

PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION

OCTOBER 12, 2023

DEPARTMENT OF TECHNICAL AND
COMMUNITY SERVICES

Comprehensive Plan Update

*Somerset County,
Maryland*

READY ^{SOMER} SET PLAN

Plan Update Timeline



June 2023- July 2024

Planning Commission public meetings will be held periodically throughout the plan update process.



June 2023

Public Survey launched. Survey will be open June 2023-March 2024.



August 2023

Draft community profile will be available on the project website.



September 2023-April 2024

Draft plan chapter development and upload to project website for review and comment.



May-July 2024

Draft plan, review, comments, and final plan.



Technical Committee Meeting #2: County/Municipal Plan Integration & Economic Vitality



Where we are...

- Launched project website & public survey- August
- Technical Committee Meeting #1- August
- Chapter 2: Community Profile (Website)- September
- Princess Anne September 18th & City of Crisfield October 11th
- Draft Chapters 3 & 4- Town & County Plan Integration & Economic Vitality
- **Technical Committee Meeting #2**
- **October 12th Planning & Zoning Commission Meeting, 6:00 PM**

Project Website

Visits to Project Website: 119



Somerset County, MD
Comprehensive Plan Update

[Home](#) [About](#) [Project Timeline](#) [Draft Plan Chapters](#) [Public Involvement](#) [Resources](#)

<https://www.plansomersetmd.org/>

CONTACT

Do you have a **question** about the comprehensive planning process?

Please fill out the form below with your question or comment and a project team member will get back to you.

Name *

First and Last

Email *

e.g., email@example.com

Your message *

Enter text here

Send



Public Survey

Surveys Collected: Digital 97

Somerset County Comprehensive Plan Update

Public Opinion Survey

Thank you for your interest in the Somerset County MD Comprehensive Plan. This survey is part of our public engagement process. The results of this survey will be documented for use in preparing the comprehensive plan update. Your participation and input will be a valuable resource for our community.

Through the comprehensive planning process, County residents, business owners and community organizations help shape the future of Somerset County. County-wide planning leads to compatible land uses, as well as transportation networks, public facilities and parks. In addition, comprehensive planning protects the County's environmental and cultural resources. Planning helps to ensure that Somerset County continues to be attractive, safe, and prosperous.

This survey typically takes less than 15 minutes to complete. Thank you for your participation!

OK

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

PUBLIC SURVEY

This survey is being used to collect your insight and perspective on various topics that comprise the Comprehensive Plan Update. The survey consists of 25 questions and will take an average of 15 minutes or less to complete.

Click the button below to complete the survey.

Complete Public Survey!

<https://www.plansomersetmd.org/>

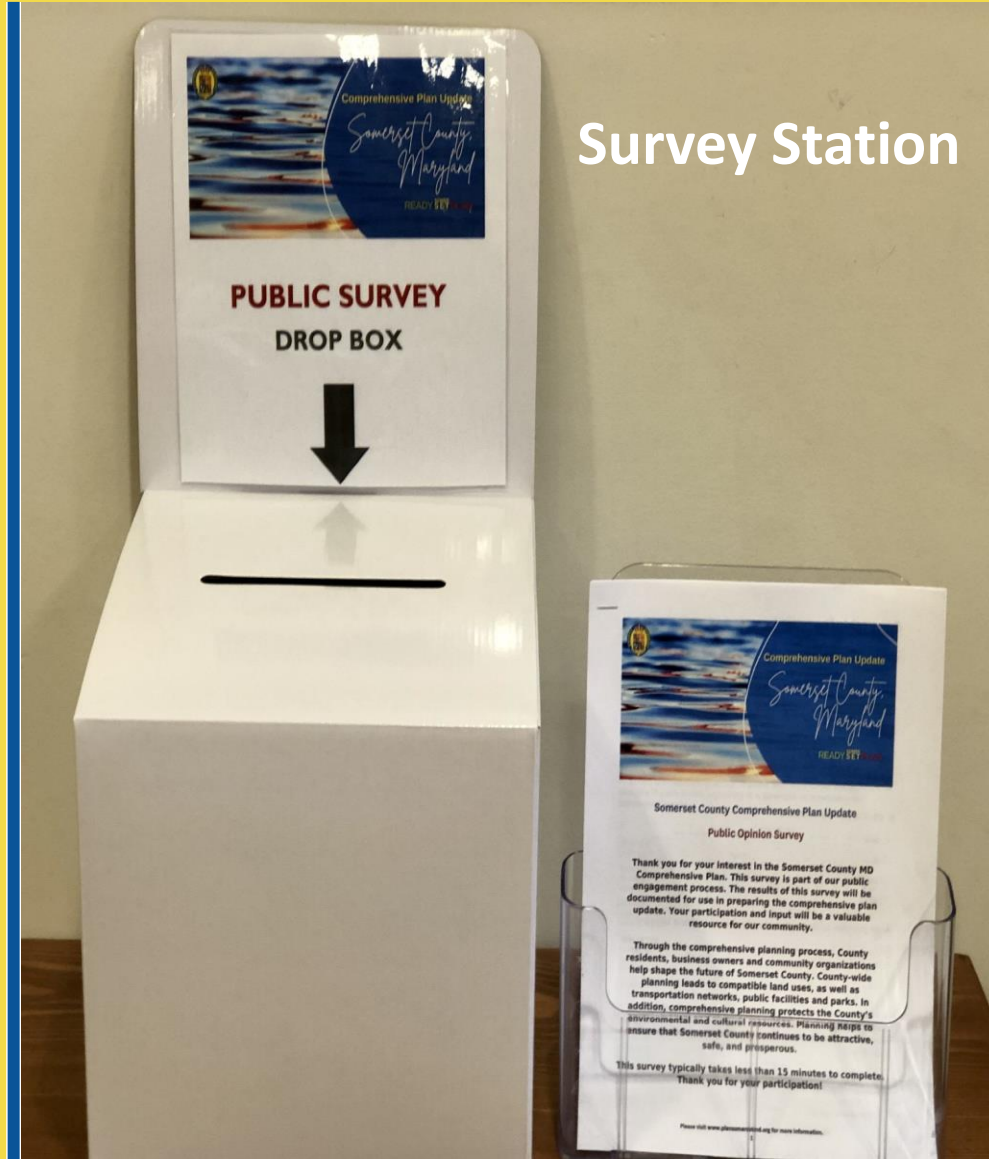




Public Survey

Survey Stations are located at:

1. UMES Dining Hall
2. Somerset Health Department
3. Princess Anne Town Hall
4. Princess Anne Library
5. Crisfield Library
6. Somerset County Office Complex





