

IMPLEMENTATION

INTRODUCTION

As much as any element in the Comprehensive Plan, this, the Implementation Element, ponders the future. In particular it considers the future that the rest of the Plan envisions and describes the means to make that vision a reality. It also addresses certain requirements of state law. Finally, it touches on the general topic of inter-jurisdictional coordination. Specifically it will describe how Easton's Plan relates to Talbot County's Plan for the same area and discuss the roles of the two governing bodies in making these Plans become reality as envisioned.

The stage for much of what will be written in this chapter has been set in previous elements of the Plan, particularly the Land Use, Municipal Growth and Community Character chapters. This chapter will take the conversation one step further by tying the whole discussion together, and proposing concrete actions that will be necessary to make the vision of this Plan a reality.

A GROWTH MANAGEMENT STRATEGY FOR EASTON

In contemplating a growth management strategy for Easton, it is necessary to first consider what the community feels is undesirable with the current situation. In doing so, it is apparent that there are many great aspects to the Town. What drives the desire for a growth management strategy is the recognition of trends contrary to these aspects. These include:

- Development that is too wasteful. Density in the older, historic parts of Easton is two to three times as dense as that found in the subdivisions of the last 30 to 40 years.
- Commercial development that is too ubiquitous. That is to say, it is virtually indistinguishable from that in any other community.

- Growth that is spreading outward too quickly. There is concern amongst many residents that Easton is spreading too far, too fast. Much of this problem relates to the first point above. That is, since density is so low in Easton, more and more land is necessary to accommodate even a constant rate of growth.
- The construction of single-use subdivisions rather than neighborhoods. Again, this causes a need for more land and also necessitates increased automobile usage.

With this as the backdrop, the following Growth Management Strategy is proposed.

Contain Sprawl with an Urban Growth Boundary (UGB)

The first step in Easton's proposed Growth Management Strategy is designed to contain the seemingly endless outward expansion of the Town. This is accomplished through the establishment of an Urban Growth Boundary (UGB), as first implemented in the 2004 Plan Update. An UGB is essentially "a line in the sand." On the Town side of this line, town-scale development will occur. On the other side of the line, development is much less dense. In Easton and Talbot County's case, the difference will be even more dramatic because both jurisdictions are proposing that the UGB be bounded on the County side of the line by a greenbelt. This would be a green ring surrounding the future ultimate Town limits consisting of forests, wetlands, and farms. This greenbelt would become a top priority area for land preservation programs and initiatives at the County level.

The UGB is depicted on the Growth Area and Future Land Use Maps. It has been sized to correspond to the size of a community that we ultimately feel comfortable with in terms of the ability of Easton to maintain its charm and quality of life. What this translates into in terms of future populations depends on the density of development within the UGB as well as how successful we are in terms of encouraging revitalization and infill

redevelopment. What this population is or when we achieve it is less important than ensuring that when we get there, Easton is the kind of place that current and future residents will be proud to call home.

The location of the UGB was based upon consultation with the Talbot County Planning Commission, current development trends, anticipated trends due to goals and objectives suggested in this Plan and logical boundaries established by property lines, roadways and natural features. Thus while it is viewed as a permanent dividing line demarcating urban and rural development, the precise location of the UGB will be examined again in 6 years as part of the next Comprehensive Plan update, just as it has been in association with this Plan revision.

This 2010 Plan Update proposes no changes to the UGB. It has, in fact, remained unchanged since the adoption of the 2004 Plan with one exception. That was the expansion of the growth area (and thus the Growth Boundary and Green Belt) to accommodate the site of the proposed future Hospital and the Talbot Community Center.

Increase Density

Perhaps the most readily apparent difference between the Downtown area that so many people love and hope to see replicated and the newer “suburban” scale development that has occurred more recently, is the density of these two types of development. Accomplishing the first step in the Growth Management Strategy, establishing an Urban Growth Boundary, will accomplish little if within its borders development continues at a scope and scale such as we have seen for much of the last 30-50 years.

