

# TOWN OF HILLSBORO COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



Hillsboro, Maryland  
September 2009

Prepared by Peter Johnston & Associates



# **TOWN OF HILLSBORO COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2009**

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Prepared by the Peter Johnston & Associates  
in coordination with the Town of Hillsboro.

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# HILLSBORO COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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# INTRODUCTION

The 2008 *Hillsboro Comprehensive Land Use Plan* (Comprehensive Plan) includes revisions to the 1997 *Hillsboro Comprehensive Plan* as well as additions to meet applicable State laws. While this Comprehensive Plan is intended to describe growth policies for Hillsboro, there are aspects of Town growth that relate to neighboring areas outside municipal boundaries. Therefore, abstracts from the *West Caroline County Comprehensive Plan* also are included.

## PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

The “Purpose” of the Comprehensive Plan is to provide a series of goals, objectives, and practical implementation recommendations to manage and direct growth and development in Hillsboro.

The Comprehensive Plan is the effort of the Hillsboro Planning Commission and Town Commissioners to ensure that the Town’s positive traits are preserved and enhanced for residents and visitors alike. This Plan serves as a guide for making decisions regarding land use and growth management.

## “SAMPLE” VISION STATEMENT

The Town of Hillsboro is located in the western edge of Caroline County just off MD Route 404, which connects to U.S. Route 50, the primary arterial in the region. Hillsboro borders the Tuckahoe River and is adjacent to the Town of Queen Anne in neighboring Queen Anne’s and Talbot Counties. Hillsboro is located in what is still a predominantly rural area, surrounded by farmland and forests. The regional economy continues to be centered on agriculture. Hillsboro is a small rural town in a desirable rural setting.

## VISION STATEMENT

*“To preserve the small town atmosphere of the Town of Hillsboro and enhance the qualities that makes Hillsboro a desirable place to live.”*

The Comprehensive Plan is the future “vision” of Hillsboro in the context of its past. The Plan contains practical and realistic recommendations for bringing the Town’s vision into reality. The ideas behind the Plan are a distillation of the community’s desires and what seems reasonable. The Plan seeks to create a better fit with development codes and the realities of “what’s on the ground” to create flexible codes and sympathetic processes. The effect is to produce a simple plan, simple regulations, and simple procedures.

What Hillsboro will look like in the future depends on the community’s vision as expressed in the Comprehensive Plan. It also depends on how effective that vision is translated into the regulatory process (implementation). It is the goal of this planning process to provide recommendations that begin to address the Town’s implementation

program. This includes the sufficiency of existing regulations, processes, and procedures. It also includes staffing and funding limitations, administration, and resource management.

The Comprehensive Plan will assist to prioritize strategies and actions to capitalize on structural strengths, mitigate conflicts, and develop effective regulations and procedures. A comprehensive plan is only as good as the ability to implement its goals and objectives. The vision and goal of the Plan is to encourage the community to promote growth consistent with the traditions and history of Hillsboro.

In order to fulfill the Vision Statement, the citizens of Hillsboro have developed a set of goals, objectives, and recommendations to guide and manage the Town in a manner appropriate with their vision for the community. These goals are based on the desire to maintain the community and promote orderly growth. They also are based on the visions for growth management as developed by the State of Maryland, which encourages the revitalization of traditional communities such as Hillsboro, while encouraging appropriate new development.

The Comprehensive Plan is not intended to be a static document. It should be reviewed and updated periodically, every five or six years (as per the requirements of State Law) to reflect new development trends, shifts in the economy, or changes in the community's goals and objectives.

## **DEVELOPING THE HILLSBORO COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

The purpose of the Comprehensive Plan is to provide a series of goals, objectives, and recommendations to manage and direct growth and development in Hillsboro. The Comprehensive Plan is the result of Planning Commission and Town Commissioner efforts to understand the current condition of the Town, its historical growth patterns, and recent developments. These have all combined to create its present appearance and condition.

Once adopted, it becomes the basis for the preparation of specific policies, programs and legislation, such as zoning and subdivision regulations, to implement the policies set forth in the Comprehensive Plan. Developing a Plan is the first step in a process that defines Town policies for future legislative action, including and most importantly, the development of laws.

As a policy document, it is general in nature “a big picture process.” It encompasses the entire geographic area of the Town, including all functional elements that bear upon its physical development, such as transportation, land use, and community facilities. The Comprehensive Plan also summarizes Hillsboro policies but does not establish detailed regulations. As a policy manual, the Comprehensive Plan reflects the laws and regulations of the State of Maryland and its various regulatory agencies. In addition, growth near Hillsboro is heavily influenced by decisions made by Caroline County and the general and specific topography and geography of the region.



## COMPONENTS OF A GROWTH MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

The Comprehensive Plan provides the basic framework and direction for all components of what may be considered the Town's planning program. The Comprehensive Plan is not a "stand-alone" document but is supported and, in turn, supports related planning and zoning program documents such as the following:

**Article 66B of the Annotated Code of Maryland: *Planning & Zoning Enabling Act* is the State's preeminent planning law, providing jurisdictions power over local land use and growth management decisions.**

- Hillsboro Zoning Ordinance; and
- Hillsboro Subdivision Regulations.

### ARTICLE 66B – PLANNING & ZONING ENABLING ACT

*Article 66B of the Annotated Code of Maryland* is the "Planning and Zoning" enabling legislation from which the Town of Hillsboro derives its powers to regulate land use. Section 3.05 of the Article sets forth the minimum requirements for a comprehensive plan which shall include, among other things:

- A statement of goals and objectives, principles, policies, and standards;
- A land use plan element;
- A transportation plan element;
- A community facilities plan element;
- A mineral resources plan element, if current geological information is available; and
- An element that contains recommendations for land development regulations to implement the plan.

The context for planning in the Town of Hillsboro must account for the growth management policies established by the State of Maryland in the Planning and Zoning Act. These policies or "visions" include the following:

1. Development is concentrated in suitable areas;
2. Sensitive areas are protected;
3. In rural areas, growth is directed to existing population centers and resources 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;
6. Economic growth is encouraged and regulatory mechanisms are streamlined;
7. Adequate public facilities and infrastructure under the control of the county or municipal corporation are available or planned in areas where growth is to occur; and
8. Funding mechanisms are addressed to achieve these "Visions."

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

- Streams and stream buffers;
- 100-year floodplains;
- Endangered species habitats;
- Nontidal wetland;
- Steep slopes; and
- Other sensitive areas a jurisdiction wants to protect from the adverse impacts of development.

Maryland has procedures to ensure that public infrastructure improvements are consistent with growth policies, as defined in the law. The Planning and Zoning Enabling Act stipulates that a local government “may not approve a local construction project involving the use of State funds, grants, loans, loan guaranties, or insurance, unless the project is consistent with the State’s Visions.” This Plan has been prepared to meet the State’s eight visions.

As the State’s pre-eminent growth management law, Article 66B requires that county and municipal plans be coordinated. Each county and municipality within Maryland is required to update their comprehensive land use plans and implementing provisions every six (6) years.

#### **NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION & SMART GROWTH AREAS ACT 1997**



In 1997, the Maryland General Assembly enacted the *Neighborhood Conservation and Smart Growth Areas Act* (Smart Growth). The intent of the legislation is to marshal the State’s financial resources to support growth in Maryland’s communities and limit development in agricultural and other resource conservation areas.

At the heart of the Smart Growth concept are the “Priority Funding Areas” (PFA’s), which represent local growth areas for targeted State funding. PFA’s include municipalities, rural villages, communities, industrial areas, and planned growth areas to be served by public water and sewerage.

The 8<sup>th</sup> “Vision” of Article 66B creates consistency between the Planning and Zoning Enabling Act and Smart Growth by requiring adequate public infrastructure for State funding. Plans must show designated growth areas including areas planned for annexation by municipalities. Lands within local growth boundaries may be designated as a Priority Funding Area (PFA) provided sewer service is planned in a 10-Year Water and Sewerage Plan and provided such designation is a long-term and planned development policy that promotes efficient land use and public infrastructure.

Plans must include areas considered as PFA’s, such as planned water and sewerage service areas, residential development areas, industrial development areas, economic development areas, and parks.

## MARYLAND HOUSE BILL 1141

In 2006, the Maryland State Legislature passed House Bill 1141 (HB 1141), which provides for Amendments to Article 66B: “Planning & Zoning Enabling Act” and Article 23A: “Municipal Annexation Act” of the Annotated Code of Maryland. Amendments include provisions for the inclusion of a “Water Resources Element” and “Municipal Growth Element” in local comprehensive plans.

### HOUSE BILL 1141

**Requires a “Municipal Growth Element” (Build-Out Analysis) and a “Water Resources Element” for all comprehensive plans. HB 1141 strongly encourages inter-jurisdictional coordination and cooperation with the County and State for effective growth management.**

Municipal and County coordination was a much debated topic in the 2006 Maryland General Assembly session. HB 1141 establishes additional substantive and procedural requirements for municipalities preparing comprehensive plans. This includes inter-governmental coordination for land use and growth management planning:

Information developed under the provisions of HB 1141 will be reviewed and evaluated by State agencies including the Maryland Departments of the Environment, Natural Resources, and Planning. Some provisions of the Bill are not effective until October 2009. Substantive procedural requirements include the following:

- The Town must include in its Comprehensive Plan a “Growth Element” that specifies where Hillsboro intends to grow, if at all, outside its existing corporate limits. It also must discuss how the Town intends to address services, infrastructure, and environmental protection needs for the Growth Area.
- The Town and County must include in their respective comprehensive plans a “Water Resource Plan Element” that identifies drinking water and other water resources to meet current and future demands. It also must identify suitable water and land areas to receive stormwater and wastewater derived from development.
- The Town must develop a “Municipal Growth Element” in coordination with Caroline County. Prior to approving a Growth Element, the Town must provide a copy to the County, accept comments from the County, meet and confer with the County, and, on request from either entity, engage in mediation to facilitate the Growth Element.
- In order for land annexed after September 2006 to qualify for State assistance as a Priority Funding Area-PFA, the Town must complete an analysis of land capacity available for development. This includes infill and redevelopment. It also includes an analysis of land as needed to satisfy demand for development.
- House Bill 1141 gives affected local governments until October 1, 2009 to update their comprehensive plans to include the Water Resources Element, now required by

existing law. There is the possibility of one to two six month extensions for good cause. Local governments that have not updated their plans by that time may not change the zoning classification of a property until their updates are complete.

- The Town must develop and share with other planning agencies an “Annexation Plan” that is consistent with its Growth Element in the Comprehensive Plan.

HB 1141 requires the Maryland Department of the Environment-MDE to provide technical assistance to local governments regarding the development of a Water Resources Element. The Maryland Department of Planning-MDP also is required to provide technical assistance to a municipality regarding the “Municipal Growth Element.” MDP encourages municipalities and counties to participate in joint planning processes and agreements.

HB1141 changes the current “5-Year Rule.” In the past, the “5-Year Rule” would allow a County to delay municipal zoning on a newly annexed area. Under HB 1141, if land uses under a proposed municipal zoning for an annexed area are substantially different from the land uses specified for the area in a county comprehensive plan, mitigation may be required (if the county fails to approve the change). The new standard under HB 1141 will be to determine whether a substantial difference exists between the land uses and densities permitted under proposed town zoning and the land uses for an annexed area, including densities, permitted under the current county zoning. The mandates of HB 1141 indicate a strong need to coordinate new growth closely with the County and State.

## **SMART AND SUSTAINABLE GROWTH ACT OF 2009**

During the 2009 legislative session of the Maryland General Assembly, major amendments were enacted to Article 66B of the Annotated Code of Maryland as well as the State Finance and Procurement Article. These combined amendments, known as the *Smart and Sustainable Growth Act of 2009*, represent substantive changes to the State’s planning and zoning enabling laws:

**Updates to the State’s Eight Visions:** In 2009, the Eight Visions espoused in Article 66B of the Annotated Code of Maryland have been expanded to include the following additional visions listed below. These visions also are included in the State Finance and Procurement Article (State Economic Growth, Resource Protection, and Planning Policy).

1. Quality of Life and Sustainability: A high quality of life is achieved through universal stewardship of the land, water, and air resulting in sustainable communities and protection of the environment.
2. Public Participation: Citizens are active partners in the planning and implementation of community initiatives and are sensitive to their responsibilities in achieving community goals.

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

**Priority Funding Areas:** The Smart and Sustainable Growth Act of 2009 affects Priority Funding Areas (PFA's) in regards to public land, adequate public facilities, and transfer of development rights. Changes to State laws discuss restrictions, moratoriums, or other capacity limitations imposed on development as a result of a local ordinance or law. These restrictions must be reported to the Maryland Department of Planning (MDP) every 2 years by the local jurisdiction, based on specific criteria. In turn, MDP must prepare a report regarding the statewide impacts of adequate public facilities every 2 years. Transfer of development rights language has been expanded to include transfers in PFA's. The purpose is to assist local governments in the purchase of land for a public facility.

**Reporting Requirements:** The Smart and Sustainable Growth Act of 2009 establishes annual reporting criteria for local governments so the State Department of Planning in coordination with the national Center for Smart Growth can build the necessary data to analyze growth trends and impacts statewide over time. Measures and indicators for reporting include the following textual and mapped information, which will be determined by MDP:

- The amount and share of growth being located inside and outside PFA's;
- The net density of growth in these areas;
- The creation of new lots and the issuance of residential and commercial building permits in these areas;
- The development capacity analysis (updated every 3 years or when significant change occurs in land use/zoning);
- The number of acre preserved with local agricultural land preservation funding (if applicable); and
- Other information on achieving statewide goals under revised state laws.

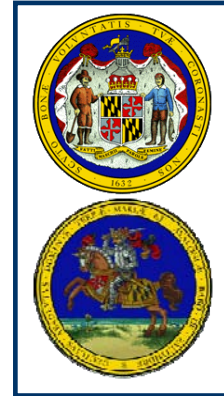
County and municipal corporations that issue less than 50 building permits per year for new residential units are exempt from the stipulated measures and indicators. However, annual reporting is still expected by a local jurisdiction, whereby the jurisdiction must prove that less than 50 building permits were issued on any given year. Jurisdictions are required to submit their respective reports by July 1, 2010.

**Comprehensive Plan Clarification:** The Smart and Sustainable Growth Act of 2009 seeks to clarify the role of the comprehensive plan and the adoption of ordinances and regulations in relation to said comprehensive planning. Declaring the intent of the Maryland General Assembly, the purpose is to create consistency with comprehensive plans, which "...should be followed as closely as possible while not being elevated to the status of an ordinance and that deviations from the plan should be rare." Legislative intent also seeks to encourage the development of ordinances and regulations that apply to locally designated PFA's, promoting mixed uses, sustainable design and development, and incentive based processes consistent with the new visions of the Act enumerated above.

The Smart and Sustainable Growth Act of 2009 requires all local jurisdictions to enact a land use plan and educate planning commission and board of zoning appeals members regarding the planning process. The education course is to be developed by MDP. It also highlights the important role played by citizens that assist in the comprehensive planning process for their respective communities. According to the amendment, "citizens invest countless hours in determining the future direction of their jurisdiction through local comprehensive plans...and...the people of Maryland are best served if land use decisions are consistent with locally adopted comprehensive plans."

## BACKGROUND

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



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

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

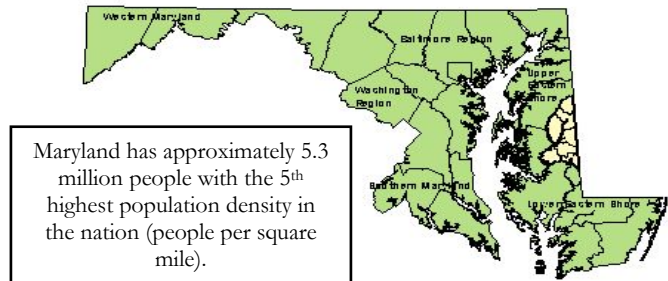
Maryland has six regional areas that include the Baltimore Region, Washington Region, Southern Maryland, Western Maryland, Upper Eastern Shore, and the Lower Eastern Shore. Caroline County is located on Maryland's Eastern Shore region.

**Table 1: Projected Population Growth by Region for Maryland**

Maryland	1980	1990	2000	2005	2010 Est.	2020 Est.	Percent Change +/-
Baltimore	2,173,989	2,348,219	2,512,431	2,611,550	2,720,550	2,826,150	+30%
Washington	1,358,916	1,635,788	1,870,133	2,002,850	2,115,800	2,280,500	+68%
Southern MD	167,284	228,500	281,320	324,000	357,350	417,200	+149%
Western MD	220,124	224,477	236,699	245,000	255,950	278,150	+26%
<b>Upper E. Shore</b>	<b>151,380</b>	<b>180,726</b>	<b>209,295</b>	<b>229,450</b>	<b>250,100</b>	<b>294,250</b>	<b>+94%</b>
Lower E. Shore	145,240	163,043	186,608	196,250	207,825	230,725	+59%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,216,933</b>	<b>4,780,753</b>	<b>5,296,486</b>	<b>5,609,200</b>	<b>5,907,575</b>	<b>6,326,975</b>	<b>+50%</b>

Source: US Census 2000

According to 2000 U.S. Census statistics (Census 2000), the State is ranked 19<sup>th</sup> in the nation for population size with approximately 5.3 million people. In addition, Maryland maintains one of the smallest land masses to support a large and growing population base.



Maryland ranks 19<sup>th</sup> in the nation for population size and the 5<sup>th</sup> highest for population density or people per square mile. At present, every region in the State is experiencing growth with the most substantial rates cited for the Washington Region, Southern Maryland, and the Upper Eastern Shore. Caroline County and the Town of Hillsboro are located in the Upper Eastern Shore. The Upper Eastern Shore indicates a projected 94% increase in population from 1980 to 2020.

### Part I: Population Growth and Characteristics

As shown in Table 2, according to the U.S. Census, Hillsboro had a population of 163 people in 2000. The Census estimates that between 2000 and 2005 the population of the Town decreased by five persons; and estimates a 3% overall decrease in population between 1990 and 2005. Population estimates for the County, for roughly the same periods, reflect a substantial increase in numbers.

<b>Population</b>	<b>Hillsboro</b>	<b>Caroline County</b>
<b>1990</b>	164	27,035
<b>2000</b>	163	29,772
<b>2005 (estimate)</b>	158	n/a
<b>2006 (estimate)</b>	n/a	32,617
<b>1990-2005/6 % Change</b>	<b>-3%</b>	<b>+20%</b>
Source: U.S. Census 2000		

There are slightly more females than males living in Hillsboro. The population is predominately white (98%) with a smaller percentage of Black and Hispanic populations, 1% and 1% respectively (see Table 3). Some 74% of the Town’s population is employed with 56% commuting to work. In 1999, no Hillsboro families were living in poverty but approximately 15 individuals, 9% of the Town’s total population, were declared as poverty status.

<b>Classification</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>% of Population</b>
- Male	79	48.5%
- Female	84	51.5%
- White	160	98%
- Black	2	1%
- Hispanic	1	1%
Median Age	36.8 years	
-Under 19 years old	38	23.3%
-20 to 55 years old	94	57.7%
-55 years old and over	31	19.0%
School Enrolled	36	22%
Employed	133	74%
Commuting	92	55%
Source: U.S. Census 2000		



The median age in the Town is 36.8 years (see Table 4). About 80% percent of the Town’s population has a high school diploma; about 10% hold a bachelor’s degree or higher. Caroline County has a lower percentage of high school graduates (75%) and a slightly higher percentage of college graduates (12%).

<b>Classification</b>	<b>Median Age</b>
<b>Hillsboro</b>	<b>36.8</b>
<b>Caroline County</b>	<b>37.0</b>
Denton	38.9
Federalsburg	33.2
Goldsboro	32.0
Greensboro	31.1
Henderson	31.0
Marydel	31.5
Preston	35.6
Ridgely	32.6
Source: U.S. Census 2000	

The average household in Hillsboro is comprised of 2.30 persons; the average family size is slightly larger at 2.71 persons. Of the 71 households in the Town, 45 are families, and of these, a little more than half have children under the age of 18 living at home. There are 26 non-family households in Hillsboro, almost all of which are single person households. One-third of all households in Town contain children under 18 years old.

Hillsboro and Caroline County are below national and State averages for median household income and per capita income. The national average for median household income is \$40,816, per capita income is \$21,587. State averages are higher than the national standard: median household income \$52,868 and per capita income \$25,614. Hillsboro’s median household income is \$29,583. Per capita income is \$16,318. Caroline County’s median household income is \$38,832, and per capita income is \$17,275.

<b>Classification</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>INCOME IN 1999</b>		
<b>Households</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Less than \$10,000	7	9.6
\$10,000 to \$14,999	3	4.1
\$15,000 to \$24,999	15	20.5
\$25,000 to \$34,999	18	24.7
\$35,000 to \$49,999	15	20.5
\$50,000 to \$74,999	5	6.8
\$75,000 to \$99,999	10	13.7
\$100,000 or more	0	0
<b>Median Household Income</b>	<b>\$29,583</b>	
<b>Median family income (dollars)</b>	<b>\$35,500</b>	
<b>Per capita income (dollars)</b>	<b>\$16,318</b>	
Median earnings (dollars):		
Male full-time, year-round workers	\$29,167	
Female full-time, year-round workers	\$20,000	
Poverty Status In 1999 (Below Poverty Level)		
Families	0	
Individuals	15	
Source: U.S. Census 2000		

Among municipalities, Hillsboro ranks the 7<sup>th</sup> highest for median household income and 3<sup>rd</sup> highest for per capita income in the County. Median annual earnings for Hillsboro's male, full-time year-round workers are \$29,167, almost \$10,000 more than the Town's female, full-time, year-round workers.

Employment data for Hillsboro indicates that slightly more than 30 percent of the labor force is employed in sales and office positions, the largest percentage of employment in any type of occupation. Production, transportation, and material moving occupations ranked second, with 25 percent of the Town's labor force being employed in these fields. Only 1.5 percent of the labor force is employed in the armed forces. Mean travel time to work for all occupations is 28.5 minutes. With the exception of Preston, Hillsboro's unemployment rate, at 4.2 percent, is the lowest of any municipality in Caroline County. It is also lower than Caroline County's.

<b>Table 6: Employment Statistics – Hillsboro</b>		
<b>Classification</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>EMPLOYMENT STATUS</b>		
<b>Population 16 years and over</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>100.0</b>
In labor force	98	73.7
Civilian labor force	96	72.2
Employed	92	69.2
Unemployed	4	3.0
Percent of civilian labor force		4.2
Armed Forces	2	1.5
Not in labor force	35	26.3
Source: U.S. Census 2000		

<b>Table 7: Occupation Statistics – Hillsboro</b>		
<b>Classification</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>OCCUPATION</b>		
<b>Employed civilian population 16 years and over</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Management, professional, and related occupations	11	12.0
Service occupations	16	17.4
Sales and office occupations	29	31.5
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	0	0.0
Construction, extraction, and maintenance occupations	13	14.1
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	23	25.0
Source: U.S. Census 2000		

<b>Table 8: Commuting Statistics – Hillsboro</b>		
<b>Classification</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>COMMUTING TO WORK</b>		
<b>Employed civilian population 16 years and over</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Car, truck, or van -- drove alone	69	75.0
Car, truck, or van -- carpooled	20	21.7
Public transportation (including taxicab)	0	0.0
Walked	0	0.0
Other means	0	0.0
Worked at home	3	3.3
Mean travel time to work (minutes)	28.5	
Source: U.S. Census 2000		

## Part II: Housing Characteristics

There are 72 housing units in Hillsboro. About three-fourths of these are single family detached units, and a little less than 15% are duplexes. The remaining 10% is divided between 3-4-unit multi-family dwellings (four total) and mobile homes (three total).

Less than 10% of the Town's total housing stock is vacant. Of occupied homes, about 70% are occupied by the home's owner and the remaining 30% are occupied by renters (see Table 9).

Most (72%) of the Town's housing stock was built in 1939 or earlier. No new homes have been built in the Town since 1995. A quarter of Hillsboro's residents have been living in the homes they currently occupy since the 1980s.

<b>Classification</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>OCCUPIED HOUSING</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Year Householder Moved Into Unit</b>		
1999 to March 2000	11	15%
1995 to 1998	14	20%
1990 to 1994	8	11%
1980 to 1989	16	23%
1970 to 1979	4	6%
1969 or earlier	13	18%
Source: U.S. Census 2000		

Housing values in Hillsboro are among the highest in the County. The median value of specified owner-occupied units (single-family houses on less than 10 acres without a business or medical office on the property) is \$101,200.00.

Table 10 shows that only the Town of Preston has a higher median value of owner-occupied houses, at \$103,200.00. While median housing values are high in Hillsboro, the Town ranks in the middle of County municipalities for median price asked for vacant houses that are for sale.

<b>Town</b>	<b>Median House Value</b>
<b>Hillsboro</b>	<b>\$101,200</b>
Denton	\$94,500
Federalburg	\$84,300
Goldsboro	\$75,400
Greensboro	\$85,200
Henderson	\$70,800
Preston	\$103,200
Ridgely	\$87,300
Templeville	\$81,300
Source: U.S. Census 2000	

# CHAPTER 1: LAND USE & GROWTH MANAGEMENT

Hillsboro is a small rural town in Caroline County, Maryland, which is located in the Mid-Shore region near Queen Anne's and Talbot Counties. The Town has witnessed little population growth in the last 50 years however it retains a stable population base. Future population growth is severely limited by the Town's lack of public water and sewerage infrastructure. Hillsboro is not expected to grow in the next six to ten years.

The Town remains small, rural, and historic. It is mostly comprised of single-family residential dwellings with some multi-family dwellings. Hillsboro seeks to maintain its small town character and residential neighborhood community. At present, several commercial establishments exist at the western edge of Town. No industrial areas exist due to the lack of public infrastructure.

The vacant land located along the north side of the Town between the corporate limits and Main Street is agricultural/open space.

## LAND USE AND GROWTH MANAGEMENT

The Comprehensive Plan establishes policies concerning the relationship between the Town's existing patterns of growth and development as well as the location, distribution, and scale of future development. It directs the location of public facilities and transportation system improvements and is directly related to community perceptions about such things as "quality of life" and "community character."

### PRIMARY GOAL & OBJECTIVES

#### GOAL

Preserve the small town atmosphere and qualities that make Hillsboro a desirable place to live.

#### OBJECTIVES

Maintain and improve the overall community character and quality of life for all residents.

Provide for traditional neighborhood businesses and encourage business and commercial revitalization that is compatible with the surrounding residential neighborhood.

Encourage home-based businesses that do not change the character of the neighborhood or impact the Town's already limited off-street parking.

Maintain and enhance the safe and efficient movement of people and goods throughout Town with particular emphasis on facilitating pedestrian travel.

Protect Sensitive Areas in accordance with local and State laws.

Preserve and enhance Hillsboro's heritage resources.

Enhance Hillsboro's municipal infrastructure, where appropriate.

The Land Use Plan portion of the Comprehensive Plan outlines Hillsboro’s primary growth management strategies. It also is a key element of the Plan because it describes the preferred land use characteristics for various areas of the Town, including possible future growth areas. The Land Use Plan has been developed to address the potential impacts of local land use policies on the fiscal and physical resources of the Town and surrounding areas.

### LAND USE PLAN

The “Land Use Plan” is the primary component of the *Hillsboro Comprehensive Plan* and includes existing and future land uses, which can translate into regulations following the Plan’s adoption.

The Land Use Plan is a continuation of the planning for and refinement of growth in the community, which began in 1997 with the adoption of the previous Comprehensive Plan. The Land Use Plan also manages the impacts of growth on environmentally sensitive areas.

The Land Use Plan provides a “long-range, big picture” that integrates the various planning goals and objectives contained in the Comprehensive Plan into a cohesive “vision” of the future. The Town’s objectives for economic development, natural resource protection, community facilities, housing, and community character are reflected.

The Plan also includes factors outside the control of local officials, such as regional and national economic trends, local market conditions, and individual land use decisions. The fundamental land use policy framework, outlined in this Chapter, will help determine the Town’s growth patterns as well as the “quality of life” for existing and future residents.

### **LAND USE GOALS**

The primary goal of Hillsboro is to preserve the small town atmosphere and qualities that make the Town a desirable place to live. Other land use goals for Hillsboro include the following:

**GOAL #1:** Enhance the existing character of Hillsboro through compatible growth and reinvestment in existing properties.

**GOAL #2:** Preserve the existing residential neighborhood areas in Hillsboro and ensure that new development is consistent with Town character.

**GOAL #3:** Encourage the restoration, rehabilitation, and adaptive reuse of existing buildings.

**GOAL #4:** Improve existing property values and the climate for new investment and reinvestment in Hillsboro by addressing key infrastructure issues, such roads and streets and other capital projects.

**GOAL #5:** Stabilize property values through the adoption of appropriate regulations.

**GOAL #6:** Expand the tax base of Hillsboro by encouraging appropriate infill and redevelopment of vacant and underutilized properties, where appropriate.

**GOAL #7:** Ensure new development is consistent with the overall growth objectives of Hillsboro by adopting appropriate development codes/standards and ensuring that all new development is appropriate in scale and size.

**GOAL #8:** Improve coordination between Hillsboro and Caroline County to promote inter-jurisdictional coordination and cooperation as required by State law.

**GOAL #9:** Protect sensitive environmental areas.

## **LAND USE OBJECTIVES**

Objectives establish specific strategies to achieve the broad community goals. Hillsboro will pursue the following land use objectives:

- Maintain and improve the overall community character and quality of life for all residents.
- Provide for traditional neighborhood businesses and encourage business and commercial revitalization that is compatible with the surrounding residential neighborhood.
- Encourage home-based businesses that do not change the character of the neighborhood or impact the Town's already limited off-street parking.
- Maintain and enhance the safe and efficient movement of people and goods throughout Town with particular emphasis on facilitating pedestrian travel.
- Protect Sensitive Areas in accordance with local and state laws.
- Preserve and enhance Hillsboro's heritage resources.
- Enhance Hillsboro's municipal infrastructure, where appropriate.
- Develop simple and practical regulations to encourage appropriate infill and redevelopment within existing neighborhoods including incentive based processes and procedures.
- Develop regulations that reflect good design standards and practices.
- Prevent development on land that is unsuitable for development because of soil characteristics, high water tables, or other environmental limitations.

- Limit “through” traffic in residential neighborhoods and heavy vehicles in the Town Center.
- Protect residential areas from encroachment by incompatible land uses.
- Evaluate infill, redevelopment, and new development with regard to the availability of, and impact on, public facilities and services and the environment.
- Integrate land use and the street and highway networks to provide for the logical continuation and improvement of existing streets and highways in proper coordination with state and municipal facilities currently in existence.
- Promote adequate recreational facilities and open space, where applicable.
- Provide for a variety of open space areas, recreational facilities, and the protection of undeveloped natural areas.
- Encourage greater recognition by all citizens that land is a finite resource and its wise use and effective conservation is essential for the survival of existing and future generations. This objective is consistent with Vision 4 of the “Planning Act, “stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay and the land is a universal ethic.”
- Encourage continued growth in a manner that will preserve significant natural features and other resources by requiring proper planning and design techniques to address sensitive environmental concerns. This objective is consistent with Vision 2 of the Planning Act, whereby "sensitive areas are protected.”
- Work with Caroline County to develop inter-jurisdictional mechanisms to streamline mutually related processes, facilitate growth management, and enhance preservation of the rural country-side.

