

# Somerset County, Md. Comprehensive Plan



Board of County Commissioners of Somerset County, Maryland  
and  
Planning and Zoning Commission of Somerset County, Maryland

~~Current~~  
9/23/79

Not Current





**Teakle Mansion, 1801**  
**Princess Anne**

Courtesy of Olde Princess Anne Days Inc.

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**Somerset County  
Comprehensive Plan  
1996**

**Board of County Commissioners of Somerset County, Maryland  
and  
Planning and Zoning Commission of Somerset County, Maryland**

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Board of County Commissioners  
for Somerset County, Maryland

Resolution No. 652

WHEREAS, in fulfillment of its statutory duty, the Planning and Zoning Commission of Somerset County on the 29th Day of August, 1996, presented to the Board of County Commissioners of Somerset County, with a certified volume of text, maps and addendum, entitled "Somerset County 1996 Comprehensive Plan Update" and Resolution No. 646 in which it unanimously recommended adoption of such plan revisions; and

WHEREAS, the Board of County Commissioners for Somerset County held an advertised public hearing on the Comprehensive Plan on the 1st day of October, 1996; and

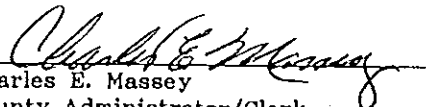
WHEREAS, the Board has given careful consideration to the contents of the plan and to the comments received from the State and the public;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That the Board of County Commissioners for Somerset County, having complied with the procedural and substantive requirements of Article 66B, Annotated Code of Maryland, do hereby ADOPT the text, maps and addendum, including those text amendments resulting from their review, as amendments and/or revisions to the Comprehensive Plan, to be known in its entirety as the Comprehensive Plan for Somerset County, 1996. Be it further resolved that an attested copy of the volume shall be certified to the Clerk of the Circuit Court of Somerset County.

Resolved this 13<sup>th</sup> day of NOV. , 1996.

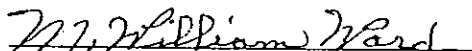
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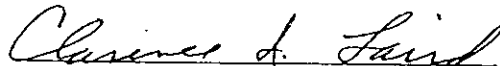
  
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ITP BOOK 4, PAGE 984

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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**Comprehensive Plan  
1996  
Somerset County, Maryland**

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## Chapter 1 Introduction

### *1.1 Location and Geography*

Somerset County is the southernmost county on Maryland's Eastern Shore. It lies along the Chesapeake Bay side of the peninsula and its county seat, Princess Anne, is 14 miles south of Salisbury, approximately 120 miles southeast of Baltimore, and 100 miles north of Norfolk, Virginia, via the Chesapeake Bay-Bridge-Tunnel. The county has a land area of some 330 square miles, including several islands in the Chesapeake Bay. The County's northern and southern boundaries are the Wicomico River and Pocomoke River, respectively.

Somerset County is strategically located to take advantage of a number of opportunities for both development and conservation. The town of Crisfield is important as a fishing, shipping and tourism center, while Princess Anne's significance as the historic County seat lies in its potential to attract businesses and tourism. To the north-east and south-west of Princess Anne respectively are the campus of the University of Maryland (Eastern Shore) and the new State Penitentiary. The County's proximity to Salisbury, Pocomoke and Ocean City is both an advantage in terms of the availability of services, as well as a disadvantage in terms of the net migration of jobs out of the County. For all of its socio-economic, political and recreational activities Somerset County depends on Routes 13 and 413 as its lifelines. Route 13 in particular channels thousands of regional vehicle trips a day through the County en-route from New York and Philadelphia to Norfolk and the south.

Somerset County has a shoreline of over 600 miles along the Chesapeake Bay, and its character varies from fishing communities and summer homes to marshland and wilderness. Several peninsulas, or 'Necks' extend into the Bay, separated by meandering rivers. From north to south the Necks are: Victor Neck, Monie Neck (or Mongrel Neck), Revells Neck, Manokin Neck and the Crisfield Peninsula. The principal rivers are the Wicomico, the Manokin, which has its source in the vicinity of Princess Anne, the Anne-messex and the Pocomoke. The interior of the County is generally flat, with good agricultural soils punctuated by areas of poorly drained wetlands. The smaller settlements include Mount Vernon, Dames Quarter, Deal Island, Chance, and Rumbley which are located on the Bay. Other settlements on the Necks include Oriole, Venton, Manokin and Fairmount, while Route 413 to Crisfield passes through the villages of Kingston, Marion and Hopewell. At the intersection of Routes 13 and 413 in the center of the County is the village of Westover.

Somerset County also includes South Marsh Island, Smith Island and Janes Island in the Chesapeake Bay. Only Smith Island is inhabited, with settlements at Ewell, Rhodes Point and Tylerton.

## ***1.2 Comprehensive Planning in Somerset County***

In 1975 the Somerset County Commissioners approved a Comprehensive Plan for Somerset. The Plan contained a comprehensive analysis of the County's resources, and was the first attempt to incorporate a comprehensive set of goals for development, preservation and county services. The County's comprehensive planning program had been started in 1973 within the Department of Technical and Community Services. The 1975 Plan included recommendations and projections to the year 1995. The current 1991 Comprehensive Plan is thus an update of the 1975 Plan.

Starting in 1988, the first steps were taken toward updating the Comprehensive Plan. They took the form of the Route 13/Route 413 Corridor Study which projected growth patterns and traffic in these two corridors, and recommended highway improvements for the 1990's and beyond. This present Comprehensive Plan incorporates the findings of the Corridor Study, as well as other related studies, such as the Comprehensive Water and Sewerage Plan, the Economic Development Plan, a County Housing Analysis, The Land Preservation and Recreation Plan, and studies related to the Eastern Shore Correctional Institute. The Comprehensive Plan also recognizes recent State of Maryland legislation on Critical Areas adjacent to the Chesapeake Bay, as well as stricter environmental controls affecting the low-lying Eastern Shore areas in general.

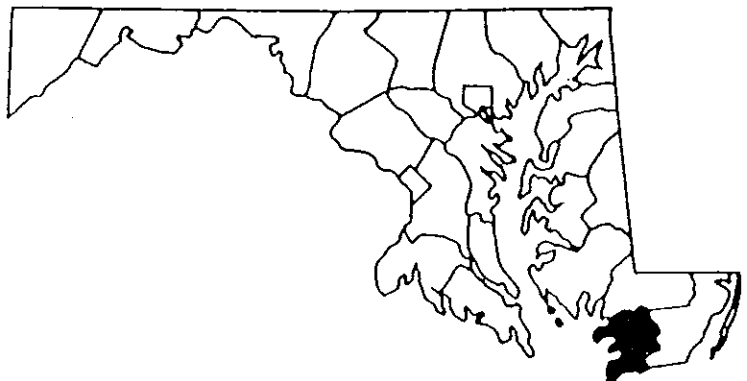
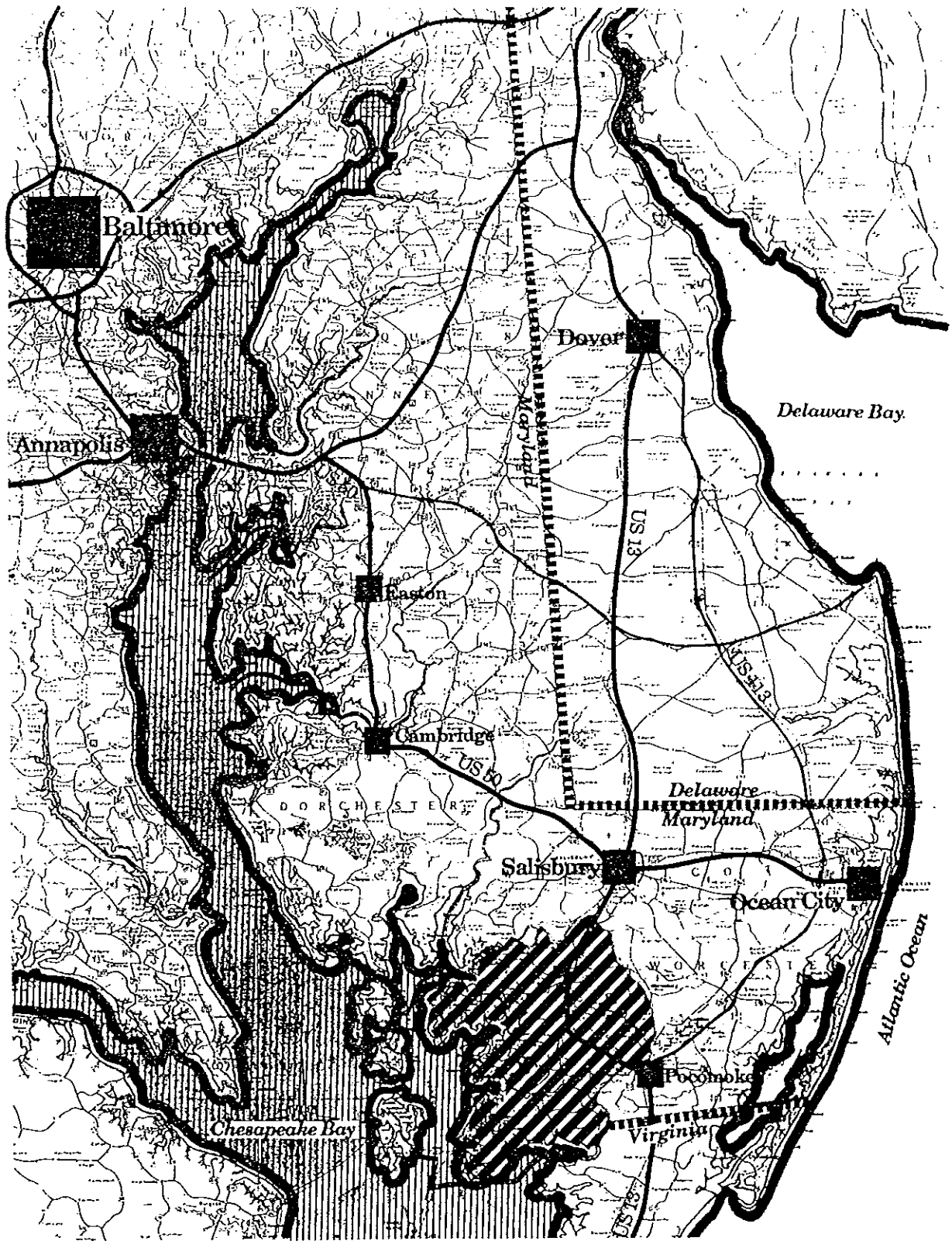
From 1988 to the present, the process of updating the Comprehensive Plan has been conducted by the Somerset County Planning and Zoning Commission, through many hours of meetings with County staff, consultants and County representatives appointed by the County Commissioners. The goals, projections, form and implementation procedures contained in the Comprehensive Plan have all been carefully considered, and weighed against alternatives and options.

## ***1.3 Planning Period for Comprehensive Plan Update***

The planning period for the Comprehensive Plan is 1991 - 2010. The critical period will be the first 5 - 10 years, when demographic trends and projections are more predictable. Toward the end of the first decade, the process of reviewing the County's status and again updating the Comprehensive Plan should begin anew.

The Economic Growth, Resource Protection and Planning Act of 1992 requires that the planning Commission, at intervals of no more than six years, review and if necessary revise or amend the plan to meet all requirements of the law. The County will, therefore, commence the next review in or around 2002.





**Comprehensive Plan**  
**1991**  
**Somerset County, Maryland**

**Map 1**  
**Regional Location**

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## Chapter 2 Goals and Objectives

### 2.1 Recent Changes

Somerset County experienced major changes in the 1980's. The traditional water-oriented economy has declined in part due to changes in the ecology of the Chesapeake Bay itself. Institutions such as the University of Maryland have expanded and will probably continue to do so. The County has received a major State detention facility into its midst. State legislation affecting 'Critical Areas' of the Chesapeake Bay shoreline has been adopted, and there is a heightened awareness of the environmental impacts of growth and development on such fundamental life-support systems as the aquifers underlying the County.

At the same time development pressures have continued in bay-front communities. Development pressures have also increased in the Route 13 and 413 highway corridors, bringing major increases in traffic. Throughout the 1970's and early 1980's however, Somerset County's overall population declined as anticipated by the 1975 Comprehensive Plan. During the late 1980's the population began to increase, and slow steady growth is anticipated for the 1990's and beyond.

The effects of these changes will be broadly felt throughout the County, prompting new directions and policies for the Comprehensive Plan. As a preliminary step in formulating the Plan, a wide range of goals and objectives has been considered in great detail by the Planning and Zoning Commission, the Citizens Advisory Taskforce, and County staff. The following Goals and Objectives are distilled from these deliberations, and have served as a set of policy guidelines for the Comprehensive Plan.

Compared to the earlier Comprehensive Plan, the Goals presented here have been simplified somewhat in their scope, concentrating more on those issues which have a direct bearing on planning and development. They are predicated on the basic assumption that a modest growth rate is predictable and desirable, and will lead to improvements in quality of life. The Goals are focused on the following areas:

- 1 Economic Development (see Chapter 4)
- 2 Land-Use and Community Development (see Chapters 5,6)
- 3 Housing (see Chapter 7)
- 4 Community Facilities (see Chapter 8)
- 5 Transportation (see Chapter 9)
- 6 Environment (see Chapter 11)
- 7 Infrastructure/Utilities (see Chapter 10)
- 8 Special Issues (see Chapter 12)
- 9 Finance and Administration

## 1. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS

(a) Diversify the economy to provide for an expanding employment base which will lead to full employment in the County. Encourage industries which can use the skills of the available labor pool such as seafood processing (using product from other areas). Encourage the growth of compatible industries that have customer and supplier linkages with the existing manufacturing and service economic base.

(b) Maintain a business retention and expansion program to assist local firms and businesses to find new markets nationally and internationally.

(c) Promote the development of new processes and products with special emphasis on agriculture, aquaculture and related processing industries. Encourage the University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES) research on the Chesapeake Bay and model aquaculture programs.

(d) In accordance with the Planning Act of 1992, protect environmentally sensitive and resource areas by promoting economic development in suitable areas. Industrial development should be directed to population centers and planned industrial parks having the required infrastructure for such enterprises. Those enterprises which are of a rural nature should be so located as to protect sensitive areas and to promote open space. County review and approval of projects and the use of incentives such as the designation of Enterprise Zones and public financing shall be guided by this principle.

(e) Target selected industries for labor re-training programs.

(f) Preserve viable, traditional, water-related activities and business. Promote Somerset County's shoreline and water-related history as a major resource for tourism. Where necessary, ensure that traditional water-related businesses retain access to harbors, boat ramps and waterways. Designation of certain facilities for watermen's priority should be maintained.

## 2. LAND-USE and COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GOALS

(a) Encourage development in selected nodes or communities so as to preserve valuable farmland, and other sensitive areas, and to protect the County's traditional quality of life from unplanned sprawl.

(b) Make efficient use of available capacity in existing community facilities, roads and infrastructure. In particular, the existing Town of Princess Anne, and other communities in the U.S.13/MD 413 corridor should be treated as "growth centers".

(c) Coordinate the extension of water and sewer services with rezoning activities so as to channel development toward growth centers and into preferred community forms.

(d) Update the County Zoning Ordinance to encourage planned unit development and clustering in preferred areas, and to discourage spot zoning and sprawl.

(e) Continue to investigate advisability of a new Agricultural Zone which would restrict residential development other than farm-related uses, which would be appropriate for Management area A and B1-type soils where septic fields can penetrate ground water.

(f) Make available site data (soils, wetlands, Critical areas etc) to prospective developers to encourage sensitive planning, and direct them to suitable areas.

### 3. HOUSING GOALS

(a) Plan for a broad range of housing opportunities, serving residents of all economic groups, especially those associated with major County employers, such as E.C.I., the County Itself and U.M.E.S.

(b) Extend rehabilitation programs throughout the County, leveraging local and State financing where possible. Concentrate on dwellings in need of sanitary connections, and housing in water/sewer service areas.

(c) Encourage affordable housing for the elderly and those earning below the area's median income. Initiate zoning changes and incentives to developers to accomplish this, and encourage sponsorship by non-profit groups such as local churches.

(d) Coordinate housing programs, administration of zoning, construction codes and rehabilitation; set affordability criteria for sale and rental units, and promote affordable housing. Coordinate Section 8 housing programs with the Towns of Princess Anne and Crisfield, and advertise programs more effectively.

(e) Adopt BOCA Code, or similar, to ensure proper standards for new construction, electrical, plumbing, fire protection, etc. Such a code should exclude historic buildings, and existing construction more than ten years old, except where public safety issues are involved as with commercial and public buildings. Adopt a Property Maintenance Code, to ensure proper maintenance of sites.

### 4. COMMUNITY FACILITIES GOALS

(a) Maximize use of existing recreation, schools and other public facilities. Adapt outdated buildings to new public uses where possible. Coordinate provision of parks and community recreation activities at or adjacent to school sites.

(b) Concentrate community facilities in villages and towns where they are accessible to the majority of people in their service areas, particularly those without adequate transportation such as children and the elderly. Prefer central locations to those on the periphery of communities.

(c) Prefer multi-service centers to separate facilities, for more efficient use of buildings and County administrative staff.

(d) Coordinate community programs between the County, incorporated towns and other resources. Make maximum joint use of existing or planned facilities in Crisfield and Princess Anne, such as the UMES swimming pool and Wellington Beach.

(e) Encourage development in areas where there is adequate capacity in existing facilities to fill future demands, and use community facilities as a planning tool for encouraging the development of villages and towns of efficient sizes and in desirable locations.

(f) Improve public access to the Bay. Encourage development of nature trails and bike paths to parks and public facilities.

(g) Promote County recreation facilities, educational programs and achievements as a means of attracting new residents and businesses.

(h) Coordinate education programs with those of U.M.E.S., especially with regard to specialized high school courses, adult retraining, and the needs of local employers.

## 5. TRANSPORTATION GOALS

(a) Provide for the movement of people and goods in a safe, effective, and efficient manner in order to both promote economic development and to enhance the quality of life within Somerset County.

(b) Improve traffic operations by reducing delay at existing at-grade intersections, and by increasing the capacity of all primary and secondary highways to adequately accommodate both existing and future travel demands.

(c) Enhance economic development and reduce traffic congestion in the County's growth centers by improving internal traffic circulation and diverting through traffic movements to alternate routings.

(d) Improve goods movement throughout the County while reducing conflicts with other uses of the thoroughfare system.

(e) Provide adequate access to regional air and railroad facilities.

(f) Investigate the potentials for development of various types of public transportation services.

(g) Develop recommendations for bikeways and sidewalks where warranted to accommodate the demand for pedestrian and bicycle travel.

(h) Coordinate County transportation activities with those of the Maryland Department of Transportation and with the plans of contiguous jurisdictions and counties. Promote transportation services (public and private) to serve the needs of the elderly.

(i) Promote full utilization of Crisfield Airport for private, business and recreational use.

(j) Promote regular ground transportation services from Salisbury/Wicomico County airport to Princess Anne and Crisfield.

## 6. ENVIRONMENTAL GOALS

(a) Respect sensitive environmental areas, such as floodplains, wetlands and the Critical Area Zone adjacent to streams, rivers and the Chesapeake Bay.

(b) Retain and enhance wildlife management areas, riparian forest, greenways, scenic areas and unique open space areas.

(c) Discourage new development in areas where there is high potential for contaminating the ground water, and discourage development where the land is considered unsafe due to unstable soils, steep slopes or potential for flooding or erosion.

(d) Encourage planning regulations with emphasis on cluster development which will preserve environmentally sensitive areas and promote good environmental practices.

(e) Continue the County's commitment to its agricultural base, especially the continuing farming of prime agricultural soils and the support of farming by agri-businesses. Encourage the establishment of agricultural districts which discourage residential subdivision and sprawl.

(f) Maintain and preserve wildlife management areas, and expand these programs to include areas of unique scenic, geological or archeological significance.

(g) Identify and encourage the preservation of historic buildings and sites, including the establishment of historic districts, with appropriate development controls.

(h) Adopt and enforce development standards to retain natural on-site features such as mature trees, hedgerows and natural drainage patterns. Encourage developer compliance with good planning practices with incentives.

(i) Adopt regulations to control or screen visual intrusions into the landscape, such as roadside signs, and unsightly land-uses, and enhance key sections of principal highways with landscaping programs, and relocation of overhead utilities.

(j) Extend solid waste management and recycling programs throughout the County.

## 7. INFRASTRUCTURE/UTILITIES GOALS

(a) Maintain and improve the quality and capacity of existing water/sewer systems as essential to the health of the communities they serve, especially those in, and on the periphery of, Critical Areas. Encourage and assist residents to hook up to systems where they are available.

(b) Plan for the extension of existing water and sewer services into prime development areas, so as to attract new development. Plan for new water and sewer systems in areas with failing septic systems. Set a program of priorities for these capital improvements.

(c) Seek new ways to finance sewer and water systems in existing towns and villages, especially those such as Deal Island, Chance, and Mount Vernon, where densities and soil conditions present a continuing health hazard and the potential for serious contamination of both groundwater and the Bay.

(d) Undertake extensive scientific analysis of soils currently designated as 'hydric' to more precisely determine their actual characteristics and limitations. The results of this study would more precisely determine which areas are suitable for growth and infrastructure.

(e) Interlink adjacent water and sewer systems where feasible, to provide for emergency back-up, and more reliable service.

(f) Protect groundwater resources and encourage further scientific investigation of aquifers and geologic formations by State and Federal agencies. [See also Environmental Goal 3(c)]

## 8. SPECIAL ACTIVITIES GOALS

(a) Establish a Joint Consultative Committee between County, Town and U.M.E.S. to coordinate expansion programs, annexation issues and areas of mutual interest, including provision of off-campus amenities and recreation opportunities for students.

(b) Improve communications between the County and the two incorporated towns on issues of mutual interest, such as development issues, use of sewer capacity, maintenance of recreation facilities, solid waste collection etc.

(c) Improve the image of Somerset County and public awareness of County services through public information programs on education, cultural resources, recreational opportunities, housing and government services, etc.



(d) Explore opportunities for grants, and other municipal assistance programs at the federal and state levels. Examine advantages of cooperating with adjacent counties to promote regional needs for assistance. Seek opportunities to participate in model programs and pilot programs as a means of extending Somerset County's exposure.

(e) Evaluate the impact of ECI, and if positive, express interest to the State in an expanded facility.

## 9. FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION GOALS

(a) Expand the County's tax base. [See also Economy 2(a)] Recognize the balance between growth and demand for services. Attempt to keep commercial tax base ahead of the residential base.

