



2022
WICOMICO COUNTY, MARYLAND
LAND PRESERVATION, PARKS & RECREATION PLAN

Adopted
July 5, 2022

Wicomico County Department of Recreation, Parks & Tourism
Wicomico County Department of Planning, Zoning and Community Development

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT PAGE

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Wicomico County Department of Planning, Zoning, and Community Development Staff

ADOPTED
July 5, 2022

COUNTY COUNCIL OF WICOMICO COUNTY, MARYLAND

2022 Legislative Session

Legislative Day No. 14

Resolution No. 75-2022

Introduced by: The President of the Council at the request of the Acting County Executive

**A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE 2022 WICOMICO COUNTY, MARYLAND
LAND PRESERVATION, PARKS & RECREATION PLAN.**

WHEREAS, the 2022 Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan is to further the goals of the County Comprehensive Plan to assess progress in both meeting the leisure needs of a growing population and helping to preserve land; and

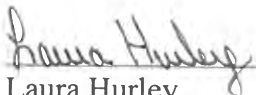
WHEREAS, the 2022 Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan is prepared in response to the requirements of Maryland's Program Open Space and includes guidelines from the Maryland Department of Planning and the Maryland Department of Natural Resources for Program Open Space plans.

WHEREAS, the Acting County Executive recommends the approval of 2022 Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan attached as Exhibit "A".

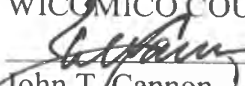
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the County Council of Wicomico County, Maryland, that the 2022 Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan, in substantially the same form as Exhibit "A", attached hereto, is hereby approved.

Done at Salisbury, Maryland this 5th day of July, 2022.

ATTEST:



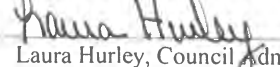
Laura Hurley,
Council Administrator

COUNTY COUNCIL OF
WICOMICO COUNTY, MARYLAND
 (SEAL)

John T. Cannon,
Council President

CERTIFICATION

This Resolution was Adopted ☒, Adopted with Amendments _____, Failed _____, Withdraw _____ by the County Council on July 5, 2022.

Certified by 

Laura Hurley, Council Administrator

RECEIVED

JUL 08 2022

COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OVERVIEW

The 2022 *Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan* builds on the 2017 *Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan* and the 2019 *Maryland Land Preservation 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 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. Planning Areas;
4. Recreation, Parks and Open Space;
5. Agricultural Land Preservation; and
6. Natural Resource Conservation;

INTRODUCTION

Wicomico County residents enjoy a wide variety of leisure opportunities which includes an extensive inventory of parks, recreation facilities, and other leisure sites. The entire system includes 111 recreation sites encompassing approximately 32,453 acres on County, municipal, Board of Education, State, and federal lands (Map 4.1 in the Appendix and Table 4.5 below). The system includes five major park types which work together to provide residents with a variety of recreation opportunities within a reasonable distance from home.

Table 4.5
Recreation and Resource Land by Owner (acres)

Owner	Recreation	Resource	Total
Wicomico County	1,773.09	0	1,773.09
Board of Education	556.28	0	556.28
City of Salisbury	277.64	0	277.64
City of Fruitland	43.63	0	43.63
Town of Delmar	3.87	0	3.87
Town of Sharptown	4.65	0	4.65
Town of Mardela Springs	5.72	0	5.72
Town of Hebron	0	0	0
Town of Pittsville	0	0	0
Town of Willards	11.93	0	11.93
<i>Subtotal, Local Land</i>	<i>2,676.81</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>2,676.81</i>
State and Federal Recreation and Resource Land			
State of Maryland	0	28,995.0	28,995.0
Federal Government	0	725.25	725.25
<i>Subtotal, Local Land</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>29,720.25</i>	<i>29,720.25</i>
Private / Quasi-Public Recreation and Resource Land			
Private / Quasi – Public	56.7	0	56.7
<i>Total, Recreation and Resource Land</i>	<i>2,733.51</i>	<i>29,720.25</i>	<i>32,453.76</i>

Increased public engagement in the Plan update, detailed further in chapter 4, was indicative of local and national trends that have demonstrated greater interest in outdoor recreation opportunities. These opportunities add “quality of life” value to the community which includes: economic benefits, social benefits, environmental benefits and personal benefits.



Economic: https://dnr.maryland.gov/land/Documents/LPRP_2019-2023/2019-2023_Maryland-LPRP.pdf

Social: https://planning-org-uploaded-media.s3.amazonaws.com/publication/download_pdf/Parks-for-Community-Engagement.pdf

Environmental: https://planning-org-uploaded-media.s3.amazonaws.com/publication/download_pdf/Parks-Improve-Public-Health.pdf

Personal: <https://www.nrpa.org/publications-research/park-pulse/mental-health-benefits-of-parks-and-recreation/>

FRAMEWORK

The framework for the 2022 *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;

Map 2.1 Regional Location



- 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 Forest Lands 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 Metro Core 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.
- In recent decades throughout the Country, however, 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 Metro Core (Map 2.4). In the 34 years from 1986 through 2020, subdivision plats located in the unincorporated area of Wicomico and outside of the

Metro Core accounted for almost 60 percent of all lots on 78.5 percent of the newly developed land. (Table 2.1)

Table 2.1
Development within the Unincorporated Portion
Of Wicomico County, 1986—2020

Area	Final Lots		Acres		Average Lot Size (ac.)
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Within Metro Core	2,133	40.5%	2,479	21.6%	1.16
Outside Metro Core	3,139	59.5%	9,017	78.4%	2.87
Total	5,272	100.0%	11,496	100%	2.18

Source: Wicomico County Department of Planning, Zoning, and Community Development ("PZCD")

- Wicomico County population increased from 98,733 in 2010 to 103,222 in 2020 — a 4.5 percent increase in 10 years—according to the decennial censuses. Population is expected to increase by an additional 12.1 percent to 115,700 by 2030; and
- MSDC data indicates that the average Wicomico County household size in 2020 increased to 2.60 persons per household from 2.53 in 2010. Since the 1990 census, Wicomico County has had the highest persons per household figure of any county in the Lower Eastern Shore. (Table 2.5)

Table 2.5
Current and Projected Household Size of Lower Eastern Shore counties, 2010-2045

Jurisdiction	2010	2020	2030	2040	2045	Change, 2010-2045	
						Number	Percent
Wicomico	2.53	2.60	2.53	2.54	2.55	0.02	0.8%
Dorchester	2.37	2.34	2.34	2.32	2.31	-0.06	-2.5%
Somerset	2.37	2.31	2.33	2.32	2.32	-0.05	-2.1%
Worcester	2.28	2.26	2.40	2.38	2.38	0.10	4.1%
Maryland	2.61	2.64	2.61	2.60	2.60	-0.01	-0.4%

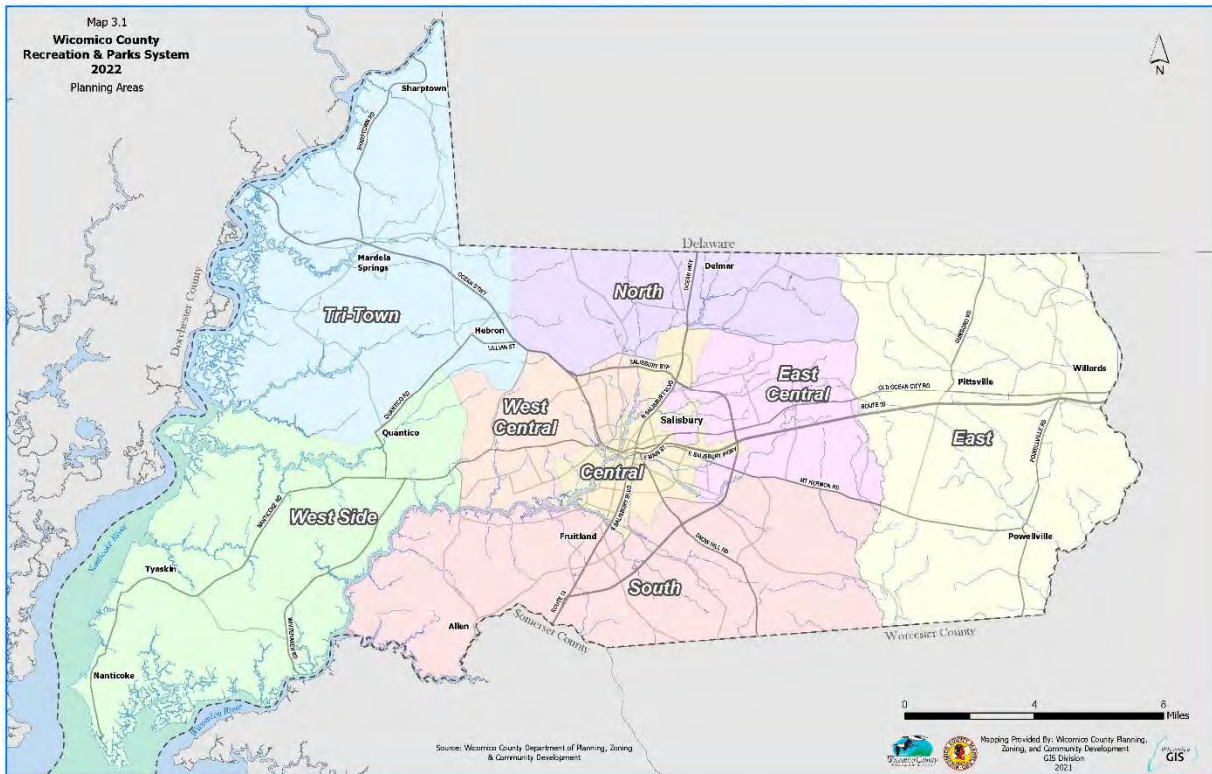
Source: MDP State Data Center, December 2020

- The 2017 *Wicomico County Comprehensive Plan*, adopted March 21, 2017, contains objectives and policies relevant to the issues of land conservation, recreation, agricultural preservation, and natural resource conservation. A summary of objectives and policies are included in chapter 2 which include:
 - Agricultural / Resource District Objectives;
 - Natural Resources and Sensitive Areas Protection Objectives; and
 - Open Space and recreation Objectives.

PLANNING AREAS

As with the previous Plan, the 2022 *Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan* divides the County into six planning areas: Tri-Town, West (West Side and West Central), North, Central, South, and East (East and East Central).

Map 3.1: Planning Areas



Planning areas are important because recreation needs are different in various sections of the county. Chapter 3 contains detailed information for each planning area related to: existing and projected population, natural features and farmland, historic places, preserved land, existing recreations sites, and recreation land analysis per 1,000 persons.

RECREATION, PARKS, AND OPEN SPACE

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, local recreation councils, municipalities, as well as other special interest groups and organizations. The wide variety of parks in the County, ranging from large natural areas to small neighborhood play areas, offers many additional activities.

Since the adoption of the 2017 Plan, participation trends in public recreation continue to rise. One of the most notable trends is the increase in amateur sport participation, which continues to be an economic driver in Wicomico County. Due to expansion of the Henry Parker Athletic Complex in 2018, amateur teams competing in tournaments has increased by 83% from 2016 to 2019. This number has increased by 273% since 2007.

Table 4.1
Public Recreation Registration 2007, 2012, 2016, 2019

Activity Category	2007	2012	2016	2019	Change 2016 – 2019	
					Number	Percent
Adult Organized Sports	1,661	1,804	1,377	2,398	1,021	74%
Youth Organized Sports	1,683	1,444	1,508	1,708	200	13%
Instructional Programs	1,052	350	608	745	745	23%
Summer Camps	2,399	610	1,438	1,665	227	16%
Out of School Time Child Care	3,594	3,446	4,003	2,736	-1,267	-32%
Special Events	26,805	22,572	18,687	40,953	22,266	119%
Harbor Slip Rentals	195	180	152	114	-38	-25%
Pavilion Rentals	261	190	177	115	-62	-35%
Amateur Sports Tournaments (teams)	566	706	1,150	2,110	960	83%
Senior Programs	260	277	150	83	-67	-45%
Totals	38,476	31,579	29,250	52,627	23,377	80%

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

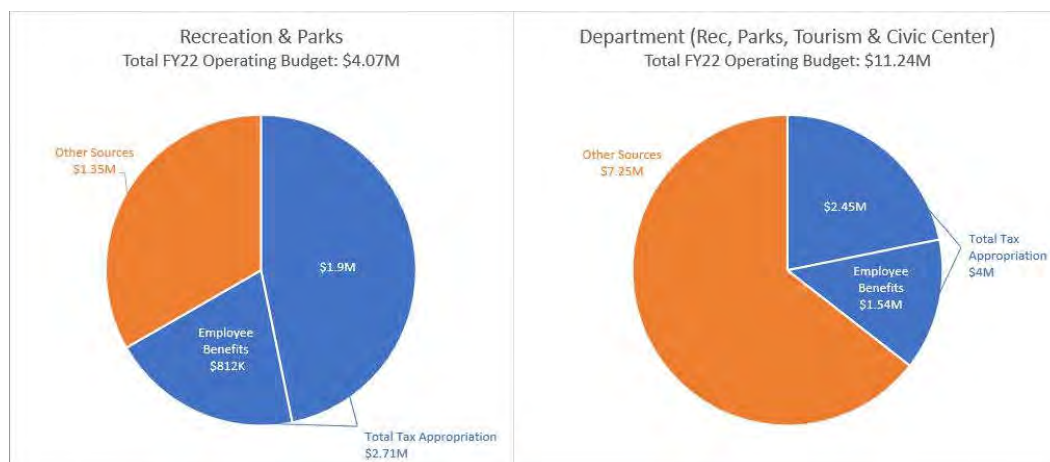
One of the ongoing challenges, for small Counties like Wicomico, is maintaining aging facilities while also trying to add new amenities to meet public demand.

For this reason, it is critical for the County to maintain and incrementally increase funding levels in order for the Department to keep an aging parks system safe and functional, modernize the vehicle fleet, and keep consistent levels of service while the cost of doing business increases. This will become increasingly important as new parks come on line and demand/public usage of parks increases (Pirate's Wharf, West Metro Core, and Connelly Mill are examples of new

parks that could be developed in the lifetime of this Plan).

Another factor to consider is the dramatic increase in amateur sports tournaments, as noted above. Though an economic engine, these events require significant financial and human resources from the Department, which can detract from core services. The financial commitment of the County must remain vibrant in order to meet these maintenance challenges and promote the Department's directive to continue maintaining and expanding opportunities in recreation and tourism.

As illustrated below, 36% of the Department's overall budget is covered through tax appropriation while the remaining 64% is derived from other sources generated through user fees, rentals and other revenue generation. This could represent another emerging challenge as discretionary spending becomes more difficult for families as inflation concerns persist.



As noted, the entire public recreation system includes 111 recreation sites encompassing approximately 32,453 acres on County, municipal, Board of Education, State, and federal lands.

The Wicomico County Department of Recreation, Parks and Tourism directly maintains 39 of these sites with a wide range of recreational activities and supporting amenities for public use. These 39 sites, encompassing 1,773 acres, include athletic complexes, parks & playgrounds, boat ramps, marinas, a wharf, a minor league baseball stadium, community center and the Youth & Civic Center.

To help assess recreation needs, public surveys were completed and input was gathered from a variety of local stakeholders. Despite having to conduct public engagement during the height of

the COVID-19 pandemic, the County gathered 832 public surveys (Appendix A), representing a 700%+ increase from 2017 levels of participation. In addition to public surveys, input was also gathered from the following stakeholders:

- DRPT Staff;
- Local Recreation Councils;
- Recreation & Parks Commission;
- County Council work sessions;
- Municipalities; and
- Wicomico County Public Schools Administration.

Of the 832 survey responses, approximately 90 percent of the participants indicated a member of their household visited a County park in the past 12 months. About 69 percent visited a County park at least once a month or more.

The top 5 areas / facilities recommended to be added or improved in the County included:

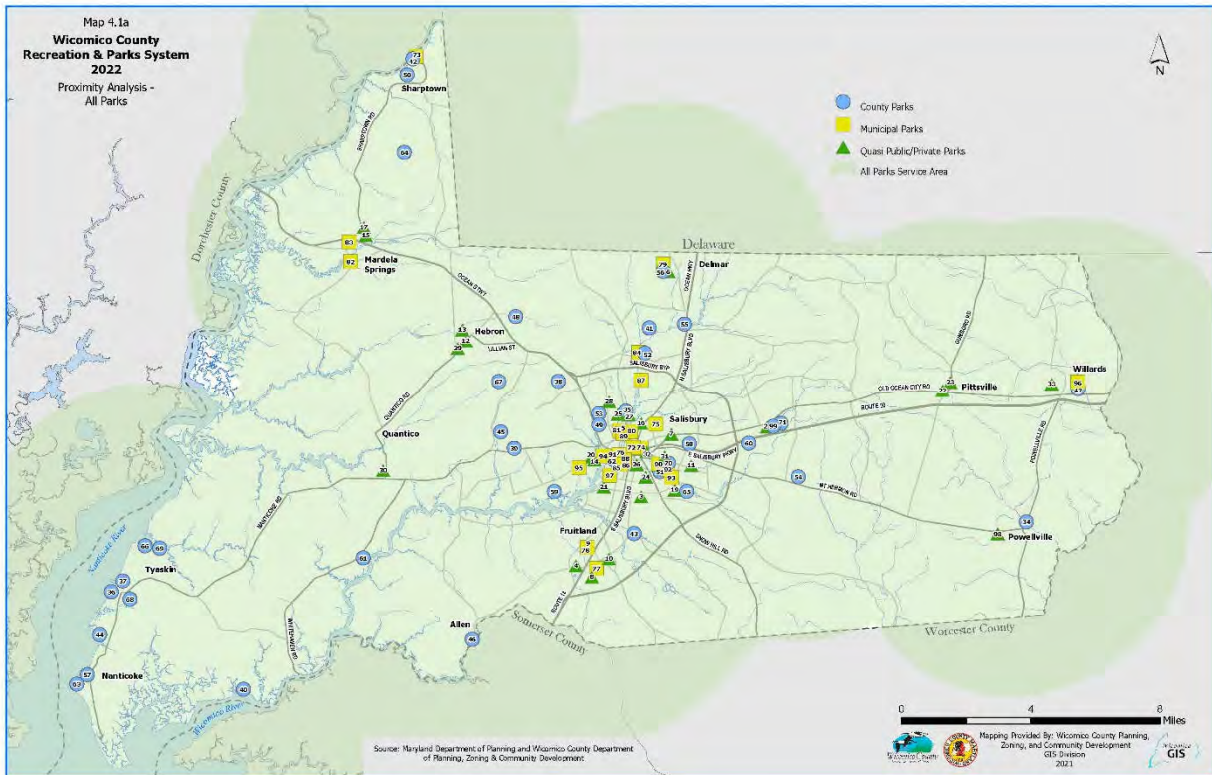
- Trail-based recreation (walking, running, hiking, biking) (61%);
- Passive outdoor leisure areas (playgrounds, picnic areas, dog parks, natural areas) (44%);
- Water recreation (paddling, boating, fishing) (35%);
- Outdoor recreation (baseball fields, soccer fields, outdoor courts, etc.) (27%); and
- Outdoor aquatic areas (beaches) (23%).

Full discussion on stakeholder feedback is included in chapter 4 and more formal stakeholder submissions are included in Appendix B.

In accordance with LPPRP Plan Guidelines, the County also conducted two additional analyses to assess its current progress to meet public demand: the Proximity Analysis and the Park Equity Analysis. A full discussion is included in chapter 4 and maps are included in the Appendix (Maps 4.1a through 4.2).

In summary and as depicted on Map 4.1a, the Proximity Analysis resulted in the entire Wicomico County area being served by the location of the existing parks and recreation system.

Map 4.1a: Proximity Analysis



While the Park Equity Mapper was useful in identifying potential equity discrepancies throughout the County, there are some gaps in the data used by the tool. An accurate inventory of the County's Parks and Recreation system would ensure future planning improves the equity score.

As a result of feedback gathered, the Plan includes a detailed list of future goals and objectives over the life of the Plan. Discussion also includes a review of major accomplishments since adoption of the 2017 Plan, including completion of 35 recreation-based construction, maintenance and expansion projects in the County totaling approximately \$16.4 million.

Appendix D highlights progress toward acquisition goals.

While acquisition remains an important part of the future, the County continues to meet its established acreage goal by exceeding its 30 acres/000 target and by demonstrating adequate distribution of facilities and recreation opportunities illustrated through the Proximity Analysis.

However, the County should remain flexible and opportunistic with future acquisition and development projects that help meet goals and objectives outlined in the Plan. As a small County facing uncertain economic times, the County must continue to balance emerging future needs with its capacity to maintain such facilities with available resources.

The public engagement process and the above analyses resulted in development of a long-range capital improvements program for parks and recreation, which is detailed in chapter 4 and is organized by Planning Areas. The Plan recommends consideration of 62 projects totaling approximately \$38M; projects are classified in short-medium-long range timeframes.

Table 4.15
Summary of Capital Recommendations

Planning Area	Number of Projects	Est. Total Cost (\$000s)	Acres to be Acquired	Estimated Costs (\$000s)								
				Immediate			Mid-Range			Long-Range		
				(FY2022 - FY2026)			(FY2027 - FY2031)			(FY2032 – FY2036)		
				Acq.	Dev.	Reh.	Acq.	Dev.	Reh.	Acq.	Dev.	Reh.
Tri-Town	7	2,645	-	-	2,060	385	-	-	200	-	-	-
West Side	15	7,036	30	185	921	2,455	-	600	875	-	-	2,000
North	11	5,765	-	-	1,035	630	-	2,500	1,600	-	-	-
Central	24	22,005	14	-	2,485	2,540	1,000	3,700	480	-	10,400	1,400
South	2	190	4	40	-	150	-	-	-	-	-	-
East	3	335	-	-	-	335	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	62	37,976	48	225	6,501	6,495	1,000	6,800	3,155	-	10,400	3,400

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

AGRICULTURAL LAND PRESERVATION

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 2017 Census of Agriculture, 494 farms encompassing 88,559 acres (or 35 percent of the total land area) are located in Wicomico County. From 1978 to 2017, the market value of agricultural products produced in Wicomico County increased by roughly \$196 billion or 181 percent from \$108 million to \$304 million, respectively (Table 5.1).

Table 5.1
Wicomico County Agricultural Characteristics, 1978-2017

										Change, 1978-2017	
	1978	1982	1987	1992	1997	2002	2007	2012	2017	Number	Percent
Number of farms	920	842	774	684	624	512	508	510	494	-426	-46%
Acres of farmland	107,102	111,109	95,542	91,254	92,057	88,470	92,852	83,739	88,559	-18,543	-17%
Avg. farm size (ac.)	116	132	123	133	148	173	183	164	179	63	54%

Market value of products (\$000)	\$108,125	\$121,512	\$134,061	\$164,101	\$205,514	\$174,594	\$197,828	\$236,321	\$303,984	\$195,859	181%
Average market value of products per farm (dollars)	\$117,527	\$144,318	\$173,205	\$240,763	\$329,350	\$341,003	\$389,426	\$463,375	\$615,352	\$497,825	423%

Source: United States of Agriculture, 2017 Census of Agriculture

In consideration of Statewide goals, the County has also established its own strategies for agricultural land preservation. 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 a property owner's voluntary willingness to sell development rights consistent with the requirements and intent of the County's Transfer of Development Rights Program.

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 800 acres of undeveloped land and productive farmland annually.

Chapter 5 includes discussion of the various elements of the County's agricultural land preservation efforts including: Preservation Areas, Easement Acquisition Mechanisms, Agricultural Land Preservation Programs, and the Rural Legacy Program.

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 credits;
- Land resale;
- Future owner/family lots; and
- Continued ownership and use.

NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION

Wicomico County policies for natural resource conservation are rooted in the 2017 *Wicomico County Comprehensive Plan*. The 2022 *Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan* endorses the County policies from the Comprehensive Plan.

In 2011, DNR revised and updated the ecological ranking of Green Infrastructure (GI) hubs and corridors to establish priorities for conservation and guide open space acquisition efforts and funding. Chapter 6 includes discussion of the many elements of the GI system in Wicomico County including its purpose, discussion on priorities and threats, and identification of best practices for conserving GI in the County.

Discussion includes the impact of sprawl development but also notes that invasive plant species is a growing threat to the natural environment. The number of invasive species entering Wicomico County is increasing annually. This is a growing problem and increasing risk to the survivability of native species and habitat integrity. Once invasive species become established and spread, natural ecosystems are compromised and reclamation costs increase. In contrast, early detection and eradication techniques are designed to decrease the extent of the impact and reduce removal cost.

To reduce or eliminate the negative effects to our local ecosystems, monitoring and identification of invasive species important. Both early detection and eradication are key to preventing and / or reducing widespread damage from invasive species. In an effort to prevent the adverse effects from invasive plant species the County should continue funding a weed coordinator position, as well as identify potential funding to prepare an Invasive Species Management Plan for Wicomico.

Chapter 6 also discusses the methodology developed for delineating “High Value Natural Areas” which consists of a three-tier ranking system that will guide the County in land acquisition efforts.

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.

INTRODUCTION

Wicomico County residents enjoy a wide variety of leisure opportunities, which includes an extensive inventory of parks, recreation facilities, and other leisure sites. The entire system includes 111 recreation sites encompassing approximately 32,453 acres on County, municipal, Board of Education, State, and federal lands (See Map 4.1, Tables 4.4 through 4.10 and Appendix C). The system includes five major park types (See Table 4.3) which work together to provide residents with a variety of recreation opportunities within a reasonable distance from home.

For the past several decades, Wicomico County has maintained 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 2022 *Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan* update builds on the County’s 2017 Plan, describing the County’s current status and efforts in recreation and parks. The Plan presents the County’s efforts to preserve Green Infrastructure, prime agricultural lands, and important natural resources. In addition, the Plan includes a user need and demand assessments, park equity analysis, and a geospatial proximity analysis for specific recreational facilities and amenities. 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 had significant impacts on the County’s leisure services.

Purpose of the Plan

The 2022 *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 counties to prepare a land preservation, parks, and recreation plan every five years. In accordance with the 2022 guidelines, two major goals of the Plan are:

- Comply with the State of Maryland mandate requiring all local jurisdictions adopt recreation and land preservation plans to qualify for Maryland Program Open Space funds; and
- 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 following 12 visions is presented with the corresponding principle(s) of the 2022 Plan:

- *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 behind the development and implementation of the 2022 *Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan*. The DRPT has primary responsibility for

implementing recommendations related to recreation and park services. Guidelines for the 2022 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 is coordinated with the Wicomico County Department of Planning, Zoning, and Community Development.

Public Participation

The 2022 *Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan* is based on the 2017 Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan, 2017 Wicomico County Comprehensive Plan, revised State guidelines, and public input. The update was prepared within the confines of reduced local, County, and State budgets and in the uncertain context surrounding the short- and long-term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, the update was prepared, in large part, on the ideas and concepts found in the following information sources:

- County trends and user demand survey;
- Maryland Land Preservation and Recreation Plan
- 2017 Wicomico County Comprehensive Plan.

In addition to the aforementioned informational resources, concepts and recommendations contained within the Plan are in response to stakeholder input with ideas derived from ongoing coordination efforts with the following interests:

- DRPT Staff;
- Local Recreation Councils;
- Recreation & Parks Commission;
- County Council work sessions;
- Municipalities; and
- Wicomico County Public Schools Administration.

Stakeholder feedback, in combination with the various needs analyses detailed in Chapter 4, were used to form capital recommendations to guide the County in future planning efforts.

Relationship to the Comprehensive Planning Process

The current Wicomico County Comprehensive Plan was adopted unanimously by the Wicomico County Council on March 21, 2017. The Plan can be viewed or downloaded from the County's website under the Planning and Zoning Department's subpage. The adopted 2017 *Wicomico*

County Comprehensive Plan, a companion document to this Plan, consists of the following 14 major elements:

Plan Introduction	Agricultural	Housing and Community Development
Development Goals and Objectives	Land Use	Economic Dev. and Financial Sustainability
Community Profile	Transportation	Mineral Resources
Sensitive Areas	Community Facilities	Plan Implementation
Water Resources Element	Historic and Cultural Resources	

The goals and objectives contained in the 2022 *Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan*, prepared as a requirement of Program Open Space, are consistent with the County’s adopted 2017 *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.

According to a 2020 National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) survey, 77% of respondents indicate that having a high-quality park, playground, public open space or recreation center nearby is an important factor in deciding where they want to live.

Source: <https://www.nrpa.org/globalassets/2020-engagement-report.pdf>

Economic Impacts

Leisure service is an industry business that generates billions of dollars each year in the United States. According to the Outdoor Industry Association, participation in outdoor recreation in Maryland in 2017 generated \$14 billion in consumer spending, which supported 109,000 jobs, \$4.4 billion in wages and salaries, and generated \$951 million in state and local tax revenue.

Source: https://dnr.maryland.gov/land/Documents/LPRP_2019-2023/2019-2023_Maryland-LPRP.pdf

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. The loss of these activities during the COVID-19 pandemic reinforced the importance of DRPT events, from both an economic and quality of life perspective. In FY 2019, the last fiscal year that was not disrupted by the pandemic, 48 events were held at outdoor parks located in the County (30 County-operated facilities), infusing \$55.8 million into the regional economy. Events included:

- USSSA Girls Softball World Series (366 teams);
- Autumn Wine Festival;
- Athletx Youth Baseball Nationals;
- ISSA Senior Softball; and
- Good Beer Festival;

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. A study conducted by the American Planning Association confirmed that "parks are one of the quickest and most effective ways to build a sense of community and improve quality of life."

Source: https://planning-org-uploaded-media.s3.amazonaws.com/publication/download_pdf/Parks-for-Community-Engagement.pdf

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 of utmost 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. Also, preserving forests and farmlands improves water quality.

According to the American Planning Association, “parks provide people contact with nature...which enhances well-being, increases fitness and reduces obesity. Park resources can also mitigate climate, air and water pollution impacts on public health.”

Source: https://planning-org-uploaded-media.s3.amazonaws.com/publication/download_pdf/Parks-Improve-Public-Health.pdf

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. According to a 2020 National Recreation and Parks survey, 93% of adults say their mental health is improved by services offered by local park and recreation professionals and agencies.

Source: <https://www.nrpa.org/publications-research/park-pulse/mental-health-benefits-of-parks-and-recreation/>

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.

FRAMEWORK

The framework for any plan is the characteristics of the community for which the plan is prepared. The framework for the 2022 *Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan* includes information on three important aspects of the County:

- ***Physical characteristics***—Information on the forests and 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 discussion about the Green Infrastructure (“GI”) process that provides some cohesion to the preservation of a variety of valuable natural resources. See Chapter 6.
- ***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).

Map 2.1 Regional Location



Additional information on the following physical characteristics of Wicomico County is presented in this section:

- Critical Areas;
- Wetlands and Floodplains;
- Woodlands and Natural Areas;
- Subdivision Activity / Development Pattern; and
- Preserved land.

Critical Areas, Wetlands, and Floodplains

Water features (Map 2.2) are significant for both major components of the 2022 *Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan*: parks/recreation and agricultural preservation/natural resource conservation. Federal and State law requires that wetlands, both tidal and non-tidal, must be preserved or relocated. Floodplains should also be preserved, wherever possible. Efforts should be made to avoid development within the 1% chance floodplain. If development occurs within the 1% chance floodplain, efforts should be made to mitigate negative impacts. Wicomico County has strong regulations for development within floodplains.

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 as determined by the 1972 State wetland maps. In

Wicomico County, the major bodies of water impacted are the Wicomico and Nanticoke Rivers, and smaller tidal tributaries. 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 and Subdivision Activity

Development in Wicomico County is centered on the Metro Core 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 Metro Core.

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 Metro Core (Map 2.4). In the 34 years from 1986 through 2021, subdivision plats located in the unincorporated area of Wicomico and outside of the Metro Core accounted for almost 60 percent of all lots on 78.5 percent of the newly developed land. (Table 2.1).

Table 2.1
Development within the Unincorporated Portion
Of Wicomico County, 1986—2021

Area	Final Lots		Acres		Average Lot Size (ac.)
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Within Metro Core	2,133	40.5%	2,479	21.6%	1.16
Outside Metro Core	3,139	59.5%	9,017	78.4%	2.87
Total	5,272	100.0%	11,496	100%	2.18

Source: Wicomico County Department of Planning, Zoning, and Community Development ("PZCD")

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 2021, 26 new subdivisions (of four or more lots) were approved in the A-1 zoning district. Since the 2017 *Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan* only two subdivisions have been approved in the A-1 zoning district as of December 2021. The 26 approved subdivisions contain 401 lots on a total of 2,651 acres, of which 1,507 acres is preserved as open space set-aside (both on lots and as a separate parcel).

Approximately 63,000 acres or 34 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 non-tidal), 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. However, to meet State WIP nutrient reduction targets / expectations and the Phase II MS 4 permit to improve the water quality of the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries, the County should explore the use of package, community, or shared septic systems to serve areas with existing failing systems and in support of agricultural uses in the A-1 Zoning District.

Furthermore, the unincorporated portion of the Metro Core adjacent to the Cities of Fruitland and Salisbury and the Town of Delmar, MD, has 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 the environmental constraints in the more rural areas of the County. Annexed or urban service district 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 2.18 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 most permissive district permits 40 units per acre for multifamily development. From 2000 through 2021, the City of Salisbury annexed approximately 1,818 acres of land in the Metro Core, which was previously under Wicomico County's jurisdiction. The development pattern and intensity within the Metro Core 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.

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 non-tidal);
- 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;
- CREP easements;
- Wetland Reserve Program easements; and
- 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 2022 *Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan* includes information on Wicomico County's current and forecasted population, age, gender, and income. The 2022 Plan uses data from the 2010 U.S. Decennial Census, 2020 American Community Survey, and Maryland Department of Planning's ("MDP") 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 by Planning Area, 2000-2045

Planning Area	2000	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	2045	Change 2020-2045
										Number
East	6,109	6,448	6,627	6,709	7,111	7,521	7,842	8,102	8,372	1,599
Central	50,196	58,737	60,659	61,417	65,093	68,842	71,787	74,167	76,636	14,637
East Subsector	9,235	10,211	10,500	10,362	11,268	11,917	12,427	12,839	13,266	2,534
West Subsector	11,663	12,998	13,457	13,625	14,441	15,272	15,926	16,454	17,002	3,247
Central Subsector	29,298	35,528	36,702	37,160	39,384	41,652	43,434	44,874	46,368	8,856
West	2,734	2,953	3,059	3,097	3,282	3,470	3,620	3,740	3,864	738
Tri-Town	5,394	6,444	6,627	6,709	7,111	7,521	7,842	8,102	8,372	1,599
South	13,495	16,087	16,618	16,826	17,832	18,859	19,666	20,318	20,994	4,010
North	6,716	8,064	8,360	8,464	8,971	9,487	9,893	10,221	10,562	2,017
Total	84,644	98,733	101,950	103,222	109,400	115,700	120,650	124,650	128,800	25,578

Sources: U.S. Census, MDP State Data Center, and PZCD

The estimated 2020 Wicomico County population was 103,222, an increase of 4.5% from the 2010 census (Table 2.2). The Wicomico County population grew at a faster rate from 2010 to 2020 than the State of Maryland as a whole — a characteristic common to both the male and female populations. According to data from the MSDC, Wicomico County is projected to grow faster than the State as a whole between 2020 and 2045 (Table 2.3), 19.9 and 10.1 percent, respectively. 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 2020 to 2045. It is projected, the County will also be the fastest growing county in the Lower Eastern Shore region between 2020 and 2045 (Table 2.3).

Did You Know?

Females outnumber males in both Wicomico County and Maryland.

Wicomico 2020



■ Male ■ Female

Maryland 2020



■ Male ■ Female

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Table 2.3
Population Totals and Projections, 2020-2045

Jurisdiction	2020	2030	2040	2045	Change, 2020-2045	
					Number	Percent
Wicomico	103,222	115,700	124,650	128,800	25,578	19.9%
Dorchester	32,531	35,160	37,300	38,240	5,709	14.9%
Somerset	24,620	27,450	28,310	28,500	3,880	13.6%
Worcester	52,460	57,150	60,810	61,950	9,490	15.3%
Maryland	6,177,224	6,413,690	6,739,410	6,873,330	696,106	10.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, MDP State Data Center

Table 2.4 shows the total population and the percent of the total population by age groups of residents in Wicomico County and the State of Maryland. According to the 2020 American Community Survey, the 25 to 34 years old age bracket contained the largest overall proportion of County residents, which consisted of roughly 12.4 percent or 12,815 County residents. In contrast, seniors 85 years or older included the smallest proportion of the County's population

(1.8 percent or 1,871 residents). In 2020, the median age of the County residents was 36 years old.

The State of Maryland's age structure of its residents is similar to Wicomico County. The 25 to 34 years old age bracket had the largest concentration of the State's overall population, which represented 13.7 percent or 829,403 residents. The 85 years and over bracket comprised the smallest proportion of the population (2.0 percent or 117,785 residents). In 2020, the median age of the State's population was 38.8 years of age.

Table 2.4
Population by Age, 2020

Age	Wicomico County	Wicomico County Percentage	Maryland	Maryland Percentage
Total Population	103,222	100.0%	6,037,624	100.0%
Under 5 years	6,262	6.1%	363,618	6.0%
5 to 9 years	6,149	6.0%	368,569	6.1%
10 to 14 years	6,317	6.1%	380,896	6.3%
15 to 19 years	9,109	8.8%	381,735	6.3%
20 to 24 years	10,177	9.9%	378,108	6.3%
25 to 34 years	12,815	12.4%	829,403	13.7%
35 to 44 years	11,050	10.7%	776,058	12.9%
45 to 54 years	11,883	11.5%	817,301	13.5%
55 to 59 years	7,204	7.0%	426,651	7.1%
60 to 64 years	5,971	5.8%	384,410	6.4%
65 to 74 years	9,541	9.2%	546,754	9.1%
75 to 84 years	4,873	4.7%	266,336	4.4%
85 years and over	1,871	1.8%	117,785	2.0%
Median Age	36	N/A	38.8	N/A

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5 Year Estimates 2016 – 2020

Households

U.S. Census Bureau data also indicate that the average Wicomico County household size in 2020 increased to 2.60 persons per household from 2.53 in 2010. 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 2045. (Table 2.5). Between 2010 and 2045, Worcester County is projected to have the largest increase of average household size, 2.28 and 2.38, respectively.

Table 2.5
Current and Projected Household Size of Lower Eastern Shore counties, 2010-2045

Jurisdiction	2010	2020	2030	2040	2045	Change, 2010-2045	
						Number	Percent
Wicomico	2.53	2.60	2.53	2.54	2.55	0.02	0.8%
Dorchester	2.37	2.34	2.34	2.32	2.31	-0.06	-2.5%
Somerset	2.37	2.31	2.33	2.32	2.32	-0.05	-2.1%
Worcester	2.28	2.26	2.40	2.38	2.38	0.10	4.1%
Maryland	2.61	2.64	2.61	2.60	2.60	-0.01	-0.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, MDP State Data Center

Income

The median household income in the County increased 20.9 percent or \$10,453 between the 2010 Census and the 2020 American Community Survey. During the same period of time, the State median household income increased 35.6 percent or \$22,862. This 20.9 percent increase in the County's median household income indicates an increasing need for leisure activities. See Table 2.6.

Table 2.6
Median Household Income, 2010-2020

Income	2010 Census	2020 American Community Survey	Change, 2010-2020	
			Amount	Percent
Wicomico County	\$49,913	\$60,366	\$10,453	20.9%
Maryland	\$64,201	\$87,063	\$22,862	35.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Decennial Census and American Community Survey, 5 Year Estimates 2016 – 2020

Current Planning Policies

The 2017 *Wicomico County Comprehensive Plan*, adopted March 21, 2017, contains objectives and policies 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

- Support the agricultural industry and associated jobs.
- Coordinate policies, programs, regulations, and capital improvement decisions that provides opportunities for new development in the rural areas, but encourages new residential development in designated growth areas of the County in an effort to preserve agricultural resources.
- Increase farm-related employment opportunities by exploring emerging trends such as the generation of power from on-farm biomass, as well as promoting agrotourism in the County.
- Ensure ordinances in the designated Agriculture Resources areas of the County are supportive of the agricultural industry.
- Give priority to public improvements directed toward agricultural related uses.
- Afford agricultural uses with maximum protection and freedom from nuisance complaints in zoning regulations and through 'right-to-farm' ordinances.

Natural Resources and Sensitive Areas Protection Objectives²

- Identify wetlands and floodplains.
- Discourage new development from locating in 100-year floodplains or on steep slopes, and in other sensitive areas.
- Provide open space, scenic areas, and natural breaks in the landscape.
- Conserve large tracts of land with existing natural resources and natural limitations on development.
- Preserve and conserve fish, wildlife, and plant habitats.
- Enhance public access and use of the local rivers and their tributaries for recreational purposes.
- Conserve forest and woodland resources, and utilize tree conservation measures and replanting programs in compliance with the Maryland Forest Conservation Act.
- Maintain and manage the forest canopy in the County.
- Ensure new development and redevelopment minimizes pollutant loadings and runoff from sites through implementing sediment, stormwater, and erosion control plans and practices.

¹ 2017 Wicomico County Comprehensive Plan, PP. 6-1

² 2017 Wicomico County Comprehensive Plan, PP. 6-1

- Educate property owners about the benefits of placing environmentally sensitive lands under public and private conservation easements.
- Coordinate with County Emergency Services Department to update Hazard Mitigation Plan by continuing to identify areas at risk from flooding, as well as mapping emergency evacuation routes.
- Request assistance from appropriate State agencies to prepare a sea-level rise and climate change study for Wicomico County.
- Continue to implement the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Ordinance and Forest Conservation Act.

Open Space and Recreation Objectives³

- Identify opportunities to increase the availability of active and passive recreational areas in an effort to improve the quality of life within the County.
- Provide an array of recreational facilities and programs throughout the County to make them available to all County citizens.

³ 2017 Wicomico County Comprehensive Plan, PP. 6-1

PLANNING AREAS

Overview

The 2022 *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 2022 *Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan* divides the County into six planning areas (Map 3.1):

Tri-Town	Central
West	South
North	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.

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, an estimated 6,773 persons live in the Tri-Town area, about 329 more persons than in 2010 (Table 2.2). By 2045, 8,372 residents are projected to live in the Tri-Town area, which represents an increase of 1,599 persons from 2020.

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 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 Nature Conservancy include the Sharptown Dunes, Plum Creek Cedar Swamp Preserve, and Upper Nanticoke Management Area.

Existing Recreation Sites

Parks and recreation areas are located where most of Tri-Town's people live: Sharptown (three parks/recreation areas), Mardela Springs (four parks/recreation areas) and Hebron (two parks/recreation areas). Additional 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. Three recreation areas are located at public schools. Public recreation sites in the Tri-Town Planning Area include (Map 4.3):

- Cherry Beach (#73)
- Cope Bennett Park (#42)
- Gene Lowe Park (#50)
- Hebron Fairgrounds & Park (#12)
- Hebron Park (#13)
- Mardela Springs Park (#83)
- Mardela High School (#15)
- Mardela Boat Ramp (#82)
- Northwestern Elementary School (#17)
- San Domingo Playground (#64)
- Westside Intermediate (#29)
- * *West Metro Core Park (#67)*

** Park has not yet been developed as of the date of public comment period;*

Recreation Land Analysis

The proximity analysis (Maps 4.1a-e) for Tri-Town demonstrates that residents have access to the 187 acres of recreation areas and activities within five miles of their homes with minimal deficiencies. A small southwestern portion of Tri-Town is shown as deficient however this area is largely marsh and not densely populated. While not having any identified bike trails with public parking at starting and ending points there are County and State roads with bikeways in Tri-Town.

The park equity analysis (Map 4.2) for the Tri-Town Planning Area is fairly consistent with the rest of the County with some rural areas experiencing a lower equity score. The County will work to provide any information needed to improve the equity tool based on unaccounted recreational amenities.

West Planning Area

The West 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 3,126 residents in 2020, an increase of 173 persons since 2010. The West Planning Area population is projected to increase by almost 738 persons to 3,864 persons by 2045. The Village of Nanticoke has the largest concentration of residents in the West Planning Area. 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 Planning Area 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 this Planning Area.

Historic Places

Whitehaven is 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. Also, 24 other significant historic buildings are located here.

