

—Community Plans—



CHAPTER 11

11. Community Plans



VISION

The vision for Community Growth Areas within Queen Anne's County is to maintain and enhance the communities as great places to live and work, working collaboratively to improve the quality of life through effective and strategic land use planning and regulation; develop partnerships in the area of shared resources that identify and implement solutions in the best interest of residents and other stakeholders; provide and maintain adequate community facilities, infrastructure, and services; and maintain community atmosphere.

OVERVIEW

Maintaining connections from the past to the present to create the future is achieved through comprehensive, consistent, and continuous County planning. Historically, planning efforts emphasized preservation of agricultural land, promotion of historical settlement patterns, economic development compatible with community character, and innovation through design. The Community Plans and the County Comprehensive Plan, through their implementation, strive to achieve the following:

- Improve quality of life
- Maintain community atmosphere
- Develop partnerships
- Coordinate protection of resources
- Conduct strategic land use planning
- Provide efficient transportation solutions
- Provide cost-effective infrastructure

These plans are the foundation for current and future decision making, applying sound planning principles guided by sustainable smart growth management strategies. These strategies are dependent on a comprehensive, continuous, and collaborative relationship with respect to both planning and implementation.

COMMUNITY PLANNING PROCESS

Implementation of previous County Comprehensive Plans resulted in the development of three Community Plans for County designated Community Growth Areas:

- Chester/Stevensville
- Grasonville
- Kent Narrows

The planning processes involved coordination to draft Community Plans for public and State agency review, public hearings, modifications, and approval and adoption by the County Board of Commissioners.

During this planning cycle, the Chester/Stevensville and Grasonville Community Plans have been folded into **PlanQAC**. The *Kent Narrows Community Plan* remains a standalone document as it is identified by the Kent Narrows Taxing District and overseen by the Kent Narrows Development Foundation.

RELEVANT STATE VISIONS



The County's 1993 *Comprehensive Plan* identified Growth Areas where development should be encouraged with the goal of discouraging continued patterns of sprawl development throughout rural areas. The County's designated Community Growth Areas included Chester, Stevensville, Grasonville, and Kent Narrows—all existing population centers with some infrastructure that each had been identified in earlier County Comprehensive Plans (1964 and 1987) as areas where future development and growth should be directed.

The 1993 *Plan* acknowledged that previous planning efforts to direct growth toward specified population centers had not been entirely successful and, subsequent to its adoption, Community Plans for each of the identified Growth Areas were developed to be consistent with the *Economic Growth, Resource Protection, and Planning Act* (see **Chapter 1—Introduction**), encouraging development concentrations in these Growth Areas. Each of these plans were since updated to address changing conditions, legislation, and community desires.

Since adopting the Community Plans, the County experienced a number of key benefits, including:

- Encouraging development and economic growth in areas designated for growth in County plans for the purpose of protecting agricultural and other rural lands.
- Providing public facilities and infrastructure to support the growth boundary delineation of Growth Areas.
- Protecting sensitive environmental features within the growth boundary.
- Establishing rural buffers (greenbelts) around Growth Areas to protect sensitive environmental features and to establish transitional areas between concentrated growth and rural agricultural lands.

Map 11-1, Community Growth Areas identifies the Growth Area boundaries for Chester/Stevensville, Grasonville, and Kent Narrows. The zoning standards and design guidelines within the Chester/Stevensville and Grasonville areas will be absorbed into the overall County Comprehensive Plan, Zoning Code, and Zoning Map. While the Kent Narrows Growth Area is likewise regulated through the County Zoning Code and Zoning Map, the existing zoning district that characterizes the Narrows and the affiliated design guidelines will remain specific to the *Kent Narrows Community Plan*.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES & LEGISLATION

The *Land Use Article* emphasizes establishing growth areas, community design, infrastructure placement, and stewardship while balancing growth with environmental protection. These visions provide the framework for planning at the community level consisting of Growth Areas and the lands immediately surrounding them.

Guiding principles for Growth Areas include:

- Maintaining small town atmosphere
- Preserving agricultural lands outside Growth Areas
- Funding infrastructure costs
- Leveraging development impact fees
- Fostering cooperation and implementation
- Managing sustainable Smart Growth (e.g., timing, phasing, location) by directing growth to Growth Areas and providing adequate public facilities
- Maintaining desirable, walkable neighborhoods
- Establishing rural buffers, greenbelts, and other preservation tools

The *Land Use Article* and 2009 *Smart, Green and Growing Legislation* adopted by the Maryland General Assembly directs counties, municipalities, and the State to coordinate planning and development efforts to achieve established visions. State legislation also outlines a number of tools and techniques that counties can utilize to coordinate and manage growth, including Adequate Public Facilities Ordinances (APFO).

The *Land Use Article* sets the standards for local jurisdictions and mandates specific items to be included in County plans. All Twelve Visions outlined in this legislation provide guiding principles for community planning.

COMMUNITY PLANNING RELATIONSHIP

The Growth Areas provide opportunities for the expansion and enhancement of existing communities that have been built around historic settlements, which reflect a variety of architectural styles and housing types, mix of land uses, employment opportunities, public facilities, and cultural and historic experiences. It is these historic settlements that have become established communities that provide a place for directing growth in concentrated areas, locating and expanding various public facilities, providing a place offering entertainment and recreation, and facilitating preservation of agricultural areas across the County.

PLANNING PROCESS

The **PlanQAC** planning process began with a review of the three Community Plans; the County decided to fully incorporate the Chester/Stevensville and Grasonville Community Plans into the overall Comprehensive Plan to better address their common issues including growth capacity limitations and desire to streamline zoning district classifications in the future. Due to the uniqueness of the Kent Narrows Special Taxing District and affiliated zoning district (Waterfront Village Center), the *Kent Narrows Community Plan* will remain a standalone document. While the *Kent Narrows Community Plan* has been developed as a separate document (see the 2022 *Kent Narrows Community Plan*), highlights are incorporated in this chapter.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

All public outreach summaries and information can be found in **Appendix C—Public Outreach Summary**.

COMMUNITY PLANS BACKGROUND

The Community Plans establish a vision, goals, objectives, and recommendations to guide the location, form, character, quality, and cost of future growth and development within the respective Growth Areas. They also seek to influence investment decisions regarding the communities' physical development.

CHESTER/STEVENSVILLE

The Chester/Stevensville Community Plan presents a strategy for managing change that recognizes the long-term desire of residents to protect the unique quality of life and fragile character of the region and charting a responsible course for the future of the Chester and Stevensville communities that maintains and enhances the quality of life for existing and future residents. Growth and change have been a way of life in both communities since the opening of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge. Stevensville is the most heavily populated area in the County, and the two communities historically have been the fastest growing, largely due to their proximity to more metropolitan area markets and availability of public water and sewer.

Given growth trends and approval of large scale developments, many residents have become concerned that continuing to follow past policies will result in a rate and pace of development that will diminish the quality of life, livability, desirability, property values, and community character. Concerns include current levels of highway congestion, gridlock on local roads, the ability of the County to adequately provide public services to keep pace with development, and the impact of development on environmental resources and sensitive areas.

Given these concerns, many prior assumptions regarding the capacity of the Growth Area to absorb planned levels of growth have been reexamined. **PlanQAC** acknowledges the development pressure facing these communities and the impacts it can have, the natural environment, and the area's evolving character. It proposes policies intended to reduce the amount and pace of growth within the Growth Area to address these concerns and take into account the County's limited public facilities including sewer, road, and school capacities. An additional key planning concern within this community is the projected impacts of sea level rise and inundation of Kent Island.

PLAN HISTORY

In 2003, the County Commissioners requested that the Planning Commission update the Chester and Stevensville Community Plans, adopted in 1997 and 1998, respectively. They appointed a Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) to review the Plans and make recommendations, which recommended combining the Chester and Stevensville Growth

CHESTER/STEVENSVILLE GROWTH AREA VISION

The Chester/Stevensville Community Growth Area will provide opportunities for families of all shapes, sizes, and income levels to obtain secure, affordable housing; maintain decent employment and education; access useful, safe, and varied transportation options; enjoy a variety of park, recreation, and historic/cultural facilities; preserve the community's environmental resources; and achieve resiliency in the face of climate change.

OPPORTUNITIES

Public Water Access

Vibrant & Walkable Downtown

Waterway Importance

CHALLENGES

Affordable Housing

Bay Bridge Traffic & Potential New Span

Sewer Capacity

PRIORITIES

Climate Change & Sea Level Rise Resiliency

Community Connectivity

Maintain Community Character

Areas, which the Planning Commission endorsed (see **Map 11-1, Community Growth Areas**). The Planning Commission agreed with many CAC recommendations, making some revisions to better reflect their preferred future course of action for the Growth Area. After additional reviews and revisions, some at the request of the County Commissioners, the Planning Commission recommended approval of the Chester/Stevensville Community Plan, which the County Commissioners adopted in May 2007.

PUBLIC INPUT

The public had several opportunities to provide input on this Growth Area, including the community survey, visioning workshops, and Community Plans Special Topic Workshop. This input helped the County frame the revised vision for the Chester/Stevensville Growth Area.

GRASONVILLE

Grasonville was first established as a village core with homes and small businesses along the County's historic Main Street (MD 18) in a location that had good commercial access to local waterways; however, when US 50/301 was built as a bypass just north of the village, business activity began to focus on the highway instead of Main Street. The result is that the once vibrant village core has eroded over the years with only modest investments in new development and redevelopment. Although there are limitations on outward growth, Grasonville has strong potential to accommodate environmentally sensitive infill development and redevelopment that is compatible with, and complimentary to, the desired village character of the community. The Grasonville Community Plan's intent is to put forth a strategy for responsible growth that recognizes the area's character and the needs of its citizens, now and in the future. The underlying premise is that with forward thinking and community involvement, quality of life can be enhanced while accommodating anticipated growth and development.

Grasonville has many assets to build upon. There is strong community spirit and a tremendous amount of local interest and involvement in community affairs. There is a significant network of desirable community facilities including an elementary school, several churches, community parks, a nonprofit environmental resource center, an active community center, a heavily used senior center, a volunteer fire station, a post office, and a new Emergency Center. Though it is limited by the nutrient cap described throughout **PlanQAC**, public sewer and water are available in Grasonville in limited capacity. The community has convenient and quick access to US 50/301, making it a desirable location for both residential and commercial development. Most important, there is a willingness by residents to proactively plan for managed growth and development that will improve their community and attain a desirable village character. Both public and private investment will be needed to accomplish this goal; however, any future growth will be tempered by the County's limited overall growth capacity.

PLAN HISTORY

The 1998 *Grasonville Community Plan* was updated by the Grasonville Task Group in February 2010, resulting in the 2010 *Grasonville Community Plan*,

GRASONVILLE GROWTH AREA VISION

With forward thinking and community involvement, Grasonville will reestablish its former character and sense of place; embody responsible growth that recognizes the character of the area and the needs of its citizens, now and in the future; enhance the quality of life for its citizens, while accommodating the area's appropriate growth and development; protect its open areas, natural resources, and scenic beauty; provide for increased connectivity; and encourage a balance between the needs of local residents, employees, and visitors to the community.

OPPORTUNITIES

Leverage Traveling Public
Revitalize Main Street
Workforce Education & Development

CHALLENGES

Affordable Housing
Built Environment Aesthetics
Sewer Capacity & Limited Growth Opportunities

PRIORITIES

Pedestrian & Bike Connectivity
Protect Natural Resources
Reestablish Character & Sense of Community

which would serve as the official Comprehensive Plan for the Grasonville Growth Area. It was also to be the basis for any required amendments to the County's Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations, Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Program and Ordinance, Master Water and Sewerage Plan, Capital Improvements Program, and any other County plans or regulations affecting the growth and development of Grasonville (see **Map 11-1, Community Growth Areas**).

PUBLIC INPUT

The public had several opportunities to provide input on this Growth Area, including the community survey, visioning workshops, and Community Plans Special Topic Workshop. This input helped the County frame the revised vision for Grasonville.

KENT NARROWS

The development of a community plan for Kent Narrows continues to be a planning priority for the County—officials, residents, and business owners recognize a need for planning considerations specific to the area.

PLAN HISTORY

The County adopted the original *Kent Narrows Area Plan* in 1992 to serve as the official Comprehensive Plan for the Growth Area. It was included as a chapter in the 1993 *County Comprehensive Plan*; the 2006 *Kent Narrows Community Plan* was developed as a standalone document that updated earlier guidance and policies (see **Map 11-1, Community Growth Areas**).

The 2021 *Kent Narrows Community Plan* establishes the area's long-term vision, consistent with **PlanQAC**, which will be phased in over at least 10 to 20 years. Community priorities, funding resources, and market conditions all affect the implementation timeline, along with the County's limited available sewer capacity. The Plan's goal is to facilitate orderly mixed-use, commercial, light industrial, marine- and seafood industry-oriented uses, as well as residential uses integrated with destination attractions, facilities, and accommodations. The area's traditional working waterfront character will be maintained by continuing implementation strategies that solidify Kent Narrows as a land and water destination with attractions for local residents, visitors, and working watermen. The Plan also updates development objectives for the Growth Area, incorporating public input and building on previous plan objectives to:

- Promote and enhance Kent Narrows as a year-round community and destination
- Improve interconnectivity within and between the community's four quadrants
- Provide safe pedestrian and bike travel ways to adjacent commercial centers
- Ensure development has architectural design that reflects the Kent Narrows character
- Establish incentives that add project value
- Encourage design innovation and creativity
- Discourage convenience-based highway service-oriented uses
- Encourage local reinvestment

KENT NARROWS GROWTH AREA VISION

The shared community vision for Kent Narrows hopes to establish the area as a year-round destination for local residents and visitors; highlight community history and the heritage of the traditional working waterfront and its character; balance appropriate economic growth and community redevelopment, including commercial and residential uses; expand public access to the waterfront and its amenities and increase trail connectivity; and preserve environmentally sensitive areas.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Coordinate Waterway Activities & Special Events
- Improve Streetscape Design
- Revisit Zoning Code & Requirements

CHALLENGES

- Limited Area Investment
- Local Transportation & Parking Options
- Not Just a Tourist Attraction
- Sewer Capacity

PRIORITIES

- Balance Preservation & Development Goals
- Enhance Waterfront Character & Heritage
- Strengthen Connectivity

- Enhance the unique waterfront experience
- Ensure public lands are adequately maintained

PUBLIC INPUT

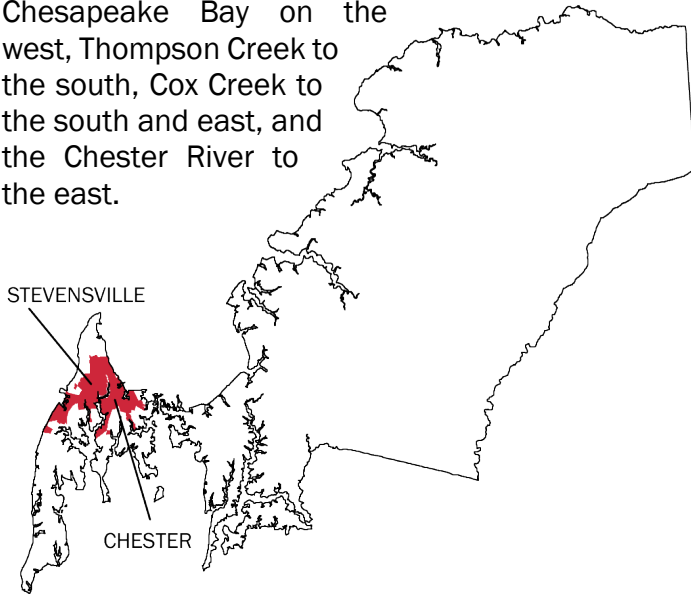
The public had several opportunities to provide input on the Kent Narrows Growth Area and Community Plan, including the community survey, visioning workshops, Kent Narrows Special Topic Workshop, and Community Plans Special Topic Workshop. This input helped the County frame the revised vision for the Kent Narrows Growth Area.