The most telling indictment of Easton’s recent densities is the fact that in and of themselves, they would not even come close to qualifying as Priority Funding Areas under the terms of the State’s guidelines. The minimum density necessary to qualify as such is 3.5

dwelling units per acre (net). Easton's more recent developments have a density of just less than 2 dwelling units per acre.

In order to reverse this trend, the previous Plan proposed the creation of a new zoning district that would be assigned to all future residential areas. The Plan even suggested the developments standards for this new district. As described in a previous chapter of this Plan, this new Traditional Neighborhood Zoning District was proposed but never adopted by the Town Council. Instead changes were made to the existing R-10A and R-7A zoning districts as well as to the Subdivision Regulations, in an attempt to get some of the suggested changes added to our existing development standards.

One of the most important changes was the way in which density is calculated. Previously, there was no density standard except for PUD's and multi-family projects. Single family detached projects were simply entitled to as many lots as they could create in conformance with the other development standards of the Ordinance. This typically resulted in a density of somewhere between just less than 2 du/ac to about 2.5 du/ac. Our goal was to increase this to the minimum "Smart Growth" density of 3.5 du/ac. Thus the way in which density was calculated was changed by specifying a density standard. Now developers know right at the beginning of a project that they are entitled to 3.5 units times the total acreage. Admittedly, 3.5 du/ac will still not likely be achieved, but this change coupled with greater flexibility with lot configurations and sizes should allow us to substantially increase the densities that we have achieved in recent years.

Build Neighborhoods

This concept has been a recurring theme throughout this Comprehensive Plan. It was discussed extensively in the Community Character chapter and touched upon in several other places. The key is to ensure that this approach is the easiest one under which to develop and that the more recently commonplace suburban type of development is the

difficult method that would only be approved under truly unique and extenuating circumstances.

Assuming these changes in future development patterns can be achieved, only part of the problem will be addressed. Easton will still ultimately be left with a suburban-style middle surrounding a truly traditionally developed core with a neo-traditional style collection of neighborhoods on the periphery. Undoubtedly, the biggest challenge facing the Town is in creating ways to “retrofit” the suburban-style subdivisions to make them denser, more connected, and more mixed use. This will be difficult and ultimately may never be fully achieved, but some things can be done to improve the situation, and some were implemented following the original suggestion for such changes in the 2004 Plan. These include:

- Permit additions to be made to single-family houses to create granny flats or duplexes as an outright permitted use. This change was made to the Ordinance, but little development activity of this type has occurred.
- Effectively narrow streets by striping or using a textured surface to create a pedestrian/bicycle lane. This concept was illustrated in the Quality Community Survey and the results were striking. The image of the existing wide street (in this case, Corbin Parkway) received a -1.7 rating. The computer-simulated image with a textured bike lane on both sides of the street received a +2.5 rating. This has not been accomplished, although the concept has been discussed for possible implementation at another location.



Corbin Parkway Existing Situation



Corbin Parkway "calmed" with paving

- Permit more neighborhood scale commercial uses by special exception in residential zoning districts. This has recently been accomplished for offices, which are allowed by Special Exception in the R-10A and R-7A Zoning Districts. A number of supplemental standards apply in order to assure that the neighborhood is not adversely impacted. Similar standards can and should be added for whatever other commercial uses might be permitted in the suburban-style subdivisions (since hopefully the newer developments will be mixed-use in nature to some degree). There has been no further progress on this recommendation beyond the limited office uses that are allowed as discussed above.
- Budget for and strategically purchase houses as they become available in order to demolish them and redevelop the sites for civic or park use. This has not been accomplished or even discussed since the last Plan. The current economic climate makes it difficult for the Town to consider such investments, even though more opportunities exist to purchase such properties at reasonable prices in such times. Going forward this is a concept that should at least be discussed for possible implementation.

Improve Design

The steps outlined above will go a long way towards making Easton a better place to live. The establishment of a UGB will contain the outward spread of development and the establishment of a greenbelt in the County adjacent to this UGB will offer some permanence to this limit. Increasing the density within the Town will improve the appearance and function of neighborhoods as well as decrease development pressures on other areas in and around the Town, not yet as ready to be developed. Building neighborhoods rather than subdivisions or developments will dramatically improve the livability of Easton and will decrease traffic by offering more goods and services within walking distance of where people live. Still, with all these changes, the Town will not generate a “sense of place” feeling unless improvements are made to the way the built environment looks.

