



# Town of Cape Charles Comprehensive Plan

Adopted December 15, 2022



# Goals & Objectives

Aerial view of the Town.

## Goals and Objectives Setting

The Cape Charles Comprehensive Plan is intended to capture a broad community vision of a future Cape Charles.

Written statements that describe future expectations are necessary to describe that vision. These statements are intended to be easily understood and generally accepted among the residents and business interests in the Town. Goals and objectives are found in the subsequent chapters for each functional area of the Plan, e.g., land use, transportation, community facilities, etc. Some goals and objectives developed in the 2016 Comprehensive Plan process were retained. Goals are long-range, generalized statements that represent the ultimate desires of the Town. The situations and conditions called for in the goals would normally be achieved only through a sustained series of actions over a considerable period of time.

The goal statements in this Plan are sufficiently broad to remain valid as people’s values change over time. As these values change, the interpretation of the goals will change also. When this happens, the goals will remain in effect, but new goals and objectives may be developed. Goals and objectives comprise a proposed series of broad policies that are more immediate and specific in nature than are the goals. Objectives are intended to be intermediate steps that are taken toward achieving the goals. For each goal, several objectives can be provided.

The topic areas covered include:

- Housing
- Economy
- Transportation
- Community Facilities & Services
- Environment
- Land Use and Future Land Use

Public engagement has continued as part of the process; to include development of a routinely updated Community Strategic Plan, whose goals and objectives should dovetail well with the core areas above and help create a plan that builds on the Town’s unified vision. Each topic has a “goal statement” that describes what the Town should strive for in each area. The objectives and strategies are specific ways the Town should work to achieve each goal.

Implementation will be achieved through the annual Community Strategic Plan, whose shorter-term, more granular objectives, informed by the Comprehensive Plan, will set the Town’s annual priorities and workflow.



Forest and wetlands near Kings Creek Marina.

# Environment

“Use policy and infrastructure to maintain and improve ecological resources and sustain an economy that relies on their wellbeing.”

- Overview
- Climate
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- The Resilience Adaptation Feasibility Tool (RAFT)
- Soils
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- Ground Water
- Drinking Water
- Wastewater
- Storm Water
- Wetlands
- Habitat
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- Recycling
- Tree Canopy Coverage
- Environment Objectives and Strategies

# Environment

## Overview

Cape Charles has an inextricable link to its environment, particularly as a community on the water. With careful planning, the Town will protect its natural resources for future generations.

## Climate

The climate of Cape Charles can be described as temperate, with warm, humid summers and chilly, but not very cold winters. July is the warmest month, and has an average daily high temperature of around 85 degrees Fahrenheit. Winters are relatively mild, with January being the coldest month. The average daily high temperature in January is 47 degrees, and the average daily low temperature is 32 degrees. The entire Eastern Shore is usually slightly warmer in the winter and cooler in the summer than the rest of Virginia due to its proximity to the Chesapeake Bay and the Atlantic Ocean.

On average, the most precipitation in Cape Charles occurs in July and August, but generally rainfall is evenly distributed throughout the year. The Town averages 45 inches of precipitation yearly. Severe storms present a risk during hurricane season from June 1 to November 30. Severe northeasterly storms can also affect the area during the fall and winter months. With rising average annual temperatures across the United States, storm events and temperature fluctuations may be more severe in the future.

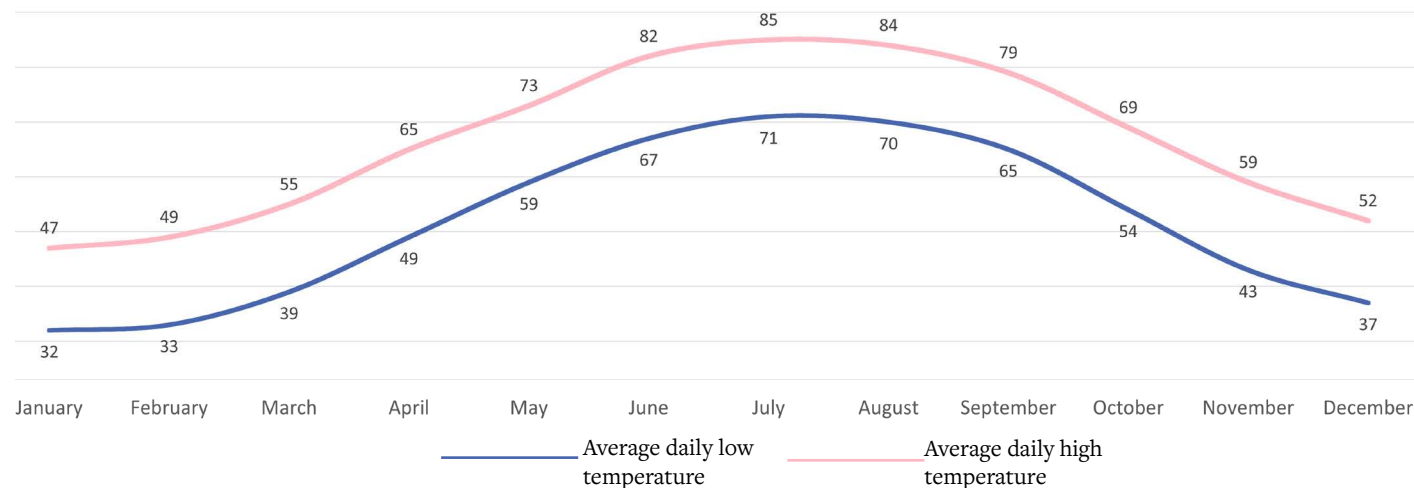


Figure 24: Average Annual Temperature

## Topography

Cape Charles lies on a peninsula and is surrounded by water on three sides. The Town is situated on the Chesapeake Bay, bordered by King’s Creek to the north and Old Plantation Creek to the south. The land in Town is low lying and relatively flat, with most of the developed land in Town between five and fifteen feet in elevation. Due to its low-lying topography, Cape Charles is vulnerable to flooding. Hurricanes and northeast storms, which are characterized by high winds, heavy rainfall, higher than normal tides, and higher than normal wave action, pose threats for flooding. All coastal areas are susceptible to flooding, therefore flood insurance is recommended for properties in coastal Virginia. However, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has mapped areas that are predicted to have a higher probability of flood. The Virginia Flood Risk Information System has a tool that allows you to look up your address and displays the FEMA determined areas at higher risk of flood. Portions of Cape Charles are located within the 100-year floodplain, as shown in Flood Hazard Area Map on Page 73. The floodplain and associated wetland areas provide valuable wildlife habitat areas as well as protect upland areas from erosion and flooding. The 100-year floodplain is delineated by the FEMA.

Land within the 100-year floodplain (Special Flood Hazard Area) statistically averages one flood in a 100-year time period, which equates to a 1% chance of flooding in any given year. However, flooding can occur more often if conditions warrant. Development within a floodplain must take these risks into account to ensure the safety and welfare of property owners. The Flood Hazard Area Map on page 73 also reflects a 500-year floodplain.

National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) participating communities can reduce policyholders’ premiums by participating in the Community Rating System program. The program awards points to communities that implement flood protection policies beyond minimum NFIP participation requirements. Cape Charles participates in this program and as a result has been able to achieve a 10% policy discount for its area participants. These discounts apply to NFIP policies in a Special Flood Hazard Area (100-year floodplain) and some policies located outside the area.

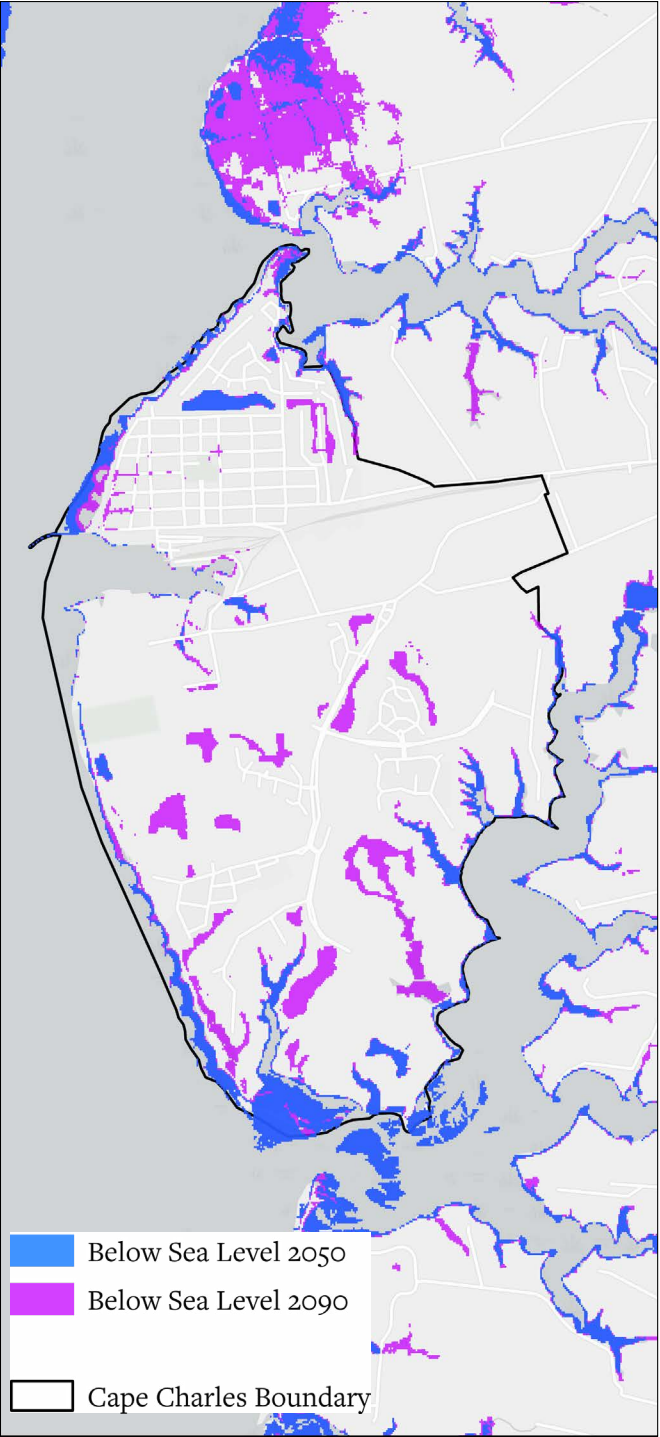
### The Resilience Adaptation Feasibility Tool

The Resilience Adaptation Feasibility Tool (The RAFT) was conceived and developed by an academic interdisciplinary collaborative core team, led by the University of Virginia Institute for Environmental Negotiation (IEN), the William & Mary Law School Virginia Coastal Policy Center (VCPC), and Old Dominion University/Virginia Sea Grant (ODU), collectively “The RAFT Team.” Funded by a Restoration and Community Stewardship grant from the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), the core team’s goal was to develop a robust Resilience Scorecard and to test it with three coastal communities. Cape Charles participated as one of these pilot communities. The Resilience Scorecard is designed to be completed independently by the academic collaborative, and provides a comprehensive assessment of the locality’s resilience to flooding while remaining economically and socially relevant. The Scorecard is comprehensive in that it measures environmental, economic and social resilience factors. It covers local policy, infrastructure, budgeting and economics, land use, community engagement, community health and wellness, and ecosystems.

