

Chapter 3: County & Municipal Plan Integration

Collaboration and agreement between the County and municipalities concerning growth areas, specifically on unincorporated areas that municipalities plan to annex into their own jurisdictions, is vitally important. House Bill (HB 1141) adopted in 2011 mandates that jurisdictions meet and confer on this subject before a municipal growth element can be adopted. HB 1141 strengthens land use requirements by necessitating better planning for annexations.

3.1 Municipal Planning

The Town of Princess Anne and the City of Crisfield both have adopted comprehensive plans. These plans include policies governing growth, development, sustainability, and conservation.

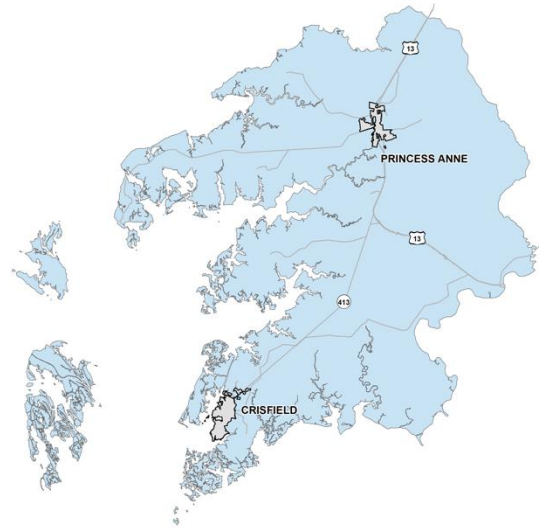


Figure 3-1: Somerset County & Municipal Map

The Town of Princess Anne Comprehensive Plan was adopted on October 13, 2009.

The City of Crisfield Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2007 with amendments approved in 2010.

Figure 3-2: Cover photos from the Town of Princess Anne and City of Crisfield's Comprehensive Plans

The Town of Princess Anne adopted a new zoning ordinance and zoning map in 2015, while the City of Crisfield adopted a new zoning ordinance and zoning map in 2018.



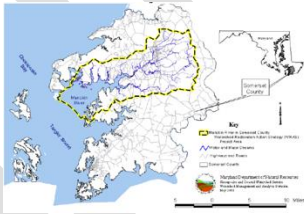



A guiding principle identified in each of the municipal comprehensive plans is as follows:

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.

3.2 The Town of Princess Anne Existing Conditions

Existing conditions summarized in the town’s comprehensive plan are included in Table 3-1. The plan summary includes land use, natural environment, transportation, and community facilities. While the comprehensive plan was completed more than a decade ago, municipal representatives reviewed this chapter and were provided opportunities to update information extracted from the plan, as applicable. This information was presented during the work session of the Princess Anne Town Commissioners on September 18, 2023.

Table 3-1.

Princess Anne Comprehensive Plan- Existing Conditions Summary			
Land Use	Natural Environment	Transportation	Community Facilities
<p>Princess Anne’s historic downtown is surrounded by residential areas, an industrial park, and the campus of the University of Maryland-Eastern Shore (UMES). The historic downtown is centered on Somerset Avenue and Prince William Street. Much of the area surrounding the Town is in woodlands and open space use with pockets of residential use along the main roads into town.</p> <p>Princess Anne Historic District National Register Information: 80001834 Architectural Styles: Italianate, Queen Anne, Federal</p>   <p>Somerset County Courthouse, located in the district</p> <p>National Register of Historic Places https://npgallery.nps.gov/GetAsset/a34299c7-e2e2-467b-b493-7b2cdebd2e/</p>	<p>Princess Anne is located in the Manokin River Watershed. The Manokin River runs through the central part of town. The Town and its surrounding area are located within the Sensitive Species Project Review Area, owing to the presence of three sensitive plant species. Wetlands, 100-year floodplains, forested areas, and steep slopes can also be found within the Town boundary. Wetlands in Princess Anne run along the Manokin River to the southeast of town.</p> <p>Manokin River Watershed</p> 	<p>U.S. Route 13 connects Princess Anne to regional destinations. Other arterial roads intersect with U.S. Route 13 in Princess Anne. Mount Vernon Road is a major access route into Princess Anne. It connects with Somerset Avenue which provides access to the central part of town. Local roads connect residential areas to Somerset Avenue and, outside of downtown, connect residential areas to U.S. Route 13 and downtown. Public transit service provides on demand responsive and fixed route schedules.</p> 	<p>Many of the Town’s facilities and services are managed in cooperation with Somerset County; including water, sewer, schools, and fire and emergency services. The Town has its own police force.</p> <p>Princess Anne has two parks, Manokin Park and Garland Hayward Park, and is coordinating with other agencies to develop more recreational opportunities.</p>  

Sources: [2009 Town of Princess Anne Comprehensive Plan](#)

3.3 Area Surrounding Princess Anne and Land Use

The area surrounding the Town of Princess Anne along with current land use and land use patterns as identified in the 2009 Comprehensive Plan include:

- 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. Under current law, development must undergo special reviews before approval can be granted, in order to ensure that sensitive species are not disturbed.

