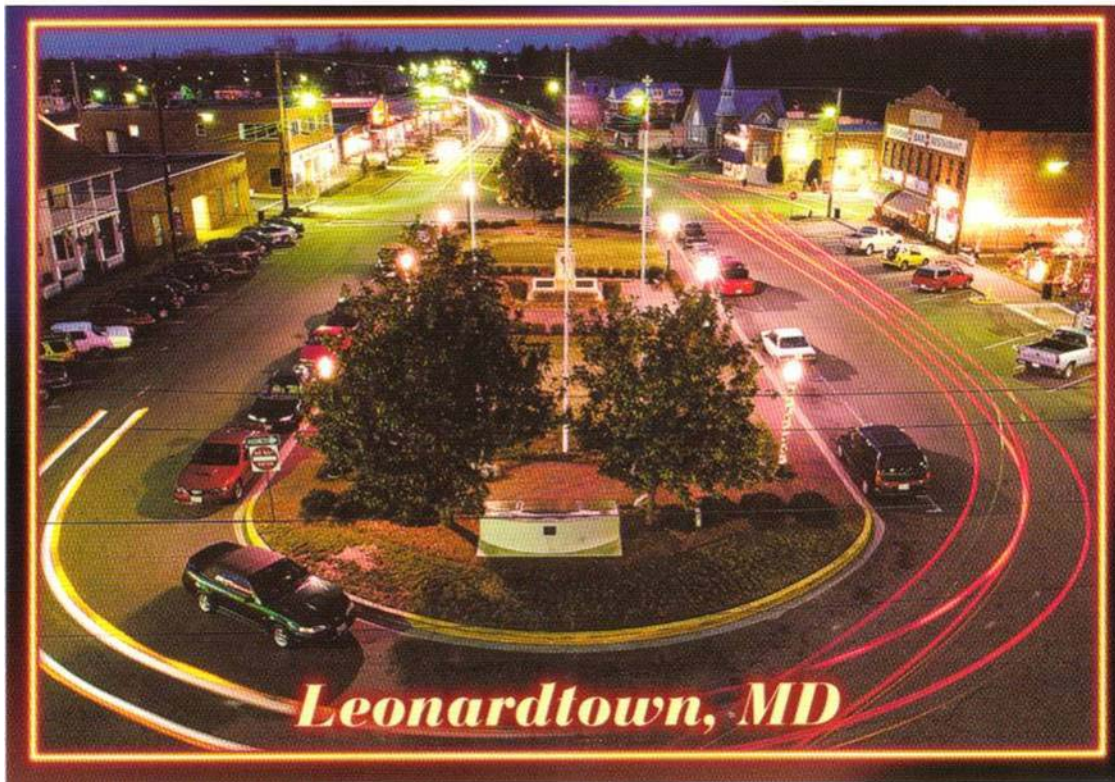


Comprehensive Land Use Plan



2004

Comprehensive Land Use Plan ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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PURPOSE

The purpose of Leonardtown's Comprehensive Plan is to protect and perpetuate the Town's unique atmosphere as the historic and governmental center of St. Mary's County. The Town is also the oldest town in the state that has been incorporated.

Over the past seven years, Leonardtown has reasserted itself economically. After a period of decline, the downtown area is rebounding with various shops and restaurants; the Town is rapidly becoming the health center, educational center and center of government for St. Mary's County.

St. Mary's Hospital, with a major expansion/renovation program completed in 2004, is the center of a complex of medical offices in and around the town. In addition to the Courthouse, the County Commissioners and most other local, state and federal agencies are in the Town. The town is also an educational center, the College of Southern Maryland, Leonardtown High, Middle and Elementary School, Father Andrew White School, Leonard Hall Junior Naval Academy, St. Mary's Ryken High School, and the St. Mary's Technical Center are in or just outside the town boundaries.

Residential growth is occurring, after a long period of stagnation. During the late 1990s the Patuxent River Naval Air Station, in Lexington Park, produced an influx of technical jobs resulting from the consolidation of several Navy activities. This added some 5,000 jobs and spin off development added a approximately 13,000 jobs in the region around the naval base. In that the Town is about 20 minutes from the Lexington Park area, some of these families and jobs located in or around the Town.

The Washington, D.C. area is still one of the fastest growing regions in the country and as its suburbs creep ever outward, the Town will be affected by the overall increase in population in St. Mary's County. From 1996-2001 St. Mary's County saw a 9.2% increase in population, as

compared to a 4.8% increase in Maryland and a 6% increase over the entire United States. It is expected that St. Mary's County population will increase from 90,044 (per the 2000 Census) to 100,800 by 2010.

This Comprehensive Plan is designed to accommodate this anticipated growth while preserving the small town character of Leonardtown. This is not an easy task, and if the Town does not have a good Plan that is followed, it could be overwhelmed.

The Plan must also look to the future. Growth usually occurs in small increments and a couple of years of seemingly minor decisions can, over time, produce large impacts on the Town. Though it is difficult to imagine what the Town will be in 20 years, not to mention 50 years, planning decisions must be made with the long range outlook in mind.

The Plan should serve as a guide to orderly growth and development while balancing these issues with human and environmental concerns.

