Planning Commission
MEETING AGENDA

Thursday, January 23, 2025 - 1:00 PM
Council Chambers, Easton Town Office
14 S Harrison Street

1. Call to Order

a. This meeting will be conducted as a workshop. As such, it will be informal in nature and there is no scheduled opportunity for public comment. Written public feedback may be forwarded to the Planning and Zoning Department at planningandzoning@eastonmd.gov.

2. Discussion

a. Development Planning: a discussion with the Talbot County Planning Commission.

3. Draft Chapter Review

a. Draft review of the following chapters: Historic Preservation, Sensitive Areas, Water Resources, Parks, Rec & Open Space, and Sustainability.

4. Adjournment

Topics for January 23, 2025
Planning Commission Comprehensive Plan Workshop

The intended focus of the second Planning Commission Workshop on the second set of Draft Comprehensive Plan chapters in their initial Draft format, will be the group of topic-specific chapters immediately following the Municipal Growth Element. More specifically, these chapters are: Historic and Cultural Resource;, Sensitive Areas; Water Resources; Parks, Recreation, and Open Space; and Sustainability. The following is a list of potential questions/issues/talking points on which to center discussion at this Workshop:

1. The Historic and Cultural Resources Chapter is practically unchanged from the current Plan. Do you see the need to cover any new material in this chapter?

2. Do you want to suggest any revisions to the boundary of the Historic District? What about different standards for different parts of the District and/or changes to the HDC Guidelines?

3. Do you have any suggested revisions to the Goals and Objectives for the Historic and Cultural Resources chapter?

4. The Sensitive Areas chapter addresses, to varying degrees, the range of such areas as mandated by the State Land Use Article (e.g., streams and buffers, 100 year floodplain, etc.). Are there any other sensitive areas in Easton that ought to be addressed in this Chapter? Is this where the Commission would like to discuss bird-strike issues? If so, is there anything from the information that was submitted to you by Mr. Ledvina or that you know of otherwise that you would like to incorporate here?

5. Do you have any suggested revisions to the Goals and Objectives for the Sensitive Areas chapter?

6. Does any of the discussion regarding capacity of our water or wastewater system suggest to you that we should include discussion concerning tying growth to capacity, or perhaps something like “closely monitoring available capacity”?

7. The Nutrient Loading calculations beginning on page 189 are very technical and somewhat hard to follow (at least at a first glance). I need to check if we are still required to conduct this analysis. If so, are you OK with the three development scenarios modeled (Total Buildout, 75% Infill/25% Greenfield for next 10 years, and 50%-50% for next 10 years) and/or would you like us to attempt modeling another scenario(s)? If this subsection is no longer required, would you like to keep it anyway, completely delete it, or replace it with something else that reflects the same points?

8. Do you have any suggested revisions to the Goals and Objectives for the Water Resources chapter?

9. The Parks, Recreation and Open Space Chapter makes the case that following the Easton Woodlands Park addition during this current Planning cycle, we are now on track to meet or exceed the State recommended per-capita acreages for parks. This certainly does not preclude the possibility of going even farther beyond such minimum standards though. To that end, do you have any recommendations (general or specific) regarding the need for future parks? One specific area of need described is for a larger-scale park(s) on the east side of Town. The current Plan just describes the area somewhat generally. Do you want to maintain that description, or would you like to begin to drill-down and get a bit more specific? Either way, do you have thoughts on whether this should be one or multiple parks to serve the projected growth on the East side of Town?

10. Do you have any suggested revisions to the Goals and Objectives for the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space chapter?

11. The Sustainability Chapter is the one new chapter in this version of the Plan. As such, we should probably talk about whether or not it covers the scope and issues that you had in mind when you directed me to draft it.

12. The chapter is very climate-change and environmental-impact focused, with a section that discusses the connection of these issues to the built environment (i.e., planning). Are there other aspects of Sustainability that you think we should address? If so,what are they? Is this the logical place to discuss the Urban3 Report (tied to the notion of Financial Sustainability) or is that better suited for the Municipal Growth Chapter, for discussion, and/or Implementation for any suggested future policies related to that?

13. Do you have any suggested revisions to the Goals and Objectives for the Sustainability chapter?

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCE PROTECTION

INTRODUCTION

The History of the Town is chronicled in the Background Chapter of this Plan. An important part of what makes Easton so unique and so special is the number and quality of historic buildings and settings. This chapter of the Plan talks about the importance of these historic and cultural resources and makes recommendations for how they can further be protected.

BACKGROUND

The history of Easton can be seen in its historic buildings and neighborhoods which date back over several centuries. Physical reminders of early history give depth and richness to the Town, to past events and to people's lives.

The preservation of historic buildings and structures includes consideration of the integrity of the location, neighborhood, design, setting, materials and workmanship. Historic preservation allows the legacy of the past to be protected and remembered. It allows for the past to be integrated with the present and reminds us that the old has a useful place alongside the new.

Easton has a substantial and well-documented stock of historic structures, streetscapes, sites, and settings. Some 944 parcels in the Historic District have been surveyed and documented.

Preservation and rehabilitation of these structures and streetscapes enhances the historic character of the town, stabilizes neighborhoods, protects property values, and attracts visitors to Easton.

Easton recognizes the importance of its historic resources and supports and encourages preservation and rehabilitation efforts by private owners, nonprofits and local governments. Private houses and public buildings are often carefully restored. New uses are found for historic buildings which no longer serve their original functions. As more and more focus for future growth is on infill and redevelopment opportunities, such adaptive reuse of historic buildings will become increasingly prevalent and important to maintaining the historic charm and authenticity of the Town in general, and the historic district specifically.

Continued historic preservation will provide Easton with a number of aesthetic and economic benefits, including:

- Promotion of a strong sense of community pride and tradition;
- Community revitalization through the restoration and adaptive reuse of older structures;
- Increased property values and tax revenues as a result of renovation and restoration; and
- Increased revenues from tourism activities generated by an interest in historic buildings and sites.

The "Stories of the Chesapeake" Certified Heritage Area encompasses heritage sites and places in Talbot and adjacent Counties which were designated a certified heritage area by the Maryland Heritage Area Authority on April 20, 2005. This program recognizes Easton as offering a number of heritage resources of importance to the region.

Easton is also a "Targeted Investment Zone", a state designation that permits the town to get state financial support for a certified heritage area.

New commercial and residential development and rehabilitation projects in the Historic District have been designed to complement historic buildings, rather than compete with them. The Town, business community, and residents have invested in preservation and restoration.

National Register Historic District

The National Register of Historic Places, an inventory of historic resources, is maintained by the National Park Service. Listing in the National Register provides recognition to sites, buildings, structures, objects, and districts that are significant to American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, or culture. An Easton National Register Historic District was surveyed, nominated, and approved in 1980. In addition to providing recognition of significance, listing in the National Register mandates consideration in the planning of any federal or federally-assisted project and provides eligibility for federal and state tax credits for historic preservation projects.

Easton Historic District

The Town has a Historic District Commission and has two museums, (the Academy Art Museum and the Historical Society of Talbot County Museum). It also has the historic Avalon Theatre where many cultural and community events take place**.** The Easton Historic District was created in the late 70s and expanded in 2005. The seven-member Historic District Commission is composed of volunteer citizens with interest or specific expertise in historic preservation and appointed to three-year terms by the Mayor. The Commission reviews proposed exterior changes to any site, structure, or appurtenance

in the defined district, according to an approved and published set of guidelines, which were recently updated by the Commission. In addition to the review of proposed projects, inclusion in the Historic District also provides eligibility for a state historic preservation tax credit to property owners who undertake historic preservation projects, whether or not the property produces income.

A map of the Easton Historic District reflecting its boundaries as of 2024 is included on the following page. This is followed by representative photographs of some of the structures and the setting of the Easton Historic District.

Town of Easton's
Historic Districts
Boundaries Map
Easton Planning Office Zach Smith 4/13/05
N
S
E
W
Old Easton District
Meeting House District
Goldsborough
Pennsylvania
Higgins
South
Davis
Winton
Aurora
Locust
Aurora
North
Goldsborough
August
Hanson
Talbot
Brooketts
Hanson
Earle
Doyer
Harrison
Harrison
Washington
Bay
Federal
Glenwood
West
Vine
Port
Mt. Pleasant
30 Mt. Pleasant Ave
Carroll's Addition
702 South St.
St. Aubins
105 Willis Ave
Oak Hill House
317 N. Washington St.
Langsdale Houses
216-218 Bay St.
Richards Cemetary
Map - 104, Parcel - 605


STOP

Easton's Historic District includes buildings encompassing a wide spectrum of type and use, including commercial (Washington Street, upper left), institutional (Christ Church, upper right and Talbot County Court House, middle right), and residential structures (middle left and bottom right and left.

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goal: To encourage continued restoration, adaptive rehabilitation and preservation of historic structures, sites, streetscapes, and settings. Encourage compatible infill in the Historic District.

Objectives:

- ✓ Educate residents/realtors and property owners about the benefits, boundaries and requirements of the Historic District review process and design standards and about the availability of state and federal tax credits for historic preservation projects.
- ✓ Establish a Local Tax Incentive program in Easton that encourages historic property owners to rehabilitate their property. This local tax incentive will complement existing state and federal tax incentives that encourage historic rehabilitation/restoration. Some 19 counties and municipalities in Maryland already have some form of local tax incentive.
- ✓ Encourage a "Rebuilding Together" chapter in Easton or Talbot County. This is a national organization whose objective is no cost repairs to homes of low income, over 60 home owners.
- ✓ Modify the Historic Commission's Guidelines by adding specific guidance and criteria for adaptive reuse projects.

Goal: To continue to support the Easton Historic District.

Objectives:

- ~~✓~~ Ensure consistent enforcement of Easton's Historic District by utilizing the services of various staffs within the town administration. A consistently enforced historic district is the most effective historic district for fostering investment and economic development.
- ~~✓~~ Refer any new development which may impact historic resources to the Historic District Commission for comment.
- ✓ Provide in-service training for the staff and Historic District Commission members.
- ✓ Investigate Certified Local Government status with the Maryland Historical Trust to provide eligibility for grants for continuing education for staff and members of the Historic District Commission, as well as other projects.
- ✓ Investigate a project to resurvey the Historic District. A new survey will update information contained in the original National Register nomination and facilitate enhanced processing of applications. Such a survey could also lead to a new nomination to expand the National Register District, including neighborhoods that did not meet the criteria for listing in 1980, but now may nearly three decades later. Such a project could be supported by grant funding and could potentially be done under the auspices of a partner organization.

SENSITIVE AREAS

INTRODUCTION

The mandate to include a Sensitive Areas Element in local comprehensive plans has been codified in The Land Use Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland as follows:

> [The plan shall include] a sensitive area element that contains goals, objectives, principles, policies, and standards designed to protect, from the adverse effects of development, sensitive areas, including the following: 1) streams and their buffers; 2) 100-year floodplains; 3) habitats of threatened and endangered species, 4) steep slopes, 5) Agricultural and forest lands intended for resource protection or conservation, and 6) Other areas in need of special protection, as determined in the plan. (§ 3.05 (a)(1)(viii), Article 66B, Annotated Code of Maryland.)

Therefore the purpose of this chapter is to discuss these areas as well as ways in which they might appropriately be protected in Easton.

Since the adoption of the 1997 Plan, Sensitive Areas have received a lot of attention in Easton. In particular, the protection of our rivers and streams has taken on a new sense of urgency. This is not unexpected. Everyone, regardless of their opinion of development, has a stake in protecting our rivers and streams. Obviously the environmental advocacy groups see this as an important issue. However, it is also an important issue to the development community. Simply stated, it is difficult to sell waterfront development and the lifestyle associated with living on or near the water if that same water is degraded.

