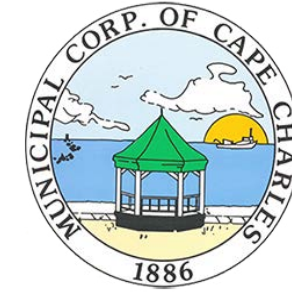




Town of Cape Charles Comprehensive Plan

Adopted December 15, 2022



Acknowledgments

Mayor

William "Smitty" Dize

Town Council

Steve Bennett, Vice Mayor

Andy Buchholz

Andrew Follmer

Paul Grossman

Tammy Holloway

Ellen O'Brien

Planning Commission

Bill Stramm, Chairman

Dennis McCoy, Vice Chairman

Kenneth Butta

Paul Grossman

Jim Holloway

Michael Strub

Town Staff

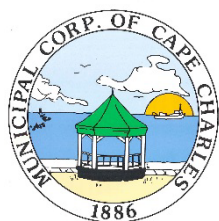
John Hozey, Town Manager

Katie Nunez, Planning and Zoning Administrator

Planning Consultant

Summit Design and Engineering

Page intentionally left blank.



Municipal Corp. of
Cape Charles

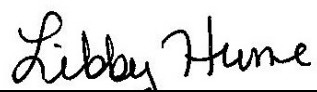
The undersigned Clerk of the Council of the Town of Cape Charles, Virginia (the "Town"), hereby certifies that:

1. A meeting of the Council of the Town (the "Council") was duly called and held on December 15, 2022 (the "Meeting").
2. Attached hereto is a true, correct and complete copy of Resolution 20221215B (the "Resolution") of the Town entitled as recorded in full in the minutes of the Meeting, duly adopted by a majority of the members of the Council present and voting during the Meeting.
3. A summary of the members of the Council participating at the Meeting and the recorded vote with respect to the foregoing Resolution as set forth below:

Member Name	Present	Absent	Voting		
			Yes	No	Abstaining
William Dize, Mayor	X				
Steve Bennett	X		X		
Andy Buchholz	X		X		
Andrew Follmer	X		X		
Paul Grossman	X		X		
Tammy Holloway	X		X		
Ellen O'Brien	X		X		

4. The Resolution has not been repealed, revoked, rescinded or amended and is in full force and effect on the date hereof.

Witness my signature and the seal of the Town of Cape Charles, Virginia this 15th day of December 2022.



 Clerk of the Council
 Town of Cape Charles, Virginia

(Seal)

Resolution 20221215B
Adoption of the Town of Cape Charles
Comprehensive Plan Update

WHEREAS, the Code of Virginia, Title 15.2, Chapter 22, Section 15.2-2223 requires the Town of Cape Charles to prepare and recommend a Comprehensive Plan Update for the physical development of its territory, and Section 15.2 mandates that at least once every five years the Comprehensive Plan is reviewed by the local Planning Commission; and

WHEREAS, the Cape Charles Planning Commission reviewed the existing Comprehensive Plan and determined it advisable to update that plan; and

WHEREAS, in October 2021, the Town issued a request for proposals for consulting services to assist with the review, update, and publishing of the Town's Comprehensive Plan update in accordance with Code of Virginia §15.2-2230; and

WHEREAS, after review of the proposals, the Cape Charles Town Council approved awarding the contract to Summit Design and Engineering Services ("Summit"); and

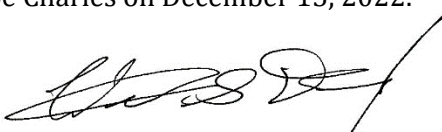
WHEREAS, the Planning Commission, staff and the comprehensive plan review group have worked diligently with Summit regarding the proposed updates; and

WHEREAS, a Public Forum was held on October 6, 2022, with public comments accepted until October 24, 2022. A joint work session of the Planning Commission, Town Council and Summit was held on October 27, 2022 to discuss comments received and appropriate changes were incorporated into the final draft of the Town of Cape Charles Comprehensive Plan dated November 23, 2022; and

WHEREAS, the Cape Charles Planning Commission and Town Council held a joint public hearing on December 6, 2022. Following the joint public hearing, the Planning Commission discussed the comments received and recommended approval of the Town of Cape Charles Comprehensive Plan;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Town Council of Cape Charles, Virginia adopts the November 23, 2022 Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Cape Charles.

Adopted by the Town Council of the Town of Cape Charles on December 15, 2022.

By: 

 Mayor

ATTEST:


 Town Clerk



Plan Highlights

This Comprehensive Plan is a guide for future development in the Town of Cape Charles. It outlines where the Town and its residents are at the time of its creation, where they want to go in the future, and the steps it will take to get there. This document, upon adoption, updates and supersedes the previous Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 2009 and amended in 2016.

The Comprehensive Plan is used as guidance by Town Council, the Planning Commission, and Town staff in reviewing and making recommendations on development applications, as well as in identifying growth and funding opportunities. Town residents and future developers can use the plan to understand the future toward which Cape Charles is striving. Adhering to the plan and taking steps to implement it is the best way to ensure that Cape Charles continues to develop in a manner that is orderly, attractive, and benefits all its residents.

The Vision Statement found on page 18 describes the overarching goal of the Plan, and the document makes recommendations in the following categories:

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

The Plan describes the current state of each of these topics in the Town and makes specific recommendations about how to improve each topic area. Arguably the most important element of the Plan is the Future Land Use map and accompanying Future Land Use categories, which will be used to make future changes to the Town's Zoning Map.

Planning Commission, Town Council, and Town staff spent many hours over three years crafting the recommendations in the plan, which were influenced by input from Town residents. It adheres to current planning best practices and is reflective of current economic and environmental realities.

Sand on the fishing pier.

Table of Contents

Introduction	13
What is a Comprehensive Plan?.....	14
Organization of the Plan.....	15
How is a Comprehensive Plan Used?.....	15
Legal Authority.....	15
Relationship to Other Plans.....	15
Town Government.....	16
Process for Plan Development and Adoption.....	16
Cape Charles History.....	17
Regional Setting.....	18
Community Analysis	23
Population.....	24
Age Distribution.....	25
Families.....	26
Racial Composition.....	26
Educational Attainment.....	27
Income.....	27
Poverty.....	27
Public Input	29
Kick Off Workshop.....	30
Stakeholder Survey.....	31
Regional Housing Workshop Summary.....	31
2022 Regroup.....	31
Comments on Draft Comprehensive Plan.....	32
Public Hearing, Recommendation, and Vote.....	32
Goals and Objectives Setting.....	35
Housing	37
Overview.....	38
Housing Inventory.....	40
Housing Projections.....	40
Accessory Dwelling Units.....	41
Tenure.....	41
Age of Housing.....	42
Housing Conditions.....	43
Housing Value.....	44
Housing Market Conditions.....	45
Rentals.....	45
Historic Resources.....	45
Affordable Housing.....	46
Workforce Housing Units.....	46
Housing Objectives and Strategies.....	47
Economy	49
Overview.....	50
Labor Force Participation Rate.....	51
Unemployment Rate.....	51
Median Household Income.....	51
Employment by Industry.....	52
Major Employers.....	53
Town Revenue.....	53
Economy Objectives and Strategies.....	54

Transportation	57
Overview.....	58
Parking.....	60
Public Transit.....	61
Alleys.....	61
Bicycle and Pedestrian Infrastructure.....	62
Golf Carts.....	63
Proposed Multi-Use Path.....	64
Commuting.....	65
Regional Long Range Plan.....	66
Compliance with Virginia Department of Transportation Plans.....	67
Transportation Objectives and Strategies.....	68
Environment	71
Overview.....	72
Climate.....	72
Topography.....	73
The Resilience Adaptation Feasibility Tool.....	74
Soils.....	77
Surface Water.....	78
Ground Water.....	80
Drinking Water.....	82
Wastewater.....	82
Storm Water.....	83
Wetlands.....	84
Habitat.....	86
Waterfront Access.....	87
Shoreline Erosion.....	87
Recycling.....	89
Tree Canopy Coverage.....	89
Environment Objectives and Strategies.....	90
Community Facilities & Services	93
Community Facilities.....	94
Amenities.....	98
Private Amenities.....	100
Broadband.....	101
Educational Facilities.....	102
Public Services and Programs.....	102
Recreational, Cultural, and Youth Activities.....	103
Cape Charles Medical Services.....	104
Active and Engaged Partnerships.....	106
Community Facilities & Services Objectives and Strategies.....	109
Land Use & Community Design	111
Land Use and Community Design Framework.....	112
Future Land Use	117
Future Land Use Map Description.....	118
Implementation	139
Relationship to the Town's Strategic Plan.....	140
Appendix	151

List of Figures

Figure 1: Population & Percent Change in Population.....	24
Figure 2: Population Projection	24
Figure 4: Population by Generation	25
Figure 3: Population by Age	25
Figure 6: Population by Race	26
Figure 5: Families	26
Figure 8: % of Population in Poverty	27
Figure 7: Family Income	27
Figure 9: Housing Unit Occupied vs. Vacancies	39
Figure 10: Housing Inventory	40
Figure 11: Housing Occupancy by Tenure	41
Figure 12: Year Structure Built	42
Figure 13: Regional Comparison of Median Value of Owner Occupied Units.....	44
Figure 14: Price of Owner-Occupied Units	44
Figure 15: Annual Median Listing Value	45
Figure 16: Labor Force Participation Rate	51
Figure 17: Median Household income	51
Figure 18: Employment by Industry.....	52
Figure 20: Town Revenues	53
Figure 19: Employers	53
Figure 21: Parking Inventory	60
Figure 23: Means of Commuting to Work.....	65
Figure 22: Place of Work.....	65
Figure 24: Average Annual Temperature.....	72

List of Maps

Map 1: Road Ownership	58
Map 2: Annual Average Daily Traffic.....	59
Map 3: Existing Parking.....	60
Map 4: Alleyways.....	61
Map 5: Sidewalks.....	62
Map 6: Proposed Multi-Use Trail	64
Map 7. Rural Long Range Transportation Plan Projects	66
Map 8. Sea Level Rise Projections	74
Map 9. Flood Hazard Areas	75
Map 10. Soils	76
Map 11. Shellfish Areas.....	79
Map 12. Wetlands	85
Map 14. Existing Land Use Historic District	112
Map 15. Existing Land Use.....	113
Map 16. Future Land Use.....	120
Map 17. Existing Zoning	152
Map 18. Existing Zoning Historic District.....	154



Foggy morning in Cape Charles.

Introduction

- What is a Comprehensive Plan?
- Organization of the Plan
- How is a Comprehensive Plan Used?
- Legal Authority
- Relationship to Other Plans
- Town Government
- Process for Plan Development and Adoption
- Cape Charles History
- Regional Setting

Introduction

What is a Comprehensive Plan?

The Comprehensive Plan is a long-range planning document that is designed to guide the future growth and development of Cape Charles over the next twenty or more years. It is the local government's guide to future community, physical, and economic development. All Towns, Cities, and Counties in Virginia are required by Section 15.2-2223 of the Code of Virginia to adopt a Comprehensive Plan. Section 15.2-2230 of the Code of Virginia requires localities to review its Comprehensive Plan on a five-year basis to ensure that it remains a relevant and usable vision for the community and is reflective of current conditions. This document should be relied upon by Town staff, as well as elected and appointed leaders, as they weigh the merits of land development applications, construct the Town's annual budget, and make many other decisions for the future of the Town. It is important to note that the Comprehensive Plan is a vision for what the citizens and leadership of Cape Charles want the Town to be in the future. While the Comprehensive Plan sets planning policy for our community, land use and development are regulated through the Town's zoning and subdivision ordinances. The Comprehensive Plan guides amendments to these ordinances and should be used to make decisions on land use applications, such as conditional use permits and rezonings. The plan will serve as a guide for Town leaders and property owners as they make many land use, fiscal, and other decisions over the coming years. The primary goal of this plan is to protect and improve the Town by providing for the public health, safety, convenience, and welfare of its residents.



Cape Charles mural on Mason Avenue by @EmilyAsAnArtist

Organization of the Plan

The Comprehensive Plan is organized into chapters that summarize all aspects of land use in the Town. Following this introduction, the "Community Analysis" chapter highlights demographic characteristics. The next chapters are the Plan Topics. Each of these chapters includes a discussion of background and analysis, identification of issues, and a statement of goals and objectives. The Land Use chapter presents the central theme of the report, the Future Land Use Plan, which designates how and where growth should occur. The other sections include discussions of Housing, Economy, Transportation, Community Facilities and Services, and Environment. The final chapter of the plan explains the relationship with the Town's annual strategic plan that is utilized to implement the plan's goals and objectives.

How is a Comprehensive Plan Used?

Town staff, the Planning Commission, and the Town Council use the Plan for recommendations on legislative land use applications. The Plan also lists planned infrastructure and public facility improvements. The community can read the Town's vision and give public comments on legislative land use applications. The Plan outlines the Town's goals and expectations of new development for developers. This guidance helps streamline expectations, feedback, and negotiations.

Legal Authority

Chapter 22, Article 3: §15.2-2223 through §15.2-2232 outlines the legal authority and requirement that all localities prepare, recommend, and adopt a Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan "shall be made with the purpose of guiding and accomplishing a coordinated, adjusted and harmonious development of the territory which will, in accordance with present and probable future needs and resources, best promote the health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity, and general welfare of the inhabitants, including the elderly and persons with disabilities."

Relationship to Other Plans

The Comprehensive Plan works in conjunction with other Cape Charles plans and ordinances, some of these include the Community Strategic Plan, Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance and the Capital Asset Management Plan (CAMP). The Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances are two sections of the Cape Charles town code that are direct regulations for the location, form, and character of private development. The Comprehensive Plan gives guidance and ultimately should influence updates to these ordinances to ensure that the goals in the Plan get implemented in a timely manner. This allows the Town Council or the Planning Commission to review a project for compliance with regulatory standards and meets the vision embodied by the Comprehensive Plan. Capital Improvement Plans (like the CAMP) are fiscal management tools used to plan for the location, timing, and financing of a community's capital improvements over time. Capital Improvements are major, non-recurring physical infrastructure or equipment that requires funding. The Comprehensive Plan can help guide the CAMP and make sure the Town's vision and priorities are aligned. Cape Charles is part of the regional Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission, features roads maintained by the Virginia Department of Transportation, and other agencies that plan in relation to the Town. This Plan should be utilized in ensuring Cape Charles vision is aligned with any plan that may affect the locality. There are also many plans and further studies mentioned within this Comprehensive Plan and these will need to be undertaken and aligned with the Plan to ensure its implementation and achieve its goals.

Additionally, the Town of Cape Charles prepares an annual Strategic Plan that will be updated more frequently and assist the Town in achieving implementation of the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan. For more information on the relationship between the Comprehensive Plan and the Strategic Plan please refer to the Implementation section.

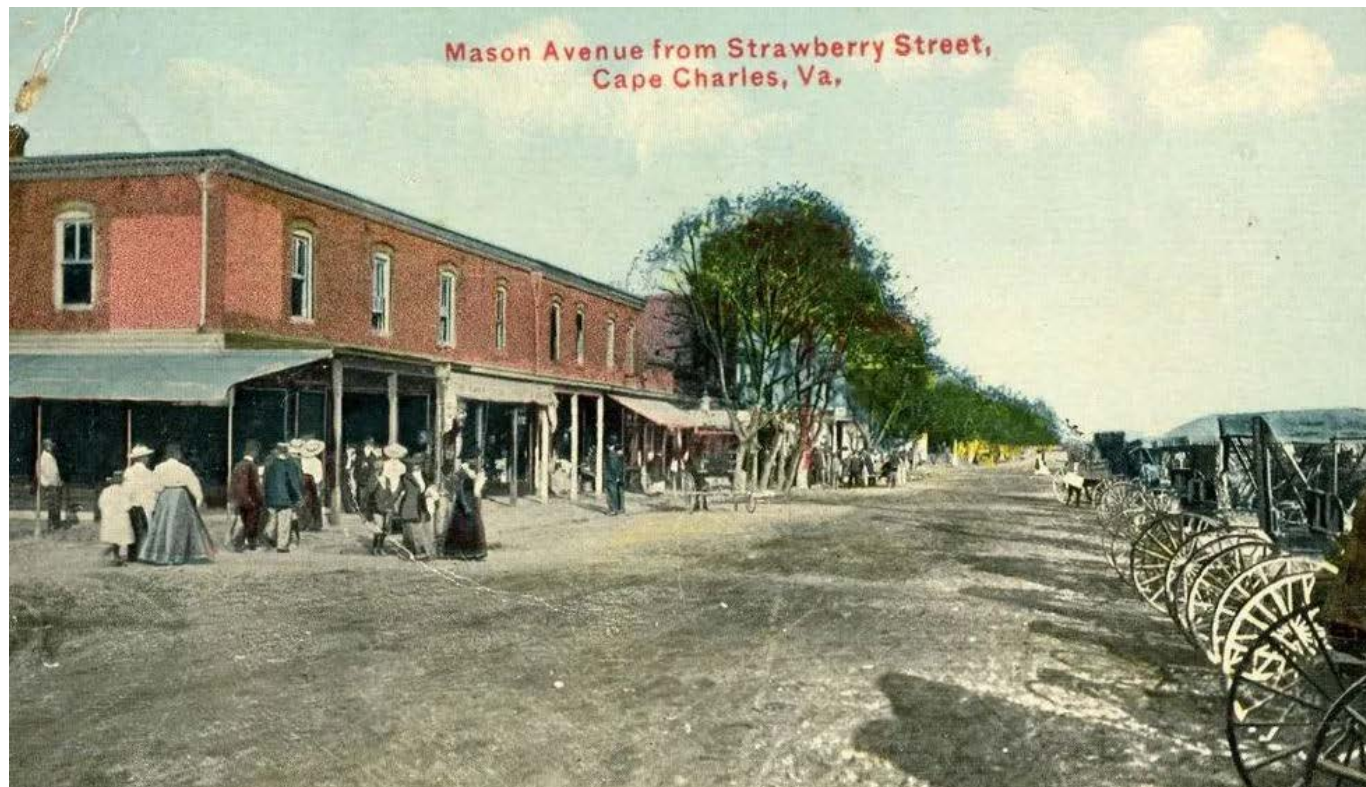
The CAMP can be found at <https://www.capecharles.org/pview.aspx?id=37927&catid=605>, and the Strategic Plan can be found at <https://www.capecharles.org/pview.aspx?id=37936&catid=605>.

Town Government

Cape Charles is governed by a six-member Town Council, as well as a Mayor who serves as the presiding officer at Council meetings. Each of these representatives is elected to a four-year term. Day-to-day operation of the Town and the supervision of Town employees is carried out by a Town Manager, serving at the direction of the Council.

Process for Plan Development and Adoption

The update of the 2016 Comprehensive Plan began in 2019. Since the 2016 Comprehensive Plan was considered a ‘minor’ update to the 2009 Comprehensive Plan, the Planning Commission also used the 2009 Comprehensive Plan with its detailed appendices. This current plan update is based on review of development trends in the Town which have prompted substantial changes to the 2009 and 2016 Comprehensive Plans.



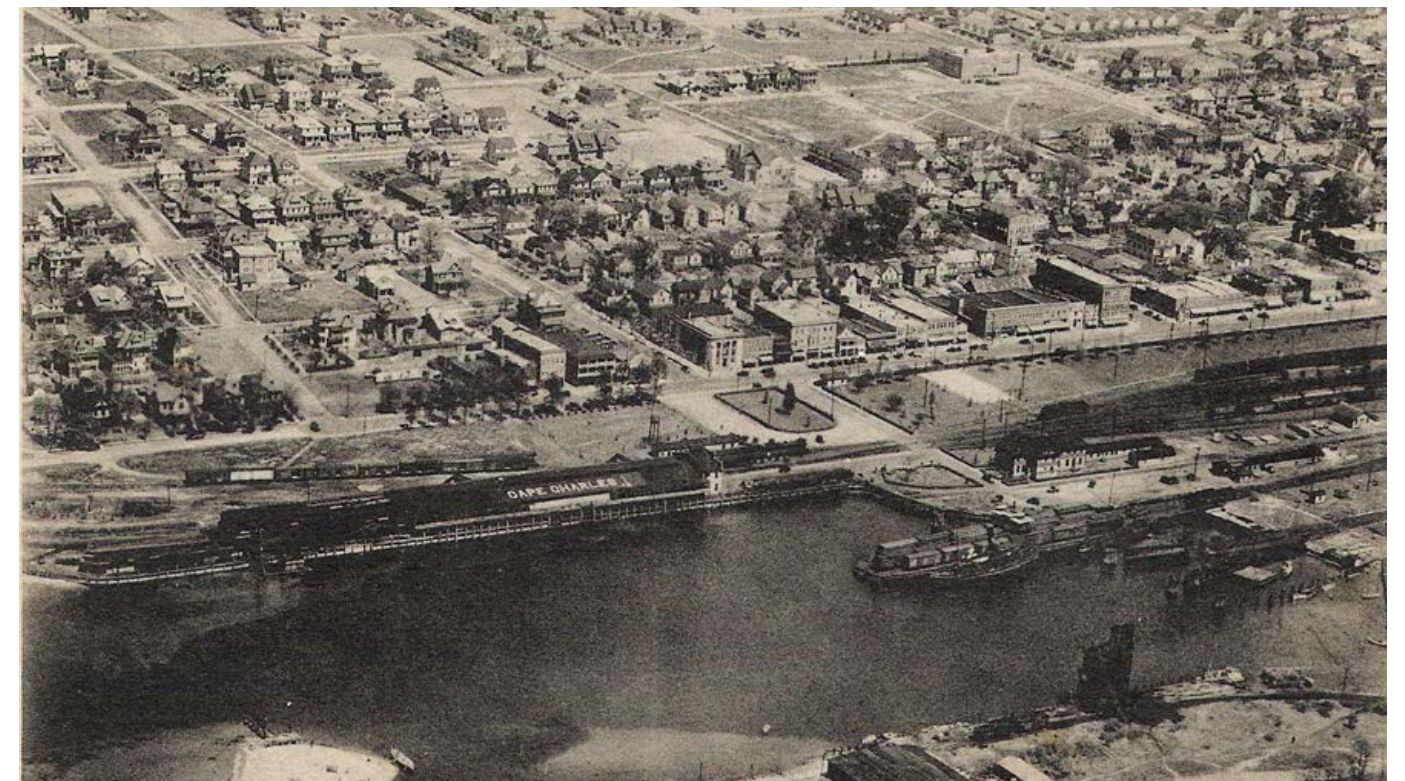
View along Mason Avenue from the year 1900.

Cape Charles History

Cape Charles was laid out in 1883-1884 at the southern terminus of the New York, Philadelphia, and Norfolk Railroad. The town owes its existence to its harbor, which, following dredging, enabled the railroad company to transport loaded cars by barge across the Chesapeake Bay to Norfolk. The town developed quickly and became the largest community on Virginia’s Eastern Shore at the turn of the century. Its buildings were constructed on a twenty-seven block grid dominated by a central park from which four landscaped streets extended. The remarkably intact architectural fabric ranges from small vernacular workers’ housing of the 1880s to early 20th century architect designed commercial, residential, and municipal buildings. The opening of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel occurred in 1964. During this time the Town began to see growth and development generally stagnate.

While significant new development has occurred in recent years, Cape Charles has one of the best collections of historic buildings of any community on the Eastern Shore. The Town strives to preserve this rich architectural heritage. An architectural survey that identified historic properties in the Town led to the listing of the Cape Charles National Register Historic District in 1989.

In 1992, the Town annexed 2,191 acres of land from Northampton County. The annexed land’s proximity to the Chesapeake Bay and other nearby amenities made the area a prime location for a new residential community. Two large tracts of land, consisting of 1,750 acres surrounding the original Town, are currently being developed. Two upscale golf courses designed by Arnold Palmer and Jack Nicklaus have also been constructed, as well as a marina and commercial areas.



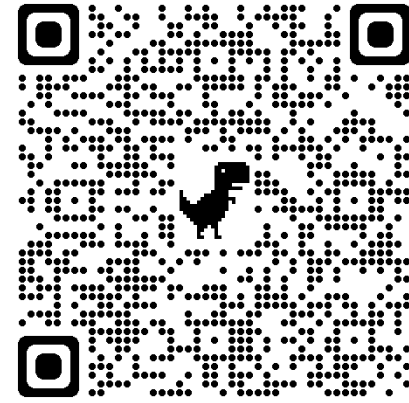
1925 Aerial image of Cape Charles.

Regional Setting

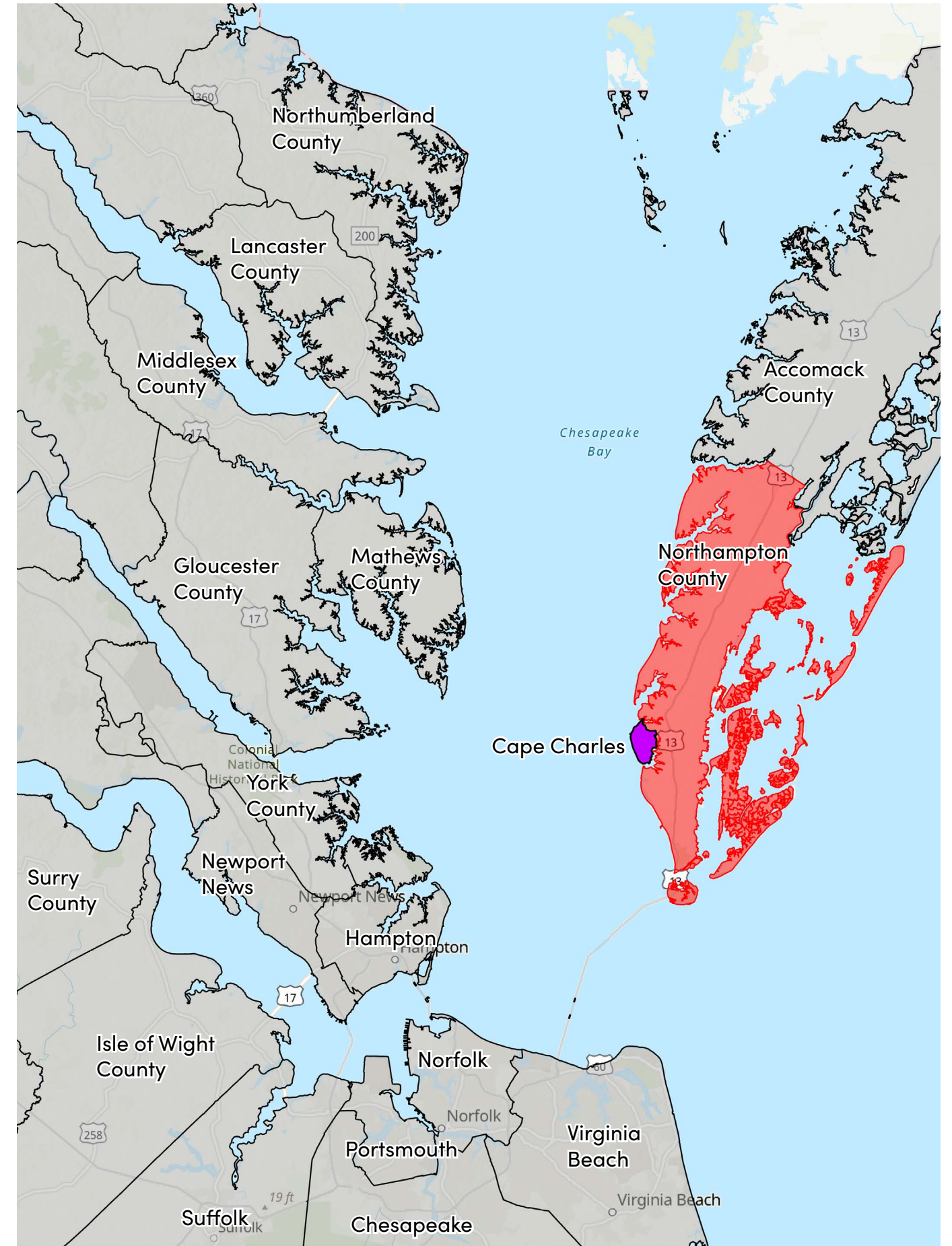
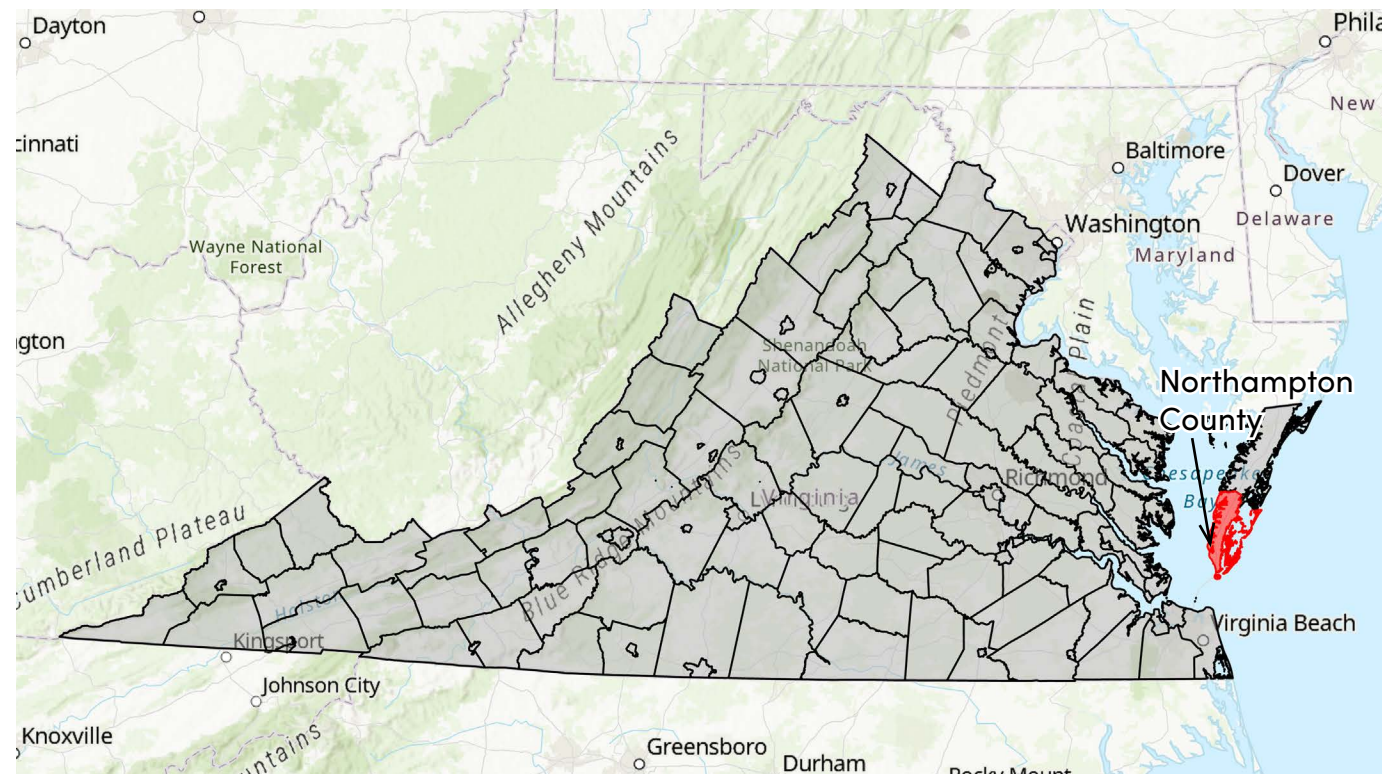
The Town of Cape Charles is located in Northampton County on Virginia's Eastern Shore. The Town is situated on a small peninsula, bordered by the Chesapeake Bay to the west, King's Creek to the north and Old Plantation Creek to the southeast. With a land area of 2,817 acres and a population of approximately 1,178 residents, Cape Charles is the largest of Northampton's five incorporated towns in terms of both land size and population. Since its inception in 1886, Cape Charles has evolved into a dynamic town capable of meeting the needs of a diverse array of residents, visitors, and businesses.

