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#### CalvertHealth

Erin Farley, Community Wellness Manager

#### **Calvert Library**

Carrie Willson, Director

#### **Calvert County Sheriff's Office**

David Payne, Assistant Sheriff

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Jason Brinkley, Director; Tamara Blake-Wallace, Planning Commission Administrator and Acting Deputy Director/Planning; Rachel O'Shea, Acting Deputy Director/Zoning; Tay Harris, Long Range Planner; Ronald Marney, AICP, CFM, Environmental Planning Regulator; Jessicca Gaetano, Planner III; Amalia Pleake-Tamm, Planner III; Christopher Sperling, Historic Preservation Planner III; Kat Lockwood, Planner II

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# Acronyms

AMI	Average Media Income
BIAC	Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee
CDP	Census Designated Place
EDU	Equivalent Dwelling Unit
EMS	Emergency Medical Services
ESD	Environmental Site Design
IBA	Important Bird Area
MDOT	Maryland Department of Transportation
MGD	Million Gallons Per Day
ΜΤΑ	Maryland Department of Transportation Maryland Transit Administration
PFA	Priority Funding Area
RIAC	Regional Infrastructure Advisory Committee
TEA	Targeted Ecological Areas
TDR	Transfer Development Rights
SHA	Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration
SMECO	Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative
TMDL	Total Daily Maximum Load

# Master Plan of Town Centers

Town Centers, established in 1983, are the county's primary designated growth areas. There are nine designated Town Centers in the county. Seven Town Centers are under the purview of the Board of County Commissioners and include Dunkirk, Huntingtown, Lusby, Owings, Prince Frederick, Solomons and St. Leonard Town Centers. Two Town Centers are under the purview of the municipalities, Chesapeake Beach, and North Beach, which have their own planning and zoning authority.

The county's Town Center Master Plans have been amended several times throughout the nearly 40 years since they were originally prepared. The St. Leonard Town Center Master Plan was updated in 2013. However, the remaining Town Center master plans have not been updated. In February 2025, the Department of Planning & Zoning proposed a framework for updating its Town Center Master Plans referred to as the Master Plan of Town Centers. This single document is intended to streamline the Master Plan update process by eliminating redundancy in Town Center Master Plan updates. The first chapter will include the Calvert County Comprehensive Plan vision and goals and background information applicable to all Town Centers. Subsequent chapters will include information specific to each Town Center. Examples of



background information applicable to all Town Center Master Plans include:

- Concentrate growth in Town Centers to prevent commercial sprawl along MD 2/4 and limit residential sprawl on agricultural land.
- Protect natural resources through required buffers and setbacks.
- Preserve cultural assets by implementing protective development standards.
- Plan for diverse housing options and provide financial assistance to meet residents' housing needs.
- Support small businesses with low-interest loans and relocation or expansion services.
- Improve transportation networks to enhance safety, reduce congestion, and increase connectivity via roads, pedestrian paths, and bike trails.
- Invest in government and civic facilities to meet the evolving needs of county residents.



# **CHAPTER 1** Town Centers













# Purpose of Town Center Master Plans

The Prince Frederick Town Center Master Plan is an official policy document of the Calvert County Government and one of several documents used to implement the Calvert County Comprehensive Plan. The current Comprehensive Plan was adopted in August 2019 and amended subsequently. Like the Comprehensive Plan, the Prince Frederick Town Center Master Plan is a snapshot in time of the dynamic process of managing growth in Calvert County.-

An adopted Town Center Master Plan serves many purposes:

- The Board of County Commissioners, the Planning Commission, and county departments use the plan as a guide when evaluating proposed projects, considering changes to ordinances and regulations, and developing the operating and capital budgets.
- The Town Center Master Plan also establishes a framework for zoning regulations specific to the Prince Frederick each Town Center.
- State agencies use the plan when considering whether to provide state funding for a local project (i.e., public infrastructure and community development projects).
- Businesses and developers use the plan to help make investment and location decisions.
- Residents use the plan to evaluate how well the county government is responding to the goals and objectives written in the plan.

While the Prince Frederick Town Center Master Plan is an official policy document, it is not a blueprint for development, nor does it commit specific resources to its implementation. Decisions made by agencies should be consistent with the goals of the Prince Frederick Town Center Master Plan. Specific implementing actions and details are left to the appropriate agency or public body through their usual processes, including rulemaking (i.e., adoption of zoning regulations), administration (i.e., site plan and subdivision plan approval) and funding of projects through capital expenditures (i.e., public infrastructure and community development projects).

# Relationship: The Comprehensive Plan to the Prince Frederick Town Center Master Plan

The 1983 Calvert County Comprehensive Plan established the county's <u>major and minor</u> Town Centers<u>and the one-</u> <u>mile radius</u>. The intent of Town Centers is to provide locations suitable for residential and commercial development and to avoid extending strip commercial development along Calvert County's highways. Strip commercial development contributes to traffic congestion, increases the potential for highway traffic accidents, reduces the drawing power of commercial uses by limiting the opportunity to share customers with other nearby commercial uses, increases the cost of needed infrastructure, and detracts from the visual beauty of the countryside.<sup>1</sup><u>The one-mile radius was intended as a</u> <u>residential transition zone between Town Centers and agricultural land.</u>

The 2019 Calvert County Comprehensive Plan update eliminated the categories of major and minor Town Centers, resulting in one category—Town Center. The Town Center one-mile radius was also replaced with a residential zoning district, <u>incorporated into implemented by</u> the<del>recent</del> Calvert County Zoning Ordinance-<u>update</u>. Additionally, the Comprehensive Plan adopted in 2019 included Phase I and Phase II expansions <u>for Dunkirk, Huntingtown, Lusby,</u> <u>Owings, Prince Frederick, Solomons and St. Leonard</u> Town Centers. The 2022 amendment <u>to the Comprehensive Plan</u>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>+</sup> <u>Calvert County Comprehensive Plan</u>, p. 3-2 (accessed 6/14/21).

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reduced the expansion <u>areas</u> to the <u>Huntingtown</u>, Prince Frederick, <u>Lusby</u>, <u>and Solomons</u> Town Center<u>s</u>-<u>Phase I</u>expansion areas</u>.



# Town Center Designations and the Comprehensive Plan Vision

#### **Town Centers**

Town Centers are intended to include a mix of commercial, office, residential, public, and quasi-public development as a means to promote economic development, create more local jobs, expand cultural opportunities, reduce traffic congestion, prevent strip commercial development, and provide a range of housing opportunities with convenient access to goods and services for county residents. The provision of adequate roads, water, wastewater systems, public transportation, and high-quality internet communication systems, together with public amenities such as parks, town squares, trails, sidewalks, bikeways, indoor recreational and cultural facilities, should remain a top priority, in accordance with Town Center Master Plans. Town Center Master Plans are individually adopted. Town centers such as the Prince-Frederick Town Center and are the primary locations for growth.

#### **Priority Funding Areas**

Most of the Prince Frederick-Town Centers are is dually designated town center and a Priority Funding Areas (PFA). Priority Funding Area boundaries are slightly different than Town Center boundaries, but generally encompass most of each Town Center. In 1997, the state of Maryland adopted the PFA Act (Smart Growth Act). Maryland's PFAs are targeted communities where local governments desire the state to invest and support future growth. PFAs are described as geographic growth areas defined under State law and designated by local jurisdictions to provide a map for targeting state investment in infrastructure. The law directs state funding for roads, water and sewer plans, economic development, and other growth-related needs to PFAs, recognizing that these investments are the state's most important tool to influence growth and development.

#### **Sustainable Communities**

Most of the Prince Frederick-The Dunkirk, Lusby Prince Frederick, and Solomons Town Centers is are also dually designated as a Sustainable Community under the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development's <u>Sustainable Communities Program</u>. The program was established in 2010 and is a place-based designation that offers resources to support holistic strategies for community development, revitalization, and sustainability in older communities. The designation places special emphasis on infrastructure improvements, multimodal transportation and development that strengthens existing communities. This designation also gives affords the county an advantage when opportunities to pursueing other state designations tied to grant funding and designations. The the county's current planto pursue the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development's Main Street Affiliation to revitalize Main Street/Old Town.

# **Consistency with the Calvert County Comprehensive Plan**

<u>The strategic direction for the Prince Frederick each Town Center Master Plans is also used to develop actions which</u> support the county's ten "visions" as defined in the Calvert County Comprehensive Plan.

#### I. Our landscape is dominated by forests and fields.

#### Each Town Center Master Plan:

- identifies key natural resources which should be preserved and/or restored through future development regulations, strategic acquisition of preservation easements, and other means.
- encourages the use of the Transferable Development Rights (TDRs) for townhouses and multifamily and senior housing.

#### 2. Our Town Centers are attractive, convenient, and interesting places to live, work and shop. Each Town Center Master Plan:

- prioritizes policies and investments that create vibrant public spaces and encourages high quality design of the built environment.
- encourages the development of a significant public gathering space in town centers.
- emphasizes that aging shopping centers should be repurposed for mixed-use.

# 3. Our wetlands, streams and forests and the Chesapeake Bay and Patuxent River support thriving plant and animal communities.

#### Each Town Center Master Plan:

- recommends one contiguous buffer of streams, wetlands, floodplains, steep slopes, and certain soils, accompanied by a setback to protect water quality of town center receiving waters.
- advocates regional watershed management planning through tracking of impervious surfaces and forest cover and adherence to Chesapeake Bay pollutant load requirements.
- strategizes for increased intensity and interval of rain events.

<u>4.</u> Our highways are safe with only moderate congestion and transit is readily available. Walking and bicycling are practical alternatives within and in close proximity of Town Centers. Each Town Center Master Plan:

- supports the completion of unfinished road segments and loop roads.
- advocates for limited access on MD 2/4.

- plans for a pedestrian and bicycle path network with connections to community destinations.
- advocates for expanded public transit that better serve commuters.
- actively seeks road safety measures.
- 5. We waste less, consume fewer natural resources, and properly dispose of waste. Each Town Center Master Plan:
  - allows reductions in required parking for new commercial developments to minimize impervious surfaces.
  - identifies the need for more robust electric vehicle charging infrastructure to support the transition away from consumption of fossil fuels.
  - maintains a development pattern that is consistent with current sewer and stormwater system plans.

# 6. Our communities are safe. We care for the well-being of each other. Each Town Center Master Plan:

- provide public services that promote a healthy, engaged, and active community.
- recognizes the strength in our diversity and importance of welcoming families from all backgrounds.
- responds to the need for quality, affordable, and accessible housing for all.
- 7. Our children are well prepared for the future. We offer robust and diverse educational opportunities.

# Each Town Center Master Plan:

- maintains a residential growth pattern that can be accommodated within existing school capacity.
- encourages the development of recreational facilities that benefit users of all ages and abilities.

#### 8. We are stewards of our cultural heritage.

#### Each Town Center Master Plan:

- encourages the preservation and enhancement of historical and archeological assets.
- prioritizes the development of cultural resources that preserve and tell the story of its people.
- recommends enhancing and preserving a walkability to access to cultural assets.

# 9. We are building a strong local economy based on renewable resources, agriculture, seafood, high technology, retirement, recreation, and tourism. Each Town Center Master Plan:

- builds upon the strength of anchor institutions.
- encourages the continued expansion of broadband infrastructure to support the growth of high-tech businesses and strengthen educational opportunities.
- encourages mixed-use and commercial development and redevelopment.

# 10.Our government is efficient, open, and responsive to citizen needs and concerns.Each Town Center Master Plan:

- benefits from participation by hundreds of interested people through in-person and virtual meetings and workshops, all of which were broadcast live, surveys and other social media, and input from county boards, commissions, and committees.
- supports redevelopment of the government and community facilities in a manner that creates an open and welcoming environment and gathering spaces for civic and community events.

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• recommends timely and transparent processes for development review and approval.

<u>(Moved from the Prince Frederick Town Center Chapter and revised to apply to all Town Centers for consolidation and streamlining purposes.</u>

# **Calvert County Comprehensive Plan Mission and Visions**

The Calvert County Comprehensive Plan's mission and visions form the basis for this updatinged Prince Frederick. Town Center Master Plans. The mission of the Comprehensive Plan is to maintain and/or improve the overall quality of life for all citizens of Calvert County by:

- Promoting sustainable development.
- Encouraging a stable and enduring economic base.
- Providing for safety, health, and education.
- Preserving the natural, cultural, and historic assets of Calvert County.

# Land Use

# Calvert County Comprehensive Plan Vision for Land Use

- Our landscape is dominated by forests and fields.
- Our Town Centers are attractive, convenient<u>convenient</u>, and interesting places to live, work and shop.
- We are stewards of our cultural heritage.

#### **Calvert County Comprehensive Plan Goals for Land Use**

- **Goal I:** Preserve the rural character of the county, its prime farmland, contiguous forests, cultural resources, and environmentally sensitive areas.
- Goal 2: Use water and sewer policies to direct growth consistent with land use policies.
- Goal 3: Develop Town Centers as attractive, convenient, and interesting places to live, work and shop.
- Goal 4: Direct commercial and industrial uses to appropriate locations; provide necessary infrastructure.

#### Values and How We Got Here

"Calvert County has long held the values of preserving the rural landscape and creating vibrant Town Centers. Calvert County has focused on preserving its rural character since its first comprehensive plan, published in 1967. This value has been carried forward in every subsequent comprehensive plan and has continuously influenced Calvert County's land development policies. These two values work together and mutually sustain each other. Supporting, encouraging, and directing growth away from the rural areas helps preserve the rural landscape and focuses development into Town Centers. Similarly, supporting, encouraging, and directing growth toward the Town Centers limits development within the rural areas and creates more activity and vibrancy within the Town Centers."

- 2019 Calvert County Comprehensive Plan, as amended in 2022

Keeping fields and forests in their working or natural state maintains the livelihood of Calvert County farmers, sustainsthe ecosystem services of Calvert County woodlands, and retains the open space that is an essential element of thecounty's identity. Paired with thriving Town Centers, these objectives can be accomplished even while meeting thehousing and shopping needs of those who want to make Calvert County their home or workplace and avoiding uniform, low-density development dispersed throughout the county. But both rural land preservation and Town Centerdevelopment must occur for both to reach their full potential: policies that guide development away from rural areascreate demand for Town Center development to fill, while policies that bolster development in the Town Center attract growth that may otherwise occupy rural areas.

(Duplicative)

#### **Town Center Land Use Categories**

The Calvert County Zoning Ordinance defers most land use decisions in Town Centers to separate Master Plans and accompanying zoning regulations, which define the type, form, and requirements for development within each center. Following each Town Center Master Plan update, the corresponding Zoning Ordinance will also be updated. Over time, the county plans to integrate the majority of these individual ordinances into the countywide Zoning Ordinance to consolidate and streamline regulations. This will occur through the ongoing Town Center Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance update process.

# **Environment and Natural Resources**

#### **Calvert County Comprehensive Plan Vision for Environment and Natural Resources**

 Our wetlands, streams and forests and the Chesapeake Bay and Patuxent River support thriving plant and animal communities.

#### Calvert County Comprehensive Plan Goals for Environment and Natural Resources

Goal I: Preserve, protect, and conserve natural resources and environmentally sensitive areas.

- Goal 2: Continue a comprehensive approach to environmental planning with special emphasis on watershed planning.
- Goal 3: Preserve, protect, and conserve land-based natural resources.
- Goal 4: Mitigate natural and man-made hazards in Calvert County.

#### **Regional Watershed Management**

Chesapeake Bay Agreement: MD 2/4 serves as a drainage divide in the county. Generally, land west of MD 2/4 drains into the Patuxent River and east of MD 2/4, it drains into the Chesapeake Bay. Under the Chesapeake Bay Program and the Patuxent River Policy Plan, the most prevalent pollutants that are monitored within Calvert County's watersheds are nitrogen, phosphorous, and sediment. The county's major point source polluters are wastewater treatment plants\_ where land application is used to treat wastewater effluent. Non-point source pollution originates from agricultural land, septic systems, and runoff from impervious surfaces and cultivated lawns. The county implements stormwater retention and retrofit measures, septic systems upgrades, and wastewater treatment plant nitrogen removal enhancement upgrades to reduce pollution under these regional partnerships.Patuxent River Policy Plan: Under the Chesapeake Bay-Agreement, the most prevalent pollutants that are monitored within Calvert County's watershed are nitrogen, phosphorous and sediment. The county's major point source polluters are wastewater treatment plants. Non-pointsource pollution originates from agricultural land, septic systems and runoff from impervious surfaces and cultivated lawns. While impervious surface has increased from seven percent to 14% in the Patuxent River watershed since 2014, growth in Calvert County has not significantly contributed to this increase. (Revised in the paragraph below.) The Patuxent River watershed consists of 578,000 acres. According to the Maryland Department of Planning, impervious surface in the watershed increased from 7% to 14% between 1984 and 2014. As of 2014, there were 80,920 acres of impervious surface in the entire watershed. In 2011<sup>2</sup>, the County accounted for 6,346 acres (7.8%) of impervious surface in the watershed. In 2023<sup>3</sup>, it increased to 7,701 acres (8.7%).

(Revised per direction of the Planning Commission.)

#### **Indicators of a Healthy Watershed**

#### Impervious Surface

According to <u>The Center for Watershed Protection</u>, when impervious surfaces exceed 10% of watershed, a stream's ecosystem begins to show sign of distress. Waterbodies typically experience several negative impacts due to increased runoff and reduced natural infiltration. Impervious surfaces such as roads, rooftops, and parking lots prevent water from soaking into the ground, leading to higher volumes of runoff that increase the risk of flooding and erosion in nearby streams and rivers. Runoff from these surfaces often carries pollutants, including oils, heavy metals, sediments, and nutrients, which degrade water quality and harm aquatic life. The increased runoff also accelerates stream and riverbank erosion, altering natural flow patterns and destabilizing stream channels. Additionally, higher runoff and pollution reduce the availability of suitable habitats for fish and other aquatic organisms, as water quality deteriorates, becoming warmer, more polluted, and less oxygen rich. Impervious surfaces also disrupt the natural hydrological cycle, reducing groundwater recharge and lowering base flow in streams during dry periods. Overall, when impervious surfaces exceed 10%, the health of ecosystems decline, making them more vulnerable to flooding, pollution, and habitat loss. Effective stormwater management practices are essential to mitigate these adverse effects.

Forest Cover

Forest cover is the most natural and least polluting land cover-in Calvert County. Forest interior (forest more than 300 feet from a forest edge) provides important habitat to many species. Forest cover adjacent to streams (riparian forests) is essential to preserving water quality. Forests absorb nitrogen in both surface and shallow groundwater, trap phosphorous-laden sediment and remove other pollutants resulting from adjacent land uses and from atmospheric deposition. In addition to mitigating pollution, forests provide important wildlife habitat, induce groundwater recharge, and minimize flooding. Riparian forest canopy also provides shade, which is critical for moderating stream temperature and the roots of the trees that stabilize stream banks and protect against erosion.

American Forests recommends an urban tree canopy cover of 40% to 60%, depending upon existing conditions<del>, as well as impervious surface of 10% or less in a watershed</del> to minimize poor water quality and stress on aquatic species. See the sidebar on the following page for the definition of forest, tree canopy, and tree canopy coverage, defined in the Calvert County Zoning Ordinance.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> 2017 planimetric data photography, the Calvert County Department of Technology Services, Geographic Information Systems (4/2/25).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> 2023 planimetric data photography, the Calvert County Department of Technology Services, Geographic Information Systems (11/2/25).

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Forest conservation requirements call for a no net loss and prioritize establishment and/or conservation of forested riparian buffers. The Calvert County Zoning Ordinance requires buffers to be expanded to include contiguous sensitive area land, like streams, wetlands, floodplain, steep slopes, and highly erodible soils. The buffer must also be further protected by a setback. Land conservation also plays a major role in protecting tree canopy cover. Partners such as the <u>American</u> <u>Chestnut Land Trust</u>, the <u>Maryland Environmental Trust</u> and <u>The Nature Conservancy</u> have conserved land in the county's watersheds.

#### Greenways

Greenways are corridors of land set aside for recreational use, environmental protection, or a combination of both. Networks of wetlands, large tracts of forest, other protected natural areas and the habitat pathways that connect them are also known as green infrastructure. The Maryland Department of Natural Resources has identified lands and watersheds that have high ecological value, designating them Targeted Ecological Areas **Forest.** A biological community dominated by trees and other woody plants covering a land area of 10,000 square feet or greater. Forest includes areas that have at least 100 live trees per acre with at least 50 % of those trees having a two-inch or greater diameter at 4.5 feet above the ground and larger, and areas that have been cut but not cleared. Forest does not include orchards.

**Tree Canopy.** The aerial branches of terrestrial plants, together with their complement of leaves or needles.

**Tree Canopy Coverage.** The area beneath the aerial extent of the tree canopy.

Source: Calvert County Zoning Ordinance, Definitions (accessed 12/27/24)

(TEAs). These areas considered the most ecologically important areas in Maryland and are targeted for conservation through the state's Program Open Space Program. Information about TEAs, including data and maps are available to agencies, organizations, and the public through an online interactive mapping program, <u>GreenPrint</u>. According to the Department of Natural Resources <u>GreenPrint</u>, ecosystem services undeveloped land and pervious surfaces in the county have an estimated value of \$200-300 million in benefits to air quality improvement, carbon sequestration, groundwater recharge, nutrient uptake, wildlife habitat and biodiversity, as well as stormwater mitigation.

#### **Protected Sensitive Areas**

Sensitive areas include wetlands, streams, steep slopes and, highly erodible soils and are protected through development regulations. Other natural resource lands and habitat for wildlife and plants protected by development regulations include; habitat for rare, threatened, and endangered species, TEAs, floodplain, cliffs, the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area, and Areas of Critical State Concern (ACSC). These areas are easily damaged and can be adversely impacted by human activity and are generally unsuitable for development. Development may lead to the destruction of habitat and reduction of diversity of plant and animal species, increased nutrient and sediment loads in waterbodies and increased runoff causing flooding. Disturbance to these habitats is generally prohibited. The Department of Natural Resources and the county require consistency with the Calvert County Zoning Ordinance and the Code of Maryland Regulations Title 8, protecting these areas from the impacts of development by requiring measures like, setbacks and/or buffers around them, expansion of the buffer if contiguous to streams, wetlands, floodplain, steep slopes and highly erodible soils, avoidance or impact minimization, and time of year restrictions.

#### Wetlands

Wetlands may be nontidal (freshwater), tidal (saline or brackish). <u>Tidal wetlands are found along coastlines</u> and are <u>salt</u> <u>marshes and mangrove swamps that are tidally influenced</u>. <u>Nontidal wetlands are typically found inland and are marshes</u>, <u>swamps, bogs, and vernal pools that are fed by rainfall, groundwater</u>. They provide ecological benefits such as floodwater storage, pollution control, wildlife habitat and a major food supply for aquatic organisms, migratory

waterfowl, and other wildlife. Care must be taken with flows artificially added upstream of a wetland or into a wetland as a result of development.

#### **Streams and Their Buffers**

Streams provide habitat for many aquatic organisms and wildlife, including fish spawning and feeding. At the same time, these streams provide a direct pathway for pollutants to move downstream into the Patuxent River and the Chesapeake Bay, potentially causing serious damage to aquatic ecosystems and the fisheries production. Vegetated (riparian) buffers remove pollutants before they enter the stream, cool, and maintain water temperature, stabilize stream banks, and improve the overall health of a stream.

#### **Steep Slopes and Highly Erodible Soils**

Steep slopes are slopes greater than or equal to 25% <u>outside of the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area and 15% inside of it.</u> Highly erodible soils are loamy soils that often comprise a high ratio of silt and very fine sands. These soils erode at a rate that can cause severe erosion, loss of fertile topsoil, sedimentation of stream valleys, flooding, and degraded water quality. Stream valleys oftentimes also comprise hydric soils that filter water by trapping pollutants. The evaluation of a site for likelihood to not erode and transport sediments into the watershed is critical. The suitability of a site depends on both slope and soil type.

#### **Chesapeake Bay Critical Area**

The Chesapeake Bay Critical Area includes as all land within 1,000 feet of the mean high water line of tidal waters or the landward edge of tidal wetlands, and all waters of and lands under the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. For Calvert County, that includes the Patuxent River. The Chesapeake Bay Critical Area reduces runoff by allowing a set amount of impervious lot coverage, identifying, and creating restrictions for habitat protection areas, and setting requirements for vegetation.

#### **Areas of Critical State Concern**

Areas of Critical State Concern are specific geographic areas of the state which, based on studies of physical, social, economic, and governmental conditions and trends, are demonstrated to be so unusual or significant to the state. The Secretary of the Department of Natural Resources designates them for special management attention to assure the preservation, conservation, or utilization of their special values.

#### Habitat for Rare, Threatened and Endangered Species

The Secretary of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources has designated two rare, threatened and endangeredspecies habitats in the southern portion of the Town Center, as well as anadromous fish spawning waters in North-Battle, Hunting and Parkers creeks, as shown the state's <u>MERLIN</u> and also in the state-list of rare, threatened and endangered species found in Calvert County, maintained by the Department of Planning & Zoning. (<u>Revised below.</u>)

Maryland is home to a wide variety of plant and animal species, some of which are considered rare, threatened, or endangered due to habitat loss, pollution, invasive species, or other environmental pressures. The Secretary of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources designates these areas, and the Department maintains a comprehensive list of these species under the Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Species Program. These designated areas are available to the public online through the state's MERLIN and also are maintained by the Department of Planning & Zoning.

#### **Targeted Ecological Areas**

Targeted Ecological Areas are regions identified by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources for conservation and ecological protection efforts due to their significant environmental value. These areas are chosen based on their ability to support biodiversity, protect critical habitats, and preserve important natural resources. TEAs often include habitats for endangered or threatened species, wetlands, riparian buffers, forests, and other vital ecosystems. They are integral to the state's broader efforts to protect water quality, safeguard biodiversity, and reduce the impacts of development and urbanization on sensitive environments. Information about TEAs, including data and maps are available to agencies, organizations, and the public through an online interactive mapping program, GreenPrint.

#### **Floodplain**

The Federal Emergency Management Agency has identified Special Flood Hazard Areas within the boundaries of Calvert County. Special Flood Hazard Areas are subject to periodic inundation which may result in loss of life and property, health and safety hazards, disruption of commerce and governmental services, extraordinary public expenditures for flood protection and relief and impairment of the tax base, which adversely affect the public health, safety, and general welfare. Floodplains are defined by the Federal Flood Insurance Rate Maps. Where Federal Flood Insurance Map boundaries and elevations disagree, elevations prevail. Federal Flood Insurance maps are available from the Department of Planning and Zoning and there is an interactive Flood Hazard Map is available on the county website.

Impervious surface is an indicator of threats to ACSC and habitats for rare, threatened and endangered species. According to <u>The Center for Watershed Protection</u>, when impervious surfaces exceed 10% of watershed, a stream's ecosystem begins to show sign of distress. Tree canopy coverage is also an indicator of healthy waterways and ecosystems, discussed further down in the chapter's next section.

#### Forest Land, Tree Canopy and Greenways

Forest cover is the most natural and least polluting land cover in Calvert County. Forest interior (forest more than 300feet from a forest edge) provides important habitat to many species. Forest cover adjacent to streams (riparian forests) is essential to preserving water quality. Forests absorb nitrogen in both surface and shallow groundwater, trapphosphorous-laden sediment and remove other pollutants resulting from adjacent land uses and from atmosphericdeposition. In addition to mitigating pollution, forests provide important wildlife habitat, induce groundwater rechargeand minimize flooding. Riparian forest canopy also provides shade, which is critical for moderating stream temperatureand the roots of the trees that stabilize stream banks and protect against erosion. American Forests recommends an urban tree canopy cover of 40% to 60%, depending upon existing conditions, as well as impervious surface of 10% orless in a watershed to minimize poor water quality and stress on aquatic species. The terms forest, tree canopy and treecanopy coverage are defined by the Calvert County Zoning Ordinance. See the sidebar for the definitions. Forest conservation requirements call for a no net loss and prioritize establishment and/or conservation of forestedriparian buffers. Additionally, as discussed previously, Article 21 of the Calvert County Zoning Ordinance requiresbuffers to be expanded to include contiguous sensitive area land, like streams, wetlands, floodplain, steep slopes andhighly erodible soils. The buffer must also be further protected by a setback. Land conservation also plays a major role in protecting tree canopy cover. Partners such as the American Chestnut Land Trust, the Maryland Environmental Trust and The Nature Conservancy have conserved land in the county's watersheds.

#### **Greenways**

Greenways are corridors of land set aside for recreational use, environmental protection or a combination of both. Networks of wetlands, large tracts of forest, other protected natural areas and the habitat pathways that connect them, are also known as green infrastructure. The Maryland Department of Natural Resources has identified lands and watersheds that have high ecological value, designating them TEAs. These areas considered the most ecologicallyimportant areas in Maryland and are targeted for conservation through the state's Program Open Space. Information

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about TEAs, including data and maps are available to agencies, organizations, and the public through an online interactivemapping program, <u>GreenPrint</u>.

According to the Department of Natural Resources <u>GreenPrint</u>, ecosystem services undeveloped land and pervioussurfaces in the county have an estimated value of \$200-300 million in benefits to air quality improvement, carbonsequestration, groundwater recharge, nutrient uptake, wildlife habitat and biodiversity, as well as stormwater mitigation. (Moved to the Regional Watershed Management section for consolidation and streamlining purposes.)

# Heritage

#### **Calvert County Comprehensive Plan Vision for Heritage**

- We are stewards of our cultural heritage.
- We are building a strong local economy based on renewable resources, agriculture, seafood, high technology, retirement, recreation, and tourism.

# **Calvert County Comprehensive Plan Goals for Heritage**

- **Goal I:** Enhance, while preserving, a walkable and vibrant business district, government center and center of community life.
- Goal 2: Preserve existing access to open space while developing walkable areas and other open space resources.
- **Goal 3:** Preserve and enhance historic structures and architecture that uniquely characterize Prince Frederick.
- Goal 4: Develop heritage resources that preserve and tell the story of Prince Frederick and its people.

#### **Historical Ways of Life**

People have lived in Calvert County for thousands of years. All the activities that people have pursued to make a life here—hunting in the woods, trapping in the marshes, cultivating the land, fishing the waters—have left an imprint on the environment. These ways of life were shaped by the setting. The heritage of Calvert County is completely bound to its land and water. Farms and communities developed in coherent relationship to the local resources on which they depended.

Archaeological remains tell of the earliest inhabitants, Native Americans, who trapped and fished, hunted, and harvested here for more than 10,000 years before people from other continents settled in Southern Maryland. Calvert County was established in 1654, twenty years after the Maryland colony was founded.

Heritage cannot be abstracted from its physical setting. The long presence of people in Calvert County has shaped the land to be the way it looks. This is no less true in Prince Frederick than it is in the rest of the county.

Identification of resources that communities value is the starting point of any preservation plan. Providing protection for them, incentives for preservation and funding for mitigation requires a thoughtful collaboration of citizens and government agencies. This chapter discusses some of the preservation challenges the county faces in Prince Frederick and suggests strategies to address them.

As detailed below, this plan supports achievement of these goals by identifying heritage resources and advancing strategies for protecting them while encouraging their use as appropriate. Consistent with other sections of this plan, the Zoning Ordinance and capital improvements are the primary tools for achieving this plan. This section concludes with identifying processes and stakeholders who have an interest in the heritage chapter of this plan.

#### **Existing Policies**

#### Identification of Cultural Resources

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP) is a statewide listing of historic sites and structures and is not regulatory. This county's comprehensive plan promotes the preservation of historic buildings and supports the application of best practices in preserving them and adapting them for new uses. It also promotes the conservation of places and archaeological sites that signify and define Calvert County, as well as effective stewardship of cultural properties and the development of heritage resources as cultural capital to connect the past to the future in a way that celebrates Calvert County's unique identity and sense of place.

#### **Historic District Commission**

The Board of County Commissioners first adopted a Historic District ordinance in 1974 and established the Historic District Commission deriving its authority from state enabling legislation. Since 1974, the Board of County Commissioners, on recommendation of the Historic District Commission has designated over 90 individual properties as Historic Districts for which the ordinance has been amended to include archaeological review on those propertiesand is now Article 9 in the Calvert County Zoning Ordinance. (Deleted to avoid future nonconformance.) Designation as a Historic District helps to promote the stewardship and ensure the preservation of historic properties while not freezing them in time. The Historic District Commission is a volunteer citizen board of seven persons appointed by the Board of County Commissioners for terms of three years. The Historic District Commission reviews proposed work and alterations to designated properties and makes recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners for new designations and for the approval of tax credits for approved work. Studies done elsewhere in Maryland and nationwide have demonstrated that designated properties tend to hold their value better than others, and the funds a property-owner expends to restore and maintain them is multiplied by a factor of six in the local economy.

#### **Calvert County Heritage Committee**

Created by Board of County Commissioners Resolution 15-98, the purpose of the Calvert County Heritage Committee is to "promote programs and activities concerning the historical and cultural heritage of Calvert County." Pursuant to the Calvert County Comprehensive Plan, the Heritage Committee, along with other stakeholders is tasked with the objective of "Support[ing] efforts to interpret and celebrate local heritage at historic sites, in the public schools, and at special events in the community and make information available to assist in those endeavors." Consistent with these objectives, the Heritage Committee is dedicated to promoting the County's heritage in all its forms.

