

Economic Development & Tourism



CHAPTER 8

8. Economic Development & Tourism

VISION

Life in the County offers a variety of opportunities for family living, business development, and employment with an economic balance between residential and non-residential land uses. Economic prosperity is achieved through a mix of commercial, industrial, maritime, agricultural, and tourism endeavors, each undertaken with environmental sensitivity. The high quality of life expected by residents is realized by attracting and retaining businesses that encourage agriculture, seafood and maritime industries, tourism and outdoor sports, small businesses, and high-tech enterprises. Our rural character is maintained by directing housing and business growth to existing communities, thus allowing the preservation of agriculture, trees, parks, open space, and environmentally sensitive and natural areas. By supporting the County's vibrant, urbanized Growth Areas and concentrating future growth in those population centers and existing towns, the County preserves its natural beauty and resources for future generations.

KEY ISSUES

Priority Industries & Sectors

Business Attraction, Retention & Expansion

Workforce Retention, Attraction & Development

Infrastructure Needs

Emerging Markets

PLAN THEMES



FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

Leverage non-resident spending



SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

Utilize and promote a variety of business incentive zones



COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION

Encourage redevelopment and infill in appropriate locations



PRESERVATION & CONSERVATION

Promote a local skilled workforce



HEALTH & RESILIENCE

Capitalize on local, regional, and emerging markets

RELEVANT STATE VISIONS



GOALS

The overarching goal for economic development and tourism is to create a balance between the needs for business attraction and retention, quality job creation, industry diversification, and tax base expansion, by focusing growth to protect the quality of life within the County.

8-1 Promote traditional business, emerging industries, and economic development.

8-2 Preserve and promote a resource-based economy.

8-3 Explore opportunities for niche hospitality and tourism industries.

Economic development is a means to create wealth and economic stability, bolster the tax base, and ensure the highest possible quality of life for County residents. This chapter identifies key issues with respect to the agricultural economy, traditional business development, and tourism. The County's economic strategy is to focus on its ability to generate sufficient tax revenues from a predominantly agricultural, tourism, and retail and service-based economy to support educational and public services for its citizens.

This chapter serves as a guide for future economic development within the County. It describes the County's current economic conditions and trends, identifies economic issues and opportunities, and outlines goals and strategies for economic development and for promoting a vibrant and diversified economy.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES & LEGISLATION

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The economic development vision found in the State's *Land Use Article* encourages economic development and natural resource-based businesses that promote employment opportunities for all income levels. This vision serves as a foundation for the County's guiding principles, which describe the context for providing a sustainable economy.

- **Preservation & Protection of the Agricultural Economy**—Acknowledge and support new technologies for farming; minimize the reduction of farmland by reducing development pressures; reduce farming expenses; and promote locally grown and produced products.
- **Balanced Tax Base**—Increase the property tax base by increasing the number of commercial properties; encourage reuse of vacant properties in business parks and retail centers; review the current inventory of commercially used and zoned properties and assess suitability.
- **Retail and Service Opportunities**—Increase opportunities for retail and service business expansion and diversification for a changing economy; enforce policies and funding for the expansion of needed technology and for the adequacy of public facilities; market vacant properties in towns and Growth Areas for new retail and service businesses; and prioritize adaptive reuse of buildings in towns and Growth Areas with adequate public facilities.
- **Opportunities for Niche Hospitality Industries**—Promote the County as an event and venue destination through the use of promotional media; develop and promote ecotourism, agritourism, and recreational tourism utilizing the County's existing natural resources and working with industry partners and stakeholders; develop and promote the County's local heritage, cultural assets and destinations, and connections with local, State, and national themes; increase group tour bus activity by promoting existing historical and cultural attractions, destinations, businesses, and visitor services; work to support, connect, and educate existing industry providers; support regional and cross marketing tourism strategies and collaborative projects; develop local transportation resources, partnerships, and businesses in support of the hospitality industry; and develop, encourage, and promote signature events that encourage interest in the County and attract visitors.
- **Skilled Workforce (Professional & Technical Jobs)**—Increase job opportunities by encouraging increase of business recruiting efforts; support the Economic Development Commission's efforts to partner with agencies and local higher education establishments to advance the education of the existing workforce.
- **Workforce Readiness (Education & Training)**—Build on and expand education and training for future jobs; increase focus on high school and advanced vocational training programs; expand opportunities for technical training; and expand opportunities for attracting higher education and post graduate education and research facilities.

POLICIES & LEGISLATION

A discussion of Right-to-Farm legislation (*County Code §§19-8:11.1*) can be found in **Chapter 4—Land Use** and Right-to-Conduct Seafood Operations legislation (*County Code §§19-12:16*) can be found in **Chapter 5—Environmental Resources**.

RELATED PLANS

EDC STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

The County's Economic Development Commission (EDC) adopted a *Ten-Year Strategic Plan* in January 2015, which included a survey of key stakeholders from all economic activity sectors. The EDC enumerated key factors framing the County's economy and updated the *Strategic Plan's* action steps, focusing on six strategies for implementation:

1. Focus on high potential economic activity sectors (i.e.: manufacturing, technology, healthcare, agriculture, and tourism) by creating business and technology parks and virtual incubators; supporting sustainable, organic, and precision agricultural operations; encouraging event-based leisure activities to increase overnight stays; and supporting healthcare campuses within the County.
2. Support education and workforce development by enhancing career readiness (e.g., trades training, certificate programs); increasing four-year college education opportunities; enhancing educational programs that support key economic activity sectors; and matching education/workforce development activities to employer needs.
3. Enhance infrastructure by supporting initiatives and incentives that enhance transportation; addressing water/wastewater issues impacting economic development; encouraging power infrastructure resilience and reliability; and hastening broadband enhancements.
4. Promotion and public awareness through enhanced EDC marketing and public relations; social media campaigns for business/economic development; coordinated stakeholder messaging; and a County branding campaign.
5. Encourage affordable and workforce housing by promoting affordable and accessible housing options (e.g., inclusionary zoning, TIF, Universal Design); enhancing public transportation to connect affordable housing and jobs;

supporting development of creative housing financing programs; and supporting affordable housing investments as economic development initiatives.

6. Enhance quality of life by matching County economic activity to jobs and incomes; enhancing progress toward a more sustainable future; improving work and workforce key performance indicators; and promoting linkages between community and economic development.

See **Chapter 9—Housing** for additional information on workforce housing within the County.

US 301 ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS

The EDC, with the support of the Upper Shore Regional Council, commissioned a study to examine the implications to North County due to the widening of US 301 in Delaware. The Sage Policy Group's study, *The Likely Implications of an Improved US 301 in Queen Anne's County*, was completed in October 2018. The study found that the County's economic development potential is meaningfully bolstered by the improvements, especially along the US 301 corridor running throughout the heart of the County. It notes that the most desirable benefit for many stakeholders may be commercial development that expands employment opportunities and the local nonresident tax base. The most salient assets supporting commercial development include:

- An abundance of land zones for commercial and industrial development, with significant volume along the US 301 corridor stretching from Queenstown to Millington.
- Economic development zones (including the Opportunity Zone encompassing the Town of Church Hill and most of the MD 213 corridor and the Baltimore Foreign Trade Zone) create prescriptive benefits for investors and business owners (see **Business Incentive Zones** later in this chapter for specifics on the applicability of these programs).
- Recent activity and existing plans provide evidence of developer interest for future commercial development.
- US 301 provides an alternative commercial route between Delaware and points north and the Baltimore-Washington region and points south.

It is important to note that implementation of any of the strategies outlined in this study must be weighed against the purpose and permitted uses in the Agricultural Zoning District, as well as the viability of continued agricultural preservation within the US 301 corridor.

ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

Broad national and regional demographic and economic trends will affect the County's labor force and economy to varying degrees. Nationally, the population is aging, and new generations are coming into the mainstream. The nature of work has changed with automation causing dramatic shifts in employment opportunity. New generations challenge many traditional employer expectations. Seniors also challenge older assumptions, with 90% of those aged 50 and above planning to work past the traditional retirement age of 65. Longer life spans and longer work lives will mean increased tax generation and consumerism. Many of the County's young adults leave after completing their education, in search of alternative economic, social, and cultural opportunities. It is important to retain young citizens by creating jobs that provide a living wage and suitable career opportunities.

EMPLOYMENT

According to the 2015-2019 American Community Survey (ACS), there were a total of 26,335 County residents in the labor force, of which 25,558 (63.7% of the County's 16+ population) were employed within the civilian labor force; this percentage was

higher than comparison jurisdictions on the Eastern Shore and the same as the State. An additional 86 (0.2% of the County's 16+ population) residents were serving in the Armed Forces; this percentage was higher than comparison jurisdictions, but lower than the State. See **Table 8-1, Employment Status** for the comparisons.

Across the U.S., the labor force participation rate has been steadily declining for nearly two decades. It has remained relatively flat since 2014, hovering at slightly over 60%. Maryland has a stronger participation rate than the nation. The County boasts a participation rate of nearly 66% percent through 2019. A growing participation rate is an encouraging sign—growth indicates that workers who may have previously been discouraged or disengaged are now re-entering the labor force. Greater participation from prime-age workers (25-55) is vital to maintain current participation rates with an aging workforce and retiring Baby Boomers.

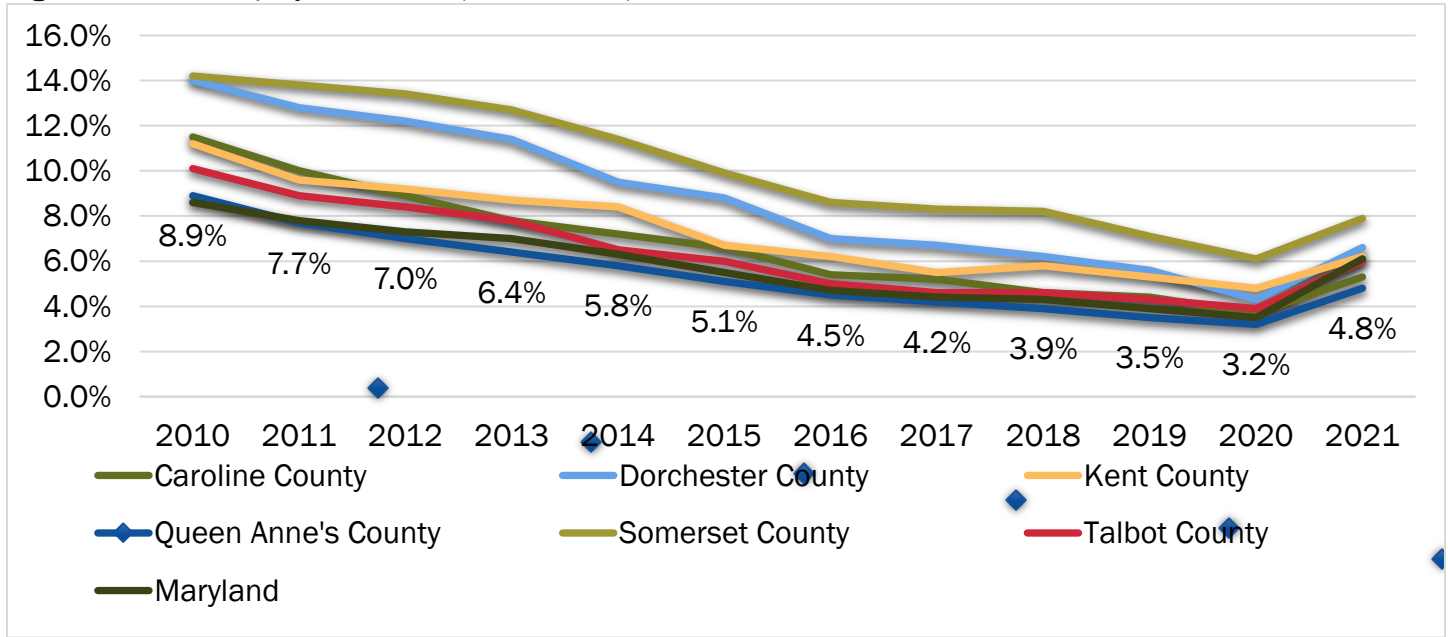
A robust economic recovery following the Great Recession has resulted in unemployment rates decreasing substantially across the U.S. The County has an especially low unemployment rate—as of February 2021, the Maryland Department of Labor reported that the County's unemployment rate was 4.8%, which was lower than the State's rate of 6.1%. Since February 2011, the County's unemployment rate has been lower than all the Eastern Shore comparison jurisdictions (see **Figure 8-1, Unemployment Rate** for unemployment rates from 2010-2021 in the month of February).