While there are many models and assumptions that are continually being updated as more knowledge is obtained, one model is presented in Map 9 taken from Virginia Eastern Shore Coastal Resilience mapping tool depicting basic inundation from sea level rise for Year 2075 assuming a high projection on level rise. In this model, basic inundation data has been updated based on sea level rise scenarios from the 2017 National Climate Assessment.

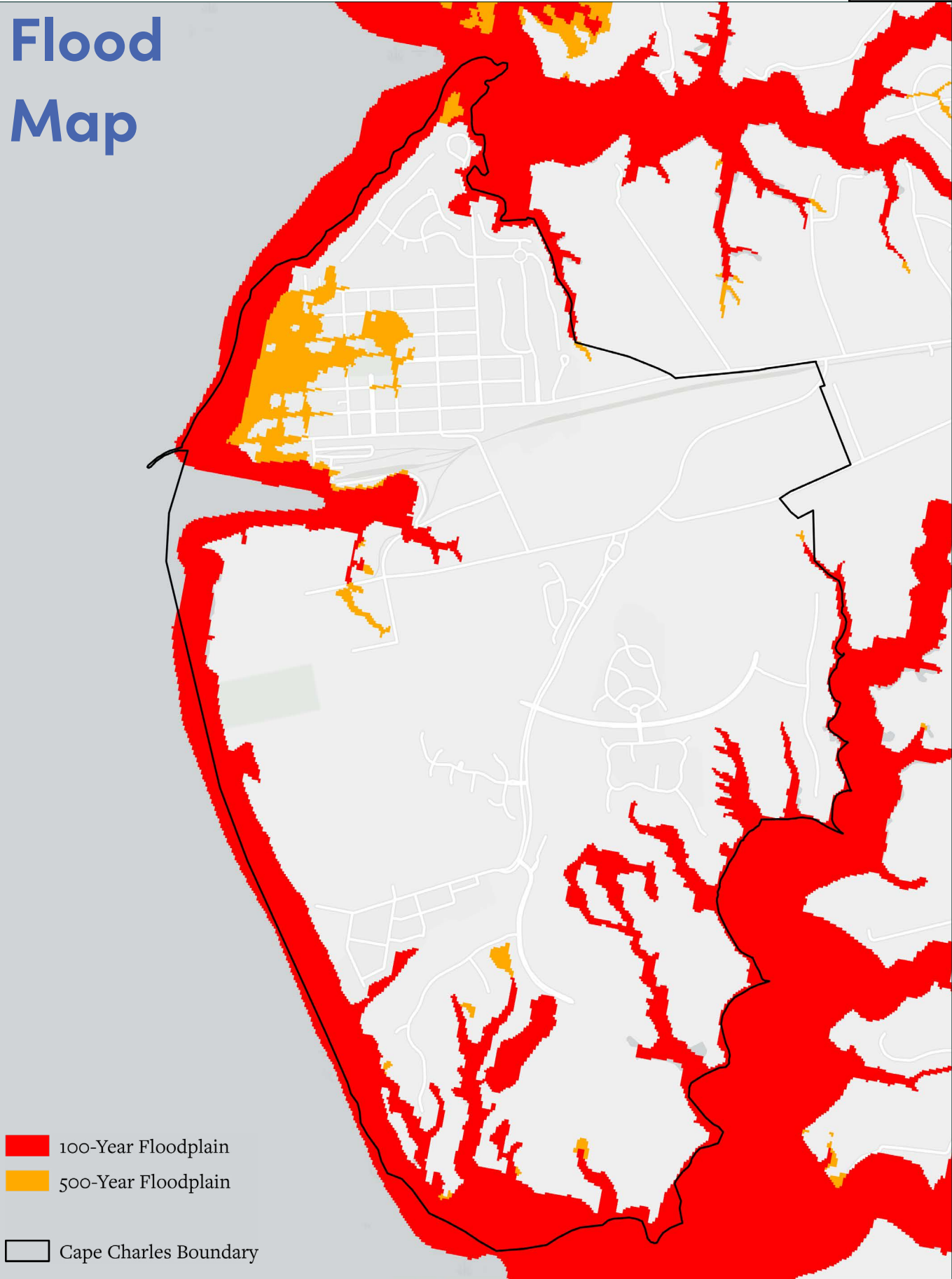
The Resilience Action Workshop (June 2017) was conceived as a way to help catalyze meaningful action at the local level to increase a locality’s resilience to coastal hazards. While, on its own, the Resilience Scorecard might increase understanding, community leadership is needed to bring about meaningful change. During the workshop, participants were introduced to the Scorecard and reviewed its findings to identify the locality’s greatest resilience strengths as well as opportunities for improving resilience in the future. To build coastal resilience, Cape Charles needs to understand its vulnerability to coastal hazards, reduce the risks where possible and be prepared to respond to severe weather.

The town needs to renew its commitment for continued study and action in this area, perhaps creating a committee that reviews study results and provides recommendations for addressing its resiliency to flooding.



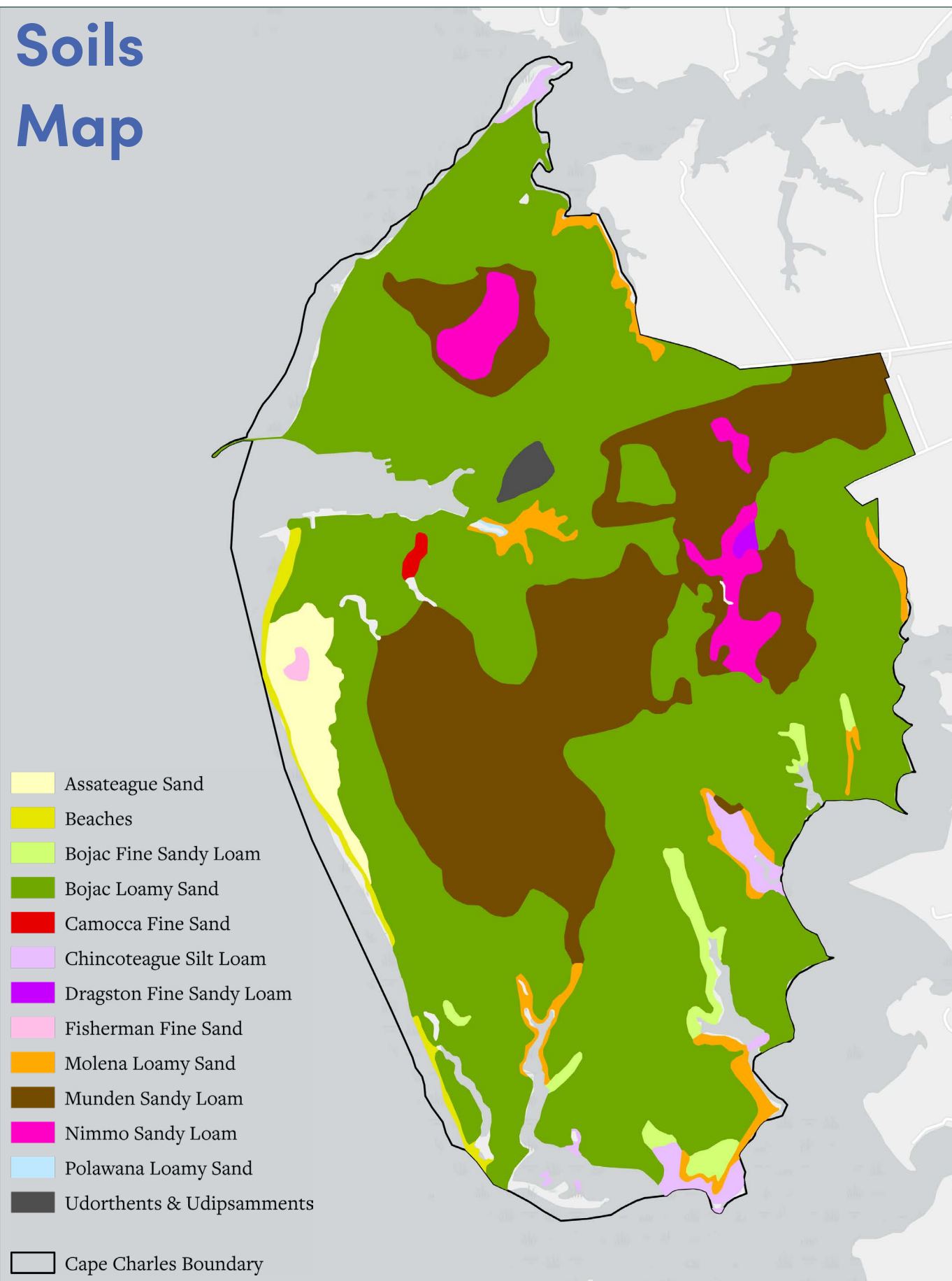
Map 8. Sea Level Rise Projections (NOAA Intermediate Projections for 2050 and 2090)

### Flood Map



Map 9. Flood Hazard Areas

# Soils Map



Map 10. Soils

## Soils

As shown in the Soils Map on the opposite page, Bojac and Munden soils are the predominant soils in Cape Charles. Bojac soils are considered very suitable for development, while Munden soils are considered fair. Poor soils, which are generally unsuitable for development, are found along the edges of the Town’s shorelines and in isolated areas inland. All of the soils in Town are either hydric or highly permeable, with ground water being a relatively shallow distance underneath. Highly permeable soils are extremely susceptible to pollutant leaching and create a high potential for ground water pollution. Hydric soils are primarily wet and drain poorly. Soils are identified with a three character symbol. The first letter is the first letter in the soil’s name. The second letter distinguishes between classifications that begin with the same letter. The third letter indicates the class of the slope. The A class has the lowest slope, while the E class has the steepest slope present in this area. Soil types within Cape Charles are discussed below:

**Assateague Sand (AsE):**

Gently sloping to very steep, very deep, and excessively drained. On and between dunes along the Bay. Very rapid permeability and low water capacity. Used mainly for wildlife habitats and recreation areas. High permeability, slope, sandy texture, and the hazards of seepage and instability limit development.