COMMUNITY PROFILES

GROWTH AREA DESCRIPTIONS

CHESTER/STEVENSVILLE

The Chester/Stevensville Growth Area contains the communities of Chester and Stevensville, both located on Kent Island. Chester is located on the eastern portion of Kent Island, bounded by Cox Creek to the west, Piney Creek and Prospect Bay to the east, Chester River to the north and Kirwan Creek to the south. Stevensville is located on the western portion of Kent Island, bounded by the Chesapeake Bay on the west, Thompson Creek to the south, Cox Creek to the south and east, and the Chester River to the east.



CHESTER

Prior to the Chesapeake Bay Bridge's opening in 1952, Chester was a small community consisting of a series of small villages and farmlands along MD 18, at one time the only road to Kent Island. With the opening of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge and the construction of US 50/301, development sprang up in the form of commercial strips along the highway and residential neighborhoods near the waterfront. As a result, most development in Chester took on a linear form along US 50/301 to readily access existing transportation routes and minimize the need for more road construction, giving the appearance from the highway that the area is much more developed than it actually is. Large tracts of farmland and woodlands were left undeveloped behind the strip development. In recent decades, construction of US 50/301 and its subsequent improvements and access controls have literally severed Chester into two distinct parts north and south of US 50/301, with only one connecting above-grade crossover.

Today, Chester is best described as a loose-knit collection of neighborhoods that lack the traditional center and sense of connection typically found in most small towns and villages. Nonetheless, it is a vibrant community with deep roots and its residents have a strong sense of identification with the area.

STEVENSVILLE

Although it is not an incorporated municipality, Stevensville is a historic community. The 1631 settlement of "the Isle of Kent" was predated only by Jamestown, Plymouth Rock, and the Massachusetts Colony. Stevensville, as a village, was established in the mid-1800s. By 1877, tax maps showed the community had prospered enough to have grown to include churches, stores, a doctor's office, post office, Odd Fellows' Hall, and a hotel. Rail service arrived in 1902 and, within a decade, Stevensville had two schools, four doctors, a blacksmith, and a sawmill.

The Stevensville area has always been physically significant as a connection between the Eastern and Western Shores of the Chesapeake Bay. Through time, Love Point was serviced by steamer, ferry, and rail from the Baltimore area. Vacationers would come for weekend visits. Residents would leave Love Point on the Bay steamer—Smokey Joe—to go to Baltimore to shop for the day, stay in a rooming house overnight, and return to Kent Island the next morning. Prior to 1952, all ferry traffic going to Ocean City traveled through Stevensville on MD 18 over the present Cox Creek Bridge. The traffic returning from Ocean City on weekends would backup for five to ten miles waiting to get the ferry.

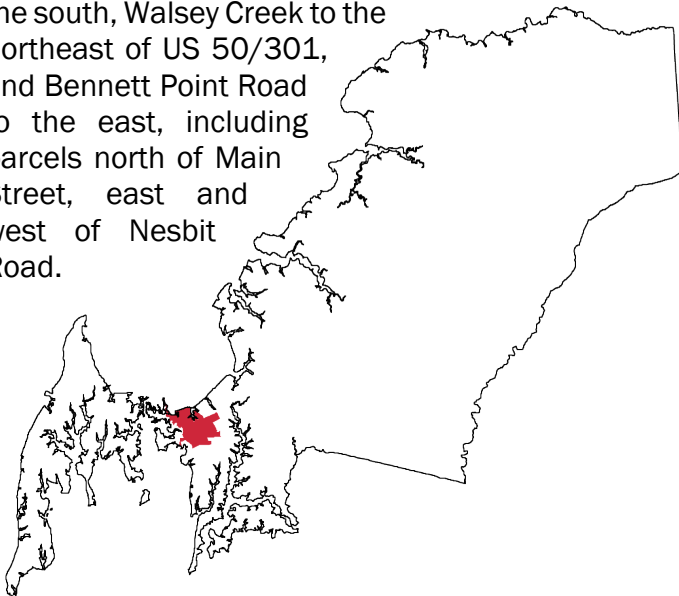
Passenger rail service to Stevensville was discontinued in the late 1930s and, by 1948, all rail service had stopped, ending the growth period that started nearly 100 years earlier. In 1952, with the completion of the first Bay Bridge, Stevensville entered a new period of growth due to the easy access to the Western Shore. Residents new to Kent Island found it to be an ideal combination of rural, waterfront countryside located within an hour's drive of major metropolitan job centers. As a result, Stevensville, once surrounded by forests and farms, grew into a highly suburbanized, auto-oriented community

centered around the historic village core. Most of the physical development in the Stevensville area occurred before US 50/301 was reconstructed as a six-lane, controlled-access highway in the late 1980s. This improvement inadvertently caused problems for many adjacent communities. In the Stevensville area, only one overpass connects the northern and southern areas, and there is no way to get from south Stevensville to south Chester without getting on US 50/301 or traveling a circuitous route that entails going to the north side of the highway and using MD 8 and MD 18 to cross back at the next overpass.

Today, Stevensville is a composite of an older Eastern Shore agrarian community and a modern suburban enclave. Its core contains beautiful, historic buildings used as commercial space alongside newer businesses designed to blend in architecturally. The surrounding residential areas are also a mix of styles and vintages. Many of the homes in and around the core are quite old. The historic district, listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1986, is north of US 50/301 and is bordered by commercial development.

GRASONVILLE

The Grasonville Growth Area extends west toward Kent Narrows, abutting the Lippincott Marina on the south side of US 50/301, and is generally bounded by the Chester River to the north, Marshy Creek and Cabin Creek to the southwest, Perry's Corner Road to the south, Walsey Creek to the northeast of US 50/301, and Bennett Point Road to the east, including parcels north of Main Street, east and west of Nesbit Road.



The Growth Area's current appearance is greatly influenced by the presence of US 50/301. This heavily traveled, controlled-access highway bisects

Grasonville, with a smaller, less populated area to the north cut off from the main part the area to the south. Residents must utilize one of two overpasses to travel from one side to the other, either at Chester River Beach Road or Nesbit Road.

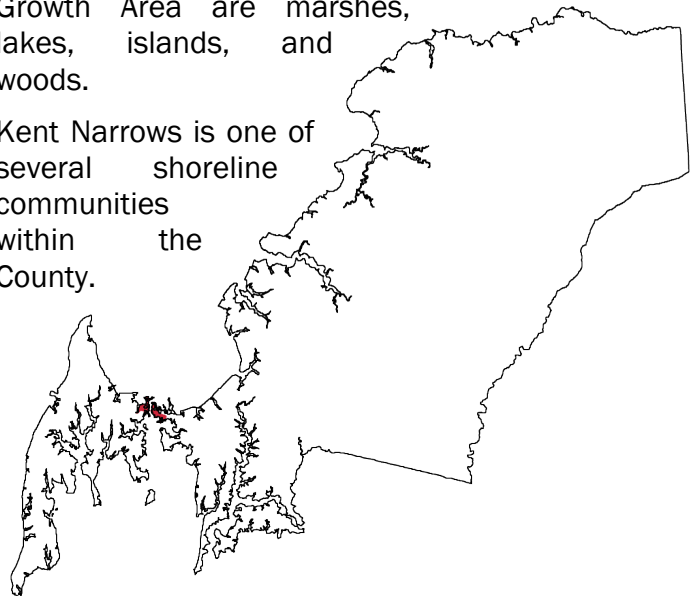
A primary focus of the Growth Area is Main Street, which in the past defined Grasonville. A solid village core really does not exist. Main Street consists of mixed residential, commercial, and public uses, with the emphasis on residential. The few businesses that are scattered along Main Street seem somewhat disjointed, as there is no cohesive commercial center. A good deal of the commercial development that exists in Grasonville is geared toward US 50/301, not Grasonville itself.

Commercial development along US 50/301 is mostly clustered around the major intersecting side streets: Jackson Creek Road, VFW Avenue, Winchester Avenue, Station Lane, Evans Avenue, Hess Road, and at the western end of Main Street where it connects to the highway. Main Street businesses are small operations that focus on local traffic.

KENT NARROWS

Kent Narrows is a unique land setting defined by Chesapeake Bay waters and a channel that bisects the Growth Area. The channel, aptly named Kent Narrows, provides idealized Eastern Shore atmosphere and setting. Within the Kent Narrows Growth Area are marshes, lakes, islands, and woods.

Kent Narrows is one of several shoreline communities within the County.



It, along with Stevensville, Chester, and Grasonville, have had the most pronounced growth pressures in recent years as a result of their location as the first

communities on the Chesapeake Bay Bridge's Eastern Shore.

Kent Narrows is a waterfront community that has been a hub of marine related industry and recreational activities for generations. Today, the area serves as a center of the Chesapeake Bay seafood processing and commercial fishing industries. The region supports hundreds of water-related businesses and is rich with maritime heritage. Local watermen keep their work boats at the County-owned marina, Watermen's Boat Basin at Heritage Harbor, located just across the harbor from many of the seafood restaurants they supply. Today, the Kent Narrows waterway supports intracoastal boat traffic from all parts of the East Coast and is a popular stop for seasonal movements of pleasure boats. Businesses along the waterway offer transient boat slips for customers. Kent Narrows also is a central draw for marina services and yacht sales companies.

Kent Narrows is part of a regional Heritage Area that shares the same geography, culture, and history as the Chesapeake Bay. The Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area is one of the oldest working landscapes in North America, covering 1,200 square miles, four counties, 21 incorporated municipalities, and a host of incorporated settlements. Heritage dates to 1642 as one of the earliest regions settled by British Europeans and Africans.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Population data are provided by the U.S. Census Bureau and Maryland Department of Planning (MDP). Each of the Growth Areas have reached populations that qualify them as a Census Designated Place (CDP). Unless noted otherwise, the CDPs are the geography used for this Plan's statistical updates.

In 2010, Chester had a population of 4,167 people and Stevensville had a population of 6,803 people; however, by 2019, Chester's population increased by 11.8% to 4,658 people and Stevensville's population increased by 6.8% to 7,267 people. In 2010, Grasonville had a population of 3,425 people; however, by 2019, the population increased by 2.0% to 3,495 people. In 2010, Kent Narrows had a population of 567 people; however, by 2019, the population decreased by 13.2% to 511 people. **Table 11-1, Population Characteristics** provides characteristic age data.

Note for Kent Narrows: The information in this section includes local households from outside the Kent Narrows Community Planning Area that is reflected on the Community Plan Maps. The data sets may not include those who reside in second homes and on vessels located in marinas.

The Kent Narrows CDP has a U1 Census Class Code, which indicates a census designated place with an official federally recognized name. It also has a Functional Status Code of 'S,' which identifies it as a statistical entity. A CDP is a statistical counterpart to a self-governing (incorporated) place such as a city, town, or village. A CDP is not a legal entity and has no government functions.

The Kent Narrows CDP is located within District 5, Queenstown, a minor civil division of the County.

Table 11-1. Population Characteristics (2019)

Subject	Chester CDP		Stevensville CDP		Grasonville CDP		Kent Narrows CPD	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Under 5 years	295	6.3%	501	6.9%	344	9.8%	0	0.0%
5 to 9 years	238	5.1%	546	7.5%	287	8.2%	0	0.0%
10 to 19 years	478	10.3%	1,046	14.4%	412	11.8%	9	1.8%
20 to 24 years	157	3.4%	316	4.3%	120	3.4%	0	0.0%
25 to 34 years	639	13.7%	866	11.9%	495	14.2%	12	2.3%
35 to 44 years	413	8.9%	1,080	14.9%	442	12.6%	0	0.0%
45 to 54 years	504	10.8%	1,169	16.1%	647	18.5%	73	14.3%
55 to 64 years	952	20.5%	959	13.2%	348	9.9%	135	26.4%
65 to 74 years	590	12.7%	543	7.5%	260	7.4%	152	29.7%
75 to 84 years	307	6.6%	208	2.9%	125	3.6%	71	13.9%
85 years and over	85	1.8%	33	0.5%	15	0.4%	59	11.5%
Median age	47.0		38.9		36.5		66.6	
Total Population	4,658	100.0%	7,267	100.0%	3,495	100.0%	511	100.0%

Source: 2016-2019 American Community Survey

Table 11-2. Population Projections

Geography	2010 Population	Population Projection			% Change 2010-2045
		2025	2035	2045	
Chester CDP	4,167	4,658	5,190	5,636	35.3%
Stevensville CDP	6,803	7,605	8,473	9,202	35.3%
Grasonville CDP	3,425	3,829	4,266	4,633	35.3%
Kent Narrows CDP	567	634	706	767	35.3%
Queen Anne's County	47,798	53,430	59,530	64,650	35.3%
Upper Eastern Shore	239,951	254,230	280,630	304,390	26.9%
Maryland	5,773,552	6,244,980	6,588,760	6,873,330	19.0%

Source: 2020 Maryland Department of Planning Population Projections; CDP extrapolations developed by Wallace Montgomery. Note: Projections do not reflect subdivisions that are still under development.

POPULATION PROJECTIONS

Population projections give an indication of future development needs for a community. Population projections to 2045 for Queen Anne's County, the Upper Eastern Shore (Caroline, Cecil, Kent, Queen Anne's, and Talbot Counties), and Maryland were developed by the Maryland Department of Planning in December 2020. **Table 11-2, Population Projections** identifies those projections. The population figures for the Growth Areas were developed based on 2010 Census data and extrapolations compared to the County's projections.

