



Comprehensive Plan Update

Planning Commission Work
Session

November 9, 2022



Notes from Public Workshop

Greater Rock Hall Business Assoc. Main Street Rock Hall

- Basic goals of the old plan still valid -- Build a sustainable community
- Maintain small town character and sense of place
- Establish a strong economic base
- Recommendation – Increase support and incentives for business growth and prosperity
- Promote downtown
- Transportation – promote circulation of people from the waterfront to downtown



Rick

- Population loss, aging local population
- Lack of housing demand, Low school enrollment
- Limited opportunities in entertainment, shopping, healthcare
- More lodging, tax tourism to fund improvements, ferry service,
- Need more population and new housing



Tori

- Maintain the community feel
- Encourage, build on waterfront opportunities
- Special events and events for kids and families



Phil

- Town is not what it used to be...its changing
- Maintain small town charm
- People love the atmosphere ...maintain it.... while we are changing
- Address the vacancy on Main Street
- The virtue of volunteering... such as Learning Center -- homework help and tutoring grade school



Jen

- Waterfront – just a tiny little beach for public access to the water
- Funding: MDE, DNR can help get funding for the waterfront
- University of DE has program support for waterfront development
- Need to have realism. The Town does not have money (to do projects)
- Haven Harbor is still developing.



Marietta

- We need senior housing...seniors don't have money to keep-up houses
- Counseling and transportation services for seniors
- Transportation – how to get RH people to other places like Chestertown
- Also need a place where kids can go
- Keep Rock Hall open year-round...need activities, winter activities.
- Transportation so kids can have access to college classes or online courses, or courses taught in Rock Hall (community college courses here)



Robin

- Supports the commercial marina element of the Town
- Thinks of the town in terms of both “heads” and “berths”
- Maritime industries are central part of economic future of the Town
- The local marine industries send people for certifications to other areas... why not do that here?
- Rock Hall is known worldwide for maritime expertise such as MD School for Sailing and Seamanship



Deborah

- We need a paradigm shift – become a robust sustainable community
- Be prudent .. Protect environment but allow smart growth



Others

- Development of housing is complicated by the permitting process
- Regarding the sea level rise mapping -- looks like we might need bridges
- Need more housing
- We did not implement much of our 2010 Comp. Plan. Already decided to do "Heritage Tourism". - Cap'n Bill



Two Long Term Trends / Challenges

There are two major long-term changes underway in Rock Hall that this Plan must address.

1. Demographics

- 1960 1,073
- 1970 1,125
- 1980 1,511
- 1990 1,584
- 2000 1,396
- 2010 1,310
- 2020 1,198

2. Sea level rise

is occurring throughout the coastal Chesapeake Bay region and its effects in Rock Hall include increased flooding, drainage and stormwater management problems, and migration of wetlands into previously dry areas. As discussed in Chapter III, sea level rise is projected to continue throughout this century and without remediation, it is expected to transform lower lying parts of the Town, expose a greater area to nuisance flooding, make certain areas more vulnerable to flooding associated with major tidal and storm events, and complicate the maintenance of infrastructure.

Vision for Rock Hall: 2040

While State law outlines the 12 Visions (discussed later in this chapter) which are to guide all comprehensive planning in Maryland, it is Rock Hall's vision of the future that gives life and special meaning to this Plan.

A vision is future oriented. It explains why one town's plan is, at its heart, different than all others. A vision is a marker in time against which each succeeding generation can compare its experience. The vision statement below, that emerged from the public engagement process, was written from the perspective of 20 years in the future.

Vision Statement

- In 2040, Rock Hall is a vibrant year-round community with an active and interconnected Downtown and Harbor. Buildings in Downtown are occupied with businesses and residents.
- The Town has capitalized on its maritime heritage and natural harbor and expanded its maritime economy which has contributed to growth in tourism, economic development, and overall well being.