Technical Committee

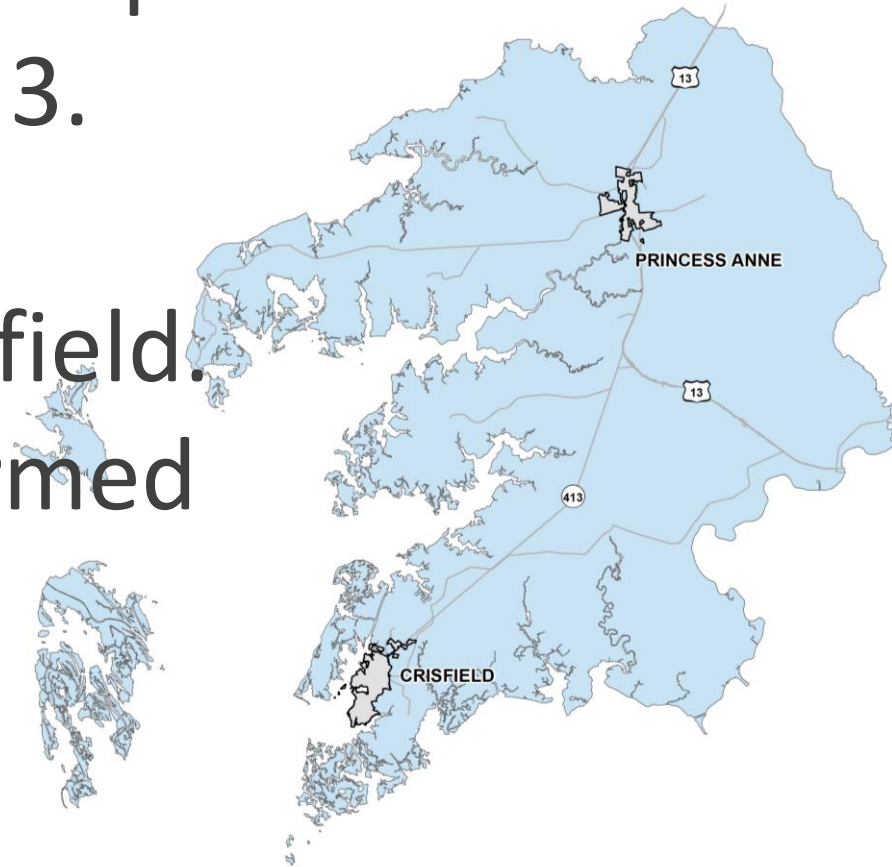
Focus: Discussion Questions, Goals & Recommendations

- ✓ Chapter 3: County & Municipal Plan Integration
- ✓ Chapter 4: Economic Vitality



County & Municipal Plan Integration

- Reviewed municipal comprehensive plans.
- Developed working draft Chapter 3.
- Met with both the Town of Princess Anne and the City of Crisfield.
- Discussion questions further informed the drafting of Chapter 3.



Princess Anne

- The Town of Princess Anne Comprehensive Plan was adopted on October 13, 2009.
 - Is this the most recent version?
 - Additional amendments to the Plan?
 - Timeframe of next plan update?

Guiding Principle of the Plan: *Implementation of a municipality's priorities and plans can be advanced when a municipality coordinates the planning of local projects with the broader policy goals of other jurisdictions and agencies of government. Cooperation among jurisdictions is important for long-term plan implementation.*



Comprehensive Plan

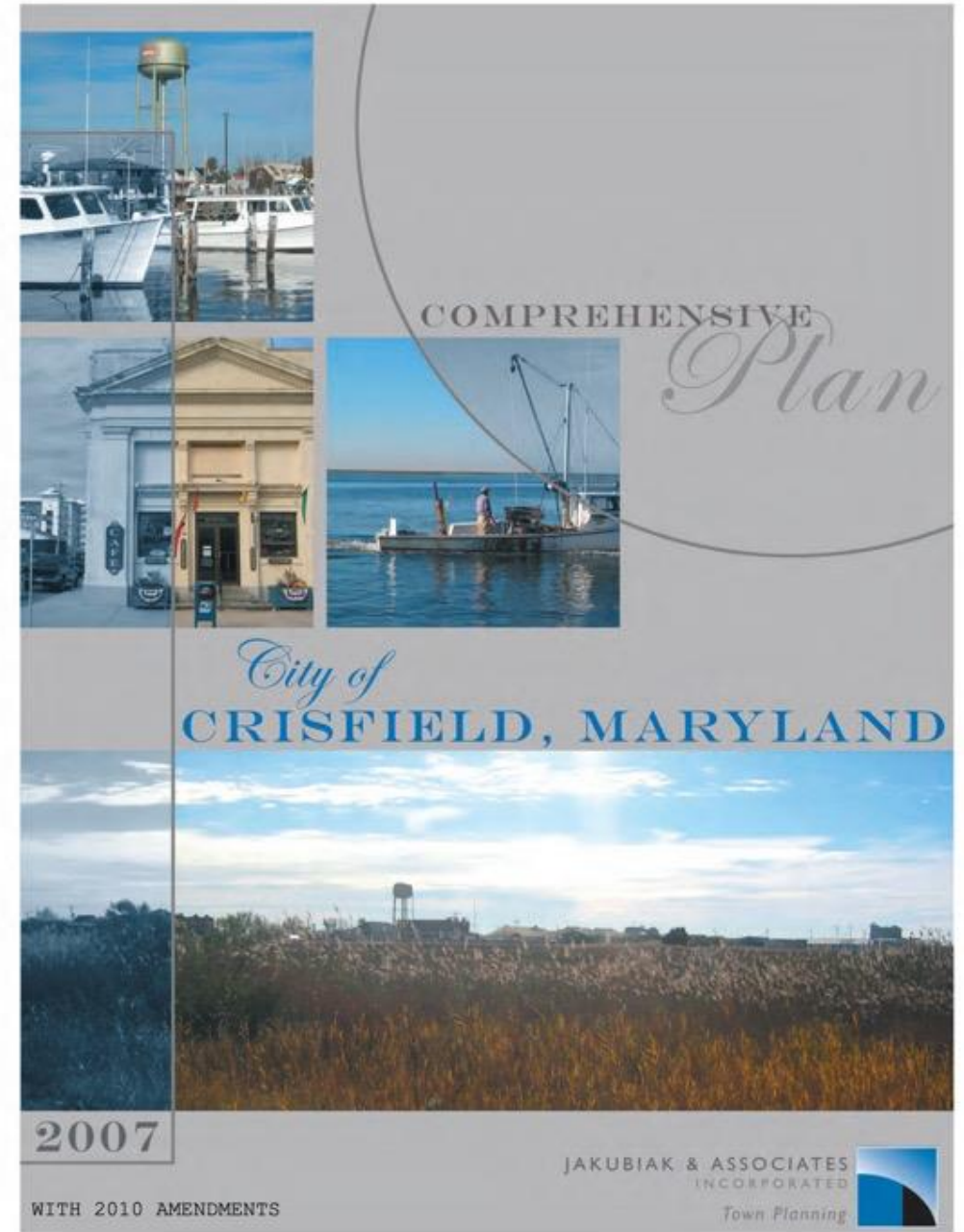
Town of Princess Anne

Adopted October 13, 2009

City of Crisfield

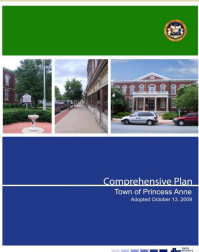
- The City of Crisfield Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2007 with amendments approved in 2010.
 - Is this the most recent version?
 - Additional amendments to the Plan?
 - Timeframe of next plan update?

Guiding Principle of the Plan: *Implementation of a municipality's priorities and plans can be advanced when a municipality coordinates the planning of local projects with the broader policy goals of other jurisdictions and agencies of government. Cooperation among jurisdictions is important for long-term plan implementation.*