INCOME

Income level data are used for a variety of analyses including quality of life assessment, lifestyle expectation assessment, expendable income analysis, and market area analysis. Basic income data provide a brief characterization of the financial status of the area.

Household income levels in Kent Narrows and Grasonville are higher than in the Chester and Grasonville CDPs, as well as in the County, State, and Nation. While Kent Narrows and Grasonville are the only two CDPs with higher median household income than the State, all four CDPs have higher incomes than the State or nation.

Table 11-3. Income (2019)

Income	Chester CDP		Stevensville CDP		Grasonville CDP		Kent Narrows CDP	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Households	2,077		2,622		1,268		295	
Less than \$10,000	83	4.0%	141	5.4%	87	6.9%	0	0.0%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	40	1.9%	69	2.6%	19	1.5%	0	0.0%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	82	3.9%	29	1.1%	70	5.5%	0	0.0%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	102	4.9%	66	2.5%	112	8.8%	58	19.7%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	318	15.3%	188	7.2%	42	3.3%	0	0.0%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	270	13.0%	235	9.0%	227	17.9%	56	19.0%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	294	14.2%	323	12.3%	123	9.7%	9	3.1%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	429	20.7%	917	35.0%	370	29.2%	53	18.0%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	262	12.6%	347	13.2%	114	9.0%	37	12.5%
\$200,000 or more	197	9.5%	307	11.7%	104	8.2%	82	27.8%
Median household income	\$88,475		\$107,473		\$90,227		\$125,139	
Median family income	\$113,102		\$112,375		\$109,444		\$163,438	
Per capita income	\$45,834		\$42,532		\$37,193		\$87,762	

Source: 2016-2019 American Community Survey

LAND USE

A thorough understanding of the types of land use activities that are currently taking place within the community provides the basis for the development of future plans. Existing land use information was

determined using 2019 land use/land cover data obtained by the County. The land use data was rectified to match aerial photography; therefore, acreages are approximations and maps are representations of existing land uses (see **Map 11-2, Community Plans: Land Use/Land Cover**).

Table 11-4. Growth Area Land Use/Land Cover ('19)

Land Use/Land Cover		Acres	%
Chester/Stevensville	Low-Density Residential	123.8	2.7%
	Medium-Density Residential	1,151.6	25.1%
	High-Density Residential	181.1	4.0%
	Commercial	441.0	9.6%
	Industrial	8.4	0.2%
	Institutional	373.9	8.2%
	Agriculture	459.0	10.0%
	Transportation	560.7	12.2%
	Undeveloped Land	1,283.1	28.0%
	Forest	778.5	17.0%
	Wetlands	104.6	2.3%
	Other Undeveloped*	400.0	8.7%
	Chester/Stevensville Total	4,582.6	100.0%
Grasonville	Low-Density Residential	77.4	3.9%
	Medium-Density Residential	399.8	20.1%
	High-Density Residential	35.9	1.8%
	Commercial	78.8	4.0%
	Industrial	0.0	0.0%
	Institutional	89.7	4.5%
	Agriculture	118.3	6.0%
	Transportation	193.3	9.7%
	Undeveloped Land	992.7	50.0%
	Forest	840.6	42.3%
	Wetlands	40.4	2.0%
	Other Undeveloped*	111.7	5.6%
	Grasonville Total	1,985.9	100.0%
Kent Narrows	Low-Density Residential	0.0	0.0%
	Medium-Density Residential	5.8	1.6%
	High-Density Residential	25.7	7.2%
	Commercial	96.1	26.9%
	Industrial	0.0	0.0%
	Institutional	10.4	2.9%
	Agriculture	0.0	0.0%
	Transportation	47.7	13.4%
	Undeveloped Land	171.6	48.0%
	Forest	9.1	2.6%
	Wetlands	116.8	32.7%
	Other Undeveloped*	45.7	12.8%
	Kent Narrows Total	357.3	100.0%

Source: Queen Anne's County 2019 Land Use/Land Cover. *Note: Other Undeveloped may include water.

ZONING

The three Growth Areas utilize 28 of the County's 30+ zoning districts. Many of these are only attributed to a small number of parcels and some of the districts have only minor differences, which has provided the impetus to reevaluate and streamline these districts (see **Map 11-4, Community Plans: Zoning** and **Table 11-5, Growth Area Zoning**).

Table 11-5. Growth Area Zoning

Zoning District	% of Growth Area		
	Chester/Stevensville	Grasonville	Kent Narrows
APKIG	2.3%	—	—
CMPD	6.9%	—	—
CS	1.4%	1.9%	—
E	—	2.9%	—
GGMC	—	3.0%	—
GNC	—	2.8%	—
GPRN	—	31.0%	—
GVC	—	2.9%	—
KISC	0.7%	—	—
NC-1	1.7%	0.4%	—
NC-2	1.6%	0.1%	—
NC-8	2.1%	4.2%	—
NC-8T	—	2.6%	—
NC-15	16.6%	2.5%	—
NC-20	12.2%	3.7%	—
NC-20T	—	12.4%	—
NVC	1.9%	—	—
SE	5.0%	0.7%	—
SHVC	0.9%	—	—
SI	3.2%	1.1%	—
SIBE	3.5%	—	—
SMPD	13.4%	—	—
SR	0.9%	6.2%	—
TC	6.5%	—	—
UC	3.5%	10.8%	—
UR	2.3%	—	—
VC	0.8%	—	—
WVC	<0.1%	—	75.4%
No Zoning*	12.5%	10.7%	24.6%
Total Acreage	4,582.6	1,985.9	357.3

Source: Queen Anne's County 2021 Zoning. *Note: Parcels with no zoning may include right-of-way and water bodies.

See **Chapter 4—Land Use** for additional related discussions.

ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

The Growth Areas are located within Maryland's Eastern Coastal Plain province, characterized as a relatively flat, low plain rising in elevation from sea level to 87 feet, and composed of unconsolidated alluvial and marine sediments. The following provides a review of environmental resources and areas.

CHESAPEAKE BAY CRITICAL AREA

The Maryland General Assembly passed Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Protection Program legislation in 1984 due to the decline of certain Chesapeake Bay natural resources. As a result, each Maryland county and municipality fronting the Bay or its tributaries had to adopt a local Critical Area Plan and development ordinances, based on criteria established by the Critical Area Commission, which required that new development within the Critical Area minimize impacts on the Bay's water quality and plant, fish, and wildlife habitat.

A key environmental protection consideration facing the Growth Areas is the substantial amount of acreage that is in the Critical Area (see **Map 11-5, Community Plans: Chesapeake Bay Critical Area**). This is not surprising since they are basically surrounded by tidal water. Land within the Critical Area is classified by its predominant use and intensity of development and is designated as one of the following:

- Resource Conservation Areas (RCA)
- Limited Development Areas (LDA)
- Intensely Developed Areas (IDA)

Descriptions of Critical Area designations can be found in **Chapter 5—Environmental Resources**.

State law and the County's Critical Area Program expressly provide for the Critical Area classification of properties to be changed in order to accommodate State and local growth management objectives that encourage environmentally sensitive new development to locate within and near areas of existing development. The process of revising a property's Critical Area designation is called growth allocation. The County Critical Area Program has specifically targeted 75% of its approximately 1,500 acres of available growth allocation for use in designated growth areas.

Within the Critical Area, there is a minimum 100-foot buffer from tidal waters, streams, and tidal wetlands, where no new development activities are allowed. This buffer may be expanded due to the presence of hydric soils, steep slopes, highly erodible soils, and wetlands. In LDA and RCA areas, the amount of lot coverage (e.g., buildings, pavement) is generally limited to 15% of total site area.

FOREST PROTECTION

Approximately 780 acres in Chester/Stevensville, 840 acres in Grasonville, and 9 acres in Kent Narrows are forested, based on the County's 2019 Land Use/Land Cover data (see **Table 11-4, Growth Area Land Use/Land Cover**). The regulations governing development of forested areas vary depending on whether the site is within or outside of the Critical Area (see County Code §18-2, Forest Conservation Act for specific details, **Map 11-6, Community Plans: Natural Features & Habitats** for a visual representation, and **Chapter 5—Environmental Resources** for additional information).

Table 11-6. Growth Area Land in Critical Areas (2021)

Critical Area	Chester/ Stevensville		Grasonville		Kent Narrows		Total Acreage
	Acres	%	Acres	%	Acres	%	
RCA—Resource Conservation Area	335.9	7.3%	116.2	5.9%	72.9	20.4%	525.0
LDA—Limited Development Area	1,201.1	26.2%	491.3	24.7%	79.7	22.3%	1,772.1
IDA—Intensely Developed Area	1,024.0	22.3%	202.8	10.2%	182.4	51.0%	1,409.2
Land in Critical Area	2,561.0	55.9%	810.3	40.8%	335.0	93.8%	3,706.3
Land Not in Critical Area*	2,021.6	44.1%	1,175.6	59.2%	22.3	6.2%	3,219.5
Total Acreage	4,582.6	100.0%	1,985.9	100.0%	357.3	100.0%	6,925.8

Source: Queen Anne's County Critical Area Maps

WETLANDS

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Wetland Inventory (NWI) maps indicate that approximately 600 acres in Chester/Stevensville, 356 acres in Grasonville, and 111 acres in Kent Narrows are wetlands (see **Map 11-6, Community Plans: Natural Features & Habitats**). There are differences in the amount of wetlands identified in the NWI maps and the amount of wetlands identified as part of the Land Use/Land Cover analysis. This is due to differences in methodology—the Land Use/Land Cover analysis identified the predominant land use/land cover for a given location, while the NWI maps are used as an overlay and do not necessarily indicate predominance. Regardless, the NWI maps are a general guide to the presence of wetlands but are not definitive, and wetlands delineations must be performed on an individual site basis prior to development approval. Areas of hydric soils on the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) soil maps are an additional indication of the potential for wetlands.

As a percentage of total land area, wetlands comprise less acreage than Critical Area lands; however, where they do exist, regulations regarding their protection severely limits the amount and type of development that is allowed. Restrictions on dredging and filling activities are specified by law, as is the requirement for protective buffers. See **Chapter 5—Environmental Resources** for a more detailed discussion of wetlands and the County's related requirements.

FLOODPLAIN

Approximately 542 acres in Chester/Stevensville, 297 acres in Grasonville, and 262 acres in Kent Narrows are located in the regulated Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA), also known as the 1% or 100-year floodplain (see **Map 11-6, Community Plans: Natural Features & Habitats**). Certain places within the Growth Areas are subject to periodic flooding, which poses risks to public health and safety, and potential loss of property. While protection of life and property provided the initial basis for protection of floodplains, there has been a growing recognition in recent years that limiting disturbances within floodplains can serve a variety of additional functions with important public purposes and benefits.

Floodplains moderate and store floodwaters, absorb wave energies, and reduce erosion and sedimentation. Wetlands found within floodplains help maintain water quality, recharge groundwater supplies, protect fisheries, and provide habitat and natural corridors for wildlife.

The minimum requirements of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) do not prohibit development within the SFHA; however, to adhere to the minimum federal requirements, the County requires development and new structures in the floodplain to meet certain flood protection measures. See **Chapter 5—Environmental Resources** for a more detailed discussion of the floodplain and the County's related requirements.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Many areas within Maryland are susceptible to climate change and Kent Island and the Kent Narrows are at the forefront of these projected impacts. Planning for and mitigating these effects in the Growth Areas is an integral part of what will shape Queen Anne's in the coming years.

In 2016, the County completed a *Sea Level Rise and Coastal Vulnerability Assessment Plan* that identified key vulnerable resources, namely on Kent Island. In 2019, the County continued this analysis through the *County Climate Resilience Planning and Financing Study*. These planning documents guide the protection of a valuable infrastructure from the impacts of climate change. They also acknowledge that Queen Anne's is a county where the environment and environmental protection are important for protecting the rural quality of life, as well as protecting the economic base provided by agriculture, hunting, tourism, and the maritime industries.

Project review will include an assessment of the County's vulnerable resources to ensure that the goals of the County's hazard resiliency policy documents are contemplated. See **Chapter 5—Environmental Resources** for a more detailed discussion of the climate change and the County's related requirements.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The economic assessment of the Growth Areas examines workforce characteristics and income levels. Each of these variables is an indicator of the economic conditions for the Growth Area, the region, and the State.

WORKFORCE

Data regarding class of worker and employment status provide an indication of the health of the workforce, as illustrated in **Table 11-7, Class of Worker** and **Table 11-8, Employment Status**. In all

Growth Areas, the majority of workers are private wage and salary workers.

According to 2019 ACS data, the most prevalent job sectors are management, business, science, and arts occupations (see **Table 11-9, Occupations by Sector for CDP Residents**).

Table 11-7. Class of Worker (2019)

Class of Worker	Chester CDP			Stevensville CDP			Grasonville CDP			Kent Narrows CDP		
	#	%	Δ '10	#	%	Δ '10	#	%	Δ '10	#	%	Δ '10
Private wage and salary workers	1,776	70.8%	0.6%	2,932	75.3%	3.4%	1,411	77.4%	13.5%	195	75.3%	0.5%
Government workers	466	18.6%	18.5%	791	20.3%	12.9%	314	17.2%	22.2%	45	17.4%	56.8%
Self-employed workers	265	10.6%	19.7%	148	3.8%	5.0%	99	5.4%	36.5%	19	7.3%	47.5%
Unpaid family workers	0	0.0%	—	22	0.6%	—	0	0.0%	—	0	0.0%	—
Total Civilian Workers 16+	2,507	100.0%		3,893	100.0%		1,824	100.0%		259	100.0%	

Source: 2006-2010 & 2015-2019 American Community Survey. Note: Δ '10 = Change from 2010; figures in red indicate a reduction.

