

SOMERSET COUNTY, MARYLAND LAND PRESERVATION, PARKS AND RECREATION PLAN JUNE 2022



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Board of County Commissioners

Craig N. Mathies Sr. – President

Charles Laird – Vice-President

Randy Laird

Rex Simpkins

Eldon Willing

Recreation and Parks Commission

Charles Laird – County Commissioner Liaison

Jim Webster

Dale Turpin

Marshall Beacoat

Mike Miller

John Dize

*Seat not filled

Robey French

Planning Commission

Kathleen Garton, Chairman

Jeremy Mason, Vice Chair

Janet McIntyre

Skip Colborn

Steve Raab

Laverne Stewart

Matt Webster

Department of Recreation, Parks & Tourism

Department of Technical and Community Services

Gregory C. Sterling, Director

Mary Phillips, Interim Director

CONTENTS

Chapter 1: Introduction.....	1
Purpose of the Plan.....	1
Local Agency Prep of the Plan.....	2
LPPRP’s Relationship to Comprehensive Planning Process.....	2
Chapter 2: Framework.....	3
Physical Characteristics.....	3
Natural Resources.....	5
Demographic Characteristics.....	11
Comprehensive Plan Framework.....	13
Implications for Land Preservation & Recreation.....	15
Chapter 3: Recreation, Parks, and Open Space.....	17
Introduction.....	17
Recreation & Parks.....	17
Programs & Procedures.....	24
Needs Analysis & Priorities.....	28
State and Federal Land.....	33
Rehabilitation.....	53
Chapter 4: Agricultural & Natural Resource Lands.....	63
Preserved Agricultural Land.....	70



TABLES

Table 2:1	Land Cover.....	4
Table 2:2	Major Watersheds & Sub-Watersheds.....	8
Table 2:3	County & Town Population 2010 & 2020.....	11
Table 2:4	County Population by Race.....	11
Table 2:5	Population Trends & Projections 2010 – 2025.....	13
Table 2:6	Population Projections by Age 2010 – 2025.....	13
Table 3:1	Fiscal Year 2022 Expenditure.....	27
Table 3:2	Program Open Space Apportionments 2017 – 2022.....	28
Table 3:3	Acreage of Recreation & Resource Land by Owner.....	30
Table 3:4	Recreation Facilities Summary Needs Report.....	41
Table 3:5	Land Acquisition, Facility Development & Recommendations.....	55
Table 3:6	Goals Met by Acquisition & Development Recommendations.....	58
Table 4:1	Selected Agricultural Statistics 2007 & 2002.....	64
Table 4:2	Protected Agricultural Land.....	70
Table 4:3	Lots Filed for Creation by Subdivision.....	74

FIGURES

Figure 2:1	Land Use.....	4
Figure 2:2	Chesapeake Bay Critical Areas & Wetlands.....	7
Figure 2:3	Streams & Wetlands.....	8
Figure 2:4	Population Graph: Median Age.....	12
Figure 2:5	Population Graph: Median Household Income.....	12
Figure 2:6	Primary and Secondary Growth Nodes.....	16
Figure 3:1	Recreation Department Staff Chart.....	26
Figure 3:2	Parks, Recreation & Natural Resource Areas.....	31
Figure 3:3	Public Boat Ramps.....	36
Figure 3:4	Proximity Analysis.....	39
Figure 3:5	Proximity Map: Fishing.....	43
Figure 3:6	Proximity Map to All Trail Types.....	44
Figure 3:7	Princess Anne Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan.....	49
Figure 3:8	Planned 413 Bike Rail Trail.....	50
Figure 3:9	Bike Route Eastern & Western Somerset County.....	50
Figure 3:10	Proposed Indoor Recreation Complex.....	52
Figure 3:11	Ewell Pocket Park, Smith Island.....	57
Figure 4:1	2017 Census of Agricultural.....	66
Figure 4:2	Agricultural Preservation.....	72
Figure 4:3	Agricultural Preservation Focus Area from 2005 LPPRP.....	75
Figure 4:4	Dividing Creek Rural Legacy Area.....	77
Figure 4:5	Protected Lands Acres Category.....	82
Figure 4:6	Protected Natural Resource Land.....	83
Figure 4:7	Green Print.....	84
Figure 4:8	Floodplain Map: Base Flood Elevation 2015.....	90
Figure 4:9	Floodplain Map: 2015.....	91

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the purpose and context for preparing Somerset County's 2022 Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan (LPPRP), its objectives and legal framework.

PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

Location

The state of Maryland requires that counties update their Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan¹ every 5 years. The LPPRP must be adopted by the County and submitted to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) by July 1, 2022, at least 18 months prior to completion of the statewide Maryland Land Preservation and Recreation Plan in 2023. The LPPRPs qualify local governments for State Program Open Space (POS) grants and other programs related to the plan's objectives for three land resource elements²:

- Recreation and parks
- Agriculture land preservation
- Natural resource land conservation

The purposes of the statewide and local LPPRPs have changed over the years due to evolving priorities at the state level. This 2022 LPPRP has been developed in accordance with guidelines developed in 2020 by the Maryland Departments of Planning and Natural Resources. Past LPPRPs have had a strong emphasis on agricultural land preservation and natural resource land conservation. This LPPRP describes progress in these areas since the 2017 LPPRP. However, based on the LPPRP guidelines, the emphasis in this LPPRP is on recreation, and discussion and policies related to agricultural land preservation and natural resource conservation programs are set forth in the Somerset County Comprehensive Plan.

To achieve this purpose, this LPPRP:

Identifies needs and priorities of current and future County residents and visitors for parks and recreation through the 2022 to 2027 period and beyond.

¹ Program Open Space: §5-905 of the Natural Resources Article, Maryland Annotated Code.

² Program Open Space is a MD DNR program that is financed through a dedicated revenue stream: the ½ percent real estate transfer tax that is levied on each property sale in the State.

Addresses the recommendations for parks and recreation made in the 2019-2021 State LPPRP.

Describes progress in parks and recreation, agricultural land preservation and natural resource land conservation since the 2017 LPPRP.

Evaluates State and County land preservation goals and objectives for the three land resource elements and identifies where they are the same, complementary or different.

Local Agency Preparation of the Plan

Somerset County government is responsible for the preparation of the LPPRP. The effort was led by the Somerset County Department of Recreation and Parks, which took the lead on parks and recreation (Chapter III), and the Somerset County Department of Technical and Community Services which took the lead on agricultural land preservation and natural resources land conservation (Chapter IV). In addition, the following agencies and organizations contributed to preparation of the plan:

- Somerset County Planning and Zoning Commission;
- Somerset County Recreation and Parks Commission;
- Somerset County Public Schools;
- Town of Princess Anne
- City of Crisfield.

The Plan's Relationship to the Comprehensive Planning Process

This LPPRP is one of a series of companion plans, regulations, and guidance documents that form the County's planning program. The 1996 Somerset County Comprehensive Plan (as amended) is the primary planning document for guiding growth and land preservation. The Plan has been amended several times since adoption including:

- May 1998 - Amendment to add historic sites to Sec. 12.1 and Rural Villages to Sec. 6.1
- March 2002 - Amendment to Land Use Chapter for West Princess Anne
- March 2010 - Amendment to add Water Resources Element to the Plan
- July 2017 – Amendment to add Growth Tiers to the Plan

Somerset County is required by State Planning to have a do a complete update to the Plan in the 2021-2023 time frame.

In 2002 to designate the West Princess Anne Growth Area in recognition of available community sewer systems and to recognize, by reference, the Lower Eastern Shore Certified Heritage Area.

In 2005 to incorporate the 2005 Land Preservation and Recreation Plan

In 2010 to incorporate a Water Resources Element (chapter).

This LPPRP has been prepared to be consistent with pertinent Comprehensive Plan policies, goals and objectives. Following State approval of the LPPRP, anticipated to occur in the Summer or Fall of 2022, it will replace the 2017 LPPRP and become one of a number of functional plans that help implement the Comprehensive Plan.

CHAPTER 2: FRAMEWORK

Physical Characteristics

Location

Somerset County is the southernmost county on Maryland's Eastern Shore, lying along the Chesapeake Bay side of the Eastern Shore peninsula. The Wicomico River forms the County's northern boundary. Dividing Creek and the Pocomoke River and Sound form the eastern and southern boundary. Tangier Sound and the Chesapeake Bay are to the west.

The County's geography is defined by peninsulas that extend into the Bay, separated by several meandering rivers: the Wicomico, the Manokin, the Pocomoke and the Annemessex. The County also includes South Marsh Island, Smith Island and Janes Island. Smith Island is the only inhabited island and has settlements at Ewell, Rhodes Point and Tylerton.

Land Cover

Table 2:1 summarizes trends in land use/ land cover and development from 1997 to 2010 (see also Figure 2:1). The County contains approximately 207,000 acres or 322 square miles of land area. In 2010 resource lands accounted for approximately 91 percent of the County's land, a decline of approximately 6,600 acres compared to 1997. Over 82,800 acres or 40 percent of land cover is forest, down from 42 percent in 1997. Since 1997, agricultural land has decreased by four percent or nearly 2,200 acres. Developed land increased by 6,800 acres or 57 percent since 1997. This large increase is partially explained by land converted to development but is also a recognition of earlier, existing development, that is now being recognized through the newly introduced classification of a very low-density residential development category in the 2010 and revised 2002 land use data. This has not been updated since 2010

Table 2:1 - Somerset County Land Use Land Cover

	1997		2002		2010		1997-2010 Change	
	Acres	Percent	Acres	Percent	Acres	Percent	Acres	Percent
Resource Lands	194,825	94.2%	189,965	91.8%	188,215	90.9%	-6,610	-3.4%
<i>Agriculture</i>	51,843	25.1%	50,690	24.5%	49,693	24.0%	-2,150	-4.1%
<i>Forest</i>	87,101	42.1%	83,532	40.4%	82,822	40.0%	-4,279	-4.9%
<i>Extractive/barren</i>	136	0.1%	138	0.1%	128	0.1%	-8	-5.9%
<i>Wetland</i>	55,745	27.0%	55,605	26.9%	55,572	26.8%	-173	-0.3%
Development Lands	11,979	5.8%	17,023	8.2%	18,774	9.1%	6,795	56.7%
<i>Residential</i>	9,567	4.6%	14,355	6.9%	15,865	7.7%	6,298	65.8%
<i>Non-residential</i>	2,412	1.2%	2,668	1.3%	2,909	1.4%	497	20.6%
Total Land Area	206,804	100.0%	206,988	100%	206,989	100%	185	0.1%

Note: The Maryland Department of Planning has slightly varied methodology in estimating acreage in the three reporting periods resulting in slight variations in total land area acreage. 2002 and 2010 include two new categories: very low-density residential development and transportation.
 Source: 1997 data from Maryland's Changing Land: Past, Present and Future, December 2001; 2002 and 2010 data from the 2010 Land Use/Land Cover update, both published by the Maryland Department of Planning.

Figure II-1: 2010 Land Use

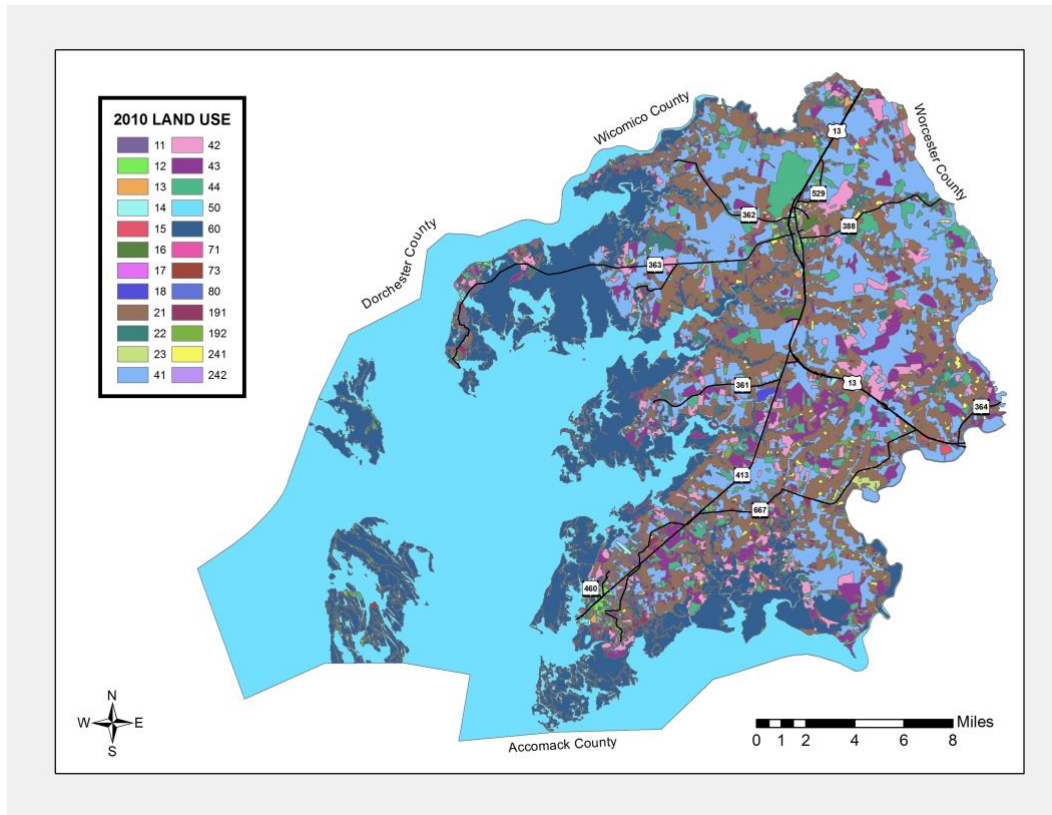


Figure 2:1 - Key

Urban Land Uses

11	Low-density residential	42	Evergreen Forest
12	Medium-density residential	43	Mixed Forest
13	High-density residential	44	Brush Water
14	Commercial	50	Water Wetlands
15	Industrial	60	Wetlands – Barren Land
16	Institutional	71	Beaches
17	Extractive	73	Bare grounds
18	Open Urban Land	80	Transportation
21	Cropland	191	Large lot subdivision (agriculture)
22	Pasture	192	Large lot subdivision (forest-ag)
23	Orchards/Vineyards	241	Feeding Operations
41	Deciduous Forest	242	Agriculture Facilities

Natural Resources

Somerset County forms a flat and low-lying coastal plain with a generally high-water table. Environmentally sensitive areas occur throughout the County but are predominant in the western peninsula necks and in the southern portions along the Pocomoke Sound where tidal wetlands define the landscape. Wetlands and the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area are shown on Figure II-2. Most of the tidal wetlands are in the CO (Conservation Overlay) zoning district where development is very limited and is restricted to a five-acre minimum lot size.

The following provides an overview of the County's natural resources:

A. Shorelines and Watersheds

Somerset County has approximately 620 miles of shoreline and is in two major watersheds. The Pocomoke watershed contains six sub-watersheds and drains to Pocomoke Sound to the south. The Nanticoke watershed has three sub-watersheds and drains to Tangier Sound on the west. Streams and watersheds are listed in Table 2:2 and shown on Figure 2:3.

Maryland's Clean Water Action Plan³ evaluated the County's nine sub-watersheds for their ability to achieve water quality and other natural resource goals by assigning water quality category classifications. Somerset County's watersheds were classified as follows:

Category 1 Priority (Restoration) Watersheds - Monie Bay and Pocomoke Sound watersheds did not meet at least half of their clean water or natural resource goals and were in need of some restoration⁴.

Category 2 Priority (Preventive Action) Watersheds - Wicomico Creek and Tangier Sound watersheds met all or all but one clean water or natural resource goals, meaning preventive actions were needed to sustain water quality and aquatic life.

Category 3 Priority (Protection) Watersheds - The Lower Wicomico River, Lower Pocomoke River, Dividing Creek and Manokin River met two or more indicators of high quality or pristine conditions and were designated for protective actions. The Big Annemessex River Watershed was both a Category 1 and Category 3 watershed. In 1996, the County adopted a non-tidal wetlands plan for the Big Annemessex River watershed to serve as the basis for non-tidal wetland permitting in growth areas of the watershed.

³ Final 1998 Report on Unified Watershed Assessment, Watershed Prioritization and Plans for Restoration Action Strategies, MD DNR.

⁴ Monie Bay was erroneously listed in 1998 as failing to meet bacteria level goals and was de-listed in 2004 to indicate it meets bacterial levels. It had a Category Six designation in 2005 indicating that it was no longer impaired by bacteria.

Figure 2:2 - Chesapeake Bay Critical Areas and Wetlands

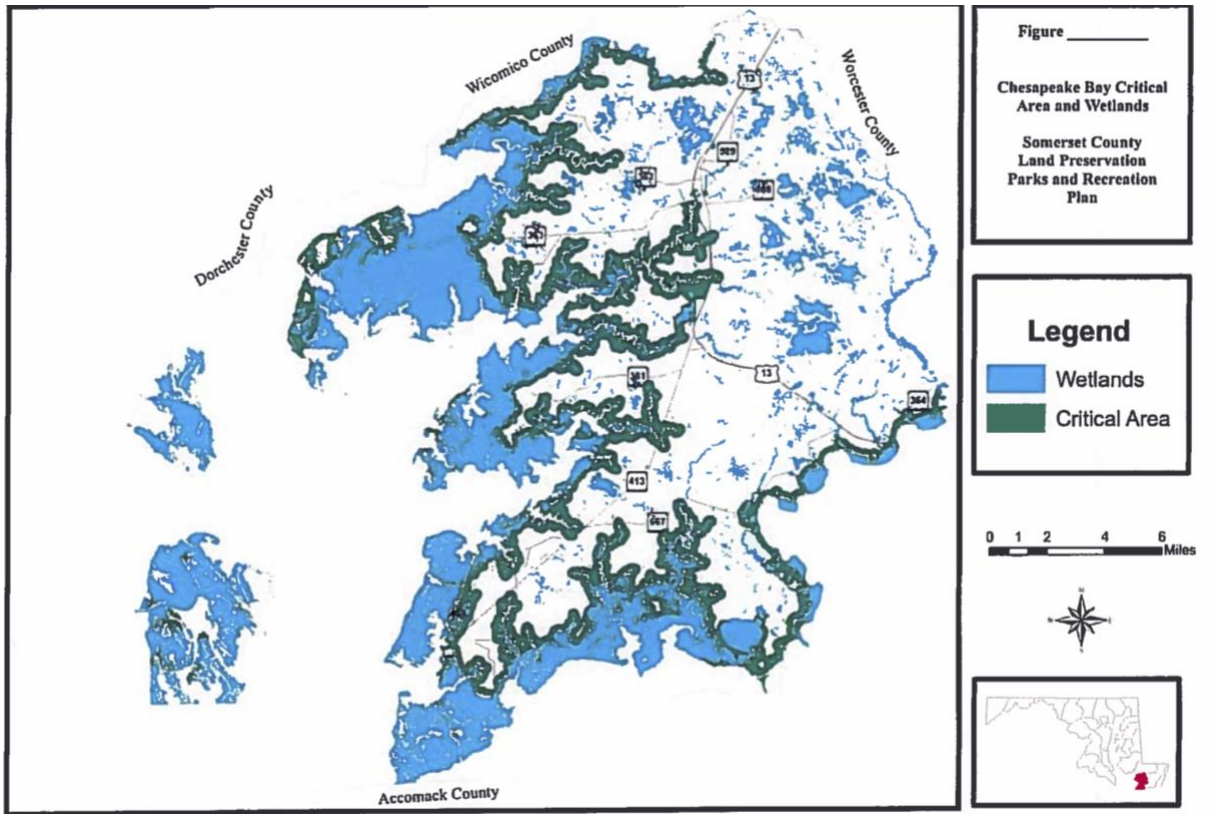


Figure 2:3 - Somerset County Streams and Watersheds

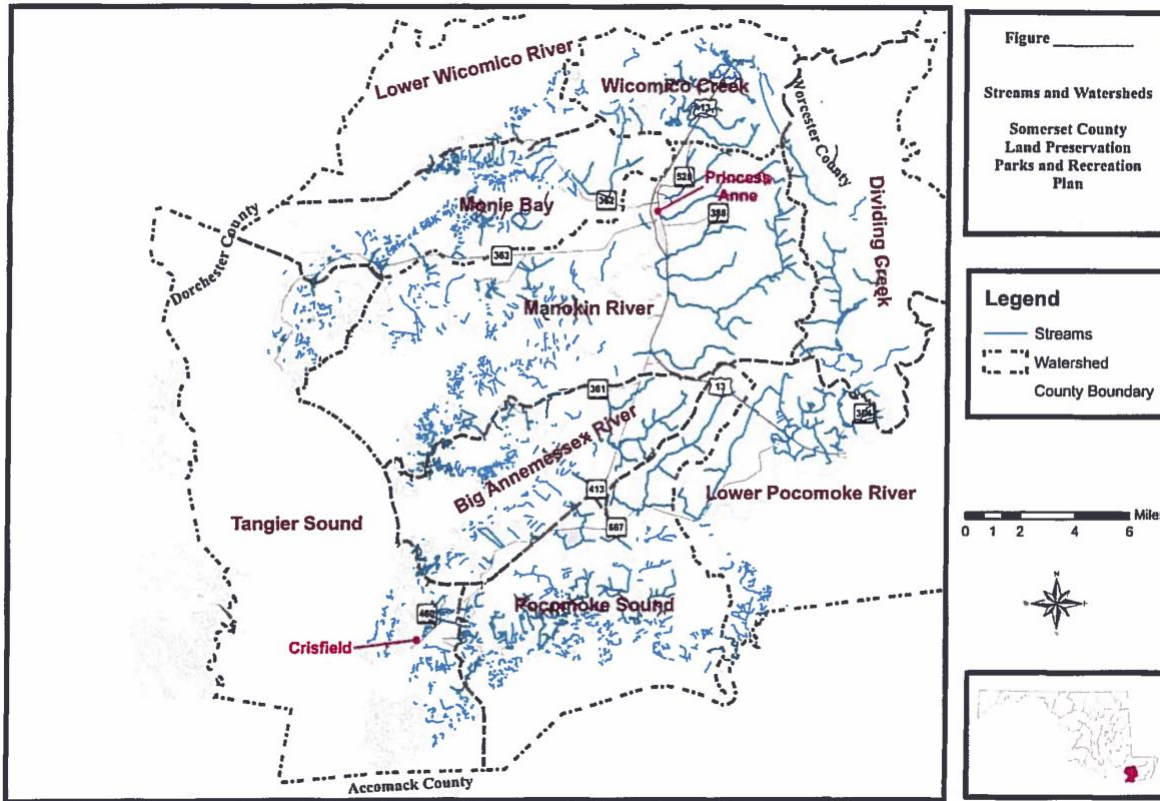


Table 2:2 - Somerset County Major Watersheds and Sub-watersheds

Number	Watershed	Acres
	Pocomoke Watershed	269,712
2130201	Pocomoke Sound*	34,246
2130202	Lower Pocomoke River	98,891
2130204	Dividing Creek	39,700
2130206	Tangier Sound	15,316
2130207	Big Annemessex River*	22,113
2130208	Manokin River*	59,446
	Nanticoke Watershed	113,498
2130301	Lower Wicomico River	72,514
2130302	Monie Bay*	21,468
2130303	Wicomico Creek	19,516

Note: The Pocomoke and Nanticoke watersheds also drain portions of Wicomico and Worcester Counties. An (*) indicates sub-watersheds entirely within Somerset County.

B. Streams

The County's coastal plain is drained by several streams and rivers. The 17-mile-long portion of the Pocomoke River and the 14-mile-long portion of the Wicomico River, that form the County's east and west boundaries, respectively, are entirely tidal. The 16-mile long Manokin River is tidal up to the Town of Princess Anne. The Annemessex River is eight miles long.

C. Chesapeake Bay Critical Area

The Critical Area is a designated conservation area that provides resource protection for the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries, while allowing environmentally sensitive development in shoreline areas (Figure 2:2). The Critical Area includes the Chesapeake Bay, its tributaries to the head of tide, tidal wetlands, plus all land and water areas within

1,000 feet beyond the landward boundary of these lands or waters. The County's designated Critical Area (uplands portion) encompasses approximately 42,600 acres or about 21 percent of the County's land area⁵. Within the Critical Area are three categories of land use: "Intensely Developed Areas", "Limited Development Areas" and "Resource Conservation Areas", each with its own density limits and environmental protection requirements.

D. Floodplains

Large portions of western Somerset County lie within the 100-year floodplain. Most floodplains are tidal, except for small areas of riverine floodplain above the head of tide. All floodplains are mapped by the County on 1" =600' scale maps. As a result of Superstorm Sandy 2012 the floodplain has been recalculated.

<http://www.somersetmd.us/maps/PrelimFloodMap.pdf>

E. Wetlands and Hydric Soils

Wetlands provide valuable functions including habitat, flood control, sediment trapping, nutrient reduction, groundwater discharge and fish spawning areas. They also provide recreational, scientific and educational opportunities. The National Wetlands Inventory

⁵ Critical Area acreage is from 2004 MD DNR Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Commission inventory data.

identifies nearly 82,700 acres of tidal and non-tidal wetlands, accounting for approximately 40 percent of the County's land area⁶. These areas are shown on Figure II-2.