Preserved Land

The State and The Nature Conservancy (“TNC”) own and/or control large portions of the West Planning Area, in essence permanently preserving the land. Portions of the Chesapeake Forest occupy large tracts in the center of the West Planning Area. Three State Wildlife Management Areas (“WMAs”)—Ellis Bay WMA on the Wicomico River to the south, the Nanticoke River WMA to the west and Wetipquin WMA to the north—comprise 4,683 preserved acres. Extensive Chesapeake Bay Critical Areas and the Quantico Creek Rural Legacy Area significantly restrict development and add to the rural character of this area of the County.

Existing Recreation Sites

The West Planning Area has 11 public recreation sites totaling 376.2 acres (Map 4.4):

- Bivalve Wharf (#36)
- Cedar Hill Park (#37)
- Clara Road Boat Ramp (#40)
- Cove Road Recreation Area (#44)
- Nanticoke Park Recreation Area (#57)
- Pirates Wharf (#61)
- Roaring Point Park (#63)
- Tyaskin Recreation Area (#66)
- Wetipquin Boat Ramp (#69)
- Westside Primary School (#30)
- West Side Community Center (#68)

Recreation Land Analysis

Water access (Map 4.1d) is the greatest asset in the West Planning Area due to the Nanticoke River to the west and the Wicomico River to the south. The proximity analysis reflects this asset and the bikeway loop on State roads 349 and 352 (Map 4.1e). Existing deficiencies are the proximity of athletic fields (Map 4.1c) to the village of Whitehaven and surrounding area. As a whole the West Planning Area is well served by the existing amenities in relation to proximity (Maps 4.1a-e).

While a large portion of the West Planning Area according to the park equity analysis (Map 4.2) has a low score, this area is a sparsely populated rural census block with large tracts of wetlands and preserved land. These natural impediments present challenges when working to address equity due to the fragmented nature of development. The more populated areas closer to the metro core and Hebron have higher equity scores and are in line with other similar areas in the County.

North Planning Area

The North Planning Area is the area north of 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. In 2020, it is estimated the North Planning Area is home to more than 8,544 people, with an expected increase of 2,017 persons to about 8,372 persons by 2045.

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.

Natural Features and Farmland

The forested lands of the North Planning Area 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 drains into the Leonard's Pond Run, which flows toward the North Prong of the Wicomico River.

Historic Places

Delmar was founded in 1859 at the convergence of two railroad lines straddling the Mason-Dixon Line separating Maryland and Delaware. This unique town has four buildings of historical significance. The area surrounding Delmar has experienced significant growth in recent years.

Preserved Land

The North Planning Area has several parcels of the Chesapeake Forest, all located east of U.S. 13. State forests total 487 acres in the North Planning Area. In 2017 the Quantico Creek Rural Legacy Area expanded into the North Planning Area to encourage increased preservation of the existing rural character.

Existing Recreation Sites

Public recreation sites in the North Planning Area provide 423.5 acres of recreation land and include (Map 4.5):

- * Connelly Mill (#41)
- Delmar Elementary (#6)
- Edgewood Park (#48)
- Gordy Park (#79)
- Henry S. Parker Athletic Complex (#52)
- Leonard's Mill Park (#55)
- Mason Dixon Sports Complex (#56)
- Naylor Mill Park Recreation Area (#84)

** Park has not yet been developed as of the date of public comment period;*

Recreation Land Analysis

Residents in the North benefit from the centralized location of recreation areas along the U.S. Route 13 corridor according to the proximity analysis (Maps 4.1a-e). Recreation area clusters near Salisbury and Delmar provide access for a majority of the population. Henry S. Parker Athletic Complex and Mason Dixon Sports Complex are indispensable athletic amenities supporting local youth leagues as well as large regional tournaments throughout the year.

The park equity analysis is predominately within the middle range for an equity score (Map 4.2). The County anticipates improvements to the equity score as the database is updated with this plan's inventory for future planning efforts.

Central Planning Area

The Central Planning Area includes the land adjoining the City of Salisbury to the east and west. The projected population of the Central Planning Area in 2020 was—almost 60 percent of the entire County population, and an increase of more than 3,262 persons (5.6 percent) since 2010. By the year 2045, roughly 76,636 people are projected to live in the Central Planning Area—an increase of 14,637 persons from 2020.

The size of the Central Planning Area has suggested further geographic refinements for planning analyses. The 1999 Plan divided the area into three subsectors: north, east, and west. The 2005 Plan classified the North Sector as a separate, distinct planning area. The East Subsector and West Subsector are geographically the same as in earlier plans:

- The East Subsector includes all land bordered generally by U.S. Route 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 Subsector includes the Northeast Growth Area emanating from the City of Salisbury (Map 2.4).

In 2020, 10,733 persons live in the East Subsector (outside of Salisbury), an increase of about 522 persons since the 2010 Census. By 2045, an additional 2,534 people will live in the East Subsector, bringing the sector population to about 13,266 persons.

The East Subsector contains 489.4 acres of public recreational land. Neither the State or The Nature Conservancy have any land holdings in the East Subsector.

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

The West Subsector includes the West Metro Core area (Map 2.4), which has experienced tremendous growth in recent decades. Population in the West Sector is approximately 13,754 in 2020 and is projected to increase by 3,247 persons by 2045.

The West Subsector contains 359.2 acres of recreational land. Neither the State or The Nature Conservancy have any land holdings in the West Subsector.

- The Central Subsector of the Central Planning Area includes the City of Salisbury. The 2020 population of the Central Sector was 37,512, approximately 36 percent of the total County population and an increase of more than 1,984 residents or 5.6 percent since the 2010 Census. The population of the Central Subsector is expected to increase by 8,856 persons to 46,368 persons by 2045.

The Central Subsector contains 297.3 acres of recreational land. Neither the State or The Nature Conservancy have any land holdings in the Central Subsector.

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 of Salisbury.

Historic Places

The initial 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 286 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 Recreation Sites

As the center of population in Wicomico County and home to the City of Salisbury, the Central Planning Area is also the center of recreation activities and sites. The increase in population density is reflected by having 52 local recreation sites totaling 1,145.9 acres within the Central Planning Area (Map 4.6):

- Beaver Run Elementary (#2)
- Bennett High School (#3)
- Billy Gene Jackson Park (#35)
- Boundless Park and Playground (#72)
- Cedarhurst Park (#38)
- Centennial Village Playground (#39)
- Chipman Elementary (#5)
- Comfort Safety Zone (#74)
- Crooked Oak Playground (#45)
- Doverdale Playground (#75)
- Downtown Salisbury Bark Park (#76)
- East Salisbury Elementary (#7)
- East Wicomico Little League (#99)
- Emerson Holloway Park (#49)
- Glen Avenue Elementary (#11)
- Harmon Field (#51)
- Parkside High School (#19)
- Pemberton Elementary (#20)
- Pemberton Historical Park (#59)
- Perdue Stadium (#60)
- Pinehurst Elementary (#21)
- Prince Street School (#24)
- Riverside Boat Ramp (#62)
- Riverwalk Park (#88)
- Rose Street Boat Ramp (#89)
- Salisbury City Park and Zoo (#90)
- Salisbury Marina (#91)
- Salisbury Middle School (#25)
- Salisbury Pony League Park (#92)
- Salisbury Skate Park (#93)
- Salvation Army Boys and Girls Club (#26)

- Indian Village Playground (#53)
- JCC Park (#14)
- Johnson Lake Neighborhood Playground (#80)
- Kilburnie Playground (#54)
- Lake Street Playground (#81)
- Newton-Camden Tot Lot & Playground (#85)
- Newton Playground (#86)
- Nick Meyer Park (#58)
- North Johnson Pond (#87)
- North Salisbury Elementary (#16)
- Salvation Army West Salisbury Youth Club (#27)
- Schumaker Park (#65)
- Waterside Playground (#94)
- West Salisbury Elementary (#28)
- West Salisbury Little League (#95)
- Wicomico County Youth / Civic Center (#70)
- Wicomico High / County Stadium / Memorial Field (#31)
- Wicomico Middle School (#32)
- Winterplace Park (#71)
- Woodcock Playground (#97)

Recreation Land Analysis

Recreation sites and activities are abundant in the Central Planning Area that benefits from being the urban center of Wicomico County (Maps 4.1a-e and 4.1ai). Key amenities range from the Wicomico County Youth / Civic Center that is used for concerts and regional sporting events to the Salisbury



Marina and Riverside Boat Ramp for water access. A unique amenity to residents of the County is the Salisbury Zoo which is free to the public and is the centerpiece of the Salisbury City Park.

The park equity analysis (Map 4.2) of the Central Planning Area is limited by the data inputs that were used to score the equity. While the analysis shows that equity within the Central Planning Area is poor, several existing recreational amenities were not included in the database and could potentially improve the equity score. The County will continue to provide the necessary information to increase the equity score in future plans.

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 16,985 people in 2020—an increase of approximately 898 persons or 5.6 percent since 2010. By 2045, the area’s population is expected to reach almost 20,994, an increase of 4,009 persons or 23.6 percent since 2020.

Natural Features and Farmland

The South Planning Area includes 26 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 Management Area, 468 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.

Historic Places

The South Planning Area is home to the City of Fruitland and the historic village of Allen. Fruitland was originally known as Forktown, a small village centered around Disharoon's Cross Roads. The village was a popular stop for stage coaches in the 1820's. By the end of the Civil War the railroad arrived in the area and with it increased development. In 1873 the name was changed to Fruitland because of the immense fruit production in the area.

The village of Allen is home to several historic structures listed on the National Register of Historic Places; Asbury Methodist Episcopal Church, Bennett's Adventure, and Bounds Lott. The earliest of these structures dates back to 1725. The village lies along the banks of Passerdyke Creek and Allen Pond at the headwaters of Wicomico Creek.

Preserved Land

Chesapeake Forest land covers approximately 1,614 acres of the South Planning Area. In addition, the Johnson Wildlife Management Area comprises 468 acres, and the Nassawango Creek Preserve, which lies in the South, East, and Central Planning Areas, is 4,893 acres in size. As noted above, several agricultural parcels are also preserved through easement totaling 2,682 acres as of 2020.

Existing Recreation Sites

The South Planning Area includes the following nine public recreation sites comprising 61.7 acres of recreation land (Map 4.7):

- Bennett Middle School (#4)
- Fruitland Falcons Sports Complex (#8)
- Coulbourne Mill Pond (#43)
- Douglas Nichols Park (#46)
- Fruitland Intermediate (#9)
- Fruitland Primary (#10)
- Fruitland Recreation Facility (#77)
- Fruitland Tennis Courts (#78)

Recreation Land Analysis

The residents of the South Planning Area according to the proximity analysis (Maps 4.1a-e and 4.1ai) are well served by most recreational amenities except for a small area in the southwest corner for athletic fields. While this area is outside of the five-mile radius used in the proximity analysis it is still relatively small population impacted in this rural area. The South Planning Area is also home to the Fruitland Falcons Sports Complex that offers youth sports such as soccer, lacrosse, and football.

The park equity analysis (Map 4.2) for the South Planning Area is ranked middle to high on the equity scale. This is due in part to the dense development pattern of the City of Fruitland and recreational opportunities centered along the US Route 13 corridor.

East Planning Area

The East Planning Area, a largely wooded and rural area that borders the Pocomoke River, is the least populated of the six 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.

In 2020, 6,773 people lived in the East Planning Area, an increase of 325 persons or 5.0 percent since 2010. By 2045, 8,372 people are projected to reside in the area, an increase of 23.6 percent or 1,599 persons compared to 2020.

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: 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 nearly 1,200 acres in the Wicomico State Forest and approximately 4,100 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.

Historic Places

The East Planning Area is historical a rural, agricultural community with the towns of Pittsville and Willards constituting the population centers north of US Route 50 and the village of Powellville to the south. Pittsville started as a railroad stop between Salisbury and Ocean City in the mid 1800's and grew to an incorporated town by the early 1900's. The Blue Crab Scenic Byway passes through the rural crossroads of Pittsville and Willards before continuing on to Ocean City.

Preserved Land

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

- Chesapeake Forest parcels, covering 4,100 acres;
- Wicomico State Forest (1,183 acres);
- Pocomoke River Heritage Conservation Fund (158 acres);
- Powellville Forest (3.5 acres); and
- Nassawango Creek Preserve (4,893 acres in both the East, South and Central 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 Recreation Sites

The East Planning Area has the following public recreation sites providing 85 acres of recreation land (Map 4.8):

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| • Adkins Mill Park (#34) | • Powellville VFW (#98) |
| • East Side Youth Sports Complex (#47) | • Willards Primary School (#33) |
| • Pittsville Elementary and Middle School (#22) | • Willards Recreation Area/Park (#96) |
| • Pittsville Playground (#23) | |

Recreation Land Analysis

Recreation opportunities in the East Planning Area are centralized within Pittsville, Powellville, and Willards. The proximity analysis (Maps 4.1a-e) for this planning area shows the coverage of parks to be sufficient however gaps do exist with water access in the north and athletic amenities in the southeast corner. The portion to the north lacks navigable waters and is not very densely populated. The southeast corner is also sparsely populated consisting of protected agricultural and conservation lands. The East Planning Area is bordered by two counties, Worcester in Maryland and Sussex in Delaware; residents within the proximity gaps may have recreational amenities that are closer in these adjacent counties.

The park equity analysis (Map 4.2) for the East Planning Area is reflective of the rural nature of development and population in this area. Higher equity areas include the towns and villages in the area; Pittsville, Willards, and Powellville. The lower equity areas are sparsely populated and as with the proximity analysis, residents may have recreational opportunities outside of Wicomico County.

RECREATION, PARKS, AND OPEN SPACE

Overview

This chapter contains a general overview of Wicomico County’s inventory for parks, recreation, and open space and assesses them based on current and future user demands to establish a road map for future parks and open space acquisition; facility maintenance; adaptive reuse and development; and capital programming considerations. Wicomico County’s goals and priorities are established based on:

- Wicomico County’s Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism’s mission, goals, and objectives;
- Needs assessment of recreational facilities and activities based on the existing inventory of amenities, and user demand input derived from stakeholders, staff, County and State surveys, and a geospatial analysis of facilities; and
- State of Maryland’s goals for recreation, parks, and open space.

Mission

The mission of the Department of Recreation, Parks and Tourism is “to enhance the quality of life for Wicomico County residents through public recreation, safe and attractive parks, tourism-driven initiatives that increase economic activity in the County and a multi-purpose Civic Center.”

Organization

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 and competent staff, perhaps the primary reason that Wicomico County has one of the premier parks 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.

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, local recreation councils, municipalities, as well as other special interest groups and 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 or businesses; and
- Quasi-public groups, such as churches, Salvation Army, VFW;

Recreation and Parks Services and Financials

Recreation Programs

Wicomico County has traditionally had a strong complement of recreation program offerings, including sports leagues, after school child care, summer camps, senior programs, instructional programs, special events and programs for targeted groups, such as at-risk youth. Participation in Department program offerings is shown from 2007, 2012, 2016, and 2019. See Table 4.1.

Findings include:

- As the County continued recovery from a lengthy economic recession, overall participation in recreation programs and events grew by 80% from 2016 to 2019, primarily due to a 119% increase in special event attendance.
- If special event numbers were removed, overall participation would have increased by 11% from 2016 to 2019.
- Adult sport participation has increased by 74% when compared to 2016 results and by 44% when compared to 2007. This may be attributed to a number of factors including new programs that the County has introduced and improved facility conditions at the Henry Parker Athletic Complex.
- Participation in youth organized sports and instructional programs have rebounded since a sharp decline during the years of the recession. Youth organized sport participation is

up 13% and instructional programs are up 23% from 2016. A new youth basketball program and popular karate instructional program contributed to these results.

- Amateur sport participation continues to be an economic driver in Wicomico County (discussed further below). Due to expansion of the Henry Parker Athletic Complex in 2018, amateur teams competing in tournaments has increased by 83% from 2016 to 2019. This number has increased by 273% since 2007.
- Harbor slip rentals have steadily decreased since 2007 and declined 25% from 2016 to 2019. Due, in part, to an overall increase in outdoor recreation associated with the pandemic, numbers have slightly rebounded in the last 2 years.
- After school child care programs have decreased by 32% since 2016. This is due, in part, to more availability of child care programs from other service providers.

Table 4.1
Public Recreation Registration 2007, 2012, 2016, 2019

Activity Category	2007	2012	2016	2019	Change 2016 – 2019	
					Number	Percent
Adult Organized Sports	1,661	1,804	1,377	2,398	1,021	74%
Youth Organized Sports	1,683	1,444	1,508	1,708	200	13%
Instructional Programs	1,052	350	608	745	745	23%
Summer Camps	2,399	610	1,438	1,665	227	16%
Out of School Time Child Care	3,594	3,446	4,003	2,736	-1,267	-32%
Special Events	26,805	22,572	18,687	40,953	22,266	119%
Harbor Slip Rentals	195	180	152	114	-38	-25%
Pavilion Rentals	261	190	177	115	-62	-35%
Amateur Sports Tournaments (teams)	566	706	1,150	2,110	960	83%
Senior Programs	260	277	150	83	-67	-45%
Totals	38,476	31,579	29,250	52,627	23,377	80%

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

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 events which mostly are multi-day and attract participants who require hotel room stays. In FY 18-19, Wicomico County hosted 48 events. This business infused approximately \$64.3 Million into the local and State economy. Ninety percent of the economic impact came from events staged in outdoor recreational facilities, accounting for 104,739 attendees and an estimated economic impact of \$55.8 Million.

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 which are primarily held in its park system. Opportunity exists to significantly increase the current volume of tourism-associated business by:

- Continuing to modernize and expand the Youth & Civic Center and outdoor athletic facilities to retain, grow and develop sporting events, meetings and conferences.
- Continuing the partnership with Ocean City and Worcester County to promote a regional brand and combine inventory and marketing tactics to attract amateur sporting events to the region.
- Developing the Pirate's Wharf property, which consists of 340.7 acres of land along the Wicomico River into a heritage-tourism and recreational asset. As a part of this project, a trail system is being built, to include a 1-mile heritage trail that interprets the land and its previous inhabitants.
- Completing a master-planning process to evaluate and capitalize on the best use for the Connelly Mill property, which is situated just north of the Henry S. Parker Athletic Complex.

Further discussion, including more detailed capital recommendations, is included later in this chapter.

Heritage Tourism

Wicomico County is endowed with buildings, structures, and districts with recognized historic significance, including, but not limited to five locally designated historic districts, 23 sites on the National Register of Historic Places, 6 Maryland Historic Trust easement sites, and 675 sites on the Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties. The County is well recognized as a place of significant cultural and historic value in Maryland. Its strategic location on the Wicomico River resulted in early settlement and continued growth. The sites, structures, and artifacts of previous eras, from prehistoric times, through the Colonial era, and on to the ninetieth and twentieth centuries provide the backdrop for the locations and culture that create the Wicomico County of the twenty-first century. Preserving those historic treasures is a shared responsibility of volunteers, County government, heritage area authorities, owners of historic structures, educational institutions, developers, and ordinary citizens. Promoting these assets through walking tours or other cultural experiences is also a shared responsibility which the Department participates in through its Tourism division.

Pemberton Historical Park (<http://www.pembertonpark.org/>) is the Department's premier heritage tourism site. The Park includes 253 acres with approximately 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.

Financials

The tax appropriation for Recreation & Parks increased significantly from 2000 to 2022. See Table 4.2. However, the bulk of increased funding is a direct result of County policy change, which added employee benefit expenses directly to the Departmental budgets. From a broader perspective, the County tax appropriation for Recreation & Parks represents 67% of the overall Recreation & Parks budget; the remaining portion must be supported by user fees, rentals, grants, and ancillary sources such as sponsorships, concessions sales, and other revenue streams. See Table 4.2b and charts below. Of the County's annual appropriation spent on Recreation & Parks, 30% can be attributed to employee benefits.

When considering combined financials of the entire Department (Recreation, Parks, Tourism, Civic Center), the results are as follows: the combined FY22 budgets for the 4 divisions is \$11.24M; of this amount, \$4M (36%) is funded by County taxes which includes employee benefits (39% of the tax appropriation); the remaining 64% must be supported in other ways. See Table 4.2b and charts below. As a result, the Department must continue to be creative with revenue generation and cost avoidance with its facilities, programs and events in order to support operations.

Additionally, it is critical for the County to maintain and incrementally increase funding levels in order for the Department to keep an aging parks system safe and functional, modernize the vehicle fleet, maintain and enhance staffing, preserve the system from environmental concerns (e.g. invasive species), and keep consistent levels of service while the cost of doing business increases. This will become increasingly important as new parks come on line and demand/public usage of parks increases (Pirate's Wharf, the West Metro Core, and Connelly Mill are examples of new parks that could be developed in the lifetime of this Plan). Another factor to consider is the dramatic increase in amateur sports tournaments. Though an economic engine, these events require significant financial and human resources from the Department, which can detract from core services. The financial commitment of the County must remain vibrant in order to meet these maintenance challenges and promote the Department's directive to continue maintaining and expanding opportunities in recreation and tourism.

Table 4.2
Recreation and Parks Tax Appropriation, 2000-2022

Item	2000	2004	2013	2016	2022
County Taxes to Support Operating Budget	\$ 1,281,400	\$ 1,274,800	\$ 1,098,878	\$2,267,953	\$2,714,401

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

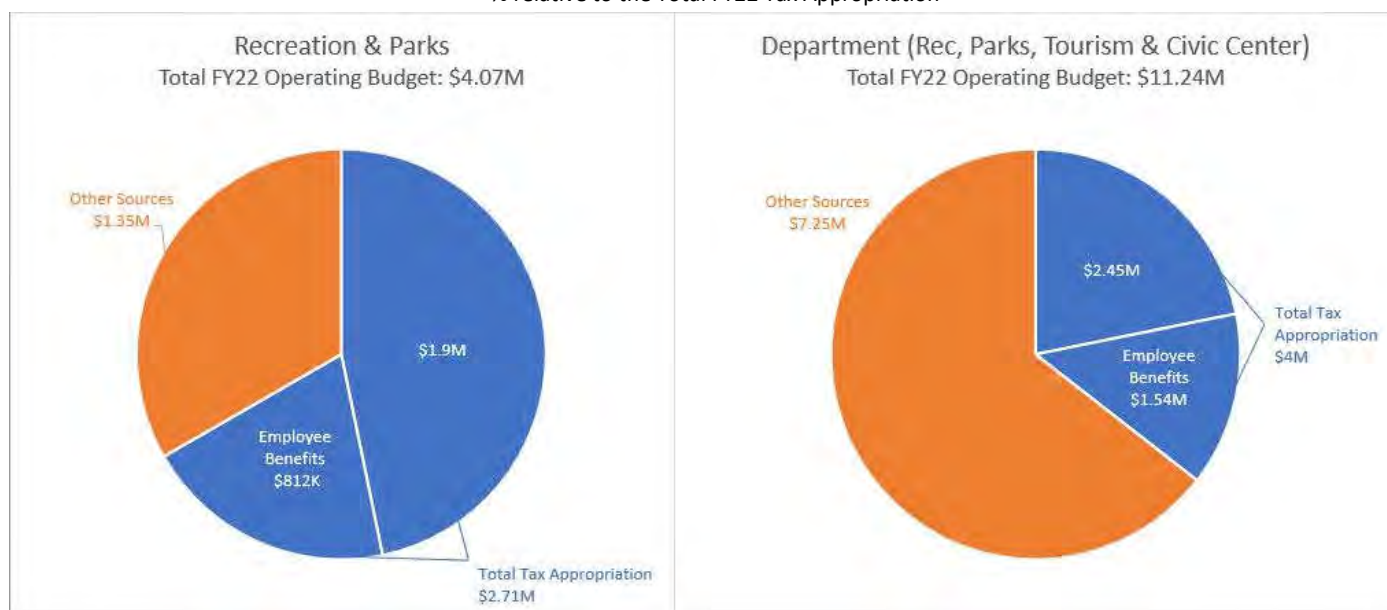
Table 4.2b
FY22 Tax Appropriation Comparison

Item	Recreation & Parks	Percent	Combined Department (Rec / Parks / Tourism / Civic Center)	Percent
Total FY22 Operating Budget	\$4,069,382	N/A	\$11,241,822	N/A
Total FY22 Tax Appropriation	\$2,714,401	*67%	\$3,994,103	*36%
Total FY22 "Other" Sources	\$1,354,981	*33%	\$7,247,719	*64%
Total FY22 Employee Benefits	\$ 811,585	**30%	\$1,540,744	**39%

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

* % relative to the Total FY22 Budget

** % relative to the Total FY22 Tax Appropriation



County Recreation and Parks System

The Wicomico County parks system includes five major types of parks. See Table 4.3. Parks are designed to serve geographic areas based on the size of the park and recreation facilities included in the park. The five park types work together to provide residents with a variety of recreation opportunities within a reasonable distance from home and are supplemented by private

recreation facilities. The recreation sites in Wicomico County, presented in Appendix C, are identified by park type.

Table 4.3
Wicomico County Park Types

Park Type	Purpose	Size	Service Area
State and Nature Conservancy	State lands and/or nature conservancies with a primary function of natural resource preservation. Based on facility type, some public recreational opportunities may exist.	Varies	Varies
County Park	Serve Metro Core area or entire county and 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
Community Park	Larger than a neighborhood park with a wider variety and greater number of recreation facilities. Often serves a municipality, or a group of subdivisions (approximately 4-10). – 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
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
Major Quasi-Public and Private	Recreation lands owned by major quasi-public and/or private entities with a primary function of providing recreational opportunities to the public or, sometimes, to private members. Recreational facilities may include a wide range of activities such as golf courses, campgrounds, sports complexes, and playgrounds.	Varies	Varies

Source: adapted from National Recreation and Parks Association

Recreation System

The existing public recreation system within Wicomico County includes an extensive inventory of parks, recreation facilities, and other recreation sites, some of which are owned and/or operated by quasi-public and/or private entities. This system of 111 sites encompassing approximately 32,453 acres of land, is comprised of the following recreational amenities on municipal, County, Board of Education, State, and federal sites. See Map 4.1, Tables 4.4 through 4.10 and Appendix C for additional information.

Table 4.4
Wicomico County Recreation Sites, 2021
 (Key for Map 4.1)

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	Quasi-Public and Private	Local Public Recreation Areas	Local Public Rec. (cont'd.)
A Upper Nanticoke Management Area		34 Adkins Mill Park	67 West Core Metro Park
B Pocomoke River Heritage Cons. Fund	2 Beaver Run Elementary	35 Billy Gene Jackson Park	68 West Side Community Center
C Plum Creek Cedar Swamp Preserve	3 Bennett High School	36 Bivalve Wharf	69 Wetipquin Boat Ramp
D Chesapeake Forest	4 Bennett Middle School	37 Cedar Hill Park and Marina	70 Wicomico County Youth & Civic Center
E Wicomico State Forest	5 Chipman Elementary	38 Cedarhurst Park	71 Winterplace Park
F Plum Ck. Heritage Cons. Fund	6 Delmar Elementary	39 Centennial Village Playground	72 Boundless Park and Playground
G Powellville Forest	7 East Salisbury Elementary School	40 Clara Road Boat Ramp	73 Cherry Beach
H Nassawango Creek Preserve	8 Fruitland Falcons Sports Complex	41 Connelly Mill Park	74 Comfort Safety Zone
I Johnson Wildlife Management Area	9 Fruitland Intermediate School	42 Cope Bennett Park	75 Doverdale Playground
J Ellis Bay Wildlife Management Area	10 Fruitland Primary School	43 Coulbourne Mill Pond	76 Downtown Salisbury Bark Park
K Nanticoke River Wildlife Mgt. Area	11 Glen Ave Elementary	44 Cove Road Beach	77 Fruitland Recreation Park
L Wetipquin Pond Management Area	12 Hebron Fairground and Park	45 Crooked Oak Playground	78 Fruitland Tennis Courts
M Wetipquin Wildlife Management Area	13 Hebron Park	46 Douglas Nichols Park (Allen Park)	79 Gordy Park
N U.S. Department of Interior	14 JCC Park	47 East Side Youth Sports Complex	80 Johnson Lake Neighborhood Playground
	15 Mardela Middle/High School	48 Edgewood Park	81 Lake Street Playground
	16 North Salisbury Elementary School	49 Emerson Holloway Park	82 Mardela Springs Boat Ramp
	17 Northwestern Elementary School	50 Gene Lowe Park	83 Mardela Springs Park
		51 Harmon Field	84 Naylor Mill Park Recreation Area
	19 Parkside High School	52 Henry S. Parker Athletic Complex	85 Newton-Camden Tot Lot & Playground
	20 Pemberton Elementary School	53 Indian Village Playground	86 Newton Playground
	21 Pinehurst Elementary School	54 Kilburnie Playground	87 North Johnson Pond
	22 Pittsville Elementary & Middle School	55 Leonards Mill Park	88 Riverwalk Park
	23 Pittsville Playground	56 Mason Dixon Sports Complex	89 Rose Street Boat Ramp
	24 Prince Street School	57 Nanticoke Park Recreation Area	90 Salisbury City Park and Zoo
	25 Salisbury Middle School	58 Nick Meyer Park	91 Salisbury Marina
	26 Salvation Army Boys and Girls Club	59 Pemberton Historical Park	92 Salisbury Pony League Park
	27 Salvation Army West Salisbury Youth Club	60 Perdue Stadium	93 Salisbury Skate Park
	28 West Salisbury Elementary School	61 Pirate's Wharf	94 Waterside Playground
	29 Westside Intermediate School	62 Riverside Boat Ramp	95 West Salisbury Little League
	30 Westside Primary School	63 Roaring Point Park	96 Willards Recreation Area/Park
	31 Wicomico High School / County Stadium / Memorial Field	64 San Domingo Playground	97 Woodcock Playground
	32 Wicomico Middle School	65 Schumaker Park	98 Powellville VFW
	33 Willards Primary School	66 Tyaskin Recreation Area	99 East Wicomico Little League

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

Table 4.5
Recreation and Resource Land by Owner (acres)

Owner	Recreation	Resource	Total
Wicomico County	1,773.09	0	1,773.09
Board of Education	556.28	0	556.28
City of Salisbury	277.64	0	277.64
City of Fruitland	43.63	0	43.63
Town of Delmar	3.87	0	3.87
Town of Sharptown	4.65	0	4.65
Town of Mardela Springs	5.72	0	5.72
Town of Hebron	0	0	0
Town of Pittsville	0	0	0
Town of Willards	11.93	0	11.93
Subtotal, Local Land	2,676.81	0	2,676.81
State and Federal Recreation and Resource Land			
State of Maryland	0	28,995.0	28,995.0
Federal Government	0	725.25	725.25
Subtotal, Local Land	0	29,720.25	29,720.25
Private / Quasi-Public Recreation and Resource Land			
Private / Quasi – Public	56.7	0	56.7
Total, Recreation and Resource Land	2,733.51	29,720.25	32,453.76

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

County Recreation and Amenities

According to a 2021 National Recreation and Parks Association review, the average parks and recreation agency manages 21 parks comprising a total of 458 acres.

Source: https://www.nrpa.org/siteassets/2021-agency-performance-review_final.pdf

The Wicomico County Department of Recreation, Parks and Tourism directly maintains 39 sites with a wide range of recreational activities and supporting amenities for public use. These 39 sites, encompassing 1,773 acres, include athletic complexes, parks &



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

playgrounds, boat ramps, marinas, a wharf, a minor league baseball stadium, community center and the Youth & Civic Center.

As demonstrated in Table 4.6, County-owned facilities account for over half of the recreation amenities in the County.

County recreation sites serve various needs of its citizens depending on the size, location, and purpose of the facility. Of the 39 total sites, 15 sites are considered County-serving areas, 14-community serving areas, and 10 neighborhood serving areas.

Table 4.6
Wicomico County Recreation and Amenities

Recreation activity and amenities	Total	Percentage of Total Inventory
Softball / Baseball	41	44%
Football / Soccer	16	25%
Basketball	16	39%
Tennis	13	30%
Playground	23	37%
Pickleball	16	100%
Swimming / Pool	6	75%
Pavilions	17	59%
Disc Golf Holes	18	100%
Boat Ramps / Slips	216	70%
Total recreation activities and amenities	382	56%

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

Municipal Recreation and Amenities

There are 25 municipality-owned recreational sites located within Wicomico County. These sites encompass approximately 347 acres of land and offer citizens a diverse range of recreational activities including amenities not included in County-owned inventory such as a public zoo and skate park. Additional sites include parks and playgrounds, marina, boat ramps, and dog parks. As shown in Table 4.7, municipalities account for 23% of the existing softball/baseball field inventory, 26% of public playgrounds, and 29% of boat ramps/slips in the County.

Table 4.7
Municipal Recreation and Amenities

Recreation activity and amenities	Total	Percentage of Total Inventory
Softball / Baseball	21	23%
Football / Soccer	2	3%
Basketball	11	27%
Tennis	6	14%
Playground	16	26%
Pickleball	0	N/A
Swimming / Pool	1	13%
Pavilions	8	28%
Disc Golf Holes	0	0%
Boat Ramps / Slips	89	29%
Total recreation activities and amenities	154	23%

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

State of Maryland and The Nature Conservancy Recreation and Amenities

The State of Maryland, the Nature Conservancy and the United States Department of the Interior have 14 sites encompassing 29,720.3 acres of land. The primary function of these lands is to meet the needs of wildlife and to protect and preserve land and the natural resources it protects. Though these sites do not provide recreational amenities to accommodate sports on fields or courts (Table 4.8), it does provide 66.47 miles of nature trails and 5 boat ramps for water access available for public use.

Table 4.8
State of Maryland and The Nature Conservancy Recreation and Amenities

Recreation activity and amenities	Total	Percentage of County Inventory
Softball / Baseball	0	N/A
Football / Soccer	0	N/A
Basketball	0	N/A
Tennis	0	N/A
Playground	0	N/A
Pickleball	0	N/A
Swimming / Pool	0	N/A
Pavilions	0	N/A

Disc Golf Holes	0	N/A
Boat Ramps / Slips	5	2%
Total recreation activities and amenities	5	1%

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

Major Quasi-Public and Private Recreation and Amenities

The major quasi-public or private recreation amenities shown below does not include the Board of Education amenities. See Table 4.9. There are 7 sites owned by major quasi-public or private entities encompassing approximately 56.7 acres of land. These sites include a youth sports complex, local parks and fairgrounds, and the Salvation Army. These facilities account for 14% of football/soccer fields in the County and 9% of softball/baseball fields. The County works closely with these entities to avoid, where possible, duplication of services and maximize recreational opportunities for citizens.

Table 4.9

Major Quasi-Public and Private Recreation and Amenities, 2021

Recreation activity and amenities	Total	Percentage of County Inventory
Softball / Baseball	8	9%
Football / Soccer	9	14%
Basketball	2	5%
Tennis	2	5%
Playground	3	5%
Pickleball	0	0%
Swimming / Pool	1	13%
Pavilions	3	10%
Disc Golf Holes	0	0%
Boat Ramps / Slips	0	0%
Total recreation activities and amenities	28	4%

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

Board of Education Recreation and Amenities

The Wicomico County Board of Education inventory consists of 26 sites with recreation parks and supporting amenities available for public use, as well as indoor programs operated, supported, or coordinated by the Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism. The geographic distribution of the sites covers an extensive area of the County, which enhances access to recreation opportunities within close proximity to the participants.

Collectively, the Board of Education inventory accounts for more than one-third of the County's total inventory of softball fields, football / soccer fields, basketball courts, and tennis courts. Additionally, the Board of Education has 20 playground sites accounting for 32% of the County's total inventory. See Table 4.10.

Table 4.10
Board of Education Recreation and Amenities

Recreation activity and amenities	Total	Percentage of Total Inventory
Softball / Baseball	23	25%
Football / Soccer	36	57%
Basketball	12	29%
Tennis	23	52%
Playground	20	32%
Pickleball	0	0%
Swimming / Pool	0	0%
Pavilions	1	3%
Disc Golf Holes	0	0%
Boat Ramps / Slips	0	0%
Total recreation activities and amenities	115	17%

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

Recreation, Parks, and Land – Trends and User Demand

The ability to assess need is a fundamental component of the comprehensive planning process. It is imperative to understand current conditions in order to develop recommendations and implementation strategies designed to meet the community's demand for recreation activities and amenities. For the purpose of this Plan update, demand for recreation and park activities is derived from a variety of sources, including, but not limited to the following: public engagement; Recreation and Parks Commission; Municipalities; Wicomico County Public Schools; and staff observations. Another important component of identifying future demand for increased recreation and parks facilities and amenities is the ability to measure current supply. As part of this planning initiative and in accordance with the State guidelines, the County utilized a proximity analysis approach, which is discussed in more detail later in this Chapter. Additional analysis was performed utilizing a new park equity tool provided by the State, which is also discussed later in the Chapter.

County Trends and User Demand

Survey

As part of the public participation process implemented to encourage citizen involvement throughout the planning process, the Wicomico County Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism launched an online survey to gauge end user interest about the recreation and parks system. Since the initiation of the online survey in January 2021, 832 responses were received. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the ability to offer in-person public meetings during the public feedback process was extremely limited; however, overall public participation in the survey was up by nearly 800% compared to the 2017 Plan. Given the importance of community engagement to ensure a community-oriented recreation and parks system, as well as to better understand evolving trends in programs and activities, the online survey will remain active. Additionally, RPT staff will identify opportunities to increase survey participation over the lifespan of this Plan. Community engagement efforts may include: advertising survey through email distribution lists and on social media outlets; administering survey at programs and events; as well as coordinating with the Board of Education and other organizations / partners comprising a portion of the recreation and parks system in Wicomico County.

Of the 832 responses, approximately 90 percent of the participants indicated a member of their household visited a County park in the past 12 months. About 69 percent visited a County park at least once a month or more.

Of those persons visiting County parks, the top 5 activities included:

- Walking, running/jogging, hiking, backpacking; (85%)
- Biking; (40%)
- Visiting playgrounds; (39%)
- Outdoor sports (i.e., baseball, softball, soccer, etc.); (39%) and
- Bird watching, wildlife viewing. (36%)

Other important metrics for evaluating the current recreation and parks system include: Does the system meet household needs? Participants were asked to identify types of facilities in need of expansion / improvement; future investments to expand or create new parks / facilities.

Noteworthy results of respondents include the following:

- The top 5 areas / facilities recommended to be added or improved in the County included:
 - Trail-based recreation (walking, running, hiking, biking) (61%);
 - Passive outdoor leisure areas (playgrounds, picnic areas, dog parks, natural areas) (44%);

- Water recreation (paddling, boating, fishing) (35%);
- Outdoor recreation (baseball fields, soccer fields, outdoor courts, etc.) (27%); and
- Outdoor aquatic areas (beaches) (23%).
- About 7% of respondents indicated a need for ADA-accessible facilities for themselves or a member of their household. Of those, 47% indicated satisfaction with ADA-accessible facilities in the County.
- 78% confirmed the importance of spending funds to acquire land for development and / or expansion of recreation facilities;

As of August 10, 2021, a total of 102 write-in comments or suggestions were included in addition to responses to survey questions. Similar to other findings, the most common write-in comments included:

- More trails (hiking / biking / walking / Rails to Trails);
- More pickleball courts (or a dedicated pickleball facility);
- More disc golf courses or disc golf holes; and
- More opportunities for public access to water (i.e. kayaking, boating, public swimming pool).

Multiple individuals also expressed a desire for an indoor public recreation center, a dedicated soccer and/or football complex, and increased opportunities for camping. In addition to the online survey, a public meeting was held in January 2022 with the Wicomico County Council to discuss various portions of the Plan.

The aforementioned results of the survey and public comment will be used to help guide policy and capital programming considerations designed to maintain and enhance the recreation and parks system; expand access to programs and facilities; and identify changes or emerging trends in recreation activities and amenities. The complete results of the survey can be reviewed in the Appendix A.

Recreation and Parks Commission

Local stakeholder feedback was also obtained, in part, through feedback received from the Recreation & Parks Commission. The Recreation and Parks Commission consists of 13 members, which includes representation from each planning area and whose members are appointed by the Wicomico County Executive and confirmed by the Wicomico County Council. In addition to providing specific feedback on the LPPRP, the Recreation & Parks Commission also plays a key role in developing the Department's strategic operations plan identifying user needs and deficiencies on an annual basis.

The Commission noted the County has a well-maintained and robust parks system with adequate coverage to serve the general recreation needs of residents. While overall feedback remains positive, several themes emerged identifying potential deficiencies in County recreation facilities and programs to be considered for future planning. These observations include:

- Keep an emphasis on maintenance of existing facilities to keep parks safe, functional, and attractive. This has become a theme in the last several Plan updates because many parks are showing signs of age having been built in the 1980's and 1990's;
- Limited public swimming pools and/or swimming areas. The Commission recognizes publicly owned and operated swimming pools may be cost-prohibitive for the County and public swimming needs may or are being addressed in other ways including:
 - Private pool access through the YMCA, Salvation Army, Civic Club pools;
 - Proximity of County residents to Ocean City and the beach;
 - Privately owned pools accessible to individuals, groups, and/or community developments; and
 - Access to rivers through boating or small watercraft;
- Need for a dedicated pickleball complex to serve County residents and host tournament events. The Commission supports an existing concept to construct a dedicated pickleball facility in the County.
- Limited indoor recreational facilities. The Department utilizes the Youth & Civic Center for a number of recreational activities, but available space and amenities are a limiting factor. In addition, the Department relies upon the Board of Education for indoor recreational space. The Department continues to work proactively with the Board of Education to reduce or eliminate fees through trade in order to maximize indoor recreation opportunities.

Municipalities and Wicomico County Public Schools

The RPT Department maintains close relationships with local municipalities, active recreation councils and the Wicomico County Public Schools in order to effectively deliver programs and services. Beginning in January 2021, RPT staff began engagement processes with the County's 8 municipalities in preparation of the Plan update. Public survey links were distributed to municipal leaders and feedback was sought on specific projects or priorities important to each jurisdiction. Where requested, in-person meetings were held with municipal leaders to discuss these concepts. Additional follow up efforts were initiated in June 2021 and draft copies of the Plan were distributed for feedback in the fall of 2021. Suggestions received were incorporated into the capital recommendations section and more formal feedback received from these groups is included in the Appendix B.

In addition to feedback sought for the Plan update, RPT engages these groups on a regular basis related to parks and recreation issues. For example, the Department:

- Includes municipalities in the County's annual Program Open Space process. Municipalities have the opportunity to submit project requests and the County has a longstanding history of completing Open Space projects in all parts of the County;
- Encourages municipalities to leverage Community Parks and Playground (CPP) funding to complete priority projects. This funding is not available to Counties but is a no-match resource for municipalities;
- Attends meetings for active recreation councils in order to stay engaged with local needs and to communicate County priorities and objectives; and
- Maintains a joint use agreement with the Board of Education outlining cooperative efforts to support the use of school facilities for enrichment activities for the citizens of Wicomico County.

These efforts, by nature, are ongoing which allows the County to maintain a pulse on community needs and to adapt quickly to meet those needs.

Staff Observations

The Department of Recreation, Parks & Tourism includes 57 full-time staff members, as well as hundreds of part-time and seasonal staff members. Several in-person meetings were held with staff members, who were asked for their perspectives based on their observations and regular interactions with members of the community. Comments include observations on strengths, opportunities, weaknesses and threats facing the Department:

- **Difficulty in hiring and retaining staff.** Changing economic realities, in part caused by the pandemic, have made it more difficult to fill critical positions required to deliver programs and services.
- **Changes in recreation landscape.** Public participation in community programs and activities continues to change. One example of this is youth sport participation. As more families participate in travel sports to meet their recreational needs, public recreational sports programs continue to decline. Not only does this impact participation levels, but it may require the County to re-evaluate its inventory of facilities to better match public demand.
- **Public desire for pickleball.** As pickleball gains in popularity, the County has recently installed lines on existing tennis courts to help meet this demand. At times, this creates shared-use conflict between pickleball and tennis players. Additionally, pickleball players have overcrowded neighborhood parks (Kilburnie Park, for example) which were not

designed to handle large volumes of cars or participants. A dedicated pickleball facility could relieve this pressure and create opportunities to meet both local demand and host local /regional tournaments.