Table 11-8. Employment Status (2019)

Employment Status	Chester CDP		Stevensville CDP		Grasonville CDP		Kent Narrows CDP	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
In labor force	2,603	66.9%	4,015	74.1%	1,860	71.5%	277	54.2%
Civilian labor force	2,603	66.9%	3,979	73.4%	1,848	71.1%	277	54.2%
Employed	2,507	64.5%	3,893	71.8%	1,824	70.2%	259	50.7%
Unemployed	96	2.5%	86	1.6%	24	0.9%	18	3.5%
Armed Forces	0	0.0%	36	0.7%	12	0.5%	0	0.0%
Not in labor force	1,285	33.1%	1,405	25.9%	740	28.5%	234	45.8%
Population 16 years +	3,888	100.0%	5,420	100.0%	2,600	100.0%	511	100.0%

Source: 2016-2019 American Community Survey

Table 11-9. Occupations by Sector for CDP Residents (2019)

Occupations	Chester CDP			Stevensville CDP			Grasonville CDP			Kent Narrows CDP		
	#	%	Δ '10	#	%	Δ '10	#	%	Δ '10	#	%	Δ '10
Management	1,212	48.3%	67.6%	1,944	49.9%	45.2%	693	38.0%	17.5%	149	57.5%	39.4%
Service	279	11.1%	14.4%	631	16.2%	63.9%	270	14.8%	20.1%	16	6.2%	129%
Sales/Office	577	23.0%	10.0%	841	21.6%	26.9%	444	24.3%	6.5%	94	36.3%	11.9%
Nat'l Resources	206	8.2%	30.6%	210	5.4%	49.9%	231	12.7%	58.2%	0	0.0%	100%
Transportation	233	9.3%	92.6%	267	6.9%	28.8%	186	10.2%	20.8%	0	0.0%	—
Total Civilian Workers 16+	2,507	100.0%		3,893	100.0%		1,824	100.0%		259	100.0%	

Source: 2006-2010 & 2015-2019 American Community Survey. Note: Δ '10 = Change from 2010; figures in red indicate a reduction. Management Occupations include management, business, science, and arts occupations; Nat'l Resources Occupations include natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations; Transportation Occupations include production, transportation, and material moving occupations.

COMMUNITY PLANNING ISSUES

Within any community there are growth and development issues that should be addressed so the community achieves its desired future. Each of the Growth Areas has several issues of importance, several unique assets, and specific development objectives, opportunities, and needs. The following were derived from public input, as well as analysis of data and study conclusions and observations.

CHESTER/STEVENSVILLE

NEIGHBORHOOD INFILL AREAS

The existing residential neighborhoods in Chester are the fundamental building blocks of the community. Their continued stability and attractiveness are essential to the future of Chester. The land use pattern for most of the existing residential subdivisions and multifamily developments will remain unchanged during the foreseeable future. Infill development of vacant lots and sites within existing developments will occur over time. This infill should be compatible in density with existing neighborhood development. Expansions of nonresidential uses within the neighborhood infill areas must be sensitive to impacts on surrounding residential uses. Property owners will steadily continue to make improvements to their homes and lots as long as values remain stable or rise.

CHESTER VILLAGE CENTER

This area covers most of the US 50/301 and MD 18 corridors through Chester and is the most highly visible portion of the community. Existing zoning is comprised of exclusively commercial and exclusively residential zoning districts, which often exist side by side. Much of the area is presently developed as older strip-style commercial uses oriented towards the highway. Other areas are predominantly residential but are in the process of transitioning to commercial uses. It is an area with a high potential for land use conflicts. The construction of US 50 as a divided highway has brought undesirable ambiguity to the area. Where businesses traditionally had oriented themselves towards MD 18, they increasingly needed to become visible to the through traffic on US 50. This plan proposes to rebuild MD 18 as a true Main Street.

As redevelopment occurs along Postal Road in downtown Chester between its intersections with the

MD 18 overpass and Cox Neck Road, development standards should require structures to be brought closer to the street to provide a streetscape that offers a sense of enclosure and encourages pedestrian use. Sidewalks, landscaping, and parking at the rear of non-residential uses would also further this objective. The notion is to create a more traditional walkable downtown feel that is currently absent in this corridor.

It is also an area with significant opportunities to foster attractive, mixed use, town-scale development and redevelopment. New development and redevelopment should be reoriented back towards Main Street. Mixed use commercial and residential development should be encouraged when there are adequate public facilities to support this type of development. Design guidelines and standards should be applied to improve the appearance of new commercial development and public/private partnerships are needed to create improved pedestrian access linked to shared off-street parking. With proper planning, this area has the potential to become the economic and cultural center of the community—a place that defines the Chester community.

When adequate public facilities are present or planned, the general characteristics of development and Village Center redevelopment in these areas should be:

- Mixed-use, small-scale development and redevelopment oriented toward local roads should be encouraged versus a continuation of highway-oriented strip-style commercial development.
- Building restriction lines for front setbacks should be reduced to allow structures to locate closer to Main Street with parking situated within side and rear yards.
- Zoning regulations should allow for higher amounts of floor area and building coverage to be utilized to intensify development/redevelopment of the site in a manner consistent with small town character.
- A mix of housing types and styles should be encouraged, including second floor and first floor apartments in conjunction with commercial and office uses.
- Shared off-site parking and internal access between adjacent sites should be permitted.

- Design guidelines and standards which discourage strip-style commercial development patterns and encourage pedestrian-oriented mixed-use patterns should be incorporated into the Zoning Regulations.

STEVENSVILLE VILLAGE CENTER

The Stevensville Village Center reflects both charm and history. The street environment has walkable streetscapes and a diversity of uses supporting both residents and visitor needs. Public street improvements have improved access to parking behind the rear of structures, improved safety, and enhanced the pedestrian environment. The following recommendations are intended to nurture infill and redevelopment, when adequate public facilities are present or planned, to enhance the current character of the Stevensville Village Center Core area.

- Current zoning within the downtown should be evaluated and revised when appropriate to preserve and reinforce the small town, historic, and pedestrian-scale character of the Village Center Core.
- Uses permitted should be limited to most types of residential and low intensity nonresidential uses that are currently permissible in the Village Center (VC) zoning district (e.g., office, service, lodging, restaurant, commercial retail, commercial services), including permitting second-floor residential uses above commercial uses.
- Incorporate design guidelines to direct the Planning Commission's review of development/ redevelopment within the Village Center Core. These guidelines should be developed with input from the Kent Island Heritage Society and the Maryland Historical Trust.
- Maintain Suburban Industrial (SI) zoning for the existing industrial neighborhood along State Street and Old Love Point Road. There are several older industrial sites and public facility uses along State Street and Old Love Point Road south of Love Point Park and the High School. This area is adjacent to existing and planned residential areas, a public park, and school facilities. The area may have better long-term potential as a residential neighborhood designed to be compatible

with the street and housing pattern of older Stevensville neighborhoods; however, this is an established industrial area that is currently needed in Stevensville to accommodate a number of important local businesses. This area should retain its existing Suburban Industrial (SI) zoning. To improve the compatibility of this area with existing and future development, basic design guidelines should be adopted for new development and redevelopment within this SI District. The primary objective of these design guidelines will be to ensure adequate landscaping and screening to protect adjacent residential uses. The geographic boundaries of the Suburban Industrial zoned land should not expand. Over time, if property owners wish to seek residential rezoning within this neighborhood, the County should evaluate each case and, if practical, recommend favorably for the rezoning.

- Encourage redevelopment and aesthetic cleanup of marginal or obsolete land uses. Alternative solutions to clean up such properties should be explored and could include considering condemnation proceedings if clean-up or demolition agreements cannot be negotiated with the property owner.

The County should coordinate with local Stevensville stakeholders to plan and implement actions to improve the commercial environment in the Village Center Core:

- Erect directional signs for the Village Center Core on US 50/301, MD 8, and MD 18. The Stevensville Village Center is easy to miss from almost any of the major State routes. In order for the Town Center Core to continue its revitalization, visitors need to have clear directions—if the trip is not convenient, the majority of US 50/301 through traffic will not consider leaving the highway.
- Erect landmark or monument signs at gateway entrances to the Village Center.
- Continue to coordinate business signage and develop interpretive signage for historic buildings.
- Add street furniture to improve the Village Center environment (e.g., benches, bicycle racks, planters).

- Coordinate historic-themed streetlight design and pursue opportunities to consolidate or bury overhead utility lines.
- Work with the Kent Island Heritage Society to develop a visitor's kiosk or museum.
- Apply for various State and federal grants and loans to provide funding for economic revitalization and historic preservation (e.g., Maryland Main Street, Neighborhood Business Revitalization Program).

LAND CONSERVATION

Conservation of natural resources and protection of environmental features is a key objective of this Community Plan. Homeowners can contribute toward the conservation of natural resources and minimize environmental impacts by limiting the conversion of forests to lawns, leaving the remaining land fallow, planting open lands with native species, ensuring that forests on their property connect directly with forests on adjacent properties, and by preventing land disturbances near waterways.

Concerns regarding the development that has taken place in recent years have highlighted the need to protect environmental resources, which has also extended to the role these resources play in defining the area's rural character. As undeveloped lands dwindle, the need to identify those remaining sites and institute measures to ensure they remain rural and that environmental resources are protected has become paramount. Measures to protect these lands include:

- Implementation of protection measures prescribed by the County's Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Program.
- Designation of lands as greenbelts to better define the edges of the Growth Area boundaries and distinguish areas appropriate for development and areas to remain undeveloped or limited to rural residential densities. These lands are located both within and outside the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area. Greenbelt lands are designed to maintain rural and open character and establish a green edge definition along the Growth Area boundary; they will also serve to protect substantial portions of the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area and sensitive environmental resources by redirecting growth away from areas formerly designated

for growth. Within these areas recommended implementation strategies include use of design standards that emphasize rural character; review and consideration of zoning classifications to maintain some of the remaining open space; and use of passive parks and interpretive facilities to support environmental education while providing public access to key waterfront locations.

CLIMATE CHANGE & SEA LEVEL RISE

The impacts of a changing climate, which includes sea level rise, present potentially enormous future challenges to lower lying communities. It is particularly concerning to Chester/Stevensville due to its extensive shoreline. This leaves many properties at risk to the effects of hurricanes, tropical storms, and heavy rain events. With such a large volume of businesses and economic activity located on or near the water, there are future planning concerns and since the County is a receiving area for evacuees in the event there is a Lower Shore mass evacuation, it will have a significant impact on Kent Island if the County is not effectively managing natural hazards.

Already, higher tides are having an impact in areas that sit only a few feet above sea level. Increased tidal flooding from sea level rise is exacerbating flooding during storm events and driving "blue-sky nuisance flooding," which is expected to grow significantly in the coming years. Erosion and subsidence, coastal flooding/sea rise, hurricane related flooding, major debris generation, and severe winter storms are all growing concerns.

In particular, it is important to evaluate low-lying areas leading to the Bay Bridge and to identify alternate routes. This includes ensuring the bridge can be accessed, as well as reviewing and strengthening evacuation plans for regional coordination.

GATEWAYS & SCENIC CORRIDORS

The Chester/Stevensville communities have an abundance of natural beauty. This scenery should be considered an important component to overall quality of life. This Plan's emphasis on defining gateways and protecting scenic corridors and views reflects a growing trend toward placemaking—creating identifying landmarks or protecting existing views that, in a national landscape, have grown increasingly homogenous over time. Identifying

gateways and scenic views will help the traveler distinguish one place from another and give residents and businesses a renewed sense of civic pride. When approaching Chester or Stevensville by car, the sequence of views from the road determines first impressions. Gateway planning would link this sequence of views together with common elements that give the corridor its own identity. Although the area's scenery is already highly valued, scenic vistas and viewsheds are often destroyed during rapid change, both in the natural and built environments; therefore, identification and protection of these assets is an important component of this Plan and integral stewardship of both communities.

TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS

Investments in transportation infrastructure is required to better manage traffic, improve safety, and reduce congestion to the extent possible and facilitate the movement of people and goods. Most recommended transportation system improvements are designed to foster greater connectivity between existing developed communities adjacent or in proximity to the US 50/301 corridor.

Although the US 50/301 corridor has bisected Kent Island and provided a number of transportation system challenges since it was first constructed, a number of proposed road improvements and new connector roads may help to overcome many of the limitations posed by through traffic along this corridor.

CHESAPEAKE BAY BRIDGE

As projected in MDOT's *2015 Bay Bridge Life Cycle Cost Analysis*, traffic impacts and congestion within the Bay Bridge corridor will continue to deteriorate. The increase in traffic and limited capacity of the Bay Bridge as the single crossing of the Chesapeake Bay in Maryland will result in continued and consistent delays. These delays impact the daily operations of many Maryland residents and businesses but impacts a disproportionate number of Queen Anne's County residents.

It is vital to the safety and mobility of County citizens that steps be taken now to quickly complete the *Bay Crossing Study* Tier I NEPA process and fund an accelerated Tier II NEPA process. Due to both the local and regional significance of this facility, it is essential that the planning and funding for additional safety and

capacity improvements continue and remain on schedule. The NEPA process, design, and construction of a future crossing will take years to complete; therefore, the County and State must continue to evaluate and implement all possible options to manage congestion during peak travel times and future construction projects.

KEY INTERSECTIONS

A number of intersections require evaluation and improvements to ensure their future safe function. Many of these intersections are located at the termini of potential new system connections. In most cases, new connector roads may prompt the need for intersection improvement to support additional traffic.

TRANSIT

Options should be explored to provide alternative means of transportation on Kent Island. Such services would provide an alternative to residents who are transportation disadvantaged (e.g., elderly residents, no-vehicle households). Such a bus or trolley system could also serve as a visitor attraction. Optional routes to consider include a MD 8 shuttle providing connection between Romancoke and Love Point and destinations in between (e.g., airport, marina, downtown Stevensville, Cross Island Trail, Terrapin Beach Park, Love Point Park). East/west Cross-Island connections providing shuttles north and south of US 50 should also be considered. All shuttles could interconnect parks and shopping, also helping to alleviate traffic congestion.

A transit study would assess the costs to capitalize and operate such a system, project ridership, and analyze the total value and benefits that could be anticipated. Such a system could reduce dependence on automobile travel, marginally reduce automobile trips, and extend the capacity of road system improvements.

Commuter facilities such as Park and Ride lots may need expansion when additional development occurs in the Stevensville area. Park and Ride, bus, and shuttle services should also be expanded as demand warrants. Shuttle and bus service should include stops at the Village Center Core, marina area, airport, shopping centers, senior center, and residential neighborhoods.

PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENTS

Some street system environments in the area are effectively hostile to pedestrians. Plan improvements to enhance mobility and circulation within and near the Chester/Stevensville Growth Area requires greater consideration of pedestrian needs. These improvements take two major forms: sidewalks and traffic calming improvements to enhance walkability in downtown areas and trail system improvements that facilitate pedestrian and bicycle connections between and among neighborhoods, downtown areas, parks, shopping areas, and jobs. Specific recommendations include:

- Calming traffic through the Village Center Core areas
- Utilizing on-street parking, where possible and appropriate, to provide separation
- Completing sidewalk systems in both Village Center Core areas
- Creating pedestrian-bicycle connections between key Village Center destinations
- Developing a network of trails specifically for pedestrian and cyclist use
- Providing a pedestrian/bicycle trail connection over US 50/301
- Connecting State Street to the Cross Island Trail and developing adjacent public parking
- Utilizing traffic calming measures to better support pedestrian crossing at appropriate locations
- Providing amenities such as benches and bicycle racks
- Enhancing the pedestrian climate along MD 18 by improving sidewalks and traffic calming measures
- Further developing pedestrian connections between Chester and Kent Narrows along MD 18 through sidewalks and Cross Island Trail expansion

WATER & SEWERAGE NEEDS

In addition to general capacity limitations, the County recognizes sewerage disposal problem priority areas and set aside capacity to address the large number of existing septic systems that discharge directly to groundwater. These are not only limiting factors in the Chester/Stevensville area's ability to achieve desired growth but are

environmental and public health issues that must be addressed.