After adoption, the Plan will serve as:

- **A unified statement of desirable development policies.**
- **A framework within which specific development issues can be evaluated and public policy effectuated consistent with the long-range growth and development goals and objectives of the Town.**
- **An information document for local elected officials, citizens, developers, and special interest groups concerning critical development issues as well as Town development policies.**
- **A decision-making tool when reviewing subdivision and site plan proposals.**

State planning and zoning enabling statutes require a statement that contains goals, objectives and implementation policies which serve as a guide for orderly development. The Plan should help Town government coordinate its functions and to provide a framework for evaluating

conflicting demands for limited resources.

I. INTRODUCTION

Leonardtown, now located at the headwaters of Breton Bay, was originally established in the mid 1650's near the Potomac River in an area now known as New Towne. In 1708, 50 acres at the head of Britton's Bay, known as Shepherd's Old Fields, were laid out in 100 lots. The area was named after the governor and became known as Seymour Town. The county seat was officially moved from St. Mary's City and the County Commissioners authorized the building of a courthouse. Prior to this, the county court was conducted in various homes in the New Towne area.

Nearly all the activity associated with the Town occurred at the landing on the Bay and the Town itself did not really exist other than on paper. In 1728, however, a more forceful group of County Commissioners was appointed and the Town began to become the center of government and commercial activity for the County. A brick courthouse was authorized in 1736. In 1744 1,096 acres around the original Town was patented to Abraham Barnes as the plantation American Felix Secundus, on which he built Tudor Hall. The land passed from the Barnes family to the Key family, which operated the farm well into the twentieth century.

Leonardtown was incorporated in 1858 and functioned as a port from colonial times through the passing of the steamboat era. After this period, better roads and trucking ended its function as a port. However, the original vision of the Town as the center for commerce and government had been realized.

The Town remained the residential and social center of the County until the middle of the

twentieth century. The establishment of the Patuxent River Naval Air Station on the Chesapeake Bay began to pull businesses and people away from Leonardtown toward the eastern side of the County. Most new development occurred in that area, now named Lexington Park, and through the 1980s, though still the seat of government, Leonardtown was somewhat ignored by the development community.

The relocation of St. Mary's Hospital to a larger site and the subsequent development of medical offices nearby began to give the Town an identity. The continued growth of County government means that most County residents still have to come to the Town. The opening of the Community College at St. Mary's in 1997, along with the continued presence of numerous Elementary, Middle and High Schools, both public and private, in and around the Town, makes the Town a center for education as well.

The expected growth and development have the potential to change the face of the Town. In the St. Mary's County Comprehensive Plan, Leonardtown and its surrounding area is designated as a Development District as part of the County's efforts to direct growth toward areas of existing development.

A. PLAN ELEMENTS

Certain elements, required under good planning practices and state laws, must be included in the Plan. The Maryland Economic Growth, Resource Protection and Planning Act of 1992 require seven Visions for growth, protection and planning. In 2000 an 8th vision was added.

These Visions are:

1. Development is concentrated in suitable areas.
2. Sensitive areas are protected.
3. In rural areas, growth is directed to existing population centers and resource areas are protected.
4. Stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay and the land is a universal ethic.
5. Conservation of resources, including a reduction in resource consumption, is practiced.
6. To achieve items 1 through 5, economic growth is encouraged and regulatory mechanisms are streamlined.
7. Funding mechanisms are addressed to achieve these visions.
8. Adequate public facilities and infrastructure under the control of the town are available or planned in areas where growth is to occur.

These Visions are not Plans. They are principles or guidelines which, under state law, must be followed during the development and implementation of the Comprehensive Plan.

In addition to the Visions, all comprehensive plans for Maryland jurisdictions are required by statute to contain certain elements, as a minimum. These elements are:

1. A Statement of Goals and Policies
2. Land Use Plan
3. Transportation Plan
4. Community Facilities Element

5. Mineral Resources Element

6. Plan Implementation Policies

There are other elements which may be considered and for the Leonardtown Plan the following will also be addressed:

1. Downtown Development/Revitalization

2. Community Character

3. Housing

4. Economic Development

5. Public Access to the Water

6. Sensitive Lands/Areas

7. Historic Preservation

II. GOALS AND POLICIES

A. LEONARDTOWN SHOULD RETAIN ITS SMALL TOWN CHARACTER

1. Downtown revitalization

a) Develop and implement a landscaping plan for the downtown and other non-residential areas of the Town.

b) Make public parking areas safer and more attractive.

c) Improve public parking signage.

- d) The Town should implement a plan for code enforcement of existing ordinances that are in place to protect the character of the Town (such as derelict buildings and property maintenance).
2. Improve/increase community activity areas
 - a) New development areas must provide areas for active and passive recreation.
 3. Increase appreciation of Town history
 - a) Develop appropriate ordinances to preserve the Town's historic buildings while allowing modifications to accommodate modern uses.
 - b) Foster a knowledge and appreciation of the Town's history through displays, signs, tours and events.
 4. Prevent sprawl development outside the Town boundaries.
 - a) In the April 1999 St. Mary's County Comprehensive Plan, the County reduced the Leonardtown Development District by removing those areas of the development district west of Leonardtown that are in the highly environmentally sensitive McIntosh Run watershed. The areas of the development district north and east of Leonardtown (from Tin Top Hill across to the Town Run valley and east to Cedar Lane) were retained in the County's plan. The Town would support efforts to reduce the boundaries to include only the Town limits. These efforts will help to control growth outside of the town boundaries and help to protect the downtown retail core. In addition, the St. Mary's Metropolitan Commission has allocated its entire share of EDUs, per the 1980 interjurisdictional agreement, outside the Leonardtown

incorporated boundaries, minimizing the likelihood of substantial additional development around the Town's periphery.

b) Additional land in the downtown area should be zoned to allow commercial development.

