



2017
Wicomico County
Land Preservation, Parks, and
Recreation Plan
Wicomico County, Maryland

Adopted
October 3, 2017

Wicomico County Department of
Recreation, Parks, and Tourism

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

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Resolution Page.

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ADOPTED
October 3, 2017

COUNTY COUNCIL OF WICOMICO COUNTY, MARYLAND

2017 Legislative Session

Legislative Day No. 23

Resolution No. 126-2017

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

**A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE 2017 WICOMICO COUNTY LAND
PRESERVATION, PARKS, AND RECREATION PLAN UPDATE.**

WHEREAS, Section 5-905(b)(2) of the Natural Resources Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland requires the local governing body to prepare a local land preservation and recreation plan with acquisition goals based upon the most current population data available from the Department of Planning; and

WHEREAS, Section 5-905(b)(2) of the Natural Resources Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland further requires the local governing body to revise its local land preservation and recreation plan at least every five (5) years, as well as in accordance with current version of the State's plan development guidelines; and

WHEREAS, a plan entitled "2017 Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan Update," attached as Exhibit "A", has been prepared by the Department of Recreation, Parks & Tourism in cooperation with the Department of Planning, Zoning and Community Development, which builds on the 2013 Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan to further the goals of the Wicomico County Comprehensive Plan; and

WHEREAS, the 2017 Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan Update assesses the progress in meeting the leisure needs of a growing population and helping to preserve land, as well as presents a short and mid-range of capital improvements program for parks and recreation; and

WHEREAS, the County Executive recommends the approval of the 2017 Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan Update.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the County Council of Wicomico County, Maryland that the 2017 Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan Update is hereby approved as to form and content in substantially the same form attached hereto as Exhibit "A".

Done at Salisbury, Maryland, this 3rd Day of October 2017.

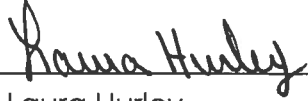
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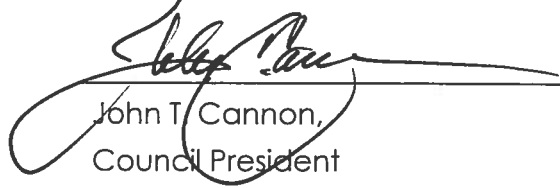
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

ATTEST:

COUNTY COUNCIL OF
WICOMICO COUNTY, MARYLAND



Laura Hurley,
Council Administrator




John T. Cannon,
Council President

CERTIFICATION

This Resolution was Adopted ☒, Adopted with Amendments ☐, Failed ☐, Withdrawn ☐ by the County Council on October 3, 2017.

Certified by


Laura Hurley, Council Administrator

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APPENDIX A – WICOMICO COUNTY RECREATION AREAS AND FACILITIES INVENTORY, 2017

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OVERVIEW

The 2017 *Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan* builds on the 2013 *Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan* and the 2017 *Maryland Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan Guidelines* 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. Also, the Plan presents a long-range capital improvements program for parks and recreation.

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

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

FRAMEWORK

The framework for the 2017 *Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan* includes information on the physical characteristics, demographic characteristics, and current planning policies of the County. The following points summarize the key findings of the Plan framework:

- Wicomico County is the heart of the Delmarva Peninsula. Located south of Delaware between the Chesapeake Bay and the Atlantic Ocean, Wicomico County is within easy driving distance of the major cities on the east coast;
- Natural features cover a significant amount of land in Wicomico County. The Nanticoke, Wicomico, and Pocomoke Rivers, large areas of woodlands, large tracts of Chesapeake 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. Pressure for expansion within this densely developed metropolitan region and increased public services, including parks and recreation, is likely to occur to the west and northwest of Salisbury because of the proximity to existing services;
- Wicomico County population increased from 84,644 in 2000 to 98,733 in 2010—a 16.6 percent increase in 10 years—according to the decennial censuses. Population is expected to increase by an additional 20.7 percent to 119,200 by 2030; and
- For planning purposes, the 2017 *Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan Update* divides the County into planning areas, with an approximate 2015 estimated population distribution as follows:

○ Central:	59.5%	○ South:	16.3%
▪ West Sector:	13.2%	○ East:	6.5%
▪ East Sector:	10.3%	○ Tri-Town:	6.5%
▪ Salisbury:	36.0%	○ West:	3.0%
○ North:	8.2%		

Recreation, Parks, and Open Space

For several decades, Wicomico County has had a vibrant, growing park system and recreation programs that have provided residents with constructive, life-enriching leisure and educational activities. Wicomico County residents enjoy a wide variety of leisure opportunities. Some of the opportunities are available through the Wicomico County Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism in cooperation with 8 recreation councils, as well as special interest groups, and other organizations.

The Wicomico County parks system includes five major types of parks: State and Nature conservancies, countywide, community, neighborhood, and major quasi-public/private parks—each designed to serve geographic areas based on the size of the park and the 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.

The Wicomico County recreation system includes many parks, recreation facilities, and other recreation sites, some of which are owned and/or operated by quasi-public and/or private entities. The public recreation system—comprised of municipal, county, Board of Education, state, and federal sites—includes the following areas and facilities (Tables A–1 through A–4 in the appendix):

- 104 sites
- 25,527 acres of land
- 51 softball fields (12 w/lights)
- 28 baseball fields (5 w/lights)
- 63 football/soccer/lacrosse fields (6 w/lights)
- 44 outdoor basketball courts (5 w/lights)
- 50 tennis courts (20 w/lights)
- 30,950 stadium seats
- 57 playgrounds
- 397 picnic tables
- 27 pavilions
- 2.7 miles of beach
- 33.7 miles of trails
- 24 concession stands
- 23 restrooms
- 11 boat ramps
- 263 boat slips
- 26 fishing and/or hunting areas
- 1 disc golf course (18 holes)
- 30 horseshoe courts (24 w/lights)

It is important to note, the aforementioned inventory does take into account for private / membership recreational amenities. Private facilities were not included as part of the County's demand analysis or the proximity analysis.

To determine user demand and identify potential deficiencies in service, the County engaged citizens in the planning process through a series of meetings, public work sessions, and a survey administered through the Recreation & Parks website. Interviews and feedback were also gathered from staff members, the Recreation & Parks Commission, and other community stakeholders. Furthermore, in accordance with State guidelines, the County utilized a proximity analysis approach which identifies gaps in service for various recreation amenities throughout the County.

A proximity analysis was completed for a variety of park and recreation facility service areas. See Chapter 3 and Maps 3.1A – 3.1E. The countywide proximity analysis included: 1) overall County-wide parks and recreation service areas providing facilities with no service gaps; 2) picnic and pavilion service areas with the only gap being a small undevelopable estuary and wetland area southwest of Athol; 3) aquatic service areas with a north-south oriented gap in the mid-western portion of the County for the Mardela Springs, Athol and Quantico areas and the far eastern portion of the County; 4) water access service areas with only a gap in the rural area in northeast corner of the County; and 5) trails and bikeways in Wicomico County providing availability of safe and useable routes throughout the County.

While the County recognizes the need to address potential gaps in service, it must balance its ability to address needs where and when practicable and economically feasible. Due to the aging nature of the County's park system, a noted emphasis in the Plan is the rehabilitation and modernization of existing facilities. Additionally, small land acquisition needs are recommended to address parking issues in strategic locations in the County. The County will remain opportunistic with development and acquisition projects as future needs emerge. The capital recommendations provided in Chapter 7 includes a full discussion of potential projects by planning area. A complete discussion on user demand and the County's strategy to meet perceived deficiencies in the recreation and parks system is discussed in detail in Chapter 3. Greenways,

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

In addition to recreation and park facilities, the County has a goal of 30.0 acres of local recreation land for every 1,000 residents (ac/000). The needs analysis conducted as part of the 2017 *Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan* identified 37.3 ac/000 of local recreation land (Table 3.14). Therefore, Wicomico County has met its goal for recreation land, and is eligible to use up to 75% of its POS allocation for development. Furthermore, the County will meet the goal at least through 2025 (Table 3.15). Nevertheless, the County recognizes the continuing need for recreation land and open space and expects to acquire additional land to meet future recreation needs.

Planning Areas

Chapter 4 of the Plan presents the information from the plan framework and the recreation and parks system for each of the six planning areas within Wicomico County. Each Planning Area contains information about existing and projected population, natural features and farmland, historic places, existing recreations sites, and recreation land analysis per 1,000 persons.

Agricultural Land Preservation

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

Five major programs/tools preserve agricultural land:

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

- Wicomico County land development regulations, which require new residences in the agricultural zoning district to be clustered on smaller lots to preserve the remaining land. The County has not set a goal for land preservation through development regulation.

Approximately 14,798 acres have been preserved through the first four programs (Table 5.2), excluding local land development regulations. The 2017 *Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan* cites a prorated share of the MALPF goal as a combined goal for land preservation. If the MALPF goal were prorated on the basis of land area, the County's share would be approximately 2,904 acres per year. At a conservative, average price of \$3,500 per acre, meeting the total goal would require slightly more than \$10.1 million per year.

Natural Resource Conservation

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

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

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

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

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

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

Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan

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

- Planning Areas map illustrating site locations by park type map (Map 7.1);
- Policy recommendations in recreation/parks/open space, agricultural land preservation, and natural resource conservation; and
- A capital improvements program by Planning Areas.

Since the adoption of the 2013 Plan, the County completed 22 major projects in various planning areas, which cost a total of \$4.7 million. Of the 22 major projects, 10 projects were specifically identified in the 2013 Plan including: structural improvements and modernization at Arthur W. Perdue Stadium; exterior renovations at the Carriage House at Winterplace Park; restoration of Nanticoke Harbor; and replacement of the Wetipquin boat ramp among other projects. A list of specific work completed by planning area is located in Chapter 7 under each Planning Area heading.

Policy recommendations are identified below by subject area.

Recreation and Parks

- RP-1 Continue to address capital rehabilitation funding in order to keep the County Parks system safe and functional.
- RP-2 Work with DNR, MDP, MDOT, and local agencies/stakeholders to develop trail systems within the County and increase connectivity to State-owned lands.
- RP-3 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.
- RP-4 Explore the potential to transfer the maintenance of existing neighborhood greens to a homeowners association.
- RP-5 Coordinate with developers to identify opportunities to establish pedestrian/bicycle paths consistent with the locally adopted plans or studies.
- RP-6 Ensure that County trails are compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- RP-7 Continue to evaluate older playgrounds to ensure compliance with the U. S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) guidelines.

- RP-8 Continue to enhance the comprehensive parks maintenance management program to ensure safe and attractive parks and to replace older equipment and vehicles.
- RP-9 Complete facility improvements outlined in the 20-year lease agreement with the Delmarva Shorebirds to include restoration and modernization of Arthur W. Perdue Stadium.
- RP-10 Work collaboratively with the Board of Education to make public facilities reasonably available and affordable for programming needs.
- RP-11 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.
- RP-12 Expand facilities required to attract and expand amateur tournaments.
- RP-13 Continue to strengthen recreation council & stakeholder relationships to support programs and park operations.
- RP-14 Continue to review the County fee structure for possible modifications to increase participation.
- RP-15 Continue to support the endowment to fund scholarships and programs for the County's at-risk populations.
- RP-16 Consider developing recreation programs that address the leisure needs of the County's continually diversifying population.
- RP-17 Coordinate with State and local governments to identify alternative methods to quantify user demands, needs, and experiences.
- RP-18 Continue public engagement efforts in order to refine analysis for public use demand specific to parks and recreation amenities throughout the County.
- RP-19 Seek acquisition of land to address parking deficiencies at the Eastside Youth Sports Complex and in Fruitland.

Agricultural Preservation

- A-1 Evaluate the minimum acreage requirement for participation in the County easement program.
- A-2 Develop alternative methods of compensation for easements to meet a variety of financial needs of farm families.
- A-3 Continue preservation efforts designed to achieve the preservation goals contained in this Plan.

Natural Resource Conservation

- N-1 Consideration should be given to expanding the existing Quantico Creek Rural Legacy Area in Wicomico County.
- N-2 Preserve open space and improve the quality of the Chesapeake Bay tributaries.
- N-3 Continue discussions between representatives of environmental organizations and County officials to discuss and assess important environmental issues in the County.
- N-4 Consider land banking and other voluntary mechanisms to preserve land along Wicomico County waterways.
- N-5 Foster a strong working relationship between the County and the State in areas of mutual interest.
- N-6 Consider coupling agricultural preservation easement purchases with initiatives to protect Green Infrastructure hubs and corridors.
- N-7 Research and identify alternative methods of compensation for easements; i.e., tax-free interest payments, tax donation deductions, property tax credit, etc.
- N-8 Seek statewide Program Open Space funding to acquire lands within targeted high priority Green Infrastructure hubs and corridors.

The capital recommendations of the Plan include 31 projects totaling an estimated \$10.3 million (Table 7.2). Highlights of the capital recommendations include:

- Acquiring 7 acres of land, including:
 - 3.0 acres to expand parking at the Eastside Sports Complex
 - 4.0 acres to expand parking at the Fruitland Sports Complex
- Developing & expanding parks to meet recreation needs of areas experiencing or expected to experience significant growth:
 - Expand the Henry S. Parker Athletic Complex to increase inventory to 8 ball fields;
 - Develop a master plan for Pirates Wharf to include passive recreation opportunities for the general public and tourists.
- A total of \$4.4 million—43% of total estimated cost—is devoted to rehabilitation of existing facilities, in response to the Plan’s emphasis on park and facility rehabilitation.

INTRODUCTION

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

To fulfill the requirements of Maryland's Program Open Space (POS), the 2017 *Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan* update builds on the County's 2013 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 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 2017 *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 2017 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 2017 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 and driving force behind the development and implementation of the *2017 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 2017 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 Salisbury-Wicomico County Department of Planning, Zoning, and Community Development.

Public Participation

The 2017 *Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan* is based on the 2013 *Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan*, 2017 *Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan Guidelines*, 2017 *Wicomico County Comprehensive Plan*, and public input. The update was prepared within the confines of reduced local, County, and State budgets. Furthermore, the update was prepared, in large part, on the ideas and concepts found in the following information sources:

- County trends and user demand survey;
- DRPT Staff;
- Recreation and Parks Commission;
- Recreation Councils;
- Maryland Land Preservation and Recreation Plan

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

- Quarterly meetings with 8 Recreation Councils;
- Recreation & Parks Commission (Spring and Fall 2016);
- County Council work sessions (November and December 2016);
- Municipalities (Summer of 2016);
- Wicomico County Public Schools Administration (July and December 2016); and
- Pemberton Historical Board (July 2016).

Additionally, many informal conversations were held with Recreation, Parks and Tourism staff, County officials, advisory board members, and other key stakeholders that were used to form capital recommendations outlined in Chapter 7.

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	

It is important to note, the goals and objectives contained in the 2017 *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.

Economic Impacts

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

Signature special events and sporting events generate significant revenue for Wicomico County's local businesses and tax base. Last fiscal year, 39 regional events were held in the park system, infusing \$40.0 million into the economy. Events included:

- USSSA Girls Softball World Series (396 teams);
- Autumn Wine Festival;
- Pork in the Park Barbecue Festival;
- Delmarva Bike Week (100,000 motorcyclists); 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. Recreation opportunities instill community pride. Activities such as hunting, golf, and recreational fishing offer a chance to develop valuable friendships and partnerships. Leisure events frequently leave participants with an enhanced sense of community spirit. Certain forms of recreation also give the physically disabled a chance to become more involved in community activities. Youths who participate in organized recreation are less likely to engage in antisocial behavior, need social services, or become involved in the criminal court system. Furthermore, recreation programs are much less expensive than the \$150 per person per day cost to incarcerate troubled youth.

Environmental Benefits

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

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

Personal Benefits

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

FRAMEWORK

The framework for any plan is the characteristics of the community for which the plan is prepared. The framework for the *2017 Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan* includes information on three important aspects of the County:

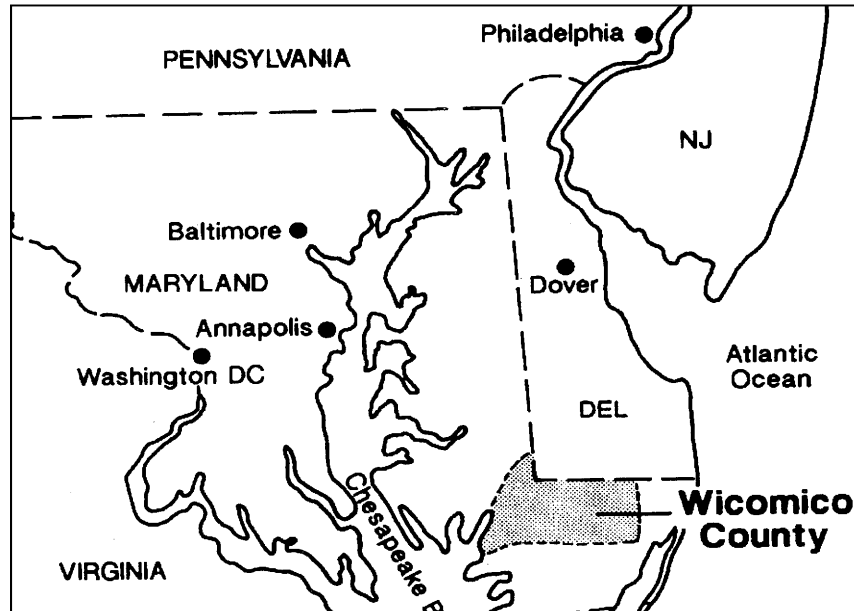
- ***Physical characteristics***—Information on the forests, woodlands, streams, wetlands, Critical Areas (associated with the Chesapeake Bay), soils, steep slopes, unique natural areas, and development patterns will help guide future park sites and recreation services. Later, in separate chapters, the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

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

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

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

Map 2.1
Regional Location



Source: URDC, 2013

Critical Areas, Wetlands, and Floodplains




Water features (Map 2.2) are significant for both major components of the 2017 *Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan*: parks/recreation and agricultural preservation/natural resource conservation. Federal and State law requires wetlands, both tidal and non-tidal, must be preserved or relocated. Floodplains should also be preserved, wherever possible. Efforts should be made to avoid development within the 100-year floodplain. If development occurs within the 100-year floodplain, efforts should be made to mitigate negative impacts. Wicomico County has strong regulations restricting uses within floodplains.

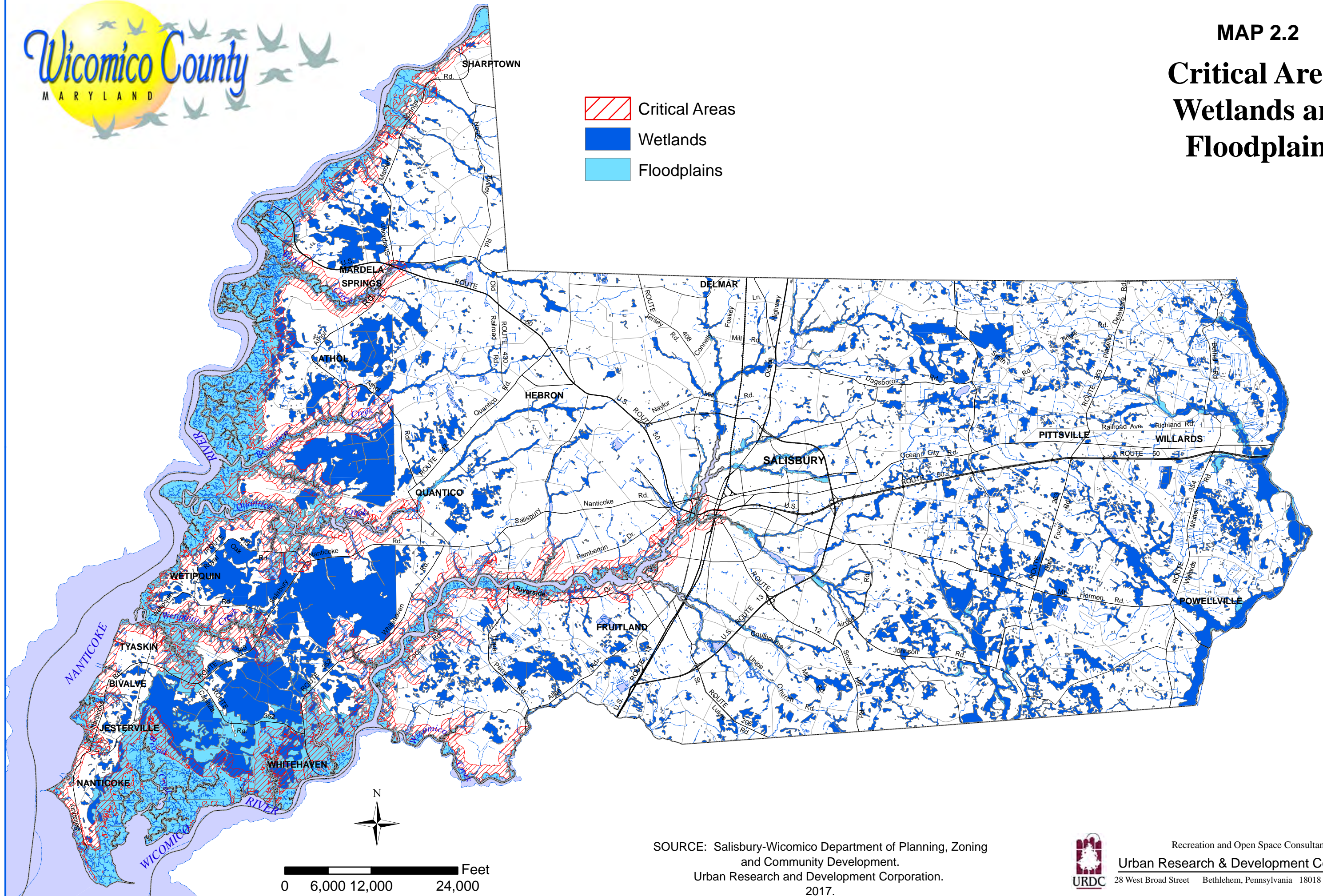
Critical Areas are regulated through the Wicomico County Critical Areas Program, adopted in 1989. As defined by State law, the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area includes the Chesapeake Bay, all tidal tributaries and wetlands, and all water and land areas within 1,000 feet of the upland boundary of the tidal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

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



MAP 2.2 Critical Areas, Wetlands and Floodplains

-  Critical Areas
-  Wetlands
-  Floodplains



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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 30 years from 1986 through 2016, subdivision plats located in the unincorporated area of Wicomico and outside of the Metro Core accounted for almost 60 percent of all lots on 79 percent of the newly developed land. (Table 2.1).

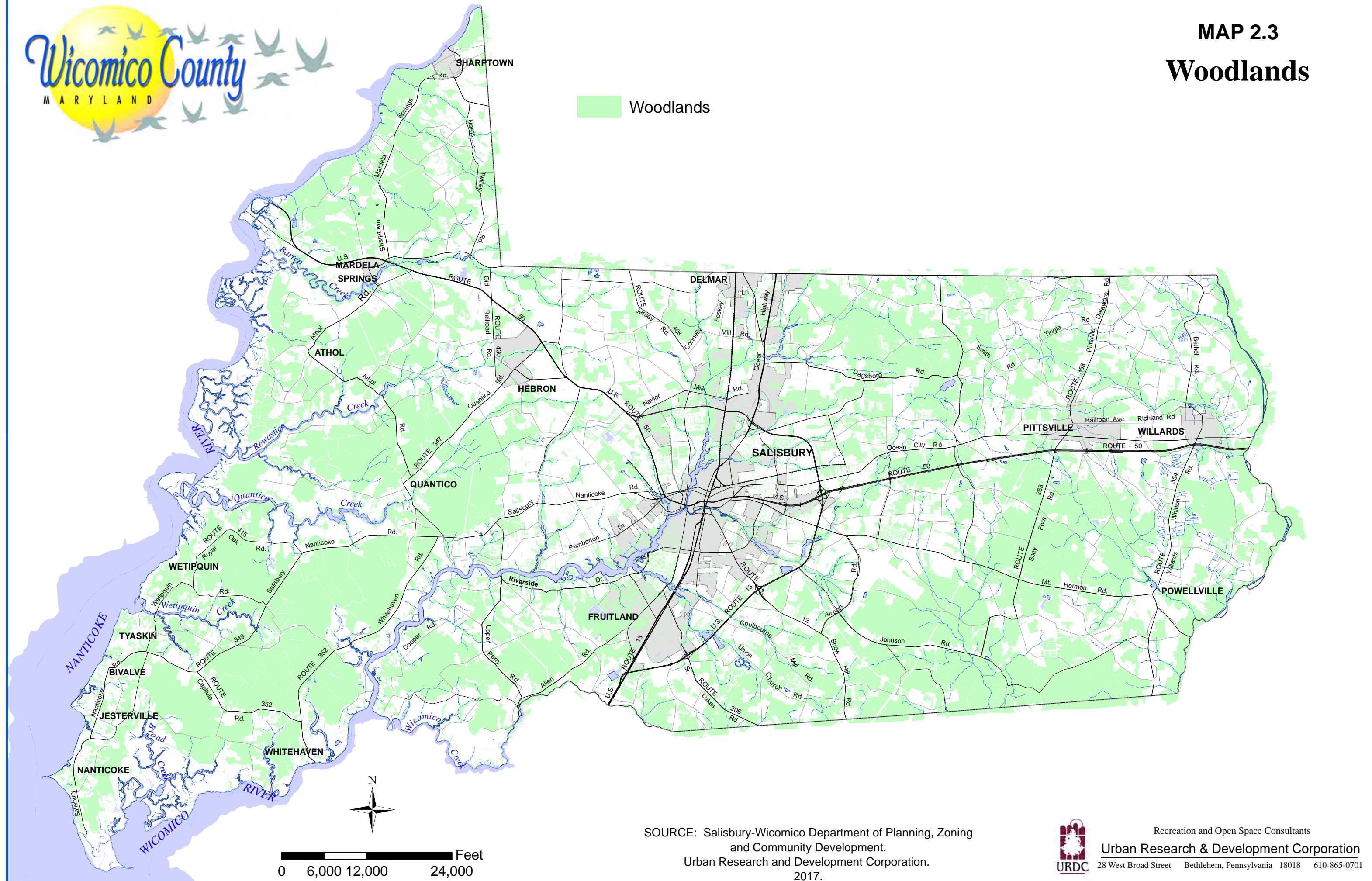
Table 2.1
Development within the Unincorporated Portion
Of Wicomico County, 1986—2016

Area	Final Lots		Acres		Average Lot Size (ac.)
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Within Metro Core	2,106	40.2%	2,422	21.2%	1.15
Outside Metro Core	3,130	59.8%	8,991	78.8%	2.88
Total	5,236	100.0%	11,413	100.0%	2.18

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

The extent of development in Wicomico County does not constitute an imminent threat to land preservation efforts. The 1998 zoning code amendments to the A-1 Agricultural-Rural Zoning District have increased the amount of land preserved through the development process. From June 1998 through December 2016, 24 new subdivisions (of three or more lots) were approved in the A-1 district. The 24 approved subdivisions contain 392 lots on a total of 2,625 acres, of which 1,432 acres is preserved as open space set-aside (both on lots and as a separate parcel).

Approximately 62,000 acres or 33 percent of the 185,567 acres within the A-1 zoning district have some level of protection from future development. The A-1 zoning district includes wetlands (tidal



SOURCE: Salisbury-Wicomico Department of Planning, Zoning
and Community Development.
Urban Research and Development Corporation.
2017.