- **An aging park system.** The age of the park system and the coinciding volume of event support and capital projects surpasses staff resources. This affects the ability of staff to deliver core services and may impact facility safety, function, and appearance.
- **Opportunity for new park development.** Staff members expressed optimism over opportunities for new development projects at Pirate's Wharf, Connelly Mill and the West Metro area; additionally, staff noted opportunities for key rehabilitation projects at Harmon Field, the Mason Dixon Complex, among other possible park improvement projects.
- **Outside competition.** For the past 15 years, the County has been active in hosting local, regional and national tournament events, generating millions of dollars annually in economic impact in the County and region. This multi-billion industry grows more competitive each year, forcing the County to compete with more wealthy jurisdictions to host events.
- **Shoreline restoration.** Exposure of breaches at Roaring Point and Cove Road beaches could result in loss of beach access if unaddressed.
- **Constrained tax support.** A growing population which cannot afford program & service fees to cover the costs makes it more challenging to meet needs, particularly in economically distressed portions of the County.
- **Absence of a centrally located indoor recreational facility.** For years, the County has utilized Board of Education facilities to provide indoor recreation programming. While this has some advantages, it is not sustainable to meet the demand of existing and future end users of indoor recreation facilities.
- **Low-lying areas susceptible to flooding.** The County has many low-lying areas along waterfront properties, some of which are park properties. As flooding events increase in severity, this could threaten the future of these parks.
- **Lack of lighted rectangular fields.** While the total number of rectangular fields accessible to the public is expected to be more than sufficient to meet existing needs, the lack of lighted rectangular fields limits public programming, particularly in the fall months when daylight hours are shortened.

State Trends and User Demand

In addition to a local perspective about a community's preference for specific recreation and parks activities and amenities, it's equally important to understand regional trends. Often times, public services such as schools, water and sewer, fire, and EMS are limited or constrained to a

jurisdiction; however, recreation and parks are utilized by both residents and visitors. As such, these activities and amenities serve as a vehicle of economic development, as well as an asset to promote public health and wellbeing.

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources utilized a robust public participation process to encourage citizen involvement during the update of Maryland's Land Preservation and Recreation Plan. The first phase of the Plan update consisted of information gathering, which included public input. A phone survey and public open link survey of 2,800 and 2,407 Marylanders, respectively, was conducted as part of the statewide outdoor recreation survey.

Statewide, the respondents of each survey indicated the following most popular outdoor recreation activities:

- Walking (75%);
- Hiking (75%);
- Biking (41.7%);
- Playgrounds / Public Parks (41.7%);
- Sports Fields / Team Sports (41.7%); and
- Running / Jogging (41.7%).

Respondents to the State survey also indicated their top priorities for future recreation needs:

- Trails (75%);
- Indoor Facilities, Including Pools (50%);
- Outdoor Water Recreation Department/Repair (33.3%);
- Track/Field/Development/Repair (33.3%); and
- Open-Natural-Wildlife Areas/Public Garden (16.7%).

Generally speaking, these results are very similar to public survey responses collected in national surveys, as well as the County survey.

(Source: https://dnr.maryland.gov/land/Documents/LPRP_2019-2023/2019-2023_Maryland-LPRP.pdf)

Recreation, Parks, and Land – Needs Assessment

Proximity Analysis

The methodology for completing the Proximity Analysis was based on Maryland's 2022 *Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan Guidelines* and information contained in the Appendix C. The recreational facilities available for public use in Wicomico County by type are listed in Table 4.4 and illustrated on Map 4.1a Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan. For the proximity

analysis, private / membership facilities and facilities restricted to residency criteria have been omitted from the assessment.

The proximity analysis focuses on the following specific types of recreation amenities: picnic and pavilion areas; athletic fields, aquatic (pools and beach facilities); water access areas and trails; and bikeways. Given the suburban / rural nature of the County, a five-mile radius for service areas was used for the rural areas and a half mile radius for service areas in the Salisbury/Fruitland metro area for this analysis. The half mile radius is depicted on the Proximity Analysis Map 4.1ai and Maps 4.1a-e demonstrate that multiple facilities within the densely populated areas of the County are located within overlapping five (5) mile radius service areas. County residents have adequate and reasonable access to amenities as depicted in the Proximity Analysis.

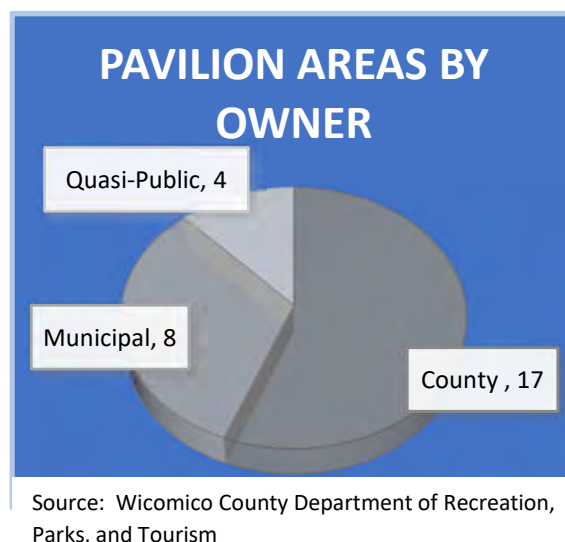
It is important to note, there are other sites (private and membership restricted) not contained in the proximity analysis; however, these facilities also serve the recreation needs of Wicomico County residents. These include facilities restricted to private membership fees or serving various residential communities. Therefore, the proximity analysis uses and depicts only facilities open to the public or having a daily user fee and does not represent the full inventory of recreation amenities serving County residents.

Wicomico County Parks and Recreation Areas

Map 4.1a, Wicomico County Recreation and Parks System 2022 / Proximity Analysis – All Parks, depicts the proximity coverage of the total existing parks and recreation facility system. The Metro Core region (Salisbury, Delmar, Fruitland, and portions of the intensely developed areas in the unincorporated portion of the County) includes extensive recreation opportunities within five (5) mile radius. The facilities include parks of all service area sizes (i.e., countywide, citywide, community, and neighborhood-serving), as well as community school recreation areas. Also, several recreation areas provide picnic and picnic pavilion facilities, numerous aquatic facilities and water access points, trails and pathways, parks, and other related recreation opportunities. In summary and as depicted on Map 4.1a, the proximity analysis resulted in the entire Wicomico County area being served by the location of the existing parks and recreation system.

Picnic and Pavilion Amenities

Map 4.1b, Wicomico County Recreation and Parks System 2022 / Proximity Analysis - Picnic and Pavilion Amenities, depicts the proximity coverage of the existing system for pavilion areas that can accommodate groups of people. Users have access to 25 separate park and recreation areas with pavilion facilities. Overall, the recreation and park inventory consist of 29 pavilions available for public use without requiring membership and residency. The facilities serve all of the population of Wicomico County.



A small rural area along the Nanticoke River south of Mardela Springs and west of Quantico was identified as a gap in coverage of picnic facilities and / or pavilions within a five-mile radius; however, the area is comprised of tidal wetlands and does not have any residential structures.

Athletic Fields and Courts

Map 4.1c, Wicomico County Recreation & Parks System 2022 / Proximity Analysis – Athletic Fields & Courts illustrates the five-mile proximity analysis for athletic fields and courts for sports such as baseball, softball, soccer, basketball, tennis and pickleball. The athletic field and court system consist of over 250 amenities for residents throughout the County centered in more populated areas. The softball and baseball fields play host to various regional tournaments throughout the year.

The gaps in the proximity analysis for athletic fields and courts are located in unpopulated or sparsely populated areas in the western, southwestern, and southeastern parts of the County. The western gap is a small marshy area located along the Nanticoke River and has a tiny population. The southwestern gap includes the rural village of Whitehaven and along Wicomico Creek bordering Somerset County. Finally, the southeastern gap is the largest relative to the other two but this area is rural and sparsely populated with a majority of the land under preservation or conservation easements. Residents of the southwestern and southeastern gaps may also have reasonable access to athletic amenities in neighboring counties.

Water Access Areas

Map 4.1d, Wicomico County Recreation & Parks System 2022 / Proximity Analysis – Water Access, shows the five-mile proximity analysis of water access. There are 14 public access areas available to the population of Wicomico County, including the Salisbury metropolitan area and two State-

operated water access areas. Aquatic facilities were not included in the proximity analysis due to there being only one located at the Salvation Army West Salisbury Youth Club.

There are four areas within Wicomico County that lack water access facilities within a five (5) mile radius of residents:

- 1) The area north of Pittsville and Willards;
- 2) A small rural area west of Snow Hill Road along the southern boundary of Wicomico County;
- 3) A tiny rural area north of Hebron on the border with Delaware; and
- 4) An undeveloped tidal wetland area southwest of Mardela Springs along the Nanticoke River.

Given the lack of navigable water bodies in the eastern part of the county that includes the areas west of Snow Hill Road and north of Willards and Pittsville there is limited opportunity to expand water access within these areas of Wicomico County. The area north of Hebron is barely outside the 5-mile radius. Lastly, the area southwest of Mardela Springs is largely undeveloped tidal wetlands. The proximity analysis gaps one through three listed above are located at the boundaries of the County limits and could potentially offer water access available in adjacent counties. Overall, residents enjoy an abundance of navigable waterways due to the numerous public access areas countywide. The County will continue to maintain existing access and explore opportunities to enhance water access as a function of development review or infrastructure adjacent to water ways.

Except for the gaps listed above water access is plentiful in Wicomico County. The Nanticoke and Cedar Hill Harbors and Salisbury Marina provide access for boaters and 294 slips available for rent, most with water and electric hookups. Cedar Hill Marina is a modern, well equipped docking facility with slips ranging from 8 to 14 feet in length. Water access is also available at 11-boat ramps situated around the County; including Cedar Hill Park, Johnson Pond, Mardela, Nanticoke Park, Nanticoke River Wildlife Management Area, Riverside Park, Sharptown, Tyaskin, and Wetipquin. Riverside Park boat ramp has been upgraded with a floating dock to accommodate residents with disabilities. A soft launch pier is a recent addition to Riverwalk Park allowing access to the East Prong of the Wicomico River. Swimming areas are accessible along the 2.44-miles of beachfronts at Cherry Beach, Roaring Point, Nanticoke Park, and Cove Road. See table 4.11.

Table 4.11
Aquatic and Water Access Service Areas, 2021

Park Type	Swimming/ Pool	Beach (Miles)	Boat Ramps	Boat Slips	Canoeing / Kayaking	Fishing
State and The Nature Conservancy	0	0	5	0	5	0
County	6	2.14	8	208	17	18

Municipal	1	0.30	3	86	7	7
Board of Education	0	0	0	0	0	0
Quasi-Public Area (Daily Fee)	1	0	0	0	0	0
Total Water Access Areas	8	2.44	16	294	29	25

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

Trails

Map 4.1e, Proximity Analysis – Bike, Water, and Walking Trails, shows the proximity coverage of the trails and bikeways. Trails and bikeways are found almost throughout Wicomico County as part of the regional road network and designated bikeways. Since cycling is permitted on roadways within incorporated jurisdictions, County, and the majority of State facilities, there are no gaps in coverage.

Wicomico County has a robust system of walking trails for pedestrian enjoyment. Pemberton Historical Park, Henry S. Parker Athletic Complex, City of Salisbury Park, Winterplace Park, and a plethora of other regional and linear parks afford pedestrians an opportunity to hike in a safe, accessible and natural environment. As the County creates or expands existing parks, opportunities to increase pedestrian activities should be evaluated and implemented. Moreover, prioritization should be given to programming for connections between the aforementioned hubs and expansion at existing facilities.

The Wicomico and Nanticoke watersheds provide residents with an abundance of water trail options on the many creeks and tributaries for activities like kayaking, paddleboarding and fishing. Many of these trails are not accessible by larger vessels providing a safe, low wake environment for these activities. Wetipquin Creek, Mardela Boat Ramp, Riverwalk Park, and Riverside Boat Ramp are just a few of the locations in the County that provide access points for soft launch activities.

Wicomico County has a path and bikeway plan to serve as a guide for the designation of future paths and bikeways. To promote cycling opportunities countywide, 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 City of Salisbury has undertaken various planning efforts since 2017 to implement their Bicycle Network Plan. These efforts include the development of a Rail Trail Master Plan with Phase 1 currently being implemented and the adoption of a Vision Zero Action Plan to reduce pedestrian deaths and increase safety. The City continues to make bicycle improvements as part of paving projects and road diets.

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 significant safety concerns for motorists and cyclist.

The Department should continue to work with stakeholder groups familiar with bicycling/hiking in the County, such as the Salisbury-Wicomico Metropolitan Planning Organization, Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee, 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.

Cities of Salisbury and Fruitland Parks and Recreation Service Areas

Map 4.1ai, Wicomico County Recreation and Parks System 2022 / Proximity Analysis – Salisbury/Fruitland Metropolitan Area, depicts the proximity coverage of the total existing parks and recreation facility system located within or adjacent to the corporate limits of the cities of Salisbury and Fruitland. These areas represent the most intensely developed and populated area within Wicomico County. As such, it is important to understand the extent of the parks and recreation amenities to identify any gaps in coverage and potential locations for future land acquisition in support of expanding the existing system.

Consistent with the proximity analysis methodology used to conduct the overall countywide geospatial assessment, the evaluation for the City of Salisbury includes parks of all service area sizes and types (i.e. countywide, citywide, community, and neighborhood-serving), as well as community school recreation areas. The only differentiating factor was the radius / buffer distance for each location. Given the rural nature of the majority of Wicomico County a five-mile buffer around each park and recreation facility was utilized; whereas, the proximity analysis

buffer around each facility adjacent to or contained within the two cities was reduced to half mile.

As depicted on Map 4.1ai, the cities of Salisbury and Fruitland benefit from extensive coverage of the existing parks and recreation system. With exception of non-residentially zoned areas and a segment of undeveloped areas in the northeast sector of the corporate boundary, the coverage area demonstrates the continued investment and commitment to provide quality parks and recreational amenities for residents and visitors to the region.

Park Equity Tool Analysis

The Maryland Park Equity Mapper (“Mapper”) was used to identify the County’s equity within the Parks and Recreation system. The Mapper is an online application created by the State to provide Maryland counties with an analysis of their current park, recreation, and green space amenities. The analysis directly relates each jurisdiction’s demographics, geography, and environmental health. The overall goal of the Mapper is to identify where disparities are and where future growth of the Parks network would most benefit the surrounding communities. This tool was created with county/municipal planners and Parks and Recreation staff in mind to assist them in making informed decisions for their counties. The Mapper utilized seven different factors to identify where underserved communities exist and they are:

- Distance to public park space;
- Concentration of children under 17;
- Concentration of adults over 65;
- Concentration of low-income populations;
- Concentration of non-white populations;
- Population density; and
- Distance to public transportation.

The park equity analysis for Wicomico County confirms that a majority of the higher populated census block groups have a medium to high park equity score, specifically around the Salisbury Metropolitan Area. See Map 4.2. The County as a whole has a Park Equity score in the medium-low equity range. The analysis identified that there are deficiencies in census block groups in the southwest and northeast regions of the county. These portions of the county are largely zoned for agricultural use but also contain the small rural communities Whitehaven, Allen, Quantico, Parsonsburg, Pittsville, and Willards. The existing parks in the southwest portion of the county mainly consist of boat ramps and fishing sites limiting the types of activities citizens have access to near their homes. The only areas for recreation in a public space for the northeast portion of the county are in the Towns of Pittsville and Willards.

While the Mapper was useful in identifying potential equity discrepancies throughout the County, there are some gaps in the data used by the tool. An in-house comparison between the 2017 Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan park inventory and the parks identified on the Mapper, 82 parks were excluded. With the addition of the County's full park inventory, many of the urban census blocks identified as having low equity in and around the City of Salisbury would see a significant increase in equity. An accurate inventory of the County's Parks and Recreation system would ensure future planning improves the equity score. The County will continue sharing GIS data in an effort to reduce the disparities and enhance the State mapping tools.

Goals and Objectives

Progress Toward Meeting 2017 LPPRP Goals

From a planning and capital programming perspective, a LPPRP serves as a policy document directing County investment considerations for maintaining, enhancing, and development of park and recreational activities. Therefore, it is imperative to evaluate the progress of implementation to gauge the level of achievement, as well as guide the development of this update. The following implementation efforts are occurring or have been completed since the previous LPPRP update:

Land Acquisition

Since the 2017 Plan update, two properties were acquired to enhance the County's inventory of facilities:

- Approximately 3 acres were purchased at the existing Mason Dixon Complex in Delmar. The new acres are adjacent to the County-owned park and provides flexibility for potential future improvements at the site. A master planning effort should take place at the park to determine best usage of the new acreage and possible reorientation of the park. As noted in Appendix B, a possibility exists to develop mutually beneficial solutions for parking, which could help park attendees and address needs for parking at Delmar Elementary School, located across the street from the lands acquired.
- Approximately 234 acres were donated to the County, known as the "Connelly Mill" property. The property sits adjacent to the north of the Henry S. Parker Athletic Complex in Salisbury and is also adjacent to the City of Salisbury's Naylor Mill Forest which has existing public walking and biking trails. With its unique natural features (including woods and various elevations) and its proximity to the County's premiere athletic complex, the property represents a future opportunity to service various recreational needs identified in public survey responses outlined in the Plan.

Appendix D, titled “Wicomico County Acquisition Goals”, includes two tables that summarize the County’s progress toward 2017 goals and also includes a listing of 2022 acquisition goals.

Facility Construction, Maintenance, and Expansion

- Since the adoption of the 2017 Plan, a total of 35 recreation-based construction, maintenance and expansion projects have been completed in Wicomico County totaling approximately \$16.4 million.
- Thirteen of these projects were specifically identified in the 2017 LPPRP including expansion of the Henry S. Parker Athletic Complex, roof replacement at Arthur W. Perdue Stadium, completion of a master plan at Pirate’s Wharf, restoration projects at Cedar Hill Marina including bulkhead and restroom improvements, among other projects. Additional project highlights include:
 - Completed \$3.2M in improvements at the Henry S. Parker Athletic Complex. The overall project included installation of new synthetic turf fields, field lights, new dugouts and other park amenities.
 - Completed \$4.4M in improvements at Arthur W. Perdue Stadium including structural improvements, a new flat roof, construction of a 360 deck, new video board and scoreboard, new field lights, new seats, among other additions.
 - Completed a park master plan and secured over \$2M for future park development at Pirate’s Wharf.
 - Completed a \$1.1M project to provide recreational opportunities for individuals with physical or mental disabilities. The initiative, known as “Project 7 ½”, included construction of an adaptive baseball field and the addition of the County’s first all-inclusive playground and sensory trail. The facilities opened for play in the spring of 2021.
 - Completed over \$500k in restoration improvements at Cedar Hill Marina including bulkhead replacement and renovation of the bathhouse.
 - Completed \$4.8M in facility improvements at the Wicomico Civic Center, which is the County’s largest indoor gathering space and home of multiple recreation programs.
 - Installed 7 new playgrounds totaling over \$300,000.
 - Resurfaced 11 courts in the County park system totaling over \$600,000.
 - Completed replacement of the Riverside Boat ramp in Salisbury.
 - Replaced the parking lots at Schumaker Park in Salisbury.

- Removal of approximately 10 acres of Wisteria (invasive species) at Pemberton Park budgeted funding to support Staff time allocated to countywide weed removal efforts and activities.

Programs

- With the completion of “Project 7 ½”, the County is able to serve as the regional host of Challenger Little League, which is a division of Little League for individuals with physical or mental disabilities. In the process, the County forged other partnerships that will increase recreational opportunities for those with special needs. This local effort is part of a growing national trend of considering issues of equity and inclusivity when designing playgrounds.

Source: <https://www.nrpa.org/blog/gametimes-2021-park-and-playground-trends/>

- The County initiated a youth basketball program in 2018 for children in grades k-8. The program started with 230 participants and has since grown to 295 participants in 2020.
- In cooperation with the Board of Education and multiple community nonprofit organizations, the Department established a “Fresh Start: Back to School” program which provides students with school supplies, access to community resources and free haircuts in preparation for each school year. The first event was held in 2018 and included over 3,000 participants.
- In 2018, the County started a “Good Sports Awards” event which included presentation of sportsmanship awards to all youth sports organizations in the County (both public and private). The event now includes 26 different youth sports organizations and is a galvanizing event for the community to promote the positive aspects of sport participation.

The Department forged new partnerships with local organizations to offer public programming. These events include: partnership with the Farm & Home Show for the Wicomico County Fair; partnership with Algonquin Ultras for the popular Pemberton 24 running event; among other local partnerships.

Recreational Land Analysis – Acreage Goal

For years, the County has utilized an established land goal of 30.0 acres of local recreation acreage for every 1,000 county residents (shown as “ac/000”). While total Countywide acreage dedicated to recreation and parks is still part of the acreage goal (See Table 4.13 below), the County recognizes that this one metric may not fully capture the extent to which these facilities are meeting the needs of residents. To help determine a more accurate assessment, the following questions were considered:

- How are park properties and amenities distributed throughout the County in relation to population centers?
- How accessible are facilities and amenities?
- To what extent are needs being met or unmet?

The most useful tool currently available to analyze these questions is the aforementioned Proximity Analysis, outlined above and included in Maps 4.1a through 4.1e.

As noted in the Proximity Analysis section, Map 4.1a shows the proximity coverage of the total existing parks and recreation facility system in Wicomico County. With a five-mile radius in the unincorporated portions of the County (see Maps 4.1a through 4.1e) and a 0.5-mile radius within incorporated areas (see Map 4.1ai), the series of maps illustrate how residents throughout the County have reasonable drive or walking access to a variety of facility types and recreational activities.

As discussed, the small gaps that do exist are not in populated areas or portions of the County that can be developed at this time. **Since the County meets both its total acreage goal and has adequate geographic distribution of facilities, the County maintains that it has met its established acreage goal.**

The County affirms the State LPRP which notes that increasing “close-to-home opportunities to get outdoors and continuing to improve equity in access to parks and nature remains important.”

Source: https://dnr.maryland.gov/land/Documents/LPRP_2019-2023/2019-2023_Maryland-LPRP.pdf

Therefore, though its acreage goal has been met, the County will continue to utilize public surveys and other stakeholder feedback and seek to increase access to park facilities for all residents of the County. These priorities will be further outlined in the implementation and capital programming sections later in this chapter.

The County will more closely examine the Park Equity tool in future plans as it continues to re-assess acreage needs. As noted in the Park Equity analysis above, gaps in data limit the accuracy and effectiveness of the assessment at this time.

Table 4.13
Recreation Land Classification and Need Analysis

Area	Size (Acres)	Eligible Acres per 000
	Eligible	(2020 population: 104,200)
<i>State Recreation Land</i> (Appendix C)		
Wicomico State Forest	1,183.3	11.3
Chesapeake Forest	16,997.97	163.1
Subtotal, State Recreation Land	18,181.27	174.4 (use maximum 15.0)
<i>County Parks</i>	1,773.09	17.0
Municipal Parks	347.44	3.33
Quasi-Public / Board of Education Parks		
Quasi-Public	56.7	0.54
Board of Education	556.28	5.34
Subtotal, Local Recreation Land	2,733.51	
<i>Local Resource Land</i>	0.0	0.0
TOTAL, Public Recreation Land	20,914.78	41.21

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

Furthermore, the County will continue to 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 or part, of its annual appropriation for land acquisition in accordance with POS guidelines.

Future Goals and Objectives

In addition to its acreage goal, the County has identified overall goals and objectives in this Plan in order to maintain the Wicomico County's excellence in leisure services, which is a tradition upheld over the 75-year history of the Parks & Recreation Department. The four core goals and their associated objectives of the 2022 *Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan*, presented below, reflect the Department's emphasis on providing an outstanding and sustainable recreation parks system which is comparable to any mid-size county in the country.

Goal 1: Increase investment in Recreation & Parks facilities and programs to better fulfill the Department's mission of improving quality of life.

- Continue to use various methods of fundraising, financing, and cost avoidance to support parks and recreation.
- Acquire land for park development where opportunities are available and which will enhance the overall recreational system.
- Pursue federal, State, and local funding opportunities to implement capital improvement considerations contained within this Plan (or future opportunities that may present themselves).
- Encourage municipalities to access funding sources to support their parks and recreation facilities. An example of this is the Community Parks and Playground grant program.
- Seek annual funding from the Maryland's Waterway Improvement Funds to address ongoing restoration of County marinas and boat ramps.
- As new facilities come on-line, continue annual investment necessary to support maintenance and operations of new and existing facilities/programs.

Goal 2: Perpetuate practices to make sure facilities within the Department remain safe, functional, accessible and attractive.

- Emphasize maintenance and improvement of existing parks and make maximum use of currently owned land and developed facilities.
- Work 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.
- Continue to protect / conserve a network of greenways, as well as natural areas and resources.
- 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.
- Maintain and promote public access to waterways, including improvement of ADA accessibility at County boat ramps and marinas.
- Provide safe cycling and walking / hiking opportunities throughout the County and seek opportunities to increase trail connectivity where feasible (via land and water).

Goal 3: Provide a wide variety of public recreation programs which are inclusive to all members of the community and promote healthy, active lifestyles.

- 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.
- Leverage local partnerships (including public and private partnerships) in order to offer more consistent programming for seniors and other historically under-served segments of the population.
- Continue to offer programs for those with physical or mental disabilities by leveraging the recently constructed Field 7 ½ and other facilities designed for this purpose.
- Pursue partnerships with local universities and/or environmental groups to provide more environmental/educational programming at County parks. An opportunity to increase programming will be presented with the new development at Pirate’s Wharf, among other facilities.

Goal 4: Develop marketing vision and strategy for the Department to improve the County’s overall image and to increase participation in programs and activities.

- Evaluate the Department’s brand and image and consider ways to more effectively promote the Department and its activities.
- Continue to promote passive and active parks, the Youth & Civic Center and tourism signature events to support the Department’s mission of enhancing “quality of life” for residents. Utilize all available forms of advertising within budgeted means.
- 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.
- Explore usage of an outside consultant to guide marketing vision and strategy related to tourism marketing efforts. Tourism efforts in the County are largely connected to park and recreation facilities.

State of Maryland

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.

All four County goals listed above, including the Department's overall mission of "enhancing the quality of life for Wicomico County residents..." complement statewide goals for recreation and parks. As the County continues to implement its strategic objectives over the next 5 years, State goals will be mutually advanced. For example:

- County goal 1 (increased park investment) is clearly reflected in State goal 3: "Use State investment in parks, recreation and open space to complement...broader goals and objectives of local comprehensive / master plans." This is accomplished, in part, through a number of State funding sources; most notably Program Open Space. State Program Open Space represents a large percentage of the County's annual capital investment in parks and recreation and has been a lifeline to keep parks safe, functional, accessible and attractive through the years. As an example, the new development at Pirate's Wharf is being funded through multiple federal, state and local sources (including Program Open Space). In addition to providing needed funds for development projects, Program Open Space also helps accomplish state goal 6 of "protecting recreational open space..." through POS acquisition funds which provide permanent protection for recreation lands. As noted in the acreage goal section, the County will continue to seek opportunities for acquisitions which will complement the existing park system (State goals 4 and 5).
- County goals 2 and 3 (access to public facilities and programs) are clearly reflected in state goal 1: "Make a variety of quality recreational environments and opportunities readily accessible..."; and state goal 2: "Recognize and strategically use parks and recreation facilities as amenities to make communities...more desirable places to live, work, play and visit." As noted, these State goals tie directly to the Department's mission. To accomplish the mission, the County will continue to leverage public and private partnerships, including with the State of Maryland. The County will also place an emphasis on inclusivity while planning for future facilities and programs.
- While County goal 4 (marketing vision and strategy) is not explicitly mentioned in the State goals, it does serve as a complement to State goal 2 in that more effective marketing promotes awareness and community involvement which creates "more desirable places

to live...” Effective marketing also indirectly touches on State goal 1 of creating opportunities which are “readily accessible”; Keeping the public informed about facilities and programs is paramount when it comes to increasing levels of participation and engagement. Additionally, the State LPRP noted that “the public wants to be better informed about outdoor recreation opportunities that do exist...”

Source: https://dnr.maryland.gov/land/Documents/LPRP_2019-2023/2019-2023_Maryland-LPRP.pdf

National

The County and the Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism and applicable partners will continue efforts to maintain and expand recreational activities and programs for persons of all abilities and ages consistent with the following three pillars of the National Recreation and Parks Association:

- Improved health and wellness through parks and recreation – Areas of focus, include, but not limited to ensuring all people are afforded safe access to quality park and recreation facilities and programs; promoting healthy eating and physical activity standards; expanding access to evidence-based health prevention programs; connecting parks and the health of the community; and supporting programs and policies eliminating health disparities:
- Protecting open space, connecting people to nature, and engaging communities in conservation practices – Promoting sustainable conservation and stewardship practices to address effects of climate change, preserving wildlife, educational programs geared towards the next generation of stewards to provide tools necessary to implement sustainable best management practices; and supporting programs and policies encouraging conservation: and
- Social equity – Ensuring all persons have safe access to park and recreational facilities and programs.

Implementing Programs

In order to fulfill its mission and to accomplish the aforementioned goals and objectives, the Department relies on a number of internal and external funding sources. The County tax appropriation is the most foundational funding source to assist with annual operating and overhead expenses. The Department also leverages, where appropriate, tourism reserve funds generated by hotel room taxes, in order to support facility improvement projects that will generate increased visitations to the County. Besides County funding, the County relies heavily on federal and state grants to support many of the capital projects required to update existing facilities and to develop new facilities. The two most consistent funding sources are State

Program Open Space and State Waterway Improvement funds. Both of these sources are utilized on a regular basis by Wicomico County in order to advance capital priorities related to Recreation & Parks. Additionally, the County has recently received and/or applied for federal funds through the Land Water Conservation Fund (“LWCF”), Maryland Heritage Areas Authority Capital Grant (“MHAA”), Recreation Trails Grant, among other federal and state grant opportunities. The Pirate’s Wharf park development is the most recent example of this as funding came from LWCF, Program Open Space, Waterway Improvement, MHAA Capital Grant, among other local sources.

While these sources help advance capital priorities, the Department must also meet its annual operating responsibilities through creative revenue generation and cost avoidance with its facilities, programs and events. As noted in previous sections, leveraging partnerships with state and local organizations is one of the methods employed by the Department to assist in accomplishing its mission.

In addition to funding considerations, the County has also included policy & program recommendations which 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.

Policy and Program Recommendations

Policy and program recommendations included in the Plan were derived from staff and stakeholder feedback and take a number of considerations into account. These considerations include:

1. Existing inventory of park facilities, amenities, programs and open space;
2. The County’s needs as identified by user demand feedback and analysis; and
3. Evaluation of the County’s current and anticipated resources to be able to maintain existing facilities and/or to possibly increase the number of facilities and programs to deliver services.

Recreation and Park System

RP-1: Work with DNR, MDP, MDOT, and local agencies/stakeholders to develop trail systems within the County and increase connectivity to State-owned lands.

Examples of potential actions include:

- Connecting State-owned forested parcels to the County trail network, including equestrian trails in the Chesapeake Forest;
- Developing public access to waterways through state lands;

- Using the new boat ramp/soft launch area at Pirate's Wharf as a hub to connect to various points on the west side of the Wicomico River;
- Linking state lands with public trails for biking, photography, birding and other recreational opportunities; and
- Coordinating with federal, state, and local government agencies, as well as non-governmental organizations to identify potential resources to plan and implement trail projects.

RP-2: Develop recreational programming and leisure opportunities for citizens and tourists to enjoy low impact eco-tourism activities such as hiking, biking, equestrian, and non-motorized water sports.

Examples of potential actions include:

- Developing a countywide master plan to identify existing and potential new soft launch sites and determining how these locations can connect to one another;
- Developing trail guides and features that explore and enhance the natural and historic features of the County;
- Connecting, by water and over land, interesting sites to one another and to major population and activity centers in the County; and
- Working with stakeholders and policy makers to identify existing & future bike routes and developing methods to protect and enhance routes for both recreational and utility cyclists.

RP-3: Coordinate with developers to identify opportunities to establish pedestrian/bicycle paths consistent with locally adopted plans or studies.

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 priority for Wicomico County.

Consideration should be given to implement the following recommendations:

- 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; and
- Evaluate the potential of incorporating bike lanes and / or signage when resurfacing roadways. Also, if possible, the bike lanes should connect to existing bike lanes to enhance the local bike network.

RP-4: Ensure County trails are compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (“ADA”).

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

RP-5: 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 2017 and 2022 Plans, playground safety issues become even more important as the county works to make the best, continued use of many current facilities.

RP-6: 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. Deferred replacement and maintenance practices inevitably lead to increased cost and unreliability. 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.

RP-7: Work collaboratively with the Board of Education to make public facilities reasonably available and affordable for programming needs.

The Board of Education and the Wicomico County Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism serve the same market: the citizens of Wicomico County. The general public will benefit from programs offered by either organization. Since the County does not operate an exclusive indoor recreation space, the two agencies should continue to work together to make facilities available for joint usage and to eliminate, or at least minimize, the cost of hosting public programs at both Board of Education and County-owned facilities. This may include the trading of space at Board of Education facilities for recreation programs and Department facilities (including the Youth & Civic Center) for Board of Education functions.

RP-8: Continue to bring visitors and dollars into the County by leveraging the County's outstanding recreation and parks system, Board of Education facilities, and facilities operated by private entities.

The County should continue to promote and 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 maintained, 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 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;
 - Water trails for non-motorized water sports such as kayaking and canoeing;
 - Natural and heritage areas;
 - Abundant flat land, particularly for low-impact outdoor fitness programs which appeal to the senior population;

RP-9 Continue to strengthen municipal, recreation council & stakeholder relationships to support programs and park operations.

Municipalities and local recreation councils are key contributors 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 engage municipalities and active recreation councils, supporting and encouraging efforts to help meet leisure needs.

RP-10: Continue to review the County fee structure for possible modifications to increase participation.

The fiscal challenges caused by increasing costs to operate programs, including minimum wage increases, makes it difficult to keep programs affordable. Many residents face hardship to afford the program fees. The recreation staff should continue to monitor the fee structure for all programs and seek creative means to maintain or lower them to gain participation.

RP-11: Continue to support the endowment to fund 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 helped to establish 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-12: In conjunction with local partners, 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-13: Coordinate with State and local governments to identify alternative methods to quantify user demands, needs, and experiences.

The County has a wide range of recreational facility types, some of which are in rural locations and prove more difficult to track in terms of user demand. The County is actively engaged with public recreation councils, Board of Education, municipalities, and the Recreation Commission who provide valuable feedback on facilities and levels of service. The County will continue to explore industry practices and work with DNR, local governments, and non-governmental organizations to develop user metrics in order to enhance analysis specific to facility types and planning areas.

Agricultural Preservation

A-1: 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-2: 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. Wicomico County should continue to assist landowners to help promote land preservation as a financially viable alternative to development.

A-3: Continue preservation efforts designed to achieve the preservation goals contained in this Plan.

A-4: Obtain Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation certification for the County Land Preservation Program.

Natural Resource Conservation

N-1: Preserve open space and improve the quality of the Chesapeake Bay tributaries.

The County should continue efforts to preserve open space, as a function of subdivision regulations and purchase of conservation easements from voluntary landowners. Additionally, continue implementation of stormwater retrofit practices associated with the Chesapeake Bay Pollution Diet. To meet State-mandated nutrient targets for the Wicomico, the County should continue to explore alternatives to connect existing residential areas with failing septic systems to waste water treatment plants.

N-2: Continue discussions 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.

N-3: 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-4: 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 Development—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-5: 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-6: 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 research potential compensation arrangements. Allowing flexibility in compensation will offer the best chance for the County to obtain each easement.

N-7: Seek statewide Program Open Space funding to acquire lands within targeted high priority Green Infrastructure hubs and corridors.

The 2022 *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.

County Priorities and Capital Improvement Plan

The 2022 *Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan* seeks to integrate the user demand analysis to translate into capital programming recommendations, which address needs where and when practicable and economically feasible. Capital recommendations are included in more detail below.

The County will continue to emphasize rehabilitation and maintenance of existing facilities in an effort to keep facilities safe, functional, accessible and attractive. As noted, the County will continue its longstanding practice of remaining opportunistic with acquisition and/or development projects which meet current needs or address emerging future needs and will need to balance its capacity to maintain such facilities with available resources.

Recreation, Parks, and Land – Plan

The 2022 *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 section of the Plan provides the guidance, in the form of capital improvements to pursue the goals of increased land preservation and an enhanced recreation system in Wicomico County.

This final section is organized as follows:

- The **County Perspective** includes the Plan map and a brief 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;
- **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 2022 *Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan* (Maps 4.1 and 5.1) illustrate 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.

Capital Priorities

The 2022 *Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan* includes specific capital recommendations outlined by planning areas. Capital priorities are a result of feedback gleaned from stakeholder interviews and noted deficiencies identified in earlier in this Chapter and are closely connected to policy recommendations included above.

The County strives to continue developing parklands to meet future needs of its citizens and will remain opportunistic and flexible to adapt to changing market conditions. Furthermore, the County is mindful that new capital improvements must also be balanced with the County's capacity to maintain such facilities at its current standards.

Top capital priorities are as follows:

1. Maintenance of existing facilities to make parks safe, functional, accessible and attractive;
2. Complete new development project at Pirate's Wharf in order to make the site accessible to the public; a high priority is providing public water access on the Wicomico River;
3. Complete master planning processes and associated development projects for Connelly Mill, the West Metro Core and the Mason Dixon Complex;
4. Continue to modernize and improve the Wicomico Civic Center, the County's main public gathering venue which also serves as a site for tourism events and many indoor recreation programs.
5. Through rehabilitation of existing facilities or above-mentioned developments, address recreation deficiencies noted in public surveys and other stakeholder feedback. Examples include development of a dedicated pickleball complex, increased access/connectivity to public trail systems, additional opportunities to play disc golf, among other potential improvements.

¹ Maps 4.1 and 5.1 illustrate the plan elements for the entire County. Portions of the plan map, each at a larger and more readable scale

6. Complete waterway restoration projects including but not limited to: bulkhead restoration at Cedar Hill; Countywide boat ramp replacements where needed; shoreline restoration projects at Roaring Point and Cove Road; and dredging projects at both harbors.
7. Identify opportunities to improve access to facilities and programs in underserved areas of the community (as initially identified in the Park Equity Analysis). This could include opportunities for acquisition or development projects in underserved portions of the County, in addition to program development to increase overall access to residents.

Other Considerations

The County recognizes the need to address user demand deficiencies where feasible but is mindful that financial and human resources are, at times, a limiting factor in certain cases. Where these deficiencies cannot be met directly, the County will strive to maximize public and private partnerships in order to address local recreation needs. Two prominent examples identified in this Plan are:

1. *Water Access*

As noted in Map 4.1d, the County recognizes a public desire for swimming pools, which may be cost prohibitive and inefficient since swimming needs can be met in other ways (i.e. single-family and multifamily developments, private pool memberships, the beach, access to rivers through boating or small watercraft, etc.). Given the abundance of aquatic areas and close proximity to larger water bodies where swimming is permitted, the LPPRP does not include recommendations to increase aquatic service areas at this time.

2. *Limited indoor recreational facilities*

The Department utilizes the Youth & Civic Center for a number of recreational activities but available space and amenities are a limiting factor. To meet indoor recreational needs, the County must continue to rely on public partners (such as the Board of Education) and private partners (such as the Crown Sports Center, YMCA, Salvation Army) to make sure indoor recreational programming is readily available to the public. Though a County-controlled indoor recreation space would offer more flexibility in public programming, it may be cost-prohibitive and therefore was included in the Long-Range capital development section.

Summary of Capital Recommendations

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 4.15 and detailed in Tables 4.16 through 4.21):

- Total projects: 62
- Total estimated cost: \$37,976,000
- Acres to be acquired: 48
- Immediate (FY22-FY26): \$13,221,000 (35%)
- Mid-Range (FY27-FY31): \$10,955,000 (29%)
- Long-Range (FY32-FY36): \$13,800,000 (36%)
- Acquisition: \$1,225,000 (3%)
- Development: \$23,701,000 (63%)
- Rehabilitation: \$13,050,000 (34%)

Table 4.15
Summary of Capital Recommendations

Planning Area	Number of Projects	Est. Total Cost (\$000s)	Acres to be Acquired	Estimated Costs (\$000s)								
				Immediate			Mid-Range			Long-Range		
				(FY2022 - FY2026)			(FY2027 - FY2031)			(FY2032 – FY2036)		
				Acq.	Dev.	Reh.	Acq.	Dev.	Reh.	Acq.	Dev.	Reh.
Tri-Town	7	2,645	-	-	2,060	385	-	-	200	-	-	-
West Side	15	7,036	30	185	921	2,455	-	600	875	-	-	2,000
North	11	5,765	-	-	1,035	630	-	2,500	1,600	-	-	-
Central	24	22,005	14	-	2,485	2,540	1,000	3,700	480	-	10,400	1,400
South	2	190	4	40	-	150	-	-	-	-	-	-
East	3	335	-	-	-	335	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	62	37,976	48	225	6,501	6,495	1,000	6,800	3,155	-	10,400	3,400

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

Capital Programming by Planning Areas

The capital recommendations of the 2022 *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. Updates on progress from the 2017 Plan are also included in each planning area as a point of reference to track progress since the last adoption.

Tri-Town Planning Area

Projects were completed to replace playground modules at Cope Bennett Park and Mardela which were included in the 2017 Plan. Additionally, tennis courts were resurfaced at Cope Bennett (including installation of pickleball lines) as well replacement of a playground module at San Domingo.

The 2022 *Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan* proposes 7 capital projects, estimated to cost \$2,645,000, in the Tri-Town Planning Area (Map 4.3, Table 4.16).

Consistent with the County's goal to emphasize rehabilitation with its aging park system, rehabilitation projects are included for Gene Lowe Park, Hebron Lions Club, Sharptown and San Domingo Park. New development includes a master planning process and construction of a park at the West Metro Core property.

Table 4.16
Proposed Capital Improvements

Site	No. Map (3.3)	Project Description	Est. Total Cost (\$000s)	Acres to be Acquired	Estimated Costs (\$000s)								
					Immediate			Mid-Range			Long-Range		
					(FY2022 - FY2026)			(FY2027 - FY2031)			(FY2032 – FY2036)		
					Acq.	Dev.	Reh.	Acq.	Dev.	Reh.	Acq.	Dev.	Reh.
Gene Lowe Park	50	Playground replacement	50	0	-	-	50	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hebron Lions Club	12	Playground, court, fence replacement	225	0	-	-	225	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cherry Beach	73	Replace bulkhead at fishing pier	200	0	-	-	-	-	-	200	-	-	-
San Domingo Park	64	Perimeter security fencing project	50	0	-	-	50	-	-	-	-	-	-
San Domingo Park	64	Resurface existing basketball court	60	0	-	-	60	-	-	-	-	-	-
West Metro Park	67	Develop master plan for facility	60	0	-	60	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
West Metro Park	67	Facility development	2,000	0	-	2,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total (7 projects)			2,645	0	-	2,060	385	-	-	200	-	-	-

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

West Planning Area

As part of the 2017 Plan, Wicomico County completed a park master plan at Pirate's Wharf with park development expected in 2022. The County also completed the bathroom renovation project at Cedar Hill and has restored 80% of the harbor's bulkhead, piles and piers. Additionally, the County made roof and cosmetic repairs at the Westside Community Center, installed pickleball lines on the Cedar Hill Tennis courts and made electrical/plumbing upgrades at Cedar Hill.

The 2022 Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan proposes 15 projects estimated at \$7.036 million in the West Side Planning Area (Map 4.4, Table 4.17), including development of Pirate's Wharf, completion of Cedar Hill rehabilitation of the bulkhead, piles, and catwalks; boat ramp replacements, dredging of both harbors, and shoreline restoration projects at Roaring Point and Cove Road beaches.