#### **Development Review**

Implementing actions specified in the Calvert County Comprehensive Plan, the Department of Planning & Zoning ensures that new development projects are reviewed for potential impact on cultural resources which include historic buildings and archaeological sites. The county has two cultural resources professionals on staff.

Calvert County cultural resource locations have been mapped by the Maryland Historical Trust and county staff and appear as layers in the county permit tracking system, enabling efficient identification of proposed developments that include known historic buildings and archaeological sites.

If a project that will negatively affect an archaeological site is proposed on a property, the county government has the authority to require an archaeological survey, based on the Town Center Zoning Ordinance. An archaeological investigation may also be required if a multifamily construction project is proposed.

#### **Cultural Resources Area Assets**

To be effective stewards of our heritage, we must educate our citizens about the nature and value of our historic and natural resources in order that we may see opportunities in those resources. Heritage resources can be thought of as "cultural capital." They can be developed as focal points for businesses and for tourism promotion with a double benefit: the resources are conserved along with local identity, and they help the community generate needed income. Celebrating heritage is also an obvious means to develop regional heritage and tourism programs that will enrich Southern Maryland as a whole. Heritage can be an organizing principle for sustainability and can integrate well with other initiatives and plans such as recreation, economic development, transportation, and environmental plans.

# Housing

# **Calvert County Comprehensive Plan Vision for Housing**

• Our Town Centers are attractive, convenient, and interesting places to live, work and shop.

# **Calvert County Comprehensive Plan Goals for Housing**

Goal I: Provide for full range of housing types in Town Centers to attract and retain multi-generational communities.

- Goal 2: Encourage walkable, mixed-use communities in Town Centers.
- Goal 3: Provide programs to increase housing affordability.
- **Goal 4:** Support aging in place through universal house design housing units and supportive services, especially near health and support services.

#### **Census Designated Places**

Each of the county's Town Centers are in a U.S. Census Bureau Consensus Designated Places (CDP). CDPs are unincorporated geographical areas for which the Bureau compiles data in the same manner as an incorporated municipality. While CDP boundaries extend beyond each

2023 Median Household Income				
In the Town Center Areas/Census				
Designated Places in Calvert County				
U.S. Census Data American Community Survey				
5-Year Estimates				
Census	Median Household			
<b>Designated Place</b>	Income			
Dunkirk CDP	\$166,471			
Huntingtown CDP	\$177,870			
Lusby CDP	\$130,543			
Owings CDP	\$171,194			
Prince Frederick CDP	\$89,625			
<u>St. Leonard CDP</u>	\$188,056			
Solomons CDP	\$89,205			

2023 Selected Housing Statistics in the					
Town Center Areas/Census Designated Places in Calvert County					
U.S. Census Data American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates					
Census Designated	Home- ownership	Median Housing	Monthly Mortgage		
Place	Rate	Value	Payment		
Dunkirk CDP	<b>99</b> %	\$557,700	\$2,760		
Huntingtown CDP	90%	\$593,500	\$2,770		
Lusby CDP	82%	\$327,500	\$1,916		
Owings CDP	94%	\$592,900	\$2,88 I		
Prince Frederick CDP	54%	\$383,000	\$2,295		
<u>St. Leonard CDP</u>	96%	\$489,500	\$3,096		
Solomons CDP	<b>69</b> %	\$455,000	\$2,528		

Town Center boundary, they provide easily accessible data for means of comparison among Town Centers.

#### Homeownership and Median Household Incomes

According to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2023 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates, homeownership rates are high (90% and above) in the Dunkirk, Huntingtown, Owings, and St. Leonard

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<u>CDPs, with Lusby CDP at a relatively high of 82%. The Prince Frederick and Solomons CDPs have lower</u> homeownership rates. In Prince Frederick, subsidized housing contributes to the lower rate, while seasonal rentals account for the trend in Solomons. See the table above for homeownership rates.

Median household incomes are higher in Dunkirk, Huntingtown, Owings, and St. Leonard CDPs (over \$166,000) compared to Lusby CDP (\$130,543) and significantly higher than in Prince Frederick and Solomons CDPs, both slightly above \$89,000. See the table above and to the left for median household income. Higher median household incomes correlate with higher homeownership rates because they enable savings for down payments, mortgage qualification, and the affordability of homeownership costs. In the Solomons CDP, however, median household income does not influence homeownership in the same way as it does in the Prince Frederick CDP because the Solomons CDP is a seasonal tourist destination. Seasonal rentals, often second homes or vacation rentals, are not aggregated with the incomes of full-time residents.

# Housing Affordability

When considering the 2023 median housing value in the table above and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's 2025 Area Median Income (AMI)<sup>4</sup> for a four-person household, those households:

- earning 60% of AMI (\$47,000 income limit) cannot purchase a house in any of the Town Center CDPs without financial assistance.
- earning 50% of AMI (\$79,300 income limit) can afford a home in the Lusby and Prince Frederick CDPs without financial assistance.
- earning 80% of AMI (\$106,800 income limit) can afford a home in the Lusby, Prince Frederick, St. Leonard and Solomons CDPs, but not in the Dunkirk, Huntingtown and Owings CDPs without financial assistance.

The CDPs lack a healthy year-round market-rate rental housing stock, resulting in a limited number of rental units. Monthly rental rates range from \$900 to \$3,995, with most falling between \$2,400 and \$3,500. The county faces a deficit of units for households at 60% of the 2025 AMI limits countywide, a limited supply for those at 50% AMI countywide, and a healthy supply for those at 80% AMI, but only in the southern part of the county. (Moved from Chapter 2, Housing Section for consolidation and streamlining purposes.)

At a time when housing stock is disproportionate to the housing needs of most Americans, encouraging affordablehousing opportunities for vulnerable segments of the population is critical. The Calvert County Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 2019 and amended in 2022, outlines a vision for housing in Town Centers that is accessible to sidewalks, public transportation, health/supportive services, and retail. There is also great value in developing cultural arts and recreational amenities that promote a sense of identity for residents living and working in the Prince Frederick Town Centers. The chief objective is to develop a place where residents can be successful at every stage of life (Outdated. Deleted for consolidation and streamlining purposes.)

The 2023 ACS median housing value, median household income, HUD's 2025 AMI limits and FMR support the <u>2020</u> <u>Maryland Housing Needs Assessment & 10 Year Strategic Plan's</u> findings that Calvert County has a deficit of 550-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Area Median Income (AMI) represents the mid-point for households with incomes either above or below an area's income distribution and is based on a four-person household. AMI is determined and used by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to determine eligibility for housing assistance, and other types of assistance. Source: HUD's 2025 AMI for Calvert County (accessed on 4/7/25).

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available rental units for people living at 30 and 50 percent of the AMI and a surplus of units for those at 80 percent AMI. People living at 60 percent of the AMI have limited housing opportunities in the Town Center CDPs. Town Center prioritization to address the deficit of rental units at the 30 and 50 percent AMI level is recommended using a variety of housing strategies, not just one approach. Seniors and individuals living with disabilities experience a higher rate of severe cost burden and should be factored into the planning process.

(Outdated. Deleted for consolidation and streamlining purposes.)

Strategies recommended by the Calvert County Housing for All Task Force include developer incentives, planned unit development, education on the definition and availability of affordable and workforce housing and promoting awareness of opportunities for housing assistance programs. In addition, the county's Zoning Ordinance permits accessory dwelling units, which provide additional affordable housing opportunities for seniors and lower-income households. These units can be integrated into an existing principal structure, such as through a garage conversion, or added as a new standalone structure on the lot. Lastly, influenced by longstanding public input for the Main Street/Old Town area and the county's pursuit to secure the state's Main Street Designation, the vision for revitalizing this area includes mixed-use buildings-These buildings would featuring commercial spaces on the ground floor and residential units on the upper floors, potentially providing affordable housing options.

(Specific to Prince Frederick Town Center.)

#### Fair Housing and Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing

House Bill 90 requires non-charter counties to develop their own approach for furthering fair housing in theircommunities, and House Bill 1045 requires localities to plan for affordable housing in the comprehensive plan. House Bill 1045 must be implemented if the comprehensive plan or housing chapter is updated or amended after January 2023. In accordance with the federal Civil Rights Act of 1968 as amended, the federal Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 as amended, and the Fair Housing Act of 1988, the county promotes through fair, orderly, and lawful procedures, the opportunity for each person to obtain housing of such person's choice in this community without regard to race, color, national origin, ethnicity, gender, disability, familial status, marital status, age, or religion. The county also promotes and encourages fair housing choice for all its residents through the administrative practices, policies, and laws that attempt to prohibit:

- Discrimination in the Sale or Rental of Housing
- Discrimination in Housing Financing
- Discrimination in Providing Brokerage Services
- Unlawful Intimidation

The county also accepts complaints from any citizen that feels that they have been discriminated against related to their housing choice and initially investigates and refers the complaint to the state or the federal housing departments. For housing projects developed or assisted with federal funds, the county ensures that its subrecipients and developers comply with statutes, regulations, and Executive Orders. <u>Additionally</u>, Calvert County commits to affirmatively further fair housing in the community by administering programs in accordance with efforts to provide a range of fair housing choices to our citizens.

#### **Community Services for Vulnerable Segments of the Population**

In addition to <u>affirmatively furthering fair housing serving as the hub for local government</u>, <u>there are</u> several key government and nonprofit services <u>that serve the county's vulnerable population and</u> are based in Prince Frederick: Calvert Library Prince Frederick, Calvert Pines Senior Center, Calvert County Health Department, the Local Behavioral Health Authority, ARC of Southern Maryland, Southern Maryland Community Network, Inc., Project ECHO Shelter, Community Ministries of Calvert County, Inc., Calvert County Department of Social Services, Barstow Acres Children's Center, University of Maryland Extension Office, and the Housing Authority of Calvert County.

#### **Aging Services**

AARP and the World Health Organization Network of Age-Friendly Communities provide a framework and action plan for developing age friendly communities, which include outdoor spaces, safe and secure walkable streets, affordable, appropriate housing to "age in place," transportation options, supportive community features, access to key services, especially health services and opportunities for residents to participate in community social activities. The Department of Community Resources, Office on Aging Division is planning a Senior Center Facilities Plan/Needs Assessment, incorporating some of that planning process within the next few years. The Calvert Pines Senior Center is planning an expansion to include a Client Services/Long-Term Care suite. This addition is designed to accommodate the growing number of social services staff employed by the Office on Aging to better support the increasing senior population.

#### **Homeless Population Services**

The Calvert County Department of Community Services and the Calvert County Department of Social Services partner with the Housing Authority of Calvert County and several non-profit organizations to provide services to the homeless population. The Housing Authority of Calvert County administers the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's <u>Homeless Housing Choice Voucher Program</u> and owns and maintains 72 housing units subsidized with Rental Assistance Demonstration Project Based Vouchers. The county's network of providers also offers services under its continuum of care for the homeless and at-risk low-income households. Finally, low- and moderate-income homeowners have access to rehabilitation loans under the <u>Maryland Special Loan Program</u>.

Identifying the county's homeless population is accomplished in two ways. Each year the homeless service providers in Calvert County participate in the Southern Maryland Local Homeless Coalition's point-in-time survey to count the county's homeless population. While the survey does not provide an accurate count, it does provide an estimate of the homeless population. According to the Southern Maryland point-in-time counts conducted in 2022 and 2023, there were 28 and 29 homeless individuals, respectively, in the county. In 2024, the point-in-time count was nine homeless individuals. In 2024, there was warm weather on the night of the count, possibly resulting in an undercount of the county's homeless population.

The County Homes Services Board also conducted surveys for the Calvert County Department of Social Services, Lifestyles of Southern Maryland, Inc., Project ECHO, Safe Harbor, Safe Nights of Calvert County and Southern Maryland Community Network for annual services provided to low-income households and the homeless population. This survey provides a more accurate accounting of the county's at-risk homeless population. The most recent survey shows that the number of unduplicated households receiving services decreased from 451 to 440 from 2019 to 2020 and that the visits to agencies increased from 527 to 648 in that same period. The term "unduplicated" means a household was counted only once regardless of how many times it was served by the six agencies. While not all services assisted the homeless population, the number of households receiving services indicates those households potentially at-risk for homelessness if assistance were not provided.

#### **Continuum of Care Community Resources Hub**

The Board of County Commissioners recently allocated local funds to allow the Department of Community Resources to leverage U.S. Department of Housing and Community Development's Block Grant funds to acquire 85 and 87 Main Street. The county plans to redevelop these properties into a community resources hub and parking area to serve vulnerable segments of the county's population, consolidating continuum of care services in a central location. The

county is also securing Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) funding for a transit station, providing accessible public transportation to and from the proposed facility.

#### Public Transportation for the Elderly and Disabled

The Department of Community Resources, Public Transportation Division, operates eight buses. routes of which sixprimarily serve Prince Frederick: one each from Chesapeake and North Beach (North/Pink route), Lusby and St.-Leonard (South/Blue route), Adelina and Broome's Island (Midcounty/Yellow route) and two shuttles (White and-Green) operating within Prince Frederick. In addition, Calvert County Public Transportation operates a bus from Prince-Frederick to Charlotte Hall in St. Mary's County. These buses link residents with employment centers, shopping centers and medical facilities and other public services; most riders cannot or do not own a vehicle. The bus system is run on a "flag system" which means there are few established bus stops and buses can be hailed along the route by passengers. Bus service operates on weekdays with limited service on Saturdays. In addition to fixed route services, the county operates on-demand paratransit services.

# **Economic Vitality**

#### **Calvert County Comprehensive Plan Vision**

• We are building a strong local economy based on renewable resources, agriculture, seafood, high technology, retirement, recreation, and tourism.

#### **Calvert County Comprehensive Plan Economic Vitality Goals**

**Goal I:** Strengthen economic opportunity in Calvert County.

Goal 2: Direct business growth to Town Centers while preserving agricultural land in the Farm and Forest District.

Goal 3: Expand Calvert County's tourism industry.

Goal 4: Strengthen educational opportunities in Calvert County.

#### **ECONOMIC STABILITY**

Today, Calvert County's economy is based primarily upon its location within the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. The county's economy is stable compared to other jurisdictions in Maryland and the nation because of several factors including: 1) a strong local business climate; 2) job market stability; 3) proximity to major employment centers in Washington, D.C., and Virginia; and 4) a strong median household income.

Residents earn above average wages as compared to other Southern Maryland counties and the State of Maryland. Calvert is one of the wealthiest counties in Maryland and the wealthiest in Southern Maryland, in part because of the proximity to federal agency and contracting jobs. However, most of those jobs are in the surrounding counties and Washington, DC. The county aims to continue to strengthen business growth by directing development to Town Centers, while preserving agricultural land and the county's rural character.

#### Calvert County Comprehensive Plan Sustainability Approach

To meet the needs of current generations without overburdening future ones, the county aims to foster business growth by directing development to Town Centers, like Prince Frederick, while preserving agricultural land and the county's rural character. Sustainable economic development is necessary to ensure the long-term viability of the <u>Town</u>. <u>Centerscommunity</u>. A reasonable rate of diversified economic growth, improvements to government facilities and services, as well as civic spaces, is encouraged to provide jobs for residents, increase incomes, expand the tax base, and create civic spaces that bring people together.

#### **Economic Outlook**

#### **Five-Year Strategic Plan**

The Calvert County Department of Economic Development is working on an updated Strategic Plan that will establish new economic development priorities for the coming years. One of the current plan's central recommendations is to accelerate the development of Town Centers to create vibrant communities that appeal to entrepreneurs and young professionals, supporting more local jobs and activity.

#### **Emerging Industries**

As Calvert County seeks to expand its economic base and attract residents, it will encourage development of emerging industries in <u>the county</u>. Prince Frederick and growth within, with attention to developing incentives and resources for entrepreneurship and innovation.

These incentives may be geared toward targeted industries and businesses having measurable economic impact and include fast-track plan processing, financing through the county's Economic Development Loan or Incentive Funds, business counseling, tax credits and access to a host of financial incentives and programs available through Maryland's Department of Commerce.

#### **Health Care**

Health care is a major employer for Calvert County with 3,500 people employed. CalvertHealth Medical Center, a 141bed acute care facility in Prince Frederick, is the second largest employer in the county with a work force of 1,314. A concentration of medical services has developed around the hospital complex and should continue to be encouraged. The county is also home to about 20 assisted living facilities – six of which are located in Prince Frederick – providing a range of care levels. As county residents continue to age and the regional demand for health care services grows, the sector can be expected to expand. A specialty health care industry focused on retirees' specific health concerns would have a strong advantage in Prince Frederick.

#### **High Tech Industries**

Because Calvert County is a peninsula with limited transportation access and alternatives, it is unlikely to become a major manufacturing, transportation, or logistics hub. However, the county may be successful in attracting new economic industries such as software development or professional services jobs that produce ideas instead of physical goods. Many of these high-tech jobs can locate anywhere. There is also an upward trend of the workforce operating remotely coupled with an increased demand for remote employees and some employers moving away from traditional office settings. Thus, the quality of life and cost of living offered in Calvert County will be key decision points for employers and employees. These businesses and their employees depend upon secure high-speed and uninterrupted high-capacity internet connections.

#### **Commercial and Retail**

Residents frequently request food service/drinking places and clothing/clothing accessories as new businesses in the county. Growth in commercial and retail space should be targeted primarily toward Prince Frederick due to the synergy provided from existing merchants, its accessibility, centralized location, and existing infrastructure. Digital Commerce 360, a leading media and research organization with over 20 years of ecommerce reporting, notes consumers spent \$861.12 billion online with U.S. retailers in 2020, up 44% from \$598.02 billion in 2019. More recent data indicates a continuing upward trend in online sales, but it is leveling out. In 2023, consumers spent \$1.1 trillion online with U.S. retailers, an increase of 9% over 2022. These trends will likely continue, leading to a major shift in brick-and-mortar store sizes and the purchasing habits of consumers.

#### **Calvert County Economic Development's Small Businesses Services**

The Calvert County Department of Economic Development strives to attract small businesses and help them growth by providing business counseling, technical assistance, site identification, infrastructure investments, community partnership, fast-track plan processing, financing through the county's Economic Development Loan or Incentive Funds, tax credits and access to a host of financial incentives and programs available through Maryland's Department of Commerce. Working closely with the Small Business Development Center and chambers of commerce, the county also provides entrepreneurs with networking opportunities, expert guidance and business promotion through community events and marketing campaigns. Moreover, the county launched its Local Business Preference Program in 2024, prioritizing area businesses for government contracts.

#### **Calvert County Economic Development's Database of Available Properties and Spaces**

Calvert County Department of Economic Development offers businesses considering relocating to Calvert County a database of available leases, land, and property sales. The data may be sorted to meet the needs of a business (i.e., leases, sales, building types, building size, and available space)

#### **Recreation and Tourism**

Calvert County has many natural, cultural, recreational, and historical resources that draw residents and visitors to the county. The impact of the tourism industry on the county's economy is significant. Due to the pandemic<u>in 2020</u>, tourism had dropped off significantly and started to rebound in 2022. It appears that current economic trends from 2022 to 2023 for total tourism industry sales in Calvert County have declined by seven million dollars. This is likely due to economic trends of increasing inflation, resulting in a reduction of disposable income. In 2023, the tourism industry employed 1,591 workers in Calvert County. Total tourism tax receipts were \$32.3 million. Between 2018 and 2023 tourism visitor volume decreased by 13%.

Programs to increase these offerings include training for hospitality jobs, supporting research into local history and archaeology, creating festivals and locations to showcase local attractions, and appropriately balancing the need to protect residents' quality of life with the demands of running tourist-oriented businesses on sites that may be distant from major roads and commercial centers.

Key tourism attractions in and around Prince Frederick include the:

- Hallowing Point Park
- American Chestnut Land Trust Trails
- Edward T. Hall Aquatic Center
- Dept. of Natural Resources beach and boat ramp on the Patuxent River
- Biscoe Gray Heritage Farm
- Battle Creek Cypress Swamp
- Calvert County Historical Society and Linden House/Farmstead
- Wallville One-Room School
- Calvert County Art Council's Art Gallery
- Star-Spangled Banner Trail
- (Deleted. Applies to the Prince Frederick Town Center.)

#### **Resource Partners**

The Department of Economic Development works with many federal, state, and local resource partners to provide a full range of support services and opportunities to the business community. Two major partners which we will continue to rely upon include the:

#### **Small Business Development Center**

Provides proven, expert advice and training to current and aspiring small businesses in Calvert County and Maryland, resulting in successful businesses that create an economic impact and better quality of life in our communities.

# College of Southern Maryland Workforce Center (formerly known as the College of Southern Maryland Corporate Center)

Delivers diverse, top-quality, business-focused workforce programming and training, and just-in-time customized workforce development solutions that maximize the potential of any business – small, medium, or large. The College of Southern Maryland's Workforce Center partners with clients to understand their business strategy and how it impacts workforce needs. The College of Southern Maryland then develops client-centric solutions based on their unique challenges and opportunities.

# **Transportation**

#### **Calvert County Comprehensive Plan Vision**

• Our highways are safe with only moderate congestion and transit is readily available. Walking and bicycling are practical alternatives within and in close proximity of Town Centers.

#### Calvert County Comprehensive Plan Goals for Transportation

- **Goal I:** Provide a safe and reliable transportation system that complements the overall development of the county and balances use by pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and bus riders.
- **Goal 2:** Maintain MD 2, MD 4, MD 2/4, and MD 231 as the main transportation corridors, providing for safe and efficient travel.
- Goal 3: Maintain and improve the arterial and non-arterial road systems to provide for safe and efficient travel.
- Goal 4: Improve and expand existing transit services.
- Goal 5: Promote transportation alternatives such as buses, carpools, vanpools, bicycling and walking.
- **Goal 6:** Continue a countywide transportation planning program that is integrated with state and regional planning programs.

#### **Transportation Planning**

#### **Calvert County Transportation Plan**

The construction of new roads or widening of existing roads to add roadway capacity is very costly and competes for resources with the county's obligations to maintain roads and bridges for safety purposes. New transportation-related investments must be weighed against these obligations that are spelled out in the Calvert County Transportation Plan. Calvert County adopted its first transportation plan in 1997, "A Transportation Plan for Calvert County 2010". The Plan established improvements to shape transportation and inform land use patterns through 2010. The updated plan, "Calvert County Transportation Plan", adopted in 2020, provides functional guidance on what Calvert County Government can do to relieve congestion and maintain a functional level of service on roads in the county.

#### Calvert County Strategic Roadway Safety Plan

The 2023-2025 Calvert County Strategic Roadway Safety Plan addresses Maryland's 2019 Vision Zero Law, which aims to eliminate motor vehicle-related fatalities or serious injuries by 2030. Currently, the county is gathering data to identify traffic safety "hot spots" and formulate recommendations towards achieving the state's Vision Zero Law. According to the Maryland State Police's crash data, vehicle-related injuries consistently occur in the county annually. Crash data, among other safety data for the county will be evaluated during the update to the Strategic Roadway Safety Plan.

#### Calvert County Transit Development Plan

The Calvert County Transit Development Plan provides guidance for all public transit services in the county. The Plan assesses existing services and aims to increase ridership, meet intra-county public transit needs, explore timed connections/transfer options, coordinate transport to medical services, and enhance the core transit service in Town Centers, countywide, and emerging destinations.

#### Adequate Public Facilities for Public Roads

The county's adequate public facilities regulations establish a process by which traffic studies are to be conducted and establishes a level of service standard which varies by roadway type and development location. Developments may not be permitted unless the developer mitigates the additional traffic brought by the development. Under the Traffic Impact Analysis policy, proposed site plans must submit a Traffic Impact Analysis when their potential impact on the transportation network warrants detailed evaluation. For phased developments, the traffic impact must be demonstrated for the entire development to ensure a comprehensive assessment of cumulative effects. While the strategic timing of projects may result in certain developments not requiring a traffic analysis, the development of other projects within the Town Center vicinity may collectively necessitate a study to evaluate their combined impact on the transportation network.

#### Regional Transportation and Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning

The Tri-County Council of Southern Maryland, consisting of Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's counties, partners with state and professionals to conduct regional planning for economic development, land use, and transportation planning. Under the Tri-County Council of Southern Maryland, Calvert County participates in the Regional Infrastructure Advisory Committee (RIAC). the Regional Infrastructure Advisory Committee identifies key transportation infrastructure priorities and coordinates funding requests with state and local and state officials, focusing on the transportation needs of Southern Maryland to accommodate the Patuxent River Naval Air Station, Indian Head NSWC, businesses, and citizens. Similarly, the county participates in the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BIAC). BIAC advises local and state government agencies in the promotion, planning, and implementation of bicycle and other non-motorized transportation in Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's counties and the Southern Maryland to Washington, D.C. corridor. BIAC also partners with RIAC by providing RIAC with recommendations related to pedestrian and bicycle safety issues.

# Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Streetscape Improvements to Enhance Community Connectivity and Sustainability

Currently there are few connected trails for bicyclists or pedestrians to use, either for recreation or for transportation between developed areas. Providing these connections is challenging because of east-west stream valleys cutting through the county on either side of the ridgeline that MD 2/4 follows. The volume and speed of vehicles, and in some instances, the lack of shoulders are impediments to pedestrian and bicycle travel. In addition, where the highways bisect developed areas, the lack of signalized pedestrian crossings discourages people from walking. While there are sidewalks, they are limited and not fully connected even in developed areas. The lack of pedestrian and bicycle facilities fosters reliance on automobiles and does not provide alternatives to auto travel.

There is strong community support for a safe, accessible bikeway and pedestrian network throughout the Town Centers. The network should accommodate people of all ages and abilities, enabling them to walk or bike comfortably to stores, restaurants, and public facilities. A variety of bicycle facility types will be used, ranging from on-road bike lanes to fully separated pathways. Facilities on state-owned roads will comply with ADA standards, and those on countyowned roads will be ADA-compliant where feasible. Each corridor will be evaluated individually to determine the most appropriate and cost-effective facility.

- Shared-Use Path Shared-use pathways are bicycle and pedestrian specific transportation corridors. Pathways are required to be eight feet wide except where adjacent to arterial or collector road where the minimum is 10-feet, per the Calvert County Zoning Ordinance.ideally 10 to 12 feet wide to accommodate bidirectional walking and bicycling, with two-foot-wide grass shoulder areas. Adjacent to roadways, they are called side paths and typically require a five-foot landscaped buffer from the roadway.
- **Protected Bike Lane** Bike lanes are "protected" when they provide physical separation between motor vehicles and bicycles. One-way protected bike lanes are usually at least five feet wide and two-way lanes are eight to 10 feet wide, with at least a two-foot-wide buffer with delineators such as flex posts, parking stops, precast curbs, planter boxes, or "armadillos."
- **Bike Lane** Bike lanes are roadway lanes that provide designated space for people bicycling but do not provide any physical separation or protection between motor vehicles and bicycles. Bike lanes are typically five to six feet wide. If seven feet or more is available, a buffer should be provided, instead of a very wide bike lane, to discourage driving or parking in the bike lane.

#### **Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning**

#### **Dunkirk and Prince Frederick Bikeways Feasibility Studies**

The <u>Dunkirk and Prince Frederick Bikeways Feasibility Studies</u> recommends establishing bike lanes along Prince-Frederick Boulevard, Main Street, Armory Road, Fairground Road, Fox Run Boulevard, Chesapeake Boulevard and between Fox Run Boulevard, Stoakley Road and MD 231 in the Prince Frederick Town Center. In the Dunkirk Town-Center, bicycle facilities are recommended on the roads looping behind the shopping areas (Dunkirk Way and Town-Center Boulevard), along Ward Road which crosses MD 4 and connects the two parks, as well as upgraded bicyclefacilities within Dunkirk District Park and the provision of a safe connection to Dunkirk Market Place, as well as a saferconnection across MD 4 at Adventure Drive from Town Center Boulevard to access the northern end of Dunkirk-District Park.

<u>(Deleted. This information will be included in Chapter 2: Prince Frederick Town Center Master Plan and Chapter 3:</u> Dunkirk Town Center Master Plan.)

#### Sustainability in Transportation

Emerging transportation considerations for the County are infrastructure for electric vehicles, restructuring parking requirements to encourage pedestrian travel within the designated nodes, and restructuring housing impact fees per unit to encourage sustainable growth practices.

#### **Electrical Vehicles**

Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative (SMECO) offers resources for electric vehicle charging stations throughout Calvert County. The installations include level two chargers, which can charge most electric vehicles in a few hours. An Electrical Vehicle Charing Stations interactive mapping tool is maintained on the county's website. Electric vehicles are rapidly increasing in popularity, and they hold great promise to reduce operating costs, emissions, and roadway noise, but they are not yet widely in use in Prince Frederick; as of March 2024.

#### Parking

Town Center zoning ordinances have traditionally incorporated by reference the parking and loading standards contained in the Calvert County Zoning Ordinance for nonresidential properties. These currently prescribe a minimum number of parking spaces per square foot, a maximum equal to 125% of that minimum, and an additional 25% allowance for pervious spaces. While these rates are adequate for assuring abundant parking at all times of day, they are also inefficient uses of land with large surface parking lots that form a barrier to pedestrian access, produce large amounts of stormwater runoff and constitute an ongoing maintenance burden for property owners. Reducing the amount of space-dedicated to surface parking would lower these impacts and yield a more attractive, cohesive, and contiguous built-environment. The Calvert County Zoning Ordinance allows reduced parking requirements if specified criteria are met.

# Water Resources

#### **Calvert County Comprehensive Plan Vision**

• We waste less, consume fewer natural resources, and properly dispose of waste.

#### **Calvert County Comprehensive Plan Goals**

- Goal I: Ensure sufficient drinking water quantity and quality to support projected population growth.
- **Goal 2:** Ensure sufficient wastewater treatment capacity to support development in Town Centers served by public sewer systems.
- Goal 3: Protect public health and water quality.
- **Goal 4:** Install or enhance storm water management systems to reduce pollution in the county streams, Patuxent River, and Chesapeake Bay.

#### **County Water and Sewerage Plan**

The land use policies contained in the Calvert County Comprehensive Plan direct the majority of the county's residential and commercial growth into the Town Centers and minimize future residential development in the Farm and Forest District. Given these policies the county must ensure that its water supply and wastewater systems in Town Centers meet current and future needs without jeopardizing the health of local waters, the Patuxent River, and the Chesapeake Bay. The Calvert County Comprehensive Water & Sewerage Plan, 2014 Update provides a framework for the county's water supply and sewerage disposal. The State of Maryland requires each county to have a county plan or a plan with adjoining counties. The plan is required to cover the 10-year period following adoption by the Board of County Commissioners. Currently, the Department of Public Works, Water and Sewerage Division is in the process of updating the average flow capacity for the water and sewerage systems throughout Calvert County, which will be published in the upcoming revision of the Comprehensive Water & Sewerage Plan. While the plan is being updated, capacity of the county's municipal drinking water system and wastewater treatment system remains unchanged, but wastewater flow and drinking water consumption rates have increased since 2014.

#### Calvert County Comprehensive Plan Sustainability Approach

The Water resources <u>managementchapter</u> promotes the safe disposal of wastewater, relative to public health, and in environmentally sound ways so that groundwater and surface water quality remain viable for fisheries/other aquatic resources and useful to humans in terms of consumption, irrigation, and recreation. Pollutants must be maintained at levels below which they might have significant impacts on human and ecological health and below the assimilative capacity of receiving waters.

### Water Quality Regulations

The State of Maryland signed the 2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement and has committed to reduce its nitrogen and phosphorus contributions to the Chesapeake Bay through the Total Maximum Daily Load Program. The Maryland Department of the Environment allocates nitrogen and phosphorus (nutrient) load caps for wastewater treatment plants and nutrient and sediment loads for nonpoint source pollutants associated with development (e.g., stormwater runoff or nitrogen loads from conventional septic systems) and agriculture (e.g., nitrogen and phosphorus from fertilizers). While-there is no active farming within the town center boundary, ilmproving water quality through better treatment, pollution control and infrastructure investment protects communities, supports resilient ecosystems and strengthens public health across the board.

#### Managing Stormwater and Non-Point Source Pollution

Under the Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load, the Maryland Department of the Environment establishes annual pollutant load reduction requirements, administered through the county's MS4 Permit. In response, the county has implemented bioretention facilities, rain gardens, bioswales, impervious surface reduction, shoreline erosion control, urban stream restoration, infiltration practices, vegetated channels, wet ponds, wetlands, storm drain outfall repairs, and stormwater management facility retrofits, throughout the county. Additional projects will be implemented to comply with MS4 Permit requirements since this is an ongoing effort.

The Calvert County Stormwater Management Ordinance establishes requirements for managing stormwater runoff and encourages the use of environmental site design (ESD) to the maximum extent practicable (MEP) in new development. Stormwater management plans are required by the Calvert County Department of Public Works for all development and redevelopment projects in the county. These plans must be submitted at three phases in the development process-concept, site development and final stormwater management construction. Designs must account for additional stormwater runoff volume attributable to new development. The Stormwater Management Ordinance requires the use of ESD treatment practices such as disconnection of rooftop runoff, rainwater harvesting, submerged gravel wetlands, infiltration berms, rain gardens, swales, and enhanced filters to satisfy the applicable minimum control requirements. The minimum control requirements state that ESD planning techniques and treatment practices must be exhausted before any structural best management practices are implemented.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, Article 21-of the county's Zoning Ordinance protects receiving waters by requiring the delineation of a Natural Resource Protection Area (buffer) that must be expanded to include contiguous streams, wetlands, floodplains, steep slopes, and highly erodible and hydric soils, accompanied by a setback.