B. PUBLIC ACCESS TO THE WATER SHOULD BE ENHANCED

1. When waterfront areas are developed, public access must be provided.

a) Access to Breton Bay must be provided via such things as marina facilities and boardwalks that are available for use by the general public.

2. Developed waterfront areas should be linked by roads and walkways/bikeways.

a) Roadway and pedestrian linkage between adjoining non-residential developments on Breton Bay must be provided in development plans for immediate or future construction.

C. CROSSTOWN AND THROUGH TOWN TRANSPORTATION MUST BE IMPROVED

1. While there are still large undeveloped areas on the outer boundaries of the Town, new transportation corridors must be established.

a) Transportation corridors must be established now and be of sufficient size to accommodate future growth. Buildings and other development not related to transportation will be prohibited in these corridors.

b) As undeveloped land is developed, the developers must build the portion of their roadway system in the established transportation corridors to serve the new

development and through traffic.

c) These new and planned roadways must tie into the existing highway and road system and must be coordinated with the future construction plans of the State and County.

2. New developments must provide for non-automobile transportation.

a) Sidewalks, nature trails and bikeways are essential elements in new development.

b) The existing system of sidewalks should be enhanced wherever possible, including acquisition of pedestrian easements or other improvements by the Town.

3. A shuttle bus system should be established connecting major employment, residential and service centers, with the downtown areas.

a) In order to increase activity downtown and to take advantage of planned parking areas which may not be near the downtown or adjacent to employment centers, the County bus system should be expanded to connect employment centers, retail areas and parking lots.

b) In light of the Leonardtown Wharf mixed use development, a shuttle connection should be established between the Leonardtown Square commercial area and the waterfront development.

D. THE TOWN SHOULD MARKET ITSELF TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF NAVY RELATED

DEVELOPMENT

1. Coordinate with the Navy to ensure continuous communication regarding Leonardtown's housing, retail and tourism opportunities.
2. The Town should pursue the establishment of roadways more directly linking the Town to the California-Hollywood employment center.

III. LAND USE PLAN

The focus of land use in Leonardtown will be managed to maintain and improve the community character and quality of life for all residents. The timing and pace of new development will be managed to be compatible with the Town's ability to provide adequate public services and to ensure that the character of the Town is protected. The Town shall give priority to neighborhood, business and commercial projects that have a reasonable expectation of being a catalyst for revitalization in designated areas of the Town.

Over half of the land within the Town boundaries is currently farmland or woodland. The challenge the Town faces is to decide how these areas will be developed.

These undeveloped lands also present an opportunity because large, contiguous areas have not been developed, the Town has the ability to designate corridors for future transportation facilities, maintain open spaces and to guide development in ways that will strengthen the Town and maintain its traditional rural setting.

A. CURRENT LAND USE PLAN Appendix A

This map shows land uses as they are being utilized today.

B. PROPOSED LAND USE PLAN Appendix B

A major goal of the Land Use Plan revision is to address potential areas which would allow for the expansion of the Commercial Business District and to provide flexibility in developing large parcels of land with a mixed use development. New development designs shall be compatible with the character of the Town. All new development abutting existing neighborhoods shall provide continuity for vehicle and pedestrian movement by maximizing connectivity to the extent consistent with good site planning.

1. DEVELOPED AREAS

Future changes to the land along Washington Street, currently zoned Multi-Family, should be rezoned to Commercial Business. This infill zoning should extend from MD Rte. 245 to Shadrick Street, between Washington Street and Pope Street. The rezoning would be consistent with the changes in zoning that have occurred over the last several years in that area and would extend the commercial business district.

Another parcel for future consideration would be the Saunders lot, corner of Rt. 5 and Rt. 245. This parcel could be considered for rezoning to Commercial Office with conditions. This would be consistent with the 1997 rezoning of adjacent properties and would be sensitive to the historic homes in the immediate area.

2. UNDEVELOPED LAND

Most of the vacant land in the Town, which consists of approximately 968 acres, is zoned PUD-M (Planned Unit Development-Mixed Use), at a maximum density of 5 dwelling units per acre. The 172 acre farm on the north side of Point Lookout Road should be zoned PUD-M as are all other large undeveloped parcels within the town, PUD-M zoning allows for mixed use development. This category gives flexibility to the developer while at the same time; the town has final approval of the development plan for the site. Rezoning of this site should be pursued immediately.

Existing vacant land along Courthouse Drive, currently zoned Multi-Family or Commercial Office, should be zoned Commercial Business. The rezoning of properties adjacent to Fenwick Street should be pursued at this time. This would allow for an expansion of the Commercial Business District.

C. POPULATION

According to the 2000 Census, the population of Leonardtown was 1,896. From 1990-1995 only 13 new residential building permits were issued. The Town now averages 13.8 per year.