Table 4.17
Proposed Capital Improvements

Site	No. Map (3.3)	Project Description	Est. Total Cost (\$000s)	Acres to be Acquired	Estimated Costs (\$000s)								
					Immediate			Mid-Range			Long-Range		
					(FY2022 - FY2026)			(FY2027 - FY2031)			(FY2032 – FY2036)		
					Acq.	Dev.	Reh.	Acq.	Dev.	Reh.	Acq.	Dev.	Reh.
Cedar Hill Park	37	Replace boat ramp	250	0	-	-	-	-	-	250	-	-	-
Cedar Hill Park	37	Playground replacement	55	0	-	-	55	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cedar Hill Park	37	Replace bulkhead, piles, catwalks	250	0	-	-	250	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cedar Hill Park	37	Dredging of the harbor	2,000	0	-	-	1,000	-	-	-	-	-	1,000
Cedar Hill Park	37	Parking lot restoration / resurfacing	250	0	-	-	-	-	-	250	-	-	-
Cove Road	44	Shoreline restoration / breakwaters system	281	0	-	281	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cove Road	44	Acquisition	185	30	185	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cove Road	44	Parking improvements / infrastructure	50	0	-	50	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Nanticoke Harbor	57	Replace boat ramp	250	0	-	-	-	-	-	250	-	-	-
Nanticoke Harbor	57	Dredging of the harbor	2,000	0	-	-	1,000	-	-	-	-	-	1,000
Pirate's Wharf	61	Phase II Development: Trails/Parking Wooded Side	200	0	-	200	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pirate's Wharf	61	Phase III Development: Elevated	600	0	-	-	-	-	600	-	-	-	-
Roaring Point	63	Shoreline restoration / breakwaters system	390	0	-	390	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

West Side Community Center	68	Roof replacement / interior renovations	150	0	-	-	150	-	-	-	-	-	-
Wetipquin Boat Ramp	69	Restoration of old piers	125	0	-	-	-	-	-	125	-	-	-
Total (15 projects)			7,036	30	185	921	2,455	-	600	875	-	-	2,000

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

North Planning Area

As part of the 2017 Plan, the County has expanded the athletic complex to 8 competitive fields and made other facility improvements such as new field lights, concession upgrades, increased storage, among other park improvements. Additionally, the County purchased approximately 3 acres adjacent to the Mason Dixon Complex in Delmar which will provide flexibility for future park planning and improvement. The County also acquired 234 acres at Connelly Mill (which sits adjacent to the Henry Parker Athletic Complex). Since 2017, the County constructed Field 7 ½ (a ballfield designed for those with disabilities), installed an inclusive playground, and built a new softball field in Delmar, among other projects in the North Planning Area.

The 2022 *Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan* proposes 11 projects estimated at \$5.765 million (Map 4.5, Table 4.18). The most notable projects are turning the recently acquired Connelly Mill property into a regional park and a rehabilitation project at the Mason Dixon Complex, which is over 40 years old. The County intends to work cooperatively with the Town of Delmar, Board of Education and the Delmar Little League in planning and constructing the improvements at the Mason Dixon Complex.

Table 4.18
Proposed Capital Improvements

Site	No. Map (3.3)	Project Description	Est. Total Cost (\$000s)	Acres to be Acquired	Estimated Costs (\$000s)								
					Immediate			Mid-Range			Long-Range		
					(FY2022 - FY2026)			(FY2027 - FY2031)			(FY2032 – FY2036)		
					Acq.	Dev.	Reh.	Acq.	Dev.	Reh.	Acq.	Dev.	Reh.
Connelly Mill	41	Master Plan	100	0	-	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Connelly Mill	41	Facility development project	2,500	0	-	-	-	-	2,500	-	-	-	-
Edgewood Park	48	Resurface existing court / replace play equipment	110	0	-	-	110	-	-	-	-	-	-
Gordy Park	79	Replace pavilion; restore contact building	200	0	-	-	-	-	-	200	-	-	-

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HPAC	52	Replace original playground equipment	70	0	-	-	70	-	-	-	-	-	-
HPAC	52	Infrastructure renovations including roof, electrical/wiring, plumbing and ventilation	300	0	-	-	300	-	-	-	-	-	-
HPAC	52	New lights for fields 7 & 8; retro to LED lights on other fields	850	0	-	700	150	-	-	-	-	-	-
Leonard's Mill Park	55	Boat ramp replacement	200	0	-	-	-	-	-	200	-	-	-
Leonard's Mill Park	55	Bridge replacement / creation of dog park	175	0	-	175	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mason Dixon Sports Complex	56	Complete master plan	60	0	-	60	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mason Dixon Sports Complex	56	Facility rehabilitation (comfort station / playground / parking / field const)	1,200	0	-	-	-	-	-	1,200	-	-	-
Total (11 projects)			5,765	0	-	1,035	630	-	2,500	1,600	-	-	-

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

Central Planning Area

Several projects listed in the 2017 Plan for the Central Planning Area have been completed including: flat roof replacement at Perdue Stadium; playground and fencing projects at Emerson Holloway Park; and minor rehabilitation of the Pemberton Park Heritage Center. Additional completed projects include: completion of \$4.4 million renovations at Perdue Stadium, replacement of a boat ramp at Riverside Boat ramp, new fencing and playground installed at Indian Village, electrical and drainage upgrades at Winterplace Park (Wicomico Equestrian Center), new playground at East Wicomico Little League, new playground installed at Billy Gene Jackson Park, playground and basketball court replacement at Cedarhurst playground, and completion of park improvements at Schumaker Park (new playground, parking lot resurfacing, ADA accessible sidewalks installed).

The 2022 *Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan* proposes 24 capital improvements in the Central Planning Area, at a cost of approximately \$22.005 million (Map 4.6, Table 4.19). Notable projects include rehabilitation projects at Billy Gene Jackson Park, exterior safety/improvements at the Civic Center, development of a dedicated pickleball complex at

Harmon Field, and a City of Salisbury project to acquire and develop a nature park in the North Prong area of the City, providing green space access within walking distance of residents.

Table 4.19
Proposed Capital Improvements

Site	No. Map (3.3)	Project Description	Est. Total Cost (\$000s)	Acres to be Acquired	Estimated Costs (\$000s)								
					Immediate			Mid-Range			Long-Range		
					(FY2022 - FY2026)			(FY2027 - FY2031)			(FY2032 – FY2036)		
					Acq.	Dev.	Reh.	Acq.	Dev.	Reh.	Acq.	Dev.	Reh.
Arthur W. Perdue	60	Facility modifications per MLB and lease	1,500	0	-	-	1,500	-	-	-	-	-	-
Billy Gene Jackson Park	35	Well for irrigation on ballfields / back field	50	0	-	50	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Billy Gene Jackson Park	35	Parking lot restoration	50	0	-	-	-	-	-	50	-	-	-
Billy Gene Jackson Park	35	Install ADA accessible soft launch ramp	35	0	-	35	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Civic Center	70	Civic Center Expansion / Recreation Center	10,000	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10,000	-
Civic Center	70	Exterior project to improve safety, wayfinding	1,200	0	-	1,200	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
East Wicomico Little League	99	Fence and backstop replacements	100	0	-	-	-	-	-	100	-	-	-
Emerson Holloway	49	Resurface existing basketball courts	100	0	-	-	100	-	-	-	-	-	-
Harmon Field	51	Development Project: Pickleball Complex /	1,000	0	-	1,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Harmon Field	51	Resurface existing basketball court	60	0	-	-	60	-	-	-	-	-	-
Indian Village Playground	53	Resurface existing basketball courts	100	0	-	-	100	-	-	-	-	-	-
Nick Meyer Park	58	Playground replacement /	110	0	-	-	110	-	-	-	-	-	-
North Prong Park		Acquisition	1,000	14	-	-	-	1,000	-	-	-	-	-
North Prong Park		Development Project: open space / trailways	3,500	0	-	-	-	-	3,500	-	-	-	-
Pemberton Historical Park	59	Rehabilitation Pemberton Cottage	80	0	-	-	-	-	-	80	-	-	-
Pemberton Historical Park	59	Rehabilitation Heritage Center	100	0	-	-	100	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pemberton Historical Park	59	Road / Parking lot repairs and improvements	300	0	-	-	300	-	-	-	-	-	-
Riverside Boat Ramp	62	Boat ramp replacement on west	250	0	-	-	-	-	-	250	-	-	-

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Salisbury City Park	90	Resurface City Park tennis courts	200	0	-	-	200	-	-	-	-	-	-
Salisbury Zoo	90	Pavilion and restroom renovations	200	0	-	200	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Salisbury Skate Park	93	Restroom construction	200	0	-	-	-	-	200	-	-	-	-
Winterplace Park	71	Playground replacement	70	0	-	-	70	-	-	-	-	-	-
Winterplace Park	71	WEC & Carriage House water/sewer	400	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	400	-
Winterplace Park	71	Carriage House interior rehabilitation	1,400	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,400
Total (24 projects)			22,005	14	-	2,845	2,540	1,000	3,700	480	-	10,400	1,400

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

South Planning Area

One project was listed in the 2017 Plan, a possible land acquisition which did not take place. However, through Program Open Space, completed projects did include parking lot improvements at the Fruitland Recreation Area and bleacher replacements at Fruitland Little League.

The 2022 *Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan* includes two capital projects estimated at \$190,000 (Table 4.20). The projects include playground replacement and drainage improvements at Douglas Nichols Park, and possible land acquisition to supplement parking in Fruitland to support existing recreation amenities (Map 4.7). Current recreational needs are being met by private entities in the South Planning Area, which has become a hub for local recreational play and increased tournament play. The County should continue to monitor growth in the South Planning Area and consider additional recreational parks/areas to accommodate anticipated long-term needs or address any deficiencies that may develop.

Table 4.20
Proposed Capital Improvements

Site	No. Map (3.3)	Project Description	Est. Total Cost (\$000s)	Acres to be Acquired	Estimated Costs (\$000s)								
					Immediate			Mid-Range			Long-Range		
					(FY2022 - FY2026)			(FY2027 - FY2031)			(FY2032 – FY2036)		
					Acq.	Dev.	Reh.	Acq.	Dev.	Reh.	Acq.	Dev.	Reh.
Douglas Nichols Park	46	Playground replacement / Drainage	150	0	-	-	150	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fruitland	77	Acquire land for additional parking	40	4	40	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total (2 projects)			190	4	40	-	150	-	-	-	-	-	-

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

East Planning Area

As noted in the 2017 Plan for the East Planning Area, the basketball court at Willards Park was replaced. Additional projects in the East Planning Area included rehabilitation of a pavilion at Willards Park, playground replacements at the Eastside Youth Sports Complex and Pittsville Playground and additional sidewalks installed at Pittsville to improve ADA access.

The 2022 *Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan* contains three projects estimated at \$335,000. The most notable objective is to work with an engaged recreation council in Willards to rehabilitate a community park near the Eastside Youth Sports Complex. (Map 4.8, Table 4.21)

Table 4.21
Proposed Capital Improvements

Site	No. Map (3.3)	Project Description	Est. Total Cost (\$000s)	Acres to be Acquired	Estimated Costs (\$000s)								
					Immediate			Mid-Range			Long-Range		
					(FY2022 - FY2026)			(FY2027 - FY2031)			(FY2032 – FY2036)		
					Acq.	Dev.	Reh.	Acq.	Dev.	Reh.	Acq.	Dev.	Reh.
Pittsville Playground	23	Basketball court renovation	60	0	-	-	60	-	-	-	-	-	-
Willards Park	96	Replace tennis courts/Field Rehab	200	0	-	-	200	-	-	-	-	-	-
Willards Park	96	Add playground module	75	0	-	-	75	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total (3 projects)			335	0	-	-	335	-	-	-	-	-	-

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

Conclusion

Wicomico County has one of the premier parks and recreation systems in the country for its size, which allows residents to enjoy a wide variety of leisure opportunities and fulfill the Department’s mission of improving “quality of life”. Park facilities and amenities are geographically distributed throughout the County, providing for reasonable drive or walking access to a variety of facility types and recreational activities. Though the County continues to meet its acreage goals, the County should remain flexible and opportunistic with future acquisition and development projects that help meet goals and objectives outlined in the Plan. As a small County facing uncertain economic times, the County must continue to balance emerging future needs with its capacity to maintain such facilities with available resources.

AGRICULTURAL LAND PRESERVATION

Overview

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 at times 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.

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 2022 *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.

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 2017 Census of Agriculture, 494 farms encompassing 88,559 acres (or 35 percent of the total land area) are located in Wicomico County. From 1978 to 2017, the market value of agricultural products produced in Wicomico County increased by roughly \$196 billion or 181 percent from \$108 million to \$304 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 2017, the total acreage of farmland has decreased by 18,543 acres or 17 percent. During the same time frame, the number of farms has declined from 920 to 494, which represents a decrease of 426 farms or 46 percent. In contrast,

the average farm size increased from 116 acres in 1978 to 179 acres in 2017, which is an increase of 63 acres per farm or 54 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 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, 1978-2017

										Change, 1978-2017	
	1978	1982	1987	1992	1997	2002	2007	2012	2017	Number	Percent
Number of farms	920	842	774	684	624	512	508	510	494	-426	-46%
Acres of farmland	107,102	111,109	95,542	91,254	92,057	88,470	92,852	83,739	88,559	-18,543	-17%
Avg. farm size (ac.)	116	132	123	133	148	173	183	164	179	63	54%
Market value of products (\$000)	\$108,125	\$121,512	\$134,061	\$164,101	\$205,514	\$174,594	\$197,828	\$236,321	\$303,984	\$195,859	181%
Average market value of products per farm (dollars)	\$117,527	\$144,318	\$173,205	\$240,763	\$329,350	\$341,003	\$389,426	\$463,375	\$615,352	\$497,825	423%

Source: United States of Agriculture, 2017 Census of Agriculture

The County recognized another crucial component to preserving farmland was to provide flexibility for agricultural related uses permitted in the A-1 Zoning District in an effort to maintain and / or increase a 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

permitting 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 also created the Quantico Creek Rural Legacy Area as a primary agricultural preservation area. Since the inception of this Rural Legacy Area in 2000, 14 easements totaling 4,725 acres have been preserved in perpetuity using Rural Legacy funding from the State's Program Open Space, as well as other funding sources. In 2017 the Quantico Creek Rural Legacy Area was expanded by 21,131 acres to include lands along Rewastico Creek and over the Paleochannel. In recent years the Lower Shore Land Trust ("LSLT") has provided public outreach and contract assistance within the Rural Legacy Area. This public-private partnership has aided preservation efforts and provided landowners a conservation management resource.

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, and amended in 2021, that established a statewide goal of preserving 1,030,000 acres of productive farmland by 2030, 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 435,510 acres or 42 percent



of the goal has been permanently preserved in the State (108,860 Rural Legacy and 326,650 Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation). Therefore, an additional 594,490 acres or 58 percent of the goal will need to be preserved in the next eight years to achieve the state-wide goal through a variety of preservation programs. The State goals for agricultural land preservation are as follows:

- 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 2030.
- 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 a property owner's voluntary willingness to sell development rights consistent with the requirements and intent of the County's Transfer of Development Rights Program.

The 2017 *Wicomico County Comprehensive Plan* contains goals, objectives, and policies pertaining to many topics pertinent to County planning. The Plan begins with three major goals that apply generally to the entire County:¹

- Concentrate intense development and infrastructure in designated growth areas with existing or planned services;
- Preserve and protect environmentally sensitive and rural lands and resources; and
- Cooperatively work with the eight municipalities and rural villages to ensure a sustainable and high quality of life in communities and rural areas.

Also, the Plan contains the following implementation strategies specifically for the areas targeted for agricultural preservation, termed Agricultural/Resource Areas:²

- Continue on-going efforts by the County to effectively stabilize the agricultural land base and to support working farms.
- Maintain the land base necessary to support the agricultural industry, preserve rural character, and protect natural resources by conserving land and encouraging growth to locate within designated growth areas, while providing opportunities for appropriate-scale growth in the Agriculture Resource areas of the County.
- Prioritize preservation efforts in areas adjacent to County designated growth areas, as well as protected areas, to better define a transition/buffer between Agriculture Resource and designated growth areas.

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 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).

¹ 2017 Wicomico County Comprehensive Plan, PP. 2-2

² 2017 Wicomico County Comprehensive Plan, PP. 7-11

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:

- Preserve 6,000 acres in the Quantico Creek Rural Legacy Area within ten years (600 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 800 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 66,054 acres annually to meet the objective of preserving 1,030,000 acres statewide by 2030, and based on Wicomico County's percentage of the State's land area (3.9%), and assuming further the County would preserve a similar proportion of land, then Wicomico County would meet a proportional share of the State objective if 2,720 acres were preserved annually by 2030.

In an effort to meet the Statewide objective, the County will need to preserve 302 acres annually utilizing funding from the following four programs/mechanisms:

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

Using an estimate of \$3,250 per acre, based on the cost of purchasing easements in the County through local and State programs over the past six years, meeting the County goal of preserving an average of 800 acres per year (County preservation and Quantico Creek Rural Legacy Area goals) would cost an average of more than \$2.6 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 (Table 5.2 and Map 5.1). The following section describes the various elements of the County's agricultural land preservation effort.

Preservation Areas

The Wicomico County Zoning Code³ identifies most land outside of the County's Metro Core and designated growth areas as being contained within the Agriculture-Rural (A-1) Zoning District. Also, the areas immediately adjacent to towns or rural villages are County designated growth areas, which are zoned Town Transition or Village Conservation, respectively. 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 agricultural district in an effort to create large areas of preserved farmland or forests. As part of the 2017 *Wicomico County Comprehensive Plan*, the entirety of the A-1 Zoning District was designated as the Priority Preservation Area ("PPA"), which the PPA consists of approximately 185,000 acres (Map 5.2).

Easement Acquisition Mechanisms

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

- Wicomico County agricultural preservation program – County program;
- MALPF – State program;
- Maryland Environmental Trust ("MET") – State program; and
- Rural Legacy – State program.

In addition, the 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:

³ *Wicomico County Code*, chapter 225, 18 September 2004, available at <http://www.wicomicocounty.org>

- **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 21 agricultural districts encompassing approximately 2,953 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 certification from MALPF, the State requires a county to include a Priority Preservation Area Element in their Comprehensive Plan, which the 2017 *Wicomico County Comprehensive Plan* has met the requirement.

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 \$650,000 annually, based on preserving 200 acres annually with an easement value of \$3,250 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 six fiscal years (FY 2016 – FY 2021), the County has retained an average of approximately \$18,000 annually to be used for agricultural preservation efforts. The funding retained annually by the agricultural transfer tax can preserve roughly 5 acres per year. Therefore, since the estimate above cites \$650,000 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 Program

The Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation was established in 1978 to provide funds as an incentive to preserve private farmland. Individual farmers sell an easement to MALPF, which 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, 7,712 acres have been preserved in perpetuity in Wicomico County as of 2022.

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. At the time of this publication, the Quantico Creek Rural Legacy Area encompasses 35,818 acres or approximately 56 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). In 2017, the County expanded the Quantico Creek RLA by 21,131 acres to include lands over the Paleochannel and along Rewastico Creek. 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 5,280 acres in the RLA are developed and an additional 12,680 acres have some level of

protection (i.e. Chesapeake Bay Critical Area, tidal wetlands, protective easement, or private protection measures). Wicomico County has identified the remaining 17,678 acres as unprotected and targeted for preservation efforts. The County estimates preserving the stated goal of 6,000 acres within the next ten years assuming the preservation rate of 600 acres per year in the Rural Legacy Area. The cost to preserve the stated goal of unprotected land is estimated at \$19.5 million (6,000 acres at \$3,250 per acre) over the next ten years. The entire Quantico Creek Rural Legacy Area is included within the Priority Preservation Area, as well as identified on the 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 2022, Wicomico County spent about \$12.3 million in funding (Rural legacy, Wicomico Forest Conservation, CREP, County Ag. Preservation program, and U.S. Navy's Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration Program) to purchase easements on 5,327.3 acres in the Quantico Creek RLA.

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 Priority Preservation Areas map will serve as a road map to guide future preservation efforts. See Map 5.2. At the time of this publication, the State-wide allocation to the Rural Legacy Program in FY 2022 was \$20,037,061. Since the inception of this program in 1997, over 114,000 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 donates 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 13 easements (donated or purchased) encompassing 2,683 acres in Wicomico County.

Easement Acquisition Funding

Wicomico County dedicates the portion of the revenue retained 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 2016, the County portion of the agricultural transfer tax was \$60,684. From FY 2017 through FY 2021, the agricultural transfer tax for Wicomico County was \$108,316.85. 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 \$12.3 million from the Rural Legacy Program to purchase easements.

Table 5.2
Preserved Land by Program, 1987-2022

Year	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	394.13	\$283,952	0	\$0	0	\$0	394.13	\$283,952	\$720.45	0	394.13
1988	306.54	\$233,906	0	\$0	0	\$0	306.54	\$233,906	\$763.05	0	306.54
1989	159.99	\$224,000	0	\$0	0	\$0	159.99	\$224,000	\$1,400.09	0	159.99
1990	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0	\$0.00	25.5	25.5
1991	455.31	\$402,391	0	\$0	0	\$0	455.31	\$402,391	\$883.77	0	455.31
1992	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0	\$0.00	0	0
1993	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0	\$0.00	0	0
1994	754.78	\$489,778	0	\$0	0	\$0	754.78	\$489,778	\$648.90	525.52	1280.3
1995	359.22	\$257,603	0	\$0	0	\$0	359.22	\$257,603	\$717.12	0	359.22
1996	214.79	\$162,236	0	\$0	0	\$0	214.79	\$162,236	\$755.32	0	214.79
1997	330.6	\$180,544	0	\$0	0	\$0	330.6	\$180,544	\$546.11	0	330.6
1998	225.41	\$173,536	0	\$0	0	\$0	225.41	\$173,536	\$769.87	18	243.41
1999	119.06	\$76,287	0	\$0	0	\$0	119.06	\$76,287	\$640.74	93.03	212.09
2000	415.4	\$617,585	0	\$0	0	\$0	415.4	\$617,585	\$1,486.72	0	415.4
2001	241.84	\$178,166	0	\$0	0	\$0	241.84	\$178,166	\$736.71	67.5	309.34
2002	602.61	\$587,662	0	\$0	0	\$0	602.61	\$587,662	\$975.19	687.22	1289.83
2003	503.95	\$438,881	0	\$0	750.57	\$779,666	1254.52	\$1,218,547	\$971.33	120.19	1374.71
2004	51.35	\$102,700	286.1	\$434,200	0	\$0	337.45	\$536,900	\$1,591.05	0	337.45
2005	21.36	\$65,551	0	\$0	0	\$0	21.36	\$65,551	\$3,068.87	163.77	185.13
2006	135.77	\$406,474	364	\$1,029,680	0	\$0	499.77	\$1,436,154	\$2,873.63	0	499.77
2007	0	\$0	67.32	\$528,902	177.91	\$447,735	245.23	\$976,637	\$3,982.53	0	245.23
2008	515.45	\$1,834,099	64.76	\$516,461	135.19	\$334,654	715.4	\$2,685,214	\$3,753.44	0	715.4
2009	206.16	\$848,000	0	\$0	344.94	\$889,177	551.1	\$889,177	\$1,613.46	75	626.1
2010	253.66	\$1,172,895	0	\$0	110.62	\$334,795	364.28	\$1,507,690	\$4,138.82	0	364.28
2011	118	\$413,000	0	\$0	607.14	\$1,507,888	725.14	\$1,920,888	\$2,648.99	0	725.14
2012	123.2	\$458,778	0	\$0	771.72	\$2,208,798	894.92	\$2,667,576	\$2,980.80	177.42	1072.34
2013	0	\$0	0	\$0	785.09	\$1,450,000	785.09	\$1,450,000	\$1,846.92	48.27	833.36
2014	429.32	\$1,697,315	0	\$0	0	\$0	429.32	\$1,697,315	\$3,953.50	0	429.32
2015	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0	\$0.00	0	0
2016	131.1	\$596,250	0	\$0	472.96	\$1,322,459	604.06	\$1,918,709	\$3,176.35	527.53	1131.59
2017	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0	\$0.00	0	0
2018	153	\$722,250	0	\$0	396.98	\$1,050,461	549.98	\$1,772,864	\$3,223.51	154.06	704.04
2019	63	\$185,772	0	\$0	0	\$0	63	\$185,772	\$2,948.76	0	63
2020	59	\$267,750	0	\$0	171.5	\$204,485	230.5	\$472,235	\$2,048.72	0	230.5
2021	149	\$609,444	0	\$0	602.67	\$1,721,358	751.67	\$2,330,802	\$3,100.83	0	751.67
2022	219.49	\$886,725	0	\$0	0	\$0	219.49	\$886,725	\$4,039.93	0	219.49
Totals	7,712.49	\$14,573,530	782.18	\$2,509,234	5,327.29	\$12,251,476	13,821.96	\$28,281,917	\$2,032.43	2,683.01	16,504.97

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

Land Use Management Authority

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

- 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 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 changes to the zoning code (September 2004) include provisions for transferring development rights ("TDR")⁴. 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 this Plan and the Wicomico County Comprehensive Plan, it is strongly recommended to evaluate the effectiveness of the existing TDR Program, as well as modifying the allocation rate for A-1 to A-1 transfers at

⁴ *Wicomico County Zoning Code*, Section 225-58, "Part III Transfer of Development Rights"

one TDR (deemed to be a buildable lot) per equivalent dwelling unit. Additionally, provisions should be consistent amongst this Plan, County Comp Plan, and County Water and Sewerage Plan for the use of TDR in support of new residential subdivisions located in the unincorporated portion of the County and connected to a public, community, or shared waste water treatment plant.

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 June 2022, the major land preservation programs implemented within Wicomico County (MALPF, County program, Rural Legacy, and MET) have preserved more than 16,504 acres at a total cost of \$28.3 million. Approximately 13,822 acres of land have been preserved through the State and County administered programs. Revenues from the State agricultural transfer tax provides County matching funds to leverage with MALPF funding for purchasing easements. The State revenues that fund MALPF and Rural Legacy Program are also intended as a dedicated revenue source for land preservation efforts. However, State law permits transfer tax revenue to be diverted into the General Fund during the annual budget process.

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 Metro Core, incorporated jurisdictions, and county-designated growth areas (Map 2.4);
- 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 contiguous rural areas for agricultural preservation and potentially expand the Quantico Creek RLA and/or establish a new Rural Legacy Area; and
- 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.

Preservation 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 16,504 acres since 1987 (Table 5.2). Two of the programs, MALPF and Wicomico County agricultural preservation, have financed easements on roughly 8,495 acres, which represents approximately 10 percent of the County's total farmland identified in the 2017 Census of Agriculture.

From 2017 to 2022, 1,969 acres of agricultural land was preserved, an approximate annual average of 328 acres, exceeding the County's goal of preserving 200 acres annually. Rural Legacy and MALPF were the two primary programs responsible for financing easements in the County, as Rural Legacy preserved 1,171 acres of land and MALPF preserved 643 acres during the aforementioned timeframe.

Over the previous 5-year period from 2011 to 2016, a total of 4,191 acres were preserved, an annual average of 698 acres, also exceeding the County's 200 acre goal. Moving forward, the County will continue to utilize the four major land preservation programs to meet the County's long term preservation goals.

As farmland has been converted or no longer active, the amount of preserved farmland has increased. If current funding levels persist, it is unlikely the County funded agricultural preservation program goal of 3,000 acres will be achieved by 2037. Additionally, the ability to achieve preserving 6,000 acres of unprotected land over the next ten years in the Quantico Creek Rural Legacy Area will depend on the amount of State Program Open Space funds allocated to the County. The cost to achieve the RLA goal of 6,000 acres within ten years would cost an estimated \$19.5 million. From 2003 through 2021, the County received \$12.3 million in Rural Legacy funding, which roughly translates to an annual average of \$612,574 from Program Open

Space for preserving land in the Quantico Creek Rural Legacy Area. Additional funding sources were provided within the RLA by interested governmental and non-governmental stakeholders.

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; and
- Fifty percent (50%) of the land in a conventional subdivision must be maintained in open space as part of the lots.

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 2,300 acres of land have been preserved in perpetuity as easements within the A-1 Zoning District in Wicomico County. From 2017 to 2022, roughly 273 acres of forest was preserved in perpetuity as easements resulting from the Forest Conservation Act.

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 2022 *Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan* assumes an average cost of \$3,250 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 Programs and Resources

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:⁵

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

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 “downzoning” 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

⁵ More information about MCES programs is available at: <http://www.agnr.umd.edu/MCE>.

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 credits;
- Land resale;
- Future owner/family lots; and
- Continued ownership and use.

NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION

Overview

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.

Green Infrastructure

Many elements of the GI system in Wicomico County have a specific significance in other areas of the 2017 *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 practices for conserving GI?

Definition – What is Green Infrastructure

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 factors 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, animals, and wildlife areas;
- Protect greenways, trails, or historic sites; 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 compromises the effectiveness of the entire ecosystem.

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 and Sussex counties;
2. Lies in Wicomico, Dorchester, and Sussex counties;
3. Lies in Wicomico, Somerset, Worcester, and Sussex counties;
4. Lies in Wicomico and Somerset counties; and
5. Lies in Wicomico and Worcester counties.

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.

In addition to sprawl development, invasive plant species and animal species are a growing threat to the natural environment. The number of invasive species entering Wicomico County and the extent of their impact is increasing annually. This is a growing problem and increasing risk to the survivability of native species and habitat integrity. Once invasive species become established and spread, natural ecosystems are compromised and reclamation costs increase. In contrast, early detection and eradication techniques are designed to decrease the extent of the impact and reduce removal cost.

To reduce or eliminate the negative effects to our local ecosystems, monitoring and identification of invasive species important. Both early detection and eradication are key to preventing and / or reducing widespread damage from invasive species. Additionally, undermanaged or unmanaged wildlife populations (e.g. deer) can be a threat to native plant species. In an effort to prevent the adverse effects from invasive plant species the County should continue funding weed removal efforts, as well as identify potential funding to prepare an Invasive Species Management Plan for Wicomico.

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?

Wicomico County utilized DNR's the 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".

Best practices – What are the best practices for conserving GI?

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

- Protect and conserve the most sensitive areas through conservation easements and fee simple purchases whenever possible;
- Manage risk and reduce vulnerability by providing guidelines for integrating human activities and land uses; and
- 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 vulnerable / threatened GI portions of the 2022 Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan is to protect the most sensitive areas in the 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 departments, State agencies and organizations, including, but not limited to the following:

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"); and
- U.S. Navy's Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration Program.

Public Programs for Restoration and BMPs:

- Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program ("CREP");
- Wetland Reserve Program ("WRP");
- Environmental Quality Incentives Program ("EQIP"); and
- Agricultural Management Assistance Program ("AMA").

Private and Public Organizations:

- Ducks Unlimited;
- The Nature Conservancy (“TNC”);
- Lower Shore Land Trust (“LSLT”);
- The Conservation Fund;
- Maryland Department of Natural Resources (“DNR”); and
- Maryland Environmental Trust (“MET”).

Strategy 2: Manage Risk & Vulnerability.

The principal strategy for the County itself will be to conserve and enhance GI, when possible, through conservation easements and fee simple purchases of lands that the County can manage. However, the strategy may conserve only a 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) 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 local governments and committees are aware that Green Infrastructure principles and design concepts may provide 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 and Zoning Commission, Wicomico County Department of Recreation, Parks and Tourism, Wicomico County Department of Planning, Zoning and Community Development, and the agricultural, forestry and conservation communities to advise decision makers on strategies / best practices to preserve the natural resources located in Wicomico County.

Strategy 3: Restore & Enhance Green Infrastructure.

In addition to protecting Green Infrastructure, efforts should be considered to maintain, restore, and enhance the GI network. However, maintenance, restoration, and enhancement are 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 Sea-Level Rise

The Maryland Climate Change Commission (2013) projected 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. Over the past decade Wicomico County has experienced heavy flooding and rains from weather events. GI has been adversely affected by excessive rainfall and hurricanes, resulting in sediment erosion, damaged forests, and destroyed habitats. The damage from excessive rain events with associated with tidal surges 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, lands in the community remain at risk.

Preservation of GI can be accomplished by a myriad of planning practices and techniques, including, but not limited to: directing development away from sensitive areas; as well as developing guidelines to encourage compatibility thereby reducing the impervious footprint. 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 and partnerships, encouraging non-governmental organizations to increase capacity for providing public outreach and education about environmental stewardship and the relationship to sea-level rise is important.

Grant funding opportunities to fund a study about the implications of sea-level rise in Wicomico County should be explored. The results of the study will assist in ongoing and future planning activities 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, it will be challenging for the County to effectively implement safeguards designed 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

According to the 2017 Agricultural Census, Wicomico was the 2nd most agriculturally productive county in the State of Maryland in overall commodity of agricultural goods. Farming is likely to be more compatible with GI than is development. Therefore, retaining farming activities within conservation easements is an opportunity to reduce risk to GI, as are other measures to retain farmland and farming within the County.

Forest Land

Most of Wicomico County's GI is forest land. For generations, woodlands and forest products have been providing landowners with income and generating jobs and economic benefits for the County. Working forests provide sustainable economic contributions, as well as 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 local professional oversight. With sound, professionally prepared forest stewardship plans, timber harvesting is a compatible use on most of the GI. In part, 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 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 prepared an assessment and mapping of 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.

APPENDIX A

Survey Results and Public Comments



Constant Contact Survey Results

Survey Name: 2021 LPPRP Survey

Response Status: Partial & Completed










Filter: None

12/2/2021 4:35 PM EST





TextBlock:

Every five years, Wicomico County updates its Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan to better meet the needs of its citizens. The results of this survey will guide the County in its planning of parks, recreation and open space.







Please indicate your primary place of residence.

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Tri-Town (Sharptown, Mardela, Hebron areas)			59	7.0 %
West Side (Quantico, Tyaskin, Nanticoke, Bivalve, Whitehaven areas)			77	9.2 %
North (Delmar area)			56	6.7 %
South (Fruitland, South Salisbury, Eden, Allen areas)			193	23.1 %
East (Parsonsbury, Pittsville, Willards, Powellville areas)			70	8.4 %
West Central (West Salisbury area)			85	10.2 %
Central (Business 13 Corridor, Downtown Salisbury, Camden areas)			133	15.9 %
East Central (East Salisbury area)			96	11.5 %
No Response(s)			63	7.5 %
Totals			832	100%

Please indicate your age.

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
18-24			30	3.6 %
25-34			77	9.2 %
35-44			212	25.4 %
45-54			170	20.4 %
55-64			143	17.1 %
65-74			131	15.7 %
75+			41	4.9 %
No Response(s)			28	3.3 %
Totals			832	100%

Please indicate your average household income.

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Under \$50,000			157	18.8 %
\$50,000 to under \$100,000			291	34.9 %
\$100,000 to under \$150,000			215	25.8 %
\$150,000 to under \$200,000			66	7.9 %
\$200,000 or more			57	6.8 %
No Response(s)			46	5.5 %
Totals			832	100%




What race do you consider yourself to be?

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
White			717	90.5 %
Black or African American			44	5.5 %
Asian, Asian Indian or Pacific Islander			5	<1 %
Native American			12	1.5 %
Other			29	3.6 %
Totals			792	100%









Are you of Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin?

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Yes			23	2.7 %
No			763	91.7 %
No Response(s)			46	5.5 %
Totals			832	100%




What is your gender?

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Male			319	38.3 %
Female			469	56.3 %
Other			5	<1 %
No Response(s)			39	4.6 %
Totals			832	100%

About how often did you or a member of your household visit a Wicomico County park or facility in the past 12 months?


Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Daily			24	2.8 %
More than once a week			162	19.4 %
Once a week			190	22.8 %
Once a month			196	23.5 %
Once every few months			144	17.3 %
Once in the past year			33	3.9 %
Did not visit in the last 12 months			51	6.1 %
No Response(s)			32	3.8 %
Totals			832	100%

Do you or any members of your household have any disabilities that require a need for ADA-accessible facilities or services?

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Yes			60	7.2 %
No			740	88.9 %
No Response(s)			32	3.8 %
Totals			832	100%

















How satisfied are you with the availability of ADA-accessible facilities in Wicomico County?

1 = Very satisfied, 2 = Somewhat satisfied, 3 = Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, 4 = Somewhat dissatisfied, 5 = Very dissatisfied

	1	2	3	4	5	Number of Response(s)	Rating Score*
						47	2.9

*The Rating Score is the weighted average calculated by dividing the sum of all weighted ratings by the number of total responses.

In which of the following activities do you participate?

Answer	0%100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Walking, running/jogging, hiking, backpacking		629	84.7 %
Biking		294	39.6 %
Paddling (canoeing, kayaking, stand-up paddle boarding)		238	32.0 %
Boating		155	20.8 %
Fishing		254	34.2 %
Outdoor sports (i.e., baseball, softball, soccer, etc.)		286	38.5 %
Indoor sports (i.e., basketball, wrestling, volleyball, etc.)		154	20.7 %
Visiting playgrounds		291	39.2 %
Picnicking		250	33.6 %
Bird watching, wildlife viewing		270	36.3 %
Horseback riding/equestrian activities		42	5.6 %
Camping		185	24.9 %
Swimming/aquatic activities		215	28.9 %
Hunting		81	10.9 %
Target shooting, archery		84	11.3 %
Other		94	12.6 %
Totals		742	100%

Which recreation areas/facilities need to be added or improved in Wicomico County? Please select your top three priorities.

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Trail-based recreation (e.g., walking, running, hiking, biking)	<div><div></div></div>		448	60.8 %
Water recreation (e.g. paddling, boating, fishing)	<div><div></div></div>		256	34.7 %
Outdoor recreation (baseball fields, soccer fields, basketball courts, etc.)	<div><div></div></div>		197	26.7 %
Indoor recreation (basketball courts, volleyball courts, etc.)	<div><div></div></div>		143	19.4 %
Passive outdoor leisure areas (playgrounds, picnic areas, dog parks, natural areas)	<div><div></div></div>		323	43.8 %
Equestrian facilities, horseback riding trails	<div><div></div></div>		40	5.4 %
Camping areas	<div><div></div></div>		161	21.8 %
Outdoor aquatic areas (beaches)	<div><div></div></div>		172	23.3 %
Indoor aquatic areas (swimming pools)	<div><div></div></div>		165	22.4 %
Sportsman areas (hunting areas, shooting ranges, etc.)	<div><div></div></div>		80	10.8 %
Other	<div><div></div></div>		103	13.9 %
Totals			736	100%

How important is it for Wicomico County to spend funds to acquire land for development and/or expansion of recreation facilities?

1 = Very important, 2 = Somewhat important, 3 = Neither important nor unimportant, 4 = Somewhat unimportant, 5 = Very unimportant

	1	2	3	4	5	Number of Response(s)	Rating Score*
						744	2.0

*The Rating Score is the weighted average calculated by dividing the sum of all weighted ratings by the number of total responses.

If you have additional feedback, please share in the area below.

