



2013
Wicomico County
Land Preservation, Parks, and
Recreation Plan
Wicomico County, Maryland

August 2014

Final Draft

Wicomico County Department of
Recreation, Parks, and Tourism

Salisbury – Wicomico County Department of
Planning, Zoning, and Community Development

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The *2013 Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan* builds on the *2005 Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan* to further the goals of the County Comprehensive Plan and assess progress in both meeting the leisure needs of a growing population and helping to preserve land. The Plan also presents a long-range capital improvements program for parks and recreation.

The Plan is prepared in response to the requirements of Maryland's Program Open Space (POS) and includes a complete discussion of relevant topics as prescribed in the guidelines from the Maryland Department of Planning (MDP) and the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for POS plans. Chapters of the plan are:

- 1 Introduction;
- 2 Framework;
- 3 Recreation, Parks and Open Space;
- 4 Planning Areas;
- 5 Agricultural Preservation;
- 6 Natural Resource Conservation; and
- 7 Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan

The following summary provides a brief look at key information about Wicomico County and the recommendations of the Plan.

Framework

The framework for the *2013 Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan* includes information on the physical characteristics, demographic characteristics, and current planning policies of the County. The following points summarize the key findings of the Plan framework.

- Wicomico County is the heart of the Delmarva Peninsula. Located south of Delaware between the Chesapeake Bay and the Atlantic Ocean, Wicomico County is within easy driving distance of the major cities on the east coast.
- Natural features cover a significant amount of land in Wicomico County. The Nanticoke, Wicomico, and Pocomoke Rivers, large areas of woodlands, large tracts of Chesapeake State Forest and other woodlands, wetlands, and much agricultural land give Wicomico County a rural character outside the City of Salisbury and the other seven (7) incorporated areas.
- Development is centered on the Metropolitan Growth Area consisting of the Cities of Fruitland and Salisbury, Town of Delmar, MD, and the adjacent designated growth areas located in the unincorporated portion of the County. Pressure for expansion within this densely developed metropolitan region and increased public services, including parks

and recreation, is likely to occur to the west and northwest of Salisbury because of the proximity to existing services.

- Wicomico County population increased from 84,644 in 2000 to 98,733 in 2010—a 16.6 percent increase in 10 years—according to the decennial censuses. Population is expected to increase by an additional 15.9 percent to 114,400 by 2025.
- For planning purposes, the *2013 Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan Update* divides the County into planning areas, with an approximate population distribution as follows:
 - Central: 59.5%
 - West Sector: 13.2%
 - East Sector: 10.3%
 - Salisbury: 36.0%
 - North: 8.2%
 - South: 16.3%
 - East: 6.5%
 - Tri-Town: 6.5%
 - West: 3.0%

Recreation, Parks, and Open Space

For several decades, Wicomico County has had a vibrant, growing park system and recreation programs that have provided residents with constructive, life-enriching leisure and educational activities. Wicomico County residents enjoy a wide variety of leisure opportunities. Some of the opportunities are available through the Wicomico County Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism in cooperation with 45 recreation councils, special interest groups, and other organizations.

The Wicomico County parks system includes three major types of parks—countywide, community, and neighborhood—each designed to serve geographic areas based on the size of the park and the recreation facilities included in the park. The three park types work together to provide residents with a variety of recreation opportunities within a reasonable distance from home.

The Wicomico County recreation system includes many parks, recreation facilities, and other recreation sites, some of which are owned and/or operated by quasi-public and/or private entities. The public recreation system—comprised of municipal, county, Board of Education, state, and federal sites—includes the following areas and facilities (Tables A-1 through A-6 in the appendix):

- 103 sites
- 25,365.4 acres of land
- 51 softball fields (14 w/lights)
- 26 baseball fields (3 w/lights)
- 62 football/soccer/lacrosse fields (6 w/lights)
- 41 outdoor basketball courts (5 w/lights)
- 52 tennis courts (14 w/lights)
- 30,350 stadium seats
- 56 playgrounds
- 29 pavilions
- 2.2 miles of beach
- 33.7 miles of trails
- 20 concession stands
- 29 restrooms
- 12 boat ramps
- 263 boat slips
- 24 fishing and/or hunting areas
- 1 disc golf course
- 28 horseshoe courts

- 288 picnic tables

Program Open Space (POS) sets a goal of 30.0 acres of local recreation land for every 1,000 residents (ac/000). The needs analysis conducted as part of the *2013 Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan* identified 35.7 ac/000 of local recreation land (Table 3.3). Therefore, Wicomico County has met the POS goal for recreation land, and is eligible to use up to 100% of its POS allocation for development. Furthermore, the County should be able to meet the goal at least through 2025 (Table 3.4). Nevertheless, the County recognizes the continuing need for recreation land and open space and expects to acquire additional land to meet future recreation needs.

The needs analysis also determined the need for individual recreation facilities. The County currently has a need for five additional softball fields, one baseball field, five football/soccer/lacrosse fields, three tennis courts, eight golf holes, two swimming pools, and two boat ramps (Table 3.7). The Plan also identifies additional facility needs as the County population increases (Tables 3.8 through 3.10).

Greenways, heritage tourism, and access to water are also significant recreation issues in Wicomico County. Each topic is discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.

Planning Areas

Chapter 4 of the Plan presents the information from the plan framework and the recreation and parks system for each of the planning areas identified above. The Plan also includes capital recommendations for each area.

Agricultural Land Preservation

Agriculture is a mainstay of the Wicomico County economy. The 2012 U. S. Census of Agriculture identifies 510 farms in the county on 83,739 acres producing goods worth \$236 million (Table 5.1).

Five major programs/tools preserve agricultural land:

- The Wicomico County Agricultural Land Preservation Program, which uses County funds to purchase development rights. The program has no specific goals, but, based on applications to the State, the County program intends to preserve 200 acres of farmland per year.
- Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF), which provides State money to purchase development rights. The State goal is to preserve 1,030,000 acres of farmland by 2022.
- Maryland Rural Legacy Program, which also provides State funds to purchase development rights. The goal set in the County application for the Rural Legacy program is to preserve 350 acres of land per year.

- The Maryland Environmental Trust (MET), which accepts donated easements. No goal has been established for land preservation through MET in Wicomico County.
- Wicomico County land development regulations, which require new residences in the agricultural zoning district to be clustered on smaller lots to preserve the remaining land. The County has not set a goal for land preservation through development regulation.

Approximately 13,116 acres have been preserved through the first four programs (Table 5.2), excluding local land development regulations. The *2013 Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan* cites a prorated share of the MALPF goal as a combined goal for land preservation. If the MALPF goal were prorated on the basis of land area, Wicomico County's share would be approximately 2,904 acres per year. At a conservative, average price of \$3,500 per acre, meeting the total goal would require slightly more than \$10.1 million per year.

Natural Resource Conservation

Wicomico County policies for natural resource conservation are rooted in the *Wicomico County Comprehensive Plan* (3 Feb 1998). The *2013 Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan* endorses the County policies from the Comprehensive Plan.

The preserved lands in Wicomico County (Map 6.1) include:

- Land where development is prohibited or severely restricted by regulation, such as wetlands or Chesapeake Bay Critical Areas.
- Land upon which conservation easements have been purchased through The Nature Conservancy, the Maryland Environmental Trust (MET), MALPF, Rural Legacy, or the Wicomico County agricultural easement purchase program.
- Land which is in public ownership for recreational use or to preserve natural features, such as the Chesapeake Forest, County and municipal parklands, or other lands owned by the Federal, State, or local governments.
- Natural areas, which have been identified as the location of a plant or animal species or geologic formation worth of preservation.
- Transmission line and railroad corridors—which foster wildlife migration and provide habitat and links between preserved lands—are likely to remain undeveloped as links in vital transportation systems.

The natural lands in Maryland form the Green Infrastructure (GI) within each county. A GI network is based on the concept of hubs and corridors. The State DNR has identified 23 GI hubs within Wicomico County (Map 6.2)

The Plan concludes that Wicomico County's land preservation policies, illustrated by the pattern of preserved land in the County, do an excellent job of supporting the State's Green Infrastructure concept (Map 6.3).

The latest version of the State’s GI maps discontinued identifying several types of natural areas. Wicomico County officials considered the omitted areas important enough to continue reference in the county LPPRP. The areas, called “High Value Natural Areas” are found on Map 6.4.

Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan

The Plan itself is contained in the final chapter of this document and is composed of:

- A map (Map 7.1);
- Policy recommendations in recreation/parks/open space, agricultural land preservation, and natural resource conservation; and
- A capital improvements program.

Policy recommendations are identified below by subject area.

Recreation/Parks (RP)-1 Continue to establish and maintain park restoration funds to address capital rehabilitation issues.

RP-2 Continue to use enterprise funding wherever possible for new recreation programs and recreation facility maintenance.

RP-3 Continue updating the depreciation schedules of facilities such as Nanticoke Harbor and the Cedar Hill Marina & Henry Parker Athletic Complex, Pemberton Historic Park, pavilions, the Equestrian Center, etc. to address the funding required to restore and modernize capital items as needed.

RP-4 Explore the establishment of a County festival site.

RP-5 Work with DNR and local equestrian groups to develop equestrian trails in the Chesapeake Forest.

RP-6 Encourage developers to provide and improve land to establish neighborhood greens in new developments.

RP-7 Coordinate with developers to establish pedestrian/bicycle paths and landscape plans along the adjacent roadways.

RP-8 Ensure that County trails are compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

RP-9 Continue to evaluate older playgrounds to ensure compliance with the U. S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) guidelines.

RP-10 Continue to enhance the comprehensive parks maintenance management program to ensure safe and attractive parks and to replace older equipment and vehicles.

RP-11 Renew the 20-year lease agreement with the Delmarva Shorebirds to include restoration and modernization of Arthur W. Perdue Stadium.

- RP-12 Work with DNR and MDP to develop public access to waterways through State lands, including the Chesapeake State Forest, and to utilize State lands for public trails, birding, photography, and biking opportunities.
- RP-13 Work with the Board of Education to reduce the fees paid by the County and eliminate the policy restricting summer indoor use of school facilities for public recreational use.
- RP-14 Continue to bring visitors and dollars into the County by leveraging the County's outstanding recreation and parks system.
- RP-15 Expand facilities required to attract and expand amateur tournaments.
- RP-16 Continue the public relations initiative to inform residents about the value received for services rendered by the Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism.
- RP-17 Continue to strengthen recreation council & stakeholder relationships to support programs and park operations.
- RP-18 Continue to review the County fee structure for possible modifications to increase participation.
- RP-19 Continue the endowment to support scholarships and programs for the County's at-risk populations.
- RP-20 Ensure safe and comfortable biking.
- RP-21 Consider developing recreation programs that address the leisure needs of the County's continually diversifying population.
- RP-22 Develop trail guides and features that explore and enhance the natural and historic features of Wicomico County.
- RP-23 Establish safe and sustainable connections between County Trails and nearby State lands and trails.
- RP-24 Consider developing a web-based application to report maintenance opportunities.
- RP-25 Continue to coordinate with Federal, State, and local government agencies, and non-governmental organizations to identify potential resources to plan and implement trail projects.
- Agricultural Preservation (A)-1 Evaluate open space requirements for residential development in the A-1 Zoning District.
- A-2 Develop an educational process for elected officials, real estate professionals, and residents to explain the benefits of a transfer of development rights (TDR) program.
- A-3 Evaluate the minimum acreage requirement for participation in the County easement program.

- A-4 Develop alternative methods of compensation for easements to meet a variety of financial needs of farm families.
- A-5 Evaluate the impact of the County's land development regulations on agricultural land preservation and make changes where appropriate.
- A-6 Continue preservation efforts designed to achieve the preservation goals contained in this Plan.
- Natural Resource Conservation – (N-1) Consideration should be given to expanding the existing Quantico Creek Rural Legacy Area, as well as possibly establishing an additional Rural Legacy Area in Wicomico County.
- N-2 Support the initiatives of various environmental groups to preserve open space and improve the quality of the Chesapeake Bay tributaries.
- N-3 Continue regular meetings between representatives of environmental organizations and County officials to discuss and assess important environmental issues in the County.
- N-4 Consider land banking and other voluntary mechanisms to preserve land along Wicomico County waterways.
- N-5 Strengthen the County focus on corridor development with an integrated approach involving State, County, and non-profit groups to protect natural resources, habitat areas, historic site, and develop waterway trails.
- N-6 Foster a strong working relationship between the County and the State in areas of mutual interest.
- N-7 Consider several concepts to enhance forest stewardship.
- N-8 Prepare a study of sea level rise to determine short- and long-term effects on Wicomico County.
- N-9 Consider coupling agricultural preservation easement purchases with initiatives to protect Green Infrastructure hubs and corridors.
- N-10 Research and identify alternative methods of compensation for easements; i.e., tax-free interest payments, tax donation deductions, property tax credit, etc.
- N-11 Seek statewide Program Open Space funding to acquire lands within targeted high priority Green Infrastructure hubs and corridors.

The capital recommendations of the Plan include 44 projects totaling an estimated \$20.041 million (Table 7.2). Highlights of the capital recommendations include:

- Acquiring 78.64 acres of land, including:
 - 38.0 acres to expand Pemberton Historical Park
 - 22.5 acres for a new South Growth Area Park
 - 6.0 acres to expand Hebron Park
 - 3.0 acres to expand parking at the Eastside Sports Complex

- Developing & expanding parks to meet recreation needs of areas experiencing or expected to experience significant growth:
 - A new community park in the West Metro portion of the Central Planning Area;
 - Expand the Fruitland Recreational Park to consider a new park to serve the growing South Metro Planning Areas;
 - Expand the Henry Parker Athletic Complex to increase inventory to 8 ball and 8 soccer fields; and
 - Pirates Wharf.

- A total of \$5.448 million—27% of total estimated cost—devoted to rehabilitation of existing facilities, in response to the Plan’s emphasis on park and facility rehabilitation.

INTRODUCTION

For the past several decades, Wicomico County has established a model system of parks, recreation, and open space for small counties nationwide. Aided by State and Federal funding programs and strong partnerships with other public and private organizations, the Wicomico County Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism (DRPT) has increased leisure services to residents and tourists far beyond County resources.

To fulfill the requirements of Maryland's Program Open Space (POS), the *2013 Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan* update builds on the County's 2005 plan, describing the County's current status and efforts in recreation and parks. In addition, the Plan presents the County's efforts to preserve Green Infrastructure: the County's rich agricultural lands and important natural resources. The following introduction to the Plan presents the context for the Plan, including local policies that have directed land preservation, parks, and recreation efforts and other circumstances that have had significant impacts on county leisure services.

PURPOSES OF THE PLAN

The *2013 Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan* is important and timely for several key reasons. In addition to continuing the County's eligibility for annual POS funding, the Plan:

- Assesses the county's progress in:
 - Meeting the leisure service needs of Wicomico County residents.
 - Preserving open space, agricultural land and activities, and important natural resources in a system of Green Infrastructure.
- Identifies any impacts on County services caused by changes in local funding mechanisms.
- Illustrates the combined effect of County, State, and Federal land preservation programs on the landscape and future character of Wicomico County.

Regulations for POS require all counties to prepare a land preservation, parks, and recreation plan every six years. In accordance with guidelines prepared by the Maryland Department of Planning (MDP) and the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR), two major goals of the Plan are:

- Comply with the State of Maryland mandate that all local jurisdictions adopt recreation and land preservation plans to qualify for Maryland Program Open Space funds.
- Guide the development of recreation and park services, and direct county efforts to conserve and protect Green Infrastructure the natural environment and farmland.

The guidelines also establish the following objectives for the Plan:

- Review goals and objectives of State and local programs for three principal elements: parks and recreation, agriculture, and natural resources.
- Identify where these goals and objectives are essentially the same, where they are complementary or mutually supportive, and where they are simply different.
- Evaluate the ability of implementation programs and funding sources for each element to achieve related goals and objectives.
- Identify desirable improvements to policies, plans, and funding strategies, to better achieve goals and improve return on public investment.
- Recommend to State and local legislatures, governing bodies, and agencies any changes to the current comprehensive plan needed to overcome any shortcomings in meeting local program goals and, ultimately, to ensure good return on public investment.
- Identify the outdoor recreation needs and priorities of current and future State and local populations.
- Achieve legislative goals of state and local land preservation programs.

Guiding principles of the Plan endorse and reflect the 12 visions of the Maryland Planning Act (1992, as amended). Each of the 12 visions is presented below (in bold) with the corresponding principle(s) of the Wicomico plan (in italics).

- **Quality of Life and Sustainability**

Work toward universal stewardship of the land, water, and air, resulting in sustainable communities and protection of the environment.

- **Public Participation**

Engage citizens as active partners in the planning and implementation of community initiatives and in being sensitive to citizen responsibilities in achieving community goals.

- **Growth Areas**

Concentrate growth in existing population and business centers, growth areas adjacent to existing centers, and strategically selected new centers.

- **Community Design**

Use land and transportation resources efficiently and preserve/enhance natural systems, open spaces, recreational areas, and historical, cultural, and archeological resources by encouraging compact, mixed-use, walkable design consistent with existing community character and located near available or planned transit options.

- **Infrastructure**

Growth areas should have the water resources and infrastructure to accommodate future population and business expansion in an orderly, efficient, and environmentally sustainable manner.

- **Transportation**

Provide a well-maintained, multimodal transportation system to facilitate the safe, convenient, affordable, and efficient movement of people, goods, and services within and between population and business centers.

- **Housing**

Provide a range of housing densities, types, and sizes to offer sufficient options for citizens of all ages and incomes.

- **Economic Development**

Encourage economic development and natural resource-based businesses that provide employment opportunities for all income levels within the capacity of the state's natural resources, public services, and public facilities.

- **Environmental Protection**

Carefully manage land and water resources, including the Chesapeake Bay and coastal bays, to restore and maintain healthy air and water, natural systems, and living resources.

- **Resource Conservation**

Preserve waterways, forests, agricultural areas, open space, natural systems, and scenic areas.

- **Stewardship**

Encourage a coalition of government, business, and residents to be responsible for creating sustainable communities by collaborating to balance efficient growth with environmental protection.

- **Implementation**

Work to achieve the 12 visions by integrating strategies, policies, programs, and funding for growth, resource conservation, infrastructure, and transportation across local, regional, state, and interstate levels.

LOCAL PREPARATION OF THE PLAN

The DRPT is the lead agency and driving force behind the development and implementation of the *2013 Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan*. Mr. Gary Mackes, Director of the Department, is the Program Open Space liaison. The DRPT has primary responsibility for implementing recommendations related to recreation and park services. Guidelines for the 2013 update require information regarding agricultural preservation and resource conservation, which is primarily taken from existing sources and County policies. Implementation of the recommendations regarding agricultural preservation, green infrastructure, and natural resource conservation will be the responsibility of the Salisbury-Wicomico County Department of Planning, Zoning, and Community Development, with a strong role played by the DRPT.

Public Participation

The *2013 Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan* is based on the *2005 Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan*. The update was prepared within the confines of reduced local, County, and State budgets. Furthermore, the update was prepared, in large part, on the ideas and concepts found in three information sources:

1. Statewide survey of households concerning park and recreation activities conducted in January 2003¹ — the survey divided the State into seven regions. Wicomico County was included in the Lower Eastern Shore region along with Dorchester, Somerset, and Worcester Counties. Within each region, 400 households chosen at random were interviewed by phone concerning participation in local park and recreation activities. The survey results provided information about:

- The percentage of households and individuals participating in 71 specific recreation activities (participation rates).

- The number of times a participant was active in the activity within the year (frequency of participation).

- Respondents attitudes about the adequacy of recreation facilities in the respondent's county.

¹ Norris, Donald F. and Hanson, Royce, *Participation in Local Park and Recreation Activities in Maryland*, May 2003, University of Maryland, Baltimore County, Baltimore (MD)

The survey results were used in the analysis of needed facilities in Chapter 3 and as corroboration of findings from interviews and meetings.

2. Stakeholder interviews — The 2005 *Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan* included ideas derived from interviews with the following interests:

- Chesapeake Bay Foundation
- City of Salisbury
- Delmar Recreation Council
- East Side Recreation Council
- Friends of Pemberton Historical Park
- Local businesses
- Mardela Recreation Council
- MD Dept. of Natural Resources
- MD Dept. of Planning
- Pemberton Historical Park Adv. Bd.
- Salisbury Adv. Council on Youth Activities
- Salisbury Area Chamber of Commerce
- Salisbury-Wicomico Co. Dept. of Planning, Zoning, & Comm. Devel.
- Sharptown Recreation Council
- The Nature Conservancy
- Town of Delmar
- Town of Fruitland
- Town of Hebron
- Town of Pittsville
- Town of Sharptown
- Town of Willards
- U.S. Dept. of Ag., Soil Conservation Service
- West Side Comm. Ctr. Adv. Bd.
- West Side Historical Society
- Wicomico County Agricultural Preservation Board
- Wicomico County Council
- Wicomico County Public Schools
- Wicomico Co. Recreation Comm.
- Wicomico County staff
- Wicomico County Tourism Board
- Wicomico Environmental Trust
- Wicomico Equestrian Center Adv. Bd.
- Wicomico Historical Society

The 2013 Plan pulls through the information from the 2005 interviews.

3. Meetings — The County sponsored meetings of both County officials and the general public to explain the project and solicit ideas for the Plan.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING PROCESS

The current Wicomico County Comprehensive Plan was adopted on 3 February 1998. The County is in the process of updating/rewriting the plan. Both the 1998 plan and portions of the current draft plan are on the county website: www.wicomicocounty.org. The current plan (1998) includes nine major elements:

- Goals and Objectives
- Land Use
- Natural Resources and Sensitive Area Protection
- Transportation
- Community Facilities
- Historic and Cultural Preservation
- Housing and Community Development
- Mineral Resources
- Implementation

Open space and recreation are part of the community facilities element of the plan, along with the following subjects:

- Water and sewerage facilities
- Stormwater drainage
- Solid waste management
- Education
- Library
- Police
- Fire, rescue, and ambulance protection

The goals and objectives contained in the 2013 *Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan*, prepared as a requirement of Program Open Space, are consistent with the County's adopted 1998 *Comprehensive Plan*.

RECREATION AND THE QUALITY OF LIFE

“Quality of life” is an ordinary phrase for an extraordinary concept. What determines the community’s “quality of life”? What allows one place to offer a “better” quality of life than another? Public services often make the difference in the locational decisions of both residents and employers. Public schools are important to families with children. Libraries are important for people to continue pursuing education. Parks and recreation are important to occupy leisure time in healthful, productive ways. Open space adds to the visual character of the community and supports habitats for plants and animals. In the competition for residents, tourists, and jobs, recreation, parks, and open space are among Wicomico County’s strongest assets.

Economic Impacts

Leisure service is an industry business that generates hundreds of billions of dollars each year in the United States. Land and natural resource preservation are significant contributors to a strong economy, particularly in agriculture, forestry, and commercial fishing. Since the advent of Program Open Space in 1969, the DRPT has successfully positioned itself to be a major contributor to the local economy.

Signature special events and sporting events generate significant revenue for Wicomico County’s local businesses and tax base. Last year, 24 regional events were held in the park system, infusing \$11,450,000 into the economy. Events included:

- USSSA Girls Softball World Series (290 teams);
- Autumn Wine Festival;
- Pork in the Park Barbecue Festival, now the 3rd largest of its kind;
- Delmarva Bike Week (100,000 motorcyclists);
- Good Beer Festival; and
- Seagull Century Bike Tour (8,000 cyclists).

Social Benefits

Recreation and leisure services contribute directly to quality of life. Research shows that a community’s recreation amenities strongly influence the feelings of both residents and workers about an area. Recreation opportunities instill community pride. Activities such as hunting, golf, and recreational fishing offer a chance to develop valuable friendships and partnerships. Leisure events frequently leave participants with an enhanced sense of community spirit. Certain forms of recreation also give the physically disabled a chance to become more involved in community activities. Youths who participate in organized recreation are less likely to engage in antisocial behavior, need social services, or become involved in the criminal court system. Furthermore, recreation programs are much less expensive than the \$150 per person per day cost to incarcerate troubled youth.

Environmental Benefits

Protecting our natural environment is a primary concern of people throughout the Country. Sustaining open space in its natural state avoids the interrelated ecological consequences of disturbing sensitive environmental features like steep slopes, flood prone areas, and woodlands. Conserving natural areas by preserving land safeguards the habitat of native and exotic flora and fauna, especially those with a limited niche that need specific localized conditions to flourish. Preserving forests and farmlands also improves water quality.

Preserving farmland adds another dimension to the benefits of land preservation. In addition to the economic importance of agriculture, saving farmland helps sustain rural landscapes. The scenery and pastoral environments rural areas provide are often irreplaceable.

Personal Benefits

Healthy people usually live longer, tend to have positive mental attitudes, and often develop better self-esteem. Recreation can deter substance abuse and help develop interpersonal skills. Older people who participate in leisure activities are frequently happier and less lonely than those who do not, thereby reducing the need for professional care. Intergenerational recreation activities give young and older people the chance to learn from each other.

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FRAMEWORK

The framework for any plan is the characteristics of the community for which the plan is prepared. The framework for the *2013 Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan* includes information on three important aspects of the County:

- **Physical characteristics**—Information on the forests, woodlands, streams, wetlands, Critical Areas (associated with the Chesapeake Bay), soils, steep slopes, unique natural areas, and development patterns will help guide future park sites and recreation services. Later, in separate chapters, the Plan discusses agricultural land and natural resources. The Plan also devotes a significant amount of discussion to the Green Infrastructure (GI) process that provides some cohesion to the preservation of a variety of valuable natural resources.
- **Demographic characteristics**—Information on the County’s people, such as population, age, gender, and income will help analyze current and future demand for recreation services.
- **Current planning policies**—Information on the County Comprehensive Plan and other plans will help determine current policies to strengthen or change to help meet the leisure service needs of current and future county residents.

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

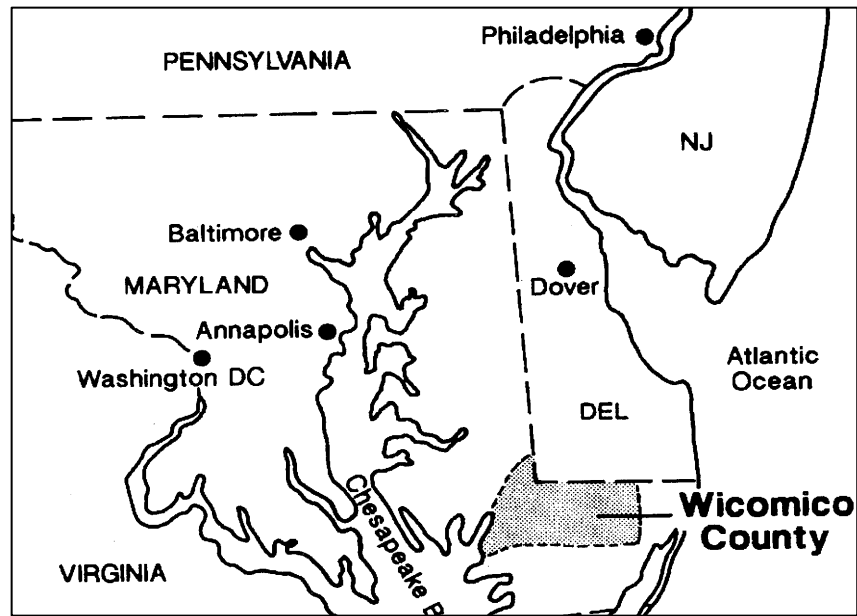
Wicomico County is the heart of the Delmarva Peninsula. Located south of Delaware between the Chesapeake Bay and the Atlantic Ocean, Wicomico County is within easy driving distance of the major cities on the east coast (Map 2.1). Additional information on the following physical characteristics of Wicomico County is presented below:

- Critical Areas
- Wetlands, floodplains
- Woodlands
- Unique natural areas
- Development pattern
- Preserved land

Critical Areas, Wetlands, and Floodplains

Water features (Map 2.2) are significant for both major components of the *2013 Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan*: parks/recreation and agricultural preservation/natural resource conservation. Federal and State law requires wetlands, both tidal and nontidal, must be preserved or relocated. Floodplains should also be preserved, wherever possible. Efforts should be made to avoid development within the 100-year floodplain. If development occurs within the 100-year floodplain, efforts should be made to mitigate negative impacts. Wicomico County has strong regulations restricting uses within floodplains.