## EXISTING LAND USE

The Town of Hillsboro is approximately 75 acres, as shown on Map 1-1: Hillsboro Existing Land Use Map. Primary land use categories include the Hillsboro Greenbelt and the existing Hillsboro Corporate Limits or “Old Town” area. Seven (7) sub-land use categories are included under the Hillsboro Corporate Limits. Table 1-1 indicates land use by planning areas as follows:

- **Hillsboro Greenbelt:** The Hillsboro Greenbelt is approximately 1,981 acres.
- **Hillsboro Corporate Limits:** The Hillsboro Corporate Limits are approximately 75 acres, as depicted in the 1997 *Hillsboro Comprehensive Plan*.

1. **Agricultural:** “Agricultural” lands comprise approximately 29 acres just north of the existing “Old Town” area.
2. **Commercial:** “Commercial” land comprises approximately 1 acre within the existing “Old Town.”
3. **Commercial Residential:** “Commercial Residential” comprises approximately 0.276 acres in the existing “Old Town.”
4. **Park:** “Parkland” comprises approximately 2 acres in the existing “Old Town.”
5. **Exempt Commercial:** “Exempt Commercial” comprises approximately 7 acres in the existing “Old Town.”
6. **Apartments:** “Apartments” comprise approximately 2 acres in the existing “Old Town.”
7. **Residential:** “Residential” comprises approximately 34 acres in the existing “Old Town.”

<b>Table 1-1: 2008 Hillsboro Existing Land Use</b>	
<b>Classification</b>	<b>Acreage</b>
Hillsboro Greenbelt	1,981 acres
Hillsboro Corporate Limits	75 acres
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,056 acres</b>
<b>Hillsboro Planning Areas</b>	
<b>Classification</b>	<b>Acreage</b>
Agricultural	29 acres
Commercial	1 acre
Commercial Residential	0.276 acre
Park	2 acres
Exempt Commercial	7 acres
Apartments	2 acres
Residential	34 acres
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>75.276</b>

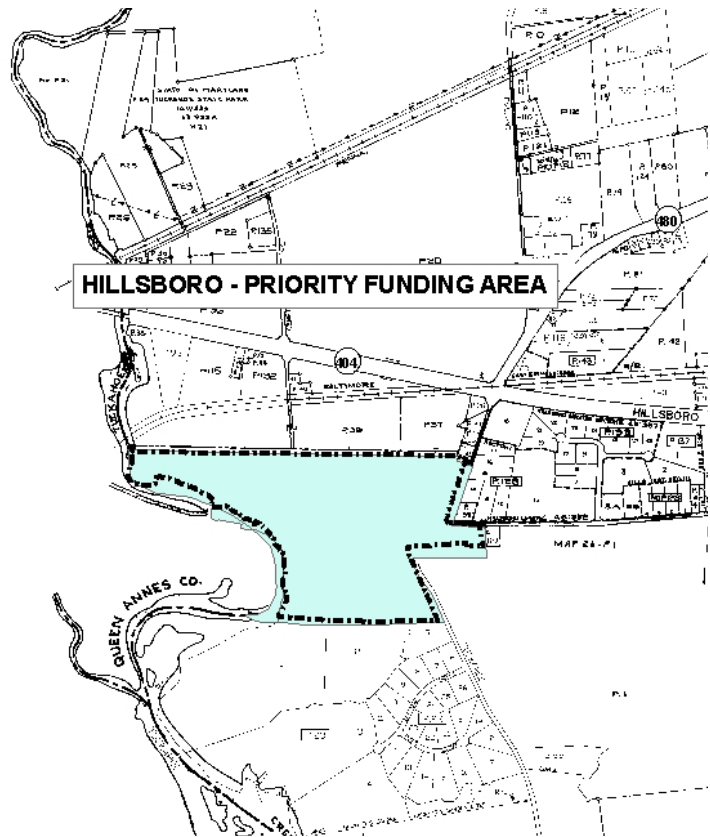
Prepared by Peter Johnston & Associates based on land use map information prepared by the Maryland Department of Planning

## **HILLSBORO GROWTH AREA & GREENBELT**

Hillsboro is a “Growth Area” for Caroline County as well as a Maryland “Priority Funding Area.” PFA’s were established under the 1997 *Neighborhood Conservation and Smart Growth Areas Act* (Smart Growth) and create consistency with the State “Visions” for growth as expressed in the 1992 Planning and Zoning Enabling Act (*Article 66B of the Annotated Code of Maryland*). PFA’s represent local growth areas for targeted State funding and include municipalities, rural villages, communities, industrial areas, and planned growth areas to be served by public water and sewerage. The corporate boundaries of Hillsboro, as they existed in 1997, constitute the current PFA boundaries for the Town (see illustration below).

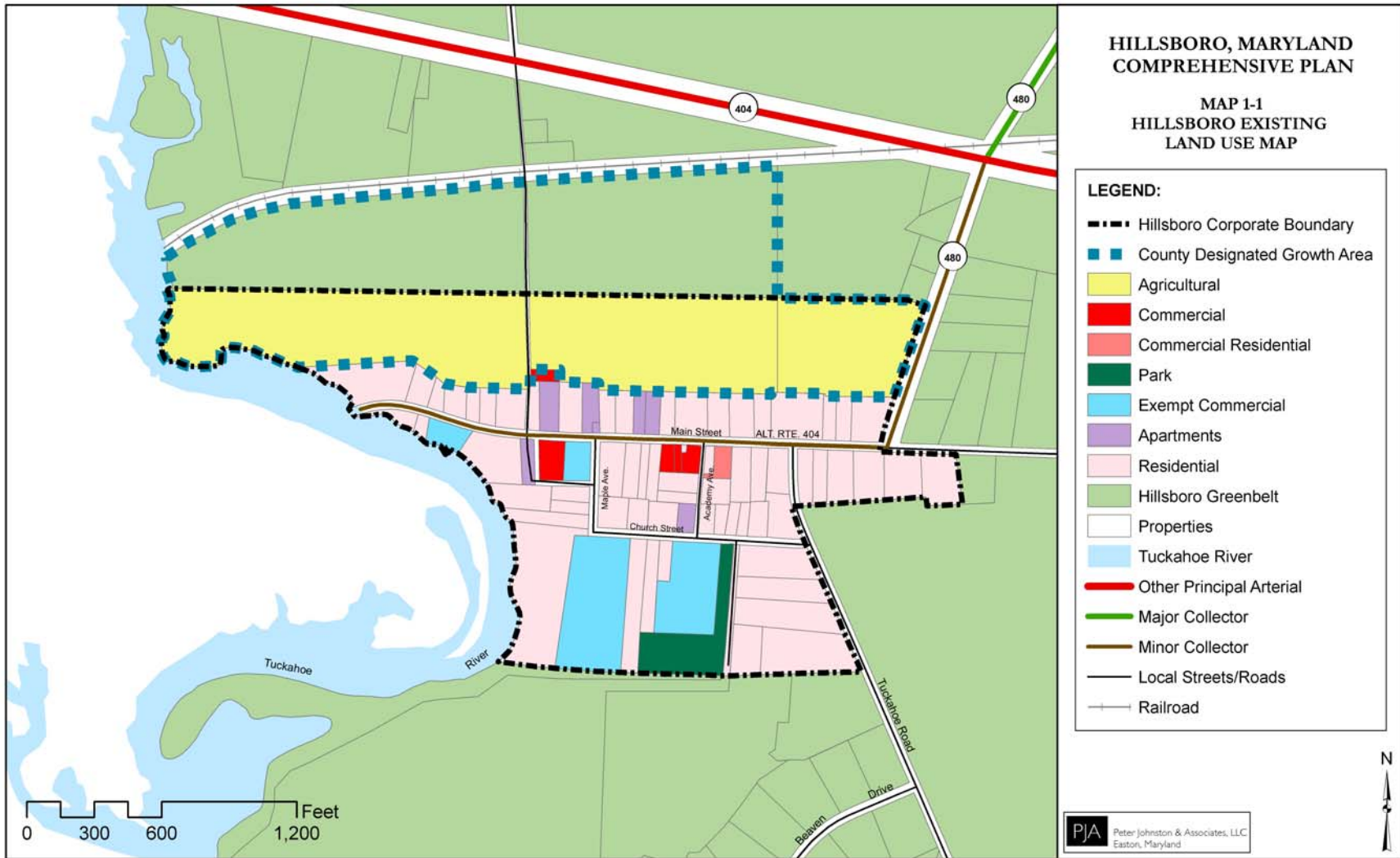


The intent of the “Smart Growth” legislation, as well as other recent changes to State laws affecting PFA’s, is to marshal the Maryland’s financial resources to support growth in existing communities and limit development in agricultural and other resource conservation areas. The designation of new PFA’s in the State of Maryland must meet the density and other criteria as outlined in State law. In addition, as of October 2006, new annexations seeking PFA designation must be submitted to the Maryland Department of Planning (MDP) for “PFA Certification.” According to MDP, County properties annexed into the Town that currently have PFA status, do not retain such status and do not automatically become PFA’s.



Little residential and commercial growth is planned for Hillsboro because of inadequate public facilities and services. Current Town policies and regulations are designed to maintain Hillsboro’s historic small town character, minimize growth, and maintain the Town’s current size. The historic corporate boundary of Hillsboro constitutes the existing PFA as of 2008 and new land for growth is not anticipated.

The 2008 *Hillsboro Comprehensive Plan* highlights the need for improved inter-jurisdictional coordination with Caroline County regarding growth. According to the “draft” 2006 *West Caroline County Comprehensive Plan*, the total “Hillsboro Planning Area” is approximately 2,056 acres, which includes the Town and a large Greenbelt. As indicated on Map 1-1, the Hillsboro Planning Area includes the existing Town of Hillsboro (75 acres) and a Hillsboro Greenbelt (1,981 acres).



## Part I: Hillsboro Growth Area

According to the 2006 *West Caroline County Comprehensive Plan*, the Hillsboro Growth Area is a small growth envelope. Some land outside the existing municipal boundaries just north of the Town is indicated. This area is shown by the County for future Town expansion and potential annexation.

During examination of the likely growth characteristics of Hillsboro, in relation to the County proposed Growth Area, several important issues are revealed. Without public water and sewer, the properties indicated by the County for Town growth are unlikely to be annexed. Portions of these



The *West Caroline County Comprehensive Plan* identifies a 57 acre area north of Hillsboro as a potential Growth Area for the Town. The 2008 *Hillsboro Comprehensive Plan* identifies this area as a Greenbelt for preservation and requests Caroline County amend their Comprehensive Plan.

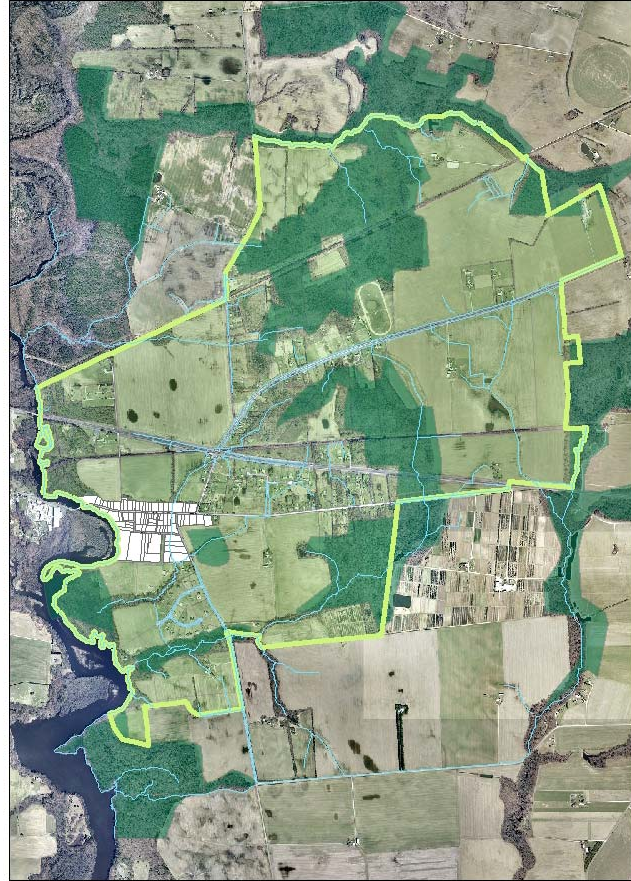
properties are currently zoned for agricultural uses under the *Hillsboro Zoning Ordinance* and “R1-Single Family Residential” under the *Caroline County Zoning Ordinance*. Essentially, incentives for developers and/or property owners to initiate further annexation by the Town are few. There is no net gain of residential units in the Town juxtaposed to the County because well and septic systems will be utilized for both. Residents of any future residential subdivision/development would have to pay Town taxes in addition to County taxes. This is a strong disincentive for annexation. The current standards of the Caroline County Department of Environmental Health indicate at least a 1 acre minimum per dwelling unit for locating a well and septic system, whether in the Town or County. Acreage per lot also depends on soil conditions and percolation testing. In addition, much of this area is located in a “Resource Conservation Area” under the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Program for the County and Town.

Given the issues, no Growth Area is envisioned for Hillsboro. The Town will remain at its current size within its traditional corporate limits. However, the Town of Hillsboro should develop clear policy objectives for peripheral County land use activities located near Town boundaries. It is important to ensure the preservation of Hillsboro’s small town rural character and any new County development on surrounding lands should respect this goal. Hillsboro should coordinate closely with Caroline County regarding future policies for the region as well as existing and proposed future zoning. At present, Hillsboro is seeking to preserve surrounding areas as agricultural uses although current County zoning allows for more intensive development.

## Part II: Hillsboro Greenbelt

As indicated on the Hillsboro Municipal Growth Map, the Hillsboro Greenbelt incorporates the Caroline County Greenbelt, as depicted in the *West Caroline County Comprehensive Plan*, with the exception that County indicated Growth Areas are now shown as Greenbelt areas on the Hillsboro Map. Hillsboro should request that Caroline County change the Town's Growth Areas to Greenbelt Areas as target priority preservation sites. Hillsboro also should request that the *West Caroline County Comprehensive Plan* be amended to reflect this request.

The proposed Hillsboro Greenbelt encompasses approximately 1,981 acres surrounding the existing Town. The Hillsboro Greenbelt is designed to provide connection with the Ridgely Greenbelt and form a contiguous preservation area. It also is designed to assist in the preservation of Hillsboro's rural characteristics and scenic countryside. The Hillsboro Greenbelt is intended to create a buffer around the existing Town to add to aesthetic and scenic value. Currently, the Hillsboro Greenbelt has 16 acres of preserved land (State Parkland - Tuckahoe State Park) and approximately 220 acres indicated for Rural Legacy preservation (Rural Legacy Planning Boundary). There are no Rural Legacy easements in the Greenbelt.



The Hillsboro Greenbelt is based on an area defined for preservation in the *West Caroline County Comprehensive Plan*. Agricultural sites near the Town should receive priority status in the County's Agricultural Preservation Program.

Remaining Hillsboro Greenbelt land identified for preservation includes approximately 1,965 acres. These areas should be considered as "Target Preservation Areas" for the "Caroline County Land Preservation Program." Land use within the Greenbelt should be studied by the Town and County to determine an appropriate level of activity and use, which is beyond the scope of this Comprehensive Plan. This includes development along MD Route 404 (Shore Highway), which may impact municipal gateways and transportation systems. Strip commercial development, currently permitted under the County's Highway Commercial Zoning, which should be discouraged. Important areas for review include intersections and Hillsboro access roads such as the intersection of MD Rt. 404 and MD Rt. 480. In addition, large scale residential development in County areas surrounding Hillsboro, currently zoned for residential development (R1), should be coordinated with the Town.

## FUTURE LAND USE

The Town of Hillsboro is approximately 75 acres, as shown on Map 1-2: Hillsboro Future Land Use Map. Table 1-2 indicates land use by planning areas as follows:

<b>Planning Area</b>	<b>Acreage</b>
1) Town Center	11 acres
2) Neighborhood Conservation	25 acres
3) Neighborhood Commercial	1 acre
4) Public & Semi/Public	9 acres
5) Agriculture/Open Space	29 acres
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>75 acres</b>
Prepared by Peter Johnston & Associates	

### Part I: Hillsboro Planning Areas

The 2008 *Hillsboro Comprehensive Plan* divides land use into five (5) primary planning areas including:

1. Town Center;
2. Neighborhood Conservation;
3. Neighborhood Commercial;
4. Public & Semi-Public; and
5. Agriculture/Open Space.

**Town Center:** The “Town Center Planning Area” is the historic core of Hillsboro, containing the Town’s most important heritage sites and structures particularly those buildings that date from the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries. The Planning Area exhibits a traditional development pattern marked by mixed residential, commercial, and public/semi-public uses. The primary purpose of the Town Center Planning Area is to preserve the existing development pattern and historic sites and structures. This includes promoting single family residences and compatible development or redevelopment through appropriate design that recognizes historic character and context. Objectives for the “Town Center Planning Area” include the following:

- Reinforce and enhance the Planning Area’s role as the central location for community and civic life as well and the Town’s identity.
- Create flexible land use development regulations that focus on compatible design.
- Recognize the existing mix of land uses as an entitlement and permit their continuation and expansion, where appropriate.
- Encourage infill and redevelopment of vacant and underutilized sites, where appropriate, to maintain an attractive diversity but at the same time insure compatibility with adjacent land uses and the existing character of downtown Hillsboro.
- Promote investment and reinvestment in the Town Center and streamline current regulations to create a flexible process that promotes investment and reinvestment.

**Neighborhood Conservation:** The “Neighborhood Conservation Planning Area” comprises a large majority of the existing Town of Hillsboro. The purpose of the Planning Area is to preserve existing and stable residential neighborhoods, while limiting the conversion of single family detached dwellings to multi-family dwellings such as duplexes and/or apartments. There are two types of residential dwellings located within this Planning Area including single family detached and multi-family:

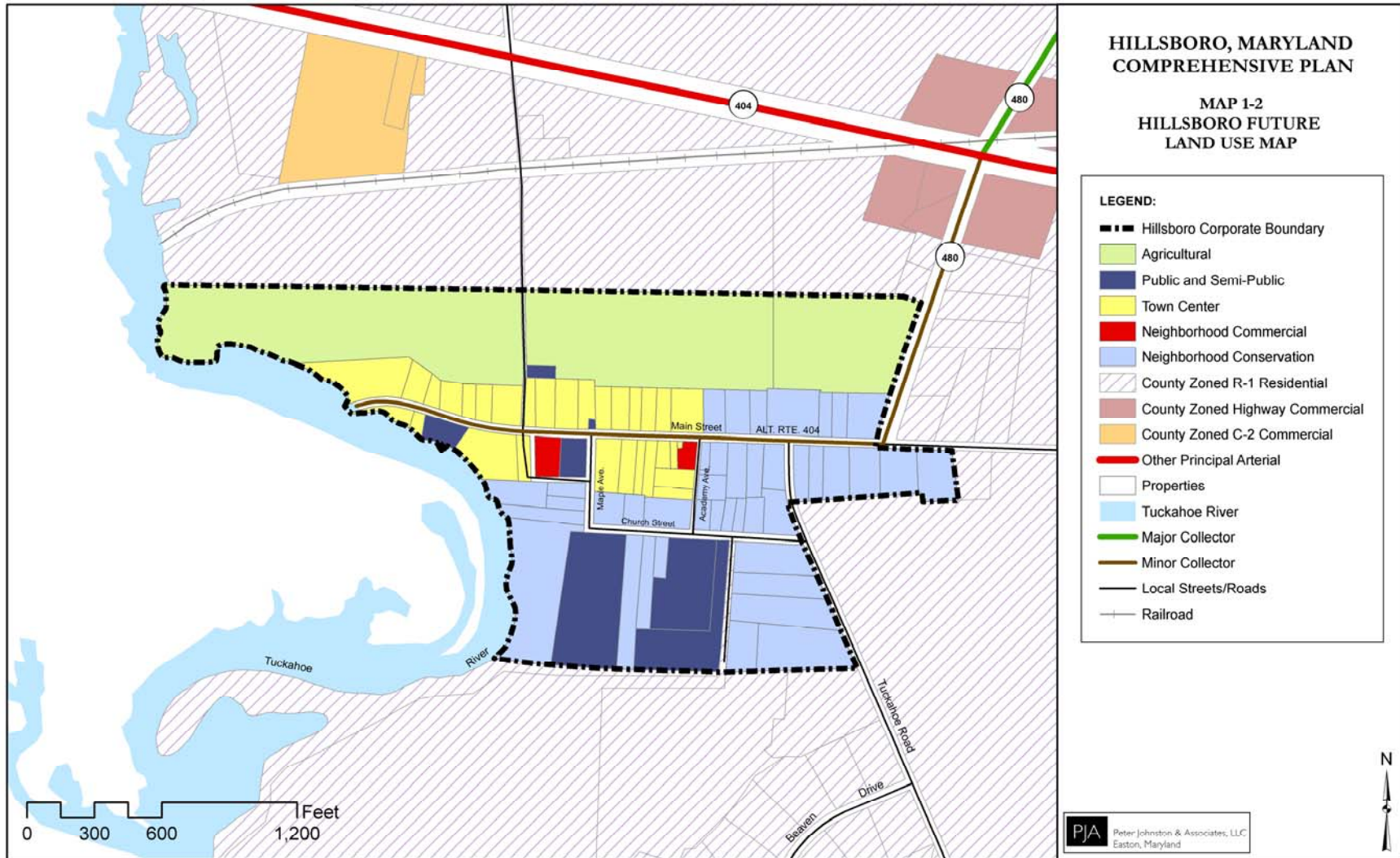
- Residential – Single Family Detached: Single Family Residential is the desired land use because it seeks to maintain the quality and characteristics of the Town. In addition, the Town seeks to limit future conversions of single family residential dwellings to multi-family residential dwellings to preserve neighborhood character and community identity.
- Residential – Multi-Family: Hillsboro has several single-family structures that have been converted to multi-family residential dwellings. The Town seeks to restrict the further conversion of these structures to multi-family uses, such as apartments. This is largely due to potential impacts on wells and septic systems as well as parking.

The Neighborhood Planning Area is intended to provide for the minor infill of existing lots consistent with existing character. This may include some small vacant properties that could be candidate sites for infill projects. When infill development occurs on lots, it should be consistent with prevalent lot development patterns. Zoning for these areas should address the need to protect existing residential areas from incompatible uses and activities that properly belong in non-residential districts. Density in the District should be maintained in accordance with historic lotting patterns. Mobile homes and double-wide manufactured housing are not considered appropriate and should not be allowed either inherently or by special exception.

**Neighborhood Commercial:** Hillsboro has several existing commercial properties and a few areas for commercial expansion. In order to preserve the residential character of the Town, new commercial uses will only be located adjacent to existing commercial uses or to replace existing commercial buildings. Design standards will ensure new commercial structures maintain the residential character of the community. Some current commercial uses are desirable home-based businesses.

**Public/Quasi-Public & Open Space:** Hillsboro maintains several open space areas and other public spaces such as the old school site, old bank building (Town Museum), boat ramp (in coordination with Caroline County), and the Episcopal Church Cemetery. The Tuckahoe River is the primary scenic attribute of Hillsboro. The Town maintains an emphasis on preserving its aesthetic and environmental qualities. Town policies in regards to public spaces seek to preserve character by minimizing conflicting land uses in adjacent areas.

**Agriculture/Open Space:** The rural aspects of Hillsboro are a primary scenic attribute. The Town encourages the preservation of agriculture and farming practices around the Town. This includes agricultural lands currently existing within the corporate boundaries of the Town, just north of the existing “Old Town.” However, Hillsboro discourages intensive agricultural operations adjacent to the Town that could constitute heavy industry, such as large scale animal operations, sludge disposal, or related agricultural industries.



## IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are designed to assist Hillsboro in the implementation of this Comprehensive Plan:

### Part I: General Recommendations

**RECOMMENDATION #1:** Ensure that all development and redevelopment is compatible with the existing character of the Town and encourage the revitalization and continued improvement of Hillsboro with a special emphasis on the Town Center and Neighborhood Conservation Districts.

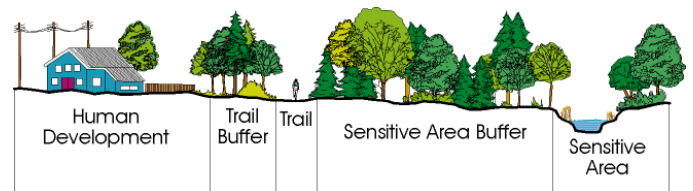
To accomplish this goal, the Town Commissioners should specifically identify and designate future revitalization areas. In addition, the Town should review the Zoning Ordinance, Zoning Map, and Subdivision Regulations to integrate safeguards for community character.



The “Town Center” of Hillsboro is an important asset both economically and socially. It contains an existing mix of land uses that includes public, commercial, and residential spaces. These are traditional neighborhoods and were historically designed to promote a cohesive and self-contained community.

**RECOMMENDATION #2:** Update the Town Zoning Ordinance, Zoning Map, and Subdivision Regulations to require that future development and redevelopment be appropriate in scale and design to Hillsboro’s small town atmosphere.

**RECOMMENDATION #3:** Promote sensitive area protection and ensure that development avoids designated “Sensitive Areas” and employs best management practices to minimize adverse impacts on water quality and habitat.



“Sensitive areas” include riparian streams that are best protected by a buffering program, including buffer requirements. This visual illustration shows how buffering works to mitigate harmful pollutants before they reach a tributary.

**RECOMMENDATION #4:** Promote inter-jurisdictional coordination and future cooperative planning and zoning efforts with Caroline County.

The Caroline County Council of Governments (COG) provides Hillsboro a forum to discuss issues and opportunities with County officials. In addition, the County and Hillsboro Planning Commissions should meet annually or periodically to discuss planning issues of mutual interest.

**RECOMMENDATION #5:** Encourage Caroline County to refer plans of proposed development, zoning changes, and subdivisions located within two miles of the Town to Hillsboro officials for review.



**RECOMMENDATION #6:** Work with Caroline County to insure the adequacy of public facilities provided and that new development adjacent to Hillsboro minimizes impacts on the rural character surrounding the community.

**RECOMMENDATION #7:** Encourage the continuation of compatible agricultural uses adjacent to Hillsboro to maintain the rural character of the community.

**RECOMMENDATION #8:** Encourage the redevelopment and re-use of vacant buildings insuring compatibility with the surrounding residential neighborhood and discourage the establishment of any industrial uses.

**RECOMMENDATION #9:** Enhance inter-jurisdictional measures with the Town of Queen Anne and Talbot County.

**RECOMMENDATION #10:** Encourage “Community Character Policies” that include the following design principles:

- Establish architectural guidelines as well as yard setbacks, bulk standards, and height restrictions to retain or promote desirable community character;
- Retain or create site designs for a pedestrian-friendly community, which shall be encouraged and facilitated;
- Insure development retains the pattern, scale, and character of the surrounding neighborhood;
- Insure the review of development proposals to place priority on the protection of historic and culturally significant buildings, monuments, and spaces contributing to the Town’s character; and
- Maintain connections to the rural landscape by encouraging protection of farms and forested areas outside the Town boundary.

**RECOMMENDATION #11:** Continue to prepare a Planning Commission Annual Report in accordance with Section 3.09 of Article 66B to monitor plan implementation.

## **Part II: Specific Recommendations**

### **Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations**

**RECOMMENDATION #1:** Update the Town’s regulations consistent with the recommendations of this Comprehensive Plan and adopt new official zoning map(s), which include the digitization of the Hillsboro Zoning Map in the Town’s Geographic Information System-GIS.

**RECOMMENDATION #2:** Create a special planning district for the Town Center and Neighborhood Revitalization Planning Areas that encourage and facilitate context sensitive infill and redevelopment with an emphasis on appropriate design.

**RECOMMENDATION #3:** Establish development standards and guidance for infill, redevelopment, and new development that ensures compliance with the Town’s design objectives.

**RECOMMENDATION #4:** Promote the upkeep and maintenance of existing buildings by adopting a building code, livability code, nuisance ordinance, and related items to improve and maintain the Town.

**RECOMMENDATION #5:** Ensure that the approval of land subdivision, rezoning, special exceptions, variances, and capital expenditures are consistent with the Hillsboro Plan.

**RECOMMENDATION #6:** Revise current development review processes. For other than permitted uses requiring a building permit, require all applicants to first submit a concept plan, including proposed building types and typical building elevations. Periodically update the development review and approval process to ensure that reviews can be carried out in a timely fashion and ensure appropriate decisions are made with regard to plan review and approvals required for projects.

**RECOMMENDATION #7:** Where possible, streamline current regulations and create flexible processes/procedures to promote investment and reinvestment in existing properties and promote context sensitive design for infill and redevelopment.

**RECOMMENDATION #8:** Establish development standards that are consistent with the existing lot and development pattern in surrounding neighborhoods and encourage the adaptive reuse of existing buildings.

**RECOMMENDATION #9:** Adopt zoning review fees that cover the cost of Town review, including the cost of any professional assistance the Planning Commission or Town Commissioners may need to adequately evaluate the merits of a proposed development.

**RECOMMENDATION #10:** Establish “Design Objectives” within the Hillsboro Zoning Ordinance based on the following basic design principles:

- Neighborhoods are compact, identifiable, and their boundaries are visually discernible;
- Neighborhoods are linear (cross-roads or grid patterned), with variations to enhance views and landmarks;
- Neighborhoods are visually coherent and character is established through consistent rules of organization and architecture;
- Street corridors are visually bounded and intimate in feeling. Street trees, sidewalks, and front yard design elements create visual layers and contribute to the intimacy of streetscape;
- Street blocks help describe component neighborhoods, suggesting the role of the street as a channel for neighborly interaction;

- Neighborhoods accommodate a mix of uses, where appropriate, even at the “town” scale;
- Parking is accommodated through a mix of on-street and unobtrusive off-street strategies. Large-scale parking lots are avoided, and older lots are redesigned into smaller landscaped segments; and
- Most important, neighborhoods and their setting convey a strong “sense of place.”

**RECOMMENDATION #11:** Establish protection standards for “Sensitive Areas.”

**RECOMMENDATION #12:** Ensure appropriate provisions to address flooding and stormwater management and encourage the use of innovative low impact stormwater management techniques, when feasible.

**RECOMMENDATION #13:** Eliminate the conversion of single-family homes to multi-family units by adopting a strong land use plan and implementing regulations that clearly differentiates housing types and densities.

**RECOMMENDATION #14:** Eliminate mobile home parks from the Hillsboro Zoning Ordinance due to a lack of public infrastructure.

**RECOMMENDATION #15:** Update the Planned Development section of the Zoning Ordinance to reflect infrastructure limitations and to enhance process, procedure, and design.

**RECOMMENDATION #16:** Update the Table of Permitted Uses in the Hillsboro Zoning Ordinance.

**RECOMMENDATION #17:** Update the Town’s Subdivision Regulations consistent with the recommendations of this Comprehensive Plan.

**RECOMMENDATION #18:** Develop official design standards and guidelines or integrate design illustrations within the Hillsboro Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations.

**RECOMMENDATION #19:** Maintain and develop a road network that calms traffic in residential areas and gives appropriate consideration to the needs of pedestrians and bicyclists.

**RECOMMENDATION #20:** Work with Caroline County to encourage strong land use controls on rural lands adjacent to Hillsboro and coordinate with the County in the review of development proposals near the Town.

## CHAPTER 2: MUNICIPAL GROWTH ELEMENT

Hillsboro is a “Growth Area” for Caroline County as well as a Maryland “Priority Funding Area.” However, very limited growth is planned for Hillsboro because of inadequate public facilities and services, primarily the absence of public water and sewer. Current Town policies and regulations are designed to maintain Hillsboro’s historic small town character at its current size.

