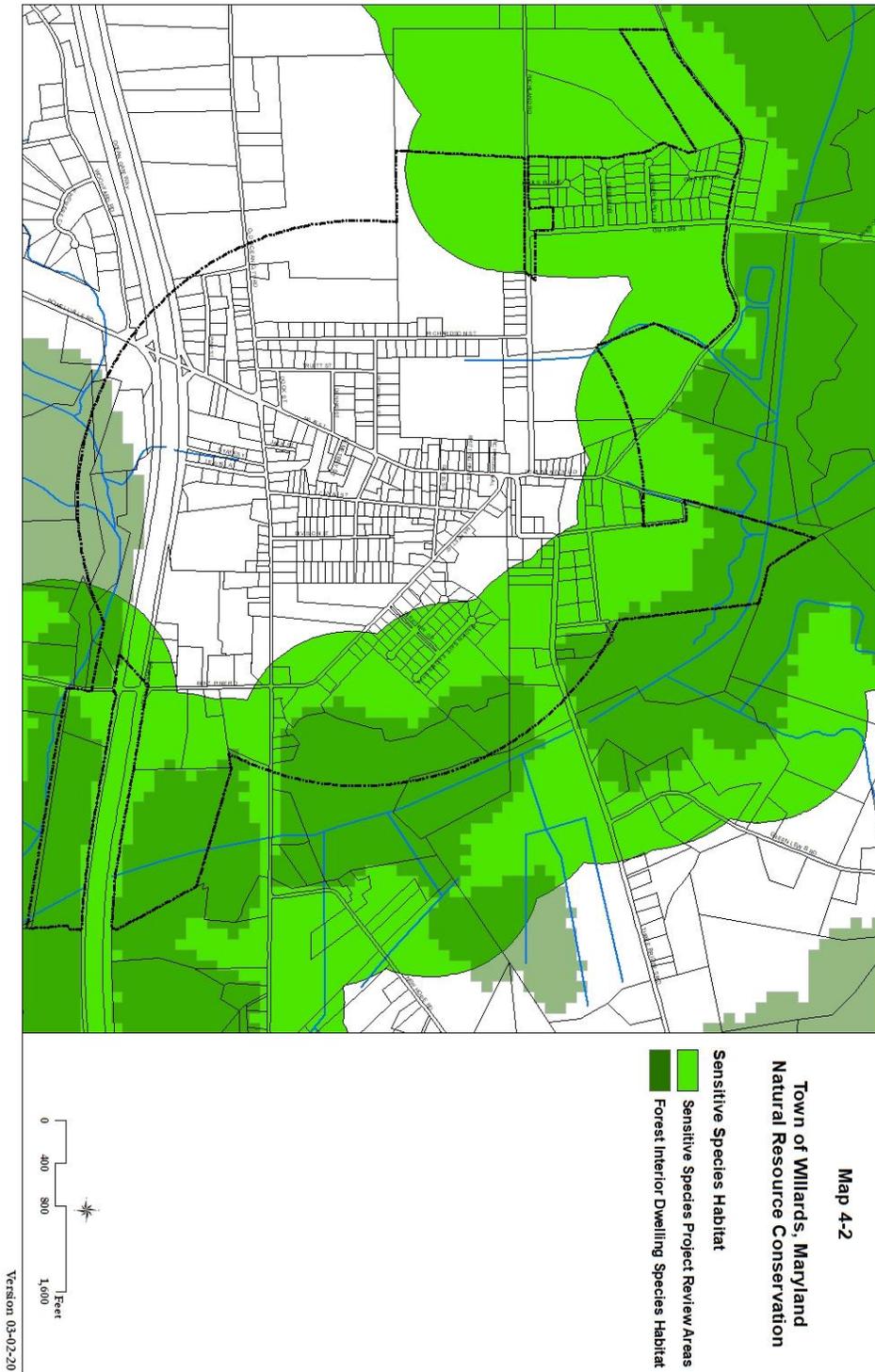
GROUNDWATER

Groundwater resources in The Town of Willards are abundant and well developed. The primary source of water is the aquifer systems under the Eastern Shore. The Pliocene-Pleistocene Aquifer, which occurs at a relatively shallow depth, is used extensively as a source of groundwater supply. The water, however, has high natural iron content. The Pocomoke Aquifer, which occurs at a slightly greater depth, provides a potable water source.

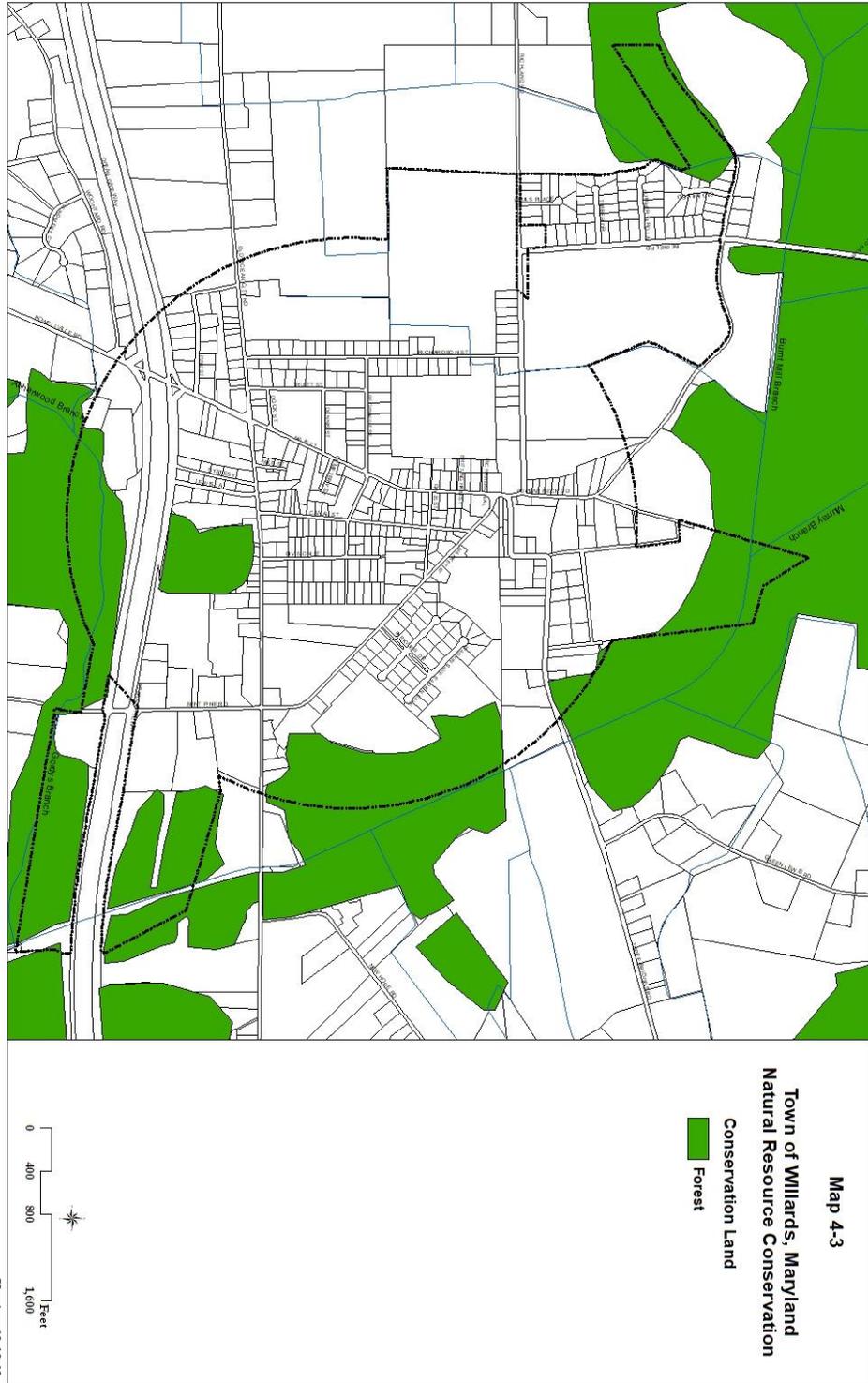
It is essential to protect this source of drinking water. Susceptibility analysis conducted in 2005 by the Maryland Department of the Environment's Water Management Administration determined the Willards water supply was not susceptible to contaminants originating at the land surface due to the protected nature of the confined aquifers it uses.



Map 4-1 Streams and Stream Buffers



Map 4-2 Sensitive Species Habitat



Map 4-3 Conservation Land

MINERAL RESOURCES

The Land Use Article requires the town to include a Mineral Resources Element in its comprehensive plan. Currently, there is no mining activity or any known commercial mineral resources in the vicinity of the Town. Also, the mineral extraction is not a permitted use in any district under the terms of *The Town of Willards Zoning Code*. Should significant mineral or a similar valuable resource, surface, or subsurface, be discovered in Willards or the surrounding area, the Town will work with Wicomico County to ensure appropriate management of extraction activities and processes.

IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION #1: Require that anyone proposing development activities must address the protection of State and federally designated endangered species. The developer must determine through contact with the Town, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and the Maryland Fish, Heritage and Wildlife Administration (MFHWA) whether proposed activities will occur within or adjacent to identified sensitive species habitats and whether the actions will affect the area.

RECOMMENDATION #2: Require activities occurring within or adjacent to sensitive species habitat provide protection measures in the project design. Include a written environmental assessment, including site design plans, and a description of steps to be taken to protect the endangered species. The developer must work with the Maryland Natural Heritage Program in establishing species/site-specific protection measures.

RECOMMENDATION #3: Amend *The Town of Willards Zoning Code and Subdivision Regulations* to incorporate appropriate stream buffers standards along perennial and intermittent streams and primary drainage ways.

RECOMMENDATION #4: Increase canopy coverage with the corporate limits to derive the many benefits of tree planting through programs to retain existing tree cover to the maximum extent practical and increase tree planting along streets and on public land.

CHAPTER 5 WATER RESOURCES

The Water Resources element (WRE) assesses the adequacy of ground and surface water resources and their capacity to meet current and future local needs. The WRE satisfies a mandatory planning requirement mandated by Maryland House Bill 1141 (HB 1141). Specifically, the statutory requirements include the following:

- Identify drinking water and other water resources adequate for the needs of existing and future development proposed.
- Identify suitable receiving waters and land areas to meet the stormwater management as well as the wastewater treatment and disposal needs of existing residents and future development proposed in the land use element of the plan.

The WRE addresses three major water resource topics, including drinking water (both supply and quality), the capacity of receiving waters to accept wastewater discharge, and stormwater runoff. Among other things, preparation of the WRE evaluates water resource capacity limits determines their potential implications for future growth to facilitate the development of appropriate management strategies.

WATER RESOURCES GOALS

The Town of Willards has established the following water resources goals:

GOAL #1: Provide an adequate and safe potable water supply to serve current and future residents.

GOAL #2: Protect water quality in the Upper Pocomoke River Watershed and the Chesapeake Bay.

WATER RESOURCES OBJECTIVES

In pursuit of these goals, Willards has set the following objectives:

- Ensure an adequate and safe potable water supply to serve the residents of Willards now and into the future.
- Implement appropriate measures to restore and protect water quality and meet water quality regulatory requirements in rivers and streams in the Upper Pocomoke River Watershed.

- Work with Wicomico and Worcester Counties and Pittsville to develop watershed planning and management strategies to minimize the impacts of land use and development on water resources.
- Develop Town-wide water conservation methods and policies.

GROUNDWATER RESOURCES

Like most communities on the Eastern Shore, Willards relies on groundwater sources for its drinking water. Willards draws drinking water from the Northern Atlantic Coastal Plain Aquifer System (NACP). The NACP encompasses approximately 50,000 square miles that extend from the North Carolina and South Carolina border to Long Island, New York. As shown in Figure 5-1, the Maryland portion of the aquifer system is bounded in the west by the Fall Line, which separates Piedmont from the Coastal Plain physiographic province. It is bounded in the east by the Atlantic Ocean.⁹

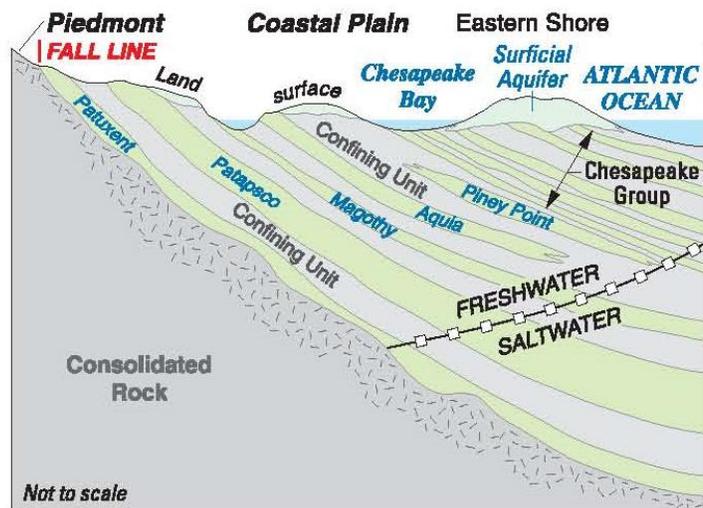


Figure 5-1 The Northern Atlantic Coastal Plain Aquifer System separates the Piedmont from the Coastal Plain.

Source: *A Science Plan for a Comprehensive Regional Assessment of the Atlantic Coastal Plain Aquifer System in Maryland*, US Dept. of Interior and USGS

Regional Water Resources

The Atlantic Coastal Plain Aquifer System in Maryland consists of an alternating series of aquifers and confining units that descend and widen as they extend toward the Atlantic Ocean. The significant aquifers are the Patuxent, Patapsco, Magothy, Aquia and Piney Point Formations, and the Chesapeake Group.

According to the Maryland Geological Survey, in 2014, approximately 1.4 million people relied on groundwater in the Coastal Plain. In Maryland's Coastal Plain counties, which include southern Maryland and the Eastern Shore, groundwater comprises 86% of the total water use.¹⁰

⁹ *A Science Plan for a Comprehensive Regional Assessment of the Atlantic Coastal Plain Aquifer System in Maryland* (Open-File Report 2007–1205), by Robert J. Shedlock, David W. Bolton, Emery T. Cleaves, James M. Gerhart, and Mark R. Nardi, U.S. Department of the Interior and U.S. Geological Survey, prepared in cooperation with the Maryland Geological Survey, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources and the Maryland Department of the Environment.

¹⁰ Ibid.

Groundwater in the Coastal Plain is drawn from unconfined (natural water table) and confined (artesian) aquifers. Unconfined aquifers are recharged by rainfall and snowmelt and depleted by drought, resulting in fluctuating water levels. Artesian aquifers receive recharge from areas where water-bearing formations crop out, leakage through confining beds, and lateral movement of water from adjacent aquifers. Artesian aquifers tend to be less vulnerable to drought conditions.¹¹

The natural water quality of Coastal Plain groundwater is generally good and ranges from very soft to very hard with the average in the moderately soft range (Vokes and Edwards, 1974). Most Coastal Plain aquifers contain both fresh and saltwater. Water directly below recharge areas is fresh; salt levels increase with aquifer depth and proximity to the ocean. The location of the freshwater-saltwater boundary (zone of diffusion) depends on the volume of freshwater entering the aquifer from recharge or leakage. One of the most common problems in Coastal Plain aquifers is saltwater intrusion. Some parts of the confined aquifers in the Coastal Plain system are affected by the intrusion of brackish or saline water. Intrusion incidences have occurred in more densely populated areas where water usage is higher.¹² Along the coastlines of the Bay, examples include Annapolis and Kent Island.