Map 2.1
Regional Location



Source: URDC, 2013

Critical Areas are regulated through the Wicomico County Critical Areas Program, adopted in 1989. As defined by State law, the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area includes the Chesapeake Bay, all tidal tributaries and wetlands, and all water and land areas within 1,000 feet of the upland boundary of the tidal waters and wetlands. In Wicomico County, the major bodies of water affected are the Wicomico and Nanticoke Rivers, but smaller tidal tributaries, as well as the land within 1,000 feet of all tidal waters are also included. The County program divides land within the State-designated Chesapeake Bay Critical Area into three types of management areas, each permitting various types and intensities of development:

- Intensely Developed Areas;
- Limited Development Areas; and
- Resource Conservation Areas.

Woodlands and Natural Areas

Woodlands cover significant parts of Wicomico County (Map 2.3), providing wildlife habitat, ecological balance, and, in some cases, recreation opportunities for residents. Natural areas are extremely important to preserve the habitat of native flora and fauna, especially those with a limited niche and need specific localized conditions to flourish.

Development Pattern

Development in Wicomico County is centered on the Metropolitan Growth Area including the Cities of Fruitland and Salisbury, the Town of Delmar, MD, and the adjacent designated growth areas located in the unincorporated portion of the County. The designated growth areas around the aforementioned municipalities represents the more densely populated areas of the County. Most of the developed land in the County is located within the Metropolitan Growth Area.

In recent decades throughout the Country, development has occurred in areas outside of urban cores, and Wicomico County is no exception. New development, exhibited by the number and size of final plats approved, has pushed against the boundaries of the Metropolitan Growth Area (Map 2.4). In the 28 years from 1986 through 2013, subdivision plats located in the unincorporated area of Wicomico and outside of the Metropolitan Growth Area accounted for almost 60 percent of all lots on 79 percent of the newly developed land. (Table 2.1).

Table 2.1
**Development within the Unincorporated Portion
 Of Wicomico County, 1986—2013**

Area	Final Lots		Acres		Average Lot Size (ac.)
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Within Metropolitan Growth Area	2,078	39.9%	2,392	21.0%	1.15
Outside Metropolitan Growth Area	3,130	60.1%	9,017	79.0%	2.88
Total	5,208	100.0%	11,409	100.0%	2.19

Source: Salisbury—Wicomico County Department of Planning, Zoning, and Community Development (P&Z)

The extent of development in Wicomico County does not constitute an imminent threat to land preservation efforts. The 1998 zoning code amendments to the A-1 Agricultural-Rural Zoning District have increased the amount of land preserved through the development process. From June 1998 through December 2013, 24 new subdivisions (of three or more lots) were approved in the A-1 district. The 24 approved subdivisions contain 392 lots on a total of 2,625 acres, of which 1,432 acres is preserved as open space set-aside (both on lots and as a separate parcel).

Approximately 62,000 acres or 33 percent of the 185,567 acres within the A-1 zoning district have some level of protection from future development. The A-1 zoning district includes wetlands (tidal and nontidal), Quantico Creek Rural Legacy Area, Chesapeake Bay Critical Areas, and other natural areas, State- and County-owned land, State and County agricultural easements, Maryland Environmental Trust easements, Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) easements, Wetland Reserve Program easements, and fee-simple properties owned by The Nature Conservancy. In addition to the publicly-owned parcels noted above, as well as other protected and preserved areas in the A-1 zoning district, other major factors limit future development, such as the septic suitability of soils.

Undeveloped areas within the A-1 zoning district on publicly-owned land or preserved and protected areas will likely remain undeveloped. The extension of public water and sewerage systems to areas contained in the A-1 zoning district is prohibitively expensive for public

financing mechanisms. Moreover, package, community, or shared septic systems serving new residential development are prohibited in the A-1 Zoning District.

Furthermore, the Metropolitan Growth Area adjacent to the Cities of Fruitland and Salisbury and the Town of Delmar, MD, have seen an increase in growth as land is annexed and proposed for development. This is partly as a result of the density restrictions in the agricultural district, as well as because of the environmental constraints in the more rural areas of the County. Annexed parcels within a designated growth area will be served by public water and sewer; therefore, development will occur at a higher density than in the County. Development in the unincorporated portion of the County has occurred at an average density of approximately 2.19 equivalent dwelling units per acre. The majority of future development will occur in the municipalities with public utilities and services that allow for more concentrated development. For example, the most restrictive residential zoning district in the City of Salisbury permits four units per acre, and the least restrictive district permits 12 units per acre for multifamily development. From 2000 through 2013, the City of Salisbury annexed 1,632 acres of land in the Metropolitan Growth Area that was previously under Wicomico County's jurisdiction. The development pattern and intensity within the Metropolitan Growth Area is consistent with the County's plans and policies that encourage and direct development to the identified growth areas and has been especially noticeable since 1998, with the implementation of the density restrictions in the County's agricultural district.

U.S. Routes 13 and 50 bisect the County in an east to west and north to south orientation, respectively. One of the goals of this plan is to link the east and west portions of the County with bikeways and greenways.

The extent of development in Wicomico County does not constitute an imminent threat to land preservation efforts in large part because the 1998 zoning code amendments to the A-1 Agricultural-Rural Zoning District have increased the amount of land preserved through the development process. A significant portion of the County's land mass located within the A-1 district has some level of protection preventing future development. Examples include:

- Wetlands (tidal and nontidal).
- The Quantico Creek Rural Legacy Area.
- Chesapeake Bay Critical Areas and other natural areas.
- State- and County-owned land.
- State and County agricultural easements.
- Maryland Environmental Trust easements.
- Conservation Reserve Easement Program (CREP) easements.
- Wetland Reserve Program easements.
- Fee-simple properties owned by The Nature Conservancy.

In addition to the preserved areas noted above, other limitations, such as septic suitability of soils, are major factors limiting residential development. Chapter 5 contains additional information about the County's land preservation efforts.

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Demographics describe the people of an area using statistics. The *2013 Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan* includes information on Wicomico County’s current and forecasted population, age, gender, and income. The 2013 Plan uses data from the 2010 U.S. Decennial Census, 2012 American Community Survey, and Maryland Department of Planning’s State Data Center.

Population

The difference in growth potential in different areas of the County has led to the identification and analysis of “planning areas” (which cover the entire County) and more specific “growth areas.” Planning areas have been included in all of the County’s Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation plans since the original plan in 1988. The Central Planning Area is large enough to be divided into three sectors (east, west, and central). The central subsector of the Central Planning Area contains the City of Salisbury. The West Planning Area has the smallest population of all the planning areas (Table 2.2).

**Table 2.2
Population Counts and Projections
Wicomico County, 2000-2025**

Planning Area	2000	2010	2015	2020	2025	Change, 2000-2010		Change, 2010-2025
						Number	Percent	
East	6,109	6,448	6,723	7,132	7,471	339	5.5	1,023
Central	50,196	58,737	61,246	64,964	68,056	8,541	17.0	9,319
East Subsector	9,235	10,211	10,647	11,294	11,831	976	10.6	1,620
West Subsector	11,663	12,998	13,553	14,376	15,060	1,335	11.4	2,062
Central Subsector	29,298	35,528	37,046	39,294	41,165	6,230	21.3	5,637
West	2,734	2,953	3,080	3,266	3,422	219	8.0	469
Tri-Town	5,394	6,444	6,719	7,127	7,467	1,050	19.5	1,023
South	13,495	16,087	16,774	17,792	18,640	2,592	19.2	2,553
North	6,716	8,064	8,408	8,919	9,344	1,348	20.1	1,280
Total	84,644	98,733	102,950	109,200	114,400	14,089	16.6	15,667

Sources: U. S. Census, Maryland Department of Planning’s State Data Center, and the Salisbury- Wicomico County Department of Planning, Zoning, and Community Development

The Wicomico County population in the 2010 U.S. Census was 98,733, an increase of 16.6% from the 2000 census (Table 2.3). Females outnumber males in both Wicomico County and, by comparison, in the entire State of Maryland (Table 2.3).

Table 2.3
Gender, 2010

Gender	Wicomico County		Maryland	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Male	47,087	47.7	2,791,762	48.4
Female	51,646	52.3	2,981,790	51.6
Totals	98,733	100.0	5,773,552	100.0

Sources: U.S. Census, URDC

The Wicomico County population grew at a faster rate from 2000 to 2010 than the State of Maryland as a whole — a characteristic common to both the male and female populations. According to data from the Maryland State Data Center (MSDC), Wicomico County is projected to grow faster than the state as a whole between 2015 and 2040 (Table 2.4). In addition, MSDC data projects Wicomico County will not only grow at the fastest rate among the four Lower Eastern Shore counties (Dorchester, Somerset, Wicomico, and Worcester) from 2010 to 2035, but the county will also be the fastest growing county in the Lower Eastern Shore region in each of the 5-year intervals between 2010 and 2035 (Table 2.5).

Table 2.4
Population Projections, 2015-2040

	2015	2020	2030	2040	Change, 2015-2040	
					Number	Percent
Wicomico	102,950	109,200	119,200	127,650	24,700	24.0%
Maryland	5,962,000	6,216,150	6,611,900	6,861,900	899,900	15.1%

Sources: U.S. Census, URDC

MSDC data also indicate that the average Wicomico County household size in 2010 remained at 2.53 persons per household—the same figure as in 2000. Since the 1990 census, Wicomico County has had the highest persons per household figure of any county in the Lower Eastern Shore. MSDC projections of household size anticipate that Wicomico will continue to have the highest average household size on the Lower Eastern Shore through 2040, even though the average size will decrease during the time period (Table 2.5). Between 2010 and 2040, Worcester County is projected to have the largest decrease of average household size, 2.28 and 2.16, respectively.

Table 2.5
Current and Projected Average Household Size, Lower Eastern Shore, 2010-2040

County	2010	2020	2030	2040	Change, 2000-2040	
					Number	Percent
Dorchester	2.37	2.33	2.28	2.26	-0.11	-4.64%
Somerset	2.37	2.33	2.30	2.30	-0.07	-2.95%
Wicomico	2.53	2.49	2.46	2.45	-0.08	-3.16%
Worcester	2.28	2.24	2.19	2.16	-0.12	-5.26%
Maryland	2.61	2.56	2.50	2.48	-0.13	-4.98%

Sources: Maryland Department of Planning

Income

The median household income in the County increased 29.7 percent or \$11,604 between the 2000 Census and the 2012 American Community Survey. During the same period of time, the State median household income increased 38.1 percent or \$20,131. This 29.7 percent increase in the County’s median household income clearly indicates an increasing need for leisure activities.

Table 2.6
Median Household Income, 1999–2012

Income	2000 Census	2012 American Community Survey; 5-Year Estimates	Change, 2000-2010	
			Amount	Percent
Wicomico County	\$39,035	\$50,639	\$11,604	29.7%
Maryland	\$52,868	\$72,999	\$20,131	38.1%

Sources: 2000 Decennial Census and 2012 American Community Survey (5-year estimates 2008 -2012)

CURRENT PLANNING POLICIES

The *Wicomico County Comprehensive Plan* (3 February 1998) contains both objectives and policies that are relevant to the issues of land conservation, recreation, agricultural preservation, and natural resource conservation. The following section identifies appropriate county objectives and policies.

Agricultural / Resource District Objectives¹

- Recognize productive agricultural land as a valuable natural resource.
- Protect Wicomico County’s agricultural heritage and vitality.
- Work with the local agricultural community in order to find viable means of keeping land in farming and to provide proper protection of productive agricultural land and agricultural business.

Natural Resource and Sensitive Areas Protection Objectives²

- Identify the wetland and floodplains in order to provide the special protection they may need.
- Provide open space, scenic areas, and natural breaks in the landscape.
- Protect water quality and wildlife, and conserve natural features that make a significant contribution to the character of the county.

¹ 1998 Wicomico County Comprehensive Plan, PP. 43

² 1998 Wicomico County Comprehensive Plan, PP. 54

- Limit development in floodplains, on steep slopes, and in other sensitive natural areas.
- Protect water quality by reducing pollution and its effects.
- Conserve fish, wildlife, and plant habitats.
- Establish protection measures for sensitive areas including streams and their buffers, 100-year floodplains, steep slopes adjacent to streams, and habitats of threatened and endangered species to reinforce existing regulatory protection programs.
- Conserve forest and woodland resources. Utilize and require tree conservation measures and replanting programs in compliance with the Maryland Forest Conservation Act.
- Develop local regulations that encourage the landscape to be preserved in its natural state by minimizing tree and soil removal.
- Ensure that all new development and redevelopment minimizes pollutant loadings and runoff from sites through implementation of sediment, stormwater and erosion control plans and practices.
- Encourage property owners to place environmentally sensitive lands under public and private conservation easements.

Open Space and Recreation Objectives³

- Encourage the preservation of land and cultural resources. Increase the availability of recreational areas to improve the quality of life within the county.
- Provide an array of recreational facilities and programs throughout the county to make recreation available to all county citizens.

Open Space and Recreation Policies⁴

- Provide sufficient, diversified recreational and open space facilities in proximity to existing and future residential developments.
- Ensure the accessibility of recreation and open space facilities for all local residents, including the elderly and handicapped.
- Preserve open land within natural area corridors adjacent to rivers and stream branches that are not suitable for intense development.
- Protect existing outdoor recreation areas and open space from encroachment by incompatible land uses.
- Maximize the use of existing facilities as stabilizing influences on the residential areas of the county.
- Recognize the value of agricultural land and other natural resource areas as important components of an open space system.
- Preserve the unique natural characteristics of the county's land and waterways and their ability to reduce potential dangers from flooding, erosion, siltation, and pollution.

³ 1998 Wicomico County Comprehensive Plan, PP. 107

⁴ 1998 Wicomico County Comprehensive Plan, PP. 126

- Give high priority to providing open space in growth centers established in the Goal and Objectives element of the comprehensive plan.
- Provide strategically located river access points for both active and passive recreational pursuits.

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RECREATION, PARKS, AND OPEN SPACE

For several decades, Wicomico County has developed and operated a vibrant, growing park system, recreation programs and signature events that have provided residents with constructive, life-enriching leisure and educational activities. The following chapter presents information about the current recreation and park system in Wicomico County.

Wicomico County residents enjoy a wide variety of leisure opportunities. Some of the opportunities are available through the Wicomico County Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism in cooperation with a Recreation & Parks Commission, 45 recreation councils & special interest groups, and other organizations. The wide variety of parks in the County, ranging from large natural areas to small neighborhood play areas, offers many additional activities.

While most recreation programs and facilities are available to the general public, some are restricted to members of a club or organization. Seven major types of agencies and groups provide leisure services in the County:

- Wicomico County;
- Municipalities;
- Wicomico County Board of Education;
- State of Maryland;
- Maintaining Active Citizens, Inc. (MAC);
- Private clubs;
- Quasi-public groups, such as churches, YMCA, Boys and Girls Club; and
- Private businesses.

The Wicomico County Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism complements its longstanding commitment to high-quality parks and recreation programs with providing exemplary park maintenance services. The Department has a Parks Division that has five major objectives:

- Logistical support to the public recreation program and tourism special events;
- Conservation of natural resources;
- Ongoing inspection and maintenance to ensure county parks are attractive, safe, sanitary, and functional;
- Land acquisition, park development, and restoration of existing recreation facilities; and
- Maintaining and promoting public access to water.

The Wicomico County parks system includes three major types of parks (Table 3.1). Parks are designed to serve geographic areas based on the size of the park and the recreation facilities included in the park. The three park types work together to provide residents with a variety of recreation opportunities within a reasonable distance from home. The recreation sites in Wicomico County, presented in the appendix, are identified by park type.

Table 3.1
Wicomico County Park Types

Park Type	Purpose	Size	Service Area
Neighborhood Park	Serve surrounding neighborhood – Frequently located at or near elementary school – Typical facilities include playground, basketball courts, and tennis courts	1-5 acres	Within 1 mile
Community Park	Larger than neighborhood park, with a wider variety and greater number of recreation facilities – Often serve a municipality, or a group (approximately 4-10) of subdivisions – Sometimes located at a middle school or high school – Typical facilities include playground, hard surface courts, picnic facilities, and several athletic fields	10-60 acres	Within 5 miles
County Park	Serve Metro Core area or entire county – Often include unique natural setting and/or specialized facilities, such as a harbor, zoo, stadium, heritage area, equestrian center, or athletic complex – Large areas may be preserved in a natural state	20-100+ acres	Entire county

Source: URDC, adapted from National Recreation and Parks Association

GOALS AND SUPPORT

Goals are important to focus an organization on accomplishing a mission. The State of Maryland, through the Departments of Planning and Natural Resources, has established the following goals for recreation and parks:

- Make a variety of quality recreational environments and opportunities readily accessible to all of its citizens, and thereby contribute to their physical and mental well-being.
- Recognize and strategically use parks and recreation facilities as amenities to make communities, counties, and the State more desirable places to live, work and visit.
- Use State investment in parks, recreation, and open space to complement and mutually support the broader goals and objectives of local comprehensive / master plans.
- To the greatest degree feasible, ensure that recreational land and facilities for local populations are conveniently located relative to population centers, are accessible without reliance on the automobile, and help to protect natural open spaces and resources.
- Complement infrastructure and other public investments and priorities in existing communities and areas planned for growth through investment in neighborhood and community parks and facilities.
- Continue to protect recreational open space and resource lands at a rate that equals or exceeds the rate that land is developed at a statewide level.

The goals of the *2013 Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan*, presented below, reflect the Department's emphasis on continuing partnerships.

- **Partnerships**

- Continue to develop strong partnerships with both public and private entities to improve the County park system and provide recreation programs where most needed.
- Revitalize and strengthen the recreation councils to perpetuate the operation and maintenance of facilities and programs under their purview.

- **Funding**

- Continue to use various methods of fundraising, financing, cost avoidance, and marketing parks and recreation.
- Continue creative techniques to finance proposed capital improvements and programming.

- **Facilities**

- Emphasize maintenance and improvement of existing parks and make maximum use of currently owned land and developed facilities.
- Continue to protect a network of greenways, natural areas, and bike routes throughout the County.
- Continue to modernize and expand the Youth & Civic Center to retain and grow its regional market share as the place to attend concerts and family shows and hold conferences, sports tournaments, and trade shows.
- Develop additional ball & multi-use fields to accommodate demand to host regional & national amateur sports tournaments.

- **Programs**

- Encourage others to provide recreation programs and services to assist the County to effectively meet a need.
- Strive to make programs affordable. Continue to raise funds to grow the "tomorrow fund" to perpetuate scholarships for those who cannot afford program registration fees.
- Restore high-quality recreation programs for youth.

- **Promotion**

- Continue to leverage passive and active parks, the Youth & Civic Center and signature events to support county tourism and economic development initiatives.
- Build on the County's location and natural assets and the department's strong reputation to maintain Wicomico County's status as the "hub" of the Lower Eastern Shore.

The goals above will continue maintain the County's excellence in leisure services; a tradition that has established Wicomico County as one of the outstanding recreation and parks systems of any mid-size county in Maryland, and, perhaps, in the country.

The Department goals and operations are very compatible with state goals in many respects. The County's outstanding park system and the program offerings from the Department and many other sources fulfill the first State goal of quality environments and opportunities for all citizens. The County has thoroughly integrated recreation and parks into the quality of life (2nd State goal), nominally evidenced by melding the recreation and parks functions with tourism in the same Department. County recreation facilities are placed to conveniently serve population concentrations and growth areas (4th and 5th State goals) and often integrate and preserve significant natural resources (4th State goal).

Recreation and parks is critical to the quality of life in Wicomico County. Many aspects of county government, private organizations, and everyday life support recreation facilities and programs, including:

- *Planning/acquisition/development* – The Wicomico County Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism is a strong, vibrant arm of County government. The Department oversees the park system, provides recreation programs, and manages the Wicomico County Youth & Civic Center, a major venue for high-quality entertainment. The Department also administers the County's tourism initiatives. In addition to a capable staff, perhaps the primary reason that Wicomico County has one of the premier park and recreation systems in the Country for its size is the foresight and continual planning to identify and meet future recreation needs. Program Open Space has been an important component of land acquisition and park development.
- *Subdivision Review* –As part of the subdivision review process, the Wicomico County Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism provides comments to the Wicomico County Department of Planning and Zoning regarding the need for recreation land in each major subdivision. The recreation recommendations are incorporated into negotiations with the developer.
- *Fees* – Wicomico County charges fees and administers a million-dollar enterprise budget to offer recreation programs and operate special, revenue generating facilities. Fees for some programs are subsidized for low-income residents through scholarships generated by the Department.
- *Partnership programs/policies* – Wicomico County works aggressively to find partners for parks and recreation. For example:
 - The Local Management Board has provided funding and personnel to improve childcare programs and family activities offered in the County.
 - The Department annually seeks and receives funding from the Maryland's Waterway Improvement Funds to address restoration of County marinas and boat ramps.

- The Department works with nine community recreation councils and numerous special interest boards to operate and maintain municipal and special facilities and activities.
 - The Department works closely with other government agencies, such as the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and private, non-profit organizations, such as the Chesapeake Bay Trust, to preserve and protect the County's natural resources.
 - The Department works closely with the Maryland Stadium Authority and State's Department of Business and Economic Development to enhance facilities which benefit the tourism economy.
- *Joint-use agreements* – The Department has a long-standing joint-use agreement with the Wicomico County Board of Education for public use of school facilities. Also, the County has a joint-use agreement with the Salvation Army Youth Club regarding Billy Gene Jackson Park. The Park is adjacent to the Salvation Army building, and the agreement provides a benefit to the community for sports and leisure programs using both outdoor and indoor resources.

Waterways and open space access – The U. S. Army Corps of Engineers and the State of Maryland, through the Inland Waterway Program offers funds to restore marinas and dredge channels within Wicomico. Maryland's Program Open Space has also been a significant partner in Wicomico capital assets for recreation.

NEEDS ANALYSIS

The 2013 Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan uses a supply/demand model to identify parkland and recreation facility needs. The current parks and recreation facilities represent the “supply” of service, while the desired use, or “demand” for parks and facilities is identified through surveys, meetings, interviews, and staff assessment.

Data on parkland and recreation facilities were obtained from the inventories in previous plans updated through field observations (Tables A-1 through A-6, Map 3.1/Table 3.2). The data conform to the information in the Maryland Electronic Inventory of Recreation Sites (MEIRS).

The Wicomico County recreation system includes many parks, recreation facilities, and other recreation sites, some of which are owned and/or operated by quasi-public and/or private entities. The public recreation system—comprised of municipal, County, Board of Education, State, and Federal sites—includes the following areas and facilities (Table A-6):

- 103 sites
- 25,365.4 acres of land
- 51 softball fields (14 w/lights)
- 26 baseball fields (3 w/lights)
- 62 football/soccer/lacrosse fields (6 w/lights)
- 41 outdoor basketball courts (5 w/lights)
- 52 tennis courts (14 w/lights)
- 1 disc golf course (18 holes)
- 30,750 stadium seats
- 56 playgrounds
- 288 picnic tables
- 29 pavilions
- 2.2 miles of beach
- 33.7 miles of trails
- 20 concession stands
- 29 restrooms
- 12 boat ramps
- 263 boat slips
- 24 fishing and/or hunting areas
- 28 horseshoe courts

Table 3.2
Wicomico County Recreation Sites, 2013
 (Key for Map 3.1)

No. Name of Area / Ownership	No. Name of Area / Ownership	No. Name of Area / Ownership	No. Name of Area / Ownership
State of MD / Nature Conservancy	Local Public Rec. (cont'd.)	Local Public Rec. (cont'd.)	Quasi-Public and Private
A Upper Nanticoke Management Area	31 Emerson Holloway Park	86 Schumaker Park	11 Hebron Fairground and Park
B Pocomoke River Heritage Cons. Fund	32 Salisbury Middle School	87 WinterPlace Park	12 Hebron Part-time Playground
C Plum Creek Cedar Swamp Preserve	33 Billy Gene Jackson Park	88 Beaver Run Elementary	14 Spring Hill Episcopal Church
D Chesapeake Forest	34 North Johnson Pond	89 Perdue Stadium	19 Woodlawn Playground
E Wicomico State Forest	35 North Salisbury Elementary	91 Kilbirnie Playground	20 Mid Delmarva Y.M.C.A.
F Plum Ck. Heritage Cons. Fund	36 Johnson Pond Park	92 Pittsville Ball Park	21 Wood Creek Golf Course
G Powellville Forest	37 Lake Street Playground	93 Pittsville School	33 Sal. Army / W. Salis. Youth Club
H Nassawango Creek Preserve	38 Rose Street Boat Ramp	94 Pittsville Playground	42 Riverside Marina
I Johnson Wildlife Management Area	39 Chipman Elementary	95 Willards Primary	44 Pemberton Apartments
J Ellis Bay Wildlife Management Area	40 Poplar City Mansion	96 Willards School	48 Tom Brown Sports Complex
K Nanticoke River Wildlife Mgt. Area	41 Salisbury Marina	98 Willards Recreation Area/Park	49 Waterside Apartments
L Wetipquin Pond Management Area	43 Waterside Playground	99 E. Side Youth Sports Complex	51 Canal Woods Swimming Club
Local Public Recreation Areas	45 JCC Park	100 Adkins Mill Park	52 Salisbury State Rec. Area-East
1 Cherry Beach	46 Pemberton Elementary	103 Coulbourne Recreation Area	53 Salisbury State Rec. Area-West
2 Cope Bennett Park	47 West Salisbury Little League	104 Fruitland Recreation Facility	57 St. Frances DeSales School
3 Gene Lowe Park	50 Pemberton Historical Park	105 Fruitland Primary	59 Sal. Army Boys and Girls Club
4 San Domingo Playground	54 Pinehurst Elementary	106 Fruitland Intermediate	60 Glen Gardens Apartments
5 Northwestern Elementary	55 Woodcock Playground	107 Fruitland Tennis Courts	64 Moss Hill Apartments
6 Mardela Park	56 Riverside Boat Ramp	111 Pirate's Wharf	67 Moss Hill Playground
7 Mardela High School	58 Riverwalk Park	114 Clara Road Boat Ramp	75 Elks Club
8 Mardela Tennis Courts	61 Wicomico Middle School	115 Roaring Point Park	77 College Lane Apartments
9 Mardela Boat Ramp	62 Newton Playground	117 Nanticoke Park Rec. Area	79 Parkside Apartments
10 Westside Intermediate	63 Newton-Camden	118 Cove Road Recreation Area	83 Woodlawn Campgrounds
13 Hebron Park	65 East Salisbury Elementary	119 Bivalve Wharf	85 Parkwood Apartments
15 Edgewood Park	66 Doverdale Playground	120 Cedar Hill Park	90 Horsebridge Golf Course
16 Gordy Park	69 Nick Meyer Park	121 Tyaskin Recreation Area	97 Gunsmoke Sporting Clay Range
17 Mason Dixon Sports Complex	70 Wicomico High School	122 Wetipquin Park	101 Powellville Park
18 Delmar Elementary	71 Wicomico Co. Youth/Civic Ctr.	126 Westside Primary	102 Nutters Crossing Golf Course
23 Leonards Mill Park	72 Glen Ave Elementary	127 Allen Park	108 Wikander Boat Yard
24 Naylor Mill Park Recreation Area	73 Memorial Field	128 West Side Community Center	109 Wicomico Yacht Club
25 Henry S. Parker Athletic Complex	74 Salisbury City Park and Zoo		110 Green Hill Yacht Club
26 West Salisbury Elementary	76 Prince Street School		112 Whitehaven Marina
27 Cedarhurst Park	78 Bennett Middle School		113 Whitehaven Playground
28 Crooked Oak Playground	80 Bennett High School		116 Roaring Point Campgrounds
29 Centennial Village	81 Harmon Field		123 Wetipquin Playground
30 Indian Village Playground	82 Salisbury Pony League Park		124 Sandy Hill Family Camp
	84 Parkside High School		125 Old Green Hill Church

Sources: Wicomico County, URDC

Land

The default Program Open Space land goal for each county is 30.0 acres of local recreation acreage for every 1,000 county residents (shown as “ac/000”). In determining the land eligible to be considered against the County goal, Program Open Space guidelines recognize the following types of recreation land based on ownership and the presence and importance of natural features:

- 100% of local recreation acreage, which includes school sites counted as either 100% of community recreation acreage on the site or 60% of the total site.
- 1/3 of local natural resource acreage.
- 100% of state and federal recreation land above 60 ac/000 up to a maximum of 15 ac/000.