The Town is mostly comprised of single-family residential dwellings with some multi-family dwellings. Hillsboro seeks to maintain its residential neighborhood community. At present, several commercial establishments exist at the western edge of Town. No industrial areas exist due to the lack of public infrastructure.

The Town has witnessed a population decline in the last 50 years however it retains a relatively stable population base. Future population growth is severely limited by the Town’s lack of public water and sewerage infrastructure. Hillsboro is not expected to grow in the next six to ten years.

### GROWTH TRENDS & PATTERNS

Hillsboro was initially a small hamlet, evolving in the 1700’s from a ferry site that bridged the Tuckahoe River and connected with Queen Anne’s and Talbot Counties. A later bridge replaced the ferry service and the Town was officially founded in 1784.

There are 72 housing units in Hillsboro. About three-fourths of these are single family detached units, and a little less than 15% are duplexes. The remaining 10% is divided between 3-4-unit multi-family dwellings (four total) and a mobile home (one total). Less than 10% of the Town’s total housing stock is vacant. A majority of the Town’s housing stock (72%) was built in 1939 or earlier. No new homes have been built in the Town since 1995. A quarter of Hillsboro’s residents have been living in the homes they currently occupy since the 1980s.

### GOAL & OBJECTIVES

#### GOAL

Preserve the small town atmosphere and qualities that make Hillsboro a desirable place to live.

#### OBJECTIVES

Preserve Hillsboro’s historic character and size and promote historic preservation incentives.

Ensure stability for single-family residential neighborhoods in Hillsboro.

Ensure that municipal infrastructure and buildings are maintained.

Coordinate with Caroline County regarding land use and growth management for areas surrounding Hillsboro.

<b>Table 2-1: Historic Population Growth 1900 – 1960 - Hillsboro</b>			
<b>Year</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Increase/Decrease</b>	<b>Rate (%)</b>
1900	196	N/A	N/A
1920	229	+33	+17%
1940	181	-48	-27%
1960	201	+20	+11%
Prepared by Peter Johnston & Associates			

As shown in Table 2-1, the largest increase in population for the historic period from 1900 to 1960 is noted in 1920 (17% increase). The largest decrease is noted in 1940 (27% decrease). From 1900 to 1960, Hillsboro grew by an approximate average of 2% over the course of 60 years.

As shown in Table 2-2, from 1970 to 2006 Hillsboro’s population declined by an approximate average of 12% over the course of the last 36 years. This indicates a pattern of slow and gradual decline primarily due to the absence of public infrastructure (water and sewer).

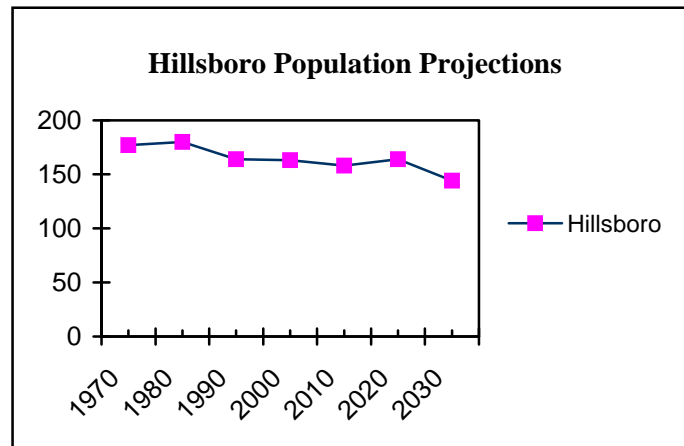
<b>Table 2-2: Historic Population Growth 1970 – 2006 - Hillsboro</b>			
<b>Year</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Increase/Decrease</b>	<b>Rate (%)</b>
1970	177	-24	-14%
1980	180	+3	+2%
1990	164	-16	-10%
2000	163	-1	N/A
2006 (estimate)	158	-5	-3%
Prepared by Peter Johnston & Associates			

## **FUTURE POPULATION GROWTH**

Hillsboro’s lack of significant growth in the past few decades is due to a combination of natural and human constraints. The Town is located along the Tuckahoe River and the presence of nearby environmentally sensitive areas, primarily Chesapeake Bay Critical Areas and the 100-Year Floodplain, limits any sizeable expansion of the Town beyond its existing corporate boundaries. Town growth policies stipulate a desire for minimal growth and a reluctance to establish public water and sewer facilities and services. Therefore, future growth is relegated to infill areas within the existing Town only.

<b>Table 2-3: Projected Population Growth 1970 – 2030 - Hillsboro</b>							
	<b>1970</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2030</b>
Caroline County	19,781	23,143	27,035	29,772	34,200	41,000	47,900
Hillsboro	177	180	164	163	158	164	144
% of County Population	.09%	.08%	.07%	.06%	.05%	.04%	.03%
Prepared by Peter Johnston & Associates							

As shown in Table 2-3, population growth projections for Hillsboro to 2030 indicate a decline in the Town's population. From 1970 to the projected year of 2030, Hillsboro's population is projected to decrease by approximately 19%. From 2000 to the projected date of 2030, population is projected to decrease by 12%. Statistics indicate a gradual loss of people over the next 20 years although no dramatic decreases are projected. Public infrastructure, particularly water and sewer, can assist in arresting this decline and reversing population loss.



Any new development in Hillsboro will require wells and septic systems as permitted by the Caroline County Department of Environmental Health. The functioning of individual septic systems is guided, and often limited, by soil type, the size of the property, and other Environmental Health and Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) regulations. High-density development is precluded because of the absence of municipal water and sewer systems. Without public water and sewer, population decline is likely to continue at its present pace (0.1% per every 10 years).

### MUNICIPAL GROWTH

The "Municipal Growth Element" indicates that Hillsboro's Growth Area consists of infill properties only within the current Town. The potential for new growth includes an additional 4 residential dwelling units or 11 new residents over the course of the next 20 years (2.64 persons per household in Caroline County).

### INFILL POTENTIAL

Limited infill potential exists in Hillsboro. As shown on Map 2-1: Hillsboro Municipal Growth Map, infill areas constitute the extent of the Hillsboro's potential growth area, all of which are located within the Town's current corporate boundaries. This includes six (6) residential lots and two (2) commercial lots. Much of the infill areas are located within the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area 1,000' boundary and two (2) residential parcels are located within the 100' buffer, severely limiting development potential. Both commercial parcels are located in the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area 1,000' boundary.

Upon review of existing Geographic Information Systems data and Maryland Property View (MPV) data, as prepared by the Maryland Department of Planning, there are 81 parcels total in Hillsboro. The average acreage for all parcels is 0.61 acres. Eleven (11) parcels are 1 acre or more, all the rest are less than an acre. The average square footage of lots within Town is 26,572 square feet.

<b>Table 2-4: 2008 Infill Potential - Hillsboro</b>			
<b>Parcel</b>	<b>Acreage</b>	<b>Square Footage</b>	<b>Zoning</b>
Parcel 1	0.758	33,019	Residential
Parcel 2	0.619	26,964	Residential
Parcel 3	0.672	29,272	Residential
Parcel 4	0.146	6,360	Residential
Parcel 5	0.209	9,104	Commercial
Parcel 6	0.166	7,231	Commercial
Parcel 7	0.407	17,729	Residential
Parcel 8	0.197	8,581	Residential
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3.174</b>	<b>138,260</b>	
<b>AVERAGE SIZE</b>	<b>0.396</b>	<b>17,250</b>	

\*Note: Parcels 4, 5, 6, and 8 (shown in gray) indicate properties unlikely to meet Caroline County Environmental Health Department regulations for on-site well and septic system.

There are eight (8) vacant parcels in Hillsboro, which constitute the Town’s potential for new growth. These lots are indicated and numbered on Map 2-1. Table 2-4 indicates a total acreage for these lots of approximately 3 acres or 138,260 square feet. The average lot size for all parcels is 0.39 acres or 17,250 square feet.

**LAND USE PATTERNS**

Land use patterns in Hillsboro indicate approximately 4 acres of vacant or underutilized properties (infill opportunities).

Six (6) parcels are zoned residential totaling 2.799 acres or 121,924 square feet. The average lot size for residential parcels is 0.5 acres (1/2 acre). Two (2) parcels are zoned for commercial use and total 0.375 acres. The average lot size for commercial is 0.19 acres.

**LAND USE PATTERNS**

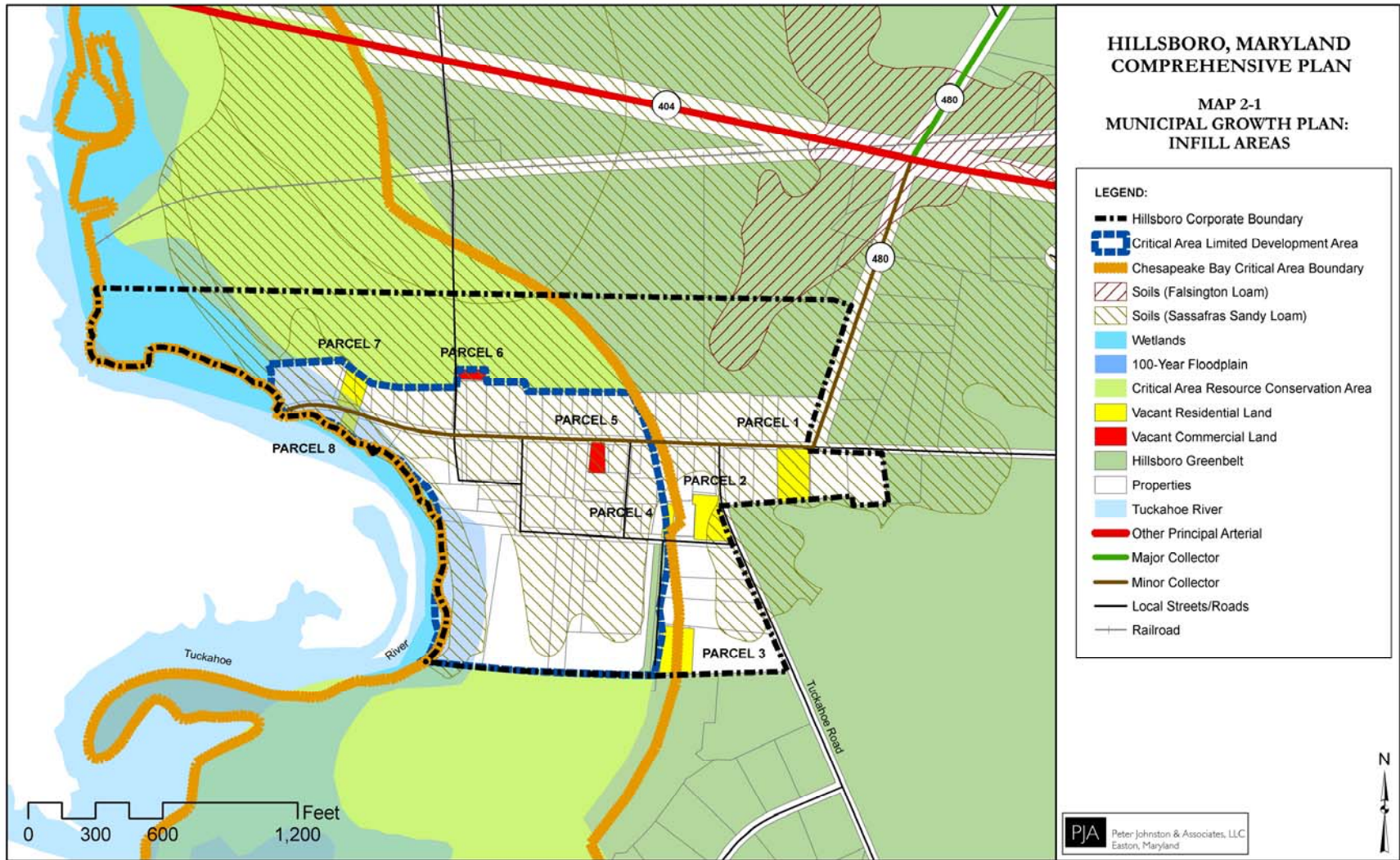
Land use patterns indicate little population and housing growth due to a lack of public infrastructure, which is consistent with the Town’s desire to remain a small rural town.

Parcels 4, 5, 6, and 8 are likely too small to meet the regulations of the Caroline County Environmental Health Department for onsite well and septic system (this includes both commercial properties). Only parcels 1, 2, 3, and 7 are potentially large enough to accommodate well and septic, all of which are residentially zoned.

**LAND USE PATTERNS**

Land use patterns indicate that most of the land area in Hillsboro is single family residential housing with few vacant/underutilized properties.

The potential exists to add a maximum of 4 additional residential dwelling units in Hillsboro. Caroline County’s average household size is 2.64 persons per dwelling unit therefore Hillsboro could add an additional 11 people over the course of the next 20 years unless public water and sewer becomes available. This rate of growth presents no significant impacts on public infrastructure for the Town or County. Any new residential dwelling units constructed also would be restricted by Hillsboro Chesapeake Bay Critical Area regulations and 100-Year Floodplain restrictions. This could decrease the number of allowable units.





## INTER-JURISDICTIONAL COORDINATION

Implementation recommendations for the 2008 *Hillsboro Comprehensive Plan* highlight the need for increased inter-jurisdictional coordination with Caroline County. Specifically, the Comprehensive Plan emphasizes the need for County government to limit development around the Town in order to protect the rural character of the community and develop coordination procedures to afford the Town an opportunity to review and comment on nearby development proposals.

Caroline County and Hillsboro should coordinate development review for County projects. Hillsboro should engage the existing Caroline County Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) when development projects are proposed near the Town. The TAC meets once a month with an annually published schedule. It includes relevant federal, state, and county agencies and entities responsible for development review. The following opportunities between Hillsboro and Caroline County are consistent with land use and growth management goals and objectives for inter-jurisdictional coordination espoused by the Town, Caroline County, and the State of Maryland.

## IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

**RECOMMENDATION #1:** Preserve the small town historic and rural character of Hillsboro at its present size.

**RECOMMENDATION #2:** Preserve Hillsboro's single-family neighborhood community identity and initiate local municipal policies and regulations to stabilize neighborhoods and limit population decline, which potentially decreases property values.

Given that the Town is served by individual wells and septic systems, this includes limiting the conversion of single-family residential dwellings to multi-family dwellings and preventing mobile homes, both of which produce added environmental strains.

**RECOMMENDATION #3:** Promote the upkeep and maintenance of existing buildings by adopting a building code, livability code, nuisance ordinance, and related items to improve and maintain the appearance of Town.

**RECOMMENDATION #4:** Promote historic rehabilitation and revitalization tax credits and other historic preservation measures to improve the existing housing stock, most of which is historic (constructed before 1939).

**RECOMMENDATION #5:** Coordinate with Caroline County regarding higher intensity County zoning, which surrounds the Town including residential, commercial, and highway commercial uses.

County residential and commercial zoned properties are likely to develop in the near future at permitted densities, particularly if MD Route 404 is dualized. Hillsboro should request enhanced coordination from the Caroline County Department of Planning and

Codes Administration to ensure compatible development with Hillsboro's historic character and unique location. Direct access for developed properties onto MD Route 404 and strip development in general should be discouraged.

**RECOMMENDATION #6:** Coordinate with Caroline County to eliminate the proposed Hillsboro Growth Area from the West Caroline County Comprehensive Plan and include this area as a Town Greenbelt in the West County Plan to create consistency between the County and Town Comprehensive Plans.

**RECOMMENDATION #7:** Meet with the Caroline County Planning Commission to discuss the Hillsboro Comprehensive Plan.

**RECOMMENDATION #8:** Coordinate with the Caroline County Department of Environmental Health and Maryland Department of the Environment to utilize "Flush Fee" funds for the upgrade of on-site septic systems to biological nutrient removal systems (best management practices) to reduce nutrient loadings.

## CHAPTER 3: COMMUNITY FACILITIES & TRANSPORTATION

Community facilities traditionally include water and wastewater, public education, transportation systems, institutional spaces, police and fire, hospitals and medical care services, as well as parks and libraries. The planned and orderly assessment, development, and expansion of adequate community facilities and services for governments are essential.

### **PUBLIC AND PRIVATE FACILITIES AND SERVICES**

#### **Part I: Public Buildings**

A Town Hall exists in Hillsboro for the conduct of local municipal government business. Local churches often have community halls, which are available to the public and can assist local government. Meeting places have a public social, political, and economic function.

Public and private facilities and services include community meeting areas (such as town halls, churches, and other public/private spaces). For example, town and community halls are places where local government can meet with the public and make decisions regarding their communities.

The Hillsboro Town Hall is located in a former school building on Church Street on a property adjacent to the Hillsboro Park. The facility is used by the Town Commissioners for their regular meetings and is available to the community for events and assemblies.

### **GOAL & OBJECTIVES**

#### **GOAL**

**Provide an appropriate array of adequate community facilities and services required to maintain the public health, safety, and welfare of the residents of Hillsboro.**

#### **OBJECTIVES**

**Ensure the continued expansion of public facilities and services commensurate with local financial capabilities and demand for services, and in a manner which is least disruptive to the environment.**

**Continue to examine the pattern and direction of future growth and assess impacts on public facilities and services.**

**Ensure that the road and street systems are maintained for the safe, convenient and efficient movement of people, goods and services.**

**Design new streets and sidewalks to fit with existing neighborhoods and facilitate circulation through the community.**

**Work with appropriate local and State agencies to provide assistance in repairing or reconstructing sidewalks and other infrastructure systems.**

**Evaluate vacant lots to see if they can be used for off-street parking lots, especially near neighborhood commercial uses.**

**Adopt zoning and subdivision regulations that ensure that all future development provide adequate off-street parking.**

## **Part II: Parks & Recreation Facilities**

Hillsboro Park is the only municipal park facility located in the Town. Classified by the County as a neighborhood park, it occupies a 1.84-acre site alongside the Town Hall property (formerly a school) and contains a ball field and playground equipment. The *2005 Caroline County Land Preservation and Parks and Recreation Plan* recommends the expansion of the Hillsboro Park facility, including the addition of walking trails, multipurpose fields, and other amenities.

The County-owned Hillsboro Public Landing and Boat Ramp, located just off Main Street, provide public access to Tuckahoe Creek. In early 2007 the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) approved an FY2008 Waterway Improvement Grant for \$99,000.00 to replace the existing boat ramp and access pier to American Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines, and to replace the existing wooden bulkhead with stone revetment.

Several regional facilities and services are located near Hillsboro and should be included in the comprehensive inventory. Assets include Stoney Point Public Landing, a Tuckahoe River water access area in Caroline County located on Tuckahoe Road. Assets also include nearby Tuckahoe State Park and Adkins Arboretum.

Tuckahoe State Park is located just a few miles north of Hillsboro. The 3,800-acre park surrounds the upper reaches of Tuckahoe Creek and contains a 60-acre lake. Both the creek and the lake are accessible for boating and fishing. The park contains 20 miles of scenic hiking, biking, and equestrian trails, as well as picnic grounds and a playground for children. Public activities and special events are offered at the park on a seasonal basis. Activities include day camps, canoe trips, children's presentations and displays, and adult programs. On weekends from Memorial Day through Labor Day the park offers a number of free family activities.

Adkins Arboretum, a 400-acre nature preserve, sits largely within Tuckahoe State Park and offers four miles of surfaced walkways leading through native woodlands that feature over 600 species of shrubs, trees, wildflowers and grasses. The Arboretum offers programs year-round in ecology, horticulture, and natural history for all ages.

The current *Caroline County Land Preservation and Recreation Master Plan* projects the future creation of a County greenways system. Both the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the *Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area Management Plan* recommend that planning for a County greenways system include a potential Hillsboro Rail Trail along an inactive railroad spur between Hillsboro and Denton. This potential trail could connect Tuckahoe State Park to the proposed Denton Municipal Greenway and has the possibility of being extended through Delaware to Rehoboth Beach.

### Part III: Education - Schools

There are no schools located within the boundaries of Hillsboro. Most of the Town’s elementary school-age children attend Ridgely Elementary School; some attend Denton Elementary. Older students attend Lockerman Middle School and North Caroline High School, both of which are located in Denton. Table 3-1 contains the State Rated Capacity of each of the four schools that serve the Town of Hillsboro.

<b>School Site</b>	<b>2006 SRC</b>	<b>% Capacity</b>
Ridgely Elementary School	443	91%
Denton Elementary School	664	78%
Lockerman Middle School	997	83%
North Caroline High School	1213	96%

SRC: State Rated Capacity  
Sources: Caroline County, Maryland Board of Education; MD State Department of Education

The *Caroline County School Master Plan* includes recommendations for expansions and/or additions of facilities to meet anticipated needs. New facilities proposed in the Master Plan that will serve Hillsboro and include the addition of one new middle school to augment capacity at Lockerman Middle School and additional high school facilities to supplement capacity at North Caroline High School.

The *Caroline County Public Schools Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)* anticipates that a new elementary school will be built in the Denton area probably within the next ten years (by 2016). The CIP also includes the construction of a new middle school within the next ten years, most likely to be located on the campus of North Caroline High School.

The timing and scale of improvements planned for the public schools that serve the Town of Hillsboro appear to be adequate to accommodate what little growth is anticipated in the Town.

### Part IV: Medical Facilities & Services

With an aging population base in Hillsboro expanded resources and services will be required for emergency and medical services. Development and expansion of associated facilities and services should occur in nearby municipalities with water and wastewater infrastructure or within Caroline County as a regional effort with neighboring counties.

Medical services are critical, particularly for a region with an older and/or aging population base. The Eastern Shore is becoming a retirement area. This phenomenon is evident in surrounding counties such as Talbot and Worcester, where the median age is over 50. The “graying” of the Eastern Shore presents difficulties in supplying adequate medical facilities and services.

## **Part V: Emergency; Police; & Fire Protection Services**

Hillsboro has an aging population base and primarily relies on Caroline County and larger nearby towns for emergency services. There are two types of emergency management services in Caroline County that provide inter-related services, including Emergency Management Services (EM) and Emergency Medical Services (EMS). Each is an individual department within Caroline County's local government structure.

Police protection for the Town is provided by the Caroline County Sheriff's Department and the Maryland State Police, both of which operate out of Denton. Fire protection is provided by the Queen Anne-Hillsboro Volunteer Fire Company. The Fire Company also provides Emergency Medical Services (EMS) in conjunction with Caroline County. The service operates twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week and provides paramedic and basic life support medical services, as well as Advanced Life Support (ALS), which provides fast medical attention to victims before they are transported to the hospital. Members of the County ALS staff are trained and certified professionals.

While no major growth in the Town is anticipated, the need to expand police protection and emergency services and/or facilities should be assessed as population increases. Given the size of Hillsboro and limited future growth, expansion of these facilities and services is the responsibility of Caroline County. The expansion of and increased funding for emergency services are the most critical including emergency management, emergency medical, fire, law enforcement (police), and health services. Volunteer fire departments may require local government assistance to expand facilities and services as these are now non-profit.

## **Part VI: Water & Sewer**

Hillsboro maintains no public water and sewer facilities and services. Water is supplied by private wells located on individual properties. Wastewater disposal is provided by on-site sewage disposal systems (septic systems). Public water and sewer facilities and services are not anticipated by the Town. The use of individual wells and septic systems has precluded the need for public water and sewer in Hillsboro.

## **Part VII: Mid-Shore Regional Landfill**

The Holly Road landfill site was purchased by the County in 1975. With the formation of the Mid-Shore Landfill Cooperative in the late 1980's, including the counties of Caroline, Kent, Queen Anne's, and Talbot, the landfill was designated as the second site for the Mid-Shore Regional Landfill II to serve the area's waste needs from 2011 to 2030. After 2030 the next landfill host will be Queen Anne's County. The landfill will impact Hillsboro, primarily additional traffic along MD Routes 404 and 480. Caroline County should initiate a comprehensive study of roads and needed road improvements to ensure the appropriate circulation of people and goods and minimize traffic related impacts on municipalities.

## Part VIII: Transportation

Hillsboro is located along MD Route 404 (Shore Highway) and MD Route 404 alternate (Main Street/Hillsboro Road in Town limits) in the westernmost part of Caroline County, a region that is experiencing increased development pressure along the arterial highway. MD Route 404 is the primary and only arterial highway in Caroline County.

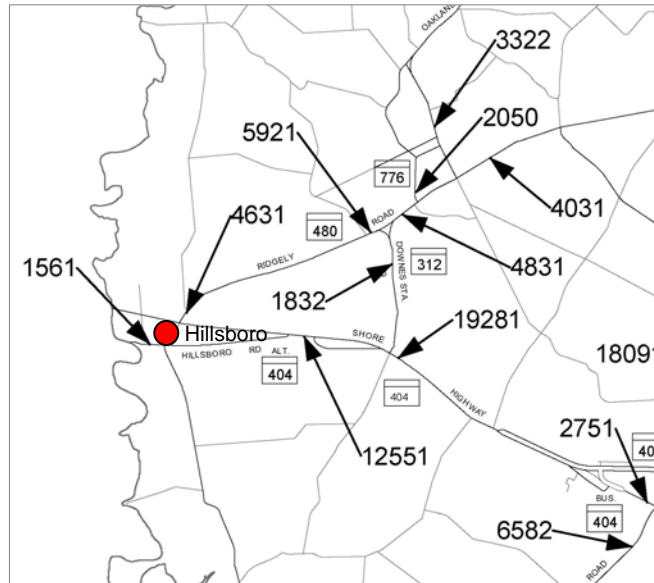
MD Route 404, which becomes Main Street within the town limits, is known as “Shore Highway” and is a major transportation corridor in the region. Area residents use it to travel east into Delaware and west to access U.S. Route 50. During peak summer months, tens of thousands of tourists follow MD Route 404 en route from the Chesapeake Bay Bridge to Delaware beaches.

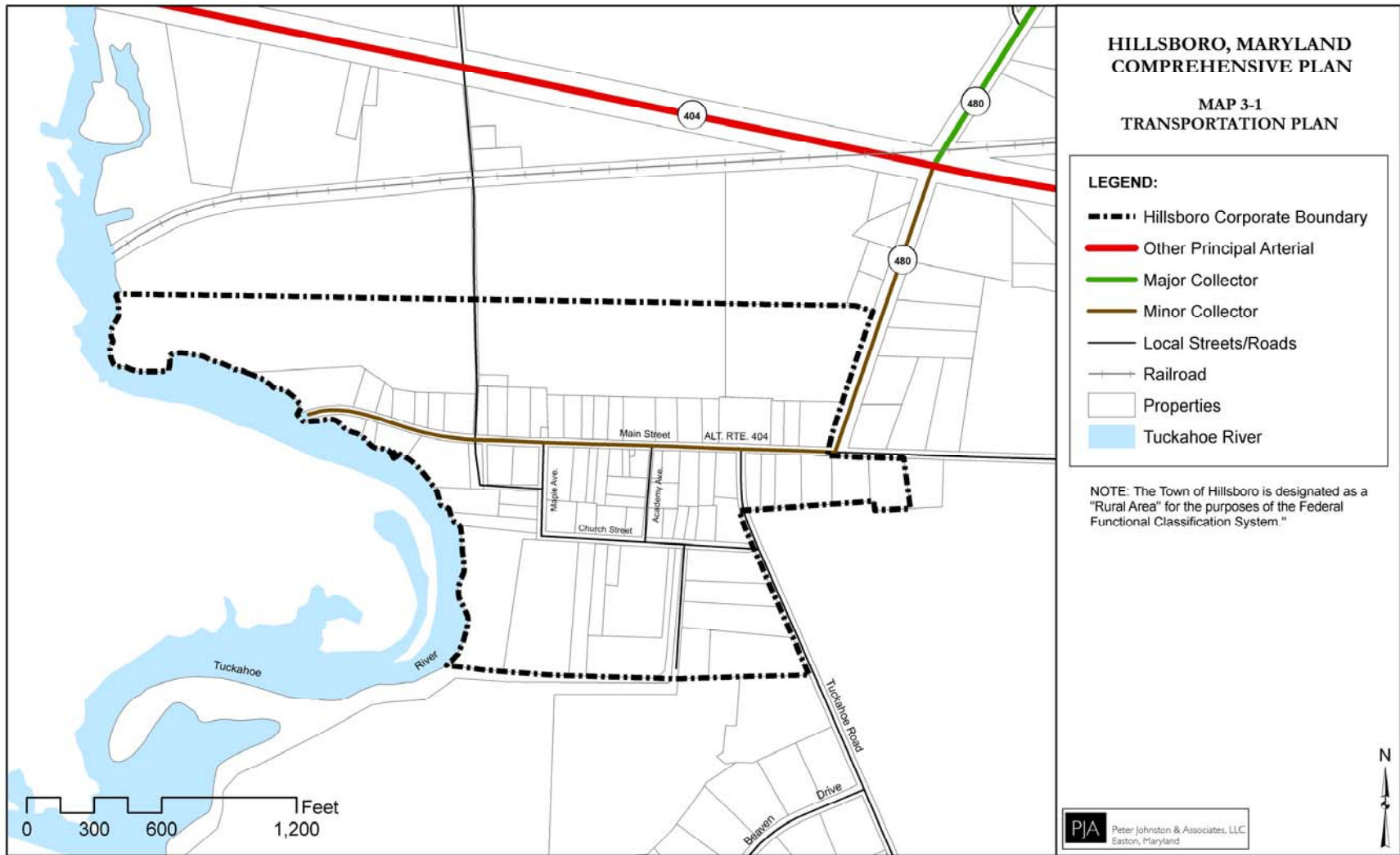
MD Route 480 (Hillsboro/Ridgely Road) is an eight-mile, two-lane road that connects MD Route 404 in Hillsboro to MD Route 313 in Greensboro, passing through Ridgely. The proximity of the future site of the Mid-Shore Regional Landfill (an industrial land use, scheduled to open in 2010) will most likely bring a significant increase in vehicular traffic, particularly trucks, to Route 404, 480 and 313.

Local roads within the boundaries of Hillsboro make up the remainder of the Town’s transportation system (see Map 3-1, Street Classification).

It should be noted, that County Zoning Districts in the Hillsboro region indicate intensive residential, commercial, highway commercial, and industrial uses. Land uses surrounding Hillsboro combined with local traffic and traffic for beach resorts, will contribute to increased vehicular volumes on MD Routes 404 and 480.

Daily Traffic Volumes in Hillsboro Vicinity







MD Routes 404 and 480 are maintained by the Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) and is serviced by the SHA's District 2 Shop. The SHA has scheduled improvements for 404 in the near future, including dualization, which could further increase traffic and development pressures near Hillsboro. The *Caroline County Comprehensive Plan* discourages intensive strip-development along MD Route 404 near Hillsboro. In addition, the Plan recommends that the State construct an overpass or other appropriate upgrades at the 404/480 intersection to insure safety and circulation.

According to the SHA, the State's "Highway Needs Inventory includes a project on Shore Highway from U.S. Route 50 to "Business" MD Route 404 in Denton. This includes a divided highway reconstruction with access control improvements. The FY2008 to 2013 Consolidated Transportation Program includes the portion of Shore Highway between Tuckahoe Creek to east of MD 480 for construction. Construction is anticipated by SHA in the Fall of 2008. Additional phases depend on funding and no other capital improvements are planned in the vicinity of Hillsboro. SHA has indicated that an overpass at MD Route 404 and 480 is not planned for this signalized intersection. In fact, no improvements are planned beyond the present dualization project with access controls.

