
Mathews County Comprehensive Plan 2030

Preserving and Sustaining the Pearl of the Chesapeake



*Adopted
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Executive Summary



Preserving and Sustaining the Pearl of the Chesapeake



Executive Summary

Purpose and Use of the Comprehensive Plan

This Comprehensive Plan provides a written guide for investing in the future of Mathews County over the next twenty years. In Virginia, every governing body must adopt a comprehensive plan to identify community resources, needs and trends of growth in order to encourage orderly development. The adopted plan must be reviewed every five years.

Code of Virginia, Title 15.2, Chapter 22:

Section 15.2-2223 – “The local planning commission shall prepare and recommend a comprehensive plan for the physical development of the territory within its jurisdiction and every governing body shall adopt a comprehensive plan for the territory under its jurisdiction. In the preparation of a comprehensive plan, the commission shall make careful and comprehensive surveys and studies of the existing conditions and trends of growth, and of the probable future requirements of its territory and inhabitants. The comprehensive plan shall be made with the purpose of guiding and accomplishing a coordinated, adjusted and harmonious development of the territory which will, in accordance with present and probable future needs and resources, best promote the health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity and general welfare of the inhabitants, including the elderly and persons with disabilities. The comprehensive plan shall be general in nature, in that it shall designate the general or approximate location, character, and extent of each feature, including any road improvement and any transportation improvement, shown on the plan and shall indicate where existing lands or facilities are proposed to be extended, widened, removed, relocated, vacated, narrowed, abandoned, or changed in use as the case may be...”

Section 15.2-2230 - “At least once every five years the comprehensive plan shall be reviewed by the local planning commission to determine whether it is advisable to amend the plan.”

Section 15.2-2232 - “Whenever a local planning commission recommends a comprehensive plan or part thereof for the locality and such plan has been approved and adopted by the governing body, it shall control the general or approximate location, character and extent of each feature shown on the plan...”

This plan updates the 2001 Comprehensive Plan and provides a framework for making important public and private decisions. The plan provides the legal basis for locating public facilities, utility extensions, transportation improvements, and guiding land development (e.g. housing, industry or commercial). In addition, the plan establishes the foundation for important regulatory land use management tools such as zoning and subdivision regulations.



A Strategic, Comprehensive Plan for Mathews County 2030

How do we achieve our vision for the future? What are the goals and priorities for Mathews County over the next 10-20 years? Where and how should growth occur? Where are public services, infrastructure and facility improvements needed? What are important public and private actions that can help us achieve our future goals and community vision?

2030 Comprehensive Plan Overview

Mathews County is located at the eastern edge of the Middle Peninsula of Virginia with shores on the Chesapeake Bay and the North, East and Piankatank Rivers. The County contains over 280 miles of waterfront shoreline, and an abundance of forests, wetlands and special environmental areas. Identified as the “Pearl of the Chesapeake,” the County is home to approximately 9,500 residents (2008 population estimate) and a destination for seasonal visitors seeking a rural coastal lifestyle among natural vistas and quaint business areas.

By 2030 Mathews County is envisioned to be a model community that celebrates its outstanding quality of life and showcases its unique natural resources, while sensitively balancing development and promoting eco-friendly practices and businesses. More detailed vision and goals are discussed in the sections that follow.

To achieve the long-range vision, this Plan establishes a number of guiding policies for encouraging the types of development and patterns desired for the future. Also, the Plan recommends a variety of action strategies and potential action projects for achieving the future goals and vision for Mathews County. An appendix to the plan includes an implementation matrix which summarizes the strategies and identifies suggested priorities for undertaking recommendations, as well as both public and private partners who should be involved in carrying the strategies forward.

Key Planning Themes

- Renewed emphasis on preserving environmental quality to enhance the quality of life for residents and visitors, protecting the unique environmental features of the County, and sustaining the local and regional economy;
- Committed leadership to managing future growth and development in a way that balances development, jobs, revenues, and public services while sustaining the rural character and special natural features of Mathews County;
- Increased cooperative approaches and initiatives to enhance the economy through heritage tourism, eco-tourism, aquaculture, and working waterfront business development that complements the environment; and
- Continued public involvement and engagement of multiple partners to address community challenges and pursue potential revitalization or rehabilitation opportunities in each of the County planning areas.



Key Planning Recommendations

People and Housing

- Increased public education regarding environmental influences and development constraints;
- Increased diversity of housing types and options, including age-restricted housing and workforce housing; upper-floor housing above ground-floor retail uses; cluster development housing; and
- Monitoring and enforcement of zoning and building codes and violations.

Economy

- Increased efforts, tools, and incentives to support and promote water-based businesses and aquaculture;
- Enhanced tourism initiatives, especially heritage tourism and eco-tourism; and
- Increased business and mixed-use development (residential and commercial) in the Mathews Court House area and designated hamlets, preferably where there is access to public utilities;

History & Culture

- Increased survey and documentation of County historic properties; and
- Designated local historic district for the Mathews Court House area and other areas of the County, as appropriate.

Public Facilities & Services

- Develop a policy regarding water supply and management options in the Mathews Court House area as well as in other designated areas;
- Implementation of Phase I of the Sanitary Sewer Transmission Force Main from Mathews Court House to Gloucester County;
- Improved telecommunications network;
- Updated 2035 Transportation Plan (with multi-modal options) and study of additional transportation evacuation routes in Mathews;
- Increased public education regarding shoreline erosion, flooding, septic system capacity limitations, development constraints, etc.



Environment

- Protection and improvement of water quality through increased public education and revised zoning regulations;
- Preservation of natural resources and increased environmental stewardship through promotion of best management practices, vegetative methodologies for shoreline stabilization (living shorelines), and utilization of available technology and tools (e.g., VIMS Shoreline Inventory);
- Increased training for County Wetlands Board members, contractors, and citizens in “living shoreline” stabilization methods and development of a model certification program that can be used by other communities; and
- Improved recreational access to the County’s waterfronts and beaches;

Land Use and Development

- Increased conservation and management of large tract agriculture and forests;
- Targeted development in Mathews Court House area, hamlets and crossroad areas;
- Updated zoning and subdivision regulations to guide and manage future growth, particularly with respect to entrance corridors, historic areas, business centers and the waterfront; and
- Planning in anticipation of shoreline erosion, coastal subsidence and sea level rise in order to protect public and private investments and minimize impacts from flooding.



2030 Vision for Mathews County

By 2030, Mathews County with its 280 miles¹ of waterfront will be widely acknowledged as the “Pearl of the Chesapeake” and celebrated as a beautiful, vibrant County with a rich cultural, political and economic heritage. The County has become a model community that showcases its outstanding quality of life, unique natural resources, and successful environmentally-friendly, sustainable development practices. In 2030, Mathews County will be a community where:

- The County carefully plans for and achieves a sustainable economy by tailoring land management policies, initiatives, and regulations to County special needs and unique environmental characteristics.
- Informed citizens work closely with government to protect the County and its way of life. Through their efforts, the sky and water are clear and the air sweet.
- Citizens appreciate each other and look to the future with pride. They value their heritage, close-knit-family traditions, open government, community service and independence.
- Researchers are attracted to Mathews to study the fragile coastal eco-systems, sustainable development practices, and alternative solutions for energy use and environmental protection.
- Government and citizens strive to improve and protect water quality by wisely managing land uses and eliminating potential conflicts.
- Shoreline management and public access to the water are community priorities.
- Development is carefully planned to protect County natural and environmental features; minimize pollution; and to sustain County resources and quality of life.



¹ Based on GIS Information from the County as of 2009.



- Safe water, streets, sidewalks, and properly functioning wastewater and stormwater management systems support the Central Mathews District and Historic Court House village. Other County districts have safe and sanitary conditions through expanded utility systems, use of best management practices, and careful monitoring.
- Life-long learning is an integral part of community life. Schools are outstanding, academically and athletically, with nationally competitive crew and sailing teams.
- County farms delight consumers and restaurant owners with local produce, while area merchants and artisans welcome patrons with quality, creative offerings in services, products, and arts and crafts.
- Forestry, fishery and ecotourism opportunities offer residents quality employment and wages while integrating sustainable business practices that protect and renew natural resources. Seasonal visitors who appreciate Mathews' traditional heritage and natural environment are attracted to the County.
- Eco-friendly enterprises – aquaculture, maritime museums, sailing schools, kayak farms, boat tours – concentrate economic activities on the water.
- Home-based businesses thrive on expanded internet services and distribute Mathews' products worldwide.
- Business enterprises offer quality services and living-wage employment, have limited environmental impact, and provide revenue contributions to the community.
- Mathews County promotes workforce housing, recreational options, health/wellness services, and a sustainable environment for its diverse population, all of which have been achieved through open communication, citizen involvement and creative use of multiple-sourced funding.
- Biking and hiking trails weave through forests and meadows, while multi-modal transportation options minimize the need for cars.





Mathews County Goals for 2030

To achieve the 2030 Vision for Mathews County, the following broad goals will guide the community in managing future services and growth and providing for the public health, safety and welfare:

Environment

- Preserve and protect the natural environment and resources of Mathews County, which are fundamental to the community's quality of life and prosperity.
- Encourage low-impact development that protects water quality, is environmentally sensitive and ecologically sustainable.
- Provide public access to outstanding County waterways and shorelines.
- Provide planning leadership within the region to protect the natural environment and resources that are the life sustaining elements of Mathews County and surrounding counties bordering the Chesapeake Bay.
- Lead planning efforts to mitigate the effects of coastal erosion, flooding and potential sea level rise.



People

- Encourage and sustain a diverse population of residents of varying ages, cultures, and incomes.
- Recognize and sustain the important contribution of County youth to the quality of life and the economy of Mathews and the region.
- Encourage the development and maintenance of safe, sanitary, and affordable housing of varying types and styles to meet the needs of County residents.
- Encourage meaningful public participation in government through diverse forms of communication and a commitment to citizen involvement in public decisions.





Economy

- Encourage the development of eco-friendly enterprises and water-based businesses that complement the environmental features of the County and promote sustainable aquaculture.
- Encourage clustered, village-oriented business centers in designated locations of the County to provide needed services and products for residents and visitors.
- Promote increased availability of and access to state-of-the-art technology, such as broadband, fiber optic, wireless networks and other technologies that support high speed communication.



Public Services and Facilities

- Support, encourage, and facilitate public water and sewer facilities to meet the community's needs for safe and sanitary conditions and promote orderly growth and development.
- Encourage and provide quality education facilities, programs and life-long learning opportunities for residents.
- Provide a safe community that effectively utilizes both paid and volunteer public safety options.
- Provide safe, connected streets and alternative transportation opportunities, including sidewalks, trails, bicycle routes and public transit.
- Provide convenient, accessible governmental services.





Comprehensive Planning Process



Preserving and Sustaining the Pearl of the Chesapeake



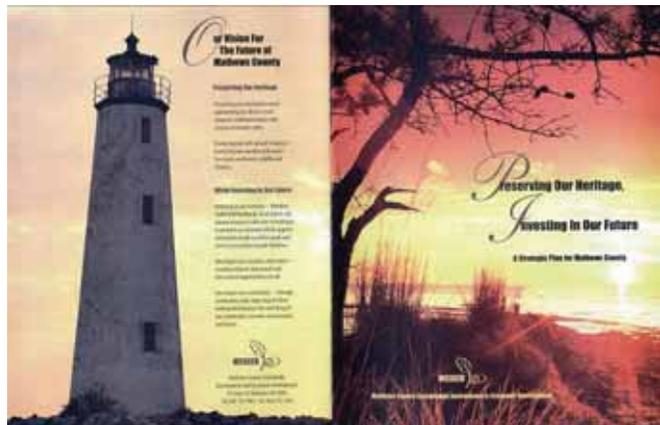
Comprehensive Planning Process

Continuing Planning Efforts

Mathews County adopted its first Comprehensive Plan in 1975; the plan was followed by a zoning ordinance in 1987. Miscellaneous amendments to the Comprehensive Plan were undertaken in the 1980s and the 1990s, including revisions in support of the Virginia Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act of 1988.

Over the past decade, officials and citizens of Mathews County have spent considerable time and effort planning for their sustainable future. In 1997, the Mathews County Board of Supervisors, Planning Commission, and the Mathews Chamber of Commerce worked extensively with the Nature Conservancy's Center for Compatible Economic Development (CCED) and citizen leaders through volunteer workgroups and community forums to preserve the coastal environment and cultural heritage, while strengthening the local economy. Over a

two year period, the visionary group, Mathews County Sustainable Environment and Economic Development (MCSEED), developed an impressive strategic plan: *Preserving our Heritage, Investing in Our Future: A Strategic Plan for Mathews County* (October 1998). This plan established a vision for the County that focused on preserving community assets and natural resources while investing in an economy that blended local traditions and resources; invested in residents and visitors; and



balanced community well-being, the economy and the environment. The plan identified special strengths and critical threats to Mathews County and set forth five initial strategies with specific steps and partners to achieve the vision. MCSEED then challenged stakeholders, citizens and other community leaders to get involved in implementation. Since 1998, there have been accomplishments, including the following:

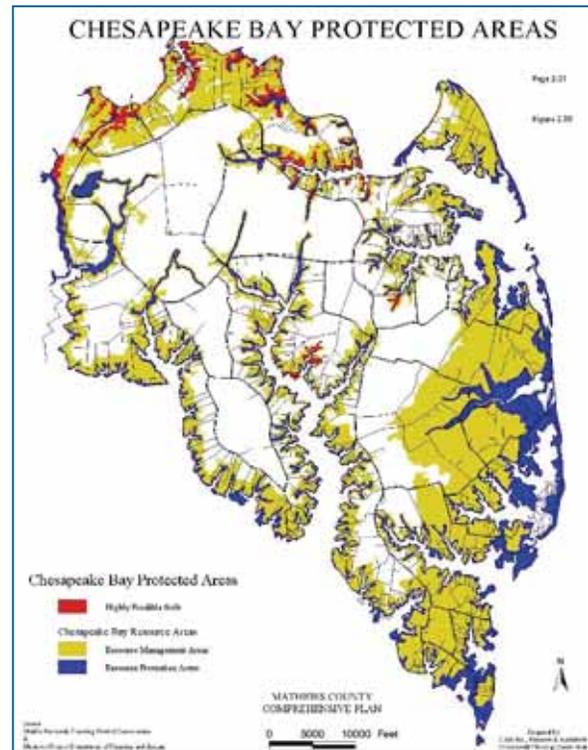
- Heritage and eco-tourism are new economic initiatives visible in the Mathews Blueways Program and investment in the Historic Mathews Court House area and downtown.
- Increased marketing initiatives, a new website, and additional business support services have assisted entrepreneurs and encouraged new business development.



II. Comprehensive Planning Process

In 2000, the Comprehensive Plan provided a more in-depth look at demographic and economic trends, constraints for development, public facility needs, community issues, land use and in particular, water quality and shorelines. Since the adoption of that plan in 2001, some of the accomplishments include:

- Adoption of a Statewaters Access Plan for Mathews County in 2003.
- Implementation of a Central Mathews and Courthouse Village Sanitary District Plan. The Hampton Roads Sanitation District has designed and allocated funding for the first phase of a Mathews Transmission Force Main and Pump Stations; construction is expected to begin in 2009 and completed in 2011.
- Establishment of a Septic System Pump-Out Program (2008) in cooperation with the Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission.
- New or upgraded public facilities such as the County Courthouse Complex, the Historic Mathews Court House and Green, the Mathews Memorial Library and the Active Lifestyle Center.
- Additional economic initiatives related to tourism and aquaculture, including a visitor welcome center, improvements to downtown Mathews and the Historic Court House Square, and continued broadband investigations.
- Public recreational improvements at Mathews High School and Park, Williams Wharf Landing, Haven/Festival Beach, and Piankatank River Landing; future improvements are planned for Fort Nonsense, the Court House Area, the East River Boatyard property and the Hall property (Billups Creek) owned by the Middle Peninsula Chesapeake Bay Public Access Authority.
- Compliance with the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act requirements with respect to the Comprehensive Plan (2001), ordinances and protection areas (2006), and program implementation (2008).

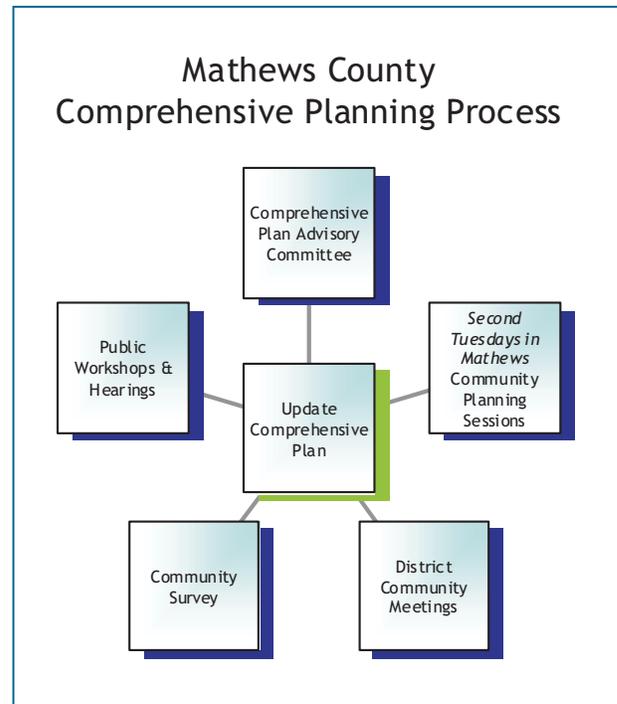




Updating the Comprehensive Plan: New Directions

In reviewing the Comprehensive Plan in 2007, as required by the Commonwealth of Virginia, County officials and planners desired a more strategic and user-friendly plan with greater citizen involvement to guide the future of Mathews.

In an effort to reach out to citizens in an educational and innovative manner, the County partnered with Chesapeake Network for Education of Municipal Officials (NEMO)² to host five community planning sessions. This organization consists of diversified professionals, community organizations, and governmental agencies that provide communities in the Chesapeake watershed with educational programs and planning assistance. The goals of the sessions were to: stimulate and engage citizens in community planning, introduce broad topics for consideration, and promote a greater understanding of the value of planning. These evening workshop sessions, billed as “*Second Tuesdays in Mathews*,” were held from October 2007 to February 2008 and featured the following topics:



- Linking land, water and growth;
- Growth in and around Mathews;
- Mathews economy: fostering sustainable economic development;
- Mathews valuable resources (shorelines, forests, agriculture, natural heritage, and history); and
- Planning the direction of your community.

The *Second Tuesdays in Mathews* sessions were very successful in engaging citizens in the future of Mathews County; each session included from 60 to 80 people in lively and thoughtful discussions. Summaries of the sessions are included as an appendix to this plan.

² NEMO Partners for this project included Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, Virginia Cooperative Extension, National Park Service, Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission, Virginia Department of Forestry, Mathews Historical Society, and Maritime Heritage Foundation. Project Sponsors included Mathews County, MCSEED, and Mathews Memorial Library.



II. Comprehensive Planning Process

Some of the community themes and issues that emerged were:

- Citizens identified the following elements as important to the future of Mathews County: the landscape, the environment, heritage and culture, recreation, economy, diverse people, youth, quality public services and facilities, and effective governance.
- Citizens identified special issues that need careful consideration: possible sea level rise, flooding, environmental protection, water/sewer challenges, community growth patterns and build-out potential, neighborhood-based planning, and revenue production and long-range financial planning.
- Citizens encouraged planners to review and incorporate applicable past planning efforts, including the MCSEED Plan and Downtown Mathews Plan. Look at successful planning efforts for similar rural communities - both regionally and beyond.
- Citizens recommended diverse, broad representation for input into the Comprehensive Plan, as well as multiple venues for participation and distribution of information.

Preparing for Comprehensive Planning Mathews County Virginia

Outcome
All five "Second Tuesdays" sessions were well attended – sixty to eighty participants each evening, including citizens, planning commission members and members of the County Board of Supervisors. Discussions were lively with participants voicing their concerns and desires for the future of the county.

Here's an example: During the final Tuesday session, participants saw a NEMO presentation on steps and tools communities can use to plan for the future and incorporate key resources into decision-making. Then, the NEMO team facilitated an interactive workshop to help participants describe elements of their vision for Mathews' future. On a long wall the team had pre-posted elements participants had already identified in the prior four forums. Using large sticky cards and markers, participants placed dozens of elements they want to see in Mathews – in categories ranging from "landscape & environment" to "economy" to "governance." The active evening ended with the group voting ways for continuing their involvement in the next stages of the county's comprehensive planning process.

Local Project Sponsors: Mathews County, Mathews County Sustainable Environment & Economic Development, Mathews Memorial Library.

Participating NEMO Partners: VA Department of Conservation & Recreation, VA Cooperative Extension, National Park Service, Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission, VA Department of Forestry, Mathews Historical Society, and Maritime Heritage Foundation.

Goals
Mathews officials contacted NEMO for assistance in preparing for revising the County's comprehensive plan. Specifically, the county wanted to:
 • Stimulate interest and engagement in the forthcoming planning process
 • Introduce community stakeholders to broad topics expected to influence Mathews County in the next 5 to 20 years
 • Prepare community stakeholders and county officials with a solid understanding of the value and function of planning

Process
Working with County officials, NEMO partners helped design, develop and deliver a five-part civic education series and plan a citizens planning academy workshop. The series, called "Talking About the Future – Second Tuesdays in Mathews" explored a specific topic each month from October 2007 to February 2008 in an evening workshop:
 • Linking Land, Water and Growth
 • Growth in & Around Mathews
 • Mathews Economy: Fostering Sustainable Economic Development
 • Mathews Valuable Resources (Shorelines; Forests; Agriculture; Natural Heritage; History)
 • Planning the Director of Your Community
 Each evening began with an introduction by the County Administrator, followed by a presentation, then about an hour of facilitated discussion.

For more information: www.chesapeake-nemo.net

Following the *Tuesdays in Mathews* sessions, the County developed an internet-based Citizen Survey to solicit additional community input using SurveyMonkey.com. The survey and a tabulation of results are included in the appendix to this plan. As of February 2009, approximately 500 respondents had completed the survey. In summary, the following comments were noted:



- *What people like the most about Mathews County:* the small community atmosphere (73%); the proximity of the community to water (53%); lack of heavy traffic (52%); low crime rate (44%); and slow growth (44%).
- *How people would like to see growth in the next ten years:* slow, one percent or less (44%), no growth (26%), medium growth, one to three percent (23%).
- *What types of development is preferred in Mathews County:* affordable housing options for all income levels (39%); new single-family dwellings on lot of 1-2.5 acres (37%), on smaller lots, with required open space (31%), and on lots of 5 acres or more (27%)



II. Comprehensive Planning Process

- *The availability of rental housing in Mathews County is fair (53%).*
- *Additional commercial businesses are needed in Mathews County (64%). The most needed businesses are: retail (62%), restaurants (61%), and hotels, motels or bed and breakfast establishments (49%). Approximately 50% of the persons purchase their goods and services in Mathews. Areas identified for commercial businesses most often were: downtown Mathews, Cobbs Creek, Gwynn's Island, New Point and surrounding counties.*
- *Issues most important to County residents were: protecting water quality and resources (74%); preserving the rural character (63%); availability of wireless/broadband (60%), preserving forest land (53%), access to the water (48%), and ability to pay local taxes (46%).*
- *Residents used the following public services frequently: library (75%), waste transfer station (66%), general government (65%), recreation (60%), and schools (54%).*
- *Familiarity with the County Comprehensive Plan: Approximately 50% of the respondents were somewhat familiar with the Comprehensive Plan.*

To engage youth in the planning process, County Planners visited Mathews County High School and met with seniors to share information on the Comprehensive Plan and to obtain their thoughts on the future. In general, the high school seniors requested that education remain a top priority for the County and all citizens; that youth be supported in public decisions and actions; and that youth be included in reviewing the long-range vision and plan for the County.

In addition to the survey, the County Board of Supervisors and the Planning Commission appointed a 17-member Comprehensive Plan Advisory Group representing each of the five County planning areas: Bayside, Central Mathews, Gwynn's Island, Piankatank, and West Mathews. This advisory group assisted County planners and administrators in furthering the Comprehensive Plan and hosting Community Meetings in each of the five districts. Summaries of the initial district meetings held from August to November 2008 are included in the appendix to this plan. Some of the common themes were:

- Failing septic systems and effect on water quality of creeks;
- Public access to County waters and shorelines;
- Flooding and drainage; maintenance of ditches;
- Enhance small business and employment opportunities for waterfront and water-based industries; tourism, ecotourism, and heritage tourism; retail and support services;
- Communication needs - High-speed, broadband internet access; cell tower coverage;
- Code enforcement – wetlands, junk, neglected/abandoned buildings, etc.
- Environmental conservation - wetlands, forests, water, soils, etc.; rising sea levels;



- Availability of public water and sewer; sub-standard housing;
- Need for affordable, workforce housing (e.g., apartments), and age-restricted independent and assisted-living housing;
- Recreation improvements – bike trails, Blueways, swimming pool, more public beaches, entertainment venues;
- Maintain rural, small town character; encourage managed, limited growth that is low-impact;
- Sufficient tax base to balance services, tax rate, public needs.

In drafting the Comprehensive Plan, the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Group and the Mathews County Planning Commission worked to ensure that the plan met State planning requirements, the needs of Mathews County, and reflected the specific needs of the community districts. Special efforts were made to develop a user-friendly plan that appropriately guided future development and investment in the County.



Mathews County and the Region



Preserving and Sustaining the Pearl of the Chesapeake



Mathews County and the Region

Overview of Mathews County

Located on the eastern tip of the Middle Peninsula of Virginia, Mathews County consists of 86 square miles and is one of the smallest counties in Virginia. Known as the “*Pearl of the Chesapeake*”, the County has 280 miles of shoreline on the Chesapeake Bay and other smaller bays, as well as shores on the Piankatank, East and North Rivers.

First explored by Captain John Smith in 1608, Mathews was formed from Gloucester County in 1791. The County was named in honor of Major Thomas Mathews, a veteran of the American Revolutionary War and member of the Virginia House of Delegates. Since that time, Mathews County has been a center for navigation and shipbuilding on the Chesapeake Bay. In 1804, President Thomas Jefferson commissioned a lighthouse at the southern-most tip of the County, New Point Comfort Lighthouse, which still stands today as a community and national landmark.

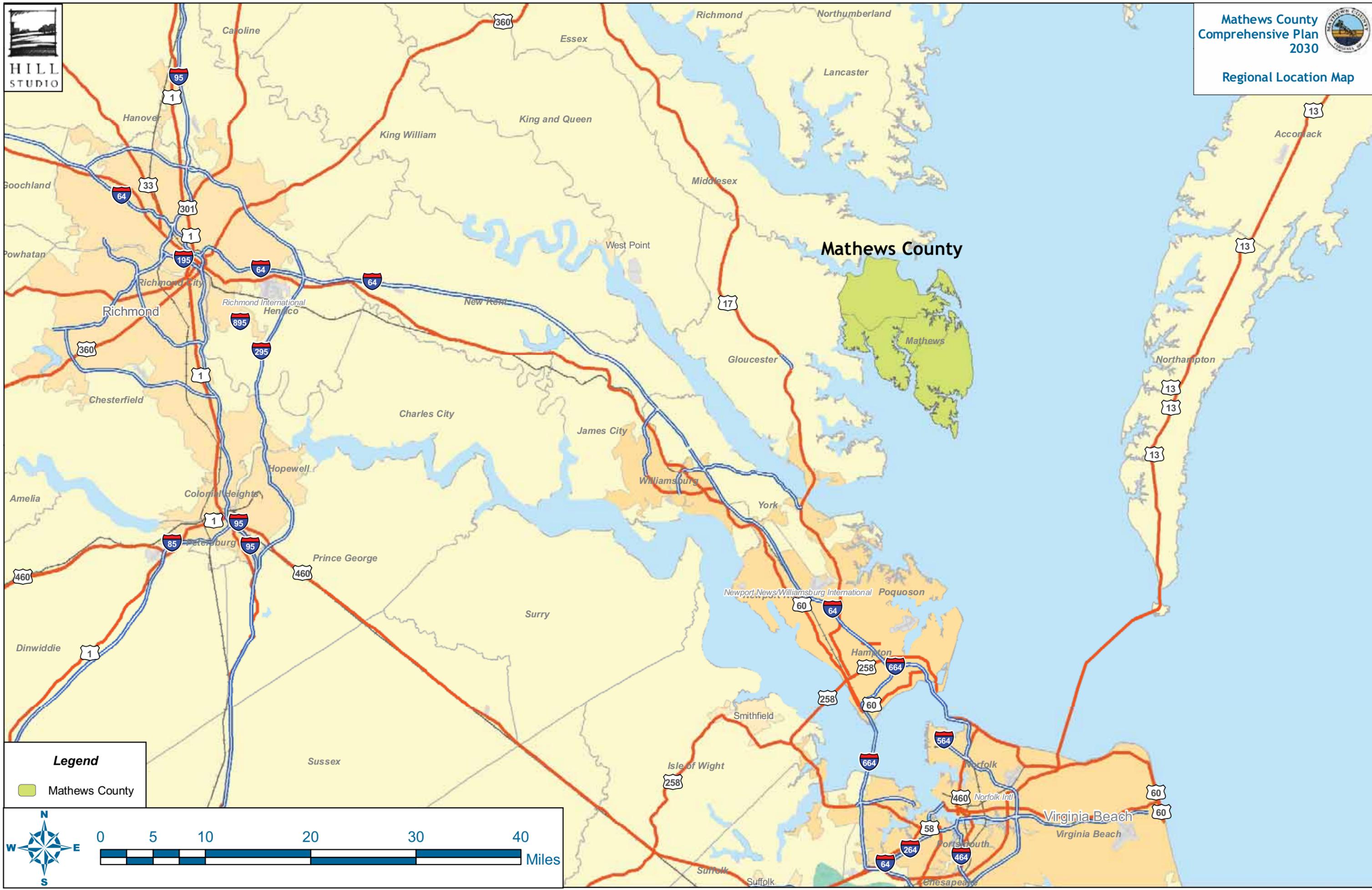


Source: Middle Peninsula Planning District

Regional Influences

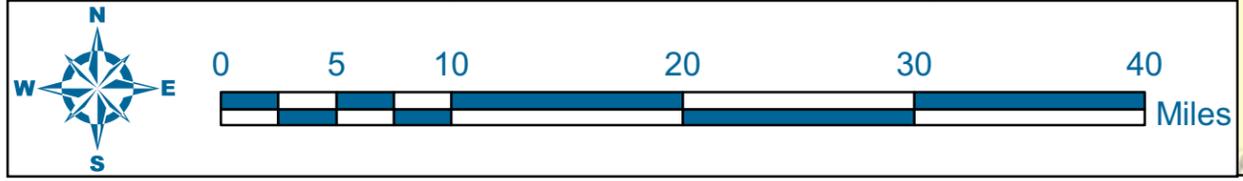
Virginia’s Middle Peninsula includes the Counties of Essex, Gloucester, King and Queen, King William, Middlesex, and Mathews, as well as three incorporated towns: West Point, Tappahannock and Urbanna. Also, Mathews is included in the Hampton Roads Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). A map of the region is shown on the following page.

Located between the Rappahannock and York Rivers which flow to the Chesapeake Bay, the region is a boater’s paradise and is promoted as “Virginia’s River Country.” Because of the region’s convenient access to multiple waterways, a multitude of historic landmarks, and varied agricultural and natural landscapes, there are numerous opportunities for recreation, eco- and heritage-tourism, and environmentally-friendly enterprises.



Legend

- Mathews County



A north arrow is located in the bottom left corner. Below it is a scale bar in miles, marked at 0, 5, 10, 20, 30, and 40 miles.



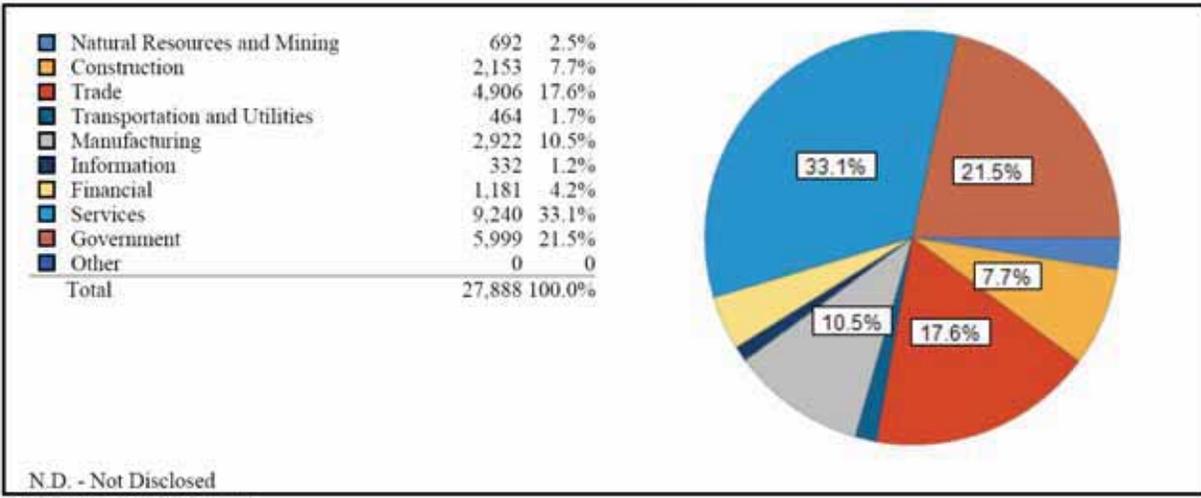
III. Mathews County and the Region

The Middle Peninsula Region is in close proximity to two major interstate highways, Interstate 64 and Interstate 95. These two interstates provide connectivity throughout the Commonwealth and beyond, providing good proximity for transporting people, goods and services. I-64 connects the region to Richmond, Williamsburg, Hampton, Newport News, Portsmouth, Norfolk, and Virginia Beach, all major development centers for Virginia’s eastern population. Interstate 95 connects the region to Washington D.C., which is approximately 175 miles to the north.

According to community profile information assembled by the Virginia Economic Development Partnership in 2008, the region’s economy is primarily based in services, government, and trade sectors, with the greatest employment in education and health care. Lumber, paper and wood products, and seafood are the major products of the region.



Employment by Sector* (1st Qtr. 2008)



N.D. - Not Disclosed
*By Business Establishment

Source: Virginia Economic Development Partnership, www.yesvirginia.org. 2009.



Demographics and Economic Trends

Middle Peninsula Region and Mathews County

The table on the following page provides a summary of basic statistics for Mathews County and surrounding counties in the Middle Peninsula Region. The following sections discuss some of the demographic and economic trends of the region and Mathews County.

Population

- Mathews County had the second lowest population in the region in 2007, representing approximately ten percent of the total population. Neighboring Gloucester County had the highest population in the region.
- Between 2000 and 2007, the region averaged an 8.6 percent increase in population; however, Mathews County lost population over this time period.
- Population projections by the Virginia Employment Commission indicate that the region may increase in population approximately forty percent by 2030. King William County is expected to almost double its population, while Mathews County is projected to slightly decrease.³ VEC projects that other counties will continue to grow at moderate to high rates. The projected increase in population for the region is attributed to the growth of the nearby Richmond and Hampton Roads Areas.
- The region totals 1,353 square miles and has an average population density of 67.2 persons per square mile. Mathews County is smaller than the rest of the counties within the region (85.7 square miles) and has a population density of 105.5 persons per square mile; this is higher than the regional average.
- The median age of residents in Mathews County in 2000 was 46.8 which was higher than most surrounding counties; Middlesex County exhibited a similar median age. In 2000, approximately 20% of the population of Mathews County was under 18 years of age.

Education

- Mathews County has the highest percentage of people in the region (18.4%) who have obtained a bachelors degree or higher.

³ While VEC projections indicate a slight decrease in population for Mathews County, 2008 figures from Weldon Cooper Center show a slight increase in population since 2000 (see following People and Housing Section). Weldon Cooper's numbers are based on net migration, rather than natural increase and therefore, are more applicable to Mathews County.



Regional Summary of Demographic and Economic Statistics							
	Mathews	Middle Peninsula	Gloucester	Middlesex	King Wm	King & Queen	Essex
Population:							
Population 2007	9,041	90,891	37,780	10,637	15,689	6,882	10,862
Population 2000	9,207	83,684	34,780	9,932	13,146	6,630	9,989
Population % Chg 2000-07	-1.8	8.6	8.6	7.1	19.3	3.8	8.7
Population 2010*	9,097	94,630	40,474	11,012	16,187	6,891	10,969
Population 2020*	9,077	105,411	46,013	12,055	19,119	7,187	11,960
Population 2030*	9,068	116,838	51,824	13,181	22,227	7,564	12,974
Population Density: Persons/Sq Mile 2007	105.5	67.2	131.2	81.6	57.0	21.8	42.1
Population, Median Age, 2000	46.2	41.5	38.0	46.8	37.0	40.9	40.3
Population, Age <18, %, 2000	19.9		26.2	19.2	26.1	22.7	22.9
Education:							
% Less than High School	19.3	22.1	19.1	26.2	21.0	30.7	26.5
% High School Graduates	34.3	34.0	32.3	30.1	38.2	38.6	35.2
% Associate Degree, Some College	28.0	27.9	32.2	25.8	26.6	21.1	22.0
% Bachelor Degree or Higher	18.4	15.9	16.5	17.8	14.1	9.7	16.2
Income:							
Median Household Income 2007	\$ 54,431	\$ 50,836	\$ 56,123	\$ 45,583	\$ 62,052	\$ 43,191	\$ 43,637
Median Household Income 2000	\$ 43,222	\$ 41,455	\$ 45,421	\$ 36,875	\$ 49,876	\$ 35,941	\$ 37,395
Income % Change 2000-07	25.9	22.6	23.6	23.6	24.4	20.2	16.7
% Families Below Poverty	4.3	6.7	6.8	9.7	4.4	7.8	7.7
Labor Force & Employment:							
Civilian Labor Force 2007	4,537	47,783	20,700	5,103	8,460	3,406	5,577
Employed Labor Force 2007	4,421	46,447	20,184	4,949	8,230	8,288	5,375
Unemployment Rates 2007	2.6	2.8	2.5	3.0	2.7	3.5	3.6
Other:							
Taxable Sales 2007, Millions\$	\$ 40.0	\$ 772.5	\$ 372.0	\$ 83.8	\$ 70.9	\$ 14.7	\$ 191.0
Taxable Sales 2000, Millions\$	\$ 26.6	\$ 505.7	\$ 220.8	\$ 60.8	\$ 55.4	\$ 14.5	\$ 127.6
Tourism Expenditures 2007, Millions \$	\$ 27.2	\$ 181.1	\$ 36.9	\$ 79.4	\$ 7.2	\$ 3.1	\$ 27.3
Tourism, Local Tax Receipts 2007	\$827,502	\$5,460,415	\$1,115,565	\$2,414,633	\$180,760	\$94,939	\$827,016
Tourism Employment 2007	412	2,487	441	1,141	84	43	366
Sources: US Census Bureau, Virginia Employment Commission, Virginia Dept. of Taxation, Virginia Tourism Commission							



Income

- The median household income for Mathews in 2007 was \$54,431. This is an increase from 2000 and higher than some of the other neighboring counties; however, it is below the state average of \$59,575.
- In 2000, approximately 6.7 percent of the families in the Middle Peninsula Region were below the poverty level. Mathews County has the lowest percentage of families living in poverty within the region (4.3 percent).

Labor Force and Employment

- In 2007, the labor force of Mathews County represented approximately 10 percent of the region's labor force and also, exhibited a low unemployment rate. Gloucester County had the largest labor force within the region and the lowest unemployment rate.
- Early 2009 unemployment figures from the Virginia Employment Commission show a 4.0 percent unemployment rate in Mathews County as of December 2008, compared with 5.2% for the State and 7.1% for the nation.
- Employment in the region by industry (2000) is summarized in a table on the following page. In the Middle Peninsula Region, education, health and social services was the largest employment sector. Retail trade and the construction industries were the second and third largest employment sectors for the region, closely followed by manufacturing and public administration. The smallest employment sectors for the region were the information and agricultural, fishing, hunting and mining industries.
- In 2000, Mathews County generally followed the regional trends. The educational, health and social services sector employed the highest percentage of County residents (20%), with manufacturing employing the second largest number (12.8%), followed by retail trade (11.7%) and construction industries (10.7%). Like the region, the information, and agricultural, fishing, hunting and mining were the smallest employment sectors within the County.
- According to 2008 statistics by the Virginia Economic Development Partnership, the region still exhibited the largest employment in the services sector (33%), followed by government (22%) and then trade (18%).



2000 Employment Percentages by Industry								
Industry	Essex County	Gloucester County	King & Queen County	King William County	Mathews County	Middlesex County	Middle Peninsula	Virginia
Ag, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting, Mining	2.3%	1.7%	4.5%	4.6%	1.9%	2.9%	2.6%	1.3%
Construction	11.0%	11.5%	10.7%	17.1%	10.7%	11.7%	12.1%	7.3%
Manufacturing	14.7%	10.7%	21.5%	26.1%	12.8%	12.0%	11.0%	11.3%
Wholesale Trade	4.7%	2.9%	1.4%	8.1%	2.5%	3.7%	3.8%	2.7%
Retail Trade	11.7%	11.6%	11.9%	15.1%	11.7%	11.5%	12.1%	11.4%
Transportation and Warehousing, Utilities	3.0%	4.3%	3.2%	6.3%	8.3%	5.3%	4.4%	4.6%
Information	1.8%	1.9%	1.5%	3.5%	1.3%	1.6%	2.0%	3.8%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate & Leasing	7.0%	3.7%	5.2%	12.2%	4.0%	4.7%	5.6%	6.6%
Professional, Scientific, Administration	5.2%	8.2%	8.0%	8.2%	7.4%	6.3%	7.5%	11.6%
Educational, Health and Social Services	19.7%	21.0%	12.7%	24.3%	20.4%	20.9%	17.2%	18.3%
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, etc.	5.9%	8.5%	6.6%	7.8%	5.9%	7.0%	7.7%	7.2%
Other Services (except Public Admin.)	4.9%	4.7%	7.3%	7.3%	6.1%	5.9%	5.4%	5.4%
Public Administration	8.0%	9.4%	5.4%	9.8%	7.1%	6.5%	8.5%	8.3%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Source: U.S. Census Bureau								

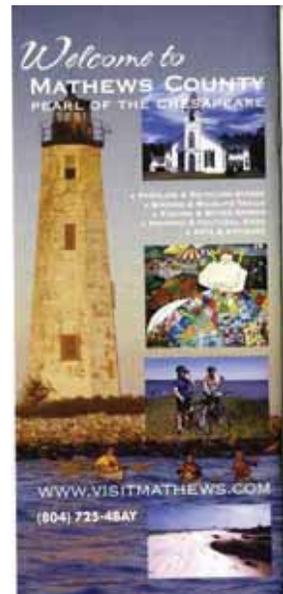


III. Mathews County and the Region

- Like the region, the employment trends of Mathews County have changed over the past decade. According to these 2008 statistics (VEC), government is the largest employer, followed by retail trade, and then accommodation and food services and construction (see Employment by Industry for Mathews County on the following page).
- Employment projections for 2016 for the Bay Consortium Workforce Investment Board Area by the VEC show that the industries with the most potential for growth in the region are professional and technical services (45%), health care and social assistance (32%), finance and insurance (26%), and educational services (20%).

Taxable Sales and Tourism

- In 2007, Mathews County had the second lowest amount of taxable sales within the region (5%). Gloucester County accounted for nearly half of the taxable sales.
- In 2007, Virginia’s visitor expenditures totaled approximately \$18.5 billion, of which the Middle Peninsula Region accounted for less than one percent. Tourism expenditures in Mathews County were over \$ 27 million, which amounted to approximately 15% of the region’s expenditures. This resulted in approximately \$812,500 in tax revenue for Mathews County.
- Mathews employed over 400 persons in the tourism industry in 2007. The region employed over 2,000 persons in tourism, with Middlesex County accounting for the most jobs in tourism (approximately 2,500).