In 2007, the U.S. Department of the Interior and U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) reported that “decades of increasing pumpage have caused groundwater levels in parts of the Maryland Coastal Plain to decline by as much as 2 feet per year in some areas of southern Maryland. Continued declines at this rate could affect the long-term sustainability of ground-water resources in Maryland's heavily populated Coastal Plain communities and the agricultural industry of the Eastern Shore.”¹³

The 2004 report of the Maryland Advisory Committee on the “Management and Protection of the State’s Water Resources” recommended a comprehensive study of the sustainability of the entire Atlantic Coastal Plain aquifer system in Maryland. Such a study is currently being undertaken by the U.S. Department of the Interior and USGS in cooperation with the Maryland Geological Survey and the Maryland Department of the Environment. The study conducted in three phases will take 7 to 8 years to complete. Currently, the project is in Phase I, which began in 2006. Thus far, the study has produced the Maryland Coastal Plain Aquifer Information System (MCPAIS).¹⁴ The MCPAIS is a GIS-based tool that stores and accesses information about Maryland Coastal Plain ground-water resources for use in water-resource management, ground-water-flow modeling, and other hydrogeological analyses.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Open File Report 2007 – 1205, *A Science Plan For A Comprehensive Regional Assessment Of The Atlantic Coastal Plain Aquifer System In Maryland*, by Robert J. Shedlock, David W. Bolton, Emery T. Cleaves, James M. Gerhart, and Mark R. Nardi, U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Geological Survey, 2007.

¹⁴ http://www.mgs.md.gov/wss/pages/cp_home.html

THE WILLARDS WATER AND SEWER SYSTEMS

Water Systems

The Town of Willards draws its drinking water from three deep wells in the Manokin Aquifer, which is part of the Chesapeake Group. The depth of the Manokin aquifer varies from east to west in Wicomico County. In the Willards area, the Manokin is 200-feet below sea level. The Town's Water Appropriation Permit allows the Town the withdrawal of up to 173,000 gallons per day (gpd) from this aquifer. Analysis of the Willards water supply found that it is not susceptible to contaminants originating at the land surface due to the protected nature of the confined aquifers.¹⁵

Willards' water system, first constructed in 1974. This system was upgraded with the new Water Treatment Plant (WTP) in 2008 and 2014 with the addition of Well 3 and reconstruction/upgrade of the WTP). The system now consists of three wells, a water treatment plant, two elevated storage tanks, and two pumping stations. The three wells are 320 feet in depth, 8 inches in diameter, and have a deep well submersible pump with a pumping rate of 145 gallons per minute. The system processes water from one well but can draw from both wells if necessary. Raw water from these wells tends to be corrosive with heavy iron content. Processing consists of Seimens flocculation, sedimentation, and filtration filters for iron removal and sodium hydroxide to mitigate corrosiveness. Chlorine gas disinfects water in the treatment process.

The water distribution system is a network of main lines varying in size from 6 to 8 inches in diameter (see Map 2-3) and two elevated storage tanks capable of storing 125,000 gallons each. The water system currently serves 450 residential units, 20 commercial accounts, and five industrial accounts. The current average daily water demand is 85,000 gpd.

Town plans include redeveloping Wells 1 and 2 to address reduced pumping capacity. The Town has applied for a Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) grants for these capital projects.

Sewer Systems

The Willards' wastewater treatment system currently serves 450 residential, two industrial, and 16 commercial accounts within the corporate limits. The current average daily flows for 2017 and 2018 were approximately 73,000 gpd with a high in 2017 of nearly 78,000 gpd. The wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) is an ENR non-significant WWTP with a design capacity of 0.2 MGD and less than 0.5 MGD discharging into the Chesapeake Bay Water Quality Segment-02-13-02-03 (Upper Pocomoke River Area) watershed.

¹⁵ Source Water Assessment for Ten Community Water Systems Wicomico County, Maryland, Maryland Department of the Environment, Water Management Administration, Water Supply Program, March 2005.

The treatment facility operates in series with an overall detention period of 36 hours and a final outfall to Burnt Mill Branch. The collection system is composed of 8-inch and 10-inch diameter pipes traversing the service area. Four lift stations service the collection system. Three stations lift the wastewater from portions of the system through 6-inch force mains up to the gravity system for additional transportation. One station, located at the treatment facility, forces the total sewage flow through a 4-inch force main to the Biolac activated sludge treatment plant (see Map 2-2).

The Town upgraded its wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) in 2008, expanding capacity and is currently permitted the discharge of 0.200 million gallons per day (mgd). This increase will support an additional 500 equivalent dwelling units (EDUs).

The treatment facility discharges to a Pocomoke River tributary, a receiving stream designated as Tier II water. As per the approved Integrated Report of Surface Water Quality (formerly known as the 303(d). Burnt Mill Branch empties into the upper segment of the Pocomoke River. The lower Pocomoke River is on the 303(d) list as the impaired waters for fecal coliform, sediment, nutrients, and impacts to biological communities. A Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL), approved by the EPA on 04/15/2009, allocated a fecal coliform limit of 4.92 x 126 MPN/Day to this facility. The parameter limits on the Willards WWTP permit are in conformance with this TMDL.

Projected Water and Sewer Demand - 2040

Total projected water demand through 2040 is approximately 0.1035 mdg under the most aggressive scenario outlined in Table 3-6 in the Municipal Growth Element. This level of usage represents roughly 60 percent of the Town's daily permitted groundwater withdrawal and 40 percent of its storage capacity (see Table 5-1). The water distribution system reaches most parts of the corporate area. Land south of US 50 is not served.

Current average daily flows at the WWTP are about 0.078 mgd of about 40 percent of treatment capacity. At most, 2040 projected average daily flows will increase average daily flows to approximately 52 percent of rated capacity.

Table 5-1: Projected Water and Sewer Demand Through 2040

Classification	Water	Sewer
Capacity (mgd)	0.173	0.2
Existing Average Daily Flow (mgd)	0.078	0.078
Percent of Capacity	45%	39%
Projected Average Daily Flow (mgd) – 2040	0.1035	0.1035
Percent of Capacity	60%	52%

Source: Peter Johnston & Associates

Programming Water and Sewer Facilities

Coordinated programming of improvements to municipal water and sewer systems is an essential inter-jurisdictional activity related to the management water resources. The flow of information from municipalities to the county and state provides a general framework from which to assess existing and future demand on drinking water supply and potential pollutant loadings to receiving streams. The Wicomico County Comprehensive Water and Sewer Plan documents the programming of current and planned water and sewer service areas and supply and treatment capacity. Water and sewer service areas, as shown in the Wicomico County Comprehensive Water and Sewer Plan, are broken down based on planned service intervals. The following summarizes the delineation criteria required by State law:

Delineation	Description
W-1 and S-1	Areas served by community and multi-use water and sewerage systems which are either existing or are under construction
W-2 and S-2	Areas to be served by extensions of existing community and multi-use water supply and sewerage systems which are in the final planning stages
W-3 and S-3	Areas where improvements to, or construction of, new community and multi-use water supply and sewerage systems will be given immediate priority
W-4 and S-4	Areas where improvements to, or construction of, new community and multi-use water supply and sewerage systems will be programmed for the 3 to 5/6 year period
W-5 and S-5	Areas where improvements to, or construction of, new community and multi-use water supply and sewerage systems are programmed for inclusion within the 6/7 through the 10 years
W-6 and S-6	Areas where there is no planned service

Proposed improvements must appear in the appropriate service area category in the Wicomico County Comprehensive Water Sewer Plan before MDE will consider issuing a construction permit. Figures 5-2 and 5-3 show current water and sewer service area boundaries according to the Wicomico County Comprehensive Water Sewer Plan.

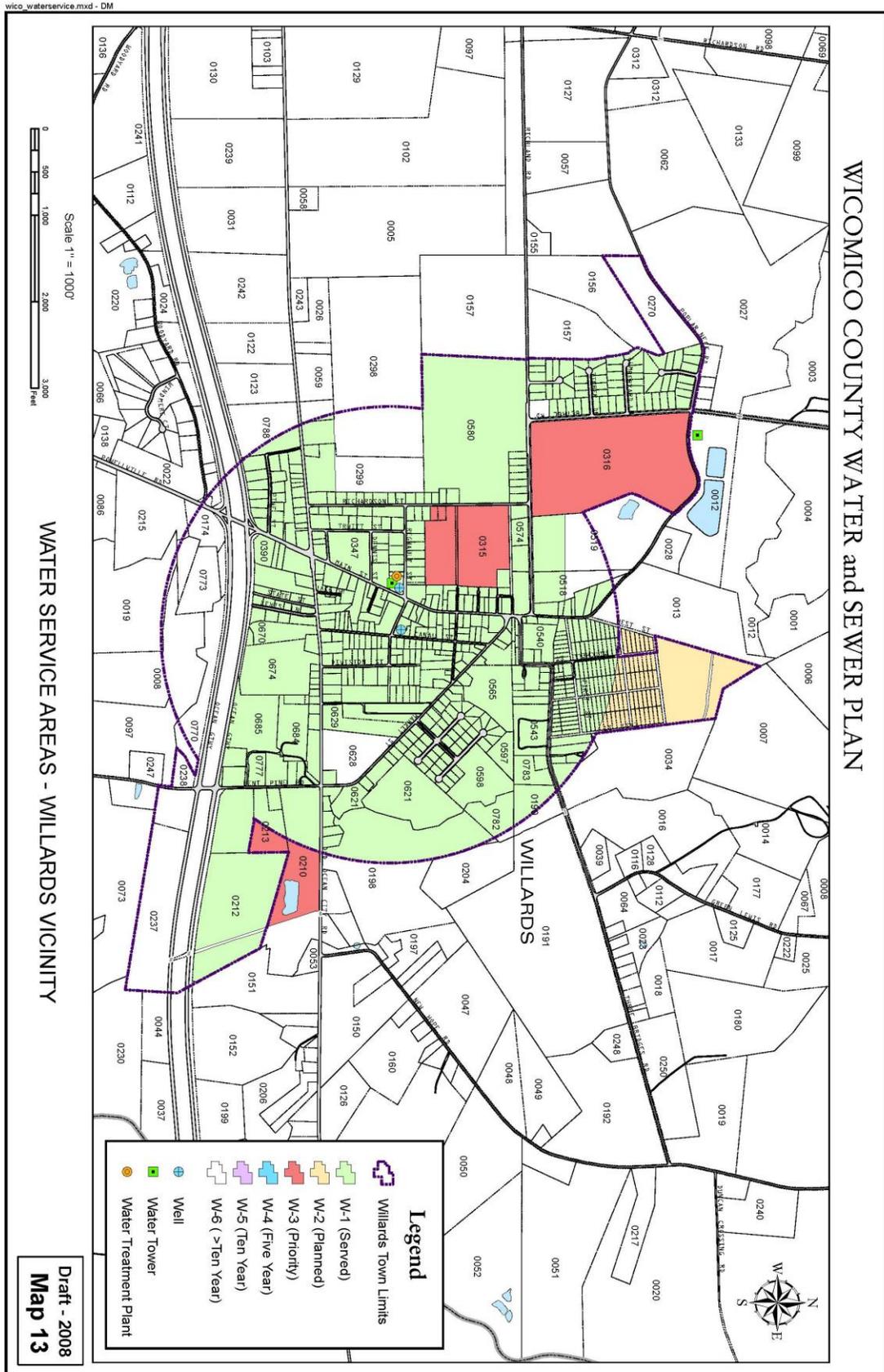


Figure 5-2

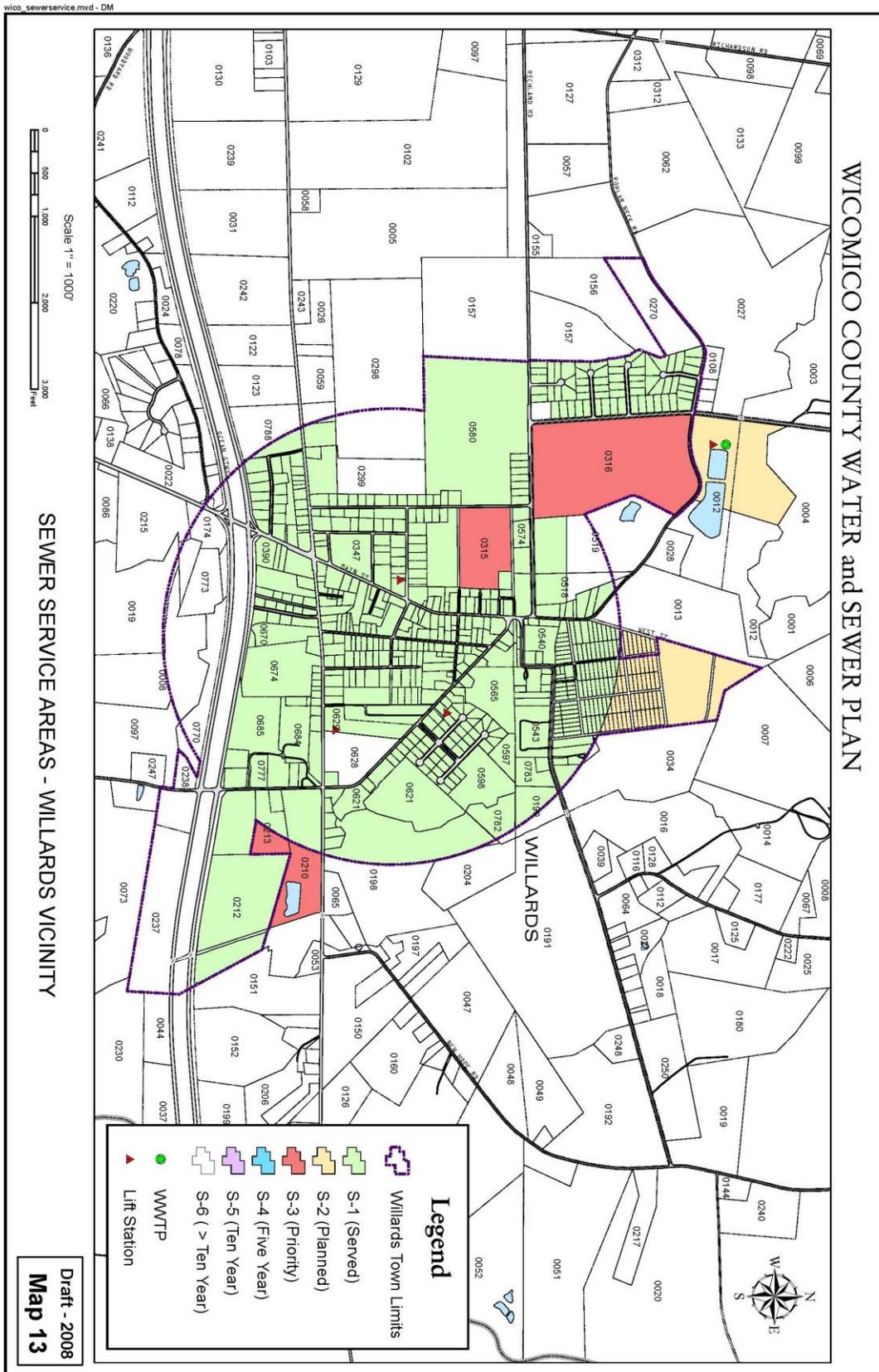


Figure 5-3

WATERSHED CHARACTERISTICS

The Town of Willards is located in the Upper Pocomoke watershed (Maryland 8-Digit Watershed Code: 021302030) and is part of the Lower Eastern Shore Tributary Basin (see Map 5-1). The Maryland portion of the Upper Pocomoke River watershed encompasses approximately 95,598 acres and includes portions of Wicomico and Worcester Counties. In 2010 agriculture and forest were the dominant uses of the 44,246 acres of land in the Wicomico County portion of the watershed, which is true of current conditions.¹⁶ Agriculture and forest constituted over 88 percent of the land use and land cover in the basin in 2010.

