

Fostering Vibrant, Walkable Communities with Multi-Generational Opportunities

Introduction

The Calvert County Department of Community Planning & Building Department staff and the WSP | Parsons Brinckerhoff consultants are working on behalf of the Planning Commission and the Board of County Commissioners to update the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance.

The intent of the Calvert County Comprehensive Plan update is to ensure the visions for Calvert County are still valid, including the twin overarching visions of preserving the rural character while directing new growth to appropriate locations, along with the vision of building a strong local economy. The update will address the county's changing demographics and issues, including land use, environment, economy, housing, and transportation. In addition, the update will address new state land use requirements, including plan elements and the Sustainable Growth and Agricultural Preservation Act.

In the summer of 2016, informational meetings were held where the public could learn about the update process and share their ideas about the challenges facing Calvert County. In September and October four interactive workshops were held where citizens, staff, and the consultants discussed issues in small groups. The discussions at workshops helped set the stage for the current phase, discussing key issues that should be addressed in the updated Comprehensive Plan. Five workshops are being held in the winter and spring of 2017. *Fostering Vibrant, Walkable Communities with Multi-Generational Opportunities* is the third in the series of issue papers and workshops.

The *Supporting Options in Community Character* issue paper proposed a series of place-types to characterize both the designated Town Centers and other existing population centers for the purpose of preserving and enhancing the sense of place in each community and across Calvert County. Participants at the workshop on February 22 provided reactions to the initial concepts and suggested how various population centers should be classified. This follow-up paper further defines each place-type and proposes principles for making these places vibrant, walkable communities serving the multi-generational population of Calvert County.

Current Policy Direction

The *Calvert County Comprehensive Plan* (adopted in 2004, amended in 2010) outlines the goals, vision, and objectives that direct growth, development, and conservation in the county. The goals of the *Comprehensive Plan* are to:

- 1) Promote sustainable development,
- 2) Encourage a stable and enduring economic base,
- 3) Provide for safety, health, and education, and
- 4) Preserve the natural, cultural, and historic assets of Calvert County.

The vision of the *Comprehensive Plan* is to create Town Centers that are attractive, convenient, and interesting places to live, work, and shop, with a benchmark goal of attracting 35 percent of all new households to Town Centers or areas immediately surrounding Town Centers.

The current Calvert County Comprehensive Plan describes major and minor Town Centers:

“Major town centers are to serve as regional centers, providing goods and services that attract visitors from the entire County and/or from outside the County (as in tourism). Minor town centers are to serve as local convenience centers unless individual town center master plans determine otherwise.” (Page 9)

In the time since the adoption of Calvert County’s Town Center concept in the 1983 *Comprehensive Plan*, the State of Maryland authorized counties and municipalities to designate Priority Funding Areas (PFA) appropriate for growth for targeting state investment in infrastructure. These locations include not only growth areas but also areas designated as enterprise zones, neighborhood revitalization areas, heritage areas and existing industrial land. Calvert County in consultation with the State of Maryland, designated Priority Funding Areas that include a wide range of places outside designated Town Centers. These areas are further recognized in the draft Growth Tier Map currently under consideration in Calvert County. The place-type strategy provides a policy framework for recognizing these locations in the updated comprehensive plan and supporting zoning ordinance.

The proposed place-type strategy is consistent with the overall goals and objectives for growth in the county and promotes compact, walkable communities that provide high quality of life along with economic and recreational opportunities for all generations. The place-type strategy builds upon and refines the original Town Center concept by proposing

Priority Funding Areas (PFAs) are existing communities and places designated by local governments as locations suitable for state investment to support future growth. In addition, PFAs include areas designated as enterprise zones, neighborhood revitalization areas, heritage areas and existing industrial land.

Growth-related projects covered by the legislation include most state programs that encourage or support growth and development such as highways, sewer and water construction, economic development assistance and state leases or construction of new office facilities.

Source: Maryland Department of Planning, (<http://planning.maryland.gov/OurProducts/pfama.p.shtml>)

development and preservation strategies to allow appropriate growth, redevelopment and preservation strategies to each place-type.

Feedback from February 22 Workshop

The *Supporting Options in Community Character* issue paper proposed five place-types for developed areas of the county:

- Town Center
- Village
- Hamlet
- Waterfront Community
- Residential Transition Area

The community provided reactions to the *Supporting Options in Community Character* issue paper at a workshop on February 22, 2017, and through comments submitted via an online survey. The structured discussion and most comments focused on the first four place-types, leaving discussion of the residential transition area until after the initial places types are more clearly defined. Summaries of the workshop and the survey results are available on the Calvert 2040 website (www.co.cal.md.us/futureCalvert).

Participants generally agreed to a narrower list of Town Centers, agreeing that it includes Dunkirk, Prince Frederick, Lusby, and Solomons. These places are the most intensely developed of the designated Town Centers in the current Comprehensive Plan. Each has nearby single-family residential development typically within the one-mile radius described in the Comprehensive Plan.