Conclusions

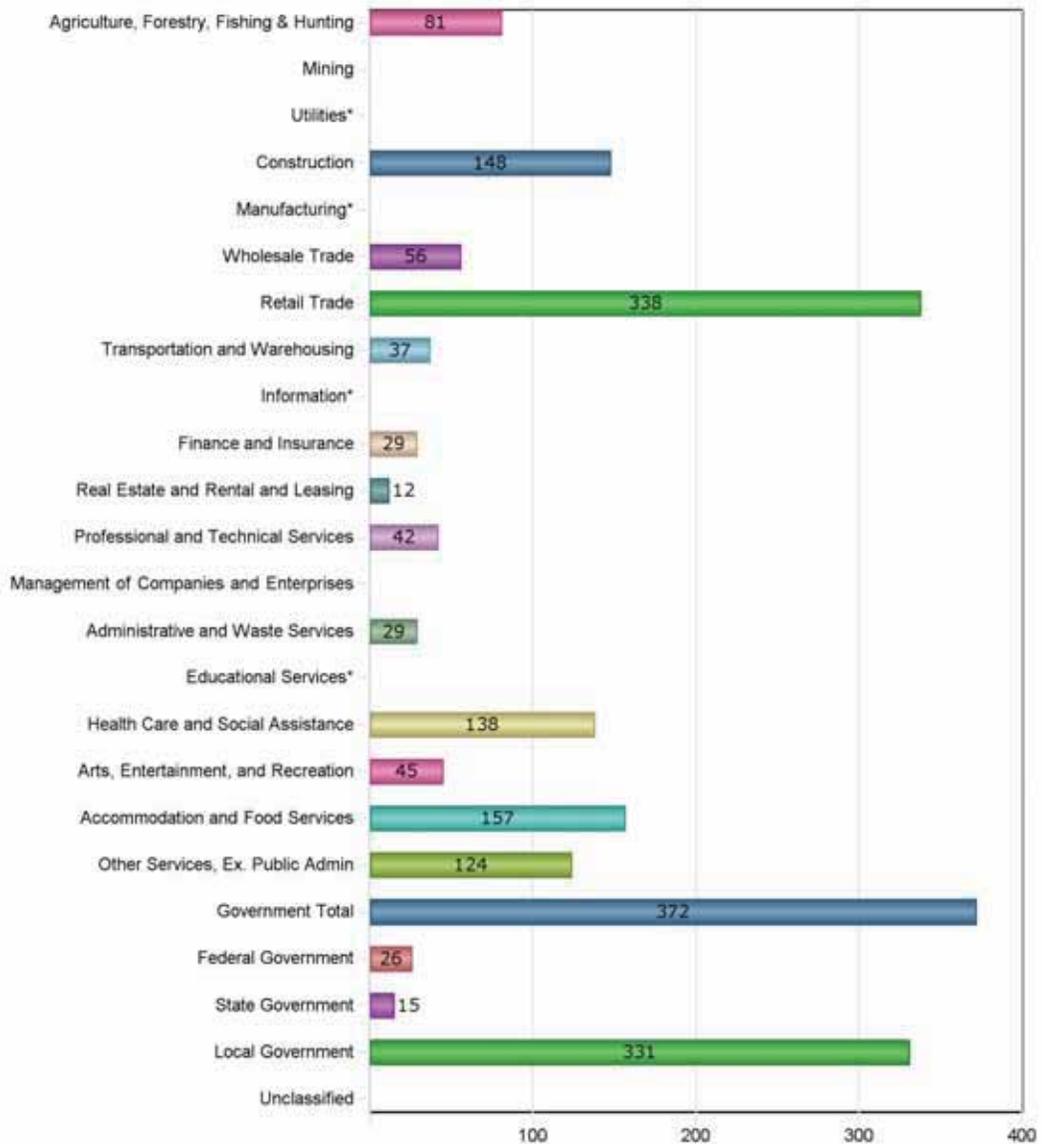
- The population of Mathews County is relatively stable and not expected to grow as rapidly as surrounding counties in the near future. The median age of residents (46.8 years) is higher than most of the surrounding counties. County population is aging.
- The average income of residents in Mathews County is higher than most residents in the region. This may be attributable to several factors, including the level of education and the higher median age of residents.
- Employment in Mathews County generally follows the regional trends; government and retail trade are the largest employers (2008).
- Increased tourism efforts could be economically beneficial to Mathews County and the region in the future. Benefits could include increased employment opportunities for County residents.



Mathews County

Economic Profile

Employment by Industry



Total: 1,697

Source: Virginia Employment Commission, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, 3rd Quarter (July, August, September) 2008.



*Mathews County Today and Tomorrow:
Conditions, Opportunities, Policies and Strategies*



Preserving and Sustaining the Pearl of the Chesapeake



IV. Mathews County Today and Tomorrow:
Conditions, Opportunities, Policies and Strategies

**Mathews County Today and Tomorrow:
Conditions, Opportunities, Policies and Strategies**

Mathews County is divided into five community planning areas: Piankatank, Gwynn’s Island, Central Mathews, West Mathews, and Bayside. A map of the districts is found on the following page. This section of the Comprehensive Plan describes general planning elements for the County as a whole -- People and Housing, Economy, Historic and Cultural Resources, Environment, Public Facilities and Services, and Land Use. The next Section, Community Area Plans, provides more specific planning information on a community-level basis.

People and Housing

Demographics

It is relevant and interesting to note that the population of Mathews County has been relatively stable over the past two hundred years. The County has grown slowly in population since its formation. For example, the population in 1900 was approximately 1,000 persons less than what it is today.

In 2000, the population of Mathews County was 9,207. The median age of the population was 46 years and the median household income was \$43,222. Approximately 22% of the population was 19 years old or younger.

Historical Population & Housing in Mathews County					
	1800	1850	1900	1950	2000
Population	5,806	6,714	8,239	7,148	9,207
Housing Units		711	1,642	2,510	5,333
Sources: 2004. Historical Census Browser. University of Virginia, Geospatial and Statistical Data Center: http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu ; U.S. Census Bureau.					
Mathews County Demographics Summary					
	2000	2004	2007	2008	
Population	9,207	9,055	9,041	9,418	
Female	52%		52%		
Male	48%		48%		
Race					
White	87%				
African-American	11%				
Other	2%				
Age					
Age, Median	46		48		
Age, 19 or younger	22%		21%		
Age, 20-64	56%		58%		
Age, 65 and over	22%		22%		
Income, Median Household	\$43,222	\$48,088	\$54,431		
Income, Median Family	\$50,653		\$64,100		
Household Size, Avg	2.32				
Family Size, Avg	2.75				
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000, 2004 and 2007. Weldon Cooper Center, 2007, 2008.					



Middlesex County

Mathews County
Comprehensive Plan
2030



Community Planning
Areas



Legend

Planning District Areas

- Bayside
- Central
- Gwynn's Island
- Piankatank
- West Mathews



0 5,000 10,000 20,000

Feet

0 0.5 1 2 3 4

Miles



**IV. Mathews County Today and Tomorrow:
Conditions, Opportunities, Policies and Strategies**

In 2000, approximately 80% of the population over 25 years old graduated from high school and approximately 45% of those had some advanced education or held college degrees. The average household size was 2.32 persons. Approximately 72% of the households consisted of families and approximately 24% had children under 18. Of the reported non-family households, 36% contained persons 65 years old and over. Of interest is that the median household income increased dramatically from 1990 to 2000 and that it has continued to increase.

Mathews County Educational Attainment	
	2000
<i>Education, 25 yrs & over</i>	
Less than High School	19%
High School Diploma	34%
Some College	22%
Associate's Degree	5%
Bachelor's Degree	11%
Professional Degree	2%
Masters or Doctorate	6%
<i>Education, 18-24 yrs</i>	
Less than High School	21%
High School Diploma	42%
Some College	30%
Bachelors or Higher	7%
<i>Source: U.S. Census Bureau</i>	

Mathews County Household Characteristics, 2000	
<i>Family households:</i>	72%
With own children under 18 years	24%
Married-couple family	61%
With own children under 18 years	19%
Female householder, no husband present	8%
With own children under 18 years	4%
<i>Non-family households:</i>	28%
Householder living alone	25%
Householder 65 years and over	14%
Households with persons under 18 years	27%
Households with persons 65 years & over	36%
<i>Median Household Income</i>	\$ 43,222
<i>Median Family Income</i>	\$ 50,653
<i>Average household size</i>	2.32
<i>Average family size</i>	2.75
<i>Families below poverty level</i>	4%
<i>Source: U.S. Census Bureau</i>	

Mathews County - Median Household Income 1990 -2007							
	1990	2000	% Change 1990-2000	2004	% Change 2000-04	2007	% Change 2004-07
Mathews County	\$27,428	\$43,222	57.6%	\$48,088	11.3%	\$54,431	11.7%
<i>Source: U.S. Census Bureau, VA Workforce Connection</i>							

Provisional population figures released in 2008⁴ for Mathews County estimate the population at 9,418, or a net increase of 2.3%.⁵ Weldon Cooper estimates show an increase as a result of people moving into the County and a decrease in births within the County.

⁴ Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service. January 27, 2009. Population Estimates for Virginia, Localities, Planning Districts, & Metropolitan Areas: Final 2007 & Provisional 2008 (July 1, 2008).

⁵ This estimate varies from that previously provided by the Virginia Employment Commission in 2007 which indicated a projected loss in population. Because Weldon Cooper Center relies on net migration rather than natural increase, it is felt that this is the more applicable population figure to reference for planning purposes.



IV. Mathews County Today and Tomorrow: Conditions, Opportunities, Policies and Strategies

Of special note is that Mathews County hosts a number of tourists and seasonal residents that are unaccounted for in population estimates. Because of the attraction of the coastal environment and other community assets, Mathews County is a destination for many persons who continue a long tradition of spending summers here. In 2000, there were approximately 900 housing units that were listed as vacant and used on a seasonal basis. If each of these units housed the average family size of 2.75 persons, the seasonal summer population would add an estimated 2,500 persons to the formal census. The Mathews Visitor and Information Center reports it serves nearly 1,200 visitors and seasonal residents a month. In 2008, approximately 10,000 persons registered at the Visitor Center. In 2009, the number registered was 11,697. Despite the recession, the number of visitors is on track to meet or exceed the 2009 count.

Demographic Trends for Mathews County

In summary, given these population statistics and their effect on the future of Mathews County, the following trends should be considered for the purposes of long-range planning:

- The population of Mathews is aging. As a result, the number of persons 19 and younger is expected to decline and the number of persons over 65 is expected to increase. This trend will influence housing and community facilities.
- The increased migration into the County (based on 2009 Weldon Cooper estimates) should be carefully considered, especially with respect to managing land development and supporting public infrastructure and services (transportation, utilities, etc.).
- With the decrease in young families and persons under 19, there is an increased potential to lose young adults to more metropolitan areas, particularly because of greater job opportunities.
- The median household income continues to increase. This may be related to the incomes of those persons migrating into the County.
- The educational attainment of persons in Mathews County is favorable. Over 80% of the population over 25 is a high school graduate, attended college or earned a college degree.
- The number of seasonal summer residents in Mathews is not well documented. These residents can result in a significant fluctuation in the County population during peak summer months. Because these seasonal tourists and residents affect public services, special consideration is needed when planning for future community improvements related to public safety and health (e.g., water supply, waste treatment).



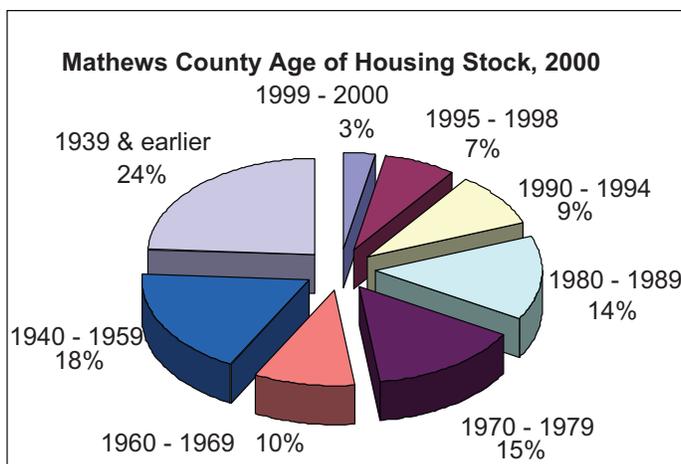
IV. Mathews County Today and Tomorrow: Conditions, Opportunities, Policies and Strategies

Housing

A summary of the housing characteristics in Mathews County is presented in the table to the right. According to the 2000 Census, most of the residential structures in the County were single-family homes (87%). Apartments or duplex structures represented less than 3% of the housing stock, while mobile homes represented approximately 10% of the housing stock. The median value of a single-family, owner-occupied home in 2000 was \$118,000; this equated to a median home mortgage of \$918 per month. In 2000, approximately 83% of homeowners paid one-third or less of their income toward housing costs.

Building permit data from Mathews County from 1990 through 2008 indicate that residential construction was primarily for single-family homes. A large number of residential permits were issued in 1990 and another slight increase in 2005. The trend over the past decade has been approximately 50 units annually.

Mathews County Housing Stock 2000		
	Number	%
<i>Housing Units, Total</i>	5,333	100
Owner-occupied housing units	3,331	63
Renter-occupied housing units	601	11
Vacant housing Units (seasonal use - 891)	1,401	26
<i>Housing Units, Type</i>		
Single-Family	4644	87
Duplex	18	<0.5
Multi-Family	127	2
Mobile Homes	532	10
Boat/ RV	12	<0.5
<i>Housing Units, Age</i>		
Housing built after 1990		19%
Housing built 1960-1989		39%
Housing built 1959 & earlier		42%
<i>Median Home Value</i>	\$ 111,400	
<i>Median Home Monthly Mortgage</i>	\$918	



Mathews County Annual Residential Building Permits		
Single-Family Building Permits	No.	Value
1990	194	\$ 17,069,150
2000	45	\$ 6,807,880
2005	91	\$ 17,857,444
2007	51	\$ 12,751,000
2008	31	\$ 6,368,110

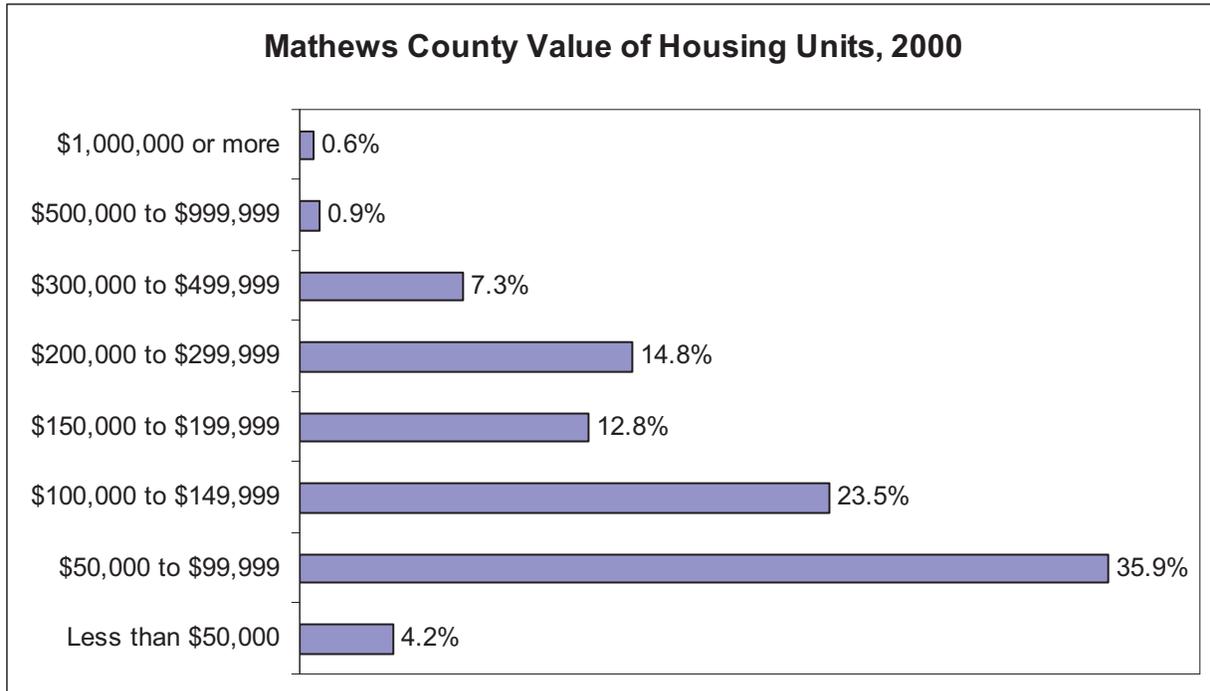
Note: There were no other residential building types built during these years.

Source: Mathews County, Weldon Cooper Center.



IV. Mathews County Today and Tomorrow: Conditions, Opportunities, Policies and Strategies

The value of housing units in Mathews County in 2000 is shown in the following table. In general, most County housing was valued lower than \$150,000. Approximately 9% of the housing stock was valued above \$300,000; around 15% was valued between \$200,000 and \$300,000; approximately 36% was valued between \$100,000 and \$200,000; and approximately 40% was below \$100,000.



Housing Trends for Mathews County

Based on review of the information available, some of the housing trends that should be considered in future planning for Mathews County include:

- There is a deficiency of alternative housing types in the County. There are very few multi-family units. Specialized housing (e.g. for seniors or handicapped persons) is either very limited or non-existent. Most building permit applications are for construction of single-family homes.
- The County housing stock is aging. Approximately 80% of it was constructed prior to 1989 and approximately half of that was constructed prior to 1960.
- The value of homes in the County is increasing. The estimated median home value in 2007 was \$228,669 (www.city-data.com), up from \$111,400 in 2000.



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People and Housing - Challenges and Opportunities 2030

Given the historical population trends and the development constraints within the County (topography, water supply, septic system challenges, wetlands, floodplains, etc.), it is reasonable to continue to expect conservative growth in the future. Like many rural communities, Mathews County appears to be aging and losing youth to larger metropolitan areas. The loss of young adults also means decreases in the available labor workforce, as well as decreased numbers of children and young families. Mathews must find creative ways to attract and retain young persons in the future. A viable, sustainable community should be representative of all age groups and include native residents, as well as those from other areas.

Also, it is important to understand that each age group has associated demands for varying types of supporting goods and services; thus, there may be shifts required in business types and available services. Social demographics must be considered and business services carefully tailored to sufficiently meet the needs of residents and targeted populations; otherwise, the County loses economically and fails to nurture those that it wishes to retain or attract.

New residents are drawn to the coastal environment, but may not fully understand County culture or settlement patterns and may not be familiar with the true dynamics of living in a coastal community. Both new and existing residents must be educated about environmental factors and respect the ecological systems that have been an asset and part of the County's way of life for centuries. Since waterfront residential property presently contributes substantially to the tax base of the County, the challenge will be to manage future land development in an environmentally sensitive manner while balancing revenues and public investments and services.

Finally, seasonal residents should be a factor in future decisions. At present, there is limited information available on the number of persons moving to Mathews County during warmer months. Additional data should be collected in order to better define public service and safety needs, and to evaluate options for equitably funding any increased service levels.

With respect to housing, there should be more targeted efforts for encouraging clustered development in suitable areas. This approach can protect sensitive environmental areas and preserve open space for the benefit of residents and the community as a whole. Housing types can be diversified by utilizing this approach, as well. There are opportunities for encouraging workforce housing in some of the small hamlet areas of the County. These could include live-work spaces, second-story apartments, or small clusters of duplex, triplex or quadruplex units. Other options are to encourage the adaptive reuse and improvement of existing buildings for mixed-use commercial/ residential purposes and rehabilitation of vacant houses.



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Both County Officials and citizens have expressed a need for age-restricted housing. This seems to make the most sense near a small village center, like Mathews, where there are supporting services and easy access to activities. Many residents of Mathews want an option to remain in the County in a quality independent and/or assisted living environment as they age.

Planning/Development Policies, Action Strategies for People and Housing 2030

The following planning and development policies and action strategies are established to achieve the desired vision for people and housing in Mathews County by 2030:

Table with 2 columns: Policy ID (PH 1) and Policy Description. The description includes a general statement and five numbered action strategies regarding housing development, zoning, and neighborhood stability.



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Planning / Development Policies and Strategies for People and Housing	
	6. Increase community awareness and education of the environmental issues associated with coastal living. Consider a variety of media communications, public announcements, series of speakers, school curricula, realtor packages, etc.
PH 2	Mathews' residents have long recognized the need for age-restricted independent and assisted living housing. Workforce housing is also needed.
	1. Assemble more definitive information on housing in the County (types, value, condition, etc.). Include a housing survey of residents to identify specific needs. Consider applying for a housing rehabilitation planning grant from the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development.
	2. Promote a diversity of housing types and price ranges within new residential developments in order to provide greater housing opportunities to all residents. Ensure quality building designs and site development through careful review of proposals.
	3. Identify infrastructure requirements that would encourage for-profit and non-profit housing groups to develop independent living, assisted living and workforce housing in the County. Promote well-designed low-to medium-density housing options in the Mathews Court House area.
	4. Work with qualified private and public housing providers to address the County's housing needs.
	5. Encourage mixed-use housing and business development in the small commercial centers of the County by revising the zoning code to provide for upper-story housing above ground-floor commercial uses, live-work spaces, and other residential/commercial mixed uses.
PH 3	Maintenance of the aging housing stock of the County is fundamental to the continued viability of its communities and neighborhoods. There must be careful monitoring of the housing stock through enforcement of the Uniform Statewide Building Code and assessment of environmental conditions to ensure public health, safety, and welfare.



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Planning / Development Policies and Strategies for People and Housing	
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improve code compliance by conducting a field survey of properties in the county to identify structures that are subject to “spot blight” abatement measures. Work cooperatively with the Building Official and various County staff (planning, police, etc.) to develop a strategy to enhance building maintenance and achieve compliance.
PH 4	<p>Young persons and families are important to the future of Mathews County, particularly in helping to achieve a healthy balance in County population, continuing the community’s heritage, and enriching the overall quality of life.</p>
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work with the high school, area colleges, and other youth organizations to identify opportunities to enhance the quality of life for young persons in Mathews County. Consider implementing special programs, initiatives, businesses, or events that may boost involvement of youth in the community.
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Work with area businesses to identify employment and training opportunities for youth with various levels of education and skills. Promote mentoring programs, on-the-job training, specialized programs in the schools, or other means of encouraging young people to continue to live and work in the County. Create focused marketing plan to target employers and potential employees.
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Encourage youth involvement in decision-making, particularly with respect to planning for the County and governmental activities. Consider adopting a youth government day that provides hands-on experience for high school seniors regarding local government operations and activities of public bodies.
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Increase workforce housing options for young adults and families. Encourage programs that assist in acquiring and improving existing residential structures. Encourage live-work space and second-story rental units above commercial spaces in the Mathews Court House area.
PH 5	<p>The seasonal population is important to the overall economy, health, and welfare of the County. Improved public facilities and services should serve permanent residents and seasonal visitors; such improvements should be financially structured to balance costs and benefits to taxpayers.</p>



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Planning / Development Policies and Strategies for People and Housing	
	1. Develop a more accurate accounting of the number of seasonal residents and tourists visiting Mathews County. Use updated figures when considering public facility and service needs, especially as it may relate to responding to public health and safety.
	2. Consider funding options for addressing any increased public facility or service needs arising from seasonal residents. Ensure equitable treatment for seasonal residents regarding benefits and costs as County taxpayers.



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People and Housing: Special Action Projects

The neighborhoods and housing types of Mathews County are important to the future quality of life for residents and the overall sustainability of the community. The following are suggestions for projects that could move the County toward the goals for People and Housing.

Age-Restricted Housing Development

Officials and residents of Mathews County recognize the need to provide expanded housing opportunities for senior citizens. This could include a single independent housing development or various development options that provide a continuum of care from independent to assisted living to long-term care. One form of desired senior housing would enable residents to live independently and meet their changing lifestyles, while remaining close to supporting services. Opportunities for such a development exist in the Central Mathews District, near Mathews Court House. The development should complement the surrounding residential and business development, be developed using sound environmental design principles, and be of a suitable scale to fit the rural character of Mathews.



An age-restricted development could be developed similar to the example shown here focusing on a grouping of units surrounding a common green. An interior courtyard would provide opportunities for activities or passive recreation. Typical community amenities would include interior sidewalks, landscaping, and designated guest parking.





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Economy

The regional economy and the contributions and comparison of Mathews County to surrounding counties are discussed in the previous chapter, Mathews County and the Region. The following section provides additional insight into some economic factors of the County and how those factors may influence the County in the future.

Labor Force and Employment

In 2000, census economic statistics for the region indicated that health and social services, manufacturing and retail trade were the industries employing most persons. The most recent data for 2009 indicates that employment trends of Mathews County have changed; the largest employer is government, followed by retail trade and then accommodation and food services. Given the development patterns in the County with the County seat and a government center in Central Mathews and a focus on tourism, it is not surprising that these sectors are the most prominent.

In 2000, approximately 56% of Mathews' population over the age of 16 was in the labor force, which was less than that of the United States as a whole (64%). In 2007, the labor force had declined to approximately 48% of the County population. The reduction in the available labor force is likely related to the aging of the population and the number of retired persons residing in the County.

In 2000, approximately 35% of Mathews' residents lived and worked in the County. A majority of workers (54%) commuted to an employer outside of Mathews County (mostly to Gloucester County, Newport News, and York County), averaging a 45-minute commute time. Approximately 11% of those employed in Mathews County commuted from outside the County (these were mostly residents of Gloucester and Middlesex Counties).

Mathews County Labor Force and Employment Characteristics		
	2000	2007 2008
Persons in Labor Force (16 and over)	56%	48%
Average Weekly Wage		\$483
Per Capita Income	\$23,610	\$43,431
Work Commuting Patterns		
Lived & work in County	35%	
Work outside County	54%	
Live out, commute in	10%	
Average commute time	45 min	
Source: U.S. Census, VA Workforce Connection.		

According to the Virginia Workforce Connection, the average weekly wage in Mathews County as of the 3rd quarter of 2008 was \$483; this equates to \$12.08 per hour or \$25,116 per year.



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According to the Virginia Employment Commission, the top fifty employers for Mathews County as of the second quarter of 2010 are listed in the following table. Most of the employers in the County are small businesses, employing less than twenty employees. The largest manufacturing employers were those in the textile trades and seafood.

50 Largest Employers

1. Mathews County School Board	26. Hurst Harvey Oil Company
2. Food Lion	27. M & M Building Supply
3. Riverside Regional Medical Center	28. The Sandpiper Reef
4. Mathews County Board of Supervisors	29. Bureau of Census
5. Star Fields LLC	30. Chesapeake Bank
6. Mobjack Nurseries	31. Mathews Co Dept of Social Service
7. Tatterson Greenhouses	32. Christie Auto Care Center
8. Zimmerman Marine	33. Foster Faulkner Funeral Home
9. Brambles Inc	34. Mathews Volunteer Rescue
10. Best Value Supermarket	35. 7-Eleven
11. Richardsons LLC	36. P. Buckley Moss Galleries Ltd.
12. Hardee's	37. Richardsons Cafe Inc
13. Postal Service	38. Seafior Construction Services Inc
14. Sea Farms	39. Stan Strings Family Kitch
15. The White Dog Inn	40. The Medicine Shoppe
16. Ocean Products Research	41. Bank of America
17. R & W Marine Construction	42. Hudgins Pharmacy
18. The Seabreeze	43. Hunters Contracting Ltd
19. East River Construction Inc	44. Island Seafood Company
20. Chimney Corner Lawnmower	45. Moughons, Inc.
21. Lynne's Family Restaurant	46. Neighborhood Convenience Store
22. Mathew's Yacht Club	47. Subway
23. Msc Development Inc	48. Dolgencorp LLC
24. Peninsula Metropolitan YMCA	49. Doziers Auto Parts Inc
25. Ambrose Disposal Service Inc	50. Flowers from the Heart

Source: Virginia Employment Commission, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW), 2nd Quarter (April, May, June) 2010.

Agriculture and Forests

In general, Mathews County can be described as a rural county with large tracts of forests, open fields and expansive shorelines. These economic sectors are summarized in the following tables and paragraphs. Although these segments of the economy have declined over the years, there may be future potential to improve management practices and expand the economic development potential for these natural amenities.



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In 2007, agricultural lands contributed approximately \$3 million in production value to the local economy. While the number of farms has remained similar over the past decade, along with the production value, the acreage has been reduced by about one-half.

Mathews County Agriculture			
Item	1997	2002	2007
Farms	58	47	50
Land in Farms (acres)	8,421	-	4,412
Avg. Size Farm (acres)	145	-	88
Market Value Production	\$3.6 M	\$4.3 M	\$3.0 M
Crop Production	\$3.4 M	\$4.0 M	\$2.6 M
Livestock, Poultry Production	\$0.2 M	\$0.3 M	\$0.4 M

Source: USDA, National Agricultural Statistic Service

In 2005, forests accounted for approximately two-thirds of County land. Figures for 2007 for Mathews County indicate that the production value of timber was approximately \$250,000.

Mathews County Forests	
Forests (Privately owned, 2005)	62% of county
Production Value (Avg. 1986-2001)	\$416,325
Production Value (2007)	\$249,000

Source: VA Dept. of Forestry

Aquaculture and Fisheries

The aquatic resources of Mathews are of substantial environmental and economic value to the County and the Commonwealth of Virginia. According to a 2005 report by the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS)⁶ the commercial and recreational fisheries of Virginia provide both monetary and non-monetary economic and recreational contributions. In 2005, sport fishing and commercial harvesting activities generated a total of \$1.23 billion in output or sales, \$717.4 million in value-added contributions or income, and 13,015 full and part-time jobs for Virginia. Of note is that approximately two-thirds of these values were attributable to the recreational sector and one-third to the commercial seafood sector. In addition, it is important to recognize that the values attributed to commercial seafood sector declined approximately 30% between 1994 and 2004 as a result of decreased species diversity, infrastructure damages from Hurricane Isabel in 2003, increased fuel costs, and imported products, among others. The largest sales for the seafood industry were from sea scallops, blue crabs, and menhaden and approximately 50% of the economic impacts were generated by seafood processing.

⁶ Virginia Institute of Marine Science - Kirkley, Murray and Duberg. December 2005. *Economic Contributions of Virginia's Commercial Seafood and Recreational Fishing Industries: A User's Manual for Assessing Economic Impacts.*



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For Mathews County, the 2005 study indicated that the commercial seafood industry represented approximately \$2.5 million in landings; in contrast, recreational fishing generated approximately \$10.4 million (\$3.9 million in income and \$6.5 million in sales) and 138 full or part-time jobs.

Mathews County Aquaculture & Fishing Economic Value	
Item	2005
Commercial Harvesting	\$2.5 M
Sport Fishing	\$10.4 M
Source: VIMS	

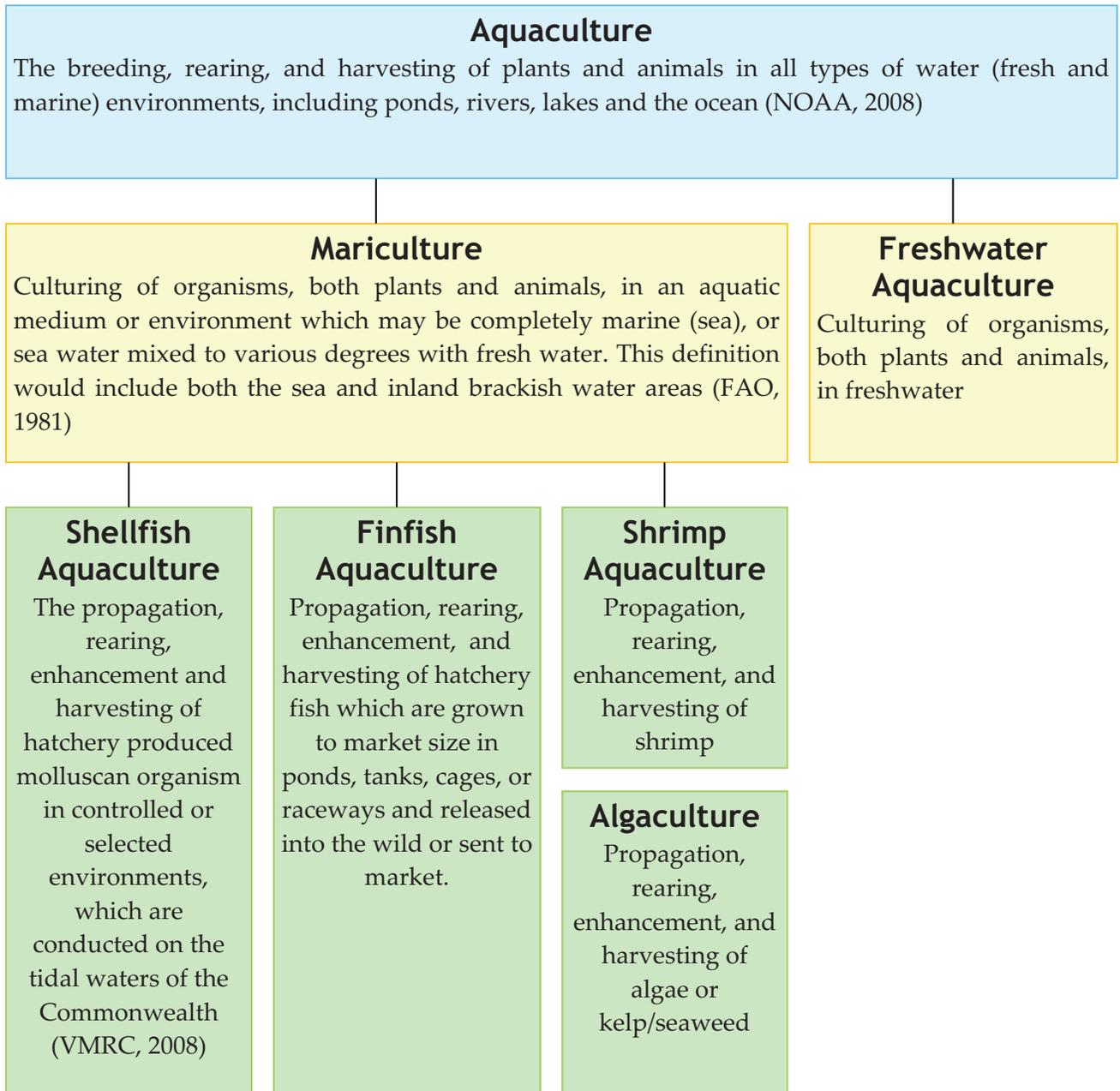
Updated economic reports in 2007 and 2008 on Virginia’s shellfish aquaculture⁷ indicate continued growth of the shellfish aquaculture industry. The studies documented increases in the cultured Virginia hard clams (*Mercenaria mercenaria*) and the culturing of disease resistant native Eastern oysters (*Crassostrea virginica*). Specifically from the 2008 Outlook Report, predictions indicate that within the Middle Peninsula there will be a 46% increase in the number of cultured market oysters sold, a 10% decline in oyster seed planted, and a 23% increase in the number of eyed larvae planted by 2009. The 2008 findings also showed an increased growth in oyster aquaculture almost twice that of 2007 with both clam and oyster sales generating approximately \$26.9 million. In fact, Virginia is number one in farmed clam production. The continued health and expansion of shellfish aquaculture will be dependent on good water quality and strong environmental stewardship to maintain it.

Aquaculture generally refers to the raising of fish and shellfish. Over the years, aquaculture practices have become more complex, ranging from freshwater to marine and specializing in various plants and animals. The chart on the following page summarizes the various forms of aquaculture as it may apply to Mathews County.

⁷ Virginia Institute of Marine Science - Murray and Oesterling. June 2007, June 2009. *Virginia Shellfish Aquaculture Situation and Outlook Report, Results of Virginia Shellfish Aquaculture Crop Reporting Survey 2005-2007 and 2007-2008.*



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Aquaculture Summary Chart Prepared by Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission, 2009.



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Economic Trends for Mathews County

Since 2000, economic trends of Mathews County have varied from that of the surrounding counties. Some of the economic trends that should be considered in planning for the future of Mathews County are:

- The greatest number of persons was employed in government, followed by retail trade, and accommodation and food services.
- The available labor force in Mathews County is decreasing. This could be related to the number of retired persons in the County.
- Most businesses in the County are small businesses, employing twenty people or less.
- Businesses employing more than twenty persons were manufacturing establishments affiliated with textiles and seafood.
- Home-based businesses have increased over the past decade, averaging about 70 annually. From 2003 to 2008, there were 429 zoning permits issued for home-based businesses in the County.
- Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting employed about 5% of the labor force. While these sectors have declined over the years, there may be opportunities for enhancing their economic contributions in the future, particularly with respect to recreational fishing and shellfish aquaculture.
- Arts, entertainment and recreation employed approximately 3% of the labor force.
- Compared with the region, Mathews County (15% in 2007) had lower visitor expenditures than its immediate neighbors, Gloucester (20%) and Middlesex Counties (43%).



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Economic Challenges and Opportunities 2030

In order to sustain the quality of life in the County and achieve its vision for an economy that is focused on eco-tourism and heritage agricultural and maritime trade, there must be a carefully constructed strategy for enhancing these industry sectors. Integrating protection and management of the natural resources that provide the baseline for these industries must be a key element of the strategy. Another important factor for success will be having a sufficient number of supporting industries, such as retail trade, accommodations, and entertainment.

Tourism statistics for the region and those of the state indicate that there are opportunities for Mathews County to increase its market share in eco-tourism. In addition, the shorelines of the County provide opportunities for increased aquaculture and aquatic-based businesses; however, these endeavors will require careful land use management to protect both the environment and businesses. Creativity, exemplary leadership, and multiple public-private partnerships will be needed to understand the complex, ecological dynamics and to educate officials, businesses, and the public.

Mathews County is constrained for development because of its topography and its proximity to surface water. This is further complicated by a lack of utility infrastructure for water and sewer. Consequently, the locations where development can occur with few constraints must be carefully planned to ensure that they are developed using best development practices and in the wisest manner with respect to land use and density. This will require careful choices to achieve a successful and balanced economy that is able to sustain the quality of life desired in Mathews County.

2030 Vision for Mathews

“County farms delight consumers and restaurant owners with local products, while area merchants and artisans welcome patrons with quality, creative offerings in services, products, and arts and crafts.

Forestry, fishery and ecotourism opportunities offer residents quality employment and wages while integrating sustainable business practices that protect and renew natural resources.

Seasonal visitors who appreciate Mathews’ traditional heritage and natural environment are attracted to the County.

Eco-friendly enterprises – aquaculture, maritime museums, marinas, sailing schools, sea farms, kayak farms, boat tours – concentrate economic activities on the water.

Home-based businesses thrive on expanded Internet services and distribute Mathews’ products worldwide.

Business enterprises offer quality services in appropriate locations, living-wage employment, limited environmental impact, and quality revenue contributions to the community.”



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Planning/Development Policies, Action Strategies for Economy 2030

The following planning and development policies and action strategies are established to achieve the desired vision for the future economy of Mathews County:

Planning / Development Policies and Strategies for Economy	
E 1	<p>The economy of Mathews County is linked to and dependent on the quality of the environment. Public decisions on land development and economic investment should be based on careful study of environmental impact, both short and long-term.</p>
	<p>1. Develop an environmental information package and assessment check-list for developers that can be used by applicants and by County representatives when considering development and rezoning applications. Include agency resources and contact information. Update regularly.</p>
	<p>2. Continue to monitor and report environmental quality on at least an annual basis. Work with the Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission and other environmental organizations to actively address environmental challenges that may affect the economy and quality of life.</p>
	<p>3. Identify and evaluate sensitive environmental areas and specific waterfront and inland land uses that may adversely affect water quality, environmental assets and long-term water-based economy. Use best management practices to resolve land use conflicts.</p>
	<p>4. Revise land development regulations to better manage land uses in waterfront areas and protect environmental quality. Provide public education and opportunities for public comment and input to ensure workable solutions.</p>
E 2	<p>Mathews County has a proud, traditional heritage in water-based businesses. Increased efforts should be undertaken to enhance this sector of the local and regional economy.</p>
	<p>1. Clarify, define and pursue County authority to regulate and manage land uses beyond the physical land area and shorelines, extending to include territorial boundaries over the water.</p>
	<p>2. Identify new or preserve existing sites for aquaculture and working waterfront businesses. Establish an Economic Development Team to ensure communication among interests, target compatible land/water uses, and adopt minimum development standards (e.g., Aquaculture Best Management Practices). Develop an economic development strategy that can be updated on an annual basis. Work</p>



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Planning / Development Policies and Strategies for Economy	
	with the Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission, the Virginia Economic Development Partnership, Chamber of Commerce, Virginia Marine Resources Commission, and other environmental agencies.
	3. Pursue the development of a land and/or in-water Aquaculture Business Park, Aquaculture Research Center or similar economic model that can enhance the economy of the County and the coastal environment. Consider financial incentives that could assist business development (e.g. special loans, incubator spaces, etc.).
	4. Revise the County zoning ordinance to better define “aquaculture” as a use and review regulations to ensure appropriate land use management. Strengthen regulations to encourage and protect aquaculture in appropriate areas.
	5. Develop and pursue designation of aquaculture opportunity zone(s) as a financial incentive to promote aquaculture and encourage investment. Adopt applicable local incentives and taxation options to promote aquaculture.
	6. Lobby general assembly for special aquaculture land use taxation category specific to aquaculture and water-based businesses, similar to agriculture land use taxation, to encourage continued use and production of important properties and operations.
	7. Educate the public regarding the importance of aquaculture and working waterfronts to the community, region and the state. Develop a brochure, webpage article, or other form of communication to promote increased understanding of water-based business operations and requirements, as well as the need for excellent water quality. Work with businesses and governmental agencies to coordinate efforts and improve communication of important coastal living issues and future goals and outcomes.
	8. Affirm the commitment of the County to protect the working waterfront as a priority for economic development and preserving coastal character. Improve communication regarding pending development matters, water quality monitoring/reporting, water access, etc. Consider appropriate “good neighbor practices” that enable shared information and communication regarding development activities.
	9. Consider adopting a formal resolution/policy that promotes and protects working waterfronts in Mathews County.



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Planning / Development Policies and Strategies for Economy	
E 3	<p>Tourism is an important economic sector for Mathews County that should be encouraged and supported as an economic development strategy.</p>
	<p>1. Develop a tourism strategy, updated annually, in cooperation with the Mathews Visitor and Information Center (MCVIC), and supporting businesses and organizations. Collaborate with MCVIC to develop educational materials that promote environmental stewardship. Support marketing and other outreach efforts by MCVIC and others to attract tourists to the County.</p>
	<p>2. Encourage development of conference/lodging facilities in selected locations with water access. Ensure environmental compatibility with the area.</p>
	<p>3. Encourage further development of bed and breakfast establishments in the County. Revise zoning code to include appropriate standards for site development, parking, and accessory uses.</p>
	<p>4. Encourage the development of additional outdoor recreation businesses such as canoe/kayak rental and guided tour services that utilize the Blueways Trail.</p>
E 4	<p>Many of the Mathews County Planning Areas have small business centers that are valued by residents of the County for support services. These “community commerce centers” should complement the economy of the larger County and be carefully managed to ensure convenient, essential services, while enhancing community character and the environment.</p>
	<p>1. Encourage carefully designed business and mixed-use development in existing community commerce centers (village, hamlet and crossroad areas) where public utilities are available.</p>
	<p>2. Promote the use of local businesses for goods and services. Maintain a business guide of local merchants and products and distribute it to residents on a regular basis (e.g., County bulletins, utility notices, etc.).</p>
	<p>3. Promote and encourage specialty arts and crafts businesses in commercial centers. Support a Mathews for the Arts Committee to coordinate and market artisan efforts and events. Work with Bay School Cultural Arts Center, Mathews Art Group, area schools, and other educational institutions to promote the arts and nurture artisan skills.</p>



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	4. Encourage home-based business development that enriches the overall economy of the County while protecting the residential integrity of surrounding properties. Update the zoning ordinance to meet requirements for enabling modern day small business, while ensuring protection of residential character.
	5. Encourage and pursue expansion of high-speed internet service throughout the County. Ensure careful design and placement of facilities to protect visual quality and the environment. Focus initial efforts in governmental and community commerce centers.
	6. Involve young adults in working with local businesses (internships, on-the-job training, after-school work, etc.) to encourage retention after graduation. Partner with area schools and colleges for special training programs to enhance local business services. Host special events in the community commerce centers oriented toward youth.
E 5	Many existing commercial buildings in Mathews County have historic significance or architectural features that are in scale with or complement the built environment. Adaptive reuse of existing commercial buildings should be considered prior to considering demolition and redevelopment.
	1. Encourage adaptive reuse of vacant/underutilized commercial structures throughout the County. Consider use of historic tax credits, Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds, or other financial incentives to eliminate blighting conditions and improve commercial properties.
E 6	The economy of Mathews County should be diversified to the extent possible to provide quality job opportunities for residents, while also providing sufficient goods and services.
	1. Encourage and cultivate diverse forms of small business or clean industry. Target sectors suitable for the area such as arts & crafts, organic produce, flex office/business, plant nurseries and seafood.
	2. Establish a permanent venue for music performances and festivals by local artists as a means of stimulating the local economy.



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Economy: Special Action Projects

The economy of Mathews County is the foundation for the overall sustainability of the community. The following paragraphs discuss initial projects that can assist the County in progressing toward the established goals and strategies for the Economy.

Tourism - Mathews County Maritime Heritage Trail

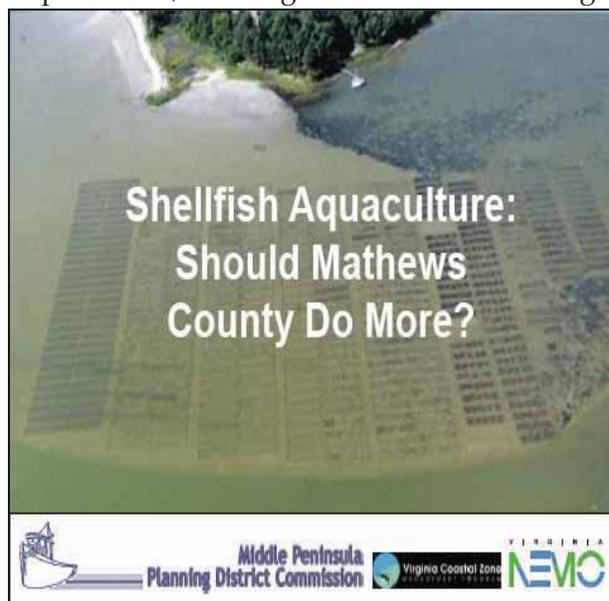
Several agencies have developed mapping and attraction information on-line for the East River section of Mathews County. This project initiative is known as the Mathews County Maritime Heritage Trail. Mapping for additional areas of the County is planned for the future. This ties in well with the expanded efforts of the National Park Service to promote the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail in the region.

