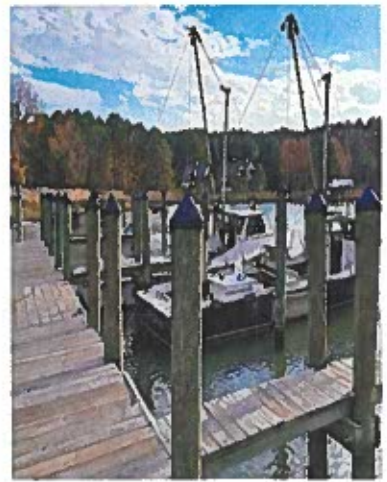


"A Place Where Land & Water Intertwine"

The Town of St. Michaels Comprehensive Plan



St. Michaels Comprehensive Plan 2025 Table of Contents

Acknowledgements

Preface

St. Michaels History and Comprehensive Plan Themes

Plan Elements

- Chapter 1: Land Use and Growth Management
- Chapter 2: Municipal Growth and Development Regulations
- Chapter 3: Environmental Resources and Sensitive Areas Protection
- Chapter 4: Water Resources Element
- Chapter 5: Community Facilities and Public Services
- Chapter 6: Transportation
- Chapter 7: Economic Development
- Chapter 8: Historic and Cultural Resource Protection
- Chapter 9: Parks, Recreation and Open Space
- Chapter 10: Housing
- Chapter 11: Community Character, Design, and Appearance
- Chapter 12: Governance and Communications
- Chapter 13: Climate Resilience
- Chapter 14: Implementation Schedule

(There are no mineral resources in St. Michaels to discuss in this Comprehensive Plan)

Adopted by Resolution _____ by the Commissioners of St. Michaels on this date, _____, 2025.

For The Residents of St. Michaels

COMMISSIONERS OF ST. MICHAELS

Alfred R. Mercier, President
Katrina D. Whittington, Vice President
Jay Hudson, Treasurer
Alexis Roiter, Commissioner
David Wojciechowski, Commissioner

ST. MICHAELS PLANNING COMMISSION

Christopher Thomas, Chairman
John Novak, Vice Chairman
J. Douglas Rollow
Bonnie Morris
Cynthia Allen

ST. MICHAELS TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

Rob Straebel

ST. MICHAELS PLANNING AND ZONING OFFICER (Town Planner)

Steve Ball, AICP

ST. MICHAELS TOWN MANAGEMENT STAFF

Jen Whiting, General Services Clerk
Kris Kakabar, Customer Services Representative
Kathy Thomas, Code Compliance Officer
Kristen Payne, Town Clerk
Kati Fitzgerald, Finance Clerk
Jeff Oswald, Chief of Police
Brian Thompson, Public Works Operations Manager

Additional Map Assistance was provided by

Mark Cahoon, Talbot County GIS Manager

PREFACE TO THE TOWN OF ST. MICHAELS COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The 2025 Comprehensive Plan defines the mission of our local government and a vision for the future of St. Michaels. A core set of values also exists to guide behavior and actions concerning the management of the Town. For staff and residents of St. Michaels, the document represents a promise for the future and provides clear direction for where our Town is going. To “get there” the plan includes updated data and analysis developed in 2024. Each Chapter contains objectives and strategies to be used in consideration in the future by management staff and policy makers. the Commissioners have committed to a set of priorities, known as “a strategic plan”, where the Town’s financial and human resources will be focused on the coming years. The latest revision to the plan occurred in 2025 and includes a new Chapter 14: “Implementation Schedule” to be used in phases of the ten year planning cycle and project budgeting to implement the new plan.

St. Michaels’ Vision, Values and Goals are set forth as follows:

VISION STATEMENT

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

OUR TOWN CORE VALUES

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

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

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

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

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

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

GOALS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

THE STATE OF MARYLAND TWELVE VISIONS AND GOALS

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

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

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

DEFINITIONS

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

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

and its tributaries; clean air and quality drinking water; sufficient and potable water in our aquifers; a low level of crime; employment opportunities; the relative absence of traffic congestion and excessive noise; access to diverse cultural, employment, recreational, education and entertainment activities; convenient access to goods and services and an ethic of personal involvement.

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

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

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

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

St. Michaels History and Comprehensive Plan Themes

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

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

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

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

The 1850s brought the beginnings of commercial oystering and fishing in the Chesapeake Bay and in the other rivers of the Eastern Shore. Oystering brought renewed prosperity and a new round of shipbuilding for that industry. Other types of vessels crafted at the boatyards of St. Michaels included pungys, schooners, bugeyes, and skipjacks. Many of these designs are unique to Chesapeake Bay. The area also began to see the development of canneries and processing plants for oysters and later for crabs. Vegetable canneries also became important to the local economy and to farmers in the region.



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

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

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

By the 1890s, the Town's population had grown to 1,200 people. St. Michaels continued to grow in the twentieth century, with many bungalows constructed on the south side of Town before the Depression and a number of colonial revival and ranch-style houses built after World War II. However, the 2007 population was 1,176, evidence of the changing demographics in the Town with many new retirees and second homeowners. The latest census data at the time this plan was updated in 2025 shows a population of 1,050 residents.

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

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

The twentieth century brought other changes to St. Michaels. The Canneries and the watermen were economic mainstays, but tourism began to play a role in the economy of the Town. The Claiborne Ferry and the construction of the railroad from the ferry to Ocean City helped showcase St. Michaels to visitors from the Western Shore of Maryland. They started to stop in Town and commercial and other services began to cater to their needs.

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

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

By the 1890s, the Town's population had grown to 1,200 people. St. Michaels continued to grow in the twentieth century, with many bungalows constructed on the south side of Town before the Depression and a number of colonial revival and ranch-style houses built after World War II. However, the 2007 population was 1,176, evidence of the changing demographics in the Town with many new retirees and second homeowners. The latest census data at the time this plan was updated in 2025 shows a population of 1,050 residents.

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

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

The twentieth century brought other changes to St. Michaels. The Canneries and the watermen were economic mainstays, but tourism began to play a role in the economy of the Town. The Claiborne Ferry and the construction of the railroad from the ferry to Ocean City helped showcase St. Michaels to visitors from the Western Shore of Maryland. They started to stop in Town and commercial and other services began to cater to their needs.

The Future

One of the principal reasons for the continued tourist industry in St. Michaels has been the presence and expansion of the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum, a significant asset to the Town. Currently both the Museum and the shops in the business district continue to attract thousands of visitors on a yearly basis. The museum also recently developed a new Welcome Center and is working closely with the Town on mitigation of the impacts from sea level rise as documented throughout this plan. New planning efforts can be reviewed in Chapter 13, Climate Resilience.

More recent activities include the development of a “Sustainable Communities Plan” that was updated in 2024 and enables the Town to qualify for a variety of State revitalization grants related to parks and economic development. There are a few areas left for growth and annexation, and it is unlikely that more than 100 additional homes will be built within the Town until it reaches complete buildout. Talbot County’s land uses are mostly conservation related uses surrounding the town which effectively prevents sprawl.

As we move into the future new challenges include how to best protect our heritage, expand trails and parks with the new waterfront at San Domingo Creek Park, mitigate changes from climate and sea level rise and consider impacts from overuse as a popular tourist destination. New plans are being considered for passenger ferry service throughout the Chesapeake Bay and careful planning is needed to manage additional visitors if that comes to fruition.

This plan outlines these and other major themes throughout the chapters to be worked on over the next ten-year planning period. However, several major planning themes emerged from public input sessions on the development of the plan and from discussions with the Planning Commission that reflect the desires of the residents. They include:

- The need to develop better data, analysis and planning related to the impacts of tourism on fiscal and community resources and aesthetic character and charm of the Town. We want to define what “Sustainable Tourism” means for St. Michaels.
- A more unified traffic management, parking and pedestrian circulation system that better directs and controls pedestrian and automobile circulation, safety and protects neighborhoods.
- Enhancement of open space, parks and water access. Completion of San Domingo Creek Park and the completion of the extension of the Nature Trail.
- Planning and implementation of mitigation projects related to climate change and sea level rise to keep the viability of the community and neighborhoods into the future.
- A new water well and system improvements for long term safety and security.

Chapter 1: Land Use and Growth Management

INTRODUCTION

The character of St. Michaels has evolved from its rich history as a maritime community to a quaint small waterfront town which provides our residents and visitors a wide array of residential and commercial opportunities. This plan seeks to maintain our historic character by guiding new development and redevelopment efforts through the creation and implementation of zoning regulations and environmental regulations focused on the core of our Town. The Commissioners of St. Michaels continue to support their limited growth policy concentrating primarily on rehabilitation and redevelopment rather than the extension of the Town's municipal boundaries. There are a few relatively small areas that could be developed within the existing town limits as further noted in this chapter and also a few other potential annexation areas as shown on the potential growth and annexation map in chapter 2, Municipal Growth and Development Regulations.

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

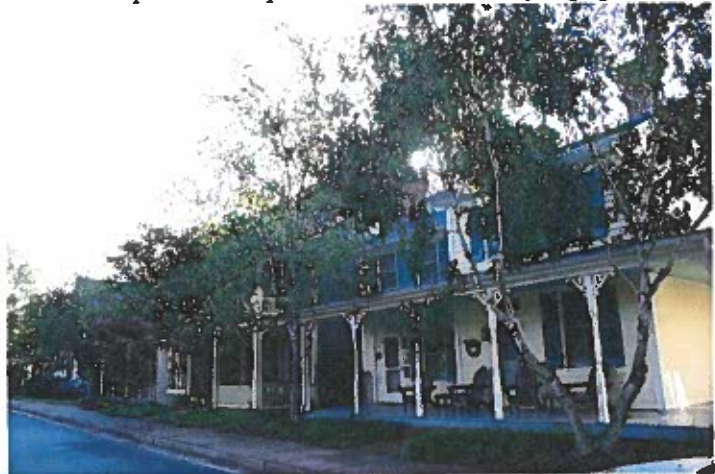
Although St. Michaels is a small community, we share some of the same land use, growth, and development issues of larger towns. Our community is concerned with maintaining our unique historic water-oriented character. We are concerned about over-development within the town, as well as inappropriate development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

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

EXISTING LAND USE

Residential Areas

Approximately half of the Town's land is devoted to residential use, characterized by single family homes on half acre lots or smaller. As an older community, St.



Michaels has many homes and entire neighborhoods that are on very small and/or narrow lots. This gives many sections of town a village feel while still lying in the rural setting of Maryland's Eastern Shore.

Residential Gateways

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

Commercial Areas

St. Michaels has two dominant areas of commercial activity. One commercial section is situated along both sides of Talbot Street, providing the majority of goods and services for the day-to-day needs of residents and contains most of the shops as well as some restaurants that appeal to tourists. A second area of commercial activity is located adjacent to the



harbor. Larger restaurants, inns, and the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum are there. Fremont Street, which lies immediately to the west of Talbot Street has long been recognized as an area suitable for neighborhood commercial redevelopment. In recent years, the Police Station, the St. Michaels Library and several small businesses and restaurants have located in that area. The Town, recognizing the value of this area, is investing in stormwater, street and sidewalk upgrades in an effort to promote the continued re-development of this street.

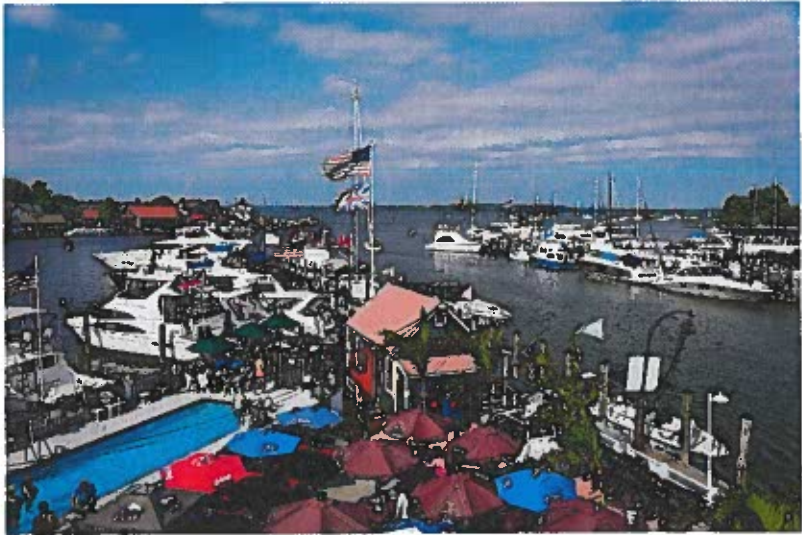
Industrial Areas

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

Maritime Uses

The town has a special category of commercial land use related to our waterfront setting; Maritime Commercial, including commercial activities that are water dependent on their nature. They include boatyards, fuel docks, marinas, and restaurants and inns that have docks and landings. Areas designated for loading and unloading commercial shellfish and fin fish should be protected by appropriate zoning and other regulations. Existing commercial activity on our harbor should be protected by limiting commercial waterfront uses to these commercially zoned areas.

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



Waterfront Development

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

Museums

The economic impact of the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum to the Town of St. Michaels is substantial. The museum's waterfront campus occupies ~~more than 18-20~~ acres with approximately 18%, fronting on St. Michaels Harbor. The museum and their surrounding lands carry a Maritime Museum zoning designation which is specific to the use and operation of the museum. The museum continues to expand their exhibits and educational programs concentrating on preserving and exploring the history, environment and people of Chesapeake Bay. They recently opened a new visitor's welcome center with exhibits and outdoor spaces.

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

The Classic Motor Museum (CMM) is dedicated to appreciating and showcasing automotive innovation and adaptation while at the same time exposing future generations of Talbot County and the Eastern Shore young adults to that heritage and its contributions.

Community Parks

St. Michaels is proud of its myriads of public parks, ranging from small pocket parks, located throughout the Town to the three waterfront parks fronting on the Harbor, and San Domingo Creek. These parks offer scenic overlooks, passive recreation opportunities, temporary mooring for boaters and a newly created kayak launching ramp. In addition, the Town offers a large childrens park with playground equipment and picnicking facilities which lies adjacent to a 1.3-mile nature trail which is accessible for pedestrians and bicyclists. Plans are underway for extending the nature trail another 1.25 miles. In 2024, the Town purchased 7.6 acres for a new waterfront park. After extensive public input a master plan was completed for the future development of the San Domingo Creek Park (See Chapter 9, Parks and Recreation and Open Space).

Agricultural and Resource Conservation Areas

Proximity to agricultural and resource conservation activities help anchor the rural setting of St. Michaels and plays an important role in defining the Town's character and sense of place. The transition from agriculture to developed areas establishes a sense of arrival into St. Michaels and is crucial in defining the feel of the Town. The Town has various resource conservation areas near the Town boundaries that limit growth, including Canton Park Farm at the West of Railroad Avenue. The property known as Miles Point at the northern limit of Town contains 72 acres placed under conservation easement and back into agricultural production increasing the overall acreage of undeveloped lands within the Town. Additionally, the Marea Terrace development at the southern entry of Town has a resource conservation covenant along the front portion of the subdivision to preserve the rural entry and the Inn at Perry Cabin intends to place the front portion of their property at the Northern portion of Town under an agriculture covenant.

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

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

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

FUTURE LAND USE & POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

Table 1-2 1-1

Future Land Use
Town of St. Michaels Area Calculations

<i>Zone</i>	<i>Area Sq. Ft</i>	<i>Acres</i>	<i>Acres*</i>
Agriculture and Conservation	7,280,572.00	167.14	144.73
Commercial	1,809,279.20	41.54	41.55
Maritime	1,088,608.60	25.00	25.00
Residential	17,133,369.60	393.33	398.46
Waterfront Development	1,131,402.90	25.97	26.03
Residential Gateway	5,509,258.60	126.34	125.77
Public Facilities	1,302,691.00	29.91	29.96

* Talbot County Public Works, GIS, 2024

Total Town Acres = 791.50

Existing land uses typically depict the land uses that are developed or currently designated while the Future land uses typically include all the land uses anticipated for development or growth towards build out. St. Michaels is a small town and mostly developed so these are practically the same. There are a few parcels as noted below within particular land uses that provide opportunities for additional development into the future.

Agriculture and Conservation: There is one agricultural land use property in St. Michaels of approximately 140 acres known as the "Strausburg Farm Property" with an agricultural and conservation land use. It is utilized as farmland with a conservation easement over a majority of the site. However, it has an approved 10 lot subdivision which could be developed in the future. There are 60 additional acres of conservation land uses located in the county and sited between the Strausburg Farm property and the main town boundary that could be added in to the town in the future, but not anticipated to be annexed at this time. If it was added, it would remain in conservation.

Commercial Land Uses: The town has 41.55 acres and mostly all developed. There are two vacant lots that the Town owned at the corner of Fremont and Canton Street of approximately 13,000 s.f. that were recently sold and anticipated to be developed for commercial uses and one small lot of 4,257 s.f. across the street. There are also some opportunities for redevelopment or second floor additions on existing commercial sites. There is one vacant Gateway Commercial site of



1.8 acres located on the south side of town where a previous hotel development was proposed but deemed to be incompatible with the small-town character for the community. There is also one other 3-acre site near the southern boundary that could possibly be a mixed use or combination of redevelopment and new development.

Maritime Commercial & Maritime Marine: There are four Maritime Commercial sites in town that are developed and currently in use. One site, the Crab Claw Restaurant, was recently sold and is anticipated to be redeveloped and raised to protect it from flooding due to sea level rise but maintained as a restaurant use. The Maritime Marine land use is restricted to the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum. Their plans have three phases. Phase I is the Plummer Center for Collections on Mill Street (completed). Phase II is the recently completed a new Welcome Center and parking. Phase III is under consideration, planning and specific uses are yet to be determined. The campus area is 20 acres.

Residential & Residential Gateway: An inventory of vacant lots was performed in 2024 and accounted for 25 potential vacant residential lots with majority of those residential lots located north of Railroad Avenue. Renovation and redevelopment are likely to continue and some second-floor additions and accessory dwelling units are possible. R-2 Zoning is within the Historic District. In recent years there have been some redevelopment of houses for their historic value and as rentals has occurred.

There is one large residential land use in the town that is undeveloped. That is a Residential Gateway site located on the north side of town adjacent to Perry Cabin Park. It is 27 acres. The zoning restricts this site to 1 unit per acre with a potential of 27 new homes if developed. The property is split by a Department of Transportation right of way which will be utilized for the future expansion of a nature trail. There is also a 1.7 acre residentially zoned site on Dodson Avenue that was previously used as a construction storage yard. It has a potential of 6-8 new single-family lots.

Other sites include a vacant 19,110 s.f. site on Boundary Lane and Talbot St. which the Town is considering selling for residential development and could accommodate several single-family houses or duplexes. Chesapeake Avenue and Miles Avenue also contain a few vacant platted lots, but also contain wetlands so new homes would likely to be four or five units. Overall, it is not anticipated to build more than 50 units to the town over the next ten-year cycle of the plan with replacement or new, or accessory housing unless the 27-acre site is developed.

Waterfront Development: Perry Cabin is a unique 24 acres with a historic Main Inn of 78 rooms and other recreational amenities. They have Waterfront Development zoning that is geared towards their particular designs. Master plans include the potential for several smaller hotel or guest buildings that could be accommodated over time.

Public Facilities: Talbot County provides sanitary sewer service and operates a 29-acre Talbot County Sanitary District sewage treatment site in town. Delmarva Power and Light has an electric utility substation on Grace Street. There is a public work storage garage and operations building on Glory Avenue.

The Town provides water service and has two water pumping stations and a water storage tank in town with plans to develop a third well and pumping station. A site has yet to be selected. The Town administrative office was recently relocated to an existing office building within the San Domingo Creek Park located between W. Chew Ave. and Boundary Lane.

Parks: There is not a separate land use for parks within the Town. They are incorporated into residential land use throughout the town. In 2023, the Town purchased the former Environmental Concern property and developed the San Domingo Creek Master Plan which was adopted in 2024 (See Chapter 9, Parks, Recreation and Open Space).

FUTURE LAND USE CHANGES

The Comprehensive Plan focuses on infill, revitalization and redevelopment within the Town's current boundaries rather than significant expansion of the Town municipal boundaries. As such, the following in-fill projects previously noted in this chapter future land uses are anticipated possible changes that may occur for the next 10 years. In accordance with this vision, Talbot County has designated "Countryside Preservation" land uses surrounding the Town as a protective buffer from development. Maintaining that land use will ensure the growth of the town will be more internally directed to in-fill and redevelopment. However, there are three potential annexation areas that may be of consideration and noted in Chapter 2.

Future Land Use (Map 1-1) and Growth Tiers (Map 1-2) are attached. Future Land Use depicts the various land uses with the potential for growth as previously outlined. The Growth Tiers Map is designed to show existing service areas and potential service for future growth. The last part of this chapter includes objectives and strategies to implement the land uses of the Town.

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

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

VISION

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

OBJECTIVES AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

- 1.1 Preserve the Town's unique historic identity in the larger landscape.
 - 1.1.1 Support the County's greenbelt concept to define town edges and to ensure that County development along the borders of the town does not detract from the community's image.
 - 1.1.2 Continue to participate in the County's Technical Advisory Committee, providing the Commissioners and Planning Commission an opportunity to comment on any land subdivision or development proposals in locations near town.
 - 1.1.3 Consistent with The Annotated Code of Maryland (2012), establish a process with the County, similar to their existing technical advisory committee, for the purpose of development, annexation and/or rezoning of land within the Town's "Areas of Interest."
 - 1.1.4 Schedule regular working sessions with representatives of the Talbot County Planning Commission and the St. Michaels Planning Commission and staff to discuss projects which may affect the Town.
- 1.2 Ensure management tools for Town growth are adequate, effective, and consistently executed.
 - 1.2.1 To accommodate planned growth, evaluate existing ordinances and fee structures governing necessary services and community facilities. This includes but is not limited to stormwater management, public water, public sewer, infrastructures, parks, open space, roads and public landscaping.
 - 1.2.2 Continue to review, establish and adopt environmental ordinances as required by State law.
 - 1.2.3 Evaluate policies to ensure that developers pay for all the direct and associated costs of development as well as for independent studies of development impacts when such studies are determined by the Town Commissioners to be necessary.
 - 1.2.4 Ensure that development occurs within those areas as identified on the St. Michaels Growth Tier Map (Map 1-3) as incorporated within the St. Michaels Comprehensive Plan.

- 1.2.5 Support appropriate infill and mixed-use development projects that are compatible with the existing community fabric.
- 1.3 Ensure Town codes are effective, enforced, and simplified to the extent possible.
 - 1.3.1 Review permitting processes and procedures.
 - Conduct a comprehensive review of the Zoning Ordinance.
 - Conduct a comprehensive review of the Subdivision Ordinance.
- 1.4 Continue to work with those businesses on Rt. 33 within the commercial zone which borders the town boundaries to maintain and enhance the historic character of the Town.
 - 1.4.1 Continue to work with the County regarding the southern approach to the Town in an effort to implement and strengthen their gateway zoning and to restrict any expansion of this commercial district or intensification of its table of approved uses.
- 1.5 Enhance the development of the commercial district.
 - 1.5.1 Develop and implement a redevelopment plan for Fremont Street.
 - 1.5.2 Develop and implement a commercial street plan which encompasses pedestrian corridors, lighting, parking and aesthetics.
 - 1.5.3 Promote the use of funding sources available through the Sustainable Community Program, Legacy Plan and other grant opportunities.
 - 1.5.4 Investigate the benefits to the Town of establishing St. Michaels as a “Main Street Community.”
 - 1.5.5 Encourage business owners to maintain their storefronts in keeping with the historic character of the town.
 - 1.5.6 Continue to Support redevelopment of the Mill as a mixed-use project.
- 1.6 Recognize the concerns of multi-generational residential needs with consideration being given to accommodation for in-law suites or facilities for care givers.
- 1.7 Connectivity.
 - 1.7.1 Continue to evaluate the feasibility of burying or relocating utility lines.
 - 1.7.2 Pursue opportunities to optimize internet accessibility, connectivity and speed for

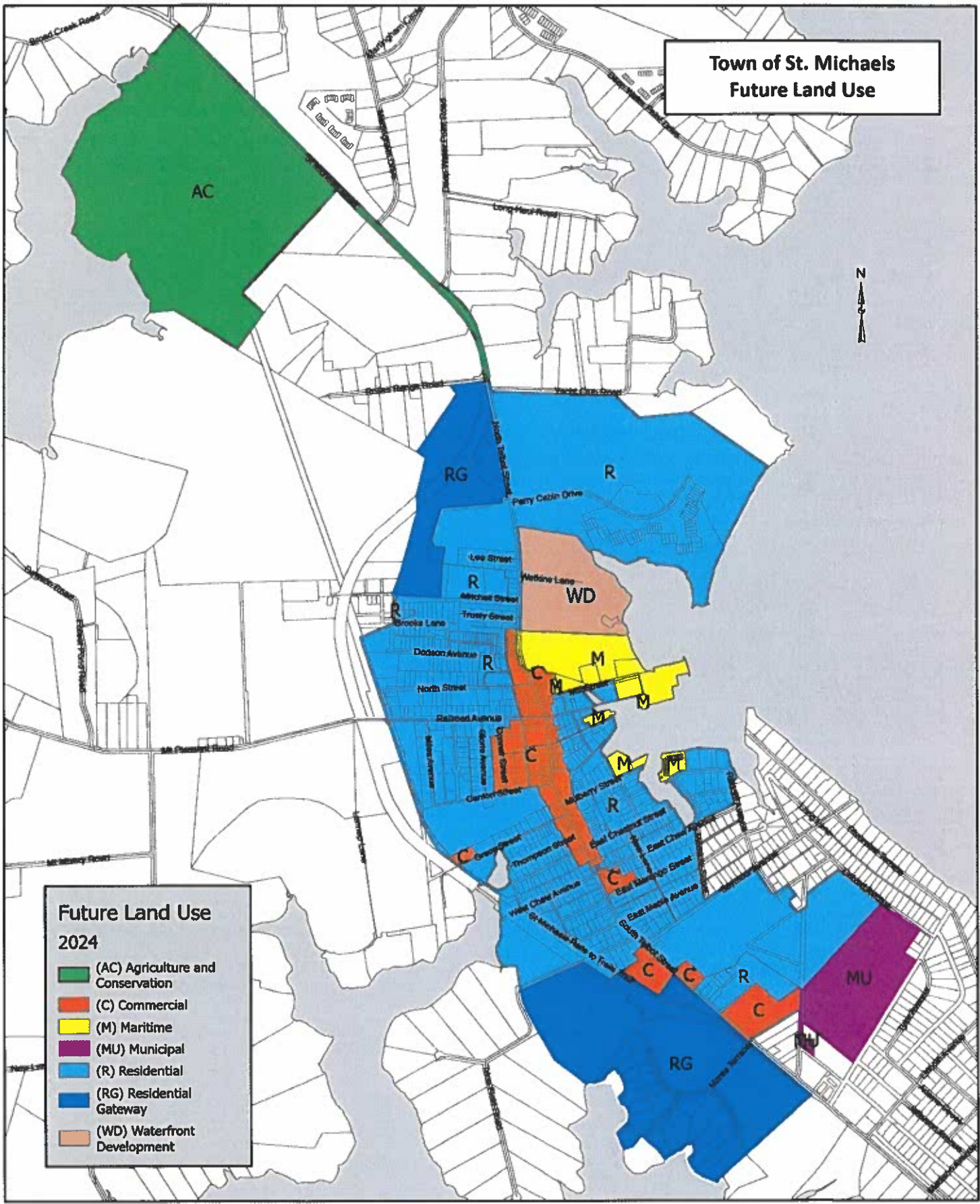
the businesses and residents of the Town in an effort to enhance economic opportunities.

- 1.7.3 Encourage the upgrade and construction of sidewalks, walking and bike paths, which will allow residents and visitors to pass from one end of St. Michaels to the other with as much ease as possible. Such improvements should enhance the ability of residents and visitors to safely walk or bike to businesses, restaurants, museums and other community amenities.