Most participants in the workshop accepted the village place-type and most applied it to Huntingtown and St. Leonard. One group preferred to retain the designation of these two places as Town Centers. Two groups suggested designating Barstow and Sunderland/Mt. Harmony as Villages. One group also designated Chaneyville as a Village.

One group saw no need to change the current designation of Town Center.

Hamlet was the designation with the greatest variety of response. Only three groups applied the place-type to one or more locations in the county. Barstow and Chaneyville were identified as hamlets by two groups of participants. Notably, Owings, an existing minor Town Center, was classified by two groups as a Hamlet. Sunderland/Mt. Harmony was identified as a hamlet by one group. Several groups did not like the term itself, and there is confusion about the intent or potential to create growth in these communities. Alternative names for this place-type include rural crossroads communities and rural activity centers.

The waterfront community place-type was applied by four groups to a total of five locations: Broomes Island, Cove Point, Dares Beach, Plum Point (including the Breezy Point and Neeld Estates communities), and White Sands. These mature, built-out communities typically pre-date zoning and subdivision regulations. Several groups saw potential for marina and restaurant development in these communities.

Two groups concluded that there is no need for the new designations of hamlet and waterfront community.

Table 1 provides a high-level summary of the place-type classification of population centers during the February workshop.

Table 1. Proposed Place-Type Designation, Workshop on February 22, 2017

Locations	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Group 5	Group 6
Dunkirk	Town Center	Town Center	Town Center	Town Center	Town Center	Town Center
Huntingtown	Village	Village	Village	Town Center	Village	Village
Lusby	Town Center	Town Center	Town Center	Town Center	Town Center	Town Center
Prince Frederick	Town Center	Town Center	Town Center	Town Center	Town Center	Town Center
St. Leonard	Village	Village	Village	Town Center	Village	Village
Solomons	Town Center	Town Center	Town Center	Town Center	Town Center	Town Center
Barstow	Hamlet	Hamlet	No Designation	No Designation	Village	Village
Chaneyville	Hamlet		No Designation	No Designation	Village	Hamlet
Sunderland/ Mt. Harmony	Hamlet		No Designation	No Designation	Village	Village
Broomes Island	Waterfront	Waterfront	No Designation	No Designation	Waterfront	Waterfront
Cove Point	Waterfront		No Designation	No Designation	Waterfront	Waterfront
Dares Beach	Waterfront		No Designation	No Designation	Waterfront	Waterfront
Plum Point	Waterfront		No Designation	No Designation	Waterfront	Waterfront
Owings		Hamlet				Hamlet
White Sands		Waterfront				Waterfront

Defining Place-Types in Calvert County

Based upon the reactions to the initial description of place-types, the definitions are refined to better fit the vision of Calvert County. The place-type approach is proposed to preserve existing community character and allow for growth in the designated Town Centers and Villages. Two of the new proposed place-types focus on preservation of the current development patterns and land use types, while permitting redevelopment: Hamlet and Waterfront Community. Expanded definitions and descriptions for each place-type are provided below.

Definitions

Town Center – These places are designated as Town Centers in the current Comprehensive Plan with a higher intensity and greater variety of commercial and residential development within the plan boundaries. Each has nearby single-family residential development, typically within a one-mile radius of the Town Center.

Village – These places may be designated as Town Centers in the current Comprehensive Plan but have a lower intensity and more limited variety of commercial and residential development. These locations are suitable for additional commercial development and various forms of single family attached and detached dwellings. They typically have single-family detached residential development within one mile.

Hamlet – These traditional settlements provide limited commercial services and may include residential and commercial development that is not consistent with current zoning provisions. These places would recognize the existing uses and development patterns, would retain local serving businesses and would restrict expansion of residential and non-residential development.

Waterfront Community – These mature, built-out communities typically pre-date zoning and subdivision regulations. They are not planned for expansion; they preserve these communities and allow redevelopment that complies with provisions for environmental protection and climate adaptation. Some waterfront communities have potential for additional marina and restaurant development. Some waterfront communities have had flood mitigation plans prepared.

Table 2 summarizes some of the key features envisioned for each place-type. Following the table are principles applicable to each place-type to inform updates to the comprehensive plan and zoning ordinance. The principles are organized into three primary planning elements: Land Use and Development Patterns, Circulation, and Building Form.