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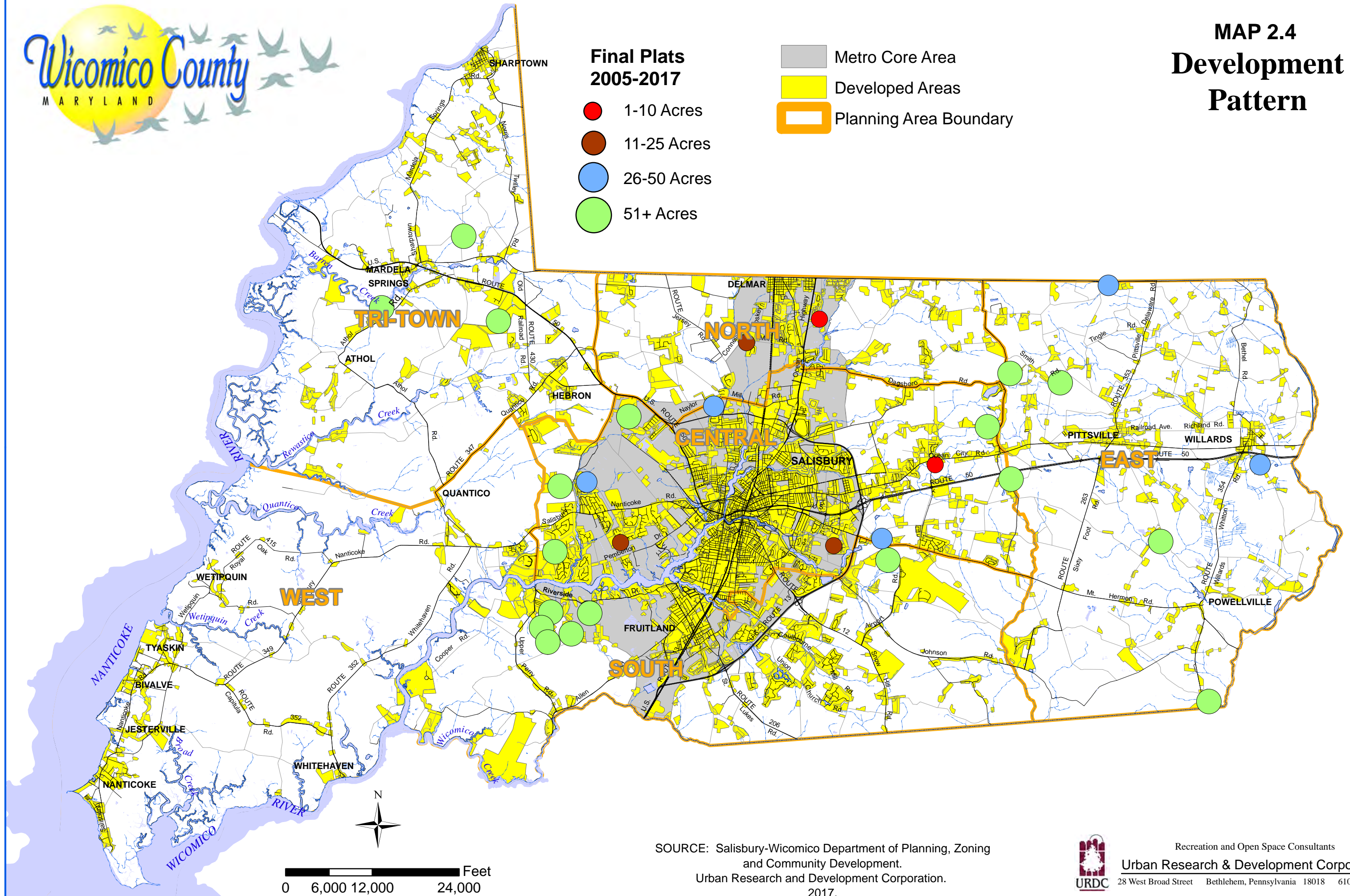


MAP 2.4 Development Pattern

Final Plats 2005-2017

- 1-10 Acres
- 11-25 Acres
- 26-50 Acres
- 51+ Acres

- Metro Core Area
- Developed Areas
- Planning Area Boundary



SOURCE: Salisbury-Wicomico Department of Planning, Zoning and Community Development.
Urban Research and Development Corporation.
2017.



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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 to improve the water quality of the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries, the County should consider the use of package, community, or shared septic systems to serve areas with existing failing septic 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 because of 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 2.17 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 2016, the City of Salisbury annexed approximately 1,681 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;
- Conservation Reserve Easement Program (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 2017 *Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan* includes information on Wicomico County's current and forecasted population, age, gender, and income. The 2017 Plan uses data from the 2010 U.S. Decennial Census, 2015 American Community Survey, and Maryland Department of Planning's State Data Center.

Population

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

Table 2.2
Population Counts and Projections
Wicomico County, 2000-2040

Planning Area	2000	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	Change 2015-2040	
									Number	Percent
East	6,109	6,448	6,723	7,132	7,471	7,771	8,001	8,202	1,479	19.8
Central	50,196	58,737	61,246	64,964	68,056	70,816	73,621	75,523	14,277	20.9
East Subsector	9,235	10,211	10,647	11,294	11,831	12,067	12,506	12,868	2,221	18.9
West Subsector	11,663	12,998	13,553	14,376	15,060	15,825	16,475	17,004	3,451	22.6
Central Subsector	29,298	35,528	37,046	39,294	41,165	42,940	44,640	45,651	8,605	20.8
West	2,734	2,953	3,080	3,266	3,422	3,575	3,702	3,843	763	22.0
Tri-Town	5,394	6,444	6,719	7,127	7,467	7,749	8,016	8,423	1,704	22.5
South	13,495	16,087	16,774	17,792	18,640	19,533	20,243	20,856	4,082	21.7
North	6,716	8,064	8,408	8,919	9,344	9,756	10,267	10,803	2,395	24.9
Total	84,644	98,733	102,950	109,200	114,400	119,200	123,850	127,650	24,700	21.4

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

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

Table 2.3
Gender, 2015

Gender	Wicomico County		Maryland	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Male	48,199	47.6	2,872,643	48.4
Female	52,983	52.4	3,057,895	51.6
Totals	101,182	100.0	5,930,538	100.0

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5 Year Estimates 2011 - 2015

The Wicomico County population grew at a faster rate from 2000 to 2010 than the State of Maryland as a whole — a characteristic common to both the male and female populations. According to data from the Maryland State Data Center (MSDC), Wicomico County is projected to grow faster than the state as a whole between 2015 and 2040 (Table 2.4), 21.4 and 13.6 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 2015 to 2040. It is projected, the County will also be the fastest growing county in the Lower Eastern Shore region between 2015 and 2040 (Table 2.4).

Table 2.4
Population Projections, 2015-2040

Jurisdiction	2015	2020	2030	2040	Change, 2015-2040	
					Number	Percent
Wicomico	102,950	109,200	119,200	127,650	24,700	21.4%
Dorchester	33,250	34,800	37,850	40,000	6,750	18.4%
Somerset	26,900	27,750	28,950	29,550	2,650	9.4%
Worcester	52,900	56,100	60,450	63,100	10,200	17.6%
Maryland	6,010,140	6,224,510	6,612,190	6,889,690	879,550	13.6%

Source: Maryland Department of Planning, State Data Center, January 2015

Table 2.5 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 2010 Census, the 20 to 24 years old age bracket contained the largest overall proportion of County residents, which consisted of roughly 9.5 percent or 9,337 County residents. In contrast, seniors 85 years or older included the smallest proportion of the County's population (1.8 percent or 1,771 residents). In 2010, the median age of the County residents was 35.7 years old.

The State of Maryland's age structure of its residents differed slightly from Wicomico County. The 45 to 49 years old age bracket had the largest concentration of the State's overall population, which represented 8.0 percent or 461,585 residents. The 85 years and over bracket comprised the smallest proportion of the population (1.7 percent or 98,126 residents). In 2010, the median age of the State's population was 38 years of age.

TABLE 2.5
POPULATION BY AGE (2010)

Age	Wicomico County	Wicomico County Percentage	Maryland	Maryland Percentage
Total Population	98,733	100.0%	5,773,552	100%
Under 5 years	6,142	6.2%	364,488	6.3%
5 to 9 years	6,140	6.2%	366,868	6.4%
10 to 14 years	6,009	6.1%	379,029	6.6%
15 to 19 years	8,968	9.1%	406,241	7.0%
20 to 24 years	9,337	9.5%	393,698	6.8%
25 to 29 years	6,335	6.4%	393,548	6.8%
30 to 34 years	5,709	5.8%	368,494	6.4%
35 to 39 years	5,584	5.7%	377,409	6.5%
40 to 44 years	6,026	6.1%	418,163	7.2%
45 to 49 years	6,974	7.1%	461,585	8.0%
50 to 54 years	7,039	7.1%	440,619	7.6%
55 to 59 years	6,259	6.3%	377,989	6.5%
60 to 64 years	5,364	5.4%	317,779	5.5%
65 to 69 years	4,078	4.1%	226,596	3.9%
70 to 74 years	2,788	2.8%	159,761	2.8%
75 to 79 years	2,341	2.4%	124,579	2.2%
80 to 84 years	1,869	1.9%	98,580	1.7%
85 years and over	1,771	1.8%	98,126	1.7%
Median Age	35.7	N/A	38.0	N/A

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2010)

MSDC data also indicate that the average Wicomico County household size in 2010 remained at 2.53 persons per household—the same figure as in 2000. Since the 1990 census, Wicomico County has had the highest persons per household figure of any county in the Lower Eastern Shore. MSDC projections of household size anticipate that Wicomico will continue to have the highest average household size on the Lower Eastern Shore through 2040, even though the average size will decrease during the time period (Table 2.6). Between 2010 and 2040, Worcester County is projected to have the largest decrease of average household size, 2.28 and 2.16, respectively.

Table 2.6
Current and Projected Average Household Size, Lower Eastern Shore, 2010-2040

Jurisdiction	2010	2020	2030	2040	Change, 2010-2040	
					Number	Percent
Dorchester	2.37	2.33	2.29	2.26	-0.11	-4.64%
Somerset	2.37	2.33	2.31	2.30	-0.07	-2.95%
Wicomico	2.53	2.49	2.45	2.45	-0.08	-3.16%
Worcester	2.28	2.24	2.19	2.16	-0.12	-5.26%
Maryland	2.61	2.57	2.51	2.48	-0.13	-4.98%

Source: Maryland Department of Planning, January 2015

Income

The median household income in the County increased 34 percent or \$13,243 between the 2000 Census and the 2015 American Community Survey. During the same period of time, the State median household income increased 41 percent or \$21,683. This 34 percent increase in the County's median household income indicates an increasing need for leisure activities.

Table 2.7
Median Household Income, 1999–2015

Income	2000 Census	2015 American Community Survey; 5-Year Estimates	Change, 2000-2014	
			Amount	Percent
Wicomico County	\$39,035	\$52,278	\$13,243	34.0%
Maryland	\$52,868	\$74,551	\$21,683	41.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5 Year Estimates 2010 – 2015, and 2000 Decennial Census

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 agritourism 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.

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

Natural Resource 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.
- 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.

² 2017 Wicomico County Comprehensive Plan, PP. 4-1

³ 2017 Wicomico County Comprehensive Plan, PP. 9-1

RECREATION, PARKS, AND OPEN SPACE

OVERVIEW

This Chapter contains Wicomico County's goals and objectives 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

To acquire, develop, and maintain park land; preserve unique natural resources; and support the public recreation program and tourism signature events. Recreational programs shall enhance the quality of life for Wicomico County residents by providing life-long benefits through a wide variety of educational, social, and recreational activities in safe and healthy environments.

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 staff, perhaps the primary reason that Wicomico County has one of the premier park and recreation systems in the country for its size is the foresight and continual planning to identify and meet future recreation needs. Program Open Space has been an important component of land acquisition and park development.

Partnerships

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, 8 recreation councils, 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;
- Quasi-public groups, such as churches, YMCA, Boys and Girls Club; and
- Private businesses.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Wicomico County

The goals identified in this Plan will continue to maintain the County's excellence in leisure services, which is a tradition established by Wicomico County to ensure an outstanding and sustainable recreation and parks system of any mid-size county in Maryland. The five core goals and their associated objectives of the 2017 *Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan*, presented below, reflect the Department's emphasis on continuing partnerships, capital programming, facilities, programs, and promotions:

Partnerships

- Continue to develop strong partnerships with both public and private entities to improve the County park system and provide recreation programs where most needed.
- Coordinate with eight community recreation councils and numerous special interest boards to operate and maintain municipal and special facilities and activities.
- 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.
- Maintain and expand existing relationships with the Maryland Stadium Authority and State's Department of Business and Economic Development to enhance facilities which benefit the tourism economy.

Capital Programming

- Continue to use various methods of fundraising, financing, cost avoidance, and marketing parks and recreation.
- Continue creative techniques to finance proposed capital improvements and programming.
- Pursue federal, State, and local funding opportunities to implement capital improvement considerations contained within this Plan.
- Request financial and personnel support from Local Management Board to improve childcare programs and family activities offered in the County.
- Obtain annual funding from the Maryland's Waterway Improvement Funds to address restoration of County marinas and boat ramps.

Facilities

- Emphasize maintenance and improvement of existing parks and make maximum use of currently owned land and developed facilities.
- Acquire land for park development.
- 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.
- Develop additional ball & multi-use fields to accommodate demand to host regional & national amateur sports tournaments.
- Maintain and promote public access to water.
- Provide safe cycling and hiking opportunities throughout the County.

Programs

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

Promotion

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

State of Maryland

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

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

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.

PROGRESS TOWARDS MEETING GOALS OF THE 2013 LPPRP

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

- The County has not acquired additional land for recreational use or open space since the adoption of the 2013 LPPRP.
- The County unsuccessfully pursued land acquisition to expand the Henry S. Parker Athletic Complex, but has adjusted its plan to accommodate additional diamond fields on existing land.
- 22 acres identified in the 2013 Plan in the South Planning Area were purchased and developed by a private organization that provides recreation and leisure services for Wicomico County citizens.

Facility Construction, Maintenance, and Expansion

- Since the adoption of the 2013 Plan, a total of 22 construction, maintenance and expansion projects have been completed in Wicomico County totaling \$4.7 million.
- Ten of these projects were specifically identified in the 2013 LPPRP including structural improvements at Arthur W. Perdue Stadium, restoration of Nanticoke Harbor, replacement of the Wetipquin boat ramp, exterior renovation of the Carriage House at Winterplace Park, among other projects.
- The County recently started a \$3.1 million expansion at the Henry S. Parker Athletic Complex, which will increase diamond field inventory from 5 to 8 fields. The project is expected to be completed in the spring of 2018 and will be included as inventory in the next update of this Plan.

Programs

- The County revitalized its environmental education program with the establishment of the Aqua Culture Center at Cedar Hill Marina. The program is open to school age groups and provides hands-on opportunities for students to engage in various environmental education activities on the water.
- Due to increased competition in the private sector and changing demographics, the County's adult sports program has suffered a decline in recent years. To meet changing needs, the Department has introduced adult recreational sports such as adult kickball and is pursuing recreational opportunities for older adults in activities such as pickleball.

RECREATION AND PARKS SERVICES AND FINANCIALS

Recreation Programs

Wicomico County has traditionally had a strong complement of recreation program offerings. The public recreation program offers more than 235 different activities, including sports leagues, after school child care, summer playgrounds, senior adult services, instructional programs, special events and programs for targeted groups, such as at-risk youth. Department-wide participation boasts 32,500 registrants and 327,000 visits annually. Participation in Department program offerings is shown from 2002, 2007, 2012, and 2016. See Table 3.1.

Findings include:

- The Department's delivery of services to its citizens has been affected by a lengthy economic recession. This prompted the Department to increase fees to recover all fixed costs including full time staffing resulting in affordability issues and participation erosion. Independent youth sports clubs, leagues, and other providers have picked up the lost business.
- Funding reductions have limited the availability of free, at risk youth programming that provides structured activity and mentoring to the County's youth.
- Adult sport participation has decreased by 10 %, primarily due to a decrease in participation in women's sports programs.
- Harbor slip rentals have decreased 5.5% in the last 13 years. This is an effect of the recent recession and affordability (gas; harbor fees) which is a national trend.
- Instructional programs like sport camps and classes have suffered with a 28% decrease over the last 13 years. This is primarily due to an increase in the number of camps offered by other organizations.
- There remains a significant and steady demand for affordable, out of school time childcare services.
- With the introduction of Adventure Education at Westside Community Center, outdoor recreation programming has rebounded from 5 years ago. However, there remains a decrease of 61% over the last 13 years due to the loss of the full time Park Naturalist position at Pemberton Park and dramatically affected the number of school groups served by environmental education programs.
- The Department's initiatives in sports marketing have delivered a 219% increase in tournament participation over the last 13 years.

Table 3.1
Public Recreation Registration, 2002, 2007, 2012, 2016

Activity Category	2002	2007	2012	2016	Change 2002 - 2016	
					Number	Percent
Adult Organized Sports	1,525	1,661	1,804	1,377	-148	-10%
Youth Organized Sports	2,447	1,683	1,444	1,508	-939	-38%
Instructional Programs	845	1,052	350	608	-237	-28%
Pemberton Environmental Education Programs	3,663	2,399	610	1,438	-2225	-61%
West Side Community Center	747	800	995	530	-217	-29%
Out of School Time Child Care	3,518	3,594	3,446	4,003	485	14%
Playgrounds / At Risk Programing	1,068	474	175	116	-952	-89%
Special Events	6,250	26,805	22,572	18,687	12437	99%
Harbor Slip Rentals	161	195	180	152	-9	-5.5%
Pavilion Rentals	182	261	190	177	-5	-3%
Amateur Sports Tournaments (teams)	360	566	706	1,150	790	219%
Happy Timers	255	260	277	150	-95	-41%
Totals	21,776	40,817	33,694	29,896	8,875	42%

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 52 events of which most are multi-day and attract participants who require hotel room stays. In FY 15-16, Wicomico's book of business infused approximately \$50.7 million into the local and state economy. Over three quarters (79%) of the economic impact came from events staged in outdoor recreational facilities, accounting for 233,000+ attendees and an economic impact of \$40.0 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 business leading to the following recommendations:

- Modernize and expand the Youth & Civic Center and outdoor athletic facilities to retain, grow and develop sporting events, meetings and conferences. Leverage State Program Open Space, Maryland Stadium Authority and the State Department of Business & Economic Development (DBED) funding to undertake these enhancements; and
- Continue to leverage the partnership with Ocean City and Worcester County to promote a regional brand and combine inventory and marketing tactics to attract amateur sporting event to the region.

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, owners' of historic structures, educational institutions, developers, and ordinary citizens.

In addition to the historic amenities located within Wicomico County, Pemberton Historical Park (<http://www.pembertonpark.org/>) is the Department's premier heritage tourism site. The Park includes 234 acres with 4.5 miles of nature trails and is the site of Pemberton Hall and the Wicomico Heritage Center. The building is one of the first 18th-century homes built in Wicomico County and has been restored by the Pemberton Hall Foundation. The Department supports an ongoing capital program for Pemberton Park. Future recommended improvements include a soft launch site for watercraft.

Financials

The Department's budget increased significantly from 1990 to 2015. See Table 3.2. However, the bulk of increased funding is a direct result of County policy change, which added employee benefit expenses directly to the Departmental budgets. Recreation & Parks employee benefits account for approximately 34% of the existing Recreation & Parks budget.

It is critical 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. Additionally, the dramatic increase in amateur sports tournaments (though an economic engine) have required 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 3.2
Recreation and Parks Budget, 1990–2016

Item	1990	1995	2000	2004	2013	2016
County Taxes						
Operating Budget	\$ 803,300	\$ 917,200	\$ 1,281,400	\$ 1,274,800	\$ 1,098,878	\$2,267,953
Capital Improvement Budget	\$ 174,000	\$ 136,000	\$ 56,000	\$ -	\$ 704,000	-
<i>Subtotal - County Taxes</i>	<i>\$ 977,300</i>	<i>\$ 1,053,200</i>	<i>\$ 1,337,400</i>	<i>\$ 1,274,800</i>	<i>\$ 1,802,878</i>	<i>\$2,267,953</i>
Fees and Charges						
Operating Budget	\$ 155,900	\$ 185,000	\$ 260,700	\$ 233,000	\$ 571,733	\$465,388
Enterprise Budget	\$ 386,600	\$ 627,100	\$ 806,200	\$ 941,000	\$ 1,412,951	\$1,644,278
<i>Subtotal - Fees and Charges</i>	<i>\$ 542,500</i>	<i>\$ 812,100</i>	<i>\$ 1,066,900</i>	<i>\$ 1,174,000</i>	<i>\$ 1,984,684</i>	<i>\$2,109,666</i>
Grants						
Federal Urban Playgrounds	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	-	-
State Program Open Space	\$ 226,000	\$ 286,000	\$ 504,815	\$ 213,100	\$ 1,110,742	\$314,500
State Waterway Improvements	\$ 50,000	\$ 1,200,000	\$ 100,000	\$ 63,000	\$ 182,086	\$99,000
Army Corps of Engineers	\$ -	\$ 111,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	-
Salisbury Maintenance	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,250	-
<i>Subtotal - Grants</i>	<i>\$ 281,000</i>	<i>\$ 1,602,000</i>	<i>\$ 607,815</i>	<i>\$ 279,100</i>	<i>\$ 1,296,078</i>	<i>\$413,500</i>
Total	\$ 1,800,800	\$ 3,467,300	\$ 3,012,115	\$ 2,727,900	\$ 5,083,640	\$4,791,119

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

COUNTY RECREATION AND PARKS SYSTEM

The Wicomico County parks system includes five major types of parks. See Table 3.3. 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 the Appendix, are identified by park type.

Table 3.3
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 (approximately 4-10) of subdivisions. – Sometimes located at a middle school or high school – Typical facilities include playground, hard surface courts, picnic facilities, and several athletic fields	10-60 acres	Within 5 miles
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: URDC, 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 encompassing approximately 25,491 acres of land, is comprised of the following recreational amenities on municipal, County, Board of Education, State, and federal sites. See Map 3.1, Tables 3.4 through 3.10 and Appendix A (1 through 4) for additional information.

104 sites	397 picnic tables
51 softball fields (12 w/lights)	27 pavilions
28 baseball fields (5 w/lights)	2.7 miles of beach
63 football/soccer/lacrosse fields (6 w/lights)	33.7 miles of trails
51 softball fields (12 w/lights)	24 concession stands
44 outdoor basketball courts (5 w/lights)	23 restrooms
50 tennis courts (20 w/lights)	11 boat ramps
1 disc golf course (18 holes)	263 boat slips
30,950 stadium seats	26 fishing and/or hunting areas
57 playgrounds	30 horseshoe courts (24 w/lights)

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



MAP 3.1 Wicomico County Parks and Recreation System 2017

State and Nature Conservancy Areas

- Chesapeake Forest
- All Other State and Nature Conservancy Areas

County Serving Areas

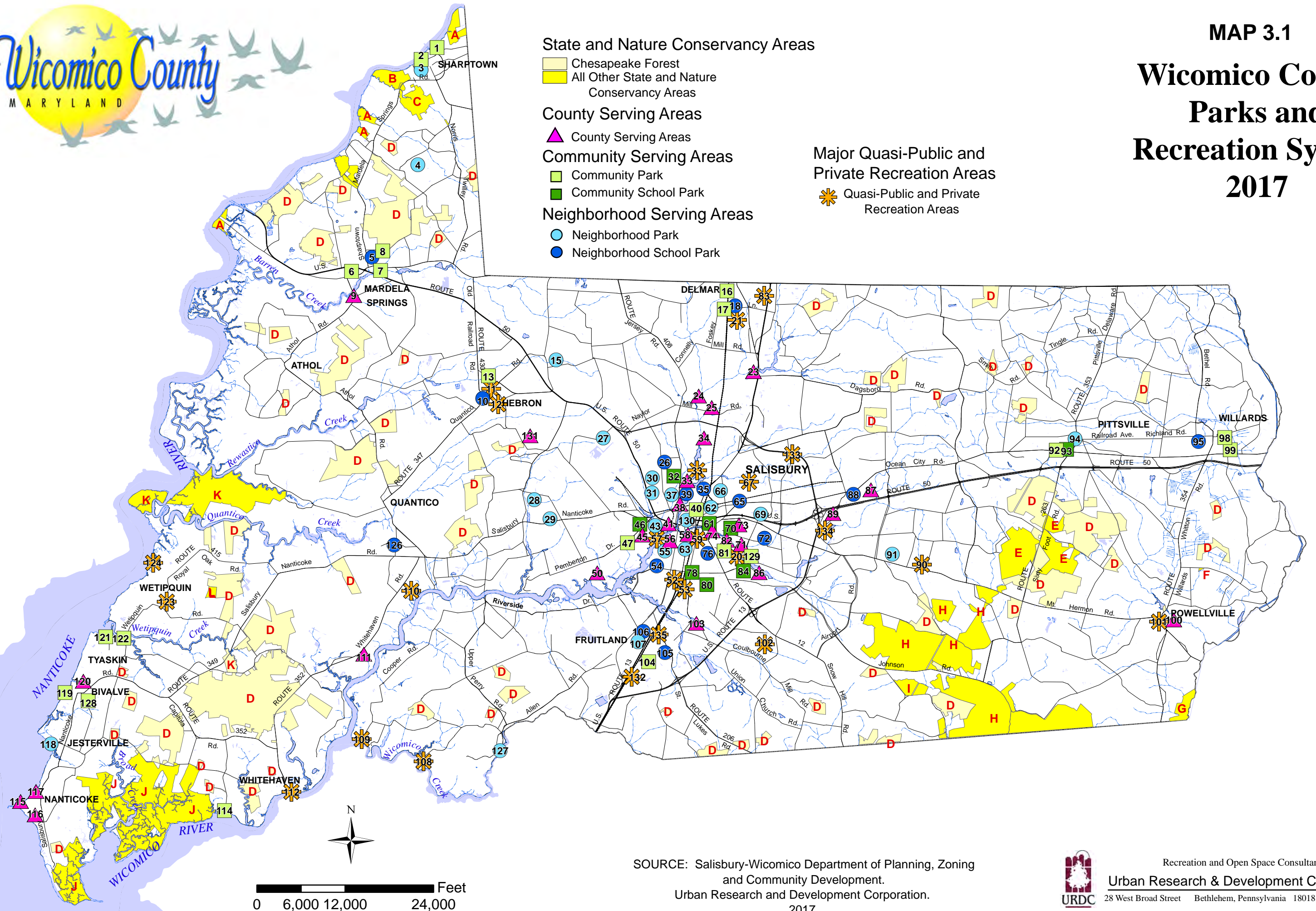
- County Serving Areas
- Community Serving Areas
- Community Park
- Community School Park

Neighborhood Serving Areas

- Neighborhood Park
- Neighborhood School Park

Major Quasi-Public and Private Recreation Areas

- Quasi-Public and Private Recreation Areas



SOURCE: Salisbury-Wicomico Department of Planning, Zoning and Community Development.
Urban Research and Development Corporation.
2017.



Recreation and Open Space Consultants
Urban Research & Development Corporation
28 West Broad Street Bethlehem, Pennsylvania 18018 610-865-0701

Table 3.4
Wicomico County Recreation Sites, 2017
(Key for Map 3.1)

No. Name of Area / Ownership	No. Name of Area / Ownership	No. Name of Area / Ownership	No. Name of Area / Ownership
State of MD / Nature Conservancy	Local Public Rec. (cont'd.)	Local Public Rec. (cont'd.)	Quasi-Public and Private
A Upper Nanticoke Management Area	31 Emerson Holloway Park	86 Schumaker Park	11 Hebron Fairground and Park
B Pocomoke River Heritage Cons. Fund	32 Salisbury Middle School	87 WinterPlace Park / E. Little Leag	12 Hebron Part-time Playground
C Plum Creek Cedar Swamp Preserve	33 Billy Gene Jackson Park	88 Beaver Run Elementary	19 Woodlawn Playground
D Chesapeake Forest	34 North Johnson Pond	89 Perdue Stadium	20* Mid Delmarva Y.M.C.A.
E Wicomico State Forest	35 North Salisbury Elementary	91 Kilbirmie Playground	21 Wood Creek Golf Course
F Plum Ck. Heritage Cons. Fund	36 Johnson Pond Park	92 Pittsville Ball Park	33 Sal. Army / W. Salis. Youth Club
G Powellville Forest	37 Lake Street Playground	93 Pittsville School	42 Riverside Marina
H Nassawango Creek Preserve	38 Rose Street Boat Ramp	94 Pittsville Playground	44* Pemberton Apartments
I Johnson Wildlife Management Area	39 Chipman Elementary	95 Willards Primary	49* Waterside Apartments
J Ellis Bay Wildlife Management Area	40 Poplar City Mansion	98 Willards Recreation Area/Park	52 Salisbury University Area-East
K Nanticoke River Wildlife Mgt. Area	41 Salisbury Marina	99 E. Side Youth Sports Complex	53 Salisbury University Area-West
L Wetipquin Pond Management Area	43 Waterside Playground	100 Adkins Mill Park	57 St. Frances DeSales School
Local Public Recreation Areas	45 JCC Park	103 Coulbourne Recreation Area	59 Sal. Army Boys and Girls Club
1 Cherry Beach	46 Pemberton Elementary	104 Fruitland Recreation Facility	64* Moss Hill Apartments
2 Cope Bennett Park	47 West Salisbury Little League	105 Fruitland Primary	67 Moss Hill Playground
3 Gene Lowe Park	50 Pemberton Historical Park	106 Fruitland Intermediate	75 Elks Club
4 San Domingo Playground	54 Pinehurst Elementary	107 Fruitland Tennis Courts	77* College Lane Apartments
5 Northwestern Elementary	55 Woodcock Playground	111 Pirate's Wharf	79* Parkside Apartments
6 Mardela Park	56 Riverside Boat Ramp	114 Clara Road Boat Ramp	83 Woodlawn Campgrounds
7 Mardela High School	58 Riverwalk Park	115 Roaring Point Park	85* Parkwood Apartments
8 Mardela Tennis Courts	61 Wicomico Middle School	117 Nanticoke Park Rec. Area	90 Horsebridge Golf Course
9 Mardela Boat Ramp	62 Newton Playground	118 Cove Road Recreation Area	97 Gunsmoke Sporting Clay Range
10 Westside Intermediate	63 Newton-Camden	119 Bivalve Wharf	101 Powellville Park
13 Hebron Park	65 East Salisbury Elementary	120 Cedar Hill Park	102 Nutters Crossing Golf Course
15 Edgewood Park	66 Doverdale Playground	121 Tyaskin Recreation Area	108 Wikander Boat Yard
16 Gordy Park	69 Nick Meyer Park	122 Wetipquin Boat Ramp	109* Wicomico Yacht Club
17 Mason Dixon Sports Complex	70 Wicomico High School	126 Westside Primary	110* Green Hill Yacht Club
18 Delmar Elementary	71 Wicomico Co. Youth/Civic Ctr.	127 Allen Park	112 Whitehaven Marina
23 Leonards Mill Park	72 Glen Ave Elementary	128 West Side Community Center	116 Roaring Point Campgrounds
24 Naylor Mill Park Recreation Area	73 Memorial Field	129 Salisbury Skatepark	124 Sandy Hill Family Camp
25 Henry S. Parker Athletic Complex	74 Salisbury City Park and Zoo	130 Boundless Park & Playground	132 Crown Sports Center
26 West Salisbury Elementary	76 Prince Street School	131 West Metro Core Park	133 Salisbury Christian School
27 Cedarhurst Park	78 Bennett Middle School		134 Salisbury School
28 Crooked Oak Playground	80 Bennett High School		135 Fruitland Falcons Sports Complex
29 Centennial Village	81 Harmon Field		
30 Indian Village Playground	82 Salisbury Pony League Park		
	84 Parkside High School		

Sources: Wicomico County, URDC (Notes: no number 14, 48, 51, 60, 113,123, and 125)

Note: * Denotes private facilities offering recreational opportunities based on membership or restricted to residency. These facilities were not included as part of the County needs assessment or the proximity analysis contained in this Plan.