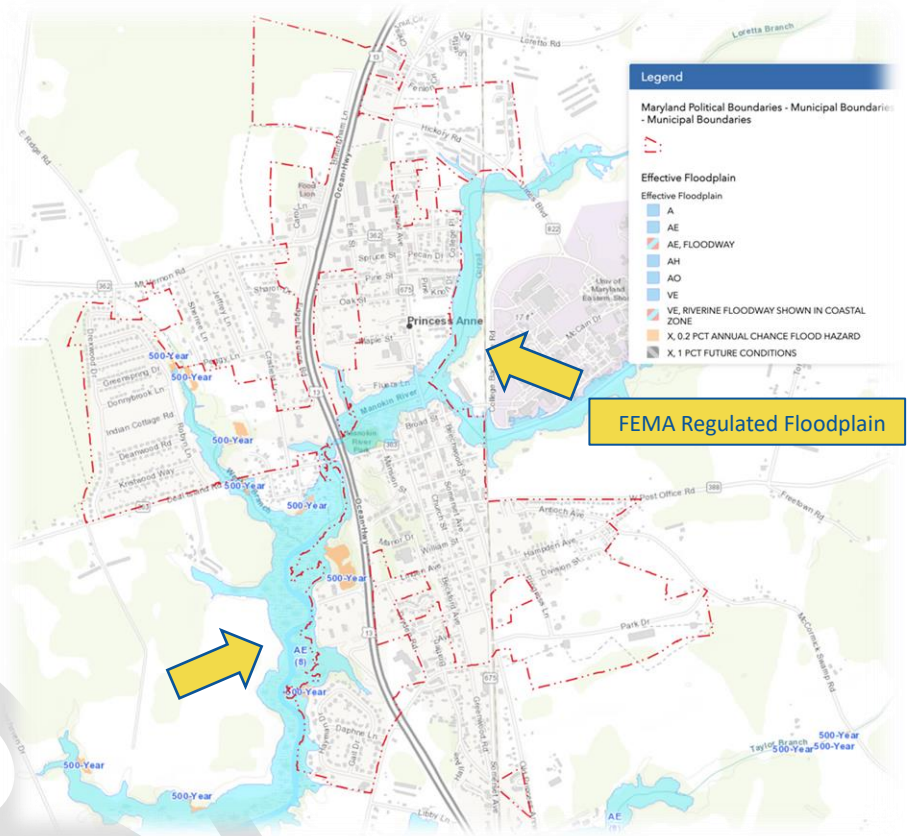


Figure 3-3: Town of Princess Anne Floodplain

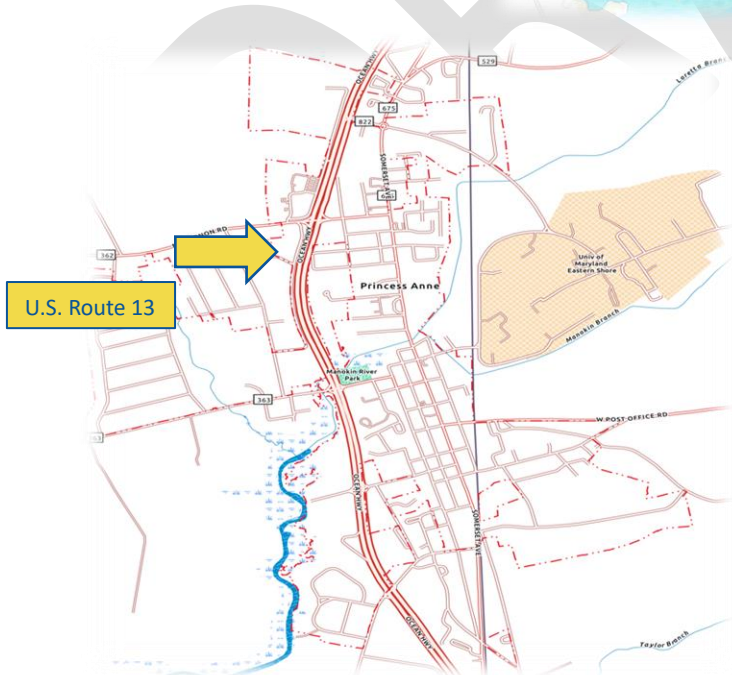


Figure 3-4: Town of Princess Anne & US Route 13

- U.S. Route 13 creates a physical barrier between the west and east sides of Princess Anne. Areas that have developed on the west side of this physical barrier are fragmented and separated from one another, the main part of town, as well as the University. This poses a multi-modal transportation challenge. It is difficult for vehicles, and a major challenge for pedestrians and bicycles to access both sides of town. Also, individual residential subdivisions lack connectivity with one another.

- Downtown Princess Anne has become physically separated from other areas of town. The transportation network that has developed over time, combined with the presence of the Manokin River, limits opportunities to make connections to downtown. UMES can be easily accessed without traveling through downtown and residential areas to the west of Princess Anne do not have a direct connection to downtown. This limits downtown’s potential as a central point for community interaction. Therefore, future development must focus on making downtown Princess Anne a destination for residents, UMES students and faculty, and tourists.

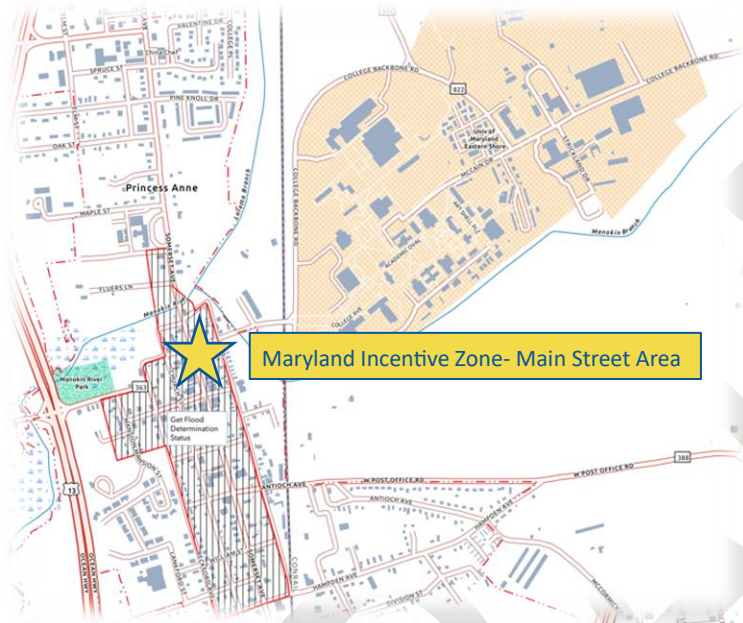


Figure 3-5: Princess Anne Main Street Area

Representatives from the Town of Princess Anne remarked that since the 2009 Comprehensive Plan, student housing has been concentrated around UMES Boulevard, which has improved emergency services response, as student housing is concentrated as opposed to the scattered sites of the past. However, there is an opportunity for additional student housing in the downtown development area. Infill development, specifically upper story development is a priority for the Town of Princess Anne. In fact, the [Main Street Program](#) has been used for historic structure and façade improvements, making this area more attractive for both commercial and residential use.

In addition, since 2019, improved pedestrian access across and along U.S. Route 13, such as walkways and stoplights, have been installed.

- Having UMES in such close proximity to Princess Anne provides the Town with a range of benefits and opportunities. However, it also poses challenges for Princess Anne. Residential development pressures are strong for rental and student housing. The University prefers that this housing be concentrated in proximity to campus. Public safety demands are higher where there are large concentrations of student housing. This can pull town resources from other areas, particularly with respect to public safety services.