Wicomico County meets the established goal of 30.0 ac/000, using 60% of school sites (Table 3.3) because the Wicomico State Forest and Chesapeake Forest lands in Wicomico provide an additional 173.2 ac/000, which is 113.2 ac/000 more than the goal for State and federal recreation land (60.0 ac/000 for State recreation land). Therefore, up to 15.0 ac/000 could also be counted toward meeting Wicomico County’s goal for local recreation land. Even if no additional recreation land is acquired, the existing State and local recreation land is sufficient to meet the acreage goal needed to serve the projected County population through 2020 (Table 3.4). **Therefore, Wicomico County formally submits that the County has met its Program Open Space recreation land goal.**

Table 3.3
Recreation Land Classification and Need, 2010

Area	Size (Acres)		Eligible Acres per 000 (2010 population: 98,733)
	Total	Eligible	
<i>State Recreation Land (Table A-1)</i>			
Wicomico State Forest	1,245.0	1,245.0	12.6
Chesapeake Forest	15,855.0	15,855.0	160.6
Subtotal, State Recreation Land	17,100.0	17,100.0	173.2 (use maximum 15.0)
<i>Local Recreation Land</i>			
County-Serving Areas (Table A-2)	1,631.2	1,631.2	16.5
<i>Community-Serving Areas (Table A-3)</i>			
County and Municipalities	132.9	132.9	1.4
Board of Education	154.1	92.5	0.9
<i>Neighborhood-Serving Areas (Table A-4)</i>			
County and Municipalities	100.5	100.5	1.0
Board of Education	148.5	89.1	0.9
Subtotal, Local Recreation Land	2,167.2	2,046.2	20.7
<i>Local Resource Land</i>	0.0	0.0	0.0
TOTAL, Public Recreation Land	19,267.2	19,146.2	35.7

Source: URDC

As a result of meeting the 30.0 ac/000 goal, Wicomico County is eligible to use less than 50 percent of future POS allocations for land acquisition and more than 50 percent for park and facility development. The County will determine priorities for acquisition and/or development projects on a case-by-case basis as different lands become available and recreation facility needs evolve. The county intends to address immediate maintenance and parkland development needs, but reserves the right to be flexible in using POS funding by applying all, part, or none of its annual appropriation for land acquisition.

The Continuing Need for Recreation Land

Despite having currently met the goal for recreation land, Wicomico County recognizes the continuing need for additional parkland to meet the needs of a growing population. Therefore, the 2013 Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan proposes the acquisition of acres of additional land to meet the recreation needs of current and future residents.

Table 3.4
Recreation Land (Acres per Thousand Persons) 2010–2025

Land Classification	2010 Eligible Acres	Acres per Thousand Persons							
		2010 (Population: 98,733)		2015 ¹ (Population: 102,950)		2020 ² (Population: 109,200)		2025 (Population: 114,400)	
		Total	Eligible	Total	Eligible	Total	Eligible	Total	Eligible
Local	2,046.2	20.7	20.7	19.9	19.9	18.7	18.7	17.9	17.9
State ³	17,100.0	173.2	15.0	166.1	15.0	156.6	15.0	149.5	15.0
Total	19,146.2	193.9	35.7	186.0	34.9	175.3	33.7	167.4	32.9

Sources: Wicomico County; URDC; MD Dept. of Planning, March 2012

¹ Includes 7.0 additional acres for Winterplace Park in the (Table 7.6).

² Includes:

- 2.14 additional acres to expand the Mason Dixon Sports Complex in the North Planning Area (Table 7.5).
- 22.5 additional acres to construct a new South Growth Area Park (Table 7.7).
- 6.0 additional acres to expand Hebron Park in the Tri-Town Planning Area (Table 7.3).
- 7.0 additional acres to expand Winterplace Park (Table 7.6).
- 38.0 additional acres to expand Pemberton Historical Park (Table 7.6).
- 3.0 additional acres to expand Eastside Youth Sports Complex

³ Assumes no additional state lands through 2025.

A total of 78.6 acres of the additional land will be used to develop a new community park or expand the Fruitland Park to serve the South Cores (Map 2.4), and to expand the Eastside Sports Complex to accommodate overflow parking. Additional information about the proposed acquisitions appears in the discussion of capital improvements and planning areas in chapter 7.

Facilities

The analysis of recreation facilities in Wicomico County is a comparison of the supply and demand for different types of facilities to determine the surplus or deficit of each type of facility. Each type of facility is converted into the general unit of “user-occurrences” for several reasons:

- A person who participates in a recreation activity usually does so more than one time during the course of a season.
- A single recreation facility can accommodate users several times each day.
- Different recreation facilities accommodate different numbers of users simultaneously, depending on the size of the teams involved in the activity.

If the supply of user-occurrences exceeds the demand, the County has a surplus of the appropriate facility. If the demand exceeds the supply, the County has a deficit of the facility. The *2013 Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan* compares the current supply of 15 types of public recreation facilities (Table 3.5) to the current demand in each corresponding recreation facility (Table 3.6) which identifies the surplus or deficit of each type of recreation facility.

**Table 3.5
Public Recreation Facility Supply, 2013**

Activity	Public Facilities			Season Length (Days)	Daily Supply Per Facility (User-Occurrences)	Annual Supply Per Facility (User-Occurrences)	Total Annual Supply (User-Occurrences)
	Type	Total	Lighted				
Softball	Fields	51	15	180	50	9,000	459,000
Baseball	Fields	26	3	120	45	5,400	140,400
Football/Soccer/Lacrosse	Fields	62	6	150	55	8,250	511,500
Basketball	Courts	41	7	180	35	6,300	258,300
Tennis	Courts	52	12	180	20	3,600	187,200
Golf	Holes	81 ⁽¹⁾	0	270	10	2,700	218,700
Swimming	Pools	10 ⁽¹⁾	0	90	900	81,000	810,000
	Miles (Beach)	2.2	0	90	12,000	1,080,000	2,376,000
Hiking	Miles (Trail)	33.7	0	240	70	16,800	566,160
Biking	Miles (Trail)	Unlimited	0	180	180	32,400	Unlimited
Boating	Ramps	12	0	210	75	15,750	189,000
	Slips	263	0	210	1	210	55,230
Fishing	Acres	427 ⁽²⁾	0	270	10	2,700	1,152,900
Hunting	Acres	20,154 ⁽³⁾	0	110	0.1	11	221,694
Horseshoes	Courts	28	24	120	24	2,880	80,640

Sources: Norris, Donald F. and Hanson, Royce, *Participation in Local Park and Recreation Activities in Maryland*, University of Maryland, Baltimore County, May 2003
Wicomico County Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism
URDC

- (1) All golf facilities and swimming pools are semipublic or private.
- (2) Estimated
- (3) Estimated - Includes an estimated 15,000 acres of private land open for hunting by permission of the owner.

**Table 3.6
Public Recreation Facility Demand, 2010–2025**

Activity	Participation Rate (Percent of Total Population)	Frequency Rate (Occurrences per User per Year)	Demand (User-Occurrences Per Year)			
			2010	2015	2020	2025
			Population: 98,733	Population: 102,950	Population: 109,200	Population: 114,400
Softball	22.00%	23.15	502,847	524,324	556,156	582,639
Baseball	8.70%	17.00	146,026	152,263	161,507	169,198
Football/Soccer/Lacrosse	19.80%	28.41	555,391	579,112	614,270	643,521
Basketball	11.90%	22.09	259,540	270,626	287,055	300,724
Tennis	10.00%	20.00	197,466	205,900	218,400	228,800
Golf	10.60%	23.00	240,711	250,992	266,230	278,907
Swimming (Pools)	50.90%	19.02	955,852	996,677	1,057,185	1,107,527
Swimming (Beach)	42.80%	13.10	553,576	577,220	612,263	641,418
Hiking	19.20%	27.26	516,761	538,832	571,544	598,760
Biking	23.80%	36.30	852,994	889,426	943,422	988,347
Boating — Ramps	25.00%	9.14	225,605	235,241	249,522	261,404
	Slips	0.25%	210.00	51,835	54,049	57,330
Fishing *	39.00%	24.40	939,543	979,672	1,039,147	1,088,630
Hunting *	15.00%	13.90	205,858	214,651	227,682	238,524
Horseshoes	9.60%	8.26	78,291	81,635	86,591	90,715

* Fishing and hunting areas are typically provided by private landowners and are not analyzed in the study.

Sources: see Table 3.5 sources

The facility analysis used the 2003 statewide survey, *Participation in Local Park and Recreation Activities in Maryland* as the primary source for the following variables necessary to estimate facility supply and demand: season length, daily supply per facility, participation rate, and frequency rate.¹ In some cases, local records or observations made by department personnel regarding program participation or site visitation resulted in a different value for a specific variable than was used in the state survey.

The analysis produces “soft” estimates of the need for some facilities for several different reasons:

- Hiking and biking trails – The length and speed of each individual trip vary enough to produce a wide range of potential capacity estimates.
- Boat ramps – Boat ramps, per se, are used very quickly, creating a relatively high capacity. Sometimes, parking space for trailers is a more limiting factor.
- Boat slips – Wicomico County residents may moor vessels outside the County, and non-residents may own many of the boats used in the County. Therefore, slip usage may not be an accurate barometer of boat usage.
- Fishing and hunting – Many areas under private ownership are open to specific hunters and fishers by special permission of the owner. No record is kept of the informal arrangements permitting hunting and/or fishing on private property.

According to the facility analysis (Table 3.7, based on the 2010 census), Wicomico County currently has a need for:

- Five (5) additional softball fields;
- One (1) additional baseball field;
- Five (5) additional football/soccer/ lacrosse fields;
- Three (3) additional tennis courts;
- Eight (8) additional golf holes;
- Two (2) additional swimming pools; and
- Two (2) additional boat ramps.

¹ Technical definitions of the variables are provided in the survey document, a complete citation for which appears in the source notes for Table 3.5.

**Table 3.7
Public Recreation Facility Needs, 2010**

Activity	Facility Types	Annual Supply (User-Occurrences)		Demand (User-Occurrences)	Surplus/(Deficit)	
		Total	Per Facility		(User-Occurrences)	Facilities
Softball	Fields	459,000	9,000	502,847	(43,847)	(5)
Baseball	Fields	140,400	5,400	146,026	(5,626)	(1)
Football, Soccer, & Lacrosse	Fields	511,500	8,250	555,391	(43,891)	(5)
Basketball	Courts	258,300	6,300	259,540	(1,240)	(0)
Tennis	Courts	187,200	3,600	197,466	(10,266)	(3)
Golf	Holes	218,700	2,700	240,711	(22,011)	(8)
Swimming	Pools	810,000	81,000	955,852	(145,852)	(2)
Swimming	Miles of Beach	2,376,000	1,080,000	553,576	1,822,424	2
Hiking	Miles of Trail	566,160	16,800	516,761	49,399	3
Biking	Miles of Trail	Unlimited	32,400	852,994	-----	-----
Boating (Ramps)	Ramps	189,000	15,750	225,605	(36,605)	(2)
Boating (Slips)	Slips	55,230	210	51,835	3,395	16
Fishing	Acres	1,152,900	2,700	939,543	213,357	79
Hunting	Acres	221,694	11	205,858	15,836	1,440
Horseshoes	Courts	80,640	2,880	78,291	2,349	1

Sources: see Table 3.5 sources

Furthermore, facility needs will continue to grow to the following levels as the county population increases, as shown below:

- By 2015 (Table 3.8):
 - 7 softball fields
 - 2 baseball fields
 - 8 football/soccer/lax fields
 - 2 basketball courts
 - 5 tennis courts
 - 12 golf holes
 - 2 swimming pools²
 - 3 boating ramps
- By 2020 (Table 3.9):³
 - 11 softball fields
 - 4 baseball fields
 - 12 football/soccer/lax fields
 - 5 basketball courts
 - 9 tennis courts
 - 18 golf holes
 - 3 swimming pools²
 - 4 boating ramps
 - 10 boating slips
 - 2 horseshoe pits
- By 2025 (Table 3.10):³
 - 14 softball fields
 - 5 baseball fields
 - 16 football/soccer/lax fields
 - 7 basketball courts
 - 12 tennis courts
 - 22 golf holes
 - 4 swimming pools²
 - 2 miles of hiking trails
 - 5 boating ramps
 - 23 boating slips
 - 3 horseshoe pits

² Swimming pools are provided through the quasi-public and private sectors.

³ Identified facility needs are cumulative. For example, the four softball fields needed by 2015 includes the two needed by 2010 and two additional needed between 2010 and 2015.

**Table 3.8
Public Recreation Facility Needs, 2015**

Activity	Facility Types	Annual Supply (User-Occurrences)		Demand (User-Occurrences)	Surplus/(Deficit)	
		Total	Per Facility		(User-Occurrences)	Facilities
Softball	Fields	459,000	9,000	524,324	(65,324)	(7)
Baseball	Fields	140,400	5,400	152,263	(11,863)	(2)
Football, Soccer, & Lacrosse	Fields	511,500	8,250	579,112	(67,612)	(8)
Basketball	Courts	258,300	6,300	270,626	(12,326)	(2)
Tennis	Courts	187,200	3,600	205,900	(18,700)	(5)
Golf	Holes	218,700	2,700	250,992	(32,292)	(12)
Swimming	Pools	810,000	81,000	996,677	(186,677)	(2)
Swimming	Miles of Beach	2,376,000	1,080,000	577,220	1,798,780	2
Hiking	Miles of Trail	566,160	16,800	538,832	27,328	2
Biking	Miles of Trail	Unlimited	32,400	889,426	-----	-----
Boating (Ramps)	Ramps	189,000	15,750	235,241	(46,241)	(3)
Boating (Slips)	Slips	55,230	210	54,049	1,181	6
Fishing	Acres	1,152,900	2,700	979,672	173,228	64
Hunting	Acres	221,694	11	214,651	7,043	640
Horseshoes	Courts	80,640	2,880	81,635	(995)	(0)

Sources: see Table 3.5 sources

**Table 3.9
Public Recreation Facility Needs, 2020**

Activity	Annual Supply (User-Occurrences)		Demand (User-Occurrences)	Surplus/(Deficit)	
	Total	Per Facility		(User-Occurrences)	Facilities
Softball	459,000	9,000	556,156	(97,156)	(11)
Baseball	140,400	5,400	161,507	(21,107)	(4)
Football, Soccer, & Lacrosse	511,500	8,250	614,270	(102,770)	(12)
Basketball	258,300	6,300	287,055	(28,755)	(5)
Tennis	187,200	3,600	218,400	(31,200)	(9)
Golf	218,700	2,700	266,230	(47,530)	(18)
Swimming (pools)	810,000	81,000	1,057,185	(247,185)	(3)
Swimming (miles of beach)	2,376,000	1,080,000	612,263	1,763,737	2
Hiking	566,160	16,800	571,544	(5,384)	(0)
Biking	Unlimited	32,400	943,422	-----	-----
Boating (Ramps)	189,000	15,750	249,522	(60,522)	(4)
Boating (Slips)	55,230	210	57,330	(2,100)	(10)
Fishing	1,152,900	2,700	1,039,147	113,753	42
Hunting	221,694	11	227,682	(5,988)	(544)
Horseshoes	80,640	2,880	86,591	(5,951)	(2)

Sources: see Table 3.5 sources

Table 3.10
Public Recreation Facility Needs, 2025

Activity	2025		
	Demand	Surplus/(Deficit)	
	(User-Occurrences)	(User-Occurrences)	Facilities
Softball	582,639	(123,639)	(14)
Baseball	169,198	(28,798)	(5)
Football, Soccer, & Lacrosse	643,521	(132,021)	(16)
Basketball	300,724	(42,424)	(7)
Tennis	228,800	(41,600)	(12)
Golf	278,907	(60,207)	(22)
Swimming (pools)	1,107,527	(297,527)	(4)
Swimming (miles of beach)	641,418	1,734,582	2
Hiking	598,760	(32,600)	(2)
Biking	988,347	-----	-----
Boating (Ramps)	261,404	(72,404)	(5)
Boating (Slips)	60,060	(4,830)	(23)
Fishing	1,088,630	64,270	24
Hunting	238,524	(16,830)	(1,530)
Horseshoes	90,715	(10,075)	(3)

Sources: see Table 3.5 sources

The identified needs will serve as a guide for the County in providing facilities as new parks are designed and constructed and existing parks are expanded and rehabilitated.

BIKEWAYS AND WALKING TRAILS

By combining the functions of recreation, parks, tourism, and major community events into a single department, Wicomico has a unique opportunity among Maryland counties to market its park system & culture. The Wicomico County Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism should continue to protect & enhance its natural areas, bike trails, and other linear corridors (Map 3.2) to enhance linear corridor systems in the County. The Department administers a website and brochure/handbook to guide cyclists to bike trails. The information, as well as links to other County and Lower Eastern Shore websites is found at www.wicomicotourism.org.

The linear corridor system is based on hubs and spurs. Hub locations are unique destinations that are staffed during normal working hours with persons able to provide printed information about public lands and areas of cultural, environmental, and recreational interest in the county. Hubs include:

- Wicomico Visitor’s Information Center
- Wicomico Youth & Civic Center
- Pemberton Historical Park
- Ward Museum of Wildfowl Art
- Salisbury University

Spurs are points of orientation and local resources that can serve as a starting point for driving, biking, hiking, paddling, or other leisure activity. Current spurs include:

<i>West Wicomico</i>	<i>Central Wicomico</i>	<i>Eastern Wicomico</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Whitehaven Ferry• Cedar Hill Park• Barren Creek boat ramp (Mardela Springs)• Town of Hebron• Village of Quantico• Town of Sharptown• Village of Wetipquin• Village of Nanticoke	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nabb Research Center• Cedarhurst Park• Centennial Village Playground• Crooked Oak Playground• Emerson Holloway Park• Nick Meyer Park• Harmon Field• Indian Village Playground• Leonard's Mill Park• Billy Gene Jackson, Sr. Park• Riverside Boat Ramp• Schumaker Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Winterplace Park• Adkins Mill Park• Eastside Sports Complex• Kilbirnie Park• Town of Pittsville• Willards Park

The linear corridor system in Wicomico County uses roads, river and stream corridors, and other existing assets to connect hubs and spurs. The system offers the benefits of beautiful scenery and alternative transportation throughout the eastern and western parts of the county. One of the major challenges of developing the linear corridor system is finding east and west connections at U.S. Route 13, which is a major impediment of the regional bike network. The Salisbury – Wicomico Department of Planning, Zoning, and Community Development works with developers to reserve land for bikeways and should continue to pursue land for future linear corridor connections.

Planning for the location and construction of new sustainable trails is a top priority in developing a regional trail system. New trails should be designed to eliminate or reduce adverse environmental impacts, promote user safety, be easily maintained, and comply with the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). As a result, upgrades to existing amenities and construction of new trails will be done in an environmentally sensitive manner compatible with the natural environment and to be enjoyed by users of all ages and skills. Additionally, the County will continue to coordinate with Federal, State, and local agencies to identify opportunities on public land to provide connections for the existing trail network.

The increased popularity of bicycling has established two distinct types of cycling:

- Recreational cycling, which is based on pleasure-based activity that does not necessarily adhere to an established schedule or frequency.
- Utility cycling, which is usually based on an established frequency, such as times involving the cyclist's employment.

Perhaps the most important consideration for both types of cycling activity is safety. Recreational cyclists can often choose areas that are not densely populated and have little automobile traffic to pose hazards. Utility cycling, on the other hand, requires the cyclist to travel into and around developed areas. Most of the time, roads must be shared with many cars, causing a significant safety concerns.

The Salisbury/Wicomico Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) recently completed the *Biking & Hiking Functional Master Plan* for the Salisbury-Wicomico Metropolitan Planning Organization (URDC, March 2012). The study includes:

- An analysis of the metro area;
- Development of a concept plan;
- Design and development guidelines; and
- Information on implementation and funding.

The Department should work with stakeholder groups familiar with bicycling/hiking in the County, such as Bike-SBY and the Wicomico Trails Committee. These groups meet regularly to evaluate potential routes and to develop recommendations to ensure the safety of the routes. The stakeholders should work with the Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism to move the recommendations on to organizations with jurisdiction over roads throughout the County.

In addition to the study that focuses on the Salisbury/Wicomico area, much information is available from the League of American Bicyclists (LAB). The LAB provides a certification program to recognize areas for elements that foster safe bicycling.

HERITAGE TOURISM

Wicomico County has a rich heritage involving European settlers, Native Americans, and African Americans. The bikeways, greenways, water access, and trails throughout the County provide opportunities to witness the natural and man-made characteristics that make Wicomico the activity center of the Lower Eastern Shore. Significant destinations for heritage tourism in Wicomico County include:

- Adkins Historical and Museum Complex (Mardela Springs)
- Charles H. Chipman Cultural Center (Salisbury)
- Edward H. Nabb Research Center
- Fruitland Election House
- Green Hill Church
- Village of Quantico
- Mason-Dixon Marker
- Newtown Historic District (Salisbury)
- Old Spring Hill Church (Hebron)
- Pemberton Historical Park
- Pemberton One-Room Schoolhouse
- Poplar Hill Mansion
- Salisbury Zoological Park
- Town of Mardela Springs
- Village of Whitehaven
- Upper Ferry
- Ward Museum of Wildfowl Art
- Whitehaven Ferry

Pemberton Historical Park (<http://www.pembertonpark.org/>) is the department's premier heritage tourism site. The Park includes 234 acres with 4.5 miles of nature trails and is the site of Pemberton Hall and the Wicomico Heritage Center. The building is one of the first 18th-century homes built in Wicomico County and has been restored by the Pemberton Hall Foundation. The Department supports an ongoing capital program for Pemberton Park. Future improvements include a contact building, stable building, "ghost framed" buildings illustrating the previous on-site smokehouse, corn crib, and slave quarters, cider press, addition to the heritage museum, and an environmental education center.

Wicomico County is part of the Lower Eastern Shore heritage area, which also includes the counties of Worcester and Somerset. The Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Council, Inc. (LESHC) located in Salisbury, is a private, non-profit organization that helps to preserve, protect, and promote the cultural, natural and historical heritage of Somerset, Wicomico and Worcester counties (www.lowershoreheritage.org). LEHSC is recognized by the State as the lead agency promoting heritage tourism in the region.

Wicomico County also has three Maryland Scenic Byways passing through portions of the County (Map 3.2):

- There are three State-designated Scenic Byways within the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area. The Blue Crab Scenic Byway includes the previous Old Ocean City Scenic Byway (connecting Salisbury to Ocean City). Old Ocean City Road (Maryland Route 346) begins in Salisbury and meanders through Salisbury's historic Newtown District and downtown Salisbury. This Byway passes through the rural crossroads of Walston, Parsonsburg, Pittsville, Willards, Whaleyville, and St. Martin, Berlin before reaching its destination of Ocean City.
- The second is the Chesapeake Country Scenic Byway. It is approximately 420 miles in its entirety along the Eastern Shore and extends the entire length of the Chesapeake Bay on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, which it extends from Chesapeake City in Cecil County to Crisfield and Ewell in Somerset County. Both the national and State-designated sections of the Byway run past many towns, including a key leg to the heart of Salisbury, and then connecting to the Blue Crab Byway. Many of the places listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) are located on or near this Byway.
- The third Byway is entirely new and will become a four State effort, called the Cape to Cape Scenic Byway. It is being developed under the guidance of the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area in collaboration with appropriate agencies in neighboring states. It will start in Cape May, New Jersey, running through Cape Henlopen, Delaware, southwards through Ocean City, Maryland, (with a leg to Berlin), down the peninsula to Cape Charles, Virginia, and across the Chesapeake Bay Bridge/Tunnel to Cape Henry, Virginia.
- In addition to the State-designated Scenic Byways, there is one National-Recreational Trail and a National Historic Trail. National trails stimulate the local economy and are designated by an Act of Congress, Secretary of Interior, or the Secretary of Agriculture. The Beach to the Bay Indian Trail is the National-Recreational Trail connecting Assateague with Berlin, Snow Hill, Pocomoke City, Princess Anne, and Crisfield. The Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail is a water trail exploring the entirety of the Chesapeake Bay and its rivers.

In addition, the byway coexists with a portion of the Beach to the Bay Indian Trail, forming the southern portion of the loop connecting Assateague with Berlin, Snow Hill, Pocomoke City, and Princess Anne, with a connecting link to Crisfield.

WATER ACCESS

Water resources abound in Wicomico County. The Nanticoke and Cedar Hill Harbors and Salisbury Marina provide access for boaters and 263 slips available for rent, most with water and electric hookups. Cedar Hill Marina (www.cedarhillmarina.com) is a modern, well-equipped docking facility with slips ranging in width from eight to fourteen feet.

Water access is also available at 12-boat ramps situated throughout the County, including Cedar Hill Park, Coulbourne Mill Park, Leonard's Mill Park, Mardela, Nanticoke Park, Riverside Drive, Sharptown, Tyaskin, and Wetipquin. Other water access is provided by the beachfronts at Schumaker Pond, Cherry Beach, Roaring Point, and Cove Road.

In the mid-1990s, the County acquired 340 acres of land, including 3,000 linear feet of shoreline along the Wicomico River, to set aside for future use. This site is known as Pirates Wharf Park and features deep-water access to support boat launching facilities and a marina. Site design of Pirates Wharf, which will include a county-wide park, is a mid-range goal of the *2013 Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan*.

The typical life span for marine structures, such as bulkhead, boat ramps, and piling, is 20–40 years. Over the past 5 years work was undertaken by the County to completely restore Nanticoke Harbor and a major portion of Cedar Hill Park's original section constructed in the late 1950's. The Department will continue to escrow funds; seek support from the State's Waterway Improvement Fund and recalibrate its restoration plan for the remaining work which spans the next 20 years.

PROGRAMS

Wicomico County has traditionally had a strong complement of recreation program offerings. The public recreation program offers more than 250 different activities, including sports leagues, after school child care, summer playgrounds, senior adult services, instructional programs, special events and programs for targeted groups, such as at-risk youth. Department-wide participation boasts 33,000 registrants and 332,000 visits annually.