203 Response(s)

In which of the following activities do you participate? - Other responses		
	Answer	Respondent
	Golf	Anonymous
	Beer and Wine Festivals	Anonymous
	Pickleball	Anonymous
	Pickleball	Anonymous
	Pickleball	Anonymous
	Pickleball	Anonymous
	Disc golf at Schumaker Park	Anonymous
	Disc golf	Anonymous
	Disc Golf	Anonymous
	Disc golf	Anonymous
	gym -- several times per week	Anonymous
	Disc Golf	Anonymous
	Trail Running	Anonymous
	Pickleball	Anonymous
	Photography	Anonymous
	Special Event Gatherings	Anonymous
	Good Beer Festival	Anonymous
	Pickleball	Anonymous
	pickleball	Anonymous
	Pickleball	Anonymous
	Pickleball	Anonymous
	Pickleball	Anonymous
	Pickleball	Anonymous
	Pickleball	Anonymous
	Pickle ball	Anonymous
	Pickleball!!	Anonymous
	Pickleball	Anonymous
	pickleball	Anonymous
	Pickleball-Spring & Summer-6 times wk	Anonymous
	Pickleball	Anonymous
	Pickleball	Anonymous
	Pickleball	Anonymous
	Pickle Ball	Anonymous
	Pickle ball	Anonymous
	pickleball	Anonymous
	Pickleball	Anonymous
	Geocaching	Anonymous
	Disc golf	Anonymous
	Pickelball	Anonymous
	Pickleball	Anonymous
	Outdoor basketball	Anonymous
	pickle ball	Anonymous
	Nothing - Covid-19 has killed my get up and go	Anonymous
	BASEBALL TRAINING, TOURNAMENTS	Anonymous

Baseball	Anonymous
Forest walks and nature education/interpretation, Forest Bathing as a soul balm	Anonymous
Pickleball	Anonymous
Pickleball, indoor and outdoor	Anonymous
Pickleball	Anonymous
Pemberton 24	Anonymous
Pickleball	Anonymous
Tennis	Anonymous
Trash collection volunteer	Anonymous
pickleball	Anonymous
Pickleball	Anonymous
pickleball	Anonymous
bocce ball	Anonymous
pickleball	Anonymous
Disc golf	Anonymous
Pickleball	Anonymous
Dog park	Anonymous
photography in the e park	Anonymous
Corn hole, horseshoes, badminton	Anonymous
Disc Golf	Anonymous
Disc golf	Anonymous
Pickleball	Anonymous
pickleball	Anonymous
Crabbing	Anonymous
Dog park	Anonymous
Dog walking	Anonymous
Community Garden	Anonymous
dog walks	Anonymous
So	Anonymous
Tennis	Anonymous
running concessions	Anonymous
Grandchildren sports	Anonymous
Flowers	Anonymous
Community events	Anonymous
Pickleball	Anonymous
Playing music	Anonymous
Disc golf	Anonymous
Disc Golf	Anonymous
Disc Golf	Anonymous
Disc golf	Anonymous
Disc Golf	Anonymous
Disc golf	Anonymous
painting/drawing/photography	Anonymous
Dog parks and dog walking	Anonymous
Disc golf	Anonymous
dog walking	Anonymous

	disc golf	Anonymous
	Disc golf	Anonymous
	golf	Anonymous
	need facility on the Westside of County	Anonymous
Which recreation areas/facilities need to be added or improved in Wicomico County? Please select your top three priorities. - Other responses		
	Answer	Respondent
	Outdoor swimming pools	Anonymous
	Boat ramp	Anonymous
	Indoor Batting Cages	Anonymous
	Paved outdoor walking/running paths	Anonymous
	Permanent Pickleball courts	Anonymous
	outdoor pool	Anonymous
	Pickleball Courts	Anonymous
	Pickleball courts	Anonymous
	Pickleball	Anonymous
	Outdoor Football	Anonymous
	Outdoor Soccer Fields	Anonymous
	Disc golf opportunities in Wicomico County	Anonymous
	Additional disc golf courses	Anonymous
	Disc golf course	Anonymous
	This is a long shot but I would love to see a hockey rink either ice or roller	Anonymous
	none	Anonymous
	Disc Golf Course at Schumaker Park	Anonymous
	Pickleball court	Anonymous
	Accessibility for those with limited mobility	Anonymous
	West side community center	Anonymous
	Outdoor swimming pool	Anonymous
	Pickleball	Anonymous
	Communications	Anonymous
	pickleball facilities	Anonymous
	ATV Trails....we have none	Anonymous
	Pickleball courts	Anonymous
	pickle ball courts	Anonymous
	Indoor pickleball	Anonymous
	Pickleball	Anonymous
	Pickleball	Anonymous
	Pickleball/tennis courts	Anonymous
	Indoor/ outdoor Pickleball courts	Anonymous
	Pickleball courts!!	Anonymous
	facilities for seniors close to home	Anonymous
	Pickleball Courts	Anonymous
	pickleball	Anonymous
	Outdoor/Indoor Pickleball	Anonymous
	Pickleball	Anonymous
	Pickleball courts	Anonymous

PICKLE BALL	Anonymous
Pickleball	Anonymous
Pickle ball courts	Anonymous
Pickle Ball	Anonymous
Pickle ball	Anonymous
portapotties at outdoor pickleball courts	Anonymous
Pickleball	Anonymous
Disc golf	Anonymous
Pickelball	Anonymous
Pickleball	Anonymous
FOOTBALL FIELD	Anonymous
Pickleball court	Anonymous
pickle ball	Anonymous
Need batting cages	Anonymous
More public access forests and water access; More mixed species diverse forests	Anonymous
Public places to ride ATVs (dirt bikes, 4 wheelers, etc.)	Anonymous
preserving non-developed wild lands & native plants	Anonymous
fields 6,7, and 8 in Fruitland	Anonymous
Pickleball	Anonymous
indoor and outdoor pickleball courts	Anonymous
Outdoor pools	Anonymous
Pickleball	Anonymous
Pickleball courts	Anonymous
Pickleball, Pickleball, and more pickleball	Anonymous
Baseball fields 6, 7, and 8 in Fruitland	Anonymous
Pickleball	Anonymous
Indoor Pickleball and tennis	Anonymous
bocce courts	Anonymous
Pickle ball courts	Anonymous
Pickleball	Anonymous
Corn hole, Horseshoes, Badminton	Anonymous
Disc Golf	Anonymous
ADA accessible disc golf	Anonymous
pickleball courts	Anonymous
pickleball courts	Anonymous
Pickleball courts	Anonymous
pickleball courts	Anonymous
Floating piers at boat ramps are great!	Anonymous
Ice skating	Anonymous
Indoor fir soccer, hockey etc.	Anonymous
Indoor walking like at Worcester County	Anonymous
Skating	Anonymous
Biking Trails	Anonymous
Roller hockey/ice rink.	Anonymous
Fishing docks for safety from vehicles when stuck fishing from bridge	Anonymous
Wheelchair accessibility at fishing sites, more floating docks	Anonymous

	Pickleball courts	Anonymous
	Disc golf courses	Anonymous
	Disc golf	Anonymous
	Smaller disc golf course for newer and younger players.	Anonymous
	More disc golf courses	Anonymous
	Disc golf	Anonymous
	Road biking on the back roads	Anonymous
	Disc golf	Anonymous
	Disc Golf Courses	Anonymous
	Disc golf	Anonymous
	Skate board park	Anonymous
	Outdoor swimming pools	Anonymous
	Disc golf	Anonymous
	access to golf	Anonymous
	need park on Westside of County	Anonymous
	wildlife viewing/sanctuaries, historic areas	Anonymous
	FOOTBALL FEILD	Anonymous
	Wetipquin Park. Pavilion and repair pier	Anonymous
How important is it for Wicomico County to spend funds to acquire land for development and/or expansion of recreation facilities? - Comments		
	Answer	Respondent
	[No Responses]	
If you have additional feedback, please share in the area below. - Responses		
	Answer	Respondent
	Suggest: 1) A depth assessment of the current WSCC building and property. 2)Outline short term and long term improvements necessary to safely utilize this property for a variety of WCPR&T and community activities.	Anonymous
	We love our local parks and outdoor areas! Keep up the good work in maintaining and cleaning. Safety (unruly gatherings, people out to harm/hurt, etc.) is also a big concern for us. Please make sure that area is covered in a plan for the future.	Anonymous
	We should consider turning long-abandoned industrial or retail sites, (Salisbury Mall) into useable outdoor space that includes trails, basketball courts, and basic picnic areas. Such an effort would remove irresponsible blight and make our communities more appealing for residents and potential future business owners interested in opportunities	Anonymous
	I would like to see more paved walking paths for use of a stroller. Even if it's just 1000 feet in a circle at Pemberton park or better yet on the water somewhere.	Anonymous
	My family feels that there are some parks in Wicomico, but we find ourselves going to all the other counties to fit our recreation needs. I know that there has been talks about possibly doing something with the old train track. It would be also if it was made into a long distance bike trail. We've been doing a lot of bike trails elsewhere.	Anonymous
	Would love to see development along the Bayside tidal communities or more access to Wicomico river (for passive activities or water recreation)	Anonymous
	I think you should spend more time taking care of the trails for example in Pemberton, they could use some work AND cleaning.	Anonymous
	The county severely lacks in a good trail system. Pemberton Parks and Naylor Mill have a few trails worth running on but nothing else to be found. The Rails to Trails	Anonymous

	proposal would have been nice to give a safe long distance route. I am hopeful about Pirate's Cove design and development.	
	I would love for there to be a specific sports and recreation facility in Wicomico county.	Anonymous
	Need more access areas for fishing. The kids need places to go fishing and or canoeing. There are not any access points on the Wicomico river except downtown. This area is lacking in clean areas for water activities. The ponds and lakes are not healthy to fish in.	Anonymous
	Because of COVID, we are spending more time outdoors. Improving the existing areas and developing new areas would facilitate keeping people outdoors when restrictions are lifted.	Anonymous
	I believe the county could benefit from some type of indoor training facility to include indoor sports like indoor softball league and indoor batting cages for the off season. The only place for batting cages is at Crown and it is limited space.	Anonymous
	I think there a huge need for an indoor recreational facility. Somewhere that has basketball courts, rec rooms for fitness activities, and even swimming. Memberships are costly and there needs to be an affordable option for families.	Anonymous
	I have no clue what can be done around those two man-made lakes you can see from Naylor Mill Road across from the landfill, but I mentioned to Bob Culver before he passed that it would be nice if the country would put in a walking trail around the water and add other recreational amenities. They remind me of Centennial Park in Howard County.	Anonymous
	Make the East to West Rail Trail happen. If Somerset can do it we should be able to	Anonymous
	It was a terrible decision to remove all soccer fields from the hack in order to just make money off of baseball tournaments.	Anonymous
	N/A	Anonymous
	Donnie is, hands down, the best Backstreet Boy.	Anonymous
	It would be great to have an indoor facility that has basketball courts (or courts that can also have volleyball, tennis etc.) and a swimming pool. It is crazy that there is no community pool. Also, other than Crown Sports, there is no place to have indoor sports. I would love to be able to rent space for basketball.	Anonymous
	Change co ed softball back to Friday nights	Anonymous
	Spend funds on areas we already have, the park/zoo, Winter Place and ball fields on Naylor Mill Rd. All of these are beautiful places to spend time. Enhance the grounds, concession stands and areas for wheelchairs! You are doing a good job please keep it up!	Anonymous
	Work done at parker complex is very much needed and glad to see the partnerships that the county has made to make this happen	Anonymous
	I would love to have the ability to rent paddle boards /canoes/ kayaks and use them locally without driving to Ocean City or Delaware to engage in an activity that could maximize our local resources. I would share this activity with friends or family that visit.	Anonymous
	Available recreation options are a quality of living issue that many factors into their decision to purchase a home and live in the county. The three needs noted above are in need of the county's attention.	Anonymous

We thoroughly enjoyed our experience with basketball with Crossover for my child. Thank you so much, sorry it was cut short. But great experience while it lasted. We appreciate the opportunity.	Anonymous
I love the Pickleball courts being added to the county. I would love to see more courts in the future! Thank you!	Anonymous
My family loves the twisty windy mountain bike / running trails at naylor mill- please more like that!!!	Anonymous
They need land for the skateboarders and the unlicensed dirt bike motorcycle riders	Anonymous
The county needs a public pool badly. The only option available is the Y, and there are limited swim opportunities because the swim team dominates the schedule.	Anonymous
I love running out there. And participating in great races there such as the Pemberton24	Anonymous
Pickleball is growing so fast in this area as in all over the country. Pickleball complex would not only add more places to play, but a drastic increase in more players playing and revenue for the county with playing fees and tournaments.	Anonymous
Camping areas including RV grounds with electricity, showers etc. will bring tourists. We are less than an hour from the Atlantic ocean, and well designed camping sites will add to the local economy.	Anonymous
The Westside Community Center has been slowly dwindling for quite some time. The youth as well as the parents in the area really need an after school program and other physical activities to give the kids something productive to do with their time. Keeping kids busy and healthy will hopefully help them transition into a productive active adulthood.	Anonymous
An indoor recreation facility for sports would be a great addition to the community.	Anonymous
The outdoors aspects of our region and the parks have made this pandemic manageable w small children. It's a great resource ,and happy place for families!	Anonymous
An county indoor youth sports facility is very important to my family. A county aquatic facility is also very important to my family	Anonymous
More and cleaner bathrooms.	Anonymous
I am an avid pickleball player and well connected with the Salisbury people that play. There are a lot but other than North Lake Park, not permanent courts. I think the addition of 4 dedicated courts would go a long way in the area.	Anonymous
Several prime locations for kayaking could use launch ramps alongside the standard boat ramps similar to barren creek boat ramp.	Anonymous
I would really like to see some soccer fields designated for the county. Some with lights...not just the outfield of softball fields. Also, it's imperative that the county have an indoor soccer facility. Even Somerset County has an indoor soccer program. While I know that USSSA is very important to our community, soccer is growing in the area.	Anonymous
Expand the hike/run trail systems. A bike trail flow park. The only lengthy trail is Algonquin in Pocomoke.	Anonymous
Potential to partner with a local organization to maximize participation and resources, short and long term . . .	Anonymous
Menâ s basketball leagues are needed or at least times for open gym.	Anonymous
Continue to expand and develop privates warf. Also have dog park at pemberton and enforce dog leash laws	Anonymous

	I am more concerned about the preservation of agricultural land instead of the non-stop building of new developments - at least institute zoning requiring larger lots on some of them. The roads can't support this unplanned, out of control building boom.	Anonymous
	trash accumulating again in Pemberton Park, especially around Wetlands Overlook.	Anonymous
	make use of the land already purchased through open space	Anonymous
	Acquisition of the wooded area immediately adjacent to the Pemberton Park entrance road should be a priority to preserve the viewshed of the river overlooks. Also, acquisition of the marsh and beach between the Roaring Point campground and Roaring Point Park. Linear parks and trails along waterways should be promoted to enhance walking.	Anonymous
	Please consider how Covid-19 in 2020-2021 has effected the use of Parks and Recreation facilities.	Anonymous
	Disc golf is growing faster then most if not all sports today. There are plenty of opportunities such as Northern Delaware, several state parks in PA has two championship disc golf courses all within their parks, Cordorus and Gifford Pinchot state parks. Charlotte NC has many courses within 30 miles and has hosted World Championships several times.	Anonymous
	The sport of disc golf is one of the fastest growing sports in the world, and this area is no exception. The course at Schumaker Park is wonderful, however it can become congested especially during the summer. An additional disc golf course in the county would really help to alleviate some of this congestion as well as give us a new place to play.	Anonymous
	More disc golf! I play disc golf at Schumaker every day in the summer and anytime I have daylight in the winter. The amount of new people Ive seen playing during the pandemic has been huge. Adults, college kids, families with children- the increase in use has been very noticeable and more courses would be awesome for everyone.	Anonymous
	Limited areas to go hiking In Wicomico County. Lack of bike trails. What ever happened to bike trail proposed from Mardela Springs to Salisbury?	Anonymous
	The focus should be on maintenance upgrade and improvement of existing facilities. It seems like the County is willing to spend money to acquire new property and improve it, but does not spend money in maintaining or improving the recreation facilities that it presently owns.	Anonymous
	Trails of 1+ miles would be a very welcome addition in the area.	Anonymous
	Since Henry Parker is now all baseball fields I would love to see more soccer fields. Soccer is a huge sport around here but there are not many fields	Anonymous
	I want our soccer fields back. Soccer has taken a back seat to baseball and softball. It's not fair to the kids that are here year round putting funds into the county budget to have their fields taken away then plopped in a muddy hole in the outfield of a baseball softball facility. We had four amazing fields with lights, bleachers, plenty of room,	Anonymous
	We have overspend on parks and rec. The real need is more funding for schools and roads, not more feel good stuff.	Anonymous
	I would love to see more indoor recreational spaces for children to participate in sports in the colder winter months.	Anonymous
	separate bike paths from traffic. dedicated paths	Anonymous
	My kids play sports year round and it would be nice to have a facility to make winter sports easier.	Anonymous

Indoor space should be a priority	Anonymous
Develop long trails suitable for long distance running and walking away from traffic, in the Salisbury area	Anonymous
We desperately need an outdoor public pool! We travel to Ocean Pines a few times each summer to visit their public outdoor pool. This would be a great source of revenue from the county, provide safe activity for thousands of families, and improve quality of life, and attract new residents. The site of the old mall would be a great spot.	Anonymous
Additional parks and green spaces would make an immediate improvement to the quality of life in the County.	Anonymous
Take care of the facilities Wicomico has first.	Anonymous
Excellent work with existing properties that I frequent. Would love to see new land acquisition to open new possibilities!	Anonymous
As a member of the WestSide, indoor facilities can use improvement to better serve the community and make the current facility more appealing. Add a kitchenette, upgrade bathrooms, improve the overall appeal as a multi-purpose room with senior use in mind... not just basketball. Think sound proofing panels.	Anonymous
Empty retail spaces continue to sit empty while known wildlife areas are being torn down. There is little known public awareness about this and we cannot speak up until after the fact and it's too late.	Anonymous
We appreciate the Parks and Recreation keeping up the Westside areas. The following would be improvements: Restrooms at Nanticoke harbor replacing the porta-potties. Park benches at Roaring Point park and Nanticoke harbor.	Anonymous
Cedar Hill could use pickle ball courts or at least stripe existing tennis courts for dual use.	Anonymous
At Wetipquin you have people on the boat ramp and bridge fishing. Where it is dangerous but yet have a community donated dock from the 50's that is falling to pieces into the water. Repair what you have 1st!	Anonymous
There are no good public campgrounds in Wicomico County. It would be nice to camp at places like Roaring Point or the new Pirates Wharf.	Anonymous
It would be nice for the county to update the ball fields in the tri town area	Anonymous
What is needed is a couple of towers for Westside Communications	Anonymous
more has to be done to enforce dumping, littering, etc as its an epic issue in Wicomico county and Salisbury area	Anonymous
Nice pickleball courts could help bring tournament here	Anonymous
There seems to be places already not fully utilized, rather than buying more land. The tennis court in the park could be marked for Pickleball for minimal money.	Anonymous
We definitely need Pickleball Courts! It has really grown in our area which require additional courts. Thank You!	Anonymous
There is a growing community of pickleball enthusiasts, consisting of younger adults all the way through those in their 80's. The potential for further development into the youth population, is incredible. It's a sport that transcends age due to the versatility of playing singles or doubles and being able to keep playing well into older age.	Anonymous

Would love to see programs on the Westside for seniors that are low cost. We also need programs for kids.	Anonymous
Keep up the good work!! Thank you!!	Anonymous
Outdoor and Indoor pickleball courts would be of huge importance with bathroom facilities near by.	Anonymous
Spending time outdoors is great for health. It is important to assure that all residents of Wicomico County have access to parks and other areas to be outdoors.	Anonymous
Pickle ball has become very popular, so it would be good to go to a park to play, as you see in other states!	Anonymous
Pickle Ball has permitted senior citizens to work toward maintaining good physical conditioning with various levels of play available. Outdoor courts would be a perfect addition for fair weather play for all ages, including our senior population.	Anonymous
Having spaces for all ages helps us socially and physically.	Anonymous
Please offer indoor space for basketball for our youth. Specifically the civic center for the Crossover program. Thank you!	Anonymous
Please add more pickleball.courts. Thanks	Anonymous
What happened to the West Metro park?	Anonymous
Consider creating kayak/canoe "trails", at parks and boat launching sites.	Anonymous
We need more areas like Pemberton Park and fields for outdoor sports practice. Also more dog parks that don't flood. The new one downtown is a great addition.	Anonymous
Pickleball is a growing sport. It serves people of all ages and gender. Particularly for seniors it provides exercise and social opportunities. It is a great alternative for people who played tennis but now unable to run as much as tennis requires. Please consider pickleball in your plans. Thank you	Anonymous
We have all these baseball/softball fields and no football field. Its kind of pointless to call the Henry Parker sports complex when it only provides one sport. There is a few local youth football teams in Wicomico. It would be so beneficial to have a football field for our youth to play. Need updated playgrounds and indoor basket	Anonymous
Look at the development of inland Virginia Beach with youth sports complexes. Our family is down their 5-6 times a year for LARGE tournaments. Shame we have no turf complexes here except baseball / softball diamonds. In my opinion this is driving millions of dollars of off season tourism money out of town.	Anonymous
These types of activities are very important for children and adults as they provide and encourage activities that promote exercise especially now.	Anonymous
Being a resident of the east side, we would like to see the Adkins Mill Park receive updates to the trails, drive ways. Also, with the house being demolished it would be nice to have a small playground installed (swings, slide). Thank you for considering.	Anonymous
There are many people enjoying pickleball in the community, however, there is non outdoor facilities available for people in the community.	Anonymous
With everything going on like the pandemic, more facilities would allow more space so that kids and spectators can attend sporting events	Anonymous
We need to ensure that we are partnering with local nonprofit baseball organizations to host more local tournaments at HPAC. The softball tournaments for adults may be a solid draw, but they can be an impediment to our youth development through the	Anonymous

game of baseball. Let's make sure that we are supporting the Eastern Shore's rich baseball heritage.	
This county really needs to invest in batting cages. I have not seen any in this area and so many kids play softball/baseball that cages for both would be great	Anonymous
If there is camping in Wicomico County, I am unsure where it is. The baseball fields in Fruitland need to be maintained. Baseball Fields 6, 7, and 8 in Fruitland get used a lot.	Anonymous
Please consider a rails to trails along the abandoned tracks from Salisbury to Mardell. It would be a great addition to the trail system that Salisbury is building. It would provide a safe biking linear park for elderly and families with children to bike and walk. That is currently lacking in the soucne.	Anonymous
More public access points for forest walks and waterways is important, these spaces can be turned into parks, but do not need to be developed in a large way. Low-impact tourism that highlights nature, not human technology, would be most ideal.	Anonymous
We desperately need more well-maintained green space in lower-income neighborhoods and minority neighborhoods, for all the mental, emotional, and physical health benefits they bring and for building vibrant, strong, caring communities.	Anonymous
Wicomico Co. needs a clean pool, both indoor and outdoor for lap swimmers. Also, Falcons Field needs a way drain water off their fields.	Anonymous
I should say that land should be acquired to preserve natural habitat and keep the beauty of the Eastern Shore intact - not "developed" and turned into ball fields and housing. We have enough ball fields. We need wild space residents can explore and wildlife can live in, and we need to preserve our trees and clean waterways.	Anonymous
Why not make the Fruitland area a destination as well as Henry Parker for Softball and Baseball?? We have the fields, the benches, the concession stand the parking but the baseball fields are in bad shape.If tourism is as important as everyone says then keep the fields nice and have those tournaments there instead of Berlin, Princess Anne etc.	Anonymous
There is a need for more ADA boat ramps (or sandy launch sites) on both shorelines of the Wicomico River.	Anonymous
Community, especially youth, need access to swimming and beach facilities. Swimming is an essential life skill and this is a water based recreation area. Recreational attendants as well as lifeguards are also excellent summer employment for 14 to 18 year olds (High School).	Anonymous
More Pickleball courts	Anonymous
With the rumors of crown selling and closing maybe while interest rates are down the county should build a huge indoor facility.	Anonymous
It would be great if there were a few different area pools that families could go to that donâ t cost a fortune.	Anonymous
Any land acquired should be of a multi use area similar to that in other counties hunting and walking Baltimore county as example	Anonymous
We need more undeveloped, natural land. Land for nature walks and preservation, not so much large athletic areas.	Anonymous

	I especially would appreciate a rails-to-trails program for extended, safe biking with, ideally, areas to camp along the way.	Anonymous
	When the county acquires land for recreation it should be to protect it from commercial and residential development and preserve our rural character.	Anonymous
	Baseball fields 6, 7, and 8 in Fruitland are in terrible shape. They are right across the street from Fruitland Little League, but they are owned by the county, so alas, they are not their responsibility. If we could revamp those fields (new mounds, new grass, removal of stickers), that would be amazing. Thanks!	Anonymous
	More forested areas for hiking, bird watching, etc. that ARE NOT managed for the timber industry, i.e. loblolly pine plantations. We need more natural diversity in the parks.	Anonymous
	We are presently using Kilbourne, Winterplace and Billy Jackson courts on a regular basis when weather cooperates.	Anonymous
	It would be wonderful to have more pickleball courts that have permanent nets.	Anonymous
	I like the natural look and feel of the parks	Anonymous
	We have 16 tennis courts at SU but they are charging \$330.00 per semester. They have indoor tennis and racquet ball courts and they charge for those facilities as well. Also it's a public institution, but still they want to charge.	Anonymous
	we need connectivity between recreation areas, more access along the river, more recreation access for people w/o cars, more wild & natural areas	Anonymous
	Love the recent art in Park would love to see Bocce courts in park . all ages and ability can play	Anonymous
	More baseball/softball fields for games and practices would be beneficial and would get a lot of use.	Anonymous
	Would love to see more public water access (for non-motorized vessels) in the area to access our beautiful waterways. Also, as a paddleboarder, floating docks are definitely appreciated for easy launching.	Anonymous
	For me there is a tradeoff in acquiring land for recreation if we are also facing challenges around affordable housing (especially in areas with high walkability and connectivity). Additionally, it's critical that there is access to recreation space not JUST around high income areas (City Park is an example of this).	Anonymous
	More trails please!	Anonymous
	Work to connect existing facilities (trails, including mountain bike trails) to DNR land in Pocomoke State Forest (approx. 18,000 acres) and Nature Conservancy land	Anonymous
	Can we get a canoe/kayak launch at poplar hill facility?	Anonymous
	Walking trails, playgrounds, bike racks, picnic tables, benches, trash/recycling receptacles and porta-potties should be available at nearly every park. Some should be ADA compliant, some should be dog friendly and some should have unique recreational opportunities (volleyball, badminton, horseshoes, game tables and corn hole).	Anonymous
	I have been playing pickleball for only 3 years but can see how the sport is rapidly growing in the area.	Anonymous
	Open space benefits everyone! Thanks for all your good work.	Anonymous
	Need more recreation areas and facilities more accessible to low income middle class people/children geared toward their interest	Anonymous

Indoor soccer type facility to include other sports is highly needed. We have one private owned in the area & its awful. Also non athletic experiences to offer: arts, cooking, crafting(specific) geared up to including teens.	Anonymous
We really need a public pool in town. An ice skating facility like the one in Talbot would also be HUGE. I drive an hour just to skate there in winter.	Anonymous
More bike trails. Trails along the river.	Anonymous
Please remove Stones and rocks from walking paths and trails: NOT HANDICAPPED ACCESSIBLE WALKING.	Anonymous
Essentials should come first. ie School maintenance. Boat ramps & kayak put ins. are important to me. Some just need a little TLC.	Anonymous
I have to drive quite a distance to find a nice park where I feel safe walking. Pemberton scares me now. Cherry beach is a little park. I drive to Delaware to walk for distance. Or Dorchester County. Wicomico has little to offer a hiker. Being here since 1976 and a hiker, i am well aware. I've walked thousands of miles in my life.	Anonymous
The playground at shumaker is a huge disappointment. Even after replacing the old equipment. Feel like we don't get a nice playground because we are not inner city and we try to not impose on frisbee golf	Anonymous
Our parks and greenspaces are so important. It's so sad that we do not have any public pools. We are still suffering from a segregated community.	Anonymous
I work at Holly Center and pre-Covid I took clients to Wicomico county parks weekly, winter place to feed the fish, the zoo and city park for walks, ball fields to see games, Adkins mill pond for its nature trail and I like to canoe in the pond. Your facilities are great, parking is plentiful and staff are very helpful! Thanks for all u do!	Anonymous
Why is it taking so long to cut the trees with the xâ s??	Anonymous
Please replace the bench which used to sit at the waterfront in Roaring Point.	Anonymous
We need more playgrounds that are actually updated and up kept with swings and such on east side! We need more fishing areas & more areas for nature walks! Mill pond needs to be fixed up! We need willards park to be fixed! We need a better and bigger play park on Main Street not just the baseball fields! Update Pemberton & bring more areas for all!	Anonymous
I think an outdoor swimming area is greatly needed. Years ago Schumaker Pond was popular but now is unsafe to swim in. I think a new area (made safe for all) would be popular.	Anonymous
While I'm not against development, we are destroying natural land and wilderness at alarming rates, destroying habitats of many animals that are an essential part of the balance of nature. In particular I refer to clearing forested areas to make room for us and displace the animals that already live there. How greedy we are!	Anonymous
we need more activities for young children	Anonymous
My biggest concern in areas to fish, fresh waster, in areas around the county. It seems like local ponds and waterways that are great spots to throw a line, have become tied up with legalities regarding HOAS, public land sold to private entities. Or just the lack of areas to be a responsible fresh water fisherman.	Anonymous
There is men's league going on currently at Crown that I'm apart. Slowly growing up to 6 teams now could easily be 7, an includes students from Salisbury U. It gives individuals in the area something an a sport to play. But it's not a legitimate hockey rink. Play would be better if on an actual rink an more attractive to more or new patrons	Anonymous

It would be great if y'all could help the Salisbury zoo get it's accreditation back and get it operating all days of the week again	Anonymous
What is this last question: you don't ask do you want more development, do you want more recreation or do you want neither. People now say more recreation and you will interpret it as more development	Anonymous
Would love to see more bike trail through the county	Anonymous
A nice botanical garden or arboretum would be welcomed.	Anonymous
Not many things to do in Allen ares	Anonymous
There should be more biking trails in the area	Anonymous
there is no real place that disabled people can go fishing or camping. no ramps even the river front have no wheelchair access we should not have to go all the way to bivalve to go fishing.	Anonymous
Would love to see a park and picnic area near the river in Salisbury near the new roundabout. All along the river from there to the zoo and warduseum could be more developed, especially thru downtown.	Anonymous
We NEED to HAVE to preserve our outdoor areas. The shore is known for our eco-tourism and unfortunately there are to many apartments and housing developments taking over our lands. Please make green spaces a priority. If we continue to over develop there will be nothing special about our area. Our heritage and way of life will be lost and diminishe	Anonymous
Would love to have more walking parks/trails!!	Anonymous
There are no playgrounds near Quantico(. There is supposed to be a public playground off of Nanicoke road, but there is no public parking available at that playground. It is really just for the development nearby. If it receives public funding, it should have parking for everyone who wants to go. We really enjoy Pemberton. Thank you	Anonymous
We need a public pool!	Anonymous
In the 50's the community members of Wetipquin built and donated a dock at Wetipquin Creek to the county. It is falling down and polluting the water plus is a real safety hazzard as people are forced to fish from the bridge to stay out of the way of those using the boat dock. When fishing from the bridge you have vehicles whizzing past.	Anonymous
No good walking trails. I want to walk more than 3 miles. Need more access to water and clean beaches.	Anonymous
A printed or downloadable digital booklet that lists all recreational sites with varying degrees of accessibility would help a lot.The extent of each site's accessibility or lack there of should be described clearly. As a paralyzed wheelchair user, I have struggled to find this info. I even called DNR & asked info, but they were unable to help.	Anonymous
We really need a community swimming pool.	Anonymous
Need to take care of the drainage ditches in the parks in neighborhoods. Breeding grounds for mosquitoes.	Anonymous
More Disc golf options. Schu is great but I think there are opportunities elsewhere. It is a cheap sport and would be great to have options around wicomico	Anonymous
"It is the marriage of the soul with nature that makes the intellect fruitful, and gives birth to imagination."	Anonymous

	Henry David Thoreau	
	Disc golf has done wonders to improve the safety and quality of the schumaker park. As the sport is having exponential growth due to covid, it would serve to have more parks to capture the growth. Ideal would be a park in winterplace.	Anonymous
	Co has lots of good parks/ land. Use money to improve, not buy more.	Anonymous
	Need more information on where people with disabilities can go or more wheel chair accessible enjoyment locations are	Anonymous
	I'm currently the Professional Disc Golf state Coordinator for Maryland. Also, the Team Captain for Latitude 64 out of Sweden. I love the course at schumaker park.. Salisbury really needs a smaller stile course that takes up little land for your younger players. I've been told one is in the works. I would love to help out. 443-235-4227	Anonymous
	Consulting road bikers for route suggestions would be a good idea. Then create a road biking Wicomico county map tourism brochure. I would be happy to help.	Anonymous
	A dog park in a corner of the Boundless playground on poplar hill and 50(ish) would be nice. A lot of dogs in the neighborhood and a lot of space there.	Anonymous
	Emphasis should be on preserving natural areas, and low impact development that will make areas more accessible, e.g. bike trails, not paved parking lots	Anonymous
	A championship level Disc Golf Course would be awesome to have. I think a great location would be the woods that are connected on the west side of the Henry S. Parker Sports Complex.	Anonymous
	Use of any land acquired should prioritize habitat and conservation or enhancement of natural areas.	Anonymous
	More disc golf	Anonymous
	Humans need to spend more time outside, in nature. Population growths make some of the trails, picnic, playground areas crowded. We need a little more separation for example, at Schumaker Park from the disc golf for walkers. Thank you for surveying your customers!	Anonymous
	Please make more walking trails	Anonymous
	I'd just like to see a revamp of existing places, or maybe the information on how to act find them	Anonymous
	It is imperative the County improve facilities and work on a way to address how haggard our areas look overall. I don't feel as though the park or other recreational areas are in a condition safe enough for my family to enjoy. It extremely sad and I'm more than happy to volunteer to make the area better.	Anonymous
	I thank no the county is doing a fantastic job improving and maintaining the facilities	Anonymous
	Lived here for 25 years and no County pool or water park. Come from Indiana. Every small town has their own city pool. The area where the old mall was would be perfect. Build a city/county pool/water park. Don't make it really expensive to get in. Sell season passes.	Anonymous
	There are no places safe to hike for distance in Wicomico county. No river walks like Cambridge, or Stephenville. No place to safely park and go walking like Sussex	Anonymous

county has. None. No nice trails anywhere. Like Trap Pond, Pemberton is not safe. Winterplace is almost Worcester count to tri area. Buy the old Vienna bridge rd.	
I love the county parks. I don't think we need any more just important to maintain. Thank you!	Anonymous
Reduce/minimize non-pervious surfaces and improve stormwater runoff Procure and agreement with County School Board for recreation use by the public after hours , like in Fairfax County, VA. This would increase tennis courts, ballfields, volleyball, etc. without new construction.	Anonymous
Considering the pandemic, please continue to address outdoor activities and indoor activities. Pool opportunities, horse trails with horses offered could be a great benefit while still maintaining current spaces.	Anonymous
Wetipquin park needs updated	Anonymous
The Westside Park has NEVER been built. Get it done!!!	Anonymous
I am always happy to see protected land, historical markers and buildings/spaces. But we are TIRED of being lectured to about slavery!! It seems like everywhere now is turning into an opportunity to wag a finger at white people and tell us how bad we are because of a bad idea from hundreds of years ago. Keep "white shaming" OUT of parks, please!	Anonymous
More low impact eco-tourism nature parks. Forest preservation and re-forestation. More parks like Pirates Wharf. Water access to the Wicomico, more publically accessible lakes, ponds for fishing, etc. ADA accessible walkways in the natural areas.	Anonymous
Please make a hard path to the upper pavilion at the Cedar Hill Park. It needs to be accessible to all.	Anonymous
We need more public access to fishing areas are overgrown not taken care of. In some areas it is unsafe to access the fishing waterways due to overgrowth. Maintenance along the city waterways and open fishing areas would be great for family fun and individuals alike	Anonymous
Went to the park at Nanticoke harbor. Thrash 10 feet from the can. (Really) dog feces everywhere. Let's remember to respect our parks	Anonymous
More parks on the west side please, more an equestrian center and more football/soccer fields. Nothing is wheelchair accessible, what are you doing?	Anonymous
Wicomico County needs to build a Facility with multiple regulation soccer fields for public access and tournaments	Anonymous
1.) I would love to be able to rent paddleboards, canoes, kayaks to use on our local waterways. It could be a source of revenue in the future. 2.) An affordable community pool with access to swimming lessons would be a boon to our community.	Anonymous
ALL THESE PARKS HAS BASEBALL FEILDS BUT NOT ONE HAVE A FOOTBALL FEILD TO START A FOOTBALL ORGANIZATION IN THE AREA	Anonymous
Wetipquin Park is in dire need of updating and repairs. A pavilion would be nice. Repairing the pier and boat docks are really needed. This park is in such disarray compared to the other area parks.	Anonymous

APPENDIX B

Municipal and Board of Education Comments



City of Salisbury

Jacob R. Day, Mayor

October 19, 2021

Wicomico County Recreation, Parks & Tourism
500 Glen Avenue
Salisbury, MD 21804

Attn: Steve Miller, Director

Re: City of Salisbury priorities for the 2022 LPPRP

Dear Mr. Miller,

The City of Salisbury formally submits this letter as record of our municipal comments for the 2022 Wicomico County Land Preservation Parks and Recreation Plan ("LPPRP"). The City's comments will address policy recommendations and capital improvements within the *Recreation and Park System* as well as *Natural Resource Conservation*.

Recreation and Parks System

RP-1: Prepare a City Parks and Open Spaces Master Plan.

The City is currently developing an inventory its parks in preparation for a comprehensive City-wide Parks and Open Spaces Master Plan. The Master Plan will identify specific funding priorities and upgrades for City spaces and will include a process for the community to provide feedback and input on park planning. The City is anticipating a comprehensive list of parks projects as a result of this planning process for the 2027 LPPRP.

Action Items:

- Spatial analysis of existing parks throughout the City in relation to neighborhoods and areas of interest.
- Prioritize park expansion and pocket parks in existing neighborhoods and future growth areas.

RP-2: Creation of North Prong Park.

The North Prong Park is a high priority project and will be located on the west banks of the North Prong of the Wicomico River between Route 50 and Rose Street. The total area will be approximately 14 acres.

Action Items:

- Acquire land within the proposed North Prong Park area.
- Prepare formal design concept.



City of Salisbury

Jacob R. Day, Mayor

RP-3: Improve utilization of parks and waterways.

Action Items:

- Providing safe access to the waterways from neighborhoods will promote healthy lifestyles.
- Explore opportunities to create an urban wilderness water trail from the Wicomico Tourism Center at Leonard's Mill pond to the Rose Street boat ramp.

RP-4: Expand recreational opportunities at Community Centers.

The City recently opened two Community Centers on Truitt Street and Newton Street.

RP-5: Maintain and expand Community Gardens.

The City currently has five Community Gardens; the continued maintenance and creation of more is a priority.

RP-6: Continue to improve access for disabled users compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act ("ADA") at all City Parks.

RP-7: Continue to update and replace existing playground equipment, fields, and courts.

The City will seek Program Open Space and Community Parks & Playground funding in upcoming fiscal cycles for these improvements.

Action Items:

- Assess and prioritize existing equipment, fields, and courts for repair and/or replacement.

RP-8: City Park light project.

Action Items:

- Replace the existing City Park lights to conform with City design standards.

Natural Resource Conservation

N-1: Implement adopted Environmental Task Force Report.

Action Items:

- Increase tree plantings and canopy using the City's Tree Canopy Study and by reviewing existing landscape requirements in the City Code. Explore grants and provide incentives to install islands or grates for tree plantings for existing residential and commercial properties that do not currently have a sufficient tree canopy.
- Develop a native plant list to be required for future land development projects and policies to address non-native plantings.
- Improve and increase riparian buffers on City owned property and encourage homeowners to



City of
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implement strategies using native plantings to prevent erosion, runoff, and other pollutants from entering the watershed.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide input on the LPPRP. Should you have any questions do not hesitate to call Amanda Pollack, the Director of the Infrastructure and Development Department at 410-548-3170.

Thank you,

Jacob R. Day
Mayor



DR. MICAH STAUFFER
CHIEF FINANCE &
OPERATIONS OFFICER

WICOMICO COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS DIVISION OF BUSINESS & OPERATIONS

P.O. Box 1538, 2424 NorthGate Drive, Salisbury, MD 21802-1538
410.677.4562 (Office) 410.677.4444 (Fax)

April 28, 2022

Mr. Steve Miller, Director
Wicomico County Recreation, Parks & Tourism
500 Glen Avenue
Salisbury, MD 21804

Dear Mr. Miller,

In reviewing the County's draft of the 2022 Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan (LPPRP). There were a few areas for additional comment as it pertains to Wicomico County Public Schools (WCPS).

- Page 4-12, paragraph 2, under *Board of Education Recreation and Amenities*. The first sentence in that paragraph notes that "The Wicomico County Board of Education inventory consists of 26 sites". For clarification purposes there are 24 school sites not including the County Stadium and Wicomico Early Learning Center. If you count the latter two listed sites, it would then be the equivalent of 26 WCPS sites.
- Page 4-26, Goals and Objectives, Land Acquisition – The Mason Dixon Complex in Delmar could be considered as a rehabilitation project in priority status with possible connections and usage by Delmar Elementary School (DES). For coordination purposes, WCPS's – Educational Facilities Master Plan (EFMP) has a Paving/Parking Lot project noted for this school. You may recall past discussions with you and/or your department concerning the DES parking situation as being overcrowded with vehicles backed up into the street. Utilizing the future Mason Dixon Complex parking area as DES staff parking provides for this site to be opened up to multiple users and mutually beneficial.
- Page 4-36, RP-7: Work collaboratively with the Board of Education to make public facilities reasonably available and affordable for programming needs. The last sentence under that section reads. "This may include the trading of space at Board of Education facilities for recreation programs and Department facilities (including the Youth & Civic Center) for Board of Education functions." We would sincerely appreciate the County's continued consideration regarding the WCPS Commencement ceremonies remaining a part of this collaborative work.

- The charted information located in Appendix C – LPPRP Inventory – Wicomico County - Parks and Recreation Inventory has some discrepancies under the Property Size (Acres) column. The table below lists what is currently noted on the LPPRP and the EFMP as acreage.

<i>Site Name</i>	<i>EFMP Acres</i>	<i>LPPRP Acres</i>
Beaver Run Elementary	17.92	16.16
Chipman Elementary❖	6.5	6.5
Delmar Elementary	10.2	5.24
East Salisbury Elementary❖	12.1	12.12
Fruitland Intermediate	10	9.17
Fruitland Primary❖	18	17.92
Glen Avenue Elementary	15	14.00
North Salisbury Elementary❖	8	7.72
Northwestern Elementary	11.48	13.50
Pemberton Elementary	18.78	8.61
Pinehurst Elementary	8.9	4.44
Prince Street Elementary	14.8	15.05
West Salisbury Elementary❖	14.11	14.13
Westside Intermediate	10.5	9.88
Westside Primary❖	18	18.00
Willards Elementary ❖	42	42.15
Bennett Middle ❖	35.38	35.30
Pittsville Elem/Middle❖	13.46	13.46
Salisbury Middle	75.68	53.26
Wicomico Middle	16	13.75
James M. Bennett High❖	69.26	69.18
Mardela Middle / High	39.79	37.76
Parkside High w/CTE❖	55.6	55.99
Wicomico High	62.1*	51.98**

❖ Lists no significant difference

*Not including County Stadium

** Includes County Stadium

In the Appendix C chart under the *NOTES*: column, it could be added that our school's gym and cafeteria areas are also utilized by the County in addition to the athletic fields, courts and playgrounds.

We appreciate your consideration in requesting and allowing us to submit comments for the 2022 Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan. If further information is needed concerning any of the items listed, please feel free to contact me at your convenience.

Sincerely,



Micah Stauffer, Ed.D.
Chief Finance and Operations Officer

APPENDIX C

Inventory

Map Key	Site Name:	Softball/ Baseball Fields Total	Softball/ Baseball Fields W/ Lights	Rectangle Fields (football/soccer/ lacrosse) Total	Rectangle Fields (football/soccer/ lacrosse) W/ Lights	Outdoor Basketball Courts Total	Outdoor Basketball Courts W/ Lights	Tennis Courts Total	Tennis Courts W/ Lights	Pickleball Courts Total	Pickleball W/ Lights	Golf Holes	Disc Golf Holes	Playgrounds	Pavilions	Swimming/ Pool Areas	Beach (Miles)	Nature Trails (Miles)	Boat Ramps	Boat Slips	Notes:
MAP_KEY	SITE_NAME																				
	<u>County Parks and Recreation</u>																				
34	Adkins Mill Park														1			0.50 Miles			
35	Billy Gene Jackson Park	1	0	1		2	2	2	2	4	4			1	1						
36	Bivalve Wharf																				
37	Cedar Hill Marina and Park	2		2		1		2		4				1	2	1	0.30 Miles	0.30 Miles	2	140	
38	Cedarhurst Park	1		1		1								1							
39	Centennial Village Playground							2						1							
40	Clara Road Beach															1	0.10 Miles				
41	Connelly Mill Park																				
42	Cope Bennett Park	1	1					1	0	2	0			1	1			0.09 Miles			
43	Coulbourne Mill Pond Recreation Area																				
44	Cove Road Beach															1	0.30 Miles				
45	Crooked Oak Playground			1		1		2						1							
46	Douglas Nichols Park (Allen Park)													1							
47	East Side Youth Sports Complex	4		1										1							
99	East Wicomico Little League	4												1							
48	Edgewood Park	1		1		1								1							
49	Emerson Holloway Park	1		1		2								1	1						
50	Gene Lowe Park			1		1								1							
51	Harmon Field	1				1								1							
52	Henry S. Parker Athletic Complex	9	6											2							One of the playgrounds is ADA.
53	Indian Village Playground	1		1		2								1							
54	Kilburnie Playground			1		1		1		2				1							
55	Leonards Mill Park	1		1										1	2			0.50 Miles			
56	Mason Dixon Sports Complex	4	2											1	1						
57	Nanticoke Park Recreation Area														1	1	0.60 Miles		2	68	
58	Nick Meyer Park	1		1		1		1						1	1						
59	Pemberton Historical Park																	5.00 Miles			
60	Perdue Stadium	1	1																		
61	Pirates' Wharf Park																				
62	Riverside Boat Ramp																		2		
63	Roaring Point Park															1	0.80 Miles	0.25 Miles			
64	San Domingo Playground	1		1		1								1	1						
65	Schumaker Park												18	1	2			0.30 Miles	1		Soft launch site
66	Tyaskin Recreation Area														1	1	0.04 Miles				

[illegible]

APPENDIX C
LPPRP Inventory - Wicomico
County

Parks and Recreation Inventory			Outdoor Recreation Amenities:								Field/Facility Based Recreation Amenities:						
Map Key	Site Name:	Property Size (Acres)	Outdoor Recreation Area (acres):	Natural Areas	Water Access	Picnic Facilities	Trails	Hunting/Fishing	Other	Field/Facility Recreation Area (acres)	Sports Fields	Playground/Play Structure	Basketball	Tennis	Activity Building/Recreation Center	Other	Notes:
MAP_KEY	SITE_NAME	PROP_ACRE S	OUTDR_REC_AREA	NAT_AREA	WTR_ACCESS	PICNIC	TRAILS	HUNT_FISH		FLD_FCY_AREA	SPT_FLDS	PLYGRND	BB_COURT	T_COURT	INDOOR_CNTR	OTHER	NOTES
	County Parks and Recreation																
34	Adkins Mill Park	33.70	33.59	X	X	X	X	F		0.11							Recreation park includes short trails on-site; poplular bird-watching location
35	Billy Gene Jackson Park	33.65	20.36	X	X	X		F		13.29	X	X	X		X	Pickleball lines added to existing tennis courts	Park property includes the Salvation Army - West recreation facility (privately operated)
36	Bivalve Wharf	0.04	0.04	X	X			F		0.00							Small wharf area used for fishing
37	Cedar Hill Marina and Park	88.66	75.43	X	X	X	X	F		13.23	X	X	X			Restrooms include shower facilities	One of two County operated marinas; park includes athletic fields, basketball & tennis courts and a playground/pavilion
38	Cedarhurst Park	5.83	2.06			X				3.77	X	X					Neighborhood park includes playground and softball/soccer field for recreation
39	Centennial Village Playground	2.55	0.00			X				2.55	X	X	X				Neighborhood park includes playground; basketball & tennis courts and open space for field sports
40	Clara Road Beach	0.66	0.66	X	X			F		0.00							Small beach area used for fishing
41	Connelly Mill Park	234.77	234.77	X						0.00							Property is adjacent to the Henry Parker Athletic Complex and was recently acquired; remains currently undeveloped
42	Cope Bennett Park	7.10	4.47	X		X	X	F		2.63	X	X		X		Two pickleball courts were added replacing one tennis court	Community park in Sharptown; lighted fields used for softball/soccer and includes playground and tennis court
43	Coulbourne Mill Pond Recreation Area	4.85	4.85	X	X			F		0.00							Pond area used for fishing
44	Cove Road Beach	1.25	1.25	X	X	X		F		0.00							Small beachfront property on the west side of the County;
45	Crooked Oak Playground	2.50	0.00			X				2.50	X	X	X				Neighborhood park includes playground, sports field, tennis and basketball courts
46	Douglas Nichols Park (Allen Park)	0.81	0.00	X	X	X		F		0.81		X					Small neighborhood park which includes a playground and water access
47	East Side Youth Sports Complex	11.81	2.52			X				9.29	X	X				Batting cages on site	Sports Complex serves as the primary home for Willards Little League
99	East Wicomico Little League	19.82	0.00			X				19.82	X	X					Little league complex serves as the primary home for East Wicomico Little League; adjacent to Winterplace Park/Wicomico Equestrian Center
48	Edgewood Park	12.00	0.00							12.00	X	X	X				Neighborhood park includes playground, sports field, and basketball court
49	Emerson Holloway Park	10.94	5.09			X				5.85	X	X	X				Neighborhood park includes playground, sports field, and basketball court
50	Gene Lowe Park	4.71	0.00							4.71	X	X	X				Neighborhood park includes playground, sports field, and basketball court
51	Harmon Field	3.17	0.00							3.17	X	X	X				Community park is adjacent to the YMCA property; softball field, playground and heavily used basketball court
52	Henry S. Parker Athletic Complex	47.57	0.00			X				47.57	X	X				Inclusive playground and sensory trail to be installed in 2021; batting cages on site	Premiere baseball/softball complex in the County system
53	Indian Village Playground	6.52	4.39			X				2.13	X	X	X				Neighborhood park includes playground, sports field, and basketball court
54	Kilburnie Playground	2.34	0.00			X				2.34	X	X	X			Two pickleball courts were added replacing one tennis court	Neighborhood park includes playground, basketball, tennis and pickle ball courts and a small open field
55	Leonards Mill Park	10.33	7.87	X	X	X	X	F		2.46	X	X				Includes horseshoe pits	Park is adjacent to the Wicomico Visitor Center operated by the County
56	Mason Dixon Sports Complex	13.18	0.00			X				13.18	X	X				Batting cages on site	Additional acreage was added in 2018 and 2020 to provide opportunities for future park enhancement; baseball/softball fields on site and playground/pavilion
57	Nanticoke Park Recreation Area	3.51	2.99	X	X	X		F		0.52							County operated marina used for commercial and private boats; small beach area for swimming
58	Nick Meyer Park	4.80	0.00			X				4.83	X	X	X			Includes horseshoe pits	Neighborhood park includes playground, sports field, tennis and basketball courts
59	Pemberton Historical Park	253.29	253.29	X	X	X	X	F		0.00					Education building, visitor center, Pemberton Cottage	Amphitheater recently added for educational groups and events	Regional park built on historical plantation; used for leisure recreation, environmental education and heritage tourism
60	Perdue Stadium	37.70	0.00							37.70	X						Minor league baseball stadium for Single A Orioles Affiliate
61	Pirates' Wharf Park	340.73	340.73	X	X	X	X	F		0.00							Property has been undeveloped since the 1990's; park development expected in 2021