This issue was discussed extensively in the Community Character chapter so there is little need to repeat. Suffice it to say that this was an issue that first rose to the surface in the 1997 Comprehensive Plan. It took on a prominent role in the 2004 Plan. In that Plan Community Character received a chapter all its own for the first time. It was undoubtedly one of the major themes of that Plan, much as it is again in this one. Since the issue first appeared on the Town’s radar in 1997, there is no question but that the design of buildings in Easton has improved. Consider simply the most recent commercial projects approved or built in the Town: A rebuilt McDonald’s that is an attractive building and does not remotely resemble the prototypical McDonald’s. The Easton Utilities Customer Service Center is a fine example of the civic pride that used to be evident in all public buildings and still should be. Wawa and Royal Farms convenience store have been built in a manner that is such a significant departure from their prototype that if not for the sign, those more

familiar with those stores' corporate architecture may not recognize them. Finally, most recently we have witnessed the construction of Target and Lowe's, two very large major retail buildings that extend this concept of departing from typical franchise architecture to much larger buildings.

The challenge of this Comprehensive Plan is to ensure that this effort to achieve improved design continues, in fact advances even more, rather than retreats. In order to accomplish this, the following recommendations are offered:

- Vigorously and consistently promote and require compliance with the "Design Principles for Easton" as described in the Community Character Element.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the Design Guidelines for the various types of development (including residential) and revise if necessary.
- Utilize Forest Conservation monies and off-site plantings to enhance sparsely landscaped areas along Route 50 and the Easton Parkway.
- Develop a Tree or Urban Forestry Plan outlining areas proposed for new tree plantings, identifying sites/locations suitable as receiving areas for off-site planting that developers cannot accommodate on their properties, and establishing priorities and tools for establishing the "Green Ring" around downtown called for in the AKRF Downtown Study.
- Accept (if not solicit) annexation requests from those businesses located on Route 50 north of the current Town Boundary and require conformance with the Town's architectural, signage, and landscaping requirements as a condition of annexation, in order to improve this key visual gateway into Town.

Restrict the Rate of Growth

The issue of actively and purposely controlling Easton's rate of growth has been the subject of a great deal of debate for each of the last three Comprehensive Plan Updates, including this one. Up to this point the Planning Commission and Town Council have elected to allow the free market to determine Easton's growth rate. This was actually the case again in the earliest draft of this Plan. However, after hearing much testimony on the subject, the Planning Commission decided that indeed the dominant theme of this Plan to retain and/or return to an older way of doing things in Easton is endangered by a continued rate of growth in the range that we have experienced in the last 20 years or so. The fear is that at 3% growth (or more) development pressures are so great that it becomes more and more difficult to achieve all the goals relative to the type and form of development we want to see. Furthermore, growth at such a rate makes some of our most challenging problems, such as improving traffic conditions, or lessening our impact on the environment, even more difficult, to the point where it borders on the impossible.

The Commission recognizes that by merely stating that we want to achieve growth closer to our long-term average of 1%, absolutely nothing changes to make that happen. The Commission and Town Council discussed this issue at great length and ultimately decided that, for now at least, this issue should most appropriately be addressed by adhering to an Annexation Policy that does not allow for an exceedingly high rate of growth. The Priority Growth Areas are ideally suited to do this. The only potential shortcoming of this policy is the rate at which infill/build-out occurs. For this reason, the staff is directed to explore policies and tools which could achieve a specified targeted growth rate, in the event that growth gets out of control. The Commission also recognizes that it will take time to develop such policies, possibly until the enactment of the next Plan

in 2015, but they also realize that the longer this task is delayed, the more difficult it will be to achieve the vision of this Plan.

INTER-JURISDICTIONAL COORDINATION

Throughout this Comprehensive Plan there have been numerous references to Talbot County and the relationship between Easton's Planning effort and that of the County. This suggests the strong need for inter-jurisdictional coordination and cooperation between these two entities.