Lastly, global warming is having a significant impact on stormwater management, intensifying the need for resilient infrastructure and adaptive planning. As global temperatures rise, we're seeing more frequent and severe weather events, including heavy rainfall, which can overwhelm stormwater systems not designed to handle such rain volumes and damage them. This can lead to increased flooding, erosion, water pollution and damage to both rural and natural landscapes. The county is currently working with the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Services to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Calvert County Stormwater Management Ordinance, Article IV, § 123-10. (accessed 4/12/21).

amend its Stormwater Management Ordinance with an updated intensity and frequency interval standard for precipitation events<del>, based on a study conducted by UMCES. The University of Maryland Center for Environmental Services is currently finalizing the study for peer review.</del> The county anticipates updating its stormwater management regulations with findings from the study in 2025-2026.

#### **Effluent Impact to Water Resources**

Effluent from wastewater treatment plants and septic tanks is a major source of contamination for waterways and poses a threat to drinking water quality. To comply with the Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load, the Maryland Department of the Environment has set nutrient caps for Calvert County wastewater treatment plants. The Bay Restoration Fund provides some funding to install enhanced nutrient removal (ENR) technology at wastewater treatment plants so they can achieve an effluent quality of 3.0 mg/l total nitrogen and 0.3 mg/l total phosphorus.

Groundwater contamination is also unlikely due to the presence of confining ground layers. However, septic systems, particularly those systems that are failing, can present significant threats to the quality of the county's drinking water and the health of the county streams, Patuxent River, and Chesapeake Bay. The Bay Restoration Fund provides technical and financial assistance to eligible homeowners for the installation of nitrogen-removing septic systems. These advanced systems remove 50% more nitrogen compared to conventional septic systems. All homeowners in the county are eligible to receive these funds; however, financial assistance is based on income and priority is given to septic systems in Critical Areas (land within 1,000 feet of tidal waters of the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries) and to failing septic systems. Since the Town Center has no designated Critical Area land, water quality benefits resulting from upgrading-septic systems to is realized outside the Town Center. Directing growth into the Town Centers served by public sewer-fike Prince Frederick Town Center, where households and businesses will be connected to these public sewer systems is an important step in minimizing the growth of septic system usage in the county and reducing the associated pollutants. Furthermore, the 2014 Calvert County Comprehensive Water & Sewerage Plan lays out policies for sewer system expansion based on land use, stressing the establishment or expansion of sewer systems in Town Centers, and not permitting sewer service areas in rural and agricultural areas.

#### **Drinking Water Assessment**

#### Water Supply

The drinking water for the Prince Frederick Town Center and surrounding area is supplied by ground water aquifers. These-Ground water aquifers are part of the Coastal Region and have the benefit of being insulated from contamination by layers of low-permeability clay that greatly reduces the chances that surface contaminants will reach the aquifers. The Coastal Plan Aquifer is characterized by a relatively thick wedge of largely unconsolidated sediments underlying Maryland's Coastal Plain. The sediments consist predominantly of sand, gravel, silt, and clay. The sediments dip gently to the east and southeast with thickness ranging from a few tens of feet near the Fall Line to approximately 7,200 feet at Ocean City, Maryland.

Calvert County's drinking water undergoes regular testing in compliance with Maryland Department of the Environment requirements and the Federal Safe Drinking Water Act that requires public systems to conduct a Source Water Assessment to understand the vulnerabilities of drinking water sources.

#### **Calvert County Groundwater Level Monitoring Network**

Calvert County's groundwater is actively monitored through the <u>Calvert County Groundwater-Level Monitoring</u> <u>Network</u>, administered jointly by the Calvert County Department of Public Works, Water & Sewerage Division, the Maryland Geological Survey. and the U.S. Geological Survey.<sup>6</sup> This network of wells is monitored on a real-time, monthly. or twice-yearly basis.

#### Adequate Water and Sewerage Service

The county's adequate public facilities regulations, found in Chapter 3 of the Calvert County Code require that prior to subdivision, site plan, and certain permit approval, adequacy of drinking water capacity and water flow for fire services (fire flow) is determined. Adequate drinking water exists if the maximum daily demand and existing usage is less than 90% of the system's capacity, and adequate fire flow is determined if no inadequacy is caused by the proposal. If a proposal is denied due to inadequacy, fees may be paid to improve facilities directly or to donate to necessary facilities in order to allow for approval of the application. Additionally, if average daily demand exceeds 80% capacity of the municipal system, the Maryland Department of the Environment requires that the county identify new sources, upgrade infrastructure, and/or reduce demand (i.e., conserve water) to ensure sufficient water quantity is available to meet projected demand. Similar to assessing drinking water adequacy, the county's adequate public facilities regulations require that prior to subdivision, site plan and certain permit approvals, wastewater capacity adequacy of capacity-is determined if existing and proposed average daily flow is less than 90% of the Prince Frederick-a wastewater treatment system's authorized and permitted capacity. If average daily flow exceeds 80% capacity, or if based on projected growth, the system will be overloaded within five years, the Maryland Department of the Environment requires that the county plan, design, finance, and construct a larger sewer facility.

# **Government and Community Facilities**

#### **Calvert County Comprehensive Plan Vision**

- Our communities are safe. We care for the well-being of each other.
- Our children are well-prepared for the future. We offer robust and diverse educational opportunities with a variety of post-secondary educational and training opportunities.
- We are building a strong local economy based on renewable resources, agriculture, seafood, high technology, retirement, recreation, and tourism.
- Our government is efficient, open, and responsive to citizen needs and concerns.

# Calvert County Comprehensive Plan Government and Community Facilities Goals

- **Goal I:** Establish policies and strategies that provide for high-quality, responsive, and cost-effective services to residents, businesses, and organizations in the county.
- Goal 2: Maintain the high quality of educational facilities: public schools, college, and libraries.
- Goal 3: Provide access to a variety of quality recreational environments and opportunities.
- Goal 4: Ensure Calvert County has adequate healthcare facilities and programs.
- Goal 5: Support public safety programs, strategies, and facilities development.
- **Goal 6:** Maintain well-managed and effective solid waste and recyclable materials management systems in Calvert County.
- **Goal 7:** Collectively plan future initiatives, to the greatest extent possible, with internal county departments and regional county jurisdictions, councils, and other potential partnerships.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Maryland Geological Survey, <u>Groundwater Wells in Calvert County, Maryland</u> (accessed 4/10/18).

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# **Community Facilities**

<u>Community facilities should be located within or in close proximity to Town Centers where infrastructure is available</u> (e.g., public water facilities, public sewer facilities, roads, sidewalks, public transit), be sited near other concentrations of civic or commercial buildings and function as multiple use buildings when locating and designing new public buildings, including schools and community centers.

# **Educational Facilities**

<u>Calvert County Public Schools has 25 schools, including 13 elementary schools, six middle schools, four high schools, the</u> <u>Career and Technical Academy, and a special education center. Calvert County's existing public school facilities have</u> <u>sufficient space to accommodate Calvert County's current and future student population until at least 2026, , with the</u> <u>exception of the North School District, due to transfer students. County adequate public facility regulations deem</u> <u>school capacity adequate unless enrollment exceeds 100%. In these instances, the affected residential development</u> <u>proposal would be deferred for no longer than six years from the date of preliminary approval.<sup>7</sup></u>

The county also has several higher education facilities. The College of Southern Maryland, a regional community college serving Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's counties, has a campus in Prince Frederick, which offers associate degrees in arts, teaching, science, engineering, and applied science. The University of Maryland's Chesapeake Biological Laboratory, located in Solomons, leads national research in fisheries, estuarine ecology, environmental chemistry, and toxicology. The Morgan State University Patuxent Environmental and Aquatic Research Laboratory, located in St. Leonard, is designed to increase the understanding of coastal ecosystems so that they may be properly managed and protected. It has a primary focus on the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries.

# Calvert County Library

Calvert Library has four locations and a Mobile Services department. The main library is located in Prince Frederick, with three branch libraries: Fairview, Twin Beaches, and Southern. A recent analysis of the library's facilities, services, and future needs identified the desire for the Southern Library Branch to be owned by the county, rather than leased, and for the expansion and renovation of the Fairview Branch.

# **Older Adult and Senior Facilities**

Calvert County's three Senior Centers provide services for older adults, seniors, and persons with disabilities, such as congregate meals, recreation and education programs, and support for enrollment in social services programs. The Calvert Pines Senior Center is located in the Prince Frederick Town Center, the Southern Pines Senior Center is located in the North Beach Senior Center is located in the Town of North Beach. For seniors or residents with disabilities who need a more secure setting with nursing staff for assistance with medication management, Calvert County is home to two nonprofit adult day care facilities.

# **Healthcare Facilities**

#### **Calvert County Health Department**

With near double the population since the Calvert County Health Department's main office building was initially constructed and as the sixth largest employer in Calvert County, the Calvert County Health Department is one of twenty-four local health departments in the state. The state's Public Health Administration oversees vital public health services to Maryland residents including infectious disease control, environmental health programs, family health services, food safety, health care quality, vital records, the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, the State Anatomy

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Adequate Public Facilities Report for Schools dated November 1, 2024. (accessed on 12/3/24).

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Board, and the activities of the 24 local health departments in Maryland.<sup>8</sup> The County Health Department is currently outgrowing its space and will need to expand to new locations or create a new main building to accommodate the influx of patients.

#### CalvertHealth

CalvertHealth Medical Center is a private, not-for-profit community-owned 141-bed acute care hospital. The main campus is located in Prince Frederick. The hospital is part of a health system that includes an employed physician network, a diagnostic imaging center, urgent care facilities throughout the county and a mobile health unit that travels to under-served parts of the county. CalvertHealth is the second largest employer in the county. Formerly known as Calvert Memorial Hospital, it was founded in 1919. The hospital's original building, located on Church Street, is a designated Calvert County Historic District. CalvertHealth periodically conducts a community health needs assessment.

The 2023 Calvert County Community Health Needs Assessment seeks to provide an understanding of the most pressing health needs and to guide planning to address the needs. The service area for CalvertHealth includes Calvert County and some portions of southern Anne Arundel County. One of the prioritized health topics is exercise, nutrition, and weight (obesity). Calvert County scores higher than the state of Maryland in the percentage of adults who are obese (37.2% compared to 31.5%) and lower than the state on access to exercise opportunities (61.4% compared to 92.6%).<sup>9</sup> Several of the significant health needs (prioritized and non-prioritized) are related to the pattern of land use: exercise, nutrition, and weight; environment; and transportation. Key themes from a community survey include a lack of good sidewalks for walking safely is a concern with 57% of survey respondents<sup>10</sup> and the for more fitness and physical activity resources.<sup>11</sup> The 2023 Calvert Health Needs Assessment's FY23-25 Implementation Plan sets forth strategies and actions, target population, key partners, tactics, and evaluation for each of the prioritized needs.<sup>12</sup>

CalvertHealth has published, <u>Walk Your Way: Calvert County Walking Guide</u>. This walking guide has several routes in the Prince Frederick area, including a route along Prince Frederick Boulevard. In addition, a <u>map of walking routes on</u> <u>CalvertHealth's campus in Prince Frederick</u> is also available online.

# **Calvert County Nursing Center**

Calvert County Nursing Center is located adjacent to the CalvertHealth campus and the Calvert County Health Department. It is a not-for-profit skilled nursing center providing long-term skilled nursing care, post-acute rehabilitative services, memory support, palliative, and respite care for people living in Calvert County and surrounding regions.<sup>13</sup>

#### **Private Healthcare Providers**

The majority of private healthcare providers are located in the Prince Frederick Town Center, many in the northern area of the Town Center near the hospital campus. As noted in the Economic Vitality section of this chapter, healthcare is a major employer for Calvert County with 3,500 people employed.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> <u>Maryland Public Health Services Administration</u> <u>https://health.maryland.gov/pha/Pages/home.aspx(accessed 6/6/21)</u>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> 2020 Calvert County Community Health Needs Assessment, p. 34 (accessed 6/30/21).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> 2020 Calvert County Community Health Needs Assessment, p. 38 (accessed 6/30/21).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> <u>2020 Calvert County Community Health Needs Assessment</u>, p. 15 (accessed 6/30/21). Note: the community survey was promoted across CalvertHealth's entire service area from May 14, 2020, to June 22, 2020.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> 2020 Calvert County Community Health Needs Assessment, p. 38 (accessed 7/7/21).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> <u>Calvert County Nursing Center</u> (accessed 7/7/21).

#### **Parks and Recreation**

The Comprehensive Plan sets for the expectations for recreation in the Town Centers. Each Town Center should serve as the focal point of recreation for residents of the Town Center and their surrounding areas. According to the Calvert County Comprehensive Plan,<sup>3</sup> each Town Center should have:

- A town park or "village green."
- An in-town pedestrian and bikeway system that connects residential areas, activity centers and schools.
- An outdoor public facility designed primarily for active team sports.
- An indoor community center capable of providing a range of activities for all age groups.

The Calvert County Comprehensive Plan includes several objectives and action items related to Town Centers increasing the amount of land dedicated to recreation and natural resources; ensuring a wide selection of public recreation facilities and program area to meet the interests and needs of all ages, incomes, and abilities; increasing the variety of community facility uses; and expanding community involvement in recreation planning.

Parks and recreation planning and acquisition goals are established in the <u>Calvert County's Land Preservation, Parks and</u> <u>Recreation Plan</u>. The updated plan was adopted on April 15, 2018, and detailed maps showing the locations of public parks and recreation sites, density of parks, open space, recreation sites, and driving distances to recreation sites. Prince Frederick, North Beach, Chesapeake Beach, and Lusby have the highest density of public parks, open spaces, and recreational sites. Both the Calvert County Comprehensive Plan and Calvert County Land Preservation and Recreation Plan call for the creation of trails and paths within Town Centers that connect with outlying parks and open spaces. <del>The</del> <del>Prince Frederick Town Center 2013 Charrette Report for the Heart of Calvert County proposes a regional trail, Prince Frederick to the River trail, that would run east west and connect the Town Center to the Patuxent River.</del>

#### **Public Safety Facilities**

Public safety facilities are police, animal control, fire, rescue, and EMS facilities that support Prince Frederick the county's residents in emergency situations. These facilities are distributed throughout the county and sited primarily in Town Centers, where the county's population density is highest.

#### **Animal Shelter**

The Linda L. Kelley Animal Shelter is an open admission animal shelter that receives and cares for owner surrendered animals and stray animals in Calvert County. The mission of the Linda L. Kelley Animal Shelter is to provide compassionate humane care and treatment to the shelter population, provide education regarding the proper care of animals and provide adoption services to the public. The shelter is run under the direction of the Calvert County Department of Public Safety. Two divisions of the department, the Animal Shelter Division, and the Animal Control Division, share space in the shelter. The animal shelter is located on MD 231 in the Calvert County Industrial Park, approximately 3.5 miles from the MD 2/4.

#### Solid Waste Management

The Department of Public Works, Solid Waste Division operates six Convenience Centers throughout the county— Appeal, Ball Road, Barstow, Huntingtown, Mt. Hope, and Plum Point—where residents can dispose of their trash and recyclables. In addition, the Solid Waste Division offers county residents free bulk item pick up services for many large items. Residents are permitted to bring large items to Appeal Landfill themselves. The Barstow Convenience Center is to be redesigned to have two levels like the Appeal Convenience Center. Funds are budgeted for Fiscal Year 2022.



# CHAPTER 3 Dunkirk Town Center Master Plan


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# Acronyms

ACS	American Community Survey
AMI	Average Media Income
BIAC	Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee
CDP	Census Designated Place
EMS	Emergency Medical Services
ESD	Environmental Site Design
MDOT	Maryland Department of Transportation
MGD	Million Gallons Per Day
ΜΤΑ	Maryland Department of Transportation Maryland Transit Administration
PFA	Priority Funding Area
RIAC	Regional Infrastructure Advisory Committee
ΤΕΑ	Targeted Ecological Areas
TDR	Transfer Development Rights
SHA	Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration
SMECO	Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative

#### **CHAPTER I. PURPOSE**

#### Purpose

The Dunkirk Town Center Master Plan is an official policy document of Calvert County Government and one of several documents used to implement the Calvert County Comprehensive Plan. The current Comprehensive Plan was adopted in August 2019 and amended in December 2022. Like the Comprehensive Plan, the Dunkirk Town Center Master Plan is a snapshot in time of the dynamic process of managing growth in Calvert County.

An adopted Town Center master plan serves many purposes:

The Board of County Commissioners (BOCC), the Planning Commission and county departments use the plan as a guide when evaluating proposed projects, considering new or changes to ordinances and regulations and developing the operating and capital budgets.

The Town Center master plan establishes a framework for zoning regulations specific to the Dunkirk Town Center. State agencies use the plan when considering whether to provide state funding for a local project (e.g. public infrastructure, community development projects, etc.).

Businesses and developers use the plan to help make investment and location decisions.

Residents use the plan to evaluate how well county government is responding to the goals and objectives written in the plan.

While a master plan is an official policy document, it is not a blueprint for development, nor does it commit specific resources to its implementation. Decisions made by agencies should be consistent with the goals of the Town Center master plan. Specific implementing actions and details are left to the appropriate agency or public body through their usual processes, including rule-making – such as adoption of zoning regulations, administration – such as site plan and subdivision plan approval, or funding of projects through capital expenditures.

The initial Dunkirk Town Center Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance was adopted on July 28, 1987. The Master Plan portion of the document has been amended three times since its initial adoption: August 4, 1998, March 23, 1999, and January 31, 2018.

#### **Designations**

Dunkirk is a Calvert County designated Town Center. It was designated as a Town Center by the BOCC with the adoption of the Calvert County Comprehensive Plan 1983. In addition, the Dunkirk Town Center is a designated Priority Funding Area and a designated Sustainable Community.

#### **Town Center**

Town Centers are intended to include a mix of commercial, office, residential, public and quasi-public development as a means of promoting economic development, creating more local jobs, expanding cultural opportunities, reducing traffic congestion, preventing strip commercial development, providing a range of housing opportunities and providing convenient access to goods and services for county residents. As compared to the county-wide Comprehensive Plan, Calvert County's Town Centers' master plans are small area plans. Refer to Figure 1 for an illustration of the Comprehensive Plan's relationship to small area plans, like Town Center master plans, functional plans, like the Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan, and regulations like zoning and adequate public facilities.

Town Centers promote business growth by providing infrastructure and enabling businesses to benefit from proximity to each other. They also promote business growth by providing attractive, mixed-use settings where offices, stores, restaurants and homes are within proximity to each other.

Town Center master plans are individually adopted. Town Centers are the primary locations for most commercial uses. The strategy of directing commercial growth to Town Centers has been in effect since the adoption of the Town Center concept in the 1983 Comprehensive Plan.

The Calvert County Comprehensive Plan states:

The provision of adequate roads, water, wastewater systems, public transportation and high- quality internet communication systems, together with public amenities such as parks, town squares, trails, sidewalks, bikeways, indoor recreational and cultural facilities, should remain a top priority, in accordance with master plans for Town Centers.

Emphasis is placed on creating a more compact pattern of development that will reduce dependence upon automobiles and enable people to live within convenient proximity to stores, offices, and services.

Calvert County Comprehensive Plan, Adopted 2019, Amended 2022, Page 3-18

#### **Priority Funding Areas**

Maryland's Priority Funding Areas (PFAs) are targeted existing communities where local governments desire the state to invest and support future growth. In 1997, the state of Maryland adopted the Priority Funding Areas Act (Smart Growth Act). The Maryland Department of Planning describes PFAs as:

Geographic growth areas defined under State law and designated by local jurisdictions to provide a map for targeting State investment in infrastructure. The law directs the use of state funding for roads, water and sewer plants, economic development and other growth-related needs to PFAs, recognizing that these investments are the most important tool the State has to influence growth and development.

Priority Funding Areas were established to meet three key goals:

To preserve existing communities;

To make the most efficient and effective use of taxpayer dollars for costly infrastructure by targeting State resources to build upon past investments; and

To reduce development pressure on critical farmland and natural resource areas by encouraging projects in already developed areas.

(Priority Funding Areas: How to Revise and Update, Maryland Department of Planning, August 2009, Publication No. 2009-004)

#### **Sustainable Communities**

The state of Maryland established the Sustainable Communities program in 2010. The program is administered by the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development. This place-based designation offers "a comprehensive package of resources that support holistic strategies for community development, revitalization and sustainability. Sustainable Communities has provided local governments with a framework for promoting environmentally, economically, and socially responsible growth and development in existing older communities. The designation places special emphasis on infrastructure improvements, multimodal transportation and development that strengthens existing communities."<sup>1</sup>

(Moved to Chapter I, applicable to all Town Centers.)

#### **CHAPTER 2. KEY ISSUES**

#### **Calvert County Comprehensive Plan Mission and Visions**

The Calvert County Comprehensive Plan's mission and visions form the basis for this updated Dunkirk Town Center Master Plan.

The mission of the Comprehensive Plan is to maintain and/or improve the overall quality of life for all citizens of Calvert County by:

- I. Promoting sustainable development,
- 2. Encouraging a stable and enduring economic base,
- 3. Providing for safety, health, and education, and
- 4. Preserving the natural, cultural, and historic assets of Calvert County.

The mission is expressed in a series of ten visions:

- I. Our landscape is dominated by forests and fields.
- 2. Our Town Centers are attractive, convenient, and interesting places to live, work, and shop.
- 3. Our wetlands, streams, and forests and the Chesapeake Bay and Patuxent River support thriving plant and animal communities.

- 4. Our highways are safe with only moderate congestion and transit is readily available. Walking and bicycling are practical alternatives within and in close proximity of Town Centers.
- 5. We waste less, consume fewer natural resources, and properly dispose of waste.
- 6. Our communities are safe. We care for the well-being of each other.
- 7. Our children are well prepared for the future. We offer robust and diverse educational opportunities.
- 8. We are stewards of our cultural heritage.
- 9. We are building a strong local economy based on renewable resources, agriculture, seafood, high technology, retirement, recreation, and tourism.

10. Our government is efficient, open, and responsive to citizen needs and concerns. (Moved to Chapter I, applicable to all Town Centers)

#### Key Issues for the Dunkirk Town Center

The plan for the Dunkirk Town Center was initiated as the nation was enduring the COVID-19 pandemic. The longevity of these economic and social consequences are still unknown. County government, residents and businesses must be nimble in response, while also considering historical factors, future trends and community values.

(Outdated, revised and integrated into the Strategic Direction section for consolidation and streamlining purposes.)

#### Key issues for the Dunkirk Town Center include the following:

**Demographics:** The population in the Dunkirk area<sup>1</sup> is getting older. The median age increased from 43.9 years of age in 2010 to 45.2 years of age in 2020. An aging population willrequire a different set or extent of public services — health care, recreation programs, transportation — than exists today. How can the Dunkirk Town Center Master Plan respond to the needs of an aging population?

(Integrated into the Demographics section for consolidation and streamlining purposes.)

Land Use: Each of Calvert County's Town Centers are unique, the Dunkirk Town Center is especially unique. It is primarily composed of commercial land uses. While Dunkirk is the second smallest Town Center by area after Owings, it is the second largest Town Center in terms of commercial square footage. The majority of parcels within the Town Center are developed with buildings or devoted to stormwater and wastewater management. Adequate public water supply and wastewater systems would promote a vibrant Town Center by allowing for infill development of remaining parcels and redevelopment of previously developed parcels. How can the Town Center Master Plan encourage infill development of the remaining parcels and appropriate redevelopment of already developed parcels in order to continue to develop a vibrant Town Center?

(Integrated into the Land Use section for consolidation and streamlining purposes.)

**Land Preservation:** In 1978, Calvert County adopted the first Transferable Development Rights (TDR) program in the state. There are over a dozen Agricultural Preservation Districts in the Dunkirk region, many of them located on the west side of MD 4, on the Patuxent River side. The county's agricultural program is based upon the dual goals of preserving the county's rural character and directing growth to appropriate locations. How can the Master Plan help encourage land preservation?

(Integrated into the Land Use section for consolidation and streamlining purposes.)

**Environment and Natural Resources Protection:** The Dunkirk Town Center is located on the ridge of the Hall Creek and Kings Branch sub-watersheds. These drain into the Patuxent River, which drains into the Chesapeake Bay. The area's nearby stream valleys, forested areas and sensitive areas are environmental resources that deserve to be protected. In addition, providing safe and environmentally sensitive access to public lands for recreation and the enjoyment of nature is important for the health and well-being of people who work, visit and/or live near Dunkirk Town Center. Adequate public wastewater systems would prevent pollution of sensitive environmental areas and waterways as well as downstream waterways. How can the Master Plan promote environmental conservation and stewardship? (Integrated into the Environment and Natural Resources section for consolidation and streamlining purposes.)

**Heritage:** Dunkirk has a rich history as a rural community known for orchards and delicious fruit. How can the Master Plan encourage the preservation of historic structures and encourage new construction to emulate the style and/or features of Dunkirk's historic structures?

(Integrated into the Heritage section for consolidation and streamlining purposes.)

Housing and Community Services: How can the Master Plan encourage meeting the need for senior housing and other needs of residents in the Dunkirk region from a wide range of economic levels, household sizes and age groups? (Integrated into the Housing section for consolidation and streamlining purposes.)

**Transportation:** Traffic congestion and the safety of motorists, pedestrians and bicyclists are significant concerns for many residents of Dunkirk. How can the Master Plan improve the transportation network in a way that is balanced? (Integrated into the Transportation section for consolidation and streamlining purposes.)

**Economic Vitality:** Adequate public water and wastewater systems will promote economic opportunities in the Dunkirk Town Center. How can the Dunkirk Town Center continue to serve the Dunkirk region as a retail and employment hub and meet the challenges of future trends and environmental constraints? (Integrated into the Economic Vitality section for consolidation and streamlining purposes.)

Water Resources: The establishment of adequate public water and wastewater systems will help protect the integrity of our water supply aquifers and surface waters. How can the Dunkirk Town Center Master Plan implement the Comprehensive Plan's goal of protecting public health and water quality? (Integrated into the Water Resources section for consolidation and streamlining purposes.)

**Government and Community Resources:** Since the mid-1980s the Calvert County Comprehensive Plan has called for the Town Centers to include indoor and outdoor public spaces. How can the Master Plan encourage the creation of additional civic buildings, spaces and events that meet community desires for a vibrant small-town shopping area that is safe and family-friendly?

(Integrated into the Government and Community Resources section for consolidation and streamlining purposes.)

# Accomplishments

The Dunkirk Town Center was designated a Town Center when the Dunkirk Town Center Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance were adopted on July 28, 1987. Since then, key amendments to the Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance, as well as infrastructure and public service improvements include:

- Establishment of the Dunkirk Town Center as a Transfer Zone, designated to receive increased density using Transferable Development Rights (TDRs) from the sending areas of Agricultural Preservation Districts.
- Designation as a Priority Funding Area under the State of Maryland's Smart Growth Act.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Most of the Town Center is designated as a Priority Funding Area. For more information, refer to the Maryland Department of Planning's <u>Priority Funding Area Interactive Map</u>.

- Establishment of the Dunkirk Town Center appearance code and project review process.
- Expansion on the west side of the Town Center to include the land area encompassing West Ward Road.
- Extension of West Ward Road across MD 4, connecting to Ferry Landing Road.
- Construction of a local road system on the east side of the Town Center as an alternative to MD 4.
- Reconstruction of the Dunkirk Volunteer Fire Department and Rescue Squad.
- Addition of turning lanes and access lanes at lighted intersections of MD 4/Town Center Boulevard and MD 4/Ward Road.
- Lowering of the speed limit from 55 to 45 miles per hour.
- Establishment of the Sheriff's Dunkirk District Station in the Town Center.
- Establishment of the Maryland Transit Administration's (MTA) Dunkirk Park and Ride, north of the Town Center.
- The designation of the Town Center as a Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development's <u>Sustainable Community</u>.
- Establishment of the Apple Greene Shopping Center.
- Construction of Dunkirk Gateway Well and Water Tower facilities.

See Chapter I for the intent of the Town Center designation and other designations that apply to the Town Center.

# **Demographics**

Population figures and projections for the Dunkirk Census Designated Place (CDP)<sup>1</sup>, Calvert County, and the State of Maryland are shown below.

Table 3.1 Population, 1980-2022 Decennial Censuses

Population	<del>1980</del>	<del>1990</del>	<del>2000</del>	<del>2010</del>	<del>2020</del>
<del>Dunkirk</del>	<u>**</u>	<u>**</u>	<del>2,363</del>	<del>2,520</del>	<del>2,431</del>
Calvert County	<del>34,638</del>	<del>51,372</del>	<del>74,563</del>	<del>88,936</del>	<del>92,783</del>
Southern Md.*		<del>228,500</del>		<del>341,808</del>	<del>373,177</del>
<u>Maryland</u>	4,216,975	4, <del>781,468</del>	<del>5,296,486</del>		<del>6,177,224</del>

Note: N/A: data was not available

\* Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's Counties

\*\*Did not exist as a Census Designated Place

Sources: Calvert County Planning & Zoning Department; U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census; and Maryland Department of Planning.

Table 3.2 General Demographic Characteristics, 2020

	Dunkirk CDP	Percent	Calvert County	Percent
<u>Male</u>	<del>1,168</del>	<del>53.7%</del>	4 <del>5,651</del>	N/A
Female	<del>1,007</del>	<del>46.3%</del>	<del>46,443</del>	N/A
<del>Under 5</del>	<del>89</del>	<del>4.1%</del>	<del>4,840</del>	<del>5.3%</del>
<del>5 – 19</del>	4 <del>09</del>	<del>18.7%</del>	<del>18,598</del>	<del>20.2%</del>
<del>20 64</del>	<del>1,282</del>	<del>59.1%</del>	<del>54,896</del>	<del>59.7%</del>
<del>65 +</del>	<del>394</del>	<del>18.1%</del>	<del>13,760</del>	<del>14.8%</del>
<u>Median Age</u>	4 <u>5.2</u>	N/A	4 <del>0.5</del>	N/A

#### Table 3.3 Race, 2020

Race	Dunkirk CDP	Calvert County
White, only	<del>2,049</del>	<del>69,935</del>
Black or African American, only	<del>147</del>	<del>12,100</del>
<del>Other races, only</del>	<del>2,222</del>	<del>76,225</del>
<del>Two or more races</del>	<del>156</del>	<del>7,485</del>

Age Composition Percentage Breakdown

27% - under 25 years old
22% - 25 to 44 years
32% - 45 to 64 years
18% - 65 years or older

# Calvert County Total Population 2020: 92,783

# Dunkirk Total Population 2020: 2,175 2023: 2,527 2.5%

# Between 2020 and 2023, the population 65 years and older decreased from 18% to 13%











<u>Census Bureau's Dunkirk CDP Profile</u>. The raw data from <u>Table DP03</u> indicates <u>< 1%. To address a comment from the Planning Commission,</u> the graphic has been updated to reflect Table DP03 data.

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# **Strategic Direction**

It has been over 30 years since the adoption of the initial master plan for the Dunkirk Town Center. Many of the actions in the Dunkirk Master Plan, adopted in 1987, have been accomplished or implemented. Accomplishments include extending Ward Road across MD 4 to Ferry Landing Road, creating a park-and-ride lot, and re-evaluating and reducing the 55-mile-per-hour speed limit through the Town Center.

(Revised, See below. Accomplishments in the paragroup have been integrated into the Accomplishment section.)