62	Riverside Boat Ramp		1.03		1.03			X	X		F								Two boat ramps located near downtown Salisbury; includes ADA compliant floating dock
63	Roaring Point Park		30.74		30.74	X		X		X	F								Community park property located on the Nanticoke River; used for swimming and fishing
64	San Domingo Playground		20.29		15.17				X										Community park includes playground, sports field, and basketball court
65	Schumaker Park		11.85		9.73	X		X	X	X	F							18 hole disc golf course on site;	Regional park that includes both outdoor recreation areas and recreational amenities; park includes an 18 hole disc golf course
66	Tyaskin Recreation Area		0.75		0.75	X		X	X		F								Small beachfront property on the Nanticoke River; includes a pavilion, water access and fishing area
67	West Metro Core Park		100.00		100.00	X													Property is not developed and does not include any recreational amenities
68	West Side Community Center		5.50		4.43	X												X	Community Center includes one indoor basketball court and small classroom for activities
69	Wetipquin Boat Ramp		3.87		3.87	X		X	X		F								Boat ramp located on Wetipquin Creek; includes boat ramp and soft launch area for paddlers
70	Wicomico County Youth / Civic Center		18.72		0.00													X	Major public gathering venue in the County; Indoor arena and gymnasium spaces are also used for public recreation
71	Winterplace Park/Wicomico Equestrian Center		381.55		347.85	X			X	X									Sand volleyball courts are additional recreational amenities on Winterplace grounds;
																			County park located on the eastern part of Salisbury; Carriage House building and equestrian center are on site which are utilized for equestrian events and special events;
	TOTALS		1773.09		1507.93								265.19						

Map Key	Site Name:	Softball/ Baseball Fields Total	Softball/ Baseball Fields W/ Lights	Rectangle Fields (football/soccer/ lacrosse) Total	Rectangle Fields (football/soccer/ lacrosse) W/ Lights	Outdoor Basketball Courts Total	Outdoor Basketball Courts W/ Lights	Tennis Courts Total	Tennis Courts W/ Lights	Pickleball Courts Total	Pickleball W/ Lights	Golf Holes	Disc Golf Holes				Swimming/ Pool Areas	Beach (Miles)	Nature Trails (Miles)	Boat Ramps	Boat Slips	Notes:
MAP_KEY	SITE_NAME																					
	Municipal Parks																					
72	Boundless Park and Playground													1								Playground is ADA.
73	Cherry Beach													1	1	1	0.30 Miles	0.17 Miles		1		
74	Comfort Safety Zone Playground													1								
76	Downtown Salisbury Bark Park																					
75	Doverdale Playground	1		1		2								1	1							
77	Fruitland Recreation Park	8	3	1		1								1	1			0.50 Miles				
79	Gordy Park	4				2	2							1	1							
80	Johnson Lake Neighborhood Playground													1								
87	Johnson Pond																					Boat ramp already accounted for with Rose Street Boat Ramp
81	Lake Street Playground	1	1			2	2							1	1							
82	Mardela Boat Ramp																			1		
83	Mardela Springs Park Recreation Area	1	1			1								1	1							
84	Naylor Mill Park Recreation Area																	5.00 Miles				
86	Newton Playground													1								
85	Newton-Camden Tot Lot Park and Playground													1								
88	Riverwalk Park																	0.80 Miles				
89	Rose Street Boat Ramp at Johnson's Pond																			1		
90	Salisbury City Park and Zoo							4	4					2	1			3.10 Miles				
91	Salisbury Marina																				86	
92	Salisbury Pony League Park	1	1															0.80 Miles				
93	Salisbury Skate Park																					
94	Waterside Playground					2								1								
95	West Salisbury Little League	3																				
96	Willards Recreation Area/Park	1	1					2						1	1							
97	Elizabeth W Woodcock Park & Playground	1				1								1								Basketball court is dirt.
	TOTALS	21	7	2	0	11	4	6	4	0	0	0	0	16	8	1	0.30 Miles	10.37 Miles		3	86	154

APPENDIX C
LPPRP Inventory - Wicomico
County

Parks and Recreation Inventory		Outdoor Recreation Amenities:								Field/Facility Based Recreation Amenities:							
Map Key	Site Name:	Property Size (Acres)	Outdoor Recreation Area (acres):	Natural Areas	Water Access	Picnic Facilities	Trails	Hunting/Fishing	Other	Field/Facility Recreation Area (acres)	Sports Fields	Playground/Play Structure	Basketball	Tennis	Activity Building/Recreation Center	Other	Notes:
MAP_KEY	SITE_NAME	PROP_ACRE S	OUTDR_REC_AREA	NAT_AREA	WTR_ACCESS	PICNIC	TRAILS	HUNT_FISH		FLD_FCY_AREA	SPT_FLDS	PLYGRND	BB_COURT	T_COURT	INDOOR_CNTR	OTHER	NOTES
	Municipal Parks																
72	Boundless Park and Playground	2.06	0.00			X				2.06		X				Includes gazebo and community garden onsite	ADA Playground area in Salisbury
73	Cherry Beach	4.65	4.65	X	X	X	X	F		0.00		X					Community park in Sharptown; includes water access, natural areas, trails, fishing and a playground
74	Comfort Safety Zone Playground	0.29	0.00							0.29		X					Neighborhood park with playground equipment and benches
76	Downtown Salisbury Bark Park	0.30	0.30							0.00						Dog Park	Dog Park on the corner of W Main and Lake St near downtown
75	Doverdale Playground	2.60	0.00			X				2.60	X	X	X				Neighborhood park; includes playground, basketball courts, sports field, pavilion/picnic area and public restrooms
77	Fruitland Recreation Park	43.63	13.56	X		X	X			30.07	X	X	X			Para course walking trail winds through the main park area	Recreation Park includes Fruitland Little League complex and Fruitland Annex area with pavilion, ballfields, playground and basketball court
79	Gordy Park	3.87	0.00			X				3.87	X	X	X				Community park in Delmar; includes baseball fields, basketball courts, skate park and picnic areas; home facility for Delmar Little League
80	Johnson Lake Neighborhood Playground	0.14	0.00							0.14		X					Neighborhood park; includes playground and picnic areas
87	Johnson Pond	47.46	47.46	X	X			F		0.00							Pond area includes natural areas and fishing
81	Lake Street Playground	4.03	0.00			X				4.03	X	X	X				Neighborhood park; includes playground, basketball court, sports field, pavilion/picnic area and public restrooms
82	Mardela Boat Ramp	2.50	2.50	X	X	X		F		0.00							Boat ramp in Mardela Springs; includes picnic area, water access and fishing
83	Mardela Springs Park Recreation Area	3.22	0.00			X				3.22	X	X	X				Community park; includes sports field, basketball court, playground and picnic areas
84	Naylor Mill Park Recreation Area	97.32	0.00	X			X			97.32							County serving park in Salisbury; includes extensive walking trails and natural areas
86	Newton Playground	0.31	0.00			X				0.31		X					Neighborhood park; includes playground and picnic area
85	Newton-Camden Tot Lot Park and Playground	0.44	0.00			X				0.44		X				Includes gazebo and community garden onsite	Neighborhood park; includes playground and picnic area
88	Riverwalk Park	5.10	5.10	X	X		X	F		0.00						Amphitheater for public events	Riverwalk area in downtown Salisbury includes walking trails, natural areas and fishing
89	Rose Street Boat Ramp at Johnson's Pond	0.61	0.61		X			F		0.00							Local boat ramp with access to Johnson's Pond
90	Salisbury City Park and Zoo	91.36	87.03	X	X	X	X	F		4.33	X	X		X		Horseshoe pits included on the site in addition to community bandstand	Community Park; includes playground, tennis court, pavilion and picnic areas, walking trails, fishing area and restrooms
91	Salisbury Marina	6.45	6.45		X			F		0.00						Public access includes piers and kayak launch	Salisbury marina located at headwaters of the Wicomico River and the City of Salisbury
92	Salisbury Pony League Park	3.19	0.00				X			3.19	X						Neighborhood park; includes softball/bsaeball field
93	Salisbury Skate Park	0.50	0.00			X				0.50							Community skate park
94	Waterside Playground	4.09	0.00			X				4.09	X	X	X			Includes community garden onsite	Neighborhood park; includes playground, picnic areas and basketball court
95	West Salisbury Little League	10.18	0.00			X				10.18	X	X				Batting cages on site	Community park includes baseball fields, playground and picnic areas; home to West Salisbury Little League
96	Willards Recreation Area/Park	11.93	0.00			X				11.93	X	X	X	X			Neighborhood park in Willards; includes ballfield, basketball and tennis court, playground and picnic area
97	Elizabeth W Woodcock Park & Playground	1.21	0.00			X				1.21		X					Neighborhood park; includes playground and picnic area
	TOTALS	347.44	167.66							179.78							

Map Key	Site Name:	Softball/ Baseball Fields Total	Softball/ Baseball Fields W/ Lights	Rectangle Fields (football/soccer/ lacrosse) Total	Rectangle Fields (football/soccer/ lacrosse) W/ Lights	Outdoor Basketball Courts Total	Outdoor Basketball Courts W/ Lights	Tennis Courts Total	Tennis Courts W/ Lights	Pickleball Courts Total	Pickleball W/ Lights	Golf Holes	Disc Golf Holes	Playgrounds	Pavilions	Swimming/ Pool Areas	Beach (Miles)	Nature Trails (Miles)	Boat Ramps	Boat Slips	Notes:
MAP_KEY	SITE_NAME																				
	Natural Resource Lands Inventory																				
	Site Name:																				
D	Chesapeake State Forest																	36.15 Miles			
J	Ellis Bay Wildlife Management Area																	3.00 Miles	1		
I	Johnson Wildlife Management Area																				
K	Nanticoke River Wildlife Management Area																	6.20 Miles	4		Public boat ramps at various locations.
M	Wetipquin Wildlife Management Area																				
B	Pocomoke River Heritage Conservation Fund																				Property is not open to the public.
G	Powellville Forest																				Property is not open to the public.
F	Sharptown Dunes (Plum Ck. Heritage Cons. Fund)																	0.62 Miles			
E	Wicomico State Forest																	20.50 Miles			
H	Nassawango Creek Preserve																				***no Trails in Wicomico
C	Plum Creek Cedar Swamp Preserve																				
A	Upper Nanticoke Management Area																				For boat ramps, see Nanticoke River Wildlife Management Area.
L	Wetipquin Pond Management Area																				Property is not open to the public.
N	U.S. Department of the Interior																				Property is not open to the public.
	TOTALS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	66.47 Miles	5	0	5

L	Wetipquin Pond Management Area		40.30								Closed to the public
N	U.S. Department of the Interior		725.25								** no public access
	TOTALS		29720.25								

acres

Map Key	Site Name:	Softball/ Baseball Fields Total	Softball/ Baseball Fields W/ Lights	Rectangle Fields (football/soccer/ lacrosse) Total	Rectangle Fields (football/soccer/ lacrosse) W/ Lights	Outdoor Basketball Courts Total	Outdoor Basketball Courts W/ Lights	Tennis Courts Total	Tennis Courts W/ Lights	Pickleball Courts Total	Pickleball W/ Lights	Golf Holes	Disc Golf Holes	Playgrounds	Pavilions	Swimming/ Pool Areas	Beach (Miles)	Nature Trails (Miles)	Boat Ramps	Boat Slips	Notes:
MAP_KEY	SITE_NAME																				
	Quasi-Public Parks/Recreation Sites																				
	<i>NOTE: include only recreational acres open to the public in "property size" column</i>																				
	<i>NOTE: include only recreational acres open to the public in "property size" column</i>																				
2	Beaver Run Elementary School													2							
3	Bennett High School	2	1	6	1			6	6												
4	Bennett Middle School	2		1																	
5	Chipman Elementary School			1										1							
6	Delmar Elementary School			1		2	2							2							
7	East Salisbury Elementary School	1		1		2	2							1							
8	Fruitland Falcons Sports Complex	3		8	1									1	1			0.69 Miles			Nature trail is walking/joggin track with exercise stations.
78	Fruitland Tennis Courts							2	2												
9	Fruitland Intermediate School	1		1		1	1							1							
10	Fruitland Primary School			2										1							
11	Glen Avenue Elementary School	1				1	1							1							
13	Hebron Park	1	1			1	1	2						1	1						
12	Hebron Fairground and Park																				
14	JCC Park	1	1																		
15	Mardela High School	2		3				2													
16	North Salisbury Elementary School	1		1										1							
17	Northwestern Elementary School			1		1	1							1							
19	Parkside High School	2		4		0	0	5													
20	Pemberton Elementary School			1		1	1							1							
21	Pinehurst Elementary School	1		1		1	1							1							
23	Pittsville Playground and Park	1												1							
22	Pittsville Elementary & Middle School	1	1	2				2						1							
24	Prince Street Elementary School	3		1		1	1							1							
25	Salisbury Middle School	1		2																	
26	Salvation Army Boys and Girls Club	2		1	1																
27	Salvation Army West Salisbury Youth Club															1					
28	West Salisbury Elementary School			1										2	1						
29	Westside Intermediate School	1		1		1	1							1							
30	Westside Primary School			1										1							
31	Wicomico High School/ Memorial Field (Stadium)	2		3	1	1	1	4	4												
32	Wicomico Middle School	1						2													
33	Willards Elementary School			1										1							
98	Powellville VFW	1				1									1						

	TOTALS	31	4	45	4	14	13	25	12	0	0	0	0	23	4	1	0.00 Miles	0.69 Miles	0	0	143
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APPENDIX C
LPPRP Inventory - Wicomico
County

Parks and Recreation Inventory		Outdoor Recreation Amenities:								Field/Facility Based Recreation Amenities:							
Map Key	Site Name:	Property Size (Acres)	Outdoor Recreation Area (acres):	Natural Areas	Water Access	Picnic Facilities	Trails	Hunting/Fishing	Other	Field/Facility Recreation Area (acres)	Sports Fields	Playground/Play Structure	Basketball	Tennis	Activity Building/Recreation Center	Other	Notes:
MAP_KEY	SITE_NAME	PROP_ACRE S	OUTDR_REC_AREA	NAT_AREA	WTR_ACCESS	PICNIC	TRAILS	HUNT_FISH		FLD_FCY_AREA	SPT_FLDS	PLYGRND	BB_COURT	T_COURT	INDOOR_CNTR	OTHER	NOTES
	Quasi-Public Parks/Recreation Sites																
	NOTE: include only recreational acres open to the public in "property size" column																
	NOTE: include only recreational acres open to the public in "property size" column																Note: Wicomico County has an agreement with the Board of Education to utilize school recreation sites for public programming
2	Beaver Run Elementary School	16.16	0.00							16.16	X	X					Elementary School; includes sports field and playground
3	Bennett High School	69.18	0.00							69.18	X			X		Track	High School; Includes sports fields, tennis courts and track
4	Bennett Middle School	35.30	0.00							35.30	X					Concrete Track Surface	Middle School; includes sports fields
5	Chipman Elementary School	6.50	0.00							6.50	X	X					Elementary School; includes sports field and playground
6	Delmar Elementary School	5.24	0.00							5.24	X	X	X				Elementary School; includes sports field, playground and basketball court
7	East Salisbury Elementary School	12.12	0.00							12.12	X	X	X				Elementary School; includes sports field, playground and basketball court
8	Fruitland Falcons Sports Complex	22.47	0.00			X	X			22.47	X						Privately owned outdoor sports complex for lacrosse, soccer, field hockey and football; Existing MOU with the County to use for public programming and tournaments
78	Fruitland Tennis Courts	0.83	0.00							0.83				X			Tennis courts adjacent to Intermediate School
9	Fruitland Intermediate School	9.17	0.00							9.17	X	X	X				Elementary School; includes sports field, playground and basketball court
10	Fruitland Primary School	17.92	0.00							17.92	X	X					Elementary School; includes sports field and playground
11	Glen Avenue Elementary School	14.00	0.00							14.00	X	X	X				Elementary School; includes sports field, playground and basketball court
13	Hebron Park	6.56	0.00			X				6.56	X	X	X	X			Neighborhood park; includes sports field, tennis and basketball court, playground and picnic areas; also includes Lion's Club Community Center on the grounds. Owned by Lions Club - lease agreement with the County for public recreation programming
12	Hebron Fairground and Park	6.85	0.00			X				6.85						Outdoor amusement area	Neighborhood park owned by Lions Club which includes fairgrounds for annual fair
14	JCC Park	10.18	0.00							10.18	X						Neighborhood park owned by Board of Education and leased to the City of Salisbury for public programming
15	Mardela High School	37.76	0.00							37.76	X			X		Track	High School; Includes sports fields, tennis courts and track
16	North Salisbury Elementary School	7.72	0.00							7.72	X	X					Elementary School; includes sports field and playground
17	Northwestern Elementary School	13.50	0.00							13.50	X	X	x				Elementary School; includes sports field, playground and basketball court
19	Parkside High School	55.99	0.00							55.99	X		X	X		Concrete Track Surface	High School; includes sports fields, basketball court, tennis court and concrete surface track
20	Pemberton Elementary School	8.61	0.00							8.61		X	X				Elementary School; includes playground and basketball court; adjacent to JCC Park sports field
21	Pinehurst Elementary School	4.44	0.00							4.44	X	X	X				Elementary School; includes sports field, playground and basketball court
23	Pittsville Playground and Park	2.57	0.00			X				2.57	X	X	X				Neighborhood park owned by Pittsville Fire Department; includes sports field playground and picnic area and basketbal court; leased to County and Town of Pittsville for recreation programming
22	Pittsville Elementary & Middle School	13.46	0.00							13.46	X	X		X			Elementary and Middle School; includes sports fields, playground and tennis court
24	Prince Street Elementary School	15.05	0.00			X				15.05	X	X	X				Middle School; includes sports field, playground and basketball court
25	Salisbury Middle School	53.26	0.00							53.26	X					Gravel track surface	Middle School; includes sports fields and track
26	Salvation Army Boys and Girls Club	8.96	0.00							8.96	X				X		Salvation Army basketball court on site

27	Salvation Army West Salisbury Youth Club		4.60	0.00							4.60					X	Outdoor swimming pool	Salvation Army indoor basketball court and outdoor swimming pool. Existing MOU with the County as the property sits on County land.
28	West Salisbury Elementary School		14.13	0.00							14.13	X	X					Elementary School; includes playground area and open field space
29	Westside Intermediate School		9.88	0.00							9.88	X	X	X				Elementary School; includes sports field, playground and basketball cout
30	Westside Primary School		18.00	0.00							18.00	X	X	X				Elementary School; includes sports field, playground and basketball court
31	Wicomico High School & County Stadium		51.98	0.00							51.98	X		X	X			High School; includes sports fields, basketball court, tennis courts.
32	Wicomico Middle School		13.75	mn							13.75	X			X			Middle School; includes sports fields and tennis courts
33	Willards Elementary School		42.15	0.00							42.15	X	X	X				Elementary School; includes sports field,
98	Powellville VFW		4.69	0.00				X			4.69	X		X				Local VFW with Baseball field and basketball court. Indoor center can be rented; pavilion is intended for VFW members but field/court is available to the public.
	TOTALS		612.98	0.00							612.98							

APPENDIX C
LPPRP Inventory - Wicomico
County

Parks and Recreation Inventory		Outdoor Recreation Amenities:								Field/Facility Based Recreation Amenities:							
Map Key	Site Name:	Property Size (Acres)	Outdoor Recreation Area (acres):	Natural Areas	Water Access	Picnic Facilities	Trails	Hunting/Fishing	Other	Field/Facility Recreation Area (acres)	Sports Fields	Playground/Play Structure	Basketball	Tennis	Activity Building/Recreation Center	Other	Notes:
MAP_KEY	SITE_NAME	PROP_ACRE S	OUTDR_REC_AREA	NAT_AREA	WTR_ACCESS	PICNIC	TRAILS	HUNT_FISH		FLD_FCY_AREA	SPT_FLDS	PLYGRND	BB_COURT	T_COURT	INDOOR_CNTR	OTHER	NOTES
	OVERALL TOTALS	2733.51	1675.59							1057.95							
		Acres	Acres							Acres							

APPENDIX C
LPPRP Inventory - Wicomico
County

Preserved Agricultural Land Inventory

Site Name:	Property Size (Acres)	Acres Preserved	Protection Type (ownership or easement type)
Ralph E. Harcum		118.00	MALPF
Venture Manor Farms #2		206.16	MALPF
Gregory H. Williams		58.73	MALPF
Walters/Griffith #1		128.00	MALPF
W. Simpson Dunahoo		166.50	MALPF
Wayne Spencer		104.44	MALPF
Lee N. Simms		114.77	MALPF
Lewis R. Riley		113.84	MALPF
Philip S. Perdue		119.81	MALPF
Robert C. Parker		150.00	MALPF
Barbara Oakley		51.35	MALPF
Bruce E. Nichols		159.50	MALPF
Edgar M. Morris		165.00	MALPF
Eugene L. Lowe		87.42	MALPF
Lewrenze Byrd, Jr.		125.06	MALPF
Marion C. Huston		129.06	MALPF
Hamilton P. Fox		84.12	MALPF
Ronald T. Fisher - Spry Larmore Rd		92.69	MALPF
Ronald T. Fisher - Jesterville Rd		110.64	MALPF
Ronald T. Fisher - Head of Creek Rd		145.00	MALPF
Brian & Cynthia Evans		98.00	MALPF
Shirley B. Dunahoo		141.04	MALPF
William H. Cooper		92.50	MALPF
William H. Cooper - Upper Ferry Rd		119.06	MALPF
William H. Cooper - Cooper Rd		232.44	MALPF
Claude Bounds Phillips		159.99	MALPF
William T. Calloway #1		214.79	MALPF
William T. Calloway #2		136.39	MALPF
Katherine Byrd		169.95	MALPF
Lloyd B. Brittingham - Powell Farm		211.60	MALPF
Shirley M. Brown		92.91	MALPF
Lloyd B. Brittingham - Powell School Farm		84.83	MALPF
Victor & Susan Arnold		248.73	MALPF
Katherine B. Allen		99.00	MALPF
James W. Agnew - Zion Rd		101.49	MALPF
James W. Agnew - Massey Crossing Rd		104.70	MALPF
Greg H., Berverly S. & Douglas P. Williams		21.36	MALPF
Cynthia & Brian Evans		256.40	MALPF
Charles M. Wright, IV		124.22	MALPF
Venture Manor Farms #1		234.63	MALPF
Lloyd B. Brittingham - Adkins Farm		141.75	MALPF
Tim & Anna Curry		94.55	MALPF
Carolyn G. Myer		83.50	MALPF
Bruce C. Wells		58.58	MALPF
William W. Kenney		100.80	MALPF
Lee & Dana Richardson		81.00	MALPF
Franklin L. Donaway		94.30	MALPF
Maurice Davis		101.47	MALPF
Philip & Krista Perdue		17.59	MALPF
David & Rebecca Calloway		135.77	MALPF
Norman F. Batchelor		102.96	MALPF
Holloway-Evans - Adkins Road		202.54	MALPF
Log Cabin Properties, LLC #1		131.10	MALPF
Martin-Ruark, LLC		123.20	MALPF

Log Cabin Properties, LLC #2				153.00	MALPF
Kevin Bailey				60.21	MALPF
Philip D. Williams				63.28	MALPF
Robert Holloway- Little Ln				116.57	MALPF
William McCain				50.00	MALPF
Grover E. Davis				83.50	Wicomico County Agricultural Easement
Thomas T. Banks				112.00	Wicomico County Agricultural Easement
William Blan Harcum				160.00	Wicomico County Agricultural Easement
William Blan Harcum				128.65	Wicomico County Agricultural Easement
William H. Cooper				88.63	Wicomico County Agricultural Easement
Ruth Freeman				132.08	Wicomico County Agricultural Easement
Nichols				52.00	Wicomico County Agricultural Easement
Brannock				23.95	Wicomico County Agricultural Easement
Cassandra L. Horner #2				52.69	Quantico Creek Rural Legacy Easement
Cassandra L. Horner #1				292.41	Quantico Creek Rural Legacy Easement
John B. Long				177.91	Quantico Creek Rural Legacy Easement
Thomas M. Fisher				135.19	Quantico Creek Rural Legacy Easement
Katherine B. McDonald				110.06	Quantico Creek Rural Legacy Easement
Woodyard Limited Partnership				687.22	Quantico Creek Rural Legacy Easement
Donald A. Hall, Jr				63.36	Quantico Creek Rural Legacy Easement
Cynthia & Brian Evans				607.14	Quantico Creek Rural Legacy Easement
Russell & Phyllis Cooper				61.78	Quantico Creek Rural Legacy Easement
Alice Tracey				472.14	Quantico Creek Rural Legacy Easement
Adkins College Tract - NAVY DNR				785.09	Quantico Creek Rural Legacy Easement
Quantico Limited Partnership - Breitschwerdt				475.08	Quantico Creek Rural Legacy Easement
Michael B Phillips				396.98	Quantico Creek Rural Legacy Easement
TOTALS				12,384.14	

APPENDIX D

2022 Wicomico County LPPRP – Acquisition Goals

2022 LPPRP - Wicomico County
Appendix D - Wicomico County Acquisition Goals

Progress Toward 2017				
Open Space and Recreational Land Goals Established in 2017	Type and Specific Location	Acreage Needed	Acreage Required	Notes
South Planning Area	Fruitland Recreational Park - additional parking	0	N/A	The Fruitland Recreational Complex includes recreational facilities operated by the City of Fruitland along with private organizations. Programs are offered by Fruitland Little League, the County, and the Falcons Youth Sports organization, among other user groups. The area is heavily used for local and tournament play. While the Falcons organization has created additional parking to relieve high-stress demands, the County should continue to look for opportunity to acquire adjacent property to accommodate future parking needs.
East Planning Area	Eastside Sports Complex - additional parking	0	N/A	At the time of the 2017 Plan, the Eastside Youth Sports Complex was heavily used for amateur sports tournaments. The facility is not suited for large volumes of vehicles so additional acreage for parking would have been helpful. Since that time, other facilities have emerged and the facility is not as heavily used for these types of events. Additional parking is not an urgent need at this time.
<p><i>As noted on the Proximity Analysis included on page 4-20 and illustrated by Map 4.1a, the system of parks and recreation facilities in Wicomico County results in "the entire Wicomico County area being served by the location of the existing parks and recreation system." As further noted on pages 4-28 through 4-30, the County has met its acreage goals and "will continue to determine priorities for acquisition...projects on a case-by-case basis as different lands become available and recreation needs evolve." Examples of this include acquisitions completed since the 2017 plan: acquired 3+ acres in Delmar to add to the Mason Dixon Sports Complex; acquired 234+ acres at Connelly Mill, which is adjacent to the Henry Parker Sports Complex and the City's highly used Naylor Mill Forest trails. These acquisitions will enhance public recreation opportunities for residents (See Page 4-26).</i></p>				

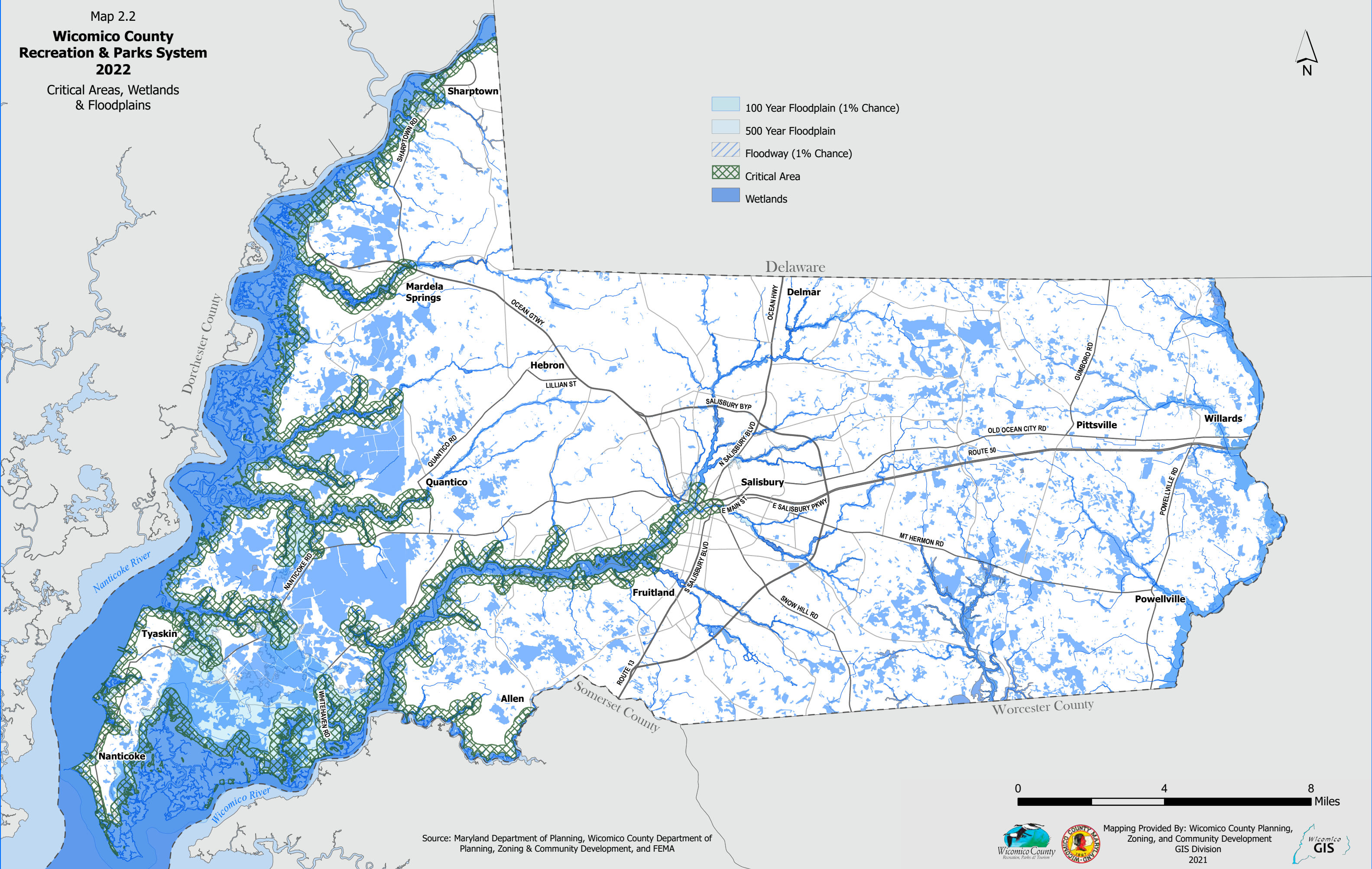
2022 Acquisition Goals				
Open Space and Recreational Land Goals 2022	Type and Specific Location	Acreage Needed	Plan for Meeting Need	Notes
West Side Planning Area	Cove Road Beach Acquisition	0	N/A	The County owns and operates a small beach property on the West Side, known as Cove Road Beach. Recently, the adjacent property has become available for purchase. Acquiring it would double public beachfront access and provide another dock for fishing and passive recreation.
Central Planning Area	North Prong Acquisition	0	N/A	As noted in Appendix B, the City of Salisbury has plans to create the "North Prong Park" along with west banks of the Wicomico River between Route 50 and Rose Street. Acquisition of lands in this area would be needed for the park to become a reality.
South Planning Area	Fruitland Recreational Park - additional parking	0	N/A	The Fruitland Recreational Complex includes recreational facilities operated by the City of Fruitland along with private organizations. Programs are offered by Fruitland Little League, the County, and the Falcons Youth Sports organization, among other user groups. The area is heavily used for local and tournament play. While the Falcons organization has created additional parking to relieve high-stress demands, the County should continue to look for opportunity to acquire adjacent property to accommodate future parking needs.
<p><i>As noted on the Proximity Analysis included on page 4-20 and illustrated by Map 4.1a, the system of parks and recreation facilities in Wicomico County results in "the entire Wicomico County area being served by the location of the existing parks and recreation system." As further noted on pages 4-28 through 4-30, the County has met its acreage goals and "will continue to determine priorities for acquisition...projects on a case-by-case basis as different lands become available and recreation needs evolve." Examples of this include acquisitions completed since the 2017 plan: acquired 3+ acres in Delmar to add to the Mason Dixon Sports Complex; acquired 234+ acres at Connelly Mill, which is adjacent to the Henry Parker Sports Complex and the City's highly used Naylor Mill Forest trails. These acquisitions will enhance public recreation opportunities for residents (See Page 4-26). The acquisition projects included in the 2022 LPPRP capital improvement section represent additional opportunities to enhance 2 existing recreational assets in the County system and to add 1 new recreational asset in the City of Salisbury (See City of Salisbury letter included in Appendix B).</i></p>				

Map 2.2
**Wicomico County
Recreation & Parks System
2022**

Critical Areas, Wetlands
& Floodplains



- 100 Year Floodplain (1% Chance)
- 500 Year Floodplain
- Floodway (1% Chance)
- Critical Area
- Wetlands



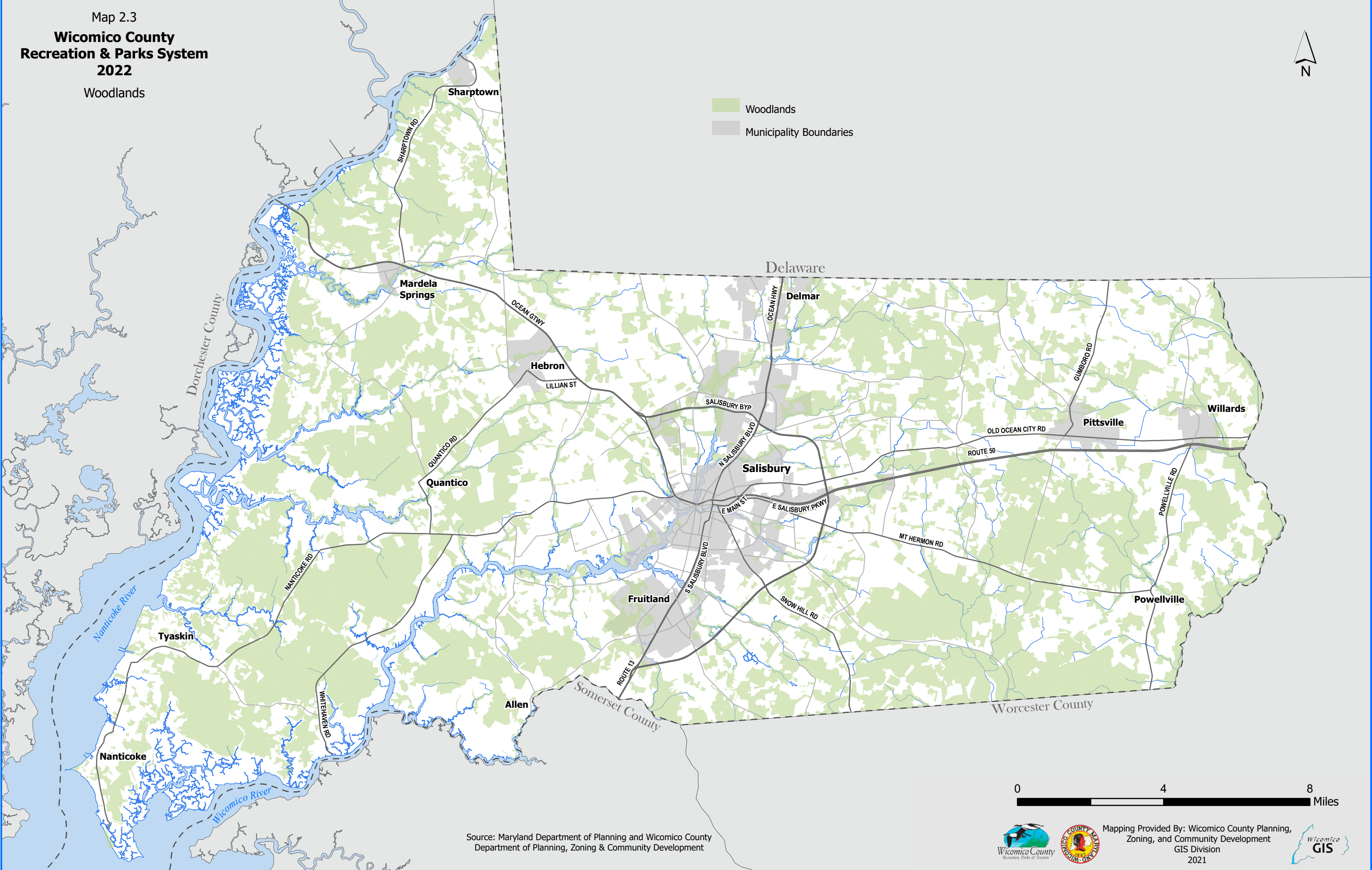
Source: Maryland Department of Planning, Wicomico County Department of Planning, Zoning & Community Development, and FEMA



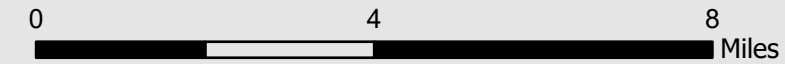
Mapping Provided By: Wicomico County Planning,
Zoning, and Community Development
GIS Division
2021



Map 2.3
**Wicomico County
Recreation & Parks System
2022**
Woodlands



Source: Maryland Department of Planning and Wicomico County
Department of Planning, Zoning & Community Development

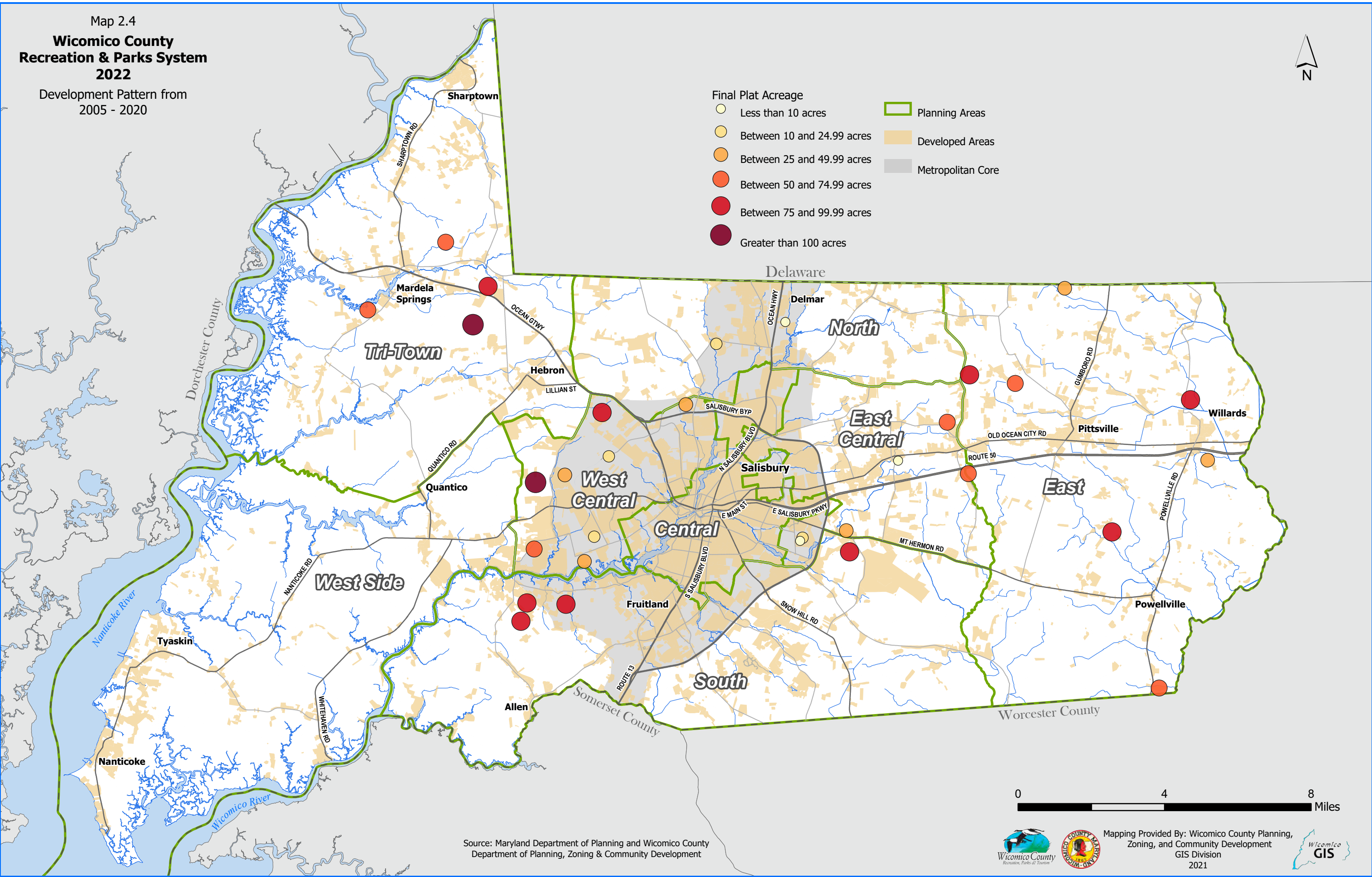


Mapping Provided By: Wicomico County Planning,
Zoning, and Community Development
GIS Division
2021