Table 5-2: 2010 Land Use/Land Cover – Wicomico County Portion of the Upper Pocomoke River Watershed

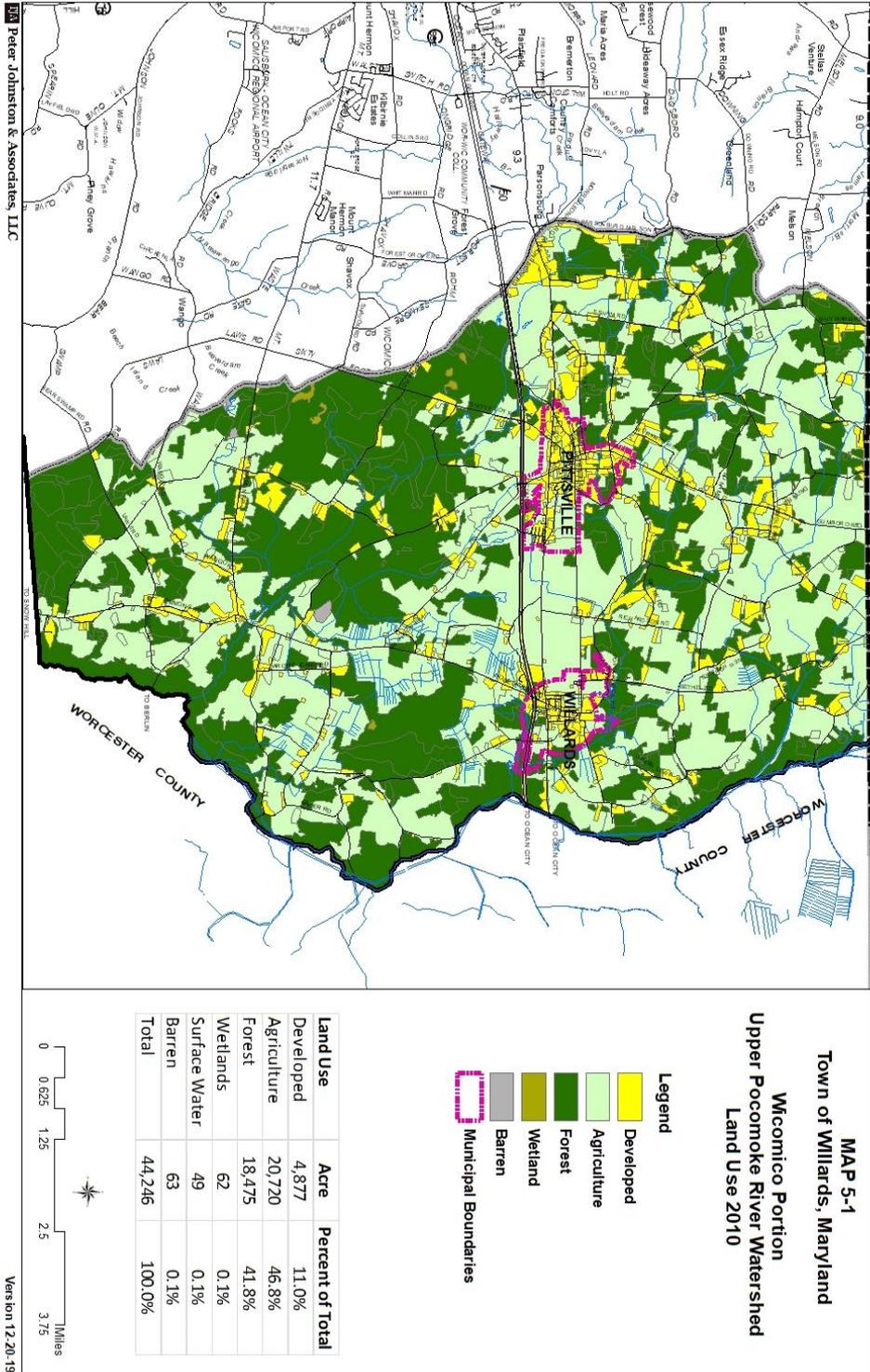
Land Use	Acres	Percent of Total
Developed	4,877	11.0%
Agriculture	20,720	46.8%
Forest	18,475	41.8%
Wetlands	62	0.1%
Surface Water	49	0.1%
Barren	63	0.1%
Total	44,246	100.0%

Source: Source Imagery: 2007 National Agriculture Imagery Program (NAIP) aerial imagery
Property data information: 2008 Edition Maryland Property View

The Pocomoke River mainstem in the watershed is approximately 15 miles long. The overall drainage system includes an additional 364 miles of streams and major ditch systems that drain the land into the Pocomoke River).¹⁷ The two wastewater treatment plants located in the watershed Willards and Pittsville have a combined average daily discharge of approximately 0.1 million gallons per day (mgd).

¹⁶ 2002 Land Use/Land Cover, Maryland Department of Planning

¹⁷ Source: Statewide Grid Maps Spring 2004 Updates, Maryland State Highway Administration



Map 5-1 Upper Pocomoke River Watershed

REGULATING WATER QUALITY

The continued deterioration of the Chesapeake Bay is a concern for the public, officials, and State agencies. Pollution can threaten the public safety, health, and welfare. Under the Federal Clean Water Act, the State is required to monitor pollution in State waters and devise strategies to address its sources.

Pollution in the Chesapeake Bay originates from two sources: 1) Point Sources, which include wastewater treatment plants and some commercial/industrial operations; and 2) Non-Point Sources, which include stormwater runoff, erosion, air pollution (atmospheric deposition), septic systems, and other “non-pipe” or indirect sources.

Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL’s) are a regulatory mechanism used to implement controls for point and non-point source discharge into impaired water bodies. Federal “Clean Water Act” (CWA) §303(d), requires Maryland to:

- Establish Water Quality Standards (WQS) for its waters;
- Monitor the condition of its waters;
- List waterbodies that do not meet standards with technology-based controls alone - 303(d) list;
- Set priority rankings for the waterbodies listed;
- Establish TMDLs that meet WQS for each listed waterbody;
- Solicit public comment;
- Submit 303(d) list and TMDLs to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for approval; and
- Incorporate TMDLs into the State's planning process.

TMDL’s establish limits or “caps” on the amount from all contributing point, and non-point sources permitted from each potential pollution source. A TMDL is a calculation of the maximum amount point and non-point pollution sources a waterbody can receive and still meet water quality standards.

Water quality standards (WQS) are based on the designated use of each waterbody. Use categories include drinking water supply, contact recreation (swimming), and aquatic life support (fishing). The CWA establishes water quality standards and TMDL programs for the stream segment based on the stream segment designation. Goals include reductions that meet the standards implied by the *Chesapeake 2000 Agreement*. Any TMDL calculation must include a margin of safety to ensure that the waterbody is useable for the designated purposes.

The Upper Pocomoke River Watershed stream segment designation II sets water quality standards appropriate for the support of estuarine and marine aquatic life and shellfish

harvesting. The Upper Pocomoke River was first listed by the Maryland Department of the Environment on the 303(d) List of Impaired Waters in 1996 with updates in 1998 and 2004. Impairments include nutrients, sediments, and biological factors from point and non-point as well as natural sources.

Maryland set TMDLs for sediment and phosphorus applicable to the Upper Pocomoke River Watershed in 2012. Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC) established TMDLs for nutrients in 2005. There are no point sources in the watershed (Delaware portion); therefore, all pollutants are from non-point sources within the watershed.”¹⁸

As per the approved Integrated Report of Surface Water Quality (formerly known as the 303(d). Burnt Mill Branch empties into the upper segment of the Pocomoke River flows into the lower Pocomoke River that is on the 303(d) list as the impaired waters for fecal coliform, sediment, nutrients and impacts to biological communities. A Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL), approved by the EPA on 04/15/2009, allocated fecal coliform limits of 4.92 x 10⁹MPN/Day to this facility; and the parameter limits are in conformance with this TMDL. ¹⁹

Maryland's Enhanced Nutrient Removal Strategy for the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries requires that the permittee shall make best efforts to achieve nutrient loading goals of 4,384 lbs/year for total nitrogen and 457 lbs/year for total phosphorus. Accordingly, under the Point Source Element of Maryland's Tributary Strategy, the Willards WWTP is assigned the Annual Maximum nutrient loads of 4,386 lbs/year for total nitrogen (TN) and 730 lbs/year for total phosphorus (TP). If the design flow of the WWTP does not increase, these loads will remain as goals only without limitations.²⁰

RECEIVING WATER CAPACITY

A primary purpose for assessing water resources is to consider the potential impacts of future growth on the water quality in the watershed. This water resources assessment evaluates two significant sources of potential pollutants entering the receiving waters - point and non-point. Point sources are identifiable inputs of waste that are discharged via pipes or drains primarily from industrial facilities and municipal treatment plants into streams, rivers, lakes, or oceans. Non-point source pollution occurs when rainfall, snowmelt, or irrigation runs over land or through the ground and gathers pollutants. Pollutants are then deposited into streams, rivers, lakes, and coastal waters or introduced into groundwater.

Stormwater runoff is a significant contributor to non-point source loading. Stormwater runoff is part of the natural hydrologic process. Human activities such as urbanization and agriculture can

¹⁸ Source: Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) Analysis for Pocomoke River, Delaware, Watershed Assessment Section Division of Water Resources, Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control, December 2005.

¹⁹ Maryland Department of the Environment Summary Report and Fact Sheet, NPDES MD0051632, June 8, 2012.

²⁰ COMAR 26.08.02.04, COMAR 26.08.03.01C(3), COMAR 26.08.04.04C, and in addition, the Chesapeake Bay Nutrient Reduction Strategy and the Enhanced Nutrient Removal (ENR).

alter natural drainage patterns and add pollutants to rivers, lakes, and streams as well as coastal bays and estuaries. Urban runoff can be a significant source of water pollution, including flows discharged from urban land uses into stormwater conveyance systems and receiving waters. In the past, efforts to control the discharge of stormwater focused on quantity (e.g., drainage, flood control, etc.) and only to a limited extent on quality (e.g., sediment and erosion control). Today, programs and regulations focus on controlling the quality as well as the quantity of stormwater runoff reaching receiving waters.

Point Source Loadings

With upgrades to the WWTP capacity of receiving waters to assimilate wastewater discharge does not appear to be a significant constraint for future growth. The Willards plant is an ENR non-significant WWTP with a design capacity of less than 0.5 MGD discharging into the Chesapeake Bay Water Quality Segment - 02-13-02-03 (Upper Pocomoke River Watershed). As per the current Maryland Department of the Environment Guidelines for the ENR requirements, permits include the TN and TP load goals without limits.²¹

The assessment of the point source impacts on water quality in the Upper Pocomoke River Watershed examined nutrient loadings in the base year (2002) against projected loadings in the planning period (2040). The 2040 assessment evaluates loadings associated with land-use changes implied in Scenario 1. It did not account for other land-use changes that may occur outside of the Town's corporate area.

Upgrades to the Town's WWTP since 2010 have substantially improved the quality of discharge from the Willards WWTP. As a result, the assessment of potential impacts of projected growth indicates that Willards' nutrient point source loading in the watershed will be substantially less than the 2002 levels (see Table 5-3). Also, Willards' phosphorus loading is well with the Waste Load Allocation (WLA) set under the TMDL.

Table 5-3: Summary Results Point Source Nutrient Loading Analysis Spreadsheet

Classification	2002 Land Use* (Acres)	2040 Land Use* (Acres)	Change (Acres)
Development*	291	291	0
Agriculture	253	253	0
Forest	112	112	0
Water	0	0	0
Other	34	34	0
Total Area	690	690	0
Nutrient Loading	(lbs/yr)	(lbs/yr)	(lbs/yr)
Total PS Nitrogen (TN)	4,277	2,449	\$ (1,828)
Total PS Phosphorus (TP)	713	306	\$ (407)

²¹ Maryland Department of the Environment Summary Report and Fact Sheet, NPDES MD0051632, June 8, 2012.

Table 5-3: Summary Results Point Source Nutrient Loading Analysis Spreadsheet

Classification	2002 Land Use* (Acres)	2040 Land Use* (Acres)	Change (Acres)
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* Development by infill in developed category

Source: Peter Johnston & Associates, LLC

Non-point Sources Loading

Nonpoint source issues in the Upper Pocomoke River watershed are the result of:

- sediment and in-stream habitat-related stressors, specifically, channelization of streams has led to increased settling of sediment in the stream substrate throughout the watershed, which is the probable cause of impacts to biological communities;
- water chemistry-related stressors, specifically, agricultural land use practices have resulted in the potential elevation of nutrient inputs throughout the watershed;
- channelization of stream segments, and
- alterations of riparian buffer zones in approximately 49% of degraded stream miles.²²

Table 5-4 summarizes the impact of Scenario 1 on the nonpoint loading in the watershed. The decrease in nonpoint loading by 2040 indicated by model results is based more on assumptions about the implementation of the State and County's Tributary Strategies in the watershed than on specific actions taken by the Town.²³

Willards has limited ability to affect source loading in the watershed, as its corporate area is only about 1.5 percent of the basin. Upgrades to the WWTP since the last WRE that reduced nutrient loading is the first practical action to address chemistry-related stressors the Town implemented. Other urban strategies to reduce nonpoint loading the Town can support include:

- Requiring stormwater environmental site design (ESD) for infill and redevelopment projects;
- Initiate an urban forestry program to conserve existing forest and increase tree cover;
- Implement low impact stormwater retrofits on streets and public land; and
- Support urban nutrient management programs, e.g., appropriate lawn fertilization guidance

²² Watershed Report for Biological Impairment of the Upper Pocomoke River Watershed, Wicomico and Worcester Counties, Maryland Biological Stressor Identification Analysis Results and Interpretation, Maryland Department of the Environment, January 25, 2012.