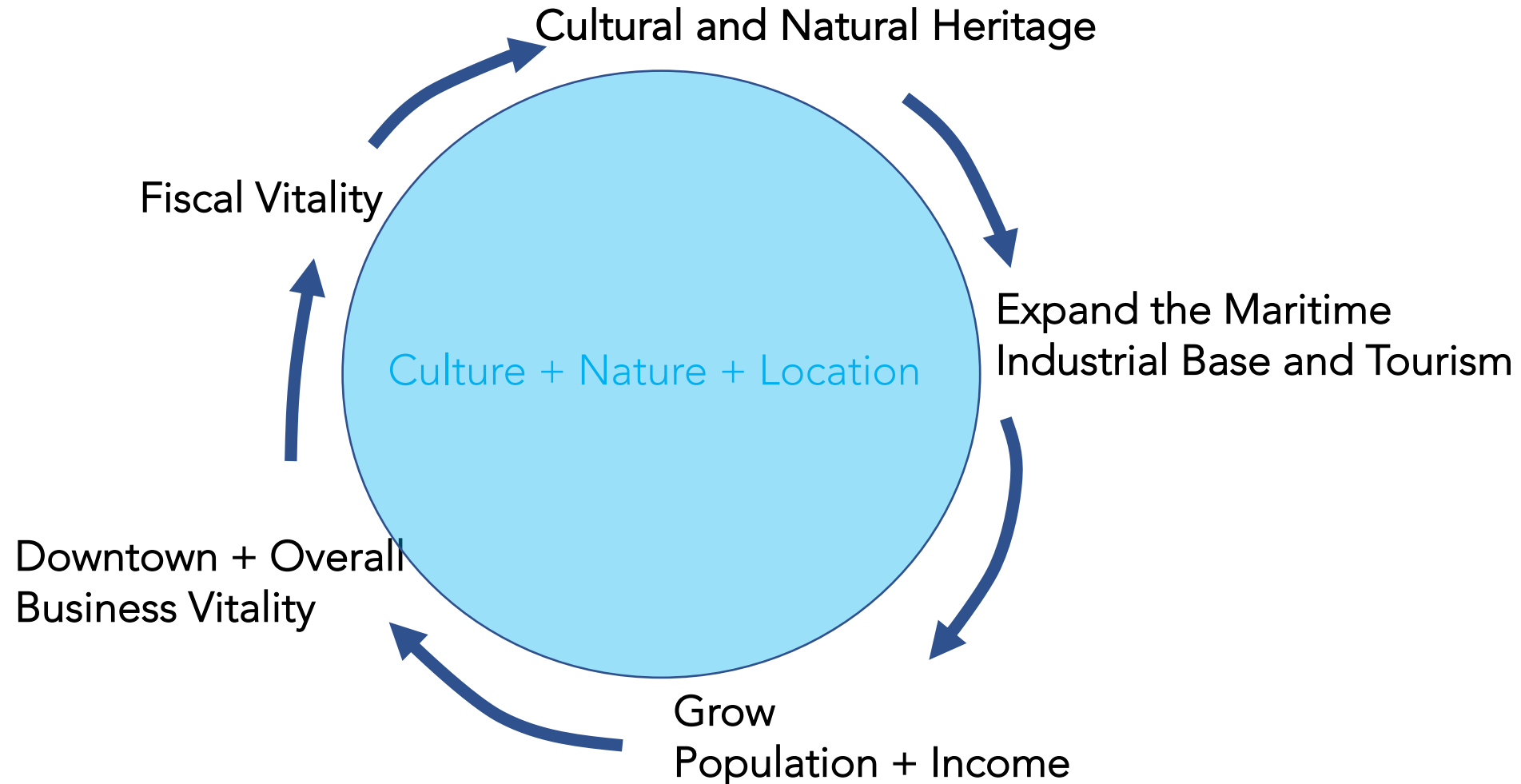
Vision Statement, continued

- Over the past 20 years, the Town has reversed its long-term population loss and grown its resident population in a steady and balanced way.
- New housing has been added including housing affordable to employees in local businesses and to seniors.
- The Town is a blend of retiree housing, second homes, and vacation homes, with a strong and vibrant community of year-round residents who have put down roots in Rock Hall.