F. Groundwater Management Areas

The County has designated Groundwater Management Areas to restrict use of private septic systems in areas of wet soil conditions. Approximately 30,000 acres are in *Management Area A* (north and east of Princess Anne and in the vicinity of Westover and Pocomoke City) where soils are extremely permeable down to the underlying aquifer and minimum two-acre septic fields and treatment zones are required. Just over 36,000 acres are in *Management Area B* (surrounding Princess Anne to the west and extending throughout the eastern portions of the County) where soil borings and specially designed septic systems are required as a condition of development approval.

G. Forest Cover

Approximately 82,800 acres or 40 percent of the County were forested as of 2010 (Table II-1). Much of this resource has commercial value for loblolly pine, oak, and hickory. Forested areas occur throughout the County, with larger concentrations in the northern part of the County, areas east and north of US 13, and east of MD 413 (Figure 2:1).

H. Topography, Steep Slopes

Only ten percent of Somerset County is more than 20 feet above sea level. Steep slopes (defined as over 15 percent) are very limited comprising approximately 200 acres of Sandy Loam soils primarily along streams within the Critical Area. Slopes between 10 and 15 percent cover approximately 160 acres.

I. Natural Heritage Areas

Natural Heritage Areas are specially designated plant and animal habits considered to be among the best examples in the State. Irish Grove (NHA-28), located along the north side of Pocomoke Sound, is a pristine marsh ecosystem within the Critical Area that contains six ecological communities and provides habitat for approximately 80 species of birds in winter. Hickory Point (NHA-29) is a wooded bald cypress swamp within the Pocomoke River Critical Area and is located in both Somerset and Worcester Counties. It is an isolated extension of the original Great Dismal Swamp ecosystem. It provides habitat for forest interior dwelling birds and other non-game and game wildlife. The County maintains

⁶ The National Wetlands Inventory acreage represented on Figure II-2 shows both tidal and non-tidal wetlands. This acreage differs from that shown in Table II-1 and in Figure II-1, because of differences in wetland identification methodology.

overlay maps of these areas and works with the Maryland Wildlife and Heritage Program to review plans that may impact Rare, Threatened and Endangered Species (RTES).

Demographic Characteristics

The 2020 Census reported a county population of 24,620, including 2,631 inmates in the Eastern Correctional Institution (ECI). Table 2:3 shows County and municipal population changes from 2010 to 2020. The total County population declined by approximately 1,850 people, or seven percent between 2010 and 2020. The population in the unincorporated areas of the County increased by less than four percent in the same time period. The Town of Princess Anne increased its population by 42 percent while the City of Crisfield had a nominal increase of three people.

Table 2:3 - Somerset County and Town Population 2010 and 2020 per 2020 Census

Location	2020		2010		Change 2010-2020	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total County	24,620	100%	26,470	100%	1,850	7%
Princess Anne	3,446	14%	3,290	12%	156	4.5%
Crisfield	2,475	10%	2,726	10%	251	9%
Total Towns	5,921	24%	6,016	23%	95	1.5%
Unincorporated Area	18,699	76%	20,454	77%	1,755	8.5%

Note: ECI population was 3,329 in 2010 and 2,631 in 2020.
Source: 2020 Census

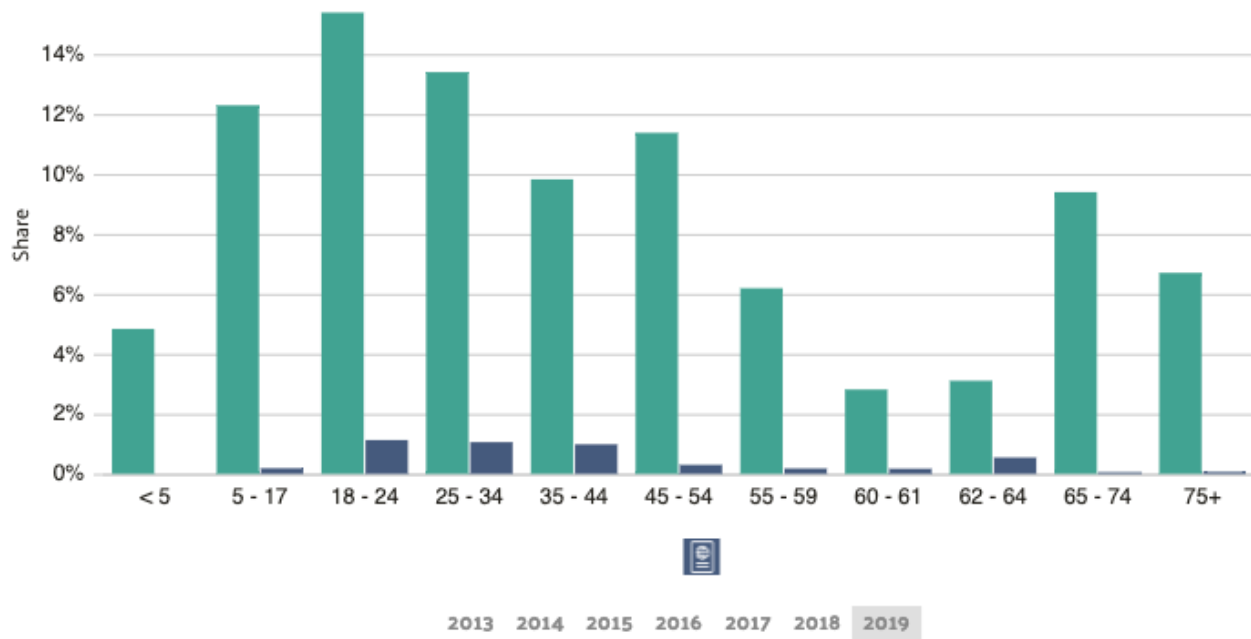
Table 2:4 - Somerset County Population by Race

Race	Population	% of Total
Total Population	24,620	100%
White	13,344	54.2%
Black or African American	10,217	41.5%
Hispanic or Latino	985	4%
Asian, other	74	<1%

Source: 2020 Census

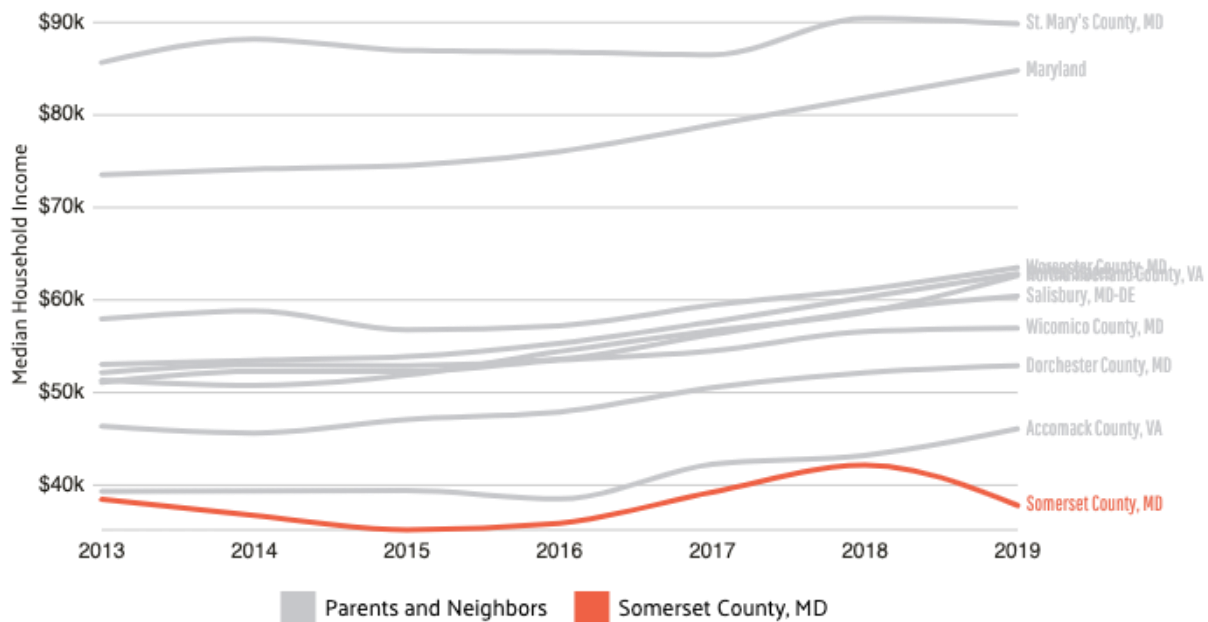
For the purpose of planning for programs it is important to note a growing population outside of the white and African American population. Additionally, it is important to be mindful of the overall accessibility of programming and facilities as it relates to demographics and cultural sensibilities.

Figure 2:4 – Somerset County Population: Median Age



Source: <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/somerset-county-md>

Figure 2:5 – Somerset County Population: Median Household Income



Source: <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/somerset-county-md>

Total County population trends and projections are shown in Table 2:4. Between 2010 and 2025, total County population, excluding ECI, is projected to increase by approximately nine percent or approximately 2,000 people. For the analysis of recreation demand in this LPPRP, the ECI population is not included in the population total because inmates do not create demand for public recreation facilities.

Analysis of rec and park needs for Somerset County take all of the above demographics into consideration and have led to the creation of a scholarship fundraising vehicle, the creation of another central facility to increase access through partnership with the local Health Department to provide free space and programming to.

Table 2:5 – Somerset County Population Trends and Projections 2010 to 2025

	2010	2015	2020	2025	Change 2010-2025	
Total	26,470	27,050	27,800	28,450	1980	7.5%
ECI	3,329	3,300	3,300	3,300		
Total (excluding ECI)	23,141	23,750	24,500	25,150	2,009	8.7%

Note: The Eastern Correctional Institution’s population is estimated at 3,300 between 2015 and 2025.
Source: Maryland Department of Planning projections.

Nearly all of the population increase through 2025 is projected to be in the 65 and over age group. This group is projected to grow by 1,980 people, a 54 percent increase. The share of the population in younger age groups is projected to change only slightly (Table 2:6).

Table 2:6 – Population Projections by Age for Somerset County 2010 to 2025

Age	2010		2025		Change 2010-2025	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
0-19	6,256	24%	6,270	22%	14	0.2%
20-64	16,554	63%	16,550	58%	-4	0.0%
65 and over	3,660	14%	5,640	20%	1,980	54.1%
Total	26,470	100%	28,450	100%	1,990	7.5%

Source: Maryland Department of Planning’s 2010 Demographic and Socio-Economic Outlook. Projections are rounded; therefore, numbers may not add to totals.

Comprehensive Plan Framework

Goals in the County Comprehensive Plan emphasize preserving sensitive natural resources and protecting groundwater and agricultural lands by minimizing sprawl and directing

development to designated primary and secondary growth areas where infrastructure capacity exists or is planned (Figure 2:6).

The land use component of the Comprehensive Plan states that:

“The County’s agricultural base is the backbone of its economy and by far the dominant land-use. The Plan seeks to preserve that base by restricting growth, and particularly unplanned sprawl, from diluting the rural character of the County. Although most of the Plan recommendations concern urbanization, they are in large part directed at concentrating urbanization in areas where it is not destructive of the farm economy”.

The Comprehensive Plan map establishes a land use framework of designated growth areas. These growth areas occur primarily along US 13 where “Mixed-Use Primary Growth Nodes” are located at Eden, Princess Anne, Westover and West Pocomoke, and along MD 413 in Kingston and Hopewell. Residential growth nodes are in Crisfield, Marion, and West Princess Anne. Twelve Rural Villages are designated for in-fill development: Oriole, Deal Island, Wenona, Dames Quarter, Chance, Mt. Vernon, Champ, St. Stephens, Monie, Rhodes Point, Tylerton and Shelltown. Outside of these areas the Comprehensive Plan primarily stresses the importance of agricultural preservation and conservation of natural resources.

The County’s general planning strategy for directing growth, conserving natural resources, protecting agricultural land, and providing supporting park and recreation infrastructure is to:

- 1. Encourage development and growth within the primary growth nodes.**
These areas can be served by water and sewer systems, or are otherwise suitable for growth due to access to main highways or proximity to other amenities. Planned unit developments and higher density residential and mixed-use commercial, employment and recreation uses are encouraged.
- 2. Provide for limited development in designated “Secondary Growth Infill Areas”.**
These are primarily bay front communities that are intended to retain a residential character along with supporting community facilities. These areas are appropriate for development provided all environmental, Critical Area, and septic system criteria are met or a central package treatment system can be provided.
- 3. Preserve and protect rural agricultural and natural resource lands by channeling growth into the primary and secondary growth areas and generally only allowing minor subdivisions in agricultural areas.**
- 4. Protect environmentally sensitive lands through regulatory controls related to floodplains, wetlands, groundwater protection, steep slopes, forests, stream buffers and through watershed protection and restoration strategies.**
These are discussed in more detail in Chapter IV of this LPPRP.
- 5. Provide recreation facilities and open space in areas convenient to the majority of population in designated growth areas.** The Comprehensive Plan

encourages more active recreation facilities in growth areas so that facilities are convenient to residents.

6. **Adhere to the County's zoning districts during the development review process.**

The low-density CO Zone (1 dwelling per 5 acres) is used to manage development in environmentally sensitive areas along the shorelines and in wetland areas. Development in the County's growth areas is guided by a variety of residential and non-residential zoning districts. However, the large majority of the County remains in the AR Zone where minimum lot size is one acre, although lots tend to be larger due to health department requirements for septic systems.

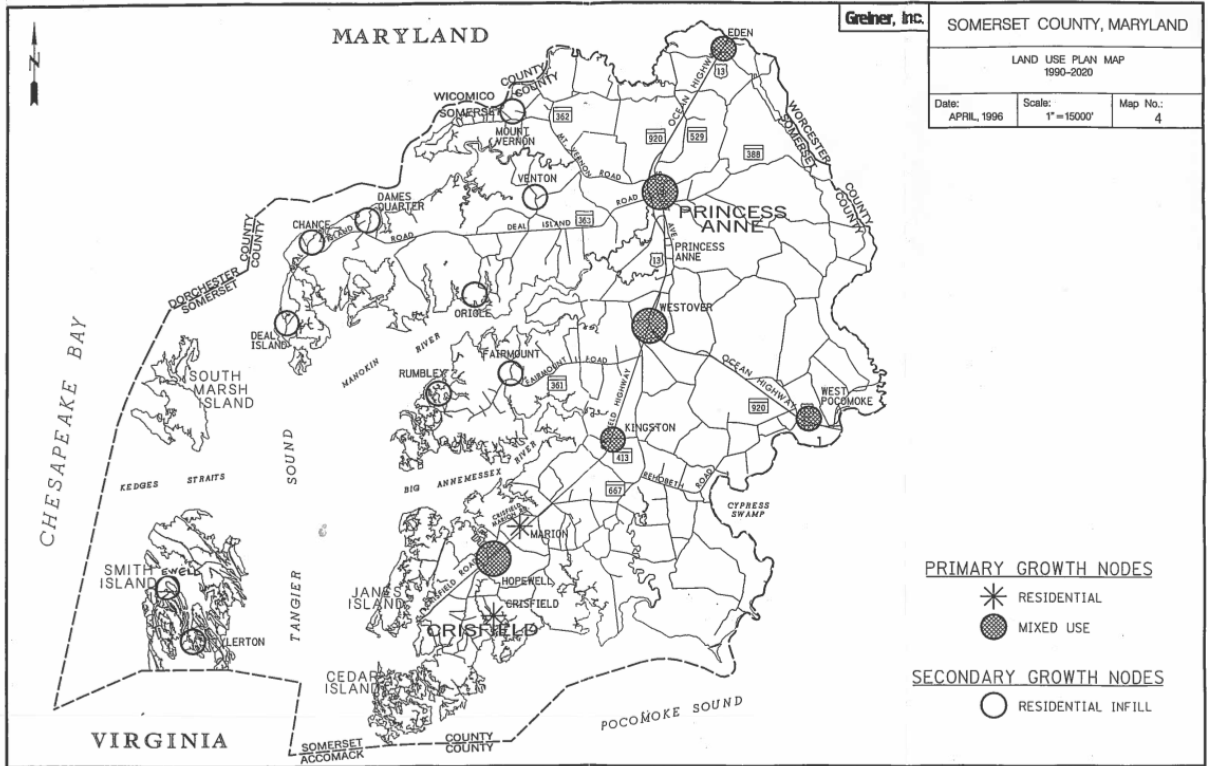
Implications for Land Preservation and Recreation

The County's location, physical characteristics, and demographics have significant implications for land preservation and recreation policies. The County is projected to have moderate but steady growth through 2025, growing by approximately 2,000 people. The Comprehensive Plan would direct most development into growth areas, but development in the AR zoned area continues to occur.

Projected age distribution changes over the next 15 years will result in increasing demand for recreation services and leisure facilities for the elderly. With projected moderate growth and physical limitations to development, the County will continue to maintain its rural character, provided adequate land use controls are in place. Extensive State and County natural resource-based recreational lands, along with extensive shoreline, create opportunities to increase water-based recreation, maritime interests and eco-tourism.

Agricultural areas are dispersed throughout the County and generally occur on lands that can be drained. A concentration of good agricultural soils lies east of US 13. Forest lands that are generally too wet to farm separate agricultural lands. The resulting forested land cover pattern provides opportunities to preserve greenway corridors, while protecting adjacent prime agricultural lands.

Figure 2:6 - Primary and Secondary Growth Nodes



CHAPTER 3 - RECREATION, PARKS, AND OPEN SPACE

Introduction

This chapter sets forth the park and recreation goals for Somerset County and identifies current and future needs and priorities for park and open space acquisition, facility development and rehabilitation. Goals and priorities are established based on:

State goals and policies for recreation and parks;

A supply and demand need analysis of recreational facilities and activities based on existing facilities and demand factors obtained from surveys of public recreational interests; and

Goals, policies and actions from Somerset County's Comprehensive Plan and the 2022 LPPRP.

Based on the supply and demand analyses, survey and input from the Department of Recreation and Parks, Princess Anne and Crisfield and various park and recreation organizations, a program for recreational land acquisition, facility development and rehabilitation are outlined.

Recreation and Parks

A. Goals

This section discusses interrelationships between the County Comprehensive Plan and the State of Maryland's goals for recreation and parks.

a. County Goals

Revised County goals in this LPPRP are built upon the 2 LPPRP goals and are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan's overall goals and objectives:

- Maximize use of existing recreation facilities and coordinate provision of park and recreation activities with school sites;
- Build on existing recreation facilities in Westover to create a central indoor and outdoor recreation hub that can serve the needs of the entire county;
- Locate new facilities in growth areas that are accessible to the majority of residents, but also provide recreation opportunities to serve populations that are far from existing recreation facilities;
- Coordinate and maximize use of programs between the County, municipalities, and the University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES);

- Enhance public access to the Bay and elsewhere through more pedestrian and bicycle facilities that go near the shoreline;
- Promote the County’s Park and recreation program as a draw for attracting new residents and businesses;
- Improve coordination between the County and its two municipalities on recreation.
- Use the newly added Tourism department (January 2021) to draw people to the county.

B. Executive Summary

Somerset County Parks and Recreation serves our county and the surrounding areas in a variety of capacities such as:

1. Parks and Public Space
2. Youth Athletic Leagues
3. Adult Athletic and Fitness Programs
4. Administration of Great Hope Golf Course
5. Organizing Public Events
6. Assisting Public School System and other county entities in several ways
7. Serving on/in Boards, Community Groups, Outside Youth Leagues that are concerned with public health and economic/tourism development.

In the 5 years since the last LPPRP Plan was submitted this Department has undergone many changes in an effort to serve the needs of our population and act on the recommendations of the 2017 Plan. The following paragraphs will detail those efforts to meet Somerset County’s Goals.

C. Maximize Use of Existing Recreation Facilities

This department determined that the most effective strategy to maximize use of recreational facilities throughout the county was to partner with agencies looking for space to provide programming, meet and plan with community members in proximity of the parks to encourage greater use and partnerships, and take measures to upgrade each facility with at least one project at each site. We view the below listed improvements to facilities and the following as significant accomplishments since the 2017 LPPRP:

Accomplishments

- The implementation of a new website including online payment. This addition made it easier for people to register for programs as well as submit payment in a timely manner.
- Programming has increased from 2017 to 2022 by the addition of 6 programs
- The completion of the first phase of the hiker/biker trail that will go from Westover to Crisfield. The first phase was 4.7 miles from Marion to Crisfield. The next phase (Westover to south of the Sheriff’s Department) is getting ready to go to bid (April 2022).

- Renovations were completed at the County Complex Gym (Late 2017) including; new multi-use flooring, dasher boards and goals. The building was painted as well.

Challenges

- Sustaining and growing programming in tight budgetary climates.
- Creating access to all parks and programs people with transportation difficulties.
- Staffing of programming and facilities within the constraints of the present county budget and makeup of the department.

1. Glenn Ward Ballpark, Crisfield MD

- a. Scheduled Girls Recreation Softball Games at the site, splitting time with our Princess Anne Field to provide equity in travel time and proximity for all county residents.
- b. Created a closer working relationship with the local Lions Club that holds an annual fundraiser tournament to maximize effectiveness and ensure that event is able to continue and discuss possibility of other events. Created an annual horseshoe tournament with Lions Club.
- c. Fostered closer ties with local Salvation Army Chapter, which also provides sports programming for youth in the Crisfield area. Through this effort we have been able to assist them with their records and promotion of programs, take the maintenance of the area aspect from their responsibilities and allow them to concentrate on staffing programs. Additionally, this has allowed us to cross promote our programming to reach a greater number of participants and discuss further ways that we can help them serve the youth who they serve.
- d. Continued cooperation with local Little League Chapter to use venue for Junior and Senior League competition and to use for fundraising tournament like the Butch Mills Memorial Tournament held this past fall.
- e. Encouraged local residents to use the facility for drop-in Softball days. With increased attention to the maintenance of the field we able to create an environment where the facility is used far more frequently than in the past. Also, this initiative created an opportunity to add Dept. programming to serve Adults interested in both Men's and Coed Softball. This new program will be discussed later in the document.
- f. Regraded parking lot
- g. Upcoming LPPI project will include re-grading the ball field surface, and adding a playground and small basketball court.

2. Upper Hill Playground Area, Upper Hill, MD

- a. Cleared brush, improved lane leading into park, replaced signage.
- b. Complete overhaul of playground equipment and removal of aged equipment.

- c. Increased dialogue between community stakeholders and Dept. to deal with issues involving the park, its users, and general upkeep and capital improvements.
- d. Included Park in Trail Program to increase exposure and use.
- e. Current 2022 POS project will include re-surface of basketball court and the implementation of additional playground equipment.

3. Westover Centralized Athletic Complex

- a. Improved walking path through weed prevention and surface conditioning, coordinated efforts with partnering agencies to increase walking/exercise on the trail through programming, incentives and exposure
- b. Developed and implemented turf management plan to maximize growth and durability of turf.
- c. Marketing/increased outreach of complex to a wide variety of entities for use including but not limited to:
 - i. County residents for Rec Programming
 - ii. Private club teams for practice and tournament play
 - iii. Local school systems for practice and game play
 - iv. Potential patrons for rental/facility use for parties, picnics, and gatherings
 - v. County agencies and groups for special events (i.e.-Relay for Life, Community Field Day)
 - vi. Businesses for advertising on facility fencing
- d. Added an exercise station with concrete pad and canopy. The parking lot was also expanded and new, durable playground material was added to the playground areas in place of mulch in POS project 2021.
- e. Adjacent property was purchased that included a maintenance shed and equipment. This will provide valuable storage and access to fields for our parks maintenance staff.
- f. LPPI 2022 (\$800,000) will include 2 field expansions to give us 4 full-sized soccer/field hockey fields.

4. Great Hope Golf Course

- a. Continue management of removal of brush and undergrowth
- b. Overhaul of clubhouse facilities, especially patio and deck areas
- c. Ongoing creation of nature trail that connects adjacent Somerset County Public Schools property to foster greater partnerships between agencies and golf course increase usage by staff and students
- d. Opened facility as a venue for picnics, walking, concerts and other non-golf activities
- e. Clubhouse renovations and upgrades – new HVAC, new carpet and paint.
- f. New Point of Sale system

- g. Enhanced social media and marketing plan
- h. Free mobile app for patrons
- i. Adjustment to daily fees and creation of Skip Jack Super pass – since the implementation of the pass, revenue is up by 50%

5. Raccoon Point Park

- a. Initiated contacts with neighbors and community members to create a “Friends of Raccoon Point” group committed to policing the park and addressing issues. This is a very secluded area and is difficult to maintain regularly. These community members in conjunction with the Dept. have organized bi-annual cleanup days at the park.
- b. Worked with local school system (early childhood education) to develop a series of outdoor activities focused around water quality, marsh life, species recognition and a wide variety of other ecosystem education. Partnered with Ward Foundation of Salisbury for this initiative.
- c. Included Raccoon Pt. as a destination in trail initiative.
- d. 2019 POS project: reposition parking lot, replaced fencing to increase safety and traffic flow and new picnic tables were put under the pavilion.

6. Princess Anne Baseball Complex

- a. New turf management plan for area
- b. Fostered partnership with both local Little Leagues to combine resources for inter- league and all-star level play.
- c. Large brush and undergrowth removal, with tree pruning to increase visibility from the road and attractiveness of facility
- d. Open facility to rental/use by other baseball programs for tournaments and practices.
- e. Re-purposed one of the existing fields and turned it into a softball field.
- f. Partnered with Somerset County Public Schools for field usage for their middle school baseball and softball teams.