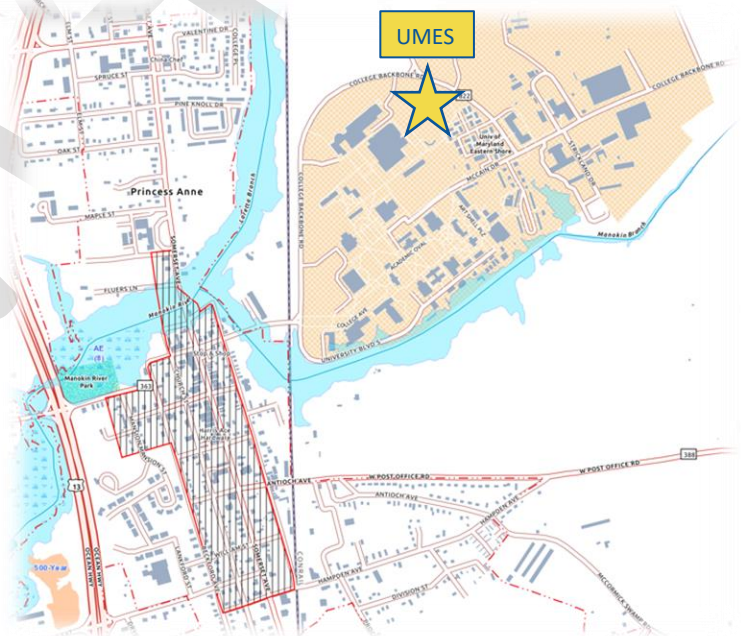





Figure 3-6: Town of Princess Anne, Transportation Network, Floodplain, & UMES

Proposed transportation improvements are outlined annually in Somerset County’s [Priority Letter for Recommended Transportation Improvements](#).

3.4 The City of Crisfield Existing Conditions

Existing conditions summarized in the city’s comprehensive plan are included in Table 3-2. The plan summary includes land use, natural environment, transportation, and community facilities. While the municipal comprehensive plan was completed more than a decade ago, municipal representatives reviewed this chapter and were provided opportunities to update information extracted from their plans, as applicable. This information was presented during the City of Crisfield Council meeting on October 11, 2023.

Table 3-2.

City of Crisfield Comprehensive Plan – Existing Conditions Summary			
Land Use	Natural Environment	Transportation	Community Facilities
<p>Land use in the City consists of commercial districts along MD Route 413 and the central business district along Main Street, residential neighborhoods, and water-dependent and water related uses in the marina and downtown maritime areas. Much of the shoreline has been devoted to commercial and industrial uses directly related to or in support of the fishing industry, including the Little Boat Harbor. This is beginning to change as multi-family condominium buildings are replacing traditional maritime activities.</p> <p><i>Little Boat Harbor</i></p>  <p>Photo Source: https://visitsomerset.com/listing/little-boat-harbor</p>	<p>Chesapeake Bay, the Little Annessex River, and associated tidal marshes are major natural features. Except for several relatively high points of elevation, the City lies within the 100-year floodplain. Flooding is a regular occurrence. The remaining marshlands and low-lying areas are vital buffers helping to dissipate the energy of storm surge and store floodwaters.</p> <p><i>City of Crisfield Elevation: 3 ft (1 m)</i></p>  <p>Photo Source: https://en-us.topographic-map.com/map-l9g34s/Crisfield/</p>	<p>MD Route 413 is the primary access route for the City. Sidewalks capitalize on the traditional street network, which is generally conducive to walking. The existence of a street grid in much of the City allows for a dispersed traffic pattern throughout residential neighborhoods. Much of the City’s collector street system is prone to flooding.</p> <p><i>SHA has upgraded all sidewalks along a 1.5-mile stretch of Route 413 (Maryland Avenue/Richardson Avenue/West Main Street) from the Crisfield City Dock to Mill Lane. Work included removal and replacement of sidewalk, curb and gutter and installation of new ramps and detectable warning surfaces.</i></p>  <p>Source: DAILY TIMES STAFF REPORT Published August 21, 2015</p>	<p>Except for parkland, the main public facilities are adequately sized for Crisfield’s current situation. A growth in population, however, would necessitate an expansion of capacity of public sewer service. Significant rehabilitation of old sanitary sewer infrastructure is needed. Local schools and a branch of the County library system provides educational resources.</p> <p><i>City of Crisfield Ch C Art IX Water & Sewer § C9-5 Connections</i></p> <p><i>The City shall provide a connection with water and sanitary sewer mains for all property abutting on any public way in which a sanitary sewer or water main is laid. When any water main or sanitary sewer is declared ready for operation by the City, all abutting property owners, after reasonable notice, shall connect all fixtures with the water or sewer main.</i></p> <p>Source: https://ecode360.com/13720146</p>

Sources: [2007 City of Crisfield Comprehensive Plan with 2010 Amendments](#)

3.5 Area Surrounding the City of Crisfield and Land Use

The area surrounding the City of Crisfield along with current land use and land use patterns include:

- The Little Annesmessex River and Jersey Island lie to the west and south of Crisfield, permanently curbing development in those directions beyond existing City boundaries. Environmental features, such as water bodies and wetlands, restrict development throughout the region.