²³ See details at

https://mde.state.md.us/programs/Water/TMDL/TMDLImplementation/Documents/FINAL_PhaseII_Report_Docs/Final_County_WIP_Narratives/Wicomico_WIPII_2012.pdf

Table 5-4: Summary Results from Non-Point Source Nutrient Loading Analysis Spreadsheet

Classification	2002 Land Use* (Acres)	2040 Land Use* (Acres)	Change (Acres)
Development	291	291	0
Agriculture	253	253	0
Forest	112	112	0
Water	0	0	0
Other	34	34	0
Total Area	690	690	0
Non-point Source Nutrient Loading	(lbs/yr)	(lbs/yr)	(lbs/yr)
- Total Nitrogen (TN)	7,085	4,375	\$ (2,710)
- Total Phosphorus (TP)	644	389	\$ (254)

* Assumes infill in the “Developed” category, no conversion of ag or forest land

Source: Peter Johnston & Associates, LLC

IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

Key conclusions from the evaluation of water resource and related issues should provide a basis for setting Town growth management and water resource conservation policies. These conclusions include:

- Based on currently available data and projections Willards has adequate water and sewer capacity to accommodate projected growth through 2040;
- The Town’s contribution to point source nutrient loading in the watershed will not increase over current levels;
- With the application of stormwater best management practices, the Town’s contribution to non-point source nutrient loading in the basin will not increase over current levels;
- Non-point sediment loading will likely increase and will require a concerted effort to manage; and
- A collaborative effort to implement the Wicomico County Phase II Watershed Implementation Plan is needed to ensure suitable receiving waters to meet the stormwater management and wastewater treatment and disposal needs of existing residents and future development.

Drinking water supply, wastewater treatment, and the capacity of receiving waters to assimilate stormwater and wastewater discharge are not significant constraints for the Town’s future growth subject to the implementation of strategies that address stressors throughout the watershed. Its

relative land acre compared to the watershed's notwithstanding, deteriorating water quality trends in the Chesapeake Bay are compelling reasons for the Town to take steps to minimize the impacts of population and economic growth on water resources. Managing land use in a way that benefits water resources requires assessing development regulations, policies, and guidelines from a new perspective for the Town. Concerning development, rules should minimize the footprint of new construction to the maximum extent possible. Building practices should emphasize water and energy conservation.

Reducing sediment loadings is particularly vital for protecting water quality and habitat values in the watershed. Reducing sediment loading to local streams will require installation and continuing maintenance of best management practices for stormwater management and maintaining or installing forested stream buffers. When and where possible, retrofit using best management practices existing stormwater facilities.

In addition to these strategies, the Town should consider the following to reduce the impacts of future growth on water resources:

- 1) Make education material regarding nutrient management to reduce fertilizer applications to grassed areas and lawns available to residents.
- 2) Establish, maintain, or expand forest buffers in the form of linear wooded areas along streams to help filter nutrients, sediments, and other pollutants in runoff.
- 3) Work with developers, homeowners' associations, and individual homeowners to reduce the amount of impervious cover by implementing techniques such as clustered houses, narrow streets, reduced pervious surface in parking lot areas, shared driveways, and permeable paving materials.
- 4) Require new development and infill and redevelopment projects to treat stormwater using nonstructural and micro-scale practices to the maximum extent feasible. Techniques such as submerged gravel wetlands, rainwater harvesting (cisterns and rain barrels), landscape infiltration, infiltration berms, and dry wells should become standard practices. Stormwater should be filtered using such techniques as rain gardens, landscape, and tree planters (e.g., linear tree pits, sidewalk planters), grass swales and bio-swales, tree-swales, grass filter strips, and vegetated buffers.
- 5) Encourage development design that maintains or enhances green infrastructure and incorporates low impact design through stormwater management techniques for water quality and quantity management. The Town also should encourage LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) technology to promote sustainable building practices,
- 6) conserve energy and improve water and air quality.

- 7) Cooperate with Wicomico County in planning for the conservation of water resources.
- 8) Cooperate with Wicomico, Worcester, and Sussex Counties in watershed-wide planning and pollution control initiatives.
- 9) Where possible, convert road ditches to bioswales.
- 10) Implement an urban forestry program to retain existing canopy and expand coverage through tree planting, including street trees.
- 11) Retrofit existing stormwater systems with bioretention/rain gardens and infiltration measures.

The Town of Willards can achieve its water resource conservation objectives and make a positive contribution to improving water quality in the watershed by implementing strategies such as the urban BMPs described above. The Town's stormwater management requires environmental site design (ESD) techniques that optimize the conservation of natural features (e.g., drainage patterns, soil, vegetation). These practices also minimize impervious surfaces (e.g., pavement, concrete channels, roofs), slow down runoff to maintain discharge timing and to increase infiltration and evapotranspiration. The use of other nonstructural practices or innovative technologies approved by MDE is encouraged. Planning for water and wastewater facilities should reflect the need to conserve groundwater resources and reduce nutrient and sediment loadings in the Upper Pocomoke River watershed.

CHAPTER 6: HOUSING

According to the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development, “affordable housing remains a serious issue in the County but not as severe compared to other jurisdictions. Core Logic rental trends estimate the minimum rental rate in 2016 ranged from \$784 for a two-bedroom unit and as much as \$1,094 for a four-bedroom with 51.2% of residents paying more than 30.0% of their income on rental units. Shortage of affordable units in the county while manageable, relatively lower income levels continue to make it difficult for low-moderate income residents to afford decent housing in the county.” Housing affordability in Willards is an issue for families with female householder, no husband present (+/- 15 percent of all families), and seniors 65 years and over who make up 19 percent of the population.

HOUSING GOALS

GOAL #1: Develop policies, initiate programs, and acquire funding to help alleviate substandard housing conditions.

GOAL #2: Establish policies and programs that accommodate a variety of housing densities, types, sizes, and costs to meet the needs of existing and future populations.

GOAL #3: Supply workforce and affordable housing enough to meet the needs of low and moderate-income households and senior citizens.

HOUSING OBJECTIVES

- Seek assistance through available State and Federal programs for rehabilitation or, in some cases, where no other alternative exists, for the removal and replacement of substandard rental and owner-occupied housing units.
- Provide incentives to encourage the development of affordable housing as well as to promote restoration and rehabilitation of existing units affordable for households earning less than the median family income of the Town.
- Develop tools and methods to ensure an adequate supply of affordable housing as new development is approved. Encourage or require that a minimum percentage of moderately priced dwelling units.
- Locate affordable housing where public facilities and community services are adequate to meet the needs of a higher density community.
- Seek public input to determine the types of affordable housing that would best meet the needs of Willards’ citizens (i.e., accessory dwellings, townhomes, ‘cottage’ neighborhoods).

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

According to the Maryland Board of Realtors in 2016, a starter home in Wicomico County cost \$120,794 (85 percent of the 2016 median home price). The typical first-time homebuyer had a median household income of \$30,500 (57 percent of annual county median income). At the average 5% rate of savings per household (\$1,525 per year), it would take a first-time homebuyer:

- Four years to accumulate a 5 percent down payment of \$6,040
- 7.9 years to accumulate a 10 percent down payment of \$12,079
- 15.8 years to accumulate a 20 percent down payment of \$24,159

Federal criteria establish the ability to pay for housing based on the presumption housing costs represent no more than 30 percent of the annual net income/median household income. Therefore, households spending more than 30 percent on housing have a cost burden. Estimates for 2017 indicate that as many as a quarter of residents of owner-occupied housing units pay more than 30 percent of household income for housing costs. The same data suggest that renters may pay nearly 30 percent of household income for housing costs. Housing costs include the payments for mortgages, home equity loans, real estate taxes, fire, hazard, and flood insurance, and utilities.

Workforce Housing

The availability of affordable housing for families who live and work in Willards is essential. Workforce housing includes single-family homes, townhouses, condominiums, starter homes, and apartments that are affordable to area workers. Nurses, teachers, municipal employees, emergency responders, law enforcement staff, and other workers who provide essential services in a community typify the workforce. The availability of workforce housing is an issue that increasingly affects people with full-time jobs, whose work is vital to any community's day-to-day functioning.

Workforce housing programs target working families to offset disparities between income levels and average rental or homeownership costs. Workforce Housing rental criteria typically require housing affordable for a household with an aggregate income between 50 percent and 100 percent of the area median income. Homeownership housing affordability criteria are housing costs equal to between 60 percent and up to 120 percent of the median household income.

In 2017, the estimated median household income in Willards was \$45,417. Based on the criteria previously cited, workforce housing in Willards includes rental units affordable for a household with incomes between \$22,708 and \$45,427 and homeownership units for households with incomes between \$27,250 and \$54,500.

Table 6-1 shows the application of workforce housing income criteria to estimates of median household incomes for household sizes between one and four members for Willards 2017. Not reported are households large than four persons. As the table indicates, rental and ownership cost burdened households of less than two persons.

Table 6-1: Median Household Income in the past 12 months (in 2017 inflation-adjusted dollars) by household size

Household Size	Median Income	Rental Housing		Ownership housing	
		50 percent of	100 percent of	60 percent of	120 percent of
		Median Household Income			
All households	\$45,417	\$22,709	\$45,417	\$27,250	\$54,500
1-person households	\$34,167	\$17,084	\$34,167	\$20,500	\$41,000
2-person households	\$35,625	\$17,813	\$35,625	\$21,375	\$42,750
3-person households	\$71,250	\$35,625	\$71,250	\$42,750	\$85,500
4-person households	\$65,125	\$32,563	\$65,125	\$39,075	\$78,150

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

The Comprehensive Plan recommends several actions related to regulatory and other policies that impact affordable housing, including the following:

RECOMMENDATION #1: Ensure that regulatory policies align with affordable housing goals by correcting regulations or requirements that explicitly exclude affordable housing types or that unnecessarily raise the cost of construction.

RECOMMENDATION #2: Consider adopting an inclusionary zoning provision for large scale residential projects that requires the reservation of a portion of units that are affordable housing. Discuss adopting joint county/municipal inclusionary zoning requirements with Wicomico County and neighboring towns.

RECOMMENDATION #3: Allow for garage apartments and other kinds of accessory dwelling units.

RECOMMENDATION #4: Permit higher-density residential development.

RECOMMENDATION #6: Streamline approval processes to make the development process less time-consuming.

RECOMMENDATION #7: Waive or reduce fees (e. g., impact fees, excise tax) and infrastructure requirements, and provide other financial incentives for construction and renovation of workforce housing to make them financially feasible.

RECOMMENDATION #8: Work with the Wicomico County government and the County's largest employers to develop and promote employer-assisted housing programs to increase workforce housing in Willards.

CHAPTER 7 TRANSPORTATION

The movement of people and goods is an essential concern in any community's growth plan because providing a safe and efficient transportation network with minimal disruption can sometimes be challenging to achieve. The “Transportation Plan Element” must be carefully coordinated with other elements of the Comprehensive Plan to assure that transportation plans and policies complement and promote those of different sections.

TRANSPORTATION GOALS

GOAL #1: Ensure the safe and efficient movement of people and goods.

GOAL #2: Provide an adequate transportation system with minimal Town expenditures.

GOAL #3: Encourage the efficient use of energy in transportation.

GOAL #4: Coordinate transportation decisions regionally and locally.

TRANSPORTATION OBJECTIVES

The following are The Town of Willards’ transportation planning objectives:

- Provide a balance of transportation facilities meeting the needs of the Town.
- Coordinate various modes of transportation so that they complement each other.
- Establish a transportation network that moves people and goods rapidly yet safely.
- Provide an adequate transportation network with minimal Town expense.
- Coordinate Town, County, Regional, State, and Federal transportation planning.
- Maximize the desired use of transportation systems, while minimizing possible effects upon neighborhoods, the environment, and the public.
- Maintain and expand the existing street and sidewalk infrastructure.
- Improve and expand safe transportation options for residents.

REGIONAL GROWTH MANAGEMENT AND TRANSPORTATION

The basic thoroughfare system in Willards consists of two state highways and a network of town-owned residential streets. Issues with these systems include inadequate off-street parking and poor street conditions, improper signs and signals, lack of adequate sidewalks, curbs, and gutters, and heavy truck traffic.

Willards’ vision is for streets that are pleasant to walk along, provide safe and efficient bike routes, and move people and goods efficiently throughout the Town. To achieve this vision, the

Town will shift its emphasis from only moving vehicles to strategies that balance the needs for cars and trucks, transit riders, bike riders, and pedestrians.

Multi-modal transportation systems must be well connected to make travel from one place to another as straightforward as possible. The key to achieving this vision is to redefine streets as a network that will serve the pedestrian, bike riders, and vehicles that will use them.

HIGHWAY FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION

The functional classification system delineates streets and/or highways based on the kind of vehicle trips it is designed to serve and allows for the logical coordination of the network of State and local streets and highways. Issues arise when roads designed to move motor vehicles pass through urban areas where conflicts between freedom of movement and speed conflict with pedestrian and bicycle traffic and adversely affect residents' quality of life.

Federal and State transportation departments delineate highways into a Functional Classification System (See Map 7-1). Also, Wicomico County classifies county roads using a similar system. Functional classification categories in the Willards area include 1) an Arterial Highway; 2) Collectors - Major and Minor; 3) Local Streets; and 4) Rural Residential.

Arterial Highways

The highest functional highway service provided to Willards is the arterial system. The primary purpose of all arterial highways is to provide continuous and efficient routes for the movement of high-volume traffic between towns or significant traffic generators, particularly that of an intra-state or inter-state nature. Direct access to adjoining land is only allowed provided at critical intersections. In the Willards area, U.S. 50 is classified by the Maryland Department of Transportation as a principal arterial. It provides the link which connects Willards to Salisbury and points beyond to the west and Ocean City to the east.

Major and Minor Collectors

Both major and minor collectors serve a similar function, varying only in volume and intensity of use. The primary purpose of the collector system is to collect traffic from local streets and provide direct movement to commercial and industrial areas and higher-order roads, such as arterial highways.

Major collectors connect areas of relatively dense settlement with each other and with other major traffic routes. These streets are intended for inter-neighborhood and through traffic. Two major collectors, Old Ocean City Road (MD 346) and Powellville Road (Route 354), serve Willards.

Minor collectors are streets which, in addition to serving abutting properties, connect with community facilities, and carry neighborhood traffic. Maryland Department of Transportation classifies Main Streets and Poplar Neck Road as minor collectors. Richland Road and Three Bridges Road also are classified as minor collectors by Wicomico County.

Local Streets

The most extensive part of the street network in Willards consists of approximately seven miles of local streets. Local streets, including cul-de-sacs, are intended primarily to provide access to abutting residential property and are designed to discourage through traffic.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The local street system is composed of relatively short, residential streets, many of which are dead-end and lack proper turnaround space. Inadequate off-street parking and a lack of sidewalks, curbs, and gutters contribute to the generally poor quality of the street system.