Table 2. Characteristics and Potential Features of Place-types in Calvert County

	Town Center	Village	Hamlet	Waterfront Community
Priority Funding Area	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Jobs	Yes	Yes	Retail and business services	Maybe
Water service	Yes	Maybe	No	Maybe
Sewer system	Yes	Maybe	No	Maybe
Health care facilities	3-5	Yes	Maybe	Maybe
Public safety station	3 or more	Yes	Maybe	Maybe
Library	Yes	Maybe	No	No
Schools	Yes	Yes	Maybe	No
Multi-family units, large (4+ units)	Yes	Yes	No	No
Multi-family units, small (less than 4 units)	Yes	Yes	Maybe	No
Lot sizes	Varies, 1 acre max for new residential	Varies, 1 acre max for new residential	2 or more acres for new lots	Varies
Building height (max. stories)	5	3	2	2 occupied
Places of assembly (community center, churches, etc.)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Small commercial building, less than 5,000 square feet	Yes	Yes	Yes	Maybe
Commercial buildings of more than 5,000 square feet	Yes	Yes	No	No
Manufacturing, warehousing, industrial, etc.	Yes	Maybe	No	No
Central business area	Yes	Yes	No	No
Sidewalks, pedestrian network	Yes	Yes	Maybe	No
Waterfront commercial (marinas, restaurants)	Yes	Yes	No	Maybe

Town Center

Town Centers exhibit the greatest mix of land uses, higher development densities, stronger connectivity, and a variety of building types.

Land Use and Development Patterns

- There is a well-defined center of activity that is nodal or linear;

- There is a mix of uses intended to serve a community of all ages, with special attention paid to senior citizens and young adults;
- There is a variety of lot sizes and housing stock that cater to an economically diverse population;
- Commercial uses include destination retail uses and services, and tend to be clustered within the central business area or along a commercial corridor;
- Commercial uses are more diverse with a focus on large scale retail sales and have a regional draw;
- A mix of housing types is provided in proportionate quantities throughout the community by:
 - Intermixing single-family attached and detached units of similar appearance but different in size;
 - Providing apartments over commercial uses; and
 - Allowing garage apartments and the conversion of large existing structures into rental units;
- There is one or more major employment center (e.g., governmental employment, institutional employment, and retail employment);
- There are parks, civic and institutional uses that serve large portions of the county, and
- Higher-density housing is incorporated into the central business area and transitions to lower-density residential at the Town Center fringes.

Circulation

- There is a street and block system that provides a favorable physical framework for private redevelopment;
- A grid street network that provides connections from the urban center to rural edges;
- Rectilinear blocks (ideally less than 600 feet) that create a walkable pedestrian environment in the central business area;
- Sidewalks are provided, ideally at least 6-foot wide in commercial areas to allow for higher pedestrian volumes;
- Streets are wide enough to include dedicated 5-to-6 foot bicycle lanes for each travel direction;
- Connections through parks and public squares and mid-block pedestrian passageways exist or are planned to provide additional pedestrian routes;
- Pedestrian infrastructure at intersections, including pedestrian signals and striped cross walks;
- Transit within the Town Center and to areas outside the Town Center; and
- On-street parallel or angled parking where possible to control traffic speed, improve pedestrian safety, and evenly distribute parking spaces.

Building Form

- Building heights are between one and five stories;
- Buildings create a comfortable pedestrian scale on the street through the use of varied building facades;

- Active ground floor uses are located on key segments of the commercial corridor or surrounding a public space;
- Commercial and mixed-use buildings have some setback from the sidewalk;
- Multi-family housing is located along retail corridors;
- Appropriate building types include:
 - Apartments above shops (multi-level mixed-use building);
 - Apartment buildings;
 - Townhouses;
 - Semi-detached houses;
 - Detached house with rental apartments;
 - Detached single-family house;
 - Single-story or multi-level civic buildings; and
 - Light industrial buildings/warehouses; and
 - Multi-tenant retail buildings.
- Public spaces are provided and sized appropriately to break up long building walls;
- Small parking lots or garages are located in the interiors of the block in order to maintain the street wall; and
- Parking is sited alongside and behind buildings.