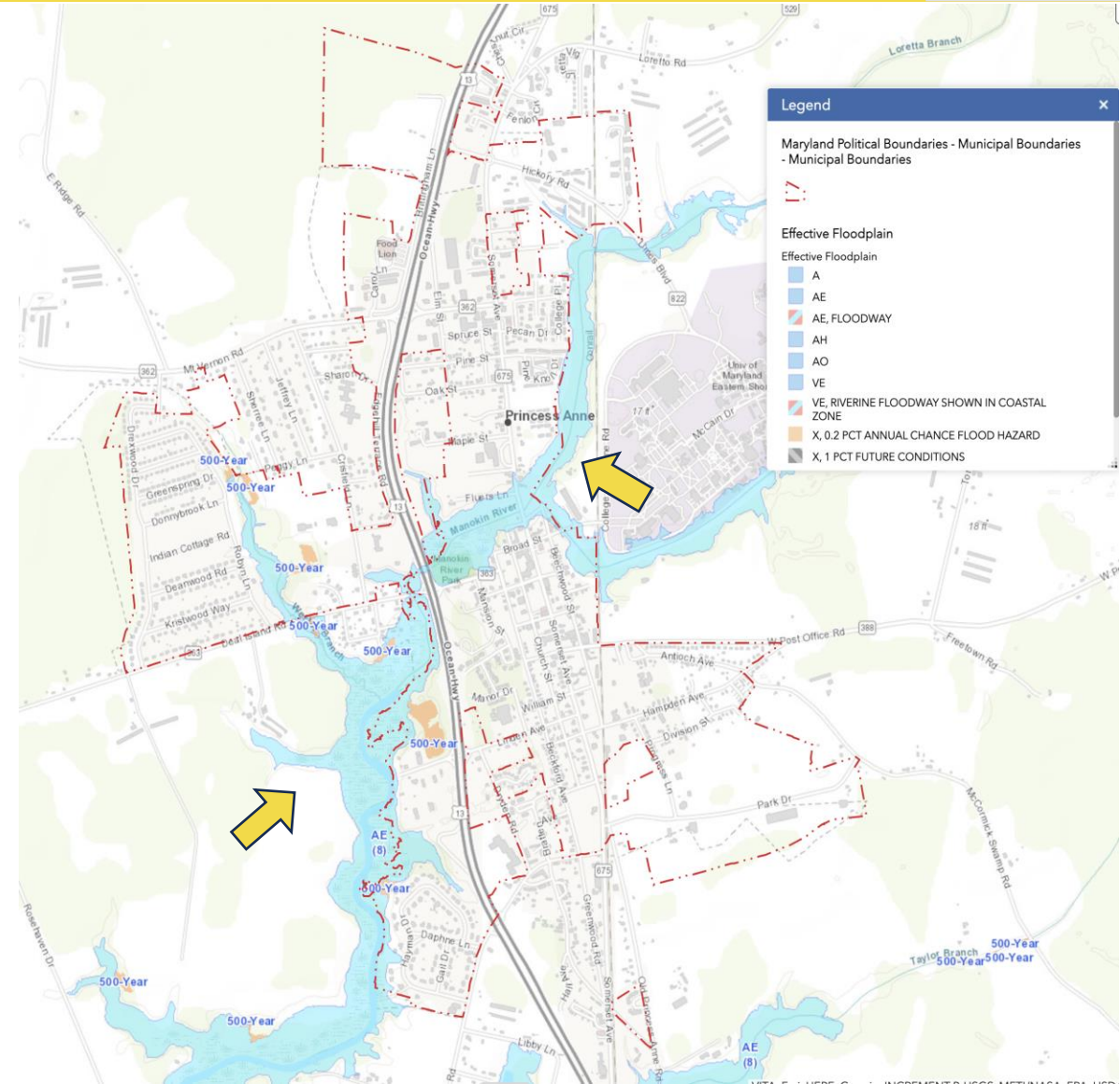


Land Use



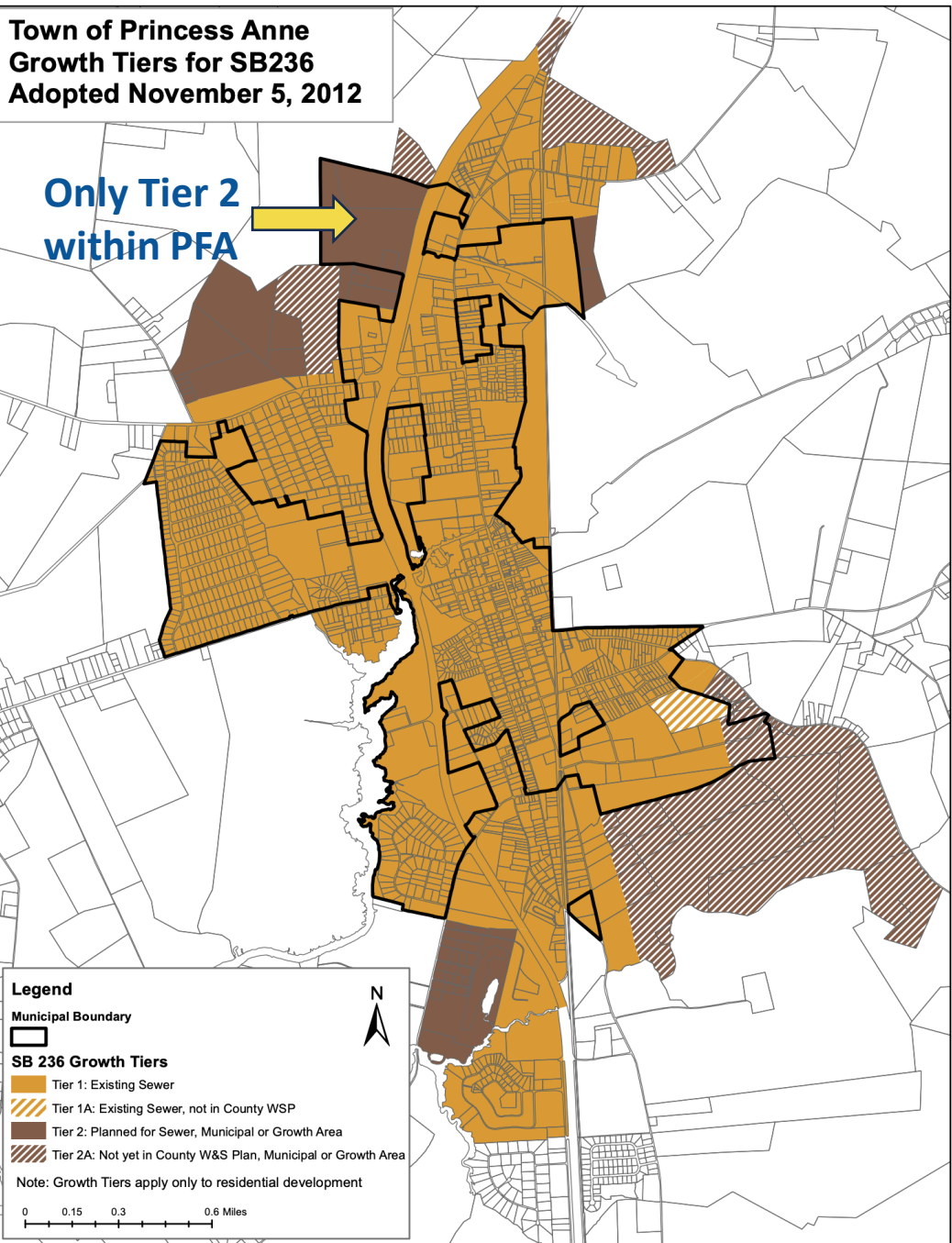
- Reviewed various municipal plan components, focusing on existing conditions, land use, and future land use.

Example: While the **Manokin River** and other natural resources in Princess Anne provide opportunities for the Town, they also pose **physical constraints to future development**. The wetlands, floodplains, and forested areas around Princess Anne limit where future development can occur.



Town of Princess Anne
Growth Tiers for SB236
Adopted November 5, 2012

Only Tier 2
within PFA



Legend

Municipal Boundary
[Thick black outline]

SB 236 Growth Tiers

- Tier 1: Existing Sewer [Solid orange]
- Tier 1A: Existing Sewer, not in County WSP [Orange with diagonal hatching]
- Tier 2: Planned for Sewer, Municipal or Growth Area [Solid brown]
- Tier 2A: Not yet in County W&S Plan, Municipal or Growth Area [Brown with diagonal hatching]

Note: Growth Tiers apply only to residential development

0 0.15 0.3 0.6 Miles

Legend

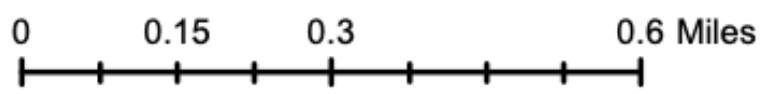
Municipal Boundary



SB 236 Growth Tiers

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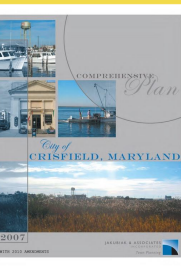
Are there changes/updates since the Growth Tiers were adopted in 2012?
Annexations?