Vision Statement, continued

- Rock Hall has conserved its unique and independent town character and culture. It has leveraged the economic energy of tourism and second homes / vacation economy to promote, sustain, and reinvest in cultural heritage, education, and the care of seniors.
- Rock Hall has perfected its development review and permitting to facilitate smart and compatible land development and private investment.

Virtuous Circle of Land Use, Economic Development, and Natural Conservation Policies



Big Picture -- Necessary to Realize 2040 Vision

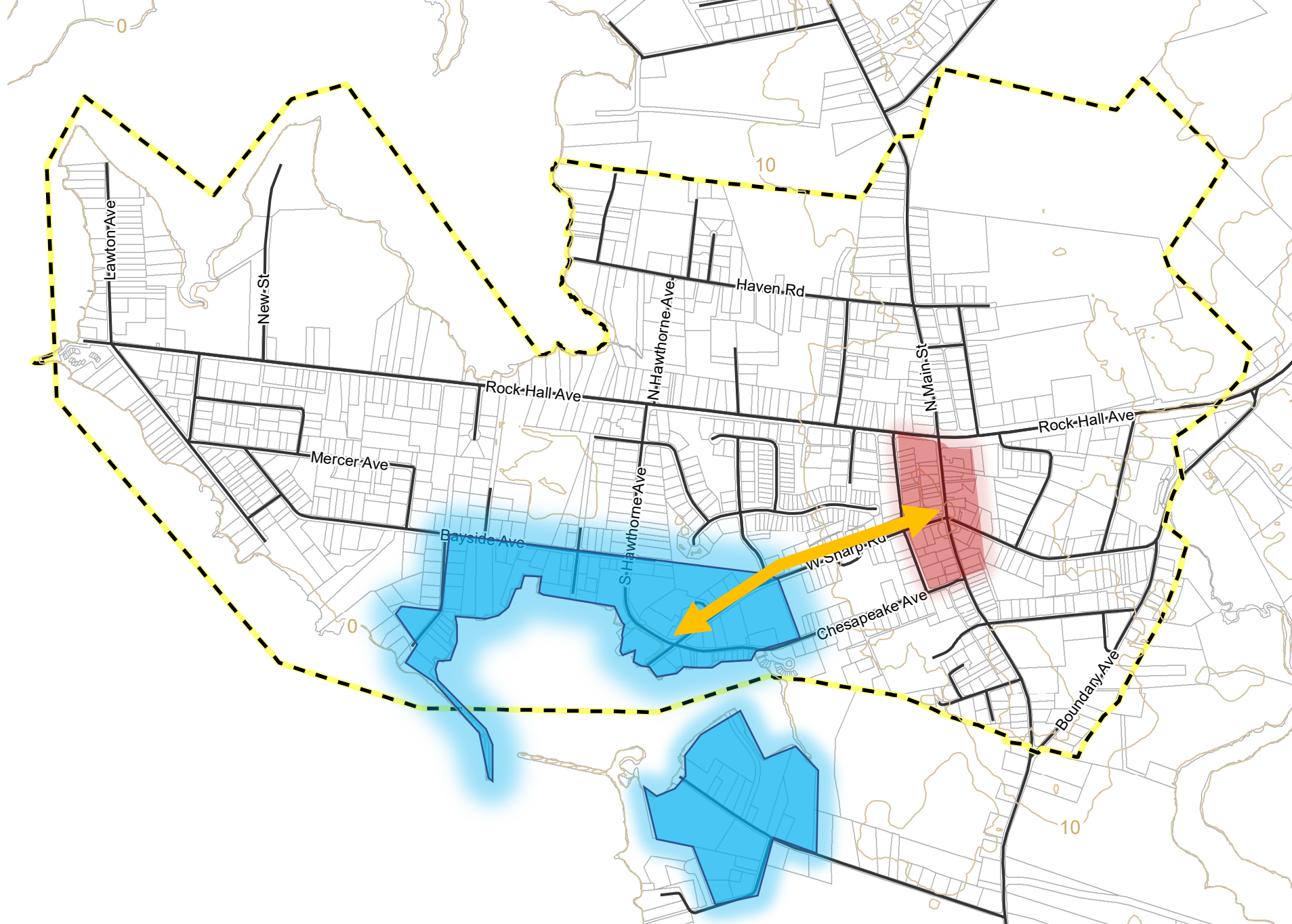
1. More land zoned for residential development and openness to growth and expansion of the town boundaries.
2. *There must be demand for housing and willing land developers.*
3. Support for multi-family / denser options to supply affordable housing for local employment base.