Table 8-1. Employment Status (2019)

| Jurisdiction | Civilian Labor Force | | | | Armed Forces | | Total Labor Force |
|---------------------|----------------------|-------|------------|------|--------------|-------|-------------------|
| | Employed | | Unemployed | | | | |
| | # | % | # | % | # | % | # |
| Caroline County | 16,071 | 61.5% | 830 | 3.2% | 8 | <0.1% | 16,909 |
| Dorchester County | 14,860 | 56.9% | 1,295 | 5.0% | 10 | <0.1% | 16,165 |
| Kent County | 9,304 | 55.7% | 403 | 2.4% | 21 | 0.1% | 9,728 |
| Queen Anne’s County | 25,558 | 63.7% | 691 | 1.7% | 86 | 0.2% | 26,335 |
| Somerset County | 8,888 | 40.9% | 798 | 3.7% | 0 | 0.0% | 9,686 |
| Talbot County | 17,732 | 56.9% | 617 | 2.0% | 41 | 0.1% | 18,390 |
| Maryland | 3,073,886 | 63.7% | 164,396 | 3.4% | 30,952 | 0.6% | 3,269,234 |

Source: 2015-2019 American Community Survey

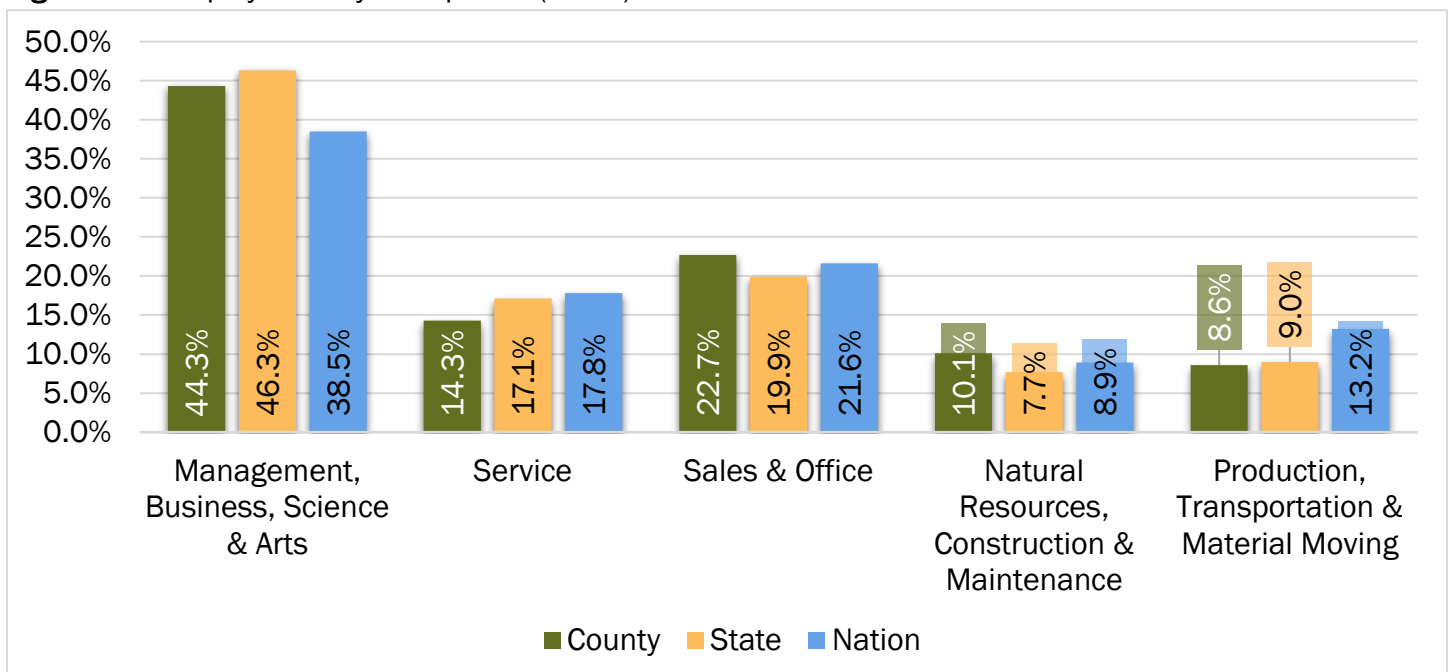
Figure 8-1. Unemployment Rate (2010-2021)



The 2019 ACS shows that the occupations County residents hold are similar to State and national percentages. **Figure 8-2** shows the percentages employed in various occupations and how they compare to the State and nation. The percent of sales and office occupations are higher, as are natural resources, construction, and maintenance, while the other occupation category percentages are less. Over 44% of County residents are employed in

management, business, science and arts occupations. Under 15% are employed in service occupations, while just under 23% are employed in sales and office occupations. Another 10% are employed in natural resources, construction and maintenance occupations, while the remaining 9% are employed in production, transportation and material moving occupations.

Figure 8-2. Employment by Occupation (2019)



Source: 2015-2019 American Community Survey

COMMUTING

Commuting data allow the County and development investors to understand what proportion of the workforce lives in the place where they work and what proportion commute outside the County for other employment opportunities. In 2018, per the U.S. Census Bureau's Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) data, there were 23,987 employed residents and 14,696 persons employed in the County. Approximately 74.1% of the employed residents commuted outside the County for work, mostly to Parole, Chestertown, Baltimore, Annapolis, and Easton; approximately 25.9% worked in the County, mostly in Centreville, Stevensville, Chester, and Kent Narrows. Approximately 57.7% of all people employed in the County came from outside of the County, mostly from Easton, Baltimore, Chestertown, Denton, and Annapolis. **Table 8-2** displays the distribution of job inflow and outflow in 2018 as well as 2010.

Table 8-2 also shows that the employed residents in the County increased by 10.4%, while the split between those with jobs in the County and those commuting elsewhere to work remained essentially the same. The County experienced a 23.8% increase in commuting from neighboring jurisdictions.

Communities that tend to have larger outflows than inflows, such as the County, are commonly referred to as "bedroom communities." Many people of working age live in the area; however, they travel to surrounding areas for work. Approximately 76.8% of employed residents traveled more than 10 miles to get to work; 11.8% traveled more than 50 miles. These statistics indicate a high number of residents commuting out of the County and long distances to get to work.

As an area that has a plethora of residents traveling elsewhere for work, the County is well positioned to

grow and attract a variety of businesses. When combining the negative number of net commuters and total number of jobs in the County, the end result is the number of resident workers. Resident workers can showcase to potential and current businesses the total available workforce present, rather than just workers (number of jobs). The County can leverage its resident worker count to demonstrate the abundance of an available workforce beyond just those employed within its borders.

Employers and communities would benefit from having a stable workforce that are more invested in living in the community, while employees benefit from having more time and fewer travel expenses with a shorter commute.

INCOME & POVERTY

As of the 2019 ACS, the County had a total of 18,577 households and 13,528 families. Of those, 5.4% of households and 1.9% of families had annual incomes less than \$15,000, while 48.3% of households and 57.4% of families had incomes greater than \$100,000. The income range of \$100,000-\$149,999 accounts for the largest single income range for households (22.7%) and for families (25.8%) (see **Figure 8-3, County Income Ranges**). **Table 8-3, Annual Income**, shows the median household, family, and per capita income for the County, State, and Nation.

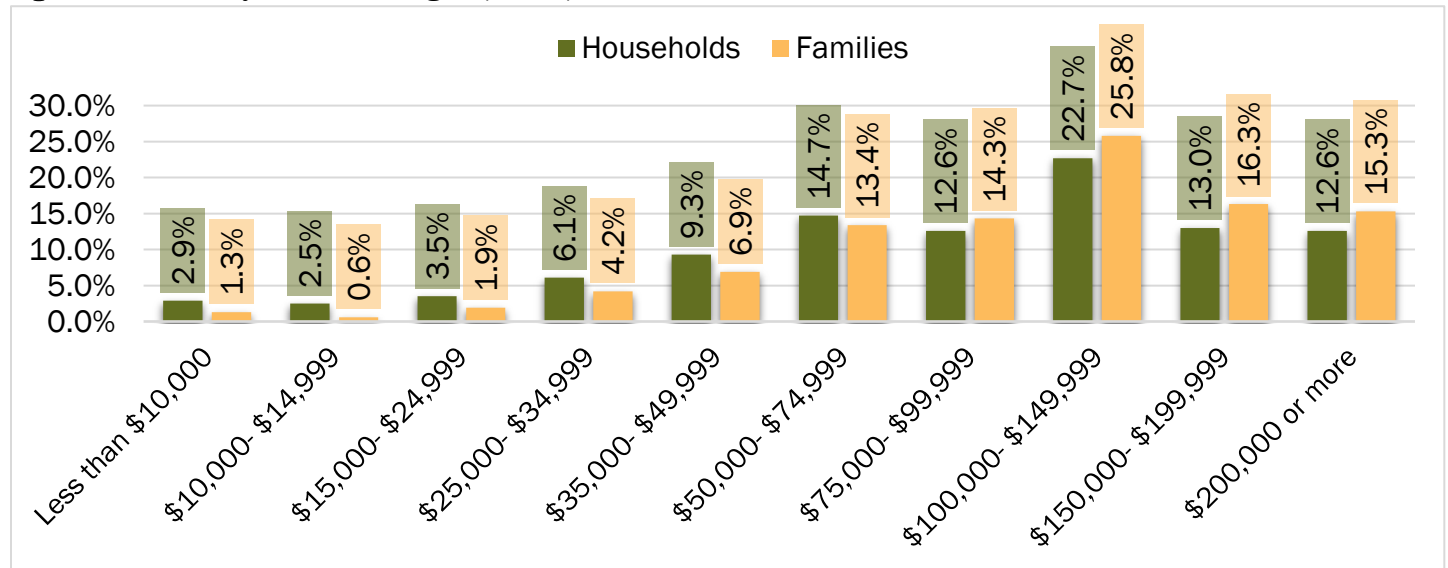
As shown in **Table 8-4**, wage rates on the Upper Eastern Shore are the highest in the following occupations: management, healthcare practitioners, computer and mathematical, legal, business, and financial operations. Attracting similar businesses would likely increase higher-paying jobs within the County.

Table 8-2. Job Inflow & Outflow (2010-2018)

| | 2010 | | 2018 | | % Change | |
|------------------------------|--------|-------|--------|-------|----------|-------|
| | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| Employed in County | 12,009 | — | 14,696 | — | 2,687 | 22.3% |
| Live outside County | 6,854 | 57.1% | 8,486 | 57.7% | 1,632 | 23.8% |
| Live inside County | 5,155 | 42.9% | 6,210 | 42.3% | 1,055 | 20.5% |
| Employed Residents in County | 21,720 | — | 23,987 | — | 2,267 | 10.4% |
| Commute outside County | 16,565 | 76.3% | 17,777 | 74.1% | 1,212 | 7.3% |
| Employed & live in County | 5,155 | 23.7% | 6,210 | 25.9% | 1,055 | 20.5% |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, On the Map

Figure 8-3. County Income Ranges (2019)



Source: 2015-2019 American Community Survey

Table 8-3. Annual Income (2019)

| Income | Amount in Dollars | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------|-----------|----------|
| | County | State | Nation |
| Median Household Income | \$97,034 | \$84,805 | \$62,843 |
| Median Family Income | \$111,420 | \$103,108 | \$77,263 |
| Per Capita Income | \$44,754 | \$42,122 | \$34,103 |

Source: 2015-2019 American Community Survey

Table 8-4. Upper Eastern Shore Wage Rate Estimates (2019)

| Selected Occupations | Hourly | | | Annual | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------|---------|-------------|----------|----------|-------------|
| | Median | Entry | Experienced | Median | Entry | Experienced |
| Arts, Design, Entertainment, Media | \$18.88 | \$11.78 | \$25.74 | \$39,274 | \$24,505 | \$53,546 |
| Building/Grounds Cleaning/Maint. | \$14.43 | \$11.79 | \$17.10 | \$30,019 | \$24,519 | \$35,578 |
| Business & Financial Operations | \$29.53 | \$18.16 | \$38.27 | \$61,420 | \$37,766 | \$79,605 |
| Community & Social Service | \$21.99 | \$15.60 | \$28.14 | \$45,730 | \$32,456 | \$58,535 |
| Computer & Mathematical | \$31.47 | \$19.27 | \$44.12 | \$65,462 | \$40,071 | \$91,779 |
| Construction & Extraction | \$20.80 | \$14.99 | \$25.71 | \$43,274 | \$31,183 | \$53,482 |
| Education, Training & Library | \$24.43 | \$13.42 | \$31.03 | \$50,820 | \$27,913 | \$64,545 |
| Farming, Fishing & Forestry | \$14.90 | \$11.65 | \$19.43 | \$30,993 | \$24,227 | \$40,423 |
| Food Preparation & Serving | \$12.01 | \$11.19 | \$14.34 | \$24,978 | \$23,280 | \$29,835 |
| Healthcare Practitioners & Technical | \$33.56 | \$19.93 | \$47.86 | \$69,804 | \$41,464 | \$99,556 |
| Healthcare Support | \$14.70 | \$12.01 | \$17.26 | \$30,575 | \$24,980 | \$35,905 |
| Installation, Maintenance & Repair | \$21.80 | \$15.17 | \$26.89 | \$45,353 | \$31,558 | \$55,921 |
| Legal | \$30.63 | \$21.70 | \$46.76 | \$63,712 | \$45,144 | \$97,267 |
| Life, Physical & Social Science | \$26.33 | \$17.90 | \$33.42 | \$54,773 | \$37,235 | \$69,513 |
| Management | \$43.10 | \$24.26 | \$61.84 | \$89,640 | \$50,468 | \$128,631 |
| Office & Administrative Support | \$18.39 | \$13.30 | \$22.94 | \$38,248 | \$27,659 | \$47,712 |
| Personal Care & Service | \$13.29 | \$11.24 | \$16.83 | \$27,646 | \$23,382 | \$35,009 |
| Production | \$16.03 | \$12.47 | \$20.96 | \$33,338 | \$25,928 | \$43,591 |
| Protective Service | \$22.27 | \$13.56 | \$29.54 | \$46,321 | \$28,207 | \$61,446 |
| Sales & Related | \$14.17 | \$11.44 | \$23.21 | \$29,466 | \$23,797 | \$48,277 |
| Transportation & Material Moving | \$15.54 | \$11.67 | \$21.23 | \$32,327 | \$24,270 | \$44,165 |

Source: Maryland Department of Labor Office of Workforce Information and Performance. Notes: *Wages estimate what workers might receive on the Upper Eastern Shore (Caroline, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne's, and Talbot Counties) and may vary by industry, employer, and locality.