7. County Office Complex Indoor Gymnasium

- a. Include the area as an indoor opportunity for walking during the business day for county employees
- b. Over the past 5 years we have implemented a wider range of rentals including private groups and teams, some from outside the county.

8. Mt. Vernon Park

- a. Added electricity to pavilion area to enhance use by community
- b. Included Park as a destination of trail initiative

- c. 2017-18 Program Open Space calls for the addition of workout stations at park
- d. Upcoming POS 2022 project will include a new basketball court, pavilion upgrades and new rubber mulch material in playground areas.

9. Ruritan Softball Field

- a. Completed renovations of the playing field and backstop areas and new scoreboard.
- b. New parking area on the first base side of the facility.
- c. Trimming trees and removal of invasive species (yearly project).

10. Marion Tennis Courts

- a. 2022 POS project: complete renovation of entire facility including new surface, fencing and basketball standards.

11. Build on Existing Recreational Facilities in Westover

- a. This effort has not yet come to fruition in regards to an indoor facility, but we have through marketing, greater organizational practices, outreach to a wide range of groups and potential users and uses significantly grown the number of people that use the outdoor facility on a regular basis.
- b. We are currently pursuing federal grants in combination with local money to build a 45,000 – 50,000 square foot community facility.

12. Coordinate and maximize use of programs between the County, municipalities, and the University of Maryland Eastern Shore

- a. Continuing to have engagement with both municipalities to hold events (walk/runs) - use their areas as sites for biking, hiking, paddling initiatives, fostered and have continued dialogue with youth centers in those municipalities to partner in programming.
- b. Completed the project with City of Crisfield to develop passive-park at entrance to town. We also assisted with support for implementation of kayak launch with letter of support, creation of signage and secured the location.
- c. Continued engagement in extensive planning with UMES for increased partnership between Great Hope and the University's PGA/PGM program.
- d. Continued partnership with Somers Cove Marina to pool marketing efforts to offer value to slip holders/transient boaters and Great Hope members. Also, engaged in partnership with marina to use their pool facilities for summer swimming programming. We have done this with great success for the last 8 years.

- e. Princess Anne – we are now a member of the Main Street program. We provide assistance on events, planning and budget.
- f. Smith Island – coordinated with Smith Island United – created a pocket park with picnic tables and a kiosk. We also secured a Federal grant (May 2022) for 1.2 million for the establishment of a trail system on Smith Island utilizing existing paths and roadways.

13. Enhance Public Access to the Bay and elsewhere through more pedestrian and bicycle facilities

- a. As a result of inventory of existing facilities serving pedestrian and cycling activities the Dept. created, with funding through the Somerset County Health Dept. and Centers for Disease Control, the Trail Mix Initiative. www.somersettrailmix.com. This initiative uses county roads and facilities to encourage physical activity through hiking and biking that uses the following waterfront areas as trail hubs: Webster’s Cove (Mt. Vernon), Raccoon Point (Westover) Crisfield City Dock (Crisfield) and uses county. All of these areas are accessible for fishing, general activity, and launches for watercraft of all sizes.
- b. Phase 1 of the Hiker/Biker trail has been completed and runs 4.7 miles from Crisfield up to Marion. The trail includes kiosks and a parking area at each end. The trail is 10 foot wide and paved for multi-use of bikers, walkers and joggers. Signage and landscaping have also been completed. The trail was named the Terrapin Run Recreational Trail.
- c. Engaged in and implemented planning, design, and promotion of phase 2c of the Hiker/Biker Trail in conjunction with SHA. Detailed description of the status of this project will follow later in the plan.
- d. Worked in partnership with SHA to establish dedicated bike lanes in both municipalities.

14. Roles, Services and Benefits of the Public Parks

- a. Provides access to natural areas for recreation.
- b. Services a wide range of demographics including age, race and income to provide inexpensive and/or free physical activity both structured and unstructured.
- c. Works for the public good by enhancing facilities, exploring new opportunities for partnerships, recreation and public health benefits.
- d. Connects people throughout the county in a wide variety of activities.
- e. Preserves and maintains parks and greenspace.
- f. Acts as a vehicle for the promotion of Somerset County through tourism outreach.

15. The Partnership for Children in Nature

- a. Since 2017 the Department has taken several steps to engage youth in a variety of outdoor activities. The creation of fishing programming at Raccoon

Point Park, youth golf activities at Great Hope Golf Course, programming on the Terrapin Run Recreational Trail catering to youth, and partnerships with local agencies such as Janes Island State Park and organizations to enhance and lend support to their programming.

- b. The creation of a pollinator and natural plant program in local parks and trail in partnership with Lower Shore Land Trust to educate youth about the importance of these species in a healthy ecosystem.

State Goals (from Maryland Land Preservation & Recreation Plan 2019 – 2023)

The State’s goals for recreation, parks, and open space are:

1. Goal 1: Coordination and Collaboration – Strengthen coordination and collaboration between federal, state and local government agencies and other key stakeholders in planning for the provision of outdoor recreation opportunities and land conservation initiatives.
2. Goal 2: Promote the Benefits of Outdoor Recreation and Conservation of Natural Lands – Promote the economic, cultural, health, and environmental benefits of outdoor recreation and conservation of natural lands. Seek to increase the public’s understanding of these benefits to enhance interest and participation in recreation outdoors in Maryland.
3. Goal 3: Increase Access to Open Spaces and Waterfronts – Increase and improve opportunities for all segments of the population to access land and water-based outdoor recreation opportunities.
4. Goal 4: Improve What’s Already Available – Improve the overall quality of outdoor recreation infrastructure at public parks and outdoor areas across the state.
5. Goal 5: Develop an Informed Stewardship Culture – Promote environmental education and use of parks and outdoor areas as teaching tools to foster a positive stewardship ethos among children, youth, and their families.

- a) Brief Summary of how Somerset County Goals complement State of Maryland Goals

In planning the goals for the coming 5 years and beyond for Somerset County Parks and Recreation it was important to consider the goals of the State. These considerations are outlined in the roles, services and benefits section and by increasing access to all citizens by the further establishment of programming in proximity to citizens in the outer areas of the county, working in concert with municipalities of Crisfield and Princess Anne to promote and utilize their existing recreational facilities and infrastructure to reach the most people, and to continue to procure grant funding from the state’s many programs to enhance and develop new opportunities for recreation. Simply put, Somerset County’s goals mirror the State of Maryland’s in almost every respect.

Programs and Procedures

This section describes the framework in which Somerset County plans, acquires and develops parks and recreation facilities and open space, including funding sources.

- a. *Organization and Planning Procedures*

The Somerset County Recreation and Parks Commission was established by the Board of County Commissioners in 1967, “for the purpose of maintaining and conducting a comprehensive program of public recreation and parks for the benefit of the citizens....” The

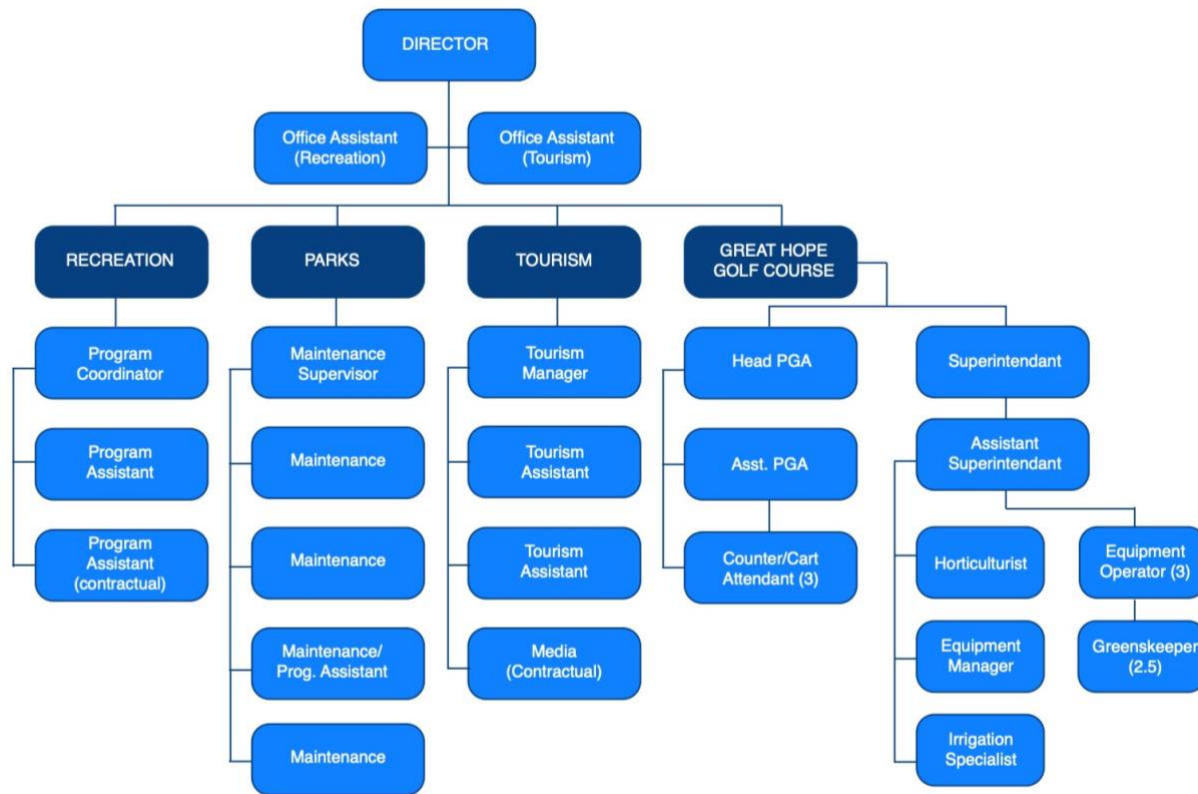
Board is composed of nine members appointed by the Board of County Commissioners for three-year terms. The Commission is required to meet at least four times a year.

The Commission provides direction to the Department of Recreation and Parks in carrying out recreation and parks programs and policies. This includes overseeing the acquisition of property, facilities development, coordination of recreation programs and facilities with the Town of Princess Anne, the City of Crisfield and local non-profit organizations. It is also responsible for implementing the goals and policies of the County's land preservation, parks and recreation plans, including administration of the use of Program Open Space (POS) funds.

The Department increasingly informs citizens about programs and activities through the Somerset County Recreation and Parks website (<http://www.playsomersetmd.com>). The website provides information pertaining to available facilities, registration for programs, class schedules and updates on ongoing projects. Program information is also disseminated through social media platforms Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube as well as links on several county websites including but not limited to: Somerset County Public Schools, University of Maryland Eastern Shore, Somerset County Health Department, both regional newspapers (Somerset Herald and County Times), Somerset County Tourism and the municipalities of Princess Anne and Crisfield. Regular emails are sent to parents and participants updating program offerings, making other announcements and providing online registration links.

Staffing for the department can be seen in the flow chart below in Figure 3:1. Staffing will also include several part-time and/or contractual workers based on need and demand such as: sports officials and fitness class instructors.

Figure 3:1 – Somerset County Recreation, Parks & Tourism Staff Chart (also includes Great Hope Golf Course)



b. Funding

Operating Budget

Budgeted expenditures for the Recreation & Parks side of the department are \$403,044.41 for salaries and benefits. Operating expenses which include, facilities and site maintenance, recreation programming, and contributions to County non-profit organizations that help provide recreation activities and facilities are listed at \$125,000. See Table 3:1 for details.

The Great Hope Golf Course is budgeted as an enterprise fund separate from the Department of Recreation and Parks budget. The county provides funds to support operating expenses at the course as facility revenue is not currently self-sustaining.

Maryland towns are also able to take advantage of grants provided by Maryland’s Community Parks & Playgrounds Program. These grants may be used by local governments to build new parks or renovate existing facilities.

Table 3: 1 - Somerset County Recreation, Parks and Tourism FY 2022 Expenditure

Recreation	Amount	Percent
Salaries & Benefits	\$403,044.41	76.9%
Operating	\$125,000	23.5%
Charitable Contributions	\$3,000	.5%
TOTAL	\$531,044.41	100%
Tourism	Great Hope	
Salaries & Benefits	\$152,281.52	\$532,424.00
Operating	\$142,000.00	\$685,380.00
TOTAL	\$294,281.52	\$1,217,804.00
TOTAL COMBINED	\$2,043,129.93	

Source: Somerset County Department of Recreation, Parks & Tourism Budget FY 2022

Capital Funds

The County’s FY 2022 Capital Budget is \$119,000, of which approximately 64% is from County funds. This budget assumed \$38,982 in POS funds. The County actually received only approximately \$24,000 (see Table 3:2). The County and the municipalities have relied heavily on POS as a major financial source for funding parks, recreation facilities, and open space. Since 2005, the County’s annual POS appropriation has averaged approximately \$134,700. POS peaked from 2006 to 2008 with the highest appropriation of \$437,296 in FY2007. Unfortunately, since the program is funded through the state’s real estate transfer tax, due to the economic recession and fiscal restructuring by the State, revenues have fallen sharply since 2008 to leave a sizable funding gap in relation to needs. Since 2012 the average POS apportionment has been approximately \$65,000.

Table 3:2 – Somerset County’s Program Open Space Apportionments from 2017 – 2022

Fiscal Year	Unencumbered Funds	New Apportioned Amount	Development Amount	TOTAL POS Funds
2018	\$145,810.47	\$118,344.00	\$88,758.00	\$264,154.47
2019	\$182,095.63	\$172,210.00	\$129,157.50	\$354,305.63
2020	\$255,305.63	\$154,745.00	\$116,058.75	\$410,050.63
2021	\$427,820.62	\$142,071.00	\$106,553.25	\$569,891.62
2022	\$389,891.62	\$172,282.00	\$129,211.50	\$562,173.62
2023	\$383,517.32	\$265,260.00	\$198,945.00	\$648,777.32
TOTAL	\$1,784,441.29	\$1,024,912.00	\$768,684.00	\$2,809,353.29

Source: Somerset County Department of Recreation, Parks & Tourism, February 2022.

Somerset County has been certified by the State as meeting its recreation land acreage goal (see Section D, below). After evaluation of acquisition goals in this document the County will then have knowledge of its available funding for possible acquisition.

Planning

The Department of Technical and Community Services is responsible for implementing the County’s comprehensive planning program, under direction of the Planning and Zoning Commission. The Department of Recreation and Parks and the Department of Technical and Community Services work cooperatively to implement the Comprehensive Plan’s goals as they relate to recreation and parks.

Planning for recreation and park facilities generally takes place through discussions between the Department of Recreation and Parks and the Recreation and Parks Commission. The Department and Commission use surveys and other public feedback mechanisms to assess needs and formulate possible projects and actions needed to satisfy expressed needs.

Needs Analysis and County Priorities for Lands, Facilities, and Rehabilitation

County priorities for land acquisition, facility development and rehabilitation consider needs in the context of State and County goals and long-term funding availability. An analysis was performed to evaluate the land and facilities needed to accommodate the recreation and park land needs of the existing and projected Somerset County population. The

analysis uses (3) time frames: short (2017-2021), mid (2021-2025), and long-range (2025 and beyond). Estimates for short-range demand and need are based on 2010 population; mid and long-range on projected 2017 and 2022 population.

Recreation and park needs were identified through:

1. Recreation Commission Meetings – meetings are held quarterly every year with members of the Recreation Commission. The goal of these meetings is to inform them of our recent activities with regards to programs and events. Each time we also discuss future plans, both immediate and extended.
2. Healthy Somerset Coalition – this coalition represents distinguished members of the community. Member of include McCready Health, Chesapeake Health, Somerset County Health Department, Somerset County Board of Ed – Judy Center; University of Maryland Eastern Shore, Somerset County Sheriff's Department, Somerset
3. County Recreation and Parks, as well as local church groups. This group meets on a quarterly basis to discuss local activities, issues in the community with healthcare and plans the Annual Somerset Community Field Day. This group strongly recognizes that recreation and activity are vital to the health of the community.
4. Somerset County Public Schools – meetings are held at various schools through the year with teachers, administration and students to talk about activities and discuss programs and needs of the community that Somerset Recreation and Parks can fill.

Promotion at our Annual Somerset Community Field Day – this event gives multiple vendors in the community a chance to reach out with information to lead people to a healthier lifestyle.

INSERT SURVEY LINK HERE.

The results from the needs analysis are the County's best estimates, especially for the mid to long-range planning horizons. The State's LPPRP Guidelines recognize that County priorities are subject to change for a variety of legitimate and sometimes unpredictable reasons.

The following sections examine the recreational supply, demand and facility needs in the County for 15 recreation activities selected by the State and the County Department of Recreation and Parks.

1. Supply

The County updated its inventory of recreation and open space land and facilities for the LPPRP. The resulting detailed inventory table showing park and recreation sites,

acreages, and amenities present at each site can be found in Appendix A. Detailed tables for the supply, demand, and needs analyses are provided in Appendix B. The location of each site is depicted in Figure 3:3. At this time, constraints in staffing and data collection and without required permits for use of county boat ramps it is very difficult to estimate usages for recreational areas that are not directly associated with the department's recreational programming. Table 3:3 summarizes the amount of recreation and open space resource lands in the County by ownership. Natural resource open space lands are discussed and mapped in Chapter IV.

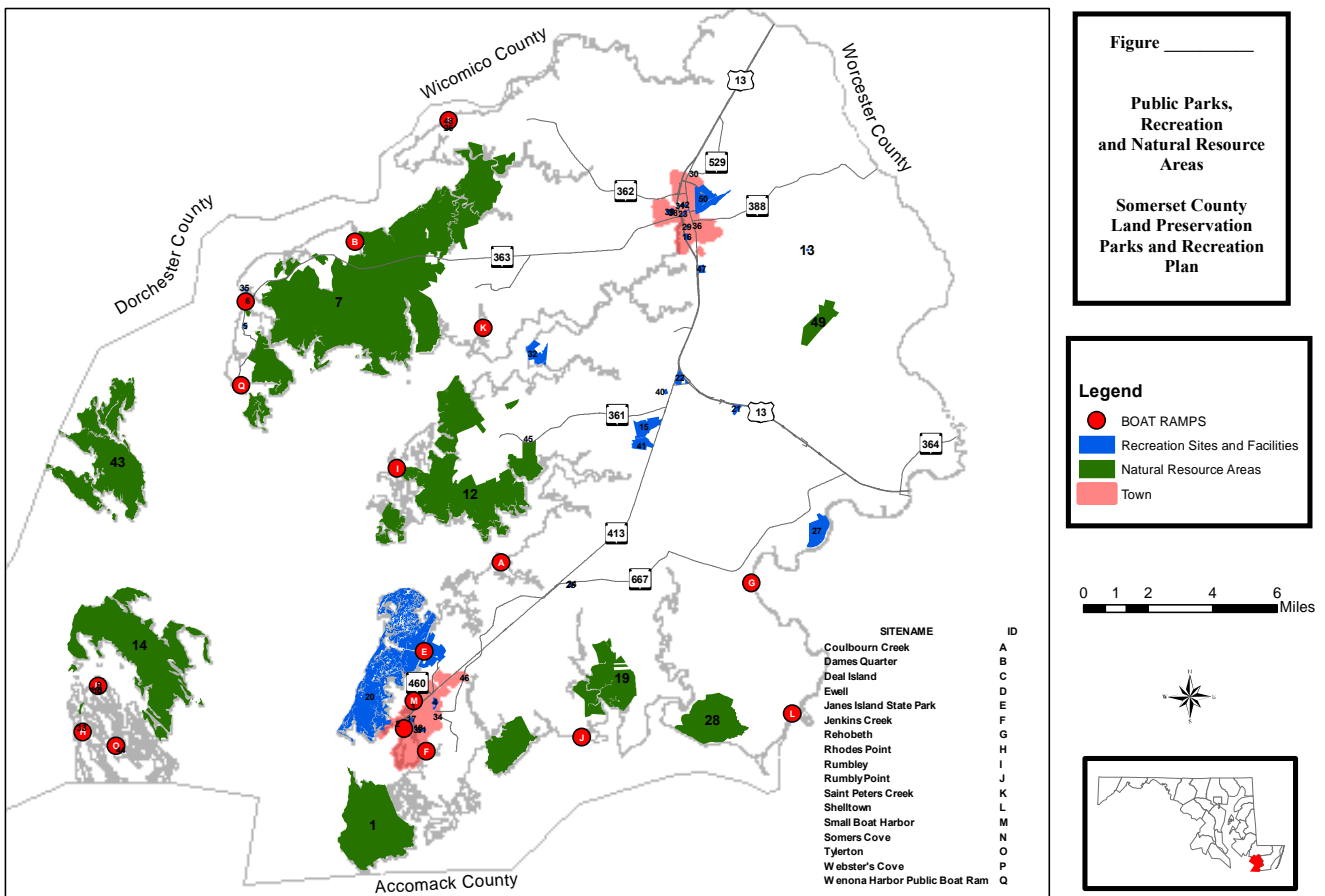
Table 3:3 – Acreage of Public Recreation and Resource Lands in Somerset County by Owner

Ownership	Recreation	Acres Resource	Total
Somerset County	598	--	598
Board of Education	160	--	160
Town of Princess Anne	21	--	21
City of Crisfield	5	--	5
Crisfield Housing Authority	8	--	8
Total Local	792	--	792
State	--	48,053	48,053
Federal	--	4,431	4,431
Total State and Federal	3,794	52,484	
Grand Total*	4,586	52,484	
Source: Appendix A			
*Excludes private/quasi-public lands (1,714 acres).			

County and Municipal Land

Somerset County provides approximately 598 acres of parks, recreation and open space land. The largest County sites are: the 213-acre Great Hope Golf Course; 216-acre Raccoon Point Recreational Area used as a regional park for both active and natural resource-based recreation; and the 46-acre “Long” Centralized Athletic Complex⁷, a new sports complex that opened in the summer of 2010, and provides five multipurpose fields. Other County owned recreation lands are smaller and contain a variety of active recreation facilities.

Figure 3:2 – Somerset County Public Parks, Recreation & Natural Resource Areas



⁷ Named after Robert C.B. Long and Edwin D. Long Jr., the former owners of the property.

Reference Key for Figure 3:2 – Public Parks, Recreation and Natural Resource Areas

Map Number	Park Name	Map Number	Park Name
1	Cedar Island WMA	27	Pocomoke River State Forest
2	Crisfield City Dock	28	Pocomoke Sound WMA
3	Crisfield City Park	29	Princess Anne Elementary Sch.
4	Crisfield High School	30	Princess Anne Head Start
5	Deal Island School	31	Princess Anne Little League
6	Deal Island Harbor	32	Raccoon Point Recreational Park
7	Deal Island WMA	33	Rhodes Point Dock
8	Ewell Ball Field	34	Salvation Army Youth Club
9	Ewell Dock	35	Scotts Cove Marina
10	Ewell Elementary School	36	Seton Center Catholic Charities
11	Ewell Recreation Center	37	Somers Cove Marina
12	Fairmount WMA	38	Somerset Civic Center & Ruritan Ballfield
13	Garland Hayward Park	39	Somerset County Fairgrounds
14	Martin National Wildlife Refuge	40	Somerset Co. Health Department
15	Great Hope Golf Course	41	Somerset Intermediate School
16	Greenwood Elementary School	42	Somerset Co. Office Complex
17	Housing Authority Rec. Center	43	South Marsh Island WMA
18	Housing Authority Tennis Courts	44	Tylerton Recreation Area Ballfield
19	Irish Grove Sanctuary	45	Upper Hill Playground
20	Janes Island State Park	46	W. Glenn Ward Ballfield
21	Lake Somerset Campground	47	Washington Senior High School
22	Long Centralized Athletic Facility	48	Webster's Cove Marina
23	Manokin River Park	49	Wellington WMA
24	Marion Recreation Area	50	University of MD Eastern Shore
25	Tennis Courts at Marion Elem. Sch.	51	Woodson Elementary Sch.
26	Mt. Vernon Recreation Park		

User Agreement Between Somerset County Public Schools and the Public. There is no formal user agreement in place, in practice both running/walking tracks in the county are

open for public use, athletic fields at both high schools are not locked and are used by the public informally for exercise. In instances where there is a formal use of the fields for a tournament or organized play, contact is made between the two parties and a rental agreement is met. This practice is infrequent.

The Board of Education is an important provider of recreation land in the County. School recreation parks totaling 160 acres are located at 9 elementary/primary, middle, and high school sites. Three additional sites classified as school recreation are used by Crisfield Headstart, Princess Anne Headstart and a parochial school. A fourth is the Marion Recreation Area which is located adjacent to a school site. These school recreation facilities are used by a variety of sport teams, youth organizations and community leagues.

Combined, the Town of Princess Anne and the City of Crisfield and its Housing Authority provide 34 acres of park and recreation lands. The Town of Princess Anne owns the 16-acre Manokin River Park and the 4.5-acre Garland Haywood Park. The City of Crisfield and the Crisfield Housing Authority have approximately 13 acres between the City Dock area, the leased Crisfield Armory, Crisfield City Park and the Housing Authority's recreation center and tennis court sites. In 2004, the three acres containing the Crisfield Headstart and Salvation Army Youth Club were sold to a private user for a new food store. Headstart moved to the H. De Wayne Whittington Primary School upon its closure as part of a school consolidation program. The property is currently owned by the Board of Education. Since 2012 this property has been condemned and razed and will be the future site of It Takes a Village Afterschool Programming, with construction slated for 2018. The Headstart Program will be housed at Crisfield High School in a newly constructed addition to the building. The Salvation Army Youth Club relocated to the Crisfield Armory, which, at the time of that LPPRP, ownership was transferred to the City of Crisfield, this site in 2014 was determined to be mold infested and subsequently youth programs ended at the site. Presently, the Salvation Army Youth Club is housed in the Woodrow Wilson Community Center for daily activities and indoor programming in the winter months has returned to the Armory after a treatment and inspection for mold performed by the City of Crisfield.