POLICIES

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

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

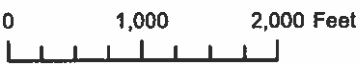


Town of St. Michaels
Future Land Use



Future Land Use
2024

- (AC) Agriculture and Conservation
- (C) Commercial
- (M) Maritime
- (MU) Municipal
- (R) Residential
- (RG) Residential Gateway
- (WD) Waterfront Development



MAP 1-1

Town of St. Michaels Growth Tiers



Note: Growth Tiers apply only to residential development.
SB 236 Adopted Sept 24, 2012.

Growth Tiers

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

0 1,000 2,000 Feet

MAP 1-2

Chapter 2: Municipal Growth and Development Regulations

INTRODUCTION

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



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

~~After October of 2009, an An~~ area may not be annexed by the Town of St. Michaels unless the impact of that annexation has been analyzed and made a part of this element as required by the State of Maryland. ~~This analysis was completed and included within this Chapter during the 2008 Plan update and updated herein.~~ The Town recognizes that the inclusion of an area in this element is a *prerequisite* for any consideration of annexation in the future or, until this Plan is amended. The Town has no plans to expand the municipal boundaries with the possible exception of the areas designated on Map 2-1 "Areas of Potential Growth & Annexation" and associated sub area Maps 2-1a, b & c which are included at the end of this chapter.

~~adjacent to Rolles Range Road as noted below and shown on Map 2-1.~~ The update to this plan will therefore focus on infill, revitalization and redevelopment within the Town's current boundaries rather than extensive expansion of the Town. In making this decision, consideration was given to potential growth on those properties immediately adjacent to the Town and possible impacts associated with development as they relate to this Chapter. The Municipal Growth Element seeks to analyze potential growth in the Town of St. Michaels based on existing and projected land use policies. It will assess how that growth will impact existing and future facilities and services. Instead of using traditional population projections, which can become inaccurate over time due to the change of growth rates, this growth element seeks to understand how full build-out conditions in the Town would affect the Town's services and infrastructure.

While the Town is not concentrating on large scale expansion, there is one area which lies between Rolles Range Road and the Strausburg Farm area, which is the northwest boundary of the Town, which may be considered for possible annexation. The Town would plan that the

Rolles Range Road annexation area be a future land use of residential and should meet the priority funding criteria required in the Sewer Plan for Talbot County for proper sewer allocation. There are several areas in the County which lie either in immediate adjacency or close proximity to the Town of St. Michaels which if new development or redevelopment were to occur, may impact the many public services already granted to Town residents. These areas are noted in the following table and further identified on Map 2-2. ~~These lands are further described in that portion of this Chapter entitled “Areas of Mutual Interest”.~~

~~It should be noted that the original build-out analysis conducted in 2008 for the purpose of determining the impact of potential development on existing public facilities and services in the Town showed that capacity was available for an additional town build-out of 538 dwelling units. These numbers included the development of the Miles Point Property which was slated to include single family dwellings, limited commercial areas and a small hotel. Since that analysis was completed, the Miles Point property has been placed under a perpetual conservation easement eliminating the potential development of these lands and their need for such services.~~

~~As evidenced in the 2008 Plan adequate capacity was available to serve the proposed annexation areas as well as those “Areas of Mutual Interest”, should redevelopment occur at some future date. It should be noted that several areas which were proposed as future growth areas in the 2008 Plan have also been deleted from this plan update. Many areas noted as “Areas of Mutual Interest” are already developed and are served by Municipal water and County Sewer, so there is a very limited opportunity for future development/redevelopment. As will be noted in the following section, with the deletion of the Miles Point Development and several “Growth Areas” additional capacity for residential build out is available. Chapter I, Land Use and Growth Management identified opportunities for future development potential from infill, redevelopment and from some minor annexation areas. These areas will be discussed in more detail in this chapter as they pertain to potential development over the next ten-year cycle of this plan.~~

The State of Maryland Annotated Code, Land Use Article (Division 1, Title 3, Subtitle 1), which governs the required elements of a Comprehensive Plan, calls for the inclusion of a ‘Development Regulations Article.’ As such, the Town considers our development regulations to be consistent with Smart Growth-related policies. St. Michaels continues to look for innovative ways to promote social, economic and environmental development and remains flexible in our plans, mostly in the use of general land uses shown in this Plan and the use of various overlay zones to encourage non-traditional development practices. Development regulations are continuously being reviewed and updated based on the desires of the community. For instance, in 2023-2024, there were new regulations adopted related to formula or chain store development reviews, tree mitigation, Historic District Commission’s authority, Gateway Commercial design standards, setbacks for accessory uses, Cannabis, noise enforcement and outdoor burning and Short-Term Rentals.

ANALYSIS OF DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY AND BUILD-OUT CONDITIONS

The Town has determined that future growth should be limited to within municipal boundaries and those areas noted for future annexation. ~~Calculations for those “Areas of Mutual Interest” have also been included and are based on the computations contained in the 2008~~

~~Comprehensive Plan. While these areas are not identified as future areas of annexation, they are being identified and included in this Chapter as they are areas around the Town that have a direct impact or receive services from the Town of St. Michaels currently. Should any of these the Areas of Mutual Interest between the town and the county areas request annexation for future servicing purposes, the Town recognizes a Plan update would be required to annex any of the “Areas of Mutual Interest.” Previous comprehensive plans analyzed “Areas of Mutual Interest” (with Talbot County Government) as potential annexation areas. This plan does not do so but recognizes that these are mostly existing, developed properties and unlikely to be annexed. Instead, the plan focuses on potential in-fill development estimates and possibilities for likely development opportunities in limited annexation areas over the next 10-year planning cycle. Areas of Mutual Interest could be considered if there was ever the opportunity to gain support of over 25% of the property owners and registered voter residents as required by State law.~~

~~but recognizes under this current plan that adequate facilities would be available to annex any of these areas. If the demographics of St. Michaels should significantly change, the population estimates generated may not accurately account for growth. Build out numbers were generated using the analytical processes within Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and Microsoft Excel to calculate buildable area on existing lots.~~

~~To create a baseline for assessing the differences between the existing Town boundary and those “Areas of Mutual Interest” any build out numbers were generated for the Town of St. Michaels simulating infill and community redevelopment.~~

~~It was assumed that areas within existing residential zones would experience infill development where possible and noted in Chapter 1 and likely developed over 10 years. Some assumptions that were made include:~~

- ~~• New development would be similar to historic patterns. Residential development records were reviewed from 2020 – 2024.~~
- ~~• Densities were calculated based on Zoning Ordinance allowances.~~
- ~~• Commercial square footage was considered for vacant land availability and potential projects. Commercial growth standard of 10,000 s.f./acre is applied.~~
- ~~• Opportunities for annexation land are mostly developed and serviced with water and sewer and would need to be analyzed and factored in or out over time.~~

~~After all the data was gathered, as detailed above, the number of existing dwellings was subtracted from the total possible dwellings the parcel could sustain, creating the build out number for that parcel. For areas already built to its designated density, or previously developed at a higher density, the total buildable area was zero. In comparing the numbers from the 2008 Plan to this Plan update,~~

~~It should be noted that the Miles Point Property which was to be developed with 278 homes, has been placed under a conservation easement with no development proposed. Therefore, even with the possible annexations, the number of projected dwelling units is considerably less than that set out in the 2008 plan. Based on the 2008 Plan, the projected number of dwelling units would have been 864 dwelling units. The proposed annexation area, which is adjacent to Rolles Range Road, if developed under the Gateway Residential standards of 1 home per 5 acres would result~~

~~in an additional 17 dwelling units, four of the lots are already improved with dwelling units. The proposed annexation area, which fronts on Brooks Lane, if developed at the Residential 1 standard of 1 home per 7200 s. feet would result in an additional 8 dwelling units. Combining the total dwellings permitted as noted in the 2008 Plan (1143-278 (Miles Point) = 865 + 21 (annexations) results in a potential build-out of 886 dwelling units. According to the tax records for the Town of St. Michaels, there are 711 dwelling units in the Town leaving adequate capacity for an additional 260 dwelling units without the need to upgrade the facilities currently available to the residents of the Town.~~

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

Potential Residential Development

Building permit records indicate that in-fill residential development averaged 7 units per year for 2020-2023. However, these included an annexation area and development of the one 7 lot townhouse project and a few single-family homes. Some of these included accessory units and 2nd floor apartments, and renovations. Considering most lots in town are developed, new units are limited with exceptions as previously noted. A 2024 land use inventory and research yield the following potential for the 10-year planning period.

Type:	Yearly	Potential Build-Out
<i>Infill, 2nd floor apartments, and accessory units estimated: 2/year</i>		<i>20</i>
<i>Residential Vacant Lots, all of town = 25 (2024)</i>	<i>3/year</i>	<i>24</i>
<i>Dodson Site (1.7-acre site, residential) = 6-8 lots</i>	<i>0/year</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Residential Gateway (north town site, 27 acres)</i>	<i>0/year</i>	<i>27</i>
<i>Strausburg Site (well & septic service)</i>	<i>0/year</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>TOTAL:</i>	<i>5/year</i>	<i>89</i>

Potential residential annexation areas have sewer/water services.

Potential Commercial/Office Development

As previously noted, there are only a few vacant lots available for commercial/office development. Retail and office spaces typically come and go and are remodeled and renovated over time. Height limits also restrict vertical development to 2.5 stories. Growth opportunities are noted below:

Potential
Build-Out (10 years)

Gateway Commercial (1) 1.8 acres 10,000 s.f./acre = 18,000 s.f.

Gateway Commercial/Mixed Use (2) 3 acres. 1 acre commercial = 10,000 s.f.

Fremont Street (3 sites) 17,257 s.f. lots @ 25% = 4,315 s.f.

Potential conversion of houses in commercial zones = 10,000 s.f.
(estimated conversion of 4 houses 2,500 s.f. over the next 10 years)

Potential 2nd floor hotel (6 units) to Town Center project = 6,888. s.f.

TOTAL = 49,203 s.f.

Potential commercial annexation areas have sewer/water services.

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

Reference Name	Proposed Zoning	Use	Density	Total Dwellings (permitted)	Existing Dwellings	Dwelling Balance
In-Town	N/A	N/A	N/A	865	711	153
Potential Annexation Area "A"	Residential 1	Low density residential	1 du/7,200 sq. ft.	17	4	13
Potential Annexation Area "B"	Residential 1	Low density residential	1 du/7,200 sq. ft.	8	0	8
Areas of Mutual Interest						
Area 1	Residential Gateway (RG)	Large Lot Residential	1 du./5 acres	16	14	2
	Agriculture B	Greenway	1 du./20	0	0	0

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

AREAS OF POTENTIAL ANNEXATION AREAS

Previous Comprehensive Plans anticipated that areas of mutual concern could potentially be annexed into the Town. Although that is still possible, this plan takes a more limited approach to possibilities for annexation and separates these areas from those of mutual concern between the Town and Talbot County.

There are three designated areas of potential annexation as defined by geographic areas: north, west and south. The area east of Town is the St. Michaels Harbor and Miles River (See Areas of Potential Growth and Annexation Map). These are described as follows:

Potential Annexation Area (A) #1

North Area (1) Range Rolles Road

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

West Area (2) Chester Park Neighborhood

This area consists of 19 properties and abuts the western town boundary. It is a combination of vacant and developed properties with single family houses. The only access is through the Town and it has existing sewer and water services. The drainage system in this area is being studied, and these properties should be considered in any improvements due to the inter-relationship of drainage systems across boundary lines. In addition, annexing this area would enhance police

service for the area. Several residents have expressed an interest in being a part of the Town and it is likely an annexation petition with an adequate number of signatures could be obtained to support the annexation.

South Area (3) Commercial/Residential

A third annexation area may be possible on the south end of town on Talbot St. (Hwy 33). There are a few existing commercial properties including the St. Michaels Fire Station. Two vacant residential properties could be included with only a few potential houses. Woodside Avenue could also be included in the town and serve as a re-aligned entrance to the public-school properties to help alleviate traffic congestion into the school in the morning.

~~Potential Annexation Area (B)~~

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

AREAS OF MUTUAL INTEREST TO THE TOWN AND COUNTY

Each area as designated below corresponds to the following Map 2-2 (Areas of Mutual Interest) and represents those areas within the County which are directly at abut or are in close proximity to the municipal boundaries of the Town. Further development or redevelopment in these areas may have an impact on the Town, and as such the Town has an interest in monitoring such activities. However, should the property owners in these areas, desire annexation, at some future date in time, the Town of St. Michaels would consider such request in that the properties are adjacent to the municipal boundaries and adequate public facilities would be available. However, it should be noted that annexation can only occur at the request of the property owners. Also, the county's land use map shows that there are many conservation and preservation land uses that are located near the town, but within the county. These land uses serve to help maintain the quality of life of the small town of St. Michaels by serving as a protective buffer from sprawl (See county map 2-3 at the end of this chapter). In general, the areas of mutual concern between the town and county are as follows.

Area 1

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

Area 2

Area 2 is adjacent to the Town's western boundary corresponding with the location of a proposed bypass/parkway. With the apparent demise of the bypass, this area has been targeted for the extension of the nature trail. Both Talbot County and the Town support this effort. Development of any other nature would be inconsistent with the parks and recreation element of our plan. However, the annexation of the existing Chester Park neighborhood as previously noted would be beneficial since access only occurs through the town and various drainage problems are shared between the area and the town.

Area 3 Rio Vista/Bentley Hay

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

Area 4

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

Area 5

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

ASSESSMENT OF IMPACTS ON INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

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

Public Schools

St. Michaels' students attend the St. Michaels School Complex, housing an elementary and middle/high school. These schools can account for a State Rated Capacity of 491 and 503 students, respectively. Currently, the cumulative student population is 758, which is well below the above noted capacity figures. Should the annexation and full build out of the above referenced area (A as shown on Map 2-1) occurs, it is anticipated

that an additional seven (7) students could be incorporated in the St. Michaels school population. The calculations for public school impacts use a rate of 0.2 elementary school students per dwelling, and a rate of 0.25 middle/high school students per dwelling.

Libraries

The Talbot County Public Library System operates a branch in the Town of St. Michaels. The facility is 3,000 8,668 square feet offering enough square footage for a population of 30,000 people, according to the American Library Association. The library has ~~indicated that future expansion plans to add approximately 3,000 square feet of~~ to the facility ~~may be required in the future~~ to accommodate the ever-increasing needs of St. Michaels' residents and visitors.

Public Safety

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

Water & Sewerage

Based on the total water usage from existing residences and the residents of Rio Vista who are already on the Town of St. Michaels water system, the Town of St. Michaels is within the limits of their Water Appropriation and Use Permit from the Maryland Department of the Environment. Should the additional ~~in town possible build-out residences be constructed,~~ growth and annexation occur, the water usage would increase to ~~248,031~~ an estimated 183,375 gallons per day which is still within the limits of the Water Appropriation and Use Permit.

~~If the Town of St. Michaels were fully built out and the potential annexation area was annexed and fully built out, the total water usage would rise to 365,211 gallons per day, which would still be within the limits of the Water Appropriation and Use Permit. As the build-out analysis indicates the potential demand for additional development due to annexation would be 13 units. Assuming that each unit would contribute 185 gallons per unit additional flows would be 2,405 gallons per day. Any existing units in the potential annexation areas (Rio Vista is an example) would already have allocated capacity in the system. It is clear that full build-out is not constrained by sewer capacity.~~

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

Recreation

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

Stormwater Management Systems

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

To reduce redundancy, further discussion of stormwater management will be completed in the Water Resources Element of this Comprehensive Plan. In addition, Chapter 13, Climate Resilience discusses stormwater and sea level rise impacts on the land uses of the Town. The challenges from climate change and sea level rise are extensive and the Town is taking a variety of actions to protect the Town, various land uses and maintain a viable community into the future.

Financing of Infrastructure Expansions Needed

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

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

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

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

Protection of Sensitive Areas

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

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

VISION

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

OBJECTIVES AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

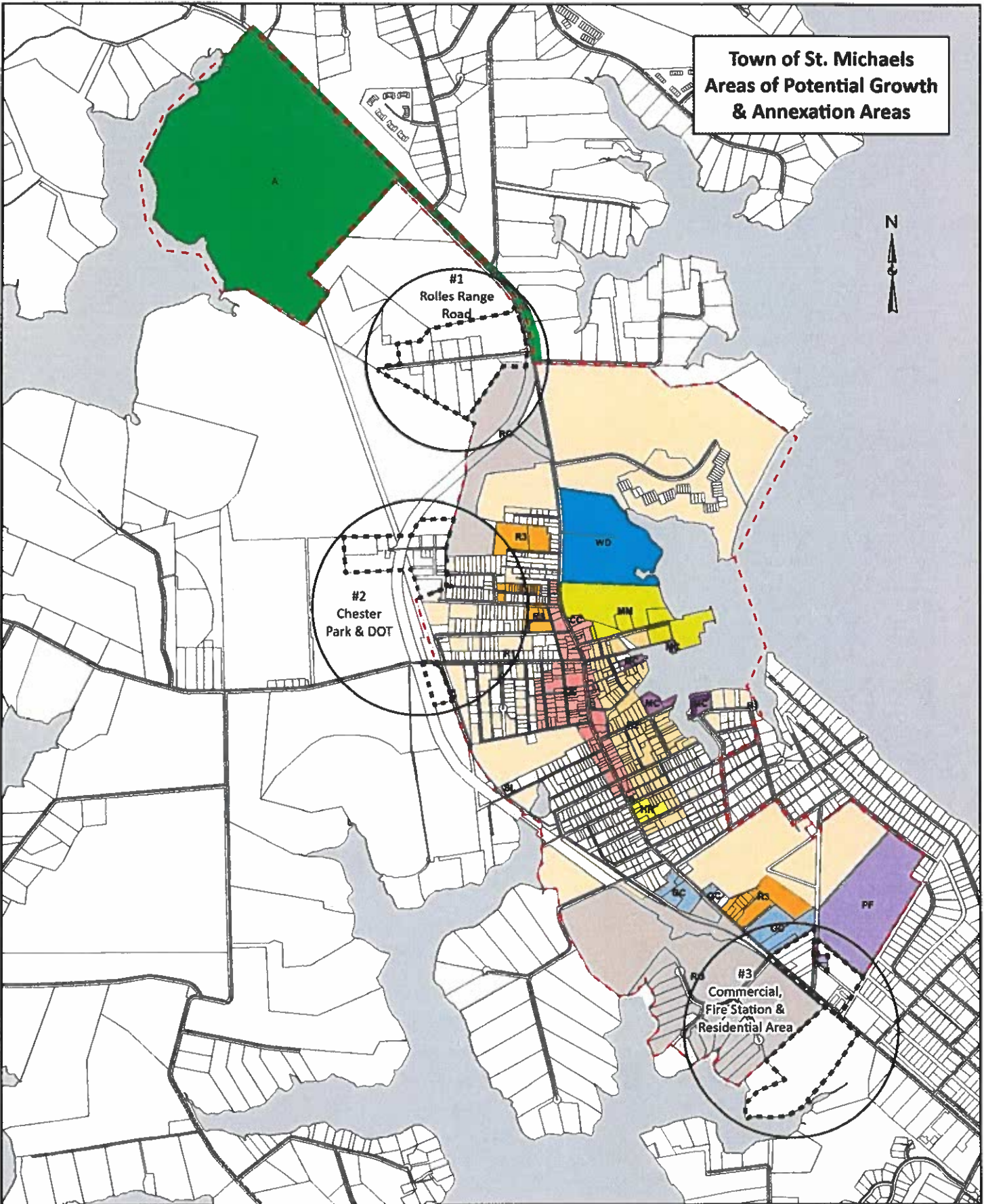
- 2.1 Ensure future annexations occur within the appropriate zoning classifications as dictated in this element.
 - 2.1.1 Preserve those areas identified for possible greenway and/or park/trail development.
 - 2.1.2 Ensure development is consistent with the Town's Tier Map.
 - 2.1.3 Monitor growth in residential areas.
- 2.2 Coordinate with Talbot County to monitor development on those lands identified as "Areas of Mutual Interest" to assure such development is consistent with the goals of the Town.
- 2.3 Monitor community and public facilities to ensure that upgrades and additions occur when needed.
- 2.4 Ensure sufficient police, ~~medical emergency and fire station~~ staff exists for increased demands of the tourist industry and population. Coordinate with Talbot County and the Fire Department for emergency services in town that are not managed by the Town.
 - 2.4.1 Work with the Talbot County Government and the Board of Education to improve a secondary access to the school complex in St. Michaels from Woodside Ave.
- 2.5 Work cooperatively with Talbot County to ensure those areas identified as "Areas of Mutual Interest" are developed in a manner consistent with the goals of the Town.

- 2.6 The Planning Commission shall serve as a recommending body that provides flexible land development regulations and reviews developments to consistency with the Comprehensive Plan.
- 2.7 The development regulations element shall encourage:
- The use of flexible development regulations to promote innovative and cost saving site design and protect the environment; and
 - Within the areas designated for growth in the plan; and
 - Economic development through the use of innovative techniques; and
 - Streamlined review of applications for development, including permit review and subdivision plat review.

POLICIES

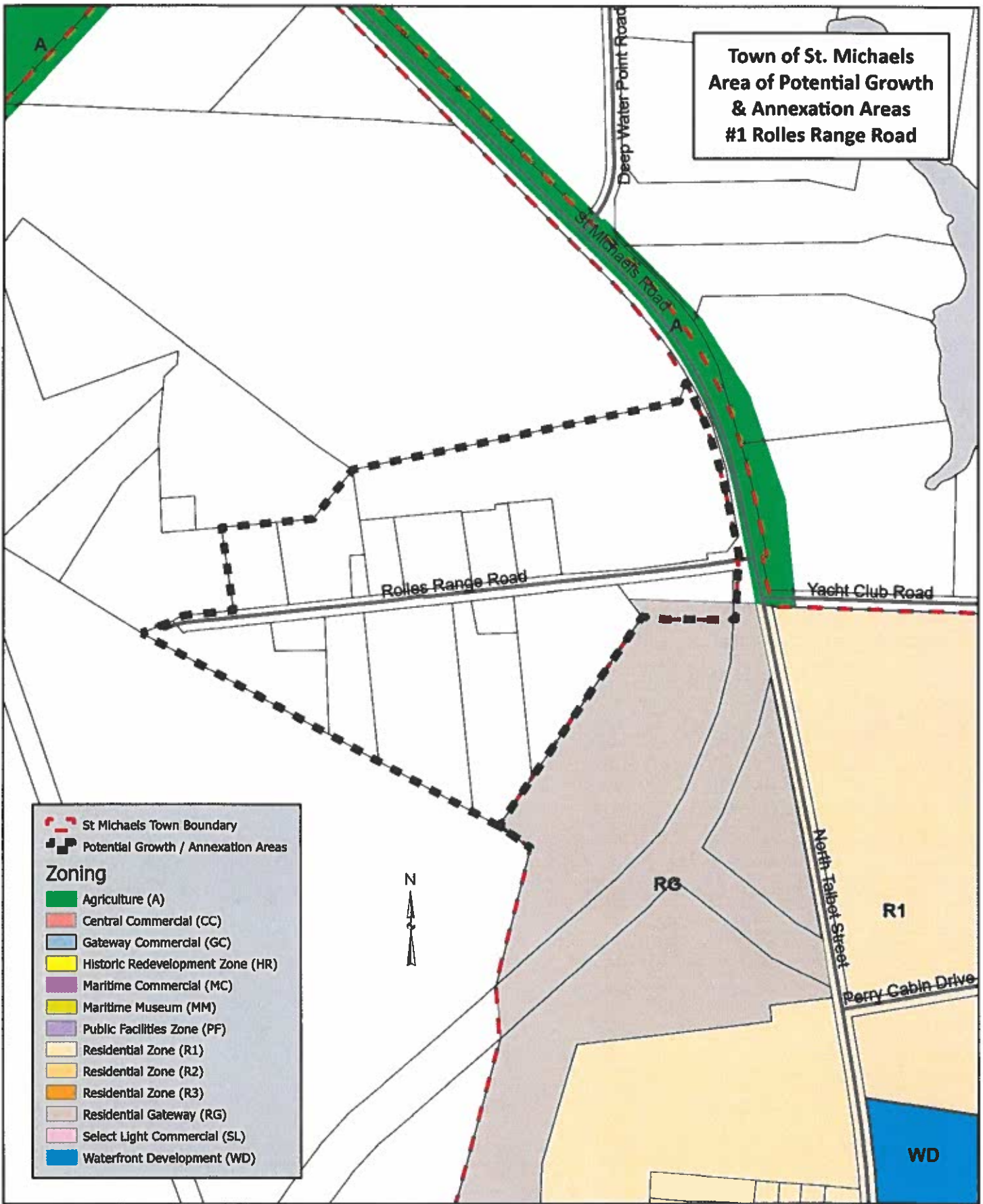
The Town maintains a policy that developers shall bear the costs associated with installation and maintenance of water, sewer, sidewalk, stormwater and other infrastructure related systems caused by new development to reduce the financial burden of the Town and neighboring properties.