Web GIS mapping of the East River by VIMS showing the Mathews County Maritime Heritage Trail Facilities and Attractions



Aquaculture and Waterfront Infrastructure

In 2008, the Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission received funding through the Virginia Coastal Zone Management (CZM) Program to study aquaculture and waterfront infrastructure. In 2009, the PDC focused on Mathews County and established an Aquaculture/Working Waterfront Steering Committee for the purposes of promoting



The Project

1. Explore how local government can support an active commercial seafood industry
2. Assess the economic webbing of the aquaculture and related commercial seafood industry and working waterfront infrastructure in Mathews
3. Suggest new or modified public policy to strengthen aquaculture-working waterfront infrastructure

Supported by:



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aquaculture and preserving and strengthening the working waterfront infrastructure of the County. Consisting of commercial and hobby oyster and clam farmers, county planners, and the Maritime Foundation within Mathews County, the committee identified current challenges within the aquaculture industry, they shared business models, and discussed how the industry could be supported or enhanced by the county through public policy. As this Steering Committee continues its work and collaboration with businesses, citizens and governmental officials, there will be many worthy recommendations that can be pursued to enhance shellfish aquaculture, water quality and economic development opportunities in Mathews County.

**Code of Virginia 15.2-2211
Cooperation of local planning commissions
and other agencies.**

“The planning commission of any locality may cooperate with local planning commissions or legislative and administrative bodies and officials of other localities so as to coordinate planning and development among the localities. Planning commissions may appoint committees and may adopt rules as needed to effect such cooperation. Planning commissions may also cooperate with state and federal officials, departments and agencies. Planning commissions may request from such departments and agencies, and such departments and agencies of the Commonwealth shall furnish, such reasonable information which may affect the planning and development of the locality.”

Aquaculture Overlay District

An Aquaculture Overlay District should be considered for the coastal areas of the County and applicable waters and submerged lands which are determined to be of significant value for aquaculture. Application of this district for land management purposes should be considered after careful study and collaboration with appropriate regional and state agencies. Public and business involvement in developing and establishing this district will be extremely important in order to share information, promote understanding, and ensure a successful tool for promoting and protecting aquaculture.

While federal and state agencies have jurisdiction over water quality and subaqueous lands, Virginia planning legislation provides for local government to have jurisdiction over land and waters within its territorial boundaries for the purposes of improving the public health, safety, convenience and welfare of its citizens to plan for future development. Also, the legislation provides for cooperation with other legislative and administrative bodies in order to coordinate planning and development; furthermore, it provides that the planning commission may appoint committees and adopt rules as needed to affect cooperation.



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Hotel and Conference Facility

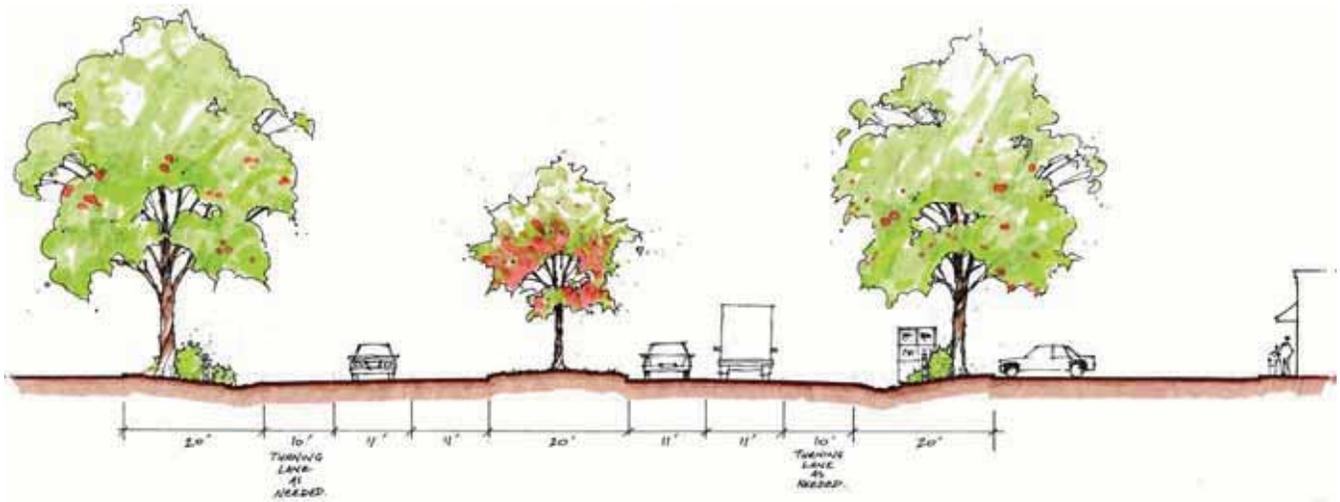
In 2001, Mathews County commissioned a study to determine if there was a market for a conference center in the county. The study concluded that, as a tourist destination, the County would benefit from a quality hotel and conference facility with water access. The County should identify potential sites for development as well as existing facilities that could be redeveloped. Once a suitable location is determined, and its owner supportive, the County could assist in developing a concept plan to market to potential investors.



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Entrance Corridor Development Guidelines

The gateway entrances into Mathews County and to historic Mathews Court House provide important first impressions to visitors and lay the foundation for development in the County. In particular, commercial development in designated nodes along the corridor can benefit both the economic and aesthetic qualities of Mathews County. Corridor development guidelines would guide such elements as site and building layout, signs, access points, and landscaping.



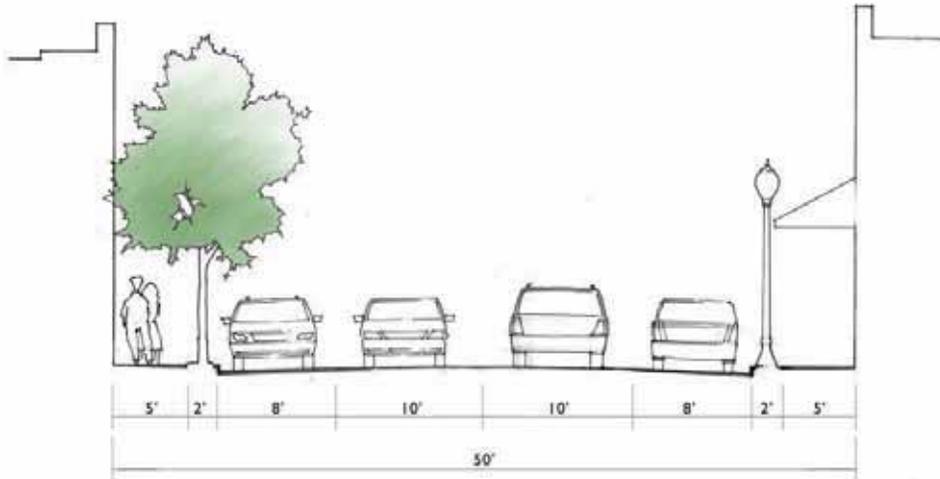
Typical cross-section of gateway entrance corridor (four lane example) showing landscaping at street and in the median, common access points, ground signs and screened parking at building front.



Typical cross-section of gateway entrance corridor (two lane example) showing landscaping at street and in a median (where possible) with a pedestrian/bicycle access trail or sidewalk. Shoulders of road could include natural swales or use pervious surfaces to manage stormwater runoff.



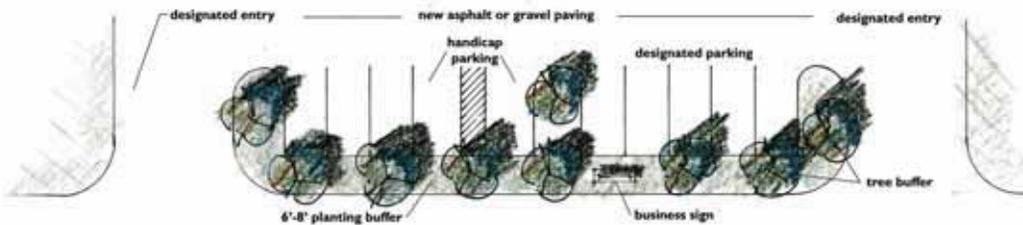
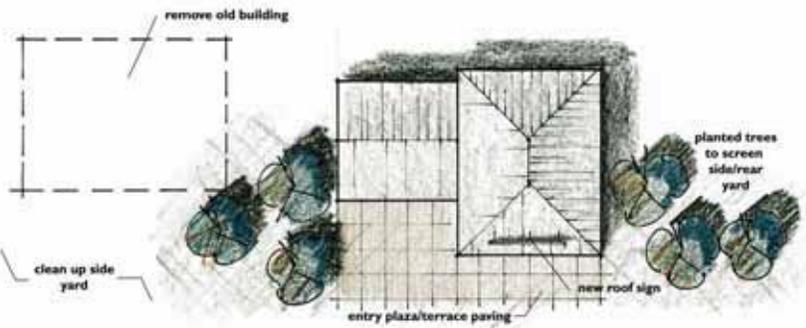
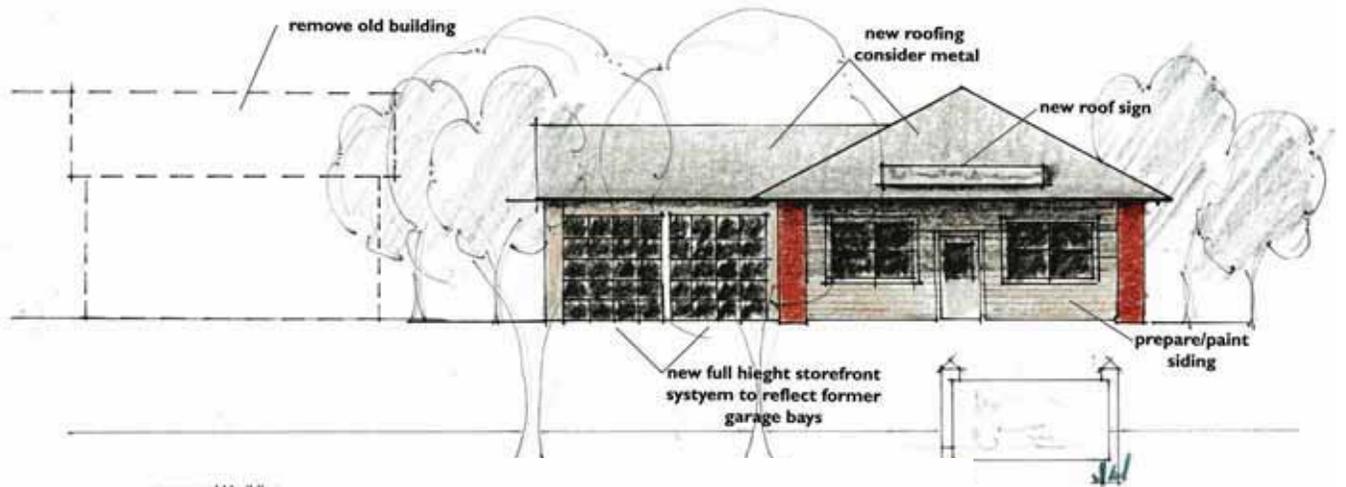
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Typical cross section of commercial corridor in designated Village or Hamlet showing proposed development pattern. Buildings are located close to the street; lighting is pedestrian scale; sidewalks provide easy access to stores; parking is located on the street or to the sides or rear of buildings; street trees provide quality landscaping; an alternative may be large planters on the sidewalk; signs are appropriately located on the building or an awning.



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Above: Before and after illustration of renovated commercial building along Route 14 entrance corridor.

Left: Site plan for new commercial use of property showing improved street frontage with controlled entrances, screened parking, landscaping and appropriate signage.



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History and Culture

Brief County History

Mathews County has a rich history⁸ that extends back to Native Americans and the early English settlement of Virginia. Early artifacts found in Mathews on Gwynn's Island date back to 10,000 BC. The first known people of the region were the Chiskiake Indians who originated in York County and later relocated to the Piankatank River in the mid-1600s.

In 1608, Captain John Smith explored the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries, mapping early Mathews County and the larger region. His historical map of Virginia, published in 1612, provided an early insight into the rich waters and lands of the region. While in the vicinity of Gwynn's Island on one of his voyages, he was wounded by a stingray and was taken ashore to what is now Stingray Pointe near Deltaville in Middlesex County. Several years later, Gwynn's Island was explored by Colonel Hugh Gwynn. In 1640, Gwynn received a grant of 1700 acres from King Charles I of England, marking Gwynn's Island as an early contribution to Mathews' settlement history.



Captain John Smith's 1612 Map of Virginia. Mathews County area is shown as a circle for reference.

The real settlement of Mathews County began circa 1650 with the establishment of Kingston Parish, which was then a part of Gloucester County. The original Anglican Church is no longer standing, but the settlement environs still exist today and Christ Episcopal Kingston Parish Church (1904). Many important Mathews' families and individuals have ties to the parish and its history.

Mathews County has a rich history in the American Revolution. It was the site of one of the Revolutionary War's first naval battles, the Battle of Cricket Hill. In 1776, General Andrew Lewis of the Continental Army waged battle against Lord Dunmore and his troops just offshore

⁸ Mathews History and Statistics, www.visitmathewsva.com. A Brief History of Gwynn's Island, www.gwynnsislandmuseum.org. Mathews County Historical Society, www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~vamchs. Middle Peninsula Historic Marker Tour, www.mppdc.com.



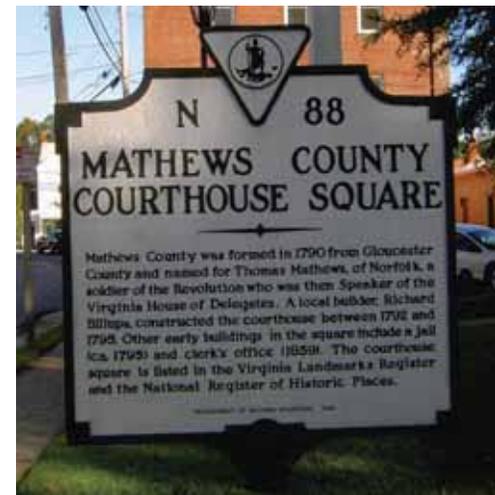
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of Gwynn’s Island. The encounter damaged the British camp and forced evacuation of the British from the island and back to sea. Another inland military post was at Fort Nonsense, located near County border with Gloucester County. This fort saw little battle; however, its earthworks are still visible today.

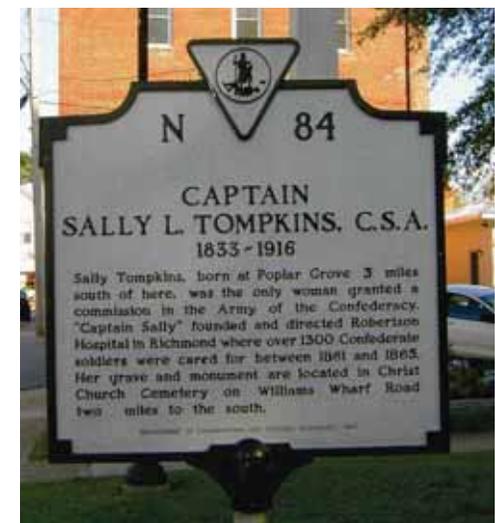
Following the Revolutionary War, Mathews was officially established as a County in 1791. It was named in honor of the Brigadier General Thomas Mathews, who was then speaker of the Virginia House of Delegates and introduced the resolution calling for the formation of a new county. He was also a prominent leader in the American Revolutionary War. The County seat was Mathews and in the early 1830s, the historic courthouse and square were constructed.



By the 1790s the County was an active shipbuilding center on the Chesapeake Bay⁹, supported by the abundant forests of live oaks. In 1804, President Thomas Jefferson commissioned the building of a stone lighthouse at the County southernmost tip on the Chesapeake Bay – New Point Comfort. This historical lighthouse still stands today, although only accessible by boat, and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. According to the Mathews Maritime Museum, more wooden sailing vessels were built in Mathews County than in any other part of Virginia from the late 1790s to 1845. It is estimated that more than 2,000 seagoing schooners were built in Mathews during the 18th and 19th centuries. The East River and Williams Wharf were centers of maritime activity. Many Mathews’ men made their living as merchant mariners, watermen, or shipbuilders. By 1835, Mathews County was a bustling area with several post offices and small villages.



Mathews County also has a rich Civil War history. A Confederate Coast Guard was active in Mathews, assisting the southern cause. A stone Confederate Memorial stands in the Mathews Court House Green in commemoration of the County Confederate soldiers. One resident, Captain Sally



⁹ History of the New Point Comfort Lighthouse, www.newpointcomfort.com. Mathews Maritime Museum, www.mathewsmaritimemuseum.com.



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Tompkins, was appointed as the only female Confederate Officer. She operated the Robertson Hospital in Richmond that cared for over 1,300 soldiers during the war.

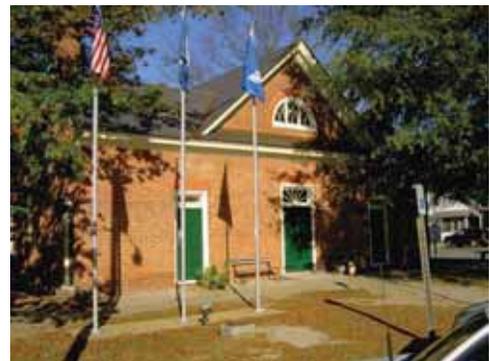
By the 20th Century, residents continued their relationship with the sea, either in their daily work as watermen or in their country's service as members of the naval forces. The fisheries and seafood of the Chesapeake Bay were productive and known for their quality and quantity all over the east coast. Today, Mathews County is still recognized for its fisheries, waterfront, and marine environment. While there are challenges that must be addressed with respect to the decreasing fisheries, sensitive ecosystem, and increasing demand for waterfront development, Mathews County continues to be in the forefront of looking carefully to the future, while continuing a long tradition of close-knit families, scenic water vistas, and a history with the sea.

Properties on the National Register of Historic Places

As of March 2009, Mathews County has eight properties that are officially listed on the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places.¹⁰ Two additional properties are under study and pending designation. These properties are described in the following paragraphs and shown on the map on the following page.

Mathews County Courthouse Square

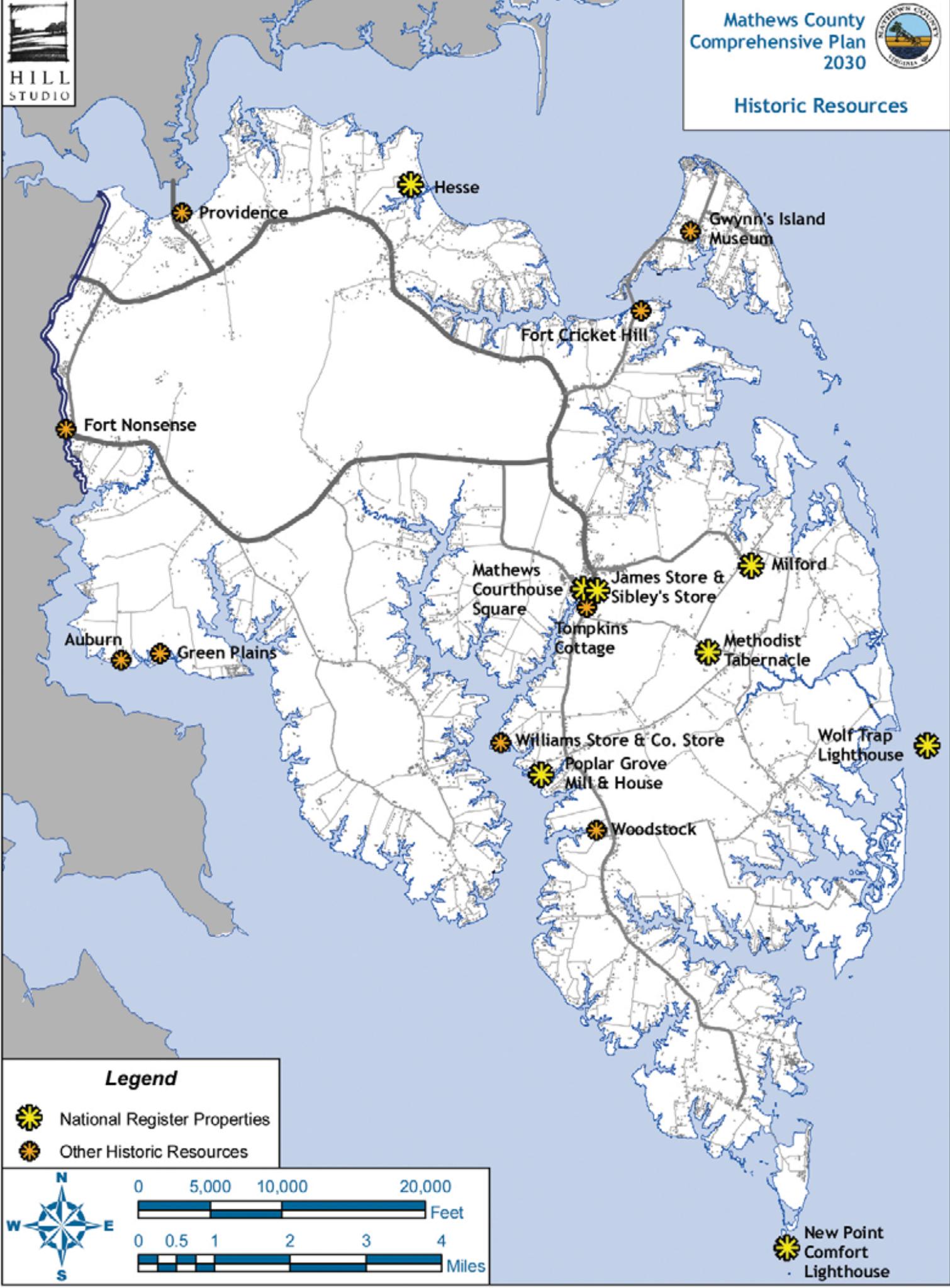
Placed on the National Register in 1977, Mathews County Courthouse Square in downtown Mathews is significant for its collection of buildings that reflect the growth of the County since 1790. A study prepared by the William and Mary Center for Archeological Research revealed that the courthouse building, which was once thought to be constructed in the 1790s by Richard Billups, was more likely built in the 1830s. The jail has stood on the courthouse grounds at least since the early nineteenth century, and the clerk's office was constructed in 1859. In 1930, the Mathews Memorial Library was built on the square, and in 1957 the county administration offices building was added. In recent years, the County has restored several of the buildings.



¹⁰ Virginia Department of Historic Resources, National and State Historic Registers for Mathews County. www.dhr.virgini.gov.

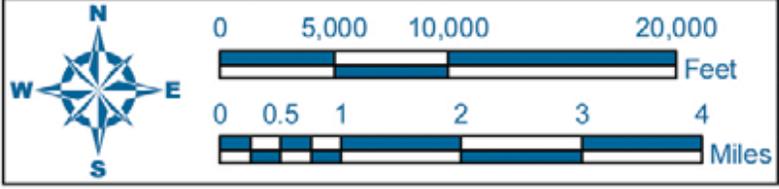


Historic Resources



Legend

-  National Register Properties
-  Other Historic Resources



 New Point Comfort Lighthouse



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Milford (Billups House)

Milford is an early home built circa 1770-1790 on the coastal plain of Billups Creek. The house was the home of George Billups, one of the first of the Billups family to come to Virginia. The house has remained in the family. The Billups Family has been involved in maritime pursuits in Mathews County over the years. There were officials of Kingston Parish and officers in the Militia. Also, they were planters. The house is an outstanding example of a dwelling for well-to-do country gentry of the late 18th Century in Tidewater Virginia. It is notable for its exceptional woodwork.

New Point Comfort Lighthouse

The New Point Comfort Lighthouse was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1973. The stone lighthouse was commissioned by President Thomas Jefferson and constructed by Elzy Burroughs (Mathews County) in 1804. The light was constructed in 1805. A retired sea captain, Issac Foster, was the light keeper. It is the third oldest lighthouse on the Chesapeake Bay. The 63-foot lighthouse has been separated from the land and the light keeper's house disappeared prior to 1963. The New Point Comfort peninsula upon which the lighthouse stands has been a landmark for navigators since the 17th Century. The lighthouse is endangered today because of erosion and the rising sea level. It is owned by Mathews County and is supported by several local groups, the New Point Lighthouse Preservation Task Force and the Mathews County Historical Society.

Hesse

Hesse is a Georgian plantation house near Blakes in the Piankatank District of Mathews County. It was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1973. Hesse is set on a bluff overlooking the Piankatank River and Godfrey Bay. It was the originally the home of the Armistead family, a prominent colonial Virginia family. William Armistead patented 500 acres on the Piankatank River in 1659. The plantation at one time numbered about 3,900 acres. The construction date of the house has not been established; it is thought to be built between 1725 and 1750. Today, the house includes a 1952 south wing addition.

Poplar Grove Mill and House

Poplar Grove was built on the East River in the late 18th Century by Richard Billups. It was built for John Patterson and named for the many poplar trees he planted on the property. A tide operated mill has existed at Poplar Grove since colonial times; however the present building replaced the original mill that burned during the Civil War. Captain Sally Tompkins was born at Poplar Grove in 1833; she was the grand-daughter of John Patterson. Also, it is believed that the Poplar Grove mill ground corn for General Washington's troops when they camped nearby.

Old Thomas James Store

The old Thomas James Store stands behind the Sibley General Store on Main Street in historic



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Mathews Court House. At some point the building was moved from its original location fronting on Main Street. It is a one-story frame commercial building that is an excellent example of early 19th Century commerce. It has been described as being among a handful of surviving antebellum commercial buildings in the South today and a rare example of basic, one-story commercial building. It was operated by Thomas James; however, the date of the building has not been established – it is listed on the nomination as being circa 1810-1899.

Wolf Trap Light Station

The Wolf Trap Light Station was constructed in 1894 and operated by the U. S. Coast Guard. It replaced an earlier lighthouse that had been constructed in 1821. The structure is comprised of a cast-iron foundation cylinder, topped with a two-story brick, octagonal-shaped dwelling and a lantern. It is located offshore of the Bethel Beach Natural Area Preserve.



Methodist Tabernacle

The Methodist Tabernacle is a large, open pavilion built in 1922 that is a rare example of an early 20th Century revival meeting facility in Virginia. The tabernacle is located in a cleared field amid woods near historic Mathews Court House. A large ditch still exists on the property which helped to drain the low-lying land and prevented worshippers from driving too close to the building.



Sibley's General Store (Pending, PIF)

Sibley's General Store consists of two joined buildings that have been used commercially to conduct retail trade in Mathews for almost 200 years. The front portion of the Sibley Store was built in 1899; the rear portion is circa 1840. The Old Thomas James Store lies behind the two buildings. Sibley's General Store is significant to the local economic and social development of Mathews County. It was Sibley's where all of Mathews County residents shopped. It received many goods via steamboat from other port cities and made them available to County residents. In addition, it also served as the Mathews post office, serving as a social hub.

B. Williams and Company Store (Pending Nomination)

The B. Williams and Company Store is a two-story frame mercantile building built circa 1869-70 that still occupies a strategic location beside the East River at Williams Wharf. It was constructed near the old Customs House that operated on the East River. For over three centuries, it has served the surrounding community in a variety of uses including tobacco port, customs facility, store, post office shipyard, steamboat dock, oyster shucking, canning house, and public landing. The store represents a link to Mathews' maritime and commercial history and is an important cornerstone in the history of the Williams Wharf area.



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Other Properties of Historic Significance

In addition to properties that are listed on the National and State Registers of Historic Places, there are other properties of known local significance that are worthy of preservation. Some of these properties are identified and described below; additional properties may be identified later in conjunction with a more thorough study of historic properties in the County.

Tompkins Cottage

The Tompkins Cottage, circa 1815, is believed to be the oldest frame structure remaining in the County. It was the home of Captain Sally Tompkins, and her father, Christopher Tompkins, a local planter, merchant, sea captain and ship builder. It is located in Mathews, adjacent to the historic Courthouse Square and houses the Mathews County Historical Society. The property is owned by the County and is leased to the Historical Society.



Community Post Offices

Throughout Mathews County, there are small post offices in each of the communities. These small buildings are centers for social activity and represent a significant culture that is unique to the County and to each smaller community. Shown below are post offices in Hallieford, Gwynn, and Bavon.



Gwynn's Island Museum and Community Center

Gwynn's Island played an important part in the history of the County from its earliest beginnings. In celebration of that heritage the island has a museum dedicated to its history and a community center that is of notable architectural quality.





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West Mathews Community Center

The Community Center in West Mathews is an old school that has been renovated for community use.



Other Historic Sites

Additional sites noted as being of historic importance include the following properties:

- Auburn
- Green Plains
- Kingston Hall
- Providence
- Woodstock

Preservation Challenges and Opportunities 2030

Mathews County has a rich history that dates back to early Colonial times with relatively few documented properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Much of the charm of the County is tied to its maritime heritage and its role as a center for small community commerce. Not only is County history important for residents to understand their community and provide a “sense of place,” County history also is important from a tourism perspective that can substantially aid the local economy. There are many structures in the County that may be of important historical or cultural significance. More research and planning are needed to identify these important sites and to plan how the community should preserve and utilize these resources.

As of 2009, the Center for Coastal Resources Management at VIMS, the Mathews Maritime Foundation and other partner agencies have been working on the Mathews Maritime Heritage Trail which will showcase the valued coastal landscape and maritime history of the County. As this important project progresses, the historic information should be incorporated into future planning documents and appropriate user-friendly maps developed for residents and visitors.



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Planning/Development Policies
Action Strategies for History and Culture 2030

The following planning and development policies and action strategies are established to achieve the desired vision for historical and cultural resources in Mathews County:

Table with 2 columns: Policy ID (HC 1, HC 2) and Policy Description. HC 1 describes fundamental history and culture and lists 5 strategies: 1. County-wide historic survey, 2. Preservation Plan, 3. Historic preservation overlay districts, 4. Incentives for property owners, 5. Maintain County-owned buildings. HC 2 describes history and culture as economic tools for tourism.



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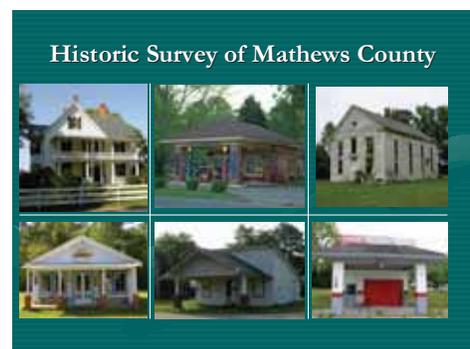
Development Policies and Strategies for History and Culture	
	1. Promote the visitor’s guide to the historic, natural and cultural resources of Mathews County. Promote driving, bicycling, canoeing/kayaking and walking tour maps.
	2. Work with the Mathews County Visitor and Information Center (MCVIC), the Mathews Historical Society and other local historical organizations to publicize materials and coordinate tourism efforts.
	3. Continue to promote cultural and performing arts as a magnet for drawing tourists to Mathews.
	4. Celebrate the heritage of Mathews County by developing a special heritage festival that can be hosted annually. Establish a Heritage Festival Committee to plan the event and coordinate activities throughout the County.
	5. Work with VIMS Center for Coastal Resources Management, Mathews Maritime Foundation, and other partner agencies to develop user-friendly guides, maps, etc. that promote the Mathews Maritime Heritage Trail.

History and Culture: Special Action Projects

The heritage of Mathews County provides an important sense of place for the community. The following discussions represent some initial projects that can further the goals and strategies discussed for History and Culture.

County-wide Historic Survey

The Virginia Department of Historic Resources provides matching funds for a historic survey. These funds are awarded on an annual basis and have been used by many localities in building their database of important historic properties.





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Public Facilities and Services

Public facilities and services provide important support to residents and businesses of the County. Often, community residents fail to truly acknowledge the diversity of support services that are needed for community well-being and safety. Many of these facilities and services are provided by the County and some are provided by state, private, or volunteer agencies. The cost of providing these facilities is a frequent budgetary struggle using tax dollars and privately-raised funds. The following section discusses existing conditions, challenges and opportunities for the future for important community infrastructure and services, including: utilities, transportation, recreation, schools, public safety (police, fire and rescue) and human services (social, mental health, medical, etc.).

Utilities

Water

Mathews County is underlain by the Yorktown-Eastover Aquifer, which is part of the Virginia Coastal Plain Aquifer System. An illustration of the primary aquifer systems in the coastal plain region is shown on the following page (Mathews County would be toward the east). This aquifer is positioned approximately 10 to 200 feet below the surface and is the second most heavily used source of groundwater for the region, supplying domestic yields of 10-20 GPM, and some large production wells (near West Point in King William County).¹¹ With the exception of Gloucester County, the region depends mostly on groundwater to provide its domestic and industrial water supplies.

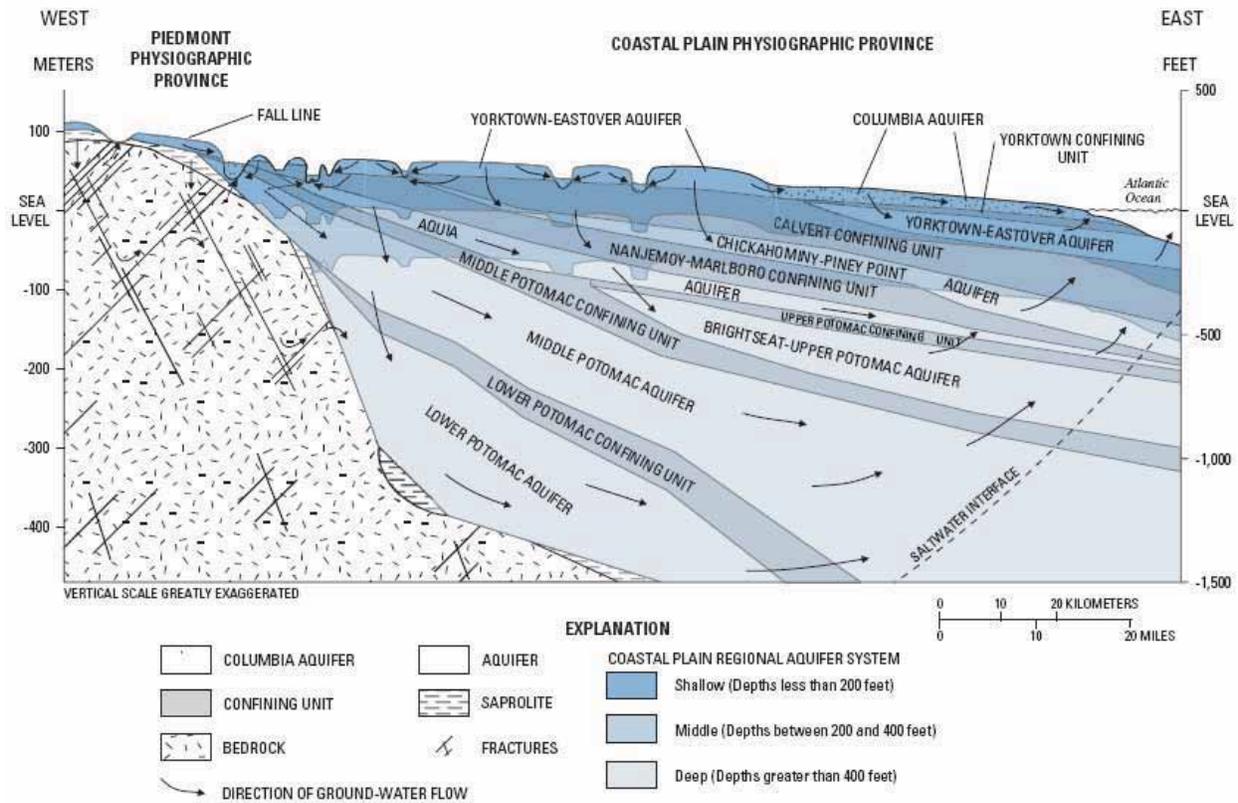
Much of the residential and small commercial water supply of the County is provided by private wells that draw water from the shallow, near surface “surficial” aquifer, sometimes referred to as the water table aquifer. (A map illustrating the depth to water table follows the aquifer system graphic.) This aquifer has a low potential for water yields and is high in chlorides and minerals¹², affecting its quality as a potable water source. Wells can supply approximately 5-20 GPM, depending on precipitation and the resulting recharge. However, the aquifer is very vulnerable to pollution from both point and non-point sources. In particular, failing septic systems, deteriorating underground storage tanks, and contaminated surface runoff are significant threats to water quality in Mathews County. Consequently, the adequate supply of safe drinking water and protection of groundwater quality is a continuous challenge.

¹¹ EEE Consulting, Inc. and Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission. *DRAFT Regional Water Supply Plan, Existing Water Sources/ Water Uses/ Water Resources, Essex, King and Queen, King William, Mathews, and Middlesex Counties and Towns of Tappahannock, Urbanna, and West Point.* May 30, 2008.

¹² Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission. *Water Supply Management on the Middle Peninsula of Virginia – An Information Review.* 2002.



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Generalized hydrogeology of the Coastal Plain Physiographic Province showing the regional aquifer system. Source: U.S.G.S. and E.R. McFarland. *Hydrogeologic Framework, Analysis of Groundwater Flow, and Relations to Regional Flow in the Fall Zone near Richmond, Virginia*. 1997.

In 1995, R. Stuart Royer and Associates prepared a *Preliminary Water Study for the County Court House Community*. The study recommended an initial water supply plan for the central business district in Mathews, at the Courthouse, using three existing well systems (Cricket Hill Apartments, Riverside Convalescent Center, and the Lee-Jackson School). The study was updated in 1997 to determine estimated capacity, service area, water quality, costs and financing options. It was estimated that the first phase water system could serve 173 single-family units (all then existing). As of 2009, the County has not implemented a water system for the Mathews Court House District. Additional recommendations may be forthcoming from the future regional water supply plan (see following discussion).

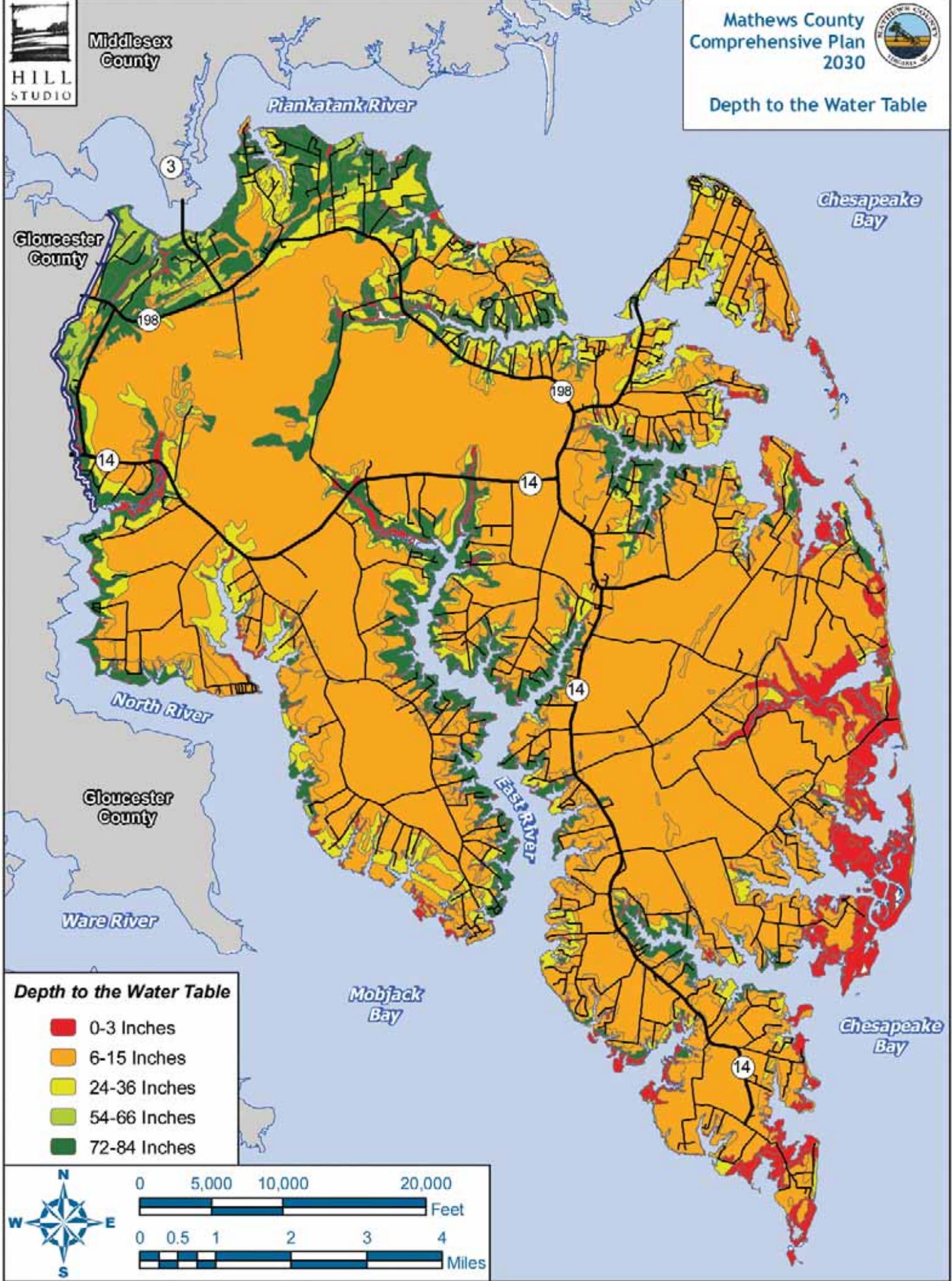


Middlesex County

Mathews County
Comprehensive Plan
2030



Depth to the Water Table





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A 2002 Regional Water Supply Management Study¹³ by the Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission indicated that in 2020 the regional water demand is estimated to be 10.3 MGD, almost double the usage in 2000. (In this study, Mathews had a projected population of 10,611 in 2020 and water use of 0.99 MGD.) Most of the regional demand is expected to be from residential development; however, the greatest potential for depletion of the region's groundwater could be from large industrial or commercial users. Given that the available water in the region from primary aquifer systems could produce from 32-57 MGD¹⁴ and that as of May 2008 there was approximately 25 MGD in existing water withdrawals, this will be a special challenge for the region, especially since large commercial or industrial users are very desirable for the region's economy. At present, King William County (along with other counties outside the Middle Peninsula Region) is defined as a "groundwater management area" which regulates water withdrawals; given water supply challenges, the management boundary could be expanded in the future to include additional counties in the region.

In 2005, state legislation was passed that required all counties, cities and towns in Virginia to prepare a local water supply plan, or be a part of a regional water supply plan by 2011. Mathews County elected to be a part of a regional plan that is being prepared by the Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission using water supply planning grants (2008, 2009) from the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality. The plan is expected to be completed by July 2010. It will cover the Counties of Essex, King and Queen, King William, Mathews and Middlesex, as well as the Towns of Tappahannock, Urbanna and West Point. The regional water supply plan consists of three phases: Phase I – Existing Water Sources, Uses and Resources; Phase II – Projected Water Demands, Management, and Drought Emergency Consistency Planning; and Phase III – Public and Agency Coordination and Adoption. As of April 2009, Phase I has been completed in draft form¹⁵; Phase II is almost complete; and Phase III should begin in late 2009.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Virginia State Water Control Board. *Groundwater of the Middle Peninsula, Virginia*. 1977

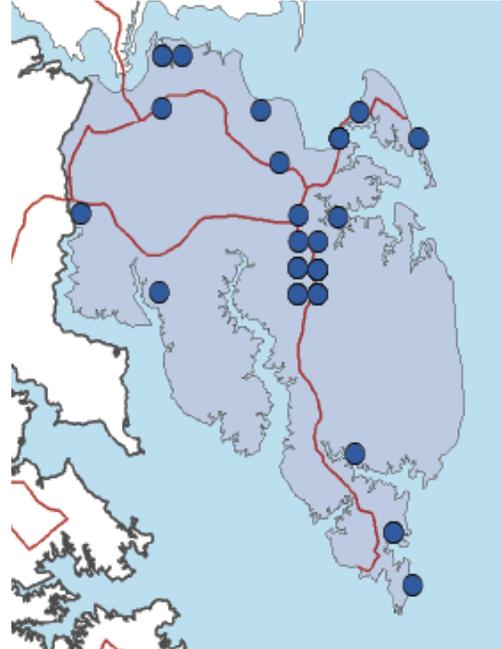
¹⁵ EEE Consulting, Inc. and Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission. *DRAFT Regional Water Supply Plan, Existing Water Sources/ Water Uses/ Water Resources, Essex, King and Queen, King William, Mathews, and Middlesex Counties and Towns of Tappahannock, Urbanna, and West Point*. May 30, 2008.



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According to the Phase I, Draft *Regional Water Supply Plan*, Mathews County has 21 permitted community wells (see map to right) which provide water for eight community systems. In addition, there are two documented large agricultural users of water in Mathews County.