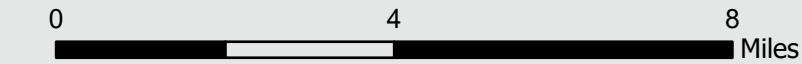


Map 2.4
**Wicomico County
Recreation & Parks System
2022**

Development Pattern from
2005 - 2020



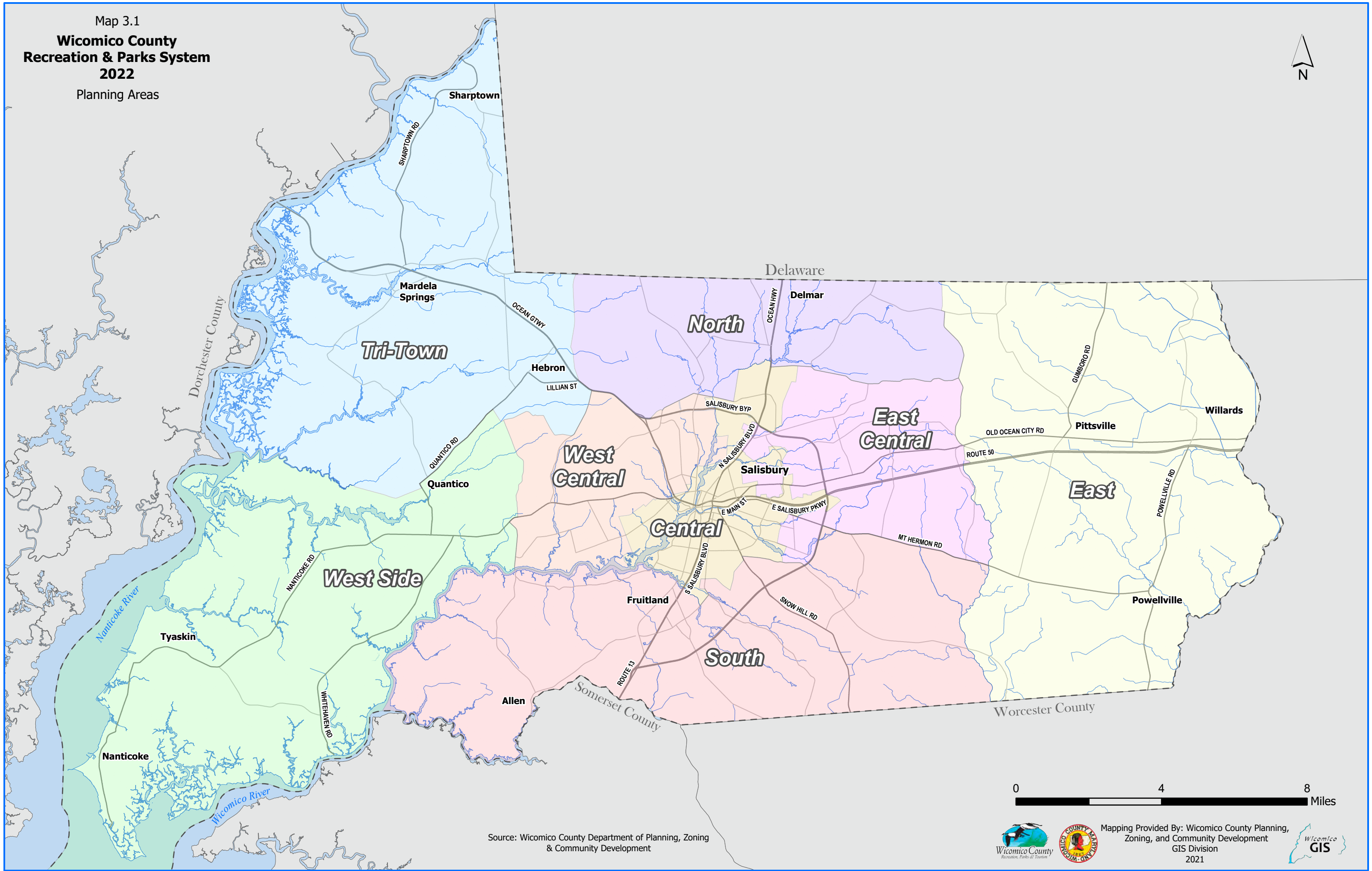
Source: Maryland Department of Planning and Wicomico County
Department of Planning, Zoning & Community Development



Mapping Provided By: Wicomico County Planning,
Zoning, and Community Development
GIS Division
2021



Map 3.1
**Wicomico County
Recreation & Parks System
2022**
Planning Areas



Source: Wicomico County Department of Planning, Zoning & Community Development



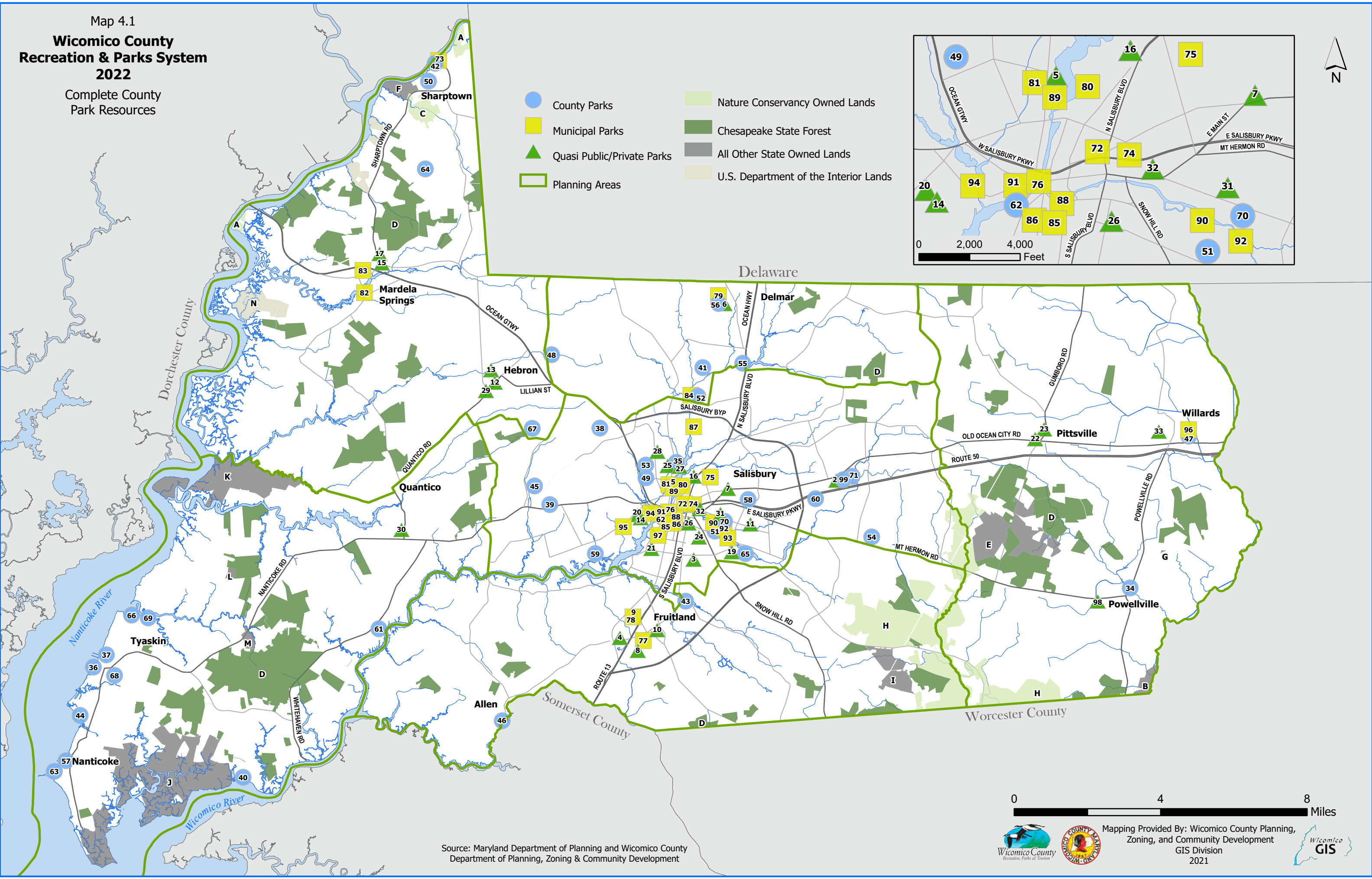
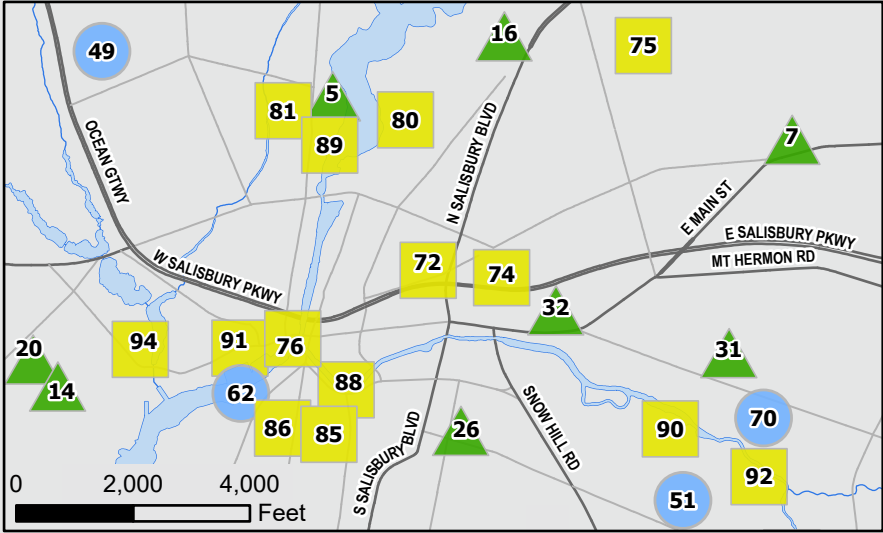
Mapping Provided By: Wicomico County Planning,
Zoning, and Community Development
GIS Division
2021



Map 4.1
**Wicomico County
Recreation & Parks System
2022**

Complete County
Park Resources

- County Parks
- Municipal Parks
- Quasi Public/Private Parks
- Planning Areas
- Nature Conservancy Owned Lands
- Chesapeake State Forest
- All Other State Owned Lands
- U.S. Department of the Interior Lands



Source: Maryland Department of Planning and Wicomico County
Department of Planning, Zoning & Community Development

0 4 8 Miles



Mapping Provided By: Wicomico County Planning,
Zoning, and Community Development
GIS Division
2021

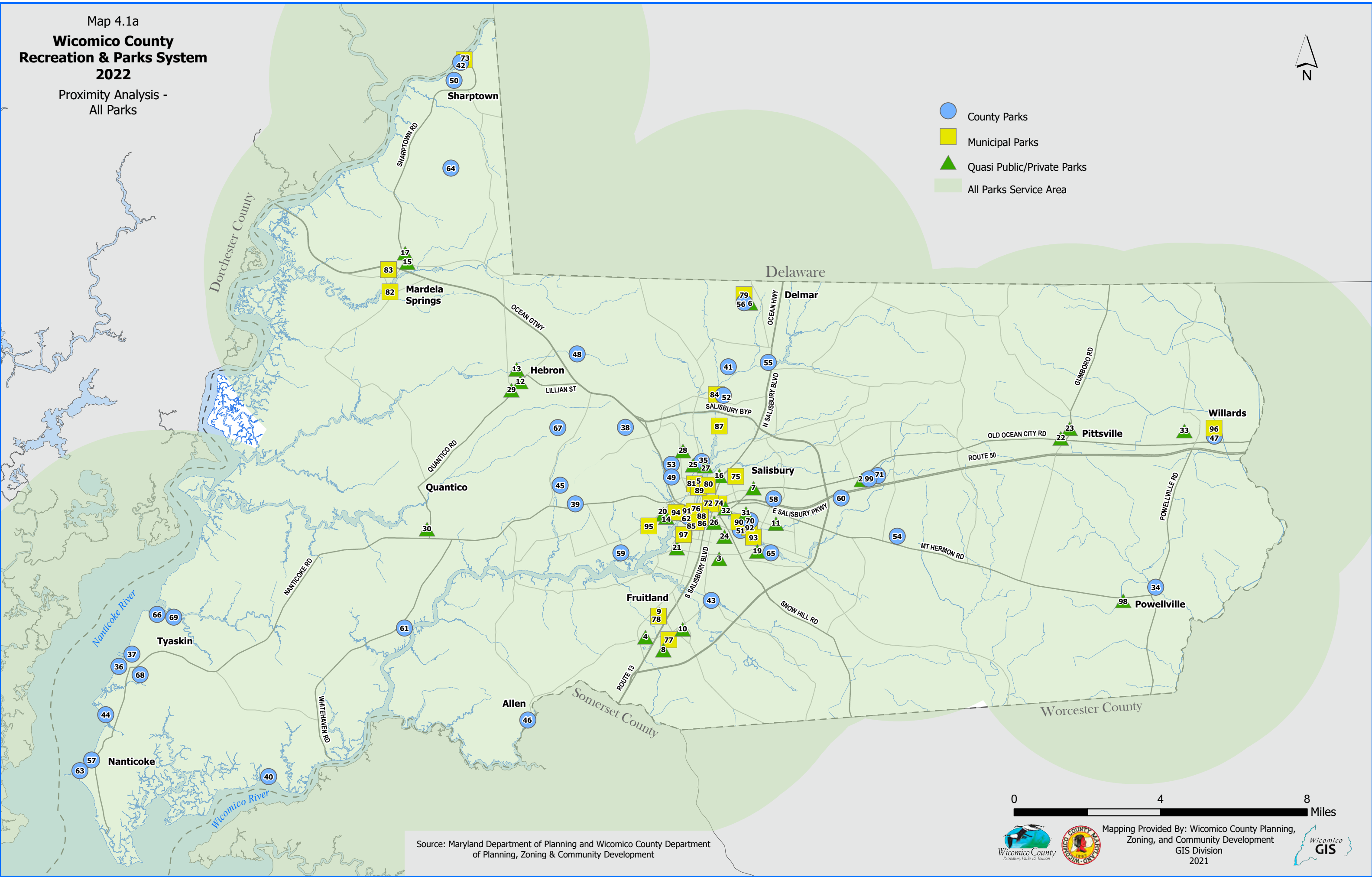


Map 4.1a
**Wicomico County
Recreation & Parks System
2022**

Proximity Analysis -
All Parks



-  County Parks
-  Municipal Parks
-  Quasi Public/Private Parks
-  All Parks Service Area



Source: Maryland Department of Planning and Wicomico County Department of Planning, Zoning & Community Development

0 4 8 Miles

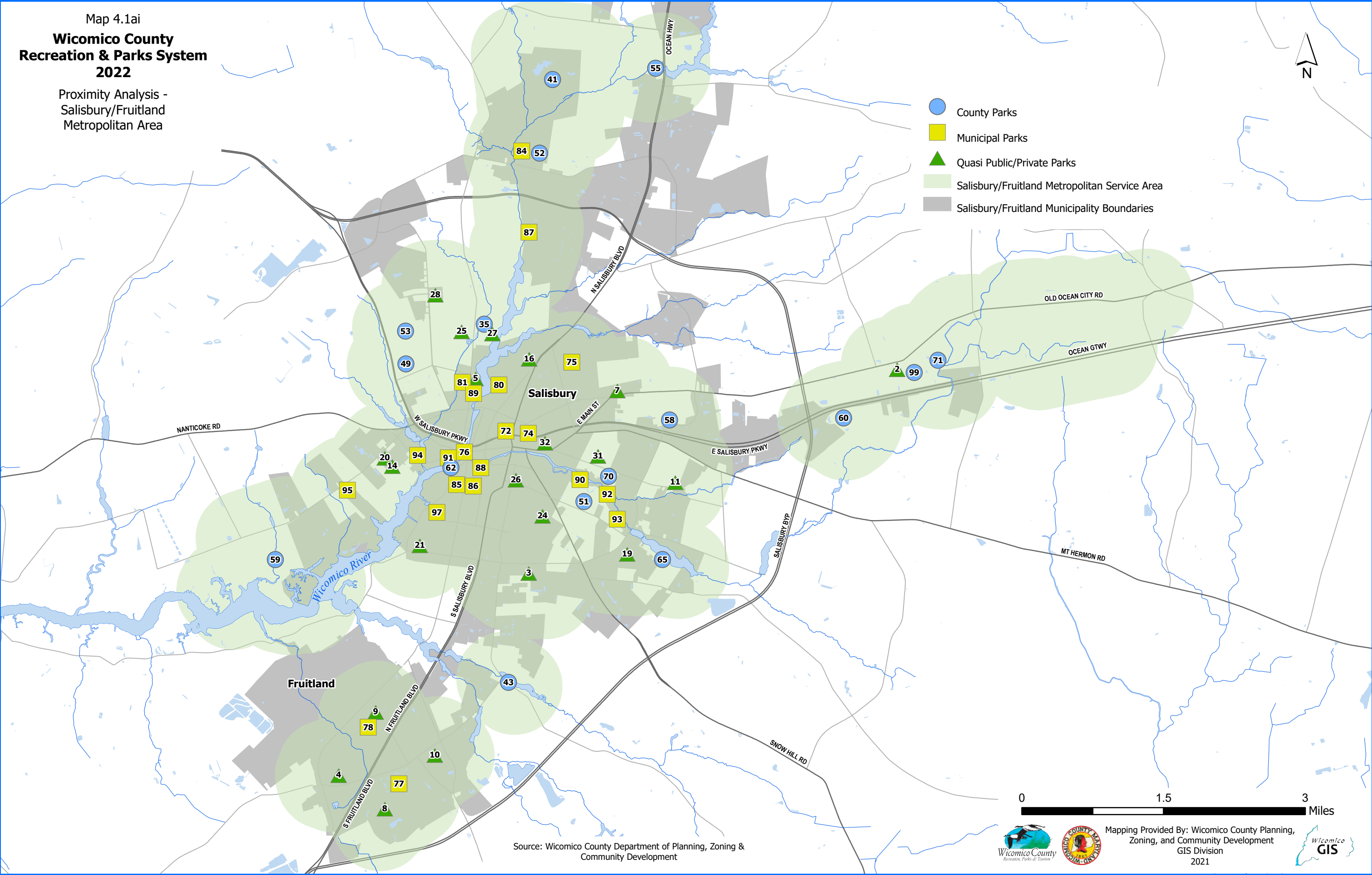


Mapping Provided By: Wicomico County Planning, Zoning, and Community Development GIS Division 2021



Map 4.1ai
**Wicomico County
Recreation & Parks System
2022**

Proximity Analysis -
Salisbury/Fruitland
Metropolitan Area



Source: Wicomico County Department of Planning, Zoning & Community Development



Mapping Provided By: Wicomico County Planning,
Zoning, and Community Development
GIS Division
2021

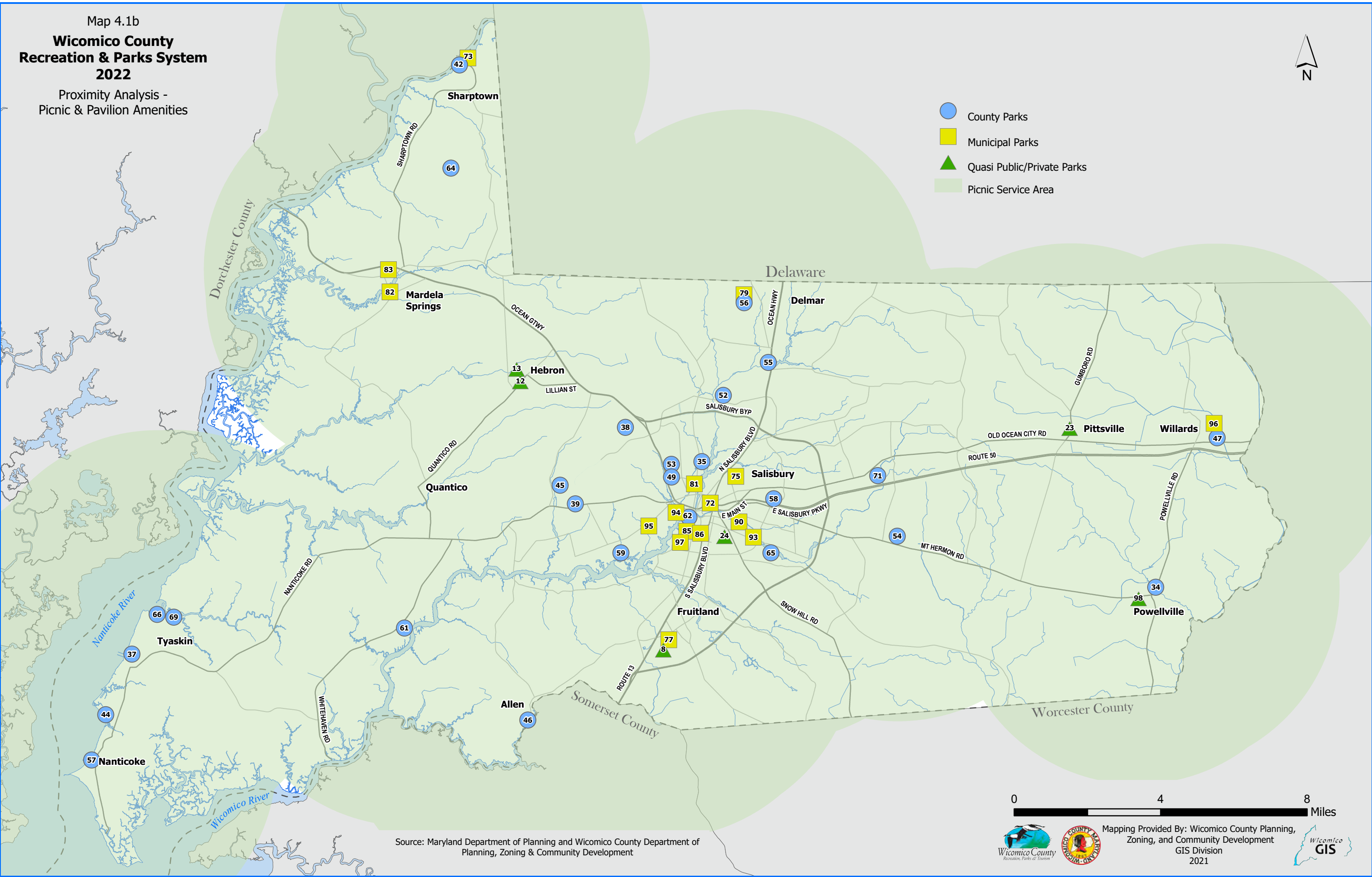


Map 4.1b
**Wicomico County
Recreation & Parks System
2022**

Proximity Analysis -
Picnic & Pavilion Amenities



-  County Parks
-  Municipal Parks
-  Quasi Public/Private Parks
-  Picnic Service Area



Source: Maryland Department of Planning and Wicomico County Department of Planning, Zoning & Community Development

0 4 8 Miles



Mapping Provided By: Wicomico County Planning,
Zoning, and Community Development
GIS Division
2021

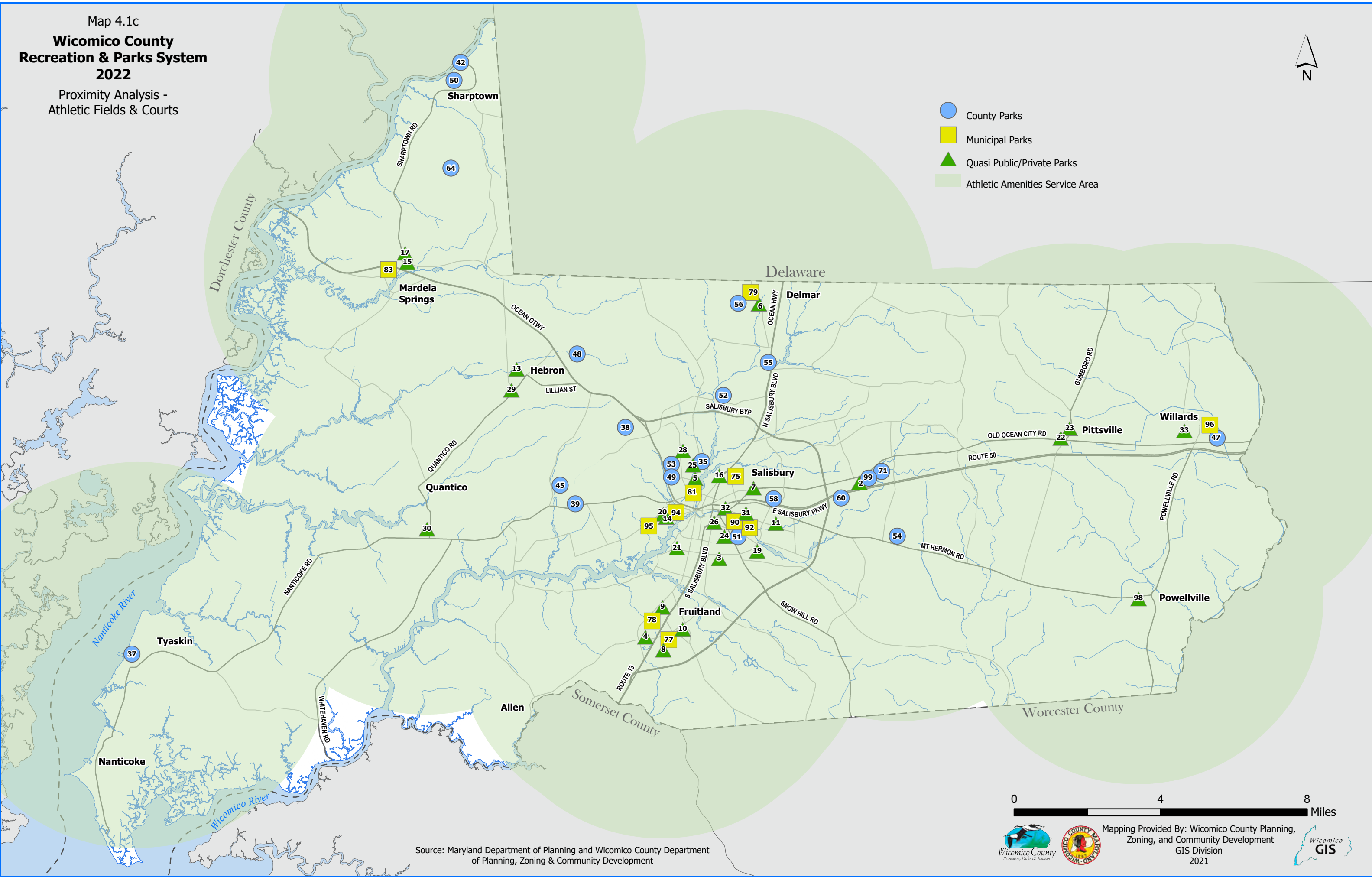


Map 4.1c
**Wicomico County
Recreation & Parks System
2022**

Proximity Analysis -
Athletic Fields & Courts



-  County Parks
-  Municipal Parks
-  Quasi Public/Private Parks
-  Athletic Amenities Service Area



Source: Maryland Department of Planning and Wicomico County Department
of Planning, Zoning & Community Development

0 4 8 Miles








Mapping Provided By: Wicomico County Planning,
Zoning, and Community Development
GIS Division
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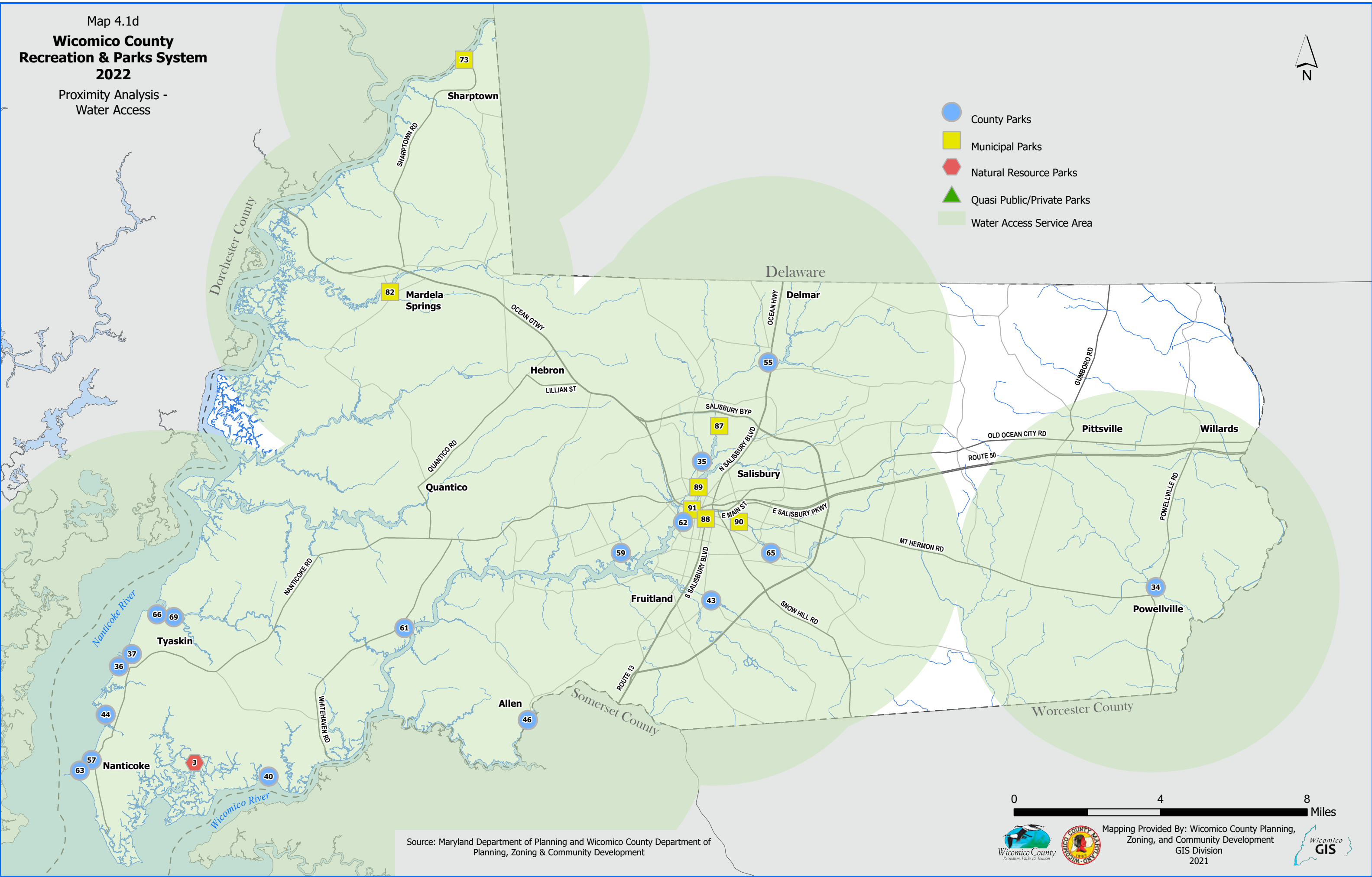


Map 4.1d
**Wicomico County
Recreation & Parks System
2022**

Proximity Analysis -
Water Access



-  County Parks
-  Municipal Parks
-  Natural Resource Parks
-  Quasi Public/Private Parks
-  Water Access Service Area



Source: Maryland Department of Planning and Wicomico County Department of Planning, Zoning & Community Development

0 4 8 Miles

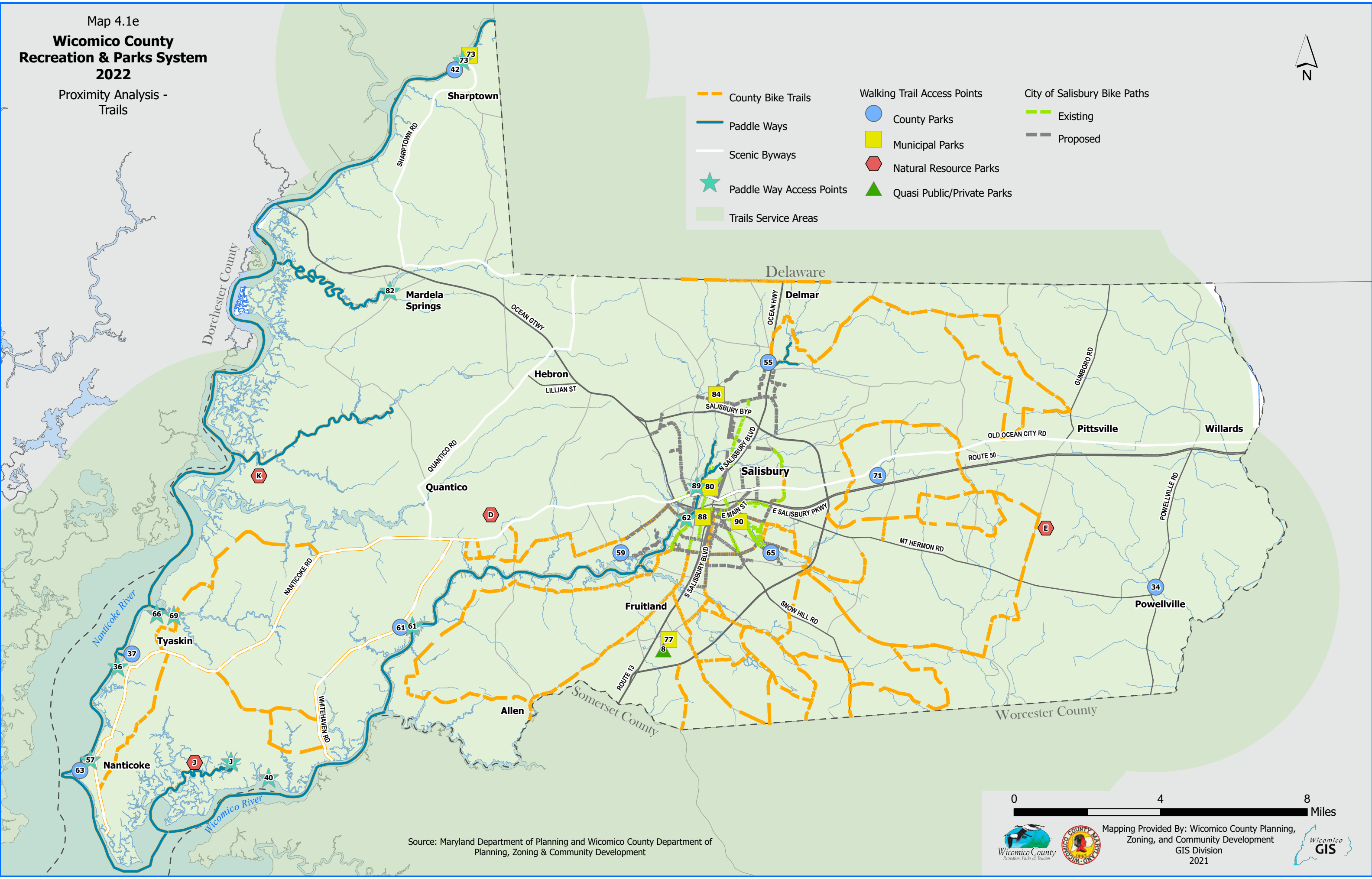


Mapping Provided By: Wicomico County Planning,
Zoning, and Community Development
GIS Division
2021



Map 4.1e
**Wicomico County
Recreation & Parks System
2022**

Proximity Analysis -
Trails



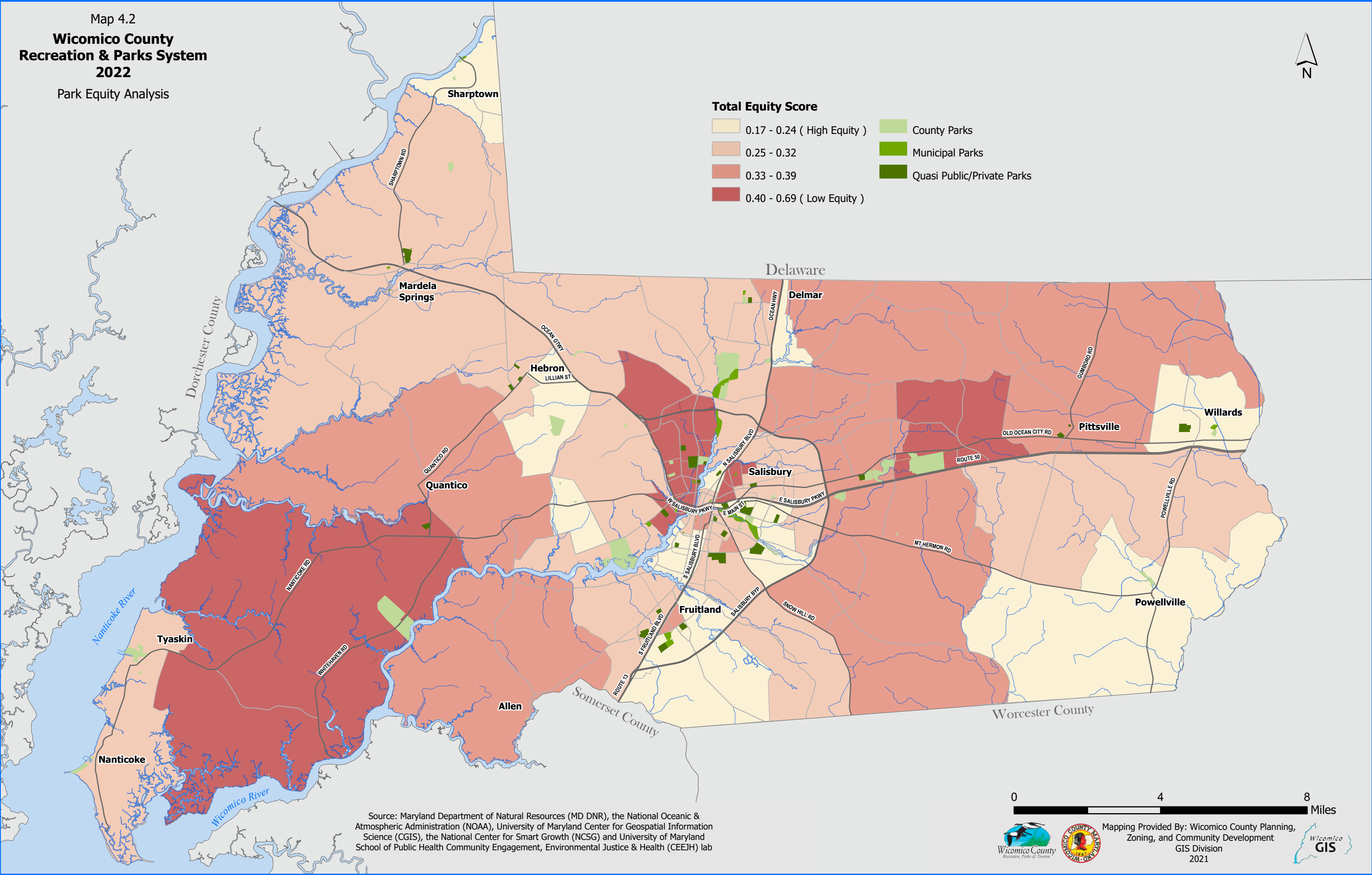
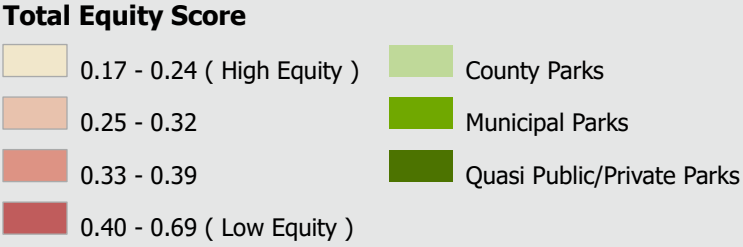
Source: Maryland Department of Planning and Wicomico County Department of Planning, Zoning & Community Development



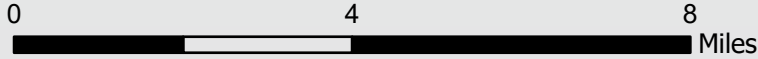
Mapping Provided By: Wicomico County Planning,
Zoning, and Community Development
GIS Division
2021



Map 4.2
**Wicomico County
 Recreation & Parks System
 2022**
 Park Equity Analysis



Source: Maryland Department of Natural Resources (MD DNR), the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), University of Maryland Center for Geospatial Information Science (CGIS), the National Center for Smart Growth (NCSG) and University of Maryland School of Public Health Community Engagement, Environmental Justice & Health (CEEJH) lab



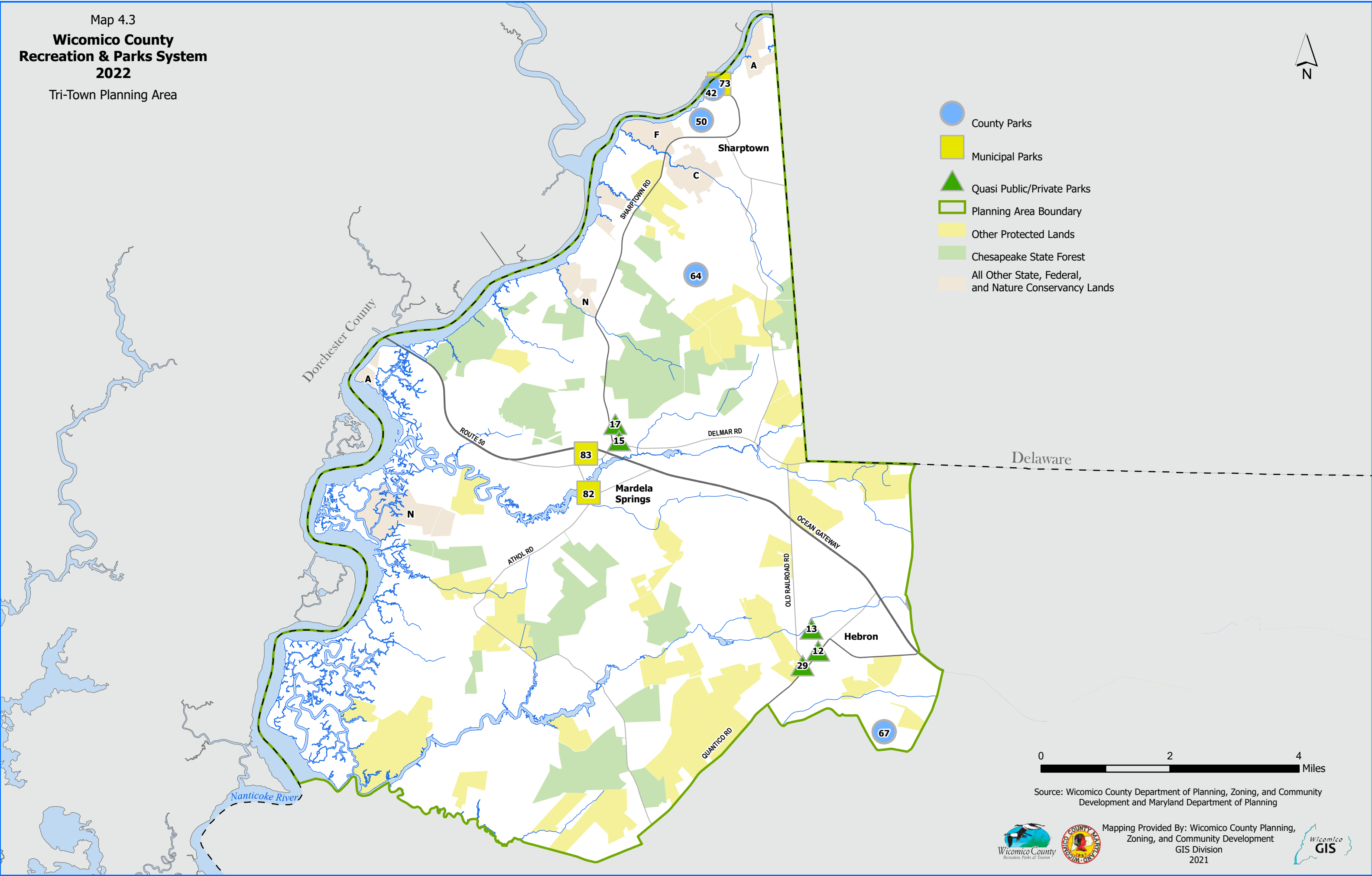
Mapping Provided By: Wicomico County Planning,
 Zoning, and Community Development
 GIS Division
 2021



Map 4.3
**Wicomico County
Recreation & Parks System
2022**
Tri-Town Planning Area



- County Parks
- Municipal Parks
- Quasi Public/Private Parks
- Planning Area Boundary
- Other Protected Lands
- Chesapeake State Forest
- All Other State, Federal, and Nature Conservancy Lands