Table 3.5
Recreation and Resource Land by Owner (acres), 2017

Owner	Recreation	Resource	Total
Wicomico County	1,494.2	0	1,494.2
Board of Education	331.1	0	331.1
City of Salisbury	389.9	0	389.9
City of Fruitland	40.1	0	40.1
Town of Delmar	18.5	0	18.5
Town of Sharptown	5	0	5
Town of Mardela Springs	5.8	0	5.8
Town of Hebron	0	0	0
Town of Pittsville	0	0	0
Town of Willards	8.6	0	0
Subtotal, Local Land	2,293.2	0	2,293.2
State and Federal Recreation and Resource Land			
State of Maryland	0	22,034.2	22,034.2
Federal Government	0	1,164	1,164
Subtotal, Local Land	0	23,198.2	23,198.2
Private / Quasi-Public Recreation and Resource Land			
Private / Quasi – Public	875.6	0	875.6
Total, Recreation and Resource Land	875.6	0	875.6

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

County Recreation and Amenities

The Wicomico County Department of Recreation, Parks and Tourism maintains 40 sites with a wide range of recreational activities and supporting amenities for public use. These 40 sites, encompassing 1,494 acres, include athletic complexes, parks & playgrounds, boat ramps, marinas, a wharf, a minor league baseball stadium, community center and the Youth & Civic Center arena. As demonstrated in Table 3.6, County-owned facilities account for approximately one-third of the recreation sites and 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 40 total sites, 17 sites are considered County-serving areas, 10-community serving areas, and 13-neighborhood serving areas.

Table 3.6
Wicomico County Recreation and Amenities, 2017

Recreation activity and amenities	Total	Percentage of County Inventory
Softball	22	41%
Baseball	9	28%
Football / Soccer	22	25%
Basketball	18	38%
Tennis	19	31%
Playground	23	38%
Concession stand	10	36%
Restroom	13	40%
Total recreation activities and amenities	136	35%

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

Municipal Recreation and Amenities

There are 27 municipality-owned recreational sites located within Wicomico County. These sites encompass 468 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 an ADA playground. As shown in Table 3.7, municipalities account for 47% of the existing baseball field inventory, 30% of public playgrounds, and 43% of concession stands in the County.

Table 3.7
Municipal Recreation and Amenities, 2017

Recreation activity and amenities	Total	Percentage of County Inventory
Softball	11	20%
Baseball	15	47%
Football / Soccer	7	8%
Basketball	10	21%
Tennis	10	16%
Playground	18	30%
Concession stand	12	43%
Restroom	9	27%
Total recreation activities and amenities	92	27%

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

Board of Education Recreation and Amenities

The Wicomico County Board of Education inventory consists of 25 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 16 playground sites accounting for 27% of the County's total inventory. See Table 3.8.

Table 3.8
Board of Education Recreation and Amenities, 2017

Recreation activity and amenities	Total	Percentage of County Inventory
Softball	18	33%
Baseball	4	12.5%
Football / Soccer	34	39%
Basketball	16	34%
Tennis	21	34%
Playground	16	27%
Concession stand	2	7%
Restroom	1	3%
<i>Total recreation activities and amenities</i>	<i>112</i>	<i>N/A</i>

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

State of Maryland and The Nature Conservancy Recreation and Amenities

The State of Maryland has 8 sites encompassing 22,034 acres of land and the Nature Conservancy has an additional 4 sites covering 1,164 acres. 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 the State does not provide recreational amenities to accommodate sports on fields or courts (Table 3.9), it does provide 23.5 miles of nature trails available for public use.

Table 3.9
State of Maryland and Nature Conservancy Recreation and Amenities, 2017

Recreation activity and amenities	Total	Percentage of County Inventory
Softball	0	N/A
Baseball	0	N/A
Football / Soccer	0	N/A
Basketball	0	N/A
Tennis	0	N/A
Playground	0	N/A
Concession stand	0	N/A
Restroom	0	N/A
Total recreation activities and amenities	0	N/A

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

Major Quasi-Public and Private Recreation and Amenities

There are 26 sites owned by major quasi-public or private entities encompassing 877 acres of land. These sites include 3 schools, 5 golf courses, marina, campground, and a variety of indoor and outdoor recreational facilities available for public use. These facilities account for 28% of football/soccer fields in the County and 19% of tennis courts. See Table 3.10. The County works closely with these entities to avoid, where possible, duplication of services and maximize recreational opportunities for citizens.

Table 3.10
Major Quasi-Public and Private Recreation and Amenities, 2017

Recreation activity and amenities	Total	Percentage of County Inventory
Softball	3	6%
Baseball	4	12.5%
Football / Soccer	24	28%
Basketball	3	7%
Tennis	12	19%
Playground	3	5%
Concession stand	4	14%
Restroom	10	30%
Total recreation activities and amenities	63	N/A

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

RECREATION, PARKS, AND LAND - NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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; 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.

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 beginning in 2016, 105 responses were received. 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, the Department will identify opportunities to increase survey participation over the lifespan of this Plan. Community engagement efforts may include: advertising survey on social media outlets; administering survey at programs and events; staff participation; 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 105 responses, about 93 percent of the participants indicated a member of their household participates in outdoor recreation activities. Of those persons participating in outdoor recreation activities, the top 5 activities included:

- Football, soccer, lacrosse, and baseball – 70%;
- Playgrounds – 52%;
- Picnic facilities – 49%;
- Hiking trails – 47%; and
- Boating / kayaking – 43%.

Other important metrics for evaluating the current recreation and parks system include: availability of parks, trails, outdoor recreational facilities, and outdoor education programs; does the system and programs meet household needs; satisfaction of outdoor recreation opportunities; fees; future

investments to expand or create new recreation activities; and identify activities in need of improvement.

Noteworthy results of respondents include the following:

- 70% indicated availability of the recreational activities and programs is extremely important;
- 90% acknowledged the parks, trails, and outdoor recreation programs meet their needs;
- 78% noted satisfaction with outdoor recreation activities;
- Of which, access to water and playgrounds ranked 1st and 2nd of the 13 polled activities, 87% and 86%, respectively. In contrast, 41% of respondents were not satisfied with access to aquatic services;
- 55% responded fees for use of public parks and recreation facilities are acceptable; whereas, 13% replied fees are too high;
- 90% confirmed the importance of allocating funding to acquire land for future expansion or creation of new recreational activities and / or parks;
- Top 5 most important activities to add, expand, or improve consisted of athletic fields; outdoor swimming facilities; playgrounds; unpaved trails; and camping areas; and
- Top 5 most important aspects of outdoor recreation in need of improvement included quality and maintenance of parks; safety / security and enforcement of rules and regulations; connectivity of trails; increase number of parks, and expand number of unpaved trails.

The aforementioned results of the survey will be used to develop policy and capital programming considerations designed to maintain and enhance the recreation and parks system; increase availability of recreation activities; 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.

Recreation and Parks Commission

Local stakeholder feedback was obtained, in part, through a series of meetings and interviews conducted with 8 recreation councils and the Recreation & Parks Commission. The Recreation and Parks Commission consists of 14 members, which includes representation from each planning area and whose members are appointed 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 was positive, several themes emerged identifying potential deficiencies in County recreation facilities and programs to be considered for future planning considerations. These observations include:

- Maintenance of existing facilities to keep parks safe, functional, and attractive. This has become an increasing challenge 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;
- Limited indoor recreational facilities. The Department utilizes the Youth & Civic Center for a small 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. Other than the Youth & Civic Center, the Department has no indoor recreational space of its own; and
- Lack of lighted rectangular fields. The County is in the process of expanding the Henry S. Parker Athletic Complex to include 3 additional diamond fields being built on top of lighted soccer fields. This change was necessitated by inability to acquire land adjoining the Complex, declining youth soccer numbers and anticipated influx of rectangular fields owned and operated by private entities within the County. While the total number of rectangular fields is expected to be more than sufficient, the anticipated loss of lighted fields at the Henry S. Parker Athletic Complex will leave the County with limited options for lighted rectangular fields.

Staff Observations

The Department of Recreation, Parks & Tourism includes 55 full-time staff members, as well as hundreds of part-time and seasonal staff members. Staff members were asked for their perspectives on recreational facilities and programs based on their observations and regular interactions with members of the community. Observations include:

- Parking limitations. Parking limitations were noted by several staff members and stakeholders; notably at the Eastside Youth Sports Complex in Willards and the Fruitland Sports Complex. These parks are heavily used for local programming, but are also relied upon as secondary sites for regional and national tournament events sponsored by the Department. The lack of sufficient parking during high-volume events may create issues with neighbors and makes it challenging to host major events at specific sites.
- Changing demographics and user needs. For example, older citizens have noted a desire to remain active, which requires additional programming to meet this need. To assist in

meeting this demand, the County has begun installing pickleball lines as tennis courts are being renovated. Conversely, the travel sports market has dramatically reduced the ability to deliver programming to middle school and high school students and further research must be done on how to serve the changing needs of this demographic.

- Absence of a festival grounds (of at least 100 acres) to accommodate signature events, festivals, and County Fair.
- An aging park system and the coinciding volume of event support and capital projects, which surpass staff resources. This affects the ability of staff to deliver core services and may impact facility safety, function, and appearance.
- Exposure of a breach at Roaring Point beach could result in loss of beach access if unaddressed.
- Constrained tax support and a growing population, which cannot afford program & service fees to cover the costs.
- Absence of a centrally located indoor recreational facility owned by the County to provide programs and services. The use of Board of Education facilities has worked, but has limiting factors and is not sustainable to meet the demand of existing and future end users of indoor recreation facilities.

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. Between January and June of 2013, approximately 2,800 random household phone surveys were conducted, as well as implementation of a web based survey completed by 2,475 respondents. The results of the citizen input assisted with the development of the Plan by identifying preferences and demand for future recreation and park activities.

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

- Walking (75%);
- Visiting historical sites (75%);
- Picnicking (65%);
- Visiting natural areas (59%);

- Participation in outdoor special events (57%);
- Visiting playgrounds (56%); and
- Swimming outdoors (55%).

Overall, approximately 82% of respondents indicated at least one member of their household participates in outdoor recreation activities.

Proximity Analysis

The methodology for completing the Proximity Analysis was based on Maryland's 2017 *Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan Guidelines* and information contained in the Appendix (Tables A-1 through A-5). The recreational facilities available for public use (open and daily fee based) in Wicomico County by type are listed in Table 3.4 and illustrated on Map 7.1 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.

For the county-wide proximity analysis, all public and fee based parks and recreation areas within Wicomico County were used to determine and identify coverage and gaps for each facility type. In contrast, private based facilities and / or amenities were excluded from the analysis. The geospatial proximity analysis focuses on the following specific types of recreation amenities: picnic and pavilion areas; aquatic (pools and beach facilities); water access areas and trails; and bikeways. Given the suburban / rural nature of the County, a 5-mile radius for service areas was used for this analysis. As future updates to the LPPRP occur, consideration should be given to reducing the radius size (less than 1-mile) for the incorporated areas, which constitute the more intensely developed areas within Wicomico County. As depicted on the Proximity Analysis maps, multiple facilities within the densely populated areas of the County are located within overlapping five (5) mile radius service areas.

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.

Consistent with State guidelines, the following are selected types of recreation facilities that were investigated using the proximity analysis for a five (5) mile radius throughout Wicomico County. The following information describes the Proximity Analysis for the Wicomico County Parks and Recreation System for various categories of recreation opportunities.

Wicomico County Parks and Recreation Service Areas

Maps 3.1A and 7.1, Wicomico County Parks and Recreation System - 2017, 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 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 3.1-A, the proximity analysis resulted in the entire Wicomico County area being served by the location of the existing parks and recreation system.

Picnic and Picnic Pavilion Service Areas

Map 3.1B, Wicomico County Parks and Recreation System / Picnic and Pavilion Areas - 2017, depicts the proximity coverage of the existing system for picnic and pavilion areas. More than 25 separate park and recreation areas have picnic and / or pavilion facilities. Overall, the recreation and park inventory consists of 403 picnic tables and 28 pavilions available for public use without requiring membership and residency. See Table 3.11. 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 (5) mile radius; however, the area is comprised of tidal wetlands and does not have any residential structures.

Table 3.11
Picnic Areas and Pavilions, 2017

Park Type	Picnic Table	Pavilion
State and The Nature Conservancy	0	0
County Serving Parks	223	9
Community Serving Areas	110	11
Neighborhood Serving Areas	64	7
Quasi Public Areas	6	1
<i>Total recreation activities and amenities</i>	<i>403</i>	<i>28</i>

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

Aquatic Service Areas

Map 3.1C, Wicomico County Parks and Recreation System / Aquatic Service Areas - 2017, illustrates the proximity coverage of the aquatic facilities. Aquatic facilities include swimming

pools and beaches serving the population of Wicomico County. Within Wicomico County, six (6) public parks and 4 quasi-public facilities have access to swimming areas. See Table 3.12. It is important to note, other sites not contained in the proximity analysis have swimming pools serving County residents; however, the facilities are restricted to private / membership or residences (single-family and multifamily developments). Therefore, the proximity analysis for this recreation feature shows coverage areas and gaps for aquatic service areas open to the public or user fee based and does not represent the full inventory of amenities serving County residents.

Two geographic areas in the County lack aquatic facilities within a 5-mile radius of residents:

- 1) A north-south band of land situated between the Nanticoke River and the Wicomico River in the western part of the County (includes Mardela Springs, Athol, Hebron and Quantico). This gap in coverage is sparsely populated and consists of farmland and limited residential development. Aquatic facilities are available within 6–7 miles of this gap; and
- 2) The eastern portion of the County serving Pittsville, Willards, Powellville, as well as the surrounding rural areas.

Table 3.12
Aquatic Service Areas, 2017

Park Type	Swimming Pool	Beach
State and The Nature Conservancy	0	0
County Serving Parks	0	3
Community Serving Areas	0	2
Neighborhood Serving Areas	0	1
Quasi Public Area (Daily Fee available)	4	0
<i>Total recreation activities and amenities</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>6</i>

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

While the results indicated the lack of aquatic facilities in the aforementioned geographic areas, the gap in service areas will be met by a variety of alternatives, including, but not limited to private swimming pools (annual membership and individual residence), rivers, and the coastal areas along the Atlantic Ocean. 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.

Water Access Service Areas

Map 3.1D, Wicomico County Parks and Recreation System / Water Access Service Areas - 2017, shows the five (5) mile proximity coverage of water access. Wicomico County includes 14 public water access areas and four (4) quasi-public and private areas serving the population of Wicomico County, including the Salisbury metropolitan area, in addition to several State-operated water access facilities.

One area within Wicomico County lacks water access facilities within a 5-mile radius of residents:

- 1) A small rural area northeast of Willards and Pittsville.

Given the lack of navigable water bodies northeast of Willards and Pittsville, there is limited opportunity to expand water access within this area of Wicomico County. Overall, residents enjoy a plethora of navigable water ways because of 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 improvements adjacent to water ways.

With exception of the aforementioned gap in water access service areas, access is plentiful in Wicomico County. The Nanticoke and Cedar Hill Harbors and Salisbury Marina provide access for boaters and 263 slips available for rent, most with water and electric hookups. Cedar Hill Marina (www.cedarhillmarina.com) is a modern, well-equipped docking facility with slips ranging in width from eight to fourteen feet. Water access is also available at 11-boat ramps situated throughout the County, including Cedar Hill Park, Coulbourne Mill Park, Leonard's Mill Park, Mardela, Nanticoke Park, Riverside Drive, Sharptown, Tyaskin, and Wetipquin. Other water access is provided by the beachfronts at, Cherry Beach, Roaring Point, and Cove Road. See Table 3.13. Future plans include a soft launch site at Billy Gene Jackson Park, among other possible locations.

Table 3.13
Water Access, 2017

Park Type	Boat Ramps	Boat Slips
State and The Nature Conservancy	0	0
County Serving Parks	9	262
Community Serving Areas	2	1
Neighborhood Serving Areas	0	0
Total recreation activities and amenities	11	263

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

In the mid-1990s, the County acquired 340 acres of land, including 3,000 linear feet of shoreline along the Wicomico River, to set aside for future use. This site is known as Pirates Wharf Park and features deep-water access to support soft launching facilities and environmental education opportunities. Development of a master plan to include site design of Pirates Wharf, is a mid-range goal of the 2017 *Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan*.

City of Salisbury Parks and Recreation Service Areas

Map 3.1-Ai, Wicomico County Parks and Recreation System - 2017, depicts the proximity coverage of the total existing parks and recreation facility system located within or adjacent to the corporate limits of the City of Salisbury. The City of Salisbury represents 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 5.0 mile buffer around each park and recreation facility was utilized; whereas, the proximity analysis buffer around each facility adjacent to or contained within the City of Salisbury was reduced to 0.5 mile.

As depicted on Map 3.1-Ai, the City of Salisbury benefits from extensive coverage of the existing parks and recreation system. With exception of non-residentially zoned areas and a segment of undeveloped and / or 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.

Trails and Bikeways within Wicomico County

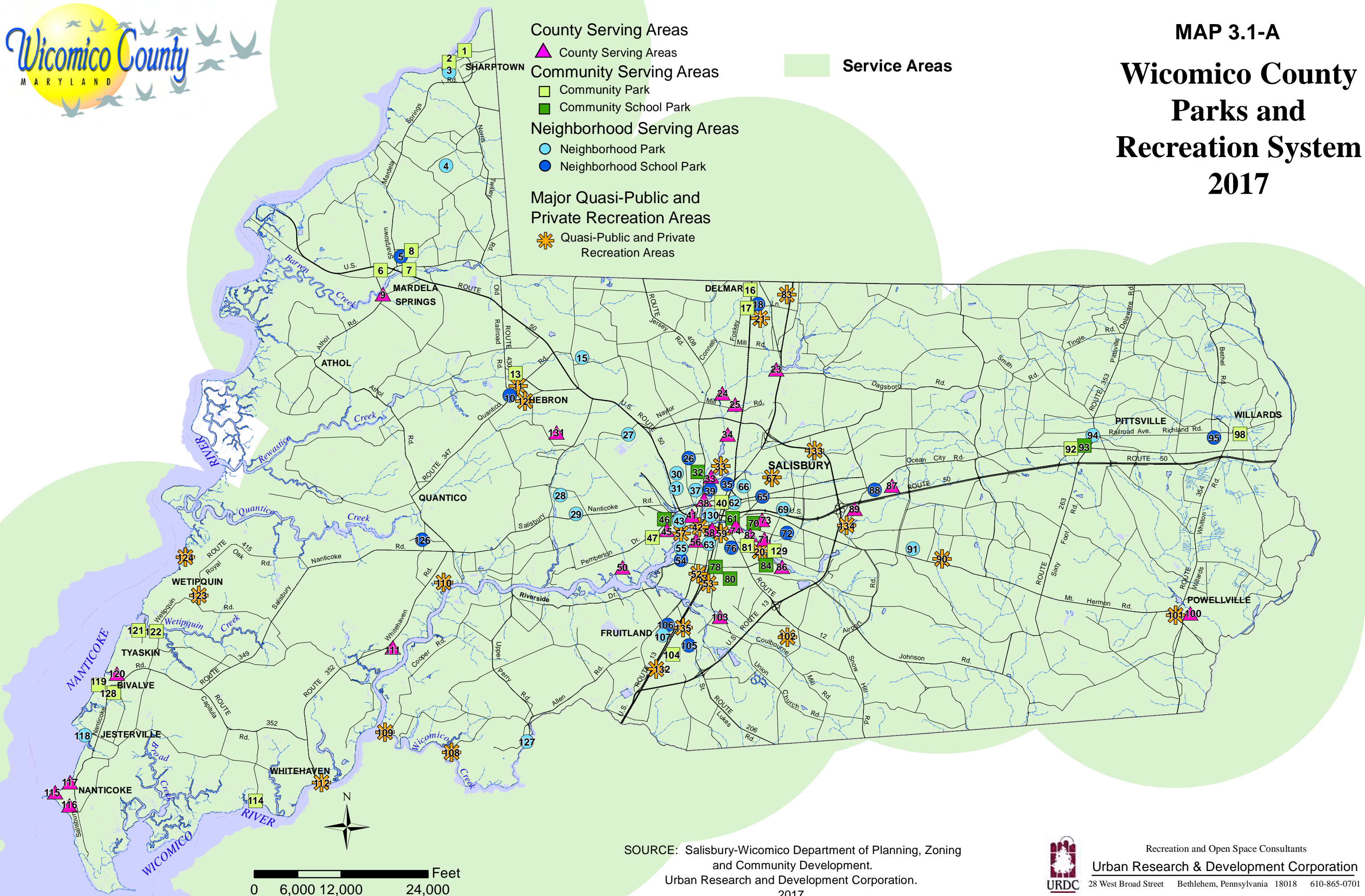
Map 3.1E, Wicomico County Parks and Recreation System / Trails and Bikeways - 2017, shows the proximity coverage of the trails and bikeways. Trails and bikeways are found almost throughout Wicomico County as part of the regional road network and designated bikeways. Since cycling is permitted on roadways 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 nature 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.

Wicomico County has a path and bikeway plan to serve as a guide for the designation of future paths and bikeways. To promote the 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.



MAP 3.1-A
**Wicomico County
Parks and
Recreation System
2017**




Parks with Picnic and Pavilion Facilities

County Serving Areas

 County Serving Areas

Community Serving Areas

 Community Park

Neighborhood Serving Areas

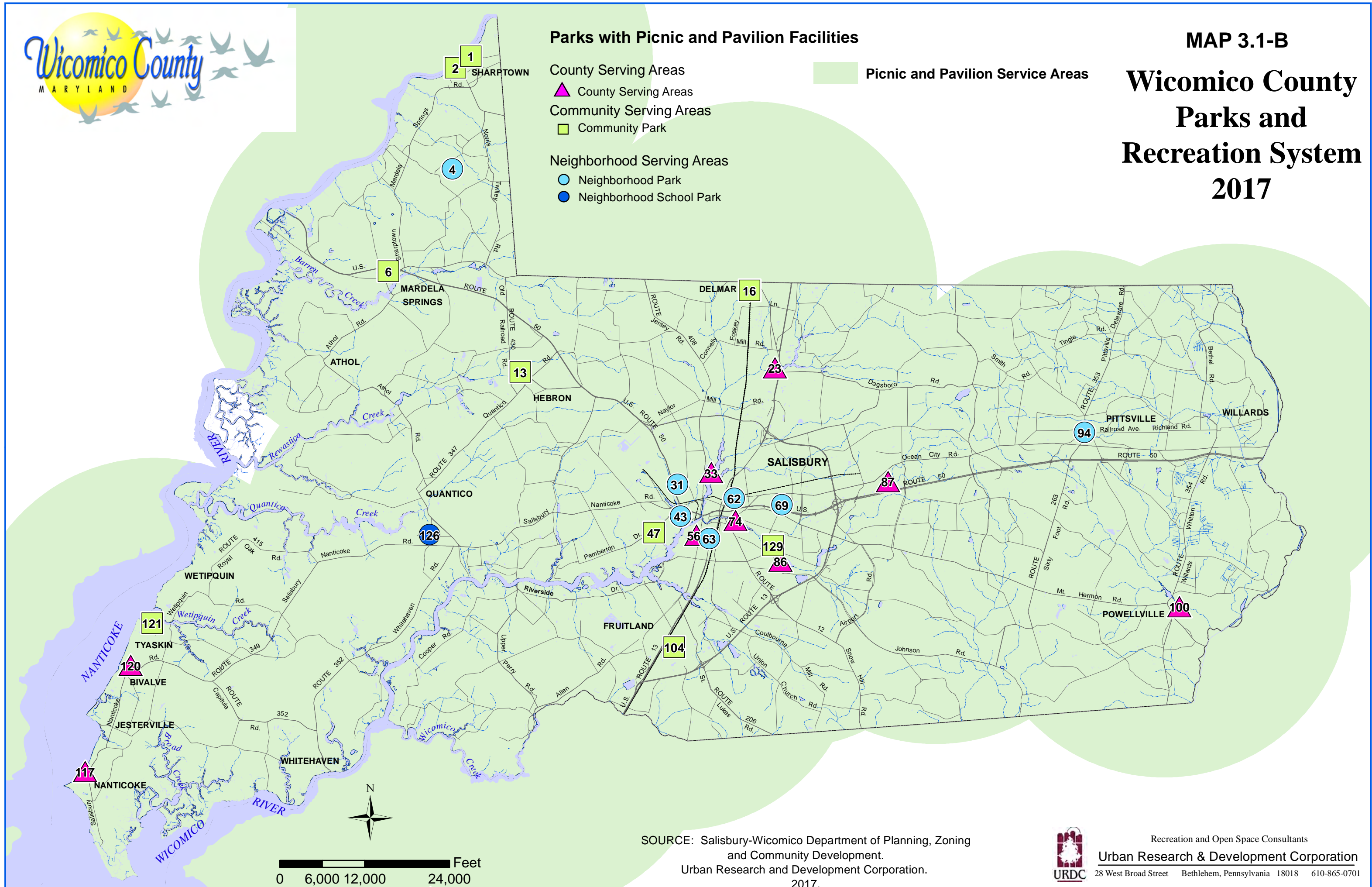
- Neighborhood Park

- Neighborhood School Park

Picnic and Pavilion Service Areas

MAP 3.1-B

Wicomico County Parks and Recreation System 2017



SOURCE: Salisbury-Wicomico Department of Planning, Zoning and Community Development.
Urban Research and Development Corporation.
2017.