Established 40 years ago, the Dunkirk Town Center spans 195 acres and serves as the gateway to the county's northern boundary. It is the second smallest of the county's Town Centers but has the second highest concentration of commercial uses, making commercial development the predominant land use. Originally a small farming community, Dunkirk remained sparsely populated and dominated by agriculture until the mid-20th century. Its proximity to the Capital Beltway/I-495 (17 miles), Washington, D.C., Arlington, Suitland, Baltimore, and Annapolis spurred steady commercial growth between the 1960s and 1990s, while adjacent areas experienced residential growth. Today, the Town Center is largely built out, with commercial development concentrated within its boundaries and residential development surrounding it. This development pattern reflects the original intent of the Dunkirk Town Center: to preserve agricultural land by concentrating growth in designated commercial and residential areas. The following guiding principles inform this Master Plan update:

- I. Continue to treat the Town Center as an aesthetic whole by retaining the single zoning district, Town Center.
- 2. Encourage commercial, medical, professional services, recreational, and institutional uses, senior housing, and mixed-use development/redevelopment.
- 3. Encourage cohesive design by enforcing landscaping, lighting, sidewalks, signage, and appearance code requirements.
- 4. Establish a distinctive gateway.
- 5. Expand the Town Center boundary to include the Dunkirk District Park and MTA's Dunkirk Park and Ride.
- 6. Conserve forests and sensitive areas with the Natural Resource Protection Area (buffer).
- 7. Consider developing a tree planting plan and a green infrastructure map. <u>(Deleted since the Town Center is</u> significantly built-out with green infrastructure along boundaries of the Town Center.)
- 8.7. Protect the Town Center's receiving waters through environmental sensitive design and addressing increasingly frequent and intense rain events.
- 9.8. Encourage private investment in sewage treatment systems, pending the future availability of public water and sewer infrastructure. (Public water and sewer is not planned for the Dunkirk Town Center in the current Calvert County Water and Sewerage Plan.)
- 10.9. Conserve Smithville Methodist Church and increase outreach to historic property owners for designated Historic Districts.
- H.<u>10.</u> Encourage multi-media means of presenting historic sites/structures and points of interest.
- 12.11. Restrict access from Apple Way to MD 4, allowing right hand turns only.
- 13.12. Complete Penwick Lane to provide direct access from MD 4 to Town Center Boulevard.
- 14.13. Extend Gateway Drive to Brickhouse Road to complete the east side local travel route
- **15.14.** Connect MTA's Park and Ride to MD 4.
- 16.15. Place a crosswalk at the intersection of MD 4/Town Center Boulevard.
- 17.16. Expand public transit services along Dares Beach Road to create a bi-directional route.
- **18.17.** Expand public transit evening hours, increase on-demand services, and advocate efficiency in MTA's commuter service.
- <u>19.18.</u> Implement recommendations in <u>Dunkirk and Prince Frederick Bikeways Feasibility Studies</u>, prepared by Mead & Hunt and funded by the <u>MDOT FY22 Kim Lamphier Bikeways Network Program when funding is available.</u>

#### **Public Partnerships, Outreach, and Input**

In October 2019, the Calvert County Planning Commission endorsed a three-phase process to update the county's seven Town Center master plans. The three-phase process includes identifying issues, developing a plan and adopting the plan. In February 2021, the Planning Commission directed staff to begin the process to update the master plan and zoning regulations for the Dunkirk Town Center. The Dunkirk Town Center was the second Town Center selected to go through the update process.

Public outreach for the Dunkirk Town Center Master Plan Update included: a project webpage on the Calvert County Government's website, press releases, social media posts that provided ongoing updates, public informational videos, news flashes emailed to those who signed up for updates and posted to the county's website, broadcast information slides and video on Comcast 1070, flyers and a 4- foot by 8-foot banner displayed at the entrance to Dunkirk District Park. Public input was gathered via meetings, workshops and surveys. The purpose of the public outreach was to inform, educate and seek public input and perspective.

#### Phase I: Identify Issues

Staff in the Planning & Zoning Department and Communication & Media Relations (CMR) Division designed a postcard advertising the kick-off meeting about the Dunkirk Town Center Master Plan and Zoning Update. The postcard was mailed to all postal patrons in the Dunkirk ZIP code, approximately 3,000 delivery addresses, including post office boxes. Planning & Zoning Department and CMR staff worked to produce two videos on the origins of Dunkirk. These videos are posted to the Dunkirk Town Center Plan and Zoning Update's webpage and on the Calvert Broadcast YouTube channel.

Public meetings on the Dunkirk Town Center Master Plan and Zoning Update began in May 2021. The first meeting was a liaison meeting for community groups and agencies. Staff contacted community groups and agencies and asked them to self-identify a liaison. Liaisons were asked to help inform their group members, neighbors, friends, residents, property owners and visitors about the upcoming update project. This strategy helped in reaching young adults and youth and sharing with staff what community members would like the plan to achieve.

The Planning & Zoning Department hosted, on behalf of the Planning Commission, a public kick-off meeting in June 2021. A public workshop followed in July 2021. The liaison meeting and kick-off meetings were held virtually. The workshop was a hybrid meeting, held virtually and in person at the Dunkirk Volunteer Fire Company. The workshop was broadcasted live via the county's website, Comcast Channel 1070, Facebook Live and was recorded and made available for anyone unable to attend the live event.

At its meeting in August 2021, the Planning Commission acknowledged three focus areas: land use; roads, traffic and public walkways; and economic vitality, based on community input at the public meetings and workshop and upon the responses to the surveys.

A public informational meeting was held on December 6, 2021. Planning & Zoning Department staff provided an overview of the update process and master plan focus areas and shared highlights from the Dunkirk Survey #2 and Photo Survey. Other presentations concentrated on economic vitality, land use/water resources, bicycling and walking. The informational meeting was held virtually; people could attend via Zoom or the live stream on the county's website, Facebook, YouTube and Comcast Channel 1070.

The CMR Division produced two "Breaking News" videos. The recreational amenities video was posted to the county's Facebook page on January 26, 2022. CMR staff provided statistics for the video after it was posted for eight days: the post was viewed by 11,050 people and the video was viewed 6,379 times with 120 reactions (likes/loves), 17 comments and 49 shares. The video was also posted to the county's YouTube page and is available for viewing at www.youtube.com/watch?v=JzcxwiYWtqk. The Septic School video featured Dr. Andrew Lazur, a University of Maryland water quality specialist who was a guest speaker at the public informational meeting on December 6, 2021. The Septic School video was posted on February 3, 2022. As of April 14, 2022, it had been viewed over 595 times. The Dunkirk and Prince Frederick Town Center bikeways planning public meeting was held on January 11, 2022. The meeting presented concept plans and provided an opportunity for the public to provide feedback. The Dunkirk and Prince Frederick Bikeways Feasibility Studies was funded by a grant from the Maryland Department of Transportation's Maryland Kim Lamphier Bikeways Network Program and county funds.

At its meeting in March 2022, the Planning Commission directed the Department of Planning & Zoning to proceed with the second phase of the master plan update.

#### Phase 2: Develop the Plan

County staff from several departments, led by the Department of Planning & Zoning, and other government agencies worked together to prepare the draft updated Dunkirk Town Center Master Plan. The draft plan will be distributed to the public and agencies for review and comment.

#### Phase 3: Adopt the Plan

There will be several opportunities for people and agencies to comment on the draft plan during the formal process of the Planning Commission's and Board of County Commissioners' considerations to adopt an updated plan for the Dunkirk Town Center.

(Moved to Appendix B of this chapter and revised for streamlining and consolidation purposes.)

# Land Use

#### **Calvert County Comprehensive Plan Vision**

Our landscape is dominated by forests and fields.

Our Town Centers are attractive, convenient, and interesting places to live, work and shop. We are stewards of our cultural heritage.

#### **Calvert County Comprehensive Plan Goals for Land Use**

Goal 1: Preserve the rural character of the county, its prime farmland, contiguous forests, cultural resources, and environmentally sensitive areas.

Goal 2: Use water and sewer policies to direct growth consistent with land use policies. Goal 3: Develop Town Centers as attractive, convenient, and interesting places to live, work, and shop.

Goal 4: Direct commercial and industrial uses to appropriate locations; provide necessary infrastructure.

#### **Background**

Calvert County has long held the values of preserving the rural landscape and creating vibrant Town Centers. Calvert County has focused on preserving its rural character since its first comprehensive plan, published in 1967. This value has been carried forward in every subsequent comprehensive plan and has continuously influenced Calvert County's land development policies.

These two values work together and mutually sustain each other. Supporting, encouraging, and directing growth away from the rural areas helps preserve the rural landscape and focuses development into Town Centers. Similarly, supporting, encouraging, and directing growth toward the Town Centers limits development within the rural areas and creates more activity and vibrancy within the Town Centers.

Calvert County Comprehensive Plan, 2019, Amended 2022, Page ES-1

In 1983, the county adopted the Town Center concept to provide locations suitable for residential and commercial development and to avoid extending "strip commercial development" along Calvert County's highways. Strip commercial development contributes to traffic congestion, increases the potential for highway traffic accidents, reduces the drawing power of commercial uses by limiting the opportunity to share customers with other nearby commercial uses, increases the cost of needed infrastructure, and detracts from the visual beauty of the countryside.

Calvert County Comprehensive Plan, 2019, Amended 2022, Page 3-2

The Calvert County Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 1983, designated Dunkirk as a Minor Town Center. Two of the purposes of the designation and establishment of Towns and Town Centers were "Concentrate commercial growth and employment opportunities (such as sales, services and assembly) in Town Centers" and "Promote efficient and attractive development in a rural setting" (Page 13).

(Included in Chapter I, applicable to all Town Centers.)

The Dunkirk Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance was adopted on July 28, 1987. At a workshop on

November 30, 1984, community members expressed their "perceptions of the problems, needs, and issues that should be addressed in a master planning program for the Dunkirk Town Center"

(Dunkirk Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance, Page 8).

The top five topics the community felt should be addressed in the Town Center Plan included:

- "Need for compatible architecture and design for quality atmosphere (landscaping)."
- "Protect natural and historical environment."
- "Maintain free traffic flow."
- "Traffic control for the intersections of Route 4 and:
- Ferry Landing Road
- Ward Road"
- "Provide good access into commercial areas and limit the number of accesses."

(Page 8)

(Integrated into the Key Issues section.)

After the master plan was adopted in 1987, the Dunkirk Town Center was expanded to include additional land on the west side of the Town Center, as called for in the master plan.

<u>(Integrated into the Accomplishments section.)</u>

The 1987 Dunkirk Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance set forth six policies to achieve the goal that Dunkirk "reflect the best features of the County's land use development philosophies and create a positive first image" (Page 10).

- The entire Town Center area of Dunkirk will be treated as an economic and aesthetic whole.
- A "sense of place" with recognizable boundaries and unifying characteristics will be

created in the commercial core of Dunkirk.

- Established residential areas adjacent to the Town Center will be protected and enhanced.
- Commercial development will be encouraged.
- The efficiency and safety of Route 4 will be a primary goal of this plan.

(Pages 10-11)

This updated master plan for the Dunkirk Town Center continues these policies, including treating the Town Center as an economic and aesthetic whole.

(Integrated into the Key Issues and Economic Vitality sections.)

The updated Calvert County Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 1997, allowed both major and minor Town Centers to have community water and sewer.

(Integrated into the Towards a Vibrant Town Center section)

The Dunkirk Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance was amended twice in August 4, 1998 and March 23, 1999, to reflect changes in the Calvert County Comprehensive Plan and to add a county government action to maintain the attractive image of the community by prohibiting industrial uses that cannot be adequately screened. (Integrated into the Land Uses section.)

With adoption of the updated *Calvert County Comprehensive Plan* in 2019, the categories of Major and Town Centers were removed. All Town Centers have the same designation of Town Center. There were no changes to this policy with the amendments adopted by the Board of County Commissioners in 2022. (Included in Chapter I, applicable to all Town Centers.)

In addition, the updated *Calvert County Comprehensive Plan* Future Land Use Plan calls for the expansion of the Dunkirk Town Center to the northwest to include the county's recreation park, Dunkirk District Park, and to the northeast to include the state's park and ride lot property. Expansion of the Town Center will require amending the Town Center's master plan and zoning. Refer to the figure below for the areas to be included in the future expansion. (Integrated into the Town Center Boundary Expansion section.)

#### Key Issues

How can the Dunkirk Town Center Master Plan continue to focus commercial growth within the Town Center and residential growth in surrounding areas to preserve rural land, while promoting high-quality design despite land and sewer capacity constraints?

Key issues identified through public input during this Master Plan update, consistent with those raised during the 1987 Dunkirk Town Center Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance adoption process, include:

- Cohesive design standards to create a distinctive identity and "sense of place".
- A distinctive and welcoming gateway.
- A well-defined commercial core in the Town Center serving residential development in outlying areas.
- Conservation of remaining historic Smithville sites and architecture.
- Preservation of natural and environmental resources.
- Smooth traffic flow throughout the Town Center, with traffic control at MD 4/Ferry Landing Road and MD 4/Ward Road.<sup>2</sup>
- Limited and adequate access into commercial areas.
- Permittance of senior housing.
- A joint-use community center, with a focus on seniors and the potential inclusion of a library branch.<sup>3</sup>
- Water and sewer infrastructure that supports existing and future development.

### **Development Trends**

Dunkirk's development patterns provide insight into its past and help shape its future growth. From the late 1600s to early 1700s, the area—then known as Smithville—was named for the Smith family, who purchased land, built homes, and established a thriving community based on agriculture, fishing, and seafood harvesting, fueled by enslaved labor. The African American community also played an important role in establishing the community as it rose from slavery, achieved freedom, and founded churches and schools. Remnants of historic Smithville remain in the Town Center today, including the Smithville Methodist Church and the Shiloh Methodist Episcopal Church cemetery—landmarks that reflect the area's heritage. Just outside of the Town Center lies the Smithville Methodist Cemetery. These historic sites, with their distinctive architecture, contribute to a strong sense of place and contrast with the surrounding modern development.

Into the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and through the 1950s, the Dunkirk area retained it's small, rural, agricultural community character with a modest population. Beginning in the 1960s and accelerating through the 1980s, the Town Center experienced commercial growth with the construction of Dunkirk Place, Dunkirk Square, and County Plaza shopping centers, and the standalone Howlin and Laurian buildings along MD 4. These structures are typically older strip malls or brick buildings with white columns and dormers, surrounded by parking lots with grassy areas and landscaping.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> See the Transportation section for a discussion for a detailed discussion on traffic congestion and safety.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> See the Government and Community Facilities section for a discussion on the joint-use community center.

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Residential growth during this period included nearby neighborhoods like Smith's Purchase and Halls Hills, and outlying communities like Lakewood, Century Estates, Ferry Woods, and Benson Acres.

Into the 1990s, the Calvert Gateway and Dunkirk Market Pplace shopping centers were built, featuring big-box stores, smaller shops with similar architectural styles accompanied with large, landscaped parking lots—some with standalone pad sites. Residential growth continued with communities like Lakewood, Dunkirk Subdivision, Smithville, and Apple Greene, as well as outlying residential communities like Howes Meadows, Hickory Creek, Old Hundred, and Ward Meadows.

In 2015, the Dunkirk District Park, a regional park located just outside of the Town Center, was completed. This civic amenity attracts local and regional users and offers picnic areas, pavilions, a playground, a dog park, a skate park, walking/jogging trails, tennis courts, pickleball courts, baseball/softball fields, and a year-round restroom facility. In 2018, the nearby MTA Dunkirk Park and Ride, also just outside of the Town Center, was completed. It provides 486 parking spaces for commuters traveling to Anne Arundel, Prince George's and Baltimore counties, Arlington, and Washington, D.C. In 2024, the Sheriff's Dunkirk District Station was established in the Town Center, fulfilling a goal of the 1987 Dunkirk Town Center Master Plan.

## **Towards a Vibrant Town Center**

The Dunkirk Town Center is the gateway to the county from the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, located approximately 17 miles from the Washington, DC beltway (I-495) to the northern boundary of the Town Center. The Dunkirk Town Center is the commercial hub of the area that includes northern Calvert County and southern Anne Arundel County. The figure below shows Calvert County's relation to Baltimore, Washington, DC, and other Maryland counties.

(Integrated into the Strategic Direction section.)

Today, the Dunkirk Town Center is mostly developed with a distinctive core of commercial, medical, office, historic, and civic uses serving surrounding residential communities. Architecture in the Town Center is characterized by three distinctive types—Historic Smithville, pre-1990s and post 1990s—each type easily identifiable. While there are residential developments surrounding the Town Center, no senior housing is in the Town Center. Additionally, the gateway, marked by a sign at the Town Center's entrance, is undistinguishable and obscured by trees that line MD 4. Traffic flow continues to be a challenge, impacted by workforce commuters, intra-county travel, and an unsignalized access points from MD 4 into the Town Center, but improved by the construction of an alternative transportation route on the east side of the Town Center, expanded access lanes at the signalized intersections of MD 4/Town Center Boulevard and MD 4/Ward Road, and a pedestrian crosswalk at the intersection of MD 4/Ward Road.<sup>4</sup> Lastly, the Town Center is served by private wells and septic systems. A few septic systems have experienced periodic failures, posing a challenge to accommodating additional development or redevelopment.<sup>5</sup> The 1997 Calvert County Comprehensive Plan included a policy allowing Town Centers to be served by public water and sewer; however, the current Calvert County Water and Sewerage Plan does not plan for these provisions in the Dunkirk Town Center. Private investment in sewage treatment systems is encouraged to address this challenge. until these services are provided as planned in the Calvert County Water and Sewerage Plan, this challenge will persist.

### Land Uses

The Dunkirk Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance adopted in 1987 stated "There are certain land uses which are inappropriate in a town center. The third purpose of this plan is to prohibit all land uses which might constitute a hazard

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> See the Transportation section for a discussion for a detailed discussion on traffic congestion and safety.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> See the Water Resources section for a discussion regarding failing septic systems.

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to be detrimental in a town center and regulate those uses which might have an adverse impact on the Town Center unless carefully controlled." (Page 2)

The Calvert County Zoning Ordinance defers most land use matters in Town Centers to a separate master plan and accompanying zoning regulations which spells out the type, form, and requirements for development of property within its boundaries.

(Included in Chapter I, applicable to all Town Centers.)

One of the purposes of the 1987 Dunkirk Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance was "to create a distinctive identity for the Town Center which will emphasize its role as the 'gateway to Calvert County' and create a unified and attractive aspect for the Dunkirk Town Center through an appearance code and an appearance review committee." (Integrated into the Accomplishments Gateway sections.)

Since the Town Center's inception in 1987, land uses have been governed by the Town Center (zoning) District and the Use Table in the Dunkirk Town Center Zoning Ordinance, and subsequent amendments. This Master Plan recommends retaining the Town Center Zoning District designation and continuing to allow uses outlined in the Use Table, with a focus on commercial, medical, professional services, civic, and institutional uses, senior housing, and mixed-use development/redevelopment. It also recommends continuing to prohibit industrial uses that cannot be adequately screened, limiting free-standing signs, and encouraging cohesive design by enforcing landscaping, lighting, sidewalks, signage, and appearance requirements.

#### **Architecture**

During the public participation process for the 1987 Dunkirk Town Center Master Plan, the community emphasized the importance of architectural compatibility and the conservation of historic Smithville. This Master Plan update continues to advocate this, but also acknowledges the three distinctive architectural styles found in the Dunkirk Town Center today. This Master Plan recommends continuing to enforce appearance code requirements with an emphasis on architectural elements that complement the scale, building placement, and materials of immediate surroundings.

#### Gateway

Dunkirk Town Center serves as the gateway to Calvert County from the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. Its northern border is about 17 miles from the D.C. Beltway (I-495). As a commercial hub for northern Calvert and southern Anne Arundel counties, the Town Center plays a key regional role. Both the 1987 Dunkirk Master Plan and this update recommend establishing a stronger identity for the area, highlighting its role as the county's gateway. This identity would be centered at the intersection of MD 4, Adventure way, and Town Center Boulevard. Currently, the Town Center sign is hard to distinguish from the nearby entrance to Dunkirk District Park, as it blends into a row of trees.

(Revised. See below)

The current Town Center gateway is defined by a sign in front of a row of trees, which blends in with the Dunkirk District Park entrance. A gateway should serve as a visual focal point that connects two areas and welcomes residents and visitors. Effective gateways include curb extensions, raised crosswalks or driveway treatments, raised medians, landscaping, lighting, seating, and public art. With the proposed inclusion of Dunkirk District Park in the Dunkirk Town Center, there is an opportunity to create a more distinguishable gateway spanning both sides of MD 4 and the median. Features could include the county flag, conservation landscaping, lighting, community art (e.g., sea horse sculptures that once decorated the county's landscape), and Town Center and Dunkirk District Park signs. Additional signage could highlight historic Smithville and the Dunkirk area's heritage. A redeveloped gateway would enhance a "sense of place" at the county's entrance. This Master Plan update, consistent with the 1987 Dunkirk Master Plan, recommends establishing a distinctive identity for the Town Center as the gateway to the county, located at MD 4/Town Center Boulevard.

#### Infill, Redevelopment, and Development

Dunkirk is one of the county's smaller Town Centers. It is the second smallest Town Center, after the Owings Town Center. Most of the land in the Town Center is already developed, primarily with commercial, office and medical uses. As buildings and shopping centers age and business needs change, there may be opportunities to redevelop these areas. Over time, regulations for things like stormwater management and landscaping have become more stringent. Environmental and site development regulations have changed over time, such as stormwater management and landscaping requirements. As sites redevelop, these newer regulations would apply, thus improving how stormwater is managed and adding more landscaping to reduce the impact of impervious surfaces.

(Revised. See below.)

Some of the Town Center's structures were constructed before current stormwater and sensitive area protection requirements. Commercial growth will consist of developing the few existing vacant lots, developing existing pad sites, and redevelopment through reuse existing buildings. This Master Plan recommends allowing mixed-use and commercial development and redevelopment, with an option of a floating commercial overlay zone that would allow flexible setback and bulk standards, and reduced parking requirements. It also recommends protecting streams, wetlands, floodplains, steep slopes, and highly erodible or hydric soils through the Natural Resource Protection Area (buffer and setback), in accordance with the county's zoning regulations. Additionally, through redevelopment and retrofit measures, this Master Plan recommends protecting receiving waters through stormwater standards that address the increasing frequency and intensity of rain events. Lastly, this Master Plan encourages private entities ensure adequate sewage treatment to accommodate development and redevelopment.<sup>6</sup>, pending the future availability of public water and sewer infrastructure. (Public water and sewer is not planned for the Dunkirk Town Center in the current Calvert County Water and Sewerage Plan.)

#### **Town Center Boundary Expansion**

In addition, the updated Calvert County Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Plan calls for the expansion of the Dunkirk Town Center to the northwest to include the county's recreation park, Dunkirk District Park, and to the northeast to include the state's park and ride lot property. Expansion of the Town Center will require amending the Town Center's master plan and zoning. Refer to the figure below for the areas to be included in the future expansion. (Revised. See below.)

With the completion of the Dunkirk District Park in 2015 and MTA's Dunkirk Park and Ride in 2018, both located outside of but adjacent to the Town Center, this Master Plan recommends expanding the Town Center boundary to include theses amenities. This expansion supports the Town Center's role in providing civic spaces and government facilities in Town Centers and fulfills the Calvert County Comprehensive Plan's recommendation for this boundary expansion. The proposed boundary expansion increases the Town Center from 195 to 291 acres. See the aerial on the following page for the expansion area.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> See the Water Resources section for a discussion on the stormwater standards and failing septic systems.



### Legend

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Proposed Dunkirk Town Center Expansion Area

# **Goals and Objectives**

#### See Appendix A for goals and objectives.

**Goal I: Continue the goal that the Dunkirk Town Center "reflect the best features of the county's land use development philosophies and create a positive first image."** 

#### **Objective I: Treat the entire Dunkirk Town Center as an economic and aesthetic whole.**

- 4.1.1.1 Continue the policy of treating the Dunkirk Town Center as a whole by retaining the single zoning district for the Town Center. [P&Z]
- 4.1.1.2 Continue the policy of enforcing an appearance code for new construction, renovation and additions that increase the total square footage by 100% or by more than 2,000 square feet. [P&Z]
- 4.1.1.3 Continue the policy of prohibiting industrial uses that cannot be adequately screened, in order to maintain the attractive image of the community. [P&Z]

# **Objective 2: Continue to encourage a "sense of place" with recognizable boundaries and unifying characteristics.**

- 4.1.2.1 Continue the policy of creating unity through quality design, Town Center planned landscaping, planned roads, uniform signage and street lighting and the use of the same kind consistent materials for walkways and parking lots. [P&Z, PW]
- 4.1.2.2 Update the Dunkirk Town Center zoning regulations to reflect the updated Dunkirk Town Center Master Plan. [P&Z]
- 4.1.2.3 Continue the policy of encouraging the style of the original construction in future construction. [P&Z]
- 4.1.2.4 Continue the policy of requiring front elevations of attached stores, offices, and residences to have varying depths. Do not allow Strip shopping malls of with only one depth only will not be allowed. [P&Z]
- 4.1.2.5 4.1.2.5 Continue the policy of establishing lighting standards and the guidance that fixtures to light signs or buildings in general need to be hidden from view in architecturally complementary fashion, if attached to the building, or in landscapingContinue the policy of limiting the number of free-standing signs. [P&Z]
- 4.1.2.6 Continue the policy of limiting the height of building heights to no more than three stories high for a total of 50 feet including the roof. [P&Z]

# Goal 2: Expand the Dunkirk Town Center to include the Dunkirk District Park and the Park and Ride properties.

# Objective I: Incorporate the public properties adjacent to the Dunkirk Town Center, outlined in the Calvert County Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 2019 and amended in 2022.

4.2.1.1 Rezone the Dunkirk District Park and Park and Ride properties as Town Center through the formal rezoning process. [P&Z, PC, BOCC]

(Duplicative. Goals and objectives are compiled in Appendix A for consolidation and streamlining purposes.)

# **Environment and Natural Resources**

#### **Calvert County Comprehensive Plan Vision**

Our wetlands, streams, and forests and the Chesapeake Bay and Patuxent River support thriving plant and animal communities.

#### **Calvert County Comprehensive Plan Goals**

Goal I: Preserve, protect, and conserve natural resources and environmentally sensitive areas.

Goal 2: Continue a comprehensive approach to environmental planning with special emphasis on watershed planning.

Goal 3: Preserve, protect, and conserve land-based natural resources.

Goal 4: Mitigate natural and man-made hazards in Calvert County.

(In Chapter I, applicable to all Town Centers.)

#### **Key Issues**

The Dunkirk Town Center sits between the Hall Creek and Kings Branch subwatersheds, which flow into the Patuxent River and Chesapeake Bay. How can this Master Plan conserve sensitive areas, and riparian forests and vegetation along Hall Creek and King's Branch tributaries to protect water quality from the impacts of impervious surfaces and increased frequency and intensity of rain events?

#### **Background**

Dunkirk is the northern "gateway to Calvert County," lying approximately 30 miles south of Washington, D.C. (center to center) on MD 4. Dunkirk Town Center includes approximately 200 acres of relatively level ground that ranges from approximately 50 feet to 150 feet above sea level, with the lower elevations at the southern edge. Calvert County lies within portions of the western Chesapeake Bay and Patuxent River watersheds; the Patuxent River is roughly 1.5 miles from Dunkirk's western edge and the Chesapeake Bay is about six miles to the east. Dunkirk Town Center mostly sits within Hall Creek subwatershed (to the north, east, south and southwest) and Kings Branch (to the northwest). (Integrated into the first paragraph in the Regional Watershed Management section, below.)

#### **Regional Watershed Management**

Watershed management is important for improving the water quality and health of the county's wetlands and waterways. Prevalent pollutants within Calvert County's watershed are nitrogen, phosphorous and sediment. Within the Dunkirk area, this pollution can come from agricultural land, septic systems, runoff from impervious surfaces and additives to cultivated lawns. Calvert County monitors tidal and nontidal waters to identify areas that need focused pollution-reducing measures, including improved stormwater retention and upgrading septic systems. Patuxent River Policy Plan

The Patuxent River is one of the eight major tributaries to the Chesapeake Bay and is the longest and deepest river running entirely within Maryland. The Patuxent River Commission adopted the plan<sup>2</sup> to guide the seven Patuxent River counties so that actions be undertaken to protect and improve the health and economic value of the Patuxent River. The Calvert County Board of Commissioners adopted the plan by resolution in 2014. This updated plan calls for closer connections between people in the watershed and the river's resources.

#### **Chesapeake Bay Program**

The Chesapeake Bay Program is a partnership of all governments within the Chesapeake Bay watershed that works together to meet the goals of the <u>Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement</u>.<sup>3</sup> This agreement lays out how governments will monitor, assess and report progress on the following five overarching goals for the Chesapeake: abundant life, clean water, engaged communities, conserved lands and climate change resilience.

(Moved to Chapter I, applicable to all Town Centers.)

The Dunkirk Town Center drains into the Chesapeake Bay and Patuxent River watersheds. The Patuxent River is about 1.5 miles west of Dunkirk, and the Chesapeake Bay is six miles to the east. The Dunkirk Town Center lies mostly within the Hall Creek sub-watershed (north, east, south, and southwest) and the Kings Branch subwatershed (northwest). It covers about 195 acres and with boundary expansion, will cover 291 acres of mostly level land, with elevations ranging from 50 to 150 feet above sea level, lowest at the southern edge.



Geographic Information Systems Team, Technology Services Department, Calvert County Government. 4/22/2025.

#### Watershed Health Indicators

According to <u>The Center for Watershed Protection</u>, when impervious surfaces exceed 10% of a watershed, a stream's ecosystem begins to show sign of distress. Based on a 2023 analysis of aerial photography, the Dunkirk Town Center contains approximately 100 acres of impervious surface, or 51%.<sup>7</sup> Although specific data on impervious surfaces in the Kings Branch and Hall Creek watersheds is unavailable, both areas are primarily rural, with forests, agriculture, and low-density development, with a continuing trend toward more low-density growth. Concentrated impervious surfaces in the Town Center impact nearby tributaries, highlighting the need to protect sensitive areas, conserve riparian forests and vegetation, and manage stormwater to reduce downstream effects.

Tree canopy coverage is also an indicator of healthy watersheds and their ecosystems. Based on a 2023 analysis of aerial photography, the Dunkirk Town Center contains approximately 70 acres of tree canopy coverage, or 24%.<sup>8</sup> Tree canopy coverage in Hall Creek and Kings Branch watershed is not readily available, but based on aerial imagery, it appears to be above the recommended 40%. Increasing tree and forest coverage to help manage runoff from impervious surfaces and increased intensity and frequency of rain events is important to maintain good water quality. According to the Department of Natural Resources' <u>GreenPrint</u> Ecosystem Services GIS layer, undeveloped land and pervious surfaces in the Town Center have an estimated value of \$200 – \$400 per acre in benefits to air quality improvement, carbon sequestration, groundwater recharge, nutrient uptake, wildlife habitat, and biodiversity, as well as stormwater mitigation. These areas are located in the west of Dunkirk District Park, north of MTA's Park and Ride, east of the Calvert Gateway Shopping Center, east of Town Center Boulevard, and south of Apple Way.

This Master Plan recommends improving watershed management by using natural resource solutions, retrofitting inadequate stormwater management measures, accounting for increased rainfall volume and frequency, managing untreated stormwater runoff. It also recommends protecting forest, vegetation, and riparian forests through landscape conservation techniques, forest conservation regulations and the Natural Resource Protection Area. Additionally, this Master Plan recommends considering developing a tree planting plan and a green infrastructure map for the Town Center that incorporates connections to green infrastructure outside of the Town Center. (Deleted since the Town Center is significantly built-out with green infrastructure along boundaries of the Town Center.)

#### **Protected Sensitive Areas and Forests**

#### **Streams**

Streams provide aquatic habitat (including areas for fish spawning and feeding), supply drinking water for wildlife and are a direct conduit for transporting sediment and other pollution downstream. Hall Creek runs through the one-mile radius of Dunkirk Town Center. Hall Creek has experienced major flooding in the last few years and flows through Ward Farm Recreation and Nature Park, a county park to the east of Dunkirk Town Center. Hall Creek is scheduled for water quality monitoring, beginning in 2024. See Figure 4-2.

#### **Wetlands**

Wetlands such as marshes and swamps are generally lowlands covered with shallow water that provide ecosystem services like floodwater storage, pollution control, wildlife habitat and a major food supply for aquatic organisms, migratory waterfowl and other wildlife. The state of Maryland requires a 25-foot buffer around wetlands, and Calvert County expands the 25-foot buffer to 50-foot for nontidal wetlands and 100-foot for tidal wetlands.

Dunkirk Town Center contains small areas of palustrine wetlands. Two are located in the southwestern area on West Ward Road; another is on the southeastern boundary, south of East Ward Road. These are all palustrine wetlands with unconsolidated bottoms and are permanently flooded.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> 2023 planimetric data photography, the Calvert County Department of Technology Services, Geographic Information Systems (11/26/24).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> 2023 planimetric data photography, the Calvert County Department of Technology Services, Geographic Information Systems (11/26/24).

Several other wetland areas are found within the one-mile radius of Dunkirk, particularly along Hall Creek, which runs through the southwestern area.

#### **Steep Slopes**

Steep slopes are slopes greater than or equal to 25%. Disturbing vegetation on steep slopes can cause severe erosion, landslides, loss of fertile topsoil, filling in of waterways, flooding and decreased water quality. Generally, all steep-slope areas are unsuitable for development. Dunkirk has areas with slopes between 25% and 50% throughout the Town Center area and a small area above 50% slope to the southeast.

#### Soil

Different soil types affect how nutrients, water and air move through the soil. Some soils erode more easily and require greater protection to stabilize landscapes and reduce nutrient and sediment runoff into waterways. The majority of soil within Dunkirk Town Center is urban land; other types include Dodon-Marr Complex; Downer-Woodstown Complex; Ingleside-Galestown Complex; Ingleside-Woodstown Complex; Udorthents Loamy and Zekiah and Issue soils. (Information on functions of sensitive areas is included in Chapter 1, applicable to all Town Centers. Information specific to the Dunkirk Town Center is included below.)

Only the protected sensitive areas located in the Town Center are listed below. For a complete list of protected sensitive areas in all Town Centers, see the Environment and Natural Resources section in Chapter 1.