State and Federal Land

The State is by far the largest owner of park, recreation and open space in the County with approximately 48,000 acres of recreation and natural resource land. The Janes Island State Park, Somers Cove Marina, and the University of Maryland Eastern Shore facilities comprise approximately 3,520 acres of recreational land. The Chesapeake Forest Lands are comprised of 17,300 acres of working forest. A portion of these lands are open to hunting by the public while the majority is maintained for the purposes of sustainable forestry. The State also owns approximately 29,700 acres of natural resource lands in several wildlife management areas. These lands provide some limited resource-based recreational opportunities but primarily contribute to the County's inventory of natural resource lands. The Federal government owns over 4,300 acres of natural resource lands at the Glen L. Martin National Wildlife Refuge, located west of Janes Island State Park in the Chesapeake Bay.

FISCAL YEAR 2022

DNR Owned Lands Acreage

SOMERSET:

Cedar Island WMA - 3,081
Chesapeake Forest Lands - 17,321
Crisfield Marine Terminal – 2
Deal Island WMA – 13,564
Fairmount WMA – 5,224
Green Hill FT – 3
Janes Island SP – 3,160
Maryland Marine Properties WMA – 1,030
Pocomoke River SF – 281
Pocomoke Sound WMA – 922
Somers Cove Marina – 69
South Marsh Island WMA – 2,968
Wellington WMA – 428
TOTAL: 48,053 acres

Other Land

Privately owned open space lands accessible to the public total approximately 1,550 acres. The largest site is the 1,400-acre Maryland Ornithological Society's Irish Grove Sanctuary in the Marion area. This bird sanctuary is mostly marshland, but contains several nature trails and pond observation decks. The 29-acre Lake Somerset Campground provide other resource-based recreation opportunities.

Water Access

The County has 29 publicly-owned boat ramps at 14 locations; see Figure 3:3. The State provides another six public ramps, four at Somers Cove Marina and two at Janes Island State Park. There are two privately owned sites available to the public and each has two boat ramps (Breakwater/ Last Chance Marina and Scotts Cove Marina). A total of 616 slips are available at Deal Island Harbor, Janes Island State Park, Scotts Cove Marina, Somers Cove Marina, and Webster's Cove Marina.

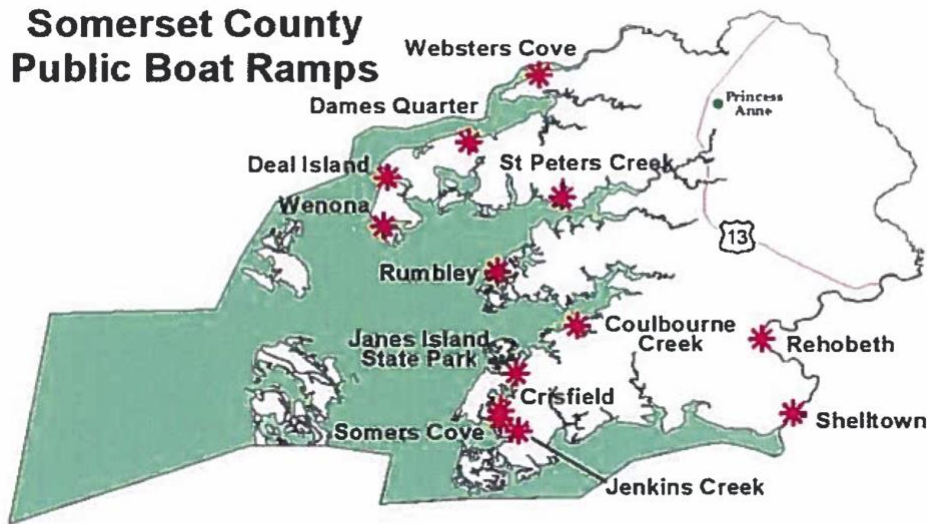
Publicly owned beaches are accessible at the Raccoon Point Recreational Area and, by boat only, at Janes Island State Park. Many of the State Wildlife Management Areas provide fishing opportunities in marsh ponds or along shorelines.

Coulbourne's Creek Boat Ramp underwent an extensive overhaul in 2015. A new floating dock was added along with resurfacing of the existing ramp.

Water Access is an essential aspect of the recreational needs of our citizens. Furthermore, these opportunities provide the county with tremendous assets to support economic growth and tourism initiatives in Somerset. Key components of this growth include, but is not limited to DNR projects on Smith Island and Monie Bay. The county is currently engaged in a cooperative effort with several other jurisdictions to create a comprehensive needs assessment for all water access points both public and private.

Janes Island and the town of Princess Anne associated with water trail mapping and promotion. The trail mapping at Bending Water Park provides another unique opportunity for persons from within the county and beyond to explore the heritage of the area in a recreational setting. Obviously, Somerset County's geography is a natural fit for an abundance of exceptional opportunities to parlay the streams and rivers in the county into enjoyment, exercise and promotion to support recreational and economic goals in conjunction with state assistance and guidance. Somerset County's Trail Mix Initiative includes all of the aforementioned trails and facilities in a comprehensive site detailing the beauty, accessibility and other attributes of the trails, ramps, and parks.

Figure 3:3 – Somerset County Public Boat Ramps



Somerset County Harbors with boat slip leasing available:

- Tylerton Boat Harbor
- Websters Cove Boat Harbor
- Deal Island Boat Harbor
- Wenona Boat Harbor
- St. Peters Boat Harbor
- Jenkins Creek Boat Harbor

To obtain more information or inquire about boat slip availability please call the Somerset County Roads Department at 410-651-1930.

Accomplishments since the 2017 LPPRP

Several of the improvements recommended in the 2017 LPPRP have been implemented (see Table 3:4)

We used a survey developed by the Somerset Recreation and Parks Department as the basis for determining the demand for recreational facilities⁸. The results were based on

⁸ 1) 2012 Participation in Local Park and Recreation Activities in Maryland and 2) State Parks and Natural Resource Areas in Maryland: A Survey on Public Opinion.

responses from 33 households from program participants, respondents to the survey and local county residents.

Additional information on demand was provided through the LPPRP public participation process, including personal interviews with County and municipal staff and other interested parties.

The demand analysis used the data for the Somerset County Recreation and Parks Survey on recreational activity participation rates, daily carrying capacity and season length unless other information or local experience indicated otherwise. In such cases, either sport season length or daily carrying capacity were adjusted to better represent local participation rates or demand was adjusted based on local activity and facility utilization experience.

2. Demand

After our analysis of our supply of facilities Many of the needs for adult exercise for biking and walking and other programming outside of our traditional catalogue have been met. Many of these are made possible by shared use agreements with Somers Cove Marina, Health Department and other civic organizations. Upon analysis conducted through informal meetings, conversations with patrons and users of our programs and considering national and state trends in recreation, the following items were consistently requested, those being.

- a. A large multi-use indoor facility
- b. Rehabilitation of current tennis courts
- c. A lighted outdoor basketball/multi-use hard surface area
- d. Increased activities for the age demographic of 45-65. Activities including basketball, pickleball, bocce ball, badminton, volleyball and low impact aerobics
- e. Archery Program
- f. A county pool facility – indoor or outdoor. This would enable us to offer swimming lessons in a more centralized facility, swim teams and swimming aerobics.

Strategies to address and prioritize these demands will include continued communication with county residents, inclusion of potential projects in yearly budgets and analysis of the feasibility of some of the larger items listed such as the indoor facility and swimming pool.

3. Needs Analysis

The needs analysis compares recreation facility supply to demand. The analysis results in two products:

A summary of surpluses or deficits in the amounts of land and facilities needed to serve County residents, and

Identification of County priorities for land acquisition, facility development and rehabilitation.

Table 3:4 summarizes results from the detailed supply, demand and needs analysis tables contained in Appendix B. Three facility deficits are identified:

Indoor gym facilities for activities such as soccer, field hockey, basketball, volleyball, aerobics classes and other indoor court sports; Local County and municipal trails; and a second public outdoor swimming pool.

With respect to indoor gym facilities, the 2012 LPPRP analyzed the need for indoor basketball only (and reported a surplus). This LPPRP analyzed the need for indoor basketball together with a variety of other indoor activities such as volleyball and indoor soccer/hockey, and identifies a minimum four-court deficit. This analysis was needed because there is growing pressure for indoor space. For example, at the Somerset County Office Complex indoor recreation league basketball and soccer compete for space during the winter months. The growth in popularity of field hockey has also created increased competition for indoor court space.

In the time since the 2012 LPPRP plan Somerset County Recreation and Parks has worked in coordination with the local Health Department to refurbish an old cafeteria in their renovated office complex to be used as gym space. This 80x50 area is centrally located and provides an additional county venue for the aforementioned activities as well as fitness programs, karate and self-defense, strength training, and a practice area for a variety of local teams. County businesses and institutions also use the area for training and recreation periodically.

The deficits for trails and pools were identified in the 2012 LPPRP. The analysis separates local trails from state trails because, combined, the trails in state parks show the residents' demand being met whereas there is need for trails to serve the resident population in developed areas.

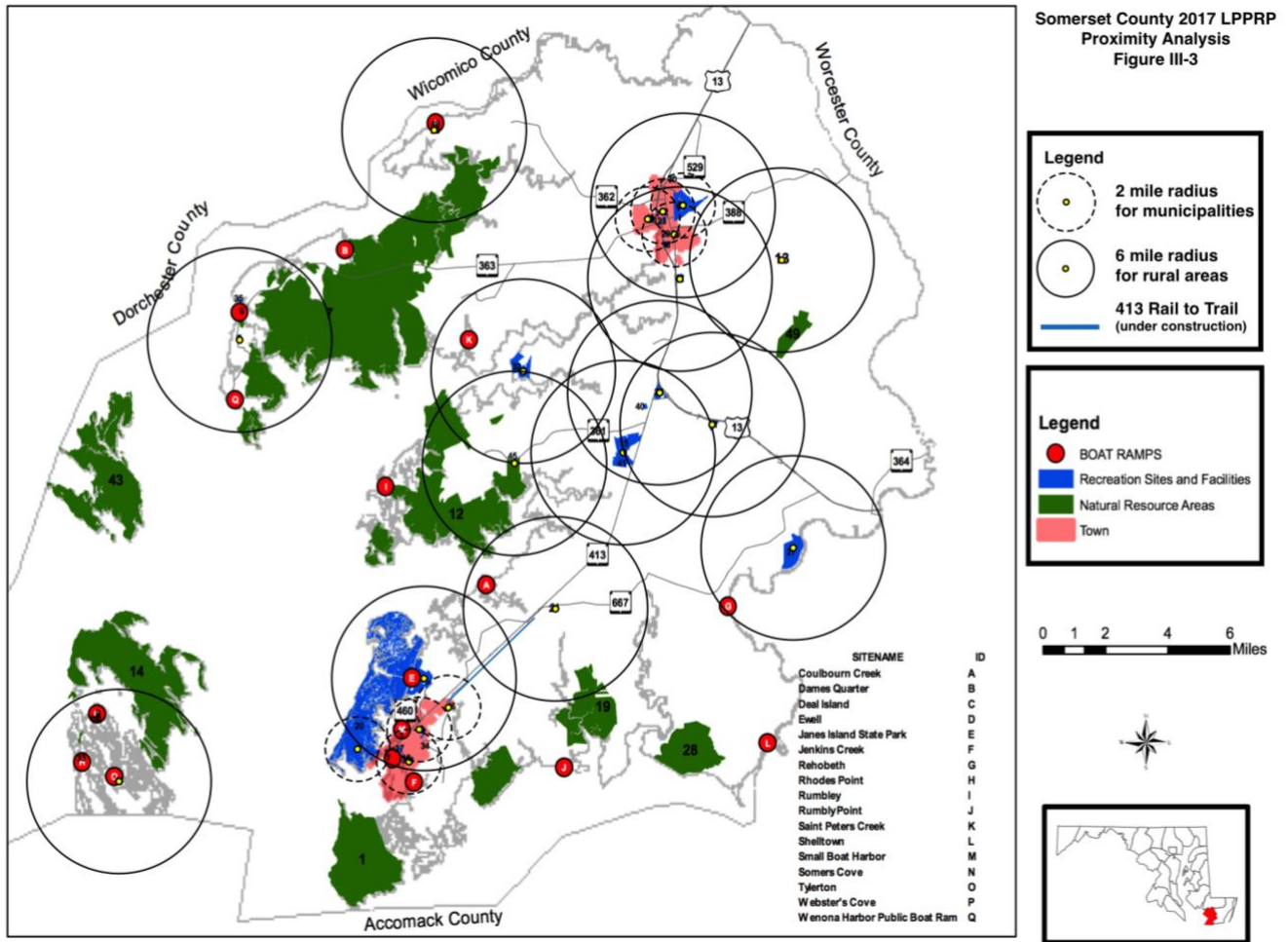
The 2012 LPPRP showed a partial need for a second outdoor pool. This 2017 LPPRP shows full need. This is due in part from deletion from the inventory of a private outdoor pool at Lake Somerset Campground, so that the only public outdoor pool is at Somers Cove Marina near Crisfield.

These needs have not changed for the 2022 LPPRP.

Based on our proximity analysis in Figure 3:4, our experience shows that Somerset County residents will travel on average 15-20 minutes to use park facilities. Many county residents travel from all ends of county to use Janes Island State Park and the Long Centralized Athletic Fields. This is the justification for our 6-mile radius in rural areas. As for municipalities and a 2-mile radius, the actual towns are small in size in respect to boundaries but many small neighborhoods and villages are within a 2-mile distance from the incorporated town boundaries. Residents will use town amenities like the municipal parks, walking paths and trails and kayak launches and travel there via car, bike or walk. In speaking to any gaps in this map most of the areas that are not covered consist of either

wide tracts of farm land, marsh land, or very sparsely populated villages and neighborhoods.

Figure 3:4 – Somerset County Proximity Analysis



Reference Key for Figure 3:4 Proximity Analysis

Map Number	Park Name	Map Number	Park Name
1	Cedar Island WMA	27	Pocomoke River State Forest
2	Crisfield City Dock	28	Pocomoke Sound WMA
3	Crisfield City Park	29	Princess Anne Elementary Sch.
4	Crisfield High School	30	Princess Anne Head Start
5	Deal Island School	31	Princess Anne Little League
6	Deal Island Harbor	32	Raccoon Point Recreational Park
7	Deal Island WMA	33	Rhodes Point Dock
8	Ewell Ball Field	34	Salvation Army Youth Club
9	Ewell Dock	35	Scotts Cove Marina
10	Ewell Elementary School	36	Seton Center Catholic Charities
11	Ewell Recreation Center	37	Somers Cove Marina
12	Fairmount WMA	38	Somerset Civic Center & Ruritan Ballfield
13	Garland Hayward Park	39	Somerset County Fairgrounds
14	Martin National Wildlife Refuge	40	Somerset Co. Health Department
15	Great Hope Golf Course	41	Somerset Intermediate School
16	Greenwood Elementary School	42	Somerset Co. Office Complex
17	Housing Authority Rec. Center	43	South Marsh Island WMA
18	Housing Authority Tennis Courts	44	Tylerton Recreation Area Ballfield
19	Irish Grove Sanctuary	45	Upper Hill Playground
20	Janes Island State Park	46	W. Glenn Ward Ballfield
21	Lake Somerset Campground	47	Washington Senior High School
22	Long Centralized Athletic Facility	48	Webster's Cove Marina
23	Manokin River Park	49	Wellington WMA
24	Marion Recreation Area	50	University of MD Eastern Shore
25	Tennis Courts at Marion Elem. Sch.	51	Woodson Elementary Sch.
26	Mt. Vernon Recreation Park		

Table 3:4 – Recreation Facilities Summary Needs Report

Numbers in parenthesis indicate a deficit. Positive numbers indicate a surplus. For example, the (1) for swimming pools (outdoor) in 2016 indicates a need for 1 additional outdoor pool to meet the current demand.

Activity	Facility Type	Existing Facilities	2016 Demand	2027 Demand
Baseball/Softball	Diamonds	23	20	20
Indoor Sports – field hockey, basketball, soccer, etc.	Indoor Courts	20	(3)	(4)
Basketball (outdoors)	Outdoor Courts/Recreation	15	9	8
Tennis	Courts	15	13	12
Field Sports (football, soccer, field hockey, lacrosse)	Multi-purpose fields	20	18	18
Trails: hike, bike, jog, walk, nature (State and/or private)	Trail Miles	14	11	11
Trails: hike, bike, jog, walk, nature (County and Local)	Trail Miles	8.1	(2)	(2)
Swimming Pools (indoor)	Pools	1	0	0
Swimming Pools (outdoor)	Pools	1	(1)	(1)
Playgrounds (Tot lots)	Playgrounds	9	4	4
Picnic Pavilions	Shelters	14	9	9
Picnic Tables	Tables	110	79	77
Boating Ramps/launching areas	Ramps	41	39	39
Equestrian Trails	Trail miles	2	1	1
Golf (18 holes)	Course	1	0	0

C. County Priorities

Table III-5 lists the County’s Park and recreation priorities for meeting its land acquisition, facility development and rehabilitation needs through 2027, including estimated costs and time frames. In developing the priorities consideration was given to need relative to:

The supply and demand analysis;

How a project can best satisfy recreational facility or activity needs;

How a recreational need can best be accommodated by facilities; and

How a project relates to the County's recreation goals.

The overall program would cost approximately \$10.3 million including partial costs for trails⁹. Projects are in three time-frames: short range (2017 to 2021), mid-range (2021 to 2025) and long range (2025 and beyond). It is anticipated that construction of trails would begin in the short-term and extend over several years beyond 2020. Several projects lack cost estimates because information was not available or the projects have not advanced to a stage where estimates can be made. Examples include the proposed trail components and Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Plan projects.

Proposals shown in the short term (2017-2021) will be funded by a combination of POS, County, local and other grant-based sources. Some acquisitions, such as rights-of-way or easements for trails may be accomplished through the development process.

Results of Park Equity Analysis, Public Meetings/Interviews/Surveys and Proximity Analysis

Analysis of county amenities in conjunction with DNR and Federal Park Facilities.

The results of park equity, proximity and demand

By taking into consideration the results of these studies and data/feedback from public meetings, surveys and the day-to-day interaction with those we serve we have been able to enter into targeted planning for our development for the next 5 years and beyond.

As a result of the data being readily accessible and, in an attempt, to compile a complete look at Somerset County Recreation from a variety of metrics, we will use a combination of all the suggested areas.

When addressing access to trails, picnicking, fishing, hunting, natural areas, water access and other outdoor activities in the provided Proximity mapping it shows that on average Somerset falls above the state averages for participation in associated activities. Examining Proximity to Natural Areas (something that we consider to be a benchmark statistic) we see that the county is well served and as a result the proximity analysis. In respect to planning, we can take comfort in knowing that our citizens are spending time in those areas frequently and have access to them. Delving deeper into the other data results we do see however, a few results that give us a look into some areas where we can better

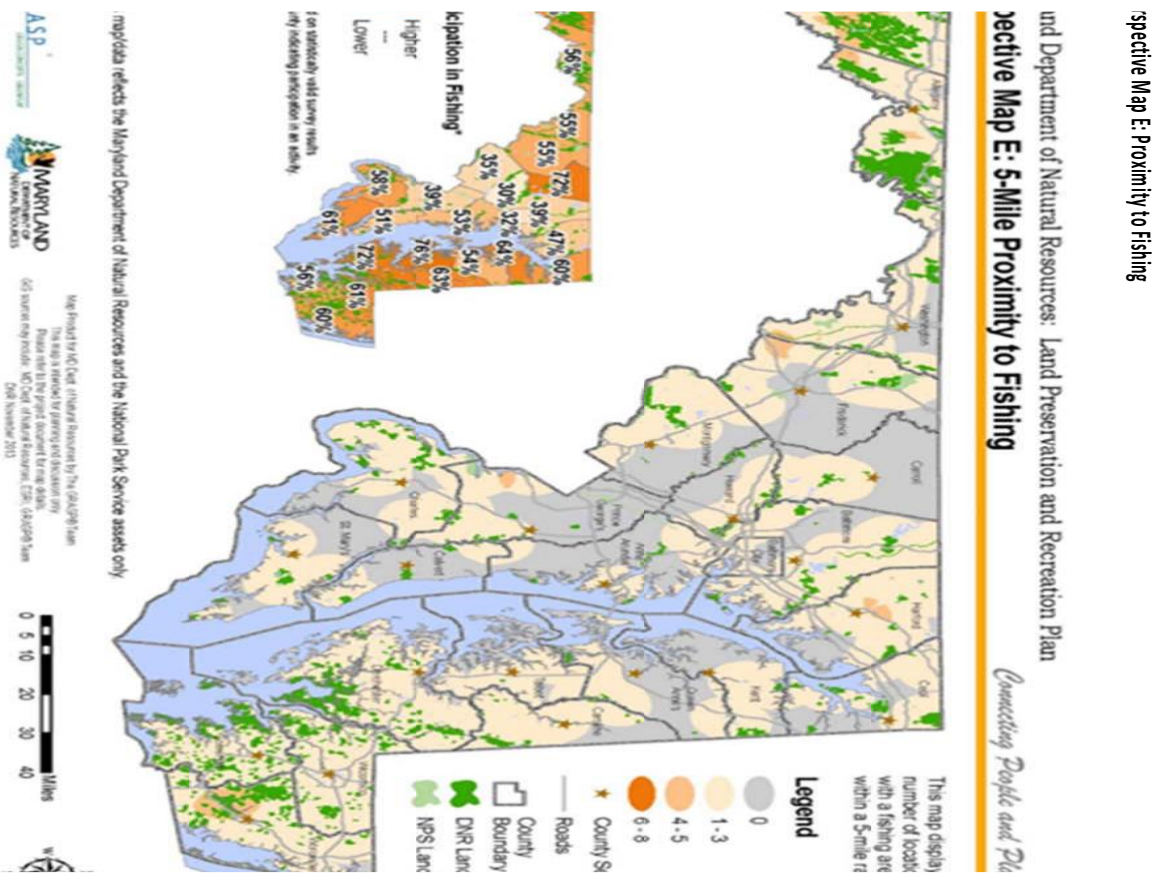
⁹ Cost estimates are approximate and are in 2022-dollar values, based on knowledge of recent land acquisitions, real estate values in different parts of the County, and facility development and rehabilitation costs. Estimates were not obtainable for Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Plan projects at this time.

provide access to recreational activities associated with these locales and amenities. *Plans and analysis will be provided below:*

Proximity to Fishing/Participation in Fishing: 56% - Proximity to Water Access/Participation in Water-Based Recreation 86%.