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Urban Research & Development Corporation

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MAP 3.1-C
Wicomico County
Parks and
Recreation System
2017

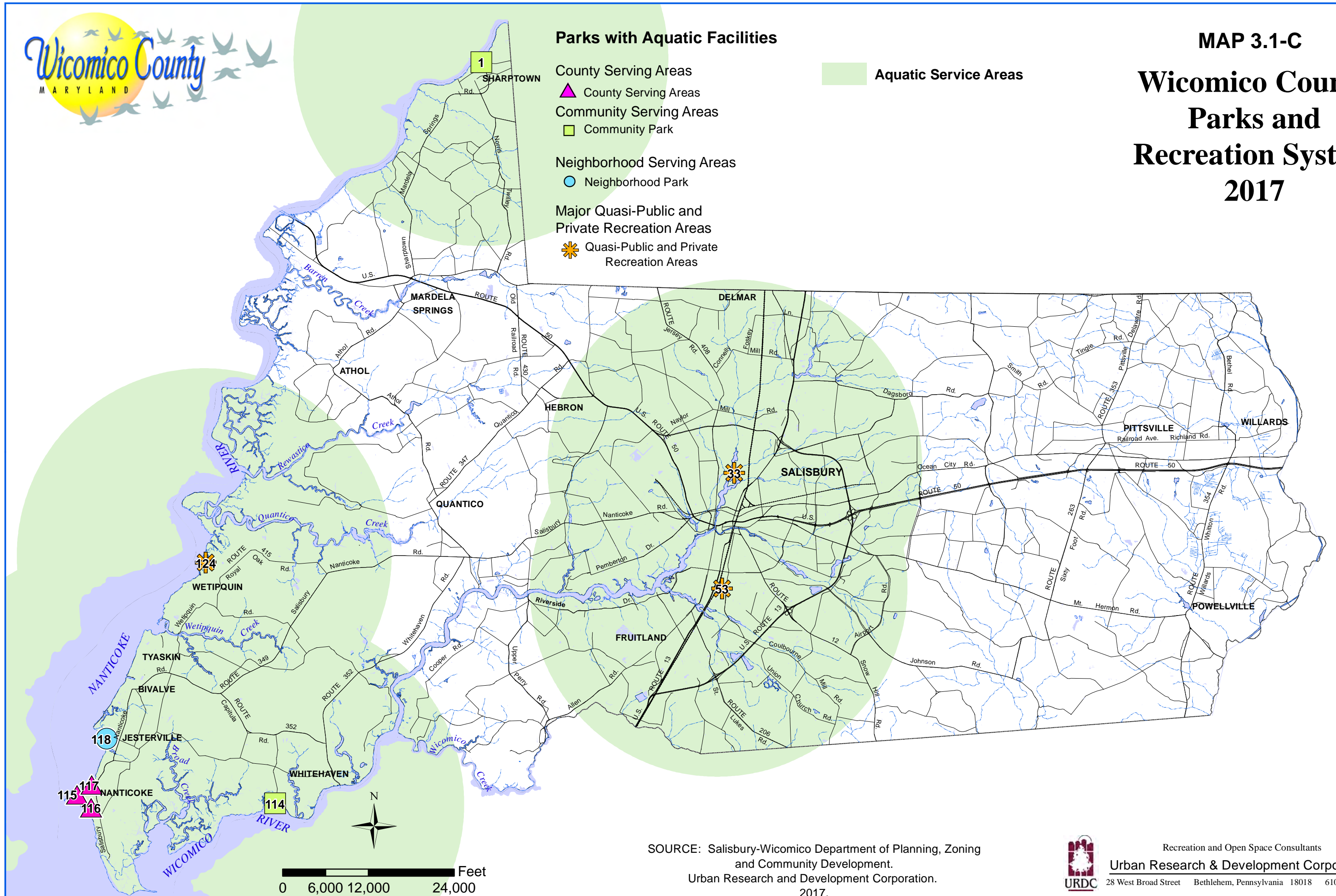
Parks with Aquatic Facilities

- County Serving Areas
Community Serving Areas
Community Park

- Neighborhood Serving Areas
Neighborhood Park

- Major Quasi-Public and
Private Recreation Areas
Quasi-Public and Private
Recreation Areas

Aquatic Service Areas



SOURCE: Salisbury-Wicomico Department of Planning, Zoning
and Community Development.
Urban Research and Development Corporation.
2017.



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Urban Research & Development Corporation
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MAP 3.1-D
**Wicomico County
Parks and
Recreation System
2017**

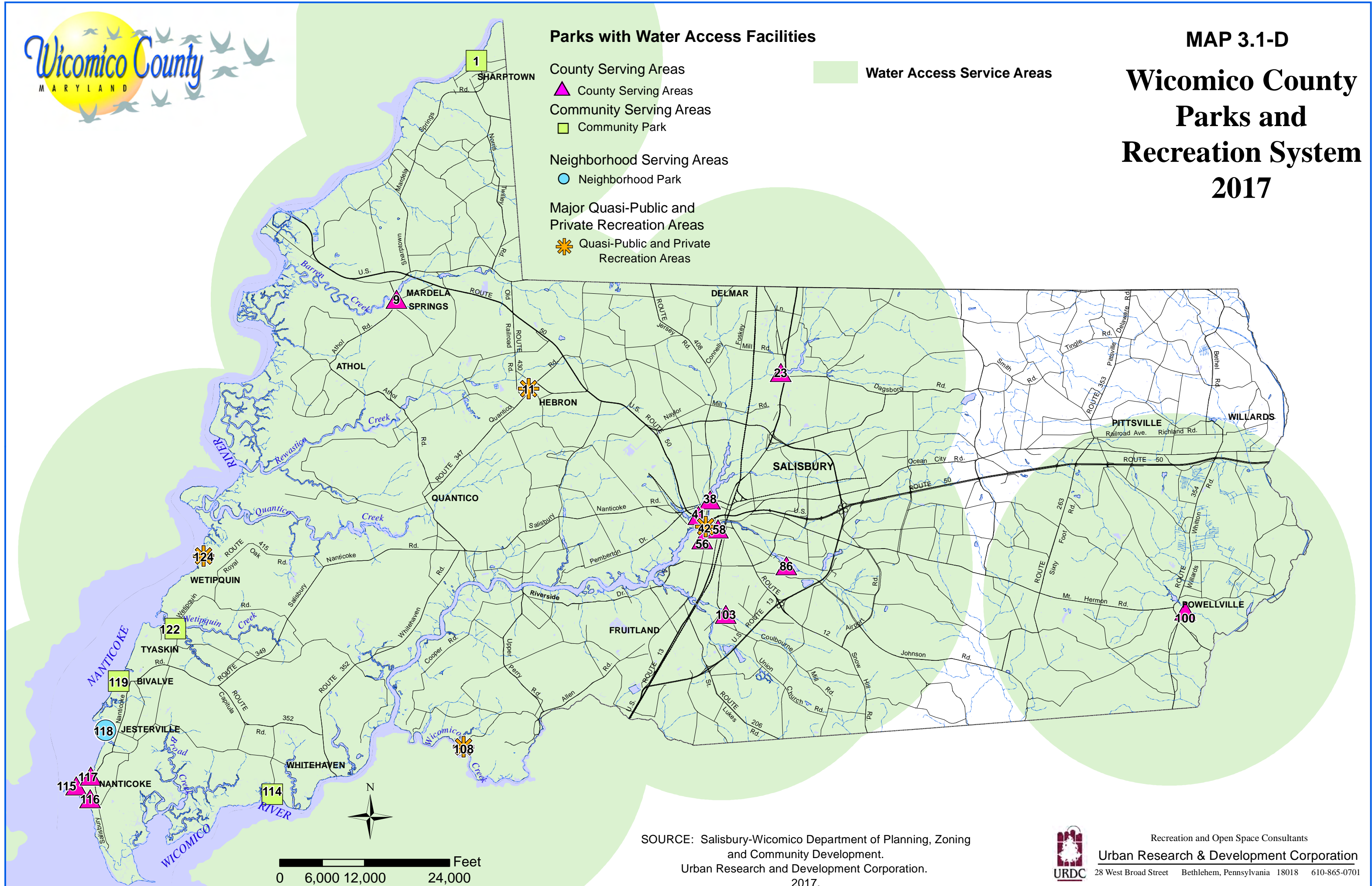
Parks with Water Access Facilities

- County Serving Areas
▲ County Serving Areas
Community Serving Areas
■ Community Park

- Neighborhood Serving Areas
● Neighborhood Park

- Major Quasi-Public and
Private Recreation Areas
✱ Quasi-Public and Private
Recreation Areas

Water Access Service Areas



SOURCE: Salisbury-Wicomico Department of Planning, Zoning
and Community Development.
Urban Research and Development Corporation.
2017.



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MAP 3.1-E

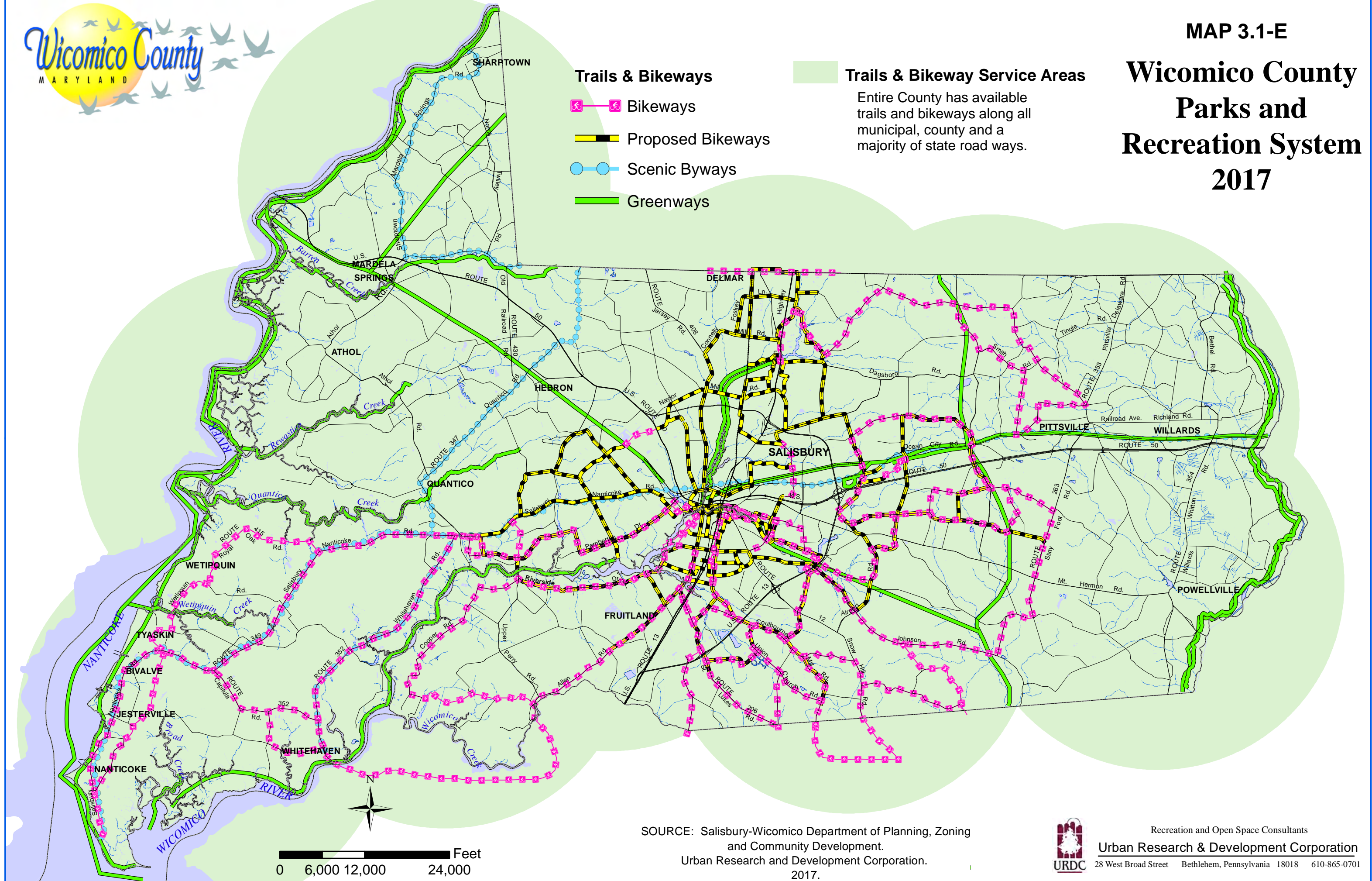
Wicomico County Parks and Recreation System 2017

Trails & Bikeways

- Bikeways
- Proposed Bikeways
- Scenic Byways
- Greenways

Trails & Bikeway Service Areas

Entire County has available trails and bikeways along all municipal, county and a majority of state road ways.



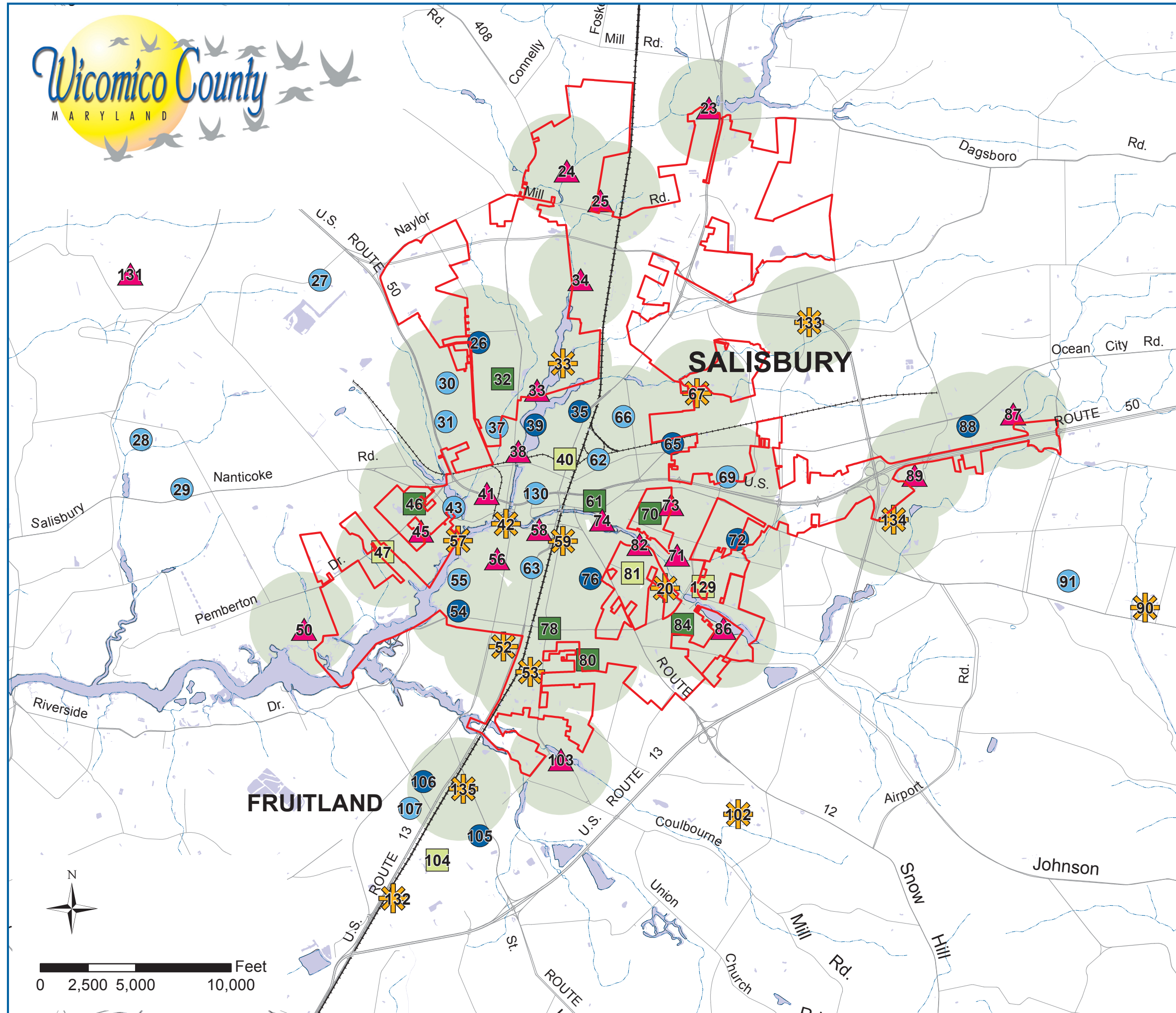
SOURCE: Salisbury-Wicomico Department of Planning, Zoning and Community Development.
Urban Research and Development Corporation.
2017.



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MAP 3.1-Ai Wicomico County Parks and Recreation System 2017



County Serving Areas

▲ County Serving Areas

Community Serving Areas

■ Community Park

■ Community School Park

Neighborhood Serving Areas

● Neighborhood Park

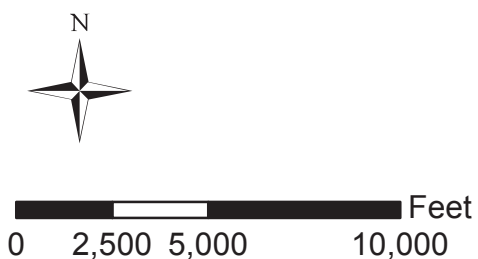
● Neighborhood School Park

Major Quasi-Public and Private Recreation Areas

★ Quasi-Public and Private
Recreation Areas

■ 1/2 Mile Radius Service
Areas

□ City of Salisbury Boundary



SOURCE:
Salisbury-Wicomico Department of Planning, Zoning
and Community Development.
Urban Research and Development Corporation.
2017.



Recreation and Open Space Consultants
Urban Research & Development Corporation
28 West Broad Street Bethlehem, Pennsylvania 18018 610-865-0701

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 motorist 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.

Recreation Land Analysis

The County has established a land goal of 30.0 acres of local recreation acreage for every 1,000 county residents (shown as "ac/000"). In determining the land eligible to be considered against the County goal, the following guidelines recognize the types of recreation land based on ownership and the presence and importance of natural features:

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

Wicomico County meets its established goal of 30.0 ac/000, using 60% of school sites (Table 3.14) because the Wicomico State Forest and Chesapeake Forest lands in Wicomico provide an additional 166.1 ac/000, which is 106.1 ac/000 more than the goal for State and federal recreation land (60.0 ac/000 for State recreation land). Therefore, up to 15.0 ac/000 could also be counted toward meeting Wicomico County's goal for local recreation land. Even if no additional recreation land is acquired, the existing State and local recreation land is sufficient to meet the acreage goal needed

to serve the projected County population through 2025 (Table 3.15). Therefore, Wicomico County formally submits that the County has met its recreation land goal.

Table 3.14
Recreation Land Classification and Need Analysis

Area	Size (Acres)	Eligible Acres per 000 (2015 population: 102,950)
	Eligible	
<i>State Recreation Land</i> (Table A-1)		
Wicomico State Forest	1,245.0	12.1
Chesapeake Forest	15,855.0	154.0
Subtotal, State Recreation Land	17,100.0	166.1 (use maximum 15.0)
<i>Local Recreation Land</i>		
County-Serving Areas (Table A-2)	1,726.2	16.8
Community-Serving Areas (Table A-3)		
County and Municipalities	133.5	1.3
Board of Education	223.6	2.2
Neighborhood-Serving Areas (Table A-4)		
County and Municipalities	102.4	1.0
Board of Education	107.5	1.0
Subtotal, Local Recreation Land	2,293.2	22.3
<i>Local Resource Land</i>	0.0	0.0
TOTAL, Public Recreation Land	19,393.2	37.3

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

The County will determine priorities for acquisition and/or development projects on a case-by-case basis as different lands become available and recreation facility needs evolve. The county intends to address immediate maintenance and parkland development needs, but reserves the right to be flexible in using POS funding by applying all or part, of its annual appropriation for land acquisition in accordance with POS guidelines.

Despite having currently met the goal for recreation land, Wicomico County recognizes the continuing need for additional parkland to meet the needs of a growing population. Therefore, the 2017 *Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan* proposes the acquisition of acres of additional land to meet the recreation needs of current and future residents.

Table 3.15
Recreation Land (Acres per Thousand Persons) 2015 – 2025

Land Classification	2015 Eligible Acres	Acres per Thousand Persons					
		2015		2020 ¹		2025	
		(Population: 102,950)		(Population: 109,200)		(Population: 114,400)	
		Total	Eligible (ac/000)	Total	Eligible	Total	Eligible
Local	2,293.2	2,293.2	22.3	2,300.2	21.1	2,300.2	20.1
State ²	17,100.0	166.1	15.0	156.6	15.0	149.5	15.0
Total	19,293.1	187.4	37.3	177.0	36.1	169.0	35.1

Sources: Wicomico County; and MD Dept. of Planning, October 2016

¹ Includes:

- 3.0 additional acres to expand Eastside Youth Sports Complex (Table 7.8)
- 4.0 additional acres to expand Fruitland Recreation Area (Table 7.7)

² Assumes no additional state lands through 2025.

Additional information about the proposed acquisitions appears in the discussion of capital improvements and planning areas in Chapter 7.

COUNTY PRIORITIES

The 2017 Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan seeks to integrate the user demand analysis to translate into policy and capital programming recommendations, which address needs where and when practicable and economically feasible. Policy and capital recommendations are included in more detail in Chapter 7 of the Plan and are summarized below.

The County will continue to emphasize rehabilitation and maintenance of existing facilities in an effort to keep facilities safe, functional, and attractive. While maintenance is emphasized in Chapter 7 recommendations, the County also recognizes the need to: acquire land for parking on the Eastside and Fruitland; complete the expansion and renovation at the Henry S. Parker Athletic Complex; and continue restoration projects at the County's marinas and boat ramps, among other projects. Also, the County will continue its longstanding practice of remaining opportunistic with acquisition 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.

Wicomico County's priorities in recreation and parks are shown in a summary of the proposed capital improvements (The entire capital improvements program is summarized in Table 7.2 and detailed in Tables 7.3 through 7.8):

- Total projects: 31
- Total estimated cost: \$10,341,000
- Acres to be acquired: 7
- Immediate (2017 – 2022): \$6,651,000 (64%)
- Mid-Range (2023 – 2027): \$3,690,000 (36%)
- Acquisition: \$65,000 (1%)
- Development: \$5,861,000 (56%)
- Rehabilitation: \$4,415,000 (43%)

PLANNING AREAS

OVERVIEW

Recognizing park and recreation needs differ in various areas of the County, the 2017 *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 2017 *Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan* divides the County into six planning areas (Map 4.1):

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

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



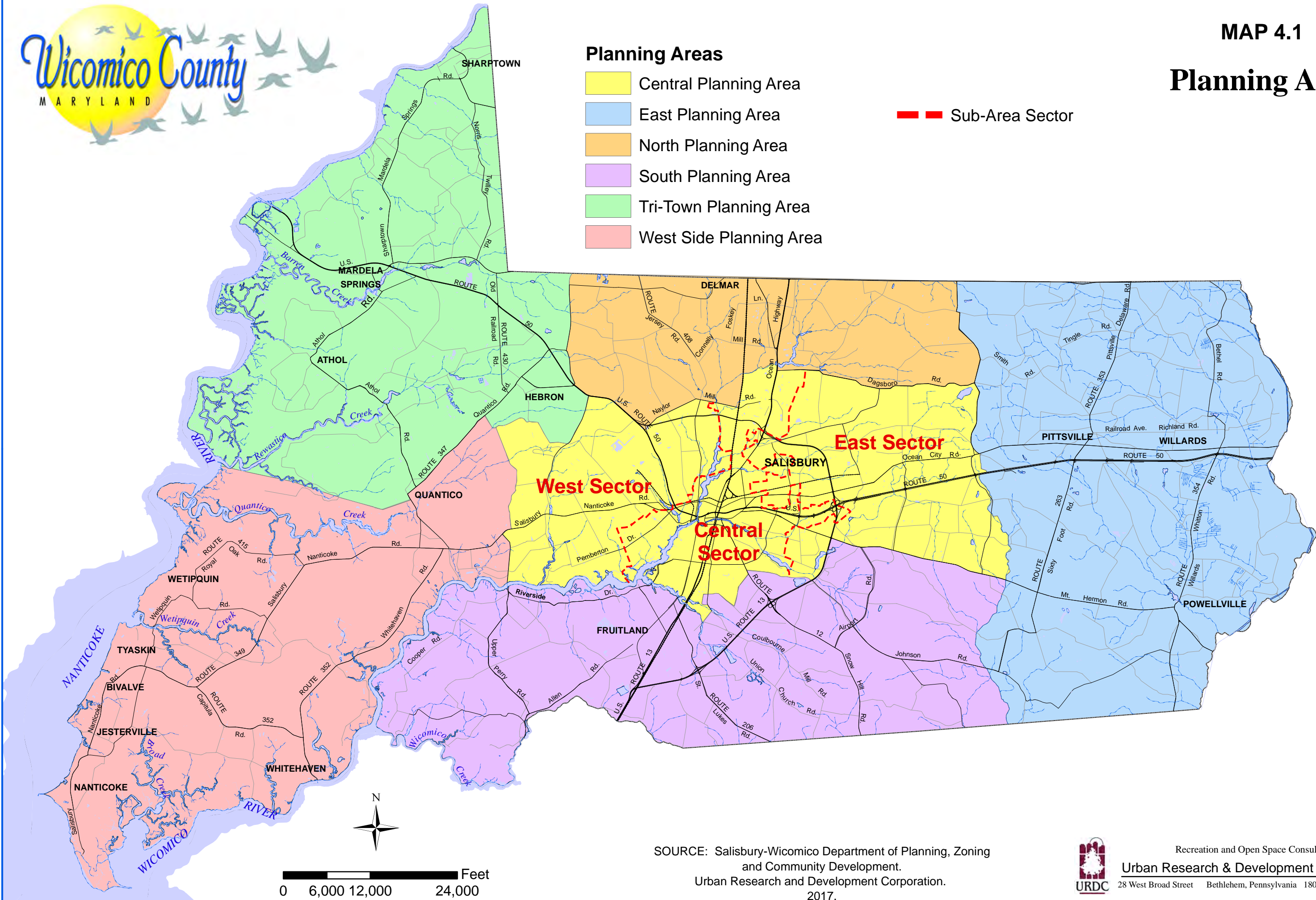
MAP 4.1

Planning Areas

Planning Areas

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

Sub-Area Sector



SOURCE: Salisbury-Wicomico Department of Planning, Zoning and Community Development.
Urban Research and Development Corporation.
2017.



Recreation and Open Space Consultants
Urban Research & Development Corporation
28 West Broad Street Bethlehem, Pennsylvania 18018 610-865-0701

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 6,719 persons live in the Tri-Town area, about 275 more persons than in 2010 (Table 2.2). By 2030, 7,749 residents are projected to live in the Tri-Town area, which represents an increase of 1,030 persons from 2015 (14.3 percent).

Natural Features and Farmland

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

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

Historic Places

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

Preserved Land

Tri-Town 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 (three parks/recreation areas) and Hebron (four 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. Five recreation areas are located at public schools. Public recreation sites in the Tri-Town Planning Area include (Map 3.1, Tables A-2 through A-4 in the appendix):

- Cherry Beach (#1)
- Cope Bennett Park (#2)
- Gene Lowe Park (#3)
- San Domingo Playground (#4)
- Northwestern Elementary School (#5)
- Mardela Park (#6)
- Mardela High School (#7)
- Mardela Tennis Courts (#8)
- Mardela Boat Ramp (#9)
- Westside Intermediate (#10)
- Hebron Park (#13)

Recreation Land Analysis

The local recreation areas in Tri-Town total 107.2 acres, or approximately 16.0 acres per thousand persons based on the 2015 population. Also, Tri-Town has State and The Nature Conservancy (TNC) sites have approximately 72.6 acres per thousand persons. Therefore, 15.0 ac/000 of the State and TNC sites can be used in the local calculation, raising the current figure to 31.0 ac/000, which meets the County guideline. If no additional parkland is acquired by 2030, the total figure will drop to 28.8 acres per thousand.¹

¹ The state calculations of acres/000 apply on a countywide basis. The 2017 *Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan* also discusses the calculation for each of the planning areas for information only.

West Side Planning Area



The West Side Planning Area is bordered by the Nanticoke River on the west, the Wicomico River on the south, Upper Ferry Road on the east, and Cherry Walk/Quantico Roads on the north. The area is primarily rural with approximately 3,080 residents in 2015, an increase of 346 persons since 2000. West Side population is projected to increase by almost 495 persons or 14.9 percent to 3,575 persons by 2030. The Village of Nanticoke has largest concentration of residents in the West Side. Most other residents live in or near the smaller villages of Wetipquin, Tyaskin, Bivalve, Jesterville, Whitehaven, Capitola, Cox Corner, and Green Hill.

Natural Features and Farmland

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

Historic Places

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

Preserved Land

The State and The Nature Conservancy (TNC) own and/or control large portions of the West Side, in essence permanently preserving the land. Portions of the Chesapeake Forest occupy large tracts in the center of the West Side. Two State Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs)—Ellis Bay WMA on the Wicomico River to the south and the Nanticoke River WMA to the north—comprise 4,461 preserved acres. Extensive Chesapeake Bay Critical Areas and the Quantico Creek Rural Legacy Area significantly restrict development and add to the rural character of the West Side.

Existing Recreation Sites

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

- Pirates Wharf (#111)
- Clara Road Boat Ramp (#114)
- Roaring Point Park (#115)
- Nanticoke Park Recreation Area (#117)
- Cove Road Recreation Area (#118)
- Bivalve Wharf (#119)
- Cedar Hill Park (#120)
- Tyaskin Recreation Area (#121)
- Wetipquin Park (#122)
- Westside Primary School (#126)
- West Side Community Center (#128)
- West Metro Core Park (#131)

Recreation Land Analysis

The public recreation sites total 587.3 acres. Pirates Wharf accounts for 340.7 acres, or 58 percent of the public recreation acreage in the West Side. Combined with the extensive state forests, recreation land in the West Side will be more than adequate for the foreseeable future. Currently, the West Side has 190.7 ac/1,000 persons even if the allowable 15.0 ac/1,000 persons for State and NC lands is not counted. If no additional land is acquired, the figure will decrease to 164.3/1,000 persons by 2030, still well within the County established goal for land acquisition. As noted in Chapter 3 and explained in capital recommendations in Chapter 7, development of a master plan at Pirate's Wharf would potentially address public needs for trail and water access on the West Side. Additionally, funding to repair the shoreline at Roaring Point Park is needed to maintain this much-valued public water access area for County residents.

North Planning Area



The North Planning Area is the area north Naylor Mill and Dagsboro Roads between U. S. 50/ Spring Hill Lane and Parsonsburg Road. The area was identified in previous County land preservation plans as the North Sector of the Central Planning Area, but given a status of a separate planning area in the 2005 plan. In 2015, it is estimated the North Planning Area is home to more than 8,400 people, with an expected increase of 1,356 persons or 16 percent to about 9,756 persons by 2030.