According to the ACS, 3.1% of County families and 5.7% of its general population had incomes that fell below the poverty level as shown in **Table 8-5**. Close to 9% of families with a female head of household and nearly 7% of individuals under the age of 18 were considered to be living below the poverty level.

Table 8-5. Poverty in the County (2019)

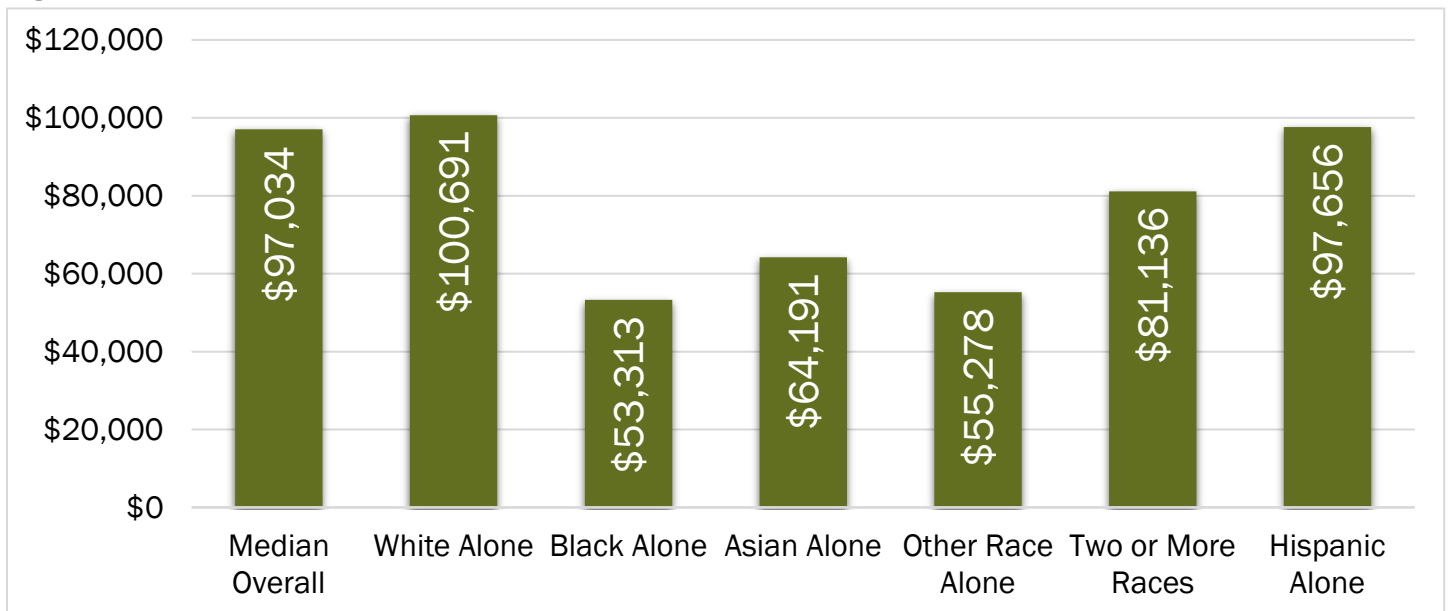
| Description | Below Poverty |
|---|---------------|
| Families | 13,528 |
| All families | 3.1% |
| With related children under 18 years | 4.6% |
| Married couple families | 1.9% |
| With related children under 18 years | 2.5% |
| Families with female householder, no spouse | 8.8% |
| With related children under 18 years | 9.7% |
| People | 49,632 |
| All people | 5.7% |
| Under 18 years | 6.6% |
| 18 years and over | 5.5% |
| 65 years and over | 5.5% |
| People in families | 3.2% |
| Unrelated individuals 15 years and over | 20.3% |

Source: 2015-2019 American Community Survey

EQUITY IN THE ECONOMY

Queen Anne's is an affluent County overall, with a median household income of \$97,034 (based on 2019 ACS data), which is approximately 14.4% percent higher than the State median and 54.4% higher than the national median; however, the gap between wealthy and poor households has been widening. From 2010 to 2019, the number of households with an income above \$100,000 increased by 41.9% while the number of households with an income below \$25,000 only decreased by 18.3%. There are racial disparities in household income, with African American and Asian households earning less than White households (by \$47,378 and \$36,500, respectively) (see **Figure 8-4**). While still earning less than White households, the difference in median income for Hispanic households is only \$3,035. The impacts of poverty also show racial disparities. Approximately 13.4% of African Americans, 51.5% of American Indians, and 18.2% of Latinos live in poverty compared to 5.7% for the overall population.

Figure 8-4. Median Household Income by Race & Ethnicity (2019)



Source: 2015-2019 American Community Survey

TAX BASE

Real property tax is the County's largest revenue source, and while the real estate tax base includes residential and commercial properties, most of the revenue is generated by residential development. Between FY 2011 and FY 2020, the County's residential real property value experienced an increase of \$532 million, while its commercial real property value increased by \$170 million (see **Figure 8-5, Real Property Assessable Base**).

INDUSTRIES

Queen Anne's County is home to over 1,400 businesses and a labor force greater than 25,000 with easy access to government facilities, federal laboratories, prime contractors, tech centers, and the Mid-Atlantic market. With metropolitan accessibility, growing job and employment rates, top-ranking agricultural opportunities, and enticing business incentives, the County strategically functions as the Business Gateway to the Eastern Shore. Economic Base

In 2019, the educational, health, and social service industry continued to rise in the County and was the industry with the greatest number of employees, accounting for 21.3% of all jobs, keeping its position as the leading job market sector since 2010. The professional, scientific, and management industry and other services, edged out retail trade and construction as the second and third largest industries in the County, respectively. Industries that experienced significant increases during this period include other services (+147.5%), agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, and mining (+33.5%), and educational, health, and social services (+27.1%). Industries that experienced significant declines include public administration (-42.4%), wholesale trade (-39.1%), and retail trade (-23.4%). See **Table 8-6, Employment by Industry** for the complete breakdown. **Table 8-7, Employment Establishments & Average Weekly Wage** provides additional information from the Maryland Department of Commerce on the number of establishments and average weekly wage for industries in the County.

Figure 8-5. Real Property Assessable Base (FY11-FY20)

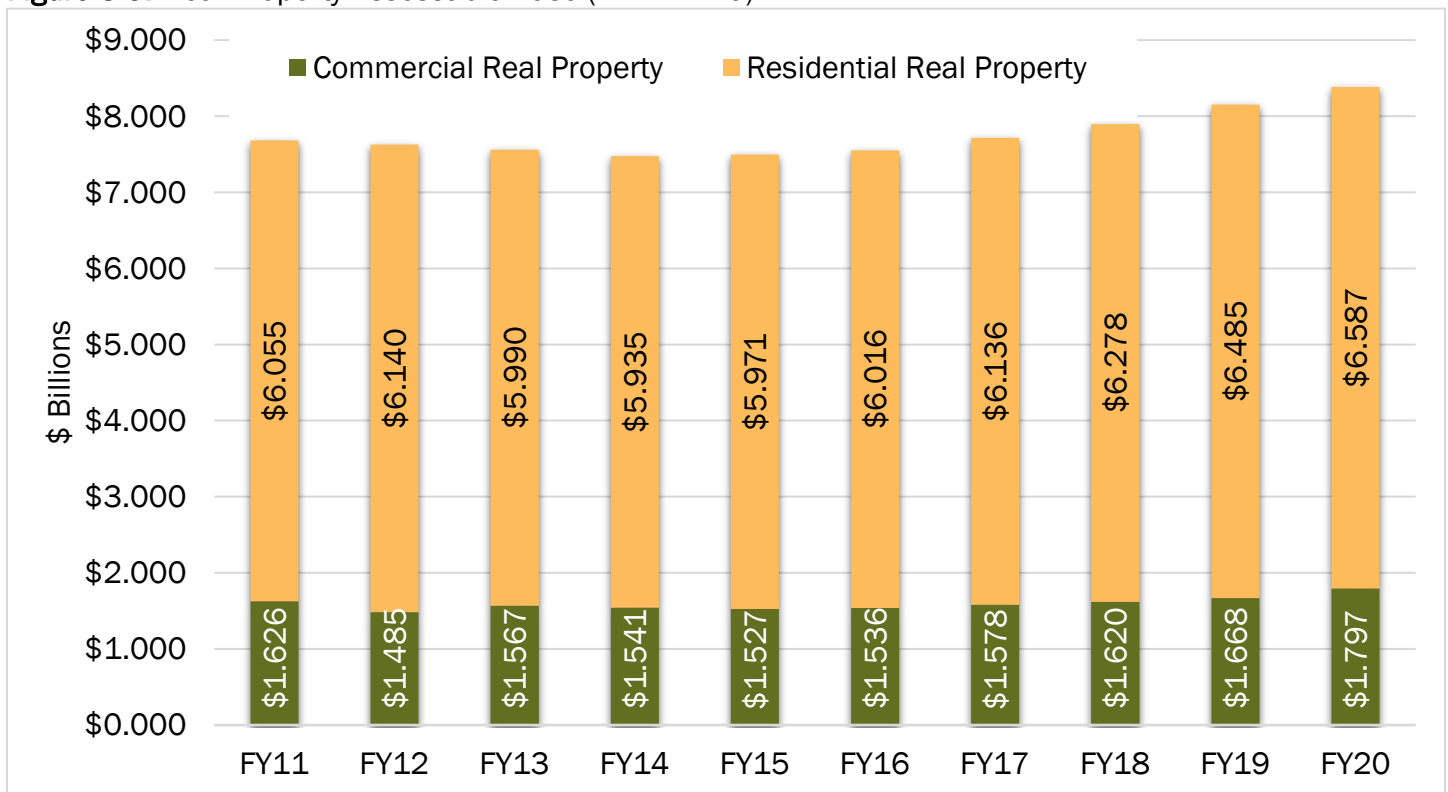


Table 8-6. Employment by Industry (2010-2019)

| Industry | 2010 | | 2019 | | Change | |
|---|---------------|-------|---------------|-------|--------------|-------------|
| | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| Agriculture, forestry, fishing & hunting, mining | 603 | 2.5% | 805 | 3.1% | 202 | 33.5% |
| Construction | 2,824 | 11.7% | 2,238 | 8.8% | -586 | -20.8% |
| Manufacturing | 1,671 | 6.9% | 2,001 | 7.8% | 330 | 19.7% |
| Wholesale trade | 1,016 | 4.2% | 619 | 2.4% | -397 | -39.1% |
| Retail trade | 3,178 | 13.1% | 2,435 | 9.5% | -743 | -23.4% |
| Transportation & warehousing, utilities | 749 | 3.1% | 759 | 3.0% | 10 | 1.3% |
| Information | 578 | 2.4% | 448 | 1.8% | -130 | -22.5% |
| Finance, insurance, real estate, rental & leasing | 1,503 | 6.2% | 1,512 | 5.9% | 9 | 0.6% |
| Professional, scientific, management | 2,695 | 11.1% | 3,084 | 12.1% | 389 | 14.4% |
| Educational, health & social services | 4,291 | 17.7% | 5,455 | 21.3% | 1,164 | 27.1% |
| Arts, entertainment, accommodation, food svcs. | 1,680 | 6.9% | 1,997 | 7.8% | 317 | 18.9% |
| Public administration | 2,247 | 9.3% | 1,294 | 5.1% | -953 | -42.4% |
| Other services | 1,176 | 4.9% | 2,911 | 11.4% | 1,735 | 147.5% |
| Totals | 24,211 | | 25,558 | | 1,347 | 5.6% |

Source: 2006-2010 & 2015-2019 American Community Survey

Table 8-7. Employment Establishments & Average Weekly Wage (2019)

| Industry | Establishments | Annual Avg. Employment | % of Employment | Avg. Weekly Wage |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Federal Government | 16 | 107 | 0.7% | \$1,037 |
| State Government | 8 | 235 | 1.5% | \$886 |
| Local Government | 32 | 2,345 | 15.0% | \$937 |
| Private Sector | 1,439 | 12,961 | 82.8% | \$764 |
| Natural Resources & Mining | 31 | 287 | 1.8% | \$710 |
| Construction | 234 | 1,115 | 7.1% | \$1,070 |
| Manufacturing | 57 | 1,234 | 7.9% | \$1,010 |
| Trade, Transportation & Utilities | 328 | 3,383 | 21.6% | \$742 |
| Information | 7 | 24 | 0.2% | \$2,142 |
| Financial Activities | 110 | 351 | 2.2% | \$1,208 |
| Professional & Business Services | 269 | 1,350 | 8.6% | \$1,138 |
| Education & Health Services | 127 | 1,184 | 7.6% | \$813 |
| Leisure & Hospitality | 140 | 3,402 | 21.7% | \$406 |
| Other Services | 136 | 631 | 4.0% | \$631 |
| Total | 1,495 | 15,648 | 100.0% | \$794 |

Source: Maryland Department of Commerce 2021 Brief Economic Facts

MAJOR EMPLOYERS

As of 2021, there were 12 employers within the County that employed 100 or more people (excluding post offices, state and local governments, national retail, and national food service) (see **Table 8-8, Major Employers**).

RESOURCE-BASED INDUSTRIES

While the County's economy has been transitioning to a more diverse and modern economy, resource-based industries (RBIs) still play an integral role in the economic well-being of the County, the Eastern Shore, and the State as a whole. RBIs include agriculture, forestry, mining, natural gas, seafood, and aquaculture, as well as support industries. Given the land-based nature of agriculture and forestry and the obvious linkage to County land use policies as described in **Chapter 4—Land Use**, the following sections address the economic impacts of agriculture (and its support industries) and forestry. Given the historical and cultural significance of watermen and the seafood industry to the County's

identity, maritime industries are also addressed and include the State-required fisheries element.