- Wetlands Small nontidal, palustrine wetlands are located on West Ward Road's southwest boundary and near East Ward Road's southeastern boundary. These wetlands are freshwater ponds with trees, shrubs, and emergent vegetation.
- Streams and Their Buffers Perennial and intermittent streams, tributaries of Kings Branch and Hall Creek, are located in the Dunkirk District Park, north of MTA's Park and Ride, north of Calvert Gateway Shopping Center, east of Town Center Boulevard, and south of Apple Way. Dunkirk Way and West Ward Road cross streams in the Town Center.
- Steep Slopes and Highly Erodible Soils Small areas of slopes 25% to 50% are scattered throughout the Town Center, with a single area exceeding 50% slope to the southeast. Most soil is categorized urban land and is suitable for development. Other soils suitable for development include Ingleside-Galestown and Ingleside-Woodstown complexes, and Udorthents, loamy soils. In contrast, the Dodon-Marr, Downer-Woodstown, and Zekiah/Issue soils are characterized with high seasonal water tables, steep slopes, or poor drainage and are generally unsuited for development.
- Forest and Tree Canopy Most forest and tree canopy in the Town Center consist of landscape plantings and forest retention areas, required by the county's zoning ordinance. Forested areas are located south of the Shoppes at Apple Greene, in the Dunkirk District Park, and north of MTA's Dunkirk Park and Ride and Gateway Shopping Center. These areas connect to larger forests outside the Town Center.

This Master Plan recommends protecting these sensitive areas in the same manner, discussed in the Regional Watershed Management section, above. See Chapter I for additional details on protective measures, applicable to all Town Centers and countywide.

#### **Important Bird Area**

The Important Bird Area (IBA) program is a global bird conservation program designed to identify, monitor, and protect those landscapes most important to birds. The National Audubon Society, in partnership with Birdlife International, began implementing the IBA program in the United States in 1995.<sup>9</sup> The current IBA effort, led by Audubon Maryland-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup><u>Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Maryland Natural Heritage Program</u> <u>https://dnr.maryland.gov/Wildlife/Pages/plants\_wildlife/nhpintro.aspx (accessed June 24, 2021).</u>

DC's Director of Bird Conservation since 2004, builds upon groundwork laid in the 1990s by volunteers of the Audubon Naturalist Society. Two essential components of the IBA process are partnerships with landowners and the involvement of public volunteers.<sup>10</sup> There are two IBAs located in or adjacent to Calvert County: Jug Bay IBA and Parkers Creek IBA. The Parkers Creek IBA lies within and to the east of the Prince Town Center.

### **Other Environmental Areas of Note**

#### **Critical Area**

The Critical Area for the Chesapeake Bay is all land within 1,000 feet of the mean high-water line of tidal waters or tidal wetlands along the Chesapeake Bay. There is no critical area within Dunkirk Town Center; the closest critical area is approximately 1.2 miles west of Dunkirk.

#### Areas of Critical State Concern and Rare, Threatened and Endangered Species

Areas of Critical State Concern (ACSC) are specific geographic areas that the Secretary of the Maryland Department of Planning designated for special management to assure their preservation, conservation or utilization. This designation is based on unusual or Maryland significant physical, social, economic or governmental conditions and trends.

Calvert County's large forest and wetland areas support high biodiversity. Maryland's Department of Natural Resources' Natural Heritage Program has identified 20 animal species and 83 plant species in Calvert County that are rare, threatened and endangered species.

There are no ACSC, nor any rare, threatened and endangered species within the Dunkirk Town Center.

<u>(These protected areas are not located in the Town Center. All protected areas are discussed in Chapter 1. There is no IBA in the Dunkirk Town Center.)</u>

#### **Protection Measures**

The following existing regulations, ordinances and processes contain provisions related to the protection of environmentally sensitive areas in Calvert County:

Critical Area regulations Floodplain regulations Soil and erosion control regulations Stormwater Management Ordinance Zoning regulations Subdivision regulations Sediment Control Ordinance Development review process Natural Heritage Areas (Included in Chapter 1, applicable to all Town Centers.)

#### **Hazard Assessment**

Hazard mitigation is a planning process that identifies threats and hazards—both natural and human- caused—in a jurisdiction and develops ways to eliminate or lessen those risks. Calvert County Government maintains an all-hazards

mitigation plan that is updated every five years. The *Calvert County All Hazards Mitigation Plan<sup>5</sup>* was published in 2017 and identified the following natural hazards the for Dunkirk Town Center based on historical damage data for the years 1950 through 2016:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup>-Audubon Missouri, Explore Important Bird Areas Interactive Map https://mo.audubon.org/important-bird-areas-5(accessed June 29, 2021).

<del>Threat</del>	Number of Events	<b>Years</b>	<b>Damages</b>
<mark>Severe</mark> Thunderstorms	<del>16</del>	<del>2006-</del> <del>2016</del>	<del>\$65,000</del>
<del>Tornado</del>	2	<del>1950-</del> <del>2015</del>	<del>\$330,000</del>
Hail	+	<del>2006-</del> <del>2016</del>	<del>\$0</del>

Other hazards that impact Dunkirk Town Center but do not have quantified damages include extreme heat and winter storms. Threats with the highest probability include severe thunderstorms, extreme heat and winter storms. In addition to the hazard mitigation plan, a flood mitigation plan is maintained to address the threat of flooding throughout Calvert County. In Dunkirk, the greatest threat of flooding is associated with Hall Creek. Both the hazard mitigation plan and the flood mitigation plan identify action items to reduce risk and promote resiliency. Although there are action items in these plans to address threats of flooding county- wide, there are no mitigation actions specific to Dunkirk Town Center at this time. (Updated. See below.)

A comprehensive risk assessment was conducted for Dunkirk Town Center based on the threats and hazards identified in the <u>Calvert County 2023 All-Hazard Mitigation Plan</u>. The risk assessment evaluated 24 natural and human-caused threats and hazards for the Town Center and was a collaborative effort that included representatives from the Departments of Public Safety, Planning & Zoning, Public Works, and Communications & Media Relations. Other represented entities included Calvert Soil Conservation, Calvert County Sheriff's Office, and the Calvert County Health Department. Based upon the assessment, four high-risk threats and hazards were identified for Dunkirk: motor vehicle crashes, utility interruptions, tornadoes and windstorms, and radon exposure.

The highest-ranking hazard in Dunkirk is motor vehicle crashes, including crashes involving bicycles and pedestrians. According to data from the Maryland State Police, there have been 1,227 motor vehicle crashes in Calvert County for the years since 2024. Of these, 17 crashes have resulted in fatalities. None of the crashes in Dunkirk have resulted in fatalities; however, several other crashes that resulted in injuries and/or property damage have been documented along MD 4 through the Town Center and at the intersection of Ward Road. Additional concerns related to motor vehicle crashes and overall transportation safety in the Town Center include access to bike lanes, sidewalks, and marked crosswalks on both state and local roads. As the Town Center continues to develop and motor vehicle, bicycle, and pedestrian traffic increases, transportation safety will remain a top priority.

Utility interruptions are the hazard with the second highest risk ranking and include interruptions to water, sewer, and electricity. As an economically focused Town Center, Dunkirk Town Center is more vulnerable to outages that disrupt the delivery of goods and services of businesses. Additionally, current limitations of existing water and sewer infrastructure prevent the establishment of businesses that require high water-usage and are of significant concern for long-range planning. Lastly, in addition to disrupting businesses, power outages that affect traffic lights increase the risk of motor vehicles crashes.

Tornadoes and windstorms are the hazard with the third highest level of associated risk in Dunkirk. Both windstorms and tornadoes bring damaging winds that threaten community lifelines such as shelter, transportation, and utilities. Tornadoes are relatively infrequent; however, the damage caused by a tornado can severely impact critical infrastructure and public safety. Historically, two (2) tornadoes were observed in Dunkirk, resulting in damage totaling approximately \$330,000. In contrast, windstorms are a much more common occurrence and are often the result of severe summer thunderstorms, although the damage is usually minor. Observed damage may include downed trees and power lines, damage to building fascia, and damage or loss of small outdoor resources such as road signs or furniture.

The fourth and final high-risk hazard is radon exposure. Radon is a tasteless, odorless, and naturally occurring radioactive gas produced by the natural decay of uranium in the soil and rocks beneath the ground. This gas can then seep into homes and buildings through cracks and openings in the foundation. Radon exposure is a slowonset hazard but is widespread and is a significant environmental cause of lung cancer. According to the Maryland Department of Health, Environmental Health Bureau, the average radon level in Dunkirk is 7.8 picocuries per liter (pCi/L) and the lung cancer risk due to radon exposure is 2.3 - 4.5%. Children receive higher estimated radiation doses from radon compared to adults due to differences in lung shape and size as well as respiration rates. However, because Dunkirk Town Center has very few residential structures, this reduces the risk associated with long-term exposure.

Other hazards that were not classified as high risk but still of concern for Dunkirk include winter storms, hurricanes and tropical storms, dam failure, and flooding. Flooding is primarily a concern in regard to Hall Creek due to the potential for waters to overtop MD 4 south of the Town Center. Flooding and subsequent closure of MD 4 limits travel into or out of the Town Center. Additionally, failure of the Calvert Gateway Dam has the potential to substantially damage Ward Road. Although the dam is not classified as high-hazard, failure would result in major transportation disruptions until alternate routes were made available.

#### **Floodplain Management**

Threat/Hazard	<b>Risk Factor</b>
Motor Vehicle Crashes	3.4
Utility Interruptions	3.3
Tornadoes and Windstorms	3.2
Radon Exposure	3.1
Winter Storms	2.8
Hurricanes and Tropical Storms	2.6
Dam Failure	2.5
Emergency Services Shortages	2.5
Extreme Temperatures	2.5
Flooding, Flash Flooding, and Nuisance Flooding	2.5
Pandemic, Epidemic, Endemic, and Infectious Disease	2.5
Terrorism and Cyberterrorism	2.5
Hail	2.4
Hazardous Materials (Fixed Facility and Transportation)	2.3
Drought	2.2
Invasive Species	2.2
Opioids & Overdoses	2.1
Earthquake	1.9
Nuclear Incidents	1.2
Civil Disturbance	I
Coastal Erosion	I
Landslide	I
Subsidence and Sinkhole	1
Wildfire	I

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has identified Special Flood Hazard Areas within Calvert County. Special Flood Hazard Areas experience periodic inundation that can cause property damage, health and safety hazards, disrupt commerce and governmental services, necessitate publicly funded flood protection and impair the tax base. Floodplains are defined by the Federal Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM). Where FIRM map boundaries and elevations disagree, elevations prevail. FIRM maps are available from the Department of Planning & Zoning and an interactive Flood Hazard Map is available atwww.calvertcountymd.gov/Maps.

There is no flood zone within Dunkirk Town Center. FEMA Flood Zone AE is within the one-mile buffer. (There are no Special Flood Hazard Areas in the Town Center. All protected areas are discussed in Chapter I.)

## **Goals and Objectives**

See Appendix A for goals and objectives.

### Goal I: Preserve, protect, and conserve water resources in and near the Dunkirk Town Center. Objective I: Protect perennial streams and their buffers

5.1.1.1 Identify pollution sources and take remedial measures. [P&Z, MDE, DNR]

5.1.1.2 Preserve and restore plantings to reduce stormwater runoff. [P&Z, DNR]

#### Goal 2: Preserve, protect, and conserve flora resources in and near the Dunkirk Town Center.

Objective I: Use plantings to slow runoff, improve air quality, reduce the heat island effect, and encourage walkability.

5.2.1.1 Develop a tree-planting plan for the Dunkirk Town Center. [P&R, P&Z]

- 5.2.1.2 Develop a greenway map for the Dunkirk area. [P&R, P&Z]
- 5.2.1.3 Work with private owners, land trusts and state agencies to preserve land in the identified greenway areas through easements or acquisition. [P&R, P&Z]

Goal 3: Incorporate environmentally sustainable development into Dunkirk Town

# Center's policies.

#### **Objective I: Use green infrastructure when developing the Dunkirk Town Center.**

- 5.3.1.1 Enhance environmentally sustainable infrastructure using conservation landscape techniques within the Dunkirk Town Center. [P&Z, EC]
- 5.3.1.2 Analyze current tensions between environmental challenges and the Dunkirk Town Center's current infrastructure. Consider solutions including green infrastructure and natural solutions for stormwater management. [P&Z, EC]

(Duplicative. Goals and objectives are compiled in Appendix A for consolidation and streamlining purposes.)

# Heritage

#### **Calvert County Comprehensive Plan Visions**

We are steward of our cultural heritage.

We are building a strong local economy based on renewable resources, agriculture, seafood, high technology, retirement, recreation, tourism.

#### **Calvert County Comprehensive Goals**

Goal 1: Identify, protect, and interpret the buildings, places, and archeology sites that signify the heritage of the community.

Goal 2: Document and conserve Calvert County ways of life, the memory of people.

Goal 3: Develop heritage resource as a cultural capital to connect the past to the future.

#### **Background**

People have lived in Calvert County for thousands of years. All the activities that people have pursued to make a life here—hunting in the woods, trapping in the marshes, cultivating the land, fishing the waters—have left an imprint on the environment. These ways of life were shaped by the setting. The heritage of Calvert County is completely bound to its land and water. Farms and communities developed in coherent relationship to the local resources on which they depended.

Archaeological remains tell of the earliest inhabitants, Native Americans, who trapped, fished, hunted and harvested here for more than 10,000 years before people from other continents settled in Southern Maryland. Calvert County was established in 1654, 20 years after the Maryland colony was founded.

Heritage cannot be abstracted from its physical setting. The long presence of people in Calvert County has shaped the land to be the way it looks. This is no less true in Dunkirk than it is in the rest of the county. Identification of resources that communities' value is the starting point of any preservation plan. Providing protection for them, incentives for preservation, and funding for mitigation requires a thoughtful collaboration of citizens and government agencies. This chapter discusses some of the preservation challenges in Dunkirk and offers strategies to address them.

As detailed below, this plan supports achievement of these goals by identifying heritage resources and advancing strategies for protecting them while encouraging their use as appropriate. The county's Historic Preservation Program, Historic Preservation Property Tax Credit and public education and outreach are the primary tools for achieving this plan. This section concludes with identifying processes and stakeholders who have an interest in the heritage chapter of this plan.

#### **Historic District Commission**

The Board of Calvert County Commissioners (BOCC) first adopted a Historic District ordinance in 1974, and established the Historic District Commission (HDC) deriving its authority from State enabling legislation. Since 1974, the BOCC, on recommendation of the HDC, has designated over 90 individual properties as Historic Districts. One of those properties, Smithville Methodist Church, is in the Dunkirk Town Center. The ordinance has been amended to include archaeology on those properties and is now Chapter 57 of the Calvert County Code. Designation as a Historic District helps to promote the stewardship and ensure the preservation of historic properties while not freezing them in time. The HDC is a volunteer citizen board of seven persons appointed by the BOCC for terms of three years. The commission reviews proposed work and alterations to designated properties and makes recommendations to the BOCC for new designations and for the approval of tax credits for approved work. Studies done elsewhere in Maryland and nationwide have demonstrated that designated properties tend to hold their value better than others, and the funds a property-owner expends to restore and maintain them is multiplied by a factor of six in the local economy.

#### **Calvert County Heritage Committee**

Created by BOCC Resolution 15-98, the purpose of the Calvert County Heritage Committee is to "promote programs and activities concerning the historical and cultural heritage of Calvert County." Pursuant to the Calvert County Comprehensive Plan, the Committee, along with other stakeholders is tasked with the objective of "Support[ing] efforts to interpret and celebrate local heritage at historic sites, in the public schools and at special events in the community, and make information available to assist in those endeavors." Consistent with these objectives, the Heritage Committee is dedicated to promoting Dunkirk's heritage in all its forms.

#### **Development Review**

Implementing actions specified in the Calvert County Comprehensive Plan, the Department of Planning & Zoning ensures that new development projects are reviewed for potential impact on cultural resources which include historic buildings and archaeological sites. The county has two cultural resources professionals on staff.

Calvert County cultural resources locations have been mapped by the Maryland Historical Trust and county staff and appear as layers in the county permit tracking system, enabling efficient identification of proposed developments that include known historic buildings and archaeological sites. If a multifamily construction project is proposed that will, or is likely to, negatively affect an archaeological site, an archaeological investigation may also be required.

Since 1993, demolitions of buildings more than 50 years old as well as demolition on a property that has mapped cultural resources on it are reviewed by a cultural resources planner. In some instances, photo-documentation is required and the photographs become a part of the permanent record.

#### **Challenges/Key Issues**

#### **Cultural Resources Are Assets**

To be effective stewards of our heritage, we must educate our citizens about the nature and value of our historic and natural resources. Heritage resources can be thought of as "cultural capital."

They can be developed as focal points for businesses and for tourism promotion with a double benefit: the resources are conserved along with local identity, and they help the community generate needed income. Celebrating heritage is also an obvious means to develop regional heritage and tourism programs that will enrich Southern Maryland as a whole.

Heritage can be an organizing principle for sustainability and can integrate well with other initiatives and plans such as recreation, economic development, transportation and environmental plans.

The assets that can convey heritage in Calvert County and Dunkirk must be identified from within the community itself. The objective is to build community and deepen the sense of place to make the experience of life in Dunkirk distinctive. The Town Center has historic resources that are still in use or could be redeveloped. Some of the existing resources, or assets, are listed below.

(Included in Chapter I, applicable to all Town Centers.)

#### **Key Issues**

Dunkirk has a rich history as a rural community known for historic Smithville. How can this Master Plan encourage the preservation and recordation of historic and archeological assets and encourage new construction that records these resources and is compatible with but distinguishable from Historic Smithville?

#### **Cultural Resource Assets**

There are 10 historic sites and structures, and no archeological sites listed on the Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties in the Town Center. The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP) is a statewide listing of historic sites and structures and is not regulatory. However, of this number, only four are extant: Smithville Methodist Church, Smithville Parsonage, the Smithville Market, and the Smithville Meeting Hall. Additionally, although Shiloh Church has been demolished, its cemetery remains in a grassy area between Dunkirk Market Place Shopping Center and MD 4. The Maryland Archeological Site Survey lists no previously recorded archaeological sites within the current Dunkirk Town Center boundaries. Dunkirk contains no National Register of Historic Places-listed properties; no farmsteads occur within Town Center boundaries. The historic sites and structures represent irreplaceable heritage resources. Accordingly, this plan seeks to protect these resources. See Chapter 1 for a discussion on the county's historical and cultural assets and the commissions that advise staff on their management.

#### **Smithville Methodist Church**

The Smithville Methodist Church is one of the oldest Methodist churches in Southern Maryland. Built in 1843, a belfry was added to the two and one-half story building in the late-twentieth century. The Calvert County Board of County Commissioners designated the church property Calvert County Historic District in October 1976 through Resolution 35-76. This designation assures preservation of the historic appearance of the church while allowing for necessary upkeep and interior upgrades.

#### **Smithville Parsonage**

In 1844, the Methodist Church split over the issue of slavery in the United States. The following year, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South splintered from the main church institution over the issue of racial enslavement. The Parsonage was constructed circa 1890 and served as the rectory for this congregation until 1922. When the building was inventoried for inclusion in the Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties in 2004, it was being used as a florist shop. Since then, it has been used for personal services. The Parsonage is recorded in the MIHP as CT-86. While not currently a designated Calvert County Historic District, it may be eligible to be designated. As an MIHP-listed property, direct impacts from proposed site development would be reviewed per the county's zoning regulations.

#### **Smithville Market**

Recorded in land records as the Smithville Market, the property was rumored to have been a slave market during the Antebellum Period. No evidence remains from this period. However, it contains a circa 1870 Victorian house built for Dr. Thomas M. Chaney with the main block used as a residence and an ell with office space. The property is recorded in

the MIHP as CT-87. Accordingly, direct impacts from proposed site development would be reviewed per the county's zoning regulations. While not a county designated Historic District, it may be eligible to be designated.

#### **Smithville Meeting Hall**

Built around 1921 for the Junior Order of United American Mechanics, the Smithville Meeting Hall operated as a general store and post office into the 1970s. Chimney removal, alteration of the entrance, an addition and the use of vinyl siding and asphalt single rooming have drastically altered the appearance of the Smithville Meeting Hall. The building nonetheless retains its American foursquare design and window arrangement. Recorded in the MIHP as CT-82 any direct impacts proposed by site development would be reviewed per the county's zoning regulations.

Historically known as Smithville, little evidence of this past remains within the Dunkirk Town Center boundaries. To preserve what exists, this plan sets out two specific objectives:

- Retain the Smithville Methodist Church in preservation as a Calvert County Historic District. This resource is the oldest historic building in Dunkirk and serves as a focal point for the present community.
- Encourage owners of historic structures in the Dunkirk Town Center to place the properties in preservation. Designated Calvert County Historic Districts are eligible for a historic preservation property tax credit equal to 25% of preapproved maintenance and/or improvements.

This Master Plan recommends continued conservation of the Smithville Methodist Church through the advisement of the Historic District Commission and the Heritage Committee, and increased outreach to historic property owners on incentives available for designated Historic Districts. It also recommends encouraging multi-media outreach of historic sites/points of interest in the Dunkirk Town Center and vicinity to the public. A potential opportunity exists with the recommendation to redevelop the Town Center's gateway by including signage that highlights historic Smithville and the Dunkirk area's heritage.

#### **Previously Unrecorded Archaeological Resources**

While most of the Dunkirk Town Center has been developed, the potential remains for intact archaeological deposits. If these deposits exist, they could contain significant information about those who preceded us.

#### **Resources Outside the Town Center**

Numerous historic architectural and archaeological resources occur proximal to the Dunkirk Town Center but outside its boundaries. These include Native American sites dating as early as 10,000 years ago through to the period of contact with arriving Europeans, Colonial Period through early-twentieth century residences and historic agricultural structures. Preserving these resources, in particular those that reflect Calvert County's agricultural tradition, is essential to retaining the rural character of the lands outside the Town Center enjoyed by residents and visitors alike.

There are two properties designated as Calvert County Historic Districts that are either adjacent to the current Town Center boundary or will be when the Town Center boundary is expanded. Both are privately-owned and not accessible to the public. Additionally, there are two historic sites along the Patuxent River.

• Red Hall (CT-4) – Red Hall is located to the east of the Town Center, on the northside of Ward Road. Red Hall is distinctive because it is reported to be one of the earliest gambrel-roofed buildings in Southern Maryland with elements possibly dating to the late 1600s. Red Hall was disassembled and reassembled with additions in the mid-twentieth century when owned by Perry B. Van Vleck, a builder and preservationist. Mr. Van Vleck acquired numerous neglected historic houses and relocated them to Calvert County, primarily in the Lower Marlboro area.

For a short period of time, the Christ at the Sea Russian Orthodox chapel, was located at Red Hall. Built in 1940 by Russian immigrant Natalie Scheffer, the chapel was moved from Cove Point to Red Hall and eventually to Herrington Harbor – North Marina where it is currently being restored.

- Whitehall (CT-84) White Hall is located to the north of the Town Center. The architecture of White Hall fuses Federal, Itanlianate and Greek Revival-style elements. The main house was constructed around 1858 by Thomas W.B. Smith after a fire consumed an earlier dwelling. The property contains several secondary structures including a smokehouse, barns, and the Sunderland Polling House (CT-192). According to the Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties documentation for White Hall, Mary Eisenman, owner of White Hall at the time, had the Sunderland Polling House relocated to White Hall in 1985.
- Patuxent River Mining Sites (CT-79) and Ferry Landing (CT-1190) These historic mining sites, located along the Patuxent River, are located within or adjacent to land owned by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources.

Information for these and other properties on the MIHP is available online from the Maryland Historical Trust via Medusa, Maryland's Cultural Resource Information System: <u>https://mht.maryland.gov/secure/medusa/</u>.

## Maryland Transit Authority Archeological Sites

Prior to development of the MTA's Dunkirk Park and Ride facility north of the current Town Center boundaries, MTA contracted a Phase I archaeological identification survey. Because the proposed development utilized federal funds, the project triggered the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) which requires federal agencies to consider potential impacts to significant archaeological resources. The survey identified two Native American archaeological sites. Phase II evaluation-level investigations determined both sites were significant due to their ability to yield important information about Native American lifeways. In accordance with the NHPA, the Federal Transit Administration, the MTA and the Maryland Historical Trust entered into a memorandum of agreement to conduct Phase III data recovery of the sites.

The combined archaeological investigations revealed Native American use of the area beginning approximately 9,500 years ago and continuing intermittently as late as the arrival of European colonists. These findings are important because they trace aboriginal subsistence strategies from early hunter-gatherers through development of horticulture, and more extensive use of agriculture to meet dietary needs. Archaeologists note significant social, economic, demographic, and political changes that result from this transition. Agriculture increased food availability but mandated greater sedentism. These two forces resulted in drastic population increases and greater social complexity. More information about the MTA's Dunkirk Park and Ride archaeological investigation may be found in the online brochure.

Despite considerable development within the Town Center, there is potential for discovering intact archaeological resources exists. If present and identified prior to disturbance, these areas could be preserved as "pockets of preservation." Future development must consider potential disturbance of archaeological deposits. Specifically, this Master Plan sets as objectives policies intended to:

- Assess locations of archaeological potential within areas of proposed development, and
- Record previously unknown archaeological resources exposed during construction.

This Master Plan recommends conducting professional review of proposed subdivision and site development plans for potential of previously unrecorded archaeological resources, and review of building permit applications to monitor ground disturbing activities and record historic and archaeological resources prior to loss during construction. See Chapter I for existing policies and development review requirements for historic and archeeological assets.

# **Goals and Objectives**

See Appendix A for goals and objectives.

## Goal I: Enhance, while preserving, a walkable and vibrant business district and center of community life. Objective I: Preserve and enhance historic resources and architecture that uniquely characterize Dunkirk.

- 6.1.1.1 Maintain the relationship between Smithville Methodist Church and the Historic District Commission. [P&Z, HDC]
- 6.1.1.2 Increase outreach to historic property owners to inform them of the incentives available for designated Historic Districts. [P&Z, ED, CMR]

#### Goal 2: Identify and Record Previously Unrecorded Archaeological Resources.

#### **Objective 1: Identify and record previously unrecorded archaeological resources.**

- 6.2.1.1. Conduct professional review of proposed subdivision and site development plans for potential for previously unrecorded archaeological resources. Inform development applicants when the potential to encounter previously unrecorded archaeological resources is high though the review process. When appropriate, include notation on plats and development plans indicating this potential and the requirement to report the discovery of artifacts to Planning and Zoning so that the finds can be recorded prior to disturbance. Enable the Historic Preservation Planner to monitor ground disturbing activities. [P&Z, HDC]
- 6.2.1.2. Review building permit applications, monitor ground disturbing activities, and record historic and archaeological resources prior to loss during construction. [P&Z]

#### Goal 3: Develop heritage resources that preserve and tell the story of Dunkirk and its people.

6.3.1.1. Identify and develop multi-media means of presenting historic sites/points of interest and structures in the Dunkirk Town Center and nearby vicinity to the public. [P&Z, HDC, HC, ED, CMR]

(Duplicative. Goals and objectives are compiled in Appendix A for consolidation and streamlining purposes.)

# Housing

#### **Calvert County Comprehensive Plan Vision**

Our Town Centers are attractive, convenient, and interesting places to live, work, and shop.

#### **Calvert County Comprehensive Plan Goals**

Goal I: Provide for full range of housing types in Town Centers to attract and retain multi-generational communities.

Goal 2: Encourage walkable, mixed use communities in Town Centers.

Goal 3: Provide programs to increase housing affordability.

**Goal 4:** Support aging in place through universal house design housing units and supportive services, especially near health and support services.

(Included in Chapter I, applicable to all Town Centers.)

#### **Affordable Housing**

At a time when housing stock is disproportionate to the housing needs of most Americans, revisioning the town center is critical. The state's Growth Tier mapping that the county adopted, the county's Transferable Development Rights (TDRs) program and environmental vulnerabilities unique to this region are additional factors adding complexity to the planning process. The Calvert County Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 2019 and amended in 2022, outlines a vision for housing in Town Centers that is accessible to sidewalks, public transportation, health/supportive services and retail. There is also great value in developing cultural, arts and recreational amenities that promote a sense of identity for people living and/or working in the Dunkirk Town Center area. The chief objective is to develop a place where people can be successful at every stage of life.

(Integrated into Chapter I, applicable to all Town Centers.)

The Dunkirk Town Center currently does not have an affordable multifamily housing development. One of the reasons for this is that there is no public water and sewer infrastructure. The <u>2020 Maryland</u> Housing Needs Assessment & 10 Year Strategic Plan revealed that Calvert County has a deficit of 550 available rental units for people living at 30% of the Area Median Income (AMI) level, a deficit of five units for those at 50% AMI level and a surplus of 980 units for those at 80% AMI level. Town Center prioritization to address the deficit of rental units at the 30% AMI level is recommended using a variety of housing strategies, not just one approach. Seniors and individuals living with disabilities experience a higher rate of severe cost burden and should be factored into the planning process, perhaps limiting development to senior and disabled housing.

In the 2020 Maryland Housing Needs Assessment & 10 Year Strategic Plan, the <u>census tracts making up</u> the Dunkirk Town Center are considered categories 4 and 5, the first and second highest need categories for homeownership stability and a category 3, indicating moderate renter stability. According to the report, this area is characterized by an older housing stock, the highest renter cost-burden rate (paying more than 50% of their income on housing), and the largest increase in the share of people that are elderly from 2000 to 2017. From 2016 to 2021, Dunkirk is the only Town Center/Census Designated Place with a decline in housing units; homeownership has decreased slightly from 90.5% to 89.9%. Compared to the county's other Town Centers, Dunkirk has the second oldest housing stock, with 1984 as the median year for construction. With the high cost-burden rate and aging population, strategies should include assistance for aging in place, more affordable housing options and programs that can improve the quality and accessibility of housing. Strategies for nearby homeowners should focus on maintaining and improving the physical housing stock, lowering housing costs and the financial well-being of residents, such as homeowner counseling, financial advising and alternative home loan product.

(Updated and revised. See the Affordable Housing section below.)

#### **Key Issues**

How can the Master Plan encourage meeting the need for senior and affordable housing given land and sewer service constraints?

#### **Housing Characteristics**

According to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2023 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates, the majority of the housing stock (887 units) in the Dunkirk Census Designated Place (CDP) is single-family homes. Prior to 1950, there were an estimated 30 houses in the Dunkirk area. Between 1960 and 2000, 88% of the housing stock was constructed. Homeownership was 99% with a median housing price of \$557,700 and a median monthly mortgage payment of \$2,760—making Dunkirk the third most expensive of the Town Centers for homeownership.<sup>11</sup> Market listings in the first quarter of 2025 indicate the average monthly rental rate was \$2,300. See Chapter I for housing data for all Town Centers.

Since 1987, the vision for the Town Center has been to serve as the commercial core for surrounding residential communities, and that vision has largely been realized. Although the Dunkirk Town Center Zoning Ordinance permits senior housing within the Town Center, none currently exists. An assisted living facility is located along Yellow Bank Road north of the Town Center, but there are no other senior or assisted living facilities nearby or in the Town Center. due to lack of public water and sewer infrastructure. (Public water and sewer is not planned for the Dunkirk Town Center in the current Calvert County Water and Sewerage Plan.) See Chapter I on services for the senior population.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates, <u>Table DP04</u> (accessed 5/1/25).

### **Housing Affordability**

Household income greatly affects a homeowner's ability to buy or rent a home, influencing affordability, loan eligibility, and financial stability. According to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, the median household income was \$166,471, the third highest of the Town Centers. To afford a house with a median value of \$557,700, a household would need an annual income of about \$114,430, assuming a 20% down payment, a 30-year mortgage with 6.64<sup>12</sup> interest rate, and expenditures of no more than 30% of the household's annual income. The "30% of the household's income" is a guideline, playing a key role in determining eligibility for federal housing programs.

Based on the <u>U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 2025 Median Area Income Calvert County</u>, which is \$158,600, households earning less than 72% AMI could not afford a home in the Dunkirk CDP. Utilities have historically been included in the rental rate, and renters typically pay utility fees, in addition to rent. This is not the case in the current rental housing market. There are other expenses, such as traveling back and forth to work, and trips to medical appointments and the grocery store that should also be considered.

Consistent with the Calvert County Housing for All Task Force's 2020 Report, this Master Plan recommends developer incentives, planned unit development, education on the definition and availability of affordable and workforce housing, and promoting awareness of opportunities for housing assistance programs. Until public water and However, adequate sewer infrastructure is needed becomes available toin the Town Center and outlying areas to realize, higher density development, like multifamily housing and senior housing. Private investment in sewage treatment systems is encouraged, cannot be accommodated and private wells and septic areas would serve such development. [Public water and sewer is not planned for the Dunkirk Town Center in the current Calvert County Water and Sewerage Plan.] See Chapter I for efforts to promote fair housing and affirmatively further fair housing and administer housing assistance to income eligible individuals and households.

#### **Community Services**

The Dunkirk Town Center is primarily a retail destination with limited community supports. There is a medical office building with an urgent care center and several local provider offices. There are two recreation parks, Dunkirk District Park and Ward Farm Recreation & Nature Park (with numerous amenities), within the future Town Center expansion area or near the Town Center.

**Aging Services:** AARP and the World Health Organization Network of Age-Friendly Communities provide a framework and action plan for developing age friendly communities. Ideally, an age-friendly community includes outdoor spaces, safe and secure walkable streets, affordable and appropriate housing to "age in place," transportation options, supportive community features, access to key services such as health services, and opportunities for residents to participate in community social activities.