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

Natural Features and Farmland

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

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

Preserved Land

The North Planning Area has several parcels of the Chesapeake Forest, all located east of U. S. 13. State forests total 477 acres in the North Planning Area, which translates to 56.7 acres per 1,000 persons.

Existing Recreation Sites

Public recreation sites in the North Planning Area provide 178 acres of recreation land and include (Map 3.1, Tables A-2 through A-4):

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

Recreation Land Analysis

Both the Parker complex and Naylor Mill Park draw from the entire County. The Parker complex also provides opportunities to use recreation as a visitor draw by attracting regional athletic tournaments. Local and visitor usage is expected to increase due to the expansion of diamond fields at the Athletic Complex. The County should continue to monitor recreational needs in the growing area of Delmar. Current parkland in the North Planning Area amounts to 21.2 ac/1,000 persons. If no additional acreage is acquired, the figure will decrease to 18.2ac/1,000 persons by 2030.

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 2015 is more than 61,246—almost 60 percent of the entire County population, and an increase of more than 11,050 persons (20 percent) since 2000. By the year 2030, roughly 70,832 people are projected to live in the Central Planning Area—an increase of 9,570 persons or 14.5 percent from 2015.

The size of the Central Planning Area has suggested further geographic refinements for planning analyses. The 1999 Plan divided the area into three sectors: north, east, and west. The 2005 Plan classified the North Sector as a separate, distinct planning area. The East Sector and West Sector are geographically the same as in earlier plans, although the emphasis of the 2005 Plan and the 2017 Plan is on areas outside of the City of Salisbury:

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

In 2015, 10,647 persons live in the East Sector (outside of Salisbury), an increase of about 1,412 persons since the 2000 census. By 2030, an additional 1,420 people will live in the East Sector, bringing the sector population to about 12,067 persons.

The East Sector contains 447.4 acres of public recreational land or 42.0 ac/1,000 persons in 2015. The ac/1,000 persons measure will decrease to 37.1 if no additional parkland is purchased by 2030. Neither the State nor the Nature Conservancy has any land holdings in the East Sector.

- The West Sector includes the western portion of the Metropolitan 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 Sector includes the West Metro Core area (Map 2.4), which has experienced tremendous growth in recent decades. Population in the West Sector is approximately 13,553 in 2015 and is projected to increase by 2,272 persons or 15.5 percent by 2030.

The West Sector contains 294.3 acres of recreational land or 21.7ac/1,000 persons in 2015. The ac/1,000 measure will decrease to 18.6 by 2030. Neither the State nor The Nature Conservancy have any land holdings in the West Sector.

- The Central Subsector of the Central Planning Area includes the City of Salisbury. The 2015 population of the Central Sector was 37,046, approximately 36 percent of the total County population and an increase of more than 7,748 residents or 23.4 percent since 2000. The population of the Central Sector is expected to increase by 5,894 persons or 14.7 percent to 42,940 persons by 2030.

The Central Sector contains 549 acres of recreational land of 14.8 ac/1,000 persons. The ac/1,000 persons measure will decrease to 12.8 by 2030. Neither the State nor The Nature Conservancy have any land holdings in the Central Sector.

In total, the Central Planning Area contains 1,290.7 acres of parkland to serve a population of 61,246, or 21.1 ac/1,000 persons in 2015. By 2030, assuming no additional parkland is acquired, the ratio would drop to 18.2 ac/1,000 persons.

Natural Features and Farmland

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

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

Historic Places

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

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

Preserved Land

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

Existing Recreation Sites

As the center of population in Wicomico County, the Central Planning Area is also the center of recreation activities and sites. The City of Salisbury has 38 local recreation sites totaling 549 acres (Map 3.1, Tables A-2 through A-4):

- Indian Village Playground (#30)
- Emerson Holloway Park (#31)
- Salisbury Middle School (#32)
- Billy Gene Jackson Park (#33)
- North Johnson Pond (#34)
- North Salisbury Elementary (#35)
- Johnson Pond Park (#36)
- Lake Street Playground (#37)
- Rose Street Boat Ramp (#38)
- Chipman Elementary (#39)
- Poplar City Mansion (#40)
- Salisbury Marina (#41)
- Waterside Playground (#43)
- JCC Park (#45)
- Pemberton Elementary (#46)
- Pinehurst Elementary (#54)
- Woodcock Playground (#55)
- Riverside Boat Ramp (#56)
- Wicomico Middle School (#61)
- Newton Playground (#62)
- Newton-Camden (#63)
- East Salisbury Elementary (#65)
- Doverdale Playground (#66)
- Wicomico High School (#70)
- Glen Avenue Elementary (#72)
- Memorial Field (#73)
- Salisbury City Park and Zoo (#74)
- Prince Street School (#76)
- Bennett Middle School (#78)
- James M. Bennett High School (#80)
- Harmon Field (#81)
- Salisbury Pony League (#82)
- Parkside High School (#84))
- Schumaker Park (#86)
- Salisbury Skate Park (#129)
- Boundless Park and Playground (#130)

Recreation Land Analysis

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

- East Salisbury Elementary (#65)
- Nick Meyer Park (#69)
- Wicomico Youth/Civic Center (#71)
- Winterplace Park (#87)
- Beaver Run Elementary (#88)
- Perdue Stadium (#89)
- Kilburnie Playground (#91)

The seven sites in the East Subsector total 447.4 acres to serve 10,647 residents, or approximately 42.0 acres per thousand population (ac/1,000 persons). If no additional parkland is acquired by 2030, the East Subsector will have 37.1ac/1,000 persons to serve a projected population of 12,067.

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

- Cedarhurst Park (#27)
- Crooked Oak Playground (#28)
- Centennial Village (#29)
- Indian Village Playground (#30)
- Billy Gene Jackson Park (#33)
- West Salisbury Little League (#47)
- Pemberton Historical Park (#50)

Local recreation land in the West Subsector amounts to 294.3 acres for the seven sites. With a projected 2015 population of 13,553, the West Subsector is served by 21.7 ac/1,000 persons. By 2030, the 294.3 acres would be roughly 18.6ac/1,000 persons for the projected 15,825 residents. The County should continue to monitor needs in the Central Planning Area which includes rehab of existing facilities and planning for future needs which may include enhancement of indoor facilities.

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 16,774 people in 2015—an increase of approximately 3,279 persons or 21.7 percent since 2000. By 2030, the area’s population is expected to reach almost 19,533 an increase of 2,759 persons or 15.2 percent since 2015.

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

Natural Features and Farmland

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

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

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

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

Preserved Land

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

Existing Recreation Sites

The South Planning Area includes the following six public recreation sites comprising 61.7 acres of recreation land (Map 3.1, Tables A-2 through A-4):

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

Recreation Land Analysis

With a 2015 population of 16,774, local recreation sites provide only 3.7 acres of parkland for every thousand residents in the South Planning Area. State acreage provides an additional 98.4 acres/1,000 persons—achieving the 60 ac/1,000 persons goal and, therefore, sufficient to contribute to the local benchmark; however, the 18.7 ac/000 persons does not meet the County established goal. If no additional local acreage is acquired by 2030, the rising population will lower the local measurement to 3.2 ac/1,000 persons or 18.2 ac/000 persons including State and preserved land in the planning area.

As noted in Chapter 3 and further discussed in Chapter 7, existing private entities in the South Planning Area are meeting the current recreational needs of residents. Since the South Planning Area is the 2nd largest population center in the County, the Department will continue to monitor existing recreational opportunities and facilities in this area to insure that needs continue to be met.

East Planning Area



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

In 2015, 6,723 people lived in the East Planning Area in 2015, an increase of 614 persons or 9.6 percent since 2000. By 2030, 7,771 people are projected to reside in the area, an increase of 14.5 percent or 1,048 persons compared to 2015.

Natural Features and Farmland

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

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

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

Preserved Land

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

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

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

Existing Recreation Sites

The East Planning Area has the following public recreation sites providing 88.3 acres of recreation land (Map 3.1, Tables A-2 through A-4):

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

Recreation Land Analysis

For a 2015 population of 6,723, public recreation accounts for 13.1 acres of recreation land per thousand residents. The State and The Nature Conservancy accounts for approximately 4,405.2 acres of land in the East Planning Area, amounting to 655.2 ac/1,000 persons, or 595.2 ac/1,000 persons in excess of the state goal of 60 ac/000. Therefore, 15.0 ac/1,000 persons of the excess can be credited toward the local goal of 30.0 ac/1,000 persons, resulting in 28.1 ac/1,000 persons of local recreation land for the East Planning Area. By 2030, if no additional land is acquired, the East Planning Area will have 26.4 ac/1,000 persons of recreation land (Public and State/TNC owned land).

Further explained in chapter 7, the County does have an acquisition goal to increase parking availability at the Eastside Youth Sports Complex, the major County Park in this Planning Area.

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 often at the expense of once productive farmland. In an effort to preserve the rural landscape and the agricultural industry, the State of Maryland and Wicomico County have developed and implemented programs designed to promote the sustainability of conserving farmland. The following chapter presents State and County programs, as well as discusses the effectiveness of these preservation programs.

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 2017 *Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan* identifies and compares the goals of the State and County programs and evaluate the effectiveness of the agricultural preservation efforts in Wicomico County. The information in Chapter 5 will provide the background for recommendations regarding agricultural preservation contained in Chapter 7.

BACKGROUND AND GOALS

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

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

The 1998 Comprehensive Plan recommended the Agricultural-Rural (A-1) Zoning District be revised to eliminate incompatible uses, as well as reduce the residential development density. In June 1998, the Wicomico County Zoning Code was revised to permit a base density of one equivalent dwelling unit (EDU) per 15 acres or under a cluster provision, a density of one EDU per three acres. Both of types of residential subdivision require a minimum of at least 50 percent of the parcel to be set aside for preserving open space. Prior to the County Zoning Code amendment to the A-1 Zoning District, residential development density was one equivalent dwelling unit per 20,000 square feet subject to meeting the Wicomico County Health Department regulations for septic systems. As part of the 2004 amendments to the County Zoning Code, incompatible non-agriculture related commercial and industrial uses were removed from the permitted uses of the A-1 Zoning District.

Table 5.1
Wicomico County Agricultural Characteristics (1978 to 2012)

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

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

The County recognized another crucial component to preserving farmland was to 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, 12 easements totaling 4,156 acres have been preserved in perpetuity using Rural Legacy funding from the State's Program Open Space, as well as other funding sources.

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

- Large tracts being farmed;

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

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

Statewide, the Maryland General Assembly passed a resolution in 2002 that established a statewide goal of preserving 1,030,000 acres of productive farmland by 2022, roughly the amount of land necessary to “support a reasonable diversity of agricultural production” throughout the State. According to the Maryland Department of Planning, approximately 386,883 acres or 38 percent of the goal has been permanently preserved in the State (87,649 Rural Legacy and 299,234 MALPF). Therefore, an additional 643,117 acres or 62 percent of the goal will need to be preserved in the next five 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 2022.
- Ensure good return on public investment by concentrating State agricultural land preservation funds in areas where the investment is reasonable well supported by both local investment and land use management programs.
- Work with local governments to:
 - Establish preservation areas, goals, and strategies through local comprehensive planning processes that address and complement State goals.
 - In each area designated for preservation, develop a shared understanding of goals and the strategy to achieve them among rural landowners, the public-at-large, and State and local government officials.
 - Protect the equity interests of rural landowners in preservation areas by ensuring sufficient public commitment and investment in preservation through easement acquisition and incentive programs.
 - Use local land use management authority effectively to protect public investment in preservation by managing development in rural preservation areas.

- Establish effective measures to support profitable agriculture, including assistance in production, marketing, and the practice of stewardship, so that farming remains a desirable way of life for both the farmer and the public-at-large.

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

- Public commitment to investment in land preservation indicated by the local legislation and the availability of State and local funding to support the County's Agricultural Land Preservation Program to purchase easements;
- Supportive local plans, zoning, regulations, and procedures, such as the *Wicomico County Comprehensive Plan*, *Wicomico County Zoning Code*, *Wicomico County Comprehensive Water and Sewerage Plan*, and agricultural preservation initiatives; and
- Community support for the preservation strategy, indicated by 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.

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

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

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).

The two aforementioned measurable objectives pertain only to the County's local agricultural preservation program. As a result of the economic downturn and a decrease in funding from the agricultural transfer tax, the ability to meet the preservation objectives is challenged. Agricultural land in Wicomico County is preserved through other means including, but not limited to the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF), Rural Legacy Program, and through the County's land development regulations. In addition to the preservation objectives of the County's Agricultural Preservation Program, the following objective represents the County's Rural Legacy Area preservation target of the approximately 2,665 acres remaining within the Quantico Creek RLA that has no level of protection:

- Preserve 2,665 acres in the Quantico Creek Rural Legacy Area with the next eight years (350 acres per year).

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

The State does not allocate the goal for the statewide farmland preservation program by county. However, using the State goal of preserving 128,624 acres annually to meet the objective of preserving 1,030,000 acres statewide by 2022, and based on Wicomico County's percentage of the State's land area (3.9%), and assuming further the County would preserve a similar proportion of land, then Wicomico County would meet a proportional share of the State objective if 2,510 acres were preserved over the next five years.

In an effort to preserve 502 acres annually, the County will utilize 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 \$4,000 per acre, based on the cost of purchasing easements in the County through local and State programs in the past six years, preserving an average of 550 acres per year (County preservation and Quantico Creek Rural Legacy Area goals) would cost an average of more than \$2.2 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 5.1 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 designated growth area 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 Village Conservation or Town Transition. The County Comprehensive Plan and supporting ordinances direct and encourage new development into these designated growth areas. Policies in the A-1 Zoning District support the creation of agricultural districts and the preservation of farmland through purchase of development rights.

In evaluating applications for agricultural districts, the County gives preference to parcels adjacent to a current ag district in an effort to create large and unfragmented areas of preserved farmland or forests. As part of the *2017 Wicomico County Comprehensive Plan*, the entirety of the A-1 Zoning District (at the time of this publication) was designated as the Priority Preservation Area (PPA), which the PPA consists of approximately 185,000 acres.

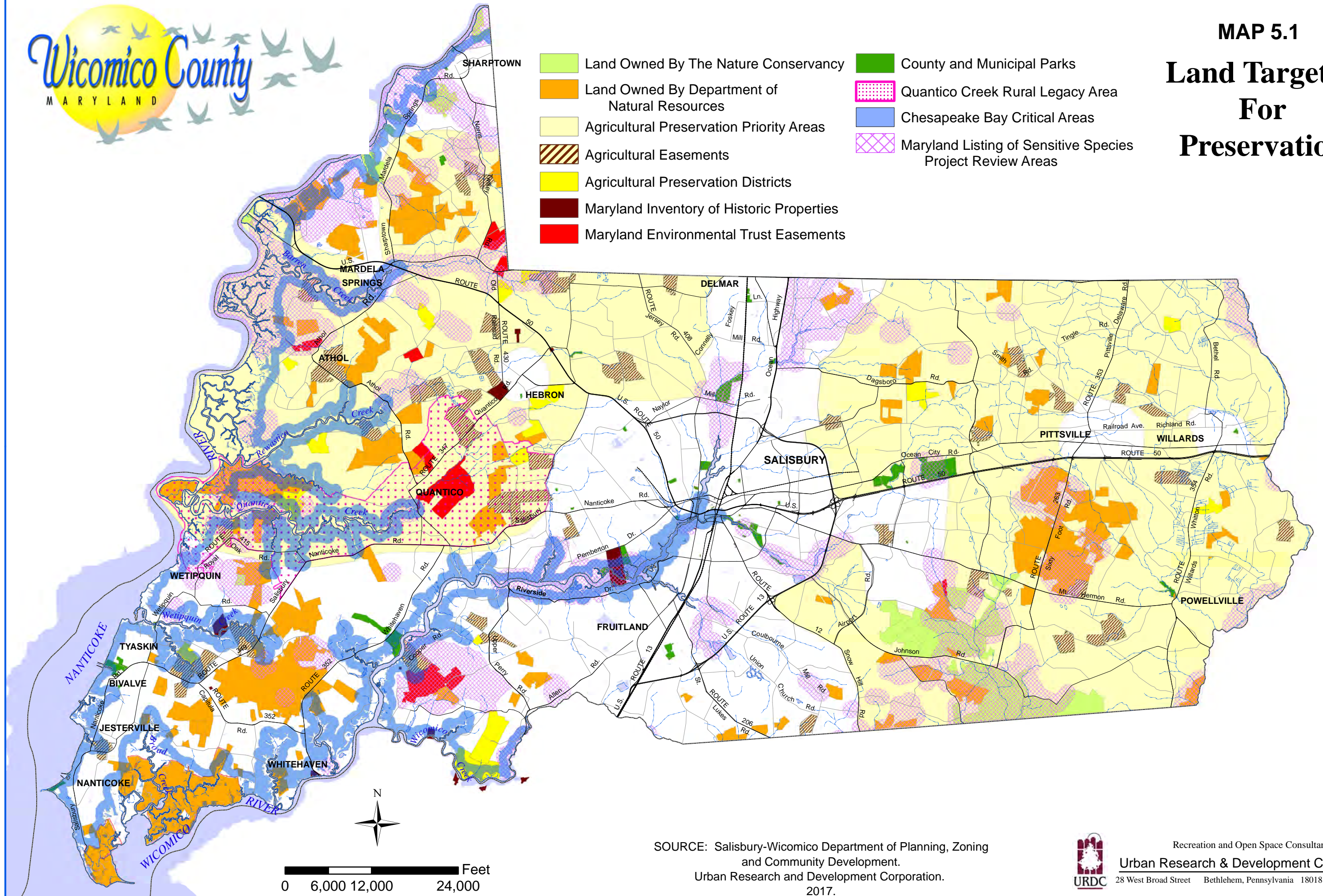
³ *Wicomico County Code*, chapter 225, 18 September 2004, available at <http://www.wicomicocounty.org>



MAP 5.1

Land Targeted For Preservation

- Land Owned By The Nature Conservancy
- Land Owned By Department of Natural Resources
- Agricultural Preservation Priority Areas
- Agricultural Easements
- Agricultural Preservation Districts
- Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties
- Maryland Environmental Trust Easements
- County and Municipal Parks
- Quantico Creek Rural Legacy Area
- Chesapeake Bay Critical Areas
- Maryland Listing of Sensitive Species Project Review Areas



SOURCE: Salisbury-Wicomico Department of Planning, Zoning and Community Development.
Urban Research and Development Corporation.
2017.



Recreation and Open Space Consultants
Urban Research & Development Corporation
28 West Broad Street Bethlehem, Pennsylvania 18018 610-865-0701

Easement Acquisition Mechanisms

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

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

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

Wicomico County Agricultural Land Preservation Program

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

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

Property owners placing land in the district program receive a 50 percent credit toward the County portion of annual real estate taxes on the property for up to ten (10) years. Currently, there are 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 \$800,000 annually, based on preserving 200 acres annually with an easement value of \$4,000 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 2011 – FY 2016), the County has retained an average of approximately \$10,114 annually to be used for agricultural preservation efforts. The funding retained annually by the agricultural transfer tax can preserve roughly 2 acres per year. Therefore, since the estimate above cites \$800,000 annually to meet the goal, the proceeds of the agricultural transfer tax are not sufficient to meet the goal of preserving 200 acres annually under the County program. As a result of decreased funding levels from the agricultural transfer tax, alternative sources of funding should be explored to ensure the County's annual preservation goal is achieved.

Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation

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

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

Since the inception of the MALPF Program, 7,412 acres have been preserved in perpetuity in Wicomico County.

Maryland Rural Legacy Program

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

In 2000, the Quantico Creek Rural Legacy Area (RLA) was established. At the time of this publication, the Quantico Creek Rural Legacy Area encompasses 14,687 acres or approximately 23.0 square miles in the western part of the County on both sides of Quantico Creek, which is tributary of the Nanticoke River (Map 5.1). The Quantico Creek area is known for its rural character, abundant open lands, cultural significance, natural wildlife habitat, and water quality impact on the Nanticoke River Watershed. Approximately 4,500 acres in the RLA are developed and an additional 7,074 acres have some level of protection (i.e. Chesapeake Bay Critical Area, tidal wetlands, protective easement, or private protection measures). Wicomico County has identified the remaining 2,665 acres as unprotected and targeted for preservation efforts. The

County estimates preserving the remaining 2,665 acres within the next eight years assuming the preservation rate of 350 acres per year in the Rural Legacy Area. The cost to preserve the remaining unprotected land is estimated at \$10.7 million (2,665 acres at \$4,000 per acre). 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 2016, Wicomico County spent about \$9.3 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 4,156 acres in the Quantico Creek RLA.

Based on the vast natural resources and the need to sustain the vibrant agricultural industry from increased development pressure, consideration should be given to expand the existing Quantico Creek Rural Legacy Area. Moreover, consideration should be given to expanding the Rural Legacy Area in Wicomico County. The need to concentrate efforts to preserve large contiguous tracts of land is the best approach to protect our natural resources and preserve our rural quality of life. To assist in targeting and prioritizing land acquisition and easement sites, the High Value Natural Areas map will serve as a road map to guide future preservation efforts. See Map 6.3. At the time of this publication, the State-wide allocation to the Rural Legacy Program in FY 2017 was \$17,663,385. Since the inception of this program in 1997, over 87,649 acres of valuable farmland, forest, and natural areas have been preserved across the State.

Maryland Environmental Trust

Land preservation efforts in Maryland began in the 1970s when the Maryland Environmental Trust (MET) was established. MET accepts conservation easement donations from property owners. Donations are strictly voluntary and are utilized by landowners to protect natural resources and preserve scenic open space. The landowner who gives an easement limits the right to develop and subdivide the land, now and in the future, but still remains the owner. Easements are binding on future owners. Therefore, an easement assures that the land will never be used in a way contrary to the current owner's intent. Financial benefits in the form of tax deductions are also associated with easements. Easements often facilitate transferring land to family members without paying large estate taxes. MET may accept conservation easements on farmland as well as environmentally sensitive areas. Since 1987, MET has assembled 11 easements (donated or purchased) encompassing 2,447 acres in Wicomico County.

Funding for Easement Acquisition

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 or roughly \$1 annually. As a result, preservation efforts have been significantly impacted and the number of acres preserved each year is declining.

Additional revenue for easement acquisition comes from the State in the MALPF and Rural Legacy programs. MALPF funding for easement purchases is difficult to anticipate by county because the allocation and program is statewide. Funding for the Rural Legacy Program is also statewide and is obtained through a competitive process, with requests for funding submitted annually. To date, Wicomico County has received \$8.5 million from the Rural Legacy Program to purchase easements.

Table 5.2
Preserved Land by Program, 1987–2016

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	395.63	\$283,952	0	\$0	0	\$0	395.63	\$283,952	\$718	0	395.63
1988	310.63	\$233,906	0	\$0	0	\$0	310.63	\$233,906	\$753	0	310.63
1989	159.99	\$224,000	0	\$0	0	\$0	159.99	\$224,000	\$1,400	0	159.99
1990	480.36	\$701,900	0	\$0	0	\$0	480.36	\$701,900	\$1,461	25.5	505.86
1991	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	0	0
1992	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0	\$0	0	0
1993	835	\$556,166	0	\$0	0	\$0	835	\$556,166	\$666	0	835
1994	518.68	\$368,926	0	\$0	0	\$0	518.68	\$368,926	\$711	525.52	1,044.2
1995	146	\$79,296	0	\$0	0	\$0	146	\$79,296	\$543	0	146
1996	463.06	\$243,531	0	\$0	0	\$0	463.06	\$243,531	\$526	0	463.06
1997	356.2	\$321,640	0	\$0	0	\$0	356.2	\$321,640	\$903	0	356.2
1998	197.06	\$397,413	0	\$0	0	\$0	197.06	\$397,413	\$2,017	18	215.06
1999	442.27	\$411,705	0	\$0	0	\$0	442.27	\$411,705	\$931	93.03	535.3
2000	584.22	\$475,963	0	\$0	0	\$0	584.22	\$475,963	\$815	0	584.22
2001	240	\$267,125	0	\$0	0	\$0	240	\$267,125	\$1,113	67.5	307.5
2002	150	\$161,459	0	\$0	0	\$0	150	\$161,459	\$1,076	687.22	837.22
2003	143.85	\$205,936	0	\$0	750.57	\$779,666	894.42	\$985,602	\$1,102	120.19	1,014.61
2004	0	\$0	286.1	\$434,200	0	\$0	286.1	\$434,200	\$1,518	0	286.1
2005	151.41	\$472,025	0	\$0	0	\$0	151.41	\$472,025	\$3,118	163.77	315.18
2006	0	\$0	364.0	\$1,029,680	0	\$0	364.0	\$1,029,680	\$2,829	0	364.0
2007	553.35	\$1,914,384	67.32	\$528,902	177.91	\$447,735	798.58	\$2,891,021	\$3,620	0	798.58
2008	283.44	\$1,168,360	64.76	\$516,461	135.19	\$334,654	483.39	\$2,019,475	\$4,178	0	483.39
2009	0	\$0	0	\$0	344.94	\$889,177	344.94	\$889,177	\$2,578	75	419.94
2010	0	\$0	0	\$0	110.62	\$334,795	110.62	\$334,795	\$3,027	0	110.62
2011	105.85	\$246,995	0	\$0	607.14	\$1,507,888	712.99	\$1,754,883	\$2,461	0	712.99
2012	132	\$458,778	0	\$0	771.72	\$2,208,798	903.72	\$2,667,576	\$2,952	177.42	1,080.72
2013	631.86	\$2,574,079	0	\$0	785.09	\$1,450,000	1,416.95	\$4,024,079	\$2,840	48.27	833.36
2014	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0	\$0	0	0
2015	131.10	\$596,250	0	\$0	0	\$0	131.10	\$596,250	\$4,548	0	131.10
2016	0	\$0	0	\$0	472.96	\$1,322,459	472.96	\$1,322,459	\$2,796	445.8	472.96
Totals	7,411.96	\$12,363,789	782.18	\$2,509,243	4,156.14	\$9,275,172	12,350.28	\$24,148,204	\$1,955	2,447.22	14,797.5

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 (September 2004) added some home-based business uses that maintain the character of the district and expand opportunities to supplement farmers' income. The Code revisions also deleted a number of uses in the A-1 district that were incompatible with agriculture, such as industrial and non-agricultural commercial uses.
- Clustering provisions, which are available in both the Zoning and Subdivision sections of the Code allow for higher density development in contrast to the density requirement of a non-cluster subdivision, which is one equivalent dwelling unit per 15 acres. Both conventional and cluster types of residential subdivision require a minimum 50 percent open space set aside of the total acreage of the tract. In addition to the disparity in densities between the two aforementioned types of subdivisions permitted in the A-1 Zoning District, another distinction is how the open space is platted. Conventional subdivisions can include the 50 percent open space set aside on the deeded lots when there is no interior infrastructure (roads) or on an individual parcel if interior infrastructure exists. In contrast, cluster subdivisions require the open space set aside be deeded as a separate parcel.
- Clustering is allowed in several zoning districts, but clustering in the A-1 zone requires the largest amount of open space: 50% of the tract. Within the A-1 zone, maximum density without clustering is 1 unit per 15 acres, while maximum density with clustering is 1 unit per 3 acres. Prior to 1998, when the code changes were enacted, residential development in the A-1 district could occur at a density of two units per acre. The open space portion of the site must be recorded on the plat/deed and, therefore, remain open in perpetuity.
- The 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 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

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

in the unincorporated portion of the County and connected to a public, community, or shared waste water treatment plant.

IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM EVALUATION

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

Funding

From 1987 through 2016, the major land preservation programs in use in Wicomico County (MALPF, County program, Rural Legacy, and MET) have preserved more than 14,798 acres at a total cost of \$24.1 million. Approximately 12,350 acres of agricultural land have been preserved through the State and County programs. Revenues from the State agricultural transfer tax provide the funds for the County program, which provides balance between conversion of farmland to residential uses and the preservation of farms. The County program also provides an opportunity for landowners to work with local officials to preserve land. The State transfer tax revenues that fund MALPF and the Rural Legacy Program are also intended as a dedicated revenue source for land preservation. However, State law permits transfer tax revenue to be diverted into the General Fund during the annual budget process. After several years of lower annual MALPF funding and some (2006, 2009, and 2011) with no funding at all, the program provided higher levels of funding in 2007, 2008, and 2010.

Land Use Management Tools

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

- Aggressively identify lands targeted for preservation for agricultural and other purposes. (Map 5.1). The degree of protection will depend on the program through which the land is protected and the specific method of protection;

- Focus development in the 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 unfragmented 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 14,798 acres since 1987 (Table 5.2). Two of the programs, MALPF and Wicomico County agricultural preservation, have financed easements on roughly 8,194 acres, which represents 10.2 percent of the County's total farmland identified in the 2012 Census of Agriculture.