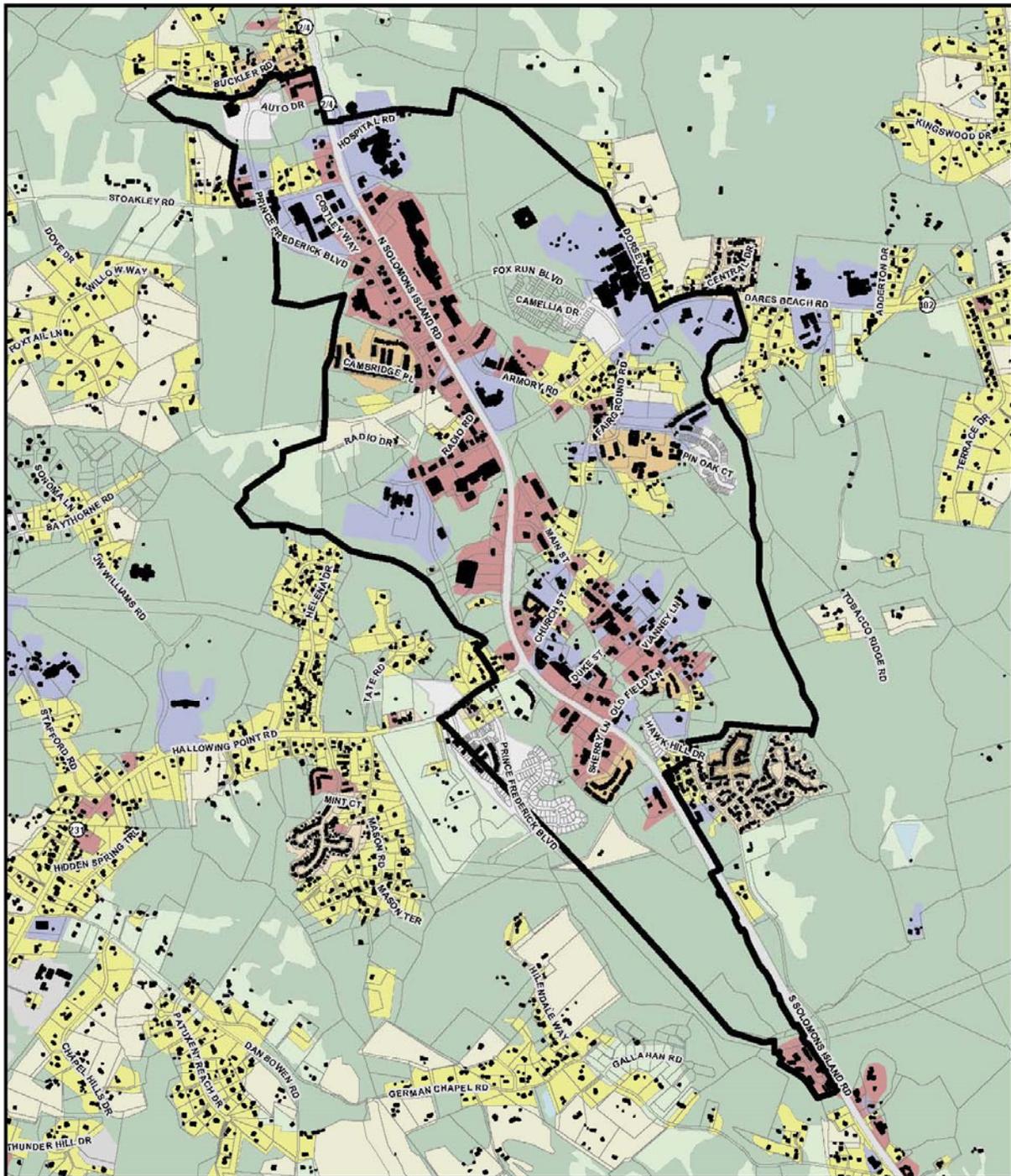
Town Center Place-type Example - Prince Frederick

The Prince Frederick Town Center contains a central business area oriented along a commercial corridor, which provides a relatively high concentration of employment and civic uses. Most of Prince Frederick is auto-dependent and not easily accessible by walking or bicycling. There are provisions for multiple travel modes, including transit options; however, a stronger multi-modal network could be provided through future redevelopment to improve pedestrian and bicycle access for a range of age and income groups. A denser mixed-use commercial center could be developed with a focus on multi-family housing and publicly accessible open space.

There is a small historic downtown area with pedestrian connections through parks and public squares and mid-block pedestrian passageways. The sidewalk network is limited to a few blocks before it becomes intermittent or nonexistent.

The greatest challenge in Prince Frederick is the modification of the current street grid to foster compact, mixed-use development. The creation of a system of parallel local roads intended to draw local travelers off the larger through highway has the potential to assist in development of a more robust grid pattern of streets. However, community resistance to interconnection of separate subdivisions and limitations on new access points to the highway make development of the grid challenging.

Another challenge is addressing the scattered pattern of low-density residential development surrounding the Town Center. This pattern results in a poor definition of the boundaries of the "Town Center" development.



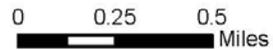
PRINCE FREDERICK

- Existing Town Center Boundary
- Building Footprints

Land Use

- | | | |
|-------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| Agriculture | High Density Residential | Medium Density Residential |
| Barren Land | Industrial | Other Developed Lands |
| Commercial | Institutional | Transportation |
| Forest | Low Density Residential | Very Low Density Residential |

- Water
- Wetlands



Village

Villages are envisioned to be residential communities with less development intensity than Town Centers. Villages contain a mix of uses, with small concentrations of commercial, retail, and civic and/or community uses.

Land Use and Development Patterns

- Villages are similar to Town Centers, but are typically smaller and oriented around an activity center rather than a commercial corridor;
- The central business area is smaller than that of a Town Center, with active ground floor uses typically lining a main square or along two to three main intersections;
- There is a variety of lot sizes and housing stock that cater to an economically diverse population;
- Smaller housing units are provided in proportionate quantities throughout the community by:
 - Providing apartments over commercial uses; and
 - Allowing garage apartments and conversion of large structures into rental units;
- There are one or two small to medium-size employment centers (e.g., institutional, retail, and service employment);
- Higher density residential tends to be integrated into a central business area and is gradated to lower density housing at its fringes; and
- Open space and public spaces may be provided.