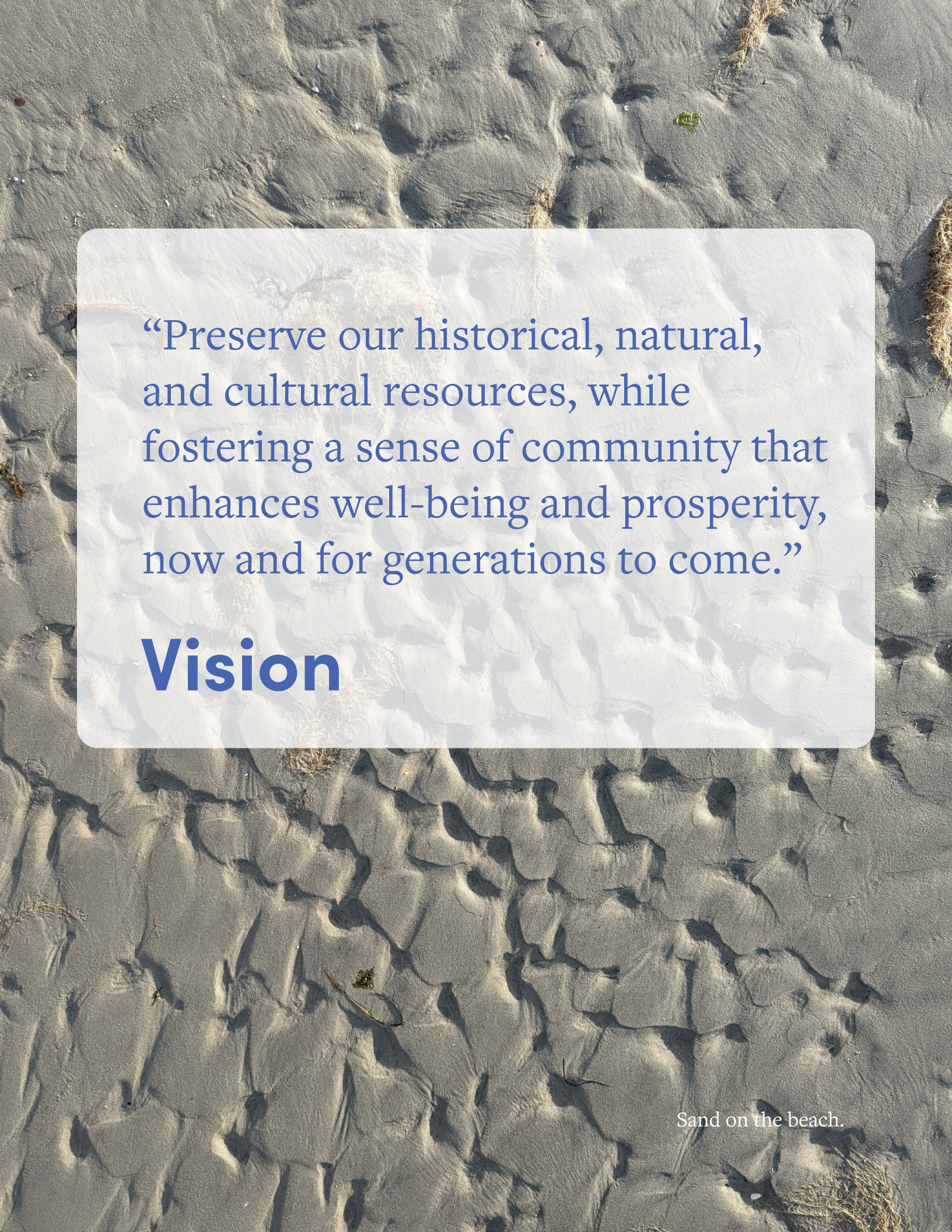
Cape Charles is located within Northampton County. Northampton has its own Comprehensive Plan that guides development in the County and details the relationship with the region's towns.

The Northampton County Comprehensive Plan can be accessed at the following government website or by scanning the QR code to the right:



co.northampton.va.us/government/elected_offices/planning_permitting_enforcement/planning/comp_plan





“Preserve our historical, natural, and cultural resources, while fostering a sense of community that enhances well-being and prosperity, now and for generations to come.”

Vision

Sand on the beach.

What is a vision statement?

The vision statement is a key piece of the comprehensive plan, derived from the community’s values, that sets the tone and direction of the plan, identifying high level aspirations for the Town to achieve. This should be a clear statement that speaks to multiple areas addressed through public input, backed by community consensus.

The community values and vision statement were developed for the Town of Cape Charles Community Strategic Plan adopted in 2021. That Strategic Plan was developed as a prelude to and to inform the development of this Comprehensive Plan. Going forward, the Community Strategic Plan will add specificity to goals and objectives of this Comprehensive Plan.

Our values: Friendliness, Sense of Community, Heritage-Traditional, Diversity-Tolerance-Respect, Determination, Hope-Optimism, Adaptability, Environmental Stewardship

Our vision:

“Preserve our historical, natural, and cultural resources, while fostering a sense of community that enhances well-being and prosperity, now and for generations to come.”

Why these words?

These sentences encapsulate the community’s future vision of Cape Charles that builds on the town’s reputation as a vibrant, community-centered place.

Residents have emphasized the importance of not only maintaining, but improving upon the amenities that define the character of Cape Charles. Well-maintained, visually attractive historic, natural, and cultural resources that support the local economy will continue to be the backbone of the town. It is critical that present actions are oriented toward providing the same, if not better, quality of life for future generations.



Sign on the corner of Strawberry St. and Mason Ave.

Community Analysis

- Population
- Age Distribution
- Families
- Racial Composition
- Educational Attainment
- Income
- Poverty

Demographics Population

Population			
	2000 Census	2010 Census	2020 Census
Cape Charles	1,121	1,009	1,178
Northampton County	13,093	12,389	12,282
Percentage Change in Population			
		2000 - 2010	2010 - 2020
Cape Charles		-9.9%	+16.7%
Northampton County		-5.4%	-0.9%

Figure 1: Population & Percent Change in Population

The growth rate of full-time residents in Northampton County has been declining, although this has slowed, while the population of Cape Charles has grown slightly in recent years after past decline. The most recent census estimate states that Cape Charles' full-time population is now 1,178. Though not measured by the U.S. Census Bureau, the Town has also observed a major increase in part-time residents. Population projections for the Town are not available from major sources of population projections, such as the U.S. Census Bureau, that calculate population projections only for cities, counties and states. However, several estimates of growth rates can be used to examine future changes in population. Considering the increase on average using the past five years, one can project using various assumptions as to what the population may look like through 2035 should this recent growth trend continue. Using American Community Survey (ACS) Census data, the town population increased during the last four years at an average of 82 full-time residents each year to Cape Charles. The chart below depicts population projections assuming 25, 50 and 75 new residents per year. Using the scenario assumptions, the Town of Cape Charles could potentially have a full-time residential population of between 1,578 – 2,303 by 2035. Although this growth projection might not ultimately be accurate, this information is important for potential impacts to town services and facilities to meet projected demand from full-time citizens, second homeowners, and visitors. The increase in secondary home rentals and tourism in Cape Charles can also be two to three times the normal full-time residential population during the warmer season.

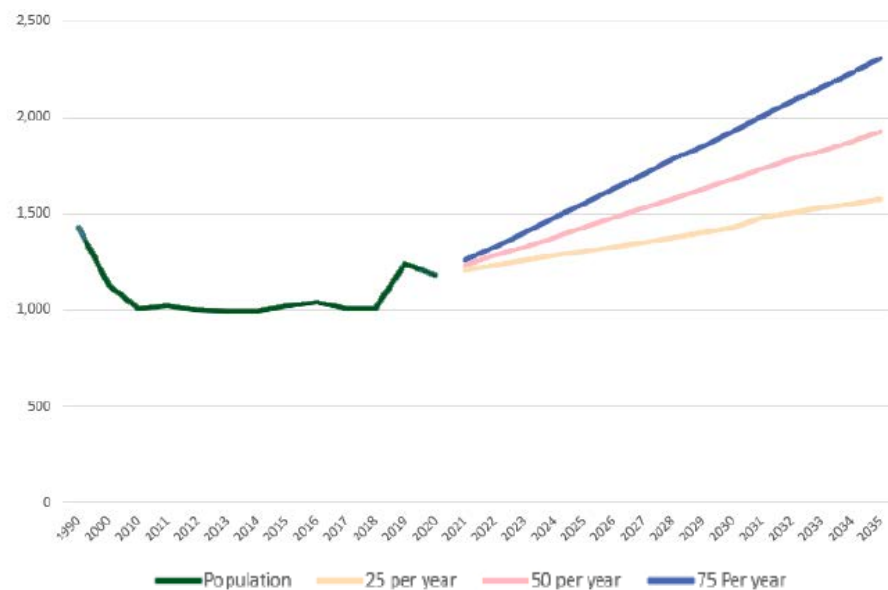


Figure 2: Population Projection

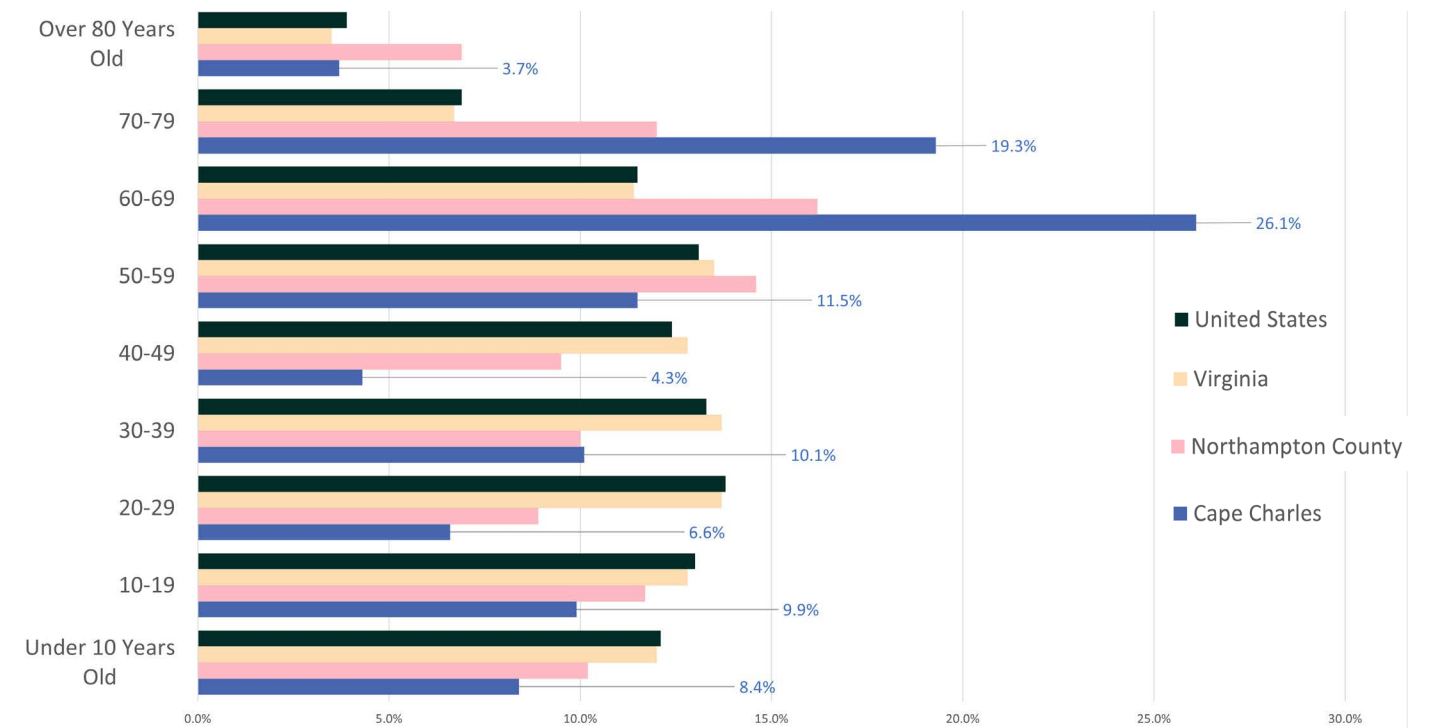


Figure 3: Population by Age

Age Distribution

The age distribution in both Cape Charles and Northampton County are significantly different than the age distribution of Virginia and the national population. As shown in Figure 3 above, Cape Charles and Northampton County have a high percentage of their populations over 50 years old when compared to Virginia and the United States. Over 60% of the population in Cape Charles is 50 or older, while only 30% of Virginia's population is 50 or older, representing a substantial difference in character. Conversely, a higher percentage of Virginia is young and of working age. Roughly 17% of the population in both Cape Charles and Northampton County are each in the 20-39 age cohort as compared to 26% of Virginia's population in this cohort.

Disparities in age are further illustrated by median ages. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the Median ages in Cape Charles, Northampton, and Virginia are 59.5, 49.8, and 38.4, respectively. The median age in Cape Charles, while higher than that of Northampton County, is approximately 20 years more than the median age at the state level. During the 2010's, the 55 and older age cohort in Cape Charles increased in size (+9.3%) as the younger age (0-54) cohorts decreased in size by the same percentage (-9.4%). This is partially due to the older retirees moving to the area to take advantage of the Town's amenities. The town needs to attract younger generations in order to provide a complete social structure that can sustain itself into the future.

	Cape Charles 2010	Cape Charles 2020	Cape Charles Percent Change 2010-2020	Northampton County 2020	Virginia 2020
Generation Z (0-19)	17.9%	18.3%	+0.4%	21.9%	24.8%
Millennials (20-34)	14.7%	12.3%	-2.4%	14.3%	20.6%
Generation X (35-54)	19.8%	12.4%	-7.4%	19.9%	26.3%
Baby Boomers (55-74)	35.8%	48.5%	+12.7%	32.5%	22.2%
Silent Generation (74+)	11.8%	8.4%	-3.4%	11.4%	6.2%
Median Age (Years)	53.5	59.5		49.8	38.5

Figure 4: Population by Generation

Families

The number of families living in Cape Charles has grown in recent years according to the U.S. American Community Survey 5-year Estimate data. The Bureau defines a family as “a group of two or more people who reside together and who are related by birth, marriage, or adoption.” The number of families in Cape Charles has increased by 41.5% over the past six years. The average family size has remained relatively steady around 2.5 from 2015 to 2020. The number of families with children under 18 has ranged between 60 and 77 from the ACS survey years 2015 to 2020 without depicting a trend. As stated under Age Distribution above, the town needs to attract younger families.

Racial Composition

The racial composition of Cape Charles did not change significantly during the 1990’s. Census data from 2000 indicates that approximately 43% of the population is black or African American. This however has changed significantly as the white population has increased. The 2010 Census data indicates that this number decreased to 31.1% while the 2020 ACS survey data depicts 16%, with the white population increasing accordingly. This is a considerable shift over the past two decades. While the black and African American population may have been decreasing, a larger percentage of new residents moving into Cape Charles are white. One of the potential factors for this change is the significant increase in housing purchase prices and renovation costs leading to a decrease in lower income earning individuals or families that can afford to live in Cape Charles while also attracting a larger influx of affluent white retirees. Figure 6 provides the racial composition change over the past decades.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total Families	217	253	292	309	319	307
Married-Couple Family	166	191	214	238	230	234
Male Householder, no spouse/partner, family	25	28	19	55	34	21
Female householder, no spouse/partner, family	26	34	59	46	55	52
Average Family Size	2.59	2.46	2.55	2.56	2.55	2.63

Figure 5: Families

	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020
White	67%	54.4%	53.8%	60.4%	77.6%
Black or African American	32%	45%	42.9%	31.1%	16%
Other	1%	0.6%	3.4%	8.5%	6.4%

Figure 6: Population by Race

Educational Attainment

The population of Cape Charles features higher educational attainment in comparison to the surrounding County. 50.1% of the population 25 and older in Cape Charles have achieved a bachelor’s degree or higher as compared to 39.5% in Virginia and 26.1% in Northampton County (2020 ACS).

Income

Cape Charles’ median household income of \$55,104 for full-time residents is higher than Northampton County (\$50,819). The figure below depicts income distribution within 658 households in Cape Charles. Although the median income level within Cape Charles can be considered high, around 23% of those households in Cape Charles have incomes below \$24,999.

VV

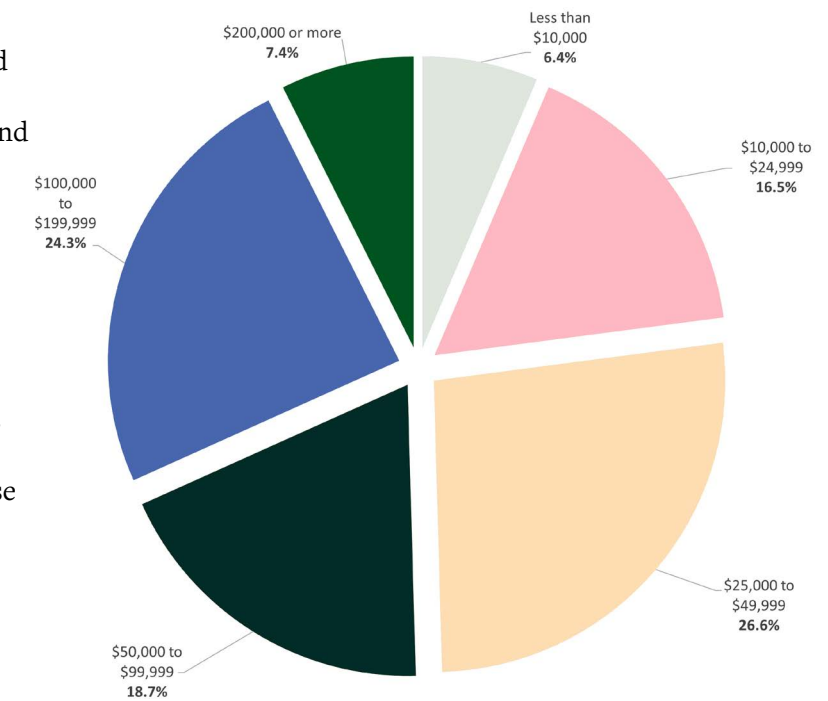


Figure 7: Family Income

Poverty

The Census Bureau uses a set of income thresholds that vary by family size and composition to determine who classifies as impoverished. If a family’s total income is less than the family’s threshold, then that family and every individual in it is considered to be living in poverty. 16% of the population for whom poverty status is determined in Cape Charles live below the poverty line, a number that is the same as Northampton County at 16.5% and higher than the state average of 10%. (2020 ACS 5-year Estimate). By further dissecting the 16% population in Cape Charles considered to be living in poverty status and assessing the age of these individuals, Figure 8 shows that over 40% of this population in poverty is under 18 years of age.

Accomack County and Northampton County have comparable overall poverty rates, around 6% higher than the rest of Virginia. Poverty is a complex and persistent problem that requires coordinated efforts across the Eastern Shore to improve housing, jobs, education, health care, and transportation options. The Town of Cape Charles does provide assistance in the form of real estate tax credits to qualified persons who are elderly or who are physically disabled (Town Code Section 66-118). Applicants must meet certain income (e.g., maximum combined income, if married, cannot exceed \$50,000) and health status substantiations.

Population Total Estimate	1227*
Population below Poverty Level	196
Percentage of Population below poverty level	16%
Poverty by Age in Cape Charles	
Under 18 years	44.4%
18 to 64 years	40.3%
65 years and over	15.3%

Figure 8: % of Population in Poverty

*Population estimate varies slightly between 2020 ACS and 2020 Census



Sunset over the fishing pier.

Public Input

- Kick Off Workshop
- Stakeholder Survey
- Regional Housing Workshop Summary
- 2022 Regroup
- Comments on Draft Comprehensive Plan
- Public Hearing, Recommendation, and Vote
- Goals and Objectives Setting

Public Input

Kick Off Workshop

The Town held the Comprehensive Plan Kick-off Workshop on July 25. This was the first opportunity for residents to help form the update process and give feedback to local government officials about the future of Cape Charles. The public was given a presentation about the focus of the Comprehensive Plan update process, project goals, and citizen/stakeholder expectations. Input from the Kick-off Workshop will be used help to shape the planning process and ultimately the new Comprehensive Plan. The questions and summary of the various tables responses are shown below.

A. What is the best way to engage Cape Charles citizens and stakeholders (e.g. more workshops, online survey, stakeholder meetings, small group forums, etc.)?

Table 1	Table 2	Table 3	Table 4	Table 5
Coffee-shop meetings, Surveys, varied times, Suggestion box	Facebook, phone call, local paper, e-mail listserv	Online survey, incentivize feedback, local news	Town Hall, local news, utility bills, seasonal visitors, meetings	Raffle with local businesses, community boards, churches

B. Who are the critical players (stakeholders) who need to be engaged in the process?

Table 1	Table 2	Table 3	Table 4	Table 5
Community groups, business owners, workforce, Coast Guard, EMS	Residents, tourism, Northampton Co., Federal agencies, underserved pop.	Watermen, churches, residents, various boards and groups, Town staff	Full time and seasonal residents, businesses	ANPDC, VDOT, public school system, nonprofits

C. If the Comprehensive Plan Process includes a community opinion survey, what topics or questions should be included?

Table 1	Table 2	Table 3	Table 4	Table 5
Vision? Services? Concerns? Changes? Missing?	Traffic congestion, beach safety, healthcare, housing	SWOT, Sidewalks, restrooms, open space, utilities, noise, housing, Airbnb	Public facilities, attracting visitors, infrastructure, traffic, housing	Engagement, transportation, tourism, Mixed Use

D. List the top three issues you would like to see the Comprehensive Plan address.

Table 1	Table 2	Table 3	Table 4	Table 5
Healthy living, green space, plan for railroad land, non-tourism growth	Year round sustainability, controlled growth	Parking garage, historic preservation, Public works, workforce housing	Workforce housing, street cleaning, small town charm	Golf cart paths, resiliency, healthcare, amenities

E. What major projects should be included in the plan?

Table 1	Table 2	Table 3	Table 4	Table 5
Community space, public works staffing, parking strategy	Improved water quality, infrastructure	Parking garage, public transit, sidewalks, hook & ladder	Good internet, economic & enviro. resiliency	Golf cart paths, rec. center, parking garage

Stakeholder Survey

A broad survey was conducted in 2019 and received 211 responses. Common concerns and desires expressed were as follows (not provided in any type of priori

- Preserve “family centered” beach town
- Preserve and enhance beach
- Preserve historic district
- Preserve Central Park
- Preserve open spaces
- Preserve and enhance deep-water harbor
- Preserve retail center
- Need for economic diversity
- Provide town walkability, sidewalks
- Need for public facilities/restrooms
- Enhance activities for youth
- Improve water quality
- Encourage affordable workforce housing
- Development of town recycling
- Development of golf cart pathways
- Need for enforcement for golf carts and traffic
- Explore ways for access to medical centers
- Ensure new water/wastewater is paid by developer
- Explore development of community center

Regional Housing Workshop Summary

Northampton County hosted an Eastern Shore Regional Housing workshop on January 29, 2020, with over 50 people in attendance. A summary of the feedback received at that workshop is below.

What type of housing development is most needed on the Shore?

- Strong desire for rental apartments, small single-family dwellings, duplexes, town homes and condos

What are the top three housing issues impacting the Eastern Shore?

- Lack of housing available for rent
- Lack of housing that is affordable

Identify the top-most significant barriers to developing more affordable housing on the Eastern Shore.

- Cape Charles Zoning Ordinance
- Cost of housing/rental within this beach community
- High cost to refurbish older homes
- Lack of qualified workforce to build homes and apartments
- Lack of full-time, year-round jobs
- Lack of educated population relative to affordable housing

2022 Regroup

After disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Town resumed work on the Comprehensive Plan with the help of a planning consultant in 2022. A Draft Comprehensive Plan was provided for review in September 2022. A public input forum was held in October 2022, and citizens were encouraged to submit comments on the plan. Public input opportunities were advertised in the Cape Charles Gazette, which is distributed throughout town and available on the Town website.

Comments on Draft Comprehensive Plan

After receiving about 280 comments on the Draft Comprehensive Plan from Town staff, members of Town boards, and the general public, Planning Commission and Town Council held two joint work sessions to review feedback and determine how to best address feedback in the final draft. The Planning Director provided additional opportunities to discuss the Draft Comprehensive Plan and the Future Land Use Map after the formal commenting period had ended.

Public Hearing, Recommendation, and Vote

Planning Commission and Town Council held a joint public hearing on December 6, 2022 to provide an opportunity for any additional comments on the final draft of the Comprehensive Plan. At the public hearing, there were 4 speakers and 3 letters read into the record which were primarily in support of the document with the exception that each speaker did not support extending commercial zoning or designating the future land use map with commercial activity for any of the corner/intersection lots for Randolph Avenue since this road is seen as the full entry-way corridor into the Town directly to the beachfront and it should not be impacted or cluttered with commercial traffic and activity.

Planning Commission outlined several minor changes to be made to the Plan in response to public comment, including changing several parcels on the south side of Randolph Avenue to Residential on the Future Land Use Map. Planning Commission voted unanimously to recommend that Town Council adopt the Comprehensive Plan with these minor changes. Town Council convened on December 15, 2022 and adopted the Comprehensive Plan.

Page intentionally left blank.



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.



View down Randolph Ave. from the gazebo.

Housing

“Pursue land use, zoning, and housing policies to meet and maintain the housing needs of all Cape Charles residents and support a strong local workforce, while preserving local character.”

- Overview
- Housing Inventory
- Housing Projections
- Accessory Dwelling Units
- Tenure
- Age of Housing
- Housing Conditions
- Housing Value
- Housing Market Conditions
- Rentals
- Historic Resources
- Affordable Housing
- Workforce Housing Units
- Housing Objectives and Strategies

Housing

Overview



A house in the Historic District.

The housing stock in Cape Charles is clustered in three main areas. The traditional residential area is located in the Town’s Historic District. Two other major clusters of housing are present in the north and south tracts of Bay Creek, where construction of several residential subdivisions continue. Housing in the Historic District of Cape Charles consists of approximately 750 dwelling units, many of which are single-family houses built between 1885 and 1920. The houses range from small bungalows to larger homes and are grouped into neighborhoods which blend together but maintain distinctive character. There are many excellent examples of Victorian, Colonial Revival, Craftsman, and Neoclassical styles of homes in the Historic District. The oldest houses, dating from the 1880s to the early 1900s are found in the center and eastern sections of the Historic District. The Town’s Historic District Review Board reviews all construction in the Historic District to ensure construction of new buildings and alterations to existing buildings do not adversely affect the historic character of the area. The Town was originally laid out in a grid of 40 foot wide by 140 foot long lots with houses spaced close together. A limited number of vacant lots exist in the Historic District.

In more recent years, significant residential construction has occurred in Bay Creek. The development’s north and south tracts span approximately 1,750 acres and will continue to bring a large number of new housing units to the area. Although the actual number of homes constructed will be driven by market forces, the Annexation Agreement of 1992 allows up to 3,000 dwelling units to be built in Bay Creek. Bay Creek has ten distinct neighborhood villages, including condominiums, townhouses, and single-family homes. Most of the homes already built in Bay Creek, a gated-community, are marketed towards high income households, retirees, and seasonal homeowners.

Single-family homes represent most of the housing market in the Town of Cape Charles. The town’s housing stock has undergone major changes in a short period of time. Numerous single-family homes in the Historic District have been renovated and that trend continues. New residential construction has also taken place in the Bay Creek golf and marina resort communities. The town has a large percentage of homes that are used as second homes, some of which are used as short-term rental units due to the high influx of tourists during the summer season.



Home under construction in Bay Creek.

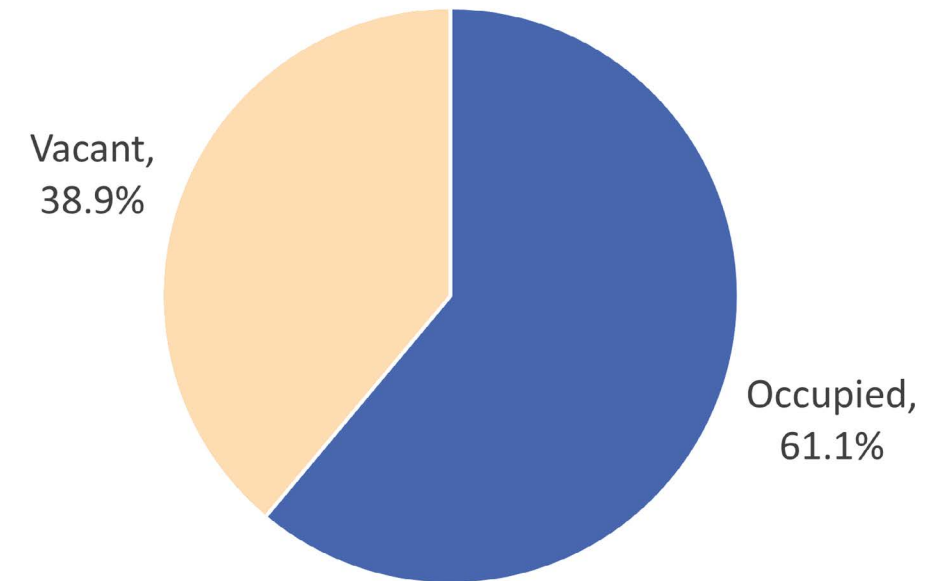


Figure 9: Housing Unit Occupied vs. Vacancies

The U.S. Census categorizes ‘vacant’ to include houses for sale, houses for rent, seasonal/recreational and other. Based on the 2010 census, at least 30% of the entire housing stock was seasonal/recreational. It is expected that this percentage number would be equal, if not higher, at the present.

Despite the positive changes in the town’s housing stock, some residents face major housing issues. Although rising property values have benefited many homeowners, increased rents and housing prices create difficulties for low and moderate income households. If current trend continues as expected, availability of quality housing will continue to decrease. An analysis of the town’s census data shows that 41% of town households are cost burdened (i.e., households that pay more than 30% of their income for all of their housing expenses including utilities). For example, a household that had a \$30,000 income would be cost burdened if it paid more than an average of \$750 per month on their rent or mortgage, property taxes, property insurance, utilities and housing maintenance costs. The town needs to be concerned with planning for quality affordable housing as its economy grows. It is necessary to reduce the percentage of cost burdened households, one way of which is providing more affordable housing stock, since this will help

encourage people to live in stable neighborhoods in town instead of moving out into the unincorporated areas of the county. This in turn will help keep the town economically viable throughout the year.