Transit

Public transportation in The Town of Willards is provided by Shore Transit of The Tri-County Council of the Lower Eastern Shore, the Lower Shore's first regional public transportation network. Shore Transit of The Tri-County Council of the Lower Eastern Shore connects significant areas of Somerset, Wicomico, and Worcester counties by bus, runs feeder routes into remote areas in the region, and connects with public transit networks in Delaware and Virginia.

Shore Transit of The Tri-County Council of the Lower Eastern Shore Route 452 operates daily and is available to Willards' residents upon telephone request. The cost is affordable, \$3 per ride, and \$1.50 per trip for seniors.

Pedestrian and Bicycle

Pedestrian and bicycle traffic typically require specific infrastructure such as sidewalks, bike lanes, and shared-use paths to ensure safer passage. A complete sidewalk system does not exist in the Town; some areas do not have a sidewalk, while others have gaps in the system, and others require repair as well as be made ADA compliant.

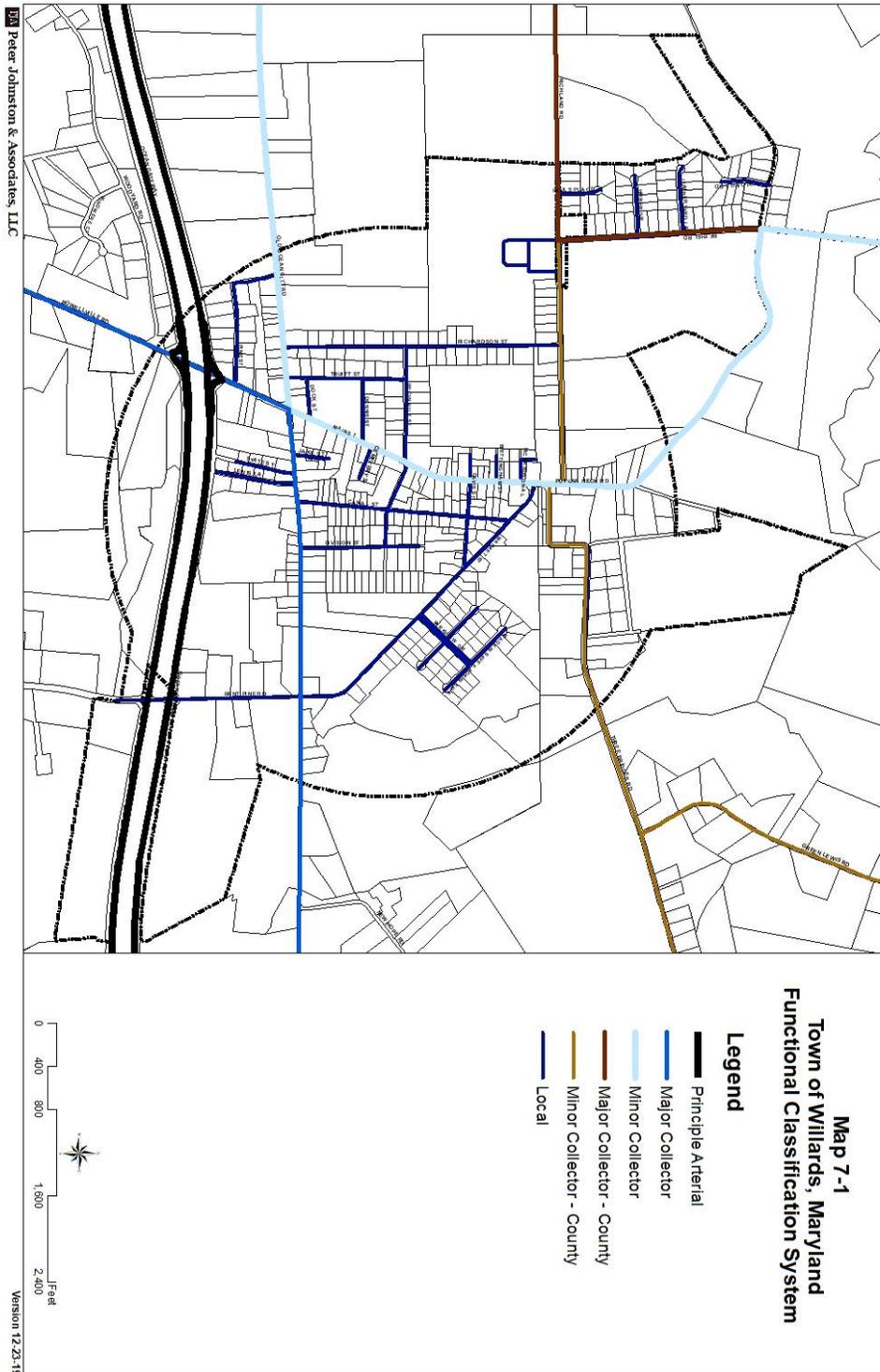
According to the America Walks organization, there is a broad range of individual and community benefits that accrue when people walk more often and when communities make walking safe, enjoyable, and convenient. The benefits America Walks enumerate are:

- **Safety Benefits:** Walkable neighborhoods have much lower rates of traffic fatalities – for both pedestrians and motorists – compared with automobile-oriented areas.

- Health Benefits: Fewer than 50% of Americans meet the minimum guidelines for moderate physical activity – walking is the most accessible and most affordable way to correct this problem.
- Social Equity Benefits: Low-income families are more reliant on walking for essential journeys than the middle class, and yet low-cost housing is often located in the most car-dependent places.
- Environmental Benefits: Transportation is responsible for one-third of all U.S. greenhouse gas emissions. Converting short driving journeys to walking journeys is reducing this impact significantly.
- Transportation Benefits: One-quarter of all trips in the U.S. are 1 mile or less, and yet most of these trips are taken by car – increasing walking reduces traffic congestion and the cost of road maintenance.
- Economic Benefits: The average household cost to own and operate one car in the U.S. is \$9,000 per year – walkable neighborhoods allow families to own fewer cars and save.

The following principles will guide the Town planning for pedestrian improvements:

- The automobile will not be the dominant factor;
- Support mixed-use to create the proper balance of activities within walking distance of each other;
- Allow flexible parking that supports walkability, for example, creating park-once-and-walk districts where much of the parking is open to the public, even if it is privately owned. Such districts enable local ‘parking pools’ and not caring if any particular site has enough on-site parking.
- allowing remote or off-site parking to preserve curb space of pedestrian activities;
- Design improvements to protect the pedestrian including block size, lane width, turning motions, the direction of flow, signalization, roadway geometry, and other factors that all determine a car’s speed and a pedestrian’s likelihood of getting hit;
- Investments in improvements for bicycling;
- Encourage land uses that shape the pedestrian spaces and provide a sense of enclosure to feel comfortable as pedestrians;
- Increase street tree plantings; and
- Prioritize improvements concerning the size and location of the Town’s walkable cores to avoid squandering resources in areas that will never invite pedestrians.
- Ease of automobile access and level of service (LOS) will not be a determining factor to improve pedestrian safety and access.
- Evaluate existing parking conditions, requirements, and locations to promote a 'park once' practice to encourage walkability.
- Comprehensively evaluate potential bicycle infrastructure improvements.



Map 7-1 Functional Classification System

TRANSPORTATION POLICIES

The following are The Town of Willards' general policies concerning the provision of transportation facilities and services.

- Support alternatives to driving alone and encourage the County and State to inform the public and private entities of the monetary and environmental costs of continued dependence on automobiles.
- Encourage the County to establish a program for commuters, including park and ride facilities at appropriate locations.
- Support bicyclists and pedestrians by providing safe, convenient, and inviting routes and walkways between activity centers.
- Priority will be given to developing a pedestrian-friendly street system within the corporate limits.
- Willards will establish street designs for new development that will contribute to reaching the transportation and land use goals of the area, provide safe and efficient mobility for all people, and contribute to the quality of life and civic identity in the area.
- Developers will build new collectors and local streets according to the Town standards and specifications.
- Willards will require that the layout of new street connections in undeveloped areas assure connectivity to the overall Town street system.
- Willards will plan for adequate rights-of-way considering existing and future development and proposed alternative transportation support facilities and programs.
- All developments will have adequate access and circulation for public service vehicles, but paved street sections should be as narrow as feasible to maintain a human scale.
- Willards will work with the State and County to coordinate the land use and transportation elements of the Comprehensive Plan with adjacent jurisdictions to achieve a reduction in drive-alone rates.

Commercial Street Policies

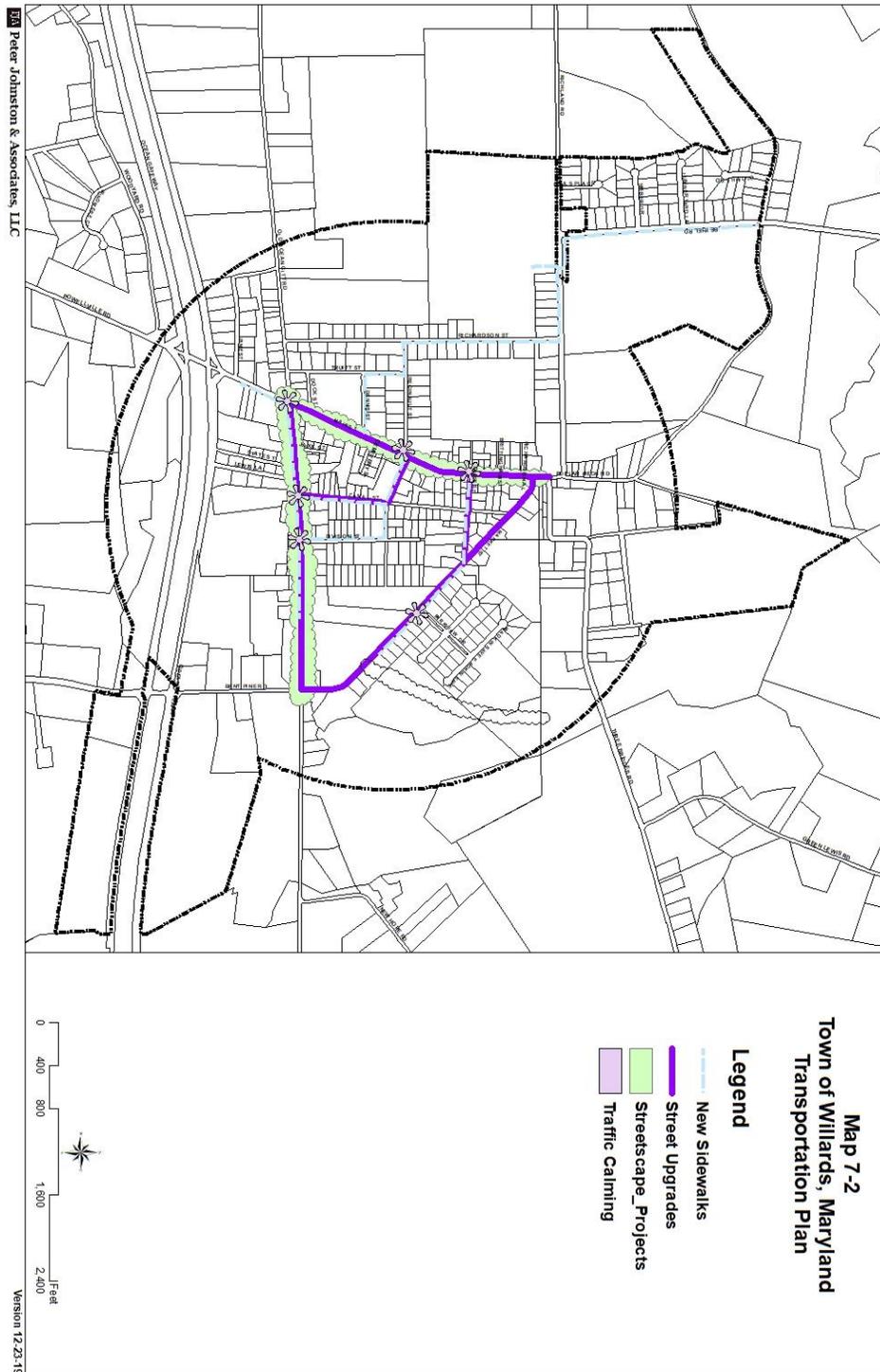
New local access streets serving commercial land uses should: 1) provide safe and convenient access, and 2) preserve or contribute to the land use they are serving. They should:

- Avoid difficult driveway approaches;
- Promote safe, comfortable pedestrian and bicycle travel;
- Separate truck traffic from shoppers and employees where possible; and
- Control truck loading and unloading that occurs on-street during morning and evening peak traffic periods.

Residential Street Policies

New residential streets serving residential neighborhoods should ensure that they:

- Provide safe and convenient access for motorists, pedestrians, cyclists, and emergency vehicles;
- Provide access within new communities and to adjacent neighborhoods, recreation areas, shopping areas, schools, and civic uses; and
- Manage vehicular traffic volumes, and minimize speed, required local travel distances, congestion.
- Avoid creating disconnected "pods" of residential development.
- Provide for the safety of vehicles and pedestrians at intersections. Ensure adequate sight distances and by using traffic control devices and geometric design features such as "T" intersections, marked crosswalks where sidewalks and road meet, traffic signals, stop signs, and other strategies, where appropriate.
- Require that streets connect with other streets whenever practical. In determining where it is feasible to connect new streets with existing ones, Willards will decide whether the merits outweigh the demerits of the whole package and whether the connection would be in the best interest of both Town residents at-large and the neighborhood.
- Require blocks be small enough (400 to 500 feet) to create travel options for motorized and non-motorized travel.
- Discouraging through-traffic and vehicular speeding in residential neighborhoods using traffic calming devices and contextually appropriate roadway design.



Map 7-2 Transportation Plan

IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION #1: Major collectors - Old Ocean City Road has adequate traffic capacity for the near future, but several street improvements may be warranted. Recommended improvements include installation of curb, gutter, sidewalks, and a bike lane where none exist with a planting space between curb and sidewalk. Willards should request the State Highway Administration undertake a Streetscape Project for the section of Old Ocean City Road within Town's corporate boundaries (See Illustration 7-1 above).

RECOMMENDATION #2: Minor collectors – Although, existing streets classified as local collectors may not be able to be improved to meet recommended standards, all future minor collectors in the Willards area should conform to standards outlined in the *Willards Subdivision Regulations* and other Town standards and specifications.

RECOMMENDATION #3: Residential streets - A “Capital Improvements Program” should be undertaken to upgrade existing local streets. Such a program should include the installation of sidewalks, curb and gutter, and other streetscape improvements where feasible. Traffic calming measures should be studied and implemented at critical locations, including along Main Street and on Old Ocean City Road (See Map 7-2).

RECOMMENDATION #4: New streets – infill and redevelopment projects within the Town should be required to expand the existing modified grid street system and connect to existing streets as appropriate.

RECOMMENDATION #5: Public Parking – The Land Use Plan emphasizes infill and redevelopment, including the development of small-scale retail establishments in the Town Center and Transitional Planning Areas. The Town should identify opportunities to increase public parking in these areas.