Water service may also be limited due to Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) limitations on future groundwater appropriation to lessen the future rate of salt-water intrusion to the aquifer.

SOUTHERN KENT ISLAND SEWER

The County recognized Southern Kent Island (SKI) as a sewerage Public Health Area of concern—many of the septic systems in the area were not operating correctly and were discharging septic effluent directly into the groundwater on a seasonal basis. An additional concern was the amount of nitrogen being released into the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries, given the proximity of the failing systems to these waters.

The County Commissioners opted to move forward with a project consisting of four phases:

- **Phase 1** consists of the Kent Island Estates and Romancoke subdivisions. It was estimated that existing homes in this phase would be connected to the County system by the end of summer 2021.
- **Phase 2** consists of the Tower Gardens subdivision and is estimated to be complete by fall 2022.
- **Phase 3** consists of the Kentmorr and Queen Anne Colony subdivisions. This phase is under design and its construction is estimated to be completed around the fall of 2024.
- **Phase 4** consisting of the Chesapeake Estates, Sunny Isle of Kent, Matapeake Estates, and Normans/Batts Neck is estimated to be complete in fall of 2025.

When complete, the SKI project will connect over 1,500 properties with failing septic systems to the County KNSG Wastewater Treatment Plant.

GRASONVILLE

FUTURE GROWTH

Grasonville is one of the County's designated growth areas. Grasonville is located along the heavily traveled US 50/301 corridor and is within commuting distance to the rapidly expanding Baltimore/Washington metropolitan area; the community has an existing concentration of

development and has existing zoning designations that accommodate commercial and residential growth; and the community is served with public sewer and some public water, and numerous other community facilities and services. It is still important to note that any future growth will be contingent on the availability of adequate public resources.

While the preceding is true, Grasonville has significant environmental resources, particularly wetlands and forests, that are a constraint to major growth. Setting aside any growth limitations of the County due to sewer capacity limitations, these environmental considerations, and the presence of conservation lands on the perimeter of the community, dictate that Grasonville will have limited growth potential.

Despite the smaller size and more limited overall development potential of the Grasonville Growth Area, residential development interest has increased in past years. The changing dynamics of real estate market forces, coupled with the County's capacity limitations, will ultimately determine the rate and timing of growth in Grasonville. With this Plan, the County and the community have an opportunity to proactively plan for the best way to manage future growth in a beneficial way.

Under this Plan, different parts of Grasonville will ultimately have several distinct characteristics. Most of the Main Street area will retain village character, with mixed village-scale commercial and residential uses. The area along US 50/301 will primarily develop as a commercial corridor serving regional needs. The northern and southern parts of the community will be primarily residential. To prevent sprawl into the rural areas surrounding Grasonville, this Plan continues to limit growth to areas designated for development within the Growth Area. The boundaries of the Growth Area are generally defined by Countryside zoning district boundaries and waterways.

NEIGHBORHOOD ENHANCEMENT

Existing residential neighborhoods are primarily zoned Neighborhood Conservation (NC), Grasonville Village Center (GVC), Grasonville Planned Residential Neighborhood (GPRN), or Suburban Residential (SR). A key objective of this Community Plan is to manage future development in existing neighborhoods and in planned development areas

so that existing neighborhoods are protected and enhanced. Ways to do this may include:

- Ensuring compatible infill development
- Ensuring new developments are integrated into existing community fabric
- Limiting single-family home conversions
- Limiting expansion of nonconforming uses
- Protecting neighborhoods from incompatible encroachment
- Improving pedestrian and bicycle access
- Increasing bicycle and pedestrian safety
- Requiring buffering for new commercial development (especially near US 50/301)
- Creating a vibrant pedestrian-oriented Main Street
- Lowering speed limits on Main Street
- Reducing or eliminating the creation of flag lots

MAIN STREET DEVELOPMENT

Main Street is the traditional focus of Grasonville: it is the major public space and is important in helping define how residents and visitors perceive the community. How Main Street develops is key to Grasonville's future. This Community Plan offers a special opportunity to coordinate land use planning along Main Street with the actual appearance of the roadway. In 1997, as part of the Chesapeake Country Scenic Byway Program, the State Highway Administration began designing the reconstruction of Main Street from Chester River Beach Road to Collier Road; however, further improvements to Main Street are needed, including the rehabilitation of the Post Office. New development and redevelopment should consider the use of rear alleyways to connect parking areas and provide for utility and service convenience.

EXISTING CHARACTER

Overall, Main Street has a residential feel with mostly single-family houses on small to medium sized lots, typically between 1/4 to 1/2 acre (10,000 to 20,000 square feet). Non-residential uses are also important and help give some blocks more of a mixed-use feel. Important community facilities located along Main Street include the elementary school, fire station, post office, senior center, community center, and churches. Although major commercial activity in Grasonville is oriented to sites with easy access from US 50/301, Main Street retains some retail and employment activity, mostly clustered

between Church Lane and around 400 feet east of Gravel Run Road. Most of this commercial activity is neighborhood-oriented (e.g., pizza parlor, beauty salon, garage).

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

Future development along Main Street will be dictated in part by market forces, in part by the County's overall capacity limitations, and in part by land use policy as set by this Community Plan and implemented through the County zoning and land development regulations. Currently, most of Main Street west from around Gravel Run Road is zoned Grasonville Village Center (GVC). A mix of residential and non-residential uses is permitted in this zoning district. Most single-family residential uses are permitted by right (no special permits required). Planned multi-family residential uses are permitted by conditional use on lot sizes of two acres or larger. A wide range of non-residential uses are permissible, but also require conditional use approval from the County's Board of Appeals.

VISION FOR MAIN STREET

Preferred development includes high-quality residential and neighborhood-scale retail development, typical of what might be found in older, small Eastern Shore towns. The vision that would seem to make the most sense from a community planning perspective is as follows.

Grasonville Village Center

In the Grasonville Village Center, low- and medium-intensity commercial uses are encouraged, along with single-family and multi-family housing. The existing village scale is maintained and enhanced so that this area once again becomes a true village center:

- New buildings built close to the street and in scale with neighboring development
- Small village scale commercial signage
- Parking located to building sides and rear
- Shared and interconnected parking areas
- Sidewalks along Main Street with connections to neighborhoods and community facilities
- Street furniture (e.g., benches, bike racks) and landscaped areas between building facades and sidewalks/streets
- Pocket park with seating area, landscaping, and tot-lot, giving families a reason to visit
- Reduced visual impact from utility poles

- Screened mechanical equipment and service areas
- Public parking on or close to the street or a public lot within convenient walking distance
- Pedestrian-scale street lighting
- Curb/gutter for area stormwater management
- Design standards similar to UC/TC districts

This intent of this area is to consist of mixed commercial and residential uses. Consideration should be given to:

- Permitting by right all residential uses except for single-wide manufactured homes
- Eliminating minimum site size requirements
- Reducing parking ratios if convenient public parking is located within walking distance

Outside the Village Center

Outside the Grasonville Village Center, Main Street maintains a mostly single-family residential feel and scale. Low intensity non-residential uses and limited multi-family development are permitted, but with standards designed to ensure an overall single-family residential appearance. Owner-occupied housing is encouraged, and multi-family rentals discouraged. The street section is enhanced with sidewalk, a grass or landscaped edge, and street trees. With homeowners' support, some streetscape consistency is achieved by coordinating fence type, trees, and other landscaping.

This vision is preferred over options that would leave the entire length of Main Street open to potential commercial and unlimited, multi-family development pending site-by-site decisions by the County Board of Appeals. Without some certainty provided through zoning, it seems inevitable that the stability of residential neighborhoods will suffer, thereby creating a disincentive for homeowners to invest in their properties as owner-occupied homes. It also seems inevitable that once several commercial developments are approved by the Board of Appeals, it will become increasingly difficult for the Board to justify denial of subsequent commercial applications. The net result would be a downward spiral of single-family residential property values and increased pressure/incentive to convert remaining homes to apartments or commercial uses throughout the entire length of Main Street.

The approach advocated in this Plan is to maintain and encourage a strong mixed-use Grasonville Village Center in the central part of Main Street. The Neighborhood Conservation zoned area to the east would consist exclusively of single-family homes. The area west of the Grasonville Village Center would be characterized by single-family homes, some with accessory apartments; limited small-scale commercial uses; and some attached duplexes on larger lots, all of which should be designed to have a single-family home appearance and blend into the existing neighborhood. This approach will continue to provide a higher level of certainty to property owners along Main Street about what can and cannot happen on their property and on surrounding properties, and hopefully stimulate private investment in the community. Consideration should be given to:

- Permitting attached duplex housing
- Restricting multi-family housing such as apartments and townhouses
- Allowable non-residential floor area of 30% of the total site area
- Eliminating minimum site size requirements
- Reducing parking ratios if convenient public parking is located within walking distance

ROADWAY IMPROVEMENTS

Main Street currently is an open section, two-lane road. As noted previously, the SHA began planning a reconstruction of Main Street from Chester River Beach Road to Collier Road. The extent of the improvements was limited by funding and the narrow, existing right-of-way. Drainage in this low-lying area is also a major consideration. SHA's preliminary design concept was to reconstruct the street with curb and gutter, with two 14-foot-wide lanes and sidewalk on one side of the street. Design work with additional opportunities for input from the community and the County should continue and promote options for increased bicycle and pedestrian safety, such as dedicated bike lanes, pedestrian crossings, and additional sidewalks. The entire length of Main Street from the Queenstown Bank to Wilson Road should ultimately be rebuilt as a closed section street with sidewalk, landscaping, and provisions for drainage. Improvements at key intersections are needed to ensure safe and efficient traffic flow. Over time, improvements

between Chester River Beach Road and Collier Road should be expanded to cover this entire area.

The following Main Street improvements should be considered:

- Improve Main Street from US 50/301 to Wilson Road as a closed section with sidewalks on both sides
- Balance calming traffic and improving turning movement safety, paying particular attention to replacing landscaping that obstructs the view of oncoming traffic
- Evaluate and modify intersection configurations to add center left turn lanes, improve turning angles to increase safety, and provide signalization where appropriate
- Evaluate and modify turning angles and lane entrance widths of smaller side street intersections
- Establish pedestrian-scale street lighting, street trees, and demarcated pedestrian crossings
- Engineer any planned improvements to correct drainage and flooding problems
- If space allows separate sidewalks from the curb by a grass/landscaped swath, ensuring the area is clear of utility poles and that it meets ADA standards
- Conduct any necessary sewer/water line improvements in conjunction with road improvements to avoid future disturbance

UN(DER)DEVELOPED SITES

Around 30% of the land now zoned for development in Grasonville is currently vacant, undevelopable (wetlands), forested, or in agricultural use. Generally, these are larger tracts of land that are zoned Suburban Residential (SR) or Grasonville Planned Residential Neighborhood (GPRN). Along the US 50/301 corridor are some additional areas that are zoned Urban Commercial (UC) or Suburban Estate (SE).

OUTSIDE THE US 50/301 CORRIDOR

County growth capacity notwithstanding, these areas could significantly increase the number of homes in Grasonville. It is important that any new housing development is be integrated into the existing community fabric as much as possible. Grasonville Planned Residential Neighborhood (GPRN) designation provides for environmentally

sensitive design, architectural integration to ensure a unified and coherent plan of development, and functional community open space and recreation areas.

Some small to medium sized tracts around Grasonville's Growth Area boundary are presently zoned Estate (E) or Suburban Estate (SE). These zoning categories generally allow for moderate density single-family residential development. The few E and SE zoned areas form a logical transitional zone between the Growth Area and surrounding rural lands. Previous expansion of the Grasonville Growth Area south of MD 18 to incorporate the Emergency Center, supports extension of public sewer to the Neighborhood Conservation (NC-20) zoned properties, if County sewer capacity allows.

INSIDE THE US 50/301 CORRIDOR

Undeveloped land in the US 50/301 corridor is clustered mainly in two locations: north and south of the Chester River Beach Road overpass and north and south of US 50/301 immediately west of Hess Road/Hissey Road. Undeveloped lands between Hissey Road and Nesbit Road are protected from future development by conservation easements.

Due to the proximity of US 50/301, a six-lane divided highway with associated traffic, noise, and glare impacts, it was not practical for future residential development on the Suburban Residential (SR) zoned properties directly fronting the highway near the Nesbit Road interchange; these properties have since been rezoned to Grasonville Gateway and Medical Center (GGMC).

In the vicinity of the Emergency Medical Campus along MD 18, open or civic spaces may be provided to accommodate a commemorative kiosk explaining the British actions in the Battle of Slippery Hill and the defense of the County undertaken by a small band of patriots. This kiosk area would have enough room for ceremonies, school groups, etc. to view the layout of the battle actions at the kiosk. Onsite or nearby parking should be available.

HIGHWAY COMMERCIAL APPEARANCE

Existing commercial areas fronting US 50/301 are currently zoned Urban Commercial (UC) and are, for the most part, already developed with businesses. Much of the development predates the closing of

direct access to US 50/301 and is oriented directly toward the highway with little connection to the Grasonville community. Most of these developments were constructed prior to the County's adoption of significant landscaping and design standards.

Appearance of infill and redevelopment of these properties should improve under the County's current landscaping, design, and signage standards. Specifically, development should be:

- At appropriate bulk and scale for Grasonville with limits on maximum structure size (e.g., no big-box retail or strip commercial centers)
- Architecturally attractive
- Integrated into community fabric where feasible and desirable
- Designed and landscape buffered to minimize negative impacts on existing residential communities
- Provided primary access/egress to service roads or roads with direct connection to US 50/301; commercial sites should not have direct primary access to MD 18/Main Street
- Applying design and sign standards to new commercial development

PUBLIC IMPROVEMENT NEEDS

To improve the quality of life for existing residents and to function effectively as a growth area, Grasonville must be an attractive place to live, work, shop, and recreate. Public investments are needed to create an attractive community, which will in turn attract higher quality residential and non-residential development that will repay the public investments.

ROADS

Overall, motor vehicle traffic moves well through Grasonville. The two full-directional interchanges with US 50/301 at Chester River Beach Road and at Nesbit Road serve the community adequately. The existing network of roads will be adequate to serve existing residents and the amount of growth that will occur, provided traffic from future development is directed toward roads with capacity and provided minor improvements are made to specific intersections. No major road improvements or new collector roads will be needed in Grasonville, except for the reconstruction of Main Street, as discussed earlier. The lack of pedestrian and bicycle amenities needs to be addressed.