As described in the Community Analysis chapter, with the baby boomer (age 55-74) population increasing 35.8% to 48.5% of the total permanent population from 2010 – 2020, the Gen X (ages 35-54) decreasing from 19.8% to 12.4% and Millennials (ages 18-34) decreasing from 14.7% to 12.3%, the town’s mix is moving towards an age disparity. Coupled with lower income buyers not able to compete for the housing within increasingly expensive neighborhoods in Cape Charles, they are then forced to move to affordable neighborhoods elsewhere that they can afford. The increased housing costs within the town make it difficult to attract younger families. Cape Charles has a need for a greater diversity of housing types to improve affordability as well as support a stable and resilient community into the future.

Housing Inventory

Housing patterns in Cape Charles are typical of small towns that developed around railroad lines in the early twentieth century. Most of the Town’s older housing stock in the Historic District is located near the downtown commercial areas, which are centered along the previous railroad lines and harbor terminus. The inclusion of the Bay Creek golf and marina communities offer newer housing stock.

Nearly 78% of occupied homes in Cape Charles are single family units (66% single family detached, 11.4% attached). With the completion of new construction and rehabilitated buildings on Mason Avenue, more attached condominium units have been entering the housing stock.

2010 Census			2020 American Community Survey	
Total Units	787	-	1,077	-
1-unit, detached	612	77.8%	715	66.4%
1-unit, attached	35	4.4%	123	11.4%
2 units	24	3%	52	4.8%
3 or 4 units	32	4.1%	19	1.8%
5 to 9 units	29	3.7%	121	11.2%
10 to 19 units	25	3.2%	35	3.2%
20 or more units	16	2%	12	1.1%
Mobile home	14	1.8%	0	0%

Figure 10: Housing Inventory

Housing Projections

A rough housing projection was developed to determine the impact on housing for continued growth. Population projections typically are constructed around full-time residents and prepared for larger localities than Cape Charles. Given Cape Charles’ smaller population numbers and the mixture of permanent residents and seasonal/ recreational occupants, forecasting housing needs contains many assumptions. Assuming an annual population projection increase of 1.7% (using 2010 to 2020 population growth numbers), an additional 200 full-time residents could live in the Town of Cape Charles by 2030. Given the current average household size of 2, another 100 dwelling units would be required to house this full-time population increase. However, one must also account for additional seasonal housing or the conversion of current housing stock into seasonal units. Using a ratio of one ‘vacant’ house to every two full-time residential homes would result in a total of 160 additional units projected for 2030. (Per U.S. Census terminology, ‘vacant’ homes are primarily seasonal/ recreational in the case of Cape Charles.)

Although the Town of Cape Charles is enclosed on three sides by water, the Town would still have capacity to accommodate these additional homes within areas such as the remaining lots in the historic district, properties within the Bay Creek communities, future developable town owned property along Old Cape Charles Road (former Keck property, 18 acres), approximately 20 acres of developer’s property along Old Cape Charles Road, and the potential development of the railroad property (approximately 40 acres) between the historic district and the harbor.

Accessory Dwelling Units

The Town of Cape Charles adopted ordinances in February 2019 that permitted accessory dwelling units under certain conditions with adequate safeguards to protect the character of the existing residential neighborhoods. This strategy is intended to develop new, moderate cost rental housing while preserving large, older homes and allow more flexibility for elderly homeowners to stay in their homes. Among the conditions of approval for accessory apartments is that the accessory dwelling unit be “clearly subordinate to” the main unit. This is achieved by requiring that the unit be less than a specified percentage of the square footage of the original house. In addition, these units cannot be rented for less than 30-day length of stays in order to foster longer term residencies (as opposed to summer tourist related weekly rentals). The number of permits issued to build accessory dwelling units from February 2019 through April 2022 totals sixteen that demonstrates an interest in residents to provide additional in-fill housing units within the town.

Tenure

61% of the housing stock in Cape Charles is either full time owner-occupied (32%) or long-term renter-occupied (29.1%). A housing unit is owner-occupied if the owner or co-owner lives in the unit, even if it is mortgaged or not fully paid for. According to the 2020 American Community Survey, there were approximately 658 full-time occupied housing units in Cape Charles. The higher full-time rental-occupancy number is due to the rental units of Sea Breeze, Myrtle Landing, and Cape Charles Lofts, approximately 138 units total. This is in addition to other downtown loft apartments, and single-family home full-time rentals. However, there are an additional 419 housing units that are classified as ‘vacant’ units per census statistics, those either offered for rent, rented or sold but not yet occupied, and those for seasonal, recreational or occasional use. Cape Charles has a high number of units within the seasonal, recreational or occasional use category because of the desirability of the town as a tourism destination and short-term get-away. As shown in the decennial census and ACS survey numbers, seasonal and short-term rentals have increased in numbers.

Cape Charles amended the Zoning Ordinance in October 2022 to include more specific definitions and language in the regulations regarding Accessory Dwelling Units.

	1990		2000		2010		2020	
Owner Occupied - Full-time	299	43.4%	253	34.3%	247	25.8%	345	32%
Renter Occupied - Full-time	268	38.9%	281	38.1%	269	28.1%	313	29.1%
Vacant	122	17.7%	204	27.6%	442	46.1%	419	38.9%
a. For rent	31	4.5%	22	3%	50	5.2%	-	-
b. For sale	11	1.6%	9	1.2%	40	4.2%	-	-
c. Seasonal	7	1%	82	11.1%	290	30.3%	-	-
d. Other	73	10.6%	91	12.3%	62	6.5%	-	-
Total	689	-	738	-	958	-	1,077	-

Figure 11: Housing Occupancy by Tenure

Age of Housing

Cape Charles has a mixture of older and new housing. Given the town's history as a turn-of-the century railroad town, many homes in the Historic District were built before 1939. The decade between 2000 and 2010 saw a tremendous amount of growth as the Bay Creek properties developed. In fact, one-third of all housing in Cape Charles was constructed since the Year 2000.

In addition to renovation of older homes within the Historic District, new housing unit construction has continued at a healthy pace. In the year 2019, permits were issued for new residential construction as follows:

- 22 new single-family residential (10 in historic district and 12 in Bay Creek)
- 8 new residential units over commercial property on Mason Avenue
- 4 new residential units in multi-family building
- 4 new apartments on Randolph Avenue

In the year 2020, 25 permits were issued for new residential construction, and in the year 2021, 60 permits were issued for new residential construction.

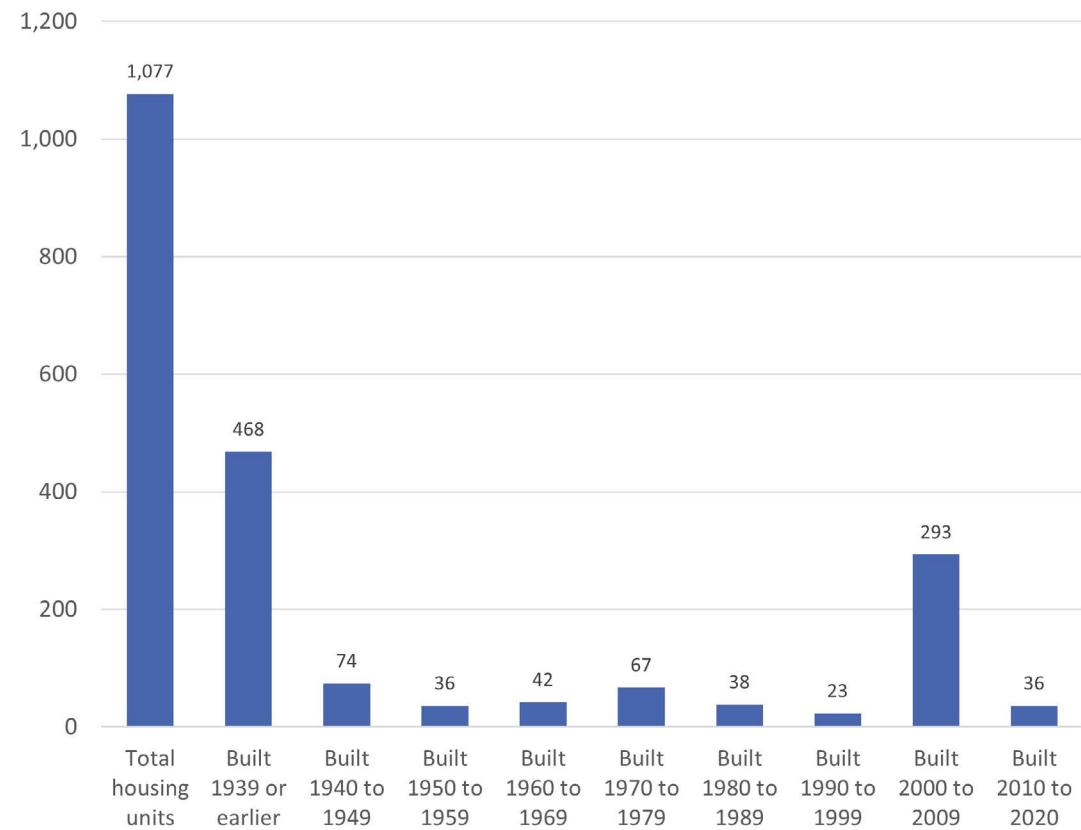


Figure 12: Year Structure Built

Housing Conditions

The need to improve housing conditions in parts of Cape Charles has been a major issue in past decades and continues today to a much lesser degree. Dilapidated, abandoned, and substandard housing is of concern to all citizens. Issues in the past had included problems with sagging roofs, missing siding, hazardous entryways, missing windows, deteriorating appearance, and unkempt yards and outbuildings. In 1995, the Town was awarded Community Development Block Grant funding for rehabilitation of 30 substandard houses located in the northeast area of the historic district. The rehabilitation project, known as the Northeast Neighborhood Comprehensive Community Development Project, helped many of the Town's residents improve their housing conditions. Building permit information indicates that a significant amount of renovation

work for existing homes in the Historic District has occurred since the early 2000's. To help improve housing conditions, the Town also adopted an ordinance to enforce the repair or clearance of dilapidated structures. All existing buildings and structures must be properly maintained to protect the occupants from health and safety hazards that might arise from improper maintenance or use of the building. As noted in the Cape Charles Historic District National Register, between surveys conducted in 1987 and 2017, over 50 homes listed in the original register were demolished. Some have since been replaced. From 2016 through 2019, eight permits were issued to demolish additional residential homes and structures such as accessory buildings and warehouse within the historic district. In 2021 there were no demolition permits issued.



House Renovation in Cape Charles Historic District, Google Streetview

Housing Value

The Town of Cape Charles has the highest owner-occupied median housing unit value in the entire region at \$366,200 (2020). 20% of all owner-occupied housing is valued about half a million dollars or more. Only 10% is valued below \$200,000.

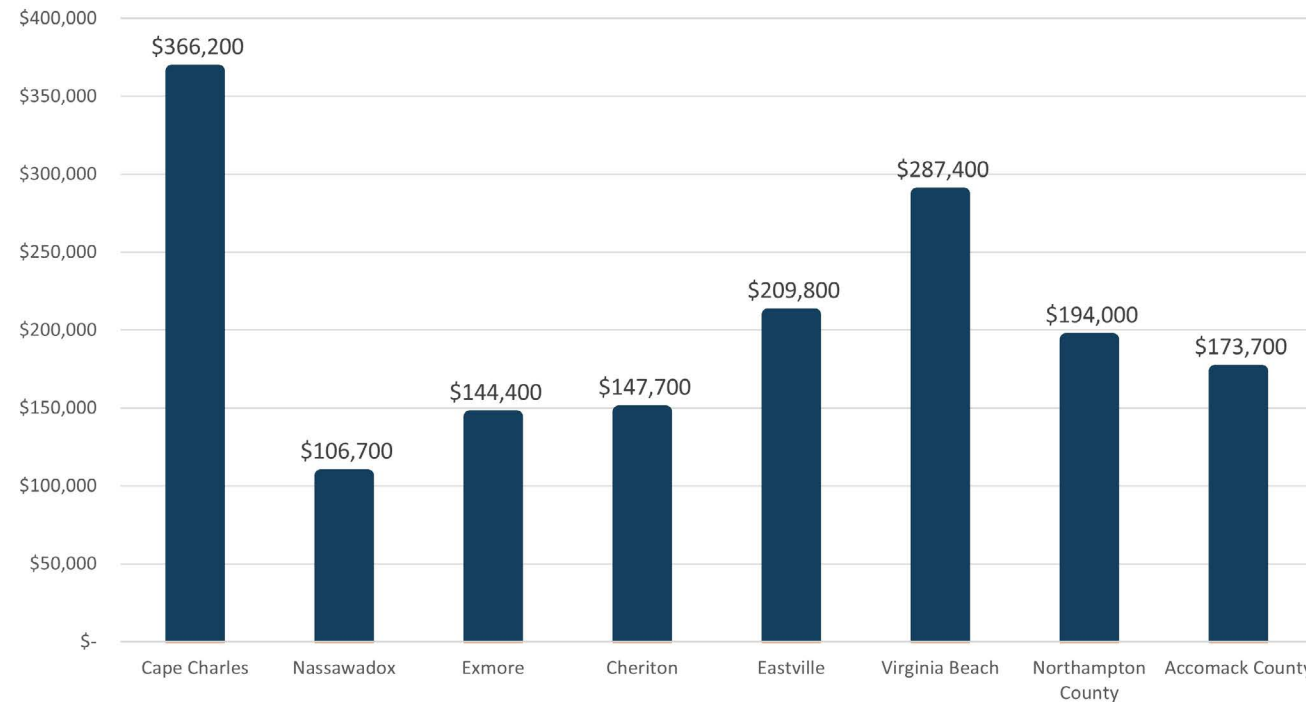


Figure 13: Regional Comparison of Median Value of Owner Occupied Units



Figure 14: Price of Owner-Occupied Units

Housing Market Conditions

Median list prices in Cape Charles have been steadily increasing over the past six years, from \$274,408 in 2013 to \$362,670 in 2021 (through October).

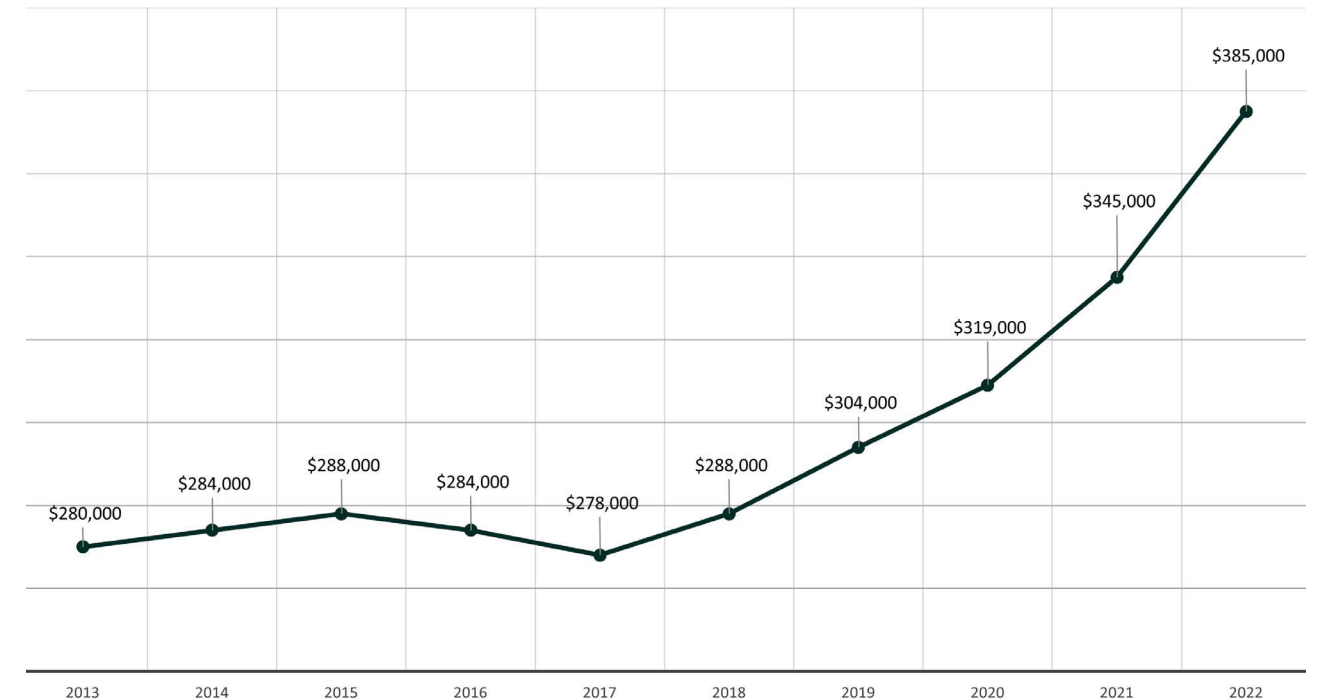


Figure 15: Annual Median Listing Value

Rentals

The median estimated market rate rent across Cape Charles in 2020 is \$630 monthly. This includes all types of housing available for rent (multi-family, single family residences, condos and co-ops). (2020 American Community Survey) Two of the main reasons for introducing accessory dwelling units into Cape Charles were to increase the number of smaller units available for long-term rental and a lower rental cost based on these units being smaller in size (typically studios or one bedrooms).

Those housing units that are categorized as seasonal or recreational and available on a short-term basis can drive rental prices much higher as a result of the current high demand for short-term rentals during the summer tourist season. As of August 2022, the town has 250 registered short-term rentals.

Historic Resources

The Code of Virginia provides local governments with a number of tools that support the preservation of historic sites and structures. Included among them are the ability to designate historic districts and the authority to adopt local ordinances that govern the treatment of historic resources. The Town of Cape Charles is a Certified Local Government and has a designated historic district overseen by a historic district review board. The homes designated as 'historic' are currently listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Affordable Housing

As a visitor destination with a large amount of second homeowners, the dynamics of the housing market in Cape Charles are impacting the overall affordability of housing. Increased housing prices throughout Cape Charles have exacerbated an already existing lack of affordable housing. Cape Charles does have two income-based apartment complexes within the town:

Washington Ave, Seabreeze Apartments - 28 units, family living; and

Randolph Ave, Myrtle Landing apartments – 93 units, senior living.

Housing costs can still be a burden for some households, including an increasing proportion of older adults. In 2020, nearly 16% of Cape Charles' population was estimated to be below the poverty line. The income-based apartment complexes noted above contribute in this high percentage number. Low-income households must pay a large portion of their income for housing. Generally, households are advised to spend less than 30% of their total income on housing costs (mortgages or rent plus utilities). However, 28.2% of full-time renter payers in Cape Charles spend greater than 30% of their income on housing. Homeowners in town can also be affected by high housing costs resulting in 28.9% of homeowners with mortgages and 18.6% of homeowners without mortgages also spending greater than 30% of their income on housing. (2020 ACS) When people with higher income start purchasing and renovating buildings in an area, one concern is gentrification. Although this increases the economic value of a neighborhood, the negative effect is the displacement of lower income residents due to the increased cost of rent, higher cost of housing, or increased property tax values. Lower income buyers thus cannot compete for the housing within gentrifying neighborhoods and are then forced to seek other neighborhoods that they can afford, which may be far outside the community. In many instances, the cultural value of the displaced residents' neighborhood could end up disappearing if the low to-moderate income buyers are not given opportunities to stay where they currently reside. With Cape Charles having the highest owner-occupied median housing value in the region, the town has a need for a greater variety of housing types that are affordable. A diversity of housing

types, including small and attached units, is one way to provide greater housing options. Affordable housing remains a national issue, all of the regions towns must work in collaboration with Northampton County to address this challenge.

Workforce Housing Units

In recent years, rising housing prices have made it impossible for much of the workforce to live within the town's boundaries. This is a group of workers defined as earning between 80% and 120% of the Area Median Income (\$55,104 for Cape Charles). Cost burdened households are defined as those paying more than 30% of one's income on all housing expenses, such as rent, utilities, or maintenance. Studies and surveys conducted by Cape Charles' Main Street organization indicate that there is a shortage of workers to support the needs of downtown merchants. Lack of affordable housing is a contributing factor in this shortage. This problem is also occurring at the broader Northampton County level, as well as much of the United States. Developing a greater diversity of housing types, including small and attached units, is one way to provide greater housing options.

Area Median Income (AMI)	80% of AMI	120% of AMI
\$55,104	\$44,083.20	\$66,124.80

Housing Objectives and Strategies

1. 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 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.



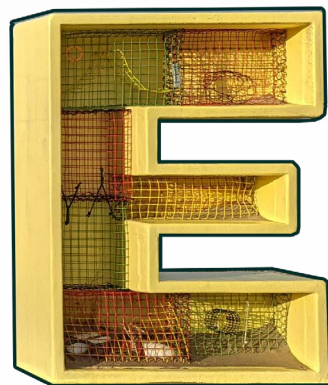
Recently developed mixed use building on Strawberry St Plaza.

Economy

“Promote a lively economy built around accommodations, food service, health care, social services, education services, retail trade, recreation, public administration, manufacturing, fisheries/maritime activities, and transportation.”

- Overview
- Labor Force Participation Rate
- Unemployment Rate
- Median Household Income
- Employment by Industry
- Major Employers
- Town Revenue
- Economy Objectives and Strategies

Economy



Cape Charles Beach "Love" Sign

Overview

Cape Charles is home to a lively economy built around accommodations, food service, health care, social services, education services, retail trade, public administration, manufacturing, fisheries/maritime activities, and transportation (2018 Cape Charles Market Study). **The Cape Charles economy is evolving to support growth in other sectors, especially tourism and related sectors, as maritime businesses decline nationwide.** Having navigated the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Town continues to encourage the growth of existing businesses, as well as the creation of new businesses, in diverse markets. The Town is pursuing strategies to support businesses of different sizes and structures, ranging from small shops opened by residents to corporations. As shown in the Community Analysis section of this plan, there is an increasing number of retirees in Cape Charles, which influences the census data metrics. As the Town is becoming a desirable place to vacation, own a second home, or retire, its reliance on seasonal influxes of people is influencing what stores and restaurants are available, as well as when they are open. One area the Town seeks to improve in is maintaining a "year round" economy that serves the community's needs while also attracting visitors.

Labor Force Participation Rate

The Labor Force Participation Rate (LFPR) is the percentage of all people of working age who are either working or actively seeking work (Employed + Unemployed). The American Community Survey estimates the Town's LFPR at 48.7% for 2020. This is lower than the United States average of 63.4%.

In January 2020, COVID caused a decline in the reported rates across the country due to economic uncertainty. Rates have since started to climb back towards pre-pandemic levels. The chart below shows labor force participation rate by % of that age cohort's population in Town. These rates incorporate the 16 to 19 years and those 65 and older, which bring down the average participation rate.

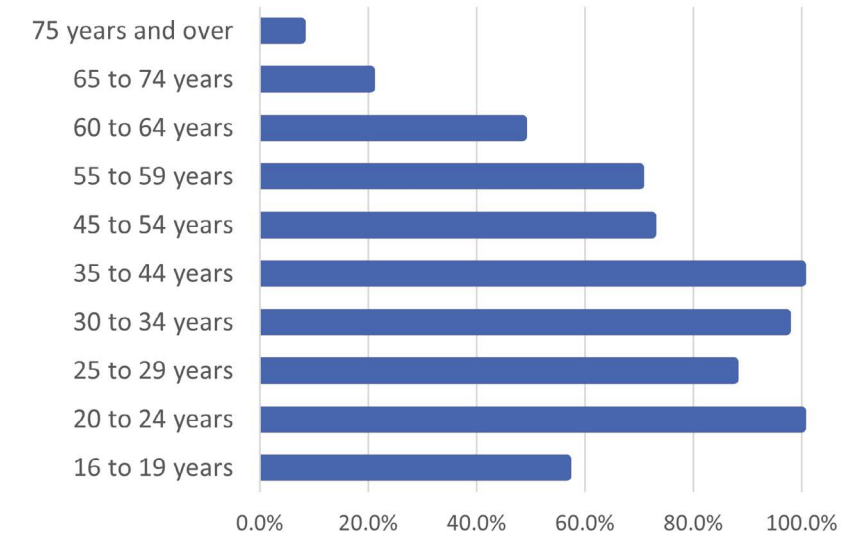


Figure 16: Labor Force Participation Rate

Unemployment Rate

The Unemployment Rate in 2020 was estimated to be 8.7%. This number fluctuated as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, which began to cause greater impacts after 2020.

Median Household Income

Cape Charles has a slightly higher median household income than its surrounding Northampton County and nearby Exmore and Accomack County, however, the region is much lower than the median household income of rest of the state, at \$76,398.

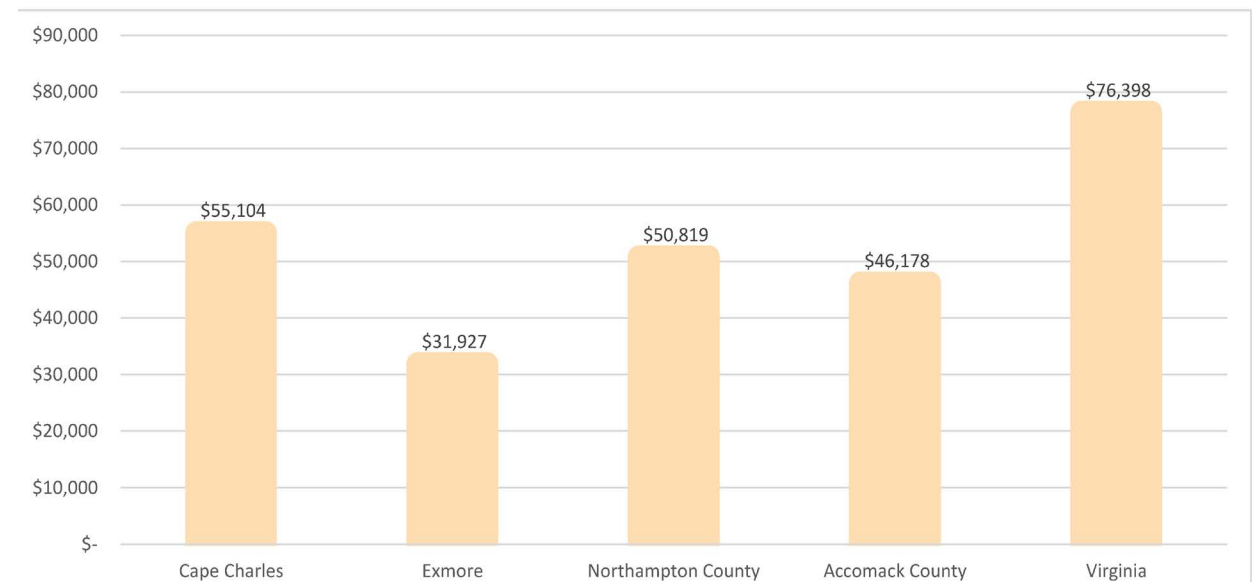


Figure 17: Median Household income

Employment by Industry

The largest sectors of employment are Arts, Entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services with Educational services, and health care and social assistance being the second largest. There is some diversity in the Town’s economy, but ideally the town would be more economically resilient if there were more larger employers. One issue that can be tied to the Town’s reliance on arts, entertainment, and food services, is the slowing of retail activity during the Eastern Shore off-season.

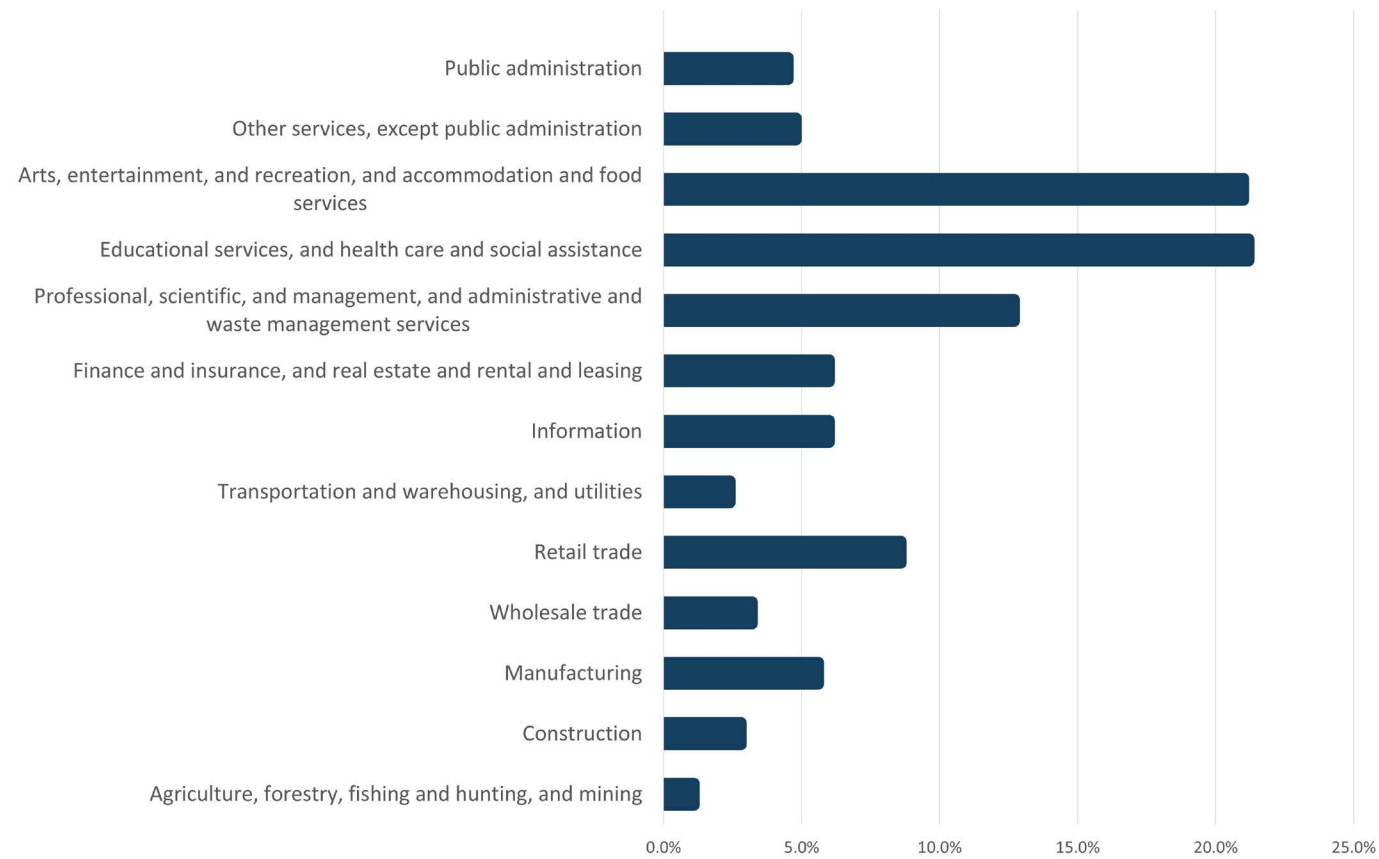


Figure 18: Employment by Industry

Major Employers

Coastal Precast Systems, located in the central portion of the Town located by the harbor, and employs 95 people. In total, 100 employees work in Bay Creek. The majority of Bay Creek employees (74) work for Troon, which manages the golf course and club. The remaining 26 employees work for the developer of Bay Creek - Preserve Communities. The Town of Cape Charles employees 41 people in total. Other noteworthy employers are restaurants pubs, such as Kelly’s Gingernut Pub and AJ’s Bar & Grill, as well as hospitality providers, such as Hotel Cape Charles. The top employers in Cape Charles illustrate the diversity of the economy that provides for residents and visitors alike.