Due to the requirements specified by the Growth Act, it is imperative that the Town and County work closely together to coordinate growth policies. This occurred during the development of the 2004 Plan, as well as the County's 2005 Plan, at an unprecedented level. In particular, a great deal of thought went into planning the future of that area located between the present Town boundary and the proposed Urban Growth Boundary. The County's 2005 Comprehensive Plan consultant (Redman/Johnston Associates, Ltd.) prepared a conceptual development plan for this area. A copy of this map, as well as a proposed concept for what a future neighborhood development might look like is included on the following pages. A close examination between the County's proposed Plan for Easton's Growth Area and Easton's Plan for the same area, reveals that the two Plans are virtually (if not actually) identical.

In the preparation of this Plan Update, there was less direct coordination with the County, but that is largely because neither entity is proposing any changes to the boundaries of the Growth Area. We have worked very cooperatively regarding the one issue that has changed in this area, namely the proposed relocation of the Hospital.

One idea that has been discussed conceptually in previous Comprehensive Plans at both the Town and County levels is that of an inter-jurisdictional Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program. A TDR program simply refers to a system whereby the right to

develop a particular property is separated from that property so that it can then be sold (i.e. transferred) from a location where the community wishes to see land preserved and protected, to another location that has been identified as appropriate for growth. A handful of such programs exist throughout the country. What would be unique about this program is that it would involve the transfer of development rights from one jurisdiction (Talbot County) to another (the Town of Easton). Such a program would be another tool in helping to preserve the areas in the county (particularly those in close proximity to the Town's growth boundary) that are slated for preservation rather than growth. It may also represent an incentive for increased density on parcels located in the Town. The County has done some initial work on this issue and has kept the Town Planning staff up-to-date on this work. It is admittedly still in the very preliminary stages though.

GROWTH AREAS AND FUTURE LAND USE MAPS

The Land Use Chapter of this Plan mentioned that the heart of a Comprehensive Plan is its treatment and recommendations concerning land use. That chapter also contained many recommendations concerning land use. It is tied to this, the Implementation Element, via the maps that will implement those recommendations.

This Comprehensive Plan contains two maps relative to land use. The first is the Growth Map and the second is the Future Land Use Map.

The Growth Map is primarily about the appropriate sequence of development for the ultimate Town of Easton. It begins with the current Town boundary. Next, it depicts the Urban Growth Boundary that is the "ultimate" Town limit. It then examines the area between these two lines and considers the appropriate priority for development of this area in terms of a sequence.

The next step is to consider what areas within the Urban Growth Boundary are not presently within the Town of Easton but should be already for a variety of reasons. These

are labeled “Priority 1 – Boundary Refinement” on the Growth Area Map. Generally these consist of already developed areas like Crofton, Old Stoney Ridge, Old Beechwood, and most of Easton Point. They have long ago been developed under Talbot County rules and regulations and have increasingly become surrounded by properties developed under Town of Easton guidelines. To virtually any outsider, these areas would be assumed to currently be in the Town of Easton corporate limits. It is important to bring these areas into Town for at least three reasons. First, all of these areas are served by septic systems and most utilize individual private wells for water. This is both potentially environmentally damaging and inefficient given the relative close proximity and availability of Town water and sewer.

The second reason these properties should be in the Town of Easton is that given their location, they enjoy many of the conveniences of being in Town without paying a fair share. Finally, from the Town’s perspective the most important reason these areas should be in Town is that they preclude the Town’s ability to grow in the future. This is due to the fact that Maryland annexation law makes it illegal to create an enclave or island of unincorporated land surrounded by a municipality. Thus when such areas exist, they have the short-term effect of causing some rather strange Town boundaries as developers annex in such a way as to technically comply with this requirement. The long-term effect is that growth is stopped in a given direction. As indicated in the Land Use chapter, these are the only areas that should be annexed during the next planning period.

One area that merits special mention is the one that includes the commercial properties on Route 50 just north of Town, across from the Easton Airport. These are classified as a Priority 1 area largely because of their high visibility. For millions of travelers each year, they form the first impression of Easton, even though at the present time they are not actually in Easton. Thus they are deemed to be a top priority annexation

area with the thought that as a condition to annexation, these properties will be required to comply with the Town's signage and landscaping requirements and in the future if and when they expand, change use, etc..., they should be made to comply with the full range of design standards, including those for architecture.