Five types/sources of funding support recreation and parks in Wicomico County and include:

- County taxes (32.2% of 2012 budget)
- Recreation councils (3.7%)
- Fees and charges (35.5%)
- Private donations (5.4%)
- Grants (23.2%)

The County's ability to offer a strong recreation system is enhanced by unique parks and recreation facilities, including equestrian facilities, an award-winning athletic complex, and a minor league baseball stadium. Furthermore, the Department works with 45 recreation councils and stakeholders groups, such as sports leagues, recreation councils, and special interest groups to keep current with needs and to complement the County's ability to subsidize programs and services.

Through interviews with key recreation personnel in Wicomico County, the following goals for the recreation program have been identified:

- Offer highest quality sports, social, educational, environmental, and enrichment programs to meet the needs of Wicomico’s citizens.
- Keep current with the public’s needs and expectations by keeping recreation councils and stakeholder groups engaged.
- Educate the public on the benefits, cost, and value of recreation activities and services.
- Offer uncompromised customer service.
- Complement tax subsidy by maximizing the productivity of stakeholder groups, recreation councils, and league boards. Provide them vision, leadership and support.
- Recruit, train, and retain competent staff and hold them to the highest standards.
- Keep recreation activities and services affordable.
- Grow the program scholarship account to extend subsidized registration opportunities.
- Perpetuate the self-sustaining business model to fund most activities, services and facilities such as the Athletic Complex, harbors, Pemberton Historical Park, and Equestrian Center.

Participation in Department program offerings is shown from 2002, 2007 and 2012 (Table 3.11). Findings include:

- The Department’s delivery of services to its citizens has been affected by a lengthy economic recession. This prompted the Department to increase fees to recover all fixed costs including full time staffing resulting in affordability issues and participation erosion. Independent youth sports clubs, leagues, and other providers have picked up the lost business.
- Funding reductions have limited the availability of free, at risk youth programming that provides structured activity and mentoring to the County’s youth.

Table 3.11
Public Recreation Registration, 2002, 2007, 2012

Activity Category	2002	2007	2012	Change 2002 - 2012	
				Number	Percent
Adult Organized Sports	1,525	1,661	1,804	279	18.3%
Youth Organized Sports	2,447	1,683	1,444	-1,003	-41.0%
Instructional Programs	845	1,052	350	-495	-58.6%
Pemberton Environmental Education Programs	3,663	2,399	610	-3,053	-83.3%
West Side Community Center	747	800	995	248	33.2%
Out of School Time Child Care	3,518	3,594	3,446	-72	-2.0%
Playgrounds / At Risk Programing	1,068	474	175	-893	-83.6%
Special Events	6,250	26,805	22,572	16,322	261.2%
Harbor Slip Rentals	161	195	180	19	11.8%
Pavilion Rentals	182	261	190	8	4.4%
Equestrian Center Events	755	1,067	945	190	25.2%
Amateur Sports Tournaments (teams)	360	566	706	346	96.1%
Happy Timers	255	260	277	22	8.6%
Totals	21,776	40,817	33,694	11,918	54.7%

Source: Wicomico County Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism

- Adult sport participation has increased by 18%, primarily because of the introduction of low-organizational “social sport” programs.
- While harbor slip rentals have grown in the last 10 years, they are down 8% in the last 5 years and are trending down further in 2013. This is an effect of the recent recession and affordability (gas; harbor fees) which is a national trend.
- Instructional programs like sport camps and classes have suffered significantly with a 58% decrease over the last 10 years. This is partly because of an increase in the number of camps offered by other organizations and the recent recession.
- There remains a significant and steady demand for affordable, out of school time childcare services.
- Reduction in funding from the Board of Education has caused the Department to lose the full time Park Naturalist position at Pemberton Park and dramatically affected the number of school groups served by environmental education programs.
- Signature special events have grown dramatically over the last 10 years and have created a popular and enjoyable entertainment outlet for the region.
- The Department’s initiatives in sports marketing have delivered a 96% increase in tournament participation over the last decade.
- The unorganized use/demand for the park system has increased as many citizens opt to recreate close to home due to the recent recession & affordability.

TOURISM

Wicomico County’s Tourism Department and the Youth & Civic Center were consolidated with the Department of Recreation and Parks in 1997. The combined Department has been able to leverage assets, and to streamline sales, marketing and support services to accommodate meetings, conferences, sports tournaments and other group business. Wicomico’s current book consists of 35 events of which most are multi-day and attract participants who require hotel room stays. In FY 11-12, Wicomico’s book of business infused approximately \$17.5 million into the local and state economy. Almost two-thirds (65%) of the economic impact came from events staged in the county parks, accounting for 208,000 visitors and an economic impact of \$11.1 million (Table 3.12).

The County benefits by receiving a hotel room tax which is used to support its tourism budget. The State benefits by receiving sales, income and corporate income tax which ranges from 2% to 7% of the economic impact.

Most of Wicomico’s bookings consist of regional & national amateur sports tournaments of which 65% are held in its park system. Opportunity exists to double the current volume of business leading to the following recommendations:

- Modernize and expand the Youth & Civic Center and outdoor athletic facilities to retain, grow and develop sporting events, meetings and conferences. Leverage State Program Open Space, Maryland Stadium Authority and the State Department of Business & Economic Development (DBEB) funding to undertake these enhancements.

- Develop a partnership with the State of Maryland to aggressively obtain more events. Build a partnership with the Salisbury Chamber of Commerce to attract, retain, and grow events.
- Develop a partnership with Ocean City to develop a regional brand and combine inventory and marketing tactics to attract amateur sporting event to the region.

Participation in the Department’s Tourism initiative held in its parks is shown in Table 3.12.

**Table 3.12
Tourism-Based Programs, FY 11-12**

	EVENT	ATTENDANCE	# TEAMS	EVENT DAYS	ECONOMIC IMPACT
July					
	USSSA Girls Fast pitch C World Series	22,500	70	4	\$2,504,667
	USSSA Girls Fastpitch 14, 16, 18	21,300	93	5	\$2,543,200
August					
	USSSA Slowpitch Nationals	3,000	18	3	\$107,190
	NSA Men's Fastpitch World Series	1,080	20	2	\$113,004
Sept.					
	USSSA Slowpitch Worth Labor Day	1,920	60	2	\$178,090
	Bike Week	100,000	0	7	\$1,191,000
October					
	Beer Festival	3,500	0	2	\$253,428
	Autumn Wine Festival	4,458	0	2	\$321,051
	USSSA Ghouls Halloween Havoc	1,080	23	2	\$68,880
March					
	Seagull Invitational Softball Tournament(small)	720	8	2	\$67,103
	USSSA Slowpitch March Madness	4,080	12	2	\$288,204
April					
	Pork in the Park	18,296	123	3	\$1,480,027
	USSSA Swing into Spring	1,000	8	1	\$65,000
May					
	Dock Daze	2,000	0	2	\$45,000
	USSSA NIT	4,950	47	3	\$235,560
	USSSA Slowpitch Memorial Day Spectacular	2,100	50	2	\$210,680
June					
	Salisbury Shootout LAX Tournament	2,300	24	2	\$170,453
	June Bug Jam	1,000	12	2	\$65,000
	Wicomico Geocache Dash	945	265	2	\$46,344
	Blast at the Beach	9,000	152	3	\$908,200
	USSSA Slowpitch Hooters Tournament	3,000	25	2	\$271,543
Totals		208,229	1,010		\$ 11,133,624

Source: Wicomico County Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism

- The Department’s delivery of services to its citizens has been affected by a lengthy economic recession, which prompted the Department to increase fees to recover all fixed costs, including full-time staffing, resulting in affordability issues and participation erosion. Independent youth sports clubs & leagues and other providers have picked up the lost business.
- Funding reductions have limited the availability of free, at risk youth programming that provides structured activity and mentoring to the County’s youth.
- Adult sport participation has increased by 18%, primarily due to the introduction of low-organizational “social sport” programs.

FINANCES

The Department’s budget has increased significantly from 1990 to 2013 (Table 3.13).

**Table 3.13
Recreation and Parks Budget, 1990–2013**

Item	1990	1995	2000	2004	2013
County Taxes					
Operating Budget	\$ 803,300	\$ 917,200	\$ 1,281,400	\$ 1,274,800	\$ 1,098,878
Capital Improvement Budget	\$ 174,000	\$ 136,000	\$ 56,000	\$ -	\$ 704,000
<i>Subtotal - County Taxes</i>	<i>\$ 977,300</i>	<i>\$ 1,053,200</i>	<i>\$ 1,337,400</i>	<i>\$ 1,274,800</i>	<i>\$ 1,802,878</i>
Fees and Charges					
Operating Budget	\$ 155,900	\$ 185,000	\$ 260,700	\$ 233,000	\$ 571,733
Enterprise Budget	\$ 386,600	\$ 627,100	\$ 806,200	\$ 941,000	\$ 1,412,951
<i>Subtotal - Fees and Charges</i>	<i>\$ 542,500</i>	<i>\$ 812,100</i>	<i>\$ 1,066,900</i>	<i>\$ 1,174,000</i>	<i>\$ 1,984,684</i>
Grants					
Federal Urban Playgrounds	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
State Program Open Space	\$ 226,000	\$ 286,000	\$ 504,815	\$ 213,100	\$ 1,110,742
State Waterway Improvements	\$ 50,000	\$ 1,200,000	\$ 100,000	\$ 63,000	\$ 182,086
Army Corps of Engineers	\$ -	\$ 111,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Salisbury Maintenance	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,250
<i>Subtotal – Grants</i>	<i>\$ 281,000</i>	<i>\$ 1,602,000</i>	<i>\$ 607,815</i>	<i>\$ 279,100</i>	<i>\$ 1,296,078</i>
Recreation Councils					
Community Councils	\$ 72,000	\$ 140,000	\$ 132,000	\$ 120,000	\$ 120,000
Sports Leagues	\$ 111,700	\$ 97,000	\$ 110,000	\$ 110,000	\$ 90,000
<i>Subtotal - Recreation Councils</i>	<i>\$ 183,700</i>	<i>\$ 237,000</i>	<i>\$ 242,000</i>	<i>\$ 230,000</i>	<i>\$ 210,000</i>
Private Donations					
Business & Service Clubs	\$ 200,000	\$ 290,000	\$ 250,000	\$ 300,000	\$ 300,000
<i>Subtotal – Private Donations</i>	<i>\$ 200,000</i>	<i>\$ 290,000</i>	<i>\$ 250,000</i>	<i>\$ 300,000</i>	<i>\$ 300,000</i>
Total	\$2,184,500	\$ 3,994,300	\$ 3,504,115	\$ 3,257,900	\$ 5,593,640

Source: Wicomico County Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism

Findings from Table 3.13 are:

- The Department’s total recreation and parks budget increased by \$1,319,615 (60.4%) from 1990 to 2000, and by an additional \$2,089,525 (59.6%) from 2000 to 2013.
- While the absolute amount of County taxes increased from 2000 to 2013, the department was less reliant on County taxes. In other words, County taxes comprised 38.2% of the Department’s 2000 budget, but only 32.2% of the Department’s 2013 budget.
- The reduced reliance on County taxes was made possible by increases in fees/charges and grants. Increases in fees/charges may reduce program participation if the public is unable to pay the increases, particularly the at-risk populations. Furthermore, grants are all from government sources, all of which are subject to increasing annual scrutiny in an era of fiscal austerity. The largest grant is consistently from the State Program Open Space, with the exception of the 1995 State Waterway Improvements funding.

Therefore, the demands of meeting the needs of a growing population, maintaining a high-quality, safe recreation and park system, replacing equipment in a timely, cost-effective manner, and funding needed additional projects all combine to pose a significant challenge for Wicomico County in the immediate and foreseeable future. The Wicomico County Recreation Commission has established the following funding priorities as a framework for decisions regarding recreation and parks expenditures:

1. *Maintenance* — Make the best use of existing parks and recreation facilities.
 - a. Safety – Ensure the safety of users at all county recreation sites.
 - b. Function – Use existing facilities for new programs whenever possible.
 - c. Savings – Provide programs and facilities that offer the greatest return on public investment.
2. *Acquisition* — Purchase land for additional parks where needed as opportunities arise.
3. *Development* — Develop new parks to meet recreation needs in identified growth areas.
4. *Expansion/Improvement* — Expand/improve recreation offerings in existing parks as demand suggests and resources allow.

COUNTY PRIORITIES

The 2013 Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan integrates the three subject areas—recreation and parks, agricultural preservation, and natural resource conservation—by presenting all policy and capital recommendations in a single, final chapter (Chapter 7) of the Plan. Wicomico County’s priorities in recreation and parks are shown in a summary of the proposed capital improvements (The entire capital improvements program is summarized in Table 7.2 and detailed in Tables 7.3 through 7.8):

- Total projects: 44
- Total estimated cost: \$20,041,000
- Acres to be acquired: 78.6

- Immediate (2013–2017): \$ 9,885,000 (49%)
- Mid-Range (2018–2022): \$ 5,365,000 (27%)
- Long-Range (2023+): \$ 4,773,000 (24%)

- Acquisition: \$ 1,900,000 (10%)
- Development: \$12,693,000 (63%)
- Rehabilitation: \$ 5,448,000 (27%)

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PLANNING AREAS

Recognizing that park and recreation needs differ in various areas of the County, the *2013 Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan*, like previous plans, divides the County into sections for analysis, called “planning areas”. Boundaries for the areas were carefully selected to reflect common physiographic, demographic, and land use characteristics and have remained essentially the same since the original plan was prepared in 1988.

Planning areas are important because recreation needs are different in various sections of the county. People close to swimming pools may be quite far from athletic fields. People in and around the city are farther from passive, nature-oriented recreation opportunities than people in outlying areas near nature centers. Planning areas allows analysts to look more closely at the park and recreation facility needs of residents in specific parts of the County.

Past land preservation and recreation plans (1988, 1994, and 1999) maintained five planning areas: Tri-Town, West Side, Central, South, and East. The 2005 plan added a sixth planning area: the North Planning Area. The Central Planning Area, which includes the City of Salisbury and most of the Metropolitan Growth Area, has been the focus of development activity since the original plan. Recognizing the continued development pressure in “high growth” areas (specific areas in which County policy and available infrastructure focused new development), the 1999 plan delineated three separate “sectors” of the Central Planning Area: North (generally north of U.S. 50/Dagsboro Road), East (east of U.S. 13), and West (west of U. S. 13).

As with the previous plan, the *2013 Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan* divides the County into six planning areas (Map 4.1):

- Tri-Town
- West Side
- North
- Central
- South
- East

The City of Salisbury provides local resources to help meet the leisure service needs of City residents, and the City and County have had a strong, effective partnership for decades. Therefore, the focus of the Central Planning Area information will be the areas outside of the City, for which the Department takes primary responsibility.

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Tri-Town Planning Area



The Tri-Town Planning Area contains the Towns of Hebron, Mardela Springs, and Sharptown, as well as the surrounding area. Smaller villages include San Domingo, Spring Grove, Athol, and Catchpenny. The Tri-Town Planning Area is still largely rural and forested. Today, more than 6,400 persons live in the Tri-Town area, about 1,050 more persons than in 2000 (Table 2.2). By 2025, 7,467 residents are projected to live in the Tri-Town area, which represents an increase of 1,023 persons from 2010 (15.9 percent).

Natural Features and Farmland

Waterways are a significant part of the natural environment in the Tri-Town Planning Area. Eighteen miles of the meandering Nanticoke River form the western boundary of the Tri-Town area. Three significant waterways flow from far inside Tri-Town to the Nanticoke, forming 34 miles of natural, scenic corridors in the vicinity of Hebron and Mardela Springs. The Quantico Creek is 14 miles long, the Rewastico Creek is 11 miles long, and the Barren Creek flows for 9 miles. Two significant water bodies near Mardela Springs are part of Barren Creek—Barren Pond and Mockingbird Pond.

The western boundary of Tri-Town includes large areas of wetlands extending south along the Nanticoke River from Ferry Point to the Chapter Point area. The Maryland Department of Natural Resources preserves 1,588 acres along the Nanticoke River known as the Eastern Shore Wildlife Management Area (WMA). Wetlands, including the WMA and various sites along Barren, Rewastico, and Quantico Creeks, make up 20 percent of the land in Tri-Town.

Historic Places

Quantico, which was founded well before the Revolution, includes numerous historic houses and churches, some of which date back to the 18th century. The area includes more than 30 recognized historic buildings concentrated near Mardela Springs, Hebron, Quantico, and the Wicomico River.

Preserved Land

Tri-Town also has more farmland preserved than any other planning area in the County. The Quantico Creek Rural Legacy Area extends into the southern portion of Tri-Town. Portions of the Chesapeake Forest lie throughout the area. Other lands preserved through State ownership or the The Nature Conservancy include the Sharptown Dunes, Plum Creek Cedar Swamp Preserve, Upper Nanticoke Management Area, and the Wetipquin Pond Management Area.

Existing and Future Recreation

Parks and recreation areas are located where most of Tri-Town's people live: Sharptown (three parks/recreation areas), Mardela Springs (three parks/recreation areas) and Hebron (four parks/recreation areas). Four other recreation areas are located outside of the towns.

The three largest public parks—Cope Bennett Park, Hebron Park, and Mardela Park—are located in the three largest population centers. Five recreation areas are located at public schools. Public recreation sites in the Tri-Town Planning Area include (Map 3.1, Tables A-2 through A-4 in the appendix):

- Cherry Beach (#1)
- Cope Bennett Park (#2)
- Gene Lowe Park (#3)
- San Domingo Playground (#4)
- Northwestern Elementary School (#5)
- Mardela Park (#6)
- Mardela High School (#7)
- Mardela Tennis Courts (#8)
- Mardela Boat Ramp (#9)
- Hebron Park (#13)

The local recreation areas in Tri-Town total 81.5 acres, or approximately 12.7 acres per thousand persons based on the 2010 population. However, Tri-Town has State and The Nature Conservancy (NC) sites well in excess of 60.0 acres per thousand persons. Therefore, 15.0 ac/000 of the State and NC sites can be used in the local calculation, raising the current figure to 27.7 ac/000, which meets the Program Open Space guideline. If no additional parkland is acquired by 2025, the total figure will drop to 25.9 acres per thousand.¹

¹ The state calculations of acres/000 apply on a countywide basis. The *2013 Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan* also discusses the calculation for each of the planning areas for information only.

West Side Planning Area



The West Side Planning Area is bordered by the Nanticoke River on the west, the Wicomico River on the south, Upper Ferry Road on the east, and Cherry Walk/Quantico Roads on the north. The area is primarily rural with approximately 2,953 residents in 2010, an increase of 219 persons since 2000. West Side population is expected to increase by almost 469 persons (seven percent) to 3,422 by 2025. The Village of Nanticoke has largest concentration of residents in the West Side. Most other residents live in or near the smaller villages of Wetipquin, Tyaskin, Bivalve, Jesterville, Whitehaven, Capitola, Cox Corner, and Green Hill.

Natural Features and Farmland

The West Side has the most shoreline of any planning area in the County—bordered by both the Nanticoke River on the west and the Wicomico River on the south. Wetlands and Chesapeake Bay Critical Areas cover large amounts of the West Side.

Historic Places

Whitehaven—listed in the National Register of Historic Places—is the home of a ferry that has operated across the Wicomico River for almost three centuries. The West Side also includes 24 other significant historic buildings.

Preserved Land

The State and The Nature Conservancy (TNC) own and/or control large portions of the West Side, in essence permanently preserving the land. Portions of the Chesapeake Forest occupy large tracts in the center of the West Side. Two State Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs)—Ellis Bay WMA on the Wicomico River to the south and the Nanticoke River WMA to the north—comprise almost 4,500 preserved acres. Extensive Chesapeake Bay Critical Areas and the Quantico Creek Rural Legacy Area significantly restrict development and add to the rural character of the West Side.

Existing and Future Recreation

The West Side has 12 public recreation sites (Map 3.1, Tables A-2 through A-4):

- Westside Intermediate School (#10)
- Pirates Wharf (#111)
- Clara Road Boat Ramp (#114)
- Roaring Point Park (#115)
- Nanticoke Park Recreation Area (#117)
- Cove Road Recreation Area (#118)
- Bivalve Wharf (#119)
- Cedar Hill Park (#120)
- Tyaskin Recreation Area (#121)
- Wetipquin Park (#122)
- Westside Primary School (#126)
- West Side Community Center (#128)

The public recreation sites total 493 acres. Pirates Wharf accounts for 340.7 acres, or 70 percent of the public recreation acreage in the West Side. Combined with the extensive state forests, recreation land in the West Side will be more than adequate for the foreseeable future. Currently, the West Side has 167.0 ac/000 even if the allowable 15.0 ac/000 for State and NC lands is not

counted. If no additional land is acquired, the 167.0 figure will drop to 144.1 by 2025, still well within the POS requirements.

North Planning Area



The North Planning Area is the area north Naylor Mill and Dagsboro Roads between U. S. 50/ Spring Hill Lane and Parsonsburg Road. The area was identified in previous County land preservation plans as the North Sector of the Central Planning Area, but given a status of a separate planning area in the 2005 plan. The North Planning Area is home to more than 8,000 people, with an expected increase of 16 percent to about 9,300 by 2025.

The North Planning Area is characterized by growth pressure between the City of Salisbury and Delmar. The U. S. 13 corridor bisects the planning area, creating a development corridor through the middle of the area. The area includes the North Growth Area (Map 2.4), which is poised to experience potentially significant future growth from Salisbury.

Natural Features and Farmland

The forested lands of the North (and Central) Planning Area(s) are in smaller tracts and more scattered than in other areas of the County. Generally, the area is well-suited for development, with better natural drainage and fewer wetlands than other planning areas.

Leonard's Mill Pond is the dominant water feature. The Jackson, Myer, and Andrews Branches and Wood Creek flow into Leonard's Mill Pond, which empties into the Leonard's Pond Run, which flows toward the North Prong of the Wicomico River.

Preserved Land

The North Planning Area has several parcels of the Chesapeake Forest, all located east of U. S. 13. State forests total 477 acres in the North Planning Area.

Existing and Future Recreation

Public recreation sites in the North Planning Area provide 164 acres of recreation land and include (Map 3.1, Tables A-2 through A-4):

- Edgewood Park (#15)
- Gordy Park (#16)
- Mason Dixon Sports Complex (#17)
- Delmar Elementary (#18)
- Leonard's Mill Park (#23)
- Naylor Mill Park Recreation Area (#24)
- Henry S. Parker Athletic Complex (#25)

Both the Parker complex and Naylor Mill Park draw from the entire County. The Parker complex also provides opportunities to use recreation as a visitor draw by attracting regional athletic tournaments. Current parkland in the North Planning Area amounts to 20.3 ac/000. If no additional acreage is acquired, the figure will drop to 17.6 ac/000 by 2025.

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Central Planning Area



The Central Planning Area includes the land adjoining the City of Salisbury to the east and west. Population of the Central Planning Area in 2010 is more than 58,700—almost 60 percent of the entire County population, and an increase of more than 8,500 persons (17 percent) since 2000. By the year 2025, more than 68,000 people are projected to live in the Central Planning Area—an increase of more than 9,300 persons from 2010.

The size of the Central Planning Area has suggested further geographic refinements for planning analyses. The 1999 plan divided the area into three sectors: north, east, and west. The 2005 plan classified the North Sector as a separate, distinct planning area. The East Sector and West Sector are geographically the same as in earlier plans, although the emphasis of the 2005 plan and the 2013 plan is on areas outside of the City of Salisbury:

- The East Sector includes all land bordered generally by U.S. 13 on the west, Dagsboro Road on the north, Forest Grove/Parsonsborg Roads on the east, and Mt. Hermon/Airport Roads on the south. The East Sector includes the Northeast Growth Area emanating from the City of Salisbury (Map 2.4).

Approximately 10,200 people live in the East Sector (outside of Salisbury), an increase of about 1,000 persons since the 2000 census. By 2025, an additional 1,620 people will live in the East Sector, bringing the sector population to slightly more than 11,800.

The East Sector contains 42.9 ac/000. The ac/000 measure will be reduced to 38.8 by 2025. Neither the state nor the Nature Conservancy has any land holdings in the East Sector.

- The West Sector includes the western portion of the Metropolitan Growth Area bounded by:
 - o The Wicomico River on the south.
 - o Upper Ferry and Fire Tower Roads on the west.
 - o Quantico Creek Road, Levin Dashiell Road, Rockawalkin Road, U. S. 50, and Naylor Mill Road on the north.
 - o U. S. 13 on the east.

The West Sector includes the West Metro Core area (Map 2.4), which has experienced tremendous growth in recent decades. Population in the West Sector is approximately 13,000 in 2010 and is projected to increase by about 2,000 persons (16 percent) by 2025.

The West Sector contains 19.4 ac/000. The ac/000 measure will be reduced to 16.8 by 2025. Neither the State nor The Nature Conservancy have any land holdings in the West Sector.

- The Central Subsector of the Central Planning Area includes the City of Salisbury. The 2010 population of the Central Sector was 35,328, approximately 36 percent of the total County population and an increase of more than 6,200 residents since 2000. The population of the Central Sector is expected to increase by 5,637 to 41,165 by 2025.

The Central Sector contains 13.0 ac/000. The ac/000 measure will be reduced to 11.2 by 2025. Neither the State nor The Nature Conservancy have any land holdings in the Central Sector.

In total, the Central Planning Area contains 1,223.7 acres of parkland to serve a population of 58,737, or 20.8 ac/000. By the year 2025, assuming no additional parkland is acquired, the measure would drop to 18.0 ac/000.

Natural Features and Farmland

As in the North Planning Area, forests in the Central Planning Area are smaller and more scattered than in other areas of the County. The area is well-suited for development, since the vast majority of the area has developed in urban uses.

The primary waterway in the Central Planning Area is the Wicomico River and its tributaries. The banks of the River are largely developed, which limits public access to the water. Farmland is common as one moves outward toward the east or west from the city.

Historic Places

The layout for the City of Salisbury was prepared in 1732. Today, the City has the richest collection of historic buildings in the county.

The 234-acre Pemberton Historical Park along the Wicomico River in the West Sector is the crown jewel of historic recreation in the county. Except for Pemberton Hall, the site remained undeveloped until 1984, when the County began to gradually develop the site within its historic context. The County developed a master plan for the site and has been steadily improving the site in accordance with the master plan.

Preserved Land

Several small parcels of Chesapeake Forest totaling 284 acres lie in the eastern and western edges of the Central Planning Area. In addition, several farms are currently under easement restricting future development.

Existing and Future Recreation

As the center of population in Wicomico County, the Central Planning Area is also the center of recreation activities and sites. The City of Salisbury has 36 local recreation sites totaling 530 acres (Map 3.1, Tables A-2 through A-4):

- JCC Park (#45)
- West Salisbury Elementary (#26)
- Indian Village Playground (#30)
- Emerson Holloway Park (#31)
- Salisbury Middle School (#32)
- Billy Gene Jackson Park (#33)
- North Johnson Pond (#34)
- North Salisbury Elementary (#35)
- Johnson Pond Park (#36)
- Lake Street Playground (#37)
- Rose Street Boat Ramp (#38)
- Chipman Elementary (#39)
- Poplar City Mansion (#40)
- Salisbury Marina (#41)
- Waterside Playground (#43)
- Pemberton Elementary (#46)
- Pinehurst Elementary (#54)
- Woodcock Playground (#55)
- Riverside Boat Ramp (#56)
- Riverwalk Park (#58)
- Wicomico Middle School (#61)
- Newton Playground (#62)
- Newton-Camden (#63)
- East Salisbury Elementary (#65)
- Doverdale Playground (#66)
- Wicomico High School (#70)
- Glen Avenue Elementary (#72)
- Memorial Field (#73)
- Salisbury City Park and Zoo (#74)
- Prince Street School (#76)
- Bennett Middle School (#78)
- Bennett High School (#80)
- Harmon Field (#81)
- Salisbury Pony League (#82)
- Parkside High School (#84)
- Schumaker Park (#86)

The East Subsector includes six local recreation sites: (Map 3.1, Tables A-2 through A-4):

- Nick Meyer Park (#69)
- Wicomico Youth/Civic Center (#71)
- Winterplace Park (#87)
- Beaver Run Elementary (#88)
- Perdue Stadium (#89)
- Kilburnie Playground (#91)

The six sites in the East Subsector total 441.4 acres to serve 10,211 residents, or approximately 43.2 acres per thousand population (ac/000). If no additional parkland is acquired by 2025, the East Subsector will have 37.3 ac/000 to serve a projected population of 11,831.