Business Name	Full-Time Employees	Part-Time Employees	Seasonal Employees
Coastal Precast Systems	91	4	0
Bay Creek - Troon	41	33	0
Town of Cape Charles	35	6	0
Bay Creek - Preserve Communities	21	5	0
Kelly’s Gingernut Pub	3	18	7
AJ’s Bar & Grill	6	10	0
Hotel Cape Charles	2	0	9

Figure 19: Employers

Town Revenue

The image below shows major revenue for the Town during calendar years 2014 through 2021, less real property tax and personal property tax. Revenue increased 157% over the 8-year period (not adjusted for inflation), with a significant increase between 2020 and 2021 after the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. Tax rate changes have occurred over the years for the Town’s various taxes, this has impacted the overall revenue numbers throughout the years and should be considered when reviewing total revenue.

Calendar year revenue	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Meals Tax	\$255,833	\$306,347	\$331,808	\$377,645	\$473,212	\$500,009	\$406,575	\$622,771
Business License Tax	\$94,217	\$103,998	\$103,351	\$110,340	\$121,211	\$142,398	\$146,080	\$193,262
Transient Occupancy Tax	\$60,994	\$91,367	\$92,942	\$102,378	\$152,218	\$165,459	\$181,865	\$341,335
Local Sales Tax	\$48,577	\$41,130	\$44,262	\$45,344	\$47,846	\$52,441	\$56,672	\$82,511
Short-Term Rentals	\$5,743	\$5,203	\$3,575	\$5,439	\$2,111	\$4,465	\$11,519	\$15,980
Harbor Dockage	\$196,741	\$247,030	\$180,001	\$205,329	\$229,917	\$249,169	\$295,370	\$446,427
Total	\$662,105	\$795,074	\$755,939	\$846,475	\$1,026,515	\$1,113,942	\$1,098,082	\$1,702,285

Figure 20: Town Revenues

Economy Objectives and 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.
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.
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.



Golf carts and cars parked along Strawberry St.

Transportation

“Create a transportation network that allows residents and visitors to access town amenities by various modes of transportation that support the historic character of Cape Charles.”

- Overview
- Parking
- Public Transit
- Alleys
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Infrastructure
- Golf Carts
- Proposed Multi-Use Path
- Commuting
- Regional Long Range Plan
- Compliance with Virginia Department of Transportation Plans
- Transportation Objectives and Strategies

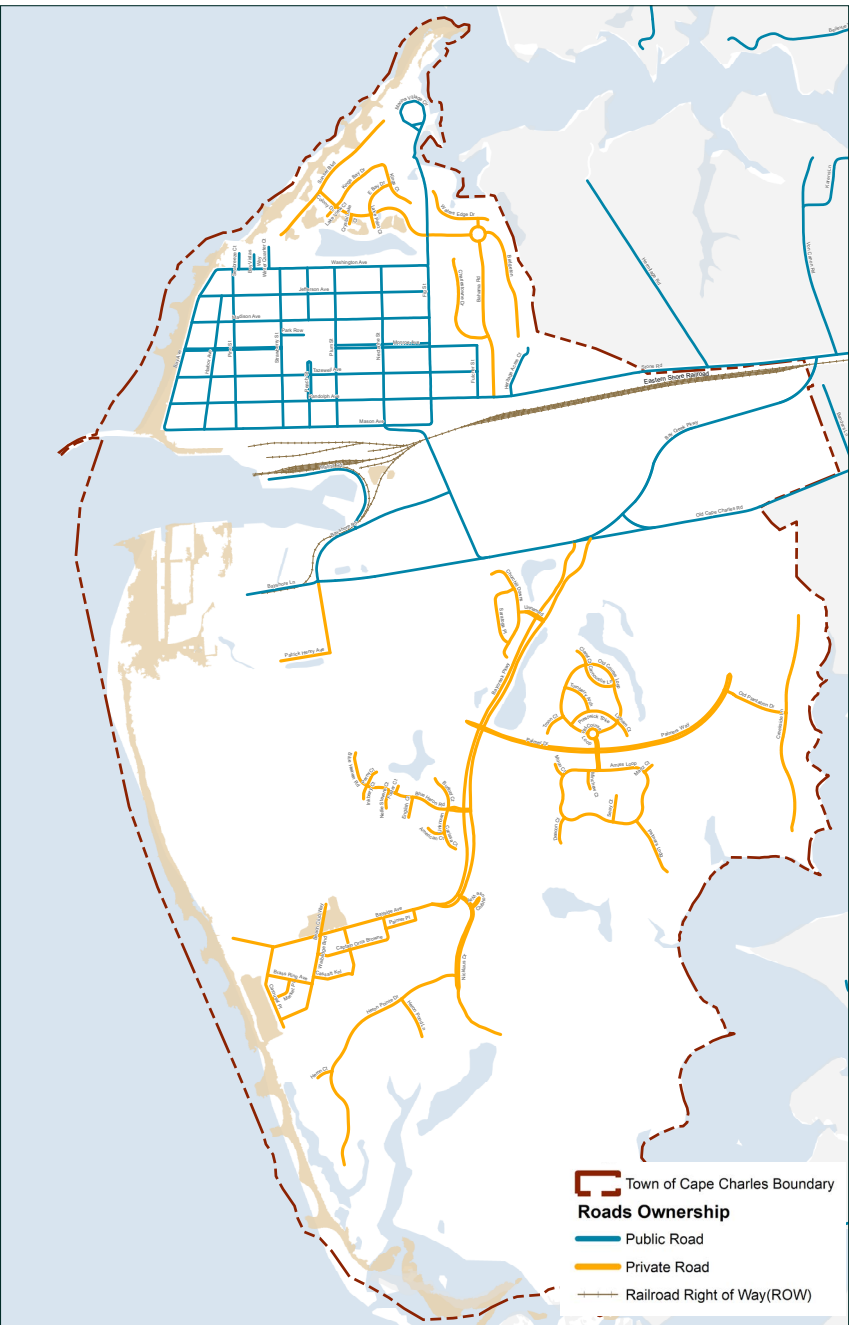
Transportation

Overview

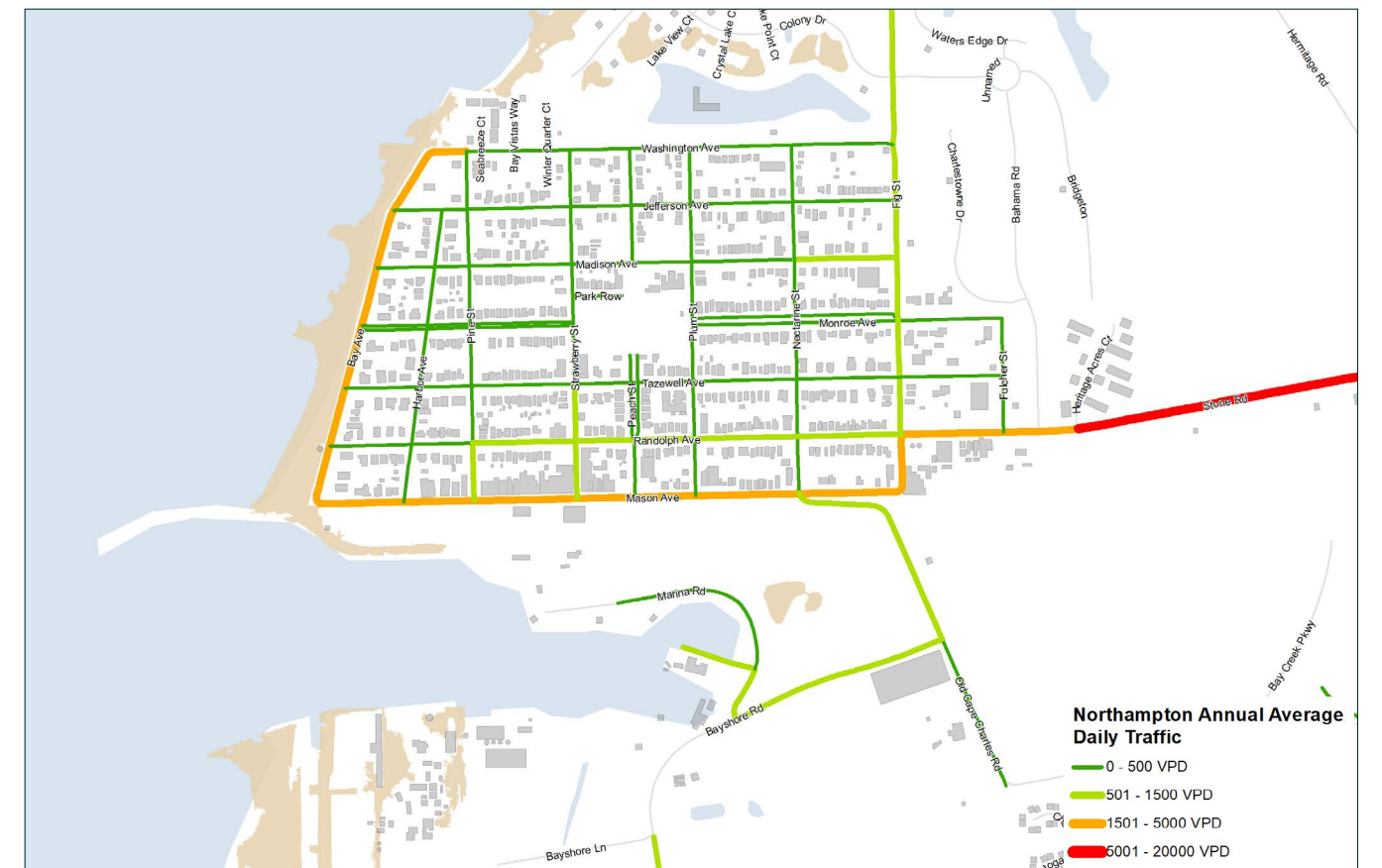
Transportation is a major factor affecting the growth and development of the community. Residents and businesses depend upon an area's transportation network for the safe, reliable movement of vehicles, goods, and people. The predominant form of transportation in Cape Charles is the street system, which consists of arterial roads, collector roads, and local roads. Route 13 is the Principal Arterial road on the Eastern Shore of Virginia. Route 184 leading into Cape Charles is a Minor Arterial road. Route 642 to Mason Avenue, Mason Avenue to Bay Avenue, and Bay Avenue are Major Collector roads. All other roads in Cape Charles are local roads. Route 184 connects Cape Charles to Route 13 and serves as the main arterial road of the Town. Route 184 intersects the Town's historic street grid at Fig Street. The Town's primary commercial road is Mason Avenue, which serves as the Town's "Main Street."

The Town's transportation plans and policies encourage and can to a large extent guide the type and direction of development. While road systems offer an effective way to move people and goods across various geographical areas, they also have other effects. Roadways have a significant impact on land use and development, economic conditions, and the overall quality of life in a community. Public services such as police, fire and emergency rescue also rely on the safe and adequate provision of roadways. Furthermore, the course of a roadway often determines the paths for public utility lines, including water, sanitary sewer, storm sewer, electrical power, and communications. Facilities for rail, water, pedestrian, and other modes of transportation must also be taken into account. These factors make transportation planning crucial to many aspects of a community.

The public roads in Cape Charles are owned and maintained by Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT). VDOT measures the volume of traffic on its roads periodically. Overall, a significant increase in traffic was seen in the residential areas of the Town's Historic District. It is likely that a significant portion of the increase is due to seasonal variations in traffic patterns.



Map 1: Road Ownership



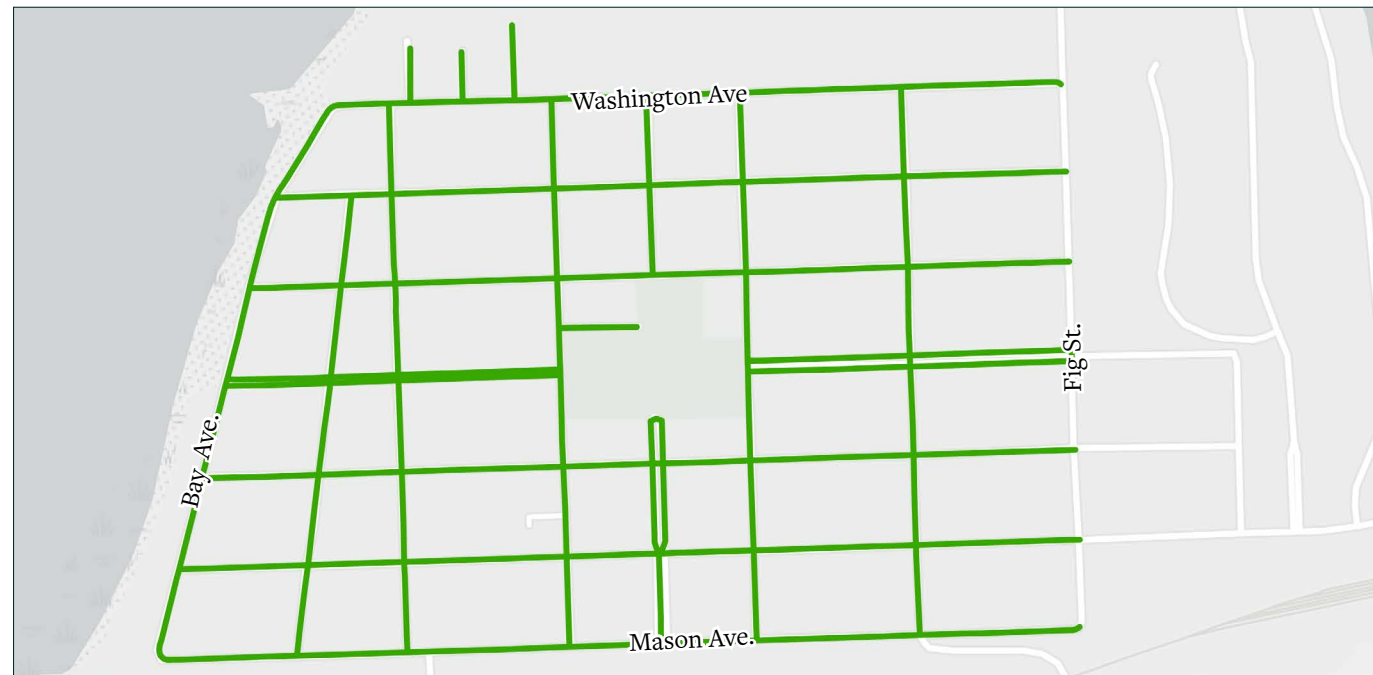
Map 2: Annual Average Daily Traffic

Parking

The availability and location of public parking will be a concern as downtown traffic increases. As more commercial space opens, there could be a shortage of public parking spaces for the downtown area, and the circulation of cars searching for parking could cause disruptions. Special events and seasonal traffic also create a need for additional parking at certain times. The town leases property on the south side of Mason Avenue, which currently has 63 diagonal parking spaces. To alleviate parking concerns within the Historic District, the town requested that the Virginia General Assembly grant street parking delegation to the town from VDOT. The Virginia General Assembly approved the town's request. The town must decide on policy for on-street parking for oversized vehicles. Additionally, a study of parking spaces in the Historic District was performed in 1999 by the Cape Charles Police Department. The study concluded that there were a total of 4,715 spaces were available. Parking near Mason Avenue is of particular concern to many citizens. The current breakdown of the available parking by street is shown in Figure 21. This is based off of current individual street lengths taking into account intersections and parking on both sides of the street. This does not include either of the parking lots within the Town. There are additional parking spaces not counted in the 1999 study located behind the Strawberry Street plaza leased by the Town.

Area/Street (Both Sides)	# of Spaces (approx)
Historic District (total)	4975
Mason Ave.	473
Randolph Ave.	457
Tazewell Ave.	441
Monroe Ave.	338
Madison Ave.	425
Jefferson Ave.	409
Washington Ave.	400
Bay Ave.	288
Harbor Ave.	233
Pine St.	265
Strawberry St.	267
Peach St.	197
Plum St.	262
Nectarine St.	260

Figure 21: Parking Inventory (from 1999 Cape Charles Police Dept. Study)



Map 3: Existing Parking

Public Transit

STAR Transit, a public transportation program of the Accomack-Northampton Transportation District Commission, provides daily bus service along Route 13. STAR Transit offers multiple routes with fixed stops in Cape Charles, and also allows riders to request stops anywhere along designated routes. The buses are equipped with bicycle racks, which allow riders to travel to and from bus stops by bicycle. This service is of particular value to Town residents who do not have access to a private vehicle or want to reduce their carbon footprint. In addition, specialized transportation services are offered by local nonprofit organizations, including the Eastern Shore Area Agency on Aging and the Eastern Shore Community Services Board.



Star Transit Bus, Star Transit Website

Alleys

A substantial number of alleyways exist in the Town's Historic District. Approximately half of these alleys are used for garbage collection. Alleys also provide critical access for public safety vehicles. Where possible, alleys need to be continuous through the block to provide adequate accessibility. Currently, some of the alleys in the Historic District are in need of repair. The Town is responsible for the maintenance of all public alleyways. There is a need to clearly define ownership of all alleys to ensure the appropriate parties are aware of their maintenance responsibilities.



Map 4: Alleyways

Bicycle and Pedestrian Infrastructure

Sidewalks exist in the downtown area for pedestrian traffic. The sidewalks within the Historic District are owned by VDOT and are located within the public right of way. While sidewalks exist in a large portion of the Historic District, many of the Town's sidewalks are in a state of disrepair. Additionally, sidewalks are missing in some areas, particularly in the northern section of the Historic District. A VDOT Sidewalk Study conducted in 2017 found that the majority of the Historic District's sidewalks were functional. See Map 7, updated from the 2017 VDOT Sidewalk Study.

A Sidewalk Committee met in 2019-2020 to study the completion, repair, and maintenance all the sidewalks in the historic district. Their recommendations were presented to the Town Council in March of 2020. The Sidewalk Committee's recommendation was that a budget line item be added starting as soon as possible and continue for an additional three years to complete new and repair existing sidewalks throughout Town.

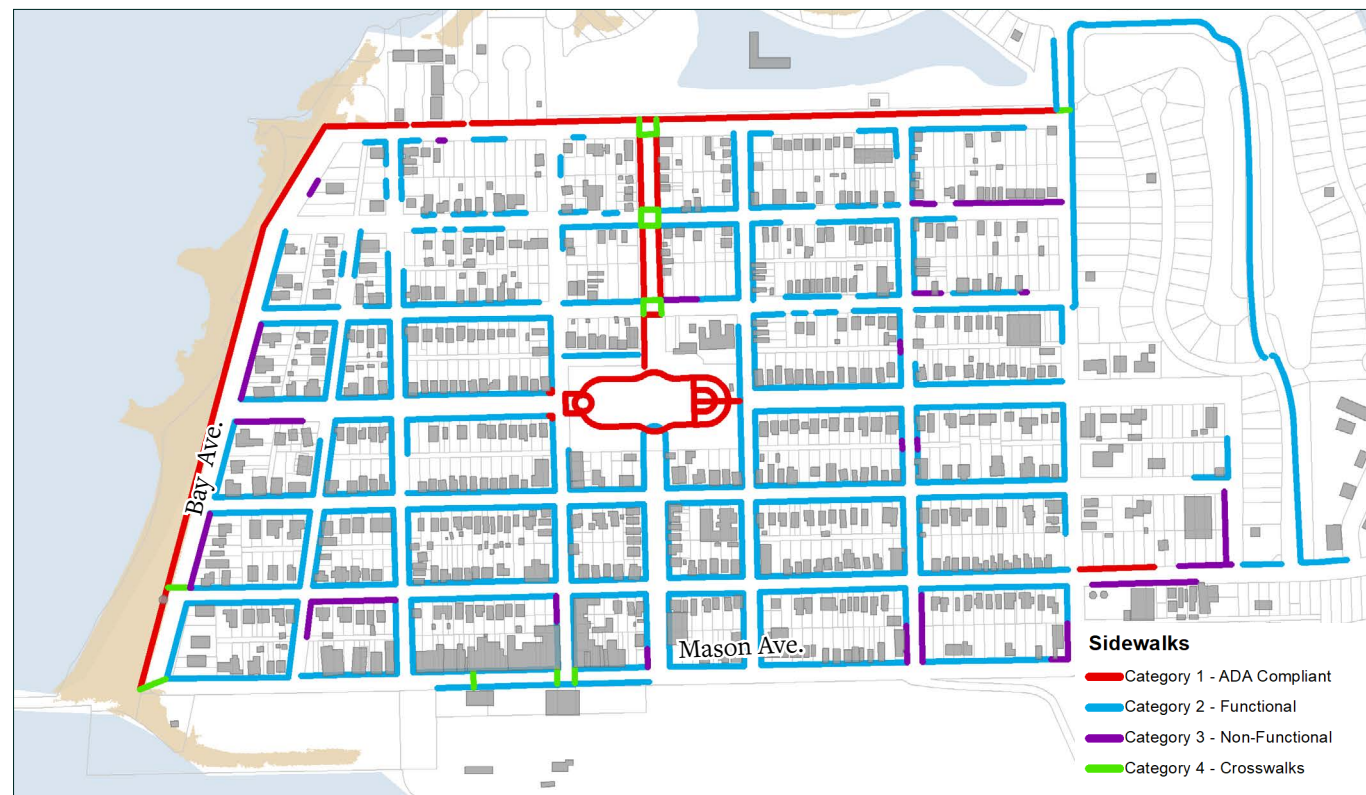
A sidewalk trip hazard contract was awarded in October 2021 and was completed in November 2021. This contract addressed trip hazards of 0.50 inches or greater located in the 3.8 miles of VDOT maintained sidewalks within Cape Charles. VDOT started replacing broken sidewalk segments in the Historic District in November 2022.

The Town lacks bike paths and other multi-use paths. With the expected increase in visitors and residential population, it is important to consider alternative means of transportation, including walking, golf carts, and bicycling. The 2035 A-NPDC Long Range Transportation Plan recommends creating a system of bike routes and multi-use paths to accommodate the Town's current and future transportation needs. There is a distinct need for a multi-use path connecting Mason Avenue to the harbor, so that access from downtown to the harbor is convenient and safe. The downtown area is separated from the harbor by the old railroad yard, and pedestrian access between the harbor area and Mason Avenue is currently accomplished through a marked path. A series of private multi-use paths exist in the southern tract of Bay Creek.

Pedestrian and bike infrastructure is a key component of the Town's mobility network that promotes healthy, active living, supports tourism, and is a fundamental mode of transportation for those without access to an automobile. In October 2018, Town Council approved participation with the Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission (A-NPDC) and Northampton County in applying for funding to construct Phase IV of the Southern Tip Bike & Hike Trail. Phases I & II are completed and run about five miles from the Eastern Shore of Virginia National Wildlife Refuge Visitors Center to Capeville Drive. Phase III is under design and will terminate near the US 13/SR 184 intersection. Phase IV would bring the trail into Town along the railroad right-of-way on the south side of SR 184, for a total of about 12.5 miles. It would connect to a planned future phase of the Cape Charles Community Trail. A Memorandum of Agreement was executed, and A-NPDC applied for funding under the VDOT Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP). A grant of \$2.5 million had been received in 2022 to construct the Phase IV trail connecting Cape Charles to a Rt. 13 terminus.



Multi-Use Path.



Map 5: Sidewalks

Golf Carts

One increasingly popular means of getting around Cape Charles is the golf cart. Virginia localities can designate roads as available for use by golf carts, however they must apply for a land use permit to the Virginia Department of Transportation to ensure the decision to designate the road is not overturned as a result of golf carts impeding the safe and efficient flow of motor vehicle traffic. The locality must consider many factors such as the connectivity, character, volume, and posted speed limit of the road, which is not to exceed 25 miles per hour. Golf carts frequently use multi-use paths to reach the downtown. An increase in golf cart usage has also been observed in the Historic District. The Town issues licenses for golf carts, and allows them to operate on streets where the speed limit is twenty-five miles per hour. At slower speeds and the ability to park more spatially efficient, encouraging the further use of golf carts alongside biking and walking is one way the Town can reduce congestion and improve traffic safety.



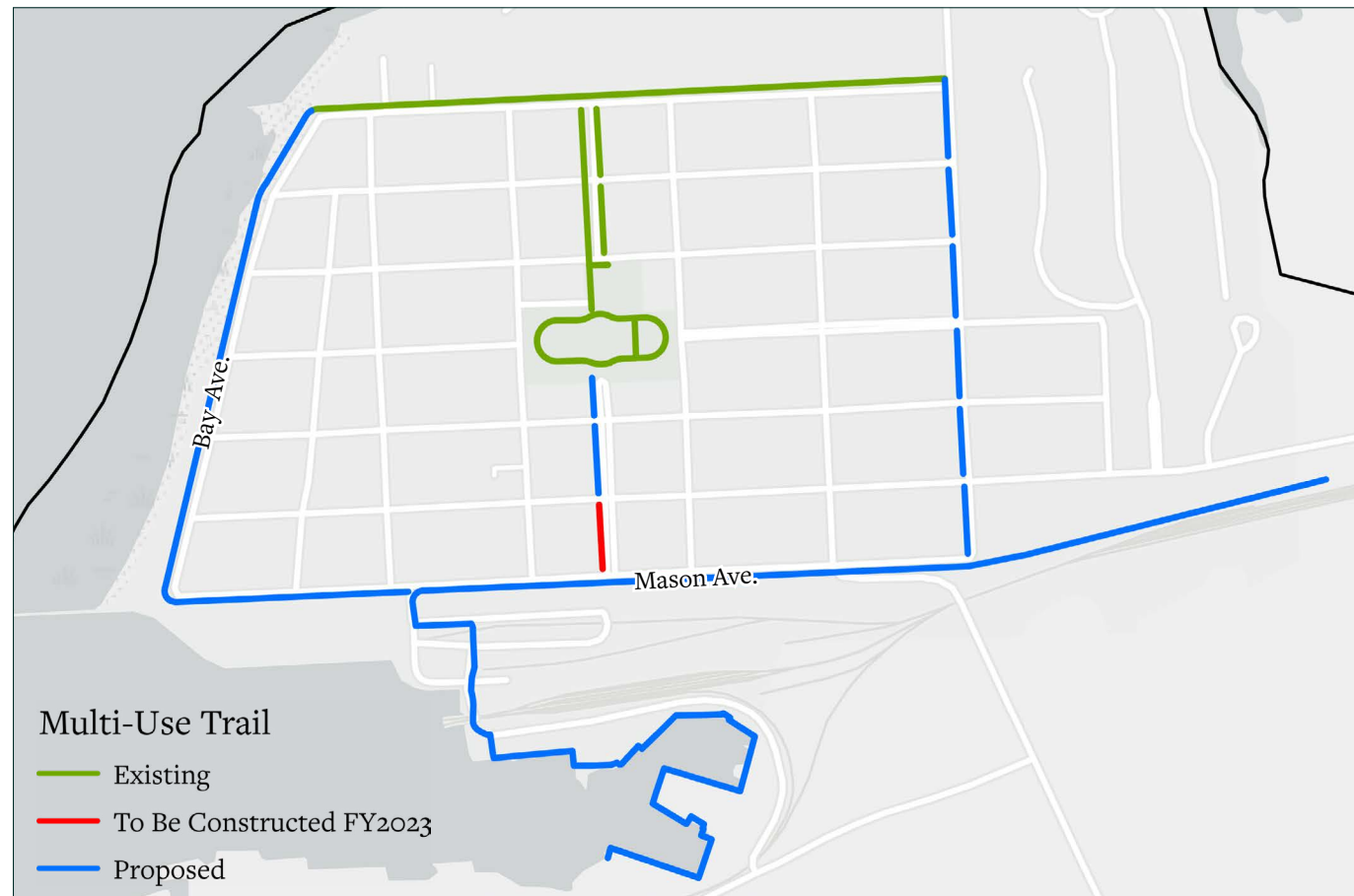
Golf Carts parked in Cape Charles downtown.

Proposed Multi-Use Trail

Cape Charles is in the process of creating a multi-use trail with the goal of providing better multi modal transportation facilities and to connect different areas of Town, including the Historic District, the harbor area and the Bay Creek development. Phase 1 (Central Park) and Phase 2 (north Peach Street and Washington Avenue) have been completed. The Town Council has decided to implement a reduced scope Phase 3, encompassing the block of Peach Street between Randolph and Mason Avenues and the connection to the south side of Mason Avenue. Map 6 shows the proposed route of the multi-use trail.



The multi-use path runs through the park.



Map 6: Proposed Multi-Use Trail

Commuting

The majority of employed residents of the Town work within the Town's borders, showing a good relationship between living and working locally. 18% are reported to work from home, with 8.7% carpooling, 5.4% walking, and 65.7% driving alone. There is the opportunity for the Town to increase the amount pedestrians and bicyclist commuters among the 55% of respondents who both live and work in Cape Charles.

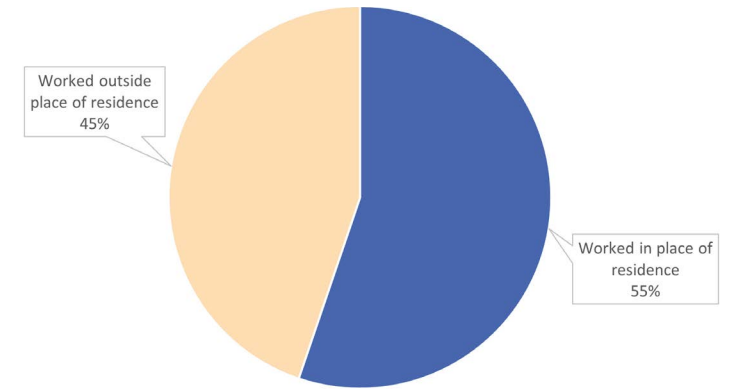


Figure 22: Place of Work

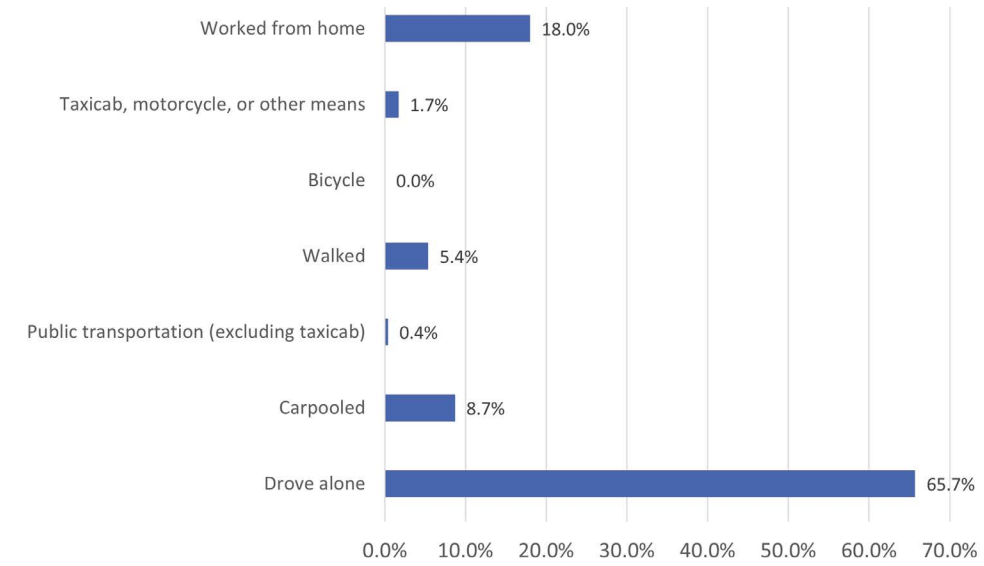


Figure 23: Means of Commuting to Work



Parked cars in the Cape Charles downtown.