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

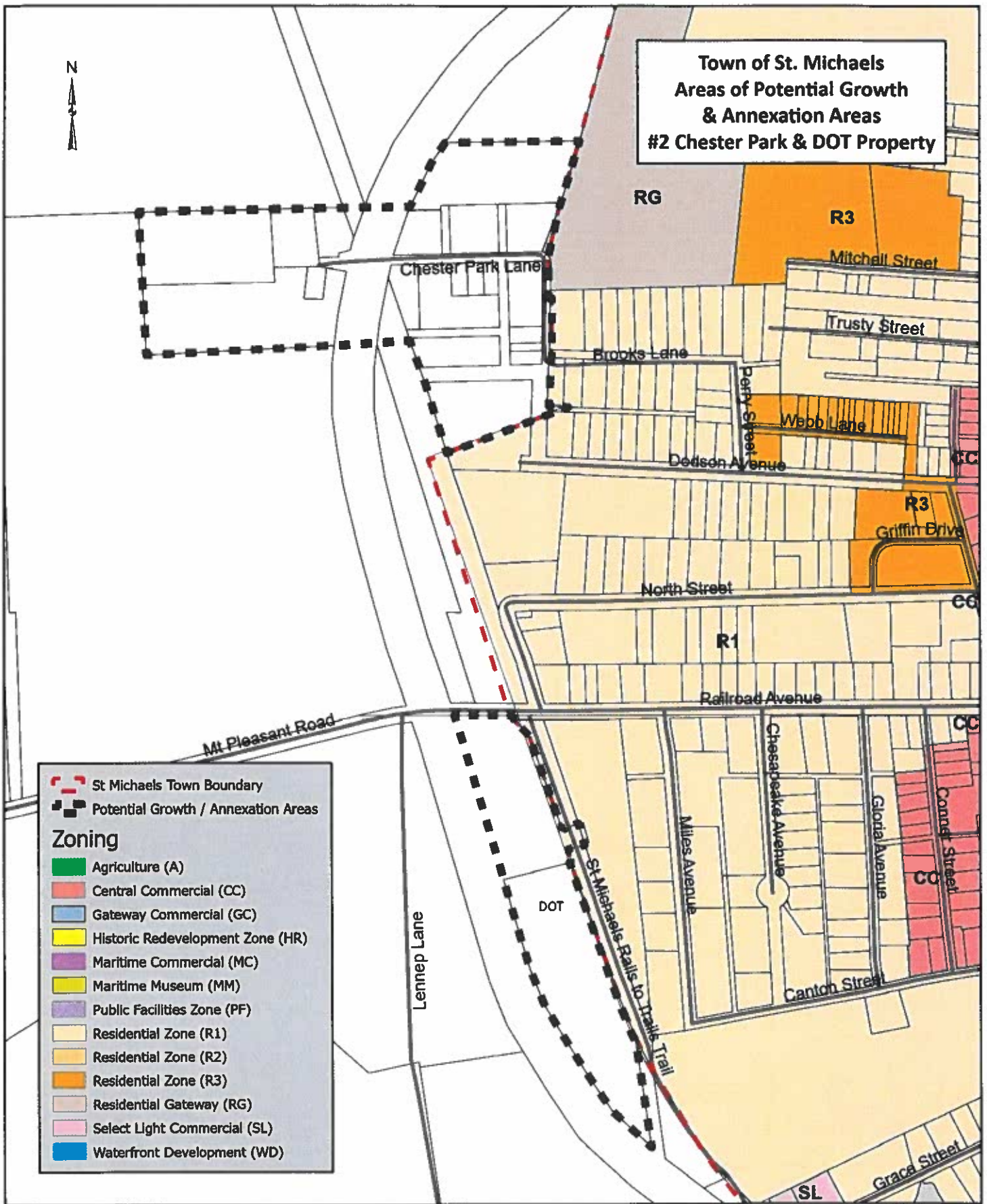


0 1,000 2,000 Feet

MAP 2-1

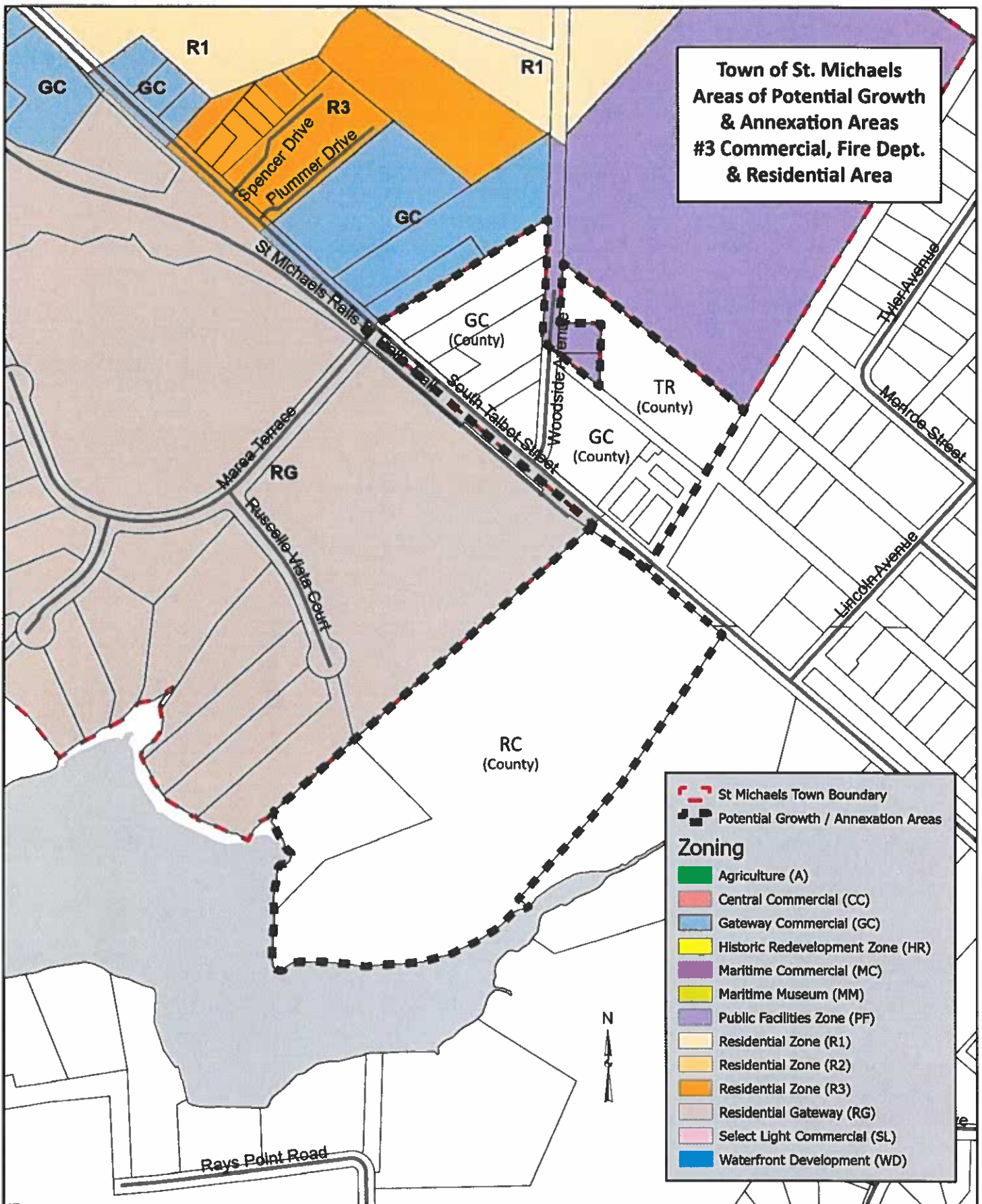


MAP 2-1a North Area



0 200 400 Feet

MAP 2-1b West Area



0 200 400 Feet

MAP 2-1c South Area

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



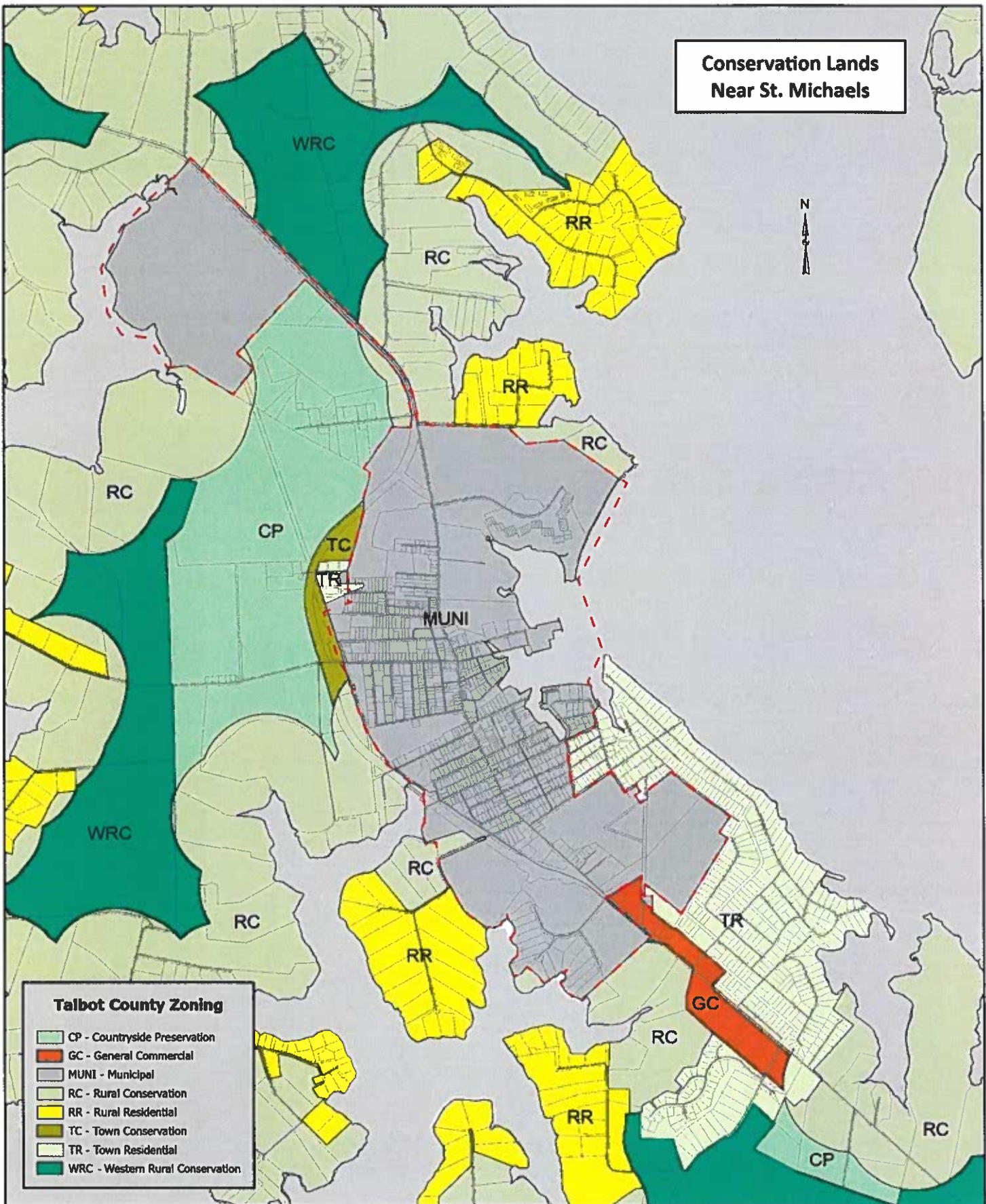
Area Of Mutual Interest

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4A
- 4B
- 5

0 1,000 2,000 Feet

MAP 2-2

Talbot County Public Works
February 21, 2024



Conservation Lands
Near St. Michaels

N

Talbot County Zoning

- CP - Countryside Preservation
- GC - General Commercial
- MUNI - Municipal
- RC - Rural Conservation
- RR - Rural Residential
- TC - Town Conservation
- TR - Town Residential
- WRC - Western Rural Conservation

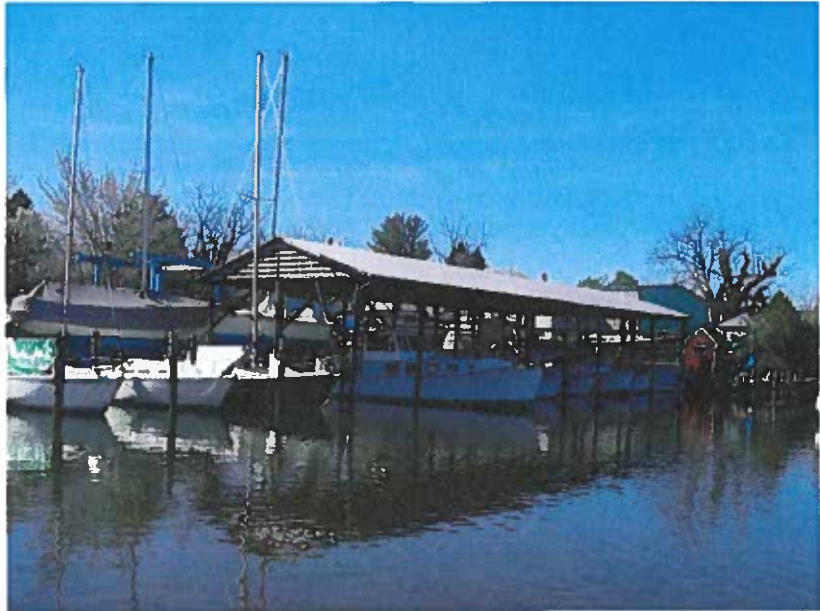
0 1,000 2,000 Feet

MAP 2-3

Chapter 3: Environmental Resources and Sensitive Areas Protection

INTRODUCTION

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

Topography, Drainage and Steep Slopes

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



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

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

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

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

Soil Characteristics

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

Ground Water

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

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

Vegetation

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

Other Features

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

Wildlife and Habitat

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

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



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

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

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

100-year Floodplains

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

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

The Town ~~should continue to actively monitors~~ the potential impacts associated with global warming, the rise of tidal water levels and the severity of storms. The purpose of such monitoring is to ensure that changes to the Town Code can be made as necessary to protect the residents and their properties. The Climate Change and Sea Level Rise Commission has a variety of projects that they are currently working on to mitigate sea level rise and flooding (See Chapter 13, Climate Resilience for details).

Non-tidal Wetlands

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

Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Program

In accordance with the Critical Area Act, all affected jurisdictions were required to develop and implement a Critical Area Protection Program to control the use and development within their territorial limits. The 1,000-foot Critical Area boundary is defined as any land 1,000 feet from the mean high tide or landward edge of tidal marsh. The Town of St. Michaels adopted a Critical Area Program along with a series of implementing provisions contained in the Town's Zoning, Subdivision and Site Plan Review Regulations. The Town of St. Michaels has areas of our developed core, predominately lands adjacent to the harbor and San Domingo Creek that are in a Buffer Management Area. The policies and goals included in the Critical Area Program were developed to accommodate future growth of the Town while addressing the associated environmental impacts. Pursuant to 2008 Maryland Laws 119, effective July 1, 2008, the Maryland General Assembly authorized the Critical Area Commission to promulgate certain regulations for the administration and enforcement of state and local critical area programs. These revised regulations promulgated by the Critical Area Commission, as set forth in Title 27 of the Code of Maryland Regulations, were incorporated into Chapter 340 (Zoning) of the Town Code. The Town periodically updates the Critical Area Code to reflect current conditions. In 2023, a new tree mitigation ordinance that regulates the Intensely Developed Areas (IDA) of the Town was adopted and approved by the Critical Area Commission.

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

1. Resource Conservation Areas (RCA) in 20-acre minimum aggregates intended for forestry, farming, and resource conservation.
2. Limited Development Areas (LDA) allow housing at a density permitted by the

- underlying zoning district'; and
3. Intensely Developed Areas (IDA) for high density residential, commercial, and industrial uses served by public water and sewer.

About 62 percent of our critical area lands are classified as IDA. About 30 percent are classified RCA. The remainder is LDA. Conversion of RCA and LDA areas to IDA is the appropriate mechanism for permitting development keeping with the existing character in the Town, while ensuring protection of Critical Area resources. The Town's Critical Area Code is required to be updated every ten years, and the Town will need to update the code by 2030 to address the recently enacted legislation related to climate resiliency and equity.

Also, development of sea level rise mitigation projects will require the Town to work closely with the Critical Area Commission and staff to ensure improvements such as bulkhead replacements and living shorelines are properly designed to comply with the State's critical area laws.



VISION

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

OBJECTIVES AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

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

- 3.1.1 Establish specific policies for reviewing all activities with respect to impact upon and protection of environmental features and sensitive areas and update these policies as needed.
- 3.1.2 Review and amend, if necessary, the Town's implementation documents in order to maintain and enhance existing specific protection measures for the following sensitive areas: 1) stream and stream buffers, 2) 100-year floodplain, 3) endangered species habitats, 4) steep slopes, and 5) wetlands.
- 3.1.3 Implement a Town ~~Forest Conservation Program~~ Tree Mitigation Ordinance which establishes requirements for reforestation and afforestation when appropriate for those areas which lie outside the Critical Area boundaries.
- 3.1.4 Augment Street tree plantings as appropriate.
- 3.1.5 Continue to employ environmental protection measures as developed by the State and set forth in the Town's Critical Area Program. Update the Critical Area Code for consistency with new legislation.
- 3.1.6 Evaluate the use of the Town's Critical Area tree mitigation fund to implement the stormwater management practices which should be utilized in the Town.
- 3.2 Protect water quality and minimize siltation in St. Michaels Harbor, San Domingo Creek, Broad Creek and the Miles River.
 - 3.2.1 Continue to require the use of Best Management Practices (BMP's) to reduce nutrient loadings to the Miles River, St. Michaels Harbor and San Domingo Creek.
 - 3.2.2 Use low-impact development stormwater management measures in the design of any new development. (Chapter 281 Stormwater Management of the Code of the Town of St Michaels)
 - 3.2.3 Review all development adjacent to wetlands to assure compliance with buffer requirements established by federal, state and town environmental regulations. (§340-27 of the Code of the Town of Saint Michaels)
 - 3.2.4 Establish specific policies for reviewing all development activities with respect to impact upon and protection of environmental features and sensitive areas including natural drainage ways.
 - 3.2.5 Require structural and nonstructural stormwater management improvements that benefit multiple properties.

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

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

3.3 Streetscape – Environmental

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

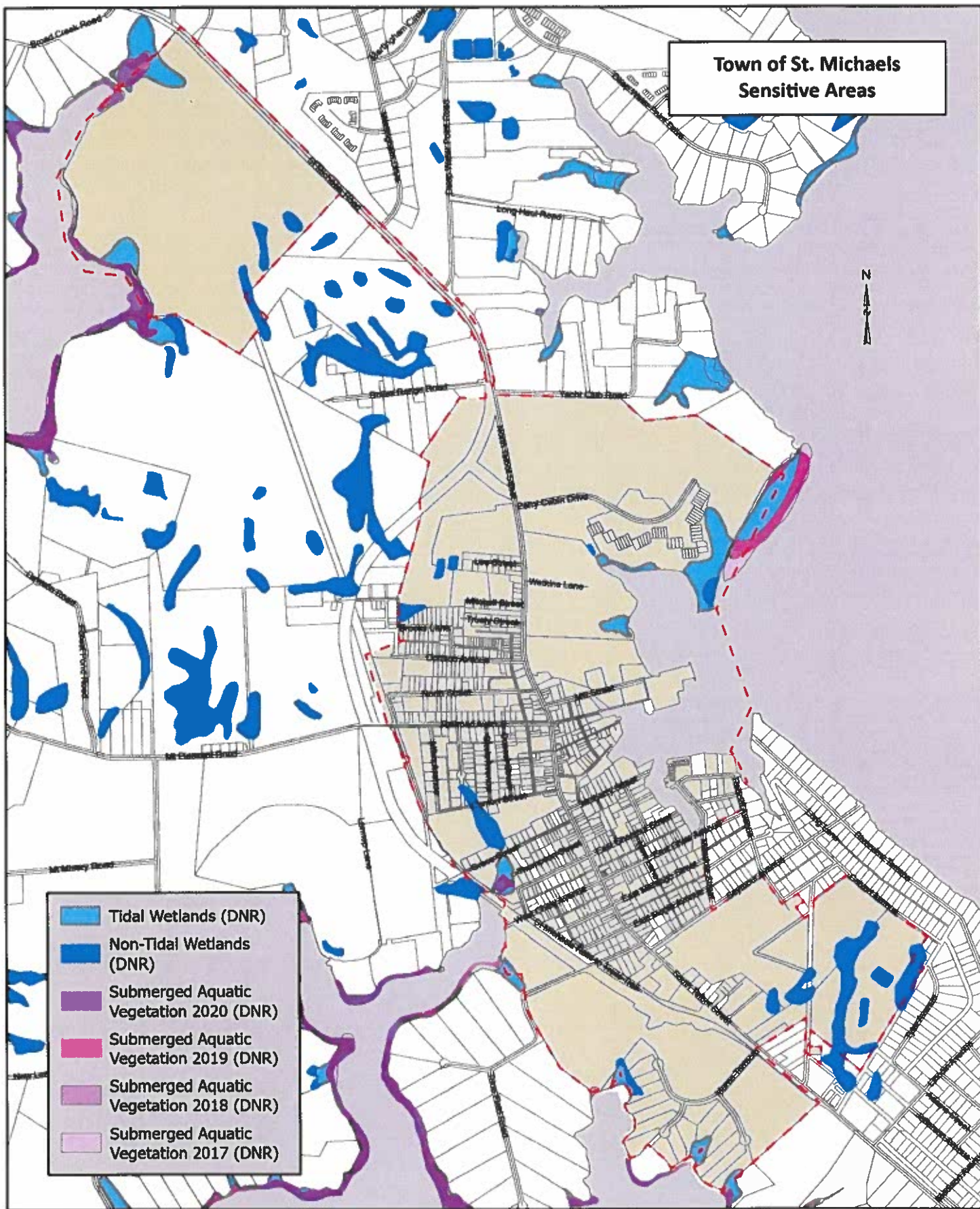
3.4 Citizen Involvement in Environmental Matters

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

POLICIES

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

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

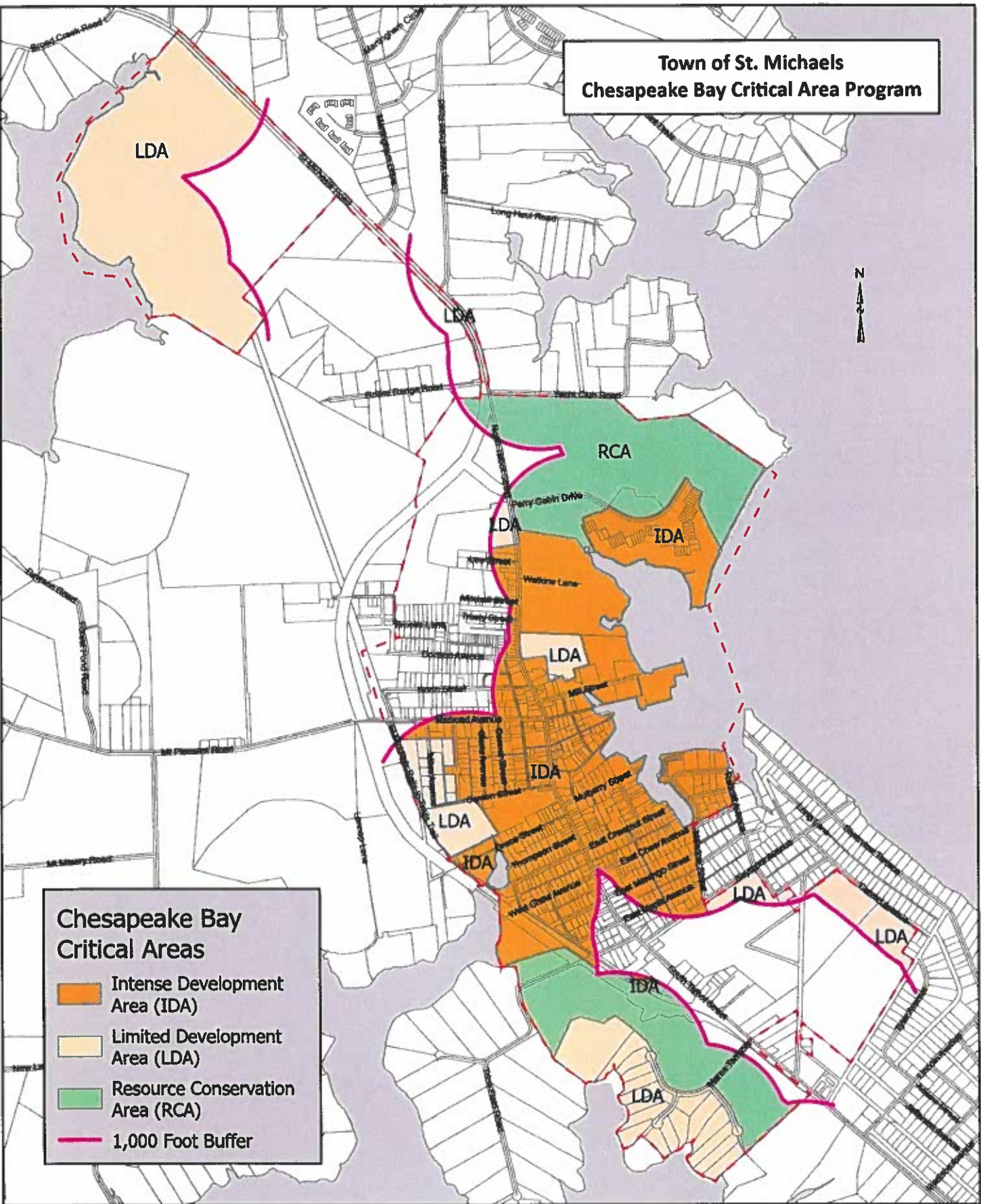


**Town of St. Michaels
Sensitive Areas**

- Tidal Wetlands (DNR)
- Non-Tidal Wetlands (DNR)
- Submerged Aquatic Vegetation 2020 (DNR)
- Submerged Aquatic Vegetation 2019 (DNR)
- Submerged Aquatic Vegetation 2018 (DNR)
- Submerged Aquatic Vegetation 2017 (DNR)

0 1,000 2,000 Feet

MAP 3-1



MAP 3-2



**Town of St. Michaels
FEMA Floodplains**

FEMA Floodplains

- 100Yr A Zone Elevations Determined
- Velocity VE Zone
- 500Yr X Zone
- Limit of Moderate Wave Action (LIMWA)

0 1,000 2,000 Feet

MAP 3-3

Chapter 4: Water Resources Element

Introduction

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

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

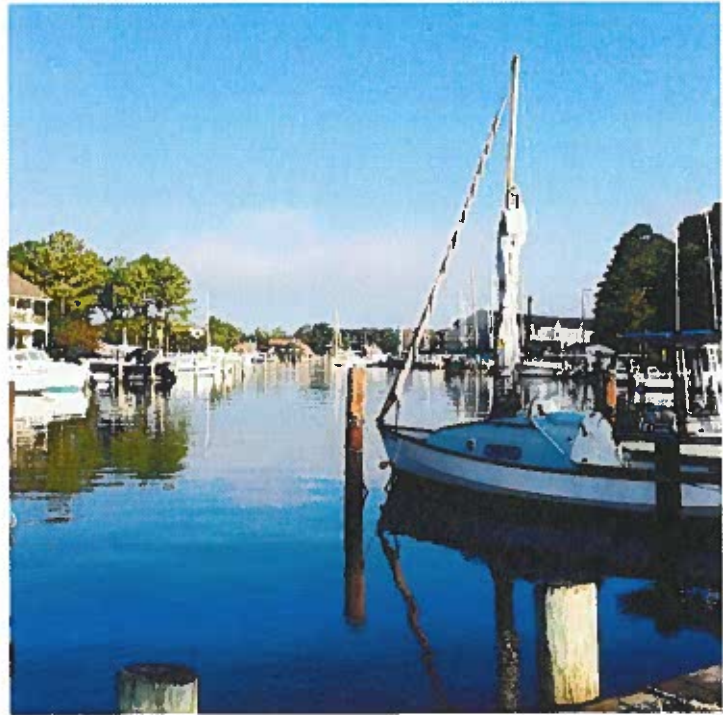
The purpose of this Water Resources Element is to ensure that any future development plans of the Town of St. Michaels take into account the opportunities and limitations of local water resources. It is required to evaluate both the wastewater generated and the available drinking water supply. This will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

Water Resource Element Goals

The goals of the water resource element are to:

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

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



- Install stormwater management best management practices (BMPs) to treat water flowing from the older parts of the Town that were built before such practices were required.

When doing this work, care should be taken to improve, where possible, stormwater drainage from streets and private lots, but certainly not to make existing drainage problems worse or to create new drainage problems. A policy has been established to incorporate in all government construction activity, where possible, added stormwater BMPs with the capacity to treat untreated water coming from surrounding parts of town. ~~BMPs are being retrofitted into the street renovation project that began in FY 2007 and is scheduled to be completed in 2015.~~ Additional BMPs practices were incorporated into the Nature Trail Project that was completed FY 2008 and will be included in the trail extension project anticipated to start construction in 2025 to treat stormwater flowing from the older parts of town into waters that feed the Bay. Incentives should be developed for owners to install individual lot BMPs, such as roof-top disconnects, rain gardens, and French drains. Town support should be lent to construction of tidal-marshes and other programs designed to remove pollutants that continue to enter nearby rivers and streams. Several sea level rise studies include incorporating new stormwater management practices such as building rain gardens and green spaces along the south Harbor area on E. Chew Avenue.

Public Utility Services of St. Michaels

Water Supply System

According to the Talbot County Comprehensive Water and Sewer Plan, the existing water system consists of two deep wells, 500,000 gallons of elevated storage, and about 11 miles of distribution mains. The Town of St. Michaels water system also serves the Rio Vista area south of Town which includes a population of approximately 400 residents. In 2007, a new wastewater treatment facility located on the same site as the existing plant was constructed to treat up to 660,000 gallons per day (MGD) to serve St. Michaels and surrounding areas. Water

bills are sent to ~~366~~ 437 accounts in this area, which also includes residents of the Bentley Hay area north of Seymour Avenue and east of Meadow Street. Total water usage ranges from about 0.16 million gpd in the winter to 0.32 million gpd in the summer. Maximum demand for one day has been just over .35 million gallons. Water service is provided to approximately 2,300 people, both inside and outside of the Town.

Only two of the three wells utilized in the past are currently in operation. Well No. 1 was decommissioned. Wells No. 2 and 3 are active. Both wells are about 450 feet deep and draw from the Aquia Aquifer. Well No.1 is an eight-inch diameter well drilled in 1928. A new pump was installed in 1986 to increase capacity to 285 gallons per minute. Well No.2 is a ten-inch well drilled in 1965 with a capacity of 480 an operating capacity of 225 gallons per minute. Well No.3 is a 12- inch well completed in 1990 with a capacity of 600 an operating capacity of 350 gallons per minute. Following construction of well No.3, well No.1 was taken out of service because of age and excessive amounts of sand passing through the screens. This well has been sealed with concrete and the well pump and motor have been removed. Both wells No.2 and No.3 are in good condition. However, in order to provide redundancy in the system in case of well failure an additional well and water storage tower will be needed. The Town is currently undergoing a capacity management network analysis to determine the proper need and location of a potential 3rd well. Although projected demand remains within permitted limits, having a third well will create the desired redundancy in the system in case of emergencies such as occurred in 2024 when a well house caught on fire and was off-line for a few weeks during repairs.