**Beaches (BeB):**

Sandy marine sediments deposited by wave action. Used mainly for wildlife habitats and recreation areas. Tidal flooding, severe erosion, and accretion of sediments limit most other uses.

**Bojac Fine Sandy Loam (BoA):**

Nearly level, very deep, and well-drained farmland. Moderately rapid permeability and instability of the soil are limitations to development.

**Bojac Loamy Sand (BhB):**

Gently sloping, very deep, and well drained. Moderately rapid permeability and instability of the soil are limitations to development.

**Camocca Fine Sand (CaA):**

Nearly level, very deep, and poorly drained. Very rapid permeability. Used for wildlife habitats and

recreation areas. Seasonal high water table, flooding, sandy texture, and instability hazard limit soil for development.

**Chincoteague Silt Loam (ChA):**

Nearly level, very deep, and very poorly drained soil located primarily in tidal marshes. Tidal flooding, the seasonal high water table, ponding, low strength, and salt are major limitations for development.

**Dragston Fine Sandy Loam (DrA):**

Nearly level, very deep, and somewhat poorly drained. Used mainly for cultivated crops and woodland. Seasonal high water table, rapid permeability, poor filtering capacity, and seepage limit development.

**Fisherman Fine Sand (FhB):**

Nearly level, gently sloping, very deep and moderately well drained.

**Molena Loamy Sand (MoD):**

Moderately sloping to steep, very deep, and somewhat excessively drained. Rapid permeability. Slope, high permeability, and droughtiness limit soil for development. Used mainly for woodland and wildlife.

**Munden Sandy Loam (MuA):**

Level, deep, and moderately well drained. Seasonal high water table and rapid permeability limit development.

**Nimmo Sandy Loam (NmA):**

Nearly level, deep, and poorly drained. Used for farmland when drained. Seasonal high water table, seepage, and rapid permeability are limitations for development. Limited for roads and streets.

**Polawana Loamy Sand (PoA):**

Nearly level, very deep, and very poorly drained. Used mainly for woodland. Seasonal high water table, rapid permeability, flooding, and wetness are major limitations for development.

**Udorthents & Udipsamments (UPD):**

Mainly fill and spoil materials and sandy materials in excavated areas. Characteristics are so variable that on-site investigation is necessary to determine suitability for most uses.

### Surface Water

Surface water in Cape Charles includes the Chesapeake Bay to the east, King’s Creek to the north, and Old Plantation Creek to the south and east. All surface water has a high saline content, except for several small ponds located within the Town, which are fresh or brackish water. Cape Charles is characterized by extensive shorelines, ranging from sandy beaches on the Chesapeake Bay to marsh fringes on King’s Creek and Old Plantation Creek. Approximately 19,200 feet (3.6 miles) of shoreline front directly onto the Chesapeake Bay. The entire Town lies within the Chesapeake Bay watershed, draining either directly into the Bay, or into Old Plantation Creek and King’s Creek, and then into the Bay.

The Chesapeake Bay has played an important role in the history and identity of Cape Charles and the Eastern Shore, providing valuable economic, environmental and recreational resources, and serving as the nation’s largest and most productive estuary. However, pollution is causing the Bay’s water quality to decline. Pollution can be classified as either point source or nonpoint source. Point source pollution results from discharge at a specific point, such as the Town’s wastewater treatment plant. Nonpoint source pollution is not attributable to distinct, identifiable source, but enters water indirectly. Nonpoint source pollution includes stormwater runoff from developed land and impervious surfaces, runoff from agricultural land, and erosion of soil and shorelines. Under natural conditions, water running off the land soaks into the ground and is filtered by soils and vegetation root systems. Disturbing sensitive areas can increase the speed and volume of surface runoff, resulting in erosion, sedimentation, and siltation of ship channels — a particularly devastating process to a Town with economically vital harbors and marinas. In settled areas where much of the land is paved or “impervious,” stormwater cannot soak into the ground and runs off very rapidly. The runoff carries pollutants such as oil, sediment, chemicals, pesticides, and excess nutrients from fertilizer, which eventually reach the waters of the Chesapeake Bay unless filtered or retained by some structural or nonstructural technique. Pollution of the water column and a reduction in the amount of light reaching submerged aquatic vegetation choke important parts of the aquatic food chain.

Ultimately, spawning grounds and benthic habitats are destroyed, resulting in serious problems for commercial fishermen. Land management techniques that minimize the amount of impervious surfaces and increasing the filtering capacity of the land can be used to reduce nonpoint source pollution. The Town has enacted a Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act Program, which enables the Town to protect water quality through local land use regulations. The Bay Act is a Virginia Law, which provides a legislatively mandated approach to protect and improve the waters of the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries by reducing nonpoint source pollution through wise resource management practices. The Town has designated Chesapeake Bay Preservation Areas (CBPAs), and has applied certain development standards to these areas. The Town’s CBPAs consist of Resource Protection Areas (RPAs), Resource Management Areas (RMAs) and Intensely Developed Areas (IDAs).



A golf cart drives past pooled stormwater.

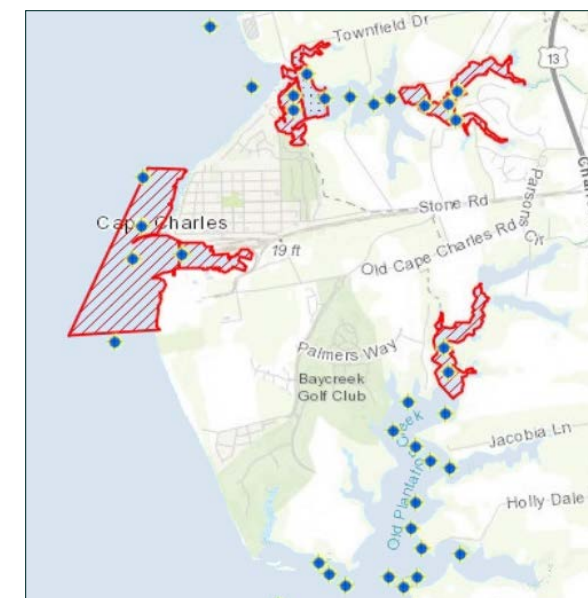
Future development activities in these preservation areas are guided by the Town’s Zoning Ordinance, which establishes standards to mitigate development impacts on water quality.

RPAs consist of sensitive lands at or near the shoreline which have important water quality value to the Bay, such as tidal shorelines and wetlands. RPAs also include a 100- foot vegetated buffer area landward of these features, where development activities are restricted. RMAs consist of sensitive land types which have the potential for causing significant water quality degradation if they are improperly developed. RMAs in Cape Charles include the 100-year floodplain and non-tidal wetlands. Development within RMAs should be planned in a manner which reduces the impact of nonpoint source pollution. IDAs consist of densely developed areas that are largely devoid of natural vegetation. The Town’s IDAs are located adjacent to the Cape Charles harbor and at the Bay Creek Marina. IDAs are designated to focus development in areas where it is already concentrated and supported by existing infrastructure while improving water quality. New development and redevelopment in IDAs must achieve a 10% reduction in nonpoint source pollution from storm water runoff. Opportunities for water quality improvement through redevelopment of IDAs include re-establishing natural vegetation and establishing a vegetated buffer over time to promote the water quality benefits of natural vegetation.

Another element of nonpoint source pollution includes boating activity. Due to its location on

the Chesapeake Bay, Cape Charles is popular with recreational boating and fishing enthusiasts. In addition, commercial fishing is a small yet visible activity in Cape Charles. While boating-related activity has a positive impact on the local economy, it can adversely impact Bay water quality if not handled properly. Several boat-related facilities are located in the Town, including a public marina and harbor as well as a commercial marina. Boating activity can potentially degrade water quality through inappropriate discharge of human waste and trash, fuel spills, oil spills, and toxic bottom paints. In order to lessen the impact of water pollution through proper waste disposal, the Virginia Department of Health requires marinas to have restroom facilities, pump-out facilities, and sewage dumping stations for portable toilets.

An extremely clean environment is needed for shellfish to thrive and be consumed safely. Shellfish require water fourteen times cleaner than where humans can safely swim. The Virginia Department of Health (VDH) monitors water quality to determine where shellfish can be safely harvested. Unclean areas are condemned by VDH and cannot be harvested. Map 11 provides locations of shellfish grounds that have been condemned in areas near Cape Charles. In addition to shellfish grounds, a substantial amount of submerged aquatic vegetation is located in the waters surrounding Town. Boating activity can impact fisheries in the area by causing increased water turbidity, which can choke shellfish grounds and decrease the amount of sunlight reaching submerged aquatic vegetation.



Map 11. Shellfish Areas

The crosshatched areas represent condemned shellfish areas. The dots represent seasonally condemned shellfish areas. See the Virginia Department of Health website for more information.

### Ground Water

Cape Charles, along with the entire Eastern Shore of Virginia, depends entirely upon ground water for its water supply needs. Ground water on the Eastern Shore is made up of a series of aquifers — bodies of sediments capable of yielding water. The uppermost aquifer is called the Columbia aquifer, also known as the water table. In the Cape Charles area, the Columbia aquifer is approximately 40 to 70 feet thick. Below the Columbia aquifer is the Yorktown aquifer system, consisting of upper, middle and lower units. The Town’s water supply is withdrawn from the upper and middle Yorktown aquifer units. The Yorktown aquifer system is separated from the Columbia aquifer by confining layers of clay, which help protect it from contamination, but also impede the amount and rate of recharge.