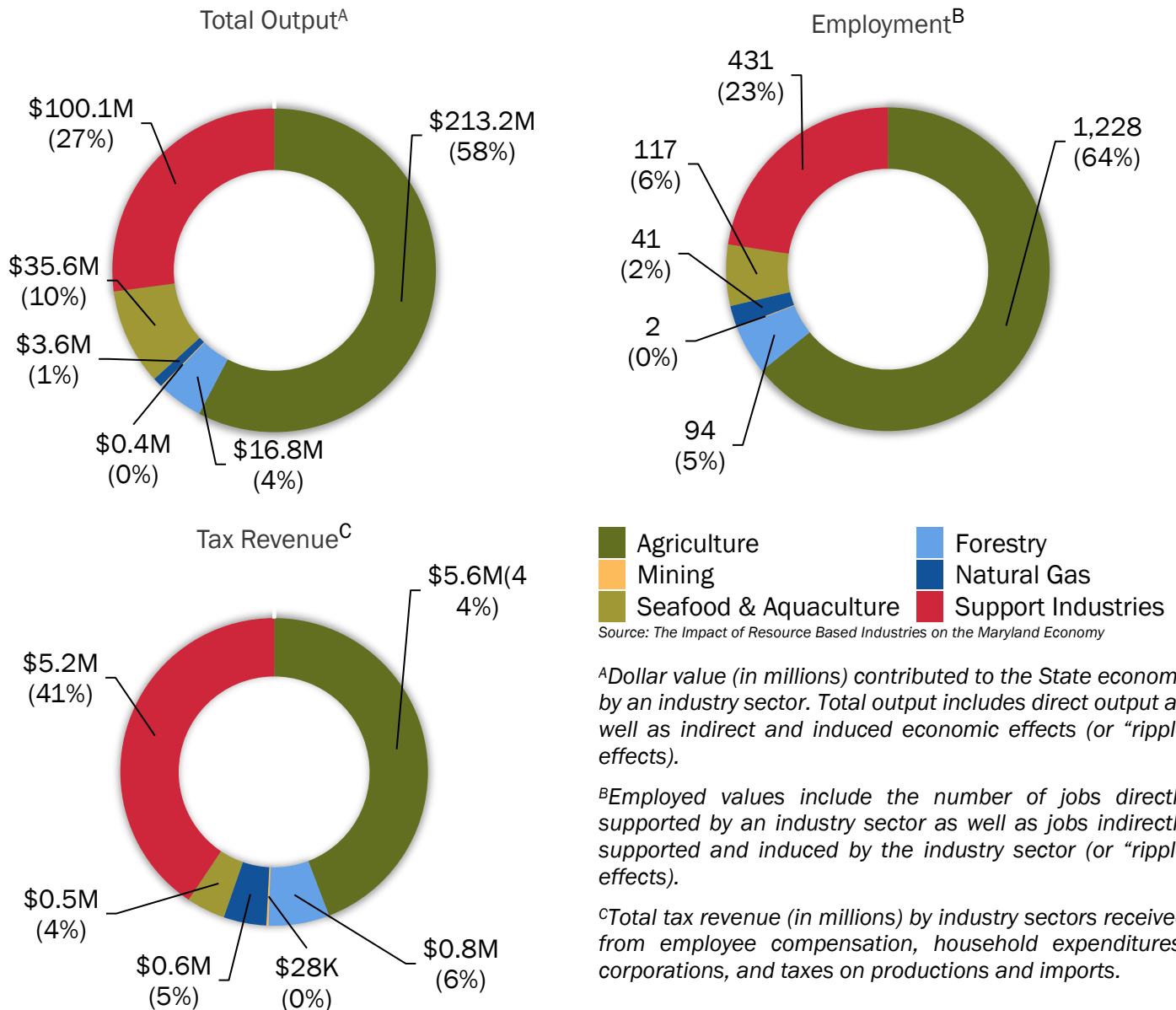
Much of the included economic impact information related to RBIs comes from *The Impact of Resource Based Industries on the Maryland Economy* (BEACON Report), prepared by the Business Economic and Community Outreach Network (BEACON) at Salisbury University. The BEACON Report measured the impact of RBIs by county and region to the State's economy. For the purposes of this chapter, it is assumed that a positive impact to the State's economy emanating from an RBI industry in the County is a positive impact to the County's economy. The total economic impact to the State of these RBIs in the County in 2015 equaled \$370 million, supported close to 2,000 jobs, and generated nearly \$13 million in State and local tax revenue. Of these RBI industries, agriculture, forestry, seafood, aquaculture, and support industries account for 98.9% of the economic activity, 97.8% of the jobs, and 95.3% of the tax revenue.

Table 8-8. Major Employers* (2021)

| Employer | Product/Service | Employment |
|---|----------------------------------|------------|
| Chesapeake College | Higher Education | 469 |
| Paul Reed Smith Guitars | HQ/Custom Guitars | 427 |
| REEB Millwork | Doors & Windows | 303 |
| Federal Resources Supply | HQ/First Responder Hazard Kits | 266 |
| S.E.W. Friel† | Canned Food Processing | 260 |
| Genesis HealthCare/Corsica Hills Center | Nursing | 135 |
| Clinton Nurseries of Maryland | Flowers & Nursery Stock | 130 |
| AZZ Enclosures | Industrial Control | 125 |
| Harris Seafood Company† | Restaurant/Seafood Packing House | 125 |
| Fisherman's Inn† | Restaurant | 110 |
| Harbor Sales | Signage Panels, Flexible Media | 105 |
| Compass Regional Hospice | Medical Services | 100 |
| Queenstown Bank of Maryland | Banking Services | 95 |
| Tidewater Direct | Commercial Printing | 93 |
| Chesterwe Center | Services for the Disabled | 82 |
| Crossroads Community | Mental Health Services | 75 |
| Zodiac of North America | Emergency Response Boats | 65 |
| Miltec UV | Lighting | 60 |
| NRL & Associates | Machine Tools | 60 |
| Hydrasearch | Marine Hardware | 60 |
| GROCO Marine | Pump Fabricator | 50 |
| Corsica Technological | Information Technology Services | 40 |

Source: Queen Anne's County Department of Economic & Tourism Development (September 2021). *Excludes post offices, state and local governments, national retail, and national food service. †Includes seasonal workers.

Figure 8-6. Economic Impact of Resource Based Industries (2015)



AGRICULTURE

Agriculture is a vital part of the County’s economy as a source of income and provider of employment opportunities, while also being a central aspect of its rural identity. The agriculture sector includes grain farming, vegetable/fruit/melon/other crop farming, greenhouse/nursey/floriculture production, cotton farming, sugarcane/sugar beet farming, cattle ranching/farming, dairy cattle/milk/poultry/animal production, and commercial hunting/trapping. Immediate downstream processors and refiners who rely on these RBI products are included in the support industries sector. The County’s agricultural industry is predominantly corn, soy, and poultry.

According to USDA’s 2017 Census of Agriculture (Ag Census), there were 483 farming operations utilizing 163,001 acres of land in the County. Over 67% (232) of the farm operations are 100 acres or more in size and make up over 95% of the total farmland in operation. The average land area operated was 337 acres. In 2012, there were 530 farms utilizing 156,941 acres. There was a decrease in the number of farms between 2012 and 2017, while the total acres of farmland in operation and the average size of farms both increased, which may be an indicator of expansion or mergers of existing farm businesses (see Table 8-9, Agricultural Census).

Per the 2017 Ag Census, the total asset value of the farms (including land and buildings) was nearly \$1.2 billion, averaging nearly \$2.5 million per operation and \$7,339 per acre. The asset value (including land and buildings) per operated acre increased by 2.4% between 2012 and 2017, and the asset value per operation increased 12.4% over the same period.

To ensure continued agricultural viability and generational continuity, farmers are diversifying their conventional grain operations, expanding traditional and innovative alternatives that include poultry operations, vegetables, vineyards, nurseries, agribusinesses, ecotourism, direct sales, and other specialty agricultural or related activities that may provide value-added opportunities. The poultry industry is a vital component of the agriculture economy, as it is for the Delmarva Peninsula. The poultry industry provides a market for grain produced on farms to then be utilized with substantial cost savings due to reduced transportation costs. Specifically, the poultry broiler sector provides jobs and sales of chicken and grain for farms in the County, which is well supported by major producers and industry trade groups such as the Delmarva Chicken Association (DCA, formerly Delmarva Poultry Industry).

A somewhat recent economic development opportunity and emerging agricultural-related market is the medical cannabis industry. The changes in the State cannabis laws in recent years provides a potential opportunity for additional marijuana growing and processing facilities in the County. Currently, the County has two licensed cannabis growers/processors.

Another emerging market in both the agricultural and tourism industries is agritourism, which is discussed later in this chapter under the **Tourism Industry**.

See **Chapter 4—Land Use** for additional information on agriculture and agricultural preservation within the County.

SUPPORT INDUSTRIES

The BEACON Report also addresses the economic impact of “support industries,” or those in-state industries that rely on Maryland’s agricultural firms for their supply-chain input. Support industries include poultry processing but not seafood processing, which is included within the fisheries and aquaculture economic data of the report.

Interestingly, the County's support industries’ impact on the State’s economy far outpaced the impacts of the other RBI industries, except for agriculture. In 2015, support industries contributed \$100.1 million to the State’s economy while agriculture contributed \$213.2 million and all other RBI sectors in the County contributed \$56.3 million.

FORESTRY

The County’s forestry industry consists of logging operations, timber harvesting, and selective tree cutting/clearing.

In 2015, according to the BEACON Report, the County’s forestry industry contributed \$16.8 million to the State’s economy (4.6% of the County’s RBI total), supported 94 jobs (4.9% of the County’s RBI total), and generated \$818,346 in State and County tax revenue (6.4% of the County’s RBI total).

Forestry activities are discussed in more detail in **Chapter 5—Environmental Resources**.

MINING

The County’s mining industry consists of gravel, sand, or similar extraction; dredge disposal; and related storage operations. In 2015, according to the BEACON Report, the County’s mining industry contributed \$393,771 to the State’s economy (0.1% of the County’s RBI total).

Mineral resources and mining activities are discussed in more detail in **Chapter 5—Environmental Resources**, fulfilling requirements of the State’s *Land Use Article*. **Map 5-12, Potential Mineral Recovery Areas**, indicates potential mineral recovery areas within the County.

Table 8-9. Agricultural Census (2002-2017)

| Year | Farms | Operated Area (ac.) | Acres per Operation | Total Asset Value | Asset Value per Operated Acre | Asset Value per Operation |
|------|-------|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 2002 | 443 | 155,566 | 351 | \$507,163,677 | \$3,144 | \$1,144,839 |
| 2007 | 521 | 146,927 | 282 | \$850,155,296 | \$5,786 | \$1,631,776 |
| 2012 | 530 | 156,941 | 296 | \$1,168,243,490 | \$7,444 | \$2,204,233 |
| 2017 | 483 | 163,001 | 337 | \$1,196,280,393 | \$7,339 | \$2,476,771 |

Source: 2002, 2007, 2012, 2017 Agricultural Census

NATURAL GAS

The County's natural gas industry consists of lateral and non-lateral gas drilling/extraction. In 2015, according to the BEACON Report, the County's natural gas industry contributed \$3.6 million to the State's economy (1.0% of the County's RBI total).

Natural gas is discussed in more detail under Mineral Resources in **Chapters 5—Environmental Resources**, fulfilling requirements of the State's *Land Use Article*.

MARITIME INDUSTRY

Even a cursory glance at a map of Queen Anne's County suggests why the maritime industry is such a significant contributor to the local economy. The County boasts approximately 495 miles of coastline. The significance of the County's access to water, most importantly the Chesapeake Bay, is reflected in part by the 40 marinas and 3,084 boat slips. While marinas and boat slips are among the most iconic manifestations of the County's marine assets, there are many other activities that depend on access to the water. The County's maritime industry can be segmented into two broad categories:

- Private businesses and industries that are dependent on access to the Chesapeake Bay and its various tributaries
- People who enjoy boating and other recreational activities who are able to access the waterways

The maritime industry supports significant economic activity within the County, supporting approximately \$80.3 million in economic activity, which is 5% of the County's annual gross county product. Maritime activities support \$9.5 million in County income tax collections each year.

MARITIME BUSINESSES & INDUSTRIES

The maritime industry encompasses a broad spectrum of businesses and activities. Certain aspects of the industry take the form of businesses offering goods and services that are directly tied to the water. Boat-related activities include ship and boat building, boat dealers, and marinas (serving both commercial and recreational boaters). Transportation-related activities include water transportation of passengers or freight as well as sightseeing and other water-based tourism activities. Fishing-related activities include not only commercial fishing, but wholesale, processing, and retail activities associated with fish and seafood.

The County also maintains 20 public landings (see **Table 8-10** for permit sales) and has nearby access to seven public terminals including the Intermodal Container Transfer Facility and the Ports of Baltimore, Philadelphia, Norfolk, and Wilmington. Public and private marinas are also available, located on the Chesapeake Bay as well as the Chester, Corsica, and Wye Rivers and connecting bays, creeks, channels. These provide fishing, sailing, and boating opportunities.