BACKGROUND

When discussing sensitive areas in Easton it is important to note several issues. The first issue is the nature of Easton itself. Easton is a modest-sized town (some would say a small city) experiencing growth pressures akin, in many ways, to those present in towns and suburbs in metropolitan areas. In addition, the Growth Act has the potential to escalate these pressures as State and County policies direct growth into places like Easton and its environs, where there is infrastructure and capacity in place to best accommodate such growth . Another issue is that Easton is very unique, particularly among Eastern Shore jurisdictions, in that it has not until very recently been located on a major body of water (a recent annexation provided Easton some frontage on the upper reaches of the Tred Avon River). Finally, it must be noted that Easton has a fairly extensive system of Environmental Protection regulations already in place. Easton's Critical Area Program, Forest Conservation Ordinance, Floodplain Ordinance and Stormwater Management Ordinance provide a high level of protection to a number of sensitive areas, including those identified by the Growth Act.

STREAMS AND THEIR BUFFERS

The importance of streams has been rather well documented, particularly in recent years with rising concern over the health of the Chesapeake Bay. The Maryland Department of Planning has summarized the justification for protecting streams rather succinctly as follows:

> Streams and their buffers are valuable to people and vital to our natural resources. Streams provide drinking water for local communities, and crop-saving irrigation for farmers during droughts. Streams support recreational fishing and serve as spawning areas for commercial fish stock;

and streams attract many outdoor enthusiasts such as hunters, bird-watchers, and nature photographers. Without adequate and sustained cooling water in streams and rivers, industries and power plants would pass higher costs on to consumers. Development near stream areas subject to flooding could result in the loss of life and property.

Streams and their buffers are home to countless species of animals and plants; and streams themselves serve as lifelines to the Bay, transporting valuable nutrients, minerals, and vitamins to the Chesapeake. The floodplains, wetlands, and wooded slopes along streams are very important parts of the stream ecosystem, and in many ways determine the diversity and health of a stream. (From *Managing Maryland's Growth: Models and Guidelines - Preparing a Sensitive Areas Element for the Comprehensive Plan*, Maryland Office of Planning, May 1993).

The importance of streams is irrefutable. It is also perhaps better understood by residents, particularly long-time natives, of Maryland's Eastern Shore than the average citizen in any other part of the State. Streams have been of paramount importance on the Eastern Shore since the founding of the region. Early in this history, streams were used as transportation routes and virtually every Town or settlement of any size was founded along the shores of a river or stream. As the region grew, streams remained crucial for the many links they provided to the seafood industry on which much of this region depended.

While the importance of streams is well documented and fairly readily accepted, the need for additional protection measures in the Town of Easton is not as readily apparent. This is due to the fact that all streams receive some level of protection. The Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Law and the Town's Critical Area Program protect tidal

streams. This requires, among other things, that runoff from properties within this area reduce the levels of pollutant loading by 10% based on the pre-development conditions and that virtually no development whatsoever occur within 100 feet of the mean high water line of the corresponding body of water. As a result of new legislation in 2008 this buffer is expanded to 300 feet in virtually all development scenarios. Non-tidal streams are governed by State and/or Federal non-tidal wetlands laws and include a 25-foot buffer within which no development can occur. State officials have suggested that to be truly effective, this width should be increased to 50 to 100 feet. Easton adopted a 100 foot buffer for perennial streams and a 50 foot buffer from intermittent streams in 2008.

One area with regard to streams which is of special concern are areas under development where land has been stripped for grading and then rains produce a great deal of sediment that is not caught due to inadequate silt fences and winds up in various waterways More stringent monitoring of runoff requirements during construction should be a priority to help ensure the health of our local water bodies.

Given these conditions and the reality that State, County, and Town of Easton growth policies all assert that growth should be concentrated in and around Easton, little additional protection is necessary or practical, beyond increasing the stream buffer width to 50 feet. The most effective way in which streams and their buffers can be protected in Easton is through the early identification of this feature in the site planning and development process and adherence to the Design Principles as outlined in the Land Use and Growth Chapter. The principle "Natural Features should Determine Design," is particularly appropriate.

Beyond buffers, the quality of rivers and streams is protected through storm water management. Stormwater management simply refers to the way in which rain

that runs off a site is treated. Traditionally swales and ponds have been used to manage stormwater. However, the State of Maryland has recently updated the 2000 Maryland Stormwater Design Manual. The new Manual contains requirements for the use of a number of alternative stormwater management practices with strict new limits. The Town last adopted a new Stormwater Management Ordinance in June of 2001. Two significant aspects of this Ordinance are that (1) it required that the 10% pollutant reduction rule of the Critical Area apply Town-wide and (2) it incorporated the 2000 Maryland Stormwater Design Manual. A new Town Stormwater Management Ordinance will need to be adopted in late 2009/early 2010 in order to implement the new State standards.

Despite the recent emphasis on alternative stormwater management practices, there are several factors hampering their implementation. These include:

- There is a certain comfort level with more traditional practices such as ponds. Engineers are familiar with their design and capabilities. The computations used are familiar and well proven whereas computations used in the design of some of the alternatives are less certain.
- Ponds are relatively inexpensive to design and construct.
- Generally speaking, the alternative practices require more area.
- Site conditions dictate which options are feasible. For example, in our area the relatively flat topography can be a drawback. An integral part of many of the alternative systems, including bio-retention, is an underdrain. Unless there is significant relief or an accessible storm drain network of adequate depth it can be difficult, if not impossible, to discharge from the underdrain system.

100-YEAR FLOODPLAINS

The 100-year floodplain is another Sensitive Area that is not very prevalent in Easton. In fact, in a recent Community Assistance Visit with the State Department of Natural Resources concerning Easton's Floodplain Program, it was estimated that there are only 15 persons residing in the floodplain in the Town of Easton. In addition, it was estimated that there are six residential structures, two publicly owned structures (utilities complex) and seven "other" structures located in the special flood hazard area. There were no permits issued for any structures in the floodplain between Community Assistance Visits (1993-1996).

The Town of Easton's Floodplain Ordinance does not prohibit development within the 100-year floodplain. This is consistent with the National Model Ordinance and the National Flood Insurance Program. Structures may be constructed in the floodplain provided they are either elevated above the level of the 100-year flood or otherwise flood-proofed in an acceptable manner. Severely limiting development in floodplain areas protects not only human life and property; it also protects sensitive ecological areas and water quality from degradation.

While the Town does not explicitly prohibit development in the floodplain, it strongly discourages such activity. This is almost never a problem because (1) the floodplain in Easton is generally very narrow; (2) it is usually otherwise undevelopable; and (3) there is virtually always ample room elsewhere on the lot or parcel in question on which to develop. Given these factors, no additional protection measures for 100-year floodplains are deemed to be necessary in Easton at this time.

HABITATS OF THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES

Habitats of Threatened and Endangered Species receive a fair amount of protection in Easton, primarily through State programs. Presently, development within the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area must address the issue of Threatened and

Endangered Species, as do any projects subject to the full requirements of the Forest Conservation Ordinance. Most projects, particularly large projects will require at least a Simplified Forest Stand Delineation, which would indicate Habitats of Threatened and Endangered Species. This would then become a basis for designing the development with such sensitive areas being the prime location for protection.

The Delmarva Fox Squirrel, a state and federally listed endangered species, is known to occur on the property designated as future residential development to the southwest of the Town of Easton. Delmarva fox squirrel habitat is generally characterized as forests with relatively mature trees, either hardwoods or loblolly pine, with a relatively sparse understory. At least three development projects have been significantly impacted by the presence of Delmarva Fox Squirrel habitat since the 1997 Plan was adopted. It is reasonable to expect the same to occur in other growth areas during the upcoming Planning period.

If proposed activities do not occur within the forested areas on the property, then Delmarva fox squirrel habitat will not be impacted. However, if development in the forested areas or timber harvesting is being planned, the following should be considered:

1. As much contiguous forested acreage as possible should be retained.
2. If clearing is necessary, at least 25% of the suitable forested area should remain unaltered or a minimum of 10 acres whichever is greater.
3. This unaltered Delmarva fox squirrel habitat should be retained as a contiguous forested tract, not as small disjunct parcels.

4. Required forested buffers, such as buffers along streams or nontidal wetlands, should be expanded to at least 100 feet and preferably 300 feet in width.
5. Retention of mast producing trees such as oaks, hickories and beech is encouraged.

HBCP biologists use these general guidelines for Delmarva fox squirrel habitat protection. For more specific technical assistance regarding projects relative to Delmarva fox squirrel protection interested individuals should contact the Maryland Department of Natural Resources.

There are Least Tern colonies located at Easton High School, at the United States Post Office Sorting Center on Commerce Drive and the roof of the Giant supermarket off Elliot Road. Least Terns are listed as a threatened species in Maryland. State law (§10-2A-01/09) requires the Department of Natural Resources and all other units of Maryland state government to take every practical step to conserve listed species. Significant mortality of chicks or eggs resulting from disturbance of the colony during the breeding season is a violation of the U.S. Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

Least Terns establish nesting colonies at predator and disturbance free barren areas of sand and/or gravel. In natural situations these areas are beaches or small islands. High quality locations, such as coastal barrier beaches can be used for many years, poorer locations are normally only occupied for a few years. The pressures of growth and development in Maryland have resulted in a scarcity of high quality natural sites and Least Terns now frequently nest at "unnatural" locations such as building roofs, dredged material islands, and areas graded just prior to development. Most colony sites are located within 1 mile of water, and often within sight of water.

To protect natural Least Tern colonies the Maryland Department of Natural Resources uses the following guidelines:

1. Establish a protection area of 660 feet from the colony's outer boundary. Within this area, establish two zones of protection: Zone1 extends from the outer boundary of the colony to a radius of 330 feet, and Zone 2 extends from 330 feet to 660 feet in radius.
2. During the breeding season, all human entry into Zone 1 should be restricted to only that essential for protection of the Least Tern colony. Human disturbance of colony sites that results in significant mortality of eggs and/or chicks is considered a prohibited taking under various state and federal regulations.
3. No land use changes, including development and intensive recreational use, should occur in Zone 1.
4. Construction activities, including clearing, grading, building etc. should not occur within Zone 1.
5. No construction, or other disturbing activities, should occur within Zones 1 and 2 during the Least Tern breeding season, from 15 April through 31 July.

Building roofs, dredged material disposal areas and other situations where Least Terns have been attracted to unnatural nest sites are treated on a case-by-case basis. For specific technical assistance regarding Least Terns, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources should be contacted for technical assistance. In these unnatural situations, even seemingly routine actions, such as air conditioner repair, pose a serious risk of egg

and chick mortality and must be avoided. For roof nesting Least Tern colonies, roof work during the period 15 April through 31 July must be severely restricted. Planned roof work should be conducted outside the breeding season, when terns are not using the roof for nesting. If emergency repairs are necessary during the April-July period, contact the technical expert identified below before initiating any work. The DNR will provide assistance with protecting the terns while the emergency work is conducted.

In addition, there are two sites that are known historic waterfowl concentration areas, which occur immediately adjacent to areas delineated on the comprehensive plan draft map. These are Papermill Pond, off the Tred Avon River, and a portion of Peachblossom Creek.

STEEP SLOPES

Whereas Habitats of Threatened and Endangered Species was the one component of the Sensitive Areas Element requiring the most extensive protection in Easton, Steep Slopes is the component requiring the least. The Maryland Office of Planning recognized this in their guidelines on this subject when they stated:

> Some parts of the Eastern Shore have few steep slopes. The objective in these areas should be to effectively protect steep slopes, but to do so efficiently. If the background study from the Comprehensive Plan indicates, for example, that most of the significant steep slopes are along rivers and streams, then steep slope protection may be more reasonably accomplished by protecting the stream buffer system, rather than by a separate "slope" regulation. (Maryland Office of Planning, May 1993).

The situation described in this passage is, in fact, the case in Easton. Virtually all steep slopes are located either in the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area or adjacent to a

non-tidal wetland. In both cases they are included in buffers within which no development may occur. If there are any rare cases in which steep slope exist outside one of these two areas, they should be identified during the sketch site plan or subdivision plan step in the development review process. Again, adherence to the design principle, "Natural Features Should Determine Design" should adequately protect this sensitive area.