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

The 500,000 gallons of elevated storage are comprised of one 200,000-gallon tank and one 300,000 gallon tank. The 200,000-gallon tank, constructed in 1981, is in good structural condition, but requires periodic painting. The 300,000-gallon elevated storage tank, referred to as the North Tank, located next to Perry Cabin Park has been in operation since 1999. By locating this tank at the opposite end of the water system from the existing tank, head pressure losses in the distribution lines have been minimized and flow rates have improved. The Town has installed a new Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system that controls the on-off operation of the No.2 and No.3 well pumps, as well as monitors the North and South tank levels. This system enables the operations staff to closely monitor the Town's water supply and make necessary adjustments. The Town installed new "Smart" Water Meters in 2023 in order to more precisely monitor individual site water consumption, detect leakages and improve customer service.

The Federal Government passed a law in 2001 requiring public water systems to have an arsenic level of less than 10 parts per billion (ppb), replacing the old standard of 50 ppb. The rule became effective on February 22, 2002. The date by which the systems must comply with the new 10 ppb standard was January 23, 2006. The natural arsenic level in the water in St. Michaels is 34 ppb. The town constructed arsenic removal plants at both wells, using an

~~absorption~~ various removal techniques with a media that attracts the arsenic to the media particles. This system has been successful. ~~for Glory Avenue Well #3, but not at Well #2 on E. Marengo Street. The town is in the process of switching over to a filtration system for arsenic removal at the E. Marengo Street well, the work is scheduled to be complete during 2015.~~ Recent testing (2023) indicates the Town removes all levels of arsenic. Also, the federal Environmental Protection Agency has recently mandated a lead pipe analysis and mitigation effort of all communities in Maryland and across the country. The Town is actively engaged in the first phase of inventory work to identify any existing lead pipe and will follow up with any remediation efforts that may be necessary. At this time, none has yet to be identified.

Water Supply Resources

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

Growth Assessment

There are currently ~~711~~ 725 residences existing in the Town of St. Michaels (2020 Census). Water account records (2024) indicate there are 719 residential accounts in town and 99 commercial use accounts, in addition to the accounts in the county as previously noted.

To calculate the daily water usage for the Town, it was estimated that the average household size was ~~2.0~~ 2.25 persons (2020 Census) and the average water usage level of service is ~~was~~ 100 gallons per person per day. Recent census data indicates that there are 38% of residents that live alone, but the 2.25 multiplier is used to account for fluctuations in population with visitors. Based on the existing ~~711~~ 719 residential water accounts ~~residences~~, each using an estimated ~~202~~ 225 gallons per day, a total of ~~143,622~~ 161,775 gallons of water is being used per day for planning purposes. Current records indicate that system wide demand remains below the estimated level of service use. This can be for a variety of reasons such as seasonal housing and commercial tourism fluctuations. It is expected that summer use will increase consumption, but remain within capacity levels. The new capacity management analysis should account for such fluctuations.

Based on the ~~build-out~~ ten year development potential analysis completed in Chapter 2 – Municipal Growth Element, it is estimated there is land available in the Town of St. Michaels to add an additional ~~154~~ 50 residences over the ten year planning period 2025-2035. Applying the estimated average household size and the average water usage, these possible residences could use an additional 11,250 gallons of water per day.

In addition, there are ~~2~~ 3 possible annexation areas which are described further in Chapter 2 – Municipal Growth Element. If these areas were annexed, 15 ~~4~~-existing residences and up to ~~21~~

24 new residences could be added to the Town and would use an additional ~~5050~~ 5,400 gallons of water per day.

These numbers do not include the Rio Vista area which is already on the Town water system. Table 4.1 shows both the existing Town residences and possible annexation residences. Those lands identified as “~~Areas of Mutual Interest~~” and identified in Chapter 2 (Municipal Growth Element” have not been included in computations as they are governed by Talbot County and included in their Comprehensive Plan.

TABLE 4.1
EXISTING AND POSSIBLE FUTURE WATER USAGE

Area	# of Existing Dwellings	# of Build-Out Dwellings (<u>10 years</u>)	Total # of Possible Dwellings	Total potential water usage (gpd)
Current				
Residences	711 <u>725</u>	154 <u>50</u>	865 <u>775</u>	174,730 <u>174,375</u>
Potential Annexation				
<u>Area North</u>	4 <u>9</u>	0 <u>13</u> <u>7</u>	17 <u>16</u>	34 <u>3,600</u>
<u>Area West</u>	0 <u>7</u>	8 <u>12</u>	8 <u>19</u>	4,275
<u>Area South</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>1,125</u>
TOTAL	715 <u>741</u>	175 <u>74</u>	890 <u>815</u>	179,780 <u>183,375</u>

Based on the total water usage from existing residences and the residents of Rio Vista (410 du) who are already on the Town of St. Michaels water system, the Town of St. Michaels is within the limits of their Water Appropriation and Use Permit (320,000 gpd) from the Maryland Department of the Environment. Should the additional in-town build out of ~~175~~ 50 residences be constructed during the ten year planning period, the water usage would increase residential use to 179,780- 183,375 gallons per day and when combined with non-residential uses ~~which~~ is still within the limits of the Water Appropriation and Use Permit.

If the Town of St. Michaels ~~were fully built out and~~ experiences modest growth as forecast and ~~with the possible annexation areas was were~~ annexed and fully built out, the total water usage would rise to ~~179,780~~ which would still be within the limits of the Water Appropriation and Use Permit.

Sewer Service

In the spring of 2008 Talbot County completed construction of a 660,000 gallons/day (GPD) treatment plant which will include Biological Nutrient Removal technology. Expansion capacity was subsequently completed to 1.0 million gallons per day (mgd) in order to provide service in the town and the surrounding area. The county sewer treatment allocated capacity assigned to the Town is 494,500 gpd. There are two other areas that abut the town and are serviced by the sewer plant. This includes the Rio Vista area, which is allocated 70,000 gpd and the Bentley Hay area which is assigned 29,800 gpd. The plant discharge concentrations for total nitrogen will be 3.0 mg/l or less with the total phosphorus concentrations of 0.3 mg/l or less. The level of service for sewage treatment is 200 gallons per residential unit. There are 3 sewage pumping (or transfer) stations in the town: one on Green Street, on Mill Street and one on Grace Street. There

are a few others, one outside of town in the Rio Vista area (Madison) and a grinder pump station located in the Perry Cabin development. Another grinder pump system is in place to service Brooks Lane and Chester Park areas.

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

St. Michaels <u>Town Only</u> – Existing flows:	133,950 GPD <u>176,000 GPD*</u>
Future Flows, <u>Residential (10 years growth):</u>	109,700 GPD <u>11,250 GPD</u>
<u>Reserved Capacity for I&I:</u>	<u>151,600 GPD</u>
 Total Flows:	 395,250 GPD <u>338,850 GPD</u>

*(Talbot County Sewer & Water Plan, County web site, 2024)

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

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

Based on the ~~potential for build-out~~ potential growth as noted before in the next ten years in accordance with future land use in the Town of St. Michaels and taking into account the existing proposals enumerated above, an additional ~~154~~ 50 units could be built in the existing Town limits. Assuming flow contributions of ~~125~~ 200 gallons per unit, the Town could contribute an additional total of ~~19,250~~ 10,000 GPD.

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

As the ~~build-out~~ annexation analysis indicates, the potential demand for additional development due to annexation would be ~~21~~ 49 units. Assuming that each would contribute ~~125~~ 200 gallons per unit additional flows would be ~~2625~~ 9,800 gallons per day. It is clear that full build-out is NOT constrained by sewer capacity. The demand from the Town of St. Michaels for sewer service is well below the treatment capacity of the sewer plant. Development within the Town and in the County contribute to the sewer plant treatment demand so it is important to monitor the use and treatment capacity over time to stay within permitted limits.

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

Capacity Management Plan

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

Point and Nonpoint Source Stormwater

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

The objectives of stormwater management are to:

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

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

The Town has actively engaged in a variety of stormwater management improvements throughout the community. Sea level rise and nuisance flood mitigation efforts are currently in

the planning stages. Recent efforts are outlined in more detail in Chapter 13, Climate Resilience of this plan.

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

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

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

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

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

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

VISION

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

OBJECTIVES AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

- 4.1 Ensure that the Town has an adequate safe and sanitary water supply.
 - 4.1.1 Continue to coordinate water system master planning with the Town's Comprehensive Plan and Tier Map.
 - 4.1.2 Construct the capital improvements as required to satisfy the Federal Government's standards for arsenic levels.
 - 4.1.3 Develop a monitoring and remediation process for analysis of lead pipe in the water system as required by the federal government.
 - 4.1.4 Complete a water network capacity study and plan for a future 3rd well site if needed.
- 4.2 Provide adequate wastewater treatment service for the Town.
 - 4.2.1 Encourage the County to continue their efforts to reduce infiltration and inflow in the sewer system to create additional capacity.
 - 4.2.2 Continue to coordinate sewer planning with the Town's Comprehensive Plan.
 - 4.2.3 Continue to work with Talbot County to assure that any modifications to sewer allocations will not diminish the Town's ability to grow in accordance with this plan.
- 4.3 Effectively treat stormwater runoff and reduce pollutant loadings entering St. Michaels' waterways.
 - 4.3.1 Incorporate the latest guidance and requirements as found in the State Stormwater Design Manual following its approval.
 - 4.3.2 Provide educational opportunities focusing on water quality improvement methods which can be implemented by individual property owners.
 - 4.3.3 Consider incentives which may encourage the residents and our businesses to pursue best on-site management practices.
 - 4.3.4 Review the effectiveness of the existing practice of installing silt fences at construction sites. Adopt policies that establish more effective run-off protection and/or ensure more careful monitoring by responsible inspection agencies.
 - 4.3.5 Continue to work cooperatively with Talbot County to obtain grant funding for projects that address water quality to the Miles River and San Domingo Creek.

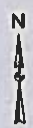
- 4.3.6 Continue to Work with Talbot County and the State of Maryland to develop comprehensive projects and strategies to improve the water quality of stormwater runoff.
- 4.3.7 Consider converting open ditch systems to bioretention systems in an effort to address water quality associated with stormwater.
- 4.3.8 Program and seek funding sources for stormwater management mitigation projects in relation to sea level rise and nuisance flooding.

POLICIES




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

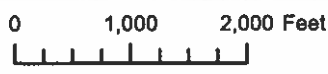
It is the policy of St. Michaels that future development plans are evaluated on wastewater generated, available drinking water and stormwater mitigation to protect water resources and public health while meeting State smart growth laws.

**Town of St. Michaels
Talbot County Comprehensive
Water and Sewer Plan
2002 Report of the Review
& Resolutions
Water Service Area**



CWSP Designation (Water)

	W-1
	W-2
	W-3






MAP 4-1

**Town of St. Michaels
Talbot County Comprehensive
Water and Sewer Plan
2002 Report of the Review
& Resolutions
Sewer Service Area**



CWSP Designation (Sewer)

	S-1
	S-2
	S-3



MAP 4-2

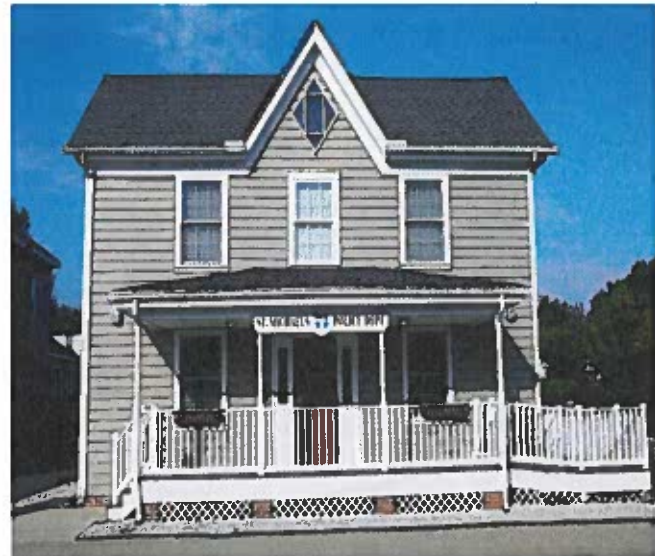
Chapter 5: Community Facilities and Public Services

INTRODUCTION

Community Facilities (Map 5-1) and public services contribute to the overall quality of life for the residents and visitors to St. Michaels. The conditions of our streets, the purity of our drinking water, the dependability of our emergency services and police department are important factors for the people who live in our town. The goal of this chapter is to assure that our public facilities, infrastructure and emergency services meet the current and futures needs of the St. Michaels Citizens. Capital Improvement Plans (CIP) are reviewed on an annual basis as a part of the Town's budget process. The objectives and strategies outlined in this plan should be a consideration for determining the infrastructure needs for the Town in the CIP planning process.



Town Administrative Office
at San Domingo Creek Park



Police Department on Fremont St.

~~Hollis Park, which was acquired by utilizing Program Open Space funding, houses the Edgar M. Bosley, Jr. Municipal Building where the administrative offices and the Town meeting room are located. In 2023, the Town acquired 7.61 acres of land on San Domingo Creek (formerly a nursery site) and developed a master plan that includes a public park and the conversion of the existing business office building into administrative staff offices. The previous Town Hall was located at Hollis Park and the Town administrative offices were relocated to this site in the summer of 2024. The Town is also considering options for a permanent meeting space to hold community forums and public hearings. At this time a variety of sites are being used including the public library, the Boy Scout Cabin (meeting area) and a church site.~~

The St. Michaels Department of Public Works is located on Glory Avenue in a building adjacent to well #3 and includes three maintenance bays and an adjacent storage yard.

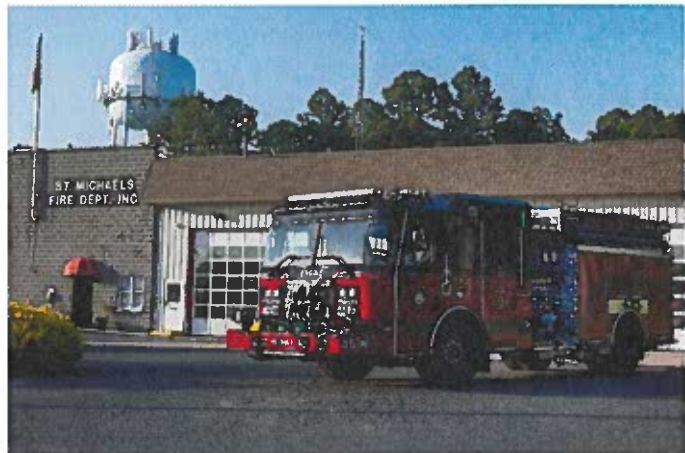
Public Safety

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

The Public Works Department currently occupies land on Glory Avenue. While building space is adequate at this time, the building is old and there is a need to have a greater yard and storage space. The location is surrounded by residential and commercial land uses in the middle of town. Potential acquisition of surplus land held by the Department of Transportation may present an opportunity to relocate and redevelop this property for more appropriate uses and provide additional space for long term needs.

Emergency Services

Fire, Rescue, and Emergency Medical services are provided by the St. Michaels Fire Department (SMFD) and Talbot County Department of Emergency Services (TCDES). Funding for SMFD is mainly a mix of County and Town funding, donations from residents and visitors, and department fundraisers like raffles, BBQs, flea markets, etc. County Funding for TCDES is mainly derived from dedicated revenue provided by the Talbot County Council.



The St. Michaels Fire Department is made up entirely of volunteers, and membership ranges between 60-80 administrative members and trained responders. The department has approximately 5-20 responders available at any given time. The SMFD building is located on the south side of Rt33, and houses two 1000-gallon Engines, a 2500 gallon Tanker, a 105' Ladder Truck, Brush Truck, Command Vehicle, Utility Vehicle, Rescue Boat, and Ambulance. The department also hosts the Talbot County ALS Ambulance, which is staffed 24/7 by two Talbot County Employees.

The Department faces similar issues to all Volunteer Fire Departments, including staffing, training, and funding shortages. A continual impediment in recruiting and member retention is the limited availability of work-force housing in the town and surrounding areas. Residents of the town have access to several hospitals, including University of Maryland Shore Medical Centers in Easton and Cambridge. The Maryland State Police Aviation Command is available

for incidents that require medivac and have access to major metropolitan emergency services in Baltimore and surrounding areas.

~~Fire, rescue, ambulance and emergency medical services are provided by the St. Michaels Volunteer Fire Department. These services are funded through multiple sources including State, County, Town, private contributions and fund-raising activities. The Fire Department had two full-time employees, but the responsibilities of these persons have been assumed by Talbot County. The membership of the St. Michaels Volunteer Fire Department averages about 80 members with perhaps 20 available for response at a given time. The Fire Department building is located on Route 33 at the southern end of Town three pumper trucks, a ladder truck, a brush unit, a command unit, and a fire and water rescue boat. One of the largest issues facing not only the St. Michaels Fire Department but all Fire Departments in Talbot County is the recruitment and retention of volunteers. A continual impediment in recruiting and retention is the limited availability of work force housing in the Town. This issue will be further discussed in Chapter 10 Housing.~~

Health Care

~~Memorial Hospital~~ Shore Medical Center of Easton has been the primary medical and healthcare provider in Talbot County and the Mid-Shore region for over 100 years. In 2006, the Shore Health System merged with the University of Maryland Medical System to enhance clinical programs and facilities and to facilitate physician recruitment. ~~Subsequently Shore Health began to seek a site for a new regional medical facility.~~ A site was selected within the Town of Easton, and agreements for the construction of the required roads and extension of water and sewer secured, ~~no construction has begun.~~ A Certificate of Need has also been secured for the new hospital to be located north of the airport in Easton and they began construction in 2024 and are anticipated to be open within a few years.

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

Hazard Mitigation

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

The Town of St. Michaels in cooperation with Talbot County has adopted a [Hazard Mitigation Plan](#). The purpose of the plan is to review assess and update areas vulnerable to natural hazards and prepare a long-term strategy to address them. The highest mitigation risks identified in the study were from winter storms, mass power outages, flash floods, tropical storms and shore erosion. The plan details and prioritizes projects that could be undertaken to mitigate all of the hazards identified. The County's Hazard Mitigation Plan was updated in 2022.

Education

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

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

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

Library Services

The St. Michaels Public Library is a branch of the Talbot County Library system and is located on Fremont Street offering approximately 10,000 volumes, including resource information, and a meeting room for community meetings and activities. The ~~3,000~~ 8,668 square feet, handicapped-accessible library is open to the public 37 hours per week and has a yearly attendance of approximately 41,000 visitors. Based on the ever increasing needs of the public, the library is ~~considering an expansion of~~ currently working on a 3,000 square foot expansion of their facility to accommodate additional meeting and educational spaces. The branch participates in the County and State inter-library loan program. Talbot County libraries are funded 75% by Talbot County and 18% by the State of Maryland. Public funds are spent primarily on staff salaries, acquisitions, supplies and routine maintenance.



St. Michales Library

Housing



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

Public Streetscapes

The Town has about 50 acres of land devoted to streets, alleys, and public rights of way. Sidewalks line Talbot Street from Seymour Avenue to Dodson Avenue and are found throughout the Historic Area. Some street and sidewalk sections are in deteriorating condition. Many Town streets are lit by sodium vapor lights attached to utility poles; however, West Chestnut Street, St. Mary's Square, and Water Street are lit by pedestrian-scale period lanterns which the town maintains. The Town, in conjunction with the State Highway Administration, recently completed additional improvements to sidewalks on the main (Talbot Street) with the installation of decorative brick pavers and

handicapped accessible crosswalk improvements. Additional analysis for accessibility to Town streets and buildings is needed to ensure the St. Michaels can accommodate the needs of all residents and visitors.

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

Communications

Easton Utilities is in the process of extending internet and cable TV to St. Michaels and the rural community of Tilghman Island. A franchise agreement was approved by the Town Commissioners to provide delivery of fiber optic cable throughout town within a two-year period. They have begun planning for installing underground internet infrastructure with the use of federal grant dollars. As a part of the agreement, municipal facilities will be connected at no charge to internet services. This will greatly improve the internet capability to download and upload data which has been a problem in the past. It should also be of value to both businesses, citizens and visitors and help boost economic development.

St. Michaels Community Center

The newly renovated St. Michaels Community Center is 5,700 square feet and offers programs that cater to all ages and interests including culinary and hospitality workforce development programs and STEM youth programs. They offer an array of wellness classes, promoting physical and mental well-being, cooking classes and more. There is also a variety of activities for Seniors. Additionally, they host local nonprofits, extending the reach and impact within the community for everyone to thrive, learn, and connect.



Police Department's SMYLE Programs

The St. Michaels Youth & Law Enforcement program has a goal of improving the quality of life for youth, seniors, and families of St. Michaels by sponsoring community service and educational programs. They work together to build a partnership between the community and the St. Michaels Police Department. Many educational opportunities exist throughout the year including a Youth Health Day to encourage physical activity and healthy eating habits.

In August of each year, the department hosts the annual National Night Out, a free community-wide event for all of the town's citizens. The St. Michaels Police Department partners with the St. Michaels Community Center for an annual block party in August. Other events include the annual Back-to-School night. In October, the Fall into St. Michaels with the St. Michaels

Community Center along with the town's Halloween activities. All of these activities help build community trust and partnerships between the citizens and the Police Department.

In December the highlighted event for local youth is the Shop with a Cop. This is also a community-wide fun festivity and decorated event for the town's citizens. In the winter, the department hosts the Jr. Police Academy. It is an after-school course to teach recruits – kids ages 9-12 – aspects of good character and instills team building, discipline application, physical training participation, and education on all aspects of policing.

VISION

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

OBJECTIVES AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

5.1 Maintain Town streets and sidewalks as necessary.

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

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

- Maintain and improve streets as necessary.
- Consider the need for a permanent meeting space/building to hold public meetings of 50-100 people.
- All sidewalks in the business district should be bricked providing a visual indicator of commercial activity. The bricking of these Brick improvements to the sidewalks should be considered for inclusion in the Town's Capital Improvement Plan.

5.2 Provide Street lighting in all appropriate areas within the Town.

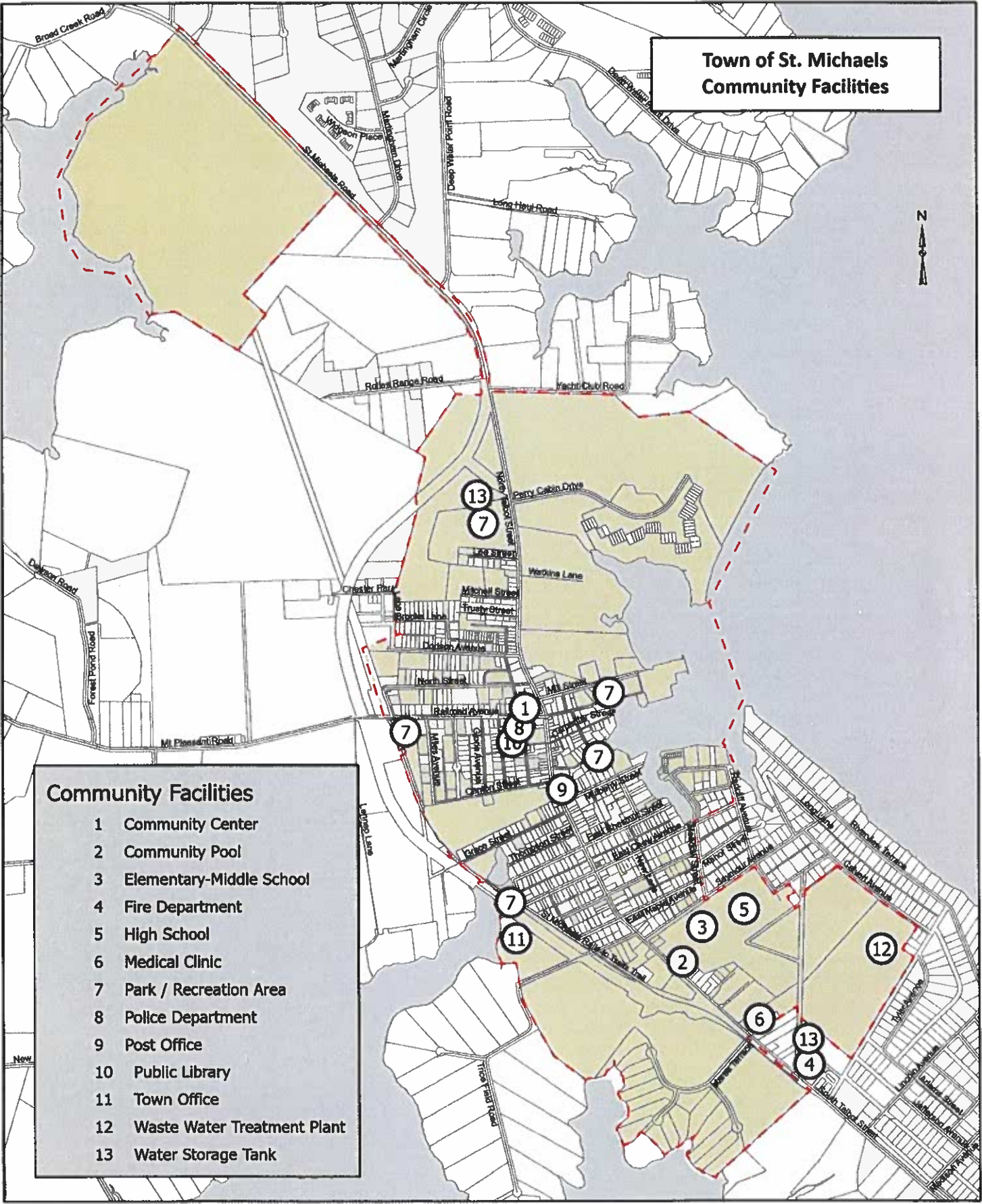
5.2.1 Continue to evaluate and upgrade streetlights.

5.2.2 Historic lighting options should be considered, whenever street and utility improvements are proposed.

5.2.3 Identify areas which are not adequately lit and develop a priority list of improvements.

- 5.2.4 Include top priorities for street lighting in the Capital Improvement Plan.
- 5.2.5 Coordinate with Choptank Electric Cooperative the installation of additional lighting along MD Rt. 33 to assure ~~that each~~ appropriate street intersection ~~is~~ are adequately lit.
- 5.3 ~~Establish a Town wireless network system to serve St. Michaels.~~ Ensure publicly accessible internet and wi-fi connectivity service is available throughout Town.
 - 5.3.1 In addition to providing service to the Town property, such service should be provided within the Town's parks and harbor allowing for public internet access to residents and visitors within those areas.
 - 5.3.2 Encourage the St. Michaels Business Association to identify "Hot Spots" within their advertising media for distribution.
 - 5.3.3 Recognize the broadband requirements for medical, legal and other community support services and the need to assure that such capacity is available.
 - 5.3.4 Work with Easton Utilities to extend broadband internet service in Town and throughout the Bay 100 region.
- 5.4 Establish and support community resources which serve the residents of St. Michaels and surrounding communities.
 - 5.4.1 Continue to support the St. Michaels Community Center in their efforts to ~~secure a permanent location~~ serve the community.
 - 5.4.2 Encourage the utilization of the Housing Authority Administrative Building for community-based functions and continuing education opportunities.
 - 5.4.3 Continue to support the YMCA in their efforts ~~to establish a permanent facility in the Town limits of St. Michaels.~~ to provide health, fitness and community-based services.
 - 5.4.4 Support the St. Michaels branch of the Talbot County Library in their expansion efforts.
 - 5.4.5 Consider relocating the Public Works facilities to a more appropriate site and redevelop the property for other uses.
- 5.5 Provide for increased demand for medical services within the Town and surrounding areas.

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



0 1,000 2,000 Feet

MAP 5-1

CHAPTER 6: TRANSPORTATION AND UTILITIES

INTRODUCTION

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

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

Town Streets

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

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

Over the past ten years from 2014 to 2023, there was a 10% increase in traffic on Talbot St. with current traffic from Easton area of 14,112 average daily trips; and 6,000 average daily trips from the north and west of Town.