According to studies by the Virginia Department of Health in conjunction with their Source Water Assessment Program (SWAP), 35 water sources were monitored in Mathews County in March 2008; of those 16 were highly susceptible to contamination and 19 were of low susceptibility. Thus, approximately one-half of the water sources tested were at substantial risk for contamination. One option for reducing the risk for contamination would be to consider implementing a wellhead protection program in the County to help protect existing and future water supplies. Such a program should include provisions for public education; recommendations for land use management near water supplies; best management/development practices; and provide a designated local coordinator and other administrative partners.

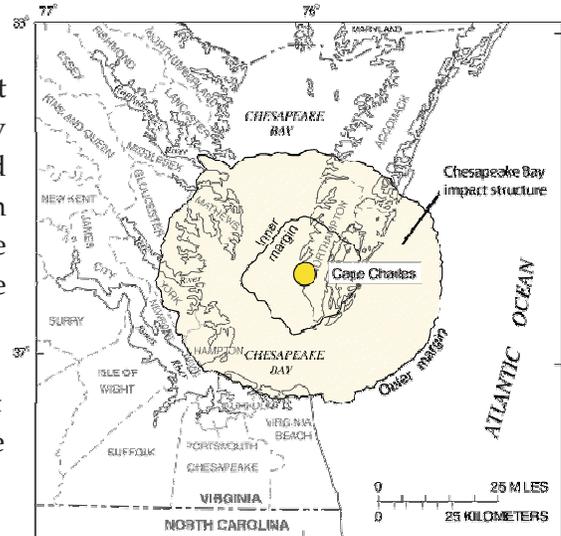


Community Well Systems in Mathews County, May 2008. Source: Draft Phase I, Regional Water Supply Plan, EEE Consulting, Inc.



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Of special note is that recent drilling studies by U.S.G.S. of the Chesapeake Impact Crater¹⁶ indicate that the impact affected the geology and hydrology of the region more than originally thought. It is recognized that the impact resulted in subsidence, faulting, and saline groundwater in the region; however, core drilling samples indicate that the extent of the embedded, highly saline water may be a significant threat. In the Hampton Roads and Chesapeake Bay region this highly saline layer can intrude into potable groundwater when there are large withdrawals. This has occurred in the Middle Peninsula with large industrial withdrawals. Thus, there is continued interest in managing groundwater and in defining the limits of the salt "wedge" in order to prevent contamination of the groundwater.



Regional map of the Chesapeake Bay Impact Crater and the USGS drill site at Cape Charles
Source: U.S.G.S., Open-File Report 2007-1094, Site report for USGS test holes drilled at Cape Charles, Northampton County, Virginia, in 2004

The regional water supply plan expected in 2010 will provide more detailed information on water sources, water quality and quantity issues, and specific recommendations for managing the County water supply and protecting surface and groundwater.

¹⁶ Approximately 36 million years ago, a meteorite impacted the eastern part of what is now the Chesapeake Bay and Virginia. It left a crater about 85 kilometers (or 52 miles) in average diameter, the sixth largest on earth, and had a dramatic effect on the geology and hydrology of the region. The physical impact of the meteorite can be seen in the rivers of the region and as a ridge along Route 198 in the Cobbs Creek area of Mathews County.



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Sanitary Systems & Sewer

Most of Mathews County is served by private septic systems. With the high water table in the County, these systems have presented many challenges to water quality and to maintaining safe water supplies. Installation of new septic systems is regulated by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality and the Virginia Department of Health; however, regular monitoring of the installed systems is more complex and often not routinely done, unless there is a public health concern. Consequently, to protect water quality and comply with the Chesapeake Bay Act, the County focuses preventative efforts on working with property owners to educate them on the need for regular pump-outs of septic tanks and to promote a septic tank pump-out program. The regional program is coordinated through the Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission and has limited regional funding; typically, the available County allocation is targeted to specific areas and income levels of residents of the County.

While new alternative septic systems may provide some technological advances for property owners, the future of these systems and the maintenance challenges are uncertain. Thus, there is public concern with respect to potential for failing systems and/or the effectiveness of new experimental systems. This concern was elevated in 2009 when the Virginia General Assembly passed new legislation that assigned state regulation and permitting of these alternative systems to the Virginia Department of Health, pre-empting any review or permitting process by local government. While additional regulations on alternative on-site sewage systems are to be developed by the Virginia Department of Health, the resolution of this issue is of special interest to Mathews County, as well as other communities throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia that have an abundance of private sanitary systems.

As of 2009, Mathews Court House is the only area served by a central wastewater treatment plant and sewage system. The County sewage treatment facility, constructed in 1976 with a design capacity of 100,000 GPD, is owned and operated by the Hampton Roads Sanitation District (HRSD) which assumed responsibility of the system in 2000. The average daily flow of the plant is approximately 70,000 GPD (2009). With the system nearing the end of its useful life, the County worked with HRSD to upgrade and expand the existing Mathews Court House sanitary system. It was decided that the best alternative was to close the existing sewage treatment plant and develop a transmission force main with pump stations to serve the existing Sanitary District with the potential expansion for defined sanitary sewer areas. The new system would extend from Mathews Court House generally along Church Street, Glebe Road, Buckley Hall Road, Windsor Road and John Clayton Memorial Highway to Gloucester and then to the regional HRSD treatment plant in York County. A map of the Mathews Sanitary Sewer Transmission Force Main and potential phased improvements is illustrated on the following page.



Middlesex County

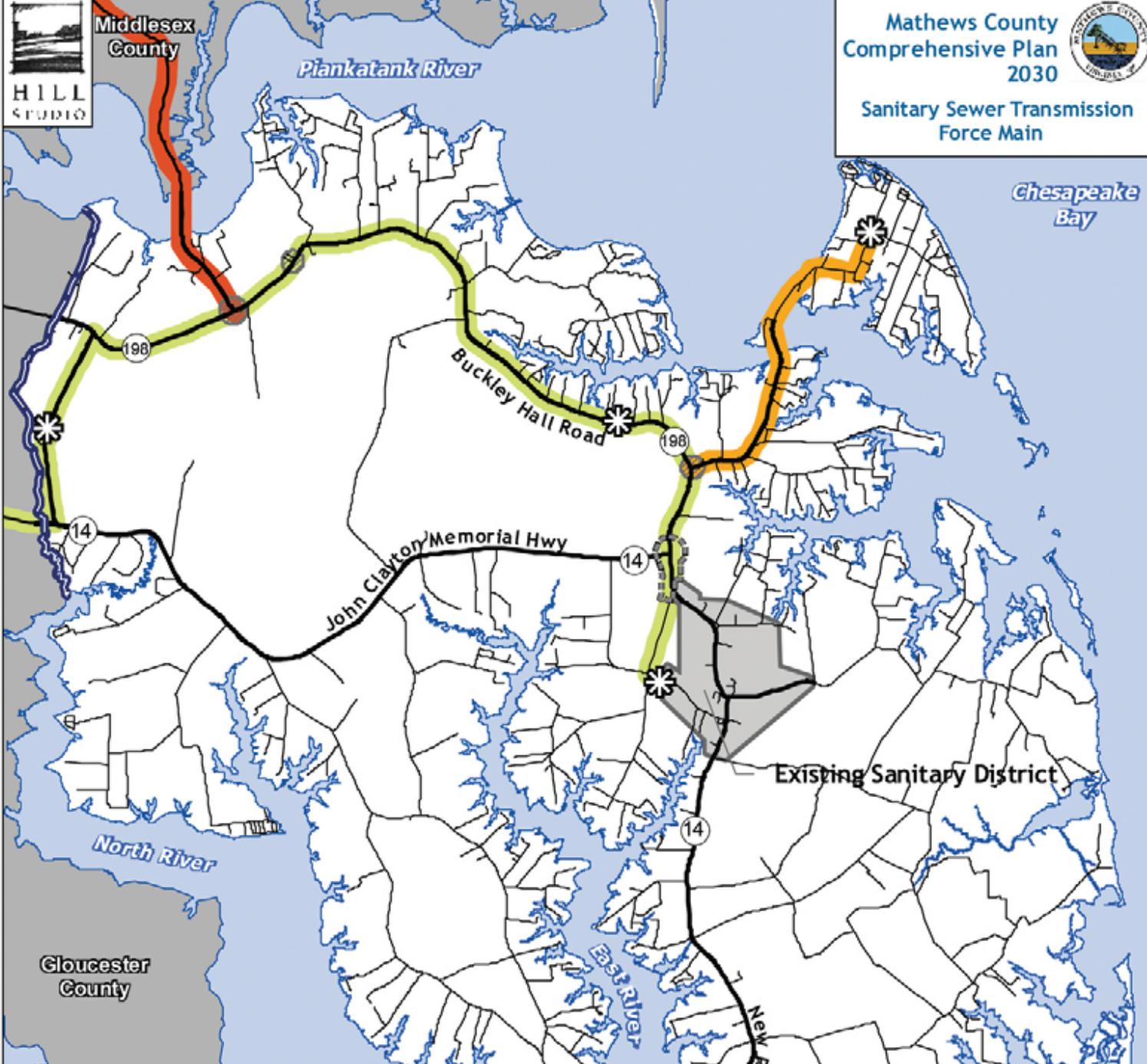
Piankatank River

Mathews County
Comprehensive Plan
2030



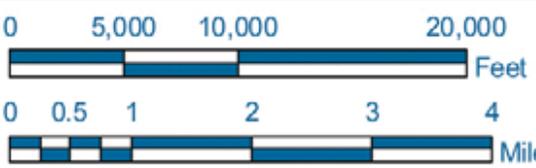
Sanitary Sewer Transmission
Force Main

Chesapeake Bay



Legend

- Proposed Pump Stations
- Phase I
- Possible Phase II
- Possible Phase III
- Sanitary District
- Potential Expanded Sanitary District
- Potential Sanitary Service Area



Existing Sanitary District

Mobjack Bay

Chesapeake Bay



***IV. Mathews County Today and Tomorrow:
Conditions, Opportunities, Policies and Strategies***

The Preliminary Engineering Report (2007) for the improvements prepared by Camp Dresser and McKee, Inc. recommended several alternatives and phasing for constructing the transmission force main and pump stations to Gloucester and the York River Treatment Facility. The proposed construction of the improvements will be in three phases – *Phase I* would convey wastewater from the Mathews Court House District to the Gloucester Courthouse area via a transmission force main along Church Street, Buckley Hall Road and Windsor Road with pump stations in the Mathews Court House area, Hudgins area and off Windsor Road between Rtes. 198 and 14. *Phase II* is proposed to convey wastewater from Gwynn’s Island to Hudgins and then to Gloucester Courthouse using a pump station and equalization tank storage on Gwynn’s Island. *Phase III* is proposed to convey wastewater from eastern Middlesex County (Deltaville) across the Piankatank River and connect with the Mathews County system. At present, the design of *Phase I* is complete; construction is expected to begin by fall 2009 and completed in 2011.

Careful land planning and appropriate choices of future land uses abutting the sanitary sewer transmission force main will be important in managing growth and development along the Route 198 corridor and to the County as a whole. (Of course, the amount of development that can be accommodated also depends on available water supply.) For sanitary service planning purposes, Phase I is designed to accommodate an average flow capacity of up to approximately 150,000 GPD; the flow capacities for Phases II and III have not yet been designed, but would be in accordance with requested development demands and negotiated community financial participation. In addition, the transmission line could be expanded to meet additional requested demand by adding a parallel transmission line, pump stations, storage, etc.



IV. Mathews County Today and Tomorrow: Conditions, Opportunities, Policies and Strategies

Solid Waste

Solid waste in the County is managed by the Virginia Peninsulas Public Service Authority (VPPSA), a regional governmental organization that provides services to ten southeast Virginia cities and counties. The organization is governed by a Board of Directors made up of one representative from each member city and county. Members pay for the specific services. The Authority operates a solid waste transfer station and convenience center in Mathews County on Route 14 in West Mathews. The transfer station accommodates household waste and some business waste, and offers recycling (paper, glass, metal, and plastic). The facility also allows the disposal of such items as tires (limited), scrap metal and white goods, oil and antifreeze, and batteries. The Mathews facility does not accept commercial/industrial waste, electronics or hazardous wastes. The Authority does provide special events for collecting electronic and household hazardous wastes.

Based on information contained in the June 2008 report by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, Solid Waste Managed in Virginia During Calendar Year 2007, the Middle Peninsula Landfill has a reported remaining life of 60.2 years.

Telecommunications

Access to broadband services (defined as a minimum 768 Kbps download and 200 Kbps upload) is important to economic development, education, public health and safety, and to the overall quality of life. Over the past few years, Mathews County has actively worked to improve and expand broadband communications to more of the County for the purpose of enhancing education and promoting economic development and home-based businesses. This initiative coincides with a larger state-wide economic development initiative to expand affordable broadband connectivity in the Commonwealth by 2010. In 2010, Mathews County joined with three other Middle Peninsula counties to establish the Middle Peninsula Broadband Authority.

As of 2009, the County is participating in a Virginia Rural Broadband Planning Initiative coordinated by the Northern Neck and Middle Peninsula Planning District Commissions. Phase



Map showing recommended phasing of broadband network for Northern Neck and Middle Peninsula Regions (Mathews is Phase II and III).

Source: Northern Neck and Middle Peninsula Regional Community Broadband Telecommunication Planning Project, Phase 1 Final Report Needs Assessment & Broadband Education, Feb. 2008.



IV. Mathews County Today and Tomorrow: Conditions, Opportunities, Policies and Strategies

I of the study was completed in 2008 and consisted of a survey/needs assessment and asset inventory; this effort revealed the region has a clear demand and need for high speed connectivity options and lags behind the nation in high-speed access. It will provide a comprehensive telecommunications plan for the region that will establish the extent and structure of recommended networks, funding options, and implementation strategies. The Commonwealth’s priority is to connect the region’s educational and health-care related facilities first, followed by residential users.

Transportation

Highway/Road Corridors and Systems

The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) manages and plans for the streets and highways systems in Mathews County, as well as the surrounding region. Long-range planning for Mathews County is done as part of the Rural Transportation Planning Program conducted by the Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission and VDOT. A map of the existing highway transportation network is presented in the map on the following page. The two primary roads leading into Mathews County are State Route 14 (John Clayton Memorial Highway) and State Route 198 (Buckley Hall Road); these are classified as rural “minor arterials”. Several other roads are classified as rural “major collector” roads; these include Windsor Road (Route 3); Church Street to Main Street (Route 14) in Mathews and New Point Comfort Highway (Route 14) to Bavon; Route 223 (Crickett Hill Road) to Old Ferry Road to Gwynn; and Fitchetts Wharf Road and Haven Beach Road to Diggs.

The VDOT 2025 State Highway Plan for the Fredericksburg District recommends improvements to some of the most travelled sections of Routes 3, 14 and 198. A summary of the proposed improvements is provided in the following table.

Mathews County Proposed Road Improvements VDOT 2025 State Highway Plan				
Route	Location Improvement	Length	Description	Est. Cost/Mile (2002)
Route 3	From Middlesex Co. to Route 14	4.78 miles	Rural, 4-lane + median	\$3.5 M
Route 14	From Route 3 to Route 198W	7.28 miles	Rural, 4-lane + median	\$3.5 M
Route 198/14	From Route 198W to Route 9246*	1.31 miles	Urban, 4-lane+ median	\$6.0 M
Route 198/14	From Route 9246 to Route 198E*	0.38 miles	Urban, 4-lane	\$5.0 M
Route 198	From Route 223 to Route 14W	0.93 miles	Rural, 4-lane + median	\$3.5 M

* Note: Route 9246 no longer exists. Lee Jackson Road was eliminated when the new Courthouse Facility was constructed at Liberty Square. Thus, the length of proposed improvements will be different for any future improvements to Route 198.

As of February 2009, none of these proposed improvements were included in the district’s six-year Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP); a few minor safety improvements have been programmed, as well as storm drainage improvements in the Mathews Court House area.



IV. Mathews County Today and Tomorrow: Conditions, Opportunities, Policies and Strategies

These are outlined in the following table.

VDOT Fredericksburg District - FY2009-2014 Six-Year Improvement Program, Mathews County			
Location	Improvement	Est. Cost	Schedule
Route 14 at Route 198	Construct turn lanes	\$3.7 M	2011
Route 14 at Route 617	Construct turn lanes	\$1.1 M	2009
Route 14 at Route 660	Construct turn lanes	\$1.3 M	2009
Route 14 at Mathews Court House	Drainage improvement study	\$500,000	2009

Traffic volumes measured in 2007 show that traffic counts in Mathews County range from approximately 6,100 average annual daily traffic (AADT) on Route 14 near Route 3, Windsor Road; 6,700 AADT on Route 198 near Route 14; to 5,200 AADT on Main Street in Mathews; and up to 1,200 AADT on Route 14 (New Point Comfort Highway) at Susan.

At the present time, the 2035 Statewide Transportation Plan is under study and is expected to be completed in 2010. The anticipated regional plan will evaluate population, employment growth and land use on the transportation system; also, it will identify any operational deficiencies, growth areas, critical freight infrastructure, bicycle/pedestrian improvements, and transit needs. When the plan is completed, it should incorporate the recommendations of this Comprehensive Plan and should be adopted as an updated transportation component.



Middlesex County

Mathews County
Comprehensive Plan
2030



Transportation
Network



Piankatank River

Chesapeake Bay

Buckley Hall Road

John Clayton Memorial Hwy

North River

East River

New Point Comfort Hwy

Mobjack Bay

Chesapeake Bay

Legend

Road Classifications

-  Rural Minor Arterial
-  Rural Major Collector
-  Rural Minor Collector
-  Rural Local
-  Bicycle Routes
-  Park & Ride
-  Prop. Alt. Evacuation Rt.



0 5,000 10,000 20,000

Feet

0 0.5 1 2 3 4

Miles



*IV. Mathews County Today and Tomorrow:
Conditions, Opportunities, Policies and Strategies*

Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

In recent years, transportation planning has emphasized including more multi-modal transportation options such as trails, bike lanes, pedestrian accommodations, bus/train, etc.). In 2000, the Middle Peninsula developed a Regional Bicycle Facility Plan which included Mathews County. The plan recommended a Class III bikeway network in the County of shared road facilities with bike route signage. Designated bike routes were on State Routes 198 and 14. Additional County bike routes are included on the Transportation Network Map on the preceding page. At the present time, there are no signed bicycle route(s). This would be very beneficial to Mathews County for seasonal visitors and for the annual “Tour de Chesapeake” which has been a large draw for visitors and a boost to the local economy.

Pedestrian sidewalks are located in Mathews and Hudgins. As additional development occurs in these commercial centers and other designated commercial areas, pedestrian facilities should be expanded to accommodate pedestrian activity.

Public Transportation

Public transportation for residents of Mathews County is provided by Bay Transit, a non-profit organization affiliated with Bay Aging. The transportation authority services twelve counties in the Northern Neck and Middle Peninsula regions and hosts forty buses (2009). The service operates from Urbanna (Middlesex County); a new transit facility is under construction in Warsaw in Richmond County and should be completed by 2010. The affordable transportation service operates weekdays from 6:00 AM to 6:00 PM and transportation must be scheduled one day in advance. Bay Transit also offers a seasonal trolley services in some communities within the service area.

In addition to the public bus service, the Middle Peninsula Rideshare Program operated by the Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission coordinates carpools, vanpools, telecommunication opportunities for residents of the region. There are three park and ride facilities in Mathews County – on Route 14 (West Mathews), on Route 198 north of its intersection with Route 3 at Dixie and on Route 198 at Mathews Park.

Storm Water Management & Road Drainage

Mathews County has poor drainage patterns as a result of the low elevation topography, poorly drained soils, high water table, tidal influences and the abundance of water features. The road network in the County includes side outfall ditches that assist in managing stormwater, when they are maintained; however, these ditches are not routinely maintained by VDOT and frequently become overgrown





**IV. Mathews County Today and Tomorrow:
Conditions, Opportunities, Policies and Strategies**

and filled with sediment and debris. The County hosts a citizen participation program in conjunction with VDOT to maintain those ditches that pose a public safety or health problem. One dilemma is that when left unattended, the ditches evolve and foster wetland vegetation, which can be beneficial in filtering stormwater pollutants; yet clearing of the vegetation becomes an environmental challenge.

Recreation Facilities

Mathews County has one inland community park, Mathews Park, that hosts a variety of public recreation facilities on ten acres, including picnic shelters, playground, tennis courts, basketball courts, and multi-purpose ball fields. The facilities are located in Central Mathews, adjacent to Mathews High School. While the County manages and maintains Mathews Park, the Mathews YMCA is under contract to the County for managing leisure programs and recreational events. In addition to the park, there are several community centers located throughout the County that offer specialized or recreational programs, and community meeting facilities. These include the Boys' and Girls' Club in Central Mathews, as well as community centers in West Mathews and on Gwynn's Island. A map showing the location of major park facilities, community centers, and the Mathews Birding and Wildlife Trail Loop is on the following page.



In addition to inland facilities, there are waterfront properties throughout the County that provide access to the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. Some of the most popular public waterfront facilities include: Haven/Festival Beach, Williams Wharf Landing, and Piankatank River Landing, owned by the County. Also, Bethel Beach Natural Area Preserve, owned by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, the New Point Comfort Lighthouse Observation Walkway, owned by the Nature Conservancy, and the Bayside Observation Deck/Picnic Pavilion owned by the Mathews Land Conservancy are important waterfront amenities.

Public access to County beaches and waterfront areas is of special interest to governmental officials and to residents of Mathews County. In 2003, the County adopted the *Mathews County Statewaters Access Plan* which provides an inventory of all County public water access properties and established community goals and recommendations for expanding facilities and public access.



Middlesex County

Mathews County Comprehensive Plan 2030



Recreation Facilities



Gloucester County

Gwynn's Island Civic Center

Chesapeake Bay

198

198

14

14

Mathews County Park

Active Lifestyle Center

Boys and Girls Club

Haven / Festival Beach

North River

Bethel Beach

Gloucester County

West Mathews Civic Center

East River

Ware River

Mobjack Bay

Chesapeake Bay

14

Legend

- Birding & Wildlife Trail Loops
- Parks / Centers

0 5,000 10,000 20,000 Feet

0 0.5 1 2 3 4 Miles

New Point Comfort Preserve & Lighthouse



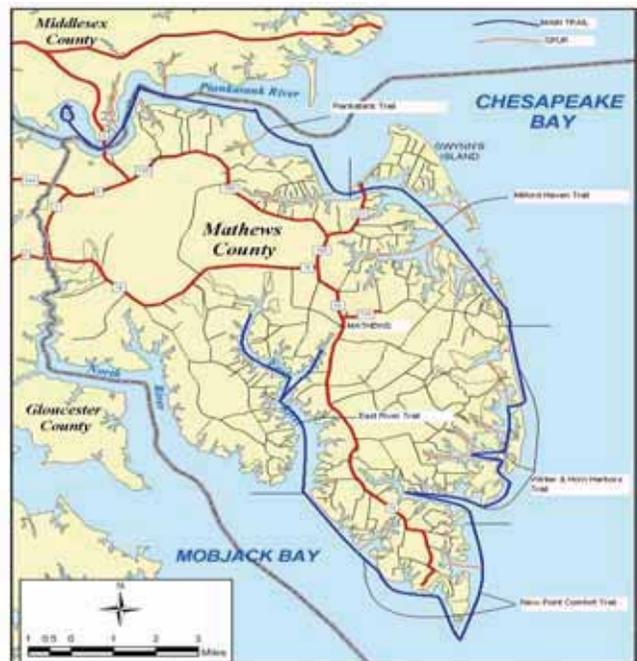
IV. Mathews County Today and Tomorrow: Conditions, Opportunities, Policies and Strategies

access points to the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. There are approximately twenty public access sites identified and discussed in the plan. A list of those sites and the amenities associated with each are identified in the two tables that follow the recreation map. Another recent property acquisition by the County is the East River Boat Yard in West Mathews. In addition, a landowner has recently donated nine acres of waterfront property to the Middle Peninsula Chesapeake Bay Public Access Authority for public water access and environmental education.

The Blueways Network in Mathews County is a recreational asset for non-motorized watercraft that serves not only residents, but also many visitors. In the County, the blueways trail system covers over ninety miles of water and includes: Piankatank River Trail, Milford Haven/Gwynn’s Island Trail, East River Trail, Winter Harbor Trail, and New Point Comfort Trail. These trails were developed and mapped by a volunteer Blueways Committee established in conjunction with McSEED. The group also has published a trail guide map.

In 2009, VIMS worked with a variety of partners¹⁷ to develop the “Mathews Maritime Heritage Trail” to preserve the valued coastal landscape and share the nautical heritage of the County. The first phase of the project is complete for the East River. More detailed mapping information on the trail can be found on line at <http://ccrm.vims.edu>.

All of these trails are part of the Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network and the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail (National Park Service).



Map of blueways trails in Mathews County. Source: Mathews County Website, www.co.mathews.va.us.

¹⁷Mathews Maritime Heritage Trail Partners include: VIMS, Mathews County, Archeological Society of Virginia (Middle Peninsula Chapter), Bay Trail Outfitters, Mathews County Historical Society, Mathews County Visitor Information Center, Mathews Memorial Library, Mathews Blueways Water Trail, Middle Peninsula PDC / Public Access Authority, New Point Comfort Preservation Task Force, Virginia Cooperative Extension Service/4H Youth Development, and National Park Service.



IV. Mathews County Today and Tomorrow:
Conditions, Opportunities, Policies and Strategies

Mathews County Statewaters Access – Site Information								
 Public Access Point	Priority	Waterway	Location in County	Map No.	Ownership	Zoning	Acreeage	Beach Frontage (lf)
Auburn Landing	L	North River	Rt 620	23-A-20	public & private	B1	0.67	80 ft
Roane's Point Lndg	M	Piankatank	Rt 630	1-A-21	public	B1	0.4	216 ft
Warehouse Crk Lndg	L	Piankatank	Rt 631	2-A-1	public	B1	0.24	
Piankatank River Lndg	M	Godfrey Bay	Rt 632	5-A-86A	public	B1	0.48	
Roses Creek Lndg	H	Queens Creek	Rt 662	10-A-206	public	B1	0.64	420 ft
Grimstead Pblc Lndg	H	Milford Haven	Rt 223	11A5-A-6	public	B1/R1	0.927	130 ft
Milford Landing	M	Edwards Creek	Rt 672	11A6-A-11A	public	R1	0.5	
Whites Creek Lndg	M	Whites Creek	Rt 682	22-A-118	public	B1	0.25	61 ft
Festival Beach	H	Ches Bay	Rt 643	27-7-1,2,3	public	C	5.339	
Haven Public Beach	L	Ches Bay	Rt 645	27-6-1,2	public	C	15.8	
Town Point Landing	H	Put-In-Creek	Rt 615	29-A-201	public & private	B1		
William's Wharf Lndg	H	East River	Rt 614	29-A-221,222	public	B1	3.35	
Winter Harbor Lndg (Old Mill Landing)	M	Winter Harbor	Rt 611	36-A-21A	public	B1		< 125 ft
Winter Harbor Haven	H	Winter Harbor	Rt 608	36-A-148	public	B1	0.25	180 ft
Horn Harbor Landing	L	Horn Harbor	Rt 698	40-A-88	public	B1	0.9	1,000 ft
Davis Creek Landing	M	Davis Creek	Rt 689	43-A-36	public	B1	0.023	208 ft
Doctor's Creek Lndg	L	Doctor's Creek	Rt 699	42-5-4B	public	B1	0.5	
New Point Comfort	H	Ches Bay	Rt 600	45-A-2 & 3	private	C		
East River Bt Lndg		East River	Rt 619		public			



IV. Mathews County Today and Tomorrow:
Conditions, Opportunities, Policies and Strategies

Mathews County Statewaters Access - Site Amenities																								
 Public Access Point	Waterway	Signs	Shoulder Pkg	Sm Pkg Lot < 10	Lg Pkg Lot > 10	Trailer Pkg	Picnic Area	Waste Receptacles	Lighting	Restrooms	Hiking Trail	Bike Trail	Rules	Food	Fuel	Handicap	Fee/Permit	Slips/Mooring	Boat Storage	Fishing Pier	On-top Launch	Unimproved Ramp	Cement Ramp	Swim Beach
		Auburn Landing	North River			◆																	◆	
Roane's Point Lndg	Piankatank			◆		◆															◆			
Warehouse Crk Lndg	Piankatank	◆																			◆			◆
Piankatank River Lndg	Godfrey Bay				◆	◆	◆	◆					◆								◆			◆
Roses Creek Lndg	Queens Creek			◆		◆												◆		◆		◆		
Grimstead Pblc Lndg	Milford Haven	◆			◆	◆			◆	◆				◆				◆	◆				◆	
Milford Landing	Edwards Creek	◆	◆															◆		◆		◆		
Whites Creek Lndg	Whites Creek			◆		◆														◆	◆	◆		
Festival Beach	Ches Bay	◆	◆										◆								◆			◆
Haven Public Beach	Ches Bay	◆	◆										◆								◆			◆
Aaron's Beach	Ches Bay		◆										◆											◆
Town Point Landing	Put-In-Creek	◆		◆	◆															◆	◆	◆		
William's Wharf Lndg	East River	◆			◆	◆			◆				◆			◆			◆	◆	◆	◆		◆
Winter Harbor Lndg (Old Mill Landing)	Winter Harbor	◆	◆															◆		◆	◆	◆		
Winter Harbor Haven	Winter Harbor	◆			◆	◆								◆						◆	◆			◆
Horn Harbor Landing	Horn Harbor		◆																		◆			
Davis Creek Landing	Davis Creek				◆	◆								◆						◆	◆			
Doctor's Creek Lndg	Doctor's Creek		◆																		◆			
New Point Comfort	Ches Bay	◆			◆		◆	◆								◆				◆	◆			
East River Boat Yd	East River		◆		◆															◆	◆		◆	

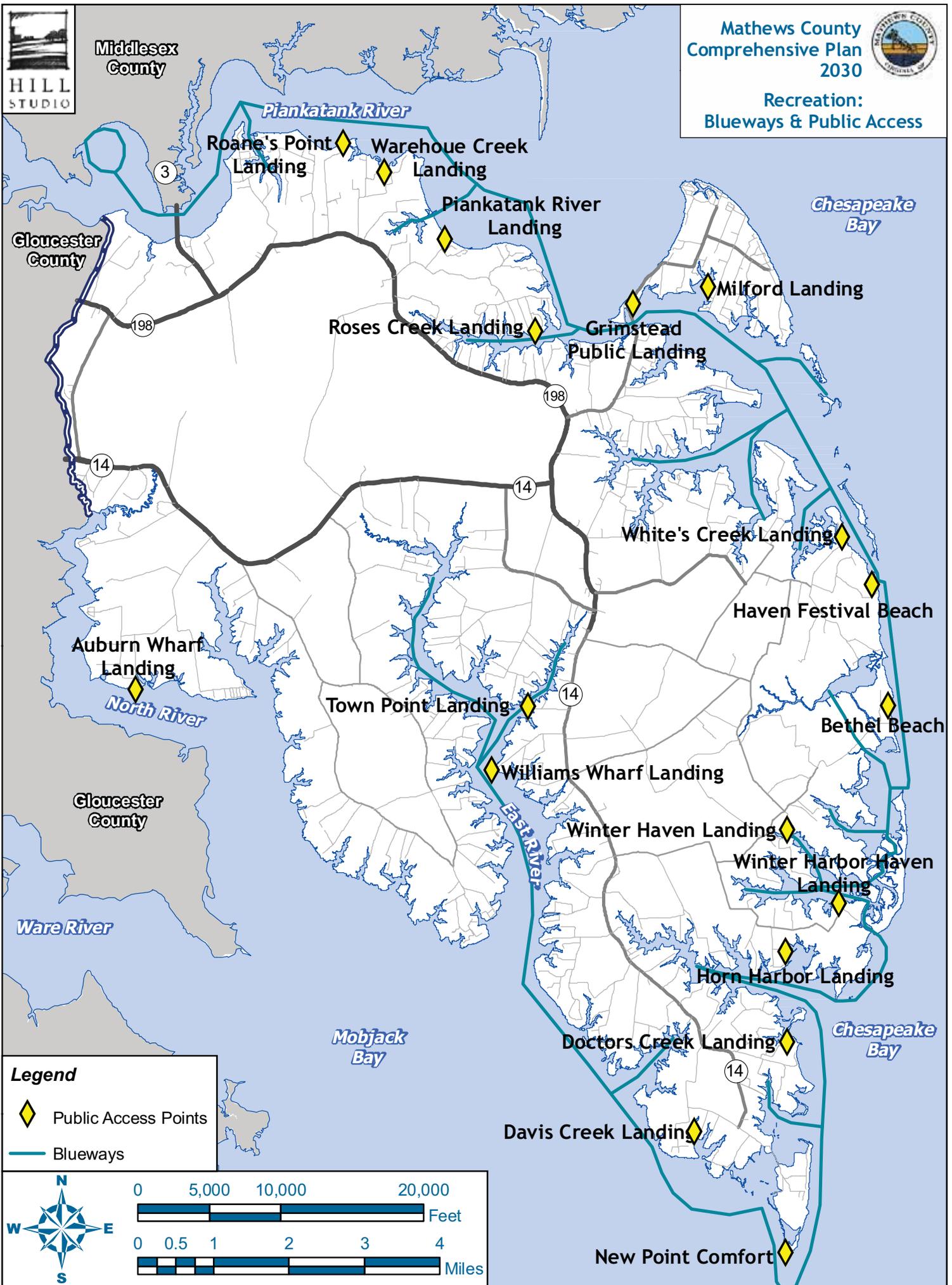


Middlesex County

Mathews County
Comprehensive Plan
2030



Recreation:
Blueways & Public Access



Legend

- Public Access Points
- Blueways

0 5,000 10,000 20,000 Feet

0 0.5 1 2 3 4 Miles

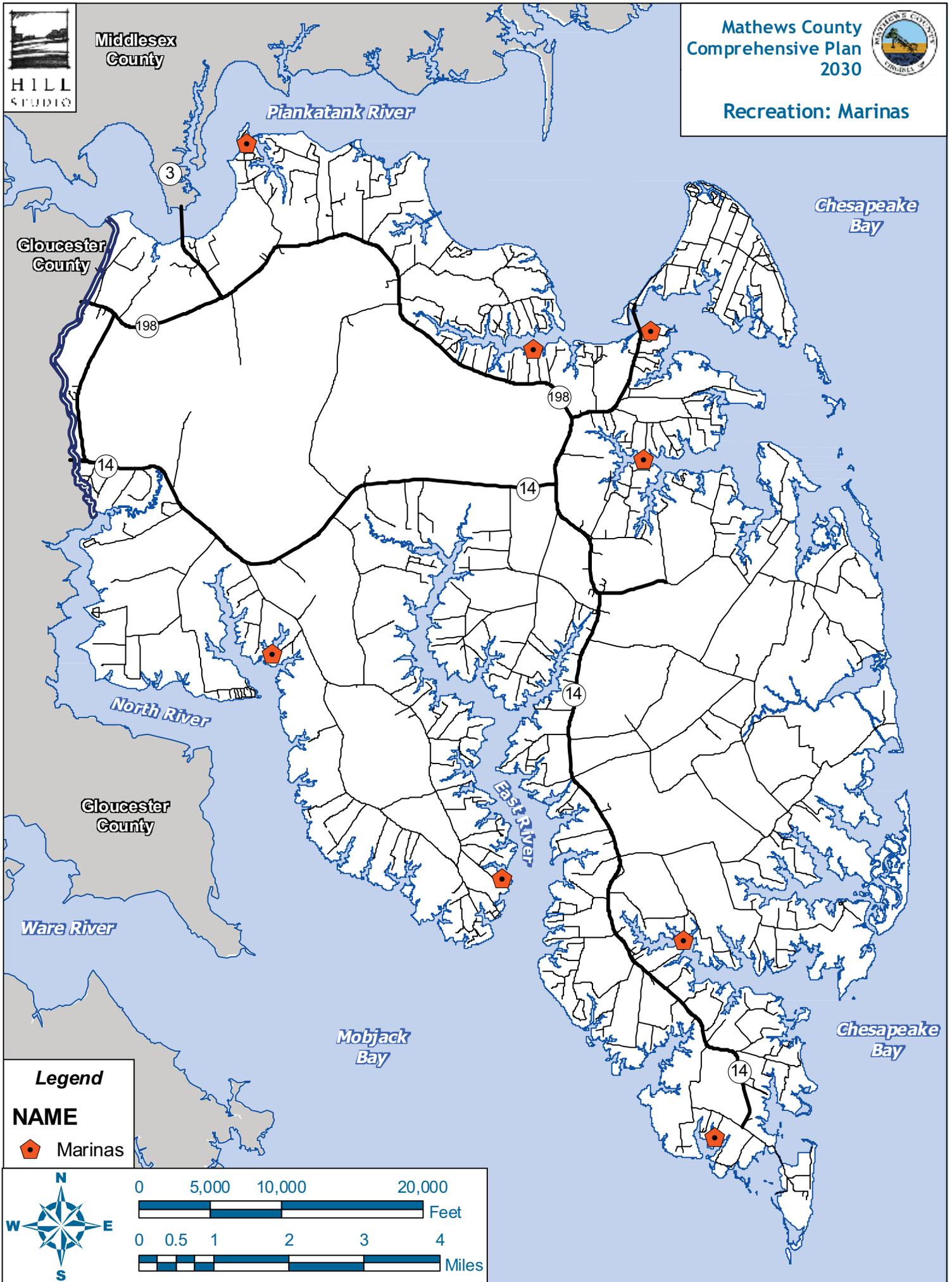


Middlesex County

Mathews County
Comprehensive Plan
2030



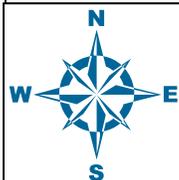
Recreation: Marinas



Legend

NAME

Marinas



0 5,000 10,000 20,000

Feet

0 0.5 1 2 3 4

Miles



*IV. Mathews County Today and Tomorrow:
Conditions, Opportunities, Policies and Strategies*

Public Safety

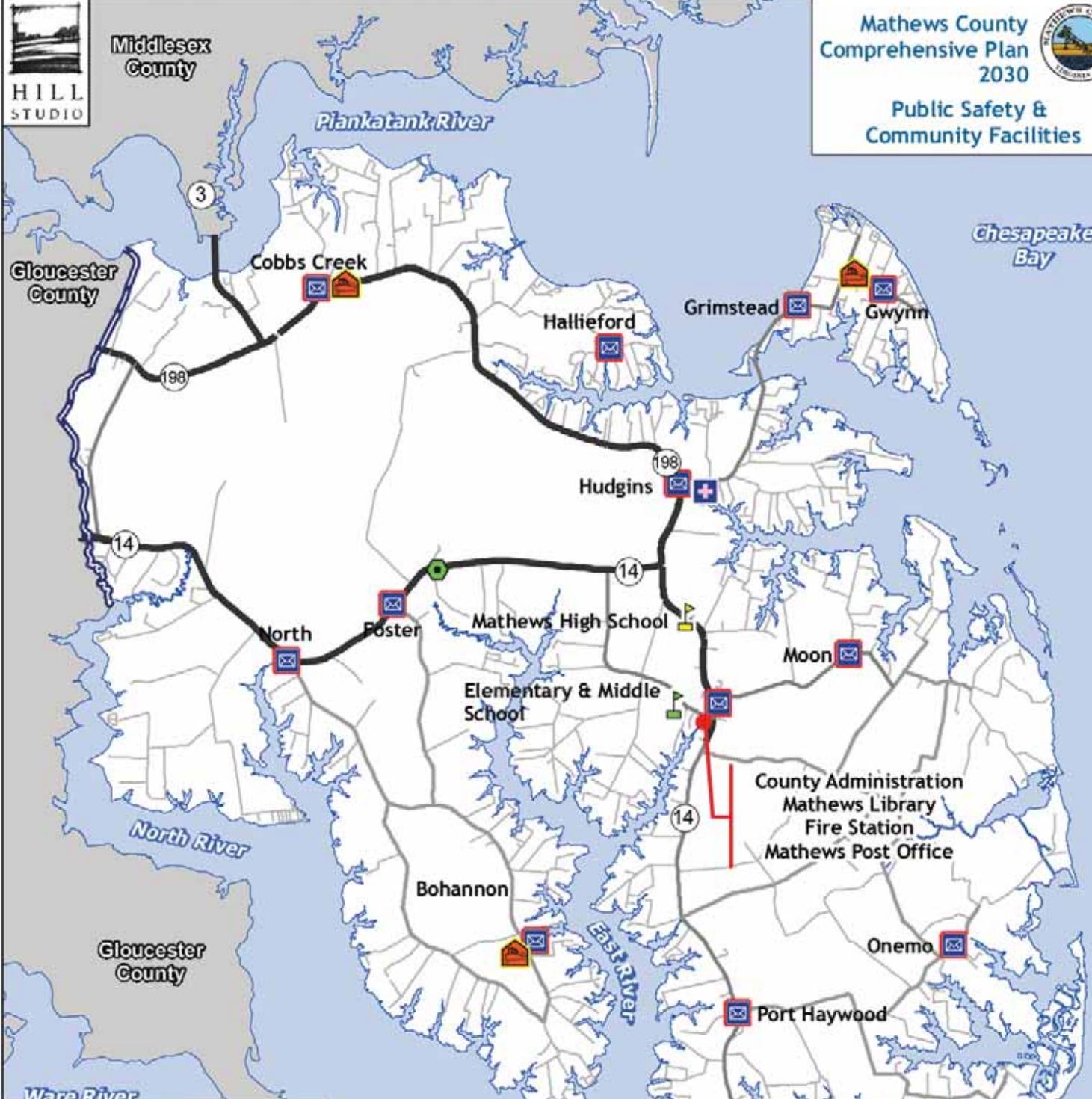
A map of public safety and other community facilities in Mathews County is on the following page. The Mathews County Sheriff's Office provides law enforcement services and offers a variety of public safety programs. The Sheriff's Office employs approximately 15 persons (officers, dispatchers, and administrative staff). The Sheriff's Office also coordinates neighborhood watch programs for various areas of the County and offers business and residential security check services. Mathews County participates in a regional jail authority, which operates the Middle Peninsula Regional Security Center, located in Saluda, Virginia. In addition, several state police officers are assigned to Mathews County.

Fire and rescue services in Mathews County are provided primarily by volunteers. There are five fire stations and one rescue squad that provide emergency services to businesses and residents. Fire stations are located in Bohannon, Cobbs Creek, Gwynn's Island, Mathews and New Point. A rescue squad station is located in Hudgins and is the largest of the public safety stations; it includes personnel trained as "first responders" who can provide skilled emergency care. Some paid personnel help staff the rescue squad. In addition, the County has agreements with neighboring Counties to provide mutual assistance.