AGRICULTURAL AND FOREST LANDS

A new sensitive area required to be addressed in the Plan in 2009 is agricultural and forest lands intended for resource protection or conservation. Generally this would seem to be a requirement more germane to Counties. As a rule one will not find a lot of agricultural land within a municipal boundary and forest land is protected, to a degree, through the State Forest Conservation and Critical Area laws.

There are a handful of areas within Easton's corporate limits that are zoned and/or used agriculturally. The A-1 zoning district is ostensibly an agricultural district. It is probably more accurate to describe the A-1 as the zoning classification assigned to land that for any number of reasons is not ready to be developed yet (e.g. lack of infrastructure).

It is, however, within the Town's interest to see that land outside of the corporate limits of Easton, but within our future growth area, remain primarily in agricultural production or forested. When development occurs in this area, it is often times not compatible with the municipal scale of development that it would have assumed had it occurred within the Town limits. For example, it is simply not possible to develop housing on wells and septic systems at the level of density possible on municipal systems. If such development occurs within the Town's growth area, it becomes a hindrance to the Town's ability to grow in that general area as it is illegal to surround

an area of county with areas under Town jurisdiction (i.e. we cannot create an island or enclave of county within a Town). The Town's ability to grow is hindered because unless the development for some reason needs to come into Town (e.g. they have failing septic systems), they rarely have any incentive to do so as they are generally enjoying the benefits of being in close proximity to Town goods and services, without the burden of paying Town taxes.

For these reasons, it is important that the land outside Town limits but within the Growth Area, remain undeveloped as much as possible and that generally will mean that it remain forested or in agricultural use. The Town therefore supports the continuation of such uses in our Growth Area until such time as these parcels are ready to be annexed and developed.

SENSITIVE AREAS MAP

A Sensitive Areas Map is located at the conclusion of this chapter. It includes the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area boundary, floodplains, forest areas, and streams with a 100 or 50-foot buffer (50' for intermittent streams, 100' in all other situations). This Map should be consulted early in the site planning process by prospective developers in the Town of Easton. However, it must be emphasized that this Map is very general. It should not be taken as anything more than a general guideline of potential environmental constraints to development and to identify features that may be more beneficial to the Town's residents in a natural state rather than as developed land. The most important part of this stage of site planning still involves fieldwork to determine the exact location and inclusion of all of the environmental features on a given site.

SENSITIVE AREAS GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

GOAL: To protect and, where possible, enhance the natural environment of the Town of Easton and its environs while recognizing the role of the Town as a regional growth center.

OBJECTIVES:

- ✓ Identify, through an environmental impact analysis, and protect environmentally sensitive areas during the initial stages of the development review process.
- ✓ Direct development, whenever possible, away from environmentally sensitive areas so that impacts are avoided to the greatest extent possible.
- ✓ Coordinate, and where necessary enhance, sensitive areas protection with other Town environmental programs such as the Critical Area Program, the Forest Conservation Ordinance, the Floodplain Ordinance, and the Stormwater Management Ordinance.
- ✓ Encourage the use of innovative and flexible development techniques as a means to protect environmentally sensitive areas.
- ✓ Monitor runoff from construction projects for compliance with existing stormwater requirements and action taken to correct any deficiencies**.**
- ✓ Ensure in large scale developments, that only the phase(s) currently under construction are cleared of ground cover so unnecessary runoff from these sites will be prevented.
- ✓ Explore the possibility of providing curbside recycling for all Town residents in order to preserve the life of the present landfill.
- ✓ Consider, where practical and feasible, the purchase of alternative fuel fleet vehicles.

GOAL: To incorporate environmentally sensitive areas in the Town's proposed system of green infrastructure.

OBJECTIVES:

- ✓ Link larger environmentally sensitive areas, such as forest conservation retention areas, Delmarva Fox Squirrel Habitat areas, wetlands, etc…, by establishing wildlife corridors.
- ✓ Enhance existing corridors by protecting additional adjacent area and planting with native plant species.
- ✓ Establish new, or add to, existing corridors by encouraging developers to link forested areas they must either preserve or provide in order to comply with the Town's Forest Conservation Ordinance.

GOAL: To minimize and mitigate adverse impacts to water quality.

OBJECTIVES:

- ✓ Encourage the use of innovative alternative stormwater management techniques.
- ✓ Annex Easton Point and connect the homes located there to the Town's wastewater system and eliminate private septic systems.

GOAL: To protect the 100 year floodplain throughout Town.

OBJECTIVE:

- ✓ Continue to administer a Town Floodplain Ordinance and to discourage construction within the 100 year floodplain.

GOAL: To identify and protect Habitats of Threatened and Endangered Species.

OBJECTIVES:

- ✓ Work with appropriate State and Federal agencies to identify Habitats of Threatened and Endangered Species in the Town.
- ✓ Protect Habitat areas by preserving, enhancing, and connecting identified areas via the development review process.

GOAL: To preserve agricultural and forest lands beyond Easton's Town limits, but within our Future Growth Area.

OBJECTIVES:

- ✓ Work with Talbot County to develop policies and regulations within the County that favor agricultural use and discourage development for lands in the Growth Area, unless said land is annexed into the Town.

WATER RESOURCES

INTRODUCTION

As described previously in the early chapters of this Plan, HB 1141 imposed several requirements concerning the composition of Comprehensive Plans that were first in effect with the Town's 2010 Plan. The most significant requirements are for the addition of two new chapters or Elements. One of these was the Municipal Growth Element. The other was a Water Resources Element, which is the subject of this chapter. In a nutshell, the purpose of this Element is to insure that the Town has or is planning to have, adequate water supply to serve the projected population of the Town, as well as adequate wastewater capacity, and the ability of the local waterways to assimilate projected stormwater from both point and non-point sources.

As was mentioned in the Municipal Growth Element, there are now three different required elements of a Comprehensive Plan that must address water, sewer, and stormwater management issues; Municipal Growth, Water Resources, and Community Facilities and Services. There is also actually a fourth Element involved when the impact of water and sewer availability and systems is factored into the Land Use Element. Given the fact that we are required to address these issues in three, if not four, different parts of the Plan there will necessarily be some degree of overlap and there must be coordination between the Elements. The focus of the Water Resources Element is distinguished from the other Elements in that it focuses primarily on the following questions:

- Is there adequate water supply to meet current and future needs?
- Is there adequate wastewater and septic supply to meet current and future needs?

- What, if any, impact will meeting these needs have on water resources?

These are essentially the same issues the Municipal Growth Element was required to examine for a host of services. The Water Resources Element is simply more narrowly focused on just water, wastewater, and stormwater. It may therefore be more detailed than was the analysis presented in the Municipal Growth Element, but the two should be consistent, if not identical in this analysis.

Before looking at the specifics of these services and resources, it is important to reiterate a general longstanding and overriding principle of the Town of Easton. That is that no water or wastewater service is extended to properties located outside of Town boundaries. Property-owners or developers that desire our services are required to annex into the Town. Furthermore property that is developed within the Town is required to connect to our municipal system. As a result of this policy, there are very few private wells or septic systems within the Town limits.

There are only two known exceptions to this policy. One is for the Ratcliffe Farm Subdivision. This is a 15 lot large-lot waterfront subdivision located distant from the 16th lot, on which the more Town-scale Easton Village project is nearing completion. These 15 lots were allowed to develop on private wells and septic systems. The other exception is for a handful (less than a dozen) houses which were in existence and served by well and septic at the time that they were annexed. They have been allowed to remain as such until it is necessary for them to connect to the Town's municipal system.

For the reason outlined above, this Plan does not include a map of the Town's water and wastewater service areas. They are virtually identical to the Town boundary. The only exceptions are the South Clifton subdivision located off of

Route 50 and one property which receives water service (but not wastewater) on St. Michael's Road.

WATER SUPPLY AND SYSTEM

Public water service in the Town of Easton is provided by the Easton Utilities Commission (EUC), an independent agency owned by the Town. The following language is taken directly from EUC's website and provides an excellent overview of the state of the Town's water supply and distribution system:

Since 1914, Easton Utilities has been dedicated to providing clean, clear, healthy water in plentiful supply to all of the town's residents. Throughout each year, our fully trained and certified staff carefully monitors water quality.

The Water Department currently serves over 7,000 customers through 122 miles of water mains and 788 fire hydrants. Easton Utilities pumps water from naturally filtered underground aquifers (water-bearing sands) through five wells that are 1,000 to 1,200 feet deep. We then treat the water as required and pump it into the distribution system. The water that comes out of a customer's tap includes water from each of these wells. No single well provides all of a customer's water. Of those wells, three are drilled 1,000 feet into the Magothy Aquifer. The final two wells are drilled 1,200 feet into the Upper Patapsco Aquifer and feed directly into a state-of-the-art water treatment plant on Glebe Road.

The storage capacity of Easton's Water Department is two million gallons, which is met through two separate one million gallon elevated storage tanks. The water storage tanks ensure adequate fire flow and pressure with capacity sufficient to accommodate the Town's future needs.

The Municipal Growth Element indicated that EUC has planned for expansion of the water system (adding a production well) in the year 2043 to

accommodate a maximum daily demand above 4.0 MGD. It can be concluded therefore that EUC both accommodates the existing water demands of the Town and is planning to continue to do so well into the future (i.e. to the year 2043). Since we have also calculated that effective "build-out" of the Town will likely be achieved beyond the long range 2040 timeframe of this Plan, it seems logical that only minimal upgrades will be necessary beyond what is already planned in order to serve the Town's ultimate population (and there is ample time to do so).

One of the mandated requirements of this Element is to examine current and future water sources and include planning strategies to protect them from pollution and over-allocation. This is difficult, if not impossible to do given that (1) Easton's source of water is located well outside of our jurisdiction and (2) it is shared by many other users. This is also recognized by Talbot County and the problem is summarized well in their Draft Water Resource Element as follows:

> *Talbot County's public and private water users draw drinking water from several major confined groundwater aquifers, many of which (particularly the Aquia and Piney Point) are widely used throughout the Eastern Shore. The capacity of these confined aquifers is increasingly strained by new development throughout the Delmarva Peninsula. The US Geological Society (USGS) reports that "withdrawals from Maryland Coastal Plain aquifers have caused ground-water levels in confined aquifers to decline by tens to hundreds of feet from their original levels. Continued water-level declines could affect the long-term sustainability of ground-water resources in agricultural areas of the Eastern Shore."3 In most cases, the recharge areas for these aquifers (particularly the Piney Point and Aquia), are not necessarily found on the Eastern Shore.*
>
> *Groundwater and surface water resources are also linked. Water from surficial aquifers can comprise a significant amount of the base flow of streams and rivers. While*

groundwater withdrawn through wells is typically returned to the ground or surface via point source discharges, septic systems, and absorption of runoff from outdoor water uses (such as watering of lawns), large withdrawals can potentially impact the quality and quantity of flows in nearby surface water bodies.

There exists no comprehensive study of the water-bearing formations used by Talbot County residents and businesses. Individual (e.g., project-specific) groundwater studies do not take into account the cumulative impacts of heavy demand on the Aquia and other formations from both the Eastern and Western Shore. In addition, the Water Balance methodology recommended by Models and Guidelines #26 (the state's official guidance for preparation of the Water Resources Element) is not applicable for the Coastal Plain. Thus, while the County understands that its groundwater supplies are limited and declining, there is no reliable measure of water supply against which to compare current and especially projected water demands.

MDE, the Maryland Geological Survey (MGS), and the US Geological Survey (USGS) have begun work on a Coastal Plain Aquifer Study, but that study remains incomplete. The County should use the data and recommendations of the Coastal Plain Aquifer Study (once completed) to shape its own water use policies and ordinances. However, the County also recognizes the need for and supports the development of broader regional water policies to protect already scarce resources.