It would seem on the surface that if one is participating in “water-based recreation” fishing would play a large part of this recreation. However, this is not the case. This Department feels strongly that educated/licensed people who fish the rivers, sounds, streams, ponds and creeks of our area are also good stewards of the resource. They care for the habitat and follow rules and regulations. In planning to increase participation in fishing it is important to provide access to fishing areas and equipment. As a result, this Department will create programming and efforts to educate people on the rules, techniques, areas for public fishing and examine the possibilities of stocking the ponds that are in our parks/golf course for catch and release fishing. We can coordinate this through efforts with local DNR, school system/STEM initiatives and promotional events. See Figure 3:5 for details

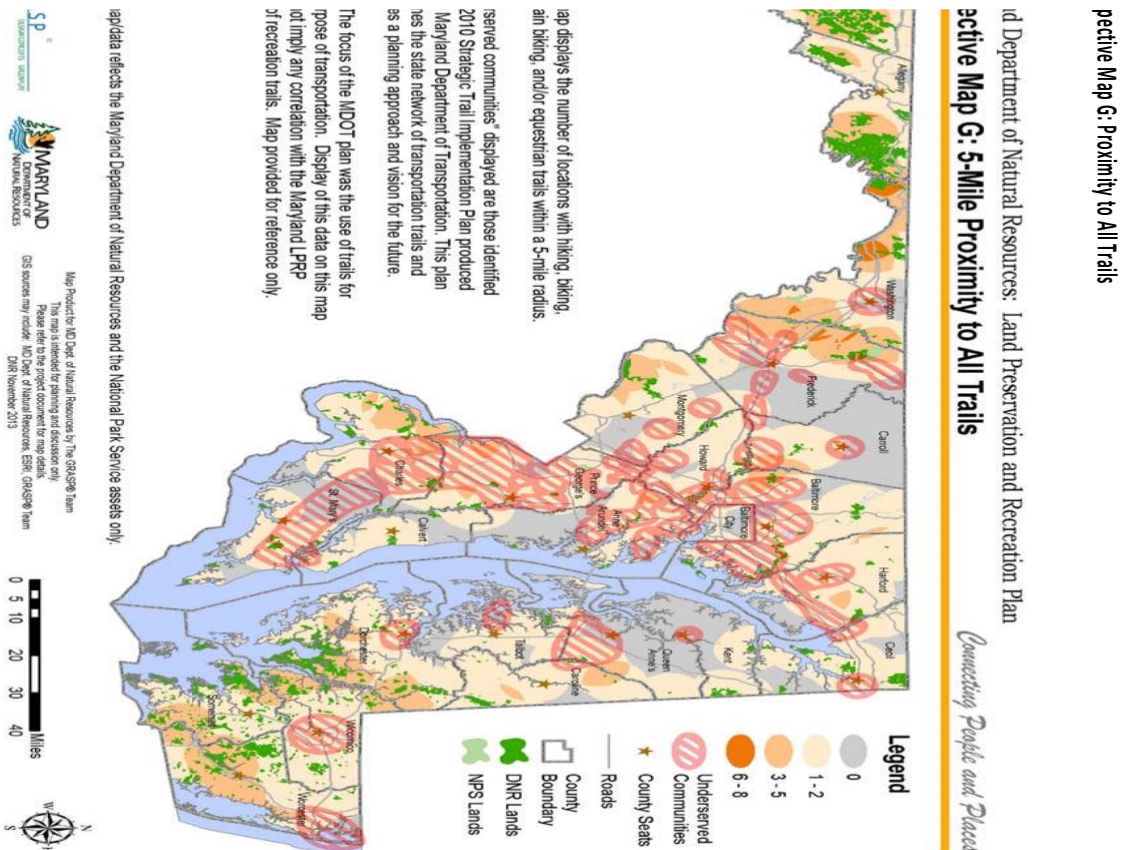
Figure 3:5 – Proximity Map: Fishing



Proximity to All Trails & 5-Mile Proximity to Hiking Trails/Participation in the Activity of Walking 65%

This is of particular interest to the Department. The illustration shows the county does not have any “Underserved Communities” in regards to Proximity to all trails but despite that ranks near the middle/bottom of participation in walking, lagging far behind many urban areas on the Western Shore. Analysis of this fact has been in the forefront of our thinking and planning here for some time. As a result, we will use this information as further motivation to continue our projects already outlined in this document such as Somerset County Trail Mix and the RT 413 Hiker/Biker Trail. These projects are both aimed at increasing awareness of the benefits of walking and providing access and information about sites in the county where the activity can be done safely. Specifically, Somerset County has instituted a walking program (Recreation and Parks and Somerset County Health Depts.) that in conjunction with the Trail Mix program provides scheduled activities, events, and educational opportunities at low or no cost to address low usage of municipal, county and state trails. See information on www.somersettrailmix.com and the Trail Mix Facebook page.

Figure 3:6 – Proximity to all trail types



Park Equity Analysis Results

In examining the results of the different layers in the Maryland Park Equity Mapper we found some very interesting facets of the data that are in line with our findings and observations over the past 4 years in Somerset.

Primarily, the eastern part of the county that borders Worcester is underserved in relation to parks and other recreational amenities provided by the county. The county will look into opportunities to provide parks and waterfront facilities in this area. Additionally, the Oaksville Eagles Ballpark is located in the Perryhawkin/Oaksville area in Eastern Somerset. A potential partnership there to increase the amenities they provide and to increase the usage of the facility with the community members in the area has already been discussed. The inclusion of playground equipment, reconditioning of the ballfield and promotion and creation of activities there will foster cooperation between this community and surrounding areas and Somerset County. In the past year, we have included this park as a location on our Trail Mix tour of bike trails.

Secondly, the data on both sub-groups shows what we have always known, that the biggest challenge facing Somerset in terms of density, income, and the resources available is that people in the outlying areas of the county are traditionally underserved by programming provided by the county. A lion's share of the challenge is represented by the large geographic area that exists in combination with the low population levels in these areas.

While there are parks and amenities in all regions of the county many of these are not in areas where a large number of people can access them. Transportation is a challenge in many instances and the difficulty in getting people to events and programming in Princess Anne and Westover.

Future planning for POS Development will take into consideration the acquisition and development of lands to "fill in the gaps" between parks in the outlying areas, with specific attention paid to the Deal Island region and the Rumbley/Frenchtown areas of Somerset. Both of these areas were noted by citizenry in meetings of being in need of park areas. Additionally, the continuing development of our Westover Centralized Athletic Fields and Park was also listed as an area the people of Somerset desire further development. The additions of softball/baseball facilities, basketball/tennis courts, expansion of the walking trail on site, additional fitness equipment, creation of more lighted multi-purpose fields and more playground equipment were all listed as priorities for this area and will be included in future Program Open Space Proposals and Plans.

Finally, the county shows a need of creation and improvement of existing park space in both Marion Station and Crisfield. Currently the county maintains 2 tennis courts and basketball area in Marion, these are aged and in need of resurfacing and repair. The same stands true for Crisfield Tennis Area. Users of these facilities spoke to the need of repairs and attention to these courts as a means to improve safety and increase usage. Future planning will attempt to address these needs. One specific challenge is the fact that both of these have received funding for resurfacing within the last 20 years.

In closing, the analysis of this data shows that in many respects the County has done an adequate job in the creation of regional parks and matching those with good maintenance practices yet we have many areas where we can create programming and space to serve a wider variety and number of people. The results of these studies make that very clear. The motivation and creation of our 5-year plan is mindful of all these items and also takes into consideration the budget and staffing realities present in the County. Certainly, execution of the plan will be reliant on the continued support of county government, partnerships with other agencies and municipalities and our approach to providing quality programs and facilities that foster pride with in the community and do the best for the most people.

Land Acquisition and Development Projects

Six projects involving land acquisition are proposed including four trail projects.

UPDATES TO THESE PROPOSALS SINCE 2012 ARE IN GREEN
UPDATES TO THESE PROPOSALS SINCE 2017 ARE IN ORANGE

- a. Acquisition of an estimated seven acres at a cost of approximately \$150,000, to provide a permanent location to house the Burgess Americana Museum and provide outside space for interpretative and educational activities. The museum is currently housed at Hudson's Corner in the Marion area, but the facilities are inadequate. A need exists to find a more centrally located site in order to promote the collection. Somerset County and Somerset County Tourism are partnering with a non-profit organization to make this project one of Somerset County's cultural, historic, and tourism attractions. This improved and expanded facility will help County efforts to increase tourism. The project will require acquisition of a building or property. Facility development is estimated at \$50,000 if an existing building could be acquired for the use.

Somerset County in conjunction with SHA has created a site plan to expand the facility at the Judge Lloyd Simpkins Rest Area and County Tourism Office to house these artifacts. This plan will create maximum exposure for the attractions and assist in this tourism initiative. This development will be considered a park space by the county as it will have outdoor space and seating.

The project has been completed with a \$500,000 contribution from Governor Larry Hogan in the budget year of 2019. Interior space displays completed in early 2022 with the grand opening taking place of April 2022. The Burgess Rural Living Center is now open to the public.

- b. The Town of Princess Anne would like to acquire approximately one-half acre of land on South Beckford Avenue to build a park with a playground. Acquisition of the property will be approximately \$100,000 and constructing the park is expected to be \$180,000.

No movement on this project has occurred.

c. Four recreational trail projects are recommended. The need for trails and other opportunities for walking and bicycling was expressed at public meetings held for this LPPRP, and is supported by the needs analysis which shows a current demand for over three miles of County and municipal trails. Currently there are approximately 12 miles of trails in the County, but all except one mile are at Janes Island State Park. These trails are not convenient or easily accessible to many residents. Detailed acreage acquisition needs or development cost estimates have not yet been determined because trail alignments, right-of-way, length, surface, and type of construction required will not be known until more design work is completed. Costs per linear mile are likely to vary between approximately \$100,000 for gravel surface and \$200,000 for hard surface. The four trails are:

- i. A trail along the old Pennsylvania Railroad right-of-way along the west side of MD 413 from Westover to Somers Cove Marina in Crisfield. The right-of-way is owned by the Maryland Department of Transportation and the County would need to work with the State to explore the feasibility of this facility. This trail could be hard surfaced because the grade and alignment are established.

Since 2012, Somerset County has worked closely with MTA and SHA to establish this right-of-way as a hiker biker trail. As a result of this work the State and County are in the midst of planning and design of Phase 1 of the trail from Davis Rd. in Marion Station to the beginning of the dual highway in Crisfield. Somerset County has listed this project as a priority to the State in its Transportation Plans for the past 3 years. Some of the challenges faced during the project include the inability to “railbank” the property due to the Transportation Safety Board’s 2015 decision that the railroad is already considered abandoned by that body. Subsequently, the county and state have been investigating ownership of the area and title searches to ascertain how the property was acquired (dating back to the 1860’s) either through easement or fee. SHA’s determination and action on the item has resulted in a “quick claim” of the property for further expansion of RT 413 and the use of the space for a hiker-biker trail in the interim. Transportation Alternative Programming (TAP) will fund 80% of the project with the remaining 20% match coming from other State Grant Programs. Submission and Re-application for funds will occur in May 2017.

Phase 1 of the Terrapin Run Trail, 4.7 miles of asphalt trail, has been constructed and is now open to the public for use. Currently, phase 2(c) is in the planning phase. This portion of the trail will begin in Westover at the Centralized Athletic Facility and will travel south 3.3 miles to just south of the Somerset County Sheriff’s Department. Phase 2(c) has been designed and funding for construction has been requested using TAP and Bikeways, identical to phase 1 funding.

- ii. A 20-mile greenway trail along the Manokin River, linking the County’s Raccoon Point Regional Park at the mouth of the river with the Manokin River Park and Garland Hayward Park in the Town of Princess Anne, and terminating at UMES. This facility is envisioned as an ecological and recreational greenway that could also have a water trail along the river.

There has been no action on this plan since 2012 recommendations.

- iii. In addition to the 20-mile greenway trail project, the Town of Princess Anne is planning to extend Manokin River Park eastward to extend the proposed trail network. The above two projects will connect to the Town's Sustainable Communities

Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan network (see Figure 3:7).

- iv. A greenway trail along the Pocomoke River that would be an ecological and recreational multi-county greenway facility. The trail could link natural resource lands and historic attractions along the river. Most of the route is within marsh areas and the type of trail surface will vary with the terrain.

Bike lanes in Princess Anne have been dedicated on the Somerset Ave, the town's main road, a greenway trail has not been constructed.

As in the Manokin trail – water trails along the Pocomoke River are in the process of being completed.

- v. **NEW Trail Program, Somerset County's Original Trail Mix, www.somersettrailmix.com**

This project in conjunction with Somerset County Health Department was designed to promote access to existing recreational facilities such as pavilions, boat ramps, walking trails, and map out bike routes on low traffic county roadways that make connections with villages and towns and neighboring counties. Infrastructure for this program includes: Trail Hub signage and informational kiosks, trail markers and QR Code to website link, development of website and social media sites, printing of brochures and maps to be displayed throughout the county, procurement of part time/contractual staff member to promote the initiative. Pictures and details are illustrated below.



Figure 3:7 Princess Anne Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

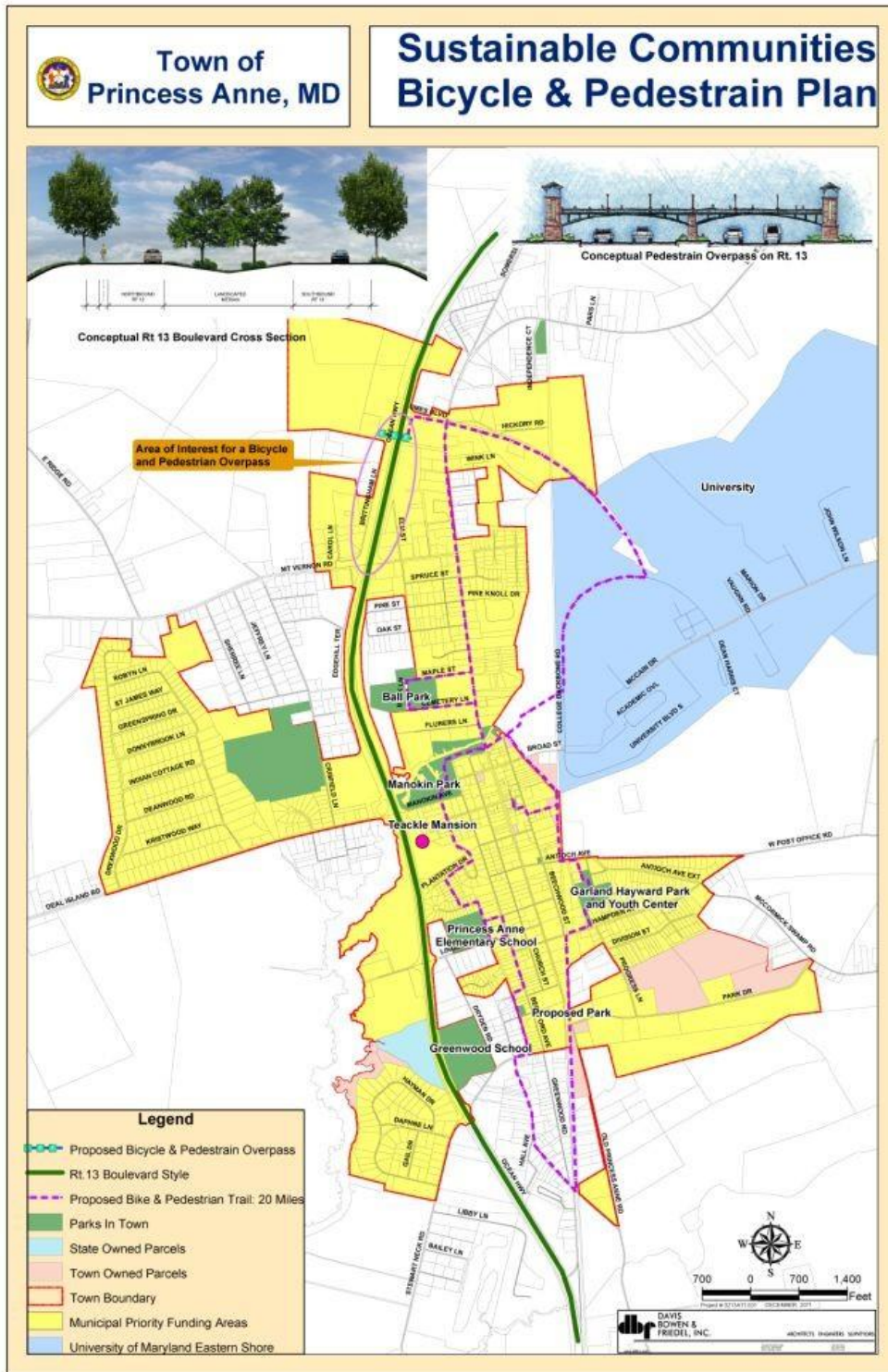


Figure 3:8 – Planned Route 413 Bike Rail Trail

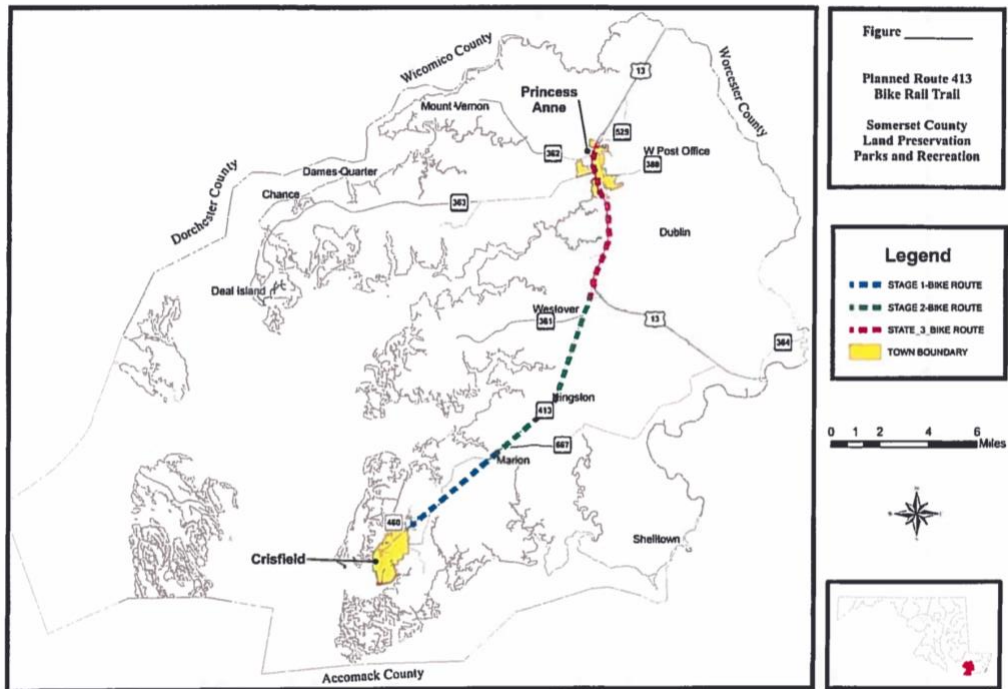
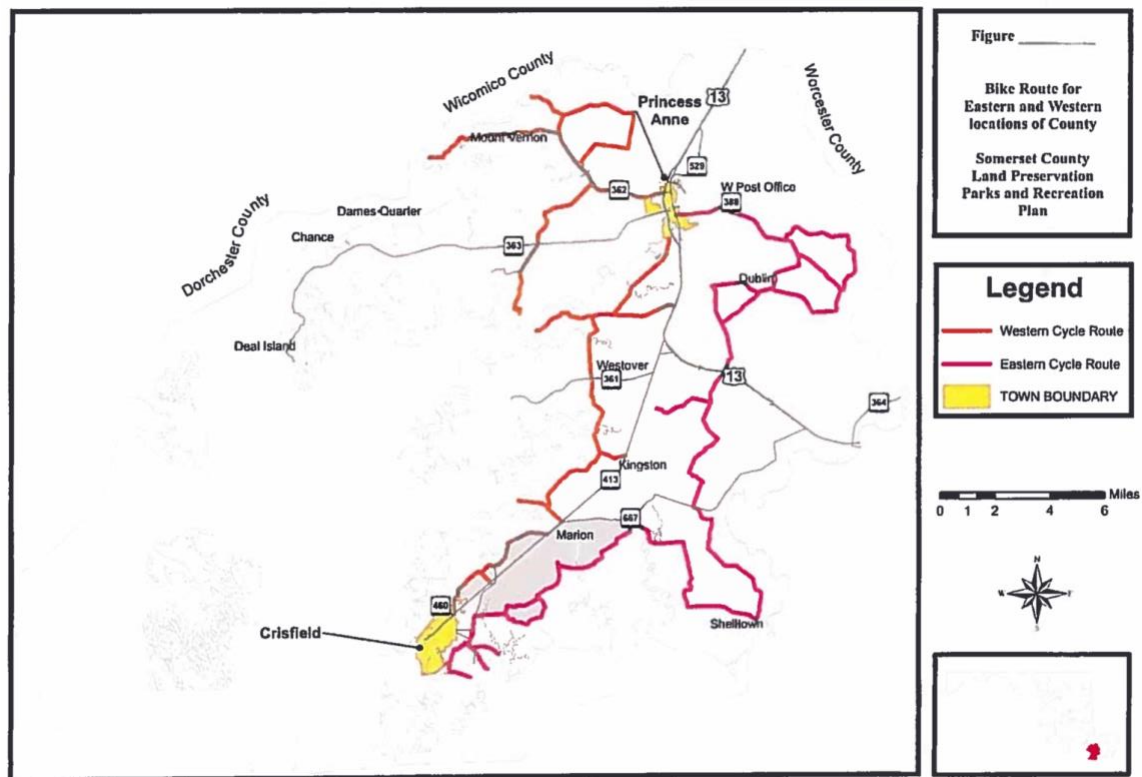


Figure 3:9 – Bike Route for Eastern and Western Somerset County



3. Facility Development Projects

Six facility development projects are proposed on land already owned by the County, towns, or the Board of Education.

UPDATES TO THESE PROPOSALS SINCE 2012 ARE IN GREEN

UPDATES TO THESE PROPOSALS SINCE 2017 ARE IN ORANGE

- a. A new indoor recreation complex located in the central part of the County. A similar project was recommended in the 2005 LPPRP at the Westover Intermediate School but is now recommended for a portion of the 45-acre Long Centralized Athletic Complex site opened by the County in 2010. This would be the County's first indoor recreation facility oriented to serve multiple needs, and is the County's top priority.

Indoor recreation facilities are currently very limited in the County. The only one fully under the Department of Recreation and Parks control is a former high school gym at the Somerset County Office Complex, built in 1957. There is strong demand for space here from multiple users including basketball, indoor soccer, and fitness resulting in scheduling conflicts. The Salvation Army runs programs at a gym in the Armory in Crisfield, but this gym is very small. The other indoor facilities are gyms at schools which are needed for school use and not accessible for public use. In fact, the high schools lack space, and practice at the County Office Complex.

Demand for indoor recreation is high and opportunities are limited. The needs analysis in Section 3 of this LPPRP shows a (four) indoor sports court deficit. According to lower Eastern Shore respondents to the State's 2003 Participation in Local Park and Recreation Activities survey, more indoor recreation is desired by six in ten households with children. A dedicated indoor facility would provide opportunities for different types of activities oriented to different segments of the population, including the growing elderly population. This would also support health education and wellness promotion under the mission of the Somerset County Health Department for "healthy people in healthy communities".

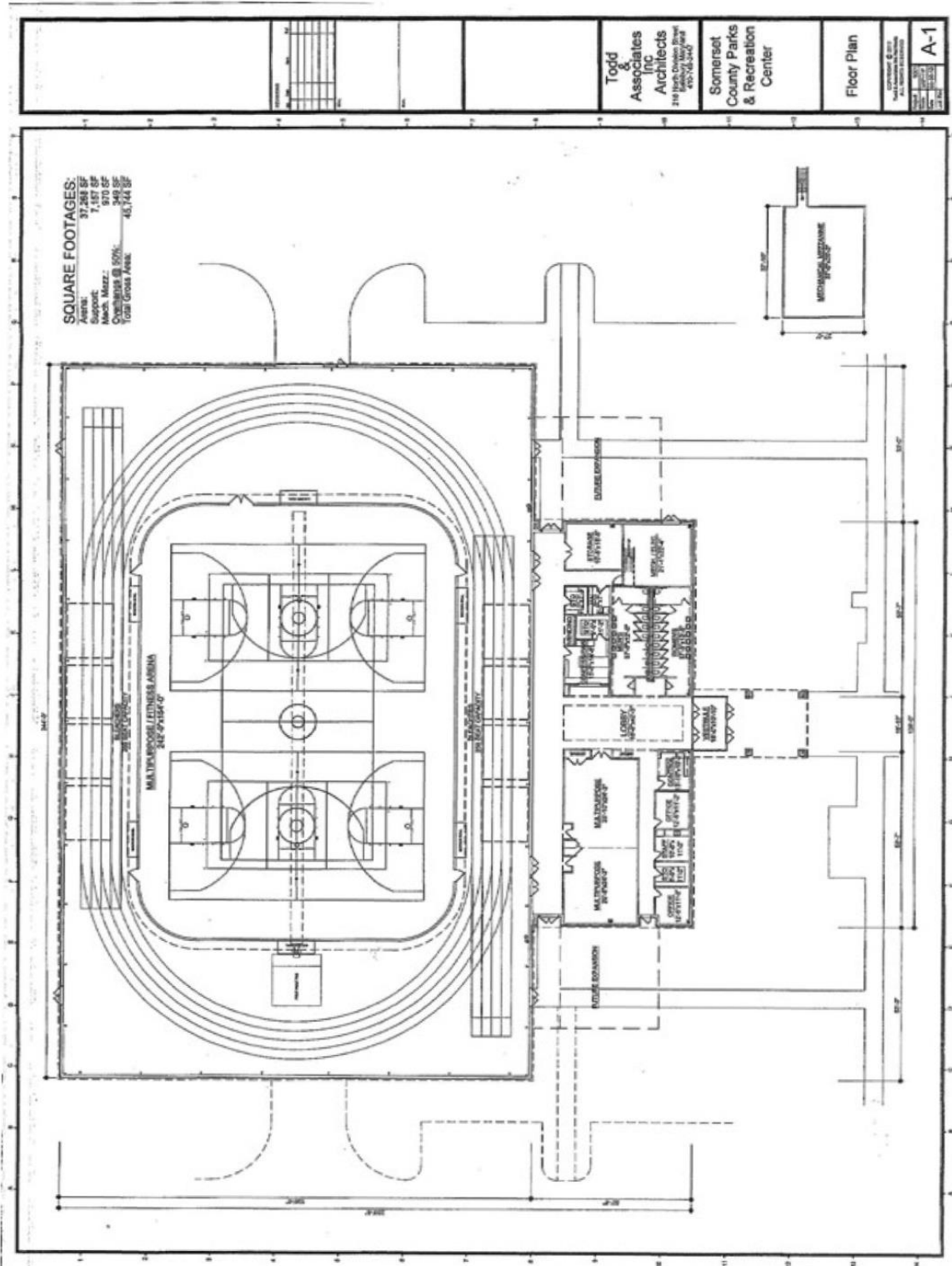
An approximately 45,700 square foot facility is envisioned that would provide a gymnasium for indoor athletic activities and other space for a variety of active, leisure, and educational/community pursuits (see conceptual layout in Figure III-3). The facility would serve both the Crisfield and Princess Anne areas in a convenient central location. Together with the athletic fields at the complex and the nearby Great Hope Golf Course the facility would create a recreational hub in the center of the County, and build on the success of the athletic fields in promoting overall recreation in the County.