Regional Long Range Plan

In 2011, Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission (A-NPDC) developed the A- NPDC 2035 Regional Long Range Transportation Plan in cooperation with VDOT, Accomack County, Northampton County, and the local governments of the Eastern Shore. This Regional Long Range Transportation Plan is one piece of the VDOT's VTrans 2035, the Commonwealth's multimodal long-range plan and a more detailed subset report known as the 2035 Surface Transportation Plan. The transportation system within the rural areas for each region was evaluated, and a range of transportation improvements – roadway, rail, transit, air, bicycle, and pedestrian – are recommended that can best satisfy existing and future needs. There are four recommended projects in or relevant to Cape Charles:

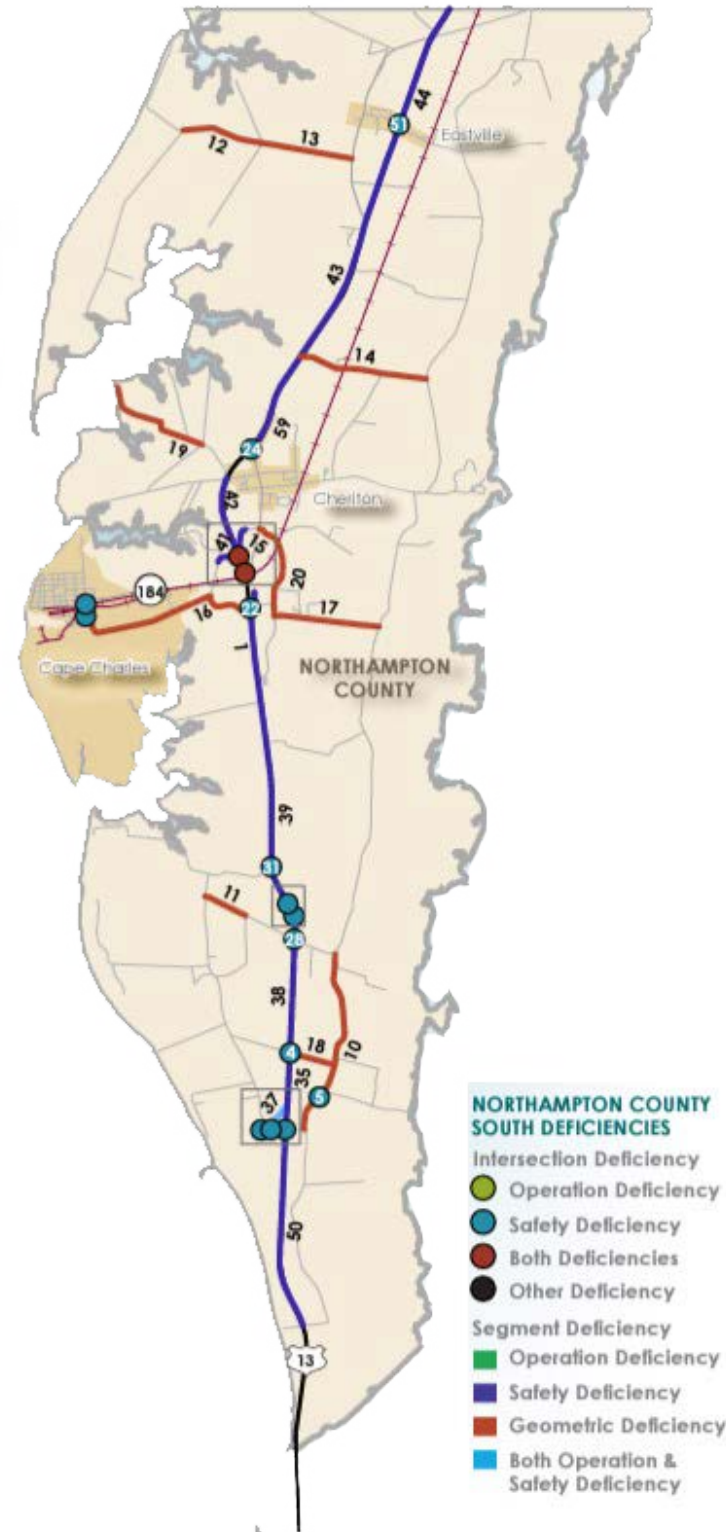
- US 13/VA 184/US 13 BUS: Mid-Term replace with new half-cloverleaf design interchange with acceleration and deceleration and turn lanes as appropriate and construct elevated structures over railway tracks and VA 184.
- VA 184 (Randolph Avenue) at Fig Street: Town Council should petition A-NPDC to reconsider a study to assess need and operations for roundabout. (Cape Charles)
- VA 642 (Old Cape Charles Rd.) from VA 1108 to US 13: Long-term reconstruct road to address geometric deficiencies (including full-width lanes and shoulders).

The Annexation Agreement of 1992 provides for the construction of an extension to Route 1108 and the closure of Route 642 (Old Cape Charles Road) at the intersection of Route 642 and Route 667 (Bender's Lane). The project was completed by VDOT in 2018.

Cassatt Parkway was constructed to connect Route 184 (Stone Road) with Old Cape Charles Road at its intersection with Bay Creek Parkway.



Cassatt Parkway, Northampton County



Map 7. Rural Long Range Transportation Plan Projects

Compliance with Virginia Department of Transportation Plans

In accordance with Chapter 22, Article 3, Section 15.2-2223 B. 1., this Plan includes a transportation plan that designates a system of transportation infrastructure needs and recommendations that include the designation of new and extended transportation facilities and that support the planned development of Cape Charles. This plan is also aligned and compliant with the Virginia Department of Transportation's Six-Year Improvement Program and has been submitted for the department's review. This comprehensive plan is intended to work in concert with regional and statewide goals, beginning with including planned and programmed projects. This Plan will also help to advance the goals and guiding principles of Virginia's Transportation Plan, or VTrans by promoting multimodal transportation.

There are currently no identified VDOT projects within Cape Charles borders. However, VTrans has identified two nodes of mid-term transportation needs to increase vehicular access to economic development sites on the south side of the Cape Charles harbor.

Transportation Objectives and 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.

- 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.
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.
 6. Collaborate with the Accomack-Northampton Transportation District Commission to promote accessible and affordable public transit in Cape Charles and throughout the region.
 - a. Collaborate with STAR Transit to pursue convenient, safe, and frequent bus service to key commercial, residential, and recreational destinations.
 7. Complete the construction of the multi-use path connecting the Historic District, the harbor area, and the Bay Creek development.
 - a. Make future improvements to the path, including resting areas and bicycle/golf cart parking.
 8. Integrate the Harbor area with existing bike, golf cart, and pedestrian networks.
 9. Support the Rails to Trails project connecting Cape Charles to the Route 13 multi-use path.



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
- Topography
- The Resilience Adaptation Feasibility Tool (RAFT)
- Soils
- Surface Water
- Ground Water
- Drinking Water
- Wastewater
- Storm Water
- Wetlands
- Habitat
- Waterfront Access
- Shoreline Erosion
- 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.

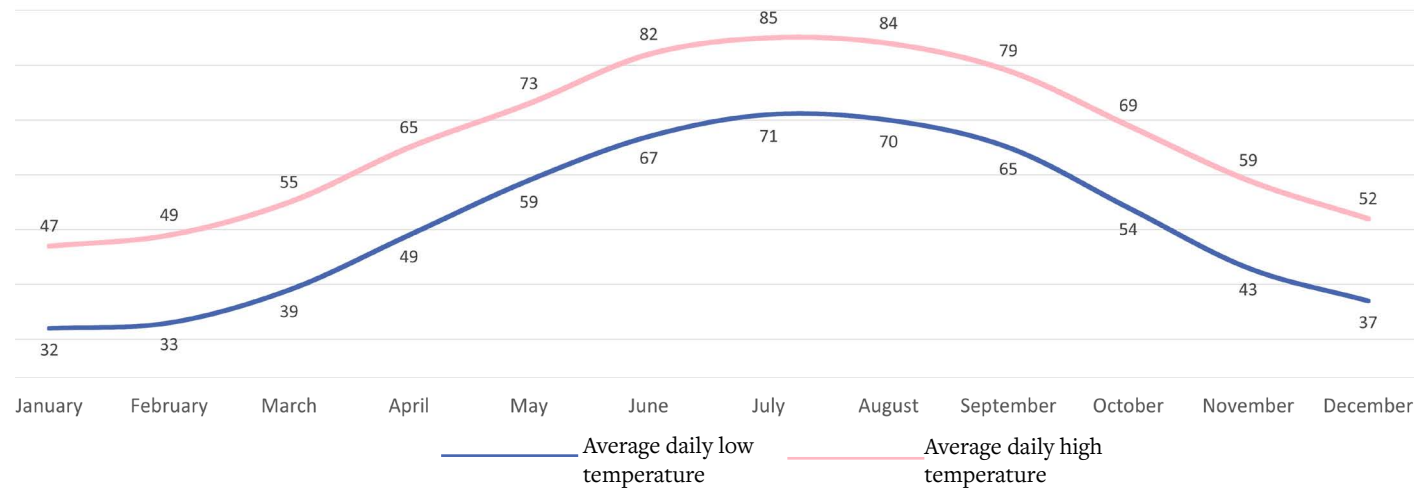


Figure 24: Average Annual Temperature

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.

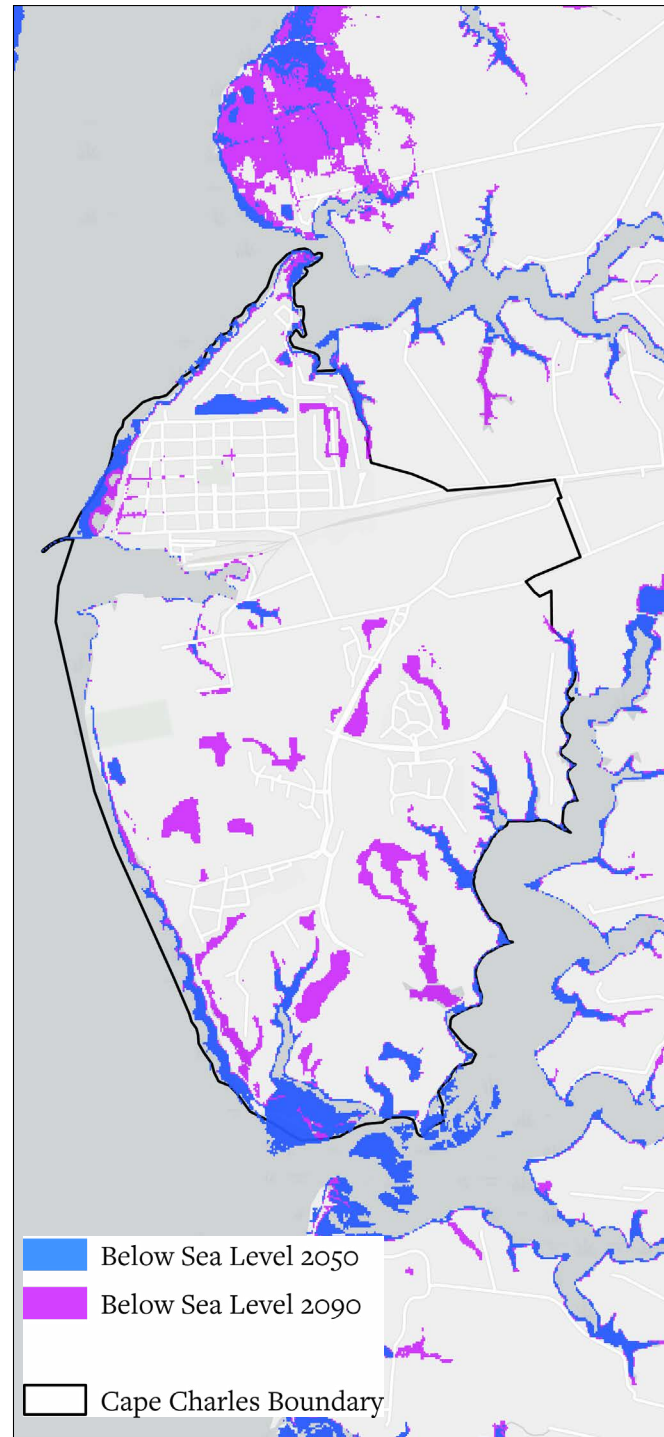
The Resilience Adaptation Feasibility Tool

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.

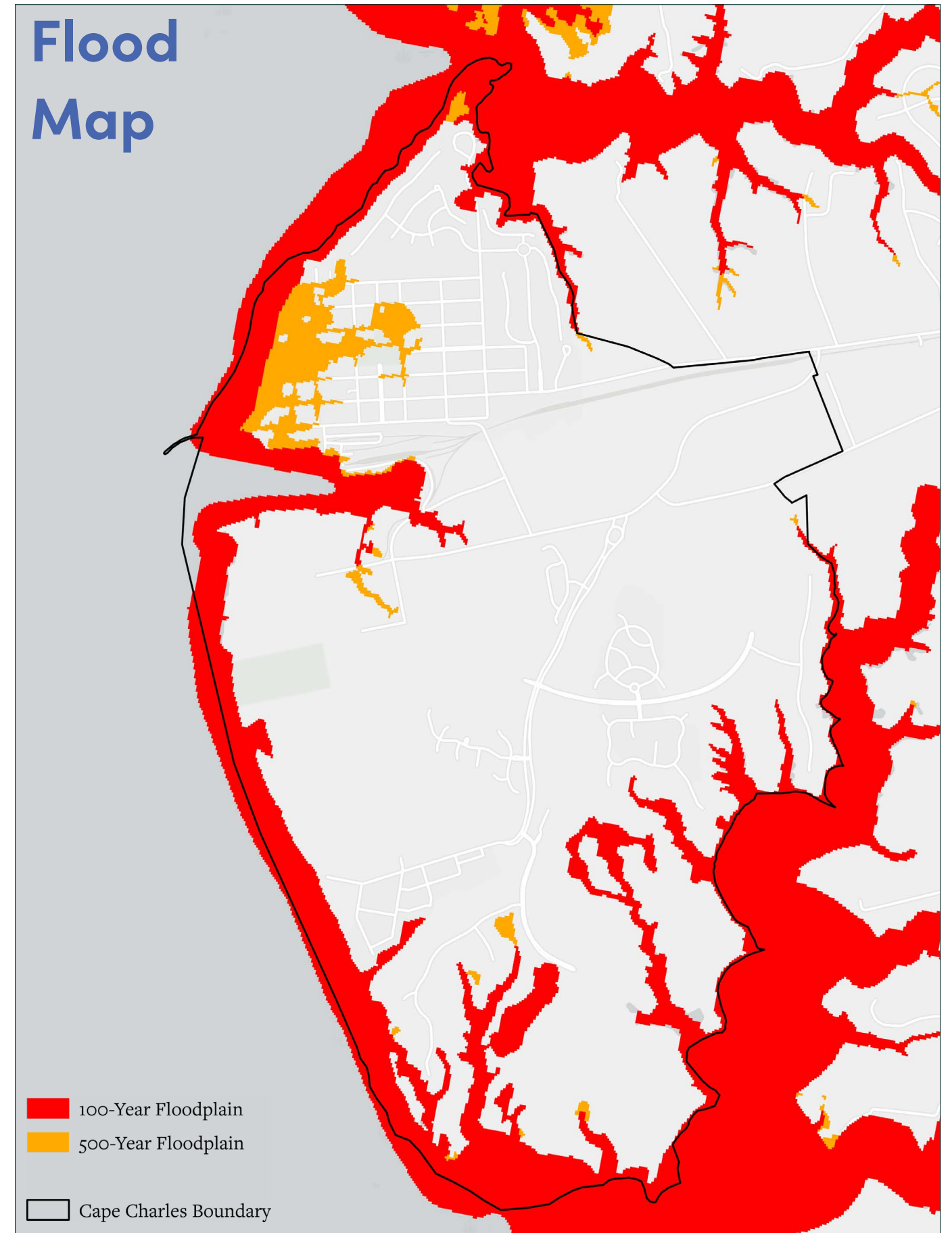
While there are many models and assumptions that are continually being updated as more knowledge is obtained, one model is presented in Map 9 taken from Virginia Eastern Shore Coastal Resilience mapping tool depicting basic inundation from sea level rise for Year 2075 assuming a high projection on level 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.



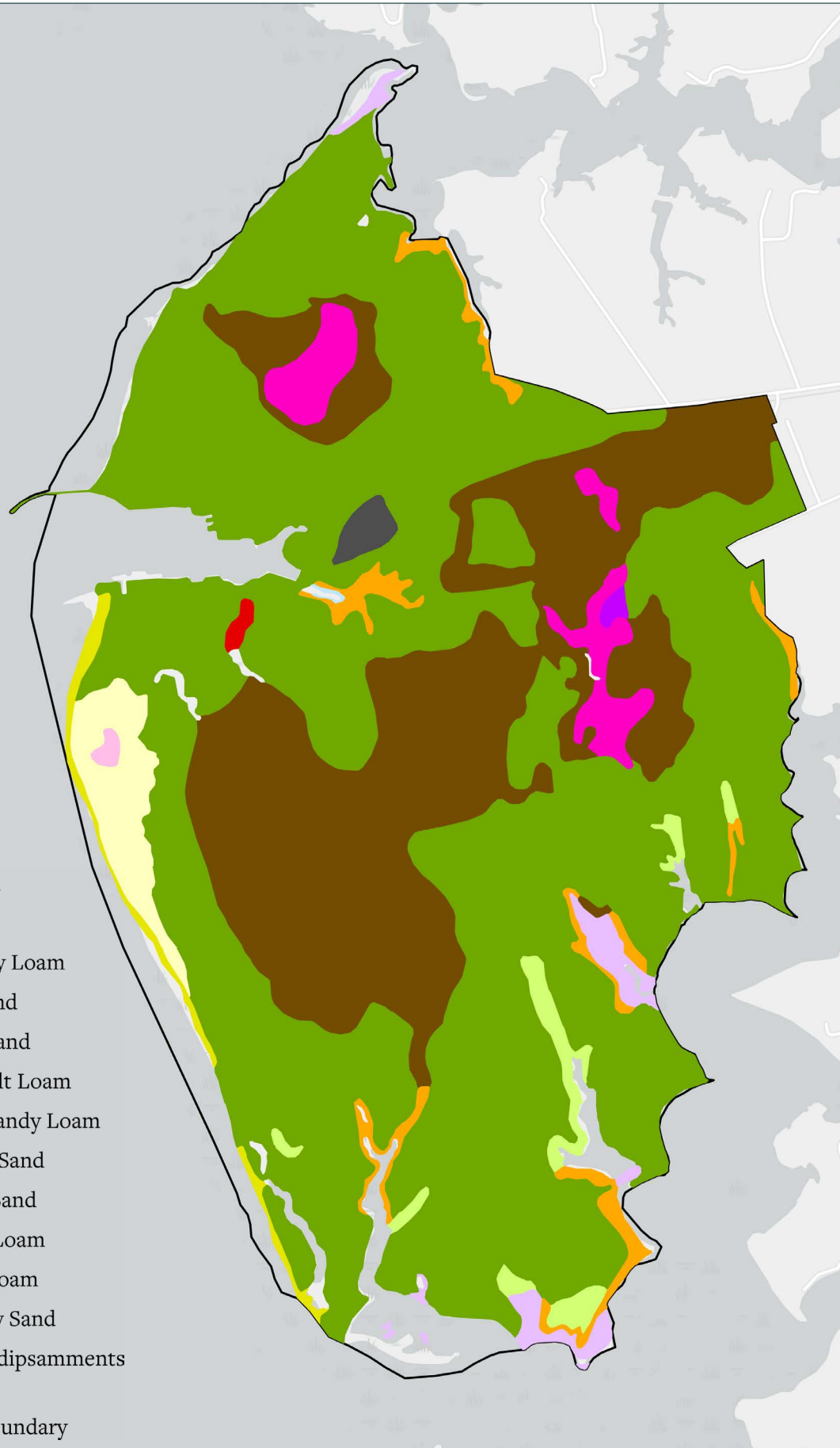
Map 8. Sea Level Rise Projections (NOAA Intermediate Projections for 2050 and 2090)



Map 9. Flood Hazard Areas

Soils Map

- Assateague Sand
- Beaches
- Bojac Fine Sandy Loam
- Bojac Loamy Sand
- Camocca Fine Sand
- Chincoteague Silt Loam
- Dragston Fine Sandy Loam
- Fisherman Fine Sand
- Molena Loamy Sand
- Munden Sandy Loam
- Nimmo Sandy Loam
- Polawana Loamy Sand
- Udorthents & Udipsamments
- Cape Charles Boundary



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.

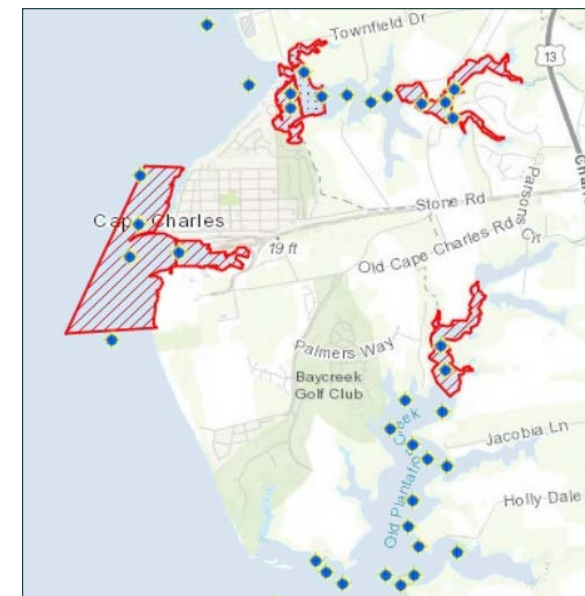
Future development activities in these preservation areas are guided by the Town's Zoning Ordinance, which establishes standards to mitigate development impacts on water quality.

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.

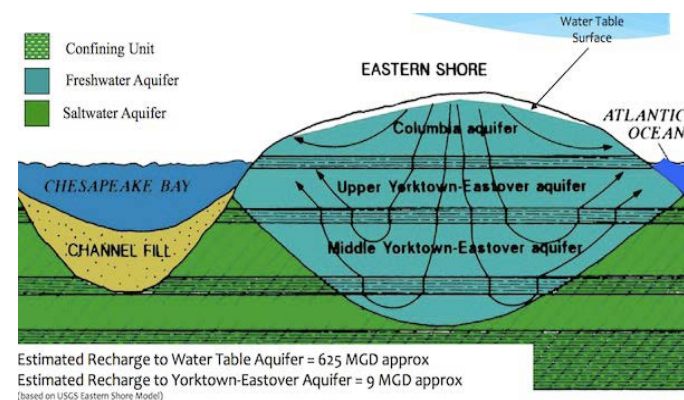
The Eastern Shore of Virginia is divided into five wellhead protection areas, based on ground water divides created by pumping patterns of the major ground water withdrawers on the Eastern Shore. Cape Charles is located in Wellhead Protection Area E - Cape Charles Area. This wellhead protection area

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.



Eastern Shore Aquifer diagram.

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.

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

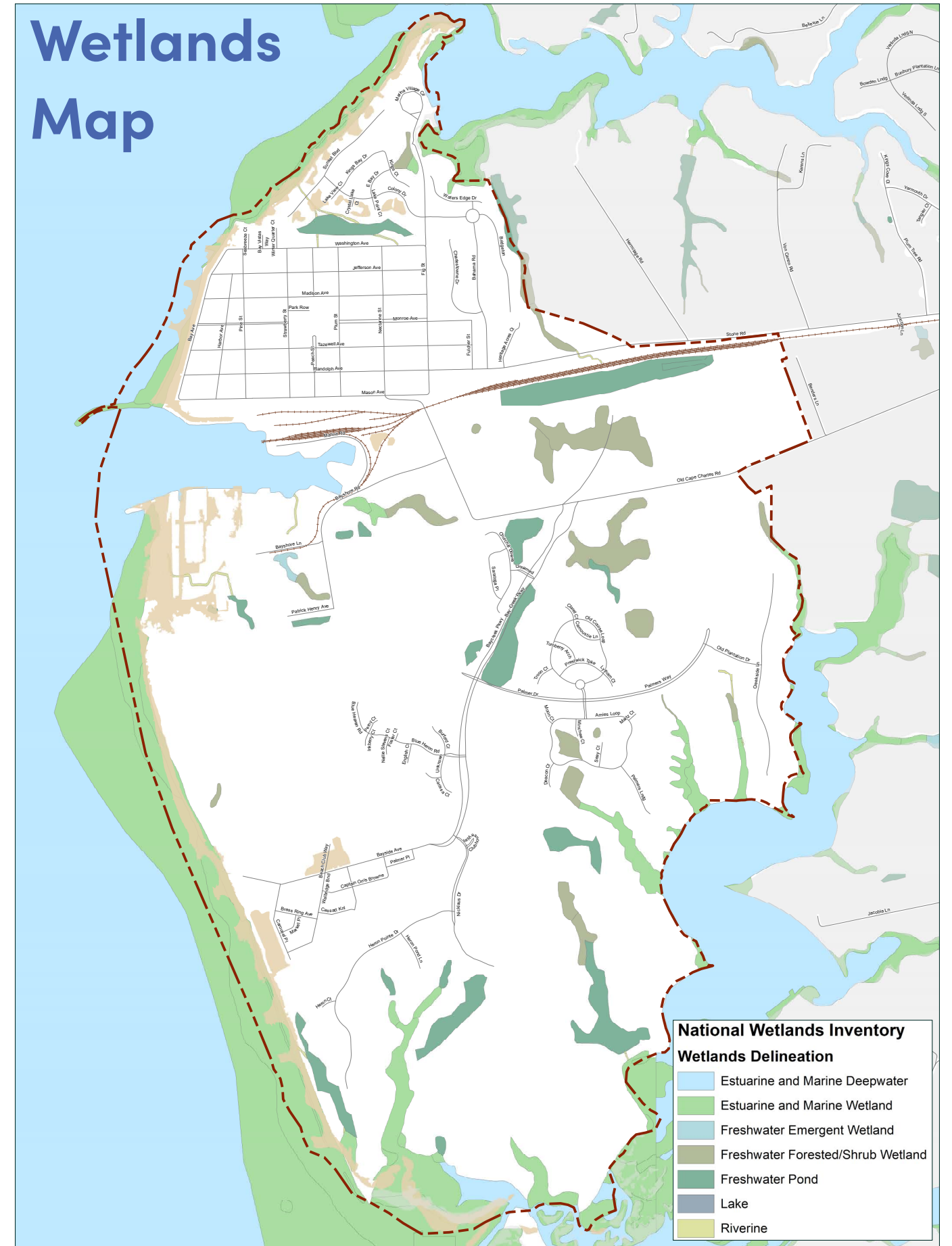
Several parts of Cape Charles are considered wetlands. Wetlands can be defined as areas that are wet or have wet soils during some part of the growing season. Tidal wetlands are influenced by tidal fluctuations and exist along the coastline. Tidal wetlands may include vegetated marshes and swamps or 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.

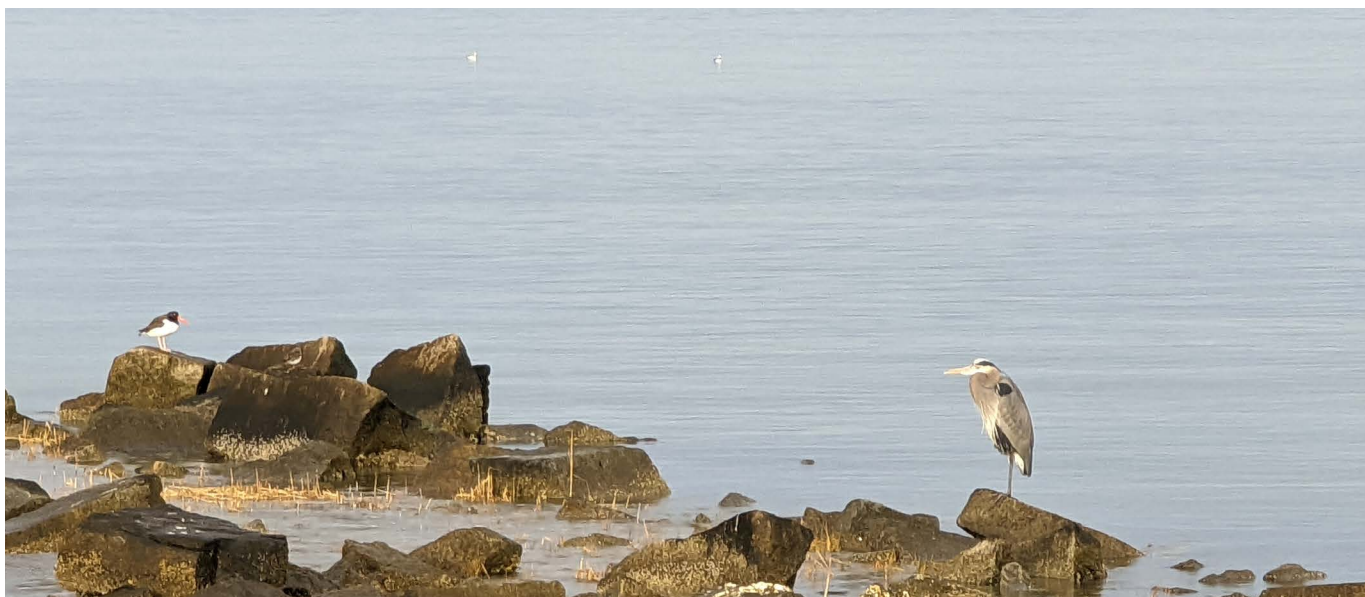


Map 12. Wetlands

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.