Circulation

- The street system has less interconnectivity than a Town Center;
- Sidewalks are provided on blocks and there is on-street parking within the central business area;
- Bicycle infrastructure is provided in the form of shared lanes;
- There is pedestrian infrastructure at intersections, including striped crosswalks;
- Transit is available, but less frequent and less convenient than in a Town Center; and
- On street parallel parking or angled parking to control traffic speed, improve pedestrian safety, and evenly distribute parking spaces.

Building Form

- Building heights are between one to three stories;
- Buildings create a comfortable pedestrian scale on the street through the use of varied building facades;
- Active ground floor uses are located in the central business area;
- Commercial and mixed-use buildings are setback from the sidewalk;
- Appropriate building types include:
 - Apartments above shops (multi-level mixed-use building);
 - Townhouses;

- Detached houses with rental apartments;
- Detached single-family houses;
- Single-story or multi-level civic buildings; and
- Small industrial buildings.
- Parking is sited alongside and behind buildings.

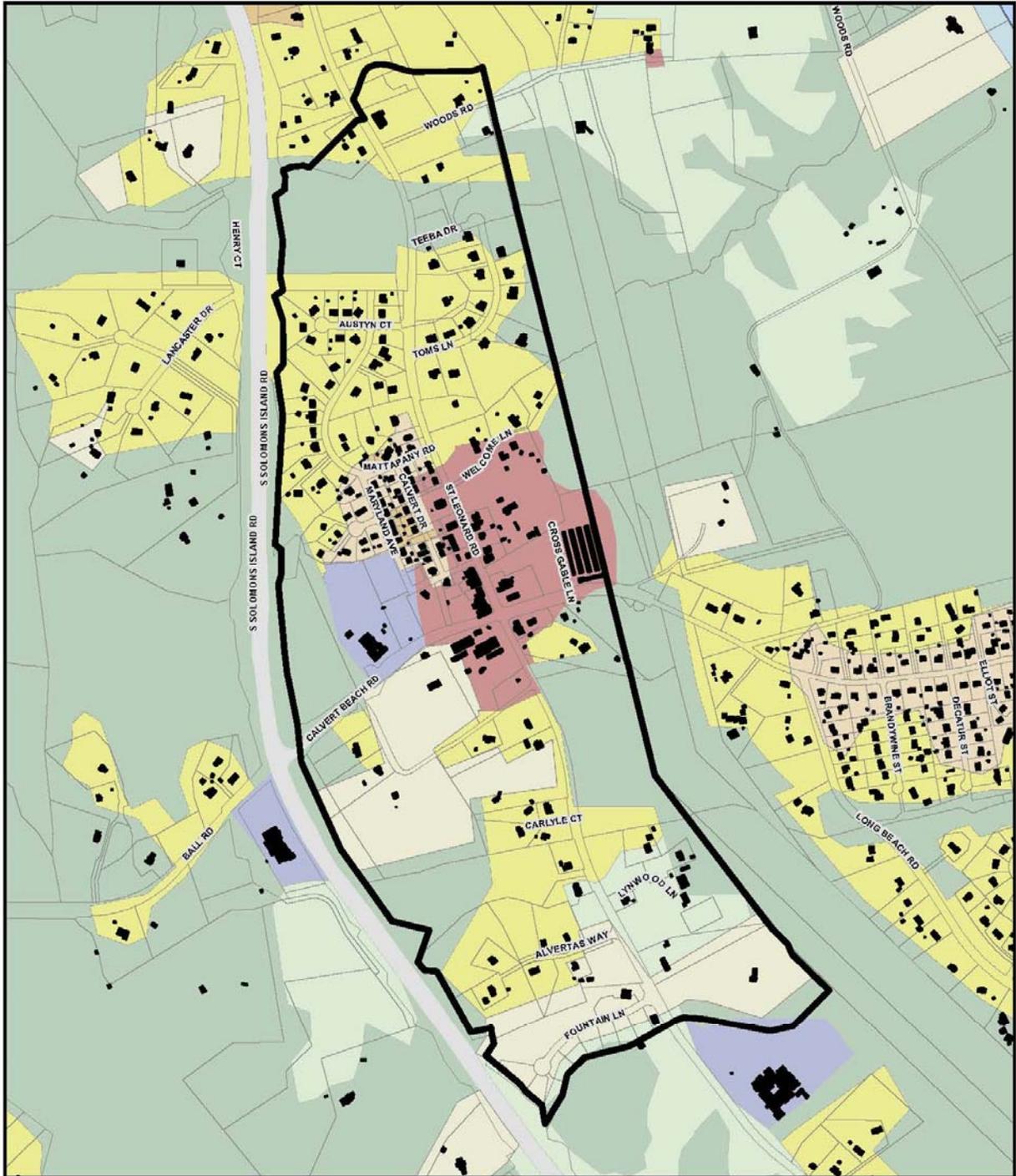
Village Place-type Example – St. Leonard

Although St. Leonard is currently designated as a Town Center, its physical characteristics are more representative of a Village. St. Leonard has an activity center and is laid out on a modified street grid. Commercial uses are concentrated at the intersection of Calvert Beach Road and St. Leonard Road where there is a mix of restaurants, retail, and community facility uses. Most commercial uses are single-story and setback from the sidewalk. Residential uses surrounding commercial uses are predominately clustered single family housing on small parcels.