The future growth area is further partitioned into three levels of priority for development. Priority 1 Areas are the "Boundary Refinement Areas" as was described previously. Priority 2 and 3 Areas are undeveloped, and generally (although not always) located the greatest distance from the existing Town Boundaries. There is no time-frame associated with the development of these latter two growth areas except that they are not deemed appropriate for development during the current Planning period (i.e. 2010 through 2016), and that when developed, Priority 2 Areas ought to be developed before Priority 3 Areas. Depending on the amount of development that does occur during this Planning Period, Priority 2 Areas may or may not be ready for development beginning with the next Planning Period in 2016. Priority 3 Areas are not envisioned as being necessary to accommodate growth for several Planning Periods.

Eventually though, it will be necessary to upgrade some Priority 2 Areas to Priority 1. Since it seems unlikely that the most suitable land to be added first will simply be the one whose owner asks first, some guidelines for deciding what lands should be added seem in order. Thus at such time as the Planning Commission determines that it is necessary to increase the supply of Priority 1 Areas, the following points should be considered:

- Proximity to Town Boundaries should be a significant consideration. Any area upgraded should be adjacent to the Town, preferably on more than one side. The higher the degree of contiguity, the higher the preference should be given to the parcel.

- Land on which a future amenity or public facility is identified should be given favorable consideration. This is especially true when the need for such amenity or facility is significant and/or imminent.
- Developers/Landowners who propose to provide land for amenities or public facilities which are specified in the Plan or in other Town Plans as being needed, but have no specific location attached thereto, should be afforded favorable consideration.
- Parcels/Farms should not be split between Priority 1 and Priority 2 Growth Areas unless there is a clear, obvious, and logical division based on a landform or a natural or manmade feature.
- Land that facilitates the annexation of long-standing enclave Priority 1 Areas, if applicable, should be given strong preference over other areas.

The second map that will guide the future growth and development of the Town of Easton during the planning period is the Future Land Use Map. This is the more traditional Map found in a Comprehensive Plan. It maps proposed land uses throughout the Town and within the Urban Growth Boundary.

The dominant land use in this Plan, as in the past, is residential. However, as has been discussed throughout the Plan, the way in which this development will occur in the future is proposed to change. Rather than simply designating land for future residential growth, collections of neighborhoods are proposed. Such neighborhoods should contain a variety of housing types, as well as limited, neighborhood-scale commercial development. The types of uses in this neighborhood scale commercial development are residentially-compatible office uses, and small, convenience type retail uses such as small grocery or convenience stores, service uses like Laundromats, beauty/hair salons, fitness centers, movie rental stores, and small sit-down or carry-out café-style restaurants or delis, as

examples. The size of these commercial areas should be relatively small as again, they are intended to provide what are essentially convenience goods and services to a neighborhood, not such goods or services at a regional or even Town-wide scale. One standard for this kind of use is 26 to 52 square feet per dwelling unit¹. Table 9 back in the Land Use Chapter also recommends that Neighborhood Retail serve a population of between 4,000 and 10,000 people and that such uses take up between four and eight acres of land. This means that although not mapped, we should plan for somewhere around 12 acres of land being devoted to future neighborhood commercial spread amongst the various future residential neighborhoods (based on a future 6,800 dwelling units, 39 sq ft of commercial space/du (265,200 sq ft), and 52,000 sq ft per 7,000 people [all midpoints of recommended ranges], $6,800 \times 2.2 = 14,960$ people, which equates to the need for two such centers, which requires 8 to 16 acres of land). In Easton, dividing this space amongst just two centers may not make it truly neighborhood-friendly. Thus it may be necessary to spread it out even more in smaller centers.

The first step in the preparation of the Future Land Use was to identify those areas that are either now or are planned to be out of play for development. These are depicted on the map as existing and proposed green spaces. These spaces consist of existing and planned parks, forest that is protected via the Town's Forest Conservation Ordinance, existing and proposed extensions to the Rail-Trail, and a network of stream buffers and wildlife corridors.