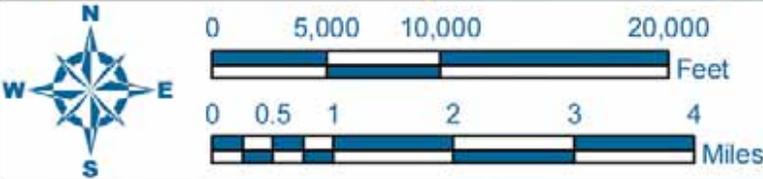


Middlesex County



Legend

-  Rescue Squad
-  Transfer Station
-  Fire Stations
-  Post Offices
-  Elementary & Middle School
-  Mathews High School





*IV. Mathews County Today and Tomorrow:
Conditions, Opportunities, Policies and Strategies*

Hazard Mitigation

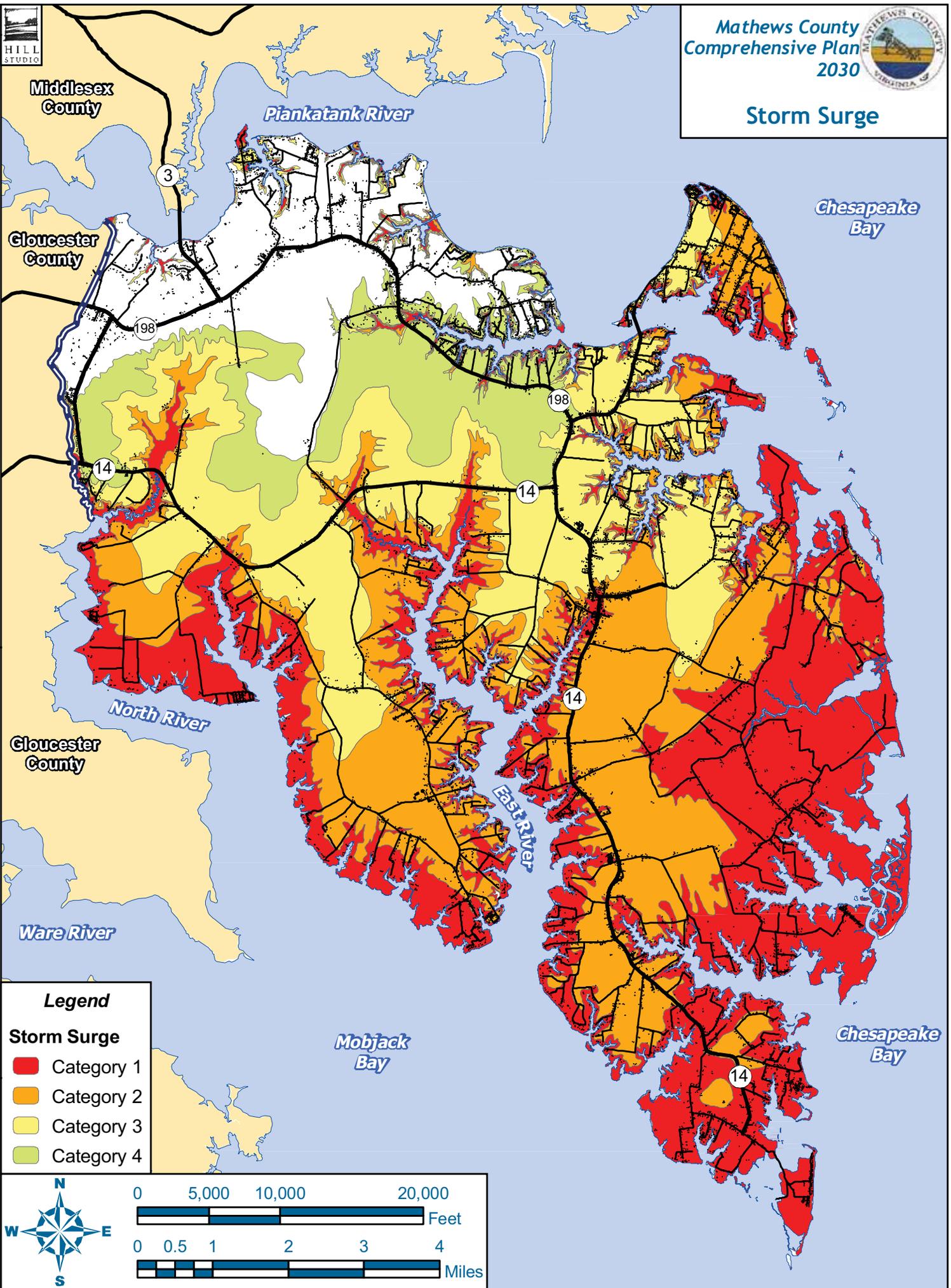
The County is a participating partner in the *Middle Peninsula Regional Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan*, which was adopted in 2005. This plan was developed in conjunction with the federal Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 which required local governments to develop mitigation plans to reduce risk from natural hazards. The regional plan is approved by the County, as well as the Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The current regional plan is in the process of being updated and is expected to be adopted by the jurisdictions in the Middle Peninsula after it is reviewed and approved by VDEM and FEMA. In 2005, the greatest risks on the Middle Peninsula were from hurricanes, winter ice storms, tornadoes, coastal flooding, and coastal/shoreline erosion. In Mathews County the risks were associated with:

- **Hurricanes and Coastal Storms** –The waterfront position of Mathews County and low-lying lands are particularly susceptible to damage from storms and hurricanes. Flooding from storm surges, wind, and heavy rains have the potential to block transportation routes and inundate properties. The Storm Surge Map on the following page indicates that approximately 50% of the County has the potential to be damaged by a Category 2 hurricane and about 80% by a Category 4. Mathews County participates in the National Flood Insurance Program.
- **Shrink-Swell Soils** – The northeastern portion of Mathews County and waterfront lands adjacent to rivers and streams contain soils that have a high potential for shrink-swell (expands with moisture content). Most of these soils are within lands included within the lands managed under the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act (CBPA).
- **Wildfires** - The region is at some risk for wildfires because of the widespread forests. According to the Hazard Mitigation Plan, of the approximately 65,500 forested acres in Mathews County, over 75% was identified by the Virginia Department of Forestry as being at medium to high risk for wildfires.
- **Drought** – According to the Hazard Mitigation Plan, there have been five major droughts in Virginia since 1900. The last severe drought in Tidewater was in 2001-02. In Mathews, a significant drought can result in significant water supply issues as a result of the aquifer limitations, the number of shallow private wells, and the lack of a public water supply.

The County has an assigned Emergency Services Coordinator who is responsible for coordinating and updating the hazard mitigation plan every five years. A High Speed Emergency Notification System (Code Red) for the County and improved digital mapping at a 100 or 200-foot scale (then at 400-foot scale) has been implemented. Residents can register for notification of emergency events, such as hurricanes or flooding, by having a recorded message sent to their home phone, cell phone or by e-mail.



Storm Surge



Legend

Storm Surge

- Category 1
- Category 2
- Category 3
- Category 4



0 5,000 10,000 20,000



Feet

0 0.5 1 2 3 4



Miles



IV. Mathews County Today and Tomorrow: Conditions, Opportunities, Policies and Strategies

Education, Health & Public Services

County Schools and Continued Education

Mathews County has three public schools that provide educational services to residents: Lee-Jackson Elementary School (Kindergarten to Grade 4, constructed 1996); Thomas Hunter Middle School (Grades 5-8, constructed 1954); and Mathews High School (Grades 9-12, constructed 1939, recent addition 2000). All of these facilities are located in Central Mathews and are fully accredited by the State of Virginia and meet the established Standards of Learning. In 2008-09 the enrollment was 1,249 students (435 elementary, 385 middle, and 429 high school). Programs offered by the schools include: special education, gifted education (SAIL, Scholastically Abled Identified Learners), alternative career and technical training, advanced placement, dual enrollment, and extracurricular sports and other activities. The County schools partner with Rappahannock Community College in Glenss (Gloucester County) for a variety of courses. Also, the County is a participant in the Chesapeake Bay Governor’s School for Marine and Environmental Science.



The school system has a Strategic Plan for educational programs, facilities, personnel, and communication. Some of the important strategies from the 2008-09 Plan include:

- Developing a capital improvement plan for short and long-term needs (by department and school).
- Recruiting and retaining quality personnel through mentorship, professional training opportunities, recognition of outstanding employees, and competitive salaries and benefits.
- Increasing student achievement and enhancing learning opportunities through benchmarking, smart boards, website/virtual offerings, dual enrollment, and partnerships with youth and community organizations.
- Involving parents in the child’s learning process through increased communication, events, and volunteer opportunities.
- Promoting schools through celebrations, recruitment, and updated information.



Rappahannock Community College offers associate degrees in arts and sciences, business management, nursing, protective services, and general engineering technology. In addition, the



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college includes a Workforce and Community Development Center that provides a GED program (Middle College), careers certificate program, and specialized workforce training.

The Bay School for the Arts, operated by a non-profit organization, is a community arts education facility in downtown Mathews. The school hosts educational workshops and training in the visual arts, heritage crafts and performing arts. The Bay School Cultural Arts Center offers life-long, continued learning opportunities for both adults and children. In addition, they host special events and operate an art gallery and art supply store.

County Administration

Mathews County is governed by a five member Board of Supervisors (elected at large). A County Administrator handles day-to-day operations. County administrative facilities are located in downtown Mathews on the historic Mathews Court House Green. In 2005, a new courts facility was built on Route 14/198 near the entrance to downtown Mathews. The existing County Administration offices (built circa 1950) underwent minor renovations in 2009 to house the County's Registrar.

Library

Mathews Memorial Library is located in downtown Mathews in a renovated building on Main Street. Thanks to an anonymous donor, the Library will soon receive an adjacent building which can provide expansion space. The Library offers on-line catalog services and free Wi-Fi within the library. Also, there is public meeting space that can accommodate approximately 50 persons (John Warren Cooke Conference Center). In addition to library and reference services, the Mathews Memorial Library sponsors programs for adults such as book clubs, author forums, computer training, literacy training, employment search and music appreciation programs. The Library also hosts programs for children including story time, after school activities, special events, and various educational and homework resources.



Health and Human Services

Many of the public services related to health care and human needs are provided by the County Department of Social Services and the Mathews County Health Department (State of Virginia). Riverside Walter Reed Hospital in Gloucester (67 beds) is the closest full service hospital; it offers the following services: emergency care, adult and pediatric critical care, general surgical, orthopedic, obstetrics/gynecology, internal, gastrointestinal, pulmonary, cardiac, and family practice. The Riverside Convalescence Care Center in downtown Mathews provides



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approximately 60 beds for comprehensive nursing and rehabilitative care.

The Mathews County Health Department is part of the Three Rivers Health District and provides health care services, family planning, and other related services. The health department is involved in many children's health programs, screenings, and preventative public health matters, including well and septic permits and food service sanitation. The Health Department hosts a Free Medical Clinic monthly in conjunction with the Gloucester-Mathews Free Clinic. The clinic is staffed by trained medical volunteers and services are provided to residents who are uninsured and meet certain poverty guidelines.

The Mathews County Department of Social Services provides protective services for children and adults; operates the County foster care program; manages the Virginia Initiative for Employment not Welfare (VIEW); and offers a variety of assistance programs including Medicaid, food stamps, temporary assistance for needy families (TANF), and other assistance for needy or disadvantaged persons. The Department works very closely with the Virginia Department of Social Services.

Various other community organizations and agencies provide a wide diversity of services to youth, elderly, mentally/physically-challenged, and other residents in need. These include: Mathews YMCA, Mathews Boys and Girls Club, Mathews County 4H, Bay School, Bay Agency on Aging, Meals on Wheels, Hands Across Mathews, Habitat for Humanity, and Middle Peninsula-Northern Neck Community Services Board.

The Middle Peninsula Safety Net Coalition assists the region in coordinating health care and human services. Members of the coalition include: Gloucester-Mathews Free Clinic, Peninsula Institute for Community Health, Three Rivers Health District, Middle Peninsula-Northern Neck Community Services Board, Mathews Community Foundation, Mathews Department of Social Services, Mathews YMCA, Bay Aging, and the Northern Neck Middle Peninsula Tele-health Consortium. In 2008, the Coalition developed and published a resource directory for Mathews' residents of the various health care and related services.



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Public Facilities and Services Opportunities and Challenges 2030

Water and Sewer

One of the challenges for Mathews County in the future will be to provide safe water and sanitary sewage systems. Expansion of the sanitary sewer transmission force main from historic Mathews Court House to Gloucester may assist development opportunities in Mathews Court House and in the commercial nodes along the corridor (e.g., Ward's Corner, Hudgins, Cobbs Creek and Dixie); however, with limited water supply and capacity of the force main to convey sanitary sewage, there should be careful consideration of any large scale subdivision, commercial, or industrial development. Any future connections to the transmission force main will be in accordance with adopted recommendations from the County Board of Supervisors; however, preference should be given to serving the existing Mathews Court House Sanitary District and business or mixed-use development at primary commercial nodes, as opposed to residential development.

Since a majority of the County is served by private on-site septic and alternative sewage system facilities, it will be important to maintain a good monitoring and septic tank pump-out program. Citizen education and close collaboration and communication with the Virginia Department of Health will be invaluable to the County in protecting water supplies and public health. Especially with respect to alternative sewage facilities, it will be important to keep open communication with property owners and the health department to ensure proper maintenance and operation.

Water supply for the entire region is a significant issue in the long-term; the regional water supply plan (late 2009) will provide more information and guidance with respect to public policies and recommended actions. Once adopted, this plan should be incorporated into this Comprehensive Plan by amendment. In Mathews County, the locations of some wells are unknown. In the Main Street – Historic Courthouse area, this limits approval for new businesses that require water for restrooms, kitchens and other uses. Maintenance of some wells is not possible, and there is increased risk of damage from fires without hydrants or fire sprinkler systems to protect older buildings.

Telecommunications

Expanding opportunities for broadband service in the County and other emerging telecommunication technologies would benefit residents and businesses. With increasing opportunities for home-based occupations, telecommuting and distance learning, the County has a unique ability to draw, or employ, residents for small business development. Expanded services and close attention to integrating cutting-edge communication technology can enhance telecommunication opportunities and positively influence the community's economy and quality of life.



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Transportation

With the exception of a few intersections where improvements may be warranted because of the traffic movements (e.g., Route 14 and 198 and Route 3 and 198), the transportation corridors in Mathews serve the County well. Maintenance of stormwater ditches should be improved; however, this will require a collaborative effort between VDOT, the County and private property owners in order to effectively improve stormwater management along County roads.

There should be a discussion with VDOT to identify the feasibility of an alternative route to bypass Route 14 to the east of the Courthouse area. In an emergency event, such as a hurricane, if Route 14 (Main Street) is blocked due to flooding, there is not a primary access route to evacuate residents in the southern and eastern portions of the County. A potential alternative route could be a north/south road east of the Courthouse area connecting Tabernacle Road to Buckley Hall Road. In addition, since there is only one bridge to Gwynn's Island, alternative means for evacuating residents of the Island in the event of a hurricane should be identified.

When the 2035 Regional Transportation Plan is completed, it should be adopted as an amendment to this Comprehensive Plan.

Recreation

Recreation opportunities are very promising for Mathews County in the future. Increased public access to shorelines and waterfront facilities can provide citizens and visitors with wonderful experiences and resources that have been so highly valued by residents for generations. The 2003 *Staterwaters Access Plan for Mathews County* provides an extensive inventory of public facilities and makes recommendations for potential improvements. This plan should be updated with respect to recommendations for improvements and priority facilities. The East River Boat Yard property in West Mathews offers great potential for additional public access.

In addition, there are increased opportunities for use of existing bicycle routes and blueways, which can promote the County as a seasonal destination. In general, these compatible recreation activities are sensitive to the environment and beneficial to the local economy.

At present, the County does not have an adopted Parks and Recreation Master Plan. This type of planning document would be very beneficial in assessing the existing facilities and programs in the County. The document could be developed in coordination with the YMCA and other recreational programming agencies and could provide a more detailed and directed plan for public needs and future recreational opportunities within the County.

Emergency Services

Public emergency systems and public response for hazards are important future issues that will need to be carefully monitored on an annual basis. While the existing volunteer emergency/fire



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system is working well in Mathews, there should be an annual review of emergency events, response times/coverage, facilities, and equipment, etc. to ensure that the public’s health, welfare, and safety are met. At present, the County is supplementing volunteer services at primary facilities during peak weekdays and weekends; additional funding and staffing may be required in the future.

Storm surges and flooding from coastal storms will continue to be a challenge, especially in those areas of the County that have higher potential for flooding and only have one primary access road. With possible climate changes and rising sea levels, coastal living and public safety issues will require careful attention to land use management and public education.

Education

Continuing education and workforce training will be most beneficial for residents and businesses. With the aging population, declining numbers of school children, and the increasing trend for youth to move to more populated, employable areas, it will be especially important to promote technical training and continued education for residents. Educational opportunities should be for both technical and cultural purposes and can be made available by both public and private entities. These opportunities can be enhanced with and expanded broadband communication system and increased collaboration among educational providers.

Human Services

County officials have recognized the growing citizen interest in suitable residential options for seniors in order to allow residents to age and remain within their home county. At present, there is only one senior care facility in the County, thereby limiting options for those who may want or need alternative housing or assisted care.

Planning/Development Policies, Action Strategies for Public Facilities & Services 2030

Planning / Development Policies and Strategies for Public Facilities & Services	
PFS 1	A safe water supply for Mathews County is critical for public safety and community well-being. Existing and new development in the County should protect water quality and quantity.
	1. In considering expansion of existing development or new development, there should be an assessment of water demand for the proposed use and potential effects on water quality and quantity. Suitable provisions should be employed for water conservation and for adequate treatment of sewage, including regular monitoring and maintenance of systems.



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Planning / Development Policies and Strategies for Public Facilities & Services	
	2. Consider adopting groundwater protection measures such as a wellhead protection program to better protect water supplies.
	3. When the Regional Water Supply Plan is completed and approved, the County should adopt it as an amendment to this Comprehensive Plan. Important recommendations should be incorporated into this plan's strategies for Public Facilities and Services. Consider developing a Master Utility Plan for the County.
	4. Recognize that development of a public water system for the Mathews Court House area is inevitable in the long-term to satisfy public health, fire suppression and economic development needs.
	5. Amend the subdivision regulations to require approved community water systems for residential subdivisions of fifteen lots or more. Work with Virginia Department of Health and include appropriate design requirements for water systems and provisions for maintenance.
PFS 2	Land development along County entrance corridors and adjacent to the Mathews Sanitary Sewer Transmission Force Main line must be carefully planned. New development should be well-designed to enhance the corridor and to minimize effects on public services along the corridor.
	1. Adopt a Corridor Overlay District along John Clayton Memorial Highway and Buckley Hall Road from the County border to historic Mathews Court House. Establish design standards for setbacks, landscaping, signage, access, and general building and site design.
	2. Encourage business development in designated commercial centers along the Sanitary Sewer Transmission Force Main. Include provisions for evaluating service requirements along the line to ensure available capacities and appropriate land uses.
PFS 3	The availability of a state-of-the-art telecommunications network in Mathews County is important to economic development, education and the overall quality of life. Broadband services must be expanded in the County in order to bridge the digital divide. The County should seek funding and lobby for inclusion in initiatives to expand the network.



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Planning / Development Policies and Strategies for Public Facilities & Services	
	1. Work with relevant local and state agencies to expand broadband opportunities within the County. Consider grant and funding opportunities that can assist in implementing and expanding the network. Utilize planned improvements to existing utility systems (private and public) to co-locate and incorporate the most current broadband technology.
	2. Establish a working telecommunications committee to advise County officials on important advances in telecommunication methodologies.
PFS 4	The Transportation Systems of Mathews County should reflect the rural character of the County while providing safe facilities for residents and businesses. New facilities and planned improvements should include sensitive environmental designs, effective traffic management measures, stormwater management measures, and alternative transportation features.
	1. Work with the regional agencies to develop an updated transportation plan that accurately reflects the desired transportation systems for Mathews County.
	2. In developing new roads within the County, pursue alternative methods and best management practices for managing the velocity and quality of stormwater runoff. Consider sustainable stormwater practices such as low-impact design (LID) alternatives, stream buffers, reduced pavement and porous materials, trees and landscaping, etc. Consider adopting a Stormwater Management Ordinance. Work with Chesapeake Stormwater Network to identify appropriate methods and alternatives.
	3. Consider establishing a stormwater management fund to pay for routine maintenance of existing outfall drainage ditches.
	4. Work with VDOT to determine the feasibility of constructing an alternative north/south route east of Route 14 (Main Street) connecting Buckley Hall Road with Tabernacle Road.
	5. When the 2035 Regional Transportation Plan is complete and approved, adopt it as a component of this Comprehensive Plan. Incorporate relevant recommendations in the strategies for public facilities and services.



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Planning / Development Policies and Strategies for Public Facilities & Services	
PFS 5	<p>Alternative modes of transportation, such as bicycle routes, sidewalks, and bus services, are important County facilities that benefit both residents and visitors. The County should pursue pedestrian and bicycle improvements in community commercial centers, near schools, and central public facilities.</p>
	<p>1. Apply for Transportation Enhancement Funds and other alternative transportation funding sources to assist in making improvements. Establish a priority list for bicycle routes to target funding for design, engineering and construction.</p>
	<p>2. Revise zoning and subdivision regulations to require pedestrian provisions and improvements for business development in community commercial centers.</p>
	<p>3. Designate and sign bicycle routes; develop a bicycle route guide.</p>
PFS 6	<p>Parks and public recreation areas are important community amenities that directly influence the community's quality of life and economic well-being. A well-thought out master plan is an effective tool for meeting community recreation needs and phasing capital improvements.</p>
	<p>1. Develop a Parks Master Plan that provides an inventory of public recreational facilities and programs and identifies needed improvements for the short and long-term.</p>
	<p>2. Improve directional signage for existing public beaches and water access points.</p>
PFS 7	<p>Mathews County is recognized for its natural environment and inherent recreational amenities. Public access to the water and shores enhances residents' quality of life and is fundamental to the eco-tourism segment of the County economy. The County should continue to promote public access and appropriate facilities along its waterways and shorelines.</p>
	<p>1. Update the adopted 2003 Mathews County Statewaters Access Plan to assess public needs, priorities, and recommended improvements for water access. Work with the Middle Peninsula Chesapeake Bay Public Access Authority to develop and conduct a survey to assess County residents' needs for new and/or expanded public water access sites and facilities.</p>



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Planning / Development Policies and Strategies for Public Facilities & Services	
	2. Pursue site planning and recommended improvements to the East River Boatyard property for public recreation and access. Consider grant funding for planning and construction (e.g., Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation, Virginia Game & Inland Fisheries, U.S. Fish & Wildlife, and EPA Brownfields).
	3. Continue to work with VIMS and other partners to plan, map, and promote the Mathews County Maritime Heritage Trail.
PFS 8	Effective public safety and emergency services are essential to the health and welfare of residents and visitors. Volunteer services are highly valued in Mathews County. Collaboration and regular communication with County officials and residents are essential to ensuring adequate emergency response and services.
	1. Continue to monitor annually emergency facility and response information and to identify community needs and challenges.
	2. Support public-outreach efforts to recruit volunteers and raise revenue for the purchase and maintenance of emergency equipment.
	3. Consider implementing an emergency response fee for non-emergency or false alarms to occupied residential/business structures or to vacant structures.
PFS 9	Hazard Mitigation and Response Planning is important to community safety. Mathews County has special challenges with respect to coastal storms and flooding. Both public and private interests should be diligent in providing advance information and appropriate procedures for dealing with potential hazards.
	1. Reach out to seasonal non-residents and new residents regarding potential hazards and emergency preparedness and procedures; make information readily available at rental properties, local businesses, and civic areas.
	2. Develop a hazard mitigation strategy for addressing drought conditions and protecting water supplies. Identify specific strategies for addressing drought under “watch” conditions, “warning” conditions, and “emergency” conditions. Specify conservation procedures and adopt corresponding ordinances to manage water use.



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Planning / Development Policies and Strategies for Public Facilities & Services	
	3. Adopt the goals, objectives and strategies for Mathews County from the updated Regional Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan, when completed and approved by FEMA.
PFS 10	Continuing education and life-long learning are important to community well-being and prosperity. There should be a variety of educational opportunities available for all ages.
	1. Partner with area educational facilities to host special events, courses and training during evening hours or weekends to meet the needs of the community.
	2. Encourage collaboration among County civic organizations and educational facilities; share adopted work plans and programs; consider a community calendar, joint newsletter, web links, etc.
	3. Provide continuing support for educational programs and facilities that promote quality education for County schools. Encourage youth involvement in public decision-making and encourage excellence in communication among youth, school and governmental officials.
PFS 11	The senior citizens of Mathews County are important to community well-being and the local economy. Senior housing alternatives and support facilities are important in maintaining this population segment's continued vitality and contributions to the community.
	1. Update the County zoning ordinance to include provisions for alternative housing options for seniors. This could include such things as: age-restricted and assisted-living communities, and accessory apartments for family members.
	2. Encourage additional senior living and support facilities in the County in appropriate locations to meet the human service needs of the community.
PFS 12	County facilities must be maintained and accessible to the public. Some County buildings require substantial renovation. It is important to retain these historic buildings and rehabilitate them in a sensitive manner, while also meeting the public's needs for services and accessibility.



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Planning / Development Policies and Strategies for Public Facilities & Services

	1. Renovate the County Administration Building and other buildings located on the Historic Courthouse Green.
	2. Consider an energy audit for county-owned buildings to identify potential cost savings.



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Public Facilities & Services: Special Action Projects

Public facilities and services provide the supporting infrastructure for many important governmental activities that citizens and visitors need. The following paragraphs discuss some initial projects that can assist the County in progressing toward the established goals and strategies for Public Facilities and Services.

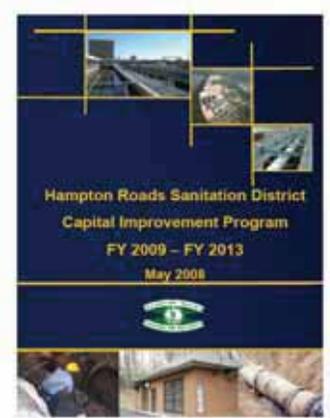
Telecommunications and Broadband

High-speed broadband and cutting-edge telecommunication technology are important to businesses and citizens. The broadband initiative is a County priority with many governmental and private partners involved in expanding services. Continued improvements in telecommunications and broadband should be promoted.



Water and Sanitary Sewer Improvements

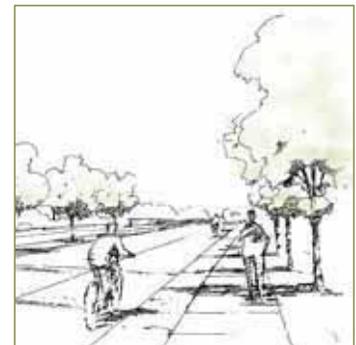
Implementation of Phase 1 of the Mathews Sanitary Sewer Transmission Force Main will provide better wastewater management in Mathews Court House, and potentially in the Hudgins and Cobbs Creek/Dixie communities. In addition, implementation will provide expanded opportunities for managing additional development along the project corridor. Options should be pursued for including conduit for broadband within the corridor, as well as considering bicycle or pedestrian trails within the right-of-way corridor. Both of these options provide public benefits and can be incorporated easily into the project.



Another public facility investment for the County could be a public water system to serve Mathews Court House. This project has been under consideration for several years. Other water supply projects that could be initiated may include: more stringent County standards for community water systems, well-protection measures, and increased septic system pump-out programs.

Bike Route Planning

Signage of significant bike routes may be one means of increasing public awareness of bicyclists and identifying designated biking corridors within the County. Funds are available through VDOT to assist in this signing effort.





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Environment

The environment of Mathews County is the major contributor to the overall quality of life and general economy of the County. The area's natural resources – waterways, shorelines, wetlands, forests, fields, flora and fauna provide sustenance and quality recreation for County residents, businesses and visitors. The County is fortunate to be adjacent to the Chesapeake Bay. Yet, this exceptional resource requires careful and meticulous planning and oversight in order to maintain its environmental features and sensitive ecosystem.



The public responsibility for protecting environmental quality and maintaining the delicate balance between nature and development lies with many local, state and federal agencies who must work collaboratively. Citizens and businesses also have an important responsibility to protect and maintain the quality of the environment in the County. Often, that recognition for environmental stewardship and pursuit of the common good falls secondary to personal interests; consequently, public education and regulatory controls are the tools most used to achieve established goals and benchmarks.

Mathews County should be and can be a model community for environmental stewardship and protection; its proud maritime heritage and prosperity has provided a stable foundation for generations and should continue fostering future generations. The quality of life that Mathews' residents enjoy today, and have enjoyed for generations, depends on strong environmental leadership.



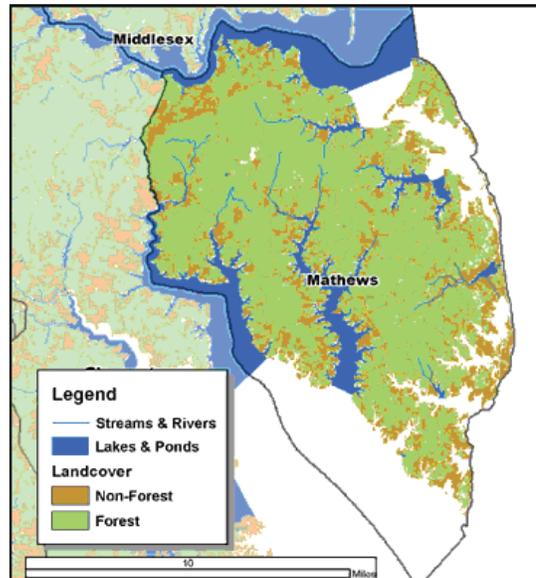


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Forests and Agriculture

Based on information available from the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation and the Virginia Tech Department of Forestry, approximately 62% of the land cover in Mathews County is forest. All of these forests are privately owned; none are public forest land. Forests are comprised of four different types: loblolly-shortleaf pine; oak-pine; oak-hickory; and oak-gum-cypress. The top ten species are loblolly pine, American holly, sweetgum, red maple, swamp tupelo, sourwood, blackgum, black cherry, hornbeam, and sassafras.

Over the past several decades there has been increased harvesting of these forests for lumber to meet market demands. In addition, changes in the water table and natural vegetative succession have affected forested lands, diminishing County resources.



Source: Virginia Department of Forestry 2003.

Of particular importance worthy of greater conservation efforts are the maritime forests of Mathews County. These forests are important coastal habitats that are now challenged by rising sea levels, erosion and land subsidence. They are important because of their ability to tolerate salinity, stabilize soils, withstand coastal storms, and provide refuge habitat. The documented maritime forests in Mathews County are shown on the map on the following page.

In addition to forests, much of the soils in the County are valued as important to agriculture. Unfortunately, poor drainage has diminished the value of some of these areas. The most productive soils are located near the shorelines of the County. These prime agricultural soils are shown on the map following the Maritime Forests map. “Prime farmland” has the best physical and chemical characteristics for producing crops.

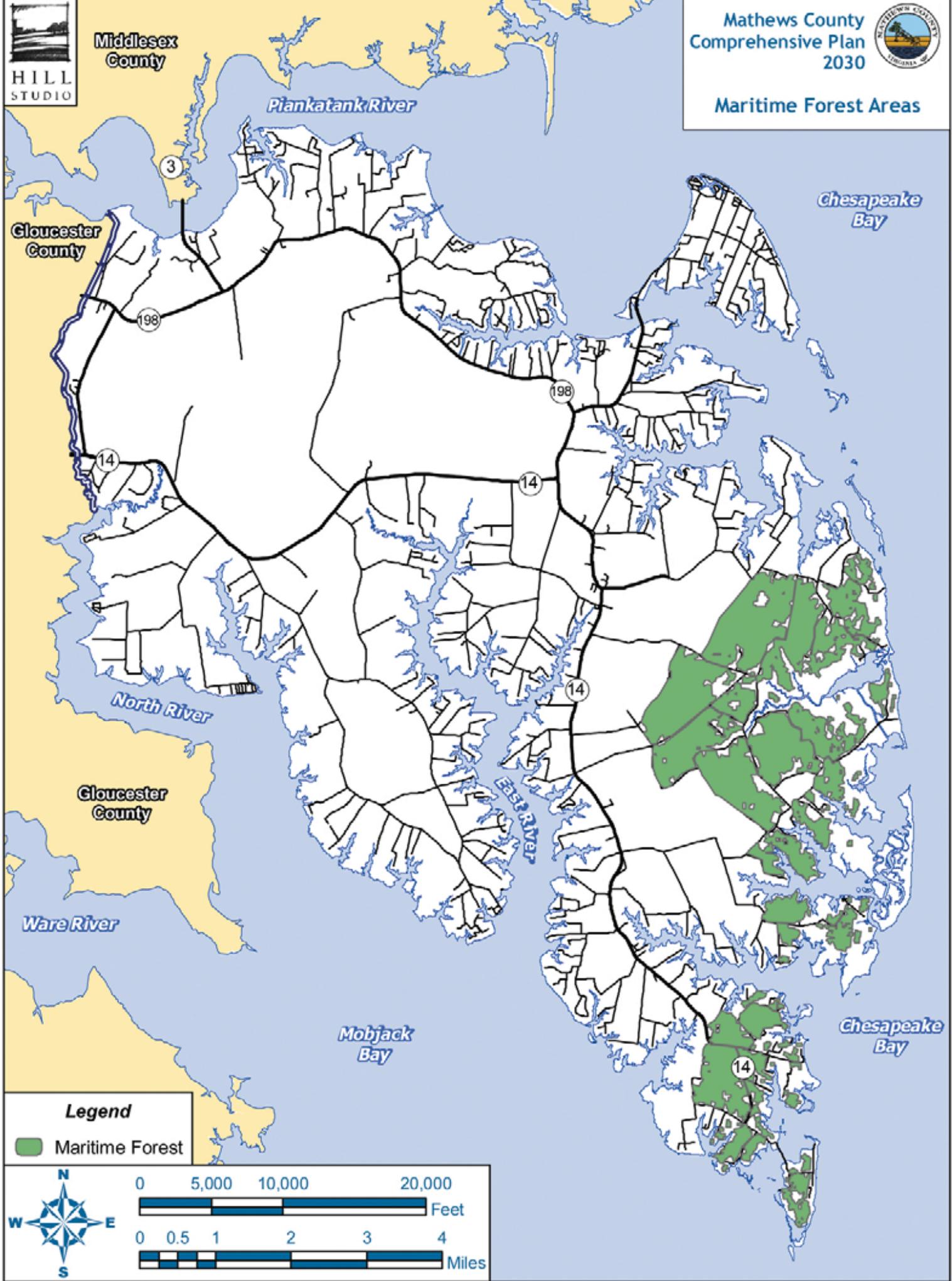


Middlesex County

Mathews County
Comprehensive Plan
2030



Maritime Forest Areas



Legend

Maritime Forest



0 5,000 10,000 20,000

Feet

0 0.5 1 2 3 4

Miles

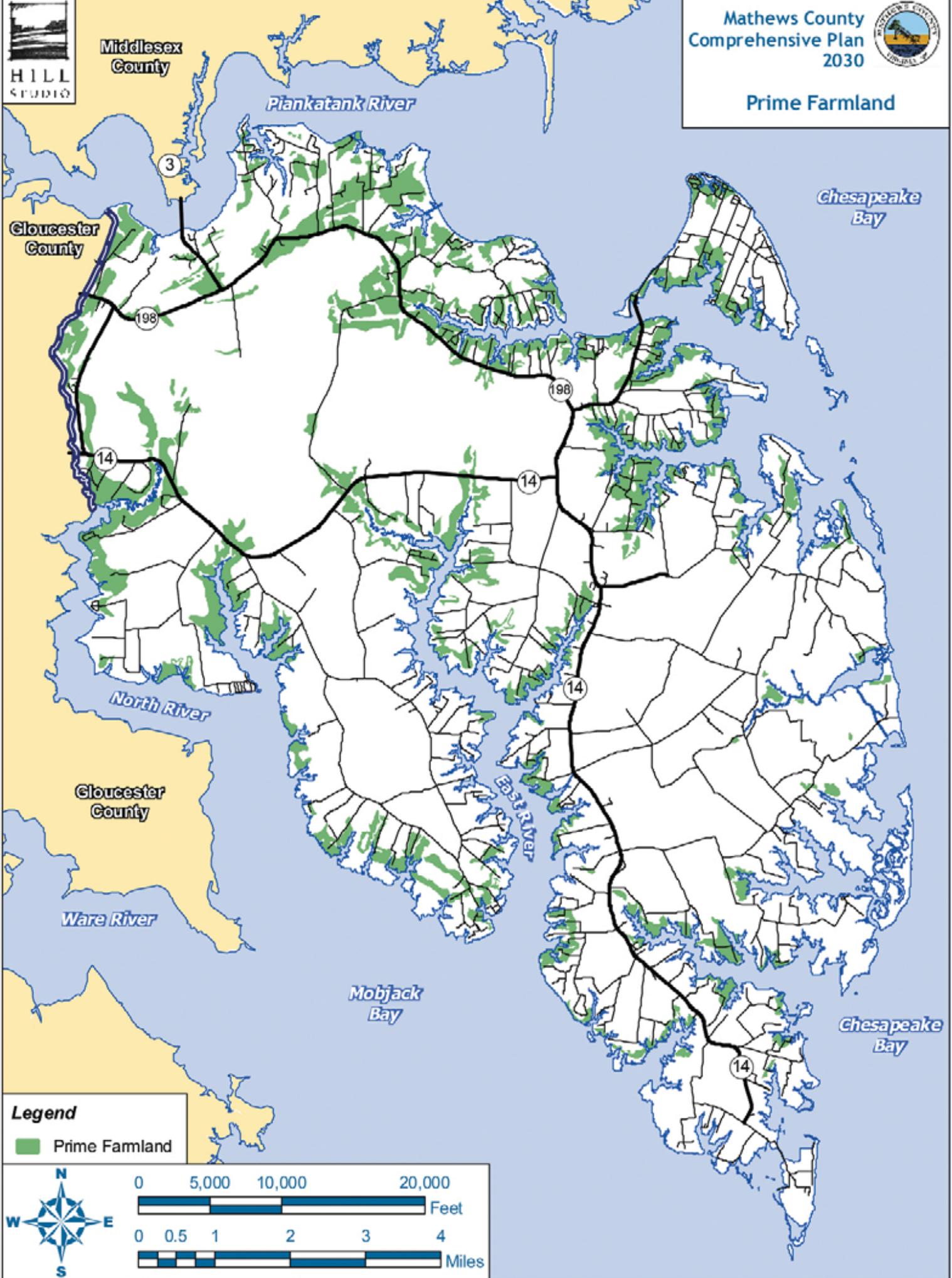


Middlesex County

Mathews County
Comprehensive Plan
2030



Prime Farmland



Legend

■ Prime Farmland



0 5,000 10,000 20,000

Feet

0 0.5 1 2 3 4

Miles



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Natural Heritage Resources

The Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) identifies and protects natural heritage resources, maintaining a comprehensive database of documented occurrences. The database includes conservation sites that contain known populations of natural heritage resources and adjacent habitat vital for their protection and stewardship.

The DCR database is useful for aiding local and regional planning; screening development projects for potential impacts on natural heritage resources; identifying targets for acquisition and easements and guiding property restoration activities.

There are several areas in Mathews County designated for conservation areas including Bethel Beach Natural Area Preserve, New Point Comfort Preserve, and most of the eastern shoreline of the County toward Milford Haven and Piankatank River.

Bethel Beach Conservation Site has a significant biodiversity ranking and features a long sandy beach, low dunes and extensive salt marsh. The Beach is essential habitat for several rare species, including the federally threatened northeastern beach tiger beetle (*Cicindela dorsalis*), which spends its entire two-year life cycle on the beach. Other species of special concern are the least tern (*Sterna antillarum*) and the sea-beach knotweed (*Polygonum glaucum*). Behind Bethel Beach is an extensive saltmarsh. This marsh is one of the few places in Virginia documented as a nesting site for the Northern Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*), a hawk that usually nests in more northern regions.

As development of natural areas and forest lands increases in Mathews County, natural heritage resources may be threatened. Forest fragmentation, introduction of invasive flora and fauna, and alteration of the local hydrology through land disturbance and/or sea level rise may change or eliminate habitat.

Useful DCR References and Resources:

Bethel Beach Natural Area Preserve Fact Sheet . Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, Natural Heritage Program.

http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural_heritage/documents/pgbethel.pdf

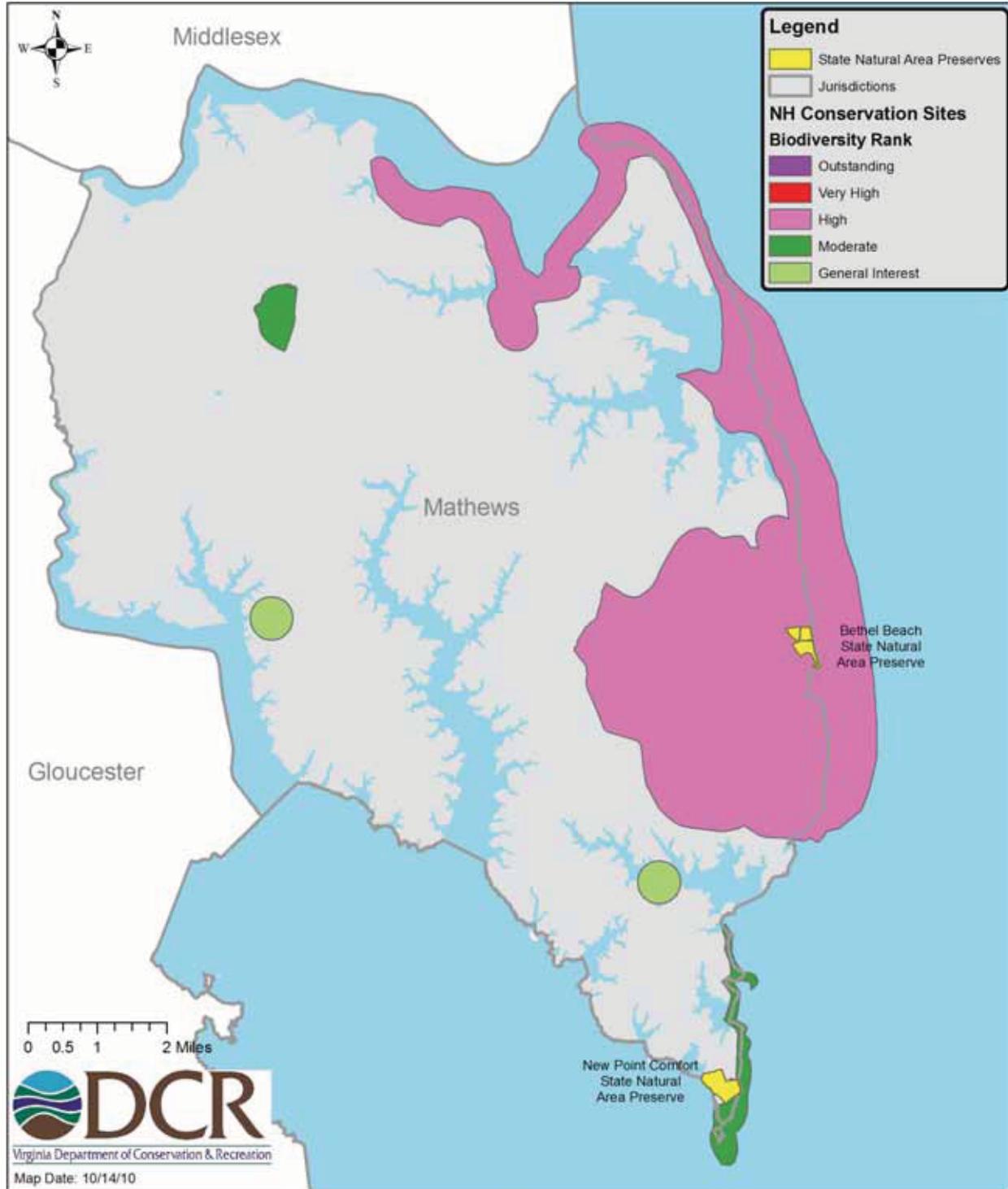
Definitions of Abbreviations used on Natural Heritage Resource Lists

http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural_heritage/help.shtml



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NATURAL HERITAGE CONSERVATION SITES





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Scenic Rivers

As of 2009, there are no designated scenic rivers in the Middle Peninsula Planning District. However, the Piankatank River is considered “qualifying” as a scenic river from Route 17 in Middlesex, Gloucester and Mathews Counties to the Chesapeake Bay.

Important Bird Areas

The Virginia Audubon Society has identified Important Bird Areas in Mathews County. Conservation lands in the county include Bethel Beach and New Point Comfort Natural Area Preserves. Extensive low marsh areas within these lands support significant populations of Clapper Rail, Seaside Sparrows, and Marsh Wrens, while tide pools support a large diversity of breeding species as well as migrant shorebirds. Large high marsh areas provide habitat for breeding populations of Sedge Wrens, Northern Harriers, Prairie Warblers, and Eastern Meadowlarks. Least Terns and American Oystercatchers are found on sandy berms and barriers while scattered pine hummocks and adjacent maritime forests support significant populations of Brown-headed Nuthatches and Chuck-will’s-widows. Isolated marsh islands support breeding American Black Ducks and American Oystercatchers. A map showing the Mathews Loop of the Virginia Birding and Wildlife Trail is on the Recreation Facilities Map.

Threatened and Endangered Species

Information from the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation indicates that there is one Federal Threatened Species, the Northeastern Beach Tiger Beetle, in Mathews County.

A status review by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) in February 2009 recommended that the Tiger Beetle be reclassified from threatened to endangered. Since the last comprehensive survey conducted by the USFWS in 2008, total beetle numbers have declined 70% throughout their range along the western shoreline of the Chesapeake Bay in Virginia.

In addition to the Tiger Beetle there are various State species that are considered threatened, endangered or of special concern. These species are listed in the table on the following page and include amphibians, birds, beetles and plants.



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Threatened and Endangered Species of Mathews County							
Scientific Name	Common Name	Global Rank	State Rank	Federal Status	State Status	Last Year Observed	Site Name
Amphibians							
<i>Ambystoma mabeei</i>	Mabee's Salamander	G4	S1S2		LT	2000	Blakes Ponds
<i>Ambystoma tigrinum</i>	Tiger Salamander	G5	S1		LE	1988	
<i>Hyla gratiosa</i>	Barking Treefrog	G5	S1		LT	1984	
Birds							
<i>Ammodramus caudacutus</i>	Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow	G4	S2B,S3N		SC	1985	
<i>Asio flammeus</i>	Short-eared Owl	G5	S1B,S3N			1988	
<i>Cistithorus platensis</i>	Sedge Wren	G5	S1B,S1S2N		SC	1992	New Pt Comfort
<i>Circus cyaneus</i>	Northern Harrier	G5	S1S2B,S3N		SC	1994	Bethel Beach
<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>	Bald Eagle	G5	S2S3B,S3N		LT	2002	Bethel Beach, Horn Harbor, Cardinal,
<i>Sterna antillarum</i>	Least Tern	G4	S2B		SC	2007	Bethel Beach
Communities							
	Coastal Plain Depression Wetland	G3	SNR			1988	Blakes Ponds
Invertebrates							
<i>Cicindela dorsalis</i>	Northeastern Beach Tiger Beetle	G4T2	S2	LT	LT		New Point Comfort, Bethel Beach
Vascular Plants							
<i>Chelone obliqua</i>	Red Turtlehead	G4	S1			1979	
<i>Mitreola petiolata</i>	Lax Hornpod	G5	S1			1979	
<i>Polygonum glaucum</i>	Sea-beach Knotweed	G3	S1S2			2007	Bethel Beach
Natural Area Preserves							
Bethel Beach							
New Point Comfort							
State Ranking: S1-Extremely rare; S2-Very rare; S3-Rare to uncommon; S#B-Breeding; S#N-Non-breeding Global Ranking: G1-Extremely rare; G2-Very rare; G3-Rare to uncommon; G4-Common; G5-Very common Federal Status: LE= Listed Endangered; LT= Listed Threatened State Status: LE= Listed Endangered; LT=Listed Threatened; SC= Special Concern							

Source: Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, 2010.