Table 8-10. County Public Landing Permits (2020)

| Permit Type | Permit Cost | Total Permits | Revenue | % Total Permits |
|--|--|---------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| Recreational Landing Permits | | | | |
| Daily Maryland | \$10.00 | 699 | \$6,990.00 | 10.7% |
| Daily Out of State | \$15.00 | 457 | \$6,855.00 | 7.0% |
| Total Daily Permits Sold | | 1,156 | \$13,845.00 | 17.8% |
| Annual Maryland | \$35.00 | 4,876 | \$170,660.00 | 74.9% |
| Annual Out of State | \$70.00 | 474 | \$33,180.00 | 7.3% |
| Total Annual Permits Sold | | 5,350 | \$203,840.00 | 82.1% |
| Total Recreational Permits Sold | | 6,506 | \$217,685.00 | 99.9% |
| Permit Vendor Fees | \$1.50 | — | \$9,232.50 | — |
| Total Net Revenue | | 6,506 | \$208,452.50 | — |
| Commercial Permits | | | | |
| Permits | \$300/1 st \$50/additional | 8 | \$1,150.00 | 0.12% |
| Total Landing Permits Sold | | 6,514 | \$218,835.00 | 100.0% |
| All Landing Permits Net Revenue | | | \$209,602.50 | |

Source: County Parks & Recreation Department, Public Landings Division

Chapter 5—Environmental Resources contains the Fisheries Element, required by the State’s *Land Use Article*.

MARITIME-BASED RECREATION

The maritime industry has a significant recreational dimension. Recreational boating is served by many maritime industry businesses. **Table 8-11** summarizes the County’s marinas. Commercial marinas typically provide more of an economic impact, as yacht clubs and community marinas tend to provide only limited services beyond moorage and boat storage, generally designed to serve only members or nearby residents. Commercial marinas serve both commercial and recreational boaters—in addition to supplying moorage and boat storage, they are also more likely to provide services such as sales of fuel, marine engines, repair services, boat trailers, groceries, beverages, fishing supplies, and watercraft accessories.

Table 8-11. Marinas (2020)

| Type of Marina | # Marinas | # Boat Slips |
|----------------|-----------|--------------|
| Commercial* | 21 | 2,102 |
| Municipal | 5 | 196 |
| Private | 14 | 795 |
| Total | 40 | 3,093 |

Source: EMSI. Notes: Commercial includes yacht clubs.

Key to understanding the economic impacts of recreational boating is estimating the number of recreational boats that are kept in the County, either by residents or by non-residents who choose to make the County their base for boating activities. Recreational boating tends to generate substantial spending for boats (e.g., boat and trailer purchases, marina services, maintenance, repair) and for boat trips (e.g., fuel, groceries, fishing gear, supplies). **Table 8-12** summarizes information on the estimated number of boats in the County.

Table 8-12. Boat Owners (2020)

| Type of Boat | # |
|--------------------------|-----|
| Recreational Boats | 621 |
| Commercial Fishing Boats | 156 |
| Freight Barges | 2 |
| Passenger Boats | 50 |
| Other Vessels | 23 |
| Total Boats | 852 |

Source: EMSI

There are more than 3,000 boat slips at marinas in the County, roughly 3.5 times the number boats, indicating the potential presence of transient

boaters who use marina services on a temporary basis as visitors to the County, as opposed to those who keep their boats at marinas on a more permanent basis. In addition to the marina boat slips, many waterfront homes in the County have piers where recreational boats are kept. These private piers expand the capacity of the County to be the base for recreational boat owners, which serves as a source of revenue to the County’s economy.

RETAIL & SERVICE

Despite the fact that the retail industry is a large employment sector for the County, many older retail spaces suffer from years of neglect and are losing tenants to newer shopping centers. One of the negative impacts of these newer retail areas is that the existing areas in some cases are not redeveloped and become a detriment to the community that they once served. Promoting reuse and redevelopment of existing sites is a priority of the County to prevent sprawling nonresidential spaces and maintain attractive existing communities. In addition, strategic placement of large and neighborhood scale retail establishments is an element of enabling the creation and strengthening of communities within the County.

While the retail and service segment is critical to a success of a local economy, it is not the most economically beneficial aspect. Over time, these businesses alone cannot maintain a successful local economy without also expanding the industrial and office space segments. These segments offer larger benefits by typically creating a larger number of higher paying jobs which give a boost to the economic strength of the area in which they are located.

A 2017 retail leakage report developed by ESRI estimated how much County residents were spending outside the County in retail and personal service categories (see **Figure 8-7, Retail Leakage & Surplus**).

Retail leakage occurs when consumer demand exceeds retail supply in a designated trade area. In **Figure 8-7**, a positive value indicates leakage of retail sales and represents net consumer spending that is being captured by retailers outside of the trade area.

Retail surplus occurs when retail supply exceeds consumer demand in a designated trade area. In **Figure 8-7**, a negative value indicates a surplus of

retail sales and may signify a market where retailers are drawing customers from outside the trade area. Growth in commercial and retail space should be targeted primarily toward Town Centers, Growth Areas, or filling existing vacancies.

CONSTRUCTION

The number of residential building permits issued in the County and its municipalities fluctuated annually since 2010. In 2010, 167 residential building permits were issued countywide. The number of permits increased to 168 residential building permits in 2019 (see **Table 8-13**).

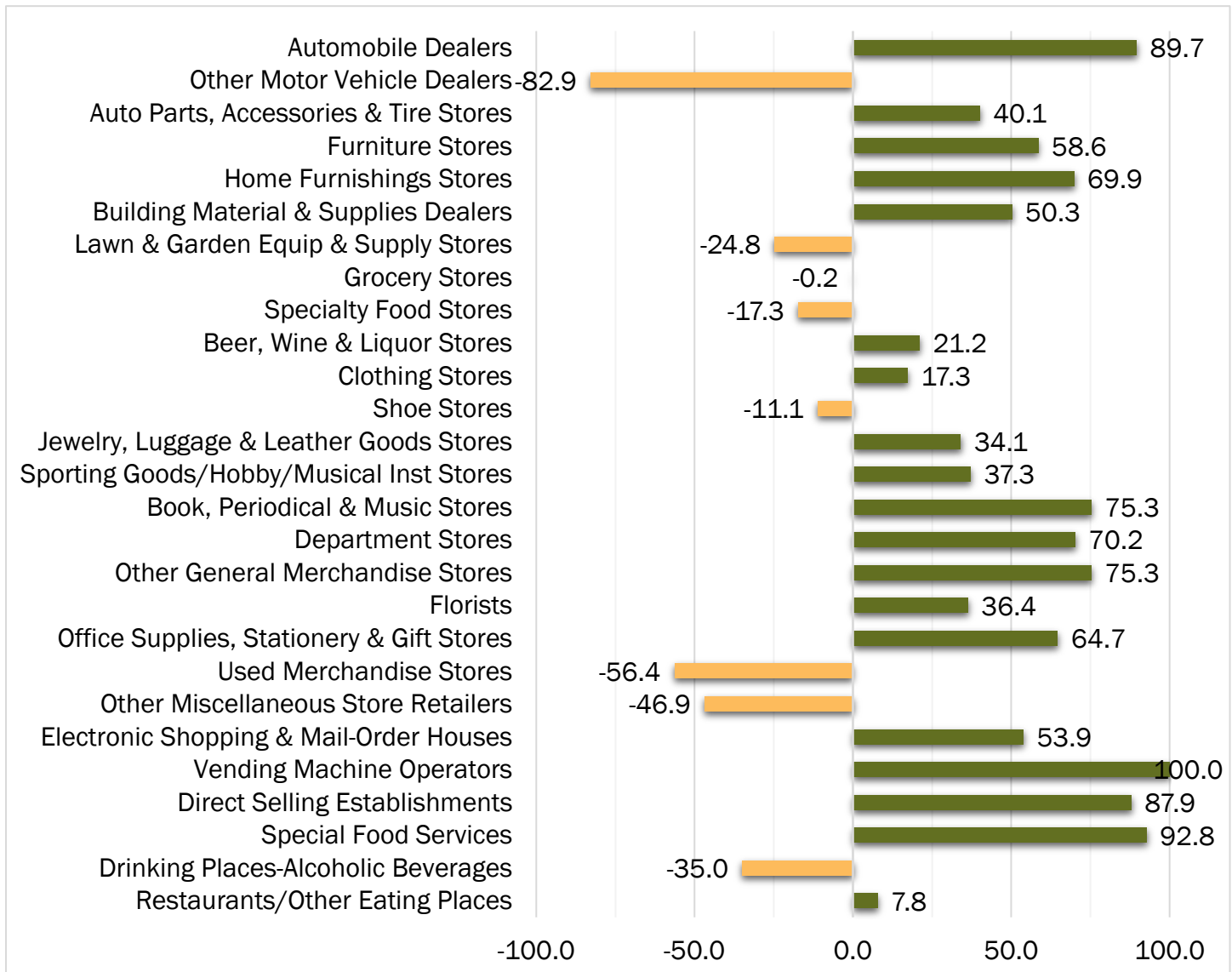
MANUFACTURING

Manufacturing has been an important element of the County's economy for many years. Although the

number of manufacturers is relatively small (64 businesses in 2019), together they generate over 1,000 jobs, making manufacturing the County's sixth largest employment sector. Manufacturing also represented the fourth fastest growing employment sector in the County between 2010 and 2019, in terms of the number of jobs, with 330 new jobs generated, a 20% increase (see **Table 8-6, Employment by Industry**).

Given the importance that manufacturing plays in the local economy, the County will need to continue its efforts to support workforce development, so that local residents have the skills needed to work in the evolving manufacturing sector.

Figure 8-7. Retail Leakage/Surplus Factor by Industry Group (2017)



Source: ESRI 2017 Retail Leakage Report

Table 8-13. Residential Building Permits Issued (2010-2019)

| Year | Single-Family | | Multi-Family | | Total Residential Permits | |
|---------------|---------------|----------|--------------|----------|---------------------------|----------|
| | # | % Change | # | % Change | # | % Change |
| 2010 | 145 | — | 22 | — | 167 | — |
| 2011 | 156 | 7.6% | 0 | -100.0% | 156 | -6.6% |
| 2012 | 184 | 17.9% | 0 | — | 184 | 17.9% |
| 2013 | 203 | 10.3% | 34 | — | 237 | 28.8% |
| 2014 | 168 | -17.2% | 5 | -85.3% | 173 | -27.0% |
| 2015 | 166 | -1.2% | 2 | -60.0% | 168 | -2.9% |
| 2016 | 119 | -28.3% | 26 | 1,200.0% | 145 | -13.7% |
| 2017 | 203 | 70.6% | 0 | -100.0% | 203 | 40.0% |
| 2018 | 209 | 3.0% | 70 | — | 279 | 37.4% |
| 2019 | 241 | 15.3% | 98 | 40.0% | 339 | 21.5% |
| Total Permits | 1,794 | | 257 | | 2,051 | |
| % of Total | 87.5% | | 12.5% | | 100.0% | |

The importance of maintaining and enhancing the manufacturing industry is imperative to a region's tax base, labor force, and employment opportunities. The interdependence of manufacturers and those businesses providing services (e.g., cleaning, delivery, maintenance) offers opportunities for local businesses to provide interdependent services. The manufacturing industry accounted for approximately 8% of employment in the County in 2019, compared to 4.4% statewide.

The existence of industrial businesses in the County provides additional opportunities to generate revenue from taxes. The County recognizes the importance of a diversified economy and realizes the benefits to its manufacturing industry. Current policies and practices demonstrate the commitment of the County to compete with surrounding counties and states to retain, expand, and attract new industrial and manufacturing corporations.

HOSPITALITY & TOURISM

The County's rich natural resources and colonial history provide the backbone for the hospitality industry, a major contributor to its economy. The County boasts a well-developed system of parks, trails, and waterways that make it a year round destination for outdoor enthusiasts. Historic and cultural attractions include artisan festivals and shows, tours of historic homes, and museums that showcase the rural lifestyle and the Chesapeake Bay.

The County has become a popular destination for weddings and other special events, as well as a destination for group tours. As such, the zoning

requirements in the County will need to provide reasonable provisions to encourage this economic driver while remaining consistent with standing land use and environmental regulations. The hospitality industry is concentrated mainly in the areas of Kent Island and the Kent Narrows along the US 50/301 corridor where the majority of the County's accommodations, retail centers, and dining establishments are located. The Chesapeake Heritage and Visitors Center (CHVC), located in Kent Narrows, serves as the official welcome center and is the central hub for the highly acclaimed Cross Island Trail. Staff assist visitors with directions, information, and local destination points of interest. The facility is also home to the Chesapeake Legacy Museum, which features interactive informational displays dedicated to the history, heritage, and culture of the County, as well as a rotating artists series, displaying artwork with an emphasis on the Eastern Shore. The CHVC is accessible from land and water and is a short drive from the Bay Bridge Airport. The Cross Island Trail encircles the grounds of the center. Also located on the property is the entrance to Ferry Point Park, which includes a 530-foot boardwalk that takes visitors over marsh and onto a trail leading to open space, a wooded area, and a beach overlooking the Chester River.

TOURISM

The County has many natural, cultural, recreational, and historical resources that draw residents and visitors. Its prehistoric and colonial history, natural features, waterfront location, and agricultural heritage offer numerous settings and experiences that can attract visitors from throughout the region

for day, weekend, and overnight adventures. One of the County's greatest economic opportunities is to attract a greater proportion of the tourists already visiting or traveling through the County and the Eastern Shore, extending the time they spend in different areas throughout the County, increasing the number of places they visit, and increasing the amount of money each visitor spends while in the County. Programs to increase these offerings could include training for hospitality jobs, supporting research into local history and archaeology, creating festival events and locations to showcase local attractions, and appropriately balancing the need to protect residents' quality of life with the demands of running tourist-oriented businesses on sites that may be distant from major roads and commercial centers.