Traffic in Town consists primarily of passenger and heavy commercial vehicles, often times, especially during the heart of the Town's tourist season, competing with bicycle and foot traffic. Pedestrian safety is a major concern, and as such, nine designated crossing areas have been established throughout the Town



with a posted speed limit of 25 miles per hour. In addition, during school openings, closing and large events, crossing guards are employed. Additional traffic safety awareness signs at the entrances to the Town would be a reminder of the need to yield to pedestrians. Controlling automobile speed on residential streets and alleys is also noted for future study and control.

St. Michaels has in recent years become a favorite destination for bicyclists with many of the hotels and marinas providing rental equipment for their guests. The end result is an increased conflict between vehicle and pedestrian traffic. However, the current planned extension of the Nature Trail by an additional 1.25 miles is underway and when completed it will allow bicyclists to safely bypass the commercial corridor of town.

In total, there are 20 streets which culminate at MD Rt. 33 with St. Michaels. Five of these streets serve not only Town residents but provide the sole access to Route 33 from outlying developments in Talbot County. Responsibilities for maintenance of the Town streets lie with the Town Department of Public Works staff and State Highway Administration. In 2024, the State Highway Administration extended brick pavers in town and resurfaced Talbot Street.

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

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

There is weekday public bus service provided by Delmarva Community Transit (DCT) between Easton and St. Michaels, with five runs daily per week to and from five designated stops in the Town. There are three areas of pick-up: St. Michaels Village, the Library and Graul's Market. Predominant destinations are the Walmart shopping area and physician appointments in Easton. There is a minimal charge for the service. Partners in Care offers on-call door-to-door public service is also available for senior and disabled citizens. These services are also predominantly used for medical needs and errands. They offer a service exchange program or fee-based services. ~~Provision of weekend service has been discussed with DCT, but is dependent upon receipt of additional County, State and Federal funding.~~

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

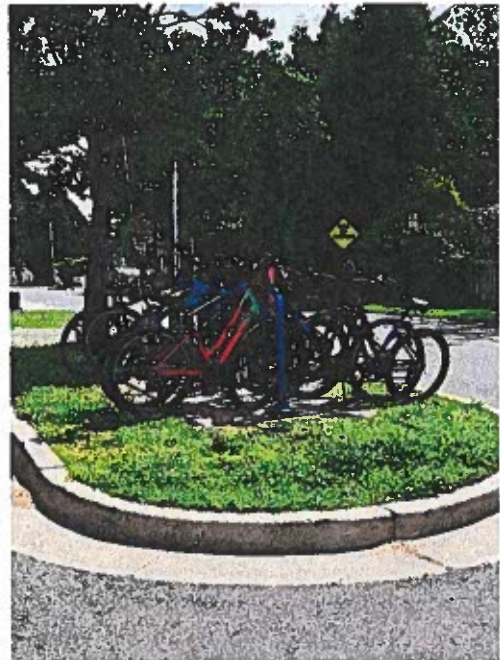
State Roadway System

Planning for State roads in St. Michaels is done by the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT), State Highway Administration (SHA) and is detailed in the [Maryland Consolidated Transportation Plan](#) Program (CTP). The CTP describes ongoing and new capital programs to be implemented over a six-year period. Talbot County works on a yearly transportation improvement plan in conjunction with the Maryland Department of Transportation. They develop a priority list which includes projects for the various communities in the county. For St. Michaels, this includes the extension of the Nature Trail and a new sidewalk of approximately 900 feet between the Inn of Perry Cabin to the main commercial area of Town. This can be constructed within the MD Rt. 33 right of way and will improve the safety of visitors to the Inn that desire to walk into the commercial district of Town.

School Access in Town

The majority of traffic related to schools come from access off of Rte. 33 (Talbot St.) from population centers to the east and turning onto Seymour Ave. and into the school. There is an opportunity to create a new and better access system to the schools by improving the existing right of way through Woodside Avenue and into the southern area of the school. Having this new access could alleviate heavy traffic congestion and create a safer pedestrian and automobile access to schools. A joint project between the County, the Town and School Board should be pursued.

~~In 2001, SHA worked with a Community Task Force to develop concept plans for comprehensive improvements to MD Rt. 33, including upgrades to storm drains, sidewalks, traffic calming and landscaping. During those discussions, the need to accommodate farm and construction vehicles was noted. Due to funding shortfalls at that time, the project was placed on hold prior to the beginning of final design. In September of 2014, the Town was advised that design funding for a new study had been approved from Pea Neck Road to Yacht Club Road. As of the writing of this plan, funding for construction has yet to be allocated for an overall Rte. 33 reconstruction project. However, some more immediate curb gutter and sidewalk improvements are funded through the SHA Innovative Contracting Division to upgrade failing infrastructure on Route 33.~~



Parking, Pedestrian Circulation & Bicycles

Parking and pedestrian circulation is a growing concern amongst the residents and visitors with the popularity of tourism to town. In development of our Sustainable Communities Plan, pedestrian safety in crosswalks and crowded sidewalks were identified as areas in need of improvement. There is a need for better control of crosswalks through a combination of design

improvements such as landscaping, curb cuts and bollards or by greater presence of police and crossing guards. A comprehensive pedestrian circulation, parking and wayfinding signage study would be a way to target specific improvements and more closely evaluate how pedestrians circulate through town.

The small size of the Town makes bicycling a good way to get around. Designated routes and bicycle amenities and services would be welcome. The completion of the Nature Trail extension will provide another way to circulate through town without the need to directly travel up and down the commercial corridor. Park and bike designated areas at the south and north entrances to the Nature Trail could help reduce automobiles downtown.

Development of an American Disability Act (ADA) accessibility management study and implementation measures is needed to ensure handicapped and disabled citizens and visitors have appropriate access to buildings and public spaces throughout town. This can be included in future budgets. Recent repairs to sidewalks were given detailed design measures to ensure Talbot St. (the main commercial corridor) is designed accordingly.

Utilities

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

Nearly all aspects of life in Talbot County and the villages which lie in the Bayhunderd area rely either directly or indirectly on access to the Internet at broadband speeds (currently defined as 25 Megabit per second (Mbps) download and 3 Mbps upload by the U.S. Federal Communications Commission. Our residents connect to the Internet by two ways: first they connect via cable modems in their homes or offices, to hybrid fiber coaxial networks managed by internet service providers, who then connect to a fiber-optic “middle mile” backbone that is interconnected with Tier 1 Internet providers that are not located in close proximity to Talbot County; and second, they use wireless devices (smartphones, etc.) with cellular technology or wireless networks connected to a series of towers in the County and Town. From the towers, traffic routes along



fiber-optic pathways out to the Internet. Older technologies, such as Digital Subscriber Line (DSL) service are no longer capable of providing broadband speeds. Over time, the number of

interconnected devices, the amount of data each process, and the speed at which they process that data has increased at exponential rates. Health care, public safety, education, commerce, entertainment and personal communication rely on this fiber-optic infrastructure. Expanding access to broadband internet over fiber-optic cable is a priority for Talbot County when evaluating not just communications projects, but any project that offers the ability to add fiber-optics or conduit for their future installation. ~~Discussions with Talbot County and distributors are~~ *The photograph to left represents an artist's interpretation of Talbot Street with utility lines removed or relocated.*

~~currently underway in an effort to finalize costs and feasibility related to fiber connections in Town.~~ In response to this need, Easton Utilities is in the process of extending internet and cable TV to St. Michaels and the rural community of Tilghman Island. A franchise agreement was approved by the Town Commissioners to provide delivery of fiber optic cable throughout town within a two-year period. They have begun planning for installing underground internet infrastructure with the use of federal grant dollars. As a part of the agreement, municipal facilities will be connected at no charge to internet services. This will greatly improve the internet capability to download and upload data which has been a problem in the past. It should also be of value to both businesses, citizens and visitors and help boost economic development.

A feasibility study ~~has been~~ previously undertaken to determine the Town's ability to bury and/or relocate the utility lines on Talbot Street. Successful completion of this project would result in less interruption of electrical and telephone service, beautification of Talbot Street which is the heart of the Town's business district and pedestrian safety as the pole removal will allow for a wider pedestrian corridor. While this remains of great interest, financial and logistical concerns have prevented this from going forward. However, it is a long-term goal for the Town.

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

Chesapeake Bay Passenger Ferry Service

In 2024, a report titled "Chesapeake Bay Passenger Feasibility Study" was conducted by Cambridge Systematics and supported by various potential service counties in the Chesapeake Bay region and with funding from the U.S. Department of Commerce and Economic Development. The purpose of the study was to evaluate potential passenger ferry services that could stimulate the economic growth of the host communities and improve access to the Bay, provide new water transportation connectivity options, and promote enhanced tourism throughout the region.

Twenty-one host communities were identified as possible route links. Route 2 includes the Town of St. Michaels, with a potential estimated annual ridership of up to 155,881. Potential station sites will be required to support the ferries and passenger service including pier infrastructure, a terminal building, restrooms, parking and walkway connections to Town. According to the report, various management options such as public/private partnerships and funding options need additional study along with a phased development of the system over time.



Example of a Ferry Service Ship

The process is just beginning, and St. Michaels should consider participating in future discussions and participate in readiness assessment as well as consideration of benefits and costs of such a transportation system for the Town.

Potential Passenger Ferry Service Routes

VISION

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

OBJECTIVES AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Transportation

- 6.1 Explore options to alleviate traffic congestion and facilitate safe pedestrian movement on Talbot Street.
 - 6.1.1 Coordinate planning efforts with SHA in regard to traffic management and safe pedestrian accessibility.
 - 6.1.2 Continue to explore the opportunity for a land-based transportation systems to connect parking locations at the south end of Town to parking facilities at the

north end of Town and connecting to commercial and harbor areas. If planned, the Town might:

- Pursue alternative transportation funding.
- Apply for local transit services assistance from MTA.
- Coordinate regional travel with Delmarva Community Transit.
- Create a Park and Ride areas at the north entrance to the Town.
- Encourage walkability on Talbot Street.

6.2 Establish policies for tour buses.

6.2.1 Identify areas suitable for parking of tour buses at the edges of town.

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

6.2.3 Continue to monitor the transportation routes and parking of buses on Town streets with an eye to limiting such street access and parking in the event hazardous pedestrian and vehicular conditions are identified.

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

6.3.1 Require new development to design and construct streets, sidewalks, pathways and trails which provide opportunities for connectivity to the town for all modes of transportation.

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

6.4 Continue to investigate safe and aesthetically pleasing walkways around town, in parks, adjacent to waterfronts and along recreational trails and pathways for public access.

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

6.4.2 Re-evaluate the feasibility of providing sidewalks on Railroad Avenue and Boundary Lane.

- 6.4.3 Establish pedestrian paths where practical and appropriate as an alternative to creating new sidewalks.
- 6.4.4 Evaluate the location and number of existing crosswalks and develop appropriate signing to help ensure the safety of pedestrians.
- 6.4.5 Increase the policing of pedestrian crosswalks and street intersections during periods of heavy traffic.
- 6.4.6 Create, maintain and enhance pedestrian walkways that provide access to parks and waterfront destinations.
 - Extend brick sidewalks throughout the Business District.
 - Establish a pedestrian/bicycle connection between Mill Street and the entrance to the Maritime Museum.
 - Pursue appropriate federal, state and private funding sources for necessary improvements.
- 6.4.7 Coordinate with SHA regarding pedestrian and bicyclist safety on Talbot Street.
- 6.4.8 Continue to pursue with State Highway Administration the reduction of speed limits and the creation of pedestrian crossings in the area of Perry Cabin Ball Fields on MD 33.
- 6.4.9 The Town and County should coordinate planning for transportation improvements in or near the Town or within the designated Areas of Mutual Interest.
- 6.4.10 Coordinate with State Highway Administration and Talbot County to develop an emergency evacuation plan, for use in the event of severe weather or a catastrophic event.
- 6.4.11 Work with Talbot County Government and the Board of Education to create a new secondary school access from Woodside Ave. to the St. Michaels school complex to improve traffic circulation and pedestrian safety and ease congestion.
- 6.5 Improve the ease and safety of bicycle travel in, around and through Town.
 - 6.5.1 Develop plans for establishing and marking bicycle routes.
 - Approach State Highway Administration, Maryland Department of Transportation or Department of Housing and Community Development for appropriate grant assistance programs.

- 6.5.2 Consider the mapping and placement of bicycle parking racks in areas which will not conflict with pedestrian traffic patterns.
- 6.5.3 Coordinate with the County to integrate town bikeways with those of the County.
- 6.5.4 Provide safe travel and parking accommodations for bicyclists when considering future developments.
- 6.6 ~~Continue to investigate~~ Complete the extension of the Nature Trail from Railroad Avenue to the Perry Cabin Ball Fields.
- 6.7 Assess the current and future vehicle and bicycle parking needs of the Town.
 - 6.7.1 Commission a thorough study of the parking facilities in town through the employment of a qualified professional.
 - Evaluate any acceptable fee the Town should charge for parking.
 - Include signage, way-finding and urban design improvements in the study.
 - Include supply and demand data for parking.
 - 6.7.2 The study should address both commercial and residential parking requirements.
 - 6.7.3 If more parking spaces are required, incorporate acquisition or development into the capital plan.
 - 6.7.4 Determine how to optimize existing parking spaces and areas.
 - 6.7.5 Continue to explore alternative methods of transportation which would provide visitors' an alternative transportation source into town, minimizing the need for utilizing their private vehicles.
 - ~~6.7.6 Consider establishing a parking facility in the Gateway Commercial Zone at the entrance to accommodate alternate transportation.~~
 - ~~6.7.7~~ 6 Continue to explore and update the onsite parking requirements, shared use parking areas and business improvement funds for commercial development.
- 6.8 Recognize the significance of the Town being located along the Chesapeake Country Scenic Byway and Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area.

Utilities

- 6.9 ~~Continue to pursue discussions with Talbot County and Broadband providers' reference providing~~ Continue work with Easton Utilities to provide adequate broadband fiber optic cable width to support health care, public safety, education, commerce, entertainment and personal communication.

- ~~6.10~~ 6.9.1 Encourage any project which requires access to a public right-of-way, either above ground or below, to evaluate the opportunity to install fiber-optic cable that is interconnected with existing networks, or at a minimum install conduit sufficient to provide for fiber-optic cable in the future.
- 6.9.2 Encourage multiple parcels to connect to fiber optic and other upgraded utilities to reduce associated infrastructure costs.
- 6.10 Encourage alternative energy where feasible and appropriate, taking into consideration the historic character of St. Michaels.
- 6.11 Continue to evaluate the feasibility of burying and/or relocating utility lines.
- 6.11.1 Consider the placement of underground conduit whenever new Town streets or major upgrades are proposed.

Passenger Ferry Service

- 6.12 Participate in efforts to study and plan for passenger ferry services throughout Chesapeake Bay.
- 6.12.1 Establish communication with the Passenger Ferry Consortium and participate in discussions regarding establishment of a ferry service that includes St. Michaels.
- 6.12.3 Perform a readiness assessment in relation to future ferry services.
- 6.12.4. Develop benefit and cost analysis for a ferry service to St. Michaels.

POLICIES

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

The Town of St. Michaels commits to providing quality transportation and utility systems to support the citizens and visitors of the Town and exploring ways to improve these systems over the life of the Comprehensive Plan.

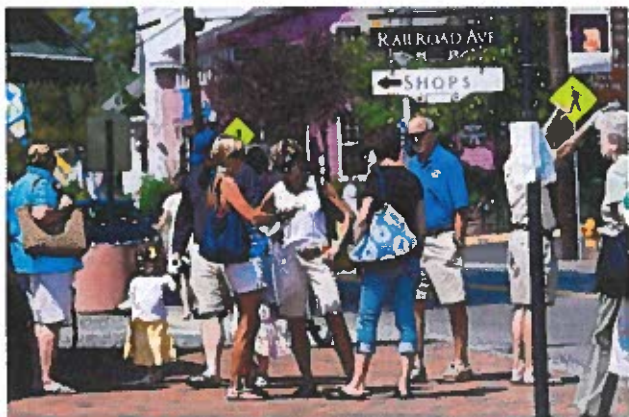
Chapter 7: Economic Development

INTRODUCTION

The twentieth century brought many changes to St. Michaels. The harvesting of shellfish and canning and food processing businesses that once were the economic backbone of the area, have given way to pleasure boats, tourists, boutiques and real estate offices. As tourism increased, the business district was transformed from a community supported shopping area to a tourist-oriented downtown. This situation has been accompanied by a substantial increase in real estate values. Rents for business locations downtown are often driven by these values rather than values based on prospective income derived from business operations. Talbot Street is the historic business core of our community. Its buildings embody the community's past and its visual identity, offering a unique shopping experience to the residents and visitors.

Tourism has much to offer the town's citizens and businesses, but residents also believe that there needs to be more data and analysis regarding the impacts of tourism and its affect on maintaining a sustainable economy and small-town community that makes St. Michaels attractive to visitors. This plan supports the development of an economic impact study that looks closely at the benefits and costs to the town from tourism and means to maintain the quality of life that comes from a balance of economic development from tourism and community values and public service costs and impacts.

The Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum, together with the quaint, historic nature of our town and businesses, attracts tens of thousands of visitors on an annual basis and has made St. Michaels a unique tourist destination. In 2023, there were 30 special events and festivals held each in town and many of these take place on the Museum's property. The museum recently completed a new visitor's Welcome Center to showcase their work and programs.



Visitors along Talbot St. Commercial Area



Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum

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

In 2024, the town decided it was important to further control franchise or formula type of businesses in order to help preserve the strong sense of community, pride and identity. The new regulations are designed to ensure these type of businesses, enhance the community experience and not diminish or distract from it; and do not create a community that has the appearance or feel that you could be in almost any town, anywhere, and therefore may diminish the unique quality of life that is known to be St. Michaels.

There has long been interest expressed in pursuing revitalization efforts in the Fremont Street area. The location of the public library and police station on Fremont Street has acted as a catalyst for such revitalization. The library has expansion plans underway for an additional 3,000 square feet. The Town is currently working with the Eastern Shore Land. The recently developed Community Center serves as an anchor to the north end of Fremont St.



Public Works Properties



The Old Mill District

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

Just west of Fremont St. is Glory Ave. which has 36,000 square feet of land and 350 linear feet of frontage used for the Public Works site. This is an area that could be redeveloped for mixed use development and enhance the neighborhood and possibly provide more housing. The Public Works site is not well suited to be in a residential area and needs to be relocated at sometime in the future. The Town should consider opportunities to relocate the facilities and partner with a developer to develop a new master plan for Fremont St. and include this property as well. The

sale of this site could offset much of the cost of relocating the facilities. Redevelopment of the property would have various economic and aesthetic benefits to the town.

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

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

In 2024, the owner of the former historic train station relocated the structure to property in the Mill District and renovated it to bring it back to its former design as another visitor attraction in this historic redevelopment area.

While we recognize that tourism will in all probability remain the economic driver for the Town, we are pursuing additional economic resources, such as small computer-based businesses, enhanced medical facilities and home-based industries. As the national economy increasingly relies on information based services, a robust data infrastructure has become critical to local success in business, education and workforce solicitation and retention. In relation to this, Easton Utilities has initiated the extension of broadband fiber optic communication services to rural areas in Talbot County. The Town Commissioners have developed a franchise agreement to bring this service, along with additional revenues, to the town in the near future. This issue is further detailed in Chapter 6 Transportation and Utilities. The Town is interested in expanding business opportunities in the technology sector and will look for grant funding opportunities for such in the future.

In 1988, the [Maryland Scenic Highway Program](#) was established as part of Highway Administration America’s Byways. The Town of St. Michaels is included as part of the program to promote tourism in and around St. Michaels, to enhance the quality of life for residents, promote the area to visitors and encourage responsible management and preservation of our historic roads and surrounding resources. Maryland Rt. 33, which runs through the heart of St. Michaels, has been designated as part of the [Chesapeake Country Scenic Byway](#) program, as part of the Michener’s Chesapeake area. Because of national, state and local byway marketing and product development initiatives, destinations along these byways receive more exposure from heritage tourists who value the travel experience as much as visitor attractions.

While retail and hospitality-based businesses continue to be the prime economic engine for the Town, we have identified an increased interest in heritage and nature-based tourism (eco-tourism) opportunities. The rich history of the Town, its waterfront setting, the Michener’s Chesapeake Country Byway designation and the close proximity to an abundance of varied wildlife and other natural features makes St. Michaels a target area for this type of business.

The Commissioners recognize ing the need to foster the continued interest in the Town ~~has hired a Communication Manager who is charged with~~ by promoting tourism and stimulating economic growth in the town, while balancing the needs of residents and businesses. In relation to this, there is interest in looking at various options to balance revenues and expenses. Recently, Talbot County has had discussions regarding the issue of increasing accommodations taxes as a way to provide additional revenues. A comprehensive approach that examines various options and opportunities for generating revenues for long-term improvements and public services could help ensure financial and economic health for the future.

The Town Commissioners adopted Ordinance 559 in 2024 which established the St. Michaels Tourism Advisory Board. The purpose of the Board is to assist the Town in its efforts to encourage businesses to locate or remain in Town while preserving the Town's historic, maritime and small-town character; and to advise the Town on matters relating to the business environment. The Board will establish data on marketing and tourism and develop a Promotion Plan.

VISION

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

OBJECTIVES AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

- 7.1 Promote a healthy business district that provides needed goods and services to residents as well as an inviting and attractive atmosphere to all who visit St. Michaels.
 - 7.1.1 Establish a Business District Improvement Committee composed of the St. Michaels Business Association, business owners/operators and town officials.
 - Create a Master Improvement Plan with a particular focus on redevelopment of the Fremont Street and relocation of the Public Works Facilities on Glory Ave. area and ways to stimulate small town commercial revitalization.
 - Create an improvement priority list for better lighting, benches, brick sidewalks and landscaping in the commercial areas.
 - Integrate the recommendations into the Town's Capital Improvement Program, as appropriate.
 - Authorize an updated study of the parking requirements for the Town that accommodates both the residents and visitors.
 - 7.1.2 Develop with the involvement of the private sector a plan for the re-development of Fremont Street. The goal of this plan will be a better mix of civic, residential, commercial and business uses to enhance the downtown's role as an activity center while protecting the quaintness of the Town.

- Research federal and state grants that may be applicable.
 - Create a revitalization zone and study other possible revitalization measures that can be taken.
 - Research the advantages and disadvantages of having a business in Town versus surrounding areas and formulate ways to encourage the retention and establishment of businesses in Town.
 - Provide data on statistics of visitors per season and income generated via different sources, such as sales tax or room tax generated.
- 7.1.3 Coordinate economic development goals and activities with those undertaken by Talbot County and Maryland State government.
- 7.1.4 Identify the most appropriate locations for development of additional public restroom facilities and construct and maintain such facilities.
- 7.1.5 Evaluate current standards and requirements for permanent signs and consider broadening the range and type of signs that can be utilized by businesses to identify their location. Signs should provide direction and contribute to the image and identify of the downtown.
- 8.1 Promote tourism in a sustainable manner to ensure it is aligned with the values of the community.
- ~~7.2~~ 8.1.1 Identify and utilize incentives to encourage investment and development in the commercial zones.
- ~~7.3~~ 8.1.2 Evaluate the potential for consolidation of properties or subdivision and development of those properties which extend from Talbot Street to Fremont Street recognizing that access and parking issues would need to be concurrently considered.
- ~~7.4~~ 8.1.3 Support and accommodate the development ~~and expansion~~ of (non-franchise/formula business) tourism-related businesses, including historic and natural sites, water access, museums, outdoor recreation, hospitality, cultural/ arts facilities and performing arts ventures.
- ~~7.5~~ 8.1.4 The Town will encourage cooperation among public and private organizations that publicize and promote tourism.
- ~~7.6~~ 8.1.5 Recognize the value of being situated along the Michener's Chesapeake Country byway and encourage sensitivity in decision making concerning the visual quality surrounding this important resource.

~~7.7~~ 8.1.6 The Town recognizes the positive economic impact an active harbor has on the economic success of St. Michaels and shall encourage continued uses associated with an active harbor.

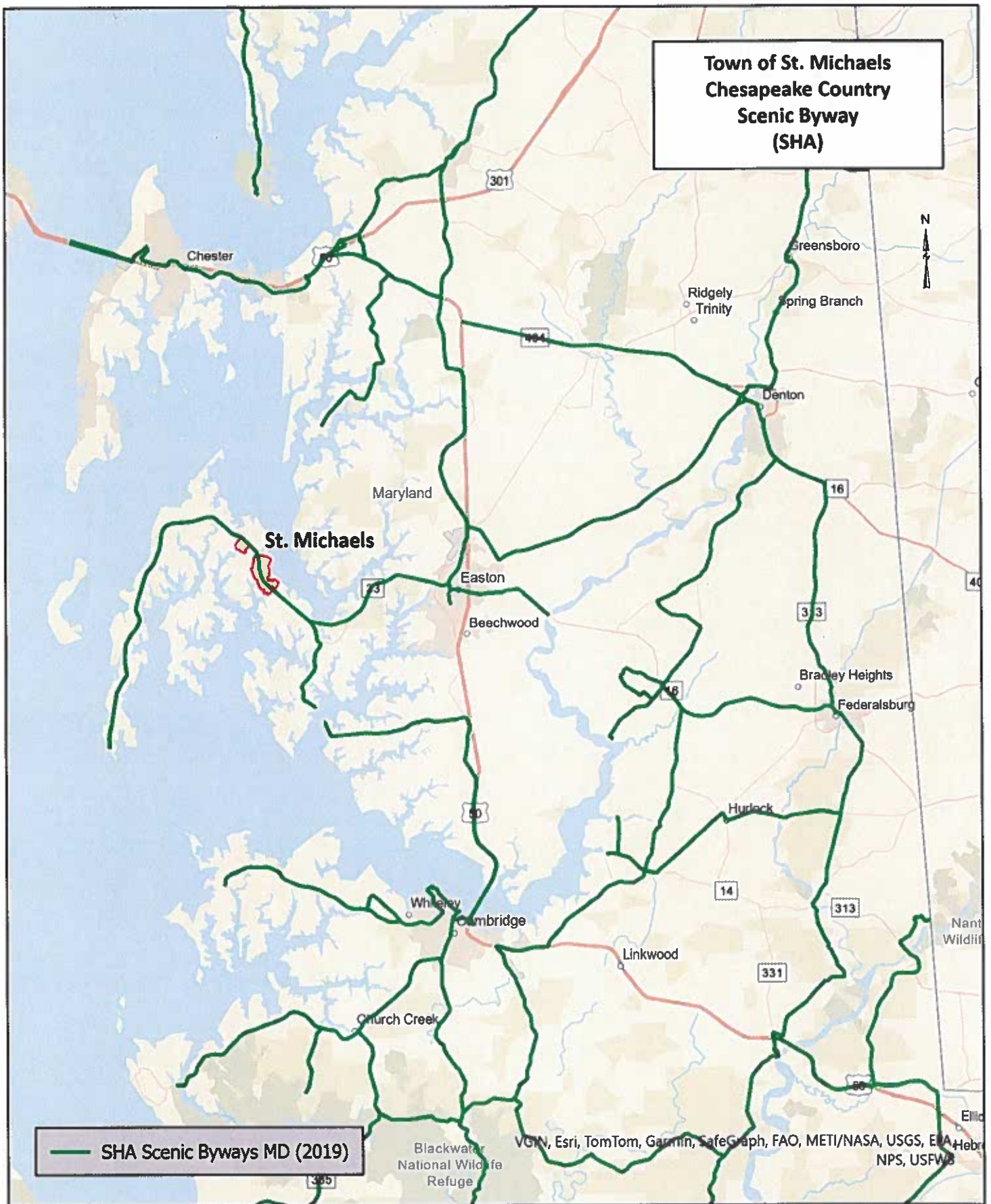
9.1 Conduct various studies and develop reports and recommendations regarding long-term fiscal and economic benefits and costs.

9.1.1 Hire experts to conduct a benefits and costs analysis to the town to balance economic development from tourism and community values with public service costs and impacts.