The West Subsector contains five local recreation sites (Map 3.1, Tables A-2 through A-4):

- Cedarhurst Park (#27)
- Crooked Oak Playground (#28)
- Centennial Village (#29)
- West Salisbury Little League (#47)
- Pemberton Historical Park (#50)
- West Metro Park (unnumbered)

Local recreation land in the West Subsector amounts to 252.3 acres for the five sites. With a 2010 population of approximately 13,000, the West Subsector is served by 19.4 ac/000. By 2025, the 252.3 acres would be roughly 16.8 ac/000 for the projected 15,060 residents. With growth pressure particularly strong to the west of the City of Salisbury, the County has proposed developing a park to serve the growing West Subsector. This Plan recognizes the need for the West Metro Park in the capital recommendations. See Chapter 7.

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South Planning Area



The South Planning Area includes the City of Fruitland and all land west to the Wicomico River and east to the Salisbury-Ocean City: Wicomico Regional Airport. The second largest of the planning areas, the south area was home to 16,087 people in 2010—an increase of approximately 2,592 persons (19.2 percent) since 2000. By 2025, the area’s population is expected to reach almost 18,640 an increase of 15.9 percent since 2010.

The South Planning Area includes the South Growth Area, one of three high growth areas in the county. If completely developed at maximum density, the growth area—south of U. S. 13 and east of St. Luke’s Road near the City of Fruitland—could accommodate an additional 13,000 persons.

Natural Features and Farmland

The South Planning Area includes 14 parcels of the Chesapeake Forest. Wetland areas extend over much of the Wicomico River and the Wicomico Creek, and, to a lesser extent, along Hawkins Branch, Walston Branch, and Tony Tank Creek.

The Johnson Wildlife Refuge, 153 acres in size, is located off of Johnson Road in the southeast corner of the planning area. The land is owned by the State of Maryland and is used primarily for hunting.

The Wicomico River and Wicomico Creek are the largest waterways in the South Planning Area. Other waterways include Passerdyke Creek south of Fruitland, Sharps Creek passing through Fruitland, and the many branches of the Nassawango Creek east of the Johnson Wildlife Refuge.

Several parcels in the South Planning Area are preserved by agricultural conservation easement. Large areas are preserved in the Upper Ferry Road/Allen area and Twiggs Corner area.

Preserved Land

Chesapeake Forest land covers approximately 1,537 acres of the South Planning Area. In addition, the Johnson Wildlife Management Area comprises 115 acres, and the Nassawango Creek Preserve, which lies in both the South and East Planning Areas, is 824 acres in size. As noted above, several agricultural parcels are also preserved through easement.

Existing and Future Recreation

The South Planning Area includes the following six public recreation sites comprising 55.8 acres of recreation land (Map 3.1, Tables A-2 through A-4):

- Coulbourne Recreation Area (#103)
- Fruitland Recreation Facility (#104)
- Fruitland Primary (#105)
- Fruitland Intermediate (#106)
- Fruitland Tennis Courts (#107)
- Allen Park (#127)

With a 2010 population of 16,087, local recreation sites provide only 3.5 acres of parkland for every thousand residents in the South Planning Area. State and Nature Conservancy acreage provides an additional 53 acres/000—short of the 60 ac/000 goal and, therefore, not sufficient to contribute to the local benchmark. If no additional local acreage is acquired by 2025, the rising population will lower the local measurement to 3.1 ac/000.

East Planning Area



The East Planning Area, a largely wooded and rural area that borders the Pocomoke River, is the least populated of the five planning areas. Maryland Routes 353 and 354 allow for north-south travel through the area, with major east-west routes including U.S. 50, MD 346, and MD 350. Most residents are concentrated in and near the Towns of Willards and Pittsville, as well as Powellville.

More than 6,400 people lived in the East Planning Area in 2010, an increase of approximately 300 persons (5.5 percent) since 2000. By 2025, almost 7,500 people are expected to reside in the area, an increase of 15.9 percent or 1,023 persons. Much of the future growth will probably occur near Willards because of its proximity to the growing Ocean City region in neighboring Worcester County.

Natural Features and Farmland

The Pocomoke River forms the eastern boundary of the East Planning Area—and of Wicomico County—and has been officially designated as a Maryland Scenic River. Both sides of the River and its tributaries include large tracts of wetlands.

Three significant creeks, each with many branches, flow into the Pocomoke River: the Burnt Mill Branch, Green Run, and Adkins Race. Other branches near Johnson Road flow into the Nassawango Creek. Large areas of the East Planning Area are preserved and available for hunting in state forests, including over 1,200 acres in the Wicomico State Forest and approximately 3,000 acres in several portions of the Chesapeake Forest.

Drainage is a critical agricultural issue in the East Planning Area. A system of public drainage associations operates to improve drainage during both the spring planting and fall harvesting. Water is retained during the dryer summer months for agricultural use. Some agricultural parcels in the area of Smith Road are preserved through easement.

Preserved Land

The East Planning Area includes five distinct areas of preserved land (Tables A-2 through A-4):

- Chesapeake Forest parcels, covering almost 3,000 acres;
- Wicomico State Forest (1,245 acres);
- Pocomoke River Heritage Conservation Fund (156 acres);
- Powellville Forest (4.2 acres); and
- Nassawango Creek Preserve (824 acres in both the East and South Planning Areas).

In addition, several agricultural parcels in the area of Smith Road and a swampy parcel along the Pocomoke River at Massey's Crossing are also preserved.

Existing and Future Recreation

The East Planning Area has the following public recreation sites providing 129.3 acres of recreation land (Map 3.1, Tables A-2 through A-4):

- Pittsville Ball Park (#92)
- Pittsville School (#93)
- Pittsville Playground (#94)
- Willards Primary (#95)
- Willards School (#96)
- Willards Recreation Area/Park (#98)
- East Side Youth Sports Complex (#99)
- Adkins Mill Park (#100)

For a 2010 population of 6,448, public recreation accounts for 20.1 acres of recreation land per thousand residents. The State and The Nature Conservancy own more than 10,500 acres in the East Planning Area, amounting to 187.5 ac/000, or 127.5 ac/000 in excess of the state goal of 60 ac/000. Therefore, 15.0 ac/000 of the excess can be credited toward the local goal of 30.0 ac/000, resulting in 35.1 ac/000 of local recreation land for the East Planning Area. By 2025, if no additional land is acquired, the East Planning Area will have 32.3 ac/000 of recreation land.

AGRICULTURAL LAND PRESERVATION

Many land preservation efforts revolve around farmland. Development has expanded the urban and suburbanized areas in Maryland and throughout the nation. Predominately, this increase in developed areas is often at the expense of once productive farmland. In an effort to preserve the rural landscape and the agricultural industry, the State of Maryland and Wicomico County have developed and implemented programs designed to promote the sustainability of conserving farmland. The following chapter presents State and County programs, as well as discusses the effectiveness of these preservation programs.

INTRODUCTION

Land preservation is a priority for public and private organizations and all levels of government. Programs at the Federal, State, and County levels offer vehicles such as conservation easements and tax incentives / advantages to entice property owners to consider preservation as another viable alternative to development. Land trusts and conservancies also offer advantages of land preservation.

Chapter 5 of the 2013 *Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan* identifies and compares the goals of the State and County programs and evaluate the effectiveness of the agricultural preservation efforts in Wicomico County. The information in Chapter 5 will provide the background for recommendations regarding agricultural preservation contained in Chapter 7.

BACKGROUND AND GOALS

Agriculture is the major industry in Wicomico County; therefore, emphasis on preservation of farmland is an integral component to the concept of sustainability. According to the 2012 Census of Agriculture, 510 farms encompassing 83,739 acres (or 35 percent of the total land area) are located in Wicomico County. From 1978 to 2012, the market value of agricultural products produced in Wicomico County increased by roughly \$128 billion or 119 percent from \$108 million to \$236 million, respectively (Table 5-1).

Traditionally, urbanization and suburbanization have caused a decline in the supply of agricultural land within Wicomico County. From 1978 to 2012, the total acreage of farmland has decreased by 23,363 acres or 22 percent. During the same time frame, the number of farms has declined from 920 to 510, which represents a decrease of 410 farms or 45 percent. In contrast, the average farm size increased from 116 acres in 1978 to 164 acres in 2012, which is an increase of 48 acres per farm or 41 percent.

The 1998 Comprehensive Plan recommended the Agricultural-Rural (A-1) Zoning District be revised to eliminate incompatible uses, as well as reduce the residential development density. In June 1998, the Wicomico County Zoning Code was revised to permit a base density of one

equivalent dwelling unit (EDU) per 15 acres or under a cluster provision, a density of one EDU per three acres. Both of types of residential subdivision require a minimum of at least 50 percent of the parcel to be set aside for preserving open space. Prior to the County Zoning Code amendment to the A-1 Zoning District, residential development density was one equivalent dwelling unit per 20,000 square feet subject to meeting the Wicomico County Health Department regulations for septic systems. As part of the 2004 amendments to the County Zoning Code, incompatible non-agriculture related commercial and industrial uses were removed from the permitted uses of the A-1 Zoning District.

Table 5.1
Wicomico County Agricultural Characteristics (1978 to 2012)

	1978	1982	1987	1992	1997	2002	2007	2012	Change, 1978-2012	
									Number	Percent
Number of farms	920	842	774	684	624	512	508	510	-410	-44.6
Acres of farmland	107,102	111,109	95,542	91,254	92,057	88,470	92,852	83,739	-23,363	-21.8
Avg. farm size (ac.)	116	132	123	133	148	173	183	164	48	41.4
Market value of products (\$000)	\$108,125	\$121,512	\$134,061	\$164,101	\$205,514	\$174,594	\$197,828	\$236,321,000	\$128,196,000	118.6
Average market value of products per farm (dollars)	\$117,527	\$144,318	\$173,205	\$240,763	\$329,350	\$341,003	\$389,426	\$463,375	\$345,848	294.3

Source: United States Department of Agriculture, 2012 Census of Agriculture

The County recognized another crucial component to preserving farmland was to allow some flexibility in agricultural related uses permitted in the A-1 Zoning District in order to increase the farmer’s income potential. In addition, The County adopted a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program in 2004 for the purpose of protecting farmland by allowing the transfer of development potential from a location in the A-1 Zoning District to one in a receiving district ideally located in an area where growth is encouraged.

The County Comprehensive Plan also created the Quantico Creek Rural Legacy Area as a primary agricultural preservation area. Since the inception of this Rural Legacy Area in 2000, 11 easements totaling 3,683 acres have been preserved in perpetuity using Rural Legacy funding from the State’s Program Open Space, as well as other funding sources.

The need to preserve the Quantico Creek Rural Legacy Area was for the following reasons:

- Large tracts being farmed;
- The lack of large-scale development;
- Soils well-suited for agriculture; and
- Several properties participating in the County or State agricultural preservation program.

The County Plan contains recommendations for local actions to preserve agricultural land and encourages local participation in State programs, as well.

Statewide, the Maryland General Assembly passed a resolution in 2002 that established a state-wide goal of preserving 1,030,000 acres of productive farmland by 2022, roughly the amount of land necessary to “support a reasonable diversity of agricultural production” throughout the State. According to the Maryland Department of Planning, approximately 359,766 acres or 35 percent of the goal has been permanently preserved in the State (76,809 Rural Legacy and 282,957 MALPF). Therefore, an additional 670,234 acres or 65 percent of the goal must be preserved in the next nine years to meet the state-wide goal through a variety of programs. The State goals for agricultural land preservation are:”

- Permanently preserve agricultural land capable of supporting a reasonable diversity of agricultural production.
- Protect natural, forestry, and historic resources and the rural character of the landscape associated with Maryland’s farmland.
- To the greatest degree possible, concentrate preserved land in large, relatively contiguous blocks to effectively support long-term protection of resources and resource-based industries.
- Limit the intrusion of development and its impacts on rural resources and resource-based industries.
- Preserve approximately 1,030,000 acres of productive agricultural land by 2022.
- Ensure good return on public investment by concentrating State agricultural land preservation funds in areas where the investment is reasonable well supported by both local investment and land use management programs.
- Work with local governments to:
 - Establish preservation areas, goals, and strategies through local comprehensive planning processes that address and complement State goals.
 - In each area designated for preservation, develop a shared understanding of goals and the strategy to achieve them among rural landowners, the public-at-large, and State and local government officials.
 - Protect the equity interests of rural landowners in preservation areas by ensuring sufficient public commitment and investment in preservation through easement acquisition and incentive programs.
 - Use local land use management authority effectively to protect public investment in preservation by managing development in rural preservation areas.
 - Establish effective measures to support profitable agriculture, including assistance in production, marketing, and the practice of stewardship, so that farming remains a desirable way of life for both the farmer and the public-at-large.

At the local level, agricultural land preservation activities in Wicomico are based on three critical elements:

- Public commitment to investment in land preservation indicated by the local legislation and the availability of State and local funding to support the County’s Agricultural Land Preservation Program to purchase easements;
- Supportive local plans, zoning, regulations, and procedures, such as the *Wicomico County Comprehensive Plan*, *Wicomico County Zoning Code*, *Wicomico County Comprehensive Water and Sewerage Plan*, and agricultural preservation initiatives; and
- Community support for the preservation strategy, indicated by the property owners willing to sell development rights consistent with the requirements and intent of the County’s Transfer of Development Rights Program.

The Wicomico County Comprehensive Plan contains goals, objectives, and policies pertaining to many topics pertinent to County planning. The Plan begins with two major goals that apply generally to the entire County:¹

- *“To promote high quality development in the County supporting it as a regional economic center, in a manner that best preserves and enhances the County’s existing character while protecting its natural resources and accommodating the diverse needs of existing and future residents.*
- *“To direct more dense growth into existing and pre-planned growth areas and less dense growth outside the Metro Core; so that, the public services and facilities necessary to meet existing and future growth can be provided and protect natural and agricultural areas are protected, consistent with the human and fiscal resources of the County.”*

The Plan also includes objectives for public actions necessary to accomplish the broad goals. One of the objectives is to *“Promote the conservation of large portions of the County with existing natural resources, prime agricultural land and natural limitations on development”*.²

Finally, the Plan includes six policies that apply specifically to the areas targeted for agricultural preservation, termed “Agricultural/Resource Areas”:³

- *“Support agriculture, forestry and related activities as a predominant use in these areas through land development regulations.*
- *“Afford agricultural and forestry uses maximum protection and freedom from nuisance complaints in zoning regulations and through ‘right to farm’ ordinances.*
- *“Give priority to public improvements directed toward agricultural, forestry and related uses.*
- *“Accommodate resource based and other industrial uses in accordance with strict performance standards.*
- *“Establish land development regulations which will accommodate residential developments in a manner which will least disrupt agricultural uses.*
- *“Cluster development is the preferred form of land subdivision to avoid land use conflicts and maintain or enhance rural character.”*

Goals, objectives, and policies of the Wicomico County agricultural preservation effort are consistent with applicable State goals. Both sets of directives focus on preserving land, protecting resources, delineating priority preservation areas for the purpose of purchasing easements, and minimizing the impacts of residential uses on agricultural uses. The County guidance is necessarily more precise and deals with specific programs and tools. State goals are

¹ 1998 Wicomico County Comprehensive Plan, PP. 21

² 1998 Wicomico County Comprehensive Plan, PP. 22

³ 1998 Wicomico County Comprehensive Plan, PP. 30

more general and frame the primary roles of the State as guidance, policy directives, and assistance.

Contrary to State goals, the County goals do not include a numerical target for preserved acreage. However, in subsequent applications to the State after the adoption of the County Comprehensive Plan, the County established the following two objectives:

- Preserve 1,000 acres of farmland within five (5) years (200 acres per year).
- Preserve 3,000 acres of farmland within fifteen (15) years (200 acres per year).

The two aforementioned measurable objectives pertain only to the County's local agricultural preservation program. As a result of the economic downturn and a decrease in funding from the agricultural transfer tax, the ability to meet the preservation objectives is challenged. Agricultural land in Wicomico County is preserved through other means including, but not limited to the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF), Rural Legacy Program, and through the County's land development regulations. In addition to the preservation objectives of the County's Agricultural Preservation Program, the following objective represents the County's Rural Legacy Area preservation target of the approximately 2,261 acres remaining within the Quantico Creek RLA that has no level of protection

- Preserve 2,261 acres in the Quantico Creek Rural Legacy Area with the next seven years (350 acres per year).

Based on the measurable and identified objectives for the County's local agricultural land preservation program and the Rural Legacy Program, Wicomico County is attempting to preserve 550 acres of undeveloped land and productive farmland annually. Establishing an objective for the amount of land to be preserved through Wicomico County's land development regulations (and more specifically, the cluster regulations for residential development in the A-1 Zoning District) is more challenging and lacks certainty since the effectiveness of the regulations depends on the size and number of subdivision requests received, which is difficult to predict.

The State does not allocate the goal for the statewide farmland preservation program by county. However, using the State goal of preserving 74,470 acres annually to meet the objective of preserving 1,030,000 acres statewide by 2022, and based on Wicomico County's percentage of the State's land area (3.9%), and assuming further that the County would preserve a similar proportion of land, then Wicomico County would meet a proportional share of the State objective if 2,904 acres were preserved annually over the next nine years. Based on 2,904 acres per year, an additional 26,139 acres will need to be preserved in Wicomico County by 2022 through four programs/mechanisms:

- MALPF
- Rural Legacy
- Wicomico County's Agricultural Preservation Program
- Wicomico County's development regulations

Using a conservative estimate of \$3,500 per acre, based on the cost of purchasing easements in the County through local and State programs in the past six years, preserving an average of 550 acres per year (County preservation and Quantico Creek Rural Legacy Area goals) would cost an average of more than \$1.9 million per year. As a result of declining program funding, the land preservation goal for Wicomico County should be studied in more detail.

CURRENT IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

Wicomico County uses many tools to preserve agricultural land, as discussed above. Combined, the programs preserve land throughout the rural areas of the County (Map 5.1). The following section describes the various elements of the County's agricultural land preservation effort.

Preservation Areas

The Wicomico County Zoning Code⁴ identifies most land outside of the County's Metropolitan Growth Area as being contained within the Agriculture-Rural (A-1) Zoning District. In addition, the areas immediately adjacent to towns or rural villages are also County designated growth areas, which are zoned Village Conservation or Town Transition. The County Comprehensive Plan and supporting ordinances direct and encourage new development into these designated growth areas. Policies in the A-1 Zoning District support the creation of agricultural districts and the preservation of farmland through purchase of development rights. In evaluating applications for agricultural districts, the County gives preference to parcels adjacent to a current district in an effort to create large and unfragmented areas of preserved farmland or forests. The County has identified the eastern and northern portions of the County as priority areas for farmland preservation (Map 5.1). Moreover, as the County updates the 1998 Comprehensive Plan, consideration will be given to delineate an official Priority Preservation Area in accordance with requirements outlined in the Agricultural Stewardship Act of 2006 (HB-2) approved by the State's General Assembly. Consideration will also be given to implementing the Sustainable Growth and Preservation Act of 2012 (SB-236). The intent of SB-236 is to reduce nutrient contributions from on-site individual sewerage disposal systems, as well as reduce the amount of overall development in areas dominated by agricultural or forested land uses for the purpose of preserving rural areas.

Easement Acquisition Mechanisms

Four preservation programs are currently used to acquire conservation easements in Wicomico County:

- Wicomico County agricultural preservation program – County program
- Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF) – State program
- Maryland Environmental Trust (MET) – State program
- Rural Legacy – State program

⁴ *Wicomico County Code*, chapter 225, 18 September 2004, available at <http://www.wicomicocounty.org>

In addition, the Lower Shore Land Trust (LSLT) is a private, non-profit organization dedicated to land preservation in the Lower Shore counties of Somerset, Wicomico, and Worcester. LSLT provides advice on land preservation techniques and helps interested landowners apply for conservation easements.

Wicomico County Agricultural Land Preservation Program

The Wicomico County's agricultural land preservation program preserves farmland in two ways:

- **Agricultural Districts** – The County's agricultural district program was established concurrent with the easement program in 1999. To participate in the district program, a farm must:
 - Be at least fifty (50) acres in size;
 - Have at least 50% of the land in prime agricultural soils (Class I, II, and III) or woodlands (Group I and II); and
 - Be located in the A-1 Zoning District.

Property owners placing land in the district program receive a 50 percent credit toward the County portion of annual real estate taxes on the property for up to ten (10) years. Currently, there are 25 agricultural districts encompassing approximately 3,876 acres in Wicomico County.

- **Agricultural Easements** – In 1999, Wicomico County adopted an easement purchase program to promote farmers to sell the development rights on farms established as agricultural districts, as described above. The Program is an alternative for farmers who prefer working with local program administrators rather than State administration. County funds for the program come from the State agricultural transfer tax, which is collected when farmland is sold and converted to another land use. If Wicomico County had a State-certified local program, the County would be able to retain 75% of the tax collected, instead of only 33% because the County does not have a local program. To obtain recertification from MALPF, the State requires a county to include a Priority Preservation Area Element in their Comprehensive Plan.

Interested farm owners submit an application to the County. Applications are ranked on seven factors:

- Soil capability;
- Size;
- Contiguity to other agricultural districts;
- Agricultural use;
- Consistency with the County Comprehensive Plan;
- Owner-operation; and
- Rural Legacy Area designation.

The first easements acquired under the County program were settled in 2004. The easements affected three properties and totaled 286.13 acres with a value of \$434,200, or about \$1,520 per acre. Additional easements were purchased in 2006, 2007, and 2008

totaling approximately 497 acres at a cost of \$2,074,326, or an average cost of \$4,174 per acre. Although participation in the County program is entirely voluntary on the part of landowners, the County has adopted a goal of preserving an average of 200 acres per year. The cost of achieving the goal depends on many factors, including the criteria listed above, property location, and market forces, but a conservative estimate to achieve the goal is \$700,000 annually, based on preserving 200 acres annually with an easement value of \$3,500 per acre. Since the inception of the program, the County has acquired 7 easements totaling 782.8 acres of land.

The County provided initial funding for the program through the sale of \$400,000 in General Obligation bonds in 1997. The initial funding has been exhausted and, with the adoption of the revenue cap in 2000, the sale of bonds will probably not be utilized for future funding.

Funding for the program is currently dependent on the amount of agricultural transfer tax received by the County. During the last four fiscal years (FY 2010 – FY 2013), the County has received an average of approximately \$11,400 annually to be used for agricultural preservation efforts. The funding generated annually by the agricultural transfer tax can preserve about 3 acres per year. Therefore, since the conservative estimate above cites \$700,000 annually to meet the goal, the proceeds of the agricultural transfer tax are not sufficient to meet the goal of preserving 200 acres annually under the County program. As a result of decreased funding levels from the agricultural transfer tax, alternative sources of funding should be explored to ensure the County's annual preservation goal is achieved.

Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation

The Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF) was established in 1978 to provide funds as an incentive to preserve private farmland. Individual farmers sell an easement to MALPF, which in doing so restricts development of the property. The Governor and General Assembly allocate MALPF funds from the State transfer tax and agricultural transfer tax revenues. MALPF allocations are divided into two parts. The first part of the allocation consists of 50% of all available MALPF funds and is divided evenly among the 23 counties. The second part of the allocation consists of the remaining 50% of total available funds is used to match County funds. State MALPF funds from the matching allocation can be used for up to 60 percent of total project cost, with a maximum of \$1 million. Any funds unencumbered from the allocation procedures are used on a statewide basis according to the ratio of asking price to easement value.

Enrollment applications are submitted to a County coordinator, who forwards the application and recommendations of the local advisory board to the State. Easement values are established by appraisal, and property owners are encouraged to voluntarily discount the easement value (i.e., accept a lower amount of compensation than the appraisal indicates) in return for potential tax benefits.

Since the inception of the MALPF Program, 6,649 acres have been preserved in perpetuity in Wicomico County.

Maryland Rural Legacy Program

The State of Maryland established the Rural Legacy Program in 1997 to encourage local governments and private land trusts to identify specific Rural Legacy Areas and competitively apply for funds to complement existing land preservation efforts or to develop new ones. Easements or fee estate purchases are sought from willing landowners in order to protect areas vulnerable to sprawl development that can weaken an area's natural resources, thereby reducing the economic value of farming, forestry, recreation, and tourism. Rural Legacy Areas help to preserve contiguous parcels, including forested and meadow areas, as well as farmlands. The Maryland General Assembly allocates funding annually for the Rural Legacy Program.

In 2000, the Quantico Creek Rural Legacy Area (RLA) was established. The Quantico Creek Rural Legacy Area encompasses 13,835 acres or 21.6 square miles in the western part of the County on both sides of Quantico Creek, which is tributary of the Nanticoke River (Map 5.1). The Quantico Creek area is known for its rural character, abundant open lands, cultural significance, natural wildlife habitat, and water quality impact on the Nanticoke River Watershed. Approximately 4,500 acres in the RLA are developed and an additional 7,074 acres have some level of protection (i.e. Chesapeake Bay Critical Area or tidal wetlands). Wicomico County has identified the remaining 2,261 acres as unprotected and targeted for preservation efforts. The County estimates preserving the remaining 2,261 acres within the next seven years assuming the preservation rate of 350 acres per year in the Rural Legacy Area. The cost to preserve the remaining unprotected land is estimated at \$7.9 million (2,261 acres at \$3,500 per acre). As the County embarks on updating their Comprehensive Plan, the Quantico Creek Rural Legacy Area should be included as part of the Priority Preservation Area, as well as identified on a future growth tier map as Tier IV consistent with the mapping expectations outlined in the State's Sustainable Growth and Agricultural Preservation Act of 2012.

From FY 2000 through FY 2013, Wicomico County has spent about \$7.95 million in funding (Rural legacy, Wicomico Forest Conservation, CREP, and County Ag. Preservation program) to purchase easements on 3,683 acres in the Quantico Creek RLA.

Based on the vast natural resources and the need to sustain the vibrant agricultural industry from increased development pressure, consideration should be given to expand the existing Quantico Creek Rural Legacy Area. Moreover, consideration should be given to establishing a second Rural Legacy Area in Wicomico County. The need to concentrate efforts to preserve large contiguous tracts of land is the best approach to protect our natural resources and preserve our rural quality of life. To assist in targeting and prioritizing land acquisition and easement sites, the High Value Natural Areas map will serve as a road map to guide future preservation efforts. See Map 6.3. At the time of this publication, the State-wide allocation to the Rural Legacy Program in FY 2014 was \$13,500,000. Since the inception of this program in 1997, over 76,809 acres of valuable farmland, forest, and natural areas have been preserved across the State.