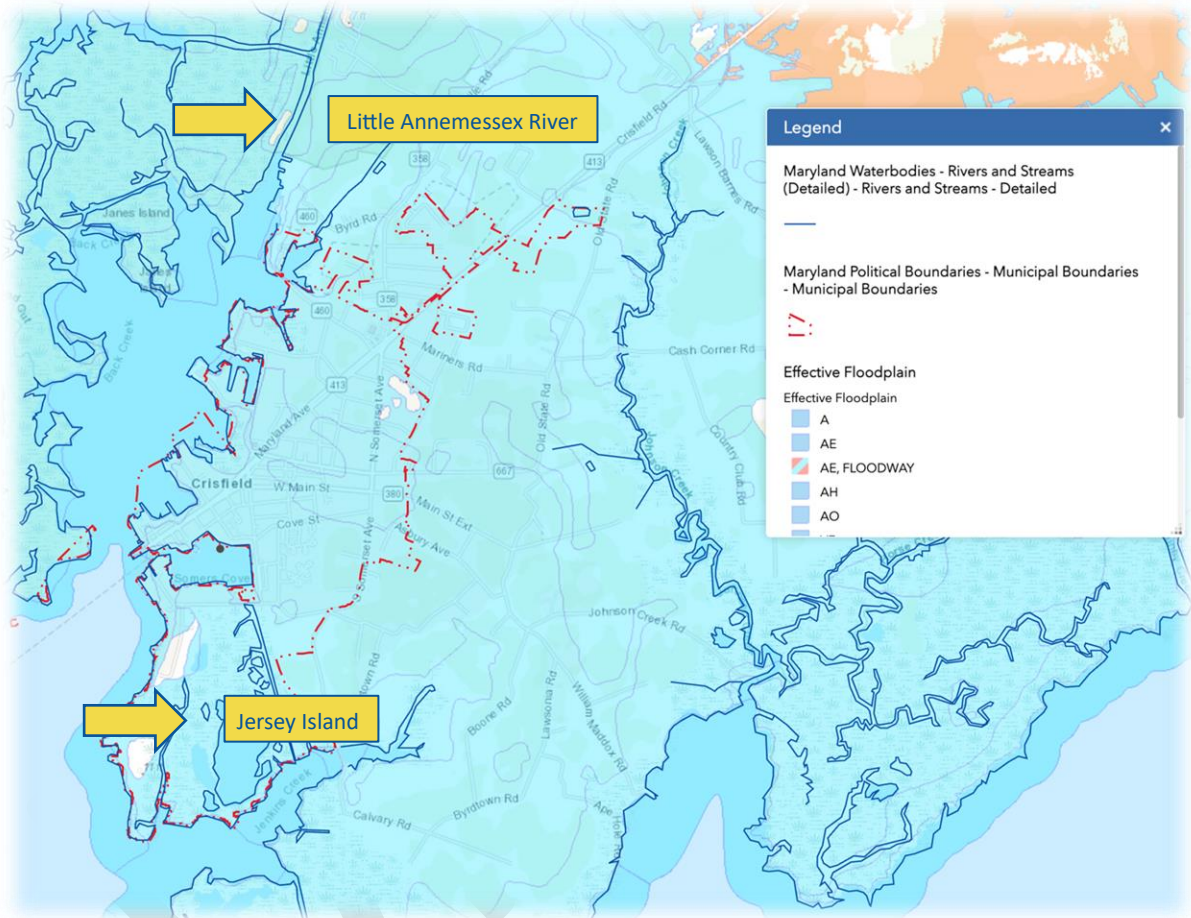


Figure 3-7: City of Crisfield, Little Annesmessex River and Jersey Island

- Tidal wetlands on both the north and south of the City are important resources that protect the City against storm surge and excessive flooding. These lands are very close to the City center and their preservation helps protect water quality, wildlife habitat, and the overall environmental health for City residents.

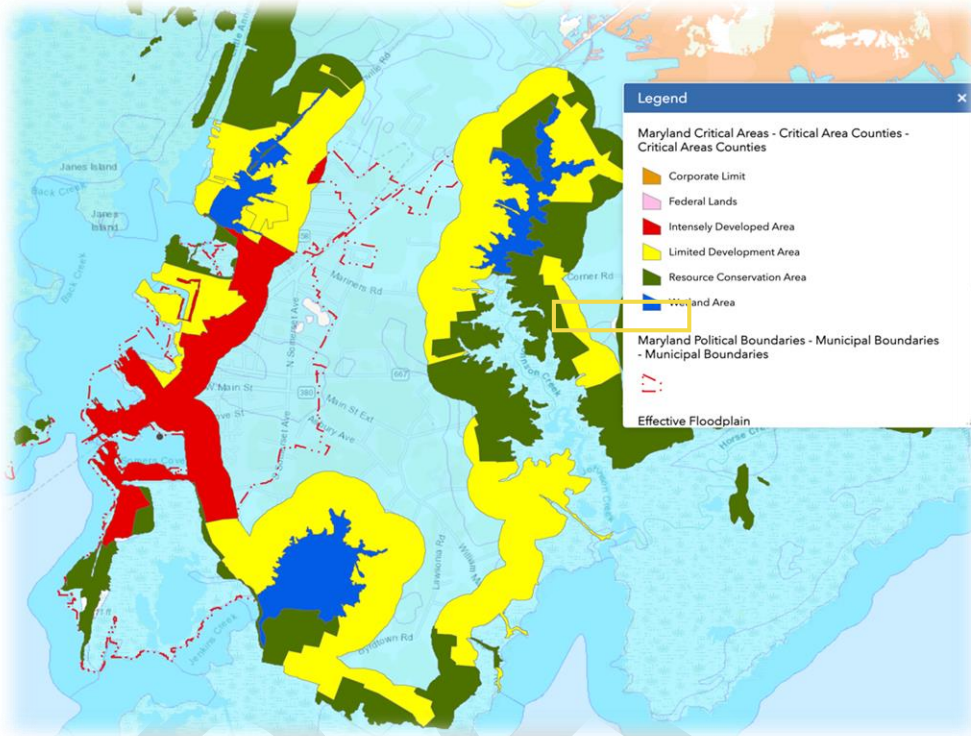


Figure 3-8: City of Crisfield, MD Critical Areas

- Except for small, isolated concentrations, urban development is largely confined to existing centers such as Crisfield. The central business district is located along Main Street. The other commercial concentrations are located at the intersection of Somerset Avenue and MD 413 and in the “downtown” area along MD 413.

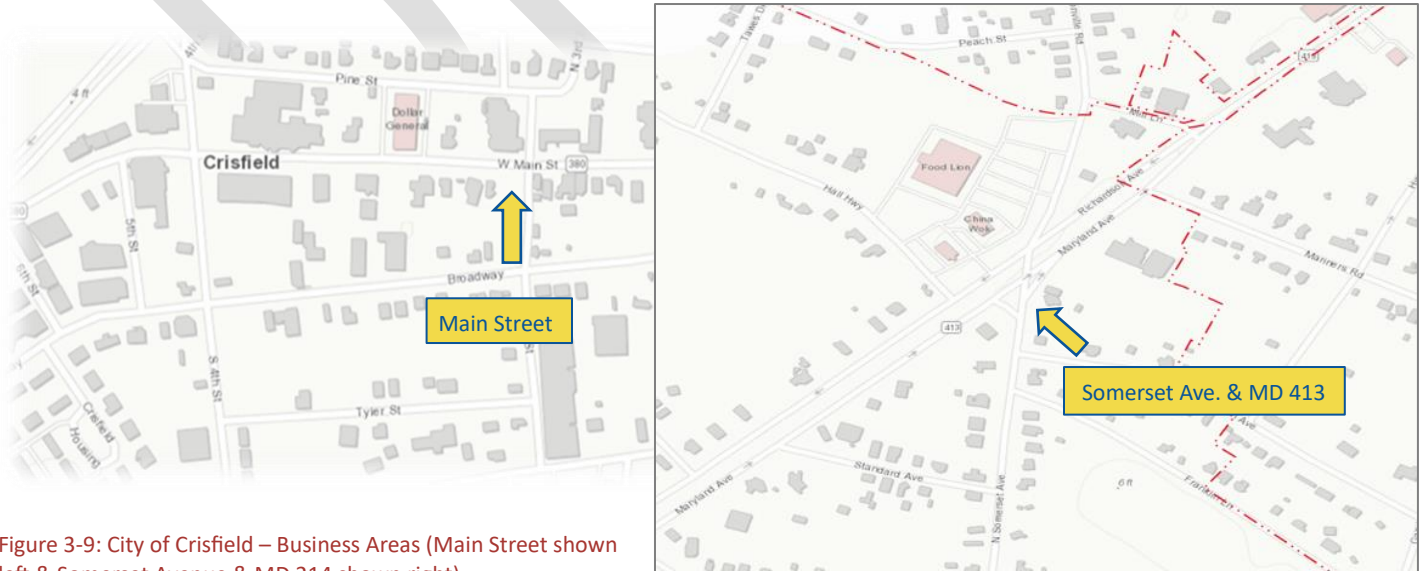


Figure 3-9: City of Crisfield – Business Areas (Main Street shown left & Somerset Avenue & MD 214 shown right)

- 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 agricultural or open space use.