IV. Mathews County Today and Tomorrow: Conditions, Opportunities, Policies and Strategies

Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program

Mathews County is included in the Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program. This program was established in 1986 (and reauthorized in 2006) to protect and manage Virginia’s coastal areas. It is part of a national coastal zone management program coordinated by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) which provides funding for programs. The goals of the program are to protect and restore coastal resources, habitats, and species; restore and maintain the water quality of coastal waters; protect air quality; reduce and prevent losses of coastal habitat, life and property; provide for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture; promote sustainable ecotourism and increase public access to coastal waters; promote renewable energy production; ensure sustainable development on coastal lands; minimize coastal resource land use conflicts; and promote education. In Virginia, it is administered through a network of participating state agencies including: Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (lead agency), Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, Virginia Marine Resources Commission, Virginia Department of Health, and the Chesapeake Bay Local Assistance Department; assisting agencies include the Virginia Departments of Historic Resources, Forestry, Agriculture and Consumer Services, and Transportation, Virginia Institute of Marine Science, Virginia Economic Development Partnership, and the Coastal Planning District Commissions.

Chesapeake Bay Act

In 1988, the State of Virginia adopted the Chesapeake Bay Act which established the foundation for public policy and planning for the Chesapeake Bay, the largest estuary in the United States, and adjacent lands. In 2000, Virginia signed Chesapeake 2000, a partnership agreement with Maryland, Pennsylvania, the District of Columbia, and the Environmental Protection Agency, that committed the Commonwealth to a shared vision for a restored ecosystem and goals for the future related to living resources, habitat protection, water quality, land use and stewardship.

Localities subject to the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act



Source: VA Dept. Conservation and Recreation



**IV. Mathews County Today and Tomorrow:
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Introductory Paragraph - 1988 Virginia Chesapeake Bay Act

“Healthy state and local economies and a healthy Chesapeake Bay are integrally related; balanced economic development and water quality protection are not mutually exclusive. The protection of the public interest in the Chesapeake Bay, its tributaries, and other state waters and the promotion of the general welfare of the people of the Commonwealth require that: (i) the counties, cities, and towns of Tidewater Virginia incorporate general water quality protection measures into their comprehensive plans, zoning ordinances, and subdivision ordinances; (ii) the counties, cities, and towns of Tidewater Virginia establish programs, in accordance with criteria established by the Commonwealth, that define and protect certain lands, hereinafter called Chesapeake Bay Preservation Areas, which if improperly developed may result in substantial damage to the water quality of the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries; (iii) the Commonwealth make its resources available to local governing bodies by providing financial and technical assistance, policy guidance, and oversight when requested or otherwise required to carry out and enforce the provisions of this chapter; and (iv) all agencies of the Commonwealth exercise their delegated authority in a manner consistent with water quality protection provisions of local comprehensive plans, zoning ordinances, and subdivision ordinances when it has been determined that they comply with the provisions of this chapter.”

The Chesapeake Bay Act required local governments to incorporate water quality protection measures into adopted plans and regulations; to define certain lands important to the water quality of the Chesapeake Bay; and authorized the Chesapeake Bay Local Assistance Board (CBLAB) to administer the program. The promulgated regulations developed by the Board required that local governments develop local programs to comply with the Chesapeake Bay Act and to promote high water quality, prevent pollution, and encourage water resource conservation. Every local program must incorporate the Chesapeake Bay Act provisions into the comprehensive plan, define important areas, and include measures to protect water quality in zoning, subdivision and erosion control ordinances.

Chesapeake Bay Preservation Areas are defined in the Act as Resource Protection Areas and Resource Management Areas. These areas have specific elements defined to protect, as well as general performance criteria that must be met for any new or expanded land development.

- **Resource Protection Areas (RPA)** include: tidal wetlands; non-tidal wetlands connected by surface flow and contiguous to tidal wetlands or water bodies with perennial flow; tidal shores; and other lands considered by the local government that have intrinsic water quality value due to ecological and biological processes they perform or that are sensitive to impacts. In addition, there is a required buffer of not less than 100 feet adjacent to these lands.
- **Resource Management Areas (RMA)** include: floodplains; highly erodible soils, including steep slopes; highly permeable soils; non-tidal wetlands not included in the RPA; land areas less than five acres entirely surrounded by such land types; and a minimum area 150 feet in width landward of the RPA on lands where none of the RMA listed land types exist; and other lands considered by the local government to be



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necessary in protecting water quality. The RMA should be large enough to provide significant water quality protection in accordance with adopted land use and development performance criteria to reduce non-point source pollution.

The Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, Division of Chesapeake Bay Local Assistance provides local program training, public education, technical assistance, and works with local governments to ensure that their programs are in compliance with the adopted regulations. Regional planning district commissions also act as liaisons in providing assistance to local governments. Implementation of the program for localities was scheduled in three phases:

- Phase I – designate and map Chesapeake Bay Preservation Areas, amend local ordinances to incorporate performance criteria, and establish a development review process;
- Phase 2 – review and revise the local comprehensive plan to include information on certain land use and development factors affecting water quality (e.g., identification of Chesapeake Bay Preservation Areas, physical constraints to development, character and location of commercial and recreational fisheries and other aquatic resources, water supply and protection, shoreline and soil erosion, existing and future land use, public and private waterfront access, and sources of water pollution). In addition, the comprehensive plan is to provide public policy statements relative to protecting water quality and implementation methods.
- Phase 3 – review and revise local development ordinances (zoning, subdivision, erosion and sediment control, etc.) to include specific notations on plats and development plans, and to incorporate provisions for minimizing land disturbance, preserving indigenous vegetation, and minimizing impervious cover.

Compliance reviews for consistency with Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act regulations should be done every five years, when feasible, in conjunction with the community's update of the comprehensive plan. In addition, as of 2008, an Annual Implementation Report is required which describes the community's development activity, history of exceptions, best management practices utilized, septic pump-out data, mapping of the RPA, and any violations.

To date, Mathews County has complied with Phases 1 and 2 of the program; County ordinances and designation of areas were found consistent, as was the 2001 Comprehensive Plan. For the benefit of consistency, the *Water Quality Improvement Plan* section of the 2001 Plan is included as an appendix to this document for the purposes of reference and the Chesapeake Bay Local Assistance Board approved compliance to date. The updated Comprehensive Plan 2030 builds upon this previous document, updates information and expands development policies as they apply to protecting water quality and sensitive environmental areas. In addition, future land use categories have been expanded to encourage land conservation and best management practices for development (see Future Land Use Section for details).

Also, the County has updated its zoning ordinance and adopted a Chesapeake Bay Preservation

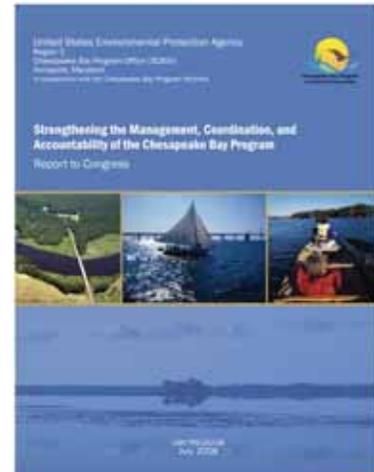


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Area Overlay District that establishes Chesapeake Bay Preservation Area boundaries and buffers, land use and development performance criteria, water quality and environmental impact assessment requirements, and development plan review process. The ordinance is administered by the Mathews County Zoning Administrator and the Wetlands Zoning Board (tidal wetlands) housed in the Department of Planning and Zoning. A review of the ordinances for more detailed provisions (Phase 3) is scheduled for 2010, along with the first Annual County Implementation Report.

In a 2008 report to Congress, EPA advised that “Despite substantial effort and progress by the full spectrum of partners, the Bay’s health remains degraded. Restoration efforts are being overtaken by current trends. For example, population in the watershed has grown nearly 17 million bringing more roads, homes, industrial and business parks, and other impervious surfaces which harden the landscape. Development has drastically altered the natural hydrology and thereby the natural filtering systems for nutrient and sediment pollution.”

Another 2008 report, *Chesapeake EcoCheck*¹⁸, advises that the lower Chesapeake Bay region, where Mathews is located, was in moderate to poor ecosystem health (rated as a C-) with water quality in very poor condition and biotic conditions declining from 2007. One positive note, however, was that underwater bay grasses increased in 2008, providing greater assistance in filtering pollutants, producing oxygen, sheltering fish and crabs, and preventing erosion. In addition, there have been modest improvements in blue crab and eastern oyster populations.

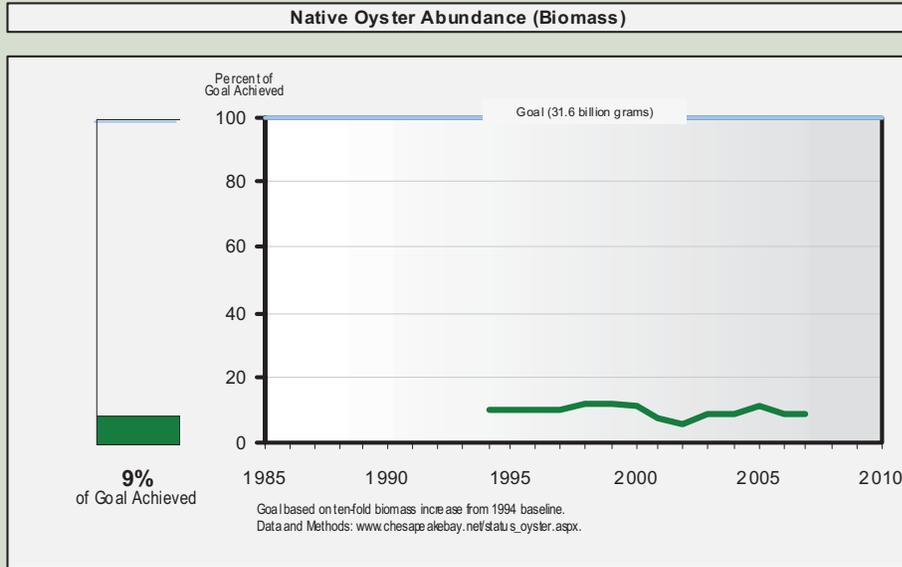


¹⁸ University of Maryland, Center for Environmental Science. NOAA. Chesapeake Ecocheck. 2008. www.ecocheck.org/reportcard/chesapeake/2008.



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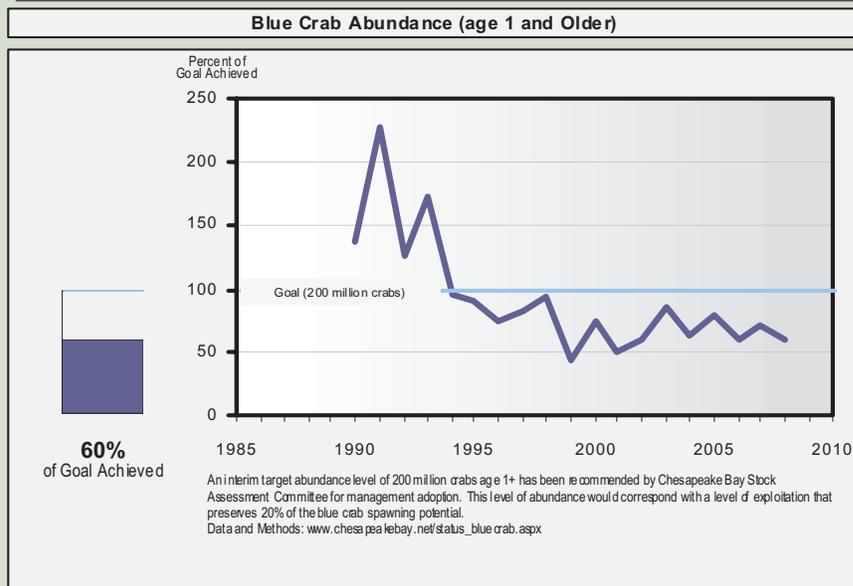
Native Oyster Abundance (Biomass)



Chesapeake Bay Health and Restoration Assessment: Ecosystem Health March 17, 2009

1

Blue Crab Abundance



Chesapeake Bay Health and Restoration Assessment: Ecosystem Health March 17, 2009

1

Source: Chesapeake Bay Program, www.chesapeakebay.net



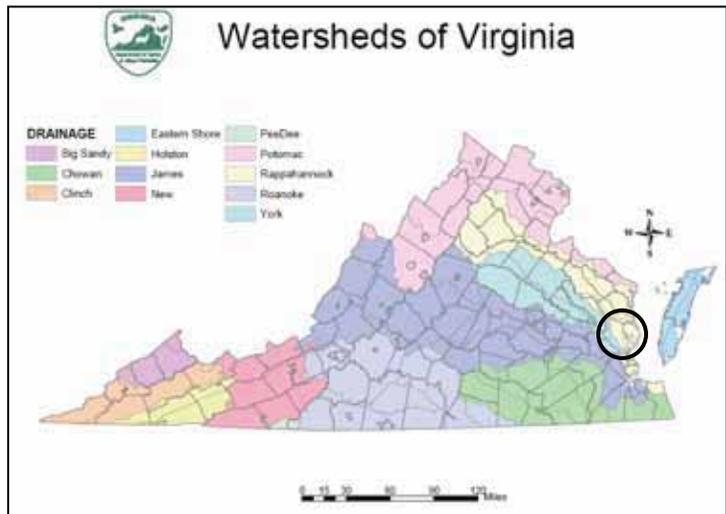
IV. Mathews County Today and Tomorrow: Conditions, Opportunities, Policies and Strategies

During 2009, there has been increased leadership from the Governor of Virginia (as well as from other states) and the President of the United States in addressing pollution issues in the Chesapeake Bay. The Chesapeake Executive Council, comprised of various state and federal representatives, set more aggressive short-term milestones to reduce nitrogen and phosphorus by 2011 – Virginia’s goal is to reduce phosphorus and nitrogen loads over the next three years through loan and grant funds for improvements to wastewater systems, land conservation, and BMPs for agriculture, septic systems, stormwater management and erosion and sediment control. At the federal level, an Executive Order for Chesapeake Bay Protection and Restoration (signed May 12, 2009) established a Federal Leadership Committee to oversee coordination of programs and activities involved with Bay restoration; to strengthen accountability of federal agencies; to collaborate with the various state governments; and to publish an annual Chesapeake Bay Action Plan (with recommended funding) and Progress Report for Bay restoration. Within the next six months, reports are expected from lead agencies which will discuss key challenges for the Chesapeake Bay including recommendations for new regulatory tools, programs and policies; expanding public access to waters and open spaces; focusing habitat and research activities; and assessing the impacts of climate change.

The following sections provide more detailed background information and recommendations for the purposes of updating information and meeting the Comprehensive Plan requirements for the Chesapeake Bay Act.

Watersheds and Existing Water Quality

A general map showing the watersheds of Virginia is shown to the right. Mathews County lies between two major watersheds in the State of Virginia – the Rappahannock River and the York River. According to the 2008 water quality report, Chesapeake Ecocheck, the Rappahannock River is rated a moderate to poor ecosystem health, while the York River was considered in poor ecosystem health. The County is divided into six smaller watersheds which are considered part of the lower Chesapeake Bay

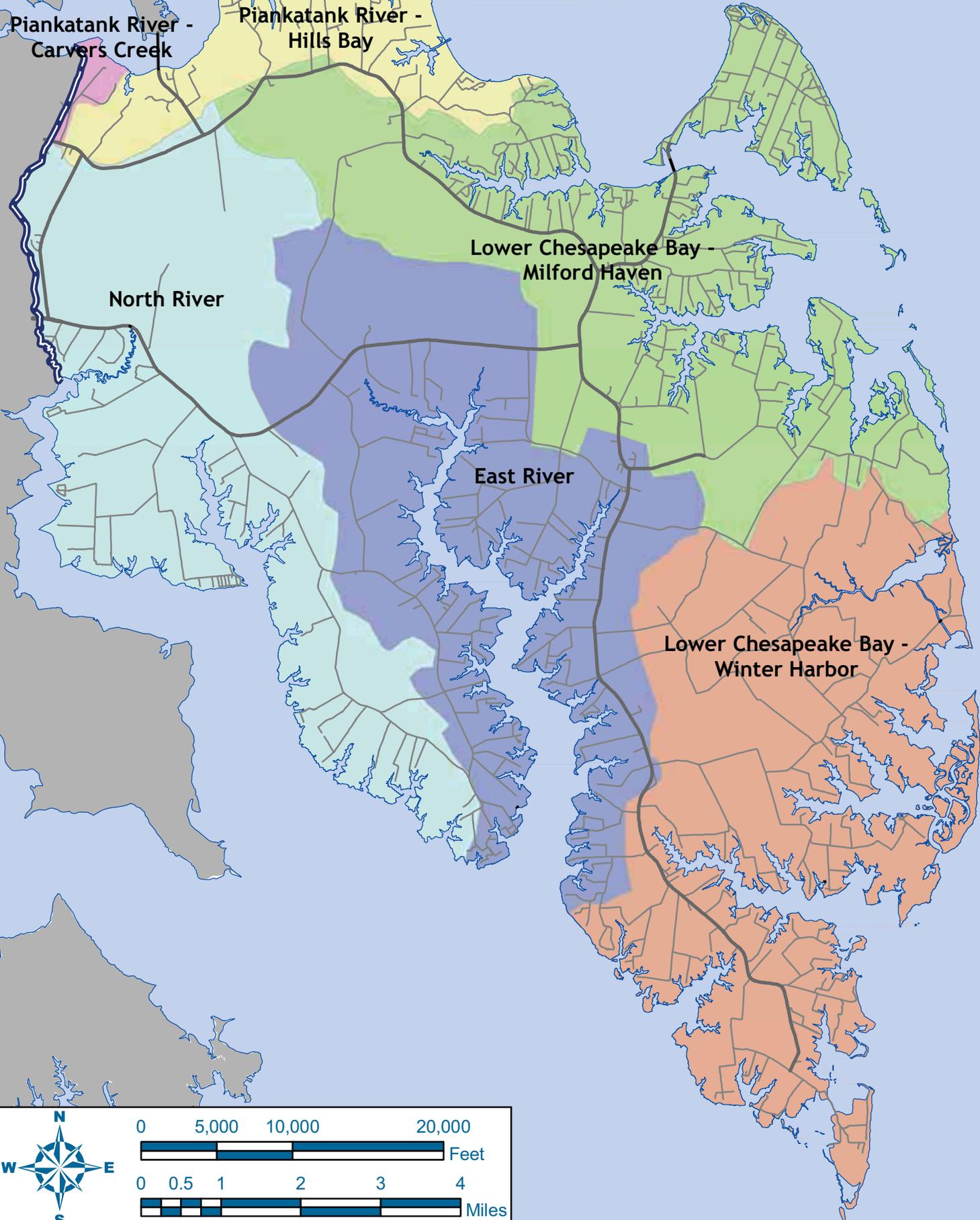


Source: Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries. www.dgif.virginia.gov/education/virginia_watersheds.

watershed: Piankatank River–Carvers Creek, Piankatank River–Hills Bay, Lower Chesapeake Bay–Milford Haven, Lower Chesapeake Bay–Winter Harbor, East River, and North River. These watersheds are illustrated on the map on the following page.



Watersheds





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In accordance with the Clean Water Act, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality assess water quality and classify waters using five defined categories. These categories are shown and defined in the table to the right. A December 2008 *Water Quality Assessment 305(b) and 303(d) Integrated Report* prepared by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality described water quality conditions of watersheds throughout Virginia, as reported from 2001 to 2006.

A summary of water quality conditions for various waters in Mathews County (2009) is described in the table on the following page. In general, most of the coastal watersheds in the County are impaired waters and classified as Category 4 or 5. Most impairment is due to fecal coliform levels which pose threats to shellfish harvesting. The sources of pollution in the watersheds were listed as either non-point source or unknown.

Water Quality Assessment Categories	Definition
<i>Category 1</i>	Water fully supports all designated uses.
<i>Category 2</i>	Water fully supports all designated uses that data are available for, but there is either insufficient or no information regarding uses that there is no data for.
<i>Category 3</i>	There is insufficient information to determine if any designated uses are being met.
<i>Category 4</i>	Waters are impaired or threatened but do not need a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL).
<i>Category 5</i>	Waters are impaired and do need a TMDL.

A map of closed and condemned shellfish waters as of July 2010 follows the table. Because these conditions change, the most up-to-date information should be obtained from Division of Shellfish Sanitation, Virginia Department of Health, Richmond, VA 23219, www.vdh.virginia.gov/shellfish.



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Watershed	Supports Uses Cat. 1 & 2	Insufficient Information Cat. 3	Impaired Cat. 4 & 5	Impairment Notes (2009) (For specific information and location, see report)
Barn Creek			X	Shellfishing - Fecal Coliform
Billups Creek			X	Shellfishing - Fecal Coliform
Blackwater Creek / Greenmansion Cove			X	Shellfishing - Fecal Coliform
Burke Mill Stream			X	Recreation - E coli Aquatic Life - Dissolved Oxygen
Chesapeake Bay & Tidal Tributary Segments (various)			X	Aquatic Life - Dissolved Oxygen Aquatic Life - Macrophytes Fish Consumption - PCB Fish Tissue
Cobbs Creek			X	Shellfishing - Fecal Coliform
Davis Creek			X	Shellfishing - Fecal Coliform
Doctors Creek			X	Shellfishing - Fecal Coliform
Dyer Creek			X	Shellfishing - Fecal Coliform
East River			X	Shellfishing, Fecal Coliform
Edwards Creek			X	Shellfishing - Fecal Coliform
Horn Harbor			X	Shellfishing - Fecal Coliform
Hudgins Creek			X	Shellfishing - Fecal Coliform
Lanes Creek			X	Shellfishing - Fecal Coliform
Miles Creek			X	Shellfishing - Fecal Coliform
Milford Haven			X	Shellfishing - Fecal Coliform Recreation - Enterococcus
Mobjack Bay			X	Aquatic Life - Macrophytes Aquatic Life - Dissolved Oxygen
Morris Creek			X	Shellfishing - Fecal Coliform
North River			X	Shellfishing - Fecal Coliform
Oakland Creek			X	Shellfishing - Fecal Coliform
Pepper Creek			X	Shellfishing - Fecal Coliform
Piankatank River			X	Aquatic Life - Bioassessment Shellfishing - Fecal Coliform
Put In Creek			X	Shellfishing - Fecal Coliform
Queens Creek			X	Shellfishing - Fecal Coliform
Raines Creek			X	Shellfishing - Fecal Coliform
Sloop Creek			X	Shellfishing - Fecal Coliform
Stutts Creek/Morris Creek			X	Shellfishing - Fecal Coliform
Tabbs Creek			X	Shellfishing - Fecal Coliform
Thomas Creek			X	Shellfishing - Fecal Coliform
Weston Creek			X	Shellfishing - Fecal Coliform
Whites Creek			X	Shellfishing - Fecal Coliform
Winder Creek			X	Shellfishing - Fecal Coliform
Winter Harbor			X	Shellfishing - Fecal Coliform

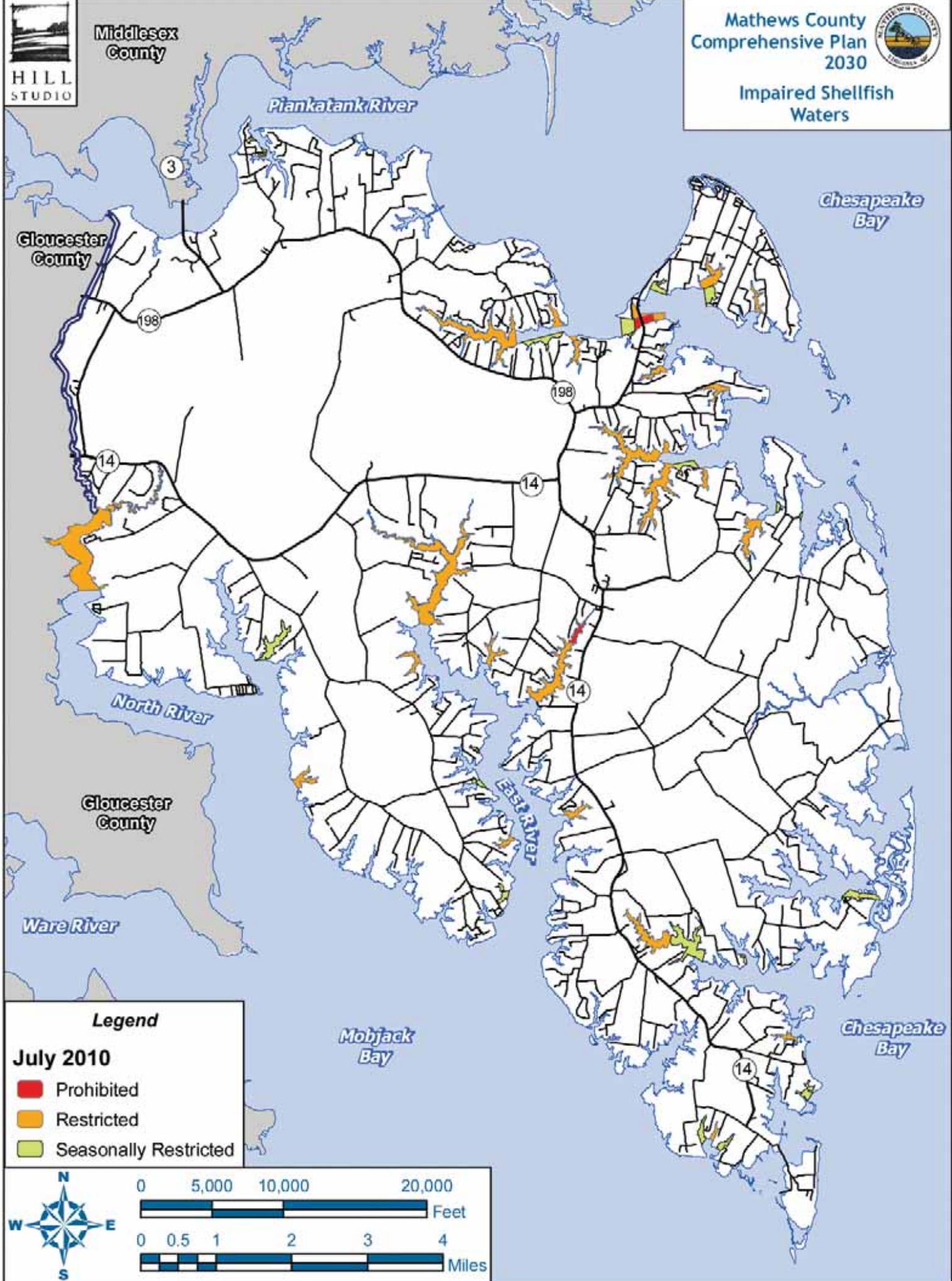


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Impaired Shellfish
Waters



Legend

July 2010

- Prohibited
- Restricted
- Seasonally Restricted





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Aquatic Resources, Commercial and Recreational Fisheries

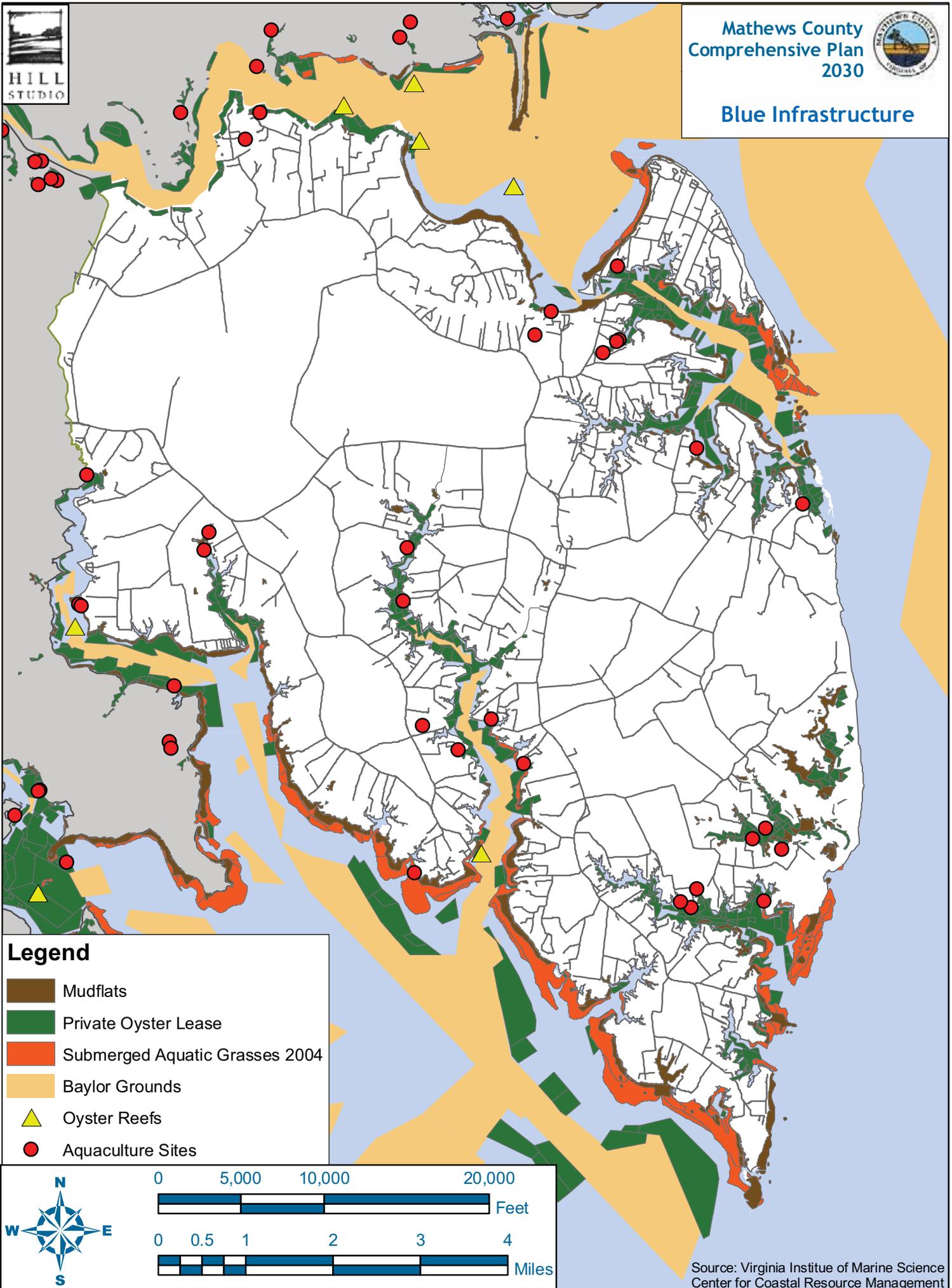
Mathews County is known for its diversity of aquatic resources – natural shorelines, expansive wetlands, and productive environmental habitats. In 2004, VIMS prepared a “Blue Infrastructure” inventory of Virginia’s Coastal Zone¹⁹ that identifies important economic and ecologic aquatic species and resources. These resources included: aquaculture sites, Baylor grounds, anadromous fish streams, oyster reefs, submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV), natural preserves, tidal mudflats and threatened/endangered waters, among others. A map of the blue infrastructure for Mathews County is on the following page. More detailed mapping is available from VIMS at <http://ccrm.vims.edu>.

The County continues to work with regional agencies to promote and protect the area’s aquatic resources and commercial fisheries. One active project in 2009 hosted by the Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission is the Mathews Aquaculture and Working Waterfront Project. This important project will identify important aquaculture assets and working waterfront sites in the County and work with private interests and governmental leaders on future land use and development options to protect and preserve those resources. In addition, VIMS may be helpful in furthering this effort through application of its aquaculture vulnerability model. This program was set up as a tool for Northampton County, but relevant GIS information could be applied to the model for Mathews County.

¹⁹ Virginia Institute of Marine Science - Berman, Hershner, and Schatt, Center for Coastal Resources Management. October 2004. *Blue Infrastructure Final Project Report and Deliverables. Blue Infrastructure Criteria and Map.*

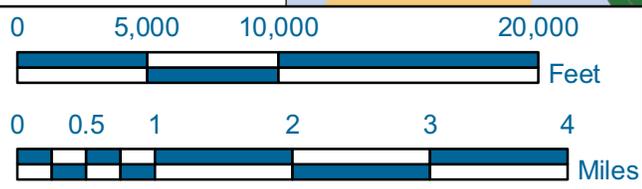


Blue Infrastructure



Legend

- Mudflats
- Private Oyster Lease
- Submerged Aquatic Grasses 2004
- Baylor Grounds
- Oyster Reefs
- Aquaculture Sites



Source: Virginia Institute of Marine Science
Center for Coastal Resource Management

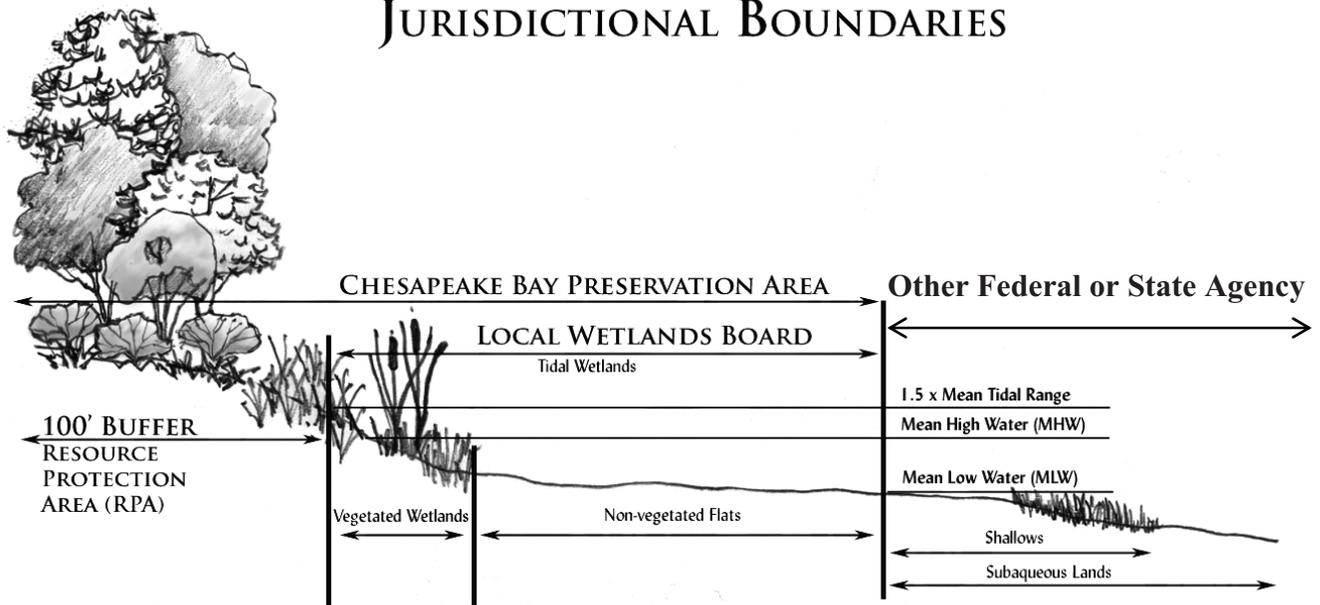


IV. Mathews County Today and Tomorrow: Conditions, Opportunities, Policies and Strategies

Chesapeake Bay Preservation Areas

A map showing the Chesapeake Bay Resource Protection Area (RPA) and Resource Management Areas (RMA) in Mathews County, as defined by the Chesapeake Bay Act, is depicted on the following page. These areas are regulated by the Mathews County Zoning Ordinance as set forth in the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Area Overlay District. The district regulations include required performance criteria for development or redevelopment of land within these areas (e.g., minimal land disturbance, preservation of indigenous vegetation, best management practices, minimal impervious cover, control of stormwater runoff, etc.) and establish procedures for developing property. Development activities in a tidal wetland, such as a dock, shore stabilization, removal of vegetation, etc., must be approved by the County Wetlands Board. In addition, other federal and state agencies (e.g., Corps of Engineers, Virginia Marine Resources Commission, etc.) may be involved in development approvals. The graphic below provides a summary of the varied interests involved in reviewing activities in tidal areas.

JURISDICTIONAL BOUNDARIES



Source: VA Department of Conservation and Recreation, Division of Chesapeake Bay Local Assistance

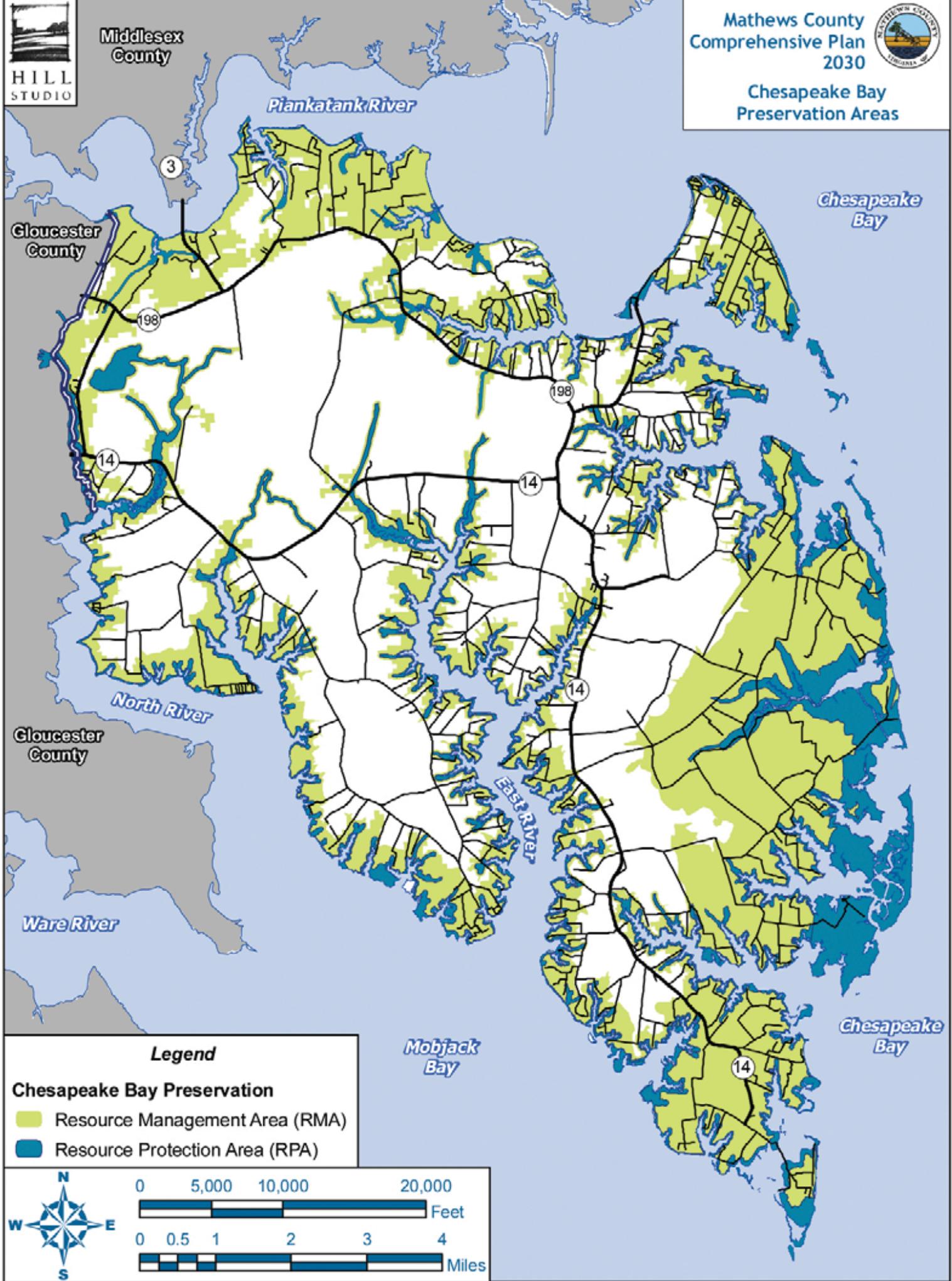


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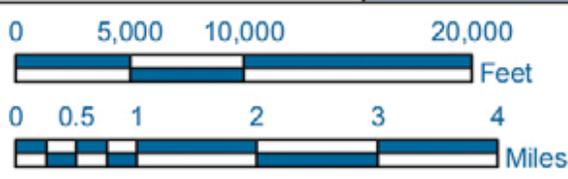
Chesapeake Bay
Preservation Areas



Legend

Chesapeake Bay Preservation

- Resource Management Area (RMA)
- Resource Protection Area (RPA)





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Physical Constraints to Development

Mathews County has various factors that constrain development. Much of the County is at a low elevation above sea level and includes many miles of shoreline. Thus, much of the land is subject to flooding and tidal inundation. Also, much of the County contains wetlands that are “transition zones” between land and water which provide important habitat for plants and animals, serve as significant processors for pollutants, and assist in stabilizing soils and protecting the land. These features are environmental attributes, but they are also considered natural physical constraints to development. The maps on the following pages illustrate the land elevation, 100-year floodplain, and wetlands (tidal and non-tidal) of the County.

When all of these constraints are considered, there is little land available for new development that does not encounter challenges. As shown in the Composite Constraints map, most of the areas that can appropriately accommodate development are located in the northern part of the County.