Fresh water is supplied into the aquifer system by rainfall, which penetrates the soil and recharges ground water aquifers. The Eastern Shore ground water flow system is characterized by brackish water of the Bay to the west and salt water of the Atlantic Ocean to the east, with limited occurrence of freshwater. Most water in the Columbia aquifer flows laterally from the center of the Eastern Shore peninsula, discharging into the Atlantic Ocean and Chesapeake Bay. A much smaller portion of water flows down through the clays and silts that separate the Columbia aquifer from the underlying Yorktown aquifers. Ground water recharge occurs near the center spine of the peninsula, forming an island-type freshwater lens. The Town is not located within the spine recharge area. Ground water modeling studies indicate approximately 11 million gallons of water are recharged to the Yorktown aquifer each day.

Because ground water is a limited resource, water conservation is critical in protecting and managing this valuable resource. Over pumping of ground water is a concern for the Eastern Shore, and could lead to well interference, saltwater intrusion, and a deterioration of water quality. In Cape Charles, water conservation measures are crucial for maximizing the available water supply and meeting future demands.

The Eastern Shore of Virginia is divided into five wellhead protection areas, based on ground water divides created by pumping patterns of the major ground water withdrawers on the Eastern Shore. Cape Charles is located in Wellhead Protection Area E - Cape Charles Area. This wellhead protection area

is the southern-most wellhead protection area on the peninsula.

In 1997, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) designated the Eastern Shore’s aquifer system as the Columbia and Yorktown-Eastover Multiaquifer System Sole Source Aquifer. A sole source aquifer is defined as an aquifer that supplies at least 50 percent of the drinking water to its overlying area. This designation helps protect ground water quality by requiring EPA review of all projects receiving federal funding.

The Eastern Shore of Virginia was declared a Critical Ground Water Area in 1976. Any party needing to withdraw 300,000 gallons per month or more in the Eastern Shore Ground Water Management Area must obtain a permit from the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). All permit holders are required to report ground water use and implement a water conservation and management plan.

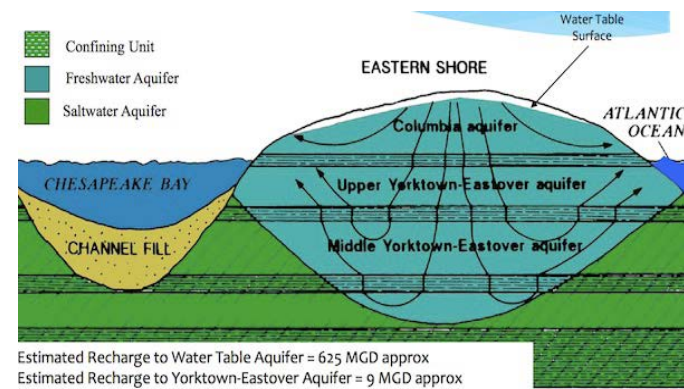
Cape Charles has been approved for a Ground Water Withdrawal Permit from the DEQ allowing a withdrawal capacity of 7.9 million gallons per month. A ground water impact assessment was conducted for the Town to study possible effects of the withdrawal, and found that over the 10-year permit period, no measurable saltwater intrusion or other water quality changes are expected to occur. However, it is possible that some saltwater intrusion may occur in the lower Yorktown aquifer in the long term (100 years) as a result of the Town’s withdrawal, in which case treatment of potable water by reverse osmosis can be used as a contingency.

Ground water contamination due to septic filter fields is not a major issue in Cape Charles because most residents and businesses in the Town are served by public utilities, however, nine septic systems still exist. When demand is created by future development, public sewer services will be extended to parts of Cape Charles that are not currently served. Property owners receiving the new services will pay for the cost of extending public utilities to these areas, as provided for in the Town Code.

The Eastern Shore of Virginia Ground Water Committee has overseen the development of regional ground water plans and studies since 1990. The mandate of the committee is to “assist local governments and residents of the Eastern Shore in understanding, protecting and managing ground water resources, to prepare a ground water resources protection and management plan, to serve as an educational and informational resource to local governments and residents of the Eastern Shore, and to initiate special studies concerning the protection and management of the Eastern Shore ground water resource.” Cape Charles recognizes the regional nature of the ground water issue and supports the committee in its efforts.



Eastern Shore Ground Water Committee’s Logo.



Eastern Shore Aquifer diagram.

### Drinking Water

The Town of Cape Charles water system receives its water from two wells located within 100 yards to the East and West of the Water Treatment Plant. Both are screened in the Upper and Middle Yorktown-Eastover Aquifer. In addition, the Town has another 2 wells that are in the process of being connected to the Water Treatment Plant. Currently 300,000 to 350,000 gallons per day (24 hours) are treated during tourist season and 100,000-150,000 (approximately 125 gallons per day per household) in the offseason. The plant itself has a design capacity of 500,000 gallons per day if both wells are run simultaneously; however, the Town’s current water withdrawal permit limits production to 360,000 gallons per day. The town is in the process of applying for new permits with higher limits. The water tower has a holding capacity of 300,000 gallons. The potable water distribution pipes have been replaced. Contaminants in the Cape Charles drinking water are routinely monitored according to Federal and State regulations. In order to ensure that tap water is safe to drink, EPA prescribes regulations which limit the number of contaminants in water provided by public water systems. The December 2021 Drinking Water Consumer Confidence Report issued by the Town has shown no violations in the Water Quality Results, in disinfection and disinfection by-products, and in lead and copper contaminants.



Cape Charles water tower.

### Wastewater

The wastewater treatment facility built in 2010 and operational in 2012 is handling less than its maximum capacity and was built to be easily expanded when the need arises. Current treatment capacity averages 250,000 gallons per day in-season (although more can be pushed through on any given day) and closer to 125,000 gallons per day off-season. This 250,000 gallons per day capacity average is determined by the State based on controlling the amount of pollution pumped into the Chesapeake Bay. The treatment facility has the capacity for expansion to 500,000 gallons per day. Pumping stations located within the Town have been updated except for Washington Avenue and a filtering field for the pumping station at Bay and Mason Avenues to decrease the odor. Currently all treated wastewater is pumped into the Chesapeake Bay.

### Storm Water

Storm water goes directly into the Chesapeake Bay and treatment is not required. However, the poor condition of the storm water and wastewater collection systems results in a portion of the storm water going through the wastewater system and being treated on its way into the Bay using treatment capacity that is needed for wastewater. The amount of storm water infiltration into the sewer collection system is a serious concern that should be evaluated so that a corrective action plan can be developed.



Storm water at Randolph Ave & Plum St intersection.



Storm water at a Mason Ave. crosswalk.

### Wetlands

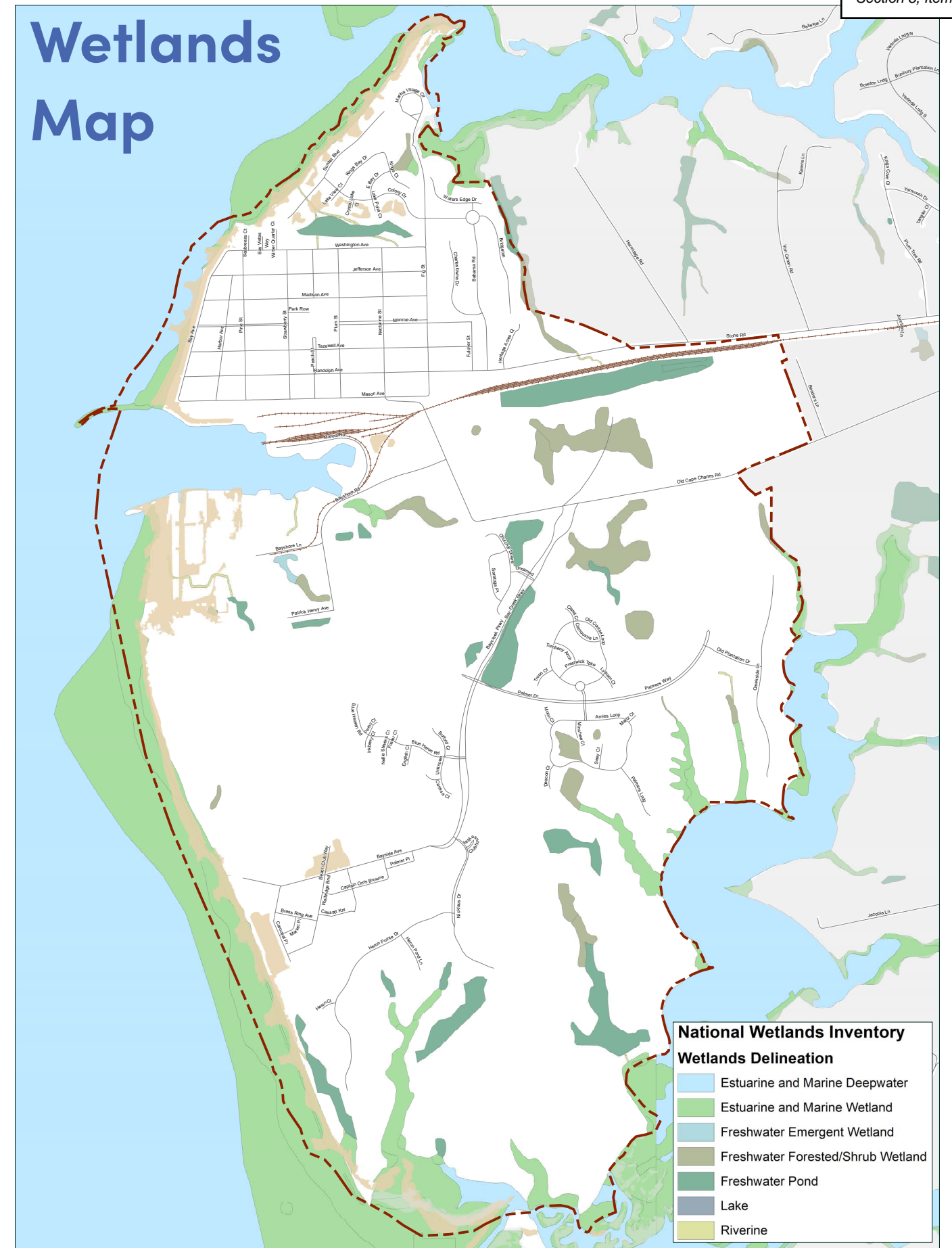
Several parts of Cape Charles are considered wetlands. Wetlands can be defined as areas that are wet or have wet soils during some part of the growing season. Tidal wetlands are influenced by tidal fluctuations and exist along the coastline. Tidal wetlands may include vegetated marshes and swamps or non-vegetated mud and sand flats. Non-tidal wetlands are usually found inland and are not impacted by tidal changes, but still meet the definition of a wetland. Local land that is included in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s National Wetlands Inventory can be viewed in the Wetlands Map on page 83.