RECOMMENDATION #6: Existing sidewalks along Main Street should be upgraded and widened.

RECOMMENDATION #7: New and upgraded pedestrian and bike systems should focus on providing safe access to the Town Center, shopping areas, the Elementary School, and park and recreation facilities.

RECOMMENDATION #8: New developments will provide sidewalks, including sidewalks along property frontages.

RECOMMENDATION #9: New developments should be required to include bike and pedestrian trails, where feasible and appropriate.

RECOMMENDATION #10: Retrofit sidewalks and street trees in areas where the Town wants to increase density through infill and redevelopment and where it wants more people to live and

work. Apply for Sidewalk Retrofit Program to upgrade and widen existing sidewalks. Request that MDOT SHA undertakes a streetscape improvement project for the section of Old Ocean City Road within the Town limits and Safe Routes to School Program for pedestrian improvements near the elementary school. Install curbs, gutters, sidewalks, and planting space for trees. Potential funding sources include MDOT's Bikeways Program, FHWA Transportation Alternatives Program administered by MDOT SHA and MDOT SHA's Sidewalk Retrofit Program.

RECOMMENDATION #11: Work with local and regional transit authorities to provide public transportation options for Willards. Determine the demand for nearby destinations. Coordinate with public transportation agencies (e.g., MDOT MTA, Shore Transit, and Ocean City Transit) to provide new routes or shuttle service to Willards and add designated Shore Transit commuter bus stop in Willards for commuters between Salisbury and Ocean City.

Recommendation #12: Streetscape projects on State facilities should be split into two tiers: one for short/mid-term safety improvements and one for a long-term streetscape project. The Town should work with MDOT SHA's District 1 Traffic Division, to conduct a safety assessment of MD 346. Town officials should petition Wicomico County to include Willard's streetscape project requests in the County's Priority Letter.

CHAPTER 8 HISTORIC PRESERVATION

The past is a building block for the future. A “comprehensive plan” must incorporate that past as an essential element of planning for its future. A community that perpetuates its heritage through its original or historic features, to serve the needs of current and future generations, maintains a physical and emotional link with its past. This link ensures that the community’s unique identity is not lost. In this regard, historic preservation is an essential tool for the economic revitalization of older towns, creating new development in harmony with history to preserve the value of historic assets.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goal: Preserve remaining cultural and historical artifacts that help tell the story of Willards’ development.

Objectives

- Encourage the restoration, adaptive rehabilitation, and preservation of historic structures.
- Enhance the setting for historic structures through a program of planting and replacing street trees to improve streetscapes.

- Support Town events that celebrate the historic and cultural resources in Willards.

HERITAGE RESOURCES

Historic Sites and Structures

The Maryland Historical Trust maintains an online database of architectural and archeological sites and standing structures, including the Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP).²⁴ MIHP includes both architectural resources and archeological sites of potentially historical importance. The MIHP lists several properties with potential historical significance in and around Willards (see Map 8-1):

- Willards Ticket Office (WI 505): Maryland Historic Trust database describes this property in the following way, “centered in the town at the intersection of Main and Market streets is the old Willards ticket office, a rectangular frame structure distinctive for its broad gable on hip roof supported by triangular-shaped brackets. The station dated around 1900 when the trans-peninsular line was operated by the Baltimore, Chesapeake & Atlantic Railroad, the company formed by Boston multi-millionaire John E. Searles, who purchased the assets of the Baltimore & Eastern Shore Railroad at public auction in 1894. John E. Searles was the company's president and Captain Willard Thomson, the general manager and later vice-president. Following the formation of the B. C. & A Railroad, a new station was established west of New Hope at a place named Willards, in honor of Captain Thomson. Sometime after the discontinuation of rail service between Berlin and Willards in 1955, the old ticket office was relocated and for a period used as the town's post office.

The Willards ticket office is located at 7485 Market Street near the intersection with Main Street in the heart of Willards. The single-story frame station faces south with the gable roof oriented on an east/west axis.

The single-story rectangular frame ticket office built around 1900 is supported on a concrete block foundation, and the exterior is clad with asbestos shingles. The one-room plan structure is topped by a gable on a hip roof with an asphalt shingle covering.

The south (central) facade is defined by a side entrance and flanking replacement windows. Triangular shaped chamfered brackets extend from the south side to support the wide eave of the gable on a hip roof.

The east and west ends of the building are distinguished by the wide eave and heavily chamfered brackets. A secondary entrance is located on the east end of the building, and the

²⁴ <https://mht.maryland.gov/secure/medusa/>

west end has a replacement window. Fixed in the gable ends of the roof are round, louvered vents.

The north (rear) elevation is an uneven wall surface with where the northeast corner juts out from the rectangular main block. Chamfered brackets support the wide eave, and the windows are replacements.

Inside, the ticket office has been reworked as a commercial space.



- Eden United Methodist Church (WI 506): Maryland Historic Trust database describes this property in the following way, “at the close of the nineteenth century the town of Willards emerged along the course of the Baltimore, Chesapeake & Atlantic Railroad east of the mill village known as New Hope where a Methodist Protestant church had been established around 1870. Centered in the new town was a Methodist Episcopal congregation organized in 1898, and a Gothic Revival church was erected the next year.

The 1/2-acre lot on which the church was built was conveyed by Ebenezer G. and Ella S. Davis to trustees, Wesley D. Truitt, Elijah Lewis, and Handy Adkins for \$40.

The single-story, gable-front frame church has an off-axis entrance and bell tower like the Ayres Methodist Church in Pittsville. Pointed arch windows filled with figurative colored glass light the sanctuary. The Eden United Methodist Church is one of the oldest structures to remain standing in the town, and it is a principal landmark for the community with its distinctive Gothic features and its tall entrance and bell tower.

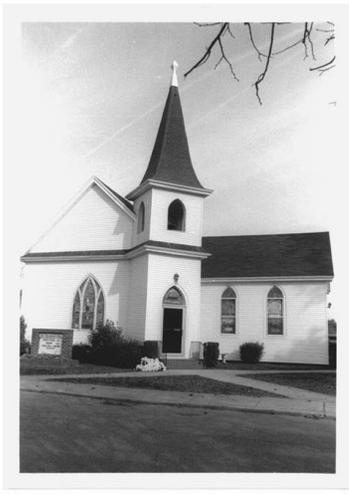
The Eden United Methodist Church, historically known as the Eden Methodist Episcopal Church, stands on the east side of Main Street in the center of Willards. The single-story frame church faces west with the principal gable roof oriented on an east/west axis.

The single-story Gothic Revival frame church built in stages between 1899 and the mid-twentieth century, is supported on a low brick foundation, and the exterior is clad vinyl siding. The steeply pitched roof is covered with asphalt shingles. Attached to the southwest corner of the main block are a corner-located entrance and bell tower. Extending southward from the main block is a tee wing, and to the east is another single-story gable-roofed wing. During the mid-twentieth century, a substantial frame addition was built to the rear of the church.

The west (main) elevation is an asymmetrical facade with a gable-front elevation pierced by a large Gothic arched window filled with figurative colored glass. The gable end of the main block is finished with a pediment end, and the line of the lower cornice is coincidental with a cornice that wraps around the corner entrance and bell tower. The edge of the eave is enclosed with vinyl soffit. The corner entrance tower is pierced by a Gothic arched window that has a stained-glass transom and a modern glass door. The upper story of the tower is pierced by open, Gothic arched openings for the belfry, which retains its bell. Atop the belfry is a tapered spire with a flared base. A wooden finial is fixed atop the spire.

The south side of the main block is primarily covered by the tee wing that extends to the south. The west face of the wing is pierced by pointed arch windows as well. The south gable end of the tee wing is less elaborately finished with rectangular windows and a side entrance.

Extending eastward from the main block is a shorter single-story gable-roofed wing that has pointed arch colored glass windows. Attached to the east side of the church is a sizeable gable-roofed church hall erected during the mid-twentieth century.



- New Hope Methodist Church (WI 507): Maryland Historic Trust database describes this property in the following way, “a small cluster of houses and the New Hope Methodist Church, along with the New Hope Cemetery north of the church, is the only significant remnants of the mill village formerly situated along Aydelotte Branch, now known as Burnt Mill Branch, a tributary of the Pocomoke River. By the testimony of the 1877 Lake, Griffing, and Stevenson atlas, the village consisted of a grist mill, school, a half dozen dwellings, and the Methodist Protestant church. Along the relatively new rail line, laid in 1868, was the granary of J. Whaley and Bros. in addition to the New Hope station. While the Methodist Protestant congregation dates to 1870, the current church was erected shortly after the turn of the twentieth century. Paired windows accent the tee-shaped frame structure with colored glass panes set in the perimeter of each sash. Fixed in the front corner of the tee plan is the entrance tower that contains an arched transom fitted with colored glass panes as well. The entrance and bell tower have been shortened with the removal of the belfry. The old church bell is housed in a small enclosure in the front yard.



James H. Truitt House, June Webb House (WI-508): Maryland Historic Trust database describes this property in the following way, “one of the most distinctive dwellings to stands along Main Street is the two-and-a-half story, part brick, part frame dwelling historically identified as the James H. Truitt, and known alternately as the June Webb house. The house, situated at the corner of Main and Market streets, was erected around 1922 in mixed materials. A tile-like brick was used on the first story, while a rusticated brick was employed in the exterior chimney on the south gable end of the tee wing.

The two-and-a-half story dwelling was designed with an extended eave featuring triangular stick brackets that trim the perimeter of the main block as well as the two-and-a-half story wing to the south.

The mixture of brick and frame materials between stories is unusual for early twentieth century dwellings in Wicomico County; however, the stick brackets that underpin the extended eave are typical of the bungalow-style dwellings that populate town and farm locations throughout eastern Wicomico County. The stick brackets and the rustic, rough-edged brick used in the exterior chimney are architectural finishes common to the craftsman-style approach that influenced bungalow design during the first quarter of the twentieth century.

Construction of this distinctive bungalow influenced dwelling took place during the ownership of James H. Truitt, who purchased this corner lot in May 1922 and took out a \$3,000 mortgage on the property the following month. James H. Truitt and his wife, Ruth Williams Truitt, maintained ownership until 1928 when the couple relocated to Prince Georges County. Between 1928 and 1945, the Truitt house was occupied by Addie D. and Noah T. Rayne, who retained title to the house and lot until they transferred the property to Valentia D. and Beatrice Truitt. Beatrice Truitt retained a life estate in the house and lot until 1977 when it was conveyed to June Anne Webb.



Margie Davis House, Dr. Frank Lewis House (WI-509): Maryland Historic Trust database describes this property in the following way, “Dr. Frank Lewis occupied this Main Street house for a large portion of the twentieth century, and the four-square dwelling served as his residence as well as the location of his doctor's office. The two-and-a-half story, two-bay frame house dating around 1918, was built in a style widely accepted across Wicomico County during the first quarter of the twentieth century. A well-preserved exterior, including a hip roof with kicked eaves and a modillion block cornice, are some of the exterior details that distinguish this house from many others built around the same time. Dr. Lewis's office was housed in a single-story hip-roofed structure that stands off the northeast corner of the four-square dwelling.

Dr. Frank Lewis's residency of this Main Street house and lot stretched from August 1931 until he died in 1992. Construction of the four-square house, however, dates from the ownership of Margie M. Davis, who held title to the lot between 1916 and 1929.

The house is located at 7411 Main Street in the center of Willards. The two-and-a-half story, two-bay, four-square frame house faces west with a hip roof oriented on an east/west axis.

A partially excavated cellar supports the two-and-a-half-story frame house with an exterior sheathing of plain weatherboards. The walls of the central block rise to a steeply pitched hip roof with kicked eaves, and the roof retains a wood shingle covering. Attached to the northeast corner of the main block is a 1930s doctor's office, and a mid-twentieth century rear wing stretches to the back.

The west (main) facade is a two-bay front with a glazed front door. The glass panels have beveled edges. Framing the front door is flanked by beveled glass sidelights. Located to left (north) is a single-pane sash window, and the first story is sheltered by a single-story porch supported by tapered paneled posts. Stretching between the post is a rectangular baluster handrail. Accenting the entrance bay is a shallow gable pediment. Single-pane sash windows light the second story, and the base of the hip roof is finished with a block cornice. The west slope of the roof is defined by a pair of hip roof dormers fitted with six-over-one sash windows. The dormers, like the main roof, have flared eaves. Attached to the ridge of the house is a twisted metal lightning rod system, and the vertical metal rods retain white milk glass balls.

The north side of the main block is four-bays across, and the tapered post porch shelters the first story. Located off the northwest corner of the house is an exposed section of an interior brick stack. A glazed side door opens onto the porch, and a shallow pediment cross gable marks the side entrance bay. Single pane sash windows light the first and second floors. Fixed atop, the hip roof is a hip roof dormer fitted with paired six-over-one sash windows.

Attached to the east (rear) wall of the main block is a two-story hip-roofed service wing lighted on the first and second floors with single-pane sash windows. The rear side, like the main block, is covered by a hip roof, and the eave is accented with a block cornice. A mid-twentieth-century single-story addition extends from the back of the early twentieth-century service wing.

Located off the northeast corner of the house is a single-story, hip-roofed doctor's office that dates to the early 1930s.”

Gordy's Industry, site (WI-629): Maryland Historic Trust database describes this property in the following way, “the property known historically as Gordy's Industry is defined by the second quarter of the nineteenth-century two-story, five-bay dwelling that stands south of an old mill pond near the town of Willards. The center hall plan house was erected for Garretson Gordy (1803-1888), and his wife Margaret (1800-1874) around the time he patented Gordy's Industry, encompassing 455 acres, in 1837. The five-bay frame dwelling retains portions of its late Federal woodwork. Also engaging are the pieces of old millstone found on the property.

Garretson Gordy and his wife Margaret occupied this mill property for most of their adult lives, and in 1850 their large family included five children, and according to the census, two other Gordy relatives who were born in Delaware resided there as well. Ten years later, in 1860, Garretson Gordy was listed with real estate and personal property valued at a substantial 516,000.

Still living in the household were two of five children; carpenter Levi D. Gordy, aged 30, and his sister Maria, aged 15. The house, along with a sawmill and a grist mill, is located at this site on the Lake, Griffing, and Stevenson atlas, published in 1877. In 1881, probably sensing the end of his life, Garretson Gordy conveyed title of the house and mill property to his son Levi, 'in consideration of a home on the said place and the old residence during my lifetime, plus \$1,000.' The Gordy mill property remained in family control until the second quarter of the twentieth century when Mary H. Gordy conveyed title to Dean W. Richardson in December 1924."



Willards Log Outbuilding (WI-101): Maryland Historic Trust database describes this property in the following way, "These two outbuildings appear to be corn cribs. They are 8-10 logs high and are covered with corrugated metal roofs. Cinder blocks currently support both. Both have a door in one gable end, and one of them has a small square door in the gable itself.

In addition to these listed properties, a significant number of structures in the town date to the early twentieth century. Most of these earlier buildings are residences located within the central area of the Town along Main and Market Streets. Because many of these structures retain a high degree of architectural integrity, they contribute to the historic character of the Town.