As farmland has been lost to development in recent decades, the amount of preserved farmland has increased. If current funding levels persist, it is unlikely the County's agricultural preservation program goal of 3,000 acres will be achieved by 2028. Additionally, the ability to achieve preserving the remaining 2,665 acres of unprotected land in the Quantico Creek Rural Legacy Area will depend on the amount of State Program Open Space funds allocated to the County. Achieving the goal of preserving 350 acres annually, the 2,665 acres could be preserved in less than eight years at a total estimated cost of \$10.6 million. From 2003 through 2016, the County received \$8.5 million in Rural Legacy funding, which roughly translates to a yearly average of \$761,429 from Program Open Space for preserving land in the Quantico Creek Rural Legacy Area.

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

- Fifty percent (50%) of the land in a cluster subdivision must be set aside in a separate parcel as open space and maintained by a homeowners' association; 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 2,301.6 acres of land have been preserved in perpetuity as easements within the A-1 Zoning District in Wicomico County.

Effects of Potential Development on Land Markets

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

One of the results of increased development pressure is the rising price of land, not only for development, but for preservation, as well. The cost per easement acre fluctuates, depending on a variety of circumstances, including agricultural yield, availability of vacant land, and individual landowner circumstances. Since 2000, the cost of conservation easements through the MALPF program has ranged from \$345 to \$6,865 per acre. The analysis used in the 2017 *Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan* assumes an average cost of \$4,000 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.

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

- The Natural Resources Conservation Service is the arm of the United States Department of Agriculture that assists property owners in conserving soil, water, and other natural resources. The service provides technical assistance as well as cost-sharing and financial incentives. Most work is done with local partners, such as local conservation districts.
- The University of Maryland Cooperative Extension, an agency of the university, provides educational and information resources from the university to the Maryland citizens. Information and programs are available in a broad range of topics, including crops, livestock, and nursery; 4H and Youth volunteers; lawn, garden, and home; family life and community; natural resources and water quality; and food, nutrition, and health.
- The Maryland Department of Agriculture is the agency of State government charged with providing leadership and support to agriculture and the citizens of Maryland by conducting regulatory, service, and educational activities that assure consumer confidence, protect the environment, and promote agriculture.

SUMMARY

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

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

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------|
| • Direct payment; | • Land resale; |
| • Tax deductions for reduced value donation; | • Future owner/family lots; and |
| • Property tax credit; | • Peace of mind. |
| • 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.

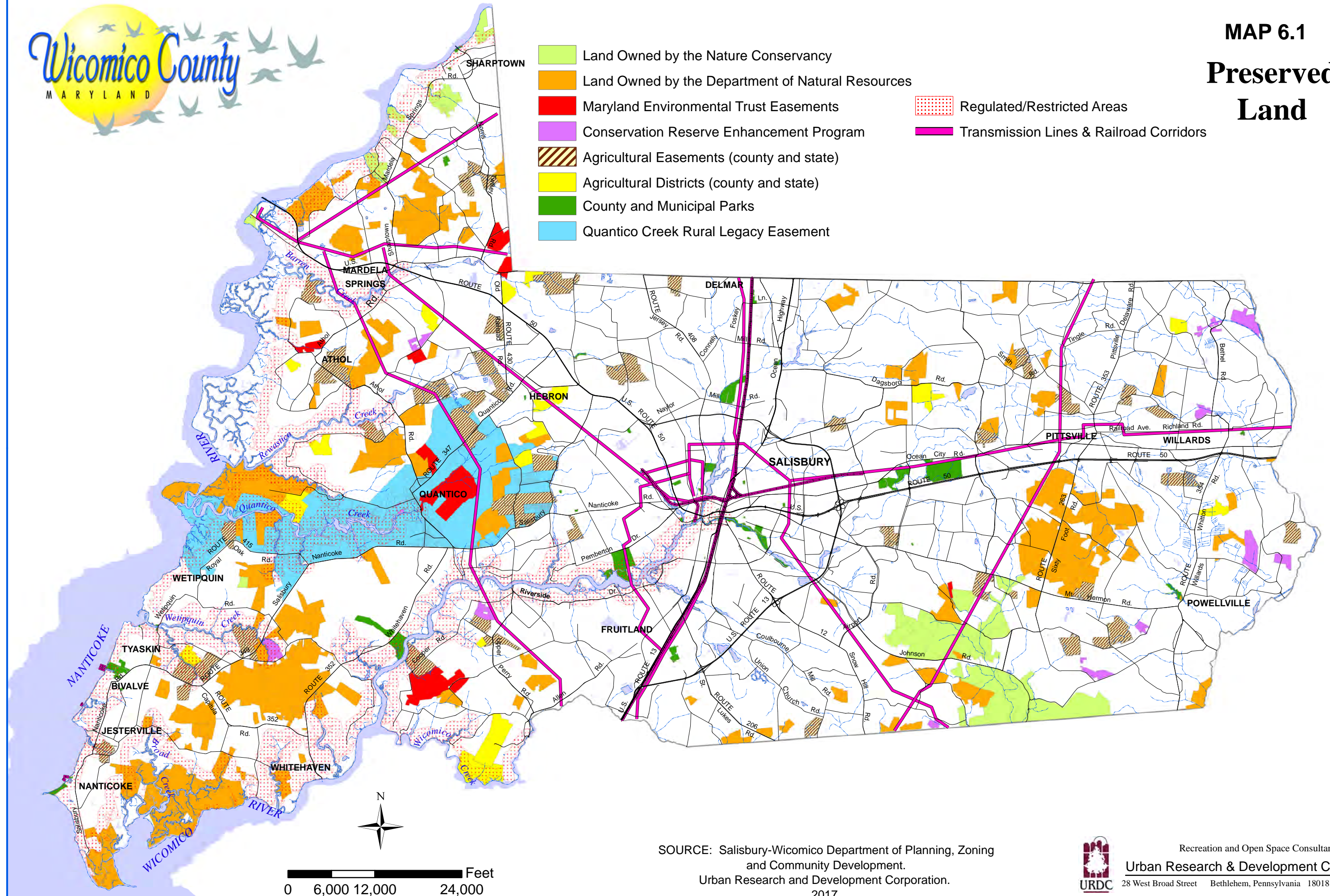
Many elements of the GI system in Wicomico County have a specific significance in other areas of the 2017 *Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan*. The following chapter reviews the GI system in Wicomico County and contains the following information:

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 ways to conserve GI?



MAP 6.1 Preserved Land

- Land Owned by the Nature Conservancy
- Land Owned by the Department of Natural Resources
- Maryland Environmental Trust Easements
- Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program
- Agricultural Easements (county and state)
- Agricultural Districts (county and state)
- County and Municipal Parks
- Quantico Creek Rural Legacy Easement
- Regulated/Restricted Areas
- Transmission Lines & Railroad Corridors



SOURCE: Salisbury-Wicomico Department of Planning, Zoning and Community Development.
Urban Research and Development Corporation.
2017.



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Definition — What is Green Infrastructure (GI)?

DNR defines Green Infrastructure as “an interconnected network of natural lands and other open spaces that conserves natural ecosystem values and functions, sustains clean air and water, and provides a wide array of benefits to people and wildlife.” Several principles discussed in the Conservation Leadership Network’s *Green Infrastructure Handbook* represent the guiding 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 and animals;
- Protect greenways, trails, or historic sites;
- Link wildlife areas; and
- Provide recreational opportunities.

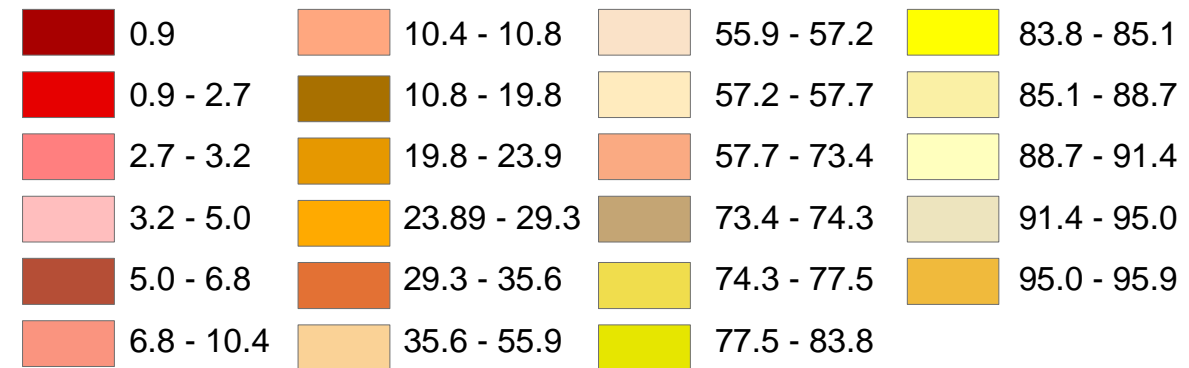
Corridors, in the form of greenways, can also define areas appropriate for future growth and areas that are ecologically sensitive and should be preserved.

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

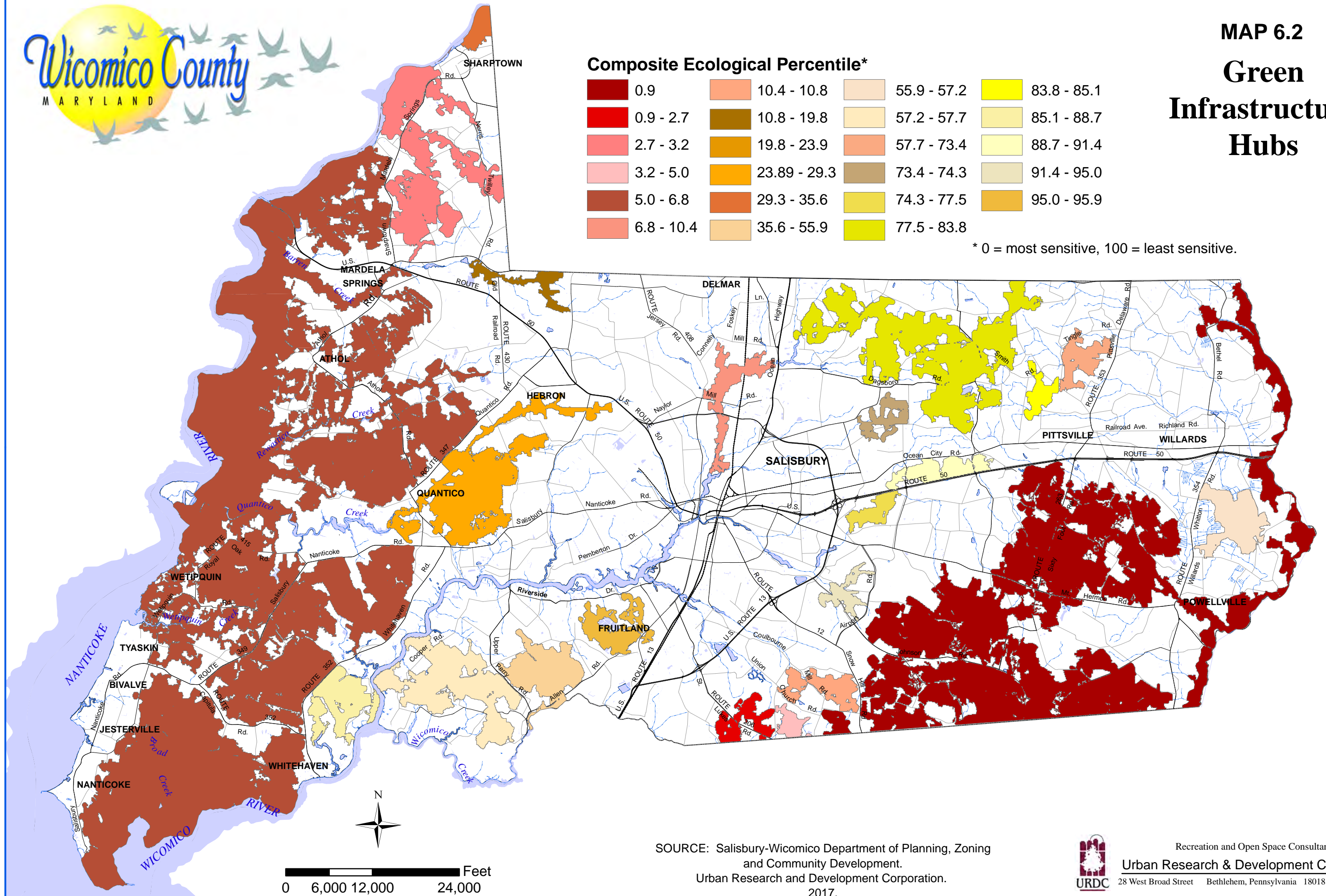


MAP 6.2 Green Infrastructure Hubs

Composite Ecological Percentile*



* 0 = most sensitive, 100 = least sensitive.



SOURCE: Salisbury-Wicomico Department of Planning, Zoning and Community Development.
Urban Research and Development Corporation.
2017.

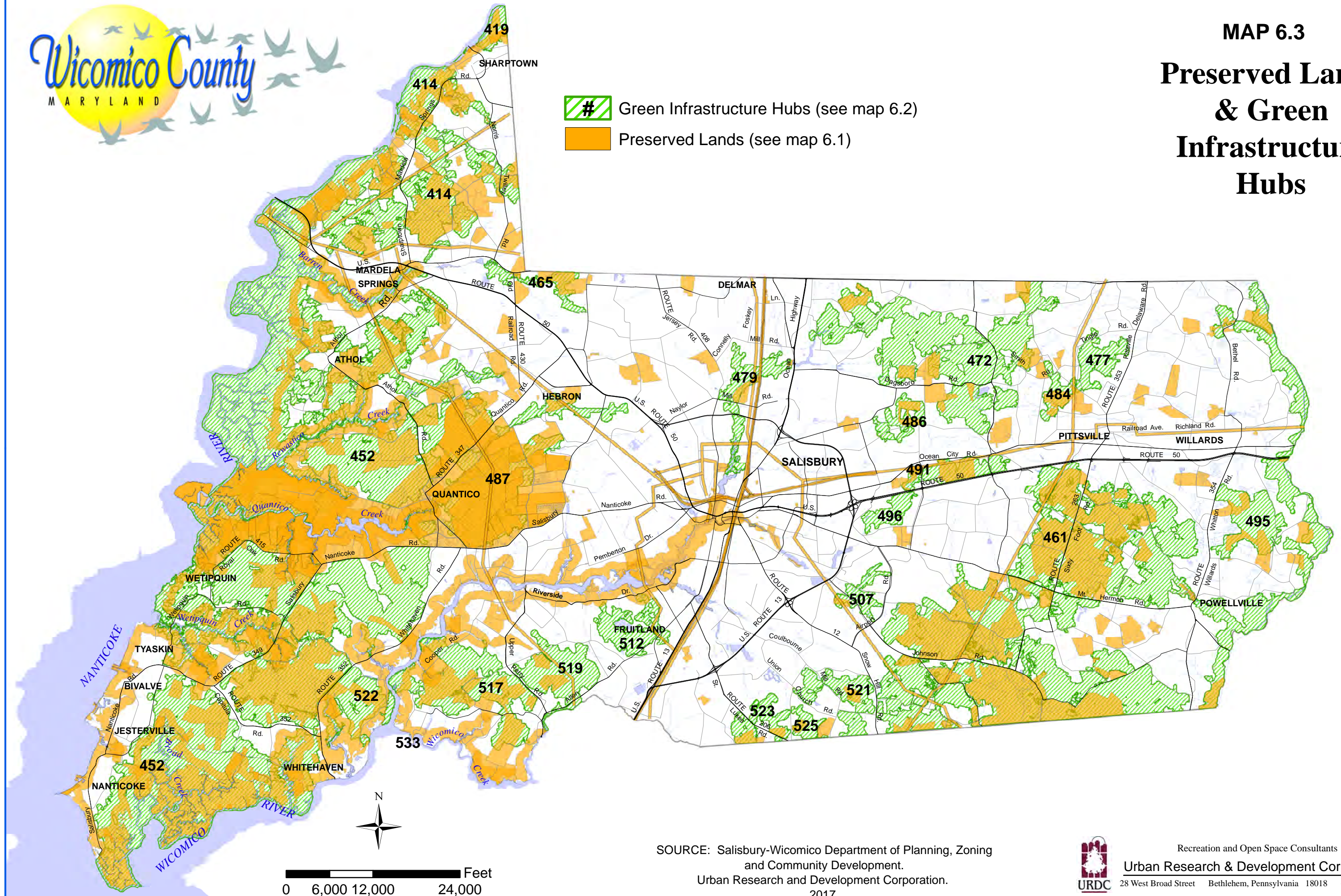


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MAP 6.3 Preserved Lands & Green Infrastructure Hubs

- Green Infrastructure Hubs (see map 6.2)
- Preserved Lands (see map 6.1)



SOURCE: Salisbury-Wicomico Department of Planning, Zoning and Community Development.
Urban Research and Development Corporation.
2017.



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

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 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.

Where are Green Infrastructure parcels in Wicomico County?

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

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

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

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

- 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 GI portions of the *2017 Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan* is to protect the most sensitive areas in the green infrastructure system through targeted conservation easements, fee simple purchases, restoration, environmentally sensitive design, and best management practices (BMPs). In addition to County agencies, the County will enlist the participation of many departments and organizations, including:

Public Programs for Donated or Purchased Easements:

- Rural Legacy Program;
- Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF);
- Farm & Ranch Land Protection Program (FRPP);
- Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP);
- Program Open Space (POS); and
- U.S. Navy's Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration Program.

Public Programs for Restoration and BMPs:

- Conservation Reserve [Enhancement] Program (CRP/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;
- The Conservation Fund;
- Maryland Department of Natural Resources; and
- Maryland Environmental Trust.

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 can conserve only a small fraction of the ecologically important lands in the County. Therefore, the second strategy is to manage the risk of adverse effects in GI areas and to reduce vulnerability, where possible.

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

- 1) Publicly acknowledging Green Infrastructure and the principles that act as a guide for land-owners, farmers, developers, and anyone making property decisions that might affect Green Infrastructure.
- 2) Ensuring that the Wicomico County Council, Parks and Recreation Commission, and Planning Commission are aware that Green Infrastructure principles and design concepts provide useful guidance regarding proposed activities over which the County may act to approve, deny, direct, advise, or otherwise have influence.

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

Strategy 3: Restore & Enhance Green Infrastructure.

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

Green Infrastructure and the Effects of Rising Sea Level

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

Green Infrastructure serves as the first line of defense against flooding. Inundation caused by a rise in sea level also causes groundwater levels to increase. Marshes and riverine beaches especially need to have inland areas protected for times when inundation causes up-slope migration. In

2012, Wicomico County experienced heavy flooding and rains from Hurricane Sandy. GI was adversely affected by the storm, resulting in sediment erosion, damaged forests, and destroyed animal habitats. The damage from Sandy is an example of potential future consequences as sea level continues to rise. Conserving natural areas and adjacent buffers will help protect against flooding and associated impacts of sea level rise. Protection from further fragmentation is vital because the current level of degradation makes sensitive areas even more vulnerable. Development and deterioration of GI may adversely affect the Ecological Goods and Services that protect against sea-level rise. Without GI to protect against flooding, sensitive lands in the community remain at risk.

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

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

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE INTEGRATION WITH COMPATIBLE LAND COVER TYPES AND USES

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

Farmland

According to the 2012 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 G.I. than is development. Therefore, retaining farming activities within conservation easements is an opportunity to reduce risk to G.I., as are other measures to retain farmland and farming within the County.

Forest Land

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

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

Recreation

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

Active Recreation

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

Acquisition

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

Design and Management

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

Extractive Recreation

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

Acquisition

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

Design and Management

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

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

Passive Recreation

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

Acquisition

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

Design and Management

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

Sensitive Areas and Wildlife Conservation

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

Acquisition

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

Design and Management

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

HIGH VALUE NATURAL AREAS

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

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

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

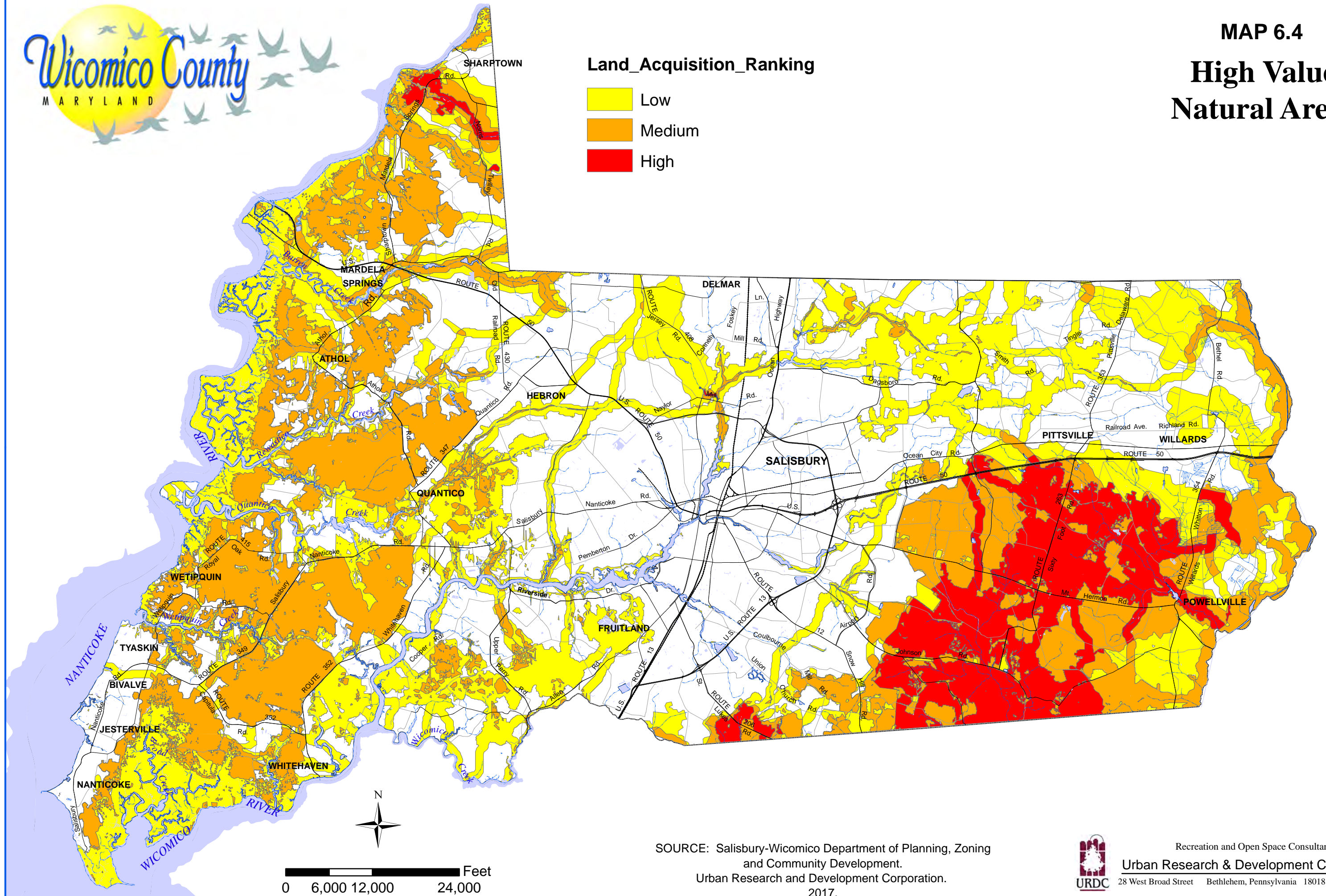
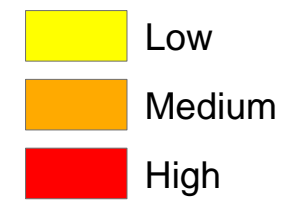
The methodology used to evaluate and rank the High Value Natural Areas included the following items:

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



MAP 6.4 High Value Natural Areas

Land_Acquisition_Ranking



SOURCE: Salisbury-Wicomico Department of Planning, Zoning and Community Development.
Urban Research and Development Corporation.
2017.



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

LAND PRESERVATION, PARKS, AND RECREATION PLAN

OVERVIEW

The *2017 Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan* illustrates the strong link between 1) the public need for parkland and other sites for leisure activity and 2) the importance of preserving significant areas of land from development, specifically farmland and natural resources. The final chapter of the Plan provides the guidance, in the form of both policy recommendations and capital improvements, to pursue the goals of increased land preservation and an enhanced recreation system in Wicomico County.

PLAN ORGANIZATION

The *2017 Wicomico County Land Preservation and Recreation Plan* contains recommendations that affect County policy as well as recommendations for specific capital improvements. The Plan is organized as follows:

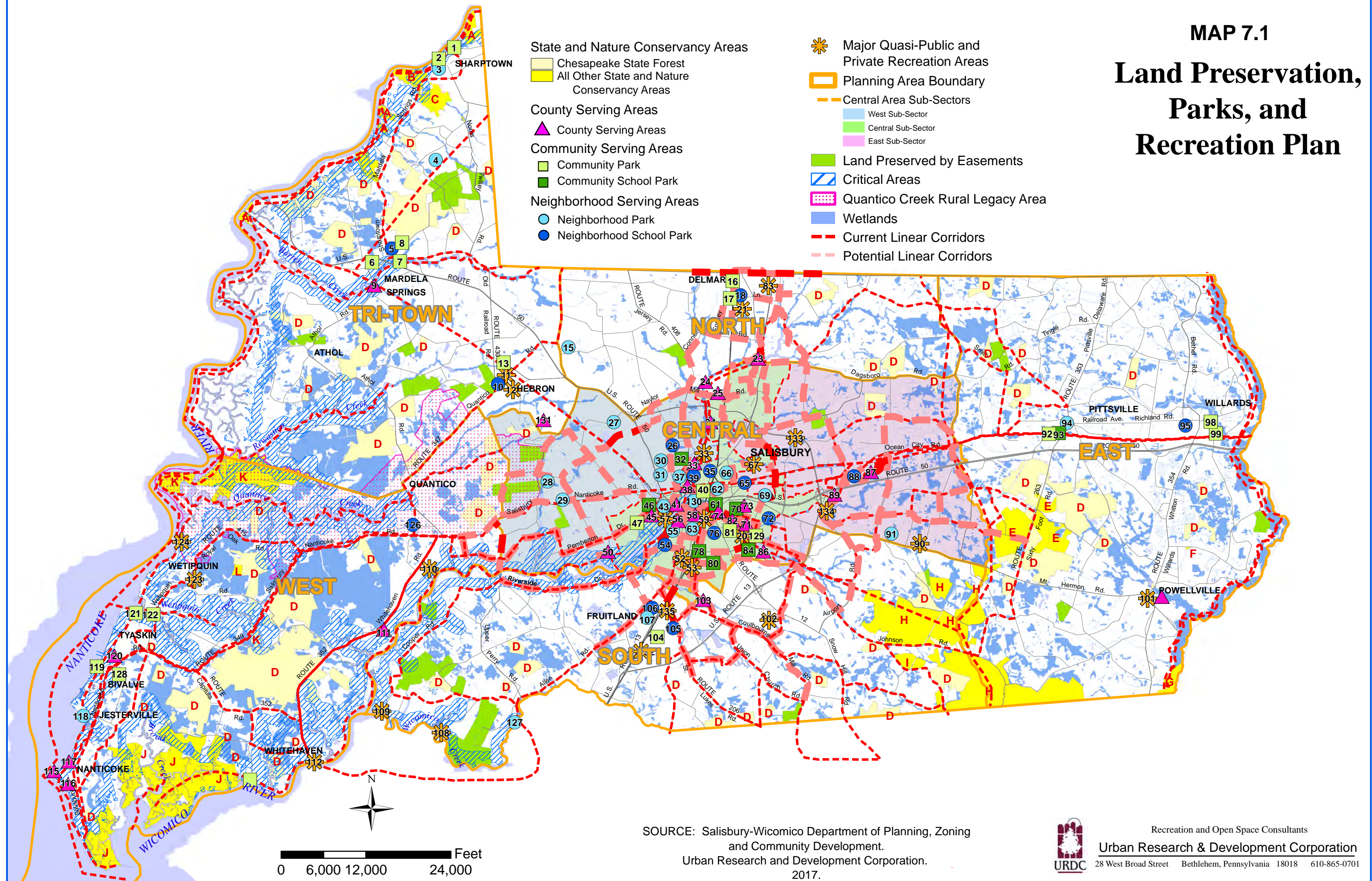
- The ***County Perspective*** includes the Plan map and a brief discussion of how the land preservation, parks, and recreation elements combine to form a tool to further the goals of land preservation and recreation services in Wicomico County;
- ***Policy/Program Recommendations*** pertain to all three areas of the plan: parks/recreation, agricultural preservation, and natural resources conservation. Policy/program recommendations are actions that do not involve major capital expenses and do not pertain to a specific planning area; and
- ***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 *2017 Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan* (Map 7.1) illustrates the effects of recent land preservation and recreation efforts in Wicomico County and provides

MAP 7.1

Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan



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.

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 discussed in Chapter 3.
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 Parks

RP-1 Continue to address capital rehabilitation funding in order to keep the County Parks system safe and functional.