Wetlands have historically been considered wastelands, because they are usually not suitable for farming or building due to their unstable and wet nature. Often these areas are also breeding grounds for insects. In the past, wetlands were frequently drained or filled to make the land developable. This negative view overlooks several important characteristics of wetlands. Wetlands are home to a diverse population of mammals, waterfowl, and marine organisms. In addition to providing homes for species that are of direct benefit to humans, many other plant and animal species are exclusively present in wetlands, making the areas an important part of regional ecosystems. Wetlands also offer a natural means of protecting water quality. Densely vegetated wetlands act as a natural filter by trapping sediments and nutrients before they reach nearby waterways. The filter feeding organisms present in non-vegetated wetlands also protect water quality by removing suspended solids from the water column. Because of their location near coastlines, wetlands can also protect an area from flooding and erosion. The dense root systems present in vegetated wetlands can help slow erosion caused by unusually high tides and wave action. The sponge-like quality of the soils present in wetlands can also protect the upland against flooding by absorbing some flood water resulting from a rise in sea level.

Cape Charles recognizes the multitude of important characteristics wetlands possess. Many regional wetlands have been filled or drained in recent decades, making it imperative to preserve the existing wetlands. The Town has adopted a Wetlands Ordinance to regulate the use of these areas, and has a Wetlands Board that oversees activities in wetlands.



Wetlands in Cape Charles.

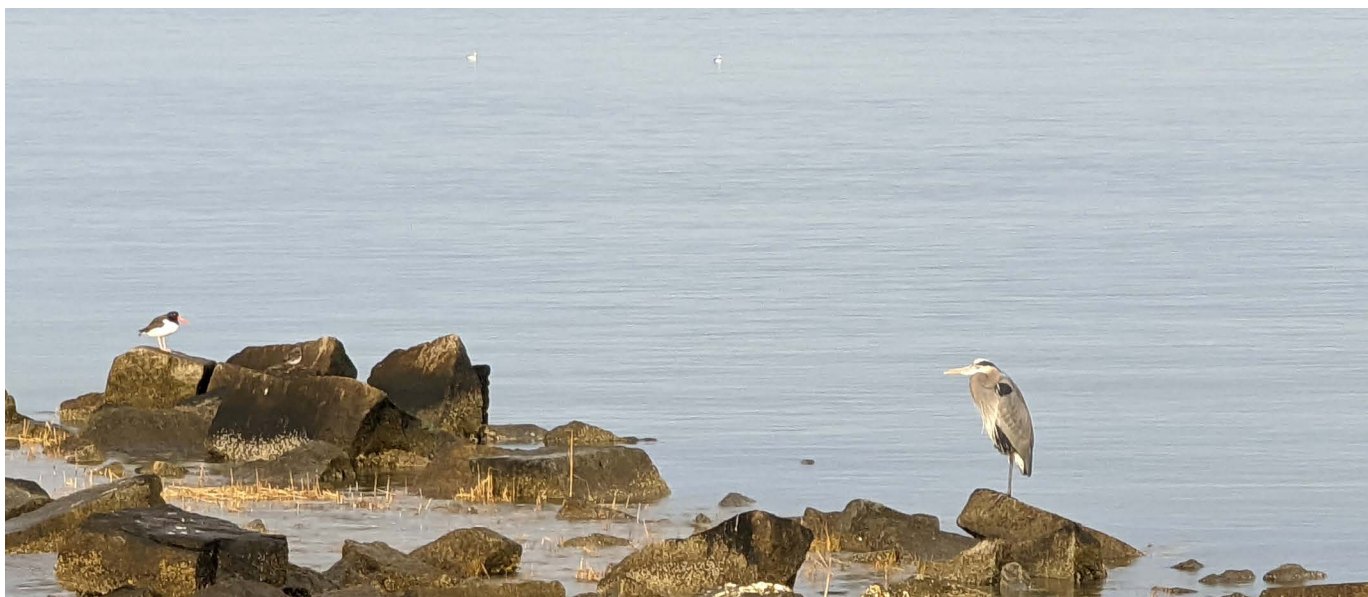


Map 12. Wetlands

### Habitat

Cape Charles encompasses diverse and significant ecosystems which support a variety of wildlife and plant species. Forested upland areas are located in the southern portion of Town along the edges of Bay shoreline, and in several large tracts further inland. These forested areas, particularly near the Bay shoreline, provide important habitat for a variety of wildlife. As previously mentioned, the Town’s wetlands also support a variety of species. The Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries lists several species of animals as threatened in the Town and its vicinity. These species include, but may not be limited to, the Northeastern Beach Tiger Beetle and the Bald Eagle. Cape Charles is located along one of the most significant flyways on the eastern seaboard for migratory birds, including waterfowl, shorebirds, and migratory songbirds, which are declining worldwide. The eastern coastline of the Bay is vulnerable to forest fragmentation and other disturbances. Habitats required for transient, breeding, and resident bird species, and particularly the vegetation upon which they depend, have been greatly reduced. Protection of these areas is critical to insure the healthy continuance of local and regional ecosystems. Future development could potentially place further stress on migratory and other land bird species, as well as the large variety of wildlife and plant species found in the area. Located south of Coastal Precast Systems is the Coastal Habitat

Natural Area Preserve, a 50-acre habitat protection area (expanded by 20.7 acres in 2020). This preserve, found on the Bay side of the Eastern Shore, is within the Audubon Lower Delmarva Important Bird Area (IBA) and considered internationally significant for migratory birds according to Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program’s Geospatial and Educational Mapping System (Coastal GEMS). It is also part of the DWR Virginia Birding and Wildlife Trail. Most of the Preserve acreage protects forested uplands that may be viewed from a wheelchair accessible boardwalk. A small amount of very sensitive dune and shoreline habitat, along with several rare species, are also protected here but access to these is restricted. The preserve provides habitat for the federally threatened northeastern beach tiger beetle (*Cicindela dorsalis dorsalis*). Coast bedstraw (*Galium hispidulum*), an herbaceous plant, grows on the dunes at the interface between open grassy areas and shaded areas where shrubs and trees dominate. During fall migration, the forest abounds with migratory songbirds and raptors resting and feeding before continuing their journey across the Chesapeake Bay. A long boardwalk takes visitors through several forested natural communities, including a globally-rare Maritime Dune Woodland, and ends at a low bluff overlooking the Chesapeake Bay. The preserve is owned and managed by the Department of Conservation and Recreation.



Birds perched at the eroding jetty.

### Waterfront Access

By providing public waterfront access, the Town encourages the public to experience firsthand the importance of water quality in Cape Charles through recreational pursuits such as sightseeing, fishing, and swimming. Numerous public waterfront access areas exist in Cape Charles, including the harbor, Cape Charles beach, the municipal pier, and the Coastal Habitat Natural Area Preserve. King’s Creek Marina (formerly Bay Creek Marina) also provides waterfront access. Preserving the quality of the Bay and its tributaries is a high priority in Cape Charles. Development pressure in waterfront areas threatens environmentally sensitive habitats which are critical to Bay wildlife and water quality. The high demand for waterfront property has increased land values, making public acquisition of these lands difficult or impossible. This makes it critical that the Town maintain, improve, and preserve all public lands which provide waterfront access as well as collaborate with private landowners to ensure protection of the environment.

### Shoreline Erosion

The Town has approximately 19,200 feet of shoreline fronting directly on the Chesapeake Bay. The mean tide range is 2.4 feet and the spring tide range is 2.9 feet. Prevailing winds along the shoreline have an average velocity of 10 miles per hour and are from the south to southwest. The effective fetch from Cape Charles to the south/southwest is about 16 miles, with an average depth of 25 feet. Cape Charles Beach, which begins at the Cape Charles harbor and extends north approximately 2,800 feet (1/2 mile), consists of a narrow sandy beach, bordered by a boardwalk and public street. North of Cape Charles Beach is approximately 4,400 feet (3/4 mile) of natural shoreline bordering the Bay, extending to the mouth of King’s Creek. At the mouth of King’s Creek, the shoreline extends for 9,500 feet (1.8 miles), forming the eastern boundary of the Town. The shoreline of King’s Creek is characterized by wetlands, consisting of fringe and embayed marsh. South of Cape Charles Beach and the Cape Charles harbor is a 12,000 foot (2.2 mile) stretch of natural shoreline fronting the Bay, characterized by a sandy beach. The northern half of this beach is wide and sandy, with sand dunes. The southern half of the beach is sandy and narrow, with tree stumps and woody debris, and an elongated pond running behind and parallel to the south end

of the beach. The beach extends to the mouth of Old Plantation Creek, where the shoreline turns inland, extending approximately 14,500 feet (2 3/4 miles) and forming the southeastern boundary of the Town. The shoreline of Old Plantation Creek is characterized by wetlands consisting of fringe and embayed marsh.

Cape Charles Beach has been used as a recreational area since the early 1900’s. In 1982, Brown and Root, Inc. transferred the title of the public beach to the Town. The transfer stipulated that the beach would remain public and would be maintained by the Town. The beach has been steadily deteriorating for thirty years before the transfer. Portions of this shoreline are still eroding. A study conducted by Byrne and Anderson in 1978 found that the historic erosion rate in Cape Charles had been 1.5 feet per year. Erosion accelerated in the 1980’s. A study by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in 1991 indicated that erosion rates from 1986 to 1990 were four to five feet per year. Current documentation of erosion rates in Cape Charles do not exist. However, based on visual assessment of the beach, it is likely that the Town’s erosion rate has remained high. This trend may continue, as there is belief in the scientific community that overall erosion rates in the Chesapeake Bay area have accelerated in the past several years.

The most significant cause of shoreline erosion in the Chesapeake Bay system is the combined action of wind and waves on the shoreline. Storm winds generate large waves which cause much of the damage. During storms and hurricanes, strong winds push additional water against the ocean coast and into the Chesapeake Bay, resulting in higher water levels of tides, which generally range between one and three feet, but may reach several feet in magnitude. Aside from the obvious hazard of flooding low-lying areas, these higher tides permit the erosive action of the waves to directly attack the fastland above the usual buffer provided by the beach. Offshore shoals help protect Cape Charles by reducing the height of waves that are greater than three feet in height. However, the impact of these waves is still significant.