Greenways

Willards lies along the path of the proposed Salisbury/Pocomoke River Greenways, a potential on-road bikeway connector that would provide a route across the eastern section of the County and link the greenways network in Salisbury to proposed corridors along Nassawango Creek and the Pocomoke River. Local parks along this corridor, including the County-owned recreation area on Adkins Avenue in Willards, provide spaces for public access to the greenways.

The County's goal is to develop a network of greenways throughout Wicomico County, particularly to connect the eastern and western portions of the County through the Metro Core. Within Willards, the Salisbury/Pocomoke River Greenways follows alongside the northern side of the Old Ocean City Road. It is from this location visitors should be able to access the downtown area of Main Street and to “Willards Park” on East Adkins Avenue. The Town should identify opportunities to work with partners on how to build out greenway infrastructure, including MDOT's Bikeways Program and FHWA Transportation Alternatives Program administered by MDOT SHA.

The Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area

The Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area (LESHA) was certified as a Maryland Heritage Area in 2002. The LESHA encompasses the largest physical territory of heritage tourism in the State – Somerset, Wicomico, and Worcester counties – and funds or promotes over 800 heritage area sites and projects. The heritage sites and projects in the three-county area include museums, cultural centers, parks, historic mansions, interpretive centers, discovery centers, landmark downtowns and interpretive walking tours, Indian trails and sites, African-American historic sites, waterway and cycling trails, and archeological and architecturally significant sites.

The Heritage Area is managed by The Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Council, Inc. (LESHC), a grassroots, nonprofit organization whose purpose is to preserve, protect and promote the cultural, natural and historical heritage of Somerset, Wicomico, and Worcester counties. Notable LESHC projects include the creation of a Beach to Bay Indian Trail, the Beach, and Beyond Passport Program, projects at the Ward Museum of Wildfowl Art, Pemberton Historical Park, Ocean City Life Saving Station Museum, the Chipman Cultural Center, African-American Interpretive Signage Sites, Pocomoke River Discovery Center and Teackle Mansion renovations.

On-going LESHC projects supporting regional heritage tourism include the Scenic Blue Crab Byway - connecting heritage tourism sites along with biking, hiking and driving route signed with a signature "blue crab" logo – and a \$10,000 mini-grant program that supports heritage tourism projects in the region by offering community organizations strategic project planning and fundraising services.

This Plan recognizes the importance of the certification status of the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area, comprising heritage sites and places in Wicomico, Worcester, and Somerset Counties. This status recognizes Willard's unique heritage and offers the Town the opportunity for coordinated and enhanced tourism activity. Consequently, the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Management Plan is now incorporated in the *Willards Comprehensive Plan* as may be amended from time to time.

Old Ocean City Road – Scenic Byway

Willards is located on what is described by the Lower Eastern Shore Byway Committee as the Blue Crab Scenic Byway (see Figure 1). This scenic route extends from Smith Island to Ocean City. It incorporates the Old Ocean City Road Scenic Byway, a 32-mile designated Maryland Scenic Byway that begins in Salisbury and ends in Ocean City. MDOT SHA has not designated the Blue Crab Scenic Byway as an official Maryland Scenic Byway. While this status excludes the route from the specific scenic byway development review process, it does not preclude work potentially being requested to preserve and enhance the roadways existing historical characteristics. Willards is given little attention in the plan documents for these scenic byways, which represent an opportunity for the Town to capitalize on eco and heritage tourism.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAMS

Programs exist to help individuals and groups temporarily or permanently protect sites and structures considered significant. Historic preservation programs include the inventorying, researching, restoration, and ongoing protection of sites and structures having a significant local or national historic interest. Historical and cultural resource preservation and enhancement through sensitive land use planning and other administrative means would benefit Willards with:

- Promotion of a strong sense of community pride for Town residents;
- Community and economic revitalization through the renovation or adaptive reuse of older structures;
- Increased property values and tax revenues as a result of renovation and restoration; and
- Increased revenues generated from heritage tourism.

More detailed information on programs including the National Historic Landmark, National Register of Historic Places, Conservation and Preservation Easements, and Historic Overlay Districts can be found from various historic preservation organizations such as the Maryland Historical Trust and its local chapter in Wicomico County.

Maryland Historical Trust

The Maryland Historical Trust (MHT) is a state agency dedicated to preserving and interpreting the legacy of Maryland's past. The Trust maintains the Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP), a broad-based catalog of historic resources throughout the State. The Inventory consists of written, photographic, cartographic, and other graphic documentation historic districts, buildings, structures, and sites that serve as a physical reminder of Maryland's history. The Inventory is continually expanding through contributions from the Trust's Statewide Architectural Survey Program, which works with county and local governments and other institutions to identify and document historic resources. Listing in the Inventory does not limit or regulate the property owner in what can or cannot be done with the property.

Maryland Historic Preservation Easement

A state-held historic preservation easement monitored by the MHT is an excellent means of perpetually preserving a historic structure and property for future generations. Such easements "run with the land" and transfer to prospective owners. The benefits for a property owner to donate his land to the MHT include income, estate, inheritance, gift, and property tax benefits. In exchange, the owner gives the MHT the right to review and approve proposed alterations on the property. The MHT will only accept easements determined to be eligible for listing on the National Register.

National Register of Historic Places

In 1966, Congress established the National Register of Historic Places as the Federal Government's official list of properties, including districts, significant in American history and culture. The Maryland Historical Trust administers the Register. Some benefits resulting from a listing in the National Register include the following:

- National recognition of the value of historic properties individually and collectively to the Nation.
- Eligibility for Federal tax incentives and other preservation assistance.
- Eligibility for a Maryland income tax benefit for the approved rehabilitation of owner-occupied residential buildings.
- Consideration in the planning for federally and state-assisted projects.
- The listing does not interfere with a private property owner's right to alter, manage, or dispose of the property.

Local Historic Overlay Zone

Another type of designation is the locally zoned historic district, which is an overlay on the existing zoning ordinance of a specified area. This district, legally allowed by Land Use Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland, is designed to maintain the visual character of the community. It may allow an appointed Commission to monitor changes, alterations, and demolition of buildings and structures of architectural or historical significance. The primary purpose of such zoning is to:

- Safeguard the heritage of Willards by preserving the areas of the town that reflect elements of its cultural, social, economic, political, or architectural history;
- Stabilize or improve property values in such a District;
- Foster civic beauty;
- Strengthen the local economy; and
- Utilize Historic Districts for the education, welfare, and pleasure of the residents of the county or municipal corporation.
- Prevent demolitions and incompatible alterations in a Historic Zone.

State and Federal Tax Credit Programs

Eligibility for or listing in the National Register of Historic Places helps qualify properties for federal and state financial incentives.

Federal Tax Credit Programs

The federal Historic Tax Credit (HTC), enacted in 1981, encourages the preservation and adaptive reuse of historic and older buildings. As of 2017, the HTC consisted of two separate tax credits: 1) a 20 percent credit for the rehabilitation costs of buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places; and 2) a 10 percent credit for the rehabilitation of non-historic, non-residential buildings built before 1936.

Maryland Historic Revitalization Tax Credit Program

Homeowner Tax Credit - Homeowners can earn a state income tax credit equal to 20 percent of qualified rehabilitation expenditures. The credit is capped at \$50,000 in a 24-month period and must have a minimum of \$5,000 of eligible expenses to qualify. The state homeowner tax credit may be used with local historic tax credits, although MHT review is independent of local review and may not be waived or substituted for local approval.

Small Commercial Tax Credit - Small commercial rehabilitations are defined as projects that do not exceed \$500,000 in total qualified rehabilitation expenses. The credit is capped at \$50,000

in a 24-month period and must have a minimum of \$5,000 of eligible expenses to qualify. Projects in a qualified Opportunity Zone may be eligible for additional tax credits.

The state small commercial tax credit may be used with federal and local historic tax credits. Federal applications are reviewed by MHT in coordination with the National Park Service and should be submitted simultaneously for a streamlined review. MHT review is independent of local review and may not be waived or substituted for local approval.

Competitive Commercial Tax Credit - Owners of income-producing properties can earn a state income tax credit (capped at \$3 million) that is equal to 20 percent of eligible rehabilitation expenses for substantial rehabilitation projects. Substantial rehabilitation projects are defined as projects with eligible expenses that exceed the greater of the adjusted basis value of the structure or \$25,000.

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION #1: Utilize the Eastern Shore vernacular architecture as the basis for determining context appropriateness.

RECOMMENDATION #2: Support and participate in the region's heritage programs and initiatives, such as the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area and the Old Ocean City Road Scenic Byway, both of which serve as economic and community development tools.

RECOMMENDATION #3: Adopt zoning provisions that promote the adaptive reuse of historic structures for public and private uses including, but not limited to, bed and breakfast establishments, craft/gift shops, small retail operations, museums, and studio space for artisans, when such uses minimize exterior structural alteration.

RECOMMENDATION #4: The Town of Willards Zoning Code and Subdivision Regulations should require developers to identify cemeteries/burial grounds/archaeological sites/historic structures on a property before any disturbance of the site and support archaeological and historical research through the preservation of significant sites.

CHAPTER 9 IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation recommendations contained in each of the preceding chapters outline an action framework for the Planning and Zoning Commission and Town Council for realizing the goals and objectives of this Comprehensive Plan. They also support and address the State's visions by setting guiding implementation principles and strategies.

Communities face accelerating change that requires adaptation to technological innovations, demographic shifts, a changing climate, and other drivers. The implementation strategies outlined in the Comprehensive Plan reflect "best estimates" of future conditions, however fraught with potential errors concerning assumptions they may be. The outcomes implied in the growth scenarios evaluated in the Municipal Growth element are not the only way things can go. They project growth, but there may be a decline or conversely dramatic unforeseen population and housing increases. The recommendations of this Comprehensive Plan emphasize strategies that have the potential for positive upside benefits and low negative downside impacts. Ones that avoid significant expenditures on capital improvements where the return on investment contradicts current market trends or where a significant, unforeseen event could leave unwarranted public debt.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

A critical tool for ensuring the town's financial solvency and long-term prosperity is a realistic Capital Improvement Program (CIP). Willards should prepare a five and ten-year plan for capital improvements that identify needs, justifies purchase or construction, and identifies the sources of funds to pay for the project or item. Beyond the mandate of protecting the health, safety, and welfare of the community, an essential capital project consideration is what is its return on investment potential. This objective suggests the CIP consists of small, incremental investments that advance the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan rather than large and expensive transformative projects.

ADEQUATE FACILITIES PROVISIONS

As a primary policy, The Town of Willards should ensure enough water and sewer capacity for infill, redevelopment, and new development within the existing corporate boundaries of the Town. The Town also should ensure that there are enough roads and other infrastructure needs available for development. If the Town determines that it does not have adequate facilities for growth, it should explore methods to acquire the necessary facilities. Chief among the options available is to require that the owners of proposed development areas provide enough funds to build or upgrade such facilities needed.

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

The 2010 Sustainable Communities Act defines Sustainable Community Areas as places where public and private investments and partnerships achieve:

- development of a healthy local economy;
- protection and appreciation of historical and cultural resources;
- a mix of land uses;
- affordable and sustainable housing, and employment options; and
- growth and development practices that protect the environment and conserve air, water, and energy resources, encourage walkability and recreational opportunities, and where available, create access to transit.

The Town of Willards became a participating Sustainable Community under the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development program in February 2020. Map 8-2 includes properties determined to need revitalization or additional state investment to strengthen the local market. The Town's program outlines a Community Action Plan that includes strategies for the revitalization of this area. Pursuing the strategies outlined in the Willards Sustainable Communities Action Plan implements many of the goals and objectives of this Comprehensive Plan. Strategies and suggested actions for the revitalization of the targeted Sustainable Community Area that this Comprehensive Plan incorporates include:

Environment

Strategy - Avoid development in and around environmentally sensitive areas and identify areas for future growth that limit environmental impacts through implementation of standards that address stream buffers, non-tidal wetlands, steep slopes, and the habitats of threatened and endangered species.

Strategy - Encourage the use of low-impact stormwater management techniques to address flooding and stormwater by:

- Applying for grant funding to implement streetscaping and bioretention upgrades;
- Performing a stormwater management study, if necessary, to help encourage environmentally friendly solutions to stormwater issues;
- Identifying streets in need of new curbs, gutters, and sidewalks, or that are most flood-prone; and
- Improving existing stormwater infrastructure with more bioswales and rain gardens to decrease reliance on ditches. Strategy- Expand, improve, and develop neighborhood playgrounds by:
 - Encouraging the county to continue plans to repair the pavilions;
 - Applying to the Maryland Department of Natural Resources Community Parks and Playgrounds program for acquisition of parkland and improvement of parks.

Strategy - Apply to the Maryland Department of Transportation Recreational Trails Program (RTP) and the Bikeways Grant Program to help fund projects within the town limits to connect with compatible County resources in the surrounding area of the town.

Economy

Strategy - Attract new compatible businesses to Town to support a diverse economy and provide services that might attract industrial employers by:

- Utilizing technical assistance and grants available from Salisbury - Wicomico Economic Development (SWED), Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Areas, Wicomico Tourism;
- Promoting Tax Credits programs for which extra points are available through Sustainable Communities designation (Job Creation, Small Commercial Tax Credits); and
- Providing guidance to small businesses and entrepreneurs to attain access to resources and small business loans.

Strategy - Beautify the commercial corridor to attract customers by:

- Developing design standards and guidelines for lighting, painting, etc.;
- Implementing a facade program/tenant fit-out program;
- Applying for Community Legacy funds;
- Rehabilitating buildings or properties through facade improvements;
- Considering Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) sidewalk retrofit program as a resource for sidewalk construction/reconstruction; and
- Incorporating improved stormwater management into streetscape improvements.

Strategy - Partner with local businesses to create incentives for people to visit multiple shops and restaurants by:

- Giving community members discounts at participating stores; and
- Increasing connectivity between restaurants, services, residential, retail, and commercial locations; and
- Working with other small towns to coordinate their economic development strategies and incentivize travel between places, and attract visitors during festivals (Salisbury, 4th of July).

Strategy: Attract a developer and tenant to provide fresh food by:

- Allocating funds to perform independent market studies of proposed grocery retail development;
- Conducting a market study and analyze the competitiveness of a grocer with the recent opening of the new Dollar General; and
- Circulating findings of the market study to potential businesses that could locate in Willards such as hardware stores, fast food establishments, bakery/donut shop.

Transportation

Strategy - Ensure street and sidewalk connectivity within the Town boundary. Connecting residential areas to the Main Street commercial corridor by applying for Safe Routes to School to increase safety between neighborhoods and Willards Elementary School.

Strategy: Complete streetscape improvements to commercial and residential roads including gutter, curb, and sidewalk installation or repair by:

- Applying to MDOT's Sidewalk Reconstruction for Pedestrian Access Program to upgrade and widen existing sidewalks and MDOT's New Sidewalk Construction for Pedestrian Access for new sidewalks;
- Requesting that MDOT SHA undertake streetscape improvement project for the section of Old Ocean City Road within the Town limits; and
- Installing curbs, gutters, sidewalks, and planting space for trees.