One of the key themes of the *2017 Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan* is the restoration of park facilities. The parks developed in response to significant population growth from the mid-1980s through the 1990s are nearing the end of the expected life cycle, and rehabilitation is a key factor in keeping older parks safe and useful. The Department should continue to look for opportunities to obtain additional park restoration funding, particularly for expensive items, such as the future restoration at Cedar Hill Harbor and the Henry Parker Athletic Complex. The County should also continue to update depreciation schedules for each facility to address the funding required to restore and modernize capital items as needed. The County should support the Department by:

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

¹ Map 7.1 illustrates the plan elements for the entire County. Portions of the plan map, each at a larger and more readable scale

RP-2 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;
- Explore acquisition of boat launch 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-3 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 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-4 Explore the potential to transfer the maintenance of existing neighborhood greens to a homeowners association.

RP-5 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-6 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-7 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 Plan, playground safety issues become even more important as the county works to make the best, continued use of many current facilities.

RP-8 Continue to enhance the comprehensive parks maintenance management program to ensure safe and attractive parks and to replace older equipment and vehicles.

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

Replacement of vehicles and equipment based on life-cycle is a crucial element of the program. The revenue cap has severely restricted County tax support of capital improvements, particularly vehicle and equipment replacement. Deferred replacement and maintenance practices inevitably lead to increased cost and unreliability. 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-9 Complete facility improvements outlined in the 20-year lease agreement with the Delmarva Shorebirds to include restoration and modernization of Arthur W. Perdue Stadium.

The Delmarva Shorebirds are the minor league (South Atlantic League) baseball affiliate of the major league Baltimore Orioles. The Shorebirds play all home games at Arthur W. Perdue Stadium in Salisbury. Minor league baseball is a fun way for families and friends to spend an afternoon or evening together. The Shorebirds provide an excellent attraction and significant revenue for Wicomico County. The team has played at Perdue Stadium since the structure opened in 1996, averaging an attendance of more than 200,000 per year. The Stadium is in need of a significant

renovation. The County should complete restoration and modernization as outlined in the 20-year lease agreement with the Shorebirds.

RP-10 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 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-11 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 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 Pork in the Park, and the Beer and Wine Festivals and other tourism events.
- Bike routes used for recreation and utility purposes should be evaluated to ensure safe and comfortable experiences. Marketing these routes for local and tourism use should be continued through department websites (www.wicomicorecandparks.org and www.wicomicotourism.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; and

- Signature special events, such as Pork in the Park, Good Beer Festival and the Autumn Wine Festival.
- Establish training programs for visitor counselors and tourism-related businesses to increase knowledge of tourist attractions and further the County's reputation for 1st-class hospitality.

RP-12 Expand facilities required to attract and expand amateur tournaments.

Contingent upon available funding, the Henry Parker Athletic Complex should be expanded to include eight (8) ball fields to accommodate anticipated demand. Tournaments hosted in Salisbury are a significant source of tourism revenue for the County. In addition to the economic benefits of an expanded facility, local programming should also be included in the expansion to ensure citizens and visitors enjoy these regional assets.

RP-13 Continue to strengthen recreation council & stakeholder relationships to support programs and park operations.

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

RP-14 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-15 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-16 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.

One recommendation is to consider adding pickleball lines to existing tennis courts throughout the County to meet the recreational needs of more active-older citizens. This process has begun, but should be further explored with individual communities, particularly as courts are scheduled to be renovated or replaced.

Research should also be conducted to determine how to best meet the recreational needs of middle school and high school students, whose needs are changing.

RP-17 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.

RP-18 Continue public engagement efforts in order to refine analysis for public use demand specific to parks and recreation amenities throughout the County.

The County will continue to administer the public use demand survey in order to obtain a statistically valid sample size for analysis. Additionally, the County will seek alternative ways to gather data and public input specific to recreational sites and amenities throughout the County for future planning purposes and the next update of this Plan

RP-19 Seek acquisition of land to address parking deficiencies at the Eastside Youth Sports Complex and in Fruitland.

Both facilities are used for local programming, but are also relied upon as secondary sites for regional and national events sponsored by the Department. The lack of sufficient parking during high-volume events at these sites is a growing issue that should be given consideration for future planning and capital programming.

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 (Table 7.1). Wicomico County should continue to offer assistance to landowners to help promote land preservation as a financially viable alternative to development.

***Table 7.1
Comparison of Land Preservation Value and Development Value***

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

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

Natural Resource Conservation

N-1 Consideration should be given to expanding the existing Quantico Creek Rural Legacy Area.

N-2 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-3 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-4 Consider land banking and other voluntary mechanisms to preserve land along Wicomico County waterways.

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

N-5 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-6 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-7 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-8 Seek statewide Program Open Space funding to acquire lands within targeted high priority Green Infrastructure hubs and corridors.

The *2017 Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan* identifies GI hubs and corridors and establishes a priority for each (Map 6.2). The highest priority areas in each Maryland county should be considered Statewide priorities. Wicomico County should work with the State to obtain statewide Program Open Space funding to acquire lands, through easement or purchase, within the high priority GI hubs and corridors.

CAPITAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Capital Priorities

The *2017 Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan* includes specific capital recommendations which are outlined by planning areas at the end of this Chapter. Capital priorities are a result of feedback gleaned from stakeholder interviews and noted deficiencies identified in Chapter 3 and are closely connected to policy recommendations included above. As noted, the County will continue to emphasize rehabilitation of existing facilities due to an aging parks system and will attempt to keep facilities safe, functional, and attractive.

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 and attractive and to maximize efficiency of services where possible.
2. Expansion and modernization of marquee facilities in the County including the Henry S. Parker Athletic Complex, the Wicomico Youth & Civic Center and Arthur W. Perdue Stadium.

3. Acquisition of land to address parking deficiencies, particularly at the Eastside Youth Sports Complex in Willards and recreation areas in Fruitland.
4. Increase recreational opportunities through facility modifications/improvements and program development. This may include development of master plans at undeveloped park lands and location/construction of sustainable trails throughout the County.

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. Three prominent examples identified in this Plan are:

1. Limited public swimming pools
As noted in Map 3.1C and the Proximity Analysis, 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
As discussed in Chapter 3, the Department utilizes the Youth & Civic Center for a small number of recreational activities because 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 the current model utilizing public and private partnerships has been utilized for many years within the County to an adequate level.
3. Lack of lighted rectangular fields
As noted in Chapter 3, the County is in the process of adding diamond ballfields to the Henry S. Parker Athletic Complex and will lose lighted rectangular fields in the process. Though lighted fields are an existing need, the expected addition of 10-20 privately funded rectangular fields to inventory in the coming year may provide solutions for this current deficiency. In light of the uncertainty of how public demand will change as a result of new fields being built, no immediate action is recommended in the LPPRP pertaining to rectangular field lights.

Summary of Capital Recommendations

The 2017 *Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan* proposes a total of 31 capital projects at an estimated cost of more than \$10.3 million (Table 7.2). Highlights of the Plan include:

- Acquiring 7 acres of land: of which 4.0 acres to accommodate parking demand at Fruitland Recreation Area; and 3.0 acres to accommodate parking demand at Eastside Sports Complex as noted in the needs analysis in Chapter 3.
- Developing and expanding parks to meet recreation needs of areas experiencing or expected to experience significant growth:
 - Complete the expansion of the Henry S. Parker Athletic Complex to increase inventory to 8 ball fields; and.
 - Develop a master plan for Pirates Wharf to include passive recreation opportunities for the general public and tourists.
- A total of \$4.4 million—43% of total estimated cost—is devoted to rehabilitation of existing facilities, in response to the Plan’s emphasis on park and facility rehabilitation.

Table 7.2
Summary of Capital Recommendations

Planning Area	Number of Projects	Est. Total Cost (\$000s)	Acres to be Acquired	Estimated Costs (\$000s)					
				Immediate			Mid-Range		
				(2017 - 2022)			(2023 - 2027)		
				Acq.	Dev.	Reh.	Acq.	Dev.	Reh.
Tri-Town	3	280	-	-	-	40	-	-	240
West Side	6	2,845	-	-	550	1,510	-	-	785
North	4	3,300	-	-	2,800	400	-	-	100
Central	13	3,746	-	-	71	1,110	-	2,415	150
South	1	40	4	40	-	-	-	-	-
East	4	130	3	25	25	80	-	-	-
Total	31	10,341	7	65	3,446	3,140	0	2,415	1,275

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

CAPITAL PROGRAMMING BY PLANNING AREAS

The capital recommendations of the 2017 *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 2013 Plan are also included in each planning area as a point of reference to track progress since the last adoption.

Tri-Town Planning Area



The County completed projects to replace ballfield lights at Cope Bennett Park and Hebron, as well as resurfaced tennis courts at Mardela Park since the adoption of the 2013 Plan. The 3 projects cost approximately \$400,000 to complete.

The 2017 *Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan* proposes 3 capital projects, estimated to cost \$280,000, in the Tri-Town Planning Area (Map 7.2, Table 7.3).

Consistent with the County's goal to emphasize rehabilitation with its aging park system, playground modules are scheduled to be replaced at Mardela Park and Cope Bennett Park before the adoption of the next Plan. The County will seek feedback from local user groups to determine what equipment or amenities may better serve Tri-Town residents when these park improvements take place.

Table 7.3
Proposed Capital Improvements, Tri-Town Planning Area

Site	No.	Project Description	Est.	Acres	Estimated Costs (\$000s)					
	(Map		Total	to be	Immediate			Mid-Range		
	7.3)		Cost	Acquired	(2017 - 2022)			(2023 - 2027)		
			(\$000s)		Acq.	Dev.	Reh.	Acq.	Dev.	Reh.
Sharptown	1	Replace bulkhead @ fishing area	200	-	-	-	-	-	-	200
Mardela Park	6	Playground Module	40	-	-	-	40	-	-	-
Cope Bennett	2	Playground Module	40	-	-	-	-	-	-	40
Total (3 projects)			280	0	0	0	40	0	0	240

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



MAP 7.2

Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan

TRI-TOWN PLANNING AREA

State and Nature Conservancy Areas

- Chesapeake State Forest
- All Other State and Nature Conservancy Areas

County Serving Areas

- County Serving Areas

Community Serving Areas

- Community Park
- Community School Park

Neighborhood Serving Areas

- Neighborhood Park
- Neighborhood School Park

- Major Quasi-Public and Private Recreation Areas

- Planning Area Boundary

- Land Preserved by Easements

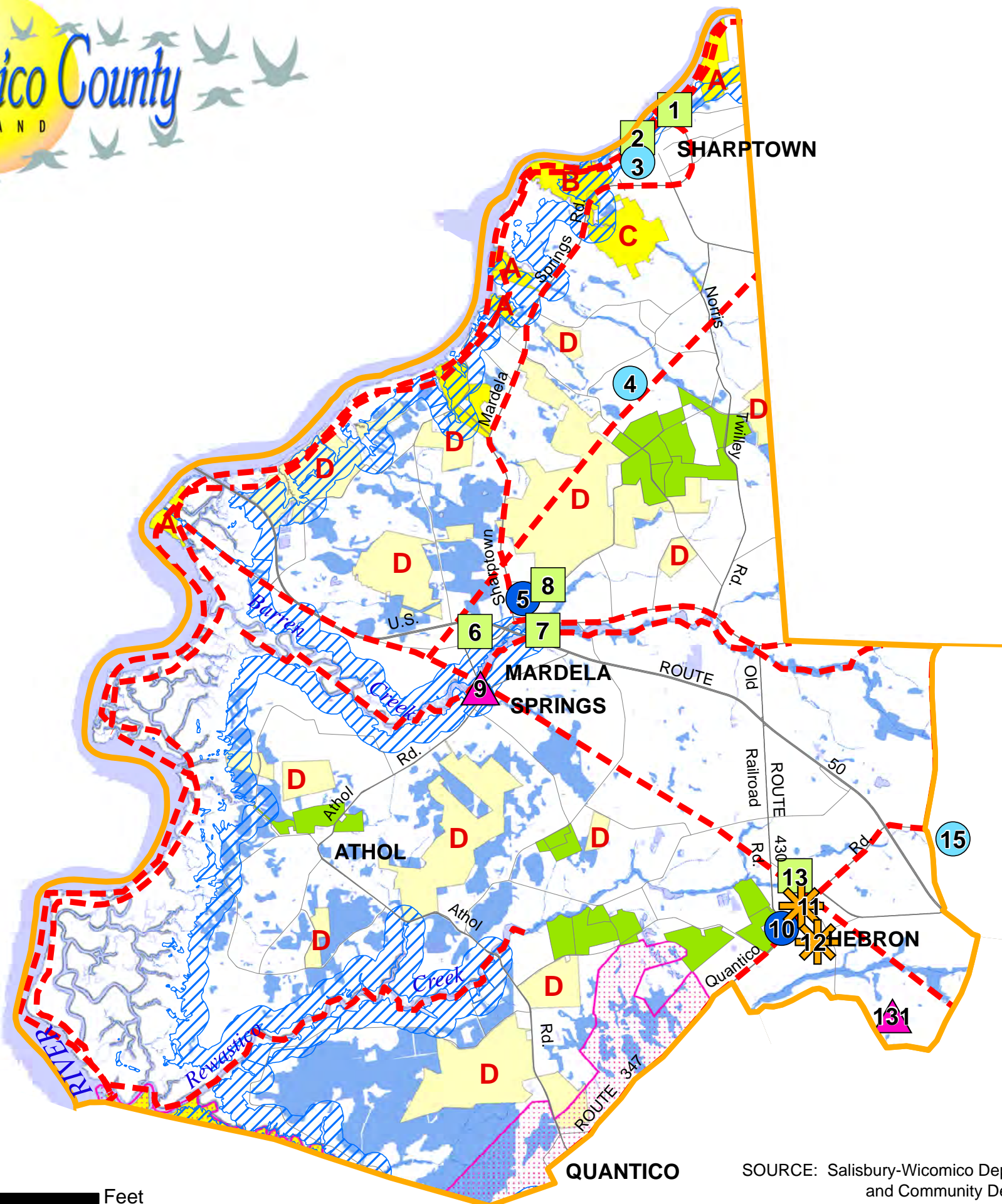
- Critical Areas

- Quantico Creek Rural Legacy Area

- Wetlands

- Current Linear Corridors

- Potential Linear Corridors



0 3,500 7,000 14,000 Feet

SOURCE: Salisbury-Wicomico Department of Planning, Zoning and Community Development.
Urban Research and Development Corporation.
2017.



Recreation and Open Space Consultants
Urban Research & Development Corporation
28 West Broad Street Bethlehem, Pennsylvania 18018 610-865-0701

West Side Planning Area



As part of the 2013 Plan, Wicomico County completed restoration of Nanticoke Harbor, including, replacement of bulkhead, piles, and catwalks. The County also replaced the Wetipquin boat ramp, resurfaced courts at Cedar Hill Park and rebuilt Tyaskin & Bivalve Wharfs as a result of damage created by Hurricane Sandy. The 5 completed projects cost \$540,000.

The 2017 *Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan* proposes \$2.845 million of improvements in the West Side Planning Area (Map 7.3, Table 7.4), including development of Pirate's Wharf Park consistent with recommendations contained in a site master plan. Major improvements are slated for Cedar Hill Park including: \$975,000 for rehabilitation of the bulkhead, piles, and catwalks; \$150,000 for replacing a boat ramp; and \$80,000 for construction of a bathhouse facility. Improvements at Cedar Hill and Nanticoke Harbor will total approximately \$1.295 million. A shoreline restoration project should be considered at Roaring Point to address beach erosion threatening future accessibility to the beach and funding needs to be secured to complete this much needed project. The 2017 *Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan* does not envision any additional recreational land requirements in the West Side.

Table 7.4
Proposed Capital Improvements, West Side Planning Area

Site	No. (Map 7.4)	Project Description	Est.	Acres	Estimated Costs (\$000s)					
			Total	to be	Immediate			Mid-Range		
			Cost	Acquired	(2017 - 2022)			(2023 - 2027)		
			(\$000s)		Acq.	Dev.	Reh.	Acq.	Dev.	Reh.
Nanticoke Harbor	117	Replace boat ramp	90	-	-	-	-	-	-	90
Pirate's Wharf Park	111	Develop master plan/park development	550	-	-	550	-	-	-	-
Cedar Hill Park	120	Replace boat ramp	150	-	-	-	-	-	-	150
Cedar Hill Park	120	Replace bulkhead, piles, catwalks	975	-	-	-	430	-	-	545
Cedar Hill Park	120	Bathhouse facility	80	-	-	-	80	-	-	-
Roaring Point	115	Shoreline restoration	1,000	-	-	-	1,000	-	-	-
Total (6 projects)			2,845	0	0	550	1,510	0	0	785

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



MAP 7.3 Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan WEST SIDE PLANNING AREA

State and Nature Conservancy Areas

- Chesapeake State Forest
- All Other State and Nature Conservancy Areas

County Serving Areas

- County Serving Areas

Community Serving Areas

- Community Park
- Community School Park

Neighborhood Serving Areas

- Neighborhood Park
- Neighborhood School Park

- Major Quasi-Public and Private Recreation Areas

- Planning Area Boundary

- Land Preserved by Easements

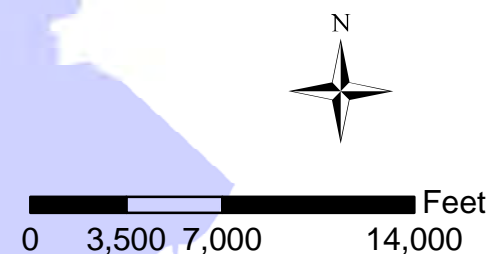
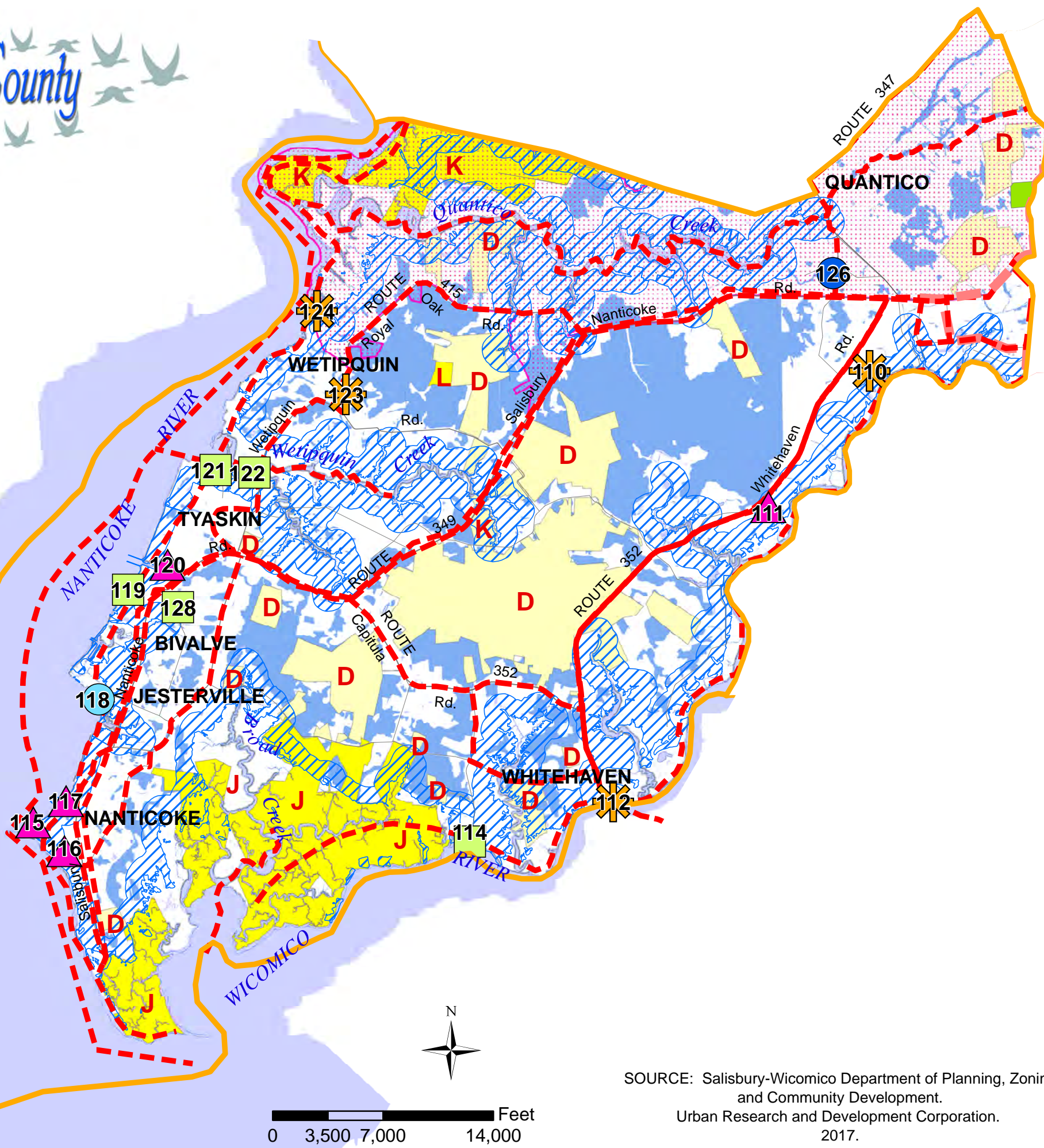
- Critical Areas

- Quantico Creek Rural Legacy Area

- Wetlands

- Current Linear Corridors

- Potential Linear Corridors



SOURCE: Salisbury-Wicomico Department of Planning, Zoning and Community Development.
Urban Research and Development Corporation.
2017.



Recreation and Open Space Consultants
Urban Research & Development Corporation
28 West Broad Street Bethlehem, Pennsylvania 18018 610-865-0701

North Planning Area



Projects listed in the 2013 Plan have not been addressed as of the current Plan update. The expansion of the Henry S. Parker Athletic Complex is scheduled to begin in the spring of 2017 and should be completed by the spring of 2018. The project is estimated to cost \$3.1 million.

The 2017 *Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan* proposes major improvements to the Henry S. Parker Athletic Complex and Naylor Mill Park (Map 7.4, Table 7.5). Additional projects in the North Planning Area will include equipment restoration at the Mason Dixon Sports Complex and Gordy Park in Delmar. The total anticipated costs for the North Planning area are expected to be \$3.3 million.

Table 7.5
Proposed Capital Improvements, North Planning Area

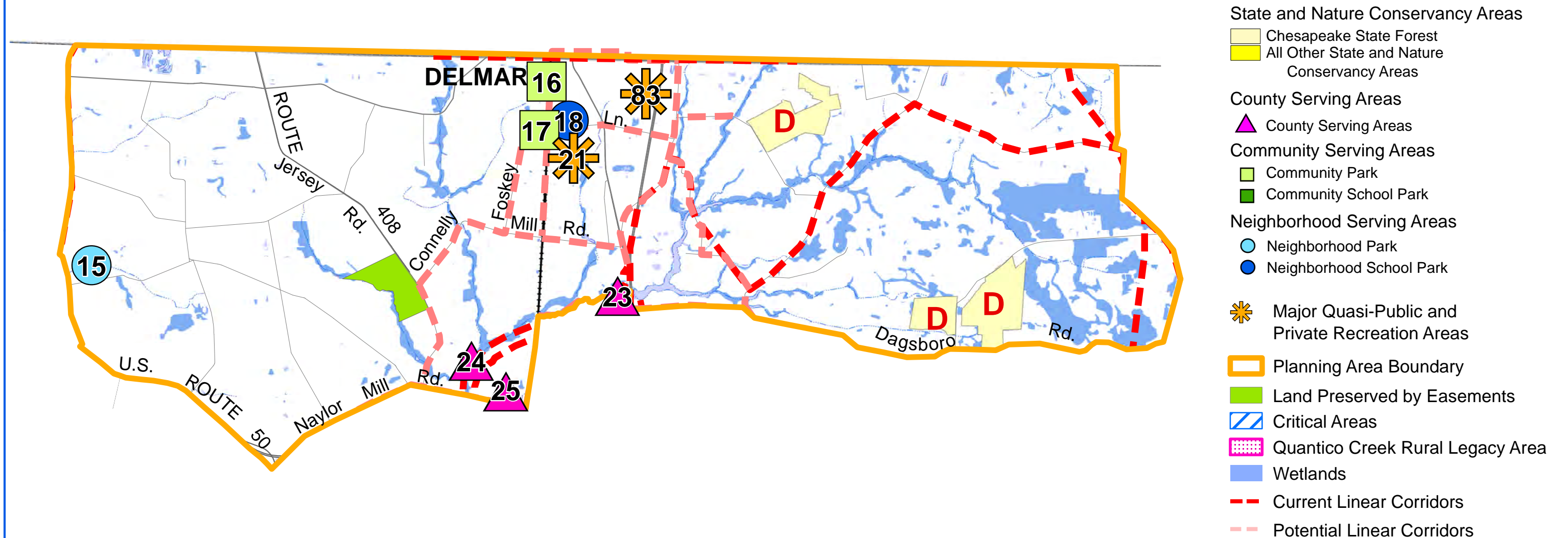
Site	No.	Project Description	Est.	Acres	Estimated Costs (\$000s)					
	(Map		Total	to be	Immediate			Mid-Range		
	7.5)		Cost	Acquired	(2017 - 2022)			(2023 - 2027)		
			(\$000s)		Acq.	Dev.	Reh.	Acq.	Dev.	Reh.
Henry Parker Athletic Complex	24	Expansion; Additional 8 fields, expand bathroom, parking, and storage areas	3,100	-	-	2,800	300	-	-	-
Gordy Park	16	Replace pavilion; restore contact bldg.	60	-	-	-	60	-	-	-
Mason Dixon Sports Complex	17	Replace playground equip	40	-	-	-	40	-	-	-
Mason Dixon Sports Complex	17	Fences, roofs, dugouts, bleachers	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	100
Total (4 projects)			3,300	0	0	2,800	400	0	0	100

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



MAP 7.4 Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan

NORTH PLANNING AREA



0 2,500 5,000 10,000 Feet

SOURCE: Salisbury-Wicomico Department of Planning, Zoning and Community Development.
Urban Research and Development Corporation.
2017.



Recreation and Open Space Consultants
Urban Research & Development Corporation
28 West Broad Street Bethlehem, Pennsylvania 18018 610-865-0701

Central Planning Area



Several projects listed in the 2013 Plan have been completed including: structural improvements at Arthur W. Perdue Stadium; exterior rehabilitation of the Carriage House at Winterplace Park; court resurfacing and playground equipment replacement at Crooked Oak and Centennial Village; and court resurfacing at Waterside Playground. Additional completed projects include: additional softball field constructed at Winterplace Park; exterior improvements made at the Wicomico Equestrian Center; and 6 storm water management projects completed at various parks in the Central Planning Area. A total of 14 projects have been completed at an estimated cost of \$3.8 million.

The 2017 *Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan* proposes 13 capital improvements in the Central Planning Area, at a cost of approximately \$3.746 million (Map 7.5, Table 7.6). The Plan includes construction of a soft launch site at Billy Gene Jackson Park, rehabilitation of the Pemberton Park Heritage Center, possible remodel of the interior of the Carriage House, and establishment of water/sewer connections at the Wicomico Equestrian Center. In addition to addressing needed rehabilitation at existing parks, capital recommendations also address planning for future needs in the growing West Metro Core population.