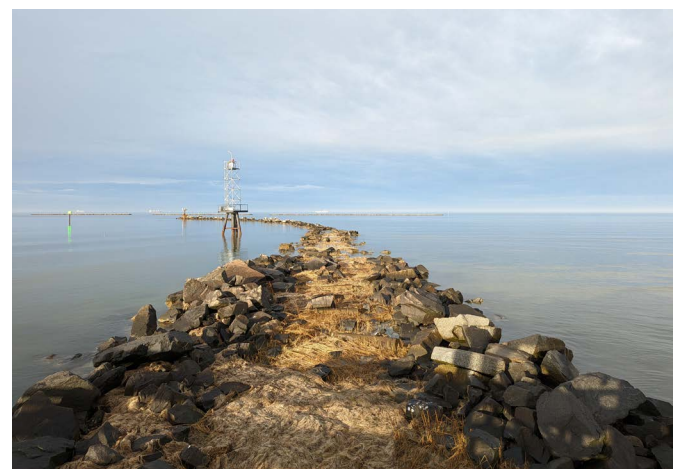
Several shoreline protective measures have been taken in recent decades. The public beach contains a seawall, consisting of a walkway and bulkheading which extends 2,300 feet along the back of the beach from the stone jetty. In 1982, groins were constructed at the public beach, which were 150 feet long 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.



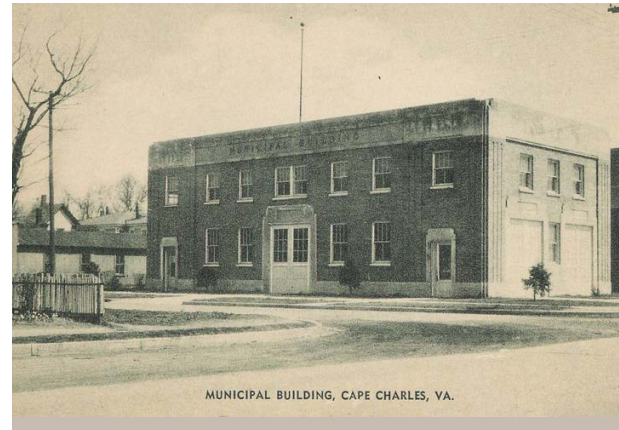
Local event at the Central Park gazebo.

Community Facilities & Services

“Create vibrant community facilities through flexible use, attractive aesthetics, and year-round programming for residents and visitors of different ages and interests.”

- Community Facilities
- Amenities
- Private Amenities
- Broadband
- Educational Facilities
- Public Services
- Recreational, Cultural, and Youth Activities
- Cape Charles Medical Services
- Active and Engaged Partnerships
- Community Facilities & Services Objectives and Strategies

Community Facilities & Services



Cape Charles Town Hall.

Community Facilities

Cape Charles' community facilities include many Town owned properties. This section provides descriptions of the facilities as well as some background information about the facility and any plans for the future.

Cape Charles Town Hall, 2 Plum Street

The town is currently served by a Town Hall, which houses most staff including the Police Department, but excludes Public Works, Public Utilities, and the Library. The Public Works Department is located close to the entrance of the Town and consists of one old building and one newer building, surrounded by a large lot. Town Hall itself has safety and regulatory concerns, as it is not accessible to those with disabilities. It is too small, and the staff has long outgrown the building. Some re-configuring has been done, as well as temporary uses of other public and private space, but that was a short-term fix. The Town is currently in the design phase of replacing the Town Hall building. There is a line item in the budget to accomplish this. The existing Town Hall will be sold and become part of the downtown business area.

The Cape Charles Memorial Library, 201 Mason Avenue

The Cape Charles Memorial Library (CCML) is the oldest library on the Eastern Shore. Previously known as the Northampton Memorial Library, the library had its beginning in a private home in 1919. In 1926 it was moved to the vacated First Presbyterian Church at 500 Tazewell Avenue and in 2013 the library moved into its current home, the former Bank of America building at 201 Mason Avenue. The CCML provides a wide range of services for the community and for citizens of all ages. The library has a Computer Lab with seven computers for public use as well as Wi-Fi access. The CCML is supported by the Friends of the Library. This volunteer group has supplied the library with children's computers, additional furniture, and support for children's programming. The library function should remain in the business district on Mason Avenue and preferably in its current location. The building itself is slated to be divided, with the Town retaining ownership of the areas currently being used for the library, and the rest of the building being sold for commercial/residential development.



Cape Charles Memorial Library.

The Civic Center, 500 Tazewell Avenue

The Civic Center, a former church, then town library, is used for meetings of the Town Council, Planning Commission, Historic District Review Board, Harbor Area Review Board, the Board of Zoning Appeals. Due to a lack of space at Town Hall it is also used by town staff as a conference room. The maximum capacity of the building is 99. The building is slated to be sold, and a new Council Chamber/public meeting space will be constructed as part of a new Town Hall complex.



Cape Charles Civic Center.

Cape Charles Central Park, at the junction of Monroe Avenue and Peach Street

Central Park is owned by the Town but also served by the volunteer group Citizens for Central Park. It is used for a very popular free summer concert series, group meetings, art and craft sales, picnics, unstructured sports, and has a much-used children's playground featuring a small zip line. The Park has a sidewalk just inside its perimeters that is used for exercise and dog walking. Two tennis courts have recently been re-fitted to be used as pickle ball courts as well as tennis. Cape Charles Christian School uses the park for its physical education programs. Immediate future plans feature a "family game area" for adults and children on the southeast corner, which will include horseshoe and corn hole courts, picnic tables, benches, trees and small tables with seating for chess. At Christmas the park is decorated, and sponsors a tree lighting ceremony and a lighted golf cart parade known as "The Grand Illumination." Portions of the Park can be rented for private events. Members of the U.S. Coast Guard often use the Park for regular exercise.

Strawberry Street Plaza, between 230 and 300 Mason Avenue

Strawberry Street Plaza is located between two condominium buildings containing commercial establishments on the first floor and residential on the upper floors. It is in the center of the business district. Both landscaping and benches for public use have been provided by Cape Charles Main Street. The plaza has been used for farm markets, music performances, gatherings, a home for Santa and Mrs. Claus during the holiday Festive Fridays events, and as an informal place to eat takeout food from nearby restaurants and bakeries. Central to Town plans is the viewshed to the Harbor from Strawberry Street beginning at Cape Charles Central Park through the Plaza and on to the town Harbor. Beyond the plaza is a train car, set on rails, located parallel to the back of 230 Mason Ave, which will be maintained on permanent static display. Work will soon begin on the exterior of the train car, including metal work, painting, and window replacement. A new public restroom and visitors center will be located just east of the train car.

Strawberry Street Plaza is currently underused. The Town, in cooperation with Main Street, should determine its best use for Cape Charles businesses, as well as citizens, by considering amenities like easily movable tables and chairs for eating food purchased at downtown restaurants, while allowing for conversion to an outdoor venue for performances and events.



Central Park fountain.

Cape Charles Harbor

Cape Charles Harbor is both a public and private deep-water harbor with a depth of 18 feet. It is dredged regularly by the Army Corps of Engineers, most recently in 2017. The Harbor is comprised of several zoning districts and the Historic Harbor Overlay District. The Towns' portion of the Harbor has recently been upgraded with the installation of concrete walks, lighting, and benches. It is a popular launching site for boaters living in and visiting Cape Charles and Northampton County.

There are two ramps for boats and one ADA compliant ramp for kayaks. There is currently no fee for the use of these ramps or for parking. Fuel can be purchased at the Harbor Masters building. The Harbor offers 96 slips for short- or long-term docking of which 46 are floating docks. Of the 96 slips, 31 are reserved for transient visitors.

The Harbor is also home to the United States Coast Guard Station Cape Charles.

The Town Council recently approved an extension of a contract for specified harbor repairs with the Virginia Department of Wildlife and Recreation.

Due to changing circumstances largely out of the Town's control, many previous efforts to plan for the harbor area, and the surrounding railroad area, have become obsolete. A new master planning effort, to include zoning, overlay areas, and associated design guidelines should be undertaken soon.



Boats in the Harbor.

Amenities

Streetscape

The Town of Cape Charles has one of the most unique collections of historic buildings of any town on the Virginia Eastern Shore. It also has an intact street grid as originally laid out in the early 1880's with seven avenues laid east to west and six streets north to south. In 1912, the town added Harbor St. and Bay Ave. (Sea Cottage addition) resulting in seven streets and one avenue running south to north (increasing postal addresses) and seven avenues running west to east. At the center of the grid is Central Park. Streets are lined with mature trees and just about everyone has a front porch.

Cape Charles is often and affectionately referred to as Mayberry. It is walkable although walks are frequently slowed by greetings from friends. Golf carts are a favorite mode of travel and are often decorated for parades and holidays. Bicycling is popular and a great way to skirt the parking issue in the summer months. As a Virginia Main Street community, the Cape Charles Main Street (CCMS) organization implements a "Four Point Approach" with Design as one of its cornerstones. The Design team supports the community's transformation by enhancing the physical and visual assets that set the commercial district apart. The placement of new benches, planters, and seasonal banners on the light poles creates a welcoming and visually pleasing atmosphere for residents and visitors alike.

CCMS maintains the The LOVE sign, an iconic landmark where residents and visitors alike take pictures. The LOVE sign meaning: L is filled with seashells/sea glass and represents the Bay; O is a tractor tire to represent agriculture; V is two kayaks and represents fun on the water; and E is crab pots to represent aquaculture. It is located next to the fishing pier and at one end of the public beach on Town property.

The commercial area on Mason Avenue has experienced revitalization and adaptive reuse, as shops, restaurants and hotels are being built to serve the increasing number of tourists who visit Cape Charles and the Eastern Shore.



The Mason Ave. streetscape.



The famous LOVE sign.

Sunsets

The sunsets are free and Cape Charles is known for its fabulous sunsets. The Town is geographically located on the shoals of the Chesapeake Bay, which allows for wide views of the setting sun and reflections on the water. In all seasons both citizens and visitors gather on the beaches, on the fishing pier, or at other waterfront venues to view the sunsets.

Cape Charles Beach

In addition to dining and shopping, our beaches are the draw for visitors. They are also some of the top reasons our citizens live here. Cape Charles is the only town on the lower Eastern Shore with a public beach front. Cape Charles also boasts two private beaches located within the Bay Creek communities. The shallow water of the Chesapeake Bay is perfect for families with young children and is also popular for day long floating in large rafts or "raft colonies". Paddleboarding has become popular, and kayaking is still a general favorite. Both can be done from the beach shoreline. The summer season is busy and sometimes hectic but from late Fall into early Spring the beaches are there for often solitary enjoyment.

The Cape Charles Boardwalk

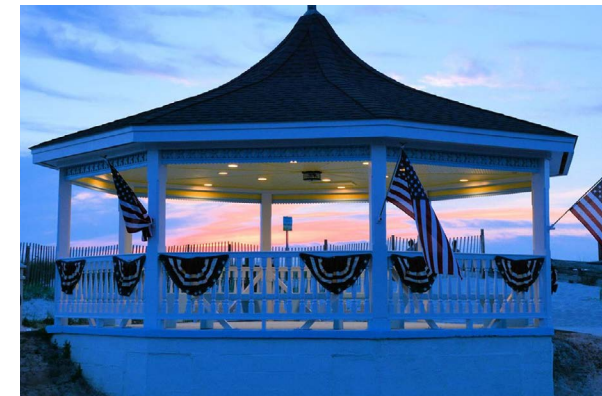
The Boardwalk is a wide concrete sidewalk paralleling Bay Avenue and the dunes along the Chesapeake Bay. The concrete boardwalk is intersected by wooden boardwalks providing access to the beach. Concrete benches and planters, trash receptacles, doggie waste bag dispensers, and information display boards are spaced along the Boardwalk at regular intervals. It is also a portion of the Community Trail and as such is a popular location for walkers, runners, sunset viewers, and even skateboarders in the evening. The Boardwalk has provided an excellent location for information boards about community events. The gazebo located at the end of Randolph Avenue is a respite from the hot afternoon sun.

The Cape Charles Fishing Pier

The Cape Charles Fishing Pier is a popular place for fishing, walking, and sunset watching. It is located at the intersection of Bay Avenue and Mason Avenue. The Town provides a blanket state fishing license for all who wish to fish from the pier. A master planning effort is needed for the public beach, boardwalk, fishing pier, and surrounding areas. This plan should identify a larger vision for the beach front, to include investments in new amenities, and guidance for maintenance.



The sunset over the bay.



Cape Charles beach gazebo.



Cape Charles Fishing Pier.

Private Amenities

Bay Creek

Bay Creek, a planned resort community, came under new management in 2020. Amenities at the gated community are available only to the residents and guests of Bay Creek. The Golf Course has been reduced to 27 holes in order provide for new and expanding walking trails, a boat house on Plantation Creek, and a variety of housing options. The Lifestyle Center features exercise equipment, various classes, a family swimming pool, and sponsored events for adults and children. Bay Creek has two sandy beaches on the Chesapeake Bay and a restaurant, The Coach House Tavern, at the golf course. The resort rental homes available at Bay Creek accommodate thousands of visitors each year.



Bay Creek Golf Course.

Kings Creek Marina

The Kings Creek Marina at the north end of Town serves residents and tourists with a world class marina and harbor for recreational boaters. Overnight accommodations, the Oyster Farm Restaurant, and the Pearl Event Center which hosts weddings and receptions, large parties, business gatherings, and community events are located adjacent to the marina.



King's Creek Marina.

Cape Charles Yacht Center, 1011 Bayshore Road

The boatyard operations at the Cape Charles Yacht Center, a commercial enterprise, are in transition. A new property owner is currently seeking contract management and determining how to best capitalize on the existing infrastructure, consisting of a 75-ton boat lift with a 25'8" beam, power from 30-amp single phase to 100-amp 3 phase, 1,000 feet of face dockage and seasonal slips for local boaters.

Broadband

The Eastern Shore of Virginia Broadband Authority (ESVBA) was created in 2008 by the counties of Accomack and Northampton with the intent that ESVBA would build the backbone of the system from the Maryland state line along the length of the Eastern Shore under Route 13. Private wireless providers would then carry the service to every customer. Approximately 1300 miles of fiber are needed to provide 100% Broadband coverage on the shore. ESVBA currently has 600 miles built out. Private companies are not going to go into areas that are not profitable and rural areas do not create the necessary profit. Thus, the majority of the 600-700 remaining miles will need to be built by ESVBA. In 2016 ESVBA began their fiber-to-the-home program to complete the build out. It has taken 13 years to get to 50%. Cape Charles was able to secure grant funding that connects the town to that fiber optic backbone. However, "getting it the last mile" or in other words connecting it to individual homes and businesses is the responsibility of those individuals. There are 27 free public Wi-Fi hotspots on the Eastern Shore. Cape Charles has one hotspot located at the Cape Charles Museum at 814 Randolph Avenue.

Educational Facilities

Cape Charles Christian School, 237 Tazewell Avenue

Cape Charles Christian School is a private school whose vision is to create an alternative education option for Northampton County. Their goal is to provide an encouraging, supportive, creative environment for children with an integrated Christian perspective. The mission of Cape Charles Christian School is to educate and develop the whole child in a non-denominational Christian setting. The school employs 5 teachers with a Student: Teacher Ratio of 13:1 and instruction from Pre-K through 8th grade.

Educational Facilities Outside Town

Cape Charles does not have any public schools within its boundaries. Nearby public schools serving the town are Kiptopeke Elementary, Northampton Middle School and Northampton High School. Private schools include Broadwater Academy, a private Pre-K through 12 school in Exmore, and Shore Christian Academy, also private serving Pre-K-3 through 8, The Eastern Shore Community College is nearby in Accomack County.

Home Schooling

One result from the Covid pandemic was the growth in home schooling in both the town and the county. Statistics are not available for Cape Charles itself, but Northampton County had 95 children being home schooled in 2021. For curriculum, parents have access to many written and online resources. In addition, most home schoolers are allied with a national or state group for support and teaching resources. Homeschoolers interact with each other through specialized classes and on field trips.

Rosenwald School Restoration Initiative

Cape Charles is home to one of 5,000 schools built in the rural South with seed money from the Julius Rosenwald and guidance from Booker T. Washington. Funds for the restoration and re-opening of the building are being collected, while the organization records and shares stories of the alumni and history of the school.

Public Services and Programs

Cape Charles Police Department

The Town of Cape Charles maintains a police force of 7 sworn officers. Cape Charles police are dispatched through Northampton County. The responsibilities of the Cape Charles Police Department include a wide range of activities such as investigating citizen complaints, initiating criminal and traffic arrests, responding to accidents, and performing crime prevention and wellness checks. The department also responds to calls from the Virginia State Police and other nearby localities.

Cape Charles Volunteer Fire Company

The fire company is not directly associated with the Town government and is housed in a facility next to the existing Town Hall, staffed by volunteers. When needed the fire departments of the county and surrounding jurisdictions also respond to fire emergencies in Cape Charles. The volunteers are active in the community often sponsoring events to raise funds to continue their operations. As with most organizations volunteers are difficult to come by.

United States Post Office, 299 Randolph Avenue

The town of Cape Charles and the surrounding area is served by the United States Post Office. The Post Office is a historical landmark in the town. It was built to be a post office in 1932 and is still in its original condition both on the exterior and interior. Passports may be applied for. The Town's single zip code is 23310.



United States Post Office.

Recreational, Cultural, and Youth Activities

Cape Charles Community Trail

The Cape Charles Community Trail is a path that will eventually cover the outer perimeter of the town and connect to Central Park along Peach Street. The Community Trail has been principally funded under the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) which administers federal money. TAP pays 80% and the town pays 20%. A portion of the trail around the harbor was implemented as part of the harbor redevelopment project and about 50% was funded via Virginia Aid to Local Ports and federal Boating Infrastructure grants. The community trail project is being implemented in multiple phases. Phase 1 consists of the walkway and other extensive work in Central Park. This was completed in 2010. Phase 2 encompasses north Peach Street and Washington Avenue. In addition to the trail itself, the project included extensive storm water system improvements and a landscaped median on Peach Street. This was completed in 2017. Phase 3 is south Peach Street (between Mason and Randolph Avenues) and the south entrance to the park. The TAP grant is in place, and this phase is approved in the Town's FY 2022 budget and is set to bid in late 2022. Phase 4 consists of improvements to the boardwalk along Bay Avenue: repairs, new steps & handrails, better ADA access to boardwalk and beach, removal of highway style lights, and decorative pedestrian lighting. The TAP grant was approved several years ago, but the project was delayed because of delays in Phases 2 and 3. Recently the Town Council voted not to move forward with the TAP funding of this project due to pressure from VDOT for the Town to immediately commit to the 20% local funding match. Phase 4 of this project will now be incorporated into the upcoming beach front master planning effort.

Cape Charles Natural Area Preserve

The 29-acre Cape Charles Natural Area Preserve is owned by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation. It features a long boardwalk that traverses several natural landscapes and ends at a low bluff overlooking the Chesapeake Bay. An additional 20.76 acres were added in 2021 with the purchase of parcel 90-13-A. The Preserve is also part of the Lower Delmarva Important Bird Area and as such over 240 species of birds have been observed within its boundaries.

Eastern Shore Rail to Trail

The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) initiated the Eastern Shore Rail to Trail Study to assess the feasibility of converting the former Bay Coast Railroad into a shared use path. The abandoned railroad corridor spans Northampton County and Accomack County and travels through the Towns of Hallwood, Bloxom, Parksley, Onley, Melfa, Keller, and Painter in Accomack County and the Towns of Exmore, Nassawadox, Eastville, Cheriton, and Cape Charles in Northampton County. The trail would extend 50 miles between the Towns of Cape Charles and Hallwood. This project was approved and received initial funding in 2022. The first leg of the trail will be built from Cape Charles (near Rayfield's Pharmacy) to Food Lion on Route 13. The Town Council has accepted responsibility for maintaining this portion of the trail once built.



Cape Charles Community Trail.



Central Park Gazebo.

Cape Charles Medical Services

Eastern Shore Rural Health Center, Eastville

The Eastern Shore Rural Health System, Inc opened the new Eastville Community Health Center on May 4, 2020 as a replacement for the aging Bayview and Franktown Community Health Centers. The Calvin L. Brickhouse Building in Eastville is a 24,000+ square foot state-of-the-art medical and dental facility. It offers medical and dental digital x-ray, expanded lab services and hours, behavioral health services staffed with two part-time and one full-time physician, recently expanded telemedicine, outreach including to the Hispanic community in the summer months (in cooperation with local growers), health education, interpretation services, an onsite pharmacy, and the room to expand staff based on need and funding. Currently the center provides two and a half pediatricians, and they are the only staff with privileges at the Riverside Hospital in Onley. They have also partnered with Riverside Hospital to share electronic medical records. Hours are limited to weekdays. Emergency care is not offered and there are no plans to do so in the future. Services are available to all including those with limited resources. Free passes are available on Star Transit, or the Community Services Board can provide transportation for a small fee. ESRHS is a Health Center Program grantee under 42 U.S.C. 254B, and a deemed Public Health employee under 42 U.S.C. 233(g)-(n). They are recognized as a Patient Centered Medical Home TM by the National Committee for Quality Assurance. NCQA is a private, non-profit organization dedicated to improving health care quality. It is located 9 miles from Town.

Riverside Shore Memorial Hospital

As one of Riverside Health System's multiple locations for inpatient and outpatient care, diagnostics, rehabilitation and wellness services, Riverside Shore Memorial Hospital provides care for medical and surgical patient emergency department and critical care patients, newborns, and patients seeking diagnostic testing. The hospital is in Onley which is the same distance from Cape Charles as hospitals in the Norfolk/Virginia Beach area. The campus includes Riverside Shore Cancer Center, Riverside Medical Office Building, and a helipad. Riverside Shore Memorial Hospital totals 139,100 square feet spread over 2 floors. It offers 52 private inpatient rooms of which 10 are critical care and 6 are Mother/Baby. The Emergency Department offers 2 private triage rooms plus 13 private treatment rooms including a trauma room. Hospital Accreditations include: DNV, The American College of Radiology, The American College of Surgeons, The College of American Pathologists, The Intersocietal Commission for the Accreditation of Vascular Laboratories, and the American Board of Registration of Electroencephalographic and Evoked Technologies. It is located 36 miles from Town.

Riverside Shore Cancer Center (RSCC)

Sleep Lab services and infusion services are offered at the Riverside Shore Cancer Center along with traditional chemotherapy and radiation therapy (including intensity-modulated radiation therapy) services. The chemotherapy suite includes 8 treatment chairs and 2 private rooms for patients who need privacy. It is located 36 miles from Town.

Riverside Medical Office Building

The Medical Office Building includes gastroenterology, gynecology, neurology, obstetrics, orthopedics, podiatry, pulmonology, and surgery. Outpatient Physical Therapy shares the office building. It is located 36 miles from Town.

Cape Charles Rescue Services

This service is part of the Northampton Emergency Medical Services network and is located just outside of Cape Charles 3 miles away on South Bayside Rd. This building provides access to quick response ambulances and emergency medical services.

Riverside Cape Charles Medical Center

Riverside Health System provides comprehensive primary medical care within the Town's borders and is located at 216 Mason Ave.

Nightingale Regional Air Ambulance

Nightingale Regional Air Ambulance provides rapid transport of the critically ill or injured, transporting patients from the scene of an accident, or from one medical facility to another. Nightingale operates as a community asset to EMS and multiple hospital systems and is called into service when time is critical to the patient's survival and air transportation is the best method. She is often able to reach areas with limited access or assist communities where long transports would tie up limited EMS resources. Nightingale is a service of Sentara and has flown more than 18,000 accident-free missions since her maiden flight in 1982. The nation's 38th air medical program and the region's first air ambulance, Nightingale has transported thousands of critically ill patients to the helping hands of trained medical professionals all over Virginia. Nightingale flies a 125-mile radius handling trauma, cardiac, neurological, medical, pediatric, and obstetric patients. From Washington, D.C. to Ocracoke Island, the Eastern Shore to Charlottesville, Nightingale flies more than 700 missions per year. The current helicopter is an IFR-capable 2011 Airbus EC145.

Northampton County Department of EMS (Emergency Medical Services)

The Mission of the Department of Emergency Medical Services is to provide basic and advanced life support providers able to respond quickly, minimizing pain, suffering and loss when emergencies occur, by delivering the highest quality care to citizens and visitors in Northampton County. It coordinates efforts to ensure the County can mitigate, prepare for, respond to and recover from any type of natural or man-caused disaster. Northampton County uses an all-hazards approach to emergency preparedness, which means planning efforts consider all types of natural and man-caused disasters that could occur in the County.

Active and Engaged Partnerships

Arts Enter Cape Charles & Experimental Film Virginia

Arts Enter Cape Charles & Experimental Film Virginia in the Historic Palace Theatre 501 (c) (3) Arts Enter Cape Charles and non-profit Experimental Film Virginia are at home in the vintage 1942 art deco Historic Palace Theatre and the Lemon Tree Gallery. At the core of the missions of both organizations is to provide performance training and high-quality entertainment for children, adults, and the entire community as well as educational opportunities in music, art, drama, live theatre and film. Arts Enter and Experimental Film Virginia are supported by private donations and grantors including, but not limited to, the National Endowment for the Arts (Our Town grant), the Eastern Shore Community Foundation, The Virginia Commission for the Arts, the Virginia Tourism Commission, Northampton County, and the Virginia Film Office. The Town of Cape Charles has been an active partner since Arts Enter was founded in 1997. Small Town Big Art.

Cape Charles Citizens for Central Park

Cape Charles Citizens for Central Park (CCP) is a non-profit organization founded in 2001 that is devoted to the vision, beautification, and utilization of Cape Charles Central Park. It was the drive and passion of CCP over the past two decades that has developed the Park into the treasured jewel it is today. During the summer in partnership with the Town they sponsor free concerts in the park on Saturday nights. These are always well attended, and prior to COVID, CCP did a bustling business with their Margaritas fundraiser during these concerts. Funds are used for benches, landscaping, playground equipment, maintenance, and a new family game area currently under construction.

Cape Charles Food Pantry

The Cape Charles Food Pantry is operated by Trinity United Methodist Church. It is the local distribution center serving the needy in the Town. It is the authorized extension of the FDA Food Bank and gets some of its items from them along with local donations of cash and food. They are the recipients of numerous fundraisers and food drives in town.

Cape Charles Lions Club 9269:

Cape Charles Lions Club 9269 is an apolitical service organization to help individuals with sight and hearing problems. Through its local fundraising efforts (food truck at local events, broom sales), the local club hosts vision and hearing drives at the local elementary schools, Head Start, and the migrant clubs throughout Northampton County.

Cape Charles Main Street, Inc.

Cape Charles Main Street, Inc Cape Charles Main Street, Inc. (CCMS) is part of the Virginia Main Street Program which is a preservation-based economic and community development program that follows the National Main Street Center's Main Street Approach™. They are incorporated as Cape Charles Main Street, Inc. and obtained § 501(c)(3) status. CCMS has more than 100 volunteers and operates under the belief that businesses are the lifeblood of the town.

CCMS is partially funded by the Town of Cape Charles and is responsible for managing the marketing for the town. They developed the branding for the town as Cape Charles Virginia's Cape, built the town a new marketing website and manage all marketing social media and advertising.

They have provided benches on the streets of the business district and landscaped and furnished Strawberry Street Plaza in the center of town. CCMS has sponsored many events designed to bring people into town, including the very popular Love Fest which began as a celebration of 50 years of the Virginia is for Lover's campaign and is held every year on the Saturday of Labor Day weekend. Festive Fridays are held on the Friday evenings between Thanksgiving and Christmas in the downtown shopping area to promote local shopping for holiday gifts. Shops stay open late and offer specials, windows are decorated, restaurants offer specialties, Santa and Mrs. Claus are available for photos. CCMS annually pursues many grant opportunities to assist local businesses and to improve the Town business district.

Cape Charles Yacht Club

The Cape Charles Yacht Club (CCYC) was founded in the fall of 2012 among a few sailing and boating enthusiasts who reside in the Cape Charles area. The founding members felt that any active harbor needed the presence of a yacht club as one of many anchors to build comradeship among fellow mariners and those that would venture into the harbor and marina. The CCYC hosts a Coast Guard Appreciation Night, has donated funds to the Cape Charles Food Pantry and to the Northampton County Education Foundations Pre-K Camp programs, performs road cleanup, and built the Kayak Floating Dock in the harbor.

Eastern Shore of Virginia Master Gardeners

The Eastern Shore of Virginia Master Gardeners (ESVMG) is sponsored by the Virginia Cooperative Association. Volunteers receive 50 hours of intensive training in all areas of Eastern Shore horticulture. In Cape Charles master gardeners support the New Roots Youth Garden through weekly maintenance and by teaching the children who attend the weekly meetings in the garden where food comes from, how to plant seeds, how to tend the garden, and how harvest the food. They also help the children with their small market stand where they sell this food and learn customer service skills, weighing, and making change.

Eastern Shore of Virginia Master Naturalists

Master Naturalists are trained volunteers who provide education, outreach, and service. They are trained in the ecology of an area – plants, animals, geographic features, and local ecosystems to help Virginia in the conservation and management of natural resources and public lands. In Cape Charles and its surrounds, Master Naturalists monitor the Cape Charles Natural Area Preserve, the Magothy Bay Natural Area Preserve, and the Savage Neck Natural Area Preserve. In 2017, a team of eight Master Naturalists did a complete census of the trees by lot number in the historic district of Cape Charles at the request of the Historic District Review Board recording the species, height, and diameter of all trees.

Eastern Shore Tourism Commission

The Eastern Shore Tourism Commission provides a function larger than the Town is able to provide and a majority of its funding is from Accomack and Northampton Counties. Its function is to market the Eastern Shore on a larger geographic scale than the Town would be able to do on its own. The Tourism group has developed an Eastern Shore Brand and the Town is part of that project.

Friends of the Cape Charles Memorial Library

The Friends of the Cape Charles Memorial Library is an all-volunteer organization responsible for promoting the library, sponsoring cultural programs for the community, and providing funds to enhance the library collection and visitor experience. They have supplied the library with additional furniture and support for children's programming.

New Roots Youth Garden

New Roots Youth Garden (NRYG) is owned and maintained by the Town but managed by the Executive Board of NRYG whose mission is to teach children where food comes from, how to plant seeds, how to tend the garden, and how to harvest the food. The children also have a small market stand where they sell this food and learn customer service skills, weighing, and making change. In addition, every week they take the food they've grown home to their families. Since a wide variety of vegetables are grown in the garden the children often find themselves eating a food they've never tasted before. Recently New Roots has been welcoming field trips to the gardens from several local schools. The NRYG holds fundraisers, but also receives grants, The Rotary Club provides funds and physical labor improving the property. The Eastern Shore of Virginia Master Gardeners provide a large part of the maintenance of the garden itself, and United Way is also a source of income. Many donations are received from citizens and businesses in Cape Charles as it is a very popular program.

Northampton County American Legion Post 56:

The Northampton County American Legion Post 56 is a patriotic veterans organization devoted to mutual helpfulness to serve those who served during a time of war; Post 56 is one of the oldest American Legion Posts in the nation with a founding year of 1919 and charter date established in 1922.

The Civic League

The Civic League provides neighbors in the Historic District a collective voice in town government by identifying opportunities for improvement and building consensus around proposed solutions. The Civic League provides Town Council and Town Management a point of contact within the Historic District to work on issues and projects. Finally, the Civic League keeps neighbors in the Historic District informed about developments and decisions affecting them.