Caroline County should develop the *MD Route 404 Transportation Corridor Plan* to highlight desired actions for Shore Highway. This includes the application of parkway standards, gateway treatments for municipalities, and other mechanisms to improve safety and circulation and preserve the County's rural character along the highway. Future regulations may require that properties located along the highway and currently designated for residential, commercial or industrial development be rezoned.

Hillsboro requires County assistance for implementing necessary main street improvements begun by the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) and State Highway Administration (SHA) in 2000 under the "Main Street and Neighborhood Conservation Program." This includes increased parking, enhanced connectivity to public spaces, improved curb, sidewalk, and gutter systems, trail connections, as well as street tree plantings and maintenance. The goal is to improve the overall aesthetic appearance of Hillsboro. Presently, SHA has indicated that main street assistance in Hillsboro was placed on hold due to budgetary constraints. Although, some funding has been restored, first consideration will be given to projects that have significant safety issues and already have preliminary engineering.

County technical assistance includes working with SHA to promote Hillsboro as a primary applicant for Main Street funding. In addition, the Town is located within a "Certified Heritage Area" under the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority (MHAA) *Heritage Tourism and Preservation Program* and along the proposed "Underground Railroad Scenic Byway." Designation as a Certified Heritage Area provides Hillsboro with priority status in the State designation of Neighborhood Conservation projects. Caroline County and Hillsboro should work closely with Eastern Shore Heritage Incorporated (ESHI) and the Scenic Byway, the regional entity responsible for the Heritage Area, to insure Hillsboro Main Street improvements are implemented.

## IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

Hillsboro's lack of significant growth in the past few decades is due to a combination of natural and human constraints. The presence of nearby environmentally sensitive areas, particularly Chesapeake Bay Critical Areas and the 100-Year Floodplain, limits any sizeable expansion of the Town beyond its existing corporate boundaries. In addition, Town policies stipulate a reluctance to establish public water and sewer facilities and services. This is coupled with a desire for minimal growth. Presently, growth is relegated to a few scattered infill areas within the existing Town.

Any new development in Hillsboro will utilize traditional well and septic systems as permitted by the Caroline County Department of Environmental Health. Soil limitations preclude high-density development. Moreover, the Town's Vision to "preserve the small town atmosphere and qualities that make Hillsboro a desirable place to live" has been and continues to be the foundation of its planning efforts. As a result, development rates historically have been low and public infrastructure within the Town is limited to local streets and the most basic community amenities and services.

**RECOMMENDATION #1:** Design new streets and sidewalks to fit with existing neighborhoods and facilitate circulation through the community.

**RECOMMENDATION #2:** Improve existing streets with walkways, where necessary, to accommodate pedestrian and bicycle movement.

Maryland SHA policy is to make all State routes bicycle compatible to promote alternative modes of transportation, which also includes walking and carpooling. The SHA "Sidewalk Retrofit Program" can assist the Town with multi-modal transportation objectives.

**RECOMMENDATION #3:** Work with appropriate local and State agencies to provide assistance in repairing or reconstructing sidewalks and roads in the community.

**RECOMMENDATION #4:** Evaluate vacant lots to see if they can be used for off-street parking lots, especially near neighborhood commercial uses.

**RECOMMENDATION #5:** Adopt zoning and subdivision regulations that insure that all future development provides adequate off-street parking.

**RECOMMENDATION #6:** Ensure adequate park and open space land and facilities to meet current and projected demands.

**RECOMMENDATION #7:** Coordinate planning and programming of community facilities with the appropriate County and State agencies and entities.

**RECOMMENDATION #8:** Require adequate public facilities to serve any proposed new development.

## CHAPTER 4: RESOURCE CONSERVATION

The primary goal of the *Hillsboro Comprehensive Plan* is to promote “Sensitive Areas” protection to minimize adverse impacts on water quality and habitat.

### SENSITIVE ENVIRONMENTAL AREAS

Article 66B of the *Annotated Code of Maryland* (Planning & Zoning Act) requires that every County adopt policies to address the protection of environmentally sensitive areas, including:

- Streams and Stream Buffers;
- Steep Slopes;
- 100-Year Floodplains;
- Habitats of Threatened and Endangered Species; and
- Wetlands.

House Bill 1141 (HB 1141), which was passed during the Maryland Legislature’s 2006 session, expanded sensitive areas elements of comprehensive plans to include wetlands and agricultural and forest resource protection as conservation areas.

Hillsboro policies advocate the preservation of scenic, cultural, historic, and environmental resources in the Town. In 1997, the *Hillsboro Comprehensive Plan* highlighted the protection of sensitive areas in accordance with state law including streams and stream buffers, the 100-Year Floodplain, habitats of threatened and endangered species, and steep slopes. Hillsboro policies also promote the protection of scenic vistas, wetlands, historic properties, and archeological resources.

### GOAL & OBJECTIVES

#### GOAL

Promote sensitive areas protection to minimize adverse impacts on water quality and habitat.

#### OBJECTIVES

Protect steep slopes and stream buffers in accordance with state laws and the Hillsboro Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Program.

Protect the scenic beauty of the Tuckahoe River by limiting development in accordance with the Chesapeake Bay Critical Areas Program.

Protect wells and septic systems requiring development and redevelopment to demonstrate that there is minimal impact on water quality.

Avoid development in the 100-Year Floodplain.

Protect the Town’s scenic vistas by working with the County to encourage strong land use controls on rural lands adjacent to Hillsboro and coordinate with the County in the review of development proposals near the Town.

Work with local, state, and federal agencies to correct existing shore erosion problems and encourage property owners to participate in tree planting programs.

Employ “Best Management Practices” BMP’s to minimize adverse impacts on water quality and habitat.

Update the Hillsboro Geographic Information System-GIS for the mapping of natural resources and sensitive areas.

Map 4-1 illustrates the Sensitive Areas located in and around Hillsboro. As indicated in Table 4-1 and on Map 4-1, the Hillsboro Planning Area contains approximately 66.2 acres of land designated by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources as environmentally sensitive. This includes National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) Wetlands, floodplain, and land within the Critical Area (note: these resources overlap each other along the shoreline of the Tuckahoe River).

<b>Table 4-1: 2008 Hillsboro Sensitive Areas</b>	
<b>Classification</b>	<b>Acreage</b>
Wetlands (National Wetlands Inventory – NWI)	25.8 acres
100-Year Floodplain	6 acres
Chesapeake Bay Critical Area	34.4 acres
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>66.2 acres</b>
Prepared by Peter Johnston & Associates	

## **Part I: Streams & Stream Buffers**

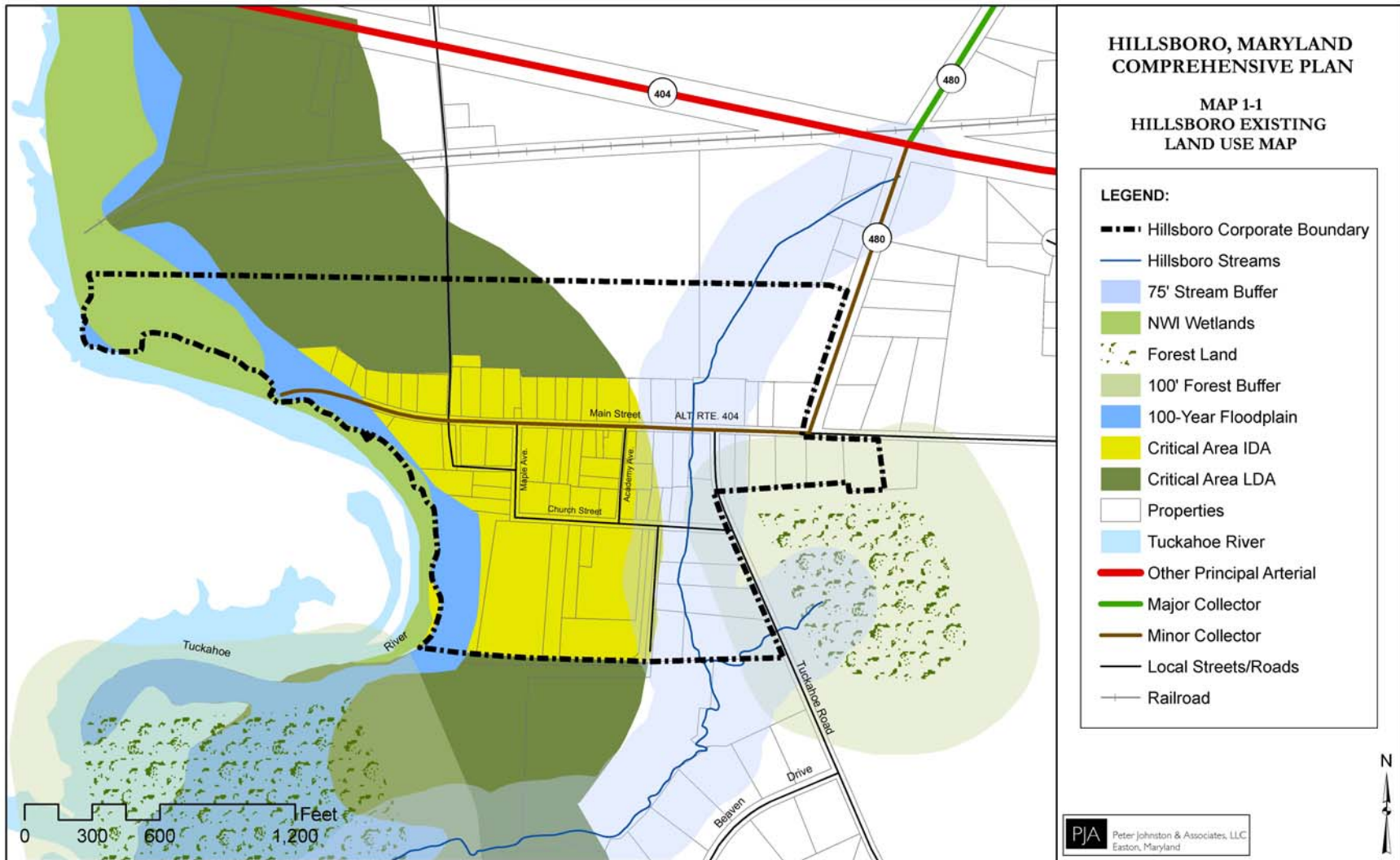
Hillsboro is part of the Upper Choptank River Watershed. The watershed extends through several Maryland counties including Caroline, Dorchester, Queen Anne’s, and Talbot as well as parts of Delaware. Major water resources in the watershed include the Choptank River, Tuckahoe River, and Marshyhope Creek.

The region also includes numerous streams that feed into these primary tributaries. Streams and their buffers are important resources that accomplish the following:

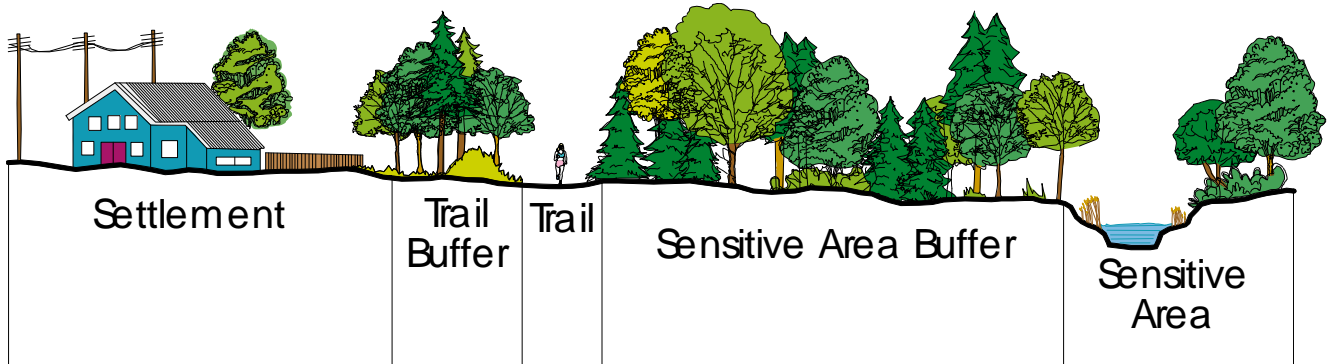
- Support recreational fishing and serve as spawning areas for commercial fish stock (such as rockfish);
- Encompass areas subject to flooding that can result in the loss of life and property, allowing for floodwater to be channeled;
- Provide a home to countless species of animals and plants; and
- Include floodplains, wetlands, and wooded slopes that are important components of the regional ecosystem.

In Hillsboro, buffers located along the Tuckahoe River are tools for protecting water quality. The Tuckahoe River is a tidally influenced waterway and an integral part of the watershed. Enhanced buffering along tidal tributaries is critical for the healthy functioning of the overall hydrologic ecosystem and for restoration of the Chesapeake Bay.

Buffers serve as protection areas when located adjacent to streams. Buffers reduce sediment, nitrogen, phosphorous, and other runoff pollutants by acting as filters, thus minimizing damage. The effectiveness of buffers to protect stream water quality is influenced by their width, accounting for factors such as: contiguous or nearby slopes; soil erodibility; adjacent wetlands or floodplains; vegetation type within the buffer (some plants are more effective at nutrient uptake than others); and maintenance of the buffer.



Buffers provide habitat for wetland and upland plants, forming the basis of healthy biological communities. A variety of animals use the natural vegetation as a corridor for food and cover. A buffer system also provides connections between remaining forest areas to support wildlife movement.



### Part II: Step Slopes

Step slopes are inclines of 15% or greater. Usually located along river and stream beds, steep slopes provide an environment that facilitates the movement of soil and pollutants if land disturbances occur. Erosion control is achieved by the regulation of development on steep slopes because such areas represent the greatest opportunity for accelerated soil loss, which carries sedimentation and pollution to streams.

Step slopes are rare in Caroline County, with only 1% of soils having been identified as having a slope greater than 15%. Most steep slopes occur along rivers and streams adjacent to or near tidal areas. Although most of the topography in and around Hillsboro is flat, there are steep slopes located along the shore of the Tuckahoe River, which borders the western side of the Town. These are protected by the *Hillsboro Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Regulations*.

### Part III: 100-Year Floodplain

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

Approximately 6 acres of Hillsboro are located within the 100-Year Floodplain, along the western side of the Town. . These areas are prone to flooding during storm surges and heavy rainfall due to location. Development restrictions within the floodplain are encouraged. This includes ensuring the proper construction of new structures to avoid destruction and loss of property during adverse weather conditions. Flood-related losses may result from:

- Structures, which are inappropriately located, inadequately elevated, or otherwise unprotected and vulnerable to floods; or
- Development, which increases flood damage to other lands.

Hillsboro participates in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). The Community Rating System of the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) National Flood Insurance Program provides participants protection against catastrophic damage of loss from flooding for nearly any type of building and its contents.

Communities participate in the Program by adopting and enforcing local ordinances that reduce future flood losses by regulating new construction. These measures include the adoption of floodplain zoning provisions designed to limit damage to structures in flood hazard areas and the adoption of special building codes for affected areas. These measures, in accordance with HUD standards, require that all new construction and substantial improvements to existing structures in flood-prone areas be elevated or flood-proofed to the level of the 100-year flood.

FEMA's Community Rating System rewards discounts on flood insurance premiums to communities that voluntarily take steps beyond the minimum requirements of the Flood Insurance Program. Premium discounts resulting from these Community Rating System activities range from five percent to 45 percent depending on the level of participation. Hillsboro's rating currently earns the Town the lowest (5 percent) discount possible on its flood insurance premiums. While this is a commendable effort, it is recommended that the Town Commissioners take the steps necessary to strengthen flood protection policies and improve Hillsboro's rating in the FEMA National Flood Insurance Program's Community Rating System.

#### **Part IV: Sensitive Species Habitat**

Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) maintains vector data delineating areas that contain habitat for rare, threatened, and endangered species and rare natural community types. Areas are assigned to Groups according to habitat: Group 1 denotes habitats of Federally-listed species, Group 2 denotes State-listed species, and Group 3 contains species or natural communities of concern to DNR but with no official status.

Currently, there are no recorded habitats of rare, threatened or endangered species located within the boundaries or possible growth area for Hillsboro. The closest habitats are on large tracts of land located on protected land in Tuckahoe State Park, a few miles north of the Town. These tracts contain Group 2 (State-listed species) habitats.

#### **Part V: Wetlands**

Wetlands are transitional areas between land and water systems that are either at or near the water table, and are continuously or intermittently inundated with water. Tidal wetlands are found along rivers and streams that are tidally influenced, such as the Choptank or Tuckahoe Rivers. Non-tidal wetlands are sometimes influenced solely by

groundwater. Wetlands support a variety of plants that contribute to the natural food chain and also act as a filter for pollution from land sources.

Three classifications of wetlands exist: National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) of non-tidal wetlands, Maryland DNR Inventory (DNR) of tidal wetlands, and Wetlands of Special State Concern (WSSC). Non-tidal wetlands can be found on the eastern and western sides of Hillsboro.

The NWI wetland classification system is tiered, with wetlands and deep water habitats divided into five major systems. The five systems include Marine (open ocean and associated coastline), Estuarine (salt marshes and brackish tidal water), Riverine (rivers, creeks, and streams), Lacustrine (lakes and deep ponds), and Palustrine (shallow ponds, marshes, swamps, sloughs). Systems are further subdivided into subsystems which reflect hydrologic conditions. Below the subsystem is the class, which describes the appearance of the wetland in terms of vegetation and ground cover. These two classes are further subdivided into subclasses that are described in terms of life form and composition.

There are a little over 25 acres of NWI wetlands within the Town boundaries. Hillsboro's western edge, which borders the Tuckahoe River, is lined with alternating areas of open-water Riverine and forested Palustrine wetlands. To the east of Town, just across Rte. 480, forested Palustrine wetlands can be found.

Wetlands located in Hillsboro are sufficiently protected by both state and federal laws.

## **Part VI: Chesapeake Bay Critical Area**

In 1997, Hillsboro adopted a "Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Ordinance" separate from the Comprehensive Plan, which controls development within 1,000 feet of the Tuckahoe River. The Ordinance designates Limited Development Areas (LDA's) as well as Resource Conservation Areas (RCA's). Caroline County recently updated their Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Program, Ordinance, and official Zoning Maps, which can assist Hillsboro in preparing updates to the program.

Approximately 34 acres of Hillsboro is located within the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area. This constitutes over one-half of the Town. Development limitations exist due to the presence of steep slopes and wetlands along the Tuckahoe River. The enhancement of buffering and the prevention of soil erosion should be encouraged to preserve water quality and aquatic habitat.

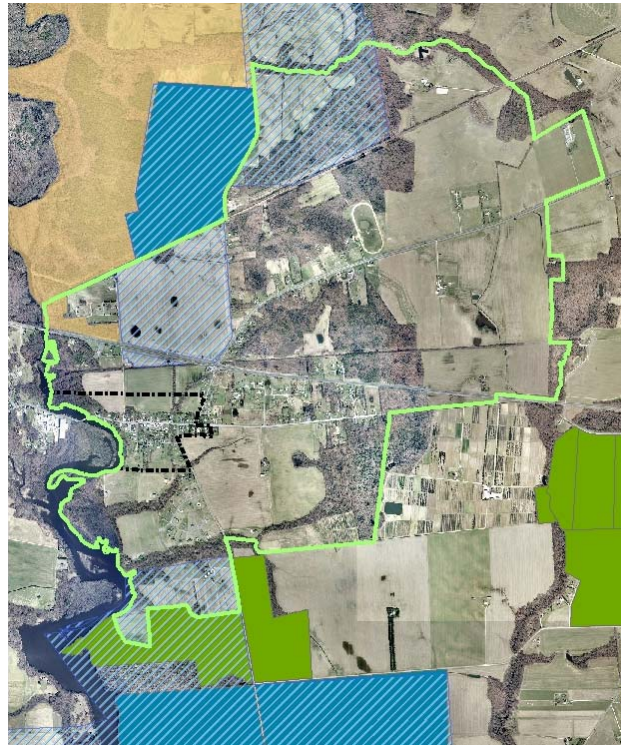


## LAND PRESERVATION & CONSERVATION

Hillsboro policies advocate the preservation of scenic, cultural, historic, and environmental resources, including agricultural land resources located in Caroline County. Map 4-2 illustrates lands in and around the Town that are protected by public and private conservation efforts.

Figure I depicts the Hillsboro Greenbelt area. The proposed Hillsboro Greenbelt encompasses approximately 1,981 acres surrounding the existing Town (marked by the solid green line). Currently, the Hillsboro Greenbelt has 16 acres of preserved land (State Parkland in Tuckahoe State Park) and approximately 220 acres indicated for Rural Legacy preservation (Rural Legacy Planning Boundary). However, presently there are no Rural Legacy easements in the Greenbelt.

**Figure I: Hillsboro Greenbelt**



<b>Table 4-2: 2008 Land Preservation Areas – Hillsboro Greenbelt</b>	
<b>Classification</b>	<b>Acreage</b>
State Parkland	16 acres
Rural Legacy Planning Areas (RLE)	220 acres
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>236 acres</b>

### **Part I: Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Program Fund (MALPF)**

The *Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Program Fund (MALPF)* is the State’s most effective program for preserving agricultural land. MALPF also has been the most successful agricultural preservation initiative to achieve land preservation and conservation goals.

Agricultural land preservation districts provide a temporary reserve, where the land cannot be developed in a non-agricultural use for five years. Once within an agricultural land preservation district, landowners may remain permanently in the program (easement). Land held in agricultural land preservation districts cannot be developed for non-agricultural uses but landowners are able to sell development rights to the State in return for placing a conservation easement on the land.

## **Part II: Rural Legacy**

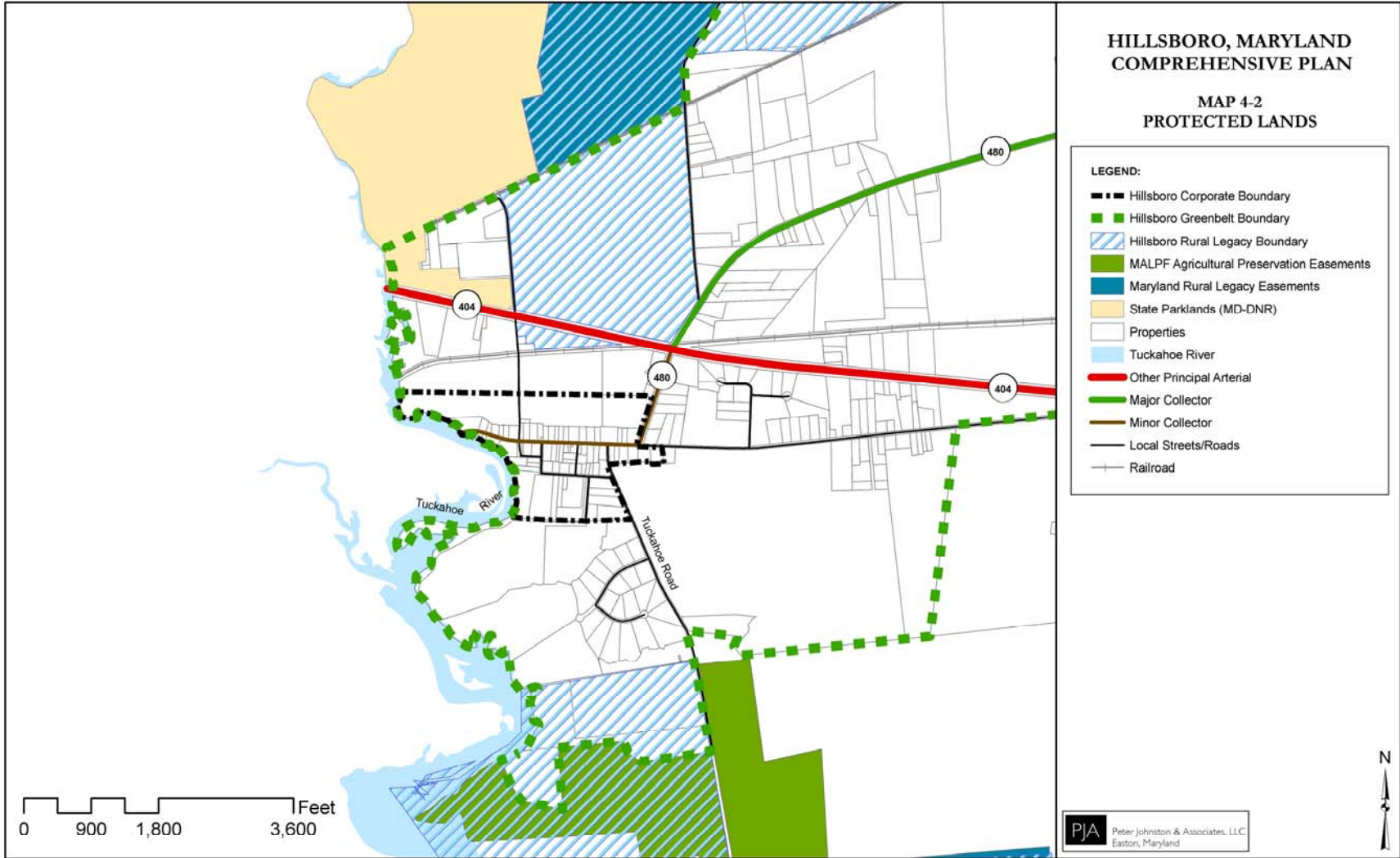
The Rural Legacy Program was created by the State of Maryland in 1997 to protect large, contiguous tracts of the State's most significant cultural and natural resource lands through grants made to local applicants. Easements or fee estate purchases are sought from willing landowners in order to protect areas vulnerable to sprawl development that can weaken an area's natural resources, thereby jeopardizing the economic value of farming, forestry, recreation and tourism.

The Town of Hillsboro is situated between two large tracts of the Tuckahoe Agricultural Security Corridor, a Rural Legacy Area (RLA) that joins three focus areas – the Marshyhope, Sassafras, and Tuckahoe areas, into one large RLA. The Corridor concept was developed to focus local, regional, and national protections efforts on one of the largest, contiguous blocks of highly productive farmland in the mid-Atlantic, an area which has seen rapid development since the early 1990s.

Safeguarding the agricultural economy of the Eastern Shore is the goal of the three Agricultural Security Corridor focus areas. The Tuckahoe Agriculture Corridor is located just above and below Hillsboro, west and south of Denton. The Marshyhope area is located north and south of Federalsburg, and the Sassafras area includes the Sassafras Natural Resource Management Area of Bloomfield Farm in Kent County. All three focus areas serve as an anchor for agricultural production and investment, buffering and enhancing the region's natural, cultural, and open space priorities.

## **Part III: State Land**

Tuckahoe State Park, owned by the State of Maryland, is located just outside Hillsboro, northwest of the Town, along the Tuckahoe Creek. The park is divided by Tuckahoe Creek, which runs the length of the park's 3,800-acres. The park's unique composition of streams, fields, forests, wetlands and a 60-acre lake is home to a tremendous diversity of plants and wildlife. The park has over 15 miles of trails open to equestrians, hikers and mountain bikers, and its large and small waterways offer an array of fishing, hunting and paddling opportunities.



## IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

Hillsboro should seek to integrate techniques in local regulations that assist with natural resource retention. These include design guidelines and, most importantly, “Best Management Practices” or BMP’s. Natural resource management requires the use of current BMP’s to enhance environmental attributes. Hillsboro should seek to integrate many of these BMP’s (some of which are state-mandated practices), such as Chesapeake Bay Critical Areas Program, Forest Conservation, Floodplain and Stormwater Management, and Erosion and Sediment Control regulations. From the local municipal perspective, given the size of Hillsboro, and its constrained resources, the Town should rely on Caroline County and the state to provide resources for enhanced natural resource protection.



The Tuckahoe River near Hillsboro is an important natural, scenic, and environmental asset. A community docking area is located in Hillsboro providing access to the river for boaters, kayakers, and eco-tourists.

The following recommendations are designed to assist Hillsboro in the implementation of this Comprehensive Plan:

**RECOMMENDATION #1:** Limit development in Hillsboro near the Tuckahoe River in accordance with the Chesapeake Bay Critical Areas Program and other local municipal regulations designed to protect sensitive areas.

**RECOMMENDATION #2:** Review and update the Hillsboro “Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Ordinance” consistent with state laws to protect steep slopes, stream buffers, and sensitive species habitat in accordance with the program.

**RECOMMENDATION #3:** Digitize the Hillsboro “Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Maps” and adopt official Hillsboro Critical Area Zoning Maps based on the Caroline County Critical Area Maps.

**RECOMMENDATION #4:** Partner with public and private entities to assist in the protection and enhancement of the scenic beauty of the Tuckahoe River.

**RECOMMENDATION #5:** Work with the Caroline County Department of Environmental Health to enhance the functioning of existing septic systems in Hillsboro through state funded assistance programs to improve water quality in the region.

Coordinate with Environmental Health and Maryland Department of the Environment to utilize “Flush Fee” funds for the upgrade of on-site septic systems in Hillsboro to biological nutrient removal septic systems (best management practices) to reduce nutrient loadings in the Tuckahoe River.

**RECOMMENDATION #6:** Limit development in the 100-Year Floodplain and adopt regulations for appropriate floodway design. Develop measures that will result in an increase in the Town's discounted FEMA Flood Insurance Rating.

**RECOMMENDATION #7:** Work with Caroline County to encourage strong land use controls for conservation site design on rural lands adjacent to Hillsboro and coordinate with the County in the review of development proposals near the Town to address sensitive areas.

**RECOMMENDATION #8:** Adopt stormwater management controls in the *Hillsboro Zoning Ordinance* consistent with state and local policies and laws.

**RECOMMENDATION #9:** Partner with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources Coastal Communities to seek grant funding for the development of a Water Resources Element for the Hillsboro Comprehensive Plan in accordance with HB 1141.

## CHAPTER 5: WATER RESOURCES

The Hillsboro Comprehensive Plan's "Water Resources Element" (WRE) satisfies a basic planning requirement mandated by the 2006 Maryland House Bill 1141. The purpose of the WRE is to assess water resource capacity to meet current and future needs. In addition, zoning classifications of a property may not be changed after October 1, 2009 if a jurisdiction has not adopted a WRE in its comprehensive plan.

Specifically, the statutory requirements include the following tasks:

- Identify drinking water and other water resources that will be adequate for the needs of existing and future development proposed in the land use element of the plan, considering available data provided by the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE).
- Identify suitable receiving waters and land areas to meet the stormwater management and wastewater treatment and disposal needs of existing residents and future development, considering available data provided by MDE.
- Adopt a WRE in the comprehensive plan on or before October 1, 2009.

The WRE addresses three major areas including: 1) drinking water (both supply and quality), 2) wastewater treatment and discharge, and 3) stormwater management. Among other things, preparation of the WRE is intended to test water resource capacity limits, determine the potential implications of water resource issues for future growth, and facilitate the development of management strategies. Specifically, the Hillsboro WRE is directly linked to the following Comprehensive Plan elements: 1) Land Use Plan; 2) Municipal Growth; 3) Community Facilities; and 4) Resource Conservation.