Detailed information from the Maryland Department of Transportation regarding functional classification, average daily traffic counts, and levels of service is available for State roads in the Grasonville Growth Area (see **Map 6-2, Average Daily Traffic** for recent information).

Circulation South of Main Street

In planning for new development, an important consideration is the lack of direct north-south through routes between areas south of Main Street and US 50/301—northbound traffic on Sawmill Lane, Grasonville Cemetery Road, Gravel Run Road, and Perry's Corner Road must travel east or west on Main Street to reach one of Grasonville's two full-directional interchanges with US 50/301. As overall traffic in the area increases, this will put more traffic onto Main Street, mixing local traffic with through traffic, and creating the potential for congestion and hazards.

A connecting road between Discovery Lane and Grasonville Cemetery Road may improve overall east-west mobility. There is the potential to consider a small roundabout at Grasonville Cemetery Road if a new connector road is considered. The intersections of Main Street with Perry's Corner Road, Gravel Run Road, and Grasonville Cemetery Road are particularly at risk because north and westbound traffic must make left turns onto Main Street.

To reduce unnecessary traffic on Main Street, this Community Plan recommends that traffic generated by future development south of Main Street should not have major access onto Main Street or streets such as Gravel Run Road and Grasonville Cemetery Road. Similarly, smaller residential streets such as Collier Road, Melvin Avenue, White House Road, and Church Lane should not be extended for access to future development. Instead, most traffic from future development should be directed to Perry's Corner Road and Sawmill Road, collector roads that provide more direct access to US 50/301.

Intersection Improvements

The key intersections of Chester River Beach Road and Perry's Corner Road with Main Street should be evaluated to determine whether signalization or turning lanes would improve traffic flow. Other intersections along Main Street such as at Station Lane, Gravel Run Road, Evans

Avenue, and Grasonville Cemetery Road will need to be evaluated and modified as necessary to handle additional traffic and improve turning angles to accommodate safer turns.

RECREATION

Grasonville Park is Grasonville's only active park facility. Grasonville Elementary School provides some open space and a play area, while Ewing Pond Park provides open space. A small County park facility (Long Point Park) is located on the north side of US 50/301 between Jackson Creek and Long Point Roads. There are two existing public boat landings, one at Jackson Creek in the northwest part of Grasonville, and one at Cabin Creek at the end of Cabin Creek Road. These are local facilities that should not be expanded for greater use by visitors from outside the community.

Grasonville is in need of more fully developed parks and an open space system, including:

- Centrally located active recreation space, accessible from existing and planned neighborhoods
- A small recreation or activity area in the Grasonville Village Center
- Pedestrian-bicycle links to recreation facilities from existing and planned neighborhoods

See **Chapter 3—Community Facilities & Services** for a discussion of the County's recreation facilities.

PEDESTRIAN & BICYCLE AMENITIES

Grasonville is fairly compact. Most destinations on Main Street could be reached within a 15-20 minute walk or a short bicycle ride from most neighborhoods south of US 50/301; however, lack of complete sidewalk or bicycle routes are disincentives to nonautomotive circulation. Creating good pedestrian-bicycle linkages would offer a safe, attractive alternative to driving, especially for young people, and help create a cohesive sense of place.

DRAINAGE

Grasonville is low lying and subject to flooding from heavy rainfall and high tides. It is important to protect properties by maintaining drainage ditches. See **Chapter 5—Environmental Resources** for a discussion of stormwater management and MS4 permit requirements.

WATER & SEWER

As is the case in other Growth Areas, public water and sewer service is a major issue and concern. While not as plagued as Kent Island with obvious inadequacies, growth and other recommendations identified in this Plan are just as dependent on adequate sewer and water service as anywhere else in the County.

At present, the vast majority of residents within the Grasonville Growth Area is on private wells. This does not present a problem in and of itself; however, in the interest of a long-term water supply of high quality and quantity, the County should consider improving inefficiencies and encourage connection of new development to community water, when available.

The County *Master Water and Sewerage Plan* establishes policy for access to public sewer service in rural areas outside of designated growth areas or sanitary districts. Current County policy is not to provide sewer service in areas designated as "Rural" in the Comprehensive or Community Plans unless there is a compelling environmental health risk that could be alleviated by public sewage disposal.

It is also critical to note that the County currently has very limited sewer capacity, which will restrict overall growth. See **Chapter 5—Environmental Resources** for a full discussion of County sewerage and water resources.

TRANSFER STATION

The solid waste transfer station off Gravel Run Road is not an appropriate use for a residential growth area. It has negative impacts on nearby residential areas and streets and, although it should either be relocated outside of the growth area or to a more suitable location with better transportation access, it may prove very difficult to site a new location elsewhere in the County. A highly desirable reuse for this site would be for recreation and open space, particularly in view of its central location with respect to existing and planned residential neighborhoods. See **Chapter 3—Community Facilities & Services** for a discussion on the County's solid waste and recycling.

SENSITIVE AREA PROTECTION

Environmental considerations are very significant to Grasonville's planning. Over half of Grasonville is

within the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area. Wetland issues are very significant, even outside the Critical Area, since hydric soils are common. Numerous federal, State, and County laws and regulations help protect Grasonville's environmental resources. **PlanQAC** and the County's zoning and Critical Area regulations meet Maryland's requirements for environmental protection and new developments are evaluated on a site-by-site basis to ensure compliance.

Environmental protection remains a crucial Countywide objective—sensitive environmental features (e.g., streams, wetlands and their buffers, floodplains, groundwater, habitats of threatened and endangered species, agricultural and forested areas) are plentiful in Grasonville. Preservation and, where possible, enhancement of these areas is a key tenet of the Community Plan. Wherever possible, vegetated buffers should be forested, using native or locally compatible tree species. Existing forest stands should be preserved. Where such preservation cannot be achieved while still allowing development, afforestation should occur within the Growth Area, per provisions of the County's Forest Conservation regulations (see **County Code §18:2, Forest Conservation Act**). Development in environmentally sensitive areas should use techniques to reduce impacts on water quality, wildlife habitats, and shoreline. Agricultural and forested areas within Grasonville are included as part of the County's designated Priority Preservation Area (see **Chapter 4—Land Use**).

PlanQAC updated the County's 2010 *Water Resources Element (WRE)* and considered impacts of existing/proposed land uses. One way to minimize impacts is by directing growth to Growth Areas. Additional best management practices (BMPs), tools, techniques, and strategies can be implemented to further reduce nutrients and sediments reaching water resources. See **Chapter 5—Environmental Resources** and **Appendix D—Water Resources Element** for the WRE.

RURAL AREA PROTECTION

A key objective of this Community Plan is the protection of existing rural areas on Grasonville's perimeter. Demarcating growth boundaries is consistent with State growth management policies, which require development concentration in suitable areas and protection of resource lands. Rural areas around Grasonville are primarily zoned Countryside

(CS) and large tracts are already protected from development:

- Most of the rural lands have RCA Critical Area classifications, which permit only very low-density development
- Large areas are permanently protected (e.g., ownership by the Wildfowl Trust of North America or Eastern Shore Land Conservancy, protection by voluntary conservation easements)

Other areas outside the growth area boundary do retain a limited amount of low-density residential development potential and there are several existing subdivisions scattered around Grasonville. This Plan's objective for these areas is to retain rural character, without upgrades to zoning or Critical Area classification.

For areas with rural designations, the following should be considered:

- Areas with rural designations should retain their existing rural character
- Any future development that occurs should be consistent with Countryside (CS) zoning and RCA Critical Area designation
- Water and sewer services should not be extended unless needed to correct an environmental health problem
- Areas should be prioritized for participation in voluntary conservation easement opportunities

KENT NARROWS

The standalone *2021 Kent Narrows Community Plan* discusses a range of community planning issues, opportunities, and recommendations in greater depth; however, this section includes brief summaries of the information included in that Plan.

SPECIAL TAXING DISTRICT

Queen Anne's County established the Special Kent Narrows Tax District (Ordinance No. 92-11). The taxing authority is the Kent Narrows Commercial Management and Waterfront Improvement Authority. The special tax applies to commercial properties: a \$0.06 is levied for every \$100 of assessed value of the property. The collected taxes are used for the security, maintenance, and amenities in the district and for the design, approval, and financing of public improvements in the district. Public improvements include pedestrian and bicycle

pathways, landscaping, signs, and lighting as needed to improve or enhance pedestrian access and safety. Within the district, some properties are eligible for exemption. In fiscal year 2021, according to the Queen Anne's County Department of Finance, the taxes brought in approximately \$42,500 in revenue.

PUBLIC LANDS, PARKS & OPEN SPACE

There are several key parcels that are publicly owned and improved that provide access to the Kent Narrows waterfront. In addition to water access, these lands provide views and vistas of the water. Preserving and enhancing public access to the waterfront, views, and vistas are crucial elements of a waterfront destination.

INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

With any development there are increased infrastructure demands, some of the demands can be met with existing infrastructure but in general existing infrastructure will need improvements. The following describe existing conditions and potential demands that could be placed on the current: transportation, water, and sewer infrastructure.

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES

Pedestrian facilities include paths, walkways and boardwalks with missing links that would otherwise connect parking facilities with various attractions, lack of ADA compliance, and lack of physical separation of bicycle/pedestrian facilities from the vehicular travel lane at locations along portions of MD 18 including the drawbridge. Pedestrian safety concerns exist with respect to inadequate lighting of parking lots and pedestrian facilities and inadequately marked and signed pedestrian crossings.

PARKING FACILITIES

Although general parking is adequate for private uses and facilities, public parking seems to be in high demand during peak periods and special events. Parking is an issue of major concern to the community. Additional public parking may be needed as future development occurs and management of use of public parking and private parking during special events is crucial.

Currently, there is a demand for additional public and private parking located in close proximity to commercial establishments. Safety, access, and location issues are crucial with respect to use of

existing public parking lots by patrons of commercial establishments. Public perception based on these critical issues prevents public patrons from routinely using the existing public parking facilities to the fullest extent.

Other issues pertain to the allocation of public spaces for private use. Developers and commercial establishments may use public parking to meet parking requirements. In some cases, public parking spaces have been allocated multiple times to more than one developer or commercial establishment, while spaces routinely go unused due to issues (both real and perceived) previously described.

Public parking and private parking demands during special events typically exceed capacity and parking management plans have been used to address needs. These management plans include utilization of both public and private parking resources as well as any additional space that is used for parking.

SIGNAGE

Numerous types of signage exist including signs to address traffic safety requirements, wayfinding and directional signage, off-premise signs for various establishments, and other forms of signs resulting in sign clutter and confusion for visitors.

SUMMARY OF IDENTIFIED NEEDS

To realize the community vision of establishing Kent Narrows as a year-round destination for visitors and local residents along with preserving the watermen's heritage, future development of Kent Narrows must focus on fostering the appropriate mix of land uses supported by the appropriate timing of infrastructure improvements to support destination development activities. The *Kent Narrows Community Plan* provided an overall summary of identified needs that form the basis of its recommendations and implementation strategies.

LAND USE

- Promote development consistent with the character of waterfront development and destination land uses.
- Preserve and enhance the natural environment to support nature-based experiences.
- Enhance views and vistas, maintain public access to water.

- Identify and implement strategies that may be useful to manage the impacts of seasonality.
- Develop or redevelop opportunity sites that have year-round drawing power.
- Enhance underutilized sites and remove dilapidated structures.
- Review and simplify the bonus provisions in the Waterfront Village Center (WVC) zoning regulations.

TRANSPORTATION

- Improve pedestrian safety and lighting.
- Improve directional signage for motorists and pedestrians to attractions, facilities, and the water.
- Identify solutions to address traffic congestion during peak times and special events.
- Expand pedestrian access to provide connections to existing attractions, facilities, the water, and to neighboring communities.
- Develop, as needed, alternative modes of transportation providing connections to key locations within the region.
- Assess parking needs for the current and future development.
- Assist the County in locating a permanent place for spoils to be deposited after channel dredging.

PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE & FACILITIES

- Quantify water and sewer capacity to meet current and future user needs.
- Identify adequate and appropriately located public and private parking facilities to support parking requirements and needs.
- Maintain and improve roads and bridges and the entrance and exit ways throughout the Growth Area. Address stormwater concerns from the roads, parking lots, and bridges. Address trash removal, runoff, and slope maintenance.
- Working with the KNDF, SHA, and Department of Public Works, develop and implement solutions to calm traffic and

improve vehicular and pedestrian safety throughout the Growth Area.

- Work with DPW to identify options for replacement for the sewer line under US 50/301 between the north and south quadrants.

DESIGN, AESTHETICS & BEAUTIFICATION

- Improve property maintenance.
- Encourage public and private development that preserves and enhances the natural environment and contributes to the waterfront community character.
- Encourage additional landscaping on public and private property.
- Work through the Kent Narrows wayfinding initiative to reduce sign clutter while improving motorist and pedestrian wayfinding signage.
- Make streetscape improvements to provide a more cohesive visual experience including traffic calming, sidewalks, lighting, street trees, signage, and pedestrian crossings.
- Through the Kent Narrows wayfinding initiative, develop signage that announces Kent Narrows as a destination.
- Maintain views, vistas, and water access.
- Utilize building and site design requirements and guidelines that enhance Kent Narrows' unique waterfront character.
- Work to ensure that public entities working in Kent Narrows understand the design standards.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT NEEDS

- Community development that augments or contributes to development of a year-round destination (e.g., interpretive programs, nature-based educational boat tours, museums and educational exhibits, offices, conference facilities, businesses attracting niche markets).
- Coordinate between waterway activities and community events.

BMPs, TOOLS & TECHNIQUES

SMART GROWTH MANAGEMENT

The County's sustainable smart growth management strategy aims to reduce development encroachment in the rural agricultural areas by directing growth to existing population centers, including Growth Areas. The intent is to concentrate growth in population centers that have employment opportunities while providing cost-effective public facilities and services to meet population needs, reduce impacts of traffic, and reduce impacts on the environment (particularly water resources).

INDICATORS & MEASURES

Planning and implementing sustainable smart growth management strategies that direct growth to existing communities provide the basis for measuring success of the County to remain a quintessential rural community. Those sustainability indicators and measures include:

- Number of subdivisions inside and outside of Growth Areas.
- Number of residential and commercial building permits issued inside and outside of Growth Areas.
- The average lot size inside and outside of Growth Areas.
- Amount of infrastructure investment inside of Growth Areas.
- Acres of greenbelt areas permanently preserved.