In the long range, consideration should also be given to using this site as a location for meeting the long term need for an additional outdoor swimming pool.

Due to budget climate, there has been no action on this plan, but the County still holds it as a top priority. In the interim, as described earlier in the document, Recreation and Parks has added an indoor gymnasium in Westover and upgraded the facility in Princess Anne.

The department is currently pursuing funding through a congressionally directed spending program. The application was submitted in the spring of 2022. Need for facility has heightened at this time.

Figure 3:10 – Proposed Indoor Recreation Complex



- b. The Board of Education plans to build fields for softball, baseball, football and a track at the Somerset Intermediate School in Westover. Currently the only playing fields at the facility are practice fields and not suitable for match play, requiring all home games to be played at Washington High School or the Long Centralized Athletic Complex. There are no adjacent schools or athletic complexes which offer these playing fields and no tracks at all in this portion of the county.

The project is estimated to cost approximately \$1 million; however, the option of installing a synthetic turf field would double or triple this estimate.

No action has occurred in this regard since 2012 plan, in fact the zoning of the area around the school as a wetland precludes any future action on this project at this time.

- c. The Board of Education acquired the old Coast Guard Property in Crisfield and plans to build softball, baseball, soccer and field hockey fields at the facility. Crisfield High School, directly across the street from the Coast Guard Property, has a shortage of available playing fields for junior varsity teams and a general shortage of practice fields. The project would cost approximately \$350,000.

As of 2016 there has been very little action with this project. A study was completed to repurpose these fields but budgetary constraints and zoning of property as a non-tidal wetland have slowed development. However, the Board did dedicate funds for the rehabilitation of the existing field hockey field to create a multi-use field for soccer as well. The field was dedicated and unveiled in fall of 2016 and includes irrigation, regrading of the playing surface and the addition of a bleacher system. The Recreation and Parks Dept. was heavily involved in securing funding and the design of the project.

- d. The Town of Princess Anne has two short-range projects planned for Manokin River Park. The first project consists of the construction of a wildlife observation deck and walkway. The second project includes the installation of a bandstand, picnic pavilion and a playground. Manokin River Park received Community Parks and Playground Funds to construct a playground and a picnic area in-line with these plans in 2013.
- e. The Town of Princess Anne plans to continue its Garland Hayward Park project, a redevelopment project in partnership with University of Maryland Eastern Shore at a former clam processing plant. Short-range improvements include a new picnic pavilion, grills, restrooms, bleachers, lighting and landscaping.
- f. The Prince William Street pocket park is a mid-range project by the Town of Princess Anne that will use property currently owned by the town to construct the park.

Rehabilitation

Two facility rehabilitation projects are recommended:

- a. Rehabilitation of the Army National Guard Armory in the City of Crisfield, which the city is in the process of acquiring. This facility is currently providing indoor gymnasium space and other recreational activities for the Crisfield Salvation Army Youth Club.

No movement on this has occurred, although the city has investigated the cost of rehabilitation, the site incurred damages from Superstorm Sandy.

- b. Install restrooms and dugout roofing at the Crisfield Little League Fields.

Dugout roofing has taken place, no restroom at this time.

4. Other County Projects

The following project is in the approved FY12 County POS program and is funded by the State and County for completion in 2012:

- a. Rehabilitation of a portion of the Raccoon Point Regional Park to install picnic grills, picnic tables, permanent trash cans, and make landscaping and parking lot improvements.
A grill was added and grading of the parking lot occurred in 2013, improvements to this park are included in 2017 Program Open Space Plan.

Table 3:5 Somerset County Land Acquisition, Facility Development and Rehab Recommendations

Projects	Location	Description of LPPRP Recommendations	Est. Total Cost (\$1,000s)	Fiscal Yr.	Acres to be Acquired	Estimated Short-range ('12-'16) Costs (\$1,000s)			Estimated Mid-range ('17-'21) Costs (\$1,000s)		Estimated Long-range ('22-'27) Costs (\$1,000s)	
						Acquisition	Capital Development	Rehab.	Acquisition	Capital Development	Acquisition	Capital Development
ACQUISITION and DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS												
Burgess Americana Museum	Marion ara (Hudson's Corner)	Acquire building and/or site for permanent museum home	\$200	FY '12-'16	7	150	\$50					
S. Beckford Ave. Park	Town of Princess Anne	Acquire land (.53ac) in S. Beckford Ave. area to construct a park and playground	\$280	FY '17-'21	0.53				\$100	\$180		
Manokin River Greenway Trail	Town of Princess Anne	Acquire land and construct approx. 20 miles of hard/soft surface trail (est. \$100,000 per mi.) that connects areas of Princess Anne	\$2,000	FY 22-'27	N/A						\$1,000	\$1,000
Manokin River Park Extension	Town of Princess Anne	Extend Manokin River Park eastward toward Univ. of MD Eastern Shore and tie w/ proposed walking trail	\$205	FY 12-'16	N/A		\$250					
Pocomoke River Greenway Trail	Pocomoke River	Acquire land for soft surface trail segments along river (est. \$100,000)	N/A	FY '12-'16			N/A		N/A			
Rt 413 Rail Trail	Westover to Crisfield	Acquire land and construct 15-mile hard surface trail (est. \$100,000)	N/A	FY 12-'16			N/A		N/A			
Acquisition Cost			\$1,250			\$150			\$100		\$1,000	
Facility Dev. Cost			\$1,435.00				\$255			\$180		\$1,000
Total Cost			\$2.69			\$150	\$255		\$100	\$180	\$1,000	\$1,000
PARK AND RECREATION FACILITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS												
Centralized Indoor Rec. Complex	Westover	Construct an indoor recreation facility on existing land in Westover	\$4,500	FY 12-'16		\$4,500						
Somerset Intermediate Sch.	Westover	Build facilities for softball, baseball, football and a track with stadium	\$1,000	FY '12-'16		\$1,000						
Coast Guard Athletic Fields	City of Crisfield	Build facilities for softball, baseball, soccer and field hockey on property owned by Board of Ed.	\$350	FY '17-'21					\$350			
Manokin River Park	Town of Princess Anne	Install bandstand, picnic pavilion and playground	\$224	FY '12-'16		\$224						
Manokin River Park	Town of Princess Anne	Construct a wildlife observation deck and walkway	\$250	FY '12-'16		\$250						
Garland Hayward Park	Town of Princess Anne	Install a picnic pavilion, restrooms, a storage shed, bicycle racks, trash cans, picnic tables, grills, etc.	\$107	FY '12-'16		\$107						
Prince William St. Pocket Park	Town of Princess Anne	Construct a pocket park	\$150	FY '17-'21					\$150			
Total Cost			\$6,581			\$6,081			\$500			
PARK AND RECREATION FACILITY REHABILITATION PROJECTS												
Crisfield Nat. Guard Armory	City of Crisfield	Acquire building from MD Army Nat. Guard & rehab for City recreation use	\$1,000	FY '12-'16		\$1,000						
Crisfield Little League	City of Crisfield	Install restrooms & dugout roof	\$25	FY '12-'16		\$25						
Total			\$1,025			\$1,025						
GRAND TOTAL			\$10,291			\$10,291						

- *Projects highlighted in orange have been completed
- ** Projects in blue are in process of being completed
- *** Projects in green are in the planning phase/funding phase
- ****413 bike trail phase 1a has been completed from Marion to Crisfield.

5. Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Recommendations

Not listed in Table 3:6 are several projects recommended in the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area Management Plan or proposed by the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Council. Only two of these projects have a cost estimate, because others have not been conceived in sufficient detail. These projects are expected to develop without major support by the County, with funding by a variety of non-county sources.

- a. The Cedar Island Marsh Sanctuary Project is being developed by the Crisfield Heritage Foundation on 300 acres that comprised the former Jenkins Creek Environmental Center. The non-profit, in cooperation with other partners, plans to construct resource-related wetland boardwalk trails and observation stations. Project cost is estimated at \$2 million, with approximately \$1.5 million for land acquisition.
- b. The Ewell Pocket Park is currently being developed by the Department of Recreation and Parks, Department of Planning and Zoning and the Association of Realtors for a small pocket park on Smith Island. (See Figures 3:11)

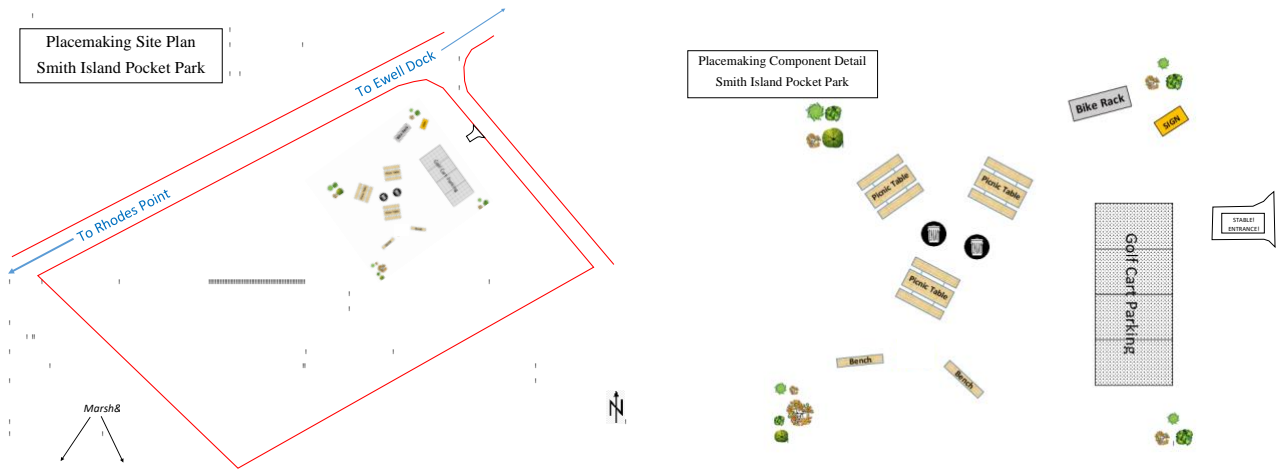
No action beyond a survey and site plan has occurred with this project.

- c. The Tangier Sound Natural History Initiative is envisioned to link existing State, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, and other protected lands with the Jenkins Creek/Cedar Island Marsh Sanctuary project (described above), the Glen L. Martin National Wildlife Refuge; and the Chesapeake Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve's Monie Bay Component. Linking these large natural resource lands together with an ecological theme will help the County implement its goals to enhance public access to the Bay and will also support efforts to boost eco-tourism. The Monie Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve is one of three such areas in the Chesapeake Bay region, and one of 29 Reserves in 23 states. Reserves are established to protect estuarine areas as natural field laboratories for research, monitoring and education. A field station is in the planning stages at the Drawbridge Farm Property of the Reserve. The Field Station will enhance research and educational opportunities in the area.
- d. The Bending Water Park Cultural Arts Center is a recommendation to develop a museum for the Accohannock Indians in the Marion area. No action, however a water trail has been mapped out.
- e. A Deal Island Skipjack Museum is recommended in the Deal Island and Wenona area to harbor the Bay's largest skipjack fleet.

Deal Island Skipjack Heritage Foundation recently received a grant (Summer 2016) to establish this museum.

- f. The Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Council and the Somerset County government plan to purchase six interpretive signs to be placed on Smith Island, as well as an observation deck equipped with a high-powered telescope. The goal of this project is to provide the visitor to Smith Island with additional information regarding the sights to be seen on the existing road from Ewell to Rhodes Point. The cost of the project is estimated at \$37,500 and is expected to be completed in the summer of 2012.

Figure 3:11 – Ewell Pocket Park – Smith Island



6. Consistency with State and Local Goals

Table 3:6 summarizes how the proposed development projects fulfill the state and county goals for recreation. This is a required table under the LPPRP preparation guidelines.

Table 3:6 – Goals Met by Acquisition and Development Recommendations

Project	Short	Mid	Long	State Goals Met (see table notes)	Local Goals Met (see table notes)	Notes
Acquisition and Development Projects						
Burgess Americana Museum				1, 2, 3, 4, 5	12	Encourages tourism
						Expands outdoor recreation opportunities
Manokin River Greenway Trail				1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	7, 9, 10, 11	Expands trail network
Manokin River Park Extension				1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	7, 9, 10, 11	Expands existing facility
Pocomoke River Greenway Trail				1, 2, 3, 5, 6	7, 9, 10, 11	Expands trail network
Rail Trail along MD 413				1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	7, 9, 10, 11	Expands trail network
Facility Development Projects						
Central Indoor Recreation						Meets County's need for indoor facilities
Coast Guard Property Playing						Expands existing school facilities
Garland Hayward Park Upgrades				1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	7, 9	Upgrades increase usability
Manokin River Park Bandstand, Pavilion and Playground						
Manokin River Park Observation						
						Expands outdoor recreation opportunities
Somerset Intermediate School						Maximizes existing school facilities
Facility Rehabilitation and Development Projects						
Crisfield Little League Ballfields						Upgrades improve usage of the facilities
Crisfield National Guard Armory						Upgrades improve usage of the facilities

Table notes are on the following page

Table Notes

State Goals	
1	Make a variety of quality recreational environments and opportunities readily accessible to all of its citizens, and thereby contribute to their physical and mental well-being.
2	Recognize and strategically use parks and recreation facilities as amenities to make communities, counties, and the State more desirable places to live, work, and visit.
3	Use State investment in parks, recreation, and open space to complement and mutually support the broader goals and objectives of local comprehensive / master plans.
4	To the greatest degree feasible, ensure that recreational land and facilities for local populations are conveniently located relative to population centers, are accessible without reliance on the automobile, and help to protect natural open spaces and resources.
5	Complement infrastructure and other public investments and priorities in existing communities and areas planned for growth through investment in neighborhood and community parks and facilities.
6	Continue to protect recreational open space and resource lands at a rate that equals or exceeds the rate that land is developed at a statewide level.
Local Goals	
7	Maximize existing recreation facilities and coordinate provision of park and recreation activities with school sites.
8	Build on existing recreation facilities in Westover to create a central indoor and outdoor recreation hub that can serve the needs of the entire county.
9	Locate new facilities in growth areas that are accessible to the majority of residents, but also provide recreation opportunities to serve populations that are far from existing recreation facilities.
10	Coordinate and maximize use of programs between the County, municipalities, and the University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES).
11	Enhance public access to the Bay and elsewhere through more trails and bike paths.
12	Promote the County's park and recreation program as a draw for attracting new residents and businesses.
13	Improve communication between the County and its two municipalities on recreation.

7. Funding

The total program for County and municipal land acquisition, facility development and redevelopment costs as shown in Table 3:6 is approximately \$10.3 million. This averages out to \$686,000 per year to 2027, the time frame for this LPPRP. POS grants have

averaged approximately \$0.135 million since 2005 and while the County is contributing towards capital project funding (for example, \$87,000 in FY 2012), this leaves a large shortfall. School construction funds will likely be used for the projects at schools. Nevertheless, in order to pursue the recommended projects listed in this LPPRP, other funding will be necessary.

The County has been actively investigating alternative funding sources for the construction of the Central Indoor Recreation Complex. The County will also likely want to partner with the various non-profits involved in implementing the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Plan as these entities can often help leverage funding from private and other public funding sources. Consideration could also be given to increasing staffing to pursue grants, recognizing that such staff can be self-supporting.

In summary, the projected costs for proposed projects will exceed current County funding levels and will require renewed commitment in the current fiscal environment, especially with recent cut backs in POS funding. The challenge is for the County to pursue all available funding sources and opportunities to leverage funding with municipal, non-profit organizations, and the State's POS program.

D. Land Acquisition Goal

Somerset County has adopted the default State recommended land acquisition goal of 30 acres per 1,000 population, which is 694 acres in 2010 (Table 3:8). The County currently exceeds this goal by 444 acres. The County had been certified by the Maryland Department of Planning as meeting its acreage goal pursuant to Natural Resources Article §5-905 c (1)(ii), but this is no longer the case due to updated guidelines requirements. We believe that this 2017 version of the LPPRP based on our Proximity Analysis and other metrics demonstrates that we have met our land acquisition goal.

When Somerset County states that they have reached, their Acquisition Goal the statement is based on the rationale that the area Somerset covers naturally has several gaps, but the land in those regions is predominately agricultural and marshland, therefor development of parks in those locales would be difficult logistically and not serve a large number of people. However, we are committed to the creation of parks and recreational areas using land that is already owned by the County. Deal Island, Rumbley, Crisfield and Marion have tracts of County owned land that can be developed into recreational areas and are reflected in our long-term goals. This in our estimation, in conjunction with our meetings with county

residents, input from patrons of our parks and programming and responses to surveys, is the best use of County and State resources to ensure that residents of Somerset County are well served in respect to parks and recreation

Table 3:7 – Somerset County Land Acquisition, Facility Development and Rehabilitation Recommendations

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Year	Current/Projected Population	Rec. & Open Space Acreage Goal (30 ac. per 1000 pop.	County & Town Recreation & Land	County & Town Natural Resources Land	Applicable State and Fed. Land	Total	Acreage Above Goal
2010	23,141	694	792	0	347	1,138	444
2022	24,760	743					395

Notes:

- 1) Column 2 shows the total acreage goal of 30 acres per 1,000 population (694 acres in 2010).
- 2) Column 3 comprises 100 percent of county and municipal recreational land.
- 3) Column 4 includes the 66-acre County owned Deal Island Wilderness Area, of which one-third or 22 acres counts towards meeting the State recommended acreage goal (Column 2)
- 4) There are 3,519 acres of State-owned recreational lands. Since this exceeds 60 acres per 1,000 persons (60 x 23.1 or 1,386 acres), 15 acres per thousand persons (15x23.1 or 346.5 acres) may be used to meet the acreage goal.
- 5) There are 47,869 acres of State and Federal open space and natural resource lands that may not be counted toward the county's acreage goal because they are classified as Natural Resource Lands.

E. Program Development Summary

This section summarizes Somerset County’s program development strategy for recreation and parks. Recommended actions on the part of the State are noted.

1. Acquire property for two park and recreation projects.

Approximately 7.5 acres of land acquisition are recommended for two projects that will then be developed at a cost of approximately \$480,000. One of these is a .5-acre park in the Town of Princess Anne. The other acquisition is for the Burgess Museum collection;

2. Request State assistance in determining feasibility of trail proposals.

The technical expertise and financial resources of the State Highway Administration and the Department of Transportation is needed by the County to begin investigating the feasibility of the recommended trails system – *Previously described*

3. Implement the proposed facility development program.

The County's facility development program totals \$4.5 million to construct an indoor recreation complex at the current Long Centralized Athletic Complex. The County is currently pursuing multiple avenues for funding the project in addition to utilizing POS funding.

4. Increase coordination between the County and its municipalities.

The County should seek ways to increase coordination and cooperation among its municipalities and others regarding recreation facilities and programming. The County's Recreation and Parks Commission should play a central role in this effort, and. Descriptions of actions regarding this recommendation are in previous pages.

5. Continue County involvement with the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area

Management Plan.

The County should continue to be an active partner in implementing the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area Management Plan. Financial assistance may be needed from the State in order to implement some of the LESHAMP projects – ***State, County and non-profit action.***

F. Five Year Goals

1. Continue to pursue funding and local and state legislature support for a planned indoor facility in Westover.
2. Expand existing Centralized Athletic Facility in Westover to accommodate growth, new programming and tournament play.
3. Continue to expand Trail Mix initiative with the goal of transitioning to a permanent and sustainable public health initiative and vehicle for tourism.
4. Continue to pursue funding for construction and design of phases II and III of the route 413 hiker biker trail.

CHAPTER 4 - AGRICULTURAL AND NATURAL RESOURCE LANDS

This chapter discusses the extent to which progress has been made toward achievement of the agricultural land preservation and natural resource land conservation goals and objectives identified in the 2009 State LPPRP and the 2012 and 2017 County LPPRP.

A. Agricultural Land Preservation

1. Introduction

Somerset County has a long and rich agricultural tradition, and it continues to play an important economic and cultural role in the life of the County. Agricultural land is widespread in Somerset County both on upland areas and on lowland areas that have been drained. Figure II-1 shows the distribution of agricultural land in 2010.

The USDA Census of Agriculture defines a farm as “any place from which \$1,000 or more of agricultural products were produced and sold, or normally would have been sold, in the census year.” The 2017 Census counted 59,440 acres of land in farms in Somerset County, down 9 percent from 2012. The number of farms also decreased during that period from 266 in 2012 to 255 in 2017 (Figure 4:1). Some other key points from Table 4:1 are as follows:

- Poultry sales made up the greatest portion of agricultural products sold in the County
- Though the number of farms and total acreage of farmland decreased from the previous Census, the average size of a farm in Somerset County increased to 233 acres
- A total of 425 persons were classified as “Producers,” or in other words, farmers
- The largest number of farms, 81, or 32%, are small farms in the 10-to-49-acre size range

A 2016 study of the economic impacts of the poultry industry on Maryland’s Eastern Shore found that in addition to the almost 4,700 people that are employed in the poultry industry,

another 2,200 jobs are generated in supplier and ancillary industries. Each of these 6,900 jobs pays on the average \$66,500 in wages and benefits, totaling almost \$460 million. In addition to the jobs created directly by the poultry industry, the local economy benefits indirectly as well, as business is generated for firms that appear to be unrelated to the poultry industry, such as banking, real estate and accounting. In 2016, the industry was responsible for as much as \$2.04 billion in total activity throughout Maryland's Eastern Shore.

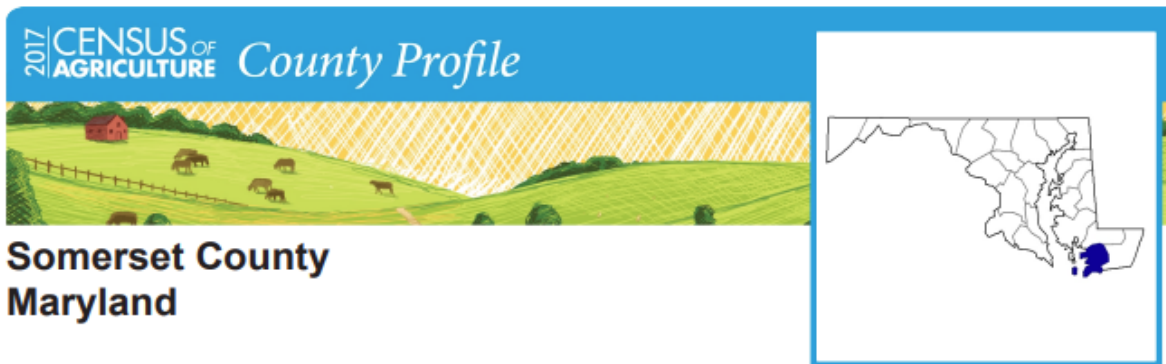
Table 4:1 – Selected Agricultural Statistics 2007 and 2002

	2007		2002		Change to 2002 to 2007	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Land in County (acres)	206,932		206,932			
Number of farms	329		301		28	9%
Land in farms (acres)	60,255	29%	56,650	27%	3,605	6%
Land in farms by land use (acres)						
Cropland	35,392	59%	38,720	64%	(3,328)	-9%
Woodland	15,005	25%	12,971	22%	2,034	16%
Pasture	1,228	2%	781	1%	447	57%
Other (house lots, roads)	8,630	14%	4,178	7%	4,452	107%
Number of Farms by Size						-39%
1-9 acres	22	7%	36	12%	(14)	14%
10-49 acres	109	33%	96	32%	13	23%
50-179 acres	60	32%	86	29%	20	13%
180 – 499 acres	23	18%	53	18%	7	15%
500 – 999 acres	9	7%	20	7%	3	15%
1000+ acres		3%	10	3%	(1)	-10%
Market Value of Products Sold \$ millions						
Crops (including nursery & greenhouse)	\$14.9	8%	\$8.9	7%	\$6.0	68%
Livestock and Poultry	\$177.6	92%	\$118.4	93%	\$59.2	50%
Total	\$192.6		\$127.3		\$65.3	51%
Market Value of Land & Buildings \$ millions						
	\$382.1		\$141.1		\$241.0	171%

Top Crops (acres)						
Corn for grain	15,237	43%	13,196	34%	2,041	15%
Soybeans	14,386	41%	19,175	50%	(4,789)	-25%
Forage (hay, grass)	1,116	3%	1,409	4%	(293)	-21%
Wheat	4,147	12%	4,793	12%	(646)	-13%
Chickens sold (millions)	58.1		63.9		(6)	-9%
Principal Farm Operator Characteristics						
Farming as primary occupation	155	47%	196	65%	(41)	-21%
Other as primary occupation	174	53%	105	35%	69	66%
Average age	58.3		55		3.3	6%
Hired Farm Labor (full & part-time)	348		680		(332)	-49%

Source: USDA, 2002 and 2007 Censuses of Agriculture

Figure 4:1 – 2017 Census of Agriculture, Somerset



Somerset County Maryland

Total and Per Farm Overview, 2017 and change since 2012

	2017	% change since 2012
Number of farms	255	-11
Land in farms (acres)	59,440	-9
Average size of farm (acres)	233	+2
Total (\$)		
Market value of products sold	262,201,000	+20
Government payments	1,875,000	+13
Farm-related income	2,534,000	-4
Total farm production expenses	179,636,000	+3
Net cash farm income	86,975,000	+80
Per farm average (\$)		
Market value of products sold	1,028,241	+34
Government payments (average per farm receiving)	14,208	+52
Farm-related income	18,770	-3
Total farm production expenses	704,454	+15
Net cash farm income	341,079	+102

11 Percent of state agriculture sales

Share of Sales by Type (%)

Crops	8
Livestock, poultry, and products	92

Land in Farms by Use (%) ^a

Cropland	64
Pastureland	1
Woodland	26
Other	9

Acres irrigated: 295

(Z)% of land in farms

Land Use Practices (% of farms)

No till	24
Reduced till	12
Intensive till	11
Cover crop	18

Farms by Value of Sales

	Number	Percent of Total ^a
Less than \$2,500	84	33
\$2,500 to \$4,999	11	4
\$5,000 to \$9,999	7	3
\$10,000 to \$24,999	15	6
\$25,000 to \$49,999	6	2
\$50,000 to \$99,999	12	5
\$100,000 or more	120	47

Farms by Size

	Number	Percent of Total ^a
1 to 9 acres	27	11
10 to 49 acres	81	32
50 to 179 acres	75	29
180 to 499 acres	43	17
500 to 999 acres	19	7
1,000 + acres	10	4



United States Department of Agriculture
National Agricultural Statistics Service

www.nass.usda.gov/AgCensus

Market Value of Agricultural Products Sold

	Sales (\$1,000)	Rank in State ^b	Counties Producing Item	Rank in U.S. ^b	Counties Producing Item
Total	262,201	3	23	337	3,077
Crops	22,101	16	23	1,588	3,073
Grains, oilseeds, dry beans, dry peas	20,931	13	23	1,124	2,916
Tobacco	-	-	5	-	323
Cotton and cottonseed	-	-	-	-	647
Vegetables, melons, potatoes, sweet potatoes	985	16	23	757	2,821
Fruits, tree nuts, berries	(D)	21	23	(D)	2,748
Nursery, greenhouse, floriculture, sod	(D)	(D)	23	(D)	2,601
Cultivated Christmas trees, short rotation woody crops	-	-	20	-	1,384
Other crops and hay	114	23	23	2,669	3,040
Livestock, poultry, and products	240,100	1	23	151	3,073
Poultry and eggs	239,447	1	23	32	3,007
Cattle and calves	117	22	23	2,674	3,055
Milk from cows	(D)	17	18	(D)	1,892
Hogs and pigs	(D)	22	22	(D)	2,856
Sheep, goats, wool, mohair, milk	(D)	17	23	(D)	2,984
Horses, ponies, mules, burros, donkeys	5	21	22	2,367	2,970
Aquaculture	256	9	15	197	1,251
Other animals and animal products	-	-	22	-	2,878

Total Producers ^c	425	Percent of farms that:	Top Crops in Acres ^d	
Sex		Have internet access	77	
Male	290	Farm organically	1	
Female	135	Sell directly to consumers	3	
Age		Hire farm labor	44	
<35	34	Are family farms	95	
35 – 64	243			
65 and older	148			
Race			Livestock Inventory (Dec 31, 2017)	
American Indian/Alaska Native	-		Broilers and other meat-type chickens	12,451,578
Asian	45		Cattle and calves	518
Black or African American	5		Goats	444
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	-		Hogs and pigs	(D)
White	370		Horses and ponies	70
More than one race	5		Layers	(D)
Other characteristics			Pullets	-
Hispanic, Latino, Spanish origin	-		Sheep and lambs	393
With military service	43		Turkeys	-
New and beginning farmers	115			

See 2017 Census of Agriculture, U.S. Summary and State Data, for complete footnotes, explanations, definitions, commodity descriptions, and methodology.