The Museum and Welcome Center

The Museum and Welcome Center for the town is housed in a 1913 building that served as an electric power generating station for 40 years. It is owned and operated by the Cape Charles Historical Society; a non-profit organization founded in 1986. The Museum and Welcome Center opened in 1996 and is open 7 days a week from mid-April through October. In 2019 (pre COVID-19), it served approximately 4,200 visitors. 65% of those visitors were from Virginia, with a consistent 14% from Hampton Roads, nearly 42% from other mainland Virginia locations, and the rest from the Eastern Shore. Exhibits center on the heydays of the town from the 1880's through the mid-20th century when steamers, ferries, and the railroad operated continuously. A new exhibit is presented each season created from the Society's archives which are cataloged and stored in the adjoining reconstructed Bloxom Station. A virtual outdoor tour takes visitors on a walk around the museum from their phone or computer and includes video and audio on the history of the museum.

The Rotary Club

The Rotary Club is an apolitical group with a world view. Their motto is Service Above Self. As a service group they invest both financial and labor into their projects. Projects in Cape Charles include the purchase and installation of a new fence, market stand, and concrete apron to New Roots Youth Garden, financial assistance for the new playground equipment at Central Park, quarterly trash pickup on Stone Road, and co-sponsor (with Main Street) the political forum featuring candidates for Town Council. The Club is also very active in support of many other important organizations and activities through Northampton County.

Tree Advisory Board

The Tree Advisory Board is an informal group of volunteers whose goal is to preserve and increase the tree canopy of Cape Charles. To that end they seek to advise both citizens, town staff, and town governmental bodies on proper tree choice, tree removal, new tree location, and proper landscaping with trees. They also help to assure the maintenance and expansion of the city's tree canopy and the health and safe condition of trees in the community. TAB also plans and conducts an annual celebration in support of Arbor Day. In both 2021 and 2022, Cape Charles was designated a Tree City USA as sponsored by the Arbor Day Foundation.

Vacation Homeowners

The Vacation Homeowners of Cape Charles was established in 2019 to contribute to the experiences of residents and visitors to Cape Charles. The VHOCC has sponsored numerous concerts, Festive Friday events, First Day in the Bay, movies at the Palace Theater and the Cookie Trail of historic homes. The group provides a community of support to vacation homeowners. In order to best serve the community, our members pledge to adhere to our "Good Neighbor Policy".

Community Facilities & Services Objectives and 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.



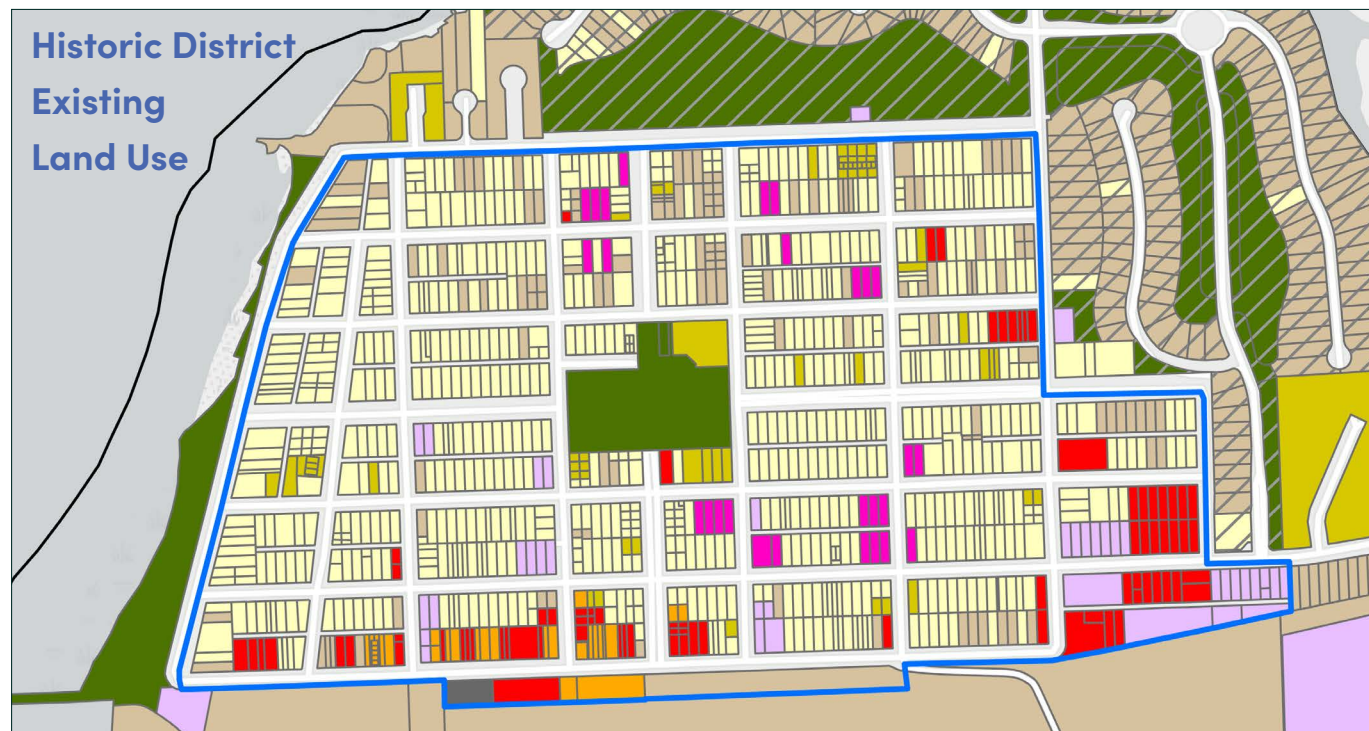
Land Use & Community Design

- Land Use and Community Design Framework
- Existing Land Use Map
- Land Use and Design Policies
- Open Space Policies

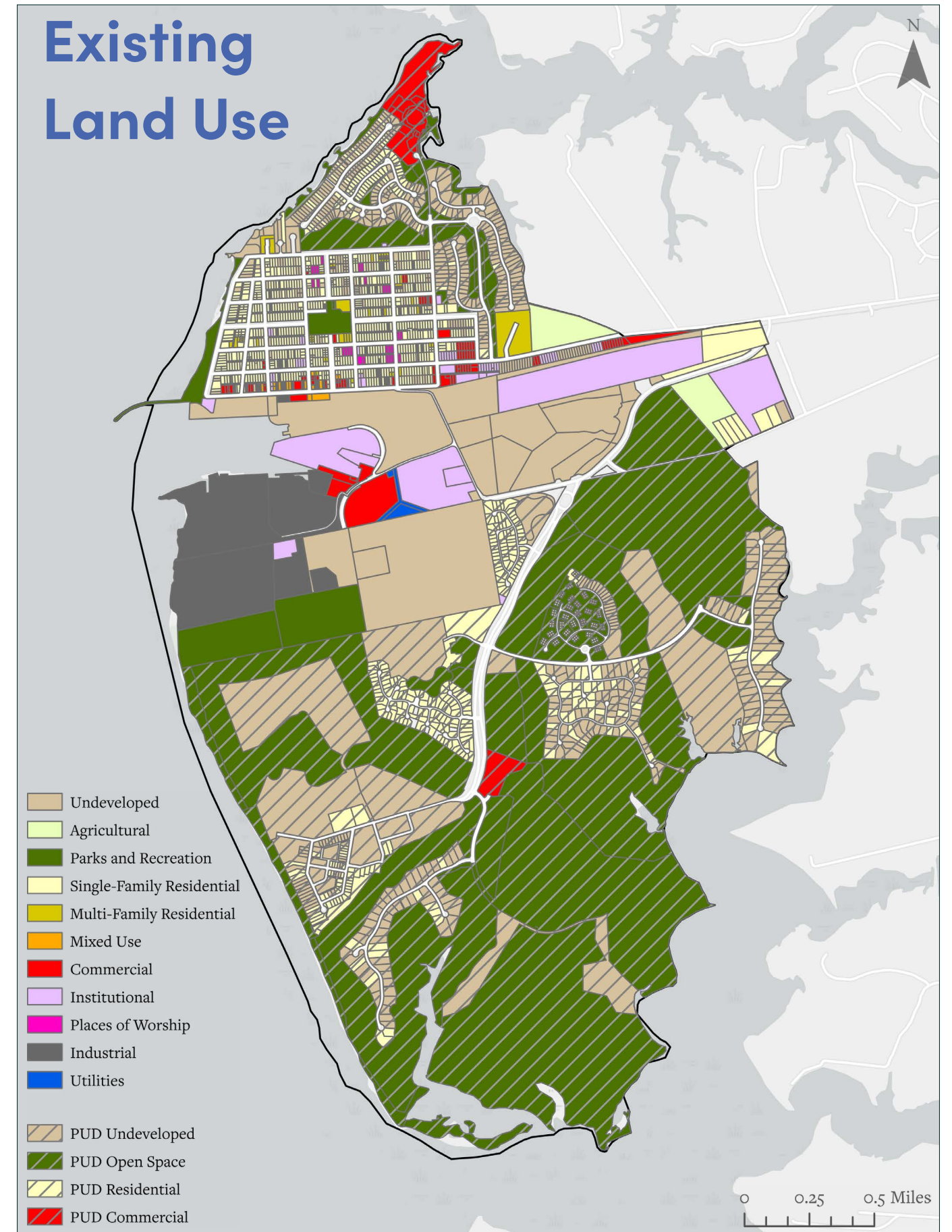
Land Use & Community Design

Land Use and Community Design Framework

From 2019 to 2021, the Town of Cape Charles held a series of workshops and meetings to begin updating the Town's Comprehensive Plan. In March 2021, Town Council approved a new Community Strategic Plan that would set the vision, goals, and objectives for Cape Charles. Throughout the meetings and discussions, several common threads or themes emerged. These themes form the cornerstone of the planning process and the source of the fundamental policy direction promoted in the Plan. Many of these themes are directly concerned with basic land use and Town design issues, such as preserving historic character, maintaining the integrity of views and entrance corridors, and ensuring compatible economic development in the future. Others are less tangible but equally important and relevant to planning, such as the preservation of open space, the maintenance and improvement of public infrastructure, and maintenance of an effective transportation network. The following policy recommendations are intended to establish a positive vision for future development, conservation and a sense of community in Cape Charles. They are intended to help implement the townspeople's desires, as expressed in the public meetings and work sessions, to protect the Town's unique and historic small town character through land use and design policies that keep the best of the old and incorporate innovative new development that will keep the town vibrant long into the future.



Map 14. Existing Land Use Historic District



Map 15. Existing Land Use

Land Use and Design Policies

1. Preserve and enhance the integrity of the Historic District.

The general layout of the Town, in terms of scale, grid network, the central park, and streetscape amenities (such as sidewalks, alleys, planted medians and street edges, and large canopy trees) greatly contribute to the character of the Historic District. The integrity of this district should be preserved and enhanced through streetscape improvements along Mason Avenue, median restoration and landscaping, and sidewalk improvements. In addition, the Town's central park should be maintained as an urban/civic amenity that provides a multipurpose space for town events and individual recreation.

2. Promote compatible infill development and renovation within established neighborhoods.

Infill development or renovation within established neighborhoods should be compatible with adjacent structures and the neighborhood as a whole. Accessory dwelling units add diversity to housing types, while maintaining the character and providing affordable options. New development in undeveloped areas should match the prevailing style and character of traditional buildings in Cape Charles. The scale, massing, and materials of new buildings should be traditional and compatible with the Town's historic architectural fabric.

3. Create new centers of activity to address the commercial, civic and recreational needs of residents and visitors.

New centers of activity should be created to serve the commercial, recreational and civic needs of both residents and visitors. Potential new activity centers include new commercial nodes in Bay Creek, the Harbor area, the area around the Cape Charles Elementary School (also referred to as the Cape Charles Rosenwald School), and the plaza on Strawberry Street. These areas have the potential to become vibrant pedestrian, mixed-use centers that provide a range of recreational, commercial and civic uses to the Town. It is also important to ensure future vehicular and pedestrian connections between these centers. The form and design character of these activity centers should be based on the scale and character of existing centers (i.e. Mason Avenue District).

Cape Charles' Historic District Review Board (HDRB) is responsible for the creation and enforcement of Historic District Guidelines. These Land Use and Design Policies are based on those Guidelines.

Open Space Policies

Open spaces and scenic views, both in and around the Town enhance the quality of life for all townspeople and visitors in Cape Charles. The Town should take steps to preserve its valued natural assets and environmental resources, such as woodlands, shorelines, tributary creeks, and marsh grasses. In addition, protection and enhancement of both scenic and recreational open space should be of primary importance in planning for the future of the Town. Specific natural resource policies are addressed in other portions of the Comprehensive Plan. The policies below are intended to address those aspects of the natural and open space features that are part of the overall land use and Town design framework.

1. Preserve the integrity and accessibility of the water's edge.

Public waterfront access should be an important amenity and identifying feature for the Town. Waterfront areas include the Harbor, the Cape Charles beach, the municipal pier and the Cape Charles Natural Area Preserve. King's Creek Marina and areas in Bay Creek also provide waterfront access. Preserving the integrity and accessibility of the water's edge is critical to maintaining the quality of life within the Town. This should be accomplished through measures that integrate the Harbor walkway with the historic core and control shoreline erosion, as well as by enhancing the municipal pier and beach as an amenity for residents and visitors.

2. Protect the viewsheds along Town entrance corridors.

Views along entrance roadways have a significant impact on how the community is perceived. Attractive entryways help entice tourists into the community and leave a positive impression to encourage future visits. Route 184 and Route 642, which serve as the entry roads into Cape Charles, have a rural identity characterized by open farm fields and relatively narrow road widths. The Town should continue to protect the scenic viewsheds along the Route 184 and Route 642 corridors through land use regulations, setback requirements, design standards and landscaping requirements. Because a significant portion of the corridors is governed by County regulations, the Town should work cooperatively with the County to plan for the future character of the corridors. The Town should pursue

the ability to jointly review proposals for properties within the County that influence the Town's entry corridors.

3. Strengthen and enhance the Town's green infrastructure.

The Town contains a number of passive and active recreational facilities that serve as an attraction for residents and visitors alike, as well as important environmental functions. The town should strengthen the existing "Green" focal points, such as the Town Central Park, and Cape Charles Natural Area Preserve. New focal points within the Harbor area should be created with greenway connections between these focal points that incorporate environmental features such as wetlands and drainage ways, and urban streetscapes with landscaping and street trees. Connections can either be built in as part of specific revitalization programs or as part of the approval of new development proposals in critical areas.

4. Protect the Town's scenic, recreational, and open space resources.

The Town's location along the Chesapeake Bay and its abundant natural resources are a critical part of the Town's identity and way of life. The Town should protect its scenic, recreational and open space resources by using environmentally sensitive design techniques in new development, preserving existing features during the site plan review process, incorporating low impact development techniques, and restoring and re-vegetating natural areas. In addition, the Town should continue to support efforts to restore and enhance critical habitat and promote the use of native plants in the Town.

5. Encourage support for landscape enhancements in and around Town.

The Town should enhance its current infrastructure of landscaping and green amenities, by promoting a Town-wide street tree program, buffer standards, and specific landscape enhancements.



Shops along Mason Ave.

Future Land Use

- Future Land Use Map Description
- Future Land Use Map
- Future Land Use Designations

Future Land Use

Future Land Use Map Description

This vision for the Future Land Use Plan was developed by the citizens and stakeholders of the Town during public Town Meetings with the Town Council and the Planning Commission. Surveys were also conducted by both the Town and Cape Charles Main Street. The recommendations of the townspeople were incorporated in both the overall policies and in the Future Land Use Plan of the Comprehensive Plan. Specifically, the first meetings focused on identifying a vision for the values we hold and the quality and character of development. Ideas about levels of growth and intensity of development were affirmed at the second public workshop where participants were asked to identify a preferred development concept. Workshop participants overwhelmingly preferred a “low growth” concept, featuring activity centers at Marina Village, Bayside Village, Mason Avenue, and the Harbor.

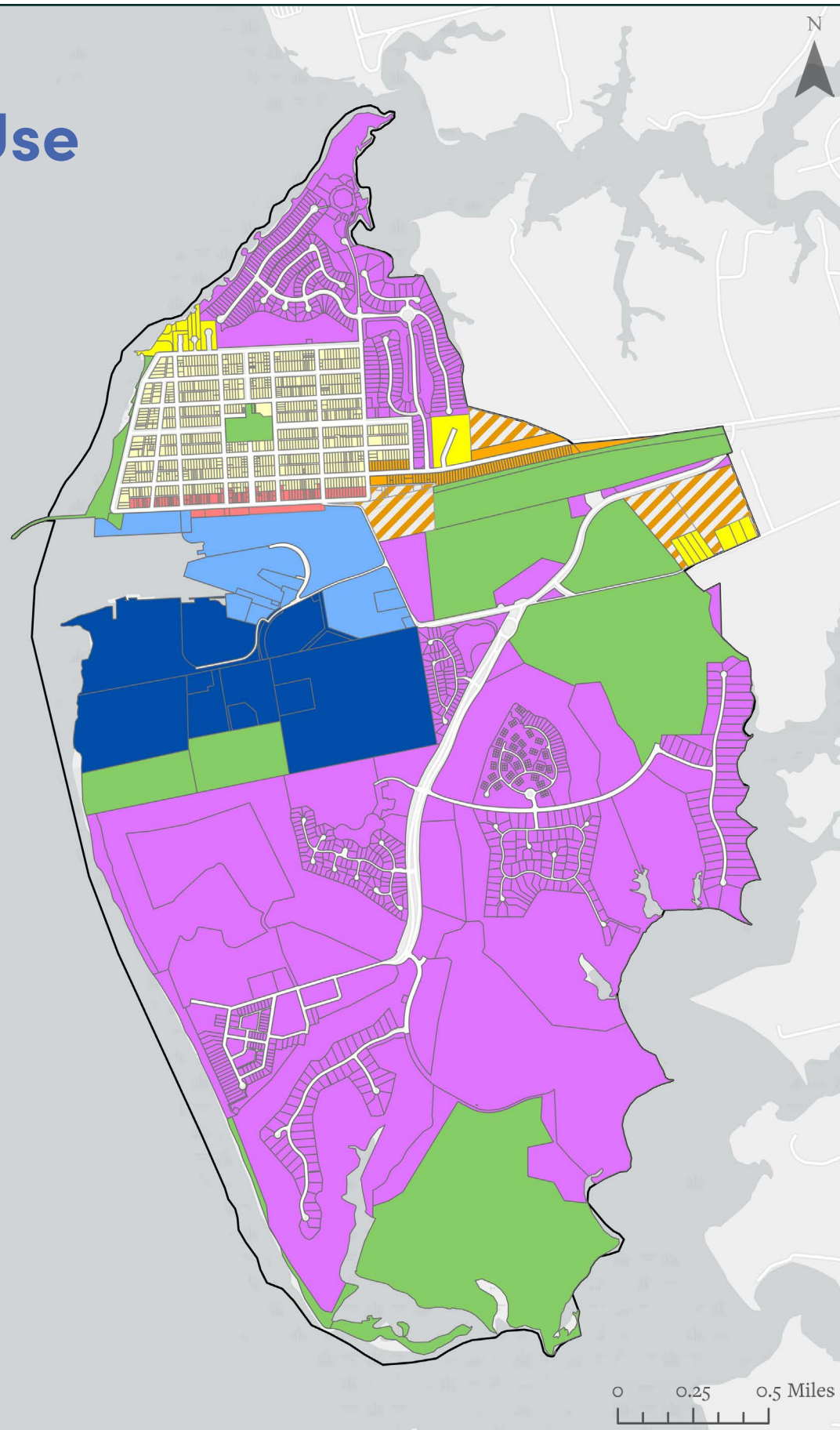
The Future Land Use Plan is intended to generally maintain and enhance the traditional settlement patterns of Cape Charles. Overall, the guiding principle is to mirror and extend the existing historic pattern of development in the Town as it grows and adapts to new land uses and building types over time. The Future Land Use Plan continues to allow for new and infill development in the existing developed and undeveloped portions of Town. At the same time, the Plan reinforces the current form of the Town and recommends that new development should be an extension of the traditional patterns of growth in Cape Charles.

The accompanying map (Future Land Use Map) represents potential land uses, development character and densities as part of the Comprehensive Plan. This Future Land Use map depicts land use designations and districts that are designed to support the overall policies and neighborhood design principles desired by the Town. It is important to note that this map only addresses broad density and land use objectives, not detailed standards. The map is not a standalone document and is to be used in conjunction with the future land use policy language.

In most cases, proposed densities and intensities are expressed in terms of ranges that are appropriate for the types of uses proposed. These ranges are intended to provide flexibility in the application of these policies to individual properties on a case-by-case basis, as the unique characteristics of a parcel are evaluated during the review of a specific development proposal. The following Future Land Use Plan policies propose land use designations and districts that are designed to support the overall policies and traditional neighborhood design principles desired by the Town.



Future Land Use



Map 16. Future Land Use

Future Land Use Designations

- Conservation/Open Space:** These areas are intended for the conservation of natural resources and protection of open space. These areas include parks, recreational areas, preserved land, and wetlands.

- Entrance Corridor:** The Entrance Corridor is intended for the development of a mix of commercial and residential uses with appealing visual aesthetics, quality architecture, and high quality landscaping that enhance the character and first impressions of the Town.

- Historic District Mixed Use:** The Historic District Mixed Use category covers part of the existing downtown historic area of Cape Charles along Mason Avenue. Development in this area is intended to reflect the diversity of historic architectural features present in the Town and incorporate the diversity of uses that bring Main Street to life.

- This plan allows for more flexible use of historic properties across the district. Rehabilitation of existing historic buildings and infill development should comply with Historic District guidelines with particular attention to how the buildings address the streetscape.

Buildings should have minimal (if any) setbacks from the right-of-way and ground floor uses that engage pedestrians with visually appealing facades.

- Mixed Use:** The Mixed Use category covers limited parts of Cape Charles near the historic town center. Development in this area is intended to incorporate a diversity of uses.

- Historic District Residential:** The Historic District Residential category covers the majority of the original street grid in Cape Charles. Any new development in this area is intended to reflect the historic character of the core residential area and compliment features of existing structures.

- This plan recognizes that some historic homes have been converted into lodging and other uses. As such, the plan intends flexibility in use while maintaining the character of the area and quality of life for residents.

- Residential:** The Residential category is intended for a variety of housing types to meet the needs of Cape Charles residents. Development in this area should include housing of various types, sizes, and prices to meet the needs of seasonal workers, families, etc.

- Planned Unit Development:** The Planned Unit Development surrounding the historic area of Cape Charles is intended to accomplish specific development goals, while being complementary to the Town's broader Vision and Objectives. The PUD includes areas designated for conservation to conserve ecological funtion, recreational amenities, and natural aesthetics

- Harbor District:** Further master planning will be conducted to create a strong vision for the Harbor District. The area is intended to develop in a way that mirrors the success of Mason Avenue and nearby historic residential blocks. The district could include a mix of uses on an extension of the highly walkable street grid. Specific Harbor District design guidelines should be developed with particular attention to how buildings address the streetscape and the harbor front to create a lively and attractive extension of historic Cape Charles.

- Harbor District Industrial:** This category is for existing and future commercial and industrial uses along the southern area of the harbor. Although these uses may be intense, the proximity to the deep water harbor is necessary for their function and for the economic diversity of the Town.

Conservation / Open Space

These areas are intended for the conservation of natural resources and protection of open space. These areas include parks, recreational areas, and preserve lands and wetlands.

a. Function

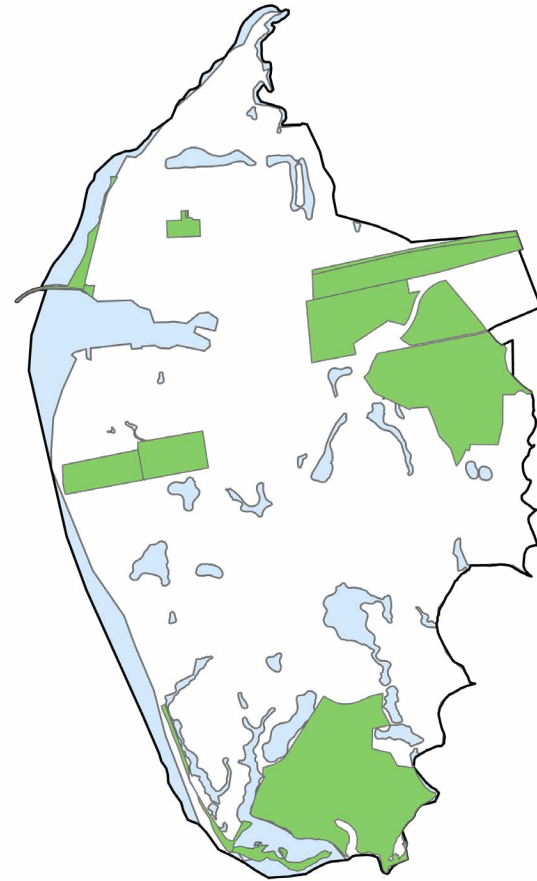
1. To provide open space and conservation areas to meet the physical and environmental needs of the Town.
2. To enhance the Town's aesthetic appeal along transportation corridors.

b. Preferred Uses

1. Land Use in the Open Space designation should consist of critical natural resources, such as shorelines and wetlands, as well as agricultural/forestal resources.
2. Open Space areas should also include parks, private golf courses, and other recreational amenities, such as multi-use paths, promenades and plaza.

c. Design Character and Scale

1. Open space areas should retain existing vegetation, particularly trees, where feasible and reforestation and revegetation of open areas of the site with native plant materials.
2. Where feasible, currently damaged or degraded landscapes and wildlife habitats should be restored and enhanced creating new natural areas and wetlands on the site.
3. Site elements should be arranged to protect and enhance special land characteristics, natural features, rare or endangered species areas, archeological sites, and other unusual natural or man-made site characteristics.



Central Park.

Entrance Corridor

The Entrance Corridor is intended for the development of a mix of commercial and residential uses with appealing visual aesthetics, quality architecture, and high quality landscaping that enhance the character and first impressions of the Town.

a. Function

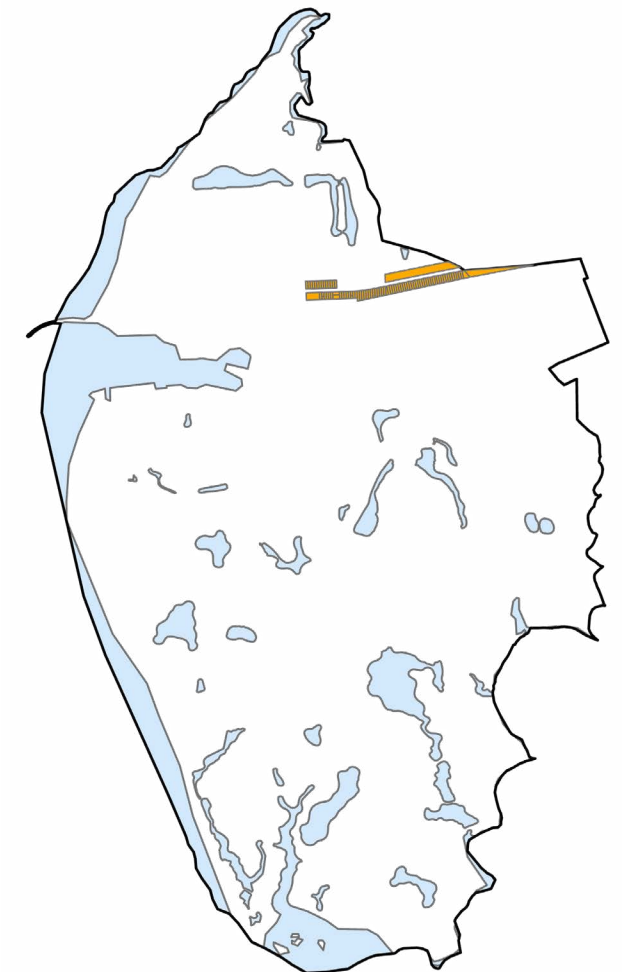
1. To provide a strong sense of a small town-historic character and to promote the continuing concentration of retail businesses and services in predominantly commercial areas.
2. To promote a diverse mix of compatible commercial, entertainment, governmental and residential uses.

b. Preferred Uses

1. Open space, to include public parks, and highly landscaped uses.
2. Land uses in this district should be small-scale mixed uses including shopfronts, workshops, small offices, housing, and specialty shops catering to local and regional customers, as well as tourists and visitors.

c. Design Character and Scale

1. Development should generally have a small town-historic character, such as that found along Mason Avenue, with a fine-grained land use pattern at a human scale.
2. Development should combine uses vertically, as well as horizontally (i.e. mixing uses among buildings and within individual buildings), to achieve convenience, and variety.
3. Design elements should be integrated with street trees, benches, and landscaping. Bicycle facilities and usable public spaces should be provided.
4. Vehicular and pedestrian links should extend into the surrounding development.
5. Land use or intensity/density transitions should be provided between nonresidential uses and existing residential areas.



Historic District Mixed Use

The Historic Downtown Mixed Use category covers part of the existing downtown historic area of Cape Charles along Mason Avenue. Development in this area is intended to reflect the diversity of historic architectural features present in the Town and incorporate the diversity of uses that bring Main Street to life.

This plan allows for more flexible use of historic properties across the district. Rehabilitation of existing historic buildings and infill development should comply with Historic District guidelines with particular attention to how the buildings address the streetscape.

Buildings should have minimal (if any) setbacks from the public right-of-way and ground floor uses that engage pedestrians with visually appealing facades.

a. Function

1. To provide a strong sense of a downtown “main street” character and to promote the continuing concentration of retail businesses and services in predominantly commercial areas.
2. To promote a diverse mix of compatible commercial, entertainment, governmental and residential uses.
3. To continue the traditional character of a commercial and mixed-use main street.

b. Preferred Uses

1. Land uses in this district should be small-scale mixed uses including restaurants, shopfronts, workshops, small offices, housing, and specialty shops catering to local and regional customers, as well as tourists and visitors.
2. In general, residential uses should be located above the first floor, reserving first floor storefront space for activity-generating uses such as retail shops, restaurants or grocery stores.

c. Design Character and Scale

1. Development should generally have a small-town main street character with a fine-grained land use pattern at a human scale. Blocks should generally not be more than 600 foot long.
2. Development should combine uses vertically, as well as horizontally (i.e. mixing uses among buildings and within individual buildings), to achieve convenience, variety and walkability in the district.
3. Design elements should be integrated with wide sidewalks, street trees, benches, and entrances to buildings at the edges of street rights-of-way. Bicycle facilities, on-street parking, and usable public spaces should be provided.



4. Vehicular and pedestrian links should extend into the surrounding development.
5. Land use or intensity/density transitions should be provided between nonresidential uses and existing residential areas.
6. It is important to maintain and improve the aesthetics of the downtown area for continued economic revival, and to protect historic buildings from demolition or renovation which would damage their historical integrity.
7. Most of the site may be developed as building, parking or paved plaza and access areas. However, there should generally be 10-20% of the site in amenity open space, such as public plazas, landscaping or decoratively paved wide sidewalks or sitting areas.
8. Alleys, thoroughfares, and service ways should be utilized to ensure trash pickup and deliveries for commercial establishments are minimized along public right of ways.

d. Building Design

1. Architectural treatment and materials should be compatible with adjacent commercial and residential architecture.



Intersection of Mason Ave & Strawberry St.