For purposes of this Water Resources Element (and lacking specific evidence to the contrary), this Water Resources Element presumes that the MDE groundwater permit issued for each public drinking water system reflects the maximum safe yield of the aquifer(s) used by that system.[4]

[4] Talbot County, Maryland Water Resources Element, Planning Commission Draft, June 3, 2009.

WASTEWATER SERVICE AND CAPACITY

Easton Utilities is also the provider of wastewater service in the Town of Easton. Their description of the state of this service is as follows:

Easton began construction on its first sewage system in 1911. In operation by 1914, it was the first separate storm and sanitary wastewater system in the State of Maryland. Currently, the Wastewater Department serves about 7,000 customers through over 120 miles of wastewater mains, twenty pumping stations and an environmentally-friendly wastewater treatment facility.

Completed in 2007, Easton's Enhanced Nutrient Removal Wastewater Treatment Facility is one of Maryland's most environmentally friendly wastewater treatment plants. Utilizing Enhanced Nutrient Removal technology, Easton's new facility meets or exceeds the Chesapeake Bay water quality goals by reducing annual concentrations of nitrogen to 3 milligrams per liter (mg/l) and phosphorus to 0.3 mg/l. These equate to 70 percent and 88 percent reductions respectively. While Easton Utilities' former facility had operated effectively, more stringent nutrient limitations and growing demand reached the point that the facility required a significant upgrade. This new facility was the first to receive funding from the State of Maryland's Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund. The facility employs a wide range of innovative technology including ultraviolet radiation for disinfection and an advanced Solids Handling System to convert sludge into a dry, manageable and useful fertilizer.

As the description above indicates, EUC brought online a new, state-of-the-art wastewater treatment facility in 2007. This plant utilizes enhanced nutrient removal (ENR) technology and has a design treatment capacity of 4 MGD, of which 61% (2.463 MGD) was being utilized as of 12/31/23, as given in the Easton Utilities Wastewater Master Plan.

The Easton Utilities Wastewater Master Plan assumes that wastewater flows will grow at 1.75% per yer, and estimate that in the year 2051 WWTF flow will be at 4.0

MGD, noting that in the year 2038 WWF will exceed 3.20 MGD and Easton Utilities will be required to develop detailed plans for WWTF expansion above 4.0 MGD.

There are two wild cards in attempting to estimate future demand for wastewater capacity. The first is the future growth of the Town. If growth rates change, the year in which capacity is reached at the plant is likewise changed. Obviously this date may get pushed significantly into the future depending on how successful we are in achieving our targeted 1% growth rate. Similarly, if the Growth Boundary is changed, the Town's ultimate population is changed, and therefore the size and possibly even the need for the 2025 capacity expansion may not be warranted.

One future user that seems near certain to connect to the Town's wastewater system is the proposed new Regional Hospital. Water and Wastewater flow capacity for phase one of the Regional Hospital is 101,250 gallons per day, or 0.10125 MGD. Future phases, when and if constructed, are estimated to bring the total capacity to 0.20 MGD, which equates to 5% of the WWTF's 4.0 MGD capacity. The impact of the hospital in terms of any future expansion needs is that if it is constructed as currently planned, then the wastewater treatment plant would reach capacity two years earlier than projected above, that is, in the year 2049 in lieu of 2051.

In summary, the Town's wastewater treatment facility currently provides state-of-the-art treatment for all of the Town's residents and can easily accommodate growth of the upcoming planning period. Based on current assumptions concerning household sizes, growth rates, and extension of services beyond the Town limits (which is not currently allowed), it is expected that the capacity of the plant will need to be increased effective in 2051. The addition of the new Hospital to this system causes this expansion to be needed approximately two years sooner (i.e. 2049).

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT AND POINT AND NONPOINT SOURCE LOADING STATUS AND REMEDIATION

Stormwater management in Easton is governed by the Town's Stormwater Management Ordinance. According to that Ordinance, its purpose is:" to protect, maintain and enhance the public health, safety, and general welfare by establishing minimum requirements and procedures to control the adverse impacts associated with increased stormwater runoff. Proper management of stormwater runoff will minimize damage to

public and private property, reduce the effects of development on land, control stream channel erosion, reduce local flooding, and maintain after development, as nearly as possible, the pre-development runoff characteristics."

The Scope of the Stormwater Management Ordinance is copied below.

No person shall develop any land for residential, commercial, industrial, or institutional uses without having provided stormwater management measures that control or manage runoff from such developments, except as provided within this section. The stormwater management measures must be designed consistent with the Design Manual and constructed according to an approved plan for new development or the policies stated in section 3.4 for redevelopment.

3.2 Exemptions

The following development activities are exempt from the provisions of this Ordinance and the requirements of providing stormwater management:

A. Agricultural land management activities;

B. Additions or modifications to existing single family detached residential structures if they comply

with 3.2 C of this section;

C. Developments that do not disturb over 5,000 square feet of land area.

D. Land development activities that the Administration determines will be regulated under specific State laws, which provide for managing stormwater runoff.

E. Nothing in this section shall prohibit the Town Engineer from requiring stormwater management controls upon evaluation of accumulative effects of previous exemptions.

3.3 Waivers / Watershed Management Plans

A. Stormwater management quantitative control waivers shall be granted only to those projects within areas where watershed management plans have been developed consistent with F. of this section.
B. If watershed management plans consistent with F. of this section have not been developed, then stormwater management quantitative control waivers may be granted to projects:
(1) That have direct discharges to tidally influenced receiving waters;
(2) That do not increase the post-development peak discharge for the 2-year and 10-year storm events by more than 10 percent.
(3) When all stormwater from the development will flow to an existing regional stormwater
facility that was designed and constructed to accommodate the stormwater from the development consistent with the quantitative control requirements of this Ordinance. Adequate conveyance must exist from the site to the regional facility. Unmanaged runoff
must not be allowed to discharge into natural drainage systems.
C. Stormwater management qualitative control waivers apply only to:
(1) In-fill development projects where stormwater management implementation is not feasible;
(2) Redevelopment projects if the requirements of §3.4 of this Ordinance are satisfied; or
(3) Sites where the approving agency determines that circumstances exist that prevent the
reasonable implementation of quality control practices.
D. Waivers granted must:
(1) Be on a case-by-case basis;
(2) Consider the cumulative effects of the Town of Easton waiver policy; and
(3) Reasonably ensure the development will not adversely impact stream quality.
E. If the Town Engineer has established an overall watershed management plan for a specific watershed, then the Town Engineer may develop quantitative waiver and redevelopment provisions that differ from sections 3.3B and 3.4.
F. A watershed management plan developed for the purpose of implementing different stormwater management policies for waivers and redevelopment shall:
(1) Include detailed hydrologic and hydraulic analyses to determine hydrograph timing;
(2) Evaluate both quantity and quality management;
(3) Include cumulative impact assessment of watershed development;
(4) Identify existing flooding and receiving stream channel conditions;

(5) Be conducted at a reasonable scale;
(6) Specify where on-site or off-site quantitative and qualitative stormwater management
practices are to be implemented;
(7) Be consistent with the General Performance Standards for Stormwater Management in
Maryland found in Section 1.2 of the Design Manual; and
(8) Be approved by the Administration.
G. The Town Engineer may grant a waiver of quantitative stormwater management requirements for individual developments provided that a written request is submitted by the applicant containing descriptions, drawings, and any other information that is necessary to evaluate the proposed development. A separate written waiver request shall be required in accordance with the provisions of this section if there are subsequent additions, extensions, or modifications to a development receiving a waiver. A waiver request submitted for subsequent additions, extensions, or modifications to a development receiving a waiver shall be evaluated based on the cumulative impacts of the development.
H. Waivers within the Tanyard Branch watershed shall not be granted unless the impacts are determined negligible by the Town Engineer. (See "Exhibit A" (map of Tanyard Branch
Watershed) attached to this document).

3.4 Redevelopment

A. The recharge, channel protection storage and overbank flood protection volume requirements specified in the Design Manual do not apply to redevelopment projects, provided that the redevelopment does not increase the 2-year and 10-year storm event discharge rates over the preredevelopment discharge rates for the 2-year and 10-year storm events. Where redevelopment results in an increase in the pre-development 2-year and 10-year storm flows, quantitative management per Section 4.0 shall apply.
B. All redevelopment projects shall reduce existing site impervious areas by at least 20 percent. Where site conditions prevent the reduction of impervious area, then stormwater management practices shall be implemented to provide qualitative control for at least 20 percent of the site's impervious area. When a combination of impervious area reduction and stormwater practice implementation is used, the combined area shall equal or exceed 20 percent of the site.
C. Where conditions prevent impervious area reduction or on-site stormwater management, practical alternatives may be considered, including but not limited to:
(1) Off-site BMP implementation for a drainage area comparable in size and percent

imperviousness to that of the project. Off-site BMPs shall be located within the same watershed as, and in proximity to the proposed redevelopment;
(2) Watershed or stream restoration; the Applicant shall obtain all necessary permits and other required approval from appropriate State and federal agencies;
(3) Retrofitting; or
(4) Other practices approved by the Town Engineer.
D. In the case of site demolition prior to site plan approval, pre-development impervious areas may be considered with proper documentation as determined by the Town Engineer.

3.5 Variance

The Town Engineer may grant a written variance from any requirement of Section 4.0, Stormwater Management Criteria, of this Ordinance if there are exceptional circumstances applicable to the site such that strict adherence will result in unnecessary hardship and not fulfill the intent of the Ordinance. A written request for variance shall be provided to the Town Engineer and shall state the specific variances sought and reasons for their granting. The Town Engineer shall not grant a variance unless and until sufficient justification is provided by the person developing land.

As mentioned previously the State's Stormwater Management Design Manual has been updated and the Town's Stormwater Management Ordinance will have to be updated accordingly. One of the more significant changes is likely to focus on the waiver section reproduced above.

Stormwater in Easton contributes both point and non-point loads to local waterways. The stormwater management system of Easton filters, collects, and treats runoff at the wastewater treatment plant located east of Town on the banks of the Choptank River. Nonpoint run-off that eludes the stormwater management system enters either the Choptank or the Miles River watershed. The Town is actually split into three 8- digit watersheds, the Miles and the Upper and Lower Choptank. All three of these watersheds are listed as impaired by nutrients by the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) and the Lower Choptank has completed a TMDL. TMDL is an abbreviation for Total Maximum Daily Load and it often refers to a plan or strategy for

limiting the maximum amount of the identified pollutant that may enter the impaired water body.

There is not yet in place a TMDL strategy which affects Easton, but we are trying to do our part to reduce pollutant loadings by imposing the 10% pollutant reduction standard of the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area throughout the entire Town. Thus as development occurs in Easton, water quality should theoretically improve, at least for the newer areas of Town. The problem areas are then confined to the older parts of Town. All of these areas drain into the Tanyard Branch via storm drains installed over 100 years ago (in approximately 1905).

A significant portion of the Town drains into Tanyard Branch, which empties into the headwaters of the Tred Avon River, which travels southwestward from Easton, by Oxford and into the Choptank River. The Tanyard Branch is subject to significant attention by the Town. Projects located in this basin are subject to specific additional stormwater management requirements. In short, within the Tanyard Branch watershed the discharge quantity volumes are required to be evaluated for the 2-year and 10-year storm events to the extent that the maximum post development release rate from the site shall not exceed the 2-year predevelopment rate for both storm events. As an alternative, developers may propose improvements within the watershed that will provide a similar level of benefit, as determined by the Town Engineer. Waivers within the Tanyard Branch watershed are not granted unless the impacts are determined negligible by the Town Engineer.