(b) Develop criteria for future annexations by Princess Anne and Crisfield. Reach a firm understanding with each town regarding the precise conditions under which annexation would be appropriate. Coordinate services, amenities, zoning and other regulations between the County and its two towns.

(c) Explore, adapt and adopt new Codes and Ordinances from other communities to make Somerset's quality of life both attractive and safe. [See also: Goals 1(c), 3(f), 4(d) and 4(e)]

### 2.2 Chesapeake Bay 2020 Panel

In 1992, the State of Maryland adopted the Economic Growth, Resource Protection and Planning Act (the Act). The Act established a series of land use visions for Maryland's future. Under the Act, the land use visions must be implemented when a local comprehensive plan is prepared. The seven visions are:

- (1) Development is concentrated in suitable areas;
- (2) Sensitive areas are protected;
- (3) In rural areas, growth is directed to existing population centers and resource areas are protected;
- (4) Stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay and the land is a universal ethic;
- (5) Conservation of resources, including a reduction in resource consumption, is practiced
- (6) To assure the achievement of the above economic growth is encouraged and regulatory mechanisms are streamlined; and
- (7) Funding mechanisms are addressed to achieve these visions.



## Chapter 3 Demographic Patterns and Projections

### 3.1 Population Background Data

The population of Somerset County is 23,440 persons, based on the revised 1990 Census data. Crisfield is the largest town with a population of approximately 3,000 within its incorporated boundaries. Princess Anne, the County seat has a population of about 1800 within its corporate limits. However the urban population in and adjacent to these two towns is 7,300 and 3,800 respectively, accounting for approximately 50% of the total County population.

In projecting Somerset County's population through the year 2010, several factors have been used as background data:

- The population of Maryland's Eastern Shore has been growing at the rate of 1- 1.5% per year.
- The Maryland State Office of Planning projections (July 1990) show the County's population growth in the decade 1990 -2000 at approximately 1% per year, although after the year 2000 the growth rate is expected to slow again.
- The Maryland State Office of Economic Development (OED) forecasts a less optimistic growth rate, however. OED projects Labor Force expansion of only 3.5% for the decade, and new job creation at a similar rate.
- Recent trends for population, households, labor-force, and jobs over the past 20 years. These are shown in Table 1.

### 3.2 Recent Population Trends and Preliminary 1990 Census

Somerset County's population is now considered to be on the up-swing, following a period of decline as young people left the County for non-farm jobs and education and often failed to return. The most serious out-migration occurred in the 1930s, and continued at a slower rate into the 1970s. Between 1970 and 1985 the population level remained virtually constant. It appears to have turned upward as a result of three significant events:

- (1) The University of Maryland, Eastern Shore (UMES) has embarked on an expansion and diversification program, which has tended to retain more of the County's young people.
- (2) The opening of the Eastern Shore Correctional Institute (ECI) has created new job opportunities and a demand for supplies and services.
- (3) An active Economic Development Program and promotion effort has begun to attract several new industries to the County.

Table 1

Demographic Trends 1970-1990

Source: Maryland State Office of Planning, July 1990 (rounded)

	<u>1970</u>	<u>1975</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1985</u>	<u>1990</u>
Population	18,920	19,050	19,190	19,050	23,440 (Incl. ECI pop.2,480)
Population Increase over 5 years		+130	+130	-140	+4,390
(Percent. Increase over 5 years)				(1%)	(23%*)
Households	5,945		6,750	6,950	7,560
Avg. Household Size	3.18		2.75	2.62	2.76
Labor Force (over 16, excluding students)	7,310		8,630	8,990	10,090
Labor Force Increase over 5 years				360	1,100
(Percent. Increase over 5 years)				4.2%	12.12%*
Unemployment Rate (current)					10.7% (seasonally adjusted)
Jobs located in the County	6,660		7,144	7,605	9,200
Median Household Income			\$11,975		\$24,225

\* Significant increase due to opening of ECI

Preliminary 1990 Census statistics show Somerset County's population at 23,440, including a prison population at ECI of 2,480. In July 1990 the Maryland State Office of Planning projected a population increase over the next ten years of approximately 10%. This follows a significant increase during 1985-1990 period with the opening of ECI (see Table 2).

**3.3 Population Distribution and Composition**

In 1989 roughly 33% of the population was concentrated in the Crisfield area, 22% in the Princess Anne area, and the remaining 45% distributed throughout the County. Within the incorporated limits, Princess Anne had 1,590 residents in 1986; Crisfield had 2,830. The concentration of population in the County's two main centers is likely to be higher in 1990, with the amalgamation of farms into more efficient units, and more people

leaving the land. According to the 1980 Census, blacks constituted 34.5% of the population, down slightly from 37.5% a decade earlier. Other minorities totalled less than 1%. At the time of publication, comparable figures were not available from the 1990 Census.

The median age of County residents in 1980 was a relatively high 32.1 years. Birth rates were lower, and death rates were higher than the State average, and the County's per capita income is roughly two-thirds of the State average. Household size has been steadily declining too, not only as a result of trends toward smaller families, but also due to out-migration by younger family members seeking work elsewhere. Many of these statistics reflect the declining rural economy in Somerset, while future trends may be toward an expanding urban economy based on service industries, tourism and aquaculture rather than fishing, agriculture and food processing. This more optimistic outlook includes plans for ECI and UMES expansion in the 1990s.

### *3.4 Institutional Expansion*

Somerset County has already taken steps to reverse the decline in population and to accelerate growth in its economy. The County's Economic Development Commission was formed to actively promote investment opportunities in the County. The County has also welcomed the Eastern Shore Correctional Institute (ECI). This State prison was originally designed for 1/3 double cells (960 persons) and 2/3 singles (960 persons) for a total of 1,920 inmates. In 1987, 527 workers were employed at ECI, a ratio of 3.6 inmates per employee. Recent expansion plans at ECI call for all cells to become double-occupancy, and temporary accommodation has been provided in the gymnasium. Additional plans call for a 420-bed expansion to house minimum security prisoners. For the purposes of the Comprehensive Plan, the 1990 ECI population comprises 2,440 inmates and 790 staff.

The University of Maryland, Eastern Shore (UMES) is a long-established land-grant college. In 1987 its student enrollment was 1,331 students, with an estimated student/staff ratio of 5:1 and a staff of 266. Total 1987 population at UMES was approximately 1,600. Expansion projections issued by UMES in late 1989 showed 2,548 students by 1995 and 3,173 students by the year 2000. Staffing in 1995 is estimated to be 510, and 635 by 2000. Thus students, staff and families will constitute an overall population increase of almost 2,800 persons by the year 2000. These expansion plans have been taken into account in the Comprehensive Plan growth projections.

The US13/MD413 Corridor Study, completed in 1989, made growth assumptions based on State data as well as local inputs. It assumed a growth rate of 25% over the 20 year period from 1985 to 2005, which is close to recent State Planning projections. The Corridor Study also assumed that by 2005, 1225 new non-farm jobs would be needed by the additional population, and a further 1000 jobs could be created so that Somerset was no longer an exporter of employment to nearby counties and Salisbury. This, together with additional supporting employment in the

government sector, would add 2,375 new jobs for a total of 11,575 over the next twenty years. The Corridor Study's growth assumptions were made for the purpose of projecting traffic growth on the County's two principal highways. They are generally consistent with the State projections. The County Comprehensive Water and Sewerage Plan (1986) and the Somerset County Housing and Commercial Analysis (RPR Economic Consultants, 1988) also used similar projections.

The Maryland State Office of Economic Development County estimates that the number of jobs in Somerset County will increase at the rate of .6% per year over the decade 1990-2000. The Somerset County Board of Education also shows a .6% per annum growth rate in its student enrollment projections.

#### DEMOGRAPHIC PLAN

After careful consideration of growth projections and factors from a variety of sources, a population growth rate of 1% per annum is considered reasonable for the planning period 1991 - 2010. This will result in a population of 23,050 by the year 2000, and almost 25,470 by 2010. This represents 4,600 additional population above the 1990 level. Household growth is expected to keep pace, but at a declining rate. This will result in 8,240 households by the year 2000, and 9,000 households by 2010.

Table 2 illustrates these growth rate projections in 5-year increments. For the purpose of projections the ECI population is expected to remain constant. The 1% growth rate therefore applies only to non-ECI population.

**Table 2**  
**Projected Growth 1990 - 2010**

	<i>1990</i>	<i>1995</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>2005</i>	<i>2010</i>
Population					
Growth rate	1% p.a.	1% p.a.	1% p.a.	1% p.a.	1% p.a.
Non-ECI	20,960	22,030	23,150	24,330	25,575
ECI	2,480	2,480	2,480	2,480	2,480
Total	23,440	24,515	25,630	26,810	28,055

The Comprehensive Plan (1991) is predicated on these basic projections. However, a variety of unknown factors are likely to affect the actual population over time, and continuous monitoring of actual conditions will be necessary.

Complementary data on Economic Growth and Housing is contained in Chapters 4 and 7 respectively.

## Chapter 4 Economic Development

### *4.1 Traditional Economic Patterns and Recent Trends*

Somerset County is the southern-most county on Maryland's Eastern Shore, and its rural economy has been in transition from a reliance on resource-based agriculture and fishing to a mix of government, services and manufacturing. This transition has generally not been able to keep pace with the growth in its population and labor force. The County's two major population centers, Princess Anne and Crisfield, are the hubs of its economic activity. These two areas are quite different in character. Princess Anne is the center of the agricultural industry in the County, a university town, the County's government center, and a bedroom community for Salisbury. Crisfield is the center of the fishing and seafood processing industries and, more recently, supports light industry and a growing tourism industry.

Traditionally, the economy of Somerset County has been based in agriculture, the poultry industry, seafood, and related services. In 1995 17.5 percent of the County's total employment was in the Farming, Agricultural Services, Forestry and Fisheries sector according to data from the Maryland Office of Planning. This percentage was down from 20 percent in 1990. According to the Maryland Office of Planning's projections, modest growth is anticipated in the future.

The Manufacturing and Services sectors of the economy in 1990 provided approximately 30 percent of the County's employment. However, there has been a shift out of Manufacturing due to plant closings, and the Service sector has also declined in recent years. The third major employer was Government which increased from 18.2 percent in 1970 to 26.8 percent in 1995. Much of this growth is attributable to employment growth at the UMES and the ECI (Eastern Shore Correctional Institution).

Commuting patterns of the workforce illustrate Somerset County's position in the regional economy of the Lower Eastern Shore. The County is a net exporter of workers. In 1990, 3,338 workers commuted out of the County whereas 1,513 people were in-commuters. This pattern represents the largest net outflow of workers on the Lower Eastern Shore. A little over 85 percent of the out commuting is to Wicomico and Worcester Counties. Salisbury and Ocean City (seasonally) are the market centers of employment in the region. Workers commute in chiefly from Wicomico County (54%), Worcester County (23%), and Virginia (10%) showing that employers in the County and particularly the Princess Anne area can draw from a labor force throughout the region.

*Table 4-1 1995 Somerset County Employment*

Employment Sector	Average Employment in the County	
	Number	Percent
Contract Construction	500	5.1
Manufacturing	500	5.1
Transportation/Communication/ Utilities	300	3.1
Wholesale Trade	700	7.2
Retail Trade	1,300	13.4
Finance/Insurance/Real Estate	400	4.1
Services	1,700	17.5
Government	2,600	26.8
Agriculture/Seafood	1,700	17.5
Total	9,700	100.0

Source: Maryland Office of Planning, "Jobs by Place of Work," 1995.

#### *4.2 Unemployment*

Unemployment trends in Somerset County are influenced by the significant number of workers in seasonal jobs such as fishing, seafood processing, agriculture, and tourism. The cyclical nature of these industries probably inflates the perceived level of economic distress ordinarily associated with unemployment rates. Nevertheless, unemployment jumped dramatically between 1989 and 1994 due to plant closings and the decline in fishing, crabbing and oyster industries. The rate as of 1994 stood at over 11 percent or 1,300 people. In a rural county such as Somerset, transportation to employment opportunities is an issue. Reaching distant employment centers is difficult for many unemployed, and there is no public transportation.

The high employment rate is a concern to the County and remedial actions currently underway include several retraining programs through the County, State, UMES, and Wor Wic Tech to introduce new skills to the workforce. In addition, the County's Economic Development Commission is concentrating on promotional efforts for attracting development to the Princess Anne Industrial Park, business retention, developing new seafood businesses with value added products, and increasing tourism. The Economic Development Plan at the end of this chapter sets out strategies for creating additional employment and economic development opportunities.



### 4.3 Employment Projections

Total employment (by place of residence) in Somerset County was 10,568 during 1994 according to the Maryland Office of Labor Market Analysis and Information. The Maryland Office of Planning projects a 14 to 16 percent increase in both the labor force and employment in Somerset County during the next decade. This increase represents approximately 1.6 percent growth per year or 160 new jobs annually. The main sectors contributing to this growth are services, trade, and agriculture.

*Table 4-2 Somerset County Projected Employment Growth*

Employment Sector	Jobs 2000	Jobs 2005	Percent Change 1995-2000	Percent Change 2000- 2005
Contract Construction	500	500	0	0
Manufacturing	500	500	0	0
Transportation/Communication/Utilities	500	500	66	0
Wholesale Trade	700	800	0	14
Retail Trade	1,400	1,500	7	7
Finance/Insurance/Real Estate	400	400	0	0
Services	2,000	2,200	17	10
Government	2,800	2,900	8	4
Agriculture/Seafood	1,900	2,000	12	5
Total	10,700	11,300	10	6

Source: Maryland Office of Planning, "Jobs by Place of Work," 1995.

### 4.4 Local Initiatives

The Somerset County Economic Development Commission is working to improve on recent economic trends in several ways by:

- aggressively seeking to attract new development;
- bringing additional financial resources to existing business through a regional revolving loan fund (administered by the Rural Development Center at UMES);
- cooperating with UMES and the State in the development of value-added (processed) seafood products;
- participating in a regional effort to increase the use of international markets by County firms;

- establishing task forces in the Economic Development Commission to work on improving primary and secondary education, fostering cooperative marketing of the County with the electric utility and other private partners and assessing the permitting process for new development; and
- seeking funding to study the feasibility of a hotel/conference facility in Crisfield; and planning in conjunction with UMES, a hydroponics facility on campus.

The County has seen some recent successes including the completion of the Great Hope Golf Course and the reopening of the CHI International (Carvel Hall) manufacturing plant in Crisfield. In terms of attracting new business to the County, over 50 percent of the available space in the Princess Anne Industrial Park has been purchased to date, and three lots are actually developed. A second phase of the Park is being considered. The Park is a joint project between the Town of Princess Anne and the County Economic Development Commission. The County and the Town have created an Enterprise Zone at Princess Anne to offer additional incentives for new development. The Park, together with areas of industrially zoned land near U.S. Route 13, provides an adequate supply of land for new business in the foreseeable future.

Another important element in the County's infrastructure for economic development is the Crisfield-Somerset County Airport. It is the only public general aviation airport in the County, and supports commercial activity in the tourism and seafood areas. Sightseeing tours of the Chesapeake Bay originate here, and it serves as a refueling depot for aircraft used to sport fish in the Bay for commercial fishing operations. The airport generates an estimated \$61,000 of economic activity annually according to the 1995 Crisfield-Somerset County Airport Masterplan. It also represents an economic development asset in that it can support corporate commuters.

These initiatives along with the efforts in tourism form a major part of the County's economic development strategy. Recommendations concerning future economic development strategy options are found in the "Implementation" section of this chapter.

#### ***4.5 Employment Sectors***

As noted above, the County's employment base is driven by Agriculture/Seafood and Government which now account for over 50 percent of all employment. However, the share of employment in any one sector can change rapidly in a rural county. For example, the closure of a business such as Mrs. Paul's (a division of Campbell Soup which employed some 200 people) contributes proportionately more to employment statistics in a rural county than in a larger urban one. A parallel situation is evidenced by the growth of government employment due to the opening of the ECI in 1987. This employment dynamic should lend encouragement to

the economic development effort since modest success over time can bring dramatic change in the employment picture. The relative performance of major employment sectors over the most recent 5-year period is shown in Table 4-3.

*Table 4-3 Somerset County Employment Change by Sector, 1989-1994*

Employment Sector	Change in Total Employment	
	Number	Percent
Contract Construction	-74	-32
Manufacturing	-308	-34
Transportation/Communication/ Utilities	29	31
Wholesale Trade	26	5
Retail Trade	163	24
Finance/Insurance/Real Estate	19	13
Services	-53	-5
Government	416	21
Agriculture/Seafood	-34	-2
Total	184	4

Source: Maryland Office of Labor Market Analysis and Information, "Employment and Payrolls Annual Average 1989 and 1994."

#### *4.6 Tourism*

Tourism represents a major opportunity to generate new jobs and increase sales for County businesses. Somerset County is rich in waterfront amenities and rural viewsapes, including pristine salt marsh and wildlife management areas. In addition, it boasts historic and cultural traditions dating from the 17th century.

Somerset County has over 400 historic sites according to a survey by the Somerset County Historic Trust. Of these, some 60 are on the National Register of Historic Places. Somerset County has one of the highest percentages of its built environment identified as historic in the State of Maryland. The County's National Register Historic Districts include Princess Anne, Crisfield, Fairmount, and Smith Island.

To promote heritage conservation and tourism, the County participates in the activities of the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Committee. The Committee is comprised of citizens and public and private agencies from the Lower Eastern Shore. It seeks broad community involvement in conserving the cultural heritage and natural features of the region, and enhancing the

economic development of the area through eco- and heritage tourism. This kind of tourism promotes responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and sustains the lifestyle of the people. The Committee prepared a Heritage Tourism Plan in 1994 that has received the endorsement of the County, the City of Crisfield and the Town of Princess Anne. It includes projects such as the development of a visitors center on Smith Island. The newly-constructed center will house exhibits portraying the life and culture of the Island and a boardwalk path through adjoining marsh land. It also includes elements of the tourism plan for Crisfield including the establishment of a "Festival Park" at the Hammock Point section of the City. A similar effort is underway on Deal Island where a preliminary plan has been developed to revitalize the waterfront by capitalizing on the heritage of Skipjacks (traditional work vessel) as a visitor attraction.

The County's tourism effort has focused on the development of new attractions, events, and regional promotion of Somerset County through cooperative promotions. The program stresses extensive community involvement in developing plans and events (e.g. The Tangier Sound Country Music Festival), and has been successful at attracting public funding for projects like the Great Hope Golf Course. The County also has engaged in programs to train local workers in the tourism industry on techniques of effective hospitality. To maximize available funding, it has leveraged its promotional budget in cooperative programs with all Eastern Shore counties to promote the region to tour group operators and in some limited general advertising.

The development of attractions, events and promotional activities are common elements in most tourism programs, and the County should capitalize on the progress being made in these areas. The County has ample room to promote its unique assets as discussed in the Implementation section.

#### **4.7 Education**

The University of Maryland Eastern Shore represents a major asset in the economic development of Somerset County as it offers several opportunities to expand the local economy and support new and existing business. Expansion of the UMES will have a significant impact on the local economy in terms of construction, housing, and business and consumer services. Expansion plans call for a total of 4,350 students (enrollment is currently over 2,800) by the year 2005. Graduate studies are expanding to the point where graduate students will form approximately 10 percent of the student body by the year 2000. Along with this expansion, there will be a corresponding increase in teaching and administrative staff. The market opportunity to provide more off-campus activities for students in Princess Anne is the subject of a study by the University's Department of Human Ecology. In addition, grant funds have been awarded to create a "storefront" retail incubator in the Princess Anne business district.

The University, in cooperation with the Rural Development Center, is developing support for an on-campus business incubator facility to concentrate on hydroponics. The facility (approximately 2.5 acres of greenhouse) would focus this technology on commercial applications including cultivating long-stemmed roses. The University is also working with small farmers on developing secondary crops to supplement their income. In addition, the hotel/restaurant and construction management programs are highly regarded and represent sources of new entrepreneurial activity.

#### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

- The Comprehensive Plan seeks to preserve the strong and healthy agricultural traditions and economy of Somerset County by encouraging growth in areas with suitable infrastructure, concentrating development away from prime agricultural land, and discouraging strip commercial development.
- The County should emphasize sustainable economic development efforts by building a broad consensus on: the value of job creation, enlarging the tax base, and recognizing the multiplier impact of new local spending in supporting service industries. The County has diverse interests and needs which should be reflected in the development and implementation of economic development strategies. The consensus must survive changes in leadership and political administrations. To accomplish this objective, the County should consider:
  - Creating a structured leadership development program to introduce County issues, programs and services to a diverse group of community leaders. These programs create effective volunteers, generate positive public opinion, and help build consensus on major issues facing the County. Many excellent models for such development programs exist in Maryland.
  - Continue the Economic Development's Commission's task force efforts in education (e.g., "Adopt a School" program), marketing, and permitting regulations. These types of groups provide an opportunity to educate and receive feedback on economic development issues.
  - Recognize the inherent differences in the economies of Princess Anne and Crisfield. A single strategy may not be appropriate for both communities, but opportunities for cooperation should be explored.
- Somerset County has set a target employment growth rate of 1 percent per year for the next decade and beyond. This rate is fairly modest when compared to the current State projections. Growth in employment opportunities of 1 percent per year would

produce almost 1,000 new jobs in the next ten years, and over 1,500 new jobs by the year 2010. Toward this end, the Somerset County Economic Development Commission plans to target the following projects for the coming decade:

- A second phase of the Princess Anne Industrial Park.
  - Additional commercial/industrial uses in the area west of Pocomoke.
  - Local assistance programs to find new markets for established businesses.
  - Promotion of aquaculture and related value added products.
  - Promotion of service business opportunities to attract and retain graduates.
  - Revitalization programs for downtown Princess Anne and Crisfield as an enhancement for the tourism effort.
  - Promotion of an enhanced telecommunications infrastructure such as fiber optics in the County to improve the quality of business communications.
- The County should ensure that adequate capacities of water and sewer exist to support growth in designated growth areas, in accordance with the Planning Act of 1992. The development of an independent system for the ECI will increase wastewater treatment capacity. Regulatory review of development projects and the use of incentives such as the designation of Enterprise Zones, public financing, and employee training programs will be guided by this principle.
- The County should continue to support the Enterprise Zone designation effort for Crisfield in cooperation with the City.
- The County and UMES should continue to work cooperatively in designing a hydroponics facility on campus that would serve as a business incubator supported by the business and technology programs at the University.
- Somerset County and particularly the Town of Princess Anne should take advantage of UMES campus expansion plans. Downtown Princess Anne businesses should orient their goods and services toward the demand generated by the University population. The County and Town should also fully support the establishment of a "storefront" retail incubator in the downtown to cultivate new entrepreneurial activity.
- Somerset County should continue to consider tourism an important component of the economy and support the continued development of attractions, activities, and regional promotional efforts. This should include support for the implementation programs described in the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Plan. Community involvement should be sought as a means to garner long-term support for tourism as an appropriate economic development strategy.