According to the City of Crisfield's Comprehensive Plan, Section 5.5 **Annexation Plan**, Crisfield's development capacity analysis indicates that the City has sufficient land to support future commercial and light industrial development and maintain the current floor area to population ratios. Although the City currently has no specific annexation plans it will consider annexing additional land for economic development purposes. All annexation will be done consistent with the City's annexation policies. These annexation policies are intended to ensure the extension of corporate boundaries permits the most efficient use of public utilities and services and that costs associated with capacity expansion are fairly allocated among those benefitting.

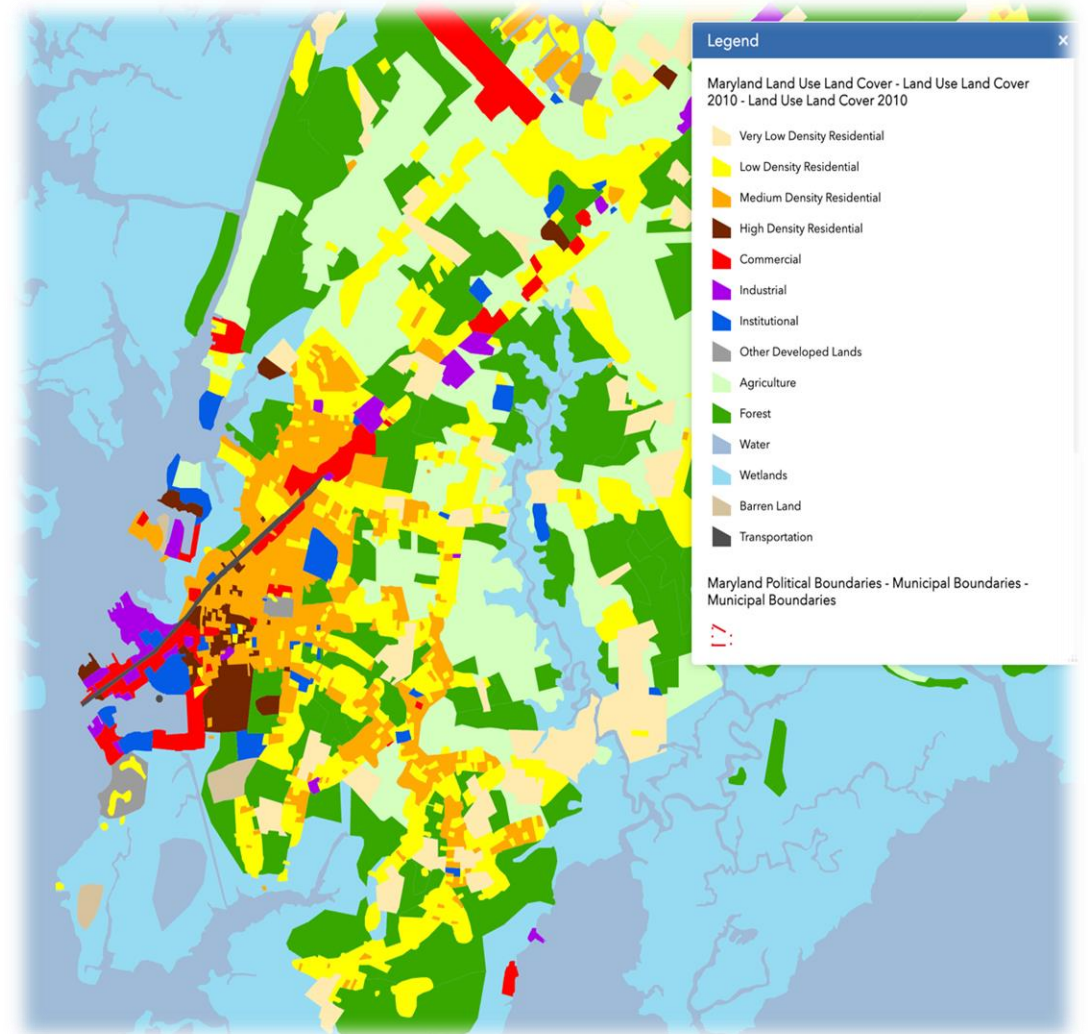
Any updates?



Land Use



Most of the land outside of the City is either developed in a very low-density pattern accessible by a network of rural roads or in agricultural or open space use.





Goals & Recommendations

Handout- Plan Integration

- Goals
- Recommendations

Chapter 3: County/Municipal Plan Integration Goals & Strategies

Goal 3.1

Encourage continued plan integration between Somerset County, Town of Princess Anne, and the City of Crisfield to ensure plan consistency and harmony between local planning mechanisms and community services.

Strategies

- Review and integrate the most recent versions of the Somerset County Comprehensive Plan and other related planning documents into the update of the 2009 Town of Princess Anne Comprehensive Plan.
- Review and integrate the most recent versions of the Somerset County Comprehensive Plan and other related planning documents into the update of the 2007 City of Crisfield Comprehensive Plan.
- Hold annual plan coordination meetings with municipal representatives, MDP, and key county personnel to discuss demographic data, land use policies, development trends, water and sewer needs, and opportunities moving forward that are consistent with county and municipal comprehensive plans.
- Hold a series of strategic planning meetings between the Town of Princess Anne and the Somerset County Sanitary District Commission to develop strategic actions that will work to address the integrity of water, sewer, and stormwater systems. Problems to address include corrosion, cracking, settling, and damage from tree roots.

Goal 3.2

Accommodate growth in Princess Anne by encouraging and facilitating new development on vacant, bypassed, and underutilized land within town limits that already have infrastructure, utilities, and public facilities, while addressing the needs of the Princess Anne residents.

Strategies

- Require site plan for redevelopment that includes:
 - Sidewalks that connect to the adjacent sidewalk system;
 - Preservation of architecturally significant structures whenever feasible; and,
 - Setbacks, building envelopes, use and parking compatible with surrounding community.



Goal 3.3

Offer infill incentive program to reinvigorate existing historic areas and support new mixed-use development that would promote the historic identity of the area.

Strategies

- Identify area neighborhoods that contain high vacancy rate and/or large number of older buildings that would benefit. This includes the Town of Princess Anne's downtown, where opportunities exist for mixed-use development with first floor commercial and upper story residential use.
- Promote infill and redevelopment with mixed use zoning to increase number of housing choices and affordability within the municipal limits of Princess Anne. Offer reduced permit fee in targeted infill development areas.

Economic Vitality

- **Economic vitality** is the strength, energy, and continuance of Somerset County's wealth and resources.
- **Economic development** refers to a program, a group of policies, or activity that seeks to improve the economic well-being and quality of life.
- The group that encourages and promotes economic vitality and development for the betterment of all the County's citizens is **Somerset County Economic Development Commission (SCEDC)**.