### GOAL & OBJECTIVES

#### **GOAL**

**Provide a safe and potable water supply to serve Hillsboro's current and future residents, while protecting water quality in the Tuckahoe Creek Watershed.**

#### **OBJECTIVES**

**Protect an adequate and safe potable water supply to serve the residents of Hillsboro.**

**Take steps to restore and protect water quality and contribute toward meeting water quality regulatory requirements in rivers and streams in the Tuckahoe Creek Watershed.**

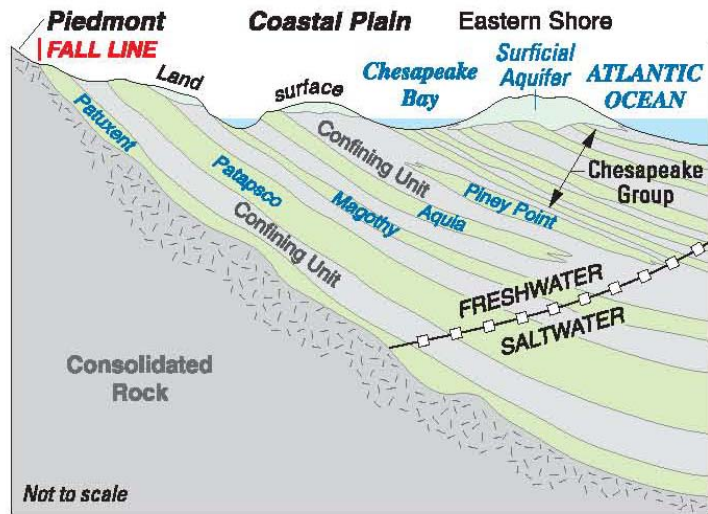
**Protect the habitat value of the rivers, streams, and wetlands in the Tuckahoe Creek Watershed.**

**Work with Caroline County and other municipalities in the Tuckahoe Creek Watershed to develop watershed planning and management guidelines that relate land use and development to their impacts on water resources.**

**Promote Town-wide water conservation methods and policies and encourage innovative technologies for stormwater and septic system treatment and disposal.**

## HYDROGEOLOGIC SETTING

Located in Caroline County, Maryland, the Town of Hillsboro is part of the Northern Atlantic Coastal Plain aquifer system (NACP). The NACP system encompasses approximately 50,000 square miles. It extends from the North Carolina and South Carolina border to Long Island, New York. In Maryland, the aquifer system is bounded in the west by the Fall Line, which separates the Piedmont from the Coastal Plain physiographic province (see Figure 5-1). The NACP is bounded in the east by the Atlantic Ocean.<sup>1</sup>



**FIGURE 5-1:** Describes the Northern Atlantic Coastal Plain Aquifer System, which separates the Piedmont from the Coastal Plain.

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

### Part I: Regional Water Resources

The Atlantic Coastal Plain aquifer system in Maryland consists of an alternating series of aquifers and confining units that descend and widen, as they extend toward the Atlantic Ocean (see Figure 5-1). The major aquifers in the Coastal Plain system are the Patuxent, Patapsco, Magothy, Aquia and Piney Point Formations (Hillsboro draws water from the Piney Point Aquifer), and the Chesapeake Group. The sediments that form the aquifers and confining units range in age from Cretaceous to Quaternary. Most of the Eastern Shore is covered by loose sediments in layers containing gravel, sand, silt and clay deposited during the present post-glacial period (Tertiary).

Total ground water use in Maryland exceeds 214 million gallons per day.<sup>2</sup> The urban areas of Baltimore and Washington, D.C. make up the largest percentage of water usage. Much of the water supply for these urban areas is derived from surface water sources. In Maryland's Coastal Plain counties, which include southern Maryland and the Eastern Shore, ground water comprises 86% of the total water use.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *A Science Plan for a Comprehensive Regional Assessment of the Atlantic Coastal Plain Aquifer System in Maryland* (Open-File Report 2007-1205), by Robert J. Shedlock, David W. Bolton, Emery T. Cleaves, James M. Gerhart, and Mark R. Nardi, U.S. Department of the Interior and U.S. Geological Survey, prepared in cooperation with the Maryland Geological Survey, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources and the Maryland Department of the Environment.

<sup>2</sup> *An Overview of Wetlands and Water Resources of Maryland*, by Denise Clearwater, Paryse Turgeon, Christi Noble, and Julie Labranche. Prepared for Maryland Wetland Conservation Plan Work Group, January 2000

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

Coastal Plain groundwater is drawn up from unconfined (natural water table) and confined (artesian) aquifers. Unconfined aquifers are recharged by rainfall and snow melt, which can be depleted by drought resulting in fluctuating water levels. Artesian aquifers receive recharge from areas where water-bearing formations contribute to leakage through confining beds and lateral movement of water from adjacent aquifers. Artesian aquifers are much less vulnerable to drought conditions.<sup>4</sup> The natural water quality of Coastal Plain ground water is generally good and ranges from very soft to very hard with the average in the moderately soft range (Vokes and Edwards, 1974).

Most Coastal Plain aquifers contain both fresh and salt water. Water directly below recharge areas is fresh; salt levels increase with aquifer depth and proximity to the ocean. The location of the freshwater/salt water boundary (zone of diffusion) depends on the volume of fresh water entering the aquifer from recharge or leakage. One of the most common problems in Coastal Plain aquifers is salt water intrusion. Some parts of the confined aquifers in the system have been affected by intrusion of brackish or saline water, notably in more heavily populated areas along the coastlines of the Bay (e.g. Annapolis, Kent Island) and the Atlantic Ocean (e.g. Ocean City), where water usage is greater.<sup>5</sup>

A 2004 report of the Maryland Advisory Committee on the “Management and Protection of the State’s Water Resources” recommended a comprehensive study of the sustainability of the entire Atlantic Coastal Plain aquifer system in Maryland. This effort is being undertaken by the U.S. Department of the Interior and USGS, in cooperation with the Maryland Geological Survey and the Maryland Department of the Environment. The assessment will be conducted in three phases and is expected to take 7 to 8 years to complete (complete by 2012 to 2014). Currently, the project is in Phase I, which began in 2006.

A key component of the assessment will be the development of an aquifer information system designed to serve the needs of both water managers and scientific investigators. When fully developed, the system will provide a web-based tool with ground-water management models for evaluation of a variety of water-management strategies. As stated by the State of Maryland and USGS:

“The aquifers in the Chesapeake Group are used mostly east of the Chesapeake Bay. These include the Cheswold, Federalsburg, and Frederica aquifers, which are used from Dorchester to Queen Anne’s Counties, and the Manokin, Ocean City, and Pocomoke aquifers, which are used in Somerset, Worcester, and Wicomico Counties. The Piney Point aquifer, which does not crop out,

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.



is tapped by wells in an area about 40 miles (mi) wide between Caroline and St. Mary's Counties [Emphasis added].<sup>6</sup>

It is important to note that adequate water resources are critical to serve existing and new populations in Maryland. According to an article written in the Baltimore Sun in February 5, 2006, "the State's growing population is straining water supplies, requiring better planning and collaboration by government at all levels." In Calvert County, competition over water resources has triggered lawsuits. Mount Airy and two other towns in Carroll and Frederick counties have been forced to curtail development because growth is outstripping water resources. In Southern Maryland, the State's fastest growing region, groundwater levels are dropping an average of 1 to 2 feet per year.<sup>7</sup>

## **Part II: Hillsboro Source Water – Piney Point Aquifer**

Residents in the Town of Hillsboro are served by individual wells. Hillsboro wells draw water from the Piney Point Aquifer. In Maryland, the Piney Point Aquifer supplies water for a substantial portion of Calvert and St. Mary's Counties on the western shore as well as Caroline, Dorchester, Queen Anne's, and Talbot Counties on the Eastern Shore. The Piney Point also provides water to other areas of the Delmarva Peninsula including Delaware.

From a geographic perspective, the Piney Point Aquifer is located below all of Caroline County. The common range of yield for wells in the aquifer is 10 to 250 gallons per minute (gpm). In some areas, the yield may exceed 600 gpm.<sup>8</sup> On the Delmarva Peninsula, the aquifer's rate of transmissivity, or the rate at which water will move through the aquifer, is greatest in a zone that runs from Cambridge, Maryland to Dover, Delaware. An area of comparatively thick high yielding surficial sediments is located in the vicinity of western Caroline County (near the Town of Ridgely). The aquifer becomes less transmissive away from this zone, as sediment thickness increases.<sup>9</sup>

The Piney Point Aquifer does not outcrop in Maryland. The principal recharge to the aquifer on the Eastern Shore is due to leakage from the overlying Cheswold Aquifer, in areas where the two aquifers are connected or separated by only a thin layer of silt and clay. Large water users on the Eastern Shore, particularly agricultural operations, depend more on the region's water table (surficial) aquifers than the Piney Point Aquifer. The surficial aquifer in the northern part of Caroline County is the Columbia Aquifer, which is poorly transmissive. The Columbia Aquifer supplies some homes and farms for

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<sup>6</sup> <http://md.water.usgs.gov/publications/wsp-2275/md-dc-html.html>

<sup>7</sup> The Baltimore Sun; "Running Dry?"; Timothy B. Wheeler; February 5, 2006.

<sup>8</sup> *Caroline County Comprehensive Water and Sewerage Plan*, Caroline County, Maryland Planning Department, 1992

<sup>9</sup> *Agricultural Use of the Piney Point Aquifer*, Maryland Department of the Environment Water Rights Division, 1998

irrigation purposes but its shallowness makes it vulnerable to drought and pollution from surface sources such as agricultural run-off and industrial contamination.<sup>10</sup>

**Piney Point Aquifer Studies**

In 1979, the *Maryland Geological Survey Report of Investigations No. 31 – Simulated Changes in Water Level in the Piney Point Aquifer* concluded that adequate capacity existed to serve Caroline County residents until 1990, including domestic and municipal users.<sup>11</sup> However, Piney Point Aquifer water levels have consistently dropped by almost 1 foot per year since 1985. The aquifer also has an exceptionally slow re-charge rate. New large-scale development and agricultural irrigation in Caroline County could place further strains on the aquifer. The next available water source is the Magothy Aquifer, which serves Easton and Talbot County. Magothy water requires treatment for iron and may be “brackish” in Caroline County.

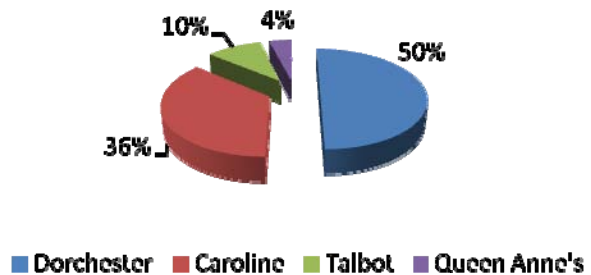
In 1995, the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) released estimated projections of water use in the Piney Point Aquifer. As shown in Table 5-1, these uses are classified as Agricultural and Non-Agricultural. Projections indicate that agricultural usage would remain constant through 2005 and that non-agricultural uses (residences, commercial/industrial uses etc.) would rise approximately 13%.

Classification	1990	1995	2000	2005
<b>Pop. Projections (MDP)</b>	<b>27,035</b>	<b>28,701</b>	<b>30,103</b>	<b>31,149</b>
- Agriculture Use (gpd)	553,737	553,737	553,737	553,737
- Non Ag Use (gpd)	929,248	986,515	1,034,708	1,070,657
<b>- TOTAL USE (gpd)</b>	<b>1,482,985</b>	<b>1,540,252</b>	<b>1,588,445</b>	<b>1,624,394</b>

Source: *A Finite Difference of Analysis of the Piney Point Aquifer on the Eastern Shore of Maryland*, Maryland Department of the Environment Water Rights Division, 1995

In 1993, 36% of the Piney Point Aquifer’s usage was in Caroline County. In 1998, a total of 392 wells were permitted to pump an average total of 31,280,800 gallons per day (gpd) from surficial aquifers. By contrast, there are 317 water appropriation permits for the Piney Point Aquifer with permitted averages

**FIGURE 5-2: Proportion of Piney Point Use for Caroline County**



<sup>10</sup> Maryland Geological Survey Report of Investigation #72, D. D. Drummond, 2001,

<sup>11</sup> United States Geological Service – USGS; *Maryland Geological Survey Report: Investigation No. 31 Simulated Changes in Water Level in the Piney Point Aquifer*; Prepared by USGS; May 1979.

totaling 5,125,950 gpd.<sup>12</sup> MDE's "Water Rights Division" instruct large irrigators in Caroline County to use the Columbia aquifer, reserving the more protected confined aquifers for drinking water supply. However, in the 1990s, an increasing number of farms sought water appropriation permits from confined aquifers (including the Piney Point) because of low yields in the surficial aquifer.

In May of 1998, MDE temporarily suspended processing applications from Caroline County farms for Water Appropriations Permits due to an increase in the number of large water users interested in using the Piney Point Aquifer for irrigation. MDE conducted a study of water use and availability in the region to evaluate the cumulative impacts of all existing water uses and proposed permitted water uses of the aquifer. This included known water uses in surrounding counties and Delaware. The study concluded that uses, at that time, would not seriously impact the Piney Point Aquifer or cause conflicts with other users. In addition, the aquifer could support additional withdrawals above existing levels. MDE has resumed processing all applications for ground water permits from the Piney Point Aquifer. MDE continues to direct large users to the Columbia Aquifer in areas where yield is sufficient. Where yield is insufficient, MDE will permit large water users including farmers to use the Piney Point Aquifer on a "case-by-case basis."

More recently, in 2007, MDE reported that steadily declining well water levels are a matter of concern to local residents in some areas of the State.<sup>13</sup> The aquifers requiring scrutiny are the Aquia, Piney Point, Magothy, and Patapsco Formations. These formations are heavily used on the Coastal Plain, particularly in the Washington-Baltimore Metropolitan Area. In 2007, the U.S. Department of the Interior (USDI) and U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) reported that "decades of increasing pumpage have caused ground-water levels in parts of the Maryland Coastal Plain to decline by as much as 2 feet per year in some areas of southern Maryland. Continued declines at this rate could affect the long-term sustainability of ground-water resources in Maryland's heavily populated Coastal Plain communities and the agricultural industry of the Eastern Shore."<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Agricultural Use of the Piney Point Aquifer, Maryland Department of the Environment Water Rights Division, 1998

<sup>13</sup> *Ground Water Protection Program*, Annual Report to the Maryland General Assembly July 2007, Maryland Department of the Environment Water Supply Program.

<sup>14</sup> Open File Report 2007 – 1205, *A Science Plan For A Comprehensive Regional Assessment Of The Atlantic Coastal Plain Aquifer System In Maryland*, by Robert J. Shedlock, David W. Bolton, Emery T. Cleaves, James M. Gerhart, and Mark R. Nardi, U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Geological Survey, 2007.

## WATER QUALITY ISSUES

According to the State of Maryland, major sources of pollution and the degradation of natural resources and water quality occur from three primary sources:

1. On-site Septic Systems;
2. Wastewater Treatment Plants; and
3. Agricultural Industries (Farm Run-Off).

### Part I: The Chesapeake 2000 Agreement

In 2000, Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania and the City of Washington D.C. signed the *Chesapeake 2000 Agreement* (Chesapeake 2000) with the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the



Chesapeake Bay Commission (CBC). Chesapeake 2000 contains goals for protecting and restoring the Chesapeake Bay such as goals for improving water quality, providing sound land use, and promoting stewardship of the Bay watershed. As North America's largest and most diverse estuary, implementing strategies to achieve the agreement's goals is critical for preserving the Chesapeake Bay. Past efforts at Bay restoration have produced no significant gains in restoration. In fact, the Bay has actually deteriorated further. This has significant impacts for all local jurisdictions in Maryland.

The *Chesapeake 2000 Agreement* calls for a reduction in nutrient loadings bay-wide, including Maryland.<sup>15</sup> Goals are 175 million pounds of nitrogen and 12.8 million pounds of phosphorus for the entire Bay watershed. Maryland's portion is 37.25 million pounds of nitrogen and 2.92 million pounds of phosphorus, which will require a 50% reduction of 1985 nutrient run-off levels from all sources: agriculture, wastewater treatment plants, and septic systems. These levels must be maintained to improve water quality.

The continued deterioration of the Chesapeake Bay in Maryland is a cause of concern for the public, officials, and State agencies. Pollution can threaten the general public safety, health, and welfare. Under the Federal Clean Water Act, the State is required to monitor pollution and devise strategies to address pollution sources. Pollution in the Chesapeake Bay for urban areas, such as Hillsboro, originates from two sources: 1) Point Sources, which include wastewater treatment plants and some commercial/industrial operations; and 2) Non-Point Sources, which include stormwater runoff, erosion, air pollution (atmospheric deposition), septic systems, and other "non-pipe" or indirect sources.

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<sup>15</sup> *The Chesapeake Bay 2000 Agreement*; Chesapeake Bay Commission, District of Columbia, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, State of Maryland, Commonwealth of Virginia, United States (Environmental Protection Agency-EPA); June 28, 2000.

## **Part II: Maryland Chesapeake & Atlantic Coastal Bays Restoration Fund**

In 2004, the *Bay Restoration Fund* was passed by the Maryland State legislature to provide a \$2.50 per month fee on wastewater system users and a \$30 annual fee on septic system owners. The “Bay Restoration Fund” was formed to address failures in Maryland regarding Bay restoration and provide a permanent source of funding to meet the goals of the *Chesapeake 2000 Agreement*. Local jurisdictions will have access to funds to improve water quality on a region by region basis across the State.

Initially, much of the funds will be used to repair and upgrade large wastewater treatment plants, such as Baltimore. However, funding is available to improve water quality in Caroline County in regards to onsite septic systems. Funds are distributed by the Maryland Department of the Environment to wastewater treatment plant owners for upgrades as well as the Caroline County Department of Environmental Health for septic system upgrades to reduce overall nitrogen and phosphorus.

In the future, water quality initiatives will continue to be a primary focus of State programs (policies that seek to improve water quality and meet Bay goals and objectives). Hillsboro should seek to establish policies and actions that can facilitate access to the Bay Restoration Fund for Town property owners. This can include assisting with property owners with direct access as well as educational material and contact numbers for Environmental Health officials.

## **Part III: Total Maximum Daily Loads**

Under the terms of the Federal Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. §§ 1251-1387), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) delegated authority to Maryland to implement a systematic technical and administrative framework for managing water quality. Delegated responsibilities include setting water quality standards, assessing water quality, identifying waters that do not meet standards, establishing limits on impairing substances, and issuing permits to ensure consistency with those pollutant limits.

Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) are a requirement, found in §303(d), of the Federal “Clean Water Act” (CWA) that became law in 1972. TMDL’s are the regulatory mechanisms used to identify pollution sources and implement controls for both point and non-point source discharges into impaired water bodies. The CWA requires that Maryland:

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

As an element to improve water quality, TMDL's establish limits or "caps" on the amount of pollutants permitted from each potential pollution source through an allocation system, as the sum of allowable loads of a single pollutant from all contributing point and non-point sources. Essentially, a TMDL is a calculation of the maximum amount of a pollutant, both point source and non-point source, that a water-body can receive and still meet water quality standards. This includes factoring projected growth and a margin of safety. According to the State, point sources include wastewater treatment plants with direct discharge permits into waterways, which require a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permits-NPDES. Non-point sources include agricultural industries and septic systems.

The CWA establishes water quality standards and TMDL programs. Water quality standards identify the uses for each water-body, for example, drinking water supply, contact recreation (swimming), and aquatic life support (fishing), and the scientific criteria to support that use. Goals include reductions that meet the standards implied by the *Chesapeake 2000 Agreement*. Any TMDL calculation must include a margin of safety to ensure that the water-body can be used for the purposes that Maryland has designated. The CWA requires that TMDL's assume a prominent role in State water quality planning. Key components of TMDL documentation include the following:

- Description of Impairment;
- Identification of the Cause of Impairment;
- Set of Quantitative Goals;
- Identification of Pollutant Sources;
- Description of Methodology;
- Determination of Allowable Load and Allocation;
- Determination of Safety Margin;
- Public Involvement; and
- Provision of Reasonable Assurance for Implementation.

Implementation of TMDL's includes the following:

- After a TMDL has been approved, State and local water quality management plans should be updated and control measures implemented.
- National Pollution Discharge Elimination System NPDES permit limits based on TMDL's, known as water quality based limits, must be issued for point sources (wastewater treatment plants).
- Non-point source controls may be established by implementing BMP's through voluntary or mandatory programs for enforcement, technical assistance, financial assistance, education, training, technology transfer, and demonstration projects.
- When allowing for non-point source controls, implementation plans should provide the following: 1) reasonable assurance that the controls will be implemented and maintained; and 2) an effective monitoring program to demonstrate non-point source reductions are taking place.

### **TMDL's in Maryland**

The State of Maryland must conduct scientific studies for waters that do not meet water quality standards due to an excessive pollutant load and determine the maximum amount of the pollutant that can be introduced to a waterbody and still meet standards. That maximum amount of pollutant is the TMDL and such studies are called TMDL Analyses. In Maryland, TMDLs are the regulatory mechanism that identifies and implements additional controls on point and non-point pollution sources. The regulation of discharges for both pollution sources occurs when water-bodies are impaired, meaning that normal controls may not adequately restore the water-body.

The legal responsibilities for water quality management are the purview of local government such as sediment and erosion control, stormwater management and other land use activities that have a strong bearing on water quality. According to the State:

“To maintain control over decisions that affect their communities, local jurisdictions have a stake in how the State's legal responsibilities for maintaining water quality standards are executed. In particular, local governments have an interest in the implementation of TMDLs. They also are best situated to address many aspects of implementation, due to their geographic proximity to the impaired waterbodies, and their direct role in decisions that affect local water quality.”<sup>16</sup>

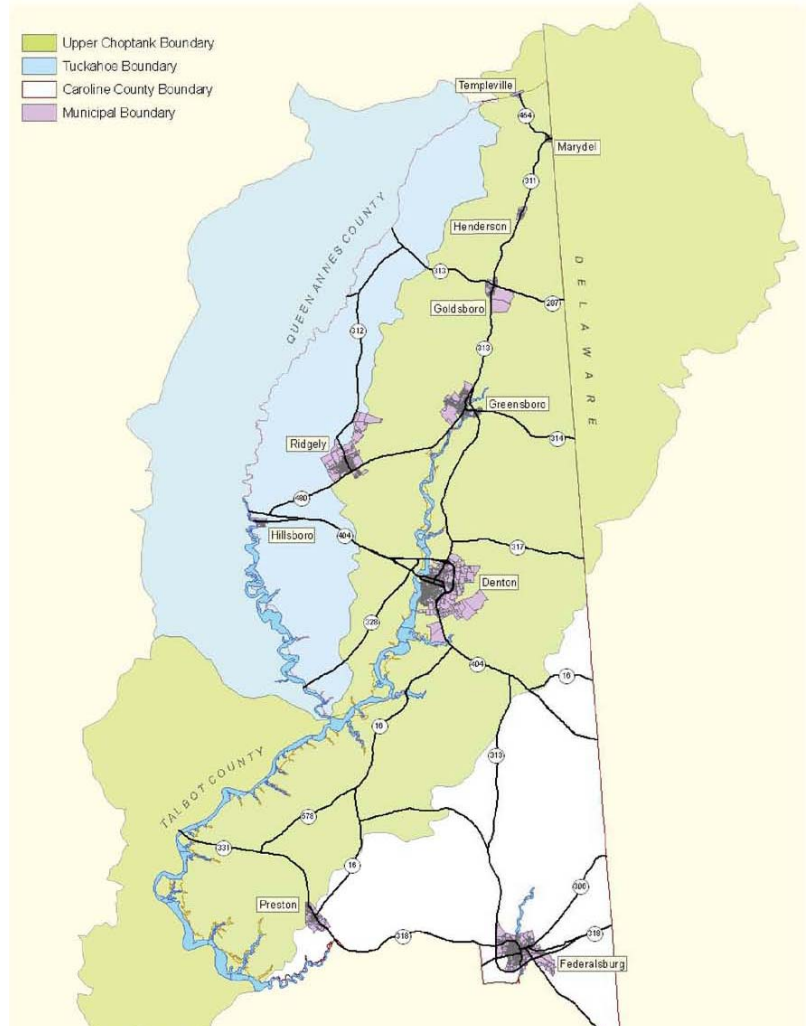
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<sup>16</sup> MD's 2006 TMDL Implementation Guidance for Local Governments, Maryland Department of the Environment, Document version: May 24, 2006

## TUCKAHOE CREEK WATERSHED

Caroline County’s two major Chesapeake Bay tributaries are the Choptank River and Tuckahoe Creek, a sub-unit of the larger Choptank River Basin. Hillsboro is located in the Tuckahoe Creek Watershed. The Tuckahoe Creek Watershed extends through Caroline, Queen Anne’s and Talbot Counties on the Eastern Shore of Maryland.

According to the November 2007 *Upper Choptank River & Tuckahoe Creek Watershed Characterization Report* (Tuckahoe Watershed Characterization), as prepared by the Caroline County Department of Planning, Codes, and Engineering in coordination with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), a majority of the watershed is located in Caroline and Queen Anne’s Counties with a smaller portion located in Talbot.



Source: *Upper Choptank River & Tuckahoe Creek Watershed Characterization – November 2007*

As shown in Table 5-2, approximately 35,920 acres of land in the Tuckahoe Creek Watershed are located in Caroline County (about 36%).

Classification - County	Land	Water	Total
Caroline	35,920	N/A	N/A
Queen Anne’s	45,960	N/A	N/A
Talbot	15,459	N/A	N/A
<b>WATERSHED TOTAL</b>	<b>97,339</b>	<b>1,280</b>	<b>98,619</b>

Source: *Upper Choptank River & Tuckahoe Creek Watershed Characterization – November 2007*



Under the 1999 *Clean Water Action Plan*, the State of Maryland conducted a “Unified Watershed Assessment” for each of the State’s 58 watersheds. The Tuckahoe Creek and Choptank River were both cited as “Priority One Restoration Watersheds,” according to Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) standards, being impaired by one or more pollutants such as nutrients, sediments, toxic substances, acidity, or fecal coliform. Specifically, the 1999 Maryland *Clean Water Action Plan* designates Tuckahoe Creek in two categories including:

- Category 1 Watershed, which is the highest priority for restoration; and
- Category 3 Watershed, which indicates protection is needed for specific and identified resources.<sup>17</sup>

According to the Tuckahoe Watershed Characterization:

“All waters of the State are assigned a designated use in regulation, COMAR 26.08.02.08, which is associated with a set of water quality criteria necessary to support that use. The designated uses may or may not be served now, but they should be attainable. All surface waters in the Tuckahoe Creek Watershed are designated use I for Water Contact Recreation and Protection of Aquatic Life.”<sup>18</sup>

Major impairments, including biological, nutrients, and sediments, are ranked low for the Tuckahoe Creek Watershed. However, metals are ranked as a high priority. Metals are likely the result of atmospheric deposition. According to the Tuckahoe Watershed Characterization, “when compared to other Chesapeake Bay Watersheds in Maryland, Tuckahoe Creek ranked among those transporting less total nitrogen (TN) to the Bay.”<sup>19</sup> State modeling indicated that total TN reaching the Bay was approximately 9.66 pounds per acre. However, conversely, Tuckahoe Creek ranked high for excessive total phosphorus (TP) loadings reaching the Chesapeake Bay.<sup>20</sup> State modeling indicated that total TP reaching the Bay was approximately 0.75 pounds per acre.

<b>Classification</b>	<b>Impairment</b>	<b>Priority</b>
Tuckahoe Creek Watershed	Biological	Low
Tuckahoe Creek Watershed	Nutrients	Low
Tuckahoe Creek Watershed	Sediments	Low
Tuckahoe Creek Watershed	Metals	High
Source: Upper Choptank River & Tuckahoe Creek Watershed Characterization – November 2007		

<sup>17</sup> Upper Choptank River & Tuckahoe Creek Watershed Characterizations, Caroline County Department of Planning, Codes, & Engineering and the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, November 2007, 85.

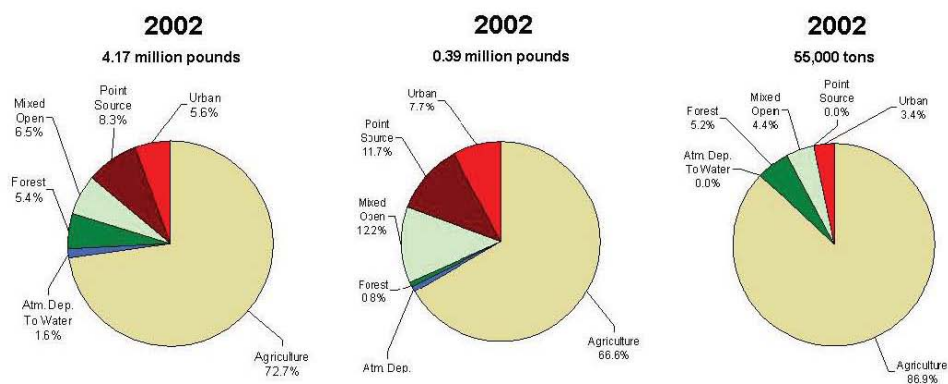
<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, 86.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

Pollution constituents preventing Tuckahoe Creek from meeting clean water quality standards include total nitrogen, total phosphorus, and total suspended solids. Excess nutrients and sediments are the primary sources of all pollution in the Chesapeake Bay. Nutrients occur naturally in soil, animal waste, plants, and the atmosphere; but in the Chesapeake Bay watershed, urbanization and farming have increased nutrient loads to unhealthy levels. These nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorus) promote the growth of algae, which in turn, blocks sunlight from reaching underwater grasses and reduces dissolved oxygen and suitable habitat for aquatic life.”<sup>21</sup>

According to the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR), as cited in the 2002 *TMDL Guidance for Local Governments Report*, the impairments in the Upper Choptank and Tuckahoe Creek Watersheds “will be the subject of TMDL programs within the next few years.”<sup>22</sup> As of 2008, TMDLs have not been established for these watersheds or the broader Choptank River Basin in which they are located. When TMDLs are established for the watersheds, they could influence future wastewater discharge permit limits.



Source: *Upper Choptank River & Tuckahoe Creek Watershed Characterization* – November 2007

The dominant characteristic of the Choptank River Basin (Choptank and Tuckahoe Creek Watersheds) is agricultural land use. As a result, the major issues in the basin are those of non-point source nutrient and sediment loads.<sup>23</sup> With its preponderance of poorly draining soils and forest areas, this basin is atypical compared to much of the Eastern Shore. Much of the Choptank River Basin is drained through ditches that have been installed over many decades to drain the flatlands for agriculture use. The drains are typically kept clear of vegetation, thus expediting flow and providing less opportunity for nutrient uptake and de-nitrification.”<sup>24</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Choptank River Overview, Maryland Department of Natural Resource, November 2003.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> *Maryland Tributary Strategy Choptank River Basin Summary Report for 1985-2005 Data*, August 2007, Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Tidewater Ecosystem Assessment.

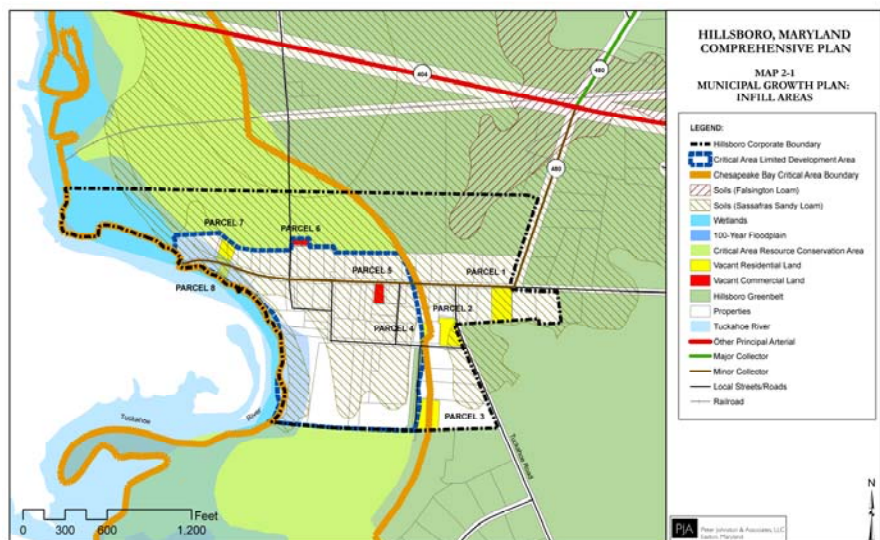
<sup>24</sup> *Factors Affecting Nutrient Trends in Major Rivers of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed*, Sprague et al., 2000.