Maryland Environmental Trust

Land preservation efforts in Maryland began in the 1970s when the Maryland Environmental Trust (MET) was established. MET accepts conservation easement donations from property owners. Donations are strictly voluntary and are utilized by landowners to protect natural resources and preserve scenic open space. The landowner who gives an easement limits the right to develop and subdivide the land, now and in the future, but still remains the owner. Easements are binding on future owners. Therefore, an easement assures that the land will never be used in

a way contrary to the current owner's intent. Financial benefits in the form of tax deductions are also associated with easements. Easements often facilitate transferring land to family members without paying large estate taxes. MET may accept conservation easements on farmland as well as environmentally sensitive areas. Since 1987, MET has assembled 11 easements (donated or purchased) encompassing 2,001 acres in Wicomico County.

Funding for Easement Acquisition

Wicomico County dedicates the portion of the revenue received from the State agricultural transfer tax to the local agricultural preservation program. State certification of the County program would entitle the County to receive 75% of the total amount of the agricultural transfer tax collected in the County. As a result of losing certification, the County receives 33 percent of the agricultural transfer tax.

The amount of funding received depends on the number and size of agricultural properties in the A-1 Zoning District being sold and converted to a different land use. Between FY 2006 and FY 2007, the County portion of the agricultural transfer tax was \$923,377. Between FY 2011 through FY 2014, the County portion of the agricultural transfer tax was \$19,841 or roughly \$4,960 annually. As a result, preservation efforts have been significantly impacted and the number of acres preserved each year is declining.

Additional revenue for easement acquisition comes from the State in the MALPF and Rural Legacy programs. MALPF funding for easement purchases is difficult to anticipate by county because the allocation and program is statewide. Funding for the Rural Legacy Program is also statewide and is obtained through a competitive process, with requests for funding submitted annually. To date, Wicomico County has received \$6.2 million from the Rural Legacy Program to purchase easements.

Land Use Management Authority

Wicomico County uses a full complement of land use management tools for farmland preservation, including:

Table 5.2
Preserved Land by Program, 1987–2013

	Purchased Easements									MET	Total
	MALPF		Wicomico County		Rural Legacy		TOTALS			Acres	Preserved
	Acres	Cost	Acres	Cost	Acres	Cost	Acres	Cost	Cost/Acre	(Donated)	Acres
1987	395.63	\$283,952	0	\$0	0	\$0	395.63	\$283,952	\$718	0	395.63
1988	310.63	\$233,906	0	\$0	0	\$0	310.63	\$233,906	\$753	0	310.63
1989	159.99	\$224,000	0	\$0	0	\$0	159.99	\$224,000	\$1,400	0	159.99
1990	480.36	\$701,900	0	\$0	0	\$0	480.36	\$701,900	\$0	25.5	505.86
1991	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0	#DIV/0!	0	0
1992	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0	\$0	0	0
1993	835	\$556,166	0	\$0	0	\$0	835	\$556,166	\$0	0	835
1994	518.68	\$368,926	0	\$0	0	\$0	518.68	\$368,926	\$711	525.52	1044.2
1995	146	\$79,296	0	\$0	0	\$0	146	\$79,296	\$543	0	146
1996	463.06	\$243,531	0	\$0	0	\$0	463.06	\$243,531	\$526	0	463.06
1997	356.2	\$321,640	0	\$0	0	\$0	356.2	\$321,640	\$903	0	356.2
1998	197.06	\$397,413	0	\$0	0	\$0	197.06	\$397,413	\$2,017	18	215.06
1999	442.27	\$411,705	0	\$0	0	\$0	442.27	\$411,705	\$931	93.03	535.3
2000	584.22	\$475,963	0	\$0	0	\$0	584.22	\$475,963	\$815	0	584.22
2001	240	\$267,125	0	\$0	0	\$0	240	\$267,125	\$1,113	67.5	307.5
2002	150	\$161,459	0	\$0	0	\$0	150	\$161,459	\$1,076	687.22	837.22
2003	143.85	\$205,936	0	\$0	750.574	\$779,666	894.424	\$985,602	\$1,102	120.19	1014.614
2004	0	\$0	286.1	\$434,200	0	\$0	286.1	\$434,200	\$1,518	0	286.1
2005	151.41	\$472,025	0	\$0	0	\$0	151.41	\$472,025	\$3,118	163.77	315.18
2006	0	\$0	364.6	\$1,029,680	0	\$0	364.6	\$1,029,680	\$2,824	0	364.6
2007	553.35	\$1,914,384	67.32	\$528,902	177.91	\$447,735	798.58	\$2,891,021	\$3,620	0	798.58
2008	283.44	\$1,168,360	64.76	\$516,461	135.19	\$334,654	483.39	\$2,019,475	\$4,178	0	483.39
2009	0	\$0	0	\$0	344.94	\$889,177	344.94	\$889,177	\$2,578	75	419.94
2010	0	\$0	0	\$0	110.62	\$334,795	110.62	\$334,795	\$3,027	0	110.62
2011	105.85	\$246,995	0	\$0	607.14	\$1,507,888	712.99	\$1,754,883	\$0	0	712.99
2012	132.00	\$458,778	0	\$0	771.72	\$2,208,798	903.72	\$2,667,576	\$2,952	177	1080.72
2013	0.00	\$0	0	\$0	785.09	\$1,450,000	785.09	\$1,450,000	\$1,847	48.27	833.36
Totals	6,649.00	\$9,193,461	782.78	\$2,509,243	3,683.18	\$7,952,713	11,114.96	\$19,655,417	\$1,768	2,001.00	13,115.96

Source: Salisbury-Wicomico Department of Planning, Zoning, and Community Development and the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation

- The *Wicomico County Comprehensive Plan* establishes policies related to agricultural preservation.
- The *Wicomico County Zoning Code* includes regulations for the A-1 Zoning District. Recent changes to the code (September 2004) added some home-based business uses that maintain the character of the district and expand opportunities to supplement farmers' income. The Code revisions also deleted a number of uses in the A-1 district that were incompatible with agriculture, such as industrial and non-agricultural commercial uses.
- Clustering provisions, which are available in both the Zoning and Subdivision sections of the Code allow for higher density development in contrast to the density requirement of a non-cluster subdivision, which is one equivalent dwelling unit per 15 acres. Both conventional and cluster types of residential subdivision require a minimum 50 percent open space set aside of the total acreage of the tract. In addition to the disparity in

densities between the two aforementioned types of subdivisions permitted in the A-1 Zoning District, another distinction is how the open space is platted. Conventional subdivisions can include the 50 percent open space set aside on the deeded lots when there is no interior infrastructure (roads) or on an individual parcel if interior infrastructure exists. In contrast, cluster subdivisions require the open space set aside be deeded as a separate parcel.

- Clustering is allowed in several zoning districts, but clustering in the A-1 zone requires the largest amount of open space: 50% of the tract. Within the A-1 zone, maximum density without clustering is 1 unit per 15 acres, while maximum density with clustering is 1 unit per 3 acres. Prior to 1998, when the code changes were enacted, residential development in the A-1 district could occur at a density of two units per acre. The open space portion of the site must be recorded on the plat/deed and, therefore, remain open in perpetuity.
- The recent changes to the zoning code (September 2004) include provisions for transferring development rights (TDR)⁵. Rights can be sent from agricultural districts to either a designated growth area (town, village, or Metro Core) at a rate of one dwelling unit in the receiving area for every two (2) acres preserved in the sending area or to another parcel in the A-1 district at a rate of one dwelling unit in the receiving area for every six (6) acres preserved in the sending area.

As part of the update to the Wicomico County Comprehensive Plan, consideration should be given to identify potential opportunities to preserve rural areas from experiencing too much development pressure. For example, the development of rural design standards establishing maximum residential lot sizes in the Agricultural-Rural (A-1) Zoning District is an opportunity to preserve farmland, forest, and natural areas. In addition, it is recommended the open space requirements for residential subdivisions in the A-1 Zoning District are reviewed to determine if the existing standards are achieving the anticipated result. Implementation of the aforementioned land use management tools will assist in reducing the impact associated with residential development within rural areas of the County.

Farming Assistance Programs

For agriculture to remain a viable business in Wicomico County, land preservation efforts must be coupled with services, “state of the art” farming opportunities, and other mechanisms. The Maryland Cooperative Extension Service (MCES) provides services and programs in support of agricultural and horticultural activities in Wicomico. MCES offerings in support of crops, livestock, and nurseries include:⁶

- Small Farm Institute;
- Commodity Marketing;
- Maryland Forages Program;
- Nutrient Management for Maryland; and
- Agricultural Nutrient Management Program.

⁵ *Wicomico County Zoning Code*, Section 225-58, “Part III Transfer of Development Rights”

⁶ More information about MCES programs is available at: <http://www.agnr.umd.edu/MCE>.

IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM EVALUATION

According to the Maryland Department of Agriculture, productive and profitable farming is the best method of agricultural land preservation. Therefore, a successful program should provide farmers with the opportunity to be both productive and profitable. The components of Wicomico County's agricultural land preservation program provide landowners with options from which to choose the most appropriate means to retain land for agricultural uses while receiving a reasonable return. The following sections offer insights into the program strategy, funding, land use management tools, program performance, effects of potential development on land markets, and farming assistance.

Funding

From 1987 through 2013, the major land preservation programs in use in Wicomico County (MALPF, County program, Rural Legacy, and MET) have preserved more than 13,116 acres at a total cost of \$19.7 million. Approximately 7,432 acres of agricultural land have been preserved through the State and County programs. Revenues from the State agricultural transfer tax provide the funds for the County program, which provides balance between conversion of farmland to residential uses and the preservation of farms. The County program also provides an opportunity for landowners to work with local officials to preserve land. The State transfer tax revenues that fund MALPF and the Rural Legacy Program are also intended as a dedicated revenue source for land preservation. However, State law permits transfer tax revenue to be diverted into the General Fund during the annual budget process. After several years of lower annual MALPF funding and some (2006, 2009, and 2011) with no funding at all, the program provided higher levels of funding in 2007, 2008, and 2010.

Land Use Management Tools

The current land use management tools in Wicomico County are helpful in preserving agricultural land. Farming remains a viable land use within the A-1 zoning district, which encompasses much of the land outside of designated growth areas and incorporated jurisdictions. This Plan encourages the County's implementation of land use management tools for land preservation including, but not limited to the following:

- Aggressively identify lands targeted for preservation for agricultural and other purposes. (Map 5.1). The degree of protection will depend on the program through which the land is protected and the specific method of protection.
- Focus development in the Metropolitan Growth Area, the incorporated jurisdictions, and county-designated growth areas (Map 2.4).
- Retain the policy contained in the approved *2010 Wicomico County Comprehensive Water and Sewerage Plan* prohibiting private package treatment plants serving new residential developments located within the A-1 zoning district.
- Partner with federal, State, adjacent county, local governments, or non-governmental organizations owning or managing land for purposes such as recreation (e.g., State parks,

County parks) or natural resource conservation (e.g., State forests) or agricultural preservation efforts including fee-simple acquisition and easement purchases.

- Strategically target large areas of unprotected and unfragmented rural areas for agricultural preservation and potentially expand the Quantico Creek RLA and/or establish a new Rural Legacy Area.
- Target acquisition of parcels located within Sensitive Species Project Review Areas (SSPRA) where plant and/or animal species are listed as threatened or endangered by either the Federal or State government.

Program Performance

The four major land preservation programs in use in Wicomico County (MALPF, County program, Rural Legacy, and MET) have preserved a total of more than 13,116 acres since 1987 (Table 5.2). Two of the programs, MALPF and Wicomico County agricultural preservation, have financed easements on roughly 7,432 acres, which represents 8.8 percent of the County's total farmland identified in the 2012 Census of Agriculture.

As farmland has been lost to development in recent decades, the amount of preserved farmland has increased. If current funding levels persist, it is unlikely the County's agricultural preservation program goal of 3,000 acres will be achieved by 2028. Additionally, the ability to achieve preserving the remaining 2,261 acres of unprotected land in the Quantico Creek Rural Legacy Area will depend on the amount of State Program Open Space funds allocated to the County. Achieving the goal of preserving 350 acres annually, the 2,261 acres could be preserved in seven years at a total estimated cost of \$7.9 million. From 2003 through 2013, the County received \$6.2 million in Rural Legacy funding, which roughly translates to a yearly average of \$563,636 from Program Open Space for preserving land in the Quantico Creek Rural Legacy Area.

Although not a "program" per se, Wicomico County is also preserving land through the County's zoning regulations that include two land preservation requirements:

- Fifty percent (50%) of the land in a cluster subdivision must be set aside in a separate parcel as open space and maintained by a homeowners' association.
- Fifty percent (50%) of the land in a conventional subdivision must be maintained in open space as part of the lots.

Since the 1998 zoning code amendments to the A-1 Agricultural-Rural Zoning District took effect, 23 new subdivisions (three or more lots) containing 376 lots have been approved. The 23 approved subdivisions account for 2,576.5 acres, which 55 percent or 1,407 acres is preserved as open space.

The County also supplements the land development codes (e.g., existing zoning and subdivision ordinances) by imposing specific regulations for the retention of forests, reforestation, and afforestation of land uses within Wicomico County. As a result of the Forest Conservation Act, over 2,301.6 acres of land have been preserved in perpetuity as easements within the A-1 Zoning District in Wicomico County.

Effects of Potential Development on Land Markets

The current zoning and development procedures in Wicomico County help to focus development in and around the designated growth areas and municipalities.

One of the results of increased development pressure is the rising price of land, not only for development, but for preservation, as well. The cost per easement acre fluctuates, depending on a variety of circumstances, including agricultural yield, availability of vacant land, and individual landowner circumstances. Since 2000, the cost of conservation easements through the MALPF program has ranged from \$345 to \$6,865 per acre. The analysis used in the *2013 Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan* assumes an average cost of \$3,500 per acre to achieve the County's preservation goal. A higher cost will greatly reduce the County's "buying power" and will reduce the amount of agricultural land that the County can preserve.

Farming Assistance

Several local sources of assistance support the County's agricultural community with a variety of services, including the following:

- The Wicomico County Zoning Code has been modified to increase the allowable ancillary uses on agricultural property, thus allowing farmers more opportunities to supplement farm income and maintain the farm during less profitable years. Future land use policies for the rural areas of the County should be sensitive to the effects that "down-zoning" or limiting the use of individual septic systems serving residential development may have on the ability of farmers to use land equity to maintain farming operations.
- The Natural Resources Conservation Service is the arm of the United States Department of Agriculture that assists property owners in conserving soil, water, and other natural resources. The service provides technical assistance as well as cost-sharing and financial incentives. Most work is done with local partners, such as local conservation districts.
- The University of Maryland Cooperative Extension, an agency of the university, provides educational and information resources from the university to the Maryland citizens. Information and programs are available in a broad range of topics, including crops, livestock, and nursery; 4H and Youth volunteers; lawn, garden, and home; family life and community; natural resources and water quality; and food, nutrition, and health.
- The Maryland Department of Agriculture is the agency of State government charged with providing leadership and support to agriculture and the citizens of Maryland by conducting regulatory, service, and educational activities that assure consumer confidence, protect the environment, and promote agriculture.

Summary

Wicomico County's strategy for agricultural land preservation includes several components. The County enacted an easement acquisition program to offer landowners a local alternative to the State easement acquisition program. The strengths of the local program are speed and flexibility. Preservation actions can take place relatively quickly.

Public services are subject to a constant pressure to provide more services with fewer resources. The Wicomico agricultural preservation program must learn to compete with the development industry for the landowner's interest. Easement value alone may not provide an adequate level of compensation for certain landowners compared to development value of the property. County staff should help local landowners make the decision to preserve land by illustrating the total value of preservation, including:

- Direct payment
- Tax deductions for reduced value donation
- Property tax credit
- Continued ownership and use
- Land resale
- Future owner/family lots
- Peace of mind

NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION

In the late 1990s, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) began an effort to address landscape fragmentation and to identify the most ecologically important lands in the state. In the effort, termed “Maryland’s Green Infrastructure Assessment”, DNR mapped key parcels of land throughout the state to target for preservation from development. In 2011, DNR revised and updated the ecological ranking of Green Infrastructure hubs and corridors to establish priorities for conservation and guide open space acquisition efforts and funding. The ranking was based on a variety of criteria that the department weighted on the basis of importance.

In addition to Green Infrastructure, DNR has similarly identified and mapped water-based natural assets, referred to as Blue Infrastructure. Both green infrastructure (GI) and blue infrastructure (BI) are discussed below.

Agricultural lands are also critically important to the character and economy of Wicomico County. Wicomico is the most agriculturally productive county in the entire State of Maryland. Many of the parcels identified as Green Infrastructure are, in fact, agricultural. The previous chapter was devoted to a discussion of preserving agricultural land, including agricultural easements. Other elements of preserved land (Map 6.1) in the county include:

- Land or permanent easements owned by preservation organizations, such as the Maryland Environmental Trust, the Nature Conservancy, and the Maryland Department of Natural Resources;
- Natural areas;
- Regulated or restricted areas, such as Chesapeake Bay Critical Areas;
- County and municipal parks; and
- Transmission lines and utility corridors.

Many elements of the GI system in Wicomico County have a specific significance in other areas of the *2013 Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan*. The following chapter reviews the GI system in Wicomico County and contains the following information:

1. Definition — What is GI?
2. Purpose — Why is GI valuable? What are the benefits of protecting GI?
3. Priorities — What are the threats to GI? How important is each threat?
4. Location — Where is GI located in Wicomico County? Which parcels are in the greatest danger of development and/or have the highest priority for conservation?
5. Best Practices — What are the best ways to conserve GI?

Definition — What is Green Infrastructure (GI)?

DNR defines Green Infrastructure as “an interconnected network of natural lands and other open spaces that conserves natural ecosystem values and functions, sustains clean air and water, and provides a wide array of benefits to people and wildlife.” Several principles discussed in the Conservation Leadership Network’s *Green Infrastructure Handbook* represent the guiding fac-

tors used by Wicomico County and the State of Maryland to develop GI planning, including preservation from development, linkage, solid underlying science and planning, benefits for everyone in the community, high priority/critical public investment, and diverse stakeholders.

Purpose — Why is GI valuable? What are the benefits of protecting GI?

GI systems are composed of hubs and corridors. Hubs are large expanses of natural land vital to the unique ecology of a region, such as forests, wetlands, riparian corridors, existing parks and conservation, and other natural lands that provide many services to the ecosystem. Hubs provide Ecological Goods and Services (EGS), which include:

- Clean the air
- Filter and cool water
- Filter and trap sediment runoff
- Store/cycle nutrients
- Conserve/generate soils
- Pollinate crops/other plants
- Regulate climate
- Sequester carbon
- Protect areas against storm/flood damage
- Protect/recharge aquifers
- Provide native animal and plant habitat

Corridors are the connections that turn a pattern of hubs into a system. Corridors may include greenways, trails, streams, riparian corridors, aquatic areas, parks, abandoned rail easements, and conservation lands. Corridors help to:

- Link native plants and animals;
- Protect greenways, trails, or historic sites;
- Link wildlife areas; and
- Provide recreational opportunities.

Corridors, in the form of greenways, can also define areas appropriate for future growth and areas that are ecologically sensitive and should be preserved.

Within Wicomico County, DNR has identified 23 hubs (Map 6.2, Table 6.1). Of the 23 hubs, five (5) hubs—414, 452, 461, 523, and 525—have a composite ecological score below 10 indicating high ecological sensitivity. Green Infrastructure is the primary physical mechanism for enhancing EGS. Green Infrastructure offers landscapes to promote human health through biking, walking, birding, hunting, and fishing. Combining GI with other preserved land (Map 6.3) illustrates the large amount of land in Wicomico County with some type of protection from development pressure.

Priorities — What are the threats to GI? How important is each threat?

Perhaps the greatest threat to GI is excessive development that fragments natural, sensitive areas. Green Infrastructure is founded on the principle of conserving hubs of sufficient size and connecting corridors to act as effective transit ways and habitat for sensitive species. Physical separation/degradation of sensitive areas permanently

Table 6.1
Green Infrastructure Hub Characteristics

Hub ID	Notes	Composite Ecological Score	Hub Rank	Total Area of Hub (Acres)	Natural Heritage Areas (Acres)	Wetlands of Special State Concern (Acres)	Upland Interior Forest (Acres)	Wetland Interior Forest (Acres)	Different Wetland Types (NWI)	Streams in Interior Forest (Meters)	Sensitive Species Project Review Areas (Acres)
414	1	3	593	12,992	3,387	3,628	6,343	2,475	50	33,861	747
419	2	36	577	3,529	244	181	1,810	341	7	4,627	0
452		7	575	40,169	0	702	16,587	3,101	101	8,942	1,570
461	3	1	594	147,476	5,560	8,999	99,539	18,716	139	263,903	23,036
465	2	20	453	511	0	12	155	5	11	2,677	471
472		84	508	5,174	0	13	3,229	75	29	5,814	360
477		73	160	672	0	0	349	6	9	964	0
479		10	483	928	0	56	417	24	9	5,699	651
484		85	101	398	0	0	229	6	4	119	0
486		74	11	505	0	0	190	0	14	110	0
487		29	523	3,787	0	16	2,307	315	24	7,622	0
491		91	113	695	0	0	444	12	16	3,113	0
495		57	338	1,227	0	0	873	64	17	0	0
496		77	164	411	0	0	238	5	4	2,823	0
507		95	196	423	0	0	167	2	5	1,435	0
512		96	29	930	0	0	413	11	10	0	0
517		58	323	2,775	0	0	1,717	206	20	441	0
519	4	56	371	2,159	0	0	1,324	298	21	537	0
521		11	355	743	0	0	401	2	5	671	140
522		89	198	957	0	0	313	11	22	0	0
523	5	3	466	1,036	0	0	577	27	12	118	0
525	5	5	340	380	0	0	222	16	4	0	0
533	4	24	543	30,778	0	0	9,330	1,541	91	6,389	404

Source: Maryland Department of Natural Resources (2013)

NOTES:

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|
| 1 | Lies in Wicomico, Dorchester, and Sussex Counties | 4 | Lies in Wicomico and Somerset Counties |
| 2 | Lies in Wicomico and Sussex Counties | 5 | Lies in Wicomico and Worcester Counties |
| 3 | Lies in Wicomico, Somerset, Worcester, and Sussex Counties | | |

compromise the effectiveness of the entire ecosystem. Low-density sprawl development is particularly concerning because it does damage to the largest amount of sensitive lands for the benefit of the fewest number of people. Other serious challenges to establishing and protecting a viable GI network include:

- Brownfields that remain unmitigated;
- Lack of available funding;
- Fragmentation of valuable hubs with isolation of wildlife and plants leading to loss of endangered species and/or probable extinction in the area;
- Development that encroach on or are in close proximity to sensitive areas and that can result in a loss of wildlife, disturbance of breeding and raising young, loss of food supplies, and introduction of domestic animals that prey on wildlife;
- Weak stewardship over parcels within the GI framework; and
- Lack of public education and outreach emphasizing the benefits of conserving forested areas within Wicomico County.

Where are Green Infrastructure parcels in Wicomico County?

In 2009, the County established the Wicomico County Natural Resources Conservation Advisory Committee. The purpose of the Committee is to develop a comprehensive Green Infrastructure Plan with strategies to implement Green Infrastructure conservation and advise the County on decisions that may affect the County's G.I.

Wicomico County utilized DNR's recently revised and updated statewide green infrastructure assessment in delineating the Green Infrastructure network for the county (Map 6.2). In the most recent update of Wicomico County's Green Infrastructure network (Version 6.0), DNR omitted some parcels that were identified in the previous version (5.1). The DNR omissions are represented in the Wicomico County Green Infrastructure Network as "Auxiliary GI".

What are the "Best Practices" for preserving Green Infrastructure?

Wicomico County has identified three primary strategies for conserving GI hubs and corridors. The strategies are designed to:

1. Manage risk and reduce vulnerability by providing guidelines for integrating human activities and land uses.
2. Restore and enhance the Green Infrastructure network where gaps exist and degradation has occurred.

Each of the three strategies is further discussed below.

Strategy 1: Protect and conserve the most sensitive areas through conservation easements and fee simple purchases whenever possible.

The county's principal strategy for implementing the GI portions of the *2013 Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan* is to protect the most sensitive areas in the green infrastructure system through targeted conservation easements, fee simple purchases, restoration, environmentally sensitive design, and best management practices (BMPs). In addition to County agencies, the County will enlist the participation of many departments and organizations, including:

Public Programs for Donated or Purchased Easements

- Rural Legacy Program
- Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF)
- Farm & Ranch Land Protection Program (FRPP)
- Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP)
- Program Open Space (POS)

Public Programs for Restoration and BMPs

- Conservation Reserve [Enhancement] Program (CRP/CREP)
- Wetland Reserve Program (WRP)
- Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
- Agricultural Management Assistance Program (AMA)

Private and Public Organizations

- Ducks Unlimited
- The Nature Conservancy (TNC)
- Lower Shore Land Trust
- The Conservation Fund
- Maryland Department of Natural Resources
- Maryland Environmental Trust

Strategy 2: Manage Risk & Vulnerability.

The principal strategy for the County itself will be to conserve and enhance as much GI as possible through conservation easements and fee simple purchases of lands that the County can manage. However, the strategy can conserve only a small fraction of the ecologically important lands in the County. Therefore, the second strategy is to manage the risk of adverse effects in GI areas and to reduce vulnerability, where possible.

Examples of possible county tasks to help maintain the GI include:

- 1) Publicly acknowledging Green Infrastructure and the principles that act as a guide for landowners, farmers, developers, and anyone making property decisions that might affect Green Infrastructure.

- 2) Ensuring that the Wicomico County Council, Parks and Recreation Commission, and Planning Commission are aware that Green Infrastructure principles and design concepts provide useful guidance regarding proposed activities over which the County may act to approve, deny, direct, advise, or otherwise have influence.

The Advisory Committee will work with the County Executive, County Council, Salisbury-Wicomico County Planning & Zoning Commission, Wicomico County Department of Recreation, Parks and Tourism, Salisbury-Wicomico County Department of Planning, Zoning and Community Development, and the agricultural, forestry and conservation communities to protect the natural resources located in Wicomico County.

Strategy 3: Restore & Enhance Green Infrastructure.

In addition to protecting Green Infrastructure, efforts should be made to maintain, restore, and enhance the GI network. However, maintenance, restoration, and enhancement is a tertiary strategy, given the context of limited public funding. Nevertheless, the strategy remains important to maintain awareness of restoration and maintenance, even in places where the GI is protected or carefully integrated with other land uses.

Green Infrastructure and the Effects of Rising Sea Level

In 2013, the Maryland Climate Change Commission projected that sea level in the Wicomico region will rise two (2) feet by 2050. Even if the projection is accurate to only $\pm 25\%$ (for instance), which is a very large margin of error, the resultant rise of 1.5—2.5 feet would result in a large loss of land that threatens both the natural and built environments in Wicomico County. Property damage, coupled with a loss of shoreline, trails, agricultural land, and GI, poses a risk to the livelihood of county residents.

Green Infrastructure serves as the first line of defense against flooding. Inundation caused by a rise in sea level also causes groundwater levels to increase. Marshes and riverine beaches especially need to have inland areas protected for times when inundation causes up-slope migration. In 2012, Wicomico County experienced heavy flooding and rains from Hurricane Sandy. GI was adversely affected by the storm, resulting in sediment erosion, damaged forests, and destroyed animal habitats. The damage from Sandy is an example of potential future consequences as sea level continues to rise. Conserving natural areas and adjacent buffers will help protect against flooding and associated impacts of sea level rise. Protection from further fragmentation is vital because the current level of degradation makes sensitive areas even more vulnerable. Development and deterioration of GI may adversely affect the Ecological Goods and Services that protect against sea-level rise. Without GI to protect against flooding, sensitive lands in the community remain at risk.