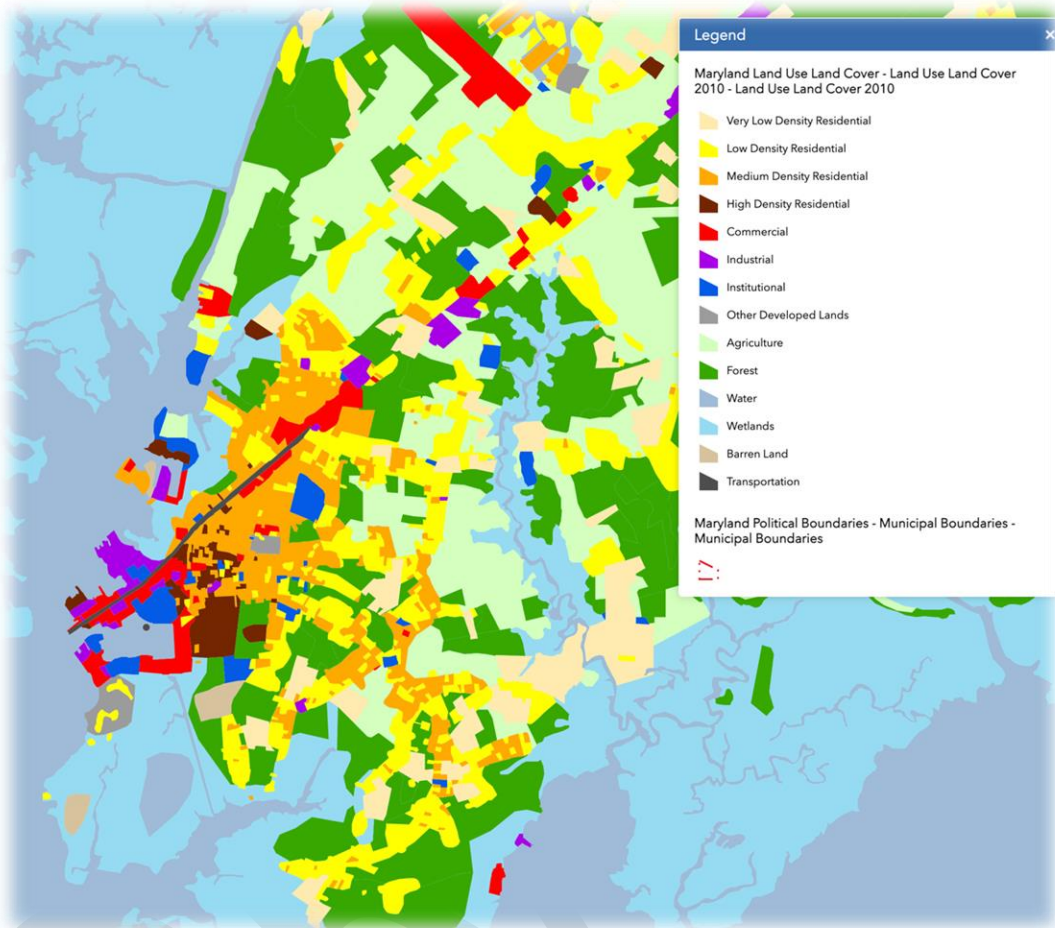


Figure 3-10: City of Crisfield, MD – Land Cover

- Somers Cove Marina is the prominent feature of the waterfront. Excluding the surface water, the marina comprises almost 50 acres of land area.



Photo Source: www.somerscovemarina.com

3.6 Proposed Annexation

3.6.1 Town of Princess Anne

According to the Town of Princess Anne, no annexations are planned due to various physical constraints. Infill and redevelopment are the Town's priorities.

3.6.2 City of Crisfield

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. The City's annexation policies are as follows:

- Annexed areas must be contiguous to the corporate limits and create a natural extension of the City's boundaries.
- Proposed annexation areas will be economically self-sufficient and will not result in larger municipal expenditures than anticipated revenues, which could indirectly burden existing city residents with the costs of services or facilities to support the area annexed.
- The costs of providing roads, utilities, parks, and other community services will be borne by those people gaining the most value from such facilities through income, profits, or participation.
- Specific conditions of annexation will be made legally binding in an executed annexation agreement. Such agreements will address, among other things, consistency with the goals, objectives and recommendations of this Plan, city zoning and landowner and city development expectations, responsibility for appropriate studies, and preliminary agreements concerning responsibilities for the cost of facilities and services provided by the City. These preliminary agreements may be further revised in a Developers Rights and Responsibility Agreement (DRRA).
- For annexations involving larger parcels of land, the City may require appropriate impact studies, including a fiscal impact study and an environmental impact assessment that addresses the potential impact of the proposed annexation on the environment of the site and surrounding area.
- If necessary, applicants for annexation underwrite the cost of completing all studies related to expanding capacity in existing public facilities and/or services.

In terms of water resources, the City of Crisfield determined that the City should consider sewer capacity limits before increasing service to areas outside the existing corporate area if it intends to fully utilize its existing development capacity. It also demonstrates that implementation of the SRP Master Plan will require additional sewer treatment capacity beyond that which can be achieved under the limits of the current NPDES permit. Implementation of the SRP Master Plan may also require added water supply.

"Plans for expanding Crisfield's water system include the area between Maryland Route 413, along Old State Road. Long range projections indicate expansion of the water service to the area north of Maryland Route 413, extending to the Daughtery Road area and properties along the Jones Creek area."15 Planned sewer projects include replacement sewer mains on 4th Street and Pine Street. 15Pg 51, 2008 Somerset County Master Water and Sewerage Plan, Somerset County Department of Technical and Community Services, August 2008.

3.7 Priority Funding Areas

Portions of both the Town of Princess Anne and the City of Crisfield contain Priority Funding Areas (PFA's).