The Department of Community Resources, Office on Aging Division is conducting an age-friendly community planning process and has plans to conduct a facilities plan/needs assessment. Currently, Dunkirk residents travel to the North Beach Senior Center or the Calvert Pines Senior Center in Prince Frederick for programs and services.

The population of adults ages 65 and older is expected to grow by 30% from 2020 to 2045. Currently northern Calvert County is emerging as an area experiencing increasing percentages of seniors and individuals with disabilities. Consideration should be given for developing a multi-use community center that houses a library, aging and disability services to improve access to community resources, recreation programming and socialization opportunities for nearby residents.

(Moved to the Government and Community Facilities section.)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis (accessed 4/4/24).

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See Appendix A for goals and objectives.

# Goal I: Continue to support the existing Dunkirk Town Center policy of allowing multi-family attached dwellings only for age-restricted housing.

**Objective I: Locate senior housing near health and other support services.** 

7.1.1.1 Continue to encourage age-restricted (senior or 55+) housing in the Town Center. [CR, P&Z, BOCC]

7.1.1.2 Permit the co-location of multi-family housing in commercial areas to bring uses closer together and allow for redevelopment and infill housing. Encourage affordable housing options in areas surrounding the Town Center. [P&Z]

(Duplicative. Goals and objectives are compiled in Appendix A for consolidation and streamlining purposes.)

# **Economic Vitality**

**Calvert County Comprehensive Plan Vision** 

We are building a strong local economy based on renewable resources, agriculture, seafood, high technology, retirement, recreation and tourism.

Calvert County Comprehensive Plan Economic Vitality Goals

Goal I: Strengthen economic opportunity in Calvert County.

Goal 2: Direct business growth to Town Centers while preserving agricultural land in the Farm and Forest District.

Goal 3: Expand Calvert County's tourism industry.

Goal 4: Strengthen educational opportunities in Calvert County.

Refer to the Calvert County Comprehensive Plan for pertinent objectives and actions.

#### **Background**

Historically, Calvert County's local economy relied on agriculture, fishing, seafood harvesting and recreation., By early in the 20th century, tourism and recreation played an important role in the county's economy when the towns of Chesapeake Beach and North Beach were developed. Over the century, Solomons and areas along the Patuxent River emerged as attractive places for second homes, boating and other water-related activities.

Calvert County is one of the wealthiest counties in Maryland and the wealthiest in Southern Maryland. This wealth is partly due to its proximity to major employment centers in Washington, D.C. and Virginia, and a strong median household income.

Today, Calvert County's economy is based primarily upon its location within the Washington metropolitan area. The county's economy is stable compared to other jurisdictions in Maryland and the nation because of several factors, including a strong local business climate, job market stability,

Calvert is the wealthiest county in Southern Maryland and one of the wealthiest counties in Maryland, in part because of the proximity to federal agency and contracting jobs. Although residents of Calvert County earn higher-than-average wages compared to other Southern Maryland counties and the state of Maryland, many of the jobs responsible for these higher wages are situated in surrounding counties. The county aims to continue to strengthen business growth by directing development to town centers, like Dunkirk, while preserving agricultural land and the county's rural character. Calvert County Comprehensive Plan Sustainability Approach

The county strives to meet the needs of current generations without overburdening future generations. It aims to balance the provision of commercial services and employment while maintaining a high quality of life. Sustainable economic development is necessary to ensure the long term viability of the community. A reasonable rate of diversified economic growth is encouraged to provide jobs for residents, increase incomes and expand the tax base. (Moved to Chapter I, applicable to all Town Centers.)
#### **Key Issues**

Adequate public water and wastewater systems will promote economic opportunities in the Dunkirk Town Center. How can the Dunkirk Town Center continue to serve the Dunkirk region as a retail and employment hub given land and sewer infrastructure constraints and no plans to provide public water and sewer infrastructure in the Town Center?

#### **Economic Trends**

Historically, the Dunkirk Town Center's local economy relied on agriculture, fishing, seafood harvesting, and recreation. Today, it has emerged as a favored spot for residents of Calvert County and its adjacent regions, serving as the commercial hub. Residential and commercial areas are geographically separated from each other, maintaining a lower population density while adhering to the conventional suburban framework of segregating land usage. Its strategic positioning along MD 4 renders it readily accessible from various parts of Calvert County and beyond. Given its location at the entrance to Calvert County, Dunkirk serves as a prominent landmark, functioning as a gateway that caters to the requirements of the community without transforming into a high-density region. Overall, the Dunkirk Town Center remains a vibrant and thriving asset to the community that offers a range of amenities and services to its residents and visitors.

#### **Economic Opportunities**

Dunkirk has been experiencing steady growth in population over recent years. This can be attributed to its strategic location, which makes it an attractive place to live for those who work in the Washington metropolitan area. Dunkirk is situated near major highways, making it easy for residents to commute to work. Additionally, the rise of remote and hybrid work resulting from the pandemic has significantly impacted population trends, leading to an increased interest in suburban and rural areas where people can enjoy a quieter lifestyle with more space. Dunkirk's amenities and recreational facilities are great incentives to stay or relocate to the area.

(Integrated into the Strategic Direction and Land Use sections for streamlining and consolidation purposes.)

Recent projections provided by JobsEQ, an economic data source used by Calvert County Economic Development, showcase the population of Dunkirk is diverse in terms of age groups. There are people of all ages living in Dunkirk, of the majority of the population falls within the 45 to 64 age group. This can be attributed to the fact that Dunkirk is a predominantly residential area, attracting families and retirees. Applied Geographic Solutions reports consumer spending at \$92,990 per household per year within the Dunkirk Town Center itself.

(Outdated. Data no longer available through a paid subscription. Revised and integrated in paragraph below.)

The Dunkirk area has long attracted people who work in major employment centers like Washington, D.C., Arlington, Suitland, Baltimore, and Annapolis, seeking a more affordable place to live in a small-town, rural setting. The MTA Dunkirk Park and Ride, offering daily commuter bus service to most of the centers, adds convenience for local residents. The area's labor force consists of 1,378 individuals, with a 67% participation rate. 88% of Dunkirk's workforce commutes outside of the county, mostly traveling alone by car<sup>13</sup> with an average commute time of 33.6 minutes. The median household income in Dunkirk is \$166,471, the third highest of the Town Centers and among the highest in Southern Maryland. Dunkirk's population is diverse in age, with 28% under 24, 26% between 25 and 44, 33% between 45 and 64, and 13% aged 65 or older.<sup>14</sup> This age distribution reflects Dunkirk's status as a primarily residential area that attracts families.

The Town Center's infrastructure will enable a modest growth pattern over the next decade. To ensure the Town Center's long-term viabilityoffering flexibility for commercial and professional uses is important. This can be

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 5-Year Estimates, <u>Table DP03</u> (accessed on 4/22/25).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 5-Year Estimates, <u>Table S1901</u> (accessed on 4/22/25).

accomplished by providing a variety of retail, food, and entertainment options, as well as professional services and recreational facilities. The goal is to make the Town Center an essential location for residents and an attractive destination for visitors and potential investors, all while supporting local businesses and small specialty stores. This involves an integrated approach to create a healthy and livable community that balances economic prosperity and social equity that offers employment, services, and shopping for those living in the surrounding lower-density rural areas.

#### **Economic Opportunities**

Diversification of the business mix and establishing walkability and placemaking in Town Centers can positively impact the local economy, the quality of life for residents and the overall attractiveness of the town center as a destination. Enhancing local dining and shopping options, creating more walkable and bikeable commercial zones and connections between attractions such as Dunkirk District Park and Ward Farm and Recreational Park can help create a more vibrant and inviting Town Center.

Taking into consideration that the growth of the Town Center is constrained by its reliance on private water and sewer systems, there is potential for the Town Center to provide a unique atmosphere with specialty shopping experiences. This approach can stimulate small business development and support local entrepreneurs, resulting in positive impacts throughout the community.

(Integrated into the paragraph below.)

Despite being the second smallest Town Center in terms of area, it encompasses a diverse array of retail outlets, restaurants, medical facilities, and other commercial establishments anchored by multiple prominent grocery chains. The Town Center's transportation and sewage infrastructure, along with limited vacant land, will support modest growth over the future decades. Its long-term viability depends on offering diverse retail, dining, entertainment, professional services, and recreational facilities. The goal is to make the Town Center a vital hub for residents and an appealing destination for visitors and investors, while supporting local businesses and specialty shops. A vibrant Town Center can be achieved through:

- A floating commercial zone that allows projects with flexible setback and bulk requirements, and reduced parking requirements.
- Appearance code requirements with an emphasis on architectural elements that complement the scale, building placement, and materials of immediate surroundings.
- Redevelopment of the Town Center's gateway.
- Expansion of the Town Center's boundary to include the Dunkirk District Park and MTA's Dunkirk Park and Ride.
- Enhancement of local dining and shopping options, creating more walkable and bikeable commercial zones and connections between attractions such as Dunkirk District Park and Ward Farm Recreation and Nature Park.

This integrated approach contributes to creating a healthy and livable community that balances economic prosperity and social equity that offers employment, services, and shopping for those living in the surrounding lower-density rural areas.

#### **Emerging Industries**

Dunkirk Town Center boasts a significant commercial presence with six shopping centers offering a diverse range of retail, restaurants, medical facilities, and various other establishments. Anchored by multiple prominent grocery chains, Dunkirk Town Center's easily accessible and highly visible location makes it a convenient go-to destination for everyday needs.

Still, the demand from consumers for unique and personalized shopping experiences is leading to a rise in boutique specialty shops that offer niche products or services not commonly found in larger retail chains. (Deleted since this is not occurring in the Town Center.) As the Town Center continues to evolve and adapt to changing consumer preferences,

the availability of personalized shopping experiences and niche products will undoubtedly contribute to its overall attractiveness as a destination for both residents and visitors. With its highly visible and easily accessed location, the Dunkirk Town Center is well-positioned to take advantage of this growing trend in retail and commercial offerings. Small independent retailers have the ability to reach a broader customer base through the expansion of e-commerce and online shopping. With this trend on the rise, the Dunkirk Town Center has the potential to attract more of these specialty shops to meet the growing demand from its consumers. See Chapter 1 for information on services available to small business services.

#### **Recreation and Tourism**

Calvert County is a region that offers abundant natural, cultural, recreational, and historical resources, making it an ideal destination for tourists while contributing to the quality of life for residents. In 2021, the county's thriving tourism industry generated \$76.5 million in labor income, \$5.7 million in sales and use tax and provided 1,622 jobs in Calvert County.

(Moved to Chapter I, applicable to all Town Centers.)

There are several key attractions that residents and visitors can explore including Dunkirk District Park and the nearby Ward Farm Recreation and Nature Park, which offer opportunities to experience unique aesthetics, recreation activities, and scenery. Economic Development's effort to expand vendor options and special activities at the farmers market in Dunkirk District Park present unique opportunities to enhance overall aesthetics and allow visitors to experience local agricultural county offerings. These avenues combined with local dining, shopping opportunities and walkable bikeable zones draw day trippers visiting the county. Investing in further improvements to the aesthetics fosters a stronger sense of community identity and pride among residents and guests, generates foot traffic and increases spending in the surrounding businesses.

#### **Resource Partners**

The Department of Economic Development works with many federal, state and local resource partners to provide a full range of support services and opportunities to the business community. We will continue to rely on our major partners including:

**Small Business Development Center:** Provides proven, expert advice and training to current and aspiring small businesses in Calvert County and Maryland, resulting in successful businesses that create an economic impact and better quality of life in our communities.

**Calvert County Chamber of Commerce:** The chamber is a collective of approximately 400 members and more than 700 representatives collaborating towards fostering a conducive business environment in Calvert County. By providing a platform for networking, the organization empowers its members to establish and nurture valuable connections while providing diverse opportunities.

**Calvert County Minority Business Alliance:** Establishes policies and programs to support not only the business growth of minority businesses in Calvert County, Southern Maryland and the state of Maryland, but all businesses. **College of Southern Maryland Workforce Center:** (formerly known as the CSM Corporate Center): Delivers diverse, top-quality, business-focused workforce programming and training, just-in-time customized workforce development solutions that maximize the potential of any business – small, medium or large. CSM's Workforce Center partners with clients to understand their business strategy and how that impacts workforce needs. CSM then develops client-centric solutions based on their unique challenges and opportunities.

(Moved to Chapter I, applicable to all Town Centers.)

#### **Goals and Objectives**

See Appendix A for goals and objectives.

## **Goal I: Utilize smart growth principles to strengthen economic opportunity and drive business growth in the Dunkirk Town Center.**

#### **Objective I: Encourage development in the Dunkirk Town Center.**

- 9.1.1.1 Maintain an online presence of tools and resources for county businesses and businesses looking to locate in the county. [ED]
- 9.1.1.2 Continue promotion of Dunkirk as an option to site selectors and developers. [ED, CMR]
- 9.1.1.3 Provide an array of business services that encourage qualified projects to relocate and expand their businesses in Dunkirk. [ED, P&Z, DPW]
- 9.1.1.4 Streamline the development review process in <u>the Dunkirk T</u>town <u>Ccenters</u>. Maintain a Fast Track Development Plan process for targeted businesses. [ED, P&Z]
- 9.1.1.5 Support the development of commercial projects that provide walkable, pedestrian-friendly, and well-connected infrastructure to encourage consumers and visitors to spend more time in Dunkirk. [ED, PW, P&Z]
- 9.1.1.6 Encourage collaboration between community members, local businesses, and government officials to identify and address community needs and priorities. [ED, CMR, CR, PS]

#### **Objective 2: Build a sense of community within the Dunkirk Town Center area.**

- 9.1.2.1 Support the creation of opportunities for residents, business owners, and community leaders to connect and communicate regarding Town Center activities through community meetings, social media, and other channels. [ED, CMR, CR, P&Z]
- 9.1.2.2 Expand activities at the farmers market and other events located within the Town Center to bring residents together, promote local businesses, and establish a <u>"sense of place"</u> with a atmosphere in which they want to be. [ED, CR, P&R]
- 9.1.2.3 Increase the visibility and promotion of the unique shops in the Town Center to draw more attention to local businesses, resulting in greater patronage and visibility. [ED, CMR]
- 9.1.2.4 Encourage innovative concepts for alternative entertainment and service centers that can be established in the <u>Dunkirk\_Town Center. [ED, P&Z]</u>

(Duplicative. Goals and objectives are compiled in Appendix A for consolidation and streamlining purposes.)

#### Transportation

#### Calvert County Comprehensive Plan Goals for Transportation

Goal I: Provide a safe and reliable transportation system that complements the overall development of the county and balances use by pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and bus riders.

Goal 2: Maintain MD 2, MD 4, MD 2/4, and MD 260 as the main transportation corridors, providing for safe and efficient travel.

Goal 3: Maintain and improve the arterial and non-arterial road systems to provide for safe and efficient travel.

Goal 4: Improve and expand existing transit services.

Goal 5: Promote transportation alternatives such as buses, carpools, vanpools, bicycling, and walking.

Goal 6: Continue a countywide transportation planning program that is integrated with state and regional planning programs.

(Moved to Chapter I, applicable to all Town Centers.)

#### **Key Issues**

Traffic congestion and the safety, including highway capacity, travel delays, and the lack of alternative transportation methods through the Town Center are significant concerns for many residents of Dunkirk. How can the Master Plan improve the transportation network in a way that is balanced given the minimal amount of undeveloped land?

#### The Transportation Network

Calvert County is a long narrow peninsula bounded by the Patuxent River to the west and the Chesapeake Bay to the east and south. MD 2/4 is the only arterial which runs the full north-south span of the county; at the north end, MD 4 branches to Anne Arundel and Prince George's Counties, respectively.

(Deleted, included in Chapter I, applicable to all Town Centers.)

Through Dunkirk, MD 4 carries between 29,500-32,000 trips on the average weekday (Table 4 – 2017 Annual Average Daily Traffic, CCTP, Page 5). Fewer than 4% of all vehicles make the trip from the southern border of Calvert County through the Dunkirk Town Center. Fewer than 10,000 commuting trips are made into Calvert County each day (CCTP, page 2) with nearly 13.6% coming from Anne Arundel County and 12.8% from Prince George's County (Table 3 — % of Workers Commuting to Calvert County by Jurisdictions, CCTP, Page 4). Much of the traffic traveling in and around the northern portion of the county remains internal traffic from Calvert County residents.

Calvert County's unique geography limits accessibility to and through the county and has historically presented challenges to the creation of a more robust internal transportation network. (Included in Chapter 1, applicable to all Town Centers.)

MD 4 is the primary north-south route for local and commuter traffic. The first Dunkirk Town Center Master Plan called for the construction of West Ward Road, constructed in the early 1990s, connecting to Ferry Landing Road and offering an alternative to MD 4 in the northwestern portion of the Town Center. As development progressed, service roadways were created on the east side of the Town Center. The first improvement constructed was Town Center Boulevard which connected MD 4 behind the Calvert Gateway Shopping Center to Ward Road. Next, Dunkirk Way was constructed on the east side of the Shoppes at Apple Greene at the southernmost point of the Town Center offering an alternative connection from MD 4 to Ward Road. These service roads currently connect several major retail shopping centers to one another without having to access MD 4 on the east side of the Town Center. Several access lanes also connect MD 4 to various buildings along MD 4, including Penwick Lane. Lastly, Plaza Drive connects MD 4 to the Calvert Gateway Shopping Center.

Considerations should be made to extend the existing loop road on the east side of the Town Center. The creation of this extension would give direct access to amenities on the east side of Dunkirk and the collector roads that connect to North Beach and Chesapeake Beach. The county currently owns two undeveloped rights-of-ways at the north and south end of the existing loop road. At the southern end, Shoppes Way would connect Dunkirk Way and Apple Way, but should be limited to local traffic. At the northern end consider extending Gateway Drive to Brickhouse Road to complete the Dunkirk Town Center local travel. The alignment of the northern section will be determined when development occurs.

#### (Integrated into the "Strategies to Address Roadway Circulation and Connectivity" section.)

#### **Traffic Congestion and Safety Concerns**

There are 1,941 individuals in the Dunkirk area's workforce, with more than 85% commuting by car and 2% using public transportation to reach their workplace destinations in Anne Arundel, Prince George's and Baltimore counties, and Washington, D.C. The mean travel time to work is 33.6 minutes.<sup>15</sup> MD 4 carries between 33,895 to 34,572 trips on the average weekday<sup>16</sup> through the Town Center. Driving through the Dunkirk Town Center during AM and PM peak hours

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 5-Year Estimates, Dunkirk, CDP, Selected Economic Characteristics, <u>Table DP04</u> (accessed 4/15/26.), <sup>16</sup> <u>Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Average Daily Traffic (ADDT) Locations</u> Interactive GIS Map, Mt.

Harmony to MD 260 on MD 4 at the Calvert County line in 2022 (accessed 4/16/25).

produces bottlenecks along MD 4. Much of the traffic traveling in and around the northern portion of the county remains internal traffic from Calvert County residents. Both intra-county and peak hour traffic contribute to traffic congestion and safety. Identified safety concerns include the lack of signalized pedestrian crossings at or near the intersection of MD 4/Town Center Boulevard, inadequate access lanes at unsignalized access points onto MD 4 and Ward Road, and dangerous driving behaviors such as driver speeds driving in excess of the Town Center's 45 mile per hour speed limit.

#### Managing Traffic Congestion and Safety

The minimal amount of undeveloped land within the Town Center requires developers to assist in performing future improvements. Additionally, the responsibility to continue to achieve the county's adequate public facilities requirement heavily relies on coordination efforts with the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) and county agencies. The State Highway Administration (SHA) conducted a transportation feasibility study in 2006 including additional dedicated southbound left turn lanes at the two major intersections to improve traffic flow through the Town Center that have been implemented. Some of the study's concepts were not pursued, such as an overpass or an overpass with six lanes.

Currently, Dunkirk Way doesn't connect to Apple Way on the east side of the Town Center, requiring residents in the Apple Green subdivision onto MD 4 to access the Town Center. MTA's Dunkirk Park and Ride doesn't have direct access to MD 4 either. Additionally, Penwick Lane, which connects to MD 4 near the Calvert Gateway Shopping Center, dead-ends and does not link to Town Center Boulevard. The future level of service for Ferry Landing Road and MD 4 should be considered, as access from MD 4 southbound is limited to a left turn, and access to MD 4 is limited to a right turn. Residents of Ferry Landing Woods Road also need a route to Dunkirk District Park that avoids using MD 4. Furthermore, although the speed limit has been reduced from 55 to 45 miles per hours in the Town Center, if warranted, an additional reduction within the Town Center limits may become necessary.

#### Strategies to Address Congestion and Safety Concerns

The areas of congestion are most obvious during the evening peak hours while traveling through the Dunkirk Town Center. Calvert County agencies have partnered with SHA to monitor and plan for growth and the potential increase in highway capacity. An off-corridor circulation system is needed to prevent congestion and dangerous traffic points. The internal circulation system should provide sufficient access and a safe and efficient means of controlling traffic. Consistent with the 2020 Calvert County Transportation Plan, this Master Plan recommends:

- Restricting access from Apple Way to MD 4, allowing right hand turns only.
- Completing Penwick Lane to provide direct access from MD 4 to Town Center Boulevard.
- Placing a crosswalk at the intersection of MD 4/Town Center Boulevard, approved by SHA but unfunded.



In addition, this Master Plan recommends extending the existing loop road on the east side of the Town Center by utilizing two county-owned undeveloped rights-of-ways at the north and south end of the existing loop road. At the southern end, Shoppes Way would connect Dunkirk Way and Apple Way but should be limited to local traffic. At the northern end, extend Gateway Drive to Brickhouse Road to complete the Dunkirk Town Center local travel.

Funding for completion of the east-side loop road, Shoppes Way, and Penwick Lane could be funded through developer contributions. The county would need to rely on SHA to fund improvements at the MD 4/Apple Way intersection and to place the pedestrian crosswalk at the MD 4/Town Center Boulevard intersection. See the Proposed Transportation Map on the following page for proposed improvements.

#### **Public Transportation**

The Dunkirk Route bus provides service throughout the Dunkirk Town Center, helping people get to retail amenities, medical services and jobs. This route performs five daily round trips in the Dunkirk area with limited service to Prince Frederick. A route evaluation was conducted for the 2021 Transportation Development Plan (TDP) which cited a system wide route reconfiguration is proposed in the TDP to reduce headways, create timed transfers and provide hourly service throughout its service hours. The evaluation identified the following issues with the Dunkirk Route: having only two connections into Prince Frederick and the inconvenience of the counter clockwise, one-directional nature of the route. A route reconfiguration is proposed in the TDP to provide service into Prince Frederick on each run while also adding additional service along Dares Beach Road, Wilson Road and Ponds Wood Road. When this route is combined with the North Route. It creates bi-directional service along a majority of the Dunkirk Route. The proposed routing will provide improved intra-county connectivity by serving Prince Frederick on each run as well as expanding the service area. More bus amenities were recommended, which are especially important for the elderly and persons with disabilities. The Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) completed a 408-space park and ride facility at the north end of the Dunkirk Town Center adjacent to the Dunkirk Medical Center and Dunkirk Shopping Center which provides a Metro Commuter Bus connection for three routes.

<u>(Updated and revised below).</u>

There are a number of private transportation providers in Calvert County, but they can be costly. Currently, Calvert County Government provides non-county agency funding for some supplemental transportation. (Included Chapter I, applicable to all Town Centers.)

Consideration should be given for implementing more supplemental transportation programs accessible to Dunkirk that will provide door to door assistance for seniors, especially frail elderly and people with disabilities. (Moved to the third bullet below).

The county's bus service currently operates as a "flag system" on weekdays with limited service on Saturdays. This system provides limited established bus stops, allowing passengers to hail buses anywhere along the bus routes. The Dunkirk Route serves the Town Center and performs five daily round trips in the Dunkirk area with two connections to Prince Frederick that runs counterclockwise and in one-directional, making trips inconvenient for riders. In addition, Dunkirk-area seniors, individuals living with disabilities, and citizens without the use of automobiles rely heavily on-demand paratransit services.

The Maryland Transit Administration completed the 408-space MTA's Dunkirk Park and Ride facility at the north end of the Dunkirk Town Center adjacent to the Dunkirk Medical Center and Dunkirk Shopping Center, which provides a Metro Commuter Bus connection to Washington, D.C., the Federal Center at Suitland, and Alexandria, Virginia. Online resources are available for Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's counties to coordinate work commutes by way of carpools

and vanpools through MTA's <u>Regional Ridesharing Program of Southern Maryland</u>. Both public transit routes and regional ridesharing are also accessible through the <u>Tri-County Council's Regional Transportation Planning Webpage</u>. This Master Plan, consistent with the 2022 Calvert County Transit Development Plan, makes the following recommendations for improving public transit services:

- Provide service into Prince Frederick on each run while also adding additional service along Dares Beach Road, Wilson Road, and Ponds Wood Road to create bi-directional service along a majority of the Dunkirk Route. While the proposed schedule reduces the daily trips from five to four round trips, it would improve intra-county connectivity, enhance efficiency and convenience, and increase access to Prince Frederick and the Calvert Pines Senior Center.
- Expand evening hour services.
- Increase public transportation-based mobility on-demand door-to-door services for individuals that cannot drive, like seniors, especially frail seniors, and people with disabilities.
- Work with MTA to restructure inefficient/lengthy routes to Alexandria, VA to reduce user commute times from Dunkirk.

### Pedestrian and Bicycle Pathways Planning

During the Dunkirk Town Center Master Plan update process, citizens expressed a strong desire to establish a network of pedestrian and bicycle facilities, accessible to riders of all ages and abilities. There is still significant potential to develop safe connections to the existing bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

Travel on foot or by bicycle can be challenging and thus represents a small percentage of all trips in the county. The 2040 Calvert County Comprehensive Plan calls for the creation of safe and attractive bicycle and pedestrian amenities that allow people to travel within the Town Centers without the use of an automobile. Although improvements have been made over the past decade, significant gaps still remain in the sidewalk and bicycle network in the Dunkirk Town Center.

The Calvert County Board of County Commissioners received a grant from the Maryland Department of Transportation's Kim Lamphier Bikeways Network Program in 2019. The grant enabled the county to conduct bikeway feasibility studies for the Prince Frederick and Dunkirk Town Centers. The report was finalized in 2023 and identifies several feasible short- and long-term projects in the Dunkirk Town Center.

(Outdated. Updated and revised below.)

Travel on foot or by bicycle can be extremely difficult and thus represents a tiny percentage of all trips in the Town Center. However, pedestrian and bicycle lanes and sidewalks provide an alternative to traveling by car and also provide for exercise opportunities and recreational activities. Although improvements have been made over the past decade, significant gaps still remain in the sidewalk and bicycle network in the Dunkirk Town Center. Consistent with the Calvert County Comprehensive Plan and the <u>Dunkirk and Prince Frederick Bikeways Feasibility Studies</u>, prepared by Mead & Hunt and funded by the <u>MDOT FY22 Kim Lamphier Bikeways Network Program</u>, this Master Plan recommends:

- Establishing shared-use paths along Dunkirk Way and Town Center Boulevard.
- Upgrading and extending bicycle facilities in the Dunkirk District Park.
- Connecting the Dunkirk District Park to Dunkirk Market Place and other nearby businesses via a pedestrian access gate on the south side of the park to Ferry Landing Road.
- Connecting the Dunkirk District Park to Ward Farm Recreation and Nature Park with a shared-use path.
- Design and construction coordination with SHA regarding a safe pedestrian crossing at the intersection of MD 4//Town Center Boulevard.
- Upgrading bicycle facilities in the Dunkirk District Park.
- Addressing sidewalk gaps along developed parcels on both sides of MD 4 through redevelopment activities or SHA Sidewalk Retrofit Program.

• Constructing a shared-use pathway along the existing Shoppes Way right-of-way to Dunkirk Way if the roadway construction is not currently feasible.

These improvements could be implemented with a combination of developer contributions, county funding, and grants, although public funds will unlikely be available into the foreseeable future due to current budget constraints and economic trends. Additionally, the county would need to work with private property owners to purchase land to create a path that connects the Dunkirk District Park with gated access to Dunkirk Market Place.

#### **Goals and Objectives**

See Appendix A for goals and objectives.

From 1970 through 2000, Calvert County was the fastest or second-fastest growing county in Maryland. Since 2010 the growth rate has slowed considerably. The Maryland Department of Planning now projects that on an annual basis population growth will slow to well less than half of 1 % annually through 2045.1 Moreover, given the county's lowdensity and low-growth development pattern and the distance from major employment centers, all indications are that the predominant mode of transportation in Calvert County will continue to be the personal automobile. However, it is possible that development policies and transportation investments can mitigate the amount of time spent in traffic for residents by keeping their local trips largely off of MD 4, and creating an environment for walking and bicycling that reduces the need for auto use for some trips within Dunkirk. The areas of congestion are most obvious during the evening peak hours while traveling through the Dunkirk Town Center. Calvert County agencies have partnered with MDOT SHA to monitor and plan for growth and the potential increase in highway capacity. The Calvert County Transportation Plan includes a set of recommendations for the Dunkirk Town Center (Page 12): • Dunkirk should meet the commercial and public facilities needs of area residents, rather than be a high density residential area. • Development on MD 4 should have the minimum impact on the service capacity and safety of major access route. • An off-corridor circulation system is needed to prevent congestion and dangerous traffic points. The internal circulation system should provide sufficient access and a safe and efficient means of controlling traffic. • New road locations need to be preplanned for the benefit of the public and potential developers. • The future level of service of Ferry Landing Road and MD 4 should be considered, as it is predicted to deteriorate. Residents of Ferry Landing Woods Road need a way to get to the Dunkirk District Park without going out onto MD 4. • As Dunkirk develops, lowering speed limits within the Town Center limits may become necessary. • Residents of Apple Green need a way to get to the shopping center on the east side of MD 4 without going onto MD 4. This route should not become a short cut for through traffic.

#### Goal I: Improve traffic and mobility in Dunkirk-

#### **Objective I: Extend the existing alternative loop road network on the east side of MD 4.**

- 8.1.1.1 Construct Shoppes Way from Dunkirk Way to Apple Way to allow direct access to amenities for local residents. [BOCC, PW]
- 8.1.1.2 Extend Gateway Drive to Brickhouse Road. [BOCC, PW]
- 8.1.1.3 Provide entry and exit points from the existing park and ride to the future Gateway Drive. [BOCC, PW]-

**Objective 2: Address geometric insufficiencies at intersections of concern.** 

8.1.2.1 Restrict turning movements from Apple Way to right turn only at the MD 4 intersection. [PW, SHA]-

**Goal 2: Implement bicycle, pedestrian, and streetscape improvements to enhance community connectivity and sustainability.** 

The community has shown support for creating an environment for walking and bicycling that reduces the need for vehicular trips within the Dunkirk Town Center. The network should safely and comfortably accommodate people of all ages and abilities to walk or bike to local amenities.

Each component of the network should be evaluated separately to determine the best possible resource at the most reasonable cost. The Dunkirk Town Center should serve as a visual marker, much like a gateway, at the entrance to Calvert County. A positive first impression can be achieved by enhancing the streetscape and pursuing the safe and

complete walkability throughout the Town Center. Electronic Vehicles (EVs) are becoming more prevalent, thus there is a growing need for infrastructure to accommodate them.

## Objective I: Expand bicycle and pedestrian networks to enhance accessibility between nearby residential development and the Dunkirk Town Center.

- 8.2.1.1 Create a bicycle/pedestrian connection between Dunkirk District Park and adjacent retail amenities by way of Dunkirk Market Place. Install a pedestrian/bicycle gate on the south side of Dunkirk District Park at Ferry Landing Road. [P&R, PW, P&Z]-
- 8.2.1.2 Provide an alternative transportation route linking Dunkirk District Park and Ward Farm Recreation and Nature Park. [P&R, PW, P&Z]
- 8.2.1.3 Convert the outer lanes on Town Center Boulevard and Dunkirk Way to a shared-use path. [PW, P&Z]
- 8.2.1.4 Placement of a pedestrian crosswalk at the signalized intersection of MD 4/Town Center Boulevard.

#### **Objective 2: Implement strategic policy changes to advance sustainability.**

- 8.2.1.1. Update county road and development standards to ensure that new roadways fully incorporate safe and buffered bicycle facilities or shared-use paths. [BOCC, PW]-
- 8.2.1.2. Coordinate with SHA to install sidewalks on the east side of MD 4 in front of existing developed properties. Fill key gaps in the pedestrian network along MD 4 by utilizing MDOT SHA Sidewalk Retrofit programs. [PW, P&Z]-
- 8.2.1.3. Require new development in the Dunkirk Town Center to connect their frontage sidewalks to the nearest logical termini. [PW, P&Z]
- 8.2.1.4. Require EV charging stations at new developments and encourage existing commercial entities to provide EV infrastructure. [P&Z, ED]

#### Goal 3: Improve and expand existing transit services.

The Dunkirk Town Center is approximately 22 miles south of Washington, DC on MD 4. Travel to and from the core of the city appears to be remaining steady. Meanwhile, travel from Calvert County to northern Prince George's County, Anne Arundel County, Montgomery County and Northern Virginia were all rising prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. The need to provide a convenient and reliable commuter bus service to nearby metropolitan cities remains a priority. Seniors, individuals living with disabilities and citizens without the use of automobiles rely heavily on Calvert County's Public Transportation System. Currently, this system operates as a "flag system". Meaning that there are few established bus stops and that buses can be hailed anywhere along the route by prospective passengers. Bus service operates on weekdays with limited service on Saturdays. In addition to fixed route services, paratransit or otherwise, the county operates on demand paratransit services.