<u>Year</u>	<u>New Residential Building</u>
1990-1995	13
1996	5
1997	13
1998	13
1999	12
2000	15
2001	18

2002	21
2003	14

With the growth scheduled at the Patuxent Naval Air Warfare Center, 13 miles from Leonardtown, and the fact that St. Mary’s County has also designated lands east of Leonardtown as a Development District, the Town is positioned for rapid growth. The Southern Maryland area has also become a more attractive commuter corridor over the last several years.

D. GROWTH PROJECTIONS

The Town’s population for the last 70+ years is presented in the following table. Statistical analysis (linear regression) of the population records revealed that the Town’s population has increased by approximately 16 persons per year over the period of record. Using a linear projection of the population records, the projected population estimated for 2010, 2020, and 2050. This information is presented for comparative purposes.

Town of Leonardtown, Maryland Census Numbers	
1930	697
1940	668
1950	1017
1960	1281
1970	1406
1980	1448
1990	1475
2000	1896
Projections	
2010	1978
2020	2143
2050	2637

Prepared by Sterns & Wheler, LLC for the Commissioners of Leonardtown Water Master Plan, September 2003

IV. TRANSPORTATION PLAN

The Transportation element of the Comprehensive Plan is, perhaps, the one over which the Town has the most control. For a place like Leonardtown, which has a major state highway running through it, scattered employment centers, a downtown core and parking concerns, the Transportation Plan is a critical element of the Comprehensive Plan.

The focus of the Transportation Plan must be moving people who are on their way to another place through the Town and moving people who live, work and shop in the Town, around the within Town.

Transportation can be enhanced by expanding and improving existing roads and by building new ones. Other methods of moving people around need to be developed through better pedestrian walks, routes to accommodate bicycles and public transit systems. Fortunately, the land in the Town available for new development is mostly undeveloped. This presents the opportunity to designate transportation corridors before buildings are put in the way.

A. EXISTING ROAD NETWORK

The Town's various public roads are individually owned by the Town, the County and the State. The ownership entity is responsible for maintenance and snow removal.

1. STATE HIGHWAYS

The State of Maryland owns and maintains MD Rte. 5 and MD Rte. 245. The Town and the State Highway Administration (SHA) have been working on a streetscape plan for the Business Rte. 5 section. After completion of the streetscape plan, it is planned that the Town would then accept ownership of this road. Due to State budget constraints this plan is currently on hold.

The most serious traffic problems occur on that portion of MD Rte. 5 between the intersection of MD Rtes. 5 and 245 and the intersection of MD Rtes. 5 and 243. There are numerous houses and businesses with individual entrances on both sides of this section of MD Rte. 5, which is a four-lane highway, with no turn lanes or acceleration/deceleration lanes. There is room for widening between MD Rte. 245 and MD Rte. 243 of this section of road. The north side has few entrances and most buildings are set back at least 100 feet and approximately half of this section passes undeveloped farmland. This is not the case on the south side which has numerous single

family detached homes and businesses with minimum setbacks from the highway.

Development regulations should insure that new buildings on the north side of MD Rte. 5, between MD Rte 245 and MD Rte. 243, are located back from the highway a sufficient amount to accommodate widening of MD Rte. 5. Adequate setbacks of new structures and right-of-way dedications are needed as development/redevelopment occurs along MD Rte. 5 and MD Rte. 245. Cooperation between the town and the State Highway Administration should continue to ensure that a MD Rte. 5 center left turn lane project is planned and budgeted by fiscal year 2007. In coordination with SHA, the town should consider access management strategies to limit private road entrance onto MD 5 and encourage access through public roadways from future developments.

2. COUNTY ROADS

St. Mary's County owns and maintains Courthouse Drive, Tudor Hall Road, Tudor Place, Library Place and Greenbrier Road.

The County also owns and maintains roads on the various County facilities' sites throughout the Town.

3. TOWN STREETS

The remaining streets are owned and maintained by the Town, with exception of several gravel roads which are private, such as Johnson Lane.

The Town generally does not build new streets. New Town streets are built to the standards of the Town Road Ordinance by developers on undeveloped land and given to the Town for maintenance.

The majority of the Town's street maintenance budget is derived from its share of the State Highway User Tax on gasoline. The state uses a formula based on miles of street and number of registered vehicles to determine the Town's annual allocation.

B. EXISTING SIDEWALK SYSTEM

The Town is well served by sidewalks in the downtown area and the Town's development regulations contain requirements for sidewalks in new developments. There are a few residential areas without sidewalks, but these are generally in low density, low traffic areas which allow pedestrians to walk along the streets with little danger. It is unlikely the Town's budget would accommodate installation of sidewalks in these areas during the time frame of this Comprehensive Plan. The Rte.5 corridor also serves a large number of pedestrians. To encourage additional pedestrian use and for safety, sidewalks should be constructed along Rte.5.

The Town has a sidewalk maintenance program and sections of sidewalks are periodically replaced. Since many of the sidewalks are several decades old, it is essential that the maintenance program be continued.

C. BICYCLE TRANSPORTATION

There are no designated bicycle travel areas in the Town. Except for the state highways, most streets in the Town are presently wide enough and so lightly traveled that bicycles can be accommodated. However, this may not be the case in the future. New and expanded roads will need to take bicycles into consideration.