The commercial center of St. Leonard is centered at the intersection of St. Leonard Road (MD 765) and Calvert Beach Road with a small cluster of local businesses extending one or two blocks in each direction. The types of businesses able to flourish in St. Leonard are constrained by the limited visibility of the commercial core from MD 2/4. The commercial area contains a mix of one-story buildings with no unifying theme. There is a common decorative lamp post along St. Leonard Road.

Since the adoption of the St. Leonard Town Center Master Plan, the Maryland State Highway Administration and the Calvert County government have worked together to create a sidewalk network along St. Leonard and Calvert Beach Roads. These sidewalks serve the commercial area, except for an area with parking directly in front of businesses. There are also sidewalks available in some of the nearby residential areas. A sidewalk on the east side of St. Leonard Road extends from the roundabout at the intersection of St. Leonard and Calvert Beach roads north to the post office beside Woods Road. There are no sidewalks connecting St. Leonard Elementary School to the commercial core, a distance of about 0.7 mile.

As indicated by the road name, Calvert Beach Road serves as the principle access to the waterfront communities of Calvert Beach and Long Beach. There are no sidewalks or paths connecting these residential areas with the commercial core of St. Leonard, and there are there no shoulders along Long Beach Road and Calvert Beach road east of the powerlines.



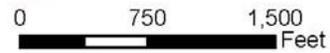
ST. LEONARD

- Existing Town Center Boundary
- Building Footprints

Land Use

- | | | |
|-------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| Agriculture | High Density Residential | Medium Density Residential |
| Barren Land | Industrial | Other Developed Lands |
| Commercial | Institutional | Transportation |
| Forest | Low Density Residential | Very Low Density Residential |

- Water
- Wetlands



Hamlet

Hamlets are smaller than Villages and contain a few commercial and/or civic uses; the remainder of development is low-to-mid density housing. Community character preservation is a focus of the planning principles applied in these locations.

Land Use and Development Patterns

- A Hamlet is a small cluster of commercial uses at a central intersection surrounded by a residential community of small single family housing.
- Hamlets include locally-serving and convenience retail services, and small offices.
- There is minimal to no perceptible density transition between residential neighborhoods and adjacent agricultural land;
- Residential parcels are relatively small and primarily developed with single family housing; and
- Public spaces, if provided, are in the form of small public squares or passive recreational open space near commercial uses.

Circulation

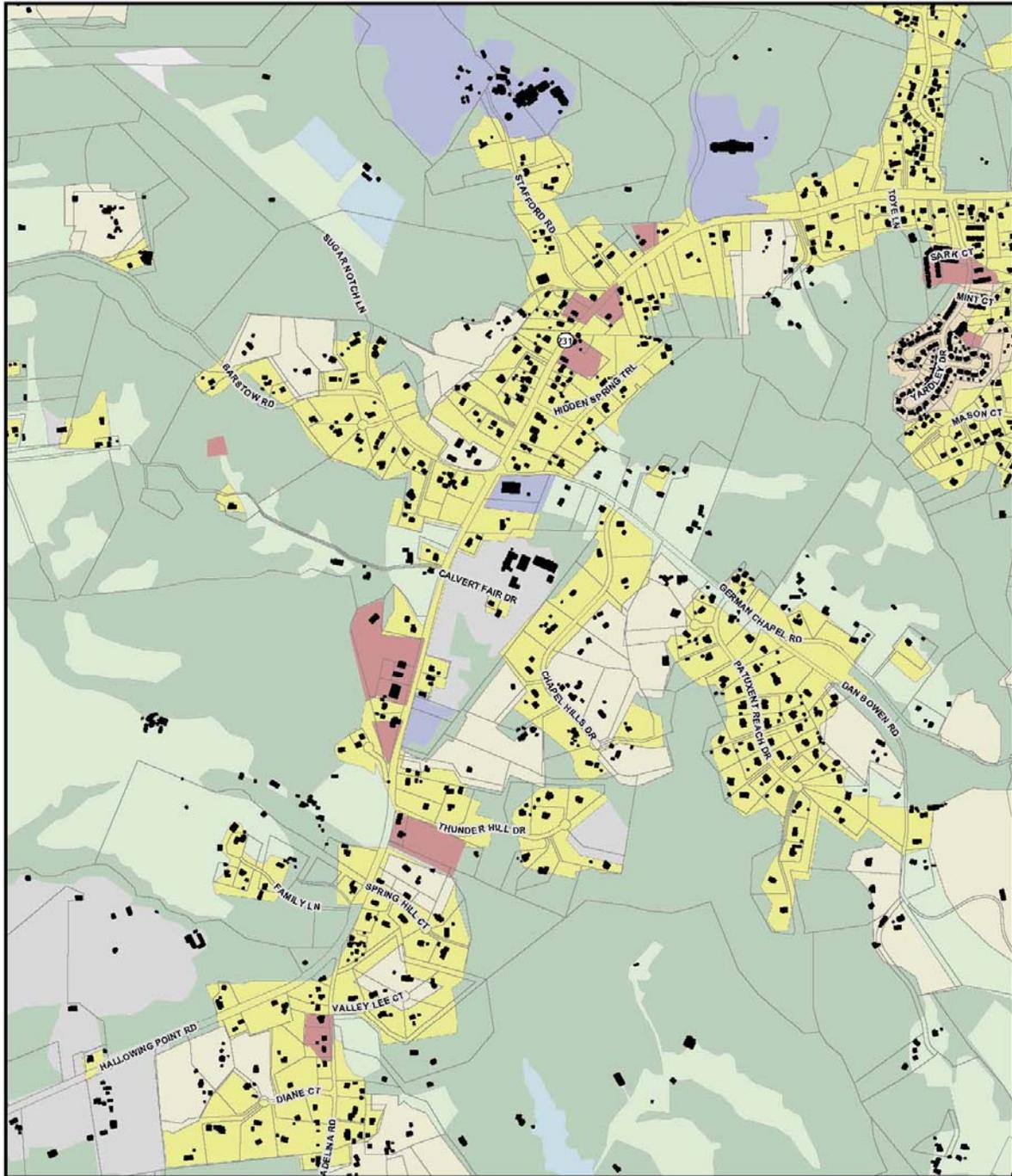
- The commercial areas and surrounding residential development may be organized on a modified street grid system with limited through streets and block connectivity;
- Transit is generally not easily available to the community; and
- Bicycle infrastructure is provided in the form of shared roads or dedicated lanes, where feasible.