Big Picture -- Necessary to Realize 2040 Vision

4. Support for multi-family housing – condominium, second homes, etc. in support of local tourism and economic development.
5. There must be growth in the aggregate local income to support year-round business.
6. Sustained commitment to economic development--tourism, eco-tourism, recreational boating, and maritime industries
7. Well-funded ongoing investments in regional/inter-state marketing, transportation, and building “tourism infrastructure”.

Big Picture -- Necessary to Realize 2040 Vision

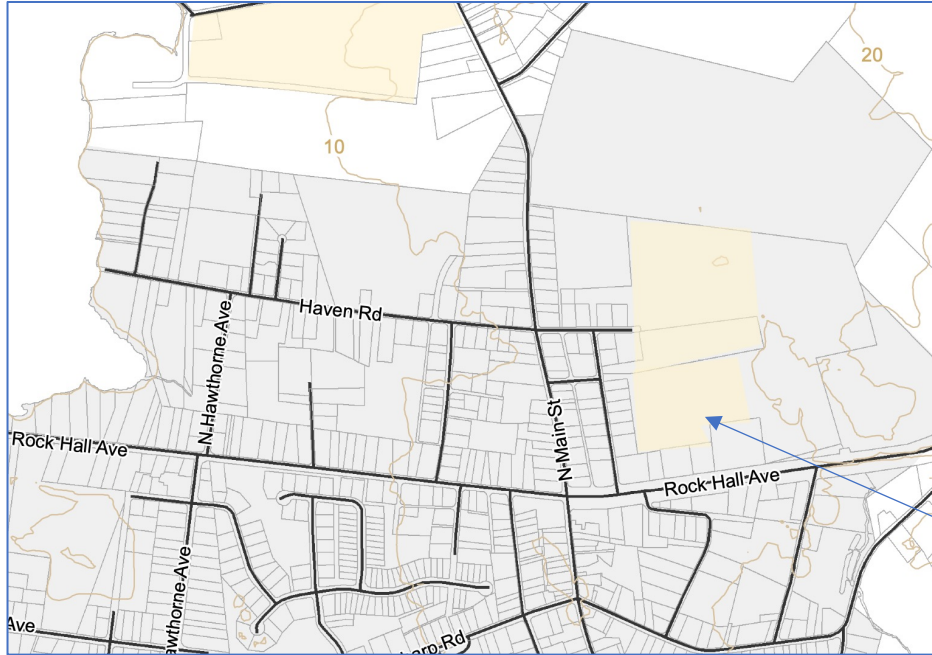
8. Substantial and costly improvements needed at the Harbor and waterfront.
9. There must be a continuation of trends allowing work-from-home with high speed, broad band internet and telecommunications.
10. Sustained commitment to address sea level rise and reduce the risk to population and infrastructure including physical barriers like sea wall, bulkheads and open spaces to absorb water and protect against flooding