It has been reported by DNR that “a wide array of best management practices (BMPs) have been planned to reduce impacts of non-point sources.”<sup>25</sup> As of 2004, Maryland Tributary Strategy Goals have been met and exceeded for the implementation of BMP’s for agricultural practices (approximately 75% or more of goals) such as nutrient management plans and conservation tillage. Implementation success also is high for animal waste management systems (both livestock and poultry), grass buffers at the edges of fields bordering waterways, and tree plantings on agricultural lands.<sup>26</sup>

According to DNR, modeled nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment loadings have decreased substantially from 1985 to 2005. Total nitrogen loadings are down 2.28 million pounds per year, 60% of the Tributary Strategy goal. Total phosphorus loadings are down 0.28 million pounds per year, 70% of the Tributary Strategy goal. Sediment loadings are down 43,000 tons per year, 83% of the Tributary Strategy goal. Despite these successes, the Report finds that agricultural land is still the major contributor of nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment and as of 2004, implementation of urban BMPs has not been as successful, notably those dealing with stormwater management (overall, approximately 12% of Tributary Strategy goals) and urban nutrient management plans (no progress).<sup>27</sup>

## HILLSBORO WATER SUPPLY & WASTEWATER TREATMENT

Hillsboro does not have public water and sewer facilities and services nor are these facilities and services envisioned in the future. Presently, the Town has private wells and on-site septic systems for each dwelling unit located in Town. No major commercial and/or industrial operations



are located in Hillsboro. Potential land for new development within Hillsboro’s corporate boundary is severely limited (see Chapter 2). The Town’s Growth Plan estimates an additional 4 residential dwelling units or approximately 11 new residents over the course of the next 20 years.

<sup>25</sup> *Upper Choptank River Watershed Characterization*. September 2002.

<sup>26</sup> Maryland Tributary Strategy Choptank River Basin Summary Report for 1985-2005 Data August 2007, Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Tidewater Ecosystem Assessment.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

## **Part I: State and Local Water Quality Initiatives**

Caroline County septic system regulations require a four (4) foot treatment zone for all on-site septic systems, which is comprised of unsaturated soil below the bottom of the tile field and a soil texture consistent throughout this depth. However, this protection distance is difficult to maintain in Caroline County on a year round basis. Under these regulations, the County and other Eastern Shore counties are allowed to delineate areas where less than four (4) foot soil treatment zones could be approved for wastewater disposal. These areas are delineated in the *Caroline County Groundwater Protection Report*. The report sets density, design, and construction requirements with appropriate justification to minimize degradation of aquifers designed for discharge.

### **Maryland House Bill 176/Senate Bill 554**

As part of the 2008 Maryland Legislative session, the passage of the consolidated Maryland House Bill 176/Senate Bill 554 affects septic systems for homeowners in the Chesapeake Bay Critical Areas statewide. Most of Hillsboro's onsite septic disposal systems (OSDS) are located within the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area (approximately  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the Town's dwelling units). OSDS in the Critical Area can be subject to periodic flooding in low-lying coastal areas or subject to high seasonal ground water, which can potentially contaminate water resources. Improperly sited and maintained OSDS can pose serious risks to water resources and the public health.

Originally, the legislative initiative was part of a broader Bill package that could have required all 420,000 Maryland homeowners on septic systems to install new nitrogen reduction technologies (BNR) when replacing a septic system. However, funding does not exist to provide a cost differential for all septic systems in the State to upgrade to onsite nutrient removal technologies. Therefore, the legislation was scaled back to only those homes (septic systems) located within the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area. This includes approximately 51,000 homeowners with onsite septic systems in the Critical Area statewide. The general cost average for upgrades is approximately \$12,000 per homeowner. Currently, the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) manages a 100% cost differential for septic replacement in the Critical Area through the Bay Restoration Fund. However, the State can make no guarantee that such funding will remain in the future.

## **Part II: Bay Restoration Fund for Enhanced Nutrient Reduction**

The Bay Restoration Fund “Enhanced Nutrient Reduction (ENR) Program” uses funding from public sewer taxes to provide up to 100% state grant funds to local governments to retrofit or upgrade sewage treatment plants to reduce the nutrient levels in plant discharge to 3 mg/l total nitrogen (TN) and .3 mg/l total phosphorus (TP). Upon completion of an ENR upgrade, the permitting authority (MDE) requires the permittee to make a best effort to meet the load goals, providing reasonable assurance of implementation.

The Bay Restoration Fund also supports efforts for de-nitrification of on-site sewage disposal systems (septic systems) through funding supplied by septic system user fees paid by property owners. Caroline County has established a program that is managed by the State Department of Environmental Health for Caroline County. Properties in Caroline County’s Chesapeake Bay Critical Area are the highest priority for funding. Most new septic systems or septic system upgrades in Hillsboro are located in the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area. System construction and/or replacement will require advanced nutrient removal onsite disposal systems, as permitted by the Caroline County Department of Environmental Health.

In 2009, Caroline County Environmental Health conducted a study of on-site septic systems in Hillsboro and reported no failing septic systems from existing dwellings. However, the State has mandated that replacement systems utilize nutrient removal technologies in the Critical Area. Therefore, Hillsboro residents

### **HILLSBORO SEPTIC EVALUATION**

**The Caroline County Department of Environmental Health has noted no “failing septic systems” in the Town of Hillsboro as of 2009.**

should consider accessing State funding for new ENR septic systems from the Bay Restoration Fund, while funding is available. Funding for this program is currently administered by Caroline County Environmental Health.

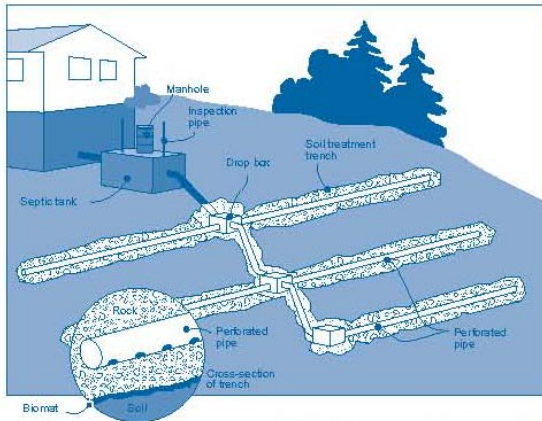
## **Part III: Onsite Wells**

There are 72 housing units in the Town of Hillsboro. About three-fourths of these are single family detached units and a little less than 15% are duplexes. In regards to water, dwelling units in Hillsboro are currently served by individual wells (approximately 72 total wells). Much of Caroline County, including The Town of Hillsboro, draws water from the Piney Point Aquifer. The aquifer is the principal source of county and municipal water for the region.

New well locations are guided by the Caroline Department of Environmental Health and the Maryland Department of the Environment under the Caroline County Groundwater Protection Report. The Groundwater Protection Report was prepared in 2003. It provides a comprehensive strategy for preserving and protecting groundwater resources.

#### Part IV: Onsite Sewage Disposal Systems

The approximate 72 septic systems in Hillsboro are onsite sewage disposal systems (OSDS). OSDS are decentralized wastewater treatment and disposal systems as opposed to municipal wastewater treatment plants, which are centralized community wastewater treatment and disposal systems. As a standard for determining nitrogen pollution from OSDS, the Caroline County Department of Environmental Health assumes 3.2 persons per septic system in the County and approximately 9.5 pounds of total nitrogen per person/per year. Calculations also include a 40% “pass-through” in the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area;  $3.2 \times 9.5 \times 0.40$  (40%) = 12.2 pounds of total nitrogen per septic/per year.



Septic system inputs, those constituents that enter the system, are not confined to just nitrogen. Other constituents include pathogens (bacteria, viruses, and parasites) as well as chemical elements such as ammonia. According to Environmental Health, a 2 to 4 foot unsaturated soil treatment zone will remove most pathogens. Septic outputs, those constituents that are released from the system, primarily include nitrogen.

According to Environmental Health approximately 55% to 85% reaches groundwater and approximately 40% reaches surface waters (Source: Chesapeake Bay Program). The purpose of State efforts to reduce pollution is to lower the total nitrogen content entering State waters. Septic systems with onsite Biological Nutrient Removal (BNR) can achieve this 50% reduction in total nitrogen (approximately 6.1 pounds of nitrogen released per year).

#### WATER RESOURCE IMPACTS FROM HILLSBORO

Water quality initiatives are important for preserving valuable resources and ensuring potable water supplies. As of August 2009, no TMDL has been established for Tuckahoe Creek that would impact the Town of Hillsboro. In addition, Hillsboro is a small part of

the Tuckahoe Creek Watershed and a minor contributor of nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediments to the receiving waters. Implementation of the Town's Comprehensive Plan will not substantially increase current non-point pollution source loadings in the watershed (see Chapter 2 of this Comprehensive Plan). In addition, the Town has no designated growth or annexation areas and does not anticipate an increase in population sufficient to warrant a need for public water and sewer facilities and services.

Hillsboro's "Municipal Growth Element" indicates that the Town's Growth Area consists of infill properties only within the current Town. The potential for new growth calculates an additional 4 residential dwelling units or approximately 11 new residents over the course of the next 20 years. The possibility of 4 new residential units equates to 4 new potential septic systems. According to Environmental Health models, this is approximately 49 additional pounds of nitrogen output once these units are constructed.

It is important to note that drinking water supply and the capacity of receiving waters to assimilate stormwater and wastewater discharge do not appear to be a significant constraint for future growth provided Hillsboro implements strategies that minimize future nutrient and sediment loads (pollution). However, a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) has not yet been established for the Tuckahoe Creek Watershed in order to measure assimilative capacity. Therefore, The Town of Hillsboro is uncertain as to whether future impacts will exceed assimilative capacity for future combined wastewater and stormwater discharge associated with existing population and expected growth from the Town's Land Use and Growth Plans. Currently, detailed data is unavailable to assess the suitability of receiving waters in Hillsboro.

## **Part I: Hillsboro Pollutant Loadings**

### **Non Point Source Loading**

Non-point source pollution occurs when rainfall, snowmelt, or irrigation runs over land or through the ground and gathers pollutants. Pollutants are then deposited into streams, rivers, lakes, and coastal waters or introduced into ground water. Stormwater runoff for the land is a significant contributor to non-point source loading.

Maryland Environment Article; Title 4; Subtitle 2 of the Annotated Code of Maryland states that the “management of stormwater run-off is necessary to reduce stream channel erosion, pollution, siltation and sedimentation, and local flooding, all of which have adverse impacts on the water and land resources of Maryland.” Stormwater management was first adopted by Maryland in the early 1980’s as part of the overall Chesapeake Bay initiative. Essentially, stormwater management has been used to control potential flooding and its effects generated by development and increased impervious surfaces.

In 2000, the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) developed the *Maryland Stormwater Design Manual* to assist local governments.<sup>28</sup> This includes a new emphasis on controlling the quality of run-off and the quantity of run-off, which reduces erosion. New State goals promote environmentally sustainable techniques. Primary goals of State stormwater initiatives include the following:

- Protecting State waters from the adverse impacts of urban stormwater run-off;
- Providing design guidance on effective structural and non-structural “Best Management Practices” for development sites, including “Green Design;” and
- Improving the quality of “Best Management Practices” with respect to their performance, longevity, safety, maintenance, community acceptance, and environmental benefits.

The *2000 Maryland Stormwater Design Manual* provides a step by step process that seeks to avoid adverse large-scale development practices such as clear-cutting, mass grading, structural fill, and suburban sprawl negatively impacting local hydrology. The process also seeks to minimize the impacts of stormwater run-off by requiring practices that replace or disconnect impervious surfaces, such as green technology. If all other options are exhausted, remaining run-off must be treated using structural practices to mitigate water quality and erosion impacts.

Stormwater runoff is part of the natural hydrologic process. Human activities, such as urbanization and agriculture, can alter natural drainage patterns and add pollutants to rivers, lakes, and streams as well as coastal bays and estuaries. Urban runoff can be a significant source of water pollution including flows discharged from urban land uses into stormwater conveyance systems and receiving waters. In the past, efforts to control the discharge of stormwater focused on quantity (e.g. drainage, flood control etc.) and only to a limited extent on quality (e.g. sediment and erosion control).

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<sup>28</sup> *2000 Maryland Stormwater Design Manual Volumes I and II*; Prepared by the Center for Watershed Protection and the Maryland Department of the Environment; 2000.



In urban areas, the amount of stormwater runoff is a function of the amount of impervious surface associated with roads, parking areas, roofs, and other human constructions. Impervious surface blocks the natural seepage of rain into the ground. Unlike many natural surfaces, impervious surface typically concentrates stormwater runoff, accelerates flow rates, and directs stormwater to the nearest stream. Stormwater management in the Town of Hillsboro is performed by Caroline County. The County should seek to incorporate new techniques for stormwater management in County local policies and regulations.

Watersheds with small amounts of impervious surface, such as the Tuckahoe Creek Watershed, tend to have better water quality in local streams than watersheds with greater amounts of impervious surface. Side effects of impervious surfaces become increasingly significant and negative as the percentage of impervious area increases. Examples of related problems include reduction of groundwater infiltration, increased soil and stream bank erosion, sedimentation, destabilization or loss of aquatic habitat, and “flashy” stream flows (reduced flow between storms and excessive flows associated with storms).

The Maryland Biological Stream Survey has related the percent of impervious surface in a watershed to the health of aquatic resources. For areas with less than 4% impervious cover, streams generally rate “Fair” to “Good” for both fish and in-stream invertebrates. Beyond about 12% impervious surface, streams generally rate “Poor” to “Fair” for both. Reduction of impervious area can be a valuable component of a successful Watershed Restoration Action Strategy (WRAS). In 2002, it was estimated that the Tuckahoe Creek watershed had approximately 1.25% impervious cover.<sup>29</sup> Agricultural operations are the primary contributor of non-point source pollution in the watershed.

### **Point Source Loading**

Point sources are identifiable inputs of waste that are discharged via pipes or drains, primarily from industrial facilities and municipal wastewater treatment plants. Wastes are drained into streams, rivers, lakes, or oceans. Although, Hillsboro does not have a municipal wastewater treatment plant (point source discharge), the Town shares the larger Choptank River Basin, in which the Tuckahoe Creek Watershed is located, with several other municipalities that have public sewer systems including the City of Cambridge, Denton, Easton, East New Market, Greensboro, Hurlock, Ridgely, St. Michaels, Secretary, and Trappe. Other point sources, in addition to municipal wastewater treatment plants, are located in the Basin. This includes commercial and industrial operations.

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<sup>29</sup> Watershed Treatment Model (WTM), Center for Watershed Protection and EPA

## **Future Point Source and Non Point Loading**

One of the requirements of the Water Resource Element (WRE) is to identify suitable receiving waters and land areas to meet the storm water management and wastewater treatment and disposal needs of existing and future development proposed in the Land Use Element of this Comprehensive Plan. Analysis also considers available data provided by MDE. According the Maryland Department of Planning (MDP), “the purpose of the WRE is to ensure that future county and municipal comprehensive plans reflect the opportunities and limitations presented by local and regional water resources. WREs are intended to improve local jurisdictions’ contribution to the protection of state land and water resources. This includes the protection of public health, safety and welfare as well as meeting local and state smart growth policies.”<sup>30</sup>

In 2002, Hillsboro’s contributions to non-point loadings in the Tuckahoe Creek Watershed were minimal. Total nitrogen, total phosphorous, and total suspended solids were substantially less than 1% of the total loading attributed to the Choptank River Basin. Fecal coliform loading was slightly less than 1%. These loadings are not expected to rise in the future due to limited growth potential in Hillsboro.

## **Part II: Addressing Water Resource Impacts & Improving Water Quality**

The “Hillsboro Water Resources Element” (WRE) provides goals and guidance for both Caroline County and Town planning initiatives. Broad goals for water resources include the following:

1. Maintaining and protecting an adequate water supply to serve Hillsboro residents through 2030;
2. Protecting water supply from pollution and adverse encroachment;
3. Initiating steps to restore and protect water quality and contribute toward meeting water quality regulatory requirements in the Tuckahoe Creek Watershed;
4. Addressing water quality impacts as well as future impacts from land development;
5. Protecting the habitat value of rivers and streams.

Some effective Hillsboro strategies to achieve these goals will include the following:

- Implementing water conservation measures, if necessary;
- Protecting forested areas through adequate buffering and retention measures; and
- Implementing Best Management Practices – BMP’s.

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<sup>30</sup> *The Water Resources Element: Planning for Water Supply and Wastewater and Stormwater Management*, Maryland Department of Planning, Publication No. 2007-003, June 2007

BMP's for the existing Town (such as retrofitting initiatives) present the most effective strategy for Hillsboro to achieve water quality goals. Hillsboro can make a positive contribution to improving water quality in the watershed by implementing these urban BMPs as recommended by Maryland State Tributary Strategies.<sup>31</sup> Standard BMP's, which may or may not apply in Hillsboro, include the following:

- Limiting impervious surface areas to 10% in identified critical or sensitive areas;
- Permitting open section roadways in new developments;
- Incorporating the use of nonstructural BMPs such as natural conservation areas, roof and non-roof top disconnection, vegetated swales, sheet flow to buffer, reduced impervious cover to the maximum extent practicable, and promote environmentally sensitive design (ESD) or low impact development (LID) techniques;
- Maintaining existing forest cover and promoting the enhancement of contiguous forest areas;
- Allowing narrower and shorter streets, rights-of-way, and sidewalks. Streets may be as narrow as 22 feet in neighborhoods serving low traffic volumes; open space designs and clustering will reduce street lengths; rights-of-way can be reduced by minimizing sidewalk width, providing sidewalks on one side of the road, and reducing the border width between the street and sidewalks;
- Allowing smaller radii for turn-arounds as low as 33 feet, using a landscaped island in the center of the cul-de-sac, and designing these areas to treat stormwater runoff;
- Allowing grass channels or biofilters for residential street drainage and stormwater treatment;
- Interpreting parking ratios as maximum number of spaces; permit shared parking arrangements; minimum parking stall width should be less than 9 feet and stall length less than 18 feet;
- Requiring parking lots be landscaped and relaxing setbacks to allow for bioretention islands or other stormwater practices in landscaped areas;
- Adopting flexible design criteria that incorporates open space designs;
- Reducing minimum lots sizes, where feasible;
- Relaxing setbacks and allowing narrower frontages to reduce total road length as well eliminating long driveways;
- Allowing for shared driveways and alternative impervious surfaces;
- Requiring rooftop runoff be directed to pervious surfaces;
- Designating a minimum buffer width and providing mechanisms for long- term protection;
- Limiting clearing, grading, and earth disturbances to the minimum required for

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<sup>31</sup> Maryland Best Management Practices. <http://dnrweb.dnr.state.md.us/watersheds/surf/bmp/bmp.asp?trib=chop>.

- developing a lot;
- Promoting the use of native plantings;
- Providing incentives for conserving natural areas through density compensation, property tax reduction, and flexibility in the design process; and
- Implementing policies and education programs that encourage the reduction of fertilizer applications to grassed areas lawns in urban areas.

Integrating new techniques assists with natural resource retention. Natural resource management requires the use of current BMP's to enhance environmental attributes. Hillsboro should review existing regulations and determine where simple administrative, policy, and/or regulatory changes can be made to address water quality. This includes incorporating new State techniques (as listed above) and promoting retrofits to existing systems in the Town.

The most prominent change in Hillsboro includes changes to stormwater management such as enhanced buffering, rain barrels and gardens, filter strips, and infrastructure improvements to promote improved water quality. Other important BMP's include Forest Conservation, Floodplain Management, and Erosion and Sediment Control regulations. Environmental site design (ESD) techniques can optimize the conservation of natural features (e.g., drainage patterns, soil, vegetation), minimize impervious surfaces (e.g., pavement, concrete channels, roofs), decrease (slow down) runoff to maintain discharge timing and to increase infiltration and evapotranspiration, and use other nonstructural practices or innovative technologies approved by the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE).

Hillsboro also should encourage Caroline County to continue its comprehensive regional and sub-regional watershed analyses, which identifies and categorizes resources. This process began with the *Caroline County Watershed Restoration Action Strategy (WRAS)* and continued with the *2007 Upper Choptank River & Tuckahoe Creek Watershed Characterization Report*. In particular, the watershed characterizations supply the foundation for the assessment and monitoring of future TMDL's.

## IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

**RECOMMENDATION #1:** Seek to implement urban Best Management Practices or BMP's for Hillsboro, where feasible and appropriate, as recommended by Maryland Tributary Strategies and this Comprehensive Plan.

**RECOMMENDATION #2:** Work with Caroline County to update and/or revise the County's *Stormwater Management Ordinance*, programs, and other development standards to require environmental site design (ESD) techniques (Stormwater Management in Hillsboro is managed by Caroline County). Caroline County should ensure the following:

- Conservation of natural features (e.g., drainage patterns, soil, vegetation);
- Minimize impervious surfaces (e.g., pavement, concrete channels, roofs);
- Decrease runoff to maintain discharge timing; and
- Increase infiltration and evapotranspiration and use other nonstructural practices or innovative technologies approved by the State (Maryland Department of the Environment – MDE).

**RECOMMENDATION #3:** Work with Caroline County to develop watershed planning and management guidelines, exploring potential impacts on the County's water resources and ways to address such impacts.

**RECOMMENDATION #4:** Consider working with the Caroline County Department of Environmental Health to upgrade existing Hillsboro onsite septic systems to new biological nutrient removal septic systems for those properties located within the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area.

## CHAPTER 6: HERITAGE PRESERVATION

The primary goal of the *Hillsboro Comprehensive Plan* is to preserve the features that imbue the Town with its unique sense of place: valuable historic sites and structures, archeological areas, and key scenic, natural, and cultural landscapes.



The Town of Hillsboro was founded in 1784 and is one of Caroline County's

oldest towns. Although the Town was settled in the late 1700s, the first bridge crossing the Tuckahoe River to the hamlet that was to become Hillsboro is referenced as early as 1706. Hillsboro is located near the Tuckahoe River on the border where Caroline County meets Talbot and Queen Anne's Counties. Most of its historic character has remained intact and is cohesive, a circumstance that is proving to be a valuable economic commodity for modern towns on the Eastern Shore.

The history of Hillsboro spans from the late Colonial and Federal periods through the Victorian age and into our modern time. Historical records show that the first Episcopal Church was founded around 1768 and a small bridge was constructed over the Tuckahoe River around the same time. The original land grant was given to Thomas Hardcastle, a famous personage in Caroline County's Colonial history.

### HILLSBORO SETTLEMENT

In the years preceding the Revolutionary War, Hillsboro was renamed in honor of Lord Hillsboro of the Calvert Family, the original founders of Maryland. At the close of the War, Francis Sellers constructed a brick house near the river and a warehouse to engage in commercial activities. In 1784, Ms. Elizabeth Downes began to lay out lots on the south side of Main Street. The stone that forms the basis for the Town Survey still remains. Three homes from the original subdivision, including the home of Elizabeth Downes, still stand in downtown Hillsboro. These homes date from 1784 to 1790.

### GOAL & OBJECTIVES

#### GOAL

Preserve Hillsboro's heritage resources.

#### OBJECTIVES

Encourage the appropriate preservation of historical, cultural, archeological, natural, and scenic resources.

Improve Hillsboro's inventory of historic sites, structures, and heritage attractions.

Encourage and support heritage preservation through mapping, planning, and regulatory mechanisms.

Coordinate strategies to achieve mutual County/Town heritage preservation goals and objective.

Encourage the development of Historic Scenic Highways for Hillsboro and the region.

Encourage industries that support heritage preservation.

Early Hillsboro was a very affluent town. In 1797, the Hillsboro Academy was constructed on land donated by John Hardcastle, a descendant of Thomas Hardcastle, an early colonial founder in Caroline County. It was a small brick schoolhouse that served as an academy for local citizens of prominence from Caroline, Queen Anne's, and Talbot Counties. The school was funded by private donations and flourished until the Denton Academy was established in 1827. The highlights of Hillsboro's history were during the Colonial and Federal periods but many wonderful homes were constructed within the Town in later decades and represent a mix of traditional Victorian, Gothic, and Greek-Revival. The great American portrait painter Charles Wilson Peale lived for a short time in the Town.



The Elizabeth Downes House (CAR-101) is located on Main Street.

### Part I: The Historical Importance of the Region

Hillsboro is significant as one of the oldest (if not the oldest) settlements in Caroline County. Much of the historic and cultural legacy of Hillsboro is representative of the traditional agrarian communities that flourished in 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century rural America. An abundance of productive farmland surrounds Hillsboro, and much of the Town's earliest architecture remains intact and visible along its streets. Maryland Historical Trust (MHT), in its recognition of Hillsboro's historic significance, noted its many "representative examples of residential, commercial and ecclesiastical architecture...with few modern intrusions". Map 6-1 illustrates the locations of the Town's most significant historic sites and the Historic District surveyed by MHT in July, 2001. The survey district contains 61 contributing resources located on about 30 acres between the Tuckahoe River and MD480



## Part II: Hillsboro Resource Inventory

There are several important elements to the development of an effective program for the protection of heritage resources. First is the inventory of heritage resources. The second involves a designation of the most significant resources for listing on a Federal, State, or local register of historic places. The third element involves specific policy and regulatory actions to protect heritage resources and build heritage tourism infrastructure.

According to *Article 66B of the Annotated Code of Maryland (Planning & Zoning Enabling Act)*, Sections 8.01 to 8.17, “Historic Area Zoning,” local jurisdictions, such as Hillsboro, may designate “boundaries for sites, structures, or districts, which are deemed to be of historic, archeological, or architectural significance.” Local heritage preservation planning allows property owners in designated historic preservation districts to access significant tax credits, low-interest loans, and grants to repair and renovate important historic properties.

Hillsboro has many valuable heritage resources. These resources are important, not only as reminders of the past, but as valuable economic resources for a growing industry in heritage tourism. Structures, such as the Sellers House and St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, have tremendous importance for Maryland’s history. The core area of Hillsboro is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

Resource inventories assist public and private entities to catalogue valuable historic sites and structures and other resources. For the purpose of this plan, resource inventories are based on information contained in the Maryland Historical Trust’s (MHT) database. Noted historic sites and structures are included in Hillsboro’s Geographic Information System (GIS Mapping System).

**Yoash House or John Corrie House (circa 1790): CAR-29:** The Yoash House overlooks the Tuckahoe River on a small hill near the Tuckahoe Bridge to the Town of Queen Anne. The Yoash House is a three story brick Federal building with a high English basement. The Yoash House is one of the earliest dwellings in Hillsboro.

**Savage Gambrel-Roof House (circa 1800): CAR-30:** This frame one and a half story gambrel roof dwelling is an early structure within Hillsboro. The original pyramidal chimneys remain at each gable end. However, the structure has been altered from its original state.



The Sellers House or Lee House is one of the oldest structures in the Town of Hillsboro.



**Lee Brick House (circa 1790): CAR-31:** In the late 18<sup>th</sup> Century, a large portion of land within Hillsboro was owned by John Hardcastle of Talbot County. A lot from this plot of land was sold to William Smith, a local merchant, and the brick portion of the house was constructed around 1794. The frame addition was built in 1798. The brick work in this five-bay house is Flemish bond on the north façade with the other two bays laid in common English bond. Much of the building was remodeled in 1870, around the time that the Francis Sellers House was remodeled.

**Elizabeth Downes or the Francis Sellers House (circa 1784-87): CAR-101:** One of Hillsboro's most noted personages were Francis Sellers, who emigrated from Glasgow Scotland to Maryland in the last quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. Sellers built the two-story, three-bay by two-bay gable roof dwelling from the period 1784 to 1787. The house was altered in the late 1800's. The Sellers House also is associated with Ms. Elizabeth Downes, who assisted in the founding of the Town of Hillsboro. Her father was Henry Downes, who founded the Alms House, which was charged with building a bridge across the Choptank River, organizing the early Methodist Church, and locating temporary quarters for Caroline County's first courthouse.

**Douglas Anderson House (circa 1793): CAR-102:** This frame house is a two-bay, two story dwelling with an exposed chimney. The lot was sold to George Wilson in 1799 probably around the time when the house was constructed.

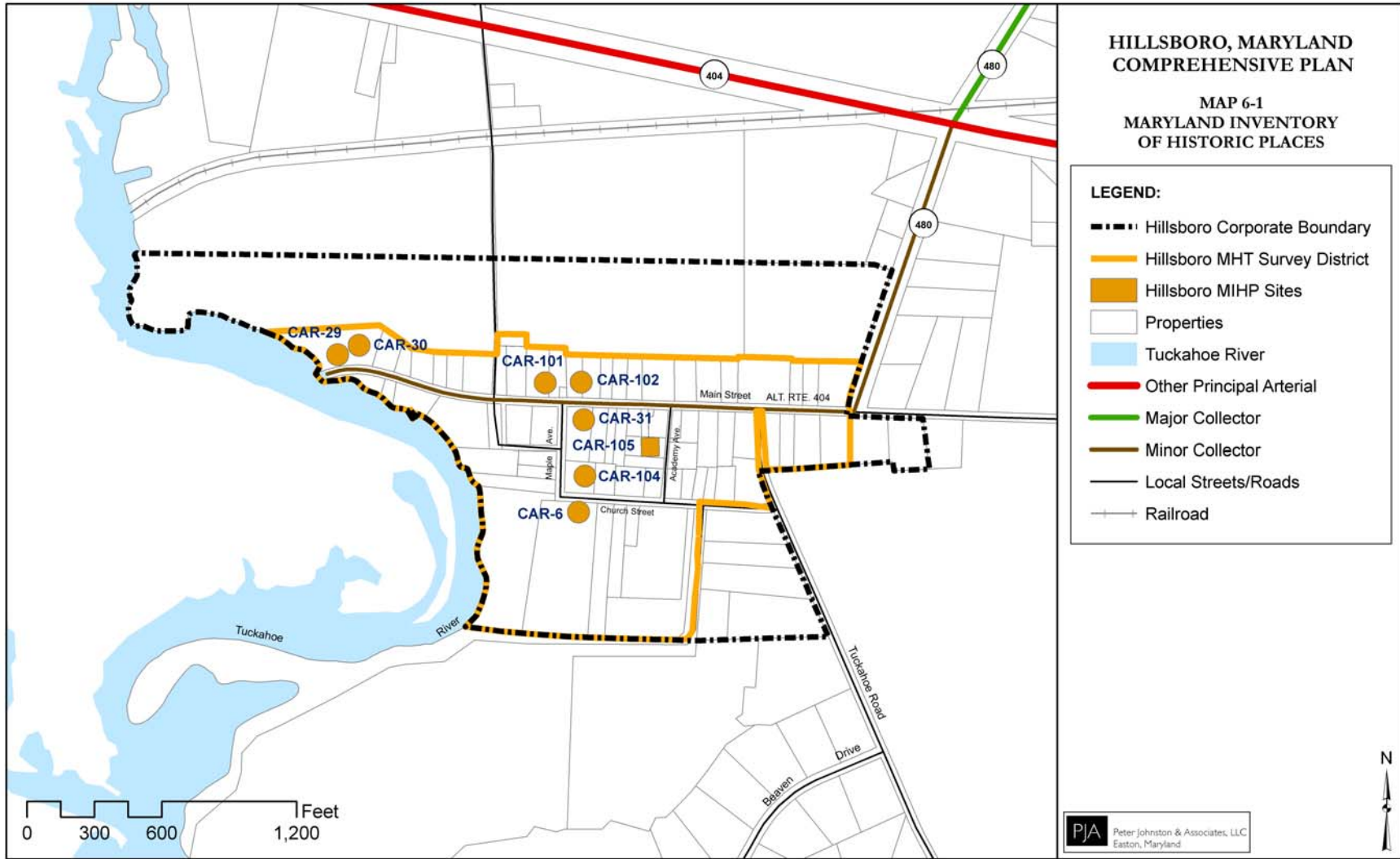
**St. Paul's Episcopal Church (1768; 1853): CAR-6, National Register of Historic Places – NRHP 293:** The first St. Paul's Episcopal Church was built in 1768 on Tuckahoe Creek. In 1853, the present church was built under the guidance of Reverend William Goldsborough in the Town of Hillsboro. The church has a simplistic and elegant design inspired by Richard Upton. At the time of construction, Anglican Church fathers advocated a return to the high roof, pointed steeple, and sharp angles of medieval gothic architecture, the Gothic Revival movement reflected in the St. Paul's of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.