The next step in creating the Future Land Use Map was to identify those areas which are already within the Town limits, but which are undeveloped. The larger of these areas are identified on this map by a series of numbers (1 through 7). Each area will be briefly described below:

1 See *Visions for a New American Dream*, Anton Clarence Nelessen, Planners Press, 1994.

Area 1 – Area 1 is a highly visible parcel located on the west side of US Route 50 at the southern gateway into Town. Saints Peter and Paul Catholic Church owns the property. A new Church has been constructed on a portion of this parcel. Ultimately Saints Peter and Paul may relocate their private school to the same parcel.

Area 2 – Area 2 is the undeveloped farm on Dutchman’s Lane described earlier in this chapter, plus an adjacent farm that is already in the Town. These properties should be developed in the mode of a new neighborhood as has been described extensively throughout this plan. This would include high density residential (at least compared to recent developments), neighborhood-scale retail, office and/or industrial space, civic space, and open space (including parks).

Area 3 – Area 3 is land owned by Shore Health System, Inc. (“SHS”). At one time this land was envisioned by SHS to be the site of a new hospital campus to replace the existing Memorial Hospital at Easton facility. In light of these plans, in 1993, a portion of Area 3 was pre-mapped with the Town’s Commercial Medical zoning district (now known as the “Planned Healthcare” district) based upon the likelihood that the size of the site was sufficient to accommodate a new hospital as well as other hospital-related uses, such as medical offices, labs and diagnostic facilities, staff/nurses apartments, and assisted living facilities. Since that time, SHS has undertaken several major endeavors, including: (i) decentralization of many functions, such as labs and diagnostic services, to other locations including Idlewild Avenue; (ii) expansion of the Memorial Hospital emergency department; and (iii) most recently, conceptual selection of property located north of the Easton Airport and offered by Talbot County as the site for a new hospital and medical campus. The timing of SHS’ development of the County hospital site remains uncertain. For the current planning period, it makes sense to keep Area 3 zoned Planned Healthcare.

If not developed as a hospital, the non-hospital medical uses described above could still be developed in Area 3.

Area 4 - Area 4 represents the site previously proposed for first a Shopping Center and later a Home Depot. These proposals were the driving force in the enactment of the moratorium on big box applications and subsequent amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance. The biggest problem with the previous proposals is that they contemplated regional-scale commercial development at a site ill suited to handle such development. This site is more logically suited for transient-oriented commercial development and its depth affords the opportunity to do so in an attractive alternative to typical highway strip development.

Area 5 – Area 5 is another area that has been the subject of numerous development proposals over the past few years. The most recent proposal involved a mixed-use development with a small shopping center anchored by a grocery store, a new movie theatre, a hotel, office space, and second floor residential space. This development scheme seems like a logical option if the shopping center and any big box uses are sized such that they target a reasonably tight market area. That is to say some level of regional-scale commercial development seems appropriate here, but it should not be of a scope and magnitude that it would attract a level of traffic that would overwhelm the site.

Area 6 – Area 6 represents the large undeveloped area on the west side of Route 50, south of Chapel Road. Given its location, it is perhaps the parcel with the greatest development potential, at least in term of the number of options for development. Its elongated shape may preclude a true neighborhood style of development, but something along that line modified to accommodate the size and shape of the property seems in order. This would involve predominately residential development. The northern portion adjacent to Chapel Farms would be logical for continued single-family housing. The

portion of the property that borders the RTC Park seems ideally suited for residential development fronting on this park. A small area for commercial development to serve the users of the Park is appropriate as well. Access to the Park from Route 50 should be provided across Area 6. Finally, the southern portion of the site could serve as a combination of transient commercial, offices and/or apartments, the latter two of which would seem ideally suited to overlook the park and greenway corridor.

Area 7 – Area 7 is the one area not currently within the Town as of 2009. It represents the site of the proposed new Regional-scale medical facility of Shore Health Systems. Based on the Memorandum of Understanding signed by SHS, The Town of Easton, and Talbot County, the Zoning of this site is to be assigned concurrent with its annexation and is to be a new zoning district which applies only to Regional Hospitals. The development of this site is envisioned as a campus-style facility with medical offices and other related services in addition to the hospital itself.