Land Use
Changes for
Residential
Growth





Back to the Big Picture



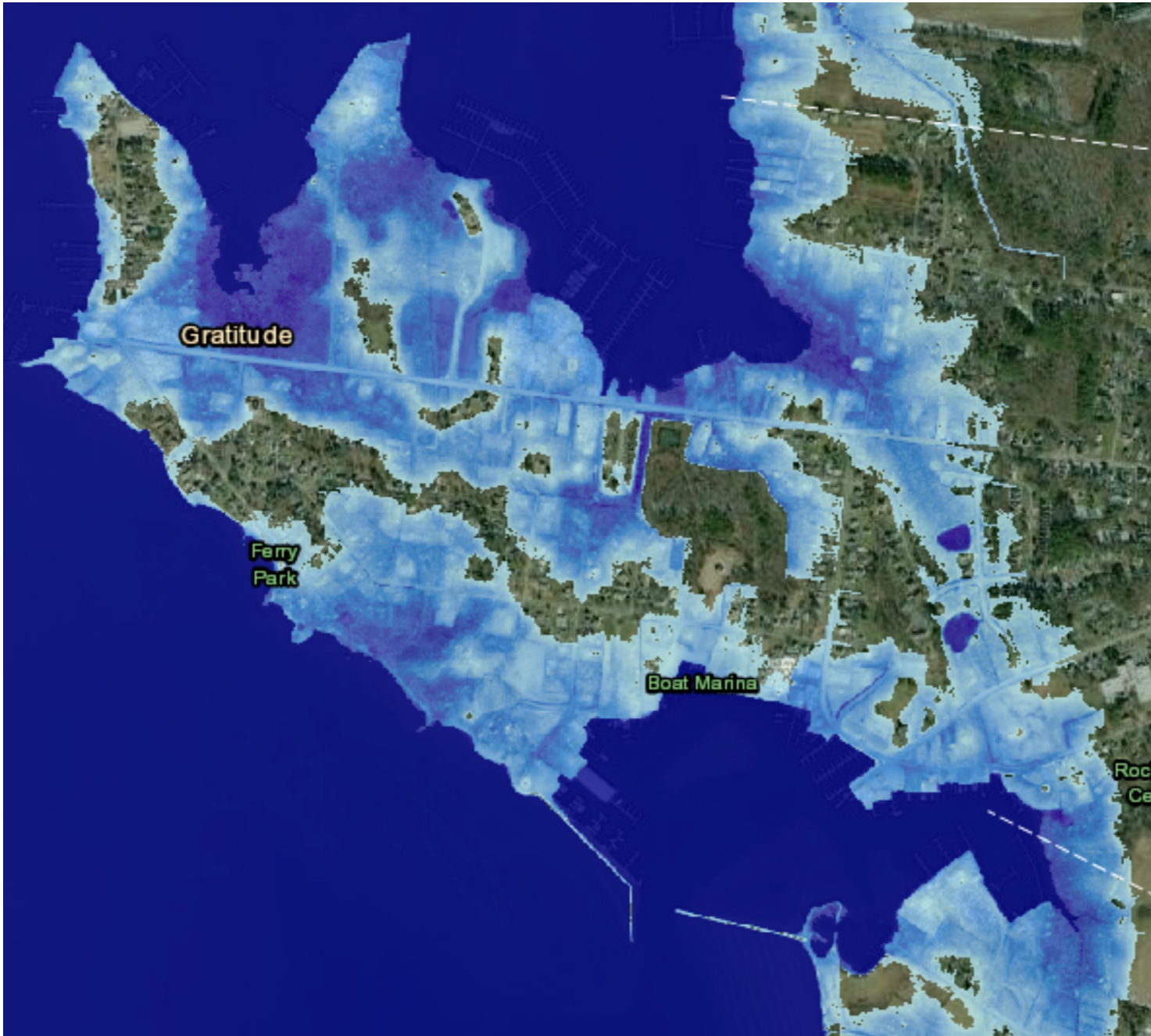
- Does the Vision Statement Work?
- Are you OK recommending these inter-related policy ideas, which I will explore in more depth?
 - Land use changes for new housing, denser housing (affordable, senior waterfront-oriented luxury, second homes, etc.)? And Annexation?
 - Sustained commitment to developing the Harbor / Waterfront?
 - Sustained commitment to maritime and tourism economic development?
 - Sustained commitment to address sea level rise?

Areas Underwater with a 2-foot Sea Level Rise.

Projected for 2050.



Source NOAA and MD Climate Change Commission.