D. MASS TRANSIT

St. Mary's County currently operates a small bus system which brings people from outside the Town limits to selected stops within the Town. There is also a Leonardtown loop which operates with regular stops throughout the Town. As the major employment centers within the Town grow, there may be a need for a transit system within the Town to lighten traffic congestion and parking space problems.

E. TRANSPORTATION PLAN - FUTURE ROADS

In order to facilitate movement through and around Town, several new roads are proposed in the Transportation Plan Internal Improvements Map (Appendix C).

As Tudor Hall farm is developed, the downtown area will be connected to this community via the extension of Fenwick Street to MD Rte. 5. The entrance for Tudor Hall Farms and the entrance for the Clark Farm on the north side of MD Rte. 5 shall be aligned when these parcels are developed. An access road should be provided connecting Doctor's Crossing Way to this lighted intersection. Also, at the MD Rte. 245 and Doctor's Crossing Way intersection, roadway improvements should be made. Though it would be the towns desire to connect the Tudor Hall Farms project with MD Rte. 243, current state environmental agencies prohibit development in the western corner of Tudor Hall Farms where this connection should be made. The State Highway Administration has stated that they would be supportive of a connection to MD Rte. 243 from downtown Leonardtown via Tudor Hall Farms. This connection would aid circulation and remove some local traffic from MD Rte. 5 and MD Rte. 5 business.

Though there are environmentally sensitive lands in the next proposed transportation

corridor, provisions should be in place to connect the Clark Farm to the Lindsay Farm access road. An improved Greenbrier Road could also be connected for improved access.

Other minor improvements are shown on the Transportation Plan Internal Improvements Map (Appendix C).

In addition to internal road improvements a loop road around the north of Town should be planned by the County. This proposal is shown on Transportation Plan External Improvements Map (Appendix D.)

This proposal creates a northern bypass which begins at an upgraded Maypole Road and ties into Cemetery Road before intersecting with MD Rte. 245. It would continue to meet an improved Cedar Lane which would enhance access to the employment center developing in the California-Hollywood area.

Though this external loop road cannot be justified now, a corridor for these roads should be designated when the land through which the corridor passed is developed. Developers would be required to build sections of these roads as part of their construction. Missing pieces of the roads would be filled in the County or by the Town if these lands are annexed.

V. COMMUNITY FACILITIES

The Town owns very few community facilities. There are three parking lots and two town squares. The town squares were refurbished in 1998. In 2002, the Town purchased an additional parking lot site adjacent to the existing facility on Park Ave. The existing lot is currently under

design for renovations, as well as building additional parking on the new site. This additional site was purchased as a result of the findings of the 2002 Parking Study.

There are recreation facilities within the Town, however, which are owned and maintained by St. Mary's County. These include a playground on the Leonardtown Elementary School property and play fields and a field house/gymnasium building on the Governmental Center property.

The Town has ownership and is developing an environmental education park, known as The Port of Leonardtown, located at the Old State Highway property on Rt. 5/ Point Lookout Road. The Town currently owns 3.32 acres of the property. The St. Mary's County Commissioners own a land locked parcel which is approximately 1 acre on the property. The Town should pursue negotiations with St. Mary's County to acquire the entire parcel.

The Town has entered into an agreement to purchase approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ acre of land at the Leonardtown Wharf. This property has concept approval for a public, water access park.

Large new developments should be required to provide recreation facilities (local playgrounds, ball fields, picnic areas) and/or land for facilities. The Town would decide on a case by case basis whether the facilities would be given to the Town for public use or retained by the homeowners of the development.

The Town is pursuing a near term solution for a new Town Hall. This opportunity would provide for the Town to own condominium office space which could be sold if a larger more permanent home for Town Hall was established.

Any development on the Tudor Hall Farms property will have a direct connection to the downtown area via Fenwick Street because of its width and the easy access through the town it would provide. This is the only foreseeable opportunity for the Town to obtain vacant land near the

downtown.

Therefore, it is a recommendation that when Tudor Hall Farms is developed that the Town obtains approximately one acre of land on the west side of Fenwick Street (extended) on Lawrence Avenue as the site of a possible future Town Hall.

VI. UTILITY SYSTEMS

The Town owns and operates a wastewater treatment plant, a wastewater collection system and a water production and distribution system. In 2003 the Town completed a Water and Sewer Master Plan. This plan revealed the following information and will allow the Town to better plan for future growth. Because of the large amount of undeveloped land within the Town and the concept plans that have evolved over time the Town should monitor, and revise as necessary from time to time, its policy for allocating water and sewer capacity.

The wastewater treatment plant, completed in 1983, is very well maintained. The plant was upgraded to a Biological Nutrient Removal process in 2003. The wastewater treatment plant is designed to process 680,000 gpd. In 2003, the plant processed an average of 387,400 gpd. Growth estimates are indicated on the Appendix E chart. This projection was completed as part of the Water and Sewer Master Plan. The chart shows a potential need for plant expansion in year three. The town has begun planning for expansion of the plant's capacity. The next expansion would take the plant to 1 mgd and would be an Enhanced Nutrient Removal System.