Unlike other industries, tourism does not have an overt physical presence, yet the economic benefits of successful tourism enterprises may permeate the overall fiscal wellbeing of the region. Tourists pay for services of the County's hotels, restaurants, gas stations, shops, museums, campgrounds, and rental car agencies. When it comes to income derived from tourists, these businesses are interdependent upon one another.

Since many of the County's attractions are natural assets, which are relatively inexpensive attractions with little to no entry fees, increasing per visitor expenditures within the County may be challenging without instituting or increasing these fees. In addition, because of its location, it is easy for visitors to spend only the day. The County should continue to develop strategies to increase the number of attractions so that a visitor needs more than one day to see them and to create "destination" accommodations and dining so that people spend the night.

Tourism does have a countywide economic impact that is greater than what is generated by its main attractions. Its towns have annual events that attract crowds of participants. The County's unincorporated communities also have annual events and festivals that contribute to the overall success of tourism efforts.

Tourism can also be supported in the County by expanding local dining and shopping; creating more walkable, bikeable, and connected Town Centers and Growth Areas; attracting travelers who may be

visiting the area without cars; and providing more and better access to the water.

Tourism has a complex role in the local economy, providing direct economic benefits plus the economic rationale for preserving a high percentage of County land in farms and open space. The most unique characteristics include abundant historic and cultural resources, many miles of shoreline, towns and communities, and largely rural character, provide the qualities that create a premier destination for visitors seeking an authentic experience.

ECOTOURISM

Ecotourism is a form of tourism that appeals to ecologically and socially conscious individuals. Generally, ecotourism focuses on volunteering, personal growth, and learning new ways to live on the planet; typically involving travel to destinations where flora, fauna, and cultural heritage are the primary attractions. For the County, it is founded in its nature-based assets that attract people to boat, hike, bike, birdwatch, golf, fish, and hunt. Ecotourism typically involves infrastructure and facilities for mobility, interpretation, and education.

HERITAGE TOURISM

Heritage tourism is defined by the National Trust for Historic Preservation as "travel to experience the places, artifacts, and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present, including cultural, historic, and natural resources." Heritage tourism also promotes local shops, restaurants, festivals, and events that celebrate a region's cultural history. Heritage tourism typically involves infrastructure and facilities for mobility, interpretation, and education.

Existing heritage tourism resources within the County include the Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area (see **Chapter 7—Historic Resources**), Scenic Byways (see **Chapter 6—Transportation**), and the Historic Sites Consortium (see **Chapter 7—Historic Resources**).

AGRITOURISM

Another emerging market in both the agricultural and tourism industries is agritourism, which is commonly used to describe any activity incidental to the operation of a farm that brings members of the public to the farm for educational,

recreational, or retail purposes. Common activities include farm tours, hayrides, corn mazes, seasonal petting farms, farm museums, guest farms, pumpkin patches, pick/cut your own produce, classes related to agricultural products or skills, and picnic and party facilities offered in conjunction with any of these activities.

A universal understanding of agritourism is needed for clear communication, reliable and consistent measurement, informed policies, and programs that support farms and their communities. To that end, a multi-state team developed a conceptual framework in 2018 that incorporates five major categories of activities: direct sales, education, hospitality, outdoor recreation, and entertainment. Specific core and peripheral agritourism activities fit within at least one of the five categories and may span multiple categories.

Core activities (e.g., fishing and hunting, wildlife viewing, farm stays, classes and tours, farm-to-table dinners and tastings, U-pick/cut, farm stands, festivals on-farm, corn maze/hayrides, horseback riding) take place on farms and are deeply connected to agriculture. In contrast, peripheral activities (e.g., concerts on-farm, agricultural fairs off-farm, outfitter services on-farm, hiking, art and photography, weddings on-farm, farmers' markets, agricultural museums off-farm) may not be considered agritourism in some regions because they take place off the farm or are not deeply connected to agriculture.

Agritourism is affected by licenses, permits, and regulations at all levels of government. Depending on the activities offered, there may be regulatory requirements on the use of equipment, machinery, and product packaging; in addition, commercial catering, food processing, and liquor licenses may apply. Some regulatory challenges for new agritourism businesses must be reconciled to ensure the viability of the emerging industry. The following consistencies must be addressed: quantifying and classifying specific commercial recreational activities in an area; ensuring adequacy of water, sewerage, and other facilities for sanitation; identifying use-appropriate attractions, farm-to-table food service, or other similar uses; and regulating the location and size of structures.

Agritourism promotes the efforts of farmers to diversify farm related activities and market the products they produce, sell, or exchange for the purpose of creating revenue and tourism. As part of this, there is also an opportunity to capitalize on the restaurant industry, including farm-to-table and farmers' markets where farmers sell to directly to local restaurants and consumers. Similarly, there is an opportunity for farmers to grow barley, corn, rye, wheat, grapes, and hops for local craft breweries, wineries, and distilleries throughout the region.

The market for agricultural tourism has increased with growing popularity across the country, in both supply (farms) and demand (tourists and consumers of agricultural products and services). An increasing number of residents and tourists are looking for opportunities to purchase fresh and locally made products, purchase directly from farmers, and to immerse themselves in a rural/agricultural experience. Promotion of agritourism can capitalize on this growing economic sector, as well as serve to:

- Preserve agricultural heritage and rural life
- Promote diversification of farm-related activities
- Expand business with value-added products, uses, and services on working farms
- Provide education and information to tourists and the community
- Increase direct farm sales opportunities, including access to affordable, healthy foods

The County also has the potential to expand tourism-related agribusinesses such as farm-to-table venues, alcohol production facilities (i.e. wineries, distilleries, breweries), farmers' markets, and community-supported agriculture (CSA).

OUTDOOR RECREATION

Outdoor recreation is a major stimulator of economic activity in Maryland; attractive and well-maintained parks, trails, and facilities increase the desirability of the community for residents and businesses. The Outdoor Industry Association estimated that participation in outdoor recreation in Maryland in 2017 generated \$14 billion in consumer spending, which supported 109,000 jobs, \$4.4 billion in wages and salaries, and generated \$951 million in state and local tax revenue. In addition to consumer spending, the

National Recreation and Parks Association 2017 report, *Promoting Parks and Recreation's Role in Economic Development*, indicates that high-quality public parks and recreation opportunities generate positive economic impacts in communities by:

- Playing a central role in community identity or sense of place and contributing to a high-quality of life and high-quality communities tend to attract skilled, educated, and entrepreneurial workers and employers seeking this type of talent.
- Enhancing community “curb appeal” and increasing the value of properties (and associated local tax revenues) located proximate to well-maintained parks. The National Association of Realtors finds that homes located near a desirable public park or recreation open space can have their values boosted by 8-20%; however, a poorly maintained park nearby can drag down the value of nearby homes.
- Lowering health care costs by providing opportunities that improve physical and mental well-being.
- Serving as green infrastructure capable of improving community resiliency to natural disasters. Parks and preserved natural spaces detain and absorb flood waters and storm damage, which can reduce risks to life, property, and infrastructure and reduce recovery and insurance costs.

ECONOMIC CENTERS

See **Map 8-1, Economic Centers** and **Map 8-2, Business Incentive Zones** for economic development related maps.

BUSINESS PARKS

The County has been aggressive in attracting and retaining businesses with support of private sector developers establishing business parks in beautiful settings with full amenities. These include the Centreville Business Park, Chesapeake Bay Business Park, Matapeake Professional Park; and Thompson Creek Professional Park.

The Centreville Business Park is a planned 80-acre park with available lots from one to 40 acres, flexible zoning, and existing office and warehouse space for lease. Class A office space for lease is available in

Centreville on 4H Park Road and at the Chesapeake Bay Business Park. The parks offer ‘build to suit’ and ready to occupy sites for manufacturing, warehouse, and service sector employers.

TOWN CENTERS & GROWTH AREAS

The municipalities, town centers, and Growth Areas are the focus of the County’s commercial and employment activities. These places are designated for higher intensity and greater variety of commercial and residential development. There is a mix of uses intended to serve a community of all ages. Additional retail such as restaurants, clothing stores, and personal service businesses would increase the local tax base and help to satisfy residents’ currently unmet needs.

Directing commercial, retail, and housing development to these areas is a central element in strengthening economic vitality in the County and an important counterpart to policies designed to preserve the County’s rural land.

The built form plays a significant role in the success of these areas as economic centers. A denser pattern of businesses, housing, and office space would reduce the travel time to work and shopping locations and create more vibrant and accessible centers of commerce. Walkable communities with a range of housing opportunities and attractive recreational facilities are important in retaining and attracting young professionals and entrepreneurs. A well-connected road system, public transit, bicycle connectivity, and pedestrian infrastructure between towns and surrounding communities are important links to connect consumers with retail and residents with economic opportunities within the County.

Centreville is the seat of County government and is the logical location for governmental, educational, and legal services. It is located in the center of the County at the headwaters of the Corsica River and is the largest incorporated town in the County. It is home to the oldest courthouse in continuous use in the State. Centreville offers businesses and their workers an excellent quality of life. Its charming, walkable tree-lined downtown is one of the nation’s designated Main Streets, and the only one in the County.

The northern towns of Millington, Sudlersville, Barclay, Templeville, and Queen Anne are farm centered. Railroads schedule transport of freight through some of these towns. Church Hill attracts

visitors and residents from the region as patrons to the local Church Hill Theater with live performances year round. Queenstown, a quaint historic town founded in 1707, is located on the Chester River and hosts the Queenstown Harbor Golf Course, a 36-hole premier public golf course, consistently ranked a top Maryland course.

The southern portion of the County includes the population centers of Chester, Grasonville, and Stevensville. This area is a designated Priority Funding Area for planned growth and supports the majority of the commercial and industrial activity in the County. Stevensville, the largest population center in the County, enjoys a growing reputation for its village atmosphere with arts and entertainment, museums, and historic sites. The communities of Queen Anne's County offer small town lifestyles, with park like amenities, within commuting distances to major employers.

BUSINESS INCENTIVE ZONES

PRIORITY FUNDING AREAS

Priority Funding Areas (PFAs) are existing communities and places where the County wants to direct State investment (in the form of loans and grants for highways, sewer and water infrastructure, and economic development) to support future growth. PFAs (municipalities, rural villages, and County designated areas) were established in response to the 1997 *Priority Funding Areas Act*. Towns and designated Growth Areas align with PFAs.

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICTS

An Arts and Entertainment District is a geographically designated area in which a high concentration of arts and entertainment facilities serve as an anchor attraction. The intent of the District is to stimulate neighborhood revitalization, improve the attractiveness and safety of areas, stimulate business activity (particularly in the evenings and on weekends), attract residents and visitors, and build the tax base.

Maryland's Arts & Entertainment (A&E) Districts help develop and promote community involvement, tourism, and revitalization through tax-related incentives. The State's 29 A&E Districts are unique destinations, attracting audiences, artists, arts organizations, and other creative enterprises to specific neighborhoods in towns and cities. Each reflects the traditions and evolving culture of its

community and invites residents and visitors to experience the best the State has to offer.

The goal of the A&E Districts program is to develop, promote, and support diverse artistic and cultural centers in communities across the State that preserve a sense of place, provide unique local experiences, attract tourism, and spur economic revitalization and neighborhood pride. In turn, this furthers the goal of reinvesting in existing communities and creating places that help people, businesses, the economy, and the environment thrive as articulated in MDP's *Reinvest Maryland* strategy. Strategies supported by the A&E Districts program include: creating accessible, unique arts destinations; leveraging the State's regional identities, natural resources, and heritage; facilitating opportunities for dynamic arts experiences that actively engage community members and attract visitors; enabling artists of all disciplines to live, work, and prosper; create an economically prosperous future; and investing in the power of place.

The program's most recent economic impact study shows that in fiscal year 2018, events and new businesses in the A&E Districts supported more than \$1 billion in State GDP, approximately \$72.1 million in State and local tax revenues, and 9,987 jobs that paid more than \$320 million in wages. Available incentives include Property Tax Incentives, Artist Income Tax Subtraction Modification, and Admissions and Amusement Tax Exemption.

HISTORIC STEVENSVILLE A&E DISTRICT

The Stevensville A&E District is a Maryland designated A&E District located in the quaint historic Stevensville community on Kent Island. The District supports a large community of local artists, galleries, shops, and eateries through First Saturday events that include diverse artistic experiences, live music, plays, art projects, parades, and family-oriented activities. The District is also rich in history and home to an array of historic sites that are open for tours. Home to Kent Island Federation of Arts and numerous other galleries, there is always a plethora of local art shows, studio classes, and other opportunities for artists to explore and share their talents. Stevensville is one of 29 designated A&E Districts in Maryland, which offer tax incentives and credits to artists and related enterprises.

ENTERPRISE ZONES

The Enterprise Zone is a geographically designated area where investments in commercial development and redevelopment and job creation are eligible to receive tax credits. The Queen Anne's County Enterprise Zone includes a majority of the Planned Growth Areas of Grasonville, Chester, and Stevensville, including the Chesapeake Bay Business Park, Matapeake Professional Park, and the Thompson Creek area. Infrastructure exists to support new, infill, and redevelopment of commercial property. Eligible commercial projects within the Enterprise Zone can be certified to receive a commercial real property tax credit prorated over 10 years. Eligible businesses operating within the Enterprise Zone can receive income tax credits for the creation of full-time jobs. The following uses are not eligible: fast food restaurants, convenience stores, standalone gas stations, adult entertainment, and gambling facilities.

OPPORTUNITY ZONES

The Maryland Opportunity Zone program is a federal initiative housed in the U.S. Treasury. Each county in Maryland has a designated zone or zones. These zones were created to revitalize economically distressed communities using private investments. Investors can receive capital gain tax incentives in exchange for investing in the zones. There is one Opportunity Zone in Queen Anne's County, centered on Church Hill and extending from Kingstown to Ingleside.