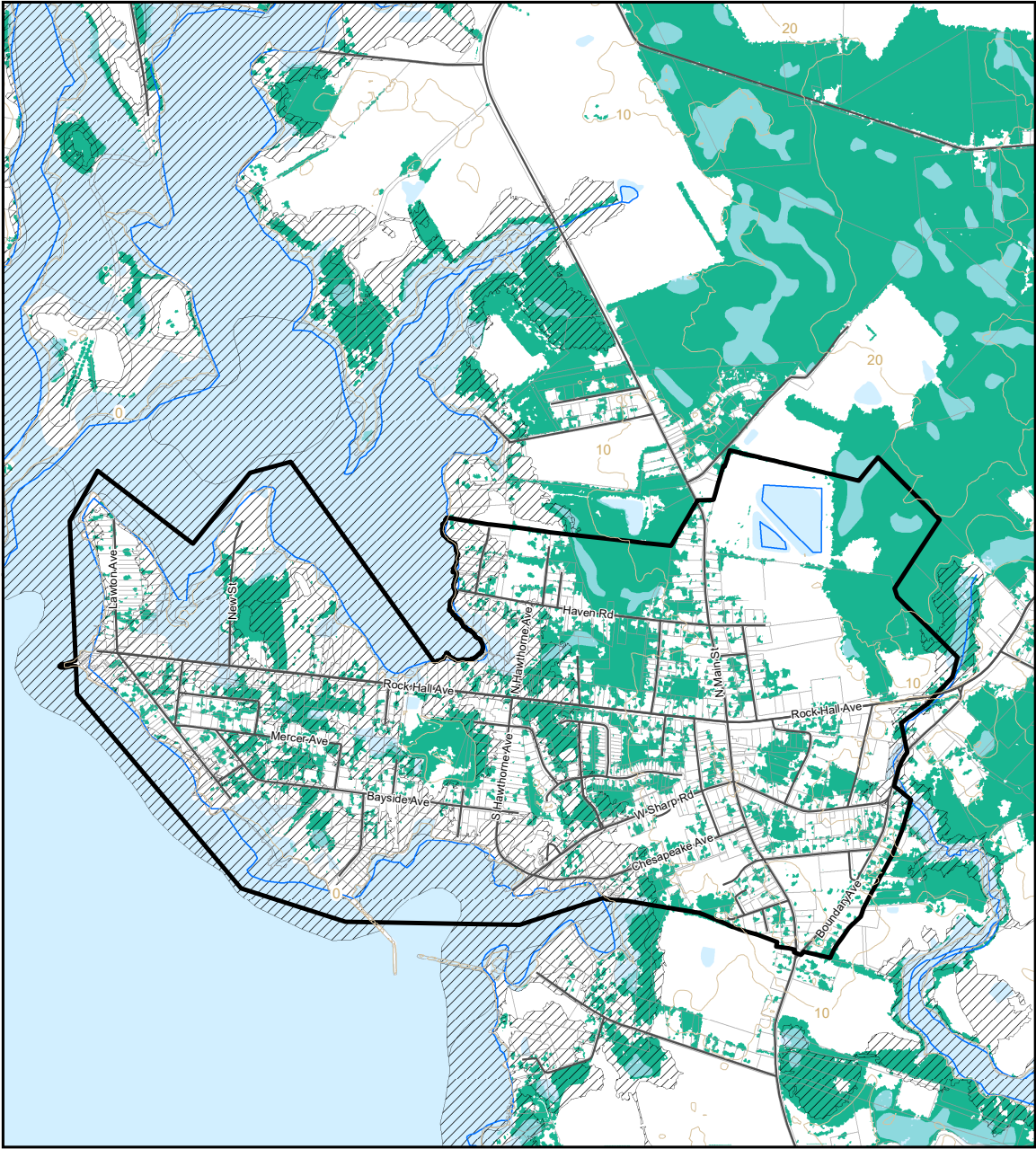


Areas Underwater with a 5-foot Sea Level Rise.

Projected for 2100.

Source NOAA and MD Climate Change Commission.

Existing Environmentally Sensitive Areas



Environmental Features

- Waterbody
- FEMA Floodplain, 1% Annual Probability
- Tree Canopy Cover
- Wetland

Zoning Map

Town of Rock Hall, Maryland