9.1.2 Study and provide options to consider various ways that would generate revenues to ensure all sectors of the economy and community are paying a fair share in relation to associated public community needs.

9.1.3 Develop a new master plan for Fremont St. that considers recent public improvements to the Library and Community Center and considers the possible sale/lease and redevelopment of the Public Works properties on Glory Ave. and pedestrian linkages of it and other sites with Fremont St.

9.1.4 Establish “Baseline” data on economic development to measure changes in the economy over time.



0 4 8 Miles

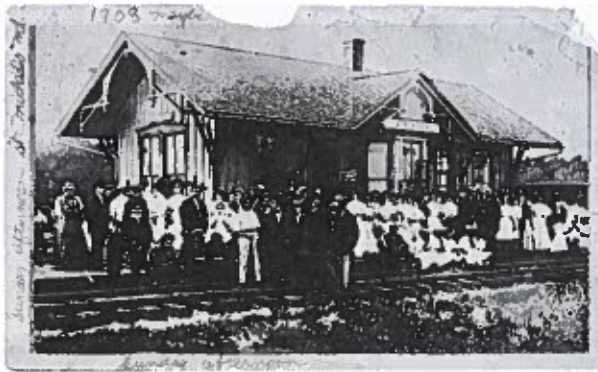
MAP 7-1

Chapter 8: Historic and Cultural Resource Protection

INTRODUCTION

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

Access to St. Michaels originated by boat and evolved by ferry, train and eventually automobile. Train service to the region developed in the early 1900's with travel from the ferry across the Chesapeake at Claiborne with train access on to Easton and Ocean City. It passed through St Michaels. In 2024 the owner of an old train station from the area developed a plan to relocate and renovate the station building. It now sits restored at a prominent location on Talbot St. in the Old Mill District and is a public attraction.

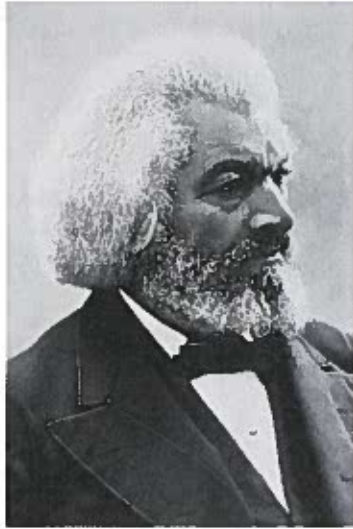


St. Michaels has a substantial and well-documented stock of historic structures, streetscapes, sites, and settings. Over 250 historic structures have been surveyed and documented, forming a largely intact historic district, in which houses, churches and commercial

structures from the late nineteenth century are particularly well represented. A number of these sites can be viewed on Map 8-1, St. Michaels Historic Areas and National Register District.

Perhaps the most famous person associated with St. Michaels is Frederick Douglass – born a slave and became an abolitionist, orator, newspaper owner and writer and later in life counseled President Lincoln during the Civil War. He was a U.S. Marshall of Washington D.C. and Counsel General to Haiti. His master, Thomas Auld, lived in St. Michaels and Douglass resided here as a boy in 1833; lived separately in a small building on Cherry Street in St. Michaels and then was hired out for several years as a farm hand.

In 1877 Douglass returned to St. Michaels as a freeman and visited the Auld family home on Cherry St. and Locust St. He met briefly with Auld on his death bed. Douglass said: “We had both been flung, by powers that did not ask our consent, upon a mighty current of life, which we could neither resist nor control.”



Frederick Douglass



Dodson House (Cherry & Locust St.)

With its roots as a planned town of the late 18th century, with lots arranged around a central public square, St. Michaels exhibits the scale of a small tidewater town nestled against and dependent upon its waterfront. While a handful of structures in town date from the late 18th and early 19th century, much of the built environment reflects the building boom of the second half of the 19th century, when St. Michaels prospered on the abundant oyster harvests. Of the several tidewater Chesapeake Bay towns that grew in the 19th century, St. Michaels particularly stands out as a well-preserved and intact example.

Preservation and rehabilitation of these structures and streetscapes enhances the historic character of the town, stabilizes neighborhoods, protects property values, and attracts visitors to St. Michaels who support the business community by eating, lodging, and shopping. The Town of St. Michaels recognizes the importance of its historic resources and encourages preservation and rehabilitation efforts by private owners and local government. Private houses and public buildings are often carefully restored. New uses are found for historic buildings which no longer serve their original functions.

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

- Promotion of a strong sense of community identity, pride and tradition.
- Managing change over time to promote quality of life in the community by ensuring neighborhood stability and a sustained cultural heritage.



- Revitalization through the preservation, restoration and adaptive reuse of structures contribute to the historic character of the town.
- Increased property values and tax revenues as a result of sensitive rehabilitation and restoration.
- Increased revenues from tourism activities generated by an interest in historic buildings and sites.

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

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



The Town has a Historic District Commission and two historic and cultural resources related museums, the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum and the St. Michaels Museum at Saint Mary's Square. There is also a Classic Motor Museum of St. Michaels. The St. Michaels Historic Museum's Mission is "To celebrate the unique history of St. Michaels and the surrounding area through preservation and education." The museum provides both guided and self-guided historic home and resources tours.



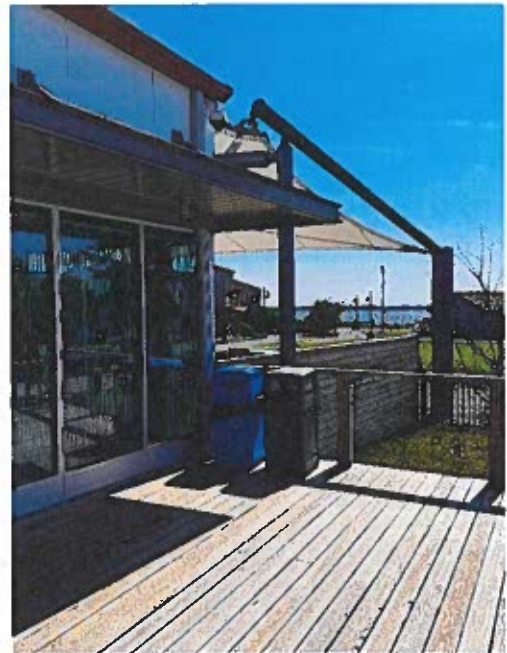
The Boy Scouts log cabin in St. Michaels is a historic building that has been home to the town's Scout troops since 1938. The cabin is located in St. Mary's Square (adjacent to the museum) along with other important symbols of St. Michaels' past. The well-known carpenter of the day Josiah Fairbank was among those who built the Scout House. It was renovated in

2019 to make it a modern facility and is used by the Boy Scouts and also by the Town for a variety of meetings. One of the most remarkable features is a massive fireplace and chimney made of granite that stonemasons George Todd and Albert Wales created when the clubhouse was built. Carved in the keystone of the interior part of the fireplace is "147," the number of the troop when the building was built. A 128-foot lighted walkway welcomes pedestrians to the front door. There also is a fire pit outside for the traditional Scout flag disposal ceremony.

Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum

The Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum's mission is to "Explore and preserve the history, environment and culture of the entire Chesapeake Bay region and make this resource accessible to all."

According to the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum, *"The Chesapeake Bay's racing log canoes are descended from workboats used by oyster tongers in the 19th century. Inevitably, competition among the watermen led to racing and organized races, and larger masts and sails were added in the pursuit of speed. On summer weekends today log canoes continue to compete in races on the nearby Miles River."* At the time of this Plan, eleven (11) log Log canoes on the National Register are docked in St. Michaels. The Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum hosts a variety of boats and wooden ship structures from the early maritime years in St. Michaels. Additionally, St. Michaels has long been known as a working waterfront town, including ship building and other activities related to Watermen's heritage. With the State of Maryland declaring Watermen an endangered culture, the preservation of local Watermen's culture is important to the Town.



CBMM Welcome Center

National Register Historic District

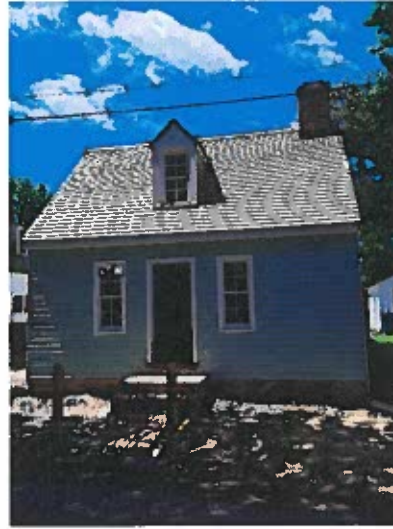
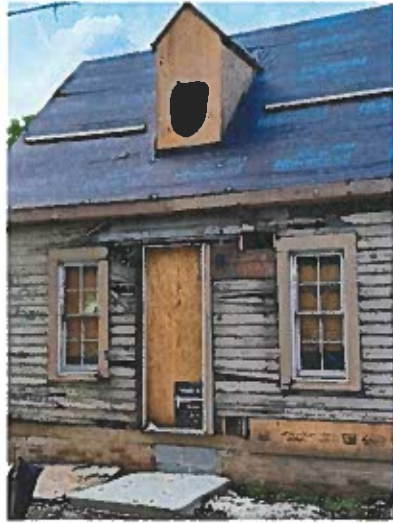
The National Register of Historic Places, an inventory of historic resources, is maintained by the National Park Service. Listing in the National Register provides recognition to sites, buildings, structures, objects, and districts that are significant to American history, architecture, archaeology,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

St. Michaels Historic District

The St. Michaels Historic District (formerly named the St. Michaels Historic Area) was created in 1972 and has been expanded and modified several times since. The five-member Historic District Commission is composed of volunteer citizens with interest or specific expertise in historic preservation and appointed to three-year terms by the Town Commissioners. The Commission reviews proposed exterior changes to any structure or appurtenance in the defined district, based on an approved and published set of guidelines. The guidelines that provide standards for this design review were modified and readopted in 2014. They were amended once again in 2023 in order to clarify issues related to lighting and the temporary use of tents for special events. This review process provides the best tool for protecting and enhancing the historic character of St. Michaels. In addition to the review of proposed projects, inclusion in the Historic District also provides eligibility for a state historic preservation tax credit to home property owners who undertake historic preservation projects, whether or not the property produces income. The Historic District Commission is currently working on designing, purchasing and placing signs at several locations of the perimeter of the district to better define the district and notify citizens and visitors that they are entering the historic area of town.

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

The Town allowed for smaller and older historic homes to be converted to vacation cottages in the past. This had provided renovation of these structures to preserve their historic value. Most of these areas have now been filled in, and so this program was successful. Below is a historic home on Locust St. which recently underwent major repair work for such purpose.



Locust Street House Renovation

While great progress has been made repairing and renovating historic structures in town, there are still various opportunities to save sites from further deterioration. One of those is Sardis Chapel, which is in the center of the original historic St. Mary's Square. The chapel is of the Greek Revival style and dates back as a Methodist Church to 1839. It has had various uses over the years and is commonly referred to as Granite Lodge. It is currently owned by Masonic Lodge. It is in need of interior and exterior improvements to bring it back to its former glory. Developing a partnership and searching for funding to save this old building would be worth the effort.



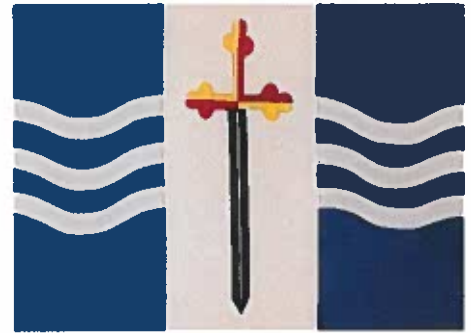
Sardis Chapel

In addition to historic homes, there are several historic churches in town that add to the charm and history of the community. The largest among them is Christ Episcopal Church which dates back to 1878. St. Luke's United Methodist Church, also on Talbot St. is of the same era (1871). There are also several historic cemeteries in town including a cemetery on Brooks Lane that contains Buffalo Soldiers from African American military regiments.



Christ Episcopal Church

The St. Michaels flag was adopted by the Town Commissioners of St. Michaels as the town's flag in 1970. The sword represents the Archangel Michael in the colors of Maryland with a background of white waves of water which refer to the narrow spit of land the town sits on between the Miles River and San Domingo Creek. The blue is to recall the sailors' wish for "fair wind and blue water".



Honeymoon Bridge was once used in a movie scene. Future plans are to replicate, raise and replace this bridge which connects Cherry St. to town properties on the St. Michaels Harbor and the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum. This will help mitigate sea level rise and improve pedestrian access.

VISION

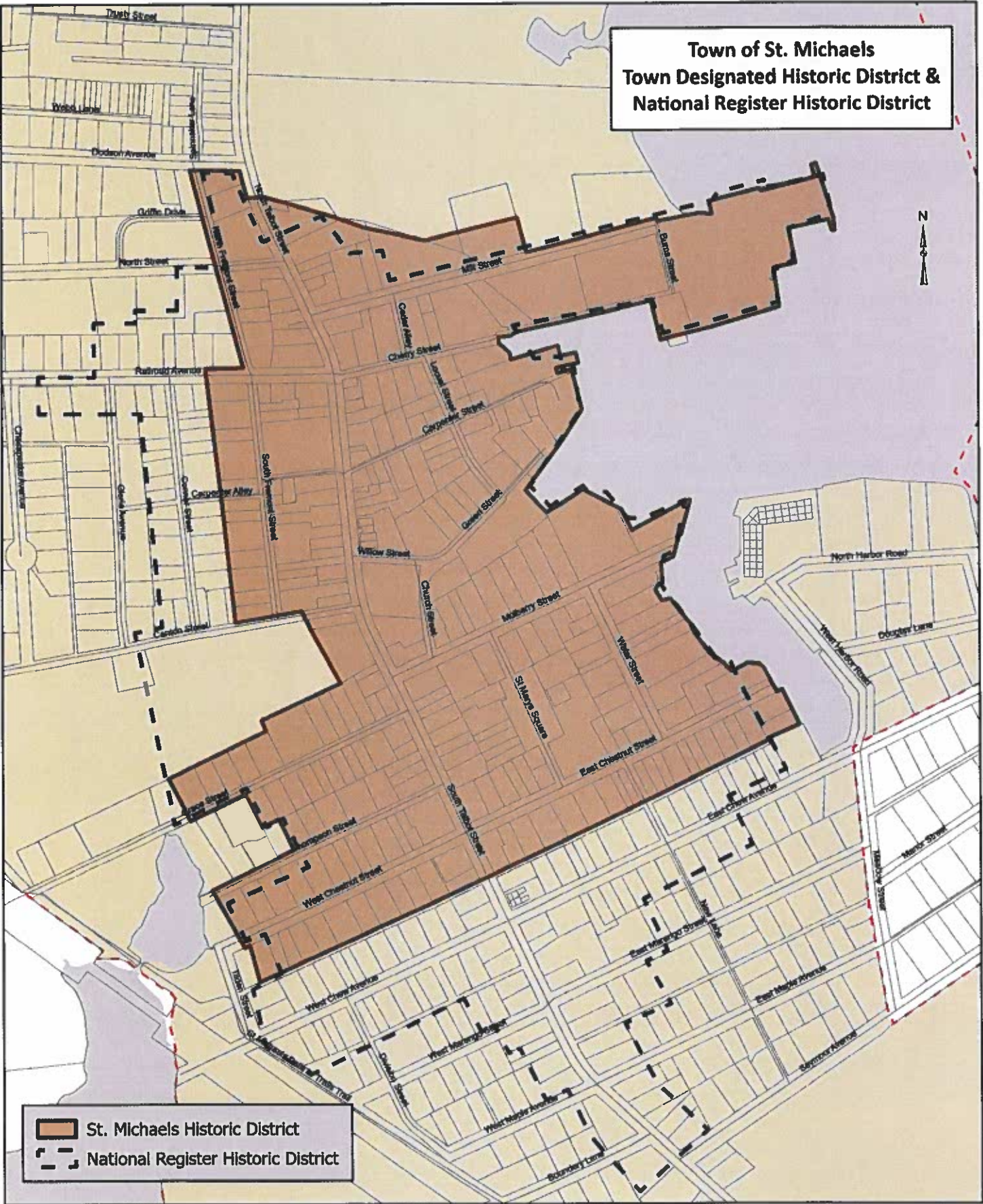
St. Michaels is a place where historic and cultural resources have been valued and preserved.

GOALS AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

- 8.1 Further the goal of restoration, adaptive rehabilitation and preservation of historic structures, sites, streetscapes, and settings.
 - 8.1.1 Consider expansion of the St. Michaels Historic District to include areas of the National Register Historic District and other neighborhoods that may be determined to be historically significant should such requests be made by the affected property owners.
 - 8.1.2 Periodically revise the St. Michaels Historic Area Guidelines to address more specific materials, techniques, and other aspects of historic structure rehabilitation while conforming to the Secretary of the Interior's Guidelines for Rehabilitation of Historic Structures.
 - 8.1.3 Continue to evaluate the feasibility of burying or relocating utility lines.
 - 8.1.4 Continue a program of planting and replacing street trees to improve streetscapes throughout the Historic District.

- 8.1.5 Consider updates to guides and assessments of the Historic District as it relates to evaluation of contributing structures.
- 8.2 Support the St. Michaels Historic District Commission and zoning regulations applicable to the Historic District.
 - 8.2.1 Pursue Certified Local Government status with the Maryland Historical Trust to provide eligibility for continuing education grants for staff and members of the Historic District Commission.
 - 8.2.2 Evaluate the zoning ordinance to allow consideration for historic character in reviewing variances for front lot line setbacks and to allow consideration for historic character on side and rear lot line setbacks for accessory structures.
- 8.3 Educate residents, realtors and property owners about the benefits, boundaries and requirements of the Historic District, review process and design standards and about the availability of state and federal tax credits for historic preservation projects.
 - 8.3.1 Encourage distribution of a brochure to area realtors to be given to potential buyers setting forth the Town's Historic District Boundary and the benefits and responsibilities of being in such a district.
 - 8.3.2 Encourage property owners to seek the expertise of the Historic District Commission when considering improvements to their property through informal discussions with the Commission.
 - 8.3.3 Post signs to mark the boundaries of the historic district and encourage the marking of individual historic structures with date plaques.
 - 8.3.4 Facilitate workshops to educate local property owners on financial incentives for preservation and rehabilitation.
 - 8.3.5 Generate and distribute a list of accepted alternative materials and conditions under which they are accepted in either rehabilitation projects or additions and new construction. Generate and distribute a list of supplies of approved alternative materials.
- 8.4 Encourage sponsorship of Town events that celebrate the historic and cultural resources in St. Michaels.
- 8.5 Recognize the heritage associated with log canoes and other historic boats on the National Register that are docked in our waterways.

- 8.6 Continue to explore opportunities to preserve the working Watermen's heritage associated with St. Michaels.
- 8.7 Protect historic and culture sites from climate and weather-related events.



0 200 400 Feet

MAP 8-1

Chapter 9: Parks, Recreation and Open Space

INTRODUCTION

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

The Town ~~has in recent~~ past years ~~had~~ been focusing on the acquisition and improvement of smaller parks to serve the needs of residents. However, in 2024 the Town set a new direction with the acquisition of 7.6 acres which was subsequently designated as San Domingo Creek Park Master Plan. The community participated in a 9-month public outreach process that led to the final design and adoption of the future plan for this largest park site within the town.



SAN DOMINGO CREEK PARK MASTER PLAN | ST MICHAELS, MD January 17, 2024

MAHAN RYKIEL



This element proposes that parks and recreation offerings be viewed in a broader context in the future as a tool to

accomplish a number of other related community development objectives, such as:

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



In planning for recreation and open space in St. Michaels, an important distinction must be kept in mind: recreation areas, such as community parks and boat landings, are used actively, while open space areas are primarily passive in nature and managed for natural resources protection.

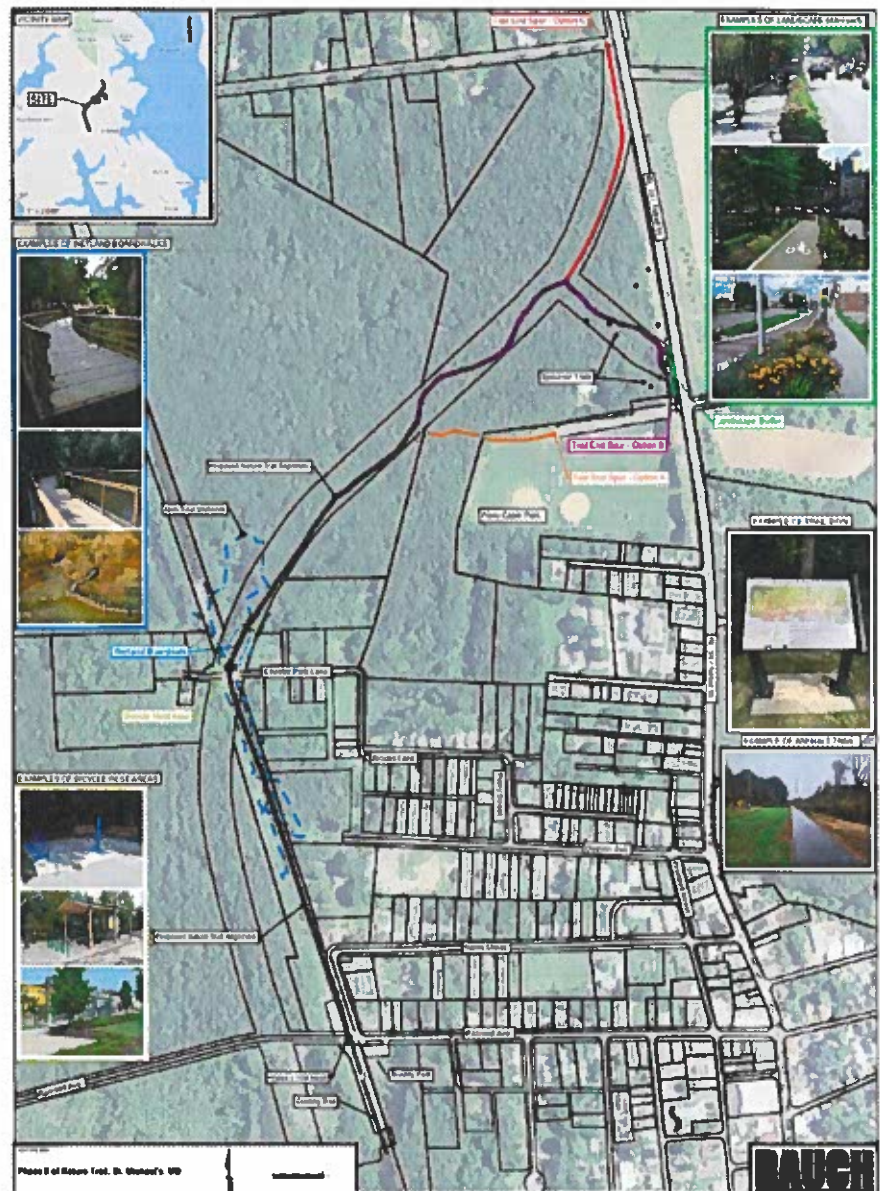


These two uses, while not attempting to achieve the same objectives, are not always incompatible. Combined with creative land planning and management programs, they can be mutually supportive toward achieving their respective objectives.

There is currently a 1.3-mile walking trail constituting Phase I of the St. Michaels

Nature Trail, which extends from Bradley Park off Railroad Avenue to the southern edge of town across from the Fire Department. The residents and visitors to the Town have expressed overwhelming support for the extension of the nature trail from Bradley Park to the Perry Cabin Ball Field (Talbot County Recreation Area). This extension would allow for a continuous route from the southern boundary of the Town to its northern boundary providing an alternative for pedestrians and cyclists traveling on MD Rt. 33. There is also consideration being given to the creation of a spur from the nature trail across the Marea Subdivision property, at the south end of Town, to an area overlooking San Domingo Creek.

The Town renewed efforts to complete a 1.2-mile extension on the trail to the north. Several grants were secured from the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) that enabled the town to complete feasibility plans, construction drawings and permitting.



Nature Trail Extension Map

In late 2024, the town received additional funding from MDOT to complete the construction of the trail extension. The trail will wind through dense forest, include a wetland bridge crossing, a pavilion where the original St. Michaels Train Station was located and a new restroom. The project construction is anticipated to be started by the publication date of this updated comprehensive plan and open to the public in 2027.

In the transportation element of this plan, reference is made to the establishment of a pedestrian walkway from Yacht Club Road to the entrance of the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum.

Should this goal be achieved, an additional passive recreational opportunity will be established for both the residents and visitors of St. Michaels. It is anticipated that Perry Cabin Resort will complete a significant portion of this in the future.

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

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

The St. Michaels YMCA (Perkins Family YMCA) opened in 2017. It also includes the Bay Hundred Senior Center and is a part of the YMCA of the Chesapeake organization. It includes full service senior center and a variety of health and exercise facilities: a pool, exercise studios, wellness center, a gym, locker rooms, supervised play, pickleball, basketball and a variety of programs and classes. It is conveniently located next to the school complex on Seymour Avenue.

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

Table 9-1 Approximate Size and Characteristics of Town Park Facilities (public and private)		
Site	Size	Park Features
1. Canton Farm Nature Area	40 acres	Nature Preserve and Wildlife Observation area located in the County adjacent to Town but owned by the Town and partially under conservation easement.
2. Perry Cabin Field	20 acres	General recreation facility with approximately 20 acres developed to include baseball/softball fields (lighted), basketball court, playground areas, picnic shelter, picnic areas, walking trail, soccer fields, public restrooms, and open space.
3. Chesapeake Bay Maritime* Museum	18 20 acres	<u>Welcome Center, exhibit buildings, lighthouse, children's outdoor exhibits and play areas, boardwalk, piers, picnic tables, bench seating, and views of the Miles River and Fogs Cove.</u>
4. St. Michaels School Complex	15 acres	Running track, tennis courts, basketball courts and playgrounds.
5. Clint S. Bradley Park	2 acres	Park facility to anchor one end of the St. Michaels Nature Trail. Includes play equipment, gazebo, picnic tables, and restroom.
6. Bay Hundred Community Pool*	1 acre	Outdoor pool facilities, showers, lockers and pool building.
7. Skate Board Park — Hollis Park Extended	.5 acres	<u>Provides skating area and parking on Mill Street. A former skate park, currently a parking lot and being considered for various future uses.</u>

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

Site	Size	Park Features
8. Hollis Park	1.9 acres	Park facility providing playground, picnic tables, bench seating and views of St. Michaels Harbor. <u>Recently expanded with the demolition of the former Town Hall and improved sea level rise mitigation bulkheads, trails and pedestrian promenade along the waterfront.</u>
9. Muskrat Park	.5 acres	Features gazebo, picnic tables, benches and Adirondack chairs, parking area and views of St. Michaels Harbor and the Miles River. Also features historic replica cannons.
10. St. Michaels Museum at St. Mary's Square*	.3 acres	A park-like setting featuring three circa 1860 buildings with artifacts significant to the history and culture of the area.
11. Back Creek Park **	.3 acres	Recreation area with pier, kayak launch ramps and storage racks**, picnic tables, bench seating, play equipment and views of San Domingo Creek.
12. George W. Wilson Reading Garden	.25 acres	Reading garden located adjacent to the library includes bench seating, patio area and rain garden.
13. St. Michaels Community Center Community Garden *	.50 acres	40 beds for vegetables, herbs and flowers, with benches, mulch and compost area.
14. Frederick Douglas Park	.1 acre	Downtown seating area and information kiosk. Restrooms located in adjoining parking area.
15. St. Michaels Nature Trail	1.3 miles	Eight-foot-wide walking and biking trail – handicap accessible, with benches, doggie bag stations.
16. Park at Radcliffe Avenue	.05 acre	Small historic park with great water views located in the adjoining community of Bentley Hay
<u>17. San Domingo Creek Park & Town Administrative Offices</u>	<u>7.6 acres</u>	<u>Passive recreation and environmental restoration project with Town Administrative Offices on site. Waterfront trails and pier.</u>
<u>18. E. Chew Avenue Pocket Park</u>	<u>0.25 acre</u>	<u>A future planned site to serve as a small viewing area along the Harbor and to help mitigate stormwater flooding from sea level rise.</u>
<u>19. Perkins Family YMCA*</u>	<u>1 acre</u>	<u>A full-service YMCA exercise and wellness facility and also houses the Bay Hundred Senior Center and associated services.</u>
* Denotes a fee required for admittance or use E** Denotes a fee required for storage		

The Town owns 53 boat slips that are rented to those people whose boats are registered in the State of Maryland. Two of these slips are made available to the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. One additional slip is used by St. Michaels Fire and Rescue Services.