The **Priority Funding Areas** law builds on the foundation of planning visions which were adopted as Maryland policy through 1992 legislation (and updated in 2009). Funding for projects in municipalities, other existing communities, industrial areas and planned growth areas designated by counties receive priority for state funding over other projects. Priority Funding Areas coordinate state and local government efforts to support economic development and new growth.

The following areas qualify as Priority Funding Areas:

- every municipality, as they existed in 1997;
- areas inside the Washington Beltway and the Baltimore Beltway; and,
- areas already designated as enterprise zones, neighborhood revitalization areas, heritage areas and existing industrial land.

The 1997 planning law recognizes the important role of local governments in managing growth and determining the locations most suitable for state-funded projects. Counties may designate areas as Priority Funding Areas that meet guidelines for intended use, availability of plans for sewer and water systems and permitted residential density. Areas eligible for county designation include existing communities and areas where industrial or other economic development is desired. In addition, counties may designate areas planned for new residential communities which will be served by water and sewer systems and meet density standards.

Source: <https://planning.maryland.gov/Pages/OurProducts/pfamap.aspx>

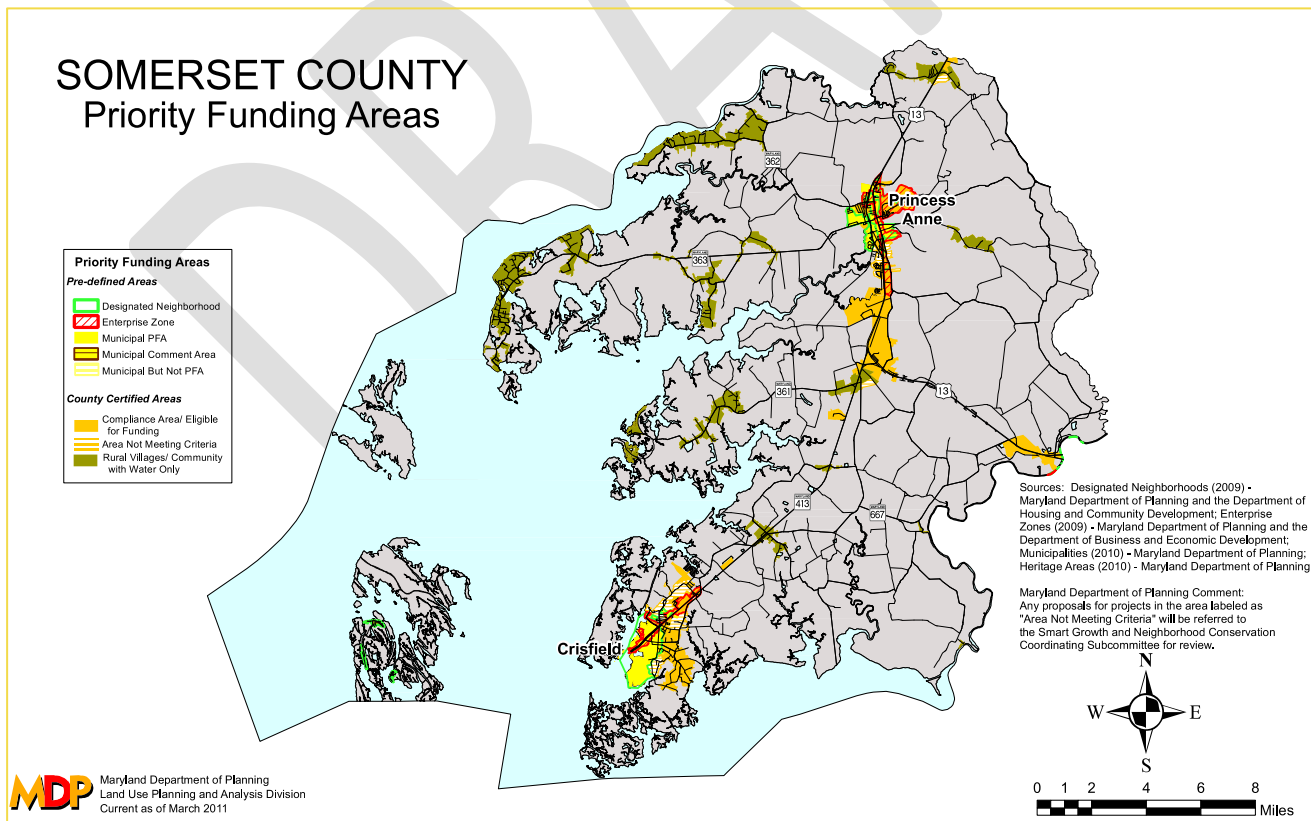
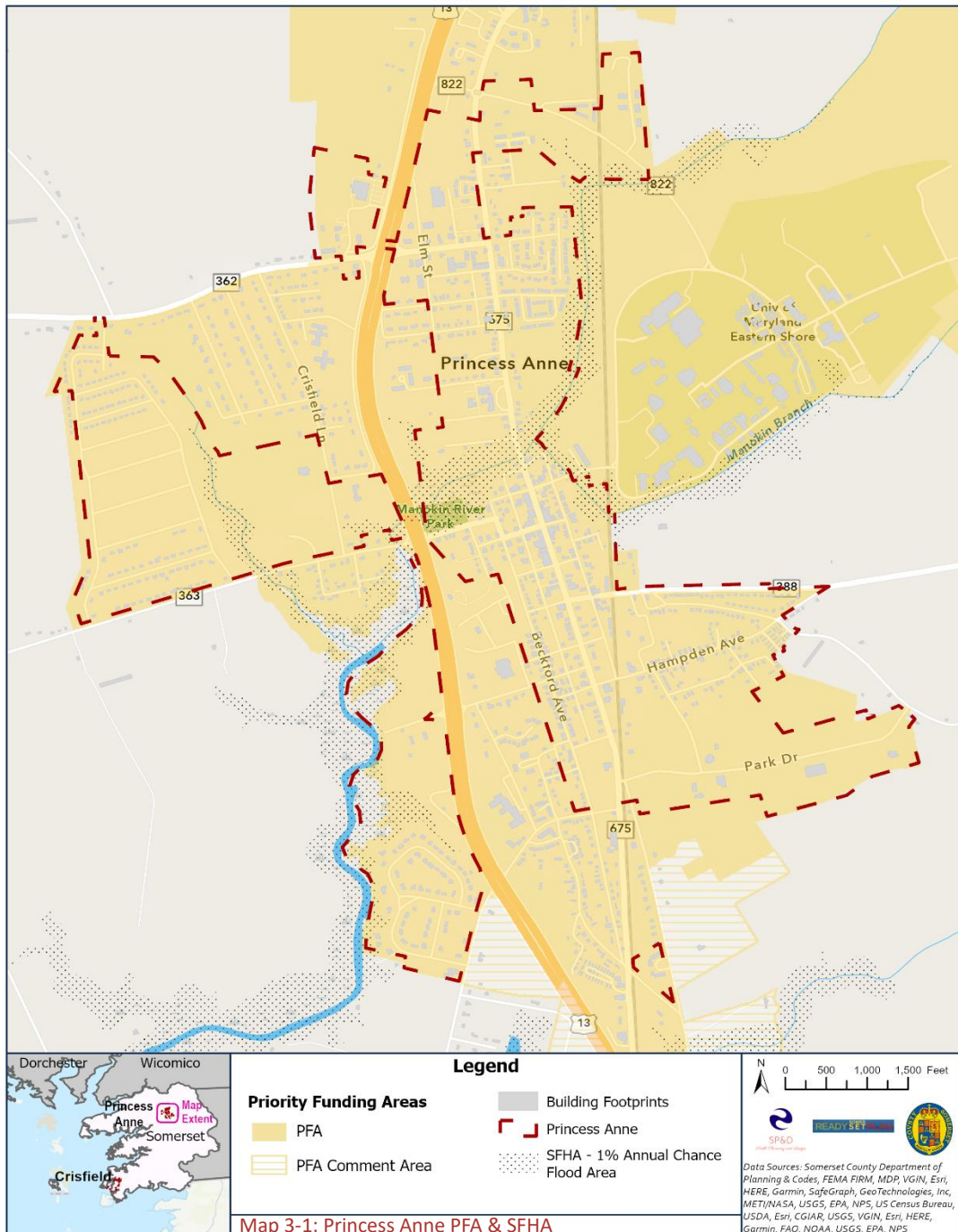