- The County should promote Great Hope Golf Course as a regional tourism destination; a hotel/conference center in the Crisfield area; seek full utilization of the Richard A. Henson Center (conference center) at UMES.
  
- The County should seek full utilization of the County Civic Center by civic groups and private enterprise.





Chapter 5 Land Use

5.1 Existing Land Use

Somerset is one of Maryland's smaller counties with 215,000 acres (336 sq. miles) of land area and another 182,000 acres (284 sq. miles) of water. The waters of the Chesapeake Bay, Pocomoke Sound and the Wicomico Rivers which surround it on three sides contribute in a major way to the County's economy, environment, and cultural values. The topography is flat and low-lying with a high water table. Only 1.6% of the total land area (3,400 acres) is developed. Of this, the two towns of Crisfield and Princess Anne (including their environs) account for 50% of the total County population, and half the non-agriculturally zoned land. The remaining 98.4% of the County land area (211,600 acres) is either agricultural, forest, wetland or other open space. The following table shows the current distribution of land-uses through the County:

Table 4  
Existing Land Use Distribution

Rural Residential			2,295 acres (1.1%)
Urban Residential and Cluster			367 acres (0.2%)
Commercial and Industrial			459 acres (0.2%)
Schools, Parks, Open Space			3,603 acres (1.7%)
Special Uses:	ECI	600 ac	} 1,300 acres (0.6%)
	UMES	700 ac	
Other Developed Land			±100 acres (0.0%)
Agriculture, Arable			64,627 acres (30.0%)
Forest			81,963 acres (38.1%)
Wetlands			60,410 acres (29.1%)
Total Land Area			215,000 acres (100%) (percentages do not add due to rounding)

5.2 State and Federal Reserves and Parks

Over 31,000 acres of the County is contained in State and Federal recreation and wildlife management areas. These are primarily located in waterfront areas, islands and estuarine marshes.

- |                                  |                             |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>National Wildlife Refuges</b> | <b>State Wildlife Areas</b> |
| • Martin (Smith Island)          | • Deal Island/Monie         |
| • South Marsh Island             | • Estuarine Research Area   |
|                                  | • Wellington                |
|                                  | • Fairmount                 |
|                                  | • Cedar Island              |
|                                  | • Pocomoke Sound            |
| <b>State Parks</b>               | • Maryland Marine           |
| • Janes Island                   | Properties (Shelldown)      |

### 5.3 Critical Areas

In 1984 the State of Maryland adopted Critical Areas legislation affecting all land within 1000 ft. of a tidal tributary of the Chesapeake Bay. In 1988 Somerset County's Critical Areas program went into effect, controlling residential densities, restricting commercial activities and increasing environmental safeguards along both bayfront and estuaries. Agricultural activities within this Critical Area zone are also restricted in terms of fertilizer and other run-offs which could pollute the Bay.

Non-tidal wetland legislation went into effect in January 1991, which will limit still further the area of useable land. However, non-tidal wetlands have not yet been officially mapped. Outside of Critical Areas, floodplains, wetlands and other environmental constraints approximately 97,760 acres (152 sq. miles or 45% of the total County land area) are developable. This area is further divided into Groundwater Management Areas based on the ability of the soil to accept and filter septic effluent without polluting the underlying aquifer.

### 5.4 Groundwater Management Areas

To the north and east of Princess Anne, and to a lesser extent in the vicinity of both Westover and Pocomoke City, the soils are extremely permeable down to the underlying aquifer. This places severe restrictions on septic tanks which might otherwise contaminate the groundwater. Approximately 30,600 acres (48 sq. miles) are affected in this way, and are categorized as *Management Area 'A'*. Current regulations require a 2 acre minimum area for a septic field and an 'adequate treatment zone' (or soil depth) of 2 - 4 feet between septic field and aquifer; otherwise, development must be on a central sewer system. This 'adequate treatment zone' is generally not available in Management Area 'A', thus effectively restricting development to the vicinity of Princess Anne where central sewer is available.

Surrounding Princess Anne to the west, and extending for a further 36,600 acres (57 sq. miles) throughout the eastern County toward Pocomoke City, lie areas of slightly lesser restriction, categorized as *Management Area B1*, requiring soil borings and specially designed septic systems as a condition of development approval. The remainder of the County is subject to normal septic field testing (*Management Area B2*). This includes areas west and south of US13, and either side of MD 413, totalling some 30,500 acres (48 sq. miles).

Environmental restrictions in any of these Management areas may be eased if development is constructed with central water and sewer systems. In view of the high cost of sprawl and the relative shortage of land suitable for rural development on septic systems, centralized utility systems at higher densities should be encouraged for most new housing. A new ground water protection report was adopted by County Commissioners in 1995. In Management Area A (around Princess Anne) a minimum lot size of

four acres is required if there is no adequate treatment zone, below the drain field. This density requirement is less restrictive than earlier requirements which precluded residential development in some areas.

### ***5.5 Agricultural Land Uses and Farmland Subdivision***

Prime agricultural land must be well-drained and loamy. However, good arable farmland has many of the same characteristics as good development land. Consequently the better arable land tends to be in the south and west of the County in Management Area B2 (see above). Approximately 56,000 acres (26% of the total land area) are currently classed as 'Improved agricultural land', a slight increase over 1970 acreage. The majority of this is zoned 'Agricultural' or 'Conservation', within which are permitted farmhouses, buildings, a number of community facilities, forestry and storage facilities and mobile home parks. The maximum density is 1 DU per acre. By comparison, the maximum density on R-1 land (the next category) is 2 DU per acre.

Recently, some large farms have begun to request planning permission for residential development along existing rural road frontage. In other Eastern Shore counties this has resulted in unplanned strip development with no amenities or public facilities. The resulting development not only reduces the inventory of good quality arable land, and causes environmental impacts on ground-water supply, but is also extremely costly to the County in terms of providing services. Consideration should be given to modifying the 'A' zone so as to encourage larger tracts to remain in productive agricultural use. Strict controls should be placed on the subdivision of farms and the spread of strip residential uses along country roads by limiting development in the 'A' zone to minor subdivisions (no more than six lots). Interfamily transfer of farm property among bona-fide family members would be permitted, but generally development would be encouraged to locate in communities with central utilities and nearby community facilities.

### ***5.6 Major Land Users***

The US13/MD413 Corridor Study analyzed property holdings within a mile either side of the two principal highways, and found a handful of owners controlling over 12,000 acres of land. The Chesapeake Corporation of Virginia is one of the largest of these. A few large sites are in public ownership, such as the State Prison site (700 acres) and lands owned by the Sanitary District. The University of Maryland Eastern Shore Campus (UMES) occupies over 600 acres northeast of Princess Anne, a fraction of which is actually occupied by the buildings of the campus itself. Some tracts are environmentally sensitive, such as the Tull's Swamp wetlands, but the majority of the larger tracts are relatively free of environmental constraints and many of them have direct access to arterial roads. There are over 80 tracts of 100 acres or more near to US13/MD413. This significant factor may facilitate the planning and development of concentrated nodes in the corridor.

Excluded from this analysis have been public land holdings of the State of Maryland in the form of highway or other rights-of-way, since they are not generally developable. However, the rail corridor operated by Conrail which generally parallels Route 13 may have a significant effect on development potentials, and was presumably a key factor in the County's decision to rezone the Westover industrial area alongside the railroad.

A rail right-of-way also extends to Crisfield running parallel to, and immediately east of, Route 413. The line is now closed and the land is currently owned by the State Railroad Administration. There has been some encroachment onto this property by adjacent land-owners and unless prompt action is taken by the County and/or the State, the statute of limitations relating to adverse possession may expire, effectively removing sections of this corridor from the public domain. This would ultimately hinder and escalate the cost of reconstructing Route 413 as a divided highway between Westover and Crisfield, as recommended by the corridor study. (see Chapter 9 Transportation)

### **5.7 Water - Dependent Users**

Unlike other Eastern Shore counties, Somerset has not so far experienced severe competition between watermen and recreational boaters, or between commercial fishing interests and residential activities. However, as growth continues and development of waterfront areas increases, access opportunities for watermen could be affected. Traditional sites used by watermen and seafood operations should be protected for as long as they remain commercially viable.

There is some conflict at present between fish packing facilities and the marina at Jenkin's Creek, as well as at Webster's Cove. The County should continue to recognize the importance of small enterprises and individual watermen to the seafood industry, and commercial docking should continue to be permitted within residential zones as long as there is no additional health or safety hazard to residents. Established seafood processing centers in Crisfield, Deal Island and Rumbley should be encouraged to expand.

Aquaculture activities have also commenced in the County. These involve the controlled reproduction, production and harvesting of fin and shell fish in managed environments, such as independent ponds or tanks, as well as in segregated areas of the Bay and its estuaries. An aquaculture facility meets the requirement of being 'water-dependent' if it requires being located at or near the shoreline. Aquaculture research is being conducted by UMES and at the Monie Estuarine Research Area.

### **5.8 Mineral Resources**

Although rich in sand deposits, Somerset County extracts very little in the way of mineral resources, due to its distance from construction in major population centers. The sand and gravel industry has grown from a handful of farm pits in 1975 to thirteen licensed operators in 1989 with an annual production of 78,000 tons and a working area of some 130 acres. In

general, pits in the Princess Anne area produce a higher proportion of gravel, whereas the Marion area pits produce sand. Most of the material is used locally. Recent mapping by the Maryland Geological Survey was unable to delineate the extent of the resource, so no specific land use recommendations are proposed here.

#### LAND USE PLAN

- The Land Use component of the Comprehensive Plan recognizes the County's agricultural base as the backbone of its economy and by far the dominant land-use. The Plan seeks to preserve that base by restricting growth, and particularly unplanned sprawl, from diluting the rural character of the County. Although most of the Plan recommendations concern urbanization, they are in large part directed at concentrating urbanization in areas where it is not destructive of the farm economy.
- The Land Use Plan Map indicates the principal areas where growth in the County is to be encouraged. The primary growth areas are all intended to have central water and sewer service.

#### Primary Growth Areas

The following areas are designated as Primary Growth Areas. They are intended for developments with central water and sewer, suitable for a broad spectrum of land uses. The Primary Growth areas are listed below and are defined on the Land Use Plan (Map 4). The Comprehensive Plan (1991) is predicated upon 80% of the residential growth in the County occurring in the Primary Growth Areas. (See also Chapter 7: Housing)

- The US 13 corridor between Princess Anne and Westover, where Princess Anne's water and sewer systems can be readily extended. Strip development should be avoided, and growth should occur in nodes or villages, with separating green space, typically respecting existing creeks and environmentally sensitive areas.
- The U.S. 13 corridor south of Westover at key access points which are suitable for growth areas due to their location on a major limited access corridor. Development should be carefully monitored and a Limited Access Overlay Zone should be established in the Zoning Ordinance to set out necessary requirements.
- Areas west of Pocomoke City, taking advantage of the riverfront for residential communities, and US 13 for commercial activities.
- Areas north of Crisfield as waterfront villages and retirement/recreation communities, which respect and avoid traditional water-men's areas and allow a sufficient buffer zone from Crisfield airfield.
- Selected growth of existing village nodes along US 13 and MD 413 at Eden, Marion and Kingston.

### Limited Access Development Overlay Zone

Somerset County wishes to maintain the rural characteristics along U.S. 13 which establish County character. However, the County anticipates that growth is most likely to occur along this corridor. U.S. 13 is a limited access highway, with existing intersections the only "breaks" available for development and service roads. As an alternative to designating the entire corridor as a growth area, the County proposes an overlay zone which would allow future growth at such intersections, but would carry certain landscape and open space requirements as would be consistent with the rural character of the County.

The Limited Access Development Overlay Zone applies only to limited access highways and may be applied only if the Planning and Zoning Commission determines that the proposed location meets all requirements at the time of a specific development proposal.

### Secondary Growth Areas (Infill Areas)

Recognizing continuing demand for waterfront homes in existing bayfront communities, the Land Use Plan indicates that selected infill development is acceptable, providing all appropriate environmental, Critical Area and septic system criteria are met. Since the majority of these locations do not have central sewer systems, proposed infill developments should be avoided in areas where there have already been septic system failures, unless they are planned as part of a central package treatment system, or are to be linked with adjacent developments to form a cooperative community septic system. These Secondary Growth Areas are intended principally for residential development with supporting community facilities. They include:

- Deal Island, Dames Quarter and Chance
- Mount Vernon
- Fairmont
- Smith Island
- Oriole and Champ
- Ewell
- Tylerton

- Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) should be encouraged in the Primary Growth Areas, with a range of community facilities consistent with the development's needs and the location, size and other criteria typically required by the County. In particular, communities with a broad mix of activities, including residential, commercial, employment and recreation should be preferred, and positive arrangements should be made to ensure that such communities maintain the traditional form and character of villages, separated by open space from adjacent development, and employing high standards of community design.

- Higher residential densities in the form of density bonuses should be encouraged in the Primary Growth Areas, where a high quality central water and sewer system is planned. Construction of such systems should be the developer's responsibility. They may either be independent or connected to existing systems, when there is adequate capacity and they satisfy the criteria of the Sanitary District. A system of density bonuses should be devised and adopted by the Board of Commissioners, possibly in the form of an 'Overlay Zone' for the Primary Growth Areas. The intention is to encourage developments which demonstrate good planning and design, which take positive steps to protecting the environment, and which fulfill the locational recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan. Such density bonuses may also be adopted for commercial activities.
  
- All development regardless of land-use which disturbs 10 or more acres should be required to assess potential environmental impacts, whether within or outside Critical Areas. A checklist of criteria similar to that for projects in the Critical Areas shall be used for all qualifying proposals.
  
- Strip development is to be discouraged in all areas of the County, whether in the principal highway corridors, or in the form of farm sub-divisions along rural roads. Developments which make little or no contribution to County infrastructure, which disturb the agricultural character of the County, and which add inappropriate traffic volumes to local roads should also be discouraged. To this end, development along roads designated as major collectors (see section 9.1 and Table 12) or higher should be allowed access only from a service road or by means of loop roads connecting with the main highway at a limited number of points. Where feasible, right-in/right-out movements only should be permitted, with 'U'-turns at principal intersections. Elsewhere, on minor collectors and local streets any subdivision of more than two lots per parcel should provide an internal road which provides access to all lots, unless:
  - (a) The Planning Commission determines that the topography, soil types or other physical conditions prevent such internal access to all lots, or
  - (b) Each new subdivision lot has at least 600 feet of frontage onto the minor collector or local street.
  
- In generally agricultural areas only minor subdivisions should be permitted unless the proposed subdivision includes plans for internal roads which provide access to all lots.
  
- Industrial and commercial development should be encouraged to cluster in office parks and employment centers within the Primary Growth Areas as indicated on the Land Use Plan Map (Map 4) They should be well landscaped, buffered from nearby residential areas

and should take positive measures to protect sensitive environmental resources. They should also have good access to a major highway; however, development in the US13 and MD 413 corridors should be strenuously discouraged unless access is provided via service roads.

- Developments in the US13 and MD413 corridors should maintain the rural character of these highways and avoid extensive clearance of vegetation within 100 ft. of the right of way. Free-standing signage should be strictly limited to industrial and commercial park entrances, and should set high standards of design. Specific development proposals along the U.S. 13 corridor may be consistent with economic development in the County, but should be limited to those existing intersections which allow for service roads along the limited access highway. The overlay growth zone instituted for this purpose shall carry certain landscape and open space requirements as would be consistent with the rural character of the County.
  
- The County has designated priority use for watermen at several locations, which include docking, access ramps, loading of fin- and shell-fish, and fish processing. The following locations are given watermen's priority, although recreational uses are not presently excluded:
  - Jenkin's Creek, Crisfield
  - Rumbley Point, West of Shelltown
  - Wenona, Wenona
  - Webster's Cove, Mount Vernon
  - Dames Quarter Creek, Dames Quarter
  - Ewell and Tylerton, Smith Island
  - Deal Island
  
- Land use recommendations relating to parks, open space, community facilities, historic areas and solid waste disposal are contained elsewhere in this document.



## Chapter 6 Community Development and Urban Form

### 6.1 Existing Towns and Villages

The principal existing communities in Somerset have developed at key locations important to the local economy. Princess Anne was originally a crossing point of the Manokin River, near to its highest navigable reach. Kingston, Marion, Oriole, Venton, Westover and Eden were located at crossroads. Mount Vernon, Deal Island, Rumbley, and Crisfield were situated at landing areas and harbors. The economy, traditionally based on fishing, tobacco and corn, required good transportation links via boat to the markets in Annapolis, Baltimore, Alexandria and Norfolk, and regular steamboat services plied the Chesapeake Bay in the 19th century.

While the original economic rationale of these communities may have changed, they still represent important population groupings which are served, as they always have been, by a variety of services - stores, churches, water-supply systems, meeting places, and transportation facilities. Decentralization of community services is important to the extent that it reduces travel to and from the larger towns.

### 6.2 Water and Sewer Services

The Somerset County Comprehensive Water and Sewerage Plan (1986, readopted 1990) proposed Service Areas and outlined proposals for those existing communities that are lacking one or both utilities. As a matter of public health and welfare, such utilities were considered to be essential for communities such as Fairmount, Chance, Deal Island and Mount Vernon. Under the Maryland Code, each community is required to support its own system and treatment facilities, and the prospect of special assessments to pay for the system caused some communities to decline the proposed services outlined in the Plan. As a result, the 1986 Water and Sewerage Plan was scaled back and readopted in 1990 with fewer service areas.

However, the need for centralized utilities continues to grow. Housing densities, minimal separation between septic fields and dangers of increased pollution of both groundwater and the Bay make basic central sewerage treatment of fundamental importance from a public health standpoint. State funding should be sought whenever available for 'central treatment facilities' in areas where septic systems have failed. This issue is addressed more fully in Chapter 10.

### 6.3 Growth Areas

The Land Use element of this Comprehensive Plan (Chapter 5) describes a preferred system of Primary and Secondary Growth Areas for the County. Primary growth areas are located in nodes adjacent to US 13 and MD Route 413, with central water and sewer and good access to community services. This is consistent with the assumptions of the US 13/MD 413 Corridor Study (1989) which assumed that 80% of all development in the County in

the foreseeable future would occur in these corridors. In order to be considered as a potential development node, an area should satisfy all or most of the following criteria:

- (1) proximity to a major highway
- (2) proximity to existing sewer system
- (3) areas with larger land holdings
- (4) areas already zoned and vacant
- (5) areas with few or no environmental constraints
- (6) areas which can be developed as nodes with open space buffers surrounding them.

The following table shows the potential primary growth nodes:

**Table 5**  
**Proposed Growth Centers and Land Uses**

- Eden - residential development drawing from Wicomico County.
- West Princess Anne - residential uses on prime land between the creeks.
- S.E. Princess Anne - industrial and commercial areas focused on the County's proposed industrial/office park.
- University Campus area - university expansion, with supporting residential uses (students and faculty).
- Westover/ECI- new community, shopping center, industrial, warehousing and transportation uses.
- West Pocomoke - industrial and commercial expansion west of the river. Some residential growth.
- North Crisfield to Marion - residential growth and supporting commercial areas.
- U.S. 13 corridor access points meeting development criteria of a limited access overlay zone.

It should be noted that Somerset's two principal towns are subject to their own Comprehensive Plans. Both communities do have a significant influence over land surrounding their boundaries and both towns appear desirous of annexing adjacent areas of the County. The Town of Crisfield's annexation plans include areas to the north-east and east of the existing town boundaries, covering areas which are also scheduled for water and sewer expansion. Many of these areas fall within the 100 year flood plain as defined by 1981 FEMA maps, and this may affect the type of structures and land-uses in the North Crisfield area. Feasibility studies of future annexations should be a cooperative effort between the County and the Town wishing to annex.

Secondary growth areas generally consist of expansion of existing settlements, as listed in Chapter 5.

#### **6.4 Community Facilities**

The new growth centers should be actively promoted and supported with plans for appropriate community facilities. While it would be inadvisable to

construct facilities too far ahead of actual market demand, the Comprehensive Plan indicates a process of outline planning for each area, so that both planners and developers will have a consistent set of guidelines for the design and evaluation of development proposals. Proposals for Community Facilities are contained in Chapter 7.

### ***6.5 Densities and Zoning***

Current zoning categories and development densities in the County are consistent with traditional rural communities. Somerset County has experienced a declining population partly because of job opportunities elsewhere, and partly because of limited housing opportunities. The attraction of Salisbury, Pocomoke, Berlin and Ocean City is due in large part to the availability of a variety of development forms and housing styles not generally available in Somerset.

Existing housing densities vary from 1 and 2 acre lot subdivisions to a few garden apartment developments in Princess Anne and Crisfield at 12 DU per acre. Several factors may be contributing to the spread of trailer homes in agricultural areas. These include a lack of affordable homes for low-income families, a shortage of starter homes for young married couples, and the age and condition of the present housing stock. Somerset should begin to encourage townhouses, patio homes and other more affordable types in order to compete with surrounding communities to retain population and tax base. This would introduce a greater proportion of housing at densities of between 5 and 10 DU per acre, thereby conserving land, bringing people closer to village centers and permitting easier access to a concentration of community facilities. This type of housing is particularly appropriate for those middle - income families of teachers, government employees, nurses, and other professionals on whom the community relies.

New development in the Primary Growth Areas should aim for a mix of housing types and an average density of between 3 and 5 DU per acre. Infill development should be appropriate to the surrounding community; however if it is dependent upon septic systems it will be limited to a minimum 2 acre lot. In secondary growth areas such as Chance or Deal Island, where existing densities are at 2 - 3 DU per acre, this further increases the pressure for central water and sewer systems in order to permit higher densities.

### ***6.6 Development Form***

Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) offer a great deal of flexibility to preserve sensitive environments, and offer a mix of housing types, densities and commercial land uses in a comprehensively - planned community. They are not currently permitted in Somerset County, although they are particularly appropriate for larger tracts of land, which are readily available within the Primary Growth Areas. Such a zoning category would be a valuable addition to the current zoning ordinance. Typical

densities for a PUD would average between 3 - 6 DU per acre, although density bonuses could push this 10 - 15% higher. Some assurance of a balanced community would be had by specifying a range of acceptable percentages for each residential type.

