

Critical Area Commission

STAFF REPORT

July 1, 2026

APPLICANT: City of Crisfield

PROPOSAL: Refinement – Critical Area Map Update

JURISDICTION: City of Crisfield (Somerset County)

COMMISSION ACTION: Concurrence with Chair’s Determination of Refinement

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval

STAFF: Annie Sekerak

**APPLICABLE LAW/
REGULATIONS:** Ch. 119, Acts of 2008, §1 – 4; COMAR 27.01.11

DISCUSSION:

The City of Crisfield is requesting approval of an update to their Critical Area map. Under Critical Area law and COMAR 27.01.11, each local jurisdiction is required to update the 1,000-foot Critical Area boundary using the best available information and technologies every 12 years. This is the first boundary line update for the City of Crisfield.

Updated Critical Area Maps

Commission staff worked with the City of Crisfield, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, the Maryland Department of the Environment, and the Eastern Shore Regional GIS Cooperative (ESRGC) to develop an updated Critical Area map for the city. The draft map was vetted by the aforementioned agencies and delivered to the City as a summary draft map for local adoption. The update resulted in an 11-acre gain and a 14-acre loss, with a net change of three (3) less acres in the City’s Critical Area. These changes are primarily due to the lack of refined imagery and data when the Critical Area Boundary was originally mapped. A copy of the map is attached to this staff report.

Excluded Areas

The Natural Resources Article, Section 8-1807.(c) allows a local jurisdiction to request areas of land be excluded from the Critical Area boundary provided that such areas meet certain criteria

and if approved by the Commission.¹ The intent of the exclusion areas focused primarily on historic patterns of intense development along the waterways. During the initial development and approval of the City's Critical Area program and mapped boundary, the Critical Area Commission approved the exclusion of approximately 95 acres of land along Back Creek from the Critical Area. The excluded area is shown and labeled on the attached map.

Ordinance No. 735

On February 11, 2026, the Mayor and City Council approved Ordinance No. 735, which will update the City's Critical Area map in accordance with State law (Ch. 119, Acts of 2008, §1 – 4) and the Critical Area Commission's mapping regulations (COMAR 27.01.11). This action constituted local adoption of the updated Critical Area map of the City of Crisfield.