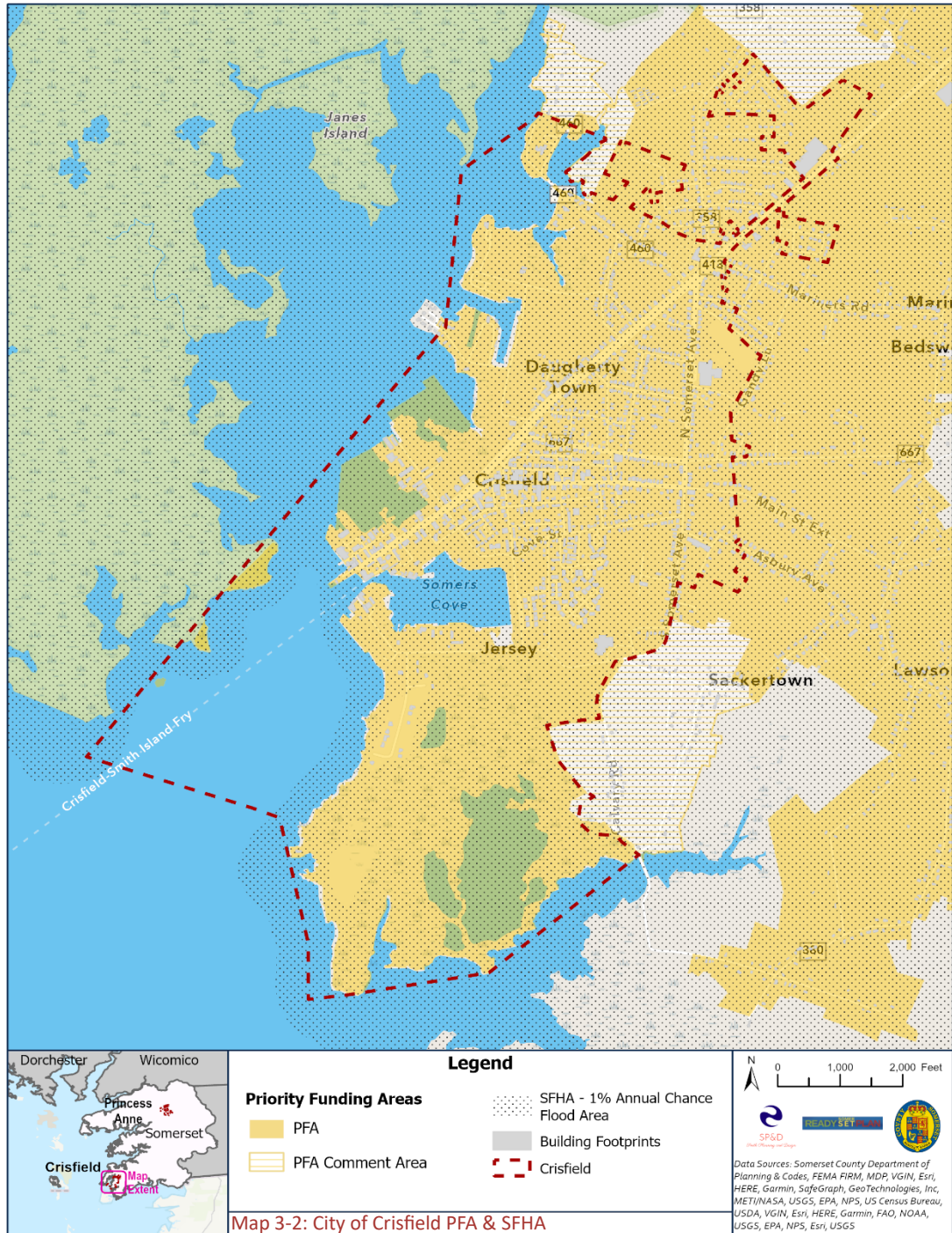
Figure 3-11: Somerset County Priority Funding Areas

3.7.1 Priority Funding Areas and Flood Hazard Risk Areas

In developing hazard maps, FEMA focuses primarily on identifying the 1% annual-chance floodplain (also known as the 100-year floodplain, Special Flood Hazard Area, or SFHA). As a result, FEMA maps the areas with a 1% annual chance of flooding. The SFHA designation is important because it is the basis for floodplain management regulations for communities across the country, and because it decides whether a structure is required to have flood insurance or not. As indicated on Map 3.1, the SFHA overlaps with the Priority Funding Area (PFA) within portions of the Town of Princess Anne.



As indicated on Map 3.2, the SFHA overlaps with the Priority Funding Area (PFA) within the City of Crisfield. Almost the entirety of the City is within the SFHA. Any new development, substantial improvement or redevelopment project should consider both the existing and future flood hazard risk. Both Somerset County and the City of Crisfield have a floodplain ordinance.



3.8 Infill, Redevelopment, and Revitalization

3.8.1 Town of Princess Anne

Vacant parcels within the Town of Princess were identified using Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxes database. These parcels present opportunities for infill development.