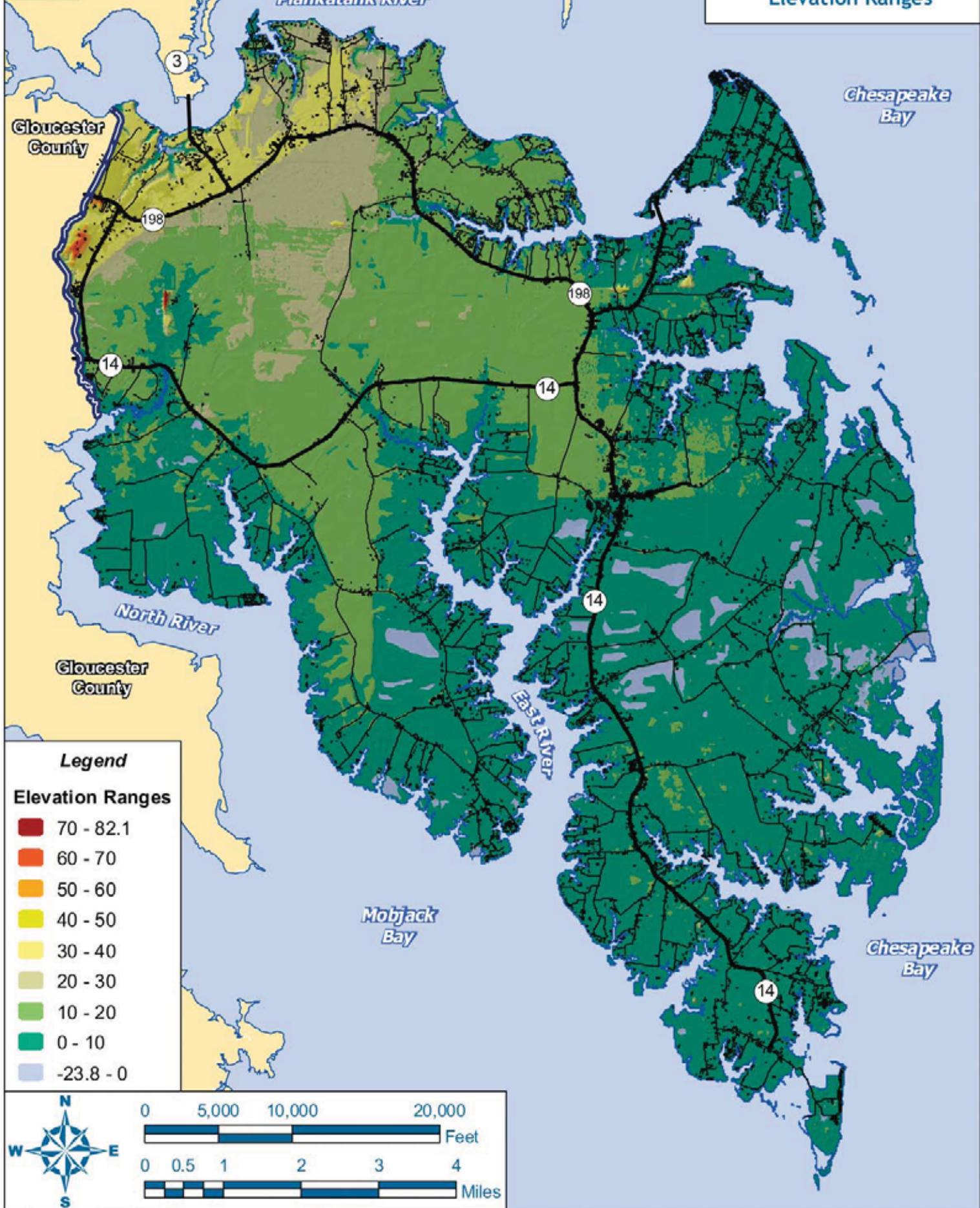


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Elevation Ranges



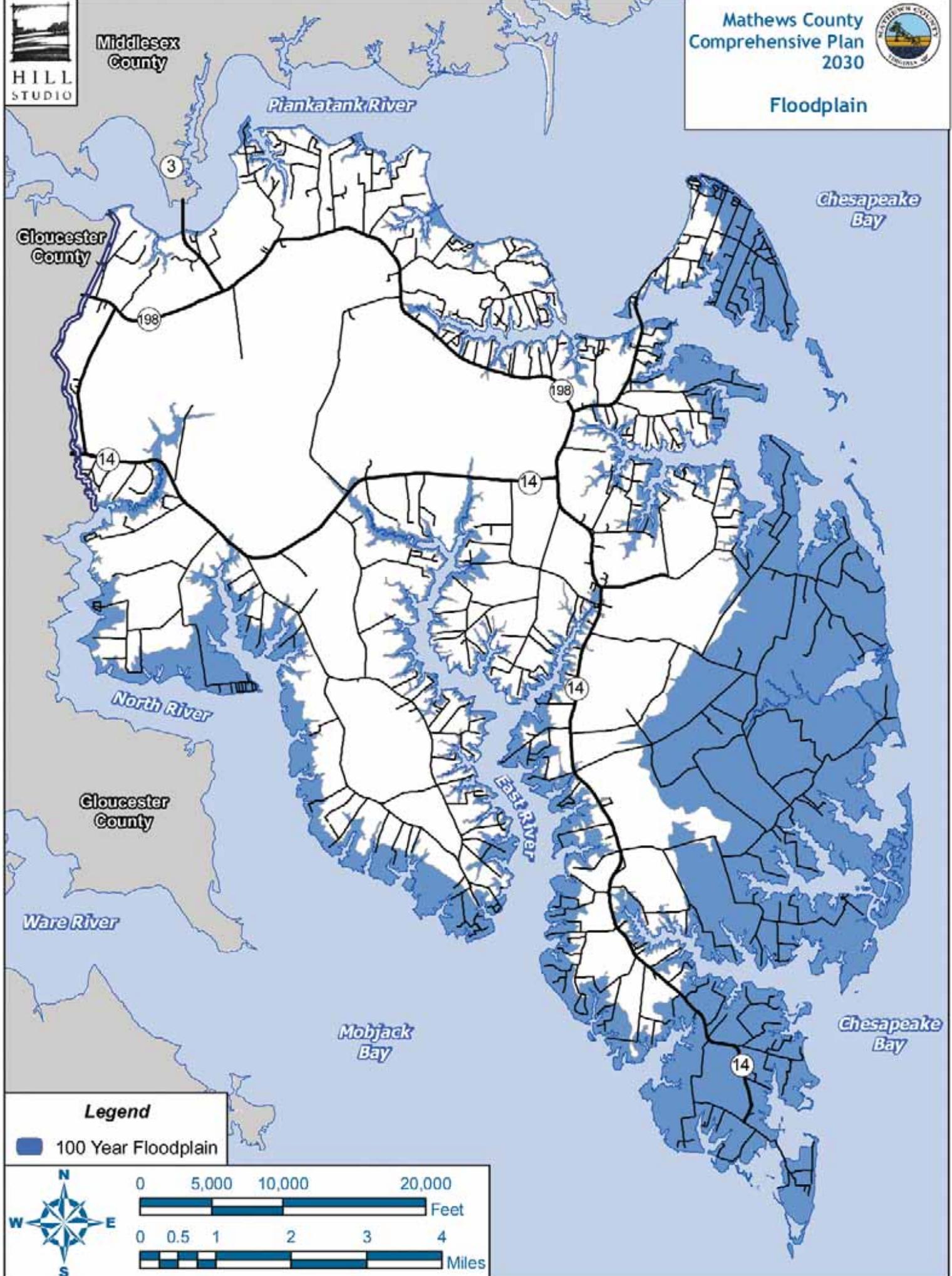


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Floodplain



Legend

 100 Year Floodplain



0 5,000 10,000 20,000

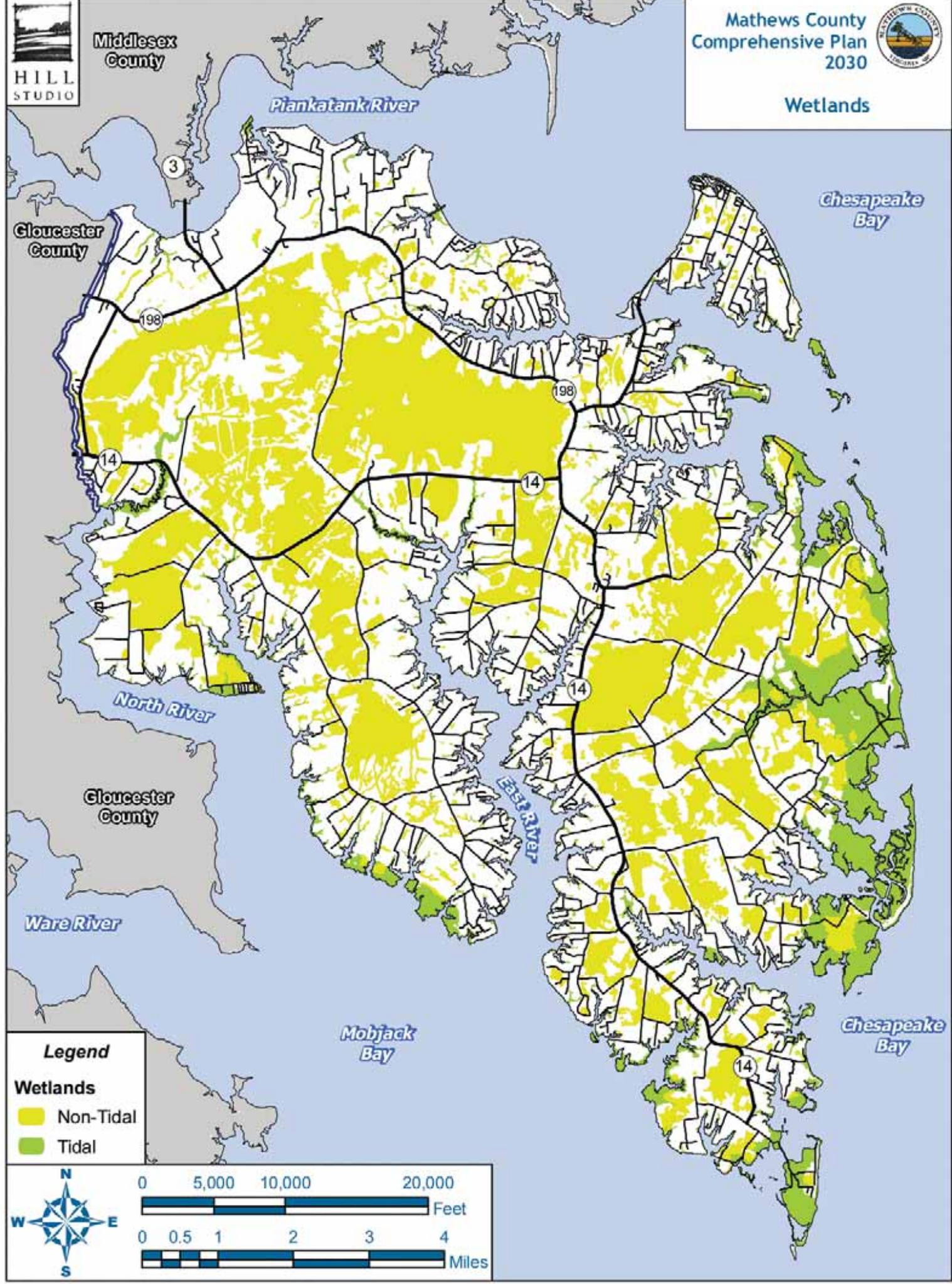
Feet

0 0.5 1 2 3 4

Miles



Middlesex County



Legend

Wetlands

- Non-Tidal
- Tidal



0 5,000 10,000 20,000
Feet

0 0.5 1 2 3 4
Miles

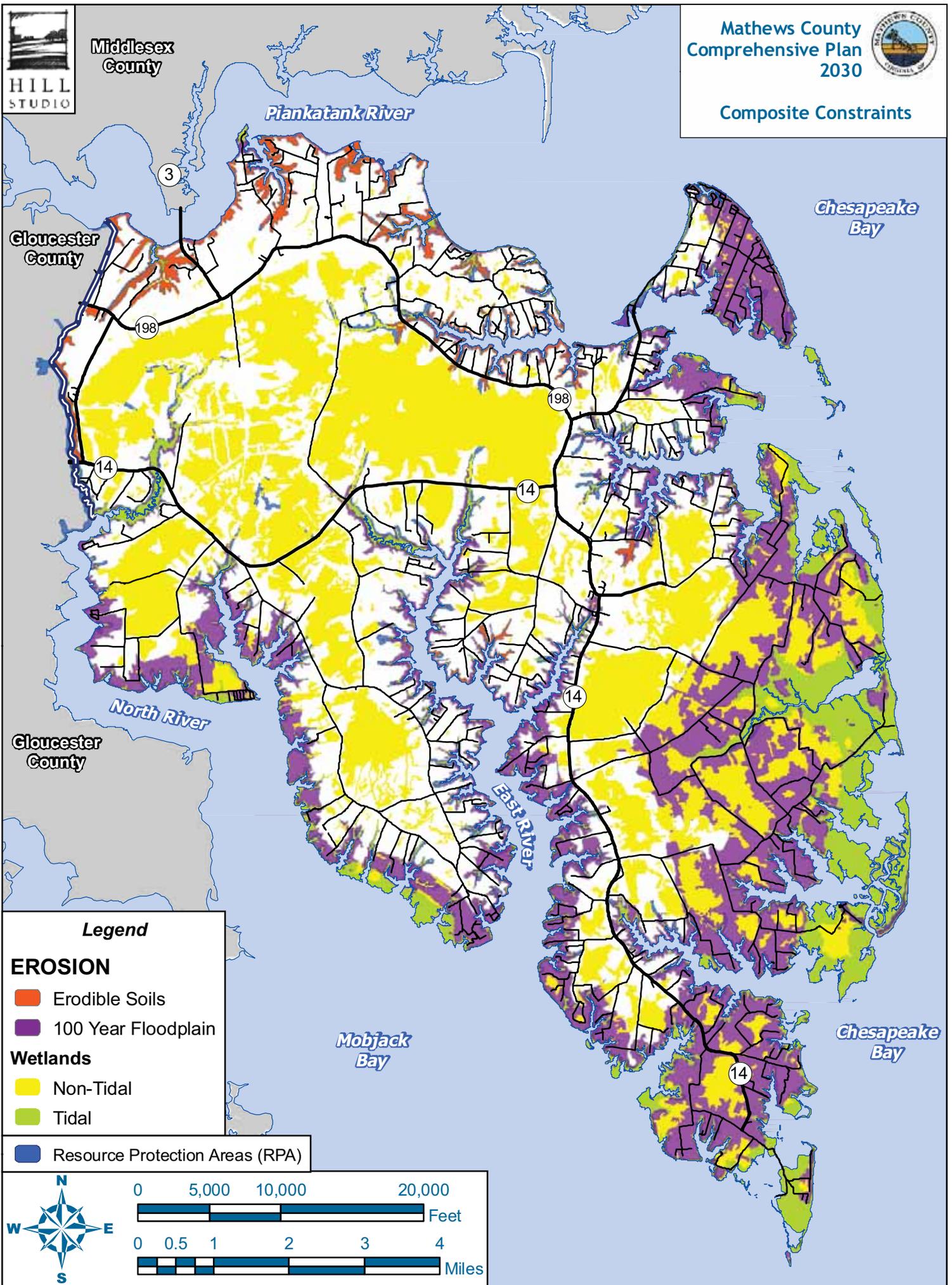


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Composite Constraints



Legend

EROSION

- Erodible Soils
- 100 Year Floodplain

Wetlands

- Non-Tidal
- Tidal

- Resource Protection Areas (RPA)



0 5,000 10,000 20,000

Feet

0 0.5 1 2 3 4

Miles



*IV. Mathews County Today and Tomorrow:
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Soils and Protection of Shorelines and Streambanks

The soils of Mathews County are shown on the map on the following page. Much of the soil in the County is of the Fallsington fine sandy loam series. The next most common soil type is the Dragston fine sandy loam which is found along most of the County shorelines. The following table summarizes the soil units in the County and provides insight into their acreages. A more detailed description of each of the soil categories is included in the Appendix.

Mathews County, Virginia (VA115)			
Map Unit Symbol	Map Unit Name	Acres in AOI	Percent of AOI
Be	Bertie very fine sandy loam	78.4	0.1%
Cb	Coastal beach	249.5	0.3%
Dr	Dragston fine sandy loam, shallow	5,554.8	6.1%
Ek	Elkton silt loam	127.2	0.1%
Fa	Fallsington fine sandy loam	33,006.6	36.0%
GP	Gravel Pit	82.1	0.1%
KeA	Kempsville fine sandy loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes	1,414.6	1.5%
KeB	Kempsville fine sandy loam, 2 to 5 percent slopes	300.2	0.3%
KtA	Kempsville loamy fine sand, thick surface, 0 to 2 percent slopes	3,298.8	3.6%
KyA	Keyport silt loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes	109.7	0.1%
KyD2	Keyport silt loam, 8 to 12 percent slopes, eroded	131.3	0.1%
Ma	Mixed alluvial land	164.7	0.2%
SaA	Sassafras fine sandy loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes	251.3	0.3%
SaB2	Sassafras fine sandy loam, 2 to 5 percent slopes, eroded	163.2	0.2%
SdA	Sassafras loamy fine sand, 0 to 2 percent slopes	218.4	0.2%
SsD	Sloping sandy land	428.5	0.5%
StE	Steep sandy land	358.7	0.4%
Th	Tidal marsh, high	640.9	0.7%
To	Tidal marsh, low	2,728.7	3.0%
W	Water	37,402.4	40.8%
Wo	Woodstown fine sandy loam	4,883.4	5.3%
Totals for Area of Interest		91,593.4	100.0%

Source: USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. April, 2009.

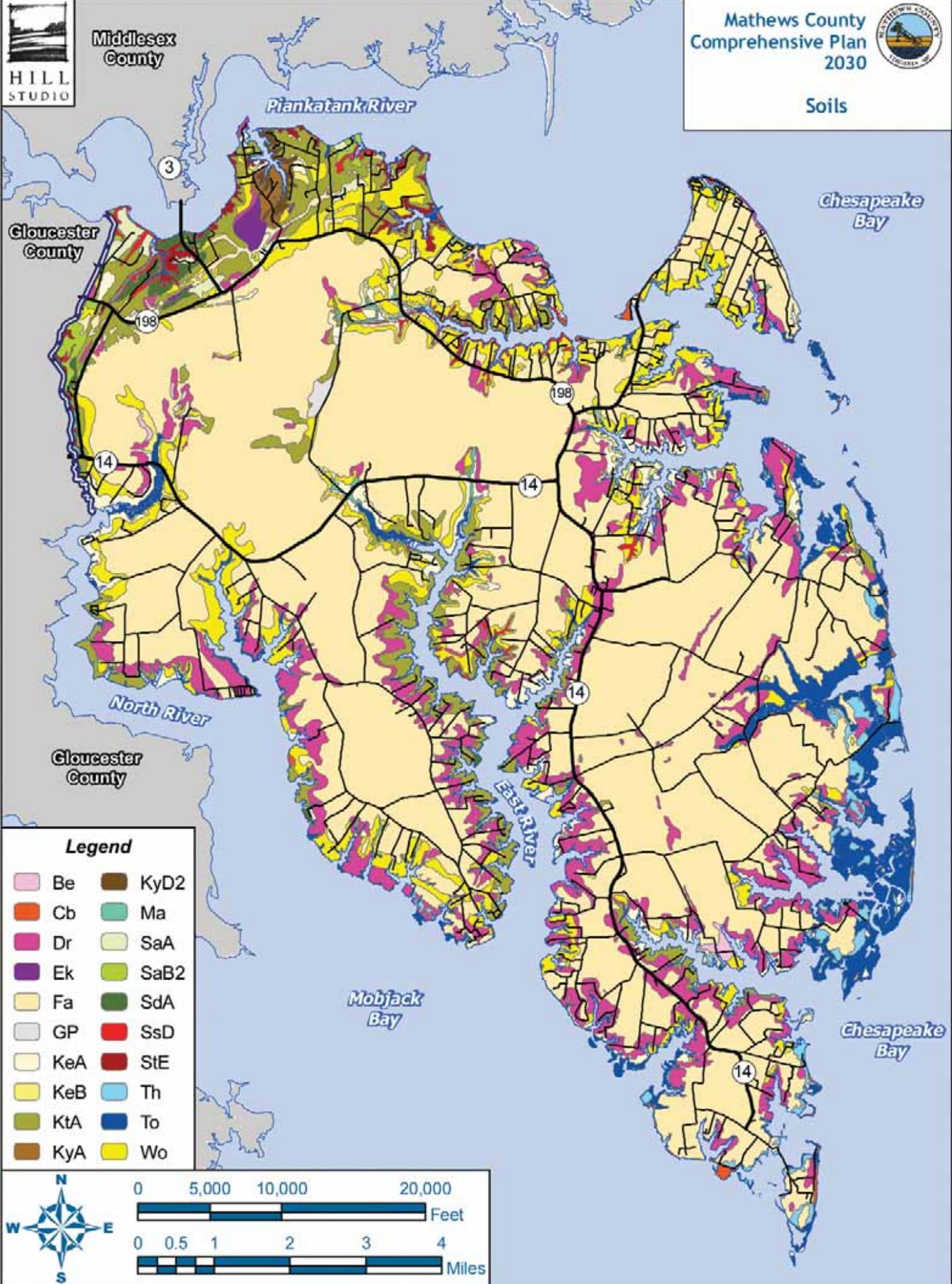


Middlesex County

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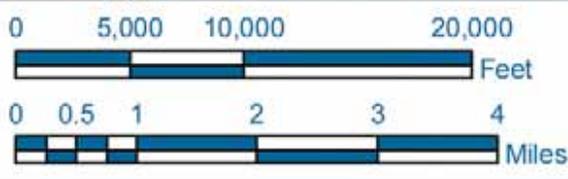


Soils



Legend

- | | |
|-----|------|
| Be | KyD2 |
| Cb | Ma |
| Dr | SaA |
| Ek | SaB2 |
| Fa | SdA |
| GP | SsD |
| KeA | StE |
| KeB | Th |
| KtA | To |
| KyA | Wo |





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The most erodible soils are those of the Keyport silt loam and Sloping and Steep Sandy Loam series. These soils are found along the streambanks of the Piankatank River and Queens Creek in the northern part of the County. A map showing the locations of these erodible soils is on the following page.

In 2008, the Virginia Institute of Marine Science updated the *Shoreline Assessment and Inventory of Mathews County*. A draft report prepared in May 2009 provides detailed information on the shoreline vegetation, existing stabilization structures, and erosion conditions;²⁰ a final report is expected by December 2010. It will be insightful as a tool to understand the shoreline conditions of the County, particularly with respect to making better decisions on shoreline management. A map of the shoreline inventory that illustrates shoreline erosion conditions follows the erodible soils map. This map was prepared based on information provided by VIMS related to the shoreline inventory study. The Shoreline Inventory Report should be referenced for more specific information on a site basis for such elements as riparian land use, streambank conditions and shoreline features, including structures. This informative report and detailed maps are available on line at <http://ccrm.vims.edu>.

A companion initiative that will be beneficial in assisting shoreline management is *Living Shorelines for the Chesapeake Bay Watershed*, prepared by the Center for Coastal Resource Management at VIMS. This collaborative project provides extensive information on natural methods for protecting tidal shorelines using native wetland plants, grasses, shrubs and trees. The benefits of choosing living shoreline techniques include: reduced costs for shoreline stabilization, enhanced water quality, increased wildlife habitat and access, and reduced wave energy. The report is an excellent guide for property owners in understanding and managing their shorelines. The living shoreline report and the shoreline inventory report will be very useful to property owners, contractors, and the County Wetlands Board in helping to assess the best environmental practices for shoreline stabilization.

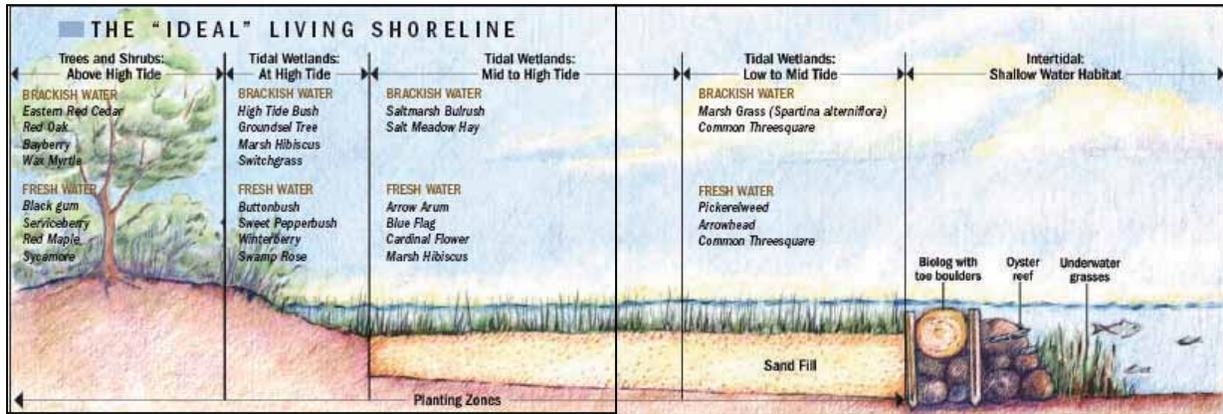
Siting of Docks, Piers, and Structures

In accordance with the Chesapeake Bay Act, the local government must manage the placement of docks, piers and shoreline structures. In Mathews County, this is done through the Wetlands Board and various federal and state permitting agencies. The most comprehensive assessment of shoreline structures for Mathews County is that compiled by VIMS as part of the *Shoreline Assessment and Inventory of Mathews County*. Detailed maps of shoreline structures are available on line at http://ccrm.vims.edu/gis_data_maps/shoreline_inventories/virginia/mathews. Property owners and interested parties should consult this mapping and other resources to determine the best management practices and appropriate locations for shoreline structures.

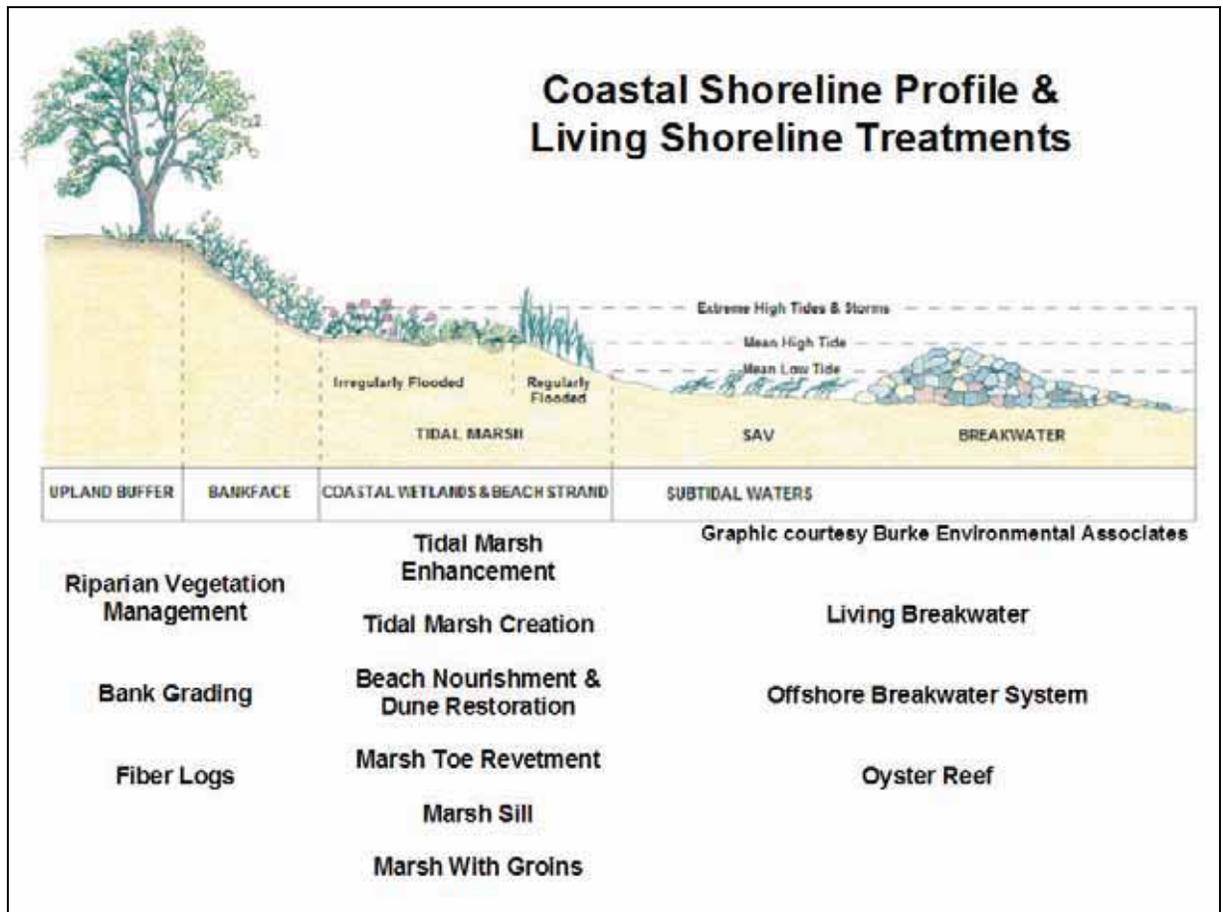
²⁰ Virginia Institute of Marine Science, Center for Coastal Resources Management. May 2009, Draft. *Mathews County, Virginia Shoreline Inventory Report Methods and Guidelines*.



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Graphics illustrating the living shoreline. Source: Living Shorelines for the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. VIMS, Center for Coastal Resource



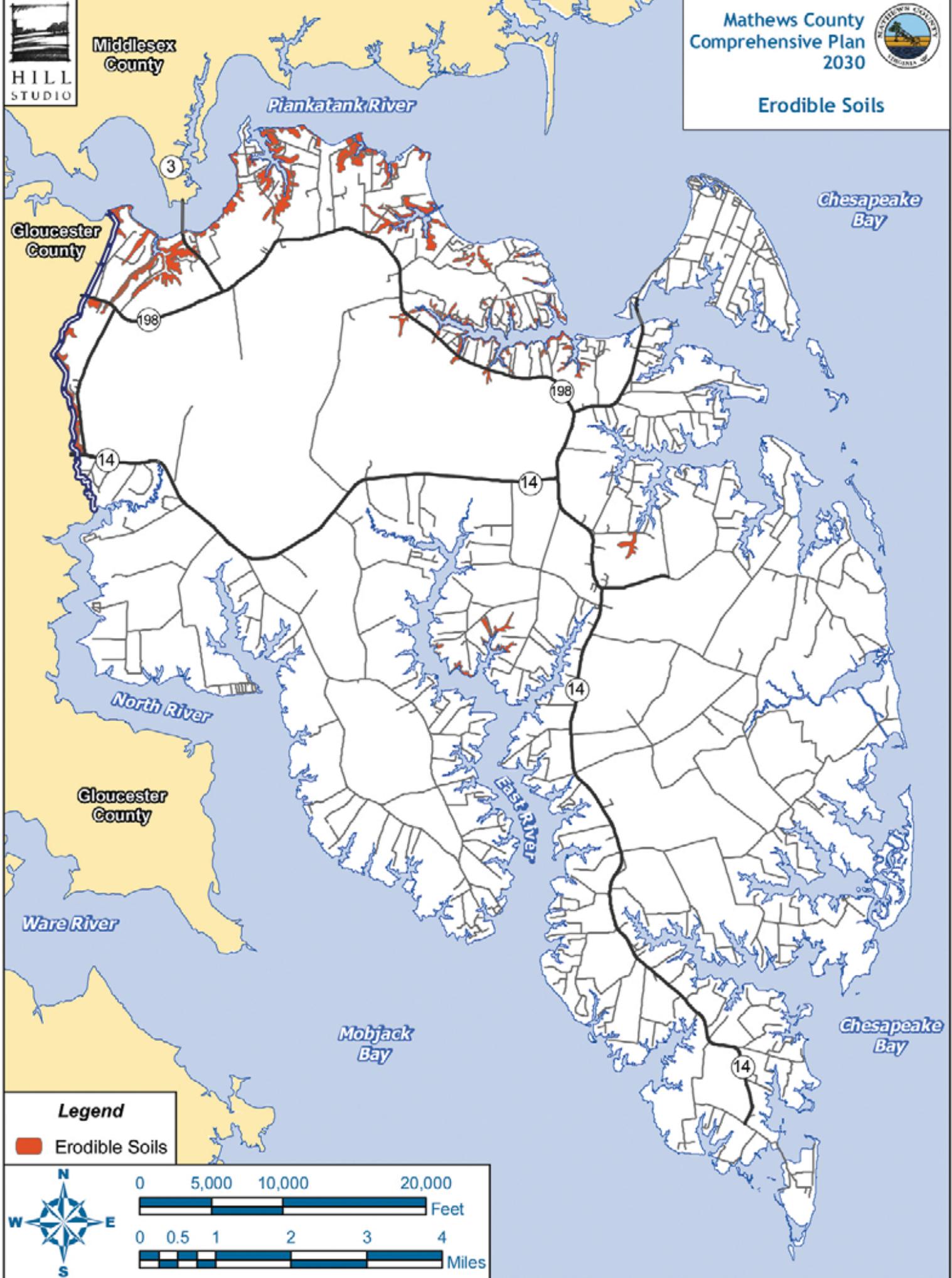


Middlesex County

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Erodible Soils



Legend

 Erodible Soils



0 5,000 10,000 20,000

 Feet

0 0.5 1 2 3 4

 Miles

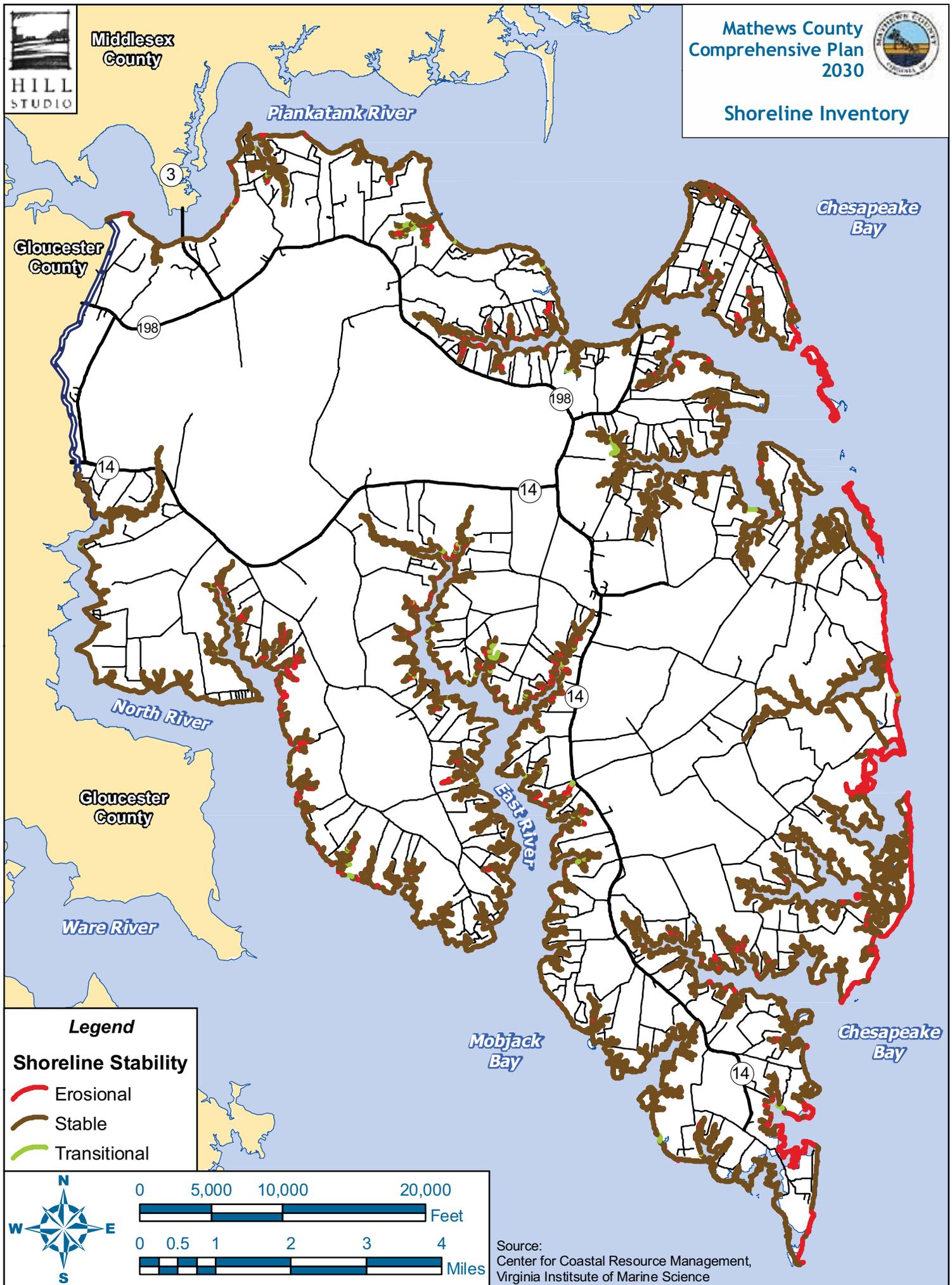


Middlesex County
Gloucester County

Mathews County
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2030



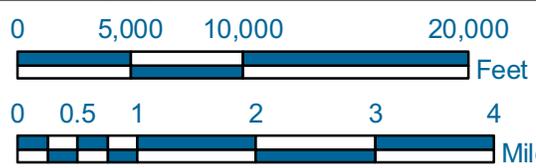
Shoreline Inventory



Legend

Shoreline Stability

- Erosional
- Stable
- Transitional



Source:
Center for Coastal Resource Management,
Virginia Institute of Marine Science



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Protection of Potable Water Supply

Because the water table in Mathews County is located very near the surface, there is considerable potential for contamination of groundwater and potable water supplies.

One of the principal sources for contamination is from septic systems. Unsaturated soil is essential for treating wastewater. In particular, the permeability of the soil to allow the flow of water through it over a sufficient period of time to filter contaminants is especially important. The permeability of the soils in Mathews County is very limited. A map illustrating the permeability is found on the following page. As indicated, soil permeability is between 0.6 and 6.0 inches per hour for most areas of the county; this absorption capacity is a challenge for septic systems (as shown in the additional map). The northern part of the County and a limited amount of inner shoreline on the East River provide the better opportunities for handling septic systems.

Since 2000 Comprehensive Plan, there have been public facility improvements that have reduced the potential for contamination of the potable water supply. The County landfill has been closed and the Virginia Peninsula Public Service Authority continues to monitor the landfill in accordance with the regulations of the Virginia Department of Waste Management. The central wastewater treatment plant in Mathews Courthouse is scheduled to be eliminated upon completion of the sanitary sewer transmission force main.

In 2010, The Hampton Roads Sanitation District will begin construction on a new sanitary sewer transmission force main from Mathews Court House along Route 198 and Route 3 to Gloucester County. (Additional information on this initiative is found in the Public Facilities and Services (Utilities) section of this plan. While this initiative should help to reduce contamination impacts on potable groundwater, the County will need to provide careful oversight in the future to ensure a safe and ample water supply. This will involve very close coordination with the Virginia Department of Health, and public education on the maintenance of septic and alternative waste systems.

Other sources of potential water contamination are underground storage tanks (USTs), agricultural runoff, animal wastes and discharges from boats. While many agricultural operations may utilize best management practices, there is an opportunity to increase public communication with citizens and businesses to promote improved agricultural practices that will enhance water quality. Proper maintenance, installation, or removal of USTs is guided by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality; information on best management practices can be found at <http://www.deq.state.va.us/tanks/usts.html>.

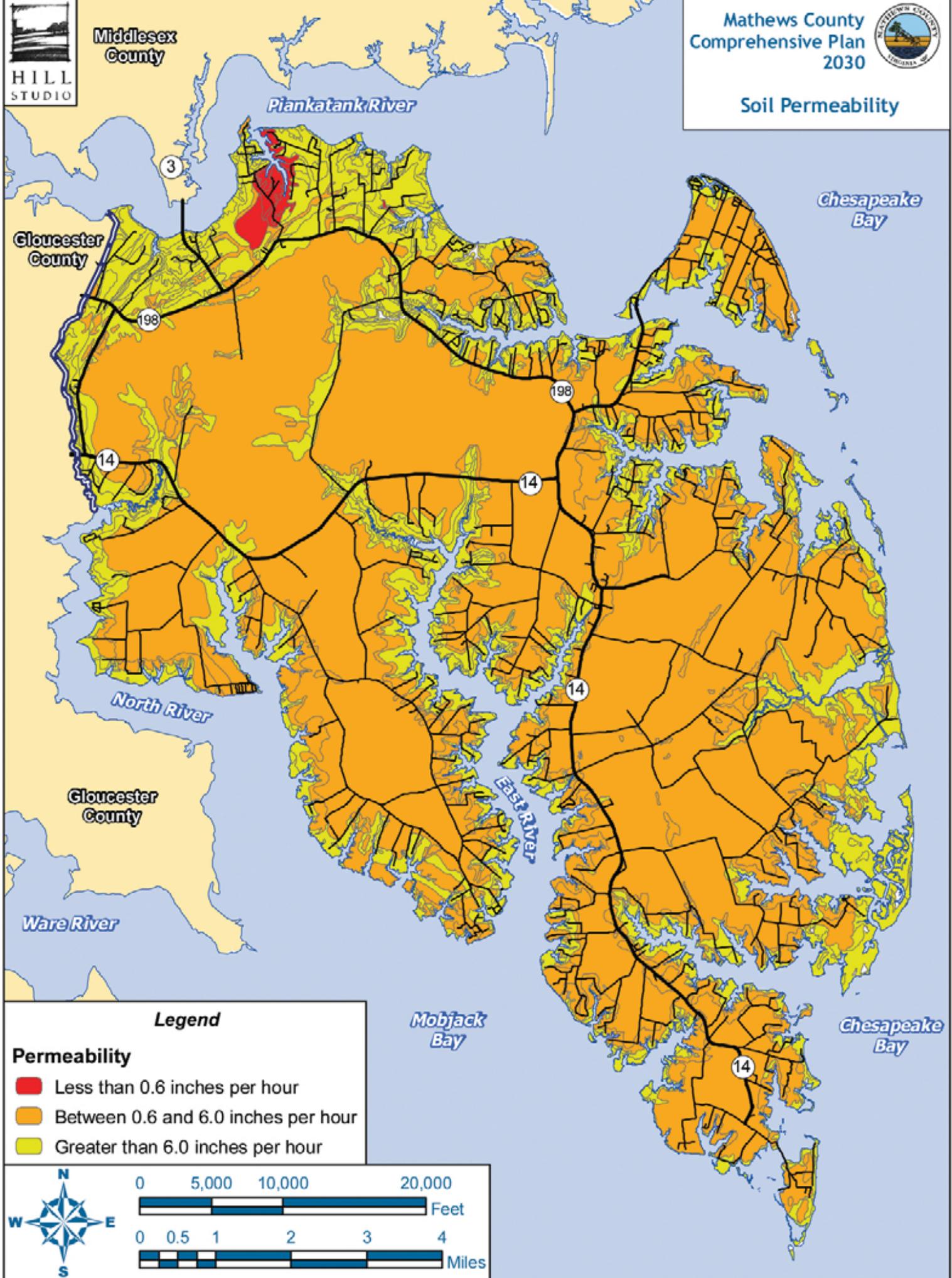


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County

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Soil Permeability



Legend

Permeability

- Less than 0.6 inches per hour
- Between 0.6 and 6.0 inches per hour
- Greater than 6.0 inches per hour



0 5,000 10,000 20,000

Feet

0 0.5 1 2 3 4

Miles

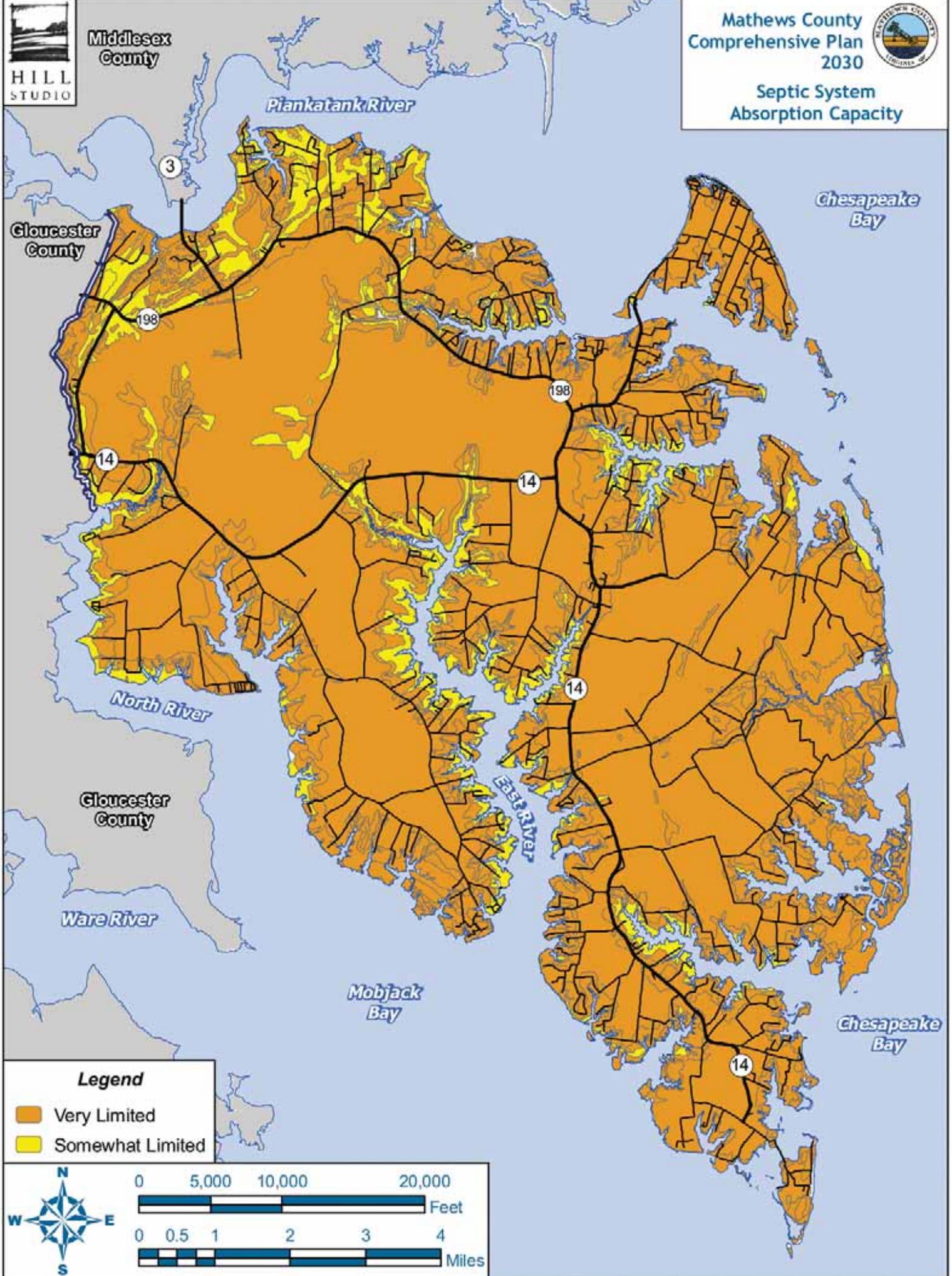


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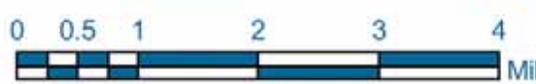
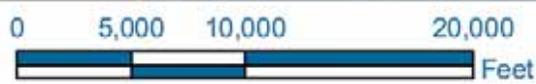


Septic System
Absorption Capacity



Legend

- Very Limited
- Somewhat Limited





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Access to the Waterfront

Mathews County is extremely fortunate to have 280 miles of shoreline. This tremendous asset is highly valued by residents and County officials because of its contribution to the area's quality of life, recreation, and local economy. In 2003, the County adopted a *Stewards Access Management Plan* that provided information on all public access areas and marinas throughout the County. The plan also includes specific recommendations and priorities for improving public facilities. More detailed information on this waters access plan is found in the preceding section, Public Facilities and Services (Recreation).

Climate Change

In recent years, there has been continued discussion about climate changes that are being experienced around the world. While there are varied opinions on causes and ultimate effects, it is recognized that changing weather patterns may contribute to rising sea levels which could significantly affect both inland and coastal communities. Regardless of the causes of climate change, as well as the pace and magnitude of such changes, it is essential that communities appropriately plan for changing trends and adjust their development patterns to minimize potential adverse impacts.