Building Form

- Building heights are between one and two stories;
- Appropriate building types include:
 - Apartments above shops (multi-level mixed-use building);
 - Detached single-family house; and
 - Single-story or multi-level civic buildings; and
- Mixed-use commercial buildings in the central business area tend to be setback from the street.

Hamlet Place-type Example – Barstow

Barstow is a predominately residential and agricultural area with a few commercial uses located along Hallowing Point Road. The existing commercial uses are not clustered around a single intersection. Barstow could create a focal point where future public space and commercial uses could be clustered. Pedestrian infrastructure in the form of sidewalks and marked crossings could be developed to support a more walkable area.



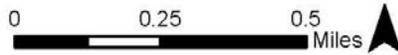
BARSTOW

Building Footprints

Land Use

- | | | |
|-------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| Agriculture | High Density Residential | Medium Density Residential |
| Barren Land | Industrial | Other Developed Lands |
| Commercial | Institutional | Transportation |
| Forest | Low Density Residential | Very Low Density Residential |

Water
 Wetlands



Waterfront Community

Waterfront Communities are clustered small population centers located along Calvert County's Chesapeake Bay, Patuxent River and tidal creek shorelines. These population centers are unique places within the county and need to be preserved. New development within these population centers is not encouraged, but redevelopment is likely due to the risk of damage to structures due to age and weather events.

Land Use and Development Patterns

- The street grid system runs parallel to the shoreline;
- If provided, commercial uses are oriented along a corridor or the waterfront and mixed with small-scale civic uses;
- The waterfront is primarily in private ownership, and includes private residences and may include commercial marinas and restaurants;
- Open space, if provided, is in the form of small shoreline parks;
- The mix of uses serves a multi-generational community;
- There are water-dependent uses, such as enhanced docking facilities and kayak launches; and
- There is no employment district, but rather smaller local service or sales retail that accommodates the local population and/or tourists.