According to the Public Beach Assessment Report for Cape Charles Beach, prepared by VIMS in 1993, the shoreline in Cape Charles is typically affected by northwest winds which occur from late fall to early spring, as well as southwest and westerly winds that are most frequent from early spring to late fall. Waves created by northeast storms do not impact the Cape Charles shoreline directly, but usually produce significant storm surge. As the post-storm winds often shift to the northwest, the water level is elevated for a short period of time. This scenario can produce high waves acting on the Cape Charles shoreline.

Erosion activity is further influenced by short-term fluctuation of lunar and storm tides and long-term sea level rise. The average sea level rise in the Bay is about .01 foot per year, or one foot per century. Although this rate seems small, its effect is dramatic considering that the fringes of the Bay have very gentle slopes, where a small increase vertically covers appreciable horizontal distance. Thus, each decade brings constant encroachment against the fastland.

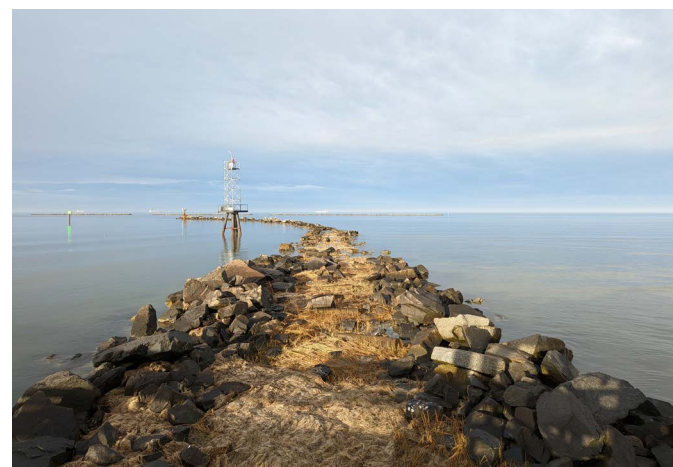
Several shoreline protective measures have been taken in recent decades. The public beach contains a seawall, consisting of a walkway and bulkheading which extends 2,300 feet along the back of the beach from the stone jetty. In 1982, groins were constructed at the public beach, which were 150 feet long and 300 feet apart. A severe storm in November, 1985 resulted in extensive damage to the beach. The beach was significantly widened in 1987 as a result of beach nourishment with 87,000 cubic yards of sand dredged from the harbor channel by the Army Corps of Engineers. The beach fill project was of major beneficial impact to the public beach. In 2016, Virginia Marine Resource Commission notified the town that the dredging for the Cape Charles Navigation Project was completed. The total quantity of material removed was 142,623 cubic yards. 113,078 cubic yards was sent to the Cape Charles Harbor Upland Placement Site and 29, 545 cubic yards was pumped onto the beach as beach replenishment.

In 1988, the Town initiated a project to install sand fencing and dune grasses, to help stabilize the public beach and control blowing sand. Fences were installed by the Department of Transportation and the Youth Conservation Corps, and dune grasses were planted by volunteers. Extensive dunes have

developed as a result of these efforts. The current dune system has reached elevations between five and ten feet above sea level.

In 1993, VIMS prepared the Public Beach Assessment Report for Cape Charles Beach, which assessed the rates and patterns of beach change on Cape Charles' public beach. According to the Report, the public beach had been reduced in volume approximately 19% since the beach nourishment project of 1988. By 1995, severe erosion along the north end of the beach had exposed the face of the bulkhead. Approximately 1,200 cubic yards of sand were used in 1995 to fill the area in front of the bulkhead, and in 1996 dune walkovers were constructed to prevent erosion due to foot traffic.

Several other shoreline protective structures exist in Cape Charles, located at the harbor and the public beach. A stone jetty is located at the northside of the harbor entrance, extending 1,200 feet into the Bay. The jetty protects the harbor somewhat from waves and limits sedimentation in the harbor from longshore drift. The jetty also helps protect the public beach by serving as a significant barrier to littoral transport of nourished beach sand. At the southside of the harbor entrance is a 200 foot earthen jetty, or mole, which anchors the end of the beach and helps keep the harbor mouth open. Approximately 4,500 feet of bulkheads line the periphery of the harbor and eliminates most shoreline erosion in the harbor. As time goes on, the jetty is slowly deteriorating and will need eventual investment and repairs as part of the Town's Capital Improvement Plan.



The deteriorating jetty on the north side of the harbor.

The storm drain outfall has also had a local impact on the very north end of the beach. The public beach is bordered on the north by a large storm water outfall pipe that extends about 300 feet from the bulkhead into the Bay. The pipe was installed as part of the 1988 beach nourishment project and subsequently has been reinforced with gabions including gabion spurs on either side. Presently, the outfall has a local effect on the public beach by partially blocking sand moving south along the shoreline from King's Creek. The outfall and associated spur are also causing an alteration in the beach platform to the immediate south. Artificial nourishment is needed periodically on the beach, due to lack of sufficient natural sand supply for replenishment. Sand retaining devices are also needed beneficial to prevent sand from eroding. The Town hired Vanasse Hagen Brustlin, Inc. (VHB) to design shoreline stabilization for Cape Charles Beach. Four near shore breakwater structures were constructed to control erosion along approximately 1,700 linear feet of shoreline, with the last structure installed over 2019 and 2020. As of 2022, the Town is monitoring the shoreline to determine if a fifth breakwater structure that was designed as part of the shoreline stabilization project will be necessary. A Beach and Dune Management Plan was developed by the Wetlands and Coastal Dune Board at the request of the Cape Charles Town Council in 2018. This plan encompasses the public beach and the dunes, which are an integral part of the public beach area. Under Commonwealth of Virginia regulations, publicly-owned land is excluded from the permitting authorities of wetlands and coastal dune boards. However, the town requested advice and recommendations from this board to help guide town management of this vital public resource. In this context, Cape Charles board recommendations are advisory, that is, non-binding. The board's recommendations are consistent with town ordinances, which represent the Town's policy. Town Council adopted the plan In February 2019, and town staff utilize it to govern replenishment and protective activities.



Shifting sands cover a walkway along the beach.

## Recycling

Cape Charles assesses the feasibility and environmental impact of recycling annually to determine if curbside service should be provided locally. Currently, the community can take their recyclable waste to centers located throughout Northampton County. While it is often requested, the cost and environmental impacts associated with providing it may prevent the service from being feasible for the Town.

## Tree Canopy Coverage

Master Tree Plan and a Tree Conservation and Preservation Ordinance were created by an appointed committee by the Town Council. The Master Tree Plan (<https://www.capecharles.org/pview.aspx?id=9713&catid=605>) and is adopted as an addendum to the Comprehensive Plan policies. The Tree Conservation and Preservation Ordinance has been adopted as an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance. As a result of these adopted regulations, site plan submissions for any site development activity must include provisions for planting of trees to meet canopy coverage requirements. Commercial site plans must include provisions for ten percent tree canopy coverage, and residential site plans must include provisions for twenty percent tree canopy coverage. Canopy coverage is calculated based on projected canopy after twenty years of growth. The new regulations are also intended to implement a no net loss policy for trees within the streetscape. A permit is required to remove a tree within the streetscape. In most cases, removed trees must be replaced with another tree.

## Environment Objectives and Strategies

1. Enhance water quality of the Chesapeake Bay.
  - a. Support intensifying the monitoring of all measures of the bay's health.
  - b. Update the Town's ordinance to reduce the amount of impervious surfaces in town to slow stormwater and contaminant runoff.
  - c. Increase the amount of vegetation and other bioretention infrastructure to filter stormwater before it enters the bay. This could be achieved either through individual projects or with new development.
2. Continue to promote the strong aesthetics of the town and limit pollution from litter.
  - a. Ensure easy access to refuse and recycling bins at town facilities and in public right-of-way.
  - b. Educate residents and visitors of best practices through signage and other materials as necessary.
  - c. Engage with seasonal vendors, such as food trucks, to ensure that they have adequate access to waste receptacles.
  - d. Ensure that stormwater passageways are in good working order and clean from debris.
3. Utilize best practices, along with infrastructure improvements, to ensure high quality drinking water.
  - a. Encourage water conservation measures to ease the load on water treatment equipment.
  - b. Review water quality improvement initiatives from other localities to develop and identify which strategies may be effective in Cape Charles.
4. Maintain the beach and harbor to protect the long-term viability of their ecological services and economic benefits.
  - a. Control dune, beach, and shoreline erosion through regulation and best practices.
  - b. Improve vehicular access from Mason Avenue to town harbor as part of new development to the waterfront.
  - c. Preserve the integrity of and accessibility to the water's edge.
5. Promote coastal resiliency through policy, development regulation, and enforcement.
  - a. Consider setting new sustainability targets regarding materials, construction practices, etc.
  - b. Consider incentives to promote the use of sustainable development practices.
  - c. Continue active participation in the Resilience Adaptation Facility Tool (RAFT).
6. Protect natural resources, especially wetlands and other sensitive ecosystems.
  - a. Prevent development in environmentally sensitive areas.
  - b. Consider establishment of wetlands bank.
  - c. Conduct annual educational campaigns directed at coastal and creek tributary property owners regarding the Resource Protection Area and the Resource Management Area applicable to their properties. Provide information on best practices regarding landscaping: the maintenance of trees, shrubs, bushes, and other vegetation, as well as appropriate species and sizes to use for replacement, if necessary.
7. Working with the Town Wetlands and Coastal Dune Board, continue to implement Coastal Resources Management guidance from the Virginia Institute of Marine Science.
  - a. Refer to the guidance presented in the locality's Comprehensive Coastal Resource Management Portal (CCRMP) prepared by VIMS to guide regulation and policy decisions regarding shoreline erosion control.
  - b. Utilize VIMS Decision Trees for on site review and subsequent selection of appropriate erosion control/shoreline best management practices: <http://ccrm.vims.edu/decisiontree/index.html>.
  - c. Utilize VIMS' CCRMP Shoreline Best Management Practices for management recommendation for all tidal shorelines in the jurisdiction.
  - d. Consider a policy where the above Shoreline Best Management Practices become the recommended adaptation strategy for erosion control, and where a departure from these recommendations by an applicant wishing to alter the shoreline must be justified at a hearing of the board(s).
  - e. Encourage staff training on decision making tools developed by the Center for Coastal Resources Management at VIMS.
  - f. Follow the development of the state-wide General Permit being developed by VMRC. Ensure that local policies are consistent with the provisions of the permit.
  - g. Evaluate and consider a locality-wide permit to expedite shoreline applications that request actions consistent with the VIMS recommendation.
  - h. Seek public outreach opportunities to educate citizens and stakeholders on new shoreline management strategies including Living Shorelines.
  - i. Follow the development of integrated shoreline guidance under development by VMRC.
  - j. Evaluate and consider a locality-wide regulatory structure that encourages a more integrated approach to shoreline management.
  - k. Consider preserving available open spaces adjacent to marsh lands to allow for inland retreat of the marshes under rising sea level.
  - l. Evaluate and consider cost share opportunities for construction of living shorelines.
8. Consider the creation of a committee to provide recommendations for increasing the Town's resiliency to storm events or delegate these responsibilities to the Dunes and Wetlands committee.
9. Assess the feasibility of providing recycling in the Town from year to year. Promote use of the Northampton County recycling drop off service.
10. Study and support efforts to protect Cape Charles existing tree canopy while encouraging new plantings. Follow the guidance found in the Master Tree Plan (see <https://www.capecharles.org/pview.aspx?id=9713&catid=605>).
11. Evaluate the amount of storm water infiltration into the sewer collection system and develop a corrective action plan.