The major recommendations of the water supply and storage system include:

- 1) Increasing the MDE Water Appropriation Permit.
- 2) Look at additional well sites for future capacity and to address the upcoming Arsenic Regulations.
- 3) An additional .5 – 1.0 million gallons of storage may be needed by 2012.

VII. MINERAL RESOURCES

Gravel is the only known mineral in or around the Town. Currently, Town ordinances do not permit gravel mines in the Town. (Gravel mines are defined as those in which gravel is extracted and taken off site. Landowners are permitted to mine gravel on their land for use on site.)

VIII. DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT/REVITALIZATION

The Town Commissioners have taken important steps toward downtown revitalization. A landscape architect was hired to redesign the Town Squares and to establish a planting theme for the Town. The squares were refurbished in 1998 to provide an ideal setting for large community gatherings and promotional events.

The Town has also established the Downtown Redevelopment District to allow businesses in the downtown to apply for low interest loans from the state. In addition, the Town implemented a program for painting a historical mural on the walls of the Old Towne Properties building located on Washington Street. However, the revitalization of buildings is essentially in the hands of the private sector.

The Town has established design guidelines to insure the rehabilitation of buildings adheres to a consistent theme. The recommended theme or “look” of the Town is traditional.

IX. COMMUNITY CHARACTER

The character of the Leonardtown community should be that of a small town. This would: (a) preclude the development of high rise buildings, (b) encourage the rehabilitation of the downtown business district as a retail and community activity center, (c) discourage large retail development outside the business district or just outside the Town boundaries, and (d) discourage large scale, regional “big box” commercial development since it is not in keeping with the goals and objectives of this Plan.

The Mayor, Town Council and Planning Commission has recognized the need for developments to address visual qualities, community characteristics, streetscapes and has required improvements as conditions of approval for developments. In December 1999, the Town approved the Leonardtown Development Design Manual. This manual was intended to establish design principles and illustrates how they may be applied to support the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations to better manage the character and qualities of future development in Leonardtown.

X. HOUSING

Leonardtown has a variety of housing styles and price ranges.

Most of the multi-family housing developed in and immediately around the Town within the past 15 years has served low to moderate income families. The Town has accommodated its share of the overall demand in St. Mary's County for low to moderate income housing and has a large stock of these types of units. The Town now needs to balance these developments with higher priced housing.

Opportunities for new housing exist in several large tracts on the boundaries of the Town. These parcels are zoned to permit flexible arrangements of housing types. New housing development must be carefully designed and balanced to maintain and enhance the character of Leonardtown.

XI. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Leonardtown continues to be the County's employment center for government and medical services. With a community college, two high schools, a middle school, two elementary schools in, or within two miles of, the Town, education related employment will continue to grow.

After a period of decline, the downtown retail district has begun to rebound. Vacant stores are minimal. Town officials should continue efforts to revitalize the downtown by providing other attractions to draw people to the downtown areas. Use of the downtown for parades and other events has become very successful.

As more activity occurs downtown, however, parking becomes more of a problem. The Town needs to establish more parking areas in and around the downtown retail area, provide better signage to existing parking areas and a map/brochure showing the existing parking areas. These items are all recommendations being addressed from the 2002 Downtown Parking Study.

XII. WATER ACCESS

With Breton Bay and McIntosh Run Leonardtown has more than 2.5 miles of waterfront. Unfortunately the entire water frontage is privately owned or restricted environmentally. The St. Mary's Ice and Fuel property encompasses what was a substantial public access point where a restaurant/bar and marina existed prior to destruction by fire in the mid-1980s. The restaurant has not been rebuilt and the marina is no longer usable.

In 2003 a concept plan for a mixed use development was approved for a private developer. The Town has agreed to purchase $\frac{3}{4}$ acre to develop a public park. With these improvements, the Leonardtown Wharf will once again become an economic driving force for the entire region.

Though zoning on this property allows for a large variety of uses, nothing has happened on the site for ten years.

Most of the remaining waterfront is encompassed by the Tudor Hall Farm, which is bordered

by Breton Bay and McIntosh Run. The Town took ownership of approximately 196 acres of this property for construction of a public golf course and hotel and conference center. A private developer has concept approval for residential and limited commercial portions of the development.

These two projects will begin to allow the Town to utilize one of its most valuable assets – Breton Bay.

XIII. SENSITIVE AREAS

The Economic Growth, Resource Protection, and Planning Act of 1992 is a State law that requires local governments to include a sensitive areas element in their comprehensive plans. This element must contain goals, objectives, principles, policies, and standards designed to protect sensitive areas from the adverse effects of development. Four environmentally sensitive areas that require protection under the Act are (1) streams and their buffers, (2) 100-year floodplains, (3) habitats of threatened and endangered species, and (4) steep slopes. Local jurisdictions may choose to protect other types of sensitive areas including natural and cultural resources such as scenic vistas, historic properties, and archaeological sites. The sections that follow describe sensitive areas in and around the Town of Leonardtown.

Maps referred to below are on file in the Town offices.

A. STREAMS AND BUFFERS

Breton Bay and the major streams in Leonardtown are shown on the sensitive areas map in

the Leonardtown Critical Areas Program.

Preservation of natural land and vegetation along a stream provides a buffer that protects the stream from sediment, phosphorous, and other runoff pollutants.