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

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

There is public waterfront access from several of the parks. With the acquisition of San Domingo Creek Park, the Town dramatically increased waterfront parkland in the community. A small fishing pier is anticipated at sometime in the future along with waterfront viewing areas, boardwalks over wetland and walking and biking trails that link to the adjacent St. Michaels Nature Trail.

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

In 2014, 2024, the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development approved the Town's request to be updated plan to continue as a designated as a Sustainable Community. To qualify for such a designation, the Town had to evaluate its strengths and weaknesses in areas, including housing, transportation, utilities and recreation. The Town recognized the intrinsic value of our parks to both the residents and visitors and supported the continued efforts necessary to maintain the conditions of these facilities while expanding the recreational, cultural and artistic opportunities offered. The adoption of the updated Sustainable Communities Plan as well as the Town's Priority Funding Area (PFA) Map to include all of San Domingo Creek Park enables the community to qualify for grant funding that would not otherwise be available from the State of



Maryland.

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

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

Another park and recreational interest under consideration is development of a dog park somewhere in St. Michaels. The Town is known for its friendly attitude towards dogs and such a facility is viewed favorably by the community. There are various possibilities and the feasibility and impacts for such needs careful review. The use was vetted as a part of the San Domingo Creek Master Plan and ultimately rejected from that site. There are a few alternative sites that are being considered that are similar or near St. Michaels at this time and it is anticipated that a dog park will become a part of the parks and recreation inventory in the future.

VISION

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

OBJECTIVES AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

- 9.1 Recognize that the primary function of the town parks is to provide a serene setting where residents and visitors can enjoy passive recreational endeavors.
- 9.2 Provide opportunities to meet recreational needs and offer environmental observation and enjoyment.
 - 9.2.1 Continue to maintain an accurate inventory of Town recreational facilities and improvements.
 - 9.2.2 Maintain adequate public waterfront access points.
 - 9.2.3 Enhance and retain the natural qualities of all parks in St. Michaels, in addition to expanding the trail and interpretation elements.
 - 9.2.4 Enhance the existing Town Park facilities through the use of amenities such as restrooms, drinking fountains, benches and Adirondack chairs, picnic tables and bike racks.

- 9.2.5 Ensure public safety of public recreational facilities through the use of adequate lighting, policing and maintenance.
- 9.2.6 Encourage volunteerism in the acquisition, construction, operation, and maintenance of parks, trails and recreation facilities.
- 9.2.7 Include the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum as a key partner in the Recreation Plan objectives.
- 9.2.8 Promote opportunities for public participation in planning parks, trails, and recreational facilities.
- 9.2.9 Assess the best location and funding options for a future dog park.
- ~~9.2.9~~ 9.2.10 Task the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board to maintain the implementation strategies of these objectives.
- 9.3 Develop and extend the Town's trail system for shared use by pedestrians and bicyclists.
 - 9.3.1 Work with Talbot County Parks and Recreation Department to provide a pedestrian and bicycle trail system from Easton to the County ball field at the north end of St. Michaels. ~~With Phase 1 of such expansion being from Railroad Avenue to the ball field.~~ Include a future trail connection from the south terminus of the Nature Trail to grocery stores and restaurants located near the Town but located in Talbot County.
 - 9.3.2 Coordinate safe biking trails within the Town's bicycle route system with other existing and planned bicycle facilities.
 - 9.3.3 Sidewalk connecting Perry Cabin to Town. Work with the owners of the Inn at Perry Cabin and the St. Michaels Maritime Museum to construct an ADA compliant sidewalk tying into the existing Town sidewalk system.
 - 9.3.4 Complete the 1.25-mile extension of the Nature Trail from Railroad Avenue to Perry Cabin Park.
- 9.4 Develop a comprehensive bicycle and pedestrian plan that includes existing and proposed bicycle and pedestrian facilities to better understand how and where new linkages would be built.
- 9.5 Parks and Recreation Advisory Board.
 - 9.4.1 Recommend and support amendments to Boards and Commissions, Committees and Panels.

- 9.4.2 Continue open dialogue and budgeting with Commissioners pertaining to park improvements.
- 9.4.3 The Parks & Recreation Advisory Board will provide oversight to improve and maintain landscaping in parks.
- 9.4.4 Assign a level of maintenance to parks and recreation facilities appropriate to sustain attractive and useful facilities. Before acquisition or construction, a funding plan for long-term operation and maintenance shall be established.
- 9.4.5 Assure ~~Provide Park~~ park facilities provide access for all age groups and, ~~where feasible,~~ conform its park facilities to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements.
- 9.4.6 Allow for appropriate educational and entertainment activities in Town parks.
- 9.5 Use recreation facilities to promote environmental and historic awareness.
 - 9.5.1 Implement historic markers.
 - 9.5.2 Provide better signage for parks. Signage may include interpretive and historical information.
 - 9.5.3 Identification and celebration of historic activities that have occurred in St. Michaels.
 - 9.5.4 Support historical, environmental and cultural education through the preservation of historical sites and the support of festivals and events reflecting the heritage of the Town.
 - ~~9.5.5 Continue to evaluate the feasibility of burying or relocating utility lines.~~
 - 9.5.6 Continue to evaluate and enforce the rules and guidelines for public parks in the Town.
- 9.6 Develop San Domingo Creek Park in accordance with the approved Master Plan
 - ~~9.6.1 Continue work on grant applications for demolition, design and construction of the park.~~
 - 9.6.2 Work with citizen groups to form support networks to promote and fund park development.
 - 9.6.3 Explore opportunities to better utilize the remaining (2nd) building on the park site adjacent to the Town Administration Building.

POLICIES

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

Town of St. Michaels Parks and Recreation Facilities



Park and Recreation Facility



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



MAP 9-1

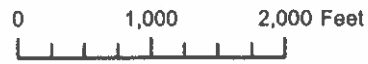
Town of St. Michaels Recreational Trail System Plan



-  Future Trail Connections
-  St. Michaels Nature Trail

Trail System

- 1 Perry Cabin Park
- 2 Back Creek Park
- 3 Bridge Crossing
- 4 Bradley Park
- 5 San Domingo Creek Park
- 6 Overlook at Marea



Chapter 10: Housing

INTRODUCTION

Housing in the town of St. Michaels consists primarily of single-family residences, typically on lots of 7,200 square feet or less, and for the most part contained in three areas zoned for residential use. According to the most recent census data there are around 725 housing units in the Town and just under 20,000 county-wide. Around 19% (135) housing units are used as seasonal, recreational or for occasional use only. Although seasonal figures may be skewed to lower percentage if they considered areas abutting the Town, but are technically outside of the Town boundary as many residents report a higher percentage of seasonal residents. A local housing survey would be of value to measure more specific trends over time.

Census data indicates that there are 357 units built before 1939, many constructed much earlier in the 19th century and considered a vital part of the historic appeal to the town. The average household size is 2.25 persons per household and the median price of a house is less than \$500,000.



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

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

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

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

The residential rental market in the Town of St. Michaels is also very limited, ~~with only 2.8% of the total housing stock being available for such rentals.~~ The bulk of rentals are contained within condominiums and apartments above commercial establishments. ~~The median rent in St. Michaels is \$823.00 per month.~~ However, considering the small size of the community there are approximately 145 housing units that are subsidized and available for low to moderate income families. These include: Riverwoods Apartments, Hamilton Village, Griffen Apartments, Willieville Apartments and 8 homes for Habitat of Humanity. Habitat for Humanity is also considering another project in town. The Housing Commission of Talbot County includes St. Michaels and Easton Housing Authorities and oversees federal housing programs for public assistance in town.

The Town is also experiencing the deterioration of a small portion of our housing stock, through home abandonment or neglect. While the Town has adopted the International Building Code as general livability standards, citations related to blight have proven cumbersome and limited success in resolving the renovations necessary to bring these dwellings back into code compliance.

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



~~As noted above, the rental market in St. Michaels is very restrictive.~~ While zoning changes have been enacted to allow apartments above commercial establishments, fire and safety issues often make this conversion not financially feasible. The Town continues to support mixed use structures in the business area as they provide greater security during off-hours and broaden the range of housing options in proximity to shops and services. Market conditions and high commercial rental rates make doing business in St. Michaels difficult; therefore, the addition of residential rental income should be an attraction for business investment. There is also some limited employee sponsored housing offered from major employers and exploring more of this would be of value to help keep employees of local businesses living in the town.

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

The town of St. Michaels is essentially fixed within its present boundaries with the exception of those areas as noted in Chapter 1 as infill developments which includes about 25 vacant lots throughout town and a few larger tracts of residential land. Chapter 2 includes a potential build-out scenario of less than 90 additional units which would likely be a mix of unit types and occur at buildout, most of which during the next 10 year planning cycle.

~~According to the 2010 census, 2020 census data, 50.2%–~~ 52% of the Town's population is 50+ in age. It is a well-documented fact that as people age, they prefer to remain in their homes. However, living independently is not always possible and there is often a need for assistance in everyday living. This need has been met in other jurisdictions, where space permits, by conversion of part of the residence to live-in accommodations. Alternately, where space is available in homes occupied by pre-retirement people, older relatives can be accommodated in attached suites or within accessory structures converted to accommodate such a use. However, such accommodations should not affect the historic architectural appearance of the Town's homes. Guidelines should be considered to assure that such modifications do not impact the historic character of the Town.

Opportunities for revitalization exist in several areas of the Town including commercial and residential properties. Many of these areas as noted in the Town's adopted [Sustainable Community Plan](#) (See Map 10-1) and [Community Legacy Plan](#) (adopted in December 2008). The Sustainable Communities Program is a place-based designation offering a comprehensive package of resources from the State of Maryland that support holistic strategies for community development, revitalization and sustainability. It requires geographically targeted resources for historic preservation, housing and economic development under a single designation. The designation places special emphasis on infrastructure improvements, multimodal transportation and development that strengthens existing communities.

Affordable and sustainable housing within a defined geographic area with an existing built environment in need of revitalization or additional state investment to strengthen the local market are targeted. The Town renewed its Sustainable Communities Program area in 2023 which requires updating every five years. This includes several residential neighborhoods.

Such revitalization efforts should be concentrated on improvements which do not change the character of a neighborhood, but offer opportunities for home and business structural improvements, landscaping, street and sidewalk improvements and a potential for new rental or home ownership opportunities. Additionally, attention needs to be directed toward ensuring that infill and restorative projects do not create architectural anomalies in their respective neighborhoods.

There is constant pressure to convert homes for Short Term Rentals or vacation housing due to the attractive qualities of the town and economic opportunities. At this time, only older and

smaller homes, or historic homes, can be used as Short-Term Rentals as well as second floors above commercial spaces. This is intended to protect existing residential neighborhoods by limiting that use from spreading throughout the town and reserving long term residential homes for permanent residents.

Accessory Dwelling Units are becoming a popular option to be used for family visitors. The Zoning Ordinance allows for these to be used as rentals, and this is a way to provide for more affordable housing without changing the appearance and overall use of residential neighborhoods.

VISION

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

OBJECTIVES AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

10.1 Maintain and restore the integrity and appearance of residential neighborhoods and commercial properties.

10.1.1 Maintain a single residence appearance in the St. Michaels Historic District.

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

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

10.1.4 Consider the drafting of an Ordinance that addresses the requirement that new structures and renovations be in-keeping with the general appearance of the neighborhood in which they are located.

10.1.5 Explore with Talbot County the possibility of tax relief for families who are active members of the St. Michaels Volunteer Fire Department.

10.2 ~~Create a Revitalization Overlay Zone which would allow for a predetermination of areas which revitalization should be encouraged. Care must be taken to assure that the historic characters of such neighborhoods are not negatively impacted by such revitalization efforts.~~ Support housing revitalization and housing affordability efforts.

10.2.1 Seek federal, state and other funds specific to revitalization and rent-to-own opportunities.

10.2.2 Continue to coordinate with the St. Michaels Housing Authority to improve site conditions through structural upgrades, sustainability landscaping and security measures.

10.2.3 Work with Habitat for Humanity to build an additional affordable single family houses in St. Michaels.

10.2.4 Utilize the Town's approved Sustainable Communities work program strategies in conjunction with the Comprehensive Plan to support housing revitalization when appropriate.

10.3 Increase alternatives to single residential units within town.

10.3.1 Continue to encourage the mixed-use in commercial buildings to include rental units on the upper floors of commercial buildings.

10.3.2 Continue to explore public-private partnerships to help provide opportunities for moderate income and working families including employee sponsored housing programs.

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

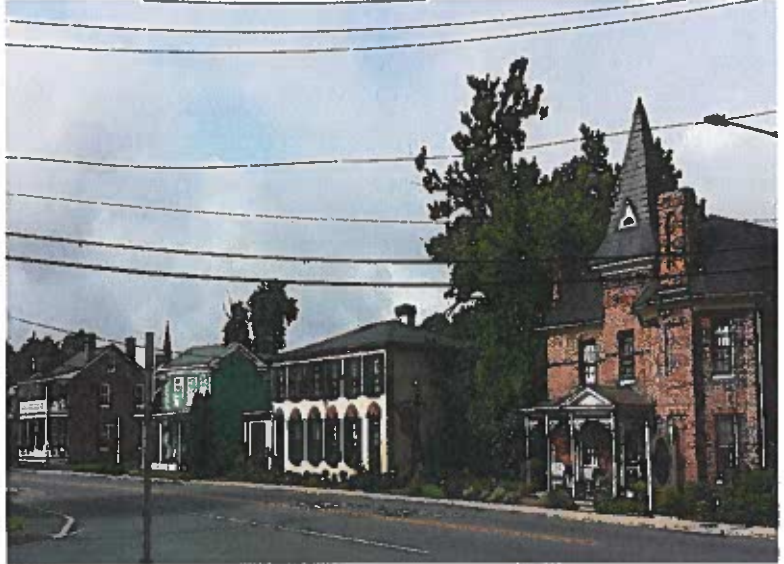
Establish specific criteria to ensure accessory dwelling units contribute to the neighborhood in which they are located.

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

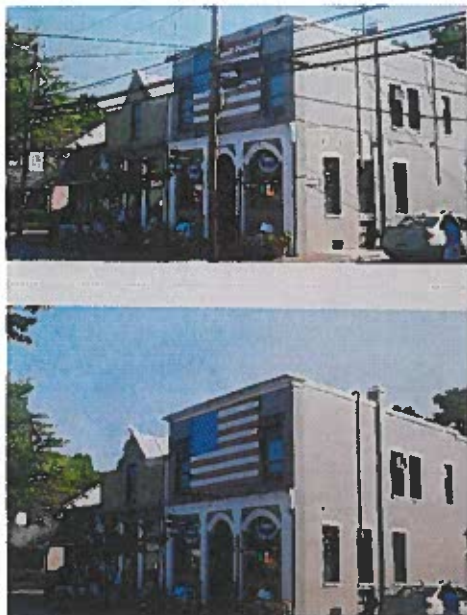
10.4 Encourage and support grant requests or tax credits for rehabilitation and/or construction for housing for low to moderate income or elderly residents.

Chapter 11: Community Character, Design and Appearance

St. Michaels is truly a community in every sense of the word. There is a central commercial zone, established residential areas, a well-defined historic district, two protected harbor areas, a library, a police and fire department, restaurants, a community center, museums, parks and nature trails and a school complex. In addition, the town residents are quick to volunteer their time to serve on various Boards, Commissions and nonprofit organizations. The Town holds a variety of community events and festivals that contribute to its sense of place as a small town on the Eastern Shore of the Chesapeake Bay with a maritime past and present that is worth protecting into the future.



The physical details of the Town, which include building and landscaping elements, intimate views, walkability and expansive vistas are important to the definition of the town's character. These details influence how residents and visitors feel about the Town, and we recognize the need to preserve and protect these physical details. Throughout this plan there is discussion on the need to develop controls on pedestrian circulation, tourism, signage and urban design to mitigate the impacts of tourism on design elements and features important to the community.



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

The relocation of utility lines from Talbot St. has been an area of discussion over the years but the costs are prohibitive. Should there be opportunities for this in the future, it is worth considering. The photo at left shows an illustration of the effect of removing poles and overhead wires and improved aesthetic to the main commercial corridor.

St. Michaels is the only incorporated Town in the larger Bay Hundred Region. Residents and Visitors to the Bay Hundred Region have to pass through St. Michaels on Route 33. The

name “Hundred Region” is derived from colonial times and an English term used to define English “Shires” or “Counties”. It means an area that could produce at least 100 fighting men and used thereafter to define the “Bay Hundred Region” of the western portion of Talbot County from Claiborne to Tilghman. The Town of St. Michaels serves as the center for commercial services and community facilities for its residents and surrounding communities and the region. Several businesses and residents still use this term to define the area and associated services.

VISION

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

OBJECTIVES AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

- 11.1 Encourage design qualities in future redevelopment that reinforce St. Michaels’ unique character and identity.
 - 11.1.1 ~~Consider the creation of Design Guidelines~~ Examine and consider design changes when needed for all new development, including residential, commercial and infill/redevelopment, in St. Michaels which will result in re-development that is more sensitive to existing housing and neighborhoods.
 - 11.1.2 Work with the Historic District Commission to ensure additions or changes to historic structures comply with the Historic District Guidelines prior to issuance of building permits.
 - 11.1.3 Implement revised design guidelines adopted in 2024 in the Gateway Commercial area for new development projects.
- 11.2 Create landscaping and setback standards for new or expanded commercial uses adjacent to residential zones.
- 11.3 With respect to all new construction, existing significant trees and natural features, such as drainage corridors must be preserved.
 - 11.3.1 Require significant trees to be preserved and integrated into the site or lot layout and replace of trees whose loss is unavoidable in accordance with Ordinance 540, and Chapter 340-182, Three Replacement and Mitigation Table in the Zoning Ordinance
 - ~~— Seek guidance from the Department of Natural Resources for appropriate strategies.~~
 - ~~— Include these standards in the Town Zoning Ordinance.~~
- 11.4 Review ~~and revise~~ the ~~review~~ process for the Planned Redevelopment Overlay Zone.

- 11.4.1 ~~Consider mapping~~ Map those areas where re-development is considered appropriate.
- 11.4.2 Mapping should be based in part on sustainable community mapping.
- 11.5 Create a sustainable streetscape program for the streets on which commercial properties abut.
 - 11.5.1 Work with the business owners, operators and the St. Michaels Business Association to establish an esthetically pleasing district for our residents and visitors.
 - 11.5.2 Study and integrate urban design improvements with landscaping, signage and parking.
- 11.6 Evaluate setback requirements and shared parking options in Central Commercial Zone.

Town of St. Michaels Sustainable Communities Area



Sustainable Communities

- Area 1 - Northwest Sector
- Area 2 - Business District
- Area 3 - St. Michaels Museum
- Area 4 - Maritime Museum
- Area 5 - Parks and Nature Trail
- Area 6 - Maritime Commercial
- Area 7 - Historic District

0 1,000 2,000 Feet

MAP 10-1

Chapter 12: Governance and Communications

INTRODUCTION

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



Communications amongst the Town's citizenry, its government bodies and business community should be supported by the most advanced technology. Technology carries a cost as does the need to keep an informed citizenry to support the Town government, attend its meetings, participate in its activities, and keep abreast in a timely manner of its decisions and regulations. The Town recently updated its web site www.stmichaelsmd.gov. This action reorganized information for easier access by the citizens and visitors of the town.



~~A primary goal in the 2008 Comprehensive Plan was to establish a town website and email distribution list to provide information to the residents, businesses and visitors in St. Michaels. In 2014, the Commissioners employed a communications Manager who was tasked with creating a~~

~~new website which was to include a directory of elected officials, members of appointed bodies and town personnel.~~ In addition, schedules of meetings, agenda, minutes, legal notices and enforcement documents and applications ~~were to be made~~ are available and updated as legislative changes were promulgated. The site also includes links to local and state resources and local clubs and organizations. New online payment of water bills was added. Work continues to add features such as on-line development applications and payment for processing.

The Town uses social media to inform its citizens including “Constant Contact” messaging on special events, emergencies and public information. Anyone can sign up and be included in this notification system. The Quick Links tab on the web site also takes you directly to a list of current activities in town.



Block Party
Author: Events
Posted on: 05-30-2024



CBMM Antique & Classic Boat Festival and Coastal Arts Fair
Author: Events
Posted on: 05-30-2024



CBMM Waterman's Appreciation Day & Crab Feast
Author: Events
Posted on: 05-30-2024



National Night Out
Author: Events
Posted on: 05-30-2024



Labor Day Weekend Art Show and Sale
Author: Events
Posted on: 05-06-2024



Summer Concerts in the Park - May 30 through August 29
Author: Events

Quick Links Activities on the Town's Web Page

As part of the comprehensive plan update, the community noted two areas of improvement in governance and communication that would be of value. First, is to establish more direct relationships with Talbot County government. The county includes large areas of residential and commercial development that abut the town, but not within the town's jurisdiction. Also, the county provides sewer services to the town, while the town provides water services to these adjacent areas.

The county and town can share long range planning studies for land use and infrastructure, and development reviews and solicit input to ensure compatibility. The Town's Municipal Growth and Development Regulations (Chapter 2 of this plan) documents areas of mutual concern and more formal review and advisory processes would ensure both governments are aware of activities in these areas.

A second area of concern is to better share plans and goals between the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum and the town leaders. The Town held 30 special events or festivals during 2023, many of which were within the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum property. Better communication and coordination would help reduce any areas of concern such as understanding when major events are planned and processing events permits in a timely manner, mitigation of sea level rise, and what economic issues and interests are shared between the various groups.

The town also publishes a seasonal newsletter to keep lines of communication open between the government and its citizens and provide another format to keep everyone apprised of activities, events and projects.

VISION

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



Town Newsletter

OBJECTIVES AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

- 12.1 Continue to develop electronic communications between the Town and individual citizens and businesses.
 - 12.1.1 Create an email contact list which encompasses all residents and businesses of the Town.
 - 12.1.2 Develop a comprehensive community calendar with events of the community center, library, churches, art league, etc.
- 12.2 Continue to support the tourism efforts of the Town.
 - 12.2.3 Support sustainable tourism efforts by publicizing special events and programs utilizing print and electronic venues.

12.2.4 Support historic and cultural events relating to the history of the Town through print and electronic venues.

12.2.5 Work with the Tourism Development Board to diversify and target activities as appropriate.

~~12.3 Obtain a more accurate “.gov” extension from the Government Services Agency.~~

~~12.3.1 Continue to research the advantages of transitioning from our current “.org” and “.com” to a “.gov” domain.~~

12.4 Strengthen communication between the Town Commissioners and the various Town Boards and Commissions, Talbot County Government and the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum.

~~12.4.1 Consider designating an elected Town Commissioner to be an *ex-officio* member of each Board and Commission.~~

12.4.1 Continue to draw on the expertise of Town residents to provide support and assistance to Town Government.

12.4.2 Establish communication processes or protocols between the Town government, county government and non-profit organizations.

12.5 Strengthen communication between the Town Commissioners and residents.

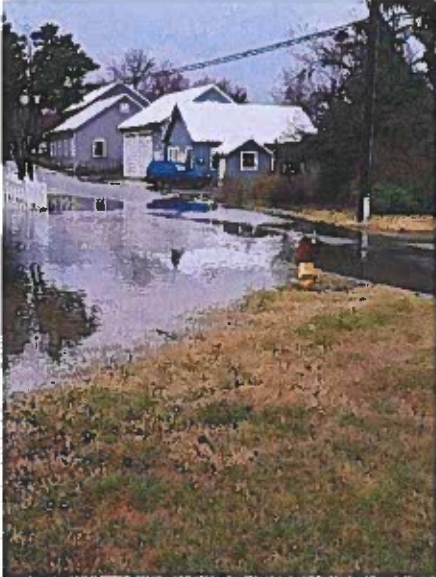
12.5.1 Continue the Commissioners efforts to provide transparency in government.

12.5.2 Consider altering the hours of the Commissioner’s public meeting times to afford greater participation by the residents.

12.5.3 Consider ways to allow part-time residents to be more actively involved in governmental decisions.

Chapter 13: Climate Resilience

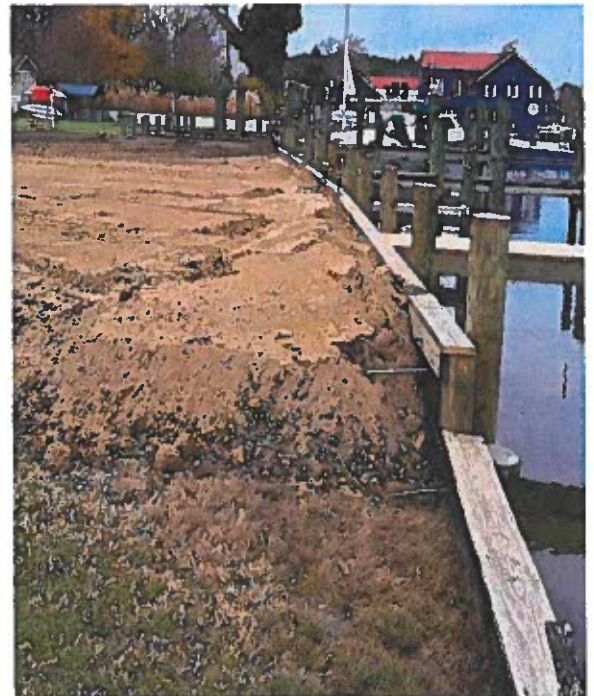
INTRODUCTION



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

Tide records have revealed that Chesapeake Bay Sea levels have risen more than one foot over the last century, due to global sea level rise and land subsidence. Sea level rise in Maryland is accelerating and projected to rise over one foot more by 2050 (Boesch et al, 2023; Sea Level Rise Projections for Maryland, 2023; University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science, Cambridge, MD). As a consequence, many residents have taken measures to raise their homes or install alternative energy systems to be more climate resilient and sustainable. St. Michaels has also adopted Code requirements for construction in the floodplain, such as additional freeboard venting.

The Town has also partnered with Talbot County to adopt a Hazard Mitigation Plan and evacuation route for the Bay Hundred area. The Town of St. Michaels also created the Climate Change/Sea Level Rise Commission (CC/SLRC) in 2021 to begin a multi-year effort to upgrade the Town's harbors and stormwater



infrastructure in order to prepare for the anticipated sea level rise and flooding expected by 2050 and beyond.

The Commissioners recognize the challenges associated with being a coastal community on the East Coast near the Chesapeake Bay with low sea-level, infrastructure and high-water tables, and hurricane risks, and that it is crucial for the Town to improve its resiliency measures. Flood mitigation efforts have focused on both more urgent needs to mitigate impacts to the year 2050, and also longer-range efforts to the year 2075.

Present and Projected Annual Tidal Water
Level Exceedances for St. Michaels
(Assuming 2019-2021 Tidal Behavior)

Ft. above Present MSL	Present	2050	2075	2100
6	0	0	1	1
5	0	3	6	14
4	1	5	83	234
3	2	76	352	UW
2	35	476	UW	

The Climate Change/Sea Level Rise

Commission consists of seven members appointed by the Town Commissioners of St. Michaels. Members include citizen volunteers, business representatives and professionals with expertise in climate change and sea level rise. Since its inception, their focus has been to actively plan for mitigating the impacts of sea level rise in the Town of St. Michaels in both the Miles River and the San Domingo Creek frontage and has been building the foundation for action over several years.

Among various studies that have been completed were the detailed sea level and storm surge projections developed by Dr. William Boicourt that considered flood events and through the year 2050 and 2100. This chart indicates that using a 5' MSL elevation would likely mitigate all but hurricane flooding events up to the year 2075. Therefore, this was chosen as the preferred design criteria for new infrastructure improvements.