RECOMMENDATION

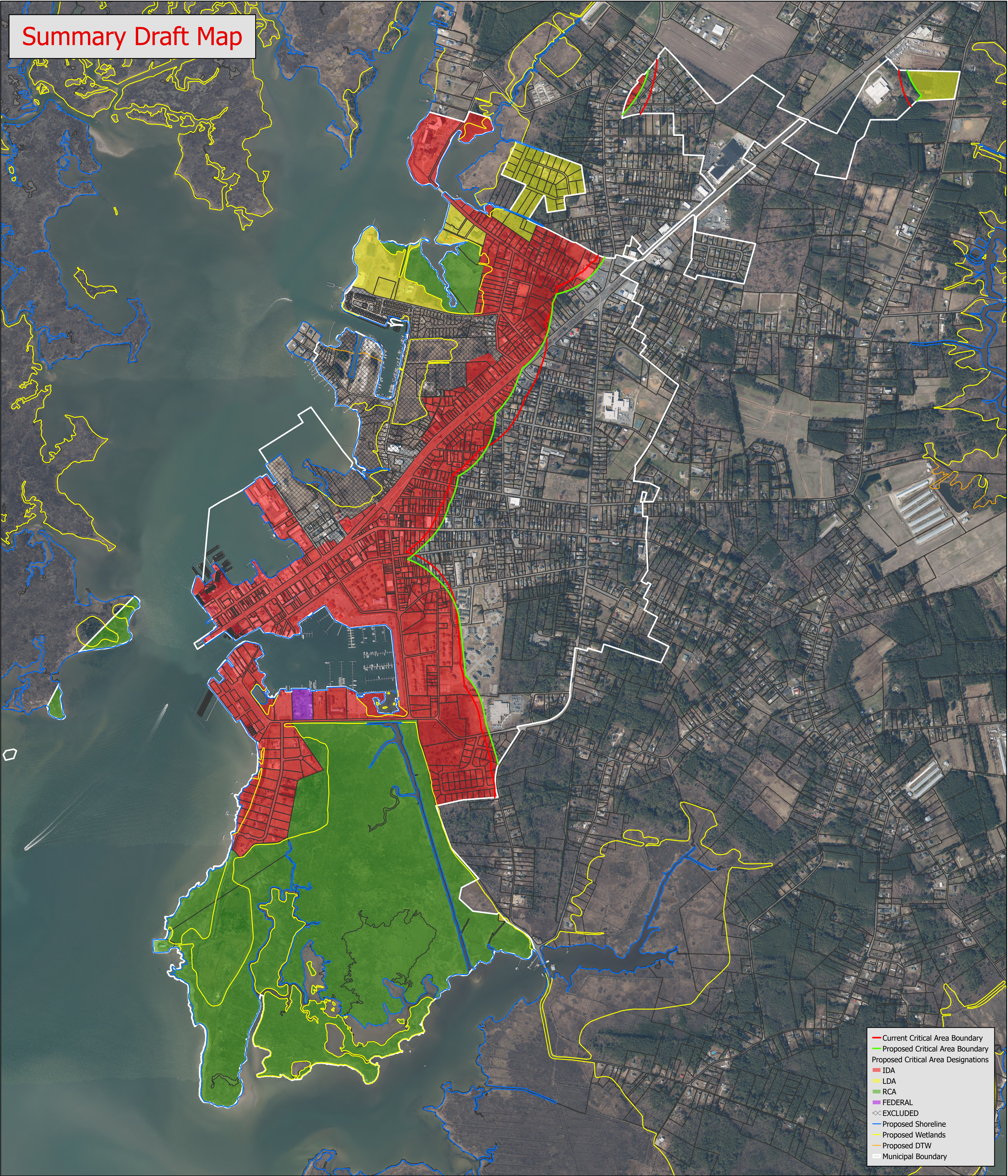
The mapping update was completed in accordance with State law and COMAR 27.01.11. Therefore, Commission staff recommend the Commission concur with the Chair's determination that the City of Crisfield mapping update can be reviewed as a refinement to the City's Critical Area program. Further, staff recommend the Chair approve this map amendment as proposed.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Summary Draft Map

¹ During the time of initial local Critical Area program and mapped boundary establishment, the Natural Resources Article, Section 8-1807.(c) provided the allowance for a local jurisdiction to request areas to be excluded from the Critical Area. The local jurisdiction had to present findings and supporting evidence to the Critical Area Commission that showed that the excluded area was urban and at least 50% developed and comprised of no less than 2,640,000 square feet in contiguous area. In addition, the local jurisdiction had to show that the imposition of a Critical Area program would not substantially improve the protection of tidal water quality or the conservation of fish, wildlife, or plant habitats; or that the proposed excluded area was located at least 1,000 feet from open water and separated from open water by an area of wetlands for which it is found will serve to protect tidal water quality, fish, wildlife, or plant habitat from adverse impacts of development within the excluded area.

Summary Draft Map



- Current Critical Area Boundary
- Proposed Critical Area Boundary
- Proposed Critical Area Designations
 - IDA
 - LDA
 - RCA
 - FEDERAL
- EXCLUDED
- Proposed Shoreline
- Proposed Wetlands
- Proposed DTW
- Municipal Boundary

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT THIS MAP:
This Summary Draft Map for the City of Crisfield Critical Area shows the proposed Critical Area designations. This map is the Summary Draft Map for the jurisdiction, and is currently being reviewed in preparation for formal adoption by the local government. This map is not intended for official use at this time because it has not been approved by the governing body in the Town or by the Critical Area Commission.
The aerial photography is from 2022 Maryland State Highway Administration contract. All imagery for the project was captured as a nominal flying altitude of 4800 AMT, with a minimum 30% side-lap to achieve a 6' ortho-product. The imagery was processed to meet or exceed NMA standards for 1" = 100' map products. Supplemental data and imagery used to create the Critical Area Boundary were also produced at a scale of 1:1200 or 1" = 100'.

Proposed Critical Area: Crisfield, Maryland

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Aruna Miller
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0 500 1,000 Feet
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