^a May not add to 100% due to rounding. ^b Among counties whose rank can be displayed. ^c Data collected for a maximum of four producers per farm.

^d Crop commodity names may be shortened; see full names at www.nass.usda.gov/go/cropnames.pdf. * Position below the line does not indicate rank.

(D) Withheld to avoid disclosing data for individual operations. (NA) Not available. (Z) Less than half of the unit shown. (-) Represents zero.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

Taken from the website,
https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2017/Online_Resources/County_Profiles/Maryland/index.php

2. Goals

The County Comprehensive Plan seeks to preserve the agricultural land base by restricting growth, and particularly unplanned sprawl, from diluting the rural character of the County. Key goals in the Comprehensive Plan are:

- Encourage growth in selected nodes or communities so as to preserve valuable farmland and other sensitive areas (Goal 2a).
- Continue to investigate the advisability of a new Agricultural Zone which would restrict residential development other than farm-related uses (Goal 2e).
- Continue the County's commitment to its agricultural base, especially the continuing farming of prime agricultural soils. Encourage the establishment of agricultural districts which discourage residential subdivision and sprawl (Goal 6e).

The County has not established Priority Preservation Areas (PPA) in its Comprehensive Plan. Somerset's Plan is required to be updated in 2020. During the update possibly including PPA's will be considered.

The State's goals for Agricultural Land Preservation are shown in the box on the next page. County goals are consistent with the State's goals. The County has not adopted a specific agricultural land preservation acreage goal.

3. 2005 LPPRP Recommendations

The 2005 LPPRP recommended program development strategy included the following:

1. Recognize the importance of preserving agricultural land as a key element of Somerset County's economy. Adopt a goal for agricultural land preservation.
2. Adopt zoning that is protective of agricultural land resources.
3. Create an agricultural preservation focus area.
4. Apply to create a Rural Legacy Area (RLA).
5. Revise the County's transfer of development rights (TDR) program.
6. Increase State funding for the MALPF program to create more interest in the program in Somerset County.

State of Maryland Goals for Agriculture Land Preservation

1. Permanently preserve agricultural land capable of supporting a reasonable diversity of agricultural production.
2. Protect natural, forestry, and historic resources and the rural character of the landscape associated with Maryland's farmland.
3. To the greatest degree possible, concentrate preserved land in large, relatively contiguous blocks to effectively support long-term protection of resources and resource-based industries.
4. Limit the intrusion of development and its impacts on rural resources and resource-based industries.
5. Preserve approximately 1,030,000 acres of productive agricultural land by 2020.
6. Ensure good return on public investment by concentrating State agricultural land preservation funds in areas where the investment is reasonably well supported by both local investment and land use management programs.
7. Work with local governments to:
 - Establish preservation areas, goals and strategies through local comprehensive planning processes that address and complement State goals;
 - In each area designated for preservation, develop a shared understanding of goals and the strategy to achieve them among rural landowners, the public at large, and State and local government officials;
 - Protect the equity interests of rural landowners in preservation areas by ensuring sufficient public commitment and investment in preservation through easement acquisition and incentive programs;
 - Use local land use management authority effectively to protect public investment in preservation by managing development in rural preservation areas; and
 - Establish effective measures to support profitable agriculture, including assistance in production, marketing, and the practice of stewardship, so that farming remains a desirable way of life for both the farmer and the public at large.

4. Progress

4.1. Recognize the importance of preserving agricultural land as a key element of Somerset County's economy. Adopt a goal for agricultural land preservation.

As noted in Section A.1, agriculture continues to be a vital element the County's economy supporting jobs and economic spin-off activity well in excess of the initial investment value in the industry. In a County with limited additional economic development options agriculture needs to be supported, nurtured, and protected.

Agriculture is a very important component of Somerset County's economy. In

2009 there were 10,908 jobs in the County of which 7,791 were private (non-

government) employment. 1,056 of these jobs were in agricultural services, forestry and fishing¹.

The 2005 LPPRP included a recommendation that the County adopt an agricultural land preservation goal of 25,000 acres. The County has not formally adopted this goal, but it will be reconsidered as part of the Comprehensive Plan update currently underway planned for 2023.

Preserved Agricultural Land

Approximately 14,049 acres of agricultural lands in Somerset County are permanently preserved through three programs/organizations. This is an increase of 2,195 acres since the 2017 LPPRP (Table 4:2 and Figure 4:1).

Protected forest land is discussed below in Section B.

Table 4:2 Protected Agricultural Land

Easement Type	Acres
Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (as of June 2021)	6,349
Rural Legacy (Somerset Portion, as of June 2022)	1,642
Maryland Environmental Trust (as of Dec 2021)	6,058
Total	14,049

Sources: 1. MALPF easements: Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation, Annual Report Fiscal Year 2021 .
 2. Lower Shore Land Trust correspondence.
 3. MET Landmarks 2022 Issue: <https://dnr.maryland.gov/met/Documents/PDFs/MET-NEWSLETTER-spring2022.pdf>

Somerset County has participated in the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF) program since the 1980s. This program preserves agricultural land by working with private landowners to sell their development rights to MALPF while retaining the right to continue to use the land for farming. As of June 2021, a total of 6,349 acres in 57 easements have been permanently preserved through the MALPF program².

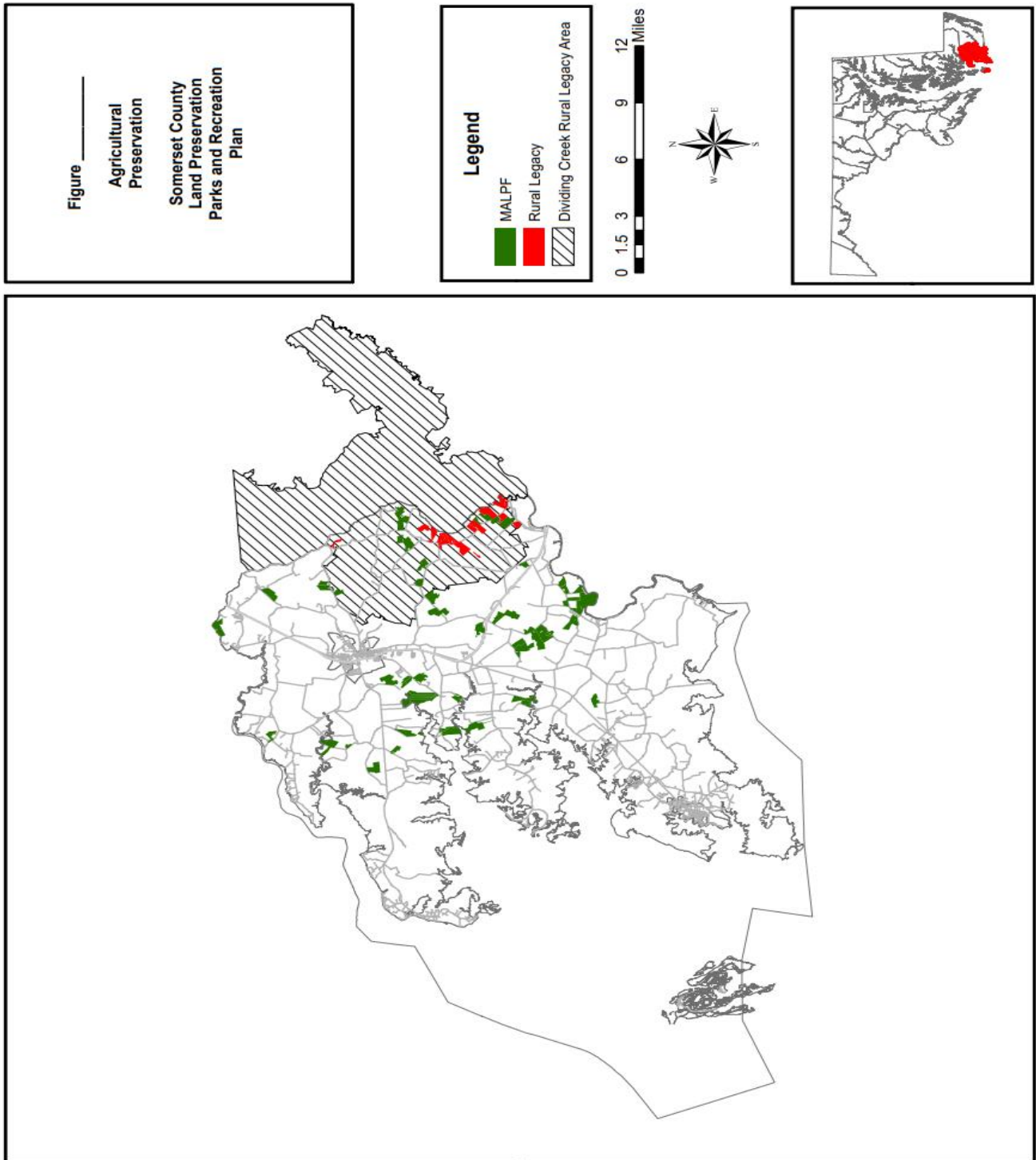
Until 2008 the MALPF preservation program was a two-step process involving the creation of temporary (5-year renewable) Agricultural Preservation Districts followed by sale of permanent easements. Somerset County helped administer the Agricultural Preservation

¹ Source: Maryland Department of Planning using historic data from U.S. BEA Table CA 25N, June 2011
² MALPF Annual Report Fiscal Year 2021

District program. MALPF now uses a one-step easement process with no district program. Land in districts is still preserved temporarily, but landowners can remove their land from the program. There are 13 agricultural districts established prior to 2008 comprising approximately 1,465 acres.

Approximately 1,642 acres are protected through Maryland's Rural Legacy Program (see Section 4.4 below).

Figure 4:2 – Agricultural Preservation



Land trusts are non-profit organizations created by interested citizens to accept, monitor and enforce conservation easements donated by landowners. Easement donors can receive significant tax benefits at the Federal, State and local property tax levels.

The Maryland Environmental Trust (MET) is a land trust that operates statewide. It holds approximately 6,058 acres in easements in Somerset County. Most of these easements are on natural resources land, a number are easements on active farmland and are included on Table 4:2.

The Lower Shore Land Trust is a local land trust that operates in Somerset County. It co-holds several easements with the MET.

Figure IV-21 shows the location of the areas protected through MALPF and Rural Legacy in the County. Most of the easements and districts are in the central part of the County with clusters near Kingston and west of Princess Anne.

4.2. Adopt zoning that is protective of agricultural land resources.

Somerset County has not changed the zoning in its rural area since the 2005 LPPRP. As noted in Chapter 2, most agricultural land is in the CO Zone (1 dwelling per 5 acres) and in the AR Zone where the minimum lot size is one acre, although lots tend to be larger due to health department space requirements for septic systems.

There have been attempts in the past to apply more protective zoning. In 1997 County staff and the Planning and Zoning Commission recommended a major change in the AR district that would have permitted only 10 percent of a parcel to be subdivided into lots smaller than 20 acres. This change would have applied to an area in the north east portion of the County. There was considerable opposition to the proposal and ultimately it was not supported by the County Commissioners.

Development pressure in Somerset County is low, and the amount of subdivision activity in the County has declined since the mid 2000s (Table 4:3).

The preceding discussion suggests that more protective zoning may not be needed. The question of appropriate development density in the rural area will be reviewed as part of the Comprehensive Plan update.

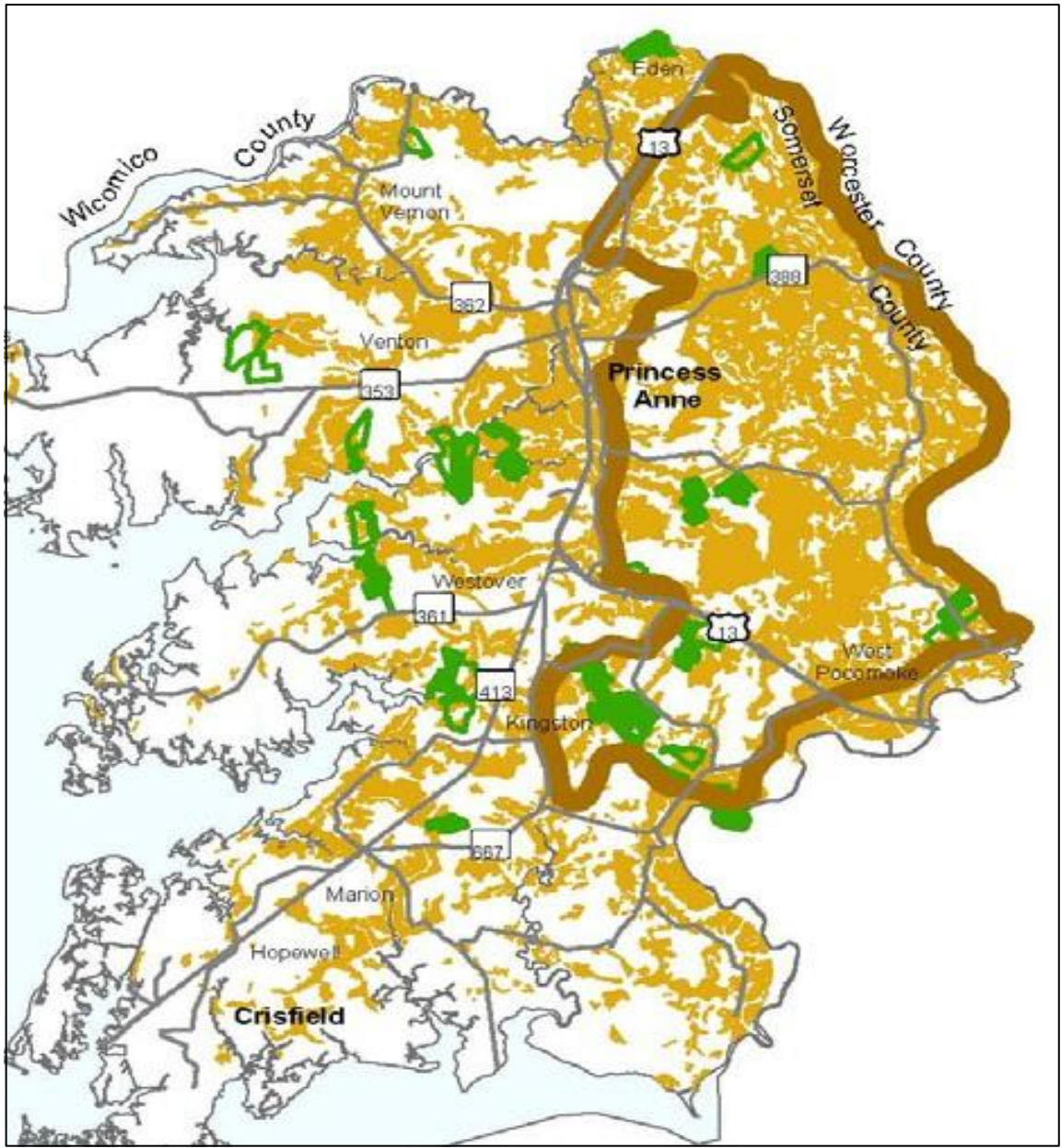
Table 4:3 – Lots Filed for Creation by Subdivision

YEAR	LOTS FILED OR IN APPLICATION PROCESS FOR SUBDIVISION
1999	30
2000	38
2001	9
2002	67
2003	10
2004	53
2005	133
2006	112
2007	35
2008	48
2009	19
2010	30
2011	5
TOTAL	589
AVE. PER YEAR	45

4.3. Create an agricultural preservation focus area

The 2005 LPPRP, after extensive analysis, recommended an agricultural preservation focus area in the north east part of the County that would be the focus of agricultural preservation efforts (Figure IV-2). While the County has not formally designated this area as a focus area, the Dividing Creek Rural Legacy Area has been designated in much of its eastern portion (see next section).

Figure 4:3 – Agricultural Preservation Focus Area from the 2005 LPPRP



 Agricultural Land
Preservation Focus Area

4.4. *Apply to create a Rural Legacy Area (RLA)*

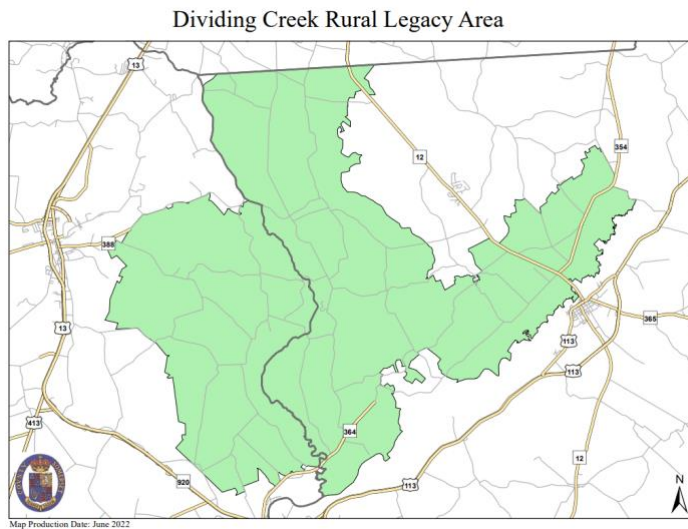
The General Assembly established the Rural Legacy Program in 1997 to protect areas of large, contiguous blocks of land of rural landscapes, including agricultural, natural, cultural, and forestry resources.

The Dividing Creek Rural Legacy Area (RLA) was designated by the State in 2008. It comprises 67,812 acres located in Somerset and Worcester Counties and is co-sponsored by the two counties and by The Lower Shore Land Trust (see Figures IV-1). The Area provides for the conservation of prime farmland, working forests and ten miles of shoreline of the Dividing Creek, which connects to the Pocomoke River, a major tributary to the Chesapeake Bay. The area also includes one of the most pristine and ecologically significant watershed basins on the mid-Atlantic. Exemplary plant and wildlife habitats including Bald Cypress and Atlantic White Cedar swamps, forest interior and migratory songbirds, colonial water birds and the federally-endangered Delmarva Fox Squirrel are found within the Area. In 2020, the portion of the RLA in Somerset County was expanded westerly by 12,285 acres, more than doubling the area covered by the Dividing Creek RLA in Somerset County. This expansion created opportunities for preservation of prime farmlands and properties with shorelines along creeks in the Pocomoke River and Manokin River watersheds as well as protecting large blocks of woodlands that offer habitat for Forest Interior Dwelling Species.

As noted in Table IV-2 approximately 1,642 acres in the Somerset County portion of the RLA have been protected using Rural Legacy funds. In total, approximately 9,905 acres in the RLA in Somerset County have been protected through various programs³.

³ Lower Shore Land Trust correspondence.

Figure 4:4 – Dividing Creek Rural Legacy Area



Source: Somerset County Department of Technical and Community Services

4.5. *Revise the County's transfer of development rights (TDR) program.*

Somerset County created a transfer of development rights (TDR) program as part of its updated zoning ordinance that was adopted in 2000⁴. Under the program any property in the AR or CO districts may be a sending area. The program has not been used because of lack of demand in receiving areas. Based on the low development pressure in the County discussed above, this lack of demand is unlikely to change.

4.6. *Increase State funding for the MALPF program to create more interest in the program in Somerset County.*

FY 2023 easement acquisition funds, allocated to MALPF by the Maryland General Assembly, saw a major increase from previous years. As a result, the allowable number of applications accepted from each County was increased to a maximum of 21. Somerset County submitted 13 MALPF Easement applications to the State for FY 2023 consideration. With an increase in funding for the MALPF program, the number of offers at the local level

⁴ In TDR program development rights are transferred from a (rural) sending area to a receiving area. The sending area is protected and the receiving area may use the development density that would have been used in the sending area.

will likely increase, which will possibly lead to an increased interest in the program and a continued rise in the number of applications submitted in subsequent rounds.

B. Natural Resources Conservation

1. Introduction

Natural resource lands help maintain the County's rural character, the attractiveness of developed areas, and provide wildlife habitat, natural systems filtration of pollutants, and opportunities for resource-based recreational pursuits. Somerset County's ubiquitous tidal and non-tidal wetlands dictate the pattern of development as well as the pattern of agriculture and forest lands. These wetlands and the County's rural character provide opportunities to increase resource-based recreation and eco-tourism.

2. Goals

The County Comprehensive Plan contains a series of goals that form the basis for County policies, regulations, and implementation programs for natural resource conservation.

The County's Comprehensive Plans goals for natural resource conservation are:

- Goal 6 (a) Respect sensitive environmental areas, such as floodplains, wetlands and the Critical Area Zone adjacent to streams, rivers and the Chesapeake Bay;
- Goal 6 (b) Retain and enhance wildlife management areas, riparian forest; greenways, scenic areas and unique open space areas;
- Goal 6 (c) Discourage new development in areas where there is a high potential for contaminating the ground water, and discourage development where the land is considered unsafe due to unstable soils, steep slopes or potential flooding or erosion;
- Goal 6 (d) Encourage planning regulations with emphasis on cluster development which will preserve environmentally sensitive areas and promote good environmental practices;
- Goal 6 (f) Maintain and preserve wildlife management areas, and expand these programs to include areas of unique scenic, geological or archeological significance; and
- Goal 6 (h) Adopt and enforce development standards to retain natural on-site features such as mature trees, hedgerows and natural drainage patterns. Encourage developer compliance with good planning practices with incentives.

Other Comprehensive Plan goals under economic development, land use, and infrastructure support the Plan's environmental goals and give further support to State natural resource goals. For example:

- Goal 2 (a) Encourage development in selected nodes or communities in order to preserve valuable farmland and other sensitive areas; and
- Goal 2 (e) Restrict residential development, other than farm related, in areas of A and B1-type soils where septic fields can penetrate ground water

The State's goals for conservation of natural resource lands are shown in the box below.