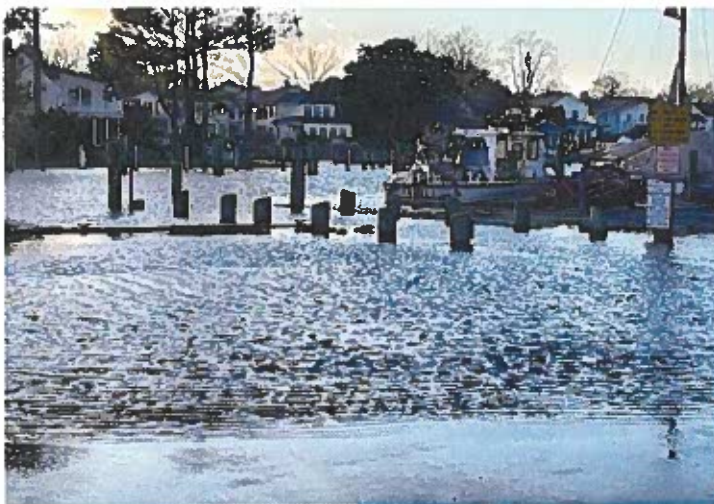
A report called: *Harbor and Stormwater Infrastructure Study (2021)* – completed by George, Miles & Buhr identified at-risk flooding areas with conceptual mitigation strategies around the main Harbor that could be implemented in the next 5-15 years. This study was completed with funding under the Maryland Department of Natural Resources - Community Resilience partnership with the Chesapeake and Coastal Services Division. It identified vulnerable areas of the town in need of detailed analysis and mitigation efforts to protect them from the impacts of sea level rise and nuisance stormwater flooding. The analysis has resulted in looking closely at the most flood-prone areas which includes the east side of Town along the St. Michaels Harbor which abuts the Miles River and in another study titled: *San Domingo Creek & Westside Stormwater and Flood Mitigation Study* for the west side of Town, completed in 2023, which includes the San Domingo Creek watershed. Both of these waterbodies connect and flow into the nearby Chesapeake Bay.

The study recommended using a 1% sea level rise projection of 2.4 fet plus the normal 1.02 feet tide or a 3.42-foot rise over MSL for mitigation projects. The study also depicted

severe flooding by including a 5% chance of a sea level rise of 2.1 feet sea level rise together with a 1.9-foot tide surge for a 4-foot flooding event.

After further consideration of the above study and this report a later study on the San Domingo Creek area, the CC/SLRC recommended setting the objective for mitigation of sea level rise and stormwater flooding projects at 5 feet over MSL as there was a significant difference between protection at 4 feet vs. 5 feet by the year 2075.

St. Michaels Harbor Area

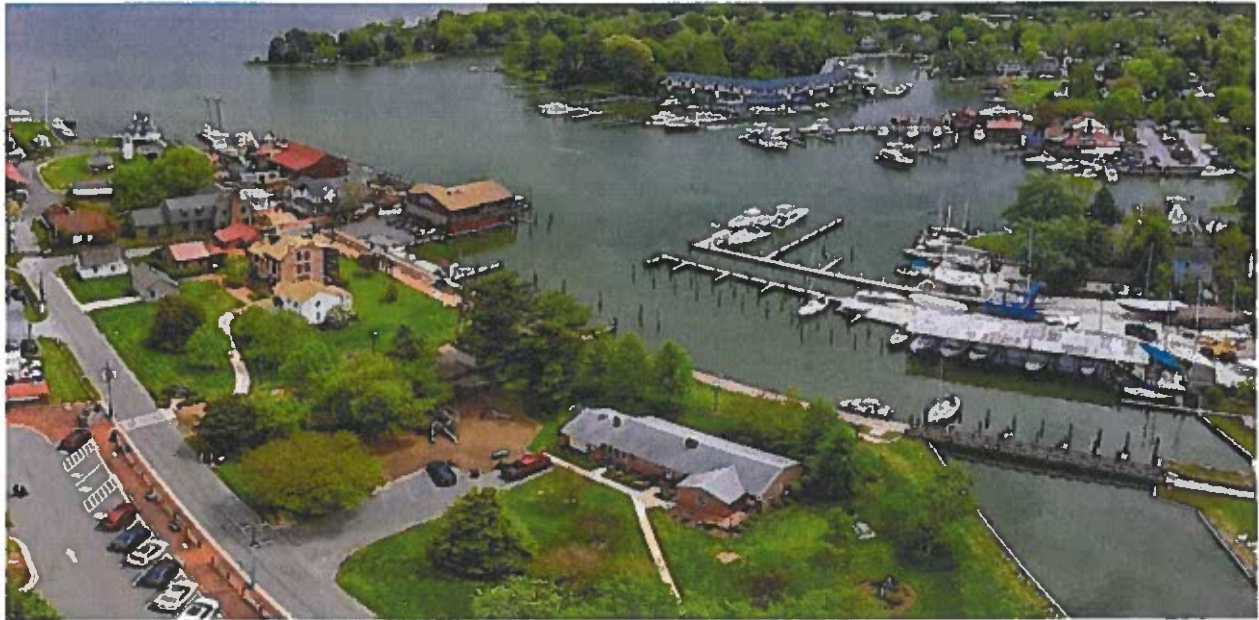


West Harbor Road (Small Boat Ramp) & West Harbor Road & East Chew Ave. Concep Plan

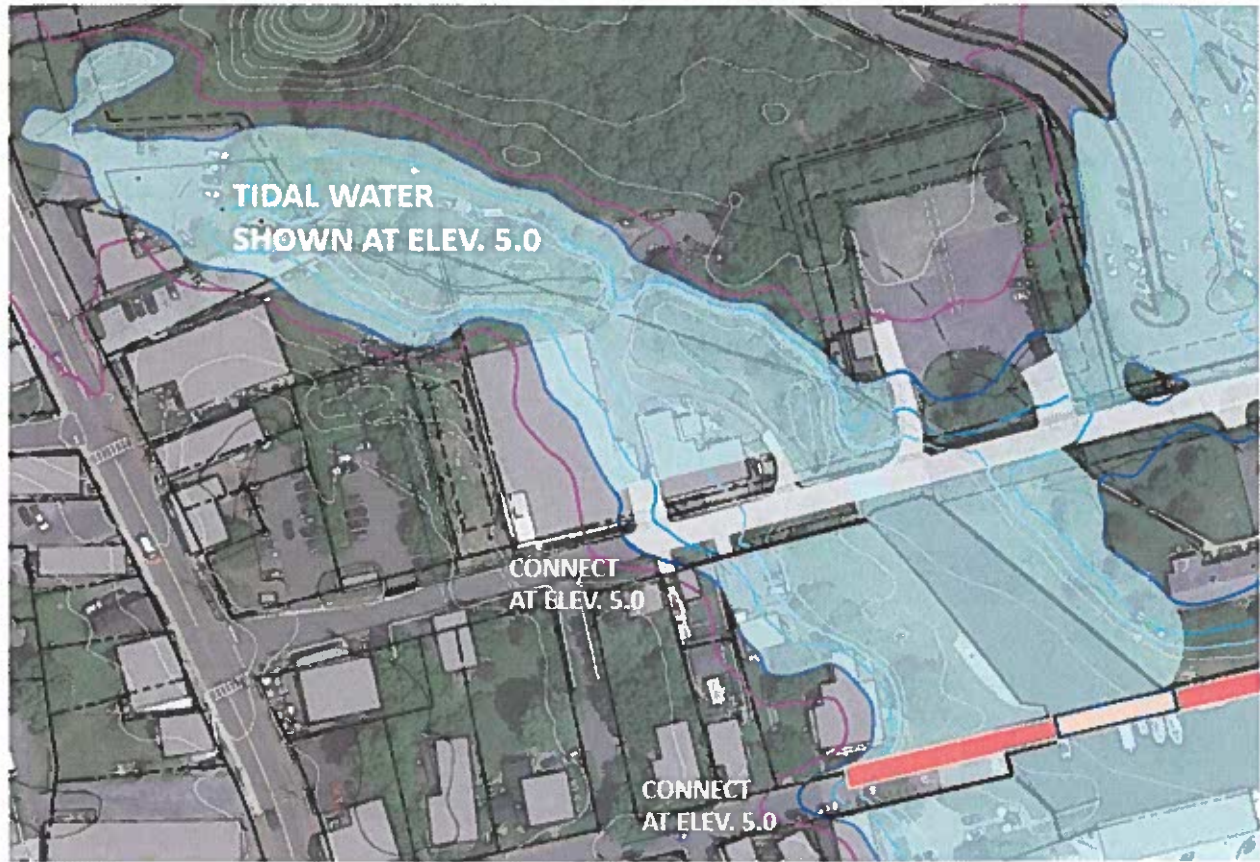
For planning purposes, the Harbor area has been divided into 3 parts or phases for study. First was the area defined by E. Chew Avenue and W. Harbor Road located along the southern portion of the Harbor area. The second area of study was the northern harbor which includes the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum (CBMM) – Burns Street/Mill Street, the Promenade waterfront walkway and Honeymoon Bridge which links Cherry Street to Hollis Park and the CBMM and the associated bulkhead along the water. The third area of study is the central harbor area including Muskrat Park, Church Street, Mulberry Street and the associated waterfront homes and businesses in that area. Several planning and design efforts are underway at the time of development of this plan.

The East Chew Avenue/W. Harbor Road area in the south harbor area was the first conceptual mitigation plan developed for the Harbor flood- prone area on the eastern part of Town. This analysis included a feasibility and conceptual design (shown here) which recommends raising the bulkhead, increasing green space and improving stormwater management through various collection designs and pumping systems for the area.

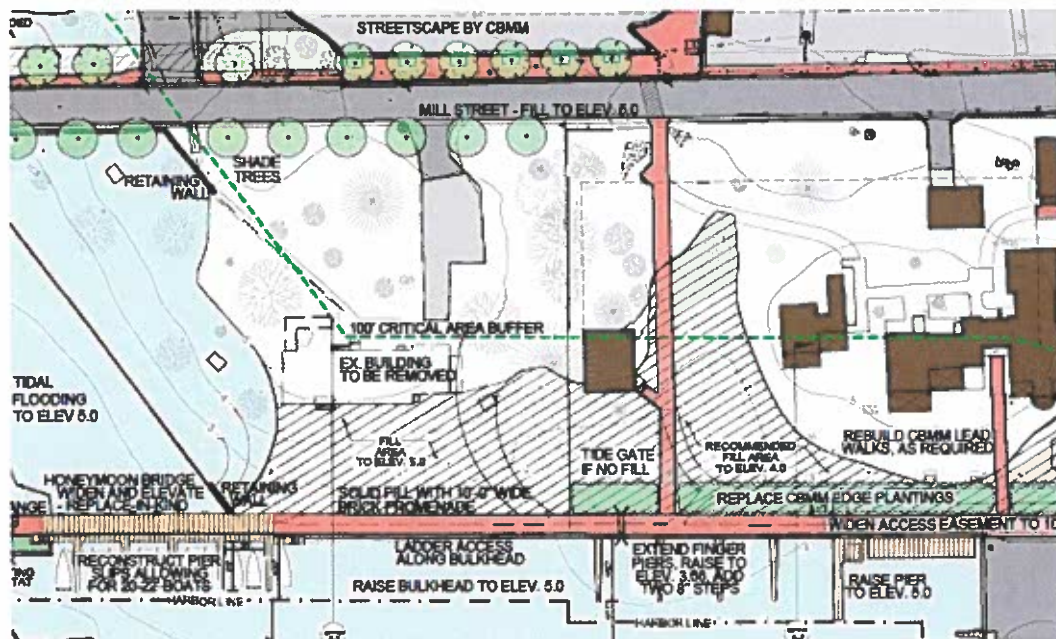
The next area of the harbor to be analyzed was the northern portion along the Mill Street Corridor as previously described. The Town was subsequently awarded an Advanced Assistance Grant for additional work in the middle and northern sections of the Harbor. The project is funded by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), through the Maryland Department of Emergency Management (MDEM). The Advanced Assistance Grant which funds mitigation work enabled the development of the overall concept plan and engineering and construction drawings to be used for future permitting and development. The goal is to have design and construction drawings that are permit viable and ready to be submitted for future construction grant requests sometime during the 10-year span of this plan update.



St. Michaels Harbor Area



Projected 5' MSL Elevation Flood Area – North & Central Harbor



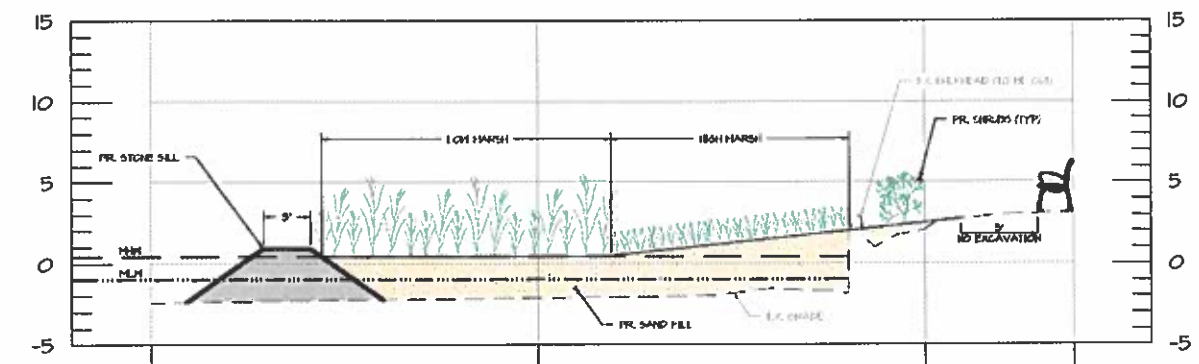
Advanced Alternative Grant: Phase I Conceptual Flood Mitigation Design Plan

Phase I conceptual design and construction plans addressed issues related to stormwater management and sea level rise along the Mill St./Burns St. area adjacent to the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum and Town owned Hollis Park site (See design above). It examined flood mitigation and resulted in new designs for raising these roads and building a new elevated bulkhead. It also includes raising, widening and rebuilding Honeymoon pedestrian bridge and some design improvements along Cherry St. The project includes final construction drawings, and the Town will be looking for opportunities to fund these improvements during this comprehensive plan's 10-year cycle. The Town will continue to partner with the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum to find ways to implement the plans which will benefit both the town and the museum. The next phase of the grant funded activities, Phase II work, is to study Muskrat Park, Church St. and Mulberry St. and develop similar mitigation projects during 2025 with construction improvements to follow.

San Domingo Creek Watershed

Building on those efforts are studies and projects to consider specific issues and possible design improvements related to stormwater management infrastructure and localized and projected flooding for the Town's second harbor and waterfront on the San Domingo Creek, located on the west side of St. Michaels.

A report titled: *St. Michaels San Domingo Creek and West Side Stormwater and Harbor Infrastructure and Flood Mitigation Study*, was completed by BayLand Consultants December 6, 2023. The vulnerability analysis conducted in that study indicated that the Back Creek Park area is ranked high in vulnerability assessment prioritization for flood mitigation. The report recommends replacing a failing bulkhead with an expanded living shoreline in Back Creek Park. (See attached Living Shoreline design concept.) In addition, a feasibility study is being developed regarding the possible use of a tide gate at the narrow part of San Domingo Creek where a nature trail bridge crosses the creek. This study will consider the effectiveness of protecting the upper watershed from tidal flooding.



Conceptual Living Shoreline Design – Back Creek Park



Bulkhead to be replaced
with a Living Shoreline



Tide Gate study area at
Nature Trail bridge

Another community driven effort to improve the neighborhood of the north part of Town is being worked on in the Chester Park, North Street, Perry Street and Brooks Lane area. This is both a drainage improvement project and a neighborhood enhancement effort. The drainage in this area was initially poorly designed many years ago and is in need of retrofitting improvements.

“Envision the Choptank” environmental partners began hosting community meetings in 2022. That was followed by some topographic surveys by the University of Maryland Sea Grant Extension. In 2023, BayLand consultants completed an assessment and hydraulic analysis of the area and recommended replacing culverts, inlets and installing redesigned swales to mitigate stormwater flooding. A “watershed” type of approach is being taken with phase I road and culvert replacements being planned and phase II additional residential scale best management practices to be developed.

The Center for Watershed Protection has assisted the community in helping coordinate efforts and research grant opportunities for further flood mitigation work needed in the future. Clean up efforts removed debris that contributed to improved drainage. Specific plans for improving the drainage systems on both public and private lands are being developed and will help reduce flooding common to the area. Grant funding to continue the work is being considered with the Maryland Department of the Environment.



Clean Up Day Workers

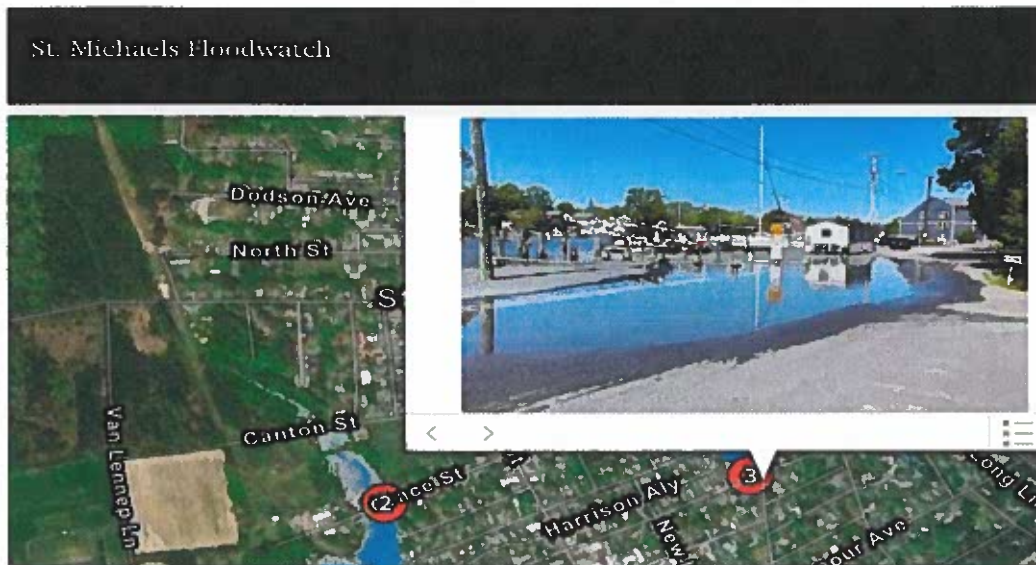


North Town Stormwater Mitigation Study Area

St. Michaels Floodwatch

Dr. Andrew Thaler, a member of the CC/SLRC, developed a tool to help the residents of St. Michaels better visualize and understand how sea level rise will affect the Town in the coming decades. This is an interactive web visualization of flooding projections, overlaid with photographs from recent flooding events.

Nuisance flooding (also called high tide or sunny-day flooding) is flooding that occurs predictably throughout the year in conjunction with large high tides. Unlike flooding associated with major weather events, nuisance flooding represents a chronic threat to the Town's infrastructure, but one for which we can plan and prepare. Storm surges, though rarer, occur infrequently in conjunction with weather events and extreme high tides. Photographs from commonly flooded areas can be posted on the web page for St. Michaels Floodwatch which uses a story maps framework.



Climate Change

As the earth continues to warm, it is incumbent on all of us to take measures to reduce our consumption of energy to limit our carbon footprints. Using renewable resources (solar, wind resources, electric vehicles, recycling) and energy efficient technologies in our homes and work are a starting point and something we all can do to help. The Town has focused efforts on sea level rise mitigation, and as we develop and implement those plans, expanding the focus to energy conservation and carbon reduction will be a priority in the future. It is anticipated that natural resources conservation efforts will increase in importance over time to enable a sustainable future. This plan establishes climate change and resource conservation of high importance and one of its major planning themes for the Comprehensive Plan.

The Challenge

The Town Commissioners and the Climate Change/Sea Level Rise Commission have followed a classic planning process where we first identified the problem, documented the problem, studied the problem, designed solutions and are implementing the solutions. Producing documentation as feedback on how effective the results will be is important to learn lessons and make adjustments as warranted for the future.

As we move forward from concept designs to specific improvements, the costs become greater. Construction of mitigation infrastructure will require millions of dollars over time. Although

grants are a tremendous help, they often require a match of 25% or more. For a small town like St. Michaels, providing funding for this work is a major challenge. Sometimes additional grants can be secured to cover matches, but often they too require a match contribution. Long-range planning and creative funding solutions will be necessary to build improvements to keep the town resilient and viable as we face the uncertainties of climate change and sea level rise in a changing world. We will need to form partnerships with Talbot County citizens and governments on the regional, state and federal levels to tell our story, secure project funding assistance and to recognize our small town successes and serve as a potential model for other communities.

VISION

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

OBJECTIVES AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

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

13.1.1 Look for partnerships in the Town and beyond to build public projects that reduce climate risks including those with Talbot County, state and federal agencies to work with and supplement our local efforts and funding.

13.1.2 Educate property owners to make their structures more resilient to flooding through elevating homes and critical equipment, raising bulkheads, the use of natural (green) infrastructure where feasible, purchasing flood insurance, the use of pervious paving and installing stormwater management systems and other improvements.

- 13.2 Continue to update our floodplain mapping, zoning and building codes that encourage reducing risk in flood prone and climate change areas.

13.2.1 Encourage residents to retrofit existing properties to reduce flood risk.

13.2.2 Inventory and protect historic properties susceptible to climate change.

13.2.3 Adopt flood-resistant construction methods that meet the needs of our Town.

13.2.4 Consider code revisions that encourage alternative energy use such as incentives of various areas and bulk requirements when certain alternative energy methods are employed.

1.3.2.5 Strongly discourage future building in areas under sea level rise stress or subject to storm surge flooding.

13.2.6 Develop and distribute information on home energy conservation measures and activities that citizens can participate in.

- 13.3 Continue to update our Hazard Mitigation Plan as Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) requires.

13.3.1 Explore eligibility for FEMA hazard mitigation funding to execute projects that reduce the risk to public facilities and infrastructure.

- 13.4 Evaluate procedures that allow for proactive adaptations rather than reactive changes relating to storm and/or flood occurrences, such as raising buildings and infrastructure above flood elevations.

13.4.1 Repair and maintain stormwater infrastructure.

- 13.5 Update our Sustainable Communities Plan regularly as it relates to climate resilience.

- 13.6 Apply and maintain an inventory of flood mitigation related permits for the National Flood Insurance Program Community Rating System.

- 13.7 Regularly map projected sea level rise projections based on NOAA Climate Program Office data.

13.8 Provide funding for sea level rise and stormwater flooding mitigation projects.

13.8.1 Research and apply for State of Maryland and other potential federal grant funds.

13.8.2 Research and apply for grant opportunities to cover local match requirements.

13.8.3 Establish in the Town's 5-year capital improvement plan (CIP) funding for local match contributions for sea level rise and flood mitigation projects.

13.8.4 Explore and consider various funding mechanisms to provide CIP revenues for sea level rise and stormwater mitigation projects such as yearly budget allocations for such, municipal bond issues, or funding from "Resilient Maryland Revolving Loan" program with the Maryland Department of Emergency Management.

13.8.5 Consider hiring a project manager – grants manager to coordinate these efforts and other grant funded projects.

Chapter 14: Implementation Schedule

The following implementation schedule is provided as a guide for carrying out the major plans, projects and programs within the ten-year planning period of the plan. It is divided into currently active and ongoing activities, priority 1 activities (1-4 years), priority 2 activities (4-6 years) and long-range activities (6-10 years). It was developed and utilizes many of the implementation strategies throughout the plan. The time frames are estimated, and full implementation may be contingent upon other external factors such as available funding, staffing and changing priorities of the administration. Because of that, some overlap, adjustments and flexibility may be needed. However, it provides a framework towards implementation of the plan and tracking progress over time.

ONGOING – ACTIVE PROJECTS, PLANS:

- Continue implementation of the Tree Mitigation Ordinance throughout town.
- Continue to work with Easton Utilities to provide adequate broadband fiber optic cable.
- Work with the Historic District Commission on designing, purchasing and placing signs at several locations of the perimeter of the district.
- Continue to enhance the Old Mill District as a public attraction with projects like the historic train station.
- Allow further infill developments which include about 25 vacant lots throughout town.
- Accessory Dwelling Units are a way to provide more housing options without changing the appearance and overall use of residential neighborhoods.
- Use social media to inform its citizens including “Constant Contact” messaging on special events, emergencies and public information.

PRIORITY 1 PROJECTS (1-4 Years):

- Hire experts to conduct a benefits and cost analysis to the town to balance economic development from tourism, festivals and community values with public service costs and impacts.
- Develop a comprehensive pedestrian circulation, parking supply and demand, and wayfinding signage study as a way to target specific improvements for parking and more closely evaluate safety and how pedestrians circulate through town. Adjust the Town code based on study results.

- Complete the extension of the Nature Trail from Railroad Avenue to the Perry Cabin Ball Fields Park.
- Develop Phase I of San Domingo Creek Park in accordance with the approved Master Plan.
- Study and provide options to consider various ways that would generate revenues to ensure all sectors of the economy and community are paying a fair share in relation to associated public community needs.
- Develop options for a permanent meeting space to hold community forums and public hearings. Consider using the second public building on the San Domingo Creek Park site adjacent to the Town Administration Building.
- Program and seek funding sources for stormwater management mitigation projects in relation to sea level rise and nuisance flooding.
- Work to add features such as on-line development applications and payment for processing.
- Continuing efforts, studies and design improvements related to sea level rise mitigation and stormwater management infrastructure and localized and projected flooding for the town.
- Provide funding for sea level rise and stormwater flooding mitigation projects within the Capital Improvements 5-year plan and budget.

PRIORITY 2 PROJECTS (4-6 Years)

- Complete development of San Domingo Creek Park.
- Establish a process with the County for the review of projects in land within the Town's "Areas of Interest." identified as "Areas of Mutual Interest" to assure such development is consistent with the goals of the Town.
- Work with Habitat for Humanity to build additional affordable single-family houses in St. Michaels.
- Complete plans for a 3rd water utilities system well and secure funding for such.
- Work with the federal Environmental Protection Agency on a mandated lead pipe analysis and mitigation effort of all communities in Maryland and across the country.

- Ensure publicly accessible internet and wi-fi connectivity service is available throughout Town.
- Consider additional traffic safety awareness signs at the entrances to the town to control automobile speed on residential streets.
- Complete a feasibility assessment of the best location and funding options for a future dog park.
- Establish improved communication processes or protocols between the town government, county government and non-profit organizations.
- Work with the Tourism Development Board to diversify and target activities as appropriate.
- Secure funding for long-term sea level rise implementation projects.
- Develop plans and funding for improved access to St. Michaels school complex with new access from Woodside Ave.

PRIORITY 3 PROJECTS (6-10 years)

- Complete implementation from priority 2 studies and projects.
- Create a Master Improvement Plan with a particular focus on redevelopment of Fremont Street and relocation of the Public Works Facilities on Glory Ave. area and ways to stimulate small town commercial revitalization.
- Consider the acquisition of surplus land held by the Department of Transportation may present an opportunity to relocate and redevelop Public Works Department activities to a more appropriate location and provide additional space for long-term needs.
- Re-evaluate the feasibility of providing sidewalks on Railroad Avenue and Boundary Lane.
- Work with utility companies to replace old wooden utility poles on Talbot Street with new poles, or possible other appropriate technologies, to ensure safety and security of equipment and pedestrians in Town.
- Continue efforts to renovate Sardis Chapel in St. Mary's Square, which is in the center of the original historic St. Mary's Square. The chapel is of the Greek Revival style and dates back as a Methodist Church to 1839.
- Explore and consider various funding mechanisms to provide CIP revenues for

sea level rise and stormwater mitigation projects such as yearly budget allocations for municipal bond issues, or funding from “Resilient Maryland Revolving Loan” program with the Maryland Department of Emergency Management.

- Work with property owners of the larger tracts of residential land and the potential build out scenario of less than 90 additional units which would likely be a mix of unit types and occur over the next 10-year planning cycle.
- Continue work with landowners in the potential annexation areas as desired to include these sites within the town boundary.