Footprints in the sand on Cape Charles Beach.

# Implementation

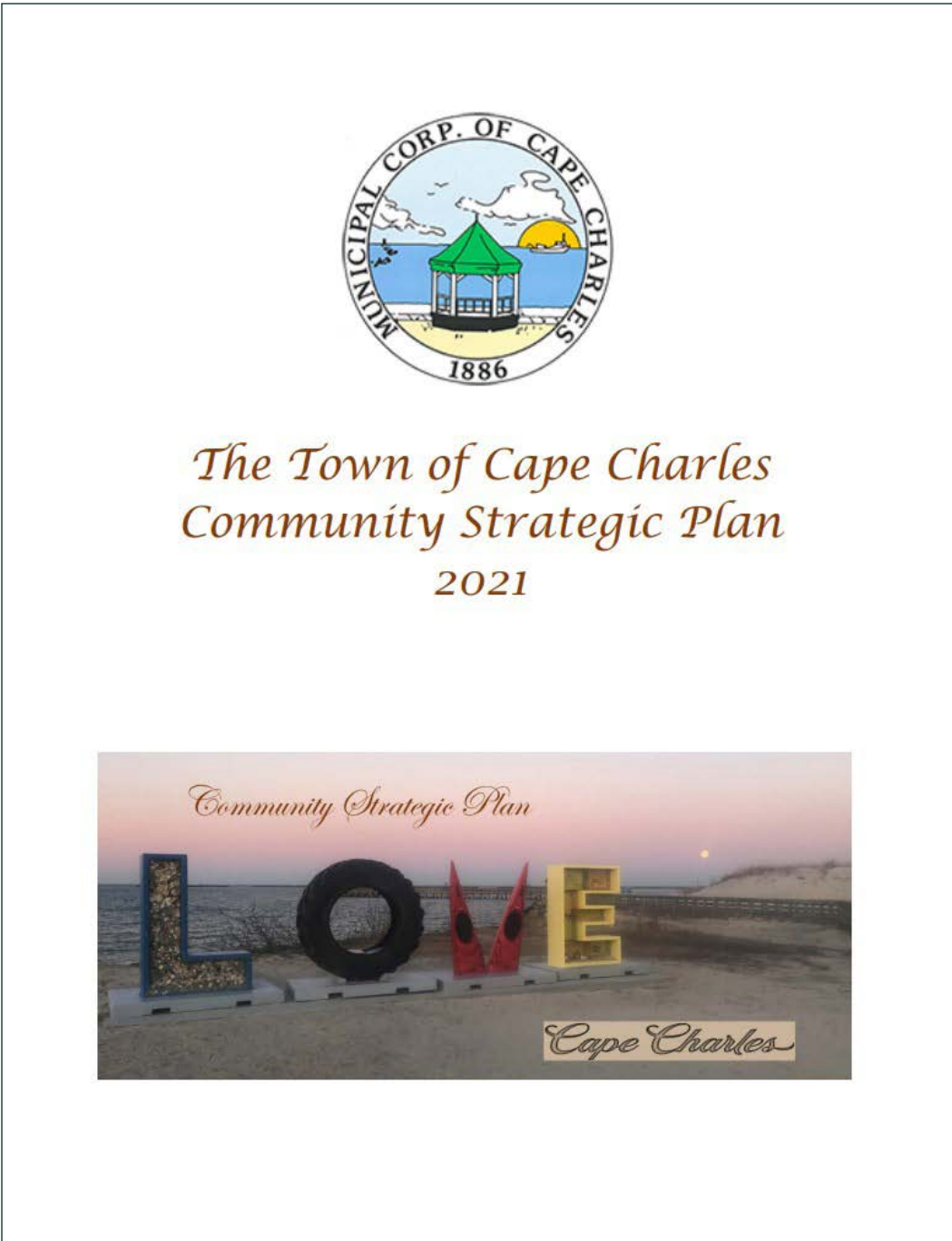
- Relationship to the Community Strategic Plan
- Objectives & Strategies Matrix

**Relationship to the Town’s Strategic Plan**

The most important part of any plan is its implementation strategy. It is acknowledged that as time passes, and decision makers change, priorities may also change. Therefore, it is critical to develop an implementation strategy that can react in real time. For Cape Charles, the annual review/update of the Community Strategic Plan will draw from the objectives and strategies of the Comprehensive Plan and be used as an implementation tool.

The Strategic Plan and the Comprehensive Plan complement one another and share the same vision. The Strategic Plan will implement the Comprehensive Plan over time by determining which of the Comprehensive Plan’s strategies to focus on in the upcoming year. The Strategic Plan is a shorter, simpler, document that can be reviewed and updated every year, with objectives that can be removed as they are implemented and replaced with new ones.

The annual review/update of the Strategic Plan typically occurs between November – February of each year. This process often includes community surveys. The intent is to finalize the Strategic Plan in time for it to inform the development of the Town’s annual budget, which includes capital projects associated with the Capital Asset Management Plan. Once adopted, the annual budget then becomes the work plan for the following fiscal year.



**Housing Objectives & Strategies:**

- Pursue character appropriate additional supply and diversity of housing, including smaller single-family homes, duplexes, town homes, and condos to increase the availability of affordable housing.
  - a. Review the Zoning Ordinance to identify barriers to the development of mixed-income housing, as well as housing diversity that is naturally more affordable by assessing the findings in the report ‘Overcoming Land Use Ordinance Barriers to Housing Development in Northampton County including Town of Cape Charles’ (published May 27, 2022). This would include a review of opportunities to decrease parking minimums and/or setbacks in certain zoning districts to increase the amount of developable land on each parcel.
  - b. Review the findings and recommendations from Eastern Shore of Virginia Regional Housing Study (published March 2022) to inform future land use and housing policy.
- 2. Encourage development of affordable workforce housing.
  - a. Engage local businesses about the housing needs of their employees and distribute said information to County and Regional/State Housing officials.
- 3. Subject to staff resources, participate in housing financing programs.
  - a. Consider participating in programming, loan, and grant initiatives that support affordable housing, such as Tax-Exempt Bond Financing, the Housing Choice Voucher Program, and the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Program.
  - b. Disseminate housing assistance information focused on available financing for housing rehabilitation (e.g. Livable Home Tax Credits through DHCD, Rehabilitation Tax Credits through USDA); provide and promote these programs with targeted marketing materials on the Town website and in the offices of the Planning & Zoning and Building Departments.
- 4. In accordance with the Code of Virginia Sec 15.2-2223.5, Cape Charles shall incorporate into its comprehensive plan strategies to promote manufactured housing as a source of affordable housing. Such strategies may include (i) the preservation of existing manufactured housing communities, (ii) the creation of new manufactured home communities, and (iii) the creation of new manufactured home subdivisions.
- 5. Address the impacts of short-term rentals (STR) on the existing housing stock. (See also Economy Objective Strategy 1.a)
  - a. Develop and maintain a Town inventory of short-term rental units in collaboration with local real estate/property management groups. Identify whether rentals are located within the Historic District or Bay Creek Planned Unit Development area.
  - b. Coordinate with stakeholders to identify how and when short-term rental units are used.
  - c. Encourage long-term rental conversions through legislation or regulation.

**Economy Objectives & Strategies:**

- 1. Seek a healthy balance between year-round residents, tourists, and second homeowners in Cape Charles.
  - a. Develop short-term rental (STR) regulations to help protect the quality of life for year-round residents.
  - b. Collaborate with Eastern Shore of Virginia Tourism (ESVA), Cape Charles Main Street, and others to promote Cape Charles as a destination.
  - c. Work with other Eastern Shore localities to develop shared strategies for tourist attraction.
  - d. Strengthen and promote available broadband service to increase viability of Cape Charles as a destination for telecommuters and increase broadband hotspot offerings at areas including the Cape Charles Beach, Central Park, and the harbor area.
  - e. Develop and promote events, such as those in outdoor recreation, to attract tourists.
- 2. Attract families with children to Cape Charles.
  - a. Support Northampton County administration and School Board efforts to strengthen local schools.
  - b. Pursue the construction of new playgrounds and recreational facilities, to include facilities for adolescent and teenaged children.
  - c. Collaborate with local organizations to increase the amount of youth programming.
  - d. Provide opportunities for organizations and community members to plan and host events on town facilities, the public right-of-way, etc.
  - e. Promote the development of year-round, family-supporting jobs in appropriate areas.
- 3. Provide opportunities for households to strengthen their economic wellbeing.
  - a. Collaborate with local and regional partners to develop workforce development programs with connections to local industries.
  - b. Partner with colleges and universities, in collaboration with the Northampton County Board of Supervisors, the School Board, and the Eastern Shore Community College, to develop educational opportunities for residents.
  - c. Partner with public/private entities to promote workforce housing development.
- 4. Promote and expand businesses in a business-friendly environment.
  - a. Promote a healthy balance of light industrial and commercial activity around the harbor.
  - b. Engage professional planning and economic consultants to develop concept plans for the Harbor area and railroad property, as well as associated design guidelines for the Harbor area that complement the Historic District.
  - c. Develop public/private collaboration efforts to guide business development, help remove obstacles, and improve access to workforce resources.
- 5. Promote diverse economic benefits for the Harbor area.
  - a. Integrate the area with existing bike and pedestrian networks.
  - b. Promote best management practices for stormwater management and flood protection.
  - c. Provide high-quality public spaces and active street frontages.
- 6. Preserve and expand the local manufacturing base to ensure diverse employment opportunities.
  - a. Collaborate with existing companies to explore opportunities for community events and/or projects that raise the profile of company benefits to the community.

