

Critical Area Commission

STAFF REPORT

January 14, 2026

APPLICANT:	Pocomoke City (Worcester County)
PROPOSAL:	Critical Area Map Update
COMMISSION ACTION:	Concurrence with Chair's Determination of Refinement
STAFF RECOMMENDATION:	Approval
STAFF:	Katie Hayden
APPLICABLE LAW/ REGULATIONS:	Ch. 119, Acts of 2008, §1—4 COMAR 27.01.11

DISCUSSION

Pocomoke City 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 eight (8) years. This is the first boundary line update for Pocomoke City.

Updated Critical Area Maps

Commission staff worked with Pocomoke City, 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 on February 9, 2025, as a summary draft map for local adoption. This map requires local approval within two years.

A copy of the map is attached to this staff report. Approximately 49 acres have been added and approximately 6 acres have been removed from the Critical Area for a 43 acre net gain of Critical Area in Pocomoke City. This increase is primarily due to annexations of land into the City. Approximately 10 properties had a 1% or more gain in Critical Area. Those property owners were notified of the change.

Ordinance No. 2026-O-4

On September 24, 2025, the Mayor and City Council approved Ordinance 2026-O-4, which updated 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 Pocomoke.

RECOMMENDATION

The mapping update was completed in accordance with State Law and COMAR 27.01.11. Therefore, Commission staff recommends concurrence with the Chair's determination that the City of Pocomoke mapping update be reviewed as a refinement to the City's Critical Area Program. Staff also recommend that the Chair approve this map amendment as proposed.



IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT THIS MAP:
This Summary Draft Map for the City of Pocomoke 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 Jurisdiction 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: Pocomoke City, Maryland

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Map Created: June, 2025