Development in both new and infill villages should be clustered in neighborhoods and focused on community facilities, in the manner of traditional communities. There should be a highly visible and accessible 'central place' wherever possible, with community facilities nearby. Internal accessibility and recreation activities should focus on off-street trails and linear parks where possible, and existing vegetation and topography should be preserved.

Strip development is to be discouraged, and special guidelines are set forth in section 5.5 (Agricultural Land Uses) and the Land Use Plan.

#### COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

- All Primary Growth Areas should be based on central water and sewer systems to be provided by developers, or in partnership with the County if Federal or State funds become available. Provisions should be made for reimbursement from subsequent tap fees. In the interests of community health and welfare the County should explore new methods of funding centralized utility systems for existing communities and for Secondary Growth Areas.
- Growth nodes and the selection of development sites within the Growth Areas should be consistent with the criteria set out in section 6.3.
- All new communities should be clustered in neighborhoods and focused on community facilities in the manner of a traditional village, with community facilities prominently located and accessible. Planned Unit Development criteria should be developed and adopted as part of the Zoning Ordinance. New housing types should be encouraged as a means of enhancing the County's attractiveness to a broader range of potential residents including young families and State/County employees. Community development plans should reduce automobile dependence and encourage non-vehicular trips using linear parks and trails.
- Mobile homes should be strictly controlled. A mobile home ordinance should be adopted addressing the design, size, layout and required amenities for mobile home parks, and the placement of manufactured homes.

## Chapter 7 Housing

### 7.1 Housing Market Survey, 1988

The housing market in Somerset County was the subject of a 1988 study by RPR Associates. Four factors were evaluated: *Location, Quality of Life, Amenities and Housing Cost*. In terms of location, Somerset's advantages lie in its proximity to Salisbury, and its potential as a bedroom community to Salisbury, with excellent access via US 13.

The quality of life found in Somerset County is measured by its abundance of State parks, wildlife refuge areas, water and recreational amenities, as well as the historic qualities of Princess Anne and Crisfield. The quality or non-existence of other amenities, however, were seen as a problem facing the housing market. In particular, the County has no major shopping center, only modest retail strips and downtown shopping in the two towns, no movie theaters and few restaurants.

Housing costs tend to be toward the low end of the market, with offerings designed and priced more for local residents than for competition with Salisbury or other nearby developments. The upper end of the market consisting of retirees and executives wishing to move into the County is served by a few modest subdivisions with few amenities. By contrast, developments in Salisbury and Wicomico County are better planned, designed as communities, offer internal recreation, day-care and other amenities and offer more stylish homes. As a result, few of the 400 new families with jobs related to ECI were able to find homes in Somerset County in 1987-88.

The housing market study concluded that three distinct market sectors should be addressed by Somerset developers:

- Quality townhomes, apartments and mid-range single-family homes serving the greater Salisbury area.
- Retirement homes for people, often from out of state, seeking waterfront lots.
- Moderately priced developments oriented toward local residents, and reflecting the County's relatively low median income.

The inclusion of Planned Unit Development (PUD) regulations in the Zoning Ordinance would undoubtedly attract quality developers with incentives such as density credits in return for amenities, imaginative design and environmentally sensitive planning.

The County should begin to play a more active role in the development approval process. There should be close consultation between developers and County staff throughout each planning application process, to ensure that rezoning applications and permits not only fulfill legislated criteria, but are also in the wider interests of the health, safety and welfare of the community as a whole.

## 7.2 Household Projections

According to the Maryland Office of Planning, the number of year-round households in Somerset County was 6,900 in 1970 and 7,540 in 1980. (Profile of Somerset County - 1986) The State's 1990 estimates based on preliminary Census data show 7,560 households. At the same time, family size has declined from an average of 3.1 in 1970, to 2.75 in 1980, to an estimated 2.65 in 1990.

The 1990 household estimate does not include persons in group quarters such as UMES students or the ECI population. The Maryland Office of Planning forecasts a total increase of 1,050 households to the year 2010. However, from the same 1990 base, a population growth rate of 1% p.a. (See Chapter 3) would result in 1,665 additional households, excluding those in group quarters. The table below illustrates the range of projections of household growth:

Table 6

### Household Projections 1990-2010

	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010
<i>State Planning</i>	7,560	7,960	8,240	8,440	8,610
Increase		400	280	200	170
Growth Rate		1% p.a.	0.7% p.a.	0.5% p.a.	0.4% p.a.
<i>Somerset County</i>	7,560	7,950	8,350	8,780	9,225
Increase		390	400	430	445
Growth Rate		1% p.a.			

## 7.3 Housing Demand 1990 -2010

Assuming an average house has a life of 100 years, the current housing stock of 7,560 units will need replacing at the rate of 75 per year, or 1,500 units in the course of the planning period, for a total of 3,100 new units. If 80% of all growth and replacement housing occurs within the Primary Growth Areas, the more optimistic projections would indicate a housing demand in the US13/ MD413 corridors of over 2,400 new units. The following table is taken from the US13/MD413 Corridor Study, illustrating a possible scenario of new housing starts in the Primary Growth Areas.

**Table 7**  
**Housing Demand Projections - Year 2010 - In Primary Growth Areas**

Node	New Homes 1990-2010	Acreage Required @ avg. 2 DU/ac*
Eden	350 - 400	190 ac
W. Princess Anne	400 - 480	230 ac
SE. Princess Anne	80 - 100	45 ac
University	300 - 340	160 ac
Westover	220 - 260	120 ac
W. Pocomoke	300 - 340	160 ac
Crisfield/Marion	600 - 700	325 ac
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,460</b>	<b>1,230 ac</b>

\* Note: this density is used for illustrative purposes only. It is inclusive of community facilities.

#### **7.4 Affordable Housing**

Somerset County currently has no policies relating to Affordable housing for sale or rental. In a County with a relatively low median income this issue is likely to be increasingly important. It will be important, too, to avoid creating pockets of low-cost housing which can rapidly have a stigmatizing effect on the community. Successful housing programs in other communities require a percentage (10-15%) of developments over a given size to be designated as 'Affordable' housing units, in order to fully integrate them into the community. These units typically have special covenants defining a rent schedule and a resale formula tied to the local Consumer Price Index (CPI) as well as provisions for validating eligible occupants. Usually, these units do not count toward development density.

One form of "affordable" housing is the mobile home. In Somerset County mobile housing is currently only permitted by special exception in agricultural zones as well as most residential zones with the exception of R-1. Consideration should be given to extending opportunities for mobile home parks of 20+ units, and restricting smaller or individual sites in future. New parks should be located in areas with community sewer systems, and well designed mobile home parks should be encouraged through careful site plan review of setbacks, landscaping and fire protection. The mobile home ordinance should be reconsidered, with a view to allowing double-wide homes as a matter of right.

#### **7.5 Housing Program Coordination**

Somerset County operates a number of beneficial housing programs and services. They are, however, administered by a variety of different agencies, and for this reason may not be adequately publicized or accessible. For example, Section 8 housing programs in the County are managed by the Town of Princess Anne; while the Housing Assistance Program (encouraging private rehabilitation) is managed by the Department

of Technical and Community Services. Other projects are administered by the Town of Crisfield. The County should give some consideration to coordinating all its housing activities, possibly through a separate department, or a Housing Authority.

## **7.6 Building Codes**

Somerset County has no Uniform Building Code, although a State-sponsored plumbing code is about to take effect, and a Minimum Livability Code was adopted in 1989 but only for rental units. The 1980 Census indicated that 10% of the County's housing stock was substandard. However, no guidelines have been adopted to legally define 'substandard'. The County should examine whether a common code such as the BOCA Code should be introduced in order to ensure that Somerset's new housing stock will be competitive in construction quality and safety.

### **HOUSING PLAN**

- The County should adopt a PUD Ordinance as a step towards attracting better quality housing to compete with developments in Salisbury and adjacent counties. The ordinance should offer developer incentives to introduce high quality environments and amenities.
- The County Economic Development Commission should begin to explore sites and potential developers for a major shopping center, with entertainment amenities, possibly in the Westover area on US 13. According to the 1988 Housing Market Study, this will have a significant effect on the attractiveness of Somerset's housing market.
- As a first step toward adopting a broad-based construction code, (such as BOCA), the County should consider the quality, safety and price of new housing in terms of its competitiveness compared to other jurisdictions.
- The mobile home ordinance should be re-examined, with a view to restricting the proliferation of small mobile home parks or individual sites. Mobile homes should, however, be encouraged in larger, well-designed and properly serviced sites, and subject to density requirements, larger mobile home units should be permitted.
- Current housing programs and housing-related services offered by the County should be more broadly advertised to residents, and expanded where possible. Each administering office should have information on programs which are managed elsewhere.
- The County should create a central Housing Authority to co-ordinate code-enforcement housing programs and related services.
- The County should adopt a Property Standards Code to facilitate (among other things) the demolition of derelict buildings which do not merit historic preservation.



## Chapter 8 Community Facilities

### 8.1 Background

In 1990 Somerset County supported a broad range of community facilities, including schools, parks, boat ramps, emergency services, libraries, museums, health services, solid waste collection and disposal sites. The majority of these are managed by the County as public amenities. A few, such as the hospital and museums, are private. Schools and Parks comprise a major portion of the County's budget, and the principal facilities are listed below:

Table 8  
Schools and Parks

Type of Facility	Number	Location
Elementary Schools	7	Princess Anne*, Crisfield*, Deal Is*, Westover*, Marion, Smith Island (2)*
Middle Schools	2	Princess Anne*, Crisfield
High Schools	2	Princess Anne*, Crisfield*
Special Schools	2	Westover (VoTech) Marion* (Learning Disabled)
Adult Education Classes	7	Princess Anne (Middle + High) Crisfield, Marion, Westover Vo-Tech, Deal Is. Ewell (Smith Is),

\* These Schools include Recreation Facilities

Neighborhood Parks (serving communities within 2-4 miles)	7	Mt Vernon✧, Oriole✧, Crisfield (3), Smith Island (2)
County-wide Parks	4	Raccoon Point✧ (Revels Neck), Somerset Park (undeveloped at Westover)
State Parks	2	Janes Island✧ Somers Cove Marina✧

✧ These facilities include Boat ramps

Boat Ramps (in addition 14 to those shown above)	14	Dames Qtr, Deal Is (2), Rumbley, Colbourn Creek, Crisfield (3), Lawsonia, Rumbly Pt, Shelltown. Rehobeth, Smith Is (2).
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Somerset County also operates a full range of emergency services listed below, as well as a newly-installed '911' enhanced emergency system.

Table 9  
Emergency Services

Police Stations	2	Princess Anne, Crisfield
Sheriff's Office	1	Westover
Fire/Rescue	8	Mt Vernon, Deal Island, Marion, Smith Is (2) Crisfield (2), Princess Anne
Hospital	1	Crisfield
Clinics	3	Princess Anne, Westover, Crisfield.

In addition, the County runs five trash collection stations and one incinerator at Smith Island. There is also a County landfill at Westover. Two County libraries are located in Princess Anne and Crisfield, and there are two privately-run museums in Crisfield and Hudson's Corner.

### 8.2 Recreation

Somerset County adopted 'A Land Preservation and Recreation Plan' in 1988. The Plan's goals included the use of recreation and land preservation as a major foundation for the County's efforts to attract more business activity and tourism. The Plan also emphasized joint use of public lands such as school sites for neighborhood recreation activities, and cooperative use of UMES facilities such as its swimming pool. It also reiterated the County's commitment to the State Critical Areas and Coastal Zone Management programs.

Four new recreation sites were proposed:

- Somerset Park in Westover, acquired but not developed (180 ac)
- Eden recreation area (2-5 ac)
- Fairmount recreation area (2-5 ac)
- Costen/Cottage Grove recreation area (2-5 ac)

Currently, Somerset County has 729 acres of active recreation sites, not including the Janes Island State Park of some 3,060 acres. These include 184 acres of school sites and 545 acres of other public lands. This exceeds State standards for recreation space, as stated in the Maryland Outdoor Recreation and Open Space Plan (1979). The State Plan recommends:

Neighborhood Parks	5 acres/1000 residents
Community Parks	10 acres/1000 residents
County Parks	20 acres/1000 residents

The following table compares recreational open space required to serve the current Somerset County population of 22,100, and a future population of 27,000, with the present available acreage:

**Table 10  
Projected Park Needs**

Recreation Type	Parks area needed (under State standards) to service:		Existing Recreation Space
	Current Population 22,100*	Future Population 27,000	
Neighborhood Parks	110.5 ac	135.0 ac	14 ac @ Elem. Mid & High Schools
Community Parks	221.0 ac	270.0 ac	144 ac @ County Parks + VoTech + Boat-ramps + slips
County-wide Parks	442.0 ac	540.0 ac	285 ac @ Raccoon Pt 3060 ac Janes Is. Park

\*excluding ECI

The County Recreation Plan recommends four new parks totalling 186-195 acres including the Somerset Park Central Complex of 180 ac, (already purchased), and the design and development of Raccoon Point. Potential activities at the Central Complex will include nature trails, golf driving range, golf course, bowling alley and racquet/exercise club.

Currently, parks and recreation sites are maintained by the County Maintenance Department. With over 25 County park sites (including boat ramps), over 520 acres of land, and a recreation program, it may be appropriate for a separate Parks and Recreation Department to be established, which would undertake its own facility maintenance as well as a more extensive recreation program.

### **8.3 Schools**

Public school enrollment declined between 1970 and 1980, consistent with a declining population. This has led to consolidation of education resources and closing the Mount Vernon Elementary School in July 1990. Table 11 summarizes school capacity, enrollment and age of each facility. The School Board projects modest increases over the next five years. As Table 11 shows, there was considerable unused school capacity in 1988.

By 1994, virtually all the County's Elementary schools will be operating at capacity. Middle Schools will average 85% capacity and High Schools (excluding VoTech) will be at 67% capacity. Beyond 1994, the pressures from additional population growth are going to be felt first in the Elementary Schools.

Table 11  
School Facilities Inventory

	STUDENT CAPACITY	ENROLLMENT 1988/1994	% CHANGE	GRADES	AGE OF FACILITY
<i>Elementary Schools</i>					
Crisfield	360	327/330	--	PreK-2	1959-81
Princess Anne	360	461/495	+7%	PreK-2	1979
Tylerton	30	15/11	-27%	PreK-5	1974
Westover	445	170/433	+150%	3-5	1959-73
Marion	270	142/191	+35%	3 + 4	--
<i>Combination Elem &amp; Middle</i>					
Deal Island	280	140/170	+21%	PreK-7	1979
Ewell	115	34/18	-34%	PreK-7	1969-79
<i>Middle Schools</i>					
Greenwood (Pr. Ane)	450	516/422	-18%	6-8	1959-83
Woodson	550	332/387	+17%	6-8	1976
<i>High Schools</i>					
Crisfield	750	477/366	-23%	9-12	1954-74
Washington	900	643/618	+4%	9-12	1978
<i>Special Education</i>					
Sarah Peyton (Marion)	60	33/35	-6%	all	1980
Tawes Vo-Tech Center	225	202/200	--	9-12	1976

Source: Somerset County Board of Education: Facilities Inventory 1989

Somerset's long-term Education Plan calls for expanding the curriculum; increasing support services such as public/community relations, counselling, health services; and improved administrative conditions. All of these activities will place added burden on existing schools. In addition, the School Board's plans call for one central County High School (Washington High) to be combined with the Votech Center, as well as a new elementary school in Princess Anne, and conversion of the combination school in Deal Island to an elementary school. These plans were prepared by the School Board prior to, and independently of, the Comprehensive Plan, and thus do not take into account 1990 Census data, current growth projections or population shifts.

From an overall space standpoint, Somerset County was well supplied with schools and recreation space in 1990. However, these facilities are not always located within easy access of population centers and neighborhoods. Future education and recreation policy should concentrate on facilities to serve denser, urban nodes of development, consistent with Land Use policies. Within such nodes, plat areas and school sites (especially elementary schools) should be located at the heart of the communities they serve so they are easily accessible on foot. Larger parks, serving several communities may best be located adjacent to or as part of middle and high

schools, where they can provide more specialized facilities, parking for spectators and participants, and generally make more efficient use of available space. At these larger sites a broader range of amenities would also assist in attracting new families into the County.

#### RECREATION FACILITIES AND OPEN SPACE PLAN

- While Somerset County as a whole is well supplied with parks and open space, it is not always located conveniently to the majority of the population. Furthermore, much of the open space is passive in nature, located along the County's shoreline. There is a need for more active facilities, which the County's 'Somerset Park' in Westover is designed to fulfil. All four facilities proposed by the County's 'Land Preservation and Recreation Plan' are further endorsed, specifically:
  - Somerset Park in Westover, acquired but not developed (180 ac) including nature trails, golf driving range, golf course, bowling alley and racquet/exercise club.
  - Eden recreation area (2-5 ac)
  - Fairmount recreation area (2-5 ac)
  - Costen/Cottage Grove recreation area (2-5 ac)
  
- Residential Development in the Primary Growth Areas is anticipated to be approximately 2,400 dwelling units during the planning period, including housing for newcomers and replacement stock. (See section 7.3) This translates to roughly 6,240 persons. The Land-Use Plan (Chapter 5) strongly recommends PUD- type development in the Primary Growth Areas. This is likely to create a demand for the following recreation facilities in the Primary Growth Areas:
  - 30 acres Neighborhood Parks - 5 or 6 parks containing tennis, tot-lots, multi-purpose courts, etc.
  - 60 acres Community Parks (some of which will be satisfied by the Somerset Park Central Complex.) - 3 or 4 parks of 10 acres each, containing ballfields, swimming and clubhouse, as well as Neighborhood Park facilities.
  
- The provision of Neighborhood and Community Parks should be viewed as the responsibility of residential developers to construct and dedicate to the County. A model mechanism should be devised whereby developers of smaller residential projects can either contribute financially to recreation facilities in a nearby larger development, or (as with water and sewer improvements) they can be partially reimbursed by subsequent developers in the vicinity. Such parks would be dedicated to the County.
  
- Parks should be located within easy access of the populations they serve. In particular, Neighborhood Parks with facilities for small children should be within walking distance (1/4 mile) of 75% of the

homes in the neighborhoods they serve. Trails and footpaths to such parks should have as few street crossings as possible, and crossing of arterials and major collector roads should be avoided.

- For each PUD or development of more than 25 dwellings, an Open Space Plan should be prepared for review by County Planning staff. Such plans should demonstrate a comprehensive approach to all forms of open space, including, but not limited to: wetlands, floodplains, critical areas, stream valleys, neighborhood and community parks and the various recreation facilities in these areas, as well as linkages between them. The plans should also provide for the preservation of natural vegetation, protection of important agricultural and historic areas, and maintenance of buffer zones around villages and between incompatible land-uses.

#### SCHOOLS FACILITIES PLAN

- School location should be closely coordinated with parks so as not to duplicate facilities, and give better coverage to residential areas.
- Planning for school facilities is properly the responsibility of the Somerset County Board of Education. For purposes of the Comprehensive Plan (1991), population growth estimates for the planning period have been used as a guide to the need for new schools, particularly in the Primary Growth Areas. Population growth in the County as a whole is estimated at 3,600 persons (1,400 households) over the 20 year period 1990 - 2010. This will require two additional 360 - pupil Elementary schools, a possible additional Middle School or a combination Middle/High school. Within the US 13/ MD413 corridor (Primary Growth Area) a combination of relocation and new population is expected to result in 2,400 additional households. Existing schools are already at or approaching capacity, and it is therefore expected that all of the new school construction during the planning period will take place in the Primary Growth Areas. The Land Use Plan Map indicates possible generalized locations for new schools.

Note: School Board growth projections vary slightly from Comprehensive Plan projections, producing different future school needs.

#### EMERGENCY SERVICES PLAN

- As the US13/ MD413 corridor expands, the County should investigate the need for satellite police, fire and rescue stations in the Westover area, possibly as a combination facility.
- The County should consider and support the formation of a volunteer fire department in Fairmount, and a combined fire/ambulance/rescue service in Deal Island.

- Medical treatment, emergency services and education programs at McCready Hospital (Crisfield) should be encouraged and supported.
- At present, the Westover Health Clinic is a relatively new facility. However, it is also relatively inaccessible. The County should continue to evaluate demand for shuttle-bus service to and from the clinic, possibly combining it with other demands for public transportation in the US13/MD413 corridors. (See Chapter 9: Transportation).
- Following recent implementation of the County's enhanced 911 system, a study should be conducted to assess any further emergency services needs.

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## Chapter 9 Transportation

The Somerset County Transportation Plan update establishes and refines planning and development policies in the 1991 County Comprehensive Plan. The transportation goals from the 1991 County Plan are unchanged and are incorporated into this update. The Plan is oriented to the year 2010 as a reference point to which state, regional, county and other public or private organizations can relate their respective planning and development decisions. It sets no precise timetable for the implementation of the plan, rather it is intended to provide direction for the county as it changes in the future. This plan contains a description of the existing transportation system and offers recommendations necessary to address current and anticipated needs.

While encompassing a variety of transportation modes, the plan places the greatest emphasis on the public roadway network. The transportation system for Somerset County is designed to ensure that the system is compatible with the planned development of the County's growth areas while protecting the rural character that exists throughout the County.

### *9.1 Existing Roadway System*

The existing roadway system in Somerset County includes US Route 13, MD Route 413, MD Route 362, MD Route 363 and MD Route 361 as main travel roadways within the county. MD Routes 667 and 675 also provide important roadway linkages for county-oriented travel. US Route 13 is a four-lane divided highway which serves as the County's only principal arterial. It is also a major route used by county and interstate motorists traveling to Norfolk, Virginia and the Bay Tunnel Bridge. US Route 13 is also used by motorists heading north into Delaware. In addition to interstate travel, traffic volumes on US Route 13 are generated by the County's major collector highways, MD Routes 362, 363 and 364, and MD Route 413 as a minor arterial.

MD Route 413 is a main county transportation corridor which connects to US Route 13 at Westover. MD Route 413 extends from the US Route 13 interchange to Crisfield in the southern portion of the county. MD Route 413 provides an important link for the communities of Marion, Hopewell, Crisfield, and Kingston to regions throughout and beyond Somerset County.

MD Route 362, Mt. Vernon Road, connects the Town of Princess Anne to Mt. Vernon in the northwestern corner of the County. The communities of Jason and Widgeon are also served by MD Route 362, their main access to US Route 13 and surrounding regions.