STRATEGIES & ACTIONS

CHESTER/STEVENSVILLE

The Chester/Stevensville Growth Area's overarching goal is to ensure and promote quality of life for its citizens while mitigating environmental and climate change effects.

GOAL 11A-1: Prepare for appropriate infill and redevelopment opportunities.

STRATEGY 1: Develop design guidelines for infill development or redevelopment, establishing benchmarks to enhance community character and quality.

STRATEGY 2: Review and amend development regulations to ensure appropriate uses, bulk requirements, and aesthetics are incorporated, ideally condensing the number of districts to allow for greater ease of implementation.

STRATEGY 3: Develop a Main Street corridor zoning district to incorporate all zoning districts that have characteristics of a traditional main street that is found within the Chester/Stevensville Growth Area.

GOAL 11A-2: Enhance the Chester/Stevensville Growth Area's sense of place.

STRATEGY 1: Identify and develop appropriate gateway treatments to alert travelers of their destination.

STRATEGY 2: Establish greenbelts to define the Chester/Stevensville communities, providing clear edges for these Growth Areas.

STRATEGY 3: Enhance appropriate environmental protection standards to mitigate future environmental and climate change effects.

GRASONVILLE

The Grasonville Growth Area's overarching goal is to reestablish its former character and sense of place, embody responsible growth, enhance citizen quality of life, protect its myriad resources, and encourage a balance between vying community needs.

GOAL 11B-1: Achieve planning objectives for existing residential neighborhoods.

STRATEGY 1: Limit the ability of nonconforming commercial uses in existing zoned residential neighborhoods to expand, unless conditioned on improvements to site appearance including screening and buffering.

STRATEGY 2: Limit home occupation scale and impact in residentially zoned neighborhoods so they do not adversely affect neighboring residential properties.

STRATEGY 3: Require new non-residential development to adequately screen/buffer from adjacent residentially zoned land, minimizing impacts on existing residential areas, particularly for new commercial development on the US 50/301 corridor abutting MD 18.

STRATEGY 4: Encourage homeownership within the Grasonville community and seek grant funding opportunities for home improvements and community development projects.

GOAL 11B-2: Achieve the vision developed for Main Street.

- STRATEGY 1:** Develop a Main Street corridor zoning district to incorporate all zoning districts that have characteristics of a traditional main street that is found within the Grasonville Growth Area.
- STRATEGY 2:** For the Grasonville Village Center (GVC) zoning district, review existing Zoning Regulations and consider revisions to permitted uses, minimum site size requirements, parking requirements, landscaping, and screening.
- STRATEGY 3:** For the Grasonville Neighborhood Commercial (GNC) zoning district, review existing Zoning Regulations and consider revisions to permitted uses, allowable floor area ratio, minimum site size requirements, parking requirements, and aesthetic appearance.
- STRATEGY 4:** Work with SHA to develop and consider a number of Main Street improvements to address design speed and character, intersection improvements, streetscapes, drainage, sidewalks, and utilities.
- STRATEGY 5:** Consider developing and adopting voluntary guidelines for fences and landscaping to help achieve streetscape consistency.

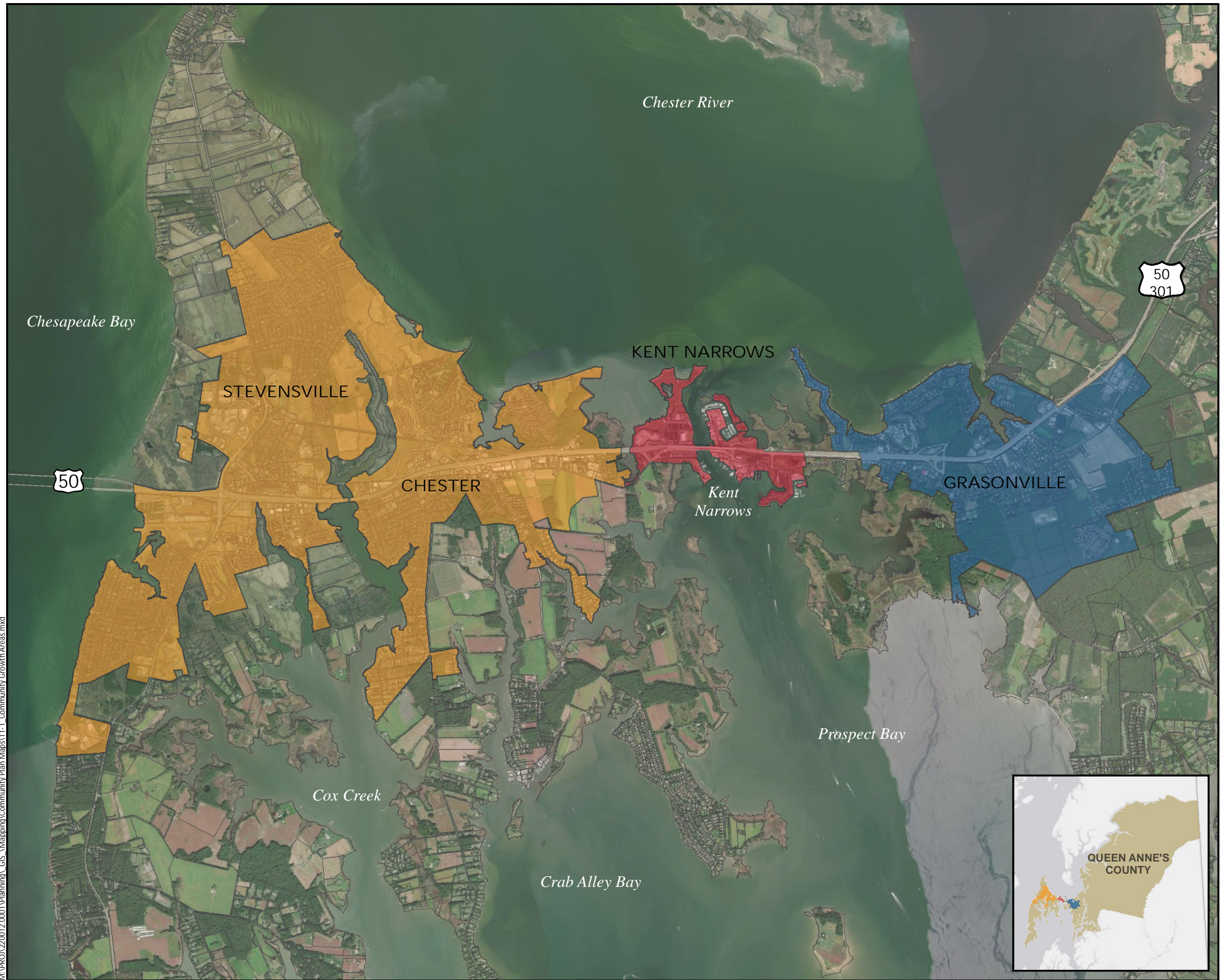
GOAL 11B-3: Encourage a more fully developed parks and open space system.

- STRATEGY 1:** Maintain an open space greenbelt on Grasonville's southern side.
- STRATEGY 2:** Explore converting the solid waste transfer station into a community park to accommodate passive and active park/recreational facilities for use by all age groups.
- STRATEGY 3:** Continue improving Grasonville Community Park on Perry's Corner Road to accommodate changing community recreational needs.
- STRATEGY 4:** Extend the Cross Island Trail and Cross County Connector Trail projects through Grasonville.
- STRATEGY 5:** Consider shared multi-use trails along MD 18 and the abandoned rail right-of-way adjacent to US 50/301; along Chester River Beach Road from Main Street to Chester River Drive; east-west trail between Perry's Corner Road and Sawmill Lane; along Perry's Corner Road from Grasonville Park to Discovery Lane; and other connections as new neighborhoods and highway commercial development occurs.

KENT NARROWS

Please see the *2021 Kent Narrows Community Plan* for a listing of the Growth Area's recommendations, strategies, and actions.

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MAP 11-1 Community Plans Growth Areas

- Parcels
- Growth Areas
- Grasonville
 - Kent Narrows
 - Chester/Stevensville



Source
Queen Anne's County Growth Areas

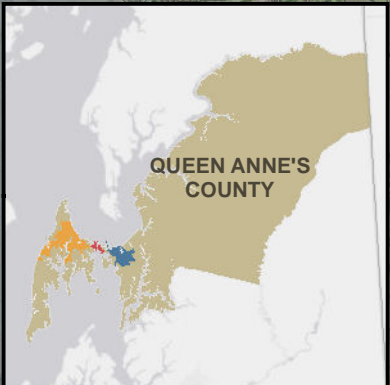
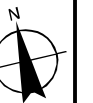


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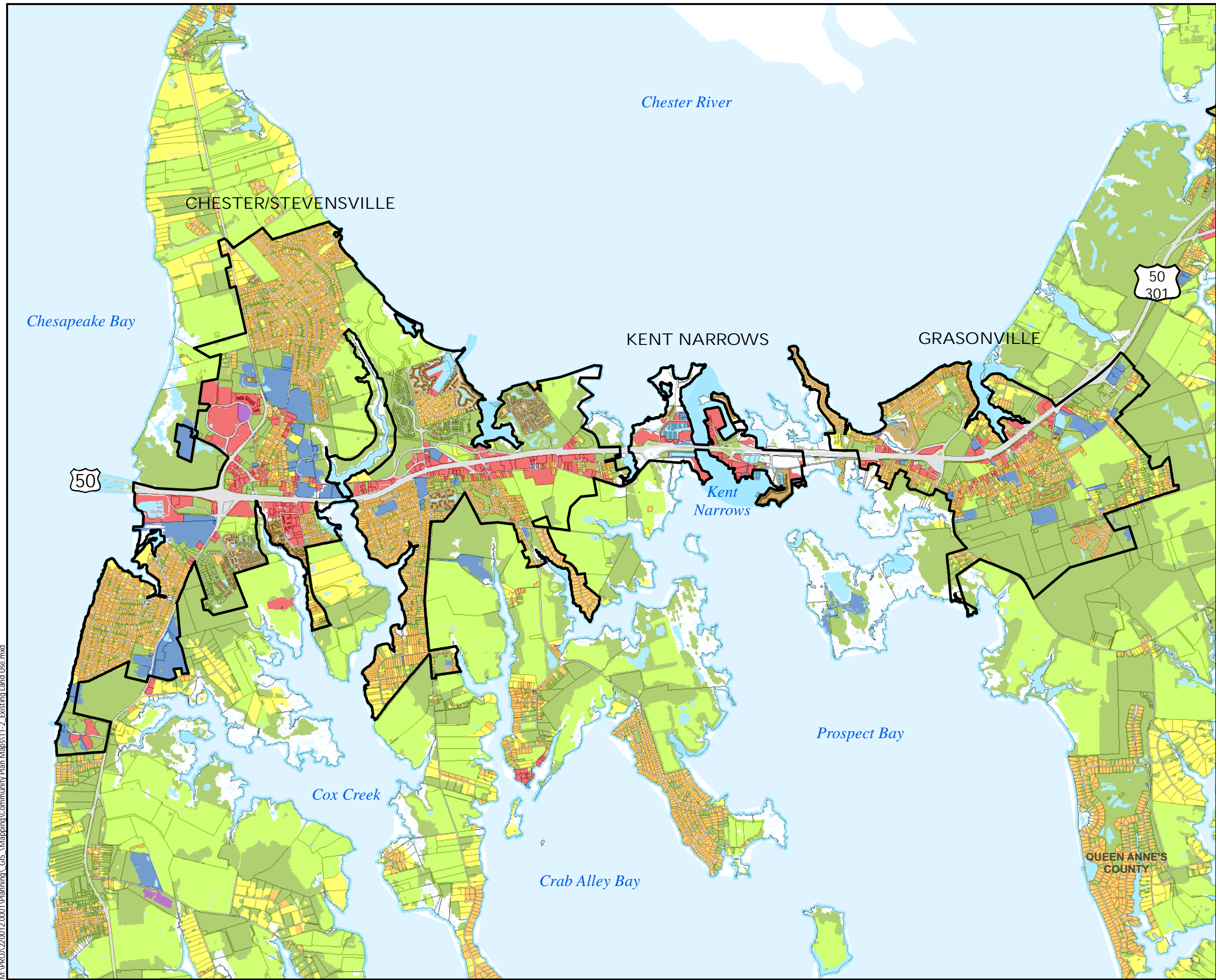
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MAP 11-2 Community Plans Land Use/Land Cover

- Growth Areas
- Parcels
- Water Bodies
- 2019 Land Use/Land Cover**
 - Low-Density Residential
 - Medium-Density Residential
 - High-Density Residential
 - Commercial
 - Industrial
 - Institutional/Public
 - Agriculture
 - Transportation
 - Undeveloped
 - Water
 - Wetlands

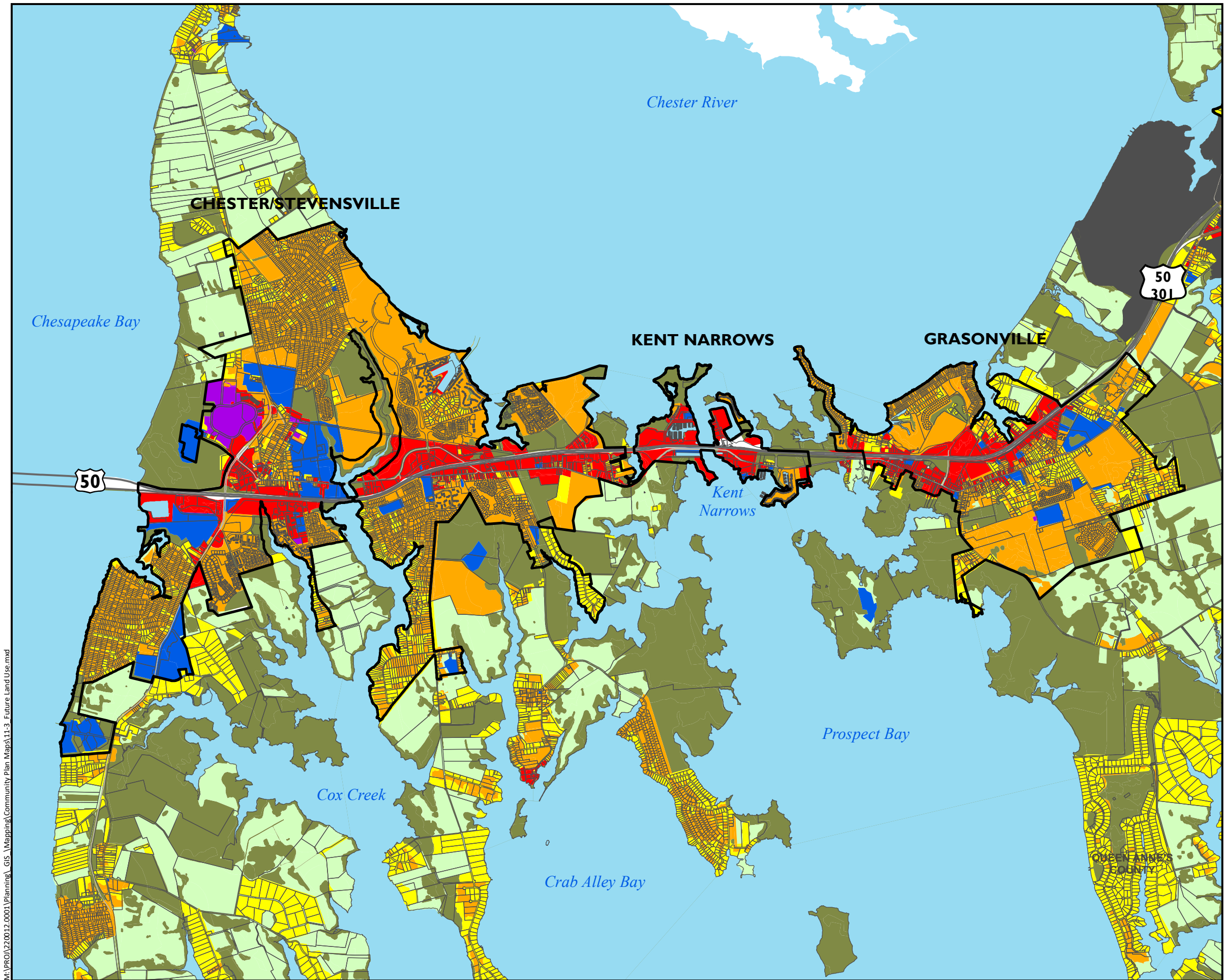
Source
Queen Anne's County 2019 Land Use/Land Cover