#### **Objective I: Increase the frequency of local transit service between town centers, including employment areas and health centers.**

- 8.3.1.1 Identify the level of demand among local employers and workers for which transit buses may be used to transport employees to and from workplaces. Develop and implement routes likely to encourage transit access for employees, patients, and students throughout the county. [CR, ED]
- 8.3.1.2 Evaluate existing routes serving the Dunkirk Town Center. Establish additional routes as necessary to ensure that all employment centers are adequately served. [CR, ED]
- 8.3.1.3 Consider extending transit hours to serve employees within the Dunkirk Town Center and adjacent areas. [BOCC, CR]

#### **Objective 2: Expand and improve demand-responsive transit services.**

- 8.3.2.1. Increase availability of demand-response public transportation. [BOCC, CR]
- 8.3.2.2. Work closely with MTA to establish a local subscription-based van pool service to areas most often traveled by commuters. [BOCC, CR]
- 8.3.2.3. Consider requesting MTA to restructure inefficient/lengthy routes to connect from Dunkirk to Alexandria, Virginia, and the Pentagon. [BOCC, CR]
- 8.3.2.4. Consider re-establishing an on-demand or subscription-based transit program that utilizes volunteers for older individuals unable to drive. [BOCC, CR]

8.3.2.5. Investigate public transportation-based mobility on-demand services for individuals unable to drive. [BOCC, CR]-

(Duplicative. Goals and objectives are compiled in Appendix A for consolidation and streamlining purposes.)

#### Water Resources

#### **Calvert County Comprehensive Plan Vision**

We waste less, consume fewer natural resources and properly dispose of waste.

**Calvert County Comprehensive Plan Goals** 

Goal I: Ensure adequate high-quality drinking water to support projected population growth.

**Goal 2:** Ensure sufficient wastewater treatment capacity to support development in town centers served by public sewer systems.

**Goal 3:** Protect public health and water quality.

**Goal 4:** Install or enhance storm water management systems to reduce pollution in county streams, Patuxent River, and Chesapeake Bay.

Refer to the Calvert County Comprehensive Plan for pertinent objectives and actions.

(Moved to Chapter I, applicable to all Town Centers.)

#### **Background**

Overview The Land Use policies contained in the Calvert County Comprehensive Plan direct the majority of the county's residential and commercial growth into the Town Centers and minimize future residential development in the Farm and Forest District (FFD). Given these policies, the county must ensure that its water supply and wastewater systems in Town Centers meet current and future needs without jeopardizing the health of local waters, the Patuxent River and the Chesapeake Bay. The Calvert County Comprehensive Water & Sewerage Plan, 2014 Update, I which was adopted in 2019, provides a framework for the county's water supply and sewerage disposal. The State of Maryland requires each county to have a county plan or a plan with adjoining counties. The plan is required to cover the next 10-year period following adoption by the county governing body. Currently, the Department of Public Works, Water and Sewerage Division in the process of updating the average flow capacity for the water and sewerage systems throughout Calvert County, which will be published in the upcoming revision of the Comprehensive Water & Sewerage Plan.

#### Calvert County Sustainability Approach

Calvert County Comprehensive Plan Sustainability Approach The water resources chapter promotes the safe disposal of wastewater, relative to public health, and in environmentally sound ways so that groundwater and surface water quality remain viable for fisheries and other aquatic resources, and are useful to humans in terms of consumption, irrigation and recreation. Pollutants must be maintained at levels below which they might significantly impact human and ecological health and below the assimilative capacity of receiving waters.

#### Water Quality Regulations

The State of Maryland signed the 2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement and has committed to reduce its nitrogen and phosphorus contributions to the Bay through the Total Maximum Daily Load program. To comply, Maryland has set nutrient caps for Calvert County wastewater treatment plants (WTTPs). The Bay Restoration Fund provides funding to install enhanced nutrient removal (ENR) technology at WWTPs to achieve an effluent quality limit of 3.0 mg/l total nitrogen (TN) and 0.3 mg/l total phosphorus (TP).

#### **Drinking Water Assessment**

#### Water Supply-

The drinking water for the Dunkirk Town Center and surrounding area is supplied by ground water aquifers. These aquifers are part of the Coastal Region and have the benefit of being insulated from contamination by layers of low-permeability clay that greatly reduces the chances that surface contaminants will reach the aquifers. Calvert County's

groundwater is actively monitored through the Calvert County Groundwater-Level Monitoring Network, administered jointly by the county Department of Public Works, Water and Sewer Division, the Maryland Geological Survey and the U.S. Geological Survey<sup>50</sup>. This network of wells is monitored on a real-time, monthly or twice-yearly basis. (Included in Chapter I, applicable to all Town Centers)

#### **Key Issues**

Adequate public water and wastewater systems helps protect the integrity of the Town Center's water supply aquifers and surface waters. How can the Dunkirk Town Center Master Plan implement the Comprehensive Plan's goal of protecting public health and water quality when these services are managed by private property owners?

Rapidly changing climate patterns could have myriad effects, ranging from torrential rainfall that may overwhelm existing drainage and damage stormwater management infrastructure; excessive heat and excessive cold that may cause roadways to buckle and crack with more regularity; and rising home heating and cooling costs due to rapid temperature fluctuations. How can this Master Plan strategize for climate change impacts?

#### **Drinking Water Demand and Capacity**

The Dunkirk Town Center does not have any public water systems. Water is provided to the Town Center through a series of private wells and privately run water systems. The Calvert County Water & Sewer Department does not currently operate or maintain any of these water systems within the Town Center or to surrounding residential areas. Given that the Dunkirk Town Center does not have a public water system and all wells that provide water to the Town Center are private, there is no current data which accurately represents the total amount of water being withdrawn from the groundwater aquifers that serve the area. That said, there are two aquifers of primary significance that serve this area (Aquia and Magothy aquifers) and all indications from the Groundwater-Level Monitoring Network data suggest there is sufficient groundwater available for many decades to come.

#### **Drinking Water Quality**

Much of the drinking water provided to the Dunkirk Town Center through private wells undergo regular testing in compliance with Maryland Department of the Environment requirements.<sup>17</sup> The Dunkirk Town Center water supply is not susceptible to contaminants originating at the land surface due to the protected nature of confined aquifers.

#### Wastewater Assessment

Septic systems, particularly those systems that are failing, significantly threaten the county's drinking water and the health of the county streams, Patuxent River, and Chesapeake Bay. Directing growth into the town centers where households and businesses will be connected to public sewer systems is typically an important step in minimizing the growth of septic system usage in the county and reducing the associated pollutants. (Included in Chapter I, applicable to all Town Centers.)

#### Wastewater Treatment Capacity and Demand

The Dunkirk Town Center is not served by a public sewerage. Calvert County does not own, operate, or maintain any wastewater treatment plants within Dunkirk Town Center, nor has the county invested in or has planned for any public sewerage systems to serve the Dunkirk Town Center. There are two larger private wastewater systems serving the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> If a private well falls within the definition of a Transient or Non-transient Non-Community water supply (TNC or NTNC), there are regular testing and monitoring requirements. Many of the private wells in the Dunkirk Town Center qualify as either TNC or NTNC water supplies and, therefore, must be regularly tested. When it comes to all other private wells that do not qualify as either TNC or NTNC or NTNC, there is no requirement for regular testing or monitoring in Maryland.

Town Center (and many smaller systems), several of which have experienced significant problems including direct discharge of wastewater effluent onto the ground's surface over the past several years. Given the natural and inevitable deterioration of land's ability to sufficiently treat wastewater, even if there is no further expansion of businesses or housing, the frequency and severity of sewage onto the ground and into area creeks and streams will worsen in the coming years.

The Dunkirk Town Center is served by many smaller septic systems and two larger private wastewater disposal systems. The exact capacity of all the various individual systems is not known; however, the maximum capacities of the two larger private systems is less than 50,000 gallons per day combined. The Calvert County Department of Public Works, Division of Water & Sewer does not currently own, operate, or maintain any wastewater treatment facilities within the Dunkirk Town Center.

#### Effluent Impact to Water Resources

Effluent from WWTPs and septic tanks is a major source of contamination for waterways and presents threats to drinking water quality. Calvert County has focused on making improvements to its WWTPs to meet its Total Maximum Daily Load target loads for nitrogen and phosphorus. (Included in Chapter I, applicable to all Town Centers.)

There is currently, and there has been in the past, significant discharge of wastewater onto the ground's surface and eventually into the waterways in the Dunkirk area from improperly operated private systems. If this continues to be the status quo, the quality of our surface waterways will substantially degrade, the health of the citizens of Dunkirk may be threatened by disease carried by wastewater effluent and businesses will not be able to occupy commercial spaces with failing systems.

#### Wastewater Treatment System Expansion Policies

The Calvert County Comprehensive Water & Sewerage Plan, 2014 Update lays out policies for sewer system expansion based on land use, stressing the establishment or expansion of sewer systems in Town Centers, and not permitting sewer service areas in rural and agricultural areas.

(Included in Chapter I, applicable to all Town Centers.)

#### Managing Stormwater and Nonpoint Source Pollution

Stormwater is a major source of contamination in the Chesapeake Bay and Patuxent River. Calvert County focuses heavily on addressing stormwater runoff through various methods to meet target loads for nitrogen, phosphorus and total suspended soils.

In response to this plan, the county focused on planning and implementing stormwater management Environmental Site Design (ESD) practices to the maximum extent possible (MEP). Using nonstructural techniques (e.g., disconnection of rooftop runoff, sheet flow to conservation areas) and micro-scale practices (e.g., rain gardens, micro-bioretention, bio-swales) throughout a development is an effective way to accomplish this goal.

Calvert County's Stormwater Management Ordinance effective May 4, 2010, establishes requirements for managing stormwater runoff and encourages the use of (ESD) to the (MEP) in new development and redevelopment. Stormwater management plans are required by the Calvert County Department of Public Works for all development and redevelopment projects in the county. These plans must be submitted at three phases in the development process: concept, site development and final. Designs must account for additional stormwater runoff volume attributable to the development.

The Stormwater Management Ordinance requires the use of ESD treatment practices such as disconnection of rooftop runoff, rainwater harvesting, submerged gravel wetlands, infiltration berms, rain gardens, micro-bioretentions, swales and

enhanced filters to satisfy the applicable minimum control requirements. The minimum control requirements state that ESD planning techniques and treatment practices must be exhausted before any structural best management practices are implemented (Calvert County Stormwater Management Ordinance, Article IV, § 123–10). (Included in Chapter I, applicable to all Town Centers.)

The Dunkirk Town Center includes many retail land uses that have large surface parking lots. Based upon an analysis of aerial photography, there is approximately 40 percent of the Dunkirk Town Center that is covered by impervious surfaces. Approximately 33 percent is comprised of asphalt/concrete, and 7 percent is comprised of buildings. This plan recommends that these creeks and their tributaries be assessed regarding their stream function, water quality and habitat to improve the health of our waterways. Possible ways to address degraded waterways include stormwater management facility retrofits, storm drain outfall repairs and stream and wetland restoration. (Revised to be consistent with the Environment and Natural Resources section. See below.)

The Dunkirk Town Center contains many retail uses with large surface parking lots. Based on <u>an</u> aerial photography analysis, approximately 51% of the area is impervious surface—26% asphalt or concrete and 7% buildings.<sup>18</sup> This Master Plan recommends assessing the Town Center's receiving waters—Hall Creek, Kings Branch, and their tributaries—for stream function, water quality, and habitat. Existing tools should be used to track progress toward meeting Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load limits and improving waterway health. These tools include MS4 Permit projects, the percentage of impervious surface and tree canopy coverage within the Town Center, and within the Hall Creek and Kings Branch watersheds. The Plan also recommends amending the county's stormwater management ordinance to reflect updated rainfall intensity and frequency standards, based on findings from the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science. For more on impervious surface and tree canopy thresholds as indicators of ecosystem health, see the Environment and Natural Resources section of this chapter.

#### **Goals and Objectives**

See Appendix A for goals and objectives.

#### Goal I: Protect public health and water quality.

#### **Objective I: Minimize pollution from wastewater treatment plants and septic systems**

9.1.1.1 Consider conducting a wastewater treatment study to analyze the current state of private wastewater systems, options for long-term maintenance of the private systems and/or replacement with a public or public/private partnership system and potential locations and costs for such options. [DPW, HD, and MDE]

#### **Goal 2: Install or enhance stormwater management systems to reduce pollution in the county streams, Patuxent River and Chesapeake Bay.**

- **Objective I: Treat unmanaged impervious surfaces**
- 9.2.1.1 Incentivize removing unused impervious areas, retrofitting micro-scale practices to provide treatment of existing impervious surfaces.

#### **Objective 2: Protect Hall Creek and King's Branch**

- 9.2.2.1 Prioritize the protection of Hall Creek, King's Branch and their tributaries. [BOCC, PC, P&Z]
- 9.2.2.2 Assess Hall Creek, King's Branch and their tributaries for stream erosion. Seek ways to restore the streams. [PW, P&Z, EC]
- 9.2.2.3 Work with the Calvert County Environmental Commission for public outreach to reduce impacts to Dunkirk-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> 2023 planimetric data photography, the Calvert County Department of Technology Services, Geographic Information Systems (11/26/24).

#### area waterways. [P&Z, EC]

## Goal 3: Preserve, protect and conserve water resources in and near the Dunkirk Town Center.

#### **Objective I: Protect perennial streams and their buffers**

9.3.1.1-Identify pollution sources and take remediating measures. [P&Z, MDE, MD DNR]

9.3.1.2 Preserve and restore plantings to reduce stormwater runoff. [P&Z, DNR]

(Duplicative. Goals and objectives are compiled in Appendix A for consolidation and streamlining purposes.)

### **Government and Community Facilities**

#### **Calvert County Comprehensive Plan Vision**

Our communities are safe. We care for the well-being of each other.

Our children are well-prepared for the future. We offer robust and diverse educational opportunities with a variety of post-secondary educational and training opportunities.

We are building a strong local economy based on renewable resources, agriculture, seafood, high technology, retirement, recreation, and tourism.

Our government is efficient, open, and responsive to citizen needs and concerns.

#### **Calvert County Comprehensive Plan Government and Community Facilities**

#### Goals

Goal 1: Establish policies and strategies that provide for high-quality, responsive, and cost-effective services to residents, businesses, and organizations in the county.

Goal 2: Maintain the high quality of educational facilities: public schools, college, and libraries.

Goal 3: Provide access to a variety of quality recreational environments and opportunities.

Goal 4: Ensure Calvert County has adequate healthcare facilities and programs.

Goal 5: Support public safety programs, strategies, and facilities development.

Goal 6: Maintain well-managed and effective solid waste and recyclable materials management systems in Calvert County.

Goal 7: Collectively plan future initiatives, to the greatest extent possible, with internal county departments and regional county jurisdictions, councils, and other potential partnerships.

(Moved to Chapter I, applicable to all Town Centers.)

#### **Key Issues**

Since the mid-1980s the Calvert County Comprehensive Plan has called for the Town Centers to include indoor and outdoor public spaces. How can this Master Plan encourage the creation of additional civic buildings and spaces that meet community desires given sewerage treatment and land capacity limitations?

#### **Government Facilities**

Government Dunkirk is an unincorporated Town Center. Prince Frederick is Calvert County's county seat and is where many of the state and county government services are provided. Government facilities currently located in the Town Center boundary include the Dunkirk Volunteer Fire Department and Rescue Squad and the Sheriff's Dunkirk District (police) Station. The MTA Dunkirk Park and Ride and the Dunkirk District Park are also in the Town Center, with the expansion of the Town Center boundary as a part of this Master Plan update.

#### **Educational Facilities**

The Dunkirk Town Center and surrounding communities are served by Mt. Harmony Elementary School, Northern Middle School, and Northern High School. The Calvert County Public Schools prepares a school facility master plan

each year. The School Facility Master Plan FY 2024 states: "The northern part of Calvert County is experiencing a higher student enrollment than the southern part of the county. Planning suggests visiting the possibility of adjusting school attendance areas to provide relief for this part of the county, by taking advantage of available capacity in the southern school schools. All the schools in this region are in adequate to good standing in the State's facility maintenance category. As of the Spring 2023 County Adequate Public Facilities Report for Schools, Mt. Harmony Elementary School at 102.3%, is over capacity. With the completion of the Northern High School project in August 2020, the previous over capacity issues appear to be resolved. A replacement for Northern Middle School is planned in FY 2025. Mt. Harmony Elementary will be evaluated pending a feasibility study, in the future. The systemic projects planned in the next few years consist of Mary Harrison Partial HVAC and Re-roofing.

(Revised for consolidation and streamlining purposes. See below.)

The Dunkirk Town Center's residential communities are served by Mt. Harmony Elementary, Northern Middle, and Northern High schools. These schools experience higher student enrollment compared to the southern portion of the county. Over the past several years, student capacity in these schools has been or is currently overcapacity. The Northern High School reconstruction, completed in 2020, appears to have abated overcapacity issues. However, student enrollment at Mt. Harmony Elementary School continues to be overcapacity, while student enrollment at Northern Middle School is overcapacity less frequently. The Calvert County Public Schools is considering adjusting school attendance areas to provide relief for this part of the county by taking advantage of available capacity in the southern schools. A replacement for Northern Middle School is planned in FY 2025 and is anticipated to address overcapacity issues. Mt. Harmony Elementary will be evaluated pending a feasibility study, in the future.

#### Libraries

Calvert Library Fairview Branch is located on the southbound side of MD 4 near Chaneyville Road. The central library is located in Prince Frederick, and three additional branch libraries are sited in other areas of the county.

Calvert Library's mission is to serve as a gateway to information, imagination, and inspiration. We: Empower individuals by facilitating lifelong learning and Strengthen our community by providing opportunities for connection to one another and the world. The Calvert Library Facilities Master Plan 2017-2037 (August 8, 2017) analyzed the library system and made recommendations. The consultants, Providence Associates LLC, noted that Fairview Branch "shows its age." The branch is a converted school that was last renovated in 1994. The collection reaches into a hallway and there is no line-of-sight for library staff to the two entrances, public restrooms or meeting rooms. The public restrooms and a loft area in the staff workroom are not ADA accessible. Comments from the Board of County Commissioners, at the time that the library's Facilities Master Plan was developed, ranged from wanting all library locations to be in Town Centers to wanting the Fairview Branch to stay in its current location.

Locating a new Fairview Branch in the Dunkirk Town Center has come up during community discussions about this long-range plan. Also discussed has been the possibility of a joint-use community center and library or a senior center and library. A decision about where to site a replacement facility and joint-facility possibilities would be made by the Board of Library Trustees and a recommendation would then go to the Board of County Commissioners for final approval.

(Revised for consolidation and streamlining purposes. See below.)

There is no library in the Town Center. The 2017-2037 Calvert Library Facilities Master Plan (August 8, 2017), prepared by Providence Associates LLC, identified the need to renovate or rebuild the Fairview Library, located on 8120 Southern Maryland Boulevard in Owings. At the time that the library's Facilities Master Plan was prepared, the Board of County Commissioners' vision ranged from all library locations in Town Centers to the Fairview Branch remaining in its current location. Public participation during this Master Plan update process included a discussion on locating a new Fairview Branch in the Dunkirk Town Center. Also discussed was the possibility of locating a joint-use community center in the Town Center that houses a library and aging and disability services. Currently northern Calvert County is emerging as an area experiencing increasing percentages of seniors and individuals with disabilities. Dunkirk Town Center is primarily a retail destination with limited community supports. There is a medical office building with an urgent care center and several local provider offices. There are two recreation parks, Dunkirk District Park and Ward Farm Recreation and Nature Park (with numerous amenities) nearby to offer recreational opportunities. The Department of Community Resources, Office on Aging Division is conducting an age-friendly community planning process and has plans to conduct a facilities plan/needs assessment. Currently, Dunkirk residents travel to the North Beach Senior Center or the Calvert Pines Senior Center in Prince Frederick for programs and services. Challenges to constructing a joint-use community center with a library and senior services in the Town Center are land and sewer infrastructure constraints. Additionally, due to current budget constraints, Calvert Library anticipates that the Fairview Library will remain in its current location. If the current scenario changes and infrastructure and land constraints are overcome, consideration for a location such as a joint-use community center in the Town Center should be considered.

#### **Older Adult and Senior Facilities**

North Beach Senior Center, one of Calvert County Government's three senior centers, is located on Chesapeake Avenue in North Beach. The center is open weekdays, Monday through Friday, 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM. (Deleted since the senior facility is not located in the Town Center.)

#### **Parks and Recreation**

Dunkirk District Park, a regional park, acquired in 1975 with funds from the Maryland Open Space Program, is located in the northern portion of the Town Center. The park's facilities include picnic areas, pavilions, a playground, a dog park, a skate park, walking/jogging opportunities, three exclusive tennis courts, four exclusive pickleball courts, two dual-lines courts, three baseball/softball fields, and a climate-controlled year-round restroom facility. Restroom and skate park replacement, lighting for night play and along pathways, additional parking, stormwater conveyance retrofitting are current planned improvements. Located outside but in proximity to the Town Center is Ward Farm Recreation and Nature Park, purchased in 2013 with funds from Calvert County Youth Recreational Opportunities Fund. The park's facilities include a baseball field, a fishing pier, restrooms, hiking trails, picnic areas, walking/jogging opportunities, tot lot playground, disc golf and cross-country skiing. Planned improvements include paved trails, a new maintenance shop, and an overlook pavilion. Funds from Calvert County Youth Recreational Opportunities Fund Improvements are allocated to partially fund improvements at both parks.

Both have park master plans. a special fund was created by the State Legislature in 2012 and is administered by the Secretary of Maryland Department of Natural Resources. A portion of the revenue received from gaming in Chesapeake Beach and North Beach is returned to Calvert County to the purpose of increasing recreational opportunities for youth in the county.

(Deleted for consolidation and streamlining purposes.)

Driving distances to the seven types of recreation sites are categorized as 0-5 minutes, 5-15 minutes and greater than 15 minutes. Maps show driving distances to athletic fields, outdoor sports courts, indoor facilities, trail sites, water access sites, historical/cultural areas and picnic areas.

<u>(Integrated into paragraph below.)</u>

One intent of Town Centers is accessibility to recreational facilities, for which the Dunkirk Town Center is within a 10to-20-minute drive to several facilities. Driving distances to five types of recreation sites are grouped into three categories: 10 minutes or less, 20 minutes or less, and more than 20 minutes. The map illustrates driving times to athletic fields, basketball courts, tennis courts, trail sites and water access sites. Drive times to recreational facilities and amenities in the Town Center are as follows:

- The driving time for the Dunkirk Town Center and surrounding area for athletic fields is 0-5 minutes.
- The driving time to outdoor sports courts is 0-5 minutes.
- For indoor facilities, the drive time is 0-5 minutes or over 15 minutes depending on destination in the Town Center.
- For trail sites, the drive time is 0-5 minutes for the areas along and east of MD 4 due to their proximity to the trails at Ward Farm Recreation and Nature Park and more than 15 minutes from other areas in the Town Center.
- For water access and historical/cultural sites, the drive time is over 15 minutes, but in some areas 5-15 minutes, depending on the distance to Chesapeake Beach where there is the most convenient water access point and areas of historical/cultural significance.
- For picnic areas, the drive time is primarily 0-5 minutes throughout the Town Center.

Each Town Center should serve as the focal point of recreation for residents of the Town Center and their surrounding areas. Each Town Center should have:

- A town park or "village green
- An in-town pedestrian and bikeway system that connects residential areas, activity centers, and schools
- An outdoor public facility designed primarily for active team sports
- An indoor community center capable of providing a range of activities for all age groups
- Calvert County Comprehensive Plan, Page 10-9

(Integrated into paragraph below for consolidation and streamlining purposes.)

The Comprehensive Plan envisions recreation amenities in each Town Center (in bold). Below is a comparison of the vision and what currently exists or is programmed in the capital improvements program for the Dunkirk Town Center.

- A town park or "village green": Dunkirk District Park is considered a town park that not only serves sports, but has a dog park, multiple playgrounds, and future plans for walking paths.
- An in-town pedestrian and bikeway system that connects residential areas, activity centers, and schools: Sidewalks have been constructed during county and state streetscape projects and development of commercial and residential projects. During the update of the Town Center Master Plan, the county received grant funds to conduct the <u>Dunkirk and Prince Frederick Bikeways Feasibilities Studies</u>, prepared by Mead & Hunt, funded by the <u>MDOT FY22 Kim Lamphier Bikeway Network Program</u>. This study determined the feasibility of creating shared-use paths that would connect important commercial, recreational, and residential destinations within each of the two Town Centers. <u>These improvements could be implemented with a combination of developer contributions</u>, county funding, and grants, although public funds will unlikely be available into the foreseeable future due to current budget constraints and economic trends. <u>(Added to addressed comment by the BOC.)</u>
- An outdoor public facility designed primarily for active team sports: Dunkirk District Park is located west of the Town Center and is one of the county's three district parks. Ward Farm Recreation and Nature Park is a new facility opened in March 2022 which includes active and passive park areas for team sports, nature education, paths, and walking trails. Dunkirk District Park has also upgraded the tennis and pickleball facility onsite.
- An indoor community center capable of providing a range of activities for all age groups: Currently, there are plans for a nature center near the Town Center at Ward Farm Recreation and Nature Park as well as the repurposing of a farmhouse into an agricultural museum. Both projects are within this Master Plan for the park facility with funding coming from a combination of county funds and a dedicated state funding source called the Calvert County Youth Recreational Opportunities Fund. This provides annual funding of projects to build out the Master Plan at Ward Farm Recreation and Nature Park.

Public safety facilities are police, animal control, fire, rescue, and EMS facilities that support Dunkirk residents in emergency situations. These facilities are distributed throughout the county and sited primarily in Town Centers. Police protection is provided by the Calvert County Sheriff's Office and the Maryland State Police.

The Calvert County Sheriff's Office mission is to build relationships through community policing that will lead to reduced crime and increased safety. The main facilities for the Sheriff's Office are located in the Prince Frederick Town Center. Two substations serve the northern area of the county. The Owings Patrol substation is located at Calvert Library's Fairview Branch, 8120 Southern Maryland Boulevard in Owings. The Twin Beaches Patrol substation is located at 9036 Bay Avenue in the Town of North Beach.

(Moved to Chapter I, applicable to all Town Centers.)

<u>The Maryland State Police Prince Frederick Barrack is located in Prince Frederick.</u> (Deleted since this applies to the Prince Frederick Town Center.)

The mission of the Maryland State Police is to serve the people of Maryland and those who visit our State through purposed policing that protects our citizens, prevents criminal acts and traffic crashes, and provides the highest quality of law enforcement services available anywhere. This is accomplished through a network of local barracks and specialized units working in consultation and cooperation with allied public safety agencies to address issues impacting public safety in Maryland and each jurisdiction through an inter-jurisdictional strategy. (Source: Maryland State Police Administrative Manual).

The Animal Control Unit is located within the Calvert County Department of Public Safety. Animal Control officers are tasked with enforcing county regulations as they pertain to dogs and cats, as well as state laws regarding cruelty to animals. These officers conduct investigations to ensure pets are kept in a humane manner, receive proper food, water, and shelter and are not allowed to run at large in the community.

(Moved to Chapter I, applicable to all Town Centers.)

#### **Healthcare Facilities**

#### Calvert County Health Department

The Calvert County Health Department's vision is "Healthy people living and working in healthy places." Its mission is "To promote and protect the health of all county residents by preventing illness and eliminating hazards to health." With its historical beginnings\_in the 1920's the Calvert County Health Department has evolved into a contemporary fullservice <u>organization</u> with approximately 280 employees and an annual budgetof \$20 million dollars. Its central office, which houses administration, <u>community health services</u>, sexual assault and domestic violence services and <u>behavioral health</u> <u>services</u>, is located at 975 Solomons Island Road North in Prince Frederick adjacent to the campus of Calvert Health Medical Center. <u>Additional clinics offering behavioral</u> health services are located in Barstow, Chesapeake Beach and Lusby. Environmental health services are located at the county office building in Prince Frederick.

Highway to Health (H2H) is a mobile outreach van that is case management driven. The mobile outreach van travels



throughout the county to provide screenings and linkage to services such as behavioral, medical, and social. This free program was set up by the Health Department to help clients get assistance with needs that they may have had trouble navigating in the past. Clients will be able to connect to health department services without traveling to the health department. The coordinators also are able to link clients to other needed services outside of the health department.

Figure 1 Highway to Health (H2H) mobile outreach van CalvertHealth

CalvertHealth Medical Health Center is a private, not-for-profit community-owned hospital. The main campus is located in Prince Frederick. The hospital is part of a health system that includes an employed physician network of primary care and specialty physicians throughout the county as well as a mobile health unit that travels to under-served parts of the county. CalvertHealth is second largest employer in the county. Formerly known as Calvert Memorial Hospital, it was founded in 1919. The hospital's original building, located on Church Street, is a designated Calvert County Historic District. CalvertHealth conducts a community health needs assessment every three years.

The 2020 Calvert County Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA). The CHNA seeks to provide an understanding of the most pressing health needs and to guide planning to address the needs. The service area for CalvertHealth includes Calvert County and some portions of southern Anne Arundel County. One of the prioritized health topics is exercise, nutrition, and weight (obesity). Calvert County scores higher than the state of Maryland in the percentage of adults who are obese (37.2 percent compared to 31.5 percent) and lower than the state on access to exercise opportunities (61.4 percent compared to 92.6 percent). Several of the significant health needs (prioritized and non-prioritized) are related to the pattern of land use: exercise, nutrition, and weight; environment and transportation. Key themes from community input include "Lack of good sidewalks for walking safely is a concern with 57% of survey respondents" and "The community needs more fitness and physical activity resources". The 2020 Calvert Health Needs Assessment's FY21-23 Implementation Plan sets forth strategies and actions, target population, key partners, tactics and evaluation for each of the prioritized needs.

CalvertHealth published Walk Your Way: Calvert County Walking Guide. This walking guide includes 13 scenic locations in Calvert County, including Dunkirk District Park. The guide is available online

(http://www.healthycalvert.org/content/sites/calverthospital/Walk\_Your\_Way\_Final.pdf).

CalvertHealth maintains the Healthy Calvert website for the Community Health Improvement Roundtable that includes the most resent Community Needs Assessment and a map of all of the parks and places in Calvert County to get outdoors and walk, hike, or bike to wellness.

(In Chapter I, applicable to all Town Centers)

#### Solid Waste Management

The Department of Public Works, Solid Waste Division operates the Mt. Hope Convenience Center on Pushaw Station Road in Sunderland where residents can bring their trash and recyclables. Residents can also come to Appeal Landfill and dispose of yard debris, building materials, and some large items. In addition, the Solid Waste Division offers county residents free bulk item pick up services, household hazardous waste collection events twice a year and paper shred events every month. Recycling Guides and yellow bins for recyclables are available to residents at all County Convenience Centers to take home free of charge.

(In Chapter I, applicable to all Town Centers.)

#### **Public Safety**

One goal for Town Centers is to provide public safety service to area residents. Fire, emergency, and policing services are located in the Town Center, satisfying the goal of the 1987 Dunkirk Town Center Master Plan to locate these facilities in the Town Center. These facilities include:

- Dunkirk Volunteer Fire Department and Rescue Squad The Dunkirk Volunteer Fire Department and Rescue Squad is located within the Dunkirk Town Center at 3170 West Ward Road, providing fire/rescue/EMS services for Dunkirk, Owings, and Lower Marlboro, as well as Anne Arundel and Prince George's counties. In 2020, paramedic ambulances staffed by career EMS employees on a 24-hour/7-day basis was established and an aerial ladder truck was purchased. The county's Capital Improvement Program has allocated future funding for a command vehicle, an engine, an ambulance, and a rescue vehicle.
- Sheriff's Dunkirk District Station The Sheriff's Dunkirk District Station is located at 10500 Southern Maryland Boulevard and was established in 2024, satisfying the 1987 Dunkirk Town Center Master Plan which

included a goal to provide policing services in the Town Center and is a direct result of the collaboration and commitment between the Board of County Commissioners and the Calvert County Sheriff's Office to ensure the continued safety for all residents and visitors in the Town Center and countywide.

• **Medivac** – The county has identified the need to locate a medivac site in the Town Center on the Dunkirk Volunteer Fire Department and Rescue Squad site. While there are no immediate plans to establish a medivac site in the Town Center, landings currently occur on vacant land on the Dunkirk Volunteer Fire Department and Rescue Squad property.

#### **Goals and Objectives**

See Appendix A for goals and objectives.

**Goal I: Establish policies and strategies that provide for high-quality, responsive, and cost-effective** services to residents, businesses, and organizations in the county.

#### **Objective I: Provide high-quality, responsive, and cost-effective customer service.**

H.I.I.I Conduct periodical analyses of county government services in the Dunkirk Town Center. [CA, PW/GS]

Goal 2: Maintain the high quality of the educational facilities that serve the Dunkirk Town Center area: schools, college, and library.