The County's goals broadly encompass the State's natural resource land conservation goals such as protecting and conserving natural resources, using easements and districts to protect sensitive and agricultural lands, and preserving the cultural and economic value of natural resources. Generally, the County's goals address the regulation of natural resources whereas the State's goals have a broader natural resource land conservation emphasis. State goals relating to GreenPrint and the concept of green infrastructure are not directly addressed by the Comprehensive Plan because the concept was not fully conceived at the time the Plan was developed.

State of Maryland Goals for Natural Resource Land Conservation

1. Identify, protect and restore lands and waterways in Maryland that support important aquatic and terrestrial natural resources and ecological functions, through combined use of the following techniques:

- Public land acquisition and stewardship;
- Private land conservation easements and stewardship practices through purchased or donated easement programs;
- Local land use management plans and procedures that conserve natural resources and environmentally sensitive areas and minimize impacts to resource lands when development occurs.

- Support and incentives for resource-based economies that increase retention of forests, wetlands, or agricultural lands;
- Avoid and minimize impacts of publicly funded infrastructure development on natural resources; and

2. Focus conservation and restoration activities on priority areas, according to a strategic framework such as GreenPrint.

3. Conserve and restore species of concern and important habitat types that fall outside the green infrastructure: rock outcrops, karst systems, caves, shale barren communities, grasslands, shoreline beach and dune systems, mud flats, non-forested islands, etc.

4. Develop a more comprehensive inventory of natural resource lands and environmentally sensitive areas to assist State and local implementation programs.

5. Assess the combined ability of State and local programs to:

- Expand and connect forests, farmlands, and other natural lands as a network of contiguous green infrastructure.
- Protect critical terrestrial and aquatic habitats, biological communities, and populations.
- Manage watersheds in ways that protect conserve, and restore stream corridors, riparian forest buffers, wetlands, floodplains, and aquifer recharge areas and their associated hydrologic and water quality functions.
- Adopt coordinated land and watershed management strategies that recognize the critical links between growth management and aquatic biodiversity and fisheries production; and
- Support a productive forestland base and forest resource industry, emphasizing the economic viability of privately owned forestland.

6. Establish measurable objectives for natural resource conservation and an integrated State/local strategy to achieve them through State and local implementation programs.

3. Local Priorities for Natural Lands and Resources

Respecting sensitive environmental areas and retaining and enhancing wildlife management areas, riparian forest; greenways, scenic areas and unique open space areas are overarching County goals. Within this framework the only area specifically designated as a conservation priority is the Dividing Creek Rural Legacy Area. The Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area is also designated but covers the whole county and, while it promotes conservation, it does so in the context of promoting resource-based recreation and eco-tourism.

An extensive amount of natural resource lands in Somerset County is permanently protected. Figure 4:5 provides a summary of these lands. Note that these lands do not include recreation lands shown on Figure 3:1.

A detailed analysis in the 2005 LPPRP indicated that as of 2005 protected natural resource lands comprised approximately 122,000 acres, or almost 60 percent of County. These lands were permanently or extensively protected from development through public and private ownership, easement, or regulations. The analysis was organized to avoid double counting acreages in different categories. More land has been protected since 2005 so the percentage of protected land would be higher today, perhaps up to 65 percent⁵.

⁵ Budget resources precluded a complete update of the 2005 analysis for this 2022 LPPRP.

Figure 4:5 – Protected Lands Acres Category

Protected Lands Acres by Category

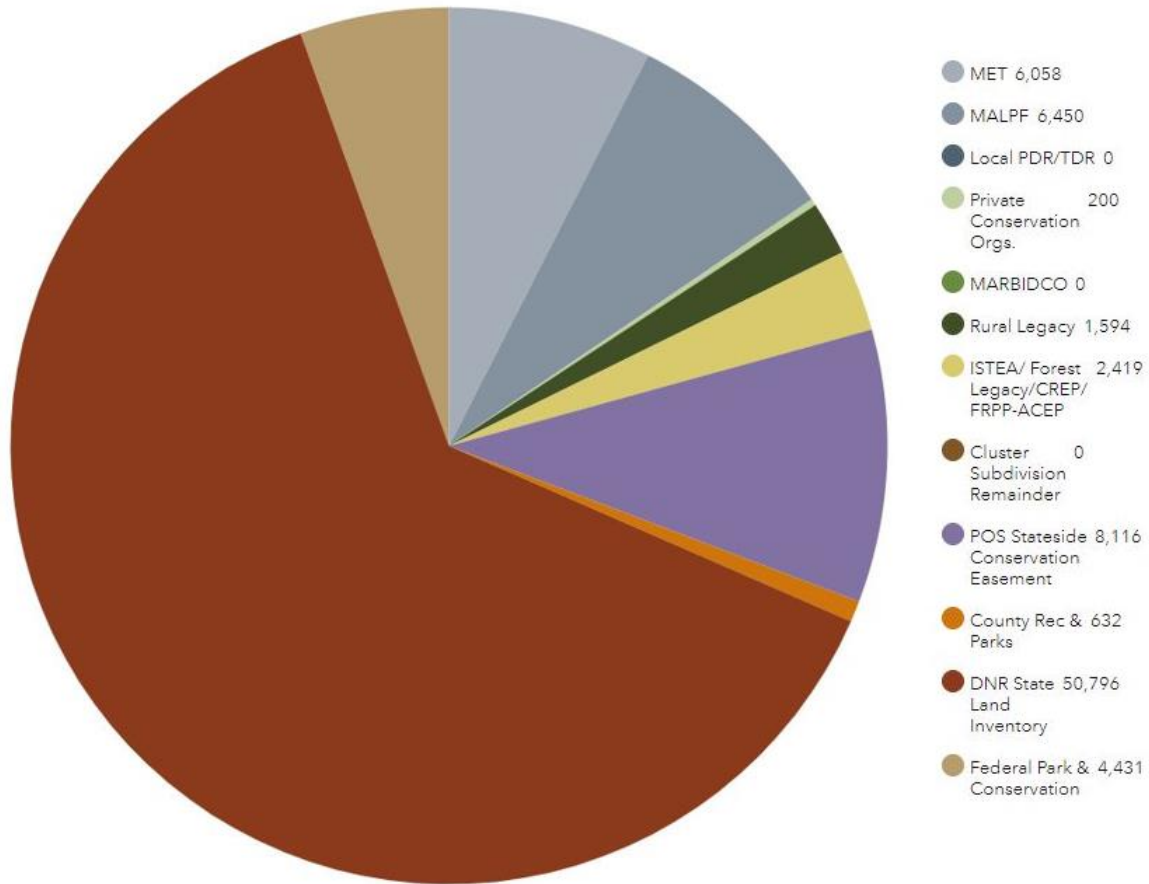
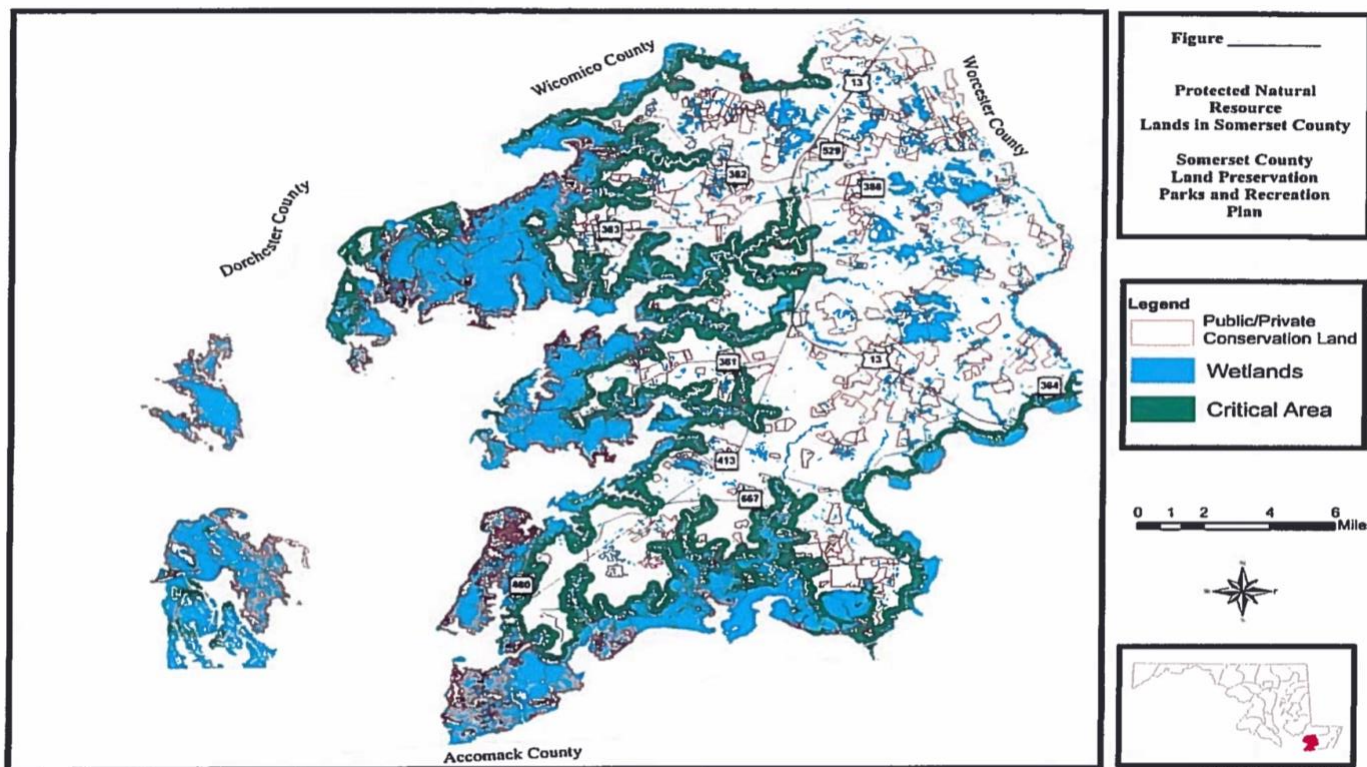


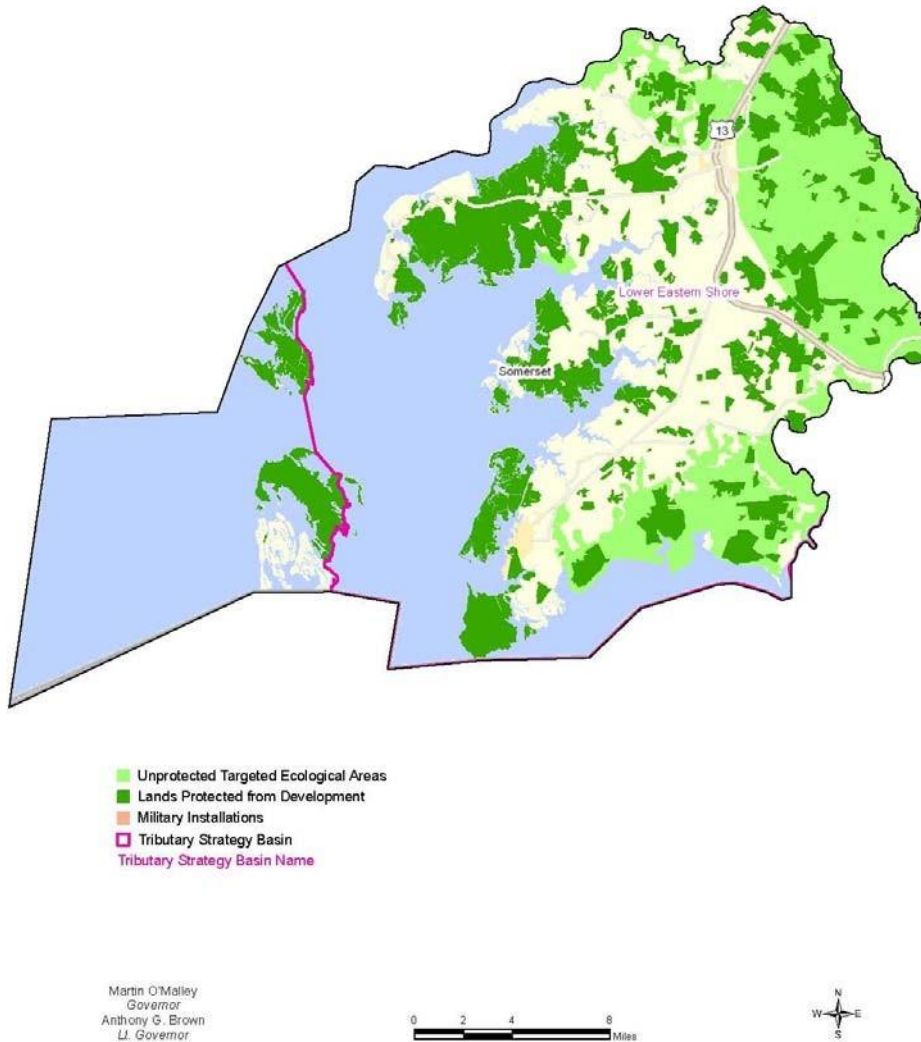
Figure 4:6 – Protected Natural Resource Lands in Somerset County



The County’s protected Natural Resource Lands and designated conservation areas are generally consistent with the State’s GreenPrint conservation priorities. These are identified as “Targeted Ecological Areas” through Maryland’s GreenPrint program and are preferred for Stateside Program Open Space funding based on their high ecological value (see Figure IV- 6).

A comparison of Figures IV-4 and IV-6 illustrates how the protected lands and designated conservation areas closely correlate with the Targeted Ecological Areas. For example, the distribution of wetlands, public and private conservation lands, and the Dividing Creek Rural Legacy area east of US 13 closely mirror the Targeted Ecological Areas in this part of the County.

Figure 4:7 – Somerset County GreenPrint



Source: MD Dept. of Natural Resources, <http://www.greenprint.maryland.gov>

4. County Implementation Program

County programs for natural resource land conservation and protection are guided by the Comprehensive Plan. The Plan builds upon the recognition that large areas of protected and sensitive environmental lands form the basic physical and policy framework around which the County's implementation regulations for protecting natural resource lands are formed.

a. *Planning Programs*

The following are additional planning programs, initiatives, data resources and inventories that are used by the County to implement its natural resource land conservation policies:

The 1998 Maryland Clean Water Action Plan evaluated the County's nine sub-watersheds for their ability to achieve water quality and other natural resource goals as discussed in Chapter 2, Section A (3). That plan led to development of a county action strategy in 2002 for the conservation and restoration of the 59,400-acre Manokin River watershed.

The County participated in the State's Tributary Strategies program and is now participating in developing TMDL implementation plans by developing a Watershed Implementation Plan (see discussion below).

The County uses available State and County inventories of land cover, natural resource lands, habitats of rare, threatened and endangered species, FIDS habitat, Natural Heritage Areas and ecologically significant areas, and other environmental features in implementing its growth and natural resource conservation policies. The County also monitors building permit and subdivision activity to track development trends. Specifically, the County uses GIS layers which identify sensitive areas when development or disturbance activities are proposed. This allows the County to condition development approvals, such as site plans for residential, commercial and industrial activities, and building permits for specific uses, or require that development be modified and designed appropriately to avoid sensitive areas, which in addition to the items identified above also includes floodplains, non-tidal and tidal wetlands.

The County supports the activities of land trusts and other organizations to acquire conservation easements on properties outside of designated growth areas.

The County has enacted a fee-in-lieu procedure for use in offsetting impacts associated with forest requirements in the Critical Area and Forest Conservation outside of the Critical Area. These funds may be used for tree plantings and water quality improvements in the Critical Area and land acquisition, planting, or the purchase of conservation easements in areas subject to Forest Conservation.

The County adopted the 2002 Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area Management Plan, as an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan, for purposes of promoting resource-based recreation and eco-tourism. The Heritage Area Plan recommends several natural resource-based projects to increase the County's ability to attract resource-based tourism (see Chapter III).

b. Regulations

Specific regulations used by the County to implement conservation and protection of natural resource lands are:

Zoning Ordinance – Ordinance 741, adopted February, 2001:

- Establishes zoning districts and land use density and intensity levels to implement Comprehensive Plan land use policies;
- Includes a cluster development option and a Transfer of Development Rights program;
- Contains Critical Area overlay regulations related to the three Critical Area land use management areas, stream buffers, forest conservation, and habitat protection;
- Contains countywide provisions relating to tidal and non-tidal wetland buffers; stream buffers; Rare, Threatened and Endangered Species; steep slopes; highly erodible soils; and
- Incorporates the Big Annessex River Watershed Overlay District to implement non-tidal watershed management regulations within the watershed. The district resulted in 1996 from the Big Annessex River Wetlands Management Plan.

Floodplain Ordinance – Originally adopted as Ordinance 238 in December 1981. The regulations pertain to flood elevation standards and building setbacks for protection of property and protection and conservation of the designated 100-year floodplain. Updated floodplain maps went into effect in March 2011.

Forest Conservation Ordinance – Originally adopted as Ordinance 581 in January 1985. The regulations are intended to conserve timber, forest and woodlands. It establishes requirements for forest stand delineation and conservation plans; timber harvests; mitigation and land banking; and reforestation and afforestation.

Stormwater Management Ordinance – Originally adopted as Ordinance 833 in July 2003 to establish minimum requirements and procedures to control adverse impacts associated with increased stormwater runoff.

Sediment and Erosion Control Ordinance – Originally adopted as Ordinance 76 in 1971. It is administered by the Soil Conservation District and is based on statewide regulations pertaining to soil runoff from disturbances over 5,000 square feet. An update of the 1966 soil survey was completed in 2007.

Subdivision Ordinance – Originally adopted as Ordinance 396 in September 1988. It provides regulations pertaining to subdivision of land and protection of natural resource lands.

5. 2005 LPPRP Recommendations

The 2005 LPPRP recommended program development strategy (pages V-11 to IV-12)

included the following:

- a. Develop measurable objectives for natural resource land conservation.
- b. Adopt zoning in the rural area that supports the natural resource conservation goals and agricultural land resources.
- c. Work with the State to complete protection of Green Infrastructure.
- d. Continue efforts to promote watershed protection as part of the State's Tributary Strategies program.
- e. Improve the mapping of the County's protected lands and natural resources.
- f. Increase State funding for natural resource conservation.
- g. Continue pursuing opportunities to increase tourism.

Progress

1. Develop measurable objectives for natural resource land conservation

The County has not yet developed measurable objectives for natural resource land conservation. With over 60 percent of the County land area already permanently or extensively protected, Somerset County needs to be strategic in developing objectives. The County also has growth area and economic development goals that need to be factored into land conservation goals.

The State could assist by helping the County define appropriate and reasonable objectives, perhaps tied to the state's GreenPrint strategic framework. These objectives could then be incorporated into the next update of the County's Comprehensive Plan.

2. Adopt zoning in the rural area that supports the natural resource conservation goals and agricultural land resources

As discussed in Section A of this chapter, Somerset County has not changed the zoning in its rural area since the 2005 LPPRP. The question of appropriate development density in the rural area will be reviewed as part of the Comprehensive Plan update.

3. Work with the State to complete protection of Green Infrastructure

The state's new strategic framework which built off the Green Infrastructure effort is called GreenPrint. As discussed in the previous section, the County's protected lands and designated conservation areas closely correlate with the Targeted Ecological Areas in GreenPrint. As

noted in the 2005 LPPRP, the State can assist the County by identifying specific priority lands that should be considered for protection. Once priority areas are identified, the County can consider options for protection which might include:

Incorporating protection criteria into the zoning and subdivision regulations.

Working with private land trusts and others in protecting such areas.

4. Continue efforts to promote watershed protection as part of the State's Tributary Strategies program

As noted in the 2005 LPPRP, a significant amount of watershed management planning has occurred in the Manokin and Big Annemessex watersheds. These planning efforts formed a foundation for helping implement County and State policies for improving water quality and restoration of tributaries to the Chesapeake Bay.

The County's programs support the State's goals for natural resource land conservation and Maryland's required nutrient and sediment load reductions as set forth in the Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL). The TMDL was established by the US EPA in 2010. It has superseded the Tributary Strategy effort and the 2000

Chesapeake Bay Agreement, and has shifted Bay restoration efforts from a voluntary framework to a regulatory framework.

The County is participated in developing TMDL implementation plans by developing a Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) that, in combination with other counties WIPs, provide "reasonable assurance" to US EPA that the jurisdictions can and will achieve the nutrient and sediment reductions necessary to meet the Bay TMDL requirements by the year 2025. The WIP is due in July 2012.

5. Improve the mapping of the County's protected lands and natural resources

Somerset County has extensive amounts of protected lands and natural resources. While the mapping and databases have improved, discrepancies between different databases remain. A considerable amount of electronic map data was assembled for this LPPRP which the County is willing to share with the State.

Accurate mapping is essential to planning for growth and for natural resource land conservation. Useful improvements and additions to the County's GIS would include:

- Resolution of acreage discrepancies and duplicative records.
- Mapped growth areas from the Comprehensive Plan.

- Updated Critical Area maps.
- Land protected through the forest conservation ordinance.

6. Increase State funding for natural resource conservation

This was a recommendation from the County to the State. As noted in Section A of this chapter, Somerset County has advocated for higher levels of State land preservation funding, but recognizes, consistent with the State LPPRP (page II-66), that political and economic conditions that would support new revenue sources remain poor

7. Continue pursuing opportunities to increase tourism

Tourism is important to the County economy and Somerset County continues to pursue opportunities to increase tourism through, for example, the Somerset County Tourism centers in Princess Anne and in Crisfield, the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area and the county's extensive tourism website <http://www.visitsomerset.com/> which includes an extensive listing of events as well as places to visit and stay.

Figure 4:8 – Somerset County Floodplain Map: Base Flood Elevation (2015)

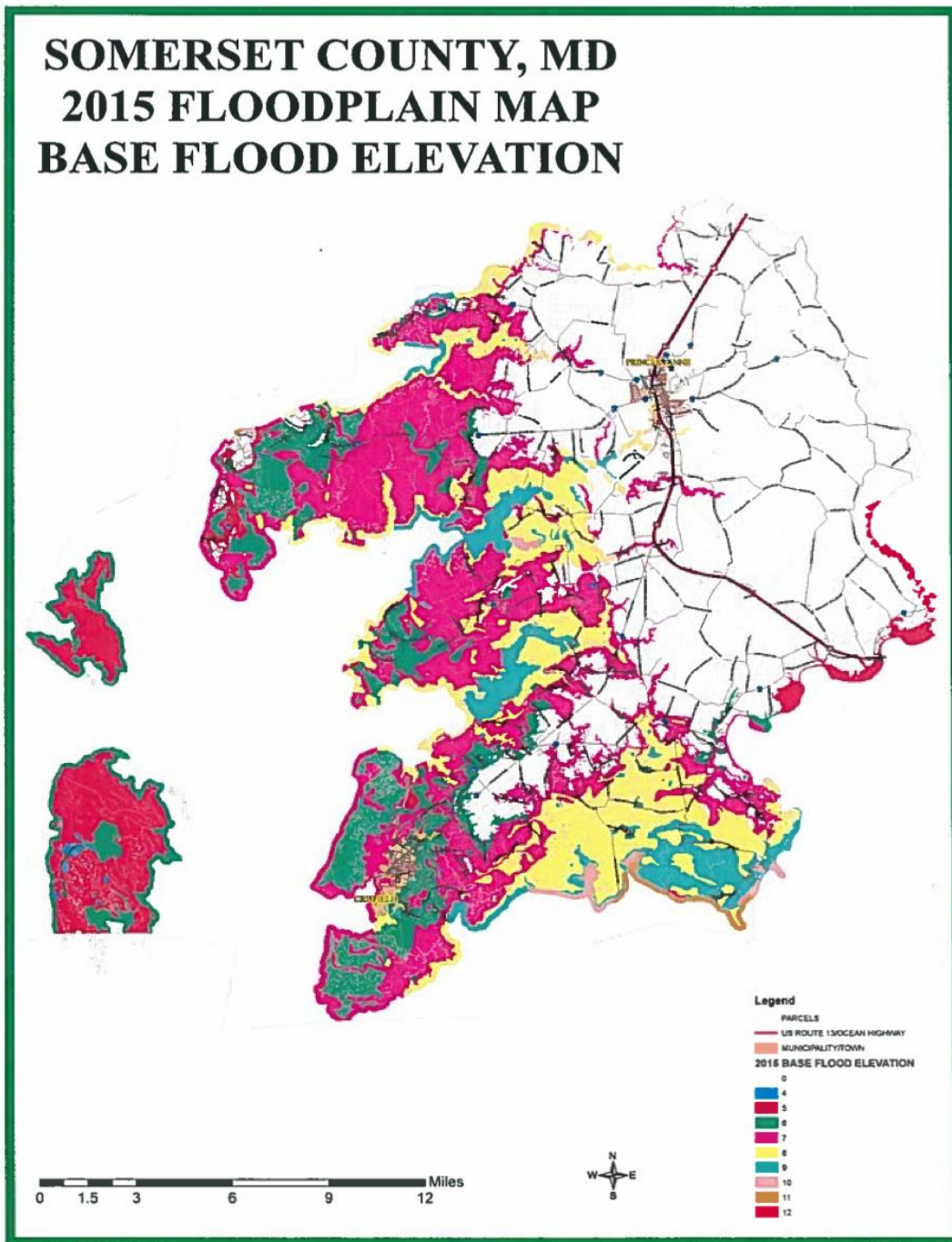


Figure 4:9 – Somerset Floodplain Map (2015)