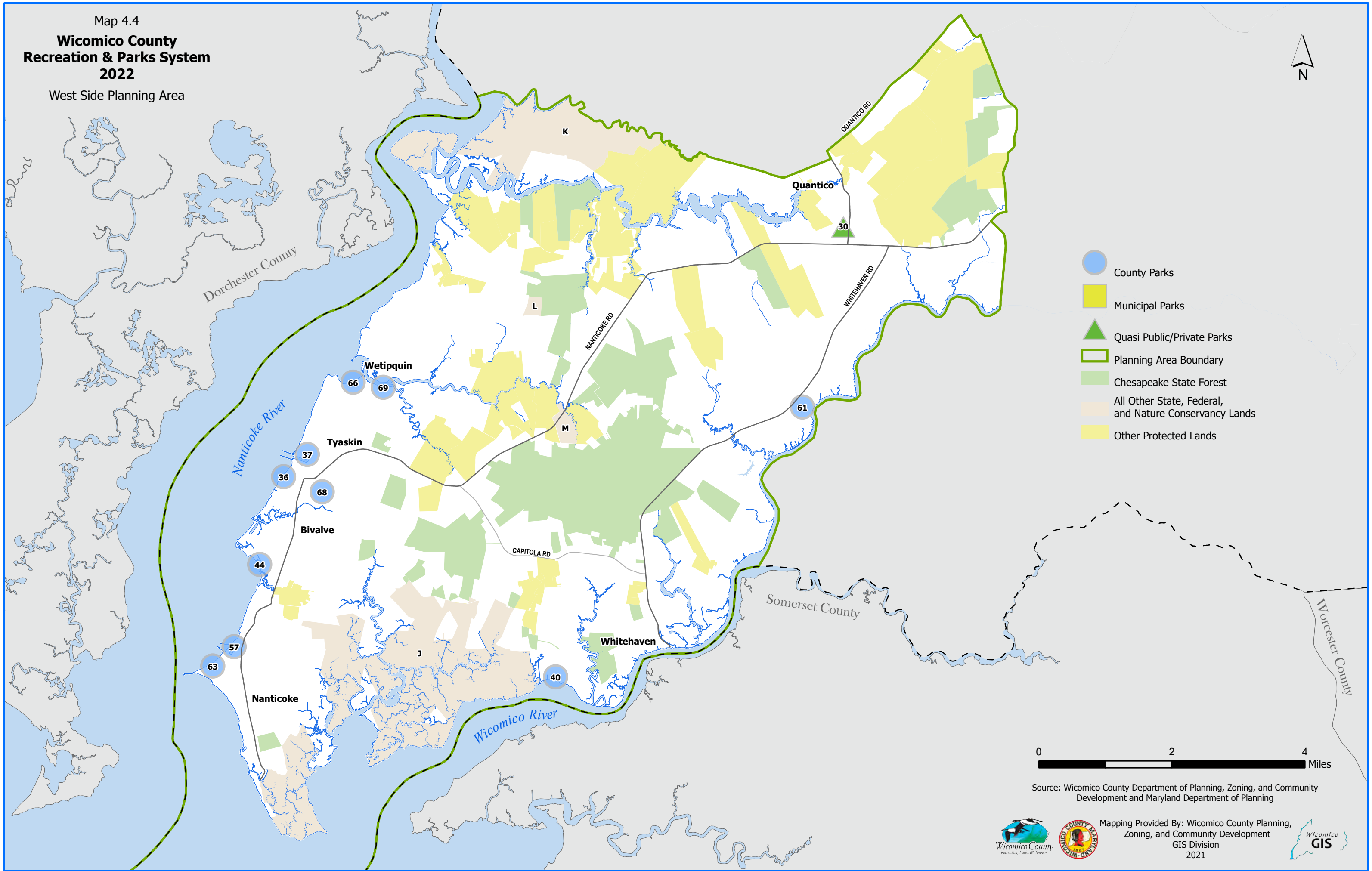
Source: Wicomico County Department of Planning, Zoning, and Community Development and Maryland Department of Planning



Mapping Provided By: Wicomico County Planning,
Zoning, and Community Development
GIS Division
2021



Map 4.4
**Wicomico County
Recreation & Parks System
2022**
West Side Planning Area



0 2 4
Miles

Source: Wicomico County Department of Planning, Zoning, and Community Development and Maryland Department of Planning




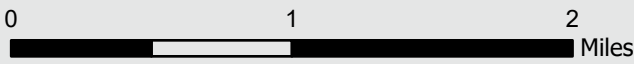
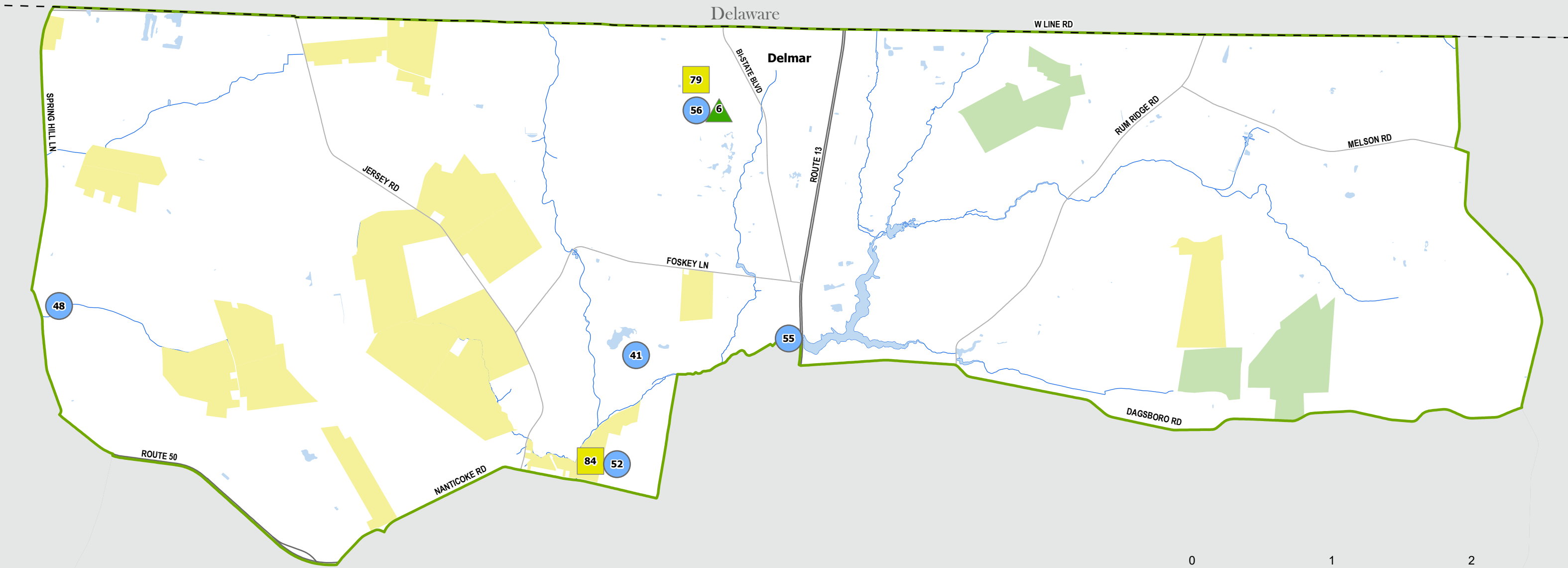
Mapping Provided By: Wicomico County Planning,
Zoning, and Community Development
GIS Division
2021



Map 4.5
**Wicomico County
 Recreation & Parks System
 2022**
 North Planning Area



-  County Parks
-  Municipal Parks
-  Quasi Public/Private Parks
-  Planning Area Boundary
-  Chesapeake State Forest
-  Other Protected Lands



Source: Wicomico County Department of Planning, Zoning, and Community Development and Maryland Department of Planning



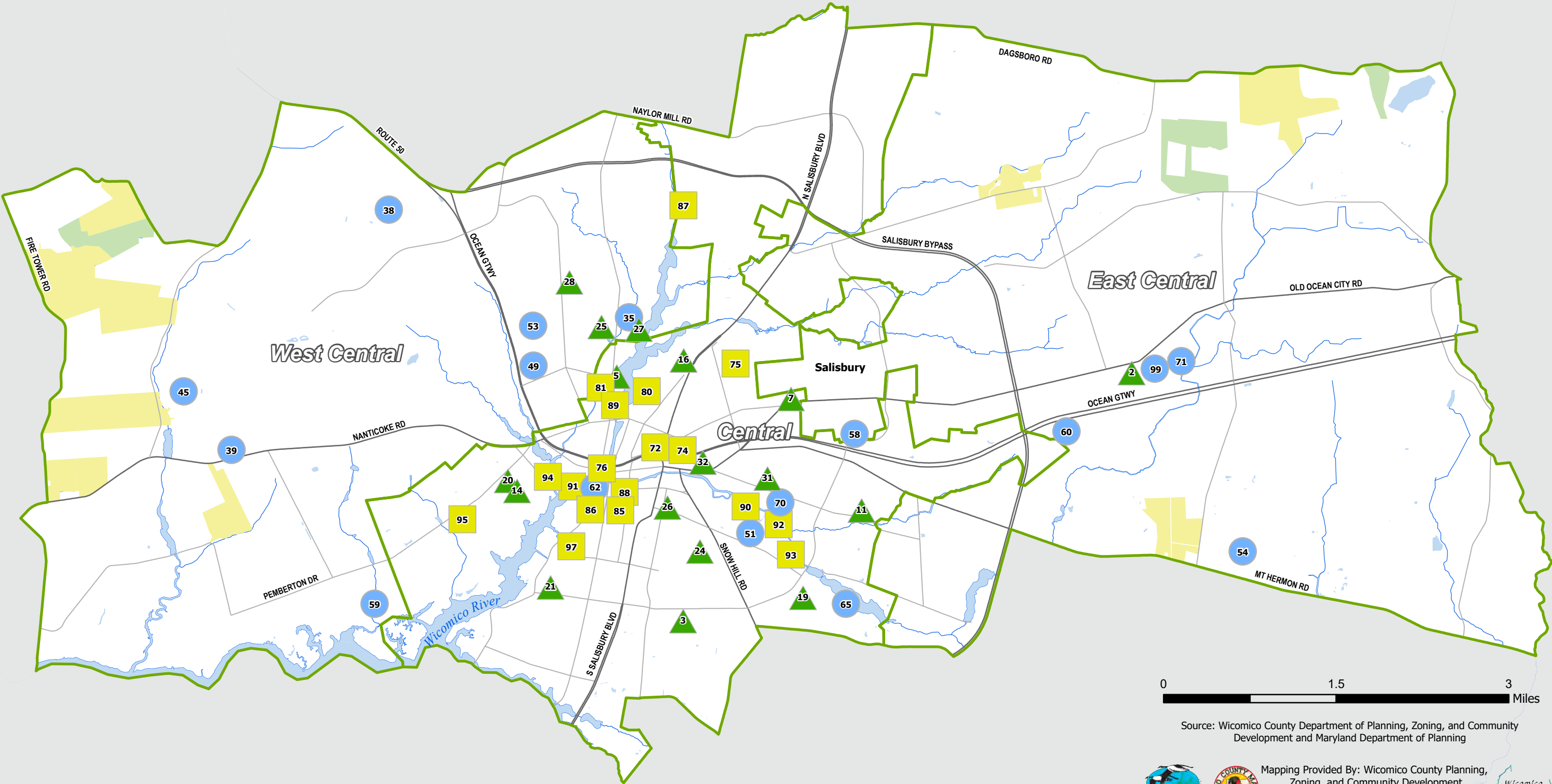
Mapping Provided By: Wicomico County Planning,
 Zoning, and Community Development
 GIS Division
 2021



Map 4.6
**Wicomico County
Recreation & Parks System
2022**
Central Planning Area



- County Parks
- Municipal Parks
- Quasi Public/Private Parks
- Chesapeake State Forest
- Other Protected Lands
- Planning Area Boundary



Source: Wicomico County Department of Planning, Zoning, and Community Development and Maryland Department of Planning



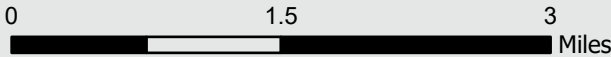
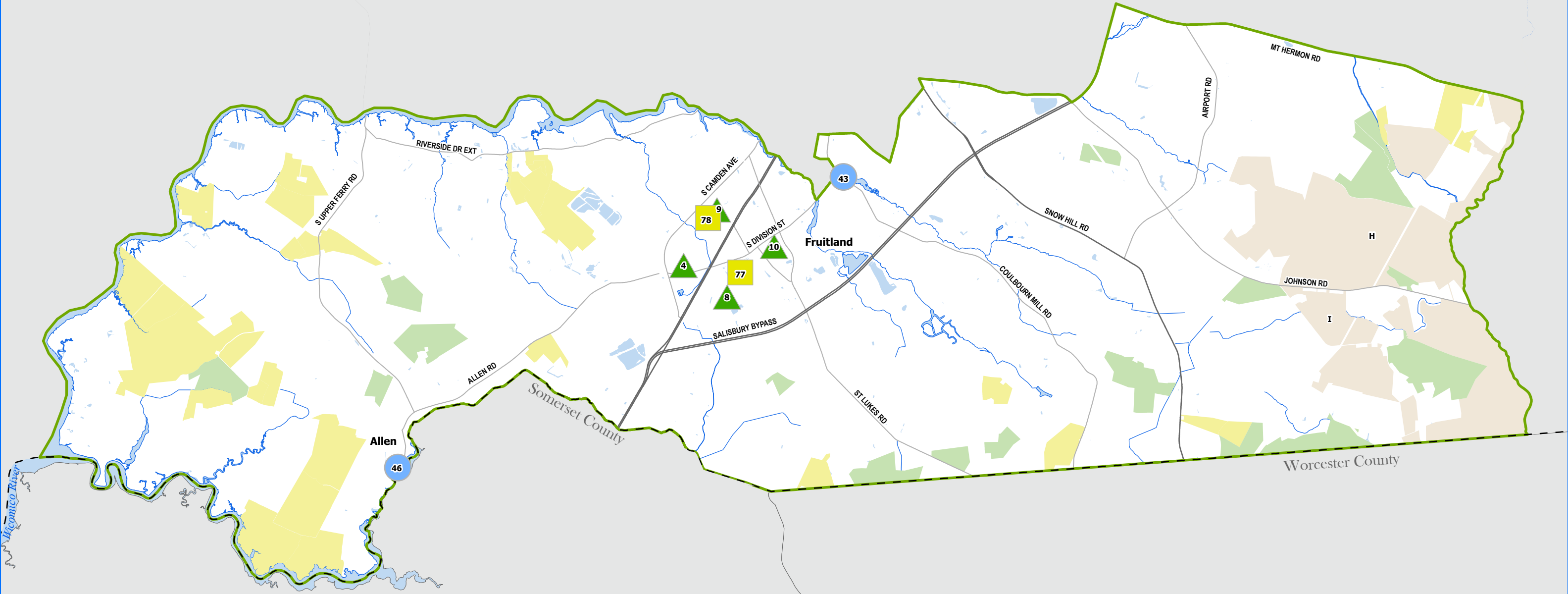
Mapping Provided By: Wicomico County Planning,
Zoning, and Community Development
GIS Division
2021



Map 4.7
**Wicomico County
 Recreation & Parks System
 2022**
 South Planning Area



- County Parks
- Municipal Parks
- Quasi Public/Private Parks
- Planning Area Boundary
- Chesapeake State Forest
- All Other State, Federal, and Nature Conservancy Owned Lands
- Other Protected Lands



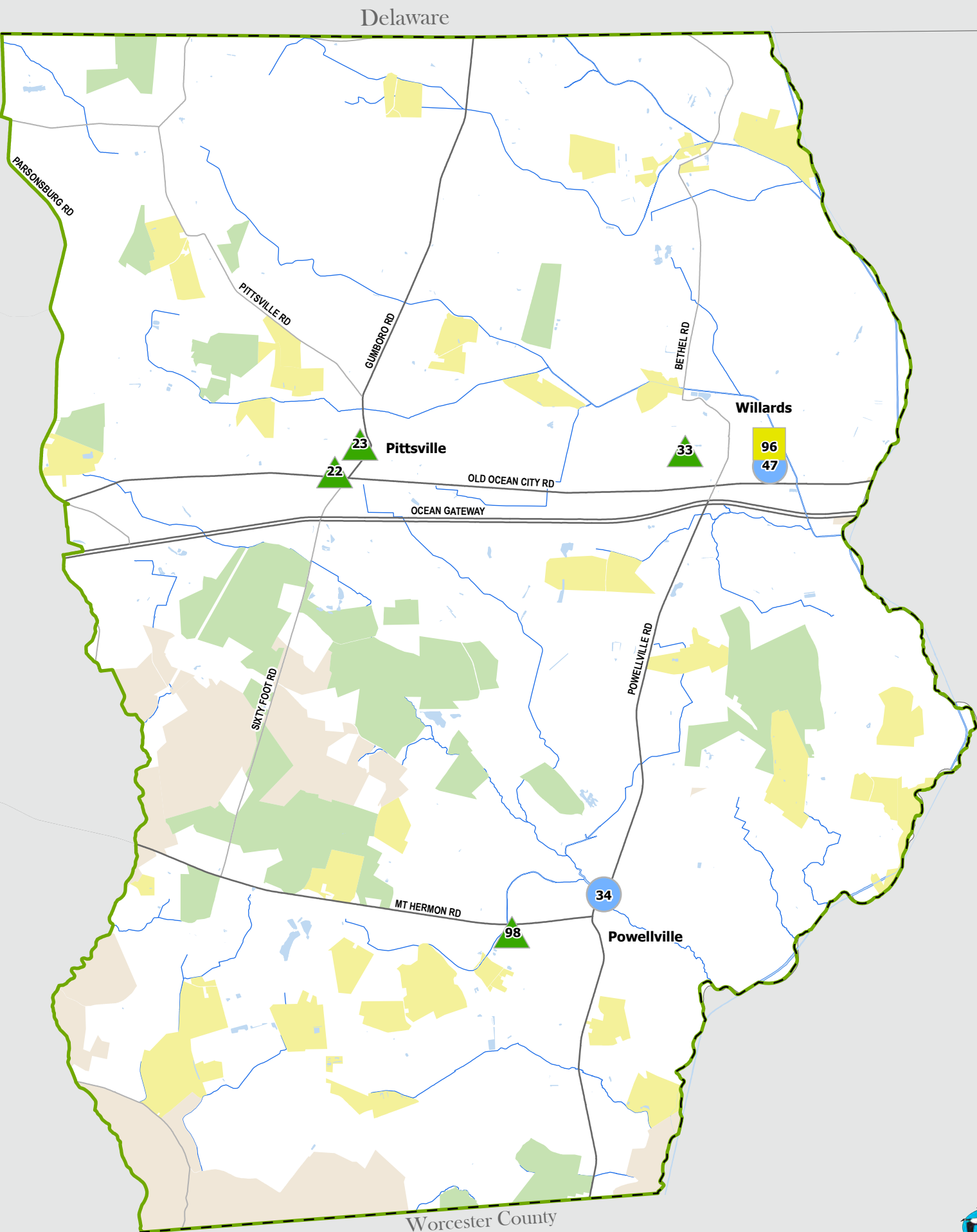
Source: Wicomico County Department of Planning, Zoning, and Community Development and Maryland Department of Planning



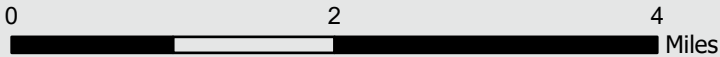
Mapping Provided By: Wicomico County Planning,
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 2021



Map 4.8
**Wicomico County
Recreation & Parks System
2022**
East Planning Area



- County Parks
- Municipal Parks
- Quasi Public/Private Parks
- Planning Area Boundary
- Chesapeake State Forest
- All Other State, Federal, and Nature Conservancy Owned Lands
- Other Protected Lands



Source: Wicomico County Department of Planning, Zoning, and Community Development and Maryland Department of Planning



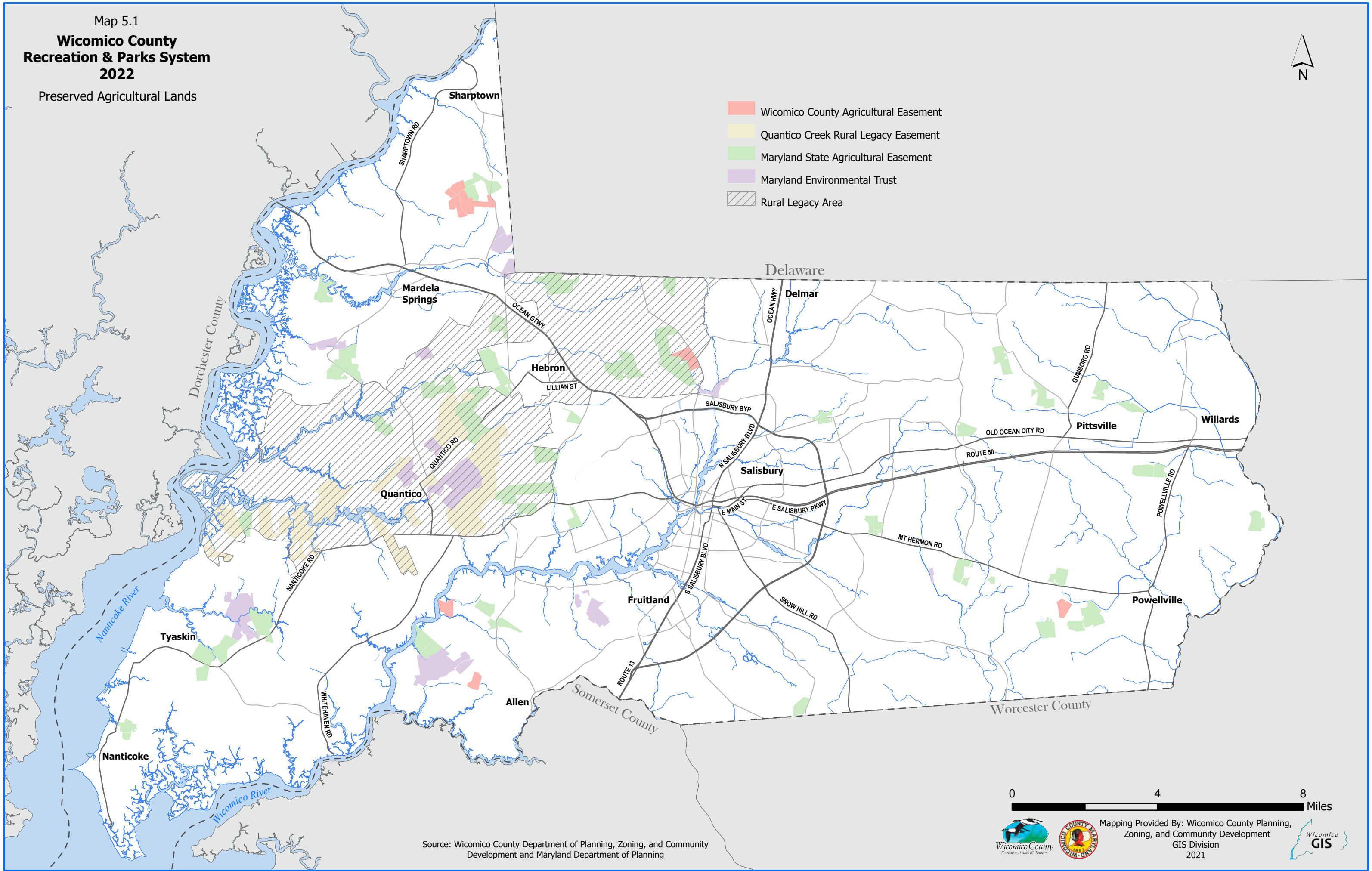
Mapping Provided By: Wicomico County Planning,
Zoning, and Community Development
GIS Division
2021



Map 5.1
**Wicomico County
Recreation & Parks System
2022**
Preserved Agricultural Lands



-  Wicomico County Agricultural Easement
-  Quantico Creek Rural Legacy Easement
-  Maryland State Agricultural Easement
-  Maryland Environmental Trust
-  Rural Legacy Area



Source: Wicomico County Department of Planning, Zoning, and Community Development and Maryland Department of Planning

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



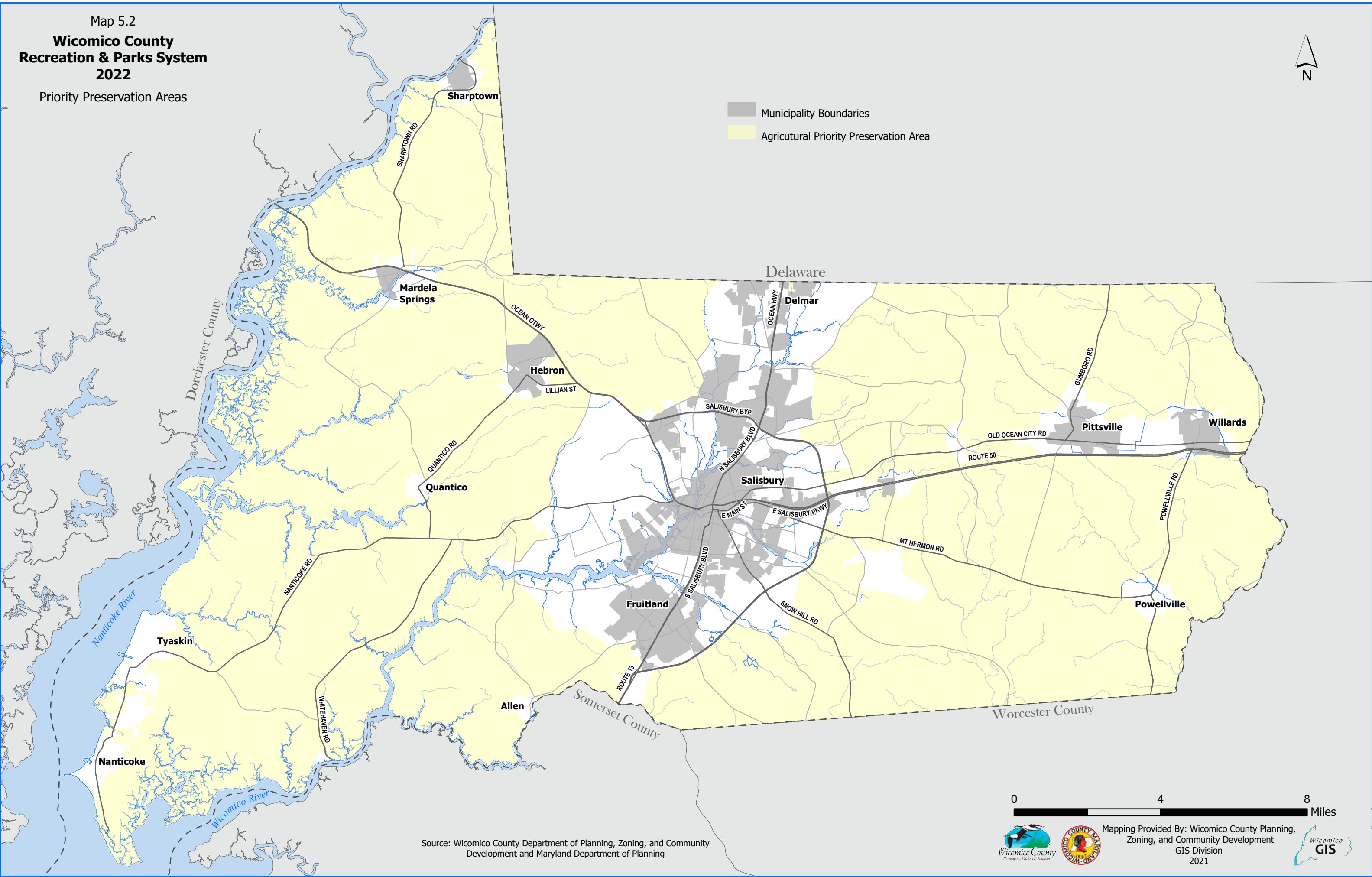
Mapping Provided By: Wicomico County Planning,
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GIS Division
2021



Map 5.2
**Wicomico County
Recreation & Parks System
2022**
Priority Preservation Areas



-  Municipality Boundaries
-  Agricultural Priority Preservation Area



Source: Wicomico County Department of Planning, Zoning, and Community Development and Maryland Department of Planning

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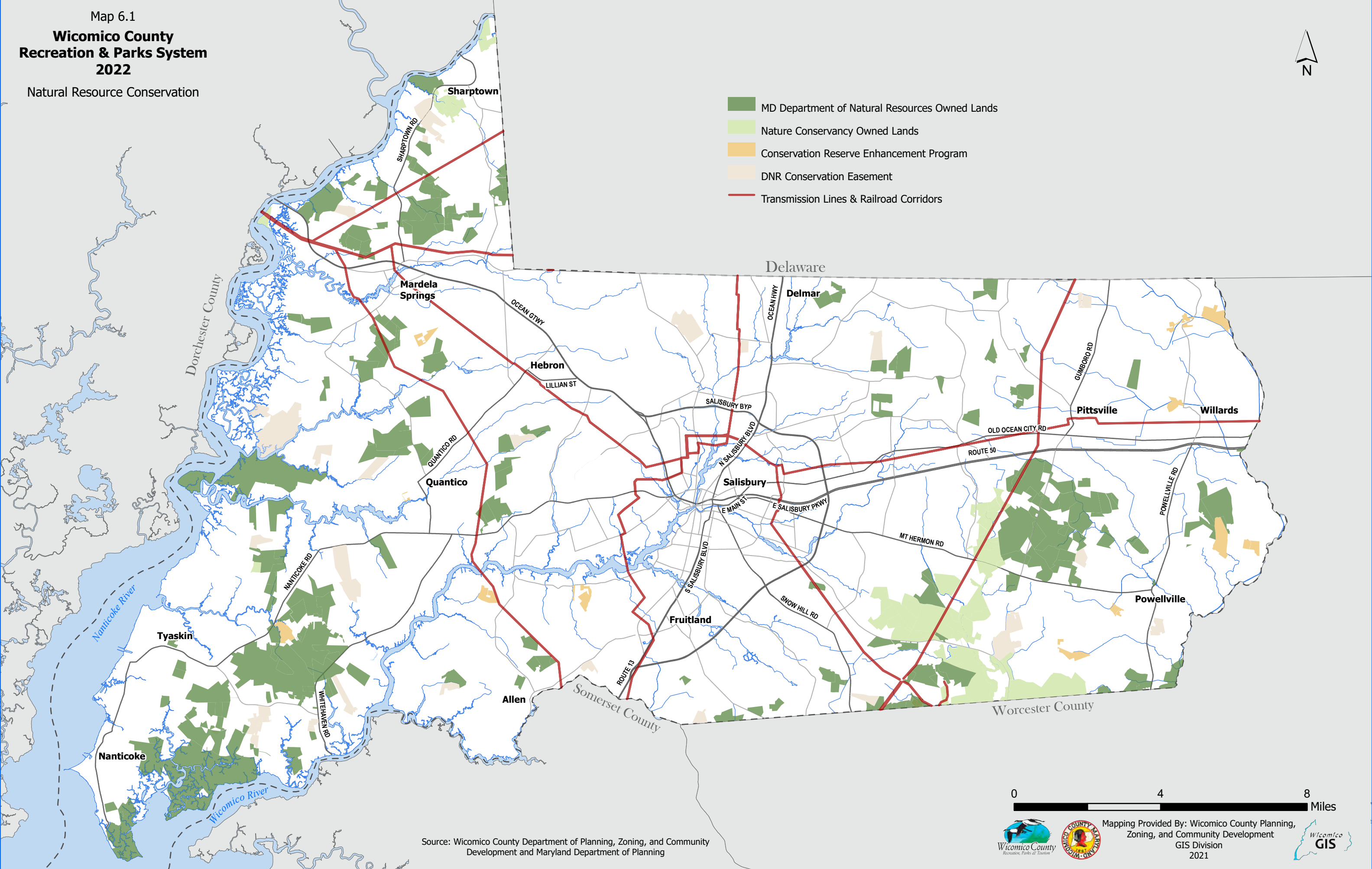
Mapping Provided By: Wicomico County Planning,
Zoning, and Community Development
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2021



Map 6.1
**Wicomico County
Recreation & Parks System
2022**
Natural Resource Conservation



- MD Department of Natural Resources Owned Lands
- Nature Conservancy Owned Lands
- Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program
- DNR Conservation Easement
- Transmission Lines & Railroad Corridors



Source: Wicomico County Department of Planning, Zoning, and Community Development and Maryland Department of Planning

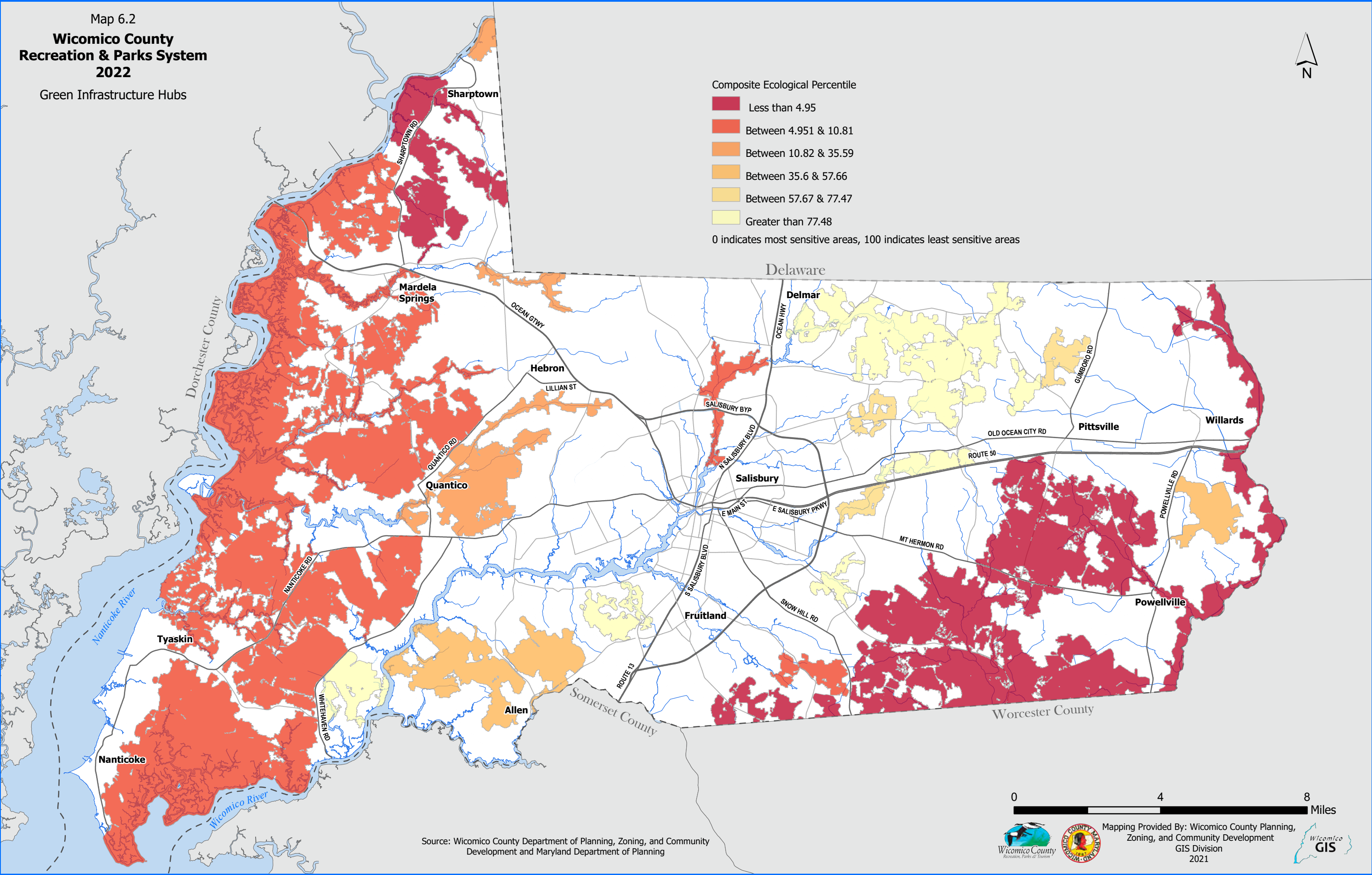
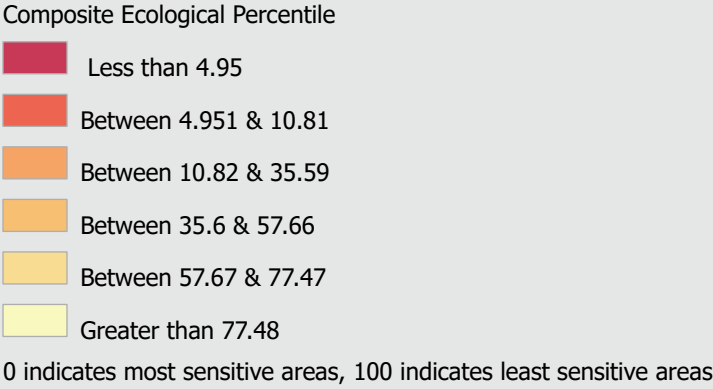
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Mapping Provided By: Wicomico County Planning,
Zoning, and Community Development
GIS Division
2021



Map 6.2
**Wicomico County
Recreation & Parks System
2022**
Green Infrastructure Hubs



Source: Wicomico County Department of Planning, Zoning, and Community Development and Maryland Department of Planning





Mapping Provided By: Wicomico County Planning,
Zoning, and Community Development
GIS Division
2021

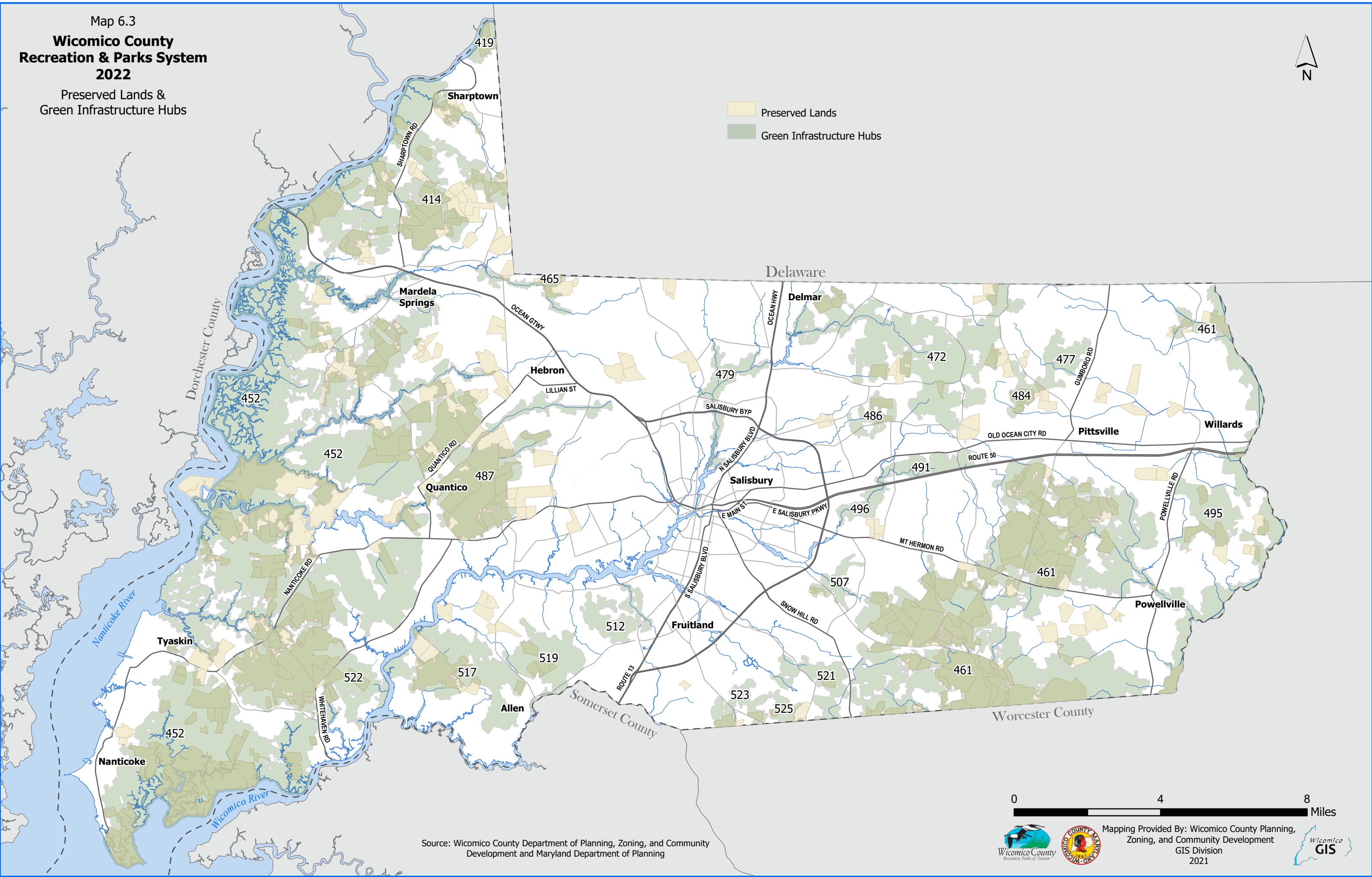


Map 6.3
**Wicomico County
Recreation & Parks System
2022**

Preserved Lands &
Green Infrastructure Hubs



-  Preserved Lands
-  Green Infrastructure Hubs



Source: Wicomico County Department of Planning, Zoning, and Community Development and Maryland Department of Planning

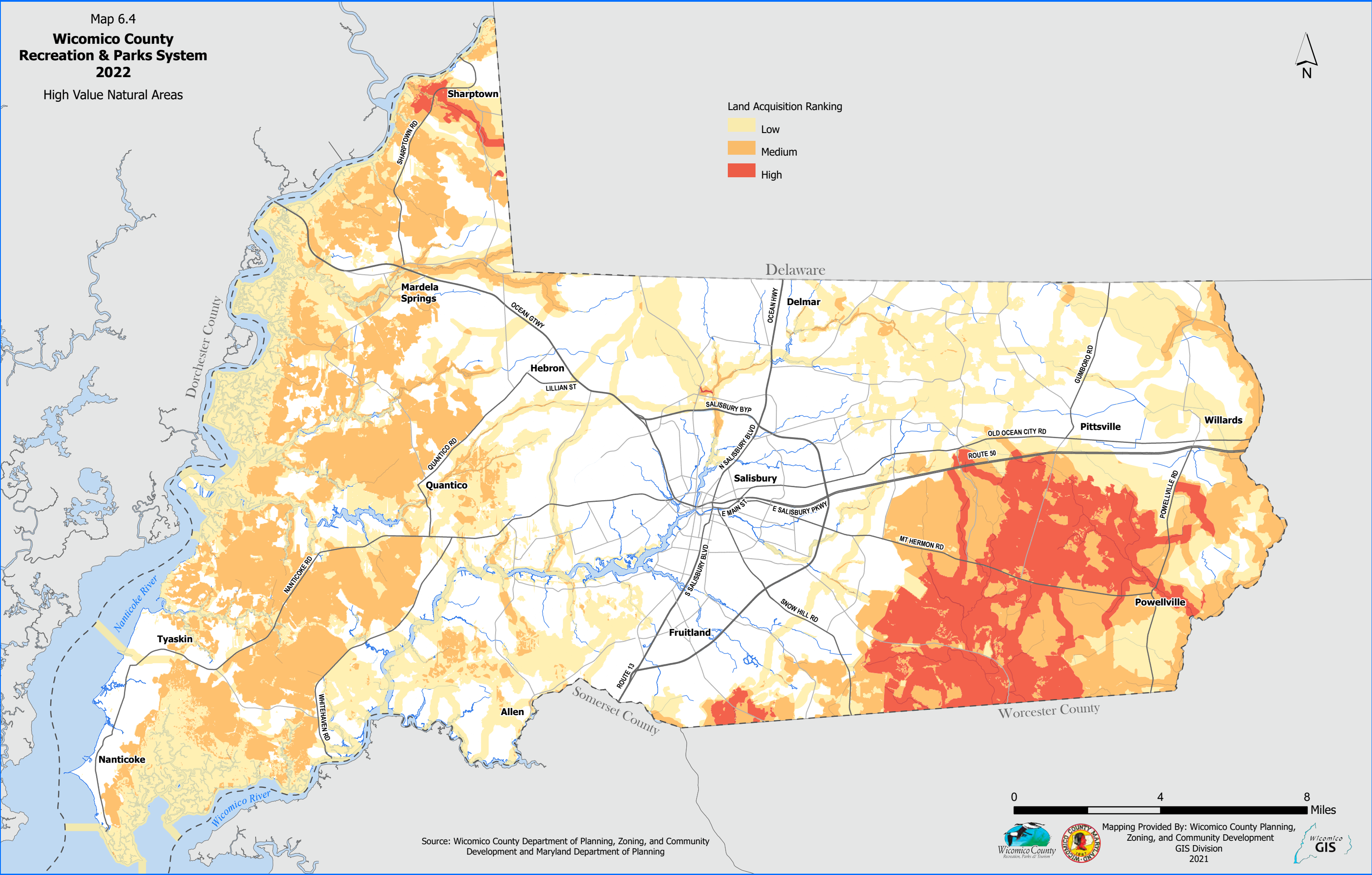
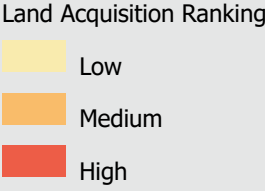
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Mapping Provided By: Wicomico County Planning,
Zoning, and Community Development
GIS Division
2021



Map 6.4
**Wicomico County
Recreation & Parks System
2022**
High Value Natural Areas



Source: Wicomico County Department of Planning, Zoning, and Community Development and Maryland Department of Planning



Mapping Provided By: Wicomico County Planning,
Zoning, and Community Development
GIS Division
2021