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January 2022

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MAP 11-3

Community Plans

Detailed Future Land Use

- Growth Areas
- Incorporated Towns
- Parcels
- Water Bodies
- Major Roads**
 - Interstates
 - US Highways
 - State Routes

- Detailed Future Land Use**
 - Low Density Residential
 - Medium Density Residential
 - Commercial & Mixed Use
 - Industrial/Business Park
 - Institutional
 - Very Low Density Rural
 - Agriculture & Open Space

Source
Queen Anne's County Future Land Use/Land Cover

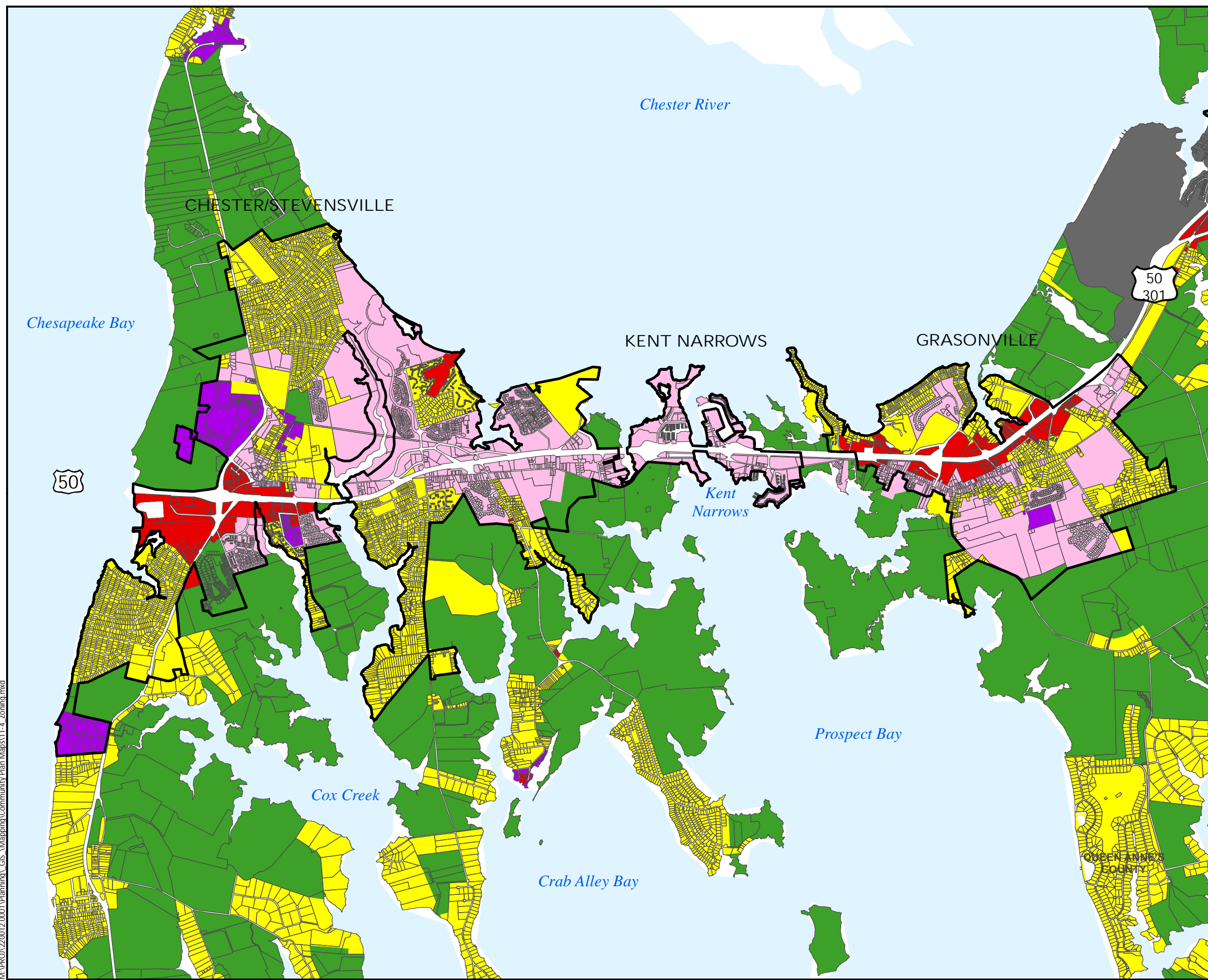
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January 2022

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MAP 11-4 Community Plans Generalized Zoning (2021)

- Growth Areas
- Water Bodies
- Zoning**
- Residential
- Commercial
- Mixed Use
- Industrial
- Agriculture
- Town




Source
Queen Anne's County Zoning

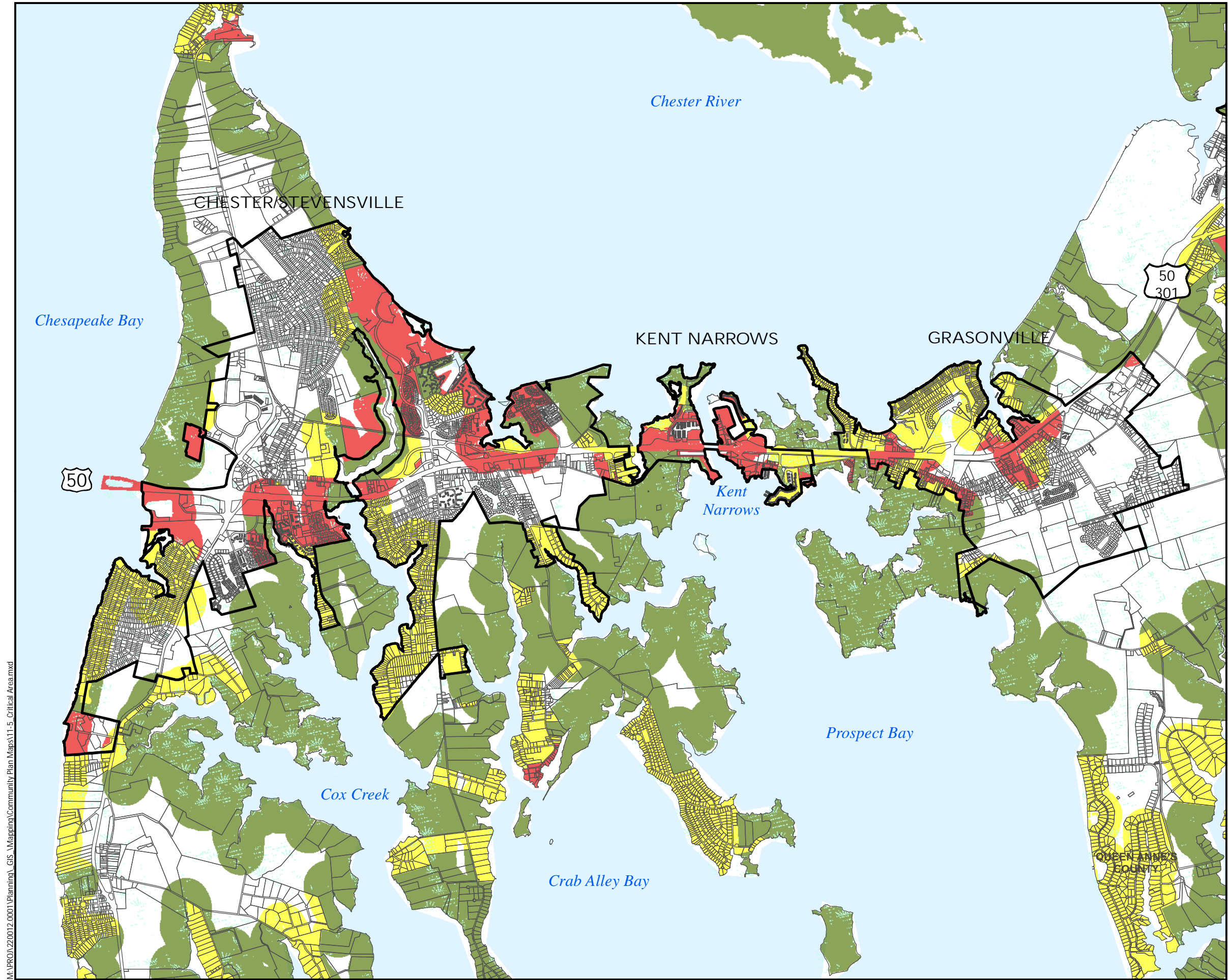


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January 2022

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MAP 11-5 Community Plans Chesapeake Bay Critical Areas

- Growth Areas
- Parcels
- Wetlands
- Water Bodies
- Chesapeake Bay Critical Areas**
 - Intensely Developed Area
 - Limited Development Area
 - Resource Conservation Area






Source
Maryland Department of Natural Resources



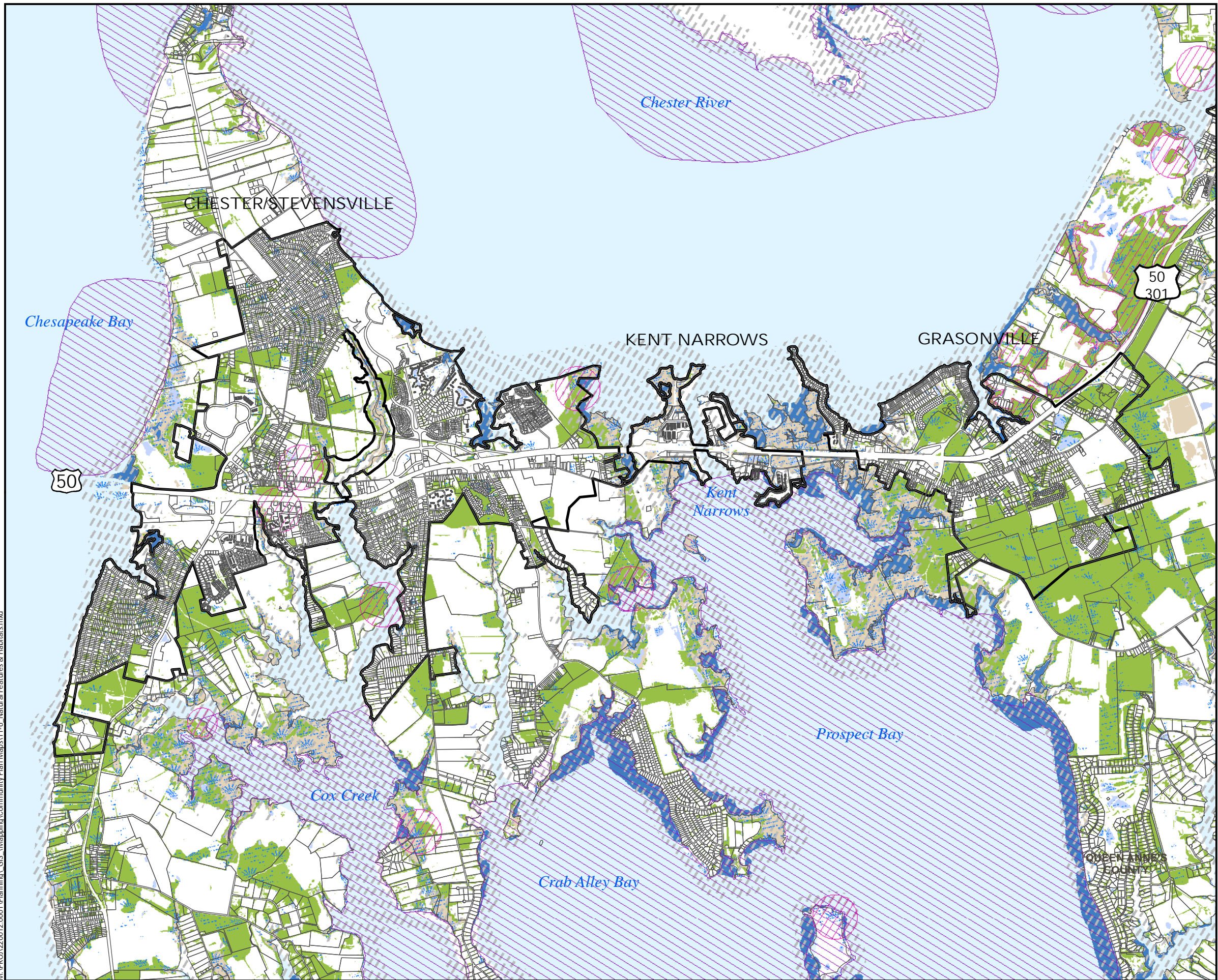
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January 2022

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MAP 11-6 Community Plans Natural Features & Habitats

- Growth Areas
- Parcels
- Water Bodies
- Natural Features & Habitats
 - Waterfowl Staging Areas
 - Wetlands
 - Sensitive Species Review Areas
 - Floodplain
 - Lakes and Ponds
 - Submerged Aquatic Vegetation
 - Forest
 - Marsh

Source
Maryland Department of Natural Resources
Federal Emergency Management Agency

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January 2022
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