B. FLOODPLAINS

The 100-year floodplain is the land area along a stream that is susceptible to inundation by a flood of a magnitude that would be expected to occur on average only once every 100 years as a result of rainfall and runoff from upland areas. The 100-year floodplains of streams in Leonardtown are shown on the Leonardtown Critical Areas Program maps.

C. HABITATS OF THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES

Certain areas, due to their physical or biological features, provide important elements for the maintenance, expansion, and long-term survival of threatened and endangered species. These areas, called habitats may include breeding, feeding resting, migratory, or over wintering areas. Physical or biological features of habitats may include the structure and composition of the soil, vegetation, and the faunal community; water chemistry and quality; and geologic, hydrologic, and microclimatic factors. Habitats may need special management or protection because of their importance to conservation of threatened or endangered species.

The Maryland Natural Heritage Program is responsible for monitoring and documenting the well-being of endangered and threatened species. Habitats for endangered or threatened species have been found within the borders of Leonardtown. Development plans will be submitted to the Maryland Natural Heritage Program for review.

The bald eagle is the most frequently reported rare and endangered species near Leonardtown. One nest site has been identified near Camp Maria on Breton Bay. However, there are no nest sites in Leonardtown.

Species with special federal status with a habitat near Leonardtown include Dabbling Ducks and Diving Ducks. These species frequent the mouth of Breton Bay, and are found scattered offshore throughout the coast near Leonardtown.

There is a current population of the Dwarf Wedge Mussel, *Alasmidonta heterodon*, in McIntosh Run north of Leonardtown which could extend into smaller tributaries of McIntosh Run. *Alasmidonta heterodon* is a State Endangered Species. There are also records of the *Chelone oblique*, or Red Turtlehead, in wetlands to the west of Leonardtown. The Red Turtlehead plant has been classified as a State Threatened Species by the Maryland Natural Heritage Program.

D. STEEP SLOPES

Steep Slopes are considered sensitive areas because of their potential for soil erosion and slope instability, as well as the diversity of plant and animal species found on undisturbed slopes. Clearing and grading of land results in increased soil erosion. The steeper the slope is, the greater the erosion problem. Runoff from rainfall carries eroded soil into the streams. By increasing the turbidity of the stream, this sediment destroys the stream's plant and animal life. In addition, the sediment carries heavy metals, pesticides, nutrients, and other pollutants that degrade water quality.

For planning and design purposes, slopes more than 15 percent are considered to be steep. The Town of Leonardtown is situated in the low flat plain region in the Atlantic Coastal Plain. Its developed area is bordered by land with slopes greater than 15 percent. These very narrow and steep

areas are found to the east along Town Run and to the west just beyond the developed residential area. Slopes greater than 15 percent also occur to the east and west of Washington Street along Breton Bay.

Elevations in Leonardtown range from 110 feet above sea level to sea level. The highest land is in north west area. The town center and historic area are situated on the edge of a gradually sloping plain at an elevation of 90 feet above sea level.

E. OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

Sensitive Areas objectives include insuring that the type and intensity of development are appropriate to the natural capabilities of the land on which the development takes place. Development should be outside of the sensitive areas. Land and natural features important to maintaining health of the town, which present constraints for development, and which are critical to reducing damage to Breton Bay as well as the Chesapeake Bay, are preserved from disturbance and enhanced to increase the effectiveness of their benefits for erosion control, filtering of sediments and nutrients and provision of essential habitat for wildlife. In return, citizens receive benefits of reduced construction costs, minimization of erosion and flood events, and improved water quality for drinking and recreation, and increased property values for a more scenic living environment.

Policies include:

1. Restrict development in sensitive areas. Direct growth away from such areas.
2. Prohibit extensive alteration to major drainage courses.
3. Protect vegetation in and around steep slopes, floodplains, and stream buffers. Prioritize these areas for preservation when open space dedication is required as part of the subdivision or development process.

4. Prohibit development where sewage treatment will not be part of the central collection and treatment system operated by the Town.
5. Encourage the linking and connection of forest required for preservation so that a wildlife habitat can be created.
6. To encourage best management practices (BMP's), such as stormwater ponds, porous paving, grease traps, grassed drainage swales, and tree planting within development projects.
7. Within the Town, both public and private sector development projects will be sited and designed to minimize adverse impacts on sensitive areas.
8. An environmental stewardship ethic will be promoted in the public and private sectors through education and volunteer programs.
9. Development regulations will be innovated so as to facilitate development and economic growth while affording protection to sensitive areas.
10. If new land is annexed into the Town, the Town will coordinate with the Critical Areas Commission and the Natural Heritage Program to determine the existence of important habitats and sensitive areas, or will require the applicant to investigate the issue.
11. Natural buffers for a stream, slope, and floodplain systems shall be a preferred protection technique over engineering solutions. Exceptions may be made where planned density or land use type cannot otherwise be achieved; on-site or off-site mitigation may be required.
12. Encourage waterfront property owners to preserve natural features and protect natural resources, but most homeowners are not aware of what they can and should do to protect their land and the watershed. Things such as stormwater runoff, stream buffers, forest

management invasive species management, soil stabilization/sediment control, landscaping, and tree preservation are important topics for rural homeowners to understand and support.