Economic Vitality

Somerset County has a labor force of 8,868 people, with an unemployment rate of 6.4%. The largest job count percentages by occupation include:



Office and Administrative Support- 12.52%



Executive, Managers, and Administrators- 11.64%



Sales- 9.23%



Production Workers- 7.31%



Business and Financial Operations- 6.36%



Economic Vitality

The work distribution of total employees in Somerset County is:

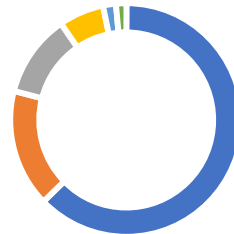


34%- Blue Collar



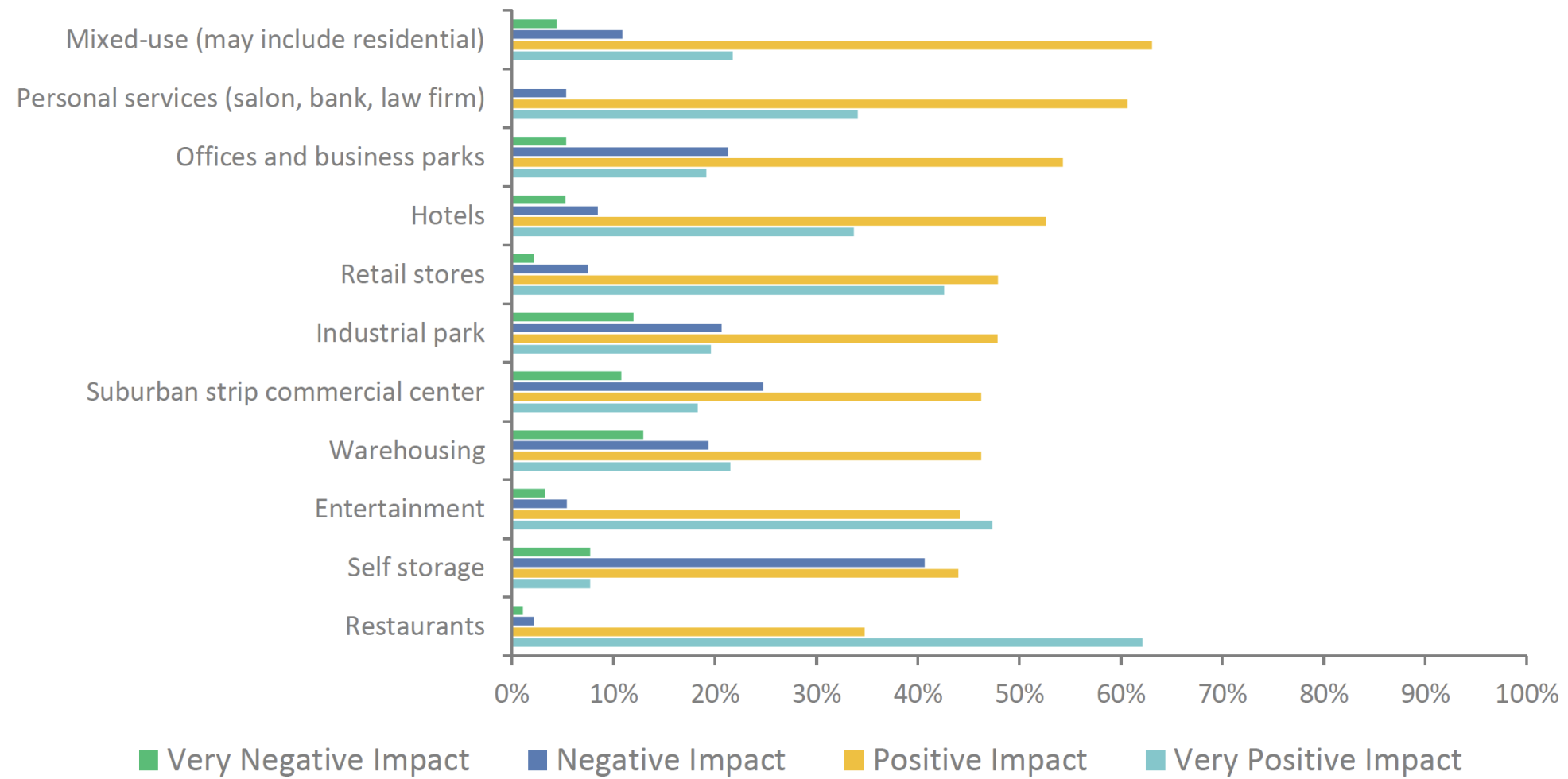
65%- White Collar

Number of employees at Somerset County businesses are:

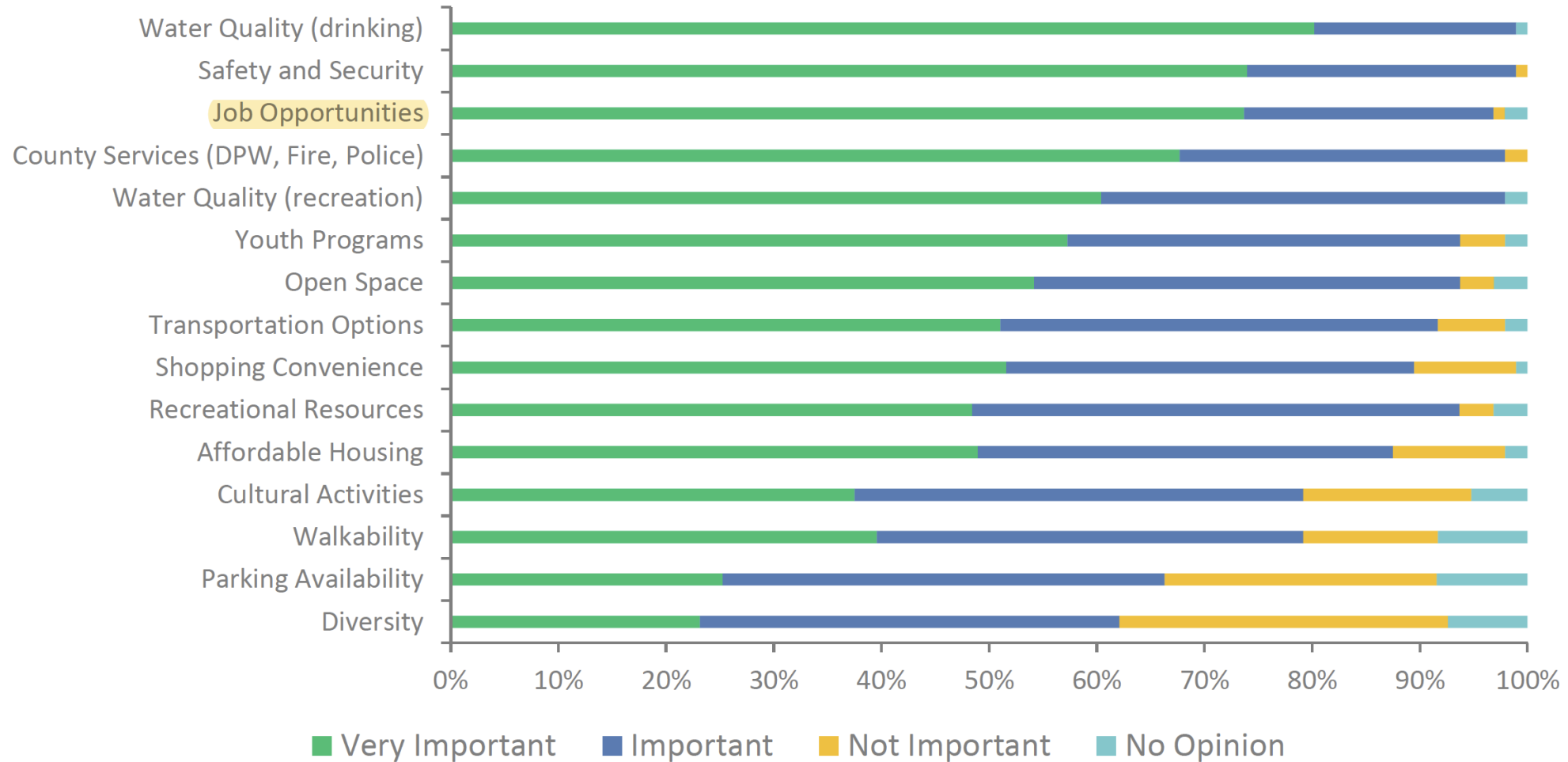


- 1-4 Employees
- 5-9 Employees
- 10-19 Employees
- 20-49 Employees
- 50-99 Employees
- 100+ Employees