Preservation of GI can be accomplished by directing development away from sensitive areas, as well as developing guidelines to encourage compatibility thereby reducing impacts. Encouraging infill development in areas with existing services, and managing development near shorelines to minimize catastrophic losses can help prepare for changing flood conditions. Allowing compatible uses will support the landscape of GI and reduce fragmentation. Furthermore, combining conservation tools and recreation opportunities, where possible, may build public support for recreation projects. In addition to planning, partnering with non-governmental

organizations to provide public outreach and education about environmental stewardship and the relationship to sea-level rise is important.

A study to explore the implications of sea-level rise in Wicomico County should be prepared. The results of the study will aid in future planning and prioritized acquisition of sensitive areas needed to protect the health, safety, and welfare of Wicomico County's citizens. Without valid direction detailing the possible effects of sea-level rise, the County cannot effectively implement safeguards to protect the livelihood of Wicomico County.

Green Infrastructure Integration with Compatible Land Cover Types and Uses

Activities and approaches to preserving GI can vary depending on the type, location, and condition of the specific land. The following section discusses various types of sensitive land and the importance of Green Infrastructure to each.

Farmland

In 2007, the County was the most agriculturally productive county in the State of Maryland in overall commodity of agricultural goods. Farming is likely to be more compatible with G.I. than is development. Therefore, retaining farming activities within conservation easements is an opportunity to reduce risk to G.I., as are other measures to retain farmland and farming within the County.

Forest Land

Most of Wicomico County's Green Infrastructure is forest land. For generations, woodlands and forest products have been providing landowners with income and generating jobs and significant economic benefits for the County. Working forests provide not only sustainable economic contributions, but water and air quality protection, a diversity of plant and animal habitats, open space, scenic beauty, and an array of recreational opportunities for our citizens.

Today, forest harvesting and silvicultural operations in Maryland are restricted by regulations on of Critical Areas, non-tidal wetlands, endangered species, and erosion/sediment control. The Wicomico County Forestry Board provides important local professional oversight. With sound, professionally prepared forest stewardship plans, timber harvesting is a compatible use on most of the green infrastructure. In fact, forest harvesting exists today because landowners had a financial incentive to manage the land and retain ownership.

Recreation

Recreational land uses present an opportunity to integrate community activities with open space and habitat. Recreation can be either active or passive in nature. The following discussion presents the acquisition and design/management considerations for various types of recreation.

Active Recreation

Active recreation includes sports, playgrounds activities, swimming, skateboarding, motorized vehicle use (e.g. 4-wheelers, motor boats, jet skis), other vehicle use (e.g. bicycles, canoes, kayaks), and equestrian activities, among others. Trails and corridors also encourage walking and other forms of active recreation.

Acquisition

When feasible, consideration should be given to locate potentially incompatible active recreation sites outside of vulnerable or highly sensitive areas of the GI network.

Design and Management

Infrastructure may include impervious or compacted road and trails, restrooms, lighting, etc. Such high-impact design features should be located in, and should direct users to, less vulnerable areas within the site. In addition, educational efforts should be included, to enhance awareness and stewardship of the more sensitive areas within the site. Design should also focus maximizing conservation (e.g., limiting paving to pervious materials and reducing or effectively shielding lighting that interferes with wildlife).

Extractive Recreation

Activities such as hunting, fishing and trapping are examples of extractive recreation. The County should evaluate the need to create guidelines to manage the use of motorized and non-motorized vehicles on publicly-owned environmentally sensitive areas, including, but not limited to wetlands of special state concern, targeted ecological areas, and other highly sensitive GI areas.

Acquisition

Extractive recreation sites will frequently be associated with GI hubs and/or corridors due to the presence of target wildlife and other resources. Public support for site acquisition may be less of a problem than for active sites, because surrounding properties may have similar uses.

Design and Management

In areas used for natural resource extraction, the impact of public access (roadways, launch sites, docks, etc.) is an important issue because these access points are in direct contact with sensitive areas such as wetland margins or stream banks. Extractive recreation sites should be designed to mitigate or avoid such impacts. When feasible, infrastructure should be limited to unpaved roadways and low-impact boat launches, with lighting designs that minimize impacts on wildlife.

Resource management such as thinning timber or establishing waterfowl blind areas has consequences for G.I. as well. Where suitable, such sites may be appropriate for acquisition through easement programs or fee-simple purchase by federal, state, or local government agencies in an effort to limit extractive uses and activities in highly sensitive GI areas.

Passive Recreation

Examples of passive recreation include nature hikes, heritage tourism, nature or outdoor-based education, wildlife observation, photography, painting, and wild lands experience. Passive activities may incorporate non-motorized vehicle use.

Acquisition

The acquisition of passive recreation sites should target areas with high value for education and low-impact activities, such as birding, photography, and painting. Public support is often easier to obtain for passive recreation sites than for higher-impact sites.

Design and Management

Managing passive recreation sites should emphasize education and low-impact uses, such as birding. For example, Pemberton Park is primarily a passive recreation site that has considerable public access and use, especially for educational purposes. Infrastructure, including trails, observation platforms, boardwalks, restoration of historical buildings, and similar items should be designed and located to minimize impacts on sensitive features of the area. Design should balance providing access to wildlife and natural features with the negative impacts that such access causes.

Sensitive Areas and Wildlife Conservation

Natural lands that perform useful community functions should be protected from all but minimal, very low-impact activity. These sensitive ecosystems include wetlands (especially Delmarva bays), floodplains, mature forests, sensitive areas, and areas of Special State Concern. Additionally, sensitive features in areas not broadly identified as sensitive should also be afforded protection from intense recreation. Examples include rare orchids, carnivorous plants, and other endangered/threatened species.

Acquisition

Sensitive areas/wildlife conservation sites should be targeted for acquisition. If possible, partnering with appropriate organizations, such as The Nature Conservancy, should maximize County resources. Public support for site acquisition is often strong because of the often-increased values of surrounding properties.

Design and Management

Sensitive sites are selected and put in public trust to conserve natural attributes. Some may be designed with limited public infrastructure, such as trails. Other sites may be too sensitive for any infrastructure. Management of sensitive areas will incorporate some degree of access but should not open for continual use.

High Value Natural Areas

Maryland's Green Infrastructure program (version 6), identifies the major part of Wicomico County's Green Infrastructure (GI) lands. However, several important areas included in previous versions of the state's GI included in previous versions of the state's GI maps had been omitted from version 6. Therefore, the Natural Resources Conservation Advisory Committee was tasked with preparing an assessment and mapping at-risk/vulnerable and sensitive land to be acquired for conservation and recreational purposes. The methodology developed for delineating High Value Natural Areas is based in science and consists of a three-tier ranking system that will guide the county in land acquisition efforts.

The High Value Natural Areas have been delineated and are considered priority areas for conservation and recreation investments. The designated areas encompass GI hubs and corridors, targeted ecological areas, and sensitive habitats, and threatened areas to close perceived holes in the GI network.

Prior to compiling the information noted above, relevant GIS data (environmental, soils, and development pattern) was collected and analyzed to identify and establish priorities for future acquisition. Furthermore, the county considered the effects and integration of compatible and incompatible recreational activities and human-dominated features on the High Value Natural Areas. (Map 6.4)

The methodology used to evaluate and rank the High Value Natural Areas included the following items:

- Threat to development and future demand based on population and housing unit projections;
- Land use / land cover;
- Soil suitability to support onsite individual sewage disposal systems;
- Forest interior dwelling species and sensitive species project review areas;
- Wetlands of Special State Concern;
- Water Quality (Tier II waterbodies) and natural drainage systems;
- Current conservation and protection efforts in nearby or adjacent areas; and
- Green Infrastructure Composite Ecological Index.

Identifying and securing funding for the future acquisition of vulnerable High Value Natural Areas is paramount to the sustainability of the land preservation effort. The ability to leverage funding from Federal, State, and local programs, as well as the continued coordination with environmental and conservation groups is imperative to successfully enhance conservation and recreational opportunities in Wicomico County. In addition, the Natural Resources Conservation Advisory Committee will have an integral role in the continued update of the High Value Natural Areas, as well as tracking progress and recommending land use management techniques to achieve the desired outcomes.

LAND PRESERVATION, PARKS, AND RECREATION PLAN

The 2013 *Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan* illustrates the strong link between 1) the public need for parkland and other sites for leisure activity and 2) the importance of preserving significant areas of land from development, specifically farmland and natural resources. The final chapter of the Plan provides the guidance, in the form of both policy recommendations and capital improvements, to pursue the goals of increased land preservation and an enhanced recreation system in Wicomico County.

PLAN ORGANIZATION

The 2013 *Wicomico County Land Preservation and Recreation Plan* contains recommendations that affect County policy as well as recommendations for specific capital improvements. The Plan is organized as follows:

- The *County Perspective* includes the Plan map and a discussion of how the land preservation, parks, and recreation elements combine to form a tool to further the goals of land preservation and recreation services in Wicomico County.
- *Policy/Program Recommendations* pertain to all three areas of the plan: parks/recreation, agricultural preservation, and natural resources conservation. Policy/program recommendations are actions that do not involve major capital expenses and do not pertain to a specific planning area.
- *Capital Recommendations and Planning Areas* involve capital expenses for parkland or open space acquisition and/or development at a specific site or within a specific planning area. The capital recommendations section is presented by planning area, including a more focused discussion and plan map for each planning area.

COUNTY PERSPECTIVE

The 2013 *Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan* (Map 7.1) illustrates the effects of recent land preservation and recreation efforts in Wicomico County and provides guidance for future initiatives.¹ Recreation, agricultural heritage, and natural resource conservation all share the common characteristic of preserving land from development. Specific discussion of the Plan in each planning area is found in the Capital Recommendations section.

¹ Map 7.1 illustrates the plan elements for the entire County. Portions of the plan map, each at a larger and more readable scale than Map 7.1, are included in the discussion of each planning area later in the report.

The Green Infrastructure (GI) system discussed in Chapter 6 helps identify land for potential preservation in Wicomico County. In addition to GI, the system of bikeways in Wicomico also identifies areas where land should be preserved. The Plan map (Map 7.1) illustrates bike routes promoted through the Department's Tourism office. Previous land preservation plans chronicled Department efforts to create a bikeway system throughout the County. Bikeways identified as "potential" linkages on the Plan map were identified in previous plans, but have not yet been formally recognized or promoted.

POLICY/PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

Policy/program recommendations of the *2013 Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan* relate to all three elements of the Plan:

- Recreation and Parks;
- Agricultural Preservation; and
- Natural Resource Conservation.

Recreation and Parks

RP-1 Continue to establish and maintain park restoration funds to address capital rehabilitation issues.

One of the key themes of the *2013 Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan* is the restore of park facilities. The parks developed in response to significant population growth from the mid-1980s through the 1990s are nearing the end of the expected life cycle, and rehabilitation is a key factor in keeping older parks safe and useful. The Department should continue to look for opportunities to obtain additional park restoration funding, increase contributions to restoration escrow accounts, particularly for expensive items, such as the future restorations at Nanticoke & Cedar Hill Harbors and the Henry Parker Athletic Complex. The County should support the Department by:

- Assuring an adequate annual operating budget appropriation to:
 - Maintain equipment, park land, and tennis & basketball courts; and
 - Restore parking lots, buildings, lighting systems, courts, etc.
- Assuring appropriations match State and Federal grants to develop and improve park properties.
- Funding a systematic approach to replace vehicles and equipment nearing their expected life-cycle.

RP-2 Continue to use enterprise funding wherever possible for new recreation programs and recreation facility maintenance.

The concept of “enterprise” funding essentially means that users of a specific facility or program pay as much of the cost for the facility/program as possible. The 2013 Department’s enterprise budget reached \$1.4 million. (Table 3.13). Enterprise funding assures that users pay directly for the benefit of a specific facility/service. The county should continue the use of enterprise funding wherever possible to sustain and grow its services.

RP-3 Continue updating the depreciation schedules of facilities such as Nanticoke Harbor and the Cedar Hill Marina & Henry Parker Athletic Complex, Pemberton Historic Park, pavilions, the Equestrian Center, etc. to address the funding required to restore and modernize capital items as needed.

The facilities noted above are major expense items for communities on the water. Annual enterprise budgets should be set funding to these capital expenses. However, public funding should not shoulder the entire capital cost since the State collects registration and sales tax from boaters for this purpose. In addition, a portion of State Program Open Space funding can be applied to cover matching grant requirements to undertake major capital expenses.

RP-4 Explore the establishment of a county festival site.

Wicomico County should explore the possibility of establishing a site with the infrastructure to support major festivals. Some festivals are already held at Winterplace and Pemberton Historical Parks. Sites currently used for these events lack ground space to accommodate growth, parking, and public / community sewer facilities. With improvements, Pemberton or Winterplace might support an event until such a site is located and developed. The County has prepared a master plan for Pirates Wharf site. It should consider acquiring additional land adjacent to Winterplace Park.

RP-5 Work with DNR and local equestrian groups to develop equestrian trails in the Chesapeake Forest.

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) owns many, forested parcels scattered throughout Wicomico County that are part of the Chesapeake Forest. As part of the County emphasis on linear corridors and trails, the State forest land provides opportunities for connections within the County trail network, particularly for equestrian trails. The County and DNR should work together to create equestrian and other linkages through the Chesapeake Forest as appropriate.

RP-6 Encourage developers to provide and improve land to establish neighborhood greens in new developments consistent with the County Subdivision Code.

New residences attract new residents, which increase the need for leisure services. The County cannot be expected to meet every basic leisure need, particularly with the revenue cap. When feasible, residential developers should assist the County with meeting the need for local neighborhood-based recreation in growing areas by providing and improving land to establish

“neighborhood greens”: small areas for informal recreation, such as picnicking and pick-up soccer or baseball games. The following guidelines, taken from the 1994 land preservation and recreation plan, should apply to developing and maintaining neighborhood greens:

- Encourage developers of residential subdivisions to dedicate useable land for recreational purposes.
- When two or more residential developments are proposed in proximity, the possibility of developing connected greens should be explored.
- Maintenance of the neighborhood green should be the responsibility of either the developer (before 50 percent of all lots are sold, developed, and occupied) or a homeowners association (after 50 percent of all lots are sold, developed, and occupied). The County should not be responsible for ongoing maintenance of neighborhood greens.
- The neighborhood green should meet minimum standards for grading, seeding, trees, and usable area (size). The county should inspect and approve the land as meeting the minimum standards before being transferred from the developer to the homeowners association.

RP-7 Coordinate with developers to establish pedestrian/bicycle paths consistent with the paths delineated in Salisbury-Wicomico Metropolitan Planning Organization’s 2012 Biking & Hiking Functional Master Plan, as well as prepare a landscape plan along the adjacent roadways.

Pedestrian/bicycle paths in the areas of the County customarily follow environmentally sensitive areas or are shared use facilities with existing roadways. The Plan recommends that locating, constructing, and maintaining sustainable trails be a top priority for Wicomico County.

Consideration should be given to implement the following recommendations:

- Adopt a Complete Streets policy guide planning requirements for new developments.
- In new developments with proposed pedestrian or bike paths, connections should be incorporated into the design to provide connections to existing or proposed facilities extending outside of the community or connecting neighborhoods.
- Evaluate the potential of incorporating bike lanes and / or signage when resurfacing County roadways (as identified in the Hiker and Biker Plan). Also, if possible, the bike lanes should connect to existing bike lanes to enhance the local bike network.

RP-8 Ensure that County trails are compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

The ADA ensures that public recreation facilities are accessible to those with physical disabilities. All Wicomico County trails should comply with the requirements of the ADA.

RP-9 Continue to evaluate older playgrounds to ensure compliance with the U. S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) guidelines.

Playground safety is paramount for any recreation and park system. Wicomico County has always assessed playground equipment against CPSC guidelines. With the aging of County facilities and the rehabilitation theme of the 2013 Plan, playground safety issues become even more important as the county works to make the best, continued use of many current facilities.

RP-10 Continue to enhance the comprehensive parks maintenance management program to ensure safe and attractive parks and to replace older equipment and vehicles.

Maintenance is the most important practice in prolonging the life of parks and recreation facilities. Wicomico County has adopted a comprehensive maintenance management program that is a major reason the County system has become a showcase for small counties nationwide. The Department should continue to enhance maintenance management practices, incorporating past experience and adapting practices to the needs of individual parks and facilities.

Replacement of vehicles and equipment based on life-cycle is a crucial element of the program. The revenue cap has severely restricted County tax support of capital improvements, particularly vehicle and equipment replacement. Deferred replacement and maintenance practices inevitably lead to increased cost and unreliability. As a result of the declining tax revenues, the Department should work closely with Federal, State, and local governments to identify potential funding sources for capital programming expenses, including, but not limited to, replacement of vehicles and equipment. Upon the stabilization and recovery of the local economy, the County should establish appropriate funding levels to adequately maintain capital and operating expenses for recreation and parks facilities and supporting amenities.

RP-11 Renew the 20-year lease agreement with the Delmarva Shorebirds to include restoration and modernization of Arthur W. Perdue Stadium.

The Delmarva Shorebirds are the minor league (South Atlantic League) baseball affiliate of the major league Baltimore Orioles. The Shorebirds play all home games at Arthur W. Perdue Stadium in Salisbury. Minor league baseball is a fun way for families and friends to spend an afternoon or evening together. The Shorebirds provide an excellent attraction and significant revenue for Wicomico County. The team has played at Perdue Stadium since the structure opened in 1996, averaging an attendance of more than 250,000 per year. The Stadium is in need of a significant renovation. The County should renew a 20-year lease agreement with the Shorebirds, which should include restoration and modernization of the stadium.

RP-12 Work with DNR and MDP to develop public access to waterways through state lands, including the Chesapeake Forest, and to utilize state lands for public trails, birding, photography, and biking opportunities.

The opportunity for trail linkages offered by the Chesapeake Forest was noted in recommendation RP-6. State lands can also provide access to waterways, links for public trails, and opportunities for other recreational activities, both active (e.g., hiking and biking) and passive (e.g., birding, photography).

RP-13 Work with the Board of Education to reduce the fees paid by the County and eliminate the policy restricting summer indoor use of school facilities for public recreational use.

The Board of Education and the Wicomico County Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism serve the same market: the citizens of Wicomico County. Both organizations provide programs to benefit the general public: public education and public recreation. The constituency of both organizations—the Wicomico County general public—will benefit from programs offered by either organization. The two agencies should work together to eliminate, or at least minimize, the cost of public recreation programs & summer use restricts held at school sites.

RP-14 Continue to bring visitors and dollars into the County by leveraging the County's outstanding recreation and parks system.

The County should continue to leverage its parks and recreation facilities to support amateur sports tournaments and signature special events. Examples of specific potential actions include:

- The Henry S. Parker Athletic Complex, Perdue Stadium, and the Wicomico Youth & Civic Center should be expanded, modernized and marketed as the potential site for as many regional and national sporting and entertainment events as possible.
- The Department should continue to use Winterplace and Pemberton Park to stage Pork in the Park, and the Beer and Wine Festivals and other tourism events.
- Bike routes used for recreation and utility purposes should be evaluated to ensure safe and comfortable experiences. Marketing these routes for local and tourism use should be continued through department websites (www.wicomcorecandparks.org and www.wicomcotourism.org).
- Expand the reach of tourism marketing to promote Wicomico County as a base for amateur sports tournaments, signature special events, meeting & conventions and transient visits to those residing within a 6-hour drive.
- Market the County as a one-day or weekend destination. Highlight specific County attractions, in essence “sharing” local resources with tourists, including:
 - Scenic bike routes;
 - Outstanding fishing and boating opportunities;
 - Natural and heritage areas;
 - Abundant flat land, particularly for low-impact outdoor fitness programs which appeal to the senior population; and
 - Regional signature special events, such as Pork in the Park and the Wine Festival.
- Establish training programs for visitor counselors to increase knowledge of tourist attractions and develop skills in public contact.
- Help to establish and promote the proposed Blue Crab Scenic Byway.

RP-15 Expand facilities required to attract and expand amateur tournaments.

Contingent upon available funding, the Henry Parker Athletic Complex should be expanded to eight (8) ball fields and eight (8) soccer fields to anticipated demand. Tournaments hosted in Salisbury are a significant source of tourism revenue for the County.

RP-16 Continue a public relations initiative to inform residents about the value received for services rendered by the Department of Recreation, Parks & Tourism.

The average resident often reacts negatively to rising tax bills but does not understand the concept of taxes paying for services. Best practices employed by the Department minimize annual tax appropriations should be shared with citizens and stakeholders

RP-17 Continue to strengthen recreation council & stakeholder relationships to support programs and park operations.

Recreation councils are a significant contributor to leisure services in Wicomico County. They lift up their constituent's needs and undertake ways and means to reduce local tax subsidy for recreation programs and park operations. The County should continue to reach out to recreation councils, supporting and encouraging efforts to help meet leisure needs.

RP-18 Continue to review the County fee structure for possible modifications to increase participation.

The fiscal challenges faced by Wicomico County have forced it to significantly increase program fees, resulting in lower participation because some residents face hardship to afford the program fees. The recreation staff should continue to monitor the fee structure for all programs seek creative means to lower them to gain participation.

RP-19 Continue the endowment to support scholarships and programs for the County's at-risk populations.

One method of continuing to reach the county's at-risk populations, such as low-income youth and seniors, in the face of fiscal austerity is to provide scholarships and targeted programs funded through endowments—money set aside to draw interest and dividends, which are then used for a specific purpose. The Department has established a scholarship fund with the Community Foundation and hold events annually to grow the fund to perpetuate the award of scholarships to register in its programs. The earnings from the fund's \$160,000 principal is awarded in scholarships annually.

RP-20 Ensure safe and comfortable biking.

Using the *Salisbury/Wicomico Biking & Hiking Feasibility Study* (March 2012), work with stakeholders, policy makers and public works agencies to:

- Identify key future designated bike routes, and develop methods to protect and enhance the routes for both recreational and utility cyclists. Establish priorities for routes based on the highest potential utilization by cyclists.
- Share findings with State, County and municipal public works and public safety officials.
- Seek funding to implement recommendations.
- Seek “Bicycle Friendly Community” accreditation from the League of American Bicyclists.
- Use the “5-Es” approach to promote bicycling in the county: (Engineering, Evaluation, Enforcement, Encouragement, and Education).
- Ensure the long-term success of County-owned portions of the regional trail system.

RP-21 Consider developing recreation programs that address the leisure needs of the County’s continually diversifying population.

Wicomico County has a relatively diverse population. Minorities and seniors represent growing segments of the population with unique leisure service needs. The Department should consider creative ways to meet the leisure service needs of various population segments with minimal increases in department costs.

RP-22 Develop trail guides and features that explore and enhance the natural and historic features of Wicomico County.

Wicomico County has many natural and historic features that can be a significant part of the visitor experience or the recreation activities of residents and workers. Trails over both land and water should connect interesting sites to each other and to major population and activity centers in the county.

RP-23 Establish safe and sustainable connections between County trails and nearby State lands and trails

In addition to a vibrant system of County and local recreation sites and resources, Wicomico County is blessed with large amounts of State lands and trails, such as the Chesapeake Forest. The County should place a high priority on connecting local and State trails to each other and to other recreational sites.

RP-24 Consider developing a web-based application to report maintenance opportunities.

Safety is a top priority for trail development. Today’s use of electronic devices offers an opportunity to identify trail hazards in real time. The County should 1) develop an application to identify maintenance needs as quickly as possible and 2) address each need as soon as possible.

RP-25 Continue to coordinate with federal, state, and local government agencies, and non-governmental organizations to identify potential resources to plan and implement trail projects.

Many resources are available in both the public and private sector for planning, developing, and maintaining parks and recreation assets. The County should always look for opportunities to establish partnerships with other public and private entities to improve the county trail system.

Agricultural Preservation

A-1 Evaluate open space requirements for residential development in the A-1 Zoning District.

Wicomico County considers farming to be a legitimate use of selected open space. Periodically, the County should review current open space requirements to determine if they achieve the desired results.

A-2 Develop an educational process for elected officials, real estate professionals, and residents to explain the benefits of a transfer of development rights (TDR) program.

County planning staff reports that the benefit of participating in the TDR program is often questioned, particularly when land is located in a receiving area. The County should develop educational materials and presentations that clearly explain the benefits of the TDR program for all property owners—those in both the sending and receiving areas. Real estate professionals, who have the means and expertise to effectively promote the TDR concept to willing buyers and sellers, should be targeted for the educational program. As referenced below (see recommendation A-8), the TDR program should be evaluated regularly to assure that its provisions are sufficiently attractive to developers to justify its use.

A-3 Evaluate the minimum acreage requirement for participation in the County easement program.

The requirement of a minimum 50 acres potentially excludes willing property owners from participation in the County agricultural easement program. The County has a goal of encouraging participation in the program, and smaller farms adjacent to current agricultural preservation districts would help the County's goal of assembling larger areas of land that is at least temporarily preserved. If desired, the County could make larger parcels a higher priority for easement purchase.

A-4 Develop alternative methods of compensation for easements to meet a variety of financial needs of farm families.

The financial tools used and timing for disbursement of funds can have a significant effect on the attractiveness of preservation as an alternative to selling farmland for development. Each landowner has a unique set of financial circumstances and goals. A land preservation deal includes many other benefits than simply a single check at closing (Table 7.1). Wicomico County should

continue to offer assistance to landowners to help promote land preservation as a financially viable alternative to development.

A-5 Develop alternative methods of compensation for easements to meet a variety of financial needs of farm families.

The financial tools used and timing for disbursement of funds can have a significant effect on the attractiveness of preservation as an alternative to selling farmland for development. Each landowner has a unique set of financial circumstances and goals. A land preservation deal includes many other benefits than simply a single check at closing (Table 7.1). Wicomico County should continue to offer assistance to landowners to help promote land preservation as a financially viable alternative to development.

Table 7.1
Comparison of Land Preservation Value and Development Value

<i>Preservation Value</i>		<i>Development Value</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct payment • Tax-free interest payments • Tax donation deductions • Property tax credit • Ownership use • Resale value • Family lots • Peace of mind 	VS.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct payment (minus taxes)

A-6 Continue preservation efforts designed to achieve the preservation goals contained in this Plan.

Natural Resource Conservation

N-1 Consideration should be given to expanding the existing Quantico Creek Rural Legacy Area, as well as possibly establishing an additional Rural Legacy Area in Wicomico County.

N-2 Support the initiatives of various environmental groups to preserve open space and improve the quality of the Chesapeake Bay tributaries.

Many environmental groups work hard in Wicomico County to help preserve open space and improve the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. For instance, The Nature Conservancy has three focuses for preservation in the Lower Eastern Shore: large forest landscapes, the Nassawango Creek, and the Nanticoke River. The focus along the Nassawango should be large tracts in headwaters of the creek to sustain the waterway against floods and hurricanes. The focus along the Nanticoke should be smaller tracts of adjacent marshes and uplands to preserve wildlife habitat.

The County should support and encourage all groups working to preserve land in Wicomico County, such as:

- Chesapeake Bay Foundation
- Friends of the Nanticoke River
- Lower Shore Land Trust
(<http://www.lowershorelandtrust.org>)
- Maryland Environmental Trust
- Nanticoke Watershed Alliance
(<http://www.nanticokeriver.org>)
- Salisbury University
- Wicomico Environmental Trust
- agricultural community

N-3 Continue regular meetings between representatives of environmental organizations and county officials to discuss and assess important environmental issues in the County.

As noted above, many environmental groups in Wicomico County work to preserve our natural resources. A working group of representatives from environmental organizations meets periodically with County representatives to establish communication and address important environmental issues. The committee should help to lead efforts to implement the *2013 Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan* and should use the plan as a framework for committee activities.