MD Route 363 begins at the Town of Princess Anne and ends at Wenona on Deal Island in the western regions of the County. MD Route 363 also serves as an important roadway for the communities of Chance, Dames Quarter, Monie and Oriole. MD Route 363 is classified as a minor arterial between Princess Anne and Dames Quarter and as a Major Collector south of Dames Quarter to Deal Island.

MD Route 361 connects to MD Route 413 just south of the US Route 13/MD Route 413 interchange and extends west to Upper Fairmount. Fairmount, Manokin, Rumbley, and Westover are other communities that benefit from this major collector roadway.

MD Route 667 provides an important linkage between MD Route 413 to US Route 13. MD Route 667 also serves as a secondary route for motorists traveling from Marion to Crisfield and avoiding MD Route 413.

MD Route 675 (Somerset Avenue) serves as the "Main Street" for Princess Anne residents, businesses, and the University of Maryland Eastern Shore. It traverses north-south connecting to US Route 13. MD Route 675 is the route number for Somerset Avenue (see Map 8).

### **9.1.1 Average Daily Traffic (ADT) Volumes**

The 1991 Comprehensive Plan described a 36% increase (12,950 vehicles per day to 17,600 vehicles per day) in ADT between 1979 and 1989 on US Route 13 north of the MD Route 675 intersection. By 1994, the ADT values increased to 23,335 vehicles per day for the same location. This is a 33% increase since 1989 and demonstrates a consistent trend of traffic volume increase compared to the previous decade. This increase can be attributed to a 22% increase in countywide population between 1980 and 1990, growth in interstate traffic, development of the ECI, and increased enrollment at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore.

On MD Route 413 the 1991 Comprehensive Plan indicated a 44% increase (4,352 vehicles per day to 6,245 vehicles per day) between 1979 and 1989. In 1994, approximately 6,400 vehicles per day were traveling along MD Route 413, which represents a 2% increase since 1989. While the volumes on MD Route 413 do not approach the volumes indicated for US Route 13, the traffic volumes along MD 413 will continue to increase in order to service regional and locally oriented traffic. Improvements to U.S. Route 13 and MD Route 413 are described in further detail in Sections 9.3 and 9.4. Table 9-1 illustrates 1994 Average Daily Traffic Volumes for other important roadways within the County.

### **9.1.2 Levels of Service**

In addition to the average daily traffic along select roadways, level of service was used to measure the performance of US Route 13 and MD 413 within Somerset County.

The "Highway Capacity Manual," Special Report 209, written by the Transportation Research Board in 1994, was used as the basis for the level of service analysis. The manual describes level of service (LOS) in terms of speed and travel time, freedom to maneuver, traffic interruptions, comfort and convenience and safety.

Table 9-1 1994 Average Annual Daily Traffic (ADT) for Selected State Roads in Somerset County

Route	Location	1994 ADT
MD 667	between Marion and Pocomoke City	4,325
MD 675	north of MD 388/south of MD 362	11,750
MD 675	north of MD 362	3,775
MD 362	west of US Route 13	2,550
MD 362	east of Jason	1,525
MD 363	west of US Route 13	3,475
MD 363	between Monie and US Route 13	2,175
MD 363	east of Monie	1,575
MD 363	at Dames Quarter	1,700
MD 363	west of Dames Quarter	1,575
MD 363	Deal Island	1,675
MD 361	west of MD 413	1,625
MD 361	at Manokin	1,325
MD 361	at Upper Fairmont	1,225

Source: Maryland State Highway Administration

There are six levels of service used as qualitative measures. These levels range from A to F, with LOS A being the best level and LOS F being the worst level. LOS C is in the range of stable traffic flow, but marks the beginning of the range of flow in which the operation of individual users becomes significantly affected by interactions with other vehicles in the traffic stream. LOS D represents high density, but stable traffic flow. Speed and freedom to maneuver are severely restricted and the driver and pedestrian experiences a generally poor level of comfort and convenience.

### 9.1.3 Existing Roadway Classifications

All roadways within Somerset County are included in five Federal Highway Functional Classifications. Somerset County's transportation system is comprised of principal arterial roadways, minor arterials, major collectors, minor collector roadways and local streets. The following is a description of the classifications from the Highway Capacity Manual, Special Report No. 209, prepared by the Transportation Research Board:

- Arterials - High capacity highways which are on a continuous route with a high degree of continuity, serving as major carriers for through traffic in a given corridor. Partial control of access can be used to give preference to through traffic, but at-grade intersections, channelization and/or interchanges may be provided.
- Collectors - Intermediate capacity roads or streets serving as connectors between two arterials or between arterials and local streets. They have the combined function of providing direct access to abutting properties and accommodating limited volumes of through traffic, which may be on a continuous route.
- Local streets - Roads or streets, other than a State highway, primarily serving as direct access to abutting properties. Low traffic volumes and low speeds are desirable features, and through traffic is often discouraged through the use of "T" intersections, cul-de-sacs, curvilinear alignments and other impediments to the continuous flow of traffic.

Table 9-2 is a summary of the classifications, roadways and roadway limits taken from the 1991 Comprehensive Plan. These classifications are still valid for this Comprehensive Plan Update. US Route 13 is the only Principal Arterial in the County and MD Route 363 and MD Route 413 are the sole Minor Arterials. This classification system is generally used by the federal government and state during its funding identification process.

#### **9.1.4 Accident Trends**

The Maryland State Highway Administration's Office of Traffic and Safety compiles accident data for state maintained roadways throughout Maryland. The Office of Traffic and Safety collected accident data for state roadways in Somerset County for 1990 through 1993. Table 9-3 lists the high accident locations for state roadway segments and Table 9-4 lists the high accident location intersections and the number of accidents that occurred between 1990 and 1993. US Route 13 and Maryland Routes 413, 361, and 675 all have rates designated by the Maryland State Highway Administration as "significantly higher than the statewide average rate for similar State maintained highways or composite sections." Both tables reflect accident data from state roadways not county or town roadways. US Route 13 and MD Routes 413, 361, and 675 have had a frequency of accidents over the last four years that warrant further investigation into the cause of the accident trend and possible solutions along these roadways. Since these are State roadways, the County should request the MSHA to perform a safety analysis on the high accident locations on these roadway segments.

#### **9.2 Current and Planned Highway Improvements**

The existing Somerset County Transportation System functions reasonably well. However, there are areas where regionally oriented and local traffic mix and adversely impact the access and circulation network within that area. The improvements identified in this section are intended to create a balanced transportation system that accommodates regional and local

traffic. Map 8 identifies the recommended improvements and future roadway classification for the County. The improvements on the map legend are listed in order of County priority.

*Table 9-2 Somerset County Roadway Classifications*

Roadway	Classification	Roadway Limits
US Route 13	Principal Arterial	Wicomico County North and East to Worcester County Line
MD 413	Minor Arterial	US Route 13 at Westover, South to Crisfield milepoints 1.40 to 14.61; Major Collector milepoints 0.00 to 1.40
MD 361	Major Collector	Westover to Upper Fairmount - milepoints 0.81 to 5.62; Minor Collector milepoints 0.00 to 0.81
MD 362	Major Collector	Princess Anne Northwest to Mount Vernon - milepoints 0.93 to 6.23; Minor Collector milepoints 0.00 to 1.93
UMES Access Road	Major Collector	MD 675 to Ring Road
MD 363	Major Collector	Dames Quarter southwest to Deal Island - milepoints 2.70 to 6.73; Rural Local milepoints 0.00 to 2.73; and Minor Arterial milepoints 6.16 to 18.19; and Rural Major milepoints 18.19 to 18.30
MD 364	Major Collector	West Pocomoke City Northeast to Worcester County Line
MD 388	Major Collector	Princess Anne East to Peter's Hill Road
MD 667	Major Collector	Marion East to Pocomoke City
Market Street (ext.)	Major Collector	Within County West of Pocomoke City
Maryland Avenue	Major Collector	Within Crisfield
Somerset Avenue	Major Collector	Within Crisfield
Somerset Avenue	Major Collector	Within Princess Anne
Broad Street	Minor Collector	Within Princess Anne to UMES

Roadway	Classification	Roadway Limits
Charles Cannon Road	Minor Collector	Kingston South to Marion
Chesapeake Ave	Minor Collector	Old Crisfield-Marion Road Within Crisfield Area
Cornstack Road	Minor Collector	Hudson Corner South to Marumsco
Jacksonville Road	Minor Collector	Within Crisfield Area
Main Street	Minor Collector	Within Crisfield Area
Mennonite Ch. Road	Minor Collector	Greenhill South to Overholt Road
Mount Vernon Road	Minor Collector	Mount Vernon east and north to terminus
Old Princess Anne Road	Minor Collector	Princess Anne South to US Route 13 at Westover
Oriole Road	Minor Collector	Oriole to MD 363
Perry Hawkins Road	Minor Collector	Princess Anne South and East to Pocomoke City, also, Cokesbury Road and Courthouse Hill Road
Revels Neck Road	Minor Collector	Westover west to terminus
Rumbley Road	Minor Collector	Upper Fairmount west to Rumbley
Smith Island Road	Minor Collector	Rhodes Point to Ewell

Source: 1991 Comprehensive Plan, Maryland Department of Transportation, June 12, 1996. - All other public roads are classified as local streets.

**Table 9-3 Somerset County Accident Data for Roadway Segments (1991-1993)<sup>1</sup>**

Location	Number of Accidents				Accident Rate per 100 million vehicle miles	
	1990	1991	1992	1993	Three year roadway	Statewide average for similar roadways
US Route 13 - Entire Route	107	109	127	118	95.0	86.2
MD 413 - Entire Route	47	46	50	32	174.3	147.8
MD 361 - Entire Route	4	6	9	5	248.6	151.5
MD 675 - Entire	25					

1. Four year period used by the MSHA, although a three year weighted statewide average is used for comparison with similar roadways.

Source: Maryland State Highway Administration, Office of Traffic and Safety

**Table 9-4 Somerset County Accident Data for Intersections, 1991-1994**

Period	Accident	Location	Pattern or Trend
Jan 91/Dec 91	10	US Route 13 at MD 364	Excessive Speed
1994	4	MD 361 at MD 413 Westover Road	No Pattern
1994	4	MD 413 at Potomac Street	No Pattern
1994	4	MD 675 at Prince William Street	No Pattern
1994	5	US Route 13 at MD 673 Layfield Road	No Pattern
1994	7	US Route 13 at MD 362 Mt. Vernon Road	No Pattern

Source: Maryland State Highway Administration, Office of Traffic and Safety

The Maryland Department of Transportation has established an annual

The Maryland Department of Transportation has established an annual Consolidated Transportation Program that identifies transportation projects throughout the State. These projects are identified by the State in consultation with the County, in which the project is located for funding between fiscal years 1995-2000. The State also prepares a long-range (20 years) Highway Needs Inventory which identifies transportation projects by County.

#### Consolidated State Transportation Program (FY1995 - FY2000)

- UMES Access Road - US Route 13 to UMES Loop Road. This project is currently under final engineering to construct 0.70 miles of a new access road with sidewalks as needed from US Route 13 to the ring road on the University of Maryland Eastern Shore campus. The access road would tie into existing Hickory Road. As explained in the UMES Access Road Study prepared by the Federal Highway Administration and Maryland State Highway Administration, this road is needed to decrease the number of right angle turns on local streets required to access the UMES campus; also, to help reduce accident rates which are higher than the statewide average accident rate for similarly designed roadways. According to the State, the access road would be classified as a major collector roadway. The County supports both UMES Access Road and its classification as a Major Collector. A formal letter to the State Highway Administrator stating this support was signed by the President of the Board of County Commissioners in November 1995.

- MD Route 363-Deal Island Road, St. Stephen to Hall's Curve. This study is currently in project planning to upgrade 6.5 miles of MD Route 363 as a two-lane highway. The goal of this project is to increase safety by widening shoulders and relocating drainage ditches and utility poles. This improvement project will improve access for residents of Deal Island, Chance and Dames Quarter and was recommended in the 1991 Comprehensive Plan.

#### State Highway Needs Inventory

Funding for the majority of projects on the Highway Needs Inventory have not been identified by the State. Typically, projects on this list are eligible for inclusion as part of the Consolidated Transportation Program.

The 1995 Highway Needs Inventory provided by the Maryland State Highway Administration outlines three current and planned state transportation improvements in Somerset County as follows:

- MD Route 363-Deal Island Road In Deal Island. This two-lane reconstruction plan has not been funded. However, MD SHA personnel state they recognize the long term need to reconstruct the road, and the feasibility of this project is being re-examined.

- MD Route 413-Crisfield/Westover Road, north limits of Crisfield to MD Route 667 at White Road. This 4.4 mile divided highway reconstruction has not received funding.



- MD Route 413-Crisfield/Westover Road, from MD Route 667 at White Road to US Route 13. This 8.7 mile divided highway reconstruction has not received funding.
- The SHA is investigating the need to upgrade US Route 13 north of MD 675 as part of the Highway Needs Inventory update. Access control improvements are also being considered in the Westover area.

### County Roads Program

The County Roads Board prepares an annual five year roadway improvement and bridge program. This is a significant factor since the County maintains 24 bridges and approximately 360 miles of roadway, more than three times the miles of State-maintained roadway. The County roadway improvements program consists entirely of resurfacing and bridge replacement projects. No new county constructed roads are proposed. Continued funding for asphalt overlay projects is recommended through the 1999 schedule in order to maintain safe and adequate roadways for future transportation needs.

County maintained roadways in Somerset County are adequate for current and near future transportation needs and no new county-constructed roads are programmed. New roads, typically developer-built residential subdivision access roads, are accepted into the county road system through the subdivision process at the rate of one or two new roads a year.

New development is evaluated for its impacts on the safety and adequacy of the highway system through the county's development review process. The process includes meetings of a Technical Advisory Committee (see under Streamlining, Chapter 12) made up of representatives from key agencies, and, for state roads, taking into account comments from the State Highway Administration.

This plan recommends a future road improvement near the US 13/MD 413 intersection that could be a joint County, State, Town of Princess Anne and private sector project. At least two suggestions have been proposed to address congestion at the signalized intersection of US 13 and MD 362 (Mt. Vernon Road). The first option would involve the construction of a roughly three quarter mile long loop road behind Mount Vernon Plaza. The road would run from the intersection of US 13 and the new UMES access road to the intersection of Mount Vernon Road and Crisfield Lane. Four way intersections would be created at both ends. The second option would involve extending the existing service road that runs north through Somerset Plaza parallel to US 13 to the location of the new UMES access road. The first option is shown on Map 8. Extending the service road would be the easier option although it would require some land acquisition at the north end, upgrading the service road, and addressing the issue of mixing through traffic with shopping center traffic. The loop road option

would be far more expensive, but be more beneficial as it would separate local and through traffic and open up the northwest quadrant of the US 13/Mount Vernon Road Intersection for development. This area is mostly within the County designated Princess Anne growth area.

### 9.3 MD Route 413 Improvements

The 1991 Comprehensive Plan used Average Daily Traffic Volumes, compiled by MSHA from 1979 to 1989, to determine peak hour level of service during this timeframe for MD Route 413. The Plan also extrapolated the growth rates along this roadway to project average daily traffic volumes from 1990 to 2010. Table 9-5 summarizes the results of the Traffic Volume Analysis contained in the 1991 Plan.

*Table 9-5 MD Route 413 Projected Traffic Volumes (1991 Plan)*

Year	ADT	Annual Average Percent Change	Peak Hour Level of Service
1989	6,245	+4.4%	C
1995	7,070	+13.2%	C
2000	8,050	+13.9%	C
2010	10,000	+24.2%	D

Traffic data for 1994, compiled by MSHA, reveal an ADT volume of 6,400 along MD 413. If we assume a annual 3 percent growth rate in traffic volume along this roadway, ADT volumes for 1995 would be 6,600 vehicles per day. When the updated volumes are compared with the ADTs in the 1991 Comprehensive Plan, the 1991 Plan projections need to be adjusted downward. Table 9-6 provides the updated traffic volume projections along MD Route 413.

*Table 9-6 MD Route 413 Projected Traffic Volumes (1996 Plan)*

Year	ADT	Annual Average Percent Change	Peak Hour Two-Way Volume	Peak Hour Level of Service
1989	6,245	+4.4%	518	C
1994	6,400	2.5%	530	C
1995	6,600	+3.1%	547	C
*2000	7,458	+13%	618	C
*2010	9,248	+24%	766	D

\* Growth rates derived from 1991 Comprehensive Plan.

As Table 9-6 shows, the peak hour levels of service would continue to be maintained at LOS C until after year 2000. This is the same conclusion reached in the 1991 Plan.

The 1985 Highway Capacity Manual, Special Report No. 209, prepared by the Transportation Research Board, indicates that the maximum ADT that can be accommodated at level of service "C" for roadways such as MD Route 413 is about 7,900 vehicles per day. The previous plan estimated that this maximum ADT of 7,900 could be reached by the year 2000. According to updated traffic volume projections contained in Table 9-6, the maximum ADT volumes would not be reached until after the year 2000.

While the updated projected traffic volumes show a slightly slower increase in traffic volumes along MD Route 413, MD Route 413 is still likely to experience a deterioration in level of service and will require improvements within the 20 year horizon timeframe for this plan. MD Route 413 is already included on the State Highway Needs Inventory. The County should encourage the MSHA to initiate a planning study of the MD Route 413 corridor to determine the feasibility of a four-lane divided facility for MD Route 413.

#### 9.4 US Route 13 Improvements

US Route 13 carries significant amounts of regionally oriented traffic, as well as providing important access to Princess Anne. The 1991 Plan used traffic data from 1979 to 1989 to quantify the traffic volumes along US Route 13. Table 9-7 updates the traffic volume and traffic projections data from the 1991 Comprehensive Plan. As with the MD Route 413 analysis, LOS is the measure used to determine how well a roadway is operating at a given time. As Table 9-7 shows, high levels of service are projected during the peak hours, typically 7 to 9 a.m. and 4 to 6 p.m., until after the year 2000.

*Table 9-7 US Route 13 Traffic Volume Update (Volumes North of MD 675/US Route 13 Intersection)*

Year	ADT Volume	Peak Hour Two-Way Volume	Peak Hour Level of Service (Based on Volumes)
1989	17,600	850	A
1994	*23,335	1,120	B
1995	*24,035	1,153	B
2000	*27,640	1,299	B
2010	*35,932	1,688	C

\* Assumes 3 percent annual growth rate.

While US Route 13 will accommodate daily traffic volumes at an acceptable (LOS C or greater) level of service for the 20-year horizon timeframe, the capacity of the roadway may become adversely impacted by the at-grade intersections in the Princess Anne area. While the intersections are necessary to provide access to Princess Anne, they can also hinder the function of US Route 13 as an arterial roadway, which is intended to carry high volumes of regionally oriented traffic.

Grade separated interchanges, loop roads<sup>1</sup> and access control measures at the intersections along US 13 within the Princess Anne area should be studied jointly by the MSHA and the County. As mentioned in the 1991 Comprehensive Plan, the primary issue is balancing the needs of interstate through traffic on US Route 13 while maintaining efficient local traffic circulation. As Somerset County continues to grow, new interchanges with US Route 13 may become necessary further constraining free flow of traffic on the County's only principal arterial roadway. Any proposed improvements should include an analysis of impacts on the character of Princess Anne as an agricultural center and university town for the County.

#### ***9.5 US Route 13/MD Route 413 Intersection***

A grade-separated interchange should be studied to facilitate free movement of traffic. Currently, this intersection is unsignalized, but carries significant traffic volumes (over 10,000 vehicles per day). A signalized intersection would not improve the traffic flow in this area since it would constrain traffic, especially in the presence of high speed and increasing volumes of traffic on US Route 13. The interchange recommendation was included in the 1991 Somerset County Comprehensive Plan and is reaffirmed as part of this update.

#### ***9.6 Access to the Chesapeake Bay Necks***

MD Route 361 (Fairmont Road) and MD Route 362 (Mt. Vernon Road) provide the primary access between Rumbley/Fairmont and Mt. Vernon communities and US Route 13, the main road artery in Somerset County. MD Route 363 (Deal Island Road) provides primary access between Deal Island, Chance, and Dames Quarter and US Route 13. These three routes are classified as collector roadways and carry moderate traffic volumes.

These three roadways are characterized as two-lane narrow roadways, with geometric difficulties (sharp curves) and narrow bridges. If significant growth occurs along these roadways, geometric and capacity improvements will likely be necessary. The County should coordinate with MSHA to perform a roadway analysis on MD Route 362, MD Route 363, and MD Route

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<sup>1</sup>

Loop roads are secondary roads which, with few or no links, form a connection with a main highway at a limited number of points.

361 to identify existing deficiencies and future necessary improvements. MD Route 363 improvements are included on the State's Highway Needs Inventory.

### *9.7 Highway System Guidelines*

The 1991 Comprehensive Plan recommended that the County adopt the 1985 ITE Highway Capacity Manual and most recent AASHTO Policy on the Geometric Design of Streets and Highways as the basic documents to guide the planning and design of all highway improvements. The County has implemented this recommendation and uses AASHTO's policy guide.

### *9.8 Railroad System*

Freight rail service is provided by Conrail and the Eastern Shore Railroad. Conrail provides services from Somerset County to the north, and the Eastern Shore Railroad provides service over the Conrail tracks from Pocomoke City in Worcester County southward. Since the State no longer operates rail freight lines, these two companies are the only rail links available to the farming, fishing, and industrial businesses within Somerset County. Maintaining this service is important to the existing industries in the County, and can be attractive to new companies considering relocation to the County. Two businesses that use the railroad have recently upgraded their spurs/siding in the US Route 13 area, demonstrating the importance of accessibility to the rail system in the County. The County continues to support freight rail service by Conrail and the Eastern Shore Railroad by ensuring that County land use policies promote the use and continued feasibility of freight rail service. The County has zoned the land south of Princess Anne on US Route 13 for industrial use and the County's Economic Development Commission (EDC) promotes growth around the railroad lines.

The right-of-way along the Crisfield branch line could provide the State and County with additional right-of-way needed to facilitate the expansion of MD Route 413 to a four-lane divided highway. This could be a cost effective solution to expanding MD Route 413. However, development around the discontinued railroad line has made the use of this right-of-way for the expansion of MD Route 413 more costly. The 1991 Plan recommended that the State preserve the right-of-way and prohibit future encroachment. This recommendation is reaffirmed in this Plan. Somerset County also has adopted an access control policy for the County's transportation system, which applies to MD Route 413. This policy was included in the 1991 County Comprehensive Plan (see Land Use Plan, Chapter 5) and remains an important part of the Plan with this update. The County has begun to require developers to contact the SHA and provide the Department with a written response regarding and development requiring access on MD 413 or other State highways. This information is required prior to site plan or subdivision approval.