F. STANDARDS AND IMPLEMENTATION

Action steps for the implementation of the policies of the Sensitive Areas Element include assuring that the Town Code includes regulations to require the following:

1. Develop flexible development standards that will offer flexibility to the developer, which will at the same time protect the public interest and sensitive areas.
2. Coordinate the requirements of regulation for sensitive areas with the Forest Conservation requirements to encourage the conservation and creation of a contiguous wildlife habitat.
3. A natural buffer of at least 100 feet shall encompass surface water impoundment areas.
4. Steep slopes shall include areas of at least 5,000 square feet which have 15 percent or greater slopes.
5. Establish and maintain a network of greenways along Town Run and McIntosh Run. Greenway connections to the Governmental Center, the library, the waterfront, Port of Leonardtown, and elsewhere within the town should be supported. Use of such greenways as pedestrian/bicycle trails should be pursued.
6. Developing a pamphlet/brochure for rural homeowners on resource management/conservation issues, programs that are available to help them, and how they can manage their properties will aid in protecting the watershed and Breton Bay. This pamphlet/brochure could be given to each homeowner/builder.

7. Encourage school or civic groups to stencil “Don’t Dump – Breton Bay Drainage” (or similar language) on storm drain inlets around the bay. This has been a very popular and effective awareness tool for the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Several storm drains in Leonardtown have been stenciled in the past with “Chesapeake Bay drainage”, but these are now faded. This would be an excellent public/community service project.

XIV. HISTORIC PRESERVATION

In an effort to revitalize its historic preservation efforts, the town has taken a number of steps in conjunction with St. Mary’s County to ensure preservation of its historic character. St. Mary’s County has compiled data and documentation on historic sites throughout St. Mary’s County. Numerous Leonardtown sites are included in the document which has been placed on the Maryland Historical Trust’s inventory listings. In 2002, the Town completed the process of nominating the following sites to be placed on the National Register of Historic Places: The Duke Building, 41655 Fenwick Street, block 10, parcel 451; St. Paul’s United Methodist Episcopal Church/Leonardtown Church of the Nazarene, 22730 Washington Street, block 4, parcel 469; Leonardtown Bank of the Eastern Shore Trust Company, 22665 Washington Street; Fenwick House/W.W. Sawyer House, 41685 Laverne Lane, parcel 481; Eldon, Part of Darley/Wentworth House, 23040 Hollywood Road, block 11, parcel 499.

In 2003 the Southern Maryland Heritage Tourism Management Plan was adopted by St. Mary’s County and the Commissioners of Leonardtown. Leonardtown was designated as a Target Investment Zone as shown on Appendix F.

It is the aspiration of the Southern Maryland Heritage Area Partnership that this plan serves as a catalyst to coordinate regional efforts. These efforts strive to recognize the importance, conserve the physical resources, and galvanize the human resource base of the region to increase significantly both the quality and quantity of heritage tourism in Southern Maryland. Southern Maryland is perfectly endowed to take advantage of tourism trends toward shorter, more frequent vacation trips; trips with children with an educational bent, and trips with active recreation as an important component.

We envision 3-5 years from now that tourism promotion will focus on several clearly identified and developed themes. We envision that tourist promotion will emphasize transportation links to encourage people to explore diverse areas of the region and stay longer. We envision that through a strong, effective management entity the Heritage Area effort will be coordinated with other region-wide economic and community development efforts to make best use of scarce resources.

Ten years from now we envision that there will be much better understanding of the full picture of Southern Maryland's heritage based on additional scholarly research. Sites connected with themes which today are not ready for promotion to tourists, such as some War of 1812 and Civil War sites, will increase the depth and draw for heritage tourists. Better linkages both across land and along the extensive water perimeter of Southern Maryland will enhance and add variety to tourist offerings. Public involvement in heritage tourism planning and promotion will be strong. The quality of life for residents will be enhanced by recreational opportunities and by conservation and protection policies adopted by the three counties to ensure the quality of the scenic, historic, and natural environment.

XV. IMPLEMENTATION POLICIES

The policies contained in this Comprehensive Plan will guide the Town’s development for the next decade. The Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations will be amended to reflect the policies contained in the Plan. Town ordinances and capital planning will be consistent with the Plan.

A. ORDINANCES AND DETAILED PLANS

Within two years after the adoption of this Plan, the following ordinances and plans shall be adopted or revised in compliance with this Plan:

1. Zoning Ordinance and Comprehensive Zoning Map
2. Subdivision Regulations
3. Road Plan
4. Code Enforcement Policy
5. Annexation Plan and Regulations

B. TOWN AND COUNTY COORDINATION

The Town and St. Mary’s County have coordinated their updated plans and now notify each other of projects of common interests. The 2002 St. Mary’s County Comprehensive Plan includes the following:

5.2 Interjurisdictional Coordination Element

“Coordinate with the Town of Leonardtown for efficient land use, growth management and

annexation policy within the Leonardtown Development District.

5.2.1 Maintain interjurisdictional agreement governing shared access to the town's wastewater plant.

5.2.2 Practice mutual referral of various development proposals and revision of county land use map proposals within the Leonardtown development district.”

C. PLAN REVISION

This Plan should be reviewed and updated no later than 2009.