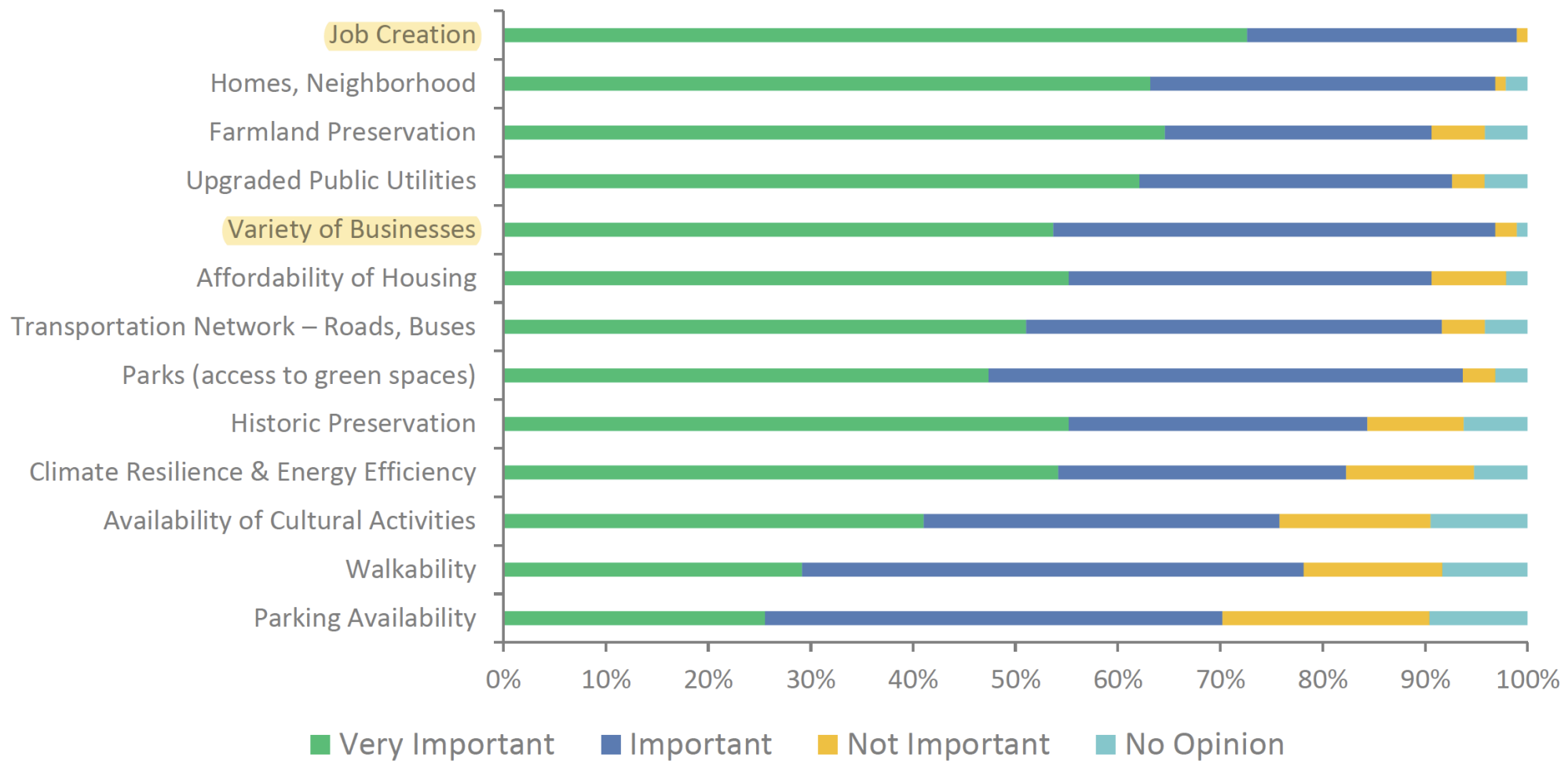
What kind of impact would each of the following types of commercial and industrial development have on Somerset County?



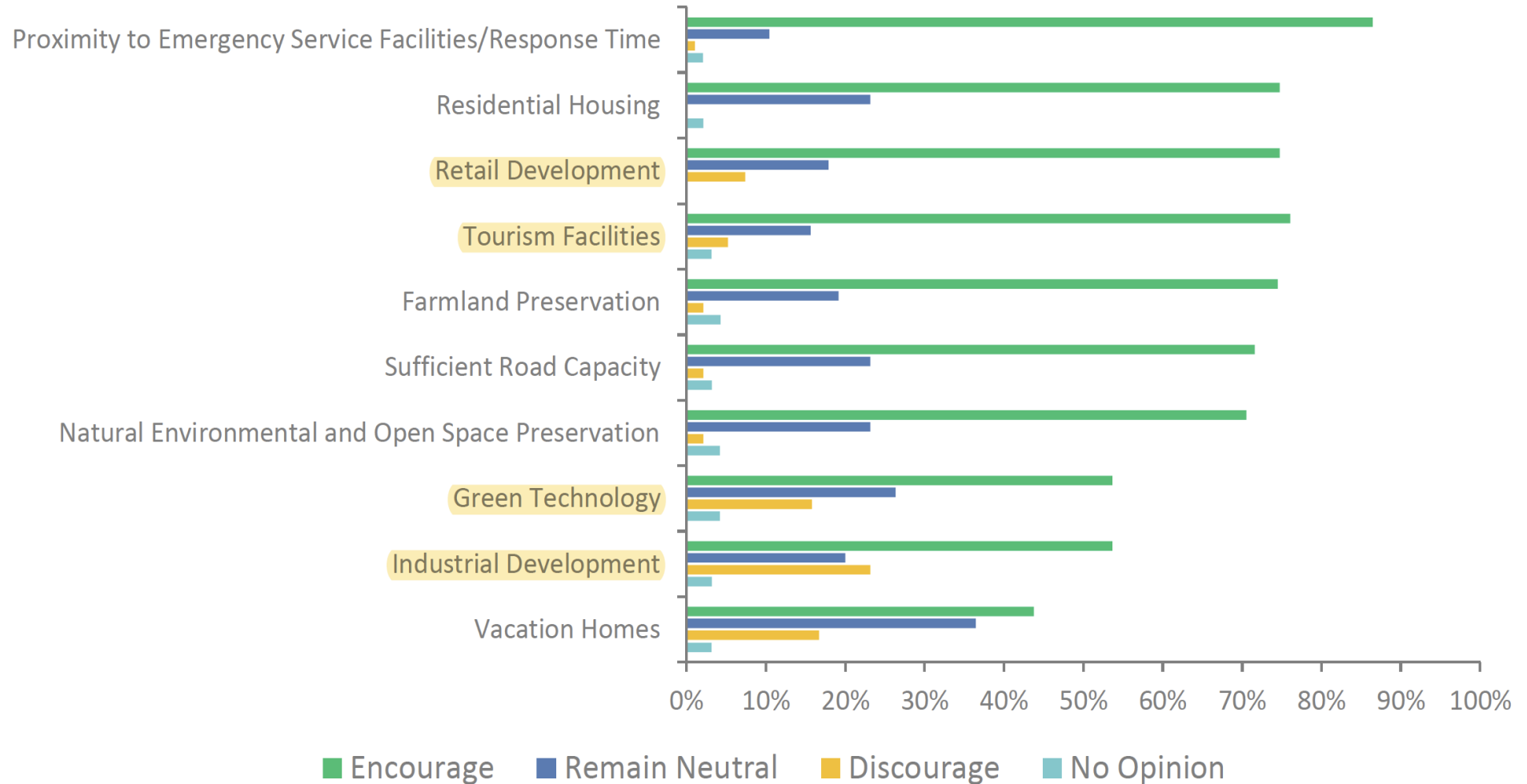
How important are the following items to quality of life in Somerset County?



How important are the following items in terms of future development?