Circulation

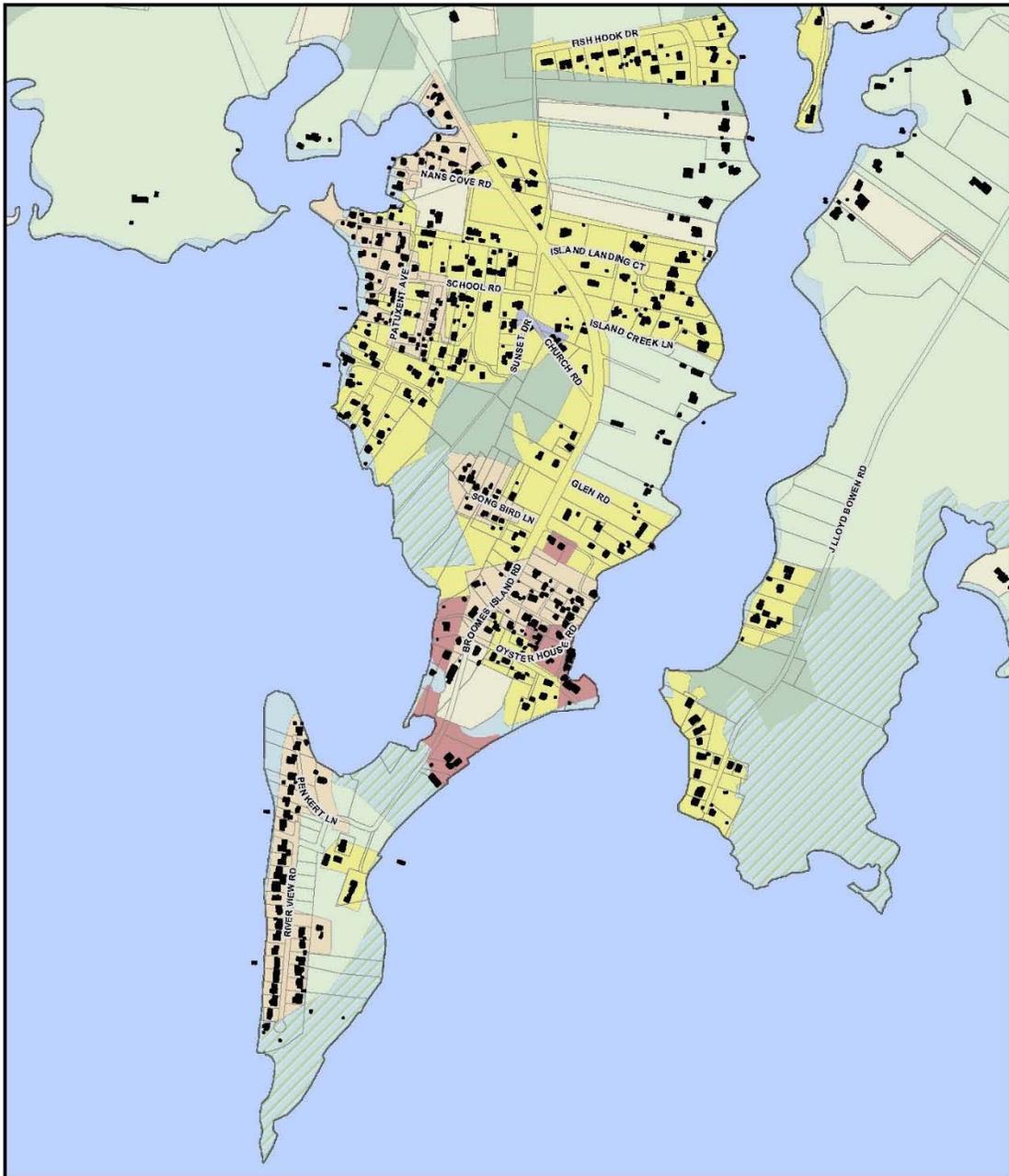
- Development is organized on a modified street grid system with limited thru streets and block connectivity;
- Sidewalks;
- There are lower traffic volumes compared to Town Centers, Villages, and Hamlets;
- Transit is not easily available; and
- Bicycle infrastructure, if provided, is on shared roadways, where feasible.

Building Form

- Building heights are between 1 and 2 occupied stories;
- A few mixed-use buildings may provide apartments above ground-floor retail uses;
- Mixed-use commercial buildings have some setback from the street; and
- Detached single family residential buildings, and small-scale mixed use or retail buildings are the most prevalent building types.

Waterfront Community Place-type Example – Broomes Island

Broomes Island's street grid is parallel to the shoreline. Broomes Island Road runs north-south and contains commercial uses and some water-related uses in its mid-section. The remaining area is rural with low-density residential development concentrated along the shoreline. Broomes Island could develop a more centralized commercial core to serve local needs and water-related uses. A more defined pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure would better support local travel options.



BROOMES ISLAND

Building Footprints

Land Use

- | | | |
|-------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| Agriculture | High Density Residential | Medium Density Residential |
| Barren Land | Industrial | Other Developed Lands |
| Commercial | Institutional | Transportation |
| Forest | Low Density Residential | Very Low Density Residential |

Water

Wetlands

0 750 1,500 Feet



Conclusion and Next Steps

The place-type principles described above can begin to shape updates to the Comprehensive Plan Update and countywide zoning ordinance. This community planning approach can address the need to preserve community character and guide future growth by providing development standards aligned to the built characteristics of the county's designated Town Centers and population centers.

The following steps would need to be taken to integrate this place-based approach to community planning and zoning in the county.

For the Comprehensive Plan update:

- Determine which locations in Calvert County are appropriate for each place-type.
- Finalize guiding principles for future growth in each place-type and incorporate them in the draft updated *Comprehensive Plan*.
- Establish place-type boundaries in the draft updated *Comprehensive Plan*, including changing the boundaries of the existing Town Center proposed to continue as Town Centers.

For the Zoning Ordinance update:

- Review existing zoning to determine which zoning districts are consistent with the principles applicable to each place-type and which require modification.
- Develop zoning text with size, height, and area regulations, site design, and landscape design standards that reflect the on-the-ground conditions and expectations of the communities and the vision of the county for the new place-types and refine the Town Center regulations.
- Prepare a series of graphics that convey dimensional regulations and design standards stipulated by the new zoning text.
- Identify, draft, and map zoning districts within each place-type.