**Economy Objectives & Strategies (Continued):**

- 7. Promote traditional water-based economic activities.
  - a. Engage with local watermen to explore ways the Town can support their businesses.
  - b. Engage with waterfront property owners around the harbor to explore ways the Town can support their businesses.
  - c. Study potential municipal barriers to entrepreneurial efforts in or around the harbor area (e.g. local seafood market).
- 8. Coordinate with Cape Charles Main Street for studying “chains of activity” in Cape Charles to identify any gaps in combinations of how someone can spend their day.
  - a. Study these chains during all seasons of the year.
  - b. Identify strategies to enhance local economy during winter season.
  - c. Attract businesses to fill gaps in chains of activity.
- 9. Identify placemaking opportunities to test temporary events, installations, or other features that attract people to the area and encourage them to spend longer periods of time, particularly during the off-season, to promote Cape Charles as a vibrant community. Placemaking involves the intentional implementation of art, public space furniture, or event programming in a space to encourage the public to interact and spend time in the space. Encouraging greater activity increases sense of “place” and can make better use of previously inactive spaces.
- 10. Update the Accawmacke Plantation Planned Unit Development (PUD) Ordinance that governs the Bay Creek Development to be consistent with the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan.

**Transportation Objectives & Strategies:**

- 1. Reduce traffic congestion by reducing local vehicle miles traveled (VMT) by automobile. Coordinate with Land Use objectives and strategies.
  - a. Plan and implement comfortable, accessible, and convenient multimodal transportation options.
  - b. Prioritize increasing the number of people walking and bicycling in town.
  - c. Inventory bicycle parking available within the town to ensure that all areas of the town have good access to bicycle parking.
  - d. Utilize “ad campaign” style communications about the benefits of prioritizing walking and bicycling in town.
  - e. Promote golf cart use in appropriate areas.
- 2. In cooperation with the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), strive to enhance walkability and complete the sidewalk network, especially in the Historic District.
  - a. Provide sidewalks on all urban streets with clear paths (unobstructed by trees, bushes, street lights, etc.) that are at least 5’ wide.
  - b. Clearly mark pedestrian crossings.
  - c. Use minimal curb radii and/or curb extensions to minimize crossing distances for pedestrians.
  - d. Ensure ADA compliance on all sidewalks.
  - e. Explore the implementation of mirrors at all alleyways to increase visibility for pedestrians.
  - f. Clarify and adopt Town policy regarding sidewalks ensuring the responsible party to implement them is defined.
- 3. Implement new policies and strategies for maintaining safety around golf cart operation.
  - a. Clarify municipal code regarding golf cart operation, ensure that signs are posted with the ordinance notifying golf cart operators that they must use the street and follow other rules of the road.
- 4. Increase the availability of parking while maintaining character.
  - a. Review benefits of providing clearly marked parking spaces on Bay Avenue.
  - b. Expand the existing parking facility south of the Mason Ave corridor to mitigate the impacts of parking on walkability in the area.
  - c. Study parking and create a strategic parking plan to recommend any infrastructure or policy changes.
- 5. Identify ownership and alignment of all of the alleys and access easements in town to ensure accuracy and that maintenance is performed by rightful owner.
  - a. Create plan to clearly identify ownership of all alleys and inform owners of their maintenance responsibilities.
  - b. Determine if existing alignments are correct.
  - c. Determine if additional alleys are needed, or if existing alleys need to be moved, especially behind commercial buildings, and develop a plan to enhance access.

Transportation Objectives & Strategies (Continued):
<p>6. Collaborate with the Accomack-Northampton Transportation District Commission to promote accessible and affordable public transit in Cape Charles and throughout the region.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Collaborate with STAR Transit to pursue convenient, safe, and frequent bus service to key commercial, residential, and recreational destinations.</li> </ul>
<p>7. Complete the construction of the multi-use path connecting the Historic District, the harbor area, and the Bay Creek development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Make future improvements to the path, including resting areas and bicycle/golf cart parking.</li> </ul>
<p>8. Integrate the Harbor area with existing bike, golf cart, and pedestrian networks.</p>
<p>9. Support the Rails to Trails project connecting Cape Charles to the Route 13 multi-use path.</p>

Environment Objectives & Strategies:
<p>1. Enhance water quality of the Chesapeake Bay.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Support intensifying the monitoring of all measures of the bay’s health.</li> <li>b. Update the Town’s ordinance to reduce the amount of impervious surfaces in town to slow stormwater and contaminant runoff.</li> <li>c. Increase the amount of vegetation and other bioretention infrastructure to filter stormwater before it enters the bay. This could be achieved either through individual projects or with new development.</li> </ul>
<p>2. Continue to promote the strong aesthetics of the town and limit pollution from litter.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Ensure easy access to refuse and recycling bins at town facilities and in public right-of-way.</li> <li>b. Educate residents and visitors of best practices through signage and other materials as necessary.</li> <li>c. Engage with seasonal vendors, such as food trucks, to ensure that they have adequate access to waste receptacles.</li> <li>d. Ensure that stormwater passageways are in good working order and clean from debris.</li> </ul>
<p>3. Utilize best practices, along with infrastructure improvements, to ensure high quality drinking water.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Encourage water conservation measures to ease the load on water treatment equipment.</li> <li>b. Review water quality improvement initiatives from other localities to develop and identify which strategies may be effective in Cape Charles.</li> </ul>
<p>4. Maintain the beach and harbor to protect the long-term viability of their ecological services and economic benefits.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Control dune, beach, and shoreline erosion through regulation and best practices.</li> <li>b. Improve vehicular access from Mason Avenue to town harbor as part of new development to the waterfront.</li> <li>c. Preserve the integrity of and accessibility to the water’s edge.</li> </ul>
<p>5. Promote coastal resiliency through policy, development regulation, and enforcement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Consider setting new sustainability targets regarding materials, construction practices, etc.</li> <li>b. Consider incentives to promote the use of sustainable development practices.</li> <li>c. Continue active participation in the Resilience Adaptation Facility Tool (RAFT).</li> </ul>
<p>6. Protect natural resources, especially wetlands and other sensitive ecosystems.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Prevent development in environmentally sensitive areas.</li> <li>b. Consider establishment of wetlands bank.</li> <li>c. Conduct annual educational campaigns directed at coastal and creek tributary property owners regarding the Resource Protection Area and the Resource Management Area applicable to their properties. Provide information on best practices regarding landscaping: the maintenance of trees, shrubs, bushes, and other vegetation, as well as appropriate species and sizes to use for replacement, if necessary.</li> </ul>

**Environment Objectives & Strategies (Continued):**

7. Working with the Town Wetlands and Coastal Dune Board, continue to implement Coastal Resources Management guidance from the Virginia Institute of Marine Science.
  - a. Refer to the guidance presented in the locality’s Comprehensive Coastal Resource Management Portal (CCRMP) prepared by VIMS to guide regulation and policy decisions regarding shoreline erosion control.
  - b. Utilize VIMS Decision Trees for on site review and subsequent selection of appropriate erosion control/shoreline best management practices:  
<http://ccrm.vims.edu/decisiontree/index.html>.
  - c. Utilize VIMS’ CCRMP Shoreline Best Management Practices for management recommendation for all tidal shorelines in the jurisdiction.
  - d. Consider a policy where the above Shoreline Best Management Practices become the recommended adaptation strategy for erosion control, and where a departure from these recommendations by an applicant wishing to alter the shoreline must be justified at a hearing of the board(s).
  - e. Encourage staff training on decision making tools developed by the Center for Coastal Resources Management at VIMS.
  - f. Follow the development of the state-wide General Permit being developed by VMRC. Ensure that local policies are consistent with the provisions of the permit.
  - g. Evaluate and consider a locality-wide permit to expedite shoreline applications that request actions consistent with the VIMS recommendation.
  - h. Seek public outreach opportunities to educate citizens and stakeholders on new shoreline management strategies including Living Shorelines.
  - i. Follow the development of integrated shoreline guidance under development by VMRC.
  - j. Evaluate and consider a locality-wide regulatory structure that encourages a more integrated approach to shoreline management.
  - k. Consider preserving available open spaces adjacent to marsh lands to allow for inland retreat of the marshes under rising sea level.
  - l. Evaluate and consider cost share opportunities for construction of living shorelines.
8. Consider the creation of a committee to provide recommendations for increasing the Town’s resiliency to storm events or delegate these responsibilities to the Dunes and Wetlands committee.
9. Assess the feasibility of providing recycling in the Town from year to year. Promote use of the Northampton County recycling drop off service.
10. Study and support efforts to protect Cape Charles existing tree canopy while encouraging new plantings. Follow the guidance found in the Master Tree Plan (see Appendix and/or <https://www.capecharles.org/files/documents/document1463052401090513.pdf>)
11. Evaluate the amount of storm water infiltration into the sewer collection system and develop a corrective action plan.

**Community Facilities & Services Objectives & Strategies:**

1. Pursue adequate lighting and other amenities (seating, trash receptacles, water fountains, signage, etc.) for Town designated facilities.
2. Plan for the creation of modernized, accessible, and welcoming municipal facilities.
3. Plan for the creation of amenities, such as a multi-use recreation field or other play areas.
4. Ensure efficient, cost-effective management, maintenance, and operation of water and sewer utilities, in conformance with all regulatory requirements.
5. Establish a policy for paying for capital facility expansion needs over time.
6. Develop proffer policies so that future development helps pay for the additional impacts and public facility costs that it generates.
7. Pursue funding opportunities for art, public events, markets, et cetera.