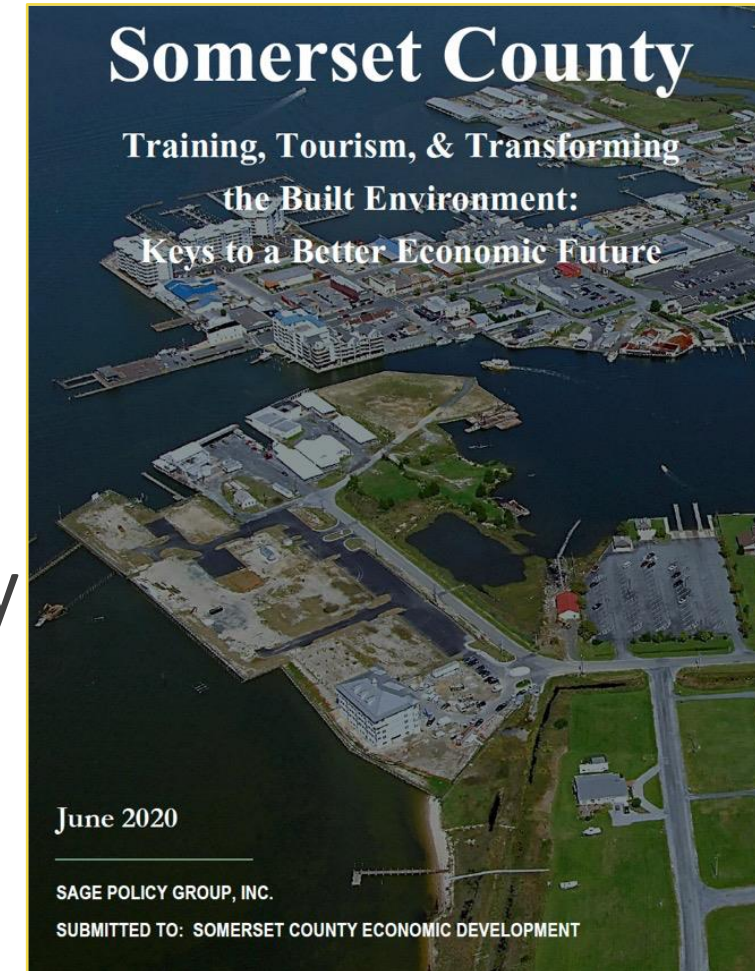
As Somerset County plans for the future, should local officials encourage, remain neutral, or discourage each of the following?





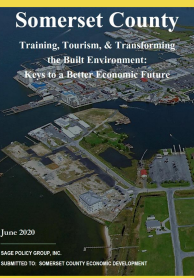
Economic Vitality

Somerset County Economic Development commissioned Sage Policy Group and partners to develop a strategic economic opportunities analysis, published in June 2020. The goal of the analysis was to supply policymakers and other stakeholders' guidance and to position the county for more broadly shared prosperity, greater visitation, livelier streetscapes, and fiscal sustainability.





Economic Vitality



One of the key recommendations from Part 1 of the report included focusing particular attention on several **promising industries** including:

- retirement living and healthcare;
- aquaculture, agriculture, food processing, and food distribution;
- skilled trades, including those related to construction and manufacturing;
- alternative energies; and,
- tourism

Economic Vitality

As part of the comprehensive plan update process, these **promising industries** have been evaluated in relation to **land use and existing zoning**. This examination has assisted in the identification of goals, recommendations, and changes to future land use. Aligning this chapter of the comprehensive plan with economic development planning efforts will advance economic development programs and policies and improve the economic vitality of Somerset County.

SOMERSET COUNTY ZONING ORDINANCE Somerset County, Maryland

Recommended by the Somerset County Planning
and Zoning Commission on February 21, 2019

Adopted by the Somerset County Board of
County Commissioners on August 6, 2019

The Effective date of this Ordinance #1144 shall be
August 6, 2019

Previously Adopted Version: February 5, 2001

Economic Vitality

Base Zoning Districts include:

- Agricultural Residential District (AR)
- Conservation District (CO)
- Low-Density Residential District (R-1)
- Medium-Density Residential District (R-2)
- High-Density Residential District (R-3)
- Maritime-Residential-Commercial District (MRC)
- Mixed-Use Village District (C-1)
- General Commercial District (C-2)
- Light Industrial District (I-1)
- General Industrial District (I-2)

Overlay Zoning Districts include:

- Airport Overlay District (AP)
- Overlay Commercial District (O-C)
- Critical Area Overlay District (CA-1)

Floating Zones include:

- Planned Unit Development Floating Zone District (PUD)
- Utility Scale Solar Energy Facility Floating Zone District (SEF)

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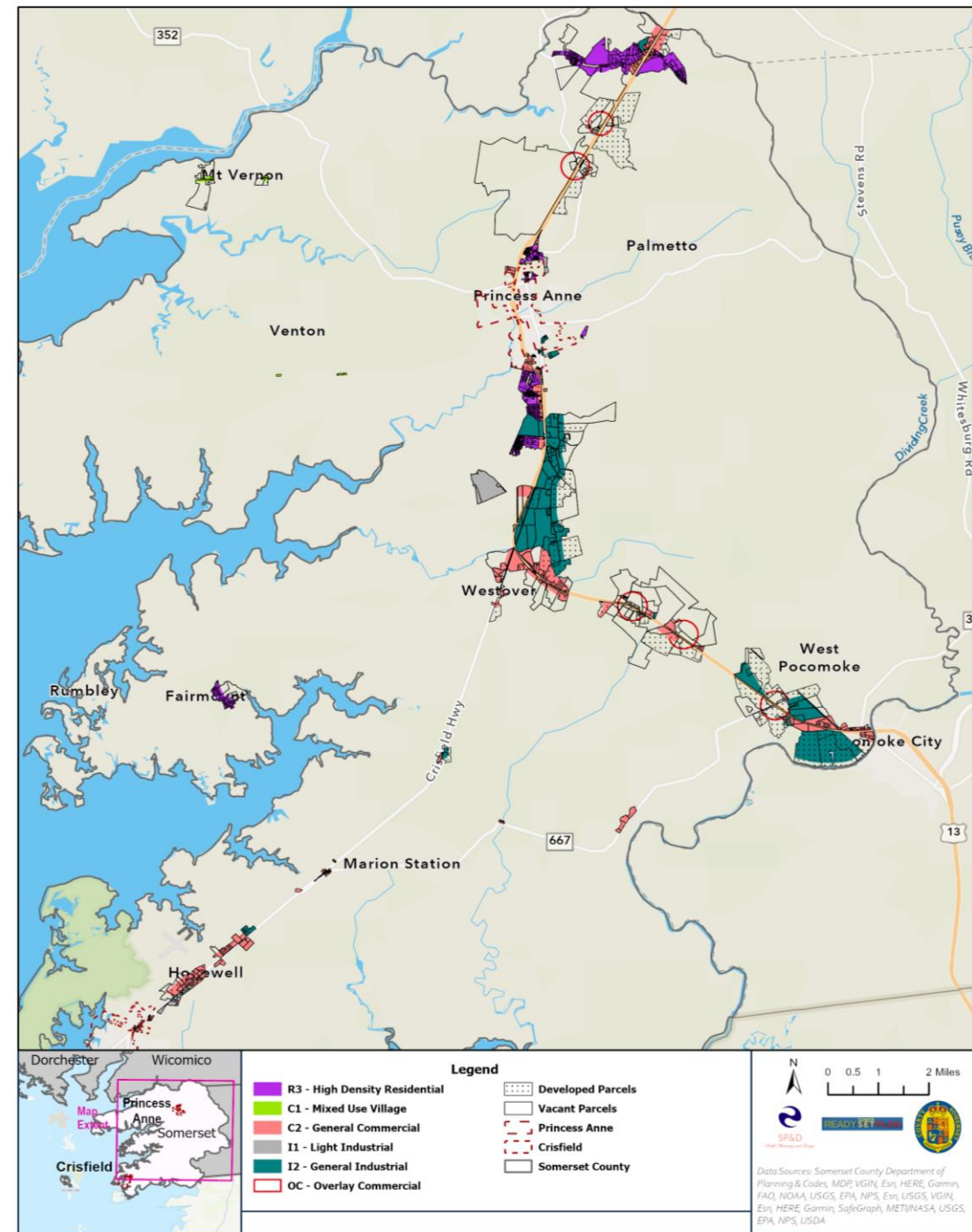
Previously Adopted Version: February 5, 2001

Somerset County land use and zoning involve the regulation of use and development of property. The unincorporated area of Somerset County is divided into zoning districts.