## 9.9 *Public Transportation*

Public transportation facilities in Somerset County includes the Crisfield-Somerset County Airport, public park-n-ride lots and bus service. The bus service is provided by Trailways, a private company.

### *Airport*

Crisfield-Somerset County Airport is the only public airport in Somerset County. The Airport is classified as a general aviation airport with a design role as a Basic Utility Airport. A Basic Utility Airport is capable of accommodating most single-engine and many small, twin-engine aircraft which make up about 90 percent of the general aviation fleet. Primary off-airport access is from Plantation Road, from MD Route 413, a two-lane minor arterial road with a posted speed limit of 55 miles per hour.

Crisfield-Somerset County Airport is important to the economy of Somerset County in terms of recreational business, commercial and retail sales and services, and local, residential employment and income. With approximately 7,750 annual operations and its attractive geographic location, Crisfield-Somerset County Airport is important to support the general aviation needs of the Eastern Shore. Continued support of this airport is recommended. The County will review its zoning and land use policies with respect to the airport to encourage appropriate growth of the airport operations. Consideration should also be given to establishing an Airport Overlay Zone to provide support for future Airport related growth.

### *Park-n-Ride Facilities*

At present, there are two Park-n-Ride lots in Somerset County for use by carpools and vanpools. They are located on the southwest corner of MD Route 362 and US Route 13 and south of the MD Route 413/US Route 13 intersection. The lot at MD 362 and US Route 13 has 18 spaces and maintains a 75 percent utilization rate. The second park and ride location contains 12 spaces which are only 25 percent utilized. The State Highway Administration is not planning additional lots.

Currently, additional park-n-ride lots are not warranted given the usage of the existing facilities. However, should Somerset County experience significant growth over the time frame of this Plan, new or expanded park-n-ride lots could be needed to accommodate the growing County population.

### *Bus Service*

There is no public transportation network available for commuters and the general public in the County. Commuter rail, reserved principally for high density urban and metropolitan regions, is not a viable transportation alternative for the rural Somerset County. Currently very limited bus service is available in the County. The Trailways Bus Service offers a seasonal scheduled service from Princess Anne. During the summer months, there are three northbound routes leaving at 8:00 a.m., 11:45 a.m., and 5:45 p.m. to destinations in Salisbury, Delaware, Philadelphia and New

York. Southbound service to Norfolk, Virginia leaves at 9:30 a.m. and 3:25 p.m. In response to demand, the winter schedule eliminates the 8:00 a.m. northbound and 9:30 a.m. southbound departure times. According to Trailways, summer ridership consists of primarily migrant farm workers from the southern and southwestern US. Winter travel is largely by students attending the UMES campus. Public transportation is provided only by the SSTAP program, and County DIAL-A-RIDE, both described below.

Within the next five years, the County and the MTA should evaluate the feasibility of additional transit service in the County, possibly by conducting a public transit needs survey for County residents. Somerset County experiences high unemployment rates compared to other counties in Maryland, and transit could be important for people to access employment opportunities. A shuttle bus service is currently operated for the exclusive use of UMES and Salisbury State University transporting students every  $\frac{1}{2}$  hour Monday through Friday between the two universities during the school year. If the shuttle service could be expanded for general public use, this would provide additional transit opportunities for County residents. The County should explore the feasibility of expanding this service with the two campuses.

#### **9.10      *Public Transportation Assistance Programs***

The Statewide Special Transportation Assistance Program (SSTAP) provides a free demand response door-to-door transportation service for the elderly, low income and physically challenged to shopping areas, medical appointments, and community centers. Funding for SSTAP is principally provided by State and local governments. Nominal fair box donations are accepted, but only account for a very small percentage of funding. Federal funds are available from Section 16 grants to non-profit organizations for the purchase of capital equipment used to transport the elderly and persons with disabilities. Section 16 grants are available on an annual basis and applicants must reapply each year. Typically, there is at least one Section 16 grant recipient each year that serves the County and/or region. Consistency with Somerset County transportation needs is required during the Section 16 grant application process, with formal certification by the County Planning Director accompanying each application. Section 16 grant participants support the County's efforts to provide transportation assistance to special needs populations.

In addition, the County operates the "DIAL-A-RIDE" Program, which is a demand response service. According to the County Commission on Aging, the number of annual participants for the program for fiscal year 1995 was 262 residents (240 elderly and ambulatory, 22 elderly and non-ambulatory).

Table 9-8 provides the funding breakdown for the County's public transportation program for fiscal year 1996. These funds are to cover the cost of operating the program.

**Table 9-8 Funding Breakdown - County Public Transportation Program (SSTAP)  
Fiscal Year 1996**

SSTAP	\$66,319
Local Funding	\$22,106
Donations and Other Revenue	\$ 2,400
Total SSTAP Funding	\$90,825

This public transportation program provides an important service to County residents. Given the rural character of the County and the lack of other public transit service through the County, the program, operated by the County Commission on Aging, is the sole transportation source for some County residents, and the County should continue to support this program through local funding.

**9.11 Bicycle/Pedestrian System Enhancements**

Somerset County does not have a defined bikeway system. However, the flat terrain and local scenery make the County attractive to bicyclists, including bicycle clubs. As a rural county, a pedestrian system does not exist except in the municipalities and a few adjacent areas.

As a result of House Bill 1249 enacted in October of 1995, significant changes to Maryland law affecting bicycle and pedestrian access have taken effect. Among the changes are the following:

- Transportation elements of comprehensive plans will have to provide for bicycle and pedestrian facilities, including an estimate of probable use;
- provision for bicycle parking must be made when a jurisdiction regulates off-street parking;
- the State Highway Administration (SHA) and a local government can designate bicycle and pedestrian priority areas for which the SHA will develop plans to increase safety, and bicycle and pedestrian access;
- the SHA must provide sidewalks along any new or reconstructed roadway, unless the cost or impact is too great;
- existing major bicycle and pedestrian routes cannot be severed unless alternate routes are provided; and
- sidewalks can be built along existing roads on a shared cost basis between the State and local government.



To encourage bicycle usage and pedestrian travel in Somerset County, the following recommendations are provided:

1. Create a comprehensive bikeway network which links activity centers and growth areas. A planned bikeway network map should be prepared and incorporated into the development review process.

The planned bikeway network should include formal bikeway linkages between UMES and Princess Anne. In addition, it may be possible to utilize the railroad right-of-way adjacent to MD Route 413 to provide a separated pedestrian/bikeway linkage in the Crisfield area. Some of the bikeway linkages could be made using "greenways." One potential greenway is the Manokin River Greenway. This greenway would link county-owned Raccoon Point Recreation Area at the mouth of the Manokin River with the Manokin River Park in the Town of Princess Anne and finally with the University of Maryland Eastern Shore campus. Map 8 shows the potential greenways that could be utilized for a bikeway system.

The bikeway system should be designed to accommodate local use (i.e., shopping trips, employment trips) in the designated growth areas identified in Chapter 5, as well as recreational use throughout the County. A bicycle system could also be attractive to tourists. Ideally, the system should provide connections to the Chesapeake Bay Neck areas (i.e. Deal Island, Fairmont) and provide linkages to Princess Anne and Crisfield and the other growth centers. A system that offers these linkages/connections could increase bicycle ridership in the County by an estimated 3-10%. To ensure safety for cyclists, the County should develop a bicycle highway compatibility policy with emphasis on safety issues for novice and child cyclists.

2. Develop a County policy for sidewalk and bikeway design covering appropriate locations, standards, construction and maintenance.
3. Along major highways, the County should work with the State to incorporate sidewalks and bikeways in the design and upgrade of roadways.
4. Provide for pedestrian travel within major subdivisions within designated growth areas. Depending upon the location and size of the subdivision, pedestrian travel can be encouraged by including sidewalks, gravel trails, or maintained trails in the design of the subdivision.

#### **9.12 *Water Transportation and Recreation***

The Wicomico River, which divides Somerset and Wicomico Counties, has considerable commercial traffic, particularly barges to the Port of Salisbury. The Pocomoke River has similar traffic, including the Chesapeake operation which recently improved its lagoon and docking area off the Pocomoke River west of US 13.

Nearly all the tributaries in Somerset County are used by local watermen. The County has given watermen priority for use of certain facilities necessary in carrying out their trade. County ramps and tie-ups are maintained by the County Roads Department which also provides oversight of the County use of waterways funding from the State.

Water-related recreation is extremely popular in Somerset County and includes fishing, duck hunting, boating and water skiing, etc. With 619 miles of shoreline and approximately 45 boat ramps, access is readily available to residents. The Pocomoke River is well known as a designated Wild and Scenic River and extends some 17 miles through the County and northward to Delaware. The Manokin also provides miles of scenic boating.

Somerset County recommends continued support of waterway use for recreation, employment, and transportation. The water resources are important for the economy of the County for tourism, waterman employment, and trade. The Somerset County Land Preservation and Recreation Plan provides a more thorough discussion of recreational amenities.

#### TRANSPORTATION PLAN

- The County will consider sharing funding from federal, state, and local sources for proposed roadway improvements, public transit, greenways, bikeways, sidewalks and airport growth. Private funding from developers should also be considered. However, developer funding for transportation/pedestrian improvements should not act as a disincentive to economic development.
- Work with the Maryland State Highway Administration (MSHA) to initiate a "Project Planning Study" for MD 413, oriented to upgrading the facility to a four lane divided highway. Work with SHA officials to identify and eliminate encroachments onto the right-of-way of the Crisfield branch line, in order to conserve this property for eventual widening of MD 413.
- Seek Maryland State Highway Administration assistance in alleviating intersection problems on US Route 13 in the vicinity of Princess Anne, possibly by introducing grade-separated interchanges, loop roads, and access control measures.
- See Maryland State Highway Administration assistance for grade separation of the US Route 13/MD 413 intersection at Westover.
- Work with SHA to undertake a detailed engineering deficiencies analysis of MD 362, MD 363, MD 361 to correct alignment problems, narrow sections and substandard bridges. Coordinate improvements with growth programs for Mount Vernon, Deal Island and Fairmount. Seek the inclusion of project planning level studies for MD Route 361 and MD Route 362 on the State Highway Needs Inventory.

- Continue to support railroad service to the County as a positive advantage for relocating businesses, particularly in the Princess Anne/Westover growth corridor through promotion by the EDC and continued implementation of industrial zoning in the area.
- Give careful consideration to establish an Airport Overlay Zone to provide support for future airport related growth.
- Continue to support construction of the new UMES access road as a major collector roadway.
- Seek MSHA assistance in conducting a safety analysis on high accident roadway segments of US Route 13 and MD Routes 413, 361 and 675.
- Create a comprehensive bikeway network to link activity centers, growth areas and recreational resources and provide tourism routes.
- Develop a County policy for sidewalk and bikeway design, covering appropriate locations, standards, construction and maintenance. Along major highways, the County should work with the State to incorporate sidewalks and bikeways in the design and upgrade of roadways. Provide for pedestrian travel within major subdivisions within designated growth areas. Depending upon the location and size of the subdivision, pedestrian travel may be accommodated by sidewalks, gravel trails, or maintained trails in the design of subdivisions.
- Within the next five years, evaluate with the Mass Transit Administration, the feasibility of additional transit service in the County, possibly through the use of a County commuter and/or resident survey. This evaluation should explore the feasibility of expanding the UMES-Salisbury State University shuttle service to provide general public transit usage between Princess Anne and Salisbury.
- Continue to financially support the County's special public transportation program for the special needs population within the County.
- Continue to support construction of the new UMES access road as a major collector roadway.



## Chapter 10 Utilities - Sewer, Water and Waste Disposal

### 10.1 Existing Water and Sewer Service Areas

Six areas of Somerset County are currently served by central water supply and sewer systems. These are Princess Anne, Crisfield, Eden, Fairmount and the communities of Ewell and Tylerton on Smith Island. In addition, a few communities such as Rumbley and Frenchtown have a central water supply. Table 15 shows the principal population concentrations and the availability of utilities:

Table 15  
Existing Water/Sewer service (1990)

Town/Village	Est. Total Population	Population served by	
		Water	Sewer
Princess Anne•, including West Princess Anne•, UMES•	3,800	3,800	3,800
Eastern Correctional Inst.	2,480	2,480	2,480
Crisfield/Hopewell•/Lawsonia	7,300	7,300	7,300
Deal Island/Chance/Dames Qtr.	1,700	-0-	-0-
Fairmount	650	550	550
Marion	650	-0-	-0-
Mount Vernon	580	-0-	-0-
Oriole/Venton	460	300	-0-
Kingston	300	-0-	-0-
Rumbley/Frenchtown	200	200	-0-
Eden•	170	85	-0-
Westover•	140	-0-	-0-
Pocomoke West•	80	80	-0-
Smith Island-Tylerton/Ewell	850	8500	850

• = Proposed growth nodes (see Chapter 5)

o = Private system

An estimated 15,000 persons (64% of the population) were served by both water and sewer systems in 1990, and an additional 585 persons (3%) had water service only. Princess Anne's water system is estimated to have capacity for an additional 11,500 population, and its sewerage system can accommodate an additional 3,200 population. The Princess Anne sewage treatment plant also serves ECI. However, plans are underway to expand the ECI plant, thereby releasing capacity at Princess Anne to serve a further 4,000 persons. Crisfield has water and sewerage capacity for an additional 12,600 and 3,500 population respectively.

Several large private sewage treatment facilities are operated by four seafood packing plants, a meat packing plant and by Chesapeake Plywood Company. Three plants are also operated by the County Board of Education at Deal Island School, Sarah Peyton School in Marion, and the Vo-Tech at Westover.

**10.2 Comprehensive Water and Sewer Plan, 1986 and 1988**

The County Comprehensive Water and Sewerage Plan of 1986 recommended several additional areas for centralized utilities. A revised Plan was adopted in 1990, following community opposition to the 1986 Plan which focused on the cost of providing water and sewer systems and their respective treatment plants, and particularly on the increase in local real estate taxes which would result. The communities recommended for centralized services in 1986 included:

- Mount Vernon
- Oriole and Crab Island
- Westover
- Southern expansion from Princess Anne
- West and northwest expansion from Princess Anne
- Northeast expansion from Crisfield
- Southeast expansion from Crisfield

Two communities which were excluded from the planned expansion areas for reasons of cost were:

- Marlon, population 550
- Deal Island, Chance, Dames Quarter, population 1700

**10.3 Failing Septic Systems**

Those communities without central water or sewer service are operating on septic systems and wells. In many areas septic systems were installed prior to health regulations and before groundwater pollution was recognized as a health hazard. The Somerset County Health Department estimates the following failure rates for septic systems in eight County locations:

**Table 16  
Failing Septic Systems, May 1990**

<u>Location</u>	Total Septic Systems	Failure Rate (%)
Oriole/Crab Is./Champ	100	20%
Deal Is/Chance/Dames Quarters	300	12%
Rumbley/Frenchtown	55	7%
Crisfield Area/Lawsonia/Birdtown	220	29%
Marion	33	?
Eden	100	?
Manokin	25	50%
Flower Hill Church Rd	40	?
Westover	35	?
<b>Total</b>	<b>908</b>	<b>20% of those reporting</b>

Failing septic systems constitute a serious health and environmental risk facing the County in the future. Pathogens and nitrates seeping into groundwater and into the Bay are the most serious hazard. The State Department of the Environment establishes acceptable standards for dissolved nitrates in groundwater, and these standards must be met for all new development. Development concentrations in many areas are dangerously high, and pressures for infill development within the Critical Areas at Deal Island, Chance, Dames Quarter, Rumbley, North and Southeast Crisfield are likely to continue.

#### **10.4      *Septic System Modernization Program***

New solutions should be examined and promoted. For example, small area sewage treatment systems, and cooperative septic systems are relatively cheap compared to the full community systems envisaged in the Water / Sewerage Plan. In 1991 the State of Maryland will initiate a Septic System Modernization and Replacement program (SSMR). The County should fully explore the opportunities offered by this program and target areas according to conditions and development pressures. Until significant steps are taken towards solving these problems, the County should discourage the Health Department from granting variances for individual septic systems, particularly in areas with high septic failure rates (10% or more), and within the Critical Areas. Additionally, the County should use whatever influence is available to direct the State Department of the Environment to investigate and test innovative and alternative septic systems suitable for the conditions present in Somerset County.

#### **10.5      *Chesapeake Bay "2020 Panel"***

Following implementation of the Critical Areas legislation, the State of Maryland, together with other states adjacent to the Chesapeake Bay, embarked on an examination of development potentials and appropriate development formulae for protection of sensitive environments, including both the Critical Areas and non-tidal wetlands. The "2020 Panel" is studying and projecting the effects of population growth on the Bay to the year 2020, and the goals or 'Visions' of the panel are listed in section 2.2. At the mid-point of this study, no conclusions have been reached but clustered development served by centralized utility systems are clearly favored over septic systems with wells. This would be consistent with the plan to accommodate the majority of Somerset County's growth into development nodes along US13 and MD413.

As a long term solution, the County adopted in 1990 a revised Comprehensive Water and Sewerage Plan. Steps should be taken to seek financing and community approval to implement the Plan in a phased manner. To enhance implementation of the Plan, the County should explore the establishment of water-conservation measures.

#### **10.6      *Solid Waste Disposal***

In addition to the town collection systems in Crisfield and Princess Anne, Somerset County currently operates seven rural solid waste "Transfer

Stations" or trash collection points at Hopewell, Jason (Route 362), Costen (Wallace Taylor Road), Chance, Westover, Tylerton and Ewell. The Tylerton and Ewell trash is incinerated on Smith Island, while the mainland trash is hauled to Westover for incineration and /or landfill. At Hopewell and Westover, engine oil is collected separately, and this service will shortly be expanded to Chance and Jason. Currently there is no recycling, but after 1991 under State mandate, newspapers, glass and aluminum will be separately collected from each transfer station.

#### **WATER, SEWER AND SOLID WASTE PLAN**

- Development proposals which require the expansion of the central water and sewer systems of Princess Anne and Crisfield should be given first priority consideration.
- Conversely, development proposals in or adjacent to existing water and sewer districts which make no provisions for connection to, or extension of these central utilities should be given low priority consideration.
- Development proposals which include proposals for new central water and sewer systems in the Primary Growth areas should also be given priority consideration.
- Septic tank failures in Secondary Growth Areas should be carefully monitored, and the results relayed to the County's Department of Technical and Community Services. The County should consider restricting new development, enforcing current environmental controls, and/or initiating new development controls in those areas where septic failure rates are high. Particular attention should be paid to those communities with populations of more than 200 homes within an area of one square mile, and older villages where the proximity of septic systems would be unacceptable under current regulations.
- The current Water and Sewerage Plan should either be replaced with a more workable Plan, or its recommendations, which were adopted by the Board of County Commissioners, should be actively followed. If the cost of implementing central water and sewer systems in those communities recommended by the Plan continues to be a problem, the County should seek more progressive enabling legislation at the State level, to enable the cost of constructing new systems to be spread equitably among County residents.
- The County should take steps to actively promote and participate in State programs such as the Septic System Modernization and Replacement program (SMSR)
- Proposed locations for new County buildings, such as schools, health facilities, libraries and emergency services should be given priority



consideration in those areas where they may be connected to central utility systems, and in communities which wish to accept such systems consistent with the 1986 Water and Sewerage Plan.

- Consideration should be given to cooperative arrangements whereby solid waste collection systems in the towns of Crisfield and Princess Anne can be expanded beyond the respective city or town limits into higher density communities in the County. Provisions for regular solid waste collection should be incorporated into new development proposals.
  
- The County should keep step with State initiatives for separation and re-cycling of certain types of solid waste. The County should assess the need for a new landfill or expansion of the present facility to meet growth projections. Private recycling proposals should be encouraged for agricultural and commercial waste and for building materials.



## Chapter 11 Environment

### 11.1 Introduction

The environment of Somerset County is governed to a great degree by the ecology of the Chesapeake Bay. The County has over 600 miles of shoreline along the Bay and its tributaries, and almost half the County's area is water. Much of the coastal area is marsh or wetlands, and the high-water table underlying the remaining land area places severe restraints on development. Most farmland is dependent on artificial drainage channels. Because of its geography, water has been an important factor in the County's economy, and many of its traditional settlements have grown up around fishing villages on coastal inlets, coves, and harbors.

The 1992 Maryland Planning Act requires that jurisdictions adopt measures to protect environmentally sensitive areas. Under the Planning Act, environmentally sensitive areas include the following: 1) streams and their buffers; 2) 100-year floodplains; 3) habitats of threatened and endangered species; and 4) steep slopes.

### 11.2 Floodplains

A large portion of western Somerset County lies within the 100-year floodplain, (see Map 10, Environmental Constraints). The 100-year floodplain covers a larger land area than the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area. Most floodplain in the county is tidal. The tidal 100-year floodplain is the land along or adjacent to tidal waters that is susceptible to inundation by the 100-year flood generated by coastal or tidal flooding due to high tides, hurricanes or steady on-shore winds. The County has no high hazard zones (Zone V). There are small areas of non-tidal or riverine floodplain along streams above the head of tide. The non-tidal 100-year floodplain is the land along or adjacent to non-tidal streams and bodies of water that is susceptible to inundation by the 100-year flood as a result of rainfall and runoff from upland areas. The county has mapped these areas on overlays to its 1" = 600' scale tax maps.

The Coastal Barrier Resources Act of 1982 established the Coastal Barrier Resources System (CBRS). The result was to prohibit issuance of new Federal flood insurance coverage for any new construction or substantially improved structures located on undeveloped coastal barriers. The Act was expanded in 1990, with several boundary revisions adopted subsequently. Most of the CBRS in Somerset County is marsh and not inhabited. However, there are existing homes on fringe areas, notably in Dames Quarter, Deal Island and Sound Shore on the Pocomoke Sound near Fair Island Canal. Other portions of the CBRS include St. Pierre Island on the Manokin north of Fairmount; south of Fairmount; east of Crisfield, including Lawson and Crisfield Marsh southwest of Daugherty Creek; Marsh Island, Jones Island and Cedar Island, as well as the Martin National Wildlife Refuge on Smith Island, Little Deal Island and Hazard Point Island.

The County's floodplain ordinance was updated in 1992. Among its stated goals are to preserve the biological values and environmental quality of watersheds. Under the ordinance, buildings and structures within tidal and non-tidal floodplain must be designed to minimize flood damage. Federal flood insurance is available for development in the 100-year floodplain, but certain structural conditions apply. Any proposed development in the non-tidal floodplain must obtain a Waterways Construction Permit from the Maryland Department of the Environment. There has been very little development in Somerset County's non-tidal floodplain.