These seven areas are envisioned by this Plan as the primary location of any development not already “on the books” at this time during the upcoming Planning Period. The first six are already within the Town boundaries and the seventh is a special situation which may or may not begin the development process during this Planning Period. Combined with the existing planned and/or approved lot inventory and potential infill/redevelopment, growth at our recent rate of 3% should not exhaust the development potential of these areas. However, in planning for the time when this does occur, the Future Land Use Map identifies properties that represent the next logical step in the development sequence of the Town. In addition, the Future Land Use Map also shows future commercial, industrial, park, and institutional uses. Commercial Use, presumably a continuation of the Transient-oriented retail already present, is shown along much of U.S. Route 50. Institutional Uses are indicated, a new addition to the Future Land Use Map. So

too are two Redevelopment Areas, a Mixed Use Commercial/Residential Area and areas identified as Business Commercial.

The Institutional Uses reflect both the current and proposed site of the Hospital as well as larger government facilities (i.e. Police Barracks, Public Works Barns). One of the Redevelopment Areas shown corresponds to the industrially-zoned land along the Rail-Trail that was the inspiration for the establishment of the Planned Redevelopment Zoning District. These properties have long been identified as suitable for redevelopment and several have been. The other Redevelopment Area is Easton Point. To date this area has slowly been redeveloped with the location of the County's Public Works Facility and the establishment and expansion of the Londonderry Retirement Community. As redevelopment occurs on lands closer to the water, more of a mixed-use project(s) is envisioned with open space and public access to the waterfront, commercial uses along the water or this open space, and residential uses located landward of the commercial uses. Ground Floor commercial with upper floor apartment or condominium space is not inappropriate either. One catalyst to the redevelopment of Easton Point may be the former site of the Town's Public Works Facility, which was just relocated in January of 2009. It will presumably soon be on the market and could help facilitate redevelopment of the area.

The one Mixed Use – Commercial/Residential Area that has been identified is for future phases of the Waterside Village Shopping Center. This is seen as a mix of the continued build-out of the Shopping Center and Garden Apartments. If the Shopping Center is made truly pedestrian friendly, these apartments could be a great place for those who are (or want to be) less dependent on the automobile to locate. This is not to say, however, that mixed use at this site is mandatory. Rather, it is permissible, even encouraged. An early proposal for the original development of the site included a mixture of residential and commercial uses, but it was soon abandoned when it was determined

that the Town's Zoning Ordinance at that time did not permit such a combination of uses. That is no longer the case today in the Zoning Ordinance and this Plan supports the concept of mixed use here as well.

The Business Commercial Areas are those that correspond primarily to existing industrially-zoned land that has slowly become less industrial and more commercial in nature. The thinking here is to eventually create a new Zoning District to legitimize this shift, while at the same time tightening up on the remaining Select Industrial Zoning Districts so that there we will have land available for truly industrial uses. Uses in the Business Commercial District will likely include offices, service uses, warehousing, and perhaps some limited, low-traffic retail.

When evaluating future development proposals both of these maps should be consulted. One will indicate what kind of use the Town expects to see on a given parcel and the other will indicate when we expect to see it. In addition, specific parcels are discussed throughout the Plan and some may be subject to planning issues that can only be found in the Parks or Transportation elements. Thus it is essential to consider what the whole Plan says about a given parcel, not just one Map or Element in isolation.

ACHIEVING THE VISION

This Comprehensive Plan for Easton lays out a future that accommodates significant growth, but does so in a manner with which we are comfortable. It acknowledges mistakes of the past, specifically in decreasing density beginning in about the 1950's and allowing a suburban-style of development to take root in Easton in the 1970's and 80's. It calls for a marked departure from these mistakes and a return to the traditional small-Town Eastern Shore style of development that shaped this community for 250 years.