Mixed Use

The Mixed Use category covers limited parts of Cape Charles near the historic town center. Development in this area is intended to incorporate a diversity of uses.

a. Function

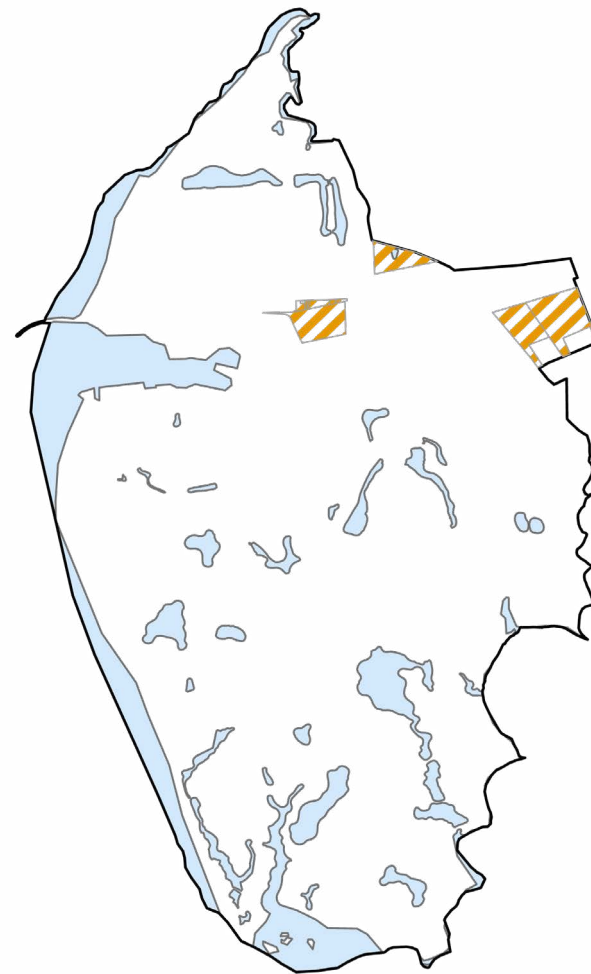
1. To promote a diverse mix of compatible commercial, entertainment, governmental and residential uses.

b. Preferred Uses

1. Land uses in this district should be mixed, including public spaces, restaurants, shopfronts, workshops, small offices, housing, and specialty shops catering to local and regional customers, as well as tourists and visitors.
2. In general, residential uses should provide more flexible options consistent with activity-generating uses such as recreation activities, retail shops, restaurants, or grocery stores.

c. Design Character and Scale

1. Development should combine uses vertically, as well as horizontally (i.e. mixing uses among buildings and within individual buildings), to achieve convenience, variety and walkability.
2. Design elements should be integrated with street trees, benches, and open spaces. Bicycle facilities, on-street parking, and usable public spaces should be provided.
3. Vehicular and pedestrian links should extend into the surrounding development.
4. Land use or intensity/density transitions should be provided between nonresidential uses and existing residential areas.
5. Most of the site may be developed as building, parking or paved plaza and access areas. However, there should generally be 10-20% of the site in amenity open space, such as public plazas, landscaping or decoratively paved wide sidewalks or sitting areas.
6. Alleys, thoroughfares, and service ways should be utilized to ensure trash pickup and deliveries for commercial establishments are minimized along public right of ways.



d. Building Design

1. Buildings should generally be located at the edge of the street right-of-way with minimal front setbacks. In scattered locations setbacks should be increased to allow for public outdoor seating for restaurants.
2. All facades of buildings should be designed with architectural detail consistent with that of the front elevation of the building.
3. Architectural treatment, materials, and colors should be compatible with adjacent commercial and residential architecture.
4. The scale, massing, colors and materials of new buildings should be traditional and compatible with the Town's historic architectural fabric.



*Example of a Mixed Use building. Source: Congress for the New Urbanism

Historic District Residential

The Historic Downtown Residential category covers the majority of the original street grid in Cape Charles. Any new development in this area is intended to reflect the historic character of the core residential area and compliment features of existing structures.

This plan recognizes that some historic homes have been converted into lodging and other uses. As such, the plan intends flexibility in use while maintaining the character of the area and quality of life for residents.

Note: Refer to the Historic District Guidelines for more detailed guidelines for development in this district.

a. Function

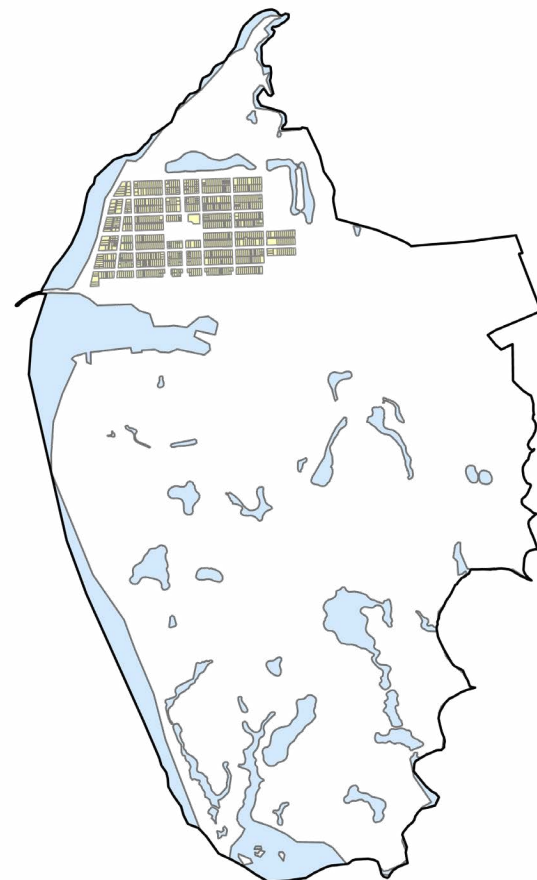
1. To meet the housing needs for the citizens of Cape Charles, while maintaining the single-family residential character of the Historic District.
2. To allow for the diverse mix of compatible, recreational, governmental and residential uses that currently exist in the Historic District.

b. Preferred Uses

1. Land uses in this designation should consist primarily of single-family dwellings with some multifamily houses, including row houses containing two to four dwelling units per structure, and single-family houses which have been converted into two-family or multi-family dwelling units.
2. A number of publicly owned lands and buildings, such as the Town Hall and Central Park, currently exist in this district. Uses that support the civic and recreational needs of Town residents should be compatible with the existing residential character of the area.

c. Design Character and Scale

1. Traditional Residential Mixed-Use projects should be compatible with the existing residential character, such as that found along the Town's historic residential streets, with a fine-grained land use pattern at a human scale.
2. All development should be sympathetic with the existing character of the area.
3. Infill development should be compatible with existing residential structures, and promote historic preservation and improve dilapidated properties.
4. Future consideration for multi-family dwellings should be based upon architectural compatibility with the Historic District guidelines.
5. Vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle circulation should tie the district together internally and with surrounding areas.



6. Landscaping should be compatible with the large canopy and flowering trees located along streets, in private yards and in public rights-of-way, and should contribute to the visual character of the area.

7. Design elements that contribute to the character of the residential area should be considered, such as sidewalks and fencing.

d. Building Design

1. Architecture should be compatible with and reflective of character, materials, and form of the existing traditional residential and commercial buildings in the Historic District.
2. Existing historic structures should be preserved and adapted for reuse over time.
3. New dwellings should complement the historic structures.



Existing Historic District homes.

Residential

The Residential category is intended for a variety of housing types to meet the needs of Cape Charles residents. Development in this area should include housing of various types, sizes, and prices to meet the needs of seasonal workers, families, etc.

a. Function

1. To meet the housing needs for the citizens of Cape Charles.
2. To allow for the diverse mix of compatible residential uses.

b. Preferred Uses

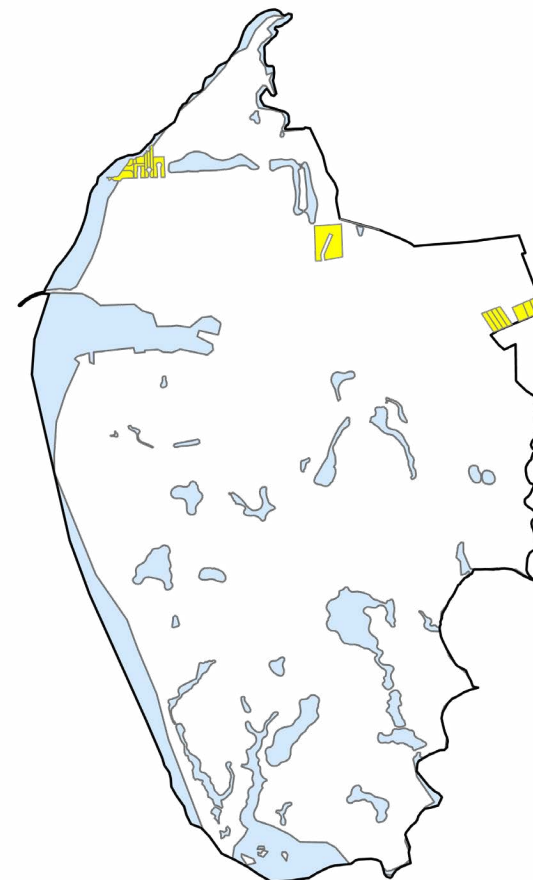
1. Land uses in this designation should consist of single-family dwellings, multifamily houses, including row houses containing two to four dwelling units per structure, or single-family houses which have been converted into two-family or multi-family dwelling units.

c. Design Character and Scale

1. Residential projects should be compatible with the existing residential character, such as that found along the Town's historic residential streets.
2. All development should be sympathetic with the existing character of the area.
3. Vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle circulation should tie the district together internally and with surrounding areas.
4. Landscaping should be compatible with the large canopy and flowering trees located along streets, in private yards and in public rights-of-way, and should contribute to the visual character of the area.
5. Design elements that contribute to the character of the residential area should be considered, such as sidewalks and fencing.

d. Building Design

1. Architecture preferably is compatible with and reflective of character, materials, and form of the existing traditional residential buildings in the Historic District.



*Example of residential buildings. Source: Congress for the New Urbanism

Planned Unit Development

The Planned Unit Development (PUD) surrounding the historic area of Cape Charles is intended to accomplish specific development goals, while being complementary to the Town's broader Vision and Objectives. The PUD includes areas designated for conservation to conserve ecological function, recreational amenities, and natural aesthetics.

a. Function

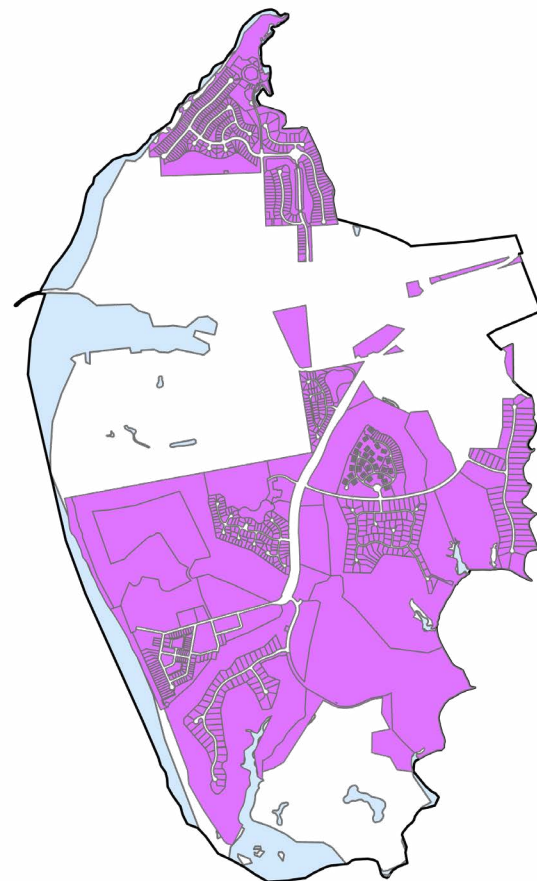
1. To allow the continued development of the Planned Unit Development in harmony with the Town.

b. Preferred Uses

Land uses in this area should follow the vision of the Planned Unit Development and the vision/objectives of the Comprehensive Plan, and work in harmony with the development of the Town rather than seeking to provide an alternative to Mason Avenue and the rest of Town.

c. Design Character and Scale

1. Uses shall be designed in keeping with the PUD approval, maintaining high quality natural landscapes and architectural aesthetics.



Bay Creek Golf Course.

Harbor District

Further master planning will be conducted to create a strong vision for the Harbor District. The area is intended to develop in a way that mirrors the success of Mason Avenue and nearby historic residential blocks. The district could include a mix of uses on an extension of the highly walkable street grid. Specific Harbor District design guidelines should be developed with particular attention to how buildings address the streetscape and the harbor front to create a lively and attractive extension of historic Cape Charles.

Note: Refer to the Harbor Area Conceptual Master Plan and Design Guidelines, once developed.

a. Function

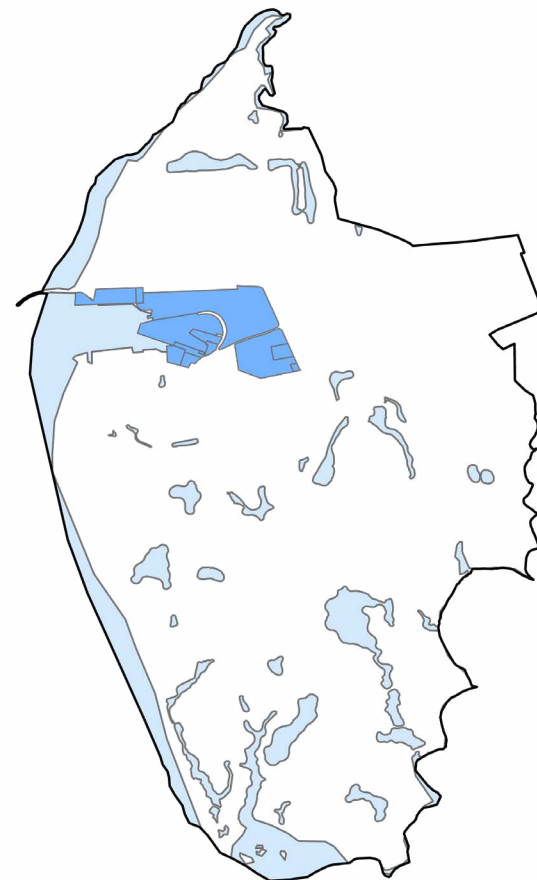
1. To provide a vibrant working waterfront that is both a strong economic benefit to the Town and encourages compatible new industry and employment uses.
2. To provide places with strong public and recreational value, with public gathering places and access to the water.
3. To provide a place for people to conduct business and to live, meet, relax, encounter nature, and learn of Cape Charles' working maritime and rail heritage and its historic traditions.

b. Preferred Uses

1. Land uses in this district should be mixed, including resort and tourism-related retail, waterfront industrial and employment, associated residences, and accessory uses and should support the existing harbor uses.
2. In general, residential uses should be located above the first floor, reserving first floor storefront space for activity-generating uses such as retail shops, restaurants or recreational amenities.
3. Berthing and marina uses should correspond to the available water depth that exists in the Harbor.
4. Open space and recreational uses, such as walkways, greenways, and public plazas and promenades, that provide access to the water should be provided.

c. Design Character and Scale

1. Harbor Mixed-Use projects should be architecturally and visually compatible with the Town's historic built fabric and design character, with a fine-grained land use pattern at a human scale, while still reflecting the best contemporary design and development practices. Blocks should generally not be more than 600 foot long.
2. Development should combine uses vertically, as well as horizontally (i.e. mixing uses among buildings and within individual buildings), to achieve convenience, variety and walkability in the district.
3. Building edges should be set similar to the existing section of Mason Avenue to create a more orderly pattern of buildings and develop an urban "main street" character.



4. Public access and views to the waterfront should be integrated in a way that is compatible with the function of the maritime activity.
5. Vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle circulation should tie the district together internally and with surrounding areas and should recognize the unique historic and waterfront environment of the site.
6. Alleys, thoroughfares, and service ways should be utilized to ensure trash pickup and deliveries for commercial establishments do not take place along public right of ways.
7. Design elements should be integrated with wide sidewalks, street trees, benches, and entrances to buildings at the edges of street rights-of-way. Bicycle facilities, on street parking, and usable public spaces should be provided.
8. Landscaping should be provided according to the approved Town landscaping requirements.
9. Most of the site may be developed as building, parking or paved plaza and access areas. However, there should generally be 20-30% of the site in amenity open space, as public plazas, landscaping or decoratively-paved wider sidewalks or sitting areas.
10. Development on the north side of the harbor should be of a scale similar to that of the Historic Downtown Mixed Use Category, while taller heights may be allowed on the south side of the harbor with a gradual height transition between the north and south sides.

d. Building Design

1. Architecture should be compatible with and reflective of character, materials, and form of the existing traditional residential, commercial and industrial buildings in the Town of Cape Charles.
2. Structures and improvements on the site should generally be clustered and compactly designed to allow for minimal disturbance and extensive open space and public areas.
3. The traditional gridded layout of streets in the Harbor Area should be reinforced through the placement and design of buildings, travelways, and landscape elements. New streets should extend the existing historic street grid of the Town.
4. Development along new or existing public streets should foster a walkable and enjoyable pedestrian environment. New development should avoid large expanses of blank walls, should provide frequent street level entries, and should provide sidewalk amenities such as street furniture and lighting that encourage year-round pedestrian use.

Harbor District Industrial

This category is for existing and future commercial and industrial uses along the southern area of the harbor. Although these uses may be intense, the proximity to the deepwater harbor is necessary for their function and for the economic diversity of the Town.

a. Function

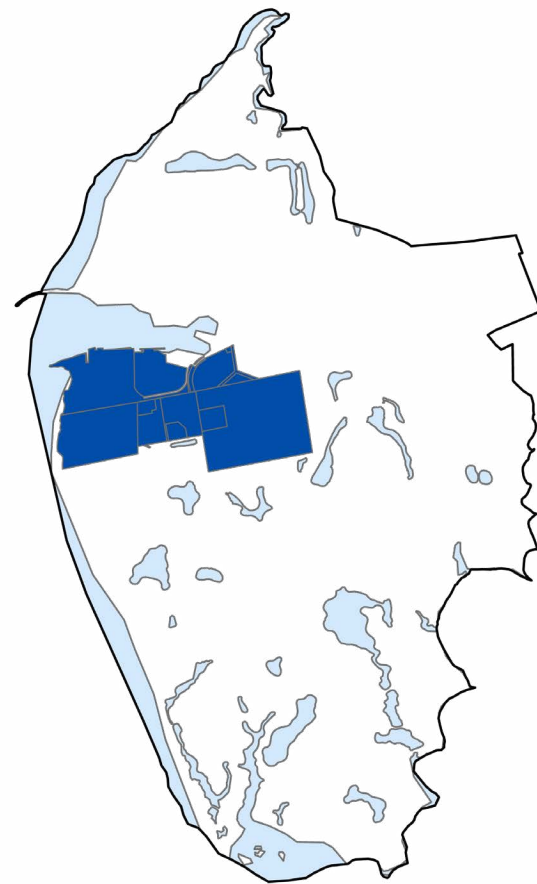
1. To provide a broad spectrum of non-tourist related local and regional employment that offers living wage jobs and supports a balanced tax base.
2. To encourage cost effective approaches to resource conservation, wise use of renewable resources, and ecologically based industrial development.
3. To serve as a model for advancing the traditional settlement patterns of the Eastern Shore's towns and employment centers.

b. Preferred Uses

1. Land uses in the designation should consist of office and flexible industrial uses, including corporate headquarters, emerging technologies facilities, and appropriate manufacturing, that support local and regional employment opportunities consistent with the Town's small town historic character.
2. Residential mixed-use areas should be encouraged to complement existing and future employment opportunities.
3. Open space and recreational uses, such as walkways, greenways, and public plazas and promenades, should be maintained as an important amenity to the Town.

c. Design Character and Scale

1. Vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle circulation should tie the district together internally and with surrounding areas.
2. Office buildings should be located close to the roadways with parking behind, or underneath and/or located in the interior of the development, so that building fronts and entrances face on the street.
3. Development along new or existing public streets should foster a walkable and enjoyable pedestrian environment. New development should avoid large expanses of blank walls, should provide frequent street level entries, and should provide sidewalk amenities such as street furniture and lighting that encourage year round pedestrian use.
4. Most of the site may be developed as building, parking or paved plaza and access areas. However, there should generally be 10-20% of the site in amenity open space, as buffers, landscaping, greenways or recreational facilities.



5. Alleys, thoroughfares, and service ways should be utilized to ensure trash pickup and deliveries for commercial establishments do not take place along public right of ways.

6. The use of landscaping and screening devices should be used to the maximum extent feasible adjacent to public rights of way.

d. Building Design

1. Architecture should be compatible with and reflective of character, materials, and features of Cape Charles, while still reflecting the best contemporary design and development practices.
2. Structures and improvements on the site should generally be clustered and compactly designed to allow for minimal disturbance and extensive open space and public areas.
3. Along major street frontages, buildings may be taller and should decrease in height as they become less visible from the street.
4. Building facades should have compatible architectural detail when visible from public areas.



Industrial uses adjacent to Cape Charles Harbor.



Footprints in the sand on Cape Charles Beach.

Implementation

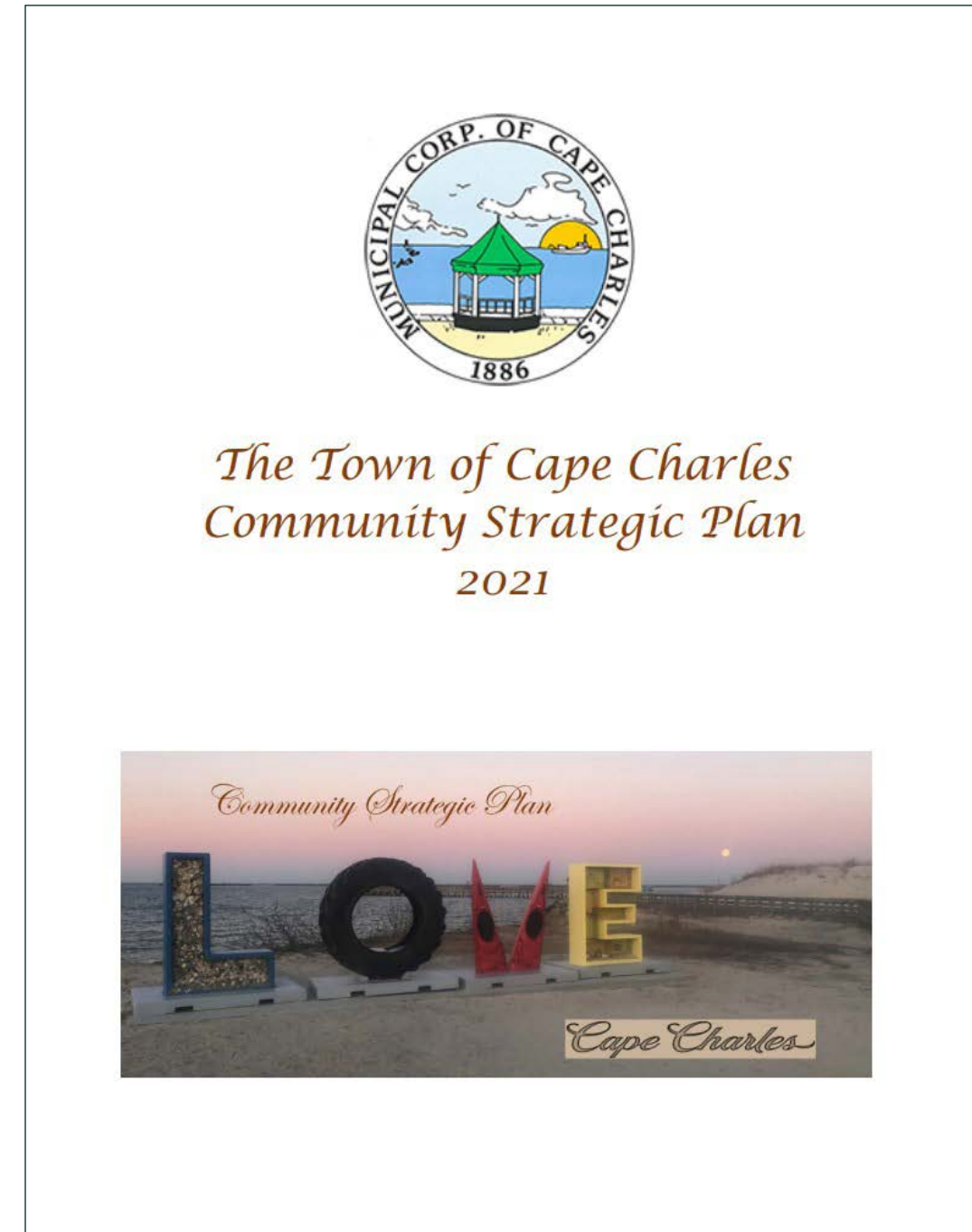
- Relationship to the Community Strategic Plan
- Objectives & Strategies Matrix

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"> a. Collaborate with STAR Transit to pursue convenient, safe, and frequent bus service to key commercial, residential, and recreational destinations.
<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"> a. Make future improvements to the path, including resting areas and bicycle/golf cart parking.
<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"> 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.
<p>2. Continue to promote the strong aesthetics of the town and limit pollution from litter.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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.
<p>3. Utilize best practices, along with infrastructure improvements, to ensure high quality drinking water.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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.
<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"> 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.
<p>5. Promote coastal resiliency through policy, development regulation, and enforcement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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).
<p>6. Protect natural resources, especially wetlands and other sensitive ecosystems.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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.

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.

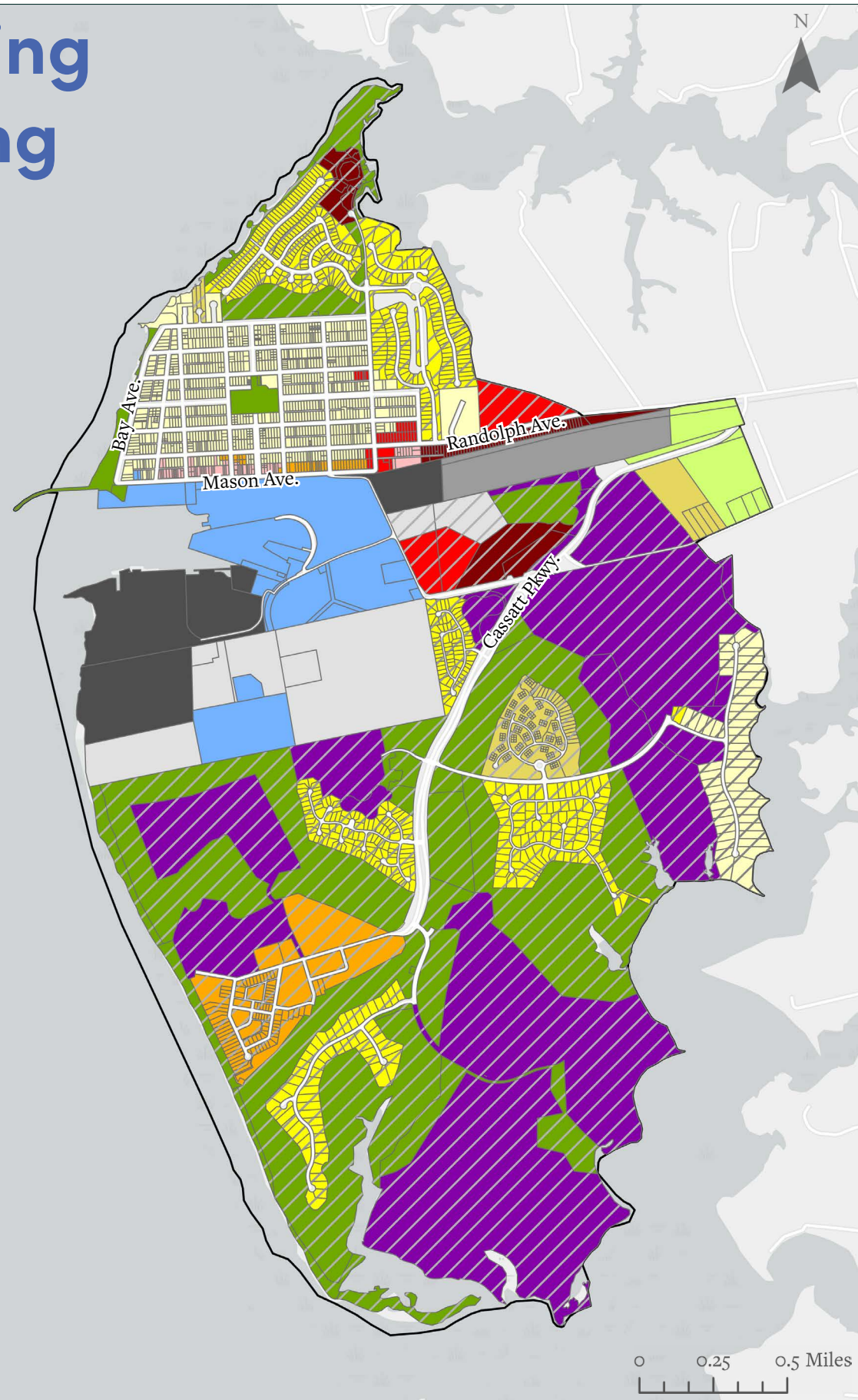
Community Facilities & Services Objectives & Strategies:

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.

Appendix

— Existing Zoning

Existing Zoning



Map 17. Existing Zoning

Zoning Classifications

- Open Space
- Residential Estate (R-E)
- Single-Family Residential (R-1)
- Medium Density Residential (R-2)
- Multi-Family Residential (R-3)
- Commercial Residential (CR)
- Commercial District (C-1)
- Commercial District (C-2)
- Commercial District (C-3)
- General Business/Light Industrial (GBI H-1)
- Industrial (M-1)
- Industrial (M-2)
- Harbor District

- Planned Unit Development (PUD)
- PUD Open Space
- Low Density Residential (PUD-R1)
- Medium Density Residential (PUD-R2)
- Multi-Family Residential (PUD-R3)
- Residential/Commercial (PUD Village)
- Commercial (PUD-C)
- Specialty Commercial (PUD-SC)
- PUD General Business/Industrial (PUD-GBI)

- Cape Charles Boundary

Existing Zoning - Historic District



Zoning Classifications

- Open Space
- Residential Estate (R-E)
- Single-Family Residential (R-1)
- Medium Density Residential (R-2)
- Multi-Family Residential (R-3)
- Commercial Residential (CR)
- Commercial District (C-1)
- Commercial District (C-2)
- Commercial District (C-3)
- General Business/Light Industrial (GBI H-1)
- Industrial (M-1)
- Industrial (M-2)
- Harbor District

- Planned Unit Development (PUD)
- PUD Open Space
- Low Density Residential (PUD-R1)
- Medium Density Residential (PUD-R2)
- Multi-Family Residential (PUD-R3)
- Residential/Commercial (PUD Village)
- Commercial (PUD-C)
- Specialty Commercial (PUD-SC)
- PUD General Business/Industrial (PUD-GBI)

- Historic District Boundary
- Cape Charles Boundary