St. Paul's Church as it appears today in Hillsboro.

**St. Paul's Rectory – St. Paul's Parish (circa 1796/1860): CAR-104:** Located across the street from the St. Paul's Church, this late 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Century dwelling is now a private residence but was once the rectory for St. Paul's Church. The dwelling is a five-bay house with two stories and a gable roof.

**Eveland House (circa 1780): CAR-105:** The Eveland House is one of the oldest structures in Hillsboro. The structure is a one and half story, three-bay dwelling with a gambrel roof. According to records, Elizabeth Downes leased a house to James Curtis, a local shoemaker in 1784. He is thought to have built the current structure just before his death in 1787. Much of the original structure has been altered.



**Town of Hillsboro Historic Core (1780’s-1900’s) Eligible for Listing on the NRHP:**

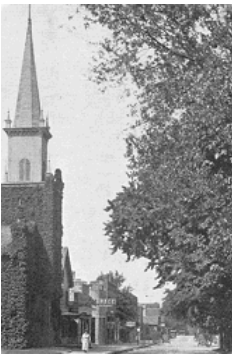
The Town of Hillsboro has many sites and structures of historic importance. Most of the homes located on the Town’s main thoroughfare and in the core area by the Tuckahoe River are eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Designation of a “Hillsboro Historic District” will greatly assist property owners to meet the financial burdens for the maintenance of old homes through grants and low interest loans from the Maryland Historical Trust.

**Daffin House (1760; 1785): CAR-1 National Register of Historic Places – NRHP**

**299:** Although not located in Hillsboro, the nearby Daffin House is important to the history of region, State, and nation. The House was built by Thomas Daffin in 1783 and overlooks Tuckahoe Creek just south of Hillsboro. Daffin House has three sections with the main center portion constructed in 1783 and attached to a smaller one-story brick house built in 1760. The Daffin house also exhibits Victorian and Greek Revival embellishments. According to historical records, President Andrew Jackson met Charles Dickinson at the Daffin House. In later years, Jackson killed Dickinson during a duel in Kentucky over horse racing.

**HERITAGE PRESERVATION INITIATIVES**

Many heritage preservation initiatives are currently occurring in Caroline County and the Hillsboro region. These initiatives present opportunities to capitalize on the history of Hillsboro to promote heritage tourism. More importantly, they represent opportunities to seek public and private investment in the Town to restore and rehabilitate heritage structures.



**Part I: Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area**

Under the Maryland Heritage Areas Program administered by the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority (MHAA), the Counties of Caroline, Kent, Queen Anne’s, and Talbot have partnered with the Eastern Shore Heritage Incorporated (ESHI – a public private partnership) to create the “Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area.” Partners in the Heritage Area also include 21 municipalities within the region. The “Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area” is one of the largest in the State.

ESHI is a non-profit organization tasked to manage the Heritage Area and develop a Heritage Area Management Plan. As a guiding policy, the *Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area Management Plan* seeks to promote heritage preservation and tourism for economic development. The purpose of the organization and the plan is to achieve Certified Heritage Area Status from the MHAA and enhance heritage preservation and tourism on a regional scale.

In 2005, the Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area became “Certified” by the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority. Certified Heritage Area Status confers many benefits, including grant funding for local projects and historic rehabilitation tax credits for property owners. Hillsboro is part of the Heritage Area.

## **Part II: Regional Scenic & Cultural Resources**

In January 2004, Caroline County in coordination with ESHI and Scenic Maryland prepared the *Cultural Landscape & Scenic Resource Assessment – Landscape Assessment Volume 1 for the Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area*. The Resources Study is oriented by region and sub-region based on physiographic characteristics, including islands, maritime lowlands, maritime highlands, and interior farmlands. Districts were formed from these sub-regions for the purposes of evaluation, with criteria based on the *National Register Bulletin 30: Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Rural Historic Landscapes*.

The West County region included three significant districts, the Ridgely District, Tuckahoe River District, and the Upper Choptank River District. These were rated by public workshop groups formed from citizens in the Heritage Area region.

The Ridgely District is located in the Interior Farmlands region. The region is dominated by flat topography, open farm fields (primarily corn and soybeans), granaries, historic small towns related to farming and the railroad industry, as well as some forested areas. Although highly rated for agricultural resources, the Ridgely District rated moderate to low for scenic and cultural resources.

The Tuckahoe River District, including Hillsboro, is located in the Maritime Highlands region. The region has a diverse topography and is dominated by rolling hills and steeper slopes along the river. In addition, other resources were cited including natural resources, moderately sized farms, open farm fields (primarily corn and soybeans), historic small towns, historic estates and properties, as well as forested areas. The Tuckahoe River District was highly rated for scenic and cultural resources. Preservation of farmland and the river was cited as a positive contribution.

The Upper Choptank River District includes Denton and West Denton. It is located in the Maritime Highlands region, which has a diverse topography and is dominated by rolling hills and steeper slopes along the river. In addition, other resources were cited including the historic river town of Denton (Caroline County Seat), natural resources, moderately sized farms, open farm fields (primarily corn and soybeans), historic estates and properties, as well as forested areas. The Upper Choptank River District was highly rated for scenic and cultural resources. Waterfront accessibility was cited as an important contribution.

A series of maps were developed as part of the Scenic & Cultural Study to rate overall resources including Visual Preference; Scenic Resources – Magnitude, Distinctiveness, and Intactness; Scenic Resource Assessment; Cultural Resource Assessment; and Scenic Cultural Landscapes. In addition, a series of individual maps were developed including

Natural Resources Heritage; Colonial and Early Colonial Heritage; Small Town Heritage; Religious Heritage; African-American Heritage; Agricultural Heritage; Maritime Heritage; and Travel and Transportation Heritage.

Although the Scenic & Cultural Study was largely subjective, overall the West County region is highly rated for cultural and scenic resources. It consistently ranked medium to high in almost all categories except for Interior Farmlands (Ridgely District). In this regard, the Scenic & Cultural Study provides valuable information concerning the aesthetic value of resources for the public abroad and heritage tourism as a whole.

### Part III: Historic Scenic By-Ways

Under the National Scenic By-Ways Program, Caroline County, in coordination with Dorchester County, is engaged in designating several State highways as Historic Scenic By-Ways. The program is designed to recognize highways that are outstanding examples of scenic, historic, recreational, cultural, archeological, and/or natural qualities and provide special benefits, including the promotion of heritage tourism. “Scenic By-Way” projects include the Underground Railroad Scenic Byway, which includes the Town of Hillsboro.



The old “Hillsboro Bank Building” has been purchased by the Town and is presently being restored as a museum and tourism information center.

### IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are designed to assist Hillsboro in the implementation of this Comprehensive Plan:

**RECOMMENDATION #1:** Partner with local entities such as the Eastern Shore Heritage Incorporated (ESHI), Caroline County Government, the Caroline County Historical Society, and the Caroline County Economic Development Corporation to promote and enhance heritage preservation and tourism initiatives in Hillsboro.

**RECOMMENDATION #2:** Partner with Caroline County and the Maryland State Department of Transportation (MDOT) – State Highway Administration (SHA) to promote Hillsboro in regards to the benefits from National Scenic and Historic Byway designation.

**RECOMMENDATION #3:** Map and inventory key heritage resources and scenic and cultural landscapes in Hillsboro.

**RECOMMENDATION #4:** Build heritage tourism attractions in Hillsboro such as the Old Bank Building.

**RECOMMENDATION #5:** Work with Caroline County to explore ways to establish a County Preservation Program Fund to assist with heritage preservation, neighborhood revitalization, and tourism in Hillsboro.

**RECOMMENDATION #6:** Support local and regional heritage tourism efforts to enhance local economy.

**RECOMMENDATION #7:** Establish mechanisms through partnerships to supply technical and professional assistance regarding heritage resources, including assistance to property owners for the rehabilitation and/or restoration of heritage structures in Hillsboro.

**RECOMMENDATION #8:** Develop planning policies and regulatory mechanisms, including Design Objectives or Guidelines, to assist in the preservation of heritage resources in Hillsboro.

**RECOMMENDATION #9:** Encourage the protection and rehabilitation of historic homes and buildings by evaluating the use of rehabilitation tax incentives at the local, State, and Federal levels and by working with the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development, the Maryland Historical Trust, and other agencies to obtain financial support for rehabilitation;

**RECOMMENDATION #10:** Assist property owners in identifying financial incentives for rehabilitation and/or adaptive reuse of older buildings that exhibit important or traditional architectural features. New construction of commercial and residential buildings, including new development, infill and redevelopment, should reflect the characteristics of Hillsboro's best historic architecture.

**RECOMMENDATION #11:** Seek ways to ensure that the Eastern Shore vernacular architecture found along Hillsboro's streets is maintained and preserved as a valuable asset and an important resource in regional heritage programs.

**RECOMMENDATION #12:** Adopt zoning provisions that promote the adaptive reuse of historic structures for public and private uses including, but not limited to, bed and breakfast establishments, craft/gift shops, small retail operations, museums, and studio space for artisans, when such uses minimize exterior structural alteration.

**RECOMMENDATION #13:** Encourage the establishment of a local historic district in Hillsboro and promote tax incentives and recognition through the awarding of plaques.

## CHAPTER 7: IMPLEMENTATION

The most important part of any comprehensive plan is ensuring that goals and objectives are implemented by municipal government and supported by residents. Accordingly, significant attention and activity should be devoted to reviewing the various land use regulations in Hillsboro. For example, there is a strong need to manage the use of existing properties in Town and ensure that improvements are consistent with the Hillsboro's goals and objectives.

### IMPLEMENTATION

*The 2008 Hillsboro Comprehensive Plan forms the policies that will dictate how Town regulations (Zoning Ordinance & Subdivision Regulations) are designed in the future.*

Presently, most of the community consists of older single-family homes. The architectural and landscape character of Hillsboro is an important and valuable asset. Therefore, this Comprehensive Plan is designed to encourage the preservation of the older community and village scale of the Town. Accordingly, this Plan will be used by the Town Commissioners, the Planning Commission, private property owners, developers, and citizens to ensure that the expressed values and goals are used to guide municipal actions and control growth.

Specific implementation actions are listed below. These implementation actions were designed to supply a policy direction to the Hillsboro Planning Commission and Town Commission in order to fulfill the goals and objectives of the 2008 *Hillsboro Comprehensive Plan*.

### **CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS**

If the Town has not already initiated such action, Hillsboro should prepare a five -year plan for capital improvements or a general Capital Improvement Program (CIP), which can be used by the Town's government or for the general benefit of the community. This plan should identify needs, provide a justification for purchase or construction, and identify the sources of funds that will be used to pay for the project or item. The CIP should allow for alteration of the plan to meet changing needs.

### **WATER AND SEWER**

Hillsboro does not have public water and sewer facilities and services nor are these facilities and services envisioned in the future. Presently, the Town has private wells and on-site septic systems.

### **ADEQUATE FACILITIES PROVISIONS**

As a primary policy, the Town should ensure that there is adequate land available for infill and redevelopment in the existing corporate boundaries of the Town. This should be analyzed in accordance with Caroline County Environmental Health standards and regulations for the location of well and septic systems.

The Town also should ensure that there are sufficient roads and other road infrastructure needs available to facilitate through traffic and pedestrian circulation and access. If the Town determines that it does not have adequate facilities, it should explore methods to acquire the needed facilities.

Updating the Town's Capital Improvement Program-CIP, infrastructure studies, and fee structure are critical. These updates are particularly important prior to the annexation of any new land outside current corporate boundaries. Updates also are important to facilitate infill and redevelopment.

## **ZONING REGULATIONS**

The current zoning regulations reflect efforts to develop designations to match conditions when they were established in years past. These regulations should be reviewed and revised to ensure that compatible uses are created. The specific zoning regulations that deal with lot size and setbacks should be examined to ensure that they encourage the type of village development appropriate to Hillsboro. This will ensure that property owners of existing buildings rebuild on small lots common to the older sections of Town and provide the flexibility needed to accomplish appropriate infill and redevelopment projects consistent with Town goals and objectives.

### **Part I: Neighborhood Conservation**

The Comprehensive Plan identifies existing neighborhoods as areas in need of protection. The primary objectives for the Neighborhood Conservation Planning Area involve maintaining the existing residential character of the neighborhoods and allowing compatible infill and redevelopment. Particular concerns that should be addressed through appropriate zoning standards and guidelines include:

- Connectivity – appropriate vehicular and pedestrian connections between on-site and off-site transportation systems;
- Circulation – consistency with the area wide vehicular and pedestrian circulation concepts of the Comprehensive Plan;
- Parking – flexible parking requirements; and
- Compatibility – essential elements of compatible project design, e.g., design, pattern, alignment, size, and shape.

### **Part II: Town Center**

In a recent publication, the Maryland Department of State Planning (MDP) described the characteristics of “Smart Neighborhoods” as follows:

- Integrated mix of uses, including residential, commercial, employment/office, civic, and open space;
- Range of housing types and densities;
- Compact design;



- Interconnected streets designed to balance the needs of all users, with sidewalks and on-street parking;
- Open spaces integral to the community; and
- Location adjacent to and extending the fabric of existing development.

The existing town center character that has resulted from historic land use development patterns reflects the characteristics of Smart Neighborhoods. However, the current zoning for much of the Town Center Planning Area does not recognize the legitimacy of the land use mix found. This is largely due to infrastructure limitations and more stringent environmental protection laws that have developed over the course of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

The Town should create zoning provisions for the Town Center that expressly recognize the existing mix of residential and non-residential uses. Zoning standards for this Planning Area should provide for the expansion of existing non-residential uses, and where appropriate, creation of new compatible commercial and business uses. There are several strategies the Town may employ to regulate future development or redevelopment in this district, many focused on ensuring appropriate design and related processes.

Much of the development potential in this Planning Area can be classified as infill or redevelopment. Infill and redevelopment standards and guidelines for the Town Center could be established that permit the Planning Commission to approve new and expanded non-residential uses that are found to be compatible with surrounding land uses. Infill and redevelopment standards could also apply to residential development and redevelopment.

### **Part III: Zoning for Planned Redevelopment Area**

The Comprehensive Plan identifies areas where the Town wants to encourage appropriate infill and redevelopment. In order to enable this outcome, the Zoning Ordinance could include standards and guidelines for infill and redevelopment projects. This may best be accomplished with a special overlay zone that allows the Planning Commission to judge the merit of a proposed infill or redevelopment project against design objectives and give administrative relief for projects that meet these criteria.

### **Part IV: Zoning for Commercial and Industrial Uses**

The Town of Hillsboro should develop simple design standards and/or guidelines for development. These should include the design of the building, landscaping, parking requirements, etc. All such new buildings should be compatible with the scale and character of the Town. Great care should be exercised to ensure that the entrance into Hillsboro (County areas) does not deteriorate into an unattractive strip of low density residential uses, commercial uses, and storage facilities.

## **Part V: Landscape Standards**

Development standards should include minimum street and site landscape requirements. On-site landscape requirements may be stated as performance standards, e.g., 15 percent of the site is to be landscaped. The Town may want to consider using Caroline County's landscape standards as a guide for developing local standards to ensure consistency across jurisdictions. This will also assist with forest conservation practices and stormwater if properly designed and utilizing best management practices.

## **Part VI: Environmental Protection**

The Eight Visions for Maryland, as articulated in *Article 66B of the Annotated Code of Maryland: Planning Act of 1992*, encourage stewardship of the land as a universal ethic. The Planning Act requires the Town to adopt policies for the protection of sensitive environmental areas. The Zoning Ordinance should be amended to include new State laws and standards that address stream buffers, non-tidal wetlands, steep slopes and the habitats of threatened and endangered species. In addition, the Town should encourage development design that maintains or enhances "green infrastructure," incorporates low impact design stormwater management techniques for water quality and quantity management, and includes "green building" technology that conserves energy and improves indoor and outdoor air quality.

## **Part VII: Forest and Farmland Conservation**

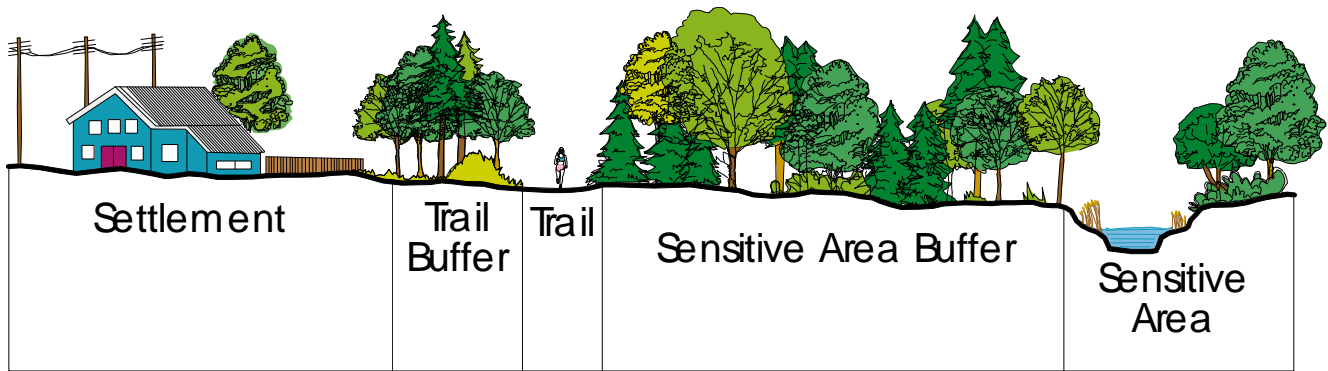
Although, Hillsboro is a well-established community, there are significant amounts of farmland as well as forested areas within its municipal boundaries. Agriculture and forestry activities should be permitted to continue provided they do not adversely impact the health, safety and welfare of the community. Although, this Comprehensive Plan envisions a continuance of these land uses, the Planning Commission and the Town Commissioners should expect forest and farmland to be converted to buildable lots for residential development. The timing of that conversion will depend on the availability of water and sewer or the market demand for housing.

## **DEVELOPMENT & DESIGN**

The development and design of a community is important for maintaining what is special about a given place. Whether special characteristics are historic sites and structures, parks and open spaces, natural features, or shopping and recreation, maintaining and enhancing these characteristics is vital.

### **Part I: Conservation Site Design**

The use of flexible development regulations to promote innovative and environmentally friendly site design is important for maintaining aesthetic, scenic, and ecologically important community features. In addition, conservation design techniques for development are critical for preserving precious resources. Essentially, these resources are an economic lifeline for the future and are what draw people to the Eastern Shore area, boosting the local economy.



Rural countryside, historic sites and structures, scenic viewsheds of farms or waterways, and small towns all contribute to identity of a region. The consequences of preservation can be seen in small towns such as Easton or Chestertown where vibrant tourist industries have been built helping to reshape and revitalize these areas. The backdrop for these historic towns is the rural farms, fields, and rivers that surround them. These entities co-exist and are mutually dependent.

**Conservation Design for Resource Preservation and Environmental Enhancement**

Innovative design to achieve the preservation of resources is important. Many design guidelines advocate clustering to preserve open space however, even though clustering is important to achieve density and preserve open space, it is not a general panacea for development on the Eastern Shore. One important reason is the flat topography of the region. Whereas clustering obviously works in areas with wide and ranging topography such as New England (because development can be hidden behind hills and forests), topography works against clustering in flat areas where development “sticks out like a sore thumb.” Buffering is the most important component of development design on the Eastern Shore. When integrated with clustering, it produces an effective combination. Buffering also provides numerous environmental benefits. Any design guidelines for the region should seek to successfully integrate buffering techniques with clustering including the utilization of native plant species.



It is important to maintain the existing rural character during the development site planning and review process and develop flexible regulations that promote conservation site design.

With flexible development regulations and streamlined processes, developers can be persuaded to initiate appropriate design for project development. Time and money cause developers to follow a “by-the-book” approach for projects, which often prevails over innovation. Sometimes this type of inflexible process promotes less environmental protection and resource conservation rather than more. The key to good design in development is innovation, a plan that integrates the existing environment and its resources.

Edward McMahon's "Better Models for Development in Maryland," provides six broad principles for better development.<sup>1</sup> These include:

- Conserving farmland, open space, and scenic resources;
- Maintaining a clear edge between towns and the countryside;
- Building livable communities;
- Preserving historic resources respect local character in new construction; and
- Reducing the impact of the car by providing more transportation choices.

### **Total Maximum Daily Load's (TMDL's)**

In Hillsboro, an important aspect of conservation design is to enhance water quality. To begin to address TMDL's, as required by the Federal and State government, the Town should review existing regulations and determine where simple administrative and/or regulatory changes can be made to incorporate new techniques promoted by the State for stormwater management, including buffering, rain barrels, filter strips, and infrastructure improvements to promote improved water quality.

Hillsboro should encourage Caroline County to complete a comprehensive regional and sub-regional watershed analysis and characterization, which identifies and categorizes resources. This process began with the *Caroline County Watershed Restoration Action Strategy (WRAS)*, defining portions of the Upper Choptank Watershed. Further study is required to define the Lower Choptank River, the Tuckahoe River, and Marshyhope Creek (part of the Naticoke Watershed).

It is important to establish a system for all jurisdictions whereby TMDL's are assessed on a regional by sub-regional watershed basis. The watershed characterization supplies the foundation for this process, including the development of a methodology and formula to calculate when a watershed reaches critical mass in regards to new development and when nutrient trading should be required. Watersheds reaching a critical mass would require nutrient trading to agricultural areas to off-set degraded areas. Any strategy also would include "Best Management Practices," particularly for municipalities like Hillsboro, and encourage sensitive site design or conservation design that accounts for environmental factors and resources. In this regard, agricultural areas can become potential partners and solvents for water quality degradation in urban/suburban areas.

Hillsboro should encourage Caroline County to continue detailed analyses of failing septic systems. The *Caroline County On-Site Septic System Study*, completed in cooperation with Talbot County, Environmental Health, and the Mid-Shore Regional Council, is the basis for continuing efforts to define the impacts of septic systems in the County and develop policies and regulations to address these impacts. In this regard, Hillsboro should contact Caroline County Environmental Health to assist in the future use of new and innovative on-site septic systems that seek improved nutrient removal.

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<sup>1</sup> *Better Models for Development in Maryland: Ideas for Creating More Livable and Prosperous Communities*; Edward T. McMahon and Shelley S. Mastran; Prepared in coordination with the Conservation Funds; October 2004.

## **Part II: Village Centers**

Every community village center provides a core or community focus. Village Centers should be located as near as possible to the geographic center of one or more neighborhoods, with equal access from all. Village centers should include a balance of residential and non-residential uses, with retail uses in proportion to housing. Major civic and social uses and facilities should be located in the village center as well as employment uses, e.g., offices, small service businesses, etc.

Village centers should be instantly recognizable due the scale of buildings and the intensity of uses. Housing density should highest in and around the village center so the most residents are within an easy walking distance of shops and other uses.

Village centers can encompass an area as small as a couple of blocks in smaller communities (less than 100 acres). In larger communities (100 to 500 acres) village centers may extent 800 to 1,000 feet from the geographic center. Important design consideration for village centers include designing for the human scale, emphasis on streetscape and the pedestrian, and attention to details that make buildings and places interesting to people on foot.

An internal open space area or commons (10,000 square feet or larger) should be located in the village center and designated as the community green. The location, design and layout of streets and landscape treatments in the village center should emphasize the community green's role as a central focal point.

## **Part III: Building Character**

The appearance and architectural character of new construction and renovation is a subject that warrants some discussion and guidance. While the Town has no intention to legislate style or "taste," it recognizes a responsibility to guide the overall appearance of our built environment. Toward that end the Town's objective is to ensure that additions to the community complement, blend with, and improve the general attractiveness and appearance of Hillsboro.

The Town wants to maintain its rural Eastern Shore, small town character. That means new construction should take design inspiration from the simple forms and building masses that are prevalent in our area. Commercial buildings should retain as much of a residential "flavor" as is feasible. This can be accomplished in ways such as breaking up the façade of larger buildings to give the appearance of smaller structures that are grouped together, including generous roof pitches (and avoiding flat roofs), and using window, door, and siding details that are similar to styles commonly found in residential construction. Parking should be screened, landscaped, lit with pedestrian scale lighting fixtures, and distributed around the sides and rear of commercial buildings. The Town does not want large parking lots that present a "sea of asphalt" appearance. Shade trees and flowering shrubs should be combined with berms and evergreens to soften both building edges and parking areas.

## Part IV: Design Principles

The Town of Hillsboro is generally concerned about how a project relates to surrounding properties. In this regard, the Town desires projects that are attractive with good site planning, including compatible architectural structures, beneficial circulation, and landscaping. The views of the site and from the site should be clearly considered by the developer and addressed in development plans. Time spent on working out the details, both visual and functional, should expedite approvals.

The following principles serve to clarify the Town's intent:

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

Although precluded without adequate public infrastructure, larger-scale development projects can best address those issues that affect the Town's guiding principal; protection and enhancement of our "small town character." This includes adherence to the following design parameters:

- Architectural harmony, including compatibility in styles, materials, colors, and building size and setbacks;
- Variety in housing types, density, and cost;
- Parks, squares, and other common open spaces for residents to interact and recreate, and to provide a setting for the architecture of the development;
- Neighborhood centers and civic spaces, which, depending on the scale of the development, can include places to shop, work, learn, or worship;
- An interconnected street system which is based on a modified grid system;
- Sidewalks, street trees, and substantial on-street parking, providing distinct separation between pedestrians and traffic;
- Streets and sidewalks that are spatially defined by buildings in a regular pattern, unbroken by parking lots;
- Traffic calming, including more narrow streets with shorter turning radii than suburban streets, and medians, circles and related features along prominent streets;
- Lighting which is designed for safe walking and signage which has a pedestrian orientation;
- A system of land subdivision and development which links one neighborhood to another and can logically be extended.

## **Part V: Access, Circulation and Parking Design**

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

Alleys provide opportunities for parking in the rear of housing and contribute to the overall permeability of the road network. Alleys should be considered for all residential neighborhoods and as access to rear parking areas in commercial and office areas.

The street layout should present an attractive streetscape. A streetscape that is interesting to pedestrians encourages more people to walk. Buildings should front on the street. Structures, whether residential, commercial, or office, should form a continuous street edge, a vertical wall that contains the street and encloses space. In this regard, most streets need to be designed so that they are usable and frontable.

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

Streets should connect with surrounding streets to permit the convenient movement of traffic between neighborhoods or to facilitate access to neighborhoods by emergency service vehicles or for other sufficient reasons. The street layout should serve the needs of the neighborhood and discourages use by through traffic. The street layout should respect natural features, should relate appropriately to the topography and should be designed to facilitate the drainage and storm water runoff.

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

Appropriate facilities for bicycles should be provided at key commercial, civic and recreation locations. To ensure this, the Town Zoning and Subdivision codes should be amended to require non-residential uses to provide bicycle storage/parking facilities to encourage and support this alternative mode of travel.

## **Part VI: Parks and Open Space**

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

The design of parks should respond to user needs. As a general rule, park design should adhere to the following principles:

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



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

## **ADMINISTRATION AND ENFORCEMENT**

### **Part I: Streamlining the Development Review Process**

Development review of infill and redevelopment projects within the old town portions of Hillsboro should be streamlined by amending the Zoning Ordinance to give the Planning Commission greater authority to vary certain development standards for proposed projects that meet voluntary design guidelines.

### **Part II: Comprehensive Plan Updates**

The ability of a municipal government to develop comprehensive plans and land-use regulations are based on the laws of the State of Maryland and on the charter and ordinances passed by the Town. This Comprehensive Plan provides a guide for the management of Hillsboro and should be followed by the Town government.

The Planning Commission, appointed by the Town Commissioners, is charged with ensuring that this Plan is followed. The Planning Commission advises the Town Commissioners on changes that might need to be made to the Comprehensive Plan and its implementing regulations over the Plan's life.

The Comprehensive Plan is not a document that should remain "on the shelf." Copies should be provided to all members of the Planning Commission and the Town Commission; as well as all employees and consultants that have responsibilities governed by the Comprehensive Plan.

The Planning Commission should also review the Plan every year. The Comprehensive Plan should be reviewed on six-year intervals to ensure that it still reflects and satisfies the needs of the Town and the citizens. The yearly review and the six-year review should be done as part of regular Planning Commission meetings and as part of a public hearing on the Comprehensive Plan to ensure that appropriate citizen input is provided to the Planning Commission.

Because the central role of the Planning Commission is guiding growth, development, and revitalization, it is important that it be composed of residents of the community. The Planning Commission should be kept at full strength at all times and the Town should ensure that they remain current with changing State laws and policies, with Caroline County's laws and regulations, and with the management of Hillsboro, providing the proper advice and guidance.

In addition, the Planning Commission should have at least the following responsibilities:

- Maintain a current and accurate Comprehensive Plan and enforcement regulations for the Town of Hillsboro;
- Review all decisions made by both Hillsboro and other agencies that might affect the Town, the Comprehensive Plan, zoning regulations, subdivision ordinances, land-use regulations and guidance, and the future direction of Hillsboro and its government and governance;
- Review and act on all requests for subdivision and other land-use change requests;
- Review and recommend changes on all revisions to the Hillsboro Zoning Ordinance and associated maps;
- Assist the Town Commissioners in the development of a Capital Improvements Program-CIP;
- Activate and participate in all programs and recommendations in the Comprehensive Plan and in other regulations, ordinances, and resolutions that fall into areas of responsibility;
- Complete other tasks and responsibilities that might be assigned to it by the Town Commissioners; and
- Recommend changes to the Comprehensive Plan, zoning regulations, subdivision ordinances, and other land-use policies, regulations, and guidance.

### **Part III: Building Codes**

If the Town Hillsboro has not already adopted the *2000 International Building Code*, it should do so. An employee or contractor should provide enforcement. As part of the enforcement of building codes, the Town's building inspector views the exterior of each property and develops a list of those properties that require remediation. Those that have obvious and major defects are noted and their property owners are given a written listing of deficiencies. Property owners are thus given an appropriate time limit within which to make the necessary repairs. If a property is too deteriorated that it causes a danger to the health and safety of the community and a hazard of residents, the Town can initiate condemnation proceedings against the property owner as provided in the building codes and by Maryland law and civil procedure. This may require a review of the Town's fee schedule.

## IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

**TABLE 1: LAND USE & GROWTH MANAGEMENT**

LAND USE GOALS	LAND USE OBJECTIVES	LAND USE RECOMMENDATIONS
<p><b>PRIMARY GOAL:</b> Preserve the small town atmosphere and qualities that make Hillsboro a desirable place to live.</p>	<p><b>OBJECTIVE #1:</b> Maintain and improve the overall community character and quality of life for all residents.</p>	<p><b>RECOMMENDATION #1:</b> Ensure that all development and redevelopment is compatible with the existing character of the Town and encourage the revitalization and continued improvement of Hillsboro with a special emphasis on the Town Center and Neighborhood Conservation Districts.</p> <p>To accomplish this goal, the Town Commission should specifically identify and designate future revitalization areas. In addition, the Town should review the Zoning Ordinance, Zoning Map, and Subdivision Regulations to integrate safeguards for community character.</p>
<p><b>GOAL #1:</b> Enhance the existing character of Hillsboro through compatible growth and reinvestment in existing properties.</p>	<p><b>OBJECTIVE #2:</b> Provide for traditional neighborhood businesses and encourage business and commercial revitalization that is compatible with the surrounding residential neighborhood.</p>	<p><b>RECOMMENDATION #2:</b> Update the Town Zoning Ordinance, Zoning Map, and Subdivision Regulations to require that future development and redevelopment be appropriate in scale and design to Hillsboro’s small town atmosphere.</p>
<p><b>GOAL #2:</b> Preserve the existing residential neighborhood areas in Hillsboro and ensure that new development is consistent with Town character.</p>	<p><b>OBJECTIVE #3:</b> Encourage home-based businesses that do not change the character of the neighborhood or impact the Town’s already limited off-street parking.</p>	<p><b>RECOMMENDATION #3:</b> Promote sensitive area protection and ensure that development avoids designated “Sensitive Areas” and employs best management practices to minimize adverse impacts on water quality and habitat.</p>
<p><b>GOAL #3:</b> Encourage the restoration, rehabilitation, and adaptive reuse of existing buildings.</p>	<p><b>OBJECTIVE #4:</b> Maintain and enhance the safe and efficient movement of people and goods throughout Town with particular emphasis on facilitating pedestrian travel.</p>	<p><b>RECOMMENDATION #4:</b> Promote inter-jurisdictional coordination and future cooperative planning and zoning efforts with Caroline County. The Caroline County Council of Governments (COG) provides Hillsboro a forum to discuss issues and opportunities with County officials. In addition, the County and Hillsboro Planning</p>

**TABLE 1: LAND USE & GROWTH MANAGEMENT**

LAND USE GOALS	LAND USE OBJECTIVES	LAND USE RECOMMENDATIONS
		Commissions should meet annually or periodically to discuss planning issues of mutual interest.
<b>GOAL #4:</b> Improve existing property values and the climate for new investment and reinvestment in Hillsboro by addressing key infrastructure issues, such roads and streets and other capital projects.	<b>OBJECTIVE #5:</b> Protect Sensitive Areas in accordance with local and state laws.	<b>RECOMMENDATION #5:</b> Encourage Caroline County to refer plans of proposed development, zoning changes, and subdivisions located within two miles of the Town to Hillsboro officials for review.
<b>GOAL #5:</b> Stabilize property values through the adoption of appropriate regulations.	<b>OBJECTIVE #6:</b> Preserve and enhance Hillsboro’s heritage resources.	<b>RECOMMENDATION #6:</b> Work with Caroline County to insure the adequacy of public facilities provided and that new development adjacent to Hillsboro minimizes impacts on the rural character surrounding the community.
<b>GOAL #6:</b> Expand the tax base of Hillsboro by encouraging appropriate infill and redevelopment of vacant and underutilized properties, where appropriate.	<b>OBJECTIVE #7:</b> Enhance Hillsboro’s municipal infrastructure, where appropriate.	<b>RECOMMENDATION #7:</b> Encourage the continuation of compatible agricultural uses adjacent to Hillsboro to maintain the rural character of the community.
<b>GOAL #7:</b> Ensure new development is consistent with the overall growth objectives of Hillsboro by adopting appropriate development codes/standards and ensuring that all new development is appropriate in scale and size.	<b>OBJECTIVE #8:</b> Develop simple and practical regulations to encourage appropriate infill and redevelopment within existing neighborhoods including incentive based processes and procedures.	<b>RECOMMENDATION #8:</b> Encourage the redevelopment and re-use of vacant buildings insuring compatibility with the surrounding residential neighborhood and discourage the establishment of any industrial uses.
<b>GOAL #8:</b> Improve coordination between Hillsboro and Caroline County to promote inter-jurisdictional coordination and cooperation as required by State law.	<b>OBJECTIVE #9:</b> Develop regulations that reflect good design standards and practices.	<b>RECOMMENDATION #9:</b> Enhance inter-jurisdictional measures with the Town of Queen Anne and Talbot County.
<b>GOAL #9:</b> Protect sensitive environmental areas.	<b>OBJECTIVE #10:</b> Prevent development on land that is unsuitable for development because of soil characteristics, high water tables, or other environmental limitations.	<b>RECOMMENDATION #10:</b> Encourage “Community Character Policies” that include the following design principles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish architectural guidelines as well as yard setbacks, bulk standards, and height restrictions to retain or promote desirable</li> </ul>

**TABLE 1: LAND USE & GROWTH MANAGEMENT**

LAND USE GOALS	LAND USE OBJECTIVES	LAND USE RECOMMENDATIONS
		community character; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retain or create site designs for a pedestrian-friendly community, which shall be encouraged and facilitated;</li> <li>• Insure development retains the pattern, scale, and character of the surrounding neighborhood;</li> <li>• Insure the review of development proposals to place priority on the protection of historic and culturally significant buildings, monuments, and spaces contributing to the Town’s character; and</li> <li>• Maintain connections to the rural landscape by encouraging protection of farms and forested areas outside the Town boundary.</li> </ul>
	<b>OBJECTIVE #11:</b> Limit “through” traffic in residential neighborhoods and heavy vehicles in the Town Center.	<b>RECOMMENDATION #11:</b> Continue to prepare a Planning Commission Annual Report in accordance with Section 3.09 of Article 66B to monitor plan implementation.
	<b>OBJECTIVE #12:</b> Protect residential areas from encroachment by incompatible land uses.	<b>ZONING &amp; SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS</b>
	<b>OBJECTIVE #13:</b> Evaluate infill, redevelopment, and new development with regard to the availability of, and impact on, public facilities and services and the environment.	<b>RECOMMENDATION #1:</b> Update the Town’s regulations consistent with the recommendations of this Comprehensive Plan and adopt new official zoning map(s), which include the digitization of the Hillsboro Zoning Map in the Town’s Geographic Information System-GIS.
	<b>OBJECTIVE #14:</b> Integrate land use and the street and highway networks to provide for the logical continuation and improvement of existing streets and highways in proper coordination with state and municipal facilities currently in existence.	<b>RECOMMENDATION #2:</b> Create a special planning district for the Town Center and Neighborhood Revitalization Planning Areas that encourage and facilitate context sensitive infill and redevelopment with an emphasis on appropriate design.

**TABLE 1: LAND USE & GROWTH MANAGEMENT**

LAND USE GOALS	LAND USE OBJECTIVES	LAND USE RECOMMENDATIONS
	<b>OBJECTIVE #15:</b> Promote adequate recreational facilities and open space, where applicable.	<b>RECOMMENDATION #3:</b> Establish development standards and guidance for infill, redevelopment, and new development that ensures compliance with the Town’s design objectives.
	<b>OBJECTIVE #16:</b> Provide for a variety of open space areas, recreational facilities, and the protection of undeveloped natural areas.	<b>RECOMMENDATION #4:</b> Promote the upkeep and maintenance of existing buildings by adopting a building code, livability code, nuisance ordinance, and related items to improve and maintain the Town;
	<b>OBJECTIVE #17:</b> Encourage greater recognition by all citizens that land is a finite resource and its wise use and effective conservation is essential for the survival of existing and future generations. This objective is consistent with Vision 4 of the “Planning Act, “stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay and the land is a universal ethic.”	<b>RECOMMENDATION #5:</b> Ensure that the approval of land subdivision, rezoning, special exceptions, variances, and capital expenditures are consistent with the Hillsboro Plan.
	<b>OBJECTIVE #18:</b> Encourage continued growth in a manner that will preserve significant natural features and other resources by requiring proper planning and design techniques to address sensitive environmental concerns. This objective is consistent with Vision 2 of the Planning Act, whereby "sensitive areas are protected.”	<b>RECOMMENDATION #6:</b> Revise current development review processes. For other than permitted uses requiring a building permit, require all applicants to first submit a concept plan, including proposed building types and typical building elevations. Periodically update the development review and approval process to ensure that reviews can be carried out in a timely fashion and ensure appropriate decisions are made with regard to plan review and approvals required for projects.
	<b>OBJECTIVE #19:</b> Work with Caroline County to develop inter-jurisdictional mechanisms to streamline mutually related processes, facilitate growth management, and enhance preservation of the rural country-side.	<b>RECOMMENDATION #7:</b> Where possible, streamline current regulations and create flexible processes/procedures to promote investment and reinvestment in existing properties and promote context sensitive design for infill and redevelopment.

**TABLE 1: LAND USE & GROWTH MANAGEMENT**

LAND USE GOALS	LAND USE OBJECTIVES	LAND USE RECOMMENDATIONS
		<p><b>RECOMMENDATION #8:</b> Establish development standards that are consistent with the existing lot and development pattern in surrounding neighborhoods and encourage the adaptive reuse of existing buildings.</p>
		<p><b>RECOMMENDATION #9:</b> Adopt zoning review fees that cover the cost of Town review, including the cost of any professional assistance the Planning Commission or Town Commissioners may need to adequately evaluate the merits of a proposed development.</p>
		<p><b>RECOMMENDATION #10:</b> Establish “Design Objectives” within the Hillsboro Zoning Ordinance based on the following basic design principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neighborhoods are compact, identifiable, and their boundaries are visually discernible;</li> <li>• Neighborhoods are linear (cross-roads or grid patterned), with variations to enhance views and landmarks;</li> <li>• Neighborhoods are visually coherent and character is established through consistent rules of organization and architecture;</li> <li>• Street corridors are visually bounded and intimate in feeling. Street trees, sidewalks, and front yard design elements create visual layers and contribute to the intimacy of streetscape;</li> <li>• Street blocks help describe component neighborhoods, suggesting the role of the street as a channel for neighborly interaction;</li> <li>• Neighborhoods accommodate a mix of uses, where appropriate, even at the “town” scale;</li> <li>• Parking is accommodated through a mix of on-</li> </ul>

**TABLE 1: LAND USE & GROWTH MANAGEMENT**

LAND USE GOALS	LAND USE OBJECTIVES	LAND USE RECOMMENDATIONS
		street and unobtrusive off-street strategies. Large-scale parking lots are avoided, and older lots are redesigned into smaller landscaped segments; and <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most important, neighborhoods and their setting convey a strong “sense of place.”</li> </ul>
		<b>RECOMMENDATION #11:</b> Establish protection standards for “Sensitive Areas.”
		<b>RECOMMENDATION #12:</b> Ensure appropriate provisions to address flooding and stormwater management and encourage the use of innovative low impact stormwater management techniques, when feasible.
		<b>RECOMMENDATION #13:</b> Eliminate the conversion of single-family homes to multi-family units by adopting a strong land use plan and implementing regulations that clearly differentiates housing types and densities.
		<b>RECOMMENDATION #14:</b> Eliminate mobile home parks from the Hillsboro Zoning Ordinance due to a lack of public infrastructure.
		<b>RECOMMENDATION #15:</b> Update the Planned Development section of the Zoning Ordinance to reflect infrastructure limitations and to enhance process, procedure, and design.
		<b>RECOMMENDATION #16:</b> Update the Table of Permitted Uses in the Hillsboro Zoning Ordinance.
		<b>RECOMMENDATION #17:</b> Update the Town’s Subdivision Regulations consistent with the recommendations of this Comprehensive Plan.
		<b>RECOMMENDATION #18:</b> Develop official design standards and guidelines or integrate design



**TABLE 1: LAND USE & GROWTH MANAGEMENT**

LAND USE GOALS	LAND USE OBJECTIVES	LAND USE RECOMMENDATIONS
		illustrations within the Hillsboro Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations.
		<b>RECOMMENDATION #19:</b> Maintain and develop a road network that calms traffic in residential areas and gives appropriate consideration to the needs of pedestrians and bicyclists.
		<b>RECOMMENDATION #20:</b> Work with Caroline County to encourage strong land use controls on rural lands adjacent to Hillsboro and coordinate with the County in the review of development proposals near the Town.

**TABLE 2: MUNICIPAL GROWTH ELEMENT**

<b>MUNICIPAL GROWTH GOALS</b>	<b>MUNICIPAL GROWTH OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>MUNICIPAL GROWTH RECOMMENDATIONS</b>
<b>PRIMARY GOAL:</b> Preserve the small town atmosphere and qualities that make Hillsboro a desirable place to live.	<b>OBJECTIVE #1:</b> Preserve Hillsboro’s historic character and size and promote historic preservation incentives.	<b>RECOMMENDATION #1:</b> Preserve the small town historic and rural character of Hillsboro at its present size.
	<b>OBJECTIVE #2:</b> Ensure stability for single-family residential neighborhoods in Hillsboro.	<p><b>RECOMMENDATION #2:</b> Preserve Hillsboro’s single-family neighborhood community identity and initiate local municipal policies and regulations to stabilize neighborhoods and limit population decline, which potentially decreases property values.</p> <p>Given that the Town is served by individual wells and septic systems, this includes limiting the conversion of single-family residential dwellings to multi-family dwellings and preventing mobile homes, both of which produce added environmental strains.</p>
	<b>OBJECTIVE #3:</b> Ensure that municipal infrastructure and buildings are maintained.	<b>RECOMMENDATION #3:</b> Promote the upkeep and maintenance of existing buildings by adopting a building code, livability code, nuisance ordinance, and related items to improve and maintain the appearance of Town.
	<b>OBJECTIVE #4:</b> Coordinate with Caroline County regarding land use and growth management for areas surrounding Hillsboro.	<b>RECOMMENDATION #4:</b> Promote historic rehabilitation and revitalization tax credits and other historic preservation measures to improve the existing housing stock, most of which is historic (constructed before 1939).
		<b>RECOMMENDATION #5:</b> Coordinate with Caroline County regarding higher intensity County zoning, which surrounds the Town including residential, commercial, and highway commercial uses.

**TABLE 2: MUNICIPAL GROWTH ELEMENT**

MUNICIPAL GROWTH GOALS	MUNICIPAL GROWTH OBJECTIVES	MUNICIPAL GROWTH RECOMMENDATIONS
		County residential and commercial zoned properties are likely to develop in the near future at permitted densities, particularly if MD Route 404 is dualized. Hillsboro should request enhanced coordination from the Caroline County Department of Planning and Codes Administration to ensure compatible development with Hillsboro’s historic character and unique location. Direct access for developed properties onto MD Route 404 and strip development in general should be discouraged.
		<b>RECOMMENDATION #6:</b> Coordinate with Caroline County to eliminate the proposed Hillsboro Growth Area from the West Caroline County Comprehensive Plan and include this area as a Town Greenbelt in the West County Plan to create consistency between the County and Town Comprehensive Plans.
		<b>RECOMMENDATION #7:</b> Meet with the Caroline County Planning Commission to discuss the Hillsboro Comprehensive Plan.
		<b>RECOMMENDATION #8:</b> Coordinate with the Caroline County Department of Environmental Health and Maryland Department of the Environment to utilize “Flush Fee” funds for the upgrade of on-site septic systems to biological nutrient removal systems (best management practices) to reduce nutrient loadings.

**TABLE 3: COMMUNITY FACILITIES & TRANSPORTATION**

<b>COMMUNITY FACILITIES &amp; TRANSPORTATION GOALS</b>	<b>COMMUNITY FACILITIES &amp; TRANSPORTATION OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>COMMUNITY FACILITIES &amp; TRANSPORTATION RECOMMENDATIONS</b>
<b>PRIMARY GOAL:</b> Provide an appropriate array of adequate community facilities and services required to maintain the public health, safety, and welfare of the residents of Hillsboro.	<b>OBJECTIVE #1:</b> Ensure the continued expansion of public facilities and services commensurate with local financial capabilities and demand for services, and in a manner which is least disruptive to the environment.	<b>RECOMMENDATION #1:</b> Design new streets and sidewalks to fit with existing neighborhoods and facilitate circulation through the community.
	<b>OBJECTIVE #2:</b> Continue to examine the pattern and direction of future growth and assess impacts on public facilities and services.	<b>RECOMMENDATION #2:</b> Improve existing streets with walkways, where necessary, to accommodate pedestrian movement.
	<b>OBJECTIVE #3:</b> Ensure that the road and street systems are maintained for the safe, convenient and efficient movement of people, goods and services.	<b>RECOMMENDATION #3:</b> Work with appropriate local and State agencies to provide assistance in repairing or reconstructing sidewalks and roads in the community.
	<b>OBJECTIVE #4:</b> Design new streets and sidewalks to fit with existing neighborhoods and facilitate circulation through the community.	<b>RECOMMENDATION #4:</b> Evaluate vacant lots to see if they can be used for off-street parking lots, especially near neighborhood commercial uses.
	<b>OBJECTIVE #5:</b> Work with appropriate local and State agencies to provide assistance in repairing or reconstructing sidewalks and other infrastructure systems.	<b>RECOMMENDATION #5:</b> Adopt zoning and subdivision regulations that insure that all future development provides adequate off-street parking.
	<b>OBJECTIVE #6:</b> Evaluate vacant lots to see if they can be used for off-street parking lots, especially near neighborhood commercial uses.	<b>RECOMMENDATION #6:</b> Ensure adequate park and open space land and facilities to meet current and projected demands.
	<b>OBJECTIVE #7:</b> Adopt zoning and subdivision regulations that ensure that all future development provide adequate off-street parking.	<b>RECOMMENDATION #7:</b> Coordinate planning and programming of community facilities with the appropriate County and State agencies and entities.
		<b>RECOMMENDATION #8:</b> Require adequate public facilities to serve any proposed new development.

**TABLE 4: RESOURCE CONSERVATION**

<b>CONSERVATION GOALS</b>	<b>CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>CONSERVATION RECOMMENDATIONS</b>
<b>PRIMARY GOAL:</b> Promote sensitive areas protection to minimize adverse impacts on water quality and habitat.	<b>OBJECTIVE #1:</b> Protect steep slopes and stream buffers in accordance with state laws and the Hillsboro Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Program.	<b>RECOMMENDATION #1:</b> Limit development in Hillsboro near the Tuckahoe River in accordance with the Chesapeake Bay Critical Areas Program and other local municipal regulations designed to protect sensitive areas.
	<b>OBJECTIVE #2:</b> Protect the scenic beauty of the Tuckahoe River by limiting development in accordance with the Chesapeake Bay Critical Areas Program.	<b>RECOMMENDATION #2:</b> Review and update the Hillsboro “Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Ordinance” consistent with state laws to protect steep slopes, stream buffers, and sensitive species habitat in accordance with the program.
	<b>OBJECTIVE #3:</b> Protect wells and septic systems requiring development and redevelopment to demonstrate that there is minimal impact on water quality.	<b>RECOMMENDATION #3:</b> Digitize the Hillsboro “Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Maps” and adopt official Hillsboro Critical Area Zoning Maps based on the Caroline County Critical Area Maps.
	<b>OBJECTIVE #4:</b> Avoid development in the 100-Year Floodplain.	<b>RECOMMENDATION #4:</b> Partner with public and private entities to assist in the protection and enhancement of the scenic beauty of the Tuckahoe River.
	<b>OBJECTIVE #5:</b> Protect the Town’s scenic vistas by working with the County to encourage strong land use controls on rural lands adjacent to Hillsboro and coordinate with the County in the review of development proposals near the Town.	<b>RECOMMENDATION #5:</b> Work with the Caroline County Department of Environmental Health to enhance the functioning of existing septic systems in Hillsboro through state funded assistance programs to improve water quality in the region. Coordinate with Environmental Health and Maryland Department of the Environment to utilize “Flush Fee” funds for the upgrade of on-site septic systems in Hillsboro to biological nutrient removal septic systems (best management practices) to reduce nutrient loadings in the Tuckahoe River.
	<b>OBJECTIVE #6:</b> Work with local, state, and federal agencies to correct existing shore erosion	<b>RECOMMENDATION #6:</b> Limit development in the 100-Year Floodplain and adopt regulations for

**TABLE 4: RESOURCE CONSERVATION**

CONSERVATION GOALS	CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES	CONSERVATION RECOMMENDATIONS
	problems and encourage property owners to participate in tree planting programs.	appropriate floodway design. Develop measures that will result in an increase in the Town’s discounted FEMA Flood Insurance Rating.
	<b>OBJECTIVE #7:</b> Employ “Best Management Practices” BMP’s to minimize adverse impacts on water quality and habitat.	<b>RECOMMENDATION #7:</b> Work with Caroline County to encourage strong land use controls for conservation site design on rural lands adjacent to Hillsboro and coordinate with the County in the review of development proposals near the Town to address sensitive areas.
	<b>OBJECTIVE #8:</b> Update the Hillsboro Geographic Information System-GIS for the mapping of natural resources and sensitive areas.	<b>RECOMMENDATION #8:</b> Adopt stormwater management controls in the <i>Hillsboro Zoning Ordinance</i> consistent with state and local policies and laws.
		<b>RECOMMENDATION #9:</b> Partner with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources Coastal Communities to seek grant funding for the development of a Water Resources Element for the Hillsboro Comprehensive Plan in accordance with HB 1141.

**TABLE 5: WATER RESOURCES ELEMENT**

WATER RESOURCES GOALS	WATER RESOURCES OBJECTIVES	WATER RESOURCES RECOMMENDATIONS
<p><b>PRIMARY GOAL:</b> Provide a safe and potable water supply to serve Hillsboro’s current and future residents, while protecting the water quality of the Tuckahoe Creek Watershed.</p>	<p><b>OBJECTIVE #1:</b> Protect an adequate and safe potable water supply to serve the residents of Hillsboro.</p>	<p><b>RECOMMENDATION #1:</b> Seek to implement urban Best Management Practices or BMP’s for Hillsboro, where feasible and appropriate, as recommended by Maryland Tributary Strategies and this Comprehensive Plan.</p>
	<p><b>OBJECTIVE #2:</b> Take steps to restore and protect water quality and contribute toward meeting water quality regulatory requirements in rivers and streams in the Tuckahoe Creek Watershed.</p>	<p><b>RECOMMENDATION #2:</b> Work with Caroline County to update and/or revise the County’s <i>Stormwater Management Ordinance</i>, programs, and other development standards to require environmental site design (ESD) techniques (Stormwater Management in Hillsboro is managed by Caroline County). Caroline County should ensure the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conservation of natural features (e.g., drainage patterns, soil, vegetation);</li> <li>• Minimize impervious surfaces (e.g., pavement, concrete channels, roofs);</li> <li>• Decrease runoff to maintain discharge timing; and</li> <li>• Increase infiltration and evapotranspiration and use other nonstructural practices or innovative technologies approved by the State (Maryland Department of the Environment – MDE).</li> </ul>
	<p><b>OBJECTIVE #3:</b> Protect the habitat value of the rivers, streams, and wetlands in the Tuckahoe</p>	<p><b>RECOMMENDATION #3:</b> Work with Caroline County to develop watershed planning and</p>

**TABLE 5: WATER RESOURCES ELEMENT**

WATER RESOURCES GOALS	WATER RESOURCES OBJECTIVES	WATER RESOURCES RECOMMENDATIONS
	Creek Watershed.	management guidelines, exploring potential impacts on the County’s water resources and ways to address such impacts.
	<b>OBJECTIVE #4:</b> Work with Caroline County and other municipalities in the Tuckahoe Creek Watershed to develop watershed planning and management guidelines that relate land use and development to their impacts on water resources.	<b>RECOMMENDATION #4:</b> Consider working with the Caroline County Department of Environmental Health to upgrade existing Hillsboro onsite septic systems to new biological nutrient removal septic systems for those properties located within the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area.
	<b>OBJECTIVE #5:</b> Promote Town-wide water conservation methods and policies and encourage innovative technologies for stormwater and septic system treatment and disposal.	



**TABLE 6: HERITAGE PRESERVATION**

HERITAGE PRESERVATION GOALS	HERITAGE PRESERVATION OBJECTIVES	HERITAGE PRESERVATION RECOMMENDATIONS
<b>PRIMARY GOAL:</b> Preserve Hillsboro’s heritage resources.	<b>OBJECTIVE #1:</b> Encourage the appropriate preservation of historical, cultural, archeological, natural, and scenic resources.	<b>RECOMMENDATION #1:</b> Partner with local entities such as the Eastern Shore Heritage Incorporated (ESHI), Caroline County Government, the Caroline County Historical Society, and the Caroline County Economic Development Corporation to promote and enhance heritage preservation and tourism initiatives in Hillsboro.
	<b>OBJECTIVE #2:</b> Improve Hillsboro’s inventory of historic sites, structures, and heritage attractions.	<b>RECOMMENDATION #2:</b> Partner with Caroline County and the Maryland State Department of Transportation (MDOT) – State Highway Administration (SHA) to promote Hillsboro in regards to the benefits from National Scenic and Historic Byway designation.
	<b>OBJECTIVE #3:</b> Encourage and support heritage preservation through mapping, planning, and regulatory mechanisms.	<b>RECOMMENDATION #3:</b> Map and inventory key heritage resources and scenic and cultural landscapes in Hillsboro.
	<b>OBJECTIVE #4:</b> Coordinate strategies to achieve mutual County/Town heritage preservation goals and objective.	<b>RECOMMENDATION #4:</b> Build heritage tourism attractions in Hillsboro such as the Old Bank Building.
	<b>OBJECTIVE #5:</b> Encourage the development of Historic Scenic Highways for Hillsboro and the region.	<b>RECOMMENDATION #5:</b> Work with Caroline County to explore ways to establish a County Preservation Program Fund to assist with heritage preservation, neighborhood revitalization, and tourism in Hillsboro.
	<b>OBJECTIVE #6:</b> Encourage industries that support heritage preservation.	<b>RECOMMENDATION #6:</b> Support local and regional heritage tourism efforts to enhance local economy.
		<b>RECOMMENDATION #7:</b> Establish mechanisms through partnerships to supply technical and professional assistance regarding heritage resources, including assistance to property owners for the rehabilitation and/or restoration of

**TABLE 6: HERITAGE PRESERVATION**

HERITAGE PRESERVATION GOALS	HERITAGE PRESERVATION OBJECTIVES	HERITAGE PRESERVATION RECOMMENDATIONS
		heritage structures in Hillsboro.
		<b>RECOMMENDATION #8:</b> Develop planning policies and regulatory mechanisms, including Design Objectives or Guidelines, to assist in the preservation of heritage resources in Hillsboro.
		<b>RECOMMENDATION #9:</b> Encourage the protection and rehabilitation of historic homes and buildings by evaluating the use of rehabilitation tax incentives at the local, State, and Federal levels and by working with the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development, the Maryland Historical Trust, and other agencies to obtain financial support for rehabilitation;
		<b>RECOMMENDATION #10:</b> Assist property owners in identifying financial incentives for rehabilitation and/or adaptive reuse of older buildings that exhibit important or traditional architectural features. New construction of commercial and residential buildings, including new development, infill and redevelopment, should reflect the characteristics of Hillsboro’s best historic architecture.
		<b>RECOMMENDATION #11:</b> Seek ways to ensure that the Eastern Shore vernacular architecture found along Hillsboro’s streets is maintained and preserved as a valuable asset and an important resource in regional heritage programs.
		<b>RECOMMENDATION #12:</b> Adopt zoning provisions that promote the adaptive reuse of historic structures for public and private uses including, but not limited to, bed and breakfast establishments,

**TABLE 6: HERITAGE PRESERVATION**

HERITAGE PRESERVATION GOALS	HERITAGE PRESERVATION OBJECTIVES	HERITAGE PRESERVATION RECOMMENDATIONS
		craft/gift shops, small retail operations, museums, and studio space for artisans, when such uses minimize exterior structural alteration.
		<b>RECOMMENDATION #13:</b> Encourage the establishment of a local historic district in Hillsboro and promote tax incentives and recognition through the awarding of plaques.

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## **ORDINANCE NUMBER 55**

### **AN ORDINANCE OF THE COMMISSIONERS OF HILLSBORO ADOPTING THE 2009 HILLSBORO COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR THE TOWN OF HILLSBORO IN CAROLINE COUNTY, MARYLAND**

WHEREAS, the 2009 Hillsboro Comprehensive Plan provides updates to the 1997 Hillsboro Comprehensive Plan including a Municipal Growth Element and Water Resources Element, as required by the 2006 Maryland House Bill 1141;

WHEREAS, funding for the Town of Hillsboro Water Resources Element was provided by the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development through a Community Development Block Grant;

WHEREAS, in accordance with Article 66B of the Annotated Code of Maryland, the Town of Hillsboro has provided copies of said Comprehensive Plan to all adjoining planning jurisdictions and the State of Maryland;

WHEREAS, in accordance with Article 66B of the Annotated Code of Maryland, the Town of Hillsboro has met and conferred with the Government of Caroline County, Maryland regarding the Town's Municipal Growth Element.

WHEREAS, the Town of Hillsboro has received comments from Maryland State agencies and Caroline County regarding the 2009 Hillsboro Comprehensive Plan and has adequately addressed said comments;

WHEREAS, the Hillsboro Planning Commission has recommended adoption of the 2009 Hillsboro Comprehensive Plan to the Town Commissioners of the Town of Hillsboro on November 11, 2009; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission and Town Commissioners of the Town of Hillsboro have held duly advertised Public Hearings on said Comprehensive Plan.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED THAT THE ATTACHED 2009 HILLSBORO COMPREHENSIVE PLAN IS HEREBY ADOPTED BY THE COMMISSIONERS OF THE TOWN OF HILLSBORO AS THE OFFICIAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR**

**THE TOWN OF HILLSBORO, MARYLAND AND SHALL BECOME EFFECTIVE NO SOONER THAN TWENTY (20) DAYS FOLLOWING PASSAGE OF THIS ORDINANCE.**

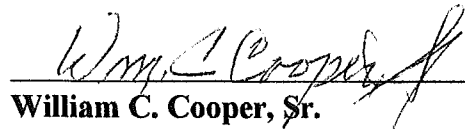
**DATE INTRODUCED:** November 11, 2009

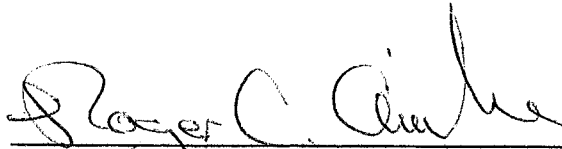
**DATE PASSED:** November 18, 2009

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** December 15, 2009

**TOWN COMMISSIONERS OF HILLSBORO:**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**Ronald A. Stafford**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**William C. Cooper, Sr.**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**Roger C. Quicke**

**ATTEST:**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**Melinda D. Stafford, Town Clerk**