Easton is not a suburban community like those found on Maryland's Western Shore or in numerous other metropolitan areas. We are a small but growing community in the

heart of a rural, agricultural and maritime region. Ubiquitous power centers and strip shopping centers are not part of what we are about. Neither are cul-de-sacs, disconnected streets and subdivisions that might as well be gated because they are so isolated. Clearly Easton has some of these types of development and the people who live, work, or shop there are no less valued members of our community than anyone else. We simply have decided such developments are an inappropriate form of development going forward in Easton. Those considering Easton as a future home that desire such a community should frankly look elsewhere.

In order to achieve the Vision laid out in this Plan, much help will be required. Fortunately Easton is blessed with a well-educated and involved citizenry. The level of involvement of many of these citizens throughout the process of preparing this and previous Plans has been described elsewhere in this document. In order to make the Easton we have all said we want, these same people and more must continue with this same level of commitment, interest and caring for our community. The authors of this Plan will eventually become less active and ultimately pass away, but the Vision we have created and the policies set forth herein will share this community well beyond our years here. If we want our children and our grandchildren to care about Easton as much as we all do, we need to maintain the passion and commitment to this Plan and its Vision.

By the same token, the Town should be as clear as possible to those seeking to move to Easton in the future about the kinds of things we envision. Ultimately the final responsibility lies with those contemplating a move here, but the Town can help make our goals, policies, and plans more clearly known so that this decision about whether to locate to Easton is as informed as possible. We should strive to communicate in as many means and mediums as possible. Our website should be easily navigable and up-to-date and we should look into means of communicating that are just now exploding in other realms, such

as blogging, podcasts, streaming audio (or video) of meetings, social networking sites (e.g. Twitter, Facebook), etc., so that all existing and future residents have the greatest possible opportunity to participate in shaping our community in the future.

IMPLEMENTATION GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

GOAL: To insure that future development, proposed development related programs and redevelopment projects are implemented consistent with the spirit of this Comprehensive Plan.

OBJECTIVES:

- ✓ Provide an analysis of the implementation progress of the Comprehensive Plan's Goals and Objectives each July as part of the Annual Report of the Easton Planning & Zoning Commission.
- ✓ Monitor the effectiveness of recent amendments to the Town's Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations which were designed to insure that future growth of the Town occurs in a system of neighborhoods rather than a collection of single-use, suburban style subdivisions.
- ✓ Develop, evaluate and refine Design Standards for all types of development in all parts of Town.
- ✓ Work with various local groups in order to prepare Neighborhood Plans similar to that done by the East Side neighborhood several years ago. The West Side has been suggested as a likely starting point for such an endeavor. Where the institutional capacity exists, these neighborhood plans can be largely prepared by the neighborhood groups themselves.

GOAL: To realize the benefits of revitalization with a Smart Growth focus in order to make our older neighborhoods more affordable, more attractive, more varied, walkable, safer and healthier, utilizing existing infrastructure.

OBJECTIVES:

- ✓ Target public investment in infrastructure and infrastructure upgrades to already developed areas since opportunities to acquire such infrastructure from new development are rare.
- ✓ Support efforts to revitalize neighborhoods through infrastructure grants, housing rehabilitation loans and programs, environmental clean-ups, etc.
- ✓ Establish policy that builds on the strengths of existing housing stock, thus preserving Easton's history and sense of place

GOAL: To research and where appropriate enact policies and measures which implement the Vision and spirit of this Comprehensive Plan.

OBJECTIVES:

- ✓ Research the legality of various methods of limiting growth to achieve an annual growth rate of no more than 1% per year.
- ✓ Evaluate the effectiveness of existing rules and regulations in achieving the design goals and principles of this Plan.

GOAL: To coordinate planning efforts for areas and issues of mutual concern to both the Town of Easton and Talbot County.

OBJECTIVES:

- ✓ Work with County Planning officials to ensure that areas designated for future growth of the Town are treated similarly by the Plans of both jurisdictions.
- ✓ Continue to work cooperatively with Talbot County to institute an Inter-jurisdictional Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Program.

GOAL: To facilitate an informed and involved citizenry.

OBJECTIVES:

- ✓ Investigate methods to insure that significant future projects (e.g. roads, community facilities, parks, etc.) are known by prospective homebuyers prior to the finalization of the sales process.
- ✓ Explore more and innovative ways to inform and involve the general public in planning issues.