**Objective I: Continue to support Calvert County Public Schools serving the Dunkirk area.** 

- 11.2.1.1 Support the Calvert County Public Schools that serve the Dunkirk Town Center through the Capital Improvement Plan. [BOCC, PC, F&B, P&Z]
- 11.2.1.2 Coordinate future capital improvements for the College of Southern Maryland, Prince Frederick Campus. [BOCC, PC, P&Z, CSM]

**Objective 2: Provide a high-quality library facility in the northwestern area of the county that supports public education.** 

11.2.2.1. Evaluate the possibility of relocating the Fairview Library Branch to the Dunkirk Town Center Include in the evaluation the options of including a joint-use community center and/or senior center. [CR, P&R]

## Goal 3: Provide access to a variety of quality recreational environments and opportunities in the Dunkirk Town Center.

#### **Objective I: Increase the amount of land area dedicated to recreation and natural resources.**

- 11.3.1.1 As the county's population grows, the inventory of parks and recreation assets and programs, as well as resources of the Department of Parks and Recreation should increase in a corresponding manner to ensure the continued delivery of high-quality programs, facility maintenance and infrastructure management. [P&R, P&Z]
- 11.3.1.2 Continue to target the development of any new indoor and outdoor sports fields or courts, and/or other active recreation components in or near the Dunkirk\_Town Center. [P&R, P&Z, ED]
- 11.3.1.3 Plan for the creation and/or expansion of centrally located parks and green spaces in the Dunkirk Town Center. [P&R, P&Z]
- 11.3.1.4 <u>Ensure that the Dunkirk District Park and the Ward Farm Recreation and Nature Park parks that are easily</u> accessible to pedestrians and bicyclists living in the town centers. [P&R, P&Z]

## **Objective 2: Meet present and future needs of the community as it relates to recreation and natural resources.**

- 11.3.2.1 Based on the Calvert County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan, adjust variety of quality recreational environments and opportunities through trends analysis and updates to individual park master plans. [P&R]
- 11.3.2.2 Produce an optimum mix of programming that provides for all recreation needs of the community creating lifelong participants. [P&R]

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- 11.3.2.3 Conduct public outreach to gauge interest, satisfaction, input, and ideas on recreation and natural resources programs, amenities, and services. [P&R, CMR]
- 11.3.2.4 Evaluate accessibility for participants of all ability levels to recreation and natural resources program opportunities and develop plans for accommodation. [P&R, CR]
- 11.3.2.5 Continue to implement the Dunkirk District Park Master Plan as funding becomes available. [P&R]
- 11.3.2.6 Continue to implement the Ward Farm Recreation and Nature Park Master Plan as funding becomes available.
  [P&R]
- Goal 4: Support and/or encourage adequate healthcare facilities and programs in Dunkirk.

#### **Objective I: Support the health and well-being of Dunkirk area residents.**

- 11.4.1.1. Work with CalvertHealth to address the priority health topic of exercise, nutrition, and weight. [CR/OAA, CCHD]
- 11.4.1.2. Support the Calvert County Health Department's efforts to provide services county-wide, including mobile outreach services to those who may have challenges traveling to the Health Department. [BOCC, CR, CCHD]
- 11.4.1.3. Support the Calvert County Department of Community Resources, Transportation Division's efforts to provide county-wide transit services to health-related appointments for those individuals who do not have access to an automobile, are unable to drive, or are unable to use the county's standard bus service. [BOCC, CR, CCHD]

#### Goal 5: Support public safety programs, strategies, and facilities development.

#### **Objective I: Support the public safety of the Dunkirk community.**

Provide adequate space for the Calvert County Sheriff's Office to provide services to the Dunkirk community. [BOCC, Calvert County Sheriff's Office]

11.5.1.1. Explore a location for a medivac site. [PS]

Goal 6: Maintain well-managed and effective solid waste and recyclable materials management systems in the Dunkirk area.

**Objective I: Ensure adequate facilities and infrastructure to accommodate current and future waste and recyclables.** 

16.1.1.1 Continue to provide trash and recyclable services at the Mount <u>Mt.</u> Hope Convenience Center. [PW] (Duplicative. Goals and objectives are compiled in Appendix A for consolidation and streamlining purposes.)

### **Appendix A: Goals and Objectives**

### Implementation

#### Introduction

This chapter is a compilation of the goals and objectives and the corresponding responsible parties for overseeing goal and objective implementation, or at the very least, are initiated and are progressing towards implementation. In addition, goal and objective implementation are characterized by timeframes or associated actions.

#### **Timeframe or Associated Actions**

**Short-Term Actions** are intended to be accomplished in the three years following adoption of the Town Center Master Plan.

**Mid-Term Actions** are intended to be accomplished in the third to fourth year following adoption of the Town Center Master Plan.

**Long-Term Actions** are intended to be accomplished in the fifth through tenth year following adoption of the Town Center Master Plan.

#### **Responsible Agencies**

BOCC	BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
CA	County Administrator
CCHD	CALVERT COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT
CCPT	CALVERT COUNTY PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION
CCSO	CALVERT COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
CMR	DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATIONS AND MEDIA RELATIONS
CR	DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY RESOURCES
CSM	College of Southern Maryland
DNR	MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
EC	Environmental Commission
ED	DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
F&B	Department of Finance & Budget
GS	DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL SERVICES
HC	Heritage Committee
HCD	HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
OOA	OFFICE ON AGING (DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY RESOURCES)
PC	Planning Commission
P&R	DEPARTMENT OF PARKS & RECREATION
PW	DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
P&Z	DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & ZONING
TS	DEPARTMENT OF TECHNOLOGY SERVICES
SHA	MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION STATE
	Highway Administration

Ongoing Actions are conducted as needed and responds to the changing needs of the residents.

**Concurrent with Development** actions are conducted as development occurs. Staff reviews development proposals and makes recommendations to the Planning Commission for consideration for approval.

The **MDOT Priority Letter** is the county's statement of its priorities for state spending on roads, bridges, bikeways, and transit in the county. It is submitted annually to MDOT upon approval by the Board of County Commissioners.

The **Zoning Regulations Update** is updated after the comprehensive plan is adopted. The **Zoning Regulations Update** requires analysis and development by the Department of Planning & Zoning, followed by public hearings and action by the Planning Commission and Board of County Commissioners.

The **Adequate Public Facilities** (APF) regulations are part of the Zoning Ordinance Update. In addition to schools and roads, the Board of County Commissioners approved amendments to the APF regulations to include, water and sewer, stormwater management, solid waste, and fire, rescue, and EMS services on November 29, 2022.

## Tables of Actions, Schedule, and Responsible Agencies

### Land Use Goals and Objectives

Goal I: Continue the goal that the Dunkirk Town Center "reflect the best features of the county's land use development philosophies and create a positive first image."

Objective 1: Treat the entire Dunkirk Town Center as an economic and aesthetic whole.	Timeframe or Associated Action	Responsible Parties
LU.3.1.1.1 Continue the policy of treating the Dunkirk Town Center as a whole by retaining the single zoning district for the Town Center.	Ongoing	[P&Z]
LU.3.1.1.2 Continue the policy of enforcing an appearance code for new construction, renovation and additions <u>where applicable</u> . that increase the total square footage by 100% or by more than 2,000 square feet. (deleted to avoid potential future nonconformance.)	Ongoing	[P&Z]
LU.3.1.1.3 Continue the policy of prohibiting industrial uses that cannot be adequately screened to maintain the attractive image of the community.	Ongoing	[P&Z]
Objective 2: Continue to encourage a "sense of place" with recognizable boundaries and unifying characteristics.	Timeframe or Associated Action	Responsible Parties
LU.3.1.2.1 Continue the policy of creating unity through quality design, planned landscaping, planned roads, uniform signage and street lighting and the use of consistent materials for walkways and parking lots.	Ongoing	[P&Z, PW]
LU.3.1.2.2 Update the Dunkirk Town Center zoning regulations to reflect the updated Dunkirk Town Center Master Plan.	Short-Term	[P&Z]
LU.3.1.2.3 Continue the policy of encouraging the style of the original construction in future construction. Continue to encourage the creation of memorable spaces through architectural elements that complement the scale, building placement, and materials of immediate surroundings within the Dunkirk Town Center, while acknowledging the Town Center's three distinctive architectural styles. (revised to reflect state policy of architectural compatibility with historic architectural)	Ongoing	[P&Z]
LU.3.1.2.4 Continue the policy of requiring front elevations of attached stores, offices, and residences to have varying depths. <del>Do not allow</del> Strip shopping malls <u>centers</u> of with only one depth only will not be allowed.	Ongoing	[P&Z]
LU.3.1.2.5 Continue the policy of establishing lighting standards and the guidance that fixtures to light signs or buildings in general need to be hidden from view in architecturally complementary fashion, if attached to the building, or in landscaping.	Ongoing	[P&Z]
LU.3.1.2.6 Continue the policy of limiting the number of freestanding signs.	Ongoing	[P&Z]
LU.3.1.2.7 Continue the policy of limiting <del>the height of</del> building heights to no more than three stories high for a total of 50 feet including the roof.	Ongoing	[P&Z]
LU.3.1.2.8 Redevelop and create a distinguishable gateway incorporating the Dunkirk District Park's entrance.	Long-Term	[ <u>P&amp;Z, P&amp;R]</u>

# Goal 2: Expand the Dunkirk Town Center to include the Dunkirk District Park and the MTA Dunkirk Park and Ride properties.

Objective 1: Incorporate the public properties adjacent to the Dunkirk Town Center, outlined in the Calvert County	Timeframe or Associated Action	
Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 2019 and amended in 2022.		i ai cies

LU.3.2.1.1 Rezone the Dunkirk District Park and MTA's Dunkirk Park and Ride	Short-Term	[P&Z, PC,
properties as Town Center through the formal rezoning process.	Short-Term	BOCC]

#### **Environment and Natural Resources Goals and Objectives**

#### Goal I: Preserve, protect, and conserve water resources in and near the Dunkirk Town Center.

Objective I: Protect perennial streams and their buffers	Timeframe or Associated Action	Responsible Parties
ENR.3.1.1.1 Identify pollution sources and take remedial measures.	Ongoing	[P&Z, MDE, DNR]
ENR.3.1.1.2 Preserve and restore plantings to reduce stormwater runoff.	Ongoing	[P&Z, DNR]

#### Goal 2: Preserve, protect, and conserve flora resources in and near the Dunkirk Town Center.

Objective I: Use plantings to slow runoff, improve air quality, reduce the heat island effect, and encourage walkability.	Timeframe or Associated Action	Responsible Parties
ENR.3.2.1.1 Develop a tree-planting plan for the Dunkirk Town Center.	Mid-Term	[P&R, P&Z]
ENR.3.2.1.2 Develop a greenway map for the Dunkirk area.	Mid-Term	[P&R, P&Z]
ENR.3.2.1.3 Work with private owners, land trusts, and state agencies to preserve land in the identified greenway areas through easements or acquisition.	Long-Term	[P&R, P&Z]

## Goal 3: Incorporate environmentally sustainable development into Dunkirk Town Center's policies.

Objective 1: <u>Encourage the use of</u> green infrastructure when developing <u>/redeveloping</u> the Dunkirk Town Center.	Timeframe or Associated Action	Responsible Parties
ENR.3.3.1.1 Enhance environmentally sustainable infrastructure using conservation landscape techniques within the Dunkirk Town Center.	Ongoing	[P&Z, EC]
ENR.3.3.1.2 Analyze current tensions between environmental challenges and the Dunkirk Town Center's current infrastructure. Consider solutions including green infrastructure and natural solutions for stormwater management.	Ongoing	[P&Z, EC]

### Heritage Goals and Objectives

#### Goal I: Enhance, while preserving, a walkable and vibrant business district and center of community life.

Objective I: Preserve and enhance historic resources and architecture that uniquely characterize Dunkirk.	Timeframe or Associated Action	Responsible Parties
HE.3.1.1.1 Maintain the relationship between Smithville Methodist Church and the Historic District Commission.	Ongoing	[P&Z, HDC]
HE.3.1.1.2 Increase outreach to historic property owners to inform them of the incentives available for designated Historic Districts	Ongoing	[P&Z, ED, CMR]

#### Goal 2: Identify and Record Previously Unrecorded Archaeological Resources.

Objective 1: Identify and record previously unrecorded	Timeframe or	•
archaeological resources.	Associated Action	Parties

<ul> <li>HE.3.2.1.1 Conduct professional review of proposed subdivision and site development plans for potential for previously unrecorded archaeological resources. Inform development applicants when the potential to encounter previously unrecorded archaeological resources is high through the review process. When appropriate, include notation on plats and development plans indicating this potential and the requirement to report the discovery of artifacts to Planning &amp; Zoning so that the finds can be recorded prior to disturbance. Enable the Historic Preservation Planner to monitor ground disturbing activities.</li> </ul>	Ongoing	[P&Z, HDC]
HE.3.2.1.2 Review building permit applications, monitor ground disturbing activities, and record historic and archaeological resources prior to loss during construction.	Ongoing	[P&Z]

#### Goal 3: Develop heritage resources that preserve and tell the story of Dunkirk and its people.

Objective 1: Identify and record previously unrecorded archaeological resources.	Timeframe or Associated Action	Responsible Parties
HE.3.3.1.1 Identify and develop multi-media means of presenting historic sites/points of interest and structures in the Dunkirk Town Center and nearby vicinity to the public.	Long-Term	[P&Z, HDC, HC, ED, CMR]

#### Housing Goals and Objectives

## Goal I: Continue to support the existing Dunkirk Town Center policy of allowing multi-family attached dwellings only for age-restricted housing.

Objective 1: Locate senior housing near health and other support services.	Timeframe or Associated Action	Responsible Parties
HO.3.1.1.1 Continue to encourage age-restricted (senior or 55+) housing in the Town Center.	Ongoing	[CR, P&Z, BOCC]
HO.3.1.1.2 Identify forces behind housing trends for the purposes of maintaining a healthy, accessible and sustainable housing stock.	Long-Term	[CR, P&Z, BOCC]

### **Economic Vitality Goals and Objectives**

## Goal I: Utilize smart growth principles to strengthen economic opportunity and drive business growth in the Dunkirk Town Center.

Objective 1: Locate senior housing near health and other support services.	Timeframe or Associated Action	Responsible Parties
EV.3.1.1.1 Maintain an online presence of tools and resources for county businesses and businesses looking to locate in the county.	Ongoing	[ED]
EV.3.1.1.2 Continue promotion of Dunkirk as an option to site selectors and developers.	Ongoing	[ED, CMR]
EV.3.1.1.3 Provide an array of business services that encourage qualified projects to relocate and expand their businesses in Dunkirk.	Ongoing	[ED, P&Z, PW]
EV.3.1.1.4 Streamline the development review process in the Dunkirk Town Center. Maintain a Fast Track Development Plan process for targeted businesses.	Ongoing	[ED, P&Z]
EV.3.1.1.5 Support the development of commercial projects that provide walkable, pedestrian-friendly, and well-connected infrastructure to encourage consumers and visitors to spend more time in the	Ongoing	[ED, PW, P&Z]

Dunkirk Town Center.		
EV.3.1.1.6 Encourage collaboration between community members, local businesses, and government officials to identify and address community needs and priorities.	Ongoing	[ED, CMR, CR, PS]
Objective 2: Build a sense of community within the Dunkirk Town Center area.	Timeframe or Associated Action	Responsible Parties
EV.3.1.2.1 Support opportunities for residents, business owners, and community leaders to connect and communicate regarding Dunkirk Town Center activities through community meetings, social media, and other channels.	Ongoing	[ED, CMR, CR, P&Z]
EV.3.1.2.2 Expand activities at the farmers market and other events located within the Dunkirk Town Center to bring residents together, promote local businesses, and establish a "sense of place" with a welcoming atmosphere.	Mid-Term	[ED, CR, P&R]
EV.3.1.2.3 Increase the visibility and promotion of the unique shops in the Dunkirk Town Center to draw more attention to local businesses, resulting in greater patronage and visibility.	Long-Term	[ED, CMR]
EV.3.1.2.4 Encourage innovative concepts for alternative entertainment and service centers that can be established in the Dunkirk Town Center.	Mid-Term	[ED, P&Z]

### **Transportation Goals and Objectives**

### **Goal I: Improve traffic and mobility in Dunkirk**

Objective I: Extend the existing alternative loop road network on the east side of MD 4.	Timeframe or Associated Action	Responsible Parties
T.3.1.1.1 Construct Shoppes Way from Dunkirk Way to Apple Way to allow direct access to amenities for local residents.	Long-Term	[BOCC, PW]
T.3.1.1.2 Extend Gateway Drive to Brickhouse Road.	Long-Term	[BOCC, PW]
T.3.1.1.3 Provide entry and exit points from the existing park and ride to the future Gateway Drive.	Long-Term	[BOCC, PW]
Objective 2: Address geometric insufficiencies at intersections of concern.	Timeframe or Associated Action	Responsible Parties
T.3.2.1.1 Restrict turning movements from Apple Way to right turn only at the MD 4 intersection.	Long-Term	[PVV, SHA]

## Goal 2: Implement bicycle, pedestrian, and streetscape improvements to enhance community

### connectivity and sustainability.

Objective I: Expand bicycle and pedestrian networks to enhance accessibility between nearby residential development and the Dunkirk Town Center.	Timeframe or Associated Action	Responsible Parties
T.3.2.1.1 Create a bicycle/pedestrian connection between Dunkirk District Park and adjacent retail amenities by way of Dunkirk Market Place. Install a pedestrian/bicycle gate on the south side of Dunkirk District Park at Ferry Landing Road.	Long-Term	[P&R, PVV, P&Z]
T.3.2.1.2 Provide an alternative transportation route linking Dunkirk District Park and Ward Farm Recreation and Nature Park.	Long-Term	[P&R, PVV, P&Z]
T.3.2.1.3 Convert the outer lanes on Town Center Boulevard and Dunkirk Way to a shared-use path.	Long-Term	[PW, P&Z]

T.3.2.1.4 <u>Placement of a pedestrian crosswalk at the signalized intersection of</u> <u>MD 4/Town Center Boulevard.</u>	Mid-Term	[PW, P&Z]
Objective 2: Implement strategic policy changes to advance sustainability.	Timeframe or Associated Action	Responsible Parties
T.3.2.2.1 Update county road and development standards to ensure that new roadways fully incorporate safe and buffered bicycle facilities or shared-use paths.	Mid-Term	[BOCC, PW]
T.3.2.2.2 Coordinate with SHA to install sidewalks on the east side of MD 4 in front of existing developed properties. Fill key gaps in the pedestrian network along MD 4 by utilizing MDOT SHA Sidewalk Retrofit programs.	Long-Term	[PW, P&Z]
T.3.2.2.3 Require new development in the Dunkirk Town Center to connect their frontage sidewalks to the nearest logical termini.	Ongoing	[PW, P&Z]
T.3.2.2.4 Require EV charging stations at new developments and encourage existing commercial entities to provide EV infrastructure.	Mid-Term	[P&Z, ED]

### **Goal 3: Improve and expand existing transit services.**

Objective 1: Increase the frequency of local transit service between Town Centers, including employment areas and health centers.	Timeframe or Associated Action	Responsible Parties
T.3.3.1.1 Identify the level of demand among local employers and workers for which transit buses may be used to transport employees to and from workplaces. Develop and implement routes likely to encourage transit access for employees, patients, and students throughout the county.	Mid-Term	[CR, ED]
T.3.3.1.2 Evaluate existing routes serving the Dunkirk Town Center. Establish additional routes as necessary to ensure that all employment centers are adequately served.	Mid-Term	[CR, ED]
T.3.3.1.3 Consider extending transit hours to serve employees within the Dunkirk Town Center and adjacent areas.	Mid-Term	[BOCC, CR]
Objective 2: Expand and improve demand-responsive transit services.	Timeframe or Associated Action	Responsible Parties
T.3.3.2.1 Increase availability of demand-response public transportation.	Mid-Term	[BOCC, CR]
T.3.3.2.2 Work closely with MTA to establish a local subscription-based van pool service to areas most often traveled by commuters.	Mid-Term	[BOCC, CR]
T.3.3.2.3 Consider requesting MTA to restructure inefficient/lengthy routes to connect from Dunkirk to Alexandria, Virginia, and the Pentagon.	Mid-Term	[BOCC, CR]
T.3.3.2.4 Consider re-establishing an on-demand or subscription-based transit program that utilizes volunteers for older individuals unable to drive.	Long-Term	[BOCC, CR]
T.3.3.2.5 Investigate public transportation-based mobility on-demand services for individuals unable to drive.	Mid-Term	[BOCC, CR]

### Water Resources Goals and Objectives

### Goal I: Protect public health and water quality.

Objective I: Minimize pollution from wastewater treatment plants and septic systems.	Timeframe or Associated Action	Responsible Parties
WR.3.1.1.1 Consider conducting a wastewater treatment study to analyze the current state of private wastewater systems, options for long-term maintenance of the private systems and/or replacement with a public or public/private partnership system and potential locations	Mid-Term	[PW, HD, MDE]

and costs for such options.		
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## Goal 2: Install or enhance stormwater management systems to reduce pollution in the county streams, Patuxent River, and Chesapeake Bay.

Objective	I: Treat unmanaged impervious surfaces.	Timeframe or Associated Action	Responsible Parties
WR.3.2.1.1	Incentivize removing unused impervious areas, retrofitting micro- scale practices to provide treatment of existing impervious surfaces.	Ongoing	[PVV]
Objective	2: Protect Hall Creek and King's Branch.	Timeframe or Associated Action	Responsible Parties
WR.3.2.1.1	Prioritize the protection of Hall Creek, King's Branch, and their tributaries.	Ongoing	[BOCC, PC, P&Z]
WR.3.2.1.2	Assess Hall Creek, King's Branch, and their tributaries for stream erosion. Seek ways to restore the streams.	Long-Term	[PVV, P&Z, EC]
	Work with the Calvert County Environmental Commission for public outreach to reduce impacts to Dunkirk-area waterways.	Ongoing	[P&Z, EC]

#### Goal 3: Preserve, protect, and conserve water resources in and near the Dunkirk Town Center.

Objective I: Protect perennial streams and their buffers.	Timeframe or Associated Action	Responsible Parties
WR.3.3.1.1 Identify pollution sources and take remediating measures.	Ongoing	[P&Z, MDE, DNR]
WR.3.3.1.2 Preserve and restore plantings to reduce stormwater runoff.	Ongoing	[P&Z, DNR]

### Government and Community Facilities Goals and Objectives

Goal I: Establish policies and strategies that provide for high-quality, responsive, and cost-effective services to residents, businesses, and organizations in the county.

Objective I: Provide high-quality, responsive, and cost-effective customer service.	Timeframe or Associated Action	Responsible Parties
GCF.3.1.1.1 Conduct periodical analyses of county government services in the Dunkirk Town Center.	Ongoing	[CA, PW, GS]

## Goal 2: Maintain the high quality of the educational facilities that serve the Dunkirk Town Center area: schools and libraries.: schools, college, and library.

Objective I: Continue to support Calvert County Public Schools serving the Dunkirk area. <u>- and the College of Southern Maryland.</u>	Timeframe or Associated Action	Responsible Parties
GCF.3.2.1.1 Support the Calvert County Public Schools that serve the Dunkirk Town Center through the Capital Improvement Plan.	Ongoing	[BOCC, PC, F&B, P&Z]
GCF.3.1.1.2 Coordinate future capital improvements for the College of Southern Maryland, Prince Frederick Campus <u>(applicable</u> countywide)	Ongoing	[BOCC, PC, P&Z, CSM]
Objective 2: Provide a high-quality library facility in the northwestern area of the county that supports public education.	Timeframe or Associated Action	Responsible Parties

GCF.3.2.1.2 Evaluate the possibility of relocating the Fairview Library Branch to			
the Dunkirk Town Center. Include in the evaluation the options of	Ongoing	[CR, P&R]	
including a joint-use community center and/or senior center.			

## Goal 3: Provide access to a variety of quality recreational environments and opportunities in the Dunkirk Town Center.

Objective I: Increase the amount of land area dedicated to recreation and natural resources.	Timeframe or Associated Action	Responsible Parties
GCF.3.3.1.1 As the county's population grows, the inventory of parks and recreation assets and programs, as well as resources of the Department of Parks & Recreation should increase in a corresponding manner to ensure the continued delivery of high- quality programs, facility maintenance and infrastructure management.	Ongoing	[P&R, P&Z]
GCF.3.3.1.2 Continue to target the development of any new indoor and outdoor sports fields or courts, and/or other active recreation components in or near the Dunkirk_Town Center.	Long-Term	[P&R, P&Z, ED]
GCF.3.3.1.3 Plan for the creation and/or expansion of centrally located parks and green spaces in the Dunkirk Town Center.	Ongoing	[P&R, P&Z]
GCF.3.3.1.4 Ensure that the Dunkirk District Park and the Ward Farm <u>Recreation and Nature Park</u> Select parks that are easily accessible to pedestrians and bicyclists living in town centers.	Long-Term	[P&R, P&Z]
Objective 2: Meet present and future needs of the community as it relates to recreation and natural resources.	Timeframe or Associated Action	Responsible Parties
GCF.3.3.2.1 Based on the Calvert County Land Preservation, Parks, & Recreation Plan, adjust variety of quality recreational environments and opportunities through trends analysis and updates to individual Park Master Plans.		[P&R]
GCF.3.3.2.2 Produce an optimum mix of programming that provides for all recreation needs of the community creating lifelong participants.	Ongoing	[P&R]
GCF.3.3.2.3 Conduct public outreach to gauge interest, satisfaction, input, and ideas on recreation and natural resources programs, amenities, and services.	Mid-Term	[P&R, CMR]
GCF.3.3.2.4 Evaluate accessibility for participants of all ability levels to recreation and natural resources program opportunities and develop plans for accommodation.	Mid-Term	[P&R, CR]
recreation and natural resources program opportunities and	Mid-Term Ongoing	[P&R, CK]

#### Goal 4: Support and/or encourage adequate healthcare facilities and programs in Dunkirk.

Objective I: Support the health and well-being of Dunkirk area residents.	Timeframe or Associated Action	Responsible Parties
GCF.3.4.1.1 Work with CalvertHealth to address the priority health topic of exercise, nutrition, and weight.	Ongoing	[CR/OAA, CCHD]
GCF.3.4.1.2 Support the Calvert County Health Department's efforts to provide services county-wide, including mobile outreach services	Ongoing	[BOCC, CR, CCHD]

to those who may have challenges traveling to the Health Department.		
GCF.3.4.1.3 Support the Calvert County Department of Community Resources, Transportation Division's efforts to provide county- wide transit services to health-related appointments for those individuals who do not have access to an automobile, are unable to drive, or are unable to use the county's standard bus service.	Ongoing	[BOCC, CR, CCHD]

#### Goal 5: Support public safety programs, strategies, and facilities development.

Objective I: Support the health and well-being of Dunkirk area residents.	Timeframe or Associated Action	Responsible Parties
GCF.3.5.1.1 Explore a location for a medivac site.	Long-Term	[PS]

## Goal 6: Maintain well-managed and effective solid waste and recyclable materials management systems in the Dunkirk area.

Objective I: Ensure adequate facilities and infrastructure to accommodate current and future waste and recyclables.	Timeframe or Associated Action	Responsible Parties
GCF.3.6.1.1 Continue to provide trash and recyclable services at the Mt. Hope Convenience Center.	Ongoing	[PVV]

### Appendix B: Public Partnerships, Outreach, and Input

In October 2019, the Calvert County Planning Commission endorsed a three-phase process to update the county's seven Town Center master plans. The three-phase process includes identifying issues, developing a plan and adopting the plan. In February 2021, the Planning Commission directed staff to begin the process to update the master plan and zoning regulations for the Dunkirk Town Center. The Dunkirk Town Center was the second Town Center selected to go through the update process.

Public outreach for the Dunkirk Town Center Master Plan Update included: a project webpage on the Calvert County Government's website, press releases, social media posts that provided ongoing updates, public informational videos, news flashes emailed to those who signed up for updates and posted to the county's website, broadcast information slides and video on Comcast 1070, flyers and a 4- foot by 8-foot banner displayed at the entrance to Dunkirk District Park. Public input was gathered via meetings, workshops and surveys. The purpose of the public outreach was to inform, educate and seek public input and perspective.

(Included in Chapter I, applicable to all Town Centers.)

#### Phase I: Identify Issues

**April 2021:** A postcard was mailed to all addresses in the Dunkirk ZIP code (approximately 3,000) and two videos on the origins of Dunkirk were posted on the Dunkirk Town Center Master Plan and Zoning Update's webpage and the Calvert Broadcast YouTube channel.

May 11, 2021: The Department of Planning & Zoning met with Dunkirk-area community groups and county departments to solicit outreach assistance and input on the Town Center's vision.

May 19, 2021: The Department of Planning & Zoning informed the Planning Commission of the kick-off meeting on June 2, 2021.

June 2, 2021: The Department of Planning & Zoning held a kick-off meeting and administered a survey for feedback on key issues and a survey for the public to submit photos on the visual quality of the Town Center: buildings, places, landscapes, streetscapes, etc.

July 15, 2021: A Survey Results/Focus Area Workshop was held. Survey results were presented, and participants were encouraged to discuss the survey results.

August 25, 2021: The Planning Commission acknowledged three focus areas: land use (how to manage future growth); roads, traffic, and public walkways; and economic vitality (improved shopping and dining options).

**Nov. 2021:** Two videos on the origins of Dunkirk were posted to the county's Facebook page, <u>Dunkirk Origins 1</u> and <u>Dunkirk Origins 2</u>.

Dec. 6, 2021: The Department of Planning & Zoning held a public information meeting on:

- Economic Vitality: How do businesses make location decisions?
- Land Use/Water Resources: Septic Systems: How they work and how to care for them?
- Land Use/Water Resources: What is the status of Dunkirk Town Center's environmental health?
- Transportation: What is Calvert County doing to improve walking and bicycling in the Dunkirk Town Center and vicinity?

Jan. 11, 2022: The Dunkirk and Prince Frederick Bikeways Feasibility Studies were presented at a public meeting.

Jan. 26, 2022: Two information videos were posted on the county's Facebook page, the <u>Septic School Video</u>, featuring Dr. Andrew Lazur, a University of Maryland water quality specialist, and the <u>Dunkirk Outdoor Recreation Amenities</u>.

March 16, 2022: The Planning Commission directed staff to further explore transportation concerns and develop possible solutions with the assistance of a Town Center consultant. The Planning Commission also directed staff to proceed with the second phase of the Town Center Master Plan update.

June 2022: Based on public input on the draft Prince Frederick Town Center Master Plan, occurring simultaneously with the Dunkirk Town Center Master Plan update, the Board of County Commissioners held two workshops to consider Town Center expansion areas including the Dunkirk Town Center expansion area, as recommended in the 2019-approved Calvert County Comprehensive Plan.

**November 29, 2022:** The Board of County Commissioners approved amending the 2019 Calvert County Comprehensive Plan, maintaining the proposed Dunkirk Town Center expansion area.

#### Phase 2: Develop the Plan

**April 6, 2023:** County staff and other government agencies prepared the draft updated Dunkirk Town Center Master Plan. Additionally, the departments of Planning & Zoning and Public Works and SHA staff further explored the transportation concerns, also considering the findings in the Dunkirk and Prince Frederick Bikeways Feasibility Studies.

July 19, 2023: The Department of Planning & Zoning presented the draft chapters 1-10 of the Dunkirk Town Center Master Plan to the Planning Commission and sought feedback.

**September 9, 2023:** The Department of Planning & Zoning presented a timeline for completing the draft Town Center Master Plan to the Planning Commission. Several staffing transitions delayed the draft plan's progress. Due to this delay, the Planning Commission directed staff to hold a public informational meeting to update the public on delays and the proposed timeline for completion.

**November 2, 2023:** A public informational meeting was held to present the draft Dunkirk Town Center Master Plan to the public and to report on the proposed timeline for adoption.

**November 15, 2023:** The Department of Planning & Zoning briefed the Planning Commission on the informational meeting.

**December 18, 2023:** The process of updating the draft Dunkirk Town Center Master Plan was placed on hold to process an amendment to the Calvert County Comprehensive Plan that would expand the Dunkirk Town Center boundary. The amendment was processed through March 2023 and then placed on hold per direction from the Planning Commission until findings from the state became available on the proposed use in the expansion area.

January 15, 2025: The Department of Planning & Zoning presented the new format of The Master Plan of Town Centers to the Planning Commission, which included Chapter 1: Town Centers, applicable to all Town Centers and subsequent chapter, applicable to each Town Center.

March 10, 2025: Staff commenced working on the draft Dunkirk Town Center Master Plan, reformatting it to align with the format of The Master Plan of Town Centers.

May 21, 2025: The Department of Planning & Zoning presented the draft Chapter 3: Dunkirk Town Center Master Plan of The Master Plan of Town Centers to the Planning Commission for review.

#### Phase 3: Adopt the Plan

There will be several opportunities for people and agencies to comment on the draft plan during the formal process of the Planning Commission's and Board of County Commissioners' considerations to adopt an updated plan for the Dunkirk Town Center.