N-4 Consider land banking and other voluntary mechanisms to preserve land along Wicomico County waterways.

The vast majority—some estimate as much as 95%—of the land along the Wicomico River is already developed. Wetlands line much of the Nanticoke River. In situations where much land is simply unavailable, for any number of reasons, land banking is an acceptable consideration. Wicomico County may wish to begin land banking—the practice of purchasing and holding land for future use (or preservation)—along county waterways. Many options are available to help structure acceptable arrangements between the county and a willing landowner, such as deferred compensation, life estate, bargain sale, and many others. The County should be aware of and consider all opportunities to conserve land along county waterways.

N-5 Strengthen the County focus on corridor development with an integrated approach involving State, County, and non-profit groups to protect natural resources, habitat areas, and historic sites and to develop waterway trails.

Wicomico County should strengthen the focus on linear corridors, such as greenways, bikeways, and trails. Linear corridors, including waterway trails, help to preserve Wicomico's current natural assets. Combining the resources of different agencies, levels of government, and other interested organizations will strengthen preservation efforts in the County.

N-6 Foster a strong working relationship between the County and the State in areas of mutual interest.

Wicomico County and the State of Maryland have many common land preservation goals and targets. The county—through the Wicomico County Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism and the Salisbury-Wicomico Department of Planning, Zoning, and Community Develop-

ment—and the State—through the Maryland Departments of Planning and Natural Resources—should work closely to strengthen efforts in areas of mutual concern, such as:

- Rural Legacy;
- Sustainable forestry;
- State land acquisition;
- Forest protection;
- Conservation funds; and
- Wetland protection

N-7 Consider several concepts to enhance forest stewardship.

Wicomico County has a forest conservation program to help protect forest lands. The County should consider concepts which enhance forest stewardship, including:

- The right to harvest forest land similar to agricultural land. — The concept of forest management includes ideas such as selective cutting and clearing to ensure long-term health of a forest.
- A program to purchase conservation easements to preserve forests, similar to the County’s agricultural preservation program.

N-8 Prepare a study of sea level rise to determine short- and long-term effects on Wicomico County.

Wicomico County should commission a study to identify threats, challenges, and potential mitigating actions associated with sea level rise, especially in Green Infrastructure areas. The study will provide the County with an action plan to assist in efforts to acquire natural areas experiencing development pressure.

N-9 Consider coupling agricultural preservation easement purchases with initiatives to protect Green Infrastructure hubs and corridors.

Easement purchases have successfully preserved agricultural land throughout Wicomico County. Combining agricultural easement purchases with initiatives to protect GI hubs and corridors may benefit the preservation of both agricultural land and areas of Green Infrastructure.

N-10 Research and identify viable alternative methods of compensation for easements; i.e., tax-free interest payments, tax donation deductions, property tax credit, etc.

Every landowner’s financial circumstances are unique. The compensation arrangement structured for one owner might be detrimental to others. In order to appeal to the greatest number of landowners, the County should develop a broad range of potential compensation arrangements. Allowing flexibility in compensation will offer the best chance for the County to obtain each easement.

N-11 Seek statewide Program Open Space funding to acquire lands within targeted high priority Green Infrastructure hubs and corridors.

The *2013 Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan* identifies GI hubs and corridors and establishes a priority for each (Map 6.2). The highest priority areas in each Maryland county should be considered Statewide priorities. Wicomico County should work with the State to obtain statewide Program Open Space funding to acquire lands, through easement or purchase, within the high priority GI hubs and corridors.

CAPITAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The capital recommendations of the *2013 Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan* are presented by planning area. Each section includes a larger-scale version of the plan map and a discussion of the effect of the plan on the planning area. Planning area discussions are presented in the following order: Tri-Town, West Side, North, Central, South, and the East.

The *2013 Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan* proposes a total of 44 capital projects at an estimated cost of more than \$20 million (Table 7.2). Highlights of the plan include:

- Acquiring 78.6 acres of land, 38.0 acres of which will be used to expand Pemberton Historical Park; 22.5 of which will be used to develop the South Growth Area Park, 6 acres to expand the Hebron Park and 3 acres accommodate parking demand at the East-side Sports Complex.
- Developing & expanding parks to meet recreation needs of areas experiencing or expected to experience significant growth:
 - A new community park in the West Metro Planning Area.
 - Expand the Fruitland Recreational Park to consider a new park to serve the growing South Metro Planning Area.
 - Expand Henry Parker Athletic Complex to increase inventory to 8 ball and 8 soccer fields.
 - Pirates Wharf
- A total of \$5.448 million—27% of total estimated cost—is devoted to rehabilitation of existing facilities, in response to the plan’s emphasis on park and facility rehabilitation.

Table 7.2
Summary of Capital Recommendations

Planning Area	Number of Projects	Est. Total Cost (\$000s)	Acres to be Acquired	Estimated Costs (\$000s)								
				Immediate (2013-2017)			Mid-Range (2018-2022)			Long-Range (2023+)		
				Acq.	Dev.	Reh.	Acq.	Dev.	Reh.	Acq.	Dev.	Reh.
Central	21	8,762	45.00	200	2,848	1,690	1,200	805	330		100	1,589
East	4	140	3.00	25	40			35	40			
South	2	1,650	22.50	250				1,400				
West	8	4,257	0.0		170	768		200	120		2,300	699
Tri-town	2	200	6.00				120	80				
North	7	5,032	2.14		3,800	112	105	830	100		85	
Total	44	20,041	78.64	475	6,858	2,570	1,425	3,350	590	0	2,485	2,288

Source: Wicomico County Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism

The following sections discuss the capital proposals by planning area within the County.

Tri-Town Planning Area



The County completed improvements to Cherry Beach, Gene Lowe, and Mardela Park listed in the 2005 plan. The 2013 Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan proposes 2 capital projects, estimated to cost \$200,000, in the Tri-Town Planning Area (Map 7.2, Table 7.3). One of the projects is the acquisition of an additional 6.0 acres at Hebron Park to meet the needs of future residents. The acquisition is carried over from the 2005 plan.

**Table 7.3
Proposed Capital Improvements, Tri-Town Planning Area**

Site	No. (Map 7.3)	Project Description	Est. Total Cost (\$000s)	Acres to be Acquired	Estimated Costs (\$000s)									
					Immediate (2013-2017)			Mid-Range (2018-2022)			Long-Range (2023+)			
					Acq.	Dev.	Reh.	Acq.	Dev.	Reh.	Acq.	Dev.	Reh.	
Mardela Park	6	Court Resurfacing	80					80						
Hebron Park	13	Acquire 6.0 ac. to extend park	120	6.0				120						
Total (2 projects)			200	6.0				120	80					

Source: Wicomico County Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism

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West Side Planning Area



Since 2005, Wicomico County has accomplished many improvements in the West Side Planning Area, including:

- Rehabilitating the jetties and boat slips at Nanticoke Park;
- Dredging the marina restoring 80% of the original section boat slips at Cedar Hill Park; and
- Developing a master plan for the future Pirate’s Wharf Park.

The 2013 Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan proposes \$4.257 million of improvements in the West Side (Map 7.3, Table 7.4), including development of Pirate’s Wharf Park in line with the recently developed site master plan. Major improvements are slated for Cedar Hill Park include: \$977,000 for rehabilitation of the bulkhead, piles, and catwalks, \$150,000 for replacing a boat ramp; and 120,000 for court resurfacing. Improvements at Cedar Hill and Nanticoke Harbor will total approximately \$1.587 million. A new boat launching facility is planned for the new Pirate’s Wharf Park. The master plan identifies future development of the park and provides cost estimates and potential phasing for park development. The 2013 Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan does not envision any additional recreational land requirements in the West Side.

**Table 7.4
Proposed Capital Improvements, West Side Planning Area**

Site	No. (Map 7.4)	Project Description	Est. Total Cost (\$000s)	Acres to be Acquired	Estimated Costs (\$000s)									
					Immediate (2013-2017)			Mid-Range (2018-2022)			Long-Range (2023+)			
					Acq.	Dev.	Reh.	Acq.	Dev.	Reh.	Acq.	Dev.	Reh.	
Nanticoke Harbor	117	Replace bulkhead, piles, catwalks	340				340							
Pirate's Wharf Park	111	Construct boat launching facility	500						200				300	
Cedar Hill Park	120	Replace boat ramp	150											150
Cedar Hill Park	120	Replace bulkhead, piles, catwalks	977				428							549
Cedar Hill Park	120	Court Resurfacing	120							120				
Pirate's Wharf Park	111	Develop park per master plan.	2,000										2,000	
Bivalve Wharf	119	Extend wharf	75				75							
Wetipquin Boat Ramp	122	Replace boat ramp	95				95							
Total (8 projects)			4,257				170	768		200	120		2,300	699

Source: Wicomico County Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism

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North Planning Area



The 2013 Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan proposes major improvements to the Henry Parker Athletic Complex and Naylor Mill Park (Map 7.4, Table 7.5). Since 2005, the County has replaced the playground module. Future projects at the Parker complex will include two projects carried over from the 2005 plan: paving/stripping the parking lot; and improving accessibility for the disabled. The 2013 Plan includes additional projects at the Parker complex as well as improvements to the Mason Dixon Sports Complex and Gordy Park. Proposed improvements in the North Planning Area are expected to cost a total of \$5.032 million.

**Table 7.5
Proposed Capital Improvements, North Planning Area**

Site	No. (Map 7.5)	Project Description	Est. Total Cost (\$000s)	Acres to be Acquired	Estimated Costs (\$000s)									
					Immediate (2013-2017)			Mid-Range (2018-2022)			Long-Range (2023+)			
					Acq.	Dev.	Reh.	Acq.	Dev.	Reh.	Acq.	Dev.	Reh.	
Henry Parker Athletic Complex	25	Pave & stripe parking lot	800					800						
Henry Parker Athletic Complex	24	Expansion; Additional fields	3,800			3,800								
Henry Parker Athletic Complex	25	Improve handicapped accessibility	30					30						
Gordy Park		Replace pavilion; restore contact bldg.	60				60							
Mason Dixon Sports Complex		Replace playground equip	52				52							
Mason Dixon Sports Complex		Acquire land	190	2.14				105						85
Mason Dixon Sports Complex	17	Fences, roofs, dugouts, bleachers	100							100				
Total (7 projects)			5,032	2.14		3,800	112	105	830	100			85	

Source: Wicomico County Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism

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Central Planning Area



Since the 2005 plan, the County has:

- Rehabilitated two (2) tennis courts at Billy Gene Jackson Park;
- Constructed an addition to the contact building at Pemberton Park;
- Purchased a heritage center at Pemberton Park for a future environmental center; and
- Developed a countywide greenways/bike trails plan.

The *2013 Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan* proposes 21 capital improvements in the Central Planning Area, at a cost of approximately \$8,762,000 (Map 7.5, Table 7.6). The Plan includes the acquisition of 45 acres of land: seven acres for Winterplace Park; and 38 acres to expand Pemberton Historical Park. Both of the projects at Pemberton Historical Park are part of the established master plan for the site.

Additionally, major improvements (greater than \$1,000,000) proposed for the Central Planning area includes:

- Land acquisition for Pemberton Historical Park;
- Development of the West Metro Core Park; and
- Rehabilitation of the carriage house at Winterplace Park.

Table 7.6
Proposed Capital Improvements, Central Planning Area

Site	No. (Map 7.6)	Project Description	Est. Total Cost (\$000s)	Acres to be Acquired	Estimated Costs (\$000s)									
					Immediate (-2017)			Mid-Range (2018-2022)			Long-Range (2023+)			
					Acq.	Dev.	Reh.	Acq.	Dev.	Reh.	Acq.	Dev.	Reh.	
Billy Gene Jackson Park	33	Replace basketball court	75						75					
Cedarhurst Park	27	Replace basketball court	40											40
Pemberton Historical Park	50	Construct outbuildings	200					100					100	
Pemberton Historical Park	50	Acquire land	1,200	38				1,200						
West Metro Park		New community park	2,200			2,200								
Winterplace Park	87	Carriage House architectural assessment	50					50						
Winterplace Park	87	Carriage House water/sewer connection	200					200						
Winterplace Park	87	Carriage House rehabilitation ,	1,400											1,400
Winterplace Park	87	Acquire land	200	7	200									
Equestrian Center at Winterplace	87	Water/Sewer Connection/Restrooms	200					200						
Waterside Playground		Replace playground	149											149
Waterside Playground		Resurface Basketball Court	95				95							
City Park		Ball field fencing rehabilitation	20				20							
Riverwalk Park		Extension of Riverwalk	175					175						
Emerson Holloway Park		Pavilion	18			18								
A. W. Perdue Stadium		Structural & decking restoration	1,605				1,350			255				
A. W. Perdue Stadium		Modernization	350			350								
Memorial Field		Lighting Restoration	280			280								
Centennial Village Playground	29	Basketball Court Resurfacing	40					40						
Harmon Field		Replace athletic lighting system	225				225							
Crooked Oak Playground	28	Court Resurfacing	40					40						
Total (21 projects)			8,762	45	200	2,848	1,690	1,200	805	330		100	1,589	

Source: Wicomico County Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism

South Planning Area



Almost all of the projects in the 2005 plan located in the South Planning Area have been completed. Accomplished projects are all located at the Fruitland Park annex and include:

- Walking trail.
- Picnic pavilion.
- Playground.
- Expanded walking trail

The 2013 Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan includes the new athletic fields at the Fruitland Park annex and one additional project in the South Planning Area. The total estimated costs for the aforementioned projects is \$1,650,000. (Map 7.6, Table 7.7). The South Growth Area Park is a new Community park to address the local recreation land shortfall, with an estimated 22.5 acres to be acquired by 2017 and development to occur sometime between 2018 and 2022.

**Table 7.7
Proposed Capital Improvements, South Planning Area**

Site	No. (Map 7.7)	Project Description	Est. Total Cost (\$000s)	Acres to be Acquired	Estimated Costs (\$000s)									
					Immediate (2013-2017)			Mid-Range (2018-2022)			Long-Range (2023+)			
					Acq.	Dev.	Reh.	Acq.	Dev.	Reh.	Acq.	Dev.	Reh.	
Fruitland Park Annex	104	New athletic fields	400					400						
South Growth Area Park	TBD	New community park	1,250	22.5	250				1,000					
Total (2 projects)			1,650	22.5	250				1,400					

Source: Wicomico County Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism

TBD – to be determined

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East Planning Area



Since 2005, Wicomico County’s main leisure service accomplishments in the East Planning Area have been:

- Acquiring land to expand Adkins Mill Park; and
- Acquiring land for a parking lot at the Pittsville Ball Park.

The 2013 Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan contains four projects carried over from the 2005 plan. The four projects in the East Planning Area, with an estimated total cost of \$140,000, (Map 7.7, Table 7.8) include improvements to Willards Park and Adkins Mill Park.

**Table 7.8
Proposed Capital Improvements, East Planning Area**

Site	No. (Map 7.7)	Project Description	Est. Total Cost (\$000s)	Acres to be Acquired	Estimated Costs (\$000s)								
					Immediate (-2017)			Mid-Range (2018-2022)			Long-Range (2023+)		
					Acq.	Dev.	Reh.	Acq.	Dev.	Reh.	Acq.	Dev.	Reh.
Willards Park	98	Replace basketball court	40							40			
Adkins Mill Park	100	Extend boardwalk	40			40							
Eastside Sports Cpx		Acquire Parking land	25	3	25								
Willards Park	98	Add playground module	35						35				
Total (4 projects)			140	3	25	40			35	40			

Source: Wicomico County Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism

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State and Nature Conservancy Areas

Name of Area and Ownership	Site Number	Planning Area	Size (acres)	Amount / Number of Facilities																			
				Softball Fields	Baseball Fields	Football/Soccer/Lacrosse Fields	Basketball Courts	Tennis Courts	Golf (Holes)	Disc Golf (Holes)	Stadium Seats	Playground Equipment	Picnic Tables	Pavilions	Swimming Area(A)/Pool(P)	Miles of Beach	Nature Trail Miles	Concessions	Restrooms	Boat Ramps	Boat Slips	Fishing/Hunting	Horseshoe Courts
State of Maryland																							
Ellis Bay Wildlife Management Area	J	West	2,874.0													3						F/H	
Johnson Wildlife Mangement Area	I	South	115.0																			H (115ac)	
Wicomico State Forest	E	East	1,245.0												20.5							H	
Nanticoke River Wildlife Mgt. Area	K	West	1,587.0																			H	
Pocomoke River Heritage Conservation Fund	B	East	156.0																				
Powellville Forest	G	East	4.2																				
Sharptown Dunes (Plum Ck. Heritage Cons. Fund)	F	Tri-Town	198.0																				
Chesapeake State Forest	D	countywide	15,855.0																				
Subtotal, State of Maryland				22,034.2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0	23.5	0	0	0	0	0	4	0
The Nature Conservancy																							
Plum Creek Cedar Swamp Preserve	C	Tri-Town	235.0																				
Nassawango Creek Preserve	H	South,East	824.0																				
Upper Nanticoke Management Area	A	Tri-Town	55.0																				
Wetipquin Pond Management Area	L	Tri-Town	50.0																				
Subtotal, The Nature Conservancy				1,164.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL, State and Nature Conservancy Areas				23,198.2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0	23.5	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	

Table A-4

Neighborhood-Serving Areas

Name of Area and Ownership	Site Number	Planning Area	Size (acres)	Amount / Number of Facilities																				
				Softball Fields	Baseball Fields	Football/Soccer/Lacrosse Fields	Basketball Courts	Tennis Courts	Golf (Holes)	Disc Golf (Holes)	Stadium Seats	Playground Equipment	Picnic Tables	Pavilions	Swimming Area(A)/Pool(P)	Miles of Beach	Nature Trail Miles	Concessions	Restrooms	Boat Ramps	Boat Slips	Fishing/Hunting	Horseshoe Courts	
Wicomico County																								
Allen Park	127	South	3.8								1	2												
Cedarhurst Park	27	Central-W	5.8	1		1	1				1	8												
Centennial Village Playground	29	Central-W	3.0				1	2			1	2												
Cove Road Recreation Area	118	West	1.6									3			0.3							F		
Crooked Oak Playground	28	Central-W	2.5				1	2			1		1											
Edgewood Park	15	North	12.0	1		1	1				1	1												
Emerson Holloway Park	31	Central-S	10.5	1		1	2				1	2	1											
Nick Meyer Park	69	Central-E	5.0	1		1	1	1			1	4	1											
Indian Village Playground	30	Central-S	6.0	1		1	2				1	2							1					
Kilburnie Playground	91	Central-E	2.0			1	1	2			1	3												
Pittsville Playground	94	East	4.0	1			1				1		1											
Gene Lowe Park	3	Tri-Town	3.7			1	1				1													
San Domingo Playground	4	Tri-Town	23.0	1		1					1	6	1											
Subtotal, Wicomico County				82.9	7	0	8	13	7	0	0	0	12	33	5	0	0.3	0.0	0	1	0	0	1	0
Municipalities																								
Doverdale Playground	66	Central-S	2.6	1		1	1			200	1	1							1					
Fruitland Tennis Courts	107	South	0.8					2																
Lake Street Playground	37	Central-S	4.4	1-L			2-L			100	1	1							1					
Newton-Camden	63	Central-S	0.6			1					1	1	1											
Waterside Playground	43	Central-S	5.0	1			1				1	1	1											
Woodcock Playground	55	Central-S	2.0				1				1	1												
Newton Playground	62	Central-S	2.2			1					1	4	1											
Subtotal, Municipalities				17.6	3	0	3	5	2	0	0	300	6	9	3	0	0.0	0.0	0	2	0	0	0	0
Board of Education																								
Beaver Run Elementary	88	Central-E	7.6	1	1	1					1													
Delmar Elementary	18	North	4.5			1					1													
East Salisbury Elementary	65	Central-S	6.0	1		1					1													
Fruitland Intermediate	106	South	5.2	1		1	1				1													
Fruitland Primary	105	South	9.6			1					1													
Glen Avenue Elementary	72	Central-S	8.0	1			1				1													
North Salisbury Elementary	35	Central-S	3.4	1		1					1													
Northwestern Elementary	5	Tri-Town	5.6			1	1				1													
Pinehurst Elementary	54	Central-S	4.0	1		1	1				1													
Prince Street School	76	Central-S	7.7	1	2	1	1			800	1		1					1						
Chipman Elementary	39	Central-S	3.1			1					1													
West Salisbury Elementary	26	Central-S	8.4			1	1				1													
Westside Intermediate	10	West	5.7	1		1	1				1													
Westside Primary	126	West	10.3			1	1				1													
Willards Primary	95	East	18.4	1		1	1				1													
Subtotal, Board of Education				107.5	9	3	14	9	0	0	0	800	15	0	1	0	0.0	0.0	1	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL, Neighborhood-Serving Areas				208.0	19	3	25	27	9	0	0	1,100	33	42	9	0	0.3	0.0	1	3	0	0	1	0

Table A-5

Major Quasi-Public and Private Areas

Name of Area and Ownership	Site Number	Planning Area	Size (acres)	Amount / Number of Facilities																			
				Softball Fields	Baseball Fields	Football/Soccer/Lacrosse Fields	Basketball Courts	Tennis Courts	Golf (Holes)	Disc Golf (Holes)	Stadium Seats	Playground Equipment	Picnic Tables	Pavilions	Swimming Area(A)/Pool(P)	Miles of Beach	Nature Trail Miles	Concessions	Restrooms	Boat Ramps	Boat Slips	Fishing/Hunting	Horseshoe Courts
Quasi-Public																							
Hebron Fairground and Park	11	Tri-Town	18.0	AMUSEMENT PARK																			
Hebron Part-time Playground	12	Tri-Town	2.0			1																	
Horsebridge Golf Course	90	Central-E	50.0					18															
Mid Delmarva Y.M.C.A.	20	Central-S	10.0			1		11				1	P					1					
Nutters Crossing Golf Course	102	South	145.0					18									1	1					
Powellville Park	101	East	4.0	1		1	1			150	1												
Salisbury University - West	53	Central-S	18.0			1		12-L					P										
Salisbury University - East	52	Central-S	37.0	1	1			3-L		2,000							1	1					
Salvation Army Boys and Girls Club	59	Central-S	4.0		2	1-L				200													
Salvation Army West Salisbury Youth Club	33	Central-S	2.0														1						
Tom Brown Sports Complex	48	Central-W	6.0		1	1																	
Woodlawn Playground	19	North	2.0				1																
Subtotal, Quasi-Public			298.0	2	4	6	2	26	36	0	2,350	1	0	1	2	0.0	0.0	3	3	0	0	0	0
Private																							
College Lane Apartments	77	Central-S	1.0					2				1											
Crown Sports Center		South	15.0			3				2000							1	1					
Elks Club	75	Central-S	45.8					9					P										
Green Hill Yacht Club	110	West	181.0					2	18				P							10			
Gunsnoke Sporting Clay Range	97	East	29.0																				
Moss Hill Apartments	64	Central-S	1.5			1						1											
Moss Hill Playground	67	Central-S	1.0									1											
Parkside Apartments	79	Central-S	0.5									1			P								
Parkwood Apartments	85	Central-S	0.3									1											
Pemberton Apartments	44	Central-S	3.0			1		2				1			P								
Waterside Apartments	49	Central-S	0.3									1			P								
Riverside Marina	42	Central-S	0.5																		20		
Roaring Point Campground	116	West	57.7												A	0.5				1		F	
St. Francis DeSales School	57	Central-S	4.0			1						1											
Salisbury School		Central-E	8.0			2													1				
Salisbury Christian School		Central-E	4.0	1	1														1				
Sandy Hill Family Camp	124	West	195.0											6		0.1	0.3		1		13	F	
Wicomico Yacht Club	109	South	11.8													0.3				1	83		
Whitehaven Marina	112	West	1.0																		40		
Wood Creek Golf Course	21	North	25.0					18															
Woodlawn Campgrounds	83	North	4.1																	1			
Wikander Boat Yard	108	South	1.5																		10		
Subtotal, Private Areas			591.0	1	1	8	0	6	45	0	2,000	8	6	1	8	1.0	0.3	1	6	2	176	2	0
TOTAL, Major Quais-Public and Private Areas			889.0	3	5	14	2	32	81	0	4,350	9	6	2	10	1.0	0.3	4.0	9	2	176	2	0

Summary of All Areas

Name of Area and Ownership	Size (acres)	Amount / Number of Facilities																			
		Softball Fields	Baseball Fields	Football/Soccer/Lacrosse Fields	Basketball Courts	Tennis Courts	Golf (Holes)	Disc Golf (Holes)	Stadium Seats	Playground Equipment	Picnic Tables	Pavilions	Swimming Area(A)/Pool(P)	Miles of Beach	Nature Trail Miles	Concessions	Restrooms	Boat Ramps	Boat Slips	Fishing/Hunting	Horseshoe Courts
State and Nature Conservancy Areas	23,198.2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0	23.5	0	0	0	0	4	0	
County-Serving Areas	1,731.2	12	7	9	4	10	0	18	20,150	10	194	9	0	1.4	9.4	7	14	9	262	12	28
Community-Serving Areas	286.0	20	15	28	10	33	0		9,500	12	52	11	0	0.5	0.8	12	12	3	1	7	0
Neighborhood-Serving Areas	208.0	19	3	25	27	9	0		1,100	33	42	9	0	0.3	0.0	1	3	0	0	1	0
Subtotal, Public Areas	25,423.4	51	25	62	41	52	0	18	30,750	55	288	29	0	2.2	33.7	20	29	12	263	24	28
Major Quasi-Public and Private Areas	889.0	3	5	14	2	32	81	0	4,350	9	6	2	10	1.0	0.3	4	9	2	176	2	0
TOTAL, All Areas	26,312.4	54	30	76	43	84	81	18	35,100	64	294	31	10	3.2	34.0	24	38	14	439	26	28

	Total Acres	Comm.	Nei.	Net	Pop.				State/NC ac/000				Total ac/000		
					2010 Census	2020 Projection	Local ac/000 2010	Local ac/000 2020	State/ Nat.C.	Total 2010	Total 2020	Eligible 2010	Eligible 2020	2010 Census	2020 Projection
					North	178.0	0.0	4.5	176.2	8,064	8,919	21.9	19.8	477	59
South	61.7	0.0	14.8	55.8	16,087	17,792	3.5	3.1	1,961	122	110	15.0	15.0	18.5	18.1
East	88.3	6.8	18.4	78.2	6,448	7,132	12.1	11.0	3,396	527	476	15.0	15.0	27.1	26.0
West	593.0	0.0	16.0	586.6	2,953	3,266	198.6	179.6	10,502	3,556	3,216	15.0	15.0	213.6	194.6
Central-E	441.4	0.0	7.6	438.4	10,211	11,294	42.9	38.8	189	19	17	0.0	0.0	42.9	38.8
Central-W	252.3	0.0	0	252.3	12,998	14,376	19.4	17.6	95	7	7	0.0	0.0	19.4	17.6
Central-C	0.0	0.0	0	0.0	35,528	39,294	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Tri-Town	81.5	21.9	5.6	70.5	6,444	7,127	10.9	9.9	4,847	752	680	15.0	15.0	25.9	24.9
County	1696.2	28.7	66.9	1658	98,733	109,200	16.8	15.2	21,467	217	197	15.0	15.0	31.8	30.2

Local, Public Sites (Co,Comm,Neigh)		Acres
North	7	178.0
South	6	61.7
East	7	88.3
West	13	501.0
Central-E	6	441.4
Central-W	5	252.3
Central-S	35	529.0
Tri-Town	10	81.5
County	89	2133.2