### **11.3      *Steep Slopes***

Somerset County is very flat: Only 10 percent of the county's land area is higher than 20 feet above sea level. There are very few steep slopes in the county, according to the County Soil Survey: only 204 acres of "Steep Sandy Loam" soil unit, (over 15 percent slope), mostly along streams within the Critical Area; and 156 acres of soil units with 10 to 15 percent slopes.

Steep slopes are defined in the county's subdivision regulations as slopes over 15 percent. Within the Critical Area, development is regulated on slopes over 15 percent. The County's subdivision regulations require that preliminary plats show topography on two-foot contours. There is no current protection for steep slopes outside the Critical Area. The Planning Commission should consider the implications of 15 percent slopes in its review of project design. This is already required for plans requiring forest stand delineations.

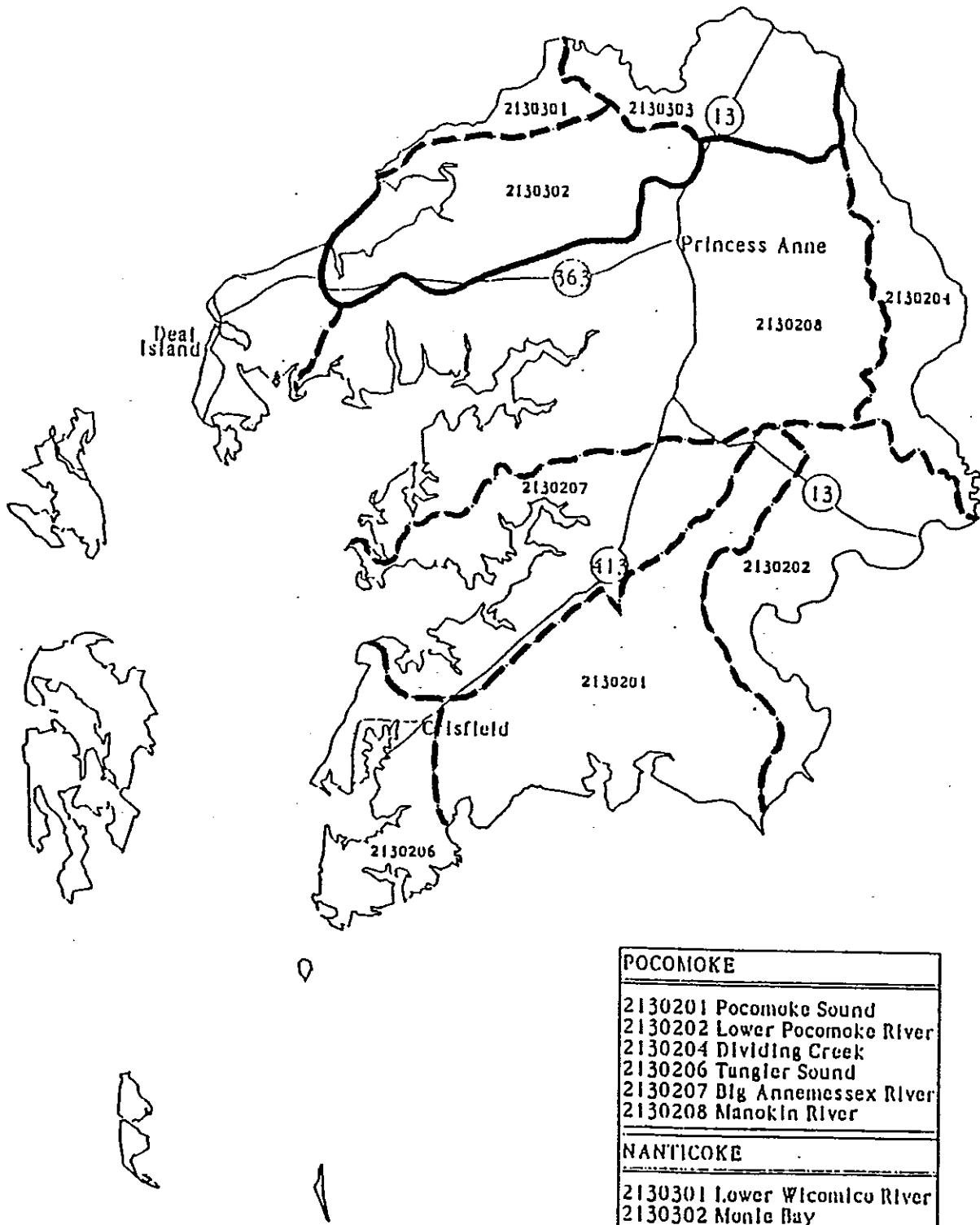
### **11.4      *Streams and their buffers***

#### ***Tributary Strategies and Water Quality***




The Maryland Water Quality Inventory (August 1994) classifies water quality conditions in the state's watersheds as Excellent, Good, Fair, and Poor. Water quality in Somerset County river basins is classified as generally "Good" and suited for water contact recreation and aquatic life. Seasonal elevated bacterial and nutrient levels in some locations were due to agricultural runoff. Increased bacterial levels in open tidal water areas were often found to be natural in origin due to marsh runoff.

The Maryland Tributary Strategies initiative resulted from the 1983 Chesapeake Bay Agreement to restore the Chesapeake Bay. The Tributary Strategies describe ways in which nutrient pollution loads can be reduced by 40 percent in many sub-watersheds that drain into the Bay. Somerset County is located in the Lower Eastern Shore Watershed. Subwatersheds in Somerset County include the Nanticoke and the Pocomoke (see Map 10a). According to the 1995 Tributary Strategies, the Lower Eastern Shore Watershed has sufficient dissolved oxygen levels in most places to support fish, shellfish and other animals, although one consistent exception is Pocomoke Sound. In the Sound the low oxygen levels are seasonal,

# Somerset County



POCOMOKE	
2130201	Pocomoke Sound
2130202	Lower Pocomoke River
2130204	Dividing Creek
2130206	Tungler Sound
2130207	Dig Annemessex River
2130208	Manokin River
NANTICOKE	
2130301	Lower Wicomico River
2130302	Monte Bay
2130303	Wicomico Creek

-  Roads
-  Watershed boundaries
-  Subwatershed boundaries

Produced by:  
 Forest Service,  
 Maryland Department of Natural Resources  
 with the assistance of  
 Image Processing & Remote Sensing Center  
 Salisbury State University

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particularly in the summer, but rarely dropping below five milligrams per liter. Pocomoke Sound, Tangier Sound, and the Big Annemessex River have among the lowest nitrogen levels of all tidal tributary streams in Maryland.

According to the Tributary Strategies, nutrient reduction goals can be achieved through the following actions: wastewater treatment plant upgrades; full implementation of erosion, sediment control, and stormwater management programs; reduction of forest loss; and implementation of other nonpoint source pollution control efforts. The Princess Anne wastewater treatment plant has completed a study for biological nutrient removal, and will begin implementation in the next phase of its plant upgrade. The Town of Crisfield has signed a memorandum of understanding with the State with respect to its plant upgrade.

Inter-jurisdictional "Tributary Implementation Teams", comprising about 30 members, have been established for each of ten watersheds covering nearly all the State to facilitate the continued participation of local governments, interest groups and citizens in deciding how best to refine and implement the Strategies. The Strategies are scheduled to be reevaluated in 1997 to assess progress and decide if mid-course corrections are necessary.

#### *Importance of Streams and their buffers*

Rivers and streams are valuable to the county in many ways. Streams are important spawning grounds for fish, and help support other kinds of wildlife. Streams also support commercial and recreational fishing and attract outdoor enthusiasts such as hunters, canoeists, and bird-watchers.

Stream buffers are areas along the lengths of stream banks, established to protect streams from man-made disturbances. Buffers are a "best management technique" that reduce sediment, nitrogen, phosphorus, and other pollutants by acting as a filter, thus minimizing damage to streams and improving water quality. Stream buffers also improve habitat for fish and other aquatic life.

The effectiveness of buffers depends on a number of different factors. According to the Environmental Protection Agency<sup>2</sup>, in areas like Somerset County, a buffer system comprising a combination filter strip (grass or low vegetative cover), a managed forest, and undisturbed forest will have a medium to high level of effectiveness in removing sediment and sediment-borne pollutants.

#### *Extent and Adequacy of Existing Buffers and Buffer Protection*

According to the Maryland Office of Planning (Maryland Land Use/Land Cover, 1990-2020 Forecast, 1992), most of the county's land is forest (42 percent), agriculture (26 percent), or wetland (28 percent). Only 4 percent is developed. The proportions of land in different land uses are projected to remain fairly stable through 2020, with only a moderate increase in the

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<sup>2</sup>

Water Quality Functions of Riparian Forest Buffer Systems in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. August 1995.

amount of developed land. Streams are generally adequately protected in Somerset County under the following existing programs:

- State law requires a minimum 25-foot undisturbed buffer around all non-tidal wetlands.
- Within the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area (approximately 35 percent of the county) regulations require a 100-foot undisturbed buffer along all tidal waters, tidal wetlands and tributary streams.
- Timber harvest operations within forested areas require a sediment and erosion control plan with, typically, a 50-foot uncut buffer strip along water courses, or a buffer management plan. Logging within the buffer is permitted only in accordance with a Buffer management Plan.
- For agricultural land, the County's Chesapeake Bay Critical Area program requires a minimum 25-foot filter strip along streams or wetlands, or functional equivalent through best management practices. There is no required buffer for agricultural land outside the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area. However, farmers are encouraged to voluntarily adopt Soil Conservation and Water Quality Plans. The Somerset Soil Conservation District estimates that adequate stream buffers are currently being provided on between 50 percent and 75 percent of farmland in the County. The level of participation in the voluntary program is expected to rise through other programs such as the conservation Reserve Program, and the Water Quality Incentive Program.

A 1990 Anadromous Fish Survey of Somerset County Streams recommended the following measures to encourage anadromous fish spawning: minimum 25- to 50-foot vegetated buffers along streams; limitations on concrete or riprap along stream channels; prohibition on construction or maintenance within the stream during the spawning season (March 1 through June 15); and prohibition on the blockage or diversion of streams. According to the Somerset Soil Conservation District, buffers would be the most important of the above measures because concrete or riprap are seldom used in Somerset County in upper stream areas, and there is little or no stream blockage or diversion.

Maintenance of ditches and channelized streams is necessary to permit human activities in Somerset County. On occasion, maintenance may be necessary during the Spring, coinciding with the anadromous fish spawning season. Construction or maintenance of streams or drainage ditches during the spawning season is not allowed under the Public Drainage Association regulations without a permit. However, since many drainage ditches are privately owned and not covered by these regulations, the proposed county wide drainage ordinance should include provisions describing when and under what circumstances maintenance would be permitted.



### *Somerset County Drainage*

Somerset County is drained by streams and their tributaries that flow into Tangler Sound on the west and Pocomoke Sound to the south. Most of the county is drained by the Pocomoke, Wicomico, Manokin, and Big Annemessex Rivers and their tributaries. Most of the creeks and large rivers are tidal for several miles from their mouth. The Manokin River is tidal as far as Princess Anne.

Because the county is low lying with fine grained soils, natural drainage is impeded. In only about 10 percent of the county do the soils drain well enough that they can be farmed without artificial drainage. Consequently, to permit human activities in the county, historically there has been much artificial drainage, including stream channelization and construction of drainage ditches. There are four public drainage associations in the county (including one public watershed association). However, most of the drainage ditches are privately owned.

In the past, some residential developments have been approved in the county without adequate drainage provisions. This may result in standing water on low lying properties and roadways. This Comprehensive Plan update reaffirms the 1991 Comprehensive Plan's support for regional drainage associations, and for the implementation of a county wide drainage ordinance. The ordinance should require at a minimum: (1) standards for ditch design, (2) that developers provide adequate drainage within a subdivision, (3) that means for ongoing maintenance for drainage systems be provided, and (4) that easements be provided along ditches to allow for maintenance. These easements will also serve as buffers (discussed further below) and preclude siting houses too close to streams or drainage ditches.

### *Proposed Stream and Stream Buffer Protection Program*

The proposed program would require undisturbed buffers from streams, and support development of a drainage ordinance with provisions for managed buffers when applicable.

### *Definition of "stream"*

Because of the amount of artificial drainage in Somerset County, it is important to define what is a stream for the purpose of requiring buffers. Some programs including the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area program define a stream as one showing on the latest USGS quadrangle maps. However, the maps can be unreliable in that drainage ditches often show as blue line streams. The question of how wetlands regulations should be applied to them is not yet fully resolved.

A stream can be defined as a natural body of running water flowing continuously or intermittently in a channel. A stream is not defined as man-made elements of a drainage system which include swales, culverts, ditches, channels, retention facilities and storm sewer systems. This definition may be further refined for application in a zoning, subdivision or drainage ordinance.

### *Program Inside the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area*

No change to the existing buffer program is proposed.

### *Program Outside the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area*

For agricultural land outside the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area, the County will continue to encourage and support adoption of Farm Soil Conservation and Water Quality Plans. Residential subdivisions would be subject to a minimum buffer from streams and drainage ditches. From streams, the buffer would be undisturbed, and be whichever is greater of the following: either the minimum 25 feet from wetlands as currently required under state law, or 50 feet from the top of the stream bank, as required under the county's Forest Conservation Ordinance. The buffer should be shown on the subdivision record plat, and should be within common or open space areas whenever possible. Because of the County's terrain and drainage, generally a non-tidal wetland greater than 50 feet wide exists along both sides of streams. Therefore the buffer (25 feet from the wetlands) will typically be at least 75 feet from the stream bank.

The proposed drainage ordinance will address adequate maintained buffers for ditches, maintenance activities and required easements on subdivision plats and site plans. Such an ordinance should be the result of County interagency consultation to meet the concerns of run-off, water quality, septic system location and roadways.

The County plans to seek grant funds available under the Coastal Zone Management Act to address ways of improving water quality in drainage ditches and channelized streams.

## **11.5 *Habitats of Threatened and Endangered Species***

Federal and state laws protect habitats of threatened and endangered species. Since the county has primary regulatory authority over most development activity that affects species habitat, the county has an important role to play in helping property owners comply with federal and state laws.

### *Reasons for protecting animal and plant species*

Respecting all life forms is an important ethic which the county supports. The diversity of animal and plant species and their habitats contributes to the county's environmental quality, making the county an attractive place to live. Protecting species is also important to the county's economy. Animal and plant species are a resource, attracting visitors such as fishermen, hunters, and bird watchers.

### *Threatened and Endangered Species In Somerset County*

Lists of rare, threatened, and endangered animals and plants, including federally listed species, are maintained by the Natural Heritage Program, which is part of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources.

Statewide, approximately 300 animals and 900 plants appear on the lists, although not all are listed as threatened or endangered, thereby affording them different levels of legal protection. Within Somerset County, as of 1995, 17 animals and 24 plants are listed. Of these, three animals and one plant are listed as threatened or endangered by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (see Table 11-1). These are the Peregrine Falcon, Bald Eagle, the Northeastern Beach Tiger Beetle, and Sensitive Joint Vetch.

*Table 11-1 Numbers Of Rare, Threatened And Endangered Animals And Plants In Maryland and Somerset County*

	Total federal or state listed rare, threatened and endangered animals and plants		Threatened or endangered species in Somerset County	
	Maryland	Somerset County	Federally Listed	State Listed
Animals	300	17	3	7
Plants	900	24	1	16

Source: Maryland Natural Heritage Program, July 1995.

#### *Effect of Listing*

For the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area (approximately 35 percent of Somerset County), the Somerset County Department of Technical and Community Services maintains maps of endangered species locations. If the Department determines or questions whether a development project might affect an endangered species, the project applicant is referred to the appropriate division of the Department of Natural Resources. The project applicant then works with the Heritage Program or other appropriate agencies to minimize any project impacts on species habitat. This may involve design changes to project access, lot lay out or stormwater management. This process is already in place for projects outside the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area that require Forest Stand Delineations under the county's Forest Conservation Ordinance.

For areas outside the Critical Area the county currently has limited information on species location: mainly Bald Eagle nesting sites, and colonial waterbirds. The county expects that additional information on the general locations of documented rare, threatened, and endangered species will be made available in the near future. When the county has this information, it will be able to identify development projects that might affect a threatened, or endangered species habitat outside the Critical Area. Since the county does not currently have this information, it does not know the extent of documented rare, threatened or endangered species habitat in the county outside the Critical Area. Based on past experience, it is likely that most endangered species habitat is either in the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area or in non-tidal wetland areas.

The Department of Technical and Community Services reviews Critical Area and other available habitat maps at the time of development to determine any effect on a federal or state listed rare, threatened or endangered species habitat area. This plan recommends that for all developments of ten or more acres, an environmental review or impact analysis be required (see Chapter 5). In the event a possible impact is identified, as part of the normal inter-agency project review, the Department will forward information about the development to the Maryland Department of Natural Resources and/or require that the applicant request comment from Heritage and Biodiversity section of that Department. As with any agency comments, before the county takes action on the development application, the proposer of the development will have to respond to any comments received. Comments will have to be received and action taken within normal review time periods, consistent with the county's goals with respect to streamlining of regulations.

### **11.6 Critical Areas Legislation**

In 1984 the Maryland General Assembly passed the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Law which established a Resource Protection Program to promote "more sensitive development activity for certain shoreline areas". The law established a Commission to develop implementation criteria for the Critical Area, which was defined as the Chesapeake Bay itself, its tributaries to the high tide level, tidal wetlands, and all land and waters within 1,000 feet to the landward side of this shoreline. Somerset County began to prepare its Critical Area Program in 1987, with the assistance of the State. Its goals are:

- to minimize adverse impacts on water quality resulting from pollutant runoff;
- to conserve fish, wildlife, and plant habitats; and
- to establish land-use policies for development in the Critical Area, recognizing the potentially harmful impacts of population growth beyond the effects of runoff.

The County Commissioners have incorporated Section 1 - 9 of the Critical Area Program into the Comprehensive Plan. Appendix 'A' outlines the program's components, and its land-use strategies are discussed below. The entire program is published separately in tabloid form. Implementation is achieved through the County's zoning and subdivision ordinances.

### **11.7 Land Use Management Areas**

The Critical Area criteria establish three land-use management areas:

- **Intensely Developed Areas (IDAs)**, where residential and other development predominates, to the virtual exclusion of natural habitat. Outside the municipalities there are six such areas in the County: the Crisfield Airport area, sites near Kings Creek, and west of Pocomoke, Tylerton, Ewell and Rhodes Point.

- Limited Development Areas (LDAs), where low or moderately dense development co-exists with natural plant and animal habitats, and where runoff problems are minimal. These areas include: West of Pocomoke, Rehobeth, Marumsc Creek, East Creek and Marion, most of the Crisfield shoreline outside the town limits, Colbourn Creek, Fairmount, Rumbley, Frenchtown, West Princess Anne along Manokin River Wenona, Deal Island, Chance, Dames Quarter, St. Stephen and Mount Vernon.
- Resource Conservation Areas (RCAs), where natural resource areas (habitats, wetlands, forests), and resource-oriented activities (farming, fishing, aquaculture) predominate. In order to accommodate growth, 5 percent of the total County's RCA may be converted to the more highly developed area. This process, which is similar to a rezoning, is called Growth Allocation.

The following table indicates the amount of the percentage of each land-use management area within Somerset County's Critical Area. The areas are delineated on the Environmental Constraints Map.

*Table 11-2 County-wide Land-Use Management Areas, as of November 1995*

	Acreage	Percent
Intensely Developed Areas (IDAs)	321	1
Limited Development Areas (LDAs)	7,428	20
Resource Conservation Areas (RCAs)	29,592	79
Total	37,343*	100

\*Excludes tidal wetlands.

Portions of the towns of Princess Anne and Crisfield also fall within the Critical Area as follows. They administer their own Critical Area programs, separate from the County.

*Table 11-3 Urban Land Use Management Areas*

	Princess Anne Acres	Crisfield Acres
IDA	249	343
LDA	178	153
RCA	18	267
Total Critical Area	445	763
Total Non-Critical Area	780	293
Total	1,225	1,056

Detailed Critical Area regulations are now in place governing:

- Prohibited uses, such as waste collection and disposal, and sanitary landfills.
- New development in IDAs, to minimize impacts on habitats, and to minimize stormwater erosion, and pollutant loadings.
- Permeable, planted buffer areas within each site development plan.
- Site layout, preferring cluster development, public access to the shoreline, and waterfront recreation facilities.
- Industrial and commercial activities, which must be consistent with the County's Water-Dependent Facilities Program (See Chapter 5, section 7).

#### **11.8 Intensely Developed Areas**

An IDA is generally defined as a concentrated area of residential, commercial or industrial uses with little or no natural habitat. All proposed development must be reviewed by the County Department of Technical and Community Services to ensure compliance with habitat protection, stormwater, deforestation and site layout guidelines. New intense development proposed in the Critical Area is directed to the IDA.

#### **11.9 Limited Development Area**

New development is now generally prohibited on steep slopes of more than 15 percent. Development proposals must identify and mitigate impacts due to runoff and erosion in connection with poor soils. A stormwater management plan must be provided, so that downstream stormwater flows are limited to that of a 2-year storm prior to development. Impervious surfaces are to be strictly limited, roads, bridges and utilities must, unless no feasible alternative exists, avoid Habitat Protection Areas (as delineated by the county). Major development sites must provide wildlife corridor systems, and replanting procedures must be an integral part of any development application where more than 1,000 square feet of forest are destroyed.

#### **11.10 Resource Conservation Area**

Development must be at rural densities of less than one dwelling unit per 20 acres, and must conform to regulations protecting habitats. It must also comply with regulations concerning agriculture, surface mining, natural parks, forestry and woodlands, as applicable.

#### **11.11 Associated Programs**

As an integral part of the Critical Areas legislation, the following programs also effectively contribute to environmental protection:

- Water-dependent facilities program;
- Shore erosion protection program;
- Forest and developed woodland program;
- Agriculture program;

- Mineral resources program;
- Natural park program;
- Habitat protection program;
- Buffer protection program;
- Threatened and endangered species program;
- Plant and wildlife habitat protection program;
- Anadromous (migratory) fish propagation program;
- Anadromous fish stream buffers; and
- Watershed management program.

Note: For complete list see Addendum to Critical Areas Regulations.