Possible sea level rise in conjunction with shoreline erosion and coastal subsidence (or sinking) is a concern for coastal Virginia. This is especially important for populated areas in terms of property damage and safety concerns as well as in terms of potential impacts on natural communities responding to changes in vegetative patterns, wildlife populations, and chemical responses due to temperature variation, runoff, varied rainfall, etc.

Potential rising sea levels coupled with the potential for stronger storms pose increasing threats to coastal communities, infrastructure, beaches, wetlands, and sensitive ecosystems. With respect to the mid-Atlantic region, rising water levels, erosion and coastal subsidence already are affecting low-lying lands, eroding beaches, converting wetlands to open water, and exacerbating coastal flooding. Consequently, the County should consider additional approaches for adapting to a changing coastline. Short-term structural solutions (e.g., rip-rap revetments, breakwaters, bulkheads, elevating structures, etc.) will not sufficiently address all anticipated changes. Shifts are needed in federal, state and local policies with respect to more long-term land-use planning and environmental protection and preservation.



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Land Use, Development and Redevelopment of Resource and Management Areas

Given development constraints and the potential long-term effects of climate change, future land development and redevelopment in Mathews County must be carefully planned and coordinated with environmental features. This includes not only new buildings and the rehabilitation of existing structures, but also the development of supporting public infrastructure. The next section on Land Use provides a more detailed analysis of existing land use and development patterns and presents recommendations for addressing outstanding issues and amending land development patterns to meet the goals of the future.

Environmental Challenges and Opportunities 2030

The environmental resources of Mathews County provide for the economic and social well-being of residents and businesses. Careful planning and management of the environment, and in particular water quality, must be a priority in order to sustain the quality of life that is cherished by citizens and visitors. The environmental resources in Mathews include complex ecosystems that are sensitive to such things as stormwater and agricultural runoff, inadequate wastewater treatment, soil erosion, and changes in temperature, rainfall and overall climate. All of these challenges are intended to be monitored and managed in conjunction with Chesapeake Bay and Clean Water regulations, among others; however, it takes many partners, extensive public education, and diligent communication to successfully achieve desired environmental goals and outcomes. Ultimately, clean water is essential to community health, safety and welfare. It will be important to pursue and emphasize effective means of monitoring and treating point and non-point source pollutants to achieve the water quality desired for Mathews County and the surrounding region. Traditionally, planning in Mathews County has focused only on land area within the County boundaries; changing the paradigm to expand planning beyond the land and over the water (still within County territorial boundaries) could significantly help to manage future water quality and minimize land use conflicts.

One of the most difficult challenges for Mathews County will be appropriately balancing the increasing conflicts regarding use of and access to the waterfront. Understandably, waterfront residents have personal interests for using and protecting their properties, while waterfront businesses have need for water access and the ability to engage in aquatic trades. In addition, citizens of the County have rights to the waterfront for access and recreation. Yet, underlying all of these interests are the sensitive environmental systems that must be recognized and protected in order to sustain the quality of life desired by all.

The potential rise in sea level should be one of the factors considered in future development patterns. Over time, it is probable that there will be changes in vegetation, the landscape, and flooding patterns. The projected degree of impact is widely discussed and varies among experts and designated study panels. Thus, to be most effective it is best be conservative when



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selecting sites for public facilities or permitting development in areas that may be susceptible to possible rising sea levels. In addition, because the expansive wetlands of Mathews County are important to the physical and ecological attributes of the region, it will be important to ensure that these beneficial communities are not depleted, but rather protected and allowed to transition naturally.

Like many communities, Mathews County residents are interested in maintaining the natural environmental character and reducing unnecessary lighting at night. The adoption of a “dark sky” ordinance can assist the County in reducing spillover lighting and maintaining natural conditions that are enjoyed by residents and important for the environment. New development could be required to provide “shielded” lighting fixtures and appropriate lighting standards could be established to ensure safety, yet control maximum illumination.

Planning/Development Policies, Action Strategies for Environment 2030

The following planning and development policies and action strategies are established to achieve the desired vision for sustaining a quality environment in Mathews County:

Development Policies and Strategies for Environment	
EN1	Environmental resources are the natural and the economic foundation of the quality of life in Mathews County. Protection of natural resources and maintenance of excellent water quality and clean air are essential to the safety and prosperity of businesses and residents. For new development and redevelopment, there should be no net increase in environmental loss or pollution.
	1. When considering new development or redevelopment, evaluate potential impacts on environmental features and water quality, particularly with respect to runoff, pollutants and waste management. Require mapping of environmental features for reference and applicant study/response to potential impact. Require use of low-impact development techniques (or “light imprint” alternatives ²¹ in conjunction with site development or redevelopment. These are in addition to use of best management practices.

²¹ Light imprint techniques for managing runoff are similar to low-impact engineering methods; they result in a blended system of engineering techniques and aesthetic design features that complement the natural and the built environment. For more information, see www.lightimprint.org.



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Development Policies and Strategies for Environment	
	2. Develop and publish a quick reference guide for citizens, contractors, and developers that illustrate use of low-impact or light-impact development techniques for several development scenarios – single-family home, small business, waterfront development, etc. Focus on good site design that minimizes disturbance of land, preserves indigenous vegetation, and minimizes impervious cover.
	3. Amend the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances to incorporate the most up to date performance criteria for improving water quality in order to comply with Chesapeake Bay Act Phase III Regulations.
	4. Amend the County zoning ordinance to include a Floodplain Overlay District to expand the available tools for reducing flood insurance rates and protecting public and private investments. Strengthen development standards and types of land uses permitted in the flood hazard and storm-induced wave zones (e.g., A/AE and V/VE zones). Seek grant funding from the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program through FEMA to reduce hazards and losses.
	5. Encourage new development or redevelopment that is designed to meet “green building” standards such as LEED. (This can reduce impervious surfaces, reduce water and energy consumption, minimize site disturbance, and reduce pollutants.) Accept the state-wide challenge and participate as a County partner in the Go Green Virginia Campaign managed by the Virginia Municipal League, www.gogreenva.org .
	6. Promote water conservation for public health, safety and welfare by encouraging (and requiring where possible) the use of low-flow water fixtures, showerheads and toilets in all new residential and business development. Encourage appropriate residential and business development that will not have large demands on the potable water supply. Promote water conservation and wise water consumption through public education.
	7. Develop a wellhead protection program that establishes minimum requirements for locations of wells and adjacent development. Amend County regulations to implement development standards and well protection measures for potable water supplies.
	8. Sponsor, coordinate and promote regular septic tank pump-out programs



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Development Policies and Strategies for Environment	
	throughout the County. Designate priority “pump out zones” and adopt regulations to ensure compliance. Identify existing pit privies and seek better alternative solutions for managing waste. Seek grants and financial programs that can assist the County in these priority efforts.
	9. Promote increased public education regarding water quality impacts of non-point source pollutants. In particular, encourage proper disposal by boaters of bilge water (contains contaminants) and improved management of livestock near surface waters.
	10. Amend the County subdivision ordinance to establish better standards and requirements for development of community water and wastewater systems in order to improve and protect water quality and provide a safe water supply for users. Requirements should exceed the minimum standards required by the health department.
	11. Consider expanding the Chesapeake Bay Resource Management Area in Mathews County to better manage development impacts on the environment.
	12. Develop and adopt a “dark skies” ordinance that will require shielded lighting for new building development and establish appropriate lighting standards for inland and waterfront properties.
EN2	Mathews County has a strong community heritage in agriculture, aquaculture and forestry. These natural resource trades remain important economic sectors and should be encouraged and supported in order to maintain community character and prosperity.
	1. Protect the environment by continuing to promote and encourage the use of best management practices and riparian buffers prescribed by the Tidewater Soil and Water Conservation District and the Virginia Department of Forestry for agricultural and forestal activities. Promote environmental stewardship among landowners and operators by actively working with them in educational efforts and incentive or recognition programs. Encourage landowners to consider conservation easements for their properties.



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Development Policies and Strategies for Environment	
EN3	<p>The wetlands of Mathews County are critical environmental features that are of substantial benefit to the health of natural systems and to coastal living. Protection and preservation of County wetlands should be a priority in order to sustain environmental quality, public health and safety, and the valued character of the community.</p>
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Encourage vegetative approaches and “living shoreline” techniques where appropriate for stabilizing coastal property waterfronts. Develop public education materials and programs that will promote use of these techniques.
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Offer “living shoreline” training for wetland board members, contractors and others who are involved in coastal property management. Provide continued leadership in this effort by helping to establish a “certification” program for wetland board members and contractors that can be a model for other communities.
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Support annual inventories of County wetlands and other natural resources. Encourage regular reporting and sharing of information among agencies, governmental officials, and citizens.
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Utilize the Shoreline Management Plan prepared by VIMS in evaluating existing conditions and proposed plans for development. Promote and encourage citizen access to the plan. Integrate into governmental permitting, Wetlands Board decisions, and planning recommendations.
EN4	<p>The waterfront of Mathews County is a valuable ecological, recreational and scenic asset that should be available to all citizens. Use of waterfront lands should be balanced to provide reasonable access points for the public and protection of the environment, while recognizing the rights of private residential and business property owners.</p>
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review and update the County Statewaters Access Plan at least every five years to ensure that public access and recreational needs are met. Update the 2003 Plan with the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.



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Development Policies and Strategies for Environment	
	2. Site any new waterfront community facilities or marinas in accordance with the checklist and criteria established by the Virginia Marine Resources Commission for Marinas and Community Facilities for Boat Mooring (1988, www.mrc.state.va.us). Coordinate locations with aquaculture and blue infrastructure resources to minimize land use conflicts and ensure protection of water quality.
	3. Identify desirable waterfront and off-shore locations for pursuing aquaculture. Develop a strategy for improving water quality, managing land use, and reducing development and pollution conflicts.
	4. Consider amending the zoning ordinance to define “floating home/structure” as a use and identify zoning districts in which this use may be permitted or is specifically prohibited.
EN5	Sea level rise, shoreline erosion and coastal subsidence over the next several decades are projected to have effects on coastal areas and natural communities. To adequately prepare for possible changes in rising sea levels and weather patterns, development should be carefully reviewed and managed to take into account the potential impacts. Where possible, conservation measures should be employed to protect natural communities and prevent investment losses in the future.
	1. Promote conservation in the eastern and southern coastal areas of Mathews County that may be most affected by possible rising sea levels and flooding. Amend the County zoning ordinance to address possible sea level changes and develop appropriate use regulations and development standards. Consider amending the zoning ordinance to increase shoreline setback requirements.
	2. Plan, site and develop new public buildings and facilities so that they take into account possible rising sea levels. Require evaluation of impact as part of the governmental contract for services. Locate facilities in the most appropriate areas.
	3. Protect existing facilities from possible sea level rise through advanced planning and implementation of environmentally acceptable protection methods.



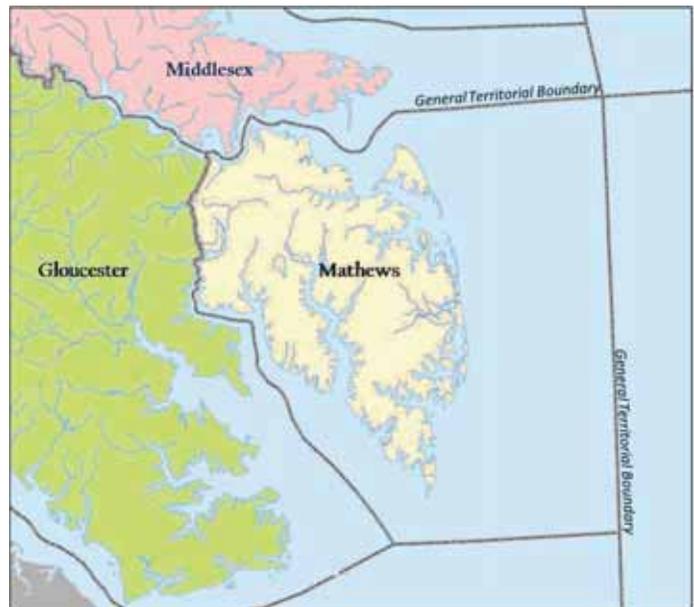
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Environment: Special Action Projects

Sustaining the environment of Mathews County will provide the greatest benefits to citizens and businesses for the future. The following paragraphs discuss some initial projects that can assist the County in progressing toward the established goals and strategies for protecting and enhancing the environment.

Planning for Land and Water within County Territorial Boundaries

To effectively plan for continued safety and well-being in the County, there must be expanded controls and management of the territorial waters surrounding the County. This will require developing new tools and working regionally with other local governments and environmental agencies to model specific legislation and methods to improve water quality in the Chesapeake Bay watershed and better manage land/water use conflicts (particularly with respect to aquaculture and “floating homes”). Public education and communication are essential to the success of the efforts and the adopted programs.



*Source: Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission.
Aquaculture Steering Committee 2009.*



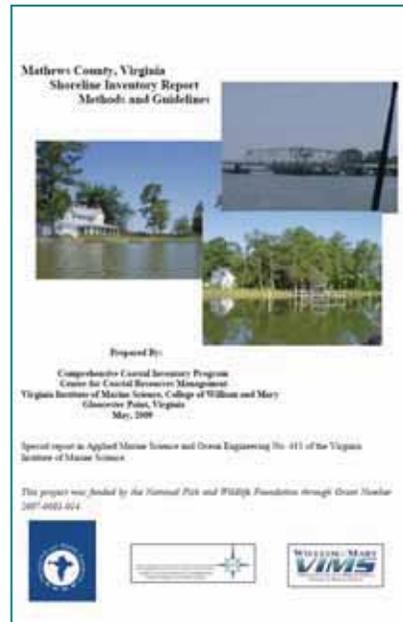
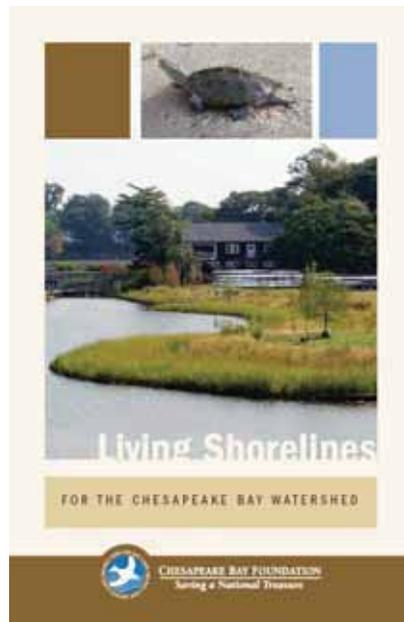
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Model Certification & Training Program - Wetlands Board

Enhanced environmental conditions in Mathews County can significantly assist in addressing many challenges for the future – water quality, economic investment, rising sea levels, and community character and quality of life.

In recent years, considerable research and mapping has been completed for Mathews that provides extensive insight into the physical and environmental conditions. Research reports include the Shoreline Assessment and Inventory for Mathews County (VIMS) and the Living Shoreline (Chesapeake Bay Foundation). Both of these reports provide excellent guidance for property owners, contractors, and reviewing officials in understanding shoreline conditions and in making recommendations for stabilization and ecological and vegetative improvements.

One simple way to encourage use of these documents and methods is to integrate them into the County review process for development permit applications. Initially, this could be done by encouraging training of County staff, wetlands board members and contractors. A “certification” and training program could be developed which then could serve as a model for other communities. The reference documents could be posted as links on the County webpage and copies made available at the library or other public offices.





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Land Use and Development

One of the main functions of a comprehensive plan is to recommend appropriate land use and development patterns that will implement a community’s vision and established goals for the future. Existing land use and development patterns need to be respected; however, in many instances there needs to be changes in future land development patterns to address development constraints and long-term planning issues. For Mathews County, there are many land development challenges that must be considered for the future – environmental constraints, limited availability of potable water, poor absorption capacities for wastewater, and coastal challenges to name a few. The following paragraphs provide an overview of the existing land use and development patterns and recommendations for future land use patterns given the County’s land use development constraints.

Existing Land Use

A map of the existing land use in the County is provided on the next page. Based on the GIS information provided, the land use acreage of the County consists of the following:

Summary of Existing Land Use Mathews County 2009		
	Acreage*	Percentage
Rural Agriculture/Residential	10,500	19%
Residential, Single Family	21,500	39%
Residential, Multi-family	40	<1 %
Commercial	700	1%
Industrial	600	1%
Public/Semi-public	3,100	5%
Conservation/Parks	2,000	3%
Cemeteries	50	<1 %
Other		
Right of Ways	200	<1 %
Commercial Utilities	10	<1 %
Open Land (not developed)	17,000	30%
Total	55,700	100%
*Note: This does not account for large lot sizes; for example, a large lot of five acres will be calculated as a specific land use, even if that land use constitutes only a portion of the parcel.		



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Existing Land Use

Gloucester County

Chesapeake Bay

Gloucester County

Legend

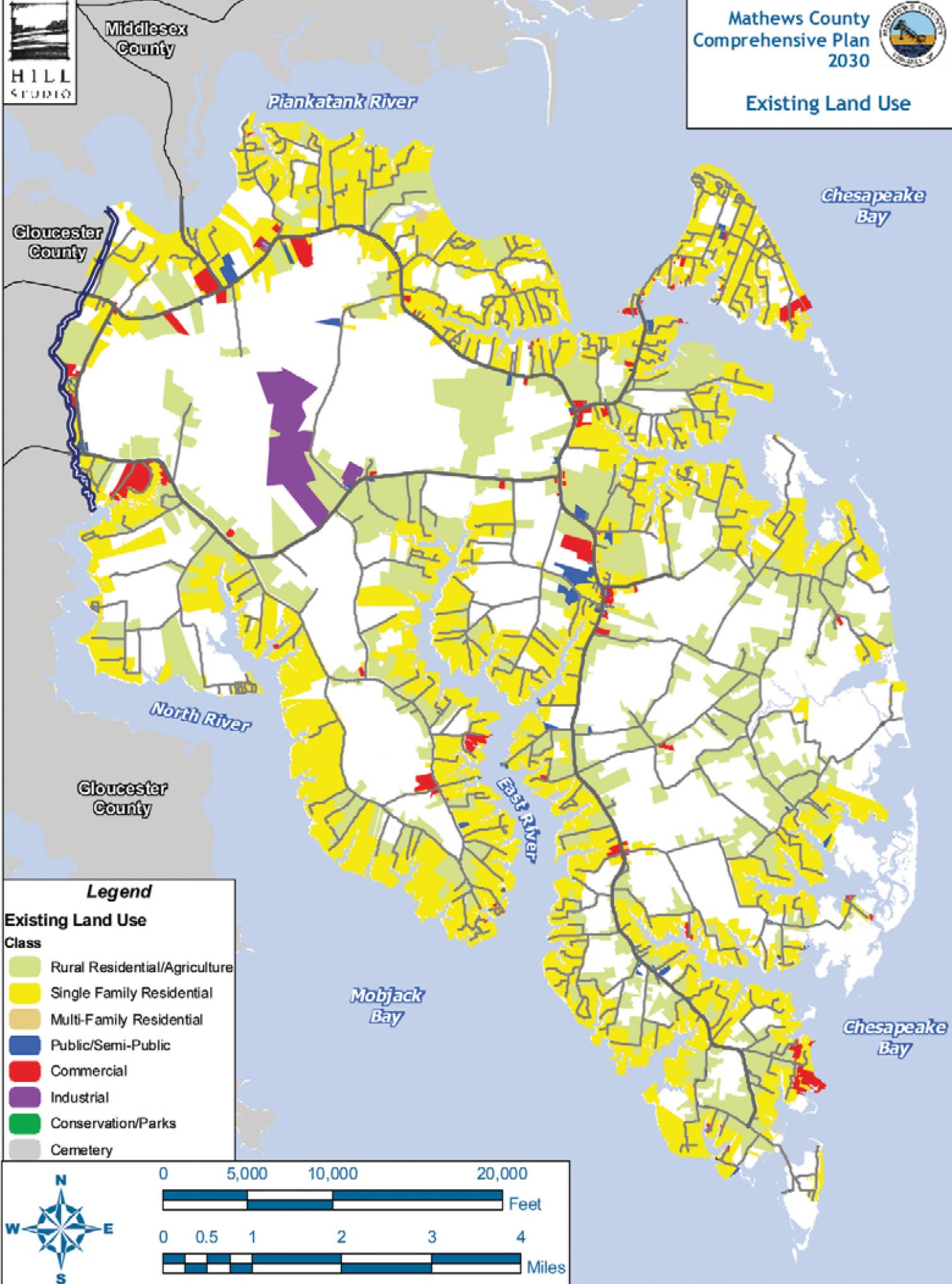
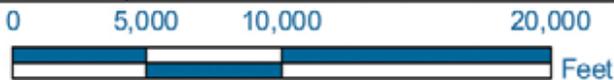
Existing Land Use

Class

-  Rural Residential/Agriculture
-  Single Family Residential
-  Multi-Family Residential
-  Public/Semi-Public
-  Commercial
-  Industrial
-  Conservation/Parks
-  Cemetery

Mobjack Bay

Chesapeake Bay





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Future Land Use

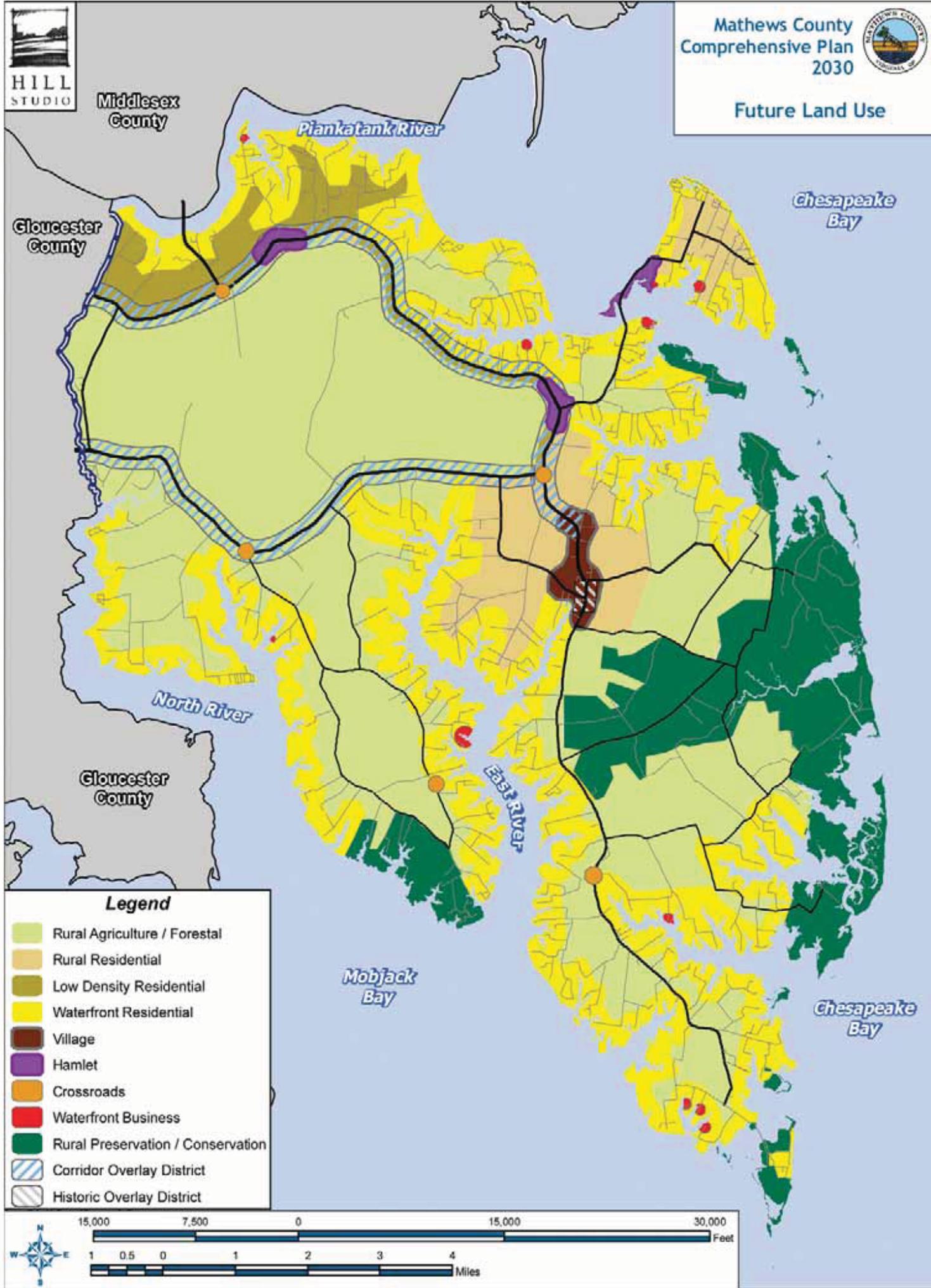
Given development constraints and environmental factors affecting Mathews County, land development patterns in the future should be more conservative than what exists today. Greater land use guidance and controls are needed in order to achieve the future vision set forth by Mathews' citizens and governmental officials. In addition, changing climate and sensitive environmental conditions present challenges for the future in order to protect properties, public health and overall community safety.

A future land use map is presented on the following page. This map was developed based on various factors including Chesapeake Bay Preservation Areas, wetlands, land elevations, proximity to the proposed sanitary sewer transmission force main, and potential coastal changes from rising sea levels. While the future land use map recognizes the need to respect existing land uses and property rights, consideration must be given to shifting development patterns in the future to the best suited areas to address future challenges. More detailed discussion of the future land use categories is on the following pages.

In addition, Mathews County supports preservation of land through conservation or open-space easements. The preservation of open space is viewed as desirable and compatible with the land management recommendations of this Comprehensive Plan, even in areas where the Future Land Use Map may recommend a different or more intensive land use.

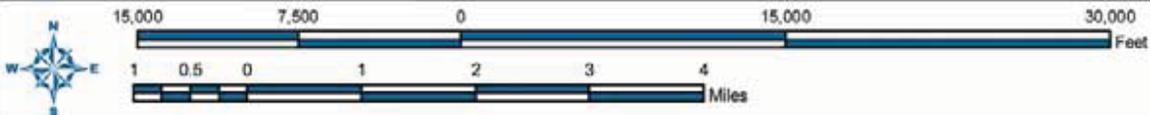


HILL
STUDIO



Legend

- Rural Agriculture / Forestal
- Rural Residential
- Low Density Residential
- Waterfront Residential
- Village
- Hamlet
- Crossroads
- Waterfront Business
- Rural Preservation / Conservation
- Corridor Overlay District
- Historic Overlay District





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The following paragraphs provide a brief overview of the proposed land use categories and development criteria. These descriptions provide guidance for amending land use regulations in the future and for encouraging the type of land development desired for Mathews County in 2030. Of special note is that these land use descriptions are not parcel specific and are not intended to identify specific zoning districts.

Rural Agriculture/Forestral

This land use category is proposed to include much of the County that is oriented to large-tract agriculture and forests. The recommended density is one dwelling unit per five acres. These low-density development recommendations are proposed in order to maintain the rural nature of the county, preserve important agricultural areas and forests, and respect the varied constraints for development. Land uses included within this category would include agriculture, forestry, and accompanying very low-density residential uses.

Rural Residential

This land use category is proposed to include areas of the county that are still rural in character and exhibit very low-density residential uses. The recommended density is one dwelling unit per 2.5 acres. This category would provide for small-tract, low-intensity agriculture and residential uses with larger lots. Also, building heights should be of an appropriate scale to maintain community character.

Waterfront Residential

Much of the residential development that exists today in Mathews is on the waterfront. Although these areas are highly cherished for their waterfront amenities, there are many environmental challenges associated with expanding development in these areas. Consequently, new development along the waterfront in the future should be more conservative in terms of dwelling-unit densities, building types and locations, and shoreline and water access. In addition, new or expanded development on existing lots must recognize constraints relative to providing and maintaining safe wastewater treatment and water supply, as well as protecting water quality. Finally, planning for possible sea level rise can protect property investments and assist in using environmental assets for the purposes of accommodating natural succession.

Building heights should be limited to an appropriate scale to ensure an appropriate fit and relationship with existing development patterns. Land uses should be limited to primarily single-family residential development at a density of one dwelling unit per acre, well-managed agriculture or open space. Larger lots or small grouped development should be encouraged where environmental factors will accommodate development; large residential subdivisions should be discouraged.



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Low Density Residential

This land use category is proposed for sections of the County where elevations are highest and where there is potential access to public sewer and safe water supply. The land uses within this category could include single family and duplex residential uses at a density of one dwelling unit per acre depending on environmental constraints and access to public utilities. Building heights should be limited to an appropriate scale to maintain community character. Business uses should be permitted only as accessory to a residence and restricted to home-based businesses that meet specific requirements for residential compatibility.

Village

This land use category includes the historic commercial center of the County, Mathews Court House. This compact development center consists of a core of mixed residential, commercial and community services that may include small businesses, upper-story residential, live/work units, and surrounding groupings of residential uses.

Within the village there are a variety of residential types and densities ranging from single-family homes to small groups of dwelling units (e.g., duplex, or townhouses) at a density of 4-8 dwelling units per acre. The village exhibits an interconnected street network and is pedestrian-oriented so that residential and business uses are within an easy walking distance of one-quarter mile (or five minute walk). The village area is well-landscaped, exhibits pedestrian-scale signage and lighting, and incorporates traffic-calming measures on the streets to ensure an inviting and safe experience. Buildings should be positioned close to the street with parking on the street or in small, shared lots located to the side or rear of buildings. Rehabilitation of existing buildings for alternative purposes should be encouraged; new buildings should respect the existing architectural context and building patterns.

Planned Business

This land use category provides an opportunity for larger scale business and limited industrial development in specially targeted areas to provide enhanced business employment opportunities and economic development for the County. Land uses could include corporate offices, light manufacturing or assembly, medical facilities, and other larger-scale business uses or warehouse/distribution uses. A planned business zone should be a minimum of 5-10 acres. Signage, access and building materials and placement should be carefully planned and coordinated to ensure a well-designed and complementary environment. Potential Planned Business areas may apply to Dixie and Cobbs Creek (existing business park area), or other areas that may be identified in the future as suitable planned business areas.



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Hamlet

This land use category is proposed for businesses serving local residents in several areas of the County. It would be applicable to the existing business areas of Hudgins, Gywnn's Island, and Cobbs Creek. A hamlet consists of a small-scale, compact settlement area that may include several business uses and community services.

Land uses may include a small convenience store, post office, fire station, church, professional office, neighborhood retail store or restaurant. These uses should be oriented to pedestrians, close to the street, and have small-scale signage and limited lighting (because of its proximity to nearby residences). Parking should be minimal and located to the side or at the edge of the street. Housing may be located adjacent to the hamlet or within the hamlet above ground floor commercial uses. Rehabilitation of existing buildings for alternative purposes should be encouraged; new buildings should complement the surrounding residential uses.

Crossroads Community

Several County primary or secondary road intersections have developed as small crossroad business centers. Examples of a crossroads community are: Dixie, Ward's Corner, Port Haywood, North and Bohannon. In addition to the central village and hamlets, these areas also serve local residents and provide small business opportunities or services at intersections of roads that frequently carry neighborhood traffic. Typical land uses could include a small convenience store, gas station, post office, café or small office. New buildings should respect the existing architectural character of nearby buildings. Rehabilitation of existing buildings for alternative purposes should be encouraged. Dixie and Ward's Corner may evolve into hamlets, since they may become more developed with the extension of the sanitary sewer transmission force main line.

Waterfront Business

The working waterfront, fisheries, and aquaculture businesses of Mathews County should be continued to the extent environmentally feasible. Appropriate business locations on the waterfront are important to the long-term economy of the County and should be carefully protected and utilized in a productive manner. In particular, preference should be given to promoting areas and sites for working waterfront operations, fishing, aquaculture, and habitat preservation that will support the economy, enhance the environment, and ensure quality production of fish and shellfish. There should be a careful assessment of new waterfront land uses with respect to their effects on important fishing and aquaculture resources. In addition, there should be careful assessment of existing waterfront land uses to ensure that they use best management practices to protect and enhance the environment. Of note is that it is important to recognize that with the pursuit and promotion of waterfront business development and aquaculture, there may be competing interests among other property owners for use of adjacent



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land and water. Quality fishing and aquaculture production require wise management of shorelines and off-shore waters with promoted understanding of aquaculture operations, processing, and access.

In addition to business uses, there may be appropriate residentially-oriented business uses that are suitable for the waterfront. These could include such uses as a small condominium complex, boutique hotel, bed & breakfast, or community campground. All of these uses must be carefully considered to ensure environmental compatibility and adequate and safe water and wastewater facilities. Like businesses, these types of uses must utilize best management practices to protect and enhance the environment.

Rural Preservation/Conservation

Rural Preservation/Conservation areas include public open space, natural preserves, and areas that should have carefully managed development or be conserved because of special ecosystems or natural conditions. These areas include dedicated conservation areas that are public set-asides for recreation and natural conservation. Other areas noted for preservation/conservation are areas that may be influenced by storm surge or possible rising sea levels over the next twenty years. Generally, further development in these areas should be carefully considered and limited to protect public and private investment and to minimize potential flood damages. Appropriate land uses would include open space, passive recreation, low-density residential development, and carefully managed agriculture, forestry or aquaculture.

Corridor Overlay District

A Corridor Overlay District is proposed to extend from historic Mathews Court House, along Main Street, Buckley Hall Road (Route 198) and John Clayton Memorial Highway (Route 14) corridors to the Gloucester County line. This district would follow the major entrance corridors into the County and include the area served by the sanitary sewer transmission force main. It will provide development guidance for new development to enhance the entrances to the historic Mathews Court House. The Corridor Overlay District is expected to be approximately 300 feet on either side of the corridors and would address such elements as general building location and design, parking, access points, landscaping, lighting and signage.

Historic Overlay District

A Historic Overlay District is proposed for the historic Mathews Court House and surrounding Mathews village area. This district would provide design recommendations for exterior building improvements and new building construction, as well as establish a process for reviewing building demolition. Also, there is the opportunity to designate additional historic overlay districts after a countywide survey of historic properties is conducted.



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Floodplain Overlay District

A Floodplain Overlay District is proposed for the County Zoning Ordinance to emphasize its linkage to land planning, use and development. At present, review of development and evaluation of floodplain regulations are the responsibility of the building official. By adopting an overlay district that is part of the zoning code, there is greater control over land uses in the floodplain and increased ability to manage development patterns within the context of the adopted Comprehensive Plan. At a minimum, the County must comply with regulations established by FEMA for the purposes of the National Flood Insurance Program; however, the County can choose to be more stringent in managing land uses and development in the floodplain. The proposed Floodplain Overlay district should coincide with the areas delineated on the Flood Insurance Rate Maps for the County and the Floodplain Map illustrated in Section V, Environment, of this Comprehensive Plan.

Future Land Use, Mathews County 2030		
Category	Approx. Area (acres)	%
Rural Agriculture/Forestal	32,000	58 %
Rural Residential	3800	7 %
Low Density Residential	2600	5 %
Waterfront Residential	9000	16 %
Village	450	<1 %
Hamlet	380	<1 %
Crossroads	150	<1 %
Planned Business	20	<1 %
Waterfront Business	200	<1 %
Rural Preservation/Conservation	7100	13 %
TOTAL	55,700	100 %



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Planning/Development Policies, Action Strategies for Land Use 2030

The following planning and development policies and action strategies are established to achieve the desired vision for land use in Mathews County:

Development Policies and Strategies for Land Use	
LU1	<p>The desired future land use for Mathews County should represent a sustainable land use pattern that enhances environmental quality while promoting high quality development. Improvements or changes in land development patterns and uses should incorporate sensitive environmental design and best management practices.</p>
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Amend the County zoning ordinance to integrate the land use categories and development standards recommended by this Comprehensive Plan.
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Amend the County Chesapeake Bay Preservation Area Overlay ordinance to expand the limits of the Resource Management Area. Consider additional amendments to improve overall water quality, protect sensitive environmental areas, and promote better management of land and natural resources.
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Revise the County zoning map to reflect revised ordinance amendments.
LU2	<p>The future sustainability of Mathews County requires planning and management of not only land uses, but also the use and treatment of the surface waters surrounding the County. The land and waters are linked; one affects the other. Future land use decisions should consider effects on both the land and the water.</p>
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pursue planning and management of uses beyond the shorelines of Mathews County. Coordinate approaches and methods with state agencies and other regional governments. Develop agreed upon procedures for reviewing development and use requests that affect land and water. Adopt applicable regulations to effectively manage uses within County territorial boundaries.
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Amend the Zoning Ordinance to adequately address aquaculture as a land use and amend other relevant regulations in order to protect water quality and appropriately manage aquaculture businesses/operations and surrounding land uses.



Implementing the Plan



Preserving and Sustaining the Pearl of the Chesapeake



Implementing the Plan

2030 Vision for Mathews County

By 2030, Mathews County, with its 280 miles of waterfront, will be widely acknowledged as the Pearl of the Chesapeake and celebrated as a beautiful, vibrant County with a rich cultural, political and economic heritage. The County has become a model community that showcases its outstanding quality of life, unique natural resources, and successful environmentally-friendly, sustainable development practices.

An effective comprehensive plan is one that is implemented and used on a daily basis by citizens and governmental officials in dealing with land development and public decisions.

Implementation of the 2030 Comprehensive Plan will require a diversity of partners. County government will provide leadership and will be a primary player; however, local officials cannot undertake all the recommended action strategies. Participation of civic groups, business leaders, residents, and others will be needed to effectively achieve the vision established by this plan. Both public and private investment will be required. In addition, a variety of potential funding sources must be considered to assist County officials in improving public facilities and addressing complex issues.

An implementation matrix is provided as an appendix to this plan as a tool for County officials and citizens. This matrix is a summary of the development policies and action strategies discussed in this plan, as well as a summary of proposed priorities and participants responsible for implementation. The matrix can be used as a quick reference guide for programming work efforts and planning for capital improvements. It can also be used to develop a report card for monitoring implementation of the plan.

One of the first steps in implementing the plan will be to update County development regulations to reflect the long-term goals and recommendations of the comprehensive plan. In addition to these ordinances, other "special action projects" are recommended to move the community forward, engage residents, and show incremental progress in achieving the vision. Key action projects are discussed in the following section and in greater detail in the preceding sections. A composite map of the recommended implementation strategies follows the discussion.



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2030 Implementation: Special Action Projects

Sanitary Sewer Transmission Force Main

The County and Hampton Roads Sanitation District have initiated plans to implement Phase I of a sanitary sewer transmission force main from Mathews Court House to Gloucester County. Construction of Phase I is expected to be completed in 2011. Phase II would add Gwynn's Island to the transmission force main sewer system. However, both timing and funding for implementation of Phase II have not been identified.

Entrance Corridor Overlay District & Design Guidelines

This overlay zoning district would be aligned with the two entrance corridors leading to historic Mathews Court House. The corridor district would apply to new and expanded development along the corridors and would provide guidance for site and building development, landscaping, lighting, access management and signage. Attractive entrance signs would be placed at gateway entrances into the County.

Historic Overlay District Mathews Court House

An historic overlay district is proposed for Mathews Court House that would guide building improvements and site development in the downtown. The district would be guided by adopted design standards for rehabilitation and new infill development. Financial incentives could assist business owners in improving their properties in accordance with appropriate standards; these could include historic tax credits and special rehabilitation funds set aside to encourage development.

Floodplain Overlay District

A floodplain overlay district is proposed as an amendment to the zoning ordinance that would apply to the floodway and 100-year floodplain. This will provide increased oversight by planning and zoning officials for development proposed in the floodway or floodplain. In addition, land uses could be more stringently regulated by implementation of such a district.

Fort Nonsense

Restoration of the Civil War site at Fort Nonsense for an educational and tourist center is proposed at the intersection of Routes 3 and 14. This can be an entrance corridor asset to Mathews County assisting in increased heritage tourism efforts.



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East River Boatyard Public Access

Redevelopment of the East River Boatyard for recreation is proposed in West Mathews. This is an opportunity to address the need for increased public access in this part of the County. In addition, the facilities that may be located here can complement the other recreational assets in the County.

Put-In Creek Recreation & Performance Venue

Redevelopment of the wastewater treatment site at Put-In Creek in downtown Mathews is proposed for a recreation and performance venue. Access to the water can provide increased tourism opportunities for the County as well as improved recreational facilities.

Territorial Boundary Expansion for Aquaculture

The territorial borders of Mathews County extend beyond the land. Amending the County zoning regulations to include planning for areas over the water will assist in managing land use and development for aquaculture and improved water quality.

Conference Center Development/Redevelopment

The development or redevelopment of property for a conference center/hotel facility is identified as a potential revitalization project. This project could provide benefits to a specific planning area as well as the County as a whole.

Age-Restricted Housing Initiative

Age-restricted housing has been identified as a need by County residents and officials. Encouraging a developer for such a project in the Mathews Court House area is identified as a priority.

Housing Redevelopment

There are residential properties in the Bayside and West Mathews Planning Areas that have experienced challenges due to failing septic systems and increased storm surges. These areas should be targeted for redevelopment and structures elevated or acquired for relocation out of the floodplain.

Cobbs Creek / Dixie Development Opportunities

With the construction of the sanitary sewer transmission force main there are increased opportunities for development in Cobbs Creek and the Dixie area. In particular, Dixie could capitalize on an opportunity for small-scale commercial development because of its connectivity to Gloucester and Middlesex Counties.

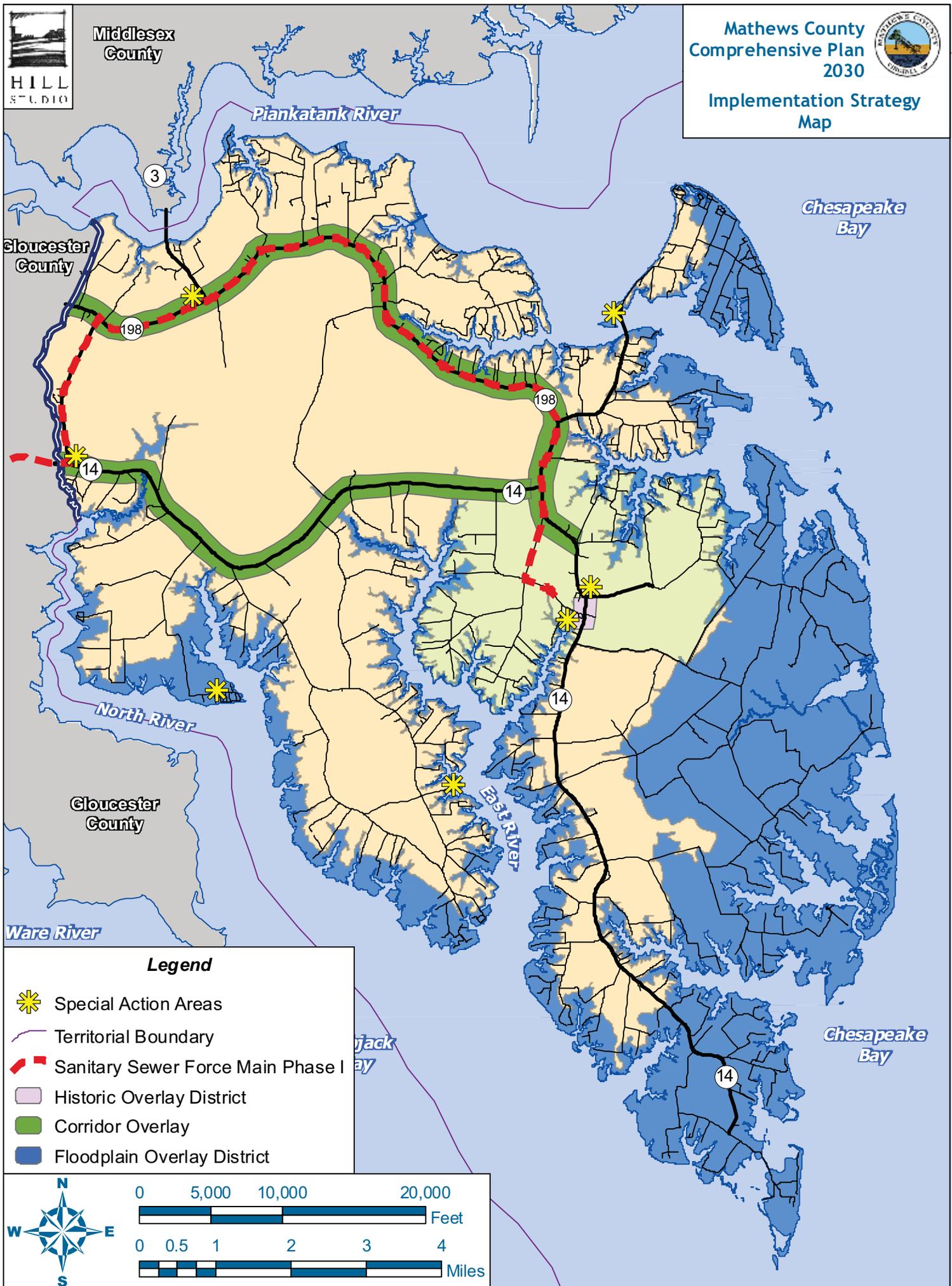


Middlesex
County

Mathews County
Comprehensive Plan
2030



Implementation Strategy
Map



Legend

-  Special Action Areas
-  Territorial Boundary
-  Sanitary Sewer Force Main Phase I
-  Historic Overlay District
-  Corridor Overlay
-  Floodplain Overlay District



0 5,000 10,000 20,000

Feet

0 0.5 1 2 3 4

Miles