Retirement Living and Healthcare Existing Land Use and Zoning

Retirement living is a residential land use, however a **Continuing Care Retirement Community** with a minimum lot area of 2 acres, is considered public or institutional land use within the *2019 Somerset County Zoning Ordinance*.

A continuing care retirement community is considered as an establishment that primarily engages in providing a range of residential and personal care services with on-site nursing care facilities. Zoning districts that allow for Continuing Care Retirement Community include R-3, C-1, C-2, I-1, I-2, and the Overlay Commercial District (O-C).



The following facilities considered part of the Continuing Care Retirement Community are not located in the zoning districts R-3, C-1, C-2, I-1, I-2, and the Overlay Commercial District (O-C):

- Manokin Nursing and Rehab, Manokin Manor, and The Gables at Manokin
 - o These facilities are located on a single parcel and zoned R2 Medium Density Residential

Alice B. Tawes Nursing & Rehabilitation Center and Chesapeake Cove Assisted Living are located in the City of Crisfield. In addition, several continuing care retirement facilities are located just outside Somerset County. These include:

- Chesapeake Cottage Assisted Living, Snow Hill
- Marilyn's Home For the Aged, Snow Hill
- Hartley Nursing and Rehab, Pocomoke City
- BayCare Assisted Living Pocomoke & Salisbury, Pocomoke City

Zoning Districts for Continuing Care Retirement Community and Parcels		
Zoning	# of Parcels	
	Developed	Vacant
R3 - High Density Residential	283	191
C1 - Mixed Use Village	25	13
C2 - General Commercial	190	165
I1 - Light Industrial	13	12
I2 - General Industrial	61	48
OC - Overlay Commercial	48	48
Total	620	464

Tourism

Somerset County engaged in strategic planning to further target tourism policy, programs, and recommendations. Part 2 of the strategic economic opportunities analysis, published in June 2020, by the Sage Policy Group and its partners focused on tourism. Key recommendations put forth in Part II of the report included:

- Focus on key hospitality targets: outdoorsy professionals and active families.
- Pursue projects positioning Somerset County as a preferred destination for outdoorsy professionals and active families: e.g., vacation packages; eco cottage development; brew pubs.
- Adopt a strong brand for Somerset County: “Endless Somerset”.
- Implement tourism messaging campaigns designed to appeal to target markets that are firmly wrapped around the “Endless Somerset” brand.



Discussion Questions Goals & Recommendations

Handout- Excerpts & Questions Handout- Economic Vitality

- Goals
- Recommendations

Economic Vitality Discussion Questions Handout

Information from the SOMERSET COUNTY STRATEGIC ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES ANALYSIS completed in 2020 by the Sage Policy Group has been extrapolated for discussion purposes.

"It is the policy of Princess Anne to promote the "Main Street" approach for downtown. This approach includes implementing strategies for marketing downtown, economic restructuring, revitalizing downtown by improving the facades of the buildings, community design improvements, and strengthening the organizations and institutions that support a vibrant downtown."

The Princess Anne Comprehensive Plan presents the following economic development actions, actions consistent with the main street approach:

1. The Town will undertake a joint effort with UMES and downtown merchants to develop a community theater, gallery, and student-run businesses.
2. The Town will apply to the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development for monies as a "Main Street Maryland" community and make use of the technical assistance the S provide.
3. The Town will coordinate with the County, State, UMES, the business community, and others develop a coherent marketing strategy to promote Princess Anne as a tourist destination.
4. The Town will retain an economic development consultant as a Main Street executive director speciality in retail revitalization and downtown redevelopment to develop and implement a strategy promoting redevelopment in the Mount Vernon Road Gateway District and ongoing revitalization downtown.
5. The Town will form a working group, comprised of students, business owners, to promote job and development in the Princess Anne area involving local business owners.¹³

All of these recommended activities are consistent with place-making, which is about more than the appearance of physical space. In addition to more beautifully maintained facades and other structures is the need for the people who supply talent, creativity, and entrepreneurial spirit to community.

Question: Has any of these actions been undertaken? How do these actions affect the County?

In 2016, following extensive damage to public housing units in Crisfield from Hurricane Sandy earlier, there was some discussion regarding relocating public housing units. Somerset County's \$75,000 out of a \$16.7 million federal grant awarded for Hurricane Sandy relief to fund the study Somerset County Commissioners awarded the contract to Design Atlantic of Salisbury. The firm to work with a steering committee made up of local officials and residents. The study was not ir to look at specific sites, but to assess acreage requirements, access to public transportation and water and sewer systems.

The Sage study team's focus is not on relocating public housing units, but retiring them over time numbers. We are not alone. In November 2018, HUD's Office of Public and Indian Housing (PIH) letter to public housing agency (PHA) executive directors declaring the agency's intent to drama reduce the public housing stock. HUD identifies four mechanisms by which to reduce the number public housing units: 1) demolition/disposition; 2) facilitation of voluntary conversion of public housing to vouchers; 3) the Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) program, and 4) the retention of ass a Declaration of Trust (DOT) release.

Chapter 4: Economic Vitality Goals & Strategies

Goal 4.1

Attract visitors, entrepreneurs, and investors who will appreciate Somerset County as it is, rather than those who would want to change its character.

Strategies

- A. Work with the State, UMES, the business community, and others to finalize and implement a cohesive marketing strategy to promote the County and both municipalities as tourist destinations.
- B. Track and report accomplishments, gaps, obstacles, and new opportunities.

Goal 4.2

Encourage retirement and healthcare living to expand the size of the real property tax base, create more demand for local goods and services, support more local employment, create a larger pool of citizens able to volunteer for local boards, and stabilize the population.

Strategies

- A. Offer a tax break for older newcomers to Somerset County.
 - o Offer a special retiree tax break for those households headed by an individual age 60 or older moving on a full-time basis to the County and purchasing for owner-occupancy.
 - o Eligible individuals would receive a 50 percent reduction in their real estate tax obligation over the course of three years. The intent of such a tax break was to reduce the inventory of unsold housing units and to create an environment more conducive to residential development.

Goal 4.3

Attract entrepreneurs who embrace the cutting-edge food production, distribution, aquaculture, and support enterprise development in the county.

Strategies

- A. Provide a large-scale tax break to anyone with the proper credentials and intellectual property seeking to develop an aquaculture facility.
- B. Partner with UMES to encourage would-be entrepreneurs to commercialize their ideas in Somerset County.
- C. Promote the adaptive reuse of vacant commercial and industrial property.

Goal 4.4

Promote the adaptive reuse of vacant commercial and industrial property for infill and redevelopment.

Strategies

- A. Maintain current database, maps, and photos of all available vacant commercial and industrial property.

Goal 4.5

Position Somerset County to help meet the Maryland's Clean Energy Jobs Act (May 29, 2019), mandates that 50 percent of the state's electricity be produced by renewable energy sources by 2030.

Strategies

- A. Identify and promote potential alternative energy sites.
- B. Encourage careful consideration of potential sites for alternative energy, as Wind farms, solar farms, and other forms of alternative energy are often land intensive.



Next Steps

- Review & Comment of new Chapters
- Upload content to project website
- Chapter Development
 - Land Use
 - Affordable Housing