In addition to these higher standards for Tanyard Branch, the Town is also working cooperatively with Talbot County on a new grant-funded project to implement a number of innovative stormwater management practices along the stream. This includes the construction of a large regional sediment pond and inlet filter bags

designed to catch litter before it enters the waterway. These activities are already funded and should be implemented in the near future. Additional projects for which the Town is seeking grant-funding in 2010 include the installation of a constructed wetland at the site of the Easton Utilities administration building and the design of a replacement conveyance system with sediment removal devices and Best Management Practices (BMP's) which will reduce nitrogen and phosphorous loadings to the watershed. This proposed project is parallel with the Town's Rails-to-Trails network and therefore natural filters and subsurface BMP's will be employed.

An analysis of the impact of the Easton WWTP on the Choptank River is included in Talbot County's Water Resources Element. It finds that this facility will have adequate nitrogen and phosphorous discharge capacity to support projected growth through 2030 and beyond. In fact in 2030 it finds that the Easton WWTP will have 21,314 pounds per year of TN and 913 pounds per year of TP in remaining discharge capacity. It should be noted that the County's projections assume a 1% population growth rate for the Town of Easton, which the Easton Planning Commission has also adopted as a target for this Comprehensive Plan.

On the more individual scale, the impact of fertilizer can be significant on the water quality of receiving waters. There is very little agriculture practiced within Easton's corporate limits and therefore not a lot of impact from this source of nutrients. However there are large areas of agricultural production within our Future Growth Area. Depending on the amount of fertilizer these farms use as well as how the application of this fertilizer is managed, the impact of such nutrients should be reduced upon annexation and development in the Town. However, the impact of lawn-applied fertilizer on the water quality of streams and rivers can be significant as well. This is obviously a concern within the already developed portion of the Town and will be a

concern as farmlands (and forested areas) are converted to developed lands in the future. The State of Maryland is requiring home improvement and similar stores to begin selling non-Phosphorus lawn fertilizer. This will hopefully help to reduce the negative water quality impact associated with lawn fertilization in the future.

The impact of the reduction of agriculture on the waterways surrounding Easton can be seen in the following summary table. It is the result of the MDE Nutrient Loading Spreadsheet. This spreadsheet analyzes the impact of future growth in Easton under three different scenarios. The first represents 3% growth, which is also the Build-out scenario for a 30 year time-frame. The second and third scenarios represent the Planning Commission's stated goal of 1% growth, again projected to a 30 year horizon. The difference between the two 1% scenarios is in the proportion of infill/redevelopment vs. Greenfield development. The first 1% scenario assumes that 75% of future development will occur in infill/redevelopment sites (i.e. anything within the 2009 Town Limits) and 25% will come from the development of land that is currently agriculture outside of Town limits. The second 1% scenario assumes that this split will be 50-50.

Nutrient Loading Analysis Spreadsheet - Summary Results

** NOTE - Check to see if this is still required & if so, if updated tables exist***

Land Use and Septic Systems (See Scenario Descriptions Below)

	2007 LU, 2007 BMPs	2007 LU, Trib Strat BMPs	Scenario 1 Trib Strat BMPs	Scenario 2 Trib Strat BMPs	Scenario 3 Trib Strat BMPs
	(Acres)	(Acres)	(Acres)	(Acres)	(Acres)
Development	0	3,818	8,246	5,252	5,382
Agriculture	0	4,927	279	3,274	3,143
Forest	0	1,813	1,813	1,813	1,813
Water	0	112	112	112	112
Other	0	684	904	904	904
Total Area	0	11,354	11,354	11,355	11,354

Residential Septic (EDUs)	0	557	56	269	269
Non-Residential Septic (EDUs)	0	375	38	188	188

Total Nitrogen Loading

	2007 LU, 2007 BMPs	2007 LU, Trib Strat BMPs	Scenario 1 Trib Strat BMPs	Scenario 2 Trib Strat BMPs	Scenario 3 Trib Strat BMPs
	(Lbs/Yr)	(Lbs/Yr)	(Lbs/Yr)	(Lbs/Yr)	(Lbs/Yr)
Development NPS	0	22,900	49,572	31,535	32,322
Agriculture NPS	0	42,567	2,441	28,178	27,038
Forest NPS	0	2,507	2,507	2,507	2,507
Other Terrestrial NPS	0	4,145	5,473	5,473	5,473
Total Terrestrial Load	**0**	**72,119**	**59,992**	**67,692**	**67,339**

Residential Septic (EDUs)	0	4,912	348	1,677	1,677
Non-Residential Septic (EDUs)	0	1,180	89	421	421
Total Septic Load	**0**	**6,092**	**436**	**2,098**	**2,098**

Total NPS Nitrogen Load	**0**	**78,210**	**60,429**	**69,790**	**69,437**

Total PS Load	**0**	**23,800**	**48,729**	**27,415**	**27,415**

Total Nitrogen Load (NPS+PS)	**0**	**102,010**	**109,158**	**97,205**	**96,852**

Total Phosphorus Loading

	2007 LU, 2007 BMPs	2007 LU, Trib Strat BMPs	Scenario 1 Trib Strat BMPs	Scenario 2 Trib Strat BMPs	Scenario 3 Trib Strat BMPs
	(Lbs/Yr)	(Lbs/Yr)	(Lbs/Yr)	(Lbs/Yr)	(Lbs/Yr)
Development NPS	0	2,441	5,451	3,414	3,507
Agriculture NPS	0	3,977	224	2,690	2,588
Forest NPS	0	34	34	34	34
Other Terrestrial NPS	0	500	651	651	651
Total Terrestrial Load	**0**	**6,953**	**6,360**	**6,789**	**6,779**

Total PS Load	**0**	**2,400**	**3,655**	**2,742**	**2,742**

Total Phosphorus Load (NPS+PS)	**0**	**9,353**	**10,015**	**9,531**	**9,521**

Impervious Cover and Open Space

	2007 LU, 2007 BMPs	2007 LU, Trib Strat BMPs	Scenario 1 Trib Strat BMPs	Scenario 2 Trib Strat BMPs	Scenario 3 Trib Strat BMPs
Total Impervious Cover	0	1,865	3,497	2,449	2,485
Agriculture	0	4,927	279	3,274	3,143
Forest	0	1,705	1,705	1,705	1,705

Scenario Description	Scenario List
Year 2007 with 2007 Level of BMP Implementation	2007 LU, 2007 BMPs
Year 2007 with TS BMP Implementation	2007 LU, Trib Strat BMPs
Scenario 1 Build-out (or 3% Growth 2040)	Scenario 1

Scenario 2 - 2040 1% Growth, 75% infill, 25% greenfield	Scenario 2
Scenario 3 - 2040 1% Growth, 50% infill, 50% greenfield	Scenario 3

The spreadsheet that produced these calculations was prepared by the Maryland Department of the Environment, who also supplied much of the baseline data. The data inputted by Town Staff required a large number of assumptions. These assumptions are listed in Appendix 2 of this Plan.

Among the conclusions that can be drawn from this analysis are the following:

- Due to the reduction of agricultural land (and thus the reduction in fertilizers) there is a decrease in the amount of non-point source (i.e. run-off) nitrogen and phosphorus in all three scenarios.
- Similarly the removal of existing septic systems currently outside of the Town of Easton but in the Growth Area, provide benefits in terms of nutrient reduction when these houses are connected to the Town's Wastewater System.
- Both of the 1% scenarios also have a reduction in Total Nitrogen and Total Phosphorus loads (including point, i.e. the wastewater treatment facility, and non-point).
- The 3% or build-out scenario uses the expected nutrient caps for the nutrient loads as otherwise it would exceed them. This implies that enhanced nutrient reduction techniques are implemented at some point in the future. At the time that this becomes necessary, the Town will have to evaluate the cost/benefit of such enhancements as it has done in the past each time the system is upgraded. It is conceivable that the Town Council at that time will decide that the cost associated with such enhancements is greater than they believe is worth bearing. If so, development will cease, except for redevelopment projects, before reaching the limits of our Growth Boundary.

WATER RESOURCES GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

GOAL: To ensure that the Town has an adequate, safe and sanitary water supply.

OBJECTIVES:

- ✓ Continue to coordinate water system master planning with the Town's Comprehensive Plan.
- ✓ Construct the capital improvements outlined in Easton Utilities' Master Water Plan.

GOAL: To provide adequate wastewater treatment service to the Town.

OBJECTIVES:

- ✓ Continue to coordinate Sewer planning with the Town's Comprehensive Plan.
- ✓ Monitor growth rates and be prepared to expand the capacity of the Wastewater Treatment Facility (currently expected to be required in 2025) well in advance of the need to do so.

GOAL: To effectively treat stormwater runoff and reduce pollutant loadings entering Easton's waterways.

OBJECTIVES:

- ✓ Continue to administer and enforce the Town's Stormwater Management Ordinance.
- ✓ Review the effectiveness of the existing practice of installing silt fences at construction sites. Adopt policies that establish more effective run-off protection and/or ensure more careful monitoring by responsible inspection agencies.

- ✓ Incorporate the latest guidance and requirements as found in the State Stormwater Design Manual following its approval.
- ✓ Continue to work cooperatively with Talbot County to obtain grant funding for projects that clean up Tanyard Branch.
- ✓ Work independently and with Talbot County to develop comprehensive projects and strategies to improve the water quality of stormwater runoff.

PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE

INTRODUCTION

One of the most critical components in maintaining and enhancing a community's quality of life is its system of parks, recreation, and open space. The careful location of parks and open space areas and preservation of the Town's natural resources as a complement to existing development can be a useful tool in guiding the Town's development into a logical, orderly and environmentally sensitive pattern. In addition to recreational and aesthetic benefits, open spaces provide a framework for various land uses. Properly located, they become boundaries and buffers between conflicting uses of land and a nucleus for building neighborhood areas. Natural features can be preserved as valuable scenic and environmental attributes of the Town. A park system and recreational program can also go a long way toward resolving the age-old problem of a community offering nothing for young people "to do."

This chapter examines the current state of Easton's Parks and Recreation system and proposes methods by which it might be improved. It also calls for the advancement of a Town-wide system of "green infrastructure." This refers to the parks and open space areas, as well as the paths and corridors that link these areas. It also proposes areas for new parks to be developed in the future as the Growth Area becomes developed.

BACKGROUND

The Municipal Growth Element analyzed the adequacy of the Town's overall parks from a acres per capita perspective, based on a State-suggested ratio. It found that the current park system meets this standard and that we would continue to exceed the threshold throughout the buildout of the Growth Area by merely relying upon the

open space requirements of the Town's Subdivision Regulations. With that as background, this chapter looks more closely at the state of Easton's Parks and Recreation system overall and makes recommendations for improving and enhancing it so as to further sustain and improve the quality of life for Town residents and visitors.

Table 12 represents an inventory of existing Town parks and open space areas. One of the most notable points is that there are a fairly large number of parks (30) in Easton. This is even more significant in that when this Table was originally created for the 1997 Plan, there were 14 entries on this Table. Clearly the expansion and development of our Park system has been a significant achievement over the last three decades. Such improvements include enhancements at Idlewild and Moton Parks, two Rail-Trail extensions, the development of North Easton Park into a first class sports complex, to the degree that it has since hosted a number of State and Regional Championship Tournaments. More recently, even during the drafting of this Plan, the Town has opened its first Dog Park in Downtown (Brewers Lane), opened a new Skate Park/Pump Track at the North Easton Sports Complex, and acquired a large (197 acres) tract of land dominated by mature forest that will preserve this land for passive recreation.

Multiple entities are responsible in some way for Easton's overall Park System. The Planning and Zoning Commission obtains land for parks through the subdivision process as one of the requirements for subdivision is the provision of 1,200 square feet of parkland per dwelling unit. The Commission also is involved in the specifics of where the parks should be located, how many there should be, etc… for a subdivision during the review process.

Once the land is obtained, it becomes the responsibility of the Easton Park Board to determine how that parkland should be improved. This group operates with the

assistance of a full-time Parks and Recreation Director who also is responsible for Easton's summer recreation program.

The ongoing maintenance of Town parks is the responsibility of the Department of Public Works, providing trash pick-up, grass cutting, and installation and maintenance of equipment, furniture, etc… With a growing system of parks, this area of responsibility grows proportionally as well.