Table 3-3.

Town of Princess Anne – Vacant Parcels	
Land Use Description	# of Parcels
Commercial- retail and wholesale services. Areas used primarily for the sale of products and services, including associated yards and parking areas.	35
Residential- includes low, medium, and high density residential	166
Total	201

Source: Maryland Department of Planning – MdProperty View Somerset County 2018 Edition. Information contained in the Parcel dataset is current as of early June 2020. Data extracted September 2023.

Redevelopment and revitalization to the downtown area since the adoption of the Town of Princess Anne Comprehensive Plan in 2009 includes:

- Demolition by Somerset County of the blighted courthouse annex which fronted on Somerset Avenue, between the historic Circuit Court and Washington Inn and Tavern buildings.
- Renovation of an older building at the corner of Somerset Avenue and Prince William Street by a private developer, Davis Strategic Development, as part of a public /private partnership with University of Maryland Eastern Shore.
- Continued renovations (resurfaced parking lot) to Somerset Choice Station, an abandoned gas station along Somerset Avenue that was fully renovated and is now owned by the Somerset County Historical Society.
- Downtown Princess Anne benefits from Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) grant funds that help support residential and commercial façade improvements. A recently awarded \$50,000 Community Legacy grant to Main Street Princess Anne will support façade improvements for four additional buildings along Somerset Avenue.
- A streetscape-storm drain project, supported by an \$85,000 DHCD Community Legacy grant, to improve access and drainage along Beckford Avenue and Williams Street. This area is adjacent to Princess Anne Elementary School and students walk this route daily to attend school. The area floods, with frequent standing water, and does not have a sufficient, safe, or ADA-compliant sidewalk system in place. The Somerset County Board of Education agreed to partner on this project and to extend safe access from the town sidewalk onto the elementary school property. This project successfully corrected all drainage and sidewalk deficiencies.

The Somerset County Economic Development Commission updated the Somerset County/Princess Anne Enterprise Zone to include additional commercial enterprises. This update expanded the boundary from 1,206 acres to 1,320 acres. In addition, Princess Anne’s Main Street is designated as Maryland State Main Street, and National Main Street. In fact, reaccreditation as a National Main Street occurred in 2021.

3.8.2 City of Crisfield

In January of 2020, a [feasibility study](#) was completed for the City of Crisfield for the downtown area extending along West Main Street between 6th Street on the west and the Town Hall Building on the east. This feasibility study resulted in the identification of both high and low priority properties for infill, redevelopment, and revitalization.

High priority properties (shown in **red** on Figure 3-12) may comprise one or more of the following:

- Underutilization (vacancies, large areas of unused land, etc.)
- Poor condition (structural failures, over grown landscaping, etc.)
- Historical or functional significance (high quality construction, large buildings, etc.)
- Inappropriate program for 'Main Street' district (warehouses, etc.)
- High potential for improvements (small improvements will make a large impact)
- Potential to contribute to improving the overall downtown development.

Low priority properties (shown in **yellow** on Figure 3-12) may comprise one or more of the following:

- Good condition
- Few vacancies
- Contributes to downtown development.

Infill – the development of vacant parcels within previously built areas.

Redevelopment – building or rebuilding on parcels that have been previously developed, with redevelopment aiming for a higher and better use of the area for the community.

Revitalization – instilling new life and vitality into a community through infill and redevelopment or other activities, such as building reuse and renovations, façade improvements, beautification efforts, small business loans, and special events.

Source: Reinvest Maryland
<https://apps.planning.maryland.gov/reinvestmd/>

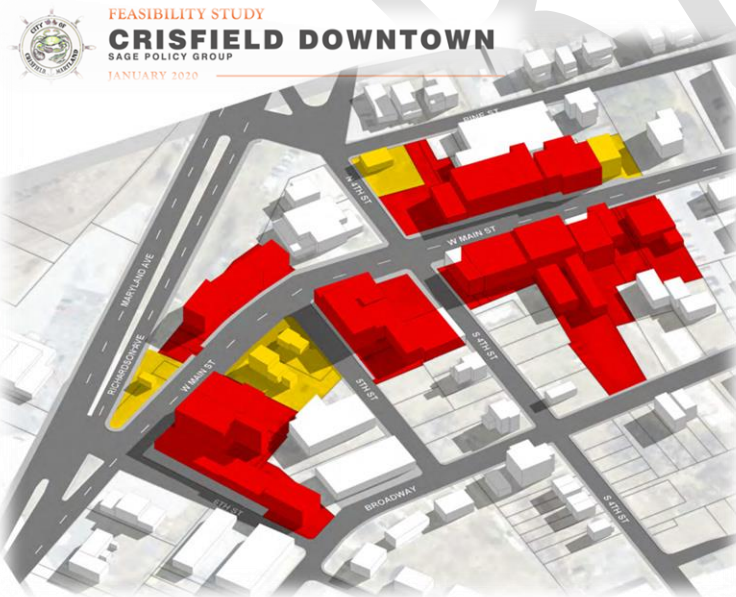


Figure 3-12: City of Crisfield Feasibility Study- Priority Properties

In addition, a density analysis was included in the feasibility study to determine where new structures (shown in **orange** on Figure 3-13) should be provided, and which existing structures should be retained.



Figure 3-13: City of Crisfield Feasibility Study- Density Analysis

Goals and Strategies: County & Municipal Plan Integration

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

- A. 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 to ensure consistency.
- B. 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 to ensure consistency.
- C. 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.
- D. Hold a series of strategic planning meetings between the Town of Princess Anne, the City of Crisfield, 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

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

- A. 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.
- B. Promote infill and redevelopment with mixed use zoning to increase the number of housing choices and affordability within the municipal limits of Princess Anne. Offer reduced permit fee in targeted infill development areas.
- C. In collaboration with County and municipal key-staff and stakeholders, review and propose adjustments to the Town of Princess Anne's municipal boundary, including anomalies, as appropriate.

Goal 3.3

Evaluate Priority Funding Areas in the fringe areas of the County adjacent to municipal boundaries.

Strategies

- A. Review municipal PFA's in relation to hazard risk and natural resource protection. Consider clearly identifying hazard risk areas and critical areas overlaid with the PFA's during discussion with Somerset County and State agencies. Determine areas where the PFA could be expanded to compensate for losses due to hazard risk, natural resource preservation, and municipal growth areas.

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- B. Meet with Maryland Department of Planning representatives to review current municipal and county PFA's and opportunities for revisions.
 - C. Review Tier Mapping to adjust fringe areas (i.e., unincorporated areas of the County adjacent to municipal boundaries).

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