### **11.12 Wetlands**

According to the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (Wetlands of Maryland, Tiner, 1995), Somerset County has 81,563 acres of wetlands amounting to 38 percent of the county. Of the total, 62,408 acres (76 percent) are estuarine or tidal wetlands. These areas include Janes Island and the Wildlife Management Areas at Deal Island, Fairmount, Cedar Island, and Pocomoke Sound, as well as the off-shore South Marsh Island and Smith Island Management Areas. Given the high percentage of hydric soils and the elevated water table, a significant amount of additional acreage may meet the technical criteria for non-tidal wetlands. The non-tidal wetlands shown on the 'Environmental Constraints' map includes only those areas classified as Priority 1, by the Maryland State Department of Natural Resources as of 1991. Priority 1 areas generally contain significant habitats.

The Big Annemessex Non-tidal Wetlands Management Plan was prepared in 1993. The primary goal of the plan was to identify non-tidal wetland resources in the Big Annemessex watershed to serve as the basis for comprehensive planning and state non-tidal wetland permitting decisions in the watershed (see Map 10a). The Plan found that wetlands in the Big Annemessex watershed performed valuable functions including habitat, flood control, sediment trapping, nutrient attenuation, ground water discharge and production transport.

The wetlands analysis supported the Comprehensive Plan's general selection of growth areas within the watershed. However, because the Big Annemessex plan identified 165 acres of threatened non-tidal wetlands within growth centers, this Comprehensive Plan update amends certain growth area boundaries (Marion and Westover) to avoid some of these high priority non-tidal wetlands. The plan identified potential mitigation sites, where non-tidal wetlands could be created.

To enforce the Big Annemessex Plan, amendments to the county zoning became effective in February 1996. The amendments achieve the following:

- Streamline review and approval of non-tidal wetland permitting within the watershed by creating a joint (County, Army Corps, Maryland Department of the Environment) application process;

- Allow the use of pre-approved wetland delineation maps within growth areas;
- Permit administrative setback variances for individual lots to avoid adverse impacts to wetlands; and
- Establish criteria for authorities (such as the County Commissioners or the Board of Zoning Appeals) to use in determining whether a project is consistent with the Big Annemessex Plan, and therefore can qualify for a zoning amendment, special exception, variance, etc.

Because the entire Big Annemessex Plan process was lengthy and costly, the applicability of its methodology to other entire watersheds in the County is questionable. Instead, future efforts should, if possible, focus on threats to valuable non-tidal wetlands in the County's other primary growth nodes outside the Big Annemessex, (i.e., Princess Anne and Crisfield). A new kind of watershed management plan, known as a Special Area Management Plan, is being developed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and may provide an appropriate process for these areas.

#### *11.13 Ground Water*

Protection of Somerset County's underlying aquifers is governed by the Ground Water Management program, which establishes criteria for septic tank location in three Management Zones. (see Chapter 5, section 4) Aquifer protection in the US 13/MD 413 corridor will be effectively implemented by new and expanded central sewer systems. (see Chapter 10, section 2)

#### *11.14 Historic Resources*

Historic resources are discussed in Chapter 12, section 1.

#### *11.15 Forest Conservation*

Approximately 87,000 acres (42 percent) of the county's land is forest. Most is privately owned by farmers or industrial forest companies. As of 1990, the main forest types were loblolly pine (30,000 acres), oak-pine (25,000 acres), and oak-hickory (25,500 acres).

Within the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area, commercial timber harvesting programs must be conducted in accordance with a plan approved by the County Forestry Board. Outside the Critical Area, a sediment and erosion control plan is required. To protect forest resources from land development, the county adopted its forest conservation program in 1994, as required by the State. The forest conservation plan can require afforestation or reforestation: afforestation is planting trees where forest cover has been absent, such as a farm field, reforestation is replacing existing trees, or greater, outside the critical area. The program allows for off-site planting in certain situations. Forest land within the Critical Area is protected and increased through provisions of the county's Critical Area Protection Program. The forest conservation ordinance applies to any



application for site plan review, subdivision, project plan, grading or sediment control approval on a land area of 40,000 square feet or greater outside the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

- Environmental protection measures associated with new development in the Critical Areas must follow the criteria of the Somerset County Critical Areas program and its Associated Programs.
- Aquifer protection measures must continue to be rigorously enforced in the three Ground Water Management Zones covering the county, as well as through active encouragement of new and expanded central sewer systems.
- The County's recycling and solid waste incineration programs should be expanded. Ground water protection will continue to be imperative at landfill sites.
- The County will adopt a stream buffer protection program outside the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area.
- The County should extend protection of anadromous fish spawning areas to areas that are outside the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area with stream buffer zones. Continued monitoring for both water quality and biological resources is encouraged.
- The County supports the development of management plans to protect: water quality in drainage ditches and streams; and high priority non-tidal wetlands in primary growth nodes outside the Big Annemessex Watershed.
- The County recognizes the importance of maintaining public drainage ditches throughout the county, and towards that end, supports the formation of regional drainage associations and the implementation of county wide drainage ordinance.
- Areas with over 15 percent slopes should be identified on preliminary subdivision plats.
- The County will implement measures requiring environmental impact review for projects of ten or more acres.
- For areas outside the Critical Area, county ordinances will provide for review of development projects for potential impacts to the habitat of federal and state listed threatened or endangered species when mapped habitat information is available.
- The County will continue its commitment to the Tributary Strategies, working with the Lower Eastern Shore team to further the state's nutrient reduction goals.



## Chapter 12 Special Issues

### 12.1 *Historic Sites*

Somerset County's past has been well documented by a succession of historical organizations and enthusiasts, including the Somerset County Historical Trust Inc. and the Maryland Historical Trust. This latter organization has recognized over 400 buildings, sites and other properties, by listing them on the State Register of Historic Places. Over 60 of these sites have been recognized by the National Register, including private homes, estates, churches, government buildings and the Chesapeake Bay skipjack fleet. Most of Somerset's historic sites are listed and described in "Somerset, an Architectural History" published by the Somerset County Historical Trust.

Four historic districts are listed on the National Register. They are:

- Academy Grove
- Manokin
- Downtown Princess Anne
- Crisfield Multiple Resource District

The Princess Anne District has 70 places listed on the National and/or Maryland Register, including 49 residences, 11 commercial buildings, 5 churches, 4 public buildings and one garden. These sites feature prominently in a walking tour of the town, and in the annual 'Olde Princess Anne Days' festival. The Teackle Mansion, Manokin Presbyterian Church and St Andrew's Episcopal Church are among the prominent National Register sites.

The Crisfield Multiple Resources District consists of 40 places listed on the National and/or Maryland Register, including the Crisfield Armory. The Manokin District includes 5 plantations or estates: Hollyhurst, Homewood, Almodington, Elmwood and Clifton, all located along the Manokin River.

The Maryland State Register recognizes a further 16 'areas' with groupings of historic sites in Rumbley, Frenchtown, Lower Fairmount, Upper Fairmount, Upper Hill, Westover, Rehobeth, Shelltown, Marion, St Stephens, Oriole, Deal Island and Wenona, as well as Tylerton, Ewell and Rhodes Point on Smith Island. These State Register districts do not have the standing of National Register Districts.

The Somerset County Department of Technical and Community Services has thus far mapped approximately 50 historic sites on overlays to the County tax maps. This process should be encouraged to continue. When development is proposed for parcels containing historic structures, property owners are encouraged to work with local and state historic organizations in furthering preservation. Historic preservation recommendations are contained in the 1988 Land Preservation and Recreation Plan.

## 12.2 Zoning

While the majority of Somerset County is zoned for Agricultural use, the major settlements have experienced some form of more urban zoning. The following zoning categories have been adopted into the Zoning Ordinance:

- Agricultural Zone A, which is intended to protect agriculture and supporting services. However, minimum lot size is one acre, which is placing pressure on land with road frontage.
- Conservation Zones CO-1 and CO-2 intended for fragile wet-lands and wildlife areas, where the minimum lot size is 5 acres.
- Residential Zones R-1, R-2 and R-3 with maximum densities of 2DU/ac, 4 DU/ac, and 5 DU/ac respectively. Environments are intended to range from 'semi-rural' in R-1, to 'semi-urban' in R-3.
- Maritime-Residential-Commercial (MRC), which is intended for larger waterfront communities and permits a variety of densities as well as clustering.
- Commercial C-1, C-2 and C-3 zones for neighborhood, highway commercial and general commercial uses respectively. These zones have no maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR) but density is controlled by setbacks, and building height
- Light and General Industry I-1 and I-2 zones

MRC zones cover much of Deal Island, Chance, Dames Quarter, Oriole, Mount Vernon, Rumbley, Fairmount, Marion, Tylerton and Ewell, as well the suburban areas of Crisfield. Elsewhere, traditional residential zoning covers East Marion, East Crisfield and West Pocomoke.

In the late 1960's the County zoned a large area on the east side of US13 for Industrial use, in order to encourage growth between Princess Anne and Westover. This was not as successful as anticipated in attracting new business, but stands as an indicator of the County's intentions. Other small areas of industrial zoning house a food processing plant in West Pocomoke and grain storage facilities in Kingston. Current zoning issues center on:

- Restricting residential sprawl along rural highways, particularly in connection with the County's rural road paving program, and redirecting commercial growth to service road areas off main highways. The basic Agricultural zone permits 1 acre lots, which is resulting in sprawl as farmers seek to cash in on increasing land values adjacent to roads. As a means of encouraging farming and protecting against urban encroachment, the 'A' zone is less effective than CO (Conservation) zones with 5 acre minimum lot sizes. The County should consider downzoning prime agricultural areas, while creating a second agricultural/residential zone which would seek to maintain rural character.
- Overhaul the "Permitted Use" categories of the current Ordinance. Certain zones tend to permit activities which do not further the objectives of that zone, and may have been included by way of 'grand-fathering' in uses which existed when zoning was first introduced to the County. For instance, the Agricultural zone permits by right a variety of community

uses, recreation uses, administrative offices, health offices and retail uses which might better be placed in a "Special Exception" category, giving the Planning Commission and Board of Commissioners the right to review potential impacts on the basic activity of agriculture.

- Introduce Planned Unit Development (PUD) zoning with density bonuses and other incentives to developers to make more efficient use of the land, and to attract more creative forms of housing and other development. Somerset may be effectively losing growth to the Salisbury area and Worcester County which encourage creative planning and design.

- Use zoning to guide development, rather than as a passive response to real estate pressures. Piecemeal rezonings should be resisted to the greatest extent possible. Additional planning/development standards should be considered for Growth Areas and for infill settings in the Critical Area. These standards should include requirements for centralized utility systems, aesthetic quality and site constraints. They could take the form of overlay zones or supplemental zoning requirements.

### **12.3 Annexation**

The Town of Princess Anne and City of Crisfield each have annexation plans. In relying solely on the views of residents who wish to be annexed, the boundaries of both towns appear somewhat irrational. In Princess Anne it is necessary to go into the County in order to reach parts of the town. This could result in tragic confusion among law-enforcement or rescue services. Consideration should be given to drafting a joint Town/County agreement formulating the conditions and steps necessary for future annexations. Among the practical considerations would be the ability to provide urban services within a fully contiguous area, and to recognize that major highways, streams and incompatible land uses constitute barriers which are appropriate boundaries for annexation purposes.

### **12.4 Streamlining**

#### **12.4.1 Introduction**

Somerset County is updating its Comprehensive Plan to comply with the 1992 Economic Growth, Resource Protection and Planning Act. Under the Act comprehensive plans must contain an element encouraging 1) streamlined review of applications for development, including permit review and subdivision plat review within areas designated for growth in the plan, and 2) the use of flexible development regulations to promote innovative and cost-saving site design and protect the environment.

In preparing this element, the County reviewed its zoning, subdivision and land development regulations and review process, including interviews with key staff, and members of the development and regulatory community.

#### 12.4.2 *Level of Development Activity in Somerset County*

Somerset County has a low level of development activity. In the six year period 1989 to 1994, a total of 204 new lots were approved in 41 subdivisions. Most of the subdivisions were minor subdivisions (defined in Somerset County as fewer than six lots). During the same six year period a total of 784 building permits for new homes were issued, an average of just over 130 per year (these data exclude the incorporated towns of Princess Anne and Crisfield).

#### 12.4.3 *Recent county streamlining activity*

Since the 1991 Comprehensive Plan, the county has initiated several streamlining initiatives.

##### 1. *The Big Annemessex Non-tidal Wetlands Management Plan.*

This plan was prepared in 1993. A goal of the plan was to identify non-tidal wetland resources in the Big Annemessex watershed to serve as the basis for state non-tidal wetland permitting decisions in growth areas within the watershed. To enforce the Big Annemessex Plan, amendments to the county zoning will become effective in February 1996. The amendments would:

- streamline review and approval of non-tidal wetland permitting within the watershed by creating a joint (Somerset County, Army Corps, and Maryland Department of the environment) application process.
- allow the use of pre-approved wetland delineation maps within growth areas.
- permit administrative setback variances for individual lots to avoid adverse impacts to wetlands.
- establish criteria for authorities (such as the County Commissioners or the Board of Zoning Appeals) to use in determining whether a project is consistent with the Big Annemessex Plan, and therefore can qualify for a zoning amendment, special exception, variance, etc.

##### 2. *Forest Conservation Program*

The county adopted its own program in 1994, greatly reducing the approval time for projects covered under the Maryland 1991 Forest Conservation Act.

##### 3. *Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)*

The county has created a TAC composed of representatives from key review agencies. The TAC meets as needed, typically monthly, in open session and reviews subdivisions and site plans. Applicants are often encouraged to attend.

4. *Computerized building permit tracking system.*

The county is moving towards computerizing its development tracking. The county has purchased a UNIX operating system, which will be customized to meet the county's needs.

5. *Revised site plan submission requirements*

In 1994 the county revised the submission requirements (Section 6, subsection 14 of the Zoning Ordinance) to allow exemption of certain types of development from having to submit a professionally prepared site plan.

6. *Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Buffer Exemption areas*

In 1994 the Critical Area Commission approved certain areas of the county for Buffer Exemption. Within these areas and subject to conditions, variances can now be approved administratively without the need for approval from the County Board of Zoning Appeals.

7. *Joint Hearings*

The Planning Commission and County Commissioners have held joint hearings on development projects or proposals.

8. *Mobile Home Ordinance*

Currently mobile homes are permitted only by special exception granted by the Board of Appeals. The Planning Commission has reviewed a draft mobile home ordinance which, among other things, would permit some mobile homes (new double-wides, for example) as a matter-of-right.

9. *Project file logs*

The Department of Technical and Community Services has begun a log in each development Project file which lists all conversations and meetings related to the project, for easy reference and follow-up.

10. *Zoning*

The County is considering an overlay zone along U.S. 13 to allow greater flexibility at access points where development is likely to occur (see revisions to page 27; Growth Areas).

12.4.4 *Overall Findings*

1. *Regulations are a key concern of Somerset County residents.*

In recent years the county and its residents have been strongly affected by environmental regulatory programs including:

- Floodplain protection program;
- Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Protection Program;

- Tidal and non-tidal wetlands protection programs;
- Groundwater protection program; and
- Forest conservation program.

Somerset County has been affected to a greater degree than many other Maryland counties because of the extent of its naturally occurring environmentally sensitive areas. Somerset County's weak economy places additional burdens on the county and its residents to comply with regulations. Much of the complexity arises from the range of local, state, and federal agencies which can be involved in a review process.

*2. Compared to other Maryland jurisdictions, land use regulation began fairly recently in Somerset County.*

Zoning was first introduced in 1970 and subdivision regulations were first adopted in 1988. As a result, there are fewer streamlining opportunities in Somerset County compared to jurisdictions with older, more complex codes. In addition, because most regulations are fairly recent, persons that we interviewed often expressed reluctance to reduce regulations or waive review of projects: their feeling was that the county needs the generally limited level of review it has adopted, first to protect residents' health, safety and welfare and, second, to protect the county's beauty, which results, to a great degree, from the very ecological fragility many regulations are designed to protect.

*3. The county's regulatory requirements for development are not excessive compared to other jurisdictions.*

The county has tailored its requirements to its level and type of development activity. For example, site plans are not required for single-family residential development, because virtually all housing in the county is single lot development. Nevertheless, the Department of Technical and Community Services (the Department) retains the authority to require a site plan for a tract development.

*4. The county's review of projects occurs in a timely manner.*

Some people we interviewed or learned about had experienced very lengthy process and approval times for their projects. One commercial development took 18 months for all approvals. At one point, the applicant had to request his state representative's assistance to help move his project forward. One minor subdivision took 30 months. A lengthy delay occurred because the project began forest conservation under the state program and ended up in the county program. Another commercial project needed a special exception, growth allocation, subdivision approval, site plan and a building permit. This process took nine months.

The persons we interviewed generally praised county agencies for their availability, help and cooperation. The TAC process works well. Not surprisingly, delays and problems tend to arise with larger, or more complex, projects which involve review by outside state or federal agencies



and commissions such as the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Commission, Maryland Department of the Environment, Maryland Department of Natural Resources, and the Army Corps of Engineers.

5. *Even though the amount of development is low, the Department of Technical and Community Services staff is concerned about processing of development projects.*

These concerns include:

- the creation of multiple internal paper files on one site or project, resulting in unnecessary duplication.
- ensuring that projects requiring multiple approvals by different agencies, boards and commissions are coordinated and processed efficiently, and move as smoothly as possible through the process.
- small staff stretched by multiple responsibilities.

#### 12.4.5 *Streamlining Opportunities*

##### 1. *Internal Processing*

Create a project based filing and tracking system.

The impending computerization of the county's building permit tracking system offers opportunities to improve how the county tracks all development. Under a project based system all paper files relating to one site or project could be kept in one location, reducing duplication and giving a reviewer access to all information in one place. The county would still need to maintain separate databases to track growth allocation, subdivision, site plans, building permits, zoning history etc.

Establish a single reception point for development applications.

Development project applications sometimes have numerous submission requirements. To assist applicants, the Department of Technical and Community Services sometimes accepts applications in stages. However, the Department is sometimes not made aware when missing portions of applications are subsequently submitted to a reviewer outside the Department, and this can delay permit review and subdivision plat review. The recently instituted file log system (see 12.4.4) will help in this process.

Some larger counties reject incomplete applications. The Department wants to retain its somewhat less formal approach, since it is appropriate to the county's size and way of doing business. However, if informality leads to inefficiency, benefits are lost and applicants may be delayed. All parts of development applications should be submitted through a central point. It is recommended that the Department's secretary accept and log in all applications or parts of applications, so that all staff are aware of a

submittal. Using a checklist (already existing as an appendix to the subdivision regulations) a record should be kept and given to the applicant of which portions of an application need to be submitted.

Consider a rotating schedule for taking phone calls from the public.

Some jurisdictions have instituted a system, whereby all calls on certain subjects are taken by one person on Monday, a different person on Tuesday etc. If the person cannot answer the question, he finds out the answer and returns the call, or refers the call to the appropriate person. The system permits staff some uninterrupted blocks of time. Cross training can be an additional side benefit to staff. Sufficient numbers of staff must be available to share telephone duty, but even small uninterrupted blocks of time can be helpful.

## *2. Meetings and Hearings*

Look for further opportunities to hold joint meetings.

As noted above, the Planning Commission and County Commissioners have held joint hearings and meetings. There appears to be potential to expand these, perhaps to include the Board of Appeals. For example the Planning Commission could sit at a Board of Appeals meeting to become aware of the land development issues concerning a special exception. Major projects, projects with economic development significance, and projects within designated growth areas should be prime candidates. Opportunities may be limited somewhat because the Planning Commission and Board of Appeals meet monthly. Also, applicants may not wish to incur the burden of producing the extra submission requirements needed to make such meetings effective.

Continue to seek opportunities to reduce the Board of Appeals caseload.

Typically the Board of Appeals caseload ranges from four to twelve cases. Twelve cases seems heavy to us, but persons we interviewed felt the process was needed and worked well. As noted above, the proposed mobile home ordinance would reduce the Board of Appeals caseload somewhat, and there may be other similar opportunities.

Consider allowing more minor variances from the zoning regulations to be granted by the Department.

Currently nearly all requests for variances are heard by the Board of Appeals although, as noted above, the Department will be permitted to grant administrative setback variances for individual lots in designated growth areas. Some jurisdictions permit the Planning Director, or a designee, authority to grant variances of up to 20 percent. Appropriate public notice and opportunities for public comment are still required.

The cost benefits to applicants would probably be less in Somerset County than elsewhere because the Board of Appeals fee schedule is already low: the \$60.00 fee just covers the cost of advertising. The potential benefits

could be reducing the Board of Appeals caseload, and holding hearings more frequently than the Board's once per month schedule. On the down side, the burden on the Department could increase: staff would have to hold a hearing and write findings.

Investigate the possibility for using administrative review, as opposed to planning commission review, for final subdivision plats.

Preliminary plans would still receive planning commission review, but a second meeting before the planning commission would not be required, or could be required at the planning commission's option. This would need an amendment to Article 66B, the State's planning enabling law, but other counties have expressed interest in this option which would improve the likelihood of achieving such an amendment.

### *3. County Regulations*

Update the zoning and subdivision regulations.

Updates are overdue, as described in the Planning Commission's 1994 Annual Report.

Adopt a limited access development overlay zone for the U.S. 13 corridor to facilitate and encourage development at suitable locations (see also under Land Use Plan, Chapter 5).

One important change would be to revise the definition of subdivision to mean the division of land into "one or more additional lots". Currently the definition of subdivision reads "two or more additional lots" and individual lots can be created by deed outside the subdivision process. Such lots sometimes do not meet zoning or other requirements.

Also the private roads policy developed between Planning Commission and the Roads Department should be incorporated.

The current version of the subdivision regulations is hard to use. When revised it should incorporate a detailed table of contents.

The county's zoning maps exist only at the 1" = 600' scale. A generalized zoning map showing the whole county on one sheet (1" = 1 mile) would be useful for overall planning and facilitating the cross referencing of documents.

Review the county's storm water management ordinance

The ordinance has not been updated since 1984 and should be reviewed.

### *4. Other Streamlining Opportunities*

Continue to support initiatives which will result in expedited review of applications by non-county agencies

As noted above, delays and problems with development projects tend to arise with larger, or more complex projects which involve review by outside state or federal agencies and commissions. Typically the county has no control over how or when these agencies or commissions will respond to a development project. Some improvements are being made at the state level. For example, the Maryland Department of the Environment has established an Environmental Permitting Center.

The Big Annessex Watershed Plan and the creation of Critical Area Buffer Exemption zones are examples of ways the county can continue to support and lead initiatives which will result in expedited review of applications by non-county agencies.

**Consider establishing a capital improvements programming process.**

Currently the county decides major capital projects on an as needed, case by case basis. A capital improvements program would prioritize public infrastructure and other relatively expensive projects, estimate the demands they will place on public funds, and identify the amounts and prospective sources of funds to pay for them.