Finally, the Mayor and Town Council have the important role of prioritizing the development of the Town's park system, primarily through the budget process. They determine which improvements are implemented (and when) and occasionally also approve funds for the acquisition of park land. These tend to be the larger, regional-scale parks as opposed to the smaller neighborhood parks that are more customarily obtained by the Planning and Zoning Commission through the subdivision process.

TABLE 12 EXISTING PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

TYPES AND AREAS	SIZE (ACRES)	OWNERSHIP	FACILITIES
Passive Parks			
Train Station Park	0.540	Town	Benches
Easton Point Park	10.55	Town	Drinking Fountains Benches
Memorial Walk	1.07	Town	Memorial Bricks
Thompson Park	0.316	Town	Benches Fountain
Easton Woodland Park	197	Town	
Neighborhood Parks			
Hunters Mill Park		Town	Playground Benches
Ian "Mac" Morrell Park (Chapel East)	1.7	Town	Playground Pavilion
Matthewstown Run	4.11	Town	Playground Picnic Area and Table Baseball Field Open Space Little Free Library
Stoney Ridge Park	19.8	Town	Playground Picnic Area

			Open Space Benches
Golton II	0.791	Town	Playground
Mulberry Station	3.169	Town	Playground Open Space Benches
Spur Lane Park	0.783	Town	Open Space
Waylands	0.859	Town	Playground Picnic Area Benches
Brettridge	2.76	Town	Open Space
Community Parks			
Idlewild	12.0	Town	(2) Softball Fields Track Picnic Area, Barbecue Grills & Tables (3) Tennis Courts Basketball Court Football Field Playground Children's Park Area Fountain/Garden Area Gazebo/Pavilion Little Free Library
Moton Park	12.2	Town	Track Picnic Tables, Barbecue Grills & Pavilion Playground Basketball Court Soccer Field Volleyball Area Benches Little Free Library

John F. Ford Park	58.0	Town	Playground Track Exercise Stations/Equipment Open SPace Drinking Fountains
Rails-To-Trails	2.75 miles (north/south) 0.90 miles (east/west)	Town	Walking/Bicycling Path Benches Frederick Douglass Mural
Special Park Areas			
A James Clark North Easton Sports Complex	26.2	Town	(4) Baseball Fields Playgrounds (4) Football/Soccer/Lacrosse/Field Hockey Fields Picnic Area Gazebo/Pavilion Batting Cages Bounce Back Wall
George P. Murphy Swimming Pool	2.8	County	Outdoor Swimming Pool
Skate Park/Pump Track		Town	Quarter Pipes LA High Wall Grind Ledge Radius Wedge Benches
Easton Dog Park	0.507	Town	Gated Small & Large Areas for off-leash play

			Drinking Fountains Benches
Easton Point Park	2.471	Town	Planned for Boat Ramp and associated parking
Others			
YMCA of the Chesapeake (Main Facility)	10.0	Quasi-Public	Indoor Facilities (9) Tennis Courts (6) Pickleball Courts Deck Tennis
YMCA of the Chesapeake (Lynn Rich Tennis Center)		Quasi-Public	Indoor Facilities (4) Indoor Tennis Courts (3) Outdoor Tennis Courts
VFW	5.0	Quasi-Public	Baseball Field Open Space Fields
Talbot County Community Center	51.0	County	Indoor Facilities Curling Rink Basketball Courts Pickleball Courts Volleyball Courts Athletic Fields Playgrounds Concession Area Pavillion
Easton Point Landing	0.50	County	Boat Ramp Pier Fishing/Crabbing
Mount Pleasant	6.46	County	Open Space Fields
Easton Village (Future Neighborhood Park)		Town	Canoe/Kayak Launch
Ashby Commons Park (Future Neighborhood Park)		Town	

Source: *Town of Easton Parks & Recreation Annual Plan, 2024* & *Easton Comprehensive Development Plan*, 2010.

** - Although listed in the inventory here, the recreational amenities are not generally available for use by the general public.*

FUTURE PARKS

One area, in which it is crucial for the Planning Commission and Park Board to work together, is the planning for future park sites. The Park Board is more acutely aware of specific demands and needs in terms of our overall park system. By being aware of such needs, the Planning Commission can be proactive in addressing them through the park dedication requirements of the Subdivision process. Furthermore, special needs (e.g., a new regional-scale park) can be considered by both the Planning Commission and Town Council during the review of discretionary approvals, such as Planned Unit Developments and Annexations.

Previous iterations of The Comprehensive Plan have made a number of recommendations regarding future parks, many of which have come to fruition. Such parks included the original Rail-Trail, the expanded Rail-Trail, the development of the John F. Ford Park, and a Waterfront Park on Easton Point.

The following suggestions from previous Plans have not been achieved but are still relevant today:

- The Town should work with the State of Maryland to help insure the preservation of Seth Forest. The Town should also ask the State to

consider the possibility of making this property more accessible. This property might be appropriate as a Regional Park of some sort rather than simply as passive and largely unused, unknown, and perhaps unappreciated open space.

- Two areas on the western side of Easton should be considered as waterfront parks. One is located along the Easton Parkway and a portion of the site is already used informally as a place where people pull off the road to have lunch or just to look at Papermill Pond. This site is identified in Easton's Critical Area Program as appropriate for a park, perhaps with a boardwalk/nature trail, which could also serve an environmental education role as well. The second area is not pinpointed, but would be in the general vicinity of MD Route 33 (St. Michaels Road) and the Easton Parkway on the southwestern side of that intersection. This might be located on either or both sides of the North Branch of the Tred Avon River. This would build upon the recent (and ongoing) acquisition and development of the waterfront park that many residents have long expressed a desire to have.
- (Not depicted on Future Land Use Map) In the long-range planning period (i.e. by 2034) a new Community (or Regional) Park, on the scale of Idlewild or Moton, should be secured and developed on the eastern side of Town, east of U.S. Route 50. This is the portion of Town anticipated to accommodate the majority of future growth and as such, a community park is essential within this area. Furthermore, this area may not necessarily be provided by any one development. As an alternative, the area for the park might be pieced together by adjoining subdivisions.

- The development (and future planned development) of the Rail-Trail is described further in the Transportation Element of this Plan. In short, it calls for the gradual continued expansion of this trail in as many directions as possible. It is hoped that it will eventually connect to a wider-scale County-initiated Trail System.

As pointed out in the Municipal Growth Element of this Plan, State guidelines for parkland indicate that the parks needs of the existing Town population are above State guidelines and that the land needed to satisfy the needs of the potential future population of the Town should be met via the subdivision process. In addition, more recreational land lies immediately adjacent to the current Town boundaries at the previously mentioned Seth Forest and a public golf course (Hog Neck). These two areas represent an additional 121 acres at the Seth Demonstration Forest and 265 acres at Hog Neck Golf Course.

Since virtually all of the future residential development of Easton will occur to the east of the current Town boundaries, it seems logical that the parks required to serve those people be located in this area as well. One possible location was discussed in the 2010 Plan. That is at the terminus of the current section of the former Beechwood Drive (since renamed Seth Drive) that traverses through Easton Club East on the parcel of land immediately north of that development. Since this parcel is adjacent to an age-restricted community and very near the edge of the Seth Forest, it seems like an appropriate location for a large park devoted to passive recreation needs. Forested areas can be protected and/or added adjacent to Seth Forest and walking trails and woodland gardens would seem to be suitable at this location. It would also be adjacent,

or in very close proximity to Chesapeake Avenue, a potential connection (or standalone) to the Town's Rail-Trail.

The Park described above would be very convenient for people in the southern portion of the future growth area. It would then also seem logical to look for a second park in the central portion of the growth area, in the general vicinity of the Waylands/Matthewstown Run/Dover Road/Black Dog Alley area, and a third one in the northern portion of the growth area that would be convenient to the Mulberry Station and Chapel East subdivisions as well as future growth in surrounding areas. General locations for each of these potential parks are shown on the Future Land Use Map found in the Implementation Element of this Plan.

A special type of park that is very desirable to Easton residents is a waterfront park. There is a significant element of undeveloped waterfront land as part of the Easton Village project. This will eventually include a pedestrian bridge across the Tred Avon to Easton Point. The redevelopment of Easton Point is discussed elsewhere in this Plan and is now underway. The Town has already converted its former Public Works property into a waterfront park and expanded the area by acquiring the adjacent property (formerly the site of Southern States). The redevelopment of Easton Point as described in the Port Street Small Area Plan include the establishment of a boardwalk/promenade and a significant public waterfront park.

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

The concept of green infrastructure was first introduced to the Easton Comprehensive Plan in 2004 when the term was still relatively new in the field of planning. It refers to the system of parks and open spaces in a community, as well as the linkages or connections between these areas. A community's green infrastructure is

important because just as the more commonly known infrastructure (i.e. roads, water, sewer, etc…) is essential to support a community's physical development, so to a community's green infrastructure supports its ecological functions. It also is important for making communities more livable.

The Conservation Fund defines green infrastructure as "the Nation's natural life support system - a strategically planned and managed network of wilderness, parks, greenways, conservation easements, and working lands with conservation value that supports native species, maintains natural ecological processes, sustains air and water resources, and contributes to the health and quality of life for America's communities and people."

There are numerous benefits provided by a system of green infrastructure. These include both ecological and economic benefits. From an ecological perspective the benefits include:

- Ensuring plant and animal biodiversity.
- Creating pathways to allow for interchange between native plant and animal communities.
- Maintaining the health of native ecosystems and landscapes by sustaining their physical, chemical, and biological processes.
- Filtering pollutants from air, water, and soil.
- Helping to cool streams and soil through shading.
- Buffering developed areas from floodwaters.

The economic benefits include:

- Increasing property values as homes located near parks and greenways sell for more than those that are not.

- Raising the community's quality of life. Communities that have planned systems of open space, including greenways, parks and trails, generally develop the reputation of being desirable places to live. Seattle, Washington, Boulder, Colorado, Portland, Oregon and Raleigh North Carolina are examples of such places.
- Attracting businesses. The communities citied above, not coincidentally, also have had great success in attracting new businesses as often times a community's quality of life is a key factor for businesses when deciding where to relocate or open a new business.
- Increasing tourism and tourism-based businesses.
- Attracting environmentally sensitive development and the developers who specialize in that niche.

Given these benefits, as well as the existence of at least a skeletal system of green infrastructure, it seems like a classic "no-brainer" for Easton to develop a more formal and planned green infrastructure system. Such a system will also further sustainability goals discussed in more detail in the Sustainability chapter of this Plan. Elements of this Green Infrastructure system are discussed in the Economic Development Chapter of this Plan where the AKRF Plan for the redevelopment of Downtown Easton is described. Two of the more significant projects proposed in that plan involve the day-lighting of Tanyard Branch and the development of a "green ring" of heavily treed streets and open spaces around downtown.

PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goal: To meet the park and recreational demands of all of Easton's citizens.

Objectives:

- ✓ Continue to study and monitor the demand for various park and recreation uses (above and beyond National Standards, which the Town largely meets).
- ✓ Coordinate the work of the Planning and Zoning Commission, Park Board, and Town Council in acquiring and planning parks.
- ✓ Coordinate park planning with Talbot County to prevent duplication of amenities/services and to ensure that between the two entities, all of Easton's recreational needs are being satisfied.
- ✓ Seek funding opportunities to design and build an eastward expansion of the Rail-Trail in the right-of-way for Chesapeake Avenue, including a grade-separated bicycle/pedestrian crossing of Route 50.
- ✓ Require future developers of land bordering Chesapeake Avenue to build (or fund the building of) a Rail-Trail within this right-of-way.

Goal: To provide a system of green infrastructure (see Future Land Use Map).

Objectives:

- ✓ Identify appropriate open space areas to serve as green centers or anchors and connect them through a series of pathways and green corridors.
- ✓ Plan future parks, open spaces and corridors in a manner that compliments and helps to build a green infrastructure system (Two such parks are proposed on the Conceptual Land Use Map for the long-term planning period on the Eastern Side of Town).

SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainable development has been defined as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The American Society of Landscape Architects makes the following points about sustainable (urban) development:

> *Urban development should be guided by a sustainable planning and management vision that promotes interconnected green space, a multi-modal transportation system, and mixed-use development. Diverse public and private partnerships should be used to create sustainable and livable communities that protect historic, cultural, and environmental resources. In addition, policymakers, regulators and developers should support sustainable site planning and construction techniques that reduce pollution and create a balance between built and natural systems.*

> *New sustainable urban developments or re-developments should provide a variety of commercial, institutional, educational uses as well as housing styles, sizes and prices. The provision of sidewalks, trails, and private streets, connected to transit stops and an interconnected street network within these mixed-use developments provides mobility options and helps reduce pollution by reducing vehicle trips. Walking, bicycling, and other mobility options should be encouraged throughout the urban mixed-use core and mixed-use neighborhoods with easily accessed and well-defined centers and edges.*

Fortunately the itemized list of characteristics or outcomes of sustainable urban development in the description above are all perfectly consistent with the Vision of the future Easton that this Plan already contemplates. Furthermore, while the idea of tackling global climate change may seem daunting, if not impossible, the actions described above are do-able. In fact, in Easton we have been moving in such a direction for the past several decades. This merely presents one more reason to continue to pursue such a vision.

The Brundtland Commission of the United Nations (1987) published the report, "Our Common Future" and defined sustainable development, as repeated in the intro to this chapter, as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Since then, the definition of sustainability has expanded to include balance and coordination among the "Three E's" of environment, economy, and equity as well as development that minimizes the negative impact on the environment and other systems.

Many issues or aspects of sustainability are far beyond the scope of the Town of Easton to address. Actions needed to address climate change, for example, have been subject to International Treaties and will require global support and cooperation in order to male meaningful progress. However, there are actions that Easton can take to anticipate and accommodate the effects of climate change and there are a number of other issues besides climate change that determine just how sustainable our future community will be.

During the Public Input phase of this Plan Update, the scope of possible sustainability issues was evident from the feedback we received. In particular, one exercise invited citizens to "use sticky dots to indicate which of the following issues/items are important to you and should be addressed in the Town's updated Comprehensive Plan under the heading of Climate Change and Sustainability." Table ____ below summarizes the responses from this exercise.

Issue	Number of Dots Placed in Support of Addressing the Issue	Comments
Air Temperature that is projected to rise by 2.5 degrees above normal average by 2050 (NOAA data)	12	
Allowing for more live/work or mixed-use units in Town	25	
Allowing small farms in town for local food production	21	
Bicycle safety, e.g., bike lanes and trails	30	
Clean Rivers and Streams	37	
Connecting new neighborhoods to existing neighborhoods to improve walkability	21	
Converting the Town's vehicle fleet to Low Emission Vehicles	23	
Electric Vehicle charging station availability	23	
Food stores that are walkable for in-town residents	40	
Maintenance of town amenities, like parks, street trees, public bathrooms, etc.	29	
Pedestrian safety, e.g.,	29	

sidewalks and road crossings		
Precipitation (annual rain volume) that has been above average for the last 26 years and is continuing to rise, with storms increasing in volume and severity	22	A commenter added: “Reason to keep waterfront as a public park and not build housing and boat ramps for the wealthy.”
Public Access to waterfront for a variety of uses	37	
Raising the tax rate to increase funding for public education	21	Commenter added, “Please think of ;less advantaged people.” Should be noted that school funding is a County, not Town, responsibility.
Relative sea level rise that is projected to be between 1 and 2 feet by 2050 (NOAA data)	23	
Safer access across Route 50	27	
Street trees for cooling, shade, water retention, and beautification	40	
Incentives for Green Building and Solar/Renewable Energy	24	Item written in by citizen
Services during extreme events	7	Item written in by citizen
Composting option	16	Item written in by citizen
Solar Panels over big parking lots and big rooftops of commercial and residential buildings	11	Item written in by citizen
Community Garden	1	Item written in by citizen
Renewable Energy Sources	16	Item written in by citizen

for Easton Power		
More pollinator-friendly solar	2	Item written in by citizen

The range of responses and level of concurrence with many of the options as expressed via this exercise was impressive and suggests there may well be community support for a more sustainable future Easton. While the responses are varied by subject, there are at least a few general themes that can be summarized as follows:

- Plan for, and mitigate, the impacts of climate change.
- Facilitate a more sustainable built environment.
- Protect the environment.
- Renewable Energy options
- Food Security

The balance of this chapter will discuss Sustainability in each of these five categories.

Climate Change

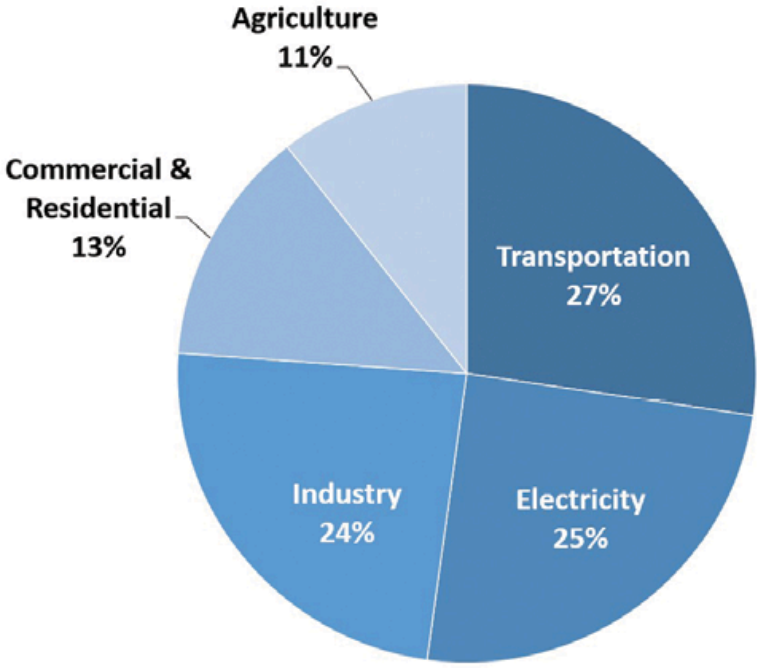
In the 2022 Planning Advisory Service (PAS) Report, "Planning for Climate Mitigation and Adaptation," the authors note that the United States is facing a number of "existential threats" but notes that only one of them - climate change - has the potential to "destroy human livability of the entire planet." According to the former President of the American Planning Association, Leo Asuncion, Jr., in a 2021 statement on the UN Climate Change Conference, "Now is an essential moment where global commitments, national policies, and ***local planning*** must all work together to meet the demands of confronting and combating climate change and its impacts on people, places, and our planet." (emphasis added)

The same PAS Report goes on to state that an effective response to the global challenge that is climate change will require fundamental and systemic changes to the built environment and "inevitably must be addressed policy by policy and project by project in our local communities." Ultimately, local governments need to shift to, and embrace the concept of, sustainable development in order to make a difference.

In general terms, planning responses to climate change fall into two categories. These are mitigation planning and adaptation planning. Mitigation planning involves planning for and taking actions that reduce the levels of Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions in the atmosphere or enhance carbon sinks (i.e. things that absorb more GHGs than they emit). Climate adaptation planning involves actions that reduce the vulnerability of people, places, and ecosystems to the impacts of climate change. The most effective approach will inevitably utilize both mitigation and adaptation techniques and strategies.

Mitigation Strategies

The sources of US GHG emissions, by sector, are shown in the following chart:



U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (2022). Inventory of U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Sinks: 1990-2020

The largest share is represented by the Transportation Sector, which covers all journeys by road, rail, water and air. This sector generated 29% of US GHG in 2019. Of the total GHG emitted from this sector, 58% of them are generated from the fossil fuels burnt for light-duty vehicles (i.e., cars, pickup trucks, sport utility vehicles (SUVs), vans, and minivans), with an additional 24% from medium and heavy duty trucks. The good news on this front is that there are actions that can be taken from a planning perspective to drive these numbers down. These range from site-specific actions, such as providing adequate infrastructure for charging electric vehicles, to bigger-picture and philosophical changes, such as planning for future growth that is less automobile dependent by incentivizing new growth that occurs in the form of compact, walkable, mixed-use communities that provide a variety of housing choices and offer services within easy walking distance of neighborhoods.

While the Transportation sector is the one most directly related to planning, in terms of the possibility to reduce GHG emissions, it is not the only one. To that point, the following are potential mitigation strategies that communities can implement that more broadly can reduce GHG emissions:

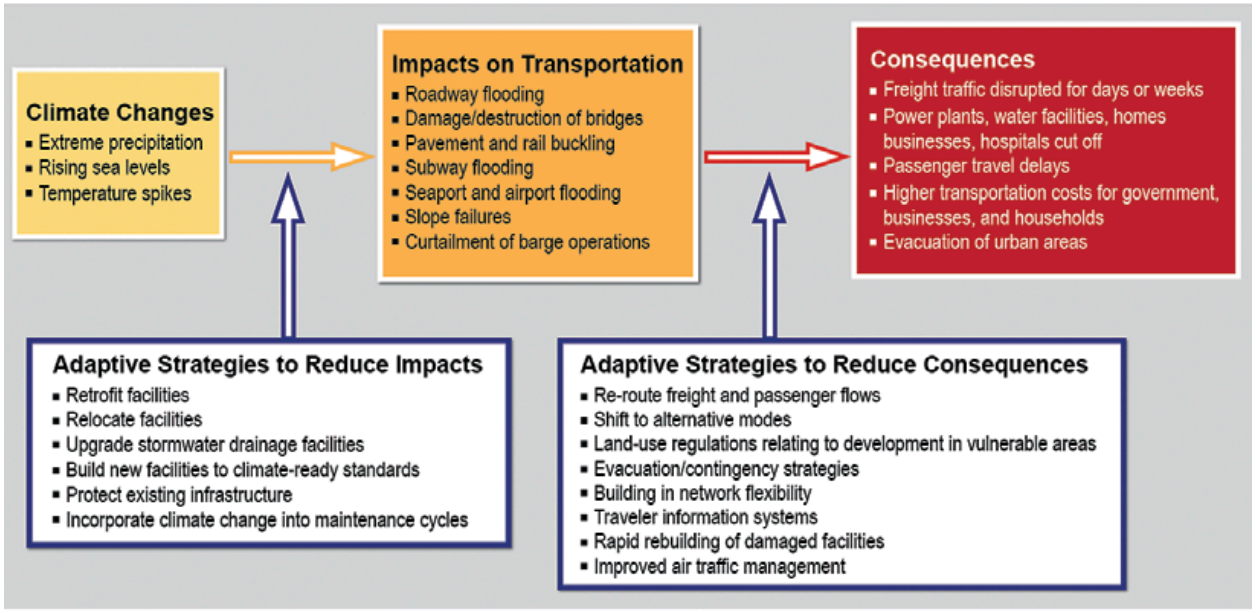
- Increasing the use of renewable energy and access to alternative fuels.
- Providing options for active transportation.
- Designing energy-efficient buildings and resilient infrastructure.
- .Protecting and enhancing natural systems and water resources.
- Maximizing co-benefits of ecosystem services and green infrastructure solutions.
- Purchasing climate-friendly products.
- Educating the public on socioeconomic and public health impacts of climate change.

Adaptation Strategies

The risks posed by climate change include rising sea levels and storm surges, heat stress, extreme precipitation, inland and coastal flooding, drought, increased aridity, water scarcity, and air pollution, all of which will have negative impacts on individual's health, livelihoods, and assets, as well as the community's economy and ecosystems. Adaptation strategies are essential to reducing vulnerability to both the likely everyday, as well as the more extreme or dangerous, outcomes of climate change.