MAIN STREETS

The Main Street Maryland program strives to strengthen the economic potential of Maryland's traditional main streets and neighborhoods. The program provides designated communities with support for economic planning, marketing and promotion, training, and education.

Created in 1998 by the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), Main Street Maryland consists of 33 designated communities that have exhibited a commitment to fostering economic revitalization and sustainability in their downtown districts. Designations are earned through a competitive process that highlights a five-point approach that incorporates design, local organization, promotion, economic development, and sustainability.

Main Street Maryland's traditional downtown economic and cultural districts are the cornerstones of local communities throughout the State. They feature historic architecture as well as locally owned shops and boutiques, arts, unique events & festivals, and a variety of restaurants and cafés which all make for a fun and authentic experience.

Centreville is one of Maryland's 33 Main Street communities. Since its 2011 designation, the work of the Centreville Main Street program resulted in:

- \$1.4 million in 36 private investment projects
- \$19.4 million in 3 public improvement projects
- 35 new businesses
- 72 jobs created
- 3,516 volunteer hours valued at \$89,412

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

Sustainable Communities are designated under a State law that consolidates resources for community revitalization and economic development under a single designation with an emphasis on infrastructure improvements, multimodal transportation, and green development.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

BUSINESS RETENTION & EXPANSION

Business retention and expansion strategies focus on satisfying the needs of existing businesses in the County. A positive relationship between existing employers and local government aids in the compilation of information that may be utilized to reduce business costs, improve competitiveness, increase markets, and provide opportunities for infrastructure enhancement. Implementing business retention and expansion strategies are typically the most cost-effective and flexible strategies in economic development. Retaining and expanding businesses is a top priority.

BUSINESS ATTRACTION

Business attraction focuses on identifying companies outside of the County and enticing them to locate their business or parts of their business within the County. The goal of this process is securing new jobs and investments and replacing closed businesses. Business closure is part of the economic cycle; however, closed businesses need to be maintained and improve the overall health of the community. Targeting specific types of businesses

that correspond with the overall character of the County is important.

SMALL BUSINESS

Over the past several years, the focus has shifted from narrowly-focused programs that address just one element of entrepreneurship, such as funding or training, to more broad-based approaches that aim to create an environment and culture where entrepreneurship can thrive. Today's policymakers, economic developers, foundations, and grant makers are looking for incentives and programs that encourage sustained entrepreneurial activity and collaboration on a local or regional level.

Every community is unique, vibrant, and teeming with problem-solvers craving the opportunity to make their impactful mark. The County should spur local economic development by creating a supportive and inclusive environment that fosters innovation and entrepreneurship.

Access to financial capital is a challenge for many small businesses, and these challenges are particularly acute for young firms less than five years old. The Federal Reserve Bank of New York's *2016 Small Business Credit Survey: Report on Startup Firms* provides a summary of credit conditions and challenges associated with small businesses nationally, with a distinction made between startup firms (i.e. those younger than five years old) and mature firms (i.e. those five years or older):

- 70% of startup applicants sought funding for expansion, compared to 60% of mature applicants
- Only 32% of 0–2-year-old firms and 49% of 3–5-year-old firms report being profitable, compared to 60% of mature firms
- 44% of startup firms self-identify as medium and high credit risk, compared to 30% of mature firms
- 52% of startup firms applied for financing in 2016, compared to 42% of mature firms
- 63% of startup applicants sought \$100,000 or less in financing, compared to 49% of mature applicants
- 58% of 0–2-year-old firms and 53% of 3–5-year-old firms reported difficulty with credit availability or accessing funds for expansion, compared to 39% of mature firms
- 69% of startup applicants experienced a financing shortfall, meaning they obtained

less than the amount they sought, compared to 54% of mature applicants

In their early years, small businesses tend to aim for expansion, but they can face significant challenges in obtaining financing. Further hampering expansion efforts is the tendency for many new firms to be unprofitable for several years. Though significant financing challenges exist for new small businesses, one bright spot is that these newer businesses tend to be seeking less money than their more mature counterparts.

SKILLED WORKFORCE

As the economy transforms, the skills demanded by businesses will change. Skills that were once in demand may no longer be valued by businesses. There are many challenges that limit useful types of training, such as the person's age, financial obligations, substitutability of skills, and competition in the labor market. For many people, the only jobs available may be entry level positions that require only short-term, on-the-job-training, such as occupations in the retail-trade and food-services industries.

Moreover, the fast pace that companies can change makes it difficult to predict what skills are going to be needed in another five or ten years. Unsurprisingly, employers are less likely to train their own employees with the necessary skills, which only make the educational system more important to citizens' long-term prospects. It is critical to strike the right balance between preparing those who are able and motivated to benefit from higher education and training with those who will enter the labor force after graduating from high school. Making higher education the de facto goal for most students may be doing a disservice to the majority of young persons who will not be successful in that pursuit. A larger proportion of high school students, for example, might be better served by focusing on vocational technology.

Connecting an educated and trained workforce that meets the needs of an evolving workplace market sector is a major challenge and need in the County. The surrounding counties and proximity to metropolitan Baltimore and Washington D.C. provides significant competition for skilled labor.

The goal of providing a skilled workforce can be achieved by focusing recruitment efforts on companies that can produce professional and

technical jobs in the County; building broadband technology to support expanded employment opportunities; continuing to provide programs that support small business development and expansion; and building capacity for infrastructure to support industries in the professional and technical sectors.

WORKFORCE READINESS

An educated workforce can be achieved by creating business opportunities that offer career tracking and sustainable employment by providing technical and innovative training options and solutions; supporting educational programs that promote post-secondary education and continuing education programs; expanding vocational training programs; and attracting post-secondary educational and training facilities and post-graduate education and research facilities. To further encourage workforce readiness, as well as economic development, the County established a Career Technology Liaison position in 2021 with a goal of working with businesses, Queen Anne's County Public Schools (QACPS), and students and their families.

BMPs, TOOLS & TECHNIQUES

TRADITIONAL ECONOMIC TAX BASE

Preserving and supporting traditional economic development such as industries, businesses, agriculture, and natural resource-based industries including maritime, forestry, hunting and fishing can be achieved through implementation of the following strategies:

1. Providing policies to support goals and objectives to guide future growth to lands within designated Growth Areas and Priority Funding Areas (PFA).
2. Preserving the County's rural economy by reducing development pressures and impacts in agricultural areas.
3. Promoting centralized infrastructure through the collaboration of local and regional infrastructure agencies and authorities.
4. Promoting opportunities for infill development in Towns and Growth Areas.
5. Prioritizing revitalization initiatives to stimulate economic growth in Towns.
6. Directing new businesses to existing and planned business parks.
7. Encouraging Towns to adopt consistent policies for annexation.

8. Ensuring the location of Town Short- and Long-Term Growth Areas are consistent with the Municipal Growth Elements (MGEs) within each Town's comprehensive plan.
9. Promoting diverse land uses governed by design standards sensitive to the community's architecture and environmentally sensitive features and that reduce unnecessary land development procedures and expenses.
10. Encouraging projects that redevelop under-utilized commercial spaces.
11. Retaining the County's rich agricultural economy by providing incentives to farmers and property owners that preserve these lands.
12. Retaining the County's rich maritime industries by providing incentives to watermen and protections to existing marinas and harbors that serve the working waterfront.

BALANCED TAX BASE

Balancing the tax base can be achieved by implementing the following strategies intending to increase the property tax base, utilize vacant properties, and increase lands for businesses in towns, while incentivizing redevelopment of land for businesses within the County:

1. Providing sufficient land and incentives to grow economic development opportunities that balance the County's tax base including:
 - Tourism, business, and employment center expansion.
 - Further developing concepts and business relocation opportunities to the Chesapeake Bay Business Park.
 - Supporting Chesapeake College's educational programs, facilities, and infrastructure.
 - Providing jobs for industries including technology, research and development, agriculture, and maritime within new and existing business parks.
2. Collaborating with Towns to maintain and upgrade public infrastructure and facilities to serve employment and workforce housing areas.
3. Tracking and monitoring job growth rates and planning for ways to stimulate employment opportunities in the County.

4. Tracking and monitoring economic development needs and opportunities by developing a commercial, industrial, and for-profit institutional database considering historic trends, projected needs, and available zoned lands.
5. Clarifying available zoned lands for commercial, industrial, and for-profit institutional development by separating public and not-for-profit institutional uses and lands not buildable under applicable codes from this classification.

- Education and Labor Market Advantage: rural areas can be attractive to business because of lower property and labor costs but there is often a shortage of skilled labor; high speed broadband offers opportunities for web based education and job training

High-speed or fiber optic infrastructure is a necessity for attracting high tech jobs. More service areas are needed to be competitive when courting high tech or digital data intensive companies. jobs goal. Advanced infrastructure, including fiber optic networks, is extremely important for business development over the next 20 years.

See **Chapter 3—Community Facilities & Services** for additional information on broadband and telecommunications within the County.

BUSINESS INCUBATORS

Business incubators are designed to be proactive, supportive environments that promote business opportunity, job creation, and economic prosperity. They seek to provide economies of scale by locating several early-stage businesses within affordable shared space under one roof. This allows multiple businesses to develop new ventures by lowering startup costs, conserving cash, and reducing potentially high service fees associated with single business startups. Typically, incubators provide multiple advantages including leases at or below market level rents, low costs for shared general services (e.g., security, meeting rooms, telephones, WiFi, copiers, cleaning services, reception areas), managerial consulting, business plan development, and mentor relationships.

TELEWORKING IMPLICATIONS

Telework refers to employer-approved work by an employee at a location other than the employer's worksite, making use of Internet and telephone communications. The telecommuting concept began in the early 1970s with the notion that people could reduce commute time by working at satellite offices more convenient to their homes. The advent of the internet radically enabled and accelerated telework. The COVID-19 pandemic has catapulted remote work into a coveted job feature that can make the difference between employment and unemployment. While rates of remote work may not stay at the current high levels, the results of COVID-19 are likely to boost long-term rates above pre-pandemic levels. Many companies with mostly office-based employees now extending their current remote working policies for the mid- to long-term, far beyond when stay-at-home orders by the State are expected to end. The speculation that increased remote work will extend past the pandemic has implications for transportation, real estate, land use, and economic development.

BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE

The County remains largely rural and low density in nature, which presents specific challenges to economic development. One way to support existing businesses and potentially attract new technology-dependent business is through expansion of high speed broadband. According to a 2014 study completed by the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs at the University of Minnesota, *Findings on the Economic Benefits of Broadband Expansion to Rural and Remote Areas*, small communities and surrounding rural areas with access to high speed broadband realize short and long term economic benefits including:

- Economic Growth: employment growth, establishment of new businesses, existing business growth, increased housing rents, higher average incomes, and increased population growth

In the near term, the COVID-19 pandemic is leading employers and employees to adopt remote work for continuity of operations and continued employment. The more local jobs can continue to be done remotely, the better the region is likely to sustain economic activity; however, jobs less able to be done remotely tend to be disproportionately held by people who are non-white, low-income, live in rental housing, lack a college degree, and lack employer-provided health insurance.

If, in the post-COVID-19 economy, remote work has a heightened role in corporate life, it could have major implications for corporate profits as companies reduce office space expenses. Employers may be able to recruit from a much larger pool of potential workers living outside the commuting radius of headquarters. Employee loyalty could decline, making retention harder. A corporate trend toward a more decentralized workforce may have unpredictable long-term impacts on wages. Higher rates of telework will impact more than just remote workers and their employers. It will also affect patterns of daily life, transportation, commercial real estate, and more. Housing patterns and prices could be affected if remote workers begin moving based on lifestyle choices rather than commuting proximity to work.

In the long term, a post-COVID-19 trend of employers offering more remote work options would decouple the choice between where to work and where to live for workers who can work remotely part or all of the time, which will create economic risks and opportunities for the County. To minimize risks and maximize the upside, an essential goal is to promote and continuously improve the County a desirable place for remote workers to live.

There are pros and cons to increased or sustained telecommuting. On the plus side, many workers prefer working from home, it reduces emissions and office costs, it helps people balance work and family roles, and it may make the workforce more productive. Downsides include the difficulties managing a telecommuting staff, negative effects of

professional isolation on well-being and career development, and long-term effects on productivity.

KAUFFMAN INDICATORS

The Kauffman Indicators of Entrepreneurship offer in-depth measures, reports, and accompanying interactive data visualizations that present entrepreneurial trends in the U.S. The Early-Stage Entrepreneurship series is a set of measures that represent new business creation. The New Employer Business Series provides information on new employer businesses, including measures that capture trends in their emergency, representation in the population and among all firms, and the time it takes these businesses to make their first payroll.

INDICATORS & MEASURES

The following sustainability indicators should be measured and evaluated over time to determine community impact with respect to meeting economic development and tourism needs as a factor affecting the overall sustainability of the County. Not all of the listed indicators/metrics are collected by EDT.

- Employment and unemployment rates.
- Acres of agricultural land in operation.
- Preservation monies directed to the County through various programs.
- Agricultural economic indicators as provided by the State.
- Increase in retail sales.
- Tracking and support for new commercial entities through the development review process.