Table 7.6
Proposed Capital Improvements, Central Planning Area

Site	No. (Map 7.6)	Project Description	Est.	Acres	Estimated Costs (\$000s)					
			Total	to be	Immediate			Mid-Range		
			Cost	Acquired	(2017 - 2022)			(2023 - 2027)		
			(\$000s)		Acq.	Dev.	Reh.	Acq.	Dev.	Reh.
Billy Gene Jackson Park	33	Well for irrigation on ballfields	25	-	-	25	-	-	-	-
Billy Gene Jackson Park	33	Install ADA accessible soft launch ramp	28	-	-	28	-	-	-	-
Pemberton Historical Park	50	Construct outbuildings	200	-	-	-	-	-	200	-
Pemberton Historical Park	50	Rehabilitation Heritage Center	70	-	-	-	70	--	-	-
West Metro Park	131	Develop master plan for facility	40	-	-	-	-	-	40	-
Winterplace Park	87	Carriage House water/sewer connection	200	-	-	-	-	-	200	-
Winterplace Park	87	Carriage House interior rehabilitation	1,400	-	-	-	-	-	1,400	-
Equestrian Center at Winterplace	87	Water/Sewer Connection/Restrooms	400	-	-	-	-	-	400	-
Waterside Playground	43	Replace playground equipment	150	-	-	-	-	-	-	150
Riverwalk Park	58	Extension of Riverwalk	175	-	-	-	-	-	175	-
Emerson Holloway Park	31	Pavilion and playground	68	-	-	18	50	-	-	-
Emerson Holloway Park	31	Replace perimeter fencing	90	-	-	-	90	-	-	-
A.W. Perdue Stadium	89	Replace flat roof	900	-	-	-	900	-	-	-
Total (13 projects)			3,746	0	0	71	1,110	0	2,415	150

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



MAP 7.5
**Land Preservation,
Parks, and
Recreation Plan**
**CENTRAL
PLANNING AREA**

State and Nature Conservancy Areas

- Chesapeake State Forest
- All Other State and Nature Conservancy Areas

County Serving Areas

- County Serving Areas

Community Serving Areas

- Community Park
- Community School Park

Neighborhood Serving Areas

- Neighborhood Park
- Neighborhood School Park

- Major Quasi-Public and Private Recreation Areas

- Planning Area Boundary

- Central Area Sub-Sectors

- West Sub-Sector
- Central Sub-Sector
- East Sub-Sector

- Land Preserved by Easements

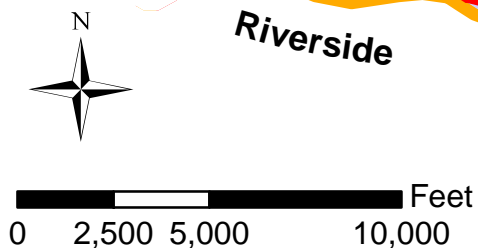
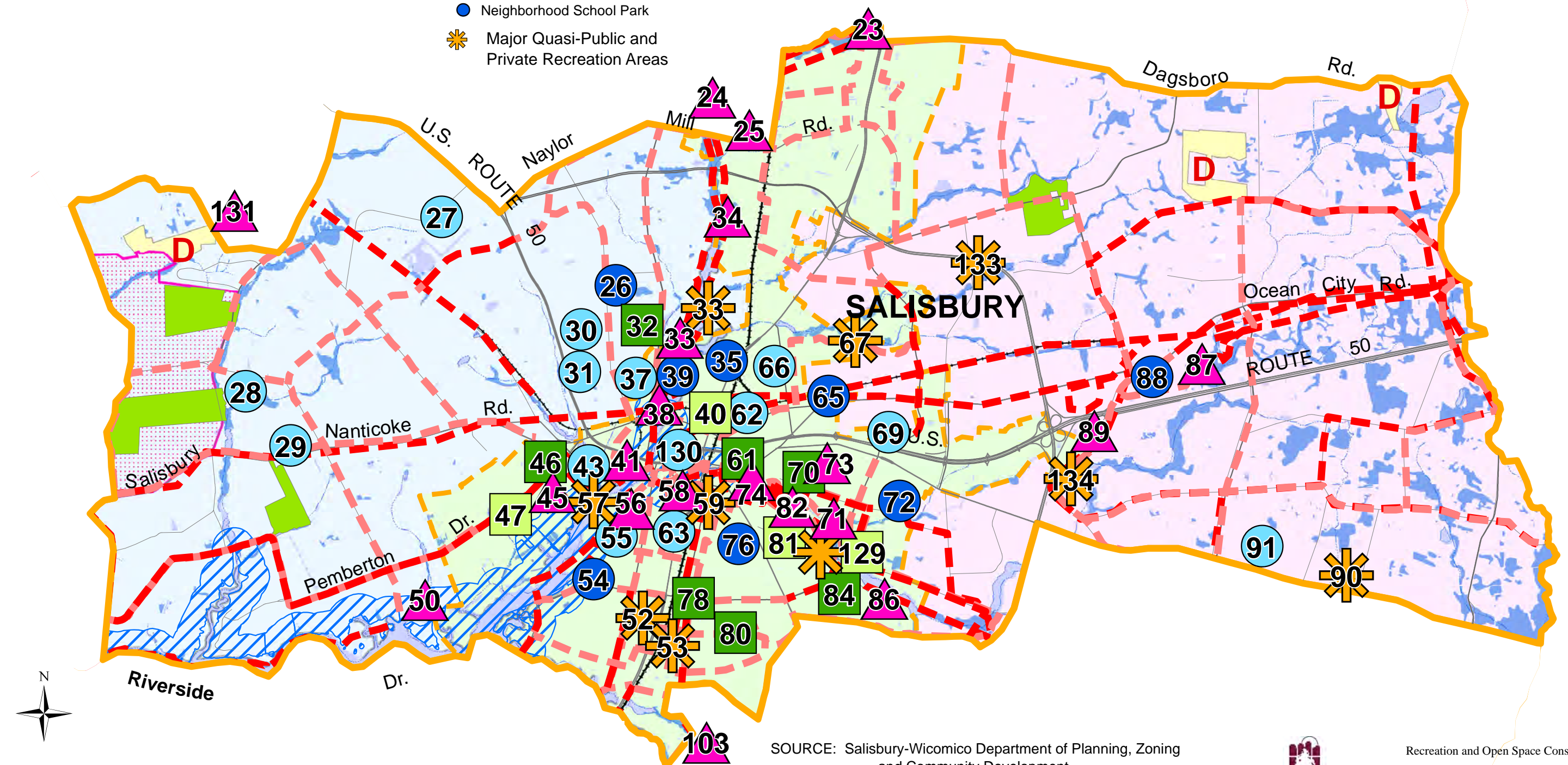
- Critical Areas

- Quantico Creek Rural Legacy Area

- Wetlands

- Current Linear Corridors

- Potential Linear Corridors



SOURCE: Salisbury-Wicomico Department of Planning, Zoning and Community Development.
Urban Research and Development Corporation.
2017.



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Urban Research & Development Corporation
28 West Broad Street Bethlehem, Pennsylvania 18018 610-865-0701

South Planning Area



Projects listed in the 2013 Plan have not been specifically addressed as of the current Plan update. The 22 acre area identified in the 2013 Plan as a potential acquisition was purchased by a private entity offering youth sports and recreational programming to area citizens.

The 2017 *Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan* includes one capital project to acquire land for additional parking to accommodate increasing demand at the Fruitland Recreation Complex as noted in Chapter 3. The total estimated cost for the aforementioned project is \$40,000. (Map 7.6, Table 7.7). 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 7.7
Proposed Capital Improvements, South Planning Area

Site	No. (Map 7.7)	Project Description	Est.	Acres	Estimated Costs (\$000s)					
			Total	to be	Immediate			Mid-Range		
			Cost	Acquired	(2017 - 2022)			(2023 - 2027)		
			(\$000s)		Acq.	Dev.	Reh.	Acq.	Dev.	Reh.
Fruitland Recreation Park	104	Acquire land for additional parking	40	4	40	-	-	-	-	-
Total (1 project)			40	4	40	0	0	0	0	0

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

East Planning Area



Projects listed in the 2013 Plan have not been specifically addressed as of the current Plan update.

The 2017 *Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan* contains four projects carried over from the 2005 Plan. The four projects in the East Planning Area, with an estimated total cost of \$130,000, (Map 7.7, Table 7.8) include improvements to Willards Park and Adkins Mill Park. A notable acquisition goal includes 3 acres of land to accommodate additional parking needs at the Eastside Youth Sports Complex. As noted in Chapter 3, the Eastside Youth Sports Complex is the major County Park for east side residents and is relied upon as a secondary site for regional and national tournament events sponsored by the Department. Current parking is insufficient to meet the demand for high-volume events, which creates issues with neighbors and local residents. The County will attempt to address this need before the adoption of the next Plan.

Table 7.8
Proposed Capital Improvements, East Planning Area

Site	No.	Project Description	Est.	Acres	Estimated Costs (\$000s)					
	(Map		Total	to be	Immediate			Mid-Range		
	7.7)		Cost	Acquired	(2017 - 2022)			(2023 - 2027)		
			(\$000s)		Acq.	Dev.	Reh.	Acq.	Dev.	Reh.
Willards Park	98	Replace basketball court	40	-	-	-	40	-	-	-
Adkins Mill Park	100	Construct gazebo/boardwalk improvements	25	-	-	25	-	-	-	-
Eastside Sports Cpx	99	Acquire land for additional parking	25	3	25	-	-	-	-	-
Willards Park	98	Add playground module	40	-	-	-	40	-	-	-
Total (4 projects)			130	3	25	25	80	0	0	0

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



MAP 7.7 Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan EAST PLANNING AREA

State and Nature Conservancy Areas

- Chesapeake State Forest
- All Other State and Nature Conservancy Areas

County Serving Areas

- County Serving Areas

Community Serving Areas

- Community Park
- Community School Park

Neighborhood Serving Areas

- Neighborhood Park
- Neighborhood School Park

- Major Quasi-Public and Private Recreation Areas

- Planning Area Boundary

- Land Preserved by Easements

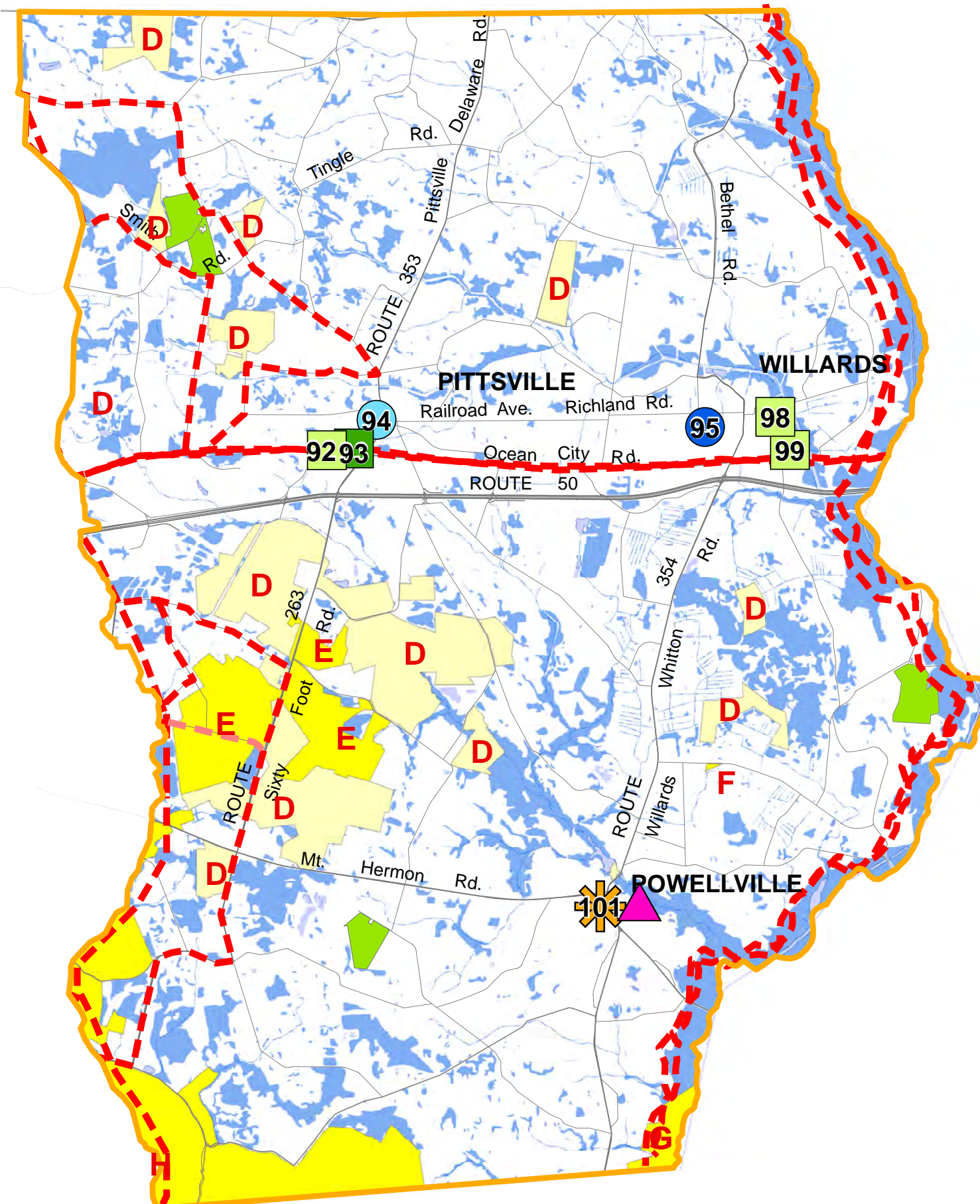
- Critical Areas

- Quantico Creek Rural Legacy Area

- Wetlands

- Current Linear Corridors

- Potential Linear Corridors



0 3,250 6,500 13,000 Feet

SOURCE: Salisbury-Wicomico Department of Planning, Zoning and Community Development.
Urban Research and Development Corporation.
2017.



Recreation and Open Space Consultants
Urban Research & Development Corporation
28 West Broad Street Bethlehem, Pennsylvania 18018 610-865-0701

APPENDIX A:

Table A-1 State and Nature Conservancy Areas

Table A-2 County-Serving Areas

Table A-3 Community Serving Areas

Table A-4 Neighborhood Serving Areas

Table A-5 Major Quasi-Public and Private Areas

Table A-6 Summary of All Areas

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Table A-1 State and Nature Conservancy Areas																								
Facility Name	Site Number	Planning Area	Acres	Softball	Baseball	Football/ Soccer	Basketball	Tennis	Golf (Holes)	Disc Golf	Stadium Seating	Playground	Picnic Tables	Pavilions	Swimming Pool/Area	Beach (Miles)	Nature Trail (Miles)	Concession Stands	Restrooms	Boat Ramps	Boat Slips	Fishing/ Hunting	Horseshoe Pits	Natural Area
State of Maryland																								
Chesapeake State Forest	D	Countywide	15,855.0																					Yes
Ellis Bay Wildlife Management Area	J	West	2,874.0														3.0					F/H		Yes
Johnson Wildlife Mangement Area	I	South	115.0																			H (115ac)		Yes
Nanticoke River Wildlife Mgt. Area	K	West	1,587.0																			H		Yes
Pocomoke River Heritage Conservation Fund	B	East	156.0																					Yes
Powellville Forest	G	East	4.2																					Yes
Sharptown Dunes (Plum Ck. Heritage Cons. Fund)	F	Tri-Town	198.0																					
Wicomico State Forest	E	East	1,245.0														20.5					H		Yes
Subtotal, State of Maryland			22,034.2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	23.5	0	0	0	0	5	0	6
The Nature Conservancy																								
Nassawango Creek Preserve	H	South,East	824.0																					Yes
Plum Creek Cedar Swamp Preserve	C	Tri-Town	235.0																					Yes
Upper Nanticoke Management Area	A	Tri-Town	55.0																					Yes
Wetipquin Pond Management Area	L	West	50.0																					Yes
Subtotal, The Nature Conservancy			1,164.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
TOTAL, State and Nature Conservancy Areas			23,198.2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	23.5	0	0	0	0	5	0	10

Table A-2 County-Serving Areas																								
Facility Name	Site Number	Planning Area	Acres	Softball	Baseball	Football/ Soccer	Basketball	Tennis	Golf (Holes)	Disc Golf	Stadium Seating	Playground	Picnic Tables	Pavilions	Swimming Pool/Area	Beach (Miles)	Nature Trail (Miles)	Concession Stands	Restrooms	Boat Ramps	Boat Slips	Fishing/ Hunting	Horseshoe Pits	Natural Area
Wicomico County																								
Adkins Mill Park	100	East	33.7										9	1			0.5		1			F		Yes
Billy Gene Jackson Park	33	Central-W	36.0	1-L		1	2-L	2-L			400	1	30	1				1	1			F	2	
Cedar Hill Park	120	West	85.0	2		2	1	2			250	1	24	2	1	0.3	0.3		1	2	144	F		
Coulbourn Recreation Area	103	South	3.0																			F		
Henry S. Parker Athletic Complex	25	North	41.0	1/3-L	1-L	4-L					3,500	1	19					2	2					
JCC Park	45	Central-S	6.0	1-L		1					400													
Leonards Mill Park	23	North	9.8	1		1						1	18	1			0.5		1	1		F	2	
Nanticoke Park Recreation Area	117	West	6.5									1	6	1	1	0.6				2	68			
Pemberton Historical Park	50	Central-W	234.0										12				5.0		1			F		
Perdue Stadium	89	Central-E	38.0		1-L						7,000							1	1					
Pirates' Wharf Park	111	West	340.7																			F/H		Yes
Riverside Boat Ramp	56	Central-S	1.3										2							2		F		
Roaring Point Park	115	West	33.0												1	0.8								
Schumaker Park	86	Central-S	11.0							18		1	26	1			0.3		1			F		
West Metro Core Park	131	West	100.0																					
Wicomico County Youth / Civic Center	71	Central-E	11.0								6,000													
Winterplace Park/East Wicomico Little League	87	Central-E	377.8	3	4	2	1	2			600	2	34	1			2.0	2	2					
Subtotal, Wicomico County			1,367.8	7/5-L	4/2-L	7/4-L	2/2-L	4/2-L	0	18	18,150	8	180	8	3	2	9	6	11	7	212	10	4	2
Municipalities																								
Mardela Boat Ramp	9	Tri-Town	1.8									1	3							1				
Naylor Mill Park Recreation Area	24	North	92.2																					
North Johnson Pond	34	Central-S	128.0																					
Riverwalk Park	58	Central-S	6.9														0.8					F		
Rose Street Boat Ramp	38	Central-S	9.0																	1		F		
Salisbury City Park and Zoo	74	Central-S	113.0	1				4-L			200	1	40	1					1			F	24-L	
Salisbury Marina	41	Central-S	2.5																		50			
Salisbury Pony League Park	82	Central-S	5.0		1-L						400							1	1					
Subtotal, Municipalities			358.4	1	1-L	0	0	4-L	0	0	600	2	43	1	0	0	0.8	1	2	2	50	3	24-L	0
Total, County-Serving Areas			1,726.2	8/5-L	4/3-L	7/4-L	2/2-L	4/6-L	0	18	18,750	10	223	9	3	2	9.4	7	13	9	262	13	4/24-L	2

Table A-3 Community-Serving Areas																								
Facility Name	Site Number	Planning Area	Acres	Softball	Baseball	Football/ Soccer	Basketball	Tennis	Golf (Holes)	Disc Golf	Stadium Seating	Playground	Picnic Tables	Pavilions	Swimming Pool/Area	Beach (Miles)	Nature Trail (Miles)	Concession Stands	Restrooms	Boat Ramps	Boat Slips	Fishing/ Hunting	Horseshoe Pits	Natural Area
Bivalve Wharf	119	West	0.5																			F		
Clara Road Boat Ramp	114	West	2.0												1	0.1						F		
Cope Bennett Park	2	Tri-Town	7.5	1-L				2-L			400	1	8	1			0.2	1				F		
East Side Youth Sports Complex	99	East	11.8		3	1					600	1						1	1					
Hebron Park	13	Tri-Town	8.0	1-L		1	1	2-L			500	1	12	1				1						
Mardela Tennis Courts	8	Tri-Town	1.0					2																
Pittsville Ball Park	92	East	5.0	1-L							200			1				1						
Tyaskin Recreation Area	121	West	2.0										8	1								F		
West Side Community Center	128	West	3.0																					Yes
Wetipquin Boat Ramp	122	West	2.7										1							1		F		
Subtotal, Wicomico County			43.5	3-L	3	2	1	2/4-L	0	0	1,700	3	29	4	1	0.1	0.2	4	1	1	0	5	0	1
Municipalities	Cherry																							
Beach	1	Tri-Town	5.0									1	20	1	1	0.3				1	1	F		
Fruitland Recreation Park	104	South	39.3	2	4/2-L	2/1-L					2,000	2	24	2			0.5	3	2					
Gordy Park	16	North	5.5		4		1	2-L			600	1	6	1				1	1					
Harmon Field	81	Central-S	3.0	1			1				400	1						1						
Johnson Pond Park	36	Central-S	3.0														0.1					F		
Mardela Park	6	Tri-Town	4.0	1-L		1	1				300	1	8	1				1						
Mason Dixon Sports Complex	17	North	13.0	1/1-L	1	1					800	1						1	1					
Poplar Hill Mansion	40	Central-S	0.4																					
Salisbury Skate Park (Added)	129	Central-S	1.2										3											
West Salisbury Little League	47	Central-W	7.0		3						300	1	8	1				1	1					
Willards Recreation Area/Park	98	East	8.6	1-L			1-L	2-L			400	1	12	1				1						
Subtotal, Municipalities			90.0	4/3-L	12/2-L	4/1-L	3/1-L	4-L	0	0	4,800	9	81	7	1	0.3	0.6	9	5	1	1	2	0	0
Board of Education	Bennett																							
High School	80	Central-S	58.7	1	1	6		6-L			900													
Bennett Middle School	78	Central-S	35.4	1		1					300													
Mardela High School	7	Tri-Town	21.9	1	1	2		2			200													
Memorial Field	73	Central-S	5.0		1						400							1	1					
Parkside High School	84	Central-S	25.4	1	1	3	2	5			300													
Pemberton Elementary School	46	Central-S	5.6			1	1					1												
Pittsville School	93	East	6.8		2			2				1												
Salisbury Middle School	32	Central-S	27.1	1		1																		
Wicomico High School	70	Central-S	30.4	1		2/1-L	1	4			2,500													
Wicomico Middle School	61	Central-S	7.3	1		2		2																
Subtotal, Board of Education			223.6	7	4	20/1-L	4	15/6-L	0	0	4,600	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Total, Community-Serving Areas			357.1	11/6-L	19/2-L	26/2-L	8/1-L	17/14-L	0	0	11,100	14	110	11	2	0.4	0.8	14	7	2	1	7	0	1

Table A-4 Neighborhood-Serving Areas																								
Facility Name	Site Number	Planning Area	Acres	Softball	Baseball	Football/ Soccer	Basketball	Tennis	Golf (Holes)	Disc Golf	Stadium Seating	Playground	Picnic Tables	Pavilions	Swimming Pool/Area	Beach (Miles)	Nature Trail (Miles)	Concession Stands	Restrooms	Boat Ramps	Boat Slips	Fishing/ Hunting	Horseshoe Pits	Natural Area
Allen Park	127	South	3.8									1	2											
Cedarhurst Park	27	Central-W	5.8	1		1	1					1	8											
Centennial Village Playground	29	Central-W	3.0				1	2				1	2											
Cove Road Recreation Area	118	West	1.6										3		1	0.3						F		
Crooked Oak Playground	28	Central-W	2.5			1	1	2				1	2											
Edgewood Park	15	North	12.0	1		1	1					1	1											
Emerson Holloway Park	31	Central-S	10.5	1		1	2					1	8	1										
Gene Lowe Park	3	Tri-Town	3.7			1	1					1												
Indian Village Playground	30	Central-W	6.0	1		1	2					1	2						1					
Kilburnie Playground	91	Central-E	2.0			1	1	2				1	3											
Nick Meyer Park	69	Central-E	5.0	1		1	1	1				1	4	1									1	
Pittsville Playground	94	East	4.0	1			1					1	12	1									1	
San Domingo Playground	4	Tri-Town	23.0	1		1	1					1	6	1										
Subtotal, Wicomico County			82.9	7	0	9	13	7	0	0	0	12	53	4	1	0.3	0	0	1	0	0	1	2	0
Boundless Park and Playground	130	Central-S	1.9									1-ADA	2											
Doverdale Playground	66	Central-S	2.6	1		1	1				200	1	1					1	1					
Fruitland Tennis Courts	107	South	0.8					2																
Lake Street Playground	37	Central-S	4.4	1-L			2-L				100	1	1					1	1					
Newton-Camden	63	Central-S	0.6			1						1	1	1										
Newton Playground	62	Central-S	2.2									1	4	1										
Waterside Playground	43	Central-S	5.0	1			2					1	1											
Woodcock Playground	55	Central-S	2.0				1					1	1											
Subtotal, Municipalities			19.5	2/1-L	0	2	4/2-L	2	0	0	300	7	11	2	0	0.0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0
Beaver Run Elementary School	88	Central-E	7.6	1		1						1												
Chipman Elementary School	39	Central-S	3.1			1						1												
Delmar Elementary School	18	North	4.5			1	2					1												
East Salisbury Elementary School	65	Central-E	6.0	1		1	2					1												
Fruitland Intermediate School	106	South	5.2	1		1	1					1												
Fruitland Primary School	105	South	9.6			1						1												
Glen Avenue Elementary School	72	Central-S	8.0	1			1					1												
North Salisbury Elementary School	35	Central-S	3.4	1		1						1												
Northwestern Elementary School	5	Tri-Town	5.6			1	1					1												
Pinehurst Elementary School	54	Central-S	4.0	1		1	1					1												
Prince Street School	76	Central-S	7.7	3		1	1				800	1		1				1						
West Salisbury Elementary School	26	Central-S	8.4																					
Westside Intermediate School	10	Tri-Town	5.7	1		1	1					1												
Westside Primary School	126	West	10.3			1	1					1												
Willards Primary School	95	East	18.4	1		1	1					1												
Subtotal, Board of Education			107.5	11	0	13	12	0	0	0	800	14	0	1	0	0.0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL, Neighborhood-Serving Areas			209.9	20/1-L	0	24	29/2-L	9	0	0	1,100	33	64	7	1	0.3	0	3	3	0	0	1	2	0

Table A-5 Major Quasi-Public and Private Areas																								
Facility Name	Site Number	Planning Area	Acres	Softball	Baseball	Football/ Soccer	Basketball	Tennis	Golf (Holes)	Disc Golf	Stadium Seating	Playground	Picnic Tables	Pavilions	Swimming Pool/Area	Beach (Miles)	Nature Trail (Miles)	Concession Stands	Restrooms	Boat Ramps	Boat Slips	Fishing/ Hunting	Horseshoe Pits	Natural Area
Hebron Fairground and Park	11	Tri-Town	18.0																					
Hebron Part-time Playground	12	Tri-Town	2.0			1																		
Horsebridge Golf Course	90	Central-E	50.0						18	9									1					
Nutters Crossing Golf Course	102	South	145.0						18									1	1					
Powellville Park	101	East	4.0	1		1	1				150	1												
Salisbury University - East	52	Central-S	37.0	1	1	6/2-L		6/6-L			7500							1	1					
Salisbury University - West	53	Central-S	18.0												1									
Salvation Army Boys and Girls Club	59	Central-S	4.0		2	1-L					800													
Salvation Army West Salisbury Youth Club	33	Central-W	2.0												1			1						
Woodlawn Playground	19	North	2.0					1																
Subtotal, Quasi-Public			282.0	2	3	8/3-L	2	6/6-L	36	9	8,450	1	0	0	2	0.0	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	0
Crown Sports Center	132	South	15.0			6					1,500							1	1					
Elks Club	75	Central-S	45.8						9															
Fruitland Falcons Sports Complex	135	South	22.0			4													1					
Green Hill Yacht Club	110	West	181.0						18															
Gunsmoke Sporting Clay Range	97	East	29.0																					
Riverside Marina	42	Central-S	0.5																		20			
Roaring Point Campground	116	West	57.7												1	0.5				1		F		
Salisbury Christian School	133	Central-E	4.0	1	1	1	1												1					
Salisbury School	134	Central-E	8.0			1													1					
Sandy Hill Family Camp	124	West	195.0										6		1	0.1	0.3		1		13	F		
St. Francis DeSales School	57	Central-S	4.0			1						1												
Whitehaven Marina	112	West	1.0																		40			
Wikander Boat Yard	108	South	1.5													0.1			1		10			
Wood Creek Golf Course	21	North	25.0						18															
Woodlawn Campgrounds	83	North	4.1											1					1					
Subtotal, Private Areas			593.6	1	1	13	1	0	45	0	1,500	1	6	1	2	0.7	0.3	1	7	1	83	2	0	0
TOTAL, Major-Quasi-Public and Private Areas			875.6	3	4	21/3-L	3	6/6-L	81	9	9,950	2	6	1	4	0.7	0.3	4	10	1	83	2	0	0

Table A-6 Summary of All Areas																						
Name of Area and Ownership	Acres	Softball	Baseball	Football/ Soccer	Basketball	Tennis	Golf (Holes)	Disc Golf	Stadium Seating	Playground	Picnic Tables	Pavilions	Swimming Pool/Area	Beach (Miles)	Nature Trail (Miles)	Concession Stands	Restrooms	Boat Ramps	Boat Slips	Fishing/ Hunting	Horseshoe Pits	Natural Area
State and Nature Conservancy Areas	23,198.2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	23.5	0	0	0	0	5	0	10
County-Serving Areas	1,762.2	8/5-L	4/3-L	7/4-L	2/2-L	4/6-L	0	18	18,750	10	223	9	3	2	9.4	7	13	9	262	13	4/24-L	2
Community-Serving Areas	357.1	11/6-L	19/2-L	26/2-L	8/1-L	17/14-L	0	0	11,100	14	110	11	2	0.4	0.8	14	7	2	1	7	0	1
Neighborhood-Serving Areas	209.9	20/1-L	0	24	29/2-L	9	0	0	1,100	33	64	7	1	0.3	0	3	3	0	0	1	2	0
Subtotal, Public Areas	25,527.4	39/12-L	23/5-L	57/6-L	39/5-L	30/20-L	0	18	30,950	57	397	27	6	2.7	33.7	24	23	11	263	26	6/24-L	13
Major Quasi-Public and Private Areas	905.0	3	4	21/3-L	3	6/6-L	81	9	9,950	2	6	1	4	0.7	0.3	4	10	1	83	2	0	0
TOTAL, All Areas	26,432.4	42/12-L	27/5-L	78/9-L	42/5-L	36/26-L	81	27	40,900	59	403	28	10	3.4	34.0	28	33	12	346	28	6/24-L	13