The following flowchart depicts the multiple impacts of climate change on Transportation, the consequences of those impacts, and some adaptation strategies that can be employed (both to reduce impacts and to reduce consequences):

Role of Adaptive Strategies and Tactics in Reducing Impacts and Consequences



The area where adaptation policies can most directly be impacted by Comprehensive Planning is the general area of land use. This is especially the case when contemplating future growth areas. Preventing future development from occurring in vulnerable locations, such as along waterways, in floodplains, or non-tidal wetlands, is an easy proactive approach to climate change adaptation. It is coincidentally consistent with the essence of this Plan. This is important because as the previously referenced PAS Report notes, comprehensive land use planning that anticipates likely climate impacts can accomplish the following community-wide goals:

- Encouraging coordinated transportation and housing investments, so that people can afford to live in safe conditions with transportation choice in case of emergency.
- Promoting green infrastructure and sound watershed management, which can reduce stormwater runoff, mitigate the urban heat island effect, and improve public health.

- Rehabilitating wetland riparian or estuarine habitats that provide natural ecosystem services, such as flood protection.
- Reducing the long-term cost of development by building in areas that are less vulnerable to climate impacts and costs.

Impacts can also be made at the individual building level. For example, increased frequency and severity of heat waves pose additional risks for occupants of homes without cooling methods. Very young children, the elderly (who represent a high percentage of Easton's population), and those with infirmities are most susceptible to heat strokes and other health risks associated with extreme heat. High-performance green buildings can have both mitigation and adaptation co-benefits. Adaptation practices are ideally implemented at the time of construction, but mitigation to existing buildings can occur in the form of retrofitting existing homes and buildings with additions such as green roofs or sun shading, water storage space, and smart ventilation.

Finally, it is important to note that although there are specific actions, as outlined above, that a community may pursue in the realm of climate adaptation, monitoring and evaluation of adaptation policies and actions can be challenging for a number of reasons. The Planning for Climate Mitigation and Adaptation PAS Report, lists the following cautions with regards to monitoring adaptation:

MEASURING ADAPTATION

Monitoring and evaluating adaptation can be challenging for the following reasons (CAP and ICLEI 2015):

- **Adaptation is not an objective or an endpoint.** Adaptation is a process of continual adjustment, and there is no clear measure or benchmark that signals that an adaptation measure is "successful." Often adaptation evaluation relies on proxy measures that relate to the achievement of broader societal and environmental aims.
- **Uncertainty is inherent in virtually all monitoring and evaluation processes.** With many climate trends not yet clear, planners need to plan for a range of possible scenarios. For example, uncertainty regarding the rate and extent of sea level rise is critical to adaptation planners in coastal areas, but equally uncertain are issues of population growth and aging infrastructure.
- **Adaptation is evaluated by measuring avoided impacts.** Adaptation efforts are designed to reduce adverse impacts of climate change. In the absence of that impact taking place, it can be challenging to measure how much worse the situation would have been without the intervention.
- **Evaluating adaptation entails tracking towards a "moving target."** In monitoring climate change, natural and socioecological systems undergo continuous change over time and so the use of a fixed baseline may lose some validity. With this consistent variability, baseline data may not always provide a solid reference point.
- **Adaptation requires long time horizons.** Because adaptation activities tend to have long time frames and unclear endpoints that are liable to change over time, it can be difficult to measure them within traditional five-year government planning cycles or political mandates.
- **Adaptation spans multiple scales and sectors.** Adaptation encompasses diverse programming strategies, populations, and locales. While it is predominantly a local process, progress towards it is often examined at much higher levels, and often at a sector scale. It can be very difficult to compare or aggregate results in an effective way because of the eclectic range of sectors, the varying availability of data, and different site contexts.
- **There is no one set of indicators or monitoring and evaluation approaches.** As adaptation is a process rather than an outcome, individual indicators for climate adaptation may not necessarily exist as "good" climate adaptation indicators. In addition, as adaptation cuts across contexts, scales, and sectors, no universal set of indicators will fit these divergent contexts.
- **Assessing the effectiveness and adequacy of adaptation is both complex and challenging.** It demands a practical, replicable approach that provides meaningful, quantifiable information. Recognizing that building resilience is a moving goal in a changing climate, measuring adaptation effectiveness should also be flexible and adaptable to a wide range of contexts and be able to catalyze learning at a variety of spatial and temporal scales (Craft and Fisher 2016).

A Sustainable Built Environment

The aspect of sustainability that is most directly relevant to a Comprehensive Plan, and which permeates throughout this Plan, is that of the built environment. This includes planning-related areas such as encouraging more energy efficient buildings, to fundamental principles of land use planning such as prescribing a future development pattern that is more sustainable than that which has occurred in the last half-century or so.

With regards to future development patterns, the measure of success will overwhelmingly come from what happens in our Future Growth Area. Certainly accommodating more growth in the form of Infill and Redevelopment of the existing Town boundaries will help achieve this goal, but given the nature of this type of development, the stage has essentially already been set. Infill/Redevelopment will be more sustainable in that such development is generally more

accommodating of active modes of transportation and is closer to the shopping and services that residents need, thus facilitating such active transportation. However, barring a fundamental (and very large) change in the scope and nature of density of development in the vicinity of Downtown, and despite strong public support for focusing future growth on this aspect, there is a limit to how much can be accommodated in this manner. Eventually, and likely sooner rather than later, the overwhelming majority of growth will occur in what are now "greenfields" in our Future Growth Area. Thus, improving the sustainability of the development of these areas will largely dictate Easton's overall success (or lack thereof) in improving the sustainability of the Town as a whole.

The elements that will lead to a more sustainable form of development in the future are covered throughout this Plan, so they will not be discussed in detail here. In particular the Implementation Chapter will devote a great amount of detail discussing recommended options for achieving this goal. For the purposes of this chapter, simply listing the options to improve the sustainability of future greenfield development will suffice, and they include:

- Permitting/encouraging/requiring mixed-use development.
- Facilitating residential development at a higher density and with a wider variety of housing options.
- Maximizing connectivity to other future development.
- Providing, where possible, connectivity to existing development.
- Facilitating and accommodating active modes of transportation.

Environmental Protection

Similar to the preceding discussion on the built environment, sustainability issues related to environmental protection are covered elsewhere in this Plan. In this instance, the Sensitive Areas Chapter addresses this topic. In short, the point is that while Easton is indeed the primary growth area for Talbot County, and arguably the Mid and Upper Eastern Shore, that does not translate into the development of every square inch of land within our jurisdiction. There are vital environmental features that are important to preserve and protect for a myriad of reasons, including enhancing the sustainability of the Town.

One example of this is the area of stormwater management. Protecting the non-tidal wetlands within Town is a more sustainable option than filling them in and constructing ponds, swales, bioretention areas and the like, to perform the functions that those natural wetlands would provide (and would do so without the cost to construct the facilities or to maintain them).

Renewable Energy

The energy supplier to the vast majority of Easton properties is the Easton Utilities Commission (EUC). Broadly speaking, EUC is pursuing a number of sustainable goals and objectives. Notably, this includes their "Sustainability Campus." Of note to the topic of renewable energy, the EUC Sustainability Campus includes a solar array, described by EUC as:

> Perhaps the biggest effort to offset greenhouse gas emissions was the installation of the 2MW solar field at Easton's Sustainability Campus located adjacent to the wastewater treatment facility. The array generates more than enough electricity to power the entire treatment plant. On average, 20% of the electricity generated by the panels is fed back onto the local electric grid. Commissioned in 2017, the nearly 10-acre site was constructed for a total of $4 million. Through a grant by Maryland Department of the Environment, 75% of the construction costs were covered, making Easton Utilities' total investment $1 million. This partnership allowed the project to be both cost and environmentally effective, benefiting the community by avoiding almost 1,672 metric tons of CO_2e emissions per year.

The Town should continue to support EUC's sustainability and renewable energy initiatives. Beyond that, we can and should explore options for additional solar

arrays. In the context of a growing town like Easton, this can be a challenge since arrays can consume large amounts of land. However, there may be opportunities to co-locate panels on the roofs of large buildings or in large surface parking lots.

Food Security

The UN Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) describes a sustainable food system as "a food system that delivers food security and nutrition for all in such a way that the economic, social and environmental bases to generate food security and nutrition for future generations are not compromised. This means that:

- It is profitable throughout (economic sustainability);
- It has broad-based benefits for society (social sustainability); and
- It has a positive or neutral impact on the natural environment (environmental sustainability)."

As a growing and vibrant Town, there is little actual agricultural activity occurring within the corporate limits of Easton. However, land that is annexed into Town is often agricultural and sometimes remains as such for several years. There is certainly nothing wrong with this practice of allowing farming as essentially a temporary or interim use until landowner/developer motivation and/or market forces dictate that it is time for the property to develop. Furthermore, the Town envisions the Talbot County side of our Growth Boundary to consist of farms and forests and supports their efforts to permanently preserve these areas.

On a smaller scale, within the Town limits sustainable food systems can be supported through gardens. These can be located on private property for the use and

enjoyment of the resident of the property, or in the form of a community garden. One such community garden exists in the East End Neighborhood of Easton, just outside of Downtown (see picture below). This option is especially appropriate in the more densely developed sections of Town where land may be too scarce for individual private gardens.

Another area where the Town can support Sustainable Food Systems is our longstanding and popular Farmer's Market. This should continue to be supported. Opportunities may even exist to expand the vendor capacity of this market, or to relocate

and/or improve the existing site such that it could be open more frequently and possibly year-round.

SUSTAINABILITY GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

GOAL: To create a more livable, sustainable, and equitable built environment.

OBJECTIVES:

- ✓ Enact Land Use Laws which prioritize or incentivize compact, mixed-use development accessible to a wide range of household incomes..
- ✓ Establish a robust active transportation system by requiring it to be built in new developments and retrofitting existing streets to include facilities for pedestrians and cyclists.
- ✓ Work with public transportation agencies to support and augment appropriate forms of public transit into/out of and within Easton.
- ✓ Explore options to expand the electric vehicle charging infrastructure in Easton, including requiring new development to provide such infrastructure.

GOAL: To reduce the vulnerability of current and future Eastonians to the impacts of climate change.

OBJECTIVES:

- ✓ Restrict development in areas most susceptible to the effects of climate change..

- ✓ Continue to pursue watershed restoration projects.
- ✓ Promote the further establishment of a vibrant green infrastructure system.
- ✓ Evaluate the Open Space/Park requirements of the Zoning Code and Subdivision Regulations to determine whether they are at the appropriate levels to achieve Sustainability goals and objectives.
- ✓ Increase Easton's tree canopy coverage to mitigate the effects of increased heat.

GOAL: To reduce the vulnerability of existing buildings and their occupants to the effects of climate change.

OBJECTIVES:

- ✓ Identify the buildings and structures most at risk to climate change impacts and offer assistance to install retrofit measures to reduce the vulnerability of these structures (through, for example, grants or low-interest loans funded by a future grant).
- ✓ Relocate, where feasible, infrastructure located within areas likely to be impacted by climate change.
- ✓ Explore the feasibility and implications of requiring that new construction meet LEED certification (or the equivalent) standards.

GOAL: To establish and maintain a sustainable food system for Easton's residents.

OBJECTIVES:

- ✓ Support the agricultural use of vacant land within the Town's boundaries as well as our Future Growth Area.

✓ Support Talbot County's Agricultural Preservation efforts in general, and specifically to preserve farmland adjacent to the outside (i.e., County side) of our Growth Boundary.

✓ Explore options to expand the capacity of the Easton Farmers Market as well as opportunities to make it more accessible and open more hours per week and weeks per year.

✓ Look for opportunities to establish more community gardens.

GOAL: To increase renewable energy supply in Easton.

OBJECTIVES:

✓ Support efforts of Easton Utilities to build upon the success of their Sustainability Campus.

✓ Explore options for contextually-appropropriate solar arrays to be established in Easton.