Table 8-14. Kauffman Indicators Comparison (2020)

| Indicator | Maryland | High | Median | Low |
|---|----------|--------|--------|--------|
| Early-Stage Entrepreneurship | | | | |
| % of population that starts a new business | 0.26% | 0.53% | 0.31% | 0.16% |
| % of new entrepreneurs creating a business by choice | 79.29% | 95.12% | 81.42% | 65.97% |
| Average jobs created by startups in their first year | 4.01 | 7.79 | 4.58 | 2.93 |
| % of startups still active after one year | 76.65% | 81.83% | 77.95% | 63.43% |
| Kauffman Early-Stage Entrepreneurship (KESE) Index | -2.64 | 5.16 | -0.13 | -7.84 |
| New Employer Business | | | | |
| % of new businesses making payroll within 8 quarters | 6.61% | 16.43% | 9.78% | 5.71% |
| New employer businesses per 100 people | 0.09 | 0.28 | 0.11 | 0.06 |
| Average quarters to become an employer business | 2.22 | 2.25 | 1.99 | 1.78 |
| New employers as a share of all employer firms | 5.75% | 9.17% | 5.95% | 4.38% |
| New Employer Business Actualization Speed (NEBAS) Index | 0.60 | 0.86 | 0.71 | 0.59 |

- Number of new business starts.
- Revenue tracking for hotel taxes, amusement and admissions, sales and use taxes, and recreational fees.
- Maintain and document business retention efforts.
- Participation in federal, State, and local grant and lending programs.

STRATEGIES & ACTIONS

The overarching goal for economic development and tourism is to create a balance between the needs for business attraction and retention, quality job creation, industry diversification, and tax base expansion, by focusing growth to protect the quality of life within the County.

GOAL 8-1: Promote traditional business, emerging industries, and economic development.

STRATEGY 1: Support methods and programs to attract and retain businesses using traditional economic development tools, recognizing a need for business incubators and telecommuting infrastructure support.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Enhance awareness of economic development opportunities.
2. Encourage occupancy or redevelopment of vacant commercial space.
3. Explore opportunities for higher education and workforce development.
4. Support the infrastructure necessary for telecommuting, new start-up businesses, and business expansion targeting high-tech and cleaner/greener businesses.

STRATEGY 2: Support initiatives to create employment opportunities and commercial viability.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Build cooperative Town/County planning initiatives to develop business and employment centers that attract employment-based industries.
2. Promote the development of business parks and commercial centers at key locations that support sustainable growth.
3. Support incentives to create employment centers.
4. Focus business growth and expansion efforts on targeted business sectors that complement the County's existing commercial base.
5. Consider identifying a revitalization area within qualified unincorporated areas of QAC and seek Maryland Sustainable Community designation.

STRATEGY 3: Ensure that sufficient commercially zoned lands exist and are appropriately located and provided with infrastructure.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Create and update an inventory of commercially developable land that accounts for adequacy of public facilities, non-tidal and tidal wetlands, potential sea level rise impacts, environmental buffers, and other limitations.
2. Review permitted non-residential land uses and amend the Land Use and Development regulations as appropriate.
3. Enforce policies and funding for the expansion of needed technology and for the adequacy of public facilities to support the establishment of employment centers.

4. Encourage commercial zoning around and within towns and established Growth Areas.

STRATEGY 4: Leverage recent improvements to US 301 in Delaware to take advantage of economic development opportunities.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Identify, list, and rank high potential commercial land.
2. Contemplate the findings of the 2018 Sage Policy Group Study of the US 301 corridor in Queen Anne's County and weigh those opportunities against the purpose and permitted uses in the Agricultural Zoning District, as well as the viability of continued agricultural preservation within the US 301 corridor.
3. Clarify the benefits available to developers and businesses.
4. Strategically encourage the development of speculative commercial space.
5. Take advantage of the SHA Tourist Area and Corridor Signing Program to clearly identify County attractions to the expanded traffic flow.

GOAL 8-2: Preserve and promote a resource-based economy.

STRATEGY 1: Support agricultural, maritime, natural resource-based, and eco-businesses through existing markets and exploration of new and innovative agricultural markets and promote them within the County.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Create new ways of offering incentives to agricultural, agritourism, and eco-businesses, with an emphasis on regenerative initiatives and ecofriendly businesses.
2. Incentive programs should be sensitive to (and reflect future changes in) industry practices and economy.
3. Build and support current agricultural, maritime, and recreation industry sectors.
4. Revise County Codes to incorporate provisions for agritourism and ecotourism.

GOAL 8-3: Explore opportunities for niche hospitality and tourism industries.

STRATEGY 1: Develop, support, and promote County cultural activities and heritage tourism opportunities.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

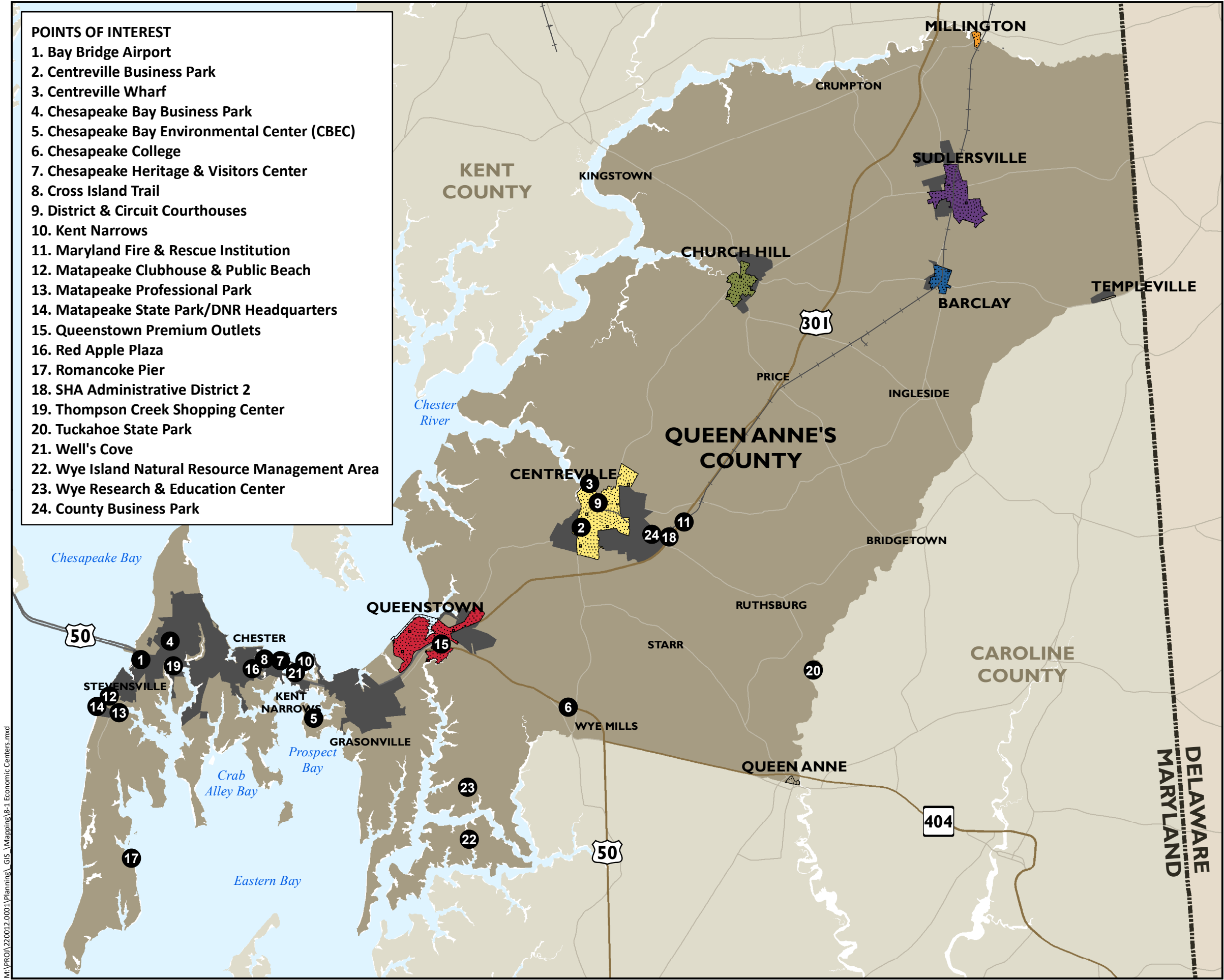
1. Promote designated areas of the County as an outdoor special events destination.
2. Develop and promote ecotourism, agritourism, and recreational tourism utilizing the existing natural resources in the County and working with industry partners and stakeholders.
3. Develop and promote the County's local heritage, cultural assets and destinations, and connections with local, State, and national themes.
4. Leverage existing County destinations, businesses, and visitor services.
5. Support, connect, and educate existing industry providers.
6. Cross-market cultural activities, tourist and historic sites, and historic and cultural events.
7. Develop local transportation resources, partnerships, and businesses in support of the hospitality industry.

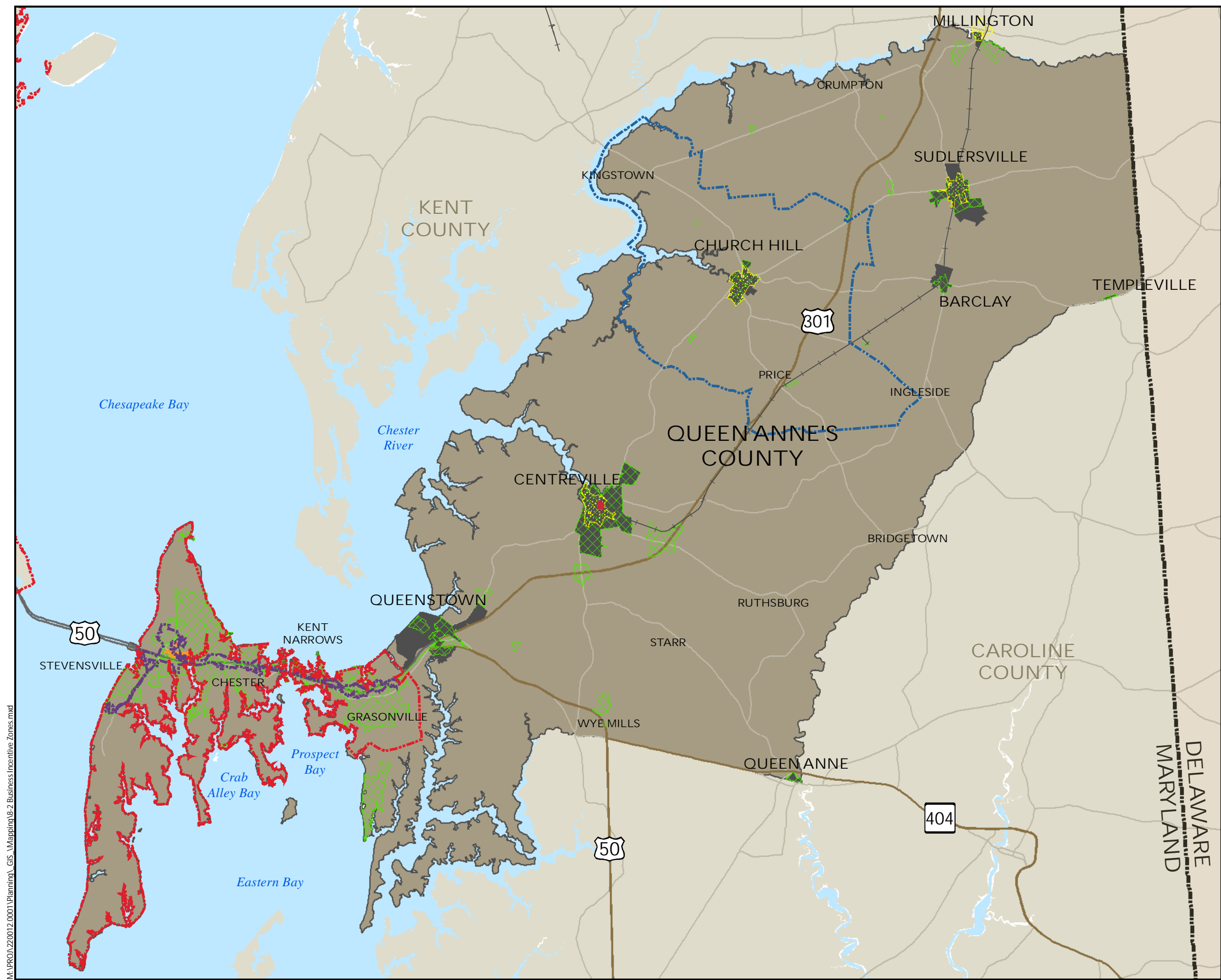
8. Develop, encourage, and promote signature events that encourage interest in the County and attract visitors.
9. Coordinate with the Queen Anne's County Arts Council and other organizations or committees involved in cultural or historic initiatives.
10. Prepare and implement a work plan for the development and promotion of the Queen Anne's County hospitality industry.
11. Implement the County brand to support the hospitality market.

STRATEGY 2: Use historic and cultural resources to support and develop tourism opportunities.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Create and coordinate programming of historic and cultural sites with community events, activities, and other tourism attractions.
2. Continue communication and collaboration between the Historic Sites Consortium and the County Department of Economic Development and Tourism.
3. Continue to support the tourism and economic development objectives and strategies of the *Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area Management Plan*.





MAP 8-2

Business Incentive Zones

- Queen Anne's County
- State Boundary
- Counties
- Incorporated Towns
- Water Bodies
- Rail
- Major Roads
 - Interstates
 - US Highways
 - State Routes
- Business Incentive Zones
 - Metropolitan Planning Organization Boundary
 - Opportunity Zones
 - Enterprise Zones
 - Main Street Areas
 - Arts & Entertainment Districts
 - Sustainable Communities
 - Priority Funding Areas

Source
Queen Anne's County Business Incentive Zones

Wallace Montgomery created this map for planning purposes from a variety of sources. It is neither a survey nor a legal document. Information provided by other agencies should be verified with them where appropriate.

January 2022

0 1.25 2.5 5 Miles

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