Strategy - Work with local and regional transit authorities to provide public transportation options for Willards by:

- Undertake a planning and/or feasibility study to determine "demand for nearby destinations;
- Coordinating with public transportation agencies (e.g., Shore Transit) to provide new routes or shuttle service to Willards;
- Adding designated Shore Transit commuter bus stop in Willards for commuters between Salisbury and Ocean City; and
- Re-establishing consistent daily service to Willards along existing routes 432 and 452 rather than serving the town via a flag stop only. The 203W schedule, where the Willards Dash In is served, is not posted on the website. Routes 203W and 203E no longer exist, and Willards Dash In is now only served as a flag stop on the 432 on the way to Ocean City, and 452 on the way to Salisbury. A passenger would have to call into the call center and pre-schedule a stop for this location. This is currently not indicated in any location on the 432 or 452 schedules.

Housing

Strategy - Provide medium and low-income families (workforce housing) with information on housing programs that can assist them in purchasing homes (Maryland Mortgage program, Maryland Home Financing Programs).

Strategy - Encourage the development of senior restricted housing to meet the demands of Willards' aging population by:

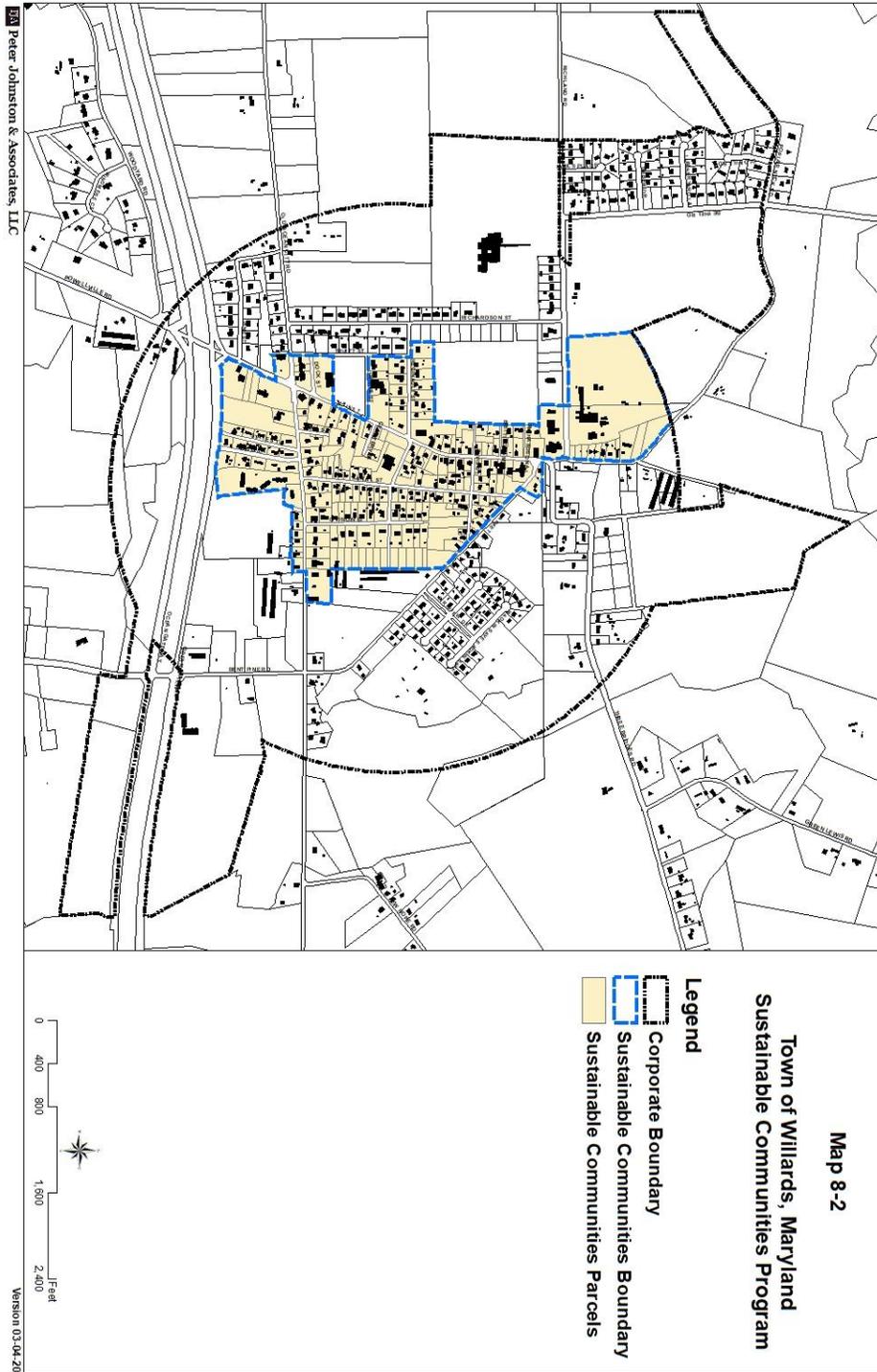
- Partnering with a nonprofit developer to provide affordable senior housing; and
- Retrofit existing units to allow for "aging in place."

Strategy - Conduct a housing study to find the percent of housing stock in need of rehabilitation, if they are abandoned or just in poor condition, and who the owners are.

Strategy - Encourage, through policies and programs, the restoration and rehabilitation of existing homes by:

- Implementing a residential facade program to make subsidized upgrades and repairs to older exteriors; and
- Working with landlords to develop and provide incentives to upgrade rental property in ways that do not cause excessive rent increases.

Strategy - Develop simple and practical regulations that encourage appropriate infill and redevelopment to make more cohesive neighborhoods and ensure compatibility with the existing character.



Map 8-2 Sustainable Communities Area

ZONING

Willards' Zoning Ordinance is an essential tool for the implementation of the objectives, strategies, and recommendations outlined in this Comprehensive Plan as well as the Sustainable Communities program. Standards and procedures should focus on infill and redevelopment, likely the primary growth mode for residential and non-residential uses in the planning period.

Where appropriate streamline review and approval procedures that allow for quicker decisions and reduced development cost, particularly crucial to the objective of affordable housing. Town official instituted the Infill Development Overlay District (IDOD) in 2008 to encourage and support infill and redevelopment within the existing corporate area. IDOD coverage includes most of the corporate area. The flexibility permitted the Planning and Zoning Commission makes the IDOD the ideal tool for encouraging and supporting infill and redevelopment in small spaces between existing development. In addition to zoning revisions from recommended in previous chapters and implied in the Sustainable Communities strategies outlined above the Zoning Ordinance should be revised to:

- Increase the effectiveness of the IDOD by expanding the uses the Planning and Zoning Commission is permitted to allow small-scale, first-floor retail and personal service uses and cottage industries throughout the overlay district;
- Allow for the next increment of intensification in the residential neighborhoods by expanding where duplex and small multi-family residential units are allowed through the application of the IDOD zoning provisions;
- Facilitate residential infill and redevelopment by reducing minimum lot size and yard requirements;
- Change the permitted use tables by replacing lists of permitted uses with categories and subcategories to facilitate ordinance interpretation and reduce the time required to determine whether the zoning district permits the use; and
- Add flexible parking standards and alternative parking arrangements.

Housing

Unprecedented shifts in demographics are redefining housing needs in the community. Demographic shifts include:

- an aging population;
- families growing, shrinking and morph over time with these fluctuations increasingly happen weekly;

- increased single person households;
- increased single-parent households with children; and
- a shrinking middle class and stagnating middle-class incomes.

These shifts indicate that building more detached single-family units alone is not the answer to addressing the community’s housing needs. The construction cost of these units results in either rent that is too high or mortgage costs beyond the reach of many residents. For its part, Willards can become more proactive and grow supply by expanding the range of housing types allowed throughout the Town. Providing a broader menu of housing types can help people — especially the underserved single population — find housing they can afford.

Permitted residential unit types in the residential districts should expand to include duplex units, bungalow courts, accessory dwelling units, small multi-family units, townhouses, live/work units, and courtyard apartments. In established neighborhoods, development standards should ensure units never exceeds the size of a single-family house (in height, width, and depth) and mix well with other building types in the vicinity. Among others, expanding the range of permitted residential unit types can result in:

- Homes with less square footage that are less expensive to build.
- Homes that can be shared allow people to combine their incomes.
- Homes that can be divided into two or more units can generate income for a household.
- Accessory, or secondary, units — such as a basement or garage apartments — are likely to be more affordable than a standard apartment.

DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

Design Principles

The Town of Willards is interested in having attractive projects with proper site planning, including structures, circulation, and landscaping, and well thought out in terms of how they relate to all surrounding properties. The following general “rules” serve to clarify the Town’s intent and stimulate the submission of noteworthy projects:

- Natural features and site constraints should suggest “natural” common sense design solutions. Development needs to design with nature, not fight, control, or dominate natural and ecological processes.

- The automobile should not be the dominant force that dictates the layout and design of residential communities. New residential streets should be narrow, discourage through traffic, be landscaped with shade trees, and recognized as the principal public spaces that they are. Given their visual and functional importance, thought, deliberation, and investment in landscape and streetscape design should be evident.
- Landscaping common open spaces. Landscaping should provide shade, shelter from wind, and visual screens or buffers from unsightly elements on adjoining properties or such on-site things as parking lots, loading areas, dumpsters, or utility structures. Landscaping also separates and buffers incompatible land uses such as the rear of commercial buildings and loading areas from adjoining residential lots. Landscaping can also provide wildlife habitat and linkages to forested and natural areas, greenways, and walking paths.
- Parking should not be a dominant site feature. Parking areas should be small scale, highly landscaped, attractive, and inviting. Many examples exist of successful shopping areas where paved parking spots were reduced in favor of shade trees, landscaped berms, shrubs, and flowers. Whenever possible, it is better to give preference to green space over asphalt and paved parking.
- Signage should be informative without being intrusive. Signs should not dominate the visual landscape. Signs should be compatible with their purpose, be clear, concise, and as small as reasonably possible.
- The architecture and styles proposed should be in keeping with the building types and techniques that have evolved in the region. The Town strongly encourages traditional designs and materials so that new developments blend seamlessly with the old. Modern materials and layouts need not conflict with the character of our Town if developers and builders are sensitive to the overall appearance of their creation.

Large-scale development projects can best address those issues that affect the Town's guiding principle for this element, protection, and enhancement of our "small-town character" by adhering to the following design parameters:

- Architectural harmony, including compatibility in styles, materials, colors, and building size and setbacks;
- Variety in housing types, density, and cost;
- Parks, squares, and other common open spaces for residents to interact and recreate, and to provide a setting for the architecture of the development;

- Neighborhood centers and civic spaces, which, depending on the scale of the development, can include places to shop, work, learn, or worship;
- An interconnected street system based on a modified grid system;
- Sidewalks, street trees, and substantial on-street parking providing distinct separation between pedestrians and traffic;
- Streets and sidewalks that are spatially defined by buildings in a regular pattern, unbroken by parking lots;
- Traffic calming, including more narrow streets with shorter turning radii than suburban streets, and medians, circles, and related features along prominent streets;
- Lighting designed for safe walking and signage which has a pedestrian orientation; and
- A system of land subdivision and development which links one neighborhood to another and can logically be extended.

Access, Circulation and Parking Design

The layout of access and circulation systems in new developments must balance the mobility, safety, and other needs of pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicular traffic. Achieving this end requires more than merely complying with street standards and specifications. The successful design of access, circulation, and parking systems in new developments requires considerable effort.

Streets may be the most important public spaces in neighborhoods and an integral part of the overall design of communities. Interconnected streets encourage people to walk by providing a variety of route options. Small blocks encourage people to walk by maintaining a human scale environment. A fine-grained system of streets, pedestrian ways, and bicycle routes help disperse traffic and reduce congestion. Multiple streets provide opportunities to connect new neighborhoods with old neighborhoods. Pedestrian walkways, bicycle lanes, and other amenities enhance the desirability of walking and bicycling.

Street layout based on a modified grid system with a logical and straightforward hierarchy contributes to the sense of place and helps orient people. This system must afford every lot a reasonable means of ingress and egress for emergency vehicles. Vehicles should be able to enter and exit without creating a danger to themselves, pedestrians, or vehicles traveling on abutting streets, or interfere with the free and convenient flow of traffic on abutting or surrounding streets.

The street layout should present an attractive streetscape. A streetscape that is interesting to pedestrians encourages more people to walk. Buildings should front on the street. Structures should form a continuous street edge, a vertical wall that contains the street, and encloses space.

The street layout should permit the safe, efficient, and orderly movement of traffic while meeting the multi-faceted needs of drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists. Street rights-of-way should be adequate to serve all functions, including carrying motor vehicle, bicycle, and pedestrian traffic, allow on-street parking, and serve as a link in the town's drainage system.

Streets should connect with surrounding streets to permit the convenient movement of traffic between neighborhoods or to facilitate access by emergency service vehicles or for other enough reasons. The street layout should serve local access needs and discourages use by through traffic. At the same time, the design should provide appropriate vehicular and pedestrian connections between residential neighborhoods, shopping, and employment areas.

Proposed new streets should provide for the appropriate extension of existing streets and contain key links of planned collector roads. The street layout should respect natural features, relate appropriately to the topography, and facilitate the drainage and stormwater runoff.

When required, parking lots should consist of heavily landscaped small lot segments that are unobtrusive. In commercial areas, parking should consist of ample on-street parking and small lots located to the side or rear of buildings, screened from the main commercial street. Access to parking should be from rear driveways where possible. Screen all parking lots from adjacent residential uses.

Amend the Zoning and Subdivision codes to require non-residential uses to provide bicycle storage/parking facilities to encourage and support this alternative mode of travel.

Park and Open Space

A variety of parks and open space should be provided for enjoyment by people of all ages. Parks and open space should be purposeful components of design and should be prominently displayed. Exceptional views and vistas should be framed or enhanced. Locate greens or commons in each neighborhood as community gathering areas. Formal parks should be designed to complement the civic architecture, where appropriate. Parks should serve the active and passive recreation needs of residents. Locate parks within easy walking distance (500 to 800 feet) of every residence. Link parks and open space together by walking paths to the maximum extent possible. In all cases, parks should be easily accessible and highly visible. Ideally, neighborhood parks or greens should be fronted on at least two sides by residential units so that residents can see park activities.

The design of parks should respond to user needs. Generally, park design should adhere to the following principles:

- Everything should have an identified purpose;
- The design should be for people not a simple application of standards;
- Both function and aesthetics should be satisfied;
- Place nothing randomly;
- Satisfy the technical requirements, e.g., for playfields, ball courts, etc.;
- Use the most cost-efficient design; and
- Provide for ease of use and supervision.

Current park facilities are adequate to serve the needs of the existing population. New developments should be required to provide a variety of parks and open space facilities to address the needs of the new neighborhoods. Parks should range from small, vest-pocket parks located within the neighborhoods to larger, community parks serving all Town residents, as deemed appropriate.